

Chapter 10: 4-Points

An excerpt...

Oto and Ebbe had just hit it off, so to speak, from the first day they met.

They both were only a couple of rooms away from each other, and were always hanging out in group therapy.

The nurses were always doing their best to split them up, but they just naturally bonded on a level that Ebbe had never experienced before.

Ebbe's injuries had long healed, and the nurses actually gave him an extra chocolate pudding now and then.

The next day Oto and Ebbe were actually paying attention to the psychologist in a small room filled with about ten other adolescents who had some type of bond with each other.

It is true what they say, that when a group of people go through hell together, they form a life-long bond.

“Oto, do you have something to share with the group today,” the psychologist asked him.

Oto decided to share a bit with the group.

He actually ended up telling his story about how he loved to race around in his VW Rabbit.

His stepdad had loved racing fast in cars or even on motorcycles.

For some reason Oto just knew that he had the reflexes of a race car driver.

Oto wasn't really sure how he knew that, but it didn't matter.

On one side of Oto on that day was Ebbe, who was winking at his buddy, slapping him in the arm when the psychologist wasn't looking their way.

Next to Oto was a 17-year-old girl with brown hair who always kept her head down and never smiled.

She had been called on that day in group, and it took her what seemed like a minute to finally look up, staring over at Oto and Ebbe, who were carefully watching the good-looking girl.

Most of the girls in that ward that were separated by empty rooms between the boys and the girls.

If Oto was being honest, he wouldn't waste his time talking to most of the girls there.

He just wasn't that interested in these particular girls, although he had a girlfriend that was still living back in that small town out in the middle of nowhere Nevada.

But they broke up months ago when they went to different colleges.

He usually kept to himself, except when it came to his buddy Ebbe.

It took a long time for the girl to look up, but eventually the therapist convinced her to tell the group why she was locked up like the rest of them.

That was of course the therapist's goal with all of the young kids.

She herself was only 28, and she thought she had a tough childhood.

But the stuff that these kids under 18 had gone through would keep her up at nights.

She would drink Vodka with strawberry soda most every night to get some of the horrific memories to at least go away for a bit.

The young girl in question said it all started when she was thirteen.

There had been a boy her own age in the same class that she was in.

She explained how she loved school, along with reading and writing in her journal whenever she got a chance to do so.

She would catch this young boy in class staring at her, and it actually made her feel uncomfortable.

But the teachers in her classes at school didn't seem to even take notice of this, or if they did, they never said anything.

It was only in Algebra that the boy was ever in a class with her.

Eventually, he got up the nerve to talk to her now and then after class on the way back out to the hallway, filled with students running around after the bell rang between classes.

At the end of the Fall semester she began talking more and more to him after class.

She actually started to feel something for him that she had never felt before with anyone.

She paused, looking up now and then at Oto and Ebbe.

She actually didn't mind watching the two boys enjoy spending time together.

She hadn't made any friends herself.

She looked up at the psychologist who was leading the group, looking the therapist in the eyes for several seconds.

She went back to telling the group her story.

It was at the start of the Spring semester the same year that she again spotted the boy from math class.

In that semester she rarely saw him, because she was in the honor track and he wasn't.

On that day it was sprinkling just a little bit, which she actually enjoyed.

She was flustered a bit, but said hello to him.

She asked him what he had been up to and how she actually missed him.

Of course she only thought the part about missing him.

They started walking together more and more after school and soon became quite close.

This time, back in group therapy, she stopped talking and looked over at Oto.

Rather than just shutting down like she usually did, she continued on with her story.

She explained how she actually learned how the boy lived only a few blocks East of her home.

They then started walking together more often before going their separate ways.

Eventually, the boy got up the courage and asked her to go steady with him.

She hadn't heard such a thing before.

She quietly just said, "yes."

Things were great at first, and they enjoyed holding hands and playing video games together at his house when his parents were still at work.

That only lasted for a month or so because he decided to start hanging out more with his guy friends instead of with her.

She spent this time reading any book she could get her hands on, and it wasn't long before her school was out for the summer.

One night in particular, although she didn't know it, the boy had been drinking warm beer that he had scored at one of his friend's house.

She explained to the group that he had somehow ended up on her doorstep.

The boy later told her how he was terrified himself, but his "boys" had dared him to do it, and he felt he had no other choice.

She came to the front door of her house and was surprised to see him looking at her like he had all of those months before in math class.

She stared at the floor back in her uncomfortable chair in group as she told the rest of her story, and Oto was now staring straight at her.

She explained in almost a whisper how she started drinking with the same boy and started snorting something that he had given her.

She had never snorted anything before, and the experience left her feeling woozy and disoriented one afternoon at her house when her parents weren't there.

At this point Oto was whispering to Ebbe, but he stopped, and couldn't help but listen to what the girl said next.

"I kept it in the drawer next to my bed at home."

The therapist asked her in a soothing voice, "What do you mean, you kept what in your drawer?"

"It was a blade that I had sharpened," she said.

She didn't say too much after that, but she finished talking by saying, "One night I went too far in my bedroom, cutting too deep into my left thigh."

The next day they were all ushered into the gym that Oto had never seen before.

A record player started up with a Country Western song echoing throughout the empty gym.

One of the therapists was at the front of the large room, and briefly showed them with another therapist how to do the Do-Si-Do.

“You know kids, swing your partner round and round...”

The therapist told them they were not allowed to get more than a foot away from each other, and that if they actually touched anyone, they would be forced to sit down against the wall.

Oto actually refused to dance at first, but he changed his mind as he tapped his foot in time with the song.

Oto actually laughed to himself a bit listening to the horrible song that vibrated from the spinning record player.

Oto didn't hesitate when the girl who talked about the sharp blade decided to “dance” with Oto.

She spun around next to him, and they both locked arms, even though of course they weren't supposed to.

A nurse immediately separated them.

Although she was allowed to keep dancing, Oto was told to go stand in the corner of the gym all on his own.

He felt bad, actually, but he had been getting used to this type of behavior in the cold hospital.

Just like the first day he had been brought into the place, Oto had to sit in a chair against the wall again after he was ushered out of the gym.

This time, however, he was not allowed any crayons or paper to write on.

Writing was actually the only time he felt sort of free.

He just stared at the nurses that would walk by.

They ignored him, chatting about whatever they could, to get through their days dealing with the kids around them.

In that chair, on that day, Oto started counting at 1,000 and worked back as long as he could by 7 until he felt better all alone against the wall.

Chapter 14: The Apache Truck

It was a sunny day, and Oto and his roommate took a drive out to the countryside in Natan's old Apache truck that his grandpa had gifted to him.

Oto didn't know what year the truck had been built, but it was so old that there weren't even seat belts in it.

Natan loved "gunning" the old truck over the speed bumps in the parking lot of their apartment complex.

On this particular day Oto wasn't paying attention, and his nose hit the glass of the windshield after Natan slammed on the brakes.

The tires hit the speed bump with full force.

Oto's eyes watered, and he tasted a little blood, but Natan just laughed his ass off.

Oto had the window down in the Apache truck as Natan drove it at 50 mph back on an old country road, until they got to a tree line out in the middle of nowhere.

He pumped the brakes a couple of times until the truck came to a stop.

“Check this out, Oto, I have a surprise for you.”

They both hopped out of the truck.

Oto looked all around, but there was nobody except for birds in the area.

He thought that he heard an old crow cawing nearby.

Natan hopped up into the back of the bed of the truck and pulled away an old tarp that Oto had missed somehow.

“What the hell is that, Natan?” Oto asked.

Natan lifted a semi-automatic rifle that was belt-fed out of the bed of the old truck.

He didn’t waste any time, and he wrapped the “belt” around his forearm just like in the Rambo movies.

Natan smiled, aiming at the dirt road ahead, letting the bullets fly.

Oto watched with fascination as the giant bullets slammed into the ground, throwing up dirt and dust.

Natan yelled out at the top of his lungs as the blood pumped in his veins and surged in his big neck.

There was no way that Oto would even have the strength to fire the gun, and he was relieved that Natan didn't ask him to.

"Dude, wasn't that awesome?" Natan asked.

"I have never seen anything like it, that's for sure. Where the hell did you get that gun and where do you keep it?"

"Don't worry, bro, it isn't my gun. It belongs to an old friend that I have and he trusted me enough to take it out here and try it out."

Natan was again relieved, because he knew they didn't have a gun at all in their place, much less something like that.

Natan carefully covered that gun back up with the tarp and they drove back home, but first stopped at the friend's house so Natan could give him the gun back.

Even though Oto and Natan shared the same bedroom, Natan had a queen-size bed, whereas Oto only had a twin.

At least three times a week Natan's girlfriend would stay over. It turned out that she wasn't pregnant, and Natan had told Oto the good news a few days ago.

That is when he learned about the sock being on the doorknob.

On those nights when he stumbled in from a late-night party, Oto would see the sock on the doorknob to the bedroom, and he then knew he had to go and sleep downstairs on the couch.

After crashing on the lumpy brown couch, he would wake up the next morning with a hangover and a stiff back.

On afternoons when it was hot in the apartment, and they were tired of watching TV, Oto and Natan would go out to the rec room and play pool.

Natan would bring all of his dirty socks with him and stuff them into the pool table pockets.

That was how Oto learned how to play an afternoon of pool after paying only fifty cents.

Oto did his best playing pool against his roommate, but he never was very good at it.

"Oto, what the hell is wrong with you? You told me you were good at math, but if you know Geometry at all, you should be able to beat me playing pool."

It was a Saturday night, and Oto was carefully slicing the fat off a tri-tip the way he had been taught, when the phone rang.

He quickly wiped his greasy fingers off before picking up, and was surprised to hear Natan's girlfriend on the other end.

"Oto, something terrible has happened. Natan ran a red light and crashed his truck after almost running down an old man walking in the crosswalk."

Oto was listening to every word she said, and then she paused before saying, "He called me from jail because he has been arrested for drunk driving."

The next couple of days went by in a blur.

Oto went down and visited Natan, who was locked up because he had failed to tell him that he had been arrested three years before for drunk driving.

Natan explained how one night last year when he had too much to drink, he drove himself home.

He ended up crashing into a power pole, and fled the scene.

Natain explained how a policeman had knocked on his door before arresting him, taking him away in cuffs, and reading him his rights.

“Why the hell did you never tell me this, Natan?”

“I don’t know to be honest. It was never something I really liked to talk about.”

“I am just in shock from all of this. What is going to happen to you?”

Natan looked at his roommate, but he was told that he could only talk to Oto for a few more minutes because his time was about up.

“Oto, I only had one final class before I could graduate, but I am going to be in here for a few weeks, so I think I will miss my college graduation.”

Oto had no idea what he was going to do for the summer, and he was busy with his final essays in his English class.

The last thing he heard from Natan before his roommate was ushered out of the visiting area was, “The lease isn’t up on our place until the end of next month, and we are paid up, so you get the place to yourself.”

The apartment was pretty lonely without Natan around, but Oto did his best to stay busy.

He stopped drinking alcohol, and of course he was no longer able to get into the popular bar downtown.

He would stay out late almost every night, though, since he had been notified that he got a B- in his English class.

He had been hoping for an A, but he was still happy with the outcome.