

On the Line- Chapter 2

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Published on Lush Stories on 02 Jul 2013

<http://www.lushstories.com/stories/love-stories/on-the-line-chapter-2.aspx>

Leighton Thatcher felt the sweat pouring down the valley of her breasts, on the back of her neck, on her scalp. She'd run four miles in under forty minutes, an all-time best. She was running on a trail that led around her neighborhood towards the shore of Puget Sound and to a spot she'd discovered when she first moved to her house. The Beastie Boys were playing through her ear buds and she slowed down on the rocky shore. The only light illuminating the sky was the iridescent color of the moon. Her father had always said that no matter where on the planet he was, he would always be looking at the same moon as her. But that was years ago and he had been long gone off Earth.

"I knew I'd find you here," said a raspy voice, a familiar one.

She ripped out her ear buds and scrambled to her feet, "Dylan?"

He was sitting on the edge of a boulder, facing her, "Oh, how I love the sound of my name coming off your pretty little lips."

He pushed himself off the boulder and landed strongly on his two feet. Surprisingly he wasn't wear black shiny oxfords or a fitted Italian suit. He was wearing running shoes, a pair of athletic shorts and a black long sleeve shirt. A hint of male musk enveloping his body, his usual slicked back hair was messy, but he didn't look a hint less of gorgeous than he was. The only thing that was different was his stance, he wasn't inviting, and he wasn't open. It was almost as if he were physically guarding himself, from her, from everything.

"Why are you here?" she asked, in a cool voice.

She wasn't afraid, she wasn't nervous; she was in shock of seeing him in person. She had only seen him on magazine covers and flyers and billboards, but not once in person since their last appearance as a "power couple".

A bead of sweat collected in the dip of her cupid's bow when he answered, "We used to come running here and I thought I'd find you here, so I ran all the way from the Smithson."

She looked into his green eyes and didn't see him anymore. She didn't see the Dylan Bradshaw she knew and had once loved.

"That has to be at least 16 miles from here, you ran all the way?"

He laughed, "I did, and I did it for you."

"Why?"

"I haven't seen you in four months Leigh, I just wanted to hear your voice, I wanted to see your blue eyes, I wanted to feel the heat from your body."

"You lost that privilege long ago, Dylan; I need you to leave me alone."

"See, that's where this goes to shit, really, I can't just leave you alone," he whispered, bringing his body closer to hers, "I love you and you love me, and we will be together. No questions asked."

She breathed in, "Is that a threat?"

He shrugged, "Merely a much suggested thought."

Just then her phone rung with a customized ring, "Hello?"

"Leigh, it's time, come now."

It was Macy, she was in labor, and she had to leave now.

"Dylan, that was Mace, I have to go, she's having her baby," she said, walking backwards.

He smiled at her, his famous expensive looking toothy smile at her. The one that never quite reached his eyes.

"Please, don't let me slow you down, just go ahead," he said, "But remember what I said."

She nodded and ran towards her house, gaining speed, running from him, running from her life, without looking back once.

Pierce Marshall Novak, operating officer no. 789, West Coast Division of TITAN. FBI Recruit.

He was repeating his name and occupation over and over again, not out of boredom, but simply out of habit.

Pierce leaned forward and placed his elbows on his knees, checking his surroundings without even looking up. A simple task thought to be hard by many. He felt a twitch in his muscles, he heard his breathing in his ears, and he felt the steady beat of his heart underneath his dog tags. He looked at the silver part of his watch, which offered a vantage view of the room. Blake was walking down the hall with coffee cups, Cade was reading something on his phone and then he saw the one thing that managed to raise his heart rate through the roof.

Well he felt it more than saw it.

He would've recognized those legs no matter where he went. He would've recognized them even if they were covered in parachute pants. His appreciation for these two limbs was short of an obsession and they belonged to the girl who had just managed to weasel herself into his late night thoughts.

Leighton Thatcher could ask you to jump and you'd ask how high, only to realize that once you hit the floor you would kneel down and kiss the ground she walked on. She was all sun kissed skin and softly swaying hips. A crown of long blonde hair with streaks of gold and white that smelled like wild flowers had been woven into her braid and crushed by his infatuation. Ice berg blue eyes, eyes that he so badly wanted to see him and love him. Long pale pink lips that hid big pearly white teeth. A torso that was solid made of rippling muscle, small globes of skin that made breasts, high on her chest. A cute little firm ass that looked like it required a full time job, but her legs were his breaking point. Long, tan, muscled legs. Flexed with every step she took, softened when she sat, not one inch of her skin marred with scars or cuts. Just miles and miles of tan skin and soft muscle. She was definitely a runner.

She was in the same hallway as Blake so they entered the waiting room together. Pierce saw Blake offer a cup of coffee and she kindly refused with a shake of her head and a bright smile. She put a hand on Blake's shoulder and softly laughed at something he said, sending a bit of jealousy right through his core. She then walked to Cade who stood up and embraced her with a hug and a kiss on her cheek, she mentioned how nice it was to see them and she finally walked towards Pierce.

Jesus Christ, he gorgeous.

Leighton couldn't wrap her head around the fact that the man standing in front of her was this beautiful. He was literally a walking one night stand. Expansive broad shoulders that led to a tapered

slim waist. He took a step towards her, with stretched out arms.

What is he doing, is he stretching, oh, he's hugging me.

And just like that, she was in the arms of man who made her want to gravel into the pavement. His arms wrapped around her waist and her arms went around his neck. Her nose slightly touched the exposed skin of his neck and she softly inhaled. A natural musk to his warm skin. He smelled like hours in the sun and years of hard work. Every nerve ending of hers was on fire. She was wrapped by six feet and two inches of solid muscle. Not ridiculously hard muscle, but solid and firm and warm.

He kissed the side of her face and let go, together they sat.

"How is she doing?"

Pierce looked at her and she nearly sighed. His face was composed of almost perfect features. His hair was brown, not too dark, not too light. It was cut short, but not buzzed. His eyes weren't quite blue, more on the violet side, a light indigo. Thick brown eyelashes running along the rim of his eyes, thick eyebrows, a small scar on the left side. But she had fallen for his smile, big white teeth, not bleached, but healthy white. There was smiles lines and his eyes crinkled when he smiled. She wanted him to look at her and smile like that.

"She's okay, they're going to give her epidural, because it hurts her too much," he said, in a hushed tone, "But she'll be fine."

Leighton looked down at the linoleum floor, "Caleb?"

"Last time I went in there, he was about to faint, but he wouldn't leave her side."

Leighton smiled, Caleb and Macy had been hot and cold through out their relationship, but there was no one else on this Earth who deserved her best friend more than him.

"Why is that I always see you four together," she watched Cade's lolling head and Blake lean back with an arm covering his face, "Are you guys all in the same line of work or something?"

Pierce smiled at her, "Lets just say we are all loyal members to the same tribe of assholes."

Pierce leaned back and stretched out his legs in front of her, one of his arms going around her and resting on the back of her chair. He watched her study him once more. He was wearing a dark v-neck

and khaki pants toed off with brown boots. He knew she suddenly felt self self-conscious of her running shorts and black sweater.

She brought up one knee to her chest and the other to the arm rest, opposite of Pierces.

She looked at the tattoos on his arm. A sleeve made of vibrant colors and dull shades of grey on his left arm. There was spiders and koi fish, geishas and dice. Their was a pair of clasped hands with a rosary in between the fingers and halfway up his forearm were three solid black lines. There was only one phrase in all of the pictures...

"In the rushing fleet of time, never forget your brothers," he whispered to her.

She looked over her shoulder to his face and saw him smile, he was watching her this whole time. She felt her face burn. A residual smile lingered on his face, making the dimple in his cheek sink deeper. The more he smiled, the more she wanted to hate him. Because it was safer, hating the man who made her heart race was safer than letting him know, but yet it was the very thing that made hating him impossible.

"Sounds militant," she said, running her finger across the inked words on his left arm.

"Because it is," he replied.

She arched an eyebrow, as if asking how.

"Navy, one deployment period, four years. As soon as I turned eighteen, I was on my two feet and growing up fast."

She turned towards him and rested her chin on her knee, "Come a long way since then?"

He smiled, not at her, but to himself, "Something like that."

She wanted to ask how, she wanted to be privy. She wanted him to confide in her, but this wasn't the time nor place.

"So Ace, any more tattoos?"

"I'll show you mine, if you show me yours," he said, a slight grin on his face.

She smiled, "What do you mean?"

He took her right hand, "I saw this one and you seem like the kind of girl who would go back for more ink."

He was talking about the tree on her right ring finger. A small reminder of her mom.

Just then Caleb rushed through the door and said, "Nine pounds, eight ounces."

They both stood up and walked down the hall way behind him.

She turned towards him, "I did go back for more ink, but you'd have to earn the privilege to see that."

She left him behind with a gaping mouth and admirable eyes.

Macy was looking down at the blue bundle of joy in her arms when she saw Caleb entering the room followed by Pierce and Leighton.

They both took their turns hugging her and asking her if she needed anything. With as much of family as she'd lost, these people fit in her life quite perfectly.

Leighton took the baby from her arms and gently rocked him back and forth, touching his face with her fingers, "Hi there handsome boy, what's your name?"

Caleb was kneeling down next to the bed, holding Macy's hand, "Max Perceval."

She looked down the baby boy, "Like the strong knight, what a strong boy you'll grow up to be, yes, yes you are."

Pierce felt a tightening in his chest. It was said that the moment you find your soulmate, angels sing from above. But he wondered what if the girl herself was an angel?

He came up behind her and rested his head on her shoulder and she let him. She even turned her face towards his and smiled. When he met her, flowers started growing in the darkest recesses of her mind and he wanted nothing more than to spend his whole life thanking her.

He wanted to be her everything, care for her, watch over her. Make her happy and always be there for her. He wanted to be hers and for her to be his, but she was like the moon. Part of her always hidden, waiting to be explored.

He put a hand on the small of her back and whispered, "You are more beautiful than ever."

Caleb put a hand over his fiancé's left hand, he felt the familiar bump of the silver ring under his palm.

He kissed her cheek and whispered, "He is so done."

She smiled and looked the couple holding their baby, "Mhm."