

# Reading between the lines

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*Continuation of Innings and Kissing, Macy and Caleb's story.*

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Macy Cunningham sat in a blue plastic chair in the very bland waiting room of a New York City hospital. The stilettos she was wearing had her feet aching but she refused to walk around barefoot in the department of Labor and Delivery. Living in the state of Washington, she had traveled 2,500 miles to see the delivery of one of her childhood friend's baby. Alexa Grey had married Nick Steele and ended up pregnant. She, Alexa and Stacey had known each other since grade school. When all the girls were way too young to understand the harshness of the adult world. Back when her father was still alive and her mother was still her mother. Shaking her head to dismiss the thoughts, she reclined in her seat and studied the Twin Tower that had leaned against the wall to watch newborns in incubators.

Caleb Walker looked like he stepped out of every woman's wet dream. The Great Sculptor herself had angled his face, pressing her fingers into the flesh of his face and pulled upward. His cheeks were precise and sharp, giving him a finished look, but that's where all the prettiness had ended. His square jaw led to a strong chin that was covered in tempting black beard stubble. His eyes brilliant, shining like sapphires in a sea of white, topped with severe dark eyebrows. His hair was short on the edges, but longer on top, messy in way that made her want to be the reason why it was tousled. She lowered her gaze to his body and nearly salivated. His massive shoulder's led to a narrow waist. His arms were crossed over his chest and she noticed the black fabric of his t-shirt straining against the bulging of the muscles on his arms. She noticed several letters in black ink playing peek-a-boo from under his shirt. He turned slightly and Macy admired his very cute butt in snug blue jeans. There was a fading in the right pocket that only happens when a box of cigarettes stays in that place over time. She knew because her father had been a smoker.

"You might want to wipe the drool and introduce yourself," said a soft voice that interrupted her admiring.

Macy quickly checked to see if she was in fact drooling herself, "Yeah, no thanks, last time I checked, Dark and Dangerous wasn't my type."

“He’s a baseball player, Macy, the only thing dangerous about him is how sexy he is,” Stacey chuckled, “And last time I checked, you didn’t have a type.”

Macy resumed to her female appreciation when she noticed he was gone from the window, “He doesn’t seem like a baseball player, you know, he seems much more complicated for that to be his career choice.”

Stacey patted Macy’s thigh, “I will tell you this, Brett says the guy just comes and goes, without a single trace. I mean he is a pinch player, but he’s always away.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“Yep, but word has it that Caleb resigned his contract. He’s leaving baseball in a couple of months.”

That was certainly something she would look into. Macy took out her cell phone, “Time to meet my little niece.”

Caleb Walker sat in a rolling chair in the conference room of the safe point in Seattle. He did a quick over look of the other three men in the West Coast division of the group. There was Blake, who was also known as Hollywood, and was Caleb’s fellow frogman. Cade was referred to as Saint and Pierce received the name of Wild Card, those two were FBI. All these men had one thing in common; they were deadly. These men worked hand in hand to catch criminals who threatened the safety and trust of American soil. They were known as Elite. He looked over the description of the new task as hand.

“So, let me get this straight,” Pierce began to murmur, “they called us in to be security detail for some freak show?”

Phillips, their director, was standing at the head of the table, wearing his friendly, but threatening expression as always, “Her powers are an extensive advantage to us.”

“Powers?” asked Cade.

“Her name is Michelle Westbrook,” Phillips paused, “She’s psychic, a medium, she also has some sort of healing mechanism.”

Caleb leaned forward and raised his eyebrows, “Like, Jesus?”

Phillips ran a hand over his forehead, “If that’s how you’d like to approach it, then sure, she’ll be using her talents to help us.”

All the guys stood after exchanging looks, picked up their belongings and started to file out.

Cade yelled out before stepping through the door, "If she's hot, I call dibs."

A few hours later Caleb was standing against the wooden railing of the dock on Pier 56. He was watching the boats sway on the marina, inhaling the scent of fresh air and the sea. For a few seconds he let himself forget how lonely he was, he let himself forget the pain he must be causing his family, he let himself forget everything.

His sullen preserve was interrupted by a vibration in his left pocket, "Walker."

He heard Brett's chuckle, "Obviously someone never taught you how to answer a phone."

Caleb smiled and fished his keys out of his pocket, "And I care because?"

"Yeah, whatever, how's the hotel going?"

Caleb rolled his eyes, "I hate it."

"Well, I have news for you," he said, slightly laughing.

"Yeah?"

"Do you remember Macy Cunningham?"

Caleb stopped in his tracks while the grin fell off his face. Did he remember her? Of course he did. No man with enough breath in his body to fog a mirror could forget a woman like her. Five feet and seven inches worth of skin to taste, touch and smell.

"Yeah, why," Caleb's voiced cracked.

Brett chuckled once more, "She has a guest property behind her house in Des Moines. Her tenant moved out a few weeks ago, and it's open."

"So, you want me to move in to her guest house?"

Brett sighed, "I mean, if you want to be cooped up in that hotel room, be my guest, but Stacey said her rent was good and the property was nice."

Caleb knew exactly why Stacey had pushed Brett to call Caleb. Stacey had caught Caleb admiring Macy in the hospital. When he saw her sizing up in the glass of the incubator window, he left. There was no way in hell he would be able to go hours watching her tight little ass walk around in skin tight jeans.

“Won’t I be, you know,” Caleb paused, “scary, if I just show up?”

This earned him a laugh, “Walker, you were scary seven inches ago, now you’re just a fucking monster. Relax, just tell her you saw the AD in the paper, besides, it’s Macy. She can hold her own.”

Caleb was one hundred percent sure of the last statement, “Okay, I’ll go.”

There was feminine whispering, “Alright, well I’ll call you later.”

Then a masculine moan, “Brett, you cool?”

“Oh, uhm, yeah, I just have my hands full, if you know what I mean.”

Caleb laughed and hung up as he got to his bike. He thought his cherry red Harley belonged on the front page of some magazine, and he knew exactly which lovely lady he’d like to see sprawled across it. He jumped on and started the engine, literally riding into the sunset when a raindrop fell on his cheek.

Macy almost dropped the candle when she heard the thunder rolling around.

“Fuck you, Thor,” she muttered, pulling apart the braid her hair was in. She grabbed the mug of warm coffee and made her way towards her bedroom, when her doorbell rang. She sighed because she was simply too lazy to go back down the stairs, thinking it was her next door neighbor, Leighton, she slowly started down the the hallway.

Then there was a knock, “I’m coming!”

Macy caught a large figure in the shadows of the thin material of the curtains, she silently sent a thank you to her contractor for installing a screen door. Setting her mug down on the side table, she slowly opened the door to something equally as unnerving as a thief.

Caleb Walker stood in her doorway, drenched, looking miserable, but sexy as ever. He wasn’t the man little girls were taught to dream of, far from the knight on the white charger. He seemed more like

a dark prince, a lonely man living in shadows of his own life.

Macy studied his dripping black hair, his figure was imposing, but she didn't feel threatened. There was a certain silent steadiness to his presence that seemed alluring to her. Lightning hit the darkness behind him, momentarily lighting up his beautifully rugged face.

"Uh, hi," she said, and realized it sounded more like a question than a greeting.

His lips had a ghost of a smile, "Hello."

His unexpected appearance had stunned her, "I don't mean to sound rude, or relentless, but, what are you doing here?"

He chuckled softly and held out his hand, "This."

She looked down at his hand. There was a piece of wet paper in his hands. The ink was runny and the words blurred, but she made out the typed letters. That's right, her AD. Her old tenant had left to Japan for some computer job.

Then she noticed the small scars on the palm of his hand, white, small, barely-there scars. She must've been intently staring because he shut his hands and set them at his sides.

"Right, the guest house," she said, looking up at him.

"Yes," he said, looking down at her. Geeze, he was tall.

"You're soaked, you really should come in," the words were out before she a chance to process them.

His blue eyes shined, "I really shouldn't, it's late, I wouldn't want to damage the floors.

The rain picked up again, and she looked up at him, sporting an 'I told you so' look. She laughed softly when he stepped inside beside her. Closing the door, she turned towards his body, that was being illuminated by the candles. There should've been nothing striking about blue jeans and a grey sweater, but when they were wrapped around a body like Caleb's, the rules had suddenly changed.

"Anything to drink," she offered, walking towards the kitchen, "Coffee, beer, water?"

"Coffee, please," he said, following her.

“Cream and sugar?”

He blinked, “No thank you, just black.”

She reached for mug, “Where are you staying now?”

“Portman’s.”

“Oh, that hotel up on Alaskan?”

“Exactly that one.”

“And you don’t like it?”

Caleb sighed, and gestured towards the chair, as if to ask he was able to sit there. She nodded and turned around to grab a mug from the cupboard.

He looked around the kitchen, light woods, big windows and silver appliances made the space appear large. The space seemed very open to him. He studied her profile, her legs, her body, being lit up by candles. The flicker of the flame danced across her warm skin. Her legs were muscular in her black spandex shorts, her hair was so dark, it appeared black, falling in soft raven rivulets to her waist. Her light blue hoodie swallowed her upper body, but he knew what she was hiding. Even if she was on the petite side, no one could deny the fact that Macy Cunningham had a nice rack.

“It’s beautiful, but I’d rather have a place to myself, space to call mine,” he said, wrapping his long fingers around the mug.

“Privacy,” she whispered, handing him a gray mug.

He took a drink of his coffee, letting it’s bitter and delicious warmth run down his throat, “I’m a very private man, Ms. Cunningham.”

“I have no doubts that you are.”

He looked up into her piercing green eyes, momentarily stunned by the depth of color. He had never felt the obligation to study a woman’s details, he was never enticed to just sit and admire simple beauty, but something about this woman sitting in front of him made him want to break all his rules.

There was an Air Force ensigna on the handle.

“I don’t suppose you were Air Force,” he murmured, letting his thumb run over the figure.

She sighed softly, “No, I was not, my father was.”

“Was?”

Her lashes fluttered, “He passed, about six years ago.”

Guilt unraveled in his body, “I apologize, I had no intentions of that.”

“Absolutely nothing to be sorry for,” she raised a eyebrow slightly, “We should probably discuss the property.”

“Of course,” he murmured, running a hand through his damp hair.

She stood, retrieved a manila folder from a drawer, and sauntered back to her seat.

“It’s a single story house. Two rooms and one and half bathrooms. I just had the lighting and appliances updated, so you shouldn’t have any problems,” she paused to look up at him, “The walls were just painted, so you could move in as early as tomorrow morning.”

She pointed at one of the clauses in the contract, “Rent is due by the fifth. Furnishings are included, you can choose to redecorate however you’d like though.”

He looked at her lips, mesmerized by the way her pouty lips formed every word that escaped her mouth, “Where do I sign?”

She looked up at him, “You’re taking it?”

He blinked at her, “Gladly.”

After he signed the paperwork, he stood and walked to sink and washed his mug.

He turned at saw Macy towards him, her mouth slightly agape, “I have never seen a man house trained that well.”

Caleb wasn’t one for laughing often, but she had a quirky sense of humor, and he couldn’t resist the

urge to laugh. The lights had switched on in the house, breaking the trance they were both held in, but the thunderous roars of the storm were still raging on.

“I should get going,” he said, his eyes dimming once more, “Thank you, for the hospitality and the property. It’s been a pleasure.”

He started to walk out when Macy followed suit. Thunder and rain was crashing around them, lightning illuminating the darkness of the woods surrounding for brief moments. She couldn’t let him leave in this weather, she hardly knew the man, but she felt a sudden sense of protection.

Before she filtered her thoughts, she reached out to touch his arm, “It’s not safe for your car in this weather, you shouldn’t drive.”

He turned to face her, “I don’t have a car.”

She gasped, “You walked here?”

He laughed at the comment, causing his beautiful eyes to crinkle at the corners, “No, I have a motorcycle.”

It was official, Caleb was the definition of every woman’s bad boy fantasy, “That’s even more dangerous.”

“I can’t stay here, I wouldn’t want to intrude your home,” he said, his eyes shining.

She sighed, “I would feel immensely at fault if tomorrow morning I’d see you or your bike in the Seattle Times.”

He felt his lips twitch up, “You’d be willing to take in a man you hardly know for the sake of your conscious?”

Her nose scrunched up, “Is that bad?”

He studied her face for a moment, taking in every detail. Switching from a man to a soldier, an observer, taking mental notes of every aspect, every groove, every point of this flawless face. Her emerald green eyes, shining in light, the small scar on her bottom lip, the faint freckles on her nose, her dark eyebrows. The cupid’s bow below her button nose.

“Not bad at all,” he whispered.

She smiled at him, making his heart swell, "The guest room is this way."

Follow behind her down the hall, he studied the lay out of the house. The pale blue walls, the door to each room. He didn't mean to intake every detail, this is who he was, this is who he was made to be.

She switched on the lights to a room with a medium sized bed in the middle of it. The the comforter was white and fluffy, mounted with several pillows. The walls were covered in black book shelves, from the floor to the cieling. He walked over to one shelf and traced the spines with his finger tips.

He turned to her, "Some of these aren't in English."

She smiled at him, walking towards his body, "You're right."

Never in his life was he enticed as he was now, studying the face of a goddess. He felt the walls he had spent years building around his heart shake, he felt guilt creep in on him. He felt the memories of Casey ease their way back into his mind. He had wanted to fall in love, get married, even have kids, but that's not a life he could choose any longer. His hands closed and gripped at each other, feeling the rises of skin there. The scars were a constant reminder of what he'd lost nine years ago, of what he let go.

The mask he wore to hide lowered, "Is it possible to use your washer?"

The smile fell from her beautiful face, "Yeah, sure, of course."

She turned towards the door, "The washroom is down the hall, first door on the left. Detergent and all that is in the big cabinet by window."

Caleb looked odd, he seemed at a loss, "Thank you."

She forced a smile, "No problem."

"Goodnight, Macy," he said, his voice becoming cold again, distant.

"Goodnight, Caleb," she said, shutting the door.