

Running into Coverage Ch. 04

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A heated night and the walk of shame

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Who doesn't know (or love) a walk of shame...I do, I DO! Estragon, you know where we stand. You are a godsend, and know football way more than I do. The shame! As always, your thoughts, comments and feedback is always appreciated. Enjoy M **** Sleep crusted at the corners of his eyes; they burned as he rubbed them. Yawning, Marcus looked around and for a moment forgot where he was. Glancing to the side where his alarm clock sat on the dresser, he was surprised to see a shoe instead. Instead of a glass trophy placed behind it, there was a picture frame. Reality came crashing at him as he realized that he was not at his own home, and this definitely was not his bedroom. The last thing he could remember was.... From the other side of the bed, the sheets shifted. Up until that point, Marcus had not realized he had been chilled since all of the fabric was covering the small sleeping form next to him. Reaching for a corner of the blanket, he tugged. Hadley twisted in her sleep to face Marcus; a smile crept over his face as he watched her sleep with the sheets tangled around her. His hand itched to rest against her hip, but fully knew she would give him ten kinds of hell for even trying. He still couldn't believe the turn of events with her earlier that evening. When they had been in the bar, something passed between them apart from the drinks and they each gave up denying their sexual attraction. Marcus had wanted Hadley from the beginning, he didn't know why, but when she played with his fingers without anyone noticing, he knew she was finally willing to go through with it. And was he ever glad she was. She had given everything she had and it was one of the better nights he had with a woman in a long time. He couldn't remember feeling such raw energy that was as open and unabashed. With a wriggle of her nose, Hadley stretched out a leg and bumped it into Marcus' thigh. He gave an 'oof' of surprise causing her to wake from sleep lazily. "Wimp." Her voice was heavy and deep from the rest. Raising a brow that was hidden by the darkness, he answered in a quieted tone. "Bed-hog." Clutching the sheet that she had stolen at some point during the late hours, she sat upright and looked around the bed. Taking in Marcus, who had pulled the ratty comforter up to cover his legs, she laughed. The sound brought warmth into his chilled body. Untangling the sheet, she covered up Marcus so that he could warm up and stay comfortable. "Sorry about that, I don't share well with others." Marcus sat up a little and leaned on his elbows facing Hadley. "You don't have to share, I can be a mattress. You need a clock in this room." He was greeted with a lethargic snort. "I have one, it's on my side. It's..." She stretched her body over the

side of the bed, Marcus would have loved raising the sheet to watch as she moved. He felt like a pervert. A pervert that needed to stay on his side of the bed and lift up his knees as heat started to travel down his body. Regardless of what they had shared not long ago, a voice in the back of his head told him she was not the cuddling type. She may have been every inch of a woman, but she was also a champion at that. “Four-thirty. I didn’t set my alarm, what time do you need?” “We don’t have practice so I can sleep in. Don’t you have a shift?” Hitting the buttons, she made sure the alarm wouldn’t go off at the typical five and set it for herself. “It’s not until nine.” Hadley turned to face him, a questioning smirk on her face. “Did you just check me out?” “No.” “You’re lying. You just did!” Moving quickly, he covered her mouth with a free hand. “Shhh! You’re going to wake your roommate.” Hadley batted off his hands. “She’s already awake, because she’s crazy . Don’t dodge the question, Marcus Jennings.” “If the goods are offered, I’ll look. Unfortunately for me, the sheet blocked my view.” The evil eye she had been known for with previous boyfriends and her family, faltered. Somehow this smooth-talking, over-confident man had weaseled his way into her very guarded heart and that made her incredibly nervous. “Thank god. I seriously doubt my ass meets your expectations after your lady friends of the world.” “Forget it.” “What do you mean forget it?” Hadley turned to lie back in the sheets and faced Marcus. “There’s no way in hell I’m answering that, or even saying a word. I’m a guy, but I’m not stupid. If you want a compliment, I’ll be the first to say one. But comparing is not happening.” “You don’t have to compare anything; I’m only speaking the truth.” Hadley lifted a brow that dared him to comment. Clucking his tongue, Marcus blew out a breath of air and knew she was fishing for a response from him. “Why put yourself down so hard?” Absentmindedly he reached around to grab her behind as she was facing him. “Your ass could probably beat a few people I know.” Hadley smacked his chest and laughed at the wounded look in his eyes. “You are such a creep!” The bed shook as he laughed. “An enthusiast, maybe. But not a creep.” “I don’t know if I should laugh or kick you out.” “Laugh, sleep and then kick me out.” A yawn escaped her lips as exhaustion caught up with her. Marcus pulled the sheets up to cover both of them, making sure to rake his fingers lightly up her thigh. “Oh, fine. But stay over there on your side.” “Somehow I don’t think that’s going to happen.” For a short while, they continued to bicker back and forth playfully until Marcus had enough and leaned in for another taste. Hadley hummed softly against his lips and gave in to the powerful craving for him. Rather than moving as they did before, their thrusts were slowed as they indulged on deep strokes and intoxicating kisses. Completely worn out afterward, Marcus drifted off to sleep first. Hadley rolled to her back and tried to regain her emotions before getting ahead of herself. She chose to sleep with him, as he did with her. Right now he was in her bed, tomorrow he may be in someone else’s but for now—she was okay with the way things were. Or at least she told herself that. As she curled her legs up for warmth, her knee lightly rested next to his hand. He seemed to be a deep sleeper from his heavier breathing, but fidgeted his thumb against her skin, making her wonder what he was dreaming about. The light tapping felt timed, as if he was nervously waiting for something. The movements stilled for a minute while his finger lifted away from her skin. Holding her breath, she prayed to god that she didn’t wake him again. Her luck kept on as he blew out a gust of air and brushed his thumb against her knee. A slow smile spread across her face as she closed her eyes. He was probably

dreaming about football. **** By six thirty his internal clock went off, jostling Marcus in the bed. He nearly fell out of it trying to stay still or stay on, since Hadley had nearly taken up all the mattress. Gathering up his scattered clothes from the ground, he dressed quickly while keeping his eyes on her. The sheets were a tangled mess around her legs, her bright purple painted toenails peeking through one end. Before he slipped out of the room, Marcus lifted the comforter and covered her. The door squeaked as he shut it, and just as he was at the front room a small voice startled him. "Busted." Caitlin, was curled up on the couch wrapped up in several flannel blankets. Her coarse hair sticking up in every which direction. "Morning to you too." Marcus ruffled his own hair, knowing he was about to leave without so much as a glance at his appearance. "I'm glad that someone had a good night." The air was awkward and he wanted nothing more than to get the hell out, instead of having a heart to heart. "It was okay. You really can come out every once in a while, instead of being cooped up in here all of the time." Marcus reached for the handle of the front door and opened it. In a wistful tone, she spoke as if he talked of a fantasy. "Someday. You might want to dampen your hair a bit; it looks like you barely survived a tornado. Or Hadley." Leaning down by the mirror in the entranceway he frowned at his appearance but figured he'd rather get out of the apartment than fix his bed tousled hair. Caitlin laughed as he shrugged his shoulders. "It'll do. See you later." Walking out of the apartment complex and over to his SUV, all memories came rushing back from the time at O State when he had spent the night at a girlfriend's house by accident. He remembered sneaking out of her room and almost got all of the way out when one of the housemates handed him a sock he'd tossed on a stair landing in getting to the girl's room. Walking out of Hadley's apartment just then, that same walk-of-shame feeling crept up the minute he heard Caitlin's eerie voice. It shouldn't have surprised him to see her on the couch, and he tried thinking the best of her. Often times he would drop Hadley off and Caitlin would be by the window. She seemed like a nice girl, but was highly reserved or just plain shy. From talking with Hadley, he knew the girls got along but definitely kept to their own ways. That was probably Hadley's doing, with having her own art studio and being as independent as she was. She didn't know how to really let people in. Last night he saw a whole new side of her and wanted to explore it. Little by little, he was breaking through this tough little artist and sooner or later she would see why. Feeling better about the morning, as he got to his SUV and frowned immediately. Perfectly nestled beneath the wiper blades was an orange envelope with the insignia for the city of Chicago. With great annoyance he grabbed the paper to check the damage. Caught up in desire, he hadn't paid for the parking spot and sure enough was being fined nearly seventy dollars. Tossing his jacket on the passenger seat, he sat down and turned over the ignition. Not even a parking ticket could take away from his good mood. Not for a second. Instead, he took out his phone and started to text Hadley, completely disregarding the horn honking Accord waiting for the spot he was currently resting in. Your roommate is weird. The next walk of shame is from my house. Waving his hands, knowing the idiot in the car behind couldn't see through the heavy tinted glass, he maneuvered the vehicle out and made his way back to his condo. The team may have an off day, but there were slips in his follow through and he needed to get to work on tightening up his tactics. The next game was against Dallas and he didn't intend on being a repeat offender, missing a pass that couldn't afford to

be missed. Last night he had lost nine yards which could have cost the game; luckily he pulled through and got back on track in the third. Despite the team being second in the division, he was playing like a minor athlete. His timing was off and the coaches knew it. When Gabe shouted at him in the fourth to snap out of it and get back in the game, he couldn't figure what was causing him to fumble balls and give away completions. Earlier in the week, he had gone over to Gabe and Samantha's for dinner. Mainly he had been there so he could get more tips from Gabe outside of the practice fields. The two had spent hours sitting on the couch arguing about his zone coverage and how he had not been on the same page as Joey Seton lately. He remembered it all too well as Samantha piped up from her paperwork at the kitchen table. "Marcus, you do seem different out there. What's up? Or maybe I shouldn't ask." "Nothing's going on. There's a problem, I'm working on it, end of story." Gabe wouldn't let him get away with such casual candor. "That's a bullshit answer. I'll tell you exactly what's going on. You've got your head in your ass and have been avoiding Seton. We're four games in. It's a new season, who cares what happened last year. When you guys start communicating and listening to each other, everything will work and you'll stop playing like you need to be benched. That's the end of the story." "What the fuck gives, man? We run through the plays beforehand." "Then get your feet in fucking order, and stop expecting the ball to come to you at the same spot on the field. Each move is a lifeline, listen to the game." "There is too much testosterone in this room. Marcus, I love you but Gabe has a point." "I give up. Everyone has an opinion on this." "I'm not everyone. Besides, mine doesn't count. Listen to what Gabe is saying it makes sense. How can you play effectively if you're going into a game blindly? Right?" Gabe looked up at Samantha as she gathered all of her papers to move into their bedroom for a little peace and quiet. Or to get away from all of their obscenities as they argued. "Sweetheart, you don't have to leave." She waved a hand at him, "its fine. You guys have a lot to figure out, and my students need reports graded correctly. I doodled a football, so it must be a sign to get out of here for a bit." Walking over to the men on the couch, she kissed Gabe, then left to finish her work. Her words had struck a chord and stayed in every thought since that night. For the practices he intended to have some of the guys change up the routines and throw high and low balls so he could work on his motions. Before everything, he planned on sitting down with Joey to figure out the best way they could keep working together. They had been a good team before, there was no reason they couldn't make a seamless one again. Confidence raced through him and he found himself getting excited to get to the practice fields. Hopeful to turn his game around, Marcus knew the actions that needed to be taken and it started with the quarterback. There were three days until the game against Washington; that was more than enough time to pull it together. **** The coffee shop had been chaotic for each of her shifts. Luckily Hadley had managed to sneak away a few hours each night to the studio and keep up with some of her canvases. One of her clients in New York had sent her an email with the descriptions of what they wanted, so she had been sketching with a charcoal pencil as a slow start. Hours had gone by but one of the canvases had remained bare. It wasn't until the banging of hammers from the construction site down the street broke through her concentration. Her fingers moved effortlessly and guided the pencil as she etched in several abstract lines. To the beat of the banging and clanking of metal, lines turned into the

shapes, which formed the outline of what she would paint over. The client had requested something urban, so it seemed fitting that Hadley's inspiration was motivated by the construction. By Saturday evening, she was anxious to start painting to give it a bold and almost masculine appeal. From what she could tell from the emails that had been going back and forth between them, the client wanted something to represent strength and success. His words were short but very pointed, giving her bullet points of what he expected. He was precise and openly disagreed with some of her suggestions. Nothing scared her, and rather than feeling stressed or pressured, she reveled in the request. Determination to succeed for the client consumed her and flooded the canvas. Creative forces sped through her veins, urging her hands to move. As she stood staring at the canvas resting on the easel, her head cocked to the side. Distinctly, Hadley recalled the man instructing her on which colors she should use. They went against everything that she had sketched. He wanted black and silver, whereas now that she had created a portion of the piece, she knew otherwise. With fingers tingling at her sides, she dipped one in a rich green and started to layer it on. Skin roaming the canvas, the cool paint lightly coating over the etched lines. Something deep inside her told her to start with the green. She would cover it up with a coat of black, or maybe even a deep purple, but the piece needed to begin with the green. Her eyes glazed and she soon became possessed by the power of her passion. Flecks of aluminum were glued in the corners, small slivers of glass scattered throughout. Heavy smears of paint pulling everything together. Minutes turned into hours and night became morning. A faint sound interrupted her hypnotic trance. Grabbing a towel, she wiped her hands clean as best as she could and reached for the phone. There were numerous calls and several missed messages. Scrolling through it all, she stopped at a message from Marcus. Since their night together, they had talked on the phone but had not had a chance to see each other. Between practices and then flying out for a game that weekend, and her irregular schedule, a phone call was all they could work in. His message brought a smile to her face; it was simple and stupid but made her body itch to be around him again. Realizing that it was Sunday, she was dumbfounded that he had considered her on a game day. A thought replayed in her head but she couldn't bring herself to phone Sam and see if they could watch the game together. A nagging feeling irritated her that she even considered watching, but Hadley couldn't fight her feelings all of the time when it came to Marcus. He had become someone she looked forward in talking to, and since their night together she definitely was anxious for him. But even though she wanted to open herself up to the idea of him, there was so much more to everything than she cared to admit. Ever since they had met, something caught fire within her and as she began each new painting she was fueled with inspiration. On Wednesday, she was scheduled to present one of the latest pieces at a gallery and couldn't have been more excited. It was her first real showing in Chicago and was unsure how her art would come across. Hadley was confident in the work but had visited many galleries since moving, and nothing she'd seen made a perfect match. The appointment could go either way, so she was mentally preparing for that by keeping her expectations very low. As the paint dried she figured a distraction was needed, and what could be better than Marcus on a television screen. Flipping the switch of the smaller fan, Hadley set the speed and made up her mind to sit in a bar with the rest of the Chicagoans and become a fan. **** The Cougars took down the

Cowboys, and remained second in the division as they rode into the sixth week of the season. Hard work paid off, and though he didn't outrun for a touchdown, Marcus did complete several passes and gained important yardage. All of the guys were grateful for the win, but kept calm on the late night flight back to Chicago. The plane had just landed and was waiting to pull into the gate in order for the team to get out. Marcus sat shaking his ankle impatiently, waiting to get out so that he could call Hadley without having his conversation overheard. While in the locker room after the game, he saw a text from her. She had taken a picture of a beer and sent it to him with a message to follow that she was indeed watching the game. A good confident feeling came over him as she warmed up to his job. He sent a message back to her, to which she immediately responded. They had gone back and forth up until the minute the team boarded the plane. The last message he sent was more of a question. Coming in late from the flight, practice would be delayed until mid-afternoon. She had mentioned that she didn't have a shift but was getting her piece ready to present at the gallery. They hadn't seen each other for a week and he was hungry for her. The phone remained blank and he scrolled through the messages trying to backtrack to see where he went wrong. As the front doors opened and the players started to exit, Marcus took a deep breath and put the phone in the breast pocket of his suit. Shaking his head, he figured he crossed the line and got ahead of himself with her. All of the players' bags lay in a heap near the gate, as he reached for his own loneliness curled through him. Sharing a room with Velesquez for the past two days, was definitely nothing but business. Defeat washed over him as the SUV coasted along the Kennedy. Just as he got within the city limits, the front of his phone lit up. He'd forgotten to turn the ringer back on after the flight and glanced down only to release his foot from the gas as Hadley's name appeared. Marcus immediately grabbed the phone and answered. "Hello?" "Are you back in town yet?" "Yeah, I'm almost home. I figured you fell asleep or something." He tried to keep his demeanor cool to see how she would react. "I couldn't sleep. I was wondering if you might possibly be driving along Division on your way home." The corner of his mouth kicked up, Division was nowhere near his condo. Glancing up at the exit signs on the freeway, he figured he had a mile to go in order to get off on North and do a drive by Hadley's apartment. "I think I have something to drop off right around there, so I would be in the neighborhood." "What if you had something to pick up?" Her statement threw him off and he repeated it to himself making sure he heard her right. "Slumber party?" He was greeted with the familiar laugh that relaxed him to the core. "If you're lucky, I'll paint your nails." This time it was he who snorted. "Whatever happened to showering together or sharing a hot bath?" "This isn't a porno, it's a sleepover!" "Well I sure as hell don't want you painting my nails." He was brimming with mock annoyance. Hadley couldn't hide the eruption of giggles as they escaped her mouth. "I don't want to paint your nails, Marcus." The truck made its way up Division and turned off her side street. "Then what exactly do you want?" "Your bed." It was close to two in the morning and she sounded more awake than she did at noon. The corner of his mouth twitched, as if he could possibly deny her let alone deny himself getting drunk on her body. No sooner did he pull up to her apartment complex than he found her standing on the street waiting for him to get her. As she climbed up into the cab, Marcus was about to lean over and kiss her but came up short when she crawled over and kissed him hard. He returned her kiss with fervent

passion. Holding her tightly, he groaned into her mouth. Hadley was the first to pull away from their kiss. Resting her forehead against his, she whispered to him. "This has been the longest week, ever." Marcus squeezed her tightly until she squealed with a sort of giddy excitement. "I see you packed light." She nodded at his reference to her bag. "Of course. It doesn't take much to make fabulous happen." All he could do was laugh and kiss her before she moved to sit in the passenger seat. A telephone could only go so far with Hadley's personality, and being so close made him realize just how much he missed her. The roads were completely cleared apart from the occasional police car patrolling the neighborhoods. Shortly after getting her, they pulled into the underground lot and found themselves heading up to his condo. Hadley clutched her bag as they rode the elevator in silence. It wasn't as if she were nervous, because fear had nothing to do with the constant buzz her body had been feeling ever since the previous week they were together. Even as they spoke on the phone, heat exploded within her and she ached to feel him inside her again. She ached to be close with him; it was something that terrified her, and still reeled her in regardless of the consequences. The ride up in the elevator, felt like an eternity. Glancing up to see which floor they were passing, Marcus nearly groaned in protest as they were lifted above the third floor. Next to him, Hadley felt the same frustrations and looked up into his face searchingly. Wanting nothing more than claiming her, he moved her bag to the floor. Marcus leaned down and pressed Hadley against the side of the elevator as they continued moving up. He was impatient and didn't want to wait any longer, their mouths acting on their own mission to devour each other. Hadley wrapped her arms around his shoulders; because of their height differences, he stretched up taking her with him. The skirt restricted her from wrapping her legs around his waist so she settled for letting them dangle where she was able to feel his steely erection press against her middle. A burning heat rippled through her, claiming every ounce of her judgment. With skill and precision, his tongue glided across hers and was still aggressive, never giving her time to take control. Thrusting a knee in between her thighs to hold her up, he felt her heat through his dress pants. Moving a hand lower, he kneaded her bottom and started to lift the short skirt. The elevator rocked as it came to a stop; Marcus issued a cruel curse and lowered Hadley so she could stand. Collecting her bag, she followed him to the entrance of his condo. The hallway was quiet in the early hours of the morning but she knew that inside his walls, they would be far from quiet and drip with sex. Following her inside, Marcus took the bag and tossed it in a corner. Hadley sunk her fingers into his arm and followed him as he walked backwards toward his room, stopping every other step to pull her forward and tease her with his tongue. Moaning with every kiss, she laughed as he dodged a side table. "We don't have to worry about roommates here." Releasing the grip on him, she floated into the spacious room, kicking off her ankle booties. "Definitely not." Stripping off his dress shirt, his voice dropped to a husky tone as he saw Hadley unbuttoning her jean skirt. "I kind of had my heart set on a manicure." Her fingers stilled on the button tab, as her entire body began to shake from laughter. Risking a glance at him, she saw his brilliant blue eyes glimmering with mischief. Sauntering over, Hadley accepted his hand as it was offered. Marcus pressed each finger against his plush lips, bringing weakness to her knees. Sitting on the edge of the bed, Hadley stepped in between his splayed thighs and began exploring his mouth with open

curiosity. The skirt remained unbuttoned and as their tongues danced to a symphony of pleasure, the open fabric brushing the skin on the back of his hand, bringing some sense back to him. With her hands running through his hair, he worked the zipper and lowered the fabric down her thin legs. The room was filled with their heavy breathing and deep groans for each other. Being free of her skirt, Hadley sagged against Marcus. She felt high with an urgent need for him and felt no shame as his own body trembled. Slowly she dipped her lips to his, when he leaned forward she leaned back, eyes fluttering close when she ran her tongue along his lower lip to nibble on the moist flesh. The instant he felt her nibble, the pressure of his arousal broke through. He wanted her, and needed to have her right then. Leaning back into the bed, Marcus pulled Hadley on top of him. She wriggled to the side as his hands groped her. Both still not completely undressed, Marcus laughed at their own rush in getting on the bed. Hadley dropped her hands and let them roam over the smooth skin of his chest. The pads of her fingers ran over his firm nipples, only to drop her lips and rake her tongue across each of them following her map of sensual travels. Marcus reached for any part of her that was closest until she scooted away. Wondering why she stopped he looked up and could have died right there. Somewhere in her exploration, Hadley had shed her shirt and was leaning above him on hands and knees. His eyes fought the lust filled glaze as he took in her bright pink bra and grey boy shorts. Without thinking, he raised a hand and brought it to the cotton of the briefs, a finger slipping beyond the elastic band. Hadley dropped low and kissed the corner of his mouth. She took immense pleasure in playing with his mouth while his hands seemed to roam her lower half. As she delved for a taste, he would let her feast on his mouth. When she came up for air, he would stroke her breathless with the light touch of his finger on her most sensitive spots. Her body quivered with need and began to perspire from the excitement. Letting her have enough fun, Marcus wanted to please her as much as she had pleased him. He was about to explode from her titillating kisses. His chest heaved and body shook from holding back, he managed to roll over her body and relished in her whimper of frustration. Nipping the sensitive skin of her ear, he whispered devilishly to her, "It's my turn to play." And did he ever want to play. Hadley moaned at his words and succumbed to the very skilled caresses of his hands. "Should I start here?" Marcus licked along her collarbone while his thumb traced her jaw. "Or down here?" Hadley arched into his hard body as he got to her breasts and dropped little love bites over the firm mounds. For being as small as she was, it was often joked that she missed puberty and never grew into her own cup size. Marcus indulged on her flesh and made her feel things about herself she had never before. Before she would have hidden behind a bra during sex, now with him, she wanted him to feast on all she offered. Unhooking her bra, he released the small mounds and brought his lips to them immediately. Out of a raging impulse, Hadley reached down and ran her fingers through his thick hair as she started to lose control. Her skin was dewy with need and he lost himself in the sweet taste of it all as his mouth closed over a tight bud. Hadley squirmed beneath him as Marcus suckled hard, almost forgetting what he wanted to do most. Releasing her breast, he moved further down the bed and lifted her legs up to his shoulders so that he could remove her panties. If the timing was different, he would have laughed at the garment but desire had gripped him and he said to hell with fun and games. The underwear made a 'swoosh' as he flung it across the

room without caring where it landed. Hadley's eyes were as dark as the late night skies, and as he looked down at her a crooked smile crept up at the corner of her swollen lips. Her legs fell to the bed but he was as quick as on the field and moved in between them, kissing her inner thighs. His tongue ran a short path up to her velvety core and when he dropped his mouth to claim her, she cried out in ecstasy. Short frenzied pants escaped her lips as Marcus tortured her in the sweetest way. Her legs shook while her belly contracted. It was all too much for her with his deliciously brutal assault. Through his devils play she babbled nonsense and gripped his hair, the forceful pull taking his breath away. "Don't stop! Oh please, don't stop...." As her voice trailed and the constant flutter of her muscles, he knew she was close. With his tongue feasting on her rich nectar, a finger delicately stroked her swollen folds. Hadley's hips buckled and she cried out as an orgasm consumed her. Without giving her time to calm down, Marcus settled his weight between her thighs and slid into her welcoming body with a smooth thrust. They both groaned together at the sensation. Wrapping her legs around him, it encouraged him to angle deep. Together they created a tempo that went back and forth between each of their needs. He ached to drive deep so he gripped her bottom to find a perfect spot and she grappled his back with her nails practically drawing blood with each of her aftershocks. With her last set, her muscles were tugging him back in as he pulled out of her. The air was thick from his grunts and her wails. With a guttural moan, he looked down into her eyes that had fluttered shut. Missing their closeness Hadley opened them to see a confused look on his face, without thinking she blinked and reached for his cheek. Marcus turned his face into her palm and surrendered himself in the sea of her body and the welcoming of her eyes. Thrusting erratically, time stopped as they shattered together. Crying out as one, Marcus gripped her hip and spilled himself inside of her. They remained still for several long moments before he had enough presence of mind to shift his weight off of her. Sweat clung to their skin, the moment of silence was broken by Hadley's gentle laugh. Marcus looked over at her through half-slumberous eyes. "What's so funny?" Words escaped her because she was laughing too hard. Following her gaze, Marcus looked over to the nightstand and began to fall into laughter with her. Dangling off of the Offensive Rookie of the Year award were the grey panties. ****