

# Running into Coverage Ch.3.5

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*Marcus and Hadley take it to the next level*

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Chapter Three cont'd The roaring cheers from the crowd filled Pendicon Field and echoed down the empty streets in Rockford. Every bar was full as the Cougars took on St. Louis for a sold out game. Marcus stood on the field, his muscles twitching and ready to go the minute the ball turned over. The game was well into the second quarter, they were up by seven but were in the Rams' zone. His eyes darted back and forth as the ball glided through the air and was taken another four yards closer to their goal. The defense had been magnetic but the Rams seemed to be a step ahead of them. Coaches were screaming into their headsets as other players around him were studying up on the next set of plays that could be used. Tapping his cleat on the grass, Joey Seton the quarterback came up to him. "We need to break zone coverage, when we get out there I'm throwing to you. I need you to try and run twelve then five and goal. We need another fucking touchdown to get them off of our backs." Marcus looked up onto the field, nodding his head. Velesquez rushed the quarterback for the Saints as his hand went back, and sacked him; the ball tumbled out of his hand. Both teams were flinging themselves to gain possession. The whistle blew. As each man gestured that his team had the ball, the outcome lay in the ref's unpacking of the scrum. The cheers of the stadium stilled until the referee waved his hands in the direction of Rockford. He spoke into his microphone and announced the turnover. Screams and chants bellowed around the players and echoed in the sky. Snapping his helmet back on, he shouted back to Seton as they ran onto the field together. "Kill it, man!" The players lined up in shotgun formation. Seton shouted out the signal and Marcus started his route as he searched the field. He dodged a linebacker and ran the agreed five yards out. Seton spotted him exactly where he'd asked Marcus to be and pulled his arm back to throw. The outside linebacker came up from the side, forcing him to run to the side and delay the pass. Seton ran to the sideline, trying to find Marcus, who was running farther, avoiding the safety and creating an open spot. Seeing the gap and Marcus in it, Seton threw the ball hard just as he got hit hard from the behind by the Saints' three-hundred pound tackle. Adrenaline fueled him; Marcus caught sight of the ball and jumped up to complete the pass. His body angled up sharply, and in a short second he prayed to God to hold onto the ball. With a grace that confounded the crowd, he caught it and landed on his feet. Twisting awkwardly to avoid the impending tackle, he ran farther. Everyone in the stands rose to their feet as he ran closer to the goal line. The Saints' safety nearly caught up with him, but

Willhouse was right with him to protect his side and blocked for him. Marcus gasped as he ran faster through another gap, but out of the corner of his eye he saw Irving gaining on him. Running faster even, knowing exactly where he was as Irving lunged for him taking him down as he broke the plane, he held onto the ball and the whistle blew signaling the touchdown. The cheers exploded around, finally breaking through his concentration. Irving helped Marcus up then smacked his arm, "You run like a bitch, but that was a good one." Marcus nodded, then ran off to jump into the stands right behind the goal posts to celebrate. Several people touched his gear and helmet, it was a silly tradition that most of the players did. Falling back down, he ran to the benches where everyone around patted his back and congratulated him on the score. Marcus went over to Seton and the two smiled at each other. It was Seton who put the ball cap on Marcus' head. "That's what I'm talking about." High up in the stadium, Hadley turned to Samantha and couldn't hide her grin if she wanted too. "This is crazy." "I still can't believe it's taken you until mid-season to catch a game. It gets kind of rowdy." Even in the private box where they were watching the game with several coach's spouses, celebrations and cheering was going on. After her shift the day before, Hadley had gone to the studio but couldn't regain her focus. Her thoughts were stuck on Marcus, whom she hadn't heard from all day. Since they had been friends, she knew how he was the day before a game. Not as if she waited for him to call, but he explained to her that he kept to himself preparing, and catching a decent night's rest. Rather than painting, she phoned Sam and asked if the invitation was still on. "Mid-season or first game, it doesn't really matter. I'm busy too." "Give it up, Had." "Oh no, I'm not even defending this again! You made a good point, I'm not a huge sports fan, this was something new to try." Shaking her head, Samantha turned her attention back to the field as the players rushed off signaling half-time. "That is a very good point. I don't care what brought you, I'm just glad that you are here." Just before she left to meet at Sam's house, Hadley had sent Marcus a text message. Her fingers tingled as she hit the send button, but figured he would want to know that she was going to the game. He had given her a hard time the week before when he talked about a different game that she hadn't thought to watch. Mindlessly she pulled her phone out of her handbag and checked for any missed calls or texts for what seemed like the fiftieth time. The screen was blank—no calls from Marcus. Samantha glanced over and spoke low so the others in the room wouldn't hear her. "He's playing a game, Had. Did you let him know you were coming?" A light color filled her cheeks as she turned to face her friend. "I wasn't checking for just that. I'm waiting for an email with color suggestions." Samantha dropped her chin into the palm of her hand and waited for her friend to finally accept her feelings and open up a little bit. "Fine. Yes, Mom, I texted him to let him know I was coming. He never responded so I doubt he knows." "Don't worry about it, Gabe never answers his phone on a game day. Besides, Gabe does know you are here so maybe he will say something. Maybe not, I don't know what it's like in the locker room. Nor do I want to know!" "We're just friends, but I kind of wish I had said good luck to him. God I sound like such a tool." Patting her friend's knee, Samantha knew what she had meant. They sat there through the rest of halftime talking about other things. She didn't want to make Hadley open up if she didn't want to. By the end of the game, the Rams had managed to get a touchdown but fell behind by fourteen points. As the last of the crowd left the field, and the stadium workers began

the clean-up, the women began to rise and collect their belongings. A telephone call broke the rustling of their jackets. Samantha reached for her cell and answered immediately. Hadley moved back over to the glass to watch the cleanup as Sam congratulated Gabe on the win. The email she had been waiting for finally came through but she had yet to hear anything back from Marcus. Her conversation was brief, and Samantha came over to Hadley. "Gabe's about ready and will meet us at the restaurant. Are you ready?" Nodding, Hadley smiled over at Samantha. "Of course." Sensing a shift, Samantha walked over and tilted her head at Hadley. "Are you okay?" "Perfect, thank you for bringing me today." Samantha pulled her friend in for a hug and together they began walking down the corridor to leave the stadium. \*\*\*\* Below in the locker room, several of the guys were still shouting at each other in their towels. Others were making phone calls and putting together plans for going out and celebrating the victory. With the win, they were all granted a day off from practice on the next day. Marcus stood in front of the mirror and was ruffling gel into his already messy hair when Gabe walked into the room. As he made his way through, he congratulated everyone as he always did. Seeing Marcus, he moved over to talk to him quickly before leaving for the restaurant. Something that was a part of his own post-game traditions. "Good game, kid." Marcus blew out a frustrated breath, "It could have been better if I'd caught the last pass." "You caught two earlier ones and scored so that's all that matters. We won, you got a few points; all in all it was a good night." "Yeah, it was." "I've got to head out and meet Sam and Hadley for dinner, but wanted to congratulate you." Marcus turned to face Gabe, who was rubbing the back of his head. "Sam and Hadley?" "I figured you knew. Hadley came to the game today; she sat with Sam to keep her company since Ernie's wife is at home with the baby." Shaking his head, he tried to keep cool. "No, I didn't know anything." Leaving the area he went over to his locker and pulled out his phone, Gabe wasn't too far behind. Skimming through the messages, he saw the one left by Hadley earlier that morning. Sure enough, she let him know she would be there. "Where are you guys going to dinner?" Gabe was smart enough to know what he meant. "I'm supposed to meet them at an Italian place not too far, but I don't think they left yet." One of the guys shouted out to Marcus as he walked out of the locker room, reminding him to meet up with everyone at Brick for a drink. It would be swarming with fans but even he felt like celebrating. Instead of answering anyone, even Gabe who was by him, Marcus dialed Hadley. "Hello?" "Hey, I'm an ass and just got your message. I didn't know you came to the game." Marcus was greeted with a lofty snort, "it doesn't matter, it was a last minute decision. You were a little busy winning anyway." "It does matter. Are you still here?" "We're just about at the parking lots, why?" "A bunch of the guys are going out to celebrate the win, do you want to come?" There was a pause, Marcus thought she might have gone into a dead zone and lost coverage on her phone until she spoke. "Sure, where do you want to meet me?" Marcus told her to wait by the parking lot and said that he would walk with Gabe to meet them. As he ended the call and grabbed his coat, he finally looked at Gabe. "I'm stealing her so you can have the rest of the night with your fiancée." Gabe shook his head and whistled. He saw Samantha first and Gabe walked up to her. Hadley stood off to the side, taking in his clean appearance and nodded. "I'm not really dressed for a night out." "It doesn't matter." He wanted to reach for her hand as Gabe had done with Sam, but knew she would smack him if he tried. Instead

he drank in the sight of her and figured she looked more than appropriate for a night out. In the time he had known her, he'd never seen her in casual attire. Even for the game, she was wearing leggings and knee high boots. Her jacket was a stylized blazer covering a shimmery tunic, which was long enough to cover her backside. "Marcus, you'll have to drive her over to our house to pick up her car." He turned to Hadley who was buttoning up the jacket. "Is it okay if we do that first?" All she could do was nod at him. She didn't like how all of the sudden she was nervous around him. Breaking the spell, she said goodbyes to Gabe and Samantha and walked off toward the SUV. Music blared when the engine started up and Marcus quickly turned the volume down. They rode in silence back to collect her car, and as he drove behind her into the city he felt a whole new game was about to begin. Over the course of the forty minutes it took to get to her complex, he had calmed his nerves and was glad to be driving alone. After every game, he was always on edge. If the team lost he was irritable. If they won, he was quiet and thought over every play, dissecting his own movements. Tonight, he might have brought in two touchdowns, but there was still much work he needed to focus on. In the fourth quarter, he barely touched a pass which should have been easy, but it was intercepted and turned over. He parked the truck in front of a fire hydrant and waited for Hadley to park her car, not the best area but he knew she wouldn't be long. Sure enough, she came around the corner and climbed into the cab. "What does a touchdown feel like?" Marcus drove off in the direction of the bar and laughed at her question. He found himself relaxing as she was with him, and started talking about the game. Telling her about the high from scoring the first time and doing it again in the third, it all seemed comfortable. They pulled up to the restaurant, which had people lined up far outside the door. Marcus tipped the valet and held the door open for Hadley. As they walked through the cramped space, people congratulated him and shouted out. Some of the players called out to him from the back as they heard the noise at the front of the bar when they entered. Hadley walked in front of Marcus, who placed his hand to rest in the small of her back. Someone handed a shot to each of them as they got to the group. A few female onlookers shot disappointed looks to each other because Marcus was not alone. Feeling the rising tension in the air that was also burning in her belly, she raised her glass up and toasted the group. "Cheers for baseball!" All of the men laughed while she downed the liquor, several players wrapped around her for a hug. Somehow she became a welcomed friend to the entire group and Marcus couldn't have been happier. Drinks started flowing freely between everyone. Guys started to sneak away with a few of the newer guests who had walked up to the group. The initially busy crowd began to thin as the celebration went on beyond midnight. A cool buzz swept through Marcus and he turned to Hadley who had been having a conversation with Velesquez. She looked up at him and smiled brilliantly, reaching down she tugged at his fingers that were resting against the bar. The dim lights only accented the mischievous twinkle in the blue depths. He lifted a brow at her and leaned down, "You want to get out of here?" "Oh yeah." Alcohol propelled her response, but she had never felt so aware of him as she did that night. For the past month she had been telling herself repeatedly not to like him. As he stood next to her and his masculine scent swirled around her, she was doomed. Whenever they were close, they each snuck chances to touch each other. A brush of a wrist there, the tip of her boot on his calf. When he lightly rubbed her side,

she gave up the fight and said to hell with it. Mentally she told herself it wouldn't be a big deal, he probably had many women before. She wasn't a saint and had been with a few guys, but didn't have to fend them off on a daily basis. Fend them off, or put another notch on his bedpost. Shushing off her thoughts, she didn't care and was tired of deflecting her attraction to him. It felt like forever before the valet brought the SUV around. As he drove off into the direction of her house on habit, he reached over and started to run his hand up and down her thigh. Her breathing became raspy at his touch and heat exploded within her. Lucky for them, there was an available spot on the opposite side of the street where he was able to park. Shutting off the ignition, Marcus looked over at Hadley. Up until that point, they hadn't really spoken all evening. Reaching over, he cupped her cheek with his palm and searched her face for any sign of resistance. Or fear of her slapping him in his own. When she did neither, he leaned forward and brought his lips to hers. Fireworks blared in his ears, but it could have been coming from the sirens across the street. A heavy sensation filled his head as he was finally able to claim her mouth, which remained tightly closed. Tilting his head, he nibbled at her bottom lip coaxing it to open. Bringing her fingers to rest on his hands, they tightened as she gave into the light stroking of his tongue. Her mouth was warm and welcoming, a sound erupting between them. Not knowing whether it came from himself or her, they both pulled away to catch their breath. "I think we should go inside." His breath tickled her face. Not willing to let go just yet, she sucked on his lower lip before releasing him. "Okay." Even as they walked up to her apartment, and despite having him at a distance from her; Hadley felt as if he were right against her skin which was burning with want and need for him. Quietly they crept into the apartment, carefully trying to not wake her roommate. Her apartment was closer to Brick than his condo, and as she held a hand over her mouth while he nibbled her neck once inside of her bedroom he realized they really should have gone to his place. She quickly moved around him to turn on the light near her bed, and then faced him. "Are you sure?" He chuckled and moved closer, dropping his skilled fingers to the buttons on her jacket and flicked it open. "Yup. You?" Standing up on tip toes, she brought her arms up and around his shoulders. "Definitely." She pressed her lips against his and stole every ounce of his courage to keep going. His hands roamed her back and pressed her closer to feel the heat of him. The intensity of the kiss and the haze of the alcohol made Marcus to sit on the edge of the bed. Never releasing his mouth, Hadley crawled up and straddled his hips. Marcus' hands worked at her thighs as her hips moved against him, rocking against his arousal. A groan escaped his lips into her mouth and she held him tight. Pulling back she looked at him, her chest heaving. Her lips were swollen from his kisses and her cheeks rosy. She looked sexier than ever as she peered down at him. Marcus reached out and pushed her arms out of her jacket and slowly raised the shirt over her head. The free skin was hot to the touch and she shivered as his lips dropped down to taste her. Hadley's eyes fluttered close as Marcus licked a special trail from her collarbone down to the tops of her breasts. The undeniable pulse of his erection below her kept her body abuzz. His hands molded the soft skin tucked behind a frail layer of silk. Keeping her eyes closed, her body hummed with excitement and took her a minute to realize he had stopped. Curling her fingers around his bicep, she opened her eyes to see why he stopped. His eyes were concentrated on her breasts that he had exposed from her bra. Her lips

parted at his intent gaze, and she squirmed from the soft touch of his fingers at the slope of her breast. Looking up into her eyes, Hadley touched his lips with a finger. Playfully, he nipped her finger and ran a nail along her burning skin. Marcus shifted causing Hadley to roll over on the bed, while he stood up to shed his own clothes. Lifting up to her knees, she reached forward and helped raise the shirt. Taking his incredible body in with appreciation as every muscle rippled by his movements, her fingers trailed over the taut skin and stopped at the top of his pants. Dropping her gaze, her deft fingers took to the button and undid it. The zipper struggled as she lowered it over his powerful arousal, her hands stalling for a minute causing Marcus to groan from the growing pressure. With the zipper halfway down, Hadley surprised him by leaning forward and dropping her lips to the straining fabric beneath. With teeth clenched, he reached down to cup her head softly as she slowly unzipped and lowered the pants down his sturdy thighs. As the fabric dropped down to his ankles, she felt the trembling of his skin and risked a glance up to his lust filled face. He growled to her while still cupping her head, "I want you so bad." She stammered, "I know. I need you too." Marcus drew his boxers down and shucked them off with his pants. Hadley drew a shaky breath at the sight of his imposing arousal in front of her. Pushing her back against the bedding, he worked on removing the rest of her clothing. Lowering himself down and wanting to feel her smooth skin against his own, he started kissing her all over again. Small sounds escaping her lips as his hands kneaded a unique pattern against her side. Speaking against her open mouth, "You have to promise to be quiet." In a voice equally as strained as his own, she responded before stealing another kiss first. "Oh god, I can't. You feel too good." He pulled away and arched a powerful brow, daring her. Reaching down, she needed to touch him, feel the powerful strength of him. As her fingers wrapped around his pulsing arousal, he made his own sound of approval. "Be quiet, Marcus." From there, the two of them began playing a game scored by silence. Marcus would nibble a soft spot between her thighs, causing Hadley to hold her breath. She would turn the tables and lean over him, dropping her mouth on the thick sturdy strength of him to keep him hard and ready. Both sizzling with unabashed sexual appetites, but neither willing to break first. Feeling the need to sink into the heat of her body, Marcus crawled over Hadley and looked down into her eyes. She widened her legs to accept his muscular frame and smiled up. Slowly running a finger up along his side until she brought her whole hand to his face. "Please, Marcus. Oh, please." Not wanting to disappoint, he got ready to enter her, but something in the back of his mind registered. In their haste to get into her bed, he forgot an important question that could put a serious damper on their activities. "Fuck. I don't have a condom." Breathless, she looked up at him. Her hand grasping his hip urging him on. "It's taken care of, don't worry." Marcus' eyes widened, and for a second Hadley thought she felt a freight train pass through the bedroom. "What do you mean, taken care of?" Hadley pushed him off her and reached for the sheet to cover her nakedness. "Nevermind, this was obviously stupid to have started..." He silenced her with the swift stroking of his hand on her shoulder. "I get hit with paternity suits, Hadley. I want to be inside of you right now, but I need to know." Marcus dropped a kiss to the area that he had just touched on her shoulder blade. Whispering, she told him. "...I didn't think about that. Um, it's not a pill but something else that prevents pregnancy. Kind of like a condom that works for five years. Only, it's already in

me.” He took the sheet from her hands and slowly moved it back down. “So you can have sex without a condom?” “Yes, with a trusted partner.” A wicked smile broke out on his face, whispering he moved back to settle in between her legs. “Do you trust me?” She waited for a minute to respond, yes she did trust him but did he feel the same about her? “ Do you trust me? ” “I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t, Hadley.” He dallied with the swollen folds at the center of her being, Hadley bit her lips to hold back her scream of pleasure. Separating her silken sheath, he leaned down and kissed her while dipping a finger inside to test her. Her hips moved against him and she wrapped her arms back around his shoulders, bringing them closer together. Their tongues melded in an orgy of sin. She was slick and ready for him and without saying a word, he removed his fingers and guided his arousal into her smooth opening. She was so tight, but kept moving to get more of him inside of her. Tendons started to bunch in his neck from the pressure of holding back, giving her time to adjust to his size but she was having none of it. Gripping his back, she dug her nails into his backside and bit down on the skin in the crook of his neck. Marcus nearly groaned from the pain and sheer pleasure, but remembered their initial game of silence. Instead he gripped her hips angling deeper and drove hard into her. Her mouth opened to cry out, but closed at the wicked gleam in his eyes. Arching her back, she pressed her breasts into him and they began moving in a steady rhythm. What started slow quickly turned impatient with need, her muscles tingled and he thrust further into her. Overcome by the sensations, her body quivered and before she would have liked she gave up to an orgasm. More than anything she wanted to scream out, as he kept thrusting into her prolonging the immense shivering but he hadn’t issued a single noise and she wanted to beat him at their game. Lifting her knees up, he sun farther, sweat clung to his shoulders and covered his backside. With each thrust, her pelvic muscles milked him, tugging him back even as he drew so far out. Below him, her head thrashed to the side as she began to surrender once again to the overpowering shuddering. This time he wouldn’t send her alone. Perspiration trickled down his temples, and kept the sin between her breasts damp. Thrusting erratically, he dropped his head to her neck and growled loudly before spilling himself inside of her. She cradled him through his aftershocks and even kissed his shoulder. The sheets were a mess, but he had been cast under her spell and couldn’t move. Making sure to keep his weight off of her, he rolled to the side and caught his breath. Just as he was starting to fall into a light slumber, the bed jostled with her movement and he found himself being covered by the sheets. She curled into his side, kissing his chest as he draped an arm around her. Whispering to him, he felt her smile against his skin. “You may have won on the field, but I took home the trophy.” He hoped to high hell that her roommate had not heard them, and hated how he lost control at the very end. She felt so good that he couldn’t help it.