

CRAY'S CREEK

Pilot

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - DAY

TAGGART "TAG" MCCOY (33), lean and solid in full dive gear, flutter kicks hard and fast against the swift current.

His hands are steady as he sets an explosive in the rock crevice. He gathers his tools, swims perpendicular to the current, and surfaces.

EXT. TAG'S PROPERTY - RIVER BANK - DAY

Tag swims to the bank and hoists himself out of the river. Stows his gear behind some rocks a safe distance away. As he aims the remote detonator...

KELSEY (O.S.)

Since when is the river deep enough
for SCUBA diving?

Tag turns to see KELSEY WINTERS (30), cute and delicate, scrabbling down a steep, rocky hill.

TAG

What are you doing down here?

KELSEY

You weren't at your cabin.

She goes to the edge of the river to look in.

KELSEY (CONT'D)

You ordered electrical supplies.
You know, Allyson is like a genius
when it comes to electrical stuff.
If you need help.

TAG

Allyson?

KELSEY

Go figure. So whatcha doing?

TAG

Get away from the edge.

KELSEY

Why? I can swim.

TAG

It wasn't a request.

Kelsey takes a teasing step towards him then back to the river's edge.

KELSEY

What? You afraid I'll fall in and you'll have to rescue me?

TAG

Come here. I want to show you something.

Kelsey frowns at his sudden change. She hesitantly walks over to where he's standing.

When she's safe, he presses the remote's detonation button.

Kelsey whirls in shock at the BANG.

Water, rocks and stunned fish shoot into the sky and back.

She and Tag get soaked.

Underwater fire flashes and burns while the water churns and foams. After a few more moments, the water settles down.

Dripping wet, Kelsey turns an evil glare on Tag.

KELSEY

Today was a good hair day.

TAG

I told you to back up.

She clenches her jaw. And her fists. Swings a powerful left hook. Tag catches the fist just before it connects with his jaw. Gives her an approving nod.

TAG (CONT'D)

Very good. What's next?

She pauses a moment to think. Mischief lights her eyes as she spins into his body and flips him to the ground over her hip. Pins his shoulder down with a knee.

TAG (CONT'D)

Wrong knee. I'm not immobile, yet.

He looks at her over his head when her grasp slackens.

TAG (CONT'D)

Kelsey?

He sits up unopposed and follows her gaze to the river.

EXT. RIVER - SURFACE - DAY

A MAN (38), stocky build and thick beard, floats downstream among wood debris. Lifeless eyes stare at the sky.

EXT. TAG'S PROPERTY - RIVER BANK - DAY

Kelsey stands up.

KELSEY
S'not what I think it is. Is it?

TAG
Stay back.

He stands to get a better look at the river. Heads for the edge. Kelsey follows.

KELSEY
He's dead, right? Gotta be.

She stares at the body. Tag wraps an arm around her and tries to block her view before she can notice the neat bullet hole between his eyes.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
He's one of the guys staying out to the Parish Ranch. What happened to him? Who would shoot him like that?

TAG
C'mon. Let's get you dried off.

He tries to guide her away from the river. She resists.

KELSEY
What? We can't just leave him.

Tag pauses. That's exactly what he wants to do.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

SUPER: 6 MONTHS AGO

EXT. WOODED MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Tag jogs down the mountain road. He grits his teeth in pain every time his left leg bears his weight. Refuses to limp.

He passes a pleasant sign welcoming him to Cray's Creek. Signs urging him to reelect a noble looking Sheriff Tyson lead him into the town's center.

EXT. CRAY'S CREEK BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

Small town PEDESTRIANS and LOITERERS stop what they're doing to watch Tag jog by in the street.

Up a ladder, MAX VRABLE, 37, short and stocky, struggles to hang a GRAND OPENING banner over a Barber Shop/Beauty Salon.

CLAIRE VRABLE (35), pleasantly plump, tugs on Max's pants. Her tugs get more urgent, nearly toppling him off the ladder.

MAX

Do you want this sign up or not?

CLAIRE

(whispers)

It's him.

MAX

What?

CLAIRE

Him!

She jerks her head none too subtly at Tag as he nears.

Max turns to look. Knocks the coil of rope off the top of the ladder. He grunts in frustration and climbs down just as Tag passes them with a curt nod.

Claire stares.

MAX

Would you give the man a break? I'm sure he's a perfectly decent guy.

Claire whirls on Max.

CLAIRE

You talked to him? When? Why didn't you tell me?

MAX

I didn't talk to him.

CLAIRE

Then how do you know?

MAX

He's been here a year and nothing's happened.

CLAIRE

Exactly. A whole year and no one knows the first thing about him. What if he's planning something up there all alone?

Max coils the fallen rope around his shoulder. Climbs back up the ladder with a laugh.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

It'll be easier to kill us all if he doesn't get too friendly.

MAX

That imagination. If it worries you so much, you talk to him.

Claire leans against the ladder in a huff. Max nearly tumbles off. He clings to the side of the building.

CLAIRE

Don't you think it's strange. Holed up in that old mining cabin. All by himself. How'd he afford that land?

Claire's eyes go wide. She spins around to look up at Max.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

He's planning to rob the town!

MAX

Not much for him to get.

Max goes back to the banner. But not before taking another speculative look Tag's direction.

INT. CRAY'S CREEK MARKET - DAY

Tag steps inside the slightly darker, but immaculately kept store. A bell TINKLES over his head.

VIRGIL PETERS (42), average build no gray hair anywhere, looks over his reading glasses as he polishes the counter to greet his customer with a welcoming smile. It turns a little curious as he recognizes Tag.

PETERS

Well ain't this a mighty pleasant surprise? What brings you to town off your regular schedule?

TAG

Aspirin.

Peters clucks in sympathy.

PETERS

Got a bit of an aching head do we?

TAG

Something like that.

PETERS

Think I can get you fixed right up.

Tag fights to hide his limp as he follows Peters to the "Pharmacy."

PETERS (CONT'D)

Name your pharmaceutical company of choice. I got 'em all.

Tag nods. Picks out a painkiller.

PETERS (CONT'D)

Right fine choice, young man.

Tag follows the owner to the cash register. Pays cash.

Peters hands him the aspirin in a small bag. Holds onto it when Tag would have taken it and left.

PETERS (CONT'D)

Now you take care of yourself. Go right home and sleep. You younguns don't know squat about taking care of your body.

Tag almost smiles at that.

PETERS (CONT'D)

I bet you ran all way here. Don'tcha do that no more, ya hear? Call me. I'll be out lickety split.

TAG

Yessir.

Peters lets go of the bag with a nod. Tag leaves.

EXT. CRAY'S CREEK BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

Tag waits until he's out of Peter's sight before breaking into a jog.

Two BOYS (9 & 8), giggle as they dodge around Tag going the opposite direction. He turns to glance at them.

THUD! He crashes into something. His leg finally gives out.

Tag's limbs tangle with Kelsey's as they tumble to the sidewalk. He grimaces as she uses his bad leg for leverage to get up.

KELSEY

Hoodlums. I know where you live!

Tag sits on the ground for a minute. Refusing to grimace. Kelsey finally looks at him. Blinks in surprise.

KELSEY (CONT'D)

Taggart! I'm so sorry.

TAG

Have we met?

Still sitting on the ground, he picks up the load of books she dropped in the collision.

Kelsey blushes. Busies herself with dusting the books off.

Keeping his bad leg straight, Tag pushes up on his good one.

Kelsey watches the way he favors the leg. She sticks out her hand. After a brief hesitation, he shakes it.

KELSEY

Small town. Everybody knows everybody. Kelsey Winters. Town librarian.

TAG

I see.

Tag carefully tests weight on his injured leg. It holds.

KELSEY

They were spray painting the...

She gestures vaguely at the illegible words dripping down the side of the library dumpster. Grimaces at Tag.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
I didn't hurt you did I?

Tag's lips quirk in a really brief smile.

TAG
You didn't hurt me.

KELSEY
How about some coffee while
you...catch your breath.

Knowing she's figured out his injury, Tag's features harden into an unreadable mask.

TAG
No, thank you.

He starts jogging away. He gradually increases his pace until he's sprinting out of the town.

Kelsey stands on the sidewalk staring after him dumbfounded.

INT. CRAY'S CREEK LIBRARY - CIRCULATION DESK - DAY

Kelsey drops a bag and a stack of books on the long desk in the bright airy room when she enters. She dumps an enormous amount of coffee grounds in the machine and turns it on.

TABITHA MONROE (30), struts inside the library. The sultry fashionista sidles her perfectly groomed body up to the desk behind Kelsey. She clucks her tongue in pity.

TABITHA
Even after getting a man flat on
his back, poor little Kelsey can't
seal the deal.

Super annoyed, Kelsey turns around. Phony smile in place.

KELSEY
Tabitha. Is there something I can
help you with?

TABITHA
You can help me understand why you
think you can just manhandle my
true love like that.

KELSEY

Your true love? You've never even spoken to the guy. No one has.

TABITHA

He is a man of discerning tastes.

Kelsey struggles to smile. Eyes Tabitha up. And down.

KELSEY

Since he's not with you. I'd have to agree.

The door slams open. ALLYSON MEYER (30), shoots inside. Red, curly ponytails flap against her ears.

ALLYSON

Kelse! Did you hear the news?

She stops short when Tabitha turns to glare at her. Giving the woman wide berth, Allyson hurries to the other side of the circulation desk.

TABITHA

I have plans for that man. Keep your mangy paws to yourself.

Tabitha spins on her heel and heads for the door.

KELSEY

Is it a five year plan? You aren't getting any younger, you know.

Tabitha pauses long enough to shoot a glare at them both. Sweeps out the door.

Kelsey turns to Allyson with a relieved sigh.

ALLYSON

Was that about the new guy?

INT. CRAY'S CREEK LIBRARY - OFFICE - DAY

Kelsey picks up a stack of books and takes them in her office. Allyson is hot on her heels.

KELSEY

What happens when someone else moves here? Are you going to call them both the new guy?

ALLYSON

Of course not. The newer new guy will at least tell us his name.

She plops in a chair across from Kelsey's desk.

KELSEY
His name is Taggart McCoy.

ALLYSON
When he tell you that?

Kelsey blushes as she sits behind her desk.

KELSEY
Remember when the pipe burst at
City Hall?

ALLYSON
Carting all those files over here
is not something I'll ever forget.
My back still hurts.

KELSEY
Well, I might've peeked at his
property deed.

ALLYSON
So now you think you know the guy?
He gives me the creeps. Never
talking to anyone.

Kelsey teases:

KELSEY
You mean you don't find a
mysterious stranger romantic?

ALLYSON
Mostly I find them mysterious.

KELSEY
(laughs)
What's your news?

Allyson gives Kelsey a puzzled look.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
You asked if I'd heard something?

Allyson's eyes widen as she sits straight up in the chair.

ALLYSON
You know Old Mr. Parish? He died.
This morning.

KELSEY
Seriously?

That is NOT good news.

ALLYSON

Yeah. We're all supposed meet at
City Hall in an hour.

INT. TAG'S CABIN - DAY

Bed in one corner, desk in another, kitchenette and bathroom
round out the cabin.

Tag elbows the door shut as he pops open the aspirin and
downs a handful of pills. He sits at his computer.

He logs on to an encrypted site. Code scrolls across the
screen securing his connection.

While waiting, Tag pulls up a floor board and takes out metal
pieces. Subconsciously field assembles them. In moments, a 50
caliber rifle is in his hands.

Instant message windows pop up on his screen.

CHASE (V.O.)

Going on my first date.
Congratulate me.

Tag reads the window. Moves the mouse to close it.

CHASE (V.O.)

She's a real beaut, too.

Pain and jealousy flicker over Tag's face. He puts the gun
down and his fingers on the keyboard.

TAG (V.O.)

Don't double with Briggs. He'll try
to add his tab to yours.

CHASE (V.O.)

Yes Sir!

TAG (V.O.)

And Guidaro. He'll eat right off
your plate.

CHASE (V.O.)

Learned that last week, sir.

Tag half smiles. His fingers tap the keys as the smile fades.

TAG (V.O.)

Come back alive. Earn your Trident,
but come back alive.

Tag waits. There's no response for a long moment.

CHASE (V.O.)

My only regret is that I won't be
serving under your command.

TAG (V.O.)

Neither here nor there. You have a
job to do. Go do it.

Tag logs off before Chase can reply. He pops up out of the chair and strides for the door.

EXT. TAG'S PROPERTY - DAY

Tag leaps off the porch. He runs around the house ripping off his shirt as he goes.

At the edge of the mountain, Tag swings his arms up. Jumps off head first.

EXT. TAG'S LAKE - DAY

Tag gracefully arcs through the air. Falls. Falls. Falls.

SPLASH.

Tag disappears beneath the surface of the lake. Moments pass.

He comes up stroking hard and fast fifty feet from where he went in.

EXT. CRAY'S CREEK CITY HALL - FRONT STEPS - DAY

MAYOR GROVER HAYES (56), lanky and congenial, holds court at the bottom of an imposing grand marble stairway leading up to an equally impressive city hall.

The entire TOWN surrounds him. Anxiety on more than one person's face. Even the CHILDREN stand subdued just out of their parents' grasp.

MAYOR

...with great sorrow. I know we
will all miss Mr. Parish. And our
condolences go out to his sons.

Allyson and Kelsey join the crowd in the back. Claire presses her way towards them.

CLAIRE

Isn't this awful?

The mayor clears his throat. Stares at the ground for a moment. Looks back at his townspeople.

MAYOR

While my office cannot enforce a mandate, we strongly recommend that you offer your condolences via telephone only.

A relieved murmur sweeps through the crowd. Claire dramatically holds her chest. Kelsey frowns.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

This is a very difficult time for the Parish boys. We think it wise to take care that we do nothing to...complicate things for them.

NADINE (32), mousy, holding an infant, shoots up her badly scarred hand. Gets a nod from the mayor.

NADINE

What about the funeral?

MAYOR

Collectively, I believe we should be able to attend that.

GARY

What about extra protection?

The mayor looks over at SHERIFF TYSON (43), who hooks his thumbs on his gun belt. Arrogance pours from every cell of his average body. He climbs a couple stairs higher than the mayor. He's careful not to block one of his campaign posters.

SHERIFF

We do not expect anything to get out of our control. As long as we each do our part.

Kelsey shakes her head. She turns to leave. Allyson shrugs and tags along. Claire falls in step beside them.

INT. CRAY'S CREEK LIBRARY - CIRCULATION DESK - DAY

Kelsey picks up a stack of books to check in.

Allyson hops up on the desk while Claire leans against it.

CLAIRE

Calls only. Who'd want to actually call those hooligans?

KELSEY

Their father just passed.

ALLYSON

A body could get seriously hurt dealing with that family.

CLAIRE

Remember the time they took the Donahue's pigs for a joyride. Said they looked bored.

KELSEY

Their dad died. They should know someone cares.

CLAIRE

Like they cared when they set poor Nadine on fire?

Allyson and Claire stare at Kelsey. She drops their gaze.

KELSEY

There was that.

CLAIRE

The first thing she did when she and George bought the Grady's place? She bricked in the fireplace.

KELSEY

I get your point.

ALLYSON

Wasn't the fireplace the Grady's claim to fame? Like some famous dude built it or something?

CLAIRE

Yeah. And she just bricked it in.

ALLYSON

I saw Reid in town last week.

CLAIRE

Awful strange he turns up and dear old dad checks out.

KELSEY

Claire!

ALLYSON

So what happens now? Everybody knows he was the only thing keeping those boys in line.

The three ladies look at each other. Pondering the question.

INT. KELSEY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Kelsey curls up on the couch in the tidy room channel surfing through the seven local stations.

She looks over at the empty armchair. Heaves a tiny, sad sigh and stands.

INT. KELSEY'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

Kelsey stops in the doorway. Steps inside, flipping on the overhead light. She smiles at a picture on the dresser.

A younger Kelsey wears a goofy grin arm in arm with CYRUS WINTERS (58). Both hold up a fish. Hers is larger.

Kelsey opens the top drawer of the dresser. She digs past bottles and bottles of prescription medication and pulls out an old sweater. Wraps it around herself. A determined look crosses her features.

EXT. PARISH RANCH - PORCH - NIGHT

Still wearing the sweater, Kelsey stands indecisively on the wide, unkempt porch holding a casserole dish. Stares at the doorbell surrounded by peeling paint.

Kelsey sucks in a breath and jerkily punches the cracked button. She jumps at the resulting chime inside the house.

Moments later, REID PARISH (33), lean and sculpted, yanks the door open.

Kelsey shrinks back at his annoyed expression. She holds out the casserole dish.

KELSEY

I brought food. For you. And... and your brothers.

Arms crossed, Reid looks at the casserole and then Kelsey. His expression softens. His body still blocks the doorway.

REID

So you have.

KELSEY

Sorry. Maybe you don't remember me.

REID

Kelsey Winters. Former jock.
Current town librarian.

Kelsey blinks in surprise. Fights to find a smile. And her wits. Can't. Sighs.

KELSEY

I just wanted to come by to offer my condolences.

REID

Why?

KELSEY

Why? I heard about your dad.

REID

You the only one who's heard?

KELSEY

No, well... It's just... You make people a little nervous.

Reid leans against the open door. Drops his arms.

Kelsey calms a bit seeing his relaxed posture.

KELSEY (CONT'D)

So anyway... since you probably don't feel like cooking... And won't for a long while.

She holds out the casserole. He regards her thoughtfully.

REID

Sounds like you've had some experience with this.

KELSEY

Maybe a little.

She offers him a tiny smile. He takes the casserole.

REID

You wanna come in?

KELSEY

Oh... no. Thank you. I don't want to disturb you. Well... more than I already have.

REID

Do I make you nervous, too?

KELSEY

Who? Me? No. It's getting late.

REID

Just for a minute. I could use a
bit of off topic conversation.

Kelsey looks around the dark front yard. Not a soul in sight.
She turns back around to meet Reid's steady gaze.

A scuffle and a CRASH echoes from inside the house.

Reid's shoulders slump. He looks wearily behind him.

Compassion replaces fear in Kelsey's eyes.

REID (CONT'D)

Maybe you should go.

KELSEY

I thought I'd come in for a moment
or two.

She steps past a surprised Reid and into the house.

END ACT ONE