

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

KAREN M. McMANUS

BAYVIEW
ELECTIVE

ONE OF US IS BACK



ONE OF US IS LYING

BOOK 3

BOOKS BY KAREN M. McMANUS

One of Us Is Lying

One of Us Is Next

One of Us Is Back

Two Can Keep a Secret

The Cousins

You'll Be the Death of Me

Nothing More to Tell

ONE
OF US
IS BACK

KAREN M. McMANUS

DELACORTE
PRESS

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Text copyright © 2023 by Karen M. McManus, LLC

Front cover photographs (left to right) copyright © 2023 by annebaek/GettyImages, Morsa Images/GettyImages, Peter Bannan/GettyImages; all other photographs used under license from Shutterstock.com.

All rights reserved. Published in the United States by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

Delacorte Press is a registered trademark and the colophon is a trademark of Penguin Random House LLC.

Visit us on the Web! GetUnderlined.com

Educators and librarians, for a variety of teaching tools, visit us at RHTeachersLibrarians.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available upon request.

ISBN 9780593485019 (trade) — ISBN 9780593485026 (lib. bdg.) — ebook ISBN 9780593485033 — ISBN 9780593705339 (int'l. ed.)

Random House Children's Books supports the First Amendment and celebrates the right to read.

Penguin Random House LLC supports copyright. Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part in any form without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing Penguin Random House to publish books for every reader.

ep_prh_6.1_144303411_c0_r0

Contents

[Cover](#)

[Books by Karen M. McManus](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Contacts](#)

[Part One](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Chapter Seventeen](#)

[Chapter Eighteen](#)

[Chapter Nineteen](#)

[Chapter Twenty](#)

[Chapter Twenty-one](#)

[Chapter Twenty-two](#)

[Part Two](#)

[Chapter Twenty-three](#)

[Chapter Twenty-four](#)

[Chapter Twenty-five](#)

[Chapter Twenty-six](#)

[Chapter Twenty-seven](#)

[Chapter Twenty-eight](#)

[Chapter Twenty-nine](#)

[Chapter Thirty](#)

[Chapter Thirty-one](#)

[Chapter Thirty-two](#)

[Chapter Thirty-three](#)

[Chapter Thirty-four](#)

[Chapter Thirty-five](#)

[Chapter Thirty-six](#)

[Chapter Thirty-seven](#)

[Chapter Thirty-eight](#)

[Chapter Thirty-nine](#)

[Chapter Forty](#)

[Chapter Forty-one](#)

[Chapter Forty-two](#)

Acknowledgments

















About the Author

For my readers

+

Edit

Contacts

- AP Addy Prentiss**
One of the original Bayview Four, Café Contigo 
- AP Ashton Prentiss**
Addy's sister 
- BR Bronwyn Rojas**
One of the original Bayview Four, Maeve's sister 
- CC Cooper Clay**
One of the original Bayview Four 
- EK Eli Kleinfelter**
Lawyer, Until Proven, Addy's brother-in-law 
- EM Emma Lawton**
Phoebe's sister, former Bayview High student 
- JR Jake Riordan**
Addy's ex-boyfriend 
- KS Keely Soria**
Cooper's ex-girlfriend 
- KM Knox Myers**
Member of the Bayview Crew, Until Proven 
- KB Kris Becker**
Cooper's boyfriend 
- LS Luis Santos**
Maeve's boyfriend, Café Contigo 
- MR Maeve Rojas**
Member of the Bayview Crew, Bronwyn's sister 
- NM Nate Macauley**
One of the original Bayview Four 
- PL Phoebe Lawton**
Member of the Bayview Crew, Café Contigo 
- SK Simon Kelleher**
Creator of About That gossip app 
- VM Vanessa Merriman**
Former Bayview High student 

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

Addy

Monday, June 22

“Are we seriously watching this?”

Maeve lifts the remote, then her eyebrows. The coordinated challenge annoys me because she knows perfectly well that we are, in fact, watching this. *This* is the entire reason that we’re sitting in front of the television on a beautiful summer day.

“You didn’t have to invite me over,” I remind her, snatching the remote before she has a chance to toss it across the room. I click the On button, then press Channel until I find the station I’m looking for. “I was perfectly fine at home.”

“You’re never perfectly fine after one of these,” Bronwyn pipes up from the corner of an overstuffed sofa. The Rojas media room is a much more comfortable place to watch TV than my living room, with the added benefit that there’s zero chance of my mother poking her head in. I forgot, though, that this enhanced viewing experience would come with a heaping dose of concern. Bronwyn returned from Yale for the summer a couple of weeks ago and immediately started trying to take charge of my life like the bossy older sister I already have.

Not that I’m complaining. I’ve missed talking to her in the Bayview Four group chat, which we really need to rename now that it’s nine people strong: me; Bronwyn; Nate Macauley; Maeve and her boyfriend, Luis Santos; Cooper Clay and his boyfriend, Kris Becker; and Maeve’s fellow

Bayview High rising seniors Phoebe Lawton and Knox Myers. It's a very coupled-off group chat, with the exception of me and those last two. Possibly only me, since nobody fully buys Phoebe and Knox's insistence that they're just friends.

Bayview Crew, maybe? I pick up my phone and edit the group chat name. It doesn't look half bad.

"Who's this guy?" Maeve asks, squinting at the screen. "Is he going to introduce—"

"No," I say quickly. "This isn't the Eastland High program. That starts at three o'clock. This is...I have no idea, actually."

"A town council meeting," Bronwyn says. Of course she'd know; she probably watches this kind of thing for fun. "Looks like they're wrapping up a budget vote."

"Thrilling. But at least that *matters*." Maeve props her bare feet up on the coffee table a little too aggressively, wincing as her heels slam into the marble top. "At least it deserves a platform. Which is more than you can say for—"

"It's local cable, Maeve," I interrupt. "They're not picky about their programming."

My voice is even but my heart thuds uncomfortably, and I'm torn between wishing I were by myself and feeling grateful that I'm not. The town councilman we're watching announces that the meeting is over, and the scene fades as interim music begins to play. Bronwyn, Maeve, and I sit in silence for a few beats, listening to what sounds like a weirdly plucky instrumental version of "The Girl from Ipanema."

Then a half-filled school auditorium appears on screen with the words *Eastland High School: Summer Seminar Series* superimposed along the bottom. Before I can react, Bronwyn abruptly launches herself off her sofa and onto mine, flinging her arms around me.

"Oh my God, what are you doing?" I mutter, dropping my phone onto the cushion.

"You're not alone, Addy," Bronwyn says in a fierce whisper. The smell of green apples surrounds me: Bronwyn's distinctive shampoo, which she's

used for as long as I've known her. And probably a lot longer than that, since Bronwyn is nothing if not a creature of habit. One time, when Nate was being extra mopey about their long-distance relationship, I gave him a bottle of it wrapped with a big red bow. He got annoyed, which was the entire point—it's never *not* fun to crack Nate's cooler-than-thou façade—but he also kept it.

"Obviously," I say, spitting a strand of hair from my mouth. Then I sink into the hug, because I actually do kind of need it.

"Good afternoon, Eastland High, and welcome to the start of our summer seminar series." The man behind the podium doesn't introduce himself, probably because he doesn't have to—he's likely a teacher or an administrator. Somebody in charge of shaping the minds of teenagers who look a thousand years younger than I feel, even though I turned nineteen just a few months ago.

"Look at all those eager beavers. School let out two weeks ago, and they're already back," Maeve says as the man continues with what Principal Gupta liked to call "housekeeping"—all the random announcements that have to be crammed in before any type of school-related event can start. "Good old Eastland High. Remember when you stalked Sam Barron in their parking lot, Bronwyn?"

"I did not stalk him," Bronwyn says, although she technically did. It was a necessary evil, though. Solving the mystery of Simon Kelleher's death hinged on Sam—the boy Simon had paid to create a distraction while we were in detention the day he died. It was the biggest, most horrifying story ever to hit Bayview. Until a few months ago, when a Simon copycat launched a deadly game of Truth or Dare that nearly got all of us blown up at my sister's wedding rehearsal dinner.

Sometimes, I deeply question why any of us continue to live in Bayview.

"I lightly interrogated him," Bronwyn adds. "And it's a good thing I did, or..." She trails off as all our phones buzz in unison.

"Bayview Four is lighting up," Maeve reports before I can reach for mine.

“I think we should change it to Bayview Crew,” I say.

“Fine by me,” Maeve says with a shrug. “Kris says to stay strong, Addy. He also wants to know if you’re still up for waffles tomorrow morning. I happen to like waffles, too, in case that’s relevant information for the two of you. Luis says *Fuck that guy*. He’s not talking about Kris, obviously; he means—”

“I know who he means,” I say as the Eastland High speaker raises his hand to quiet the restless chatter that’s started up among the audience.

“All of us at the Eastland High Summer Seminar Series realize that there are many other things you could be doing on a beautiful June afternoon,” he says. “It’s a testament to the importance of today’s special topic that you’re here instead.”

“Special, my ass,” Maeve mutters, tucking a strand of hair behind one ear. It’s exactly the same shade of dark brown as Bronwyn’s, but she recently cut it into a cute, choppy bob. After a battle with childhood leukemia, Maeve spent the first few years of high school trying to get out from behind Bronwyn’s shadow, and I think her final form emerged when she stopped echoing her sister’s signature ponytail.

“Shhh,” Bronwyn hisses, before finally releasing me.

“At Eastland High, we want to inspire you to dream and achieve, but we also want to prepare you for the harsher realities of life,” the speaker continues. “The decisions you make as high school students today will shape the trajectory of your future for years to come, and the wrong choice can have devastating consequences.”

“Is that what we’re calling it now?” Maeve asks. “A *wrong choice*?”

“Maeve, I swear to God—” Bronwyn starts.

“Quiet!” The word bursts out much more loudly and angrily than I intended, startling Bronwyn and Maeve into silence. I’d feel shame at the misdirected rage, which neither of them deserves, if I weren’t such a giant ball of stress. Because any minute, I’m going to see...

“Nobody knows that better than today’s guest. He’s here through an educational partnership with the California Department of Corrections, to speak frankly with you about how his actions derailed what was once a

bright and promising future. Please welcome our speaker, who's a current inmate at the East Crenshaw Juvenile Detention Facility and a former student from neighboring Bayview High—Jake Riordan.”

Bronwyn squeezes my arm and Maeve inhales sharply, but other than that, I've managed to cow them into temporary silence. Not that it matters; if they spoke, I wouldn't hear a word over the blood pounding in my ears.

Jake Riordan.

My ex. The love of my life, once upon a time, when I was too naïve and insecure to see who he really was. I knew he could be jealous, and if you'd pressed me back then—which nobody except my sister, Ashton, ever did—I might have admitted that he was controlling. But I never would have imagined that when I cheated on him, he'd get revenge by teaming up with Simon to frame me for murder, then nearly kill me when I tried to expose him.

Oh, right. Jake wasn't *actually* trying to kill me, according to his very expensive lawyer. *Lack of specific intent*, she said, along with a lot of other legal buzzwords piled onto his defense that, ultimately, kept him from being tried as an adult.

At the time, a lot of people called it a sham of a trial, especially when it was over and Jake was sentenced to a juvenile facility until the age of twenty-five. Everything he did—not just to me and my friends, but to Simon—boiled down to a whopping seven and a half years behind bars. The headlines screamed “Privilege on Display!” and there were a half-dozen online petitions urging the judge to impose a harsher sentence.

But memories are short.

Jake's been a model prisoner ever since he went in, and last December, a true crime show ran a profile on him that was, as the *Bayview Blade* said, “surprisingly sympathetic.” Jake was humble. He was remorseful. He was *committed to helping other young people avoid the same mistakes he'd made*. And then, barely two weeks after my sister's wedding at the end of March, Juror X surfaced.

Or rather, his former girlfriend did—a woman who claimed she'd gotten hundreds of texts about Jake's trial from one of the jurors while it

was happening. Turns out, Juror X kept her up to date with a constant stream of confidential information and visited news sites that he was supposed to keep away from. When screenshots surfaced on BuzzFeed, Juror X panicked, tried to delete his Internet history, lied under oath, and basically gave Jake's legal team the opening they'd been looking for to ask for a new trial.

Juror X's real name is Marshall Whitfield, which the Internet collectively discovered within a few weeks of the story breaking. He's now gone underground after being doxed, and I might feel sorry for him if he hadn't tossed a grenade into my life.

Now Jake's case is pending, and in the meantime, he's started what Maeve sarcastically calls the Jake Riordan Rehabilitation Tour. The school visits aren't always televised, but when they are...I watch. I can't help myself.

"He looks terrible," Maeve says, glaring at the screen.

She's not entirely right. Jake looks older than nineteen, but not in a bad way. He's still handsome, his brown hair cropped short and his eyes a piercing, summer-sky blue against too-pale skin. He's clearly working out more than ever, which you can tell despite the shapeless khakis he's wearing. He approaches the podium to scattered applause, his head bowed and his hands clasped in front of him. No handcuffs, of course. Not for a school visit, although the three officers sitting in folding chairs off to one side are armed and ready for trouble.

But Jake never gives them any.

"I'm here to tell you about the worst time of my life," he says in a low, earnest tone, which is how he always starts. And then, with his hands gripping the edge of the podium and his eyes locked on the students in front of him, he tells them about the worst time of mine.

He's clever. He talks a lot about *pressure*, *undue influence*, and *duress*, as though he were Simon's reluctant, clueless patsy instead of his eager conspirator. According to Jake, he doesn't even remember attacking me and Janae Vargas in the woods behind her house; all he wanted, he claimed during the trial, was for us to stop threatening him. *Us*, threatening *him*.

That didn't go over well in the court of public opinion, though, so he's careful to avoid the topic during school visits. If anyone mentions me, he quickly segues into a monologue about how his poor choices hurt *everyone*. Especially him.

Next November, it will be two years since that awful night in the woods. A lot of good things have happened since then: I moved in with my sister, I made new friends, and I graduated high school. I took some time off so I could figure out what I wanted to do with my life, and I've decided it's going to involve teaching. I got my first-ever passport last month, so that Maeve and I can travel to Peru at the end of July to be counselors for an English immersion program. After that, I'll start applying to college. My dad, although he's still the definition of a hands-off parent, came through with an offer to help with tuition.

The ticking clock of Jake's release has always been far enough away that I could believe I'd be ready once it wound down—older and wiser, settled into the kind of busy, important life where I'd barely think twice about my convict ex being back on the streets.

It never occurred to me, until recently, that the clock could be reset.

“What does Eli say about all this?” Maeve asks as Jake continues his well-rehearsed monologue. My sister's husband heads up a legal-defense nonprofit, so he's our go-to expert for anything crime-related. Even though, as Eli has pointed out to all nine members of the Bayview Crew at one time or another, we rarely listen to him until it's too late. “Does he think Jake's going to get a new trial? Or that he'll be released, or—”

“Eli is busy thinking about who's going to cover for him during paternity leave,” I remind her. My sister Ashton's surprise pregnancy—she's due in November—is why I've moved back in with my mother. Mom and I haven't always been on the best of terms, but being excited about the baby has given us something to bond over. Lately, that bonding mostly consists of coming up with grandmother names that won't make her sound old. Current leader: Gigi, because Mom refuses to consider my suggestion of Insta Gram.

“Eli can think about more than two things at once,” Bronwyn says. “Especially if you let him know how worried you are.”

“I’m not worried,” I say, eyes on the screen. My voice is muffled, though, by how hard I’m gnawing on my knuckle.

Jake has wrapped up his speech and started taking questions from the kids. A boy sitting in the front row asks, “What’s the food like in prison?”

“In a word? Awful,” Jake says, with such perfect timing that everyone laughs.

“Do you get to see your mom and dad?” a girl calls out. The camera jerkily pans her way, and I catch the flash of another girl’s coppery curls behind her. It almost looks like—but, no. I must be seeing things. Still, when I glance at Maeve, she’s squinting at the television with a puzzled frown.

“Not as often as I’d like, but yes,” Jake says. “They haven’t given up on me, and their support means the world. I hope I can make them proud again someday.”

“Barf,” Maeve says, but even she sounds slightly less sarcastic. The Jake Riordan Rehabilitation Tour is *that* good.

Another boy raises his hand, and Jake acknowledges him with a chin lift. It’s such a familiar gesture—the way he’d greet our friends in the hallway of Bayview High, one arm wrapped tightly around my shoulders—that I shiver. “If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?” the boy asks.

“Everything,” Jake says instantly. He gazes directly into the camera, and I recoil as though he’d just entered the room.

There it is.

That’s what I’ve been waiting for—the reason I keep torturing myself by watching these. I don’t want to see it, but I need to acknowledge that it exists. That glint in Jake’s eye. The one he can’t hide for a full Q&A session, no matter how hard he tries. The one that reflects all the anger he’s pretending he no longer feels. The one that says, *I’m not sorry*.

The one that says, *What would I do differently?*

I wouldn’t get caught.