



# When One Door Opens

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Logan Sellers's parole officer has issued three commandments: stay sober, stay employed, and stay out of trouble. At first Logan thought those three simple rules would be easy to follow. But that was before he accepted a side job assisting his boss's housebound agoraphobic nephew, Caleb.

Caleb is deceptively normal for a guy who hasn't left his apartment in three years, and his friendly, caring personality tugs on heartstrings Logan didn't know he had. But hitting on his boss's nephew is asking to be unemployed. Logan has enough problems with booze on every corner and a supervisor trying to jump into his bed. He doesn't need to work out how to free Caleb from the anxiety that keeps him in his apartment; he needs to keep his nose clean, attend his AA meetings, and make a fresh start—alone.

If only his heart would get with the program.

## When One Door Opens Details

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## From Reader Review When One Door Opens for online ebook

### Ami says

#### 3.5 stars

I agree with some of the things Vio said, and Mandy said, and Arthur said...

Despite featuring two of my major pet peeves and one minor one (minor, because it hadn't been turned into a major one for me yet. If I encountered this more frequently, it could be another major pet peeve \*grin\*). The story was quite solid, as a debut. I did enjoy the fact that it dealt with issues that hadn't been commonly touched in this genre. An ex-alcoholic (who was a mean drunk, which landed him in prison for a year) and a housebound agoraphobic.

I thought the portrayal of both characters were quite realistic as well. Logan (the ex-con) kept written as coming to AA meetings and anger management class, and there were scenes of him fighting the lure of the bottle. While Caleb (the agoraphobic) didn't get immediately cured by love, even when he felt that attraction towards Logan, his mind still messed him up, and he still had panic attacks through out the book. There was also a journey for them to get to the better state of mind and being, one step at a time. I also thought their banters were quite enjoyable.

HOWEVER, like Mandy, I didn't get as emotionally affected by these characters as I should. And like Arthur, I felt that there was time the scenes written didn't really improve the storyline ((view spoiler)) or that some of the things Caleb experienced to "heal" himself was a bit overboard ((view spoiler)). I would prefer Logan's best friend, Michael, to come earlier in the book, and it would be nice to see a scene or two with him (and Logan) at one of the Al-Anon meetings.

I would still like to check the next book of this author, should she release a sophomore title.

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### Nina says

Despite the potentially angsty premise, this was mostly a feel-good story - with some heartbreakingly sad moments and some scorching hot scenes - that would probably be in my top ten comfort reads if I were the type to reread books.

To sum everything up, it was hot, sweet, tender, a touch angsty, lovable and extremely frustrating during that giant clusterfuck about halfway through where everyone suddenly turned TSTL and made me want to slap the shit out of them. This is the kind of situation that usually makes me want to throw my ereader to the wall, but this time I actually had a lot of fun. It was a bit like watching a movie: I was emotionally invested, but I was also internally laughing my ass off in a "What the fuck are you doing, you idiot?" kinda way.

It sounds terribly cheesy, but this was actually a wonderfully narrated journey of recovery and redemption. I loved seeing these two ~~broken men open their hearts to love~~ [gosh, Nina, for real?] ~~total whack jobs~~ [okay, that's mean] *guys* fall in love in a way that was pretty different from what is portrayed in the usual romance novel. Aside from the fact that both Logan and Caleb were hugely hung up on their personal issues - alcoholism and agoraphobia - their falling in love was a no-fuss, relatively uncomplicated affair. The ILYs were not looked at through a magnifying glass, examined and angsted over and cried upon; by the time they uttered the three magic words, it was already pretty clear that they were truly madly deeply in love - to them and to the reader.

Also, this was supremely sexy. It wasn't particularly focused on the sex, but for some reason it worked for me. Okay, that sounds like I jerked off to it.

My mind is unusually dirty these days... might be due to my hot emotional romance with Viv.

But I digress.

I did have a little problem with Logan in the beginning, and it was precisely because of sex-related matters. Basically, in the first, say, 15% he thinks with his dick. He jerks off thinking of Caleb after just one meeting, during which the poor guy was scared like a newborn rabbit, so I got kind of freaked out there for a bit. But it's okay, because, as I said, this is a *journey of redemption!* (Gah.)

I'm pretty much done here, since I'm dead tired and can't seem to manage to string something more coherent together.

Warmly recommended.

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## Val Kovalin says

Logan is a huge, burly ex-con who needs to hold down a job to satisfy his parole officer. Now he's working part-time at a package delivery facility under a loathsome female supervisor who sexually harasses him.

He gets another assignment from their overall boss Klass, to assist Klass's housebound nephew Caleb who suffers from debilitating agoraphobia. Logan warily accepts, but when he and Caleb meet, they experience strong sexual chemistry.

Caleb is a sweet little blond whose pretty face hides a determined nature. He has managed to build a successful website design business without leaving his house in the past three years.

The two men start a relationship with formidable challenges. There is Caleb's agoraphobia, which stems from complex emotional and family problems. Add to that, Logan's alcoholism, which was the catalyst that landed him in prison. Meanwhile, Logan is in an extremely precarious position in that any violation of the terms of his parole (such as losing his job, drinking, or entering a bar) could send him back to prison – and his supervisor could easily exploit this.

This book gave me wonderful escapism because the smooth writing, complex characters, and realistic problems made me believe in it. It kept me turning pages.

Both Caleb and Logan are appealing men – especially Logan, whose dialog and thoughts provide the flashes of humor throughout the book that are a nice counterbalance to the serious subject matter.

Their chemistry is delicious as Logan engages Caleb with funny stories and unabashed flirting and lures him past his fears, and Caleb finds his fierce hunger for sex and love awakening. Their sex scenes appear in the story after a slow build-up of sexual tension that is both realistic and hot.

Also, the sex scenes aren't just about sex – they further the characterization and the plot. Meanwhile, their sparring dialog can be very funny: (Caleb, referring to Logan's giant size, says, "What do they do in your family? Devour villagers?")

I'm always hoping for an incredibly vivid setting and workplace. This book didn't give me that, but both Chicago and the package delivery facility were sketched in enough for solid realism, which puts the book above the bland settings and non-jobs of most m/m romances.

There were three standouts for me in this book. First, the complex and vivid portrayal of agoraphobia with its panic attacks and its way of twisting one's thinking into irrational fears. Caleb's problems are treated with respectful realism, complexity, and fascinating detail, and are not solved overnight.

Second, the equally complex and realistic portrayal of alcoholism on down to the protocol of recovery (no relationships are recommended within your first year of sobriety) and the terminology (e.g., a dry drunk). We readers get to see the way AA meetings are conducted and the Twelve Steps are worked, and Logan's interactions with his sponsor. Wonderful in-depth realism.

Third, the harrowing insecurity of being a parolee is explored for maximum story potential. We readers see how a parole officer can show up and shake down your apartment at any time, looking for guns and drugs. How an ex-con has to check in all the time. How other people can report to your parole officer about you. This is the best portrayal of what it feels like to be on parole that I've read since Robert Crais's novel *The Two Minute Rule*.

The main characters, as I've mentioned, are strong and three-dimensional. Plus we get the bonus of some strong supporting characters. Dabb, the parole officer, is stern but fair, quirky (with his M&M-themed office) but tough. Michael is the loyal best friend with some handy investigative skills. Klass is the melancholy boss with some surprising depths and secrets of his own. I especially appreciated Dabb and Klass because they could have potentially been cardboard villains without their captivating mix of complex good traits.

Speaking of cardboard villains...one thing made me uneasy about the book, and that was the loathsome female supervisor Foster. For readers sensitive about misogynistic portrayals of women in m/m romance, Foster may push your buttons. She reads like a trait list of everything that women hate in other women – conniving, slutty, vicious, deceitful, two-faced – on down to her dyed hair and tight, cheap clothing.

On the other hand, somebody has to be the villain, and sometimes the villain has no redeeming traits. Also, an author can write about whatever she wants to, including this type of villain. Overall, this book is a treat that you shouldn't miss.

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## **Kazza says**

**"Don't freak out."** Words I came to love through the course of reading this book.

I thought this book was utterly charming. The two MC's, Logan and Caleb, were endearing. And the secondary characters were all fully developed.

Logan is an ex con sentenced to three years for assault. He has served one, and is released with stipulations to meet his parole conditions - he work at his allocated job, see his parole officer once a week, stay clean, go to anger management classes, and AA meetings. Logan's boss, Harrison Klass, offers him \$100 *off the books* to make a mail drop, grocery run, and a ten minute conversation twice a week to his nephew, Caleb, who suffers agoraphobia and social phobia.

Long story short Logan falls for Caleb, Caleb for Logan. But there's a whole lot more to the story than that. Both men feel they aren't good enough for the other because they both have difficult problems. And they are big problems - phobias are so irrational but so very real and debilitating for the sufferer. Not easy for the partner either. Alcoholism is a bitch as you are always an alcoholic, just a practising or non-practising one. It's always with you. J D Ruskin made sure that point was known. Logan battles with his desire for alcohol on a daily basis. The ease of obtaining it and how it's temptingly everywhere - from a ball game to a meal

and everything in between. Caleb is such a prisoner of his constant fears that he would rather suffer hypothermia, injury, or fire than leave his home. So both men have conditions that take a lot of hard work to overcome or cope with. It also takes an understanding partner to work through these things with you. I liked the way these two men were there for one another. Mostly it was Logan helping Caleb. Logan was still coming to grips with what it means to be an alcoholic. By the end an event occurs that makes him open up fully to Caleb and helps Logan come to terms with what he has to do to move forward more and more. Caleb makes him want to be a better man. Logan helps Caleb do things he wouldn't do before he came along. Fear of loss is a powerful motivating factor.

Given the subject matter, When One Door Opens is never bogged down in misery. It's sweet and humorous. Logan's LGBT AA meeting is so funny and his sponsor, Stacey, is a great character. All the members are quirky. Likewise when they manage to go out together to a movie that whole scene at the theatre made me laugh.

Both characters are really likeable but I just adored 6'7" Logan. He had a way about him that was gorgeous and his jealous growls, protectiveness and kind-hearted way around Caleb just stole *my* heart. Caleb is a sweetie, and I just wanted to jump into the Kindle and help him.

The sex is light-on. When it occurs it is well written but never long. There is an erotic undercurrent throughout, particularly when the guys are around each other. Mostly it's courtesy of knowing what Logan feels about Caleb. Oh, and I liked the phone sex scene, mmmm.

There is a pain-in-the-arse female character in the book. She is well written - I wanted her hit by a frying pan. Thankfully that wasn't a major part of the story but it ramped the tension up and helped lend an edge. There are other little stories going on - John Dabb, the PO, Harrison Klass, Caleb's uncle and Logan's boss, and Michael, Logan's one-time best friend, are all interesting.

The only thing that let this book down for me was the ending. It's a happy enough but it was abrupt and felt uncertain and rushed.

When One Door Opens is a very good read. It is engaging, it tackles tricky subjects with plenty of sensitivity, and it's nice and easy to read. I really recommend this book with much confidence to those liking something with thought provoking issues, that is humorous, sweet, romantic and sexy.

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## Elena says

### 3.5 stars

The strong point of this book is also the one thing that made it just average in my eyes.

On one hand, I appreciated the lack of drama despite the serious issues and difficult circumstances both MCs faced. On the other hand, everything was just a little too easy.

Logan has an amazing parole officer, when he meets Caleb they immediately click and it takes very little effort on Logan's part to make Caleb leave his apartment that first and second time.

Caleb does eventually get therapy and I'm not saying his anxiety and agoraphobia weren't believable, on the contrary. I just don't buy that, after spending three years too afraid to go further than his neighbor's flat, he would be okay going to the grocery store without any sort of medication or previous therapy, just because Logan was distracting him with dirty talk.

Every other potential stumbling block was treated pretty much the same, everything resolved with a couple of sentences and in the end this story made for a nice read, but nothing more.

Although I have to say that Caleb (view spoiler) was very refreshing.

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### **SheReadsALot says**

@dreamspinners: "When One Door Opens" with @JDRuskin1184 is free for the next hour! Don't miss this award winning #TweetAway!

<http://t.co/26UWq2TYL6/s/gnvW>

**Ends 11am EST 11/30/14**

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### **Arthur says**

[like scene with three teenagers in the theater, for example (hide spoiler)]

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### **Anke says**

It was a very compelling story, the way both MCs were struggling with their problems was written in a very gripping way. Nevertheless, over the time it somehow lost it's steam. What will stay with me is the striking way of bringing across the layers of alcoholism - on the surface functioning rather well, but underneath the lure of the bottle almost always present. Very gripping, indeed.

On top of that the development of the relationship between both challenged men, how they worked to overcome their handicaps to be worthy of the other one, the whole writing of the story was just perfect. That made this book a very positive read.

My only niggle - yes, I have one of those again, sorry - would be that the storyline with the Foster woman was rather inexplicable.

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### **Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says**

**So boring that I DNF-ed at 90%.**

This book might be one of those cases where the e-book outshines the audiobook. This book is pretty universally liked by my friends, and the premise sounded really interesting to me. An agoraphobic dating an alcoholic ex-con? Sign me up! However, this book draaaaged on and on and, in the end, I couldn't listen for one more dull minute.

Normally, the narrator for this book, K.C. Kelly, is a sure thing. I ADORED his narration of Brute and really enjoyed Love, Like Water, but for some reason I didn't love his voice with these two characters. He has a slow, deep, atmospheric reading voice that is very well suited for fantasy and also worked well with cowboys, but didn't really mesh for the characters in this one. It wasn't a *bad* narration, but it didn't enhance

the story.

Now on to the story itself. I usually love a slow burn, angsty romance, but here it took FOREVER for anything interesting to happen. I also didn't mesh well with the characters. I hated the over-the-top character of the bitter, man-whore, evil woman character from work, and the MCs felt flat for me. In terms of Caleb's agoraphobia, the treatment for it felt like a cop-out. It was all too convenient and too easy. I'd recently read an excellent book with an agoraphobic as the MC (Curio) and that was much more enjoyable, so I couldn't help compare the two books a little bit.

While this audiobook wasn't bad, I didn't particularly like it either. It was blah-central and I'm sure I won't remember it in a few weeks.

\*Copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review\*

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## **Heather C says**

### **These guys broke my heart!!**

Caleb the agoraphobic and Logan the alcoholic were both so broken and incomplete without each other. I came very close to crying a one point...almost. Even with the few pretty sad moments the story was really sweet and uplifting.

4 stars because the crime plot got a little crazy and I think it took away from the main story. Which should have been about Logan and Caleb healing each other and not dealing with a petty interference.

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## **Trisha Harrington says**

I loved Logan and Caleb. And this book had me gripped from the first page. The story itself was really interesting and I found myself unable to put it down until I had it finished. I was a bit skeptical but I didn't need to be. It was one of the sweetest books I have read in a long time.

The story was kind of different for me. An ex-criminal who has a drink problem (Logan) is asked by his boss to look after the boss's nephew. And the nephew (Caleb) is afraid to leave the house due to agoraphobia. It all develops from there and their relationship begins as a friendship with mutual attraction. And then it develops.

I really loved Logan. He was a sweet character who just needed a second chance. And he was getting it after a struggle. I found him to be really interesting and I loved him instantly. There were some parts I wanted to give him a nice big hug and comfort him. He really had very little self esteem. Which was similar to Caleb who was almost the same in that are. They both believed the other deserved better.

Caleb was just a sweetheart. I felt so sorry for him with the way some people treated him. And then the loss of his mother on top of that. It all just made him really afraid. I was so glad he and Logan ended up with a HEA.

Overall I would really recommend this book to anyone who likes sweet characters and a nice interesting story. :)

## **Kaje Harper says**

This is a more sweet than angsty story about two guys whose lives are circumscribed by their pasts. Logan is a recovering alcoholic who is on parole after a violent bar fight that sent him to prison. He's working a dead-end job when his manager offers him a chance to earn a little extra money. All he has to do is deliver items to the manager's nephew Caleb, and use the opportunity to check on Caleb, who is confined to his apartment by crippling agoraphobia. Both men are lonely, trying to keep from drowning in their obsessions, and gay. As they become friends, and then more, they support each other in making the first strides forward into a more satisfying life.

The attraction between the guys has a nice arc. They don't just jump into bed, although once they get there things move fast. Caleb's condition is well-portrayed and both guys are sympathetic characters. The story occasionally strays into over-familiar territory, but on the whole is a nice easy read with some main characters I came to care about, and a plot that manages not to veer too far into either the melodramatic or the saccharine. This is a good debut book, and I will look forward to others from this writer.

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## **◆\*Arianna◆\* says**

### **3-3.5 STARS**

Logan knows how is to lose everything and start over. He's an ex-con on parole. As a condition of his parole, he must have a steady job, so he works as a package handler. Being a recovering alcoholic is not easy for him. He's struggling to stay sober every day, but he wants a second chance, so he's attending AA meetings and also anger management classes. Logan needs more money to survive, so when his boss offers him a part-time job, he accepts it. His new job is to take care of Caleb, his boss's nephew who is agoraphobic. Twice a week he must take care of Caleb's mail and every couple of weeks he must pick up groceries for him.

Caleb has a severe form of agoraphobia. Since his mother died three years ago, he didn't left his apartment. Even with this illness, Caleb wants to take care of himself; he's a web designer, working only from home. He never talked with a therapist or another agoraphobic, living in his apartment like a prisoner. He feels that nobody can understand him.

Logan and Caleb become friends, feeling somehow connected from the beginning. Logan is attracted to Caleb, but he must stay away if he wants to keep his job. Caleb is attracted to Logan too, but he's too shy to try anything. He doesn't want Logan's pity. He's afraid of rejection. They start to know each other better, Caleb sharing with Logan some things about his mental illness and some things about his past. They try to help each other and give each other strength, especially when they become more than friends.

First thing first, I really liked the premise – an ex-con and an agoraphobic.

The main characters were likeable. I liked both Logan and Caleb – how sweet and caring they are, how supportive and patient are with each other. I really admired both of them, Logan for his determination to stay without booze and Caleb for his determination to be independent. I really liked the fact that Logan doesn't treat Caleb like someone who have a mental illness and I enjoyed the banter between them.

However I can't say I felt too much the connection between those two or that I felt connected in some way

with them.

I didn't understand why the story needed so many secondary characters, because in some way, some of them complicated the story.

My main problem with this one was the plot. It was too much. At some point there's too much going on in Logan and Caleb's lives. And the fact that everything felt rushed didn't help. The ending was also rushed and for me it didn't seem to be an ending...It was more like the ending of a chapter...

Overall, I only liked this one!

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## **Nancy says**

### **Posted at Shelf Inflicted**

I think I may have a mild case of agoraphobia. The last time I experienced a little panic attack was several years ago while I was in Poland. I wanted to go to church and light candles for my close family and friends who passed away while there was no mass in session. But no, my husband's parents insisted we attend mass. Even though we arrived 5 minutes before mass started, there was a line of people starting to form just outside the door. All the pews and most of the seats were occupied, but we did find just enough room somewhere in the middle. Once we were seated, I let go of that breath I'd been holding. When mass was over and everyone got up to leave, I gradually inched my way to the door until the sea of people was no longer moving. Even with my husband and his parents standing right behind me, I felt totally vulnerable. What if a fire started? What if people got trampled or suffocated? What if someone noticed my flushed cheeks? Suddenly I felt faint and broke out into a sweat. I had a wild urge to start screaming and pushing the people standing in front of me in order to get the crowd moving. We eventually got out and I took many invigorating breaths of cold air. My mother-in-law realized she left her scarf behind and looked in my direction. I shook my head and told her she was on her own. No way was I going back in there.

Caleb's problem is so much worse. He hasn't left his apartment in three years, not even when the radiator broke or when he fell in the shower and seriously injured himself. I never really thought about how dangerous this affliction can be until after spending time with Caleb and feeling his fears and anxiety.

Logan has his own issues to deal with. A woman comes on to Logan at a bar and her jealous boyfriend takes a swing at him. Fueled by alcohol and rage, Logan pummels the guy who took a swing at him into the ground along with injuring three unfortunate patrons who tried to restrain him, one of them his best friend, Michael. For that stunt, he spent a year in prison. Now he's on parole, attending anger management classes and AA meetings. Logan works as a package handler and is trying hard to avoid the temptations of alcohol. A relationship is the last thing he needs, but when he starts his part-time job delivering packages to his boss' nephew, Caleb, Logan's resolve begins to crumble.

Caleb is blond, cute, and has a good heart. In spite of his affliction, Caleb is a very strong character. He has a successful web design and editing business and is determined to maintain his independence even if he is unable to leave his apartment. Caleb and Logan are really good together and both are willing to work hard to help each other stay strong as they confront their issues. I loved their humorous banter and their growing connection. The sex scenes were light and infrequent, and though I loved the fact that the emphasis was on the developing relationship, I would have liked to see more buildup of sexual tension. At times, their sex seemed brief and perfunctory. Caleb's agoraphobia was handled sensitively and felt authentic. I found his

progress, struggles and setbacks believable. There is no simple cure and the road to recovery continues to be bumpy. Logan's struggles were also believable, but I would have liked to see a glimpse of his past and how he came to struggle with alcohol. Much was made of his height, physical strength and dominant behavior, and little of his vulnerable side.

There are lots of wonderful and fully-developed secondary characters. Harrison Klass, the floor manager, and Caleb's uncle is a man with secrets, guilt and regrets, but he wants what's best for Caleb. John Dabb is Logan's parole officer with a penchant for M&M's and secrets of his own. Stacy is Logan's AA sponsor and was instrumental in helping him find the right meeting. There was Min and her grandfather of Meng's Market, who fulfilled Caleb's grocery orders and the friendly old woman who lives across from Caleb. And there was Logan's best friend Michael who demonstrated his investigative skills, but got such short shrift in this story.

So why ruin this story with a tiresome, loathsome, one-dimensional villain like Karen Foster? Karen is Logan's supervisor and the kind of woman everyone loves to hate. She's a liar, manipulator and a thief who uses sex to further her agenda and makes Logan's and Caleb's lives difficult. I know she was there to provide an opportunity for Logan to manage his anger, but I could have done without her and her machinations which did absolutely nothing to enhance the plot. Then again I might have enjoyed this subplot if Karen were a different sort of character.

This is a very well written and cleanly edited story. Despite its flaws, I thoroughly enjoyed it and hope to see more of Caleb and Logan.

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## **Vio says**

### **3.75 stars**

Logan a recovering alcoholic and ex-con on parole, needs extra cash he's barely making enough to live on with his current factory job. So he isn't too fussed in accepting another job on the side taking care of the managers nephew who is agoraphobic. Caleb's condition has worsened over the last 3 years ever since his mother's death, he hasn't budged from the building and only steps out the apartment on rare occasions. I was sceptical and wondered why on earth his Uncle would trust an ex-con with the care of his nephew even Logan wonders. Guilt, shame misguided love all factor into it.

Caleb even though scared to death of their first meet, has a spunky personality the retorts are quick and cute. Loved Logan musing to himself about the scarily clean apartment " What does the little neat freak do? Wash his trash before hiding it away in a cabinet?". A gradual awareness and friendship is building, Logan badgers and uses every trick in the book to help Caleb feel more secure, he doesn't belittle or treat him like a freak. What got to me the most was being able to see and feel how scary, debilitating and life threatening Agoraphobia is, Caleb has a few close calls it could easily drive one crazy. Caleb is about to have his first outing on the roof, Logan's talking sex and distracting him, all in good fun which helps relax him somewhat. It's only the beginning and by no means a cure there are setbacks for both of them and compromises to be made.

I liked Logan he's not cured of his alcoholism it's there every day tempting him so he continues to attend AA meetings and his PO is keeping close tabs on him for good reason. Caleb is wonderful, he needs cuddles and lots of love and yep I had a huge soft spot for him. I could totally see him in those tight sweatpants that Logan and everyone else kept perving on, Logan solves this by retrieving a pair of scissors heh! A few tiny niggles and peeves which I ignored. It was good for me and the no fast easy cure was a plus.

