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WILD LOVE

ROSE HILL SERIES



BOOK ONE

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

ELSIE SILVER

WILD LOVE

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
ELSIE SILVER

Wild Love

Rose Hill Book #1

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*For all the women who've figured out that good enough isn't actually
enough. And for those of you who are still looking for more. It's out there.
You'll find it. And if not, don't worry.
There's always Ford Grant.*

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Flawless

Heartless

Powerless

Reckless

Hopeless

Gold Rush Ranch

Off to the Races

A Photo Finish

The Front Runner

A False Start

Rose Hill

Wild Love

Wild Eyes (coming September 2024)

Book 3

Book 4

CHAPTER ONE

FORD

“DUDE. *FORBES* NAMED YOU THE WORLD’S HOTTEST BILLIONAIRE.” My best friend, Weston Belmont, announces the title with extra flair to mock me. He makes it sound like I’m a stripper about to take the stage.

I ignore him and focus on unpacking the box of cleaning supplies at my feet.

“Ford.” He shakes the glossy magazine at me. “This is crazy.”

My eyes slice toward West, and I give him the blankest look I can muster. He lounges in the high-backed chair with his boots kicked up on my desk. Dirt crumbles off the bottoms, making this place an even bigger mess than it already is.

“It’s crazy all right.” Propping my hands on my hips, I turn to survey the old barn that will be the head office for my new recording studio and production company. I’m calling it a barn, but it’s more of an empty, dusty outbuilding. Rust-colored holes in the floor lead me to believe there were stalls in it once upon a time. Now, it’s mostly a big, messy open space with a small kitchenette area near the front door that’s separated by a long narrow hallway.

Either way, it sits just a short walk from the main farmhouse on a massive plot of sloped land, right on the edge of Rose Hill.

And when you open the old barn doors, the view is nothing short of spectacular.

The lake butts against the bottom property line, pine trees frame either side making it feel like a private oasis. The edge of the small mountain town is a mere five minutes down the road. Beyond that, it’s all jagged

mountains that stretch back into miles upon miles of pristine Canadian wilderness.

The spot is beautiful. But everything on the property has fallen into disrepair. It all has so much potential though. I can see it clear as day. Guesthouses for the artists. Antique furniture. Spotty Wi-Fi. No paparazzi.

Rose Hill Records. Named after the town I've come to love.

I've produced *one* successful album, and now I've got the itch. I want to do it again and lucky for me, an influx of artists want a turn too. I'm excited to be creative every day. Listen to music every day. Make songs come to life every day.

Especially *here*.

Rose Hill is the perfect place to make a home and start the business I've always wanted.

A personal haven where I don't have to wear a stuffy suit or report to shareholders who don't care about anything but the bottom line or get hounded by the press about being "the World's Hottest Billionaire," like it's some sort of crowning achievement.

"It says here you declined to comment."

If they named West the World's Hottest Billionaire, he'd milk the hell out of it.

Me? I decline to comment and take off to a small town where I can start a brand-new business venture by myself. I hate the attention.

"Actually, I gave them one comment before saying I officially refused to comment."

West snorts. "Oh, this ought to be good."

My cheek twitches. He knows. He knows me better than almost anyone.

"I told them I'm barely a billionaire and just happen to be more attractive than the 2,500 other people on the list. They want to write an article about the least interesting aspect of my life. So, no comment, because this accomplishment doesn't deserve one. Conventionally handsome, rich guy says no fucking thank you."

"So weird they didn't want to publish that charming one-liner from you, Ford. A real head-scratcher."

I shrug and ignore the jab. Talking about money makes me uncomfortable. I've had an abundance of it my entire life and have now spent an awful lot of time around people who make my childhood look meager. I have never found it to be an especially impressive trait about any

one person I've met. In fact, it's kind of the opposite. When you have a lot of money, people act differently around you, and if you let yourself get too obsessed with your own money, you can turn into a real piece of shit.

Why would anyone want to read an article about how rich some guy is?

I've also never flourished in the spotlight. The attention makes me snappy and sarcastic, and what I've been told is *rude* or *out of touch with social cues*. Though I'm not sure I'd take it that far. I'd call it direct and say other people get offended too easily.

Unlike West, I don't come off as likable. I'm aware of the perception, but I'm not particularly bothered about changing it. Anyone who knows me knows better. And I'm not losing sleep over the opinions of those who don't.

I bend down, scoop up the hand-held duster, and make my way across the room. My lace-up boots thud on the scuffed hardwood floor as I trudge over to the vintage cast iron stove in the corner. Cobwebs and partially burnt logs fill the space beneath it, and I wonder how long they've been there, who put them there, what story they might tell. If they weren't such an eyesore, I'd leave them. To be frank, I feel a bit like a yuppie intruder barging in to make everything all shiny and new.

I could pay a person to do this grunt work, but hiring someone I can trust feels like a mountain too steep to climb. Plus, there's a certain allure to building something with my own hands. Yeah, I've got the money, but I don't *need* to spend the money when I'm perfectly capable. When I've got the ambition and the dedication.

Hard work—that's how I ended up owning one of the busiest bars and premier live music venues in Calgary. That's how I ended up founding a music streaming app that catapulted my bank account into an obnoxious stratosphere. My dad had plenty of money, plenty of connections, and he could have set me up easily—but he didn't. He was hell-bent on my sister and me learning the value of money.

But what will all my successes from here on out be chalked up to?

Money. Connections. *Luck*. And I don't believe in luck.

"What even is this picture of you?" West holds the magazine up from across the room. "You look like you're hiding behind the popped collar of your jacket."

"I was."

"Why?"

Bless him. His furrowed brow and tilted head betray his genuine confusion. To someone like him, it makes no sense why I wouldn't bask in the notice. He's larger-than-life, fun, a big fucking showboat—and I love all of that about him. West also has a good heart and is trustworthy as all get-out. He's genuine in a world of so many people who aren't. He found me reading by the lake as a kid and started talking to me like he knew me. Hasn't stopped since then, unlikely of friends as we might be. There's something about us that has just... stuck.

For twenty years we've stuck.

"Because I didn't want my picture taken. Don't like it."

"Why? Do you need me to tell you how handsome you are?"

I scoff. "Because I was walking down the street to meet my sister for coffee, not at a photo shoot."

He chuckles. "I mean, would it have killed you to smile?"

"Yes." I stare at the fireplace, duster in hand, trying to figure out how the hell I'm going to do everything on my list.

"You're gonna need a shovel for that oven. Not a duster."

"Thank you, West. I'm so glad you're nearby to lend your opinion."

He lets out an exaggerated sigh. "It's gonna be like the old days. Just you and me getting into trouble."

"You got into trouble. I watched."

"I remember Rosie tagging along, just fucking shit-talking you the entire time. God, nothing made me prouder of her." My body stills at the mention of his sister. *Rosalie*. I haven't laid eyes on her in a decade, but my shoulders get tense all the same.

I turn to face West. "Doesn't she have her master's and some fancy job in Vancouver now?"

I already know she does. I look her up from time to time—just to make sure she's happy, of course. West mentions her when we talk, but never in detail. It's all generalities, surface-level updates. But then, why would he tell his best friend anything more in-depth about his baby sister, who took off to live in the city?

It's better I don't ask.

He waves a hand, like Rosie slinging jabs as a teenager is the most impressive feat to him. "Those were the best summers. I was always such a sad fucking panda when you went back to the city for school."

I hated it too. Back to the city, back to school with kids who—unlike West—treated me like I was different from them. Back to the pressure of being the son of one of the world’s most recognizable guitarists. Rose Hill was my favorite escape as a child, and it would seem nothing has changed for me as a thirty-two-year-old man. It’s like time stands still here. No one here treats you like you’re rich or famous or even particularly special. Everyone just goes about their business. That fresh mountain air must give everyone the perspective that city people seem to lack.

But my attachment to this area is more than just that. I’m drawn back to this place on a much deeper level. To the memories it holds.

“Well, this year you won’t have to cry about it, West. You’re officially stuck with me.”

I toss the duster back into the box, coming to terms with the fact I might need to hire someone to help get this place up and running if I want to record here anytime soon. The main house is now livable—fully updated it myself over the winter—but this building is so much worse.

“Fuck yeah. I’m going to get you on my bowling team.”

“No. Absolutely not. You told me it’s dad’s night out, and I’m not a dad.” I kick my toe at what I thought was a dead bug but am now certain is mouse droppings. “Except to maybe an entire herd of mice.”

“I don’t think mice roam in herds.”

“Whatever they are, I don’t think they qualify me as a dad.”

“That’s fine. It’s really just Sebastian and me, assuming he’s in town, and then we’ve got you—”

“You haven’t got me—”

“And then we’ve got Crazy Clyde.”

“Who’s Crazy Clyde? I don’t think you can just roll around calling people crazy anymore.”

“He’s the dude who lives on the other side of the mountain—pretty much a hermit—because he believes in every conspiracy theory known to man. His stories are my favorite. And he’ll introduce himself as Crazy Clyde, so I’ll let you be the one to correct him.”

I blink at my friend. This sounds like my nightmare.

“I’m not fucking bowling with you, West.”

He scoffs and dismisses my words with a hand flick. “You say that now. But you always said no to my shenanigans as a kid too. And then you’d be there. Emo hair in your eyes, pushing those oversized glasses up the bridge

of your nose.” He grins at me, perfect white teeth flashing bright next to his rough stubble. “Moody scowl on your face. Probably some obscure book of poetry clutched under your arm.”

I can’t help but snort out a laugh at his accurate description as I shake my head. “Get fucked, Belmont.”

“Look at you now—”

My pointer finger aims straight at him. “Don’t even say it.”

As he speaks, his hands make sweeping, dramatic movements through the air. “World’s Hottest Billionaire.”

“I hate you.”

“Nah. You love me. I’m the sunshine to your grumpy.”

My brows pinch together. “What?”

“It’s a thing in romance books—”

A knock at the door cuts him off, and we both turn to look across the barn, toward the rickety front door down a narrow hallway that turns sharply into the kitchenette.

“Who would be here?” West whispers like we’re in trouble.

Maybe we are. I’ve only been in town for a short while, working on the main house, so I have no idea who it could be. My sister Willa would barge in unannounced. My parents would call. My best friend is sitting across from me.

Truth is, I have no one else in my life who cares about me enough to drive all this way.

I keep my circle tight and trust few. The allure of Rose Hill is that the paparazzi don’t want to spend all day driving to *maybe* get a shot.

“I don’t know.” I shrug and West’s eyes go wide as an owl’s as he shrugs back.

Another knock.

“I can hear you whispering in there,” a feminine voice I don’t recognize calls from the other side of the wooden door.

My head goes to Rosie first, but this voice sounds too young to be hers. So, with a heavy sigh, I stride toward the door and yank it open.

Before me stands a girl. She’s wearing black ripped jeans. Black Chuck Taylors. An oversized Death From Above 1979 T-shirt—one of my favorite bands. The garment boasts a few intentionally distressed holes across it. Her pitch-black hair is tied in two braids, one down each shoulder, complemented with straight bangs in a slash across her forehead. All of this

is topped off with an unimpressed expression on her face. The top loop of a JanSport backpack dangles from her fingers.

I don't know how old she is. Young. Looks like that awkward, confusing age just before you become a teenager—based on her sullen stare and the sizable zit on her chin. She crosses her arms and drags her gaze from my face down to my feet before making her way back up.

“Who are you?” I don't mean to sound like a dick when I say it. After all, she's just a kid.

Her lips flatten, and she blinks once, slowly. “Your daughter, dickhead.”

Now it's my turn to blink slowly. I hear West's chair roll across the hardwood and his heavy steps as he approaches.

“Pardon me?” I say. I heard the words, but my brain is not processing their meaning.

“You're my dad,” she says and rolls her eyes. “Biologically speaking.”

But there's no way. There's absolutely no way. The mere statement puts me on the defensive. It's laughable.

One stupid *Forbes* article about my bank account and the cockroaches crawl out. I know this story all too well. I almost feel bad for the girl. She's too young to pull this off on her own. Someone *must* have put her up to it.

“Listen, whatever your name is, I'm not sure what you're after from me, but I can take a guess. And you're barking up the wrong tree.”

“My name is Cora Holland. Your name is Ford Grant Junior, and you're my biological dad.”

“Oof, leave the junior off,” West murmurs from behind me. “He hates that.”

I don't spare my friend a glance. Instead, I stare down at the snarky little kid spouting total bullshit right to my face. She's got a lot of nerve. I'll give her that. “That's impossible. I never fucked Morticia Addams.”

Her head tilts and her eyes roll again. She barely reacts. “Really original, nepo baby. Never heard that joke before.” She rifles through her backpack. Black, *of course*. With a flourish, she pulls out a sheet of paper emblazoned with a logo I recognize.

The company I submitted DNA to so I could complete a family tree as a gift for my mom.

“What about a paper Dixie cup?” she continues. “A petri dish? A sterile tube? You fuck any of those for a few bucks at any point in your life?”

I feel every drop of blood sink down to my feet as my stomach turns and my head spins.

Because yes, in fact, I did.

West slaps my shoulder, giving it a firm squeeze as he edges past me and out the door. “Right, well, see you at bowling, I guess.”

And then I’m left here.

Alone.

Staring at a young girl who may well be my biological child. And feeling like what I might actually be is the World’s Most Unprepared Dad.

CHAPTER TWO

ROSIE

I SMILE BACK AT THE BOARDROOM FULL OF PEOPLE.

My boss.

My boss's boss.

My boss's boss's boss.

I wanted so badly to nail this presentation. I think I did. No, I *know* I did. But you wouldn't think so based on the blank looks and absent nods. It's not like I expected a standing ovation, but a couple of pats on the back might have been nice.

Instead, it's borderline awkward.

"And, well..." I wipe my hands down the front of my pencil skirt, a sign of how nervous I am. "That's my take on the acquisition based on the research I've done."

More blank fucking looks.

"So, uh, thank you for coming to my TED Talk." I laugh at my own joke, but it comes out shrill and desperate and makes me cringe internally.

I glance over at Faye, my favorite member of the admin team, who's taking meeting minutes. She presses her lips together to stifle a laugh and gives me a discreet thumbs-up.

At least Stan, the company president and also my boss, pities me enough to chuckle lightly. But he laughs at almost everything I say. Then licks his lips and stares at my tits.

So, with one more brief smile, I snatch up the stack of papers from the table in front of me and hustle back to my seat at the boardroom table. The solid pressure from the backrest of my chair has me sighing as I relax back into it.

As someone from accounting takes their turn, Stan leans in toward me, probably to complain about how buying another gravel pit will cost the company money while completely ignoring the fact it will also make them more money.

“You were great. Such a smart girl.”

My lips tug back as I try to swallow a wince. *Such a smart girl* makes me want to hurl all over his expensive tan slacks. But I swallow my vomit and force an awkward smile onto my face like I’m flattered by his condescension. “Thank you, Stan.”

The meeting drags on in a boring blur of people talking, spreadsheets on projectors, and me trying to convince myself I’m going to love this job eventually. I have too many student loans to let myself think otherwise.

This is the best job ever!

I repeat the sentiment in my head, thinking about my sizable paycheck. How grown up I’ll feel when I’m debt free. I’m the most educated person in my family. Working in the city at a Fortune 500 construction materials company.

Living the dream.

Before I know it, the meeting has ended and most people have filed out of the room—Faye whispered “you killed it” in my ear before departing—but not me. I’m still the newest employee in the room, which means I’ll be the one cleaning up after the production meeting. As I’m tidying the room, Stan, who is still lingering at the table, gestures me toward him.

“I need you a moment, Rosie.”

“Rosalie,” I correct. Because Stan doesn’t know me well enough to call me Rosie.

He just chuckles, like my request is amusing.

Stan is the best boss ever!

If I think it enough times, maybe I’ll believe that too.

“Can you come show me on this map exactly which property you were talking about?” he asks. “The one that borders our current pit?”

“Of course.”

When I come to stand beside him, he has a satellite image map on his laptop screen, zoomed all the way out like he can’t even figure out which country we’re in.

“May I?” I ask, pointing at his mouse. He nods and lifts his hands, leaning back in his chair but not getting out of the way.

I brush it off and bend down, maneuvering the map to where it needs to go. With a few clicks, I zoom in and shift over until the outline of the property in question comes into view.

“Right there.” I point at it just as I feel a hand on the top of my ass.

His hand.

I freeze, shocked by the contact and by the absolute gall of this man. He could have claimed he was touching my tail bone or something equally ridiculous, but then he slides his big, meaty palm down over the curve of my butt. His fingers trail over the middle, about to dig in, when I turn abruptly and slap his hand away.

He has the audacity to give me a set of wide, little-boy eyes, like he’s innocent. It pisses me off.

He pisses me off.

I transform from friendly Rosie into I’ll-fucking-kill-you Rosie. After all, you don’t grow up the only sister to a guy like Weston Belmont and enter adulthood without a scrappy side at least partially intact.

My shoulders go rigid and ice hardens my voice. “Stan, if I wanted you to touch me, I would tell you.”

“Rosie—”

“But now I’ll have to tell HR instead. You’re a pig.”

He looks stunned by my words, by the abruptness with which I scoop up my belongings and storm toward the door.

You’d think he’d apologize, beg for mercy, but instead, he says, “HR is gone for the day. You’ll have to wait until tomorrow.”



“You look tired.”

Ryan stumbles from our bedroom and gives me a dopey smile. I wait for the swirl of butterflies to crash around in my stomach, but they don’t come.

“I am,” he says, immediately heading for the coffeepot.

I’m not sure where he was last night. I came back to an empty apartment after a session of late-night stewing around the office while I finished up some work. HR really was gone for the day—I know because I went past their offices multiple times, which just added to my anxiety.

When I got home, I cracked open a bottle of wine and stared out over the city. Under the pitch-black cloud-covered sky and the endless West Coast drizzle, cars weaved through the wet downtown streets of Vancouver with a gentle whooshing sound that was almost soothing. After that, I'd eaten a bowl of popcorn for dinner and contemplated my life.

Most girls would have been worried about their boyfriend's whereabouts. They'd probably blow up their phones and demand to know where they were and who they were with. But I was struck by no such inclination.

I like Ryan. I've always liked Ryan. Since the first day he flopped down next to me and flashed me that signature lopsided, boyish grin in the first finance course of my master's program. Everything about our relationship after that was easy. Friends and study buddies, roommates, and from there... more.

Then I just never left.

Sometimes I wonder if it was all just a little *too* easy. We grew from roommates to partners in a way that seemed simple and obvious. Now, we're feeling like roommates again, and I wonder what changed and how I never noticed it happening. I wonder if sweet, lovable Ryan has noticed or if I'm the problem.

I wonder... do you feel yourself fall out of love? Or do you just wake up and realize it one day?

"What'd you get up to?" I ask. "I didn't even hear you come in."

He pulls out the second seat at the island in our sleek two-bedroom apartment. "Yeah. Didn't get back until like three and you were out cold. Some bigwigs from the head office took the guys and me out for beers after work, and one thing led to another."

He chuckles good-naturedly and ruffles my hair. Some days that might feel sweet. But after what happened to me yesterday, it feels... condescending.

I give him a brittle smile and smooth my hair. Ryan is a good guy. I remind myself of this all the time, over little things. I feel guilty those little things are irritating me, and I feel guiltier for what that irritation might mean.

He's like a golden retriever. Happy and chill and unbothered all the time. And sometimes when he accidentally drools on me or gets hair on my

black shirt, like some sort of big, happy idiot, I want to snap at him. But he's so well-meaning that I don't.

I ignore it because our lives are too damn busy for me to worry about that right now. Ryan is everything I should want and I don't want to throw away a multi-year relationship with a nice guy, all because I'm overworked and on edge.

That seems rash. It could be a phase. I could regret it. I've always been the responsible child in my family. I don't make thoughtless moves.

"Fun," I add without feeling. Because a bunch of oil industry guys going out on the town doesn't sound any better than a bunch of construction industry guys doing the exact same thing.

They both sound like prime ass-grabbing situations.

My cheeks heat as I recall the feeling of Stan's hand over the curve of my body. I've always thought I'd be able to brush something like that off. When I ride the SkyTrain, people bump into me all the time. But with him it's the intention—the path his touch took.

It felt *wrong*. And I stayed awake for a long time thinking about it. Realizing I had heard the sharp, ragged intake of his breath behind me as his fingers dug in.

That little gasp is what spurred me into motion.

That little gasp plays on repeat in my ears. It makes my skin crawl. It makes me not want to show my face at work. It seems like it shouldn't bother me this much, and yet it does. I'm not sure who I trust enough to tell. I could tell West, but I know how he'd react, and I don't want him to go to jail.

So, I opt for Ryan. Sweet, lovable, reliable Ryan.

"I have something I was hoping I could get your opinion on."

He pauses from scrolling on his phone to peek up at me, a reassuring expression on his face. "Yeah, babe. Of course."

"So yesterday, at the end of that big meeting I've been prepping for—you know the one?"

His eyes stay glued on the screen, but he nods. "Yeah, of course. You've been walking around muttering that presentation under your breath for at least a week. I bet you nailed it."

"Right. Yeah. That's the one. And it went well. But, so..." My fingers twist in my lap, cup of tea forgotten on the counter before me. I have my full attention on Ryan as I try to muster the courage to get this out. But

Ryan has his attention on what appears to be a video of a raccoon taking a bubble bath.

“At the end of the meeting, I was showing my boss, Stan, something. And he touched me. Well, he grabbed my ass.”

My throat feels tight as Ryan jerks his head up in my direction. “Oh shit,” is the first thing he says, but there’s an edge of amusement to it. Like this is somehow funny.

“Yeah. Oh shit.”

Ryan straightens at my terse tone, finally looking concerned. “Do you think he meant to? Like, was it on purpose?”

The bridge of my nose stings at that being the first thing he asks. “Yes, it was very much on purpose.”

“Dang. Are you all right?” He puts the phone down and gives me his full attention, though I’m finding I wish he hadn’t. I thought I wanted his attention, but now I’m squirming under his gaze. Turns out this was easier to talk about without him staring at me.

I nod briskly, assuredly, to cover for the fact I don’t know if I actually am all right. “I told him I’m going to take it to HR, but they were gone already. So now I’m kinda gearing myself up to walk in there and let them know.”

He blows out a loud breath and shifts on his stool, placing a hand on my leg before saying the worst thing he’s ever said to me. “Shit, Rosie. I’m sorry. I know how important this job is to you. Do you think it might be better to pretend like it never happened? These big companies”—his fingers graze my thigh before squeezing it, and I feel myself recoil from his touch—“they stay as far away from scandal as possible. And it’s still a relatively new position for you... I’d hate to see that jeopardized.”

I’m stunned into silence. I blink back at the man I’ve lived with for the past two years, a mixture of fury and devastation twisting inside of me.

My mouth moves and so does my body, but not in conjunction with what I feel inside. “Yeah. For sure. Wouldn’t want to jeopardize anything.”

I nod as I pat his hand, which is still on my leg. But I’m uncertain who’s reassuring who here.

All I know is that Ryan’s reaction isn’t what I wanted from him.

Which is why I take his hand and remove it from my body.

“I’m glad you agree. I think I’d just carry on with my work if I were you.”

If I were you.

“Mm-hmm,” is all I can muster as I pull away from him.

“I know, babe. I know.” He tries to squeeze my shoulder reassuringly and a wave of discomfort washes over me. I don’t want to be touched. “Once you’ve been working in the industry as long as I have, you’ll learn we have to look past some things if we want to be successful.”

In response, I scoff and make an internal note to look past sexual harassment in the future. It’s an especially obnoxious sentiment coming from someone who was out all night getting wined and dined by the bigwigs at his company. I know Ryan thinks what he just said is well-meaning and supportive, but it makes me want to punch him square in the face.

Sweet, professional, MBA-toting Rosie Belmont doesn’t hit people though, so I swallow the urge and mumble, “Thanks,” before walking away.

The disparity between our experiences is a lance through my heart, but not one I necessarily want to take out on Ryan at this moment. I can’t afford to be reckless.

But the fact he doesn’t even seem upset? That smarts.

I didn’t need someone to go in there and beat the shit out of Stan, but I’d be lying if I said I wouldn’t have liked it. It might have been nice to feel like the man I share my life with has my back. That he’d defend my honor—lame and old-fashioned as that might sound. Even the tiniest spark of ferocity over my safety, the injustice of it all, would have sufficed.

Hell, I’d have settled for a hug.

I get neither.

When I go to leave later that morning, Ryan offers me a thumbs-up and says, “Go get ’em, tiger,” from behind the glass shower door.

I feel sick on the train the entire way to work.

I begin to shake on the elevator ride up to our floor.

I keep my eyes down, knowing that if I can just make it to the privacy of my tiny office, I’ll be able to regain my composure behind a closed door.

But I’m intercepted by Linda from HR. She has an apologetic expression painted all over her face before any words even crest her lips. “Good morning, Rosalie. Once you’re settled, can you come to my office?”

“Yes, of course.” My voice cracks as I nod.

We exchange matching forced smiles, but when I turn away from her, a big, fat tear rolls down my cheek. Because I know exactly what’s coming.