

Coming Soon

written by

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INT. WARFIELD THEATRE - CONCERT STAGE - NIGHT

Red velvet curtains. Warm bulbs. A heart-shaped marquee.

No LED screens. No arena polish. Just fabric, a live band, and ROWAN HALE, 29, sweaty, glittering, absolutely built for this.

The Warfield screams the final chorus back at her.

ROWAN
(singing)
JUST A LITTLE MORE TIME--
WAS IT REALLY THAT HARD TO DO?
IT WAS ALL I EVER ASKED OF YOU--

The band builds.

Rowan spins in her skirt, framed by the heart she fought tooth and nail for.

For five perfect seconds, this is it. This is enough.

Cue: RED BALLOONS. HEART CONFETTI. Big ending.

A concerning mechanical screech enters the sacred space.

The balloon net drops six inches.

Stops.

The heart confetti does absolutely nothing.

Then the whole swollen net swings over the audience like a possessed uvula.

The crowd follows it with their eyes. Phones up. Singing turns to pointing.

Rowan looks up.

The stage-high leaves her face for a single second.

Of course something like this would happen.

In the wings, AMBER, tall, headset on, checks Rowan's face before she even bothers with the giant cursed pendulum.

A CREW GUY with no regard for safety appears high on the rig with a long pole, poking desperately at the net.

Into the mic, first instinct:

ROWAN (CONT'D)
I'm gonna swing from the
chandelier...

The crowd laughs.

Rowan catches Amber's eye.

Amber's face softens. A tiny nod.

Rowan turns back to the crowd. Collected now. Almost enjoying it.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
Lucky you, San Fran. You guys get
one more chorus. On the house.

The crowd cheers.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
BUT... if they're not coming down,
you're going up.

She raises both hands.

The crowd raises theirs.

Rowan times the swing of the balloon net.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
Two, three, four--

The drummer catches it.

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.

The band crashes back in, riding the stupid pendulum like it was always the plan.

Rowan points the mic out.

The Warfield lifts.

No balloons. No confetti. Just hands, phones, sweat, noise.

Rowan laughs through the last breath of it.

Then she catches Amber in the wing. Amber smiles.

Rowan's smile holds. Almost.

It's always almost.

She bows.

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INT. TOUR BUS - NIGHT

The bus door squeaks open. Amber steps on first.

Rowan climbs aboard behind her, glittered, breathless, expecting applause.

There is none.

AMY

"Lane" is doing a lot of work there.

MAYA

Cult favourite is not an insult.

Rowan stops.

AMY and JARED, Rowan's publicists, are hunched over a laptop propped on Rowan's makeup bag. On screen: Iris, Rowan's A&R.

All polite. All tired.

ROWAN

Well. Don't all cheer at once.

Amy and Jared acknowledge her politely, then turn back to the screen.

JARED

What about main stage earlier in the day? We can do a shorter set.

Amber shoves a protein shake into Rowan's hand. Rowan doesn't notice.

IRIS

Naya's main-stage push is already in motion. There's a new single already climbing. There's a campaign. There's a next step.

That lands.

Rowan points at herself. Points at the laptop.

Amy gives her a manager smile that politely means shut up.

JARED

Then move Rowan later in the Gobi. Let her close the tent. Give us a smaller production bump and press support.

Rowan scoffs. They ignore her.

Amber takes the protein shake back before Rowan can use it as a weapon. Rowan still hasn't noticed.

IRIS

I'm sorry guys, but my hands are tied here. The label won't spend more money extending an era that's run its course.

ROWAN

No.

Rowan ducks under Amber's arm and wedges herself into the laptop frame.

IRIS

Hi, honey.

Amy closes her eyes. Jared looks at the ceiling.

ROWAN

Give me the slot. Give me the budget. I'll give you the single, the launch, the whole next era.

Silence.

IRIS

You have a single?

ROWAN

I have THE song.

Amber, Amy, and Jared all look at her.

Rowan looks only at Iris.

IRIS

What kind of launch?

Rowan feels the room tilt toward her. She loves it.

ROWAN

Coachella. Sunset. First time anyone hears it. No teasers, no little begging-for-attention rollout. We make the first listen the moment.

JARED

That part is actually--

AMY

Jared.

ROWAN

The whole conversation becomes: who is Rowan Hale now? And the answer is "The pop star you wish you got to see for 50 bucks before she exploded."

Iris almost smiles.

IRIS

We would need the master, title, and top-line creative for the new album by Friday.

AMY

That's five days.

Rowan nods too fast.

ROWAN

Great. Done.

JARED

Rowan.

She ignores him.

Sabrina, princess of the bus and ruler of everyone on it, hops onto the table.

Her face fills the laptop camera. One giant eye. Whiskers.

SABRINA

Meow.

One delicate paw lands on the keyboard.

The call ends.

Silence.

Sabrina licks her paw like she negotiated the deal herself.

Amy exhales. Jared removes his glasses. Amber stares at Rowan.

Sabrina steps off the table and presses against Rowan's shin like a tiny groupie.

Amy rubs her forehead.

Rowan starts backing toward the bathroom.

The bus lurches. Or maybe she does.

The colour drains slightly from Rowan's face.

3 **INT. TOUR BUS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Tiny. Fluorescent. Cruel.

Rowan tries to sit with dignity as she vomits into the toilet. There is nowhere for dignity to go.

Amber is behind her, gathering Rowan's wet curls away from her face.

AMBER

There we go. Very regal. Very next era.

Rowan chokes out half a laugh, half a retch.

Outside, Amy is already on the phone.

AMY (O.S.)

Dan, how fast can you get to Portland? It's an emergency.

Rowan lowers her forehead to the toilet rim.

ROWAN

Did I sound too desperate?

Amber does not answer fast enough.

ROWAN (CONT'D)

Great. So that's a yes.

AMBER

I think you sounded scared.

Rowan looks at her.

ROWAN

I heard them bargaining me down.

AMBER

They were trying to keep you in the room.

ROWAN

By lowering the ceiling?

Amber has no quick answer.

Rowan laughs, broken.

ROWAN (CONT'D)

You know those stories where they
put old people on a slab of ice and
just swoosh them into the water?

AMBER

You're twenty-nine.

ROWAN

In pop star years, I'm basically
geriatric. Everyone's waiting for
an ice cap big enough.

Amber flushes the toilet, then wipes cold sweat from Rowan's
forehead with her pyjama sleeve.

ROWAN (CONT'D)

What if I was bluffing? What if
this is it?

She gestures to the bathroom.

ROWAN (CONT'D)

What if I stay here forever?

Amber holds Rowan's face. Gentle, firm.

AMBER

I know you. This isn't it.

That gets in. Rowan wipes a tear fast.

ROWAN

I really hope you don't regret
saying that.

Amber's smile almost drops.

Almost.

AMBER

You're getting your moment. And
until then, unfortunately, I live
on this clown car with you.

She struggles to get up in the cramped space.

AMBER (CONT'D)

No one puts my baby on an ice cap.

Rowan half-smiles.

Sabrina watches from the doorway. Guarding.

Eyes narrowed. Almost too human.

4 **INT. TOUR BUS - A FEW HOURS LATER**

The bus rattles along the black highway.

Everyone is asleep.

Rowan slips out of her bunk, oversized hoodie over stage glitter, dark circles, hair wrecked.

 ROWAN
 (whisper yelling)
 Brina?

No cat.

She checks the mini fridge with one eye half-open.

No frozen princess.

Rowan exhales, turns--

MARINA BELL sits in the lounge.

Older. Cat-like. Fur coat. Perfect posture. The glamour of a past era, deeply offended by the bus.

Rowan freezes.

 MARINA BELL
 Is this what they give musicians
 now?

 ROWAN
 Who the fuck are you?

Marina Bell preens. Adjusts her fur coat.

 MARINA BELL
 Marina Bell.

 ROWAN
 Okay, Marina Bell, does anyone know
 you are on a bus?

MARINA BELL

I am not lost. I am here by divine appointment, though I object to the venue.

Rowan nods like that made sense. She glances toward the bunks.

ROWAN

I hear you, Marina Bell. Just sit tight while I get the little pink spray from my bag. I keep it just for stowaways.

Rowan takes a few slow steps back, smiling carefully.

Then Sabrina's toy mouse slides across the floor by itself.

Rowan stares.

The toy mouse lifts.

Just slightly.

It trembles in the air.

Then drops.

ROWAN (CONT'D)

Nope.

MARINA BELL

You promised them Friday.

Rowan stops.

MARINA BELL (CONT'D)

Bold choice, considering.

Rowan blinks. Then starts laughing.

ROWAN

Okay, thank fuck. This is a dream.

MARINA BELL

No. You would need to sleep first. And we both know you haven't. Just like we both know you don't have a song.

Rowan clocks that.

ROWAN

How do you know that?

MARINA BELL
As I said. Divine appointment. I'm
here to help with your whole...

Marina Bell gestures at all of Rowan.

MARINA BELL (CONT'D)
Condition.

ROWAN
Okay. No. I'm going back to sleep,
and when I wake up, you're gone
because you are not real.

MARINA BELL
I can guarantee you I am very real.

ROWAN
Great. Then, very real stowaway
lady, get off my bus.

Marina Bell looks out the window.

For the first time, the judgment leaves her face.

Rowan climbs back into her bunk, keeping one eye on Marina Bell.

A beat.

MARINA BELL
You'll call.

ROWAN
I absolutely will not.

Rowan yanks her curtain closed.

5 **INT. ROWAN'S LIVING ROOM - THURSDAY NIGHT**

Four days later.

Silence.

For the first time, Rowan is horizontal.

She lies on the floor in half her makeup, one sock on, phone glowing beside her.

Mood boards cover every wall. Glossy pop. Stripped-back.
Darker. Brighter. Every possible Rowan except the real one.

Red marker cuts through them:

TOO SAFE.
 ALREADY DID THIS.
 WHO IS THIS?

Coffee cups and takeout receipts track the last four days
 across the floor.

Half-written lyrics cover the piano. Most end after one line.

Her phone keeps lighting up with questions from her team she
 cannot answer.

She cranks her neck toward Sabrina's throne, the couch.

No emotional support diva to be found.

ROWAN
 Brina?

No answer. Expected.

A beat.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
 Nope.

Nothing.

She squeezes her eyes shut.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
 I am not doing this.

Nothing.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
 I am not calling the bus ghost.

Still nothing.

Her phone lights up again:
 WHAT ARE WE ACTUALLY GIVING THEM TOMORROW?!

Rowan laughs once. Tiny. Dead.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
 Fuck it.

She stares at the ceiling.

ROWAN (CONT'D)
 Marina Bell?

The room stays still.

Rowan exhales, embarrassed.

ROWAN (CONT'D)

Okay. This is good. This is
healthy.

She reaches for her phone-

Suddenly the room drops away.