



Oh. My. God. What the . . . ?

My heart thumps wildly as I snatch a *City Girls* magazine off a Lincoln Park newsstand. I clutch the glossy little weekly in horror as my eyes zero in on the headline: WINGWOMAN BARES ALL.

Shitty! It can't be.

Chills prickle down my spine as I rip off my Diesel sunglasses to take a closer look. The mortifying picture just below the headline is every girl's worst *nightmare*. And it's right smack on the cover of the dishiest, most well-read social magazine in Chicago.

A butt photo.

Yep. There it is – a way-too-big snapshot of a girl's flouncy white miniskirt tucked into a lacy pink thong, her pearly white butt peeking out for the entire world to see.

I clap a hand over my gaping mouth. This can't be happening. It just can't be. I mean, that girl in the picture? It's . . . well . . . it's . . .

ME.

My cheeks flush feverishly as I inspect every inch of my high-resolution butt. Hands shaking. Head pounding. Panic. Panicky. Panicking. I mean, this is humiliating. This is a nightmare. This is . . .

Aaack! *Is that cellulite?* I squint hard, slowly turning the

magazine right, then left. *It is!* I can't believe this. I close my eyes in pure torture.

Just then, a gaggle of girls struts past. They spot the picture from four feet away and immediately huddle around the newsstand. Their squeals of laughter hurt my ears.

'Look!' one girl shrieks, pointing. 'That's hilarious. Can you imagine?'

'Eww!' another girl hisses. 'Her ass is *droopy*.'

I whip around, shoving on my sunglasses and pulling up my puffy black North Face vest all the way to my ears. Tears well up as I glare down at the photo. At least you can't see my face. Someone is bound to find out, though. Aren't they? They'll recognize my outfit or my blond hair or something. I'll be discovered. I, Victoria Hart, will forever be known as the girl in the butt photo!

I need to get home – *fast*. Stuffing the magazine under my arm, I rush back to my apartment a few blocks away.

Damn my job.

Damn that reporter.

Damn last night.

Why do these things always happen to me? I mean, the night started off *sooo* wonderfully. You know . . . kind of. At least I thought so. (Okay. Okay. Maybe it was a tad shaky. But that's totally understandable. Right? It was my first night on the job!) Hmph. Maybe I should see what you think . . .

There we are, flying down Lake Shore Drive in a sleek black SUV limo with the tinted windows rolled down, moon-roof open, and our hair flipping all around. Just me, two other wingwomen, and a *City Girls* magazine reporter. It's a gorgeous April night. Crisp and cool. There are dark foamy waves from Lake Michigan crashing to the left and the Chicago skyline sparkling to the right. I gaze out the window at the Hancock Building as I nervously sip my bubbly champagne and try to remain calm.

Tonight I'm training to be a wingwoman. And I'll admit it, I'm freaking out. I have no clue what I'm doing. None. I mean, I went through wingwoman training and everything, but tonight is for real. Tonight I'm actually meeting clients

and trying my best to hook them up with all the hot girls they're interested in.

I'm completely nervous. And it doesn't help that this stupid *City Girls* reporter is going undercover with us tonight to see if this new dating revolution actually works. I don't even know what I'm doing yet and he'll be analyzing my every move.

Oh God. I bite my lip. What if I screw up? What if . . .

Okay. I just need to relax. Everything will be fine. I take another sip of my champagne and glance over at the two other wingwomen. I barely even know them, but they seem nice enough, I guess.

There's Lexi, the Tyra Banks wannabe. She's a total diva – decked out in shiny gold everything and currently on her cell phone fighting with her agent in L.A. Something about a toothpaste ad? I don't know. Whatever it is, Lexi is livid and keeps screaming, 'No fucking way! Tyra wouldn't be caught dead.'

And then there's Redd, a strawberry blond babe in a skimpy red skirt and shockingly tall black boots. She's a self-proclaimed gold digger. Rough and tough in every way, with a set of pricey double Ds proudly stuffed into a black sequined top.

I eye my nonexistent cleavage self-consciously.

Anyway, I guess these two girls are the pros. They've been wingwomen since the very beginning, ever since Chicago Wingwoman opened its office down on State Street by Marshall Field's about a year ago. And they're supposed to be showing me the ropes tonight.

'Oh yeah? Well, fuck you!' Lexi suddenly shouts, snapping her cell phone shut and tossing it into her gold hobo bag. 'Hmph. Minty fresh my ass!' she huffs as she steals a flute of champagne from the limo bar and downs the entire thing. 'Look at me!' she bellows to no one in particular. 'I have an amazing body. I should be doing Victoria's fucking Secret.'

That's when Jay, the *City Girls* reporter, pulls out his spiral notebook and silver voice recorder. 'Can I ask you girls a couple of questions before we get to the bar?' he asks.

'Shoot,' Redd says, fluffing her strawberry blond hair.

Lexi gives Jay an evil stare, but shrugs. And I nod, trying my best to appear cool and confident like the other girls.

‘Great.’ Jay grins, peeling off his suede sports coat. He clicks on the recorder. ‘Since we don’t have a lot of time, let’s get straight to it. Tell me. Why did you girls become wingwomen? Because it’s fun? Because you get paid to party?’

‘Screw that. I’m in it for a husband,’ Redd rasps, lighting a cigarette. ‘A rich one.’

‘Don’t be stupid. You know we can’t date clients,’ Lexi snaps, lowering her gold glittery eyelashes at Redd. ‘Talk about *desperate*.’

‘Speak for yourself, prissy pants.’ Redd laughs heartily, taking a long drag and blowing out a white puff of smoke. ‘I don’t care what management says. They’re crazy if they think I’d pass up an eligible bachelor with a fat wallet. Forget that! He’s mine. Finders keepers.’

Jay scribbles in his spiral notebook, then turns to me. ‘Okay. So. What about you? It’s Victoria, right?’

I nod, shifting uncomfortably in the leather seats. ‘Um . . . I don’t know. I guess I *like* being a matchmaker. I always have.’ I wrinkle my nose, realizing how naive and dreamy I must sound. But it’s true! I’ve always played matchmaker for all my friends. First there was Julia and Kevin. Then Gwynn and Bryan. I mean, I’m really good at setting people up. And, well, that’s what being a wingwoman is all about. Right? *I was born to do this job*.

‘How cute.’ Lexi smirks, batting those eyelashes again.

‘Oh Vicky, doll!’ Redd coughs and slaps her knee. ‘You’re cracking me up. I almost bought that bullshit. You’re good. *Really good*.’

‘Sounds like you’re very dedicated.’ Jay smiles, ignoring the others. ‘How long have you been a wingwoman?’

‘Um . . . actually it’s my first night,’ I say. ‘These girls are showing me how it’s done.’

Redd yanks up her black sequined top and lets out a huge, ‘Hell yeah!’ She holds up her champagne in cheers. ‘It’s gonna be a real good night.’

‘To a good night!’ Everyone whoops and clinks glasses. Well, everyone except Lexi. She’s already on her cell phone again.

As we pull up to Fulton Lounge in the trendy West Loop meatpacking district, I can already hear the gyrating music thumping onto the streets. This is the city's new ultra-hip neighborhood, filled with cool brick lofts, art galleries, and loads of chic lounges, restaurants, and clubs. Our driver runs around and opens the limo door.

'Ready?' Redd grins, a fresh cigarette dangling from her lower lip.

'I think so,' I say, taking a deep breath and dabbing on some sheer pink lip gloss.

Jay is already on the sidewalk, snapping photos as we climb out of the car. We squeeze our way through the designer crowd milling about outside, blue spotlights flickering all around our heads. I guess the clients are meeting us at the door. They have our pictures, so they'll find us. All we know is that they're businessmen from Texas with a lot of cash to throw around.

'I bet that's them,' Lexi hisses, pointing a slick red fingertip at a pack of cowboys looking outrageously out of place among all the hipsters.

Redd stamps out her cigarette and nudges us toward them. 'Hee-haw, ladies! Let's get after it.'

Suddenly an arm sweeps around the four of us. It's attached to an enormous, red-cheeked man with a five-gallon cowboy hat and an expensive white suit.

'Howdy there!' he hollers. 'I'm Max. Are you gals our wingladies for the night?'

'That's us,' we say in unison.

'Boy, ya'll sure are a sight for sore eyes.' Max tips his big white hat. 'Meet the boys,' he says, waving over the crew of cowboys. And suddenly we're surrounded by boots, blue jeans, and big ol' belt buckles. I can barely keep up with all their names. Billy, Clint, Austin, Luke, and . . . is it Dusty?

The girls decide they should take three clients each and I should stay with the reporter, so I can watch and learn while they do their thing. Lexi leads her Texans past the bouncer and into the glitzy crowd. And Redd flips her strawberry blond hair off her shoulders, hooks arms with Max, and flashes a big, dazzling smile.

'So tell me about your ranch,' Redd purrs sweetly as she

makes her way past the doorman. 'Is it big?' Her other cowboy clients lag a few steps behind.

Jay turns to me, swinging his sports coat over his shoulder. 'Should we grab a seat at the bar?'

We watch as Redd and Lexi work their magic. They flutter around the lounge like social butterflies, a brightly colored martini in one hand and a cowboy in the other. It looks effortless, how they work their way into conversations. How they flirt and laugh. How they casually introduce their clients. It all seems so easy. So natural.

And just look at how happy all the cowboys are! Max is beaming from ear to ear, chatting it up with a gorgeous brunette in a powder-blue slip dress. Lexi and Clint are working their game with a feisty redhead. And the rest of the cowboys are surrounded by six-foot blond models.

All of a sudden, I have an urge to give it a whirl myself. I mean, I can do this! *Totally*. I'm absolutely giddy with anticipation.

Just then, Redd struts up, 'It's your turn, baby cakes. Show us what you've got.'

'Awesome!' I hoot, leaping off the barstool.

Jay looks nervous. 'Are you sure you're ready? Maybe I should go with Redd?'

'I can do it.' I put my hands on my hips, slightly hurt. Why is Jay doubting me? How hard can this be?

'Go get 'em.' Redd gives me a thumbs-up. 'I'm gonna grab a drink. Yell if you need backup.'

'Will do.' I beam excitedly. I'm going to be fine, though. Better than fine. Brilliant!

'Let me take a closer look at you,' I say to Jay.

He takes a few steps back, and I carefully eye him up and down. Cute enough. Very stereotypical writer. Tasseled loafers. Levi's. Rumped blue oxford. That suede jacket thrown over his shoulder. Let's see . . .

My professional opinion: we're going to need someone a tad on the artsy side. Not funky, though. Very well read. Down-to-earth. *A nice girl*. Hmm . . . I scan the crowd.

Too high maintenance.

Too girlie girl.

Too porn star.

Ooh. Wait a minute . . . there! ‘What about her?’ I point to a cute girl with rosy cheeks, tiny wire-frame glasses, and dark curls flowing all around her face.

Jay wrinkles his nose. ‘She’s kind of nerdy. I can do better. Don’t you think?’

What? Nerdy! She’s cute. Adorable, actually. Doesn’t Jay realize I’m a trained professional? Hmph. He should trust my judgment. That could be his soul mate! His entire reason for . . .

‘What about one of *those* girls?’ Jay points to a pack of Paris Hiltons, all skin and legs. In fact, as I look closer, I’m not entirely sure they even have clothes on.

Gulp.

‘Um . . . yeah. Sure.’ I scratch my head, suddenly wishing I had downed more than one drink. A little liquid courage might be handy right about now. ‘Let me go feel out the scene. I’ll be right back.’

As I walk over to the Hiltons, my hands shake and my knees wobble. Okay. I just need to stay calm. Everything’s fine. *This is my calling.* Get it together, Vic.

I plaster on my best glittery grin and prance right over.

‘Hey!’ I squeak. The flock of fake eyelashes, heavily lined lips, and big blond hair stares back at me.

Silence.

Um. Okay. This is awkward. Let’s try again. ‘What’s going on?’ I say, a bit louder this time.

More silence.

They all frown.

Wow. Are you kidding me? No wonder guys need a wing-woman. These girls are like ice queens. ‘Don’t you just love this place?’ I say, even louder.

‘We’re trying to work,’ one girl snaps. ‘Do you mind?’

Thank God.

‘ME TOO!’ I yowl, practically throwing my arms around them. ‘This is my first night. Can I just tell you . . . I am *sooo* incredibly nervous.’

The Hiltons eye me skeptically. Hmm. They’re probably not used to running into other wingwomen, that’s all.

‘So where are your clients?’ I smile, feeling totally

relaxed now. I mean, I'm bonding with coworkers. This is so great! I wonder if they know Redd and Lexi? Ooh. Now that I think about it, I should really ask if these girls have pointers for me. They look like they've been around the block, um, a few times and . . . 'Oh, I'm sorry. Were you saying something?'

'I said that's who we're looking for. Clients,' one girl grumbles. 'So if you could just . . .'

'*You lost them?*' I gasp. 'I'm so sorry! Can I help? Maybe they're in the bathroom or something. How awful. Can you get fired for that?'

The Hiltons look at one another strangely and then burst out laughing.

'What's so funny?' I ask, my eyes growing wide. 'Did I say something wrong?'

'Oh, sweetie! We're working girls.'

Right. Okay. That didn't exactly go so well. It wasn't my fault, though. Jay picked out the prostitutes, not me. How could I have known? It was an honest mistake. The trouble is, things aren't getting any better. It's been one painfully awkward attempt after another.

'Oh my God. I love your shoes!'

'Um. You're blocking my view. Could you move?'

'Wow. Is that a Pucci scarf?'

'Yeah. So?'

'Your highlights are amazing.'

'What? It's my natural color!'

'This is embarrassing. Do you have a tampon?'

'No.'

'Don't you just love this place?'

'Vad? Förlåt? Jag förstår inte?'

'Tough night?' Redd asks Jay and me later in the evening. 'Awful.' I sigh, my high hopes completely deflated by this point. 'What's wrong with me? You and Lexi made it look so easy.'

'Don't worry,' Redd rasps. 'You'll get the hang of it.'

Jay jabs me in the ribs. 'Hey! What about her? She's hot.'

He points to a gorgeous Asian girl in a white tank top, black miniskirt, and stilettos.

‘Sure,’ I mumble. ‘Let me run to the bathroom real quick. Keep an eye on her.’

I stumble into the restroom to regroup. I can’t believe how hard this wingwoman stuff is! I thought it would be a snap. You know. Have a few drinks. Laugh. Chat it up with a few gorgeous people. Make an introduction or two. Easy breezy. But people just aren’t interested in talking to random strangers. What am I going to do?

I grab a paper towel and dry my hands. I can’t quit. No! Victoria Hart is not a quitter. I’m going to go out there and show everyone I can do this. Because I can! I just know it. I swing open the bathroom door and walk back into the shrieking laughter and thumping house music with newfound confidence.

As I march over to Jay, I suddenly become very aware that people are staring at me. Hmm? That’s odd. Maybe I have toilet paper stuck to the bottom of my shoe? I stop and peer down at my silver strappy heels. Nope. Nothing.

Good God. People *really* are staring at me. How rude.

And look, is that girl pointing at me? My cheeks flush feverishly. What the . . . ?

Actually, she’s laughing at me. Aaack! They are, too!

Wait. *Everyone is.*

I can feel tears pricking at my eyes. What’s going on?

Redd suddenly comes bounding toward me. ‘YOUR ___ IRT!’ she screeches.

‘*What?*’ I yelp. I can’t hear her over the pulsating music.

Redd yanks the back of my skirt down. ‘Your skirt,’ she says breathlessly. ‘It was stuck in your thong!’

Oh my God. My heart stops. I whirl around and stare at all the howling faces in horror. People are doubled over in laughter. (Which thong did I wear tonight?! Please let it be a cute one. *Please.*) The Hiltons are wiping tears away from their eyes. And that’s when I see Jay . . . snapping pictures with his camera.

I can’t believe him. I run over and rip the camera out of Jay’s hands. ‘WHAT ARE YOU DOING?’ I shriek.

‘Hey! Give me that camera back!’ Jay yells, dropping his

spiral notepad and pencil. 'I'm not going to print anything. Swear. What kind of guy do you think I am?'

'You're a jerk,' Redd growls at Jay, then races after me. But I'm already pushing my way toward the door.

I'm MORTIFIED. (And really, *ree-ally* praying I didn't wear that grungy old blue thong with the hole in it.)

I clack down the stairs of Fulton Lounge, tears flooding down my cheeks. I just want to go home. I dump Jay's camera in a trash can and stumble into a cab. As we pull onto Halsted Street, I sink back into the dark sticky seats. And right as I'm about to shut my eyes, I pull up my white skirt just enough to see my thong. (Pink G-string. Calvin Klein. Very cutesy. Thank God.) My eyes flutter shut.

What a night. I have to be honest. I don't know about this whole wingwoman thing. It's not how I imagined the job at all. I mean, I wasn't using any of my matchmaking skills.

How did I get myself into this?

I rest my head on the cool cab window and let my mind float back. I guess it all started about a week ago with that one phone call. **THE NEWS THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING.** I mean, I knew my friend's life was going to change forever. But little did I know mine would change, too. How could I have predicted that life as a singletini would never be the same?



When I get that call, I know something's up. I just know it. Gwynn never calls late on a Sunday night. Ever.

'I'M ENGAGED!' she squeals as soon as I pick up my cell phone.

No hi.

No nothing.

I nearly drop the phone. 'Are you kidding? Oh my God. *Tell me you're kidding.*' I can feel the blood rushing to my neck and cheeks. And I seriously think I might pass out.

I hear Gwynn laughing at the other end of the line.

'This isn't funny,' I gasp, clutching my stomach. 'I . . . I can't breathe. I mean, what? You're engaged? Are . . . are you sure?'

'Yes, I'm sure!' Gwynn shrieks. 'Bryan proposed last night at Blackbird.'

'Wow,' I say, shaking my head in disbelief. I'm stunned. I mean, I know I set them up after college and everything, but I haven't been so sure about them lately. They've been fighting a lot. Mostly about Bryan's mom. She desperately wants him to move back to New York and Gwynn wants no part of it. None. And, well, I swore I wouldn't say a word, but Julia and Kimmie – our other two best friends – spotted Bryan getting cuddly with his old East Coast girlfriend, Kaitlyn, a few weeks ago. Yeah. I KNOW. And now he wants

to marry Gwynn? I was expecting a breakup call, not this. It doesn't make any sense.

'Isn't this so super exciting?' Gwynn bubbles away. 'Oh Vic – and the ring! It's amazing. You're going to die. I picked it out a few months ago. But . . . *shh*. Don't tell anyone. I want Bryan to get all the credit.'

Wait a minute.

My ears perk up. Did she say ring? Gwynn never told me she went ring shopping!

'What does it look like?' I ask, my stomach suddenly fluttering with excitement. Don't get me wrong. I'm still not sure if this wedding thing is a good idea or not, but who doesn't want to hear about diamonds?

'I love, love, love it!' she squeals. 'It's absolutely perfect. Super simple and super big!'

'It sounds amazing!' I gush, already wondering how much it was. It *had* to be ridiculously expensive if Gwynn picked it out. I mean, she grew up with an entire silver place setting in her mouth! Of course I'd never ask. That's so inappropriate. But . . .

Well? We *are* good friends . . .

(No. No. Don't do it.)

It's just a question. It's not like she has to tell me if she doesn't want to . . .

(Don't do it!)

'How much was it?' I blurt. *Aaack!* What's wrong with me? I'm terrible. Do I have no self-control?

'Mmm . . . I think it was, like, fifty or sixty? Something like that.'

'Thousand?!' I cough. That's almost twice my yearly salary!

'Yeah. Hello! It's a Harry Winston.'

'Oh. Right. Absolutely,' I say, trying desperately not to show my surprise. I mean, seriously. Shut up! A Harry Winston? Isn't that the ring they give away on *The Bachelor*? Hollywood stars wear Harry Winston. And even they usually just borrow those sparkly boulders for Oscar night.

Gwynn keeps talking and talking – telling me all about how she really, *ree-ally* wants a September wedding and on, and on, and . . .

Wait . . . what? SEPTEMBER? That's not even five months away!

'Fall weddings are gorgeous. Don't you think?' Gwynn chatters. 'It's still warm out. Not too hot. And it's so pretty with the leaves changing. I'm thinking the Lincoln Park Zoo. What do you think? Too overdone? I don't know about all those stinky animals, though. Eww. I'll have to think about it. Anyway.' Gwynn sighs. 'I'm so excited! Can you believe I'm actually engaged? I have a wedding to plan now, I have a *fiancé*!'

Once we hang up, I sit down on the corner of my bed in shock. This is not good. Not good at all. What if all those rumors are true? I'd feel terrible. *I set them up*. I'd be partially responsible.

I have such a bad feeling about this. And . . . okay, fine . . . it's not *only* because of Bryan.

I'll admit it. What . . . what does this mean for me? Gwynn is going to be a W-I-F-E. Part of a legally bound couple. Where will the rest of us girls fit in?

I know. I know. I sound incredibly selfish. I should be pelted with a thousand bags of that songbird-safe rice you toss at all the newlyweds. What's wrong with me? Don't I want Gwynn to live happily ever after?

I do. I really, really do, I want that for all four of us. But right now? We're having so much fun! Living it up in Chicago and being singletinis. We even made a pact.

It was our senior year at the University of Illinois. The night before we graduated. Gwynn, Kimmie, Julia, and I decided we had to go out big. We ended up at Kam's (where else?) – home of the drinking Illini and home to some of our best college memories. We danced and drank all night, and eventually made our way to the Quad around daybreak. It was so calm and peaceful. It felt like the entire campus was ours. We lay on our backs in the fresh-cut grass, gazing up at the lavender sky. We talked about everything that night. Our hopes. Our dreams. We were going to have it all when we moved to Chicago. The jobs. The money. The men. The martini parties. We'd be singletinis, someone said. 'Long live the singletinis,' we shouted over and over again, laughing into the sky. 'Long live the singletinis . . .'

Ha! And I almost forgot. We even created a new martini the first night we moved to Chicago. (How fun is that?) We lugged home a couple bottles of SKYY and a bunch of ingredients and garnishes, and we mixed and experimented until we came up with the perfect drink. Our drink. The Singletini. Mmm. Speaking of, I could really use one right about now.

I mean, what is going on? What is Gwynn thinking? We've only had two years of bliss. (Crazy fun! Well . . . mostly. Everyone dates a few jerks. Right?) I mean, we're not ready to get engaged yet. Are we? We always said we'd get married later on, when we got older.

Oh dear God. Are we getting old?

'Arghh!' I shriek into a white ruffly bed pillow.

Okay. Calm down. Breathe. It's not like Gwynn's moving to the suburbs or anything. (Oh no. *No way*. Gwynn would never do that. She has scoffed at the suburbs ever since I've known her. She always said she'd rather die than become one of those stuffy North Shore ladies.) Right. So getting engaged is not a big deal. People do it all the time. It was bound to happen. Nothing to get freaked out about. It doesn't mean we're getting old! Get a grip, Vic.

Armani, my chubby black cat, leaps onto my lap. The tiny silver bells on his collar *ting-ting-ting* as I scratch behind his ears.

Hmm. What time is it? I've got to talk to Kimmie! I dial her number, nervously biting my thumbnail.

Come on. Pick up.

Kimmie's answering machine flips on. *Hey, it's Kimmie. Leave a message.*

I call Julia and same thing. No answer.

Hmph. *Now what?*

I should take a bath. Relax. Clear my head. As I run the water, I examine my face in the vanity mirror above the sink. Are we really getting old? I lean in closer and tilt my chin up to get a better angle. There are faint lines at the edges of each eye. (What are those called? Crow's-feet?) I wrinkle my nose and watch as the annoying little lines deepen.

Eww.

I relax my face, stretch the skin back with my fingertips,

and study the reflection. Better. But the lines are still there. *Great.* I'm prematurely aging. I'll probably have to get Botox before I'm thirty. And that stuff always looks so fake, anyway.

I step away from the mirror and sigh. At least the rest of my body is in decent shape. I lift up my T-shirt and tap my abs. Okay. Maybe I'm a tad bit softer than I was in college. But overall, not bad. I slowly turn and stand on my tippytoes to see my profile in the mirror. Suck in. Suck in.

At least my stomach is flat. Well, kind of . . .

I exhale sharply and watch in horror as a small (or not so small) pocket of skin forms under my belly button. Aaack!

I have a . . . oh my God.

I have a pooch.

How could I let myself go like this?

I throw myself onto the floor into a flurry of sit-ups. 1-2-3-4. Yes. Oh yes. 5-6-7-8. This is good. 9-10-11. I should do this every day. My abs will be back in shape in no time. 12-13-14. Yeah. I'm not getting old. Who cares if I have a friend who's engaged. 15-16. Woo. Okay. It's really starting to burn now. 17 . . . 18. Good God. Are you kidding me? This sucks.

I flop onto my back and groan. Pathetic attempt, Vic. Pathetic. Armani purrs and nudges his furry black head against my calf.

'Not now, Armani.' I bat him out of the way, feeling tears spring to my eyes.

This is a crisis situation on *sooo* many levels. Why did Gwynn have to go and get engaged?

She's not ready for this.

I'm not ready for this.