

DYING TO GO EXCERPT

- And here I am, Rosisophia Doroche, a conglomeration of the Golden Girls' names smushed together, mom's favorite show in the '80s, a most hideous name that I'd managed to keep a secret for all of my life until my mother filled out my high school graduation forms for my diploma. I didn't learn she'd done this until my name was called in front of my 120 high school classmates and their families before I walked across the stage for my diploma. The look of shock on my face is forever etched into the photos of that moment, and even the laughs and extra cheers have been captured on a video recording that I will never watch for any amount of money.

After showering and dressing in a light blue sundress and applying a bit of foundation, I wander into the kitchen where Mom is putting some sort of breakfast casserole into the oven. Mom turns to look at me, pausing in judgment as is her *modus operandi*. "Can't you apply a bit more makeup, Rosi? You're not a spring chicken anymore, you know?"

"Mom, I really don't think your friends will care if I've applied mascara." I grab an orange from the fruit basket on the table.

She swats my hand. "Save your appetite for breakfast. And Jan will care. It's her nephew that's coming to town next week for a visit. She needs to sell you, Rosi."

"Sell me? I'm not a horse. And I am not the least bit interested in dating."

Mom takes a deep breath and sits down at the kitchen table, tapping the seat next to her for me to do the same. I count to five before sitting down.

"I'm sorry, Rosi. I'm worried about you. We all know that Wesley is dating again. I just think it'd be good for your self-confidence if you started dating again, too. You don't want to be alone at your dad's and my age, do you?"

"Wesley isn't dating again," I say through gritted teeth. "He's engaged to his mistress. And I don't need a partner to live a happy life. I'm here to help you and Dad when he has his surgery later this week. I am not here as your pet project." I stand up. "I'm taking an orange and going for a walk around the block." I grab the orange out of the fruit bowl again and storm outside.