

Just when she started to have hope Tate was changing, he blew it.

Val hitched Libby higher on her hip, adjusting the hood of her fleece onesie. Her daughter babbled happily, smacking a tiny fist against Val's shoulder.

Tate barely glanced up from the papers spread across the small table. So much for their "family outing at the cabin." She'd looked forward to this—just the three of them. Four, counting Hank.

The drive had reminded her of why she loved southern Missouri. Autumn blazed across the hills, a fiery canopy of crimson and gold stretching over the winding road. Sunlight dappled through the trees, casting shifting patterns on the pavement. But the moment they arrived, Tate had pulled out his laptop and case files.

"We're heading down to the stream," Val said, trying to keep the bitterness from her tone. "You coming?"

He ran his fingers over the bridge of his nose. "I've just got a few things to wrap up—"

So much for their family evening. Instead, work had followed them.

She hesitated, waiting for him to notice. For him to close the laptop, set the papers aside, and remind her that this trip was more than a change of scenery.

He didn't.

The tightness in her chest expanded.

Biting back her frustration, she turned toward the trees. "Come on, Hank."

Hank barked once, impatient, then trotted ahead. Val followed, boots crunching over fallen leaves. Although she wanted to look back, she focused on the footpath. He hadn't followed them outside, had barely acknowledged their leaving.

Six months. That's how long Libby had been in this world and how long she'd been back in Tate's orbit? He was trying, she knew that. But every time she let herself believe in the man playing lullabies on his guitar, the lawyer Tate—the one she'd left behind—showed up again.

*Val's Last Second Chance* is the captivating opener to *A Glen Falls Romance*—a sweet, small-town romance series filled with strong heroines, swoon-worthy heroes, and the magic of second chances. Dive into Val and Tate's unforgettable journey today and discover why Glen Falls is the small town you'll never want to leave.

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