

Meet Taylor, 2003. She's a teen who came to Nashville with blisters on her fingers from learning to play a twelve-string guitar. In every room she enters, she's the youngest person (by decades) and is often the only woman. And if anyone asked if she could see herself becoming the biggest superstar on the planet, her answer probably would have been yes.

Writing alongside industry veterans after school, Taylor Swift demonstrated a songwriting ability that set her apart. But her origins are more complex than a teen tapping into a new generation of country music fans. It's a story of taking risks and of trusting her instincts when no one else did.

Washington Post reporter Emily Yahr pulls back the curtain on the country music industry—from executives who said yes to Taylor (and those who regret saying no), to the writers and producers in those legendary after-school sessions, to Nashville itself. Intimate and immersive, the story of Taylor's first ten years in Nashville are richer and more surprising than even longtime fans can imagine. This book is for all of Taylor's listeners and fans, from those who know every lyric of "I'd Lie" to those who arrived during the Folklore/Evermore era. It transports readers to the golden era of early-2000s country, a decade that shaped Taylor as a musician and ultimately changed country music itself long after she left the genre.

Emily Yahr is an award-winning pop culture reporter in the Style section at *The Washington Post*, where she writes about TV, celebrities, music, and movies. She has covered country music and Taylor Swift's career for more than a decade. This is her first book. Yahr lives in Washington, DC.

Read by Kate Coventry;
prologue read by the author



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TAYLOR SWIFT *The* DEBUT YEARS *Emily Yahr*

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