

Eric Michael Pearson

Modeling is tough.  
To get ready for this shoot,  
I didn't eat for, like, *two and a half* hours.

#### FOREWORD

One humid summer night in Austin, Texas, Mamrie Hart and I spent an hour drunkenly arguing and openly crying on the street while wearing David Bowie— and Tina Turner—inspired wigs, butterfly eyelashes, and KEEP AUSTIN WEIRD tie-dyed T-shirts. Yes, we had been out at a bar dressed like that. Yes, the bartender bought us two-too-many shots. Yes, the jury's still out on whether that bartender thought we were reject prostitutes having an existential crisis. And yes, what we were actually arguing about was complete nonsense. But man did those giant orange butterfly wings superglued to Mamrie's eyelids hold up. The next morning we dragged our haggard bodies into our production van (we had been in the middle of filming a travel web series). When the crew left to get some coffee, we finally looked at each other and had this conversation:

“We cool?”

“Yeah, we're just idiots.”

“Bloody Mary?”

“Dear God, *yes*.”

And that was that. We were back.

That day it really hit me: A friendship with Mamrie Hart is a truly special thing. It's a friendship that, even in the seemingly difficult times, is abso-fucking-lutely ridiculous, in the best way possible. And that, plain and simple, is Mamrie's life.

We've been friends since 2007, where we met on our first sketch comedy team, Finger (pronounced Fing-uh, because we were *clearly hilarious*). One of the first sketches we performed was called “Party Starters,” about two girls who start parties everywhere they go, even in inappropriate places (again, *hilarious*). But the core of that sketch has carried through to our friendship. Together we've been globe-trotters, meeting Mexican and American wrestlers, professional bull riders, spiritual healers, one-eyed mini ponies, a woman watching a Britney Spears concert through opera glasses . . . the list goes on. She's pushed a person out of a cab, screaming, “That's Brooklyn, bitch,” at the end of a drunken night. She's shown me her blackjack skills while wearing a Snoop Dogg sweatshirt, sloshing a Lemon Drop martini, and flirting with a man to get a free electronic cigarette. She's made me a bra with removable airplane bottles. She's gotten me a green screen as a birthday present and wrapped it with DENTAL DAM written in huge letters across the outside. She's crashed on my couch and farted herself awake in the middle of the night. She's given me a handmade trophy to commemorate my excellent repression skills. She's voluntarily bought swamp suits, a blow-up doll, karate gis, pizza costumes, and an electronic inflatable penis costume for other live shows we've done. She's a special breed.

Needless to say I couldn't be more thankful to have this absurdly sweet, reincarnated-vaudevillian-entertainer-meets-DIY-driven-hillbilly-sass-factory in my life. And now she's created a book that lets you into hers. THANK GOD. Take it from someone who has watched her scoop room service lasagna off a carpeted hotel-room floor and eat it: None of what you're about to read is exaggerated, fabricated, or G-rated. But it is, like her, special.

—Grace Helbig, #1 *New York Times*

bestselling author of *Grace's Guide*

## INTRODUCTION

I wrote a book, you guys. This is big. Anyone who knows me at all (and you certainly will by the end of this thing) knows that I don't even *read* books, let alone write them. Sure, I'll occasionally find myself perusing *Us Weekly*, or a lengthy takeout menu, or an ex-boyfriend's Facebook post about his new perfect family, but that's about it.

For those of you who randomly picked this up at Barnes & Noble,\* allow me to tell you a little bit about myself. My name is Mamrie Hart and I wanted to write this paperweight to combine my two favorite things: delicious cocktails and embarrassing myself. 'Cause nothing goes together better than dirty martinis and queef stories. A duo for the ages.

In 2011, I created a show called *You Deserve a Drink*, which lives on the Internet.\* Every week I make a custom cocktail in honor of whoever in pop culture I think needs one the most. After sitting down and putting these stories on paper, I realized the person who most deserves a drink in this book is *you*, the reader! It's gonna be a doozy, dudes. Why, you ask? Because . . . drumroll, please . . .

This book has a built-in drinking game!

Drinking games are a great way to rationalize excessive drinking, plus I selfishly want everyone to have a buzz so they think I'm a better writer than I actually am. The rules on my show are simple—drink every time I make a terrible pun—but that won't work here. I can't be responsible for alcohol poisoning of the literally *dozens* of people who will read this book. Instead, I came up with these rules.

Drink every time I . . .

1. reference an old television show;
2. talk about a food product that could be purchased at 7-Eleven;
3. use a slang term for a reproductive organ.

Turns out, you learn a lot about yourself when you write a book; and turns out, I talk about these three things incessantly. I don't think there's been a day in my adult life when I haven't discussed *Boy Meets World* (why did they make Eric so dumb in the last few seasons?) or at least mentioned nachos.

Another detail you will see scattered among these pages is the word *rutabaga*. No, you are not about to embark on a bio bender about root vegetables. *Rutabagais* my safe word. Normally safe words are codes used during BDSM (hard-core sex stuff) that the submissive person can use when he/she isn't comfortable. Well, my safe word will be written every time I want my parents to stop reading that chapter. Part of me wishes I had said it before even writing the definition of *safe word*. I know my parents and other family members are going to read this book. It's inevitable. And they will be super proud. I'll be the goddamn Lady Gaga of this year's Thanksgiving!

*Sorry, Aunt Debbie, I cannot take the stuffing out of the oven. I can't risk a thumb burn when I have to autograph books next month.*

But there are a few tales that my relatives might not want burned into their brains. I figured a safe word would be a good way to prevent future therapy costs, and so they don't "turnip" their noses

at me come Turkey Day . . . 'cause rutabagas are turnips (more highbrow classic jokes like that in the pages ahead).

Now that all the rules are in play, let's do this thing. Let's read a fucking book, you guys! You could be reading this on the beach and quietly wondering how, exactly, to get that sand out of *there*, or be by yourself at a bar while you wait for a blind date and want to avoid having conversation with the people around you.\* Whatever the circumstances, I hope you have a good time reading it. I had a great time writing it. And with that . . .

*Full House*, Flamin' Hot Cheetos, and *Chubby Cubbies*. Drink, mothafuckas!

Bad Apple

1½ oz Calvados or other apple brandy

1½ oz vodka

2 oz fresh apple cider

½ oz ginger liqueur

Put everything in a shaker of ice and go to town. Strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a slice of apple, or if you want to be really bad, dip the rim in that delicious caramel dip they stock in the produce department.

I need everyone to sit down right now, because what I am about to say might shock you to the core. Although I am one of the most elegant, refined women you will ever have the pleasure of meeting, truth be told, I have had some pretty ridiculous hangovers in my day. If I had a nickel for every time I've had a hangover, I would've already paid a group of top scientists to find a cure.

The worst hangover I've ever experienced came the morning after my first night living in New York City. The year was 2005. By some grace of God, I had actually graduated from college, and rather than use my diploma for rolling papers (which I'd threatened to do on many occasions), I was going to use that theater degree for good. I was going to be a serious actress.

I won't lie to you. I was nervous. But to have a career in acting, it would have to be either L.A. or NYC. Moving to L.A. would've been easier for me because I had the built-in safety net of my dad and stepmom living there. In L.A., the crime was lower and the tits temps were higher. But if I was going to be the next Meryl Streep, I needed to toughen up. I needed to dig deep and experience *struggle*. The most I struggled in college was when the Papa John's delivery guy would forget the garlic sauce.

Yes, this girl right here was going to be serious. Mind you, this is my official graduation photo. Everyone else looks poised and ready to take on adulthood. (I, on the other hand, had slept thirty minutes and had cran-grape and vodka in my purse.)

I got off my flight from North Carolina, full of hope and a twelve-dollar bag of Chex Mix.\* I was ready to take the city by storm, and also mace anyone who came near me. This was 2005, people. Sure, it wasn't 1980s "let's all pretend there isn't a corpse in our subway car" Brooklyn, but it also wasn't the Brooklyn that shows like *Girls* have depicted. Nowadays if you live in Brooklyn, your biggest danger is a rent hike when a specialty pickle shop opens next door.

I came prepared to take down anyone who walked too close behind me. I didn't care if you were benignly looking at my purse because you noticed the tag read CUCCI instead of GUCCI; I'd already have one hand on my mace, the other hand on my scarf to choke you out if I needed to.

And I wasn't just prepared for an attack on the streets. I was always conjuring up new scenarios to protect myself in my apartment too. Every night before tucking myself into sleepy time, I would make a game plan in case someone broke in. Bubble Wrap right inside the door will sound like gunshots when they step on it! My landlord probably wouldn't be stoked if I spread tar all over my stairs, but maybe I could get away with wads of gum. I was apparently banking on these intruders being the "Wet Bandits" from *Home Alone*.

Luckily, I didn't have to face the Big Bad Apple by myself. I was moving into an apartment with my friend Kat, whom I had been a camp counselor with a year before. I knew from our summer together that if Kat was one thing, it was fun! No chance of a boring roommate there. But to be honest, I was a little anxious about the whole living-with-each-other scenario. Being roommates with someone in a new city is a lot different from being pals in the carefree world of swimming and s'mores. We had hung out on days off, getting ridiculously drunk together and acting like fools, but this was the *real* world. Was Kat going to stop being polite and start getting real?

Truth be told, the only time we'd ever gotten together during the off-season, she ended up wrecking my car. But she paid for it without question! And, sure, there was talk that she didn't actually leave camp of her own accord but was fired for bringing weed on a campout. But I had no confirmation if that rumor was true-mor, and surely someone wouldn't be *that* stupid! So I suppressed my nerves and told myself that my new roommate situation was going to be ideal.

I got off the subway at Prospect Avenue in Brooklyn, fully expecting the streets to be covered in chalk outlines and to see rats building nests out of used syringes. Turns out, my street looked like an establishing shot from *The Cosby Show*. The streets had rows and rows of brownstones with big stoops and flower boxes under windows. The only chalk on the sidewalks was for hopscotch. And if there were rats, they were probably the cute puppet ones from *The Muppet Show*. I loosened my grip on my mace as Kat ran up to me, waving.

"Welcome to New York!" she said, wrapping me in a big hug and helping me with my duffel bag. Kat was classically beautiful. She had jet-black hair and fair skin, very 1940s glamour. She was twenty-seven to my twenty-two *and* she wore a leather jacket, so I inevitably felt like a fetus with eyeliner in comparison.

"Kat! Thank God! I was so worried, but this neighborhood is straight out of a magazine! I can't wait to see our place."

She breathed in sharply. "So, there's been a *little* change of plans."

*Oh Jesus*, I thought to myself. *We're going to be homeless. I am going to have to sell my body on the streets, and I'm so out of shape right now that to make any money I'll have to do a BOGO deal. Or maybe a punch card system . . .*

"They have to fix a couple more things in our place, so it won't be ready for a few days."

A few days?! I didn't have any money for a hotel. Kat found a place that was eight hundred dollars each a month, and after the security deposit and insane broker fee, I was moving to New York with three hundred bucks to my name. I imagined myself staying in a shelter, finally breaking out all the knowledge I had held on to from the film *Curly Sue*. Before I could ask Kat how smooth her sleight of hand was, she eased my worries.

"I already told my friend Maegan that you were coming. I've been staying with her the past month. It's right up this block." I followed Kat, a little nervous about invading a complete stranger's place.

"Relax, we've been best friends since we were five. She's totally cool with you crashing in the living room with me," Kat said, trying to reassure me. *Sure*, I thought to myself. *Having someone*

*you've known since kindergarten stay with you is one thing, but some rando with her cherry-print duffel bag and three-days-without-a-shower greasy head is another.*

“Honey, we’re home!” Kat called as we walked up the stairs. Maegan appeared at the front door wearing a 1982 Van Halen Hide Your Sheep Tour T-shirt and cutoff jean shorts, and she had on the exact knee-high gladiator sandals that I had been coveting all summer but had worried would make my calves look like a tray of yeast rolls at Golden Corral. She had wild, curly red hair that stuck out everywhere, kind of like Dana at the end of *Ghostbusters*, when you can’t tell if she’s about to fuck Bill Murray or wear him as a skin suit. Simply put, Maegan’s look was on point.

“It’s so nice to meet you! Welcome!” she said as she ushered us into her apartment. It was decked out in the raddest vintage shit I’d ever seen. There was a light-up sign that read DISCO hanging above her bed, and the headboard was made out of a refurbished dashboard, complete with an 8-track player. Maegan grabbed me a Corona while Kat was fixing herself a tequila and orange juice.

“Starting early on the tequila, I see,” Maegan called to Kat in the kitchen, then turned to me. “I have that shirt!”

I looked down at my 1983 Kenny Rogers Jovan Musk Tour tee. While I was in shock from the coincidence, she kept going like she had just pointed out a mass-produced tunic we’d both gotten from Target.

“Are you coming to the show with us?” she asked.

“What show?”

“I wanted it to be a surprise!” Kat said, pouring more tequila into her cup. The tequila looked like one of those optical illusion faucet fountains you buy from SkyMall that never stop pouring. “We’re seeing the Pixies at Coney Island tonight!”

“Seriously?!” I jumped up, spilling a little Corona on Maegan’s pristine midcentury modern couch.

“Oh my god, I’m so sorry,” I apologized. Great. First ten minutes at this girl’s place and I was already wrecking the joint.

She walked over and wiped it with her hand. “Don’t worry about it. Kat spilled an entire bowl of beans and rice on it two nights ago.”

*Look at me, I thought. One hour in New York and I’ve already got these hip-ass adult friends and am going to a show? Granted, the only song I could name of the Pixies was the one that went, “Uh-huh . . . I got a broken face,” but I knew it was going to be fun. I also knew they had an album called *Surfer Rosa*, because I pointed out the cassette tape in a boy’s car in high school once and he said, “You like the Pixies?” and I was all like, “Yeah, I love them” (totally lying), and he was all like, “What’s your favorite album?” and I was all like, “I think I just started my period. Please take me home.”\**

The rest of the afternoon was spent drinking Coronas on the stoop with Maegan and her boyfriend, Doug. Maegan had already been living in New York for a year and was armed with loads of advice. I was relieved. I was worried that everyone was going to be too cool for school, but she was so nice. I could already see us becoming good friends.

A few hours later, the four of us crammed into a beat-up gypsy cab and rode down to Coney. I had never used a car service before and felt so fancy! Sure, the guy had twelve tiny pine tree air

fresheners hanging from his rearview, and I was sitting on someone's leftover pizza crust, but it wasn't a boring old yellow taxi. After twenty minutes in the car, we were dropped off in front of a Nathan's hot dogs. Stepping out of that old Crown Victoria, I (naturally) immediately stepped in dog shit, but I felt like ScarJo being dropped off at the Oscars.

We got to the venue just as the sun was setting. With the pink sky, ocean, and old amusement park rides behind the stage, I couldn't believe I was finally here. It was the perfect backdrop to start this new chapter of my life. I felt like this moment called for a cheers.

"I'm gonna go grab a drink—you want anything?" I asked Kat as she puffed on a one hitter painted to look like a cigarette.

"Beers are going to be, like, twenty bucks. I came prepared." She reached into her huge purse and pulled out, no lie, an entire carton of orange juice. "It's half OJ, half tequila." How she got that past security, I have no idea. Her bag was like Mary Poppins's for hot messes. Mary Poppins.\*

I started to tell her that I'm just one of those people who can't drink tequila, but I stopped myself. I had three hundred dollars to my name and no job. If someone was offering me a way to get drunk, I needed to take it.

I took a big gulp from the carton, already planning a lie about having diabetes if a security guard approached us. I had no problem breaking out the fake seizure from my high school production of *Steel Magnolias*. It always worked when I wanted to get a free glass of juice at brunch. Once the OJ-tequila combo hit my lips, I realized Kat was terrible at ratios.

"Jesus, I know he got away with murdering his wife and all, but what's your problem with OJ?" I asked.

Before Kat could judge laugh at my hilarious joke, the music started and the massive crowd went nuts. Well, as nuts as you can for a group of thirty-five-year-olds about to listen to alternative noise rock.

For the next two hours, I helped Kat finish that carton. The sun set and we lost track of Maegan and her boyfriend, but Kat didn't seem to be worried. The Pixies played songs about everything from Salvador Dalí to scuba diving. I mouthed along to the lyrics I didn't know, Oprah-style. Seriously, if you never noticed this while Oprah was still on the air, do yourself a favor and find some old episodes. Lady Winfrey never knew the damn words to any of her guests' songs. And I'm not just talking about when a new artist would come on who Oprah had to pretend to give a shit about. I'm talking when she would introduce Tina Turner singing "Proud Mary." Tina would be tearing it up to this classic tune, and then when the camera panned to O, she would be mouthing, "Loud Harry keeps on yearning . . . and we're bowling, bowling!" Oprah had her favorite things, and, well, that was my favorite thing of Oprah's.

I got drunk enough to stop even trying to be into it and instead spied on all the thirtysomething hipsters trying to get fucked up while also balancing their new responsibilities. I took in a lot of conversations that went something like this:

*Hey babe, if I take half of another Ecstasy, will I be normal around the sitter in three hours?*

*Yeah, babe. But just remember tomorrow morning we have Daphne's couples baby yoga graduation and then Conner's prohibition BBQ.*

When the concert wrapped up, we found Maegan and Doug. I was pretty drunk at this point, but I could tell that Maegan wasn't in the great mood that she'd been in on the ride here. Kat didn't seem to care, though.

"We should all go into the city and do karaoke!" Kat said, pumping her fist.

I full-on squealed at this idea. I love—I love, love, *love* karaoke. I don't care if I'm staying by myself in a Holiday Inn; if the hotel bar has karaoke, I'm there. I will shamelessly sing "It's Raining Men," complete with jazz runs through the crowd to a roomful of strangers. If this was what life in New York was going to be like, I was going to be kara-okay with it.

"I think we are going to sit this one out," Maegan said. "But y'all have fun."

I was sad she wasn't coming, but I could tell something was off. Maybe she and her boyfriend were fighting. I gave her a big hug. "Thank you for being hospitable," I slurred in her face, literally spitting on the *spit* part of the word.

And with that, Kat and I started our vocal warm-ups and headed to the train. Now, a train all the way from Coney Island to the East Village can take anywhere from forty-five minutes to seven days. To pass the time, I pretended to pole dance on the train poles, which is a total rookie move. You can always tell tourists in New York by three things: (1) they are standing in front of the Empire State Building trying to decide if Earlybird or Valencia is a better filter for their Instagram; (2) they think it's worth it to wait in an hour-long line for Magnolia Bakery cupcakes; and (3) they think they are the first people to pretend the poles on subway trains are stripper poles. Kat beatboxed as I put on my best sultry face and swung around, completely falling on my ass.

Later that year I would try pole dancing again, and the results would be even more embarrassing. I know we have karaoke to get to, but this is worth a tangent, trust me.

A friend of mine from college, Sean, had taken a job producing one of those terrible "We've Got Three Dozen Kids" shows as soon as we'd graduated. Although being surrounded by an army of Christian values and perms left over from '94 sounded like hell, he was making a serious paycheck nine months out of college, while I still considered a fine meal wandering around Whole Foods stuffing my face with free samples. He came to visit New York one night and was ready to spend some of that hard-earned Christian scrilla. He had been kind of a nerd in college, so I knew he was going to be peacocking.

I met a very drunk Sean at a bar in the East Village, along with a few of his friends whom I didn't know, but they seemed nice. We drank a ridiculous amount of champagne, vodka, and whatever else we could form the words to order. After several hours of imbibing, Sean got an idea to keep the party moving.

"Let's go to the strip club. I'll buy everyone lap dances."

Brilliant idea! *Look at me, chugging champagne and getting lap dances paid for on a random Monday night. I am the white female P. Diddy!* I thought to myself. I was two seconds from starting my own clothing line (instead of Sean John, it would be called On the John), feeling completely pimp. Until then, I'd only "made it rain" with IOU slips. I felt like my baller status was at an all-time high—that is, until we arrived at the *actual* strip club around three a.m.

Sapphire, conveniently located under the Queensboro Bridge, was the saddest thing I had seen since I caught my high school history teacher crying by himself during *Titanic* as I waited to sweep the theater. I had expected to roll into a place with crazy lights and lots of bass pumping through the speakers—basically, I was expecting a live Rihanna video. Instead, we walked into a room where one dude was getting a subpar lap dance as eight other strippers counted down the

minutes until they could go home. It was clear to me why they had named this place Sapphire, because it was making me blue.

We took our seats in this den of sadness, and you could almost hear the collective groan from the strippers in the back. I couldn't blame them. I myself have never worked as an exotic dancer, but I have worked in many restaurants; and when you are just about to close and a party of ten rolls in, it fuckin' sucks. That leftover pizza in your fridge and DVR'd *Say Yes to the Dress* are gonna have to wait, because you're stuck for another two hours. I think I even mouthed, "I'm sorry," to the really tired-looking ones as we walked to find a table. It wasn't so much finding a table as deciding which one to take in this completely empty strip club.

I went to the bathroom to give myself a wasted-face pep talk. This usually involved a lot of slurring, "You got dis, bitch," into the mirror and a lot of emphatic hand gestures. (Note to self: Always check to make sure someone isn't trying to take a dump in one of the stalls as you are screaming, "Shut up, you're beautiful!" to yourself.)

I had gotten to the point in my pep talk where I almost aggressively fist-bumped my reflection (before remembering it was a mirror and that would severely hurt me) when one of the exhausted strippers walked in. I curtsied and went back to the table. When I got there, I found the only other girl in the group sitting by herself.

"Where is everybody?"

"They ditched us girls to go get private dances. Sean left us his credit card to get drinks, though."

The music must've been super loud, because all I heard was, "Sean said to do a bunch of Patrón shots and pop a bottle of Moët and Chandon," which is exactly what we did. Just two women who had never met, sitting in a flypaper of a strip club at closing time on a Monday, taking shots and putting money in thongs as we talked to the strippers. And not to knock these ladies, but they really weren't working it. This wasn't the type of place where someone could argue, "She holds up her own body weight upside down, then does eight spins. This isn't just stripping; it's athleticism!" Or a place like the one in *Flashdance*, where your artistic expression is just as valued as your ta-tas. The closest these women came to artistic expression was the "in memory of" tattoos on their shoulder blades.\* Their dance moves made them look like C-3PO in drag.

The few times I've been to strip clubs, I've sat there and tried to enjoy myself even though I really would rather have asked the strippers about their young sons' reading levels or told them why they should go back to cosmetology school. But I couldn't just sit back and watch this sad display at Sapphire. I was the white female P. Diddy, after all! I wasn't going to have my ticket punched on the lame train. It was time to board the Hot Mess Express. So, I took matters into my own hands.

Before you could say "terrible decision," I climbed up onstage and was knocking on the window of the DJ booth. I slurred to the DJ to play "Poison," by Bell Biv DeVoe, one of the all-time greatest songs in history.

The beat dropped and so did all of my inhibitions. I started *owning* that stage. I'm talking medium-level kicks, almost-splits—all of my signature moves. At this point the strippers had sat down and were watching *me*. The poor girl I was there with appeared to be awkwardly clapping, though she might've just been trying to swat gnats away from our Moët. I waited for the chorus to kick in as I slowly sauntered to the pole.

At the sound of "That girl is poisooooon," I started spinning on the pole. And as soon as I did, my right contact lens went flying out of my eye. Mind you, I am legally blind, so I can't see *shit* without contacts, let alone spin around and do tricks. So there I was, on all fours on Sapphire's stage, looking for a contact. Just as I found the thing and held it up in triumph, one of the dancers grabbed the contact and threw it as hard as she could,\* like a grenade about to



detonate. She looked me square in the good eye and said, “Honey, unless you want some random coochie juice in your eyeball, you gotta let that thing go.” I can’t thank you enough for that advice, Cinnamon. I really hope she went back and got her final perm credits.

Worth the diversion, right? Okay, back to the scene with Kat! There I was, lying on the floor of a subway car in the same spot a homeless man had probably masturbated to an Archie comic. But at least I had both contacts in. My vision was only obscured by that half bottle of tequila. My eyesight was 20/90-proof.

During our trip, Kat and I reminisced about our summer at camp together.

“Remember that time you drank absinthe at Chrissie’s lake house and refused to take off that bonnet all night?”

“Oh God,” I slurred, “don’t remind me. I have so many pictures of me looking like Little House on the Scary. Change of subject. What the *hell* have you been up to since you got here?”

Turns out that despite her current habit of drinking tequila out of a Tropicana carton, Kat seemed to have her shit together. Her friend had gotten her a job at a recording studio, and she was full of weird celebrity-interaction stories.\* Once we hit our stop, we chucked the empty OJ carton in the trash and stumbled into the karaoke bar. Kat beelined to the bar and gave the bartender a smooch on the cheek. She waved to a few other people in the bar and headed back our way with martinis. “These were on the house,” she said, winking. *Dayum!* I thought to myself. Kat had covered some ground in the past month.

As they usually do after half a fifth of tequila and martinis, the night got blurry from there. I remember a lot of sweaty dancing, doing sake bombs with some Japanese businessmen, and telling a guy he was attractive in a Bob Ross kind of way.

One thing I do remember perfectly clear is when I finally got my name called to sing. Well, not *my* name, exactly. They called out the name Chauncy, which is my karaoke stage name. Look, when you rock the mic as hard as I do, you need a little obscurity.

I chose the song “Kiss,” by Prince, and went full-force with it, telling the group of sake bombers that they didn’t need to be beautiful to turn me on. I pointed at Bob Ross to let him know there wasn’t a particular sign I was more compatible with. When the last lyric flashed across the screen, I sold it. “I just want your extra time and your”—I shook my ass so hard on that guitar riff, then jumped up and landed in a split—“*kiss!*”

I assumed it was followed by a WELCOME TO NYC, MAMRIE! banner dropping from the rafters and the businessmen hoisting me up on their shoulders as people clamored to shake my hand, but I can’t be too sure. Why, you ask? Because I blacked da fuck out.

To this day, I have no idea how we got back to Maegan’s place. All I know is that I woke up with Andy Capp’s Hot Fries in my hair, and it felt like there was a Vine of Mariah Carey hitting her highest note on a loop in my brain. I thought I was alone, but then I heard Maegan and Kat in the bedroom talking tensely. I could tell they were trying to keep it down, but French doors don’t really lock in sound like they used to. After I unsuccessfully tried to eavesdrop, Maegan came out, looking totally put together. She had on another awesome vintage rocker tee covered with a blazer. I was still in my Kenny Rogers shirt and . . . yep, no pants.

“Sounds like you guys had fun last night!” she said, smiling. Kat, not saying anything, walked to the bathroom and started the shower. As awkward as I felt about the situation, I had just spent thousands on a theater degree and I was going to act cool about it, dammit. My first NYC acting gig!

“Totally! Thanks for—” I stopped myself, slapping my hand over my mouth. Something felt different. I swirled my tongue around my mouth faster than Joey Newman did at the Christmas dance in seventh grade. It was then that I realized what had happened.

“Holy. Shit.”

“What’s wrong?”

“No, no, no, no, no.” I grabbed a compact out of my purse and smiled into my reflection. “I chipped my front tooth last night! I fucking chipped my tooth.”

I must’ve hit myself with the mic when I went for the split. To be honest, it wasn’t that noticeable to the eye, but it felt like such a difference in my mouth. I couldn’t stop running my tongue over it. It was like when you finally get your braces off and your teeth feel like glass, or like a hockey rink freshly slicked by a Zamboni.

Maegan went in close to my mouth to check out the damage, which was a risky move considering the rogue Hot Fries. She shook her head, laughing. “I did keep hearing you drunk singing, ‘Uh-huh! I got a broken face!’ over and over again when you came in.”

I cleared my throat. “Hey, I’m really sorry if we were loud coming in last night.” I could tell by Maegan’s expression that this apology was warranted. “I swear I’m not normally a huge tequila mess. Just, first night and all . . .” My voice trailed off. I was nervous. Here was this girl I could see myself being really good friends with, and I’d given her the worst first impression. This wasn’t how I was picturing the adult version of me to be. If I was Maegan, I don’t know if I’d even be speaking to this slug of human pantslessness.

“Totally get it,” she said as she stood up. “Do me a favor, though, and make sure Kat actually comes into work today. She wants to call out sick, but we are really busy and I know she’s just hungover, ya know?”

“Sure thing,” I said, the reality hitting me square in the face. Not only were they coworkers; I realized that this Maegan was the same *Maegan who was Kat’s boss*.

“Oh, and tell her to not roll in wearing sunglasses.” Maegan smiled and left for the day.

Just when I’d recovered from the first slap of reality, the other hand bitch-slapped me into clarity. Maegan hadn’t gotten into a fight with her boyfriend. After a month of Kat staying in the living room, Maegan was ready for Kat to move out so she could actually have some time to herself in her own apartment. Our apartment not being ready was the worst for Maegan, and I would soon see why.

While that first night was one for the books (literally; I am writing about it in a book right now), I knew I had to get my shit together. Kat? Not so much. She wanted a Dewey Decimal System of blackout nights. She bounced from job to job. She rarely came home, and when she did, she was never alone. She didn’t bat an eye leaving a random one-night stand in our apartment while I was still sleeping, only to have said dude walk in on me eating Froot Loops topless ’cause I thought I was home alone.\*

I lived with Kat for five months. I remember one night Kat and I got into an argument, maybe a week before I told her I was moving out. During it, she said, “You were fun at camp. Why are you so boring now?” That’s when I was officially over it.

I was busting my ass, working fifty to sixty hours a week just to make rent, going on any terrible audition that would see me. I didn’t need to be around someone who only wanted me to be the

most irresponsible version of myself. I didn't need someone encouraging me to be a total wastoid so they'd feel better about their mistakes. I can be a total wastoid of my own accord, thank you very much! Speaking of my own accord, she had crashed my Honda Accord a year before and brushed it off! Why hadn't I trusted my intuition?

If I was going to be an actual functioning adult,\* I knew I needed to surround myself with supportive friends. Friends should be like a good bra, lifting you up. Bad friends are like sports bras. They can do wonders when you go out dancing or during high-energy times, but on a day-to-day basis they really just smush down some of your greatest assets.

Side note: If Cracker Barrel is hiring a woman to create phrases for its new apron line, get in touch.

There is one awesome thing that came out of that awkward first roommate situation: the beginning of a long friendship with Maegan. Little did I know I'd end up living in the apartment where I discovered my chipped tooth for five years. Nine years later, I slept on her couch in New York for a week as I tried to convince someone to publish this book. One of these days, I'll stop crashing on her couch . . . or at least quit spilling things on it. #sorryaboutthelasagna

As for Kat? Well, Kat's time in New York ended shortly after I moved out.

She realized the city was a bit much for her and got the hell out. I found out via Facebook stalking that she went to nursing school and is working as a nurse, with an adorable little boy and a husband.

Here's what I learned about living in the Big Apple. (And don't worry—this book isn't all life lessons and hidden meanings. I just had to kick it off with a little credibility before I throw in the naked pudding-wrestling story. . . . Kidding! Or am I?) You can carry a pony keg of pepper spray with you at all times; put as many thumbtacks on your doorbell as you see fit. But at the end of the day, sometimes the person you've got to protect yourself from the most is *yourself*.

Oh, and for the love of God, avoid having roommates at all costs.

Here's us, years later, at Maegan's birthday. I had come a long way since that first night. Put together, no tooth chipping, and I only drank *half* a bottle of tequila that night. #growingup

### Key Lime Crime

2 oz vanilla vodka

Juice of 3 key limes (or 1 big juicy lime if you can't find key limes)

2 oz pineapple juice

Splash cream (or nondairy equivalent)

Crushed graham crackers for the rim

Simple syrup for the graham crackers to stick to the rim

Combine all but the last two ingredients in a shaker with ice, shake them up, and strain into a martini glass. If you are feeling crazy, substitute a scoop of ice cream and some ice for the cream and blend dat shit! For the rim job (first rim job joke of the book!) wet the rim of your glass with the simple syrup, then dip it in the crushed graham crackers. A drink and a snack!

