

RAN DUMB-ER

THE CONTINUED ADVENTURES
OF AN IRISH GUY IN L.A!

MARK HAYES

Chapter 2

WAIT. WHAT. I FORGOT? MY SCISSORS!

Next day.

Woke up.

Face in the pillow.

Drool everywhere.

Pants still on.

Red top hat next to my face. Sweating buckets from the heat. Eyes blurry. Slightly blinded. Where the fuck am I?

Oh yeah.

OH YEAH!

I'm back in this beautiful land of WeHo!

Do the check:

Phone.

Wallet.

Passport.

iPod.

All good. All accounted for. Text on my phone:

'CHOWDER: Come up to the SkyBar pool at the Mondrian hotel. We're all laying out. Maybe have a booze?'

Taaaaxi! And we were off once again. Heard the Mondrian was a nice hotel. Not sure what to expect. Obviously some sort of a nice pool. Turns out to be *savage*. Looks like a pool the Greek Gods might've had. Or one you'd see in an American Gigolo remake. Marble. White. Trees. Loungers. Blondes. Brunettes. Meatheads. Beautiful people town. Lifestyles of the rich and famous. Plus: me.

Spot the group. All panned out on a big white poof under a tree dripping with mini-chandeliers. Surrounded by food platters and drink buckets. Chicken. Shrimp. Lobster. Grapes. Strawberries. Berries. Orange juice. Dom Perignon. Gin. Oh Jesus. Chilled house music playing from hidden speakers. Perfect weather. Hot but not sweltering. Even the fact it was November and this hot was mighty. Far from the wet fields of Ireland now. Top off. Tan on. Betsy. This is the good life!

High fives all round. Recap the night. Struggle to make sense of it. Time for a Bloody Mary. Daytime boozing. Back up on the horse. According to a text in my phone, I'm also meant to have a date today. Met a girl in the taxi on the way home last night. Or so she told me. No recollection. Nobody had.

Told to invite her up to the pool. She's in, would love to come. So we all sat. Drank. And looked around. Mighty views from the pool overlooking L.A. Mightier views around the pool. Forgot how good-looking the women in L.A are. Not saying women in Ireland aren't, ahem. Just that here, they are tip-top of the pile. Mix of everything. All perfect looking (no wonder so many girls are beyond self-conscious here). Models. Dancers. Porn stars. All-American. Asian. Latin. Europeans. Russians. Australians. African. Every corner of the globe. Quality is *ridiculous*. Even better... The *amount* of good-looking women here. Everywhere you look. Or maybe it's just in this part of town. Either way: Unreal. Got me half pumped for my blind pool date. More the merrier!

Chowder had a flashback that it might've been a blonde girl. Good-looking, he thinks. Happy days! So we all kept an eye for a blonde girl. Kept seeing good-looking blonde girls. Distracted by all the good-looking blonde girls. So much so, none of us noticed the, eh, sound-looking brunette who appeared out of nowhere.

“Mark?”

“Ehh, yeah, why so?”

“It's me.”

The non-blonde-sound-looking girl from last night.

“Oh yeah. So it is.”

Balls.

“Do you not remember?”

No I do not.

“Oh yeah, I do...”

Dose. Turns out to be really sound (as in she had a very nice personality). Just slightly odd.

“Where do you live?”

“On the sea.”

“Oh yeah, what beach?”

“No. On the sea. I live on a boat.”

“You live on a boat?”

“I live on a boat.”

Was not expecting that.

“Where's your home?”

“Well, I have no real home. I live on a boat. Just stayed in my friend's house by here last night. Didn't want to get a taxi all the way back to the boat.”

Hmm. All I heard was: I have no real home. You might say: My pool date was with a homeless person? Or am I now just drunk? What's going on? Where am I? L.A?

I must text home to Ireland actually, tell my parents I'm alright. But am I alright? Yeah. Just have one more drink. You can decide what to do then. OK. Great plan. Hang on. Back at the poof. Girl has gone. Seems the mermaid had to go back to the sea. Short. Sweeet. Date over. Night time on!

Again. Same enjoyable rigmarole, a routine I will never get bored of: Home. Shower. Put on my gladdest of rags. Get picked up a car service. (Pam the driver. Older lady. Jolly laugh. Mighty woman!) Chauffeured down to a restaurant called Koi. Again. Unreal food. Ridiculously good. Healthy too. Giddy up. Japanese style this time. (French last night?)

The Man, Jackie and the rest of their crew are in great form. Fans of the mighty L.A lifestyle. Banter flowing at the table. Bottles of wine and champagne trying to keep up. English quip. Irish charm.

Dinner. Finished. Back to the SkyBar. Gallons more booze. At one point I'm behind the bar, showing the head barman how to make Baby Guinness, which is a shot consisting of Kahlua on bottom and Baileys on top. Looks and tastes mighty. Shots for everyone! Yay. Party on. Gets a

bit blurry.

Last call. Chatting with two girls. Two sisters. Both blondes. But they kind of look like Kardashians, in a good way. (No one said they were natural blondes.) Dark. Dirty. Hot. New Yorkers. Staying in the hotel. Lights come on. Bouncers start barking at people. Herded out of the bar. Sisters invite me up to their room for a nightcap. Giddy up! Up we go. Penthouse? Penthouse! Jesus. This is unreal. Big huge living room in the middle of the suite. Couches to the right. Bedroom to the left. Glass windows and doors. Wrap around balcony. Big. Huge. Giant. Billionaire. Penthouse! Girls... What the funk do ye do??!

In we go. I've got my arm around one sister. She has her hand on my belt. The Other Sister goes to get drinks. I excuse myself. Bursting for the bathroom. Like a racehorse.

“Ahhhaa.”

Knock on the door. Other Sister comes in. Bottle of vodka in her hand. Two glasses.

“How's it going? Can I come in?”

Obviously. Hands me a glass. Fills it up.

“Cheers.”

“Cheers!”

Slurp.

“You know my sister's married, right?”

What the funk...,

“No. No I did not. Are you serious?! Does everyone here that's married have roaming hands?!”

“I'm not married...”

Cue embrace. By embrace I mean we kiss for a second, she opens my pants and drops to her knees. One fabulous swoop. Oh Jesus. Forgot how good American girls are at tooting on my ponder pipe. Slurping for dear life. (Me. Obviously. Drinking the vodka!) Slurping it down. Heaven. Drunk. But in heaven. Except. One problem...

Her giving me a toot feels unreal. So much so I'm closing my eyes, mmm'ing away. Unfortunately whenever I start doing this, I also begin to sway. And, as my eyes are closed, start to get the spins.

“Oh no. Jesus. Stop. No no, not you, Other Sister.”

I'm talking to The Spins.

“Mmmm.

Ohhh.”

Spinning.

“Mmmmmmm.

Oohhhh noooo.”

Can't stop spinning. Funk. I'm drunk. Realise now I've been served straight vodka. One of my nemeses. Hits me hard. Suddenly I'm *waaay* too drunk. Survival mechanism kicks in. Get out of here. Must. Go. Home. Now!

“Schorry I'm reallee sohrry but slorry I musthh guh. Goosed.
Too drunk. Noo.

Must.

Go.”

Other Sister understands. I open the bathroom door. Scuttle out. See the first sister on the bed.

“Where have you been? What were you doing in there?”

She asks with a wink (or maybe I was just blinking really slowly and drunkenly at this point. Who knows?)

“Ahh shaba. I'm lorry. Musty eh goes.”

Make a beeline for the door. Clip the couch on the way. Pan out face first onto the couch. One bounce up and down. Lie there for what feels like a deep sleep but really only ten seconds. The Spins. Back. Bad. Funk. Don't want to puke. My brains shouts at my dumb body: You know what to do: Get. Home. Now! Haul myself up. Scuttle off. Out the door. Down the elevator. Into a cab. Might have walked into a bush. (Walked. Fell.

Tomato. Potato.) Either way. I'm home. Safe. And. Sound?

Woke up. Face down. Arms out. Legs together. Crucifixion style. Eyes look to the right. Quickly to the left. No one next to me. Mouth tastes dry. No puke at least. No wet on my bed. Tongue just feels like a carpet. Quick check: All allocated and accounted for. Look at my phone. Text:

'CHOWDER: Come up to the pool at the SkyBar. We're all laying out again. Maybe have a booze?'

Deja-funking-doodle-duu? What day is this? Did yesterday just happen? Where am I? Did I dream that? Run my hand through my hair. Confused. Lost. Although. Feel a few twigs in my hair. Maybe that did all happen. Only one way to find out... SkyBar on!

Again. Repeat. Pool. Poof. Sun. Music. Food. High life. And. Booze. Wash. Repeat.

Had to be done. Only way to avoid the inevitable down I was running from. Putting off jet lag. Now ducking and dodging a cruel hangover. Don't worry about that now! Just have one drink. Only cure. Just the one... OK! dumb part of my weak brain, you've sold me. Yeah, I'll have a mojito please! Again. Ended up all over the place. Daytime, poolside. Nighttime, randumb. Dinner. Italian place this time, Cecconi's, which is apparently where all the stars come to hideout and eat pizza and meatballs. Needless to say, quite tasty. Greatest octopus I've ever had. Although have I had octopus before? Not too sure. Also discovered I am a fan of rosette. Like all real men. Obviously. After the dinner: Drunken Hollywood Haze. Very. *Very*. Blurry.

This is how blurry. So after dinner, we went back to the Mondrian Hotel. The Man and The Jackie went to bed (early flight). Chowder fell asleep in the corridor. Leaving Charlotte and myself in the SkyBar, wondering where everyone else was and why the SkyBar was so dead. Where else should we go? Body Shop! Which is a place where girls dance on tables and the likes, you know, sans clothes. I think that's how we ended up in there so early anyway. In we go. Charlotte sits down. I go to the bathroom to relieve my tiny bladder (maybe I just fill it up a lot). Come back from the bathroom. And must be drunk. Seeing as I am strolling around, like I'm lost. So lost, I randomly sit down. Next minute, I see Charlotte,

"Sharrlot?? Is that you?? What are you doing here?"

"You just came in with me. We came here together."

"We did? As in, *we* did? Really? Jesus. Don't remember that.

Where are we again?"

So it was time to go. Back to the SkyBar. By now I was feeling a bit ragged. Tired. Worse for wear. Charlotte made the smart choice. Went to bed. I made the ape choice. One last night cap.

Sitting at the bar. Up on a stool. Eddie Griffin (comedian, odd ball, angry man) to my left. Denis Rodman (former NBA player, odd ball, eccentric man) to my right. Some actress is talking to them/at me. Telling me she was a porn star. Not sure if I believed her. Not the brightest shining star I'd seen. She did look she was in porn though, I'll give her that. Enormous fake boobs. Big fake lips, like two little bananas. Tight silver dress that looked like it was painted on. Smart expression on her randumb face.

While she's talking to D Rod (as I call him, not sure if he liked it) Eddie Griffin is looking at me. Pretty sure it's the look of a man who doesn't like white Irish guys named Merrick. Jealous of my... I don't know. Maybe I'm paranoid. After a few jibs and jabbers about who I am, and what I'm doing here, Eddie tells me the world is about to end. Tonight.

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah man! You don't believe me?"

"No no, I do (*not*) believe you. Could you tell me why though?"

Eddie swivels on his chair. Points to the sky. From the SkyBar. I look up. Eddie tells me solemnly,

"There's a ball of fire headed straight our way. All y'all motherfuckers better believe me. It's ending... TONIGHT!"

"What now?"

Try to follow Eddie's finger. See a red light in the distance. Red light of a radio pole it looks like. Some sort of flashing red light in the distance. Not a fire ball. Not the impending end of the world. Merely the rambles of a drunk man.

"Here, Eddie, that's just a red light..."

"Hush your mouth, homeboy! You calling me a liar?"

"No, Edward, I'm not. I'm merely saying that's a red light of some sort. Never said you're a liar. Just you're either drunk. Or a dope?"

Don't think he gets the meaning of dope. I do know he gets angry. Guzzles down a drink. Swivels his chair. And starts just eye-balling me for dear life. Sitting on the stool next to me. Giving me the dirtiest look. Infected stink eye. On cue, D Rod pops his head in,

“Me and Molly here are going upstairs, finish this party off right. Come if you want.”

I assume he's saying this to Eddie and his other friend, more so than me. Either way, I take this as my cue... to go upstairs to what seems like an orgy! Obviously!!! (I joke.) Three black men and an Irish baby, plus one dodgy lady? Nay for me.

Home. Collapse into bed. Dodge the dudes. Dodge the Molly. Fall asleep. Wondering if the world is really going to end. Or if the sick pain in my stomach is down to the fact I've yet to go to the bathroom since I've arrived back in LA. Still yet to have a movement. Delightful.

Groundhog. Woke up. Eyes bulging. Deep breath in my nose. Deep growl from my stomach. Heaved myself straight up onto my knees. Looked around. Realised where I was. Realised it was Monday. Realised I can't hack more drink. Wondered why the song *It Was All a Dream!* was singing in my head. Checked my phone. Text:

‘THE MAN: Are you alive?’

‘ME: I believe so?’

Another text:

‘CHOWDER: Just checking to see if we can get you on board with us. Pack a bag and I'll let you know!’

‘ME: On what board? Let me know who? Where am I? Why am I? What's going on?!’

‘CHOWDER: We're going to Antigua. Seeing if you can come on the private jet with us! Do you not remember?!’

‘ME: Eh. No. I knew ye were all going down with Charlotte's Dad for a week. Didn't realise I might be going too!’

‘CHOWDER: Well, get ready. I'll let you know.’

Sitting on my bed. Boxers and socks. Shoulder slumped. Pretty goosed.

Wondering: What's going on?! Who is: The Man? Am I going on a private jet? No way. Am I just dumbly drunk? Should I pack? Do I need to? Still haven't unpacked since I arrived. Haven't phoned home either. Must check my emails too. Oh God, my life is either all coming together or quickly falling apart.

Laptop. Online. Loads of emails:

'Are you in L.A? Did you leave already? Where are you?'

Oh yeah. Forgot to tell most people I was leaving.

'Ha ha, yeah, I'm gone. Back in L.A! Mighty!'

Copy. Paste. Send. Need to brush my teeth. Grab my wash bag. Must shave too. Look through my wash bag. Mind starts running circles. Past few days felt like an acid trip. Jolts. Bolts. Twitching. Brain struggling to make sense. Calm down. Calm down. It's OK, it'll all be OK... Oh. Dear. Jesus.

"Where are my scissors?"

My scissors.

The little scissors that I've had since I was young. Went with me on that school trip to Germany. Journeyed to Hong Kong. All over Greece. Europe. The States. They've been everywhere with me! One of a kind. How could I not have brought them?! I always pack them. Must be a mistake. Please God, no!!!

For some weird reason, this causes my mind to fall apart. Seriously. Maybe the past few days and the gin monkeys were involved too. But the scissors triggered it all. Straight onto Skype. Phone home. No answer. Phone my brother. No answer. Sister, nothing. Where is everyone?! Go online. Facebook. Chat. Who can I get to check in my house for my scissors? Chatting with randumbers online:

'Hey, how are you? Ok, look, I need my scissors. Can you go to my house and check if it's there?'

People asking me:

'Who's this? Have we even met?'

ARRRRRGHHHH!!! Useless! I need help. I just need someone to get me my scissors!!! Roommate overhears me. Pops her head in the door. Sees me

sitting in a mostly naked slump. Deliriously look up at her. Like Gollum, but with wilder hair.

“Do you need a scissors? You can borrow one of mine if you like? I have about five.”

Twitches kick in,

“Thanks for the offer. But they're not the same. You don't understand. This scissors is irreplaceable. One of a kind. I use it when I'm shaving. Trim my hair. All that stuff. Any other scissors can't do it like this one does it. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!!!”

Needless to say, she doesn't understand what's going on. Neither do I. Just asks me how I'm settling in. Hasn't seen me all weekend. I tell her I'm going home. I need to go home. Wasn't ready for all this. Not without my scissors at least.

“What? Are you OK?”

“Don't know.”

All I know is that I'm now checking flights back to Ireland. How much? When is the quickest I can get back?! I'll just go back for a day. Just one day. Collect my scissors. Say goodbye to people like I should have. Prepare myself a bit more mentally for this trip. You know, moving halfway across the world on your own. And then I'll come back. Then everything will be fine. Then my mind won't feel like it's falling apart. Then I'll be ready. I just need my scissors. That's all! Roommate looks freaked out. Asks if I want a cup of tea -

“No thanks, just need my scissors, ha ha, haahaha.”

That's all. Start to get frantic. Maybe it's in my bag. Maybe it fell out of my wash bag. Rip open my suitcase. Tear everything out in a wild rush.

“Isithereisitthereisithere?!”

Nothing. Balls. Suitcase two. Same drill. Throwing clothes, shoes, underwear, books and teabags all over the place. Nothing. Jesus Christ. I know where it is. Next to the TV in my room. I left it there so I wouldn't forget. HOW DID I FORGET!?!

“AND WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY BOWELS?!!!”

My stomach kicks me in the bowel region once more. Uggghhh. God.

Goosed. My brain kicks me in the head. Oh Jesus. I'm fucked. *It Was All a Dream* pipes up once again. What's going on?!

Turns out my phone is ringing. Somewhere on my bed. Underneath all my suitcase stuff. My life belongings. Separating me from my phone. Throw everything off the bed. See my phone on the pillow. Jump on it like a naked mad man in his boxers. Chowder's name flashing on the screen. Not now Chowder, not now! I need to sort my life out. Phone stops ringing. Rest for a second. Immediately starts again. And again. Until I realise:

Oh Jesus. I forgot.
Chowder!
Antigua!
Private jet?!

Or am I going home for my scissors?!

Press the answer button,

“Heh-Hello...”