

RAN DUMB-ER

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

MARK HAYES

Chapter 1

BIG BAG OF NUTS!

It was the best of times, it was nuts at times.

Bright lights. Dim city. Big dreams. Harsh reality.

Extravagant. Intense. Insane.

Celebrities. Porn stars. Married women.

I'm back. I'm in L.A. And it's Halloween.

Little did I know how underprepared I was. Halloween in L.A might just be the most nuts time of all. Randumb. Bizarre. Mighty. Seeing little green and orange oompa loompas running around while your senses are being pummeled from all angles. Hot women seem to be everywhere. Half of them naked. The rest half naked. Almost all of them sporting the best bodies money can buy. Imagine all that, if you can.

OK.

So.

Past few days have been kind of like that. Except. Actually even harder to describe. Particularly as I'm now packing my bags again. As I think I'm off on a private jet to the Bahamas.

As.

You.

Do?

I'm getting ahead of myself...

Halloween night, land at LAX. Collect my bags. Nervously queue up for the visa inspection. Get through. Skip past customs. Delighted. No pat down. No cavity probing. And my visa is real? *Mighty!*

Turn back on my long-awaited American phone. Call my buddy Chowder, who kind of looks slightly like Jude Law. Or so he says. Maybe a rounder version, I might add. He's outside waiting with his girlfriend Charlotte, who Chowder also likes to describe as his Megan Fox lookalike (which in

fairness is the more truthful of the two). Stroll out the sliding doors of LAX. Suck in a deep breath of warm L.A air. Ahhh. Fast food. Smog. Heat. Betsy (Mighty!). I'm back! Dancing!

“Chowder - Hope you've been taking care of L.A for me.
Charlotte - Long time no see!”

Throw my bags in the boot of Chowder's car. Jump in the back. Feel funky mighty. I think. I'm back! Drive on!

Weirdly enough L.A smells and looks like home. In the sense that my senses were instantly used to it again, even if it's been 3 months since I was here last. Body temperature readjusted. Air didn't look foreign. Smells didn't seem like I was in a foreign land. Felt good. Seeing all the McDonalds, Starbucks and Subway signs. Sucking in the fume-filled air. Basking in the warmth. Complete opposite to Ireland. But still. Duck to water.

Felt like Chowder and Charlotte's adopted child in the backseat. Both of them asking how I was, how was the flight, do I have my seatbelt on? This would be a reoccurring theme. Chowder turns around,

“What time are you going to the Playboy mansion then?”

“Hmm. Let me check. I'll make a quick call.”

Phone. Dring dring.

“Howdy lady! I made it back- It's Mark... MARK... MARRRRRRKKKK. (Accent issues? Not a-funking-gain!) Not Merrick. M-A-R-K. Irish. Irish Mark, that's the one! How are you? Where am- I'm on the way to West Hollywood! WeHoooo. Yeah, just got back. How are you? What's the jam with later tonight? The Mansion? What time- You which now? Seriously? Why would you do that? But I told you I was coming back... OK. Funk. Yeah, no. How much to pay? Ehh. Yeah. No. No worries. Ciao ciao...”

Balls. Ehh. So then. Hmm...,

“Chowder. What are ye up to tonight?”

“Big night planned. Charlotte's Dad is in town. Going to dinner first. Party in the Roosevelt afterwards. Halloween is nuts here. Should be fun. Pity you can't come mate!”

“Yeah. Pity alright. Although, you know what, if the offer's still open, I will come! Ye've been kind enough to pick me up from the airport. The least I can do is come out to dinner with ye.”

“Are you sure? We are going to Chaya, really nice restaurant, food is amaaaazing.”

“Yeah. I'm sure.”

“Will the girl not mind you canceling on her? What's her name, Tammy?”

“Kammy? Nah, she'll be cool. No worries.”

(Particularly as she just informed me that she gave away my free VIP invite. Thought something had happened as I didn't phone earlier. Asked someone else to go with her instead. Tut. Ape. Say nothing.)

Half an hour in, my plan had already changed. Halloween party at the Playboy Mansion: Out. Dinner and see what happens afterwards: On.

Get to my new temporary abode in West Hollywood. Chowder's friend Tara has a spare room. Quick hello. Dinner in half an hour. Dump my bags. Two minute shower. Whip on my costume. Back out the door. Barely even time for a movement. Jump in a taxi. Hubbulla. Hub-bulla? Hubulla! Eventually he understands the name of the restaurant I'm saying. Arrive at Chaya. In I stumble.

Introduced to Charlotte's Dad, Perry, his girlfriend and glamorous side-kick, Jackie, along with two directors from his company. All over from London for a few days. Sit down. Beer already waiting for me. Take a swig. Realise they're all looking at me. Oddly. Charlotte asks,

“What are you meant to be?”

“Eh, a banshee.”

Obviously.

“Banshee? What on earth is that?”

“You know: Red top hat. White shirt. White tie. Pair of jeans... Typical Irish banshee!”

“Oh right.”

Cue laughter. Ice broken. Bluff on.

Smile and thank Perry for inviting me along, ask if they've already ordered? Cue a perplexed look. Repeat myself. Realise that even though they're all English, they don't understand my accent in the slightest. Maybe I was slurring my words from the jet lag.

“Not too sure what you just said but would you like something stronger than a beer, a gin perhaps?”

“Ehh. Yeah. Please. Make it a double!”

Two gins arrive in front of me. Sweet Jesus. Dumb last words. Dinner. Unreal. Chowder was right. Cheers to Perry, or as I started calling him: “The Man” Finish up.

“What's the plan?”

“Roosevelt Hotel. Hollywood strip. Massive Halloween party.”

“Sounds good. What about tickets?”

“Taken care of.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. Don't worry about it. Just have a good time.”

“Well if you insist...”

Limo waiting for us outside the restaurant. (Ha, mighty to be back in L.A!) Drop The Man and company off at their hotel in West Hollywood. Not up for the crowds in Hollywood.

Three of us head down in the limo on our own. Buzzing now big time. Delighted to be back. Night is shaping up nicely- Until. We hit gridlock. Almost midnight. And the traffic is that bad? Wu. Good old L.A.

Eventually we arrive at the Roosevelt. Massive crowd outside. Huge. Thankfully, Chowder knows a guy. Sorted out the tickets. Greets us. Skips us past the crowd, who give us the nicest of dirty looks. Who cares, we're in!

Just as we enter, a girl who looks like a mix between Lucy Liu and a Barbie doll tells us to follow her. OK? Charlotte's on crutches (trampoline accident, snap of the ankle) so safer to come this way, she informs us. Seems dodge until we find out that the girl appears to be running the VIP lounge upstairs. Takes us the back route, asking if we would like to go in to the VIP lounge? This is weird; no doubt we're getting stung somehow... Ah who cares, we're in!

Placed is packed. People everywhere. All dressed up. All in ridiculously good costumes. (It is Hollywood after all. Not your raggedy Ann outfits that most people plump for back in Ireland. Although my banshee outfit really was top notch). Hot-looking nurses. Cops. Avatars. Witches. Village People. Clowns. Cavemen. Star Wars. Playboy bunnies. Tarzan girls. Playboy girls. Hustler girls. Lingerie models. Girls wearing bits of string barely covering an inch of their body. Girls in body paints. Girls. Girls. GIRLS! Seriously: Unreal.

(Did I mention it's great to be back in L.A? In Cork you wouldn't really see girls in such outfits. And in most cases if you did, you probably wish you hadn't looked. My eyes!)

Roosevelt is big. Historic Spanish-style hotel in the middle of Hollywood, named after Theodore Roosevelt. Hotel lobby inside, DJ playing there. Next to that is "Teddy's" which is a dark, swanky club that almost feels like a wine cellar, filled with beautiful people. Another DJ in there. Big room off of that where I think the first Academy Awards was held way back in 1929. Another DJ in there? Jesus, they're everywhere. Pool area outside called the Tropicana Bar with cabanas all round. And to cap it all off, there's another DJ on a little stage in the middle of the pool outside. Impressive work all round. (Apparently Marilyn Monroe stayed in one of these cabanas for a while, and now haunts it. Apparently.)

Anyway, amongst all of this we had somehow ended up at a private party in a VIP suite outside, overlooking the pool. Our new friend, Maggie Wong worked for a company who had rented out the suite. Only cost them \$60,000 to rent it out. For one night. Great value! Unfortunately for Ms. Wong, hardly anyone from the company decided to show up. Which is why we had been invited along. Make up the numbers. Seat fillers. Works for me. Particularly as it was the only part of the hotel that had a free bar included. Betsy! Maggie Wong utters the magic words,

"Help yourselves to any drinks you want."

And we're off! Myself and Chowder made a beeline for the six foot tall fridge full of vodka. Oh sweet Jesus. Booze. On,

“Would anyone like a booze?”

Girls want some wine. No worries. Lots of expensive looking bottles in this fridge. Except. Balls. No corkscrew. Not to worry... Found a coat hanger! So now, like a banshee I'm ramming open \$200 bottles of wine with my coat hanger corkscrew. Call me MacGyver! Oddly enough, my quick thinking has impressed Maggie Wong. Or maybe it's the banshee outfit,

“Loooooooooveee your red hat!
Love it!!!”

Either way, she seems to have a soft spot. Myself and Chowder booze on. Guzzling down mango vodka. Doing a bit of mingling in the VIP suite. Big room inside. Leather couches. Plasma TVs. Chandeliers. All that lovely VIP gibber. Big bar on one side. Big balcony outside. Only twelve people in here. Meet the folk outside. Nice people. Doctor. Writer. Candlestick maker. Only now do I realise that the pool area below us is rocking! Way better than this suite. But. No free booze out there. Hmm.

Free booze or rocking party? Drink on or mingle? I know: Drink drink drink. Ahhh. Now. Let's go for a stroll and have a laugh!

Unfortunately Charlotte is ruled out for strolling around. On crutches and all. Meaning Chowder is staying put too. Tut. Time to go for a solo wander. Looks mighty, back in a few. Actually, seems Maggie Wong wants to come have a look around too. Come on Maggie, let's go on an adventure!

After the relative calmness upstairs, it feels like we're thrust into a zoo full of models down below. Beautiful people gone wild. Music, drink and whatever else, has them all pumped up to the max. Jumping. Dancing. Creeping. Rocking. Boozing. Spilling. Screaming. Hooting. Hollering. The dogs have been left out. Gridlock everywhere. No hope of getting inside to the hotel. So far this stroll has been ten feet. Maggie grabs me by the arm,

“Follow me.”

Lead the way, Ms. Wong! Around by the far side of the pool we go. Mingling. Saluting. High fiving. Going well. Until. Hit another gridlock. Jesus, this place is packed. What should we do? Go back upstairs? Chill a minute? Maggie Wong says chill,

“Let's just hang here.”

Cool. So we chill. I'm looking around. Gazing everywhere. Taking it all in. Where have all the green fields gone? Hang on... Realise someone's hand is rubbing my banshee pants. Maggie Wong? Hey hup. What's going on here? Look at Maggie. She smiles. Keeps rubbing. Tells me she likes my banshee costume. Loves my accent even more.

“Why thank you. It is my best asset, to be true.”

Well besides my... location. Duu. While Maggie is rubbing my wong, she asks if the people are still on the balcony.

“Ehh, let me check... No don't think so. Why? Who are they actually?”

Hmmm. This feels nice...

“Oh, well, that's kind of my husband and a few of his friends- ”

“Emmm what now?”

My wong wangs.

“As in *your* husband or just someone's husband?”

“Yeah, mine. Ha ha. Why, can he see us?”

“No he can't see us but I can feel his wife rubbing me!”

Wong looks at me.

“Should I stop? Do you not like it?”

“I do, Ms. Wong, but it's kind of wrong, so probably for the best. Call me when the divorce goes through.”

Night ends with me back up in VIP. Wondering if the husband saw. Deflecting Maggie's eye daggers. Sipping on boozes. Dancing around the balcony. And repeatedly singing what appears to be the new anthem of the moment *Empire State of Mind*. Loving it! Even if it is a song all about New York and not L.A, it will have to do. Cheers-ing everyone with my bottle of mango vodka. Great to be back...,

“In New Yorrrrrrrrk... there's nothing you can't do, now

you're in Newwww Yorrrrrrrkkkkkkk!!!”

Cheers everyone. Mighty VIP welcoming party for me. Banshee is back in town! Greatest return night ever!!!

Slug. Chug. Dumb. Done. Maggie *whaaat?!*