

The First two Chapters of your adventures journey.

Goodbye Norma Jean

Introduction

When Norma Jean was born, she was born into a middle-class family.

Her Father was working for the famous Howard Hughes. Her father could not provide for the family, Maxine decided to leave Him.

Maxine's friend from High School and Her sister's ex-husband arrived at her doorstep, to step into the role of being the Head of the Household.

He brought home a Navy Buddy; Norma Jean fell head over heels in love with him.

For her it was love at first sight.

She knew this was her only escape from her Military style household.

When she said her "I do," she dreamed it would be a supremely happy marriage.

To end her second marriage, she had to move miles away from the abuse to get a fresh start in life, ultimately finding the Man she deserved.

Prologue

In this novel, some incidents are described as how they happened.

Names have been changed to protect the innocent and the guilty.

It is a novel that lets you relax, unwind, have a few laughs, and not think about your problems for a little while.

It is a reminder that life is a journey filled with imperfect moments.

We are all imperfect, but we are all in this crazy comedy called life.

Switzerland

It is 1876, the United States just had their 100th Independence Day celebration.



Winter has just started in Switzerland.

The farms are bare of crops due to the winter.

Life is hard being a farmer in Switzerland.

12–15-hour days of back breaking work.

At the moment there is no green land, just beautiful snow.



The Armand Nicolet Tramelan watch factory is producing watches in the Hundreds every week.

Fred sees smoke in the distance.

That looks like smoke coming from the watch factory.

says Fred

I think Your right Fred. replies Augustine

Let us hurry and help the bucket brigade.

Fred and Augustine run towards the watch factory.

Upon arrival they see that they are too late.

Nobody is putting water on the fire.

It is because the Factory has burnt to the ground.

Armand is in a crouched fetal position crying his eyes out.

I am deeply sorry for you Armand. Fred says

Are You going to rebuild the factory?

I do not know what I am going to do, it is too early to decide. replies Armand

Well, if you need anything just let Me know.

We have plenty of wood in the barn. Fred says

The following Year the watch factory was rebuilt.

It is summer now

The temperature is higher than usual, approximately 95 Degrees Fahrenheit.

Fred & Augustine are looking at their cultivated land.

This heat ruined the crops this year. Fred says

What are we going to do, Fred?

It is finally time to go to the new world.

Where is the new world, Fred?

The land of Opportunity, the United States of America.

Fred replies

How are we going to survive there?

Remember, we have family there that went many years ago, they will help us to start again with a new life.

Are we going to run a farm again Fred?

That is all I know how to do. I have never done construction except for building our house and barn and I definitely don't know how to make watches like Armand.

What are we going to take with us Fred?

Just our clothes because we cannot take anything else, no furniture, no farming equipment.

What is going to happen to our things? asks Augustine
I will have Armand's brother Ramando oversee everything.

He can take what he wants and let the town's people buy the rest, he can send us the money when he finishes to sell everything.

We need to go into town to book our passage tickets.

Fred and Augustine go into Bern city.

Here we are, the ticket office. says Fred

Fred and Augustine enter the ticket office.

Hello Fred and Augustine, how have you two been? the Clerk asks

Not so good, this heat wave ruined our crops, so we have no other choice but to go to the promised land. Fred replies

Yes, the United States is a wonderful place to start your life over.

They also call it the land of opportunity.

Are you here to buy tickets for the next ship going? asks the Clerk

Yes, we will need two tickets for the next ship that is leaving. Fred says

Hmmmm, let Me look at the scheduled departures.

The next ship departure will be next month onboard the Roulette ship.

You do not have any ship that is leaving sooner? Fred asks

Oh yes, the Normandie which
departs tomorrow.

How much would it be for two
tickets? asks Fred

Do You want First Class with all
the amenities?

The 1st Class tickets are only \$499 each.

Oh no, we cannot afford the first-class tickets. replies
Fred

We will have to buy the 3rd Class tickets.

Are you sure about the 3rd Class tickets, you do not get
any amenities. asks the Clerk

I am sure. says Fred

Fred and Augustine go back home to pack their
belongings.

Fred, can I take My wedding dress with Me, we had a
wonderful wedding. asks Augustine

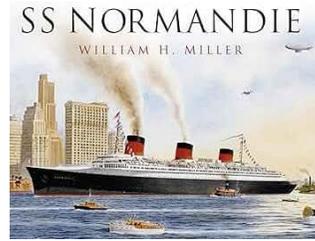
I suppose so, you looked so lovely in that wedding dress.

Fred replies

Let's get some sleep because we must get up early
tomorrow.

The next day

There is a knock on the door.



Who is it? asks Fred

It is me, Ramando. I am here to take You to the port.

It is incredibly early. replies Fred

Yes, I know but if You miss the ship's departure you will have to catch the next ship and that one departs next month. replies Ramando

Ok, sure glad we packed last night, grab your things, Augustine. says Fred

No such thing, I will take her things out to the wagon. Fred and Ramando put the luggage in the back of the wagon.

They all get on the wagon, Augustine sitting in the middle.

Yaaaah shouts Ramando.

The horse and wagon start to go down the trail.

Fred, Augustine, and Ramando arrive at the docks.

Ramando gets the luggage. out of the wagon.

I am sure going to miss you two. Ramando says sadly

You better come back and visit me.

Not sure when we can return Ramando. says Fred.

A ship hand shouts through a megaphone,

“All aboard.”

Well, we must get on board. says Fred

Ramando is standing there incredibly sad, waving to Fred
& Augustine.

The ship's whistle sounds, & the ship starts to pull away
from the dock.

Land of Opportunity

Immigrants entered the United States through several ports. More than 70 percent were from Europe generally coming through the East Coast arriving at Ellis Island processing center in the New York harbor.

Many immigrants wanted to move to communities established by previous settlers from their homelands. And their health care extended beyond routine. Friendships were formed; hugs were exchanged.

Let us dissect that: these immigrants had come across the ocean from faraway lands. Most did not speak English. They were sick. They had little to nothing in terms of possessions.

And they were treated by skilled medical staff that included women at Ellis Island; fed healthy meals cooked daily in a huge kitchen with fresh ingredients; had sunshine.

The beauty of it all?

No medical staff ever got sick in that infectious disease hospital. Forty percent of Americans trace their heritage through the island. Which means that four percent of

Americans had family that was treated in that hospital complex.

Who were they? Are any of them still alive? Did they share their stories with their children and grandchildren? And what other stories does that hospital hold? Because there are so many stories waiting to be told just about that infection disease hospital, let alone the entire hospital complex.

As the issue of immigration continues to be debated across America, from the White House to local town halls to dinner tables and bars, it's a wonderful time to look back and look across the Hudson River.

The Ship Normandie passes a construction site on an island.

Augustine look, they are building something on that island. It looks like they are building it to put something on top of it.

I am not sure Fred, you know I am just a lonely Wife.

Augustine says

Are You really lonely?

No, it is just an old saying, that is all. I am incredibly happy being with You Fred.

Do You think it is going to be for the statue their sending from France? asks Fred

I did not hear anything about that, where did You hear about it? Augustine asks

I bought a newspaper before we left and been reading it along the way. It is going to be a present for the United States of America from France. Let Me read the article about it.

It will be called the Liberty Enlightening the World or Statue of Liberty and it is a symbol of freedom, inspiration, and hope.



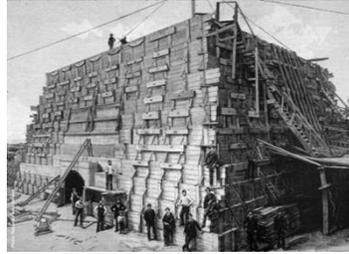
It is a gift to the United States from the people of France; the statue would be a symbol of friendship between the two nations.

It will be designed by French sculptor Frédéric Auguste

Bartholdi, and its metal framework

will be built by Gustave Eiffel.

They also say that Gustave Eiffel will build an exceptionally large Tower in France after the Statue of Liberty. They also say the French people will finance the statue and the French government had agreed to pay for its transport to New York, and the Americans would be expected to pay for the pedestal.



The tablet she carries is the date of United States Declaration of Independence which was signed on July 4th, 1776. The seven points of her crown symbolize the seven countries and the rays of the sun.

The image of Her is the hopeful spread of liberty around the world as an example of what the United States is showing other countries.

The torch represents progress. The rays stand for a halo (or aureole). They radiate forward like the sun — another way in which Lady Liberty enlightens the world.

The broken shackle and chains show her as a goddess free from oppression and servitude.

That sounds so amazing Fred. Augustine says
It sure does.

It also says the new structure on Ellis Island began receiving Immigrant's on January 1, 1882. Annie Moore, a teenage girl from Ireland, accompanied by her two younger brothers, they made history as the first immigrants to be processed at Ellis Island.

The ship Normandie arrives in the Land of Opportunity, New York.

When Augustine and Fred exited the Normandie, they got in line and followed the rest of the Immigrants into the Ellis Island Inspection building.

They approached the table of the Immigration Officers.

Passports and Voyage tickets please. Immigration Officers says

Fred looks at the Immigration Officers badge. It reads George Johnson.

Here are my Wife's and my passports and Voyage tickets, Mr. Johnson. Fred replies

So, you came here on the Normandie.

She was not supposed to be here until next week.

I guess she traveled faster than usual. Mr. Johnson said She sure did Sir, both of us got seasick a little. replies

Fred

Mr. Johnson stamps both passports.

Welcome to the United States of America. What are your intentions in the United States?

I have Family in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and they know an Amish family that is going to take us in and teach us how to farm here in the United States.

Farming in Switzerland is hugely different. says Fred

Go over there to that table where it says Work permits.
Thank You Mr. Johnson

Augustine and Fred go over to the work permit table.
How may I help you two? asks the work permit Officer
We are from Bern Switzerland, and we are relocating to Fort Wayne, Indiana.

I have Family there, and our family knows an Amish family who farms. They are going to teach us to farm here in the United States.

What is the families name who are sponsoring you two?
the Immigration Officer asks

They are the Millar family; they also are from Bern Switzerland.

How do you spell it?

Oh yes, sorry, it is Millar. Everyone thinks it is spelled Miller.

Let Me look in the directory. Hmmmmm I cannot seem to find it.

Fred starts to panic.

It should be in there; we cannot go back to Switzerland because we no longer have a farm.

Well, we will have to send a letter to make sure that they will sponsor you two.

How long will that take? asks Fred

It should take a week to get there, and if they send it right back, you are looking at another week.

Can we go into town to get a hotel room? Fred asks

No, you must have a sponsor first. Once we receive the letter that they are going to sponsor you then you may proceed.

Where are we going to sleep and eat? asks Augustine

For people that are detained, there is a small café, you will have to sleep on the benches or the floor.

You must be joking. Augustine says angrily!

No Ma'am, these are what we offer, that comes from the government of New York.

We do not have any US dollars. Fred says

You can exchange money over there where it says "Exchange."

Thank You, I guess.

Fred, I am furious with You, look what situation you have put us in, you should have asked someone what steps to take to get into the United States. Augustine says angrily I am sorry dear.

Do not sorry Me, I cannot believe you.

Two weeks go by.

Sleeping on the benches and floor Fred begins to get sick.

Augustine is also starting to feel ill. A person with Immigration walks up to Augustine and Fred.

Are You the Nicolet family?

Yes, are we finally going to get out of here? Fred asks

Yes, you could have left half a week ago, your sponsor's letter arrived here five days ago.

Why didn't anyone tell us that the letter had arrived? asks Augustine

Sometimes things just happen that way. The Immigration Officer says

Here is Your letter.

The Immigration Officer gives the Envelope to Fred.

Fred opens the letter. Fred reads the letter and hands it back to the Immigration Officer. The Immigration Officer stamps the letter.

You are now ready to proceed. The exit is over there, you cannot miss it, it has a sign above the door that reads “EXIT.”

Just because we are from Switzerland does not mean we are stupid, we know what “Exit” means.

Augustine and Fred exit the building on Ellis Island and proceed to the ferry dock. They anxiously get onboard. The ferry gets underway to the mainland.

[In November of 1954, the last remaining detainee on Ellis Island, a Norwegian merchant seaman named Arne Petersen, was released and Ellis Island officially was closed by the U.S. government.]

Do Bad Days Happen

Introduction

*So you think you are having a bad day?
You ain't seen nothing yet!*

If your days are not too happy, you could have a day like a person in this book. Sometimes, something unexpected happens, or we just can't seem to get going. Whether you're having a bad day or are at a not-so-good point in your life in general, remember that there is always a path out there and all it takes is for you to take one step at a time. Keep pushing on and know that hope and possibility are always around you if you stick with it. No matter what the reason is, you'll arrive at a place where you can finally place your challenges on a shelf and move on.

The most important lesson of all—especially if you're in pursuit of a big dream or goal—is simply not to quit. Ultimately, remember that nothing lasts forever, we just have bad days. We all do!

So ask yourself:
Do Bad Days Happen?

Prologue

In this novel, some incidents are actually described how they happened. Names have been changed to protect the innocent and the guilty.

In this novel, there are several short stories for your enjoyment. It's a novel that lets you relax, have a few laughs, and not think about your problems for a little while. It's a reminder that life is a journey filled with imperfect moments. We are all imperfect, but we are all in this crazy comedy called life together.

You can skip around the chapters if you'd like—each one is its own standalone story, so go ahead and start with whichever one strikes your fancy first. It is totally up to you!

Thank you...and enjoy.

1

The Small Town of Maravillosa



It was a hot summer day around 105 degrees. Brian, Michelle, and Ralph arrive at Hotel Maravillosa.

“How may I help you this *woooooonderful* day, Señor?” says the boisterous woman hotel clerk behind the counter.

“I have a registration for one room, with three adults,” Brian says.

“No children?” The check-in clerk asks.

“Nope, not this vacation, just us adults this time.”

“What is the name it is under?”

“Brian!”

“And your last name, Señor?”

“Just Brian; no last name!”

“Everyone in our country has to have a last name! I do

not see a reservation under that name.”

“Look again, I specifically made it for this weekend, Cinco de Mayo.”

“They celebrate that in the U.S. but not in our town.”

“Ah, here it is, but you made it for last month,” says the clerk.

“No, I’m sure it was this weekend!” says Brian.

“Brian, you didn’t write it down?” Michele asks frustratingly.

“No, you always tell me to use my app!”

“Well then bring it up,” she says.

“I can’t, my phone fell into the pool. It hasn’t dried out yet.”

“I’m so sorry, Señor, but we are booked up.”

“Great. *Now* what are we going to do?” Michelle asks angrily.

“No, no, you *have* to have one room.”

“The only room we have left is the Presidential Suite.”

“How much is that?”

“60,000 Maravillosa Moobers, per night.”

“What is that in dollars?”

“\$3,000 per night, five-night minimum.”

“*You’re outta your mind!* I’m *not* paying that!”

“You better do something; I’m *not* going back home,” Michelle says.

“I have enough for three nights only. Ralph, you pay the

rest.”

“Okay, but you need to pay me back.”

“Why is that?”

“Because *you* invited *me!*”

“Just pay the lady so we can get our room,” grumbles Michelle angrily.

A few minutes later...

“It's ready; just go to the 13th floor then turn right, then left, another left, then right, left, and right again.”

“Boy, I hope one of you got all that,” demands Brian. “I thought hotels didn't have 13 floors?”

“In our small town of Maravillosa we do not believe in superstitions. I'll have the bellhop help you with your luggage.”

“No thank you. We can manage.”

“For *you*, maybe, but for me, I want them to deliver it... and make sure you give them a *very* good tip!”

Brian finally finds the room after asking the clerk 10 times.

“It *only* took you three hours,” Michelle says sarcastically.

“I have great news, and I have bad news,” Brian says.

“What is the good news?” Michelle asks.

“There is a double king bed!”

“And the bad news is?” Ralph asks.

“Someone has to sleep on an Army cot.”

“I’m definitely *not* sleeping on the cot,” declares Michelle. “Well, well, then who will it be?” she asks.

“Not me!” barks Brian.

“Well I can't *possibly* sleep on the cot because it's too low to the ground. I'll never be able to get up.”

“Well that leaves you, Brian. You’re the only one left that doesn't have an excuse.”

A short time later at the pool...

Everyone was finally gathered around the pool.

“Can you make a payment for me?” Ralph questioned. “Just deposit this \$100 into the ATM to pay for my credit card.”

“Okay, I'll give you the receipt when I'm finished,” Brian said.

Leaving the hotel, the doorman is standing near the revolving door outside.

Brian tries to enter it and just barely manages to step in as it was turning very fast.

That was close...I thought I wouldn't get in! Brian is thinking.

But the door keeps going around and around with Brian stuck inside. It won't slow down enough to let him out.

“How do you stop this crazy thing?!” screams Brian.

He finally manages to get out by using his foot as a blockade. Now it’s throbbing.

“What’s wrong with that *crazy* thing?! Why doesn’t it stop and let people out?” asks Brian.

“There is something wrong with it, I think?” says the doorman.

“You *think*?” Brian says.

“Señor, it’s been like that since I started working here six months ago. Excuse me, what is your name, Señor?” the doorman asks with curiosity.

“My name is Brian. I am not good about introducing myself. What is yours—oh, never Mind—I see your name on your name badge. Nice to meet you, Guber!” Brian says.

“Oh no, my name is actually el Potrero,” says the doorman, grinning.

“But why does everyone call a male *Señor*?” Brian asks.

“In my small town of Maravillosa, it is an honor to be called *Señor*, Señor!”

“I need a ride into town for some groceries,” Brian says.

“There is a store a short distance just over the road,” says el Potrero.

“Across the road? That’s a toll road freeway! Are you *crazy*?!” snaps Brian.

“Well, Señ—”

“It’s *Brian*! Stop calling me *Señor*!”

“Well, Brian Señor, some people cross walking, some come back, some don't!”

“Are you *kidding* me?” asks Brian in disgust.

“No, Brian Señor, I would *never ever* joke about something like that.”

“Okay look, I need to get to the bank and buy some groceries. Can you get me a ride?” asks Brian.

“Yes, Señor Brian, right away.”

“Enough with the *Señor* already!” barks Brian.

“Okay, as you wish, but don't you want to feel honorable?”

“*Just get me a ride!*” screams Brian.

Half an hour later...

A beat-up car with its back bumper dragging behind pulls up to the front of the hotel and the driver rolls down the window.

“Did someone call for a taxi?” the driver asks.

“El Potrero, I asked you to get me a ride, not a taxi. Why didn't you call for the hotel shuttle?”

“First, Señor—”

“Stop calling me Señor already! I thought you were the doorman?” asks Brian.

“But I am, Señor!” el Potrero says proudly.

“You're the taxI driver also?”

“No, this is Guber; that's why it's on my badge.”

“Why didn't you get the hotel shuttle?”

“Because I can't do three jobs at once, Señor. It's not allowed in my wonderful town of Maravillosa.” El Potrero shrugs. “And besides, it has two flat tires and no more engine—it was stolen six months ago before I started working here.”

“Just take me into town!” barks Brian.

“Oh, *noooo*, no can do. No one is allowed on the streets after 6 p.m. and it's 5:59 p.m. right now, Señor. Too many gangsters and robbers out at night and we won't make it there and back in only one minute...oh, no, it is 6 p.m. You must get up early tomorrow, Brian Señor.”

“Figures,” Brian says with a sigh.

The next morning...

Brian is standing out in front of the hotel, constantly looking at his watch, when the gardener comes out of a door right next to the revolving door. Brian looks at him in frustration.

“Figures, my luck,” says Brian, rolling his eyes skyward. “Excuse me, is el Potrero here? He told me to meet him here early in the morning.”

“Sorry, it's his day off today,” the gardener says.

“So, is there another driver that can take me into

town?”

“No, Señor, today is Wednesday, and nobody is allowed to drive on Wednesdays in our town of Maravillosa. If you get caught driving on Wednesday they make you go to the cow pastures to shovel poo pool!”

The next morning, the sun is shining brightly and you could hear the sound of parakeets whistling and the *tap-tap-tap* of woodpeckers pecking away off in the distance.

“Ahhhhhh! It's going to be a great day today!” says Brian, stretching as he gets up from the cot.

Brian goes to the Breakfast Area. Ralph and Michelle are already there eating.

“Why didn't you two wait for me?” Brian asks.

“Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise,” says Michelle and Ralph at the same time.

“That's why we didn't wait for you!” Michelle adds with a smirk.

“Did you pay my credit card?” asks Ralph.

“I couldn't get into town. This town is weird with their laws,” says Brian. “I'm supposed to meet the doorman, Guber Driver.”

“Huh?” asks Ralph.

“That's what they call the taxis here.”

“It's the same guy?” asks Ralph.

“Yeah, and the shuttle driver too, but someone stole the engine.”

“Okay, just don't forget to pay my credit card—if not, the hotel will throw us out onto the street.”

“Why would they do that?”

“Because it's maxed out!”

A few hours later...

Brian and el Potrero go into town.

“Go!” el Potrero says. “Hurry because it is almost lunch here in town. The whole town stops working for two hours straight! If you don't obey and keep working and you get caught, you have only two punishments to choose from. The first, you know about cleaning our *WONDERFUL* cow and pig pens...or...you clean out the horse stalls. I like the horse stalls the best out of the two.”

Brian asks, “Why do you like the stalls better?”

“Oh, I just love horses and the aroma is much better.”

Brian looks through a window of what appears to be the jail but he could see only one cell.

“There is only one cell. What if more than one person gets arrested?” Brian asks curiously.

“We take turns. One in the cell, the other watching the other one so they don't escape. One hour each turn.”

“You've been arrested before?” asks Brian.

“Of course! *Everyone* has.”

Brian enters the grocery store, looking around. The place seems odd—it has shelves with food, a dell section, a window that looks like it belonged in a bank, and all the goodies anyone would need.

Brian gathers up what he needs and goes to the cashier. There is a very old cash register on the counter, sort of like the ones you might see in an old Western movie.

The cashier writes down the prices on a big piece of paper. “Would you like a bag?” she asks.

“Yes, of course. I can't carry everything,” Brian states.

“That will be an extra 500 Goobers.”

“*WHAT?!*” screams Brian. “*You're out of your mind!* I'm *not* paying that.”

“No Goobers, no bags. Maravillosa Town Law.” She shrugs. “I don't make the laws.”

“In the U.S., everyone has to pay only \$1.00 for a bag! I refuse to pay when groceries are so expensive. They should have to give them free,” Brian says.

“So...no bags?” the cashier asks.

“No. I'll try to carry everything. And I would like a newspaper. Do you have any?” Brian asks.

The cashier turns over the paper that she wrote the prices on. “This is our only paper for the town and it's also my register.”

“Doesn't that old register work?”

“Nope. Hasn't worked since the town was established in 1812.”

Brian gathers everything up and starts to go to the door when he turns and asks, “Where is the ATM?”

“It's in the corner near the table where those ladies are sitting.”

He sees the ATM but something in that corner doesn't look right. There sits some odd-looking ladies in the two booths. One of them is calling him over and blowing kisses at him.

Brian steps a little closer.

The one throwing kisses says, “Come here, Big Boy,” in the deepest voice there is.

“Holy *SHIT!*” Brian yells out. “I'm outta here!” Backing away, he drops one of the sodas trying to carry everything, picks it up, and sprints to the door.

Half an hour later...

Brian gets back to the hotel, el Potrero still by his side. “Here, there's a soda for taking me into town,” he says.

“Thank you so kindly, Señ—Brian. I almost said it.”

“Said what?” asks Brian.

“I almost called you *Señor.*”

“It's okay. I'm starting to understand your little town.”

Brian leaves el Potrero and continues to the pool area

where Michelle and Ralph are enjoying the sun and pool.

“Did you pay my credit card?” asks Ralph.

“No, you told me to put it in your checking account,” Brian says, confused.

“No, I specifically told You to pay my credit card.

“Well next time do it yourself,” Brian answers angrily.

“You don't see that I'm in a wheelchair with one leg missing?” Ralph says very angrily.

I forgot 'cause I almost got molested by some drag queens! Next time have your sister do it then!” Brian yells. Everyone in the pool area starts to stare at him.

“Remember, *asshole*, I'm not just his sister, but your *wife* also, so be careful what you say,” Michelle replies angrily.

Ten minutes later...

The doorman starts to open the can of soda and it squirts everywhere, getting him soaking wet.

Brian returns and sees that the doorman is totally soaked.

“I know it's 105 degrees out, but why are you so hot that you sweat like a pig and totally wet?” Brian asks.

“You did it on purpose!” el Potrero says.

“What did I do on purpose?” Brian asks.

“You gave me this shaken up soda! The soda you gave me squirted me when I opened it.”

Brian starts laughing.

“It's not at all funny! In our town of Maravillosa, a doorman is respected like knights!” the doorman answers angrily. “No funny tricks with *me*, *no* more!”

“It wasn't a trick! I swear on my dead mother's grave,” Brian sarcastically says to the doorman.

“Señor Brian, let me tell you something. In our town we never, *ever* swear on our dead mother's grave.”

The next morning...

Brian walks to the front door hoping to catch el Potrero early to go into town to pay Ralph's credit card. He finds him in the same spot by the doorway as usual.

“Good morning, el Potrero! It's such a good day, isn't it?” questions Brian.

“No sir, Brian, it is *not* a good day,” replies el Potrero.

“Why isn't it a good day, Potrero?”

“You do remember what the name of our wonderful town is, don't you?”

“Of course, it's Maravillosa. Why do you ask?”

“You see, when the first settlers discovered the land which was turned into our town, they came over the hills, and looking at the land down below, they said, *Maravillosa*. That is marvelous in English. So, every day is Maravillosa—or marvelous—everywhere you are in our small town.”

“Okay, now I understand. I need a favor that I hope you can do for me.”

“I will do anything for our Maravillosa guests.”

“I need to go to the town square to pay my brother-in-law's credit card.”

“I shall go round up our Guber vehicle. I will be back in less than 10 minutes.”

“Okay, I will wait here and not move an inch.”

“Brian, you will freeze up all your joints if you stay in one place. Just stay here and I will be right back.”

Less than 10 minutes later...

El Potrero pulls up to the hotel entrance and rolls the passenger window down.

“I am at your service. Wait and I will open the door for you.”

“Potrero, I am not a woman. I can open my own door.” Brian says.

“Nonsense, we do this for *all* of our guests no matter if you are female or male, so get in and we will be on our way before the traffic clogs our dirt freeway.”

“That bumpy road is your freeway?” asks Brian.

“Yes, I am afraid it is. We haven't collected enough money all of the years it was established in 1850.”

“Why, the other day when we went to the town square,

there were only like three cars on the road?”

“Oh, the whole town of Maravillosa plays what you gringos call soccer—for us it is *football*—this day.”

“The whole town plays?”

“Almost all. Construction. The three construction workers, the local plumber. Even the Mayor, who’s been our mayor for 75+ years. The only people that don’t play is the nice pregnant lady who runs our market and the bartender.”

El Potrero and Brian arrive at the town square later.

“Here you are my gringo friend. I will wait here for you.”

“Okay, I’ll be right back.”

Brian starts to enter the small market when he sees the little broken-down wooden stand. A small sign is dangling from one nail that reads: *MARGARITAS 2 FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.*

What the heck, it couldn’t hurt, Brian says to himself.

“Hello, Señor. How can I help you this Maravillosa day?” the bartender asks.

“Why does everyone in this town call everyone *Señor*? You guys don’t get sick of it?” asks Brian.

“Not at all, Señor. It is in our Constitution, put into law in 1860. So, how can I help you?”

“Two margaritas to go, please.” states Brian.

“Okay, if you insist.”

“I’m in a hurry because I have to pay my wife’s brother’s credit card.”

“Here you go, Señor,” the bartender says, handing Brian two delicious-looking margaritas.

Before Brian turns around, he feels the presence of someone behind him. He turns and sees Potrero standing with his arms crossed over his chest, slowly shaking his head.

“Potrero, what’s up, my friend?”

“I have to put you under arrest, Señor Brian.”

“Why, what did I do? You’re the Guber driver and the doorman—don’t tell me you’re the town sheriff too!”

“I have to have three jobs just to pay for my daughter’s wedding. And in our little town we are not allowed to drink alcohol in the street,” states Potrero.

Brian turns around to face the cart bartender, who looks like he is 10 years old.

“He is actually 4’5” and is 62 years old.”

“Why didn’t you tell me when I ordered the drinks?”

The bartender steps down and disappears from view until he comes to the front of the cart and points to the sign. There is some *VERY* small writing that you barely see. It reads: NO MARGARITAS IN THE STREET, ORDINANCE #3.

“The ordinance is #3 out of how many?” asks Brian.

“We have only 10 ordinances that go back to when the town was established,” Potrero responds.

Potrero escorts Brian to the one-cell jail, puts him inside, and locks the door.

“Hey! Don't I get my one phone call? And who is going to watch me?” asks Brian.

“We lock the cell door when there is a foreigner arrested. And we stopped giving prisoners the one call when the town was established because it's too expensive.”

“LET ME OUTTA HEEEEEREEEEEE!” Brian screams.

Michelle and Ralph, not seeing or hearing from Brian on their last day, drive off into the sunset and never hear from Brian again.

So ask yourself:
Do Bad Days Happen?

2

I'm a Billionaire

“Turn on Channel 13!” yells Sam to Gabriela.

“Sam, did you know that with odds of more than 175 million-to-1, jackpots routinely reach hundreds of millions?”

(From the TV) “Get ready for tonight’s winning lottery numbers,” the lottery announcer says. “The first number is 1.”

“Dang, I don't have that number!” shouts Sam.

“You know, Sam, they say that number one is creativeness, research. It's a rule of success, happiness, and prosperity. With *all* the things you've tried, you should for sure have this number,” Gabriela says.

“I don't care about that! I just want my numbers. Now hush and let me hear the rest of the numbers so I can start planning our paradise vacation.”

The yellow balls with the red numbers are constantly being turbulently turned around and around. Suddenly, another one pops up into the tube. “Your second number is 6,” the lottery announcer says.

“That's another one that I don't have,” Sam says.

“Dear, you should have chosen number 6 because it is a number for love, attractive force, and sexuality. Of course, you *should* be more of these without a number involved...”

“Ya, ya, now hush!”

“The next number *iiiiiiiiis* 3,” the lottery announcer says.

“They say number 3 is the rule of law and money. I know you gotta have that one,” states Gabriela.

“The next winning lottery number is number 5.”

“Sam, you should have that one, number 5. This number represents travel, literature, communication, hazard, action. You love to travel—at least to the next city a mile away.”

“*Son of a bitch*, another one not on my ticket,” Sam says. “Okay, this is *frickin’ ridiculous!*” he shouts.

“Your next number in tonight's weekly lottery is...the number 7.”

“Number 7 represents astrology, numerology, entertainment and music. I know you were smart enough to choose that one, Sam,” states Gabriela, who is in the kitchen. Suddenly there's a loud whirring sound drowning out the sound of the TV.

“Yeah, let me hear already!” Sam shouts. “Turn off that noisy blender *NOW!* And if you don't keep your trap shut I'm going to hit you with a knuckle sandwich!”

Sam turns his attention back to the TV. “*Come on*, final number; if I get this one I get my five bucks back.”

The weekly lottery announcer says, “Get ready for your final number!” She pauses as the last ball pops up into the tube. “Your final bonus number is 13. Good luck to you all.”

“Okay, got that one. At least I get my five bucks back that I spent on these stupid lottery tickets,” states Sam.

“Well, did you finally win so we can get out of this cockroach-infested apartment?” asks Gabriela. “You've been playing for over 20 years the same numbers every time, twice a week. There have been days we've gone sometimes without eating because of your lottery habit!”

“No, once again I only got one number, but at least one of them was my lucky number. I can take the five bucks I won and buy five more!” Sam says happily.

“Over my *dead ass body!*” states Gabriela angrily. “You're not buying any more lottery tickets or I'm moving back in with your mother. And you know how much she hates me.” Gabriela says. “Wait—you told me you bought *two* tickets, 10 rows, 5 on each lottery ticket. You only have one ticket in your hand. Where is the other one? Did you buy a beer again, lying to me again about how many lottery tickets you bought?” Gabriela asks.

“Oh *yeah*, I *did* buy two tickets— and this time I didn't buy a beer. Read the numbers for me; you know I go into panic mode when I'm under stress,” Sam says.

“Okay, Bob, but this is your last time I'm going to read them for you!” Gabriela says.

“Why did you call me *Bob* again?” asks Sam. “Are you still cheating on me with your ex-husband? If you are, you know I’m out of here,” Sam states.

“I didn’t call you Bob. You’re hearing things again. Go see your doctor for your meds. I think they need to be adjusted for the thousandth time. You just had them adjusted last week, maybe they need to be adjusted again.”

“*JUST READ THE NUMBERS AND SHUT THE HELL UP!*” Sam screams.

“You’re treating me like shit again!” cries Gabriela.

“Keep it up and you *will* be living with my ma again,” snaps Sam. “Just read them, *dingbat!*”

“Okay, no yelling and no interrupting me,” Gabriela says. “Did you find the other ticket? Because the other one is still in your hand.”

“Oh, yeah, I still have the same ticket in my hand. You know I have a short memory,” Sam states. “I keep telling you I hate what’s happening to me! I must have a damned disease—maybe it’s dementia or Alzheimer’s disease,” shouts Sam.

“Stop being a hypochondriac. You don’t have either.” Gabriela says sternly, rolling her eyes.

“Where was it, again?” asks Sam.

“It’s probably in your wallet, idiot.” Gabriela states.

“I *told* you, stop calling me an idiot,” says Sam. “You know, an idiot doesn’t even know how to wipe his own ass and I know how to wipe mine!”

Gabriela rolls her eyes. “Okay, did you get it out yet? she asks.

“What, my pee pee? Sam asks, confused. “I’m not even horny.”

“The *ticket*, you asshole!” Gabriela says. “I have better things to do, you know.”

“Really? Better than living the high life?” questions Sam.

“Get the ticket out of your wallet.”

“Okay, okay, I’ve got it. Read me the numbers.” Sam says.

Gabriela reads the first line of numbers. Sam is confused about the numbers not being in order.

“Yeah, tell me the next line,” Sam says.

Gabriela finishes reading all the numbers and Sam has a shocked look on his face.

“Sam, what the hell is wrong with you?” asks Gabriela. “Do you need to go back to the hospital once again?”

“No Gabriela. We are billionaires, Gabriela.” Sam is suddenly grinning widely. “Not

millionaires, but *billionaires*.”

“The lottery is only for 3 million,” Gabriela says.

“I bought the SUPER PLETHORA tickets, not the weekly lottery,” Sam says with joy. “We can now build our dream house made mostly of glass. Hurry up Gabriela, once we turn in the ticket in and get our money, we can go on the vacation of a lifetime! We can be gone for over a year or more!” Sam states.

“You sure your convertible will even make it that far?” Gabriela asks. “You know since you went through the car wash with the roof down it hasn't been the same. And the bumper is barely hanging on.”

“Yeah, it'll make it, besides, now that we're *FILTHY RICH* we can always take the bus one last time.”

Sam pulls up to a stop light next to a car with a lady and a small child in a car seat; their window is down.

He starts to pick his nose.

The little girl says to her mom, “Mommy!”

“Yes, dear?” the lady asks.

The girl screams, “Mommy, that man is picking his nose. You told me that picking your nose is gross and is not lady like. How come he can pick his nose but I can't, Mommy?” questions the little girl.

The lady turns to Sam, who still has his finger still in his nose.

“Yes, little one, that is very gross,” she says, loudly enough for Sam to hear.

“Well, I have to get it out somehow!” Sam states.

“Do you need a Kleenex?” questions the lady in the other car. “I have some here if you want,” she says.

“You sound just like my 95-year-old mother,” says Sam. “No, I *like* using my finger instead of a Kleenex.”

As the light turns green, the woman speeds off into the sunset throwing Kleenex into Sam's convertible.

“I wasn't picking my nose. I was scratching! *Geeze!*” Sam says. “Gabriela, let's stop and get some clothes before we go on a wonderful vacation. I see a spot we can pull into. See that old lady getting into her car? Let's take that spot.”

Minutes later, Gabriela and Sam are still waiting for the old lady to pull out. “Okay, this

lady has been taking too long,” Sam says.

At that exact moment, whatever it was in Sam's nose started to slide out.

“I got you now, sucker,” Sam says very loudly as he slides his right hand pinky finger into his right nostril.

Out of the corner of his eye, Sam sees a very beautiful woman with the cutest little girl holding her hand. Before he could get his finger out of his nose, the little girl says to her mother, “That man in the car is picking his nose again, just like my little baby brother does. That's *gross*, huh mommy?” questions the little girl.

“Yes, it sure is honey, and he would never have a chance to go out to dinner with me, even if Mommy and Daddy weren't together.”

Sam quickly rolls up the passenger window when it dawns on him that it is the same woman and her little girl that were at the stop light. He rolls up the rest of the windows and closes his convertible top out of total embarrassment. Then he finds another space far from the beautiful woman and the little girl.

After getting out of his car, Sam notices that the old lady was finally pulling out of her parking space. “Just my luck, huh?” Sam says.

As Gabriela and Sam go inside the store, Gabriela says to Sam in a stern voice, “Get me a cart! I'll be in the Ladies Department. Meet me there and don't embarrass me like the last time we came to this store.”

Sam tries to find the best shopping cart available. He then grabs a disinfectant wipe where the store puts them out for the customers and wipes not just the handle but the *ENTIRE* cart. (Sam is such a germaphobe.)

Not being able to find Gabriela, Sam walks up and down every aisle.

“I just can't seem to find her,” Sam says to himself. Then he is relieved when he finally spots the pretty pink blouse she is wearing. Sam walks over and grabs the cart. “I've got the cart,” he says to her over his shoulder as he begins to push the cart down the aisle.

“*STOP! THIEF!* He's taking my purse!” screams the lady.

The store's security guard runs up to Sam, reaching out as he tries to put Sam's hands into handcuffs.

“I didn't try to steal anything from this lady. She's my wife!” Sam says.

“No, I'm not,” says the lady. As she turns around Sam realizes that it is not his wife.

“Why are you harassing me?” Sam asks the guard.

“You tried to steal this lady's purse”! the security guard states. “You're under arrest.”

Sam looks down and sees the lady's purse in the cart— and, of course, it is totally different than what Gabriela has.

“Put your hands behind your back please, or I'm gonna have to get rough,” states the security guard.

Sam suddenly feels very dizzy and light-headed. Next thing he knows, everything goes dark.

As Sam awakes, nothing seems to be familiar.

There's a bench which kinda looks familiar. It is like the one at the park. But the room is very dark and Sam can see bars—

“NO! It can't be! *IT'S A JAIL CELL!*” screams Sam.

“Hey Bro, what you in here for? Pimping? Drug dealing? Come on, you can tell me. If you are dealing, then I need a fix. I can pay you double what they pay you on the street,” says what looks like a male, almost eight feet tall—but he' dressed in a skimpy, short skirt with hairy legs, high-heeled shoes, a five o'clock shadow, and looks *really buff*.

“Guard! Guard! *LET ME OUT!* I demand it! I have to go collect my lottery money. Tell this he-she to leave me alone!” screams Sam.

The next morning...

“Inmate 1313, report to the visitor phone,” is announced over the loudspeaker.

Sam has to look at his uniform to see what number he has. “That's me! See you, Godzilla!” shouts Sam.

“You'll be back in no time! Trust me, you're not the first to be my little bitch,” laughs Sam's cellmate.

Sam rapidly goes to the visitor phone, sits down, and picks up the receiver.

“You have exactly five minutes to talk. Your time starts now,” Sam hears over the receiver.

“Well, Sam, you really did it this time, didn't you?”

“Just get me out of here!” screams Sam into the phone.

“I'll do the best I can, but why did you text me that you were arrested for murder?” asks Sam's psychiatrist.

“I didn't text you I was in here for murder. I texted you to bring me a *burger!*” Sam says, frustrated. “Get me outta here *NOW!*”

“It's going to be hard to do that because you're on so many medications,” states the psychiatrist. “You might have to be in for a couple of days.”

“No way in hell. I'm *not* going back in there with He-She Godzilla!” Sam barks.

“Ha ha he he, you mean Big George. He's a little teddy bear. He wouldn't even kill a fly or molest a frog.”

“Coulda fooled me!” shouts Sam. “Just get me outta here.”

“You know, you're going to have to go to Therapy, don't you?”

“I'll do anything. Just get me outta here! Where the hell is Gabriela?” asks Sam.

“She refuses to come there again; says this was the last straw. Seems like you've embarrassed Gabriela for the last time.”

A few days later...

Sam is finally released from the jail and is going directly to his required Therapy session. The lot is very crowded and he is looking for a parking space. Then Sam sees a car with its engine running and it looks like it is just about to pull out.

Alright, I won't be late for this class. I'm still 15 minutes early, says Sam to himself. He pulls alongside the space and puts his blinker on, waiting.

The car starts to pull out when a red Corvette comes zipping in from the opposite direction.

“You *ain't* taking my spot and if you hit my car, I'll own that Corvette,” shouts Sam.

The Corvette swiftly pulls into the space before Sam can turn in.

“*Damn you,* that was my space!” shouts Sam.

A very beautiful young lady gets out of the Corvette, turns toward Sam, and points to a small sign just in front of the Corvette. The sign reads: STAFF PSYCHIATRIST. She says, “That's *my* space, Buford.”

“Damn, now I'm going to be late,” says Sam. He drives around the lot several more times until he finds an open spot at the far end of the lot.

The big office building is a maze of hallways, but Sam finally finds the office where he

was told to go for the Therapy class.

All the seats are empty in the Receptionist Area. Sam seems puzzled.

“Are you waiting for a class?” the receptionist asks.

“Yes, I am, but I thought there would be more people here. I’m here for the noon Therapy class.” He glances at his watch. “It should be starting now.”

“No, it's *1:00pm* now. The time changed a few days ago. Did you forget to change your clock ahead an hour, sir?” asks the receptionist.

Sam suddenly remembers the time changed the night he went to jail. *Figures! It can only happen to me! Good ol' Sam!* he thinks.

“But you are lucky. The doctor was running late today so the class just started about 10 minutes ago. You’d better hurry, though.” She gives him directions to the classroom. “Take Elevator C, up to the second floor, turn left, then go down the third right hallway, then right again after the double doors, turn down the second left hallway and then it is the sixth door on the left not counting the blue door.”

Sam finally enters the Therapy classroom after searching for over 10 minutes and interrupting other classes.

He tiptoes in and finds an empty seat in the back row. His chair creaks noisily as he sits down. A familiar-looking young woman is writing on the white board. She is wearing a very beautiful dress. Then it dawns on him where he’s seen the pretty lady from—it’s the Corvette lady from the parking lot!

Sam feels very embarrassed.

The lady turns around and looks right at him. Now Sam's face is as cherry red as her car. Even worse, he realizes that he’s seen her somewhere else as well—she's the gorgeous lady who was holding hands with the cute little girl. The one who saw him picking his nose.

“I see you finally decided to join our group. My name is Dr. Ellen.”

Sam stands up. “I don't like groups...and, uh, I left my soda in the Reception Area. If you'll excuse me, I'll be—”

“Sit down. You will *not* interrupt my class again! Is that understood?” She turns from looking gorgeous to looking like the Wicked Witch of the Millennium. Sam quickly sits down.

“Don't worry. She's not as mean as she looks,” says the student next to Sam.

“How tall is she? She looks like she is 8'9”?” asks Sam.

“She's only 5'5". I made that mistake already,” says the other student.

“Thanks for the info. I was going to ask her myself why she didn't play professional basketball,” says Sam.

“You two in the back. Let me know when you're finished with your little chat so I can continue with the class,” Dr. Ellen says, clearly frustrated.

“Are you sure She's *not* the Wicked Witch of the Millennium?” asks Sam.

A minute later...

“Excuse me, Miss, can I go take a piss?” asks Sam.

“You should have gone before the class started! And we say, ‘Can I go to the *restroom*.’” Dr. Ellen says snidely.

“No, I always say, ‘I have to take a piss,’” replies Sam.

“If you *must*, then go. It will not count good toward your probation,” She snaps at him. All the students are now staring at Sam.

Sam leaves the class and remembers he has a small package to pick up at the P.O. Box office.

I need to stop by my P.O. Box. I hope my package has arrived. Sam thinks to himself.

Sam drives to the front of the building hoping to get a parking space right in front of it.

“Yep, just as I thought. No parking spaces close. I hate to walk far,” grumbles Sam.

There is a long line to get inside, Sam finally gets close to the door but tries to go around the line.

“Get in line like the rest of us!” snaps a lady in line.

“Sorry ma'am. I just need to get inside.”

“So do all of us,” snaps the lady again.

“Yeah, back of the line,” everyone is suddenly shouting.

“Everyone here has packages to pick up?” asks Sam.

Once again the lady says angrily, “No, we're waiting for our tax returns.”

“Well, I'm just here for a small package,” Sam states. Sam tries to go inside, squeezing past the long line. He finally makes it to the counter.

“How are you today, Mr. Fred Red?” Sam asks.

“Mighty fine, Mr. Sam,” says Mr. Fred Red.

“You have a lot of packages again. You on a spending spree again, like your psychiatrist always asks you?” asks Mr. Fred Red. (Mr. Fred Red always knew too much about everybody and wanted to know everybody’s business!)

“It's none of your frickin’ business,” Sam says.

“What did you say?” asks Mr. Fred Red. “You can always get another postal box company to get your mail,” snaps Mr. Fred Red.

“Why do you say that?” asks Sam, confused.

“Because you said it was none of my business.”

“I said it out loud?”

“Of course. What do think?” asks Mr. Fred Red.

“Sorry sir, I didn't know I said it out loud,” replies Sam.

“You got something from Social Security. You probably owe them money.”

“They owe *me* money. I didn't get my check this month,” states Sam. “Let me see that. It has my last address from three years ago...No wonder I didn't get this! I only got it because last month I finally added my wife to my Social Security.”

Sam opens the huge, thick envelope. He is in total shock.

It reads: COMPLETE AND RETURN BEFORE YOUR NEXT CHECK WILL BE ISSUED. DATED JANUARY 15TH.

“What is today?” Sam asks.

“It's February 20th,” says Mr. Fred Red.

“I have to go to Social Security right away!” Sam says, worried.

“What are you going to do with these packages?” asks Mr. Fred Red.

“I'll get them next week,” replies Sam.

“You know, you waited too long the last week and your wife was furious about all the packages you received,” states Mr. Fred Red.

“Don't worry, I know how to hide my packages better now,” says Sam.

Sam hurries past the line of people waiting in line, bumping into several of them.

“I guess he got his return. He's racing outta here before it burns a hole in his pocket!” a man says from the crowd.

The others in line start to laugh.

Sam hops into his convertible, starts it up, and heads to the Social Security Office.

“But which office should I go to? Every time I need to go it has a *long* line out the door

and around the building, but when I don't need to go there and drive pass there, there is *no* line at all,” Sam says out loud to himself.

Sam finally finds a parking space. In front of the stall there is a sign that reads:
DISABLED ONLY – GET WELL CLINIC.

“What the hell. I'm only going to be a few minutes,” Sam says to himself.

There is not the usual line, but the people waiting are very noisy.

Sam suddenly has to go poo poo.

Sam tries the handle to the restroom but it's locked. Sam starts to pound on the door, saying very loudly, “*Hurry up!* I have to go poo poo!”

A muscular security guard, who walks like he has broomsticks under his arms, comes over to see what the commotion is about.

“What's the problem here? You have to keep it down in here so others waiting patiently can hear their number when it's announced.”

“Yeah, hush him up, Sarge!” shouts a person waiting.

“What were you, in the Marines before, or what?” Sam asks.

“Sure was. 35 years. Made Staff Sergeant. Now, if you don't pipe down, I'm going to have to *forcefully* escort you out,” Sarge says with authority.

The restroom door finally opens and a woman holding a baby is trying to exit. She looks at Sam and says, “This is the Ladies room. *Yours* is over there.”

She's pointing to the other door with a sign that simply reads: MEN

Sam feels totally embarrassed.

“When you finish, please leave quietly,” Sarge says.

“Why? I have my ticket,” Sam states.

“You can return to the waiting area if you are absolutely quiet. *Not a peep,*” Sarge says with authority.

Sam waits for two hours. Someone next to Sam is playing a game on their phone. Every few seconds, it makes a *ping* sound.

Sarge comes directly to Sam. “You need to put your phone away. Others need to hear their number being called.”

“It's not me!” snaps Sam.

“You're causing such a commotion; we need to get you outta here ASAP. What number do you have?” asks Sarge.

“1313,” responds Sam.

“Well, sorry to tell you, but they called that number over an hour ago,” Sarge answers sternly. “You'll have to get another number.”

“You gotta be shitting me!” Sam says with anger.

“Watch your language! There are elderly and children here! If you don't, I'll escort you out of here.”

Sam goes to the ticket machine and obtains another ticket and quietly waits for his number to be on the information board again.

Finally—A1313, GO TO WINDOW 13—the information Board reads. Sam hurriedly goes to window 13 and sits down.

“How can I help you today, sir?” questions the Social Security Representative.

“I need to get help filling this Benefits form out. It was sent to my last address, which I had 13 years ago,” Sam says.

“We don't handle Benefits at this branch. You will have to go to Branch 13 on 1313 Notlucky Blvd.”

Sam phones Gabriela. “Your life is wonderful,” answers Gabriela.

“Why do you always answer that way?” asks Sam.

“Because it could always be worse,” replies Gabriela. “We could have a dangerous virus, cancer, or something worse! Besides, did you forget, we're billionaires!”

“Of course I didn't forget! Meet me at the Social Security office at 1313 Unlucky Blvd.”

“Isn't that one always full?” questions Gabriela.

“That office is the only one that handles Benefits,” Sam says angrily.

Later at the Social Security office on Notsolucky Blvd...

“I'm waiting in the car because you always embarrass me,” says Gabriela. “And hurry up! We still have to go to the lottery office with the ticket today!”

Sam obtains a number out of the machine. It reads 1313. “Damn, is that all the numbers these machines spit out?” Sam mumbles. He sits down and patiently waits for over two-and-a-half hours.

“Man, they are getting ready to close.” Sam walks up to a window that somebody just left from. “Excuse me. I need some help filling out a form.”

“Sit down and wait ’til your number is called.”

“But I just need help filling this huge form out.”

“Sir, I just told you, *wait* your turn.”

“But—”

“*Security!* Make this gentleman wait until his number is called,” says the representative.

“Yes, ma'am.” The security guard say. He turns toward Sam. “Sir, sit down and be quiet. You have to wait your turn.”

“But there are only three of us here and I don't make that much noise.”

“You heard the loud speaker say, ‘We will be closing in 10 minutes; no more taking numbers.’”

“10 minutes? I need at least a half hour,” says Sam.

“I thought I told you to be quiet,” says the guard.

(Loud Speaker) “Number 1312, go to Window 7.”

“Figures I have to be the last one!” Sam grumbles.

A few minutes later...

(Loud Speaker) “Ticket number 1313, go to Window 13.”

“About time,” Sam says, jumping up.

Sam goes all the way to the last window as the representative is closing her window.

“*Noooo!* Wait a minute! They just called my number!”

“You took too long to get here. We are now closed.”

“*Please!* I got this form today. I don't know how to fill it out. The form says a representative can help me.”

“Okay. This better not take long. Let me see your form.”

Sam hands the representative the form and she helps him fill it out.

Sam goes to the door.

“Next time come earlier. These people have families too!” says the guard.

Sam walks to the car, sobering. He starts crying uncontrollably.

“Now, why are you crying?” asks Gabriela. “You’re always crying.”

“You know when I'm in stressful situations I get upset. I'm such a wreck after all of this, I think I'll leave my car here. You'll have to drive!” says Sam.

Minutes later...

“Why does this car turn off every time you stop?” questions Sam.

“I told you, *all* the new cars do that. You still haven't read the manual for this car yet, have you? asks Gabriela.

“Nope, haven't even read mine, and it's over 25 years old. I don't understand these new cars. They can't just leave technology the way it is—they're *always* thinking they can make it better!” states Sam. “Gabriela, are you sure it is supposed to run this way?”

“That's what they said when I picked it up at the dealer. Next time you can go with me instead of watching your stupid games,” snaps Gabriela.

“They're not stupid. They teach you strategy; not like your cooking shows,” says Sam.

Sam looks at the speedometer. *That seems to be working*, Sam thinks to himself. Then, out of the corner of one eye, he notices the gas gauge.

“*Noooooooooooooooo!*” screams Sam.

“Why on earth are you screaming at the top of your lungs, Sam?” Gabriela asks.

“Look!” says Sam. “The gas is on E.”

“Yeah, it means *extremely* full,” states Gabriela.

“Noooo, remember I taught you, E is for *empty!*” Sam cries out.

“You mean like out of gas?” questions Gabriela.

“*Exactamente*. That means *exactly* in Spanish,” snaps Sam.

“I know Spanish, remember. I'm Latina.”

The car starts to sputter.

“There! Over there!” shouts Sam.

“Over where?” asks Gabriela.

“Pull into that gas station,” Sam says, pointing. The car starts to lurch.

“You hate their gas, you always tell me. You say on Channel 13 they always talk bad about those gas stations.”

“Just this one time—I'm *not* pushing this heavy ass car!”

“Heavy? This car weighs half what your car does.”

“Just pull in, for gosh sake!” snaps Sam.

She finally pulls in just as the car completely runs out of gas and sputters to a stop.

“You know, there might be a reason why we are empty!” Gabriela says.

“And why that might possibly be is?”

“You never taught me where the handle is to open the gas cover.”

“Aaaaaaa for gosh sake, I'll do it.” Sam gets out, goes to the driver's side, and pulls a latch. He then looks toward the rear of the car to see if the gas door opened.

“Sam, oh Sam, I think you didn't pull the right handle!” Gabriela says.

“Why the hell not?” questions Sam.

“Cause the hood to the engine just opened.”

Sam is cursing, thinking he is doing it under his breath.

“You shouldn't curse so much! That's why you lost your last job, remember?”

Sam opens, then closes, the engine lid very hard. He looks back to see if the gas door is open. “Aaaaah, it is open,” Sam says.

Sam puts the nozzle into the fuel filler hole. Just then, a huge lunch truck pulls up and begins backing in towards them from the rear, but is *not* slowing down enough.

CCCCCCCCRRRRRRRAAAAAASSSSSHHHHH!

The lunch truck slams into the back of their car, smashing the rear bumper. The entire bumper is now hanging almost to the ground. Then the gas nozzle comes flying out, spraying gas all over Sam and soaking his pants.

“I'm so glad I walked in front of the car and not the back,” Sam says to himself.

“DUDE, YOU HIT MY CAR!” he screams at the truck driver.

“Your car? It's *my* car!” shouts Gabriela. “You bought it for *me*.”

“Now I have to wait and get his insurance information, and the lottery office will be closed until Monday!” cries Sam.

“Nonsense. Our insurance will come here and obtain the information. Let's get going so we get there before they close,” Gabriela states. “Make sure you have your driver's license and the ticket ready so we don't waste time when we get there.”

Sam reaches in his back pocket for his license, then tries to remember where he put the ticket. He takes everything out of his wallet and finds *no* lottery ticket. He begins to panic, then suddenly remembers that he put it in his front pocket so he wouldn't lose it.

His pants are dripping wet with gasoline. Sam sloooooowly reaches in his front pocket to retrieve the lottery ticket. “Aaaaahhhh, it's still in one piece!” Sam says happily to himself.

“Let's *go!* Do you have your driver's license?” asks Gabriela.

“Yes, dear,” answers Sam.

“What about the ticket?” Gabriela asks.

Sam is daydreaming about turning his ticket in to the lottery officials...

Reporters are lined up with cameras flashing and very bright lights shining on Sam. Everyone is happy and excited.

“Tell us how it feels to be a billionaire, Sam!”

“What is the first thing you will spend the money on, Sam?”

“How does it feel to be the luckiest guy on earth, Sam?”

After receiving his lottery check, the media plasters his face all over the TV, newspapers and the internet. He’s a star!

Days later, Sam receives a Social Security letter of benefit cancellation. Ha! He didn’t need it. He just won the Billion Dollar Lottery!

Sam suddenly stops hallucinating—he is drenched in sweat and comes back to reality as Gabriela jabs him in the ribs.

Sam then turns the ticket over to see Winnnnnnnnner The ink is smeared so badly from the gasoline that it cannot be read.

“NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!” shouts Sam.

Gabriela asks, “What is wrong?”

“The ticket is *ruined!* I won’t get my lottery money!” he cries, showing her the soggy, smeared ticket.

Sam drops to his knees and screams at the top of his lungs,
“NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!”

“*Your* lottery money—it was *our* lottery money! *You IDIOT!*” Gabriela says angrily.

**So ask yourself:
Do Bad Days Happen?**

Now that you have read the first 2 Chapters of the 2 Best Sellers, it’s time to publish them!