

# THE ROOMMATE BOOK



SHARING LIVES & SLAPPING FIVES

BECKY SIMPSON

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Other books by Becky Simpson

I'd Rather Be Short

To all of my roommates.

You know who you are.

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# INTRODUCTION

I was sitting at my desk working on an illustration project when I had the idea to write a book about roommates. My then roommate, Bekah, had said something funny. Or maybe she did something funny. Or maybe I just remembered something that we saw that was funny. I don't recall the

details of that moment, but I do remember feeling like the idea came out of nowhere.

But it didn't come out of nowhere. The inspiration really wasn't that single lightning rod moment; it was an eight-year catalog of memories with Bekah and some of the other best roommates around.

Allow me to explain.

There's this song by Dead Man's Bones (Ryan Gosling's band) called "Pa Pa Power."

Bekah and I discovered it a couple of years ago, well after its release in 2009. We were late bloomers, even when it came to music; but we didn't care because we loved that song.

Somewhere along the way, a tradition was born. Every time "Pa Pa Power" was played, we dropped whatever we were doing to lunge-dance-exercise for the duration of the song. We called this "lancing." It was the only apartment rule to which we seriously abided. In fact, sometimes one of us would play it at five a.m. and force the other to jump out of bed and engage in four minutes of "hardcore lancing." Because it was a serious tradition, we had to do it. No questions asked. Side note: This exercise not only builds character, but also an incredible ability to get quite low on the dance floor (whether it be Matrix or Sally O'Malley style). For this, I am forever grateful. Most of this book was written while we lived together on Enfield Road in Austin, Texas. Nothing would please me more than to annotate each and every single one of these inside jokes, but my editor assigned me a page limit and a "book deadline," so here we are.

Let's take a time machine back to college at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. The year was 2007, and I signed a lease with Rachel, Brie, and Katie. This was the start of three years of ugly birthday cakes and hand-me-down decor.

We were weirdos, and we knew it. The first place roommate freedom took us was . you guessed it: hair extensions. I don't think any of us thought hair extensions were cool until Brie showed up with full-bodied Sarah Jessica Parker hair (totally kidding—Brie's hair was brown). Brie's bold move gave the rest of us permission to glue strips of fake hair (or was it real hair?) onto our own scalps and save the consequences for later (except

for Katie; she never bought in—until Halloween). Were these DIY extensions itchy, nappy, and just the excuse we needed to unapologetically say no to the gym? Absolutely. We looked like mermaids, and we couldn't have been happier. Instead of disposing of them when we were finished (like normal people), we kept them in a bag under our sink, better known as the Bag O' Hair. We weren't sure if we'd need them again for costume parties (Amy Winehouse, Kat Von D) or impromptu rattails, so we made sure to keep them handy.

It's been six years since we shared an Iowa street address, but I still remember because we just had so much fun. It was a formative time in life, but we didn't know it because we were too busy going on zombie bar crawls (once), making fun of "Live, Laugh, Love" posters (and all other clichés), borrowing each other's clothes, eating Party Pizzas, and listening to MGMT.

This book is a celebration of roommate life. It is not an account of horror stories or worst-case scenarios; it's an homage to the best of times that have outlived the leases with which they started. It's a reminder to make the most of the moments to come. It's an excuse to celebrate the little things, start dumb traditions, let the hair extensions down, and create space for friendship and play.

Remember, if it's not fun, you're doing it wrong.

Tonight, we lance.

LET'S  
DO  
THIS

# ROOMMATES EXPLAINED

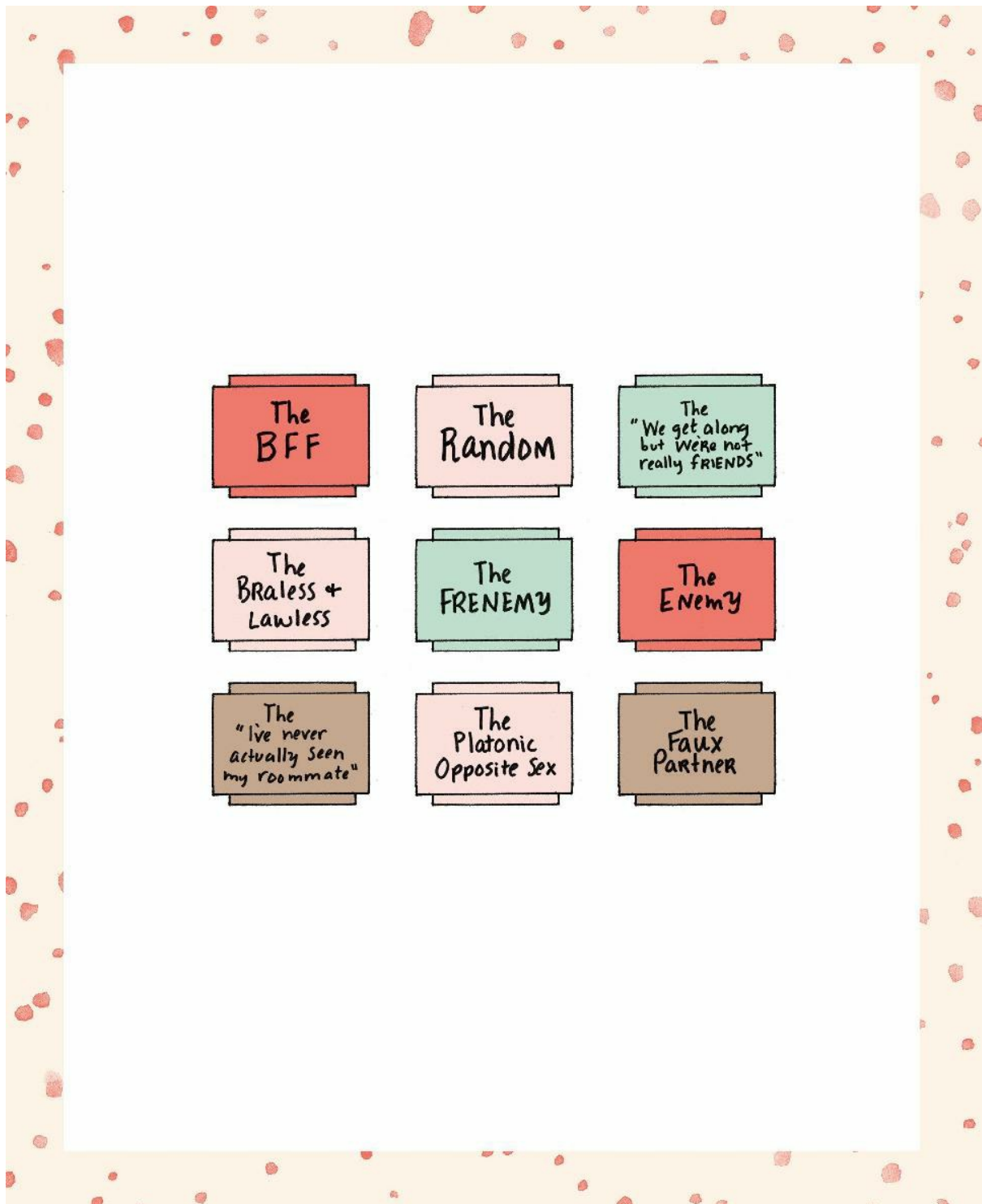
For most of us, roommate life begins at eighteen. We head off to college bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. Dorm living situations are almost always out of our control. Throughout the rest of college and early adult life, roommates are a hodgepodge of strangers, best buds, and friends of friends of cousins' friends.

Just like snowflakes, no two roommates are alike.



ROOMMATE  
TYPES AS  
CAFETERIA  
TABLES





Nobody wants to be put in a box, but since it's easier, we're going to do it anyway. Here is a comprehensive list of roommate types, categorized as if they are cafeteria tables in the 2004 cinema classic Mean Girls :

The BFF

'nuff said.

## The Random

This is the most common type of roommate. Whether you ended up living together by way of craigslist or the old-fashioned college dorm pairings, all of your life's decisions and experiences have led you to this point. Welcome to the rest of your life.

The Random is like a mysterious one-hundred-acre farm in West Texas. It may always remain desolate and unfamiliar, but if you're lucky, it will make you rich with oil (or memories). Go for the gold and shoot to become best friends by the end of the year.

## The "We Get Along but We're Not Really Friends"

I hope you don't kiss your mother with that mouth.

## The Braless and Lawless

We all know and love her. She's exposed and she has no filter. She truly embraces her danger zone and has answered the door without pants at least once. She encourages the rest of us to let our hair down and, if nothing else, eat leftover pie for breakfast.

## The Frenemy



## The Enemy

This was avoidable.

## The "I've Never Actually Seen My Roommate" Roommate

Depending on whom you ask, this is either code for "I'm making the most of it," or "I just won the lottery, nerds."

## The Platonic Opposite Sex

Pros: dating advice, somebody to clean the fan blades, probably won't

steal your clothes. Cons: shared bathroom (let's not talk about the . . . hair), sports ball posters, can't steal their clothes.

### The Faux Partner

One hundred percent platonic, but is more than just a roommate. This is “your person.” While similar to the BFF, the faux partner differs in that friends and family regard you as one unit. They know you really are just pals but it's . easier this way. It starts by showing up to (all) events together and transitions into FaceTiming each other's families and never ends because one day your future spouses (if you go that route) will invest in a modest commune so nobody ever has to leave.

This is roommate nirvana.

Behind all of these labels are a real bunch of weirdos. I mean, people. Weird people just like you and me. Who hasn't been somebody's Random or Braless and Lawless (fingers crossed)?

Maybe you received your first draft pick and landed Phoebe Buffay. Lucky you. But for the rest of us—the gang who let craigslist match-make us—these are now our homes filled with beaded curtains and porcelain cat figurines.

Regardless of how we arrived, it is our duty to make the most of this Dougie dance that we call roommate life.

# PEACE TREATY

Gratitude is COOL.

Let's start small...

What are three things you're  
thankful for today?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

What generally annoys you?

What are your expectations?

What will make this year a success?

Hosting badass parties? Keeping a clean house?  
Creating memories? Living the crazy stories you will  
share with/hide from your grandchildren?

What are the non-negotiables?





# 3 STEPS to SUCCESS:

1. ALLOW room  
for faults
2. LIVE in Peace
3. BE THANKFUL

-Paul

(Somewhere in Colossians)



MARRIAGE  
ADVICE  
FIT FOR  
ROOMMATES

- ASK QUESTIONS BEFORE OFFERING ADVICE.
- STRIVE TO GIVE MORE THAN YOU RECEIVE.
- DON'T TRY TO CHANGE THEM.
- LET GO OF THE SMALL STUFF.
- DISAGREEMENT IS NOT ALWAYS BAD.
- DO NOT ATTEMPT HOUSE PROJECTS WITHOUT WILLIE NELSON AND A BOWL OF GUAC (SAYS MY FRIEND JENNY AND SHE'S RIGHT).
- STAY CHILL.

DESTINATION  
SOUL  
SISTERS

# FRESH START

Welcome to the start of a new era. Signing the lease is like signing a (one-year) marriage license. This is the land of opportunity for creating awesome memories. Better yet, these memories come at half price, because hey, that's why you decided to share this four-hundred-square-foot space in the first place. Living with whimsy should start at the moment two or more (roomies) become one (lease).