



by kristin giese

follow @allmoxie on instagram

"We'll pull the ten baby teeth that haven't fallen out, attach wires to the bicuspid's so we can yank 'em into place, and then put braces on the teeth remaining. Easy peasy," the oral surgeon explained with a broad smile.

My best guess is, most malpractice suits begin with testimony that includes, "and then the doctor said, 'easy-peasy, lemon-squeezy' before leaving a scalpel in my lower intestines."

Thanks to the surgeon's described cake walk of a procedure, I had spent the past three weeks trapped in a dental hellscape with a dry socket cherry on top, subsisting solely on soup, Knox Blox, and Three's Company reruns.

Today, I was returning to school and my sixth-grade class.

"I can't walk with these," I complained, hobbling into my elementary school on the crutches my mom had rented earlier that morning at the drugstore downtown.

"I thought her mouth was the problem," a classmate whispered to our teacher as they passed us by in the hall.

He wasn't wrong. My mouth had been the problem, but last night I fell running up the stairs and "deeply stubbed my toe," as medically diagnosed by my mother.

"These don't work," I whined.

"That's because they're not tall enough for you. Here," my mom said, pulling the right crutch out from under my arm. Unprepared, I stepped forward and put all my weight on my sore foot. I blanched and slumped to the floor just outside my classroom.

For a fleeting moment, I saw my mother's commitment to her stubbed toe theory waiver, but she recovered quickly by shoving a Jell-O packet into my hand and dragging me to my desk.

Mrs. Michaelson, my 6th grade teacher, eyed us suspiciously from her perch at the back of the room. I smiled weakly, eating cherry gelatin as my mom hauled a step stool from the chalkboard to elevate my leg.

"Stubbed toe," my mom mouthed to Mrs. Michaelson, as explanation of the scene we were making.

At three o'clock, I hobbled out to the curb and fell into the front seat of our minivan.

"Toe better?" my mom asked as she drove to the orthodontist.

"A broken foot doesn't heal in a day," I chided.

She rolled her eyes. "You're so dramatic," she said, a statement for which she had quite a few receipts.

I've always had a flair for theatrics. In preschool my teacher pinned a note to my backpack that read, "Please talk to Kristin. She's declared herself a crocodile and has bitten two classmates and one teacher."

I like to believe I'm a pit bull in business, today, because in my formative years I tasted the blood of weaklings.

"I see you have hoof and mouth disease," the orthodontist joked as I crawled into the dental chair. I didn't laugh, in part because the only thing worse than dad jokes are dentist jokes, but also because the new rubber bands in my mouth hurt too much to smile.

"I think I broke it," I said through gritted teeth.

"You think?" he questioned.

"We're not sure." I shrugged.

Without warning, he reached down and tugged off the sock that was delicately covering my toes. I yelped in pain. He gasped. The top of my foot had turned jet black.

"Cheryl!" he shouted to reception, "get Mrs. Giese back here. She needs to take her daughter to the hospital."

"Why didn't you tell me it was black?" my mom hissed as she folded me into the front seat of the van, embarrassment still flushing her face.

"I told you it was broken. You didn't believe me," I challenged as she shoved my crutches in the back.

She glowered at me.

"I didn't know it was black, okay? That's new information to us both," I admitted.

At the Urgent Care, the doctor took one look at my black foot and hauled me into the Xray room.

Ten minutes later he returned with an actual medical diagnosis, unlike my mother's.

"It's broken. The 4th and 5th Metatarsal, to be exact. We can't set it. It's been too long. We're worried about blood flow. You need to go straight to the hospital emergency room. They may need to re-break it."

I turned the last sentence over in my mind, horror building inside me. I couldn't tell you, then, what I thought he meant when he said "re-break it," but ten years later my vision played out in Misery when Kathy Bates hobbled James Caan with a sledgehammer.

I leveled my eyes at my mother, raised my hand, pointed at her, and said, "You're a horrible mother."

Even the doctor looked hurt by my verbal assault.

"I knooooow," my mom wailed in response, hysterical. Two nurses immediately fled to her side to console her.

"She always breaks her toes, you know?" my mother said, lifting her eyes to one of them.

They agreed. The nurses understood. One of them gave me a dirty look.

"And we've gone three times to the ER in the past. They always say you can't do anything for a broken toe. Right?"

The nurses nodded in solidarity. "Right," one shushed.

"Plus, she's so dramatic, like, all the time." My mom hiccupped from crying.

"They always are," a nurse hushed as she rubbed my mom's back.

Then, my mom looked at me, her quivering lip growing into a full cry as a shame-spiral of mom-guilt engulfed her.

A third nurse rushed in with orange soda to comfort her.

Of course, my mom wasn't wrong about any of it. I'm a Gemini daughter with a Leo moon rising. I have been in my feelings since the birth canal. Tack on sarcasm since preschool, a wild ability for storytelling since kindergarten, and a size six shoe in the third grade, and you get someone who doesn't need a stubbed toe to turn any situation into a sideshow.

My mom was doing the best she could, which was pretty darn good. She's an amazing mom, but I have been hysterical my whole life, in all senses of the word. I am funny. I am emotional. And as someone who plays big even when others are demanding I be small, I have been labeled hysterical plenty of times by those who don't know what else to do with a strong woman other than cut her down.

This book is about the hysterical parts within me, within ALL of us.

I've come to believe that trauma, despite all the earnest talk that surrounds it, might actually be a laughing matter in that if we — at some point — don't find a way to laugh again, we have lost more to our trauma than it has earned from us.

For years, I thought I was just a closer. It's a part of my job to get the deal. But, as I've unfolded as a producer, writer, storyteller, I've come to realize that, while I can and do close, I thrive that much more as a fixer.

It's a role I've had since the start of my career. In fact, fixer is at the top of the food chain of my task list. I have always been the first line of defense to solve whatever problem was in front of us.

So, that's what this book is. Mostly funny stories from my life to fix us.

I have cherry-picked stories from my childhood, my life in entertainment as a talent manager, publicist, and producer, and the things I've learned running my own company to shed light on how what hurts us can also point us toward what will radically heal us.

We've shown that we're strong enough and vulnerable enough to cry about it – which, don't get me wrong, crying is good, necessary, and needed, even. Heck, I cried twice last week just for shits and giggles.

But now, from one hysterical human to another, I want to see if we're brave enough to laugh about it.

ONE

Headset and Weight Belt

I took my vibrator to Best Buy.

Because climate change. Duh.

I don't have any data that tells me my masturbation habits are linked to the plight of the polar bears, but I don't think now is the time to be cavalier. The ice caps are melting, People.

So, I did what I believe Leonardo DiCaprio would want me to do...would want us all to do, really...I took my Magic Wand vibrator to Best Buy to be recycled.

For those of you that don't know, the Magic Wand is the Mercedes of vibrators. Wirecutter, the independent review section of The New York Times, picked it for their top slot – dare I say, pun intended? So, I figured, I trusted them with my Christmas tree and toaster oven selections, why not my vagina, right?

The publication said their reviewers put 110 hours into testing the category. Not sure how that went over with HR, but I needed only two minutes to know they were right about this and the Cuisinart Convection Oven. You're welcome.

Here's what I've learned. My philosophy on vibrators is pretty similar to cars. Keep 'em clean, lubed, and charged; and every few years it's good to upgrade. Obviously, this goes without saying, while it's okay to lease your Volvo, NOT your vulva. Vibrators are an owned-only category. Please and thank you.

So, I took Riggs to be recycled. Yes, I named him. I've also named my oven, curling iron, and washing machine. Although, admittedly, I've never been to third base with any of them...yet.

I'm not a monster, so I wrapped Riggs in an ULTA bag because they're peach and opaque. Honestly, if I weren't choosing to have my ashes sprinkled along the Amalfi Coast as my bon voyage to this earth, I'd pick a peach coffin, too. Peach lacquer feels like the exact, big shoulder pad energy I want for my entrée to the afterlife.

I planned my route carefully. Coffee, post office, FedEx pick up, and then a Riggs drop off on my way home.

Now, I'm not saying that the customer service is lacking at Best Buy, but also, have you been?

I once tried to buy a washing machine there. I explained to a sales associate what I was looking for – front load, cycle options, dependable. He pondered, and said, “I’ve got just the model for you. This way.”

I followed him through the store, weaving through aisles of DVDs and surround sound speakers.

“This has everything on your list.” He smacked his hand down on the white metal of the machine and smiled proudly, his Blackberry holstered at his hip.

I looked down at the Whirlpool appliance before me, its white powder-coating shining brightly under a ceiling of fluorescent lights.

“Isn’t that a dishwasher?” I asked.

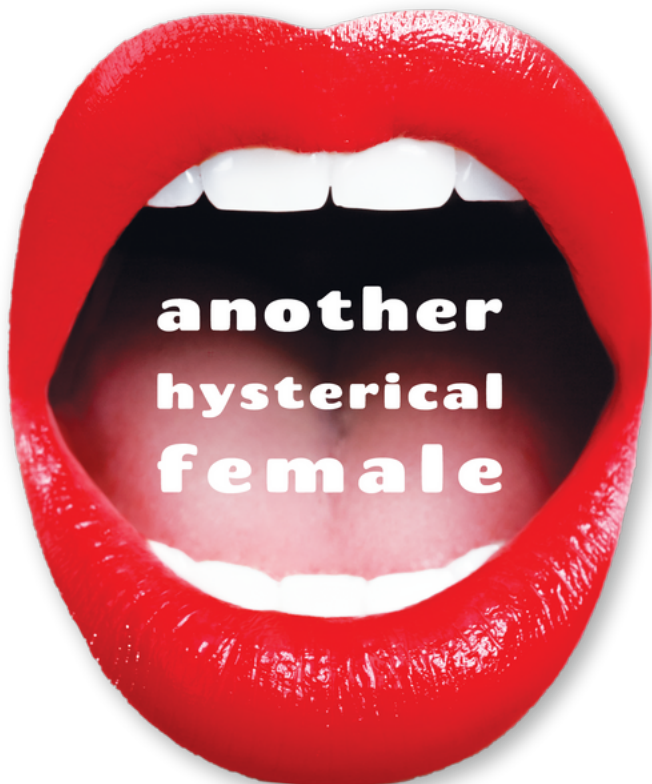
He looked at it blankly. “What’s the difference?”

“Only everything,” I said.

He bristled, “This isn’t my department,” and walked away.

And, that right there is why when I needed to buy a dryer last year, I bought “Doug” at Lowe’s.

But, today, as I approached the entrance to the store, I wasn’t worried. I had no reason to think anyone would even notice my arrival.....



To keep reading or to book Kristin Giese, please contact her at inquiry@allmoxie.com.

