

# **IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT**

**PAUL RUDNICK**



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Summary: Seventeen-year-old Caitlin Singleberry is a proper Christian teenager and member of a family singing group, but today she has been given a truly impossible assignment—keep her cousin Heller Harrigan, Hollywood wild child, out of trouble for the last weekend before her first big movie debuts.

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*For John*



one

## May God and Everyone Else Forgive Me

I am a good Christian girl and I am so ashamed.

Up until forty-eight hours ago I had never tasted alcohol, kissed a boy, worn anything sleeveless or sung a song in public at the top of my lungs using suggestive and inappropriate lyrics. I had never kidnapped anyone or held up a convenience store at gunpoint or stolen a convertible. I don't even have a driver's license.

In a very few minutes I am going to have to leave this jail cell and try to explain everything to my parents, my eight brothers and sisters, Reverend Benswelder, all of the lawyers everyone's hired, the police, the mayor of Parsippany, New Jersey, and all of those journalists and their camera crews plus all of those people from those things on the Internet that I have never been allowed to read or follow or click on or whatever those procedures are called.

I have no idea what I'm going to say.

## two

### Oh No

**I**t's happening. I can feel my chest getting tighter and my hands starting to clench and soon I won't be able to breathe because I'm having a panic attack. I was diagnosed with a severe anxiety disorder when I was eight years old and couldn't go on escalators because I knew I would fall and the escalator would chew me up. I've had therapy to try and control the attacks through medication and deep breathing and behavioral modification but right now, unless I list the names of my brothers and sisters in order, three times, all of them will die. Carter Corinne Caleb Callum Carl Castor Calico Catherine. Carter Corinne Caleb Callum Carl Castor Calico Catherine. Carter Corinne Callum Caleb . . . NO NO NO that was wrong and I have to start again only now I have to repeat the names six times because I have to protect everyone and I know this sounds crazy but I can't stop. Carter Corinne Caleb . . .

# three

## Who I Am

**M**y name is Caitlin Mary Prudence Rectitude Singleberry and if you live in the middle section of New Jersey you might have heard of or maybe even listened to my family. My parents run a small grocery store but they also, along with my siblings, have been making records and performing since before I was born—at seventeen I'm right in the middle.

I have always loved being a Singing Singleberry and I've always hoped that I would someday get married and have children who would join our family onstage and off, but I don't know if this is still going to be possible. I don't know if anyone let alone a wonderful Christian boy with firm morals, an open-hearted smile and neatly pressed khakis will want to hear me sing ever again, let alone fall in love with me, not after the way I've behaved. On top of that I'm supposed to be going to college next year but that's probably never going to happen. I've been so worried I won't get accepted anywhere that I've applied to

twelve schools and I've compulsively rewritten my essays and spell-checked them more times than I can count but now, well—what college on earth would even consider accepting someone with my criminal record?

I don't believe in blaming other people for my shameful actions because that is not what a Singleberry does. But may God forgive me because I do blame someone else for all of the unspeakable things that have happened. I blame my cousin Heller Harrigan.

I know that Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek but with all due reverence, while Jesus suffered many dreadful things, he never met Heller. If he had I sincerely believe he would've added, "Turn the other cheek except when it comes to Heller Harrigan. You're allowed to smack her as hard as you can. Tell her I said so."

I HATE HELLER HARRIGAN.