

**TBH**

**51 TRUE STORY COLLABS**

**HUNTER MARCH**

Scholastic Inc.

I had a hard time deciding who to dedicate this book to,  
then I took inspiration from my friend and fellow author  
Jenn McAllister who dedicated her book to her mother . . .

This book is also dedicated to Jenn's mother.

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ISBN 978-1-338-05399-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

17 18 19 20 21

Printed in the U.S.A.

40

First printing 2017

Cover and book design by Suzanne LaGasa

Cover illustration and chapter opener lettering by Annica Lydenberg

Cover photo by Jen Siska

Chapter opener watercolors and watercolor splashes by every-tuesday.com

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# My Best Friend

My best friend and I had very different lives growing up. I grew up with a father *and* a step-father who loved me. My best friend's father passed away when she was just nine years old. I had a mother who made sure I was as successful as I could be. Hers didn't care if she went to school or not. I had every opportunity in the world. She had none.

After her father passed away, my best friend's mother became a functional but mean alcoholic. Her mother went to work every morning and went straight to the bar afterward, where my best friend and her sister would meet her after school. They'd sip from mocktails with umbrellas as they watched their mom transform night after night. Her words began to slur, her steps became uneasy, and her eyes searched for someone she could take her pain out on.

Then my best friend and her sister would get into a car that swerved all the way home. Their mother once drove them right off the freeway. Luckily, they all walked away uninjured.

# I had every opportunity in the world. She had none.

My best friend had zero supervision growing up. No one looked over her shoulder as she did homework. No one noticed how late she stayed out. *No one cared.* So my best friend did it all herself. In between going to the market to buy more alcohol and cigarettes for her mother, she graduated high school with straight As and put herself through college.

When my best friend was in her twenties, her mother was diagnosed with lung cancer, and passed away shortly after.

I never had the chance to meet my best friend's mother, but it's safe to say that she left us with an incredible daughter. A daughter who started her own business, who never let anyone tell her that she couldn't do something, a daughter who ended up raising me.

This best friend is my mom, Sandy. She's raised my brother and me with such care and attention that we had no choice but to become as happy and successful as we've ever wanted to be. She gave us every opportunity in the world, because she knew how hard it was not having them.