

# *Hooves High*



# Introduction



Dear Reader,

We're so happy you've picked up a copy of our book! With all the stress we experience in our everyday lives, whether it is at home or in the office, wouldn't it be great if you could just laugh it all away? Well, sit back, grab a piece of key-lime cheesecake (well, that's what we would eat), and be prepared to become a laugh whore!

We met each other at work several years ago. Total opposites in many ways, Nicole, a sassy, sexy mulatta, and Paul, a towering, corn-fed 'Bama Boy, realized we had a couple of big things in common. We both promote building strong relationships personally and professionally and, just as importantly, we both live *out loud!* In other words, we talk to anyone (including the brick walls), constantly meet hilarious people (whether they know it or not), find ourselves in the funniest situations (like Nicole's "Santa's Thong" incident), laugh at the most inappropriate times (cue our "Mondo!" distress call), and come up with some of the craziest catch phrases to commemorate those moments (Embrace Your Bigness - EYB). Since then, we've found something almost every day that either makes Nicole's mascara run or Paul's sides hurt (only because Paul doesn't wear mascara) from laughing so hard.

This book will make you laugh your ass off and hopefully learn to laugh at yourself. Each chapter provides a catch phrase and the hilarious personal story (or two) that helped shape its meaning for us. The chapters contain four parts:

1. The Meaning (definition of the catch phrase)
2. The Heart of the Story (when to use it—because you *will* want to use it!)
3. The Tail (how it came about)
4. Trimming the Fat (the lesson learned).

Finally, we share our secret weapon for success: food! You'll love our potluck recipes for victory because nothing gets you through the day like a good scoop of Shiznit Spinach Dip or Cat Barf.

You can bring your new positive and hilarious attitude back to the cube farm at work and infiltrate others with it. Also, we want you to learn to enjoy food again (without the guilt – EYB!) and incorporate this love into the office as well.

In other words, we want your workplace to be your happy place! So, open up and say “ahh” because you’re about to get fed a heaping helping of our off-brand humor, complete with catch phrases, the hot-flash inducing “tails” that accompany them, the life lessons we learned as a result, and a side of our no-fail favorite foods to help feed your stomach, as well as your soul, along the way.

Hooves High!

**Paul & Nicole**

# Hooves High

## MEANING

If you're the one on your team always suggesting a potluck, then your hooves are high! In other words, you love food.



## HEART OF THE STORY

If you're looking to get healthy in the workplace, *this is not your book*. We're not going to be spouting off weight loss tips and nutritional goals, so hear us when we tell you *we love food*. We are not the type of people who can eat and eat and not gain a pound. If that's you, and you're reading this book, we hate you. (In fact, we both gained five pounds just by writing down these recipes.) Your hooves can still be high but, if we ever meet you, be prepared for snide remarks and occasional snubs. What we'd really like to do is kick your skinny ass, but since you love food, we'll accept you as the stepbrother or stepsister that's the necessary evil. We just suggest you say little and agree always.

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *And bow. We like bowing.*]

We are the type of people, though, who love chicken biscuits in the morning with a side of heffa juice (aka gravy for you non-southerners) and coffee from the gas station down the street with three full squirts of French vanilla concentrated creamer that contains all the original fat from the French vanilla cow. We're also the type of people who decide where to go for lunch based on the restaurant's dessert menu (i.e. key lime cheesecake!). We coordinate events at work that involve food, and we make friends with other departments who like to host food-related functions as well.

Something else you need to know before we continue is, if Paul had a mistress, her name would be Chocolate Surprise (and, no we don't mean Beyoncé, his favorite singer).

[PAUL'S NOTE: *Yes, it would; yes, it is; and I'll share the recipe with you later in the book.*]

Undeniably, Paul is a dessert whore. A fantasy three-course meal to him consists of an appetizer of cookies, followed by an entrée of cake, and rounded out with a nice dessert of something a la mode! We thought Paul would waste away into nothing when whipped cream frosting became all the rage a few years ago and he (the true Hooper he is) started refusing cake (bless his heart). Thank goodness for all the doctors who've come out recently proclaiming the truth about real butter versus that margarine spread containing "mono" something or other that you can't even pronounce unless you start at the end and work your way backward (kinda like reading a German word). Yes, butter cream frosting is back, and we're so glad Paul is whole again.

[PAUL'S NOTE: *Indeed!* Eight pounds, six ounces!]



## TAIL

There are some moments in life where you just go, "Shit, they got me," and you're left with only two choices:

1. You can either continue to lie and hope the other person's bullshit radar is on the fritz.
2. You can face the truth head on, as ugly as it may be, and fess up to the crime. One such incident happened to Paul a few years back.

Soon after Paul and Nicole met at work, they discovered they each had a love affair with food-- Paul with desserts and Nicole with everything else.

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *Wait! Why do I have to be the one labeled as liking "everything else"? That makes me sound like a cow!*]

[PAUL'S NOTE: *Well, if the moo fits...*]

One of their first work-related challenges was to figure out how to bring several teams of disparate individuals together to work more cohesively and collectively. The standard manager tricks of holding team meetings and giving presentations weren't going to work, so Paul and Nicole planned a potluck instead. It was perfect because food is the universal language, and they knew it would give everyone some common ground to start conversations.

[PAUL'S NOTE: *And it satisfied Nicole's insatiable need for food. Mooooo!*]

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *I hope Baby Jesus comes down from heaven and drop-kicks yo ass for saying that!*]

[PAUL'S NOTE: *There is no drop-kickin' when the truth's being told. Hallelujah!*]

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *My ass! Let's just amend the initial comment. "It satisfied our insatiable need"...cause Lord knows I didn't pack on all this weight until I began lunchin' with you!*]

[PAUL'S NOTE: *Mmnt.*]

Nicole, always on the ready for a good potluck, whipped out her handy-dandy Perfect Potluck Matrix and went to work. She put together sign-up sheets and coordinated the entrees, veggies, starches and desserts needed, based on the number of people attending.

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *And I'll show you how to plan the perfect potluck for your own team or family gathering a little later!*]

If someone started to waiver on whether or not they would participate, Nicole turned up the guilt and made them feel as useless as a back pocket on a shirt.

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *Because guilt is the gift that keeps on giving <wink>.*]

She would say in her best Becky voice, "Oh, you're not coming? Why not? I was so looking forward to talking to you, and now I'll be stuck with *<insert name of their nemesis>*. Well, hell. And you know how much everyone enjoys your *<insert food>*. I hope no one else bails 'cause you know the rest of the team kind of follows your lead. Are you sure you can't come?"

Ninety-nine point nine percent of the time, whomever Nicole was talking to either felt so guilty or so flattered they'd not only show up, but they'd make something extra complicated and delicious.

[PAUL'S NOTE: *For those of you who are white, like me, "Becky" is Ebonics for white girl. There's even a song about it. Look it up.*]

Paul and Nicole always wrangled at least twenty people to participate in a potluck at any given time, and there was always so much food you could feed a fat camp full of starving kids and even have some left over to end a little bit of world hunger. At one particular potluck, food covered the appetizer table, an entrée table and, most important, a big fat dessert table. Once Nicole gave the okay to start digging in, Paul quickly make his way through the line with a small plate of appetizers and entrées. Then, as if the table would magically disappear once he sat down, Paul bee-lined for the desserts, neatly piling one of each on his plate.

"What the hell?" Nicole exclaimed loudly for all to hear.

"What?" Paul shot back, unapologetically.

"Look at all that damn dessert!"

"I got a plate of real food first. What do you want from me? These nice people took the time to make all these desserts, and I feel obligated to try each one."

And, with that, Paul sat down without another word, picked through his entrée plate, ensuring he did not fill up on meat and vegetables, and worked his way through his mountainous dessert plate.

About ten minutes later, Paul tried to casually make his way back over to the dessert table for round two, in a move affectionately Nicole dubbed as *The Sneak*. Paul would stop and speak to a person here and a person there, giving the illusion he was “working the room”, when all he was really doing was inching his way back to his mistress.

Instantly recognizing *The Sneak*, Nicole called Paul out. “Don’t think I don’t know where you’re going!”

“What?” Paul said, again in the most unapologetic of tones.

“You’re getting a second plate of dessert!” The belittlement cut through the air like a knife.

With tilted head and raised brow, Paul simply replied, “And? Your point?”

“Well, aren’t we just a little piggy today! Oink! Oink!” she imitated, with her eyes pinched and her nose crinkled in true pig-like fashion.

[PAUL’S NOTE: *Nicole swears she did not make pig noises, but it was all so hurtful and traumatic that’s it’s hard to remember for sure now.*]

[NICOLE’S NOTE: *Traumatic?! Who’s being the drama queen now?*]

[PAUL’S NOTE: *It cut...deep!*]

[NICOLE’S NOTE: *DQ, man...DQ!*]

In a hopeless situation, with everyone looking up at him and his empty plate perched menacingly over the red velvet cake, Paul simply replied, “Excuse me?”

[PAUL’S NOTE: *So, this was the moment. The moment when you know you’re caught, and I was caught real good, with my fork in mid-stab over that cake. My first instinct was to deny, deny, deny but, as you’ll soon see, I finally just gave up and faced the music.*]

By now, people had caught the scent of the “goings down” in the air, and the buzz of their many conversations became conspicuously quiet. After all, they knew when Nicole and Paul started going at it; something unexpected was bound to happen.

Realizing he had to deflect and beat Nicole to her next punch line, Paul frantically stated, “I don’t care. If I’m a pig, so be it. My hooves are high!”

He reached down, stabbed the red velvet cake right off the platter, and shoveled a huge piece into his snout. With red-stained teeth and icing clinging to his chin, Paul smiled at Nicole as if saying, “What you gonna say now?” The *bitch* was implied.

What ensued next can only be described as sheer mayhem. Appetizers were choked on, soda shot out of noses. People were laughing so hard. They tried to clean up the messes, but all eyes remained fixed on Paul. In a final moment of defiance, Paul threw his arms up, spread his middle fingers apart, and exclaimed for all to hear, “*Hooves High!*”

With trepidation, Paul saw a couple of people quietly spread their fingers apart, trying to imitate the movement. He encouraged, “If you love food and are tired of being polite and only taking a small portion here or there, hold your hands high. Screw convention! Hi, my name is Paul, and I am a dessert whore! Hooves High!”

With his hands still high, he scanned the crowd for support. Seconds ticked by like hours. Paul’s eyes darted back and forth as he hoped for vindication. Finally, a voice from the back called, “My name is Marie, and I love wings! All kinds, and my Hooves are High, too!” A chicken wing was grasped proudly in her hoof as proof, and she started laughing.

[PAUL’S NOTE: *Marie was already one of my favorite people, but she will forever be cemented in my heart as the first official hooper in our Hooves High Club. Love you, Marie!*]

Quickly, others confessed to their food affairs, too. It was great. There were no apologies. Just acceptance. And so, a new mantra emerged. From a situation meant to disparage and cause dejection, empowerment was born. Hooves High was embraced as a powerful catch phrase used by all—from the skinny analyst on our team who looked like a zipper when she stuck out her tongue to the managers who insisted they be referred to as tall and not tubby. Yes, Hooves High gave you permission to love your food in the open instead of hiding it behind a cheater’s closed door.

[PAUL & NICOLE’S NOTE: *We do want to extend our apologies to the pig. Unfortunately, that poor little pink animal has been maligned for centuries as being synonymous with overeating and obesity, so who are we to try and change that now? We’re just going to embrace it by keeping our snouts clean and our Hooves High.*]

Nicole now regrets her malicious behavior toward Paul and firmly believes fellow hoofers should never call each other out. The best way to support a fellow hooper is to either join in or simply turn a blind eye and provide a nonjudgmental antacid when needed.

### **SETTING FREE YOUR INNER HOOF**

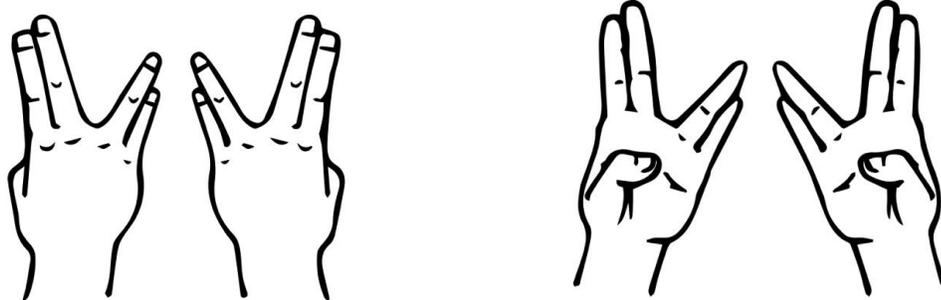
So, when can you release your inner hoof? Below are some appropriate situations when a full-on Hooves High exclamation is fitting:

1. The next time you're in a team meeting and someone produces a birthday cake to celebrate a coworker's birthday. Hooves High!
2. When the project manager of a project you've been slaving over brings in doughnuts from your favorite doughnut place and they're the good kind, topped with icing or filled with fruit fillings. Hooves High!
3. When a vendor pops in with fresh bagels, a variety of flavored cream cheeses, and the good coffee during a presentation to try and sell you on the latest product. Hooves High!
4. If management asks you to go to lunch with them and they tell you they're buying...before you order. Hooves High!

[PAUL & NICOLE'S NOTE: *We fully support loud bursts of Hooves High; however, unless you have already trained your boss in your quirky behaviors, it's usually better to keep your outbursts to a minimum in one-on-one situations, as you run the risk of your boss thinking you need psychiatric attention. At these moments, Hooves High at your own risk!*]

### **THE HOOVES HIGH HAND GESTURE**

Raise your arms high in the air and make the Vulcan "Live Long and Prosper" sign with both hands, then bring your thumbs back across your palms to imitate two hooves, and repeat after us: *Hooves High!*



### **TRIMMING THE FAT**



Don't pass judgment on others (especially when food is involved). We all have our quirks and, if you're reading this book, yours probably include food, fun, laughter and more fun. Remember, we each live in a glass house and, just as quickly as you can pass judgment, judgment can be passed on you (like a bad kidney stone), especially in the workplace. Stay open, and know that remaining as nonjudgmental as possible will take you the farthest.

# Mmnt!

## MEANING

“Mmnt!” is an expression of displeasure. It’s easy and simple to say, and it sounds better than “You stupid bitch” or “Damn, now I’m gonna have to work all night because your dumb ass just screwed up!”



## HEART OF THE STORY

The correct pronunciation of “Mmnt!” is very important because it’s really more of a sound than a word. The *t* is almost silent. Lord knows you don’t ever want to be caught mispronouncing a word at work and appearing unprofessional (even a made-up one like this). So, repeat after us: it’s MMNt and not mmnT.

The amount of emphasis and the loudness of your voice should be equal to the amount of aggravation or anger you’re experiencing. For instance, if you come into work and forget your ID badge, a small “Mmnt!” will probably do. It really can only be heard by you and typically will not produce a response from other people who may have heard you and understand what the word means.

Let’s say, though, you are running late for work, have a big presentation to give in five minutes, and you realize after you get to the door that you left your ID badge and your notes for the meeting at home. In that case, a big, loud “Mmnt!” for all to hear is totally appropriate and justified. With that kind of frustration, coworkers should come flocking to your side, asking what they can do to help. If they don’t, they’re not your friends, and you can write them off your Christmas list.

“Mmnt!” isn’t just an expression of frustration for your own actions. It is a very fitting comment about others’ actions as well. When end users still call you for help even after you’ve trained them, provided dummy-proof documentation and explained the same thing three times, throw a well-deserved “Mmnt!” their way. When someone trips, *again*, on the hall carpet square that’s needed replacing for months and it’s in front of an audience, look them dead in the eye and go, “Mmnt!” Frankly, they should have known.

Finally, “Mmnt!” is a great phrase you can use in your everyday life. When your husband says he can’t do something because football season has started, and it dawns on you that for the next few Saturdays and Sundays his ass is going to be parked on the couch in front of the TV: “Mmnt!” Or when your wife drops the bomb that you’ll be going to Sunday dinner at her mother’s house at 4:00 p.m. (aka the start time for game two) when she lives an hour away (meaning you’ll miss how game one ends and you won’t get home until after game three begins), a low-toned “Mmnt!” is appropriate. Or when the kids have ignored you for the third time, a forceful “MMNT!” is all you’ll need to let them know they are seconds away from being knocked into next week.

[NICOLE’S NOTE: *Guys, when it comes to your wife or girlfriend, always use a low-toned “Mmnt!” We don’t want to hear on the news about how you ended up in the hospital with gunshot wounds.*]



## **TAIL**

“Mmnt!” is so versatile that we couldn’t pick just one tail to share with you, so we selected three. They will illustrate the adaptability and flexibility one simple four-letter word can have. Unlike those other four-letter words we all know and love, this is a new one that’s appropriate no matter what kind of company you’re keeping.

### **1. SALTY COOKIES**

As we mentioned, potlucks are Paul and Nicole’s specialty. At the end of one potluck, they immediately begin planning the next one because, well, why not? Not only are they great opportunities for Hoofers to try lots of different foods but, most importantly, they’re an opportunity to have others cook. Let’s face it, who doesn’t love that?

At the end of their first year together, it was time for the big Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa potluck and Nicole was all atwitter, signing up peeps for different dishes and desserts. All year, Paul had bragged and bragged about his “famous” Merry Christmas cookies. He claimed to have adoring fans far and wide that put in special requests for his cookies during the holidays. Knowing Paul would be debuting his cookies for her and the team at this potluck, Nicole quickly assigned him one of the coveted dessert spots.

As the potluck approached, Paul walked by Nicole’s office and called out, “Only two more days til I bless you with my Merry Christmas cookies.”

Nicole, eager to lay her greedy hands on this wondrously hyped cookie, yelled back, “Ooh, sweetie, you know I can’t wait. Mama loves her a cookie! You make sure I get the first one!”

For the next two days, Paul continued to build the frenzy over his heavenly baked treats. On the day of the potluck, Paul purposely arrived five minutes late so he could make a grand entrance. After surveying the best door for his entrance (because there were two), he flung open the door farthest from the food and proudly marched in carrying a large red plate full of shortbread cookies topped with rich, buttery icing. As he moved through the crowd, he gave everyone the head nod indicating that, yes, they were indeed among greatness.

With a sweep of his hand, Paul quickly pushed aside all inferior desserts on the dessert table to make room for his Merry Christmas cookies in the center. No one seemed to mind, as it was understood that these cookies deserved a place of prominence and distinction.

After everyone enjoyed a round or two of appetizers, starches, entrées and vegetables, it was time for dessert. Paul swiftly made his way to the back of the room to hand out his cookies so as to divert attacks from any wayward cookie vultures.

[PAUL'S NOTE: *You know who you are.*]

He gently placed one cookie on each person's plate and sat down, waiting for the oohs, ahhs and other accolades to begin. Nicole was the first to speak. Paul turned to her in anticipation.

"What the fuck is this?"

"I know," Paul beamed, understanding Nicole was *verklemt* and forgiving her use of the f-bomb in front of the team. "Fabulous, aren't they?" he enthused.

"Fabulously salty, I'd say. Did you screw up the recipe?" Nicole shot back.

"What?" Paul exclaimed, with a look of horror on his face. "Let me taste one." Jumping up, he ran to the back of the room and shoved a cookie in his mouth. "No, these are perfect, as always. I don't know what you're talking about. They're not salty!"

"Oh yes, they are," she insisted. "I need a glass of water." <cough> <cough>

"You need to stop fronting and admit they're the best cookie you've ever had," Paul replied, only half kidding now.

"No, I'm serious. These are the saltiest cookies I've ever tasted."

"What? Are you kidding me? You are obviously sick, and your taste buds are distorted." Paul frowned in displeasure.

Paul scanned the room and saw others looking down at their cookies, debating whether or not to taste them, so he continued, "Look, everyone, you need to try them. Don't let the Hater-Ade Nicole is drinking sway you. My cookies are *not* salty!"

With that, a few people bit into their cookies, and several oohs and ahhs floated around. Hearing them, Paul immediately picked up his pride off the floor and began to dust it off. Simultaneously, he shot Nicole his best skunk eye with a hint of "told you so, bitch."

“Eww, these really are kinda salty,” came a hateful minion from the front of the room.

Bam! Paul’s pride fell back onto the dirty, carpeted floor. “Really?” he said. “Are you sure it’s not just Nicole using her powers of suggestive thinking on you?”

“No, they are salty. I’m sorry.”

“Yeah, I can see where you’d say they’re salty,” said another spiteful underling. “I’m not complaining, because the cookie is great, but I do taste the salt in them.”

“Honestly, there is *no* salt in these cookies, people! No one has ever said this before!” Paul moaned. “I am in a state of shock.”

“Well, it looks like about seventy percent of the peeps like them, so maybe only those of us with a more refined palate were able to pick up on all the saltiness,” Nicole offered, clearly pleased with herself.

Paul stared at her. “Seventy percent, my ass. You have poisoned everyone’s mind with your salt talk. If you’d have never said it, no one else would have said anything,” Paul responded bitterly. “But perhaps you’re right about being a salt connoisseur.” <wink, wink>

“You did not just go there, Mr. Mitchell!” Nicole gasped in mock disgust. “I will have HR down here faster than Monica turned on Bill with that blue dress! And you know black girls, even the mulatta ones like myself, don’t do that. It’s a white girl thing! Mmnt!” And there it is, the *Mmnt*.

“Okay, okay,” Paul said laughing and throwing his hands up in defeat. “I guess I’ll just have to accept seventy percent for now, but this debate is far from over.”

“Yes, perhaps by this time next year you’ll have had enough time to figure out how to make the next batch less salty.”

[NICOLE’S NOTE: *And every year since then, someone has commented on their saltiness.*]

[PAUL’S NOTE: *Yes, because every year you bring it up before they are able to form their own opinions! Mmnt!*] And there it is again.

[NICOLE’S NOTE: *I’m just trying to prepare them for the shock.*]

[PAUL’S NOTE: *Yeah, go on. Take another sip of your Hater-Ade.*]

## **2. RED CROSS RETRIBUTION**

Let’s share another example of when “Mmnt!” is appropriate. Paul and Nicole regularly donate blood to the Red Cross. They both have type O blood and feel it’s important to give as often as possible.

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[PAUL’S NOTE: *I have an O negative blood type, so that makes me the universal donor and slightly more important than Nicole, who only has O positive.*]

[NICOLE’S NOTE: *“Only” my ass! O positive is still important, and it’s even better because I can receive blood from both O positive and O negative donors! You can only receive blood from other O negatives!*]

[PAUL’S NOTE: *Don’t go bitch cakes on me. I’m just saying it’s not the best...like mine.*]

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *Mmnt! At least I won't die a lonely death waiting for blood!*]

Because Paul spent some time out of the country recently, he was on a “deferred” status for a year and unable to give blood. Some of his favorite things about giving blood, though, are the peanut butter cookies and juice they offer after every donation. He was often spotted pumping his fist in increasing frenzy while donating just to get his peanut butter cookies faster.

[PAUL'S NOTE: *Hooves High!*]

One time, during Paul's deferment period, Nicole came back from giving blood in a particularly good mood. After extolling the virtues and importance of giving blood and making sure Paul knew how great she felt for helping her fellow man (and not being selfish and traveling abroad like he'd done), he heard crackling noises coming from her cube.

“What are you doing?” Paul Instant Messaged Nicole.

“Nothing,” Nicole replied quickly.

“It doesn't sound like nothing,” Paul typed.

“Why don't you get back to work?!” she shot back.

Irritated, Paul returned his attention to his spreadsheet. A few seconds later, he heard “Mmmmm. Ohhhhhh. Mmmmm.” Frustrated, he got up and marched over to Nicole's desk.

“What are you...” He stopped midstream, his mouth falling open in shock. “Are those my favorite peanut butter cookies you just opened and are eating?” he gasped.

“Hahaahaaaa! Yes! Yes! Yes!” Nicole moaned, thoroughly enjoying her cookie orgasm.

“You know those are my favorite! Why didn't you just eat them while you were there? Why did you bring them back? Just to torture me?”

“Oh, I had some after I gave blood and, they were just so good, I had to bring another pack back with me,” she retorted, and carried on with her torment. “Torturing you is just a bonus.”

“Mmnt. I hate you,” Paul responded flatly. “You know I'd give if I could.” (See how the flat tone of Paul's Mmnt really conveyed his disgust with Nicole? We call this a teaching moment.)

“Sucks for you. Can you hand me my juice, please? I'm covered in cookie.”

“Really, cookie whore? Really?” he said, dropping his head to the side and glaring at her. “I have work to do.” Paul slunk back to his desk.

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *First, it's not what you're thinking. I'm not that kind of whore. I don't give it up like that but, if I did, honey, men would be lined up around the block, okay? Second, this type of whore is perfectly acceptable, and I freely embraced it that day. Keep reading—more to come on that later in the book.*]

“Wait!” Nicole called. “Come back a minute.”

“No. It’s too painful,” Paul whined.

“Come here.”

“What?” he barked, barely reappearing at the entrance of her cube.

Slowly, Nicole reached for the handle of her desk and opened it. Inside sat a bright, shiny red package of unopened peanut butter cookies. “For you,” she offered.

“Really?” he said less defensively now. “You got them for me? You remembered?”

“Of course! I couldn’t go and not get some for you. I know you love them. I just had to make you work for them,” she laughed.

“Thank you, but you’re still a cookie whore.” He extended his hand in anticipation of the cookie blessing.

“Yes, yes I am,” Nicole said, handing over the package and making the sign of the cross as she did so. “You may go now, my child.”

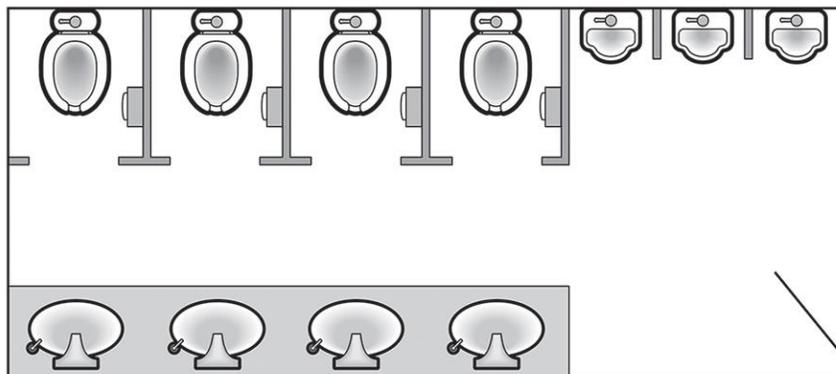
Bowing, Paul laughed. “Thank you, my queen. You are both kind and generous.” Paul returned to his desk. To this day, he maintains those were the best peanut butter cookies he ever had.

### **3. APPROPRIATE MEN’S BATHROOM ETIQUETTE**

And now, on to the final and most important example of when “Mmnt!” is appropriate.

Let’s talk for a minute about the men’s bathroom. It should be a place to do your business, not the place you socialize and swap stories. When did it ever become okay or appropriate to smack a guy on the back and say hello when he is saddled up to a urinal in mid-pee? Don’t you know that smacking someone on his back is a surefire way to break his concentration *and* his pee stream? Why even do it in the first place? What purpose does the touching of another man’s back in the bathroom serve? Mmnt!

While we’re on the subject, let’s review appropriate men’s bathroom etiquette. Assume there’s a men’s bathroom with three wall-mounted urinals and four stalls (see figure below).



If you're the first guy in the bathroom and just need to pee, it is imperative you take one of the wall-mounted urinals in the corner. Never *ever* take the one in the middle. If you're the second guy in the bathroom and also just need to pee, then you take the other unoccupied corner urinal. This gives you a little privacy and ensures the smell from any flatulence you expel is minimized to that corner and not dispersed throughout the room. If, and only if, you are the third guy in the bathroom and there is no other choice, you may take the middle urinal (and even then, walk slowly, casually assessing the situation to see if anyone is near done and shaking; if they're shaking, walk even slower and cough to make your presence known so they know to hurry up). Honestly, they don't want to pee in front of an audience any more than you do.

[PAUL'S NOTE: *For those of you unfamiliar with shaking, it's the next-to-last step of the peeing process. When you're done peeing, you have to shake your pistol a little to ensure you don't drip once you reholster. The final step is buckling your pants and/or zipping your fly.*]

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *If you're the type of guy who chooses to be at the middle urinal, one of two things is happening. Either you think you have the biggest package ever and are encouraging others to peek, or you enjoy holding your meat in the middle of a man sandwich. I'm not judging, though. Carry on.*]

[PAUL'S NOTE: *Don't be one of those guys at the corner urinal who takes forever to shake and zip up. It's just like the rules of a parking lot. Get in your car, turn it on and back out. Don't sit there forever and primp and prattle while others wait to pull into your space.*]

Similar rules apply to bathroom stall etiquette. If there are only three stalls, take a corner stall first unless one of them is a handicap stall. If there is a handicap stall, then you take that one first. A handicap stall is always preferred because there is more room to spread out, and sometimes you even have your own sink where you can wash up and quickly make an exit before any of your coworkers realize it was you who just stank up the whole place.

Other rules apply as well. If you're dropping a huge load of boys off at the pool, consider a courtesy flush or two. Don't keep sending them off the diving board without providing them some new water to swim in every once in a while. Mmnt!

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *Ditto for you girls, too!*]

A conversation at the sinks is fine when both of you are finished with your business and back on a level playing field. A conversation when one or both of you is midstream is not. What are you expecting? Eye contact? That will throw off the other person's aim. An intellectual exchange? All brain cells are concentrating on peeing and aiming. If you want dialogue, peeing will cease or reduce to a small trickle, thus causing a backup in available urinals and more people having to use the middle urinal. Hold that thought and say it at the sinks.

One last note for both men and women: do not, we repeat, do not talk on your cell phone while you're doing number one or number two. No one appreciates hearing your one-sided exchange, and the person on the other end surely doesn't want to know that's the kind of business you're conducting.

### **MMNT! YOURSELF INTO INFAMY**

*Mmnt!* is probably the one thing you can say that people will start to pick up subconsciously and not even know they've started using. When we started at our last company together, we would say "Mmnt!" during casual conversations with our new coworkers.

"The water in the faucet is brown. Where is the filtered water? Oh, that *is* the filtered water? Mmnt!"

"There's a meeting on Sunday, and we need to be there? Mmnt!"

"Your wife left you over the weekend and took all your money? Mmnt! Oh, and she left you with the kids? MMNT! And you have a strange itching sensation 'down there'? Double MMNT!" (And then slowly back away.)

[NICOLE'S NOTE: *TMI, people, TMI! Learn boundaries with your coworkers!*]

When we noticed the strange looks our coworkers were giving us, we explained the awesome power of "Mmnt!" and why we use it. Now we hear them using "Mmnt!" down the halls, around the corners, and in their own casual conversations.

"You're calling the Help Desk because you forgot your password...again? Mmnt. One moment, please."

"Mmnt! I don't know why that code isn't working!"

"You really expect me to believe you're late again because of traffic? You live three miles away. Mmnt!"

We're prouder than peacocks at how quickly "Mmnt!" has caught on. It's like verbal kudzu.



## *Hooves High*

There's always a time and place for saying what you feel, and knowing when that right time is will get you far in life. For those times when you can't express what you're truly feeling, a low-key "Mmnt" should get you through (and covertly indicate to those in the know that something funky just went down and you didn't like it one bit).