

How to Live in Motels

Amy Long

TISA'S

Motel & Pizzeria

626 W John Sims Pkwy • Niceville, FL 32578



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Knock on door and wait for Ryan to answer.
2. Step into room. Smell stale cigarettes and dirty sheets. Feel weirdly glamorous and a little scared. You're not supposed to be here.
3. Stay just long enough that your parents will believe you when you tell them you were hanging out with your high school friends, who don't take methadone and narcotic anti-anxiety pills.

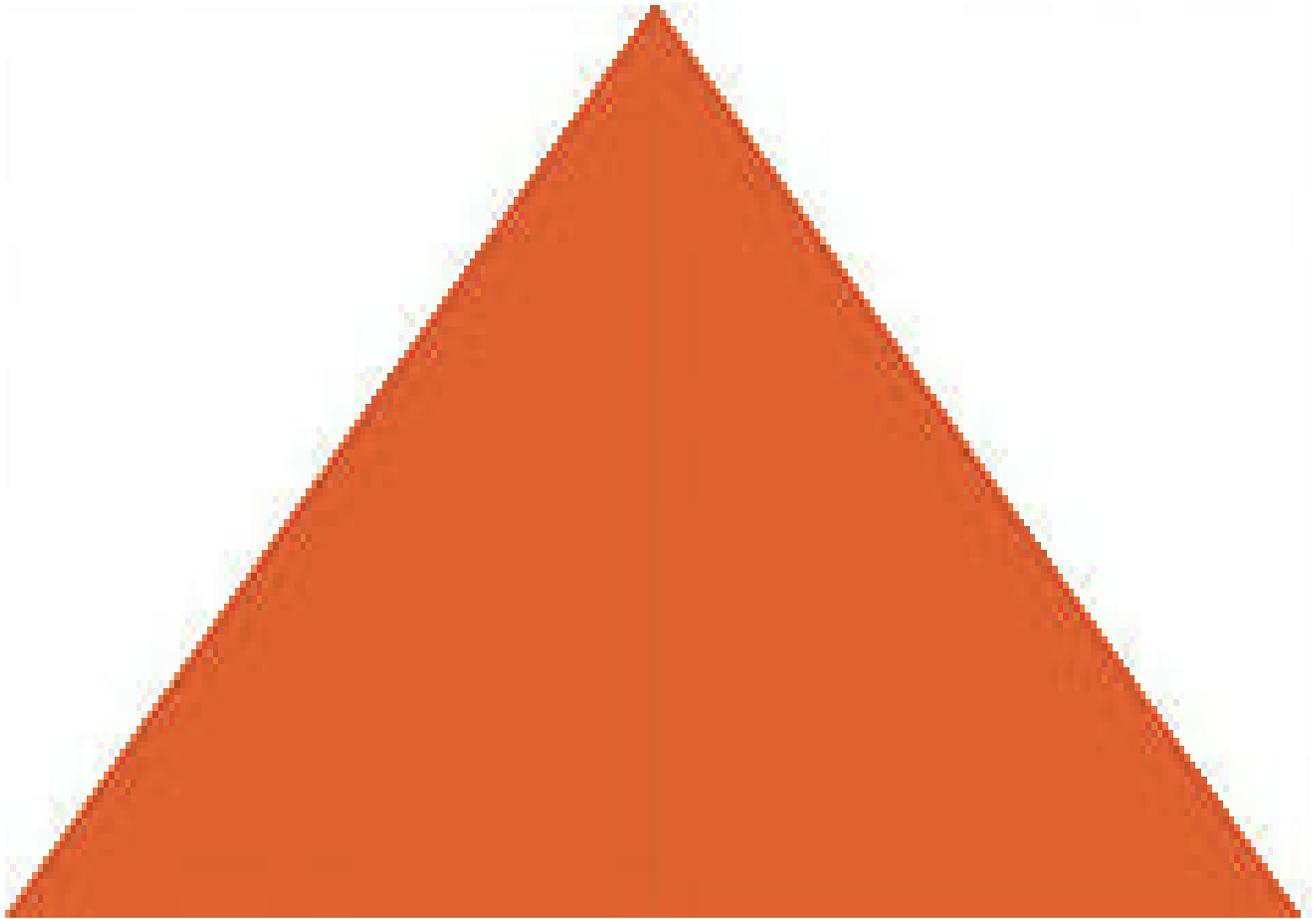
## FOR YOUR SECURITY

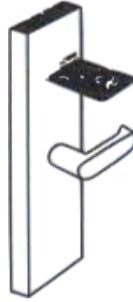
- Keep your valuables in your bag. Keep your phone on hand in case your mom calls.
- Secure deadbolt. Remove your clothes and crawl under dirty sheets. For a long time, do nothing that requires you to remove your clothes, or at least not *all* of them. Wait forever to reciprocate after Ryan goes down on you. Achieve your first orgasm. Perch on bathroom sink and smoke your first cigarette, one of Ryan's Marlboro Reds. Feel, finally, like an adult.
- Use viewport to ID all visitors. A knock at the door could mean Ryan's dad with a baseball bat. A knock at the door could mean the staff wants to clean the room, and you can't let them so close to Ryan's pills. A knock at the door could mean that your mother convinced the man at the front desk to give her Ryan's room number because you haven't come home, and your sister, who can't lie, told her you were here. Watch like a movie you can't pause as her headlights flash on you, naked with the twenty-two-year-old whose heroin addiction you know she knows exists.
- Ensure that all windows and doors are locked. The door locks on its own. Worry anyway that some stranger—or, worse, your mother—will walk in and see you naked.

# GAINESVILLE LODGE

215 N. Main Street

Gainesville, FL 32601





## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Fully insert keycard. Hope custodial staff heeded the "Do Not Disturb" sign you hang on the door every time you leave. If they didn't, they'll have seen the empty coke bags and remnants of snorted pills on the TV cabinet. If they didn't, they'd probably have kicked you out by now.
2. Remove keycard. The keycard reminds you of the cards you use to get into your dorm room, which acts more like a storage facility now. You do most of your living in this motel room because Ryan can't afford to rent a real apartment, and he needs you with him. Ryan can't afford his own prescriptions or the coke you snort together. Pay for the prescriptions. Pay for the coke. Suppress your anger over all the money you spend on Ryan. He's on the other side of the door.
3. Depress handle and open door. Depress yourself when you enter the room and see evidence of your drug use, clothes at the foot of the bed, overflowing ashtrays, empty cigarette packs, CVS bags that once contained Ryan's prescription bottles. You can ignore the mess when you're high. But you're not high. You're sober, coming home from class. Depress yourself again. You just called a motel room "home."

## **FOR YOUR SECURITY**

- Keep all pills on your person because you don't know whether motel employees can access the safe. Don't worry about police. You and Ryan are white and clean, and you have a college ID.
- Secure deadbolt. Curse deadbolt when Ryan locks you out during a fight and leaves you stranded on the highway-facing skywalk in panties and a threadbare T-shirt in the middle of the night. Bang on door. But, wait, not too loud. Someone might hear and then see you. Crouch and plead. Wait. Bang again with moderated fists. Wait. When he lets you back inside, cry on Ryan's shoulder. Tell him how scared you were so he

can insist you knew he only meant to tease you. It was three minutes. Of course he'd never leave you out there. Don't you know that?

- Use viewport to ID all visitors. A knock at the door could mean a cop. A knock at the door could mean a maid or the motel's management. A knock at the door could mean some other junkie who knows where you live and wants your money or your pills. A knock at the door could mean Ryan's mom, who pays for the room. A knock at the door could mean your own mother, who would kill you if she knew you'd eschewed the dorm room your dad pays for to live in this motel with that drug addict they both told you to stop seeing.
- Keep your keycard on you at all times. If you lose it, you'll have to ask the night clerk to open your door, and he'll see what you and Ryan have been doing in this room that isn't really yours.
- Ensure that all windows and doors are locked. The single door locks automatically, so you don't need to worry about the door. Worry about it anyway. Worry about it outside at night in your underwear while you knock and jiggle the handle and try not to scream. If you scream, that someone you're scared will come out to gawk at your bare legs could instead decide to call 911 or walk over and intervene himself; he might try to fix it. Refuse all belief in fixing it. If no one hears you, no one will see how cruelly Ryan can treat you or that you let him and love him anyway, that you believe him when he says he loves you, too.