



MATTHEW PERRY

A MEMOIR

Foreword
by Lisa Kudrow

Friends, Lovers, and
the Big Terrible Thing

Friends, Lovers,
and the
Big Terrible Thing

A Memoir

MATTHEW PERRY



FLATIRON
BOOKS
NEW YORK

[Begin Reading](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Photos](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

**Thank you for buying this
Flatiron Books ebook.**

To receive special offers, bonus content,
and info on new releases and other great reads,
sign up for our newsletters.

[Sign Up](#)

Or visit us online at
us.macmillan.com/newslettersignup

For email updates on the author, click [here](#).

The author and publisher have provided this e-book to you for your personal use only. You may not make this e-book publicly available in any way. **Copyright infringement is against the law. If you believe the copy of this e-book you are reading infringes on the author's copyright, please notify the publisher at: us.macmillanusa.com/piracy.**

*For all of the sufferers out there.
You know who you are.*

The best way out is always through.

—Robert Frost

You've just got to see me through another day.

—James Taylor

Foreword

by Lisa Kudrow

“How’s Matthew Perry doing?”

Over the many years since I was first asked, it’s been, at different times, the most asked question for me. I understand why so many people asked it: they love Matthew and they want him to be OK. Me too. But I always bristled at that question from the press, because I couldn’t say what I wanted to say: “It’s his story to tell and I’m not authorized to tell it really, am I!” I would have wanted to go on to say, “This is very intimate personal stuff and if you don’t hear it from the actual person, it is, to my mind, gossip and I’m not gossiping about Matthew with you.” Knowing that no response at all could do more damage, sometimes I would just say, “I think he’s doing well.” At least that doesn’t amplify the spotlight and maybe he can have a fraction of privacy as he tries to deal with this disease. But truly, I wasn’t exactly sure how Matthew was doing. As he’ll tell you in this book, he was keeping it a secret. And it took some time for him to feel comfortable enough to tell us some of what he was going through. Over those years I didn’t really try to intervene or confront him, because the little I knew about addiction was that his sobriety was out of my hands. And yet, I would have periods of wondering if I was wrong for not doing more, doing something. But I did come to understand that this disease relentlessly fed itself and was determined to keep going.

So, I just focused on Matthew, who could make me laugh so hard every day, and once a week, laugh so hard I cried and couldn’t breathe. He was there, Matthew Perry, who is whip smart ... charming, sweet, sensitive, very reasonable and rational. That guy, with everything he was battling, was still there. The same Matthew who, from the beginning, could lift us all up during a grueling night shoot for the opening titles inside that fountain. “Can’t remember a time I wasn’t in a fountain!” “What are we, wet?”

“Can’t remember a time I wasn’t wet ... I!” (Matthew is the reason we are all laughing in that fountain in the opening titles.)

After *Friends* I didn’t see Matthew every day, and I couldn’t even hazard a guess with regard to his well-being.

This book is the first time I’m hearing what living with and surviving his addiction really was. Matthew has told me some things, but not in this kind of detail. He’s now letting us into Matthew’s head and heart in honest and very exposed detail. And finally, no one needs to ask me or anyone else how Matthew’s doing. He’s letting you know himself.

He has survived impossible odds, but I had no idea how many times he almost didn’t make it. I’m glad you’re here, Matty. Good for you. I love you.

—Lisa

Prologue

Hi, my name is Matthew, although you may know me by another name. My friends call me Matty.

And I should be dead.

If you like, you can consider what you're about to read to be a message from the beyond, my beyond.

It's Day Seven of the Pain. And by Pain, I don't mean a stubbed toe or "The Whole Ten Yards." I capitalize Pain because this was the worst Pain I've ever experienced—it was the Platonic Ideal of Pain, the exemplar. I've heard people claim that the worst pain is childbirth: well, this was the worst pain imaginable, but without the joy of a newborn in my arms at the end of it.

And it may have been Day Seven of Pain, but it was also Day Ten of No Movement. If you catch my drift. I hadn't taken a shit in ten days—there, there's the drift. Something was wrong, very wrong. This was not a dull, throbbing pain, like a headache; it wasn't even a piercing, stabbing pain, like the pancreatitis I'd had when I was thirty. This was a different kind of Pain. Like my body was going to burst. Like my insides were trying to force their way out. This was the no-fucking-around kind of Pain.

And the sounds. My God, the sounds. Ordinarily, I'm a pretty quiet, keep-to-myself kinda fella. But on this night, I was screaming at the top of my lungs. Some nights, when the wind is right and the cars are all parked up for the night, you can hear the horrific sounds of coyotes ripping apart something that is howling in the Hollywood Hills. At first it sounds like children laughing way, way off in the distance, until you realize it's not that—it's the foothills of death. But the worst part, of course, is when the howling stops, because you know whatever has been attacked is now dead. This is hell.

And yes, there is a hell. Don't let anyone tell you different. I've been there; it exists; end of discussion.

On this night the animal was me. I was still screaming, fighting tooth and nail for survival. Silence meant the end. Little did I know how close I was to the end.

At the time, I was living in a sober living house in Southern California. This was no surprise—I have lived half my life in one form or another of treatment center or sober living house. Which is fine when you are twenty-four years old, less fine when you are forty-two years old. Now I was forty-nine, still struggling to get this monkey off my back.

By this point, I knew more about drug addiction and alcoholism than any of the coaches and most of the doctors I encountered at these facilities. Unfortunately, such self-knowledge avails you nothing. If the golden ticket to sobriety involved hard work and learned information, this beast would be nothing but a faint unpleasant memory. To simply stay alive, I had turned myself into a professional patient. Let's not sugarcoat it. At forty-nine, I was still afraid to be alone. Left alone, my crazy brain (crazy only in this area by the way) would find some excuse to do the unthinkable: drink and drugs. In the face of decades of my life having been ruined by doing this, I'm terrified of doing it again. I have no fear of talking in front of twenty thousand people, but put me alone on my couch in front of a TV for the night and I get scared. And that fear is of my own mind; fear of my own thoughts; fear that my mind will urge me to turn to drugs, as it has so many times before. My mind is out to kill me, and I know it. I am constantly filled with a lurking loneliness, a yearning, clinging to the notion that something outside of me will fix me. But I had had all that the outside had to offer!

Julia Roberts is my girlfriend. *It doesn't matter, you have to drink.*

I just bought my dream house—it looks out across the whole city! *Can't enjoy that without a drug dealer.*

I'm making a million dollars a week—I win right? *Would you like to drink? Why yes, I would. Thank you very much.*

I'd had it all. But it was all a trick. Nothing was going to fix this. It would be years before I even grasped the notion of a solution. Please don't misunderstand me. All of those things—Julia and the dream house and \$1 million a week—were wonderful, and I will be eternally grateful for all of them. I am one of the luckiest men on the planet. And boy did I have fun.