



I've been invited to a party. I hate parties. The forced happiness, that requirement to have a good time, "Hey! We're out! We're having fun!" I'm working on this abnormality, and by "working on" I mean that I'm learning to accept that I hate parties. That there is a very good possibility that I am a misanthrope.

I dread Evites. I checked email yesterday and there it was. "Stacy McMillen? Who the hell is that?" I clicked on the dreaded link. The monitor whizzed and blinked, making that weird choking sound that computers do. The little green bar inched slowly...slowly...to the right. Drumming my fingers. Shoot, my nail polish chipped. My ring feels tight. Am I getting fat? My computer heaves a sigh and the Evite opens. Damn. I do know Stacy McMillen. She is my friend Erin's new roommate. She is inviting me to me a housewarming party. This is horrible news.

I must consider an escape plan. Am I out of town? Is someone in town? Maybe I have another party? Or, a work thing! Um... I promised I'd do...something.

Hell. I click 'Yes,' and add my pithy comment. "Erin has a new roomie! Wouldn't miss it!" I lie. I look down the list of other RSVPers, because isn't this the best part of an Evite? To see who's

Evite Me

Written by Karen Woodward

coming and compare pithy comments? The pressures of an Evite. I don't know any of these people. I can't go to this! My social anxiety crawls at me, as I imagine various horrors that await me at a housewarming party that will be peopled with good looking, successful, boring people that I do not know.

I can do this! Said the person who reads Tony Robbins.

Just be yourself! Said the occasional Oprah watcher.

It's no big deal! Said my mother's daughter.

No way in bloody hell am I going to that party! I think.

I grab the mouse again. The arrow hovers above 'No.' I could be safe. Free. Released from the pain of smiling so much. It could all be over.

I slide over to 'Maybe.' Or I could hedge my bets, and not quite commit to a yes or no. I could retain an air of mystery, like I might have somewhere better to be. *Who is this woman and why is she a 'Maybe'? Does she really have commitments or is Stacy just not that cool?* That's right sheep! I'm the master of the 'Maybe,' I'm spoilt with choice. I got things going on that you could only dream about. I am all over this town like an Olsen twin!

Does anyone read these RSVPs or am I the only one? And all these people under 'Have not Replied,' who are they? Is it the wrong email address? Are they aware that Stacy McMillen knows if they've opened it? I'm not an Evite neophyte. I know how dangerous these things are. You open, you answer. You're caught. Stacy's got you in her housewarming party clutches.

It's too late for me. I've clicked and now I must choose my fate. I click on 'Maybe' and adjust my pithy response to read, "Erin has a new roomie! I hope I can make it!"

Evite Me

Written by Karen Woodward

Fuck it. They don't have to know why I'm a 'Maybe.' A little mystery is good when I don't show up places. It's hysterical really. A lot of people think I'm the busiest person ever because I can rarely make it to their soirées, when really I'm at home catching up on *How I Met Your Mother*.

But no, let them think I'm kicking it at Winston's! I got an in at Villa! I'm shooting up at Bar Marmont! I'm underground but *on the scene!* Mary Kate's got nothing on me!

Wow. Just clicking 'Maybe' opens a world of possibilities. I should open Evites more often.