

Moving and Spinning

I had this spinny chair when I was younger; it was from IKEA—the PS LÖMSK Swivel Chair. It had a red plastic shell with an orange cover that you could pull up and down to dramatically hide or reveal yourself to spectators. I tricked many friends’ parents by hiding my friends in it when their parents arrived to pick them up. I was sure they never knew. But then, it always went the same way: we would spin the chair around and open the shade to reveal my scrunched-up friend begging their parents to let them stay. Their parents never let them.

E. Fourth Street

After living in my dad’s studio and then living in a cockroach-infested apartment in Stuyvesant Town, my parents and I moved into an apartment on E. Fourth Street between A and B when I was around three years old. This is the first apartment I remember. We had a huge living room with a brown velour couch, wall-to-wall carpeting (something I heard my parents complaining about a lot), and the tiniest little kitchen imaginable. (My parents rarely ever cook together in the kitchen anymore because of this; I can still see them flinch when they walk side-by-side in the kitchen at my current apartment.

Even seeing that is rare.) My room was way too big for a 3-year-old. I had all of my Polly Pockets, Calico Critters, and Friends To Be Made dolls strewn across my pink carpeted floor. My mom and I would spend hours arranging all the little bears and blonde-haired mini-people into “set-ups.” We would create scenes and stories for each miniature figure. Sitting in the corner of this room was my brand new chair. My dad would put me inside of it and spin me around. It was like my own amusement park at home.

I lived on E. Fourth Street until I was nine. Then we had to move. I put on a brave face. It was only a house. I found a sense of comfort in that my Calico Critters and spinning chair were coming with me. I remember asking why we were moving and not getting a straight answer. *Why wouldn’t they tell me?* I felt like crying. I didn’t want to make my parents feel bad so I didn’t.

E. 32nd Street

My new house on E. 32nd Street was a two-floor brownstone. Besides my tiny closet of a bedroom, my most vivid memory of this place was the huge elk head, belonging to my landlord, that hung above the staircase when you

walked up. I named it Ella the Elk. I had a friend Ella at the time, but it was *not* named after her. My mom painted my walls blue, got me a loft bed, and arranged a little hang-out area underneath for my friends and me to play. My first few nights I almost vomited from sleeping up so high. My room had a blue theme, so my swivel chair stood out as it sat in the corner of my *pre-teen* hang-out area. It was in this house that my friends and I asked my dad for “one more second” before we had to leave and he responded “no, there are no secs involved” and we all burst out laughing. This was also where my band, Age of Kids, was formed and where we held many of our practices. We lived here for one year. I still don’t know why we left.

W. 29th Street

I wasn’t as upset to leave my 32nd Street house. Maybe it was because of my small room, or because I was used to the feeling, but I wasn’t even close to tears. We packed everything up and moved to W. 29th Street, where the floors were peeling off, the wall was kind of slanted, and we had no shower. I got the bigger bedroom because my parents felt bad for sticking me in a closet for a year. My dad built a recording studio

in our house. We fixed the shower. We got a puppy. We got a credenza (my mom’s pride and joy). We got rid of our brown velour couch and got a new leopard one. Everything was different. Except my spinny chair. In this house, in that spinny chair, my friends told me that they had overheard this girl insulting me. I curled up in the chair and cried for so long while they comforted me and assured me that I didn’t need her, but I knew I did. There were bite marks on the sides from my new puppy, and the hinges were squeaky from so much turning. I didn’t get rid of it until high school. I was 13, and according to my family, it was time. I needed to *grow up*. We put it out on the street. The next day it was gone. I have no idea where it is now.

So I got a new closet, but I still have my pink poster that says “For Like Ever” that I’ve had since Third Street. I got a new desk, but I refused to get new bookshelves until last year. My parents are more comfortable with new things. They got us a new dining room table a few weeks ago and I have yet to adjust to it. I miss the burn marks from Hanukkah candles that fell out of the menorah, and the chipped wood from the family dinners where I was so angry I silently broke off pieces of the table.