

Mia  
the  
Melodramatic



The Mia  
Fullerton  
Series

Eileen Boggess



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*To my parents, Pat and Bonnie Burke, who had to live through my melodramatic younger years, and to Todd, Erin, and Nolan, who have to live through my melodramatic middle years*





## Chapter *One*

“**I** *f you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. Clap clap.  
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. Clap clap.  
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely  
show it. If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. Clap clap.”*

I rolled over in my bed and looked at the clock: 8:03 a.m. It was way too early for this.

*“If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. Stomp stomp.”*

There was another verse?

*“If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. Stomp stomp.”*

I put the pillow over my ears, trying either to block out the sound of my mom’s voice or to suffocate myself, whichever came first.

*“If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it. If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. Stomp stomp.”*

Blessed silence. Was the torture over? I tentatively lifted the pillow from my head. *“If you’re happy and you know it, shout hooray. Hooray!”*

I threw the pillow back over my head and shoved my fingers in my ears as she bellowed, *“If you’re happy and you know it, shout hooray. Hooray! If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it. If you’re happy and you know it, shout hooray. Hooray!”*

Hooray, it was over. I closed my eyes and scooted further under my covers. It was the first Saturday of summer vacation and I wasn’t going to let Mrs. Sunshine ruin one of my many planned marathon

sleep sessions. I'd just gotten comfortable in my cocoon when I heard, "*If you're happy and you know it, do all three. Clap clap. Stomp stomp. Hooray! If you're happy . . .*"

I threw off my blanket. "Mom! I'm trying to sleep!"

Her voice grew closer. ". . . *and you know it, do all three. Clap clap, stomp stomp, hooray!*" I hid back under my covers, but it didn't help. She was growing closer, louder, and more shrill with every syllable. "*If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.*" The covers flew off my bed and Mom leaned over me, booming, "*If you're happy and you know it, do all three. Clap clap, stomp stomp, hooray!*"

I opened my eyes. "Are you finished?"

"Are you happy?"

I scowled at her. "Doesn't my face show it?"

"It's time to get up. What are you trying to do? Sleep your life away?"

"Yes." I threw my blanket back over my head. "Now, leave me alone. I'm on summer vacation."

"So am I, but you don't see me lollygagging my day away." She sat on the edge of my bed. "Besides, I have some great news. You know how you were looking for a summer job?"

From under my blanket, I replied, "And remember how I can't get one because you won't let me get my learner's permit even though I'm already fifteen?"

"You're not getting a permit until you take driver's ed next fall."

I pulled the blanket off my face. "But—"

She held up her hand. "Forget about it—it isn't happening. But before you crawl back under your covers, hear me out. What would you say if I told you I found you a job that pays minimum wage, lets you work with other teenagers, and is close enough you can ride your bike there?"

"I'd say there has to be a catch."

"There's no catch. Last night, Nancy White called while you were

out. You remember Nancy, right?"

I nodded. My parents used to haul my younger brother Chris and me out to Bill and Nancy's farm for some "fresh country air" when we were little. While forcing us to spend the day outside in the broiling sun being eaten alive by horseflies, our parents sat in the air-conditioned farmhouse chatting with the Whites.

The last time I'd been out to the farm was when I was twelve. Nancy had offered to give me some horse-riding lessons, and because *Black Beauty* was one of my favorite books, I jumped at the chance. In no time at all, I was positive Trixie (the horse) and I would be two souls joined as one as we flew through fields of flowers and conquered mountains together. Unfortunately, Trixie had a very different view of our impending relationship. The first time I approached her, she deliberately moved over and stepped on my foot, breaking three of my toes. Right after that, due to my new phobia of being squashed by large farm animals, my parents and Nancy made the mutual decision not to have me take any more horse-riding lessons.

I instinctively massaged my foot while Mom continued, "Nancy's the director of the Little Tyke's Theatre and she called because they need someone to help with their summer program."

"Isn't Little Tyke's the place where kids put on a bunch of plays?"

"That's why I was singing 'If You're Happy and You Know It.' It's Little Tyke's theme song." She started in again. "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. *Clap—*"

I grabbed her hands mid-clap. "I don't know anything about acting. Why would Nancy ask me to work there?"

"During the summer, Little Tyke's takes their plays around to the different parks in the city. Nancy thought you'd be perfect to watch the kids backstage."

"I wouldn't have to dress up as Playhouse Pal, would I?" Playhouse Pal was a clown dressed in a red and white polka dot suit

who introduced the plays. Her big red smile and painted white face totally creeped me out.

“Heavens, no. I’m sure they have someone trained to do that. Nancy said they just needed someone to manage the kids between shows.”

“I don’t know . . .”

“Think about how much fun you’ll have working with the other teenagers on the crew. With Lisa going away for the summer, you’re going to need to make some new friends.”

Lisa, my best friend since the beginning of time, had taken a job as a counselor-in-training at the MENSA Camp she attended last year. She’d already told me she wouldn’t be able to have any contact with me over the summer because she was going to immerse herself in the camp culture. She was planning to do a sociological study comparing and contrasting her personality in the two settings—or something like that. She thought if we communicated in any way, it would taint her findings. Sometimes being best friends with a genius can really suck.

“I have other friends,” I replied defensively. “Besides, how much fun can hanging out with a clown be?”

“Think how much money you can earn working full-time.”

Chewing on a hangnail, I thought about how that money could go toward a car for me next year—assuming I could ever convince my parents to let me drive one. But still, Little Tyke’s Theatre?

“And if you take this job,” Mom added, “you won’t have to hang around the house with Chris all summer.”

I smiled. “You have a deal.”



## Chapter Two

I looked out my bedroom window and saw Tim's dad loading suitcases into the family minivan. I couldn't believe it! My boyfriend for the past 209 days was leaving to spend the whole summer with his grandparents in Maine. And though I thought it was rotten when Lisa told me she was abandoning me for the summer, the pain didn't compare to when Tim told me his parents were shipping him and his brother Kevin off for a summer by the ocean. I mean, Tim and I had spent practically every day together during the previous six months. We studied together, played basketball together, rode bikes together, kissed together, and laughed together. OK, so maybe we fought together most of the time, too. But what was I going to do without him for an entire summer?

When I saw Tim walk out his front door and cut across my yard, I ran out of my room and down the stairs to meet him before he rang the bell. I wanted to say goodbye without my whole family standing around gawking at us. If I wasn't going to be around any testosterone for the next ten weeks, I hoped to get in one last make-out session before I was left high and dry.

I slipped outside just as Tim reached my porch. For a few moments, we simply stared at each other. I think it was the first time since we met, during my meeker days, that neither of us knew what to say.

Finally, Tim spoke. "Well, our flight's in a couple of hours." He shifted his weight from foot to foot. "I guess this is goodbye."