

# Mia Matters

By Emily Nelson

Mia was hanging out with Lily in her room when the doorbell rang. She yelled to her parents, "I'll get it," and ran downstairs. Standing there was Harper, the Mean Girl of the Bridgeview Elementary, the school where they all went. Harper said, "Hey nerd, I've decided to let you do my homework, so, here it is," she said as she dropped the papers and books and folders into Mia's hands. She said "Good luck." In a sarcastic tone, and walked away. Lily came down the stairs to see who it was and saw Mia there with a huge stack of homework. "Harper again?" Lily asked and Mia nodded. This was the third time this week that Harper had come by to drop off her homework for Mia to do, and she barely slept a wink all week. "Why do you let her walk all over you? You can stand up for yourself like I do." "You're on the softball team, the soccer team, and you're super popular, so YOU don't get bullied. Plus, you're WAY more brave than I am." Mia answered. "It isn't about being popular. It's about standing up for what's right. Plus, I'm only popular on the sports teams." Lily looked at her watch, and then said, "I have to go now, but tomorrow we ARE going to stand up to Harper, no if's, ands, or but's." That night, Mia thought about why Harper always picked on her, and nobody else. Then Mia realized it wasn't only her, it was only the people who didn't dress like Harper dressed, talk like Harper talked, and didn't have what Harper had. Then, she had an idea.

\*Next day\*

Lily was waiting at the place where she and Mia always meet to start to walk to school together, but she wasn't there. Lily would soon be late for school, so she decided to walk to school without Mia, which only happened when one got sick. She walked to school and sat down at her desk, worrying about Mia. Mia's parents would've told Lily if Mia was sick, and she hadn't heard anything. Then Harper walked in, 50 minutes late to class, and nobody blinked an eye. She always showed up late, and this was just average. But what surprised Lily was what happened next. Mia walked in, talking to the popular crowd. Before that day, Mia never said a word to the popular crowd. And she was wearing the latest fashions, not whatever was the first thing she pulled out of her closet was, and makeup. Mia never wore makeup. Instead of sitting next to Lily, like she always did, she sat next to Harper and continued talking to the popular group. It was like this till lunch, when Lily finally talked to Mia. "Why are you acting like them?" Lily asked. "Who, are you?" Mia answered. "You-your best friend, remember?" Lily stammered. "Do you know her? If not, byeeee!" Said one of the popular girls. "Yea-" started Lily, but Mia cut her off, "No, never seen her before." After that, Lily felt a hole in her stomach, like she lost her best friend. Because, Lily thought, I might have.

\*After School\*

Mia felt bad about ditching Lily at the place where they usually walk to school, and even worse about pretending to forget her at lunch. So she was surprised when she saw Lily at the front door. "Why have you been acting so weird lately? And give me a straight answer." Demanded Lily. "I found out that the only people who don't get bullied by Harper, are the ones she 'inspires'." "So? That doesn't mean you can just change. And without telling me!" Lily exclaimed. "I-I'm sorry Lils. I just don't want to be bullied anymore. Plus, this Mia is waaay better." "What? WHAT? Do you seriously think THIS Mia is better than the old one?" Lily yelled. "Oh yeah? Give me one good reason." Mia challenged. "I can give you one HUNDRED reasons, but I'll start with the obvious. One, the old Mia is smart, while the new one is not. The old Mia is fun and unique, while the new one is dull and the same as everybody else. Remember the quote 'be yourself because everyone else is already taken'? And finally, the old Mia was nice. This Mia is very rude. Have you changed your mind yet?" "I'm starting to, but what do I do with all these new clothes?" Mia asked, not wanting to give in, but starting to think about it. "I have an idea, but you'll need to completely grow out of New Mia first. This is gonna be SO fun! Do you trust me?" "I-I trust you." "Good. Come on." Lily said as she led Mia out the door.

\*Twenty minutes later, outside\*

"So, I called my uncle and he's coming over now. We just have to wait a few more minutes. While we wait, why don't you change and then bring down all your new clothes and a black marker?" Lily instructed. "Are you gonna tell me what's going on yet?" "No. Wait to find out yourself." She told Mia as Mia ran upstairs. Mia came down the stairs as a truck pulled up. A man came out of the truck and Lily went over to talk to him. As Mia wondered what they were doing, they pulled something out of the truck-was that a wood chipper?- and moved it to the front lawn. "Okay, so there is one more thing we need to do. Write New Mia on all of the clothes." "What?" Asked Mia. "Just do it." So they did. After they finished writing on all the clothes, Lily walked up to the wood chipper with a shirt. She turned it on and threw the shirt into the wood chipper and watched the threads of the shirt come out the other end. "That's what you were planning?" Mia asked. "Yep. It's your turn. Do you want to go?" Lily asked, holding up a pair of ripped jeans. "Yeah." Mia said as she took them out of Lily's hands and threw them through the wood chipper. "Woohoo!" Yelled Mia as she dumped a basket of clothes into the wood chipper and laughed. "Even better, these aren't mine, there Harper's!" After all the clothes were thrown into the chipper, Lily told Mia, "Remember, Old Mia is going to change the world, while New Mia is going to be making it worse. The old Mia matters. The new one doesn't." "Same with you Lils, same with you."