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opening extract from

The Princess Diaries

written by

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published by

Macmillan Children's Books

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Tuesday, September 23

Sometimes it seems like all I ever do is lie.

My mom thinks I'm repressing my feelings about this. I say to her, 'No, Mom, I'm not. I think it's really neat. As long as you're happy, I'm happy.'

Mom says, 'I don't think you're being honest with me.'

Then she hands me this book. She tells me she wants me to write down my feelings in this book, since, she says, I obviously don't feel I can talk about them with her.

She wants me to write down my feelings? OK, I'll write down my feelings:

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'S DOING THIS TO ME!

Like everybody doesn't *already* think I'm a freak. I'm practically the biggest freak in the entire school. I mean, let's face it: I'm five foot nine, flat-chested, and a freshman. How much *more* of a freak could I be?

If people at school find out about this, I'm dead. That's it. Dead.

Oh, God, if you really do exist, please don't let them find out about this.

There are four million people in Manhattan, right? That makes about two million of them guys. So out of TWO MILLION guys, she has to go out with Mr Gianini. She can't go out with some guy I don't know. She can't go out with some guy she met at D'Agostino's or wherever. Oh, no.

She has to go out with my Algebra teacher.

Thanks, Mom. Thanks a whole lot.

Lilly's like, 'Mr Gianini's cool.'

Yeah, right. He's cool if you're Lilly Moscovitz. He's cool if you're good at Algebra, like Lilly Moscovitz. He's not so cool if you're flunking Algebra, like me.

He's not so cool if he makes you stay after school EVERY SINGLE SOLITARY DAY from 2:30 to 3:30 to practise the FOIL method when you could be hanging out with all your friends. He's not so cool if he calls your mother in for a parent/teacher conference to talk about how you're flunking Algebra, then ASKS HER OUT.

And he's not so cool if he's sticking his tongue in your mom's mouth.

Not that I've actually seen them do this. They haven't even been on their first date yet. And I don't think my mom would let a guy put his tongue in her mouth on the first date.

At least, I hope not.

I saw Josh Richter stick his tongue in Lana Weinberger's mouth last week. I had this totally close-up view of it, since they were leaning up against Josh's locker, which is right next to mine. It kind of grossed me out.

Though I can't say I'd mind if Josh Richter kissed *me* like that. The other day Lilly and I were at Bigelow's picking up some alpha hydroxy for Lilly's mom, and I noticed Josh waiting at the check-out counter. He saw me and he actually sort of smiled and said, 'Hey.'

He was buying Drakkar Noir, a men's cologne. I got a free sample of it from the salesgirl. Now I can smell Josh whenever I want to, in the privacy of my own home.

Lilly says Josh's synapses were probably misfiring that day, due to heatstroke or something. She said he probably thought I looked familiar, but couldn't place my face

without the cement block walls of Albert Einstein High behind me. Why else, she asked, would the most popular senior in high school say hey to me, Mia Thermopolis, a lowly freshman?

But I know it wasn't heatstroke. The truth is, when he's away from Lana and all his jock friends, Josh is a totally different person. The kind of person who doesn't care if a girl is flat-chested or wears size eight shoes. The kind of person who can see beyond all that, into the depths of a girl's soul. I know because when I looked into his eyes that day at Bigelow's, I saw the deeply sensitive person inside him, struggling to get out.

Lilly says I have an overactive imagination and a pathological need to invent drama in my life. She says the fact that I'm so upset about my mom and Mr G is a classic example.

'If you're that upset about it, just *tell* your mom,' Lilly says. '*Tell* her you don't want her going out with him. I don't understand you, Mia. You're always going around, lying about how you feel. Why don't you just assert yourself for a change? Your feelings have worth, you know.'

Oh, right. Like I'm going to bum my mom out like that. She's so totally happy about this date, it's enough to make me want to throw up. She goes around *cooking* all the time. I'm not even kidding. She made pasta for the first time last night in, like, months. I had already opened the Suzie's Chinese take-out menu, and she says, 'Oh, no cold sesame noodles tonight, honey. I made pasta.'

Pasta! My mom made *pasta*!

She even observed my rights as a vegetarian and didn't put any meatballs in the sauce.

I don't understand any of this.

Things To Do:

1. Buy cat litter.
2. Finish FOIL worksheet for Mr G.
3. Stop telling Lilly everything.
4. Go to Pearl Paint: get soft lead pencils, spray mount, canvas stretchers (for Mom).
5. World Civ. report on Iceland (5 pages, double space).
6. Stop thinking so much about Josh Richter.
7. Drop off laundry.
8. October rent (make sure Mom has deposited Dad's cheque!!!).
9. Be more assertive.
10. Measure chest.

Thursday, September 25

In Algebra today all I could think about was how Mr Gianini might put his tongue in my mom's mouth tomorrow night during their date. I just sat there, staring at him. He asked me a really easy question – I swear, he saves all the easy ones for me, like he doesn't want me to feel left out, or something – and I totally didn't even hear it. I was like, 'What?'

Then Lana Weinberger made that sound she always makes and leaned over to me so that all her blonde hair swished onto my desk. I got hit by this giant wave of perfume, and then Lana hissed in this really mean voice:

'FREAK.'

Only she said it like it had more than one syllable. Like it was spelled FUR-REEK.

How come nice people like Princess Diana get killed in car wrecks, but mean people like Lana never do? I don't understand what Josh Richter sees in her. I mean, yeah, she's pretty. But she's so *mean*. Doesn't he *notice*?

Maybe Lana is nice to Josh, though. *I'd* sure be nice to Josh. He is totally the best-looking boy in Albert Einstein High School. A lot of the boys look totally geeky in our school's uniform, which for boys is grey trousers, white shirt, and black sweater, long-sleeved or vest. Not Josh, though. He looks like a model in his uniform. I am not kidding.

Anyway. Today I noticed that Mr Gianini's nostrils stick out A LOT. Why would you want to go out with a guy whose nostrils stick out so much? I asked Lilly this at lunch and she said, 'I've never noticed his nostrils before. Are you gonna eat that dumpling?'

Lilly says I need to stop obsessing. She says I'm taking my anxiety over the fact that this is only our first month in high school and I already have an F in something, and

transferring it to anxiety about Mr Gianini and my mom. She says this is called displacement.

It sort of sucks when your best friend's parents are psychoanalysts.

Today after school the Drs Moscovitz were totally trying to analyse me. I mean, Lilly and I were just sitting there playing Boggle. And every five minutes it was like, 'Girls, do you want some Snapple? Girls, there's a very interesting squid documentary on the Discovery channel. And by the way, Mia, how do you feel about your mother starting to date your Algebra teacher?'

I said, 'I feel fine about it.'

Why can't I be more assertive?

But what if Lilly's parents run into my mom at Jefferson Market, or something? If I told them the truth, they'd *definitely* tell her. I don't want my mom to know how weird I feel about this, not when she's so happy about it.

The worst part was that Lilly's older brother Michael overheard the whole thing. He immediately started laughing his head off, even though I don't see anything funny about it.

He went, '*Your* mom is dating Frank Gianini? Ha! Ha! Ha!'

So great. Now Lilly's brother Michael knows.

So then I had to start begging him not to tell anybody. He's in 5th period Gifted and Talented class with me and Lilly, which is the biggest joke of a class, because Mrs Hill, who's in charge of the G & T programme at Albert Einstein's, doesn't care what we do, as long as we don't make too much noise. She hates it when she has to come out of the teachers' lounge, which is right across the hall from the G & T room, to yell at us.

Anyway, Michael is supposed to use 5th period to work on his online webzine, *Crackhead.* I'm supposed to use it for catching up on my Algebra homework.

But anyway, Mrs Hill never checks to see what we're doing in G & T, which is probably good, since mostly what we're all doing is figuring out ways to lock the new Russian kid, who's supposedly this musical genius, in the supply closet, so we don't have to listen to any more Stravinsky on his stupid violin.

But don't think that just because Michael and I are united in our front against Boris Pelkowski and his violin that he'd keep quiet about my mom and Mr G.

What Michael kept saying was, 'What'll you do for me, huh, Thermopolis? What'll you do for me?'

But there's nothing I can do for Michael Moscovitz. I can't offer to do his homework, or anything. Michael is a senior (just like Josh Richter). Michael has gotten all straight As his entire life (just like Josh Richter). Michael will probably go to Yale or Harvard next year (just like Josh Richter).

What could *I* do for someone like that?

Not that Michael's perfect, or anything. Unlike Josh Richter, Michael is not on the crew team. Michael isn't even on the debate team. Michael does not believe in organized sports, or organized religion, or organized anything, for that matter. Instead, Michael spends almost all of his time in his room. I once asked Lilly what he does in there, and she said she and her parents employ a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy with Michael: They won't ask if he won't tell.

I bet he's in there making a bomb. Maybe he'll blow up Albert Einstein High School as a senior prank.

Occasionally Michael comes out of his room and makes sarcastic comments. Sometimes when he does this he is not wearing a shirt. Even though he does not believe in organized sports, I have noticed that Michael has a really nice chest. His stomach muscles are extremely well-defined.

I have never mentioned this to Lilly.

Anyway, I guess Michael got tired of me offering to do stuff like walk his sheltie, Pavlov, and take his mom's empty Tab cans back to Gristedes for the deposit money, which is his weekly chore. Because in the end, Michael just said, in this disgusted voice, 'Forget it, OK, Thermopolis?' and went back into his room.

I asked Lilly why he was so mad, and she said because he'd been sexually harassing me, but I didn't notice.

How embarrassing! Supposing Josh Richter starts sexually harassing me some day (I wish) and I don't notice? God, I'm so stupid sometimes.

Anyway, Lilly said not to worry about Michael telling his friends at school about my mom and Mr G, since Michael has no friends. Then Lilly wanted to know why I cared about Mr Gianini's nostrils sticking out so much, since I'm not the one who has to look at them, my mom is.

And I said, Excuse me, I have to look at them from 9:55 to 10:55 and from 2:30 to 3:30 EVERY SINGLE DAY, except Saturdays and Sundays and national holidays and the summer. If I don't flunk, that is, and have to go to summer school.

And if they get married, then I'll have to look at them EVERY SINGLE DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, MAJOR HOLIDAYS INCLUDED.

Define set: collection of objects element or member; belongs to a set

A = (Gilligan, Skipper, Mary Ann)
rule specifies each element

A = (x:x is one of the castaways on Gilligan's Island)

Friday, September 26

Lilly Moscovitz's List of Hottest Guys

(compiled during World Civ., with commentary by Mia Thermopolis)

1. *Josh Richter* (agree – six feet of unadulterated hotness. Blond hair, often falling into his clear blue eyes, and that sweet, sleepy smile. Only drawback: he has the bad taste to date Lana Weinberger.)
2. *Boris Pelkowski* (strongly disagree. Just because he played his stupid violin at Carnegie Hall when he was twelve does not make him hot. Plus he tucks his school sweater into his trousers, instead of wearing it out, like a normal person.)
3. *Pierce Brosnan, best James Bond ever* (disagree – I liked Timothy Dalton better.)
4. *Daniel Day Lewis in* Last of the Mohicans (agree – Stay alive, no matter what occurs.)
5. *Prince William of England* (duh)
6. *Leonardo in* Titanic (As if! That is so 1998.)
7. *Mr Wheeton, the crew coach* (hot, but taken. Seen opening the door to the teachers' lounge for Mademoiselle Klein.)
8. *That guy in that jeans ad on that giant billboard in Times Square* (totally agree. Who IS that guy? They should give him his own TV series.)
9. *Dr Quinn, Medicine Woman's boyfriend* (whatever happened to him? He was hot!)
10. *Joshua Bell, the violinist* (totally agree. It would be so cool to date a musician – just not Boris Pelkowski.)

Later on Friday

I was measuring my chest and totally not thinking about the fact that my mom was out with my Algebra teacher when my dad called. I don't know why, but I lied and told him Mom was at her studio. Which is so weird, because obviously, Dad knows Mom dates. But for some reason, I just couldn't tell him about Mr Gianini.

This afternoon during my mandatory review session with Mr Gianini I was sitting there practising the FOIL method (first, outside, inside, last; first, outside, inside, last – Oh my God, when am I ever going to have to actually use the FOIL method in real life? WHEN???) and all of a sudden Mr Gianini said, 'Mia, I hope you don't feel, well, uncomfortable about my seeing your mother socially.'

Only for some reason for a second I thought he said SEXUALLY, not socially. And then I could feel my face getting totally hot. I mean like BURNING. And I said, 'Oh, no, Mr Gianini, it doesn't bother me at all.'

And Mr Gianini said, 'Because if it bothers you, we can talk about it.'

I guess he must have figured out I was lying, since my face was so red.

But all I said was, 'Really, it doesn't bother me. I mean, it bothers me a LITTLE, but really, I'm fine with it. I mean, it's just a date, right? Why get upset about one measly date?'

That was when Mr Gianini said, 'Well, Mia, I don't know if it's going to be one measly date. I really like your mother.'

And then, I don't even know how, but all of a sudden I heard myself saying, 'Well, you better. Because if you do anything to make her cry, I'll kick your butt.'

Oh my God! I can't even believe I said the word butt to a teacher! My face got even REDDER after that, which I

wouldn't have thought possible. Why is it that the only time I can tell the truth is when it's guaranteed to get me into trouble?

But I guess I *am* feeling sort of weird about the whole thing. Maybe Lilly's parents were right.

Mr Gianini, though, was totally cool. He smiled in this funny way and said, 'I have no intention of making your mother cry, but if I ever do, you have my permission to kick my butt.'

So that was OK, sort of.

Anyway, Dad sounded really weird on the phone. But then again, he always does. Transatlantic phone calls suck because I can hear the ocean swishing around in the background and it makes me all nervous, like the fish are listening, or something. Plus Dad didn't even want to talk to me. He wanted to talk to Mom. I suppose somebody died, and he wants Mom to break it to me gently.

Maybe it was Grandmere. Hmmm . . .

My breasts have grown exactly *none* since last summer. Mom was totally wrong. I did *not* have a growth spurt when I turned fourteen, like she did. I will probably *never* have a growth spurt, at least not on my chest. I only have growth spurts UP, not OUT. I am now the tallest girl in my class.

Now if anybody asks me to the Cultural Diversity Dance next month (yeah, right) I won't be able to wear a strapless dress, because there isn't anything on my chest to hold it up.

Saturday, September 27

I was asleep when my mom got home from her date last night (I stayed up as late as I could, because I wanted to know what happened, but I guess all that measuring wore me out), so I didn't get to ask her how it went until this morning when I went out into the kitchen to feed Fat Louie. Mom was up already, which was weird, because usually she sleeps later than me, and *I'm* a teenager, *I'm* supposed to be the one sleeping all the time.

But Mom's been depressed ever since her last boyfriend turned out to be a Republican.

Anyway, she was in there, humming in a happy way and making pancakes. I nearly died of shock to see her actually cooking something so early in the morning, let alone something vegetarian.

Of course she had a fabulous time. They went to dinner at Monte's (not too shabby, Mr G!) and then walked around the West Village and went to some bar and sat outside in the back garden until nearly two in the morning, just talking. I kind of tried to find out if there'd been any kissing, particularly of the tongue-in-mouth variety, but my mom just smiled and looked all embarrassed.

OK. Gross.

They're going out again this week.

I guess I don't mind, if it makes her this happy.

Today Lilly is shooting a spoof of the movie *The Blair Witch Project* for her TV show, *Lilly Tells It Like It Is. The Blair Witch Project* is about some kids who go out into the woods to find a witch, and end up disappearing. All that's found of them is film footage and some piles of sticks. Only instead of *The Blair Witch Project*, Lilly's version is called *The Green Witch Project.* Lilly intends to take a hand-held camera down to

Washington Square Park and film the tourists who come up to us and ask if we know how to get to Green Witch Village (it's actually Greenwich Village – you're not supposed to pronounce the *w* in Greenwich. But people from out of town always say it wrong).

Anyway, as tourists come up and ask us which way to Green Witch Village, we are supposed to start screaming and run away in terror. All that will be left of us by the end, Lilly says, is a little pile of Metrocards. Lilly says after the show is aired, no one will ever think of Metrocards the same way.

I said it was too bad we don't have a real witch. I thought we could get Lana Weinberger to play her, but Lilly said that would be typecasting. Plus then we'd have to put up with Lana all day, and nobody would want that. Like she'd even show up, considering how she thinks we're the most unpopular girls in the whole school. She probably wouldn't want to tarnish her reputation by being seen with us.

Then again, she's so vain, she'd probably jump at the chance to be on TV, even if it *is* only a public access channel.

After filming was over for the day, we saw the Blind Guy crossing Bleecker. He had a new victim, this totally innocent German tourist who had no idea that the nice blind man she was helping to cross the street was going to feel her up as soon as they got to the other side, then pretend like he hadn't done it on purpose.

Just my luck, the only guy who's ever felt me up (not that there's anything to feel) was BLIND.

Lilly says she's going to report the Blind Guy to the 6th Precinct. Like they would care. They've got more important things to worry about. Like catching murderers.

Things To Do:

1. Get cat litter.
2. Make sure Mom sent out rent cheque.
3. Stop lying.
4. Proposal for English paper.
5. Pick up laundry.
6. Stop thinking about Josh Richter.