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Opening extract from

Sweetness and Lies

Written by

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For Ellie Gilmore –
happy reading!

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Chapter 1
Me and Mia

It is 3.35pm.

In the last five minutes, *this* happened:

1. The school bell rang.
2. My friend Mia yelled, “Run!”
3. We ran out of class.
4. Our teacher Miss West yelled, “Don’t run!”

5. We ignored her.

6. The number 39 bus pulled up by the school gate.

7. Mia grabbed my arm and we jumped on first.

8. All the people who had been waiting in line grumbled and tutted at us.

9. I felt bad but Mia just grinned and shouted, "Sorry! It's an emergency!" at them all.

Mia cracks me up.

She is *so* funny.

And cheeky.

It's now 3.36pm and we flop down on the very back seat of the top deck of the bus.

We always sit up here. We love to look out the window and chat about people we see.



“Hey, Tilly!” Mia says, and sticks her elbow into me. “Check it out!”

A man has come up the stairs of the bus.

Does she mean check *him* out?

“He thinks he is *well* cool,” Mia hisses.

The man has on a T-shirt, jeans and trainers.

He has sunglasses on the top of his shaved head.

His clothes look like they cost a lot of money.

I bet he *does* think he’s cool.

“His bald head is like a big potato!” Mia blurts out.

Uh-oh.

She said that a bit too loud. And it didn’t help that I burst into giggles.

The man frowns at us before he sits down.

“Well, it’s true!” says Mia, with a grin.

“Shhhh!” I whisper, but I still have the giggles.

Other people on the bus are giving us the evil eye too, but Mia just gives them her best sweet smile.

What *is* she like?

Well, she’s not like any other friend I’ve ever had.

Zoe, Grace and Helena were the friends I had before. They were nice, but not crazy, like Mia is.

But they're not my friends any more. Not since I got a place at Beech Cliff school.

When I told them I was going to Beech Cliff, they said, "Hmm, that's posh, isn't it?"

What they meant was "You think you're too good for us now, don't you?"

But it wasn't *my* fault I had to go there.

Hey, my parents are snobs, OK? They were happy for me to go to the local primary school at the end of our road.

But when it came to secondary school, they made me sit an exam to get into Beech Cliff.

I was sorry I passed that exam. Everyone else in my class went on to the school ten minutes' stroll away. But because I passed, I have to take two long bus journeys every day, all by myself.

Well, I was all by myself for the first two days, till I got to know Mia. I didn't spot her at first, among all the new faces.

Then I saw her in Mrs West's class, pulling a face behind Mrs West's back. I burst into giggles, and had to cover up the noise with a pretend sneeze.

I've been giggling ever since.

"Thanks!" I say now to Mia.

"What for?" she asks. "Getting you into trouble with the man who looks like a potato?"

I give her a joke slap on the arm.

"For making my first week at Beech Cliff so much fun, you idiot!" I tell her.

Me and Mia, we're BFFA*...

* BFFA = Best Friends Forever – Already!