

Emma & Emmets

PLAYGROUND
MATCHMAKER

Julia
DeVillers



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CHAPTER 6

“Let’s see if your brains are stale and slow after summer break,” Mr. Webber said. “It’s time for Webber’s Winners! Each day I’ll ask a trivia question relating to an upcoming lesson. Whoever answers correctly first will be Webber’s Winner.”

Emma sat up straight. Her brain was thinking now. Emma loved a good challenge, and she *really* loved winning one.

“What do you win?” someone asked.

“The winner gets to choose his or her class job for the day,” Mr. Webber announced, and everyone cheered.

Perfect. Emma would choose to be line leader. She loved being the first in line and having the rest of the class follow her to lunch, recess, and specials. It would be the perfect plan to ensure she got to recess early enough to save the top of the jungle gym. She half-raised her hand in anticipation of answering.

Mr. Webber started. “And the question is: In poetry, how many lines are in a qu—”

“Four!” a voice called out. Everyone swiveled their heads to look at Daniel.

“That’s correct,” Mr. Webber said. “A quatrain is a poem that has four lines.”

“But you didn’t finish the question,” Emma protested. “We didn’t even get to raise our hands. That’s not fair.”

“I got the answer right,” Daniel said. “I’m new. I didn’t know you had to raise your hand. I shouldn’t be penalized.”

Maybe not, but he should be penalized for being super annoying, Emma thought.

“Next time, I’d appreciate if you raise your hand before answering. But today, I won’t penalize you for not realizing this,” Mr. Webber said. “Daniel is today’s Webber’s Winner.”

Erg.

“I’d like to be line leader,” Daniel said.

“Wow, you’re quick *and* prepared. Did you have line leader at your old school?” Mr. Webber asked.

“Actually, I don’t even know what it is,” Daniel said. “Someone told me about it this morning, so I figured it would be cool.”

Hey! Emma had talked about line leader to him. That someone was *her*. She’d ruined her own chance!

“A man who knows what he wants. Daniel will be our first line leader,” Mr. Webber announced.

“Yessss,” Daniel said, pumping his fist. Everyone laughed—even Mr. Webber. Everyone except Emma.

Emma knew what she wanted, too! And Daniel had just gotten all of it: the right answer, line leader—and everyone’s attention. Emma wished she was in Mrs. Tingley’s class with Claire instead of here with the world’s most annoying boy.

“Let’s take a minute to get to know you better,” Mr. Webber said. “Tell us a little bit about yourself.”

Emma perked up. This would be a great time to share her new matchmaker talent. When it was her turn, she could tell the class that EmMatchmaking would be open for business at recess. Annie might jump in and share how amazing Emma was.

“So, does anyone have any questions for Daniel?” Mr. Webber said.

Oh. It was “let’s get to know about *Daniel*.” Emma felt squelched.

“Do you play lacrosse?” someone asked.

“No,” Daniel said. “I like wrestling and longboarding.”

“Where did you move from?” someone asked him.

“California,” Daniel said. Emma had never met anyone who had lived in California before. It was all the way on the other side of the country.

“Did you ever meet any stars?” Rosemeen asked.

“Sure.” He shrugged. “All the time.”

All the time? Now hands were shooting up all over the place. Emma had never met a celebrity before. Her dad knew one of the weather guys on their local news from his “good old college days,” but he’d never even taken Emma to meet him.

Everyone was asking Daniel about celebrities. He seemed so smug about it. Like *he* was the celebrity. Emma would show zero interest in him, she decided. She leaned into her desk and started organizing her school supplies. Her pencils to the left, her green and yellow highlighters next to them, her Jake LaDrake folders in the middle . . .

Jake LaDrake. She looked up at Daniel. There was no way he had ever met Jake LaDrake, right? Right?

Emma tried to hold it in. But she burst.

“Did you ever meet Jake LaDrake?” Emma blurted out.

“Jake LaDrake?” Daniel said casually. “Yeah, I saw him at a restaurant once.”

Emma cracked. There was no way Emma could fake zero interest anymore. He had seen LaDrake in real life.

“What was Jake eating?” Emma burst out. “Was it before or after his haircut? Was he wearing green, his favorite color? Did he—”

Mr. Webber cut her off. “One question at a time. And the goal is to find out more about our new student, not celebrities. Let’s ask Daniel what *his* favorite color is.”

“My favorite color is green, too.” Daniel said. “*PUKE* green.”

Wait a minute. Was he bringing up puke because of Emma? She looked over and he grinned. Yes, that puke reference was for her. Emma scowled. She realized she was biting her nails. Yes, Daniel Dunne was

stressing her out and now she had bitten off one of the pink polka dots on her manicure.

Emma switched to biting her pen instead. She chewed harder and harder as Daniel started telling everyone about his favorite things and everyone listened to him.

Rosemeen leaned over. “Emma,” she whispered. “Your pen—”

“Bad habit, I know,” Emma whispered back.

“Thank you, Daniel,” Mr. Webber was saying. “Now let’s assign the other classroom jobs. Pencil sharpener cleaner will be . . .”

When Emma found out she was going to be door holder opener, she chewed on her pen even harder. Door holder opener was the worst job of all; it meant she would hold the door for everyone and be the *last* one in line.

When Mr. Webber directed the class to write a quatrain, Emma kept chewing on her pen. She wrote:

If *you’re new in school*
You should follow our rules
And not assume that
You’re so cool.

“Emma,” Rosemeen whispered again. “Pssst.”

Emma quickly crossed out what she’d written so Rosemeen wouldn’t see it. Rosemeen was turning out to be slightly annoying also. Hey! Rosemeen

and Daniel were both annoying, so maybe that meant they would be a perfect match!

Emma took out a piece of paper and wrote on the top:

* EMPM *
new secret code for
EmMatchmaker's perfect matches
Rosemeen + Daniel = PM?

"Pssst, Emma." Rosemeen poked her with her pencil. Emma ignored her, wishing that Rosemeen could magically morph into Claire.

"Do we have any volunteers to read their quatrains to the class?" Mr. Webber asked. Emma waited for Daniel to stand up and read his award-winning poem about meeting celebrities. Instead, Mr. Webber called on Henry.

*"I met a girl at summer camp
who leaptfrogged into my heart.
And now that we're together
we don't want to be apart."*

Henry looked at Annie and she beamed back at him.

"Awwww," cooed half the class.

"Gross!" groaned the other half.

"Oh, I'm swooning!" Daniel pretended to faint and everyone laughed. Except Emma, of course.

“Uh . . . that was a surprisingly romantic quatrain,” Mr. Webber said. “Who’s next? Emma?”

Uh-oh. Emma looked down at her paper. All she’d written was her EMPM and the poem about the annoying—*ahem*—*anonymous* person who thought he was so cool. But Emma was saved from the embarrassment of saying she hadn’t written a poem she could read aloud by a sudden burst of laughter. Emma looked around to see what was so funny. But it was looking suspiciously like everyone was laughing at her.

“Ha, she’s green!” somebody said.

Rosemeen pulled a purple Bedazzled cell phone out of her bag and held the screen up to Emma’s face. Emma had green ink all over her mouth and nose! Her Jake LaDrake pen had leaked when she was chewing on it!

Now everyone was seriously cracking up. Emma was sure her face wasn’t only green now, but also red. ERG!

“Take the bathroom pass and go wash up,” Mr. Webber said.

“I *tried* to tell you,” Rosemeen whispered to her, giggling.

As Emma left the classroom, she was sure she could hear Daniel laughing the loudest. Well, ha. He and Rosemeen could laugh all they wanted. They deserved each other. No, actually they wouldn’t deserve each other, Emma thought as she walked down the

hallway to the girls' room. They were both so annoying, they would deserve nobody. Emma would cross them both off her EMPM list and banish them to loneliness for all of fourth grade.

Rosemeen + Daniel = Nothing

Emma stomped into the girls' bathroom and caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror. She had a wide green streak running from her mouth up to her nose and cheek. Hey, her teeth were green! Heh. She looked like a zombie frog. Even Emma had to crack up a little bit.

Emma washed off all the green ink except a tiny splotch on her cheek. She used her fingernail to make it into the shape of a heart. Well, Emma wanted to get noticed today, right? This wasn't exactly her plan, but she'd work it.



When people asked her why it was there, she would tell them it was her new logo!

Emma smiled into the mirror. Sure, people might be talking about her green pen-splasion but look what she could turn it into—promotion! She'd remind everyone about Henry's romantic poem and her matchmaking skills and nobody would be laughing then.

Emma sadly would have to toss away her Jake LaDrake green pen, but she felt that maybe he had

a little to do with this new genius plan. It was like Jake was there, helping with her new matchmaking. If Jake were there, he'd say: "Emma, you have a gift, a talent, a superpower for making perfect matches. Like you and me."

Ahhhh.

If Jake were there, he'd take her hand and . . .

Actually, if Jake were really there it would be really embarrassing, because they'd be in a GIRLS' bathroom. Eeps! Emma had had enough EMbarrassing moments for today. She hurried out of the girls' room and back to class.

