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The Magnificent Mulligans[®]



**DOLPHINS
IN DANGER**

Bill Myers

The Magnificent
Mulligans™

BOOK FIVE

DOLPHINS IN DANGER

Bill Myers

Illustrations by Greg Hardin

FOCUS
ON THE FAMILY®

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Dolphins in Danger

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*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice.*

PROVERBS 12:15

For Robin:

No one could ask for a better sister.

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Chapter 1

Morning Mayhem

ALL US MULLIGANS take turns fixing meals for a day. Because it was Mom's day to cook breakfast, everyone showed up (less chance of getting food poisoning). Even Nick was there—after his usual two and a half hours of fixing his hair in the bathroom.

And, since we're talking food, I sat at the table too. Well, actually it was under the table since Mom has a rule against animals eating *at* the table. AS IF I'M AN ANIMAL! (Sorry for shouting.) But no matter how many times I point out that chimps are different, I lose. (The fact that my arguments sound a lot like “*OO-oo, AH-ah, EE-ee*” probably doesn't help either.)

And it's still a mystery why I never get a day to cook! I have this great recipe for smashed bananas smeared on open-faced bananas, smothered in boiled banana sauce and topped with burnt banana sprinkles. And for dessert, there's Dad's chewed-up television remote, although I have to find out where he's hidden it this time.

Meanwhile, I have to be content sitting under the table, reaching up and secretly feeling around for any goodies.

"So," Dad asked Janelle as everyone ate, "how's your tennis coming along?"

Janelle groaned, "I'm horrible."

"I don't believe that," he said. "They let you join the team midseason."

"Because I own a tennis racket," she sighed.

"And nice tennis shoes," Mom encouraged. "Don't forget the tennis shoes."

Jessica, Janelle's twin sister, weighed in. "Just keep practicing, Sis."

"Easy for you to say," Janelle said. "You're good at all sports."

"Just keep practicing," Jessica repeated.

"But I'm so bad I keep tripping over my shadow."

"Just keep—" Jessica stopped, then smiled weakly. "I hear the chess club needs members."

The good news was, everyone was so busy talking and eating they didn't notice a very attractive (though somewhat hairy) hand reaching up to the table searching for food. Of course I couldn't see anything, which explains the

SQUISH-ing

of butter into my palm. I pulled it back under the table and gave it a big

slurp!

Hmm, not bad, but not as good as the sausage and eggs I knew were still up there.

“What about you, Nick?” Dad asked. “How are those flight lessons coming?”

“Fantastic,” he said. “I just keep getting gooder and gooder.” Besides bad grammar, Nick has a problem with humility. (Actually, he has *no* humility, so I guess he doesn’t have a problem with it.)

“I still can’t believe they’re letting you fly,” Hector said.

Nick answered, “At sixteen, it’s totally legal. Just like getting a driver’s license.”

“But your driving is terrible,” Stephanie said.

“Well, there are fewer cars to hit up in the air,” Lisa said.

“Laugh all you want,” Nick said. “But me and Dad figure it’s going to help in running the park.”

“As long as you stay up nice and high,” Hector said.

Janelle added, “And we teach the giraffes how to duck.”

As the teasing continued, my hand was back on the table searching . . . until I knocked something over and quickly grabbed it.

“No, Winona,” Stephanie whispered. “Don’t.”

Although she’s only eleven years old, Stephanie’s always

looking out for me. They say she has something called autism. I don't know about that, but I do know that of all the Mulligans, she's my favorite. And she loves hanging out with me, which means she has super good taste.

But despite her warning, I was too hungry to pay attention. I pulled the container off the table and put it underneath. It was hard to see what it was in the dark, but the rest of the family was eating it, so it must be good. I unscrewed the cap, tilted back my head, and poured it in.

It only took a moment before

mmmmrrrrruphhhh!

which is the sort of scream you scream when you're trying to cover your mouth . . . which is what you do when you dump the entire contents of a pepper shaker into that mouth.

Mom turned to Stephanie. "I'm sorry, sweetheart, did you say something?"

"It wasn't me," Stephanie answered.

"Hmm . . ." Mom said. She wasn't the suspicious type, but with eight kids, 139 animals, and one chimpanzee, you can't be too careful.

Stephanie reached for a glass of water. When the coast was clear, she slipped it to me under the table. I grabbed it and gulped it down to put out the fire in my mouth.

All this as Dad kept talking. "And today is Julie's big day."

"That's right," Hector said as he rumbled the hair of our

Morning Mayhem

favorite six-year-old munchkin. “Today, you get your own animals to care for.”

“Just like us older and wiser kids,” Nick said.

Jessica looked at Nick and frowned. “Well, older anyway,” she said.

“The flamingos are so beautiful,” Julie said. “I can hardly wait.”

“They’re a big responsibility,” Lisa said. “They’re going to rely entirely on you.”

Little Julie grinned. “I know.”

As they spoke I was under the table giving a

AH . . . AH

which is just the sound you make trying not to sneeze from all the pepper that went up your nose.

“Stephie?” Mom asked.

“Still not me,” Stephie said.

AHHH . . .

“Well, it’s somebody,” Mom said. She started to look under the table, but I saved her the trouble with an earth-shaking

AHHHHH-CHOO!

“WINONA!” everybody cried.

Which is just the thing you cry when the chimpanzee

under your table sneezes so hard, she jumps up and slams into the bottom of the table, causing dishes and glasses of milk to

crash
glug, glug, glug

onto the table. Along with a

roll . . . roll . . . roll . . .

handful of sausages.

“WINONA!” everyone yelled.

Which is just the thing you yell when your chimp grabs a few of those sausages and races for the door.





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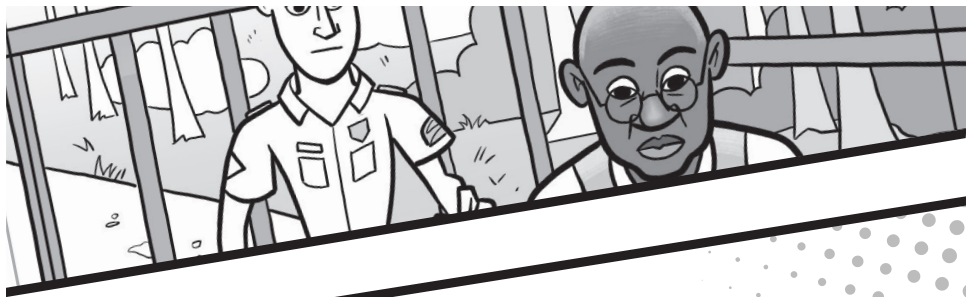
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