



# Baking with Love

FEATURING **PAOLA & EMERY™**

BY SUSAN HUGHES

ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE





our  
generation®

This is Paola & Emery's story.







PAOLA & EMERY™

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BY

SUSAN HUGHES

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*An Our Generation® book*

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ISBN: 979-8-2184521-3-1

Printed in China



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**EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!**

*Big words, wacky words, powerful words, funny words...  
what do they all mean? They are marked with this symbol.  
Look them up in the Glossary at the end of this book.*





# Chapter One

## BESTIES FOREVER!

“Welcome to the final day of our summer baking camp!” Chef Andre exclaimed. “And now for the surprise!”

Emery and Paola grinned at each other—happy about today’s surprise, but sorry that camp was ending.

All summer, the two nine-year-olds had enjoyed making up recipes and taking risks with new ingredients. Baking was a fun way to be creative! Plus, they’d gotten to spend every day together for a whole month.

Not that this was anything unusual. Their families lived next door to each other. They’d been inseparable\* since kindergarten and were at each other’s houses so often that their parents now liked to say, ‘You can’t have one without the other!’



But this summer had been special because the girls had gotten to spend so much time baking—which was their favorite thing to do! Over the years, they’d gone from pretend-baking with pretend food and even a pretend oven, to actually helping their grandparents and mothers in the kitchen. Paola’s grandmother loved teaching them Mexican-inspired dishes, and Emery’s grandfather enjoyed showing them his Italian traditional favorites.

So, yes, they were sorry that baking camp was almost over, *but* they were super excited to find out what today’s surprise was!

“On the first day of camp, your parents all gave permission for this special event,” Chef Andre revealed. “A TV crew is here to film your final day of camp! They are putting together a news segment on day camps, and they may include some of what they film here today.”

“Amazing! We’re going to be on TV, Emery!” Paola said. “This could be great for my acting career!” She did a happy twirl.

Emery smiled. She knew her best friend was



always trying to convince her parents to let her take acting lessons. She loved being the center of attention. But Emery...well, she was the opposite. She felt more comfortable being in the background. The idea of being filmed made her a little nervous.

Suddenly, Paola took her hands and looked into her eyes. “It’ll be fine,” she said reassuringly. “We’ll be doing this together.”

And just like that, Emery did feel better. When she was with her best friend, things always worked out!

“So, campers, we’re going to carry on with our final day of baking while the crew films,” said Chef Andre. “They want us to pretend they aren’t here, so they can show a typical day at baking camp.”

“That’s a little disappointing,” said Paola to Emery, but Emery was relieved—although she was sure she wouldn’t be able to forget she was being filmed.

So yes, as the filming began, Emery was a little self-conscious\*, and so were some of the



other campers. They hardly said anything and kept looking over at the cameras. But at least Emery got to be Paola's partner, like she'd been all month. It took the attention away from her, that was for sure.

Because Paola was the opposite of self-conscious! She was even more outgoing\* than usual! As the day went on, all the kids were having fun baking, and as they got more and more absorbed in their work, most of them forgot about the film crew. Not Paola, who continued to be super-exuberant\*, but Emery did. It was the final day, and she was determined to make the most of it!

Which is why she didn't hold back when her friend started to get bossy. Paola hadn't been like this during all the weeks of baking camp, but all day now...

"You're not the boss, Paola! And I'm not your sous-chef\*!" Emery finally said late in the afternoon, when camp was almost done. "We're baking *partners!*"



“I know, Emery,” Paola said, looking surprised. “But I’m being dramatic on purpose. The film crew...”

“It’s not fun if you keep ordering me around,” Emery continued.

“Emery, I don’t think I’m—” Paola said.

Then, while they were both flustered\*—they had never argued before!—the film crew came over to them.

“Hello, Emery and Paola. You’re baking partners? Is it okay if we interview you two?” the reporter asked, holding a microphone out to them. “Can you tell me why you decided to come to baking camp, what you like about baking, and whether you like creating your own recipes?”

The girls were such close friends that they could often communicate with a single glance, without even speaking. So, they looked at each other now, and even though they had just been unhappy with each other, they understood what each other was thinking.

Which is why Paola began chatting away,







looking right into the camera, answering the reporter's questions.

"I love baking and I want to have my own bakery one day," she announced. "I want to do some of the baking, but I think it would be fun to work behind the counter, too, and see what the customers like most. I'd have fun talking with them and getting to know them."

Paola seemed to light up as she talked. She looked so natural and comfortable.

Then she looked at Emery. "My best friend Emery loves baking, too," she said to the reporter. "We really love baking together—as equal partners!"

Emery grinned.

"Wonderful! Tell me about yourself and why you're at this camp," the reporter said to Emery.

To her surprise, Emery found it easy to answer. "I love baking, and I would love to work in a bakery one day!" she said. "I'd like to be the one who comes in early, before the customers arrive, to make all the bread and other special



treats, and add all the fun details to the cakes and cookies.”

The reporter thanked them, and the girls smiled at each other. They knew they had lots of things in common, but also some differences—and this was one of the things that made their friendship so special.



# Chapter Two

## SPARKLES AND ZEST

After a fun long weekend, Emery and Paola got up early. Today was the first day of school! They'd planned what they would wear today, since they loved clothes and fashion. To Paola, color was important, in baking, and in fashion! She liked bold colors best—and her favorite was hot pink. So, she was wearing her favorite hot pink shirt this morning.

To Emery, it was the little details that mattered. She added sparkly touches when decorating her baking—and when preparing her outfits. So, this morning, she wove soft pink, sparkly ribbons into her hair and wore her soft pink T-shirt.

They gulped down their breakfasts and hurried outside, pulling their mothers along with





them. Paola's mom had a corporate\* job and worked long hours at her mid-town office. Emery's mom, a stay-at-home mom, was the head of the school council\*, and devoted many hours to volunteering at the kids' schools and at community events. But the two good friends also made time for each other and, especially, their children! In the mornings, they always walked their daughters to school, though after school, they let them walk home with their older brothers.

This year, for the first time ever, the girls weren't going to be in the same class, which was too bad. But Paola was looking on the bright side. She'd probably know lots of kids from her class last year, and she hoped there would be many new kids, too. She loved meeting new people and making new friends.

Emery, however, felt a little nervous. She would know some kids from her class last year, of course, but she'd never spent much time with them without Paola being there. Paola was like the "glue" between her and the others. What would it



be like to be on her own? Would she fit in?

Paola glanced over at Emery as they walked. Her friend looked nervous, so, to help distract\* her, Paola began chatting about their older brothers. They were both trying out for the middle school soccer team. There were try-out practices all week, and the try-out itself was on Sunday.

The boys had played soccer for years on the same team. Their dads had been assistant coaches together, and they had worked hard to improve the skills of all the boys on the team. The team had done really well, coming first or second in the play-offs.

“Our dads are spending so much time doing soccer drills with Mateo and Luke!” Paola said.

Emery agreed. “My dad is so intense about Luke making it onto the team! He’s talking about it more than Luke is.”

“Same,” said Paola. “Our dads are so competitive\*. It’s almost like getting on the team matters more to them than it does to the boys!”

“All the time they’re spending with Luke





and Mateo does bug me a little though,” Paola admitted. “I hardly saw Dad all weekend.”

“Me, too,” said Emery. “It feels like Dad isn’t interested in the things I like to do, like baking...”

Paola was nodding and about to add something else, but—here they were at school.

“See you at recess,” said Emery, trying to smile.

“And then at lunch,” Paola reminded Emery, giving her friend an extra-tight hug.



The girls did meet up at recess, and sat together at lunch, and spent their afternoon recess together, too. When the day ended, and they were walking home together, Paola was still full of energy and giggles.

She told Emery she had chatted with lots of new kids in her class, plus her teacher loved drama.

“Our class is going to put on a play!” she gushed, and did a happy twirl as she walked. “I’ll



finally get to act. I can't wait!"

Emery's morning hadn't gone as well. She had really missed being with her outgoing friend. She told Paola that her teacher had encouraged her to take part in the group activities, but Emery felt lonely. In the afternoon, they all had to say a few things about what they did that summer. She never liked speaking in front of the class and felt awkward.

"Was there anything you liked?" Paola asked.

Emery thought. "Well, when I mentioned the baking camp and the film crew, everyone was really interested," she told Paola. "And later, I helped Lucie—she's new!—organize her desk. She was really nice, and we talked a little."

"That sounds really good!" Paola said, grabbing Emery's hand and swinging it as they walked together. "I bet tomorrow will be even better."

Emery grinned. "You're the best, Bestie."

"So are you!" Paola said, laughing. "And



together we're amazing! Which is why, like our moms say, 'You can't have one ...'”

“...without the other!” shouted Emery.



# Chapter Three

## HAPPY SHIVERS

The school day raced by. Emery tried a little harder to talk to the kids in her class, and they had all been really friendly. She felt less lonely. At lunch and again at afternoon recess, she had laughed at Paola's reenactments\* of the funny things that had happened in her class—the hamster getting loose, the music teacher trying to get them to sing a song in German... She knew Paola exaggerated her stories in order to distract her, and she was grateful. It worked!

The girls chatted all the way home from school, and when they said goodbye, they did it in their usual way:

“Bye, Bestie!” said Paola. “You can’t have one—”

“—without the other!” Emery said.





Paola's family was having dinner, and she'd been talking about her teacher, the new kids in her class, and the hamster, Snowy.

"So, no, Snowy didn't really escape today," Paola admitted, "but she's so cute and perky and she loves running on her wheel!"

Mateo laughed. "Ah, yes, Mrs. Faulk's class. I remember those days of goofing around."

Paola poked him gently with her elbow and grinned.

"Now, Mateo," said Dad, in a serious tone. "I called your coach today and offered to help out at the try-outs on Sunday."

Mateo's face changed. "Dad, I'm going to try my hardest, but...there are lots of other great soccer players at this school, don't forget—including Luke!"

"Luke definitely has a good chance of making the team," Dad said, "but I'm certain you can do it, too. You're so talented and you try so hard..."

"Dad—" Mateo started to say.



Just then Dad's phone rang. He listened for a few moments, smiling, then put the call on hold.

"It's your camp, Paola," Dad explained. "The producer\* of that TV baking show, 'Sugar Pies and Mud Pies'—"

"—Emery and I watch that show all the time!" Paola interrupted.

"Well, the producer saw the videos from the camp, and they want you to be in a kids' baking competition," Dad said. "It will take place this Sunday, and it'll be broadcast live on TV!"

"I want to do it!" cried Paola. "For sure. Can I? Can I, Mom? Dad? Please?"

"Well, I guess so," her mom said. "We'll just talk a little more to the producer to find out a few more details..."

"Wow, Sis!" Mateo said, giving Paola a high-five. "I'm so excited for you! Best of all, you don't even need to try out. You're in!"

"Yeah, it sounds like so much fun. I mean, I might not win..." Paola said.

"Hey, I bet you do win," said Mateo, and





Paola felt happy shivers as she pictured it. Cameras clicking, flashes going off, cheers... It might be just like how famous actors feel when they give a great performance!

“It’s too bad the contest is on Sunday, the same day as my try-out, and Dad already promised to help out,” Mateo said, “but maybe we can make it to the prize presentation to see you give your bow and hear your thank you speech!”

Paola laughed as Mateo gave her another high-five.

As Mom tucked her in later that night, she promised she’d be at the event to cheer for her. “Now try to get some sleep,” Mom told Paola.

It was only after Mom had turned out the light and closed her door a little, like she liked it, that Paola suddenly sat up in bed.

Oh no! She hadn’t called Emery to tell her she was going to be on TV! Could she call her now?

No, it was far too late. But it would be okay. She’d see her first thing in the morning and tell her then.





# Chapter Four

## SKITTERY BUTTERFLIES

That same evening, Emery had just come downstairs to say goodnight to Dad and Luke. Mom was at a Lakeshore Waters Block Party planning meeting.

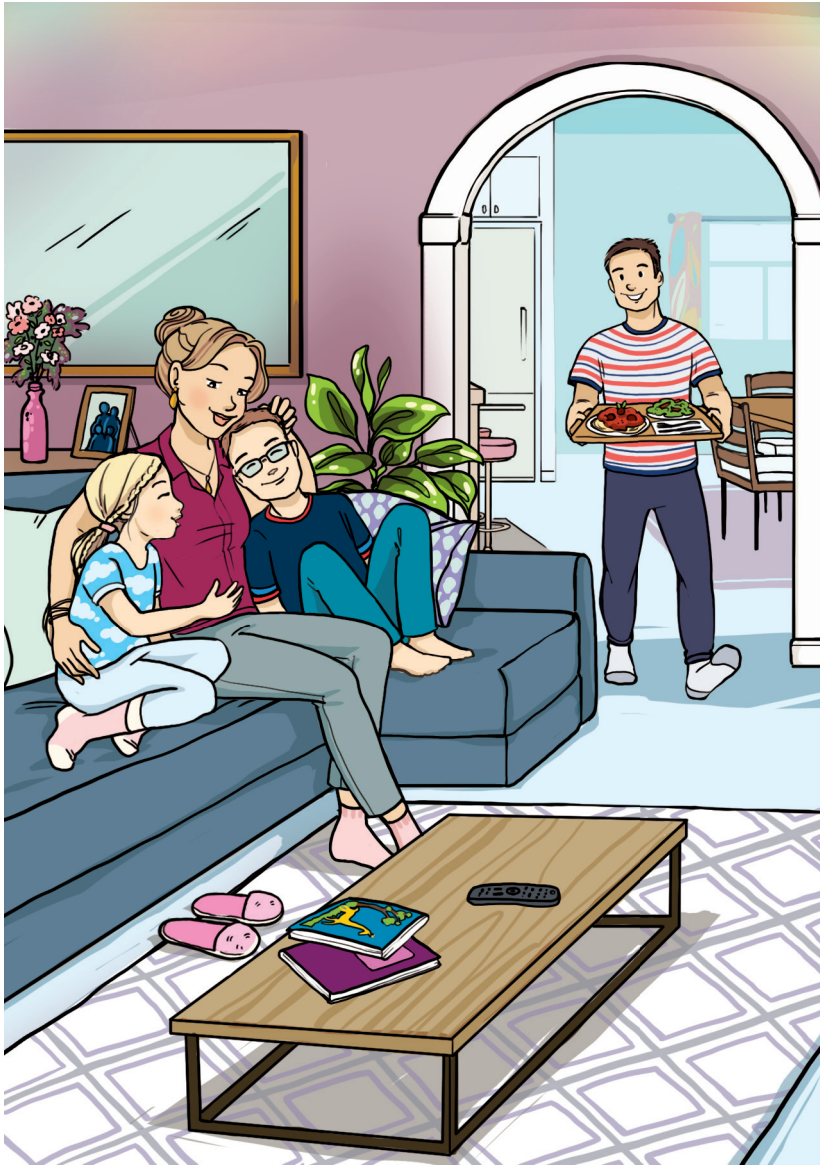
Just then, Mom arrived home. Luke and Emery hurried over to give her a hug, while Dad headed into the kitchen to warm up some dinner for her.

“You’re just heading off to bed, Emery? Come and chat for a minute first,” Mom said, guiding her into the family room and sitting on the sofa. “You too, Luke.” She put her arms out wide, and they sat on either side of her and snuggled up.

“How was school today, Emery?” Mom asked. “Any better?”

“It was okay, I guess,” Emery said. “Not so





bad.”

“And you, Luke?” Mom asked.

“I practiced for try-outs...”

“—That reminds me,” Dad said, coming back into the room with a plate of pasta. “I offered to help out with your try-outs on Sunday. And I’m going to take the day off work on Friday to do some extra practicing with you.” He smiled. “You’re going to get on that team for sure, Lukie!”

“Oh, wow, Dad, that’s nice of you,” said Luke. “And thanks for the vote of confidence\*. But you know, there are loads of really good players trying out. Players as good as Mateo. So I’m not *definitely* going to make the...”

Dad, frowning, was about to interrupt when Mom’s phone rang.

“I’ll be quick,” she promised, answering. She listened for a few moments, smiling, then put the call on hold.

“You’ll never guess!” she said, excited. “The producer of that local TV show, ‘Sugar Pies and



Mud Pies,’ wants Emery to be in a kids’ baking contest this Sunday!”

“Wow, that’s amazing, Emery!” cried Luke. “Congrats!”

“Great stuff, kiddo!” said Emery’s dad.

Emery smiled but she felt skittery\* butterflies in her stomach. “Mom, can you check if Paola can be my partner on the show?”

Mom asked the producer and found out that no, the kids would be baking on their own.

“Hmmm,” said Emery. “I’m... I’m not sure if I want to do this. I’m a bit nervous about being on live TV, especially in a contest!”

Emery was sure Paola must have been asked to be on the show, too. She was such a good baker and so perfect for TV! Did Emery want to compete against her bestie? How could friends compete against each other?

“The producer would like an answer,” Mom said, “but...”

“Mom, can you tell them I need to think about it overnight?” asked Emery.



“Of course,” said Mom.

As Emery headed upstairs to bed, she felt better. In fact, she was beginning to feel quite excited, even proud, that she had been chosen for the contest. She was sure that Paola would never agree to be in the contest without checking with her first—not if she knew they would be competing against each other—but maybe it would be okay to be in the same competition...? They are such good friends. What could go wrong?

Anyway, they could talk tomorrow at school and make up their minds together about what to do.



# Chapter Five

## MEETING HALFWAY

Emery got dressed and ate her breakfast quickly. She wanted to knock on Paola's door early, so they'd have lots of time to talk about the baking contest as they walked to school that morning.

But Mom's phone rang. "That's Paola's mom," she told Emery. "She forgot to tell us Paola has a dentist appointment this morning, so she won't be at school until after morning recess."

So, it wasn't until the lunch bell rang that the girls had a chance to meet up.

They waved to each other and hurried to their usual spot in the school lunchroom.

"Guess what happened last night—" Paola began, before she had even sat down.

"Did you get a phone call last night—?"



Emery was asking at the very same time.

They burst out laughing and stopped talking. Each waited for the other to speak. Then, both girls began speaking again.

“It’s amazing, right? What—?” Paola began.

“Can you believe that—?” Emery began asking.

Once again, the girls stopped talking and burst out laughing. Then they couldn’t speak at all because they were laughing so hard.

By this time, a group of kids had gathered around, curious to find out what was going on.

“You go ahead. You talk, Paola,” Emery managed to say before Paola began speaking.

So, Paola did. She told everyone about the phone call. Her eyes shone, and she waved her hands around.

The other kids were bubbling with questions. “Yes, it’s ‘Sugar Pies and Mud Pies’”! Paola explained. “And yes, the contest is in three days!”

Many of the kids were fans of the show. They peppered\* Paola with more questions. Emery was



happy that she'd suggested Paola be the one to share the news. And just listening to Paola... The more she talked, the more excited Emery got, too.

"No, we wouldn't be partners. We'd each be baking alone," Paola said to the kids. And Emery remembered, and suddenly felt a little nervous.

But overall, she felt better and better about it, and at one point realized that it seemed she had actually made up her mind. She was going to be in the contest!



That night, Paola enjoyed telling her family about how the other kids in grade 4 reacted to the news that she was going to be on TV. She even got up from the dinner table and acted it out, for fun!

But later, as Paola helped her dad tidy the kitchen, he said, "The baking contest should be fun, Paola. Remember not to share your special baking secrets with anyone—it's a competition, after all—like a sports game!"

"Okay, Dad," Paola said slowly. *But wait...*







*did Dad just wink at her? Or did he mean what he said about not sharing?* It gave her a bad feeling to think about not helping her best friend.

*Maybe Dad was joking?*



Next door, Emery and her brother were loading the dishwasher. Emery grinned, remembering how Paola told the kids about their news and how excited everyone was..

Then suddenly, she realized.

Paola had agreed to be in the contest without knowing if she, Emery, had even been asked to be in it!

Emery bit her lip. A weird, sad feeling came over her. Her best friend had let her down.

“Emery, are you okay?” Luke asked, but just then, Mom came hurrying into the kitchen, holding her phone.

“Emery, it’s the ‘Sugar Pies and Mud Pies’ producer,” she said. “She wants to know if you’re going to be on the show. Oh! And they’ve changed



their format: Now contestants can have partners!”

Mom explained that the next morning, contestants would receive a list of all the ingredients that would be available to them at the competition. They got to decide what recipe they would make and of course, they could practice making it at home if they wanted.

“Oh!” Emery said. “Okay, thanks, Mom. I’ll be in the contest, I guess.”

Mom looked at Emery carefully. “Are you sure, honey? You don’t seem very sure. You don’t have to do this, you know.”

“No, it’s okay, Mom,” Emery said, firmly. “I’m sure.”

It was good to know they could bake with a partner, but...knowing this didn’t really make her sad feeling about Paola go away. It wasn’t why she’d decided to be on the show. No, Emery really did love baking. And she’d realized how much fun it would be to bake something special with Paola.

*But would Paola even want her to be her partner?* she wondered as she put a plate in the



dishwasher. *And...did she even want to be partners with Paola now?*

That was such a strange thing to be wondering.

“Hey, Emery!” Luke said, rinsing the last dinner plate and handing it to her. “You’re going to be in the contest! It’s exciting! Maybe you’ll win!”

“Maybe!” Emery said.

“So, smile!” Luke said, nudging her, playfully.

And Emery did. Because her brother was right. This was exciting, and Paola was still her best friend, and now she needed to shake off her hurt feelings!

“I’m going to run over to Paola’s for a minute!” she called out to her parents, and off she went.



When the producer called Paola’s home a short time later, and Paola heard about the change in the rules, she was so relieved. *Phew!* She and Emery could be partners!



She wouldn't have to decide whether to help out her bestie if they weren't competing against each other. She didn't have to think about Dad's advice—or figure out if he really meant it or not.

Everything was more fun when she was with Emery. They would be an amazing baking team!

"I'm going to run over to talk to Emery!" she called out to her parents, and off she went.



Paola and Emery met halfway between their houses. Laughing, they grabbed each other's hands.

"Let's be partners!" Paola cried, as Emery asked, "Will you be my partner?"

"Yes!" Paola answered.

Tomorrow was Teachers' Learning Day, so they didn't have school.

"Let's meet up tomorrow morning," Paola suggested. "Can we meet at your place? My mom has to go to the office."

"Sure. Mom told me she'll be here," said



Emery. “She knows I’ve got the day off.”

Both girls climbed into bed that night feeling good. Being in a baking competition with your best friend? How perfect was this?



# Chapter Six

## THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!

As they'd promised, both dads were taking the day off work today to help their sons practice for the Sunday try-outs.

Emery stood in the front doorway, waving to Dad and Luke. Dressed in their soccer gear, they were heading over to meet Paola's dad and brother.

"Hey, remember, Dad: The boys are trying out for the team, not you!" she teased.

Her dad laughed, and Luke called back, "Have fun baking, Emery!"

Meanwhile, Paola was about to head over to Emery's house. She passed by her dad and brother, who were kicking the ball back and forth on their front lawn.

"You can do it better than that," Paola's dad told his son. "Try again, like this," he said,



demonstrating.

“Nice kick. You’ll make the team for sure,” Paola said to her dad, teasing.

“Funny, Sis,” Mateo called back, laughing. “Good luck with the baking practice!”

Emery waved as Paola came bouncing up the walkway.

“Hey, Paola!” she called. “Ready to get baking, Bestie?”

“Absolutely!” Paola replied.

The girls headed to the kitchen table. They’d received the list of ingredients that would be available in the contest kitchen. They sat down to review it.

“Wow.” Paola let out a big breath. “Amazing! There’s everything here from chocolate, caramel, pretzels, and marshmallows...”

“...to licorice, coconut, and every single type of spice in the world!” Emery continued. “It looks like we could make anything we wanted... Anything we want to invent!”

“True,” said Paola. “The sky’s the limit\*! We





could make pumpkin strawberry muffins decorated with peppermints and spearmint candies...”

“...or chocolate cookies sandwiched together with jam and marshmallows...” said Emery.

“...or chocolate cheesecake swirl with pineapple peel frosting...” said Paola.

“...or a pyramid of meringues\* in cool colors—pink, purple, blue—and tied in a big bow...” said Emery.

“...or sugar cookies in all kinds of shapes and colors and flavors...” said Paola.

“...or flaky croissants bursting with yellow custard cream, or buttery pistachio and cheese twists dripping with icing...” said Emery.

Paola and Emery both paused to take a breath, looked at each other, and burst out laughing.

“Okay, we’re letting our imaginations run away with us a little,” Emery admitted.

The girls decided to be more realistic. Today was Friday—and the contest was on Sunday! So, Emery grabbed two notebooks and pens, one for Paola and one for her. She set a timer for



10 minutes. They each began thinking carefully, mulling over\* ideas of possibilities for recipes that would be just right for a contest—original, not too easy but not too hard to make, tasty, and beautiful to look at.

When the timer went off, the girls both looked relieved.

“That was harder than I thought it would be,” said Paola.

“Definitely,” agreed Emery. “But I think I came up with some good suggestions.”

“Me too,” said Paola.

They placed the lists side by side and looked them over.

“Hmmm....” Emery said, crossing off one, then three, then all seven of Paola’s ideas.

Meanwhile, “Hmmm....” Paola said, crossing off one, then two, then all six of Emery’s ideas.

“You don’t like my idea of a caramel crepe decorated with tiny raspberry syrup hearts?” Emery asked.

“You don’t like my idea of a bubblegum pink



cake roll with red licorice strings draped across it?” Paola asked.

The girls shrugged. Neither one said it aloud, but it was obvious that each thought her ideas were best.

They decided to take a lunch break and had a fun time making cheese sandwiches with baby tomatoes drizzled with mayo and mustard. Luckily, the tension\* they had both been feeling when they were cooking had disappeared.

Emery’s mom reminded them to clean up the kitchen, and then they sat down to make new lists of ideas. But once again, they each wrote down many ideas, but they couldn’t persuade each other that their ideas were best.

“I can’t believe you don’t like any of my ideas,” Paola said.

“You always think yours are best,” complained Emery. “You always think you’re right.”

“Are you kidding? No way!” Paola said. “I feel like I always have to give in to you!”





Emery stared at Paola, and Paola felt bad. *She sort of reminded herself of her dad right now. She remembered what he had said about not sharing her ideas with Emery before they were partners. She thought about how he was acting about Mateo's soccer. He was so competitive. Was she? Was she being too competitive?*

Emery was blinking her eyes fast, like she might cry.

*I don't want to lose my friendship with Emery,* Paola thought. But...at least two of her ideas really *were* better than Emery's, and Paola wanted to win the contest. She and Emery needed to choose the best idea!

Emery was feeling bad that Paola didn't like any of her ideas, yes. But what was hurting more was suddenly remembering how Paola agreed to compete in the contest instantly—without even checking if Emery had been invited.

Why was she remembering this now? She thought she'd set it aside, once they agreed to be partners, but...Paola had never even apologized,



and now Paola was insisting that her ideas were best, and Emery was certain *her* ideas were.

For a long moment, neither girl spoke.

Then, somehow, they came up with a plan. They wouldn't try to choose the best idea right now. They'd choose their top two favorites. They'd practice making them both—and then decide which worked best.

It took the rest of the afternoon, but they did it. They managed to narrow down their list to two favorite ideas by choosing one from Emery's list—sugar cookies with confetti sprinkles on top—and one from Paola's list—cupcakes with spicy cream cheese. Each girl's family recipe was important to her, and she was proud of it. Emery's Italian grandfather made sugar cookies with confetti sprinkles on top every Christmas. Baking these treats had become an important holiday tradition for Emery's family. Paola's Hispanic grandmother made Cinco de Mayo chocolate cupcakes with chili cream cheese frosting. Paola's dad was always begging for these cupcakes. They reminded him of



his homeland, Mexico.

Just then, Emery's dad and brother came home, looking sweaty and tired.

"Your dad says it's time for you to head home and get ready for dinner," Emery's dad told Paola. "Hope you girls got lots done today."

Emery and Paola looked at each other.

"I'm sorry we argued so much," Paola said to Emery. "It makes me feel bad when we disagree."

"Me too," said Emery. "I'm sure tomorrow will go better. Let's try to cooperate more."

"See you then, Bestie!" Paola said to Emery. "And remember, 'You can't have one...'"

"...without the other," Emery said.



# Chapter Seven

## NO MATTER WHAT?

The evening before, the girls had decided to work in Paola's kitchen. Paola's mother had suggested it. She explained that Emery's mother had hosted the baking partners yesterday, and she'd be happy to do it today.

She'd even looked over the recipes for the cookies and cupcakes at dinnertime and had gone to the store and bought all the ingredients so they could practice making as many cookies and cupcakes as they wanted.

So, this morning, the girls got up early. They said good luck to their brothers, who were heading to the final practice with their dads.

"I hope they both make the team," Emery said, when she arrived at Paola's house. She paused. "What do you think would happen if only one got





on the team? Would...would they stay friends?"

"Of course," Paola said confidently. "Nothing would break them up." She paused. "But...what about our dads? Would they stay friends?"

"Luke and Mateo care about getting on the team, but..." began Paola.

"...but our dads seem to care more!" Emery concluded.

The girls looked at each other, worried. They knew they were thinking the same thing. Their dads were so competitive about these try-outs. Could they stay friends no matter what?

What about friends who disagree sometimes? Who sometimes have different opinions? What about...the two of them? They were partners in this baking contest, but they had such strong and very opposite opinions. Would they be able to remain besties?

"Girls, I've just tidied the kitchen," called Paola's mom. "So anytime you want to get started, you can!"



“We better make like two eggs...” said Paola.

“...and get cracking!” said Emery, finishing the baking joke.



They decided to make the sugar cookies with confetti sprinkles on top. Emery placed the recipe where they could both see it. It was her grandfather’s original recipe. Emery didn’t want to change one single ingredient or one single step in the baking process.

“It’s perfect this way,” she told Paola.

They got all the ingredients out and decided to make a small batch. They didn’t get far. Paola made a mistake right at the beginning. She put double the amount of baking soda in the cookies.

“Will it matter?” she asked.

“Everything matters,” Emery cried, shocked. “They have to be perfect, and they can’t be perfect if we don’t follow the recipe exactly!”

They started again, and this time, it was



Emery who made the mistake. “Oh, no!” she said. “I didn’t put enough white sugar in!”

“No problem,” said Paola. “Let’s add it now.”

“No, no, we can’t!” cried Emery, horrified. “It’s too late. We’ve already added the wet ingredients\* to the dry ingredients\*. We need to start again.”

They started again. The next mistake happened because they were distracted. Paola was describing her dreams of becoming an actress. “Maybe I’ll be the hero in a movie!” she said, and Emery was picturing her best friend rescuing a scared puppy in a dark forest when...both girls reached for the bowl of batter at the same time, and...oops!

It fell on the floor upside down.



Finally, by lunchtime, they had managed to put a batch of cookies in the oven.

Paola’s mom made them lunch, and they





relaxed for a bit, enjoying the carrot sticks, cucumber slices, red pepper chunks, and pita bread, dipped in hummus.

When the cookies were ready, Paola's mom helped the girls pull the hot tray out of the oven.

"Taste-test time?" Paola's mom asked hopefully.

"Nope," Emery said. "Not until the cupcakes are done. We want to try them at the same time."

"Okay, it's time to make cupcakes!" cheered Paola.



# Chapter Eight

## SPLIT DECISION

Now, Paola placed her grandma's recipe where she and Emery could both see it. This was her recipe for chocolate cupcakes with chili cream cheese frosting. Paola felt the same way about this recipe as Emery felt about her grandfather's traditional recipe—she didn't want to change one single ingredient or one single step in the baking process.

"It's perfect this way," she said to Emery. They got all the ingredients out and decided to make a small batch. They didn't get far. Emery made a mistake right at the beginning.

"Oops!" she cried. "I added too much oil!"

"Okay," said Paola. "We'll have to toss this batch out and start again."

"Hang on," said Emery. "Maybe I can use a



spoon to try to scoop up the extra oil...”

“No!” said Paola, firmly. “You won’t get just the right amount out. They have to be perfect, and they can’t be perfect if we don’t follow the recipe exactly!”

They started again, and this time, it was Paola who made the mistake. “Oops!” she said. “I put brown sugar in instead of white sugar.”

“That shouldn’t matter,” said Emery. “It should be....”

Paola shook her head. “Nope. If it didn’t matter, the recipe would call for ‘white or brown sugar’ and it doesn’t. We need to start again.”

They started again. The next mistake happened because they were distracted again. This time, Emery was telling Paola about a new interest she had. She’d been making bracelets by braiding embroidery threads. She described how much fun it was to choose what colors to combine, and how she had to use just the tips of her fingers to pick up and manipulate\* the fine thread. Paola and Emery both reached for the big package of flour at the







same time, and...oops!

Flour went everywhere—onto the floor, onto them, and, worst of all, into the big bowl of cupcake batter.

“Oh no!” said Paola’s mom from the kitchen doorway.



Finally, late in the afternoon, they managed to put a batch of cupcakes in the oven. And after Paola’s mom took them out, they made the chili cream cheese frosting in only one try, and frosted the cupcakes.

Finally, it was time for a taste test.

First, the sugar cookies. Wow!

Then the cupcakes. Yum!

“Best one?” Paola asked. “Hands down, it’s the ...

“...sugar cookies!” yelled Emery.

“...cupcakes!” shouted Paola.

Emery began explaining why she thought the sugar cookies tasted best, and Paola began



explaining why she thought the cupcakes were best. Both talked at the same time. Neither listened. Their voices got louder and louder...

“We have to decide! The competition is tomorrow!” Paola cried.

“I know!” Emery answered back. “And by the way,” she said, without even knowing she was going to, “you agreed to be in the competition before you even knew that I was invited!”

Both girls were quiet. They were breathing heavily. Their hearts were pounding.

Paola felt terrible. She made herself look at Emery. “I’m sorry, Emery,” she said. “It was a silly thing to do. I was only thinking about myself. I wasn’t being a good friend at all.”

Emery bit her lip. She nodded. She couldn’t speak for a minute.

“We should just go with your choice,” Paola said all in a rush. “Let’s bake the sugar cookies with the confetti sprinkles in the competition.”

“No!” Emery burst out. “I don’t want you to give in on this just because you feel guilty about



something you did.”

Now Paola nodded. “Okay,” she said. “Thanks.”

The girls were quiet again.

“This is so hard!” said Emery. “I really want to do well in the contest. I want to win! And that’s why I want to bake the sugar cookies. I really do think they’re a better choice than the cupcakes.”

“I feel the exact same way about the cupcakes. Your cookies are great, but...the cupcakes are better, and I really want to win, too!” said Paola.

“Well, how about we have our families taste the cookies and the cupcakes and vote on which is best?” said Emery.

“Perfect,” said Paola. “Let’s ask them.”

The two girls smiled at each other. It felt so good to agree!



“Now what?” Emery was on the phone with Paola. She yawned.

After dinner that night, Emery and Paola



had run separate taste tests in their homes. Their moms, dads, and brothers had voted on which was best.

But...it was a split decision, tied! Three votes for sugar cookies, and three votes for chocolate cupcakes.

"We can't agree on what we'll bake, and the contest is tomorrow..." Paola yawned. "But we can't decide tonight."

"We're just too tired," Emery agreed. "Let's sleep on it and figure it out tomorrow."

As the girls drifted off to sleep that night, they were both thinking, *we agree on so many things. If only we could agree on what to bake tomorrow!*



# Chapter Nine

## COMPETITION DAY

The next morning, Emery and Paola had mixed feelings as they watched their brothers and dads drive away to the soccer team try-outs.

One—they felt excited and nervous about their own competition. They had wished their brothers good luck, but it was hard knowing their dads had chosen to watch the soccer try-outs and not their baking competition.

Two—the girls were super stressed that they didn't even know what they were going to bake today!

*If we could just bake the cupcakes, I know we'd win!* Paola thought. *My recipe is best!*

*If we could just bake the sugar cookies, we'd win for sure,* Emery thought. *My recipe is best!*

Plus, three—normally they would have



discussed what to wear on this very special day. But they had been too frazzled last night. And this morning, there hadn't been time!

When they met up outside to go to the TV studio, and they saw each other's outfits, they burst into big smiles. Emery was wearing her soft pink shirt and had braided sparkly ribbons into her hair, and Paola was wearing her hot pink shirt. *Perfect!*

"If only our dads were here, too. And Luke and Mateo, of course," said Emery, as Paola's mom wove her way through the downtown traffic. "But there's no way the boys could miss the try-out."

"And...I guess it's important our dads are at the try-outs to cheer on the boys," said Paola, slowly. "Right?"

"I *guess* so," Emery agreed.

"It's fantastic your moms are with you, though, right?" Paola's mom said from the front seat.

"For sure," Emery said. "Mom even made a sign that says, 'Go, Paola and Emery!'"



The girls grinned at each other, and it felt good.

Now, they needed to discuss which recipe they were going to bake today. But...would they just argue again? Neither wanted to argue. So, neither raised the topic.

Each secretly hoped her friend would suddenly realize her recipe wasn't the best one after all...

Then, they had missed the chance to talk, because Emery's mom was saying, "We're here!"

They were in front of a big brick building with a flashing neon sign that said, 'WESTERN OAK RIDGE STUDIOS.'

The girls followed their moms inside.

"Wow!" Emery gasped. It was thrilling to enter the big reception area. It bustled with activity. A red-headed woman with a clipboard immediately rushed up to them and directed them down a long hallway to Studio B.

When they walked inside, a man wearing a headset and holding a tablet hurried over, smiling.







“Hello, hello!” he greeted them. “I’m Clive, and you must be our final baking team, Emery and Paola. Wonderful! Please follow me. Moms, you may find a seat with the studio audience.”

Emery and Paola were whisked across the floor, through several rows of cameras and camerapeople. Clive pointed out staff as they went: “That’s the show’s producer, that’s her assistant, that’s the director\*, there’s our sound guy, our head of lighting, our head of props\*...and that’s the stylist, Bettina,” he finished, waving her over.

Suddenly, Bettina was tying back their hair into ponytails and putting chef’s hats on their heads.

Then the two girls were positioned behind a long kitchen counter, built at kid height, with six stations. It stretched from one side of the set to the other. Clive was introducing the other participants, who waved cheerfully back at them.

Everything was happening so fast! It was an amazing, exciting blur—and best of all, neither Emery nor Paola had time to feel worried or even



nervous anymore!

The girls looked across the room to where the small audience was sitting and spotted their moms, who waved at them, blew them kisses, and pumped their signs up and down.

“And this is the host, Chef Suzanne,” Clive announced, and of course, Emery and Paola recognized her. They had watched Chef Suzanne on ‘Sugar Pies and Mud Pies’ thousands of times! Then, suddenly, “Quiet on the set!” rang out.

Silence fell, the lights dimmed, Chef Suzanne got into position in front of the long counter, and the cameras turned to focus on her.

“In three...two...one...” called out the director, “and...we’re live!”



# Chapter Ten

## BRAINWAVE!

“Welcome, viewers in the studio and around the country,” said Chef Suzanne. “I want to remind all the viewers and the competitors, too, that the show is live. You’ll be watching these 12 young bakers in action in real time!”

And, as Chef Suzanne introduced the competitors, one by one, and Emery and Paola heard the applause when their names were mentioned, it finally sunk in.

*I’m on live TV!* Emery thought, and...the butterflies were back! Emery shifted uncomfortably from foot to foot, opened her hands, closed them. Her chef’s hat suddenly felt wrong. She reached up to fiddle with her ponytail, then with the ribbons in her hair, pushing the chef’s hat more to the front...

*I’m on live TV!* Paola thought, and...was



giddy\* with excitement. *But wait, was her apron hiding too much of her cute outfit?* She untied the apron strings, readjusted it. *Which of the three cameras was filming her? Were any of them filming her?* She tried to look without looking like she was looking! *How do actresses do this...?*

“So, the rules,” Chef Suzanne explained. “On our show today, our 6 baking teams will make one baked good each. They can use any of the many, many ingredients available to them here in our kitchen. Then they’ll introduce it to the TV audience and explain why they chose it for this event. Oh, and of course, I’ll taste them all! I’ll also decide on the winner!”

The audience clapped.

“And now,” Suzanne looked at each set of partners as she spoke, “ready, set... begin!”

Paola and Emery watched as the other kids pulled out recipes and began to work. They were opening the kitchen cupboards and the refrigerator door, reaching for ingredients. They were laughing and high-fiving each other. None of them looked



nervous or worried about winning. They simply looked like they loved baking and were having the time of their lives\*!

But the two of them? They couldn't even decide what recipe to make!

They cared so much about being best that it was ruining everything!

Then the most amazing thing happened. The baking partners on either side of them glanced over at them, stopped their prepping, and came over, looking concerned.

“Hey, is everything okay?” one girl said.

“Do you need a hand?” asked a boy.

“Can my partner and I do something to help?” asked another girl.

Emery and Paola glanced at each other. True besties, the girls shared a thought without words.

“Oh, no! We're completely fine!” Paola reassured them.

“You're all so nice, but we're great,” Emery added.

Emery and Paola turned to each other and





said, at the same time: “I’m sorry.”

“We’re partners and best friends,” Emery said.

“We’re on the same team, not competitors!”

Paola said.

“Even the kids competing against us are getting along better with us than we are!” Emery laughed.

“I know we can figure this out,” said Paola.

“Me too,” said Emery. “There has to be a way we can both feel good about what we bake today. We both care about our traditional family recipes, which is why we are so sure our recipes are both the best...”

“So, what if...” Paola said.

“What if we come up with our own unique recipe,” said Emery.

“One that is connected to *both* our traditional family recipes,” said Paola.

Again, they looked at each other and knew instantly what the other was thinking. They both had the same brainwave!\* And it was time to get baking!



# Chapter Eleven

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Emery and Paola had to act fast. The other competitors were already preparing their dough creations.

Quickly, they pulled out their two recipes, placed them side by side, and compared them. In whispers, they made notes, sometimes agreeing right away, sometimes disagreeing at first, but then finding a way to agree.

Next, they were reaching for ingredients—a package of this, a jar of that, some items from the refrigerator, some from the cupboards...

Emery pre-heated the oven while Paola oiled the pans. Emery measured and mixed the dry ingredients together. Paola poured the wet ingredients. Then, they were beating, whisking, stirring, and then combining the two bowls of





ingredients. And the whole time, they grinned as they worked, almost forgetting they were in a contest! Then onto the baking sheet and into the oven went their creation. They quickly assembled the special topping, and when the oven timer went off, they added it to the top of their special dessert.

Then, *ding, ding, ding!* “Time’s up, bakers!” Chef Suzanne announced.

Emery and Paola took a deep breath. Phew! They were done, and just in time!

“Well, hasn’t this been delightful to see these young people bake up a storm?” said Chef Suzanne to the audience at home and in the studio. “And now, each pair of bakers will describe their creation, and I’ll have a taste! Yum!”

Two by two, the baking partners stood in the spotlight, proudly displaying their desserts, and explaining how they came up with their recipes. Some seemed nervous. Their voices were shaky. Others spoke confidently. But all were proud of what they had created, especially when Chef Suzanne tasted their treats and spoke glowingly



about each one. Emery and Paola applauded along with the studio audience and the other competitors, impressed with their fellow bakers' creativity and skill.

Then the spotlight and cameras turned to Emery and Paola.

"Paola," Emery said, suddenly. "I'm not sure..."

Paola took her hand and squeezed it. "It's okay. We're doing this together. It'll be fine," she said calmly and confidently. "Besides, look!"

She pointed into the audience. Their mothers were holding up their signs and blowing kisses, and oh! Their dads and brothers were there, too, in their soccer outfits and holding a big banner which read, 'Go, Team Baking with love!'

Emery giggled. "It's...all our family! It's everyone!"

"Yay! They're all here for us," whispered Paola. "Okay, are you all set?"

Emery took a deep breath. "Ready," she said.



“One...two... three...” said Paola.

“Ta-da!” the girls cried, revealing their special dessert. It was a giant chocolate cupcake with a special cream cheese spread on top *and* a surprise inside!

“Looks delicious,” said Chef Suzanne, cutting into the cupcake with her fork. Sweet confetti sprinkles came out! When she tasted the pastry, the sprinkles, and its cream cheese topping, her eyes opened wide.

“Sweet sprinkles and a spicy paprika cream cheese,” she said. “Wow! What a unique choice. Sweet and spicy, both! Can you tell us about your dessert, girls?” Paola looked at Emery questioningly. Did Emery want her to do all the talking?

But Emery knew it was important to their partnership that she speak. She told Paola with a look that she would go first.

Emery’s voice was soft and trembling at first. “My best friend Paola is just like zesty hot paprika!” But as she talked, Emery’s voice became





a little louder and lots steadier. “The spiciness of the cream cheese is like the zest Paola brings to my life. That’s why I wanted to make this one-of-a-kind cupcake that’s bursting with flavor!”

“The sweet sprinkles make me think of my best friend Emery,” Paola chimed in. She lifted her chin, and she projected her voice like an actress. “Emery always brings sweetness to my life, and she is one-of-a-kind, so I wanted to make this one-of-a-kind cupcake with its sweet touch.”

Chef Suzanne took a few minutes to look at her score sheets for all the delicious desserts. Then she was ready to announce the winner.

“The winning dessert is Emery’s and Paola’s giant sweet-and-spicy cupcake!” she said. “Why? It wasn’t just one ingredient that makes it so special. It was the original, creative combining of ingredients—flour, chocolate, cream cheese, and confetti candies. And it was also the contrasting\* tastes—the sweet confetti sprinkles and spicy cream cheese... The creative combo of ingredients and the contrasting tastes wins them the prize.”



Suddenly, the girls' families were shouting out, "Sweet and zesty! Emery and Paola! You can't have one without the other!" and everyone began applauding—the other contestants, everyone in the audience, the crew, and Chef Suzanne too!



# Chapter Twelve

## GOOD FRIENDS

“Emery and Paola receive a wonderful prize today,” Chef Suzanne continued. “They’ll spend four Saturdays baking here at our TV studio kitchen. They can invent eight more desserts together, using any ingredients they’d like!”

Paola nudged Emery. “So great!”

“Amazing!” Emery replied.

“We’ll publish those eight new recipes, plus today’s recipe for their giant cupcake, in a special recipe book for them to share with family and friends,” Chef Suzanne concluded.

Emery and Paola were delighted, and they felt so proud when the other kids came rushing over to congratulate them.

Then it was time to greet their families.

“Hey, Luke, Mateo,” the girls asked. “How



were try-outs?”

“We both made the team,” Luke said, shaking his head.

“We can’t believe it!” said Mateo. “I think it’s because our dads helped us so much.”

“No way,” said Paola’s dad. “I’m sure it’s because the boys spent so much time practicing together.”

“Exactly. The coach said he was impressed most with how well they passed to each other—like they didn’t even have to look,” said Emery’s dad, throwing an arm around Paola’s dad. “They just seemed to know where each other would be, and when.”

Emery and Paola exchanged glances. They knew just how that worked!

“But we want to say sorry,” said Paola’s dad. “We did prioritize\* supporting the boys’ soccer try-outs over your baking...”

“...And we know you had some struggles,” said Emery’s dad, “so we’re proud that you found a way to be good partners.”





The girls smiled shyly.

“Now, I vote that we walk down the street to that ice cream place I saw when we drove up!” suggested Mateo.

“Great idea!” said Luke. “We can celebrate all our successes today!”

Everyone agreed. As they set off, Paola and Emery were already planning what new desserts they could invent starting the very next weekend.

“We’ll combine our ideas and come up with something special together!” said Emery.

“Because you can’t have one...,” said Paola.

“...without the other!” said Emery.





# Glossary

*Many words have more than one meaning.  
Here are the definitions of words marked with  
this symbol\* (an asterisk) as they are used in  
this story.*

**brainwave:** *a sudden bright idea*

**competitive:** *wanting to win or be more  
successful than others*

**contrasting:** *very different*

**corporate:** *to do with a large company  
or business*

**director:** *the person who supervises the actors,  
lighting and sound crew, camera crew,  
and other staff for a television program  
or similar production*

**distract:** *take someone's attention away from  
something else*

**dry ingredients:** *ingredients for baking that  
are dry or solid, such as flour, nuts,  
baking powder, and salt*

**exuberant:** *full of energy, excitement,  
and happiness*



**flustered:** *upset or confused*  
**giddy:** *feeling happy and excited*  
**having the time of their lives:** *having a lot of fun*  
**inseparable:** *unable to be separated*  
**manipulate:** *to handle skillfully*  
**meringues:** *a dessert or dessert topping that's made with egg whites and sugar*  
**mulling over:** *thinking about carefully*  
**outgoing:** *openly friendly; at ease talking with others*  
**peppered:** *to direct something repeatedly and quickly at someone*  
**prioritize:** *treat something as more important than other things*  
**producer:** *the person who handles the business matters of making a TV show*  
**props:** *moveable objects or articles used on a set that will appear on screen*  
**reenactments:** *the acting out of an event that already took place*  
**school council:** *a group of elected parents, the principal, staff representatives, and*



*sometimes students who work together  
to support students' achievement and  
well-being at school*

**self-conscious:** *feeling especially aware of  
oneself; uncomfortable because you're  
worried of what people think about you*

**skittery:** *restless, fluttery, or nervous*

**(the) sky's the limit:** *there is no limit*

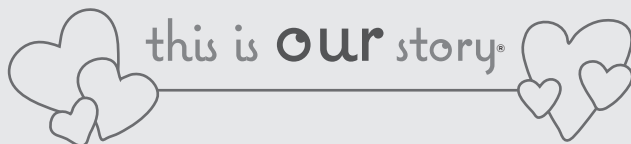
**sous-chef:** *the second-most important cook  
in the kitchen*

**tension:** *a feeling of anger or fear between  
two people or groups who may not  
trust each other*

**vote of confidence:** *a sign or expression of  
approval and encouragement*

**wet ingredients:** *ingredients for baking that  
are wet or liquid, such as eggs, milk,  
juices, and oil*





We are an extraordinary generation of children.  
And have we got a story to tell.

Our Generation® is unlike any that has come before. We're making a positive impact on our community by performing small, but powerful, acts of kindness, standing tall for causes we believe in, and creating a narrative where everyone can make a difference.

We're speaking up for those around us, taking leaps to develop big ideas, and embracing new opportunities without ever forgetting to build lasting memories along the way. From playing sports outdoors and learning new instruments, to singing out loud and dancing around, we're laughing together with friends as we share in the best moments of being a kid.

Our dreams have no limits, our voices echo around every corner, and we have the strongest belief that we can make anything and everything possible with our greatest gift: imagination.

This is our time. This is our story.

**[ourgeneration.com](http://ourgeneration.com)**

### *About the Author*

*Susan Hughes is an award-winning author of many children's books, including picture books, chapter books, young adult novels, nonfiction books for all ages, and even a graphic nonfiction book. Susan is also a freelance editor and writer. She helps coach and guide other writers in revising and polishing their own manuscripts.*

### *About the Illustrator*

*Passionate about drawing from an early age, Géraldine Charette decided to pursue her studies in computer multimedia in order to further develop her style and technique. Her favorite themes to explore in her illustrations are fashion and urban life. In her free time, Géraldine loves to paint and travel. She is passionate about horses and loves spending time at the stable. It's where she feels most at peace and gives her time to think and fuel her creativity.*



*Baking with Love became the book that you are holding in your hands with the assistance of the talented people at Maison Battat Inc., including Joe Battat, Dany Battat, Andrew Shapiro, Loredana Ramacieri, Sandy Jacinto, Veronique Casavant, Alexandra Bonfa, Laurie Gaudreau-Levesque, Ananda Guarany, Cynthia Lopez, Marie-Sophia Morkos, Valentina Quan, Pamela Shrimpton, Marius Jivoin, Natalie Cohen, Zeynep Yasar, and Tamara Kovacevic.*







this is OUR story®

# Baking with Love

Besties Paola and Emery™ are not only neighbours, but they've been inseparable friends since kindergarten. They also share a love for baking and just had the best month ever at summer baking camp together.

But for the first time ever, their friendship is being put to the test.

Paola and Emery are invited to compete in a baking competition on a popular kids' TV show, but they have very specific ideas about which special dessert to make...

What happens when friends disagree? Can they find a way to remain best friends and also bake their very best?

It's impossible to separate Our Generation® characters from the generation of kids who read about and play with them, for they are one and the same.

They're changing the world by making their households greener. They're baking cupcakes to help charities. They're writing in their journals, practicing for recitals, doing cartwheels down the block and giggling with their friends until they can hardly breathe. Our Generation is about kids growing up together. "This is our story" reflects the community of these amazing kids as they laugh, learn and create the narrative of their own generation.

Ages 7 and up

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ISBN 979-8-218-45213-1



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