

BOBBI CHEGWYN

RADICAL ***RAY***

The Too Much Moment

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HEY THERE, LITTLE MATE!

I'm so glad you've picked up the next part of Ray's journey. This book still has plenty of laughs, friendship, and funny moments, but it also follows Ray through something a little harder to talk about.

Sometimes, we start to wonder if we're just too much: too loud, too different, too emotional. And when someone says something that hurts, even if they didn't mean to, it can stick to us like glue.

In this story, Ray begins to question the very things that make him who he is. He starts to believe thoughts that aren't kind or helpful, and those thoughts begin to change how he sees everything around him. But what he learns along the way is something I hope you remember too: just because we think something doesn't mean it's true.

As you read, I hope you take a moment to think about yourself. Have you ever felt like you had to shrink or hide a part of who you are? Have you ever believed

something about yourself that made you feel small or unsure?

What if those thoughts were just old stories, ones you don't have to carry anymore?

This book is for anyone who's ever felt like too much or not enough. It's a reminder that the things that make you unique aren't problems to fix. They're parts of you that deserve to be seen and loved, exactly as they are.

So come along. Ray has a few things to figure out, and maybe, as you read, you'll discover a few things about yourself too.

And remember: your story matters. You don't have to be less of anything to belong. You're already more than enough.

With Radical Love,

xo
Bobbi.

CHAPTER 1



THE NEW KID

Ray Roxby of Banksia Street, Botany, had a lot to be excited about. For one, his school was launching something brand new called *The Great Talent Takeover*. And two? He already knew exactly what his act would be: comedy.

It made perfect sense. Ray loved making people laugh. He had endless energy and wasn't exactly known for being subtle, just like his favourite kid comedians online (well, the ones his mum, Shirl, actually let him watch).

He'd been rehearsing jokes all week, mostly in front of Atlas, his Blue Heeler, who wagged his tail politely and only walked off once, mid-punchline. His mum, Shirl, gave a small smile and said, "Well, you're definitely entertaining... the dog."

That morning, Ray was dribbling his soccer ball around the kitchen while testing material.

"What do you call a dinosaur who crashes his car?" he asked, one foot still on the ball.

Shirl didn't look up from her laptop. "Please don't say this is going to be in your actual act."

"Tyrannosaurus wrecks!" Ray beamed.

She smirked, still typing. "That's great, mate. But maybe keep the wrecks to a minimum in the house, yeah?"

Ray huffed, but he wasn't discouraged. This was his moment, his time to shine.

But before he could fully drift off into daydreams of standing ovations and lunchtime fame, something else caught his attention at Booralee Public School: a new kid.

Mr. Nelson stood at the front of the classroom and cleared his throat. "Class, I'd like you to meet Addison Monroe. He's come all the way from Ohio, in the United States."

Ray sat up straighter. A new kid from the other side of the world? This was huge. Ohio — that was practically another planet. What did they eat there? Did they say *mate* or *dude*? Had Addison ever seen a bald eagle up close?

All around the room, curiosity sparked. Jack and Lucy exchanged looks. Even Sam, usually nose-deep in his sketchbook, glanced up. Lizzie, finally back at school after that legendary driveway skateboarding accident that broke her arm, raised an eyebrow too. She'd missed most of last term and had been doing schoolwork from home with her wrist in a cast. Ray had missed her quick wit and the way she asked the questions he always forgot to.

She leaned toward Lucy and stage-whispered, "Do you think he brought peanut butter and jelly in his lunchbox, or is that just something cartoons made up?"

Ray nearly snorted.

All eyes were now on Addison, who stood awkwardly at the front of the room, shifting like he wasn't quite sure what to do with his arms. His backpack looked about two sizes too big, like he was lugging around bowling balls instead of books. His eyes flicked toward the door, then dropped to his sneakers.

"Welcome, Addison," Mr. Nelson said, his voice warm. "Why don't you tell us a little about yourself?"

Addison cleared his throat. "Uh... I moved here from the US with my family."

And then: nothing.

Ray waited. Surely there was more. Favourite food? Favourite sport? Had he ever been to Disneyland?

But the silence stretched. Lucy tapped her pencil. Jack tilted his head. Lizzie leaned forward like she had at least five follow-up questions ready. Even Ray leaned in a little, willing Addison to keep going. But Addison just pressed his lips together and held on to his backpack straps like they might help him disappear.

Mr. Nelson nodded kindly. "We're happy to have you. You can take the seat next to Ray."

Score.

As Addison slid into the desk beside him, Ray turned, keen to make a good first impression.

"Hey! I've never met anyone from Ohio before."

"Yeah," Addison said quietly, eyes still down.

Okay, not exactly a warm hello. But maybe he was just nervous. New school. New country. New everything.

Ray gave it another go. "Have you ever done a talent quest? Our school's doing this big thing, *The Great Talent Takeover*. Everyone's signing up."

Addison blinked. "Oh. Cool."

Ray tilted his head. *Cool?* That was it?

"You should sign up. You must be good at something."

Addison shrugged. "I don't know."

Before Ray could ask more, Mr. Nelson clapped his hands together.

"Alright, let's get started with our first lesson."

Ray sat back, but his mind kept buzzing. Addison was quiet, a little serious. Maybe even unsure of himself. But something about him made Ray want to know more. Maybe Addison just needed a proper Aussie welcome.

And deep down, Ray had a hunch. A tiny spark of something. Like maybe this new kid, this quiet, unsure kid from Ohio, was going to matter. Maybe even become a friend.

As the class settled in around him, Ray had no idea that by the end of the week, he'd be seeing himself in a way he never had before.

And it all started with a single moment.