

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

by Ken Bradbury



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Characters: Darlene, Jessica, Erin, & Missy

Three girls stand in a line, ranging from confused to petrified. They stand a moment, then Darlene enters ... obviously the boss.

DARLENE: Okay! Line up!

JESSICA: We are lined up.

DARLENE: I knew that. Are we ready?

ERIN: I don't even know what we're doing here.

DARLENE: Didn't you read the announcement?

ERIN: Sorry. I was doing something really dumb instead. I was studying.

DARLENE: You've got your whole life to study, Erin. This is important. This is the Olympics!

JESSICA: I think it's a crazy idea.

DARLENE: Look, you've all moved into our school this year and I'm going to bring you up to speed. I'm putting you all in the Olympics.

ERIN: I can't even dribble a basketball.

DARLENE: This isn't basketball, Erin! This is something really important! Something life-changing.

JESSICA: I like my life. Why change it?

DARLENE: Because you're in Jr. High! You can't just walk into Middle School like some dumb, confused idiot!

JESSICA: My mom did.

DARLENE: That was a different time, Jessica. (*noticing Missy for the first time*) What's the matter with you? You haven't said anything.

MISSY: I ... uh ... I don't have anything to say.

JESSICA: Do we have to do this?

DARLENE: No. No, you can suffer through your Jr. High years without the proper skills and make a total mess of things. Or ... you can listen to me and learn to compete in Darlene's Jr.

High Olympics. You know, starving kids in China would love to have me as a life coach!

ERIN: A life coach?

DARLENE: An instructor! A guide! Face it, girls, I'm about the most popular girl in this school. You should thank me for what I'm about to teach you. *(to Missy)* Why are you so quiet?

MISSY: Uh ... may I be excused? I have a math test tomorrow.

DARLENE: Math! Missy, I'm going to train you in something that's *really* important! Social skills! Making a name for yourself! Being somebody! Don't you want that?

MISSY: I'm okay with being nobody. Really. Being nobody is ... you know ... peaceful.

DARLENE: Oh, save me from girls who want to live a safe life! There's adventure out there, ladies! There's an entire school to conquer! Okay! You ready for the first event?

MISSY: No.

DARLENE: Good! Good! Okay, here's the scenario, girls. It's 8 o'clock in the morning, you've hit the snooze button twice because you were up too late playing computer games last night, your mother comes in and says, "You're going to be late for school!" You have ten minutes to do your hair! Go!

(Jessica and Erin begin to madly brush their hair, primp, spray their hair, curl their hair...a flurry of activity. Missy simply brushes her hair back a bit, then speaks.)

MISSY: Okay.

(The other two stop and look at her.)

DARLENE: What?

MISSY: I'm done.

DARLENE: You hardly touched your hair.

MISSY: I know. I don't want to be late for school.

DARLENE: You're going to walk into first hour class without styling your hair?

MISSY: That won't help my grades, will it?

DARLENE: Your grades! I'm talking about your life, girl! This could affect your entire life!

MISSY: My hair?

DARLENE: Your social standing! You've got to be admired! You want to get every girl in school jealous of you.

MISSY: Oh.

DARLENE: Oh?

MISSY: Sorry.

DARLENE: Oh, forget it. Event number two, ladies!

ERIN: How's my hair?

DARLENE: We've moved on, Erin. Event number two in the Middle School Olympics. Texting! Get out your phones! When I say go, text in this message! (*Erin and Jessica retrieve their imaginary phones*) (*speaking quickly*) "Oh my gosh! Did you see what she's wearing today? I've got to type fast because the teacher's watching me and we're supposed to be watching a video on the digestive system but it's all ... you know ... yuck ... and besides digestion makes me think of lunch and we're having chicken nuggets for the third time this week and they're all hard and cold by the time we get to it and besides I'm not eating this week anyway, and now I've got to go because she's taking my cell phone." Stop!

(*looking Erin and Jessica's phones*) So? How'd we do? Get it all? Uh-huh ... nice ... nice ... terrible spelling but great finger speed. (*to Mindy*) You didn't text?

MISSY: I don't text. It takes too much time.

JESSICA: You don't text?

ERIN: How do you breathe?

DARLENE: Too much time? What in the world can be more important than texting?

MISSY: When I want to talk to my friends I just talk to them.

DARLENE: Face to face? Are you crazy? Girl, you need major therapy.

ERIN: You just talk to them?

JESSICA: Cool.

DARLENE: Not cool! Next event!

JESSICA: Do they talk back?

MISSY: Uh-huh.

DARLENE: Focus, Jessica! Focus! Next event! Giggling!

MISSY: Giggling?



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