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# **PREVIEW**

THE  
**BULLY**  
GAME

BY  
**GEORGE  
HALTZKA**



**PREVIEW**

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# **The Bully Game**

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# **The Bully Game**

*By George Halitzka*

## **Cast of Characters**

**BRITTANY**, *a teenage game show host*  
**THEODORA**, *a socially-awkward student*  
**THOR**, *a tough guy*  
**JUSTIN**, *the class clown*  
**HEIDI**, *who's very popular*

## **Setting**

Today at your school after the last bell

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# The Bully Game

*(A tight spotlight shines on BRITTANY, who is touching up her makeup in a compact.)*

**BRITTANY:** It's all about the show. Put on a smile and give 'em what they want. Make 'em laugh, make 'em like you, whatever it takes. Yeah, somebody might get hurt – it's you or them. Keep 'em laughing or you'll be the one who cries. Don't know what I mean? Stick around for the show. You'll see.

*(The main stage lights come up to reveal BRITTANY motioning to THEODORA.)*

**BRITTANY:** Come on, Theodora! Half the school's waiting.

**THEODORA:** I never heard of a video game tournament at school.

**BRITTANY:** You're gonna love it! I bet you can win it all.

**THEODORA:** I'm okay, I guess . . . Brittany, are you my friend?

**BRITTANY:** Yeah.

**THEODORA:** I mean, my *real* friend? 'Cause once, this girl said she was my friend, then knocked down my books.

**BRITTANY:** I'm not two-faced.

**THEODORA** *(looking around and starting to exit):* We shouldn't be in here. We'll get in trouble.

*(THEODORA starts to exit. BRITTANY grabs her arm.)*

**BRITTANY:** I didn't wanna tell you . . . if you do this, it'll help your Mom.

*(Pause. THEODORA looks at BRITTANY with uncertain hope.)*

**THEODORA:** Honest?

**BRITTANY:** Swear.

**THEODORA** (*nodding her agreement*): If it'll help Mom.

**BRITTANY**: Wait here; the show's about to start.

**THEODORA**: What show?

**BRITTANY**: The tournament! Just . . . stay here!

**THEODORA**: If it'll help Mom.

*(BRITTANY leaves THEODORA in front of the curtain, then darts offstage in the opposite direction. Peppy game show music. The curtain opens to reveal three game show contestant podiums.)*

**BRITTANY**: And now it's time for everybody's favorite after-school activity, the Bully Game—where the worse you are, the better you play! Let's meet today's meanies. *(Each BULLY enters as he or she is introduced.)* Our first contestant enjoys tormenting cats, bench-pressing small cars, and stuffing seventh graders in lockers. His friends call him Thor Helgenschmidt, but you can call him "cruel." *(BRITTANY holds up an applause sign.)* Contestant number two is the class clown with a mean streak, Justin Hoogelmann. Justin loves to make folks laugh, especially at other people's expense. *(Applause sign.)* Finally, Heidi Stimple's specialties include starting rumors, sending evil texts, and being two-faced. Don't make her mad, girls, or she'll make you cry yourself to sleep tonight. *(Applause sign. Theme music fades out.)* All right, bullies, you know how the game is played. You have three rounds to abuse today's victim. Whoever does it best will be the biggest meany at *[Your School]*. Ready to play?

**HEIDI**: Excuse me, Brittany? There's been a mistake. I'm not a bully; kids are just jealous. I can't help being popular.

**JUSTIN**: Yeah, I'm not a bully either. Some people can't take a joke.

**THOR**: Amateurs.

**HEIDI**: Say WHAT, musclehead?

**THOR**: You heard me, Barbie.

**JUSTIN**: Just 'cause I have a brain—

**THOR**: You can't bully nobody.



**HEIDI:** Yeah? Then let's talk about that stain on your shirt.

**JUSTIN:** You go shopping at Abercrombie and Dumpster?

*(THOR advances on HEIDI and JUSTIN. BRITTANY steps between them.)*

**BRITTANY:** Slow down, Bullies! Save it for your victim: Theodora McGillicutty.

**JUSTIN:** *Theodora?* The freakshow from math class?

**BRITTANY:** Remember, each of you have three chances to abuse your victim so we can discover the biggest bully of all. Theodora McGillicutty is an eighth grader who enjoys wearing black, gaming on her phone, and writing poetry. She doesn't have friends and usually forgets her deodorant.

**THEODORA:** That's not true!

**BRITTANY:** All right, bullies—time for Round One! You have one minute, using only words, to make Theodora feel like the loser she is. On your mark—

**THEODORA:** Brittany! This isn't what you said—

**BRITTANY:** Get set—

**THEODORA:** Where's the video games?

**BRITTANY:** GO!

**JUSTIN** *(pointing to THEODORA'S outfit):* Hey Theo, who died?

**THEODORA:** What? . . . Oh, black's my favorite color.

**HEIDI:** *Love* your hair! Does your Mommy do it for you?

**THEODORA:** Right now, my mom isn't—

**THOR:** Does it stink in here, or is it just you?

**THEODORA** *(sniffing her own armpits):* I don't smell!

**THOR:** Back off! You probably got bugs, too.

**JUSTIN:** What a reek! Did you take out the garbage, or are you just

trash?

**HEIDI** (*pulling THEODORA aside*): Theo, I'm sorry they're making fun of you.

**THEODORA** (*with a shrug*): A lot of kids do.

**HEIDI**: Do you like any boys? (*THEODORA shrugs in embarrassment.*) You can tell me. I won't say anything, promise.

**THEODORA**: Swear? (*HEIDI nods. THEODORA speaks in a stage whisper.*) I think, um . . . Thor's kinda cute.

**HEIDI**: Hey Thor, Trash Girl likes you!

**THEODORA**: You swore!

**THOR** (*shuddering*): I feel slimy all over!

**BRITTANY**: Time's up! Theodora, how do you feel?

**THEODORA**: Justin, that was mean when you said I was trash.

**BRITTANY**: Can't you take a joke?

**THEODORA** (*to THOR*): Why'd you say I smell?

**BRITTANY**: Have you heard of *deodorant*?

**THEODORA** (*to BRITTANY*): You let Heidi tell everybody who I like! You're my friend!

**BRITTANY**: Only when people aren't watching. If you stopped being so annoying, people would leave you alone.

**THEODORA**: Brittany!

**BRITTANY**: Heidi, that was a brilliant move — tricking Theo into revealing her secret crush. You win round one!

(*HEIDI steps forward into a spotlight.*)

**HEIDI**: I'm not *trying* to be mean. I swear. But if you were up here with everybody watching, you'd try and win. You know you would. People say I'm "popular." But that's not, like, guaranteed. If kids see me making nice with the freakshow . . . I'm not *good* at anything. I'm not

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*failing* stuff, but it's straight Cs, okay? I don't play sports, I don't sing or dance or whatever . . . I gotta do something to make people notice me. It's not my fault I'm popular. It's just the only thing I'm good at.

*(The spotlight fades out. We return to normal lighting.)*

**BRITTANY:** Time for Round 2: Physical Bullying!

**THEODORA:** I'm leaving!

**BRITTANY:** Don't you wanna help your Mom?

**THEODORA:** How can this help—

**BRITTANY:** You'll never know if you leave, Theo. On your mark—get set—GO! *(BRITTANY acts as a sports commentator during this round, narrating the BULLIES' actions as they perform them.)* Looks like Thor is starting with a classic—knocking down Theo's books in the hallway. She's trying to pick them up . . . look, Justin offers to help! But not really—look at that book fly! Now Heidi moves in. She's threatening to gossip about Theo's crush unless Theo gives up her necklace . . . smooth move, Heidi! Threatening can be *much* more effective than real violence. Uh-oh, it's not working. Heidi does a hair pull! Looks like that hurt! And Theo surrenders the necklace. Justin comes in with a flanking move, tripping Theo as she walks away! Look at that laugh—great intimidation tactic. Meanwhile, Thor is back for more. I think—yes, he's actually going to try and shove her in a locker. This man knows all the classics! Time's up, bullies.

**THEODORA:** Thor, that hurt!

**THOR:** I'll teach you to tell people you like me.

**HEIDI:** Nice necklace! Thanks, Freakshow.

**THEODORA:** Do I get that back after the game?

**BRITTANY:** This round goes to Thor for his use of the classic book-tossing and locker-stuffing moves!

**THOR:** I'm dedicating this win to my big brother, who taught me everything I know. Bluto, I hope you'll get to see the pictures in prison.

**BRITTANY:** Thanks, Thor. We'll be back with our next round in one minute.

*(THOR steps into the spotlight.)*

**THOR:** Pretty soon, I'll be able to do it. I'm tired of hearin' Mom cry when they fight. Tired of bein' his punching bag if I get in the way. Yeah, pretty soon I'll be able to do it. Stop my Old Man. But for now, I gotta give it back somehow. He's too big. So when I get whupped, I whup on somebody too. Like you don't. Maybe nobody pounds you, but when somebody makes you feel this low . . . you give it back. Don't tell me you don't. That's how it works. I'm just bein' like Dad. Like you. Kids should learn to defend themselves. That's how it works.

*(We return to normal lighting.)*

**BRITTANY:** Good news, meanies, we have time for a bonus round: Cyberbullying!

**THOR:** What's cyber-babbling?

**JUSTIN** *(rolling his eyes as he takes out his phone):* Bullying on the internet, genius.

**THOR:** My phone's in my locker!

**BRITTANY:** Too bad, so sad – looks like this round is Heidi versus Justin. You have one minute to demolish Theo. On your mark – get set – go!

**JUSTIN:** Hey Freakshow, you got social media? *(THEODORA crosses her arms and refuses to answer. Meanwhile, HEIDI is already searching on her phone.)* Never mind; I'll find it . . .

**HEIDI** *(showing JUSTIN her phone screen):* I wouldn't tell either if I took selfies like that.

**THEODORA** *(pulling out her own phone to see what they're looking at):* Hey! That's when I dressed up for the fall dance!

*(Throughout this scene, the dialogue inside {brackets} should be typed by the characters into their phones at the same time they say it aloud.)*

**JUSTIN:** {Who're you trying to impress? No guy's gonna dance with that.}

**HEIDI:** {Nice hair. Too bad it's not 2002.}

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**THOR** (*snatching HEIDI'S phone*): I wanna play, too! {U . . . R . . . ugly.}

(*HEIDI snatches her phone back before he's finished typing.*)

**THEODORA** (*to BRITTANY*): Make them stop! My friends'll see that stuff.

**BRITTANY**: Like you *have* friends.

**JUSTIN**: {This is what a Freakshow looks like.} (*putting down his phone*) Did I win the bonus?

**BRITTANY**: Stupid comments on social – that's all you got? (*JUSTIN looks confused – he thinks he's doing just fine.*) No selfies? No texts? (*(JUSTIN and HEIDI shrug.)*) I'll show you how it's done. (*whipping out her phone*) Here's an *awesome* picture of Theo chewing with her mouth open at lunch.

**THEODORA** (*horrified*): How'd you get that?

**BRITTANY**: Yesterday in the cafeteria when I was acting like your friend. (*posting another photo*) And here, Theo looks like a huge dork –

**THEODORA**: Brittany, stuff you put online never goes away!

**BRITTANY**: Next, you blow up her phone with texts. {Theo, you look sooo dumb in those pictures.} {Why don't you stop coming to school? Nobody wants to see you.} {Were you born like this, or do you hafta work to be that stupid?} (*Mortified and upset, THEODORA turns off her phone.*) See? *That's* how you cyberbully.

**HEIDI** (*impressed*): Do you give lessons?

**BRITTANY** (*taking a not-very-humble bow*): The bonus round goes to the host for her brilliant use of selfies and texting. Our championship is next, bullies, so get ready for the final challenge. (*The lights dim. BRITTANY steps into the spotlight.*) I know what you think: I'm a bully. A mean girl. But if you knew me, you'd call me what I am: Scared. At my old school, me and this girl Katrina were friends. But the guy she liked went out with me, so Katelyn started an online thing called "Group Without Brittany." Anybody could join . . . except me. I couldn't see what kids posted, but don't worry, they told me. Have you ever had 30 humans dedicated to destroying your existence? Apparently, I have buckteeth, stringy hair, big feet, an irritating voice . . . and dandruff. They wouldn't quit with the dandruff. I hated school

because kids told me what was happening online. I hated home because I imagined what they were saying. I hated *life* until I stopped eating and got sent to counseling. When I transferred to this school, I decided it was time for a change: I wasn't gonna be afraid anymore. Kids would be scared of *me*. You think I *like* this Bully Game? I put on a show because the Katelyn thing could happen again, and I'm *freaked*. Who's Heidi gonna spread rumors about when she's done with Theo? Who's Thor gonna beat up? Our school counselor says bullying's about power, but I think she's wrong: it's about *fear*. Kids leave you alone when they're afraid. Otherwise, they realize *you're* the one who's scared. *(We return to normal lighting.)* Time for our championship round, bullies! Heidi and Thor are tied at one win each, but Justin could come from behind and send us into overtime. Here's everybody's favorite part of the game: the Your Mama round!

**THEODORA:** What? They don't know my mom!

**BRITTANY:** Life sucks. On your mark—get set—GO!

**THOR:** Your mama's so ugly when she went for a haircut, the beauty parlor threw her out!

*(THOR thinks that was hilarious. BRITTANY and the other BULLIES roll their eyes.)*

**BRITTANY:** Not like that—make fun of her *real* mom! She was at the awards thing, when Theo got that dumb math trophy.

*(The BULLIES remember. They nod their heads, smirking.)*

**JUSTIN:** Total freakshow. Like mother, like daughter.

**HEIDI:** She's so skinny, with those circles under her eyes . . . *(to THEODORA)* Is Mommy on drugs?

**THEODORA:** No! She can't help it when—

**JUSTIN:** How come she wears raggedy clothes? Doesn't she have a job?

**THEODORA:** She can't work 'cause—

**HEIDI:** Ohhh, too stupid to get a job? Or just too ugly?

**THEODORA:** She can't always, um—

**THOR:** I swear that was a wig. Is she bald or something?

**THEODORA:** Brittany, stop them!

**BRITTANY:** Everybody's laughing but you. Whose problem is *that*?

**JUSTIN:** Remember how she almost fell? Right on top of Theo's little brother?

*(THEODORA covers her face and begins to cry.)*

**BRITTANY:** She's crying, bullies! Move in for the kill!

**HEIDI:** Ugly, stupid, bald, clumsy . . . your mom's got it all, girl!

**THEODORA:** She also has cancer, all right? She might *die*.

*(A moment of silence.)*

**BRITTANY:** No mercy, bullies! Do you want to win or not?

**HEIDI:** Um . . . Justin, why don't *you* move in for the kill?

**JUSTIN:** Thor can do it.

**THOR:** I can't . . .

**BRITTANY:** Are you bullies or not?

**HEIDI:** Brittany, her Mom's *dying*.

**JUSTIN:** I told you, I just wanna make people laugh.

**BRITTANY:** Aww, let's throw a pity party for Freakshow!

**JUSTIN** *(extending his hand to THEODORA):* Theo, come on.

**THEODORA** *(to BRITTANY, speaking through angry tears):* You said this would help my Mom! You're not my friend. You're a liar.

*(JUSTIN leads THEODORA offstage. Pause.)*

**THOR:** You said this would help her Mom?

**BRITTANY:** You don't think she did it for fun, do you?

**HEIDI:** Her Mom with *cancer*?



## **END OF FREE PREVIEW**

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