

GAME ON

Written By

May Grehan

Based on, if any  
Primary School

FADE IN:

EXT. UNDER THE HALL - DAY

A competitive match of handball is taking place. Think a 'Pokemon' tournament, lots of cuts to different angles, sound effects and split screens. The players faces are in shadow.

There is commentary throughout the match.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Welcome to the match. It's a scorcher.

EM (V.O.)

You might wanna finish your Zooper Dooper before it melts.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Fine serve. Tigerlily is able to return it and Stephanie plows a leftie backhand return, couple of shots exchanged, but Tigerlily struggles to keep a cross-court backhand in a rally.

EM (O.S.)

First fault! This game is really heating up. A sausage-sizzling serve from Stephanie there. And Tigerlily slugs it back.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Stephanie performs a cobble-smash. She plays a good rally so far. Tigerlily plays a slack hand but she struggles with it.

EM (V.O.)

Double fault. You don't get games better than this Char-char.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Certainly not. Looks like Tigerlily has been annihilated and Stephanie is once again the reigning champion of Sherville Primary School.

Tigerlily hands over her ball. Stephanie takes it.

The title "Balls" appears.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Opening credits begin.

A student writes the title 'Balls' over and over in her workbook. The camera tilts up on the student and scans the rest of the classroom focusing on objects like rulers, books and desks.

The commentary continues.

CHARLOTTE (O.S)

Well Emmy we've got some exciting news to share.

EM (O.S)

What is it Char-char?

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

Well apart from the looming pen licence test crippling everyone's love for the sport, it looks as though there is a new kid on the scene.

Reveal CLARE (10), a wholesome looking kid.

EM (O.S.)

That's right. We have the facts and they are that she is from somewhere else in Australia, she has been with us for almost a week and... she has no friends.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

What are your thoughts on the topic, Emmy?

Reveal the commentators, EM (9) and CHARLOTTE (10). They hold pencils up to their mouths as microphones. They think they are hilarious and rightly so.

EM

Well she is pretty cute and I can't smell her from here so she seems alright. What about you Char-char?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know Emmy, could be a cooty-infested-mess or could be the newest contender -

A giant one metre ruler slams on their desk. Reveal Mrs Benedict (40), she resembles the 'You are the Weakest link' host. She is terrifying. She eyeballs the girls.

Mrs Benedict is the only adult you fully see in the film. When she is revealed there is always a tilt up.

MRS BENEDICT

Emily Banks and Charlotte  
Reugebrink would you like to  
finish your commentary... or would  
you like to finally get your pen  
licences?

They both lower their pencils at the same time. Mrs Benedict's metre ruler slides off the table with a terrible shriek. She walks back to the front of the class and sits. She glares at all the children. She hates children. But loves to terrorize.

Em and Charlotte look at each other. They giggle and continue to write.

Back to Clare. She looks around at her surroundings. There is a girl applying lip gloss in the back corner of the class, a boy making origami right behind her, and a girl eating her own booger at the front of the class. Clare disgusted, looks away quickly.

There is a boy to her left, MANSOOR (11), a Middle-Eastern boy, very skater-boy type with his hair covering his face. He is concentrated on his workbook. Clare tries to get his attention.

CLARE

Psst... Psst... Psst.

Mansoor flicks his hair back and looks at Clare.

MANSOOR

What?

CLARE

I'm Clare. What's your name?

MANSOOR

Mansoor.

Mansoor stares at Clare begrudgingly and swings his hair back onto his face. He continues his cursive writing.

CLARE

I'm new.

Mansoor shutters. This girl won't leave him alone.

CLARE (CONT'D)

So... how is your day going?

Mansoor flicks his hair and stares at Clare.

MANSOOR

(Really irritated now)

Look! I really need to pass this test. My writing is the worst in the class and I don't want to repeat a year again. So what do you want?

CLARE

I was just wondering if you wanted to hang out at lunch. I mean you don't have to but I thought-

Mansoor gets back to his work. He doesn't have time for Clare right now.

CLARE (CONT'D)

-I'd ask. You seem pretty cool and you know... maybe we can play a bit of handball.

Mansoor's head shoots up. He turns slowly to look at Clare.

MANSOOR

Bottom playground. Middle bell. Bring your ball.

Mansoor points his pen at Clare. He does some cool pen and finger trick, as if he is a finger ninja. He flips his hair back in to position and gets back to his workbook.

CLARE

Cool cool cool cool cool cool.

Clare is hyped to have a possible new friend. She nods and gets back to her writing.

INT. BAG RACKS - DAY

The first bell rings.

Introducing MERRY (10), a tomboy with short boyish hair, who is extremely offended being called a boy. And Cole (9), an Japanese boy with big-square glasses, a total gamer.

Merryn, Cole and Mansoor get their lunchboxes out of their backpacks. They stare suspiciously at Clare.

Clare is sitting by herself about 100 metres away. She is on some steps with her lunchbox, trying to do the cool ninja pencil trick Mansoor previously did.

COLE

What do you mean she challenged you?

MANSOOR

She challenged me. She said handball or die.

MERRYN

That's so awesome!  
(Suddenly suspicious)  
I mean... who does she think she is?

MANSOOR

I don't know yet.

They lean their heads in unison and stare at Clare. Clare catches them and waves. They straighten up.

COLE

I've already talked to the twins about the girl. Nothing on her yet. Except they did say she has a freckle just behind her right ear.

Zoom into Clare's ear. The freckle is there. Behind her are the twins, HARRIET (8) & JACK (8), both skinny with limp dark hair. The identical siblings are ducked behind a bush, one with notepad and one with binoculars, spying on Clare.

Mansoor, Merryn and Cole's heads have drifted to the side again.

MERRYN

They are so thorough.

Clare looks over at them again. They straighten up.

COLE

Well what are you gonna do?

MANSOOR

The balls in my court, Cole. I say... game on!

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

The middle bell rings.

Mansoor, Merryn and Cole are positioned on the playground. Merryn is on the monkey bars and Cole on the slide. As Clare approaches, Cole slides down and Merryn climbs over. They stand behind Mansoor.

MANSOOR

Looks like you showed up.

CLARE

Yeah. Didn't want to sit alone again. After three days it gets kind of lonely. I started talking to my ball. I think I might call it... Wilson.

Clare raises her ball and turns it revealing a signature on one side. We find out later this is a very important ball.

MANSOOR

This is Merryn and Cole.

Mansoor gestures to the pair. They try to suss Clare out and see if she's serious competition.

CLARE

Hi.

COLE

(Threatening)

Hey.

MERRYN

(Assessing)

Hey.

Mansoor interrupts.

MANSOOR

Right. Let's get this show on the road.

They follow Mansoor onto the bottom courts.

EXT. BOTTOM COURT - DAY

Merryn takes a chocolate coin out of her pocket.

MERRYN  
Head or tails?

MANSOOR  
Heads.

CLARE  
Tails?

Merryn tosses the coin. It spins high and falls down to the ground on tails.

MERRYN  
(To Mansoor)  
You win. Who's Ace?

MANSOOR  
(Points at Clare)  
Her.

CLARE  
Thanks man!  
(Confused)  
What's an Ace?

MERRYN  
You serve first.

CLARE  
Oh! Ha! I knew that.

COLE  
(To self)  
Ooh she's cocky.

Merryn picks up the chocolate coin. Both players take their place in the square. She opens the chocolate coin, puts it in her mouth and eats it. Close up on her mouth.

MERRYN  
Three, two, one... Handball!

They play with Clare's ball first. Shot like a tennis sports match, there's lots of slow-motion and replays. Clare is having fun and Mansoor is in his element. Clare wins almost immediately.

CLARE  
I'll get it!

Clare goes to get his ball.



COLE  
(To Merryn)  
Woah. That round was less than 10  
seconds. That's a Sherville  
record.

Cole and Merryn watch Clare as she comes back for round two. They are fully engaged now.

MANSOOR  
My balls turn.

Clare pockets her ball and Mansoor brings out his very torn and ashy one. It looks like it's been swallowed and later vomited out by a beast of some kind.

MANSOOR (CONT'D)  
That was a lucky spin you had  
there.

CLARE  
Oh thanks.

MANSOOR  
(Game on)  
It won't happen again.

Round two begins. Mansoor is intensely serious now. Clare is still very composed. Mansoor wipes beads of sweat off his forehead while Clare does stupid tricks like bouncing the ball through her legs, using her left hand and bouncing the ball with her head. Clare wins. Mansoor goes to collect his ball.

Cole stops the timer on his watch.

COLE  
(Astonished)  
One minute, forty seconds.

Merryn and Cole look at each other in excitement then bound over to Clare.

MERRYN  
That was awesome!

COLE  
Your arm swing was killer. It's  
something I've never seen before.

MERRYN  
Where did you learn to play like  
that?

CLARE

My brother taught me.

Mansoor, feeling defeated, finally returns with his ball. He cleans it on his pants and hands it to Clare. The others stand back.

MANSOOR

Here, you win.

Mansoor holds his ball out for Clare to take. Clare does not take it. Mansoor, ashamed by his loss, keeps his head down.

MANSOOR (CONT'D)

Take it.

(Beat)

TAKE IT!

CLARE

Manny, I don't want your ball.  
It's yours.

Mansoor looks up at Clare, confused.

CLARE (CONT'D)

Good game.

Clare puts her hand out for Mansoor to shake. Mansoor pockets his ball and shakes Clare's hand. They both smile.

Merryn and Cole smile too. They walk away huddled in a line.

EXT. BIG STEPS - DAY

STEPHANIE McCALLISTER (11), a year seven South-African girl who is an overachiever, has as strict bob haircut and is the school bully, has watched the whole game between Mansoor and Clare. She sits on the big steps, like a Mafia boss, with her two henchmen, TIM (13) and ANDREW (12).

She watches the four players walk away and slams her fists down on the cement. Andrew winces. Stephanie is furious.

STEPHANIE

Who is that girl?

ANDREW

Don't know.

STEPHANIE

What did you say?

Andrew does not respond. He is terrified at what Stephanie might do to him.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Hmm?

More terrified.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Hmm?

Tim interrupts, very matter of factly.

TIM

He said he doesn't know.

STEPHANIE

Oh. Well then...

(Genuinely sweet)

Tim, can you tell Andrew that he needs to speak clearer because sometimes I can't hear what he says.

Tim nods and Andrew nods too.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

(Evil)

Now... find out all you can on that year five girl. Whatever it takes.

Tim and Andrew nod and walk off. Close up on Stephanie's evil face.

INT. BAG RACKS - DAY

Cole takes chopsticks from his bag. He breaks them apart and puts them up to his mouth. He does the face of a walrus. Everyone laughs.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The four of them sit at their respective desks. Mansoor and Clare in front and Merryn and Cole behind them. Merryn holds a chatterbox out and Clare picks a number.

INT. CANTEEN - DAY