



Jessie MacIntyre, 14, is new to Estevan, and she's having trouble fitting in. By signing her up with the local girls hockey team, her parents hope to give her a fresh start and help her make new friends. But bullies can be found everywhere—even the dressing room. Will Jessie be able to protect herself and find acceptance?

### **Chapter One Excerpt**

3:27.

Three minutes till two days of freedom.

Mr. Wallis drones at the front of the class about our homework assignments for Monday then rolls right into a lecture about tonight's Halloween Dance and how we have to set a good example for Estevan Junior High. Everybody nods because they've heard it before. I haven't, but it doesn't matter. I wouldn't go to that dance if my life depended on it.

Believe it or not, Mr. Wallis is one of the few EJH teachers I like. He's usually in a good mood, and he tries to make his classes interesting. He uses cool expressions like "beware of Greeks bearing gifts" and "we're two ships passing in the night." On the downside, he's obsessed with making us enter our daily homework in the calendar app on our phones.

I realize that everybody's staring at me. What did I miss?

"Jessie, let me repeat this. Where is your phone?" Mr. Wallis asks.

As I reach under my chair for my backpack, the plastic seat makes a squonking noise, just like a fart.

The sound is timed perfectly with dead silence. You'd have to be deaf to miss it. Jason snickers behind me. Derrick, who rarely pays attention in class, starts laughing like a hyena. That gets the class going. While Mr. Wallis tries to regain control, I dig like a gopher in my backpack. Eyes burn holes in my back. My fingers brush my phone, but there's no way I'm taking it out.

It's a relic. A dinosaur. My dad's old flip phone from another century.

Mercifully Natalie's phone starts playing a song I don't recognize, and Mr. Wallis makes a fuss because he has a rule about shutting off notifications—not that Natalie cares. She gives him this pathetic story about a family emergency, and he falls for it hook, line, and sinker.

By the time I sit up, things are back to normal. "I can't find it," I tell him. "I'll write down my homework." I hold up a piece of paper.

I notice Kim's smiling at me. She sits in the row to my left. But her smile isn't friendly. Why would it be? She's definitely not my friend.

Note from Maureen: *Power Plays* is a marriage of two worlds from my experience—junior high teacher and hockey mom. Although Estevan Junior High was a wonderful place to work and interact with young people, it was not free of bullies. Work places and schools rarely are. I taught Jessies, Kims, Shaunas, and Taras. Many of the hockey anecdotes are true and are based on my daughters' experiences playing in Estevan. I am so proud to have two female hockey players from SE Saskatchewan on the cover! My friend Wanda Harron shot the original

photograph in Lampman (my hometown rink!) in January 2020. If you have questions or comments about Power Plays, please reach out to me. I love to talk hockey and books!

### Community Reviews

I learnt many ways to try and stop bullying. The parts about Jessie going to parties was also very true and how it is hard to say no.

— **Courtney, 12**

I have seen things like this (bullying) happen before and when I first read this book it gave me goose bumps because it seemed so real. It really made me think about bullying and how it hurts people and how people can be so mean, sometimes without realizing it.

— **Haylee, 13**

Normally the action parts of sports novels confuse me. Even though I don't know much about hockey, the novel's action was easy to understand.

— **Kaitlyn, 13**

Really good book, really good read. It was easy to follow the plot. The author was able to get the basic teen issues of bullying and loneliness that accompanies moving to a new town and the natural responses of covering up and hiding.

— **Jordynn, age 15**

As my class read the novel aloud, they laughed together, were intense together, and felt empathy for the characters together. This novel made my class better.

— **Dana H, teacher**

**Emily & Maureen**

**Hale & Maureen**

