

**Angie Barillaro**

# **IF LOOKS COULD KILL!**

**A play about appearances, body image and the media.**



**Radiant Heart Publishing**

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## PLAY SYNOPSIS – OUTLINE

1. The Jessie and James Show introduce topic on the controversial beauty contest The Millennium Babe.
2. Recent death of Anne Johnston who was starving herself to win the competition after having been rejected because she was a size 12.
3. Mrs. Johnstone and daughter, and Anna's best friend.
4. Historical fashion footage - last 100 years of fashion – either overheads or real models or PowerPoint presentation.
5. 50's News - models catwalk to song from that era
6. 60's News - models catwalk to song from that era
7. 70's News - models catwalk to song from that era
8. 80's News - models catwalk to song from that era
9. 90's News - models catwalk to song from that era
10. MILLENIUM BABE Competition organizers
11. Women's expert attacking magazines, toy manufacturers
12. Children playing with toys
13. Barbie creator and Barbie
14. Editors of women's magazines
15. POPULARITY expert from Popular Magazine
16. Calvin Clone – leading fashion designer
17. Roundup
18. FINALE: Dance/sing (OPTIONAL)



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## Scene One

- ◆ INTRODUCTORY MUSIC - Students may choose to show a video they have made featuring their peers; or display photographs on a screen.

◆ VOICE OVER "It's the J AND J SHOW"! ENTER JESSIE & JAMES

- JESSIE: Hi everyone. Welcome to another action packed show.
- JAMES: That's right; today we're looking into the very controversial scandal surrounding THE MILLENIUM BABE Competition.
- JESSIE: You may have read lately about the tragic death of Anna Johnstone, a teenager who suicided after she heard the news from THE MILLENIUM BABE Competition organizers that she didn't qualify for the contest because she was too fat.
- JAMES: Given that Anna was just a size 12 – well, I'd hardly call that obese.
- JESSIE: So today, we're asking the questions that need to be asked. What is going on? We've called in a number of people in the field to give us their side of the story.
- JAMES: Are young women being treated to unrealistic ideals that are impossible for them to live up to? Who are the culprits? Why are so many young girls suffering from eating disorders?
- JESSIE: Did you know that even primary school girls are now dieting and obsessing about their weight and appearances?
- JAMES: It's quite alarming. But now we would like to bring in Mrs. Liza Johnstone, mother of suicide victim, Anna – and her younger daughter Larissa, with Anna's best friend Carl.

## Scene Two

ENTER ANNA JOHNSTONE, LARISSA & CARL.

- JESSIE: Thank you for joining us today, given the difficult events you have been through.
- MRS J: Yes it has been difficult, but it's really important for me to keep people aware of the problems, so that hopefully there will be no other victims like my daughter.
- JAMES: Obviously, you are here to talk about your daughter's suicide. Why do you think she did it?
- MRS J: Well, I know why she did it. A day after her death I found her diary hidden under her bed and once I finished reading it, I knew more about my daughter than she ever told me. Carl was her best friend; perhaps he would like to read an entry.

C AR L: **(READING)** “I knew it! I’m too fat! Why do I have to be such a pig? Why can’t I just be slim, or at least stick to a diet? Everyone else can. I’m sick of people saying that I’ve got such a pretty face, if only I’d lose weight. I can’t. I practically eat nothing as it is – and then I’ll go and ruin it by bingeing on chocolate or something. How pathetic. Now this stupid letter. I’ve been told not to even bother applying, as I’m a size 12 from the Millennium Babe competition organizers. What’s the point?”

JESSIE: That’s pretty amazing. Considering your daughter was only 16 and only just a size 12

LARISSA: My sister was very attractive, but she always compared herself with magazine models and actors. Whenever we went shopping, she used to try on size 10s, and if they were a bit too tight, she’d get really depressed. We used to tell her she was obsessed but she never believed us. She really believed she was ugly and fat.

MRS J: The competition was the clincher. It did it for her

JAMES: I hear you’ve been in touch with the MILLENNIUM BABE organizers...

MRS J: Yes, and I’ve got quite a few supporters behind me. Mostly other women, doctors and experts who see the destruction that such organizers create.

LARISSA: There’s also a group of us at school who are protesting about the competition. We’ve had enough of being told how to dress, look and feel.

JESSIE: Do you want to explain that further?

LARISSA: Well, Carl and I and our other friends are faced with many problems. When we read magazines, all we ever see are perfect models. We feel really ugly compared to them!

CARL: It’s hard enough being a teenager, without all these confusing messages.

JAMES: Ugly? Confusing? What do you mean?

CARL: Well just look at these pictures. These aren’t normal girls or guys. Perfect skin, perfect bodies, perfect hair, and perfect teeth. My friends and I don’t look like this, yet many of them are attractive in their own way. How can we compete with these airbrushed beauties?

MRS J: The media should be empowering girls, not taking advantage of how inadequate they already feel.

LARISSA: And look at the girls on television. They have to look so much more attractive than the guys do. It’s not fair.

JAMES: Thank you so much for coming in and joining us, and we promise we will explore this issue further.

MRS J: It was a pleasure, thank you.

◆ **EXIT MRS. J , CARL AND LARISSA.**

## Scene Three

- JESSIE: Well soon we will show you some images we've actually gathered for you before we meet THE MILLENIUM BABE Competition organizers. It's interesting to have a look at what men and women have been told to look like throughout history...
- JAMES: It's almost as if women's bodies are not their own, and are never good enough.
- JESSIE: But let's get back to this MILLENIUM BABE COMPETITION. This competition has been running this for nearly 100 years, started by Vogue Magazine back in 1903. It's a huge global competition, with millions of dollars in prizemoney, and previously known as THE VOGUE WOMAN OF THE DECADE.
- JAMES: Let's see some of the winners from the last half-century, as well as the highlights of those decades.

### Student prepared segment -

- ◆ ENTER 50'S NEWSREADER
- ◆ 50'S MUSIC
- ◆ 50S SLIDES/VIDEO
- ◆ 50'S MODEL, CATWALK TO ELVIS PRESLEY
- ◆ 50'S DANCERS (Optional)
- ◆ REPEAT ABOVE FOR 60S TO BEATLES or other.
- ◆ REPEAT ABOVE FOR 70S TO ABBA or other.
- ◆ REPEAT ABOVE FOR 80S TO MADONNA or other.
- ◆ REPEAT ABOVE FOR 90S TO SPICE GIRLS or other.
- ◆ REPEAT ABOVE FOR 2000s to?

- JAMES: Some pretty incredible looks, there!
- JESSIE: Hmm, yes. It's interesting to see that so many of those women would be seen as fat nowadays.
- JAMES: Now let's welcome the MILLENIUM BABE Competition organizers, Cata and Simon

## Scene Four

### ENTER SIMON AND CATA

- CATA: Bonjour
- SIMON: Hi darlings! Kiss kiss
- JAMES: Well, we're here to listen to your response to the controversy surrounding your competition.
- SIMON: NO! NO! Darling! You must be joking, joking! What controversy? We just have fun darlings! There's no harm, fashion is just fun. You