

# This is Not a Game.

by Meridith Byrne

**Step right up! Watch me weave!  
One ball to chase, one truth to leave!**

Oof, check out that *mom*: screaming kids, tired hair, &  
a discount bag of Oatie-Os.

No job. Pays with SNAP - off your taxes, of course.

Ignore my Benz, the private beach,  
the firm I bought with your overdraft fees.  
She's got her hand in your pocket, not me.  
I just made the game. She chose to cheat you.

**Pick a cup and place your bet!  
Watch your future pirouette!**

Yet another queer kid wants you to learn a new word  
just to say hello.

And "they" need a new law to feel "safe." Spare us.

Never mind those protections I withdrew.  
You won't miss them, unless you're breaking rules.  
Smart folk play straight, and no one gets hurt.  
I like my bathrooms tidy, straightforward like my game.

**My hands are quick, the stakes are high!  
Your dignity? Just sleight-of-eye!**

That sad sack with the ailments called out yet again.  
"Mental health" day.

We all got problems, but you showed up anyway.

I take weeks off grid - to create new jobs.  
Inspiration is a drink on a coastal veranda.  
That mope better quit moaning and boot-strap up.  
Titles are like spells. Don't hate the wizard.

**Pick a shell, pick a side!  
Whose success is bona fide?**

Oh, to be *special*. It's obvious *that one's* at the table  
to fill a quota.

DEI this, affirmative that - buzzwords inspiring barf.

Who cares my stone-engraved name's on the arch.  
Years ago, Grandad earned me my spot.  
But you - you waited in line while diversity cut ahead.  
If they had any merit, they wouldn't need a handout.

**One more spin! Don't be slow!  
Trust your senses - be the show!**

Another day, another scientist spinning a tizzy -  
Fire! Ruin! *Snore*.

Always trying to cancel your Hemi and your burgers.

But this ring on my hand - melted rainforest gold -  
Dorkus is sore it'll never match a lab coat.  
You just compost and recycle - we're doing fine.  
That smell? Don't worry, it's progress.

**Final flip! Last call, last cup!  
Double down or give it up!**

Another go? Ouch. *Sorry*, your partner took your last turn,  
before they ditched.

Don't look at me, call a family lawyer.

You found a pink slip underneath the middle cup?  
You should've watched my hands; it's not that hard.  
Hey, you took a chance, and you lost. That's life.  
Step away from the winners if you're gonna whine.

**Encore twist! Last little spin!  
(Turns out you will never win.)**

Once, you were better than the fallen and the freaks . . .  
you thought.

Kept your shoes clean and your credit tight.

I just left out a ladder to elevate the show.  
You climbed and conformed like a good little drone.  
Remember when I told you, "your time will come?"  
It won't.