

Kat's Dilemma

By Linda Dunlop

- Kee:** Hey! Superstar! Giza hug!
- Kat:** Ow Kee, stop it! Leave me alone!
- Kee:** What's wrong? Aren't you Ms National Running Superstar or something now? Shouldn't you have a smile on your face? Or are you sad that you have ditched your best friend in the entire world for fame, riches and glory?
- Kat:** I wish. My trainer says that for the world championships I need to go a bit beyond what I'm doing. Take it to the next level.
- Kee:** What? You've been training all the time as it is. We never see you anymore. Are you going to stop coming to school too? Hey, can I join the team?
- Kat:** You wish. Forget it. You won't understand anyway.
- Kee:** Sorry. Tell me! That Brown's an eejit anyway. The way he says: "winning is..."
- Kee and Kat:** "...the only sport worth playing!"
- Kee:** Loser.
- Kat:** He wants me to take injections. Epo or something he calls it.
- Kee:** Injections? What's wrong?
- Kat:** Nothing's wrong. It's just something that will help me do a bit better.
- Kee:** What like a drug or something?
- Kat:** No! Well...I don't know. Brown says it is a chemical made by our body, to make red blood cells. The injections give the body a help along. The more red cells I have, the better I can get oxygen to my muscles and the faster I will go. They use it to treat sick people so it must be safe.
- Kee:** But isn't that what drugs do? Help your body do things that it can't do naturally? And they aren't all safe.
- Kat:** You take drugs don't you? Like caffeine in coffee to help you wake up before a test. And Jake takes ritalin to help him concentrate in lessons. Not that he manages it but anyway. We all want to be better. But I don't think it is like that. I mean, I have red blood cells anyway, and this just helps me make more.
- Kee:** Even so, isn't it a bit extreme? I mean who wants a jab for nothing? Do you really trust that Brown to give you clean needles? What about infections? And who knows how safe it really is if it is used for sick people. Maybe your blood will get really thick from all the red cells and you'll have a stroke or heart attack or something. You are fit! And anyway you are already the best, I mean the best, in the school. In the country. And I'm not just saying that coz I love ya.
- Kat:** But I want to be the best in the world, not just this dopey school. And that's what everyone is doing to get to the top these days. If I want to win, I need to do it too.

Kee: But isn't that unfair? I mean surely not everyone is doing it. And even if they are, what does it mean if you win but you know you have taken something to help. Don't you think it's, well, dishonest?

Kat: But everyone is doing it. Mr Brown said that he knows that the best athletes in other countries are doing it. If I want to have a fair chance I've got to do it.

Kee: So there is no problem, you just take the injections and that's that. Good luck to you.

Kat: No, dippo that's not that. I was looking it up there and it says on the internet that it's banned. So I kinda don't want to. But I don't want to let Mr Brown down, and I really want to win. And everyone else is doing it. Plus my mum has paid a fortune for me to get this good and run for the country, so how can I not win?

Kee: Well if it's banned it must be for a good reason, like for your health or something. Seriously you need to tell Brown where to get off.

Kat: Yeah right. Easier said than done! I was thinking I might just take a little bit. You know, see how it works. Then there's little risk to my body and I can see how it goes. And train even harder aswell so that I don't even need it.

Kee: That's rubbish. If you start taking it you won't want to stop. And a little bit is still a little bit. A little bit might be too much. You have no idea how much it would take to harm you. And just say they find it.

Kat: They won't. Mr Brown keeps the needles and stuff. Protects us all that way. So they won't find it on me.

Kee: That's not what I meant. I meant in your pee. Or in your blood. Don't you have to do tests? Just cos they can't find the needle doesn't mean they won't find evidence.

Kat: I'll be OK. Like I said, I'll just use a wee bit. The body makes it naturally so I can explain it away. And what are the chances of them testing me?

Kee: OK say they don't find it. Even though they have tests. Say everyone else is doing it. Even though they aren't. And even say it doesn't hurt you now. Even though it might in the future. And say it works and you win loads of prizes and lots of money and fame and sponsorship.

Kat: Stop it!

Kee: Let me finish. Say all that happens. How will you feel? Knowing that you have done something wrong.

Kat: Brown says the only way to beat drug cheats is to play them at their own game. Just because it is illegal doesn't mean it's wrong.

Kee: Well I think you are mad to even consider it. And I think you should get a new coach and report Brown.

b If I do that, I'm finished. Brown will see to that. I know it. What else can I do Kee?