

PLAYING GAMES

A short dramedy by
Diana Burbano

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

EMERALD, feisty, sees no need to be nice. 11. Female.

LOU, trying to be a good person. Smart. 11. Any gender.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Playing Games was first performed at South Coast Repertory's Youth Conservatory in 2019.

(EMERALD is sitting in her room playing a video game. LOU walks in.)

LOU: Uh, hey – ?

(This startles Emerald. She gets distracted and messes up the game.)

EMERALD: No. NO! AAAAAUUUGGGHHH!!!

LOU: Uh –

EMERALD: AAAAAAAUUUGHHH!!!!!! KNOCK! KNOCK!

LOU: What? I –

EMERALD: KNOCK! Before you come into my room and ruin my concentration – gah! The tournament is over!

LOU: You can start another one –

EMERALD: No, Lou, I do not want to. I have been playing this particular game, with this PARTICULAR character since December 17th at 4:17 p.m. in the afternoon. I am able to PAUSE when I am forced to leave the game to do stupid stuff like school or food. But you RUINED my concentration and now I have to start the level all over again!!

LOU: Geez. I'm sorry. You don't have to be such a jerk. Mom said I should get you to come to dinner 'cause she's been yelling for you for like an hour.

EMERALD: My mom.

LOU: What?

EMERALD: My mom. She's not your mom. Even though she says, "Call me mom," she's actually not allowed to GIVE you mom rights.

LOU: Fine. Whatever. Come to dinner. *(Under their breath:)* I hate you.

EMERALD: It's mutual.

LOU: I don't want to be here either, you know.

EMERALD: Great, then go away.

LOU: This is mine and my dad's house. Why don't you go away?

EMERALD: Believe me, I'd love to.

LOU: I don't know if you know this, but this house is haunted – by a psycho kid killer, who'll rise up out of the toilet and eat your head!

EMERALD: GOOD!

LOU: And it only eats stupid people like you!

EMERALD: Awesome. Can't wait to get chomped up. It's much better than living with you.

LOU: Come to dinner before I get in trouble.

EMERALD: (*Sticks her tongue out.*) BLLLLBBBTTTTT!

LOU: So mature. OK, forget it. If *your* mom wants you she can just come and get you herself.

(They turn to leave. Emerald restarts her game. Lou watches for a second. Then.)

You'll never get past that level unless you find the extra heart under the tree, under the graveyard, under the mountain.

(Lou turns to go.)

EMERALD: Wait! Which tree?

LOU: The one that's made of Yum Yum fruit. There's like ONE pixel you hit and you get another heart to defeat BashTet. Otherwise she moves too fast and you never have enough hearts.

EMERALD: Why are you telling me?

LOU: Because it's really dumb that you haven't gotten past this level.

EMERALD: I LIKE this level. I get to stab Franky over and over again.

LOU: Oookay. I think maybe the psycho in the toilet is scared of YOU.

EMERALD: Good. Anyway. That heart thing may be a helpful thing to know.

LOU: You're welcome.

EMERALD: Whatever.

LOU: Also, you need to flick the controller like this –

(They take the controller and do a funky flick.)

– to get past the Gore Dragon.

EMERALD: Huh.

LOU: OK, I'm going now.

(A pause. They turn to go.)

EMERALD: I guess you might be able to occasionally come into my room. If you want.

LOU: Why would I want to?

EMERALD: So I can beat you senseless in *UnderMasters*.

LOU: Ha! Please.

EMERALD: Scared?

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