

DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME

TEN-MINUTE PLAY

By Matt Thompson

Copyright © MMIX by Matthew Thompson

All Rights Reserved

Heuer Publishing LLC, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The writing of plays is a means of livelihood. Unlawful use of a playwright's work deprives the creator of his or her rightful income. The playwright is compensated on the full purchase price and the right of performance can only be secured through purchase of at least six (6) copies of this work. PERFORMANCES ARE LIMITED TO ONE VENUE FOR ONE YEAR FROM DATE OF PURCHASE.

The possession of this script without direct purchase from the publisher confers no right or license to produce this work publicly or in private, for gain or charity. On all programs and advertising this notice must appear: "Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC of Cedar Rapids, Iowa."

This dramatic work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

The right of performance is not transferable and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second hand from a third party. All rights including, but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, broadcast, recitation, lecturing, tabloid, publication, and reading are reserved.

COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.

PUBLISHED BY

HEUER PUBLISHING LLC

P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406

TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011

DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME
By Matt Thompson

SYNOPSIS: During a group therapy session for board game fanatics, we are privy to a variety of issues from playing Scrabble in Latin to using real money in Monopoly.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(ONE MAN, FOUR WOMEN)

BOARD GAME THERAPIST (m or f)Facilitator of the board game fanatic session.

STEVE (m)English professor who plays Scrabble in Latin.

LAURA (f).....Doesn't recycle paper while playing Pictionary.

JENNIE (f).....Environmentalist who gets a little upset.

JAIME (f).....Fears that she's falling in love with the way another man plays Monopoly.

AT RISE:

STEVE, LAURA, JENNIE, and JAIMIE are attending a therapy session for board game fanatics. They are all seated in a semi-circle, so that they can see one another. The game Operation lies on a table.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Okay, thank you all for attending this month's session. I'd just like to take this moment to say that, it takes a lot of courage and strength to be here. And I want all of us to remember, that we are never alone. So, let's turn to the person next to you and say thank you.

Everyone turns to the person next to them and says thank you.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: It takes strength from within to admit that one has a problem, but it takes the help, support, and determination from others in order to build a foundation of commitment. So, thank you all for being here today. I'd also like to thank Jennie for hosting this month. So, thank you.

JENNIE: You're welcome.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Now, who would like to go first. Steve? You made a lot of progress last month, so why don't we start with you.

STEVE: Sure. Hi, I'm Steve, and I have a board game problem.

EVERYONE: Hi, Steve.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: How can we help you, Steve?

STEVE: Well, as some of you know, I'm an English professor at the University of Iowa, and my wife and I like to play Scrabble. But after I've exhausted the English language, I start spelling out words in Latin and my wife just gets aggravated. She yells at me, "English! In English, Steven!" Then she walks away, and I'm left alone with no one to play with.

There is a hushed general clamor.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: I see. Try using the Ye Olde English dictionary, and when you have that *urges* to spell out words in

Latin, spell out sixteenth century colorful metaphors such as “zounds” instead.

That should keep your wife satisfied. And if you land on triple word score, that should keep *you* satiated for a while. Thanks for sharing Steve. Next?

LAURA: Hi, my name is Laura, and I have a board game problem.

EVERYONE: Hi, Laura!

LAURA: (*Very distraught.*) Hi. (*Beat.*) I'm not sure I can do this.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: The correct answer is that you *can* do this. We're all in this game together.

LAURA: Well . . . Alright.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Great. Now, would you like to explain the rules of *your* game, please?

LAURA: I suppose. It started right after we got married. One of our friends knew how much we enjoyed games and gave us Pictionary, and, well . . . Oh, I don't know if I can say it. She starts to break down and cry.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: You're doing fine, Laura. We're all here for you.

JAIMIE: We're right here for you.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Jaimie's correct. Now, please go ahead.

LAURA: Okay. Um, well, you know how in Pictionary, you have those little sheets of paper that you draw on?

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Yes.

LAURA: Well . . . I don't use the other side.

LAURA breaks down again. General disapproval from the group.

JENNIE: That's a waste of paper.

STEVE: How can you sleep at night?

LAURA: (*Pleading.*) I'm sorry! I just like fresh pieces of paper! I don't recycle!

STEVE: (*Aggravated.*) Tell that to the environment!

JENNIE: And the Redwoods!

STEVE: And the Yangtze River Dolphin, which is now extinct!

JENNIE: And we all know who caused its extinction!

LAURA: Oh, dear, I am so sorry!

More general clamor.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: All right! All right! Could we have some order please?!

STEVE: *(Very upset.)* Who do you think you are, anyway?

LAURA: I'm just a woman! And I have needs too, you know.

THE BOARD GAME THERAPIST touches the side of the Operation game. This makes a loud buzzing sound.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: May I remind all of us that we are not here to judge. We have all elected to participate in this wonderful program that is HOG GAS: Helping Overcome Grown-up Board Game Addiction Symptoms. We have all elected to be here tonight in order to help each other.

STEVE: Well said.

LAURA: *(Crying.)* I'm, so sorry, everybody. I just don't know what I can do. If I ask my husband to use the other side of the paper, he gets all frustrated, breaks all the pencils, and then, goes out with the boys and plays Yahtzee.

JAIMIE: Just like a man.

JENNIE: *(Aghast.)* He breaks the pencils? Wood is from trees! Were they redwood pencils?

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Jennie, please control yourself.

STEVE: Why won't your husband just use a pen?

LAURA: *(Breaking down, completely.)* I don't know! I have no idea! I've pleaded with him! I've tried to reason with him! He's so stubborn! He just won't use a pen in Pictionary!

General clamor, once again, as LAURA breaks down again and cries.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Alright, alright. *(After everyone is quiet.)* Laura, you seem to have a multi-headed problem, just like

a Hungry Hungry Hippos board. Part of solving a problem is acknowledging that you have one, and you have done that, so you should be rewarded.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST claps, encouraging others to join him, which they do.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: The second part of your problem is concerning your unwillingness to recycle.

JENNIE: I can't believe you.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Jennie. Restraint, please.

JENNIE: Sorry.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Now, Jennie, why don't you channel that anger into a constructive solution for Laura. What can Laura do to help her problem with Pictionary?

JENNIE: Well . . . What if you used scratch paper for drawing that already has printing on one side.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Great suggestion, Jennie.

LAURA: (*A ray of hope.*) Thank you. I'll . . . I'll try that.

JENNIE smiles and then immediately reaches over and hugs LAURA, who hugs back. The rest of the group claps.

LAURA: Thank you, everybody.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Now, about your husband; I suggest that taking Jennie's idea into consideration, is one option. Another option: why don't you get yourself a mini dry erase board? Buy a rainbow assortment of colored pens and slap some Velcro on them. Sometimes the dark black ink brings out the worst in people. Using bright and cheery colors such as orange, pink, even teal can bring out the positive aspects. If he sees that the pens erase, as pencils do, it might just ease him into using pens during those Pictionary moments. (*A warm smile.*) And you save the environment at the same time.

LAURA: Great idea.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: You see, part of role playing as a couple is . . . not playing games with each other. And tell him to call my office for an appointment.

LAURA: *(Relieved.)* I sure will.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Now, anyone else? *(To JAIMIE.)* Jaimie? You've been awfully quiet this evening. I don't have my hand on a Ouija board, but I'll bet that you have something to share?

JAIMIE: I don't think so.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: We're all here to help. But, only *you* can help yourself. We can wait as long as you need. We're not playing with a timer here.

Pause.

JAIMIE: Okay. Um . . . My name is Jaimie, and I'm addicted to Monopoly.

EVERYONE: Hi, Jaimie.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Addictions are very difficult to break.

JAIMIE: I'm not sure I should talk about this in front of everyone.

STEVE: We're here to help.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Steve is correct. Think of this group as your conscience. There's nothing to hide from us. We don't judge.

JAIMIE: Okay. *(Takes a deep breathe.)* Two nights ago, here at the house, my husband and I had a wine and cheese party. It was just us and another couple, Chet and Susan. After a couple of hours, my husband had a little too much to drink and passed out on the couch. Susan, who is a complete lightweight, laid down in the spare bedroom and, well . . . let's just say that we all had a bit too much to drink.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: So, you were alone with Chet.

JAIMIE: That's right.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: And how did you feel about that?

JAIMIE: Fine. Fine. We've been friends for years, so we get along well.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Go on.

JAIMIE: Well, one thing led to another and . . . next thing we know we're playing Monopoly together. Just the two of us. I tend to be a little aggressive when playing and of course he lost the game, and I jumped up and down and called him a giant panda bear. You know 'cause he's a big bear of a guy and all. He had to fork over nearly four thousand dollars after he landed on Park Place. I had four hotels on the property. And he hands me the money . . . there's Chet . . . just smiling at me. *(With a woman's yearning.)* Just smiling. Something in me, just lit up. I still remember his face. He was smiling, like he had a little secret. So confident. So raw. I hate to admit it, but I began to fall in love . . . with the way he played the game of Monopoly.

JENNIE: Explain.

JAIMIE: Well, Chet is just so dashing, and he's a risk taker. He shows no fear.

LAURA: *(Giddy with gossip.)* What game piece does he use?

JAIMIE: He uses the most charming game piece in all of Monopoly: the hat.

All the girls giggle with giddiness.

STEVE: I should use the hat.

JAIMIE: The hat is very classy. *(Disappointed.)* My husband uses the shoe. I mean, what kind of man uses a shoe when playing Monopoly? Will someone tell me, please?

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: So, you're intrigued by this man's board game tactics.

JAIMIE: Absolutely.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: How so?

JAIMIE: He buys Oriental Avenue, even though he knows there's no value in it. He buys up only half of the railroads, like he's teasing me to buy the other two and join him in some kind of romantic capitalistic venture. And every time he lands in jail, he gets out free . . . every time. Every time. He's not afraid of anything. *(Disappointed.)* Whenever my husband lands on my properties he cries like a baby, then gets up and plays Jenga by himself.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Now Jaimie, attraction to how other individuals play board games is completely normal, so long as you don't act upon your thoughts.

JAIMIE: I'm afraid of what I might do if we ever play Twister.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Let me ask you a question. Why do you love your husband?

JAIMIE: (*Smiling.*) Well, when we met, we were playing the game of Life. We both went to spin and our hands touched. And then as my little car began to fill up with pink and blue children, Tom just stared at me in the face, and that's when I knew that I would marry this man. I love him. I still love him.

LAURA: That is so romantic.

JAIMIE: But then sometimes I feel like I don't trust myself.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: I trust that you'll do the right thing.

LAURA: And so do I.

JENNIE: And so do I.

STEVE: I trust you.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: You see that's what group therapy is all about. Trust. Many of you may not know this, but Jaimie has been working with the group for over eight months now. She's made real progress with Monopoly.

JAIMIE: Yes, just last week I stopped using real money as the banker. I can pay the rent . . . for real! General approval from the group. It's nice to hold a fake \$500 bill for once.

More general approval.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: And, what else?

JAIMIE: I stopped buying *Baltic Avenue*. I realized that no matter how many hotels I put on the two purple properties, I'll only ever barely break even. I realize that now. Thank you.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: (*To JAIMIE.*) Thank you. Jaimie is in our intensive Chutes and Ladder's Program. And right now, she's all ladders! Isn't that right?

JAIMIE nods sheepishly as there is general approval.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Remember Jaimie, we all believe in you.

JAIMIE: I believe in me too. And I believe in my husband. He's great at Scattergories. He's so smart. And I know that I love him so much. Thank you everybody.

STEVE: Group hug!

Everyone stands up and hugs while smiling and cheering. General clamor.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: And remember whenever you have a board game problem, or addiction, there is always somebody close by to help. Just know that you are never alone.

ALL: YOU'RE NEVER ALONE!

They all sit back down. Everyone slowly turns and looks out into the audience.

BOARD GAME THERAPIST: Okay, now who's next?

THE END