Real Life RPG, or THE VIDEO GAME PLAY
by Reynaldo Piniella

Commissioned by Baltimore Center Stage
**When should you read this play?**

When you’re feeling overwhelmed, tired of being stuck in the house or just in need of a laugh, read this play. If you can, gather some friends and family and read it out loud. You’ll be laughing at each other by the end if it or laughing at me for thinking of this silliness.

**A Video Game Play?**

When I thought about what “Play At Home” meant to me, I realized that I’ve been playing a lot of video games at home these days. So, this play is based on some of my favorite RPGs (role playing games.) For those of you who know nothing about video games, don’t fret. You’ll get to wear cool clothes, fight with crazy weapons and save the world before going back to the beginning to do it all over again.

**Note**

This play is modeled after a video game demo where you’ll get to play the first mission of a broader narrative. This is just the start of your adventure, not the end. And because it’s a demo, it’s a work-in-progress not the final product.

This play is a “choose your own adventure” so the choices you make will affect the world around you. Choose wisely. These life changing questions will be **bolded**.

Use this script as an instruction manual but rules were meant to be broken, right?

**Cast of characters**

5 actors

???, then SUFFERING
FAITH
LOVE
HOPE
FEAR/ANGER/HATE
You decided to read/perform this play with some friends?! Great! Whether you’re at home or on Zoom, get ready to move your bodies and vibrate those vocal cords.

The tallest person in your group will play ???
(If two people or more people are the exact same height, you play eeny, meeny, miny, moe to decide which of them plays ???)
That person goes into another room/closet/bathroom nearby. If you’re on Zoom, they turn off their camera. They should remain in the other room/off-camera until prompted to reveal themselves.

???
(from “offstage”)
Close your eyes.

Everyone obeys the angelic words of ???

???
No peeking at your script yet.
You’ll need to trust me.
I’ll be your guide on this journey.
I want you to know that you’re powerful.
And you can change the world.
You are about to embark on a journey through time.
You’ll come to many crossroads.
Would you like to continue on this journey?
Yes…or no?

If the team says yes, keep going.
If they say no, turn to page 16.

???
Good.
Your mission is to defeat three evil beings plaguing our world.
These beings have tortured, stained and infected us for far too long.
And we need you to change the course of history.
The trials ahead will be fierce so you must be ready.
...
Open your eyes and grab your scripts.

Everyone opens their eyes.

???
The youngest of you is the purest of heart and will play Faith, a soldier who specializes in hand to hand combat.
Who might this be?
The youngest person steps forward.
(If two people or more people are the exact same age, you play eeny, meeny, miny, moe to decide which one of them plays Faith.)

???
Faith...can your team have faith in you?

FAITH
I hope so...

???
You’ll need to have more faith than that.
You are young. Believe and you shall achieve.
Now, the oldest of you will play the healer of wounds, Love.
Your wisdom combined with the healing power of love makes you a force of good that this world has never seen.
Step forward elder.

The oldest person steps forward.
(If two people or more people are the exact same age, you play eeny, meeny, miny, moe to decide which of them plays Love)

???
Are you ready to be the backbone of your team?

LOVE
Backbone? I’m more of the shoulder to lean on type.

???
I love that.
And finally, the shortest person remaining may be small of stature, but they are tall in bravery. Who is it that I speak of?

The final person steps forward.
(If the two remaining people are the exact same age, you play eeny, meeny, miny, moe to decide which of them plays Hope)

???
You are to play the long-range attacker, Hope.
I hope you are ready Hope.

HOPE
You better know it!

???
Now that’s the kind of enthusiasm I’m looking for.
...But it seems we have one person remaining.
Step forward...chosen one.

_The remaining person steps forward._

???
You have a special assignment.
Join me in the other room.

_They do._

???
Are you happy with your roles?
Yes or no?

*If everyone is happy, stay on this page.*
*If not, turn to page 17.*

???
Good. I knew you would work well together.
While you may be powerful warriors, you don’t look the part.
You must put on some armor for the battles ahead.
Cover your body, your head, your legs with whatever you can find.
Extra defense points are awarded for non-practical clothing choices.
You have 60 seconds to complete your look.

_People get dressed._

???
Are you sure this is what you want to wear on your journey?
There will be no costume changes allowed.
60 more seconds if you’d like to change into something that makes you feel good.

*After everyone’s transformation is complete-*

???
May I say, you all look marvelous.
Now, you must delay no longer.
Your journey starts now.

LOVE
Um, voice person? If these “beings” are torturing the world, don’t we need weapons or something?
???
You are enough.
Know that. Trust in that.
Now let the trials begin.

*The cast member without a role is now FEAR and they come running out of the other room.*
*FEAR should move with an immense amount of swag.*

FEAR
You don’t look like heroes to me.
You look silly in those costumes.

FAITH
Who are you?

FEAR
Someone to FEAR!
Cower before me!

HOPE
Never! Who you think you are?

FEAR
Fear! I already told you!

FAITH
Oh, that’s actually your name. Got it.

FEAR
Idiots! Take this!

*FEAR breaks out into some amazing dance moves.*
*I’m talking about whatever they can bring. Breakdancing, two stepping or the macarena.*
*Faith, Hope & Love get hit hard.*

FAITH, HOPE & LOVE
AHH!!!

FAITH
I’m hurt.

LOVE
Me too.
HOPE
We can’t go down without a fight!

HOPE does a dance solo.
FEAR just laughs at them.

HOPE
What?

FEAR
You fool!
You’ll never defeat me with those weak moves.

FEAR knocks HOPE back with a devastating dance move.

FAITH
They’re too much for us.

LOVE
Retreat!

HOPE
No! We have to stay and fight.

LOVE
Are you crazy? We can’t win.

HOPE
Faith, what should we do?

LOVE
Should we stay or go?

The actor playing FAITH chooses to stay or go.
If they choose to stay, stay on this page.
If they choose to run, turn to page 18.

FAITH
We stay and fight!

HOPE
That’s what I like to hear!

LOVE
So, what’s your plan?

FAITH
We have to face our fears. Together.
Dancing in public can be scary but if we combine our powers, we’ll be unstoppable.
I can bring my young flair.
Love can bring the oldies but the goodies.
And Hope can drop it down low and pick it up slow.

HOPE
Sounds good to me.
Are you ready?

FAITH
Ready.

LOVE
Bust a move y’all!

*The two teams line up in dance battle fashion and dance it out. It’s 3 on 1.*
*The actor playing ??? observes from off-stage/camera and serves as the judge.*
*If you have any audience members, they can be a judge too.*
*If Faith, Hope and Love win, stay on this page.*
*If FEAR wins, turn to page 19.*

FEAR
Impossible! How did you do that?

LOVE
Teamwork makes the dreamwork baby!

FEAR
UGH! Why weren’t you scared of me?

FAITH
Why would we be? Fear is just a four-letter word.

FEAR
I’ll be back. Save the Last Dance for me.

FEAR runs off.

???
You have passed your first trial.
You should celebrate.
Go get a snack. Or a beverage of your choice. Let me know when you’re ready to continue.

Everyone takes a snack/drink/check your phone break. Once everyone is back, the actor who played FEAR is now ANGER and their walk should look tough. Really tough.

ANGER
You beat Fear! How dare you!
That makes me angry!
Now I have to conquer you.
Behold the power of my vocal cords!

ANGER starts to sing “All Star” by Smash Mouth
(Feel free to sing another pop song that speaks to you.)

ANGER
“Hey now, you're an all-star
Get your game on, go play
Hey now, you're a rock star
Get the show on, get paid
And all that glitters is gold
Only shooting stars break the mold”

LOVE, FAITH and HOPE are frozen in place.

LOVE
Ahhh, the catchy hook has me paralyzed.

FAITH
I’m stuck too!

HOPE
What kind of magic is this?

ANGER
I hate terrible pop music. It makes my blood boil.
But the catchy tunes can’t help but invade your nervous system.
Join me for the second verse and I’ll let you live.
Defy me and you DIE.
What say you?

If the party decides to sing with Anger, turn to page 20.
If they say no, stay on this page.
FAITH
We’ll never sing with you!

HOPE
We bounce to our own beat.

*FAITH, HOPE and LOVE can move again.*

LOVE
Let’s spice things up, shall we?

The party starts to sing *Wannabe* by the Spice Girls.
*(Feel free to sing another song that speaks to you and your party. The most important thing is you revel in your performance.)*

THE PARTY
“If you wanna be my lover, you gotta get with my friends
*(Gotta get with my friends)*
Make it last forever, friendship never ends
If you wanna be my lover, you have got to give
*(You’ve got to give)*
Taking is too easy, but that’s the way it is

If you wanna be my lover
*(You gotta, you gotta, you gotta, you gotta, you gotta slam)*
Make it last forever
*(Slam, slam, slam, slam)*
Slam your body down and wind it all around
Slam your body down and wind it all around
*(Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey)*
Slam your body down and wind it all around
Slam your body down and "zig-a-zig", ah
*(Uh, uh, uh, uh)*
If you wanna be my lover”

ANGER’s body convulses.

ANGER
Wait, how?
90s music always filled me with anger but now…I feel happy.
What? This can’t be.

LOVE
We sing with love.
You should sing with us sometime.
ANGER
That makes me want to...smile.
I would like that, maybe?

LOVE
Anytime, Anger. Anytime.

*Anger smiles.*

ANGER
I have to go.

*ANGER runs off.*

???
I’m impressed.
I’m sure you are eager to fight your next opponent.
But all of this work must have you drained.
Sometimes in life, we have to pause.
It allows us to recharge, replenish and rejuvenate.
Find a relaxing position.
You can be sitting, standing or laying down.
We’re going to meditate for one minute.
You need to be centered for what lies ahead.

*Everyone breathes for what feels like a minute. Feel free to go longer or shorter depending on what you need.*

???
Slowly open your eyes.
It appears your next challenger is among us...

*The actor formerly known as ANGER is now HATE.*

HATE
I haven’t felt this strong in a long time.

*HATE flashes an evil grin.*

HATE
You beat Fear and if that wasn’t enough, you changed Anger. He smiled at me!
Asked me how my day was going!
You chumps want the world to look like a rainbow utopia, don’t you?
Well I’m not having it!
HOPE
Who are you and why are you so mean?

HATE
I’m not mean! I just hate you!

FAITH
But we just met...

HATE
Shut it!
You may not know who I am, but I am the world champion in Rock, Paper, Scissors.

LOVE
That doesn’t really seem like a game a person like you would play.

HATE
Well, people like you have rigged everything else.
Giving people a leg up just because their hair is curly, or they have ashy elbows.
With this game, the playing field is level.
So, which one of you dares to face me one on one?

HOPE
I will!

HATE
You fool. You will shall perish.
I’ve lost so much in my life and I hate losing.

HOPE
Then you better hope for the best.
Let the games begin.

HATE
Best of three wins.

*If HATE wins, turn to page 22.*
*If HATE loses, stay on this page.*

HATE
NOOOOOOO!!!!
How could you dethrone me?!
Rematch! Please!
HOPE
No. You need to learn that just because someone different than you gets a chance, doesn’t mean you’ll never get one. The world is a better place when we all have a voice.

HATE
All that positivity has me in my feelings. I suddenly feel…tolerant?
No. I must leave.

*HATE hangs their head as they speed walk out of the room.*

FAITH
Is that it?

LOVE
Yeah, we beat all three trials.

HOPE
It kinda feels anticlimactic.

???
Then prepare for your fourth and final test.
ME!

??? steps out of the other room.

FAITH
What?

HOPE
But you’ve been guiding us this entire time!

LOVE
Are you our real enemy?

???
I wouldn’t say that.
I’m what you get once fear turns to anger and then turns to hate.
I’m SUFFERING!

*Faith, Love and Hope gasp.*

LOVE
Impossible!
SUFFERING
Your eyes do not deceive you even if I did.
Yes, I am that great evil that plagues the world.
All people will know suffering at some point and now you know me personally.

HOPE
Why did you hide from us?

SUFFERING
You could not perceive who I am until you faced my children.
My spawn are weak but once I add your power to my collection, the world will fall.

FAITH
We beat your minions then we’ll beat you too!

SUFFERING
Faith, always the spunky one.
Very well.
If you seek to rid the world of suffering, then you must beat me in the ancient game of two truths and one lie.
Each of us will come up with three facts about ourselves, one of which is a lie.
Guess the lie correctly and you get one point.
If after two rounds I have more points than you, I win.
Ok?

FAITH
Ugh, I suck at lying.

SUFFERING
But I don’t. So I shall go first.
May truth guide you.

If LOVE, FAITH and HOPE win, stay on this page.
If they lose, turn to page 23.

SUFFERING
Well, you really are special.
I bow down to you.
You have bested the fiercest foes our land has to offer.
And now you can claim your reward.

HOPE
Ooh, what is it?

SUFFERING
You’ve managed to create joy while you were fighting.
Now you can now spread that same joy to people around the world who are fighting their own battles.
It is a dark time we’re living in and we all could use some levity.

FAITH
That isn’t much of a reward.

SUFFERING
On the contrary, if you can use Love, Hope and Faith to change minds and open hearts, you will be the most powerful beings in the galaxy.
Can I call you my friends?

LOVE
Of course.

FAITH
No doubt.

HOPE
Do you even need to ask?

SUFFERING
May I have a hug?

They all hug. Even the FEAR/ANGER/HATE gets in on the action.

End of play.
IF YOU CHOSE TO NOT CONTINUE YOUR ADVENTURE

???
It appears your team is already disjointed.
Would you like to reconsider your choice?

If yes, return to page 3.
If not, stay on this page.

???
(sigh)
Very well.
May your next adventure be longer.
For now, it is GAME OVER.

End of play.
IF YOU WERE UNSATISFIED WITH YOUR CHARACTER ASSIGNMENT

???
I see.
Now is your chance to swap roles.
You have 30 seconds to decide.

*If the team swaps roles in time, turn back to page 5.*
*If they are still undecided, ?? says*

???
Your journey has not even begun and already you are struggling to work together.
Nothing is won alone. We need each other to create the world we want to have.
I’m sorry but your time on this path has come to an end.
GAME OVER.
Perhaps next time, you will work as a team.

*End of play.*
IF YOU CHOSE TO RUN FROM FEAR

FAITH
Let’s get out of here!

FEAR
You fools, you can’t escape me!
The only way to stop me is to face your fears!

FEAR stars dancing around them.

LOVE
It’s too much...

HOPE
We can’t stop them...

FAITH
I’m sorry guys...

FEAR
You see! Why have all this faith when you can live in fear?
Fear is good. It keeps you safe. It paralyzes you and stops you from digging deeper.
Now look at you. You’re weak.

The Party faints.
?? enters.

FEAR
Huh...I feel different.

???
That’s because you faced your fears. You were scared of people passing you by.
Taking the opportunities you felt entitled to.
You wanted a seat at the table but you didn’t want to work for it.

FEAR
So what do I do now?
Who am I? I can’t call myself Fear anymore.

???
That’s for another time.
Their story is over.
It’s GAME OVER for now...
End of play.
IF FEAR WON THE DANCE BATTLE

FEAR
You fools! You thought you could beat me?!

FAITH
My legs. They can’t move...

HOPE
We can’t stop them.

LOVE
I’m sorry guys…

*The Party faints.*

FEAR
That was easy.
...
Uh, what do we do now?

???
Drink something. Relax. Watch the Office.
Because it’s GAME OVER.

*End of play.*
IF YOU AGREED TO SING WITH ANGER

ANGER
Excellent choice.
Here we go!

EVERYONE
“It’s a cool place, and they say it gets colder
You’re bundled up now, wait ‘til you get older
But the meteor men beg to differ
Judging by the hole in the satellite picture
The ice we skate is getting pretty thin
The water’s getting warm so you might as well swim
My world’s on fire, how ‘bout yours?
That’s the way I like it and I’ll never get bored

[Chorus]
Hey now, you’re an all-star
Get your game on, go play
Hey now, you’re a rock star
Get the show on, get paid
All that glitters is gold
Only shooting stars break the mold"

LOVE
I feel…different…

FAITH
A heat pulses through my body…

HOPE
What is this feeling?

ANGER
It’s the 90s tunes flowing through your veins.
It seeps into your pores and makes you mad.
It makes you angry!
Doesn’t it feel good? It’s so much fun being angry in a group.
Follow me and we’ll be angry together.

Everyone exits into the other room.
?? enters.

???
And so the three warriors are seduced by Anger.
The two remaining evil beings wreak havoc on our world.
It falls further into disarray.
These three are no All-Stars.
GAME OVER.

*End of play*
IF HATE WINS THE ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS COMPETITION

HATE
I TOLD YOU I WAS UNSTOPPABLE!
BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD FOR YOU THREE!

FAITH
No, please!
Let us try again.
Isn’t that how video games work?

HATE
True but…I’d hate to give you another chance.
Do I have to mystery person?

???
Yes, you do.

HATE
UGHHHHHHHHHH!
I hate this “hold your hand” participation trophy nonsense.
…whatever.
I’ll just have to beat all three of you.

???
Can Hate’s next opponent please step forward?

Play until Love or Faith wins. Then return to page 12.
IF YOU LOST TWO TRUTHS AND ONE LIE

SUFFERING
So close, yet so far.
Suffering is everywhere the sun casts its light.
And now that light shines on you.
When people suffer, I find ice cream or Netflix helps them deal with the grief.
Go do that and then try again later if you dare.

HOPE
I’ve already seen every season of The Office!

FAITH
I’m lactose intolerant!

LOVE
Isn’t suffering a long process? This seems kinda quick to pull the plug on us.
Take two? Please?

SUFFERING
Fine.
A second life is just a second chance to suffer.
Round two starts now.

Return to page 14 and play two truths and one lie until Hope, Faith and Love wins or Suffering is just tired of playing.