

To all of the Jaspers out there! Enjoy. – Julia

Forward By Kim “Tip” Frank, Ed.S., LPC

Author, *Lost and Found: Rescuing Our Children and Youth from Video, Screen, Technology, and Gaming Addiction*

Julia has tackled issues such as handling a parental divorce, bullying, personal safety, grief, and friendship, just to mention a few. None of these childhood issues is more important than the one contained in this book. Too many of our young people fall prey to video game addiction. Ninety-seven percent of young people regularly play video games and of these up to fifteen percent become addicted, according to the American Medical Association’s Council on Science and Public Health. That’s over 5 million kids! This book helps parents and professionals “get ahead of the game” by teaching the pitfalls of video game overuse and clearly demonstrating what a healthy balance with video gaming looks like. Imparted in Julia’s book are key principles set forth in my latest book, *Lost and Found*, involving prevention of “screen addiction.” (See *Tips from Tip* at the end of this book.) Julia does this in a way that is easily understood by kids. By broaching this topic with the young people you know, you will be getting an early start on the preventions of this most recent phenomenon of video gaming addiction.



P.O. Box 22185 • Chattanooga, TN 37422-2185
423-899-5714 • 866-318-6294 • fax 423-899-4547 • www.ncyi.org

ISBN: 9781937870164 \$9.95 • E-book ISBN: 9781937870935
© 2013 National Center for Youth Issues, Chattanooga, TN • All rights reserved.
Written by: Julia Cook • Illustrations by: Michelle Hazelwood Hyde
Published by National Center for Youth Issues • Softcover
Printed at Starkey Printing • Chattanooga, TN • May 2021

DUPLICATION AND COPYRIGHT

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, video or audio recording, or otherwise without prior written permission from the publisher, except for all worksheets and activities which may be reproduced for a specific group or class. Reproduction for an entire school or school district is prohibited.

The information in this book is designed to provide helpful information on the subjects discussed and is not intended to be used, nor should it be used, to diagnose or treat any mental health or medical condition. For diagnosis or treatment of any mental health or medical issue, consult a licensed counselor, psychologist, or physician. The publisher and author are not responsible for any specific mental or physical health needs that may require medical supervision, and are not liable for any damages or negative consequences from any treatment, action, application or preparation, to any person reading or following the information in this book. References are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute endorsement of any websites or other sources.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Cook, Julia, 1964- author. | Hyde, Michelle Hazelwood, illustrator.
Title: But it's just a game / written by Julia Cook ; illustrated by Michelle Hazelwood Hyde.
Other titles: But it is just a game
Description: Chattanooga, TN : National Center for Youth Issues, [2021] | Audience: Ages 7-12. | Summary: Addicted to playing video games, a young boy learns how to switch out his game controller for a “life controller,” creating a healthy gaming balance.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021010613 (print) | LCCN 2021010614 (ebook) | ISBN 9781937870164 (paperback) | ISBN 9781937870935 (pdf)
Subjects: CYAC: Stories in rhyme. | Video games--Fiction. | Compulsive behavior--Fiction.
Classification: LCC PZ8.3.C76797 Bu 2021 (print) | LCC PZ8.3.C76797 (ebook) | DDC [E]--dc23
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021010613>
LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021010614>

NCYI titles may be purchased in bulk at special discounts for educational, business, fundraising, or promotional use.
For more information, please email sales@ncyi.org.

My name is Jasper, but all of my friends call me "Thumbs," because I'm super-duper good at playing video games. A good gamer has to have really quick thumbs, and my thumbs are SO fast that sometimes I can't even see them move!

**"JASPER...
IT'S TIME TO GO!"**





*With my game controller in my hands,
I'm the boss of my whole world!
I can be who I want and do as I please.
I can get the highest score.*

*I get all the chances that I need.
If I make a mistake it's ok.
Everyone thinks I'm "it on a stick!"
And the bad stuff all goes away...*

Like spelling tests, and cleaning my room,
and my annoying little sister who always
wants me to play house with her...

YUK!

"JASPER!
GRAB YOUR STUFF
AND LET'S GO!"

*I can hear my mom's voice, but I just can't stop now.
I'm on a new level and I can't figure out how,
to win this part so that I can move on.
I just have to keep playing, but I know that it's wrong!*



“Jasper, if we don’t leave right now, you’ll be late for school!
You’re spending way too much time playing that new video game of yours.”



Yesterday, I was sitting in math, grading my homework when I heard my teacher say, "As soon as you are finished checking your work, write your score at the top of your paper."

Score??? My score's over ten thousand! Once I get to the next level, I'll have the highest online score ever!

I need to get home and play my new game.

This level is driving me crazy!!!

I think I know what I need to do next.

I just need to stop playing lazy.

*Then my head went right into my video game,
and I started my plan of attack.*

With my fast thumbs there's no way I can't win.

This I know for a fact!

**"JASPER!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH
OUR TV REMOTE?"**



After lunch, Jason Sardoni's uncle came to talk to our class for career day. He's a carpenter, and he brought some of his tools and explained how they work.

"This is a miter box. I use it to cut angles.

This is a chalk string. I flip it to make straight lines on wood.

This is a level. I use it to..."



"Level??? I'm stuck on a level, and I need to figure out how to get to the next level.

***I need to get home and play my new game, and try out my plan of attack.
With my fast thumbs, there's no way I can't win. This, I know for a fact!"***

"Hey Thumbs. What are you doing with my uncle's cell phone?" Jason asked.

"Yeah kid, put that down!"