

GAME NIGHT  
(Humans Only Please)  
by Laura Neill

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## Characters

### Library Denizens:

EVERY, she/they, the lost (possibly dead) hero. Leader. Fan of checkers. Also known as Benny.

KRIS (as in Kristine or Kristopher), any gender, goth who is really into anime. Fan of dance battles.

MAX (as in Maxine or Maximillian), any gender, dresses nerdiest, but was actually bad at traditional school. Fan of complicated "avoid the lasers" heist adventures.

SPOT (this is a chosen name), any gender. Not a dog, but wishes they were. Speaks human but also inserts barks/woofs into conversation. Fan of fetch and other imaginary ball games.

HEN (as in Henrietta or Henry), any gender. Weirdly good at making anyone/anything look good. Fan of fashion shows. Has hidden rage.

### Sports-ballers:

STAR, she/they. Captain & star forward. Secretly has a giant crush on Kris.

GEE, any gender. Goalie. Undefeated last season, but can only play half of every game due to blood sugar issues.

RED, any gender. Defense. Always ready to take a piece out of someone. Gets a lot of fouls.

PAX, any gender. Midfielder. Constantly in action on the field, but peacekeeper among the team.

Note on pronouns: The pronouns in the script default to she/they but can be changed to reflect the pronouns of the actor playing each character.

## Time

A Friday night, in a future closer to us than we want to believe.

## Place

The YA section of the library. But it doesn't look great. Clearly a librarian hasn't been here in some time.

### Production Notes

This play can be produced on any kind of budget. All you really need are some board games, objects that could theoretically be used to fight mutant lizards (all of which should be easily findable in a library, so think lamps, cleaning supplies, sharpened shelves, etc), and something to signify bookshelves so that the crepe-paper laserdome can be constructed.

The play takes place in one set, in one scene, so you can pour all of your scenic energy into one design that offers possibilities for your actors.

If you have the means, you can also include a more fleshed-out, naturalistic set: the detritus of a post-apocalyptic life with no trash removal, books everywhere, computers pulled from their counters to use as chairs, etc. Over the course of the play, the set can reveal hints that things are even worse than the audience originally thought: a makeshift curtain can pull back to reveal a wall of these makeshift “weapons,” a bookshelf in the back holds scavenged items, etc. Maybe there is a generator in one corner.

Costumes are all buildable from clothes your actors have in their own closets, or you could buy a ten-pack of T-shirts and have the cast design shirts for each library denizen, and jerseys for the sports-ballers. Or, if you're looking to go bigger with costumes, you also have the option to create wildly fantastical outfits for the library denizens, crafted by Hen, the resident fashion designer character, in her post-apocalyptic boredom.

The mutant lizard is most likely a stuffed animal thrown onstage as the actor playing Avery ducks out during the battle. You could also choose to have the actor playing Avery do a quick-change—if so, have them wear an outfit under their soccer jersey that is lizard-like, and their soccer jersey is torn off during the fight to reveal their “scales.” It is ideal that the lizard-Avery costume or object have a tail of some kind, which could be tucked under the soccer jersey or thrown onstage during the battle.

The battle sequence can happen in complete darkness and solely rely on text if you don't have the resources for fight choreography. Or, if you choose to keep the lights on and have fight choreography, this is a great opportunity to show off for your audience. The possibilities are endless, as each character fights according to their “game”: Kris dance-battles, Spot uses canine moves/growls/bares teeth, Hen jabs with needles from sewing, the soccer players kick and feint, etc.

None of this has to look realistic. We're in post-apocalyptic times here. Have fun with it.

**This excerpt from GAME NIGHT requires four actors of any gender. Hen is worried about their friend Avery, who went out into the postapocalyptic landscape “to get snacks” and has not returned.**

KRIS

She's coming back.

HEN

She was supposed to be back for game night.

MAX

It's not like time means anything anymore, maybe she just lost track--

SPOT

She just went to get treats.

HEN

Yeah, how do you lose track of time breaking into Rite Aid? It's like a five-minute walk.

KRIS

Maybe she's guzzling gummy worms.

HEN

Or maybe--

MAX

Shut up. Shut up shut up shut up. You've been re-reading way too many zombie novels. Avery is fine.

SPOT

I'm sure she's fine, but maybe we should do a search party?

MAX and KRIS

NO.

HEN

Okay, if you're not worried about Avery being out there, why are you worried about Spot being out there?

MAX

We just, we don't need a search party. Avery is fine, she's coming back, and we should start setting up lasers because we should be partying when she gets here, show her she was missing out by being slow.

KRIS

Ohmigod only the nerdiest of nerds would think fake lasers equal a party.

MAX

As opposed to fake punk dance battles?

KRIS

Shut up.

SPOT

Or we could play search party. I could scout.

MAX

Spot--

SPOT

I could practice my retrieval skills finding Avery!

KRIS

You're not going out there. It's dangerous.

HEN

If it's DANGEROUS, then we should HELP her--

KRIS

We're not taking the puppy out there just because Avery got bored because she's read all these books a trillion times and decided she wanted snacks.

SPOT

You know, I'm not actually a puppy, I just relate to the world through adorable roleplay as a means of coping with the hellscape that is our post-apocalyptic existence.

KRIS, HEN, and MAX

We know.

KRIS

But I'm still not letting you go out there, freshman, because your human self is also a baby. So.

HEN

(to KRIS)

And you? Senior? Just gonna sit on your butt while Avery probably dies, I mean, SHAKE your butt?

MAX

No one is dying.

HEN

Tell that to Blaze.

KRIS

Blaze could be fine. Blaze could have just gone somewhere else--

SPOT

(in agreement)

Woof.

HEN

Yeah, I'm sure when someone leaves the only hangout spot they've ever liked which also happens to be one of very few hangout spots still above the water line, when they leave all their friends and don't text--

KRIS

I mean, it's not like cell service is great anymore--

MAX

It's not like Blaze actually LIKED the library, they just hung out here because they didn't have a ride home--

HEN

--when they obviously still don't have a ride home because there IS NO HOME, when we hear weird screaming noises outside and see a LIZARD TAIL around the corner--

SPOT

(whines)

MAX

EVERYONE WENT TO GET GUMMY WORMS. LIZARDS ARE NATIVE TO NORTH AMERICA AND AREN'T NECESSARILY SHAPESHIFTING MUTANTS. GAME NIGHT IS THE ONLY THING KEEPING ANY OF US SANE NOW THAT THERE AREN'T NEW FICTION RELEASES. SO CAN WE PLEASE SET UP THE LASERDOME BEFORE AVERY GETS BACK AND ONLY WANTS TO PLAY STUPID CHECKERS. AGAIN.

(A moment, in which everyone realizes how much Max needs this moment to be normal, and they acquiesce.)

KRIS

Yeah, Max. Lasers will be fun.

SPOT

Woof!