You should play Splatoon with your family

Usually my younger siblings wait until I'm done with work — they're in earlier time zones than I am, so they're being polite — then the group chat lights up: "Splat." "Splat." "Splat."

This is our shorthand for "It's time to play *Splatoon 3*."

I am not what you would call a gamer, but I did buy a Nintendo Switch in 2020. That's kind of when this all started. I am the oldest of five, and most of my younger siblings love video games. In the interest of bonding, I started hanging out with them on FaceTime while we played *Animal Crossing* together. In 2022, one of my brothers got *Splatoon 3*. Eventually, most of the rest of us did, too. Now four of us (and one of my brothers' significant others) play *Splatoon* together.

I am writing this, in part, because my younger siblings have some complaints

Our pandemic family video game hangouts never really ended, so now I am logging serious hours on *Splatoon*. For the uninitiated, it's a third-person shooter, but a family-friendly one; the idea is to paint as much space in a map as possible. It seems to be set in a future where mammals generally, including humans, are absent. We play as squid-like Inklings that swim through paint. You can be killed by other players during matches, but then you are simply reincarnated.

I get killed a lot.

My siblings and I are scattered across the US, and we don't get to spend a ton of time together in person. But since we

started splatting together, we've been hanging out on FaceTime several times a week. We've developed a whole intrafamily lore. I thought about explaining it, and then realized it is completely incomprehensible. Just trust me on this one, it's very funny.

I am writing this, in part, because my younger siblings have some complaints, and they would like me to abuse my position of power (?) at a website in order to air them out. There are nine items on the list at the moment, but I'm sure they will think of something else to complain about soon.

I will air only one: when we all play, it's annoying to set up matches together, because teams consist of four people and there are often five of us. So what usually happens is that one of us starts playing. Then, once they're in a match, they can accept "drop-ins" and so the rest of us all drop in, which means we join in the following match. It would be nice if we could figure out how to do this in a more efficient way, so one of us doesn't have to play alone while the rest of us wait.

I have never been a video games person per se. Mostly, I play them as a way of hanging out with friends; I played *Counter-Strike* with friends often enough in college that I didn't embarrass myself, but I wouldn't say I was good. When I lived in New York after college, video games were a fun way to hang out with my downstairs neighbor after work. Now, they're sibling bonding time.

We don't really make plans ahead of time, which means that sometimes not all of us can make it. But it's nice to get a text that says only "splat" and means "I love you, let's hang out."

https://www.theverge.com/2024/2/16/24075342/splatoon-3-family-bonding