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are almost  
certain to feel  
unhappy when we  
fail at them.

We may think of  
video games as  
being "fun,"  
but in *The Art  
of Failure*,  
Jesper Juul  
claims that  
this is almost  
entirely

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mistaken. When we play video games, our facial expressions are rarely those of happiness or bliss. Instead, we frown, grimace, and shout in frustration as we lose, or



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die, or fail to  
advance to the  
next level.

Humans may have  
a fundamental  
desire to  
succeed and  
feel competent,  
but game  
players choose  
to engage in an  
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nearly certain  
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why do we play  
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even though  
they make us  
unhappy? Juul  
examines this  
paradox. In  
video games, as  
in tragic works

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of art,  
literature,  
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seems that we  
want to  
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unpleasantness  
even if we also  
dislike it.  
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tragedy is often explained as catharsis, as a purging of negative emotions. But, Juul points out, this doesn't seem to be the case for video game players. Games do not purge us

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of unpleasant emotions; they produce them in the first place. What, then, does failure in video game playing do? Juul argues that failure in a game is unique in that

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when you fail in a game, you (not a character) are in some way inadequate. Yet games also motivate us to play more, in order to escape that inadequacy, and the feeling of

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escaping failure (often by improving skills) is a central enjoyment of games. Games, writes Juul, are the art of failure: the singular art form that sets us up for

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failure and  
allows us to  
experience it  
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