

Negative. Again.

It's no use. Nothing works. It's time to face facts.

You're dying.

All your schooling, your expertise, your brilliance - they all come to nothing. Your body has been eating itself from the inside for years, and the time you have left is measurable in days. It's your body, Doctor. It isn't something you can think your way out of.

Think your way out. Of your body.

Huh.

Victor

A Human Game
for three or four players

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for
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Ingredients used:



What This Is

You are the Doctor, a scientist from New York. You're dying. Unable to stop the disease, you leverage your company's unbelievable achievements - human cloning, hyper-accelerated growth, and your own Zulu method of neurocoding - to create a copy of yourself. You won't survive, but maybe he will.

The first attempt is a disaster. You try again. And again. Your failures teach you, eventually, that though the clones share your Zulu-imprinted knowledge, they are unable to access your memories. They cannot empathize with what they know, cannot accept and affirm their past actions, and anyway have no ego present into which they can integrate those affirmations. Without these things, the clones go instantly mad and soon die.

Problem-solving, however, is your strength. The clones, you decide, require:

- An emotional landscape
- A moral compass
- A sense of self

These three aspects, these components of a soul, are what you must impart. If your theory is sound, a clone with such a triune soul will recover their - your - memories, becoming you. Even if you fail to give a clone *your* soul, he should still be able to live a life of his own, which may be good enough.

You are on your 22nd clone, Victor, and time has run out. This, your last chance, must succeed. However, Victor's lack of emotion, morality, and identity present challenges. You've mentally codified these into the Three Prohibitions.

The First Prohibition

Victor can understand only logical statements.

The Second Prohibition

Victor cannot understand value judgments.

The Third Prohibition

Victor cannot see another person, or he becomes confused that he is not that person. Therefore, you can speak to Victor only via intercom.

Luckily, your Zulu program has instilled a deep, abiding curiosity in Victor. Sitting in his room, he will try his best to learn what you have to teach him. If you can teach him.

Your final hours are upon you. Good luck.

Playing the Game

Three players sit in a circle. Each of you chooses an initial role: Victor, the Doctor, and the Narrator. Talking, you play out a scene in which the Doctor uses analogy and rhetoric to impart a component of soul into Victor. At the end, you vote on the Doctor's success.

Beginning a Scene

The Narrator begins. In 20 seconds or less, she describes an initial situation. For example:

- In the night, a rat has died on the floor of Victor's room.
- Surfing his learning machine, Victor discovers the idea of community.
- Raking his fingernails on his chest, Victor draws blood.

The Doctor decides which component of soul – Emotion, Moral Compass, or Sense of Self – he will attempt to instill into Victor this scene.

Victor's player moves so that he faces away from the Doctor; he will not look at the Doctor until the scene is over.

The Roles In Play

If you are the Doctor, you speak to Victor through the intercom, trying to awaken a piece of soul within him.

If you are Victor, you narrate your own speech and actions within your room, responding with interest to the Doctor and asking questions in order to satisfy your curiosity.

If you are the Narrator, you set the initial situation, provide color description, and play any other characters who may arrive. Whenever the Doctor violates a Prohibition, stop the action and say so. Corrected, the Doctor continues his dialog as though no mistake had been made.

At Scene's End

When the group is ready to end a scene, do. Ask: *Did the Doctor teach Victor what he set out to?* Each player votes Yea or Nay.

If the players vote Yea unanimously, that component is a success. Mark it so on a scrap bit of paper.

Otherwise, mark down the number of Yea votes. Victor will need a number of Yea votes equal to twice (the number of players - 1), or four votes in a three-player game, to successfully absorb the component.

Another Scene

Each player passes her Role to the left (or right, as you like) and a new scene begins.

End of the Line

At the start of the game, note the time. The game ends after a number of half-hours equal to the number of players, or 90 minutes in a three-player game.

Endgame

The Doctor has expired. His pre-recorded video message wishes Victor a happy, virtuous, and fulfilling life. The door opens and Victor is free to leave.

If Victor lacks any components of soul – that is, that component received neither a unanimous Yea vote nor the total number of Yea votes – Victor's madness comes fast (perhaps at the sight of the Doctor on the screen). Describe this sad, dark ending.

Assuming that is not the case, the players discuss if Victor absorbed the Doctor's emotion, moral compass, and sense of self. Go through each of these. The players who served as Narrator in each appropriate scene have the final decision, and describe how Victor is similar or different from the Doctor.

If Victor is dissimilar on any component of soul, he leaves the room and begins a new life. Celebrate momentarily. Ask one another if it was all worth it. Then ask if the Doctor would think so.

If Victor is similar to the Doctor in every component of soul, he regains the Doctor's memories. The new Doctor rushes from the room to clean up his old body, wondering what tomorrow will bring. Decide what lies in store for him.

Alternatives

Victor might be Victoria. It is, of course, no bother.

In the case of a four-player game, add a fourth Role, the Umpire. The Umpire has the task of policing the Doctor's dialogue for Prohibition violations, rather than that duty falling to the Narrator. During Endgame, both the Narrator and Umpire have the final decision as to whether Victor absorbs the Doctor's soul.