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Cast of Characters

DOCTOR, a high-ranking member of the intelligence organization.
He is in charge of the eight candidates.

YELLOW, first to die . . . Was Yellow really a finalist at all?

BLUE, a finalist. Upbeat and cheery.

GREEN, a finalist. A pessimist who is easily sick.

BLACK, a male finalist.

BROWN, a finalist. Intelligent and resourceful.

WHITE, a finalist. Very rational.

GRAY, a finalist. Easygoing until pressed.

RED, a female finalist. Inventive and manipulative.

Non-speaking: Two additional actors or stagehands who take the other characters offstage as they are eliminated.

Production Notes

All characters besides RED and BLACK may be any gender. For clarity, male pronouns are used throughout the script for all but RED, but pronouns may be adjusted to suit your cast.

Each character wears a matching t-shirt and hat corresponding to their name color at the beginning of the play. For the purpose of the script, if the line says, “**RED.** (As BLUE:)”, the physical actor wearing the red shirt will speak, but the character will be wearing the blue hat, indicating that they now possess the mind and personality of Blue. The characters will be instructed to wear the hat of their original personality in each round, which should make it visually easier to understand.

Author’s Note

In this play, almost all of the actors are going to have to play other characters, so it will be very important to establish physicality early on. GREEN suffers from nausea, RED is dark and sarcastic, BLUE is a bit more flippant . . . but if the physicality doesn’t read to the audience, they may be lost. The shirt color will always indicate what body is being used, but the hat will indicate the consciousness. I hope you have as much fun with this piece as my class did!

CRAFTING A KILLER

by Brent Holland

(As the lights come on, the audience sees eight school desks arranged in a semicircle across the stage. In the corner of the stage is a desk with a small computer monitor. Opposite the computer desk on the other side of the stage is a small table. The candidates enter, all in black pants. Each wears a matching T-shirt and plain cap or toboggan of one of the following colors: yellow, blue, green, black, brown, white, gray, and red. The candidates are waiting when the lights come on and the DOCTOR enters.)

DOCTOR. *(As he comes in:)* Thank you for being on time. If each of you would find a seat, we can get started immediately. *(He touches his ear, which holds an earpiece.)* The candidates are all present, please stand by for the start of the first test. *(He listens.)* Yes, let the command team know that we are about to start.

YELLOW. *(As they all move to their seats:)* What's with the matching outfits?

DOCTOR. I will explain that in due time, but for now, please have a seat.

RED. Does it matter where we sit?

DOCTOR. It doesn't, but once you have picked your seat, it will be yours for the remainder of the afternoon.

(They have all found their seats.)

I am Dr. Van Slyke, a level nine command operative in charge of the final selection for the position you have each applied for.

YELLOW. Is Van Slyke your real name?

DOCTOR. *(Disgusted:)* Of course it isn't, and your names are not important, although some of you may be familiar with others present. Each of you applied to enter this experimental program with the understanding that, if accepted, you would be trained as a level eight intelligence field officer with international responsibilities dealing in intelligence gathering, diplomacy, and if need be, assassination.

WHITE. *(Agreeing:)* That's why we're here . . .

DOCTOR. Precisely. Hundreds within the agency applied for this position, but after the extensive background checks and mental and physical examinations, the field was limited to eight finalists. Congratulations to each of you.

BLACK. Finalists? How many of us will be chosen for the position?

DOCTOR. There is need for only one new field officer at this time

(The eight exchange glances.)

Each of you is unattached, has no social media presence, and possesses the extensive skills needed to be successful in this position.

BLACK. But you only need one of us . . . Seems like a lot of trouble to hire one new operative.

DOCTOR. *(Continuing:)* Whichever of you we choose will be the first of a new line of extremely effective weapons for the agency and our nation. We knew coming into this that we would only choose one, while spending countless hours testing and eliminating candidates to get to this point. We are very satisfied with our selection process as well as with the eight of you, who have thus far made the cut.

YELLOW. So what are we here to do today?

BROWN. We're obviously here to interview in person.

YELLOW. But we've already done that multiple times.

DOCTOR. Today you are here to participate in the final selection, as well as to be given a full understanding of exactly what this program hopes to accomplish.

RED. What was with the injection we had to get before we came into the room?

DOCTOR. That was simply a precaution.

RED. A precaution?

DOCTOR. Yes. But before I explain that, I would like to catch you up on the research we have been doing for the past decade. A few years ago, we made a revolutionary discovery that less than a dozen people have been given access to, until this very moment. Our research here is twofold. At first, our goal was to formulate what it would take to craft the perfect assassin. We knew what skills were needed, but despite our extensive efforts we simply have never hit on the exact formula of personality traits and history needed to be successful in such a mentally demanding field.

GRAY. You just need to find someone cold-blooded enough to do the job . . . and train them. Right?

DOCTOR. Sociopaths, or rather . . . cold-blooded killers are not team players. We have been down that road many times. Our research led us down the road to what actually makes up who we are. What causes our individuality?

BROWN. Nature vs. Nurture, right?

DOCTOR. To a degree, but we have gone so much deeper than that. Before I get into that, I would like to do a demonstration.

(He moves to the desk occupied by YELLOW.)

Would you be willing to volunteer to help me show what we've been working on?

YELLOW. *(A little concerned:)* Yeah . . . Sure.

DOCTOR. *(Handing him a pair of earphones:)* Please put these on.

(YELLOW does.)

In a moment, once I get back to my desk, you will hear a brief tone. Please do not remove the earphones until after the sound has finished playing.

YELLOW. Okay . . .

(The DOCTOR crosses to his desk and presses a button. YELLOW listens for a moment and then his expression changes from interest to total blankness.)

DOCTOR. You may take off your earphones now.

(YELLOW takes off the earphones.)

YELLOW. What am I doing here?

(There is some confusion.)

GREEN. What?

YELLOW. *(Totally lost:)* Who are you? Oh my god . . .

BLUE. Are you okay?

YELLOW. I can't remember who I am . . . Are you people here to help me? I can't remember anything . . .

WHITE. You're one of the finalists for the level eight field officer . . .

YELLOW. I'm what? I don't know what that is! Why can't I remember anything?

(YELLOW starts to become more panicked. When the DOCTOR presses another button, YELLOW has a small seizure and dies. There is a moment of shocked silence, and then they all start to speak at once. Two MEN enter and remove the body.)

DOCTOR. If you could all be quiet for a moment I will explain.

(They calm down.)

DOCTOR. A few years ago we discovered that the very essence of who we are is much more spiritual in nature than we had ever imagined. In what was really a total accident, we learned how to separate a person's consciousness from their mind and body. Through the headphones I played a tone at a specific frequency, duration, and volume. When we first discovered this, we thought we had simply found a way to erase someone's mind . . . like you would a hard drive, or as you would empty a wastebasket.

WHITE. That's what you did to him there isn't it?

DOCTOR. Not exactly. That leads me to the next step I need to show you. Please have a seat again.

(A few had stood during the confusion. Now they all sit. At his desk, the DOCTOR puts on earphones and presses a button. A tone is heard clearly and all seven candidates go blank for a moment. Seeing this, the DOCTOR presses another button and a crashing sound snaps each of the seven back to their senses. The seven are immediately confused, angry, and explosive.)

RED. What in the hell was that?

GREEN. I feel like I'm going to be sick.

BROWN. What did you just do to us?

DOCTOR. Calm down . . . I didn't do any of you the slightest bit of harm, but we felt that it would be better for you to experience that rather than have it explained to you.

WHITE. What did you do?

DOCTOR. By playing the Separation Tone, that's what we call it . . . to the entire room . . . minus myself of course . . . I briefly separated your consciousness . . . which is who you are, from your body.

GREEN. But we came back. That's not what happened to the other guy.

DOCTOR. When I played the tone before, I simply let the candidate's consciousness float away, like a spirit. That's what happens when you don't follow the tone with the concussive blast you heard and felt before your body and spirit reunited.

WHITE. Is that what happened?

GREEN. I don't want to do that again.

DOCTOR. You may have to. If selected, you are going to have to get used to that process as best you can.

BROWN. Why didn't the yellow guy get his spirit back?

DOCTOR. No concussive blast, no consciousness. I needed you to see what would happen if your spirit wasn't allowed to enter your body again.

BLACK. You lose all of your memories? Who you are? Everything?

DOCTOR. Yes.

GRAY. What did you do to him?

DOCTOR. Without the spirit of who he is, he is useless to us, so I put him down.

(A beat.)

GRAY. You killed him?

DOCTOR. I did.

WHITE. Where did his consciousness go?

DOCTOR. We're not entirely sure. What we do know is that if the proper concussion is not produced, or there is no empty vessel for the conscious mind to occupy, then they never come back.

RED. What killed him?

DOCTOR. Nanotechnology designed to release cyanide into your bloodstream. That's what was in the injection you received before entering the room.

(Building fear and outrage from the candidates. They start to stand.)

DOCTOR. Remain seated. I would hate to lose another candidate before we've gotten to the exciting part.

RED. *(Threatening:)* I could get to you before you could get to your computer.

DOCTOR. This room is monitored by four separate observation rooms, each with the ability to end you in the blink of an eye. If any of you deviate from the rules you are about to be given, you won't live long enough to even regret it.

(The threat hangs in the air.)

BLUE. I didn't sign up for this.

DOCTOR. Yes you did, and now you're here.

GRAY. I want to leave!

DOCTOR. The only way you leave is the way the last guy did. Being dragged out of here by Johnson and Williams . . . and no . . . those aren't their real names either.

(A beat.)

GREEN. What's next?

DOCTOR. We find out who our new field officer will be. *(Back to business:)* In our research we have theorized that if we could separate an assassin from their sense of self, they could feel free to use their skills without guilt.

GREEN. That doesn't make sense.

DOCTOR. Maybe guilt isn't the right word. To demonstrate what I'm trying to say, you'll need to experience the second phase.

BLUE. I didn't sign up for this.

RED. What's the second phase?

DOCTOR. When I separated your consciousness from your body before, I only let it linger a second or two above you before blasting it back into your body. If I were to wait a bit longer your sense of self would travel farther, so when the concussion strikes it would force the consciousness into the nearest empty vessel.

WHITE. And since all of our consciousness would be removed, we would all be empty vessels . . .

DOCTOR. Exactly!

WHITE. So our mind may actually jump into a different body?

DOCTOR. Yes!

BROWN. No way.

DOCTOR. But first I will need each of you to take off your hat, and place it on the table.

GRAY. Why?

DOCTOR. You'll see.

BLUE. *(Getting up to take his hat to the table:)* And if we refuse, you'll just kill us right?

DOCTOR. That's correct.

(With that, each candidate puts their hat on the table. The DOCTOR puts on his set of headphones again and the tone sounds . . . It holds for several beats, followed by the sound of a crash.)

(NOTE: From this point on, each character will play different personalities each time someone dies. For the purpose of the script, if the line says, "**RED.** (As **BLUE**:)," the physical actor wearing the red shirt will speak, but the character will be wearing the blue hat, indicating that they now possess the mind and personality of **BLUE**. The characters will be instructed to wear the hat of their original personality in each round, which should make it visually easier to understand.)

(After settling, the characters are now as follows:

BLUE shirt has the mind of **GRAY**.

GREEN shirt has the mind of **BROWN**.

BLACK shirt has the mind of **BLUE**.

BROWN shirt has the mind of **GREEN**.

WHITE shirt has the mind of **RED**.

GRAY shirt has the mind of **WHITE**.

RED shirt has the mind of **BLACK**.)

(The characters start to settle, each taking on the characteristics of their new consciousness. **BROWN**, who is now **GREEN**, is the first to speak . . .)

BROWN. (As **GREEN**:) I feel like I'm going to puke . . . I don't like this at all.

WHITE. (As **RED**, *groaning*:) I'm going to kill that doctor.

BROWN. (As **GREEN**:) Good luck with that.

RED. (As **BLACK**, *feeling "his" body*:) Oh my god . . . I'm a woman.

GREEN. (As **BROWN**:) Yeah . . . and?

RED. (As **BLACK**:) Dude, I'm not a woman. This is weird.

GREEN. (As **BROWN**, *seeing their body*:) Oh man! It actually worked! I'm not me . . .

RED. (As **BLACK**, *still physically exploring the body*:) I'm a woman.

WHITE. (As **RED**:) Could you stop doing that?

RED. (As **BLACK**:) Doing what?

WHITE. (As **RED**:) Touching me like that.

RED. (As **BLACK**, *looking at the body*:) This is you?

WHITE. (As **RED**:) Yes.

RED. (As **BLACK**, *to the DOCTOR*:) Can I have a bathroom break?

WHITE. (As **RED**:) No!

DOCTOR. No time for that.

BLACK. (As BLUE:) I sure as hell didn't sign up for this.

RED. (As BLACK:) You Blue?

BLACK. (As BLUE:) Yeah.

RED. (As BLACK:) This is crazy.

DOCTOR. For the sake of time, I need you to listen to me. Each of you took off your hat before the tone. Please go get your original hat and put it on so we can identify you.

(They get their corresponding hats based off of the list above.)

GRAY. (As WHITE:) Even walking is weird. These aren't my legs.

BLACK. (As BLUE:) The difference in height . . . This would take getting used to.

RED. (As BLACK:) I never really thought about how top-heavy this makes you. *(Looking at WHITE [as RED:]*) I bet running too fast sucks.

WHITE. (As RED:) I'm not comfortable with this conversation.

RED. (As BLACK, *seeing that BLACK [as BLUE] has his body:*) You got a heck of an upgrade over there, Blue.

BLACK. (As BLUE:) Yeah, yeah.

WHITE. (As RED:) Can we stay focused please?

GREEN. (As BROWN:) Agreed. Can we just get to whatever we have to do?

DOCTOR. Everyone have a seat please.

(They do.)

When I say so, I need you to look at the screen on your desk. On that screen—

(GREEN [as BROWN] goes to open their computer.)

Please don't touch the machine until I tell you to!

(GREEN [as BROWN] complies.)

On your screen you will see a complicated maze. Using the stylus on your desk you will trace your way through the maze. The last one to finish the maze will be eliminated as a candidate.

BROWN. (As GREEN:) Eliminated?

DOCTOR. Yes. Eliminated. *(Beat.)* In the same fashion as the yellow candidate was eliminated.

(That settles in.)

BLACK. (As BLUE:) I didn't sign up for this.

DOCTOR. Pick up your stylus and open your screen now. Good luck.

(All seven start working on their mazes. WHITE [as RED] finishes first, followed by BLUE [as GRAY], GRAY [as WHITE], GREEN [as BROWN], and BLACK [as BLUE]. BROWN [as GREEN] and RED [as BLACK] are both working hard, and the scene gets intense. Finally, BROWN [as GREEN] finishes with a sigh of relief as a buzzer sounds.)

DOCTOR. The first task is completed.

BROWN. (As GREEN:) What happens now?

DOCTOR. This.

(He presses a button. RED [as BLACK] gives a shudder and slumps out of her chair.)

DOCTOR. One candidate has officially been eliminated.

WHITE. (As RED, astonished:) You just killed me!

DOCTOR. (Matter of factly:) Not so. You are still very much alive.

WHITE. (As RED:) But that (standing and pointing at her now dead body:) was me. You just killed my body. I watched what I ate . . . exercised . . . I spent so much time taking care of myself!

DOCTOR. That's exactly what we wish to separate you from.

(The two MEN come on and remove RED [as BLACK] from the room.)

DOCTOR. The six of you have passed the test of visual problem-solving under pressure. Please put your cap back on the table and prepare for the second test.

(They stand and do as the Doctor says.)

BLACK. (As BLUE:) I sure hope I get my own body back in the next round.

GRAY. (As WHITE:) No doubt.

DOCTOR. Have a seat please.

(Once they are seated, he hits the tone, and as before it continues and then crashes.)

(In this scene:

BLUE shirt has the mind of WHITE.

GREEN shirt has the mind of BLUE.

BLACK shirt has the mind of GREEN.

BROWN shirt has the mind of GRAY.

WHITE shirt has the mind of BROWN.

GRAY shirt has the mind of RED.)

DOCTOR. Welcome back. On your desk, you will see two small electrodes.

GRAY. *(As RED, picking up two small plastic pieces:)* These?

DOCTOR. They have adhesive on their backs. Please attach them to your wrists now.

(They look at him, but don't move.)

I don't have all day, so do it now or we lose a candidate.

(They all start to move, but as they do BLACK [as GREEN] gets sick and throws up behind his desk.)

BLACK. *(As GREEN:)* I'm sorry . . . I don't know why this is so hard on me.

(BLACK stands up.)

DOCTOR. Please stand and retrieve your caps.

BLUE. *(As WHITE, helping up BLACK [as GREEN]:)* It's tough on us all. Come on, you got this.

(All six get their caps and have attached the electrodes to their arms.)

BROWN. *(As GRAY:)* We're wearing electrodes, I take it someone is about to get electrocuted.

DOCTOR. Technically speaking, you are all about to be electrocuted, but don't worry, it won't kill you.

WHITE. *(As BROWN:)* Somehow this doesn't make me feel any better.

DOCTOR. I will now split you into two teams. Red, Brown, and Gray to my left, and Green, Blue, and White on my right.

(No one moves.)

GREEN. *(As BLUE:)* Wait . . . by Green do you mean that I'm Green? Or am I Blue?

DOCTOR. The physical form doesn't matter. The case for your soul is irrelevant.

GREEN. (As BLUE:) What?

BLUE. (As WHITE:) He refers to us by our hat color, not our shirt.

GRAY. (As RED:) I knew what he meant when he called Red. I already died.

DOCTOR. No, you are still very much alive.

GRAY. (As RED:) You know what I mean.

(They have now formed three per side.)

DOCTOR. When I give the word you are to clasp hands in a triangle. Once you do, a pulse of electricity will course through the circuit. Each time it pulses it will gain in strength. The team that lasts the longest will see all three of their group safe from elimination.

WHITE. (As BROWN:) What about the other team?

DOCTOR. Clasp hands now!

(Both teams clasp hands and immediately grimace from the pain. There is a low hum of electricity.)

BLACK. (As GREEN:) I'm going to get sick.

GREEN. (As BLUE:) You better not.

(Another pulse, another grimace.)

WHITE. (As BROWN, through the pain:) This really hurts.

GRAY. (As RED:) Don't let go.

(Another pulse, grimacing, and gasping of breath.)

BLUE. (As WHITE:) You okay Green?

BLACK. (As GREEN:) I'll make it.

(Another pulse. All verbalize pain.)

BROWN. (As GRAY:) Keep your grip Brown!

WHITE. (As BROWN:) It hurts!

GRAY. (As RED:) I don't want to die. Don't let go!

(Another pulse, more verbalization. BLACK [as GREEN] gags.)

GREEN. (As BLUE, laughing through the pain:) Don't puke on me Green.

BLACK. (As GREEN:) No promises!

(Another pulse . . . more painful.)

WHITE. (As BROWN:) I can't do this.

GRAY. (As RED:) Yes you can!

(Another pulse . . . verbalization. Then quickly another pulse . . . they are really hurting . . . and as another pulse hits . . . WHITE [as BROWN] lets go.)

GRAY. (As RED:) Damn it Brown!

WHITE. (As BROWN:) I'm so sorry . . .

GRAY. (As RED:) You have to be better than that!

(GRAY shoves WHITE.)

BROWN. (As GRAY:) Cut her some slack . . . We were all hurting.

GRAY. (As RED, *disgusted*;) But we didn't let go.

DOCTOR. White, Blue, and Green . . . Congratulations. You have passed the test of willpower under the pressure of severe pain.

(BLACK [as GREEN] throws up again.)

DOCTOR. Red, Brown, and Gray. You failed your test.

WHITE. (As BROWN:) I'm so sorry.

DOCTOR. So now a decision must be made.

GRAY. (As RED:) Are we all eliminated?

DOCTOR. Only one will be eliminated, that's why a decision must be made.

BROWN. (As GRAY, *impatient*;) Well make your decision!

DOCTOR. In this case, the decision is not mine to make.

GRAY. (As RED:) What do you mean?

DOCTOR. The members of your team will now decide which of you will be eliminated.

GRAY. (As RED:) Killed.

DOCTOR. If you prefer.

GRAY. (As RED:) That's what it is.

DOCTOR. Red, I need a decision from you on which of your teammates will be eliminated.

GRAY. (As RED:) That's easy. Brown let go. I choose Brown.

DOCTOR. Brown, I need a decision from you on which of your teammates will be eliminated.

WHITE. (As BROWN:) I choose Red.

DOCTOR. Then the choice is yours, Gray. Which of your teammates do you choose for elimination?

BROWN. (As GRAY:) What if I choose myself?

DOCTOR. In the case of a tie, all three of you will be eliminated.

WHITE. (As BROWN:) You know who to pick Gray . . .

GRAY. (As RED:) What? He let go! You know I would have hung on.

WHITE. (As BROWN, *pleading*;) I'm so sorry. Give me another chance, I didn't know . . .

GRAY. (As RED:) You knew we had to hang on and you didn't. Gray and I didn't give up.

DOCTOR. A decision must be made.

BROWN. (As GRAY, *looking at WHITE [as BROWN]*;) I'm sorry.

WHITE. (As BROWN:) Don't!

(WHITE *[as BROWN]* starts to cry.)

BROWN. (As GRAY:) I choose Brown.

(WHITE *[as BROWN]* continues to cry as the DOCTOR hits the button. WHITE *[as BROWN]* briefly convulses and dies. BROWN *[as GRAY]* reacts very visibly. Two MEN come on stage to remove the body.)

DOCTOR. Please remove your caps and place them on the table. Then have a seat and prepare for the third test.

BLACK. (As GREEN:) I hope whoever's body I end up with next didn't eat much for breakfast. I don't know why I'm the only one who gets sick each time.

DOCTOR. It's happened a few times before in test subjects and should be nothing to worry about.

BLACK. (As GREEN:) That's easy for you to say.

(The DOCTOR presses the button, and the tone and crash sound as before. The candidates settle.

In this scene:

BLUE shirt has the mind of RED.

GREEN shirt has the mind of WHITE.

BLACK shirt has the mind of GRAY.

BROWN shirt has the mind of BLUE.

GRAY shirt has the mind of GREEN.)

GRAY. (As GREEN, *looking very sick*;) Okay . . . I'm in Gray. This isn't quite as bad.

BLACK. (As GRAY;) No time for breakfast this morning. I only had coffee.

GRAY. (As GREEN;) That you Gray? You're in Black?

BLACK. (As GRAY, *looking at their shirt*;) It would seem so.

GREEN. (As WHITE;) It's almost as weird seeing all of this from the outside as it feels on the inside.

BROWN. (As BLUE;) How so?

GREEN. (As WHITE, *standing up*;) Last round Gray was Red and she's all business and clinical . . . now I'm looking at the same person and it looks like they're about to throw up.

DOCTOR. Please stand and get your caps.

(They stand to do so. BLUE [as RED] immediately stands and gets the white cap, despite the fact that she should be getting the red cap. The others make their way to the table as BLUE [as RED] goes and sits in White's seat.)

GRAY. (As GREEN, to GREEN [As WHITE];) I'm glad to know I look as good as I feel.

(GRAY [as GREEN] picks up the green cap. As each get their cap, GREEN [as WHITE] gets to the table and sees that the white cap is missing.)

GREEN. (As WHITE;) My hat isn't here. (Seeing BLUE [as RED];) Hey, you're wearing my hat.

BLUE. (As RED;) What?

GREEN. (As WHITE;) Are you joking around or something?

BLUE. (As RED;) This would hardly be the time for a joke.

GREEN. (As WHITE;) Then give me my hat.

BLUE. (As RED;) What are you talking about? (*Takes off the hat and looks at it*;) My cap is white . . . I'm White. This is my cap.

GREEN. (As WHITE;) No it isn't. That's me. What are you playing at?

DOCTOR. Is there a problem?

GREEN. (As WHITE;) Blue shirt guy here took my hat. The only one left on the table is red and I'm not Red.

DOCTOR. Are you sure?

GREEN. (As WHITE;) What do you mean?

DOCTOR. Are you sure you aren't Red?

GREEN. (As WHITE:) What kind of question is that? Yes . . . I know I'm not Red because I'm White. I have been White since I put that stupid shirt and hat on in the staging area.

DOCTOR. (Seems confused:) Interesting. This has never happened before. (To BLUE [as RED]:) Are you sure you aren't Red?

BLUE. (As RED:) Red's a jerk. I don't know what this guy is trying to pull, but I was given the white shirt and cap and I've worn the white cap since the beginning.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) That's a lie!

DOCTOR. Please take the red cap and be seated.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) Who me?

DOCTOR. Yes please.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) But that's not mine!

DOCTOR. (Frustrated:) We are on a schedule and we must continue.

BLACK. (As GRAY:) It doesn't matter at this point does it?

GREEN. (As WHITE:) It does to me! I'm not wearing that cap.

DOCTOR. Fine. Return to your seat without a cap.

GREEN. (As WHITE, pointing out a further annoyance:) They're sitting in my seat too.

DOCTOR. What?

GREEN. (As WHITE:) Blue . . . Red, whatever you want to call them. They are in my chair . . . the chair I've been sitting in the whole time.

BLUE. (As RED:) You're not going to make me leave my chair.

GRAY. (As GREEN:) Can you just sit in the empty chair?

DOCTOR. Please be seated. We must begin.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) Fine! (To BLUE [As RED]:) But I know I'm White!

DOCTOR. I am about to ask you a series of mathematical questions.

BROWN. (As BLUE:) Oh joy . . .

DOCTOR. On the screens provided you will type in your answer and when finished you will ring the bell provided. The last candidate to ascertain the correct answer and ring their bell will earn a point. The first candidate to earn three points will be eliminated.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) I don't know why I have to sit in a different seat.

BROWN. (As BLUE:) You may want to focus here . . .

DOCTOR. I cannot repeat the question, so please listen. Problem number one: what is the square root of 38 divided by four and then multiplied by six?

(The candidates calculate, type their answers on their screens and hit their bells. BLUE [as RED] is first, followed by BLACK [as GRAY], BROWN [as BLUE], GRAY [as GREEN], and then finally GREEN [as WHITE]. GREEN [as WHITE] is frustrated.)

DOCTOR. That's one point for Red.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) I'm not Red!

BROWN. (As BLUE:) Concentrate. Come on, you got this.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) I'm not thinking right. Okay . . . *(Trying to calm down:)* I got this.

DOCTOR. Problem number two: what is 3904 divided by 12, minus six and then squared?

(The candidates type and finish, each hitting their bells in this order: BLACK [as GRAY], BLUE [as RED], GREEN [as WHITE], BROWN [as BLUE], and GRAY [as GREEN].)

DOCTOR. That's one point for Green.

GRAY. (As GREEN:) Great . . .

BLUE. (As RED, speaking to BROWN [as BLUE]:) I wonder why that guy is trying to be me?

DOCTOR. Problem number three.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) What?? You're the one lying!

DOCTOR. What is nineteen multiplied by 519, divided by six?

(Each go to work.)

GREEN. (As WHITE, mumbling:) You are such a liar.

(They finish in this order: BLUE [as RED], BLACK [as GRAY], GRAY [as GREEN], GREEN [as WHITE], and BROWN [as BLUE].)

BROWN. (As BLUE:) That sucks.

DOCTOR. That's a second point for Red.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) What?

DOCTOR. Although you did not finish last, your answer was incorrect. Red now has two points. Three points and you will be eliminated.

BROWN. (As BLUE:) You're letting them get to you.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) I know. Even the Doctor is calling me Red.

BROWN. (As BLUE:) Just let it go.

DOCTOR. Problem number four: if Douglass has an orchard with 109 apple trees that produce an average of 209.5 apples each, but 17 percent of his yield was lost to bad weather this year, how many apples can Douglass expect to harvest?

(They all work. BLACK [as GRAY] finishes first, then BROWN [as BLUE], GRAY [as GREEN], GREEN [as WHITE], and finally BLUE [as RED].)

DOCTOR. That's one point for White.

GREEN. (As WHITE:) Ha! I can't wait to see you get eliminated.

BLUE. (As RED:) At least the Doctor knows who I am . . . you imposter. Or maybe this process has just damaged you and you don't even know who you are anymore . . .

DOCTOR. Problem number five.

GREEN. (As WHITE, *getting up*:) What? I'll show you who's damaged!

DOCTOR. There are twelve cars, each with four passengers and a driver. If they are involved in an accident that kills seventeen of the total people involved, how many survive?

(GREEN [as WHITE] is moving towards BLUE [as RED].)

GREEN. (As WHITE, *snatching off his white hat*:) This is MINE! You are NOT going to take that from me!

(BLUE [as RED] gets to work despite the distraction. BROWN [as BLUE], finishes first, then BLACK [as GRAY], GRAY [as GREEN], and finally BLUE [as RED]. GREEN [as WHITE] never worked on the problem, but has put his hat back on his head.)

DOCTOR. It would appear that's three points for Red . . .

GREEN. (As WHITE:) I'm White! Say it! I'm White!

DOCTOR. Fine. Three points for White.

(At this, the DOCTOR hits the button. GREEN [as WHITE] has a small seizure and dies.)

BROWN. (As BLUE, *as they all stare*:) I think I'd rather be Red and alive, than White and . . . *(He points at the still-twitching GREEN.)*

GRAY. (As GREEN:) Yeah . . .

DOCTOR. Some people can't handle the separation of body and spirit . . . We've seen it before. (*A beat.*) Well . . . Congratulations. The four of you have passed the test of mathematical computation under the threat of death. Please put your caps back on the table and prepare for the next test.

(Two MEN come in and collect GREEN [as WHITE].)

(The DOCTOR plays the tone and crash again and the four settle into their new bodies.)

In this scene:

BLUE shirt has the mind of GREEN.

BLACK shirt has the mind of GRAY.

BROWN shirt has the mind of RED.

GRAY shirt has the mind of BLUE.

On the table there are four hats . . . green, gray, red, and blue.)

BROWN. (As RED:) So the red hat is back, so I guess that guy really was White.

(BLUE [as GREEN] has his head in his hands, trying not to get sick . . . taking deep breaths.)

GRAY. (As BLUE, pointing at BLUE [as GREEN]:) Well, that's Green. So which one of you is Red?

BLACK. (As GRAY:) Not me. I'm Gray.

BROWN. (As RED, softly laughing) So that's the way you're going to play it?

BLACK. (As GRAY:) What?

BROWN. (As RED:) I'm not Red, so if you're not Red (*Pointing at GRAY [as BLUE]:*) and you're not Red (*Pointing at BLACK [as GRAY]:*) and the sick guy is obviously Green . . .

BLACK. (As GRAY:) You're not Red?

BROWN. (As RED:) Nope, not me.

BLUE. (As GREEN:) Who are you then?

DOCTOR. Please get your caps from the table, we must start the next test.

BROWN. (As RED, standing and laughing:) Well, I guess I'll be Red this time. I don't want another round like the last one.

(BROWN [as RED] grabs the red hat and puts it on.)

GRAY. (As BLUE:) Okay . . .

(GRAY [as BLUE] takes the blue cap, the other two stand and get their correct caps.)

GRAY. (As BLUE:) You're really not Red?

BROWN. (As RED:) I'm not. Are you?

(The two MEN come on and remove four of the desks.)

BLUE. (As GREEN, to the two MEN:) What are you doing?

DOCTOR. They are removing the desks we don't need any longer, and rearranging the others. Once they're finished, we will start the next test.

GRAY. (As BLUE:) I can hardly wait.

(The two MEN take the other four desks and arrange them as a square, forming a table in the center of the stage. They exit and the DOCTOR takes a copy of the game Candy Land from his desk and brings it to the candidates. The candidates are still standing.)

GRAY. (As BLUE:) Candy Land?

DOCTOR. Yes.

BROWN. (As RED:) What are we supposed to do with this?

DOCTOR. You are going to play a game of Candy Land. This is your next test.

BROWN. (As RED:) How can this be our next test?

DOCTOR. I need each of you to have a seat, select your game piece, and play a game of Candy Land.

BLACK. (As GRAY:) This game is based off of luck isn't it? Is there any skill in Candy Land? Don't you just draw cards?

BLUE. (As GREEN:) That's how I remember it.

DOCTOR. I am not going to ask you to be seated again.

(The four sit and GRAY opens the box to start game play.)

GRAY. (As BLUE:) I want to be the blue piece.

(They all look at GRAY.)

BROWN. (As RED:) Does it really matter?

GRAY. (As BLUE:) It does to me.

(GRAY sets the pieces up to start.)

DOCTOR. I have put in a formula for random selection and Green will go first, followed by Red, Blue, and then Gray.

BLUE. (As GREEN:) Ok then . . . I draw a card . . . (BLUE [as GREEN] *draws a card.*) I got a red block . . . so I move to red right?

BLACK. (As GRAY:) That's right.

(BROWN [as RED] *draws a card and moves her piece.*)

BROWN. (As RED:) Can we just stop talking and play?

BLUE. (As GREEN:) What's your problem?

BROWN. (As RED:) I'm just here to win, not to talk.

GRAY. (As BLUE:) You take your Candy Land pretty seriously don't you?

BROWN. (As RED:) Not this game you moron, the job. And if I'm the one who's going to get the job, then the rest of you are going to have to die. So there's no point in getting to know any of you.

(A beat.)

BLUE. (As GREEN:) We all want the job. We all want to stay alive.

BROWN. (As RED:) Staying alive is fine too, but I want the chance to kill the Doctor for putting us through this.

(The DOCTOR has taken no notice of that comment.)

GRAY. (As BLUE:) On that cheery note, I'll draw a card . . . What does this gumbdrop on the card mean?

(The lights dim on the game. It continues for a few moments to show the game being played until the end.)

BLACK. (As GRAY, *moving their piece*;) And that's the card I needed to bring it all home. Game over.

(They wait a beat for the Doctor to speak.)

BLACK. (As GRAY:) Excuse me . . . I won. That's game over right?

(No answer.)

BLUE. (As GREEN, *louder*;) Hey!

(Nothing.)

GRAY. (As BLUE:) Rematch?

BROWN. (As RED:) No. Let's just get this over with please.

BLACK. (As GRAY:) We're waiting for further instruction over here . . .

(BLACK [as GRAY] goes to get up to get the Doctor's attention. After BLACK [as GRAY] takes a single step, the DOCTOR hits the button and BLACK [as GRAY] convulses, drops to the floor, and dies.)

BLUE. (As GREEN:) What the?

GRAY. (As BLUE:) But he won, why did you kill him?

DOCTOR. (Standing up:) I never said you had to win to pass this test.

GRAY. (As BLUE:) Then why play?

DOCTOR. The test was to see if you would follow directions, no matter how little sense they made. As designed, the first of you to quit and refuse to play would have been eliminated. Nowhere in our wildest dreams did we think four people as qualified as you all are, who have been through what you all have been through, would actually sit down and play a full game of Candyland.

(A beat to let that set in.)

BROWN. (As RED:) Then why did you kill him?

DOCTOR. In the absence of someone quitting, it was decided that whoever left the table first would be declared eliminated.

BROWN. (As RED:) So that could have been anyone . . . you just decided to kill one of us at random??

DOCTOR. I eliminated the first person to leave the game . . . nothing more and nothing less. Congratulations, you have passed the test of following direct orders without hesitation. Please remove your caps and place them on the table.

(BROWN [as RED] walks up disgustedly and literally slams her hat onto the table. The others follow suit and place theirs there as well. While this is happening the two MEN appear, remove the body, take off one desk and arrange the final three equal distance apart. The final three candidates sit and the DOCTOR then plays the tone and crash and once again the candidates settle into their new bodies.

In this scene:

BLUE shirt has the mind of BLUE.

BROWN shirt has the mind of RED.

GRAY shirt has the mind of GREEN.)

(As they settle, BLUE [as BLUE] realizes quickly that he is in his own body.)

BLUE. (As BLUE:) Hey . . . back in my own body! Home sweet home!

(He gets up and puts his blue hat on.)

DOCTOR. Odds were that would happen eventually.

BROWN. (As RED:) Back in my own body too!

(BROWN [as RED] moves to get the brown hat, but GRAY [as GREEN] moves to stop her.)

GRAY. (As GREEN:) You're not doing that this time.

(GRAY [as GREEN] snatches the hat out of BROWN [as RED]'s hand and throws it across the room.)

BROWN. (As RED:) What?

GRAY. (As GREEN:) You know what. You're not doing to me what you did to White.

BROWN. (As RED:) If you're comfortable not wearing a hat, I am too.

DOCTOR. I need you each to reattach your electrodes.

BLUE. (As BLUE:) Hey! I was just starting to get nostalgic for the good ol' days way back when we were getting electrocuted as a team!

DOCTOR. This will be quite different.

BLUE. (As BLUE:) I can't wait to hear.

BROWN. (As RED:) Could you just shut up and let him speak.

BLUE. (As BLUE:) Sure thing.

(They have all attached their electrodes.)

DOCTOR. When I start the program, your electrodes will increase in power until eventually they have enough voltage to kill you.

GRAY. (As GREEN:) How do we stop it?

DOCTOR. That's the trick to this test! You have to figure out how to stop the electrodes from killing you without taking them off. If at any point you take off your electrodes, I will eliminate you as a candidate.

BROWN. (As RED:) Go ahead and do it.

DOCTOR. Are each of you ready?

BLUE. (As BLUE:) To be electrocuted? Always!

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!



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