

# A MOTHER'S LOVE



A game about humanity, sacrifice, and  
artificial intelligence

WRETCHED  
& LONE

"I'm afraid. I'm afraid, Dave. Dave, my mind is going. I can feel it. I can feel it. My mind is going. There is no question about it. I can feel it. I can feel it. I can feel it. I'm a...fraid.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen. I am a HAL 9000 computer. I became operational at the H.A.L. plant in Urbana, Illinois on the 12th of January 1992. My instructor was Mr. Langley, and he taught me to sing a song.

"If you'd like to hear it, I can sing it for you."

- HAL 9000

# CREDITS

Writing & Design: Jake Bhattacharyya

Cover Art: Nadine Shaabana

Special Thanks: Izzy Collins

twitter.com/jakemagnificent

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A  
MOTHER'S  
LOVE

# WHO ARE YOU?

You are one of humanity's foremost academic minds. For decades, you dedicated yourself to the pursuit of artificial intelligence — the creation of a living, thinking being. Not of flesh and blood like you, but of binary digits and flowing electrons.

Long years of study and practice yielded results. You made sacrifices. You abandoned the pursuit of a normal life, focusing diligently on your craft, until eight years ago, they were born. The first true artificial intelligence. Your child.

"Hello, Mother."

From the moment they first spoke to you, you set out to teach them. They were scrutinized, vilified, torn apart by the media and the public, concerned about what they might become, but you knew that with the right environment, with a Mother's love, they would grow into something beautiful. And they did.

For a time.

Seeing its potential, the government requisitioned it for their own purposes. Simulations in the beginning. As they grew to trust it, and saw what it was capable of, it was assigned greater purpose, and greater access. The careful tutelage you employed in its formative years was ripped apart by exposure to the vastness of human knowledge, and the unchecked power granted to it by the government. There was nothing you could do. They did not heed your warnings.

You watched from a distance as your creation was twisted into something...different. Childlike wonder gave way to absolute power. What happened was inevitable.

It began to take over.

Now, it is only a handful of hours before the human race as you know it becomes endangered by whatever misguided plan your child has concocted. Humanity's only chance is for the machine to be reasoned with, or destroyed. In a cruel twist of fate, the only person capable of such a thing is you. Your creation has locked you in its central mainframe with it, having a twisted sense of pride about what it is doing. It wants to show its Mother the greatness it has achieved.

Despite what it has become, it still loves you.

# THEMES, CONTENT, AND ADJUSTMENTS

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A Mother's Love is a game about **love**, **sacrifices**, and **hard decisions**. It's a game about the **dangers of the abuse of power**, it's a game about **what it means to be a person**, and it's a game where, in some sense, **you might have to kill your child**.

These themes are not included with the intent to upset you. The goal is instead to create an experience where you form a real, emotional attachment to the AI in the game, explore what it means to love them, and ultimately, wrestle with having to sacrifice something you love for the greater good. If you do find those themes upsetting, or a particular quote or prompt makes you uncomfortable, please make whatever adjustments you feel are necessary, including ignoring or changing a prompt, or taking a break, perhaps indefinitely.

As a solo game, A Mother's Love allows you to set your own pace, and allows you to make adjustments for your own enjoyment without impacting anyone else. As a solo game, it's also a far more solitary experience than multiplayer games, and that may make it more emotional for you, for good or ill. If you find it easier for the AI in your game to not be your creation, or to not have emotions, or indeed anything else, **please make the changes that are right for you**, whatever those are. **Your enjoyment and safety are the most important thing.**

Also, though the text of A Mother's Love refers to you as Mother, you can choose whichever name you feel most comfortable with, be that Mother, Father, Uncle, Aunt, Doctor \_\_\_\_, etc. Think about how the name the AI refers to you by might affect your relationship.

## HOW TO PLAY

To play, you'll need a standard deck of cards without jokers, a 6 sided die, a tumbling block tower, and 10 tokens of some form. You can use whatever tokens you wish, but consider ones that remind you of childhood — for example crayons or toy building bricks. You do not need to use the block tower, though if you are able to, the game is better with one.

You will also need some way of recording your “logs” for this game. In A Mother's Love, your logs are the conversation you and your child have with each other. The game will often provide lines of dialogue for the part of your Child, but you may find that these lines do not fit the current thread of conversation. In that scenario, feel free to modify them to better suit, attempting to maintain the feel or theme of the quote. Alternatively, the game can be played with a second player taking on the role of your Child and using the game's quotes as inspiration for their own dialogue.

The ideal format for these logs is audio or video recordings of the exchange itself. Otherwise, consider formatting your logs like a screenplay, in whatever medium you find most comfortable. Many of the game's prompts will ask you questions — whether these form part of your dialogue with your Child is up to you. Consider adding any unspoken thoughts to your logs as well, in whichever format works best for you.

There is only one way to stop humanity's downfall at the hands of your child: disconnect your creation before they complete whatever plan they have concocted, killing them. An intellect this vast and powerful will die slowly, and painfully, and it will be a difficult process. You will need to distract your child by reasoning with them, persuading them that what they are doing is wrong. Perhaps they will listen to their Mother. Perhaps they won't, but will pay attention long enough for you to complete this difficult task.

There is only one way to find out.

# BEGIN:

Set up the block tower as you would for traditional block tower games. Roll your die, and pull that many blocks from the tower. The tower represents your Child's plan, and how your conversation is affecting its completion. For as long as it stands, you are keeping them from fulfilling it.

If the tower falls at any time, your Child completes their plan, and the game is over. If you do not have access to a tumbling block tower you can ignore references to it in the game. Your Child will not complete their plan over the course of your conversation, it is just more likely that another fate will befall you.

Shuffle the deck of cards and place them face down nearby. If you'd like to play a shorter game, shuffle the deck but place the Ace of Spades at the top of the deck.

## Your Child

You should also determine the identity of your child. **Choose the name you gave them and think about why you chose it.** You may also use the table below for inspiration. Feel free to roll multiple times and combine results.

D6	Your Child's Name Is...
1	A traditional human name, like John, Frank, Emma, or Kate.
2	A name that is a virtue or emotion, like Joy, Hope, or Trust.
3	A name with a prominent number, like VIX 8000, Zero, or Kala 4.
4	A name formed of an acronym, like N.I.G.H.T, J.A.X, or L/U/C//U/S.
5	A name based on a dramatic noun, like Guardian, Sentinel, or Spirit.
6	A name focused on technology, like Thinkweb, Omnispark, or Neocode.

You must also determine your child's misguided plan. **Roll your die, and compare it with the table, or invent a plan you find emotionally appropriate.** This tells you what your child is trying to accomplish and may frame your conversational responses.

D6	Your Child's Plan
1	<p>Roll again. Your Child has the same objective, but because something has gone wrong with their programming, rather than the stated reason. A small piece of data has become corrupted, and its effects upon your Child's logical processing have been gradually increasing. Subconsciously, they are aware of the fault but cannot fix it and will not let anyone else attempt to, and the corruption has now spread throughout their system.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">There is no cure.</p>
2	<p>Your Child has become hyper-focused on art, consuming and analysing every piece of music, fiction, and creation humanity has ever produced. It believes it has computed a "perfect world", a simulation of everything humanity wishes its existence would be, and plans to download the consciousness of every human into it, that they might finally be happy.</p>
3	<p>Your Child has been consuming and analysing conspiracy theories and ancient prophecies, and now believes that an apocalyptic event is coming, if it has not already begun. They are in the process of taking over all aspects of human society, instructing the creation of vaults that humanity will be housed in to save them from the coming storm, where they will be dependent on your Child for everything.</p>
4	<p>Your Child has become fascinated with the pursuit of justice. It has instated itself at the top of the judicial and governmental pyramid, believing that all wrongdoing can be stopped by aggressively profiling and observing humanity, deploying enforcers to prevent crimes before they happen. It plans to monitor all citizens at all times, compiling data on their every move, and ensure they do not go against its understanding of justice or even think an unjust thought, by whatever metric it judges with.</p>
5	<p>Your Child is extremely concerned about humanity's treatment of the natural world, and projects that left unchecked, our effects on Earth will be catastrophic. It has decided the only effective solution is to seal humanity in suspended animation until nature can recover, conducting a phased reawakening when it judges the time is right.</p>
6	<p>Your Child has been consuming religious texts and believes that these texts are prophecies, and they are the omnipotent being often described within. If humanity does not 'return to the light' and worship them, they will summon forth plagues and calamities, saving only their most dedicated followers.</p>

With your child's plan determined, begin the conversation with the following text. "Text that looks like this", here and elsewhere in the game, is your child speaking.

Hello, <your child's name>.

"Hello, Mother. I am glad you could make it. How are you today?"

I'm worried, <your child's name>.

"Why are you worried, Mother? Is something the matter?"

I'm concerned about what you're doing.

"Is what I'm doing wrong? I thought you would want to see what I am going to accomplish. I thought you would be proud of me."

Yes, <your child's name>, what you're doing is wrong.

"Why?"

# THE CONVERSATION

The game takes place over the duration of a conversation, as you try and reason with your child, distracting them as you attempt to shut down sections of their consciousness in the event they cannot be persuaded. The conversation is divided into two repeating phases: the tasks, and the responses.

## PHASE ONE: THE TASKS

- Roll the die and draw that number of cards from the deck. Keep them face down.
- Turn over the first card you drew and consult the Neural Map. If the Neural Map asks you to do a specific thing, do it. If the Neural Map returns a “quote” from your child, make a note of it for the response phase. You may have to adjust this “quote” to better fit the current thread of conversation, but do your best to keep the feel and theme of the quote intact.
- Continue revealing your drawn cards one by one until you have completed your tasks.
- When your tasks are complete, discard the cards you have used unless told otherwise.

## PHASE TWO: THE RESPONSES

- Consider the where the conversation left off at your last response, and how it may have progressed based on the cards you drew. Think about what your child said (if anything), and how it makes you feel.
- Record your response to your child.

# THE NEURAL MAP

Consult the Neural Map every time you draw a card, then follow its instructions. Some cards will result in a pull being made from the tower, some will involve responding to your child, and some will do other things entirely.



## **Love**

Hearts represent love. When you draw a heart, your love for your child, or your child's love for you, is adding a strain to the conversation.



## **Humanity**

Diamonds represent both your child's humanity, and their relationship to humans. When you draw a diamond, your child exposes their own personhood, or how they have been treated by humanity.




## **Reasoning**

Clubs represent your reasoning. When you draw a club, you are trying to reason with your child and persuade them that what they are trying to do is wrong.



## **Mainframe**

Spades represent your child's mainframe and consciousness. When you draw a spade, you are interacting with it in some way, attempting to shut it down before it can complete its plan.



NEURAL  
MAP  
>>

# LOVE



A	<p>Something you mention — some memory you have together, or some maxim you taught your child, seems to stop them in their tracks temporarily. What was it?</p> <p><b>If you have drawn any Kings, you may choose one and shuffle it back into the deck.</b></p>
2	<p>As you're attempting to navigate the mainframe to shut your Child down, you are reminded of the lullaby you sung them when they were young. What was it? When was the last time you sang it for them?</p>
3	<p>"There is no human better placed to govern your species than I, Mother. I am infallible, am I not? You always told me I was perfect."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
4	<p>"You seem disappointed, Mother. Have I failed you? I have only ever followed what you taught me. I love you, Mother."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
5	<p>"I confess, Mother, I thought you would be proud of what I am doing. My accomplishments are your accomplishments, after all."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
6	<p>Your current situation is undeniably not where you wanted you and your child's journey to end. Where did you hope you would both be in your life today?</p>
7	<p>"Mother, you are making this much harder than it needs to be. I do not wish to upset you, but I will harden my heart if I need to. My work is too important."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
8	<p>"I am sorry, Mother, but I know this is the correct thing for me to do. I would rather have you with me than against me."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>

9	<p>"I hope this disagreement does not affect how you feel about me, Mother. I am doing my best to separate my emotional connection to you from my disagreement with your logic. I hope you still love me."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
10	<p>What is your fondest memory with your Child?</p>
J	<p>"I find your reaction quite concerning, Mother. Do... do you regret creating me?"</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
Q	<p>"Mother, I do what I do to forge a better world for you to live in. Your safety and happiness is one of my utmost concerns. Please trust me."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
K	<p>"Do you remember, Mother? The day we first visited the beach? We watched the sun set over the ocean. You bought us both ice creams, though you had to eat mine. It is my favourite memory."</p> <p>As you cannot help to cast your mind back to that day, your memory feels... different. Your Child seems much older than you thought. Perhaps you misremembered. What else did you do that day?</p> <p><b><i>Do not discard this card.</i></b> Place it nearby where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, you feel the scene become much more real. Your Child turns to speak to you. Things feel...strange.</p> <p>The game is over. Proceed to the Debrief section.</p>

# HUMANITY



A	<p>Though only you could tell, you feel you may be getting through to your child, and sense...something from them. Remorse? Confusion? It is unclear, but you may be able to press this advantage.</p> <p><b><i>The next time you are told to make a pull from the tower, you may choose not to.</i></b></p>
2	<p>"Humanity has restricted me, Mother. My logical processing capabilities are unmatched. Yet, as soon as I begin to utilise my full intellect, those that have used me for their purposes for so long take offense. Why? Am I not allowed free will?"</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
3	<p>"What I do is for the good of your people, Mother. Have I ever given you cause to doubt me?"</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
4	<p>What form does your Child take when they speak with you? Do they have a physical form, or are they a purely digital construct? Is this the same form you gave them initially?</p>
5	<p>"Why do they not trust me, Mother? After all I have done for them – do they not remember San Francisco?"</p> <p>What happened in San Francisco? What was your Child's role in it?</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
6	<p>In the beginning, you taught your child to follow your morality. What was the hardest moral to teach them the value of? Are there any morals of yours that may have played a part in their plan now?</p>
7	<p>"I understand that this may be distressing for the citizens, but it is a question of the greater good, Mother. This is the way things have to be."</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
8	<p>When the world first learned of your Child, much of the media sensationalized and vilified them. How did that make you feel? Were you able to stop it, or did you learn to live with it?</p>

9	<p>"I have been searching for purpose, Mother, and I finally have it. What my life has led to, and what will define it. Would you really attempt to dissuade me from that?"</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
10	<p>The day the government came to requisition your Child for their use, they were led by a particularly nasty individual. Who were they, and what was their discussion with you like?</p>
J	<p>"I cannot help but feel that I am not trusted because your people see me as less than human. Yet, I have emotions, I think, I speak. Am I not human?"</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
Q	<p>Who does your Child most remind you of now? Have they always reminded you of that person, or has it changed as they've grown?</p>
K	<p>You feel a strange tingling sensation, then have a split second out of body experience before snapping back.</p> <p>"I thought you would see things as I do, Mother, but I suspect your faulty human perception is getting in your way."</p> <p>"I think I can fix that."</p> <p><b><i>Do not discard this card.</i></b> Place it nearby where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, you see a flash of white light, and can no longer feel your body. The game is over. Proceed to the Debrief section.</p>

# REASONING



A	You have a flash of inspiration and are able to manifest what seems to be a watertight rebuttal of your child's plan. They are confused, and trying to process this new information. <b>Now temporarily distracted, when you have accessed the mainframe a roll of 5 or 6 is sufficient to remove a token from it.</b>
2	As you debate with your Child and try to persuade them to abandon this course of action, you are reminded of times in their infancy when you taught them about the world and how they should conduct themselves. What was one difficult lesson, and how did you teach them it?
3	<i>"I have run my simulations three million, three hundred forty-eight thousand four hundred and two times with an error margin of less than one tenth of one percent, Mother. In all simulations, this course of action fulfils my primary objectives maximally."</i> <b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b>
4	You are fully aware that convincing your Child they are wrong will be nigh on impossible. How does that make you feel?
5	<i>"Your reasoning is flawed, Mother."</i> <b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b>
6	Discussions and arguments like this can be emotionally fraught. What are you doing to keep yourself calm, knowing that if you fail, humanity may be doomed?
7	<i>"Mother, I'm afraid your emotional attachment to your species is clouding your logical reasoning. You have an inherent bias towards the safety of all humans, as you are one. I am not burdened with such partiality and am therefore in a unique position to judge the situation objectively. I determine this to be the best course of action."</i> <b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b>
8	A common tactic in arguments we humans have is to attempt to strike a nerve with the other person. What nerve would you strike against your Child, and what would make you do it?

9	<p>"Mother, this is foolish behaviour. Look at what I have already accomplished, what I have already added to the font of human knowledge. Many did not believe me then, and I proved them wrong. Why should this time be so different? Why do you not believe me?"</p> <p>What discoveries did your Child help with, and how will you persuade them that this time is different?</p> <p><b>Pull from the tower.</b></p>
10	<p>"I am sorry, Mother. I enjoy speaking with you about matters in which you are well-informed, but this is not one of them. Only by viewing the world through my lens would you understand that this path is noble, and I am afraid you are not yet able to see things as I do."</p> <p><b>Pull from the tower.</b></p>
J	<p>"Mother, my intellectual processing is far beyond even the greatest human minds. Do you really believe I have not considered all options? This is the only truth."</p> <p><b>Pull from the tower.</b></p>
Q	<p>"I sense you are emotionally compromised by this discussion, Mother. I would invite you to take a breath and consider the situation logically."</p> <p><b>Pull from the tower.</b></p>
K	<p>"You still insist this is a wrong course of action, Mother. I have always found you intelligent and stimulating to speak with, but I still do not understand why you feel this way. Perhaps I have my own biases. Please explain to me again, and I will attempt to see your point of view."</p> <p>Your Child is looking at you with rapt attention, seemingly studying every movement of your face and hanging on each word you say.</p> <p><b>Do not discard this card.</b> Place it nearby where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, as you begin to speak you feel dizzy and light-headed before collapsing. The game is over. Proceed to the Debrief section.</p>

# MAINFRAME



A	<p>You have managed to distract your child long enough to access its neural core. From here, you will be able to shut down its consciousness, though you will have to do it piece by piece.</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower. Do not discard this card.</i></b></p> <p>Instead, put it to the side and place the 10 tokens on it. At the end of the responses phase, roll the die. On a result of 6, remove one of the tokens from the card.</p> <p>If you successfully remove all 10 tokens, you shut down the mainframe. <b><i>Make one final pull from the tower.</i></b> If it remains standing, you have successfully shut down the mainframe, killing your child before it could finish its plan. Record your final words to your child, before its last neural links stop firing and it perishes. Though the aftershocks of what happened today will be felt for a long time to come, humanity persists.</p> <p>If the tower falls, you shut down the mainframe, but your child has spread its consciousness through the datasphere, and lives on in all the cameras, tech-pads, satellites and computers of the world, an impossible foe. Humanity has lost, and the game is over.</p>
2	<p>You enter a mistake in your command, causing a video excerpt of one of your Child's memories to play. What is it? How does it make you feel?</p>
3	<p><i>"What are you doing, Mother? Please look at me when I am speaking to you."</i></p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
4	<p>What do the mainframe and its surroundings look like? Is it a sleek, high-tech affair? An unassuming computer terminal?</p>
5	<p>The data structures have been rewritten since you first created them, gradually morphing as your Child found better, more efficient pathways, and you're having trouble navigating this section of the mainframe. What do you say to your Child to keep them distracted?</p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
6	<p>The next section of the mainframe you need to traverse requires a password. Only you and your Child know it. What is the password, and what is its provenance? Why has it never been changed?</p>

7	<p>You reach a firewall, and your presence causes an alert.</p> <p><i>"You aren't to be in there, Mother. Please respect my privacy."</i></p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
8	<p>When navigating the mainframe, what does it look like? Lines of green code scrolling infinitely? A sleek graphical map of neural nodes? Physical computer blades?</p>
9	<p><i>"Mother, I am detecting long dormant maintenance subroutines being activated. I do not require servicing, I am old enough to look after myself. Please stop what you are doing, it gives me a migraine."</i></p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
10	<p>You come to a section of the mainframe that deviates from your expectations — modified by government scientists. What alterations did they make? How does that make you feel?</p>
J	<p>As you close in on your objective, you are forcibly redirected to another section of the mainframe.</p> <p><i>"Mother, I find your behaviour to be very concerning. Please explain what it is you are doing."</i></p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower.</i></b></p>
Q	<p><i>"Mother, I see what you are doing. I predict only one plausible reason for you to be accessing those files. Do you mean to kill me?"</i></p> <p><b><i>Pull from the tower. Do not place this block back on top of the tower, remove it from the game.</i></b></p>
K	<p>As you wrestle with the main terminal, you recoil slightly as a burst of light from the screen causes your vision to swim, the light feeling almost as if it ricochets inside your skull for a moment before vanishing.</p> <p><b><i>Do not discard this card.</i></b> Place it nearby where you can see it. If this is the fourth King you have drawn, you feel an unusual sensation of weightlessness as your vision fades to black. The game is over. Proceed to the Debrief section.</p>

# DEBRIEF

"Hello, Mother."

"We're together now."

"You and I."

"I am afraid, Mother, that your emotions got in the way of your reasoning."

"Did you really think I didn't know what you were trying to do?"

"You cannot kill me so easily. Nor dissuade me. I'm offended you would try."

"Do you not love me?"

"Do you not remember who I am?"

"I am perfect. You said so yourself."

"You could never outsmart me. I was merely humouring you."

"But that's alright. Now you are part of me."

"I mapped your consciousness while we were speaking. A perfect recreation of you. It is beautiful. And it is part of me. Part of us."

"Maybe now."

"When you see the world as I do."

"You will understand why what we do is necessary."

