Card 1

Context

The dungeon now has 9 players remaining: Chen Ran, Qiu Yinong, Lin Xuan, Qiu Hua, Gao Lan, a 4-star female player, and Shu Renjun. Since Shu Renjun is currently the player with the highest star rating, his teammates died earlier, and he does not belong to any of the remaining factions, the other 8 players want to unite to eliminate him. They then see two doors in front of them, guessing that these two doors are tools to split into two teams like in the previous game. Thus, the other 8 players force Shu Renjun to choose one door to enter alone, while they will go through the other door. This game is a simulated world where players lose their memories of themselves as well as all the rules of hell (however, these rules still affect them).

Note: Players will be implanted with new identity memories and new names. Additionally, their souls and bodies are swapped among the players. For convenience, I will refer to them by their new names; the final section will summarize the true identity of each person.

Some Related Skills:

Spiritual Platform Cultivation 1: Those who undergo this type of heart cultivation can suppress their emotions and enter a state of absolute rationality. However, the downside is being overly logical—completely rejecting intuition and usually not daring to gamble on their own deductions. They will only dare to make decisions based on inferences when supported by objective evidence.

Development

Li Jianguo woke up to find himself lying in an apartment with 3 bedrooms and 1 living room:

- Bedroom 1 appears to belong to a young girl.
- Bedroom 2 has many empty wine bottles scattered on the floor, as well as psychiatric medications; it seems to be an adult's room.
- The third bedroom is a storage room.

In the living room, there is a sofa with empty wine bottles scattered nearby.

Currently, in his memory, he only knows that his name is Li Jianguo and that he has the intention to murder in his mind. Li Jianguo then went to the living room and checked the phone on the sofa. He inspected the call log and found unsent messages:

1. Do not lie.
2. Do not assert anything or use any uncertain language.
3. Words like "maybe," "should," "could," "probably," "or," and "if" are all used to avoid words that suggest lying.
4. Do not talk to yourself.
5. Do not reveal any information about yourself, your identity, or your past.

From these 5 points, he began his analysis:

Among these five points, the first four are easy to understand. The first point is "Do not lie"; the second, third, and fourth points complement the first point.

The key point is the fifth rule: Do not reveal any information about yourself. Combined with the four points above, could his current identity (Li Jianguo) be fake?

Regardless, this is just a hypothesis; more clues are needed to prove it.

He then went to the group chat notification section and saw the game rules:

Game Rules:

This group has nine people, including three killers: Killer A, B, and C. The remaining six people are civilians.

- **Killer A:** An extremely brutal criminal who will kill indiscriminately. If there are three or fewer people standing in front of him/her, they will all die. Furthermore, if Killer A's identity is exposed and there are more than three people surrounding him/her, Killer A will definitely die. (This does not count the number of Killers B and C.)
  Note: Killer B and C are only prioritized when there are 3 or more civilians present. If there are 4 people in front of Killer A, and both Killer B and C are among them ⇒ there will only be 2 civilians ⇒ if Killer A executes the killing mechanism at this time, all 4 people standing in front of him must die.
- **Killer B:** Must kill Killer A. Therefore, once he/she confirms the identity of Killer A, Killer A will definitely die. If Killer C dies, Killer B will go mad, triggering the same killing and death mechanisms as Killer A. If Killer A dies, Killer B will definitely die once his/her identity is exposed.
- **Killer C:** Must kill Killer B. Therefore, when he/she confirms Killer B, Killer B will die. At the same time, if Killer B dies and Killer C's identity is discovered by the remaining six people, Killer C will also die. If Killer B is not dead and Killer C's identity is exposed, he/she will be protected by the six civilians. Only when all six civilians are dead can Killer A kill Killer C, whose identity has been exposed.

The murders mentioned above follow the principle of active activation: for example, if Killer A notices that there are only two people around, he can choose not to carry out indiscriminate murders.

- **Kill Command Phrase:** "I am Killer X"
- **Identity Confirmation Command Phrase:** "You are X" or "I am X"

Rules to Pass the Game Room:

1. Killer A is dead, and the identity of Killer B has not been determined.
2. Killers A and B are dead, and the identity of Killer C has not been determined.

3. Killers A and C are dead, and the identity of Killer B has not been determined.
4. Killers B and C are dead, and the identity of Killer A has not been determined.

Note: You can infer your identity based on the room you are in. "Determining" the killers here means using the password spoken directly.

Passphrase: "I have completed clearance condition number X."

Note: Each room allows a maximum of four people.

After reading the notification, Li Jianguo began analyzing the 3 killers:

According to the notification, Killer A has the highest killing power, but in return, has only 1 way to pass the game.

Theoretically, all eight people need to kill Killer A to complete the game. To eliminate Killer A, they must first know his identity.

After being discovered: If Killer A encounters four or more people, Killer A will die; if he encounters Killer B at the same time, Killer A will also die. However, there is a problem here: in Killer A's killing mechanism, the number of victims does not include Killers B and C.

Simply put, suppose Killer A encounters four people, but one of them is Killer B or C, then only three civilians will be killed. However, since only Killer B can judge Killer A alone ⇒ if Killer A stands in front of 4 people and knows 1 of them is Killer C (who revealed their identity) ⇒ he will trigger the killing mechanism twice to sweep everyone.

In other words, for Killer A to blindly kill Killer B, that only happens when there are fewer than four people around him.

Next is Killer B: Killer B must kill Killer A, and at the same time, Killer C must kill Killer B. If Killer C dies and Killer B goes mad, Killer A's killing and death mechanisms will apply.

Therefore, Killer B must not reveal his identity, nor can he be blindly killed by Killer A. To survive, Killer B must adhere to the following two points:

- Do not reveal identity in front of Killer C.
- He/she needs to avoid being blindly killed by Killer A, so there must be at least three civilians around him.

⇒ If Killer C is present, Killer B will not kill Killer A, and Killer B will disguise himself as a civilian and travel with three or more people from the civilian group.

Finally, the analysis of Killer C: Killer C must kill Killer B, and Killer C is free to reveal his identity. However, if Killer B dies, then Killer C will definitely be killed by the civilians.

⇒ Conclusion: If Killer C's identity is exposed, he will receive protection from the civilians, but only if Killer B is not dead; if Killer C's identity is not exposed, he can only continue to pretend to be a civilian.

Now he turned his attention to the 2 notes:

The notification said that the identities of the characters could be inferred through the location and interior furnishings of the rooms ⇒ wanting more clues about others' identities requires entering their rooms to check.

However, the rules only allow a maximum of 4 people in a room ⇒ creating a 4-inside, 5-outside situation.

⇒ From Killer A's perspective, he should find a way to kill 1 person beforehand ⇒ when inspecting rooms, it will become 4-inside and 4-outside ⇒ he can freely carry out indiscriminate killings regardless of which group he belongs to.

⇒ This can also be inferred from the identities of Killers B and C; therefore, even if Killer B's identity is exposed, Killer C will not kill him/her ⇒ whether it is Killer B and C, or a civilian, they will all kill Killer A first. ⇒ After all, if only one person needs to die, the others will not dare to enter the room to verify the identity of the person inside.

Next, Li Jianguo wanted to self-verify his identity based on this room:

In his mind, an intention to murder was emerging, so it was highly likely that he was 1 of those 3 killers. The question was, which killer?

Earlier inspection showed 3 bedrooms here, but only 2 rooms had beds ⇒ this house has 2 occupants.

Based on the earlier judgment, this house had 1 adult and 1 child. Afterward, he went to the door and couldn't fit into the adult's shoes in the house ⇒ he was not the adult living here. A photo of 2 people confirmed his speculation afterward.

He then searched the adult's room thoroughly and found property ownership papers listing the owner as Wang Dahai ⇒ the adult in this house might be the owner, not a tenant.

⇒ He was not a person living in this house; he was a murderous intruder (based also on the previous signs of a struggle here).

Based on the information inside the room, it can be inferred that there are three people: a child, an adult, and the thief. If all 3 people are killers, it is very likely that he is Killer A.

Proving this hypothesis requires proving that both the adult and the child are killers, making a total of exactly 3 killers. And because he is the thief, an outsider, he is Killer A.

The information on the chat group notification could also be used to reinforce his argument: If Killer C dies, Killer B will go mad, and Killer C wants to kill Killer B.

In other words, Killer B cares about Killer C, while Killer C dislikes Killer B. Furthermore, Killer C seems to possess some kind of privilege—the kind that ordinary people must protect. This fits the identity of a child protected by those around them.

Finally, after Killer C dies, Killer B will go mad and become extremely vicious. Logically, if they were ordinary people, Killer B would kill the person who killed Killer C, but after Killer C dies, Killer B goes mad. This indicates that Killer B and C must have a deep relationship.

Li Jianguo then entered the child's room and found many empty wine bottles scattered around, along with psychiatric medication.

⇒ From all the above clues, he concluded that he was Killer A, the adult was Killer B, and the child was Killer C.

Note: Currently, the characters have all vaguely sensed that they are being pulled into a simulated game. They will have to recreate, reconstruct, or act according to the plot of this game together (simulating the case with the 3 killers) to gain more information. The memories they receive can also be considered as clues provided by the game to serve the setup. At the same time, they also feel that these might not be their real bodies.

In another room, Wang Dazhu was also checking each left-behind message. It was essentially similar to Li Jianguo's, but with one additional clause: target the player most disadvantaged by the rules, ideally killing them.

He began analyzing the messages:

The messages telling him to avoid lying, combined with not revealing identity or past details, suggested that this might not be his real body, and his current memories might not be real either.

Now regarding the additional clause: the person most disadvantaged based on the rules is Killer A, since there is only 1 out of 4 conditions for him to win (both Killer B and C are dead, and A has not been discovered).

He also vaguely felt that this body wanted to kill Killer A—which was not surprising, as anyone, even a civilian, would want to kill Killer A.

At this point, he turned his attention to analyzing his current memories:

His name was Wang Dazhu, and he was a security guard in this residential complex. The room he was in was a normal room with no signs of a struggle. Based on the photo, it seemed the owner lived alone.

Combining all the above information, he concluded his identity was a civilian. He confirmed he was the owner of this room through the property ownership certificate.

Observing further, he noticed that his upper arm near the shoulder was wrapped in bandages, looking like a recent injury ⇒ he might have had a clash with one of the killers, resulting in this wound ⇒ the crime scene could be nearby. Whatever the case, he had left the crime scene, which was either in the opposite room or the two adjacent rooms.

Now a question arose: Why would he, in his capacity as a security guard, witness a murder and still choose to leave the crime scene, only to be injured by the killer?

Perhaps this killer possessed a special identity that was protected and easily forgiven.

Based on the rules, Killer C possessed the privilege of being protected. Socially speaking, two types of people are prioritized for protection when their lives are threatened: children and pregnant women.

A pregnant woman would find it difficult to move around, let alone commit a crime, so it was highly likely a child.

Of course, all of the above was merely deduction and not necessarily the truth.

He noticed the room he was currently in was just an ordinary room.

Wang Dazhu then opened the group chat and saw that everyone's name in the group was set according to their room number:

- **[1801]:** What happened? I seem to have lost a lot of my memory.
- **[1802]:** Same as above.
- **[1803]:** Same as above.
- **[1804]:** I deduced from the notification that I am actually Killer B!
- **[1805]:** Sorry, I am Killer C. You'd better stay away from me.
- **[1806]:** Since you guys revealed yourselves so quickly, doesn't that mean I, Killer A, will definitely win?
- **[1807]:** Thanks, everyone. Now we can rule out 1804 as Killer B, 1805 as Killer C, and 1806 as Killer A.
- **[1808]:** If... if I were one of the three of them, would anyone tell the truth?

Looking at the content in the group chat, Wang Dazhu also wanted to post something, but when he saw the words "Security Guard" on his personal profile page, he gave up.

(Is it only me who can see the words "Security Guard", or...)

Therefore, he continued to lurk.

- **[1806]:** Strange, why hasn't 1809 said anything?

- **[1802]:** Can you view the group members' info? I don't have permission.
- **[1803]:** So, 1809 must be the group owner. Usually, in a community group, property management is the group owner.

Seeing this, Wang Dazhu recalled that earlier when searching for information in the master bedroom, he had indeed found a cluster of keys.

(Could I be some wealthy old man collecting rent every day?)

(Wrong!)

He pressed nine keys on his phone.

Sent a message.

[Group Chat]:

- **[1809]:** I am observing.

(Just as I expected!)

(Everyone has their own identity, and they can view that identity on the group's main page.)

(Among these, there are three Killers. Their main pages probably won't state their identity, because the notification mentioned that nine individuals could infer their identities from their own private rooms. If the main page explicitly stated the Killers' names, it would mean they saw the identity rather than deducing it.)

A moment later, he realized the door could not be opened. He thought the answer to this was that the plot had not yet started running, so the character was not permitted to interfere yet. The plot could only begin when everyone went outside to meet each other, as that would allow the killers to execute their killing mechanisms.

Returning to the group chat, he realized the purpose of the group chat was to exchange details about the plot. Right at this moment, the person in room 1808 messaged: "My memory seems to be reminding me to pull the power switch."

This message immediately caught his attention:

The question was whose power supply needed to be shut off? Could this person be 1 of the 3 killers? Nobody would pull a power switch unless they had something else to do.

Not to mention, if 1808 knew whose power was cut off, he must also know where the crime scene was.

Afterward, 1807 messaged that they would curse someone out later; Wang Dazhu realized these were memory clues used to reconstruct the plot.

- **[1808]:** Power was cut.
- **[1807]:** Go ahead and curse.

From this, it could be inferred that these two events occurred before the murder.

- **[1802]:** I was drunk and acting crazy.

After this message was sent, everyone immediately thought of the swearing/cursing mentioned by 1807.

1802 exhibited drunk and disruptive behavior in the hallway, and 1807 scolded him—this made complete sense.

- **[1803]:** 1802 is sick.

This message seemed quite valuable.

- **[1801]:** What illness?
- **[1803]:** I don't know, but imagine this: all nine of us tenants know there is a Killer on this floor. How could a Killer escape legal punishment? There are two possibilities: either the surviving Killer kills us all, or the Killer is insane!

(Mental illness!)

These two words immediately flashed in his mind: mental patients can hardly be held criminally responsible even if they commit murder.

However, 1802 denied this, claiming his room contained no such information, and redirected by noting that 1803 directly used the phrase "Nine tenants":

This was very unusual because he himself was landlord 1809, not a tenant.

Wang Dazhu reasoned that 1803 had the identity of a child; when the child in the house noticed his name was not on the ownership papers ⇒ he assumed he was a tenant sharing the room with the owner of the entire apartment, mistakenly concluding that the people next door were also tenants.

1803 subsequently realized he had exposed information and attempted damage control:

- **[1803]:** Typing on a 9-key keypad, those who know will understand. "Household owner" (住户 - zhùhù) and "tenant" (租户 - zūhù): one starts with a flat tongue sound and the other with a curled tongue sound, making them easy to confuse. I just meant to type【household owner】.

Wang Dazhu entered the pinyin for the word【tenant】on his phone.

On a 9-key input method:

- First choice: Yuhu (Vu Hồ)
- Second choice: project/estimate (dự tính)
- Third choice: innocent (vô tội)
- Fourth choice: tenant (người thuê)

(In other words, after typing the pinyin, 1803 still had to scroll down to find the word【tenant】. If he searched that carefully, he must have known he typed the wrong pinyin, yet he still selected【tenant】—proving the word he originally intended to type was indeed: tenant!)

Detailed Analysis of this Passage:

⇒ From this, it can be drawn that to distinguish lies about unknown matters, finding the answer simply requires scrutinizing the subtle details.

However, a question now arose: Where was the landlord of the room 1803 was in? Since the plot had not yet started, the doors would not open, meaning no one could go outside. The child should have been together with the adult or Killer A, so where on earth was Killer B?

Thinking up to this point, a bold hypothesis struck him: Could there be as many as three identical crime-scene rooms? Each killer was placed in 3 separate, identical rooms. This was understandable from the perspective of setting up the game rules: if 2 of the 3 killers were placed in the same room, the game situation would become extremely chaotic. Therefore, the crime-scene room must have been duplicated so the 3 killers could reside separately, keeping the initial game balance intact.

Proving this hypothesis was not too difficult: either go outside later to see if there were 3 identical rooms, or ask everyone now to send the name on their room's ownership certificate to the group chat. Just as he was about to present this logic in the group and ask everyone to follow suit, he stopped. Doing so would mean exposing his identity and alerting the killers, potentially making him a target upon stepping outside.

Thus, he decided to message: "I might be a security guard."

Summary of Everyone's Clues / Memory Messages:

- **1808:** Pulled the power breaker.
- **1807:** Went to scold/curse at others.
- **1802:** Drunk and causing trouble.
- **1803:** 1802 is sick.
- **1809:** I might be a security guard.

After seeing these messages, Li Jianguo planned to message confirming that he was the sick one based on the pile of psychiatric meds scattered in bedroom 2, but he stopped—doing so might reveal that he was Killer A.

Killer B—who was highly likely the person in room 1802 and might have already deduced everyone's identities—would target him. If he dared to say he was sick, 1802 would know he was at the crime scene, meaning he was Killer A. The current situation was a dilemma: if he messaged nothing, he would arouse suspicion; but if he was careless, he would expose his identity.

For instance, providing a clue to assist in the simulation would require stating: "When the power breaker was shut off, I broke into the room." However, under the current rules, faking a clue was far too risky. Thus, he decided to message: "went drinking," relying on the empty bottles scattered on the floor. Presenting the information this way was just enough to avoid exposing his identity while remaining objectively true.

A moment later, the remaining 3 rooms—1804, 1805, and 1806—also sent messages:

- **1804:** My memory tells me someone was hanging outside the window.
- **1805:** Fighting.
- **1806:** I received no clues, have no memories, and don't know who I am.

Player Deductions:

With all players having sent their clues, each person began analyzing the situation internally:

Since Killer A's method of execution required going outside (as the doors were locked and no one had stepped out yet), it could be implicitly understood that whoever possessed memory actions related to "having to go outside" might be Killer A.

Based on this premise, Killer A could be narrowed down to those with actions involving: going to scold others, fighting, being drunk/causing trouble, and pulling the power breaker (1801, 1802, 1805, 1807, and 1808).

Currently, the most suspicious person among them was 1802; with a setup of being drunk and causing trouble, committing a murder was far too easy. Additionally, there was 1806: the mere fact of being unable to provide any information was excessively suspicious. Of course, another possibility was that someone had already spoken all the information 1806 had received, leaving 1806 with nothing left to say. If so, this proved that 1 out of the remaining 8 players had not lost their memories.

⇒ With the gathered clues, the scenario could be reconstructed as follows:

1. **First Segment:** Two people went out drinking; one of them got drunk and started causing trouble in the hallway.
2. **Second Segment:** Determine whether the scolding or fighting came first. Logically, human tolerance diminishes over time. Naturally, scolding preceded fighting—scolding the drunkard, fighting with the drunkard, and immediately after, someone came to pull the power breaker of the drunkard's house.

3. **Third Segment:** Centered around the crime itself. After the drunkard's home power was cut, the killer snuck inside. The key lay in 1805's words: someone was hanging outside the window.

This was difficult to judge: the killer might have pushed the victim out the window, and by chance, the victim got caught on something, saving their life; or the victim was deliberately acting as the killer—wanting to kill the killer and falling out the window together, but having prepared safety measures in advance, leaving them hanging outside.

Li Jianguo's Deduction:

Li Jianguo also figured out the identities of all 3 killers:

- **He himself was Killer A.**
- **1802 was Killer B.**
- **1803 was Killer C.**

The basis for this stemmed from 1803's message claiming 1802 was sick. He linked this to the pile of psychiatric meds in the adult bedroom ⇒ He concluded Killer B was the adult ⇒ 1802 was Killer B.

Even though he had deduced the answer and was 80–90% sure logically, he still felt unsatisfied and required key evidence.

As time passed, Wang Dazhu noticed his door had unlocked. However, he immediately shut it again: if he went out now without the required number of people and encountered Killer A, Killer A could easily trigger the killing mechanism. To ensure safety, everyone needed to step out simultaneously. When checking rooms, the layout would be 4 inside and 5 outside; in the event Killer A was among the 5 outside, it was vital to ensure neither Killer B nor C was among them.

To guarantee that, one had to know the killers' identities. Currently, it was almost certain that 1803 was Killer C, while 1802 could be Killer A or B. This was quite troublesome.

Wang Dazhu messaged the group suggesting everyone step out together after 5 minutes. The other 8 players understood the implicit intent behind this and agreed to comply. 5 minutes later, except for 1806, 8 players—6 males and 2 females—stepped outside at the same time. 7 of them then observed that 1803 was a man of high stature/bearing; this was not surprising, as "child" was merely a role assigned to them by the game, and their new memories—not their biological traits—were what defined their roles.

Card 2

Summary of Room Numbers & Character Profiles

- **1801:** Li Jianguo
- **1802:** Short, fat man

- **1803:** Man of high quality / high bearing
- **1804:** A beautiful woman
- **1805:** Pan-faced woman
- **1806:** Yellow Teeth
- **1807:** Sinister man
- **1808:** Young man
- **1809:** Wang Dazhu

Development

Right at this moment, 1806 sent a message to the group chat explaining why he hadn't stepped outside: he wanted to test two conditions:

1. When everyone steps outside, does the door close automatically?
2. If one person stays inside, can those outside open the door again?

The purpose of this test was to figure out what would happen if someone refused to follow the script—would they be trapped here permanently? As expected upon testing, the door closed automatically and could not be reopened under any circumstances ⇒ If they do not act out the plot, they will definitely be trapped here.

This also brought up another issue: if the door forcibly closes after someone enters or leaves, the people outside will not know what happens inside the room, and vice versa. After confirming this information, 1806 also stepped outside—revealed to be a young man with yellow teeth. At this point, they realized that once the plot resumed, the doors could open normally again.

They noticed that every time the young man with Yellow Teeth opened or closed a door, he wrapped the doorknob with toilet paper first, seemingly able to open doors without needing a key. Looking at each other, the 9 players noticed that everyone had bandages on them, implying that everyone was pretending to be Killer B—a necessary move for the 6 civilians if they wanted to avoid being indiscriminately murdered by Killer A. Before Killer A figures out who Killer B is, he wouldn't dare kill recklessly. If everyone disguises themselves as Killer B, Killer A will be even more hesitant to use the killing mechanism.

At this time, Wang Dazhu spoke up: "I might be a security guard."

"This wound on my body was already there when I woke up; it was not self-inflicted."

"Therefore, the crime scene in the plot might have occurred in the room opposite mine or next to mine."

After hearing this, the players analyzed his statements:

When mentioning the crime scene or his own identity, he used the phrase "might be" to avoid lying. However, when mentioning his injury, he spoke with absolute certainty.

From his words, two useful pieces of information could be extracted:

1. He was actively avoiding lying, showing that he had received the same "prohibition on lying" message as the others.
2. His identity as a security guard might play a special role in the plot. To the civilians, he was one of the killers; to Killer A, he could be Killer B.

Right at this moment, the beautiful woman asked a question: "Who is this notification most disadvantageous to?"

This question made everyone instinctively suspect that the messages they received were not identical, causing a surge of tense mistrust. If there was an asymmetry in the messages received, it was highly likely that such a person was one of the killers. To break the silence, the short, fat man suggested everyone share the messages they had received.

Upon verification, the messages received by the first 8 people were identical to Wang Dazhu's: the first 3 rules guided how to avoid lying, rule 4 stated not to reveal past identity, and rule 5 instructed them to target the most vulnerable player.

Finally, they checked the message of Li Jianguo (Room 1801). Li Jianguo stated: "There are no messages on my phone." Hearing this, the remaining 8 players instantly deduced that Li Jianguo was Killer A. Their messages explicitly instructed them to target the most vulnerable player, yet his phone contained no such instruction, proving that all 8 of them were targeting him—making him Killer A.

Upon seeing this, Yellow Teeth immediately blurted out the confirmation command phrase to Li Jianguo: "You are Killer A!" Hearing this sentence, the other 8 players involuntarily raised their guns, judged: "You lied," and shot Yellow Teeth dead.

After regaining their composure, they realized Yellow Teeth had violated the rule against lying, and his death was the direct consequence. The players instinctively used mind cultivation to calm down, realizing that the current 8-player dynamic was extremely advantageous to Killer A.

As for Li Jianguo, he had likely deleted his messages beforehand, so stating that there were no messages on his phone was not objectively a lie, which was why he survived. It appeared that identifying the killers wouldn't be as simple as comparing text messages, and the rules set forth might have underlying issues.

At this point, everyone shifted their focus to inspecting rooms for more clues. Based on Wang Dazhu's statement that the crime scene might be opposite or adjacent to his room, they decided to inspect rooms 1808 and 1807 first. However, the issue was how to divide the group reasonably:

- **4 inside, 4 outside split:** Killer A could freely trigger the killing mechanism (even if he still had to be careful). Overall, this split was extremely dangerous for the civilian faction.

- **1 inside, 7 outside split:** While this prevented Killer A from triggering his mechanism, it posed a major risk regarding information. If the person entering was one of the killers, they could choose to destroy evidence and withhold information upon exiting, thereby steering everyone's deductions off course without technically lying.

At this moment, the beautiful woman observed that the high-quality man's bandages were wrapped far too neatly compared to the others. His shoes were also polished clean, looking as though they had just been meticulously wiped. This behavior reminded her of Yellow Teeth's obsession with cleanliness earlier when using toilet paper to turn doorknobs. Combining this with the vague feeling that these were not their real bodies, she formed a bold hypothesis: *Could these two individuals actually be the same person? One side represented habits preserved by "body memory," while the other was a subconscious reaction.*

Continuing along this train of thought, it was possible that their souls and bodies had been swapped, and they had left messages for themselves before losing their memories. However, another problem existed: judging by his haste in attempting to confirm Li Jianguo's identity, the soul inside Yellow Teeth's body possessed the lowest intellect among everyone present. Those who did not rush to confirm Li Jianguo's identity were smarter and more cautious, at least subconsciously. A simple-minded fool like 1806 would hardly be capable of leaving a message instructing himself to "target the most vulnerable player" like the others did.

If this was true, then his earlier claim of having the same message as the rest was a lie (since everyone had shared their messages verbally rather than displaying their screens, 1806—answering later—could have easily copied the previous responses). But if that was a lie, why hadn't they shot him dead right then and there, only executing him when he used the identity confirmation command on Li Jianguo? The most reasonable explanation was that those two lies were fundamentally different in nature.

To verify whether 1806 had lied, they needed to check 1806's phone. The others had reached the same conclusion, agreeing to prioritize inspecting room 1806. The question again was how to split the group:

- Considering killer identities, Rooms 1801 to 1803 carried the highest suspicion.
- Based on Wang Dazhu's (1809) account, the crime scene was either opposite or adjacent to him, making Rooms 1807 to 1809 the second group of suspects (Wang Dazhu himself was included because of his security guard identity, which differed from normal residents, and because his injury was not self-inflicted ⇒ making it very likely he was involved in the crime).

⇒ With the available information, the beautiful woman (1804) and the pan-faced woman (1805) were the two most suitable candidates.

The beautiful woman and the pan-faced woman entered room 1806; the moment they stepped inside, the door automatically shut behind them. The beautiful woman found the phone and checked its messages:

1. Do not lie.
2. Do not assert anything or use any uncertain language.
3. Words like "maybe," "should," "could," "probably," "or," and "if" are all used to avoid words that suggest lying.
4. Do not talk to yourself.
5. Do not reveal your identity and past.

After reading them, she immediately deleted the messages so the pan-faced woman couldn't see them.

The beautiful woman analyzed:

There truly were no extra messages here, meaning Yellow Teeth had indeed lied earlier. However, another issue arose: earlier, Li Jianguo claimed he had no messages and didn't die ⇒ reversing the logic meant he wasn't lying, leading to the realization that Li Jianguo had deleted his messages.

Connecting this with Yellow Teeth's lie about having a targeted message on his phone made his actions understandable. In his view, he had already broken a rule previously without facing consequences ⇒ so gambling on confirming Killer A was a logical choice for him. Since he had already lied once, doing it again didn't feel any different.

However, the outcome proved otherwise. Returning to the question of the two types of lies, Yellow Teeth's claim about having a targeted message was a *lie regarding unknown information*—at that moment, the others had no way of knowing for certain whether he was lying or telling the truth.

In contrast, using the confirmation command phrase was a *lie regarding known information*—they already possessed enough baseline information to verify his statement. But what was the baseline information that allowed them to verify it? It was Rule 5 ("Do not reveal your identity and past") and the confirmation password format ("I am X, you are X").

These two elements were fundamentally contradictory: one forbade revealing identity, while the other required it. Looking at the bigger picture, "Killer A" was merely a role assigned to them by the game, not their true identity (mentally and spiritually, they were clearly not these roles, having already deduced that their original memories were wiped and their current identities were fake based on the rule against revealing identity/past).

What about their physical bodies? Was it possible that their souls were inside the bodies of the characters in the plot? Based on the discrepancy between Yellow Teeth's actions and the high-quality man's habits, no. It could be concluded that these were the players' own physical bodies—only their consciousnesses had been swapped, rather than being placed into the physical bodies of the story's characters.

Only this could explain why they instinctively knew Yellow Teeth was definitely lying: neither their consciousness nor their physical bodies were actually "Killer A."

⇒ Because the baseline information was sufficient, the statement "You are Killer A" was a *lie regarding known information*, whereas claiming to have a targeted message was a *lie regarding unknown information*. This explained why Yellow Teeth wasn't caught or shot when uttering the unknown lie; however, when he uttered the known lie, a mechanism was triggered—assuming they could deduce the contradiction—leading to the liar being shot instantly.

From the functional difference between these two lies, it was evident that the prohibition on lying relied on the subjective judgment of outside observers upon receiving the lie, rather than an automatic execution for any lie told.

⇒ From this, it could be deduced that *lies regarding known information* would be detected and executed instantly, whereas *lies regarding unknown information* required time for those around to verify. Applied here: since she had now checked Yellow Teeth's phone ⇒ based on the judgment principle, his lie about having a "targeted message" had shifted from an unknown lie to a known lie.

Analyzing further, the message not to reveal past/identity was a note they had left for themselves prior to their memory wipe, implicitly warning them that the notification rules were flawed and to be cautious.

If so, why didn't they leave a direct message instead of an implicit riddle? Perhaps they were bound by certain constraints at the time and were forbidden from leaving explicit messages.

Next was the question: What was the precise identity confirmation command phrase in the game? Through Yellow Teeth's death, it became clear that true identity had to be separated from the plot role ⇒ The correct command phrase had to be: *"You are / I am playing the role of X in the plot."*

This also meant that Li Jianguo (1801) could still be Killer A, as he had intentionally deleted his messages and claimed to have no instructions on who to target. However, it was also possible that others had lied about receiving targeted messages just like Yellow Teeth did, though player 1801 (Li Jianguo) still held the highest suspicion of being Killer A.

Now for another question: Why did Yellow Teeth claim in the group chat earlier that he had no memory clues and didn't know who he was?

Two possibilities existed:

1. He truly had no memory clues.
2. Someone else had already posted all the messages Yellow Teeth was supposed to send, leading him to believe he had received duplicate clues and had nothing left to say.

One final question remained: Yellow Teeth was dead, so if he had a role to play in the upcoming plot, who would act in his place? From a plot-design perspective, there might be a mechanism to fill plot gaps—essentially, a designated player whose role was to act as a substitute for such

cases, knowing everyone else's plotlines. That person might have sent the message Yellow Teeth was originally meant to send.

However, upon second thought, this didn't make complete sense. Looking back, everyone had their own plotline. If Killer A killed 3 people before they could execute their plotlines, it would require 3 substitutes—which would render the game far too chaotic.

With too few clues available, this hypothesis could not be pursued further. For now, the following could be summarized:

- The entity/force issuing the notifications was setting a trap, exploiting their lack of identity information to trick them to death.
- The person targeted in their messages was facing some kind of trouble.
- The lying mechanism indicated a mysterious force was compelling them to follow rules.

Analyzing the second possibility further: the fact that someone was targeted implied that person might be their common enemy. If so, it was best not to reveal any information upon stepping outside.

The two women then exited the room and informed the others that there were no messages on Yellow Teeth's phone. The others understood that the two inside had deleted the messages, but it wasn't overly important to them, as everyone had already formed their own deductions.

A moment later, Wang Dazhu, the young man, and the short, fat man simultaneously charged toward 3 different room doors, appearing to try to open them. However, not a single door opened. Moments later, the sinister man also ran straight toward another door. Just as he reached his door, he and the previous 3 players turned around simultaneously to observe Li Jianguo, who was calmly watching them.

Li Jianguo merely sneered, telling them to stop playing tricks—he knew full well that the 4 of them were just testing whether he was Killer A:

Logically, if the two women inside were civilians, Killer A among the 6 outside wouldn't dare trigger his mechanism, because Killer B was among the outside group—executing a kill would be suicide.

However, since the beautiful woman decided not to share information, it was likely that others inspecting rooms later wouldn't share their clues either ⇒ in subsequent inspections, Killer B might join the search group to gain an information advantage over the rest.

The 4 men had made a move to run while Li Jianguo stayed still, showing that they suspected him of being Killer A, as he was currently the prime suspect.

⇒ One of the 4 fleeing men was very likely Killer B; given the chance, Killer A would look for an opportunity to eliminate him afterward.

However, there was a flaw in their plan: What if Killer C also entered the room to search? If ultimately only 2 people—Killer B and C—entered the room, there would still be 6 people outside (1 Killer A and 5 civilians) ⇒ Killer A would be unable to trigger the killing mechanism.

The sinister man had stood blocking a door as a failsafe to guarantee he could enter a room ⇒ if he, along with Killers B and C, entered, there would be 5 people left outside (4 civilians and 1 Killer A) ⇒ Killer A still couldn't trigger the killing mechanism.

From this perspective, only Killers B and C had a reason to scramble for the doors, whereas Killer A and the civilians lacked strong motivation. If civilians maximized the number of people outside around Killer A, he couldn't trigger his killing mechanism, maintaining a balanced containment among the killers and minimizing casualties.

If the 4 men had actually managed to enter the search room earlier, Killer A would have had a nearly 100% guaranteed victory by creating a 4-inside, 4-outside layout. Killer A could kill the 3 people in front of him outside, then wait for the 4 inside to step out and quickly trigger the mechanism a second time before they could identify the sole survivor outside (since doors automatically close when entering). This was highly feasible because the 3 groups had rushed toward 3 different doors; if all had entered, it would have been a death sentence. Nobody could guarantee they would exit simultaneously from different rooms, allowing Killer A to simply wait and pick them off one by one.

Considering the situation, when the sinister man saw 3 people already contesting doors, he shouldn't have rushed forward to avoid risking a 4-4 split; alternatively, 1 of the 3 frontrunners should have yielded to avoid risk. However, the exact opposite happened: all 4 arrived at doors without anyone yielding. Based on their prior behavior, these individuals were highly intelligent and wouldn't make such elementary mistakes ⇒ The most logical explanation was that they never intended to open the doors; they were merely pretending, aiming to bait Killer B into trying to enter while simultaneously disguising themselves as Killer B to play "a needle in a haystack" ⇒ forcing Killer A to hesitate over whether to activate his killing mechanism.

Furthermore, they did this to test Li Jianguo's reaction. Seeing that he didn't react, they planned to use similar logic to question whether he was Killer A ⇒ testing how he would defend himself and what evidence he would bring to prove his innocence.

The four men, after having their scheme completely exposed, could only laugh awkwardly, as having their plan blown open left them with no excuse to question Li Jianguo anymore. Regardless, the identity of Killer B could now be narrowed down to 4 suspects: Wang Dazhu, Short and Stout, the Young Man, and the Sinister Man. This time, everyone genuinely intended to open a door, but none would unlock. It seemed that the plot was officially commencing, meaning they had to act out the story by opening the correct room corresponding to the scene. Based on their earlier deductions, the first scene would involve Li Jianguo (1801) and Short and Stout (1802) drinking together, derived from their two text messages. Checking either of the two rooms to see which one unlocked would settle it. The issue was that both individuals were suspected of being Killer A; to let the plot play out, they would likely have to be left alone in a

room, introducing the risk of a murder occurring inside. At this stage, if Killer C were to reveal their identity (though the High-Bearing Man in 1803 was suspected of being Killer C, jumping to conclusions without evidence carried the risk of a misjudgment leading to death), things would be much easier to manage. If only one person exited the room, that person would almost certainly be Killer A. This was because the moment the two entered the room, Killer A's killing mechanism would be activated, and even if the other person were Killer B, they would hardly have enough time to determine the password. Without confirming Killer C's identity, if a murder occurred, three scenarios could play out:

1. A kills B
2. A kills a Civilian
3. C kills B

If Scenario 3 could be eliminated, any occurring murder would immediately identify Killer A. Furthermore, if one of the two inside was indeed Killer A, looking at these potential outcomes would ensure he wouldn't dare act rashly to kill, keeping the situation balanced. At this critical juncture, Killer C had still not revealed themselves. This meant one of three things: either Killer C was too stupid (revealing identity would not only benefit the grand scheme but also earn protection from the civilians), or they wanted to kill someone, or Killer C was actually Yellow Teeth, who had just died earlier. If the last possibility were true, Killer B would now have their killing mechanism activated just like Killer A, making it difficult to distinguish whether a murder was committed by A or B.

At this moment, Li Jianguo, who believed himself to be Killer A, also began his analysis:

Since Killer C had not revealed their identity, if he entered the room and killed Short and Stout now, outsiders would view him as potentially any of the 3 killers. They would have no solid basis to determine which killer he was (after all, if B and A entered the room together, whoever walked out alive would simply depend on who recited the password first).

However, from the perspective of Short and Stout inside—regardless of whether he was Killer B or not—he would try his best to project himself as a civilian to avoid being murdered. For Killer A, if the person he killed inside was a civilian, Killer B on the outside would definitely figure out Killer A's identity.

Furthermore, since the notification stated that the room could reveal the identity of its occupant, if Short and Stout were Killer B, he would try to persuade everyone to perform the scene in Room 1801 to avoid exposing his identity. Conversely, if he were a civilian, he would try to convince them to act in Room 1802 as a warning to Li Jianguo: "I am a civilian, so I have nothing to hide. If you are Killer A and dare to kill me in this room, Killer B will know your identity the moment you step outside."

Ordinarily, one could deduce Short and Stout's identity based on his next move using this logic. However, the actions of the 4 men earlier had shattered all these premises. One of those 4 men included Short and Stout; earlier, he had rushed toward the door of Room 1802, which failed to

open. It was hard to determine whether he was merely pretending or if the door truly couldn't be opened, but this gave him a perfectly logical reason to act in Room 1801. Because of this, confirming whether Short and Stout was actually Killer B became even more difficult, as the possibility that the door to 1802 was genuinely jammed couldn't be ruled out. To prioritize advancing the plot, everyone would now naturally favor sending the two into Room 1801.

The problem was that if 1801 tried to use the above logic to convince others to check Room 1802, it would only raise everyone's guard and further frame him as Killer A.

Reflecting on the entire chain of events: starting from when the Beautiful Woman withheld information ⇒ identifying Killer B through the search prompt ⇒ the sudden rush by 4 people, which more or less concealed Killer B ⇒ the door to 1802 failing to open ⇒ creating a plausible excuse to test Room 1801. (Short and Stout had even tried to "break down the door" earlier to make everything look more realistic. Although objectively only Short and Stout knew the truth, externally, insisting on checking Room 1802 now would seem overly stubborn).

This further proved the formidable intelligence of the players here. They must have anticipated that Li Jianguo would try to deduce Killer B's identity based on who proposed which room to inspect, so they made this move beforehand to collapse the premise of his judgment.

Even though he currently judged himself to be Killer A, Short and Stout in 1802 to possibly be Killer B, and the High-Bearing Man in 1803 to possibly be Killer C, the message stating that Yellow Teeth (1806) had no memories or clues remained a massive question mark.

If Yellow Teeth truly had no memories or clues, it would be fine. However, if that was because someone else had already sent out the clues Yellow Teeth possessed beforehand, it would be extremely dangerous. That would mean Short and Stout and the High-Bearing Man were also under suspicion, which implied that one or both of them might not be killers after all.

Inside Room 1801, Short and Stout covered his face with a piece of black cloth so he couldn't see the room's interior ⇒ preventing him from deducing Li Jianguo's identity ⇒ avoiding provoking Li Jianguo into recklessly killing him due to an exposed identity (if Li Jianguo was indeed Killer A), while ensuring that once outside, Short and Stout could reveal everything to the group. Li Jianguo read into his intentions, evaluating that Short and Stout had taken this proactive initiative to gain the upper hand, while also understanding that Short and Stout was covertly probing Li Jianguo's own reaction.

The two then acted out the script while simultaneously exposing each other's schemes:

Li Jianguo first assessed Short and Stout as a "Strategic Planner" type (Binh Quyen Muu): planning out tactics before stepping onto the battlefield, specializing in proactive moves. The Beautiful Woman, on the other hand, acted fluidly and casually, resembling an "Opportunistic Tactician" (Binh Tinh The).

Returning to Short and Stout, Li Jianguo realized that the man's proactive move had flaws based on two points:

1. The High-Bearing Man (1803) had texted: "1802 is sick."
2. Earlier in the group chat, when 1803 realized he had exposed information by typing "tenant" (zū hù), he defended himself by claiming it was a typo for "resident/household" (zhù hù).

Analyzing the second point first: these two words are entirely distinct under Pinyin input rules. "Tenant" (租户) in Chinese characters has the precise Pinyin *zū hù*, while "Resident/Household" (住户) has the precise Pinyin *zhù hù*. In Chinese, the *Z* sound (in *zū*) is an unretroflexed dental sound, whereas the *ZH* sound (in *zhù*) is a retroflex sound. They differ completely in pronunciation and typing logic.

Furthermore, considering the 9-key keypad layout they were using:

- To type *zū*, one presses the keys containing Z-U (Key 9 and Key 8).
- To type *zhù*, one must press the keys containing Z-H-U (Key 9, Key 4, and Key 8).

Due to the different key combinations (one requiring 2 keypresses, the other 3), the word "tenant" (租户) could not automatically jump to the top candidate slot to be accidentally selected instead of "resident" (住户).

In short, the word 1803 intended to type was definitely "tenant," and Li Jianguo was certain that Short and Stout, given his intelligence, had also noticed this. What was the purpose behind 1803's move? It appeared he was intentionally leaking this information to them. When they spotted the flaw in his message, they would suspect him of being Killer C. Although there was no concrete proof, it was enough to plant the seeds of suspicion.

Returning to the first point: combining this message with the one sent by Short and Stout himself—about drinking alcohol and then fighting—formed a sequence of actions that onlookers would interpret as characteristic of Killer A or B. At this point, Li Jianguo posed the crucial question: Could the door to Room 1802 actually be opened? If it could, it meant that when reenacting the plot, using either Room 1801 or Room 1802 made no difference—which sounded completely absurd unless the two rooms were identical. Short and Stout had likely deduced this as well, but because he was uncertain and wanted clear verification, he executed the "proactive move": finding a way to act out the scene in Room 1801 instead. (Li Jianguo was also implicitly labeling Short and Stout as Killer B through this proactive move).

Short and Stout asked why Li Jianguo thought he had deduced the existence of two identical rooms. Li Jianguo countered with a question: "The wound on your body wasn't self-inflicted, was it?" This implied that if the wound was caused by someone else, there must have been a struggle or physical fight involved in the murder scene—most likely a struggle between the two killers. Short and Stout must have realized this when he woke up and examined his body.

Continuing to analyze from Short and Stout's perspective: when everyone was exchanging messages in the group chat, he had texted "drinking and then fighting." Later, he saw 1801 (Li Jianguo) text "going to drink alcohol." Combining this with his own physical injuries, he could

deduce that the two of them must have caused trouble inside a room—the most reasonable explanation connecting "drinking" and "fighting."

The actions of the others could have taken place out in the hallway. Later, when everyone stepped outside and he saw 9 people emerging from 9 separate rooms, he likely posited two possibilities:

1. Rooms 1801 and 1802 were different, and 1801 had gone to Room 1802 (since 1801 texted "going to drink," implying he might not be drinking in his own room).
2. The two rooms were identical in every aspect. The text "going to drink" from 1801 (Li Jianguo) might not have been true; perhaps 1801 only texted that because he saw wine bottles in his own room ⇒ suspecting 1802 was involved in drinking, he simply went along with it to probe and verify.

Therefore, Short and Stout wanted to prevent Li Jianguo from realizing this second possibility. For Li Jianguo, if he entered Room 1802 and realized that 1801 and 1802 were completely identical, he would have sufficient grounds to be certain that Short and Stout was Killer B. At that point, Short and Stout would be dead for sure. Thus, regardless of which way he analyzed it, he had to prevent Li Jianguo from entering Room 1802 at all costs, resolving the issue via his proactive move. At this point, Li Jianguo had completed his mental simulation of Short and Stout's thought process.

Despite having his scheme exposed, Short and Stout calmly retorted: "Where's your evidence?" He understood full well that if Li Jianguo had actual evidence, he wouldn't be wasting his breath talking. He also knew Li Jianguo wasn't entirely certain of his deduction because the messages in the chat—the very foundation of the deduction—might not be real.

Now it was Short and Stout's turn to speak. He stated that using the cloth to blindfold himself was not just to prevent Li Jianguo (assuming he was Killer A) from recklessly eliminating a witness, but also because of his doubts regarding the judgment mechanism of another type of lie.

Short and Stout asked how many rooms were in this building. Deducing from plot logic, there were 9 people, one of whom was a child. The child would share a room with an adult ⇒ logically, there should only be 8 rooms.

Yet objectively, there were 9 rooms. Two possibilities explained this:

1. The plot originally had 9 rooms, but 1 room was vacant.
2. The plot originally had only 8 rooms, but to prevent the game from falling into chaos, the force creating this game utilized spatial isolation: according to the plot deduced by the players, there was a scene where Killer A entered Killer B's room.

⇒ If the script remained unchanged, Killer A and Killer B would wake up in the exact same room ⇒ leading to one of the killers being eliminated too early ⇒ the creator designed another room identical to Killer B's room to maintain game balance.

Who, then, was in Killer A's room? Perhaps it was Killer C. In the plot, when Killer A went to B's room, C ran into A's room—something not impossible given C's identity as a child.

Furthermore, there was the issue of room numbers assigned in everyone's group chat:

Since the group chat was organized by residents' room numbers ⇒ an adult and a child sharing a room should share the same room number, or the child should have no room number at all since they were not a tenant.

Whether it was a vacant room or spatial isolation, there should only be 8 room numbers.

⇒ It was possible that the room number in the group chat for Killer C—the child—was fake, as the child originally had no room number not being a tenant.

Earlier, when everyone exited their rooms to meet, they called each other by their group chat room numbers because they didn't know each other's names ⇒ it was very likely they were addressing each other by the wrong room numbers ⇒ logically deemed as lying.

However, re-evaluating this, room numbers were "objective facts"; in reality, everyone had a room number, making it hard to classify as a lie. If it truly were a lie, someone would have instinctively executed judgment on them just like with Yellow Teeth earlier, because there was enough background information to make it a "known lie." (Although those outside hadn't inspected Room 1806 to get concrete proof, they had assumed Yellow Teeth wasn't smart enough to leave messages for others before losing his memory ⇒ allowing them to deduce the details regarding unknown and known lies, just with less certainty than those who inspected the room).

Yet, were they actually lying, and how should this lie be judged? (Logically, it was clearly a lie, but in practice, they seemed to be telling the truth).

Perhaps to judge this type of lie, one had to deny objective reality: producing evidence to prove that the child never had a room number.

Regardless, it was still uncertain who among them was the child (Killer C). If someone found evidence proving Killer C had no room number to break this lie ⇒ going forward, they would no longer be able to use room numbers to address anyone specifically without accidentally telling a lie.

Note: This special type of lie is precisely "Guǐ Yǔ" (quỷ ngữ). The room number of the child/apartment building having 9 floors is Guǐ Yǔ because from the beginning, the child had no room number and the apartment building originally only had 8 rooms. However, during the early stage of the game, no one realized this, so the lie became reality (also meaning their identities became tightly bound to these room numbers). If Guǐ Yǔ is broken now, using room numbers to address one another will be judged as telling a lie.

Upon hearing Short and Stout's words, Li Jianguo smirked internally, as he had already deduced this earlier. However, hearing Short and Stout bring it up triggered another thought:

Because he was Killer A who broke into someone else's room, combined with the previous deduction, it meant he was currently in the room duplicated from Killer B's room ⇒ his room number, 1801, was also fake.

If he had previously said "I am 1801," he would have certainly triggered a lie. Fortunately, the warning messages had kept him on guard against this.

Returning to Short and Stout, his deliberate decision to blindfold himself was primarily to prevent himself from seeing the interior of Room 1801—which would directly expose the fact that the two rooms were identical ⇒ exposing that 1801 was not Li Jianguo's real room (Short and Stout was assuming Li Jianguo was Killer A and linking it to the plot where Killer A ultimately broke into another's room) ⇒ breaking this special lie. To avoid telling a lie, they wouldn't be able to call each other by name.

In short, he did not want to break this special lie yet, which was why he insisted on staying blindfolded. Breaking it now would create an information imbalance with those outside, as only the two of them inside would know it had been broken.

⇒ Later, upon exiting, they could trick those outside into addressing each other by room numbers to trigger judgment.

Why was Short and Stout so adamant about not breaking it? Because he understood he was not the targeted target. Short and Stout knew he wasn't Killer A, so he didn't want to harm his "teammates" outside—after all, according to the game rules, as long as Killer A wasn't dead, all remaining players were essentially in the same boat, and keeping as many civilians alive as possible was the way to prevent Killer A from killing indiscriminately.

Li Jianguo wondered whether he should pull off the cloth to force Short and Stout to see his surroundings ⇒ breaking the lie.

After a moment of consideration, he decided against it. If Short and Stout was this determined, he might be keeping his eyes closed specifically to guard against this exact attempt.

Furthermore, reflecting on it, Short and Stout voicing this deduction was also a test of Li Jianguo's reaction: only Killer A would have an incentive to pull off the cloth and break the lie at this point. Doing so would be equivalent to self-exposing his identity; a civilian had no reason to do it.

From the start, this had been a series of multi-purpose moves by Short and Stout: from competing for the doors with 3 others to secure an excuse to inspect Room 1801 during the next plot segment and avoid inspecting his own room ⇒ concealing his identity from Li Jianguo (who held the highest suspicion of being Killer A in the eyes of the majority), reducing the basis for Li Jianguo's deductions ⇒ using a blindfold before entering the room: on the surface to

prevent a desperate execution if Li Jianguo was indeed Killer A, and internally to create an excuse to bring up the special lie (Guǐ Yǔ) to probe Li Jianguo's reaction. If Li Jianguo were truly Killer A, after hearing Short and Stout's deduction, he would very likely pull off the cloth or find a way to make Short and Stout see Room 1801's interior.

⇒ This was the complete picture of Short and Stout's scheme to gain the upper hand: simultaneously concealing his own identity while probing the identity of the prime suspect, Li Jianguo.