

Imitator 268

Chapter 268: Hidden Players

Cao Haichuan paused slightly and continued, "Actually, from the very beginning I was wondering, tic-tac-toe isn't any complicated strategy. Why would the game rules use it to determine plot ownership?"

"As long as players know how to play, they'll inevitably divide plots in a 5:4 ratio.

"But later I realized that the existence of tic-tac-toe wasn't a game between players, but a game between the God's Imitator and players.

"The God's Imitator was actually deliberately using this calculation behavior to occupy players' thinking time, thereby increasing the difficulty for them to discover 'hidden players.'

"Although tic-tac-toe's strategy is simple, it's actually rather obscure. If you haven't played before, then figuring out the optimal solution and avoiding possible pitfalls would still require some time to deduce.

"No matter how simple the calculation, it still occupies the brain.

"Adding other game rules and the probing and gaming between players, it becomes even harder to realize the existence of 'hidden players.'"

Jin Cheng clearly found this statement very hard to accept, "But it could also be the audience deciding the plot opening order and criminal file order!"

She could be said to be the biggest victim. And she had always blamed the audience for this.

This was also one of her important reasons for selling shelters at high prices and extracting gold coins from the audience.

Cao Haichuan shook his head, "At first I also thought it was the audience deciding these things, but I quickly realized something was wrong.

"Because most of these decisions clearly went against the audience's interests.

"The plot opening order and the selection of 'privileged community' looked chaotic, but actually had a hidden standard:

"Whichever community was willing to offer more gold coins when bidding on plots would receive preferential treatment.

"The first nine-square grid opening at A4 wasn't a coincidence, but deliberately selected in the most crowded place to check the bidding intentions of Communities 7, 9, and 15.

"The next three nine-square grids all opened in the center rather than corners, also to compare each community's bidding willingness.

"The reason Community 12 ultimately won was because they were most willing to spend gold coins when bidding on plots.

"These 'hidden players' could only obtain gold coins through plot auctions, so in the fifth round, they specifically opened the G7 nine-square grid to pre-determine Community 12 as the 'privileged community.'

"They needed to use Community 12 as this 'middleman' to achieve such a cycle:

"Community 12 would drive up shelter prices as much as possible, earning gold coins from the audience. Then through bidding on plots, send a portion of gold coins into the 'hidden players' hands.

"Only by selecting Community 12 could they maximize their interests.

"Clearly, Community 12 also realized this very early. They deliberately raised their bids and indeed got what they wanted.

"The order of announcing criminals' crimes was also like this.

"The first crime announced was 'selling inferior shelters.' This is actually very abnormal.

"Because if players wanted to commit similar crimes, they'd have to wait until at least after the sixth round ended. But this crime was announced right at the start of the sixth round.

"This led to fundamentally no players committing similar crimes. Only 'Community 7 being jointly implicated' was the one possibility.

"And after this, because 'selling inferior shelters' had become completely safe, no longer having any deterrent effect on field players, it inevitably led to everything sold to the audience becoming inferior shelters.

"This clearly completely didn't align with the audience's interests. If the audience chose themselves, they absolutely wouldn't put this crime at the initial exposure.

"But for 'hidden players,' they had sufficient reason to do this.

"First was killing the chicken to warn the monkeys. By killing Community 7 players with the weakest bidding willingness, make all players feel fear and more actively bid on plots.

"Second was to let field players confidently and boldly sell inferior shelters, more quickly earn gold coins from the audience, and make plots bid at higher prices.

"The subsequent order of announcing crimes also tried to accommodate Community 12 as much as possible, putting the two crimes that might threaten them last, giving them ample time to think about strategies and persuade others to use 'against-conscience votes.'"

Jin Cheng's eyes widened. She still found this statement hard to accept.

"But no matter what, you still don't have any evidence. This is all your speculation!

"Can you find any rule from the game rules that supports your viewpoint?"

Cao Haichuan nodded, "There is indeed one rule that can support my viewpoint.

"The 'lie detection mechanism' rule says this: If the number of 'perfect judges' is fewer than 10 people, then all players except 'perfect judges' and 'audience' will additionally trigger instant death punishment once.

"Don't you all think this rule is somewhat redundant?"

Cao Haichuan continued explaining:

"Because judging by the standard of 'whether voting against conscience,' field players only have two types, either against conscience or not against conscience.

"This rule could completely say 'players who vote against conscience suffer instant death punishment once additionally,' without needing to use the phrasing 'all players except certain groups.'

"So this rule is actually a rule targeting 'hidden players,' because this sentence also includes them.

"This might be the only way to kill these hidden players in the game.

"If my speculation is true, then these hidden players are the truly advantageous identity in this game. They can decide the order of nine-square grid auctions, can decide the order of criminal judgments. They constantly observe field players' behaviors, selecting the most obedient and easily controlled communities and players from among them to become their middlemen for extracting wealth from the audience.

"Hidden players need to bear almost no death risks throughout and can earn large amounts of gold coins.

"But they clearly overlooked that there's actually a death rule targeting them. Or they might be overconfident, thinking no field players could realize this.

"I don't know if the God's Imitator who designed this game is hiding among these 'hidden players,' but in any case, they are the group most deserving of instant death punishment in the entire game."

Having said this, Cao Haichuan let out a long breath as if relieved of a burden, "Alright, now the game has truly ended. Everyone enjoy this final time.

"I'm sorry, but I already gave you a chance."

Clearly, if Community 17 hadn't been selected in the final vote, perhaps Cao Haichuan would still have hesitated about whether to reveal the truth.

But the moment other communities selected Community 17, everything became irreversible.