

## D.5 Schrödinger's Wolves



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Difficulty: Hard

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<http://puzzle.cisra.com.au>

The safe labeled CURE contains a sheaf of papers and a large cylindrical tube with a conical nozzle on one end. You take them and decide to leave the strange secret room. There is a steel door leading further into the building, or you could brave the zombies in the gold room. Which to do? Perhaps there are instructions on how to use the CURE, written in the papers you have found?

You wake before dawn in a village. You know that your name is *Manuel*, and you have lived in the village your whole life. Yet in some ways you feel you don't know who you are. Thoughts race around your head, often contradicting and seemingly independent of each other. Part of you feels a deep hunger, recently sated but threatening to rise again. It seems overwhelming in a way, but it is only partially in control of you. Or is it only in control of part of you? At the same time, you feel a deep knowledge lost inside you, although you are yet to understand what that means. Mostly though you just feel scared, a terrifying feeling that death is on its way and you will need a lot of luck to avoid it.

Around you are 6 other villagers. In the torchlight, you see confusion in their eyes. They seem to be in exactly the same situation as you are, stuck in a strange place and unsure of who or what they are.

A meeting is being held, and there is a lot of activity. There has been a murder earlier in the night. It is clear that there were two people responsible, although from the nature of the death it seems that 'people' is a generous term. The culprits must have been from the village, but it is not at all certain who they are. Accusations abound, but no sense can be made of it. In the end, you decide together that it will come to a vote. The person who gets the most votes will be sent to the fire to be cleansed of evil. This will happen each day, until it is clear that the evil has been removed from the village.

It is late however, and you all agree to return to sleep and hold the first vote during the day.

You fall asleep quickly into a deep dream from which you wake suddenly certain of... something... but the vision fades before you can truly grasp its meaning.

The next morning, you meet again with the other villagers. The discussion begins as to who should be the first to be sacrificed. As you think about who you will vote for, you take note of what you see in their faces, and what you feel in yourself, marking yourself down in the 4th row:

Player	Dead	Good	Evil
1	0	89	11
2	0	65	35
3	0	65	35
4	0	80	20
5	0	73	27
6	0	67	33
7	0	60	40



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Accusations fly, and there is a lot of discussion, but in the end the votes are cast and it is *Kieran* who is sent to the pyre. You feel a sense of relief that you were not chosen, and that you will live another day.

Kieran is taken, screaming his innocence. It seems mostly genuine to you. As the fire comes however you feel reality collapsing into greater focus, and he is transformed. The fire races along his skin as hairs that weren't there before now catch alight. He lets out a vicious snarl, struggling against the bonds as the fire consumes him. You all feel a slight sense of relief. A feeling of evil has been partially lifted from everyone. Yet all of you know that the danger is certainly not yet over, since the murder could not have been committed by one person alone.

During the night, you find yourself running. Up ahead, you see *Parker*, and decide that he will be your victim tonight. He turns, and you look at his chillingly wolf-like face, but the face you see is your own. You scream in fear, but there are no sounds other than the tearing of flesh. You regain consciousness back in your bed. You feel that part of your innocence has been eaten away. You're not sure whether you were the hunter or the hunted this night.

It's clear to you that not everything you see happening is real – your visions are contradictory possibilities, tangled together. Only death brings reality into focus.

The new day begins, and you gather with the other villagers again. No-one seems to have died during the night, as all 6 of the remaining villagers are present, but there is still the smell of death in the air. No-one is willing to look for the source, afraid of what they might find. As you look around, you notice that *Fabian* doesn't look quite real - you can partly see through him. In fact, most of the villagers look like this to varying degrees, yourself included. Again, you take a note of what you see (taking care to put people in the same order):

Player Dead Good Evil

1	8	92	8
2	23	92	8
3	0	77	23
4	8	77	23
5	46	85	15
6	15	77	23
7	100	0	100

This day, the discussion is quiet, though tense. There is a lot of suspicion and mistrust. Nobody wants to give away too much, for fear of what might be used against them.

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In the end, *Arthur* is chosen. He is taken, protesting his innocence. This time, as the fire burns, it seems that Arthur's life is ironically returning. As the fires take him, no signs of evil appear, and it is clear that an innocent has been sacrificed. Again you feel reality collapsing into focus, as if in death Arthur's role in this world is resolved, and some possibilities that once existed are now taken away.

You look around you, and see life returned to your fellow villagers, but the smell of death has not left. You suddenly realise that Parker is no longer with you. It is strange, as you thought you had seen him recently, and there is nowhere he could have gone. A search begins, but you have a feeling you know where to look. Soon enough, Parker's body is found, mutilated. It is clear however that he did not die recently – the body is cold and the blood is dried. As you look closer, you see there is something not quite right about the wounds as well. It is almost like there are two separate sets of wounds overlaid, both fatal, but neither quite real on their own.

Later that night, you find yourself prowling again. It seems more real than before, although still you are not sure if it just a dream. You see *Santos*, and decide it is his turn to feed your hunger. This time nothing disturbs you.

Morning comes, and only four of you remain. You take note once again of what you see:

Player Dead Good Evil

1	67	100	0
2	33	100	0
3	0	33	67
4	0	67	33
5	100	100	0
6	100	100	0
7	100	0	100

The others cast their votes, and the votes are split, although you yourself have somehow escaped attention, despite a growing sense of guilt inside you. You have the deciding vote. You ponder what to do for a while, but then it becomes clear.

There is one way to cast your vote which guarantees that you will survive this ordeal and still leave you with some chance of purging the evil from inside you. You realise that today's vote was your destiny from the beginning, as the name of the villager you must vote for has been cryptically spelled out for you by the attack targets on the first day.

You cast your vote, and await your destiny, confident in your survival but much less sure about your soul.

