

**The Longest Rainy Sunday Podcast**  
**Episode- Mein Kampf in Quarantine: Secret Hitler**  
**Audio Transcript**

**Disclaimer-** As per the creators of Secret Hitler, if you don't think there's anything funny about Fascism being a game, please contact the White House.

**Pratyush-** Secret Hitler is a party game in which the players are divided into Fascists and Liberals. The groups try to pass as many Fascist and Liberal policies as they can. The Fascists are faced with an additional challenge to protect their identity, so that the Liberals do not find out who they are. On the face of it, the theme of the game seems to be– 'Don't trust anyone'. However, in this episode of the Longest Rainy Sunday Podcast, we talk about how this game makes us think differently, if we *really* shouldn't trust anyone, and why it is relevant in the current political landscape of the world.

Hi guys! I am Pratyush, the producer of this episode, and today I'm in conversation with my assistant producers Mudita Jain and Rishika Shah.

**Mudita and Rishika-** Hi guys!

**Pratyush-** So, you know, even though Secret Hitler is originally a board game, thanks to the pandemic, we had to play it on an online emulator. What did you guys think about this?

**Mudita-** At first, I thought it was going to be pretty difficult to play it virtually, but the online version of the game somehow managed to surpass my expectations. Of course we had to stay on the zoom call simultaneously to simulate being in the same room. And our dependence on the internet connectivity was obviously a drawback but in spite of losing connection so many times, I think we still managed to play it and it was fun.

**Rishika-** Yeah I also think that like if we were in the same place physically, that would really help us to find out if a person is lying by observing things like their body language, or their tone, or their facial expressions. And so, even though like the Zoom call wasn't a completely ideal situation, it was a lot better than having 0 face to face interaction. That would not allow us to enjoy the game at all.

**Pratyush-** It was quite a different experience, to be honest. What did you guys think about the genre of the game?

**Mudita-** Talking about the hidden identity part of it, Fascists already knew their teammates. It was for the Liberals who needed to recognise theirs. So, from the beginning itself, I felt Liberals are always at a weaker position. When I was playing the game, I was Liberal, I think, for the first 2-3 rounds, and didn't see any scope of winning the game. Because Liberals aren't acquainted with other peoples' behaviours when they are lying, so it just makes the entire game way too difficult for them.

**Rishika-** I think something that's really interesting about this game is that Fascists are expected to lie to win, because lying is something that isn't really socially encouraged, or accepted, in general. But Secret Hitler allows you to lie freely without any consequences, without any harmful implications. When I was a Fascist, I think something I constantly kept thinking about was how people reacted very differently to me when I was lying vs when I was saying the truth. And because of this, like recognising these kinds of patterns, that helped me increase my convincing power.

**Pratyush-** You know, the first few games that we played, I was always the Fascist, and I always made the Liberals believe that I was a Liberal, and I ended up winning each game. And this is the convincing power the game definitely teaches you. It equips you with skills to put forth strong convincing arguments in a discussion, which is a pretty important skill to have in life. In Secret Hitler, the Fascists are trying to persuade the others to believe a lie— something against their beliefs— and because of that their convincing power becomes even more important.

**Mudita-** So apart from the skill of convincing, I think the game also enlightens us about telescoping. Like every game, even Secret Hitler moves one step at a time. This is what telescoping is about. We break down the final goal of getting all the Liberal or Fascist policies passed into short term goals like getting your team mate elected round after round.

**Rishika-** I also think that telescoping makes it a lot easier to think about the main goal more clearly. I kept thinking of short term goals like getting a single policy passed, or convincing people that I am a Liberal if I am a Fascist, or causing Liberals to suspect each other, or getting voted for as chancellor, if I am Hitler. All of these small goals work towards winning the game.

**Pratyush-** Another important aspect of the game is lie detection and decision making. We need to decide how to lie, and who to believe.

**Mudita-** Yeah. Well, since the duration of the game is not too long, you end up playing each role at least once. I think that puts you in a position where you can contemplate your previous roles and act accordingly in the next one. You analyse your behaviour, your words, and how they should be distinguished from the previous round. When I was a Fascist, I found myself using the same tricks that worked on me when I was a Liberal. And as Liberals, we try to recognise the same lies and tricks that we used when we were Fascists.

**Pratyush-** Absolutely. I believe that Liberals are stuck in this dilemma between being too trusting and too cautious. At every step, the game presents you with a choice, and we need to make a decision. I mean, initially I thought that I should suspect everyone, because anyone could be a Fascist. One of the objectives of the game is for the Fascists is to make the Liberals distrust each other and fight amongst themselves, and this helps them gain more power. This is very similar to what politics has been throughout history,

**Rishika-** This is also very similar, I think, to the way the British colonized India for more than 200 years. They turned all the Indian rulers against each other, all of the Indian rulers were

fighting amongst themselves. And while they were distracted in that, the British could easily gain more power and gain more territories all across the country. And I think a very similar trend is prevalent in India today as well. There has been a rise in hate crimes against religious minorities like Muslims, caste minorities like Dalits, as well as women and members of the LGBTQ+ community, and this has been happening ever since the current ruling party gained power, when won by a landslide number of votes. Also, because the people are so distracted fighting amongst themselves about really minute differences, and very often irrelevant things, the Government can pass policies which may not always be beneficial to the people and no one may even realise when the Government does that.

**Mudita-** It's 2020 right now, and even in the current political scenario in the US, with the year being marked by upcoming elections and racial injustice protests, parties have clearly lost their way. They are so busy sabotaging and constantly meddling with each other's personal lives that they have actually deviated from the more pressing issues at hand.

**Pratyush-** These unprecedented times call for unparalleled trust which if absent allows dictatorship to flourish. We need to come together as a society to resolve the issues we face. It is important to trust people.

**Rishika-** I think it is really important to trust people in this game. In one of the games that we played, Pratyush and I were both Liberals, but something he said, I don't know what it was, and the fact that he was always a Fascist before that, made me not trust him at all, and that's why I did not give him any kind of power, I did not help him throughout the game. At the end, when we lost I regretted this a lot because maybe if I would have trusted him even slightly, the Fascists would not have won so easily. We could have won.

**Pratyush-** Even if we don't trust people 100 percent, we still need to respect their opinions and at least listen to what they have to say, or we'll end up regretting our own decisions. Claims made by people might not be the ultimate truth, but you can easily be led astray amidst the blame game.

**Mudita-** Pratyush, Rishika and I played this game from a view of analysing it. Let's hear it from our friends, Srinjayi and Aadya who played it just for fun.

**Pratyush-** Thank you Srinjayi and Aadya for being here. What was your experience playing Secret Hitler online?

**Srinjayi-** At the start, a lot of us were playing it for the first time, so there was a lot of confusion- actually trying to understand the game, the procedure and how you can actually win the game. But, I think we played like a couple of trial rounds and after that we got a hang of it which is when it actually got fun.

**Aadya-** Playing online was still a little confusing. Even now, I don't know exactly all the rules but it wasn't too bad.

**Pratyush-** So, which role did you like playing more and why?

**Srinjayi-** I liked playing the role of the facsist (fascist). I think they actually drive the game. Being a liberal is very simple and you don't have to really lie that much.

**Aadya-** I liked being Hitler the best. That was probably the most fun one, like deceiving everyone, no one expecting that it was me.

**Pratyush-** So, from an outside perspective, what real life applications do you think this game has?

**Aadya-** Honestly, I feel like it wouldn't have any intellectual applications as such in the real world, but I feel like it would probably help people read others better and also like help you deceive others.

**Srinjayi-** It like teaches you to be diplomatic and really analyse things. I think it's somewhat like playing the game of chess because you actually pre-calculate your moves and what the other person might do next. So, I think it makes you think more about the future.

**Pratyush-** Thank you for listening to this week's podcast. Stay tuned for next week. Attached below are the transcript and the link for the game for you guys to play online.