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Art 380

Zhong Ji Mi Ma (Guessing the Password)

Zhong Ji Mi Ma is a game usually played by teenagers in China after dinner. It is a number guessing game with disgusting consequences. Before the game begins, everyone puts some of their leftovers into a cup. Whoever loses must either take a bite, or finish the concoction, depending on the rules set forth by everyone at the table. A game like this is usually played by teenagers and college students after a jovial dinner, but little kids would most definitely enjoy playing it as well due to the gross out factor.

The game starts with four or more people sitting around a dinner or cafeteria table. The things needed to play are: a cell phone or pen and paper, leftover food, and a group of friends. One person is the “Giver,” while everyone else is a “Guesser.” After everyone offers something *nonpoisonous*, but disgusting into a cup, the Giver will write a number down on a piece of paper, or type a number on their cell phone. Once a number is chosen, the Giver will say a number aloud greater than the value he/she has chosen. The Giver will then choose who starts, and which direction the guessing will go. The first person will guess a number between 1 and that value. If the first person does not guess the number, the Giver will give a range using the guessed number for the next person to guess a value. For example, in a scenario:

- Giver writes down 25(the guessers do not know this number) and announces 30 to the group for the guessing to begin.
- First guesser says 15.
- Giver will give the range of 15-30 to the next guesser.

- Second guesser says 27.
- Giver will give the range of 15-27.
- Etc.

This process will continue until one person eventually guesses the correct value. That person will then have to take a bite of or finish the concoction, depending on what everyone else in the group decides. When they're done, the guesser who lost will become the Giver and the Giver will become the Guesser for the next round. The game will continue until people want to quit.

This game is a roller coaster of emotions. There's fear of eating something disgusting; relief of guessing the incorrect number; nervousness as the number range decreases; and pure demented happiness from watching others scarf down something nasty. To be good at this game, players should know how to read body language. Constantly look at the Giver when he/she is going to give a new number range and see if there is a tell. Beyond that, it's all luck and players can't really rely on strategy. Zhong Ji Mi Ma is a pretty straight forward game and there isn't really a way of cheating. As long as everyone guesses a whole number, someone will eventually lose.

Players should try to be considerate to others around them since the setting is usually a restaurant. They should try to keep quiet, keep the groaning to a minimum, and not let others see what they're eating. Other people are probably eating *normal* food and don't want to be grossed out or disturbed by a group of loud kids. Things usually still get pretty rowdy from one overdramatic character. There's an overdramatic friend in every crowd!

Source: My 25 year old cousin in Taiwan.