

The Liar and the Truth Teller

History and provenance

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The puzzle family

This is a truth-teller/liar puzzle, often told using “knights” who always tell the truth and “knaves” who always lie. Raymond Smullyan’s *What Is the Name of This Book?* (1978) is an important published collection in this tradition [1].

What can be attributed

Smullyan is a documented author and popularizer of this family, not an established inventor of every two-doors version. I did not establish the first appearance of this exact guard-and-doors wording.

The single-guard and unknown-mixture variants on this page remove an assumption used by the usual “ask the other guard” answer. A nested question about the guard’s own answer handles all of them. That is a relationship between the variants, not a separate historical attribution.

Sources

[1] Raymond M. Smullyan, *What Is the Name of This Book? The Riddle of Dracula and Other Logical Puzzles* (1978).

<https://cs.bme.hu/~szeredi/ait/Smullyan-What-is-the-Name-of-This-Book.pdf>

Sources checked September 7, 2026. A documented appearance is not necessarily the earliest appearance.