

# Nostradamus Goes Quantum



TECHNISCHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
DARMSTADT

**Barbara Jiabao Benedikt** (✉), Marc Fischlin, and Moritz Huppert

Cryptoplexity, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany  
{barbara\_jiabao.benedikt, marc.fischlin}@tu-darmstadt.de  
moritz.huppert@proton.me

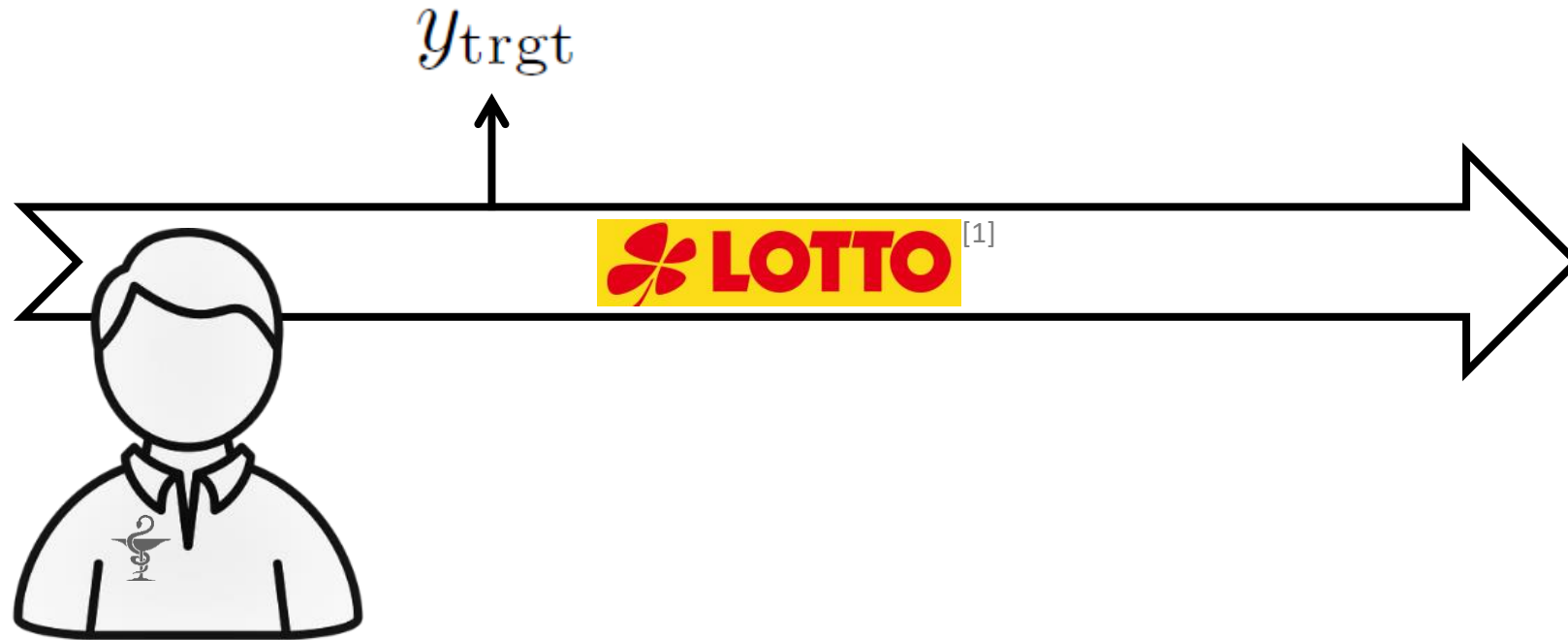


# The Modern Nostradamus [KK06]



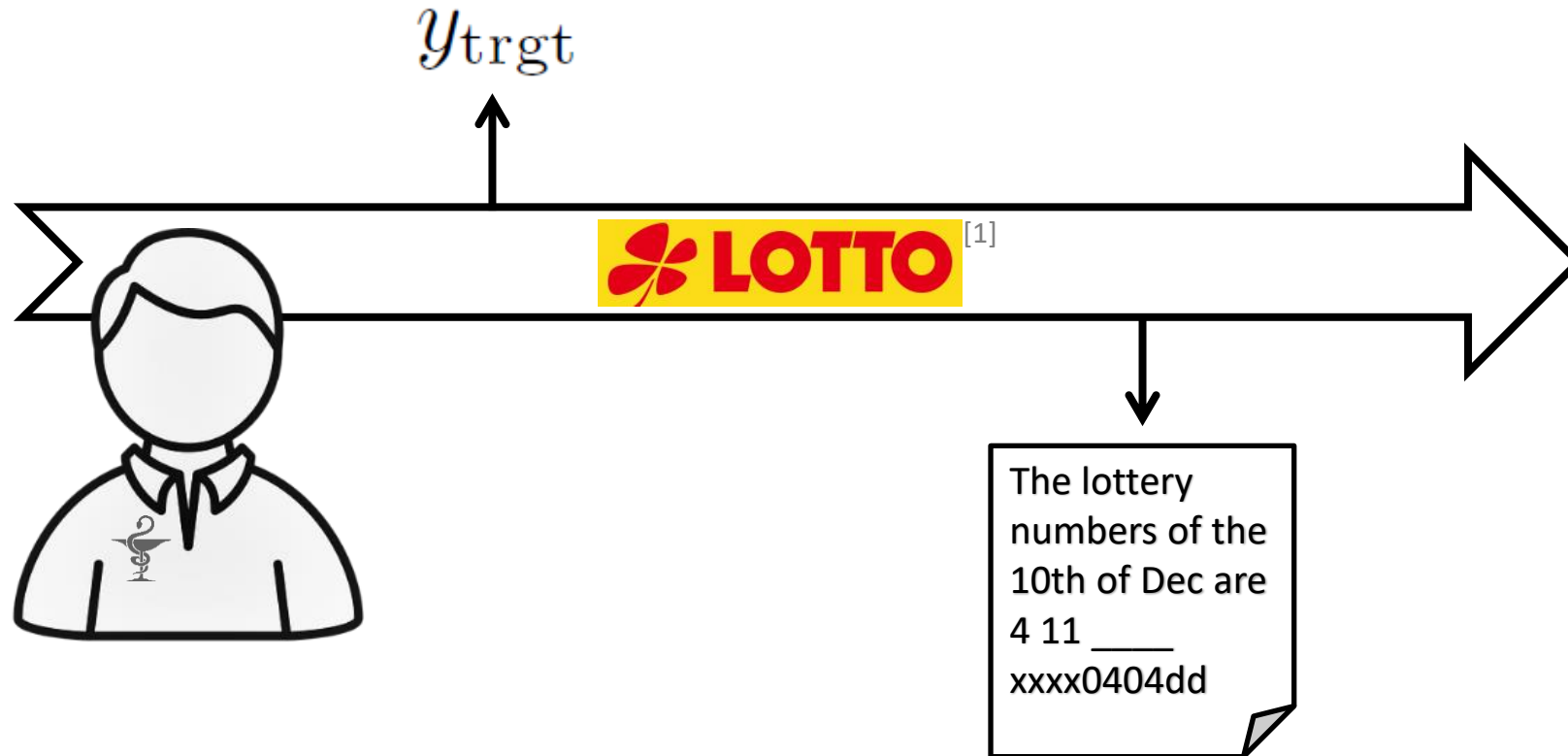
[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# The Modern Nostradamus [KK06]



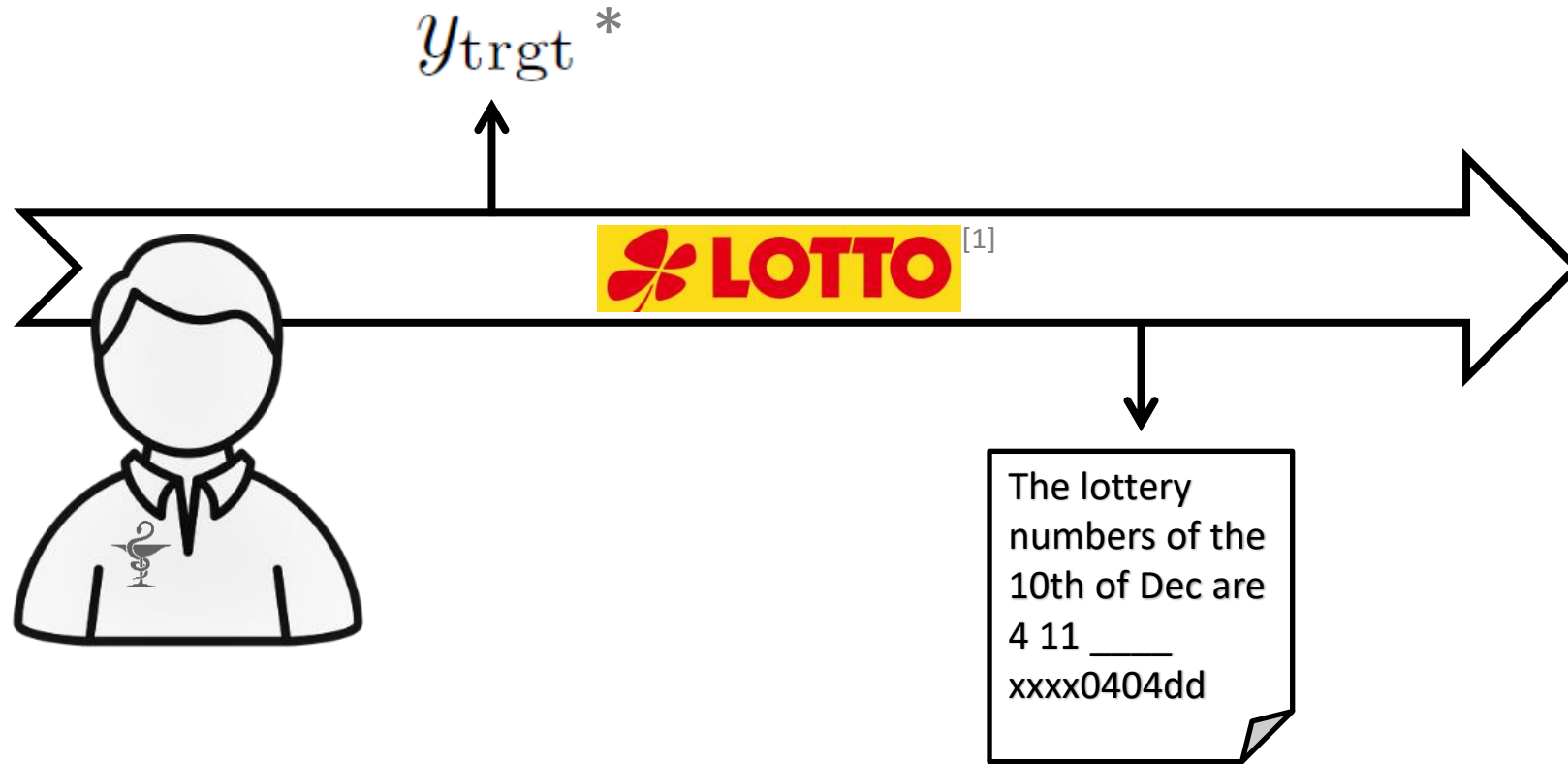
[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# The Modern Nostradamus [KK06]



[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# The Modern Nostradamus [KK06]



\* hash value of an iterated hash function

[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# History of Nostradamus-Attacker



Legendary  
Nostradamus



requires magic



Classical Nostradamus  
[KK06, BSU12]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$$

[BSU12] Blackburn, Stinson and Upadhyay. On the complexity of the herding attack and some related attacks on hash functions. Designs, Codes and Cryptography, 2012.

[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# History of Nostradamus-Attacker



Legendary  
Nostradamus



requires magic



Classical Nostradamus  
[KK06, BSU12]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$$



Quantum Nostradamus  
[our work]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$$

- [BSU12] Blackburn, Stinson and Upadhyay. On the complexity of the herding attack and some related attacks on hash functions. Designs, Codes and Cryptography, 2012.
- [KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# History of Nostradamus-Attacker



Legendary  
Nostradamus



requires magic



Classical Nostradamus  
[KK06, BSU12]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$$



Quantum Nostradamus  
[our work]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$$

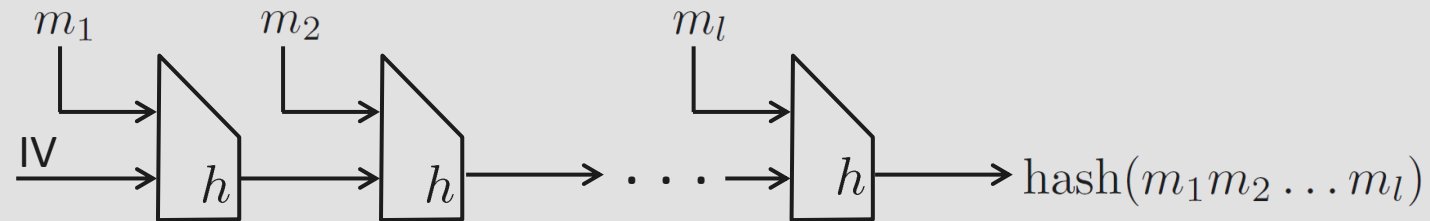
Essentially optimal!

- [BSU12] Blackburn, Stinson and Upadhyay. On the complexity of the herding attack and some related attacks on hash functions. Designs, Codes and Cryptography, 2012.
- [KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.



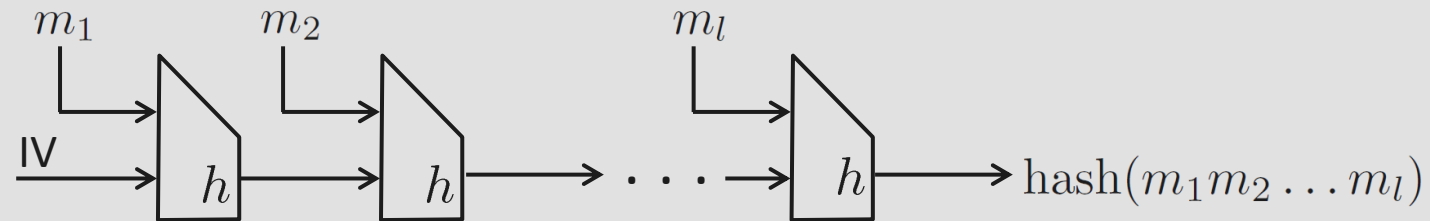
# Preliminaries

$\text{hash} : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$  iterated hash function, e.g.,



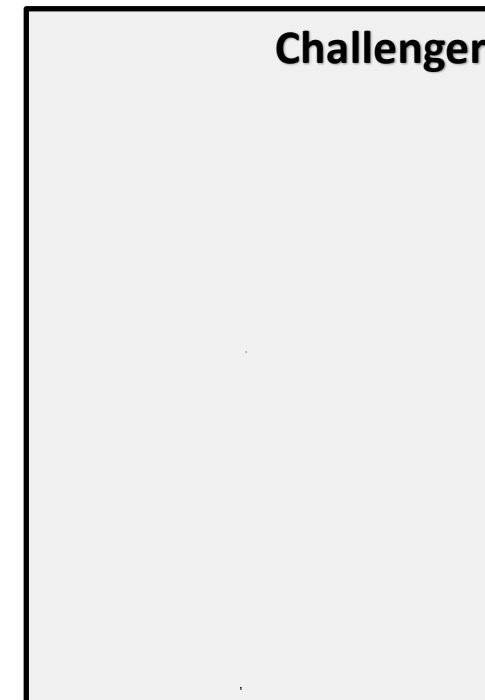
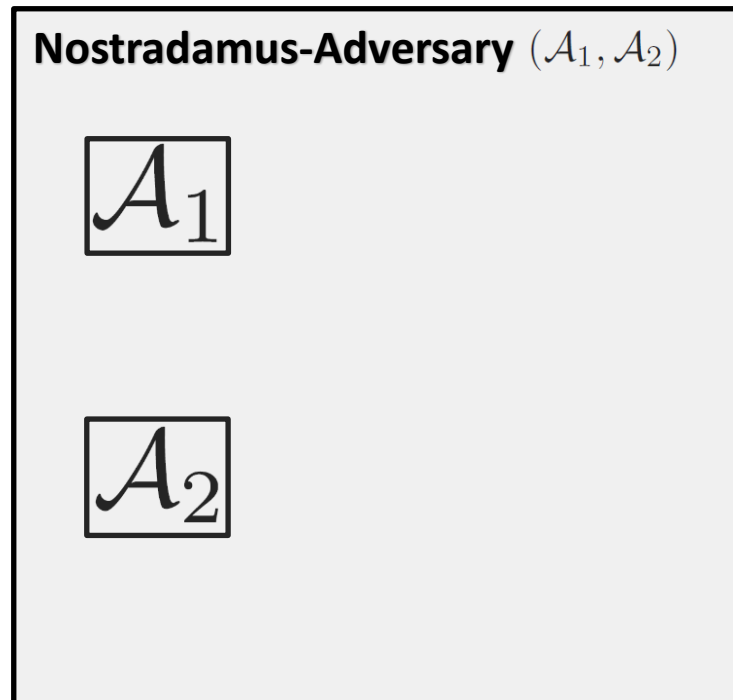
# Preliminaries

hash :  $\{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$  iterated hash function, e.g.\*

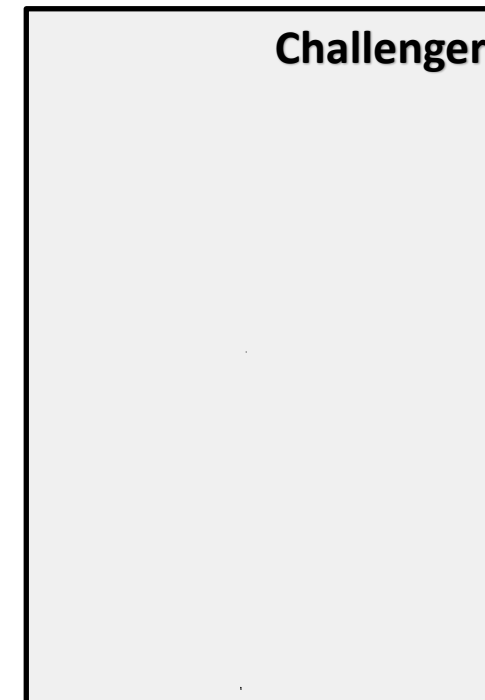
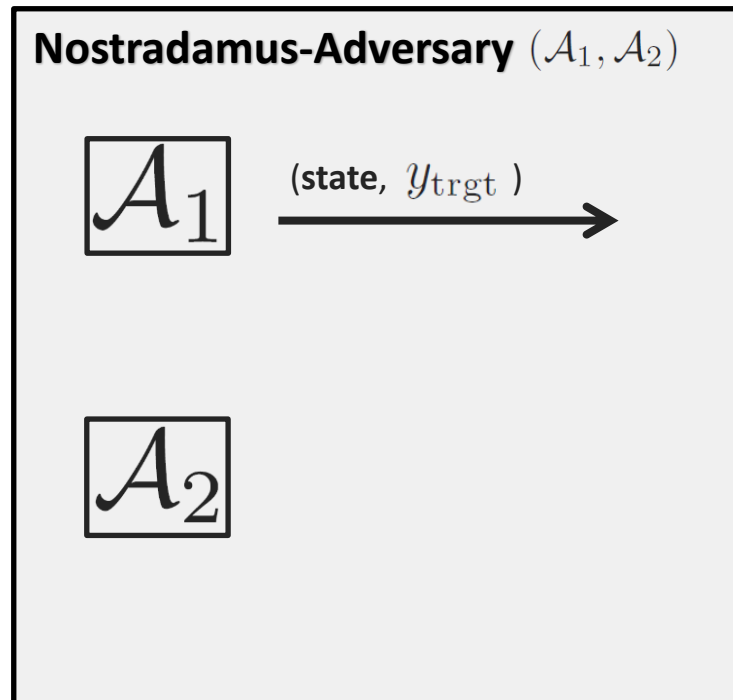


\* Results also applicable to SHA-2, SHA-3 or SHAKE.

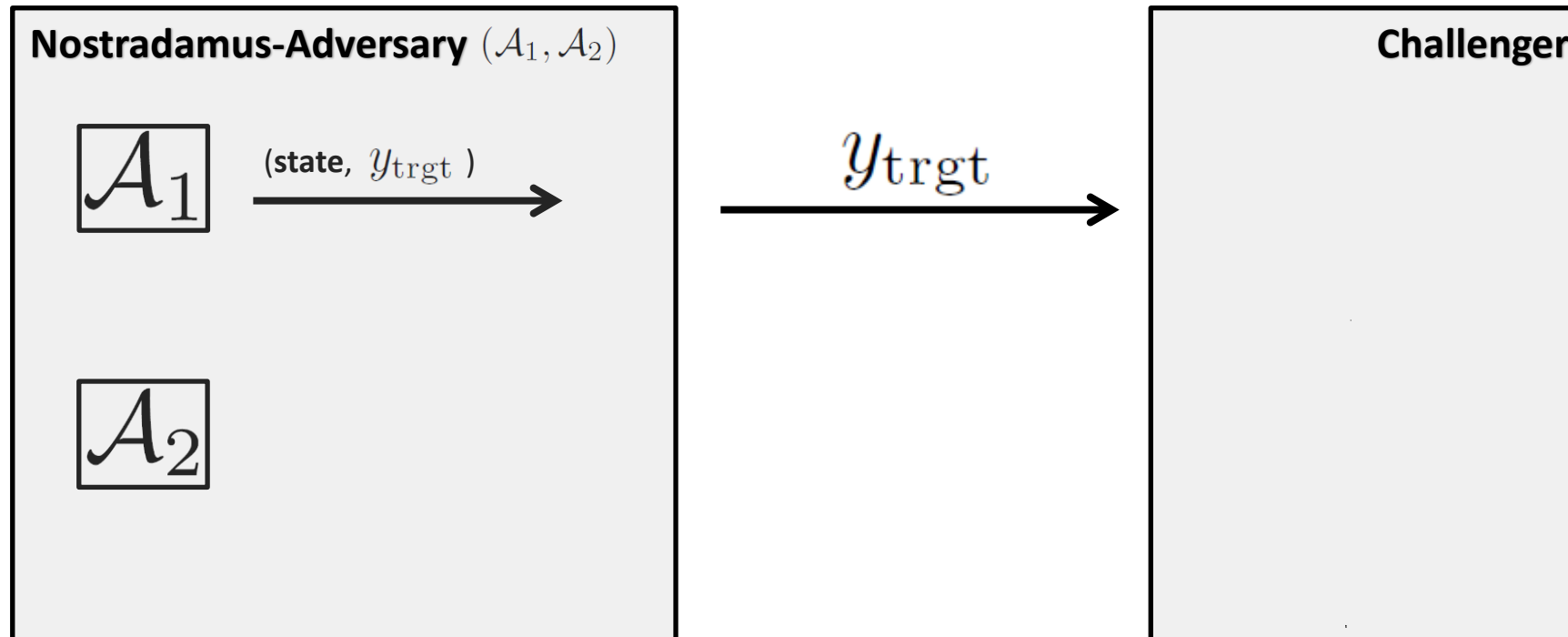
# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack



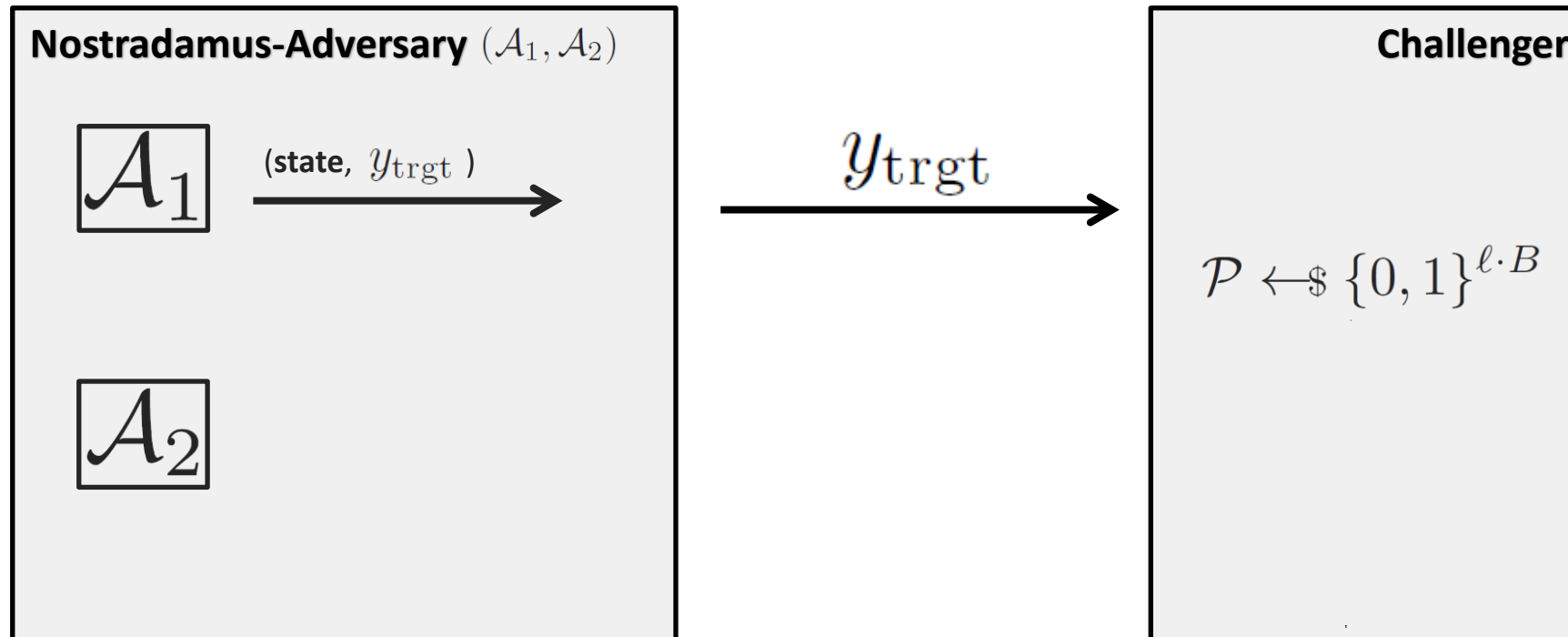
# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack



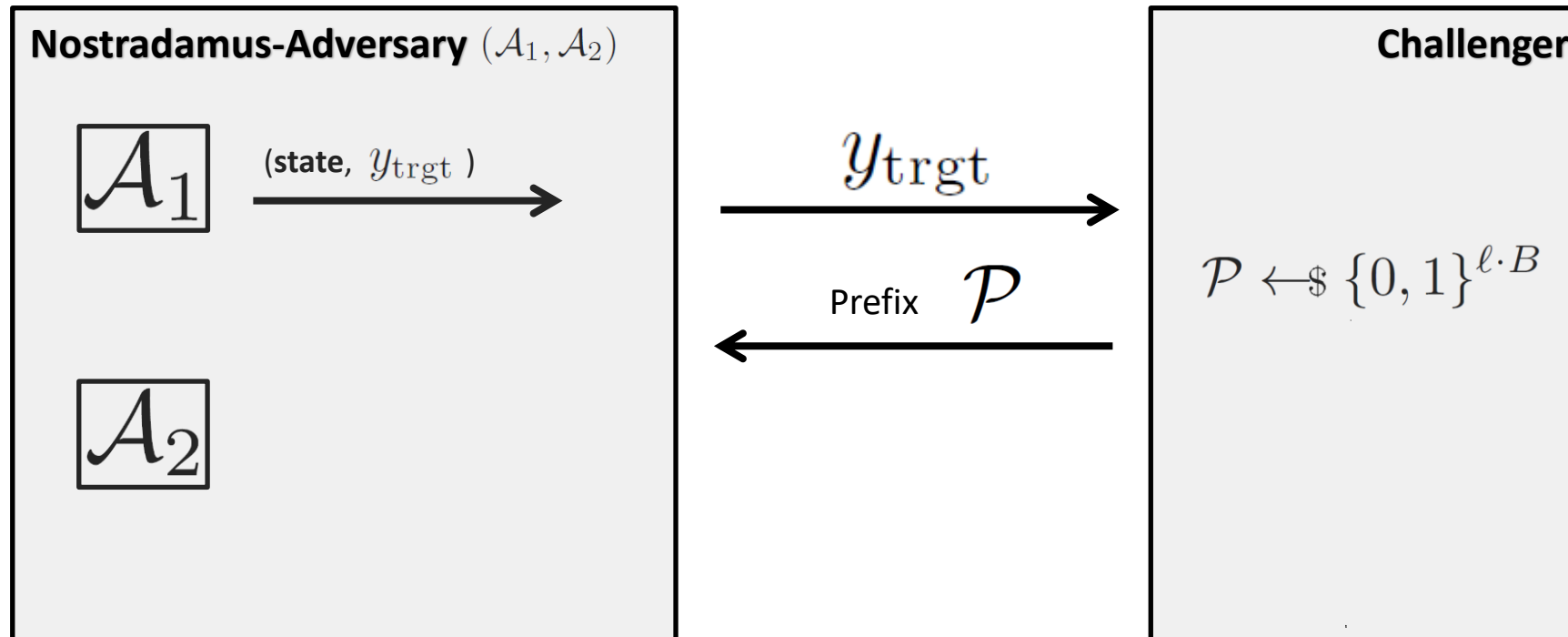
# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack



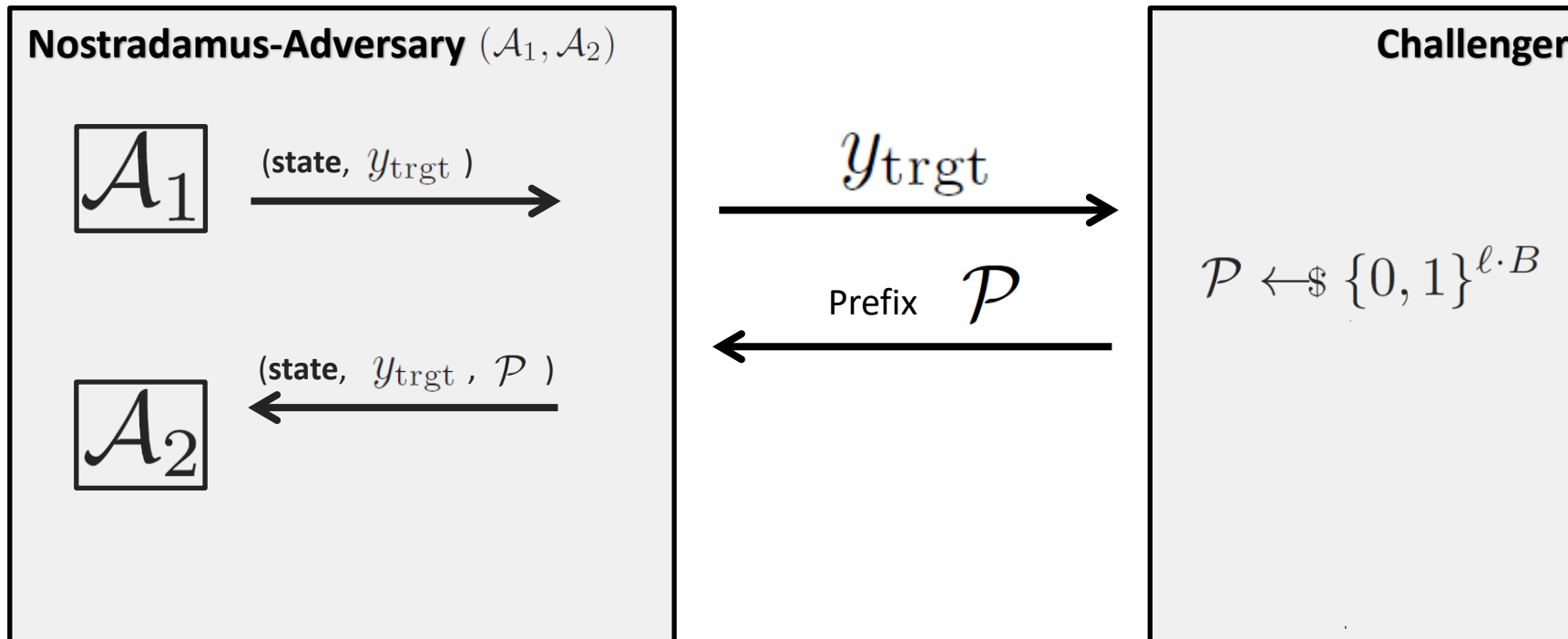
# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack



# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack

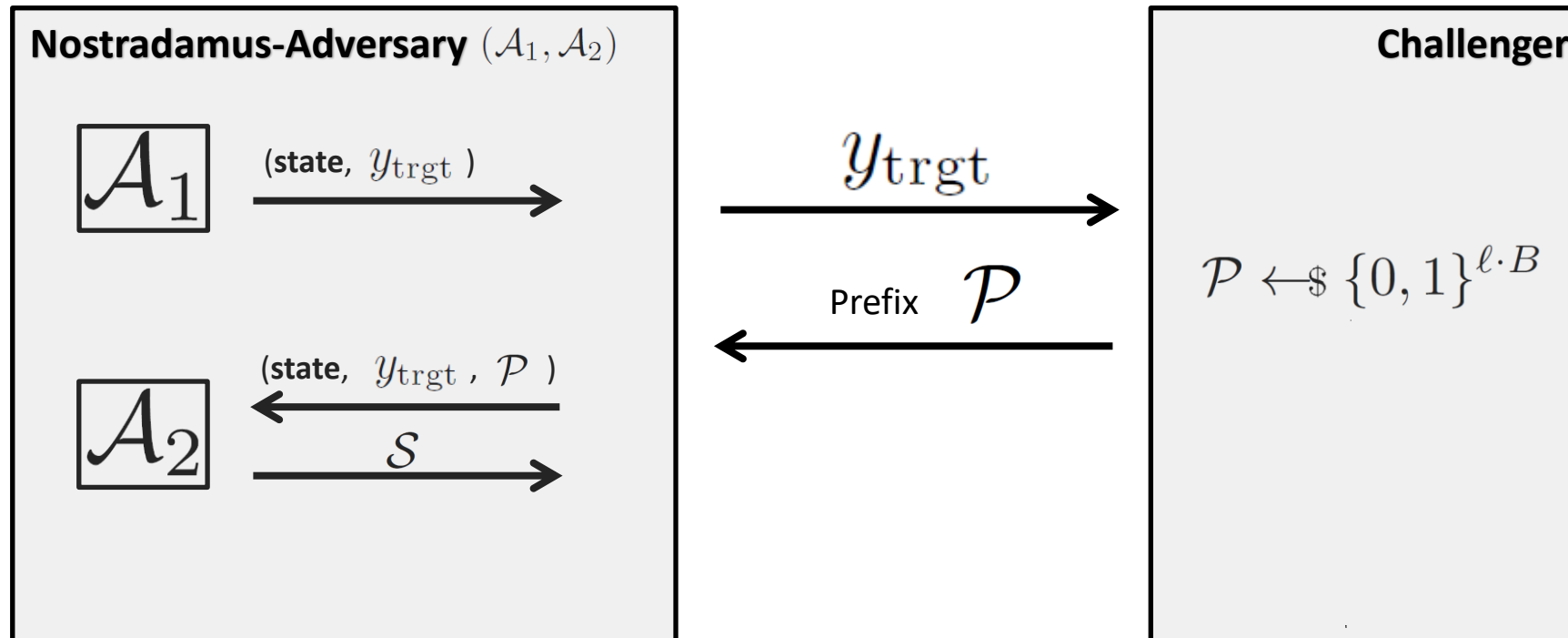


# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack

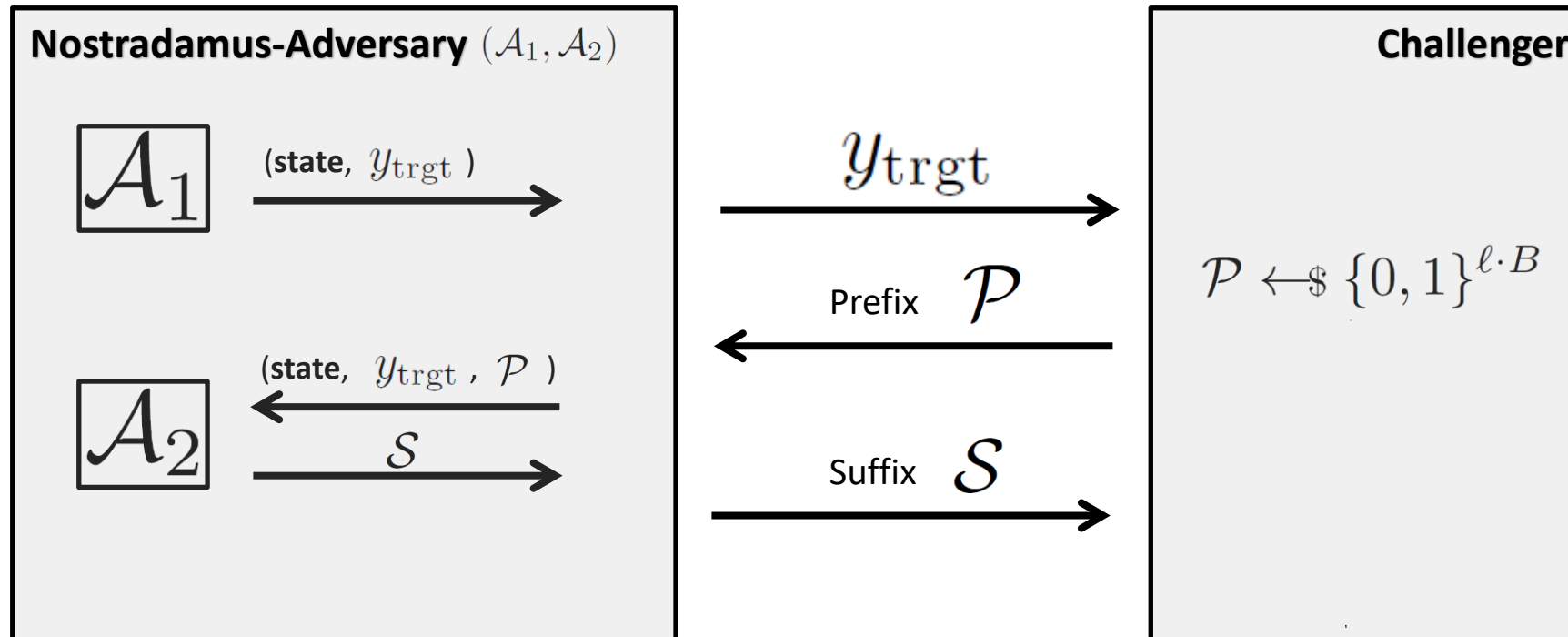




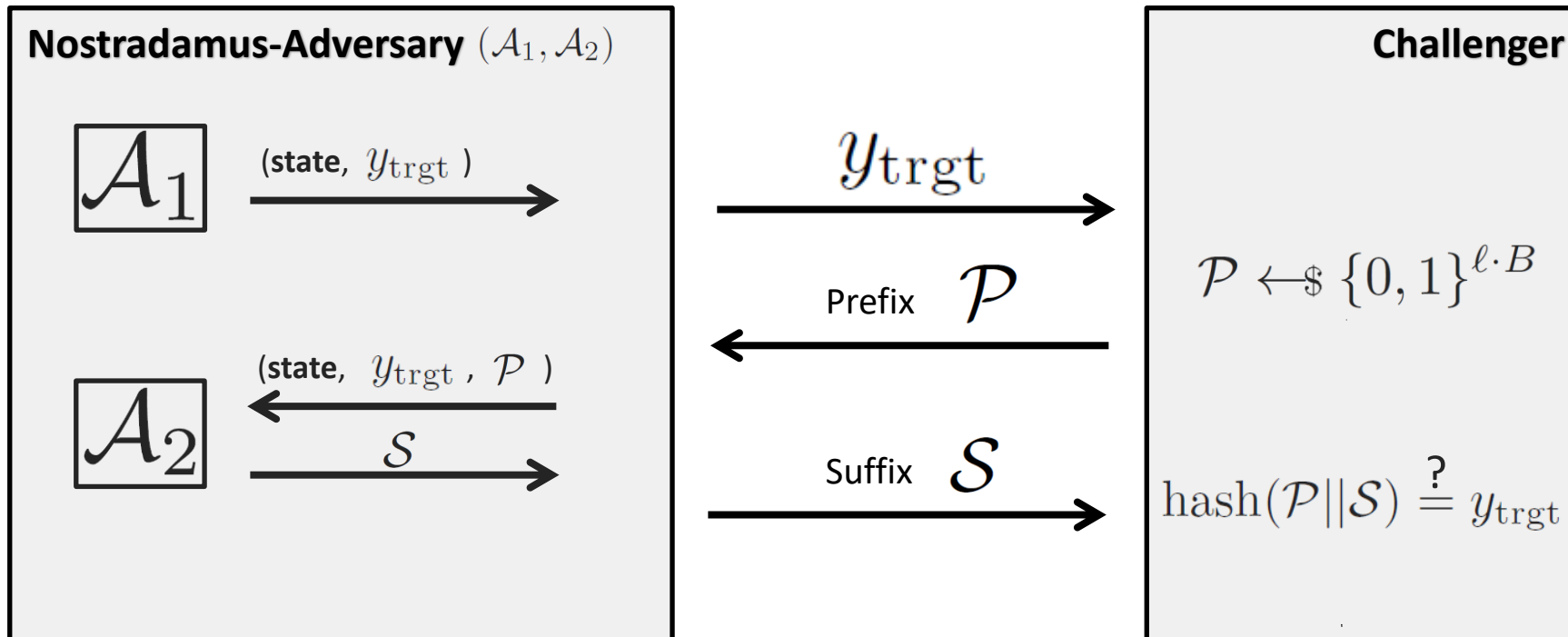
# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack



# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack



# The Formal Nostradamus-Attack



# History of Nostradamus-Attacker



Legendary  
Nostradamus



requires magic



Classical Nostradamus  
[KK06, BSU12]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$$



Quantum Nostradamus  
[our work]



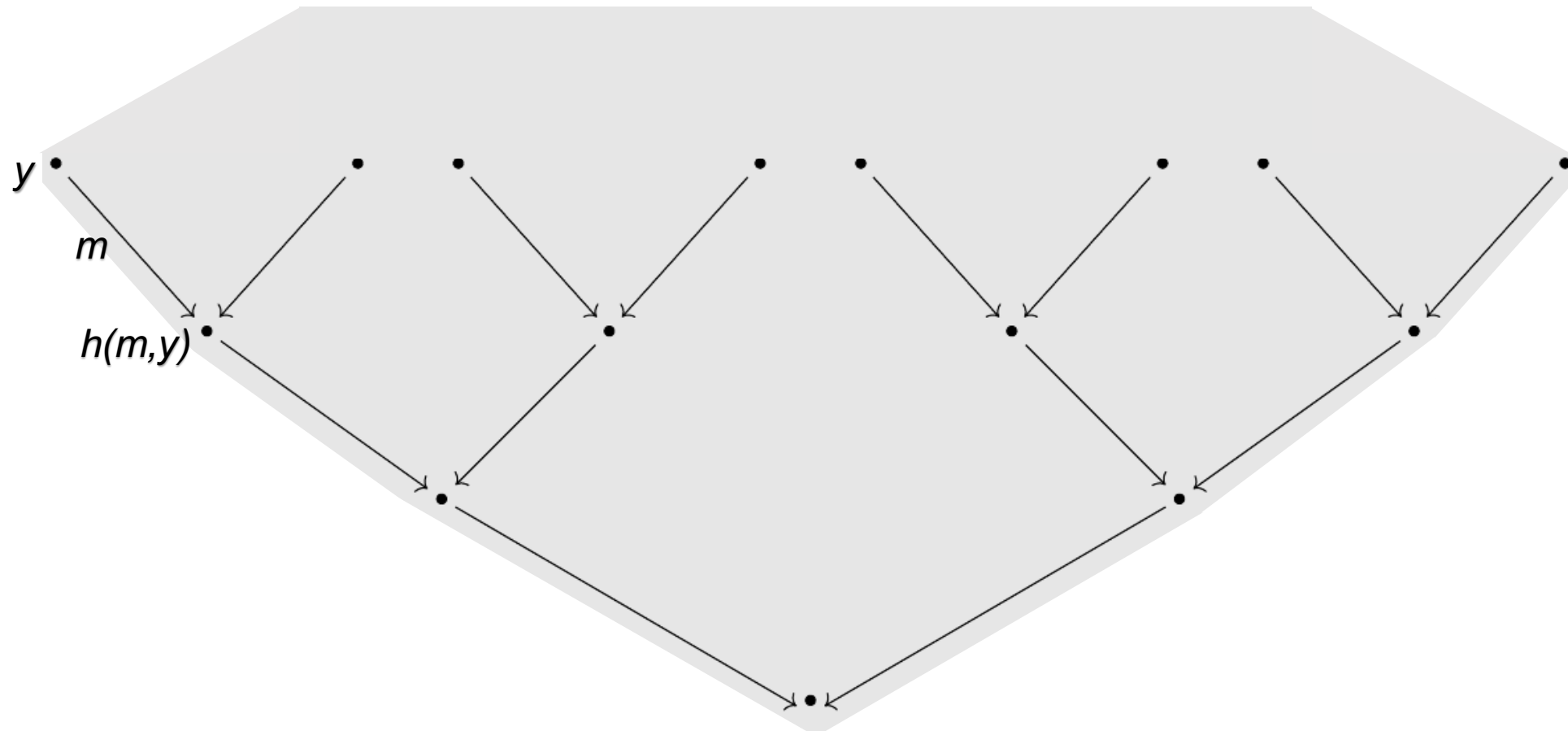
$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$$

Essentially optimal!

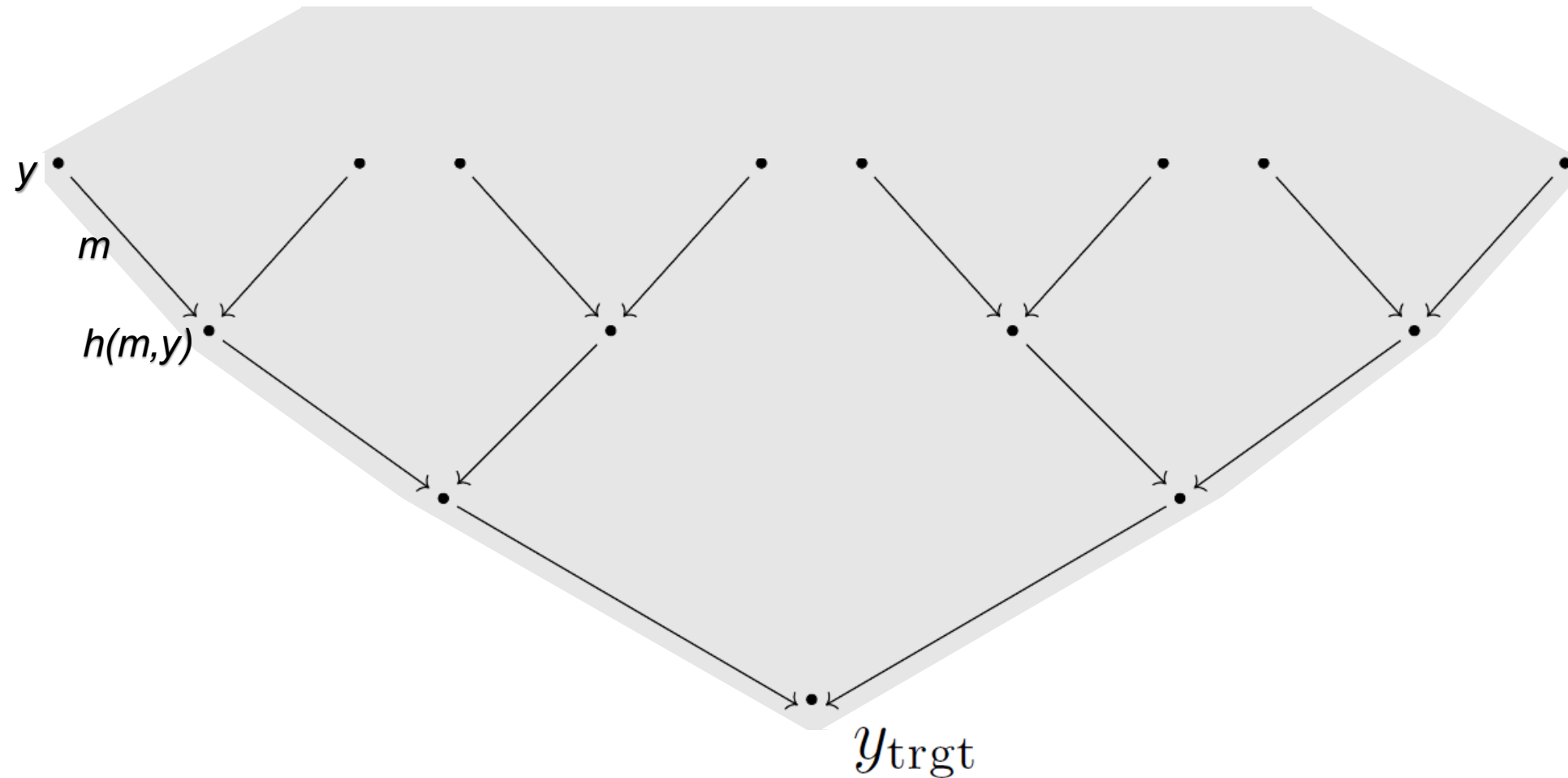
[BSU12] Blackburn, Stinson and Upadhyay. On the complexity of the herding attack and some related attacks on hash functions. Designs, Codes and Cryptography, 2012.

[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

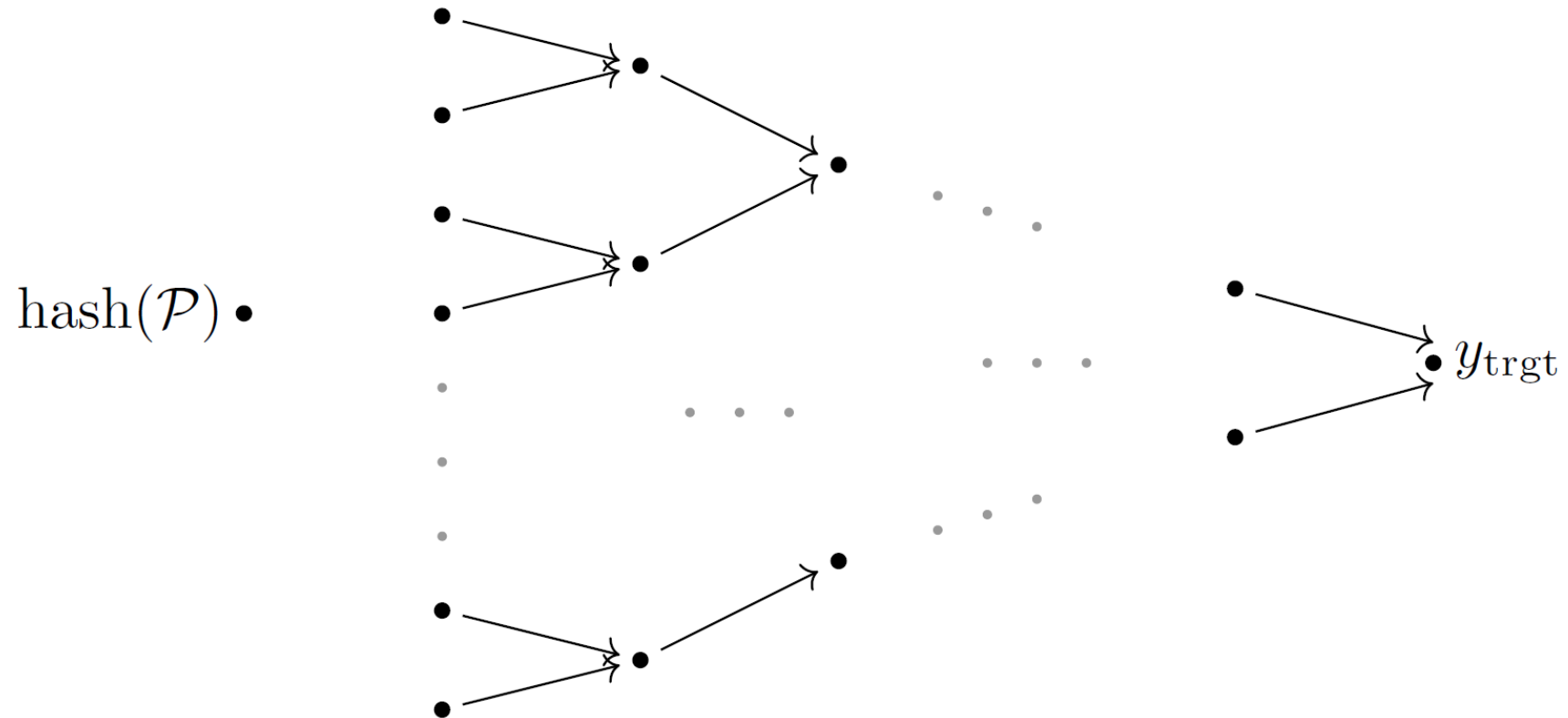
# The First Phase



# The First Phase



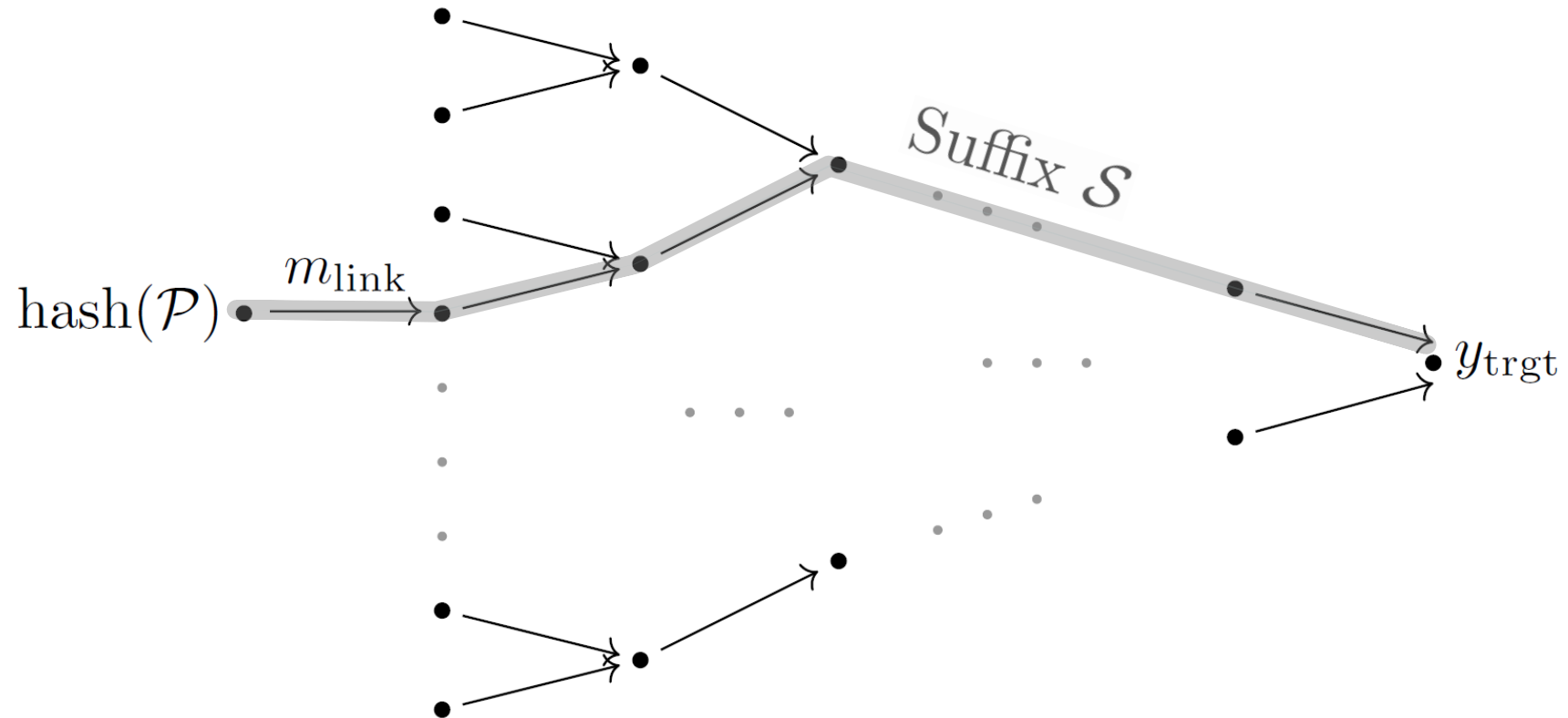
# The Second Phase







# The Second Phase



# History of Nostradamus-Attacker



Legendary  
Nostradamus



requires magic



Classical Nostradamus  
[KK06, BSU12]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$$



Quantum Nostradamus  
[our work]



$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$$

Essentially optimal!

[BSU12] Blackburn, Stinson and Upadhyay. On the complexity of the herding attack and some related attacks on hash functions. Designs, Codes and Cryptography, 2012.

[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# Grover's Algorithm

**Theorem [BBHT98, Gro96].** Let  $M^* \subseteq \{0, 1\}^B$  be a *non-empty* set of suitable message blocks. Then there is a quantum algorithm, which finds a suitable message block after

$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{p^{-1}}\right)$$

“valuations” of message blocks, where  $p := |M^*| \cdot 2^{-B}$ .

[BBHT98] Boyer, Brassard, Høyer and Tapp. Tight bounds on quantum searching. Progress of Physics, 1998.

[Gro96] Grover. A fast quantum mechanical algorithm for database search. Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual ACM Symposium on the Theory of Computing 1996.

# Grover's Algorithm

**Theorem [BBHT98, Gro96].** Let  $M^* \subseteq \{0, 1\}^B$  be a *non-empty* set of suitable message blocks. Then there is a quantum algorithm, which finds a suitable message block after

$$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{p^{-1}}\right)$$

“valuations” of message blocks, where  $p := |M^*| \cdot 2^{-B}$ .

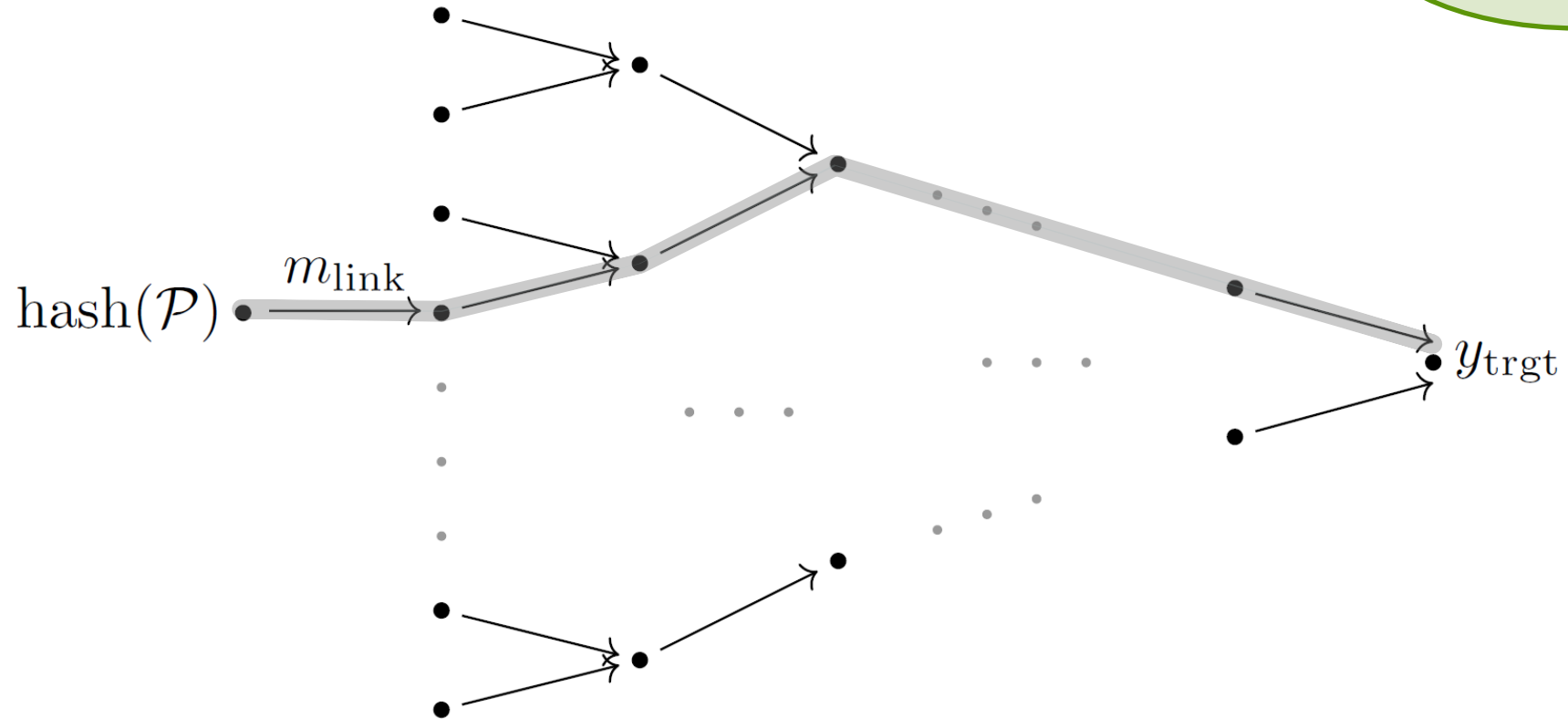
↑ Check of Suitability

[BBHT98] Boyer, Brassard, Høyer and Tapp. Tight bounds on quantum searching. Progress of Physics, 1998.

[Gro96] Grover. A fast quantum mechanical algorithm for database search. Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual ACM Symposium on the Theory of Computing 1996.

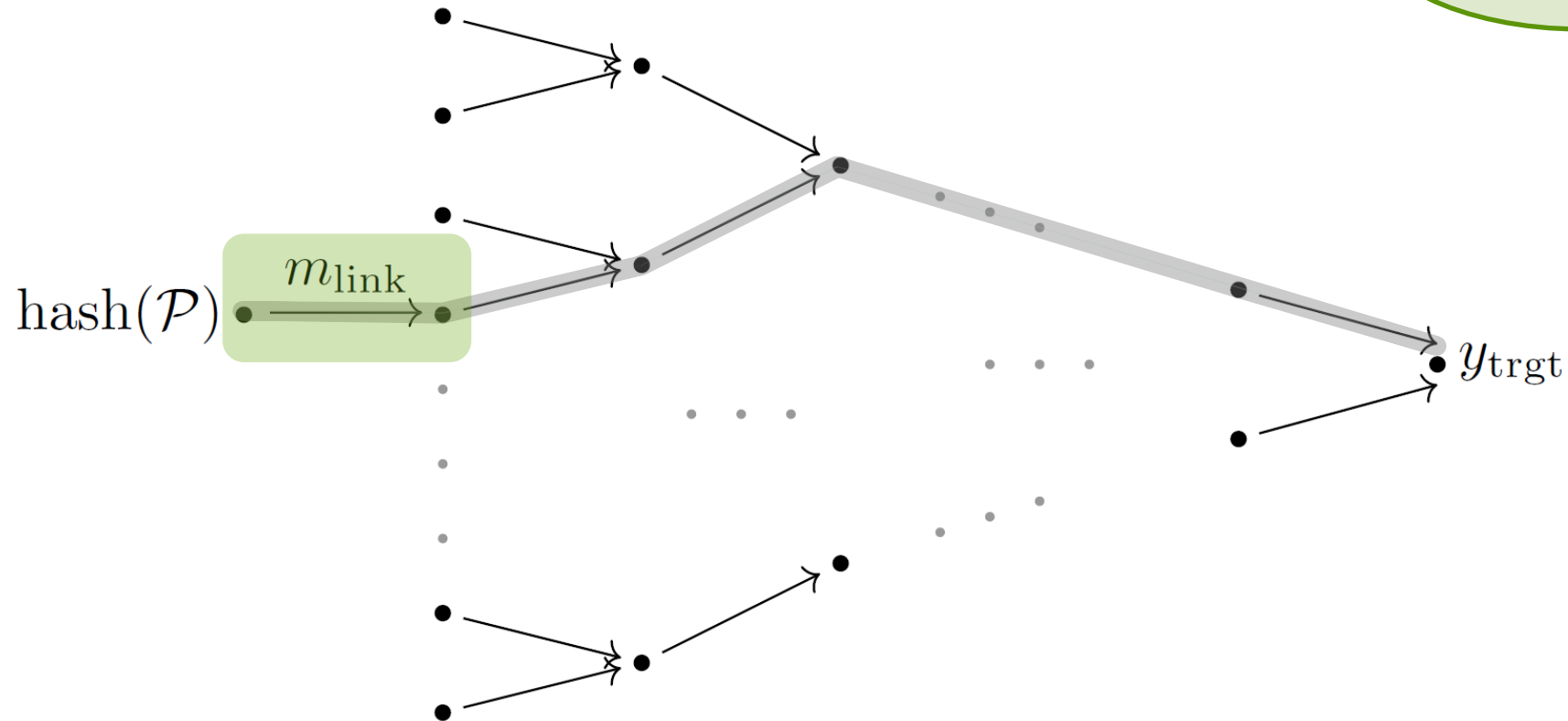
# How to Apply Grover's Algorithm

Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .



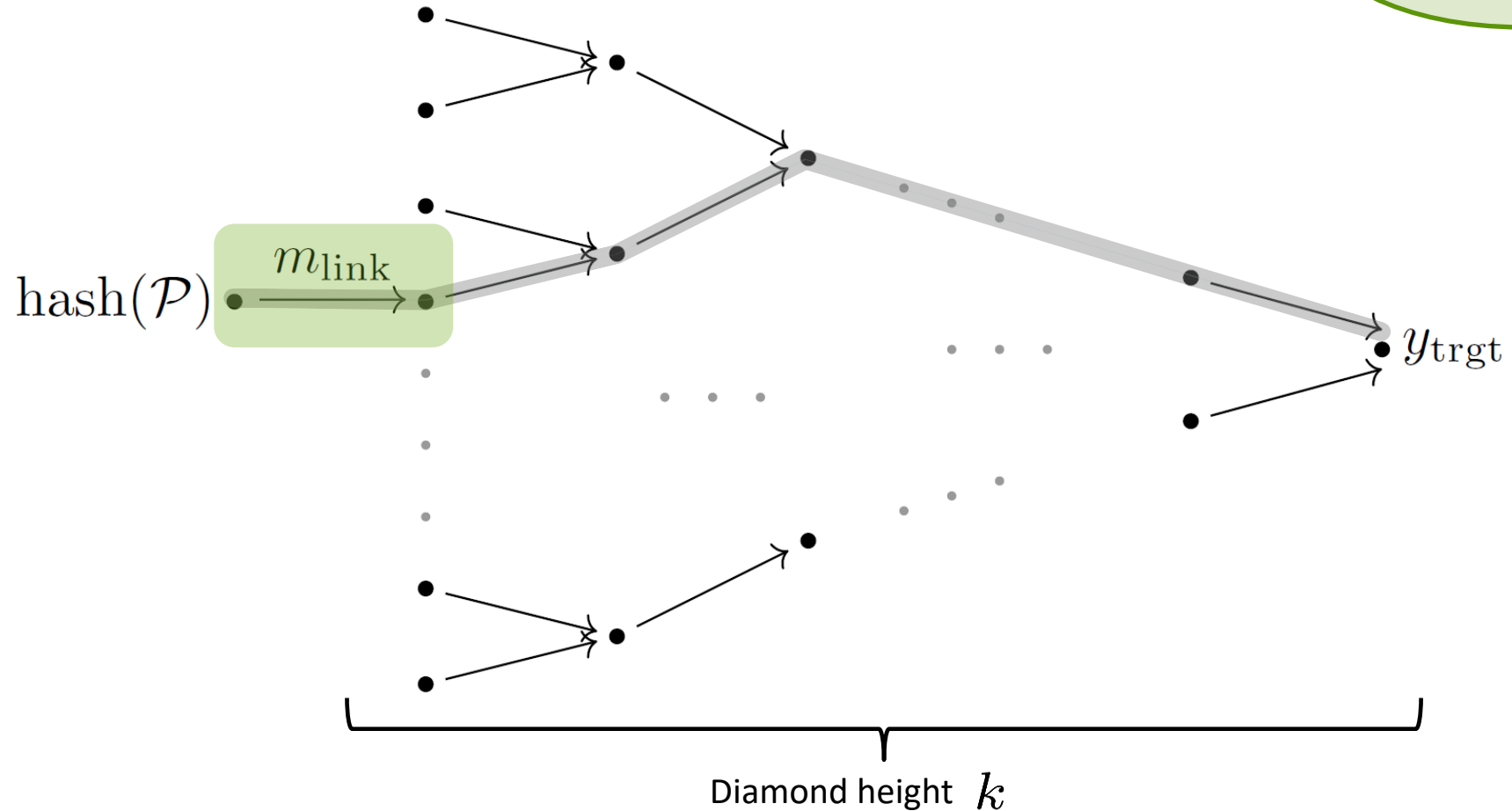
# How to Apply Grover's Algorithm

Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .



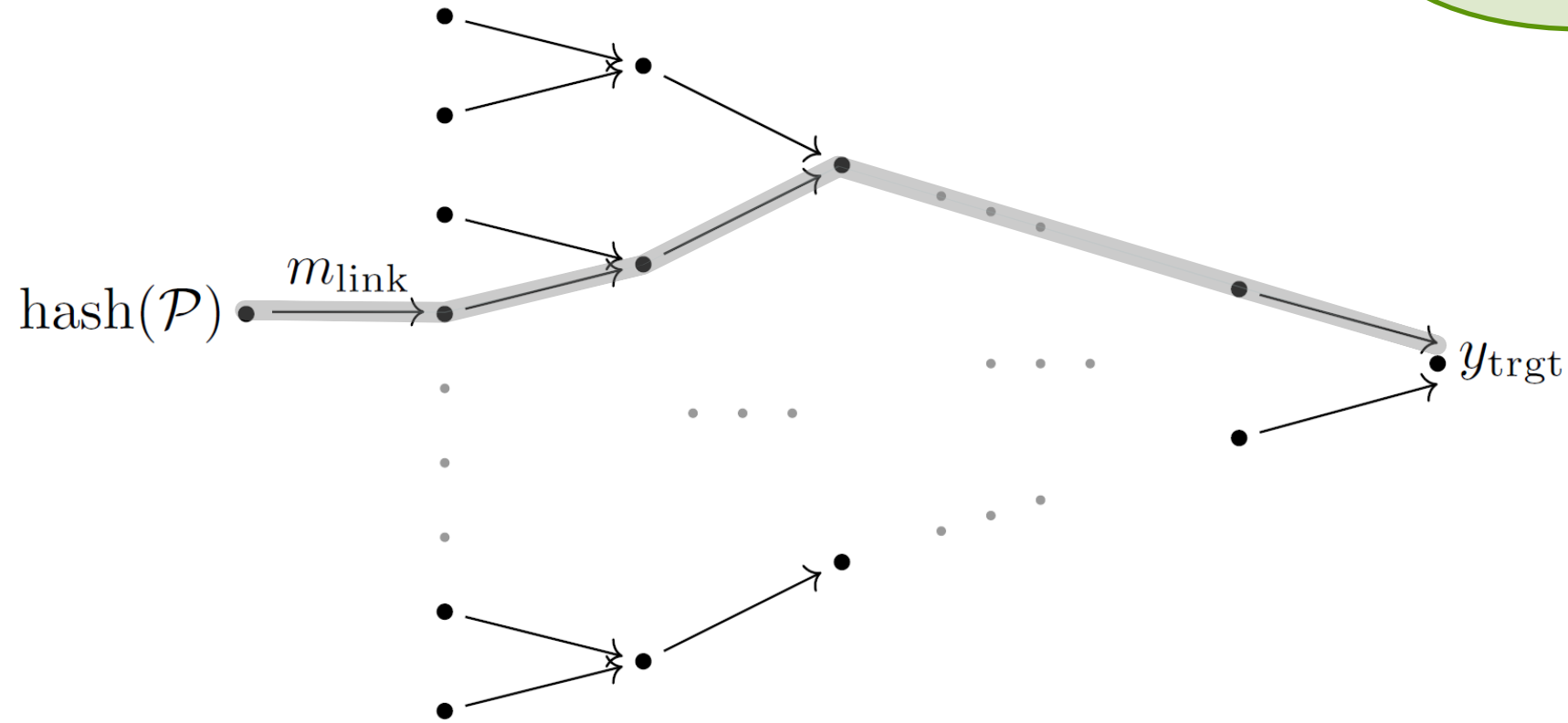
# How to Apply Grover's Algorithm

Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .



# How to Apply Grover's Algorithm

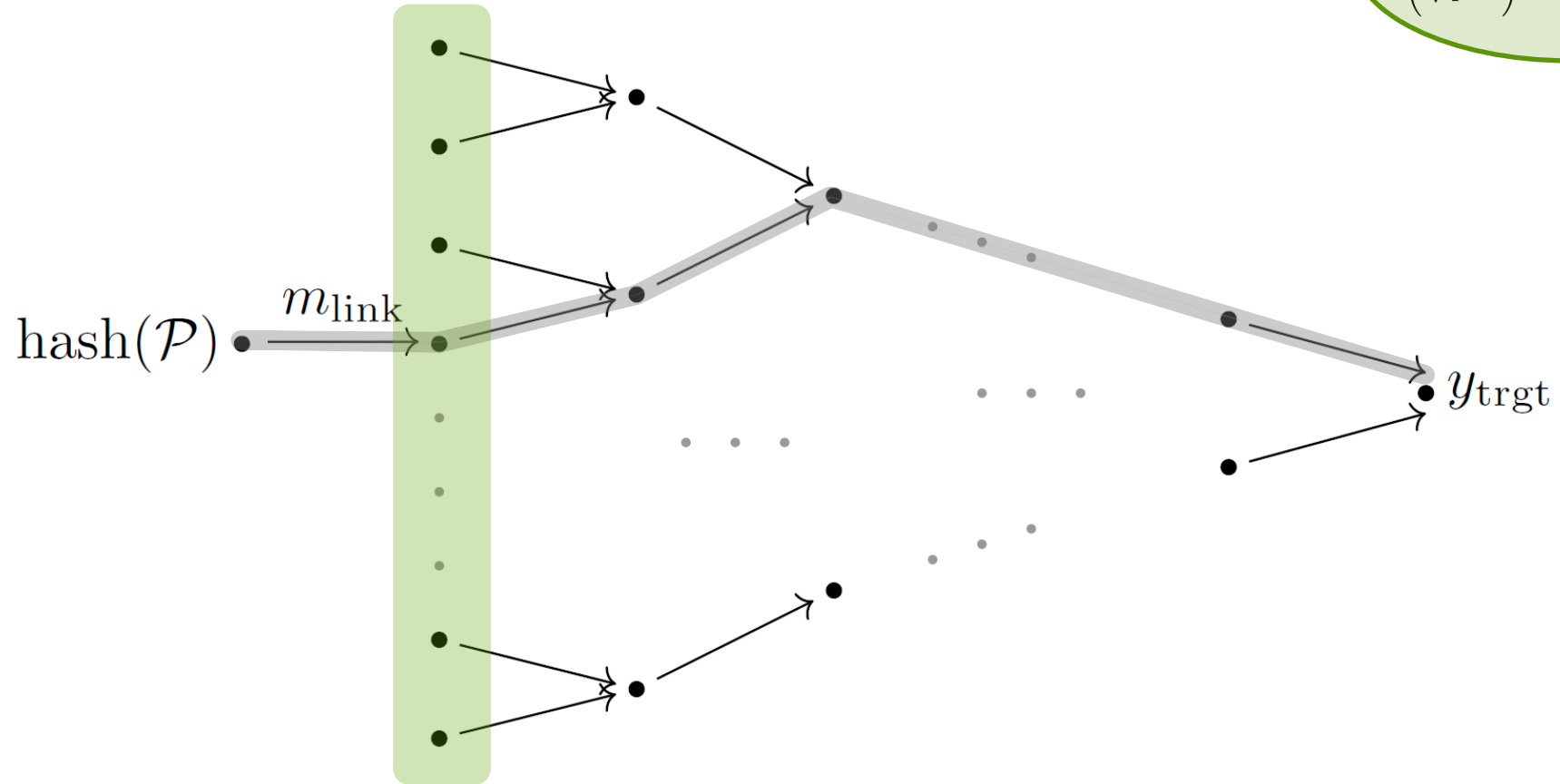
Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .



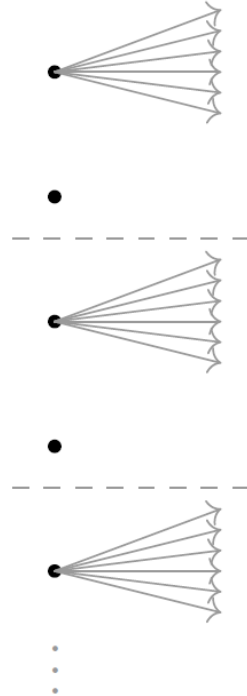


# How to Apply Grover's Algorithm

Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .



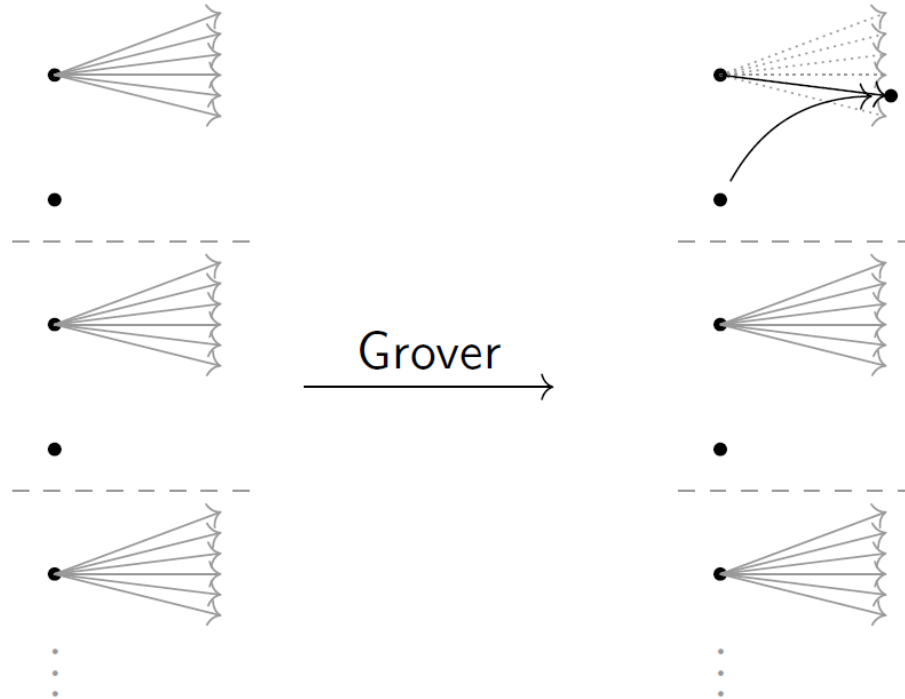
# Naïve Approach [BHT98]



Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .

[BHT98] Brassard, Høyer and Tapp. Quantum cryptanalysis of hash and claw-free Functions. LATIN '98: Theoretical Informatics, Third Latin American Symposium.

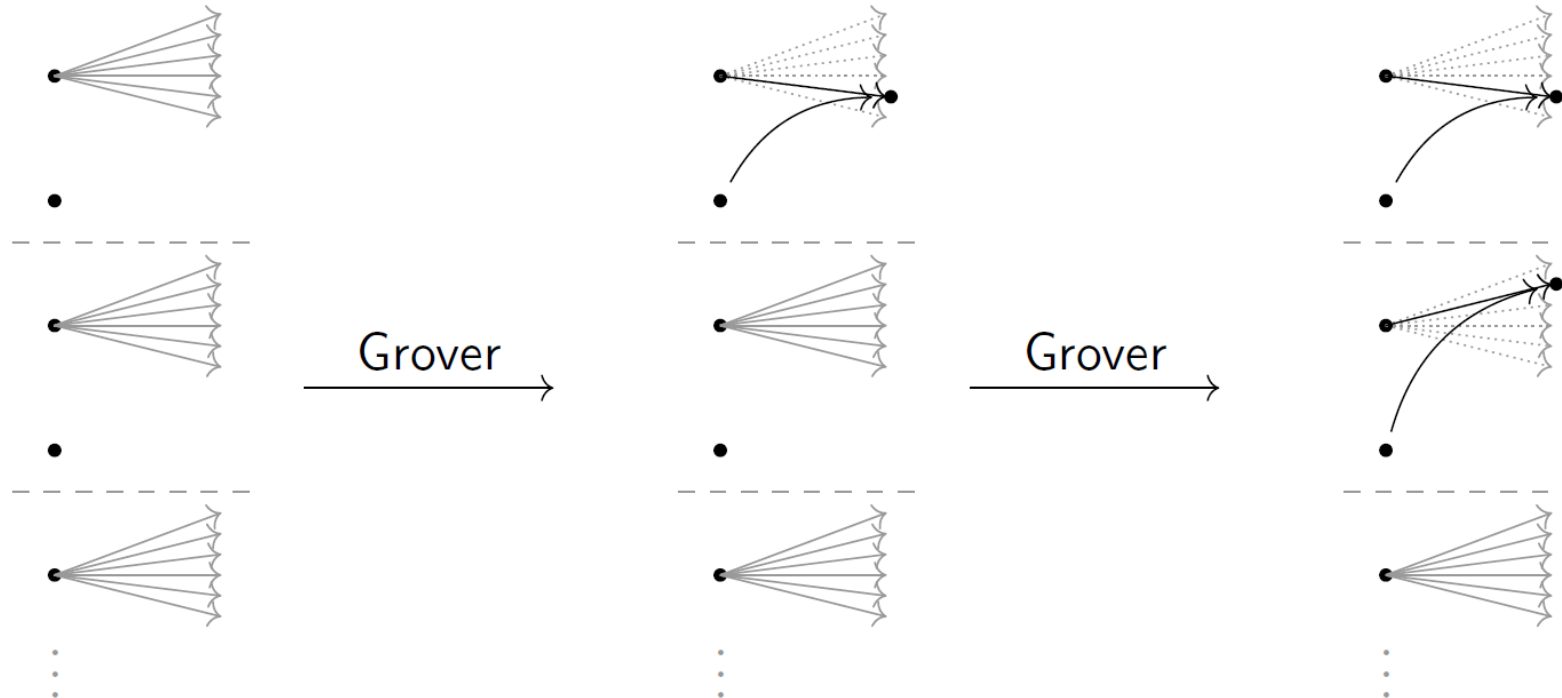
# Naïve Approach [BHT98]



Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .

[BHT98] Brassard, Høyer and Tapp. Quantum cryptanalysis of hash and claw-free Functions. LATIN '98: Theoretical Informatics, Third Latin American Symposium.

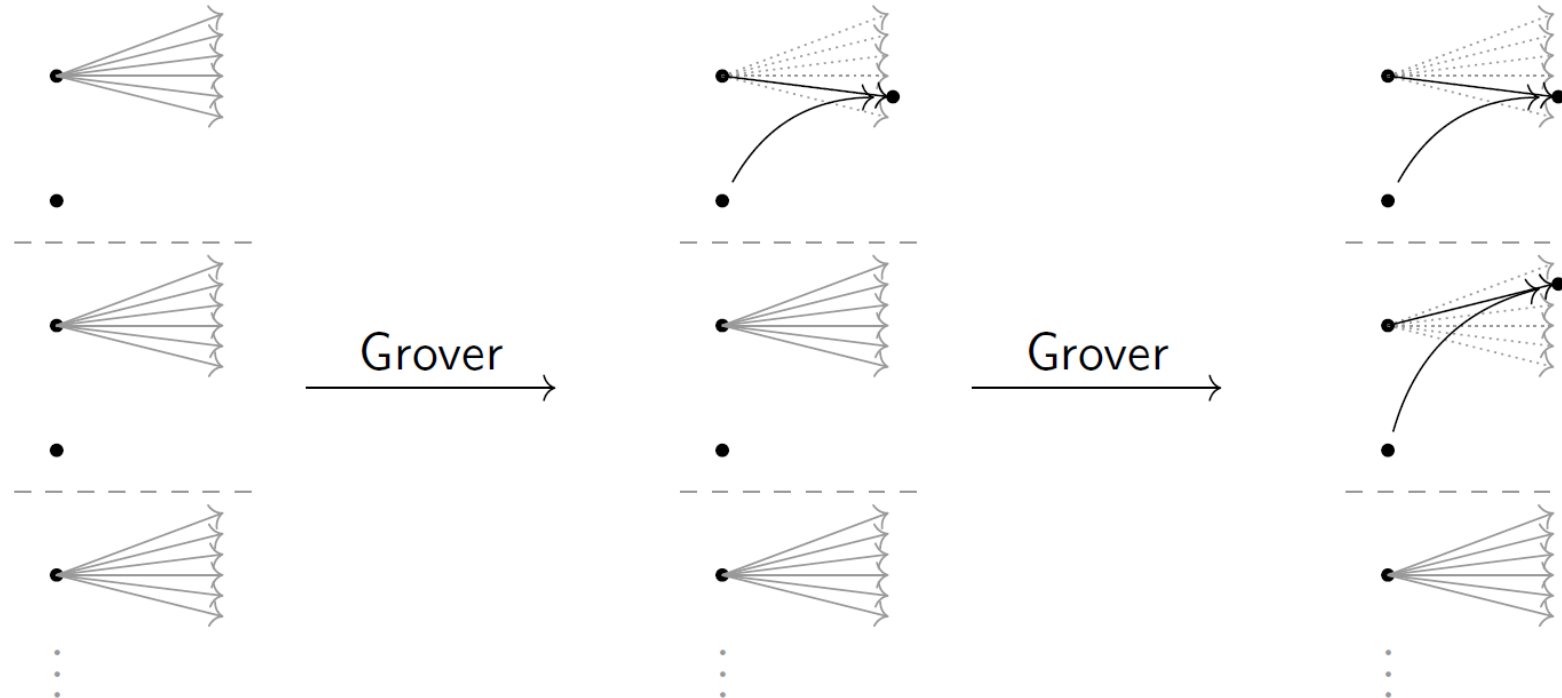
# Naïve Approach [BHT98]



Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .

[BHT98] Brassard, Høyer and Tapp. Quantum cryptanalysis of hash and claw-free Functions. LATIN '98: Theoretical Informatics, Third Latin American Symposium.

# Naïve Approach [BHT98]

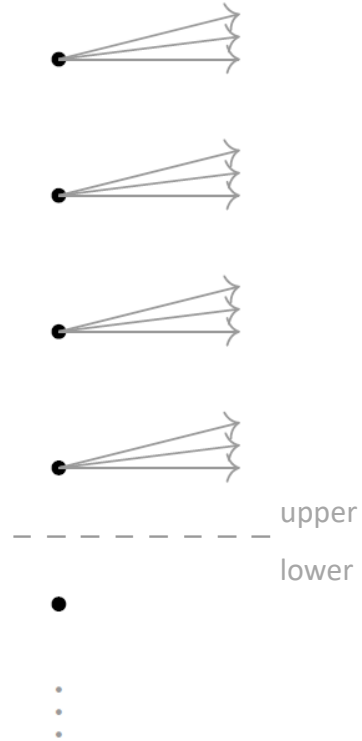


Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .

**Problem:** Needs a lot of evaluations for each pair!

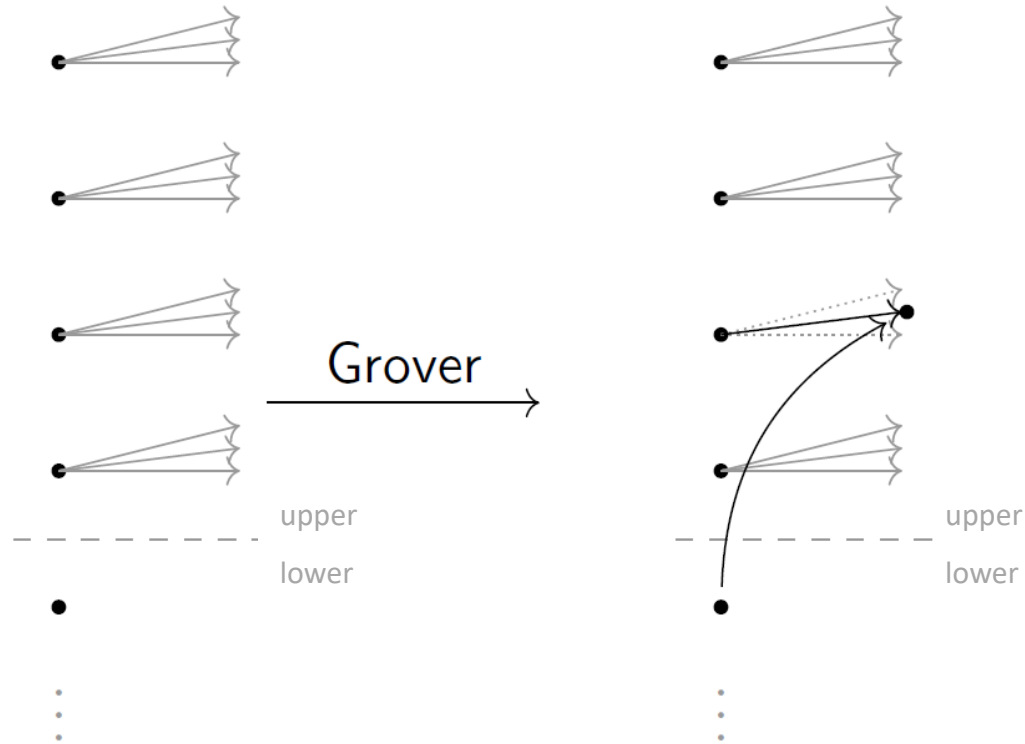
[BHT98] Brassard, Høyer and Tapp. Quantum cryptanalysis of hash and claw-free Functions. LATIN '98: Theoretical Informatics, Third Latin American Symposium.

# Enhanced Approach



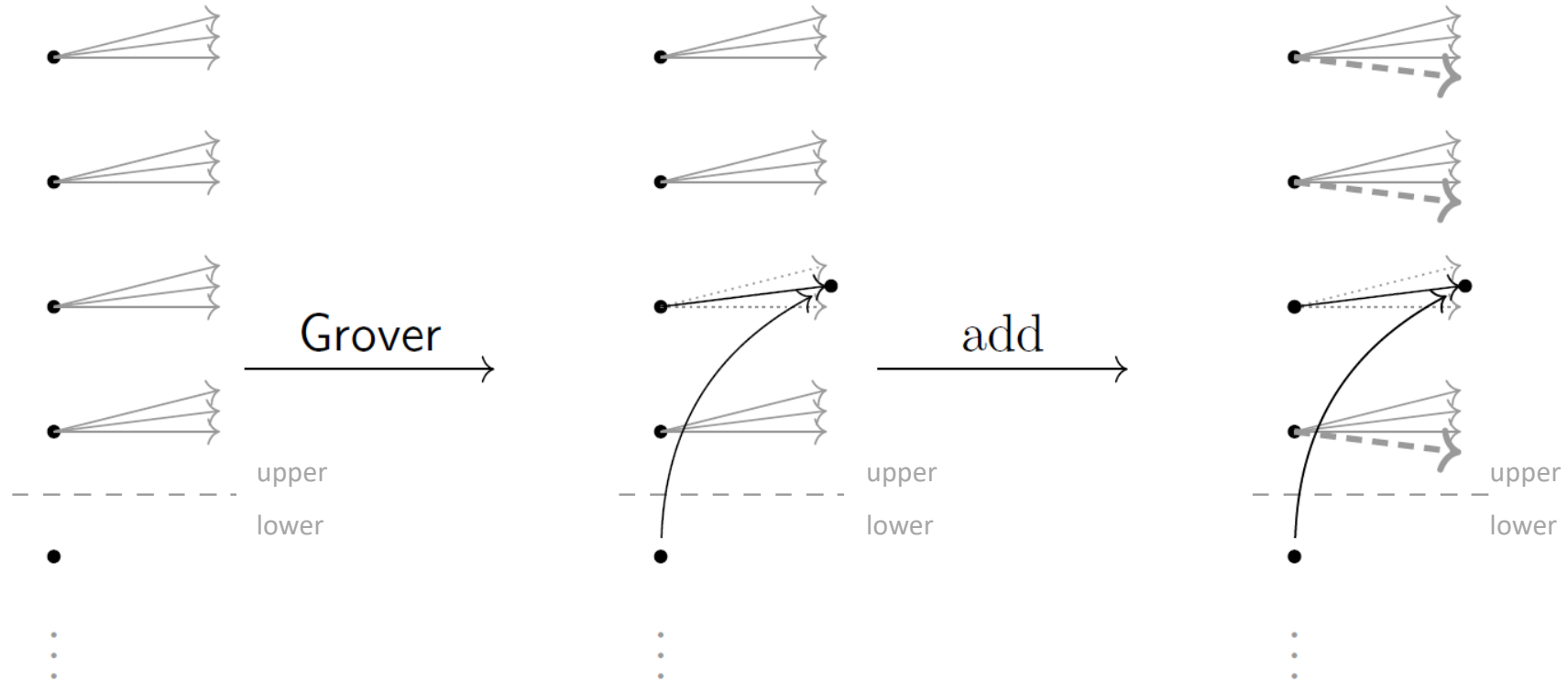
Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .

# Enhanced Approach



Grover succeeds after  $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .

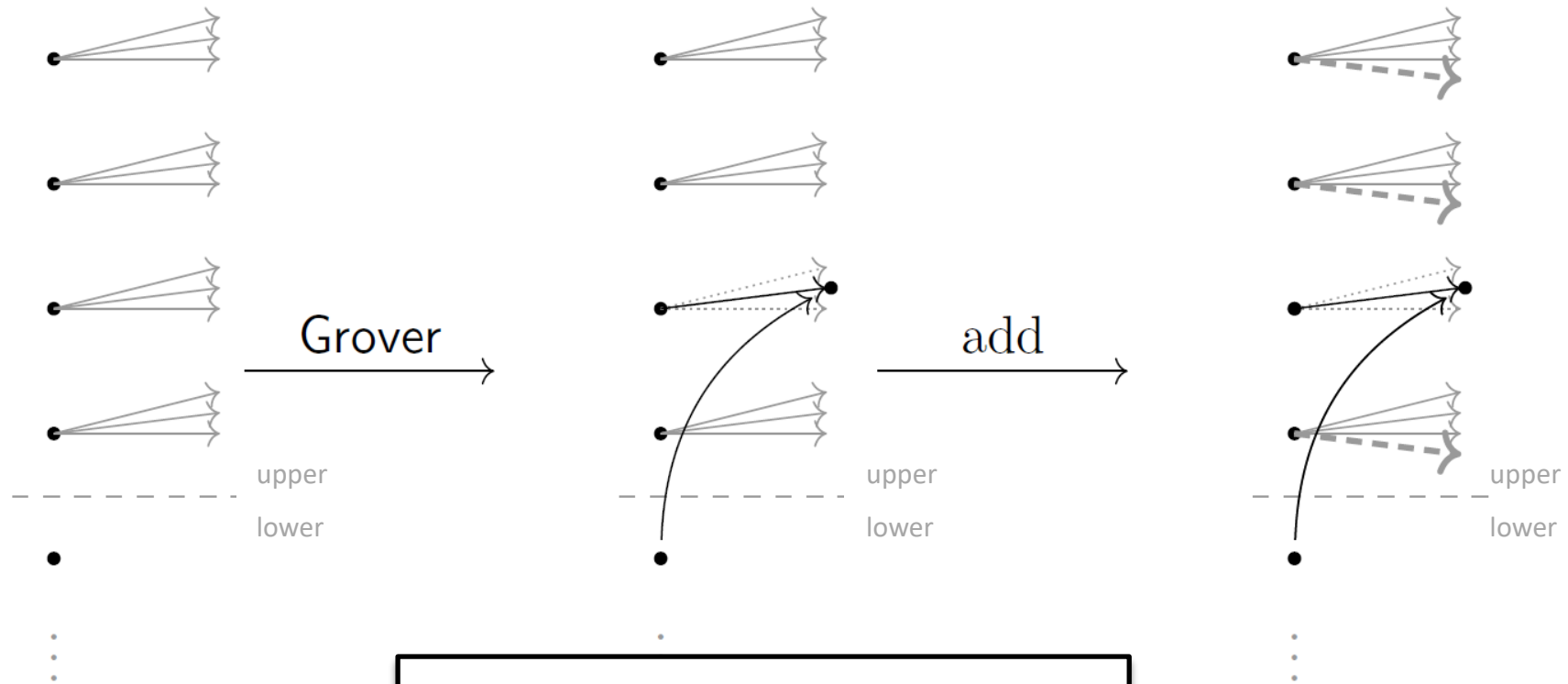
# Enhanced Approach



Grover succeeds after  $O(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .



# Enhanced Approach



Grover succeeds after  $O(\sqrt{p^{-1}})$  evaluations of  $h$ .

**Advantage:** Needs fewer evaluations on average for each pair!

	Classical [KK06]	Naïve [our work]	Enhanced [our work]
$\mathcal{A}_1$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n}{3}+k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+2k}{3}}\right)$
$\mathcal{A}_2$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{n-k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$
The Attack $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{4n}{9}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$

n = hash size  
k = diamond height

[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

	Classical [KK06]	Naïve [our work]	Enhanced [our work]
$\mathcal{A}_1$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n}{3}+k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+2k}{3}}\right)$
$\mathcal{A}_2$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{n-k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$
The Attack ( $\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2$ )	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{4n}{9}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$

↶ Essentially optimal!

n = hash size  
k = diamond height

[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

---

# About Lower Bounds

## Lower Bound of c-Collision Finder [LZ19]

**Theorem.** Given a *random* function  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  any quantum algorithm needs at least

$$\Omega \left( 2^{\left(1 - \frac{1}{2^c - 1}\right) \cdot \frac{n}{2}} \right)$$

evaluations of function  $f$  to find a **c-collision**, i.e.,  $c$  different elements  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_c \in X$  such that  $f(x_1) = f(x_2) = \dots = f(x_c)$  with constant probability.

[LZ19] Liu and Zhandry. On Finding Quantum Multi-Collisions. Advances in Cryptology – EUROCRYPT 2019.

---

# How to derive a Lower Bound for $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$ ?

## How to derive a Lower Bound for $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$ ?

	Classical [KK06]	Naïve [our work]	Enhanced [our work]
$\mathcal{A}_1$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n}{3}+k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+2k}{3}}\right)$
$\mathcal{A}_2$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{n-k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$
The Attack $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{4n}{9}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$

n = hash size  
k = diamond height

[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.

# How to derive a Lower Bound for $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$ ?

	Classical [KK06]	Naïve [our work]	Enhanced [our work]
$\mathcal{A}_1$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n}{3}+k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{k} \cdot 2^{\frac{n+2k}{3}}\right)$
$\mathcal{A}_2$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{n-k}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{n-k}{2}}\right)$
The Attack $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{2n}{3}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(2^{\frac{4n}{9}}\right)$	$\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$

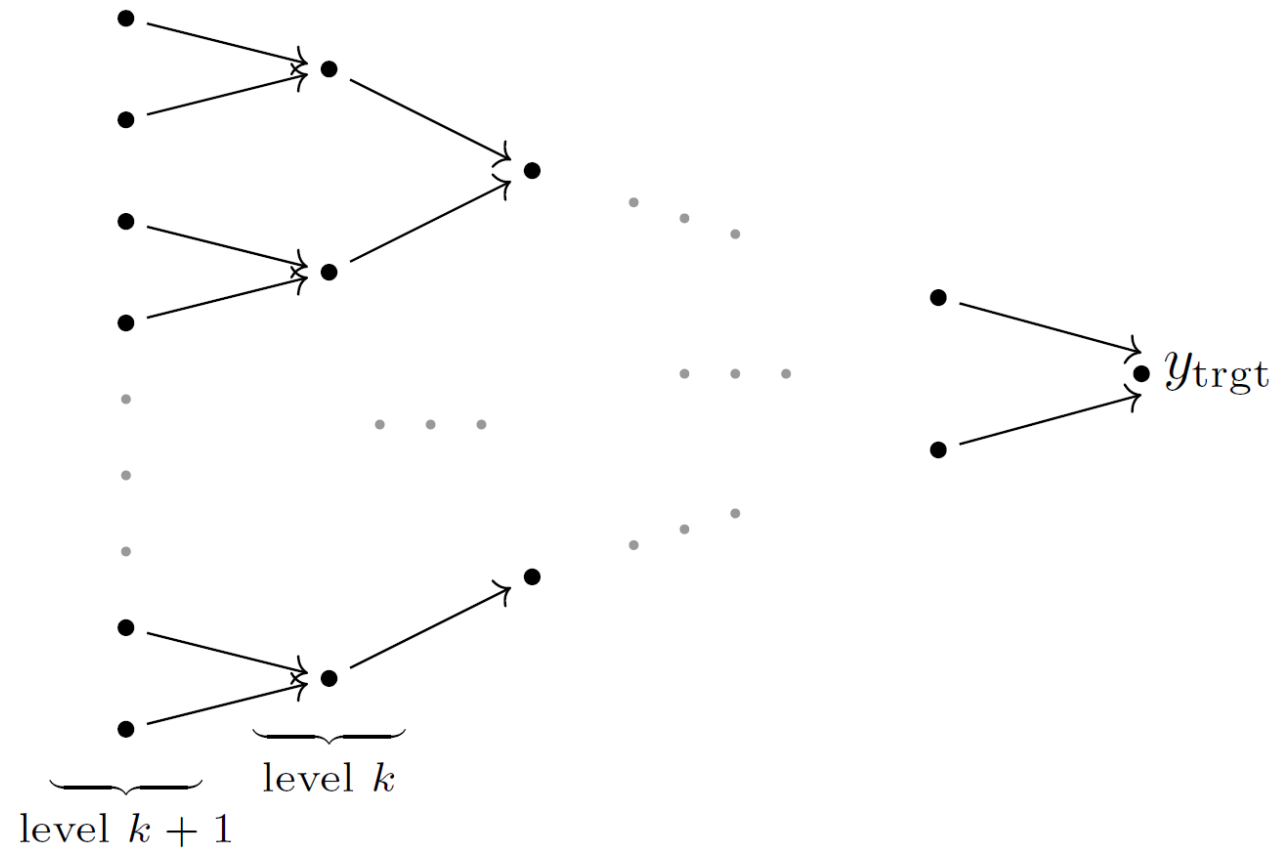
Doesn't matter, if k or k+1!

n = hash size  
k = diamond height

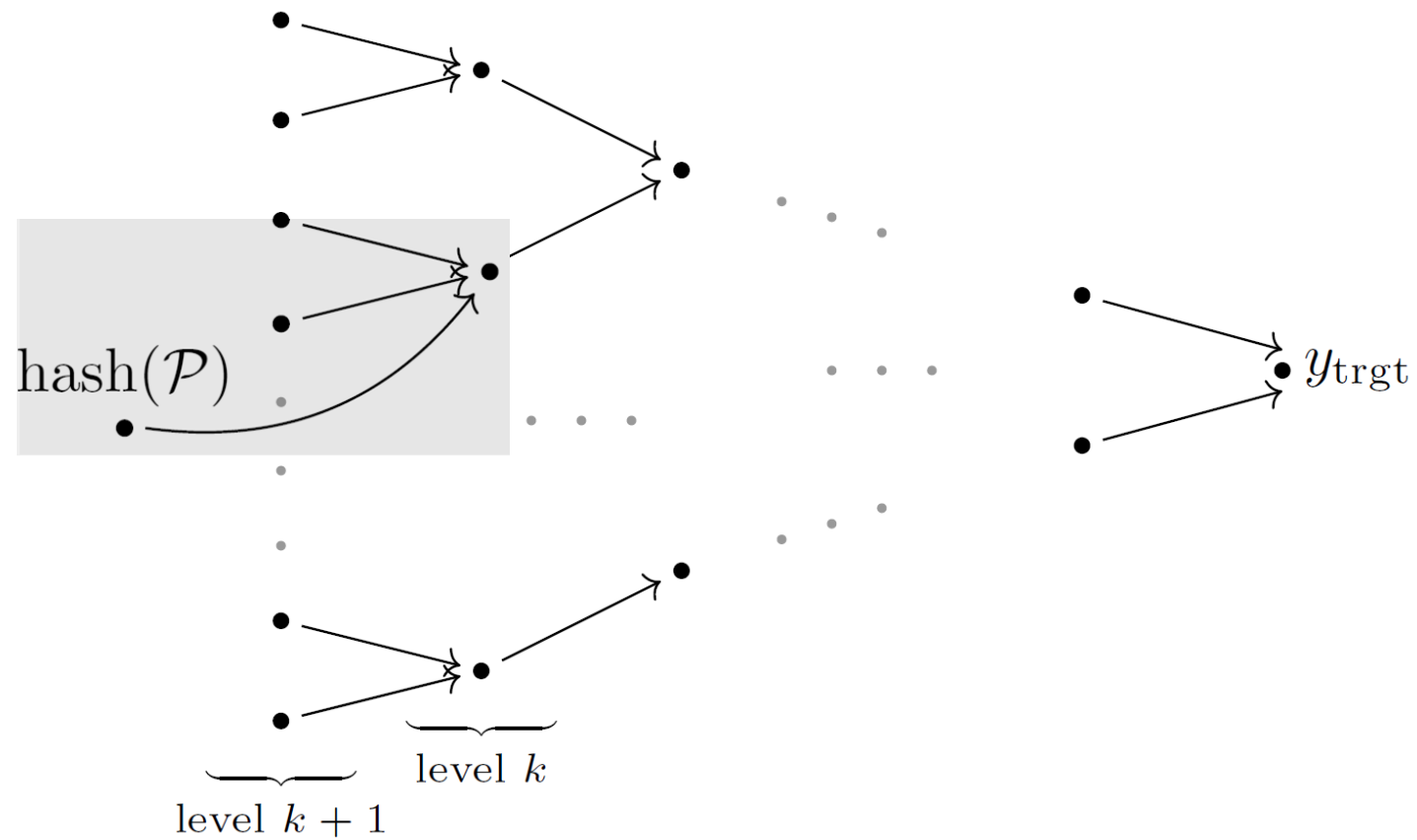
[KK06] Kelsey and Kohno. Herding Hash Functions and the Nostradamus Attack. Advances in Cryptology - EUROCRYPT 2006.



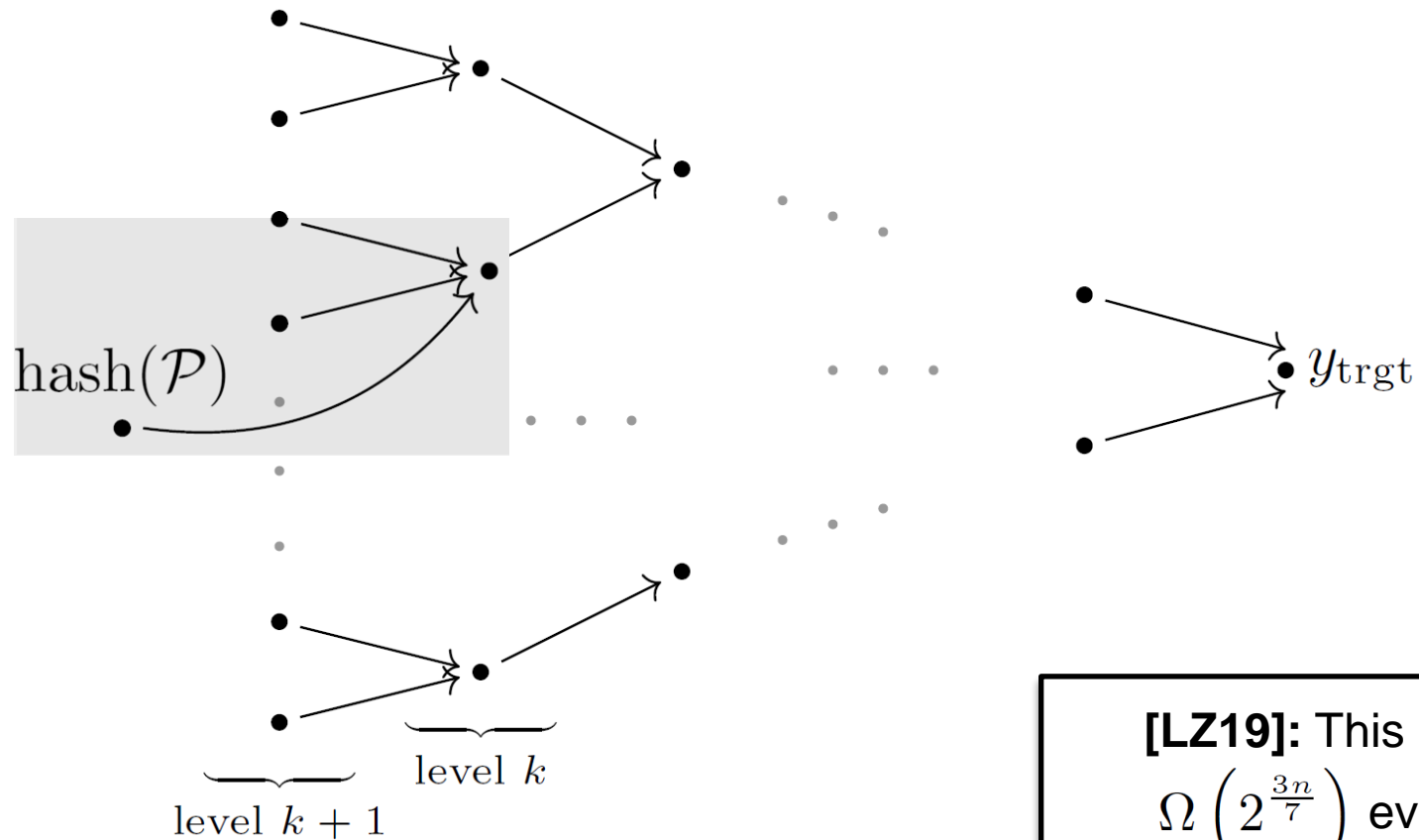
# How to derive a Lower Bound for $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$ ?



# How to derive a Lower Bound for $(A_1, A_2)$ ?



# How to derive a Lower Bound for $(\mathcal{A}_1, \mathcal{A}_2)$ ?



**[LZ19]:** This needs at least  $\Omega\left(2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$  evaluations of  $h$ .

[LZ19] Liu and Zhandry. On Finding Quantum Multi-Collisions. Advances in Cryptology – EUROCRYPT 2019.

---

# General Lower Bound

# General Lower Bound

**Theorem [our work].** Any Nostradamus Attacker  $\mathcal{A}$  needs at least

$$\Omega \left( 2^{\frac{3n}{7} - s} \right)$$

evaluations of  $h$ , where  $s$  is the maximal block length of suffix  $\mathcal{S}$ .

## To Sum Up:

- *Quantum Nostradamus Attack*, which needs  $\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$  h-evaluations
- There are *Lower Bounds*:
  - $\Omega\left(2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$  with Diamond Structure
  - $\Omega\left(2^{\frac{3n}{7}-s}\right)$  in General

## To Sum Up:

- *Quantum Nostradamus Attack*, which needs  $\mathcal{O}\left(\sqrt[3]{n} \cdot 2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$  h-evaluations
- There are *Lower Bounds*:
  - $\Omega\left(2^{\frac{3n}{7}}\right)$  with Diamond Structure
  - $\Omega\left(2^{\frac{3n}{7}-s}\right)$  in General

## Thanks for the Attention!

Our full version: [eprint.iacr.org/2022/1213](https://eprint.iacr.org/2022/1213)

Our Qiskit-Experiments: [git.rwth-aachen.de/marc.fischlin/quantum-nostradamus](https://git.rwth-aachen.de/marc.fischlin/quantum-nostradamus)