Shu Renjun's Instance

Context: [True Self Players | The 18 Levels of Hell: Lying is Forbidden Here Wiki | Fandom]

The Dungeon Structure: This arc takes place across a series of player-created dungeons inside the Hell instance system. The six players involved are each required to design one dungeon for the others to survive. The dungeons are played sequentially, and each player's dungeon is cleared in turn. The final, third secret chamber of the Hell instance contains the main plot — and crucially, it is where the Dungeon Boss (Hua Changsheng) operates.

The Scoring System: Each dungeon cleared earns a player 1 point. The player with the highest score at the end of all six dungeons survives. If two or more players tie for highest, additional rules apply. Critically: Hua Changsheng's skill can tamper with the score data directly, allowing her to override the legitimate results.

Player-Designed Dungeons: In the third secret chamber, players are given the unique ability to design their own dungeons for the others to navigate. These dungeons must follow the "principle of puzzle-solving" — they cannot be designed as guaranteed death traps with no solution. However, the difficulty has no upper limit, and players can exploit this to create near-impossible scenarios.

The Six Players:

Chen Ran — The protagonist. Three-Star player with Military Form ideology. Possesses "Eternal Kingdom" (called "Word Weaver: Eternal Realm" or "Eternal Dominion" in this arc) — a True Self-level skill that destroys all active player-created skills within range, can penetrate dimensional boundaries, and prohibits skill use for one hour afterward. Requires receiving a Lie before activation. Also possesses nascent "Highest Good is Like Water" Heart Cultivation — a chaotic, intuitive counter-system to standard rational thinking.

Qiu Yinong — Chen Ran's partner. Three-Star Weird Speaker. Possesses "Wheel of Time" — a skill that resets time by up to five minutes, pulling all affected players back to an earlier state and causing memory loss of the intervening period. Can be used repeatedly as long as a Ghost Language (Guǐ Yǔ) exists in the dungeon. The Ninth True Self Player is believed to reside within her.

Lin Xuan — Three-Star player with Space Skill "Magic Cube Universe" (also called "Cube World"). Creates up to six parallel dimensions simultaneously, transfers players between spaces, and includes dimensions with faster or slower time flow than the original. His skill is bound by the dungeon's rule system — a fatal flaw discovered in this arc. A gambling addict whose greatest weakness is over-reliance on his skill at the expense of independent thinking.

Shu Renjun — Five-Star player. Possesses "Forbidden Bookstore" — a Weird Speaker skill that can record events in a supernatural book and then force players to re-enact those recorded events in a scripted performance. Has achieved "Unity of Heaven and Man" Heart

Cultivation — a rare, rule-transcending system that makes him resistant to standard psychological manipulation.

Hua Changsheng — The arc's true hidden antagonist and Dungeon Boss. Three-Star Weird Speaker. Possesses "Super Energy Modeling" — a Superego-level skill that can tamper with virtual world data, including score statistics. Can force a dungeon settlement at will, overriding the legitimate results. Has been concealing this skill throughout the entire dungeon. Previously killed a Five-Star player using this same method.

Big Gold Tooth (Cui Yu) — Four-Star player from the Underworld resistance organization. Possesses "Golden Mouth, Jade Words" — a skill with a trigger mechanism: if he breaks a chain of consecutive affirmative statements, his subsequent words are heard as their opposite by affected targets. A true believer in the Underworld's cause, willing to sacrifice himself strategically.

Stars are basically levels. The higher the Star, the more intelligent and powerful someone is.

True Self Players are 10 individuals who have achieved an advanced state of psychological and metaphysical integration within the game system, representing a higher tier of Player evolution beyond standard Player capabilities. The concept is closely tied to ego structure, self-awareness, and the ability to operate across different states of consciousness. To achieve this particular level, one has to reach 10 Stars and meet with the 1st True Self Player on the Eternal Land, a dimension separated from Hell.

True Self Players have achieved a level of psychological wholeness that manifests as enhanced capabilities within the game system. The distinction appears to be related to Freudian psychoanalytic structures (Id, Ego, Superego) but transcends simple psychological categorization into something metaphysically substantive within the game's reality. They have not yet reached True Self in Heart Cultivation, but all of them are Near True Self.

In short, True Self would be the state of complete detachment from all laws, emotions and concepts of the universe, while also simultaneously affecting the universe on the whims of your thought. A state of Godhood that Omniscient (a True Self Player watching over Hell) accomplishes.

Heart Cultivation Systems:

- *Supreme Perfect Enlightenment* (Buddhist): Standard system. Suppresses emotion, produces formulaic rational thinking. Weakness: predictable to sufficiently powerful No-Distance users like Omniscient.
- *Highest Good is Like Water* (Taoist): Integrates emotion into thinking, produces unpredictable intuitive leaps. Chen Ran is in the early stages of developing this.
- *Unity of Heaven and Man* (Confucian): Transcends the rules and social order that constrain all players. Shu Renjun has achieved this but is not fully immune to moral coercion.

The Liar Killer and the No-Lying Rule: Every player carries a Liar Killer weapon. If a player states something objectively false in a provable way, the weapon fires autonomously. Players use careful language ("perhaps," "likely," "should") to avoid lying. "Future Lies" are

binding oaths — if violated, the weapon fires. "Ghost Language" (Guǐ Yǔ) is a false premise established as objective truth; breaking it causes those who contradict it to technically lie.

No-Distance: A high-level mental combat technique. At the Superego level (the third realm of the Spiritual Platform), it can project real players into a mental world and simulate their future behavior with near-perfect accuracy. "No-Distance Kill" refers to the combination of Qiu Yinong's Wheel of Time and repeated No-Distance attacks — the Wheel of Time pulls a target back before they can recover from No-Distance exhaustion, allowing indefinite mental assault.

Weird Speakers vs. Liar Killers: Weird Speakers can activate skills directly without needing to receive a Lie first. Standard players (Liar Killers) must receive a Lie before using a skill, which charges the weapon. This makes Weird Speakers more flexible but also more vulnerable to certain counters.

PHASE 1 — THE CLASSROOM / RULE HORROR DUNGEON BEGINS

Lin Xuan identifies the dungeon type and immediately adapts his behavior

White: When Lin Xuan finds himself in a classroom full of forty students with a Mathematics Teacher at the front (students being robots, mi-humans mi-robots or humans), he immediately identifies this as a "Rule Paradox dungeon" — a type where the clearance conditions are hidden inside the rules themselves, and where breaking a rule can result in instant death from an NPC rather than from another player. He does not look around the classroom or attempt to scout, instead staring straight ahead and pretending to listen to the teacher. His immediate reasoning: in Rule Paradox dungeons, something as simple as "looking around" could be a rule violation that triggers an NPC kill.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He correctly identifies the dungeon type from environmental context alone — a classroom setting, NPC-populated, no visible rules posted. He deduces that rules must be either in the textbook or inside the desk, and begins searching discreetly.

🔴 **Tactics (Lin Xuan):** Rather than acting on impulse (scanning the room, interacting with students), he applies the "safety first" principle of Rule Paradox dungeons — do nothing unusual until the rules are found.

Chen Ran solves an unsolvable mathematics problem — and writes the answer for Qiu Yinong

White: The Mathematics Teacher calls Chen Ran to the board after killing the NPC student Fang Han (who failed to solve Fermat's Last Theorem). Chen Ran's assigned problem is: "Can every natural number be expressed as the sum of no more than three positive integers

cubed? If not, prove the maximum number of integer cubes required." This is a known false proposition — not all natural numbers can be expressed this way. Chen Ran demonstrates that the number 4 cannot be expressed as a sum of three or fewer cubes of positive integers, then proves it works with four, then shows that natural number 5 breaks the four-cube limit. He extends this into a general proof covering negative integers and concludes: the proposition is false in general, but holds within a bounded range when negative integers are allowed. After returning to his seat, he writes the answer on his desk so Qiu Yinong — who sits in the third row and will pass his desk on her way to the board — can read it.

🟢 **Intelligence/Knowledge (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies and solves a non-trivial mathematical proposition under extreme time pressure, with his life on the line. The solution involves number theory reasoning across multiple cases (positive integers only, then including negatives), demonstrating genuine mathematical fluency rather than mere formula recall.

🟡 **Deception (Chen Ran):** He writes the answer on his desk rather than speaking it, creating a covert communication channel that the NPC teacher cannot directly observe. This is both information transfer and rule circumvention — he has answered his own problem publicly, so writing on his desk afterward is not a violation.

🔵 **Foresight (Chen Ran):** He anticipates before Qiu Yinong is even called that she will be next (the teacher is going row by row), and that she will need the answer, and that she will pass his desk — all before the teacher calls her name.

Lin Xuan injects antibiotics to create legitimate illness — avoiding the classroom trap

White: Lin Xuan is in the fourth row. After watching Fang Han (row one) die for failing, Chen Ran (row two) succeed, and Qiu Yinong (row three) succeed using Chen Ran's written answer, Lin Xuan realizes he is next. The next problem is the Collatz Conjecture (3n+1) — another famous unsolved mathematical problem. He cannot solve it. But he also cannot simply pretend to be sick and leave, because he suspects that leaving class under false pretenses might violate a rule. He injects himself with an Antibiotic Reagent — causing genuine abdominal pain and diarrhea — creating a legitimate physical symptom that allows him to leave without lying about being ill. The teacher notices his distress and sends Chen Ran to escort him to the infirmary.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He correctly deduces that "pretending to be sick" is probably a rule violation in this dungeon, while "actually being sick" is not. The distinction between genuine and feigned illness becomes legally significant in a no-lying system.

🔴 **Tactics (Lin Xuan):** He creates a physical reality to match the rule requirement rather than fabricating a verbal excuse. This is the practical application of "you cannot lie, but you can engineer the truth."

🔵 **Foresight (Lin Xuan):** He acts before being called to the board, understanding that once called, there is no graceful exit — his window for action is while he is still a background student.

Chen Ran and Lin Xuan read the rules in one glance and immediately walk on

White: When Chen Ran and Lin Xuan exit the building together, they both turn simultaneously to look at the left side of the outdoor wall — where the rules are posted. Both read and memorize the complete ruleset in a single glance, then continue walking forward without hesitation, without discussing what they read, and without any visible reaction.

🟣 **Perception (Both):** Both independently deduce that rules in a Rule Paradox dungeon are placed in conspicuous locations near doors — either indoors or outdoors. Since they found nothing indoors, both predict the outdoor wall simultaneously, demonstrating convergent deductive reasoning without communication.

💜 **Miscellaneous:** The deliberate casualness of their response — reading instantly, showing no reaction, continuing to walk — is itself a survival behavior. In a dungeon where NPCs observe behavior, appearing to study the rules too carefully could itself trigger a violation.

Lin Xuan identifies the word "Player" in Rule Three as the critical signal

White: After reading the classroom rules, Lin Xuan focuses on an anomaly: all rules address "students," but Rule Three specifically uses the word "Player." In a dungeon populated by NPCs disguised as students, this distinction is enormous — it means Rule Three was written specifically for the real participants. He deduces: the rule is a path designed for players who dare to attempt the classroom problems. Players who cannot solve the problem must leave with a reasonable excuse; players who can solve it must report to the Class Teacher or Grade Director after class. The use of "Player" rather than "student" is a signal — this rule is the actual dungeon clearance mechanism.

🟣 **Perception (Lin Xuan):** He catches a single-word anomaly in a multi-rule document read in seconds, correctly identifying it as the most important word in the entire ruleset.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He constructs the full implication: if Rule Three uses "Player," it means the dungeon distinguishes between NPCs (students) and real participants (Players). This rule was written for the real people, not the furniture. Therefore it describes the actual clearance path.

Lin Xuan deduces the two-doctor puzzle and identifies Chen Ran, Qiu Yinong, and Big Gold Tooth as possibly non-human

White: At the Health Building, two doctors approach simultaneously. The first asks: "What seems to be the problem?" The second asks: "Where are you feeling unwell?" Lin Xuan chooses the second doctor — the one who asks about sensation rather than structure — and is led safely into the correct infirmary. When Big Gold Tooth arrives and chooses the first doctor, he is killed by a chainsaw in the wrong infirmary. Lin Xuan watches this and deduces the underlying logic: "What's the problem?" is how you address a broken machine; "Where do you feel unwell?" is how you address a person with sensations. Therefore the first infirmary is for robots (things), and the second is for people/half-robots (beings with feelings). He then extends this: if Big Gold Tooth, despite his intelligence, chose the robot infirmary, it means Big Gold Tooth is not a player — he is a robot. Similarly, Chen Ran tested Lin Xuan on the way to the infirmary by making an "inexplicable move" (stepping toward the blue line then returning) to see if Lin Xuan would make a new, unpredictable move or merely copy him. Lin Xuan copied the move — which a robot would also do (following pre-set patterns). This makes Chen Ran uncertain whether Lin Xuan is human.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He correctly decodes the two-doctor question structure as a human/robot sorting mechanism purely from the linguistic framing of the questions — no other evidence is provided.

🟢 **Intelligence (Lin Xuan):** He recognizes that "what's wrong" versus "where do you feel unwell" represents a category distinction between object-diagnosis and person-diagnosis, drawing on common-sense understanding of how language reflects the speaker's model of the listener.

🟣 **Perception (Lin Xuan):** He notices Chen Ran's test on the way to the infirmary — the deliberate "inexplicable move" — and correctly identifies its purpose: Chen Ran was probing whether Lin Xuan would make a genuinely unpredictable human response or a pattern-copying robot response.

🔵 **Foresight (Lin Xuan):** He extends his deduction forward: if robots and half-robots both exist in the school, and the cultivation containers in the Experimental Building hold beings with human organs, then there is a third category — half-robots who have both mechanical and organic components. This reframes the entire dungeon's population structure.

Chen Ran independently deduces the human/robot/half-robot structure from the same evidence

White: In the infirmary, Chen Ran lies on the hospital bed and runs the same analysis as Lin Xuan. He recognizes that the cultivation containers in the Experimental Building — which hold Chen Ran copies, Qiu Yinong, Big Gold Tooth, and Hua Changsheng — combined with the doctors' question structure, indicate three categories of beings: pure robots, half-robots (half-machine, half-human with real organs), and humans. He then connects this to Rule Two of the infirmary: "Players, please do not reveal your identity" — which uses the word "Player" again. He concludes that "Player" here means human, and that the doctor can distinguish the three categories through physical examination or weighing (robots being heaviest, humans lightest). "Do not reveal your identity" therefore means: do not let the doctor examine you in a way that reveals what you are.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He reconstructs the full classification system of the dungeon's population from the physical evidence of the cultivation containers — beings with tubes attached and pained expressions indicate living organs in mechanical frames.

🟢 **Intelligence (Chen Ran):** He correctly connects linguistic evidence (the word "Player" in Rule Two) with physical evidence (the cultivation containers) and the medical context (the doctors' questions) into a unified model of the dungeon's world.

Chen Ran deduces the infirmary rules through elimination — arriving at a counterintuitive answer

White: After reading the infirmary rules, Chen Ran runs a systematic analysis. Rule Three states: "When the doctor asks about your physical condition again, please answer carefully." Rule Four states: "If you find the doctor leaving midway, please don't worry. When he returns, he will be able to cure any student." Rule Five states: "If the doctor asks you for help, please ask him to issue a certificate."

He initially struggles with the ordering: Rules Three and Four seem sequential but are actually reversed — the doctor leaves first (Rule Four), then asks again when he returns (Rule Three). He deduces: the doctor goes to retrieve parts for a half-robot repair before even knowing if the treatment plan failed. When he returns, if the student says "I'm still unwell," the doctor will replace the student's malfunctioning organ — which means death for a human. If the student says "I'm fine," the doctor won't replace anything — he'll ask for help carrying the parts, and issue a certificate (Rule Five). The counterintuitive conclusion: say "I'm fine" even though you're still in pain, to avoid the replacement procedure.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He works through three rules simultaneously, identifying that their logical sequence is not their listed order, and rebuilding the causal chain correctly: doctor leaves → gets parts → returns → asks again → student answers → outcome determined.

🔵 **Foresight (Chen Ran):** He anticipates the trap within the trap: saying "I'm still unwell" feels like honesty, but in this dungeon's context, it triggers a lethal response. The correct answer violates natural intuition.

🟢 **Intelligence (Chen Ran):** He identifies that "cure any student" in Rule Four uses "student" not "patient" — catching a subtle linguistic signal that the doctor's treatment modality is mechanical replacement, not medical healing.

Lin Xuan deduces the same infirmary rules — and identifies the hidden trap Shu Renjun built in

White: Lin Xuan runs his own analysis of the infirmary rules in parallel. He arrives at the same conclusion as Chen Ran: say "I'm fine." But he goes one step further and identifies two unresolved questions: first, where does the doctor go when he leaves? Second, Rule Four says "When he returns, he will be able to cure any student" — but if Lin Xuan breaks his arm

while the doctor is away, and the doctor only brought back stomach parts, doesn't this contradict "able to cure any student"?

He almost follows this second question into a dead end before catching himself: this is one of Shu Renjun's designed distractions. The "any student" phrasing is a false lead designed to make players with Space Skills waste time simulating edge cases in other dimensions. The real answer requires only the first question's answer, which he realizes points toward the replacement scenario he already deduced.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He correctly identifies a deliberate logical trap embedded in the rule — a question that seems meaningful but is actually a time-wasting decoy.

🟢 **Intelligence (Lin Xuan):** He catches himself mid-reasoning when the line of thinking begins to feel like it's steering him toward wasted simulation cycles rather than useful conclusions — a metacognitive catch that saves him significant time.

🟠 **Manipulation Awareness (Lin Xuan):** He correctly attributes the confusing "any student" phrasing to Shu Renjun's deliberate design, understanding that the dungeon creator has intentionally placed friction in the rules to exploit players' analytical habits.

Lin Xuan correctly identifies "Robot Lin Xuan" as the replacement — and engineers the identity swap

White: When the doctor returns and Lin Xuan says "I'm still uncomfortable," a second Lin Xuan walks in from behind a curtain — a robot copy. The doctor's plan: send the "defective" Lin Xuan to the Experimental Building for factory return, using the robot copy as the replacement. Lin Xuan correctly deduces that telling the doctor he was "still uncomfortable" would cause the doctor not to examine him — because there's no need, since he can simply swap the student out. He also deduces that he cannot immediately swap positions with the robot copy while the doctor's back is turned, because the robot might attack him. Instead, he waits until the doctor finishes writing the certificate and turns around, then steps forward to take the certificate himself — establishing himself as the "healthy" Lin Xuan who needs the certificate to go to the Experimental Building.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He correctly identifies the replacement mechanic before it is revealed, anticipating that "I'm still unwell" would trigger substitution rather than treatment.

🔴 **Tactics (Lin Xuan):** He engineers the certificate handoff to fall naturally to himself rather than the robot — ensuring he is the one with the Experimental Building access document.

🟡 **Deception (Lin Xuan):** He maintains the appearance of being the defective unit throughout the encounter, allowing the robot to believe it is the healthy replacement — right up until the moment the Research Personnel's laser resolves the identity question for him.

Lin Xuan decodes the basement murals — deducing the room number 1001 in the west sixth floor third room

White: In the lower level of the Experimental Building's scrap room, Lin Xuan finds four walls covered in cryptic imagery. He analyzes each:

- Left wall: Three-layer painting — a square shape (representing earth in "square earth, round sky"), a spherical planet (representing sky/heaven), and a small pond at night. Combined: "Arabian Nights" → "One Thousand and One Nights" → the number **1001**.
- Right wall: Painting titled "Cold Beauty Saw" (Guan Yu's weapon, the Green Dragon Crescent Blade), scorching heat (representing "Shu" — both "heat" and "the Shu Kingdom"), and eight floating swords (Liu Bei's Eight Swords of the Shu Lord). Guan Yu received the sixth sword. The painting's direction: **West 6**.
- Front wall: "The dragon robe and golden crown reflect the sun's splendor" → the character "Emperor." "The benevolent are invincible, choosing grace is important" → Mencius's Mother Moves Thrice, where the third move (near a school) is the one that matters → **Third**.
- Back wall: A giant period/circle → "the start is the end, the end is the start" → return the item to its original position after taking it.

Combined: West side, sixth floor, third room, item number 1001. After taking it, return it to its original position.

🟢 **Intelligence/Knowledge (Lin Xuan):** Extraordinarily broad knowledge base applied simultaneously across Chinese literature (Journey to the West, One Thousand and One Nights), Chinese history (Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Record of Ancient and Modern Swords), classical philosophy (Mencius), and mathematical properties (1001 as a sphenic/pentagonal/pentatope number) — all from memory, in a dark basement, under time pressure.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He correctly structures the multi-wall message as a composite address: orientation + floor + room + object number. He recognizes that redundancy in the address (the "six o'clock direction" if 1001 were a room number) eliminates one interpretation and confirms the other.

Chen Ran independently decodes the same basement murals — arriving at the same answer faster

White: Chen Ran runs the same mural analysis as Lin Xuan, but more efficiently. His key advancement: he correctly resolves the right wall by tracing "Cold Beauty Saw" → alias for Green Dragon Crescent Blade → Guan Yu's weapon → Guan Yu's position in the list of Eight Sword recipients → the number six. He also correctly resolves the front wall by identifying the second line as Mencius's Mother Moves Thrice, and specifically the third move (near the school) as the relevant one — giving "Third." He then eliminates the first interpretation of the combined message (West, 6 o'clock direction, third floor, room 1001 — redundant) and confirms the second: West side, sixth floor, third room, object 1001.

🟢 **Intelligence/Knowledge (Chen Ran):** Equivalent knowledge base to Lin Xuan, applied with greater precision — he reaches the same conclusion in less time by more efficiently eliminating redundant interpretations.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He catches the redundancy in interpretation one (a room number already specifies location, making the directional indicator redundant) and uses this elimination to confirm interpretation two — a clean logical test applied to an ambiguous multi-variable problem.

🔵 **Foresight (Chen Ran):** Having deduced the room location, he immediately identifies that a time limit must exist in the Experimental Building — because there was no rule posted obviously indoors, which means the rule is intentionally hidden, which means the dungeon wants players to find it under time pressure. He begins timing himself from the moment he enters.

Chen Ran deduces the White Shoes trap — and nearly avoids a lethal mistake

White: Chen Ran has deduced the room location and is about to head to the sixth floor west third room when he catches himself. He recalls Classroom Rule Six: "There is only one person wearing white shoes on campus. If a second person wearing white shoes is found, please ignore any of his/her instructions." He realizes: in a school full of robots, what constitutes an "instruction" to a robot is not a verbal command — it is any data transmission or information that produces a behavioral response. Therefore "ignore his/her instructions" actually means "ignore him/her entirely." The white shoes signify highest authority; the rule prohibiting a second white-shoes person from giving instructions means: wearing white shoes grants absolute authority over all campus robots. But finding the rules through the Experimental Building without white shoes first would mean entering restricted areas — which requires white shoes. He has almost walked into a trap: going to the sixth floor in student clothes would trigger the five-minute timer, and finding the rules would require him to then get white shoes, but by then the time would already have expired in his original space.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies the semantic gap between "instructions" as humans understand them (verbal commands) and "instructions" as robots process them (any triggering input). This gap reframes the entire rule.

🔵 **Foresight (Chen Ran):** He catches the trap before triggering it — recognizing that the intended path is to get white shoes first, not to find the rules first. This saves his original space from being rendered useless.

🟢 **Intelligence (Chen Ran):** He draws on his understanding of computing and data processing to reinterpret a seemingly simple rule, demonstrating cross-domain knowledge application.

Lin Xuan discovers the five-minute rule by systematic experimentation across dimensions

White: Lin Xuan, using his Space Skill, sends multiple copies of himself into the Experimental Building wearing different configurations (with red shoes, without red shoes, as a student, etc.) and times each one until the Research Personnel kill them. He determines: with red shoes, a copy is discovered in approximately 10 seconds. Without red shoes, a copy lasts approximately 2.5 minutes before being killed. The total time from arriving at the Experimental Building to the moment a "student" copy would be killed = approximately 5 minutes. He concludes: there is a hidden 5-minute rule for non-staff members in the Experimental Building.

🔴 **Tactics (Lin Xuan):** He uses his Space Skill as an empirical testing tool — running controlled experiments with different variables (shoe type, student vs. non-student identity) to isolate the specific rule.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He correctly deduces an unposted rule from behavioral evidence — the Research Personnel's killing patterns imply a time limit, not a random patrol schedule.

Lin Xuan realizes his original space is already compromised — and calculates his remaining viable spaces

White: After discovering the five-minute rule, Lin Xuan realizes with horror that five minutes have already elapsed in his original space — he jumped into the scrap room basement while time was still running in that space. This means his original space is now a death trap: as soon as his Main Body exits the scrap room, the Research Personnel will kill him. He calculates: of his six spaces, the original space is lost. The fast-time-flow spaces also have too much time elapsed. He has at most two or three truly usable spaces remaining, and as the slow-time-flow spaces continue to age, those will eventually expire too. He estimates approximately half an hour of usable time, divided into 12 sessions of 2.5 minutes each.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He applies precise time-flow arithmetic across six parallel dimensions simultaneously, correctly identifying which spaces are still viable and calculating a remaining operational window.

🔴 **Strategy (Lin Xuan):** He immediately reconfigures his approach — rather than blindly searching the Experimental Building, he must find the rules within 12 targeted excursions of 2.5 minutes each, prioritizing efficiency over thoroughness.

Lin Xuan applies "thought of escaping vs. thought of pursuing" — deducing where Shu Renjun must have hidden the rules

White: Facing the impossible task of searching the entire Experimental Building in 12 two-and-a-half-minute windows, Lin Xuan applies a strategic framework he calls "thought of hiding vs. thought of seeking." He reasons: Shu Renjun must have hidden the rules somewhere Lin Xuan would "absolutely never find." But the dungeon principle of puzzle-solving requires that clues be visible. Therefore, Shu Renjun must have hidden the rules "under the lamp" — in the darkest place beneath the most obvious light. The "darkness

under the lamp" in this dungeon is the lower level of the scrap room — where he already is. The basement murals are the clue. He concludes: the rules are not randomly placed; they are at a specific location pointed to by the murals.

🩷 **Reasoning (Lin Xuan):** He applies the "darkness under the lamp" principle — the answer is hidden in the most obvious place, which is paradoxically the last place someone would look.

🔵 **Foresight (Lin Xuan):** He correctly anticipates Shu Renjun's design philosophy: the creator knows about the Space Skill and will have made the dungeon impossible to brute-force, meaning the rules must be findable through deduction rather than exhaustive search.

Chen Ran navigates the teachers' office — solves the Three Gods Problem of classroom management

White: Chen Ran finds the teachers' office and reads its rules. Rule One: teachers don't like tattletales. Rule Two: the Class Teacher must have blue leather shoes underfoot. Rule Three: the Class Teacher is obsessed with fantasy novels and must be made to believe in science. Rule Four: two chances to ask questions from any teacher. Rule Five: when the class bell rings, return immediately to the classroom. He has six minutes. He identifies: the Class Teacher is not the bald middle-aged man with blue shoes — it is the radio on his desk (the radio plays fantasy novels, the bald man listens along with everyone else, and there is a photo of blue shoes under the radio). He asks the Physics Teacher a question deliberately structured to make the Class Teacher (the radio) "believe in science" through an indirect chain of logic: "Based on Wave-Particle Duality, can Spiritual Energy be diffracted or interfered with?" The Physics Teacher concludes yes — meaning Spiritual Energy is a particle, meaning it can be controlled by science, meaning the entire energy system of fantasy novels collapses scientifically. The radio stops playing.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies the radio as the Class Teacher from a convergence of evidence: the radio plays fantasy content (matching Rule Three), a photo of blue shoes is under the radio (matching the specific wording of Rule Two — "underfoot" means beneath the radio, not on the bald man's feet), and the bald man's authority over the radio's content matches a Grade Director rather than a Class Teacher.

🟢 **Intelligence (Chen Ran):** He designs a question that is technically one question but requires the Physics Teacher to independently answer a prerequisite sub-question (is Spiritual Energy a particle or a wave?) before answering the surface question. This uses one of his two allowed question slots while actually extracting two answers.

🟡 **Deception (Chen Ran):** He achieves "making the Class Teacher believe in science" without ever addressing the Class Teacher directly — working entirely through a chain of indirect consequences triggered by one question to a different teacher.

Chen Ran identifies that the Grade Director is a robot — and deduces the authority hierarchy

White: After the radio stops (the Class Teacher "believes in science"), Chen Ran writes down the Mathematics Teacher's problem and hands it to the bald Grade Director, who immediately flies into a rage at the Mathematics Teacher for leaking exam questions. The Grade Director then instructs Chen Ran to fetch the Principal. From this, Chen Ran deduces: a red-shoes robot (the Mathematics Teacher) has malfunctioned by developing human emotions and leaking questions. A blue-shoes robot (the Grade Director) cannot handle a red-shoes robot's malfunction directly — he can only escalate to the white-shoes robot (the Principal). This establishes the authority hierarchy: white shoes > blue shoes > red shoes > black shoes.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He extracts the full authority structure from a single observed interaction — the Grade Director's inability to directly discipline the Mathematics Teacher.

🔵 **Foresight (Chen Ran):** He immediately anticipates the next step: he must go to the Principal's house, but the Principal is the most dangerous entity on campus. He begins planning how to approach that encounter safely.

Chen Ran deduces the Principal's house encounter in advance — including the 15-minute window

White: Walking toward the Principal's house along the white zebra crossing line, Chen Ran calculates: the round trip takes approximately 30 minutes (15 minutes each way). A class period is 45 minutes. Therefore he will spend 15 minutes inside the Principal's house. He further deduces: since the Principal's house must have a puzzle, and the puzzle must be completable in 15 minutes, the puzzle's time limit is exactly 15 minutes. He also pre-deduces what the puzzle will be: he is a non-human entity (a robot student) visiting the principal's house. The principal must verify whether the visitor is a normal robot or a defective one with human emotions. Therefore the puzzle's underlying premise will be: "Prove that you are a normal robot."

🔵 **Foresight (Chen Ran):** He correctly predicts the puzzle type — "prove you are a normal robot, not a mentally ill one" — before arriving, giving him a significant head start on the solution.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He applies time arithmetic to constrain the puzzle parameters, then uses the dungeon's thematic logic (robots vs. half-robots, emotional malfunction as the dungeon's central conflict) to predict what kind of verification the Principal would perform.

Chen Ran solves the Three Gods Problem — identifying the Human, Half-Robot, and Robot principals

White: The Principal's house contains three identical-looking principals: one is Human, one is Half-Robot, one is Robot. There is a game rule on a desk: each can only answer "1" or "2";

the Human always tells the truth, the Robot always lies, the Half-Robot can do either. Chen Ran has three questions. He constructs a meta-question: "If I ask you whether he [pointing at Principal C] is a Half-Robot, would you answer 1?" He applies the double-negation logic: both the Human and the Robot, when asked this meta-question, will produce the same answer — 1 if the target is the Half-Robot, 2 if the target is not the Half-Robot. This is because the Robot's lie about what they would answer cancels with their lie about the target's identity, producing the same answer as the Human. He uses this to eliminate who is not the Half-Robot, then uses a second meta-question to identify who is the Robot among the remaining two, and finally uses the confirmed Human to verify his conclusion.

🟢 **Intelligence (Chen Ran):** He correctly solves the Three Gods Problem — one of logic's classic puzzles — under time pressure and with life-or-death stakes, using the double-negation property of the meta-question to bypass the ambiguity created by the Half-Robot.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** His deduction chain is flawless: eliminate the Half-Robot first (since the meta-question works on Human and Robot but not Half-Robot), then identify the Robot among the remaining two using the same technique, then confirm with the now-verified Human.

Chen Ran realizes the Three Gods Problem and the "who to choose" problem are independent — catching his own near-fatal mistake

White: After correctly solving the Three Gods Problem (identifying Human, Half-Robot, and Robot), Chen Ran begins to reason about which Principal to choose to bring back to the Grade Director. He initially deduces that the three Principals don't know each other's identities — because before he made his choice, none of them killed each other. If they had known each other's identities from the Three Gods Problem, the Robot would have immediately killed the Human. This means the Three Gods Problem gave them no information about each other that they didn't already have. He catches the critical flaw in his own reasoning: the Two Problems (Three Gods Problem and "who to choose") are completely independent — they don't share data. The Three Gods Problem uses known-identity logic; the "who to choose" problem uses unknown-identity logic. Conflating them would have led him to conclude that his choice would trigger a killing chain — but it won't, because the three Principals still don't know each other's identities after his questioning.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He catches his own logical error mid-deduction — recognizing that two problem structures occurring in the same scene are not necessarily linked, and that assuming linkage would produce a wrong answer.

🟢 **Intelligence (Chen Ran):** The ability to identify and correct a self-generated logical fallacy under time pressure and mortal danger is a rare meta-cognitive achievement.

Chen Ran chooses the Robot Principal — engineering the Half-Robot's attack without getting caught

White: Having resolved that the three Principals don't know each other's identities, Chen Ran deduces: if he chooses the Robot Principal and leads him away, only the Human and the Half-Robot remain. The Robot Principal (now gone) is no longer a threat. The Half-Robot will immediately know the remaining person is the Human — and will attack. When the Robot Principal falls, Chen Ran can pick up the white shoes. But: picking up white shoes doesn't match his student identity, and the Robot Principal (who is still functional until attacked) might kill him. Chen Ran's gamble: the Half-Robot will attack first, while the Robot Principal is distracted by moving. He chooses the Robot Principal ("Principal, the Director is looking for you"), leads him toward the stairs, and watches as the Half-Robot — who is organizing documents and already positioning — launches a surprise attack as soon as the Robot Principal's back is turned.

🔴 **Tactics (Chen Ran):** He engineers a kill between two NPCs without directly participating — creating the conditions for the Half-Robot to act by removing the Robot Principal's field of vision at the critical moment.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He correctly deduces that among his two valid choices (Robot or Half-Robot Principal), choosing the Robot Principal creates a two-person scenario where the Half-Robot can definitively identify and kill the Human — while if he chose the Half-Robot, the Robot might still be uncertain about who remains.

🟡 **Deception (Chen Ran):** He frames the summons as coming from the Grade Director — a natural institutional reason for the Principal to move — so the Robot Principal's movement toward the stairs is motivated and unsuspicious.

Chen Ran passes the identity verification by remaining motionless when the Principal bites his arms off

White: After collecting the white shoes and returning to the Principal's house to escort the Half-Robot Principal back, Chen Ran faces an unexpected second identity verification. The Principal (who he thought was the Human but is actually the Robot — he has re-read the rules and corrected his understanding of which Principal is at home) bites off Chen Ran's shoulder and then both arms to test whether he reacts with pain. A robot would not cry out; a human would. Chen Ran, having deduced that he has not yet heard "Identity confirmed" (the phrase used when passing verification at the Experimental Building), understands the verification is not complete. He stands motionless throughout, expressionless, as his arms are bitten off and consumed. Only when he hears "Identity confirmed" does he relax.

🔴 **Tactics (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies the behavioral test being performed and suppresses his pain response entirely — treating the arm amputation as an information-gathering event rather than an emergency.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** His reasoning chain is precise: the absence of "Identity confirmed" means the test is ongoing; any pain response or verbal output during an ongoing

test would constitute a rule violation; therefore, silence and stillness are the only options regardless of what happens physically.

Chen Ran reads the Principal's house rules and re-decodes the entire dungeon structure

White: After finally reaching the rules on the mezzanine floor of the Principal's house, Chen Ran rapidly reconstructs the dungeon's true narrative:

- Rule One ("The Principal is human but doesn't like being human"): The Principal at home is the Robot; the one sent to the Experimental Building is the Half-Robot. The Robot doesn't like being a mere robot and wants to suppress the Half-Robot ideology.
- Rule Two (teachers should teach, students should study): This is the Robot Principal's ideology — rigid adherence to role.
- Rule Three (Wednesday afternoon Experimental Building screening): All teachers and students undergo screening; any Half-Robot found will undergo "ideological education" — destruction and replacement.
- Rule Four (someone in the Experimental Building is modifying robots): A hidden Half-Robot (later identified as the "Red Coat") is covertly converting robots into Half-Robots.
- Rule Five ("The Principal's body has a problem, please ignore his instructions"): The Robot Principal developed a malfunction; the campus rule to ignore the second white-shoes person was referring to this Robot Principal.
- Rule Six ("The Principal will not ignore the second person wearing white"): The Robot Principal will not ignore the Half-Robot Principal — meaning there is an active conflict between them.

He then deduces the two clearance conditions: prove you are a robot, and be present for the Wednesday afternoon screening.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies that every rule in the Principal's house refers to a different Principal — not all to the same one — and that the entire dungeon narrative is a conflict between the Robot Principal's "exam-oriented education" ideology and the Half-Robot Principal's "happy education" ideology. This is Shu Renjun's personal experience encoded as a dungeon.

🟢 **Knowledge (Chen Ran):** He draws on his understanding of Chinese education policy debates (exam-oriented vs. happy education) to identify the dungeon's thematic core, then uses this thematic understanding to deduce the clearance mechanism.

Chen Ran deduces that the dungeon's clearance conditions were already met from the beginning

White: Chen Ran realizes with shock that he has been exploring the campus, finding rules, and navigating traps — all of which was unnecessary. The clearance condition was met the moment he swapped identities with the robot Chen Ran in the infirmary (proving he was a robot), confirmed his identity at the Experimental Building entrance, and confirmed it again at the Principal's house. He was recognized as a robot by three independent verification systems. All he needs to do is attend the Wednesday afternoon screening in the Experimental Building and be confirmed as a robot there. The vast majority of what he did after leaving the infirmary was exploring a dungeon that was already cleared — every trap and puzzle he navigated was Shu Renjun's design to kill players who kept exploring rather than realizing they were done.

🔵 **Foresight (Shu Renjun, revealed retroactively):** The entire dungeon was designed so that the clearance condition is met early, but players don't know it and keep searching — walking into increasingly lethal traps in the process.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies that the dungeon's principle of puzzle-solving means a guaranteed death scenario cannot exist — therefore, since every path leads to danger, the clearance condition must already have been met through an earlier, less obvious action.

Chen Ran writes a poem about studying on the back blackboard — completing the dungeon's thematic test

White: Back in the classroom, Chen Ran finds no College Entrance Exam countdown. Instead, the back blackboard has the heading "Student" with blank content beneath it. He writes a poem: "Under the lamplight, accompanied by the stars. Between the pages, time unfurls. The youth holds his pen to break the dawn. A future as bright as desired." Nothing happens immediately. But when the Wednesday screening arrives, Chen Ran and Qiu Yinong are confirmed as robots (having proven their identities through the three verification systems), transported to an examination room, and given a test paper asking: "Courage, wisdom, resolve, perseverance, discipline, confidence, patience. What do they equal?" The answer written on the paper: "Smooth Sailing, Achieving Success in the Imperial Examination, Carp Leaping Over the Dragon Gate, Bright Future." They have cleared the dungeon.

🟢 **Intelligence (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies that filling in the "Student" blackboard is part of the dungeon's thematic requirement — the dungeon is about what it means to be a student, and engaging with that theme (rather than just solving mechanical puzzles) is part of the clearance.

Qiu Yinong navigates the Experimental Building — and discovers the Red Coat's true identity

White: Qiu Yinong, using repeated Wheel of Time activations to bypass the five-minute rule, searches the entire Experimental Building for the "Research Personnel wearing a Red Coat"

referenced in the Experimental Building's Rule Three. She searches all six floors, the dissection room, and the cultivation container hall (inadvertently getting the Chen Ran copies sent to dissection by breaking their tanks). She eventually finds a small room with a person whose white coat is red on the inside — but when she takes off her white shoes to ask this person a question, she is attacked. She uses Wheel of Time to reset, and discovers: the person inside the small room next to a cultivation container holding the Half-Robot Principal is the future Robot Principal that will replace him. The Red Coat is not a person to ask — it is a person to free. She must smash the cultivation container to release the Half-Robot Principal.

🟣 **Perception (Qiu Yinong):** She correctly identifies the Red Coat from the inside-out coat detail — a visual tell requiring close observation and the conceptual flexibility to recognize that "wearing a red coat" can mean the outer surface is red even if the garment is currently worn inside-out.

🩷 **Reasoning (Qiu Yinong):** She deduces that the conflict is already resolved — the plot is fixed, the Half-Robot will always be destroyed — and therefore the Experimental Building's puzzle is irrelevant to clearance. The real clearance was the identity verification process.

Qiu Yinong and Chen Ran both clear the dungeon simultaneously — guarding against the final Wooden Man trap

White: When Chen Ran and Qiu Yinong simultaneously complete their final squares in the Red Light, Green Light game and clear the dungeon, they discover that the two Wooden Figures have turned their heads and are staring directly at them. A player who looks up after clearing — out of natural curiosity or relief — would be killed instantly. Both Chen Ran and Qiu Yinong had kept their eyes fixed on the Wooden Figures throughout the entire road puzzle, never looking down. When they exit the road puzzle, their gaze is already level with the Wooden Figures' faces — they see the turned heads immediately and freeze without needing to "look up."

🔵 **Foresight (Both):** Before entering the road puzzle, both had been looking forward at the Wooden Figures — keeping their eyes at the right height so that when they re-emerged, their line of sight would naturally catch the Wooden Figures' status without requiring a dangerous upward glance.

🟠 **Manipulation Awareness (Both):** They correctly identify that Shu Renjun would design the Wooden Figures to turn their heads at the clearance moment — making the "relief look-up" the final death trap.

PHASE 2 —Killing Shu Renjun strategy

The issue here is that Omniscient (True Self Player who has the ability to understand all-knowledge in any environment of Hell as long as she uses No-Distance and her skills) is against Chen Ran while not being on the Instance itself. She makes a replica of Chen Ran’s clone who replicates every move that he will do on the Instance based on his state of mind so that she will have an easier time to counter Chen Ran.

Now that they managed to escape, Chen Ran decides to kill Shu Renjun who is a superego lvl player, achieving a mental state of near immunity to manipulation For that, the Instance CR fought provided sufficient psychological awareness of Shu Renjun's mental state.
He first becomes more openly arrogant, direct, and mocking. He makes pointed remarks about Lin Xuan's intelligence ("I seriously doubt what value you have besides your Space Skill") and deliberately excludes him from the scoring discussion. This is not petty cruelty. Chen Ran has deduced that Lin Xuan's greatest liability is over-reliance on his Space Skill — when the skill is prohibited by Eternal Kingdom, Lin Xuan cannot protect himself through independent thinking. Chen Ran is issuing a diagnostic test: can Lin Xuan, stripped of his skill and under social pressure, deduce what is happening around him and respond intelligently? If he cannot, he becomes a vulnerability in future dungeons. If he does, he will be important for the next part of his schemes. Chen Ran identified that psychological aspect back at the end of Cat And Mouse Game.
After the scoring is revealed, Chen Ran targets both remaining opponents with precise psychological strikes. For Hua Changsheng: he mentions "paternal love," deduces she lacked it, and watches her fist slam the chair in rage — a Superego emotion that the True Self's Heart Cultivation cannot suppress. This is her "health bar" revealed. For Shu Renjun: he delivers a meticulously constructed story about a boy raised by a controlling mother, who killed her for freedom, only to discover that the world's rules (law, morality, public judgment) simply replaced her. He deduces Shu Renjun's specific backstory from the Unity of Heaven and Man Heart Cultivation profile — those who achieve it typically lived under severe rule-based oppression— and the Instance itself. He pushes Shu Renjun to the point of screaming, chains erupting from his body, now seeing Shu Renjun's weakness.

Chen Ran and Shu Renjun deduces the dungeon's true meaning — the Chimera backstory

When six players stand before two rows of squares leading to two identical-looking statues with red buttons on their backs, Shu Renjun (and simultaneously Chen Ran, Qiu Yinong, and others) deduces the dungeon's narrative from the setup: two statues, facing away, requiring simultaneous button presses from behind — symbolizing the Little Girl backstabbing two adults from behind. But the Third Person died from a fall, meaning the Little Girl could only physically backstab the Adult. Yet the dungeon requires backstabbing both. Resolution: the Adult and The Third Person are the same body — a chimera, where one twin absorbed the other during embryonic development but retained the absorbed twin's consciousness. Backstabbing the Adult is equivalent to backstabbing The Third Person because they share one physical form.

Chen Ran reconstructs the full narrative logic from the three dungeon secret chambers:

- Conclusion One: The Adult was physically incapable of killing The Third Person — they shared a body.
- Conclusion Two: The Adult knew of The Third Person's existence; The Third Person did not. The Adult had a 24-hour perspective; The Third Person was unconscious during the Adult's active periods.
- Conclusion Three: Backstabbing the Adult is equivalent to backstabbing The Third Person — because they share one physical form.

He presents these three conclusions carefully, avoiding definitive language (using "possible" throughout) because he cannot be certain whether incorrect deductions constitute Lies in a player-designed dungeon.

Hua Changsheng reveals her true backstory — and her skill

White: After Lin Xuan deduces that her story likely involved a paternity test, Hua Changsheng confirms: her adoptive father discovered through a paternity test that the Little Girl was not his biological child. He confronted the biological father (the Adult — a man with mental illness who lived next door). Both ended up hanging outside the building simultaneously. The Little Girl faced a choice: pull them up, or untie the ropes. She untied both ropes, killing them both, and walked free — no legal consequences, as a child cannot be prosecuted for a rope coming undone. She then reveals her skill: "Super Energy Modeling" — which can tamper with score data in the virtual world dungeon. She sets everyone else to zero points and herself to four, triggering a forced settlement.

Lin Xuan, watching Chen Ran and Qiu Yinong frozen by the Wooden Man figures, suddenly realizes: this is the kill. Hua Changsheng designed the Red Light, Green Light game knowing that any player who enters it will be immobilized for an extended period. If that period is long enough, the Eternal Kingdom effect will expire during the immobilization — leaving Chen Ran unable to use his skill when Hua Changsheng activates hers. He calculates: Chen Ran used Eternal Kingdom right after the previous dungeon ended. The Eternal Kingdom prohibits skills for one hour. If the road puzzle takes more than an hour (which the slow time flow of the virtual-world-within-a-virtual-world makes likely), Chen Ran will emerge from the puzzle unable to use his skill for the critical window when Hua Changsheng strikes. This thought process is exactly what Chen Ran wanted Lin Xuan to deduce.

Cui Yu's strategic sacrifice — choosing Shu Renjun as his target

White: Cui Yu, the Four-Star Underworld player, recognizes that he will die regardless of who wins — if Shu Renjun survives, the Underworld fails; if Chen Ran wins, Cui Yu's knowledge of the team's skills makes him a liability. He calculates: dying alongside Shu Renjun now maximizes his strategic value, giving him a better chance of resurrection as a martyr (because Chen Yang, Cui Yu's chief in the Underworld Alliance ultimate goal is to revive people). He delivers a speech about the Underworld's cause and the war to come, walks directly in front of Chen Ran (who was holding the optimal position), and announces: "Cui Yu of the Underworld requests Shu Renjun to die." He speaks a Future Lie binding himself to only pair with Shu Renjun — locking the Five-Star player into a death pairing from which no skill can save him.

Strategy (Cui Yu): He identifies the single action that maximizes his value — locking Shu Renjun into a pairing — and executes it decisively, accepting death as the cost.

🟠 **Manipulation (Cui Yu):** His speech is partly genuine belief and partly calculated pressure — he correctly identifies that the speech will make everyone (including Shu Renjun) freeze for a moment, creating the opening to step forward and seize the position.

🩷 **Reasoning (Cui Yu):** He correctly deduces that the Future Lie mechanism makes his sacrifice binding and irrevocable — once spoken, Shu Renjun cannot escape the pairing no matter what skill or argument he deploys.

This was weaponized by Chen Ran himself.

Chen Ran deduces that the "psychiatric hospital" reality is still Shu Renjun's dungeon

White: After clearing Shu Renjun's dungeon, Chen Ran finds himself in a psychiatric hospital. A doctor named Shu Renjun tells him that Hell, the Eighteenth Layer, and all dungeons were a virtual psychiatric treatment program — and that he is mentally ill. His parents arrive, looking decades older with white hair. He panics internally, suspecting this is a trap, but also fears it might be real. He holds onto one thread: his parents' white hair. In his memory, his mother cared obsessively about her appearance and his father would pull out her gray hairs. The white hair means either they aged dramatically while he was hospitalized (plausible over years), or something is wrong. He demands to see Chen Yang — his cousin — as a control variable. If Chen Yang's behavior contains any element inconsistent with Chen Ran's memory of him, this is still a dungeon.The Three-Layer Simulation tests each player against their deepest emotional wounds. For Chen Ran:

- Layer One (Family): He watches his parents argue in public, helplessly, as a "robot child" who cannot intervene. He enters the Fusion State of Mind (Highest Good is Like Water), takes the red pill, and clears.
- Layer Two (Love): Li Xintong — his girlfriend who died — appears. He hears her say "I'm in so much pain, why didn't you come to save me?" — his deepest guilt. He takes the red pill immediately, without hesitation.
- Layer Three (Friendship): Chen Yang appears. Instead of saying something meaningful, he says "Get lost" — and tosses Chen Ran a bag containing a dictionary (a childhood number game reference) and a red pill he "tricked from fake doctor Shu Renjun."

Chen Ran correctly identifies the third layer as the most difficult: Chen Yang's behavior is inconsistent with what Chen Ran's inner world would generate (it would have been something philosophically useful). He deduces this is because Omniscient's influence makes Chen Yang hide his true thoughts in Chen Ran's mental simulation. He waits until "Doctor Shu Renjun" hands him the pill before taking it — not the one Chen Yang offers — because he cannot confirm Chen Yang is safe.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies that his own emotional state makes him unreliable as a judge of reality — his desire for this to be real is too strong to trust. He therefore requires an external verification point (Chen Yang) whose behavior he can test against deep memory.

🟣 **Perception (Chen Ran):** He catches the white hair detail as the critical tell — not because white hair is impossible, but because it is inconsistent with a specific behavioral memory (his father pulling out gray hairs).

Chen Ran survives the identity verification at the Principal's house — the hidden fourth test

White: After clearing the Three-Layer Simulation, Chen Ran returns to the Principal's house. Before he can step outside, he pauses. He has not yet heard "Identity confirmed." This is a critical signal — at the Experimental Building, passing identity verification was always followed by that phrase. Its absence means verification is not complete. The next sequence involves the Principal biting off his arms and eating them while interrogating him. Chen Ran stands motionless throughout, expressionless, responding to none of the Principal's questions. He maintains this state until he finally hears "Identity confirmed" — at which point he understands: this was a fourth-layer test, checking whether a player who had cleared the Three-Layer Simulation would immediately revert to human behavior upon believing the simulation was over. Anyone who cried out, answered questions, or reacted to pain would have died.

🩷 **Reasoning (Chen Ran):** The signal chain is clean: verification required "Identity confirmed" at the Experimental Building → therefore its absence here means verification is still pending → therefore all subsequent treatment, however painful, must be endured robotically.

🔵 **Foresight (Shu Renjun's design, recognized by Chen Ran):** He correctly identifies that this is Shu Renjun's "hidden trump card" — a test that exploits players who cleared the psychological simulation but are not yet back in full-robot mode. The transition moment between simulation and reality is the most vulnerable.

Shu Renjun's final gambit — using No-Distance before his death to tell Hua Changsheng everything

White: Shu Renjun, having deduced that he is guaranteed to die in Hua Changsheng's dungeon (through the mechanism, not through direct combat), makes a final strategic move. Before dying, he uses No-Distance on Hua Changsheng to tell her the complete operational plan he has deduced: Lin Xuan will use his Space Skill to create a fake Shu Renjun in the original space and transfer the real one elsewhere; Qiu Yinong's Wheel of Time will erase Hua Changsheng's memory of the transfer; Chen Ran will follow up with Eternal Kingdom once positioned correctly. By telling Hua Changsheng this, Shu Renjun ensures that even after his death, his consciousness (still existing in Space No. 3) can influence events — because Hua Changsheng will eventually recover her memory and know that Shu Renjun's warning was accurate, granting him retroactive credibility.

🔵 Foresight (Shu Renjun): He predicts not just the operational sequence but also the meta-game: that his warning will seem untrustworthy to Hua Changsheng at first, but once she recovers her memory and confirms his accuracy, she will trust his subsequent strategic advice — even though he is already dead.

🔴 Strategy (Shu Renjun): He converts his inevitable death into a strategic asset by pre-positioning information that will only become useful after he is gone — essentially creating a post-mortem alliance with Hua Changsheng.

PHASE 6 — THE CHESS MATCH ACROSS SPACE / KILLING HUA CHANGSHENG

Lin Xuan executes the fake-real swap — protecting Chen Ran, Qiu Yinong, and Cui Yu

White: At the critical moment when Eternal Kingdom expires and Hua Changsheng is about to use her skill:

Step 1: Lin Xuan activates his Space Skill, transferring five of the six players to Space 1 (slow time flow) and himself to Space 2 (also slow time flow). In the slow time flow, Hua Changsheng cannot raise her arm fast enough to use her skill.

Step 2: Lin Xuan repeatedly transfers Hua Changsheng between spaces, delaying her for approximately 50 seconds of accumulated time.

Step 3: Qiu Yinong (in Space 1) uses Wheel of Time, pulling everyone back to 5 minutes before Eternal Kingdom expired — returning them all to the original space, with no memory of the transfer. Lin Xuan, in Space 2, is unaffected.

Step 4: Lin Xuan transfers True Chen Ran, True Qiu Yinong, and True Cui Yu to Space 3 (normal time), and brings their Space 3 copies back to the original space.

Result: In the original space, only True Shu Renjun and True Hua Changsheng remain — the other four "players" are copies. Hua Changsheng triggers her forced settlement, killing True Shu Renjun and four copies. The True players are safely in Space 3.

🔴 Strategy (Lin Xuan): He correctly identifies that the only viable intervention window is the slow-time-flow space — where even fractions of seconds can be stretched to create operational time unavailable in the original space.

🩷 Reasoning (Lin Xuan): He constructs the full four-step sequence correctly, identifying that Qiu Yinong's Wheel of Time is the key — it creates the amnesia that prevents Hua Changsheng from knowing she was transferred.

Chen Ran and Shu Renjun play the remote chess match — across life and death

White: In separate mental spaces, Chen Ran and Shu Renjun engage in a symbolic chess game that represents their strategic contest over Hua Changsheng's fate. Chen Ran takes black (goes first). Shu Renjun takes white. Each piece placed represents a revealed strategic element:

Chen Ran: "The Eternal Kingdom effect on Qiu Yinong ended during the Highway Decryption."

Shu Renjun: Blocks. "I deduced that long ago."

Chen Ran: "Lin Xuan is my chess piece; he has already used his Space Skill."

Shu Renjun: Blocks again.

The game continues through the full review of Lin Xuan's operation. Chen Ran then uses "Wheel of Time" in the game — repeatedly taking back moves and replaying them, searching for a line that works. After eighteen attempts, he places a piece on the Center Point (the position Shu Renjun had previously claimed) and says: "You have lost."

🩷 Reasoning (Chen Ran/Shu Renjun): The chess match is the clearest representation in the arc of the distinction between "reviewing known information" (placing pieces in established positions) and "finding the new move" (the 19th loop — placing black on Center Point, which breaks the pattern entirely).

🔵 Foresight (Shu Renjun): He had predicted all 18 of Chen Ran's initial loops and prepared responses to each, all resulting in Chen Ran’s entire death (but those 18 layers were merely deceptions for the final layer). The 19th loop — the one Shu Renjun did not predict — is the one that kills him.

Chen Ran identifies the winning move — No-Distance nineteen times through Wheel of Time

White: In the 19th lauer, Chen Ran announces his winning move. The secret: Qiu Yinong's Wheel of Time, combined with Shu Renjun's own No-Distance, creates an unstoppable loop. Every time the clock resets, Shu Renjun (who has no memory of the loop due to Wheel of Time) uses No-Distance on Hua Changsheng again. Over nineteen loops, Shu Renjun uses No-Distance nineteen times on Hua Changsheng — each use consuming mental energy. When Qiu Yinong finally deactivates the Wheel of Time, all nineteen uses' worth of mental exhaustion hit both Shu Renjun and Hua Changsheng simultaneously. Both collapse — Hua Changsheng babbling incoherently, Shu Renjun barely breathing. They are rendered mentally incapacitated without anyone directly attacking them.

🩷 Reasoning (Chen Ran): He correctly identifies that Shu Renjun's own strategic habit (using No-Distance on Hua Changsheng each loop to try to warn or influence her) becomes the weapon — because each use accumulates without Shu Renjun's awareness (Wheel of Time erases the memory of the loop).

🔴 Strategy (Chen Ran): The move is elegant precisely because it requires no direct action against Shu Renjun or Hua Changsheng — it simply lets their own behavior (Shu Renjun's No-Distance use) and its accumulated consequences (mental exhaustion) do the work.

Shu Renjun realizes he "lost to himself" — and weeps

White: In his dungeon, watching the chess match resolve, Shu Renjun understands the final verdict. In life, he killed his mother seeking freedom, and lost — the law, morality, and his own conscience replaced her control. In death, his own No-Distance — deployed in his attempt to outsmart Chen Ran — became the instrument of his defeat. He used his greatest strength against himself, nineteen times over. He murmurs: "I lost to myself?" Two lines of tears fall — the first time in the narrative he has cried and something that Chen Ran abused it, since the start of his strategy.

he three analyze the dungeon's outcome — and identify the "overpraising" trap ahead

White: After Hua Changsheng and Cui Yu are dealt with, Chen Ran, Qiu Yinong, and Lin Xuan conduct a post-mortem. Chen Ran raises a critical concern: the two Hunting Squads in this dungeon seemed oddly weak relative to their star ratings — almost as if they existed to build the three players' confidence artificially. He connects this to Omniscient's known ability to design causality chains: if the Omniscient skill was behind the events that led them to track Gao Lan, then the Hunting Squads were placed specifically to make them feel capable of fighting above their star level. The next dungeon — now that the overpraising is complete — will contain a genuine top-tier Five-Star Hunting Squad. Additionally, advancing to Four-Star now would trigger Six-Star Ego Slayer tracking. Their strategic conclusion: stay at Three-Star until they can jump directly to Six-Star.

🩷 Reasoning (Chen Ran): He correctly identifies the arc pattern: easy wins (boosting confidence) followed by the true test. The Hunting Squads' weakness is not incompetence — it was design.

🔵 Foresight (Chen Ran): He correctly anticipates that the next threat will be a coordinated Four-Star or Five-Star Hunting Squad using combination skills — and that their current combat record makes them high-priority targets.

🔴 Strategy (All three): They establish a binding social contract — staying at Three-Star together — with the threat of collective destruction if violated. Lin Xuan is included in this agreement specifically because his advancement to Four-Star would trigger the cascade that kills all three.

Thus, Chen Ran’s entire strategy ends here.

Chen Ran’s entire strategy recap : Chen Ran’s situation is structurally unwinnable. He is caught between two fundamentally superior forces that invalidate any conventional strategy. On one side stands Omniscient, a True Self Player operating outside the Instance, who uses No-Distance to access all knowledge within Hell’s environment. Through this ability, she constructs a perfect cognitive replica of Chen Ran, a projection that mirrors his state of mind, reproduces his reasoning patterns, and predicts his future decisions. This allows her to pre-counter every move he makes before he even executes it. On the other side are high-tier players such as Shu Renjun, who possess overwhelming experience, refined structured reasoning, and near immunity to manipulation due to Superego or Unity of Heaven and Man cultivation.

This creates a paradox with no apparent solution. If Chen Ran relies on structured reasoning, his thoughts become perfectly predictable to Omniscient. If he abandons

structure, he is simply outclassed by veteran players. In either case, there is no viable decision-making framework that leads to victory.

Chen Ran does not attempt to solve this paradox directly. Instead, he invalidates it by removing the condition that makes it possible: continuity of cognition. His reinterpretation of Eternal Kingdom is central to this shift. While others view it as a one-hour defensive nullification, Chen Ran treats it as a rupture in causality. During this period, Omniscient's No-Distance loses its data stream, all skills are disabled, and the continuous observation required for prediction collapses. The result is a closed, unobservable decision space in which Chen Ran can think freely without being modeled.

Outside of Eternal Kingdom, however, he enforces a strict behavioral constraint on himself. He refuses to think strategically, avoids forming conclusions, and does not interpret information. This is not passivity but deliberate information control. Any thought he finalizes becomes data that Omniscient can replicate. To prevent this, he splits his cognition into two modes: inside Eternal Kingdom, he acts as an active strategist; outside of it, he becomes non-committal and cognitively restrained.

Because he cannot safely think, Chen Ran shifts the burden of reasoning onto others. He forces his allies to generate the insights he needs while keeping himself insulated from the informational consequences. His treatment of Lin Xuan exemplifies this. By openly mocking him, questioning his value, and excluding him from discussions, Chen Ran creates a high-pressure environment designed to test whether Lin Xuan can function without relying on his Space Skill and whether he can deduce under stress. The result is successful: Lin Xuan independently realizes that Hua Changsheng's plan relies on the interaction between Eternal Kingdom's one-hour skill restriction and the Red Light, Green Light immobilization combined with time dilation. This would ensure that Chen Ran is unable to use his skill at the exact moment Hua Changsheng activates hers. Crucially, Chen Ran never reaches this conclusion himself—he needs Lin Xuan to do it so that the information does not become visible to Omniscient. Lin Xuan is thus elevated into an essential execution node in the strategy.

At the same time, Chen Ran conducts precise psychological probing of his opponents. With Hua Changsheng, he targets the concept of paternal love, triggering an immediate and violent emotional reaction. From this, he deduces that Superego cultivation does not eliminate emotional vulnerability; it merely suppresses it. Under the right stimulus, emotional instability still surfaces, providing a potential attack vector. With Shu Renjun, Chen Ran constructs a highly specific narrative: a child raised under oppressive control, who kills his mother to gain freedom, only to find himself constrained again by societal rules. This profile is not arbitrary but derived from the typical background associated with Unity of Heaven and Man cultivation, combined with observed behavior and dungeon context. Shu Renjun's loss of composure and the manifestation of chains confirm the accuracy of the deduction—his immunity is not absolute, but maintained through control.

When analyzing the dungeon itself, Chen Ran applies strict logical reconstruction. The setup presents two statues requiring simultaneous backstabs, yet one of the supposed targets—the Third Person—has already died from a fall, making it impossible to stab them physically. This contradiction leads to the only viable resolution: the Adult and the Third Person share a single body as a chimera. From this, Chen Ran derives three conclusions:

the Adult cannot kill the Third Person because they are physically unified; the Adult is aware of the Third Person while the latter remains unaware; and stabbing the Adult is equivalent to stabbing both. However, Chen Ran presents these conclusions as merely “possible,” because in a player-designed dungeon, an incorrect assertion could be treated as a lie and result in death.

Hua Changsheng then reveals her endgame. Her backstory involves a child who allowed two adults to die by untying their ropes, and her ability, Super Energy Modeling, enables her to directly manipulate score data. She sets all other players’ scores to zero and her own to four, triggering a forced settlement that would instantly eliminate everyone else. Her hidden advantage lies in timing: the combination of immobilization and time dilation ensures that Eternal Kingdom expires before the critical moment, leaving Chen Ran unable to respond. Once again, this trap is not deduced by Chen Ran himself, but by Lin Xuan, fulfilling the role Chen Ran assigned to him.

Cui Yu introduces another layer of complexity through his strategic sacrifice. Recognizing that survival is impossible and that his greatest value lies in eliminating Shu Renjun, he uses the Future Lie mechanism to bind himself to Shu Renjun in an unavoidable death pairing. His speech, while partially ideological, is also calculated to create a momentary hesitation in others, allowing him to secure the necessary position to enforce the binding.

Before his death, Shu Renjun makes a final move by using No-Distance to reveal Chen Ran’s operational plan to Hua Changsheng, including Lin Xuan’s spatial manipulation, Qiu Yinong’s memory resets, and the timing of Eternal Kingdom. His objective is not immediate trust but delayed validation. After memory resets, Hua Changsheng will eventually recover this information and confirm its accuracy, retroactively granting credibility to Shu Renjun even after his death.

Following this, Chen Ran faces Shu Renjun’s psychological dungeon, a simulated psychiatric scenario designed to collapse his perception of reality. He anchors himself to a specific inconsistency—his parents’ white hair, which contradicts deeply ingrained memories of their behavior. This anomaly allows him to reject the illusion. Across the three layers—family, love, and friendship—he consistently prioritizes logical inconsistency over emotional appeal. In the third layer, he identifies Chen Yang’s behavior as unreliable and refuses the offered pill, instead waiting for confirmation from a more consistent source. His key adaptation here is recognizing that his own emotional desire for the scenario to be real makes his perception inherently unreliable.

A hidden fourth layer follows, in which Chen Ran realizes that identity verification has not been completed because the expected confirmation phrase has not appeared. He is subjected to extreme physical and psychological torment, including dismemberment and interrogation, yet he does not react in any way. He understands that the trap is designed to catch those who revert to normal human responses prematurely. Only by maintaining complete non-response does he pass the test.

The final execution phase relies on a complex multi-space architecture orchestrated by Lin Xuan. At the critical moment, players are distributed across spaces with differing time flows. Hua Changsheng is delayed through repeated spatial transfers, while Qiu Yinong resets time, erasing memory of these actions. Lin Xuan then swaps the real players into a separate

space and leaves copies behind. When Hua Changsheng activates her forced settlement, she kills only Shu Renjun and the copies, leaving the real team unharmed.

The true killing move, however, lies in Chen Ran's exploitation of repetition. He recognizes that Shu Renjun will consistently use No-Distance in every loop created by Qiu Yinong's Wheel of Time. Although memory is erased with each reset, the mental cost of using No-Distance accumulates. After nineteen loops, the total strain is applied simultaneously, causing both Shu Renjun and Hua Changsheng to collapse. This victory is achieved without direct confrontation—only by allowing consistent behavior under memory erasure to accumulate into self-destruction.

The accompanying chess match between Chen Ran and Shu Renjun mirrors this process. Each move corresponds to a known strategic element, each reset to a loop, and each replay to repeated execution. Shu Renjun anticipates the first eighteen iterations, but the nineteenth introduces a deviation—a move outside the predictable structure, symbolized by placing a piece at the center. This is the decisive break from determinism.

The entire plan operates across five layers simultaneously: physical (real versus copies), informational (delegated cognition), psychological (false perception of alliances), temporal (loop accumulation), and strategic (indirect action by Chen Ran). Shu Renjun ultimately realizes that he has lost not to Chen Ran, but to his own consistent behavior, stating, "I lost to myself."

After the conflict, Chen Ran identifies a final meta-layer: the apparent weakness of prior opponents indicates a deliberate confidence-building phase. He anticipates stronger, coordinated threats ahead and responds by refusing to advance in rank, avoiding triggers that would escalate danger. A binding agreement is formed to enforce this constraint.

In the end, Chen Ran's strategy operates on an entirely different axis from conventional approaches. He does not win by outthinking, outfighting, or outreacting his opponents. Instead, he breaks observation through Eternal Kingdom, externalizes cognition through others, distrusts his own perception when necessary, converts repetition into accumulated damage, and ultimately forces his enemies into defeating themselves. He never solves problems directly—he restructures the system so that the problems cease to exist. That is why Omniscient cannot fully predict him, why Hua Changsheng kills the wrong targets, and why Shu Renjun is defeated by his own logic.