

FOOLISH GAME OF THE GODS

Chapter 2: I Am a Follower of [Order]

A gentle breeze brushed by under the silvery glow of the bright moon.

On the rooftop of a towering building, Cheng Shi sat at the edge with his legs swinging freely in the air, savoring the spoils of his day.

In his mouth was a blood finger bread, the most common reward from the [Food Trial]. This bread was shaped exactly like a human finger, even mimicking the texture perfectly. Only the taste of cranberry jam bursting in the mouth confirmed that it was merely food and not a severed finger.

Unfortunately, the bread was waxy, and the jam was sour; C-grade food wasn't very palatable.

But none of that mattered as long as it provided energy, and energy meant survival.

Yes, in this world, living was the most important thing.

Since the arrival of the [Gods] half a year ago, the real world had been transformed into an absurd [Faith Game].

Everyone had to choose to follow a certain [Path of Fate] and believe in a [God], surviving in this broken and surreal reality with the blessings of their chosen god.

The world was described as broken because the [Gods] had divided it into countless fragments.

Everyone, now referred to as [God's Followers] or [Players], was randomly assigned to survive within one of these fragments.

For Cheng Shi, that place was the rooftop of an unknown building.

The rooftop spanned about 200 square meters, spacious but with no shelter. It offered no protection from the elements, not even a piece of cloth to cover himself.

The most difficult part was the air walls surrounding the rooftop, preventing him from going downstairs, even though the door was right there.

To break through these air walls and expand his living space, he had to initiate and successfully complete “trials” related to extending space.

And this was part of what made this world “unreal.”

The world was physically divided, and society had completely ceased to function. Players, deprived of all resource support, managed to survive for six months only because the game could provide everything they needed.

In this game, all “resources” had to be obtained through participating in [Wish Trials], encompassing everything from “clothing, food, housing, and transportation” to “divine powers.” As long as you dared to wish, the [Gods] would descend with a [Divine Trial Field] and pair you with suitable teammates.

By successfully completing the trial with your teammates, whatever you wished for would be granted by the [God] and appear before you.

The more outrageous the wish, the harder the trial.

Additionally, each trial increased various scores, allowing you to progress further along the trial path.

Of course, if you're socially anxious, you can opt for solo trials, though they don't increase scores and only offer barely usable rewards.

Those who managed to survive to this point had already adapted to everything within the game, with many becoming experts.

Cheng Shi sat on the rooftop, painstakingly swallowing his food, and looked at the game information within his field of vision.

[Current Global Followers Count: 8,478,114,678]

In just six months, the global population had dwindled to two-thirds of its original 12 billion.

[Faith Game] wasn't a completely safe game; death in the game meant death in reality as well.

However, refusing to accept the trials would mean no access to the resources and materials needed for survival.

The game's purpose was obvious: only by growing stronger could one survive to the end.

“One day left...”

Looking at the striking red text reminder in his view, Cheng Shi sighed.

The [Faith Game] wouldn't allow players to survive idly; every seven days, it automatically matched players with a [Special Divine Trial].

The difficulty of these trials was very high, and if players failed to complete them, even surviving by sheer luck would mean losing the ability to participate in [Wish Trials] for the next cycle.

In other words, failure meant no income for the following week and living off stored supplies!

To be honest, Cheng Shi had quite a bit of food stored. After managing for half a year, he had set up two warehouses on the rooftop.

Although the supplies in the warehouses were of poor quality, they provided sufficient security for his survival.

“I hope the teammates matched with me this time are reliable. After being let down two weeks ago, I already wasted a lot of food last week, and the stock in the warehouse is approaching the warning line...”

As he considered how to tackle tomorrow's challenge, a voice called out from afar.

"Hey, buddy, how's today's haul?"

Looking up, Cheng Shi saw the voice came from a "neighbor" on the adjacent rooftop, a young man with long hair and trendy attire.

The colorful and bizarre clothes he wore were the latest "fashion" acquired from participating in trials.

The man, surnamed Xie.

Although the real world was separated by air walls, these invisible barriers only restricted movement. They did not block light or sound, and even allowed people to toss items to each other.

Because of this, most neighborly relations weren't friendly, as one never knew when a neighbor might pull out a submachine gun and shoot.

The game did not prohibit players from killing each other.

Cheng Shi did have a few neighbors living nearby, one of whom was on the rooftop opposite him.

Both sides were separated by roughly twenty to thirty meters, communicating by shouting.

He claimed to be from Jiang Province, a senior civil engineering student, with the surname Xie.

A bit eccentric, but not a bad person.

Before the descent of the gods, he was worried about finding a job. Little did he know, after their arrival, he was directly employed.

After all, there were no jobs left in the world, and truth be told, being a [Professional Player] could indeed be considered employment.

Thus, he was one of the few “Descenders” who believed the gods had saved the world, or at least saved its employment rate.

Cheng Shi shook the can of tentacle slime drink in his hand and smiled, showing it off as his bounty.

“Holy crap, snot water, huh? Dude, I’ve never admired anyone in my life, but I sure as hell admire you. How can you drink that stuff?”

The young man surnamed Xie looked shocked, his face turning a shade paler as he stared at the drink in Cheng Shi’s hand.

“Snot water” was the nickname for this drink. The tentacle slime was green and viscous, resembling the snot from a hot-cold, hence the name.

Despite this, it was still a good thirst quencher. And due to its viscosity, it even had a slight filling effect.

Cheng Shi chuckled and said, “How do I drink it? Once it’s in your mouth, you can’t bite through it; it just slides right down.”

“ ... ”

Xie’s face turned even paler, and he gagged a few times before saying in disbelief, “Come on, man, I see you come back steady every time, your ladder score must be pretty high. Why do you keep doing solo dungeons and making things hard for yourself?”

Of course, it was because solo trials had lower difficulty and less pressure.

Everyone knew this, so Cheng Shi just smiled without saying anything.

“Hey, we’ve been neighbors for so long, and I still don’t know which god you follow. Care to share? You never know, maybe we’ll be matched together someday, and we can coordinate in advance,” Xie shouted again.

“What about you?” Cheng Shi countered.

“Me? Didn’t I tell you? I follow [Order], doesn’t it show? Civilization flames burn bright, order lasts forever!”

As Xie spoke, he stood up straight and tapped his right fist lightly against his left shoulder, the signature gesture of a [Order] follower.

He did it perfectly, skillfully too, but Cheng Shi knew he was lying.

This conclusion wasn’t drawn from observing minute expressions or movements; being separated by tens of meters, he couldn’t clearly see Xie’s expressions anyway.

It was Cheng Shi’s ability.

Or rather, the [Faith Talent] bestowed upon him by his god.

Since choosing to follow [That One], he had become exceptionally sensitive to lies.

Whenever someone lied, he could sense it. Although he couldn't pinpoint which specific statements were lies, he could piece together enough from the context of their conversation.

Still, even knowing Xie was lying, Cheng Shi chose not to expose him.

After all, neighbors could be good for occasional banter and relieving boredom, so there was no need to sour relations.

Even if Xie wanted to expand his boundaries and invade Cheng Shi's territory, he would need Cheng Shi's consent to begin any related trial.

Trials for extending space could be initiated freely if the target space was unclaimed.

But if the target space belonged to someone, their consent was necessary to decide on a confrontation trial or a cooperation trial.

For Cheng Shi, no trial, whatever it may be, would get his approval.

“Hey, man, it’s no fun keeping secrets. Telling me won’t make any difference. Are we in competition or something?”

Xie was probing.

Cheng Shi raised an eyebrow, ready to counter.

“What’s your [Ladder of Ascent] score, and what’s your ID? I’ll check your rank.”

Xie froze at this, his face tinged with suspicion as he asked, “Are you really a [Order] follower?”

Cheng Shi shook his head, his smile playful:

“No, I’m a follower of [Chaos].”

“.....”

Xie’s shock was evident, his pupils contracted sharply, and his brows furrowed deeply.

Cheng Shi’s tone was calm, so calm it was as if he truly could view the [Order] rankings on the [Ladder of Ascent].

This caught Xie by surprise. He had assumed Cheng Shi, with whom he often chatted, was someone with a more balanced faith.

He hadn't expected him to be a follower of [Chaos].

In the [Faith Game], paths of fate have opposites.

Like [Civilization] and [Chaos], they were opposing paths.

And certain gods within opposing paths had [Faith Opposition].

For example, the first god of the Civilization path, the prelude of Civilization [Order], and the first god of the Chaos path, the prelude of Chaos [Chaos], had opposing faiths.

Their pursuits were fundamentally different, their ideals polar opposites. Thus, under the guidance of their patrons, their followers were encouraged to detest one another.

However, followers of opposing faiths shared the same [Ladder of Ascent], allowing them to see each other on the leaderboard.

The [Ladder of Ascent] ranking determined the opportunity to “face a true god and receive divine favor.” Therefore, if the top ranks were filled with people of opposing faiths, the weaker side might struggle until the next [Meeting].

Xie’s expression changed multiple times; he neither disclosed his score nor pressed further.

Because he truly wasn’t a follower of [Order].

At this moment, the moonlight shone on his face, unable to illuminate the shadow there.

He couldn’t quite fathom Cheng Shi’s depths.

“Are you lying to me?”

Cheng Shi smiled: “I never lie.”

