

The Gods 106

Chapter 106: So-Called Teammates, So-Called Cooperation

Cheng Shi and Li Bola instinctively ignored their unhelpful teammate and continued exchanging their thoughts.

Both of them now had a new understanding of each other.

Cheng Shi thought: This hunter is a skilled player—clear-headed and action-oriented.

Li Bola thought: As expected of a player with a 2400 score—organized, logical, and insightful. A reliable teammate... though being a blood-swapping priest is a bit of a burden.

As for Qin Chaoge...

She wasn't thinking anything. She had fallen asleep.

Cheng Shi glanced at his snoring companion, a smile tugging at his lips.

She's quite the actress, always in a new role, constantly trying to keep everyone guessing.

Li Bola, too, seemed amused by Qin Chaoge's antics, though she hadn't stopped observing her. Every now and then, her gaze lingered on the sleeping bard.

The two awake team members continued their discussion for a long time. Thanks to Li Bola's Wind-Tamer abilities, their conversation was entirely enclosed by a barely perceptible wind barrier, keeping their words contained to just the three of them.

As the gentle breeze swirled around him, Cheng Shi couldn't help but feel a surge of admiration.

If only I could have this kind of elemental affinity one day.

Night fell quickly.

Aside from the guards roughly delivering a meal, no one had disturbed them in the meantime.

As the moonlight filtered through the small windows at the top of the holding cell, Li Bola smiled and nodded at Cheng Shi before transforming into a breeze right in front of them, disappearing without a trace.

The moment she left, Qin Chaoqe snapped her eyes open, her snores vanishing instantly.

“Not sleeping anymore?” Cheng Shi asked, amused.

“What? You wanted me to keep sleeping so you could try something funny?” she shot back.

“... I just took a piss, might want to check your reflection.”

“I already did. I’m gorgeous, and my piss is fragrant. You need to hydrate.”

“?”

Cheng Shi found himself at a loss for words. Her sharp tongue had completely disarmed him, and all he could do was shake his head in defeat.

Qin Chaoqe laughed heartily, leaning against the bars separating their cells with a smug expression, clearly pleased with herself.

“Alright, what’s the plan now?” she asked, oozing confidence.

Cheng Shi’s gaze flicked downward, noticing how one of the bars was pressing between Qin Chaoqe’s chest, accentuating her already impressive figure.

Tsk, she's got a figure that's not far behind Hu Xuan's.

"Shouldn't you be the one asking that?" Cheng Shi quipped.

"Cut the crap. I'm pretty sure your brain works better than mine. You come up with the plan, and I'll follow. Saves time."

Cheng Shi raised an eyebrow in surprise. This woman was unexpectedly practical.

"You trust me?"

"How will I know if I don't try?"

"Alright, then follow the hunter. I have a feeling she's hiding something from us. If we stick close to her, we might figure out what it is.

Can you handle it?"

It was a clear provocation.

Qin Chaoge saw right through it, but she didn't refuse.

Instead, she gave Cheng Shi a sideways glance, then, without a word, tore open the bars of her cell with her bare hands.

With a powerful squat and leap, she vaulted up to the second-story window, easily gripping the iron bars.

Then...

She didn't break the bars. Instead, she crushed the wall surrounding the window with her hands and agilely slipped through, chasing after Li Bola.

Cheng Shi stood there for a moment, completely stunned by the sheer strength she had just displayed.

Huh?

Bard? More like warrior.

Had he missed something? What kind of song had she sung to herself to get that strong?

But that wasn't even the point.

Lady, you just broke out of here in plain sight. Do you think the rest of the prisoners are idiots?

Sure enough, the moment Qin Chaoge broke out, the entire holding cell erupted into chaos.

The other prisoners began shouting, shaking their cell bars with all their might in an attempt to follow her example and break free.

But not everyone was a superhuman like Qin Chaoge.

At least, Cheng Shi wasn't.

After shaking the bars for a while with no success, he was eventually helped by a fellow inmate, who used a piece of wire to pick the lock.

"Not bad, brother. You're pretty skilled at lock-picking," Cheng Shi praised.

“Of course! I used to... wait, what did I used to do again? Eh, never mind. Let’s get out of here while the guards are home for the night. We’re free!”

With that, the lock-picking inmate joined the mob of escapees as they stormed out of the dungeon.

Cheng Shi frowned, watching the man’s retreating figure, lost in thought.

“Whatever, I need to get out of here first.”

The lazy warrior was off sleeping, the mage was missing, the ranger was investigating all over, and now the bard was off on a mission.

Finally, Cheng Shi found himself alone.

Now he could go examine the body.

Yes, examining the corpse.

The fact that one of their teammates had died right at the beginning of the trial had been weighing on Cheng Shi like a thorn in his side.

If he didn’t find out who the killer was and take care of the threat lurking in the shadows, this trial would be anything but smooth.

Despite all the evidence pointing to the follower of [Silence] being corrupted and committing suicide, it was too deliberate and crude to be true.

Li Bola had likely joined them in the dungeon partly for this reason as well. She was likely trying to determine if either he or Qin Chaoqe was the killer.

Back at the inn, Cheng Shi hadn't had a chance to get close to the corpse of the follower of [Silence]. But now, with less than 12 hours since the death, there was still time for him to gather some useful information from the body—assuming he could find it.

During their conversation earlier, Li Bola had already informed them of what happened after the so-called "suicide."

The guards had come to inspect the scene, but they were tight-lipped about the deaths and quickly closed the case without further investigation.

The two bodies had been taken to a place called Eternal Chapel.

All the dead in the town were brought there, awaiting purification by the High Priest and subsequent burial.

So, the current goal was clear: head to Eternal Chapel.

Cheng Shi casually stepped out of the hole Qin Chaoge had made in the wall, looking up at the freshly risen blood moon. He couldn't help but chuckle to himself.

Night is the best time for shady business to thrive.

Good people should stay indoors.

Too bad... I'm not one of them.

...

Meanwhile.

On the rooftop of a religious building north of the Traveler's Office, Li Bola crouched in the shadows, motionless like a predator waiting for its prey.

She wasn't alone. Another figure was lurking beside her.

Upon closer inspection under the dim moonlight, the figure was none other than Qin Chaoge, the bard who had just left Cheng Shi's side.

She was still as carefree as ever, lying on her back in the shadows, looking bored out of her mind.

"You sure he'll come?" Qin Chaoge asked lazily.

Li Bola smirked.

"Of course.

Even though he acted natural, I could sense it—he has a strong desire to see the body."

"Tell me, how'd you figure that out?"

Li Bola chuckled.

"No harm in telling you. People's gazes distort time. While it's not the kind of time we usually think of, it's a real phenomenon.

My god grants me the ability to perceive these distortions. I can sense where everyone is looking.

Cheng Shi disguised it well. His gaze was controlled, precise, and subtle. But no matter how subtle, there are always traces left behind.

And as a hunter, I'm adept at tracking traces."

"Can't you explain it in simpler terms?"

"He looked at the body too few times."

"Few?" Qin Chaoge raised her eyebrows.

"Even the Sage of Life didn't look much, but based on her attitude, you could chalk it up to disinterest.

But Cheng Shi is a priest—a priest of [Decay]. Fresh corpses radiate [Decay] energy. There's no reason he wouldn't want to absorb it.

That divine power is far easier to acquire than through self-harm.

So, he's hiding something...

At first, I wasn't sure what, but once you came chasing after him, it became obvious—he wants to examine the body."

"Why would he need to send me away just to examine a corpse?"

"Everyone has their little secrets."

"Tch, fair enough. But, sister, your secrets are pretty big. Aren't you afraid I might use that against you?" Qin Chaoge teased, her hand wandering over to poke at something "big."

Li Bola snorted coldly.

"Even if I hadn't told you, you would've figured it out by now, right?"

Bard, can you take your hand off my... secrets?"

Caught red-handed, Qin Chaoge sheepishly withdrew her hand, grinning.

"Sorry, it's just... they're hard to resist."

"Do you like women?" Li Bola asked, arching her brow.

Qin Chaoge blinked, her expression turning strange. "Maybe?"

"I can tell you where Hu Xuan is."

"No, no. I like men. I'm very certain of that."

"....."

The air between them grew awkwardly silent for a moment.

Unable to endure the quiet any longer, Qin Chaoge asked:

"We're teammates. Why all the games? Wouldn't it be easier to just work together?"

Li Bola smiled.

"The word 'team' is made up of two radicals—'ear' and 'person.' If you don't listen closely and learn what kind of person someone is, how can you know if they're truly a teammate?"

You've walked your path to this point, and now you're questioning me?

Don't test me, Bard. I know you're not stupid."

"I am stupid..."

"Shh... Quiet. He's coming."