

The Gods 1061

Chapter 1061: [Truth] Has Long Since Entered the Fray

The moment those words fell, the variable Cheng Shi no longer had a future.

An experiment was, in the end, just an experiment. Nobody cared whether a variable vanished or not — unless that variable determined the experiment's outcome.

And, unfortunately, the variable Cheng Shi clearly wasn't that kind of variable.

He stared at Cheng Shi in shock, and in the next instant felt an immense, boundless force ripping his body apart — disintegrating it. And it wasn't just him — it was Cheng Shi himself. No — it was every player in this experiment.

Cheng Shi's heart lurched. He scrambled out of the "Qin Xin" perspective and, through the Truth Limit's Creator mode, saw the entire experiment collapsing at visible speed. But he hadn't manipulated the Truth Limit. He hadn't planned to reconstruct another experiment either. So why was the experiment dissolving as though its supports had been yanked away?

Was something external interfering with his experiment?

Yes — of course there was!

The Ritual of Truth!

The Truth Limit was merely a reflection of the Ritual of Truth. The real Ritual was still in the Grand Scholars' hands. If they activated it to forcibly interfere, they could absolutely snuff out the experiment he was running.

But why now? They hadn't acted earlier or later — why wait until his experiment was complete?

Even if the Ritual of Truth needed a cooldown before its second activation, there was no way the timing coincided this perfectly — finishing its cooldown the exact moment his experiment concluded.

Besides, the experiment was already done. What was the point of stopping it?

If it wasn't about stopping anything, then right now...

The thought hit him like a freight train. Cheng Shi's expression changed in an instant as he suddenly realized: the Grand Scholars' timing was anything but random. The fact that they'd tolerated him completing the entire experiment meant they wanted it completed!

In other words, the Grand Scholars had been waiting for him to finish!

These cunning old foxes had to have been eyeing something on him — which was why they'd cast a sprawling net at the perfect moment to harvest his experiment's results for their own gain.

But that didn't add up either...

The experiment's result was simply meeting another version of himself. Everything Scarred Cheng Shi said was in his head. How would the Grand Scholars extract those memories?

Or maybe it wasn't the memories they wanted?

At this moment, though Cheng Shi's body was disintegrating, his mind was razor-sharp. He clearly remembered that this experiment had been born entirely of a spur-of-the-moment impulse. Before obtaining the Truth Limit, he'd never planned to run his own experiment within [Truth]'s Trial.

Since the experiment's existence was coincidental, how could the Erudition Presidium have predicted it would happen?

They hadn't predicted it — they were improvising?

No. A liar's instinct told Cheng Shi this was no coincidence. These old fossils had been waiting for something all along. And when he connected it to their urgent "we're running out of time" when he hadn't yet realized the Trial was an experiment, his pupils contracted and a terrifying thought surfaced:

Could they be stealing "time"!??

As [Truth] followers, when [Truth] sought to seize [Time]'s authority, saying its followers were stealing time wasn't wrong. But that wasn't what Cheng Shi meant. He meant the Grand Scholars were using him to steal time!

The method was unknown, but Cheng Shi had evidence to support this theory: the Time Battlefield's effect had been weakening!

Was that the Grand Scholars' doing?

If so, it meant the Grand Scholars weren't just observing from outside the Time Battlefield — they were counting on him to keep resetting time within this reconstructed Tusnat experiment ground. They were siphoning [Time] power from him, and he had become [Truth]'s window for plundering [Time]!

This was bad!

Cheng Shi's expression darkened further. It suddenly dawned on him why the Grand Scholars had waited for the experiment to end — because they'd already anticipated he would run this experiment.

Of course, the Erudition Presidium — long buried in history's depths — couldn't possibly know a specific Drifter this intimately, even if they'd been informed about the Drifters' existence.

So the one who'd predicted his actions wasn't the Grand Scholars at all. It was their Benefactor — [Truth]!

[Truth] hadn't just told its followers about the players' existence. It had almost certainly laid out Cheng Shi's personality in exhaustive detail!

So this was never a scheme where NPCs stole player identities. This was a scheme designed to target him — Cheng Shi — personally!

[Truth] had factored him into Its plan to exploit [Time]. It had even predicted his greed once he obtained the Truth Limit. It had calculated every single step, all for the sake of waiting for him to break through the spatiotemporal barrier and connect with some existence in another slice universe.

That existence didn't have to be himself — it could be anyone. [Truth] wouldn't care. It only needed to confirm that [Time]'s power had carried him out of the present and into a parallel space-time that [Truth] could neither observe nor perceive. With that confirmation, [Truth] could verify Its hypothesis and glimpse the universe's truth!

After all, seizing [Time]'s authority was most likely for exactly this purpose!

And [Truth] already had a hypothesis about the universe's truth — otherwise, this experiment wouldn't have been so masterfully deceptive, using layer upon layer of nested traps to lead him into the snare!

Fine — fine! What a [Truth]! What a glorious continuation of [Civilization]!

'Seems a certain clown has been on Your shopping list of experimental materials for a long time. Otherwise, how could You know my greed and desire for revenge so thoroughly!'

Cheng Shi was furious. He felt like a genuine clown at this moment — not the job class, just the pure pejorative.

But there was no time for self-recrimination. He knew he had to act immediately. While everything hadn't completely fallen apart, he needed to extract himself and his teammates from this identity experiment that was about to be reconstructed.

The question was: how?

The Ritual of Truth wasn't the Truth Limit. It hung above the experiment, an external force that altered the experiment and was unaffected by time resets. So even if Cheng Shi reactivated the Time Battlefield and dragged the timeline back to the starting point, the only thing affected would be the collapsing experimental environment.

Trees, buildings — they'd simply change shape and position while continuing to crumble. Utterly useless for saving the players.

In this moment, the survivor seemed to have stumbled into a dead end, with a python called "conspiracy" lurking in the shadows, waiting to strike.

Saying he wasn't panicking would be a lie. Cheng Shi was panicking out of his mind.

But he certainly wouldn't sit and wait for death. In a Trial where a true god had entered the fray, the Grand Scholars carried so much of [Truth]'s will that every contingency he'd prepared against mortals was instantly rendered useless. At this point, Cheng Shi knew: relying solely on his own power was no longer enough to turn the tables. His only hope now lay in the divine balance of power.

As the Fear Faction's sole lackey and the Approach Faction's "offering of destiny," Cheng Shi absolutely refused to believe that [Void]'s two patrons had no reaction to [Truth]'s machinations. They must be "fighting back" — it was just happening in dimensions he couldn't see.

And [Truth] must have found allies of its own. Otherwise, it alone could never have held off two [Void] sovereigns.

Which meant his two Benefactors were tied down.

In this moment, to steady his nerves, Cheng Shi once again pulled out the [Corruption] Container. As fear receded like a tide, his thinking became exceptionally clear.

When waiting for rescue was hopeless, the only option was to take the initiative — to call out through prayer and draw the attention of the Benefactors beyond the Trial, thereby injecting a thread of vitality into this dead end.

But how to get their attention was another problem. After racking his brain, Cheng Shi suddenly thought of one desperate measure.

Time Has Path!

Remember the finger-snap he'd made when Fang Yuan pulled out the key and called down the meteor fire rain?

At the time, Cheng Shi had activated Fate Has Divergence, but the experiment hadn't responded at all. So he'd concluded that [Truth] was externally blocking every force that might destroy the experiment. But looking back now — what if "fate's divergence" wasn't meant to bring down the meteor fire rain, but to create the very predicament he was in right now?

If so — could activating Time Has Path now rewind everything back to the moment before they'd found the Truth Limit!?

After all, what was restricted to working only within the experiment was the Time Battlefield. Whether Time Has Path could affect the entire Trial was something even Cheng Shi, as its user, couldn't be certain of. But at this point, who cared about certainty? Just try it. If it didn't work, he'd think of something else.

With intense resolve in his eyes, Cheng Shi snapped his fingers one final time before his body fully disintegrated — activating the [Time] talent that uncannily mirrored [Fate]'s own:

Time Has Path.

The fragile snap echoed, and everything...

Remained exactly the same.

"...#\$%&*!"

Cheng Shi's suspended heart quietly died.

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Chapter 1062: The Mortals' Experiment Is Over — The Gods' Has Only Just Begun

When the heart dies, the lamp goes out. When the person dies, the path fades.

The Ritual of Truth was indeed grinding everything away — disassembling the fuel it had marked and feeding it all into that brilliant nebula, stockpiling power for the next experiment.

Cheng Shi's form slowly crumbled away within the experiment. From feet to head, from limbs to features — in moments, all that remained was a mouth. And yet even that last mouth still curved upward in that final instant.

Nobody in their right mind could have managed a smile at a time like this. So why was Cheng Shi still smiling?

Because...

[Birth]!

Don't forget — Hu Xuan had planted a Pregnancy Rhythm on Cheng Shi's arm. So long as [Birth] was also part of this divine clash, he could always revive through [Birth]'s power and return to the world.

So in life's final second, he was waiting for a miracle — a miracle belonging to [Birth]. He'd experienced one before, and as it turned out, where there was a first, there would be a second.

In the instant those last lips were about to dissipate, a surge of [Birth]'s revival power erupted, pushing back against [Truth]'s erosion and reclaiming Cheng Shi's flesh.

The curve of his smile grew wider and wider. As the revived body solidified, the skin pulled taut by that exaggerated grin made his face look almost ferocious.

But the revival's power had its limits. Once the Pregnancy Rhythm exhausted every drop of its strength, Cheng Shi's smile froze — then inverted in an instant, the triumphant smirk collapsing into helpless panic.

[Birth] could give him a second life, but not a third. [Truth]'s erosion continued. After reopening his eyes, the Pregnancy Rhythm had merely postponed his death by a few more minutes.

"Damn..."

When death loomed close, even the dying cursed.

Cheng Shi was losing his mind. He scraped together the last dregs of his strength, struggled to snap his fingers, and warped himself back to Hu Xuan's side — hoping to buy time by spamming Pregnancy Rhythm reapplications like exploiting a bug, stalling until his Benefactors could break free from the divine standoff to save him.

He also knew Fang Yuan was with Hu Xuan. That loophole-exploiting [Order] follower might just find some gap in the rules to keep everyone alive.

And sure enough — Cheng Shi guessed right. Fang Yuan was indeed protecting the group. Though his method was rather creative.

When Cheng Shi dragged himself to the group, all five were unscathed — in far better shape than he was.

He was astonished. But what shocked him even more wasn't their condition — it was the utterly absurd scene before him.

Three identical pudgy figures were tearing pages from the books in their hands and shouting: "Experimentation-based displacement is prohibited in this area!" It was this [Order] power that had held off [Truth]'s erosion, keeping their bodies intact.

As for why there were three identical pudgy men — that wasn't Fang Yuan's doing. It was the work of Meng Youfang, standing behind him pale as a ghost but grimly holding on. The God Worship Society president had summoned two copies of "Fang Yuan" in one breath, and all three were barely fending off the Ritual of Truth's decomposition with their combined [Order] power.

Behind Meng Youfang were Chen Yi and Wei Zhi, currently locked in a wide-eyed staring contest over Hu Xuan at their feet, utterly baffled.

Because Hu Xuan was going into labor.

"!!??"

Could you even imagine the scene these people had assembled? When Cheng Shi beheld it, his brain short-circuited — so thoroughly that he nearly forgot he was dying.

Hu Xuan's belly was swollen larger than the blood moon over Far Dusk Town.

'Lady — we seriously have to pick now!?'

'Does a baby born during a crisis develop a stronger sense of crisis or something!?'

'This is insane! [Birth] doesn't seem like the impatient type! Who did you inherit this urgency from!?'

The weakened Cheng Shi materialized and immediately crumpled to his knees. Seeing his brother arrive, Meng Youfang's flagging spirit surged. He blurted out:

"Brother — [Truth] actually dared attack me! Is It trying to reconstruct a new god out of my body!?"

"..."

Nearby, Chen Yi's face was iron-green: "Hold on a little longer. He won't abandon me."

Fang Yuan was drenched in sweat and couldn't spare the breath to reply. Wei Zhi eyed the others with a shifting gaze and let out a contemptuous snort:

"A ragtag mob. Nothing more."

"..."

Cheng Shi gritted his teeth, stood up, shoved Wei Zhi aside with a "you want to do it yourself?", and staggered over to Hu Xuan's side before collapsing again. He knew it was terrible timing, but what else could he do? He was the only Priest present — someone had to deliver the baby.

Besides — this was one job he had experience with.

Looking at Hu Xuan, nearly unconscious from pain, his brow furrowed. He realized this birth was nothing as simple as he'd assumed.

For a Life Sage who gestated endlessly, a difficult delivery meant something extraordinary. Could she be ascending in status right now?

Was the true Eternal Sun about to be born?

A jolt of electricity ran through Cheng Shi. He immediately drew his scalpel.

This one was good! This one had to be delivered!

Everyone's salvation might depend on the Sage's labor!

But [Truth]'s erosion had truly drained him. He held the scalpel to Hu Xuan's swollen belly and traced back and forth without managing a single incision. In the end, Wei Zhi snatched the scalpel from his hand and gave a mildly disdainful huff:

"I'll do it. Where do I cut?"

Cheng Shi's eyelids were growing heavy. He removed his mask, cast a group-wide Healing on everyone under shared divine grace, then pointed at Hu Xuan's belly:

"Cut hard. As long as you can break through, any technique is fine.

The Cheng Method of Delivery prioritizes one thing — going with the flow."

The words had barely left his mouth when — sshk! — Chen Yi plunged his dagger into Hu Xuan's stomach.

The next second, Hu Xuan vanished.

She'd been banished into the past by Chen Yi. Only the "fetus" wrapped in amniotic membrane hung suspended in midair for a moment before crashing down in a splash of fluid beside Cheng Shi.

'Wait — you...'

Cheng Shi was about to curse when his gaze locked onto the infant — because this "boy" was rather too well-developed. Why was he so tall?

Hold on — wait!!!

Why was it a grown man!?

Where was his Sage!?

...

Meanwhile, on the other side.

Everything Cheng Shi experienced, the gods were experiencing too.

[Fate] was dead set on dragging the universe down with it, forcing every god present to set aside their differences and jointly prop up the fragile universe.

Only [Truth] stood motionless, watching [Fate]'s rampage. Pages turned lazily. Perfectly calm.

It didn't seem afraid of the universe collapsing. No — the rather cheerful tempo of Its page-turning suggested It was actually looking forward to [Fate]'s divergence.

[Deceit] gazed at [Truth] with inscrutable eyes.

[Folly], behind It, snorted a laugh and shook Its head:

"The end of one foolish act is often the beginning of another.

[Truth]'s experiment is about to start. How do you intend to shut the gods' mouths, [Deceit]?"

"?" [Deceit] glanced back at [Folly] and returned the snort. "I'll chop you into stuffing, wrap you into dumplings, and stuff them down their throats. Does that method satisfy you?"

With that, [Deceit] actually released Its hold on the universe and attacked [Folly] directly.

[Folly]'s eyes sharpened. It vanished on the spot. And the universe, robbed of two gods' support, plummeted — spider-web cracks racing across it, teetering on the brink of collapsing into the void and total annihilation.

And in that exact moment, within the Trial — completely oblivious, desperately trying to survive — Cheng Shi activated Time Has Path.

Every solemn-faced god was preparing to invoke their authority and summon the Convention to collectively save the world — when [Fate] suddenly stopped, as though its madness had been cured.

It steered the divergence back onto the proper road and ceased dragging the universe toward its funeral.

For a moment, the gods stared at each other, expressions varied.

And at the same instant, [Birth] — unable to bear the commotion any longer — sent a thread of divine power toward the Trial and spoke:

"Child — live —

Birth — continues —"

The gods followed Its gaze, finally piercing through [Truth]'s obstructions to see everything happening within the Trial. They furrowed their brows in unison. [Deceit], seeing Its clown was still alive, rolled Its eyes and casually "translated" — or rather, reinterpreted — [Birth]'s words for [Truth]:

"Hear that, Bookworm? The Boss says: release my follower. Otherwise, the Boss will keep slapping you around."

"..."

That was decidedly not what [Birth] had meant. But the gods understood It wanted to protect Its child, so they turned their collective gaze on [Truth] — waiting to see how this second god of [Civilization], who'd stirred up such a monumental mess, intended to wrap things up.

The Starlight Canon flipped its pages faster. [Truth] gave a casual smile:

"Relax. The Trial is about to end. Their preliminary experiment was a great success.

Next... it's my turn to take over."

"!!!"

The words had barely fallen when the void changed color.

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Chapter 1063: [Truth] — The True Lunatic

How long had it been since [Truth] personally conducted an experiment?

Aside from the faith fusion It had pushed through when [Void] lobbied the gods to sign the Convention, the legends surrounding this [Civilization] god lurking behind the scenes mostly came from Its followers and the [Truth] Empire that had vanished from the Land of Hope.

If the followers were already this insane, could the god possibly be any saner?

As it turned out — absolutely not.

Among the assembled gods, likely only [Deceit] knew what [Truth] intended to do.

[Folly] certainly knew — but It had already left, deeming [Truth]'s scheme a foolish act before departure.

[Death] and [Birth] could guess at some of it, yet they still believed [Truth] mightn't be so bold.

[Memory] gazed at the Starlight Canon with a slightly frosty expression. It could sense that [Truth] had stolen [Existence]'s authority. But gods stealing each other's authority was nothing unusual. Besides, [Memory] hadn't been able to provide the memories sealed away by [Fate] when [Truth] had come asking — so It hardly had standing now to obstruct [Truth]'s self-exploration.

As for the others — they were mostly just watching the spectacle. [Oblivion] in particular was practically hoping [Truth] would stir up an even bigger commotion, so It could seize the opportunity to obliterate a few things It had wanted obliterated.

[Deceit]'s upturned eyes swept over every god's reaction, then turned to [Truth] with a sneering scoff:
"Do you think your foolish act will produce an answer?"

The Starlight Canon offered no reply. It merely accelerated its page-turning — faster and faster, until the entire book trembled.

As it turned, countless pages erupted from the book and scattered like a sky full of stars. The radiance of knowledge illuminated the entire void. Orderly starlight emanated enlightenment that penetrated to the essence of things.

The flickering stars dispersed in all directions, their trajectories linking into lines — like a giant brush painting the world, like a divine spider spinning its web. Those crisscrossing rays of starlight seemed to weave together into an infinitely vast divine calculation engine, while the tangled stellar tracks appeared to link into layer upon layer of divine-script seals.

Clearly, [Truth] had been preparing for this moment for quite some time. Such a grand experimental setup was exceedingly rare — its scale so immense it seemed to encompass the entire universe.

Wait!

The gods' gazes turned grave all at once. Was this lunatic [Truth] actually planning to experiment on the universe itself!?

It wasn't impossible. After all, Its indifference to [Fate]'s rampage earlier looked remarkably similar to how It was now treating the entire universe.

This was bad — [Truth] was about to lose its mind!

And not just a little — a total breakdown!

What kind of day was this? One lunatic after another.

The gods' expressions shifted dramatically. They were debating whether to immediately halt this experiment — one that appeared no less catastrophic than [Fate]'s divergence — when [Fate] had already moved.

It didn't know what [Truth] wanted. But as a [Void] sovereign who could see through appearances to essence, It had already felt the dense, unmistakable aura of world-annihilation radiating from [Truth].

This madman wanted to destroy the world — just like Itself!?

No — absolutely not!

Fixed destiny had not yet become fixed. The universe could not yet embrace the void. The world's script must not reach its finale here!

So [Fate] struck. It layered misfortune upon [Truth] and scattered fixed destiny across the universe. It called on no one, warned no one — only wanting to use Its own power to crush [Truth]'s experiment, to strangle this insane world-destruction experiment in its cradle, to ensure this [Civilization] continuation that sought to shatter fixed destiny would continue no more.

Its luminous eyes turned cold. Wind rose from the void.

The frigid wind of nothingness blew those even colder star-filled eyes directly before [Truth]. Before the gods could react, while [Truth] was still preoccupied with preparations, [Fate] unleashed a full-power strike against the Starlight Canon — now reduced to nothing but its cover.

This blow carried the full force of a [Void] sovereign in the current era. It was [Fate]'s aspiration for fixed destiny — and Its frigid contempt for [Civilization].

It knew that under the Convention's protection, It couldn't kill [Truth]. But as long as It inflicted damage — severe damage — the remaining divine power would be insufficient to support [Truth]'s pursuit of meaningless truth.

And at that very same moment, [Deceit] also moved.

But It didn't bother with [Truth]. It didn't seem to care about [Truth]'s experiment at all. Instead, It cast Its gaze down upon [Truth]'s Trial, and with a simple blink, plucked the wretched players out.

When the Trial-interrupted notification appeared in Cheng Shi's vision, he knew the divine balance of power had produced a result. Even if [Void] hadn't won, they'd at least stopped [Truth]'s cheating.

That should have been cause for celebration. But Cheng Shi never expected that when he opened his eyes again, the familiar void was absent, the Rest Area rooftop was absent — instead, he'd been fast-forwarded straight to the audience with a god. And what an audience — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...

'Holy shit, why are there so many!?'

As pair after pair of divine eyes glanced in his direction, the weakened Cheng Shi broke into a full-body cold sweat, feeling even weaker than before.

'What is this — a conference?'

'This isn't "divine balance of power" — this is an offline brawl!'

'Who's fighting who?'

Seeing [Truth] surrounded in the center, a sky full of stars radiating the breath of knowledge, clearly in the middle of unleashing some ultimate move — so... was it [Truth] versus everyone!?

'It's that fierce!?'

Though the gods hadn't all shown up.

[Life] was down by one. [Descent] had sent only one.

[Civilization] had members absent, though their will resonated here.

[Folly] seemed to be gone. [Time] hadn't come in person either.

The latter made sense — [Time] never had the time. But what was [Folly]'s excuse?

Seeing the rival steal the spotlight, was It too embarrassed to attend?

That tracked, actually — after all, It didn't even have Its authority anymore.

As it turned out, repeated audiences with gods did build a certain immunity. Cheng Shi felt terrified beyond measure, and yet his mind remained clear enough to survey the situation, analyze the gods, and check on his teammates...

[Deceit] had fished out five people. Only Hu Xuan — and the man she'd delivered — remained unaccounted for.

Among the five, Fang Yuan had completely short-circuited. When the [Order] follower realized every pair of eyes before him belonged to a deity, his in-game composure — steady as a mountain — evaporated entirely. His brain buzzed, sweat poured, and he felt this scene was worse than withstanding [Truth]'s erosion head-on.

He'd met gods before. Just never this many at once. The combined number of gods present exceeded the total he'd ever encountered in his entire life — how could he not be terrified!?

Wei Zhi wasn't faring well either, even though she wasn't the real Wei Zhi.

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Chapter 1064: The Quest Never Ends — I Am [Truth]

Foolish Game of the Gods

When the heart dies, the light goes out. When the person dies, the path crumbles with them.

The Ritual of Truth was indeed grinding everything down — decomposing every piece of fuel it had marked and cramming it all into that dazzling nebula, stockpiling power in preparation for the next experiment.

Cheng Shi's silhouette began to disintegrate, slowly, steadily — from feet to head, from limbs to features. Before long, all that remained was a single mouth. And somehow, even in that final instant, the corners of those remaining lips curled upward into a smile.

No one in their right mind could find something to smile about at a moment like this. So why was Cheng Shi still smiling?

Because...

Birth!

Don't forget — Hu Xuan had once planted a Pregnancy Rhythm in Cheng Shi's body. As long as Birth was still a player in this divine gambit, he could always be revived through Birth's power — reborn into the world.

So in this final second of life, he was waiting for a miracle. A miracle belonging to Birth. He'd experienced one before, and as the saying went — where there was a first, there would be a second.

The instant those lips were about to evaporate into nothing, a surge of Birth's revival power erupted outward, pushing back against Truth's erosion and reconstituting Cheng Shi's flesh.

The arc of that smile grew wider and wider. As his body solidified, the grin stretched so grotesquely wide that his face contorted into something almost feral.

But revival had its limits. Once the Pregnancy Rhythm had expended every last drop of its restorative power, the arc of Cheng Shi's smile froze — and in the very next heartbeat, it collapsed downward, morphing from sneering bravado into helpless panic.

Birth could give him a second life, but not a third. Truth's erosion continued unabated. Even after Cheng Shi's eyes reopened, the Pregnancy Rhythm had merely delayed his death by a few more minutes.

"Shit..."

A dying man's last words tend to be profane.

Cheng Shi was losing his mind. He channeled every last scrap of strength in his body and, trembling, managed to snap his fingers — swapping himself back to Hu Xuan's side. His plan was to buy time by planting Pregnancy Rhythms on himself over and over, exploiting the loophole until his Benefactor could spare a hand from the divine gambit to save him.

He also knew Fang Yuan was with Hu Xuan. That loophole-loving Order follower might just find some crack in the rules to keep everyone alive.

And sure enough, Cheng Shi's guess was right. Fang Yuan was indeed keeping the others safe — though his method was rather creative.

When Cheng Shi struggled to his companions' side, he found all five of them completely unharmed, in far better shape than he was.

He was stunned. But what shocked him even more wasn't their condition — it was the utterly absurd scene unfolding before his eyes.

In front of him stood three identical pudgy figures, each tearing pages from the books in their hands and shouting outward: "Experimentation is prohibited in this area!" It was this power of Order that held Truth's erosion at bay and kept their bodies intact.

As for why there were three pudgy figures... that wasn't Fang Yuan's doing. It was Meng Youfang — the God Worship Society president standing behind them, ashen-faced and gritting his teeth through sheer willpower — who had summoned two additional 'Fang Yuans' in a single breath. Only through three combined streams of Order's feeble power were they barely holding off the Ritual of Truth's decomposition.

Behind Meng Youfang stood Chen Yi and Wei Zhi. The two men were staring wide-eyed at Hu Xuan on the ground below them, exchanging baffled looks, utterly at a loss.

Because Hu Xuan was going into labor.

"!?!?"

Can you imagine what kind of scene these people had produced? When Cheng Shi laid eyes on this tableau, his brain short-circuited so completely he nearly forgot he was dying.

Hu Xuan's belly was swollen bigger than the blood moon that had hung over Far Dusk Town that night.

'Lady, did you really have to pick THIS moment?!

'Are babies born during a crisis born with better survival instincts or something?!

'Come on — Birth isn't exactly known for being in a rush! Who on earth did you inherit that impatience from?!

The weakened Cheng Shi collapsed to his knees the instant he appeared. Meng Youfang's flagging spirits surged the moment he saw his brother. The words tumbled out before he could think:

"Brother! Truth actually dared to make a move on me! Could He be trying to use my body to reconstruct an entirely new god?!"

"..."

On the other side, Chen Yi's face was iron-gray. "Just hold on a little longer. He won't abandon me."

Fang Yuan's face was drenched in sweat — he couldn't spare the breath to respond. Wei Zhi, however, let his gaze sweep appraisingly over the group before letting out a snort of derision:

"A rabble. Nothing more."

"..."

Cheng Shi clenched his teeth, hauled himself upright, shoved Wei Zhi aside with a muttered "You think you can do better?", and staggered over to Hu Xuan's side before dropping to his knees again. He knew the timing was terrible, but what choice did he have? He was the only Priest present — someone had to deliver the baby.

'Besides, it's not like this is my first time.'

He looked at Hu Xuan, who was so wracked with pain she was on the verge of blacking out, and his brow furrowed. He realized this birth might not be as simple as he'd assumed.

For a Life Sage who was perpetually in a state of gestation, what kind of delivery could possibly cause her this much difficulty? Unless — was she about to ascend?

Was the true Eternal Sun about to be born?

A jolt of electricity shot through Cheng Shi. He instantly drew his scalpel.

'This baby is a game-changer! This baby HAS to be born!'

'Everyone's survival might be riding on this one delivery!'

But Truth's erosion had truly sapped every ounce of his strength. He held the scalpel against Hu Xuan's distended belly and waved it back and forth without managing to leave so much as a scratch. In the end, Wei Zhi snatched the scalpel from his hand, huffed with mild contempt, and said:

"I'll do it. Where do I cut?"

Cheng Shi's eyelids were growing heavier by the second. He tore off his mask, hit everyone — himself included — with a burst of shared-blessing healing, then pointed at Hu Xuan's belly and said:

"Cut hard. As long as you get it open, that's good technique.

The Cheng Method of Delivery values one thing above all — going with the flow."

The words had barely left his mouth when — shhk — Chen Yi drove his dagger into Hu Xuan's belly from the side.

An instant later, Hu Xuan was gone.

Chen Yi had exiled her into the past. All that remained was the 'fetus,' still wrapped in its amniotic membrane, suspended in midair for a heartbeat before it — and all the amniotic fluid — splashed down beside Cheng Shi.

'What the — you...'

Cheng Shi was about to curse, but his eyes were immediately drawn to the newborn. Because this 'boy's' body was... more than a little too well-developed. Why was he so tall?

Wait — hold on!!!

Why was it a grown man?!

Where's my Sage?!

...

Elsewhere.

Everything Cheng Shi was experiencing, the gods were experiencing too.

Fate had set His mind on dragging the entire universe to its doom, leaving every god present no choice but to set aside their grievances and work together to prop up the fragile cosmos.

Only Truth remained motionless, watching Fate's machinations with pages lazily turning — still perfectly composed.

From all appearances, He didn't fear the universe's collapse. No — the brisk, almost cheerful tempo of those turning pages suggested He was looking forward to whatever came of Fate's wayward path.

Deceit studied Truth with an inscrutable gaze, eyes dark and unreadable.

Behind Him, Folly let out a snicker and shook His head:

"One foolish act ends, and another begins.

Truth's experiment is about to start. So tell me, Deceit — how do you plan to shut the gods' mouths?"

"?" Deceit glanced back at Folly and returned the snicker with one of His own. "I'll mince you into filling, stuff you into dumplings, and cram them down their throats. Does that method of shutting mouths satisfy you?"

With that, Deceit abandoned His share of holding up the universe entirely and lunged straight at Folly.

Folly's eyes narrowed, and He vanished on the spot. The universe, suddenly bereft of two gods' support, lurched downward with a sickening drop, cracks spreading across it like a spiderweb. It teetered on the brink of plunging into the Void — total annihilation.

And at that very moment — inside the Trial, knowing none of this, acting purely out of self-preservation — Cheng Shi activated Time Has Path.

Every god steeled themselves, ready to invoke their Authority and summon the Convention to collectively save the world. But then Fate suddenly stopped — as though the madness had simply... passed — and released His grip on destruction.

He steered the divergent path back onto the proper road, no longer dragging the universe down with Him.

For a long moment, the gods stared at one another, expressions as varied as their natures.

And at that same instant, unable to endure the turmoil any longer, Birth extended a single thread of divine power toward the Trial and spoke:

"Child — live —

Birth — continues —"

The gods followed Birth's gaze, finally piercing through Truth's obstruction to see everything unfolding in the Trial. Their collective brows knitted. Deceit, spotting that the Clown was still alive, rolled His eyes and promptly 'translated' Birth's words for Truth:

"Hey, Bookworm — did you catch that? The Boss says let my follower go, or She'll keep smacking you around."

"..."

That was most certainly not what Birth had meant. But the gods understood Her intent was to protect Her child, so they turned their eyes to Truth — waiting to see how this second god of the Civilization path, who had caused such an upheaval, intended to bring this to a close.

The Starlight Canon's pages flipped faster. Truth smiled casually:

"Relax. The Trial is about to end. Their preliminary experiment was a success.

What comes next... is for me to take over."

"!!!"

The instant those words fell, the Void itself changed color.

Chapter 1065: [Truth] Falls in Pursuit — Truth Emerges from Pursuit

If shock could be ranked by degree, then what the mortals were witnessing right now — this apocalyptic spectacle — was undeniably maximum.

No one could believe a true god had just self-destructed. Even Cheng Shi, who'd watched [Prosperity]'s self-annihilation firsthand, found it inconceivable that [Truth] would walk the same road.

He even wondered whether this was a fabrication the Fun God had whipped up, because otherwise it was simply too outrageous.

For what purpose?

A god, using His own life as an experiment — what kind of joke was this?

[Prosperity] had wanted universal flourishing, but before being schemed into a cage, She'd never intended to die.

The gods had surrounded [Truth], yes, but they hadn't seemed ready to strike. Only [Fate] had launched an attack. Was that really enough to push [Truth] into a do-or-die gamble?

Besides, wasn't His experimental method a bit crude? Blasting a hole in the sky would reveal the universe's truth?

Of course not. As the incarnation of wisdom and inquiry, [Truth]'s experimental methodology couldn't possibly be that rough. His core philosophy certainly wasn't "brute force solves everything."

If raw power could produce miracles, the universe's truth would've long since become casual gossip among the gods.

So "piercing the sky" was merely the opening move — [Truth] seizing the initiative.

He'd wandered the path of seeking the universe's ultimate truth for untold ages. All He'd lacked was a fresh experimental concept. And just now, inside that trial, a certain clown had delivered the perfect inspiration.

If using [Truth]'s power to reconstruct an object to a different position represented [Truth]'s restoration of [Time], then reconstructing an entire starry sky into a different state could represent [Truth] simulating a starry sky beyond the spatiotemporal barrier.

After all, both crossed "time."

Following that logic one level higher: if a world He couldn't reach truly existed out there, then by reconstructing the current world to be indistinguishable from the target world, the experiment's host could be considered to have carried the entire universe across into another spacetime!

Even if it wasn't true traversal, the resonance between two identical worlds would give [Truth] the answer He sought.

And that was exactly what [Truth] intended to do — and was doing!

He'd been preparing for ages, having everything in place even before approaching [Deceit]. But this experiment required breaking the spatiotemporal barrier, so He needed [Time]'s power.

[Time], however, had no time to let Him steal His Authority. So [Truth] devised an alternative — exploiting a loophole in the Convention to find a lever for [Time]'s power. That lever was hidden in...

Cheng Shi.

[Truth] had calculated that to win the trial, Cheng Shi would inevitably reset time again and again, searching for opportunities. So He issued an Edict: His followers — the Erudition Presidium's Grand Scholars — were to lay formation arrays throughout the experiment ground and siphon [Time]'s power.

That was also why Cheng Shi's Time Battlefield kept weakening — from the very first reset, [Time]'s power had been stolen.

No one would have imagined a true god would stoop to harvesting divine power from a mortal.

Yet [Truth] had. Or rather — this was [Truth]. He would never let pride stand between Him and His goal. Otherwise, He wouldn't have played the role of [Prosperity]'s son at the Assembly of Gods Convention.

Still, the core issue was simply that [Time] had no time. The gods searched for Him everywhere and found nothing; their only option was to work through His followers.

And Cheng Shi was simultaneously a [Void] walker. If [Truth] believed the clown carried no schemes relating to [Void] and [Existence], He'd be a fool.

So from the moment Cheng Shi was pulled into this special trial, everything was conspiracy. Every last bit was calculation.

[Truth] was still [Truth] — utterly without sentiment.

He'd schemed against not only Cheng Shi but His own followers. In other words, He'd never truly regarded His believers — they were merely variables with subjective initiative inside His experiment.

He had told the Grand Scholars about the players' existence, yes. But He'd never intended for them to actually replace the players in this era. Because the moment the trial concluded, His experiment would begin — and the entire universe would be demolished and rebuilt. What did a handful of mortals drowned in history's river matter compared to that?

And lest anyone forget — no matter how miraculous the Ritual of Truth was, it was still [Truth]'s creation. When the true god who wielded [Truth]'s Authority from His Divine Throne personally marked the universe and presided over its reconstruction, who could possibly stop this mad [Truth] experiment?

Nobody — because the gods had already been deceived!

[Truth] had used a confrontation with [Void] to capture the entire universe's attention, pinning down the gods so they couldn't interfere with His experiment. Then He dissolved the cosmos into raw material and rebuilt another world.

That was sufficient.

And if it wasn't? Then He'd throw in His own life!

A true god's existence could fuel this pre-planned experiment all the way to its final solution.

When the universe was rebuilt and truly resonated with another world, someone would naturally sense the truths flowing through it — truths that didn't belong to this world!

That someone wouldn't be the now-fallen [Truth]. But that someone would never forget that the real "truth" was something [Truth] had delivered.

Put simply, [Truth] was gambling too. He was betting that behind this world existed at least one counterpart [Truth] who shared His curiosity, who also yearned to reach outward. And world reconstruction would be one method of mutual communication.

It was like two telegraph operators in an apocalypse, each unaware the other existed, scanning frequencies. The moment they locked onto the same channel and confirmed each other's existence — confirmed that beyond themselves, other [Truths] existed — then [Truth] would, by definition, no longer be the truth.

And that was why [Truth] had stopped valuing His own life. He knew: when [Truth] falls in pursuit, truth emerges from pursuit!

So what the gods and players saw before them was not [Truth]'s actual experiment ground. This space was merely a cage — a stage [Truth] had built to hold the universe's gaze. The real experiment had long since begun outside this place, which meant the cosmos was, even now, being ground to dust under [Truth]'s planned experiment — hurtling toward destruction.

Among the assembled gods, some had clearly arrived at the same conclusion. [Fate], having regained His composure, also realized He'd been duped. He was about to break free of this pocket space to halt [Truth]'s experiment when His twin god shook His head with a sigh:

"Too late...

If Bookworm hadn't chosen to die, we could still leave. But by choosing death, He ensured we can't destroy the experiment.

If I'm not mistaken, the old relic is about to arrive.

An irresistible Final Oracle...

The Convention will probably put Bookworm's Authority on the table for everyone to pick over. Of course, He'll have left behind distribution conditions elaborate enough to buy Him all the time He needs.

Heh — give a god who's studied rules His entire existence credit for finding a loophole in the Convention.

The last one to use a Final Oracle as a weapon was the Prosperity Mother, wasn't it? One after another... truly fascinating.

Death... is it always liberation?"

[Deceit]'s words were thought-provoking, but [Fate]'s focus lay elsewhere. He regarded His twin god with cold fury:

"You drove [Folly] away on purpose?"

You saw through [Truth]'s design all along, yet you wagered the hope of disrupting the experiment on [Folly]?"

Since when have you been collaborating with [Folly]?"

But you forget — [Folly] no longer has His Authority!"

[Deceit] smiled, gazing at the rain of [Truth]'s fading radiance falling through the Void, and replied with pregnant meaning:

"He doesn't. But someone else does."

...

Chapter 1066: The Audience of the Experiment

The value of [Folly] continued to rise.

Time rewound by a moment.

While the gods' attention had been drawn to the corner where [Truth] held sway, [Folly] stood alone in the empty Void, witnessing the collapse of the universe.

It was true that He had leaped free of [Truth]'s trap one step ahead of the others, but that was as far as it went — He had never intended to stop the experiment in the first place.

All of this, in His eyes, was nothing more than a foolish act.

He did not believe [Truth] could succeed — or rather, what [Truth] called "success" was merely a fleeting glimpse of this universe's true nature, hardly worthy of being called a "success" at all. And so He had no reason to intervene. He simply stood to the side like a spectator, watching in silence.

Under the Supreme [Truth]'s extraction, the entire world was collapsing at a terrifying pace. Stars winked out. Flesh dissolved. Countless players had no time to register what was happening before everything around them crumbled to dust.

Fear had no time to spread — in an instant, it froze into absolute nothingness.

The final act of the Void Era seemed to have arrived ahead of schedule. In that moment, neither people nor things escaped its reach.

Every existing thing in the world was ground into raw material, destined to be used in the reconstruction of a new world belonging to [Truth].

Hong Lin was fortunate. Under the protection of the Convention, this Proxy of [Prosperity] was not counted among [Truth]'s experimental materials, and so she remained unaffected.

But the instant she watched Tao Yi — standing right in front of her — dissolve into ash with a look of utter bewilderment, Hong Lin's stunned eyes turned red in a heartbeat. She shifted into her Bear Spirit form and lashed out at everything around her.

Yet her "counterattack" was utterly powerless. No matter how desperately she fought the surrounding nothingness, she could not find the culprit who had taken Tao Yi and everything else away.

She howled in defiance, roared in despair, pounding in every direction, unleashing her fury — and yet it changed nothing.

Only when everything in the world had been ground to dust and begun rising, converging toward the heavens, did she finally see it in the Void — that beam of light called [Truth], and the cold, impassive figure of [Folly] standing beneath it.

Hong Lin raised her head toward the sky, blood dripping from her eyes, and roared her accusation:

"If you wanted the world to die, then why bestow the Game upon us?

Are mortal lives not lives at all?!"

[Folly] glanced at this mortal who had been pushed to the threshold of a Divine Throne, and spoke:

"'All life is folly, all civilization is foolishness' — that is the greatest truth of this universe.

[Prosperity] wanted nothing more than for the universe to flourish — but did She ever ask whether anyone else wanted that?

[Truth] sought to prove the truth in His heart — but did He ever ask whether the world consented?

And you — when you ended the lives of others through preemptive strikes or acts of vengeance, all for the sake of those meaningless mortal emotions — did you ever ask how those who died at your hands viewed you?

The law of the jungle, selfish gain — the fundamental nature of this universe has never changed.

And so, you and Him..."

[Folly] cast another glance at [Truth]'s ongoing experiment and let out a derisive snort. "You're all the same. All foolish acts."

Hong Lin visibly froze for a moment at those words, but in the next instant her gaze grew even more resolute.

She had never once questioned whether her path was right or wrong. But inspired by [Folly]'s words, she came to a realization: the false [Prosperity] was utterly insufficient to protect her friends from the gods. If she wanted her friends to flourish forever, she had to become the true [Prosperity].

No — even higher than that. She had to become an existence above those sixteen Divine Thrones to impose her will upon the universe!

Hong Lin had her epiphany — but it seemed to have come a bit too late. And so, she went "mad."

She charged straight at [Folly].

"I can't find [Truth], so I'll start by taking down His accomplice!

[Folly], prepare to die!"

The silhouette of the great bear was utterly tragic. Perhaps she knew she could never kill a deity, and might even die here herself due to the gap in their Status — but she charged forward regardless.

With no attachments left, she had nothing but her own lonely courage.

But in [Folly]'s eyes, this courage was simply absurd.

"?"

'Do you even hear what you're saying? [Folly] is [Truth]'s accomplice?'

'Even setting aside opposing faiths, [Folly] was standing right here criticizing [Truth] — how does that make Him [Truth]'s accomplice?'

'What kind of brain does this Proxy of [Prosperity] have?'

Her foolishness didn't even operate on the same wavelength as the cosmic "foolish acts" He spoke of. Hers was foolishness in the most literal sense.

"..."

Despite His utter disdain, [Folly] departed anyway, because He had no desire to entangle Himself in a foolish act — and because [Truth]'s little display of folly had ceased to hold His interest.

At the tail end of the experiment, the result was nothing more than decoration. Once you knew the direction was correct, the rest lost all appeal.

[Truth]'s experiment had indeed reached its most critical moment. The immense power of [Truth] began to reconstruct the entire world according to the predetermined blueprint. In the very next second, Hong Lin — her attempt at deicide thwarted — watched the rest-area villa beside her re-form with a thunderous rumble, and Tao Yi, who had vanished, reappeared.

The torrent of grief and fury suddenly lodged in Hong Lin's throat. Her outstretched bear paw froze mere inches above Tao Yi's head, her entire body rigid with shock.

Tao Yi flinched as well. She looked at the bear-formed Hong Lin before her, tilted her head slightly, and asked in puzzlement: "Baldy, were you crying? Why are you crying?"

The sound of her best friend's unmistakably real voice shattered Hong Lin's composure in an instant. She swept Tao Yi into a massive bear hug and burst into sobs.

"Aaahh—"

Tao Yi had no idea what was going on, but her own eyes reddened in sympathy. She gently patted the giant bear's back, swallowing hard before murmuring: "What's all this crying about? Honestly, a grown woman like you."

"I..." Hong Lin lifted her head, both paws gripping Tao Yi's slender shoulders, trembling with the raw relief of someone who had survived a disaster. "I thought I'd never see you again—"

Before the word "again" could leave her lips — BOOM — Tao Yi and everything around them vanished into thin air once more.

Hong Lin's pupils contracted sharply. She lunged forward, desperate to hold onto Tao Yi, but her paws closed on nothing.

"Xiao Yi!!!"

The first reconstruction had ended. It appeared that no match for another [Truth] had been found.

But this was an expected failure. The second reconstruction would begin soon enough.

Just as the toppled bear raised her head once more, glaring up at the beam of [Truth]'s light blazing across the firmament, ready to wage a war to the death against it — the villa reappeared, and Tao Yi materialized out of nowhere, landing squarely on the bear's back.

The Wood Elf blinked in surprise for a moment, then laughed and patted the bear beneath her:

"Baldy, you never let me ride on your back! What's gotten into you today? Did something good happen?"

'Something good?'

'I'd like to know what part of this counts as something good!'

'But you're back — and that's the best thing of all!'

Hong Lin twisted around again, deftly catching the flung Tao Yi in her embrace — but this time, before she could utter a single word, Tao Yi vanished again. Disappeared right in her arms.

"..."

A few seconds later, Tao Yi reappeared, standing on Hong Lin's bear paw with a puzzled frown: "Baldy, what are you doing? I'm a mage — don't expect me to agree to a melee sparring match..."

By now, even Hong Lin in her daze could see the pattern. Tao Yi wasn't truly disappearing — she seemed to be undergoing constant reconstruction. And as for why she was being reconstructed...

That question was probably best directed at the [Truth] hanging high overhead.

What was He doing?

Running an experiment?

For once, Hong Lin didn't look at Tao Yi. Instead, she turned her gaze toward the beam of [Truth]'s light crowning the heavens, wondering: if this was an experiment, then why hadn't the other gods moved to stop Him?

Or had they already given their tacit approval — and if so, what did they hope to learn from it?

Did Benefactor [Fate] know? Did Cheng Shi know? And where was he right now?

While Hong Lin's mind churned in confusion, the frequency of Tao Yi's appearances and disappearances began to accelerate. She flickered in and out of existence like a strobe light, barely able to speak a complete sentence during each manifestation.

"Baldy, where is this..."

"I think I had a dream..."

"You're still alive... that's good..."

"Baldy, you..."

Hong Lin went numb. She just lay there, sprawled on the ground, watching Tao Yi flicker on and off atop her chest — sometimes even wearing different outfits — and thought to herself:

'If this experiment isn't lethal and could go on forever, having the little fox quietly keep me company for a while doesn't sound so bad, does it?'

The great bear, dragged back from the brink of despair, was exhausted. The strobing Tao Yi acted like a hypnotic pendulum, slowly coaxing her eyelids shut.

...

Chapter 1067: The Assembly of Gods Convention

The world outside was undergoing countless cycles of collapse and reconstruction — a process that might continue for a very long time. Meanwhile, the gods "imprisoned" by [Truth] in that confined space were far from idle, launching a second game of their own.

After [Truth]'s self-destruction, [Justice] manifested immediately. That booming voice of divine order drowned out the cacophony of the apocalypse, once again drawing the gods into a brilliant, orderly starry sky.

The gods sat facing one another, with seven seats empty — [Prosperity], [Corruption], [Decay], [Truth], [War], [Folly], and [Time] were all absent.

The remaining nine would serve as today's voters in the Assembly of Gods Convention. And today's agenda was simple: how to distribute [Truth]'s Authority!

Even as the universe endured its apocalypse, [Justice] carried out the Convention's protocols with meticulous precision, as if the world's destruction had nothing to do with Him.

And in truth, the Convention had only been drafted to protect divine authority from being lost — it said nothing about preserving the universe from disintegration. So in this moment, [Justice] may have obstructed the gods from "saving the world," yet He remained perfectly within the bounds of "order."

The Scales representing the universe's ultimate fairness first glanced at the Iron Law occupying [Order]'s seat, then spoke in a resonant hum:

"[Truth] destroyed His own Divine Throne, leaving behind His Authority and issuing a Final Oracle, which states:

Truth lies in the pursuit, in the accumulation, in the mastery. Therefore, I forbid the gods from dividing My Authority among themselves. Instead, all Authority shall be bestowed upon a single god. Those willing to inherit My Authority shall attend this assembly, and the one who receives a majority vote shall claim it.

This Assembly of Gods Convention is hereby convened. Please begin your vote."

The moment He finished speaking, one god immediately cast a vote.

A star blazed to life above [Birth]'s head, and that massive Divine Pillar lashed against the starry sky as She cried out impatiently:

"Hurry—

Child—"

Evidently, someone was eager to clock out and pick up her child.

But wherever work existed, so did frustrations. Overtime was the norm, and no one was permitted to leave until the meeting concluded.

The gods regarded [Birth] with varying expressions. This was clearly not the time when voting for oneself could yield any advantage. [Truth]'s Final Oracle stipulated that the candidate needed a majority — there were nine voters present, meaning at least five votes were required.

Securing five votes was extraordinarily difficult. For the gods in attendance, it was no different from personally handing [Truth]'s Authority to someone else. So things were far from that simple.

Before the gods had even deliberated, voting for oneself was nothing but a waste of time — utterly pointless. Everyone present was exasperated by [Birth]'s impatience.

You couldn't say She didn't want the Authority — She had shown up, after all.

But you couldn't say She truly wanted it either — She clearly didn't care about strategy.

Fortunately, everyone had long since grown accustomed to this "big sister's" attitude. Her approach to everything was simple: show up, participate, and never leave a seat empty. Beyond that, She couldn't care less — as steady as an invariable in [Truth]'s experiment.

But the other gods had far more on their minds.

[Deceit] took in every glance exchanged among the gods, then shot a sidelong look at the frowning, stone-faced sibling beside Him and grinned:

"Oh my, worried about your follower, are we?"

What good is worrying? A mortal can't attend the Assembly of Gods Convention."

His words dripped with passive-aggressive innuendo. Everyone who heard them knew He was hinting at something.

After all, [Deceit] was the one who had brought the Clown to the last Convention assembly — so this was less a taunt and more a deliberate opening.

But [Fate]'s eyes merely flickered, and He said nothing.

In truth, His concern extended beyond just His follower — He was worried about the world itself.

The Fixed Destiny had not yet reached its true culmination. The world should not be destroyed here. Yet He was shackled by the Convention, genuinely lacking the power to break a Final Oracle. So rather than causing a scene, it was better to vote obediently, conclude the meeting quickly, send [Justice] on His way, and then go save the universe.

However, certain gods clearly had no intention of ending this Convention so swiftly. Seeing [Fate] give no reaction, [Deceit] rolled His eyes, pondered for a moment, and then called out to [Justice] with a sly grin:

"Old fossil, I have a question before we vote."

[Justice] was the only god who would never preemptively silence [Deceit] just because He anticipated mischief — after all, He represented the Convention.

"Speak freely."

[Deceit]'s eyes curved upward in a smile: "[Truth] only stipulated terms for His Authority before dying, but made no mention of His voting rights. So I'd like to ask — how should the two voting rights in His possession be distributed?"

Indeed, [Truth] had held two voting rights — one His own, and one inherited from [Prosperity].

Those two votes had been instrumental in preparing for this experiment, and now they were ownerless.

[Deceit]'s question immediately piqued every god present. After all, those were two extra votes — two votes that could prove decisive at critical junctures.

The gods all waited for [Justice]'s response, but before He could reply, [Deceit] spoke again.

"I recall that one of those voting rights belonged to [Prosperity], correct?"

Since the god who took that voting right has now fallen, and [Prosperity] currently has an acting Proxy — then by the principle of fairness, shouldn't that voting right be returned to [Prosperity]?"

The instant He finished, a dissenting voice rang out.

"I object!"

[Oblivion] cast a spectral gaze toward [Deceit], then glanced at [Fate] before snorting coldly:

"Don't think others are blind to the relationship between that so-called Proxy and your [Void] faction. Handing a voting right to a mortal — only you, [Deceit], could dream up something like that. How is this any different from giving you an extra vote? You might as well take [Truth]'s Authority while you're at it."

[Deceit] arched an eyebrow and grinned:

"I'm not particularly fond of bookworms, but since we're already here — sure, why not?"

"When do I get it? Right now?"

"...?"

'Can you seriously not tell the difference between sincerity and sarcasm?'

[Oblivion] let out another cold snort and looked away.

Regardless of whether [Deceit] had caught the meaning, [Death] certainly had.

After a moment of deliberation, a tuft of green flame suddenly ignited in His hollow eye sockets, and He addressed the assembly:

"Even if... Frazor... has no... voting rights... She is... still a member... of [Life].

She has... the right... to attend... this Convention... as an observer. [Justice]... did you... ask Her... whether She... wishes... to attend?"

[Justice] fell silent for a moment. In His view, a Proxy was not a true deity — her status still classified her as mortal. Even if she possessed a Container, not even Envoys had ever attended as observers. Did a mortal holding a Container truly qualify?

The complication was that the Convention had no explicit provision on this matter, so everything had to be negotiated. [Justice] turned His gaze to the assembled gods and began soliciting their opinions.

As long as [Prosperity]'s Proxy held no voting rights and would not influence the disposition of [Truth]'s Authority, the other gods had no real objections. More importantly, [Deceit] had already spoken up; it looked as though He was courting [Death]'s vote. If they refused [Death] face now, and He ended up swayed to the other side... that would be far too disadvantageous.

And so the gods remained silent.

[Oblivion] knew He could not reject a seemingly "reasonable" request, so He held His tongue as well.

Just like that, with the gods' tacit consent, [Justice] pulled Frazor into the assembly.

In the very next second, nine pairs of divine eyes and one set of Scales watched as a softly snoring, sleeping bear materialized in [Prosperity]'s seat.

"..."

"..."

"..."

...

Chapter 1068: Voting Rights

At this point, even [Deceit] couldn't hold it together anymore.

He burst out laughing:

"It appears the great Frazor exhausted all Her strength trying to save the world. Well, that's certainly understandable.

At least She's better than certain cold-hearted gods who are laser-focused on Authority while the universe burns around them."

"..."

Another wave of silence swept through the assembly.

When a loudmouthed troublemaker included himself in his own insult, there was simply no angle from which to mount a counterargument.

In the past, only [Folly] could match Him blow for blow — but with [Folly] absent, [Deceit] reigned unchallenged.

Yet those words struck a genuine chord in Hong Lin.

'I really was trying to save the world!'

'But the world rejected my salvation and hypnotized me with a strobing fox!'

Hong Lin was, of course, wide awake. No matter how much she loved sleeping, there was no way she could remain unconscious after [Justice]'s summons. After all, [Justice] had issued an invitation, not a forced conscription — so the mere fact that she had arrived at the Assembly of Gods Convention proved she had been awake when the invitation came.

So why was she still pretending to sleep?

The answer was the same as the first time she had deceived herself by attending with her eyes shut: what I can't see can't hurt me.

'As long as I can't see any of you, I can't make a mistake. And making no mistakes in front of the gods is the greatest achievement there is.'

Before she understood why [Truth] had destroyed the world or why this Convention had been convened, Hong Lin dared not presume whether what she had witnessed was a collective conspiracy of the gods or a freak accident. Either way, being admitted to this assembly was her only chance to find answers.

So she couldn't flip the table like she had tried to do with [Truth]. She needed to calm down, listen carefully to the gods' words, search for clues — and find a way to save her friends.

Of course, she might not be able to decipher every nuance hidden in the gods' dialogue on her own — but there was always Cheng Shi.

A Destined One would never fall before reaching the end. Under [Fate]'s protection, he would certainly survive to the final act of the world's script. Even if this was the final act, as the one who had guided her toward [Fate], the Fate Weaver would absolutely be the most brilliant protagonist on this stage!

So as long as she gathered the gods' information and relayed it to him, he would surely unravel every thread and find a way to save the world.

And once the world stabilized, Tao Yi and all her friends would naturally escape from this world-ending experiment!

That was the entirety of Hong Lin's reasoning for attending. Her faith wasn't blind trust in Cheng Shi — it was absolute conviction in [Fate].

She felt her good fortune extended far beyond this, and in truth, her instincts proved correct.

[Deceit] cast a meaningful glance at the soundly sleeping Frazor, then finally steered the conversation back on track:

"Let's return to the matter of voting.

Everyone seated here has already shown their hand, so there's really no need to play coy.

If we hurry up and push through, maybe after the votes are counted we can still interrupt [Truth]'s experiment before the era ends — buy a bit more time for the Void Era."

At those words, [Memory], who had been silent until now, finally spoke. Those eyes — so heavy with the weight of recorded history, betraying neither joy nor sorrow — intoned:

"The Void Era ending and a new era arriving ahead of schedule... isn't necessarily a bad thing."

"Oh? You really think the 'next era' will be a good thing?"

Let me tell you something, [Memory] — you and [Time] are both [Existence], yet the two of you couldn't be more different.

He's already seen the light, so what exactly are you still clinging to?

Tsk. Looking at you, you seem as obtuse as [Folly]. Don't tell me [Folly]'s Authority ended up with you?"

"..."

'Shouldn't have opened my mouth.'

[Memory] cast a ghostly glance at [Deceit] and said no more.

And with that, the already taciturn assembly fell completely silent. After being needled by [Deceit], virtually no god was willing to speak.

[Fate] shot a frigid look at His sibling and said icily: "Stop wasting time. Cast your vote."

"Heheh~

How is this wasting time? You think you're the only one in a hurry?

I'm in a hurry too. The world's destruction means [Void] is nearing its end, and as the master of this era, I'd rather it didn't come to such an abrupt close.

But no matter how rushed we are, the Convention must still be observed. So instead of squabbling after the fact, let's settle the voting rights issue first."

[Deceit] glanced left and right, silently tallied His votes, then proposed with a sly grin:

"How about this — I know everyone has a few bones to pick with me, so I won't stir up any more trouble for the universe.

I'll forfeit my claim to [Truth]'s Authority and cast my vote for one of you instead. But... I have one condition!

Those two voting rights of [Truth]'s — they go to me. How about it?"

Trade one concession for guaranteed passage on every future agenda item?

As if the universe would be so generous. Letting [Deceit] get His hands on two extra voting rights would be catastrophic!

Would anyone ever have a peaceful day again?

[Oblivion] shook His head, the first to object.

But considering the far greater uncertainty of [Deceit] actually claiming [Truth]'s Authority, the other gods remained silent — clearly agreeing to the trade.

[Oblivion]'s expression turned utterly grim. The thought of [Void] gaining an advantage felt worse than losing Himself.

Yet He quickly devised a countermeasure — a way to split the votes while simultaneously fracturing [Void]. He addressed [Justice]:

"Since the founding of the Convention, no single god has ever held three votes. This undermines absolute fairness, and I refuse to set such a precedent. If [Void] truly wants a voting advantage, those two votes can be split — one for [Deceit], one for [Fate]. But on the condition that both of them forfeit all claims to [Truth]'s Authority, and that these voting rights only take effect after this Convention concludes!"

"?"

[Oblivion] again!

[Deceit] turned to look at [Oblivion], the corner of His eye lifting in amusement.

'Clumsy [Descent], do you really think this will work?'

"I agree."

While [Deceit] was still savoring His disdain, [Fate] suddenly spoke up to accept the proposal.

His entire purpose in attending had been to prevent [Deceit] — who had strayed from the Fixed Destiny — from obtaining [Truth]'s Authority. That objective was now achieved. If He could also walk away with an extra voting right, it was practically a total victory. He had no reason to refuse.

Seeing His own sibling pull the rug out from under Him, [Deceit] frowned — but after a moment's thought, His eyes spun, and He agreed as well.

Immediately after agreeing, however, He turned and cast His vote. And His vote went to...

[Chaos]!

"I don't trust anyone to hold [Truth]'s Authority. [Chaos] doesn't have much going on upstairs — if He gets it, He gets it. No big deal."

The moment those words left His mouth, the room fell silent again.

Everyone knew that [Chaos] and [Deceit] had a history of deep collaboration. So how was voting for [Chaos] any different from voting for [Deceit]?

The gods certainly weren't going to follow suit on such a transparent vote. Winning [Truth]'s Authority as a solo candidate was impossible, so they surveyed each other, exchanging covert signals.

And it was at that very moment that [Fate] cast His vote. He gave it to...

The sleeping Big Cat.

"?"

Big Cat was stunned. She felt a flash before her eyes as though something had been ignited, and in her confusion she heard her Benefactor's voice:

"I have cast my vote and can no longer be a candidate. That being the case — may I be excused, [Justice]?"

...

Chapter 1069: The Fate of Truth's Authority

Yet another one desperate to pick up the kids.

[Fate]'s urgency was written plainly across His face — every god present could see that He simply wanted to go protect the follower He had left stranded in the Void.

Although [Truth]'s experiment had bypassed the cage area He had established, that measure was designed to restrain the gods. Once [Justice] had pulled them all into the Convention assembly, there was no telling whether the Void out there was still safe.

The other gods clearly couldn't care less. Only [Birth] and [Fate] remained unable to set their worries aside.

Seeing this, [Deceit] smirked with amusement. [Justice] hesitated briefly before asking — in a rare departure — a question unrelated to the Convention:

"Is the truth that [Truth] sought truly beyond this space-time?"

[Fate]'s answer was resolute: "I don't know."

That answer drew an inscrutable smile from [Deceit], who turned His gaze toward [Memory]. [Memory], meanwhile, quietly lowered His eyes.

Since [Truth]'s self-destruction, no god knew that [Fate] had sealed away memories within Him.

[Fate] continued:

"All I know is that the Fixed Destiny has not yet been severed. So even if this universe truly contains truth, it can only reside within this space-time that I perceive.

[Truth] took the wrong path. He went astray.

As for the other spaces-time that the rest of you are imagining — that is nothing more than a great deceptive lie spun by [Deceit] and [Time] together.

I had assumed that even though [Existence] stands opposed to [Void], the two paths were at least equal in their devotion to approaching 'Him.'

Now I see how wrong I was.

[Existence] truly should not exist."

With that, [Fate] cut a blade-cold glare at [Memory] and departed the Convention.

A great deceptive lie woven by [Deceit] and [Time]?

The phrasing sounded profoundly awkward.

[Deceit] certainly loved His lies — but did [Time] even have time to tell lies?

If not, then what exactly had He been busy with all this while?

The gods knew far more than mortals and understood this world far better. They too had all manner of speculations about the universe and Origin, but now it seemed that some had already surged ahead in their understanding — [Void], [Time], [Folly], and the freshly fallen [Truth].

When you thought about it, the secret powerful enough to drive [Truth] to self-destruction in pursuit of self-evidence probably wasn't as simple as [Fate] described it. If truth truly lay beneath these stars, why would [Truth] have needed to annihilate everything and reconstruct a new world?

So [Truth]'s experiment hadn't merely brought Him His answer — it had inspired the others' imaginations about secrets beyond the universe, turning their gazes once again toward [Void], toward the two masters of this era.

Under the pull of curiosity and thirst for knowledge, everyone wanted the truth.

Yet perhaps only a handful actually possessed it. If the others wanted to catch up quickly, they would have to choose between [Truth]'s Authority and the universe's secrets.

[Oblivion] knew He couldn't scrape together half the votes. After long deliberation, He concluded that [Memory] — sibling to [Time] — likely knew something. Besides, His reason for attending the Convention was straightforward: prevent [Void] from claiming the Authority and making more trouble. With [Void] now ineligible for votes, He decided to cast his ballot for [Memory].

He wanted to acquire useful memories from [Memory]'s Collection Hall.

The two gods conferred briefly. [Memory] was noncommittal.

He didn't believe He had any collection worth sharing with [Oblivion], so He offered no response.

But [Oblivion] surveyed the assembled gods and simply couldn't find a better candidate. Even if only to rally opposition against [Void], He could only give this vote to [Memory].

One other god shared the same thinking. Although the Iron Law bore no grudge against [Void], it too yearned to learn about the past.

It often felt confused about its own identity, sensing that perhaps some memory had been lost. So it also cast its vote for [Memory].

[Memory] suddenly held two votes — a temporary lead.

The remaining gods held off, still observing.

And by "observing," they were really just waiting to see [Deceit]'s next move.

It wasn't hard to notice that among those who hadn't yet voted — besides [Memory] Himself — only [Death], [Silence], and [Chaos] remained.

Those three votes were transparently aligned. [Deceit] had initially planned to secure [Birth]'s single vote to claim [Truth]'s Authority, but [Birth] had impatiently voted for Herself, and [Fate]'s wasted ballot made things worse. Now it seemed impossible for the Fear Faction to sweep up [Truth]'s legacy.

Since that was off the table, [Death] and [Silence] couldn't very well give their votes to [Chaos] either — after all, on the surface, they weren't allied with [Deceit].

And so the situation deadlocked.

The gods were all shrewd enough to foresee the outcome. If no one compromised, [Truth]'s Final Oracle would drag on indefinitely. Who knew what would become of the world under the experiment's ongoing reconstruction? And the final act of the Void Era might well proceed without them — leaving only the absent gods to play out the drama.

So everyone would inevitably compromise. The path of compromise was to choose the most reassuring, lowest-risk third party to receive [Truth]'s Authority.

And that third party, when you looked around the room, could only be...

[Birth].

No other reason — She was stable.

And so, in the next instant, [Death], [Silence], and [Memory] simultaneously voted for [Birth]. [Chaos] stealthily conferred with [Birth] at length, and under the impatient lashing of Her Divine Pillar, He too cast his vote for Her.

Five of nine — the Final Oracle was fulfilled. The god least in need of Authority had received [Truth]'s Authority.

[Birth]'s Divine Pillar twisted briefly, showing not a shred of joy at the acquisition. She bellowed "Child—" and vanished from the gods' sight.

[Oblivion] fled just as quickly — He had no choice. [Death] and [Deceit] were eyeing Him like hawks. He wasn't arrogant enough to fight two at once without preparation, so to the sound of [Deceit]'s mocking laughter, [Oblivion] dissolved His own form.

[Memory] gazed at [Deceit] with neither joy nor sorrow, leaving behind a single sentence — "Stop coveting my Collection Hall" — before departing.

[Deceit] paid no attention to the remark. Instead, He plucked up the pretending-to-sleep Big Cat, and said with deep implication:

"Little kitty, little kitty. After acting as a Proxy for so long, you've surely learned one lesson by now — once your Benefactor dies, there's no one left to protect His followers."

Then He casually tossed her aside and vanished into the starry sky.

The remaining gods filtered out one by one, leaving only [Justice] and the Iron Law behind.

Interestingly, at every previous Convention assembly, [Justice] had always been the first to vacate — since He represented the Convention, He never appeared when unnecessary.

But this time, He clearly had something to say to "Himself."

The perfectly balanced Scales turned their gaze toward [Order]'s seat, and after a long silence asked:

"Does order still exist in this universe?"

The Iron Law's reply was unwavering: "Of course."

The Scales paused, then asked: "Then why is it that every god has gone to save the universe — yet you alone have not gone to uphold order?"

The Iron Law fell into a brief confusion, thought for a moment, then replied:

"[Truth] told me that order exists not only within the universe, but perhaps beyond it as well. So I am waiting for a new order.

I want to know how one order differs from another. If order itself is not unique, then what is 'His' expectation of [Order]...

And what meaning does my existence hold?"

...

Chapter 1070: The Sky Has Fallen!

The world was still being reconstructed. [Truth]'s experiment continued.

But this didn't actually make sense.

For [Fate], [Truth]'s experiment was undeniably the greatest variable threatening the Fixed Destiny. Now that He had extricated Himself from the Convention assembly, logic dictated He would move immediately to halt the experiment and drag the universe's trajectory back on course.

Yet He didn't.

Not because He hadn't tried — but because He hadn't succeeded!

An unexpected force had blocked His interference, ensuring [Truth]'s experiment proceeded in orderly fashion.

This force did not belong to [Truth]. It was merely a contingency He had left behind. Ultimately, with [Truth] dead, no matter how grand or precise His experimental design, it could never withstand the power of a true god.

Only another true god could stop a true god.

[Fate] stared at those familiar eyes before Him, fury boiling over:

"So [Civilization] is truly determined to go astray — to part ways with [Fate]?!"

[War]. Yes, it was [War]. Those eyes of blood and fire bore straight into [Fate], all former restraint and deference stripped away, replaced entirely by battle lust and defiance.

His left eye erupted in flame; His right eye spattered with fresh blood. Blood and fire spiraled before the beam of [Truth]'s light, encasing the experiment's core within a fortress of impenetrable iron.

[War] was not facing [Fate] alone. After the Convention had adjourned, virtually every god had converged on this spot. They gazed at this [War] — so different from before, yet so reminiscent of the

past — with undisguised shock. None had imagined that the final guardian of [Truth]'s experiment would be [Truth]'s sibling within the [Civilization] path.

[Death] was somewhat puzzled. The enormous skull tilted in confusion and asked:

"[War]... the universe... collapses... faith ends... what do you... gain from this?"

[War] shook His head, His flames roaring: "Nothing."

"Then why... do you... obstruct... the gods... from interrupting... [Truth]'s... experiment?"

[Truth]... died... seeking... proof — clearly... He already... had His... answer.

Since an answer... already exists... why must... the experiment... continue?

The world's... reconstruction... is destroying... the foundation... of our... faith.

When everything... in the universe — every vessel... of faith — becomes... a variable... in [Truth]'s... experiment — do you mean... to let our... very foundation... be held... hostage?

Even if... [Truth] is dead... and the experiment... has no master... we will never... entrust... our faith... to an... experiment.

You stand... here... blocking... the gods — do you intend... to use... this experiment... to seize control... of the universe?!"

A masterful move — the old fox had slapped [War] with a hat almost too large to bear. [Death] had already learned the truth about the universe from [Deceit], and knew full well that the unprepared universe could not withstand the "truth" that [Truth]'s experiment would bring.

If the universe's understanding were truly upended by a single experiment of [Truth]'s, then — as variables in a higher-dimensional experiment — might they not trigger uncontrollable changes that would alert the supreme Experiment Master to the anomalies in this corner of the starry sky, prompting measures detrimental to this world?

This was the Fear Faction's — or at the very least [Death]'s — gravest concern.

But these worries could not be spoken aloud; He could only "delicately" dissuade.

What He didn't know was that [War] should have been standing on His side. [Deceit] had long since established a cooperative relationship with [War].

What He knew even less was that [Deceit] hadn't yet found the right moment to share His plan with His Fear Faction allies — and one crucial link in that plan had already gone wrong!

[War] truly should not have been here!

He was never supposed to accept [Truth]'s invitation. [Deceit] had kept Him in reserve, promising that an epoch-shaking battle awaited Him — a promise exchanged for [War]'s support of the Fear Faction.

But [Deceit] had clearly underestimated [War]'s battle lust. Or rather, when a more direct path to confronting that Entity presented itself, [War] — who had restrained Himself for so long — refused to wait any longer.

So when [Truth] approached Him, He agreed without a moment's hesitation.

And [War]'s eagerness had, in turn, solidified [Truth]'s conviction in His own hypothesis — steeling His resolve to die in pursuit of truth for all.

When [Deceit] arrived on the scene and discovered that it was [War] who had safeguarded [Truth]'s experiment, His expression turned extraordinarily grim.

If [Truth]'s experiment merely revealed the truth to the world, then [War]'s presence here meant He intended to tear the sky wide open — to confront Origin head-on. After all, that had always been [War]'s sole and singular purpose.

As expected, different fears could never unite different beings.

[War], in the end, was never truly part of the Fear Faction. His one and only desire was to challenge the Supreme — and even after losing to Himself countless times, He had never given up.

But [Deceit] couldn't understand. Suppressing His fury, He addressed [War] in an icy tone:

"With what you have right now — how do you expect to win?"

In truth, the cooperation between [Deceit] and [War] had been mutual. On this front, [Deceit] had neither failed [War] nor deceived Him. It was [War], driven solely by His obsession with battle, who had betrayed [Deceit].

He knew He was in the wrong, yet He had no desire to turn back.

He simply gazed beyond the universe, spirits blazing:

"[War] lies in the fighting and in the struggling — but never in winning or losing!

From the day I shattered [Order] with my own hands, I have yearned for this moment day and night. All I seek is to challenge the first creation of this world. Win or lose, I will have been worthy of the divine name [War] above my head.

This, too, is the meaning of my existence.

[Deceit], though I have broken our pact, this is no reckless impulse.

You told me yourself — beyond this universe lie countless others, each containing another me. Since they are all me, when I cry out in blazing blood, every one of them will answer in roaring flame!

I cannot imagine how magnificent and fierce such a war would be. I only know that battlefield is my destiny.

'He' bestowed upon me the bloodlust of [War]; I shall return to Him a war worthy of that bloodlust. If I win, the fear in your hearts will vanish. If I lose, then every being in the universe will know terror.

Either way, I will have honored 'His' divine name and your 'guidance.'

Where is the fault in this?

So today — blood boils, flames rage, and I march to war!"

The instant His words fell, under the gods' stunned gazes, the entire universe shuddered violently. Then the reconstructing world ceased its cycles of destruction — it froze in place, and at some bizarre frequency, began to resonate with something beyond the universe.

The boundless Void began to peel away. Behind the nothingness, the iridescent colors of [Existence] bled through. One glance told every god these were Existence Rifts — yet the divine power seeping through these gaps between parallel worlds felt disturbingly unfamiliar and chaotic.

Whatever lay on the other side of these rifts didn't resemble the parallel timelines that [Time] had derived. Could what lurked behind them be the truth that [Truth] had sought?

But what was it, exactly?

Before anyone could ponder further, the substantive flow of [Time]'s power that had enveloped the universe fractured like a spider web — cracking open like an egg breaking its shell, admitting a breath that did not belong to this starry sky.

In that instant, every god who sensed the alien presence grew deathly grave and tense.

[Fate], watching the universe careen toward catastrophe, hardened His gaze. He wrung from Himself the very last drop of divine power, ignited the Authority of the Fixed Destiny, and single-handedly suppressed the universe's resonance.

[Birth] followed immediately. [Death] took up the relay. Every god unwilling to let the universe fall unleashed their full power, barely managing to hold the shattering world together.

Yet [Deceit] still had not moved.

[Fate] strained against the burden, spirals spinning in His eyes like whirlpools, starlight flashing like meteors. He caught sight of His sibling's utter indifference to everything unfolding, and through gritted teeth urged:

"Whatever plans or schemes you harbor, [Deceit] — the universe's collapse is absolutely not a prerequisite for your success! Why won't you act? This world is about to be destroyed!

The era must not end here, and the Fixed Destiny cannot be led astray! If the universe falls, he will die too — the [Void] Pact will be severed. Can you truly accept that?"

"Tch—

Is this really my dear sister who wanted to drag the universe into ruin?

You can't only count me as part of [Void] when it's convenient for you.

I'd love to help, but my understanding tells me it's all futile.

The only reason you're managing to hold on is that [War] hasn't struck yet. The moment He does, no one — no one — can save this starry sky.

Look — over there. He's about to begin."

The gods turned in alarm — and saw a world-burning inferno surge skyward in a reverse cascade, slamming directly into the place where [Truth]'s light shone. It was like a hammer striking a stress point, shattering the already overburdened "eggshell" beyond all recovery.

In that moment, beneath a sky raining shards of [Time]'s dissolving bubbles, the gods beheld countless identical worlds arrayed before them. Cries of disbelief and exclamations of shock rippled across every reality; scrutinizing gazes and examining stares intertwined. When the barriers of space-time came crashing down, the incredible truth of the universe was laid bare before all the gods.

The sky of this world had finally collapsed.

But not at [Truth]'s hand — it was [War] who had torn it apart.

Terror condensed in a single instant. The cacophony fell silent. Every slice universe seemed to reach an unspoken agreement, growing still at once.

And then, countless points of fire plunged like inverted meteors — streaking upward, a hundred answering one call.

In that moment, blood stained the crimson heavens, and flame illuminated the universe.

...