

The Gods 117

Chapter 117: What's Really Hidden Behind That Door

Stepping into the void had become almost second nature for Cheng Shi at this point.

When he opened his eyes again, he found himself in a structure identical to Eternal Chapel.

Except, here, everything was different.

The walls were pitch black, and crimson full moons were painted all over them. The blood-red paint dripped down the walls in eerie patterns, forming strange "strings."

A chapel... in the void!?

Cheng Shi was stunned. His eyes widened as he looked ahead. The chapel's doors were wide open, the door panels shattered, and debris was strewn across the floor.

Clearly, there had been a fierce battle here.

Cheng Shi cast a quick healing spell on himself, then took off his shirt to wipe the blood from his feet. He carefully followed the footprints on the floor, step by step, into the chapel.

As soon as he passed through the broken doors, he noticed birdcages scattered across the floor to the right.

It seemed the birdcages had been caught in the earlier conflict. They were twisted and deformed, with bird droppings, feathers, and feed scattered everywhere, giving off a faint stench of decay.

"Black feathers... Could this be...?"

Cheng Shi frowned slightly, knelt down, and picked up a few pieces of bird feed. He tasted them.

Terrible. They tasted far worse than the bird food at Shaman's house.

He spat out the crumbs and continued forward.

The chapel's hall was large, but there were no chairs or tables. Instead, the floor was covered in white circles, and within each circle lay shackles, as if it were a gathering place for prisoners.

As he ventured deeper inside, at the very front of the chapel, he found a book on a broken-legged table.

The book was covered in dust, and it looked like it hadn't been touched in a long time.

Cheng Shi purified it with a quick spell before picking it up and flipping through the pages, reading aloud:

"Visitor's Guide to Far Dusk Town:

1. Obey local laws. It is forbidden to harm local residents...
2. If you need assistance, please visit the Traveler's Office...

..."

Halfway through, Cheng Shi stopped reading.

He had an idea.

The one person everyone had heard of but never met in person—the shady guide.

"Interesting..."

A guide?

So, this isn't the exit to Far Dusk Town. It's the entrance?"

He glanced at the circles on the floor.

"Is this where we 'paid the fee' to get on?"

Cheng Shi tossed the booklet aside and continued further in.

At the far end of the hall, behind a large painting of a blood moon, there were two doors, one on the left and one on the right.

Standing before the doors, he observed them closely and noticed that the handle on the left door had been turned and used far more frequently.

So, he chose the left-hand door and cautiously pushed it open.

But the moment he stepped forward, he froze, his face paling instantly.

There was no path beyond the door!

The instant he opened it, a wave of stench, like the reek of rotting flesh piled up for centuries, assaulted his senses, rushing straight into his nose, making his throat twitch in response.

"Gulp..."

Don't get the wrong idea. That wasn't hunger...

The nauseating stench made Cheng Shi's eyes water, and he held his breath, squinting as he peered ahead, only to realize that there was no room beyond this door. Instead, it opened into a vast, natural cavern, untouched by human hands.

He was standing on the very edge of a cliff inside the cavern.

If he had taken even one more step, his foot would have slipped off the cliff's edge, and he would have plunged into the abyss below.

Looking down from the precipice, Cheng Shi saw the source of the overwhelming stench: a pit at the bottom of the cavern, filled with countless bodies. Some were whole, some dismembered, some rotting, some fresh...

All of them were human corpses.

Cheng Shi's pupils contracted, and his grip on the doorknob tightened.

A mass grave!

This was a massive pit of corpses!

Judging by the clothing on the bodies, it was easy to tell that many of the rotting corpses belonged to residents of Far Dusk Town—and...

The town's travelers!

All the people who had died in Far Dusk Town had been transported here and dumped into this pit.

"Heh, so this is their idea of 'purification,' and this is how they 'bury' the dead."

Cheng Shi let out a cold laugh and slammed the door shut.

“Seems our friendly guide has another role to play...”

He wiped his hands and turned toward the right-hand door.

When he opened the door, Cheng Shi chuckled.

Because standing before him were three people, their faces filled with tension as they stared each other down. Each of them looked seriously injured.

Not far in front of him were two familiar figures: the ranger and the warrior. Both were in bad shape.

Ji Ran’s right shoulder hung limp, with a massive, visible gash running down his shoulder, deep enough to expose bone.

He was panting heavily, staring intensely at the two others in front of him, not even daring to look back when he heard Cheng Shi’s voice.

Li Bola wasn’t in much better condition.

Her suit had been torn to shreds, reduced to tatters, and her longbow, made from clock hands, had somehow been driven through her own abdomen, piercing her body.

A small hand formed from wind covered her wound, but it couldn’t stop the steady flow of blood dripping onto the floor.

As for the man standing across from them, clad in a black hooded cloak...

His identity didn’t need explanation.

This was the same person who had led them on a wild goose chase all night long.

He didn't look great either, but he was in far better condition than the ranger and warrior.

The black cloak had been torn in half, revealing his emaciated legs, which were covered in wounds. One especially nasty gash ran from his knee all the way up to his abdomen.

With just one glance, Cheng Shi could tell exactly where Ji Ran had landed that brutal strike.

The sight made Cheng Shi instinctively clench his own legs and shudder.

But soon, Cheng Shi noticed something peculiar.

Despite the man's severe injuries, Cheng Shi couldn't sense any [Decay] leaking from his wounds.

This meant that the cloaked figure wasn't human at all!

He was likely a puppet!

A puppet made of flesh and blood!

The three of them stood in silence, locked in a standoff. The air between them was thick with tension, balanced on a knife's edge.

Any sudden movement could trigger another brutal fight to the death, and whoever moved first would expose themselves to an immediate counterattack from the others.

And just then, Cheng Shi arrived.

So Cheng Shi smiled.

He understood the situation instantly and made his decision...

To walk past them.

He had spotted a door behind the cloaked figure, and it was clear that he was guarding it. Everything they were looking for must be behind that door.

There was no doubt that the three standing before him had clashed over this very door.

But something was strange—where was Hu Xuan?

She had entered ahead of everyone else; where had she gone?

Cheng Shi frowned slightly and stepped further inside.

“Well, well, seems lively in here. Playing cards, are we?”

He laughed as he walked into the room, edging toward the ranger.

Healing energy pulsed at his fingertips, but he couldn't risk directly casting it on her.

That would break the precarious balance.

Instead, he carefully manipulated the healing light, spreading it evenly over Li Bola's body as he walked.

He raised her vitality slowly but steadily, careful not to tip the scales of the standoff.

Li Bola felt the healing and was grateful, but she didn't dare move.

Because what Cheng Shi was doing was risky.

One small mistake could upset the delicate balance and draw him into the conflict, forcing him to become the next target for the other two to gang up on.

In essence, Cheng Shi was risking his life for his teammates, just like he had done outside the chapel.

Having such a selfless healer by her side, Li Bola felt a deep sense of relief. She considered herself lucky.

But despite Cheng Shi's assistance, she wasn't optimistic about their situation.

Even putting aside the [Fate] warrior Ji Ran, the black-cloaked figure alone was a massive problem.

He was far stronger than she had initially anticipated.

Yet right now, she couldn't warn Cheng Shi.

Because if she spoke, the balance would shatter!