

The Gods 128

Chapter 128: Hehe~ How Did You Know It Was Me?

When Cheng Shi uttered the name “Zhen Xin”, the expression on “Older Cheng Shi”’s face finally changed!

The confusion on his brow flickered briefly, then he let out a helpless chuckle:

“Doubt is a good habit, but too much doubt? That’s no longer caution—that’s paranoia.

So, what now?

Have you already crossed paths with this ‘darling of [Deceit]’?”

“Crossed paths?” Cheng Shi scoffed coldly. “No, no, I’d say... I’m meeting her right now!”

To be honest, when Fool’s Lips whispered the name “Zhen Xin,” Cheng Shi startled himself.

But after thinking it through, it made perfect sense.

If anyone could orchestrate such a grand, elaborate scheme to fool everyone, it could only be her, the one [Deceit] calls His First Masterpiece.

Cheng Shi had been suspicious of the “Older Cheng Shi” for quite some time because he never believed that he would just casually return to the past and engage in such lively conversation with his former self.

Sure, there might be some interaction, but not to this extent.

Reversing his own personality, Cheng Shi realized that a more likely scenario was that his future self would have stumbled upon this place and simply remained hidden in the shadows, silently observing his younger self.

Whether his present self lived or died wouldn't matter—his future self would only take a brief moment to reminisce, and that would be that.

He certainly wouldn't engage in extended conversations with his past self.

Because, as the faker had said, Cheng Shi had walked his path alone, always.

Of course, circumstances can change a person's nature over time. Cheng Shi couldn't fully judge what his future self had gone through. And since he hadn't found any solid evidence to support his suspicions during their dialog, he played along, listening and believing—at least on the surface.

But as the conversation went on, Cheng Shi felt more and more off.

The "Older Cheng Shi" was far too invested in this trial.

Even if it involved [Birth], [Corruption], Zangier, and the Council of Scholars, it didn't warrant this level of engagement. He should've been here for the entertainment, not to unravel mysteries.

That's when Cheng Shi's mindset shifted. He continued to speak cautiously while waiting for the perfect moment to test his theory.

Finally, the opportunity arose!

When he feigned a stumble, seemingly about to fall into the void, he managed to grab the other Cheng Shi's arm!

In that brief moment, he felt it—a familiar, steady heartbeat that hadn't wavered from the very beginning.

This reminded him of someone who had once been smitten with him.

Shaman!

Just like Shaman, this person had an unnervingly consistent pulse.

But here's the thing—Shaman wasn't a player.

Even if she had some hidden agenda and was carrying out behind-the-scenes manipulations, she shouldn't know this much about the trial or the players.

Besides, if this truly were a future version of Cheng Shi, with all the experience and skills he would've gained, maintaining such a steady heartbeat might not be impossible.

So, this wasn't solid proof.

Cheng Shi's suspicion reached a deadlock.

A con artist might deceive for amusement, but an elaborate charade like this couldn't be just for a laugh.

There had to be something more, something the faker was hiding too well for Cheng Shi to pinpoint.

So, instead of sitting back and waiting, he took the initiative.

He asked the "Older Cheng Shi" for advice.

The response? Zangier—an offering to [Deceit].

And that's when a light bulb went off in Cheng Shi's head, and he considered a new possibility.

A possibility so wild, so unbelievable.

He began asking himself:

What if the teammate who 'died' wasn't actually a follower of [Silence]?

What if the supposed follower of [Silence] wasn't the one who died after all?

What if the real teammate...

was someone else?

What if... there was still a teammate alive?

And what if that person was also a follower of [Deceit]!?

That would explain the logic behind the suggestion to offer something to Him.

With this wild train of thought, Cheng Shi suddenly connected all the threads of the trial.

What if one of his teammates had awakened early, gathered vital information—perhaps from their own tour assistant, or maybe from a fellow traveler?

The fact that everyone had awakened in different locations this time gave her a significant opportunity to manipulate events.

So, what if she, through some incredible means, left behind a corpse and quickly escaped the scene?

Or... what if she never even left the scene?

What if she had stolen Shaman's identity and became Shaman?

Even when the players regrouped to discuss their next steps, she was right there, in the room next to his own!

Later, when Cheng Shi rebuffed her advances, it gave her the perfect excuse to slip away unnoticed, beginning her carefully orchestrated plan.

When did they meet her again?

Ah, yes—the Traveler's Office.

Everyone else's tour assistants were left behind at the inn, except her! She went to the office.

And why? To investigate, obviously.

The opening window was too short for her to gather all the details, so she boldly went to the Traveler's Office and, on her way out, put on a show for Cheng Shi.

Now that he thought about it, she seemed awfully certain that he would refuse her again.

She made her presence felt, then left.

When did they meet again?

The bar!

Yes, the bar!

She asked him for a child.

Ha, how ridiculous.

Looking back now, it seemed like she was deliberately leading him back to her house, although she seemed somewhat surprised when he brought it up first.

But this wasn't about having a child!

Perhaps she thought the team was solving the trial too slowly, so she decided to speed things up.

The Sun-Spot Finches!

The food for the Sun-Spot Finches in the courtyard!

Ha, that wasn't a childhood nostalgia moment for Shaman.

She was subtly hinting that birds could be attracted with food.

I was so blind to miss it.

And when did they meet again?

Ah, right—Qin Chaoge!

The moment that cold and distant Qin Chaoge walked past him, he should have realized something was off.

He had indeed seen through the lawful bard, but he hadn't realized that the bard had already been replaced.

Qin Chaoge had been swapped!

And the one who replaced her... was Shaman!

When Cheng Shi left Shaman's house, there were only two people left inside—Qin Chaoge and her.

If she was who Cheng Shi thought she was, then of course his powder wouldn't hold her forever, and Qin Chaoge...

Qin Chaoge likely wasn't much of a match for her either!

That's when she must have taken the bard's place, becoming his teammate, standing right beside him!

No wonder she didn't come near him again after that.

And she never sang a single song after that!

She had used her attitude in Shaman's house as a disguise.

That well-timed display of disgust was so perfectly executed; no one could've suspected her!

When did they meet again after that?

Entering the door, stepping into the void.

That's now!

This insane, bold follower of [Deceit] was now impersonating his future self!

She must have some kind of tool that could read memories. That whole “life flashing before your eyes” moment when he entered the void wasn’t a death omen—it was her manipulation!

She had read his memories!

And Cheng Shi had a pretty good guess about her talent.

At least one SS-rank [Deceit] faith talent, I Am You!

A talent that allowed her to perfectly disguise herself as the target, as long as she could make the target vanish from everyone’s sight.

At least one SS-rank [Deceit] faith talent, Illusory Dreaming of Something from Nothing.

A talent even more terrifying than Su Yida’s “Mirages in the Rift Between Reality and Illusion.”

While Su Yida’s mirages could create things that others believed in, this one—just from its name—could literally create something from nothing.

The user could weave illusions from their imagination, and as long as the deceived person started to believe, every false item in that illusion would become real.

All she needed was for the deceived person to accept it, and she could manufacture countless creations and infinite possibilities!

So the moment Cheng Shi stepped into the void, he had already entered a grand and meticulously crafted illusion.

Of course, there was also the Master of Deception, for only when two deception masters met would the truth be revealed.

The more Cheng Shi thought about it, the more stunned he became.

The more he thought, the more unbelievable it seemed.

A player who managed to manipulate everyone right from the start of the trial, ultimately leading them all to the correct answer...

So had she realized that this trial was a no-win scenario the moment she stepped into the void!?

Then, she must have used her memory-reading tool, simulated his future, and then used Illusory Dreaming of Something from Nothing to deceive Cheng Shi, crafting an illusion of his “future self” with the power to reveal the void, gradually leading Cheng Shi to witness...

The insane God-Thief experiment...

To uncover this absurd truth!!

But...

Is this even possible?

Isn't this a bit too much?

Could a player really design such an intricate scheme on the fly?

This wasn't just deception—it required an incredible depth of knowledge and historical understanding.

She had to know all about the Tower of Logic, Zangier, the Stellar Dagger, and everything related to them. And within just a few minutes of reading his memories, she had to fully understand him!

It's easy to understand someone quickly, but to become them—that's hard!

This... is this what it means to be the Chosen One?

So this is what His Chosen One really is!

Compared to her, Su Yida doesn't even deserve the title of Master of Trickery.

Yes, Master of Trickery.

Because the Illusory Dreaming of Something from Nothing is the exclusive blessing of the Master of Trickery.

For a moment, Cheng Shi was speechless.

Watching Cheng Shi sink into his thoughts, overwhelmed by this revelation, the older Cheng Shi finally couldn't help but burst into laughter.

With that crisp laugh, her voice abruptly changed back.

Even her appearance changed back.

Shaman!

A perfectly unharmed Shaman now stood in front of Cheng Shi.

Still wearing that light summer halter dress, still in those same lace-up sandals, looking as shy and demure as ever, with that innocent, naive expression.

No—she wasn't entirely unharmed. There was still a wound on her right shoulder.

A wound left by Cheng Shi's own scalpel.

"Oh dear, I've been caught!

Hehe~

I'm curious—how did you figure it out?

Don't tell me it was a guess. I never believe in guesses.

Every lie is revealed because someone found the evidence to shatter it.

So go on, Little Cheng Shi, how did you know it was me?"

How do I know?

Heh, you give me too much credit.

I didn't know!

The name "Zhen Xin" wasn't something Cheng Shi had deduced—it came straight from Fool's Lips.

In a desperate attempt to bluff a Master of Trickery he had never met, Cheng Shi had spent ages silently begging the Fool's Lips for help, until it finally whispered the true name of the person before him to bolster his confidence.

But the moment he heard that name, he was even more terrified than she was.

As for identifying the older Cheng Shi as a fake? Yes, that was Cheng Shi's own deduction.

But the reason for his deduction...

Honestly, even Cheng Shi hadn't realized he still had one final ace up his sleeve.

Memory!

He had hidden away a card related to memory!