

The Gods 130

Chapter 130: Why Can't There Be One More Choice in Fate's Judgment?

He knew Zhen Xin wasn't dead, and he knew she couldn't die.

Not only because of the life-saving methods granted by her status as a Chosen One of [Deceit], but also due to the "Law of Pregnancy" that Hu Xuan had planted in her, which could resurrect her once.

Yes, she had replaced Qin Chaoge, and thus also carried the "Law of Pregnancy"!

So, when Zhen Xin chose to abandon Cheng Shi in the dark chapel room, she probably already knew that Cheng Shi wouldn't die either.

Everything was within her calculations.

Except for the part where Cheng Shi didn't follow the script and managed to fool her.

Looking at the charred remains on the ground, Cheng Shi couldn't help but wonder—if the "Older Cheng Shi" was a fake, did that mean all the so-called "future" events Zhen Xin had mentioned were fabricated?

Had she made up all those people and events just to make Cheng Shi believe she was truly his future self?

And what about the history of Zangier and the Council of Scholars?

That part had to be true, because the Stellar Dagger was right there, and her abilities couldn't fabricate something as monumental as divine essence!

At least, not yet.

Truth and lies, illusions and reality.

Zhen Xin had truly mastered the art of deceit to its fullest.

Cheng Shi was filled with a sense of admiration.

The moment Zhen Xin died, her “Pocket of False Memories” shattered, and two of his teammates, who had been trapped in the void, fell onto the platform.

A gravely injured ranger and a warrior with a grim expression.

Li Bola took in the impossible scene before her, her brows furrowed tightly.

She seemed ready to ask what had happened while she was trapped, where they were now, and who the burnt corpse on the ground was—Qin Chaoge or Hu Xuan?

But wary of Ji Ran, she chose to suppress her questions.

Ji Ran, dragging his massive sword, looked toward Cheng Shi, surprise flickering across his face.

“Tsk, you killed her?”

Well done!”

Cheng Shi looked at this [Fate] follower, who had been collaborating with Zhen Xin, and sneered.

If the corpse had been Zhen Xin’s doing, then today’s warrior, Ji Ran, was cleared of any suspicion.

It seemed he had simply been chosen by Zhen Xin as her reluctant partner in the scheme.

He had played the role of the killer quite convincingly.

“Even a dog knows to mourn its owner. She just died, and you’re already looking to switch masters?”

Ji Ran smirked and shrugged indifferently:

“Owner?”

Nah, brother, she wasn’t my master. I’m not that lucky. I was forced into this.

She took my second dice. I had no choice but to humor her.

Now that you’ve killed her, doesn’t that mean we’re teammates again?

Haha, aren’t you going to give me a welcome back ceremony?”

Ji Ran laughed loudly, clearly relieved by Zhen Xin’s death.

Hearing his words, Cheng Shi and Li Bola finally understood why this “warrior of the day” had made it this far.

He had two dice!

No wonder he was so confident. Two dice would give him a significant buffer for mistakes.

It seemed he truly was one of [Fate]’s favored children.

“Sorry, but I don’t play with whores—male or female,” Cheng Shi spat, and without warning, he thrust out his right hand, unleashing a sudden bolt of lightning straight at Ji Ran.

The ranger followed up, firing a barrage of wind arrows, locking down all of Ji Ran's potential escape routes.

And yet, even with this, Ji Ran dodged.

With a snap of his fingers, he vanished from his original spot and reappeared next to Zhen Xin's charred corpse.

He crouched down and reached into the charred remains, pulling out a grey-white die, laughing maniacally as he retreated.

As soon as he fell back, another bolt of lightning struck Zhen Xin's corpse.

A posthumous strike—not intentional, but it happened.

Cheng Shi watched Ji Ran retreat, his expression darkening.

This 13-point warrior was already difficult to deal with. If Ji Ran rolled that second die...

Cheng Shi could only hope that Ji Ran's ability was for rerolls, not stacking.

Yet, the more you dread something happening, the more likely it becomes.

The moment Ji Ran retrieved the die, he tossed it across the platform. It rolled a couple of times and finally landed on...

1 point.

$1 + 13 = 14$.

Critical success!

Ji Ran's grin stretched as wide as it could go. He let out a chuckle, dragging his massive sword as he charged forward without a second thought.

Even though his trajectory was painfully clear, neither Cheng Shi nor the ranger could seem to lock onto his position.

For a moment, they felt like they were standing still, frozen in place, helplessly waiting for the giant sword to come crashing down.

Boom!

Silver light, full with brute force, slammed down right in front of Cheng Shi. Fortunately, the quick-thinking ranger had already transformed into wind and whisked him away before the blade could claim another victim.

The wind carried the clown backward, while the warrior grinned wickedly and pursued with his sword. On the ancient Stellar Dagger, the three of them played out an absurd game of chase, hunt, and slaughter.

"Come on, didn't you want to kill me?"

Why haven't you made a move?

Priest, where's your lightning?

Run out of juice?

Ranger, run faster, or I'm going to catch up to you!"

The distance between them continued to shrink, and Li Bola's heart sank. She had reached the edge of the platform. Beyond it, the only path left led to the Eternal Sun's hand.

"Cheng Shi! Do something!"

I'm trying! I'm thinking so hard my brain's about to fry!

Cheng Shi gritted his teeth, continuously injuring himself while restoring the ranger's stamina. He was terrified that if his healing wavered for even a second, they'd both be caught.

This warrior, empowered with max stats and overflowing with divine energy, was a complete lunatic. You couldn't fight a godlike berserker head-on, someone who wouldn't tire for the entire day.

At best, they had a few more minutes before they became victims of the warrior's blade.

And this time, there wasn't a "Law of Pregnancy" to save them.

"What's wrong, out of ideas?"

Fine, I'll cut you some slack.

If you stop now, I'll give you a few minutes to recover. We'll fight it out fair and square—one-on-one, and whoever loses dies.

As for the other one, I'll let them go. How about that?"

Ji Ran had grown bored of the chase. Now, he was toying with his prey.

It was a blatant attempt to sow discord, but its simplicity often made it effective.

Unfortunately for Ji Ran, neither the wind nor the clown liked simplicity.

“Cheng Shi! I’m heading for the arm!”

Just as the two of them were cornered with nowhere to run, an idea suddenly struck Cheng Shi. He shouted at Li Bola:

“The Fate’s Judgment! If we trigger it, everyone will be pulled into the voting phase. We might still have a chance!

While Zhen Xin hasn’t revived yet—quick!”

Li Bola paused for a moment, realizing that this was their only option.

Though she hadn’t heard the name Cheng Shi had mentioned earlier, seeing the corpse on the ground made it easy to guess—it must have been the real Qin Chaoge.

Because only her behavior had changed so drastically.

And Cheng Shi’s meaning was clear.

It was currently two versus one. If they triggered the judgement now, they could win the vote, change the path of fate, and perhaps, fate would shift in their favor and resolve the crisis.

That was the most optimistic outcome.

So she roared:

“Are you sure you’ve found the answer?”

I'm completely in the dark here—it's all on you, Cheng Shi!"

That level of trust weighed heavily on Cheng Shi's shoulders, as he began frantically thinking through his decision.

The townspeople, the travelers, the Divine Envoy, Zangier, the Council of Scholars...

He didn't want to choose any of them.

Because he knew that no matter what he picked, fate would spiral out of control, beyond anyone's reach.

Choosing the townspeople, travelers, or the Divine Envoy would likely end the experiment prematurely. But then, would they face the chaos of two rogue gods battling each other? Or would it be the intervention of the Council of Scholars? No one knew.

Choosing Zangier? That would be out of the question—not just because of the unpredictable consequences, but because Cheng Shi couldn't stomach giving Zhen Xin what she wanted after she had manipulated everyone from the start.

And as for the Council of Scholars...

If fate evolved to the point where they successfully completed the experiment, the players who witnessed them stealing the authority of the [Gods] would undoubtedly be eradicated like vermin.

So no—the choice wasn't easy.

Who deserves redemption?

I'm the one who deserves redemption!

Just as Cheng Shi's mental gears were turning faster than ever, Ji Ran's sword slashed downwards, crackling with enough force to tear wind and lightning alike, descending right toward the clown in mid-air.

At that critical moment, a flash of brilliance crossed Cheng Shi's mind. He shouted at the top of his lungs:

"Trigger the final judgment!

I choose the one who deserves redemption to be...

Hu Xuan!"

"!!!"

"???"

The name that should never have been an option echoed through the air, and even the wind seemed to pause.

It wasn't just Li Bola who was dumbfounded, although she was certainly shocked.

More importantly, Fate's Final Judgment accepted the choice, and the decision process officially began.

Everything in the void froze.

Even the eerie glow of the Bloody Moon was stuck in place.

The wind stretched long and thin, the massive sword hovered just above Cheng Shi's nose, the warrior mid-leap, and the charred corpse... raised a single finger.

A prompt appeared before all the players, and the only option on the list was the one Cheng Shi had spoken aloud.

Hu Xuan!

She had transformed from a player into a selectable option.

She had lost her right to vote, but now had the chance to be voted on.

Suspended in mid-air, Li Bola's mind reeled as she stared at the familiar name, utterly shaken.

What had happened to make this crazed Sage of Life the one deserving of redemption?

She couldn't wrap her head around it.

But she decided to trust Cheng Shi.

Even if the last time she trusted him, all it had gotten her was a stomachache from laughing too hard.

Still, there was something strangely trustworthy about this priest, who had bled and fought alongside her.

Clowns may hoard their trust, but the wind doesn't.

So, she cast her vote.

There was only one option in the Final Judgment, but now Hu Xuan's vote count increased by one.

Cheng Shi stared at the tally—two votes for Hu Xuan, and his nerves remained tense.

This was still a massive gamble!

He was betting on fate's evolution to save both of them.

Before the final judgment began, Cheng Shi had never even considered that a player could become a selectable option.

But once he ruled out all the other possible choices, his gaze turned toward Zangier, hanging upside down in the night sky, and another equally insane individual flashed through his mind.

The Sage of Life, Hu Xuan!

Where was she?

Zhen Xin had claimed that Hu Xuan was caught in a tug-of-war with Zangier's unconscious divine essence.

If that wasn't a lie, it meant Hu Xuan was already entangled with Zangier.

Looking back at the rules of the Fate's Trial:

Fate's choices must align with the theme. Since the truth revolved around false gods, the eligible party for redemption had to be someone or something entangled with the false gods.

And Hu Xuan fit that perfectly.

Except she was a player.

But Cheng Shi never let himself be bound by rigid rules, so he took a wild leap and made a player part of the answer!

Because even if Zhen Xin had lied, and even if he didn't vote for Hu Xuan, he couldn't accept the other outcomes.

If death was inevitable either way, he might as well bet big!

What if I win?

When Hu Xuan's name was accepted by the Final Judgment, Cheng Shi felt a small weight lift off his shoulders.

My luck has always been terrible, but...

My gambling streak has always been pretty good.