

The Gods 131

Chapter 131: Today's Warrior Dies Today

Ji Ran stared at the options before him, his mind going blank for a moment.

To be honest, he didn't care who got redeemed.

He was just here to have some fun in the trial, and when that [Void] follower approached him for cooperation, he agreed to put on a show together.

But now, it seemed like their performance had gone off the rails.

Because he had no idea what kind of fate his partner wanted to achieve.

There were only three people left at the scene, and two had already voted for the same option. Didn't that mean he was bound to lose?

Ji Ran snorted internally:

Whatever, who cares about the outcome. I'll just kill them all first.

To him, the only real Fate's Judgment was cutting the threads of others' destinies with his sword.

Yes, Ji Ran wasn't the true killer, but he very much wanted to be one.

So he prepared to pick a random choice, eager to end this time-freezing farce.

But just as he was about to select the Council of Scholars, another option suddenly appeared on the Fate's Final Judgment list.

Zangier!

Hm?

Ha, interesting. She's awake.

Ji Ran laughed internally, then chose Zangier as well.

Indeed, Zhen Xin had awakened.

Or rather, her consciousness had never faded—her body simply hadn't yet revived.

And the rule of Fate's Final Judgment was that as long as you were alive, you retained the right to vote.

So, she communicated her choice to her partner.

2:2.

A tie.

Li Bola's face instantly darkened, her only advantage of time completely erased.

But Fate's Final Judgment never allowed ties. If a deadlock occurred, He would randomly select one of the tied options as the final outcome.

And Random was one of His favored powers.

Cheng Shi, on the other hand, hated randomness, because that meant there was a 50% chance that Zhen Xin would win the game entirely.

He and Li Bola would likely end up as the warrior's next victims, their journey ending here.

Besides, when it came to Fate, was randomness truly random? That was debatable.

But even so, Cheng Shi's expression didn't waver. In fact, there was even a hint of playfulness in his otherwise frozen look.

Ji Ran stood towering above Cheng Shi, poised to strike with the force of an avalanche, yet confusion filled his mind.

The Decay Priest seemed unnaturally calm. What was he thinking? What was he waiting for?

Fate to favor him?

Ridiculous. I'm a follower of [Fate]. Why would He favor someone else when I'm standing right here?

With that thought, Ji Ran could already picture Cheng Shi being split in two by his blade.

What a delightful feeling, to cut another thread of destiny!

Cheng Shi, for his part, had no idea what Ji Ran was thinking. He was simply waiting.

And what was he waiting for...?

Sincerity!

Naturally, sincerity.

He was waiting for the seeds of sincerity he had planted to bear fruit—waiting for an answer!

Time ticked by, and Fate's Final Judgment began its countdown. In a short while, He would select one of the tied options randomly.

And that outcome, perhaps, wouldn't be the one Cheng Shi wanted.

But just as the final judgment was about to conclude, the tie was suddenly broken!

Hu Xuan: +1!

3:2!

Cheng Shi had won!

Ji Ran's eyes widened in disbelief as he stared at the outcome, shock and confusion flooding his face.

Li Bola was equally stunned. She seemed to realize something and smiled faintly.

The charred corpse lay motionless, giving no clue as to what thoughts, if any, stirred within it.

Cheng Shi, though his expression remained stiff, had joy practically spilling from his eyes.

Hu Xuan had become an option, losing her right to vote. It was obvious she hadn't voted for herself.

So, who cast that final vote for her? The answer was clear.

There were six players in this trial, five present at the scene, and one left outside!

That player, naturally, was...

Qin Chaoge!

The [War] Bard had awakened during the Fate's Final Judgment, and faced with the tied options, she had made her choice.

After being knocked out by "Shaman," she had been shoved under a bed.

Cheng Shi's powder, meant for Shaman, had made its way into her lungs as well.

But no matter how potent the powder, so long as the player wasn't dead when the final judgment began, they retained the right to vote.

And so, Qin Chaoge woke up.

And she was Cheng Shi's last hope.

In fact, the moment Cheng Shi exposed Zhen Xin's identity, he was already certain that Qin Chaoge had only been replaced—she hadn't been killed.

If Zhen Xin had been willing to kill her teammates, both he and the ranger would've died in that dark chapel room. They wouldn't have made it this far.

This meant Qin Chaoge had simply been hidden away, not eliminated.

And as long as she wasn't dead, she retained the right to vote.

Zhen Xin hadn't overlooked this, but she had likely thought that a player completely out of the loop wouldn't cast a vote that favored the opposition.

That level of randomness was no different from letting Fate make the decision itself.

She liked gambling, and to her, blind gambling was just another form of fun.

And so, with both knowing the stakes, Qin Chaoge woke up under the bed and cast her precious vote.

No one could have predicted that this vote would end Cheng Shi's wild gamble with a win!

Well, not everyone had been caught off guard.

At least Cheng Shi had expected it.

Once he realized that the person who had brushed past him earlier wasn't Qin Chaoge but Zhen Xin, he knew that his sincerity had yet to yield its results!

And conveniently, Qin Chaoge was a lawful bard.

She would definitely help him.

The question was, being so far beyond the void, in Far Dusk Town, and unaware of the events that had unfolded since, how could she help? How could she know which option to choose?

She had always known!

Because...

It was her bardic talent—Portrait in the Song!

Although she had once said she hadn't painted a portrait of him, when Cheng Shi had stormed into Shaman's house and she had angrily grabbed his collar, that wasn't just an emotional reaction.

Sure, her reaction fit the [War] faith's temperament, but more importantly, she had realized she hadn't gotten a clear enough picture of him and had decided to sketch him again in her mind.

Cheng Shi had suspected this at the time, and his habit of leaving backup plans led him to play along.

You like drawing? Fine, draw all you want.

He had taken her hand in his, their skin pressed together, heartbeats syncing.

The perfect moment for a detailed side profile.

You see, this kind of talent doesn't just record—it extends and fills in the gaps.

Given how much Qin Chaoge had observed and scrutinized Cheng Shi over the past two days, she had learned enough about him.

Though this priest followed a different faith, unlike her lawful nature, he wasn't the kind of man to trample over order.

So, she thought she had seen through Cheng Shi and could deduce his choice!

Even though she didn't know what the other option besides Hu Xuan meant, her talent told her that Cheng Shi would help Hu Xuan.

Granted, she didn't like Hu Xuan. The woman was a madwoman.

But she also knew that Cheng Shi wasn't a liar—he was sincere, even if that sincerity was rare and cautiously given.

And so.

3:2.

Fate moved inevitably toward the ending Cheng Shi had crafted for the Sage of Life!

Seeing the expected result, Cheng Shi smiled.

When you're at a disadvantage, sincerity is the best weapon.

But sincerity can also be a form of deception.

Cheng Shi had concealed his true self, discarding his identity as a trickster, and through genuine means, secured two extra votes!

Victory was now within reach.

"Buzz—"

The Final Judgment disappeared.

The moment the text vanished from the players' vision, a terrifying pressure erupted from the Stellar Dagger.

A shockwave swept out like a storm, and before anyone could react, they were all blown away.

Amid the chaotic winds, Cheng Shi only saw Ji Ran's sword sweeping past the tip of his nose, cutting down from his chest, past his navel, and dangerously close to his hips—nearly ending his lineage right then and there.

"...Shit!"

Cold sweat drenched Cheng Shi.

Ji Ran had also been caught off guard by the storm, losing his grip on his massive sword, which gave Cheng Shi the narrowest of escapes.

As Ji Ran readied himself to strike again, Cheng Shi's lightning was already flying toward him.

Cheng Shi's reaction was lightning-fast—literally. Even though he had narrowly escaped death, he hadn't retreated an inch.

Instead, he used the momentum from the windstorm to leap forward. And then...

“Boom!”

Lightning exploded, crackling wildly!

The strike was too close—so close that Ji Ran couldn't dodge.

No—he shouldn't have been unable to dodge. With divine power coursing through him, a simple storm shouldn't have affected him.

But the moment he failed the Final Judgment, Fate's favor vanished from him.

He became just a regular human again.

Ji Ran didn't want to accept it. He tried to swap fates with someone else, but the ranger had already merged with the storm, becoming one with the wind.

As for Zhen Xin...

She was still a barely-awakened corpse, and no one even knew where the storm had blown her.

And so, with no way to escape, no way to avoid it...

The bolt of lightning Cheng Shi had sent crashing into Ji Ran's chest tore through him without mercy.

"Gah—"

Ji Ran's body seized up, blood spraying from his mouth. His eyes filled with disbelief as he glanced at his pierced chest, a flash of sorrow crossing his face.

But in his final moments, he smiled.

Cutting the threads of fate—that had been his choice.

And now, that choice had finally led back to him.

Perhaps this is the true cycle of fate.

"Cheng... Shi..."

He wanted to share the last insight he had about Fate with the one who had severed his thread, but in his final moment, he didn't see Cheng Shi anywhere.

Because after delivering the final blow, Cheng Shi had ridden the wind and left.

He's just a dog that died on the roadside. Why would I care to look back?

The clown smirked as the wind carried him away.

“You... Are you really a priest?”

“Huh? Didn’t you see how big my heals were?”

“...All I saw was lightning.”

“That was a prop. I’m out of charges.”

Cheng Shi wasn’t lying—the five charges the townspeople had given him were all used up.

But five bolts of Thunderclap Judgement, and only one sacrifice repaid...

Ah...

For all the effort Le Le’er went through, I’ll have to delay settling this debt for a bit longer. Surely, He won’t mind, right~?

Li Bola, still sweeping Cheng Shi through the storm, couldn’t help but laugh at his words.

“Hah, sure, I believe you.”

“...”

Sis, could you sound a bit more convincing?