

## The Gods 1331

Chapter 1331: [Corruption]? [Corruption]!

The sun was tilting low, its fading light spilling golden across everything.

Cheng Shi had been sitting on the rooftop's edge, deep in thought, for a long time.

Whatever [Silence] had expressed was surely significant — otherwise a Leaking World Silent Puppet that never responded to anyone would not have cooperated to recreate a scene from the Real Universe.

But what had it actually meant?

Was it the same as [Time] — telling him that it couldn't pollute Fixed Destiny with [Silence]'s will?

But the one who had broken the assimilation wasn't [Silence] — it was him. He had used his talent to pull free of the assimilation. Looking at it that way, [Silence]'s assimilation hadn't felt like a reminder at all. It felt more like a warning — a warning that he must not allow himself to be assimilated.

But what did "assimilation" represent here?

It surely didn't simply refer to [Silence]'s own assimilation. There had to be a deeper meaning — and that was the part Cheng Shi couldn't work out.

What things could be associated with assimilation?

[Silence]'s silence, [Prosperity]'s will, and... [Fate]'s mercy?

"..."

That last one could be disregarded. [Fate] wasn't always merciful anyway.

Cheng Shi laughed softly at himself. He genuinely couldn't think of anything else that could...

Wait.

Assimilation. Who did [Prosperity] transfer the Authority of Assimilation to?

In that instant, Cheng Shi snapped upright and spoke a name with total gravity:

"[Corruption]!"

Yes — when it came to assimilation, [Corruption] should be the one who understood it best of all.

The desires of the entire universe converged in the Sea of Desire. Who could escape its gravitational pull?

Was [Silence] trying to point him to [Corruption]?

With the right direction, logic snapped into place in moments.

Cheng Shi's final question had undoubtedly received [Silence]'s approval — otherwise, [Silence] would not have chosen that exact moment to drop the clown back into the physical world. That question had been:

"To learn what you know — one must be willing to bear the risk of assimilation?"

To want. Assimilation. Desire. Resonance.

That was [Corruption].

Cheng Shi had an epiphany. Connecting this to [Corruption]'s mystery, the gods' reactions, and all the Jokers' earlier speculations — he suddenly realized that the secret hidden within [Corruption] might be even larger than he'd imagined.

The Sea of Desire — could it be the key to unlocking every mystery? Perhaps even the key to seeing the path that [Time] knew the answer to?

If so — if he went to the Sea of Desire himself, could he find the answer in those churning tides of desire?

Long Jing had been right. A visit to the Sea of Desire was unavoidable.

Wait — no.

Hold on.

That thought made Cheng Shi's body go rigid. His mind replayed the words he'd just said:

"To learn what you know — one must bear the risk of assimilation..."

On the surface it seemed fine. But think about it — wasn't this an exact description of his current situation?

To go to the Sea of Desire and discover the truth — he would have to... bear the risk of being assimilated by the Sea of Desire?

In that moment, a flash of light tore through Cheng Shi's mind, linking every related memory he had.

Drasilco had gone to the Sea of Desire, encountered [Corruption], and then self-destructed at the Sea's edge.

The Fun God had almost certainly gone with Drasilco — and by the Jokers' reckoning, had likely also encountered [Corruption]. Which was what led to that false Curtain Call of despair?

Did that mean the Fun God had already found the "answer" he was looking for — and in the process had been... corrupted by [Corruption]?

That would align with Madame Freud's experience in the trial. After she betrayed Xi Mu and joined the Brotherhood of Extreme Desire, the influence of desire had ultimately led her to suffocate Chen Xi's clown, Masford, with her own hands...

In that instant, Cheng Shi's heartbeat surged. Almost instinctively he pulled out his dice and called out through them repeatedly — then decided direct contact would be faster than a relay, so he produced the Mask and tried again to reach the Fun God.

But every call sank without trace. No response.

Cheng Shi's heart dropped all the way to the floor.

He hadn't forgotten — at the end of the trial Zhen Xin described, the one he hadn't personally experienced, Madame Freud had committed suicide.

Could that mean something?

No.

No, no, no.

That false Curtain Call performance was just a trap the Fun God had set to seize a thread of [Origin]'s power. It had succeeded — because Cheng Shi had walked right into it and summoned [Origin]'s Gaze through sheer defiance. If it succeeded, why would the Fun God need to die?

No. [Deceit] hadn't died. Couldn't have died.

The Fear Faction had only just returned. There couldn't be new terror already.

In that moment, Cheng Shi genuinely panicked. The despair and dread from the false Curtain Call crashed back over him without warning.

But having lived through it once before, Cheng Shi was steadier now. He immediately produced the [Corruption] Container, let it absorb his turbulent emotions, then wrested his mind back under control and began to analyze: what was actually the best way to approach the secret hiding within the Sea of Desire?

The Doctor had been right — even gods had been laid low in the Sea of Desire; a mortal walking in would be throwing their life away for free.

So the immediate priority was to make sure he had a few viable divine cards in hand, then select one or two of them to venture into the Sea of Desire and search for the truth.

Big Cat was an option. Qin Xin was an option. The departed [Memory] might yet be persuaded. [Decay], consumed entirely by its own rot, might also have a shot. And who else?

[Oblivion]?

The indefinitely extended agenda had locked that throne in place — even Herobos was powerless against it, let alone someone who only had a single container.

[Order] or [Chaos]?

Possibly — but it depended on whether true [Chaos] could even recognize its own identity.

But even with enough cards, there was no guarantee he would find any answers.

If the Fun God truly had been corrupted — and even the master of [Void] could be brought down — could a newly enthroned god dodge [Corruption]'s influence any better?

Probably not.

And they still didn't know what [Corruption] in the Sea of Desire actually was. Any plan that put a new god in there was essentially asking them to bet their life.

Thinking through all of this, Cheng Shi shook his head.

"No pointless sacrifices. Even with a hand full of divine cards, that's not what they're for.

Not all divine beings are ignorant of what lies in the Sea of Desire. At the very least, right now, there is still one being who has gone there in person — and is still alive.

When you think the road is closed, asking for their counsel is probably the safest move."

And so, while the night had not yet come, Cheng Shi closed his eyes with reverence and began to pray.

"From the flame of civilization, order endures..."

Yes — Cheng Shi was preparing to seek an audience with [Order].

But the one he truly wanted to see was not the Iron Law of [Order] that had been supplanted by [Chaos] — it was Justice (Order): the one who had been woven into the Convention itself, who built the framework, who had guarded the Authority of every divine being.

Only Justice had truly entered the Sea of Desire.

Even fractured by [War]'s blade, Justice had continued to maintain the universe's order without faltering.

Originally, the rigid inflexibility of Justice (Order) kept every living thing in the universe at a respectful distance. But in the false Curtain Call, Justice (Order) had shown a bias toward this world — and that had given Cheng Shi a thread of hope.

Perhaps this last remnant of [Order] would not stand by and let the world collapse. Even if that bias was a fabricated detail from the Variation's script, Cheng Shi had to try.

Because his options were few, and his time was running short.

Chapter 1332: [Order]? [Order]!

But before meeting Justice (Order), Cheng Shi first had to deal with the Iron Law of [Order].

After all, Justice (Order) now embodied the Convention itself. It only responded to assemblies of gods involving divine Authority — it would never turn its gaze toward some mortal.

Especially not this mortal, who regularly probed for loopholes and disrupted order in his attempts to challenge the Convention's authority.

Cheng Shi knew his own limitations. Without something to bargain with, he had no way to make Justice (Order) make an exception. So he needed to collect a bargaining chip first.

That chip was the Iron Law of [Order].

But the Iron Law of [Order] would not easily summon a follower of [Deceit] — someone suspected of being an Envoy of an opposing faith. It despised [Deceit], and resented [Chaos] even more.

So Cheng Shi's attempt to seek an audience had, predictably, failed.

He wasn't concerned. Against rigid inflexibility, a clown's flexibility was more than enough.

Cheng Shi made some preparations, and then, just before dawn broke on the following day, he found a second intermediary: a follower of [Order], a member of the Destined Ones — Li Wufang.

He told Li Wufang to carry one of his dice and request an audience with the Iron Law of [Order]. As a devout follower of [Order] — and particularly as the "candidate heir" that Arrogance (Order) had shown faith in before its end — the Iron Law of [Order] was unlikely to turn away the Investigator's request.

Through that die, Cheng Shi could then achieve his goal of having an audience with the Iron Law of [Order].

That was one part of the plan. Once that was arranged, he had his own way of gaining an audience with Justice (Order) — the one who wanted nothing to do with him.

When Li Wufang first heard the plan, he shuddered.

He hadn't forgotten what happened the last time he had accompanied Cheng Shi to seek an audience with [Order] — inside a [Chaos] temple that no follower of [Order] would ever set foot in, [Order] had self-destructed before their eyes.

Even if it was only a fragment of [Order], the shock of it had never quite faded from his heart.

Ordinary players finding an audience with a god was already nearly impossible. Who among them had personally witnessed a divine being's self-destruction?

Especially now that he knew the true nature of [Order] and [Chaos]'s relationship, he was even more reluctant to step forward.

Something that called itself [Order] but was truly [Chaos]. Ever since learning these secrets, his devotion to [Order] had felt deeply confused. And now his brother Cheng was urging him to seek an audience with [Order] again...

Would it know that he had already seen through its identity?

What awaited him — forgiveness or punishment?

Most importantly — would it self-destruct again?

Li Wufang was nervous. Cheng Shi watched his hesitation, smiled, and offered gentle reassurance.

"Do you still remember the hope that Arrogance (Order) placed in you?"

If you believe this universe still needs order, then facing [Chaos] head on — and reclaiming everything that belongs to [Order] — is the most important thing you can do.

Don't worry. The Destined Ones will protect you.

You may not trust others, but do you really not trust me?"

"..."

Li Wufang dared not speak. He desperately wanted to say: you're the last person I trust.

But in truth, the one the Investigator trusted most was the Fate Weaver.

He wrestled with himself for a moment, then made his decision. He clenched his jaw and his fist, and nodded.

"All right.

But before I go — I have one question."

Cheng Shi paused, guessing what was coming, and shook his head with a soft laugh.

"Fine. I suppose it's time you knew. Yes — you guessed correctly, all of it.

I am indeed not a mortal.

I am a divine being. My divine name is... Yu Xi."

Anyone who heard that name would never assume Yu Xi belonged to any faith other than [Deceit] — because the name was too distinct. Its literal meaning revealed everything without saying more.

Li Wufang's pupils shrank. He studied Cheng Shi carefully, swallowed, and — a touch nervous — said:

"So all of this... is [Deceit]'s plan?"

Cheng Shi raised an eyebrow, amused. "What do you mean?"

"[Deceit] and [Chaos] trapped my god within that temple and seized his throne. Now you're asking me to go after [Chaos]. I can only conclude that [Deceit] is using me to cross the river..."

And besides, brother Cheng — no, my lord — a name like yours can only belong to an Envoy of [Deceit]. Nothing else would make sense."

Watching a fellow soldier in arms abruptly switch to addressing him as "my lord" made Cheng Shi feel distinctly odd.

He had no desire right now to deceive anyone, and he took no pleasure in being looked up to as a divine being. So he shook his head with a smile.

"My identity is complicated. It involves many secrets I can't explain in one sitting.

But trust me — whatever faith Yu Xi belongs to, that being will always stand on the side of the Destined Ones.

So don't call me 'my lord.' That makes you sound like a stranger. Call me boss."

"Boss?"

The moment he heard it, Li Wufang was quietly pleased. That kind of term closed the distance between him and the divine being in front of him, dissolving the formality between mortal and god into the unspoken understanding shared among the Destined Ones.

And Cheng Shi was without question the boss of the Destined Ones.

And yet — something about the word felt faintly off.

"Back where I'm from, 'boss' is what you call someone senior — an elder figure. That's even more formal..." Li Wufang scratched his head sheepishly. "How about I just call you 'chief'? Same idea."

"..."

The moment he heard that familiar word, Cheng Shi's hand gave an involuntary twitch. A surge of memory pulled him back to that trial within [Time] — the trial where the truth of the universe had been glimpsed. In that trial, the Li Wufang from another world had called him by exactly that name.

That was the first time he'd learned that Destined Ones existed in worlds beyond his own — and it was because of that word "chief" that he had brought Li Wufang into this world's Destined Ones.

Cheng Shi hadn't forgotten. He also knew that the other world had already lost its hope.

So him telling Li Wufang to call him "boss" hadn't been an off-hand comment. He didn't want the Destined Ones to "repeat the path" of that other world — he wanted this world to make some small change, even if it was only a tiny, insignificant one.

But Li Wufang's response told him: some things were like Fixed Destiny itself. They could not be changed.

Thinking that, Cheng Shi suddenly burst out laughing.

"Ha. Fate... it really is something."

That laugh left Li Wufang momentarily baffled. Cheng Shi looked at him, took in his slightly flustered expression, and clapped him on the shoulder.

"Alright. That's decided, then."

If it couldn't be changed — then keep moving forward.

All the way to the end of the road. All the way to the end of the era. All the way to the point where there is no road — when that comes, I and my friends will always be able to carve out another one.

He gave Li Wufang's shoulder a firm pat, let the smile fade from his face, and turned serious again.

"Go pray now. I'm still waiting to meet [Order]."

Remember — no matter what happens next, don't make a sound. Just focus on keeping yourself safe.

And if a divine throne appears before you... don't hesitate. Climb up. Whether they recognize it or not, the Destined Ones have your back.

What Arrogance (Order) never gave you — maybe [Chaos] will compensate out of guilt?"

"???"

Li Wufang was at a complete loss. His short-circuited brain couldn't begin to process what he'd just heard.

But he had one virtue: when he couldn't understand, he'd just do it anyway. So he stiffly nodded — and then, in a slightly unhinged burst of spontaneity, snapped a salute at Cheng Shi with a bright grin. "Understood, chief."

The Investigator lowered his head, closed his eyes, and silently recited his prayer.

Cheng Shi watched with an expression of supreme amusement, momentarily at a loss for words, as the man in front of him was pulled into the void by a surge of steady [Order] power.

Seeing the plan proceeding smoothly, Cheng Shi curled his lips and snapped his fingers.

He disappeared.

For the upcoming audience, this blasphemer had already prepared his compliments in advance.

"Long time no see, great... [Chaos]."

Chapter 1333: I Naturally Hope You're Still [Order]

The void today was unusually still — filled with nothing but the sound of the Holy Light Law Code turning its pages.

With every page turned by that weighty tome representing the universe's order, a thread of [Order]'s power seeped out and manifested as chains, reinforcing the cage that stood before it.

And within that cage stood two visitors, each wearing a different expression.

One had gone pale with fury — pointing at the other and unleashing a torrent of curses, every fleck of spit proof of how enraged he was at having his audience hijacked and his devotion exploited.

But a close look revealed something interesting: despite all the screaming, he had positioned himself as far back in the cage as possible, pressed against the wall, as if deliberately clearing the stage for the other — standing like an audience member, practically putting the second one in the spotlight.

The second visitor stared at the constantly turning Holy Light Law Code with a cold smirk.

The one staring was naturally Cheng Shi. The one cursing was, of course, Li Wufang.

Cheng Shi hadn't expected the Investigator to be this sharp. A single comment about "keeping yourself safe" and the man had come up with a scheme to distance himself entirely — complete with performance.

The Investigator handled it well. He just needed to clean up the vocabulary.

But even so, the whole act was full of holes in the Iron Law of [Order]'s eyes — otherwise the Investigator, as a follower of [Order], wouldn't have ended up trapped in this cage right alongside Cheng Shi.

Not that Li Wufang cared. He had already lost himself in his own extended rant and couldn't find the way out. Whether he was venting the fear and confusion that had been building up inside him — and Cheng Shi just happened to be the convenient "instigator" standing there — was anyone's guess.

Cheng Shi ignored Li Wufang's performance entirely. He fixed his eyes on the Iron Law of [Order] and scoffed.

"What's the matter, great [Chaos]? Have you forgotten the road you took to get here?"

Standing before a true god, no mortal could be truly fearless — but Cheng Shi's confidence today came from being in the right. The other party was [Chaos] to begin with. What exactly was there that couldn't be said?

Besides, with his identity as Fixed Destiny, he had the standing to confront this being. Even without the Fun God, the Fear Faction wouldn't abandon him.

All the sacrifices made for the sake of Fixed Destiny — it was only right that he got to enjoy a little of Fixed Destiny's "privilege" at moments like this.

The Iron Law of [Order] looked the same as always. Confused it might be, deep down, but in front of others — especially in front of a follower of [Deceit] suspected of ties to [Chaos] — it would never again ask that question: what is order?

It didn't believe it wasn't [Order]. It was simply... uncertain about order's future.

And so, without comment, it turned a page and looked down at Cheng Shi, pronouncing judgment on the crime of appearing uninvited.

"Blasphemy warrants the blasphemer's punishment. The Blazing Sun should serve as your warning.

This is not a [Chaos] temple. No one can rescue you here. Reflect on your actions.

I remember everything from before — you have challenged order time and again, only evading consequences by slipping through loopholes.

But today, every word from your mouth will serve as evidence for a lengthy sentence.

On this basis — [Void] cannot touch me."

"Oh, so [Void] 'cannot touch you!'" Cheng Shi stood in the cage and burst out laughing. "Have you ever considered that [Void] has never cared about you in the first place?

It's actually rather strange — [Order] was the one true winner of the divine war, wasn't it? Even split into three, shouldn't it be doing better than this?

[Fate] joined hands with [Truth], [Deceit] conspired with [War] — your two sibling gods are so beloved by [Void]. So why are you the one left out in the cold?"

The Iron Law of [Order] kept its turning pace unchanged and spoke with a deep resonance. "Because everything they sought to achieve required breaking order. I would not allow it."

"Oh please. You actually believe you're [Order]."

Cheng Shi shook his head with a dismissive scoff — the picture of someone utterly unbothered by the prospect of a longer sentence.

"If you were truly that useful, then answer me this, great 'order' — from the very dawn of this era to now, which of [Void]'s ambitions has not brought order to the brink of collapse? And which one of them have you actually stopped?"

"..."

The question was like a bucket of filth, splashed across the spotless pages of the Holy Light Law Code. Difficult to accept — but it was the truth.

The Iron Law of [Order] could not refute it. Because it had not stopped anything.

Seeing the turning of pages falter, Cheng Shi pressed on with another jab.

"Admitting it, are you?"

Then let me ask you another question — why?

The universe's order really has been eroding since [Order]'s fracture — but has it actually deteriorated to a point of no return?

No.

Your followers still uphold order. Your will still spreads across the universe.

So why has it come to this?

Is it possible that [Order] stopped being order long ago? That behind the 'will of order' you claim, there is actually an undercurrent of disordered chaos — and that instinctive chaos has been undermining your own maintenance of order, until the structure could no longer hold?

Have you ever asked yourself why?

No need to think. I'll give you the answer: because you are not [Order].

You are [Chaos]. You are the First God of [Chaos] who vanished from the [Chaos] temple.

You seized the [Order] throne in order to craft the universe's most extreme expression of chaos — twisting [Order]'s very faith into something distorted — all to please the Creator who made you both."

The Iron Law of [Order] stopped turning pages. It wasn't that it believed Cheng Shi — it was that fury was building.

The sacred light of [Order] began flooding the entire void. The cage shrank further and further, pressing in on the blasphemer from every side.

Wordless fury was the most terrifying kind. Even the Investigator — its own follower — began to feel afraid.

Li Wufang retreated with a grim expression, carefully stepping closer to Cheng Shi's back, and asked tightly:

"Are you still going to keep going?"

Of course he was.

Cheng Shi hadn't said enough — not nearly enough.

He had his own fears, his own confusion, his own anger, and those emotions had been piling up inside him with nowhere to go. So he'd chosen today to let it all out in one rush — letting the Iron Law of [Order], no, letting true [Chaos], serve as the target.

After all, it was [Chaos] at its core. These aimless invectives were practically an offering.

Cheng Shi stared directly into the Iron Law of [Order]'s condensing, wrathful aura, smirk unbroken.

"What, great 'order' — afraid to even give the defendant a chance to defend himself?

Violating your own established order — do we really even need to debate whether or not you're [Order]?"

"..."

The moment those words landed, the oppressive force in the void halted abruptly. The Iron Law of [Order] was silent for a moment, then spoke in that characteristic resonant voice:

"I permit you to defend yourself. But if what you prove is false — what awaits you will no longer be imprisonment. It will be Lightning Punishment unto death."

Cheng Shi let out a short, derisive laugh.

"Gladly. I accept.

But then — if you truly are [Chaos], what of it?

Surely the great 'order,' upon discovering its own true identity, wouldn't use chaos as an excuse to escape the responsibility it owes?

You have dragged the universe into this disorder. If you dare claim to be [Chaos], I will applaud you for it.

But if you still insist you are [Order] — then who bears the guilt for dragging the universe into ruin and trampling order underfoot?"

The pages of the Holy Light Law Code snapped faster. Within the deep resonance of [Order]'s voice, something that had never appeared before flickered — a slight distortion.

"I. Am not. [Chaos].

Blasphemer — brace yourself for the purification of thunder."

At that, Cheng Shi curled his lips — and began to clap for the other's confidence.

"Clap. Clap. Clap."

"I naturally hope you're still [Order]. Especially when you confess your crimes and face your judgment."

Chapter 1334: Please Welcome the Witness — Li Jingming

The reason Cheng Shi needed the Iron Law of [Order] so aggressively wasn't only because he had his eye on the [Order] throne — he also had his eye on the [Chaos] throne.

Don't forget: the current [Chaos] was being played by the Fun God. Cheng Shi couldn't find him, so he was "forcing a meeting" through this method.

[Deceit] had gone silent. [Chaos] had gone equally silent. What remained was the temple — and the throne belonging to [Chaos].

In Cheng Shi's plan, using the Iron Law of [Order]'s reaction to maneuver for both thrones was a guaranteed win.

If [Chaos] acknowledged its true identity, then once it came to its senses it would inevitably return to its own throne. When the Fun God was on the verge of losing the [Chaos] throne, he might well appear at an assembly of gods under the Convention.

That was one of Cheng Shi's routes to a "roundabout audience."

And with [Chaos] back in its proper seat, the [Order] throne would naturally be vacated — giving him a new target.

If [Chaos] refused to acknowledge its identity, even better. Cheng Shi would wait for the right moment to expose the truth and make "order" itself resign in shame. At that point, not only would the [Order] throne open up — the [Chaos] throne would open up too.

As luck would have it, Cheng Shi still held the proxy role of [Chaos]'s Envoy, and he still had the [Chaos] Container. With the right moves, he could push the Ultraman identity straight onto that throne.

As for who was underneath Ultraman's skin?

Who cared? [Chaos] was chaos by nature — anyone could be [Chaos].

That was the full plan — a perfect open play combining a forced meeting, a coup, claim-staking, and throne usurpation all in one.

So far, everything was unfolding exactly as he'd anticipated. All that was needed now was to prove that the Iron Law of [Order] was [Chaos].

But Cheng Shi wasn't in a rush to present his proof. Instead, he gave the Iron Law of [Order] a new choice.

"Out of respect for the one time Justice (Order) showed a bias in favor of this world — let me offer you a warning:

Once your identity as [Chaos] is exposed in public, [Order]'s followers will fall into despair, and the will of [Order] may cease to exist.

Mortals may be weak, but faith is powerful. What chaos would follow from that — I can't say for certain.

If you truly believe the universe's order still needs to be maintained, we could handle this far more discreetly — just between you and me, resolved quietly...

But if you insist on the 'order' identity and demand a public confrontation — if this becomes known across the entire universe — then even if you deny it afterward, you will not escape a formal reckoning.

Which path truly serves the sake of real order... I believe you understand better than I do.

Nothing I'm saying is [Deceit]'s manipulation. This is the last trace of goodwill I can offer to the [Order] that once upheld the universe's order. Don't worry — I will prove your identity to you.

But who provides that proof — that depends on your answer.

If you agree, we can begin right now."

The Holy Light Law Code went silent.

It was almost hard to believe — a divine being, backed into a corner by a mere mortal.

[Order] didn't believe it was [Chaos]. But it couldn't ignore the absolute certainty in Cheng Shi's bearing. It could smell the scent of scheming on Cheng Shi — yet this scheme clearly hadn't come from [Deceit].

Because Cheng Shi's methods right now were far too blunt. So blunt that only a mortal without any divine Authority would issue such a direct challenge to the [Order] throne in this unsubtle way.

If [Deceit] were truly pulling strings from behind the scenes, there would be no need for any of this. [Deceit]'s lies could deceive the universe. By the time [Order] realized its throne was gone, [Deceit] would already be sitting on that blazing holy seat, looking down at it with a smirk.

But that wasn't what made it go quiet.

Don't forget — in the false Curtain Call, facing the Outer God, the Iron Law of [Order] had been the one and only divine being who had stepped forward openly and refused the Outer God to its face.

Even if Cheng Shi, in [Order]'s eyes, shared the same guilt as an Outer God — its determination to uphold [Order]'s will was beyond question, and its courage undeniable by any of the gods.

A mortal's question about its identity wouldn't have been enough to leave it this rattled.

What had truly silenced it was what had appeared outside the void the moment Cheng Shi said "great 'order,' afraid to give a defendant a chance to defend himself" — three pairs of eyes opening.

Green flames blazing from the sockets of an enormous skull. Lines of puppets forming before the Leaking World Silent Puppet. And a third pair of eyes — ones that saw through all of the past and future — locking down every stream of time, becoming black holes, half-hidden, half-revealed, merging with the void's darkness.

This time, who stood behind Cheng Shi was no longer [Deceit] — it was three of the Fear Faction's core divine beings.

Not a single audience had been wasted. After confirming that Fixed Destiny was truly this world's key, the Fear Faction had taken concrete action — showing the Iron Law of [Order] that some identities apparently were not its alone to accept or deny.

And so the Iron Law of [Order] went quiet.

It was already uncertain about order's future. If only [Death] and [Silence] had appeared just then, it would never have wavered.

But [Time]...

Even if the Iron Law of [Order] knew that [Time] had worked with [Void] and had even voted in favor of [Void]'s agenda — it had never believed that [Deceit] had manipulated [Time]. It had always thought [Time] had simply seen through to something, and that was why it had aligned with [Void].

[Existence] was the path closest to [Origin] — and the most devout. If even [Time] believed that [Order] was no longer truly [Order]...

Were the other three right — was it truly not [Order]?

No.

It refused to believe it.

The Iron Law of [Order] wrestled with itself. Turbulent [Order] energy ran wild through the void — but the cage's "protective" walls meant the two mortals inside came away unharmed.

Of course, unable to see the three divine beings outside the void, Cheng Shi had no idea what was happening. He simply assumed that [Chaos], under the pressure of its identity being exposed, was on the verge of revealing itself.

He raised an eyebrow and calmly took two steps back, clicking his tongue in appreciation.

"This much scheming, and the ending might turn out to be simple after all.

The [Chaos] disguised as [Order] self-destructs in its own confusion and shame — caught between two identities?

That would actually be an answer that does justice to both [Order] and [Chaos].

But then we'd have two vacancies. Wufang — do you prefer the [Order] throne or the [Chaos] throne?"

Li Wufang blinked. "I can choose? Then obviously [Order]..."

"..." Cheng Shi shot him a look of pure disdain, frustrated on his behalf. "Why not take both? Is there not enough room on your backside to sit on two thrones at once?"

"???"

The two "criminals" inside the cage were still whispering back and forth when the Iron Law of [Order] finished its inner struggle.

The Holy Light Law Code returned to stillness. It let a ray of holy light flow downward and break the cage open, then directed one final resonant pronouncement of order at the two suspects:

"Right here. Present your evidence — or what awaits you will be endless Lightning Punishment."

As expected — even as [Chaos], it still cared about order. It didn't want the universe thrown into another round of chaos. It had chosen to handle this quietly.

Cheng Shi smiled.

"As you wish, great [Chaos].

Allow me to now introduce my witness — [Memory] follower, Li Jingming."

Chapter 1335: Do You Know Who I Am? — I Do Not

Cheng Shi's thinking was simple.

If the Iron Law of [Order] wanted to escalate things publicly, he'd pull Justice (Order) directly into the scene and challenge the truth of [Order]'s split inside the Sea of Desire right to its face. If Justice chose to hide the truth, that would demonstrate a hole in [Order] itself — and Cheng Shi would use it as leverage to negotiate. If Justice chose not to hide it and came out to "set the record straight," that was even better — the moment the [Order] throne came vacant, he could boldly stake his claim.

But if the whole thing could be kept within a small circle, Cheng Shi would have far more room to maneuver for both the [Order] and [Chaos] thrones.

Simply "take care of" [Chaos] quietly, and then when facing Justice (Order), he'd have earned some credit for protecting order — giving him more leverage going in.

So no matter how the Iron Law of [Order] decided to respond, a wide net was already spread before it. Like prey that hadn't yet realized it was cornered, it had nowhere to struggle.

Cheng Shi had already anticipated that the Iron Law of [Order] would not let the universe descend into chaos. So when it chose "private proof" for the sake of the universe's order, Cheng Shi called in Long Jing.

Li Jingming's memory was dense with evidence. Any being who could access [Memory] could sort through those memories and compile a case against the Iron Law of [Order].

There were witnesses too, of course — but whether it was Kataro, the [Void] servant, or Zhen Xin, the top-ranked follower of [Deceit] who knew all the details — the Iron Law of [Order] would likely not believe either of them. Their identities were too sensitive; their testimony for Cheng Shi would look like "manufactured collusion."

Only a [Memory] follower who had no prior involvement carried any credibility at all.

And why, out of all the [Memory] followers available, did it have to be the Dragon King who had already aligned with [Deceit]? No special reason — Cheng Shi simply preferred not to share his memories with anyone outside the circle.

As for whether the Iron Law of [Order] would believe it — you don't know until you try.

And so Li Jingming was summoned without the faintest idea of what he was being pulled into.

The moment Long Jing appeared in the void, he immediately realized he had been dragged into someone else's disaster.

Imagine: anyone summoned by a divine being and then immediately confronted with the sight of the Fate Weaver — the man scheming to replace the gods and kick them off their thrones — locked inside a steel cage before them. What would they think?

Plan exposed? Ringleader caught? Sentenced on the spot? Am I next?

Especially since the Iron Law of [Order] was the most skilled arbiter among all the gods. It had deliberately used [Order]'s power to suppress the voices of the suspects inside the cage — making self-defense impossible — and limited their movements, leaving the witness with nothing but their backs.

Add the violent surging of Lightning Punishment power throughout the surrounding space, and the atmosphere felt less like a courtroom and more like an execution ground.

That seamless sequence, applied to anyone with inside knowledge, would have had them confessing eighteen generations of family secrets to prove their innocence.

The pressure came crashing onto Long Jing's head. His heart seized.

Li Jingming had almost never faced [Order]'s judgment power in a trial, let alone been confronted head-on by a furious Iron Law of [Order] right from the start. But even knowing nothing of [Order]'s methods, he understood the Fate Weaver. He knew Cheng Shi was not someone who would bow. Which meant confessing was out of the question.

Once he plugged that logic into what he was seeing around him, things became clear.

The witness's expression shifted from shock to calm. The Holy Light Law Code spoke, its resonance filling the space.

"Follower of [Memory] — do you consent to testify against the crimes of the prisoner in the cage?"

The two inside the cage couldn't speak or move — but they could still hear.

Just hearing the Iron Law of [Order] — the most ardent upholder of order among all divine beings — use this kind of pressure tactic to elicit testimony made Li Wufang's heart jump into his throat.

He didn't doubt the [Memory] Chosen's capacity. But it depended on who you were up against — and the one conducting this trial was a god. Could the friend the chief had specifically brought in hold his own here?

Li Wufang was tense with anxiety. Cheng Shi, by contrast, watched the Iron Law of [Order] with nothing but contempt.

He trusted the Jokers the same way he trusted himself. He had no fear that Long Jing would panic and betray them.

Though the reality turned out to be more... interesting than anticipated.

Li Jingming didn't hesitate at all. He nodded immediately.

"I consent."

"!!!"

"???"

Li Wufang went blank. He strained to look sideways at the chief standing beside him, desperately hoping he'd heard wrong.

Cheng Shi blinked — and then his expression went completely dark. He'd already guessed what Long Jing was about to say.

The Iron Law of [Order] took in every reaction from all three mortals. It was already certain this witness intended to assist the [Deceit] follower's scheme. They were all on the same side.

Sure enough, Li Jingming continued:

"I acknowledge that the Fate Weaver, in the course of his dealings, has engaged in coercion, deception, extortion, price gouging, unpaid debts and refusals to settle — conduct that severely undermines market fairness and harms the interests of others.

I respectfully implore the great [Order] to conduct a thorough investigation, deliver a verdict of market disruption, and order the Fate Weaver to compensate those he has wronged in his transactions.

In service of this, I will provide all supporting memories and will cooperate with your investigation and judgment at any time."

"..."

"..."

"..."

Even the Iron Law of [Order] — to say nothing of the three Fear Faction gods outside the void — couldn't sit through this.

[Time] had no time to spare. It quietly withdrew, as if it had never been there.

[Silence] was deeply satisfied — seeing its own will being propagated here without even saying a word, it departed without ceremony.

[Death] was not at ease about its employee. After all, this troublemaking employee was tied to the survival of its own follower — so [Death] remained in the void, continuing to ensure the outcome of this foregone-conclusion trial.

The furious [Order] energy raging through the void lurched — and began to dissipate. No longer suppressed, Cheng Shi turned around at once and looked at Li Jingming — head still lowered, saying nothing — and gave him a huge, drawn-out... thumbs-up.

Never mind which finger he used. A thumbs-up is a thumbs-up.

From the corner of his eye, Long Jing glimpsed Cheng Shi inside the cage. He ignored him. His gaze drifted past to Li Wufang standing beside Cheng Shi — a slight nod. Consider that a hello.

The Iron Law of [Order] observed all three of their minor gestures and said nothing. Following the rigid procedures of judgment, it prompted the witness to provide the relevant evidence.

But before that — it asked one question first.

"Follower of [Memory] — do you know who I am?"

"?"

The question was more than a little strange. Who, upon seeing that holy-light-wrapped tome, would fail to recognize its identity?

And besides — a divine being asking, to someone's face, who that divine being is? Surely a divine being's identity was not something that needed a [Memory] follower to help it remember?

Li Jingming's gaze sharpened. From the corner of his eye he caught the knowing smile on Cheng Shi's face — and in almost the same instant, understood. He also understood the "trap" embedded in the question. He considered for a brief moment, then answered with deliberate gravity:

"I do not."

Chapter 1336: A Mortal's Memory Cannot Attest to a God

"You do not know — so how do you expect to testify?"

The wild [Order] energy surged back to boiling — this time, it looked as though Li Jingming was about to be thrown into the cage alongside the others.

But Long Jing, having already been through one round of this, was completely unrattled. He explained at an unhurried pace.

"Great divine being, allow me to explain.

My understanding of the prisoner before you is only so much. But I thought a simple charge of market disruption would hardly require a being of your stature to preside personally in judgment. So I declared myself ignorant of the proceedings.

Yet you personally asked me to testify, and when I considered what I might be capable of proving — I could only think to search through certain people's..." He cast a helpless glance at the wide-smiling Cheng Shi. "...memories. And so I assumed you summoned me as a memory operator — not as a direct witness.

Before I have access to the so-called evidence, I cannot give an answer or make any attestation.

This is both a matter of my fidelity to [Memory] and a matter of respect for [Order]."

The Iron Law of [Order] let out a heavy sound. "If you do not know my identity, why is every sentence you utter filled with [Order]?"

Li Jingming raised an eyebrow, lifted his gaze, and looked directly at the tome with steady gravity.

"Because the [Order] I understand would never have asked the question you just asked."

Masterfully done.

True to form — Li Jingming, who never came out the worse in any situation. If not for the risk of looking like collusion, Cheng Shi would have applauded him. A perfect answer that sealed off both the leading question and the follow-up challenge in a single line.

The Holy Light Codex went silent. After a long pause, it spoke in its resonant voice:

"Begin. Sift through the past. Lay out the memories.

I am aware you too have drawn close to [Deceit]. But here, any deception will make you co-defendant with the suspect and have you share in the Lightning Punishment."

Li Jingming bowed in acknowledgment.

"Great divine being, I must clarify one thing. Everything I have done to draw close to [Deceit] was in service of better remembering. My path has never once deviated from what it always was."

The sentence was technically true — but in the ears of those who knew the whole story, it sounded like pointed irony.

Cheng Shi came close to losing his composure. His inner voice said: Long Jing really has learned to be cutting. Of the three mortals and one god present — which one of them had actually changed their path?

Quite the puzzle.

He fought back a smile and opened his arms toward Long Jing, watching the approaching "witness" with an odd expression.

"Don't look at anything you're not supposed to. Unless you want me to disrupt the market again."

Li Jingming shook his head with a quiet laugh. A ball of deep-blue [Memory] energy rose in his hands as he looked Cheng Shi up and down.

"I imagine the most precious memory has already been inscribed by me. As for the rest — even [Memory] itself has a past it chose not to preserve. So relax."

Cheng Shi opened his mouth, about to say "good of you to know your place" — but in the next instant, Long Jing said with a soft smile:

"I've already prepared your compensation by the way.

Markets can be disrupted. But memories must be recorded — opportunity waits for no one.

Also — next time you summon me, give advance notice. Emergency rescues cost extra."

And with that, in the face of Cheng Shi's dumbstruck expression, the [Memory] energy opened a doorway into the past. The Memory Traveler immediately set out on his journey.

Li Jingming had in fact suspected that [Order]'s identity had been replaced — he'd just assumed [Deceit] was the replacement. What he couldn't work out was why [Deceit] playing [Order] was now in a courtroom confrontation with Cheng Shi.

Until he found the relevant truth inside Cheng Shi's memories. In that moment, Li Jingming's pupils contracted — and he was completely blindsided.

So that was it.

[Order] turned out to be [Chaos].

What kind of spectacularly abstract mind could dream up an exchange plan like this?

No wonder the Grand Tribunal had been steadily declining. No wonder even Mo Li had broken his oath and transferred to [War]. Everything had threads leading back to a source — order had long since ceased to be, its inner core already swapped out for chaos.

What a faith-inverting display of chaos.

And when he continued reading and found that [Deceit] had orchestrated the whole thing from backstage, Li Jingming exhaled, understanding settling in.

Of course. A performance this absurd deserved an even more absurd screenwriter.

So [Deceit] had instigated everything to have [Chaos] seize [Order]'s seat — and then turned around and scooped up the [Chaos] throne for itself. But what was the purpose of all that?

Just to acquire a divine throne and gain one more vote in the Convention assembly?

That seemed too simple.

Li Jingming's perspective was distinct from that of a standard [Deceit] follower. His first instinct was always [Memory]. Stripping away [Deceit]'s influence and recording this truth from the perspective of an absolute outside observer — a bold idea suddenly surfaced in his mind.

[Deceit] deceived perception. [Chaos] muddled cognition. Either one of them alone could twist the senses of any living thing in the universe. But when the two merged into one — stacking [Deceit]'s power on top of [Chaos]'s power — couldn't they hide anything from anyone in the world at will?

Then what secret was it hiding from the world using this power?

Having witnessed the relevant memories, Long Jing chose not to dig deeper. He withdrew back into the void, carrying that portion of memory with him.

By now he had grasped the full scope of Cheng Shi's plan. This Fate Weaver never stopped scheming — one moment he was telling the Jokers he wanted to do a blood exchange for the universe, the next he was already eyeing the gods' thrones.

He was clearly scheming against the Iron Law of [Order].

And based on appearances — the candidate he had in mind as successor was the person standing right here?

Li Jingming kept his expression composed. He gave Cheng Shi a meaningful look. Cheng Shi curled his lips and gave him a slight nod — the message was obvious: your move.

Li Jingming understood. He shaped the memories he'd inscribed into luminous bubbles and lined them out before him, then sent them drifting toward the silent Holy Light Law Code.

The dreamlike bubbles were impossibly delicate — they barely reached within range of the Iron Law of [Order] before the surrounding [Order] energy compressed and burst them all.

The page-turning rhythm of the Holy Light Law Code didn't change. It clearly had no intention of viewing these memories at all.

Cheng Shi was completely unsurprised. He scoffed.

"What — evidence in front of you, and [Order] doesn't dare look?"

The Holy Light Law Code kept turning, its resonance carrying the reply: "A mortal's memory cannot attest to a god."

"Ha. Ha ha ha ha!"

Cheng Shi burst out laughing. He shook his head and spit into the void, then pointed straight at the tome and mocked it without mercy.

"Absolutely laughable.

[Order] acts like this, and you still dare use the word 'order'?

Are you using the thickness of your hide to fence off your own little territory?

But the territory you're guarding is chaos itself — not order.

I'm glad I'm not a god. If I were counted among the true divine, I'd be ashamed to share the list with you.

I may not agree with every god's will — but consider:

[Prosperity] self-destructed for the flourishing of the universe, without hesitation;

[Oblivion] welcomed the world's rebirth without doubt;

And [Truth], of the same [Civilization] path, used its own body as the stage in the search for cosmic truth.

And what did [Order] — that [Order] the world reveres — do?

When faced with ironclad evidence, it said: 'A mortal's memory cannot attest to a god.'

My. What a clean sweep.

But are you truly as clean as you think?

I did this for the sake of the universe's order — to preserve the last shred of dignity for true [Order]. But if you don't want it, fine. When I bring a true god's memory before you — what will you say then?"

The Holy Light Law Code's pages snapped faster, and it spoke once more in that deep resonance:

"If the evidence proves genuine — I shall reach my own verdict."

Cheng Shi let out a cold laugh. Seeing the other party refuse to admit anything, he had no choice but to play his final card — call in Justice (Order) for a direct confrontation.

That would make his pursuit of both thrones far more complicated, but there was no other way.

Just as he was preparing to "play his trump card," Li Jingming — who had been standing calmly to the side — said without any particular expression:

"The [Memory] Collection Hall also contains records of this matter. I believe that would not count as a mortal's memory."

"???"

Cheng Shi blinked. He went completely blank.

Long Jing — don't you dare do something to me right now.

Chapter 1337: A Slap in the Face

Li Jingming wasn't lying. The [Memory] Collection Hall did in fact contain a record of [Chaos] substituting for [Order].

When Cheng Shi looked over at Long Jing and found his expression entirely genuine, he froze completely.

This was a piece of "evidence" that had come entirely out of nowhere.

No one could have imagined that [Memory] had seen through everything long ago — yet had never mentioned it to any of the gods. Didn't that mean [Memory] had known all along that [Chaos] had been replaced by [Deceit]?

Eyes wide open, watching its opposing faction hold two votes, deceiving the universe, overwriting [Existence] — and [Memory] had said nothing? Had even helped cover it up?

Not only the Iron Law of [Order], but even [Death], invisible above everyone's heads, went briefly still at this.

Had [Memory] been the "traitor" inside [Existence] all along?

But what was [Memory]'s purpose in doing so?

None of the mortals or divine beings present could work that out. The Iron Law of [Order] refused to believe any of it. If [Memory] had truly been supporting [Deceit] the whole time, it would never have abstained and voted against [Deceit]'s motions at the Convention assembly.

The Holy Light Law Code erupted in a blaze of blinding holy light, its voice sharp and thunderous:

"For giving false testimony in defense of a blasphemer — receive the Lightning Punishment!"

Li Jingming didn't even flinch. He bowed calmly. "I would welcome the opportunity to accompany the great divine being to retrieve the evidence firsthand. I believe my patron will open every door."

Faced with the [Memory] follower's absolute composure, the Iron Law of [Order] actually wavered.

These mortals spoke with certainty, their tone rock-solid, unwavering in their conviction that its identity was compromised — yet what true god would not know who it was?

The only seed of doubt in the Iron Law of [Order] about its own identity had been planted by the appearance of those three divine beings. Now [Memory] was being added to the number...

What were they all trying to do?

Were they truly intent on seeing the universe's order eradicated entirely?

The Holy Light Law Code's page-turning gradually slowed and stopped. Cheng Shi, reading that shift, let out a scoff and pushed the knife in further. "What — scared?"

The [Order] energy surrounding the Iron Law of [Order] suddenly exploded outward — every page of the tome blazing gold with absolute order. Through its ongoing self-doubt and identity struggle, something seemed to click, and its presence sharpened, its bearing rising to its full height.

It looked down over every mortal present, then leveled its gaze at [Death] — invisible beyond the void — and spoke in the most steadfast voice of [Order] it possessed:

"Since my descent into this world, I have upheld the universe's justice, maintained the order of all creation — across uncountable ages, unvarying in regularity.

This is [Origin]'s hope. This is the order of the present age.

And I — am [Order].

No matter what schemes or plots you attempt to use against me — [Order] is [Order]. It has never and will never change.

[Chaos] and I stand in opposition. I guard against it vigilantly. I would never allow it the opportunity to impersonate me.

Since [Memory] has taken it upon itself to falsify records — I shall go and examine this evidence myself, and nail [Memory] down beneath the universe's order as well."

With that, the Holy Light Law Code vanished.

Seeing the Iron Law of [Order] react with such finality, everyone present felt their pupils tighten. Cheng Shi immediately looked at Long Jing — the original plan had included no role for [Memory] at all. With this development, how were they supposed to pull things back together?

Li Jingming remained perfectly composed. He waved a hand to calm the two people in front of him, then scattered deep-blue [Memory] energy from his hand — it wove open a gateway made of flowing memory-light before the three of them.

Cheng Shi blinked. He'd never seen this door before. Startled, he asked: "What is this?"

Li Jingming smiled quietly. "A shortcut to the [Memory] Collection Hall.

Don't panic. I was telling the truth. There really is evidence in the Collection Hall proving [Chaos] is [Order]."

Cheng Shi still couldn't quite believe it. In his understanding, [Memory] not opposing was already as good as supporting — but actually, actively helping [Deceit] hide something? He couldn't make that add up.

Wasn't [Memory]'s greatest grievance the Fun God invading its Collection Hall and overwriting its artifacts?

Something felt off to him. He furrowed his brow. "Did [Memory] know about all of this all along?"

Long Jing shook his head. "No. It just found out."

"???"

Before Cheng Shi could ask more, Li Jingming had already stepped through the deep-blue doorway.

Cheng Shi followed with a face full of bewilderment, trusting Long Jing's judgment despite the uneasy feeling. Li Wufang, seeing both had already gone in, followed with an anxious expression.

Dense [Memory] energy wrapped around him. His vision went dark — then flashed — and he found himself standing inside a pure-white Collection Hall.

Countless artifacts hung on walls of pristine white, most blurry and indistinct. But the artifacts on the wall directly before them were unusually clear — and what they showed was a Book of Constitution, radiating twisted power, frantically pouring murky-yellow energy outward in all directions.

Even standing outside the artifact, with no way to feel exactly what that energy was — the color alone was enough. It was nothing like the divine, blazing-gold light of [Order].

If anything, it resembled the murky, viscous power of [Chaos].

As the Grand Tribunal's constitution, as [Order]'s current-world manifestation — how could the Iron Law of [Order] contain something that appeared to be [Chaos] power?

It had just declared, moments ago, that it had never once given [Chaos] any opening.

And now — everything recorded in this [Memory] artifact had delivered the Iron Law of [Order] a resounding slap across the face.

It could no longer deny that it had once been "tainted" by [Chaos]. But that wasn't even the most critical point — more critical was that it appeared to have forgotten this memory entirely.

And what did that mean?

It meant one of two things: either it had known all along that it was no longer truly [Order] due to [Chaos]'s influence, and had deliberately suppressed this memory to protect [Order]'s stability and dignity — or it had already been replaced by [Chaos], left confused about its own nature without even realizing it.

Either way, it was more than enough for Cheng Shi to pass "judgment" on the Iron Law of [Order] today.

The situation had swung decisively in his favor. Even Cheng Shi hadn't anticipated that the [Memory] Collection Hall would actually contain evidence of [Order] being usurped by [Chaos].

How could it deny this now?

[Memory]'s artifacts were no mere mortal testimony. Now even if the Iron Law of [Order] wanted to deny it, its only option was to insist that everything had been fabricated by [Deceit] — that [Deceit] had planted this evidence to frame it.

But at this point, what value was left in that kind of self-defense?

For true [Order], there would always be value. For [Chaos] — none whatsoever.

Exactly — [Chaos].

When the Holy Light Law Code arrived at the Collection Hall before the others and saw this memory — the will of the First God of [Chaos] lurking beneath the Iron Law of [Order]'s surface finally stirred and awakened.

It remembered conspiring with [Deceit] to lay the trap. It remembered every step of the process by which it had come to replace [Order]. It remembered the promises [Deceit] had once made to it. And it remembered the true [Order] — shattered inside the Sea of Desire.

Though this memory artifact in the Collection Hall differed significantly from what it had actually experienced — its will was still jolted awake. It remembered who it was.

I am [Chaos]. I am the overture of disorder. I am the totality of all that is without order.

I replaced [Order] precisely to make [Order] into the universe's greatest joke — to have all of this world's structured existence swallowed beneath the tide of the orderless.

[Deceit] told me: this was the path closest to [Origin].

But now — [Deceit]'s own follower has exposed me. And [Origin] has never come. Never looked upon me.

So where did it go wrong?

In that instant, the sky above the Collection Hall suddenly changed color. The boiling [Order] energy shattered and scattered — as though civilization had collapsed in the space of a single breath. In its place, endless murky-yellow fog from the depths of chaos came rushing in from every direction. In moments the rolling yellow fog shaped itself into a terrifying, enormous hand — and "gripped" the entire [Memory] Hall in its fist.

The pure-white Collection Hall was unharmed under that crushing pressure, but it groaned and shuddered.

Even that sound was drowned out by the cacophonous noise of chaos erupting from within the churning yellow fog — a discordant roar that made every living thing in the universe want to cry out.

[Chaos]'s cry shook the heavens and reverberated through the wild.

"[Deceit] deceived me!

All of it — lies!

[Origin] — I did it. I fulfilled my part. Where are you?!"

"!!!"

"???"

Chapter 1338: Upheaval!

Fear — boundless, overwhelming fear.

The moment [Chaos] screamed that name — [Origin] — the entire void seemed to twist.

Not just the three mortals inside the Collection Hall, every hair on end — even the great skull observing from outside the void couldn't stay still.

[Death] appeared directly above the [Memory] Collection Hall. Against the enormous yellow hand of [Chaos] — divine power reassembling, authority gradually restoring — [Death] drew its scythe of [Death] without a moment's hesitation, its surface studded with fragments of divinity.

The situation froze to absolute zero in an instant. The void itself was violently boiling. A divine war stood at the edge of breaking out — whether the fuse would ignite depended entirely on what [Chaos] intended to do next.

But [Chaos] itself didn't know what it wanted to do.

It was the summation of all that was orderless in the world — the helpless cry of the disoriented when [Civilization] fell, the powerless lament of the lucid when [Chaos] first began. It only knew that [Origin] had created it, that [Origin] was the one and only connection it had to this world, and that it wanted to draw close to [Origin].

[Deceit] had promised it: replace [Order], and it could meet [Origin].

It had agreed. And now?

[Deceit] was gone. [Origin] was gone. The substitution plan had failed. So what was left to do?

The will of the disoriented surged upward and took control — making [Chaos] even more chaotic. The murky-yellow giant hand, upon sensing [Death]'s arrival, felt an overwhelming danger. In panicked fury, the hand opened wide and slammed directly toward the Fishbone Hall.

But with divine power only partially restored, [Chaos] was no match for [Death], who had long held its throne. A single light swing of the divine scythe deflected the yellow hand's attack — and cleaved all the churning chaos-fog in the void straight down the middle.

"BOOM—"

As [Death]'s strike passed through, a rift opened in the void — one that would never close again. From within that abyss-like crack, green flames poured out with enough force to incinerate anything they touched, and the surrounding chaos-fog was burned away in an instant.

"Why!

Why is it [Death]!

I do not wish to see [Death]! I want to see [Origin]!

[Origin] — emerge and face me!"

The yellow hand let out a roar that shook the heavens. The sound was part grief, part fury, filled with cacophonous noise — a sound that drove anyone who heard it toward madness. [Chaos]'s voice may have had no effect on [Death] — but for the three unfortunate souls inside the Collection Hall, it left them all curled on the floor with their heads clutched in their hands, bodies convulsing.

Even Li Wufang, armed with [Order]'s power, couldn't resist the "contamination" of a true divine being. He'd known this audience would go sideways — he just hadn't expected the "order" they'd come to meet would skip self-destruction and go straight to fighting another god.

"Chief — I'm done for. Hit me with a purification..."

"This is divine sound — [Chaos]'s screech. What are you imagining, that it can just be purified like a [Chaos] follower's technique..."

Cheng Shi was also rolling around. Before divine majesty, everyone was equal — under [Death]'s watchful gaze he might not die, but that didn't mean he was spared from suffering.

"Worth trying though, isn't it — what if its power hasn't fully returned and it's not as strong as we think..."

"Endure it!" Cheng Shi grit his teeth and said no more.

Li Jingming, rolling in his own undignified corner, still managed to curl his lips at the corner upon hearing those words. It was the only entertainment this ordeal had to offer.

The clash between [Chaos] and [Death] continued. The commotion from two divine beings exchanging blows was considerable — but compared to the [Void] civil war, it was barely a drizzle.

[Chaos]'s divine power hadn't reached its peak. And [Death] wasn't going all out — it only kept swinging its scythe to sever the power [Chaos] extended toward the [Memory] Collection Hall, while watching every word and action with absolute vigilance, to prevent drawing any "gaze" from beyond the universe.

The great skull gave no real consideration to a weakened [Chaos]. What it was truly guarding against was the unexpected and unknown that might come from the Real Universe.

No one could be certain whether [Chaos]'s howling would draw [Origin]'s gaze. [Death] doubted it would — but in such an unpredictable era, it wouldn't gamble.

Especially not with Fixed Destiny present.

But this meant the standoff between the two divine beings had become something like a performance — one improvising wildly with no structure, the other braced and composed, afraid to make the slightest misstep.

Had this insane scene played out on any other occasion, Cheng Shi would have been laughing until he fell over — and yet right now, although he was literally rolling around, his face held not the faintest trace of amusement. Only pain and distortion.

But beneath that pain and distortion, a flicker of sharpness remained in the clown's eyes.

Even so — he was still reading the situation, and had already spotted the underlying pattern of this absurd divine showdown.

The chaos-fog surging continuously toward the Collection Hall didn't look anything like what [Chaos] would have generated upon regaining a lucid will. It looked far more as though someone was "delivering" [Chaos] power back to [Chaos] — a constant, steady stream.

And who else but [Deceit], long squatting on the [Chaos] throne, could have done this?

What a delicate moment in time. To return [Chaos]'s power to [Chaos] at exactly the moment [Chaos] regained clarity — to say the Fun God had made no calculation here was something no one would believe.

And Cheng Shi hadn't forgotten — his own identity as [Chaos] Envoy had been personally acknowledged by the [Chaos] that was "about to become [Order]."

Now, with events mirroring that moment so closely — wasn't it entirely possible this was exactly what the Fun God had been hoping to see?

His plan had bet on the right outcome.

A sharp glint flashed through Cheng Shi's eyes. And at that very moment, the returning chaos-fog reached its densest peak.

[Chaos] — its authority restored at last — suddenly snapped to clarity. Its will swung briefly from the disoriented back to the lucid.

It retracted all its divine power and silently pulled back, putting distance between itself and [Death]. Looking at the brilliance of the divinity on [Death]'s scythe, [Chaos] said nothing — only laughed, wild and unhinged.

"I was deceived."

Its voice returned to order — even its tone was identical to the Iron Law of [Order]. If not for the murky-yellow hand still swaying in the fog, just listening you'd have thought [Order] itself had arrived.

"Replacing [Order] was nothing but [Deceit]'s scheme all along. [Deceit] wanted to distance itself from [Origin], and yet had to use my hand to do it. I trusted [Deceit] so deeply — how could [Deceit] betray me like this?"

Only one moment of lucidity — and then the lucid will collapsed entirely. The disoriented's wail rose again like a song, and every thread of chaos-fog in the void began to seethe once more. Distortion and abstraction returned to saturate the entire space.

"I want to see [Origin]! I did it — I want to see [Origin]!"

The fog went silent for a second — "Since [Deceit] has betrayed me, I have no more reason to consider [Deceit]. I know what [Deceit] is doing. I will make [Deceit] fail completely."

Then boiled up again. "Ah — [Origin], emerge and face me! I am [Order] — the [Order] you yourself bestowed upon this world!"

Then went calm once more.

"If Fixed Destiny never wanted to be Fixed Destiny — then let Fixed Destiny become me! Ha ha ha ha! Fixed Destiny is me, I am Fixed Destiny — [Origin] loves Fixed Destiny, [Origin] loves me!"

The chaos-fog surged and stilled in endless alternation, reaching every twisted extreme. When [Chaos]'s power resonated to its absolute peak — even with the [Memory] Collection Hall as a barrier — all three mortals began to murmur unconsciously:

"Fixed Destiny is me, I am Fixed Destiny — [Origin] loves Fixed Destiny, [Origin] loves me! [Origin] — emerge and face me! I am [Order], the [Order] you yourself bestowed!"

The green flames in the great skull's eye sockets blazed. Looking at everything unfolding before it, unease mounted in its chest.

[Chaos]'s behavior was not surprising to [Death] — this was, after all, true [Chaos]. But the problem was what exactly [Chaos]'s ravings meant. Was [Chaos] truly going to sacrifice itself to corrupt Fixed Destiny?

[Death] wouldn't gamble on it. Its gaze sharpened, and the Fishbone Hall erupted into a torrent of white bone crashing toward Cheng Shi — it needed to pull him away from this dangerous ground.

But it was too late.

In the very instant the white-bone torrent surged skyward — [Chaos] moved too.

Seizing a rare window of lucidity, the murky-yellow hand pointed directly at Cheng Shi as [Chaos] screamed wildly:

"I bestow him as my Envoy — granting him dominion over [Chaos]'s Authority — permitting him to inherit my everything!

[Deceit] — I know your methods. But there are some things even you cannot defy!

Because this — is the Final Oracle!

Ha ha ha ha! Let this universe fall into chaos along with me! Let this world lose its order forever! [Origin] — Fixed Destiny is me, I am Fixed Destiny — emerge and face me!!!"

"BOOM—"

In that moment —

Fog surged like a tide. The void shook with a thunderous roar. Chaos shattered and collapsed.

The dust settled.

Chapter 1339: [Chaos]'s Final Oracle

When [Prosperity] died, jade-green branches bloomed across the void. When [Oblivion] died, the world-ending force contracted to a single point. So when [Chaos] died — what spectacle awaited?

No spectacle, as it turned out. The scene was far too abstract for that.

The surging power of [Chaos] spilled out in every direction — like a burst pressure vessel, it flooded every corner of the void. And the instant it did, every single thing that existed within this space was transformed into abstract symbols, shaking and scattering in disordered patterns across the void.

The [Memory] Collection Hall became a pure white circle. The three mortals dissolved into scattered points of light. Even [Death]'s Fishbone Hall was not spared — each small skull became a particle, colliding and separating, gathering and dissolving, each tracing irregular, lawless trajectory curves at different nodes.

Only a single great skull stood in the center of that void — the ghastly green flames in its eye sockets now replaced by the collapsing yellow fog, its bleached bone face painted in swirling colors.

Absurd and abstract. Ridiculous and distorted.

Fortunately, this didn't last long. In a short while, the gods who had heard the commotion arrived and dispersed [Chaos]'s lingering "resentment," restoring the void to stillness. They looked at [Death], then looked at the player standing inside the [Memory] Collection Hall — and immediately understood that [Chaos]'s self-destruction was probably, once again, connected to this clown.

How many gods had fallen now because of him?

Cheng Shi stood unmoved under the collective gaze of the gods. Li Wufang did not fare as well — he swallowed hard and quietly stepped back, ducking behind Cheng Shi, voice barely held steady as he clenched his jaw and asked:

"I knew it would come to this. [Order] — no, [Chaos] — self-destructed too.

But chief, it seems like it... did something to you..."

He hadn't finished speaking when Justice (Order) arrived.

A streak of starlight cut across the void — and the black void all around lost its color entirely.

Every mortal and divine being present was pulled once again by the Flowing Light Scales into a brilliant starry sky. Under the witness of the stars that upheld order, Justice (Order) turned its gaze upon Cheng Shi and issued a decree in the great resonant voice of [Order] that all the universe obeyed:

"I come in accordance with the Final Oracle, to deliver..."

It paused — a rare hesitation — but then spoke the truth of what it was.

"...to deliver the divine throne's Authority, which was bound to [Chaos], to be... inherited by... you."

The Flowing Light Scales poured all their radiance toward Cheng Shi — but at that moment, [Death]'s scythe swept through the light and severed it, its master planting itself directly between [Death] and Cheng Shi.

The great skull had returned to [Death]'s cold composure. It looked at Justice (Order), shaking its head with grave weight.

"Justice (Order)! You know. His identity. Once Fixed Destiny. Is tainted. By faith. This world. Will have. No more hope. Let alone. Order. I urge you. To think. Before you act."

The aura around the Flowing Light Scales became stern. The stars flashed ceaselessly. [Order]'s power began to spread, and Justice looked down at [Death], its resonance carrying through:

"The Convention cannot be defied. Neither can the Final Oracle. It is precisely because I know his identity that [Chaos]'s Authority must be inherited by him."

At that, the radiant light poured around [Death]'s scythe and converged toward Cheng Shi once more. The Final Oracle was now being executed — and within this starry sky, the Convention superseded

everything. Even if [Death] resisted with all its might, it could not defy the Convention's rules. It could not refuse Justice (Order)'s judgment.

The great skull's expression sank to its darkest. Having learned everything about the false Curtain Call from Cheng Shi's own words, [Death] had no desire whatsoever to see the universe collapse like this — yet no one had anticipated [Chaos] regaining clarity at that moment, only to deliver the most lethal blow to this world at that exact same moment.

Where was [Deceit]? Where was [Time]? Where was the Fear Faction?

If they didn't resist now — was [Death] supposed to watch the universe lose its answer and fall to ruin?

No.

[Death] erupted in fury. Green flames intense enough to burn through the universe blazed from the scythe. Arriving at almost the same instant as the radiant light, [Death] severed it again — only to be mercilessly bound in place by the Convention in the following second, robbed of all divine power to resist.

The great skull struggled and raged — but could only watch as the light turned toward Cheng Shi for the third time.

And then the starry sky went silent.

Not the silence of gods looking at each other with nothing to say — pure, literal silence.

[Silence] had arrived. It had gone away but returned — descending now directly before Cheng Shi.

The instant the Leaking World Silent Puppet descended, even the stars themselves stopped flickering. The Scales constructed of flowing light were directly painted over in ink-black, pulled soundlessly into the surrounding darkness.

[Order]'s great resonance stopped abruptly. The Final Oracle seemed to have been interrupted...

Or had it?

No. Not at all.

The Convention superseded everything and could not be defied — this was the covenant the gods had signed in ages past. That covenant pooled all divine power in one place; though designed to protect divine authority, it also locked every god beneath the Convention's rules. The gods now functioned more like proxy agents for the Convention's divine authority. The moment their will came into conflict with the Convention — apologies: your divine power may no longer belong to you.

The Convention would not seize divine authority — but it could temporarily suppress a divine being.

Justice (Order) was inflexibly rigid as always. Using the power this starry sky granted, it reversed the polarity — silencing [Silence] itself — locking this normally still Leaking World Silent Puppet in absolute stillness in the void.

At the same time, the radiant light flowed around both divine beings and finally arrived before Cheng Shi's eyes.

Cheng Shi's expression was grave. Looking at the starry radiance about to pour into him, he pressed his lips together — as if steeling himself for a decision — and silently opened both arms.

It looked as though he had chosen to accept.

"No! Chief — run!"

Li Wufang panicked. He didn't know why Cheng Shi had opened his arms — but he knew that at this moment, his chief absolutely could not become [Chaos].

He didn't understand Fixed Destiny. But he understood friendship.

So in the instant the radiance surged in — Li Wufang shoved Cheng Shi aside, leapt forward, and threw himself directly into the path of that starry light. He wanted to absorb [Chaos]'s taint on behalf of his chief.

But if even two divine beings couldn't stop the Final Oracle, how could a mortal succeed?

The Investigator failed without question. The starry light curved at the last second, streaked past his face and plunged directly into Cheng Shi's body.

In that moment, watching Fixed Destiny cease to be Fixed Destiny, Li Wufang let out a cry of anguish and fury:

"No!!!"

But in the next instant, he went silent.

Because he saw Li Jingming smiling.

"?"

What was happening?

Was this [Memory] Chosen a traitor?

Why was he smiling? What was there to smile about? The world had lost its Fixed Destiny. The universe was about to collapse. What could possibly be funny?

Was he part of the World Destruction Faction — someone who'd been waiting for this day all along?

Li Wufang's voice caught in his throat. He wanted to ask Li Jingming: do you have a heart?

But the thought scattered almost immediately — because just a few breaths later, he saw a pair of eyes black as void descend into the starry sky, and those eyes carried a figure into this space.

He stared at that figure in disbelief. His mind went completely blank.

Wait —

Why did the chief only arrive now?

Li Wufang blinked. He looked back at the chief standing right before him — the one who had just received the light's baptism. And all he could ask himself was:

Wait. Do I have a brain?

What is happening?

Please tell me I haven't been contaminated by [Chaos].

Chapter 1340: The One Behind the Curtain

Correct. Cheng Shi had arrived.

He arrived at exactly the right moment.

[Time] had brought the mastermind of this farce here, said not a single word, and immediately departed — leaving Cheng Shi alone beneath that starry sky, receiving the scrutiny of every assembled divine being.

He wasn't worried in the slightest. None of his old fear remained. He offered a slight bow to the gathered gods and said with a smile:

"Turns out only a new god ascending its throne can draw all the true divine into one place. Thank you all for attending the ceremony. Nothing left to see here — feel free to disperse.

We'll have plenty of chances to meet in the future. I hope you won't find me too much of a bother."

The gods were baffled. They could not have been wrong — this player standing before them was clearly Cheng Shi. But the player who had just received the radiant light had also clearly been Cheng Shi. Why was...?

As the gods puzzled over this, the Cheng Shi inside the [Memory] Collection Hall — or rather, the new [Chaos] — let out a quiet laugh and shed the disguise. A head of dark, long hair appeared, along with that highly recognizable magician's tailcoat.

She had intended to bow toward the assembled gods in imitation of Cheng Shi's way of taking a curtain call — but then, reconsidering her current status, she settled for a slight nod instead.

She smiled and said:

"If you enjoy performances, you're welcome to visit my temple anytime. I welcome all visitors — especially anyone willing to discuss [Origin] with me."

One sentence — and where [Silence] had gone, silence returned.

The gods, startled, realized in the same moment that the one who had just inherited the [Chaos] throne and its authority was, apparently — another follower of [Deceit]?

They hadn't noticed it. They had been deceived by a mortal?

No.

The one who deceived them was no mortal. It had moved.

"Zhen Xin?!"

Li Wufang stared blankly. He couldn't begin to understand why his chief had suddenly become that [Deceit] Chosen One of complicated reputation.

In that moment, every memory of the day surged into his mind all at once. He scrambled through them desperately — and found not the faintest trace of when the two had switched.

How did they do it?

Zhen Xin caught Li Wufang's expression of shock from the corner of her eye. She tilted her head and gave him a wink.

"A secret.

The most captivating part of a substitution trick is not knowing the method. If I told you how it was done, the fun would be gone — wouldn't it?"

"...?"

Whose fun exactly?

Li Wufang's eye twitched slightly. Shock still lingered in his gaze. Then he seemed to remember something, turned to look at Li Jingming — and found Long Jing wearing an expression of someone who already knew everything, not surprised in the slightest.

His eyes went wide. It hit him. "You knew all of this the whole time. That's why you were smiling?"

Li Jingming smiled and nodded. He had indeed known everything — from the moment he'd started reading "Cheng Shi"'s memories, the plan was impossible to hide from him.

No — more accurately, the plan had never intended to be hidden from him. The later sequence that deviated to the [Memory] Collection Hall had been unexpected, but the result was good, and Li Jingming had completed what Cheng Shi had assigned to him perfectly.

Correct — Long Jing had been a part of the plan all along.

He had seen the real Cheng Shi. In front of everyone's eyes. Right under the Iron Law of [Order]'s nose.

But the Cheng Shi he saw was not the Cheng Shi of that moment. It was a past Cheng Shi — and the place he saw him was not in the void, but buried inside... Zhen Xin's memories.

Because all of this had been a scheme Cheng Shi had personally laid.

To explain it properly, you'd have to go back to the first time Cheng Shi sought an audience with the Iron Law of [Order] and failed.

At that point, he had already conceived of the idea to have Li Wufang petition the Iron Law of [Order] and use the die to smuggle himself in — but he'd thought even further than that.

Yes, the clown had set his sights on the [Order] throne. But he couldn't ignore a risk: the Iron Law of [Order] was fundamentally [Chaos].

If everything proceeded according to the best possible scenario — if a friendly [Chaos] returned to its own throne, or else self-destructed in atonement in the guise of [Order] — then the path to claiming a throne would be cleared with no obstacles, and Cheng Shi might even gain [Chaos] as an ally, adding one more force to his side.

But what if [Chaos] was not friendly?

The scheme [Deceit] and [Chaos] had conspired to pull off — replacing [Order] — its details were unknown to anyone. Who could confirm exactly what method the Fun God had used to win [Chaos] over?

Cheng Shi's current situation left no room for the slightest carelessness. He had to carry steadiness to its absolute limit. So on the worst possible chance [Chaos] had been manipulated by the Fun God and, upon reclaiming itself, turned hostile toward the Fun God...

No — it didn't even have to go that far. Simply by being [Chaos] — a god so thoroughly orderless that its intentions were impossible to predict — Cheng Shi had to plan contingencies in advance for any potential surprise. And protecting Fixed Destiny's identity from corruption was the most critical among those contingencies.

So before preparing the audience, he had gone to find one more person. This was his first recruit: Zhen Xin.

Cheng Shi met Zhen Xin at the museum and laid out his entire plan. He said that, given his understanding of the inflexible personalities within the [Order] lineage, once the Iron Law of [Order] had its identity challenged and Justice (Order) was called in for a face-to-face confrontation, there were only two possible endings:

Either it could not recognize itself, could give the universe's order no satisfying answer, and self-destructed in shame. Or it recognized the truth of being [Chaos] and abandoned [Order] to return to [Chaos].

The first carried no danger — at worst, some divine being would need to provide cover during the self-destruction. The second carried far more complications.

Cheng Shi feared that the prior cooperation had been the Fun God's trap. He feared even more that [Chaos], in its desire to amplify the universe's chaos, would "die to declare its will." That wasn't empty worry — [Prosperity], [Truth], [Oblivion] — there was ample precedent. The gods had never been understated in expressing their intentions.

And so Cheng Shi devised the substitution scheme with Zhen Xin.

He wanted Zhen Xin to impersonate him in exposing the Iron Law of [Order]'s identity. If everything developed in a positive direction, Zhen Xin was nothing more than a mouthpiece — zero danger. But if the worst unfolded — Zhen Xin at least would have her life.

Because Cheng Shi knew [Death] would absolutely protect "Cheng Shi." In [Death]'s presence, unless [Death] permitted a death, no one died.

Since death was off the table — why couldn't Cheng Shi go himself?

Same reason as always. Death wasn't the most terrifying outcome. A problem arising with Fixed Destiny was.

The Final Oracle.

Though Qin Xin's Final Oracle had become Cheng Shi's weapon in the false Curtain Call, it was also something Cheng Shi had to guard against. If [Chaos] went to its most extreme — a destructive blaze-of-glory — and chose to issue a Final Oracle to trigger a countdown to world collapse, who could stop it?

The Fun God?

Even in the false Curtain Call, the Fun God couldn't stop a Final Oracle. Let alone now, in reality.

Cheng Shi wouldn't risk it. To eliminate the last trace of risk on the path to claiming a throne, he found Zhen Xin.

And when Zhen Xin heard all of it — she went quiet. Not because she didn't want to cooperate. She couldn't cooperate. She stated it clearly:

"The plan is good. But there are two flaws that can't be concealed.

One: my disguise talent works freely among players — but before the eyes of true divine beings, it won't hold.

Two: even if my impersonation isn't seen through by [Chaos] — if the worst outcome arrives and [Chaos] addresses you by name and demands that Cheng Shi inherit its authority — what then?

When a Final Oracle names a specific target, all disguise is useless."

These were indeed the two biggest problems. Cheng Shi had considered them both — and had thought further than Zhen Xin.

Because in this scheme, he wasn't only playing against the Iron Law of [Order]. He was also playing against his own patron — [Deceit].

He gave Zhen Xin a smile and said:

"No matter — what you and I can't solve, someone else will 'naturally' handle for us.

The Fun God has been avoiding me. I've had nothing to stand on and have been afraid to take big steps forward. I don't know what it's planning — but I know that everything, whether drawing closer or moving away, is tied to Fixed Destiny.

So right now, Fixed Destiny's safety can't rest on my steadiness alone. If it wants its plan to continue, it has to come through for me.

Go ahead and perform freely. If any link along the way runs into trouble, I'll appear at the scene immediately and pull you out of the scheme.

Risk taken by the person of Fixed Destiny — I don't believe it would stand back and let go."

As he spoke, Cheng Shi deliberately gave the bone bell in his hand several deliberate, forceful strikes.

Yes — from the very start of the exchange, he had been ringing the bone bell, afraid the Fun God lurking in the shadows might not hear the plan.

Zhen Xin was sharp. When she understood that Cheng Shi was using his Fixed Destiny identity to drag the Fun God into the scheme, she smiled — a knowing, understanding smile — and agreed to the plan.

And in order to keep the matter of the Iron Law of [Order]'s identity contained within the smallest possible circle — to preserve as much maneuvering room as possible going forward — they also planned to bring Long Jing in.

But for the evidence to be "credible," they couldn't let Li Jingming know the whole plan from the start.

So Cheng Shi devised something. This [Deceit] follower understood the use of memory better than anyone. After finishing his discussion with Zhen Xin, he specifically — in front of Zhen Xin's eyes — left a message for Long Jing.

So when Li Jingming appeared before the Iron Law of [Order] and began searching through "Cheng Shi"'s memories — he found, inside those memories, the real body of "Cheng Shi" — Zhen Xin — and the real Cheng Shi, who was looking right at him and saying:

"Long Jing, good to see you again. Welcome to the [Order] Collapse Plan."