

## The Gods 137

Chapter 137: Who Is It This Time? How Could It Be Him!? How Could It Be Him??

Back on the rooftop, Cheng Shi hadn't even fully opened his eyes before cold sweat began trickling down his forehead.

He was nervous, deeply so, as his mind churned with a troubling thought:

What if...

I'm just saying, what if... You tear down your neighbor's house, beat up their kid, and instead of getting mad, the neighbor hands you ten grand...

What do you think their real motive is?

"....."

Cheng Shi's first instinct was: Crap, this is my last meal.

With a jolt of fear, he scrambled up from the rooftop. Without even acknowledging the greetings from Xie Yang across the way, he rushed into the storage room, plastering all the masks he could find onto his body.

Then, gripping the dice in his hand, he started muttering to himself like a prayer:

"Blessed Patron, please protect me, blessed Patron.

I didn't do anything wrong.

It was Your artifact that caused all the trouble.

That little girl is a rotten apple; she's been stirring up trouble everywhere, and even killed that... Today's Warrior. You see everything from your high throne, so please, defend me! At best, I'm just a minor accomplice!

Surely, I don't deserve death!"

But after muttering for a good while, nothing happened.

Cheng Shi began to feel that something was off and gradually stopped.

He pricked up his ears and listened intently, but everything around him seemed normal. There didn't appear to be any signs of a divine presence, like someone coming to summon him into the presence of a god. His brow furrowed deeply in confusion.

"Huh?"

Nothing's happening?

Did my prayer actually work? Did my Patron block it?

It can't be that she... suddenly turned over a new leaf..."

The moment that thought appeared in his head, Cheng Shi quickly bowed his head and muttered another prayer.

"....."

This is impossible. Can't stop thinking about it even when I try.

After a few more minutes of tense waiting, with nothing out of the ordinary occurring, Cheng Shi's previously hunched posture straightened again.

Looks like it's resolved.

Praise [Deceit]!

I don't know how exactly the Patron shielded me, but...

It's been long enough now. I should be safe.

He let out a long sigh of relief, took off the masks he had plastered onto himself, and put them back on the shelves. A smile crept onto his face as he prepared to leave the storage area.

After all, Xie Yang had seen him rushing around earlier, so he needed a good excuse to explain his behavior.

Otherwise, his aloof image might get tarnished.

However, as Cheng Shi pushed open the door to the storage room and stepped outside, he realized that the scene before him was not the familiar rooftop.

Instead, he found himself standing in a very familiar office.

The office was bustling with people, noisy and chaotic.

Old Wang was busy trading stocks, Brother Cao was watching a soccer game, Sister Wu was showing off her newly bought necklace to her coworkers, and Little Li, her face flushed, was texting her boyfriend on her phone.

And as for himself...

Yes, there was another him in the office, fast asleep at his workstation.

Everything in front of him was so real that Cheng Shi almost felt as if he'd traveled back in time.

Judging by the scene, this had to be during his internship, before he had graduated.

How could he tell at a glance? Well, because when Cheng Shi finally graduated and joined the company full-time, Brother Cao and Sister Wu were both fired for having an affair in the office.

It was a shame... He missed the juiciest part of the gossip by just one day.

That had always been a lingering regret of his.

Cheng Shi chuckled at the memory.

But then, the smile quickly disappeared from his face.

When your memories unfold before you as though you've traveled back in time, you can pretty much guess who's behind it.

"....."

[Memory].

An entity that, to Cheng Shi, wasn't much better than [Fate].

Why was it [Memory]?

I could've understood if it wasn't [Fate], or even if it wasn't my Patron... Even [Birth], [Corruption], or [War] would make sense.

But why [Memory]?

Is it because I escaped last time, so this time He's come in person?

What have I done to deserve a god's personal visit!

Dear Patron, aren't you going to shield me?

Could it be that [Memory] came along with [Fate]?

Did my Patron block [Fate], only to let [Memory] slip through?

Damn... That's not impossible.

As the realization hit him, Cheng Shi's face turned pale, and sweat began to slick the palm gripping the storage room door.

He didn't dare move an inch, his eyes darting around the office, trying to spot any sign of Him.

Of course, when a god doesn't want to reveal Himself, how could Cheng Shi possibly find Him?

After searching fruitlessly, Cheng Shi swallowed hard and carefully began to close the door.

Out of sight, out of mind.

If I don't see You, then let's pretend I was never here.

With that thought, he quickened his pace, shutting the door with increasing urgency.

As sweat soaked through his shirt, the storage door finally clicked shut.

“Phew—”

Cheng Shi exhaled a long breath of relief. Without hesitation, he turned on his heels, ready to run.

There was a window at the back of the storage room, specifically kept for situations like this, to give him a way to escape if an unexpected enemy appeared.

I don't know if it'll work against a god, but so what? First, I run.

Yet just as he took his first step, Cheng Shi noticed that the storage room behind him had also transformed into that same office, without him realizing.

Old Wang had closed his stock trading app, Brother Cao had turned off his game, Sister Wu was holding her stomach and pretending to head to the bathroom, and Little Li had hidden her phone in a panic.

And himself...

Still asleep at the desk.

The reason for all this, of course, was that the boss had arrived. The boss of this family-owned business was a second-generation rich kid set to inherit the family empire.

Before coming to work, he didn't even know his family owned a small company like this.

The company's annual output didn't even match his monthly allowance, so he rarely showed up for work. If he was in a good mood, he'd drop by.

But despite his laidback attitude, he still had to discipline employees when they slacked off.

And so, he woke Cheng Shi.

Not the one sleeping at the desk—the one standing at the door, trembling.

“Cheng Shi.”

Hearing the “boss” call his name with a stern expression, Cheng Shi’s knees nearly buckled.

That voice wasn’t his boss’s. It was a neutral, unfamiliar voice, but one that felt all too real.

You can already guess. For an entity with godly power, capable of transforming reality itself, there was only one possible answer...

[Memory]!

He was standing before him in this form!

Cheng Shi’s mind went blank. Instinctively, he forced a smile, unsure of what to say.

Last words?

He hadn’t thought that far ahead.

A greeting?

Well, not cursing Him out would be a good start, so forget about greetings.

“.....”

Since he didn't know what to say, he opted for the safest course of action—a fake smile.

Because I'm always sincere when I fake smile.

As he stared at the “boss” standing before him with a serious expression, Cheng Shi's heart pounded like a drum.

Great, now the infinite pressure of meeting a god and the overwhelming anxiety of facing your boss are hitting me at the same time.

What a perfect combination!

But Cheng Shi only stayed dazed for a moment. He quickly snapped into action, bowing deeply and apologizing:

“Sorry, boss! I promise I'll never sleep on the job again!”

The “boss” looked at Cheng Shi, clearly amused by his frantic efforts to hide his panic, and then burst out laughing.

“You think this is a dream?”

“Uh... yes... right?”

Cheng Shi smiled awkwardly, then quickly shut his eyes tight, trying to play dumb.

But the moment he squeezed his eyes shut, he realized something terrifying—his eyelids no longer responded.

?

“The shadows of your Patron are painted all over your eyes, and His echoes resonate in your voice. You, just like your Patron, are a natural-born liar.”

Heh, are You complimenting me or insulting me?

Should I laugh or cry?

As Cheng Shi twisted his expression in confusion, unsure how to respond, [Memory] spoke again.

“There’s no need to panic. Though my will differs from His, I won’t trouble His followers because of it.

You are one of the pieces in my collection. I’m simply curious—how has such a small artifact caused me so much trouble?”

“.....”

Excuse me, is Your idea of “not troubling” a follower showing up at their home and interrogating them?

Such generosity!

Cheng Shi remained silent, as if, in that moment, he had transformed from a follower of [Deceit] into one of [Silence].

“Are you afraid?”

Interesting. That’s not what I expected from you.

As I said, I mean you no harm. There's no need to be so frightened."

Listening to this god of unerring record-keeping repeatedly tell bold-faced lies, Cheng Shi couldn't hold back anymore.

He muttered under his breath:

"You... You're already troubling me."

[Memory] laughed—or perhaps it was more accurate to say the “boss” laughed, given the scene around them.

He thoughtfully stroked his chin, and for a moment, the pupils in his eyes vanished into the void.

A second later, they returned.

The sight sent shivers down Cheng Shi's spine.

"Ah, I see now. Yes, it seems you misunderstood me."

"?"

"I don't owe you an explanation, but your Patron is too irritating, constantly letting things slide. It's become quite a nuisance.

So, I decided it's time to cause Him a little trouble as well.

It's quite simple, really. The root of it all is that a trickster snuck into my collection."

With a snap of His fingers, the scene around Cheng Shi shifted instantly. It felt as though he had plunged into an ocean, floating helplessly amidst a sea of bubbles, unsure of what was happening.

Before long, a pair of familiar eyes opened before him.

Patron!

The mischievous, void-colored eyes—no other god could possess those!

Had He come to save me!?

Cheng Shi's heart surged with joy.

He saw his Patron wink at him, and with that, countless bubbles in the ocean shattered, only to swiftly re-coalesce.

Following His gaze, Cheng Shi saw, within one of the bubbles, a figure gradually coming into focus.

It was blurry at first, but upon closer inspection, the image reflected within the bubble was...

Himself.

!!??

So this is... just a memory?

Cheng Shi's heart plummeted once again.

"Do you see it now?"

You, Cheng Shi, at this moment, have become a budding follower of [Chaos], Ultraman.”

!!!

Cheng Shi’s heart went back to its place, only for his brain to short-circuit.

Huh?