

The Gods 158

Chapter 158: Everything is Arranged by Fate

2400!?!?

All three of the Torchbearers widened their eyes in shock, even Fang Shiqing momentarily held her breath.

She had hypothesized that Cheng Shi's score might be above 2000, but she had never imagined he would be at 2400!

Players in that score range were people whom most others could only look up to.

"Big shot, don't scare me!"

"2400..."

"You..."

Fang Shiqing stared deeply into Cheng Shi's eyes, as if trying to see through to his very soul.

But while she failed to read Cheng Shi's heart, her own emotions were laid bare in her eyes.

The complexity of her feelings eventually condensed into two simple words:

Regret!

She regretted it!

Back then, she should have kept insisting—stubbornly, persistently, relentlessly!

Who knew? Maybe with enough persistence, she could have dragged Cheng Shi into joining the Torchbearers.

A “good” person with a score of 2400 would have been the greatest asset the Torchbearers had ever recruited!

Because no matter the era, the Torchbearers’ Flame-Seekers had never dared approach players with scores above 2400 lightly.

Such players had already carved out their own path in the [Faith Game]. There was no way a benevolent, world-saving organization like theirs could sway them with nothing more than lofty ideals and dreams.

The Torchbearers were pragmatic, and so was Fang Shiqing.

She had always known that for the organization to grow, it could only recruit potential members from the lower ranks.

But now, over six months since the game’s arrival, even those “potential recruits” had long since “cashed in” on their potential. There weren’t many “future prospects” left to bet on.

So, who to recruit and from which rank was a question every Flame-Seeker had to carefully consider!

Even players above 2000 points were rarely approached unless a Flame-Seeker was absolutely confident in their decision.

That’s why, when she had tried to recruit Cheng Shi before, she had said it was a gamble.

And she had lost the gamble because Cheng Shi had refused.

But in another sense, she had won, because unlike a certain other player who had betrayed the Torchbearers after being approached, Cheng Shi had kept their secret.

And now, here he was, responding to her summons.

Seeing the increasingly complicated emotions in Fang Shiqing's eyes, Cheng Shi slowly turned his head away, pretending not to notice.

He glanced at the dark corner of the room and, with a playful tone, said:

"If you're admiring me, just don't say it out loud. I have too many fangirls—if you have any thoughts, get in line.

For now, let's talk about more pressing matters.

What's the situation here? Where are we? Where are we heading? And who's the enemy?"

At first, Cheng Shi had thought this was just some difficult urban guerrilla battle.

But when Fang Shiqing uttered the name of the location, it was as if a thunderclap exploded in Cheng Shi's mind, leaving him frozen on the spot.

"Gasmira.

We're currently in the cellar of a tavern inside Gasmira's inner city.

Our identities are those of city guard knights, but under the ferocious assault of the [Twilight Church], the City Guard has been scattered.

The scholars have pulled back their forces, focusing all their efforts on defending the inner city while awaiting reinforcements from the Tower of Logic.

But the entire city is at the eye of the storm, hanging by a thread.

The outer walls have been breached in countless places, leaving them useless. The Chaos-following knights of the [Twilight Church] are flooding in madly!

And what we need to do is reach Void Experimental Site No. 69, find the scholars, and retrieve a petal of the Whispering Tree...

Before it withers in the flames that will soon engulf Gasmira's World Tree."

As Fang Shiqing finished, she realized she might have revealed too much about their objective.

Given the current situation, merely surviving and exiting the trial would already be considered a victory.

After all, this battle—one that would shake the entire Land of Hope—was the most "glorious" moment in the history of the [Chaos] followers.

Countless surface-dwellers perished as easily as blades of grass being cut down. Rivers of blood nearly drowned the city ruins, and the inferno that followed this war burned everything to ash, erasing all the tragedies that had unfolded.

Words in a history book may not convey much emotion, but living through it? That's when you realize how utterly insignificant one person's power is in the face of such a war—a war that sought to destroy truth and trample order.

Cheng Shi, having just been summoned here, probably didn't have a full grasp of the brutality of the situation. But the three of them had already been fighting tooth and nail on the battlefield for four days.

Even though they had only seen one corner of this grand battlefield, the memories of those four days were enough to last a lifetime.

Yes, this was Gasmira. Yes, this was the Tower of Logic.

But right now, this was the domain of the [Twilight Church]!

This was where the Death's Bell Knights rang the bell for the end of all order and truth!

The shock and unease on Cheng Shi's face didn't go unnoticed by the others. Bai Ling bit her lip, then forced a determined smile.

"B... Big shot? Don't worry... I... I'll protect you."

Worry?

Are you kidding me? Me, worried?

Cheng Shi took a deep breath, inhaling and exhaling twice.

Tower of Logic. Gasmira. [Twilight Church]!

He had heard these three terms far too many times today.

Now, he finally understood what was going on.

This was all a setup.

All that talk about [Order], about [Chaos], about a summoning—it was all a lie!

This was clearly the work of [Fate]!

The inescapable sense of destiny was overwhelming, so much so that Cheng Shi now believed that the person he had been seeking to "witness" all along... was himself!

[He] had already hidden the answer here, beneath the surface of this trial.

The Crown Jewel of Truth!

What else could be the crown, and what else could be the jewel, if not the fruit that had formed on the World Tree after 500 years?

He had been pulled to this place by a mask, dragged into a trial from over two hundred years in the future, dropped into the middle of the [Chaos] siege on Gasmira—all for that fruit?

So, you want me to retrieve this fruit, right?

[Fate]?

Cheng Shi's face turned pale as he gripped the dice in his sleeve, his mind swirling with countless thoughts.

But just then, he felt the dice of fate tremble once more.

The pale dice in his hand flipped over, turning the six-pipped side back to one.

“???”

You're really responding to me?

No, wait—what I mean is... you're actually taking time to respond?

I was just thinking out loud. You didn't need to suddenly acknowledge me if you're busy or something.

It's... kind of scary...

Cold sweat beaded on Cheng Shi's forehead.

His fingers rubbed against the dice, and he silently repeated prayers in his mind, using every compliment and praise he had ever learned in his life.

But the dice remained still, and the single pip facing up seemed to radiate a silent mockery.

Great, great.

At least staying still is the best acknowledgment of my flattery.

Otherwise, who knows where I would've ended up by now.

Seems like He's forgiven me once again.

Praise... uh... praise be to forgiveness.

As the mental storm raging in Cheng Shi's head finally subsided, he awkwardly fidgeted with the dice beneath his clothes, thinking about what he could say to mask the sudden change in his expression.

However, the three Torchbearers in front of him were also lost in their own thoughts and hadn't noticed his moment of panic.

For a while, the four of them stood in silence in the stuffy, confined space. It wasn't until Cheng Shi cautiously loosened his grip on the dice and confirmed that nothing else was going to happen that he finally let out a deep sigh of relief. His heart, which had raced up to his throat, finally settled back into his chest.

“Don’t worry. We’ll definitely win this trial.” Cheng Shi forced a stiff smile and addressed the trio in front of him.

Fang Shiqing stared at him in bewilderment, unsure where his sudden confidence had come from.

Cheng Shi could see her confusion, but he couldn’t explain it.

Because he felt that if they failed this trial, he might very well end up in Gasmira forever, repaying his debt to that Patron with his life.

Fate...

It really is...

Relentless!