

## The Gods 169

### Chapter 169: Mutual Pursuit

Cheng Shi had once again transformed into an endlessly extending spiderweb.

He found himself quite curious about this form, and so he tried to guess at the whims of the God of Fun—whether this web was merely for amusement or carried some deeper meaning.

But after thinking for a long time, he couldn't come up with an answer.

In the end, his attention was drawn to the forms of the others following behind him.

Ji Yue was the first to descend. By this point in their heart-to-heart, she had almost entirely let down her guard around Cheng Shi.

In truth, even without their bonding session, just the fact that Cheng Shi had opened the entrance to [Laughter and Mockery] was enough for a scholar obsessed with studying the void to throw caution to the wind and leap in.

After all, for them, research was everything.

The moment she landed, Ji Yue immediately began scanning the surroundings, her eyes brimming with curiosity and an unquenchable thirst for knowledge.

Of course, that wasn't what Cheng Shi saw.

To him, all he saw was a black veil, dripping with blood, trembling constantly. And with each tremor, the blood dripped faster.

A blood-stained veil!?

Cheng Shi froze for a moment. For some reason, this image made a word pop into his mind:

Thief!

Does the God see Ji Yue as a thief?

A bleeding thief?

Well... it makes sense. After all, scholars of the Void Matter Theory, under the blessing of [Truth], constantly study the void.

And the void belongs to Him—er, Them.

So really, calling these scholars “thieves” isn’t too far off.

But what’s with the blood?

Is it because she’s been tainted by [War]?

Hmm, that seems plausible, too.

Cheng Shi had a moment of realization:

Ahh...

The forms people take in [Laughter and Mockery] aren’t that hard to understand after all.

So, what about me as a spiderweb...?

Could it represent my role as a trickster, waiting for things to fall into my web?

After all, spiders hunt by waiting for their prey to trap themselves in their webs.

Whoa, that actually makes sense!

Not long after, the three Torchbearers also jumped down.

Cheng Shi looked up and saw that Fang Shiqing had become a blazing torch, Bai Ling a small black bird with white spots covering nearly its entire body, and Cui Qiushi...

Cui Qiushi had taken the most ridiculous form of them all, transforming into a perfectly square stone.

As for the last to jump down—the prisoner—he had become a rusty, old French horn.

Cheng Shi observed all of this with great interest, searching for connections between each person's form and their personality, trying his best to understand [Deceit]'s understanding of them.

But not everyone remained as calm as he did. Each of the players who had jumped into [Laughter and Mockery] were stunned by what they saw.

Bai Ling, in particular, flapped her wings excitedly and chirped:

“What is this? Wow, it's amazing—I'm really a bird! Haha, I can fly now!”

“I... why did I turn into a rock?”

“A black veil... that's Ji Yue?”

“Doo... doo... doo...”

“A bird? A rock? A torch? A horn?”

A veil... dripping with blood...

Fascinating. So those ancient experiment records were true after all.”

Amid the chorus of astonished voices, Cheng Shi, instead of playing the role of someone who “knew all about this place,” froze on the spot, dumbfounded.

Huh?

Why can I hear everyone’s voices this time?

Wasn’t [Laughter and Mockery] supposed to distort people’s voices?

Can mechanics like this be altered?

Patron, are you peeking in again?

Cheng Shi’s eyes quickly darted around the area, but finding nothing, he scratched his head in confusion. This action, however, appeared to the others as a strand of the web reattaching itself to the web’s structure.

But soon enough, Cheng Shi regained his composure and, with great interest, turned to Ji Yue and asked:

“What did the records say?”

Ji Yue didn’t hold back.

“Setavman, the 74th student of the great scholar Glau, once wrote in his records of void experiments:

'He opened a realm in the void, a place called [Laughter and Mockery]. Everyone who enters this realm becomes a foreign joke, meant to amuse the natives of this domain.'

Although this account sounded more like a fairy tale than an experimental finding, it remained in the Tower of Logic's archives for decades.

Every student in the Void Matter Theory department has heard of this realm, but few have entered it.

It wasn't until Setavman's centennial anniversary that his student, Bruno, stepped into the realm once more, confirming his teacher's discovery and correcting the nature of [Laughter and Mockery].

For Bruno discovered that this wasn't a realm, but a river—a river... that can traverse the void.

In this river, filled with elements of reality, Scholar Bruno shattered a mirror. Afterward, he found himself in the far northern nation of Carnivale, a place he had never visited before in his life.

So, Cheng Shi—are you planning to use this method to bring us into the Void Experimental Site No. 69, the one blocked off by the High Wall of Knowledge?"

"....."

Sister, you've taken all the credit for yourself. What more can I say?

Cheng Shi curled his lips. Aside from nodding, he had nothing to add.

"But according to the records, the mirror's appearance is random, and its destination unpredictable. How can you be sure you'll find it, and how can you be sure it'll take us where we need to go?"

The black veil trembled even more violently now. Seeing her obvious enthusiasm and hunger for knowledge, Cheng Shi was amused.

Oh, you don't know?

Well then, don't blame me for giving you a little lesson.

"Ahem..."

Cheng Shi cleared his throat and began:

"The 'mirror' you mentioned is actually one of His prying mirrors.

[Deceit] is constantly watching the void, observing all the amusing things that happen within it. To witness these amusements, He created countless prying mirrors.

Each mirror corresponds to a different amusing event in the void.

And I..."

Actually, what Cheng Shi was thinking was:

And right now, we are the biggest source of amusement in the void.

Because from His perspective, having His follower, three Torchbearers, and a Void Matter Theory scholar all vying for the same fruit behind the High Wall might just be the greatest entertainment this chapter of history has to offer.

There's no way He would miss such a grand feast. He might even open a backstage door nearby just to ensure that the clown in this play doesn't miss out.

As these thoughts crossed Cheng Shi's mind, and before he could finish his sentence, a prying mirror silently appeared behind him.

The surface of the mirror rippled with black light, swirling like a vortex, and before long, it coalesced into a spiral staircase that seemed to descend into the abyss.

When Cheng Shi saw the frozen expressions of the others, he felt a sudden pang of unease and turned his head to look.

“.....”

What did I just say?

The God of Fun is always the first to show up when there's a juicy story to watch unfold.

Especially when the story involves Himself.

Cheng Shi was speechless.

In trying to account for [Deceit]'s temperament and show off some clever planning in front of his teammates, he had unwittingly become the very subject of the joke, voluntarily offering himself up as the entertainment.

This mutual pursuit... well, I guess you could say it counts.