

The Gods 171

Chapter 171: No, I Don't Know You, But I Know You Will Come!

"There's something I've been meaning to ask but haven't had the chance. I'm genuinely curious.

Since we're about to reach the end, I figured now's a good time to clarify with you all.

What exactly does the Whispering Petal look like, and what does it do?

It would be a waste if we arrived only to not recognize it and fumble around."

Cheng Shi, knowing when to play it cool and when to be humble, looked towards Ji Yue and Fang Shiqing, waiting for an answer.

The torch remained silent, its flames flickering briefly before turning toward the veiled figure.

The veil trembled for a moment before Ji Yue spoke slowly, after some thought:

"To be honest, I've never come across any official records from the Tower of Logic describing the appearance or function of the Whispering Petals or the fruit they bear.

As you might imagine, given the current situation, no written records would have left Gasmira.

History won't change just because of our arrival—the Conjugated Whispering experiments will ultimately be buried in a great fire, with all records about them burned to ashes.

In the limited historical materials I've found, there is only one description that matches it somewhat.

It comes from a ritual hymnal from a tribe during the Age of Chaos, which mentions the appearance of the Whispering Petals and the fruit.

The book describes it like this:

'O tree that blossoms beneath the heavens, blooming with white flowers that reflect the void's shadow, and bearing black fruit.

But flowers will still wither, and the fruit will eventually fall, just like the world-enshrouding umbrella that burns with the fire of extinction.'

Though vague, the scholars in the School of Historical Studies believe this is the clearest account of the Conjugated Whispering Petals and fruit.

This is because the tribe in question was directly connected to [Chaos].

They emerged in the early Age of Chaos, and their ancestors were very likely among the Death's Bell Knights who participated in the destruction of Gasmira.

Following this line of thinking, we conducted a detailed investigation into the early tribes of the Age of Chaos.

During that era, [Civilization] had barely collapsed, and many customs from the previous epoch were carried into [Chaos]. So, in the early part of the Age of Chaos, there were still some fragmented 'histories.'

The historians were able to identify two documented uses for the Whispering Petals, but there is no mention of the fruit anywhere.

Of the two uses, one is what I need... the 'Twin Elixir.'

The other, however, I believe, is not necessary for us—'us' meaning the Torchbearers, not the historians.

That is the 'Shadow Oath Elixir.'

It's an elixir that binds one's shadow to the petal, serving as a solemn, unbreakable vow."

As she spoke, Ji Yue turned to Cheng Shi, her expression filled with eagerness.

"With the masks as a guarantee, using one of the two petals to create a Shadow Oath Elixir would be a waste. It would be much better to create two Twin Elixirs, allowing my soul to split once more. This way...

Our Torchbearer research will progress much faster."

"....."

"....."

"....."

She actually wants to split her soul again.

Cheng Shi was speechless for a moment. He didn't respond, nor could he. He simply glanced at Fang Shiqing from the corner of his eye.

Though the Torchbearer Flame-Seeker remained composed, the slight flicker of her flame clearly froze the moment Ji Yue mentioned the "Shadow Oath Elixir."

So... this is why the Torchbearers need the petal!

It makes sense.

After all, they don't have an artifact like the Oath Mask, and the Oath Mask itself doesn't truly exist.

Cheng Shi had fabricated it with “Offering to the Void,” a creation that could not endure long in the real world.

True, the mask had power, but its effect was limited to ensuring that the five who swore upon it would not betray the newly-formed “Torchbearers.”

But beyond that, the mask could no longer serve as the foundation for future vows.

Because “Offering to the Void” cannot be preserved indefinitely.

And seeking an additional layer of protection in their battle against the Gods was a natural step for the real Torchbearers.

This also suggested that the Torchbearers were facing a crisis—or had already faced one.

A crisis that had caused them to doubt their traditional Flame-Seeker recruitment system, a crisis that had made them question whether those who were good and orderly would truly never betray them.

Thus, they had set their sights on the elusive and difficult-to-obtain Whispering Petals.

“A white flower with black fruit.

Now that we know what it looks like, it’s time to set off.

Scholar, would you be so kind as to light our way with the radiance of [Truth]?”

The black veil dripped with blood.

“With pleasure!”

Before her words had even fully echoed, Ji Yue boldly stepped into the mirror and disappeared before everyone's eyes.

“.....”

This woman... if she keeps researching like this, will she end up switching to [War]?

Her personality's already starting to resemble it...

Cheng Shi had intended to be the second one through, but to his surprise, the prisoner acted first, decisively stepping into the mirror before Cheng Shi could lift his foot.

This “Torchbearer novice,” who had remained silent for most of the journey, expressed his conviction to fight for the cause through his actions.

The stone followed right behind, and the bird fluttered into the spiderweb before becoming the fourth to step through.

The torch...

The torch flickered a few times, and though many words were left unsaid, they all condensed into two simple ones:

“Thank you.”

Cheng Shi whistled, keeping his words brief:

“Make sure to return the favor.”

And with that, he finally stepped forward, determined not to be the last one through.

Fang Shiqing hesitated for a moment, then smiled and followed after him.

...

The moment Cheng Shi stepped into the mirror, the aura of the void enveloped him. Though his consciousness drifted into darkness, the sensation this time was far better than the last.

There was no sense of being pulled or ejected—his entire descent felt like he was floating, slowly and steadily, like parachuting from a great height, landing softly on the ground.

The instant his feet touched solid ground, his vision brightened.

Cheng Shi instinctively took a half-step back, raising his scalpel defensively and squinting as he cautiously surveyed his surroundings.

To be honest, he wasn't entirely sure which part of the experimental site his Patron had sent him to.

But from what he could guess, he had definitely landed in the place with the most entertainment value.

The more fun, however, the greater the risk.

So Cheng Shi didn't dare let his guard down.

But when he looked around, he found no signs of danger.

Not only that—his teammates were nowhere to be seen.

Everyone who had jumped in ahead of him had disappeared.

In this spacious laboratory, surrounded by walls of glass, the dense branches and leaves of the Conjugated Whispering Tree covered every corner. And aside from countless pieces of equipment and notebooks, there was only one person in front of him...

A gray-haired scholar wearing glasses.

Hearing the sound of movement, the scholar turned around to face Cheng Shi, his eyes showing no trace of surprise.

Instead, the scholar's gaze carried a sense of relief, as though he was greeting an old friend he hadn't seen in years. His bright eyes were filled with anticipation, sadness, and a touch of melancholy—but not confusion.

This... was highly unusual.

He knew I was coming?

Why?

Who is he?

Cheng Shi's fingers instinctively moved toward the [Death] ring on his hand, as he cautiously took another step back.

And it was at that very moment that the gray-haired scholar spoke.

"You've arrived."

"Who are you?"

"Oh, forgive my forgetfulness—it seems I forgot to introduce myself.

I am Kuwei, a scholar of the Tower of Logic, a simple fool seeking [Truth], and, perhaps, the last remaining person responsible for this crumbling laboratory of Void Matter Theory..."

Kuwei!?

Cheng Shi's pupils constricted.

He had just heard this name moments ago, and now, here it was, standing right in front of him.

This inescapable feeling of fate...

Isn't it a little too strong?

"You... know me?"

"No, I don't know you. But I knew you would come."

"?"

A flood of thoughts rushed through Cheng Shi's mind, and the burning question about [Fate] burst from his lips:

"Did He tell you?"

Kuwei nodded slightly, his eyes glowing with sincere reverence.

"Yes, He did."

Huh?

What's going on?

The grand scholar of the Tower of Logic, the leader of the Conjugated Whispering experiments, is... a follower of [Fate]?

What kind of plot is this?

Cheng Shi was stunned.

"You... how could you be His follower..."