

The Gods 179

Chapter 179: Killing and Gifting Treasure?

Cheng Shi had thoroughly enjoyed the thrill of the kill, but there was another who wasn't faring as well.

Bai Ling was clearly terrified by the overwhelming power of the lightning. She gripped her longbow tightly with one hand, the other clutching her wounded arm. It looked like she had given up on resisting and was simply waiting for the inevitable.

But Cheng Shi, having achieved his goal, had no intention of lingering.

He glanced at his ring, which had been recharged by Bai Ling's fear, chuckled softly, and then dashed out.

At the same time, Ji Yue and the others, who were in the heat of battle nearby, heard the commotion behind them. They turned in shock, only to see a masked stranger charging toward them.

To Fang Shiqing, this figure seemed oddly familiar.

Not just the shape of their body, but even the echo of their movements struck a chord.

However, she had barely recovered from the process that erased her memories of Cheng Shi. She was still mentally piecing together how the Torchbearers had ended up here, side by side with a 2600-point scholar. Her thoughts were jumbled, and she couldn't make the connection.

Now, with someone suddenly rushing out from behind, she swiftly abandoned her distractions and tore a page from her book.

It was a page infused with the power of a fierce wind—a basic attack spell, but enough to slow down the approaching figure.

Cheng Shi, quick to notice, saw the page flutter, and realizing it would "leak" some wind, immediately shifted his plan. He prepared to take the hit and use the momentum to leap down to the next walkway, where he could blend into the crowd of [Chaos] followers.

He was ready to jump. Fang Shiqing's wind pushed toward him just as expected. But in that split second, something strange happened—his body began to flicker.

In that moment, it was as if [Existence] turned into [Void]. The wind inexplicably passed right through him, failing to cause any harm.

Everyone—players and [Chaos] traitors alike—knit their brows in confusion.

What kind of technique was that?

Even Cheng Shi was stunned.

He saw his body flicker a few times, and then, with a faint “whoosh,” his consciousness was pulled back into the darkness.

In front of everyone's eyes, he vanished.

“Dis... disappeared?” Fang Shiqing's eyes widened in disbelief, but the very next second, her face paled as she shouted, “Qiushi, watch out!”

A massive blade narrowly missed Cui Qiushi's head as he ducked, rolling swiftly to the edge of the platform and positioning himself in front of Fang Shiqing to protect her.

Ji Yue, having retreated after exhausting her strength, returned as well, her face a bit pale from overexertion.

There were too many enemies.

The Death's Bell Knights had almost completely overrun the entire Void Experimental Site. With the few remaining scholars being slaughtered one by one, the tide of battle had fully shifted in favor of [Chaos].

At least from the players' perspective, everywhere they looked, they saw only His followers.

They screamed and howled with savage glee, their twisted expressions eager to tear apart what little order remained.

"We can't hold them! Fall back into the lab!" Ji Yue thrust her spear forward to slow the enemy's advance while taking large steps back with the others.

When the three finally regrouped with Bai Ling inside the lab and realized they had nowhere left to retreat, their expressions grew grim.

There were still half a day left in the trial. The thought of holding out in such a confined space against the swarm of enemies for that long was nothing short of a fantasy.

At that moment, every one of them felt the crushing weight of the situation.

And worse, the Conjugated Whispering Tree had caught fire!

Just as history had recorded, these [Chaos] lunatics had set fire to the World Tree that grew between reality and void!

The flames roared, spreading and growing with the wind. In mere moments, everything in sight was engulfed in a fiery inferno!

"The fire is too intense. Maybe we should tear open the void..." Cui Qiushi suggested, but Ji Yue quickly interrupted him.

"The situation in reality might be even worse. At least here, we have the advantage of geography to reduce the area we need to defend.

But the Central Academy in reality must have already fallen by now.

The fire in the void may be somewhat contained, but in reality... the tree's massive canopy has likely already become a cradle of hellfire."

Even in such dire circumstances, Ji Yue's mind remained clear. She scanned the surroundings with a heavy gaze, her tone serious yet composed.

"So, the best strategy is to hold our ground here, at least until the trial ends.

Of course, we should also pray that the Doomsday Brigade doesn't hurry to wipe out what remains of the Death's Bell Knights'... limited... amusement."

She then turned to Fang Shiqing.

"Poet, I never thought I'd end up here with you all, but now that we're here, I don't regret it.

However, in these final moments, I hope I won't need to divert my attention to defend myself from behind..."

Fang Shiqing didn't say a word. With a determined look, she nodded firmly.

In that instant, the new and old Torchbearers stood united once again, their shared trust resonating between them.

Even though they had already forgotten the oaths they once swore beneath the witness of the "mask."

Ji Yue smiled, a look of satisfaction crossing her face before she burst into hearty laughter.

"Good! Very good!

With things as they are, I can finally experience His power firsthand, to truly feel the allure of [War]!

Though it's a pity that in this last stand, there are no spoils of war to claim.

Judging by the hunter's expression, that masked [Chaos] follower who mysteriously vanished probably made off with everything already.

History...

In the end, hasn't changed."

Ji Yue's eyes darkened.

Clearly, her research had hit a dead end.

But just then, Bai Ling, who had remained silent, bit her lip and reached into her belt, pulling out two pristine, slender...

White petals.

"!!!"

"???"

"!!!???"

The pure white petals shimmered with a blinding radiance. A single glance was enough to cause a sharp sting in the eyes.

Yet despite the pain, none of the four could tear their gaze away from Bai Ling's hand. Their eyes were bloodshot, their faces filled with disbelief.

"What is this..."

Cui Qiushi was dumbfounded.

First, he was shocked by the petals, which he had never seen before. Then, he was bewildered by a feeling of déjà vu.

Why did this confusion feel so familiar?

He tried to recall events from earlier in the trial, but his mind drew a blank.

Fang Shiqing and Ji Yue, both equally stunned, quickly pieced it together. Fang Shiqing's eyes widened, while Ji Yue's gaze sharpened.

"These are... still unwithering... Conjugated Whispering Tree petals!?"

Seeing the wild excitement in Ji Yue's eyes, Bai Ling took a step back, clutching the petals tightly and nodding hesitantly.

But Ji Yue, still full of questions, wasn't about to let her go. She took a step forward and grabbed Bai Ling's arm.

"Where did you get these?"

Cui Qiushi, snapping out of his stupor, quickly stepped between them.

He gave Ji Yue a cautious look, his stance clearly protective of Bai Ling. His message was clear without needing words.

It was obvious that the trust they had just established was now under threat once again.

The threat of “bearing a treasure that brings disaster.”

But while they both worried that Ji Yue might lose her composure, Fang Shiqing intervened, pulling Bai Ling and Cui Qiushi aside as she shook her head.

“Don’t worry, Ji Yue means no harm.”

Indeed, Ji Yue held no ill intent.

At this moment, her mind was a whirlwind of hope and shock, joy and excitement mingling together, like storm clouds parting to reveal the sun. She felt as though she had been reborn!

These two pure Whispering Petals were like tracks leading into the future, reigniting the research path she had thought was at a dead end!

To be honest, Bai Ling was just as confused.

She had only just discovered the petals herself and had no idea how they had ended up on her.

She found them near the spot where the masked man had struck her waist earlier.

So...

Had he approached her not to kill her?

But to... gift her the treasure?

What kind of script was this?

Frowning deeply, Bai Ling recounted everything that had just happened, not leaving out a single detail.

As soon as she finished, Ji Yue's face grew even more serious.