

The Gods 183

Chapter 183: What Are You Really Hiding?

“Little White String, your shocked expression is so beautiful. What a pity my camera’s broken, or I could have captured this moment perfectly.

Hehe~

And as for that someone else—I’ve already shown the goods, and you’re still not going to show yourself?

Hmm?”

With both hands, Cheng Shi held up the result that the Tower of Logic had waited five hundred years for but had never attained, all while maintaining an air of nonchalance.

Not only was he not panicked, but he audibly clicked his tongue, scanning the surroundings as if searching for someone.

And when his gaze swept to his right, not far away, a wisp of green smoke quietly billowed from the void. From within it, the long-missing [War]’s Chosen One Hu Wei appeared, his expression dark as he surfaced beside the two of them.

“Oh my, finally decided to show yourself, brother, Hu?”

At the sound of those words, a shadow flickered in Hu Wei’s eyes.

He hadn’t expected the old teammate he once admired to actually be Zhen Yi in disguise. But if she had impersonated Cheng Shi, it meant the two had indeed crossed paths.

“Zhen Yi, you had better not have harmed my brother...”

Hearing this, a swirl of complicated emotions welled up in Cheng Shi’s heart.

On one hand, he appreciated that Hu Wei cared about him in this moment—thinking about him when the stakes were high. On the other hand, Hu Wei never seemed to actually lend a hand when things got dangerous...

So, was this being a good friend, or not?

Probably... good enough.

These chaotic thoughts only lingered for a second before Cheng Shi once again shifted into his role as Zhen Yi.

After all, Cheng Shi might have listened to Hu Wei's words, but Zhen Yi? Definitely not.

So, as Zhen Yi, he cut Hu Wei off mid-sentence.

“Or what?”

Even if I did kill him, what would you do about it?

Avenge him?

Kill me?

Hehe~

Oh, I'd love that. Go on then, I can't wait.”

With that, he lifted his neck, closing his eyes in a mock invitation.

Hu Wei stared at the vulnerable neck, at the posture of submission, yet instead of stepping forward, he sharpened his focus, guarding against the space behind him.

Even Bai Fei, rarely one to retreat, took a cautious step back, readying her “Emperor’s New Bow” in her hands.

They were both wary of what tricks this full-of-lies trickster might be brewing, preparing to turn them into laughingstocks.

Yes, it wasn’t injury or death that they feared—it was becoming Zhen Yi’s joke.

In truth, by the time players reached their level—where strength was backed by caution—dying outright in a trial was rare.

That’s why most [Chosen Ones], or at least the top-tier players, didn’t typically worry about their survival in any given trial.

This also meant that fear was a rare emotion in their interactions.

But Zhen Yi was different.

In a realm where fear had little place, she had cultivated a special kind of fear, one unique to [Deceit]: Becoming her mockery.

She had forged her own path, and there was no doubt that she was the frontrunner in that race.

Everyone knew that people, especially those with high standing, valued their reputation.

And the higher one’s standing, the more they needed to protect their dignity.

This “standing” didn’t just refer to Ladder of Ascent ranks or scores on the Path to Godhood; it encompassed all aspects of one’s existence.

But Zhen Yi was the kind of player who could casually turn someone’s reputation into a source of mockery.

It was why almost no one among the high ranks liked her.

So, when Cheng Shi tilted his head back, Hu Wei and Bai Fei were both hyper-aware of their surroundings, trying to avoid becoming her next joke.

What they didn’t know was that at this very moment, Cheng Shi actually had no defenses up.

If anyone had chosen to strike—even someone as lowly as Yan Chun—he would have died on the spot.

As an Overseer, Cheng Shi had left himself practically no means of countering an attack.

So this was a life-or-death gamble!

But, on the other hand, it wasn’t really a life-or-death gamble.

Because Cheng Shi knew full well—they wouldn’t dare make a move.

While Cheng Shi had only encountered Zhen Yi once, that brief interaction had shown him she was a gambler. A crazed one.

She liked to test people, to play games, to gamble blindly.

And she rarely lost. All of this, Cheng Shi had picked up from the way she had grabbed his hand so forcefully that time.

She's soft... no, she's crazy.

Crazy to the point where few would dare take up her bets, which is why her expression had turned so dark, her demeanor so shocked, when Cheng Shi had actually taken her hand.

Now, Cheng Shi was simply recreating that same mad gamble.

As for why he was so convincing...

Well, it's a little embarrassing to admit, but Cheng Shi enjoyed the thrill of these heart-pounding all-in gambles himself.

And after so many rounds of gambling, he had even developed a bit of a knack for it.

So, the bluffs and bold plays of a man with nothing to lose had become Cheng Shi's secret to a guaranteed win.

He waited a long time—long enough to mentally link every clue together—before finally opening his eyes again.

Seeing that neither Hu Wei nor Bai Fei had taken any action, a flicker of "disappointment" crossed his gaze.

"Sigh, boring."

Though his face was full of teasing amusement, Cheng Shi was genuinely surprised inside.

Under the looming shadow of Zhen Yi's "reputation," they really didn't dare move!

But that also meant Zhen Yi was truly feared by these people.

And yet... here I am, tangled up with her...

Hiss—

So, the road ahead is looking a bit dangerous, isn't it?

Oh well, I've always been a rebel who never follows the straight path.

Cheng Shi let out a soft, wry laugh as he looked at the two people in front of him, his eyes filled with playful amusement.

There's no victory in a gamble without raising the stakes.

The reason he had risked his life like this—apart from solidifying his identity as Zhen Yi—was to gain the upper hand in the confrontation that would come next.

Yes, confrontation.

Although Hu Wei was a follower of [War], Cheng Shi could tell he wasn't like some of the other reckless [War]'s followers. Hu Wei wasn't driven by blind aggression alone.

And when faced with a strategist like that, if no fight broke out during the first encounter, then mutual wariness would define their interactions going forward.

So, to ensure the rest of the trial went smoothly, Cheng Shi decided to take the offensive.

“You've clearly heard the prophecy, and the fruit, well, it's right here in my hands.

Here, take a look.

To be honest, the whole process was too smooth—no real challenge. Quite dull, actually.”

“You... went to the future?”

Hu Wei frowned, glancing cautiously around his surroundings as he asked in a low voice:

“You haven’t moved an inch from where you were standing this whole time. How could you have gone to the future?”

Ah, so my body really didn’t move the entire time—that’s good.

Cheng Shi grinned internally, but his tone was sharp and sarcastic:

“Well, what do you think?”

“.....” Hu Wei, frustrated, fell silent.

“Have you never heard of time travel?”

How quaint.

I did travel through time, you know.

I brought this fruit back from 200 years in the future, and I even snagged this petal while I was at it. Unfortunately, the rest were snatched away by some crazy lunatics.

Want to take a look? It’s a petal from the Conjugated Whispering Tree!”

With that, Cheng Shi flicked the petal toward Hu Wei.

But Hu Wei didn't catch it, allowing the petal to drift to the ground.

"Tsk, it's free, no need to be scared. I'm not going to trick you."

Hu Wei's face darkened further, but in the end, curiosity got the better of him. He bent down and picked up the petal.

The moment it touched his hand, he knew—this petal, brimming with the power of [Existence], was indeed real.

She really was Zhen Yi. She had indeed ventured into the future, plucked the only fruit and petal from the World Tree, and returned.

So the phrase "the future has arrived" meant... retrieving the fruit of the future?

But what's the meaning behind that?

How does this connect to everyone's future?

The reason so many of the [Chosen Ones] had fallen from the top of the Ladder of Ascent was because they had sought confirmation of this prophecy from the Blind One.

Even though no one knew what agreement Zhen Yi had made with the Blind One to keep her so tight-lipped, she had indeed verified that such a prophecy existed.

A prophecy that pointed to the "future."

Not all [Chosen Ones] had the ability to foresee or predict the future. They were still human, after all, and humans had curiosity.

They were curious about what their future held. So, upon learning of this prophecy, they descended the ladder.

Hu Wei had been one of them.

He knew Zhen Yi couldn't be trusted, so during his search for the "future," he had deliberately avoided the prophecy as described by Zhen Xin, instead seeking the "true" prophecy through other means, from clues gathered through conversations with others.

Based on his deductions, Zhen Yi's version of the prophecy likely wasn't entirely false. She was the type of liar who liked to mix truth with lies, so there was probably one true statement in the prophecy.

Following that logic, Hu Wei had focused on the phrase "above reality and void" and, in the process, discovered [Laughter and Mockery].

But with only one line of the prophecy to go on, the clues were still too vague, so he had to make another wish.

And his wish wasn't for the clues he'd mentioned during the trial's introductions. Instead, it was for someone tied to the prophecy!

Yes, his true wish was crystal clear: He wanted to meet someone deeply connected to the prophecy!

So, the moment Hu Wei saw Cheng Shi, he knew Cheng Shi was hiding something.

And when he discovered that Cheng Shi was actually a Weaver of Fate and not a Cremator, that feeling only grew stronger.

But what he hadn't expected was that the "something" Cheng Shi had been hiding wasn't those surface-level details—it was who "he" really was.

She was Zhen Yi!

Zhen Yi, the liar who made people grit their teeth in frustration and flee at the sight of her!

It all made sense now.

If anyone had the deepest connection to the prophecy, it wasn't even the Blind One who made it—it was Zhen Yi, standing right before him!

After all, all the [Chosen Ones] had heard the prophecy through her lips!

Hu Wei pieced together everything—he'd calculated everything—except for the fact that Cheng Shi in this trial was Zhen Yi!

Looking at "Zhen Yi" with a heavy expression, Hu Wei spoke in a low, serious voice:

"So, the phrase 'the future has arrived' means that when you stepped into this place, you traveled to the future to retrieve the lost fruit of the World Tree?"

The Blind One's prophecy about the future was just about a fruit?

What a joke!

I'll admit, the fruit is valuable.

I once tried to track down information about it but found nothing. I had also heard that Poison and Mo Li had both failed in their wishes to obtain it.

But even so, this fruit isn't something worth the Blind One's effort to weave an entire prophecy around, let alone something worth keeping you hidden for so long!

So, you're still lying!

Zhen Yi, what are you really hiding!?"