

## The Gods 201

Chapter 201: What a Coincidence, I Happen to Be a... Standard [Fate] Follower in This Round Too

Cold, damp, musty, reeking of urine and blood.

Before his consciousness fully returned, Cheng Shi's sense of smell jolted him awake. The complex stench flooding his nostrils made him shudder instinctively.

Just one breath confirmed that the air in this trial's location was incredibly foul, strongly suggesting he was somewhere like a city sewer.

As his hearing gradually recovered, a cacophony of whispers and distant shouts and wails filled his ears. He listened intently for a moment and came to a rather absurd conclusion:

A prison.

He was standing in a prison.

What a coincidence, back in prison again. Could his identity in this trial be an imprisoned criminal?

Well, well. [Order] couldn't even sentence me to prison, but [Chaos] managed to throw me in here.

You two really work well together.

A few seconds later, sensation returned to his limbs. He felt a heaviness in his head, a soreness in his neck, and a pressure on his cervical spine that suggested he'd been struck from behind.

He tried to raise his hand to rub his neck but unexpectedly felt a large iron object there instead.

“?”

Alarmed, Cheng Shi snapped his eyes open.

But what greeted him wasn't the expected prison cell, but a pitch-black iron mask with several small, bright holes drilled into it.

!!!

What is this thing?

A prisoner's helm?

What crime did I commit to deserve wearing such a massive iron helmet?

Cheng Shi blinked in astonishment, suddenly realizing the pressure on his neck wasn't from pain or injury, but from the enormous steel helm locked onto his head!

He reached up and felt the iron contraption. It was incredibly hard and showed no signs of seams, suggesting it wasn't an ordinary restraint.

The helm had seven holes corresponding to his eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth. Peering out through the horizontal eye slits, he could see he was confined within a small iron cage.

And, similarly clad in red prison uniforms with identical iron helms, were 5 other prisoners!

These 5 identically dressed inmates were likely his teammates for this round?

Besides the six of them, the massive prison stretched out before him, crammed with countless cages. Other prisoners also wore the same standard helms. In fact, everyone in this prison wore one, though the colors of their prison uniforms varied.

Cheng Shi gave a quick scan and noticed a pattern.

The number of prisoners wearing the same color uniform wasn't large—some groups had 3 or 4, others 7 or 8, but none exceeded 10. These same-colored prisoners were caged together sequentially, their cages marked with prominent wooden number plaques.

Cheng Shi couldn't see his own number, but by observing others, it wasn't hard to determine his cage number was... six.

The last of the six red prisoners, the number six he had disdained at the start of his Fate Path.

6.

Still couldn't escape this... great fate!

As Cheng Shi looked around, the other five players in red uniforms finally stirred. They woke up and were quickly shocked by their surroundings.

Though their expressions were hidden, their stiff limbs and tense backs clearly indicated their astonishment and confusion.

Like Cheng Shi, these teammates instinctively tried to remove the helms upon waking, but despite their best efforts, they failed.

Cheng Shi silently observed everyone's actions while also straining his ears to gather any nearby intelligence.

His identity was no longer a liar with the "Master of Deception" talent, but a gambler holding the true Die of Fate. To gain the upper hand in the upcoming interactions and cooperation, he needed to establish an advantage early on.

And intelligence advantage was the most crucial part.

The six players' cages weren't lined up but arranged in a circle. This circular structure was common throughout the harsh prison; all cages holding same-colored prisoners were arranged this way.

The circles varied in size, allowing almost every prisoner to see their same-colored "teammates."

Behind Cheng Shi were five prisoners in white uniforms, their five cages forming a smaller circle. A fierce argument was currently erupting among them.

They seemed to be fighting over a woman.

"Bullshit! You're all full of shit! I'm Dolly's man! I won her at the Grand Catching Festival! She's mine!"

"Scum! spits Got the guts to fight me? I'll show you who really came first at the Grand Catching Festival!"

"You dogs, all lusting after my woman! Just wait, just wait! Soon I'll cut you all down in the arena, every last one of you, just like I won at the Grand Catching Festival!"

"Less talk! If you beat me, Dolly's yours. Do you dare accept?"

"Dolly is mine! You disgusting animals! Come on, let's fight!"

Cheng Shi listened intently for a while but gleaned no useful information. His only thought was a burning curiosity about how beautiful this Dolly must be to make five men fight over her like this.

Further away was another circle of seven cages holding prisoners in yellow uniforms, also arguing, but their voices were muffled by the general prison noise.

He could only catch snippets like "memory," "chaos," "order," and extremely vulgar curses.

Numerous prison guards armed with long whips patrolled the area. If any prisoner's shouts became too loud and annoyed them, they would mercilessly whip the offenders inside the cages.

Watching the whips leave welts on the prisoners' bodies, watching them curl up in pain and howl, he couldn't help but be reminded of someone, no, something... disgusting.

Ugh, bad luck.

Cheng Shi shook his head to clear the unpleasant image. Just then, one of his teammates in front finally spoke. His voice sounded strange, muffled by the helm, but it was undeniably male. It seemed there were no women in this trial round.

The resonance within the iron helm "polluted" everyone's voice, adding a murky buzzing quality that made it hard to hear clearly.

"There's always something new every year, and this year's particularly weird.

Never thought I'd be a prisoner again. This familiar feeling brings back memories.

Why are you guys so quiet? All mutes? Been a while, say something."

"Squeak," Cheng Shi replied obligingly.

"..."

The speaker was the teammate in cell 5. He looked at Cheng Shi and laughed heartily, kicking away a rat near his feet while tapping his own "iron head."

"This tin helmet is interesting. Can't seem to take it off. Must be something special about it... the power of [Order]?"

Correct, it was indeed [Order].

Actually, the moment Cheng Shi saw the prison guards nearby, he recognized the influence of [Order]. The guards wore the standard knight uniforms of the Grand Tribunal Hall, which meant this trial likely took place in a prison within one of the Grand Tribunal Hall's cities.

Fine, really fine.

An [Order] trial mistakenly sent him into [Chaos]'s territory, and now [Chaos] comes knocking, forcibly placing him back on [Order]'s turf.

You two lovebirds and your deadly dance... probably needs a wedding to sort things out.

As soon as teammate 5 finished speaking, teammate 1 to Cheng Shi's left responded, his tone slightly serious:

"There's something wrong with this helm. My prophecy tells me that only the person who put it on us can remove this 'shackle' of [Order]."

Everyone turned to look at him, stunned.

"A prophet? You're a prophet? What did you roll? Is it accurate?"

"Heh, [Fate]."

"Yo, tough guy, huh? What's your score, daring to reveal your hand like that?"

Cheng Shi also raised an eyebrow, looking at this "prophet" with an amused smile.

A colleague, huh? What a coincidence, I happen to be a... standard [Fate] follower in this round too.

In fact, before this trial, I was also a prophet!

And the prophecy I saw was: I win this trial.

Although the die roll was 1, my talent tells me this outcome is inevitable.