

The Gods 209

Chapter 209: The Dead Su Wu and the Vanished Li Yi

Su Wu was dead, lying at the feet of Knight Captain Apol, near the "Fate Endpoint" he had found for Gao San.

A distinct spear wound marked his back, flesh torn, blood splattered. Three inches below the wound, the purification card given by the Magician was still stuck.

However, since the beneficiary host was dead, the face of the playing card had vanished, and its light had long since extinguished.

But Cheng Shi knew the Knight Captain wasn't the killer. It was one of the teammates.

Yes, a player did it.

He was so certain because he had also been attacked. But the attack was strange because he felt the attacker's skills were mediocre. Not mediocre compared to the divinely empowered Today's Warrior, but mediocre even compared to his original self.

The moment the fog exploded, a figure rushed from the direction of Ji Er's cage, aiming a straight thrust at his neck.

Although Cheng Shi couldn't see who it was due to the combined effects of the fog and the helm, he could hear the direction the spear was coming from, so he easily dodged it.

He countered with a slash across the attacker's shoulder. The attacker grunted in pain and immediately retreated.

He recognized the grunt clearly as Ji Er's voice.

But that made it even stranger.

A suspected Clown disguised as an Overseer, with such mediocre skills, ambushing a warrior generally believed to be an Acrobat the moment the fog erupted? How dared he?

Or rather, since he chose to ambush, why make no attempt at concealment?

Was he so sure he would succeed with one strike? With that half-baked move?

No, Cheng Shi didn't believe it. He felt someone was impersonating Ji Er, trying to frame him.

But he couldn't figure out who it was.

He didn't rush to pursue, instead listening to the guards charging over, stealthily changed his position, and stuck the purification card he held onto the back of the prisoner in the white uniform behind him.

Sure enough, when the purification card lit up, three or four sets of heavy footsteps charged towards that direction.

Cheng Shi hid aside, listening as the guards subdued the unfortunate inmate with their lances, sneering inwardly.

Good thing I held back. Otherwise, I would have been badly tricked.

He never intended to use the playing card from the start. Or rather, he never intended to execute the plan pieced together by his teammates!

Because he felt none of these teammates were trustworthy!

This had nothing to do with prophecy; it was simply the sixth sense honed and accumulated by a clown skilled in deception.

Not only that, Cheng Shi had his own plan.

He was indeed cooperating with his teammates, and he did intend to lend a hand when the plan was executed to facilitate things for them. But his goal wasn't to swap identities with prisoners in different colored uniforms, but rather...

To remain passive and reap the benefits!

Yes, he planned to do nothing at all.

Because according to the plan, when his teammates swapped themselves out, even if he didn't move, he could achieve the same final goal as them: facing five "fakes" with little combat ability!

Furthermore, this approach carried lower risk. Ji Er was right about one thing: players couldn't guarantee whether the Grand Tribunal Hall had means of identifying individuals. If they simply swapped identities, all would be well if undetected. But if exposed, the consequences were unpredictable.

The players' knowledge of the deathmatch sentence was limited to information gathered from surrounding inmates. Before seeing the full picture, Cheng Shi dared not take risks, nor did he want to.

So, "superficially agreeing, but actually refusing" was the best method of cooperation.

But what he hadn't expected was that when the fog dissipated, nobody had moved!

The players present hid amidst the wreckage, grimly surveying the surroundings. It didn't take long to realize that none of the teammates in this round had made a move.

But not everyone. At least Su Wu was dead...

And at least, Li Yi was gone.

His cage didn't even contain a "replacement." He had simply vanished.

Three of his six magic purification cards lay scattered on the ground, one stuck to the dead Su Wu, and another placed by Cheng Shi on the inmate behind him, who was now pinned under the Punishment Knights' boots. The last card was nowhere to be found.

It seemed the Magician's gifts brought misfortune, and his teammates were clever enough to realize this.

Cheng Shi frowned and sneered inwardly.

Indeed, no fools in this round. Likely, the moment the plan took shape, everyone had the same idea.

Everyone actively agreed, yet everyone wanted to be the most cautious one.

But why did Li Yi move? Where did he go? Didn't he think of that?

Unlikely. A Magician wouldn't overlook such a simple strategy. So he must have had another plan.

What about Su Wu then? Who tricked him into dying?

His magic card was stuck on his lower back, clearly placed there by someone else. Was it the killer disguised as Ji Er, or the combat expert Su Wu had provoked?

Cheng Shi took advantage of the knights not yet having full control of the situation, mingling with the groaning, downed prisoners while scanning around, trying to find any trace of Li Yi. But he failed. The number of people present was exactly the same as before the fog exploded, only Li Yi was missing.

Not just Cheng Shi, the other teammates who hadn't moved were also searching for Li Yi. Zhao Si and Gao San even directed their gazes towards the lightly injured Punishment Knights, wondering if the audacious Magician had found a way to remove the helm and blend into the enforcers' ranks.

But as the guards gradually got up, they realized they were wrong.

Li Yi had vanished, vanished into thin air.

The high-ranking knight outside saw the chaotic scene, suppressed his anger, and walked in. With a casual wave, he ordered the knights behind him to drag up all the prisoners and place them under guard at the guards' feet.

He paced over to Ji Er, the cause of all this chaos, scanned the surroundings sharply, looked coldly at the "trembling" instigator, and snorted heavily.

"You should be glad you're a deathmatch convict. Under the laws of High Mountain Prefecture, deathmatch convicts are exempt from private punishment. Otherwise, according to my 'order,' you'd be dead already."

Ji Er, uncharacteristically, didn't talk back. His face filled with terror, he shook his head and stammered, "Not me, I don't know, I don't know anything, don't kill me, it wasn't me!"

Seeing this, Cheng Shi frowned.

What happened to him to cause such a drastic change in personality?

His gaze then shifted to Gao San and Zhao Si.

It seemed likely that the one who stabbed people in the fog was one of these two, especially Gao San. Using clumsy means to hide the fact that he was a warrior was indeed excellent camouflage.

And he had "sufficient" reason to kill Su Wu.

But this was just speculation; Cheng Shi had no proof.

Like Cheng Shi, Gao San and Zhao Si had also been stabbed in the fog. The attacker's build and voice strongly resembled Ji Er's, but they both felt it couldn't be Ji Er. So their suspicion first fell on each other, then shifted towards Cheng Shi.

Everyone was guessing who the attacker was, pondering who had injured all the guards, planting such a huge landmine in this trial.

Because the three of them could confirm they hadn't acted!

And the escaped Li Yi would certainly not cause such a huge commotion to attract attention before disappearing.

Amidst mutual suspicion and doubt, the situation gradually spiraled towards collapse. The outcome everyone least expected seemed to be approaching.

That was the Final Deathmatch... brought forward.

The high-ranking knight turned to look at Su Wu's corpse on the ground and asked gravely:

"What happened? What did you see?"

Knight Captain Apol frowned slightly and recounted what he had seen and heard:

"I saw lights flare up in the fog and knew someone intended to use the chaos to escape. So I charged towards the nearest light, only to find it came from... a rat."

A rat?

Following Apol's spear tip, everyone looked and noticed a crushed rat lying on the floor amidst the cage wreckage beside Su Wu. The last magic playing card was stuck squarely on its back.

“I realized then that the lights might be a diversion. So I charged towards the darkest part of the fog. On my way, I encountered a highly skilled... assassin!

Not only skilled but also employing superb killing techniques. I didn't see any of his attacks, yet I was stabbed three times during the exchange.”

Saying this, Apol tore open his armor, revealing three bloody spear wounds on his stomach.

“But I stabbed him too!”

The high-ranking captain frowned, disbelieving. “Spear wounds? Punishment Knight? One of our own?”

As soon as the words fell, the situation tensed abruptly. All Punishment Knights present tightened their grip on their spears, warily eyeing their comrades beside them, especially looking for wounds.

But too many knights were injured; almost everyone who had been in the fog was wounded.

“I'm not sure. I didn't hear the sound of scraping armor, nor did my spear strike armor.” Apol's expression was exceptionally grave. He looked at the high-ranking knight seriously. “Keep in mind, there's a noble viewing tonight. I fear this is a premeditated assassination attempt!

Therefore, my recommendation is: no one present leaves. Cancel tonight's noble viewing. Accelerate the Final Deathmatch. After the punishment concludes, we will thoroughly cleanse the... scum hidden within our ranks!

And find that vanished prisoner.”

The high-ranking knight pondered for a moment and accepted Apol's suggestion.

“Everyone, spread out formation! From now on, I will notify the Iron Law Knight Order to take over external security. No knight is permitted to leave until the deathmatch performance concludes!

Also, if anyone accidentally killed this deathmatch convict, confess now, and I can still plead for leniency for you at the tribunal. If no one responds...

When I catch you, don't blame [Order] for being merciless."