

The Gods 21

Chapter 21: I Know You're Playing Dumb

[Chaos] is the first god of the [Chaos] path, the prelude to disorder, madness incarnate, and the arch-enemy of [Order].

His will promotes the belief that there is no inherent order in the world, and that the universe's ultimate state should be one of chaos. As a result, players who follow Him are often mentally influenced by His will and tend to be somewhat... unhinged.

If we were to choose the most popular players, [Order] followers would undoubtedly top the list.

But if we were to choose the least popular players, followers of evil gods like [Corruption], [Oblivion], or [Folly] would rank below the followers of [Chaos], who would overwhelmingly take the top spot.

Because not only do they rarely help during trials, but they often cause trouble instead.

Of course, saying they "cause trouble" is putting it mildly. Due to their disdain for rules and their commitment to undermining order, they often act in "malicious" ways.

But for them, this "malice" is considered "benevolence," since they believe they are guiding the trial toward chaos.

And chaos, in their minds, is the universe's "ultimate" state.

It's best to avoid provoking followers of [Chaos]. Just let them be.

Fang Shiqing quickly skipped over Huang Bo and turned her attention to Bai Ling.

Bai Ling waved her hand dismissively, speaking with a tired tone:

"I didn't notice anything strange. If I had to say something... it's that the men here are a bit too strong."

She licked her lips involuntarily, adding, "They're really strong."

"No one found anything strange? This doesn't add up." Fang Shiqing instinctively filtered out Bai Ling's feverish remarks and began pondering deeply.

If every corner of the memory scene was abnormally clear, there was only one possibility: the memory's owner knew everyone here, which is why they could mentally fill in the details about every individual.

But from what they had gathered so far, the patrons seemed to be strangers to one another.

So how could a memory involving strangers be so vividly detailed?

Could someone be plotting something within the tavern?

As the group sank into silent contemplation, Cheng Shi, bored out of his mind, raised his glass and complained:

"Where are the waiters? My drink's empty. Aren't they supposed to be constantly watching the tables and refilling drinks?"

As soon as he spoke, Xu Lu shot him a scornful look, as if he were just a freeloader.

On the other hand, Bai Ling completely agreed with him. She winked at Cheng Shi and mentally labeled him as a "freeloader who likes to party."

Fang Shiqing overheard Cheng Shi's complaint and initially felt a sense of helplessness. It seemed like, aside from the sneaky little assassin Ah Ming, everyone else in this team was slacking off.

But as she observed Cheng Shi craning his neck to look for a waiter, a sudden flash of realization crossed her mind. She slammed her book down on the table with a loud "bang!"

The sound startled everyone.

“The waiters!”

“Huh?”

“What?”

Fang Shiqing was visibly excited as she explained:

“The waiters! Cheng Shi is right. Only the waiters would constantly observe every table and be familiar with the guests. That’s why every detail in the memory is so clear—because the waiters already know everything here!”

Xu Lu stared at Cheng Shi, her eyes wide in shock, but seeing his equally surprised expression, her astonishment lessened slightly.

It looked like he hadn’t realized it himself. Probably just a lucky guess...

Cheng Shi, for his part, played the part of being clueless. He widened his eyes and blinked a few times in confusion, muttering:

“Did I say that?”

Fang Shiqing gave him a meaningful glance before quickly standing up, ready to approach the waiters.

During the initial investigation, she hadn’t listened to much of the waiters’ conversations. They hadn’t said much, and their words seemed irrelevant, so she had skipped them.

Seeing her move so swiftly, Cheng Shi kindly reminded her:

“Careful now! The patrons here are strong and have had a lot to drink. You might rile them up if you rush around too much, and if a fight breaks out, we’ll be in danger!”

His words sounded like an excuse to hold her back. Xu Lu, who was following closely behind Fang Shiqing, looked back at him with anger.

Even Ah Ming, who had just stood up, glanced awkwardly at Cheng Shi.

“Cheng Shi, you—”

But Fang Shiqing froze in place, her mind racing once more.

A person’s memory isn’t a perfect objective reflection of reality—it’s often colored by personal biases.

There’s a well-known saying: “We see things not as they are, but as we are.” This applies perfectly to memories.

If all the patrons in this memory appear unusually strong, it means the memory’s owner believed them to be strong when they encountered them.

Reversing this logic, the owner of this memory is likely physically weak—much weaker than the average person!

A weak waiter... that was likely the key to this layer of the memory!

Fang Shiqing’s eyes gleamed with realization. She glanced at Cheng Shi again, who was still feigning cluelessness, but she didn’t expose him. Instead, she hurried upstairs with Ah Ming in tow.

“I remember you mentioned a waiter was sleeping in the upstairs lounge?”

Ah Ming quickly recalled and responded, “Yes, tall, skinny, with a bit of a limp.”

“That’s him!”

Without looking back, Fang Shiqing rushed upstairs. The others followed closely behind, and Bai Ling, sensing that Fang Shiqing had found the solution, immediately got to her feet to catch up.

As she passed by Cheng Shi, she lightly grazed his hand with her fingernail and giggled:

“Underestimated you, big shot.”

At the same time, she mentally labeled him as “expert at fishing for fools.”

Cheng Shi smiled but didn’t respond.

Fang Shiqing led the group to the door of the locked lounge. Ah Ming pointed at the lock, and with a simple gesture, the door clicked open.

“What’s that?” Xu Lu asked, astonished.

“Class talent—‘Finger Key.’” Ah Ming replied bashfully.

Cheng Shi silently raised his opinion of Ah Ming. This was an A-rank talent, and not an easy one to acquire, either.

Moreover, that talent clearly belonged to an assassin, which meant Ah Ming hadn’t lied about his class.

But he had hidden his real score.

So, was he a follower of [Order], or of [War]?

Fang Shiqing stepped into the dark room, tearing a page from her book and shaking it in the air. The paper quickly folded itself into a lantern, illuminating the entire room.

A soft melody echoed from the lantern: "Oh God, bring forth the light, and let the world sing in joy."

The Scholar-Poet's magic had finally been revealed.

"Tsk tsk, quite nice," Cheng Shi mused.

The voice was clearly Fang Shiqing's own. Cheng Shi hadn't expected this English teacher to have such a melodious singing voice.

But the sound of the door opening and the singing immediately woke the sleeping waiter. Groggy and confused, he blinked at the group standing before him, fear creeping into his voice as he said:

"If you guys need something, talk to Zado. I'm off duty."

Fang Shiqing flashed a gentle smile.

"We're here to see you."

"See me?" The waiter clutched his blanket tightly, his voice trembling. "I don't think I know you..."

"Don't worry, we're not here to cause trouble."

She glanced back at Cheng Shi, signaling him with a look.

Cheng Shi caught on, casually casting a calming spell on the waiter, followed by a quick hypnosis spell.

After all, he was a priest, and he had all the basic skills.

Fang Shiqing gave him an approving smile before turning back to the waiter.

“Calm down. Think carefully. Everything you’re seeing is just a memory. This is all in the past. It’s time for you to let go of these memories, isn’t it?”

The waiter’s eyes grew more and more dazed. After a moment, he nodded and said:

“Yes, that’s right. I remember now. This is my memory.”

“Whoosh—”

“Crash—”

As he finished speaking, the waiter’s entire body shattered like a mirror, disintegrating into countless sparkling fragments before reforming into a deep, blue, mirror-like portal.

The answer was correct, and the players had found the exit to this layer of the memory.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. Fang Shiqing raised her eyebrows, signaling to the group that they could leave in an orderly fashion.

“Huang Bo hasn’t come up yet...” Ah Ming reminded them cautiously.

“Leave him. Let’s go,” Fang Shiqing replied.

Cheng Shi shrugged and was the first to step into the portal.

Before leaving, he glanced sideways at Fang Shiqing, and they exchanged a look of understanding.

Fang Shiqing's expression conveyed: I know you're playing dumb.

Cheng Shi's look replied: Abba abba abba.

As Cheng Shi stepped through first, Xu Lu, standing behind Fang Shiqing, muttered quietly as she nervously fiddled with her hands:

"What kind of person does something like that? Only eager when it's time to get out."

Fang Shiqing chuckled softly, but inwardly, she was thinking:

What kind of man likes these girly, cutesy types? So dumb... kind of pathetic.

The others followed suit, one by one. Ah Ming lingered for a moment, hesitantly glancing downstairs, before finally stepping into the portal as well.