

## The Gods 239

Chapter 239: Fighting — Hell Yeah!

While conversing with Selius, Cheng Shi hadn't devoted much attention to the scholar himself. Instead, he'd been scanning the surroundings, searching for this trial's teammates.

Yes — he was looking for teammates.

Since the earlier "fighting yourself" trial had been nothing more than an imagined "slice war," then this trial had to have real teammates somewhere.

He wondered how far along his teammates had gotten. According to Selius, if one failed to eliminate their personality slices within twenty-four hours, they'd face the grim scenario of those slices continuing to grow until Selius extracted them from the host and created another version of themselves.

And that, in turn, would recreate the starting conditions of the imagined trial.

But this laboratory housed well over a hundred operating tables. He simply couldn't determine which lucky souls were his teammates.

After eliminating the local Land of Hope ethnicities, there were still several dozen experiment materials who appeared to be players. Beyond that, no amount of visual inspection could tell them apart.

With the search proving fruitless, he turned to examining himself.

When Cheng Shi discovered that both the Tomb End Stone and the Concentric Dagger he'd stored in his personal space had vanished, he was once again certain his theory was correct — it had been a chaos born entirely within his imagination!

Better yet, because the slice experiment had been interrupted, he still hadn't been fitted with that irremovable prisoner helmet!

Which meant he could take off his mask at any time and swap it for another!

[Fate]'s blessing was upon him once more. Cheng Shi's confidence surged instantly.

He offered Selius a faint smile while one hand slipped behind his back to quietly grip his die.

In truth, Cheng Shi knew the Selius before him had to be fake.

If his earlier imagined experience had truly been an extrapolation rather than baseless fantasy, then the real Selius should be locked inside that inescapable research workshop, waiting for an outsider to come rescue him.

So the one conducting slice experiments in the laboratory was absolutely his slice — an imitation indistinguishable from the original.

But Cheng Shi didn't care.

What difference did it make who he cooperated with?

His only goal was to escape this laboratory before misfortune descended upon it, then safely clear the trial. As long as slice-Selius could get him out, cooperation was perfectly fine.

So when Selius remained silent for an extended moment — failing to prove his identity — Cheng Shi proactively broke the stalemate.

"All right, drop the act. You're not the real Selius.

As it happens, I'm not a real warrior either. I don't know any Galusha, and I didn't come to rescue any scholar. I simply stumbled into the Grand Tribunal's trap and got shipped here.

Scholar, I have no interest in how many dirty secrets are buried in this laboratory. Just get me out of here safe and sound, and I won't cause you any trouble. Deal?"

Selius regarded Cheng Shi carefully for a while. He detected nothing remarkable about this "bluffing" experiment subject, nor did he sense the divine power surging within him. So he changed tack and decided to stop playing along with this unusual piece of experiment material.

A specimen this special ought to lie back down on the table obediently and let himself be properly studied.

And so Selius smiled — a smile tinged with amusement.

"Young man, it seems you've got something backwards.

This is my laboratory. My domain.

If anyone's going to cause trouble for anyone, it should be me causing trouble for you — not the other way around.

Surely you don't think that just because there are no knights here, I can't regain control of you?

Then why don't you guess — why is it that this laboratory has not a single research assistant, nor a single guard knight?"

Selius had shown his hand. After several rounds of mutual probing, he seemed to have lost patience.

'Sure enough, a slice is far less composed than the original. Looks like a personality defect.'

'But that tone of yours — tsk — I don't much care for it, warrior.'

Cheng Shi smiled too. He snorted with contempt and tossed the die in his hand straight onto the floor.

The Die of Fate rolled across the ground several times before wobbling to a stop at Selius's feet, landing on a one.

Selius looked down at the die and cautiously stepped back.

"What? Want to gamble with me?"

"Gamble? You're not worthy."

Selius was taken aback. He seemed to be wondering where this experiment material found the audacity. He raised his head to deliver a mocking retort — but the moment his gaze lifted from the die, a blur of a fist had already materialized before his face!

"Boom—"

In the instant before shock could even register, Selius's head was obliterated.

A straight punch. Detonation.

Red and white splattered across the floor, adding a few drops of saturation to the sterile laboratory.

Cheng Shi stared coldly at the headless corpse on the ground and retrieved his Die of Fate.

"Fate like stars, within sight but out of reach.

Tsk. You know absolutely nothing about warriors of [Fate].

Since you refused to cooperate, don't blame me for causing trouble.

Come to think of it, I was too cautious fighting those tricksters. Never got to enjoy the fun of being a Hero of Today. I hope you can bring a little intensity — let me experience the caliber of [Fate]'s favored child."

With that, Cheng Shi glanced back at the experiment materials inside the laboratory, silently offered a prayer for his unseen teammates, then strode out the door.

But the moment he pushed through, he was greeted by the vast expanse of the experiment ground — where one Selius after another was shattering the equipment beneath their light-blocking covers and stepping out of cultivation vessels, dripping wet.

The scene felt familiar, yet Cheng Shi couldn't recall for the life of him when he'd experienced something like this before.

Since he couldn't figure it out, he stopped trying. Two scalpels slid from his sleeves, and he offered an elegant bow to the countless Seliuses before him.

"The show is about to begin. Would the audience please enter in an orderly fashion.

A friendly reminder — be sure to purchase your tickets before the performance. And the price of admission is...

Your life!"

With that, he flung the scalpel in his hand at the nearest Selius slice, then produced a fistful of dice from his personal space and hurled them skyward.

In an instant, the experiment ground was showered in a clattering rain of dice.

"I picked up this opening act from the Magician.

I may not have many playing cards, but... I've got more than enough dice!"

Before his words had fully landed, Cheng Shi vanished from where he stood and materialized at the location of a random die. The instant he appeared, he drove a merciless elbow strike into the nearest

slice. Before the Selius before him had even hit the ground, a throwing knife was already sailing from his hand, burying itself in the back of another distant slice.

Then, without a second's pause, he appeared at the next position.

Cheng Shi, brimming with divine power, didn't fight with the sweeping grandeur of a true warrior — but he made up for it with devastating bursts and relentless stamina.

Combined with his phantom-like die teleportation, calling him a Hero of Today was almost misleading. He was more of an Assassin of Today.

The kind of assassin who cared nothing about resource management and even less about taking damage.

Though every slice wielded terrifying strength, and every Selius possessed outstanding combat ability, not a single one could survive a single exchange against Cheng Shi.

He was a starving wolf loosed upon a flock of sheep — holding nothing back, wholly surrendering to the thrill of slaughter.

"The show is reaching its climax. Would the esteemed audience please...

Hurry up and die!"

"Shhk—"

"Bang—"

"Thud—"

Amid the dense crowd of Seliuses, bodies flew and fell in rapid succession. Every time the Assassin of Today appeared, it triggered a roar of fury — only for him to leave behind corpses and depart with a laugh.

Watching the "audience" sink deeper into impotent rage during this performance, the star of the show seemed to reach a profound sense of fulfillment.

[Corruption] flowed freely. Slaughter bloomed.

Cheng Shi was in the zone. Truly, deeply in the zone!

The scalpel in his right hand drew blood with every stroke. His left hand clutched a bottle of Prosperity of Yesteryear — sipping whenever he tired. His entire body became a shuttle weaving through the ocean of bodies filling the experiment ground. Within minutes, nearly half the Seliuses were gone.

"Fighting — hell yeah! More!"

He threw his head back, drained another bottle of Prosperity of Yesteryear, and plunged back into the mass of slices without a moment's hesitation.

Blood overtook the color of cultivation fluid. Corpses paved a new floor. The Seliuses went from swarming him with twisted faces, to warily keeping their distance with dark expressions, to stumbling backward in open terror.

He was afraid. No — they were afraid.

For the first time, inside the very laboratory built to manufacture fear, Selius felt a fear that belonged to him alone. And the source of that fear was a blood-crazed lunatic.

Only now did he realize that the question he'd asked — the one left unanswered — finally had its answer.

This experiment material was, without a shadow of a doubt, a lunatic. A death-defying, pure, unadulterated lunatic!