

The Gods 247

Chapter 247: Reborn?

Reality. An apartment in some unknown city and province.

A burly man woke up on a squeaking spring bed. Hearing the teeth-gritting screech of metal coils beneath him, he slammed a fist into the bed frame the instant his eyes opened.

"Thud — crash—"

The bed collapsed. Under the sudden force, the ancient spring bed finally ended its miserable, load-bearing existence.

"Damn it, why do I keep sleeping on this piece of junk?"

He rose to his feet in a fury, grabbed a broken plank, and hurled it out the window.

It landed with a thunderous crash on someone's makeshift shed below, sending up a plume of dust several meters high.

"Which piece of shit did that!? I just built that leek canopy!! I'll kill you, you son of a—!!"

The big man was deaf to the screaming below. His irritated gaze continued sweeping across the decrepit old furniture in this cramped, run-down apartment.

"Screw it — all of it goes! I could die any day now, so why the hell am I still putting up with this crap!?"

The angrier he got, the more he demolished. A punch shattered the sofa. A kick splintered the coffee table. Then, to the accompaniment of curses from below, he sent all the "garbage" flying out the window.

This ignited not only the fury downstairs, but the neighborhood gossip mill as well.

"I saw it — 1406's throwing stuff. Bro, if I were you I'd just pray to take him out!"

"1406? Song Yi? No way. I know the guy — he's super sentimental. This place isn't even originally his, but all the old furniture came from his parents' generation. He even told me he specifically prayed to get them back. Why would he toss them?"

"You sure about that? Looks like the TV cabinet's next."

"Boom— crash—"

"Okay... did something happen to him?"

"Who knows. Maybe someone body-snatched him. Tsk."

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Reality. An archive room in some unknown city and province.

A frail young man awoke on a long table. The moment his eyes opened, he doubled over laughing.

He rolled back and forth on the table, howling with laughter until tears streamed and his strength gave out. Only then did he stop, casting a manic gaze across the room packed with archival documents.

"Spectacular. Absolutely spectacular!"

The moment I myself become one that history remembers — that's when I've truly become a Historian!

Hahaha, hahahaha! The more profound the history, the more blinding its light should be!

Burn! Let these forgotten records become history once more — a history far more spectacular than obscurity!"

With that, the crazed young man pulled out a torch, lit it, and tossed it into the mountain of archives.

Flames erupted wildly, devouring the words on every page — just as the histories of old were swept into time's river, carried by raging waves into depths unknown.

"So the history nerd next door is dead?"

No idea which lunatic grabbed his spot...

What a waste. He organized all those records, and now they're going up in smoke.

Could've at least sold them to the History School folks. Would've fetched a pretty penny. Sigh."

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Reality. A street in some unknown city and province.

After clearing the trial, Yu Gui had been sitting motionless inside a roadside phone booth.

This went on for so long that the neighbors had practically concluded this former [Death] follower on their street had finally offered himself to his patron god.

But Yu Gui wasn't dead. He'd simply come to the sudden realization that he felt completely out of place in this world. That the Faith Game was a terrifying thing. That walking the razor's edge between death — balancing between offering himself and offering others — was something that filled him with bone-deep dread in retrospect.

So he'd locked himself away.

As if hiding inside this cramped phone booth could shut out the fear and sever all ties with this incomprehensible world.

But the longer he stayed, the more speculation drifted through the neighborhood.

"Ugh, that little [Death] assassin kicked the bucket? His score was pretty decent too. What a shame."

"Shame about what? That you didn't get to sleep with him?"

"Well, yeah. Such a sunny, cheerful, handsome young man. I'd been flirting for days too — was this close to sealing the deal. And then... sigh. Lost love, yet again."

"Your taste sure covers a wide range."

"End of the world and all — love whoever comes along, I guess."

"..."

Hearing these words, the little assassin hugged himself tighter, utterly helpless.

The outside world was far too terrifying.

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Reality. A mountain region in some unknown province.

Wei Youxue was a bard in the truest sense — not only did he commit the various "beauties" of trials to paper, but he also devoutly panned for interesting stories from time's river. And even in reality, he did the same.

He was a Plate Traveler.

This was a newfangled profession that had emerged only after the Faith Game's descent. It was highly popular, yet very few actually practiced it.

Because Plate Travelers, true to their name, spent their lives journeying between the fragmented reality zones created when the Gods carved up the world. Their perpetual occupation was dealing with all manner of people.

In a world of clearly delineated, individually claimed fragments of space, free travel like the pre-Gods era was simply impossible. So Plate Travelers constantly negotiated with players in each zone, seeking passage to continue their journeys.

It was an arduous existence. You never knew which day some player would refuse you, stranding you mid-route with no recourse.

Nor could you ever know which player was a wolf in sheep's clothing, biding their time to fleece you — or, more directly, to kill you and be done with it.

But some people loved this profession. The world never lacked those who dared to take risks, and Wei Youxue happened to be one of them.

He'd been stranded here by a neighboring zone's outrageous demands in a stalled negotiation. But upon awakening from this trial, he agreed to the other party's price without a second thought.

Such decisiveness made his "toll booth" neighbor quite suspicious.

"Wei, you're like a different person. If you'd been this generous from the start, would you have wasted half a month haggling with me?"

"You're not holding a grudge and planning to off me on the way through, are you?"

I'm telling you, I'm 200-plus points higher than you. Even if I let you through, the one dying would be you. Aren't you scared?

No — something's off. You must've gotten your hands on something that can kill me. Absolutely not — I won't agree. Unless you add more..."

"Done. I'll add more!"

"???" The neighbor was dumbstruck. "Wait — you actually want to kill me?"

He eyed Wei Youxue warily, backing away while scrutinizing him up and down: "You don't care about surviving anymore?"

"Surviving?" Wei Youxue laughed heartily. "Surviving matters far less than passing through. If I can't see new horizons, how is that any different from death?"

"No. Something's wrong with you. I refuse. Go find Old Sun instead. You've changed.

Changed in a terrifying way. I'm afraid you've been bottled up so long you're itching to kill me."

"...Very well. Until we meet again."

"Hey — you're really leaving? Add a bit more! A bit more and I'll definitely let you through!"