

The Gods 250

Chapter 250: Come Up

Cheng Shi went in after all — because [Chaos] had given him no other choice.

Without the chaotic hand to help, he couldn't even get down from this platform engraved with "word corpses."

So when the only path led forward, Cheng Shi gritted his teeth, squeezed his eyes shut, and charged in.

The instant he stepped through the shattered Gate of [Order], the scene before him shifted once more.

Every last wisp of amber chaos peeled away like unraveling silk, and the essential blackness of the Void reasserted itself. Cheng Shi stood frozen in place, gaze falling to the first step that had appeared at his feet.

The first step — and the only one.

He had to admit that, up to this point, if not for that torn-apart codex, nothing about this place suggested the one seated above was the champion of disorder — [Chaos].

Everything here was too orderly. From climbing the platform to passing through the gate to these stairs beneath his feet — every stage was impeccably organized.

But the more orderly it was, the more terrified Cheng Shi became.

Because madness so often hides beneath the calm.

Whew—

"Relax, Cheng Shi. You've got this. It's just one small step." The thought gave him pause. Then, inexplicably: "Yet one giant leap for mankind."

And then he...

Jumped up.

Because jumping effectively prevented the embarrassing arm-and-leg-on-the-same-side shuffle caused by nerves.

But the instant he landed, phantasmal faces materialized from the Void's depths and hurtled toward him. As these apparitions rushed through his body — from far to close, then close to far — a cacophony of fragmented noise was brutally crammed into his ears.

Cheng Shi instinctively crouched low, concentrating on the jumble of sounds. But he couldn't discern individual words — he could only generally tell that every single voice carried "slander and abuse."

He frowned, bewildered.

'What... does this mean?'

Before he could think further, a second step appeared. This time he was less restrained — he simply bounced up.

Immediately, the scene in the Void's depths shifted again. Beside every individual, a second person appeared. The moment the pairs discovered each other, they lunged into brawls, faces contorted with fury.

Cheng Shi understood — this time it was "wrath and violence."

And just as before, the images surged toward him like a raging flood crashing through his consciousness, making him feel every bit as volatile as the figures in the vision.

The third step appeared.

This time Cheng Shi didn't jump. He kicked the step impatiently, then stepped up with a scowl.

The scenes stretched longer — the two-person skirmishes exploded into a panoramic scroll of all-out war!

Blood sprayed. Flames billowed. The world burned to ash. Corpses piled into mountains and seas.

This third act was clearly "war and slaughter."

The scroll after scroll dove around Cheng Shi, wrapping him within. Countless screams and wails seemed to ring right beside his ears. Rivers of blood rose above his ankles. Fire scorched his flesh. His eyes gradually reddened, and only by clenching his fists with every ounce of willpower did he suppress the urge to destroy — to keep himself from charging headlong into that sunless battlefield.

Then came the fourth step.

He waded through clinging blood and stepped over bone-charring flame, face twisted in agony as he climbed.

And then all the crimson receded. All the flames sputtered out. In the Void's depths, countless living beings wandered like the walking dead — shambling without purpose, pounding themselves in mindless frenzy. Their voices squeezed from their throats became meaningless howls. Their gazes, locked within dead eyes, congealed into a madness on the verge of eruption.

The entire world seethed with "lunacy and silence."

One glance at these innumerable phantoms was all it took for Cheng Shi to start tearing at his own hair, hammering his own skull, dropping to one knee, gasping for air, retching uncontrollably.

"Damn! Damn!! Damn!!!

I've had enough! I've had enough!! Are we there yet!? Why aren't we there yet!?"

Cheng Shi bit down hard, dragged himself forward on his knees, and crawled up to the fifth step.

And then the world before his eyes — changed completely!

Changed beyond comprehension. Changed beyond understanding.

Humans walked on all fours like beasts. Birds slithered like serpents. The rising dawn resembled a full moon. Celestial hooks spewed fire and hung inverted.

His cognition finally fractured. This was no longer a world — this was a carnival of disorder, a banquet of chaos!

And as the sole attendee of this feast, Cheng Shi — gazing upon this scene where humans weren't human and ghosts weren't ghosts — finally had his mental defenses shattered by the tide of disorder.

He began to move without any conscious thought.

Cheng Shi didn't know what he was doing, but he knew he had to keep moving — because stasis was itself a form of order, something He despised. So Cheng Shi began to dance — aimlessly, clumsily, absurdly — swaying to the cacophony of madness, accompanied by the dissonant shrieks.

And then the sixth step appeared.

But Cheng Shi, now wholly immersed in the carnival of disorder, could no longer see this step. He had already surrendered completely to chaos.

"A pity."

A sigh echoed from the Void's depths. Then, beyond the five steps Cheng Shi had climbed, countless more surged into existence — step after step, linking together in an unbroken stairway stretching to the very end of the Void.

Looking up, there were far more than a hundred. Far more than a thousand.

The instant these solidified stairs appeared, Cheng Shi snapped out of his chaotic trance.

He jolted awake — yet had absolutely no memory of what he'd just been doing.

"Damn. Did I just... black out from partying too hard?"

'I blacked out?'

'Huh? What did I do? Surely I didn't do anything weird?'

He frantically inspected his body, then let out a long sigh of relief: "Thank god — pants are still on."

And right then, from the very top of the stairway, an "exceptionally orderly" booming voice resounded:

"Who are you?"

"..." Cheng Shi flinched violently, then straightened his back, eyes shut, teeth clenched. "Ultra— Cheng Shi. Wanderer of [Void]. Oathbreaker of [Deceit]. Follower of [Fate]. Cheng Shi!"

He gave up. He didn't dare claim an envoy's title in front of the real deal. All he could do was pray that his patrons were listening and would come rescue him posthaste.

So the moment the words left his mouth, his mind began chanting frantically:

'Help! Help! My Lords — both of my Lords! Come save me! Please, I'm about to get killed!'

But the voice above said nothing. After a moment of silence, it spoke — utterly devoid of emotion:

"Come up."

Yet this single "come up," in Cheng Shi's ears, was nothing short of the greatest possible validation!

'He didn't deny me!'

'What does that mean? It means He... never mind, it means nothing. It means my two [Void] masters might not need to make the trip after all. Things might be salvageable. I might not die!'

'Forgive me, forgive me — if the two of you haven't left yet, please hold off for now. Give me some personal space. Let me go have my audience with the new boss, so this not-particularly-competent envoy of mine can present a proper... performance review.'

'Ahem. Straighten up, Cheng Shi. Whether you can slip on the Ultraman vest and sneak into the board meeting — it all comes down to this!'