

## The Gods 252

Chapter 252: He Is Here — He Has Always Been Here

While Kataro's statement was technically correct, it was steeped in far too much of [Chaos]'s perspective. At least for [Order], human adherence to law still held meaning — otherwise, why would He bother protecting His followers?

For the drama?

'Ha. Surely not.'

But viewed from a perspective transcending humanity, Cheng Shi did agree with the sentiment. So he nodded and launched straight into praise:

"As expected of the man who held my post — your level of faith is top-notch!

But...

I thought I was here for an audience with Him. I didn't expect it was you who summoned me.

Yet I distinctly heard a voice like one of Theirs just now — was that also you?

It didn't sound like it.

He's... not here?"

Kataro smiled and shook his head:

"He is here. He has always been here."

"!!!"

Cheng Shi froze solid. Cold sweat erupted across his skin in an instant.

'What!? He's here!?!'

'He's here and you dragged me over to stand in this spot!?!'

'Huh!?!'

'Are you trying to get me killed, man!?!'

'I didn't say anything weird just now, did I!?!'

The backbone that had lasted a grand total of a few seconds evaporated without a trace. His legs gave out and he lurched forward, eyes whipping behind him at the same time.

But the Divine Throne truly showed no sign of anyone... of any God.

Kataro's expression turned serious as he caught Cheng Shi's arm and steadied him:

"Careful, my Lord. There's no need for alarm. Our Master is everywhere — this temple is itself a part of Him."

"..."

'A part of... Him?'

'Thanks, buddy. Before you told me that, I really wasn't this nervous...'

'Given this temple's design, please tell me this isn't His mouth?'

'Oh — probably not. By [Chaos]'s will, this could be any body part except the mouth.'

Cheng Shi rose on trembling legs, managed an awkward smile, then released Kataro's hand and called out reverently in every direction:

"Praise the prelude of Chaos. Praise the frenzy of disorder. Praise You — the great [Chaos]."

The instant his words fell, Kataro quietly stepped to the side. The entire temple began to warp violently. Countless points, lines, and planes peeled away from Cheng Shi's vision, transforming into utterly disordered symbols that flickered and leapt wildly. Innumerable colors scattered into the air, rising and shifting without pattern.

Amid this nauseating, disorienting visual maelstrom, a colossal hand materialized from the amber chaos mist. It casually rearranged the symbols and colors, as though organizing everything.

Yet with each gentle touch, everything in his field of vision seemed to grow more chaotic.

Symbols became colors. Colors became symbols. Distortion broke apart into flickering. Flickering collapsed into distortion.

Cheng Shi felt his consciousness plunging endlessly downward. Just as his mind was about to burst from the overwhelming flood of disorder — a deep, resonant voice hauled him back into the Void.

"Cheng Shi."

"Yes!" Cheng Shi snapped awake, answering with palpable anxiety.

"Or Ultraman?"

Cheng Shi's body went rigid. He hadn't expected the question to be a dramatic pause.

'This question again!?'

'How am I supposed to answer!?'

'I was just standing in Ultraman's spot — I can't exactly say "Cheng Shi" now, can I?'

His eyes darted toward Kataro, but the man was staring at his nose, which was staring at his heart — perfectly still, silently awaiting his response.

"..."

'I'm dead, I'm dead. My two Lords, help! Come save me again!'

But clearly, no one was coming to his rescue. After an agonizing moment's hesitation, Cheng Shi chose — resolutely — to be himself.

It wasn't that he didn't want to be Ultraman. He just didn't want to choose between being Cheng Shi and being Ultraman.

Same as always — he was greedy. He wanted it all. But the prerequisite was: you had to acknowledge that he was Cheng Shi.

This distinction mattered enormously to him.

A name might be nothing more than a label to others, but not to Cheng Shi. He wouldn't change it. He refused to change it.

[Chaos] hummed for a moment. The temple continued to distort. By now, Cheng Shi's vision contained no trace of the palace — only shifting colors and elongated symbols, the briefest glance at which trapped you in an infinite kaleidoscope.

And that chaotic hand stood "still" — casually adding and removing fingers, changing its palm lines without order.

"Then the one standing beside you — who is he?"

Cheng Shi's fists tightened. "Kataro."

"Good. Then where has My envoy, Ultraman, gone?"

"..."

'So that's what He means.' It seemed [Chaos] had no intention of making things difficult. He was simply waiting for Cheng Shi to acknowledge a certain identity — one that shouldn't have belonged to him, yet somehow did.

Once this clicked, Cheng Shi struggled only briefly before raising his head to answer:

"Standing right here. I am Cheng Shi — and I am also Your envoy, Ultraman."

Kataro smiled from the side. But [Chaos], it seemed, didn't care for the answer. He snorted coldly, and a gust of disordered wind sent both figures in the hall stumbling.

"Greed is the Authority of [Corruption]. You dare make an offering to [Descent] in My temple? What audacity!"

The words hit Cheng Shi like a bomb. Cold sweat instantly soaked through his collar.

'That is not what I meant, man!'

He was mid-excuse when [Chaos] spoke again.

He really did love the dramatic pause.

"However — a moderate degree of greed is beneficial.

But as My envoy, you must learn restraint."

"?"

'What does that mean?'

Cheng Shi was confused. He suspected [Chaos] still had more to say.

Sure enough, a few seconds later, the voice continued:

"Ultraman!

I can grant you the name 'Cheng Shi.' And you may stand in that position, reclaiming everything that should rightfully be yours — including the privilege of serving below My dais.

But greed has its limits.

Once you accept My bestowal, you will no longer be a wanderer of [Void]. You will be a servant of [Chaos].

Do you understand?"

"!!!"

Oathbreaking! Again with the oathbreaking!

[Chaos] had been staggeringly direct. Cheng Shi had never imagined that a god of Chaos — still bearing the divine name of [Chaos] — could speak to him this plainly.

This wasn't a command. Nor was it coercion. It was "generously" placing the choice back in his hands once more.

Cheng Shi was stunned.

He could scarcely believe he'd been offered the chance to become an Envoy — outright!

And this wasn't some historical joke of an envoy. This was the real deal. A genuine, authentic Envoy!

A Servant God of the Path. One of those Beings who transcended the game — who stood above all!

But the first thing Cheng Shi felt wasn't excitement. It was alarm.

He was trying to figure out whose scheme this was!

[Deceit]? [Fate]? Surely not [Death]!

If he truly broke his oath, aside from [Chaos], who else would benefit?

On the surface, no one. But in reality... there was one.

The Fun God!

He'd probably adore this kind of plot twist — might even be watching with bated breath, hoping it would unfold.

'My Lord — no, former Lord — this is Your doing again, isn't it?'

'Huh? Isn't this way too big of a joke?'

'Envoy!'

'Do you understand what that means!? You're not worried I'll lose my composure and defect from [Void]!?''

'Think about it — how many Chosen Ones slave away their whole lives just for a handful of scattered Divinity!?''

'Even Hu Xuan, who struck gold, only earned the potential qualification to become an Envoy!'

'And now, the choice to become an Envoy is sitting right in front of me — all I have to do is change my last name!'

'That kind of temptation! Who could resist!?''

'No wonder every three-time defector is a combat monster. If I went and renamed myself Lü Shi, forget high-tier players — even the Chosen Ones, what are they going to fight me with? Their heads?'

'What's the right choice here? Is there even suspense?'