

The Gods 268

Chapter 268: Now He's Thoroughly Behaving

Cheng Shi let out a dry laugh and started playing dumb.

"So when you encountered her, you grafted a gravekeeper's fate?"

"You sure know a lot, don't you, sis..."

Cheng Shi's heart clenched. He was terrified that Tao Yi had also blabbed about the part where he'd talked smack about this very [Prosperity] Chosen One. Fortunately, Hong Lin seemed "unaware" of that particular detail.

"She and I tell each other everything," Hong Lin said, pursing her lips as she withdrew her spear. "She's very grateful you saved her. But she guessed your identity wrong.

She told me you're a trickster — a wolf in sheep's clothing. Yet here you are, a Fate Weaver. A Fate Weaver who's apparently involved with Zhen Yi!"

"..."

'Sis — "involved" is a bit much. We're clean. Spotless. Zero contamination.'

Still, Tao Yi hadn't been wrong per se. In fact, most players who suspected there was a faith-switching priest in their midst would first think of the clown — the Master of Trickery — with the "Lies Like Yesterday" talent, rather than [Fate]'s Fate Weaver.

This was because clowns were a class that functioned as priests by swindling healing abilities from other faiths. The Fate Weaver's greatest power, on the other hand, wasn't faith grafting — it was mending fate.

Fate Weavers differed from other priests. They didn't focus on bodily wounds or spiritual purification. Instead, they concentrated on their target's destiny — patching and mending it.

For example: when someone was about to be critically injured or killed in an unavoidable disaster, a Fate Weaver couldn't alter the disaster's trajectory. But they could mend the victim's destiny — downgrading a fatal wound to a minor one, or even escaping unscathed.

So the Fate Weaver was a predictive healer — their treatment method essentially "pre-altering" the target's fate of injury.

As for fate grafting, that was merely a compensatory mechanism for this "unstable preemptive treatment plan."

When a Fate Weaver repeatedly attempted to mend someone's fate but ultimately couldn't turn the tide, they could choose to personally kill the target and graft that person's destiny onto themselves — continuing to walk a short distance further down fate's road on behalf of the one fate had abandoned.

And so every Fate Weaver who grafted fate carried tales of sorrow too deep to tell.

They occasionally deceived people too. But most of the time, it was people's tears they were deceiving.

That said, was this Wood Elf a little too clever?

How had she guessed he was a clown?

What went wrong in that trial?

Watching Cheng Shi frown in thought, Hong Lin seemed to read his confusion. She gave a wry laugh:

"Wondering how Tao Yi saw through you?"

Tell me your real identity, and I'll tell you."

Cheng Shi scoffed, completely immune to this tactic: "I am a Fate Weaver. A virtuous, upstanding Fate Weaver. If I weren't, you'd never have heard my name from Tao Yi."

"..."

The logic checked out, but something about those words rubbed Hong Lin the wrong way.

She spat with undisguised contempt:

"'Virtuous and upstanding' is debatable. Scheming tricks, on the other hand — you've got plenty. Mind games everywhere. You're rather like that little fox."

"Little fox?" Cheng Shi chewed on the nickname before realizing it meant Tao Yi.

"Surprised? She chose [Prosperity], but she's the same as you — a trickster who doesn't belong to [Deceit].

She's been reading people since she was small. Who knows what goes on inside that little head of hers.

She didn't actually see through your identity during the trial. It was only after dealing with that teammate surnamed Su that she began to suspect something was off about you."

"!!!"

Cheng Shi's eyes sharpened. Su Yida's death flashed through his mind. "Tao Yi killed him?" he blurted.

Hong Lin nodded:

"Yes. I once gave her a [Death] dagger for self-defense — capable of killing any person of her choosing. Quite a precious S-grade item. Pity it was wasted on some nobody Master of Trickery."

Cheng Shi was stunned again: "She knew Su Yida was a Master of Trickery?"

"I told you — the little fox is excellent at reading people. She claimed that past the halfway point, she'd already sensed something off about that Su fellow. Apart from foraging for her, he'd never once used [Memory]'s power again. She also noticed how closely he watched you — while your own glances at him were evasive, almost pointedly ignoring the items in his hands.

So she began to suspect the Memory Traveler. Sure enough, after the plunge into the Void, the interactions between you two grew even stranger. At the time, though, she simply thought you'd already seen through Su's identity. She didn't yet suspect you were a trickster too.

Remember when she grabbed you and jumped into the Void-Whiskered Swallowing Dolphin? Every time the little fox calls me and retells that part, she laughs for ages. Because by then she'd already figured out the Master of Trickery's identity — which meant she didn't actually know the dolphin's location either.

But she caught the direction that schoolboy was looking, and just leapt with you in her arms.

Tsk. Hard to imagine a grown man hiding in a woman's embrace at death's door. Luckily the little fox is a natural actress — never let anything slip."

"..."

Cheng Shi was numb. He'd never imagined there was another expert hiding in that trial!

"But alas — the human heart is always hidden behind a layer of skin. She still got fooled by you.

A Fate Weaver playing his cards like a trickster. Is that how you tricked Zhen Yi too?"

"..."

'Are we done yet?'

'Zhen Yi this, Zhen Yi that — bad luck!'

Cheng Shi stood up with an exasperated face, pointing at the Sighing Sorrow Tide that was gradually settling in the distance:

"Sis, you don't really think I was just gambling you'd come back for me, do you?"

No matter how confident I am, I'd never place my life in the hands of a friend-of-a-friend I barely know. I simply made a small bet on the side."

He even placed deliberate emphasis on the word "friend"!

Hong Lin's eyes turned scornful: "Don't try to show off in the wrong place. I'm not buying it."

Cheng Shi clicked his tongue but didn't take offense. He explained at a leisurely pace:

"You scouted at your speed for that long and found nothing. At this moment, the other two teams haven't made progress either. The thing is — [Prosperity] trials are never hard because of finding people. They're hard because of protecting people.

If He doesn't want us saving His people, this round is unwinnable no matter what — we might as well split up and leave.

But if He does, He'd never make it hard for us to locate them.

So now that you've found nothing outside the Sighing Sorrow Tide... isn't it possible that the person we're looking for — or at least a clue about the target — is inside the mist?"

As the words landed, Hong Lin's eyes narrowed ever so slightly.

She finally understood why Tao Yi admired this player named Cheng Shi.

Bold. Sharp. A gambler. Capable of out-tricking Zhen Yi. He really was promising material.

"So — what did you find in there?"

"Huh? Nothing. I was in there too briefly before you dragged me out." Cheng Shi spread his hands with the most punchable expression imaginable.

"..." Hong Lin's mouth twitched. Irritation plastered across her face.

'He actually pulled off the flex.'

But for this type of person, she had certain... unique methods.

And so the thoroughly annoyed Hong Lin seized Cheng Shi by the back of his collar — dangling him like a chicken — and marched him toward the stalled Sighing Sorrow Tide.

"Come on, sis, I can actually walk on my own."

Cheng Shi sensed something was wrong and tried to struggle, but a swift smack from her wooden spear quieted his flailing limbs.

"Didn't you want someone to carry you? Carrying and dangling are basically the same — both save effort."

"I changed my mind!"

"Heh. Too late."

With that, she shoved the stolen bottle of Prosperity of Yesteryear back into Cheng Shi's arms — returning property to its rightful owner — and hurled him, potion and all, straight into the mist.

Under [Decay]'s catalysis, Little Cheng Shi once again became Old Honest Cheng.

"..."

Now he was thoroughly behaving.