

## The Gods 270

Chapter 270: The Absolute Number One Grand XX

They were fighting.

Nobody had expected the two who'd held back at the start to come to blows inside the Sighing Sorrow Tide.

The Rot Chanter showed no fear whatsoever at the Druid's surprise attack. He spread his arms wide, let Big Cat's claws rake across his body, then closed his eyes and sang with all his might:

"Let decay pulse between skin and flesh! Let rot flow through marrow and bone!

We, the devout, shall cry out beneath the epitaphs of the final tomb:

Fester! Rot! Decay!

When sores cover the earth, when naught remains of the cosmos but twilight — then this world shall become what He loves."

His rasping voice blazed like a flame, instantly boiling the quietly flowing Sighing Sorrow Tide. The roiling mist shuddered in time with the eerie syllables, transforming into countless rotting hands of putrefied flesh — all reaching for Hong Lin as she lunged.

Cheng Shi's pupils contracted sharply at the sight.

Featherhead was only a singer — and inside the Sorrow Tide, he could already command this enormous volume of [Decay] power. If a mage had been here instead, the entire group wouldn't be enough to pick from his teeth.

But a Chosen One was a Chosen One. Hong Lin the Big Cat showed no alarm. Her massive form crashed down like a starving wolf vaulting into a sheep pen — sweeping, biting, swiping through the endless [Decay] arms. A true beast: every strike scattered countless withered hands into nothing.

The power of [Prosperity] erupted wildly, even clearing patches of mist around them.

The spectators collectively retreated, maintaining a safe distance.

Cheng Shi pulled back with the others. Only then did it dawn on him that the Rot Chanter's "Rotting Hymn" hadn't worsened his own decay.

'Is the Baptism of New Life really that effective?'

'Isn't that basically an anti-[Decay] weapon?'

While he puzzled over this, his peripheral vision caught something: the hunter who'd arrived with Featherhead was also unaffected. He immediately realized something was off — and turned to the Puppet Master lingering behind the group.

Sure enough. The team's immunity to the "Rotting Hymn" had nothing to do with the Baptism of New Life. It was the Puppet Master shielding them from the chant!

That seemingly invisible girl stood silently at the rear, her hands clearly grasping countless puppet-control threads, deftly whipping them back and forth above the group's heads — shattering every [Decay]-infused syllable before it could reach a player's ears. Everyone heard the full performance, but no one was affected by the song.

This single display told Cheng Shi her score was anything but low.

Possibly very high!

She might not have reached the heights of Hong Lin and the other peak players yet — but she wasn't far off.

'Another round of nothing but experts. Wonderful.'

"I can feel the other vanished footprints. Follow me — I've found the trail."

The cold-faced hunter spoke abruptly, then walked into the deeper mist without a backward glance. Cheng Shi blinked, glancing at Hong Lin mid-brawl with the Stinking Bird, then at the teammates beside him. A slight frown.

The Puppet Master's gaze swept both directions. After a moment's thought, her puppet scooped her up and followed the hunter.

Zuo Qiu leaned in, speaking quietly:

"Let's go. Don't wait. It'll be fine."

I've heard about these two. Way back when, Baldie got matched into a round that was pure [Decay] — ran into 'Rotting to the Core,' the number-four on the [Decay] ladder, plus four other high-scoring [Decay] players she couldn't even name. Our poor [Prosperity] Chosen One was hunted the entire match...

Afterward, she started settling scores. From the lowest scorer to the highest. But a peak [Decay] player at similar level isn't easy to kill. Without someone's help, there'd have been no chance for a clean kill.

So care to guess who helped?"

"..."

He didn't need to guess. The answer was painfully obvious.

'Are you serious? This is that melodramatic?'

'Featherhead actually helped Big Cat kill one of his own?'

Seeing Cheng Shi's stunned face, Zuo Qiu knew he'd guessed it. He gave a little clap:

"Impressive! Truly worthy of someone who outplayed Zhen Yi!"

"..."

"That's right — our very own Rot Chanter, Zhen!"

At the time, 'Rotting to the Core' was fourth and Zhen was fifth, but the score gap was sizeable. Perhaps the moment Zhen saw Baldie make her move, he decided to hitch a ride. So while the opposing-faith Chosen One systematically hunted her tormentors, he played an... unflattering role — torpedoing his own same-faith ally.

For players, this isn't exactly unheard of. The game's ecosystem simply works that way. Everyone wants to climb higher toward that fabled Audience Meeting that supposedly determines fate.

So believe it or not — the two fighting over there once cooperated.

One feels she helped him out. The other finds a man who'd betray his own faith camp revolting. That's all there is to it.

But regardless, Zhen did contribute. And Baldie, for all her rough edges, is someone who — well, let's not say she has a good reputation. But she honors her debts.

So even though these two can't stand each other for various reasons, they won't go at it for long.

Clear? Let's go. We'll follow the hunter for clues. We've wasted enough time already."

Zuo Qiu set off the instant he finished. Cheng Shi spared one glance at the battlefield and followed in silence. A quiet realization stirred within him: not every conflict was born of hatred. Sometimes it was about...

Telling a story.

Sure enough — the moment the group slipped away, the two combatants abruptly stopped and locked eyes.

Featherhead threw his head back in a wild laugh, ripping the rotting flesh from his chest entirely, letting his blackened heart pound visibly behind his fragile ribs.

"Ha — hahahaha! You failed to kill me again, Baldie!"

"Ptoo—"

Big Cat shook the foul blood off her claws, scrubbing them against the rotting leaves with undisguised disgust.

Indeed, killing a [Decay] follower inside the Sighing Sorrow Tide was a tall order. Like trying to make someone fall ill under the Prosperity Divine Shade — pure fantasy.

"Lucky you. A stone in a cesspit is exactly what you are — stinking and hard."

"One woman's poison is another man's honey. You think it stinks because [Prosperity] makes you think it stinks. I think it's fragrant because my devotion tells me that everything my patron bestows is my glory."

"Disgusting. Whether it's the God Worship Society or the Descent Faction — each more nauseating than the last."

"Ha, I'll take that as a compliment. Since neither of us died — then..."

Agreement still stands?"

Big Cat frowned impatiently: "Spit it out."

"I want to know if 'Zhidiao Xiumu' has had an Audience with God!"

Big Cat froze. Her brow knotted tightly.

"You've allied with that rat?"

"Yes."

"You're not afraid he'll play you to death?"

"Afraid — but he says he has a way to grant me an early Audience!" Featherhead's expression suddenly turned fanatical. He spread his arms toward the sky, breathing in the [Decay] mist with greedy trembling. "I cannot refuse. Because I have already felt His call."

"Sorry. Calling you 'Stinking Bird' was my mistake." Hong Lin's face turned dead serious.

"?"

Featherhead blinked, then his eyes lit up: "You've finally learned to appreciate my devotion?"

Big Cat squeezed out a textbook fake smile and offered her heartfelt appreciation:

"You're not a stinking bird. You're an idiot."

The absolute number one grand idiot."

"..."