

## The Gods 273

Chapter 273: On the Other Side of the Fog Gate...

Zuo Qiu had no choice. The moment everyone realized the lantern he'd pocketed was connected to the Fog Gate, his position became painfully awkward.

Perhaps he truly had no ulterior motive. But he couldn't control what others thought.

And so, with no alternative, the singer lifted the lantern and led the way straight into the Fog Gate.

Hong Lin followed second — not only because she was bold and skilled, but because the lantern required [Prosperity] power to function. No one else present was a [Prosperity] follower.

Cheng Shi went third. The moment the round's strongest player entered the Fog Gate, he moved without hesitation.

Then came the cold-faced hunter. Finally, the Puppet Master and her mature puppet brought up the rear.

When Cheng Shi stepped into the spatial corridor he'd never visited before, the warped, distorted space was already flooded with blue luminescence. [Prosperity] power flowed continuously from Hong Lin's fingertips into the lantern, where it was converted and released as [Decay] energy.

The [Decay] that poured out didn't corrode the surrounding players. Instead, it formed a thin shield, blocking the corridor's spatial erosion.

Watching this reality-inverting spectacle, Cheng Shi needed a long moment to recover.

'[Prosperity] giving birth to [Decay]. So by that logic, shouldn't Featherhead call Hong Lin "mom"?'

'And if so... calling me "Uncle Cheng" isn't too much to ask, right?'

"What are you thinking about with that disgusting smile? Everyone huddle closer. There's barely any blue glow left. The protection radius is tight. Careful you don't get crushed to death by the spatial forces."

Hearing Hong Lin's warning, Cheng Shi's expression snapped to serious. He shuffled over in tiny steps.

The spatial corridor looked nothing like the fantastical, ever-shifting Mockery and Jeering. Walking through it felt more like traversing a short, narrow cave tunnel.

The five of them pressed tightly together, advancing slowly under the lantern's improvised shield. After roughly a few minutes, another Fog Gate appeared ahead.

"We're here. This is the other end of the spatial subsidence." Zuo Qiu halted and turned back, his expression awkward. The meaning in his eyes was unmistakable:

'Making a singer take point from here on out is a bit absurd.'

Hong Lin snorted, pushed past him, and prepared to charge in first — but Cheng Shi's hand shot out and caught her arm. Her eyes sharpened. "Is something wrong with my fate?"

"?"

Cheng Shi blinked before remembering he was supposed to be a Fate Weaver, not a Hero of Today.

'That's why!'

'That's why everyone waited for him to make the call before entering the Fog Gate. They hadn't trusted his judgment specifically — they'd been waiting for a Fate Weaver's guidance!'

'When he'd told everyone to proceed, they'd taken it as confirmation the path ahead was safe. That's why everyone had been so cooperative!'

Cold sweat instantly slicked Cheng Shi's back.

'Damn! I played myself!'

His original intent in grabbing Hong Lin was simply to tell her to be careful. But given his supposed identity, saying too much now would only mess with her judgment and shake everyone's morale.

So Cheng Shi could only maintain a calm facade, smile lightly, and shake his head: "Stay safe."

"..."

Hong Lin gave him an odd look, waved her hand dismissively, and charged through the Fog Gate.

Cheng Shi wanted to follow immediately, but the cold-faced hunter moved faster — shoving past the historian and vanishing through the gate in a single stride.

The Puppet Master was right behind. Cheng Shi trailed after. Only when everyone had left did Zuo Qiu glance thoughtfully at the lantern in his hand before stepping through last.

But what none of them expected was that the other side of the Fog Gate wasn't another mist-shrouded stretch of the Sighing Forest. Instead, they emerged into a sun-drenched, birdsong-filled woodland settlement!

Even more unbelievably, they materialized right at the settlement's central sacrificial altar!

Nearly a hundred Mushroom-Footed People encircled the altar in a ring, every one of them bowed in devout prayer. The scene was quiet and eerie.

When Cheng Shi saw this, his eyes flew wide. He was too stunned for words.

The other teammates were in much the same state. Aside from the [Silence] assassin — silent as ever — everyone's jaws had dropped clean off.

"A hallucination?"

Cheng Shi murmured, pinching his left cheek.

It hurt. Didn't seem fake.

Then his right cheek stung too. He whipped around — and found Hong Lin beside him. She'd pinched him as well.

"Did that hurt?"

"..." Cheng Shi shook his head with grave composure. "No. It's definitely a hallucination."

Hong Lin arched an eyebrow, then pinched her own cheek. The confusion froze on her face.

'This liar!'

She glared at Cheng Shi — but he was already pointing ahead. She followed his gaze and saw that the Mushroom-Footed People who'd been prostrating in prayer moments ago were now scrambling to their feet, pointing at the players and crying out in alarm.

"Who are you!?"

"Where did you come from?"

"Where's Abur!? You — intruders? Quick, intruders!"

"Don't panic — I can sense the power of [Prosperity] on them! They're not intruders!"

An elderly Mushroom-Footed man at the front raised his hand, quelling the tribe's alarm. He studied Hong Lin with uncertain eyes and offered a tentative prayer:

"All things grow — flourish and prosper."

Hearing the prayer, everyone immediately knew: this was a genuine Mushroom-Footed settlement!

'How? A Fog Gate in the Sighing Forest connecting to a rainforest settlement on the surface of the Land of Hope?'

'How is that even possible!?'

But the facts were the facts. Even the [Prosperity] Chosen One had to accept reality. Hong Lin started, then immediately activated her [Prosperity] aura and nodded respectfully to the elder.

"All things grow — flourish and prosper!"

Once the prayers matched, both sides relaxed.

After hearing Hong Lin's response, more and more Mushroom-Footed People gathered around the central altar. They stared at Hong Lin and the players behind her with shock and delight, cheering and leaping with joy.

"Praise [Prosperity]! They're His people! Not intruders — His people!"

"They're outsiders! Praise [Prosperity]! After all these years, outsiders have finally come!"

"Chieftain, they're carrying the Desolate Lamp that Abur took! It was Abur who found them!"

"Yes! Why didn't Abur come back with them? He's a hero! He found [Prosperity]'s own people! He found the way out!"

"My kin — the tribesman who brought you back to us... where is he?"