

## The Gods 294

### Chapter 294: Tongue of Eating Lies

Cheng Shi's face was black as the bottom of a pot, while Hong Lin beside him wore a look of amused delight.

He took two deep breaths to suppress his irritation and asked again:

"You turned Zuo Qiu into a puppet, but you can still use his innate talents?"

This question finally hit the mark. Even Hong Lin turned serious and chimed in:

"A Silence assassin has a talent like that? How come I never heard that brat The Prisoner mention it?"

Who?

The Prisoner?

Cheng Shi blanked, then turned to Hong Lin in bewilderment: "Who did you just say? The Prisoner?"

Hong Lin blinked and nodded: "Yeah. What — you've met him too? Don't tell me you scammed him as well."

Cheng Shi shook his head: "I've heard the name from other people's mouths, but the person who used it was faking his identity."

"Hmm. Figures. That brat is only slightly less infamous than Zhen Yi — enemies everywhere. If he had a title, it'd probably be 'Second-Biggest Jinx.'"

"..."

'Second-Biggest Jinx' was certainly something.

Cheng Shi mused: "So he's the Chosen of Silence?"

"Yep. An ascetic monk who's even more of a motormouth than you!"

"???" Cheng Shi was dumbfounded. "What do you mean 'more of a motormouth'? He's a Silence follower — how can he out-talk me? Can he even speak?"

Hong Lin snorted: "So you do know you never shut up."

"..."

'Hold on, sis — can we actually communicate here? Is that seriously my main point?'

While Cheng Shi and Hong Lin were busy bickering, the Puppet Master chimed in again. Zuo Qiu's puppet spoke slowly:

"Yes, I have that talent. But it's not what you think — it can't last very long. So to maintain combat strength, I need to keep creating new puppets."

Not a lie!

Cheng Shi frowned slightly, secretly breathing a sigh of relief.

If a Puppet Master who could lie had chosen to tell the truth, that meant there probably wasn't a problem — for now. But he still wanted extra insurance. So he put on a grave expression and said:

"Puppet Master. One last question. Answer this, and our deal is done.

"But I must warn you — you'd better not lie. This is your only chance.

"Because I have... Master of Deception!"

The instant those words left his mouth, both the Puppet Master and Hong Lin's eyes flashed sharply, and they stared at him with scrutinizing gazes!

But Cheng Shi never bluffed without preparation. In a flash, he whipped out a poker card, pressed it mysteriously against his forehead, and grinned:

"This is a 'Master of Deception' poker card — a gift from a magician friend of mine. I rarely use it, because even though I'm not a Deceit follower, I have a decent knack for spotting liars... so I can generally tell when someone's being dishonest.

"But you're too unusual. Your behavioral logic seems sound, yet it keeps giving me an uneasy feeling. So I have no choice but to pull out this last resort I've never activated before, to verify your identity.

"Now then — tell me: you are a member of the God Worship Society who bears no ill will toward me or Hong Lin, and you are a Puppet Master who wishes to go to the Septic Final Tomb to seek out Decay!

"This time, I want all of your puppets to speak at once."

He locked his burning gaze on the Puppet Master's and her puppets' mouths.

Hong Lin was surprised by Cheng Shi's excessive caution, but her attention was clearly elsewhere. Her expression turned distinctly odd, and she asked Cheng Shi in an amused tone:

"A Master of Deception card isn't something just anyone can get their hands on. It requires a magician to go to extraordinary lengths to deceive a liar who already possesses Master of Deception!

"The ability to trick 'Master of Deception' into card form — I've only ever seen that in one person. This magician friend of yours... it isn't her, is it?"

Cheng Shi had no idea who the "her" in Hong Lin's mouth was, but whoever it was, that person couldn't and shouldn't be his friend. He needed to snuff out Baldy's line of questioning before she speculated further.

So he shook his head, expressionless.

Hong Lin raised an eyebrow at his denial but remained noncommittal.

The puppets, meanwhile, all wore thoughtful expressions. Then, in eerie unison, they said:

"Yes. What you said is correct."

Truth!

The Master of Deception confirmed that this lie-capable Puppet Master had spoken the truth.

Hearing that, Cheng Shi finally let out a genuine sigh of relief.

'Once bitten, twice shy. Being a liar is absolutely exhausting...'

But Cheng Shi showed no reaction. He silently peeled the poker card off his forehead, tucked it back into his storage space, and spoke again:

"We can let you go. But Prosperity Divinity alone isn't enough. You'll need to throw in that Memory artifact as well."

"..." Zuo Qiu's puppet lips moved for a moment before letting out a sigh. "You're too greedy. That's a price even I can't bear."

"Why can't you bear it? You're heading out there with no guarantee you'll survive or come back. Rather than losing such a treasure in the Sighing Forest, you might as well just give it to me."

"Or how about this — you lend it to me. If you don't die, I'll return it the next time we meet. Deal?"

Cheng Shi gave the suggestion with absolute sincerity — so sincere, in fact, that even the Silence follower was rendered silent.

"..."

Zuo Qiu's puppet eyes filled with contempt.

'Do you even believe your own words?'

'That's some brazen number-crunching right there.'

Hong Lin was so entertained she was practically beaming. She stood with her arms crossed, watching the show, her gaze bouncing rapidly back and forth between the two — finding this negotiation absolutely delightful.

The Puppet Master deliberated for a moment, then spoke through Zuo Qiu's puppet once more:

"The Memory artifact is still useful for the road ahead. However... I can lend you a Deceit artifact instead. It belongs to the same Void path — I imagine you'd find it useful.

"But remember — it's a loan.

"Just as you said: the next time we meet, I hope you'll return it."

With that, Zuo Qiu's puppet reached behind himself, produced an object, and tossed it onto the floor. The instant it touched the ground — it started writhing!

It was alive!

Its surface glistened with moisture, and its violent thrashing splattered wet streaks across the surrounding floor.

Cheng Shi and Hong Lin stared at the wriggling thing, totally stunned.

Because it was unmistakably a self-dancing...

Tongue?!

"???"

What?

Wait — at that length, it surely wasn't a human tongue, right?

Cheng Shi's brain short-circuited.

Admittedly, this did seem like exactly the kind of thing He would create. But seriously, Benefactor — are all of Your artifacts this... disturbingly weird?

Hong Lin stared for a beat, then frowned with undisguised revulsion.

"What the hell is that thing?"

"An S-grade Deceit faith artifact: the Tongue of Eating Lies.

"It really is alive, and it does need feeding — but all it requires is one lie per day, and it'll live on healthy and happy.

"As for its function — it's a contract-type artifact. You can use it to swear an oath and play a truth-telling game. There's no limit on the number of participants. Those bound by the tongue must take turns asking the next person a question. Whoever tells a lie gets... ahem, 'caressed' across the cheek by it.

"Of course, the force of the caress may not be exactly gentle..."

"..."

So the liar gets aggressively "caressed" across the cheek?

What?

You're calling that a caress?

Cheng Shi stared at the tongue before him, his eyes nearly popping out of their sockets.

'Lady, that's a tongue. A forceful "caress" is just getting slapped by a giant tongue!'

'And this is supposed to be S-grade?'

The Puppet Master had clearly read Cheng Shi's skepticism. She used Zuo Qiu's puppet to explain further:

"Deceit loves a good show, which is why He created something like this. The effect itself may seem meaningless, but there's one critical point: it's a compulsory contract artifact. When you activate it, you don't need anyone else's consent."

"!!!"

The Cheng Shi who'd just been internally roasting the thing charged over to the Puppet Master in an instant, snatched the wriggling tongue off the floor, and stuffed it into his storage space. Then, under the dumbfounded stares of the other two, he gave a light cough:

"Ahem. I accept the deal. Hand over the Divinity. Mm — give the Divinity to Baldy.

"This tongue is just a loan — I'll have to return it. I can't let my teammate take a loss, so I'll handle the return personally when the time comes.

"You're the Chosen of Prosperity anyway — collecting a bit more Prosperity Divinity suits you just fine. Right, Baldy?"

Hong Lin gave a cold snort, folded her arms, and regarded Cheng Shi with a half-smile but said nothing.