

## The Gods 36

### Chapter 36: The Starting Point of Fate and the Game of [Memory]

“Who? The one from just now?”

“Didn’t you guess who it was?” the voice asked.

Cheng Shi furrowed his brow, deep in thought.

He had a good idea. After confirming that the entity before him was his patron, he was fairly certain that the previous one was likely another god from the [Void] path—[Fate].

After all, they had the same external manifestation, the same form, and the same void-like energy.

The only difference between them was their personalities.

One was cold and indifferent, while the other was whimsical.

“So, it seems you’ve guessed it,” the voice teased.

“Even if I’ve guessed it, what difference does it make? I’m just a human. How could I possibly exact revenge on a god?”

“Hehe, no need to test me. I’ll give you an answer.

Any living being can exact revenge on a god. It’s just that this ‘revenge’ might not take the form you think it would.

Take you, for example. From the very beginning, you’ve been avenging yourself against Him.”

“???”

What are you talking about? When did I ever try to take revenge on [Fate]?

If I had that kind of courage, would I even bother running solo trials?

Seeing Cheng Shi's confusion, the entity continued:

"From the moment you took my mask at the 'Starting Point of Fate,' you began your blasphemy against [Fate]."

Cheng Shi was dumbfounded. His mind flashed with countless images, and his thoughts drifted back to the day the [Gods] descended.

...

On that beautiful, sunny afternoon, the [Faith Game] forcibly invaded the consciousness of every person on Earth in a way no human could comprehend. Cheng Shi was no exception.

At the Starting Point of Fate, Cheng Shi found himself standing before a white mask and a bone-white die. His confusion knew no bounds.

The situation was clear: he had to choose one of the two.

Cheng Shi hesitated, not knowing what either of these items represented.

"What should I choose?" he muttered to himself.

To his surprise, the mask answered him.

"Choose the Die of Fate."

Cheng Shi had no idea what the Die of Fate was or represented, but he knew the mask was referring to the die.

Cheng Shi was the type to follow advice.

So, he picked up the die.

In his simple way of thinking, if someone offered advice, it was usually good to take it.

So he chose the die without hesitation.

Just as the mask began to curl into a satisfied smile, Cheng Shi suddenly reached out and grabbed the mask as well.

The mask's smile froze.

Cheng Shi wasn't just someone who followed advice—he was also a clever person.

If this mask was telling him what to pick, then it must be valuable too.

So, Cheng Shi's greed got the better of him, and he decided to take both. He refused to settle for just one.

That's when the anomaly occurred.

The die began to grow heavier, and the mask started to burn.

The flames scorched Cheng Shi's left hand until it was blackened and charred, while the weight of the die crushed his right hand into the ground.

But even through all that, Cheng Shi never let go.

He was the type who would cling to his greed, even if it killed him.

It wasn't until the mask had burned through half of his body and the die had crushed his palm that the strange phenomena began to subside.

Cheng Shi lay on the ground, near death, staring at the mask's remains and the ash-covered die. He was back to having to choose one item.

He chuckled bitterly, placing the remnants of the mask's lips on his face—only for the mask to disappear instantly.

With no other choice, he extended his mutilated right hand to grasp the die from the ground.

And then...

He inexplicably became a follower of [Deceit].

On his face appeared a phantom Mouth of Mockery, and in his hand, he possessed a Die of Fate that always rolled a 1.

Since then, while others prayed to their masks during their Divine Will, Cheng Shi could only pray to his die.

...

"Remember now?"

You defied your destiny.

From that moment onward, every one of your Divine Wills has been an act of blasphemy against Him.

Now, think—if a tiny worm constantly doubted, challenged, and insulted you...

What would you do?”

Cheng Shi’s face twitched. That depends, he thought with a grimace.

If I were that god, I’d crush that filthy worm in an instant.

But if I were the worm...

Curses! [Fate] really is a bitch!

The great eye beneath the stars narrowed slightly, a smirk dancing in its gaze.

“See? You’ve just blasphemed against Him again.”

“...”

Cheng Shi plastered a fake smile on his face, all the while cursing inwardly. Did you summon your follower just to mock him?

“What else could it be?” the voice teased.

“...”

Is this god serious?!

Cheng Shi's face twitched as he sighed in resignation.

"Can we get to the point, O mighty Patron?"

Your humble and devoted follower has just survived an assassination attempt. My spirit is deeply shaken, and I'm exhausted. I don't have the energy for your jests.

What is it you wish to tell me, or what do you wish for me to do? Please, just say it plainly."

The eye swirled lazily, its tone still playful as it replied:

"Why didn't you follow my command and kill that follower of [Fate]?"

Cheng Shi answered honestly:

"I personally felt that forcing her to realize how miserable her so-called fate is—making her question the protection of the god she once worshipped—would be far more painful than killing her.

Death is the simplest form of suffering."

"Interesting. [Death] might not agree with you, but it doesn't matter. His opinion doesn't count.

But tell me—how are you so certain your choice was the right one?"

"Because I'm Your follower. Your light guides me, always."

That was pure flattery, through and through.

But it didn't work.

The eye laughed again, twinkling with amusement:

"You've just blasphemed against Him once more."

"....."

"But I'm satisfied with your response.

Hmm, how should I reward my loyal follower?

Let me think... perhaps I'll tell you a few secrets.

So many secrets—now, which one should I share?"

The eye blinked joyfully, and after a moment, it chuckled:

"Let's play a game, shall we?"

"?"

"A game of Memory.

The followers of [Memory] wander everywhere, seeking out interesting secrets to please their god. So, let's have a secret-trading game of our own.

You may ask me two questions, and I'll ask you two in return.

Given that I bear the name of [Deceit], to make it fair, let's add a rule:

Out of the two answers, at least one must be true.”

Cheng Shi's eyes narrowed, his mind racing at full speed.

According to the official rules of the [Faith Game], “At the end of every year, players will be ranked based on their scores on the Ladder of Ascent, and the top ten will be granted the opportunity to meet the gods.” But that event was still six months away.

So, no matter how this turned out, this was a rare chance to gain insight into the [Gods], learn more about the [Faith Game], and perhaps discover something about himself.

The question was—what should he ask?

And how could he ensure that the god wouldn't lie?

After thinking for a long time, Cheng Shi came to a conclusion: He couldn't ensure anything!

Even the rules of this very game could be a lie.

After all, the god's name was [Deceit]!

Since that was the case, there was no point in overthinking it.

He'd just ask whatever he truly wanted to know.