

## The Gods 38

Chapter 38: Chat Channel Insights and a New Trial!

Cheng Shi didn't give a single bottle this time.

Because of that, he could vaguely hear an argument breaking out in the neighboring building that night.

Of course, it was the [Fate] follower doing all the shouting, while Xie Yang kept apologizing with a nervous laugh.

Amused by the groveling sounds of a "bootlicker," Cheng Shi slept like a baby.

He didn't wake up until noon the next day, lazily stretching before skimming through the chat logs of the various channels.

As usual, the Faith Channel was filled with endless lies. Even glancing at it felt like a waste of time.

The Regional Channel was full of people planning meetups or comparing scores—chattering on like elderly matchmakers before the [Gods] had descended. The sheer volume of mundane messages gave him a headache.

Only the Class Channel had anything interesting, with fresh gossip worth reading every now and then.

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[Class Channel]

"Brothers, breaking news! [Prosperity] has a new Chosen One after a 2-month gap! 'Bald Head Uses Pantene' has been dethroned!"

"Huh? Tell us more!"

“You guys from [Prosperity] keep changing your Chosen One so often. It’s only been a few months and already another one. Why?”

“Did he strangle himself with his own hair again?”

The joke about being “strangled by their own hair” was a popular jab at followers of [Prosperity].

[Prosperity] is the second god of the [Life] path, embodying the apex of life, the flourishing of mind and body. The god encourages unchecked growth and rapid rejuvenation.

As a result, followers of [Prosperity] often experience surges in spiritual energy, and their flesh and hair grow at abnormal speeds.

In fact, more than one hapless follower had suffered because of their overgrown hair, leading to mishaps during trials.

Over time, this became a running joke among players.

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[Class Channel]

“Who knows? I shaved my head, so I’ll never be the clown.”

“Who’s the new Chosen One? Let everyone bow before them.”

“The new ID is ‘Only Carves Rotten Wood.’”

“Notice the ‘Rotten’? That’s a tough one. Where are the [Decay] followers? Shouldn’t they be beating him up?”

“Heh, let them have their fun. Our [Decay] Chosen is still ranked number one, so [Prosperity] can keep eating our dust.”

“Correction, they’re eating something else. Not dust.”

“Care to share your coordinates?”

“Sure, Jiang Province, Shanshi City, Xinyao Street, No. 167-1 Guqiao Alley. Come on, I’m waiting.”

“???? That’s where I live, bro! Who the hell are you?!”

“Damn, what a coincidence. That was my old house.”

“Holy crap, all those toys were yours?!”

“???”

“Brother, tell us more about those ‘toys.’”

“…”

“And by the way, [Deceit] got a new Chosen One too. First time since the game started. The guy who used to dominate with ‘True Heart’ got knocked down out of the top 10.”

“He probably failed a few trials. Still, it takes a real boss to stay in the top 10 even after failing. One failure, and I’d be out.”

“Don’t worry, I got you. I’ll heal you.”

“Idiot, I can heal myself.”

“Yeah, but your own milk never tastes as good as your bro’s.”

“...”

“?”

—

Cheng Shi was chuckling at the banter when he suddenly saw the message about [Deceit]’s Chosen One being replaced. His expression turned serious as he quickly opened the Ladder of Ascent rankings.

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[Ladder of Ascent (Existence-Memory) / (Void-Deceit)]

1. Li Jingming (Memory) 204
2. Ad Space for Rent (Deceit) 203
3. This Feeling Can Wait (Memory) 200
4. Still Like a Dream (Memory) 197
5. Aba Aba (Deceit) 197

...

19. If Your Score's Lower, Just Kill Yourself, Noob (Deceit) 189

20. This Day Last Year (Memory) 189

21. True Heart (Deceit) 188

...

64. I Never Lie (Deceit) 161

...

—

If Cheng Shi hadn't heard the name Zhen Xin in his conversation with [Deceit], he wouldn't have paid much attention to this ID.

He remembered that True Heart used to dominate the Ladder of Ascent with 210 points, and yet, in just a few days, they had dropped to 188 points.

Rank 21.

What had this guy been up to?

How had he suddenly fallen out of the top 10?

There was no way to figure it out just by thinking, so Cheng Shi decided to ask directly.

Feeling bored, Cheng Shi casually posted in the Faith Channel:

“Why did you drop down, man? Run out of tricks?”

Normally, a message like this would get lost in the endless stream of scams and banter. But for some reason, this time, a lot of people saw it, and it immediately ignited their gossiping spirits.

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[Faith Channel]

“Rumor has it, she’s pregnant with Li Jingming’s child and is on maternity leave.”

“That’s not right. I heard she got caught in a national crackdown on fraud and got locked up.”

“Whoa, the Qing Dynasty must’ve ended—look who’s crawled out. What era are we living in now?”

“The Era of [Deceit].”

“High awareness, were you a government official in your past life? Mind sharing your score and some tips, bro?”

“I live by two rules: 1. Be honest. 2. Be really fucking honest.”

“I know a bit. She’s got a communicator and reached out to some higher-ups from other faiths. Apparently, she’s out looking for someone.”

“Looking for who? The father? Is she really pregnant?”

“Shit, maybe it’s mine?”

“Brothers, I’m going to piss on him to wake him up.”

“.....”

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Looking for someone?

Cheng Shi frowned. That sounded odd.

How could searching for someone affect your rank on the Ladder of Ascent?

How was she even “looking for someone”?

Unable to make sense of it, he continued scrolling through the rankings.

He noticed that many of the IDs around his rank were well-known in various channels, each with around 2400 points.

These were the top-tier players.

And here he was, just barely over 2100, yet already climbing the ranks.

Tsk, I’m not bad after all!

But Cheng Shi had never understood why, after each trial, his Ladder of Ascent score would always max out.

After meeting [Deceit], however, he had started to get an idea.

Could it be because...

As soon as the thought crossed his mind, he immediately suppressed it.

No! Stop thinking about it!

If I summon something nasty again, I might not get saved next time.

Still, the power [Deceit] had mentioned...

Cheng Shi really wanted it.

“Becoming a Chosen One... that’s a bit much.”

Turning a laid-back slacker like him into a motivated go-getter would take at least ten days of effort.

And so, Cheng Shi spent the rest of the week leisurely, without any particular drive.

That is, until a blood-red notification flashed in his vision, signaling the arrival of yet another trial.

He looked at the trial details and sighed.

“Here we go again...”

—

[Special Trial (Which Path Leads to Death [Death]) has begun]

[Matching teammates (1/6)]

[Trial Objective: There is but one path that leads to death. Find it and offer your sacrifice. (Time limit: 7 days)]

“?”

Seven days!

Why was this trial so long?

Since the [Gods] had descended, the longest trial shared across the channels had been three days.

But today, the trial length had been extended to a full seven days!

There was no need to think twice—this trial’s risk factor had likely multiplied several times along with the duration.

[Match successful (6/6), entering trial]

Cheng Shi’s heart sank, still reeling from the surprise, when his vision was pulled into endless darkness.