

The Gods 56

Chapter 56: The Shocking Truth

“His own?”

Cheng Shi was completely bewildered.

“What do you mean by ‘his own’?”

The innkeeper patiently explained:

“Ardos’s mentor was Zangier, the head of the Creation Alchemy School at the Tower of Logic. That school was incredibly advanced in the fields of creation and puppetry, far ahead of the other schools.

After Zangier published his latest findings, other factions, fearing his influence, assassinated him. With his mentor gone, Ardos became a fugitive scholar with no protection.

In his escape, he wandered into the underground and joined us.”

Hmmm—Why does this sound so familiar?

If this guy gives me a “Would you like to join us?” line, I’ll feel like I’m back in Fang Shiqing’s arms in a dream.

“With our support, Ardos was able to research a method called ‘self-puppetry.’ He transformed his dying body into a perfectly-crafted flesh puppet!”

“?” Cheng Shi blinked, confused.

“He turned himself into a puppet? Then who controls him?”

“No one controls him, the only one who could control him was himself. Before he became a puppet, he designed a perfect consciousness for himself to ensure he could continue aiding our cause.”

“.....”

AI?

Cheng Shi’s mind buzzed.

Isn’t this just artificial intelligence?

Why would someone turn themselves into a human AI?

“What’s the point of that?”

“The point? Using his broken life to create something as close to a perfect life form as possible—that’s the very essence of pursuing [Truth], isn’t it?”

“.....”

You make it sound so logical, but my mom always told me not to argue with idiots.

Cheng Shi’s mind was exploding with the desire to roast the innkeeper, but on the outside, he maintained a patient smile.

This isn’t the pursuit of [Truth]—this is the pursuit of idiocy!

“And what about that guy tonight...?”

“Kataro, Ardos’s junior. He also transformed himself into a puppet.”

“.....”

Double kill!

What is wrong with these people?!

The more Cheng Shi thought about it, the more they seemed like followers of [Corruption], driven into a state of obsession and extreme desire.

Given that they were underground, it wasn't far-fetched to assume their faith might be tied to [Corruption].

So, Cheng Shi asked curiously, “Is this [Corruption]?”

“You mean my faith? No, no, no. I don't truly believe in any [God]. Or rather, the one I believe in hasn't descended yet.”

“???”

Cheng Shi's face twisted in confusion. He stared at the innkeeper, frowning.

“Then where did your [Corruption] powers come from?”

The innkeeper raised an eyebrow, lifted his hand, and gave it a small shake.

As his arm trembled, the aura of [Corruption] around him began to dissipate. Gradually, a radiant golden power re-emerged, wrapping around his body.

Cheng Shi stared at the familiar energy in disbelief.

[Order]!

It was the power of [Order]!!!

“You—you—you...”

“Unbelievable, right? The truth is, I’m actually one of His followers.

Not only that, but I used to serve in the Grand Tribunal.

And Moxius...

He’s my junior.”

“!!??”

Stunned didn’t even begin to describe Cheng Shi’s reaction. His expression completely broke down, his mouth gaping wide enough to fit two light bulbs.

Wait, hold on!

“You were... a judge at the Grand Tribunal?”

“First-Class Judge, Chernosly. Brings back memories, doesn’t it?”

“Then the [Corruption] power you were using... does that mean you’re a defector?”

The term “defector” referred to someone who abandoned their original faith to follow another [God]. Such followers would face eternal punishment from their previous patron for breaking their oath.

Even players in the [Faith Game] had the option to defect, but doing so left them with a permanent debuff from their former god, even if they successfully switched their allegiance.

Moreover, the new [God] they followed wouldn’t show them any special favor for defecting.

So, choosing to defect was a momentous and difficult choice.

“A defector? No, I never abandoned my faith in [Order]. I simply added devotion to other [Gods] alongside my loyalty to Him.”

“?”

Wait, you can do that?

Good grief, this guy’s a true poly-faith player—he wants it all.

But how could the gods you’ve betrayed just let you get away with this?

“I’ve never heard of anyone being this... broad in their faith,” Cheng Shi muttered, trying to wrap his head around it.

Chernosly laughed maniacally, his voice tinged with madness:

“Before we succeeded, no one realized that faith didn’t have to be pure. That it could be chaotic like this!

That’s precisely why we came together!”

It's starting.

Cheng Shi's eyes narrowed. He realized that this midnight conversation was finally getting to the heart of the matter.

If this former First-Class Judge wasn't a mere follower of [Corruption], nor a defector from [Order], then there had to be a deeper reason for his return to the heart of the Grand Tribunal.

And that reason likely involved a far more profound conflict of faith.

Cheng Shi had a theory forming in his mind. He suspected that Chernosly might have begun to worship [War]!

After all, the innkeeper had said that his true faith hadn't descended yet.

At this time, the internal war was just beginning in the Tower of Logic. [War] was aware of the Land of Hope but had not yet descended upon it.

The worshippers of [War] were still in the process of perceiving His divine name.

Yes, the descent of the [Gods] followed a set order, usually aligned with the path they represented.

This was common knowledge in 2000-point games and above.

But then, Chernosly said something that completely blew Cheng Shi's mind.

"All of us come from different faiths, each of us chosen by our respective patrons.

And yet, we all suffered misfortune, oppressed and wronged by our own kind, forced to flee.

It was then that we realized our faiths were not entirely correct. Somewhere in the vast universe, there might be a faith that better suits us—one that is waiting for us.

And so, guided by this vague and mysterious feeling, we gathered in the underground.

After decades of 'faith experiments,' we finally discovered...

He opened His eyes and looked upon us!!!”

Chernosly’s expression grew wild with excitement. His eyes were bloodshot, his hands trembling, and his body tensed as he reveled in the satisfaction of “summoning” a god.

“We felt His presence, heard His whispers.

We realized that He was the essence of the universe, the source of all things!

We knelt before Him in reverence, accepted His will, and prayed for His descent.

But we knew that humble prayers alone would not earn His favor.

So we needed a grand ritual to welcome His arrival!

We will spread the flames of war to every inch of the Grand Tribunal’s lands. We will plunge the entire Land of Hope into chaos, make every soul wail in despair, and let them cry before death. Then, in the midst of their suffering, they will awaken to His presence!

Finally, everyone in this world will kneel at His feet!”