

The Gods 59

Chapter 59: Drunken Sleep of Death

When a difficult puzzle has multiple solutions, people tend to gravitate toward the simplest one.

What they often don't realize is that, in trying to figure out which solution is the simplest, they end up making the problem more complicated.

Unable to find Kataro, Cheng Shi was left with two remaining options: Fang Jue and Moxius.

In terms of difficulty, approaching Moxius was clearly easier than reaching Fang Jue.

Since Fang Jue had been identified as a murderer, the Law Enforcement Bureau and the Grand Tribunal would undoubtedly be keeping him under the strictest surveillance.

Meeting him was almost impossible.

Moxius, on the other hand, was a different story. Even if his whereabouts were unpredictable, as long as Cheng Shi found a reasonable excuse, there was still a chance to take a gamble.

And Cheng Shi already had an excuse. All he needed to do was tweak or exaggerate it a little...

Most people, when faced with this situation, would likely first attempt to meet with Moxius.

But Cheng Shi wasn't like most people.

He discarded the idea of meeting either of them directly and shifted his approach—to make them come to him instead.

And how could he make them come looking for him?

That was simple...

With When Fear Descends.

Cheng Shi slipped into an alleyway, pulling the semi-divine artifact from his robes.

The sinister red glow remained as captivating as ever, the essence of [Death] and [Corruption] swirling around the blade, so thick it sent shivers down the spine.

The solution was simple. If someone were to die in the town after the “real culprit” had been apprehended, it would raise the possibility that the captured culprit wasn’t the true mastermind—or at the very least, that another killer was still at large.

So, all he needed now was to find a “lucky target”—someone whose death would cast doubt on Fang Jue’s guilt and reignite Moxius’s drive to continue the investigation.

The only question remaining was... who would that lucky target be?

Cheng Shi wandered aimlessly through the streets of Eternal Bloom Town for an entire day, unable to settle on a suitable victim.

It wasn’t until the moon climbed high into the sky that he found himself back near the inn, where he spotted the bard Ardos’s drinking buddies.

They were just leaving, headed off to another spot.

Cheng Shi smirked.

There it is.

He quickly followed the group, discreetly eavesdropping on their idle complaints.

“Now that the killer’s been caught, the nights have become so quiet. Honestly, it’s kind of boring.”

“I miss the old days when Ardos was around. Sure, his stories were terrifying, but at least they were interesting.”

“I think you just miss Ardos’s money, not him.”

“Haha, same difference. Without big news to talk about, even drinking feels dull.”

“.....”

These drunks were the type who thrived on chaos, caring little for whether people lived or died. Their sole concern was finding something exciting to talk about while they drank.

Others might have scorned them for their callousness.

But not Cheng Shi. Inwardly, he praised them:

What a perfect group of target customers—even makes me feel hesitant to kill them.

He pulled his hood tighter over his head, quickened his pace, and stepped in front of the group, blocking their path.

Startled, the drunks stopped in their tracks, confused and irritated.

“Hey, what’s the deal? Move out of the way!”

“Get lost, we’re broke. Go ask Ardos—he’s the one with money.”

“Who are you? What do you want?”

Cheng Shi, his face hidden in the shadow of his hood, chuckled softly and reached into the sleeve of his robe.

He pulled out something small, but it was too dark to see clearly.

The drunks weren't angry at his silence; rather, it piqued their interest.

"What's that? You trying to sell us something?"

"You think you can take on the five of us by yourself?"

"Hey, pal, open up your hand, let's see what you've got. If it's something good, I wouldn't mind paying for it."

Just what I was waiting for!

Cheng Shi's lips curled into a sly smile as he spoke in a hushed, mysterious tone:

"Oh, it's something good, alright. I'm an alchemy pharmacist, and this is my latest creation. I call it 'Drunken Sleep of Death.'

Just one dose will put you into a state of 'dream death.' From the outside, it's indistinguishable from actual death—even your heart will stop beating.

Not even the judges of the Grand Tribunal could tell the difference.

But!

It's not true death, because even in the 'dream death' state, your five senses remain intact. You'll hear the sounds around you, feel people's touch, and if you can manage to keep your eyes open, you'll see everything happening around you.

The effect lasts for 24 hours, and no external stimulus can break it.

Create your own death and witness the fear in others.

How about it? Want to give it a try?"

As soon as he finished speaking, Cheng Shi could hear the breaths of the drunks quicken.

Their heartbeats pounded like war drums in the quiet night, excitement palpable in the air.

They were hooked.

Completely hooked.

For a group of thrill-seeking drunks, this was the ultimate drug—it had practically been tailor-made for them.

And indeed, it had been.

Cheng Shi had just made it up on the spot.

The offering to the void had once again conjured the "sacrifice."

In truth, Cheng Shi's hand held nothing but a few pieces of candy. But the moment these drunks, eyes blazing and breath heated, fixed their gaze on the "pills," the candies underwent a profound transformation.

Drunken Sleep of Death—complete.

“How much!?”

“How many do you have?”

“Did you really come here alone?”

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Buddy, that’s a dangerous thought.

Even if I did come alone, what do you plan to do?

Rob me?

Sorry to disappoint you, but I was planning to give these out for free.

“Oh, if you’re interested in helping me test the drug, they’re free of charge.”

“Free?”

“Really?”

“You mean all of them?”

The glint of robbery in the drunks’ eyes faded, replaced by eagerness.

“Of course,” Cheng Shi said, opening his hand to reveal five “pills.”

Just enough—one for each of them.

Without hesitation, the drunks snatched the pills from his hand, each popping one into their mouth immediately.

Praise [Prosperity]—in a town where no one could die, experiencing a day of simulated death was the ultimate thrill.

“How long before it kicks in?”

“Instantaneously.”

The moment the words left his mouth, the five men collapsed one by one.

“Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud.”

The night returned to silence.

Their hearts had stopped, and their body temperatures were rapidly dropping. They looked like corpses.

With a smile, Cheng Shi nudged one of the fallen drunks with his foot before dragging them into a nearby alley.

By the time they woke up tomorrow, Eternal Bloom Town would have a brand-new headline, guaranteed to spark even more fear.

Once his task was complete, Cheng Shi returned to the inn in high spirits.

As for any traces of his presence on the street, he hadn't bothered to hide them.

Lying on his bed, Cheng Shi stared at the ceiling, his mind churning:

Come on, Moxius, let's see how quickly you can find me.

The third night.

Another sleepless night.

Cheng Shi remained the last player in the inn.