

## The Gods 591

Chapter 591: Narrator Bro Needs More Research

No wonder!

No wonder Zhen Yi knew so much history. No wonder virtually every name she'd ever dropped corresponded to a real entity. She hadn't been making things up at all—she'd been narrating!

Only the characters were real. The stories were entirely fabricated.

So did that mean Herobos—a name he hadn't heard before—was also a genuine existence?

Cheng Shi's gaze sharpened. He leaned toward Hong Lin again: "Have you heard of Herobos?"

"Herobos?" Hong Lin frowned slightly and nodded. "Hand of Purifying Weevil. The Envoy of Oblivion. Why—did you run into him?"

Cheng Shi blinked. 'He really is an Oblivion Envoy?'

"The Hand of Purifying Weevil was the leader of the World Destroyers during the Sinking Era—the one who guided the entire epoch toward annihilation.

He believed everything in existence was nothing more than filthy weevils, ceaselessly gnawing at the primordial universe. And so he annihilated all things, seeking to restore the origin and thereby please his Benefactor."

That narration came not from Hong Lin but from the Dragon King, launching into another miniature history lecture.

Hearing this, Cheng Shi's entire being jolted. His complexion shifted visibly. He recalled the World Destroyers outside Kannar City in the previous trial—the leader they'd encircled—and wondered whether that was Herobos himself.

But that wasn't the sole reason for his shock. What truly stunned him was that Li Jingming had mentioned the word "primordial."

Though "primordial" wasn't quite the same as "Origin," weren't the implications uncomfortably close?

Was the Dragon King probing on purpose because he knew something? Or was the concept simply embedded in Herobos's story?

Cheng Shi didn't dare voice the question, so he could only mask the shock in his eyes and redirect his attention to Chernosly.

Li Jingming noticed that Cheng Shi hadn't followed up on his thread. He raised a thoughtful eyebrow.

He enjoyed discussing history with others. Only through extensive conversation could he continuously fill in the gaps of the past. During trials, he never hesitated to throw out topics.

But it seemed this Fate Weaver's guard against him remained far too high.

The three players fell silent once more. Inside the dream, Chernosly was still conferring with Moxius on how to bypass the Supreme Court and confront the Iron Law directly.

The Supreme Court's defenses weren't as airtight as the Howling Iron Prison's, but the Iron Law Knights' patrol and shift-change schedules weren't public knowledge either.

As First-Class Inquisitors who hadn't yet served on the Supreme Court, the two could only reconstruct the knights' guard schedule from memory and pick an optimal window to infiltrate.

Chernosly's plan was for Moxius to stand watch at a critical shift-change point on the outer perimeter while he slipped through the gap in coverage and headed straight for the Supreme Court's inner sanctum.

He did nearly all the planning himself, refusing to let Moxius speak—determined not to drag his junior disciple into this. But Moxius clearly cared about him, punctuating key junctures with a telltale cough as a hint.

The planning process was excruciatingly dull. Before long, Cheng Shi's mind drifted.

Though dream-time didn't match the trial's real clock, this was still burning trial time. He wanted to nudge Li Jingming—whose Memory powers could control the dream's pace—to hurry things up. But the Dragon King was plainly fascinated by every frame of the memory, so Cheng Shi pursed his lips and let his mind wander.

Hong Lin was in the same boat—even more impatient, in fact. But she knew the Dragon King better and understood that rushing would accomplish nothing. She'd already closed her eyes and was dozing off.

Sensing their restlessness, Li Jingming's eyelid twitched. Perhaps to liven the mood—or to pick up the earlier thread—he suddenly asked Cheng Shi:

"You encountered Herobos?"

Cheng Shi had been counting sheep. The sudden question made him lose his count entirely. He shot the Dragon King an exasperated look: "You owe me a sheep."

"?"

Li Jingming was baffled. The word "compensation" now triggered something akin to a trauma response. The instant Cheng Shi spoke, that fire he'd been burying deep surged upward.

Cheng Shi had only been needling him offhandedly—he wasn't seriously demanding payment. But he didn't answer the Dragon King's question either. Instead he asked one of his own:

"Narrator Bro, which era did Herobos ascend to godhood in?"

"?"

'Narrator Bro?!'

At the nickname, Li Jingming's eyelid spasmed. Worse, Hong Lin, who'd been dozing nearby, bolted upright and seized Cheng Shi's shoulder, eyes razor-sharp as she scanned him from head to toe.

"Who are you?!"

Cheng Shi's body went rigid, eyes flying wide—but he grasped what had happened almost instantly.

'Damn—I used the same nickname as Zhen Yi!'

'She called Li Jingming "Narrator Bro" too!'

'Bad luck's mother opened the door for bad luck—and bad luck's home.'

But he didn't need to explain himself this time, because he knew Big Cat was simply reacting on reflex. She'd figure it out soon enough. So he put on an expression of wounded exasperation—the look of a man whose perfectly innocent joke had been blown out of proportion—and turned to Big Cat with pure mockery in his eyes.

"Sis, I was just poking fun at him. How'd that trigger your fight-or-flight?"

"..."

Hong Lin had indeed been triggered. Her face flushed with embarrassment, but then she scrutinized Cheng Shi one more time, replaying every action he'd taken in this trial and back in Dolgod. Only after she was truly satisfied did she release his shoulder with a casual air, bluffing confidence:

"Triggered? Who's triggered? I was testing your reflexes—checking if you were cautious enough."

"..." Cheng Shi laughed in exasperation.

'Fine, fine. I'm not cautious enough.'

'Even the least cautious version of me wouldn't rip the Howling Iron Prison's door off its hinges and immediately go punch a Supreme Inquisitor!'

Seeing Big Cat turn away in embarrassment, he let it go and redirected his attention to Li Jingming, repeating the earlier question.

Because he'd noticed something: when the word "era" came up, the Dragon King—for once—hadn't answered.

The man's silence wasn't entirely because of that irritating nickname. It seemed... Cheng Shi had hit a blind spot in his knowledge.

"Fascinating. I knew you'd carry unique memories." Li Jingming chuckled, his expression brightening. "Let's make a deal, Cheng Shi. Tell me what these 'eras' you mention are—whether it's what I think it is."

Li Jingming genuinely didn't know about the eras. But after accumulating an enormous volume of memories, he'd noticed that certain historical recollections were anomalously chaotic—varying wildly depending on the perspective.

He'd never understood why—until he heard Cheng Shi's question today. A sudden realization hit: those chaotic memories might not be linear at all.

Eras... which era... it sounded like parallel timelines. Could memories also be parallel, which would explain why different recollections seemed contradictory and jumbled?

Li Jingming's curiosity was thoroughly hooked. He turned to Cheng Shi with blazing eyes, his desire for new memories written plainly across his face.

And Cheng Shi... declined the deal.

He'd never intended to tell the Dragon King anything. He'd deliberately said "era" to make Li Jingming squirm with curiosity...

Well, that wasn't the whole truth.

His own intelligence-gathering speed was limited. To learn more about the eras, multiple people working in parallel was the way forward.

Cheng Shi had originally considered reaching out to the History School. But now that he'd learned its founder was Zhen Xin, he was starting to think twice.

The reason... was self-evident.

So his gaze drifted back to the Dragon King. Under normal circumstances, cooperating with a Memory follower was a hard sell. But the man was nominally a follower of the Fun God.

And partnering with a player who routinely blasphemed the Fun God—wasn't that entertainment in its own right?

If so, it could count as an offering to Him!

Emboldened by this "justification," Cheng Shi acted. He tossed the man a small crumb of a hint.

Only a hint, of course. Given how little he actually understood about the eras, he certainly couldn't satisfy the Dragon King's insatiable appetite for memories.

If his own ignorance were exposed, today's carefully cultivated mystique would become tomorrow's rug burn on his face.

That kind of blunder was not an option.

"I have no interest in deals. I'm only interested in compensation.

It seems Narrator Bro's knowledge base is a bit thin. I suggest you go back and do more research."

"..." Li Jingming's smile froze. He frowned—then nodded thoughtfully.

It seemed he understood.

Chapter 592: Facing Order

Back in the room, Chernosly and Moxius's planning finally reached its conclusion.

They set their operation for three days later at midnight—the exact moment when the inner and outer shift-change schedules overlapped at the Supreme Court.

Having committed their entire plan to memory, Li Jingming stopped wasting time and channeled his Memory power to accelerate the dream's flow. The scene leapt forward to the night of Chernosly's operation.

The dreamscape shifted in a haze, and in the blink of an eye the three players materialized near the Supreme Court. Chernosly was already scaling the high walls under Moxius's cover, advancing toward the court's inner sanctum.

Three ghosts trailed silently behind, shadowing his every move.

Chernosly's preparation had been meticulous. He'd timed every gap in the shift changes and slipped through the Knights' blind spots with precision. The sentries guarding the Supreme Court weren't as alert as those at the Howling Iron Prison—in their minds, nobody would dare "walk to their death" in a capital saturated with Order's presence.

Before long, the group reached the High Pavilion where the Iron Law was enshrined. Standing before it, Chernosly's expression became impossibly complex.

His humility hid defiance. His devotion was laced with doubt. His resolve was riddled with anxiety. His fear sparked courage. He gazed upon this holy site—where Order had once watched, descended, and bestowed guidance upon the Grand Tribunal—and felt his heart thunder like a war drum, his mind roar like a chorus of lightning.

He didn't know whether what he was about to do was right. But he knew Order... must withstand questioning!

Because that was the lesson Grand Justice La Quis had taught him his entire life.

And so, with this conviction, Chernosly's face grew ever more unyielding, his eyes ever more resolute. He waited for the perimeter to clear, then took his first, near-blasphemous step toward the tower that represented Him.

As for the three non-protagonists behind him—they, too, seemed infected by the suffocating tension. Their faces turned somber one after another.

Of course, what made them tense wasn't Chernosly's performance or the oppressive atmosphere. It was... It. The Iron Law!

A god's gaze recognized no distinction between past and future, reality and dream. The moment they followed this First-Class Inquisitor through that threshold, all three players would—within Chernosly's dream—be standing face-to-face with Order!

The terrifying part was that some of them already suspected something was wrong with Order.

The even more terrifying part was that Cheng Shi already knew the entity in that pavilion was not Order at all.

So, in the name of caution, Cheng Shi shoved the Dragon King ahead of him and pulled Big Cat behind him. Only when he had a meat shield both front and back did his taut nerves relax by exactly 0.001 percent.

Big Cat's expression was equally grave—but within that gravity hid a concealed eagerness.

No one knew what she was thinking. They only heard her ask: "Is this... considered a divine audience?"

Li Jingming walked steadily, disinclined to chat. Cheng Shi hid in the middle and nodded discreetly: "If blaspheming a god to his face counts as a divine audience, then yes—I think we are."

"..."

"..."

That single quip cranked the surrounding tension to its peak. Even Li Jingming stumbled mid-step up ahead, drawing a deep breath before cautiously pressing on.

Chernosly, too, advanced with care. Rather than vault over the outer walls into the High Pavilion, he crept through the night toward the first-floor doors, eased them open, then tiptoed in with almost reverent silence.

And the instant the three trailing "ghosts" slipped through the crack behind him—every one of them froze.

Because the Iron Law—the one that should have been housed on the topmost floor, the embodiment of Order's will and the Grand Tribunal's supreme constitution—was hovering right before their eyes. It radiated infinite holy Order light and faced them, its pages flipping with a rush of whispers.

It had seen them. It had caught these interlopers!

Chernosly's mind went blank. His first instinct was to drop to his knees in devout greeting.

"Civilization's flame ignites, Order endures eternal! Praise the great Benefactor! Praise the God of Order who ensures civilized and orderly progress throughout the world!"

But the moment the reflexive praise left his lips, he remembered: he hadn't come to pay homage to his Benefactor. He'd come to... question him.

And so, under the stunned gazes of Cheng Shi, Hong Lin, and Li Jingming, this "audacious" follower of Order cut straight to the point with absolute bluntness, completely bypassing every planned preamble, and hurled his deepest doubt at the divine artifact before him.

"If I may ask, great Benefactor—is everything my teacher, Grand Justice La Quis, said... true?"

The sheer abruptness made even Cheng Shi's heart lurch.

'Bro—the plan you and Moxius hashed out was solid. First profess your devotion, then present your experiences, then steer the conversation toward judgment, and finally introduce the doubt. You two spent an entire night rehearsing a complete script—so how come you jumped straight to the last line?'

'Where's the preamble? The emotional appeal? The step-by-step buildup?!'

'All just—gone?'

'How is that question any different from outright blasphemy?'

'That's not even good blasphemy!'

'Who do you think you are—a darling of the Void? That every god is the Fun God?'

'When I question him, he laughs and shades me. When you question Order... guess how he's going to judge you?'

No need to guess—because Order's judgment arrived immediately.

Moments after Chernosly posed his question, the Iron Law hovering in the air began flipping its pages in a frenzy.

The turning grew faster and faster, until it was practically brutalizing its own pages. And as the rustling escalated into a violent racket, the holy Order light emanating from the codex gradually warped into a turbid, gruel-thick yellow glow.

The instant that familiar radiance flared, Cheng Shi's mind detonated.

Chaos!

That murky yellow light was unmistakable. Not long ago, he'd waded through those same churning yellow mists while impersonating the Envoy of Chaos—and conned a Grand Marshal in the process.

The color of that mist was identical to the yellow light now shining down on Chernosly's head.

This wasn't Order's radiance. This was Chaos's muddy glow!

Every muscle in Cheng Shi's body seized. A bolt of cold shot from his tailbone straight to the crown of his skull, and even in his spectral state, he felt goosebumps erupting in waves.

Why was there Chaos?

How could there be Chaos?!

This was Order's divine gift, embodying the supreme constitution! This was Order's avatar, embodying Order's will! This was the Iron Law that had usurped Order's Divine Throne—so why was it radiating the light of Chaos?!

Cheng Shi was staggered. Even the moment Prosperity had destroyed itself, he hadn't been this shaken.

His reaction was swiftly noticed by the Dragon King and Big Cat. Sensing something wrong, both instinctively closed ranks around him.

Big Cat asked with concern: "What's wrong?"

Li Jingming turned his head, expression grave: "So Order really does have a problem. Its radiance has turned murky."

"!!!"

Hearing the Dragon King's observation, Cheng Shi's head snapped up, and he stared at the Iron Law again. A sudden realization struck: the entity hadn't altered Order's aura—only its visual radiance.

In other words, this chaotic, turbid glow—unrecognizable to anyone else—still appeared to be Order in the Dragon King's and Big Cat's eyes. Disordered, problematic Order, but Order nonetheless.

They couldn't distinguish what the light signified. They didn't yet know what was happening.

But Cheng Shi knew far too well. Fear was blooming inside him, because he could already feel a familiar presence beginning to seep from the turbid glow—a presence he'd experienced only once before, while climbing the Chaos Steps.

The unmistakable herald of an indiscriminate storm of Chaos!

His blood ran cold. He grabbed the Dragon King and Big Cat and began retreating at full speed. Both were decisive—the second they'd felt his alarm they'd already prepared to pull back. Seeing his expression contort, they couldn't not know something they hadn't detected was unfolding. Their gazes hardened, and they reversed course, dragging Cheng Shi toward the pavilion's exit.

But they were one beat too slow—because the Iron Law had grown ever more frenzied.

Its pages whipped back and forth like tidal waves. In a flash and without warning, the book violently exploded. Countless pages inscribed with legal scripture peeled away from the codex and drifted down like snow. The holy scripture-light dimmed. Red light pulsed. And across every fluttering page, warped scratches spread like a disease, seemingly desperate to obliterate every shred of Order's civilizational text.

Torrents of unspeakably terrifying Chaos power erupted from page after page in succession, layered like the cresting waves of a tsunami—roaring, surging, and slamming outward in every direction. The man and three "ghosts" who hadn't escaped in time were swept off their feet.

Chapter 593: A Serious Problem—That's Not Order at All. That's...?!

Madness... everything had gone mad.

Chernosly was hurled outward by the berserk force, smashing through the doors and rolling out of the High Pavilion.

Dense Chaos aura coiled around him like chains—head to toe, layer upon layer. Discordant, maddened screams shredded his ears while kaleidoscopic, hallucinatory visions erupted behind his eyes.

His consciousness was torn apart, his memories scrambled, his reason devoured. Before long, he was writhing and wailing on the ground, bloodshot eyes locked on the direction of the Howling Iron Prison, his lips muttering disordered fantasies.

"They despised my teacher's justice, envied his reputation, feared his devotion—it was them! These filthy political factions, these disgusting power-hungry opportunists—they framed my teacher!

They don't want me to succeed as Supreme Inquisitor. They're afraid I'll uphold justice like my teacher and hold them accountable, so now they're coming after me too!

All of this is their fault—it's the Grand Tribunal that has a problem!

Order—oh, Benefactor—open your eyes! Right under your nose, on the very judgment seat of this Supreme Court, a pack of freeloading blasphemers is tearing out the foundations of universal order!"

Unlike Chernosly's total descent, the Dragon King and Big Cat merely experienced mental disorientation.

Li Jingming discovered his memories were dissolving—evaporating. In a burst of panic he channeled every shred of Memory power into an ironclad spell shield around himself. But it only slowed the collapse; it couldn't dispel the hallucinations now filling his vision.

Yes—he was hallucinating.

He saw the countless people from his collected memories shambling around him like the walking dead, their familiar silhouettes blurring as they staggered and faded. He tried to reach out and stop them, only to find himself trapped inside his own shield—unable to break free, unable to help.

Big Cat fared the same, though her world was considerably more... colorful. And bloodier.

She'd shifted forms again—back into the bear spirit—and was roaring, pounding her chest, then grappling with the flowers, grass, flagstones, and dirt at her feet.

She didn't realize she was rolling on the ground. In her eyes, the terrain was a blood-soaked battlefield, and everything beneath her fists was an enemy being ground into the earth.

As for Cheng Shi...

He hadn't gone mad. But he was getting close.

He saw no illusions. He suffered no hallucinations. He simply heard endless curses roaring in his ears—every person he'd ever deceived seemed to be viciously cursing him, swearing that someday he'd be swindled out of everything just the same.

Cold sweat soaked through his clothes. His soul trembled faintly. Listening to the invective and watching the madness, Cheng Shi felt as if he'd been transported back to the seemingly endless Chaos Steps. Only this time, the protagonist wasn't him—it was everyone else.

Perhaps because he'd already climbed those steps once and built up a resistance, Cheng Shi realized the "tier" he occupied was far lower than the others'. He hadn't fully sunk into this carnival of chaos. He stood alone—a straggling, helpless bystander.

But even a bystander could feel fear. What was frightening was never the difference in roles between performer and audience—it was the play itself, and the spiritual core it conveyed.

The scene before him was an unmistakable revelation of a terrifying truth: here in the Grand Tribunal, within this site of worship for countless Order faithful, the Iron Law that had usurped Order's Divine Throne was not an artifact of Order at all. Its true nature was Chaos—pure, undiluted Chaos!

And what was even more horrifying: under Chaos's interference, dream and reality were beginning to merge.

No—"merge" wasn't the right word. It was more like... confusion!

He could clearly see the Dragon King and Big Cat gradually shedding their spectral states, acquiring physical bodies, and beginning to alter the dream's environment!

"!!!"

If the dream was no longer a dream, then which timeline governed—the dream's internal clock, or the trial's?

Or worse still: under Chaos's influence, was there any coherent timeline left at all? Would everyone ultimately drown in this divine maelstrom, reduced to blasphemous ash beneath "Order's" judgment?

No! He couldn't let this continue!

Cheng Shi gritted his teeth and decided to act.

Not to save this dream—but to save himself and his friend Big Cat.

He couldn't be certain his immunity would last. What stood before him wasn't some triggered Chaos trap—it was an actual god!

What that god intended, no one could say.

But how had it become the Iron Law?!

Was that why it had tried to recruit him—and kept having Kataro impersonate him? To find someone who could manage the Chaos Temple in its stead, freeing it to devote itself to taking over the Grand Tribunal?

'Hss—'

'Does that mean... I'm going to become the Lord of the Chaos Temple?'

'No, no, no! Cheng Shi, get a grip—this isn't the time for that!'

'Focus on what's happening to it and what you should do!'

He already had the faintest inkling of a theory. If the Iron Law were truly an artifact of Order—even a damaged one—then this situation would be catastrophic. But if the entity was actually Chaos... well, this was just the most on-brand episode imaginable.

After all, Chaos was inherently without pattern.

The real question was: why wasn't it as lucid as it had been inside the Chaos Temple?

Could this be a side effect of suppressing Order?

Quite possibly.

The only insight Cheng Shi had gleaned from the Fun God was this: a follower of Deceit must see through appearances to the essence. Therefore, to stop a Chaos event, one couldn't rely on Order—one had to...

Become Chaos. Resonate with it!

Order couldn't approach disorder. Only disorder could understand disorder.

Only by becoming disorder himself would he have any chance of seeing what lay hidden beneath this sudden onslaught of Chaos—something that struck at the very essence of Order!

His gaze hardened. He shook off the noise in his ears, then—right in front of the god—tore the mask from his face. Standing in the moonlight, he looked down at his own shadow, reached out without hesitation, and touched fingertips together. He switched faiths.

And the instant he returned to Deceit's embrace, this veteran of the stage shed his earlier solemnity. The corners of his mouth curled upward, his grin brimming with confidence and madness.

He bowed with theatrical elegance toward the deity still raging inside the High Pavilion. Behind his back, one hand had already seized a single die shimmering with Fate's iridescence. And he raised his voice in praise.

Though the praise was not for the Chaos before him—but for Void's surface, Deceit, whether or not it was watching this grand performance.

"Lies of yesterday; mockery of today.

Yesterday I deceived Chaos's followers. Therefore, today...

I am a follower of Chaos."

He straightened up—and in that instant, the Clown underwent a magnificent metamorphosis into a Sanity Eroder drunk on madness.

The moment Chaos's power settled over him, he felt himself dissolve into the carnival of disorder. The Sanity Eroder, brimming with perfect sanity, gazed at the "Order" beyond the doors, his smile growing wilder by the second.

"Praise be to my Lord. Your devoted follower has come to share your burden."

Chapter 594: "True Colors of Greed"

Cheng Shi's method of "sharing the burden" was simple: since only chaos could blend into chaos, then...

Let the Chaos grow even greater!

He raised a hand and hit Big Cat, the Dragon King, and Chernosly with a Sanity Eroder's signature intelligence-reducing heal. The degree of chaos afflicting the two still-maddened targets immediately escalated another notch.

Big Cat stopped pummeling the ground. She looked around in bewilderment—and just like the Dragon King before her, she was now seeing endless hallucinations.

She saw Prosperity's followers staggering forward in a corpse-like tide. She saw her friends scattered among them, stumbling and faltering. She even saw gods self-destructing in the sky above—divine corpses cascading down like falling stars trailing world-ending fire, sending ripples across the living world.

And the Dragon King... he started dancing.

Li Jingming could no longer maintain his ethereal, otherworldly Daoist image. Hair disheveled, he was twisting and swaying in a... duck dance.

Hands clasped behind his back, torso bent at the waist, mimicking a duck, bouncing and hopping, one step one shimmy—the surprisingly coordinated movements suggested he was intimately familiar with this particular routine.

Cheng Shi nearly broke character. If it weren't for the imperative to maintain his persona as a Chaos devotee, he'd have been on the ground howling with laughter.

Shame there was no camera.

As for Chernosly, the paranoid First-Class Inquisitor's endurance had long since maxed out. Cheng Shi's Chaos-laced heal was the final straw. His eyes rolled back and he collapsed in a dead faint.

'Tch. Lightweight.'

Of course, Cheng Shi hadn't done this just to embarrass the trio. He'd noticed that the moment he became a follower of Chaos, the surging tides of Chaos swirling around the area seemed to gradually part around him and redirect elsewhere.

This raging divine Chaos power was actively avoiding the "false" Chaos aura bestowed by the Fun God's blessing. The realization impressed and puzzled him.

Under these conditions, he seemed to have far more room to maneuver.

So Cheng Shi's courage suddenly ballooned. Recalling Chaos's attitude toward him inside the Chaos Temple, he figured that with enough care, the god wouldn't suddenly turn hostile.

But what should he actually do?

Wake it?

No—this was probably Chaos's true form. No waking required.

Go up and ask it? Ask why it was here impersonating Order, and where the real Order had gone?

He wanted to. But he didn't dare.

Cheng Shi frowned. After a moment's thought, he concluded that approaching his "Benefactor" as a mere Chaos follower wouldn't carry enough weight for a conversation.

But what if... he used a different identity?

What if the Envoy of Chaos, the great Lord Ultraman, appeared in person to offer devout greetings? Then perhaps he could casually ask what the god was up to—no, ask what he could do to help!

An employee looking out for the boss's interests couldn't possibly be wrong, right?

And if he actually did help, then given tonight's "contributions," claiming the title of genuine Ultraman wouldn't be unearned, would it?

Reasonable. Feasible!

In this moment, his true colors of greed achieved overwhelming dominance.

So Cheng Shi moved. He first hid the Lush Horn Crown behind his back, readied a healing spell in his palm—aimed at Big Cat's direction and launchable at any instant—and only then turned his gaze toward the "Order" inside the High Pavilion and began walking forward.

As he walked, his lips murmured elaborate praises of Chaos—though from his demeanor, these sounded less like sincere devotion and more like a man psyching himself up.

The walk wasn't long, but Cheng Shi's pace was glacial—even slower than when he'd approached Order's domain in the dungeon. But, as he'd hoped, the Chaos torrent erupting from the Iron Law no longer affected him, nor did it continue to affect the three people he'd already "treated."

And so, caught between nervous relief and agonizing uncertainty, Cheng Shi crept up to the Iron Law.

The codex—once revered as Order's very incarnation—was still convulsing violently. Its pages had nearly all fallen away, leaving only two heavy covers flapping back and forth. The Order symbols on the covers flickered on and off, as though two forces were locked in a savage tug-of-war for control of the tome.

Cheng Shi's eyes went wide. Baffled, he assumed Chaos was suppressing the residual Order within the codex.

Order might be just and well-regarded, but Cheng Shi was currently a Chaos follower. He had neither reason nor standing to help an unfamiliar Order deity resist his own "Benefactor."

'I'm Ultraman right now. How could I betray my own side?'

'Setting faith aside—given that Chaos had once been willing to cover for him before Hu Wei and Da Yi—wasn't backstabbing it now a betrayal of trust?'

'But how do I actually help?'

'It's so agitated. What if...'

'Hmm? Agitated?'

A flash of inspiration struck—or perhaps a momentary lapse in judgment. He suddenly thought of a way to prove his devotion without needing to say a word. He raised his hand and fired a Chaos-tinged Calming Spell straight at the raging Iron Law.

'I don't know if a Calming Spell works on Chaos, but it definitely works on agitation. That much is certain, right?'

It was indeed certain.

When the Calming Spell—born from some indescribable mental state—landed on the codex...

With a deep hum, all of spacetime froze.

The surging Chaos flood roared backward, sucked inward like a reversed tide. Layer upon layer of Chaos aura compressed into near-solidity—coalescing into mist identical to the murky yellow fog outside the Chaos Temple—and swallowed Cheng Shi whole.

The Chaos aura that was being drawn back didn't all return to the codex. Instead, like stagnant water that had suddenly found an outlet, it surged toward the utterly stupefied Cheng Shi.

"!!!"

Cheng Shi's eyes went wide. His first instinct was to retreat—but it was already too late. The berserk Chaos power flooded his mind. His vision went black, and his consciousness plummeted into endless darkness.

In the final instant before awareness vanished entirely, he thought he glimpsed a pair of star-like eyes flashing through the void. Whether this was a desperate cry for help or a Chaos-induced hallucination, he couldn't say.

Time's river flowed on in silence. An indeterminate span later, Cheng Shi woke.

Before his eyes even opened, cold sweat had already soaked through his clothes—because he could feel it: a familiar aura. Infinite, boundless Chaos power drifting through this space, hallucinatory and hypnotic, exactly like the atmosphere inside the Chaos Temple when he'd had his audience.

'The Chaos Temple?!'

'Again?'

'It refused to see me before—so why summon me a second time?'

'What is it doing?'

'Wait—oh no!'

'Is this what happens when an employee stumbles onto the boss's secret? A private meeting to discuss... termination?'

'No!'

'Please, sir—what the eyes see isn't necessarily real! Round it off and the eyes definitely see nothing real! So I didn't see anything!'

'My directorship isn't even official yet! I haven't collected a single dividend! Getting kicked out now is an absurd loss!'

Cheng Shi was spiraling. But as wild thoughts tore through his head, a voice—deep, vast, and primordial—spoke into his ear.

"You... are..."

'That timbre—it's him. Of course it's him.'

Chaos!

Cheng Shi's heart clenched. He snapped his eyes open and scanned his surroundings, but nothing greeted him except an endless expanse of murky yellow fog. The god was nowhere to be seen. So he rose from the ground, bowed his head in feigned piety, and spoke:

"I am your devout follower, Ultra..."

Halfway through the name, a complicated look crossed Cheng Shi's eyes, and he swallowed the last two syllables.

The same principle applied: he could be Ultraman, but only after being Cheng Shi first.

Yet once those final syllables were cut, the sentence's tone shifted into something entirely inappropriate. It no longer sounded like self-introduction—it sounded like a defiant delinquent puffing out his chest at a dean's reprimand.

Cheng Shi broke into a full-body cold sweat at his own blunder. He was about to course-correct when the voice spoke again:

"...Who?"

Chapter 595: Beyond the Scope of Acting

"?"

Cheng Shi froze momentarily before realizing that "who" was actually the continuation of the earlier "you... are..."

"..."

'Bro, those pauses between your words are getting longer and longer.'

But no helping it—the boss had asked, and the employee had to answer. So he bowed again and began:

"Praise be to my Lord. I am..."

"I do not... recall..."

"..." Interrupted again.

Cheng Shi went numb. He tugged awkwardly at the corners of his mouth and resigned himself to waiting patiently for the other party to finish speaking.

"...you. You... divine name... what is... it?"

'Divine name?'

'Which divine name?'

'It doesn't recognize me?'

'It still isn't lucid?'

Cheng Shi's expression tightened. Eyes lowered to the ground, a glint of cunning flickered through them. A bold idea was forming—could he exploit the god's confused state and trick it into officially acknowledging his Envoy status?

But that carried risk. If he said one wrong word to a deity that wasn't fully conscious, the resulting fury might award him not a seat on the board of directors but a headstone in Mi Laozhang's cemetery.

So—gamble or not?

Cheng Shi hesitated. He threw every cognitive resource into weighing the pros and cons, meticulously tallying everything he stood to lose should he fail, and in the end chose...

To fold.

Not because his greed had evaporated, but because he understood that retreat was never surrender.

Being granted a divine audience already proved his earlier actions hadn't been wrong—at the very least, he hadn't caused any harm to whatever the god was currently doing. Rather than bet everything on a

title, it was smarter to leave room for the boss to take the lead. That way he could earn goodwill and protect his own life. Why wouldn't he take the safer road?

Moreover, beyond the immediate stakes, Cheng Shi had to think about the Void angle.

He needed to consider carefully: if he actually accepted an identity from Chaos, would the two Void gods tag-team beat him to death when he got back?

The Fun God probably wouldn't—even if he'd agreed to merge with Fate, he'd always been interested in Chaos. But the other one... was harder to predict.

Mulling this over, Cheng Shi's lip twitched. He wiped the cold sweat from his brow and gave his name honestly.

Of course, he couldn't reveal his real identity. The Lies of Yesterday effect was still active—at this moment, he was a "genuine" follower of Chaos.

"I am your most devout follower. My name is..."

"Devout..."

Interruption x3.

The chaotic yellow mist began to churn violently. The god seemed to recall something—or forget something. It kept muttering that word over and over, until Cheng Shi's heart was hammering with panic, before finally speaking again with a trace of clarity:

"I do not... recall..."

Cheng Shi had learned by now. He didn't rush to respond. He waited patiently.

"...you.

When... did you... become... one of my Servant Gods?"

"?" Cheng Shi started—but it wasn't this sentence that sent shock bolting through him. It was what Chaos said next that made his jaw hit the floor.

"I remember... Blazing Sun... remember... Howling Gale... remember... Thundering...

I remember many more...

But I do not... remember you.

Tell me... when did you become... my Executioner?

Are you... impersonating... my Executioner?!"

The instant the voice faded, the entire expanse of chaotic yellow fog solidified like walls and began crushing inward toward Cheng Shi.

"!!!!!"

'What is happening?!'

'What is it saying?!'

'Executioner?!'

'Whose Executioner? Only Order has Executioners!'

'Blazing Sun—Thundering—those are all Executioners established by Order! How are those names coming from Chaos's mouth?!'

'Wait—is it... Order?'

'But the chaotic yellow fog beneath my feet is Chaos's creation! How would Order be here?'

'Could this be a prison where Chaos has trapped Order, and the entity that summoned me isn't Chaos at all—but Order?'

'Did I actually guess right that such a place exists?'

'But surely Order wouldn't coincidentally also have those... dramatic... pauses?!'

'No, no, no—that's wrong!'

'It is Chaos. It has to be Chaos!'

Otherwise the Chaos aura on his body wouldn't resonate with its power. It wouldn't be able to manipulate Chaos's force. And furthermore, a mortal radiating Chaos energy could never survive under Order's gaze.

Then why—in its own domain, facing a follower it had once summoned and even shown goodwill to—was it displaying amnesia and confusion? Why was it trying to kill its own Envoy candidate?

'Has it... "chaosed" itself?'

'Bro, have you lost your mind?!'

"..."

Cheng Shi was stunned. His brain emitted a thunderclap of white noise, every thought blanking out. Watching the yellow fog boil ever more intensely around him, fear slowly crept upward.

A possibility had just struck him—a conjecture so terrifying it made his skin crawl.

He'd guessed correctly.

It had truly driven itself into chaos. It had completely and utterly come to believe it was Order!!

Then the tug-of-war between Chaos and Order inside the Grand Tribunal wasn't Chaos suppressing residual Order—it was Chaos, having convinced itself it was Order... casting off its own Chaos!

It was severing its own past!!

It had gone too deep into the role—so deep it had crossed far beyond the bounds of acting, warping its own will into something approaching unified transformation.

The strongest evidence for this theory was the moment he'd cast the Calming Spell: all of the Chaos power had rushed backward but hadn't returned to the codex. Instead, it had poured into him.

What could make a fake follower of Chaos more attractive to Chaos energy than the real Chaos itself?

Impossible. That could never happen—unless...

Chaos itself had abandoned Chaos!

It sounded absurd, but the facts seemed to confirm it.

First: the entity that had replaced Order—the Iron Law—was definitively not a corrupted artifact of Order. It was Chaos.

Chaos had somehow seized Order's power and settled into Order's nest. And during that process, it had gradually begun abandoning its original Chaos power, attempting to become true Order.

The side evidence supporting this conclusion? The endless stream of maddened, deranged Order followers appearing throughout the Grand Tribunal!

Think about it: if Chaos truly was discarding its own power, jettisoning Chaos energy without reservation, wouldn't that ownerless Chaos energy destabilize the surrounding space, contaminate people's minds, and drive them insane without their ever knowing?

Yes. Absolutely yes.

But the question remained: was the entity deliberately slicing itself apart to play Order, or had it long since convinced itself it was Order, making this nothing more than an uncontrollable autoimmune rejection?

Consider: with its power, at a time when Order was absent, it could have easily dragged this unprotected nation into a Chaos hell. But it hadn't. Not only had it refrained—it had disguised itself as Order, striving to keep this land bathed in Order's radiance.

So was this the grandest chaos in the universe? Or the grandest order?

'This world has gone mad!'

Cheng Shi couldn't fathom Chaos's motives. He only knew that Chaos had now become thoroughly chaotic.

To become Order, it was splitting itself from its own essence!

And precisely because this discarded Chaos essence had nowhere to go, it accumulated around the Supreme Court, spawning the fear and confusion that every person in power knew about yet refused to speak of.

This was also why Grand Justice La Quis had witnessed a Supreme Inquisitor trying to tear the Iron Law apart!

Lo Yat's devotion to Order had allowed him to detect the Iron Law's anomaly. He'd tried to "correct" order. But whether that violent act stemmed from genuine devotion to Order or from the corruption of Chaos...

No one could say for certain.

Cheng Shi suspected the latter—because he refused to believe the Grand Tribunal's Supreme Inquisitors were as reckless as the Grand Justice. If every leader of this nation was that impulsive, then the Grand Tribunal's longevity was honestly quite an achievement...

But regrettably, Lo Yat had still fallen before the absolute force of Chaos.

And this explained why Chaos continued to call itself Order even here, inside this yellow fog where there was no need for pretense.

Because it was lost. Utterly, completely lost.

However...

If all these deductions were correct, then what identity should he present before this entity?

Cheng Shi's brow knotted. His eyes turned grave.

Chapter 596: If You Act, I Act Too

His answer would determine the outcome of this audience.

He'd long known that within this yellow fog, prayers and cries for help could not reach the outside. One wrong answer and what awaited him could be a second feast of Chaos—or a second judgment of Order.

Which one depended entirely on whether the entity was lucid.

It wasn't just Chaos that was confused. Cheng Shi was confused too. He had no idea why the Chaos that had been perfectly fine just a moment ago had suddenly deteriorated to this state. But he knew that if he didn't answer soon, the boiling fog tightening around him alone would smother him alive.

So he gripped his Fate die tight, placed one more bet with himself—and one more with the Chaos before him.

His life was the stake. And his confidence... came from his talent for blasphemy.

This audacious Clown launched into another blasphemous performance!

"Order!"

Cheng Shi switched expressions in a heartbeat. Swallowing his anxiety and terror, he fixed the churning yellow fog with a glare of undisguised loathing and roared hysterically:

"You cannot judge me!

The universe was born disordered! Rules are a joke! Your laughable will is nothing but sugar-coating smeared over the essence of chaos! Only the ignorant and the useless—worthless weevils—would follow you, pathetically begging for scraps beneath your dissolving candy!

My Lord is the essence of the universe! Chaos is the eternal ultimate! As long as my Lord endures, even if this cage can hold me, it cannot hold the fracturing hearts within your Grand Tribunal, nor the chaos that is about to sweep across this entire continent!

Praise be to my Lord! Praise be to... the great Chaos!

I am not wrong!

I was never wrong!"

He even began hurling divinity fragments—tossing the meager Order divinity still on his person into the surrounding yellow fog with the contempt of discarding worn-out shoes.

This frenzied display gave the churning yellow fog a momentary pause. The entity hidden within, prompted by the sight, seemed to slip into an endless spiral of recollection.

Sensing the shift, Cheng Shi's nerves pulled taut as bowstrings. He held his breath, focused every faculty, and didn't dare make a single unnecessary move.

He'd shown his hand.

Without knowing whether the entity would present as Order or remain as Chaos, his only option was to claim allegiance to Chaos. The Chaos aura saturating his body couldn't be concealed—there was no possibility of impersonating an Order follower on the spot.

But Chaos was single-mindedly trying to become Order. What Cheng Shi had just done was practically suicidal. So what gave him the courage to blaspheme "Order" to its face?

Aph Ros.

More precisely—the historical account Aph Ros had once shared with him.

Cheng Shi understood: if he wanted to survive this encounter with a deity that was neither fully Order nor fully Chaos, the critical thing was to establish a connection with both identities simultaneously. Otherwise, if he ingratiated himself with one side, he'd face being "judged" by the other while it was disoriented.

But Order and Chaos were polar opposites. How could anyone possibly be connected to both?

There was a way. There actually was.

Blazing Sun!

This former Executioner of Order had recognized, after the era's destruction, that Order could no longer protect it. It had turned to Chaos, becoming the Wrath of Abomination. And in the current era, Order had recaptured it and locked it away.

This singular identity struck Cheng Shi like a flash of lightning, revealing a crack to exploit.

Every action he'd taken wasn't mere blasphemy—it was a performance. He was playing the role of Blazing Sun. Only this entity had genuine ties to both gods.

Moreover, Order had never executed the Wrath of Abomination. That meant the worst possible ending from this act was imprisonment.

And as long as he lived, there was hope.

Cheng Shi knew his only chance lay in the devotion he'd expressed at the start of this audience, followed by the hatred he'd just displayed—a shift that perfectly mirrored Blazing Sun's transformation. The Chaos aura on his body served as ironclad proof of that faith change.

He'd even mimicked Chaos's behavior, casting away every last fragment of Order divinity from his person—as if severing himself from his past—hoping to resonate with Chaos's own self-rejection.

As for where those Order fragments had come from...

Naturally, they were the ones he'd borrowed from Big Cat.

'Thanks, Big Cat. This debt is probably never getting repaid.'

This was every tool Cheng Shi had at his disposal in this crisis. Whether it would work... depended on whether this god—Chaos that had driven itself chaotic—would accept the identity he was presenting.

The gambit was extraordinarily bold. The performance, before a true deity, was riddled with holes.

But that was exactly what Cheng Shi was betting on: that Chaos was not lucid, and that "Order" was not yet sharp enough to see through it!

There was no retreat. He could only grit his teeth and push forward, closing every inch of distance he'd given up. He seized upon the entity's extreme state of confusion and tried to exploit the opening to its fullest.

The chaotic yellow fog boiled once more. The will within was indeed profoundly disordered.

After cycling through who-knew-how-many ages of blurred memories, the entity seemed to gradually recover its identity. Looking upon this environment that did not belong to Order, and at this former devotee who'd turned their back on piety, a flicker of bewilderment passed through its eyes. Then it let out a faint, sorrowful sigh:

"Obstinate to the end. It seems your sentence is far from over."

With that, it vanished—along with every last wisp of chaotic yellow fog—without a shred of mercy.

'Gone?'

'It's gone!'

'I won the bet!'

'I'm alive!!'

The binding force released him. Cheng Shi's heart unclenched—but before he could exhale, he realized he was plummeting into the boundless Void once again.

As his body fell, his consciousness slowly dissolved. But as long as this was the Void, he had nothing to fear.

'I'm home.'

With that thought, Cheng Shi collapsed into exhausted sleep.

Yet at that very moment, deep beneath this Void, a pair of eyes—upturned at the corners, pupils like blended stars and spirals—quietly opened, gazing up at him from the unseen depths with an amused smirk.

"Hee~

Chaos acknowledged him first. I merely didn't refuse. Surely he can't blame me for that.

But honestly—who said you could slack off? How can a clown nap in the middle of a performance?"

As the words faded, a hallucinatory gale erupted from below the Void, howling upward, catching the falling Cheng Shi in its embrace.

Before the unconscious Clown even registered what had happened, the Void around him began to shift in silence. The infinite darkness transformed once again into churning, murky yellow. More than that, the wind cradling him gradually stilled, and the phantasmagoric, seething colors coalesced alongside it into... a palace of staggering grandeur.

The Chaos Temple materialized before mortal eyes once again, sheltering its lost follower with its mercy.

And when this follower awoke, the cold sweat that the Void gale had just dried... returned in full.

"!?!?"

'Oh no—I knew it! Removing the psychological block on dreaming was a mistake! Why am I dreaming again?!

So was the earlier death-defying escape the dream, or was this re-entry into the wolf's den the dream?

Or was it both? Or neither?!

If it was both, there was nothing to worry about.

But if it was neither... was he beyond saving?

Had it grown lucid? Had it realized he'd tricked it?

Would it be a lucid Order, or a lucid Chaos?

Cheng Shi's heartbeat accelerated violently. Eyes wide with panic, he scanned his surroundings, and a desperate, frantic prayer erupted inside his mind:

"Lies of yesterday, beyond all reach!

Fate like the stars, mockery of today!

My two great Benefactors—please come save me! Your devoted follower is about to croak!"

Chapter 597: Faith Fusion—Again

What answered Cheng Shi's prayer was not either of his Benefactors, nor the colossal hand of churning yellow fog that had once descended from the temple above. It was a familiar face—someone so familiar they were practically his mirror image.

Kataro!

The Ultraman impersonator was strolling toward him once more, that same easy smile on his face.

The moment a normal-looking person appeared, the crushing weight on Cheng Shi's heart lifted dramatically.

'Good—at least there's someone here I can have a coherent conversation with.'

He surged to his feet, studied Kataro's welcoming expression, and began with undisguised gravity:

"Kataro, I saw... I saw..."

He'd been about to spill everything—to compare notes and confirm what he'd just witnessed. But the words died on his tongue, swallowed by caution.

He realized he had no standing to question anything. Even as the genuine Chaos Envoy Ultraman, he'd have no right to demand explanations from a true god about its activities.

Yet his curiosity about what had just transpired was unbearable—he simply couldn't suppress it. So he pivoted on the spot:

"I think I saw it in a dream..."

Probably because I missed it too much. Sigh—I've always been this devout.

Kataro, is it here right now?"

Hearing this, Kataro's composure very nearly cracked.

In all the world, when it came to understanding Cheng Shi, Kataro considered himself no worse than third. After all, he'd been imitating this man for a long time. So when the words left Cheng Shi's mouth, Kataro could practically read the precise shape of the blasphemy taking place inside his head.

But he didn't dare call it out. He could only shake his head with a smile: "I don't know."

"You don't know?!" Cheng Shi blurted in surprise—but almost immediately, he decoded the answer.

Kataro had said nothing and yet said everything.

Every previous time he'd asked, the man had given a clear answer. This time, the answer was ambiguous—which meant everything he'd just experienced was real. Chaos truly had gone to play... no, to become Order!

'Then the heir to this temple...?'

'No, no, no—that's not the point. The point is: what is it trying to do?'

'Where's Order? Where did the real Order go?'

'How did it slip through Order's defenses?'

Cheng Shi's curiosity was devouring him. He barely needed to ask—Kataro could read every question right off his face.

Seeing the shock painting the great Lord Ultraman's features, Kataro lowered his head in reverence and spoke in a tone of utmost respect, unhurried and measured:

"My lord, I can see what you wish to ask. If you are ready, Kataro can lead you to the answer."

"!!!"

Cheng Shi's pupils contracted violently. He fixed the man with a piercing stare and asked in disbelief:

"The answer? You know where Order is? Don't tell me Chaos actually imprisoned it here!

No—wait. What do I need to prepare?

What does it want me to prepare?"

Cheng Shi hadn't been swept up in blind excitement. He was instantly on guard, brow furrowed, thinking hard.

Everything he'd experienced today had clearly been guided by an invisible hand behind the scenes. Whether that hand belonged to the colossal palm formed from chaotic yellow fog, he couldn't be certain—but it was undoubtedly connected.

He studied Kataro's respectful yet unreadable gaze and began replaying the day's events. He traced through his actions again and again, going all the way back to the moment before he'd even met Li Jingming.

Big Cat was clearly fine. On reflection, the teammates and NPCs he'd encountered during the trial seemed unproblematic too. Even the Dragon King, who'd put on a whole rival-act with him, appeared clean.

The suspicious one was himself. It was Cheng Shi who seemed to have an issue.

When the Iron Law had unleashed its Chaos torrent and dragged everyone into the carnival of madness, he'd had every opportunity to grab Big Cat and the others and simply leave. But instead, his brain had overheated, and he'd charged straight up to the god, wanting to lend it a hand...

'How laughable. A mortal—a fake Envoy—wanted to help a god.'

Cheng Shi possessed enough self-awareness. He knew he was greedy, but the greed at that particular moment had been excessively strong. That gamble had risked not just his own life but Big Cat's too. And the Dragon King's—actually, the Dragon King's didn't count.

Under those circumstances, that spike of greed was genuinely suspect. But he couldn't entirely rule out minor interference from Chaos either.

Regardless, some puppeteer had orchestrated all of this. And that puppeteer's goal... was it to draw him closer to Chaos, or closer to Order?

Or... to find Order?

Cheng Shi's gaze sharpened. He turned to Kataro again: "You can take me to it? Kataro, please don't tell me that it—Order—the first god of Civilization—is right here inside the Chaos Temple."

Kataro blinked, then quietly lowered his head without a word. But that reaction said more than enough.

'It's really here!'

'Order has been imprisoned by Chaos inside its own temple!'

Cheng Shi's eyes bulged. His pupils trembled.

'Mother of—this is headline news!'

'If I traded this memory with the Dragon King, could I get a Servant God relic in return?'

"Where is it?" he demanded impatiently.

Kataro answered with a gentle smile: "Are you ready, my lord?"

"What should I prepare?"

"I don't know."

"...Then what do you know?"

"I know only what I am meant to know, my lord."

Kataro's tone grew ever more deferential and polished. Cheng Shi, however, was having none of it.

"Transfer me to a real person."

"?" Kataro froze. He didn't understand.

Seeing the bewilderment, Cheng Shi clicked his tongue in boredom:

"Never mind. I'm not ready. I don't know what it—or they—have planned for me, and I've decided I don't want to find out.

I'm giving up. Since what you've brought me isn't an order but a choice, I choose to pass.

Mm—knowing it's locked up in here is reward enough. Ah... I should clarify: I'm not gleeful that a true god is imprisoned. I'm simply awed by the magnitude of this secret. That's all.

That's it.

I am a God Upholder. I respect them. And I would never blaspheme them."

"..."

Kataro gaped at the perfectly deadpan Cheng Shi, twitched the corners of his mouth, and offered no comment.

Cheng Shi's torrent of words sounded as though it was addressed to Kataro—more likely aimed at them—but in truth, he was persuading himself.

Greed was the path to death. The one seated upon the Bone Throne had said that. Until he had the strength to handle certain secrets, it was better not to learn too much.

'Give myself time. At least... at least wait until I've climbed to the top of the leaderboard and obtained a talent from the Fun God capable of fooling the gods. Then I can worry about divine power plays.'

"Today's haul was excellent. I'm satisfied.

Also, Kataro—next time you need me, could you maybe give me a heads-up first? Getting yanked into the temple without warning is a bit... ahem, I don't even have time to fix my appearance."

Kataro ducked his head, barely suppressing a grin: "My lord, I lack the ability to summon you to the temple. Your presence here is naturally due to our Benefactor's invitation."

"???" Cheng Shi went blank. "Didn't you just say it wasn't here?"

"I said I didn't know."

Cheng Shi's gaze narrowed: "So you're saying it is here?"

"I don't know."

"..." Cheng Shi's nerves pulled tight. His sharp eyes swept the surroundings restlessly, but on the surface, he let Kataro's deflection draw an amused huff: "Tell me one thing you do know. Otherwise, the next time I have an audience, I'll suggest a replacement body double."

"!!!" Kataro snapped rigidly to attention. He fixed the great Lord Ultraman with a complicated stare and declared solemnly: "I... My lord, the advice I can offer you is: I don't know."

"?"

The instant those words left his lips, the entire Chaos Temple dissolved into nothing, ejecting a thoroughly bewildered Cheng Shi.

He floated there in a daze, muttering the phrase over and over, chewing on its meaning—until his eyes flew wide and his contracting pupils reflected stark, disbelieving shock.

"Wait—how did I... undergo faith fusion again?"

Chapter 598: Deceit Fuses with Chaos—The Clown Who Lost His Mind!

**【Cheng Shi, Male, 22 years old】**

**【Path of Fate: Void】**

**【Path Talent: Reflection of Nihilism (SSS): ...】**

**【Current Faith: Deceit (Fused) Chaos】**

**【Road to Ascension: 2204, Global Rank: 387,994】**

**【Ladder of Ascent: 175, Path Rank: 48】**

**【Faith Talents:**

Lies of Yesterday (SS): Deceit faith talent...

Master of Deception (S): Deceit faith talent...

Sacrifice to Nihilism (S): Deceit faith talent...

Shared Divine Grace (S): Priest class talent...

Aspect of Sentient Beings (S): Fate oathbreaker talent...

Chaos Acting (SS): Chaos faith talent, active. When you are impersonating a target, regardless of whether others recognize the identity you are playing, you can project any image, aura, and voice you wish onto observers, achieving an effect indistinguishable from the real thing.

Order Horn (S): Chaos faith talent, active. You may perform any action to create sound and have it count as the sounding of Order's horn, thereby extracting disorder from the target's heart and removing all Chaos status effects from the target.

Fishing in Muddy Waters (S): Chaos faith talent, active. Within any type of fog or smoke, you gain a panoramic field of vision and can transform into mist to merge with your surroundings.

...]

"!!!"

The faith fusion had struck so suddenly that Cheng Shi completely lost the ability to think. He stood there, utterly stunned.

He read and reread his new talents, gradually emerging from his stupor. The corners of his mouth began climbing—higher and higher—until they physically couldn't stretch any further. Only then did he expel the breath that had been lodged in his chest.

"Hahahaha—!

So this is what real faith fusion looks like! So even I can get new talents!

Oh, Mi Laozhang—bet you didn't see this coming. I also have eight... uh, never mind. Only kids compare. Adults know when to be modest.

Hm? Wait—I also have a Path talent. So that makes...

Ha!

Mi Laozhang—bet you didn't see this coming. I'm a nine-talent man now!"

In this moment, the Clown was "triumphant" beyond measure.

But why was he able to fuse with Chaos even after the Void unification?

Did this count as fusing a second faith or a third?

Chaos, Deceit... Sanity Eroder, Clown...

What was he now?

A clown who'd lost his mind?

'Hss—'

'That sounds even more absurd.'

But none of that mattered. What mattered was: if Deceit could fuse with Chaos, then did that mean his other faith, Fate...

...could also fuse with something?!

Four faiths?!

Cheng Shi's spirits soared. That cunning gleam returned to his eyes as he mentally reviewed which gods his Benefactor Fate was closest to. One divine name leapt from memory:

Folly!

Fate had personally nudged him toward Galusha, and that Oathbreaker from the Grand Tribunal was a follower of Folly!

'Huh?'

'So my next identity is... a Folly-purging Fate Weaver?'

'Actually... that doesn't sound bad?'

While Cheng Shi was still daydreaming about infinite possibilities, his freefall through the Void finally reached its conclusion. He heard a crash—as if he'd shattered something—and then his vision went dark. The Void spat him out.

When he opened his dazed eyes, he found himself back inside the Supreme Court of Katouting.

Before him: a wary Big Cat. A deeply frowning Dragon King. A dazed Chernosly. And...

Radiating Order's holy light, hovering majestically in the air with every page intact and an aura of supreme authority—"Order."

It had recovered!

But this "Order" was not truly Order. The problem was, most people in this world couldn't see past the surface. They could only perceive what they chose to believe.

And so, the chaotic Supreme Court had order once again.

The Iron Law had fully emerged from its deranged state and returned to being the world's symbol of order. Its pages rustled as they turned, the surrounding Order aura surging in rhythm with it. A terrifying pressure gathered—it appeared to be searching for the appropriate charge with which to judge these blasphemers standing before it.

Hong Lin's face was carved from stone. She hadn't had time to wonder why the ground around her looked like something had chewed it up, nor why she was covered in mud. She simply retreated a few steps to shield Cheng Shi, every nerve taut:

"This is bad—get ready to run!"

Li Jingming looked even darker. He'd expended countless resources to get here, only to be swallowed by chaos with nothing to show for it—not a single frame of what had happened recorded.

But now wasn't the time for complaints. He edged closer to the other two and spoke with icy composure:

"I've heard of wars between the gods. Order may have been affected by Chaos during a God War, causing it to lose its own Order at certain moments.

But this isn't the time for analysis. We need to end this expedition early.

A god's gaze doesn't distinguish between dream and reality. Before the Iron Law passes its verdict—move. Now."

He quickly traced several Memory symbols in the air. Memory power surged, gradually dissolving the three tangible bodies back into spectral form.

But right then, the Iron Law Knights arrived on the scene, drawn by the commotion. And alongside the fully armed sentries came Grand Executioner Artair and his student, Moxius.

The instant Moxius saw the Iron Law looming overhead, actively judging Chernosly, his face went deathly pale.

His worst fear had come true. It seemed the Benefactor had rejected Chernosly's defense and was poised to deliver severe punishment.

Chernosly, meanwhile, had slowly regained consciousness as the surrounding Chaos aura dissipated. But this was a lucidity built upon Chaos-warped cognition. He hadn't forgotten what he'd said—the influence still held. He was still affected.

So when he took in the scene before him, he looked up at the Iron Law in terror—then turned to Moxius in fury.

"Moxius, I trusted you with everything, and you betrayed me?!"

You called them here?!

You covet my position the same way they covet power—it's disgusting!

You've disappointed me beyond words. You're no different from them, drowned in greed for power!

How dare you face the oath you swore to our Lord! How dare you face our friendship!

Moxius—you have blasphemed Order! It is you who blasphemed Order!"

Moxius was frozen. Watching Chernosly's descent into madness, he thought of Lord Lo Yat, who had broken down in the exact same way.

Now, at last, he was beginning to believe what the Grand Justice had said. And yet... he couldn't bring himself to accept that any of this was real.

He wanted to reach his senior. Wanted to salvage the friendship. But the moment he stepped forward, his teacher Artair blocked his path.

"Teacher, Chernosly is—"

"He violated the constitution. He committed blasphemy!"

"He—"

"He violated the constitution. He committed blasphemy!" Artair repeated, face cold as steel, brooking no argument.

Moxius went white—as if all strength had drained from his body. His head dropped.

"Yes, Teacher. I understand."

Seeing Moxius's submission, Chernosly's expression twisted into even greater fury: "Moxius, I will remember your betrayal! I will remember your filth! I will remember your 'order'!"

What a Grand Tribunal! What justice! What fairness!

I am innocent! I was framed! I am not wrong! I beseech my Lord to bear witness—I, Chernosly, First-Class Inquisitor, am not wrong!"

As his voice faded, Li Jingming finally completed his dream-escape technique. He flicked his wide sleeve, called out "Go!"—and prepared to spirit Cheng Shi and Hong Lin out through the dream.

But at that exact moment, the Iron Law, which had been calmly turning its pages, stopped. It had landed on a page inscribed with the crime of blasphemy. Across the page, furious thunderstorm energy erupted instantaneously.

The roar of the lightning plasma was so violent it seemed to freeze spacetime itself for a single heartbeat—and in that instant, the Dragon King's Memory technique for breaking free of the dream failed outright.

They hadn't escaped.

Chapter 599: A Feast of Order and Chaos?

'Bad—we need to go! Now!'

The three players' pupils contracted sharply. Hearts sinking, they immediately reached for their lifesaving measures. Big Cat surged forward in front of Cheng Shi with a low growl and shifted back into bear form, unleashing the full, boundless power of her dual-faith, attempting to shelter both her Prosperity and her friend beneath Order's judgment.

Order was not the sort to be moved by a sinner's friendship and withhold its verdict. Everyone present saw a single streak of violet light ignite the night sky—daylight seemed to descend for one blinding instant—and then a world-ending boom shook the Supreme Court to its foundations.

Judgment had been handed down. The guilty would be destroyed!

The thunderbolt detonated right before his eyes. Even Cheng Shi—who lived alongside lightning daily—was stunned senseless. This Lightning Punishment dwarfed the final judgment from Order's trial by magnitudes. Under the radiance of its light alone, all thought of resistance evaporated. Even somehow, amid the roar, an involuntary urge to repent crept in.

'It's over. We went too far!'

Even Li Jingming had lost his composure. He tried to pull his last resort from storage, but... spacetime had been frozen!

Only for an instant—but after that instant, the blasphemers would be annihilated within this dream. Even if the imprisoned spacetime was released in the next second, it would already be too late.

The Dragon King's face was rigid as stone. Never, since the Faith Game's inception, had he encountered a lethal crisis of this caliber—brought about directly by a god.

No solution. Just because he'd been one fraction of a second too slow, the situation was now an unsolvable death trap.

All three could practically smell death closing in.

But at that very instant—the moment the thunderbolt nearly grazed the tip of Big Cat's nose at the forefront—the entire dreamscape froze again!

This time, it wasn't just spacetime that was immobilized. Everything was. Even the Lightning Punishment itself—even the "Order" that had rendered its verdict—was locked in place by an eerie, intertwining force.

The charging thunder hung right before her eyes. Plasma fragments grazed past her eyelashes. Hong Lin's eyeballs were locked in place; the terror in her heart screamed at her to swallow, but aside from her consciousness, there was not a single part of her body that could move.

The same went for Li Jingming. He could feel the web-like electrical discharge from the Lightning Punishment piercing through the hems of his robe, crawling across the fabric toward his entire body. Yet he couldn't even constrict his pupils—frozen in place alongside the thunder, his heart quaking, certain that the next second would bring total obliteration.

As for Cheng Shi... he was doing comparatively well.

Shielded behind both of them, he still had some distance from the lightning. But his consciousness was equally in disarray—not from the terror of impending electrocution, but from what he'd just witnessed: three pairs of star-like eyes, opening simultaneously above Order's head!

One pair: mischievous and mocking. One pair: cold as an arctic abyss. And one pair... ancient beyond reckoning.

Deceit. Fate. Memory!

In this single moment, three gods had descended at once, each rescuing their own follower.

Order detected the arrival of the three deities. It instantly broke free of the multi-layered bindings across reality and illusion, its pages turning as it gazed upward at the trio. It produced a sound no mortal had ever heard—a hum woven from the very fabric of universal law.

"The balance between Existence and Void should not manifest beneath my judgment and verdict. You... have overstepped."

"Pfft—" The upturned, mischievous eyes let out a contemptuous snicker. The star-points within them flickered rapidly. "Old fossil. I think you're really past your prime. You still believe you're the Order that conquered the universe?"

The one in the Convention I can't mess with. But you...

Hee~

How about a fight? Whoever's fist is bigger, gets to call the shots. What do you say?"

Order's pages flipped in a frenzy; its aura fluctuated for a long moment before it squeezed out a single sentence: "The Convention... must not be violated."

The mischievous eyes turned meaningful. It nodded: "No-Brain really did rub off on you. This little underling of yours sure is loyal."

"..." The room fell silent. Deceit's outrageous remark left everyone speechless.

Seeing no one taking the bait, the eyes swiveled toward the pair etched with the weight of ancient history and asked:

"How interesting. Void sensed its followers' 'devotion' and came to protect Void's walkers. But you belong to Existence. What are you doing here?"

Don't tell me you lost your memories and can't find your way home? Hmm?"

Memory ignored Deceit entirely. Instead, it gazed with evident interest at Fate beside it.

"If the one who writes destiny constantly rewrites the direction of what is destined, can destiny still be called destiny?"

The cold, star-like eyes—devoid of joy or sorrow—flicked a glance at Memory and answered with frigid indifference:

"Whether something is destined or not, Existence does not get to decide. Even Time cannot engage me as an equal on this subject. Let alone you."

Memory heard this and didn't argue. It simply nodded in silence.

"And you—why did you come?" Fate turned toward Deceit.

Deceit blinked innocently:

"Are you deaf?"

Oh right, I suppose that makes sense—after all, you're just a pair of eyes. It's normal if you can't hear clearly.

No wonder some mortals blaspheme you so freely and you never hear it. I used to think you were just pretending.

But it turns out you really can't hear?

Strange though—if you can't hear, why do you keep calling to tell me someone's looking for me?

The universe sure is wondrous. Deaf and not-deaf are in superposition."

"..."

As the two Void gods began their civil war, Memory quietly retreated one step. Even Order—the de facto host—maintained its silence, as if the unfolding drama no longer had anything to do with its judgment.

"You want a fight?" The cold eyes grew colder still.

"Why wouldn't I?"

But—do you have the time?"

The mischievous eyes grew ever more mirthful. The spirals within them spun noticeably faster, the star-points dazzling ever brighter.

Fate was stunned into silence. That cold gaze swept over every god present, then lowered to where Cheng Shi and the others stood. A cold snort. A single blink. And it vanished from the divine assembly.

And vanishing alongside it—the dumbfounded Cheng Shi.

This sovereign of the eras had simply taken its follower and left—right under Order's nose.

Order said nothing. Did nothing.

Deceit, witnessing this, chuckled softly and turned meaningfully toward Order:

"Take care of yourself, old fossil. You really ought to keep up with the times. Otherwise... you're going to get left behind."

And with that, Deceit vanished too—and casually took along... the Dragon King.

Yes. Deceit had snatched Li Jingming right out from under Memory's nose, tossing back one final line:

"Well, well—who's the one who can't find their own follower, hmm?"

Seems like too many memories aren't always a good thing. Easy to get them mixed up.

Hee~"

"..."

The scene became exquisitely awkward. The two remaining gods and one mortal all shared the discomfort.

Hong Lin was completely stupefied. She'd never imagined her Benefactor would descend—only to save just one of its two followers. Worse, the lucky one rescued wasn't even her.

'Huh?'

'What happened to my good luck? What happened to being the Destined One? What happened to being Fate's darling?!'

'Gone?! Just like that?!'

Memory shook its head with a sigh. It studied every mortal present, then nodded thoughtfully.

"Let us hope... that Obsessive Order is still Order."

With that, the ancient, weathered eyes dissolved into the air like history fading away—and took the unfortunate, luck-abandoned Big Cat with them.

Thus a farce drew to its close, and Order's judgment reached its conclusion.

But what was there left to judge? The prisoners had already broken out.

The instant the three gods departed, spacetime finally normalized. But this was still a dreamscape—and so long as the dreamer hadn't awakened, the history, or rather the memory, would continue unfolding.

Having lost its targets of judgment, the Iron Law drifted back to its rightful place in the High Pavilion, calm as if nothing had happened.

A single mortal who'd broken into the Supreme Court wasn't worth the personal attention of a god's judgment.

The field of Iron Law Knights and devout Order faithful, having watched their Benefactor raise the hammer of judgment high only to let it fall gently, were thoroughly bewildered.

In the end, it was Grand Executioner Artair who stepped forward and proclaimed in a deep voice:

"Praise be to Order. He has shown sufficient mercy. Yet blasphemy cannot be forgiven lightly. Guards—escort the criminal to the Howling Iron Prison, to await..."

the next judgment!"

"Sir!"

The knights swarmed the still-cursing blasphemer, who was craning his neck and hurling invective at the Grand Tribunal, and hauled him away.

Chapter 600: No—A Carnival of Void and Existence

The Void. Again, the Void!

Cheng Shi was numb. He didn't feel like he'd dived into a dream so much as he'd embarked on a divine-audience marathon.

He'd been thinking just a moment ago that it had been ages since he'd seen his other Benefactor. And right on cue, there it was.

Only... the attitude was somewhat concerning.

His heart clenched. Standing ramrod straight beneath his Benefactor's gaze, he waited. When the entity made no move to speak, he opened with:

"Praise be to—"

He didn't even finish before those cold, star-like eyes cut him off.

"Why did a walker of the Void step into Chaos?"

A short question. It sent Cheng Shi's soul hurtling out of his body.

In that instant, the Void's wind regained its temperature—abruptly reminding Cheng Shi of the second Path Starting Point, when he'd been kneaded like dough under that terrifying pressure.

'Great—my cold sweats are getting more frequent.'

'Am I depleted or what?'

'Hmm? Void is technically a kind of "depletion," isn't it? Makes sense, actually.'

'!!!'

'Cheng Shi, now is NOT the time for random tangents! You need to figure out how to bluff—no, manage—no, RESPOND to your Benefactor!'

'It's watching you right now. Brain, SPIN!'

Cheng Shi's CPU went into overdrive. In that single frantic moment, he racked his brain for excuses. To find a good one, he replayed everything related to his Chaos fusion at breakneck speed.

The memories surfaced so rapidly he actually had a brief out-of-body moment, his train of thought veering momentarily toward a stray question: did he have the qualifications to become a Memory darling too?

But the nonsensical tangent dissolved immediately as another line surged into his mind.

He suddenly remembered Kataro's ambiguous final words before leaving the Chaos Temple:

"My lord, the advice I can offer you is: I don't know."

Cheng Shi had never figured out what that meant—until this very moment. Enlightenment struck like lightning. 'So that's what "I don't know" meant!'

His expression transformed instantly. The frightened "blasphemer" became a helpless victim—aggrieved and desolate:

"Benefactor... I... I don't know!"

He delivered the line with full conviction. But the uncertainty and panic at the corners of his eyes betrayed the hollowness of that conviction.

He wondered whether his Benefactor could see through him. But Fate—as the Void sovereign who perceived the universe's very essence—how could it not read Cheng Shi's thoughts?

It saw everything clearly.

Though all of this had been engineered as a trap by its sibling god, there was no question that Cheng Shi's greed had driven him willingly into it.

Therefore, his will had genuinely strayed from the Void for one brief moment. In the futures visible to Fate, its follower was not supposed to set foot in Chaos.

And now, change had once again overridden destiny. The ripples from Prosperity's self-destruction continued to spread. Fate's brows furrowed ever so slightly.

Yet it did not punish its follower. It simply returned to its default coldness—joy and sorrow absent—and spoke:

"Chaos seeks to prevent the essence from awakening. They themselves don't know what they're doing.

Walking the path of Chaos will only carry you further... and further from Fate."

"!!!"

At those words, Cheng Shi's knees buckled. He nearly collapsed into the Void.

This wasn't even a veiled warning. This was practically an open threat!

It didn't want him near Chaos.

'But! But the three Chaos talents are too good to give up...'

'If I'd never had them, fine—easy to let go. But they're already in my pocket. Asking me to dig them out and throw them away now... Sorry, that's not happening!'

Cheng Shi swallowed hard. He resolved to stand firm for the sake of the hard-earned gains in his pocket.

He threw every mental resource into constructing a clever argument. Before long, he drew a deep breath, fixed his gaze with determination, and spoke:

"Benefactor... I...

was wrong."

The Void's wind stopped dead—but the biting chill lingered.

Those star-like eyes ceased their twinkling. The spirals stilled. Fate watched Cheng Shi in silence—watching this follower who'd been over-influenced by its sibling—saying nothing.

It wasn't moved by Cheng Shi's earnest demeanor. It simply wanted to hear what else its follower would say.

This time, Cheng Shi chose not to resort to his silver-tongued sophistry. He felt the old "if destiny is destiny, then it should tolerate change" angle was getting stale. And reusing the same justification over and over would only irritate whoever was being conned. Even if, to the god, it technically counted as a devotional offering, surely offerings of sincerity needed to be refreshed now and then?

So this time, instead of playing the insincere devotee, he chose to be an honest confessor.

He was going for the heart-to-heart approach with Fate.

"Your devout follower—me—must admit that I am, at times, perhaps the tiniest bit greedy. But I didn't seek Chaos's attention. I was trying to profit from Chaos and Order's conflict.

Besides, the faith fusion had only just started. I assumed that since I'd already fused with Void, I couldn't fuse with other faiths—which is why I felt safe giving it a few responses with ulterior motives.

But I had no idea that wasn't a confrontation between it and Order at all—that it was actually playing the role of—"

And that was where he was silenced. Physically silenced.

Another gust of Void wind materialized from nowhere, blowing past his lips and ramming every word he was about to say right back down his throat.

Simultaneously, a pair of mischievous eyes snapped open directly above Cheng Shi's head. The instant they appeared, the entire Void was suffused with a sardonic, mocking aura.

"Let me seeee—who's the petty one threatening my follower?"

Hearing this, Cheng Shi wished he could bury his head in the deepest stratum of the Void. He stood trembling in place, not daring to make a sound.

The cold eyes flicked toward the mischievous ones. The gaze grew even icier: "It seems you really do want a fight."

"What's-your-name, stop being all bark and no bite. Do you actually have the time right now?"

The moment those words landed—

BOOM!!!

Cheng Shi went flying.

The shockwave from the Void civil war was nothing short of apocalyptic. The entire expanse of Void collapsed in an instant. Infinite Void energy erupted from the deepest reaches like a reawakened volcano, painting the already-black canvas even more thoroughly void.

Yet even as the horrifying power expanded at speeds beyond mortal comprehension—annihilating everything that existed within the Void—it didn't harm this poor mortal so much as a hair.

Cheng Shi simply felt a titanic force slam into him head-on, and then he was blasted away like a golf ball driven off a tee.

His body flew forward while his soul trailed behind, trying to catch up.

He didn't know how long he flew. When his awareness finally struggled back into his body, he found himself in a new region of Void—stable and silent—and was rocketing headfirst into the "ground."

BOOM—

The Clown had crash-landed.

When he sat up disheveled, he discovered that in this stretch of Void, another pair of eyes was staring at him with burning intensity.

Cheng Shi startled—then broke into a grin.

"Hey, Dragon King. We meet again. Did you get punched in here too?"

Indeed—those eyes belonged not to some god but to Li Jingming, standing atop the Void, devoutly awaiting his "Benefactor's" audience.

But Deceit had simply dropped him here and left. Then, a Cheng Shi fell out of the sky.

Cheng Shi was perceptive. He read the confusion in the Dragon King's eyes and, noting the man's reverent posture, instantly deduced that the audience hadn't begun yet.

His eyes swiveled. He cleared his throat:

"Ahem—by the way, the Benefactor asked me to relay a message."

Li Jingming had frowned the instant he saw Cheng Shi. Hearing this, his confusion deepened: "Fate?"

"Oh—your Benefactor. Deceit." Cheng Shi corrected himself without missing a beat. These little tricks were second nature to him. "Sometimes I talk too fast and trip over my words. Besides, the Void is one family—all love and harmony. Why differentiate?"

"?"

Li Jingming's eye twitched. He found the claim roughly 100% unbelievable. But there was nothing else to do here, so he nodded, gesturing for Cheng Shi to continue, curious to see what this Fate follower was up to now.

Cheng Shi rubbed his hands together, his expression turning mischievous:

"Come to think of it, I'm a little shocked too—I've never encountered this particular format before.

Dragon King, you might not believe this, but your Benefactor says the message is cash-on-delivery. So before you hear it...

Shouldn't you pay the shipping first?"

"..."