

The Gods 62

Chapter 62: The Dead Alchemist

The first-class judge of the Grand Tribunal, Lord Moxius, had gone missing.

Well, not technically “missing.” He had simply gone out on his own to investigate a case one night and hadn’t returned since.

Naturally, the Law Enforcement Bureau was in a state of panic. Not only had they received a report that five more residents had been found dead in Eternal Bloom Town, but they also discovered that the prisoner had escaped!

Even the secret inspector from the Grand Tribunal who had visited the prison the previous day was nowhere to be found.

The enforcers were like ants on a hot pan, desperately seeking an audience with Moxius’s fellow judges, but even the other judges were at a loss.

Moxius’s final order to them had been to wait for his return at the Law Enforcement Bureau.

The timing couldn’t have been worse.

On the one hand, it wasn’t like Moxius had been missing for an extended period—he had only been gone for a single night.

Even regular people sometimes spent a night out without returning home. How much more so for a judge investigating a case?

Of course, this isn’t to say that Lord Moxius was out enjoying himself for the night—investigations took time.

But on the other hand, it was unusual. Moxius had never taken this long to solve a case before. Usually, by the time he encountered a suspect, the investigation, judgment, and punishment were all completed in short order.

In summary, Moxius's unexplained absence and the strict order he left behind had left everyone in a state of anxious limbo.

Eternal Bloom Town was once again shrouded in fear, with rumors circulating that the escaped killer would return for revenge.

It wasn't until the fourth night, when the five corpses that had been moved to the archive room mysteriously woke up, that the terrified enforcers realized the whole thing had been an elaborate prank.

Good news: no murders had occurred after all!

Bad news: Lord Moxius was indeed missing.

With no real case to investigate, where could His Lordship have gone?

The judges, being seasoned members of the Grand Tribunal, remained calm. They were certain that Lord Moxius must have been delayed by something urgent and would return eventually.

After all, in a place like Eternal Bloom Town, there wasn't anyone who could truly threaten Moxius's safety.

However, when the staff at the Law Enforcement Bureau discovered that *When Fear Descends* had also disappeared, and the sealed chamber now contained only two unfamiliar corpses, even the judges grew uneasy.

Eternal Bloom Town erupted into chaos once more.

It was the morning of the fifth day, after a sleepless night for all the officials, that the five drunks who had nearly given the Law Enforcement Bureau a heart attack were released, cleared of all charges.

Their bodies were covered in bruises, evidence of the harsh interrogation they had endured.

But rather than being angry, their faces were lit with satisfaction and smug amusement.

“Hahaha, those idiots! We fooled them all!”

“No amount of whipping could hide the fear in their eyes. Did you see the look on Director Vicky’s face? And the best part? We’re innocent—they can’t do anything to us!”

“So satisfying!”

“I can’t believe that drug was so potent. Where’s that alchemist? Anyone know where he is?”

“I think he’s staying at the inn?”

The five men exchanged meaningful glances and immediately bolted toward the inn.

Clearly, nothing could top getting their hands on five more doses of that drug.

With “Drunken Sleep of Death,” all of Eternal Bloom Town would be their playground.

However, after much inquiry, when they finally arrived outside the alchemist’s room, a frail-looking inn servant emerged from the door.

The servant, upon seeing five burly men standing outside with excited looks in their eyes, was startled.

Instinctively, he pressed himself against the door frame, trembling in fear.

“Hey, where’s the guy inside?”

“Is the alchemist there? Where did he go?”

“Were you cleaning the room? Did you see anything—like a drug called ‘Drunken Sleep of Death’?”

“Forget it. Move aside. We’ll go in and check ourselves!”

Just as the men were about to barge in, the servant suddenly burst into tears.

“It wasn’t me, it wasn’t me! I swear, I found him like that! It wasn’t me!”

The drunks were taken aback by the sudden crying but quickly brushed past the servant and entered the room.

Inside, they found a charred corpse lying in front of the bed.

The burnt fragments of clothing on the body indicated that the corpse belonged to the very alchemist who had sold them the drug “Drunken Sleep of Death” two nights ago.

The drunks stood frozen, staring in disbelief.

“What... what the hell happened?”

“Dead? Hey, did you do this?”

“You killed the alchemist? How did you do it? With what? Praise [Prosperity], tell us how you did it and we won’t report you!”

“Stop standing around! Look for more of the drug!”

"I-it wasn't me... I came in to clean the room and found his body. I was scared out of my mind... I didn't dare say anything... sob, sob..."

The drunks rummaged through the room for a while but found no trace of the drug. Instead, they found scattered vials and ingredients, most of which had exploded during some alchemical reaction, leaving behind a mess of multicolored substances.

"Damn—The drug's gone."

"Hey, there's a real body here! Should we report this to the Law Enforcement Bureau?"

"Of course, we should! If someone's really dead, it's way bigger than our little prank. This is news, brothers!"

"Report it! Go tell the enforcers that the escaped killer struck again, and he's back for revenge!"

The servant, upon hearing that the corpse was supposedly the result of the escaped killer's revenge, became even more terrified. His legs gave way, and he collapsed at the door.

"It wasn't me! It's not my fault!"

"Ugh, useless. I'll go report it myself!"

"....."

You have to admit, these thrill-seekers had remarkable initiative when it came to finding amusement.

It wasn't long before the enforcers surrounded the inn once again, this time accompanied by two judges.

The moment the judges entered the room, they were hit with a strong medicinal odor. Frowning, they carefully searched the entire room.

On the desk were scraps of alchemical notes, the handwriting crooked and messy, resembling the scrawl of someone uneducated.

The torn pages contained scribbled notes with words like “sleep,” “death,” and “improvement.” All signs pointed to the fact that the deceased had been refining a drug before his death.

The floor around the bed was littered with shattered vials, and the remnants of common alchemical reactions could be seen among the wreckage, likely caused by an explosion that had triggered a chain reaction with the materials.

The body was burned beyond recognition, and an aura that clashed with [Order] still lingered on it.

It appeared that the alchemist had been a follower of a minor god.

After some deliberation, the judges came to the same conclusion as the Law Enforcement Bureau.

A pharmaceutical alchemist who worshipped a false god had died while attempting to concoct a drug infused with the divinity of [Death]. In the process, he had effectively offered himself to [Death].

This wasn't the work of the escaped killer, as there was no trace of [Corruption] or any lingering aura of fear.

But in a place like Eternal Bloom Town, this was still big news. Deaths were rare enough, but accidental deaths were nearly unheard of.

After interviewing the drunks who had reported the incident, questioning nearby guests, and conducting a thorough review, the judges finalized their report:

“This individual used an excessive amount of unknown, uncontrollable divine power from [Death]. As a result, he could not receive [Prosperity]’s protection and met his own demise.”

With the case quickly solved, the guests and enforcers breathed a collective sigh of relief.

As long as the killer hadn’t struck again and there was no lingering fear in Eternal Bloom Town, the temporary absence of Lord Moxius wasn’t too concerning.

The judges left the inn calmly, leaving the enforcers to tie up the loose ends.

“You there—you’re the one who found the body, right? What’s your name? We need to take you back to the Bureau for a full report.”

“I... I’m Kataro, sir. This has nothing to do with me, right?”

“With that timid face of yours, if you were involved, you’d have run off long ago, haha! Don’t worry, it’s just a routine report. The case is closed.”

“S-So it’s over? Okay, I’ll come with you.”

“Yeah, come on. The time of death was sometime before dawn. Did you hear anything during your patrol?”

“Uh, I did hear a muffled noise before dawn, but it wasn’t too loud, so I didn’t investigate... You know, privacy for guests is important.”

“You did the right thing. If you had checked, the room might’ve had more than just one dead body. What a madman, using divine power like that...”

As the servant left with the enforcers, the five drunks scratched their heads, sighing in disappointment.

“What a waste... That was some good stuff...”

The brief moment of excitement was quickly extinguished, and the panic that had started to rise was quickly stifled.

With the Law Enforcement Bureau in disarray and Eternal Bloom Town still reeling from its brush with [Death], the search for the real killer and the missing Lord Moxius continued.

But none of this concerned the servant who had discovered the body.

The sky darkened.

Kataro slowly left the Bureau, pausing at the entrance to glance back at the brightly lit, bustling building.

A playful smirk curled on his lips.

With a tilted nod, he waved to someone in the distance, though no one knew to whom.

“Goodbye, lovely people.”

He pulled his hood over his eyes and vanished into the night, swallowed by the shadows.

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[Special Trial (Which Path Leads to Death [Death]) Challenge Cleared]

[Scoring in progress... Calculating rewards...]

[Player: Cheng Shi | Performance Score: C]

[Reward Item: Mask of Boredom (C) x1]

[Reward Item: Mask of Mockery (C) x1]

[Reward Item: Mask of Apathy (C) x1]

[Reward Item: Mask of Obscurity (C) x1]

[Reward Item: Mask of Suspicion (S) x1]

[Path to Godhood: +0]

[Ladder of Ascent: +3]

[Current Path to Godhood Score: 2125, Global Rank: 458,728]

[Current Ladder of Ascent Score: 164, Fate Path Rank: 62]

[Trial Complete. Exiting...]