

## The Gods 66

Chapter 66: Shh, I'm Listening to [Gods]' Gossip

“Her name is... Le Le'er.

She was once the daughter of the [Mother of Prosperity].

But she couldn't resist temptation and fell...

Into the [Abyss of Desire], becoming the revolting Fear Mother Tree.”

“?”

Hold up!

I know this!

I even fought one of her children!

!!!

Cheng Shi's mind suddenly flashed back to a previous trial, remembering Song Yawen, who had encountered the White Bone Throne.

So, it turns out... that was when Song had fallen under the gaze of [Death]!

And that scythe, the one that could destroy worlds—could it have been borrowed from the very god in front of me?

No wonder it had been wielded with such force—whoever would hold back when fighting a green tea schemer?

But, hey... where's your scythe, old buddy?

Shouldn't a god this powerful have a big ol' scythe on hand?

The giant skull seemed to sense Cheng Shi's memories. It paused, as if giving him time to recall more details, before continuing slowly:

"Garuda... in an attempt to redeem her...

Tore out one of his ribs and split off a quarter of his divinity.

He crafted this dagger as a gift, and sent it to the [Sea of Desire].

But that bitch rejected him, and polluted... the Garuda Dagger.

She deserved to die."

After those words, a torrent of death energy surged up from the void, erupting with immense force, drowning everything in its wake.

Cheng Shi, caught in the crossfire, was swept away and reduced to a pile of bone shards.

No one knew how long the enraged god vented. For a moment, Cheng Shi thought he might be forgotten—or worse, obliterated.

But his consciousness eventually reformed.

The problem was, now he was like the giant skull on the Bone Throne: just a head.

Cheng Shi clicked his jaw a few times, realizing that smacking his chin against the steps actually hurt.

“.....”

Fine, standing is overrated. Sitting down for a bit isn't so bad.

So that's where the [Corruption] in When Fear Descends came from. The Fear Mother Tree had split off part of her divinity as a final, resolute rejection of Garuda.

But what exactly happened between the two of them?

Could you elaborate, please?

I've got time—the trial just ended, and I've got a full seven days.

The giant skull's gaze lowered, resting on Cheng Shi again. Its jaw moved as though it might continue the tale, but then it stopped.

“Old history. Best left forgotten.

Today, I saw it again.

[Memory] has always refused to find it for me in the dreamscape.”

“But you've brought it back. Good.

So, Cheng Shi...

What do you want, as your reward?”

Cheng Shi hastily propped himself up on his chin, like a jack-in-the-box springing up.

If you're asking, I'm taking this seriously.

"Respected and great True God,

Acquiring this Garuda Dagger was merely a humble, insignificant effort on my part to learn more from the trials You and the other gods have bestowed upon us.

If... and this is just an 'if'... You could offer a lost soul like me some small bit of guidance,

It would be far more valuable than any semi-divine artifact."

Nervously, Cheng Shi gazed up at the throne.

The giant skull remained silent.

Cheng Shi's heart skipped a beat. He thought he might have asked for too much. Just as he was about to backtrack, the skull spoke again.

"You... are one of His followers.

Among us, only He and...

Forget it. I won't mention Him.

Only a few of us like to give you directions."

"I have no guidance to give you.

Your understanding of death...”

Cheng Shi’s heart clenched as he recalled the pathetic 0 points he’d received on his Path to Godhood in the last trial.

“...is quite fresh.

I need to reflect on this.

Perhaps I can seize... some dominion from His hands.”

“!!??”

What?

Who are you planning to seize dominion from?

What does that have to do with me? I didn’t do anything!

Cheng Shi was thoroughly bewildered, nearly scared to death.

“However, I can still grant you something.”

With those words, the Execution’s Hour scepter floated up from the pile of “junk” on the ground.

“What’s this about...?”

A concentrated surge of [Death] energy flowed from the mouths of every skull adorning the Bone Throne, enveloping Execution's Hour.

In a matter of moments, the thunderous scepter began to twist and reshape, transforming into a ring, with lightning crackling across its surface.

The material of the ring was nothing like the wood of the previous scepter; instead, it resembled the bone that made up the staircase beneath Cheng Shi.

“At the end of the first [Divine War],

[Order] killed [Thunderclap].

Using half of His divinity, He crafted the Thunderclap Staff.”

“.....”

Cheng Shi was stunned, overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information in this conversation. He also felt a strong urge to call out [Order] for playing dirty.

Killing someone was one thing, but desecrating their corpse and mocking them afterward? Talk about kicking a guy when he's down!

“His other half of the divinity is with me.

But right now, you're too weak.

You're not worthy yet.

I've reforged the Thunderclap Staff, covering [Thunderclap]'s essence.

Keep it safe.

When you've traveled further on your path, I'll give you the other half."

The pale, bone-like ring floated down gently, slipping onto Cheng Shi's finger.

Or rather, it would have, if his hand hadn't fallen off behind him.

And how exactly is a skull supposed to turn around?

Not happening. Nope.

"....."

Wait a minute!

Something doesn't feel right!

Let me get this straight—

[Death] took When Fear Descends, then turned Execution's Hour into a ring, saying that once I've grown stronger, He'll give me the other half of Thunderclap's power.

This sales pitch...

Hiss—

Why does this feel like one of those half-baked promises my old company bosses used to make?

You didn't give me anything and still took one of my artifacts?

How is this a deal?

This is daylight robbery! You're bullying an honest guy here!

Cheng Shi finally snapped out of his shock, clicking his jaw against the floor a few times before he couldn't hold it in any longer and asked:

"Um... Since You dislike the Fear Mother Tree, what about the half of Le Le'er's divinity still in the Garuda Dagger...

Would it be possible to... return that to me?"

The giant skull went silent. Even though its eye sockets were empty, Cheng Shi felt as though he were staring into eyes that led straight to death.

"I... I mean, it's just a suggestion.

I was thinking, for a god as mighty as You, such a filthy divinity must be nothing more than trash—a nuisance to be sealed away.

Instead of letting that half of her divinity go to waste...

Ahem, why not let it work for me?

You see: I work for You...

No, I work for my master, but I also work part-time for You. And she works for me.

In other words, she's working for You.

Sounds reasonable, right?

Wouldn't that be more satisfying than just letting that divinity sit idle?"

There was no response.

Still no response.

Time seemed to stretch on. In that moment, Cheng Shi thought that maybe this wasn't [Death] after all—maybe it was actually [Silence].

Bro, aren't you going to say something?

"He wasn't wrong. You... are indeed greedy."

"?"

Just as those words fell, another surge of [Death] energy rose from the Bone Throne.

This time, the power enveloped not only the ring but also When Fear Descends.

Before long, a small, shrieking branch was torn from the Garuda Dagger and quickly fused into the ring.

Simultaneously, the Garuda Dagger vanished.

The moment the Fear Mother Tree's divinity touched the ring, it etched a series of screaming mouths into the surface, twisting the once bone-white ring into a grotesque, blood-red artifact.

The ring, now radiating an eerie crimson glow, floated back onto Cheng Shi's skeletal hand.

Did it work?

Holy crap, it worked!!

Excited, Cheng Shi bit down on his hand bone, inspecting the twisted and sinister ring closely, unable to contain his excitement.

"What is this?"

But he quickly corrected himself, realizing the mistake in his tone.

"I mean, please, Great One, bestow this new subordinate relic with a name."

To be honest, Cheng Shi thought he saw a glimmer of excitement in the giant skull's hollow eyes.

But he wasn't sure if he was just too excited and imagining things.

The giant skull hesitated for a moment, its teeth clattering as if mulling over the options, before finally giving the new relic its title.

"Let it be called... the Bone Servant Le Le'er's Ring."

"....."

I'm speechless.

How is this any different from naming it “QQ Bubble Tea: So Good It Makes You Say MEEP”?

This badass-looking ring, and that’s the name?

Fine, fine, fine!

You’re the god. What You say goes.

Cheng Shi gave in.

He nodded earnestly and said:

“This name will be praised for all eternity, a title that will echo through the ages.

And, of course, that bitch Le Le’er will be working for You forever!”

“Hmm.”

The giant skull let out a strange grunt before dissolving into a cloud of white ash, like sand flowing in the wind.

After that, the Bone Throne began to disintegrate.

With the boss gone, the skulls that had been silent for so long finally started up again.

“Goodbye! Goodbye! I’m leaving too, She’s waiting for me!”

“Hurry up! Don’t keep Her waiting!”

As the throne crumbled, the fishbone staircase beneath Cheng Shi also began to collapse.

Now reduced to nothing but a skull, Cheng Shi had no way to escape and could only let himself fall into the void.

Even as the sensation of freefall overtook him, he kept his grip tight on his hand bone.

Until, finally, his consciousness faded into darkness once more, only to awaken again.

Cheng Shi's eyes shot open, and he raised his hand, staring at the twisted, crimson-glowing ring now wrapped around his right index finger.

The ring, which seemed to scream with fear itself, looked dazzling in the sunlight...

So... captivating.