

The Gods 68

Chapter 68: The Vanishing Chosen Ones, and the New Trial

Xie Yang's last trial took place in a small town called Hanlin Town, part of the Canriwal Empire.

Cheng Shi didn't figure this out by asking him—it was from reading the books Xie Yang had brought back.

The seventeen books weren't history books at all. They were a random collection of novels that a pig farm owner from the town had bought to pass the time.

The books even had the owner's personal notes and doodles scribbled in the margins.

The genres were varied, ranging from romance stories like "The Beautiful Girl of the Town" to mysteries like "Kill That Peasant" and even technical reference books like "The Life of Cannibal Pigs." There was certainly no shortage of variety.

But what these books lacked was any genuine historical content about the politics, culture, or geography of that time period.

Perhaps "history" is called history because it is written retrospectively—by future generations reflecting on the past.

Back then, people living in the moment probably didn't care at all about how they would be remembered after their death.

While the books didn't offer any useful knowledge, they were still a decent way to pass the time.

During those days, Cheng Shi encountered a pig breeder who followed [Birth], a pig farm owner who worshipped [Prosperity], and even a butcher dedicated to [Death].

Seeing how the path of [Life] was so intertwined with practical daily life shattered Cheng Shi's preconceived notions about the lofty nature of faith.

It was hard not to marvel at just how omnipresent the gods' influence really was.

Aside from reading, a few important events also took place over those days.

The biggest one? The shocking revelations in the Trade Channel.

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[Trade Channel]

“Sorry to break it to you, but ‘Carving Rotten Wood’ just hit the top spot. The big guy from [Decay] got knocked down to 10th place, hahaha.”

“For [Prosperity], cheers!”

“LMAO, where’s the [Decay] gang? Can they stomach this?”

“Funny enough, the Grand Marshal also lost his ranking. He dropped to 4th place. The Silent ones overtook him. Rough.”

The “Grand Marshal” was the nickname given to the chosen one of [War] by his fellow followers. Ever since the [Faith Game] descended and the Ladder of Ascent rankings began, the Grand Marshal had always held first place in the [War] and [Silence] rankings.

But who would have thought? Just two days after the last special trial, he lost five consecutive trials and dropped to 4th place.

“+1, [Order] also dropped, but the top spot is still held by [Order]—just a new [Order].”

“What the hell is going on? Even the [Fate] chosen one dropped. Now [Time] is ranked first, and they’re tied together?”

“Crazy, man. It’s like a bunch of chosen ones are playing ranked matches. It’s like watching gods fight! Exciting just thinking about it.”

“I don’t know about the others, but I can tell you that the [Fate] chosen one didn’t drop on purpose. He lost to me.”

“Huh? I’m seeing the Trade Channel here, but the way you’re talking, I thought I opened the Faith Channel. Wake up, man, stop fooling yourself.”

“[Deceit] up there? What do you guys even talk about in your Faith Channel? Just lying to each other?”

“We’re cultured, okay? It’s not lying—it’s art. Haven’t checked in for a while. Hang on, I’ll take a look...”

“I’m back. A few are playing cards with the [Gods], some are creating worlds, and a couple are over in the backroom fudging the Ladder of Ascent rankings.”

“.....”

Cheng Shi smiled as he scrolled through the ridiculous chatter.

Still, the collective drop in ranking of the chosen ones did seem odd, and he couldn’t shake the feeling that something was amiss.

When something unusual happens on a large enough scale, it’s worth paying attention.

Why were these chosen ones, who had held steady rankings for years, suddenly dropping points after just a few difficult trials?

Cheng Shi’s score wasn’t high enough to fully grasp the situation, but after some thought, there were two likely possibilities:

One: They were simply failing their trials more often, but the sheer number of failures suggested they might be pursuing something specific—something they were relentlessly chasing, even if it meant losing points.

Two: There might be rules in place for the top-ranking positions that ordinary players couldn't comprehend, making it far harder to occupy first place than it seemed.

If trials were changing, there was no reason to think the chosen ones' difficulties weren't also evolving.

Whatever was happening, it would require more observation to figure out.

Still, treading carefully always seemed like the right approach.

"The storm is coming. Some are riding the waves, while others are drowning."

"Hard to say what will happen."

With that, Cheng Shi opened up his Ladder of Ascent.

The player with the ID "Sincerity" had dropped to 47th place. Judging by the ranking drop, they'd likely lost dozens of matches without dying, which is how they had landed here.

Even more surprising was that Li Jingming, the chosen one of [Memory], had also started losing points.

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[Ladder of Ascent (Existence – [Memory])/(Void – [Deceit])]

1. First Again, Bros ([Deceit]) – 204

2. Feelings Remain ([Memory]) – 201

3. Li Jingming ([Memory]) – 199

4. Still Feels Like a Dream ([Memory]) – 198

5. He Flees, He Chases, He's Trapped ([Deceit]) – 196

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46. Watching the Big Guy's Escape Route ↓ ([Deceit]) – 179

47. Sincerity ([Deceit]) – 179

...

62. I Never Lie ([Deceit]) – 164

...

Time flew by like a wild stallion, never to return.

Seven days passed in the blink of an eye, and it was once again time for a trial.

But this time, Cheng Shi greeted the trial with a smile.

The reason? The green tea girl next door had seemingly vanished.

For seven full days, Xu Lu had ignored Xie Yang, leaving him heartbroken and convinced the girl he adored had died in her trial.

When Cheng Shi heard this news, he was so shocked that he had to pinch his thighs tightly to stop himself from laughing in Xie Yang's face.

But credit where credit is due, Xie Yang was a sentimental guy. He mourned Xu Lu's disappearance for three to four days.

On the fifth day, though, he snapped out of it and tied the love letter he had written for Xu Lu to a string, lowering it down to the window of a girl named Fan Tingting, who lived in the apartment beneath Xu Lu.

He called it "healing through love."

Cheng Shi scoffed, silently cursing himself for misjudging Xie Yang.

Then he turned around and gave him a big thumbs-up.

You've got way more fun going on in your life than I do, young man.

I'm going to live vicariously through your drama for the rest of my days.

Cheng Shi chuckled to himself as he thought about it, but his vision suddenly turned red.

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[Special Trial (The Vanishing World – [Oblivion])] has begun.

[Matching teammates (1/6)]

[Trial Objective: Break free from your chains, abandon your shackles, embrace destruction, and find redemption. (Time limit: 3 days)]

—

[Oblivion]!

An [Oblivion] trial!

Cheng Shi stared at the text in disbelief, quickly standing up and stuffing all his survival tools into his inventory.

It had been a long time since he'd seen an [Oblivion] trial. The last one was back when he hadn't even reached 2000 points.

The trials [Oblivion] created were notoriously straightforward.

There was only one goal: survive the end of a world.

Survive the terrifying natural calamities...

And live!

—

[Matching complete (6/6). Entering trial...]