

The Gods 71

Chapter 71: [Divine Will] in Progress

After Su Yida left, everyone exchanged glances, unsure of what to say.

Several awkward seconds passed in silence before Zhao Qian finally stepped forward and broke the tension.

“I’m a Hawkeye Scout. Sorry, but I need you all to cooperate with me... by having a fight.”

Hawkeye Scout, a [War] Hunter. Of course!

Cheng Shi had guessed Zhao Qian’s profession but hadn’t anticipated that he was a follower of [War].

The [War] ritual was simple: it involved conflict. In crowded places, a follower could just pick a couple of random people to brawl with, and that would suffice.

But unfortunately, this trial was set in the wilderness.

And even worse, this trial involved the old, the weak, and the young...

The only two people who didn’t fit that description were the guy who had left and the one who now wanted to pick a fight.

“.....”

The silence grew even heavier.

Judging by Zhao Qian’s muscular build, it was clear that this fight wasn’t going to be easy.

Before performing their rituals, [War] followers might not have an abundance of war-related talents. However, due to their constant involvement in combat, their physical strength had long surpassed that of ordinary people.

And once [War] followers began their rituals, under the gaze of their god, they would want nothing more than to unleash the full force of their combat prowess.

Holding back simply wasn't part of the equation.

Anyone facing off with a [War] follower would have to endure the first wave of attacks before the [War] follower would calm down.

Zhao Qian's expression was serious, and Cheng Shi glanced around, noticing that neither Tao Yi nor Gao Yu had any intention of volunteering to be the punching bag.

Sigh, there's only an old man left. It wouldn't be right to let a senior citizen take the hit.

It seemed nearly certain that this beating would fall upon Cheng Shi.

But just as he was about to step forward to accept the invitation to fight, something unexpected happened—Cui Dingtian, the white-haired old man, stood up and stepped forward.

"Cough... cough... I'll fight you. I'm a warrior, I can take it!"

Cheng Shi's eyes narrowed as he looked at the old man.

The old man's a warrior?

Indeed, [Decay] warriors were known for their exceptional defensive abilities. Unlike [Order] warriors who could protect an entire team, [Decay] warriors focused on enhancing their own defenses.

This particular role even had a widely recognized nickname:

Mummies.

They wrapped themselves in shiny, protective exteriors, but inside, they were rotten to the core.

Like mummies buried by the sands of time.

“A mummy?”

Even Zhao Qian paused, surprised, before nodding in acceptance.

By this point, players with this level of experience rarely misjudged their own strength. If the old man had stepped up, that meant he was confident he could take the hit.

“Alright. If you can withstand my first wave of attacks, your ritual will also be complete.”

[Decay] rituals involved accelerating decay, and any form of injury would count toward that goal.

So this was a win-win for both of them.

“Be careful—my right punch packs a lot of power.”

With those words, Zhao Qian’s eyes turned red, and he lunged forward, colliding with Cui Dingtian in an instant.

The sheer force of his movement pushed the earth down beneath his feet, leaving a deep imprint in the mud—a testament to his speed.

“Bam! Bam! Bam!”

In the blink of an eye, their fists and legs collided, the impact of bone and muscle clashing louder than even the distant thunder.

Cui Dingtian, who moments ago had seemed frail and sickly, fought back with sharp eyes and agile movements that left everyone dumbfounded.

But his coughing hadn't stopped—in fact, it had grown worse.

Cheng Shi casually stepped back, giving the two enough room to fight.

With a blade of grass in his mouth like some street punk, he sauntered over to where Tao Yi and Gao Yu were standing, grinning.

“Need any help?”

Tao Yi's previously cheerful face immediately turned flustered, while Gao Yu, who had been more reserved, spoke up first.

“I'm a Scholar of Knowledge, specializing in mechanical engineering. I don't need any knowledge from you, but I can share some with you.”

Scholar of Knowledge, a mage follower of [Truth].

This profession had the most variants in the entire game—no other role even came close.

It was similar to [Order] mages, who could study and wield specific elements as Elemental Judges. Scholars of Knowledge could select from different schools of knowledge and use these as the foundation for pursuing [Truth], leading to a myriad of specialized professions.

For example, scholars who specialized in mechanical engineering believed that “Flesh is a burden, but machines are eternal.”

They thought the path to [Truth] was too long and that human lifespans were too short to complete it. By developing machines that could be perpetually upgraded, they sought to transcend the cycle of life and death and thus gradually approach the god.

Understanding dawned on Cheng Shi, and he casually glanced at the bundle hidden underneath Gao Yu's clothes.

So, it's not weapons he's carrying, but tools.

Smart kid—good thing he didn't leave his tools in his storage space.

Scholars of [Truth] had two types of rituals: Support classes had to receive knowledge, while offensive classes had to spread knowledge.

Cheng Shi, now intrigued, smiled:

"Ah, so you're one of the smartest Scholars of Knowledge. Please, we're all ears."

Gao Yu hesitated for a moment, then, after some thought, shared his knowledge:

"The Void-Energy School at the Tower of Logic once had a scholar named Gluo, who conducted an experiment using the [Truth] ritual provided by the Council of Scholars.

He launched 100 source-less beacons into the void.

Then, together with his students, he carried 100 beacon trackers in an attempt to collect the beacons from a rift in the void while traveling as far as possible from the Tower of Logic, to a city called Gasmira.

The experiment was extremely time-consuming and labor-intensive. But if it succeeded, it would have proven that the positions of objects in the void were directly correlated with their positions in reality.

Unfortunately, Gluo failed.

During the years of travel to Gasmira, the trackers could continuously sense the presence of the beacons. But when they finally arrived at the city, they lost contact at the very last moment.

The scholars of the Tower of Logic unanimously concluded that Gluo's idea was absurd—that the void had no connection to reality.

Because of this failure, Gluo lost his candidacy for a seat on the Council of Scholars, and he died in obscurity.

But the day after his death, every beacon he had launched fell out of the void, landing directly at his funeral in Gasmira.

His students were devastated, unable to comprehend the impossibility before them.

When they gathered the beacons, they found that all 100 were accounted for—none were missing. However, each beacon was missing a small piece.

When the scholars who rushed to the scene pieced the missing parts together, they formed a mask, the size of a beacon.

The mask's expression was one of mocking laughter, as though ridiculing humanity's feeble attempts to explore the void.

Faced with this undeniable fact, the Tower of Logic had no choice but to admit that Gluo's theory had been correct.

Not only that, but they also began to suspect that a [God], one who enjoyed toying with humanity, might exist within the void—connected to reality.

That was the first time in history that people felt the presence of [Deceit]...”

Cheng Shi found himself utterly dumbfounded by the story, not sure how to process it.

He blinked rapidly, staring at Gao Yu in astonishment.

Is this kid calling me out?

Has he seen through me?

That can't be right. This high schooler doesn't seem particularly special—there's no way he could have figured out my identity so quickly.

Could it just be a coincidence?

Because if there's a deity behind this story, it's without a doubt Him!

Who else could be so spiteful?

Cheng Shi's mind spiraled with confusion. His eyes darted around before he finally asked, cautiously:

“That's what you call knowledge? Isn't that just history from the Land of Hope?”

“There's a reason we study the past—to help us navigate the present. That's why history is always knowledge!”

“Huh? And what lesson are we supposed to take from this story?”

“Stay humble, and respect the mysteries of the world.”

“.....”

If you want to understand why [Deceit] appears in the void, you need to grasp one key point:

[Existence] represents reality, which is simple to understand. But the traces left behind by [Void] are what we call the void itself.

[Void] cannot be seen, but when it begins to erode [Existence], it takes on a form that [Existence] can comprehend—this form is the void.

Cheng Shi clicked his tongue, observing Gao Yu for a moment longer before confirming that the kid had accidentally hit the nail on the head.

“Are you well-versed in history?”

“I wouldn’t say well-versed, but I do love history. I’m a member of the History School.”

Oh-ho, interesting!

When a kid earnestly tells you that they’re part of the History School, you’ve gotta stop calling them a kid. Call them “Little Professor.”

The History School wasn’t some small, unimportant group. A vast knowledge of history and the ability to recall past eras with ease were just the first steps in gaining entry to this organization.

More importantly, every member of the History School had to have personally witnessed a significant event that shaped the future of the Land of Hope and written detailed accounts of that moment.

In a way, the entire historical record of the world’s most important events came from the History School.

They were the ones who ensured that the world's history was laid bare for all to see.

But such high membership requirements meant that members of the History School were essentially “chosen” history enthusiasts.

Because players in the [Faith Game] had no control over which trials they would enter next, witnessing a historical event was a matter of sheer luck.

Cheng Shi suddenly felt quite excited—he had recently developed a fondness for history too.

“Mind if I ask, Little Gao... which historical event did you witness?”

“It's classified within the school. I can't say.”

“.....”

Welp, guess I'm not worthy after all.

Cheng Shi clicked his tongue in disappointment before turning to look at Tao Yi, who had been silent the whole time.

“What about you, Miss Elf? How do you plan on completing your ritual?”

As a Wood Elf, Tao Yi was a follower of [Prosperity].

[Prosperity] rituals revolved around nurturing and growth.

When the ritual's target was oneself, it often involved... eating.

A lot of eating.

Normally, [Prosperity] followers never had to worry about food.

But today was different. Everyone's personal storage space had been sealed.

The poor pink-haired elf girl seemed to have lost her primary source of nourishment.

"I..."

Just as Tao Yi was about to explain her predicament, Su Yida returned, holding something in his hands, excitement evident on his face.

"Tao Yi, look! I found these mushrooms in the past of this land. Will this be enough for you?"

Tao Yi looked over in surprise, seeing that Su Yida's hands were indeed full of mushrooms.

"Huh? You're a follower of [Memory]? Thanks, this is perfect!"

She skipped over happily, taking the mushrooms from Su Yida's hands.

However, from Cheng Shi's perspective, the scene was bizarre beyond words.

Because to him, Su Yida's hands were completely empty!

"Amazing... truly amazing. What an impeccable performance."

Cheng Shi muttered to himself, his mind spinning.