

The Gods 72

Chapter 72: Relocating in the Storm

Su Yida was a talented actor.

At least, to the other players, his statement had conveyed three key points.

First, he was a [Memory] Mage, a Memory Traveler.

Second, he had a seemingly useful ability to revisit the past, a power that would undoubtedly be valuable in this [Oblivion] trial, subtly increasing his importance in the group.

Third, he had accurately deduced that Tao Yi was a follower of [Prosperity], demonstrating sharp observational skills.

But to Cheng Shi, Su Yida's performance contained two layers of deception hidden from the others:

His talent...

And his score!

Cheng Shi had already figured out Su Yida's talent:

The [Deceit] S-rank faith talent, "Mirage in the Rift Between Reality and Illusion."

Whenever someone believed Su Yida's lies, everything he described would become real to that person.

On the other hand, if someone saw through his lie, then they would see right through everything he was creating, as if it didn't exist.

In other words, Su Yida had created a handful of mushrooms that existed in a liminal space between reality and illusion.

Tao Yi believed him, so she could see the mushrooms—and eat them.

But Cheng Shi, having already guessed that Su Yida was a follower of [Deceit] and possessing a talent to see through lies, couldn't see the mushrooms at all. To him, Su Yida's performance looked like a clumsy, absurd pantomime.

This was precisely why many of [Deceit]'s talents, despite seeming overwhelmingly powerful, were often rated lower than expected.

Because once a lie was exposed, no matter how grand it was, it would come crashing down like a house of cards, impossible to rebuild.

But the curious thing was... Cheng Shi couldn't afford to expose Su Yida, not now.

Perhaps throughout this entire trial, he couldn't.

Su Yida might be the only person capable of enabling Tao Yi to fully utilize her power in the trial.

Additionally, an S-rank talent suggested that Su Yida's Ladder score was likely above 2000.

Looking at it that way, this man's scheming mind was no less formidable than the teammates from Cheng Shi's last trial.

Tao Yi, smiling with her eyes half-closed, continued to happily devour the mushrooms, completely unfazed by the battle that had just ended between Zhao Qian and Cui Dingtian.

The elderly man glanced briefly at Tao Yi, coughed, and nodded, seemingly reassessing the young woman from the opposing faith.

Zhao Qian, still eyeing Cui Dingtian with a strange expression, took a few steps back and exhaled deeply before speaking.

“Mummies sure live up to their reputation for defense. Impressive.”

“Cough... cough... I’m honored.”

As soon as the fight was over, the old man hunched over once more, resuming his coughing.

“Alright, as everyone can see, the rain is getting worse. Given the nature of the ground underfoot, if it gets any heavier, there’s a high chance of a mudslide or landslide.”

Zhao Qian kicked at the muddy ground, frowning as he continued.

“My suggestion is to head downward and then veer to that side. The mountain over there looks sturdier, with more solid rock. Whether we wait out the rain or face a heavier storm later, we’ll have better options there. What do you think?”

Everyone followed the direction Zhao Qian was pointing and saw that the mountain indeed appeared more solid, with a surface of dark white stone.

“No objections from me.”

“Hmm... no objections... glug...”

“Cough... cough... Let’s go quickly then.”

Zhao Qian took the lead, with Su Yida following energetically. Cui Dingtian wasn’t far behind.

Cheng Shi and Gao Yu naturally walked together at the back, silently following.

“Hey, you keep talking about us—what about you?” Gao Yu asked quietly.

“Me? What about me?”

“Your ritual. If you’re not a follower of [Prosperity], that means the only other...”

“Oh, that.” Cheng Shi chuckled awkwardly, then made a deliberate gesture of adjusting his pants.

“Already done.”

Gao Yu’s eyes followed Cheng Shi’s movement, and upon seeing Cheng Shi’s completely soaked pants, a sudden realization hit him. His eyes blinked in disbelief.

“Wait... that counts?”

You... impressive!

That was fast!”

“Hmm? Isn’t fast better? Saves time.”

“.....”

Gao Yu gave a bewildered smile and turned his head, clearly unable to understand Cheng Shi’s reasoning.

With her meal finished, Tao Yi appeared much more energetic. She dashed ahead to lead the group.

Not surprising, considering her nature as a Wood Elf. With her affinity for plants, the thick grass and thorns standing in their way were no obstacle.

With just a wave of her hand, Tao Yi cleared a path through the dense vegetation along the cliffside, creating an easy route for the others to follow.

“Come on, follow carefully.”

Her nimble form darted and leaped across the moss-covered rocks and vine-covered platforms, looking completely different from the seemingly harmless pink-haired girl from earlier.

Just like I said before—no one at this score level is simple.

Appearances can be deceiving.

Cheng Shi shook his head with a smile and followed closely behind.

While he couldn't match Tao Yi's effortless movements, he was still able to make his way down quickly.

But halfway down, a sudden burst of vines shot out, wrapping around Cheng Shi's leg and yanking him from the air.

Startled, Cheng Shi turned to see that it was Tao Yi who had “flourished” the plants around her, transforming them into a giant hand that caught him.

Instead of feeling embarrassed or inferior, Cheng Shi gave her a wide, grateful smile and immediately started kissing up to her.

“Wow, a true star! You're incredible, Lady Tao! Thank you, ma'am! I'm going to cling to your legs for life—I won't ever let go! Even the heavens will witness my devotion!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, thunder clapped loudly above them.

“Boom—BOOM—”

.....

The others watched in silence, somewhat amused by the spectacle. Tao Yi, blushing slightly, waved her hand dismissively.

“It’s nothing. Let’s help each other out and keep moving.”

The group pressed forward again, with Cheng Shi and Gao Yu falling to the back.

By now, the rain had intensified dramatically.

The torrential downpour was like a curtain of water, so thick it was obscuring the players’ vision. They had no choice but to fashion makeshift rain covers from nearby materials, holding them above their heads just to get a clear view of the path ahead.

“Hey, Little... Gao Yu...”

Hearing Cheng Shi’s attempt at small talk, Gao Yu sighed.

“Just call me whatever you want.”

“Little Master Gao!”

As soon as Cheng Shi said those words, a wave of satisfaction washed over him.

“I’m really into history too, especially the history of the Tower of Logic’s development in alchemical creations. Since we’re stuck walking, why not tell me more about it?”

Gao Yu seemed a little surprised.

“You’re interested in puppetry?”

Cheng Shi didn’t hold back, nodding earnestly.

“Absolutely!”

Then, lowering his voice, he added:

“Look, when I’m not in trials, it gets pretty lonely. But if I connect to other people’s spaces, I have to constantly be on guard, worried they might try something. It’s not safe.

But if I could learn a bit about alchemical creations and make a puppet companion, well...

Heh, heh, you get it, right?”

The rain was pouring down, and the noise of the storm should have kept their conversation private.

But at some point, Su Yida had quietly fallen behind. Now, walking just ahead of the two, he perked up, clearly listening to their hushed chat.

It was obvious that he was curious about what they were discussing.

Gao Yu, meanwhile, seemed to be growing more certain of Cheng Shi’s personality, giving him a slightly disdainful look.

“Flesh is only a temporary companion. Now that the [Gods] have descended, we may have infinite possibilities ahead of us. Why would you cling to something so fleeting?”

Cheng Shi paused for a moment, then countered:

“And what should I cling to? Eternal mechanical constructs? Are you going to build yourself a waifu mech to keep you company?”

Cheng Shi had just blurted it out as a joke, but to his surprise, Gao Yu’s steps faltered, his face turning bright red as he quickly looked away.

Cheng Shi stared at him in shock.

Wait a minute—don’t tell me you’ve already built one!

What???

Sure, mechs are every guy’s dream, but not like this, Little Master Gao!

You’re not even 18 yet!

How can your path veer so far off course?

I suggest you hand over the mech to me—I’ll bear this burden of sin for you!

Su Yida, who had overheard the conversation, frowned.

Had these two been whispering to each other all this time... just to talk about mechs?

They hadn’t even spotted a clue to the trial’s solution, and here they were discussing the “romance” of mechs?

Seriously? Was the current situation not romantic enough? Give it another hour of rain, and the entire valley would be so flooded, the water would be both “romantic” and “dramatic.”

Shaking his head in disbelief, Su Yida quickened his pace and caught up with the group ahead.

Once Su Yida was out of earshot, Cheng Shi turned back to Gao Yu.

“Different tastes for different people. So, tell me, Little Master Gao—what else can you share?”

Gao Yu wasn't particularly keen on engaging with someone he considered lowbrow, but being asked to share his knowledge felt too good to pass up. After a brief hesitation, he gave in.

“What do you want to know?”

“Oh, just tell me about the most notable figures in the alchemical creations field, their research focuses, and which ones are the most promising. Then, I can go look up more information later and focus my efforts.”

“Let me think...”

Gao Yu trudged through the muddy ground, pondering for a moment before replying:

“If you're asking about the true geniuses in alchemical creations, you'd be looking at Zangier, who died during an experiment in the early Civilization Era, and Bacchus, who, toward the end of the era, transformed his own wife into a new form of life.”

“...I'm talking about creating a puppet wife, not turning my wife into a puppet! Let's talk about the first guy—Zangier!”

Cheng Shi's heart skipped a beat upon hearing the name.

According to Chernosly, Zangier hadn't died in an accident.

He'd been assassinated by scholars from other schools at the Tower of Logic!