

The Gods 77

Chapter 77: The Replacement for Prosperity of Yesteryear: Fleeting Radiance!

The corpse of the Vortex Devourer continued to rise after swallowing everyone.

So, by the time the players broke free from the belly of the beast, they were already close to the surface.

With Cui Dingtian's powerful swimming, it wasn't long before they were dragged out of the water.

"Splash—"

"Whoa!"

"Huff, huff!"

"We're saved..."

The moment everyone's heads broke the surface, the old man immediately retracted his skin and began coughing violently, sinking back into the water.

Zhao Qian, quick on his feet, grabbed hold of him.

"Elder Cui!"

Su Yida hastily pushed himself away, afraid of sinking back down with the old man.

Tao Yi frowned slightly at the sight, summoning a floating piece of wood to support Cui Dingtian under his arms.

Cheng Shi wasn't paying attention to any of this. What concerned him most was that just a few hours ago, there had been a monstrous storm and massive waves, yet now, there wasn't a trace of it.

All that stretched out before him was a vast ocean, littered with floating debris and countless dead, unknown creatures. But there was no sign of the earlier disaster.

Startled, Cheng Shi scanned the surroundings, unable to believe his eyes.

“Is it... over?”

No one could answer him.

Gao Yu, floating on a piece of driftwood, let out a deep sigh.

“Well, it looks like I’ll still get to celebrate my 18th birthday.”

Tao Yi, looking exhausted, let out a dry laugh and sank her body into the water up to her neck.

By now, nearly 20 hours had passed since the trial began.

The sun was hanging low in the sky, casting light and heat over the ocean, burning their skin.

It took the group a good while of floating on the surface, catching their breath, to confirm that this wasn’t some kind of illusion.

The disaster had truly passed.

At least... for now.

“Cheng Shi, quick, heal Elder Cui! He’s not going to make it!”

Zhao Qian came closer, pushing a piece of driftwood with a visibly anxious expression.

Cheng Shi frowned, growing more and more suspicious of Zhao Qian's attitude toward Cui Dingtian.

Zhao clearly cared about the old man, but aside from lending help when it was convenient, he didn't seem too eager to go out of his way during more dangerous moments.

Could it be...

Let's not overthink it for now. Whatever Zhao Qian's motives, the fact that they had all survived was largely thanks to Elder Cui.

Cheng Shi quickly swam over to the old man.

The moment his hand touched Cui Dingtian's wrist, Cheng Shi immediately realized just how bad the old man's condition was.

His heart wasn't pounding with the vigor of exertion—it was slowing down, as if the man were truly about to turn into a mummy.

Was this the after-effect of his divine power?

Or the cost of his talent?

It seemed far too severe.

In this state, ordinary healing spells would only delay the inevitable, not save him.

Prosperity of Yesteryear might do the trick, but with their personal storage spaces sealed, there was no way to access the potion.

Wait!

Actually, there was a way!

“Gao Yu!”

Clutching Cui Dingtian’s hand, Cheng Shi shouted toward the young mage:

“I need an alchemy furnace! At least 15 centimeters tall, with a grinding wheel, a mixing mechanism, and a pressure valve. It must be fire-resistant and heat-conductive!”

Gao Yu blinked in surprise, but quickly nodded.

His toolkit had been partially lost in the belly of the giant beast, with much of it torn away by the void. However, he had managed to hold onto most of the tools and materials.

Because he had hidden them inside his own stomach!

He had been using his own flesh to slow the decay of the tools.

These tools were his only lifeline in the trial. Losing them would mean being unable to continue.

Having no other choice, this crude method was the only option he had.

Gritting his teeth, Gao Yu used a sharp stick to slice open his recently healed stomach and pulled out the materials, quickly hammering them together.

Alchemy furnaces in the Land of Hope followed roughly the same specifications—the only differences were the materials and the internal components.

Cheng Shi's request was clear, and there were just enough materials to craft a small handheld furnace, so Gao Yu swiftly completed the task.

The moment Cheng Shi took hold of the furnace, a crazed gleam flashed in his eyes—one that screamed, I'm going to bet big this time.

Everyone could see the mad glint in his eyes and knew that Cheng Shi was serious, but that he also had almost no confidence.

As for what he wasn't sure about...

It was likely the idea of crafting potions here on the spot.

"You know how to brew potions?"

Su Yida looked genuinely bewildered.

Gao Yu, on the other hand, scoffed.

If Su Yida had been eavesdropping on their entire conversation earlier, he should have realized that Cheng Shi's primary interest was in alchemical creations, a school that didn't just focus on puppets—it also pursued strange and dangerous potions with relentless passion.

Cheng Shi's face was tense, and he ignored Su Yida's question.

"Elder Cui's condition is critical. Normally, [Decay]'s divine power should be flowing through his body, but as you can see, it's being suppressed by some other force.

If we let him continue like this, by nightfall, he'll truly become a mummy.

My healing talent is limited, and I can't reverse his condition.

But... I do have one method left. It's a gamble, but it's worth trying.

And that method... is alchemy!"

Under the shocked gazes of the other players, Cheng Shi opened the furnace.

"You've all heard of Prosperity of Yesteryear, right? It's an A-rank potion that combines the divine powers of [Memory] and [Prosperity].

While learning alchemy, I attempted to simulate its properties and managed to create a potion with a very similar effect."

"You can brew A-rank potions???" Su Yida exclaimed in disbelief, immediately following up with skepticism. "But there's no [Divinity] here, is there?"

Once again, Cheng Shi chose to ignore him.

"I called it 'Fleeting Radiance.' Drinking it allows the user to temporarily cast aside all pain and instantly restore their body to peak condition."

"But?" Zhao Qian, sensing something, frowned and asked.

"Yes... but..."

The potion has severe side effects.

After five days, the user will fall back into their previous condition, and the speed at which they approach death will accelerate dramatically.

In other words, it's a life-draining potion. You could call it five days of 'fleeting radiance.'"

Cheng Shi finished speaking and turned to look at Cui Dingtian.

"Elder Cui, I know you're searching for your son. If you survive, there may still be hope. But if you die here..."

Cui Dingtian, whose consciousness was barely holding on, suddenly clenched Cheng Shi's hand with surprising strength.

Understood.

Without hesitation, Cheng Shi tore off a piece of flesh from his own arm and tossed it into the furnace.

The sight shocked everyone.

"Flesh alchemy?" Gao Yu muttered in disbelief.

"What else? Flesh is one of the best alchemical materials, and my flesh contains healing power.

But my flesh alone might not be enough. Even though this potion doesn't require [Divinity], it still needs the combined powers of [Prosperity] and [Memory]..."

He didn't need to finish the sentence. Everyone's gaze followed Cheng Shi's, landing on Tao Yi and Su Yida.

Tao Yi's eyes widened in surprise, but she quickly nodded resolutely.

Despite the searing pain, she summoned a branch to scrape off a piece of skin from her arm and placed it into the furnace.

After this, fearing that her [Prosperity] power might not be enough, she prepared to cut even more skin from her other arm.

In her mind, Elder Cui's current state was entirely due to his efforts to save them.

From Tao Yi's perspective, whether it was to ensure the team's strength going forward or simply to repay her debt, saving him was a must.

Besides, compared to the agony they had endured underwater, this pain was nothing.

Tao Yi's logic was simple, but Cheng Shi stopped her just in time.

"Alchemy is about balance and precision. Sometimes, less is more."

He then placed the furnace in front of Su Yida.

Su Yida's face darkened, his expression conflicted.

Truth be told, he had no inherent objection to saving Cui Dingtian. In fact, he was more than willing to help.

After all, Cui Dingtian's strength and character made him an invaluable ally.

But the problem was... Su Yida wasn't actually a [Memory] follower!

If Cheng Shi really could brew this potion, as he claimed, then Su Yida feared that the process might expose his true identity.

While revealing his true identity might not have dire consequences, the worst-case scenario would be that the entire trial team could lose three key players: Cui Dingtian, Su Yida himself, and... Tao Yi.

That would be a disaster!

Did Su Yida have these concerns? Absolutely.

And Cheng Shi?

Of course, he had already accounted for all of this.

Because he was also lying.

To be honest, before he got hold of Ardos' alchemy notes, Cheng Shi didn't even know what an alchemy furnace looked like.

His potions had always been conjured out of thin air.

But today was different.

With his personal storage sealed, he couldn't just make things up on the fly.

So, to pull this off, he needed to stage a convincing performance!

His mind raced, drawing upon every bit of alchemical knowledge he had. He added as many details as he could, describing the effects of the potion to make the entire ordeal more believable.

If it hadn't been for Tao Yi and Su Yida, this plan might not have gone so smoothly.

But fate had a funny way of working things out:

Their team just so happened to include a [Prosperity] follower and a [Memory] follower.

Even if the latter was actually a [Deceit] follower.

But that didn't matter!

Let's remember the power of [Offering to the Void]: When five others, besides the caster, acknowledge the existence of a fabricated item, the item becomes real.

Undoubtedly, everyone present believed Cheng Shi could brew this potion.

And besides Cheng Shi, four people believed Su Yida was a [Memory] mage, that he truly had [Memory] powers.

Only Su Yida himself doubted whether his flesh would work for the potion.

So, the biggest wager wasn't on anyone else—it was on Su Yida.

Cheng Shi was betting that Su Yida could convince himself, that he could make his heart believe he truly possessed [Memory] powers, and that therefore, the potion wouldn't fail.

This gamble wasn't about Cheng Shi deceiving Su Yida.

It was about waiting for Su Yida to deceive himself!

Sure enough, Su Yida's mind raced through countless thoughts, and in the end, he landed on a reasonable yet absurd conclusion:

His [Memory] power might be fake, but in the eyes of others, it was still [Memory].

So, by divine will, the potion shouldn't fail.

A flicker of hesitation crossed Su Yida's eyes, but with a determined grimace, he tore a piece of flesh from his arm and threw it into the furnace.

Success!

The moment Su Yida acted, Cheng Shi knew he had won!

To hell with those five days of "fleeting radiance"!

As long as they survived three days, there would be plenty of time to figure out how to save everyone later.

If they couldn't survive those three days, well, it wouldn't matter anymore.

Ecstatic, Cheng Shi shut the furnace and flashed a crazed smile at Zhao Qian.

"I need fire!"