

The Gods 82

Chapter 82: The Great River's Water Descends from the Heavens!

If disappearance signifies annihilation, then what is the true significance of this boundary?

The players found themselves in what seemed to be an unsolvable situation. Once Zhao Qian and Cheng Shi exhausted their mental strength, the group would inevitably plummet and disappear beneath the boundary line.

But the trial had to have an answer—it always did.

The question was, where was the answer?

In truth, the answer wasn't difficult to deduce. In fact, every one of the six players had already thought of it.

The answer most likely lay beneath the boundary!

Perhaps the boundary wasn't a line of annihilation, but a gateway to survival!

But then came the next question:

How could they verify if their theory was correct?

As Cui Dingtian had said earlier: "Truth comes from practice."

Someone would have to take the risk and verify what lay beyond the boundary.

And that was the hardest part.

Who would go!?

In their last trial, there was a reckless assassin who had charged ahead, even if she had dragged everyone into trouble. At least she had been at the forefront.

But in this trial?

They had the old, the weak, and the young... but no one with the guts to charge ahead.

In terms of both faith and personality, Zhao Qian seemed like the type who would charge headfirst into danger without hesitation.

But in this critical moment, he remained silent.

As for Su Yida... well, that wasn't even worth considering.

For a moment, the group fell into a tense silence. And because their cooperation had gone smoothly up until now, this silence was even harder to break.

No one could come up with a good enough excuse to ask a seemingly decent teammate to risk their life for the group.

Cui Dingtian quietly reeled in his skin-rope and returned to the hot air balloon.

He looked at the worried faces of his teammates, hesitated for a long time, and finally sighed.

"Sigh, let this old man do it. I'm old. I don't have many days left."

"As Cheng Shi said, even if we get past this, I'll at most have three days left anyway. You're all still young; you have hope ahead of you.

I've already made it farther than I ever thought I would."

Just as he was about to release his grip on the rope and drop down again, Zhao Qian hooked his leg around him, his face full of inner conflict as he said:

“Elder Cui, are you really giving up on finding Qiushi?”

Qiushi.

Such a familiar way to refer to him.

So Zhao Qian does know him!

Cui Dingtian didn't seem to catch the underlying meaning in Zhao's words. His face darkened at first, but then he burst out laughing.

“No need to find him anymore. Qiushi's a good kid. He's independent. For all I know, he's already living a better life than I am, haha!

I taught him from a young age to be upright and stand tall, just like his grandfather taught me. That's where my name comes from—Cui Dingtian, 'Standing Tall.'

You're all still young, with long roads ahead of you. I'm old and can't see the path forward anymore...

Besides, in this game, warriors are supposed to charge ahead, right?

So...”

Before he could finish speaking, Cui Dingtian forcibly knocked Zhao Qian's leg aside and let himself fall backward, plunging toward the abyss before anyone could react.

“Elder Cui!”

“Old man!”

Cheng Shi was quick to react, but even his outstretched hand only brushed against Cui Dingtian as he fell.

Frowning, Cheng Shi considered casting a calming spell to stop the old man, but someone acted even faster.

Zhao Qian, who had been sluggish and slow earlier, suddenly kicked into high gear. Flames erupted in the furnace, blasting out intense heat and forcing the hot air balloon to rise rapidly.

Cui Dingtian’s descent slowed slightly, and a small smile appeared on his face.

But it wasn’t enough—he was still falling.

There has to be another way!

There’s no way this trial is completely devoid of clues!

But what is it!?

Cheng Shi furrowed his brow, his mind racing.

[Oblivion], disappearance, reality, abyss, boundary...

Countless sparks of inspiration flashed and faded in his mind, colliding and merging into a mental storm that rivaled the flames Zhao Qian was directing into the furnace.

But while Cheng Shi could keep calm, Zhao Qian couldn't hold out any longer.

"Priest! Boost my mental strength!"

Zhao Qian called out to Cheng Shi for help. And at that very moment, all of Cheng Shi's thoughts froze. The scattered puzzle pieces in his mind coalesced, forming a picture from memory.

Suddenly, he recalled a conversation in the Trade Channel.

There was once a priest of [Oblivion] who complained that their patron god didn't feel like a deity of [Oblivion], but rather one of [Void].

Their god was obsessed with studying the void, trying to merge with it. During trials, the orders they received weren't about defeating opposing believers, but rather about uncovering the secrets of the [Void].

Thinking back to the Vortex Devourer they encountered yesterday, it seemed clear that [Oblivion] indeed had this inclination.

If that was the case, could it be that the boundary below led directly into the void?

Could getting closer to the void be the answer the god was giving them?

It's important to remember that the void isn't inaccessible. In fact, it's more welcoming than reality, accepting all forms of existence.

People feared the void because they projected their fears of void rifts onto the void itself.

At the boundary between reality and the void, void rifts had the power to erase existence, swallowing anything that approached.

Any lifeform that got too close would be obliterated.

That was the true source of fear!

But as long as one could withstand the eroding power of the void rifts, venturing into the void itself was quite simple.

The problem was that crossing a void rift required extraordinary conditions—beyond special semi-divine artifacts, a person would need godlike power.

To put it simply, only the most powerful individuals could tread in the void.

Now, looking back at the boundary beneath them, didn't it seem like a boundary between reality and the void?

A boundary with no buffer, crudely severing reality from the void.

And yet... none of the six of them were powerful enough to cross a void rift.

However...

They couldn't cross the rift themselves, but they had seen something large enough to help!

With this thought in mind, an idea began to take shape in Cheng Shi's mind...

And it would be another massive gamble!

A wild, outlandish gamble!

After fulfilling Zhao Qian's request for a mental restoration spell, Cheng Shi tugged on Su Yida's leg.

Su Yida looked down, puzzled, and saw Cheng Shi staring up at him with an exasperated expression.

“Hey, Big Bro Yida, did you just pee yourself? Something’s dripping on me from above!”

Cheng Shi’s complaint was so out of the blue that it threw everyone off, even though they had been focusing intently on Cui Dingtian.

The others quickly glanced at Su Yida in surprise.

Su Yida’s face froze, and then morphed into a furious expression.

“Screw you! I didn’t pee!”

He violently shook his leg, as if trying to shake Cheng Shi off.

Tao Yi, startled, tried to calm things down.

“Su Yida, don’t do that!”

Su Yida, embarrassed and angry, looked up at Tao Yi, raising his voice in defense.

“Tao Yi, don’t listen to him! I didn’t—”

Before he could finish, his furious expression suddenly turned to one of shock and terror, his eyes widening as if he’d seen something unbelievable.

“Water! It’s water! The disappeared water is falling back down! Look out!!!”

Tao Yi's head snapped upward in response to Su Yida's words.

And just as her gaze pierced through the thin wooden parachute, she saw it—the same kind of torrential downpour as yesterday was hurtling down from the endless sky above!

No matter how quick Tao Yi's reflexes were, the sight left her momentarily paralyzed with fear.

There was no need to debate who would cross the boundary now. With this volume of water, they would all be pushed into the boundary line!

In a flash, Su Yida's quick thinking saved the moment.

He yanked hard on the skin-rope and shouted:

“Tao Yi, let go! If the parachute takes the full force of this, we'll be pushed down instantly!

Elder Cui! Get back up! Dying now is pointless—look! There's something in the water!

Grab onto them, and we can climb back up!

The water that disappeared is returning!! It'll take us up!! Hurry!!!”

True to his name, Cui Dingtian acted swiftly in this critical moment. He tightened his skin-rope and shot upward.

As he ascended, he lashed out with another skin-rope, reaching out to grab onto the falling debris from the returning ocean.

Zhao Qian, seeing this, didn't dare hold back any longer. He stretched out both arms and summoned a massive flaming bow, the heat distorting the air around it. The fiery string hummed with tension, making everyone's ears buzz.

“What do we fight for? Only blood and fire!”

As the prayer of [War] left his lips, fine beads of blood seeped from Zhao Qian’s arms.

And then, all they heard was a roar from deep within the flames as a blazing white arrow shot from the bow, tearing through the wooden parachute and flying straight toward the oncoming water.

“Zzz—BOOM!”

The arrow ripped through the air, and the white flames at its tip exploded upon contact with the water, burning a massive hole in the downpour.

“It’s now or never!” Su Yida screamed. “That drifting log! It’s our only chance!”

Tao Yi, seeing another piece of wooden debris, channeled her [Prosperity] powers to their fullest. In an instant, the log sprouted new growth, its branches and leaves spreading into a thick canopy.

The dense foliage acted as a buffer, slowing the log’s fall.

Cui Dingtian, now reinvigorated, wasted no time in bundling up his teammates like a pack of dumplings. Then, with a swift motion, he used his skin-rope to swing them through the falling water and onto the log.

Su Yida, playing the role of the group’s eyes, spotted another piece of debris in the air and shouted:

“4 o’clock, up and to the right! Zhao Qian, keep going!”

But Zhao Qian was spent. His breathing was labored, and it was clear he had nothing left to give.

At that moment, Cheng Shi spoke up.

“This isn’t going to work. We can’t keep up with the speed of the falling water.”

“YOU!!!” Su Yida glared at Cheng Shi, furious that he was being so negative at a time like this.

“Vortex Devourer!”

Cheng Shi’s expression was confident as he continued, “If we want to cross that boundary, we need to find the corpse of a Vortex Devourer!”

Vortex Devourer?

What did the “pet” of the [Void] have to do with this?

Before anyone could fully grasp what Cheng Shi meant, Su Yida’s face suddenly lit up with realization. He pointed excitedly to a spot above and shouted:

“There! Elder Cui! Zhao Qian! Look over there! There’s a Vortex Devourer’s corpse!!”

Zhao Qian turned to look and, sure enough, spotted the massive creature falling through the water!

How had such a large object gone unnoticed until just now?

Cui Dingtian wasn’t entirely sure how the Vortex Devourer related to the boundary, but it didn’t matter—he didn’t hesitate.

In a flash, he swung his bundled-up teammates toward the creature’s body. As the water pressure increased, he used the remaining skin-rope to pull himself to the falling corpse.

The group made contact with the Vortex Devourer's thick hide without incident. Cheng Shi, wasting no time, stuck his right hand out of his "mummy wrap" and punched the creature's belly.

Perhaps due to the pressure of the moment or the constraints of being wrapped up, his punch missed the mark.

But the Thunderclap Judgment was powerful enough. Even a misfire was more than enough to achieve Cheng Shi's goal.

"BOOM—"

The scene from the previous day replayed itself, only this time, they were striking the creature's exterior rather than its interior.

A massive bolt of lightning tore through the sky and blasted a charred hole into the Vortex Devourer's stomach.

"Get in! Quickly!"

This time, Cheng Shi didn't charge in first. Instead, he grabbed onto Tao Yi.

Tao Yi didn't think too much about it, assuming Cheng Shi had overexerted himself. She held onto him tightly and jumped into the beast's stomach.

The others followed swiftly behind.

And just as Cui Dingtian was the last to leap into the creature's belly, the colossal corpse reached the boundary.

The body vanished.

And so did everyone inside.