

The Gods 89

Chapter 89: So It Was You After All!

Su Yida stiffly crawled into the tent from outside, not even lifting his head as he spoke to Tao Yi:

“It’s... your turn... Quickly, move this half-dead meat sack... out of here.”

Then, with a jolt of realization, his eyes widened as they locked onto Cheng Shi’s cold gaze.

“You’re awake!?”

There wasn’t a hint of guilt or regret in Su Yida’s eyes for having killed Cheng Shi. In fact, it seemed as though he had completely forgotten what had happened. Instead, his voice was laced with mockery as he sneered:

“So, it turns out we do have a priest in our team. Lucky us. I was starting to think you were just Tao Yi’s emergency food stash.”

Tao Yi didn’t respond to his words. As a follower of [Prosperity], she knew well that without food, her divine powers would diminish quickly. Had Cheng Shi not woken up, it wasn’t impossible that he might have become just that—a backup food source.

The only reason they had kept watch over him for so long in silence was because his identity as a priest offered them a shred of hope.

Cheng Shi understood this and, despite his weakness, struggled to cast Heal.

He didn’t target Su Yida. Instead, the healing went to Tao Yi.

However, the Shared Divine Grace effect meant Su Yida still felt a brief moment of warmth from the healing.

“Another one! I’m freezing out here!”

Cheng Shi sneered inwardly, completely ignoring Su Yida's demand.

As he attempted to sit up, his body gave out, causing him to fall into Su Yida's arms.

Surprisingly, Su Yida didn't avoid him. He caught Cheng Shi and supported him.

"I know you're weak, but everyone's weak right now. So your little act won't work. If you want to survive, it's time to take your turn guarding the camp."

Cheng Shi used Su Yida's arm to steady himself and then asked, "Was it you who saved me?"

"If by 'Fleeting Radiance' you mean that potion, then no. You should thank yourself for keeping yourself alive for five more days."

Su Yida chuckled, but there was something sinister behind his smile.

"What did you see in the void rift?"

Su Yida's smile faded instantly, his expression turning cold.

"I saw death and lies. Some people tell grand stories, but it's all just fiction."

Cheng Shi raised an eyebrow, confirming one important fact.

The Su Yida who had killed him wasn't the Su Yida standing before him now.

Interesting... What kind of entity had emerged from the void, impersonating Su Yida to kill him?

Or perhaps it hadn't been an impersonation at all.

In that moment, Cheng Shi's mind circled back to the same thought Zhao Qian had once had.

An individual who knew everything about him, someone who had greeted him with "long time no see"—was it possible...

They had come from the future?

But that theory clashed with Cheng Shi's understanding. All power related to time manipulation was believed to be unable to affect past trials—this was an established rule.

It shouldn't be something players alone could break.

Wait a minute...

If players couldn't break the rules...

Could it mean that something else had intervened?

A spark of realization flashed through Cheng Shi's mind. He thought he finally understood.

At some point in the future, a special entity had sent that version of Su Yida back to the present to kill him!

And then, after committing the murder, the killer had returned to their proper future.

However, there was still a flaw in this theory.

Why hadn't Cheng Shi died?

If the Su Yida who killed him had really come from the future, Cheng Shi knew, as a follower of [Deceit], that Su Yida wouldn't have simply stopped after strangling him.

If Cheng Shi had been the one sent back in time to kill someone, he would've made sure to leave no chance for survival—a clean, undeniable death would've justified the journey.

So... why?

“Are you not afraid of death?” Cheng Shi suddenly asked, his eyes locking onto Su Yida's smirk.

Su Yida raised an eyebrow, assuming Cheng Shi was referring to his earlier act of stepping into the void rift. He replied calmly:

“I am, but I'm more afraid of walking away empty-handed.”

“You really are crazy.”

Cheng Shi patted him on the shoulder, pushing himself past Su Yida and out of the tent.

Tao Yi, who had been silent the whole time, quietly followed him.

Su Yida turned to look at the two of them slipping out of the tent, his expression unreadable.

—

As soon as Cheng Shi stepped outside, he realized that his expectations of a freezing, windy landscape didn't even begin to compare to the reality of the situation.

The cold struck him like a physical force, immediately raising goosebumps all over his body.

His joints began to stiffen noticeably, and the air he breathed in seemed to freeze his nasal passages and throat.

So cold?

What kind of ice field is this?

Cheng Shi shivered uncontrollably as he cast a cold resistance spell on himself and then shared the buff with his teammates.

Except for Su Yida.

Elder Cui's face brightened slightly upon seeing Cheng Shi awake, but as he remembered that Cheng Shi, like himself, only had five days left to live, his smile turned bittersweet.

Gao Yu, too, seemed relieved, though the warmth that had previously marked their relationship was gone. His concern now was more like the care one would show to any teammate, nothing more.

Cheng Shi keenly noticed the change in Gao Yu's demeanor. Without saying a word, he nodded in acknowledgment to both men and then, like Tao Yi, quietly took his place outside the tent.

When the wind ripped through a hole in the tent, Cheng Shi rushed to cover it with his body, using Elder Cui's skin to patch the gap.

When Tao Yi's feet froze to the ground, preventing her from moving, Cheng Shi channeled the last of his energy to let a sliver of healing spill from his fingertips, easing her discomfort enough for her to move.

The wind continued to howl furiously, and the temperature kept plummeting.

After an hour or so, Cheng Shi felt like every part of his body had been frozen solid, save for the faint beating of his heart.

“Is... it... time?”

Tao Yi could barely move her head to nod. Her face was covered in frost, and she was crawling on the ground, inching her way back toward the tent.

Cheng Shi followed close behind.

Every step felt like crossing a frozen abyss, each movement a battle against the bitter cold.

But before they could crawl into the tent, Su Yida emerged, a little earlier than his scheduled shift.

He helped Tao Yi inside and then rubbed his arms, trying to warm himself as he stared at Cheng Shi.

Cheng Shi’s face was so frozen that he couldn’t even muster a smile. He staggered closer to Su Yida and, with a trembling voice, whispered into his ear:

“I don’t care what point in the future you’ve come from, nor what your purpose is. End this now, or we’ll die together.”

Su Yida looked puzzled.

“Are you freezing mad, Cheng Shi? What are you talking about?”

“I don’t care what point in the future you’ve come from, nor what your purpose is. End this now, or we’ll die together.”

“I won’t repeat myself a third time.”

With that, Cheng Shi raised his hand, mimicking the gesture of removing a mask, and forced his frozen muscles to twist into something resembling a smile.

At that moment, Su Yida's face darkened instantly.

His eyes flickered with uncertainty. His face tensed, and in the span of just a few seconds, countless thoughts raced through his mind.

But in the end, he didn't dare gamble that Cheng Shi was bluffing.

He must have a backup plan!

Of course, he would have a backup plan!

Otherwise, there's no way this man could've made it so far through trials as brutal as this!

Damn! I underestimated just one thing—Cheng Shi is just as much of a madman as I am!

No, he's crazier!

This mutual destruction is pointless!

But... I can't die yet!

And so...

Su Yida relented.

He raised his hand and gave a slight wave. The howling winds reversed, the endlessly frozen earth began to melt, and the temperature around them rapidly rose. Even in the distance, trees began to sprout from the once barren mountainsides.

[Time]!

It was the power of [Time]!

With a mere wave of his hand, Su Yida had reversed time, transforming the ice field back to what it had been before the freeze.

Cheng Shi felt the stiffness in his body melting away. His legs gave out, and he collapsed to the ground.

Su Yida looked down at Cheng Shi's weakened form, his face now dark as ink.

"When did you figure it out?"

Cheng Shi smiled.

In truth, he hadn't been completely sure. But when they had made contact earlier in the tent, he had noticed one glaring detail—Su Yida, who had always been obsessed with the [Divinity] in Cheng Shi's body, hadn't made a single move for it.

That detail alone had made Cheng Shi suspicious of his identity.

But there was no way he was going to tell Su Yida that. He was going to enjoy this little victory.

Even though his body was drained, Cheng Shi still mustered enough strength to shrug.

"I didn't figure it out. I was just bluffing."

“?”

“Hahaha! Hahaha, so it was you! It really was you!

You really are one...”

Cheng Shi forced out a deep, wheezing laugh.

“... a complete and utter...

madman!”