

GUARDIAN

Chapter: 106 (END)

Strong tremors rocked the surface; the underneath of Huang Quan was even more stormy.

Snake Fourth Uncle firmly protected Zhu Hong, as if she was still that spoiled young snake wrapped around his wrist.

Partially visible scales, as hard as iron, loomed underneath his skin, protecting her from the rocks and sand falling from all directions.

The underground calmed only after an indeterminate amount of time; the thick, black gas that obscured one's knowledge of where they were miraculously began to gradually dissipate. Those who survived wearily stuck their heads out from various corners and carefully examined their surroundings.

Zhu Hong asked in a low voice: "Fourth Uncle, what is it?"

Snake Fourth Uncle shushed her, released his divine senses, and cautiously scanned the situation nearby.

Right at this moment, Zhu Hong suddenly made a small exclamation. Snake Fourth Uncle turned his head and saw that the branch of the Da Shenmu, which had grown a third bud for an unknown reason, had gradually begun to float out from her hands. Zhu Hong wanted to immediately chase after it but was grabbed by Snake Fourth Uncle: "Wait, what are you going to do?"

Zhu Hong was a bit anxious: “Shen Wei saved my life. I also agreed with him that I would find a place to plant it. How could I lose the branch of the Da Shenmu?”

After she said this, she broke away from Snake Fourth Uncle’s hand and ran out as if she was a newborn calf who wasn’t afraid of tigers (t/n fearlessly).

Zhu Hong had only been born for not even several hundreds of years and completely did not know of various complexities. She had never heard of “Houtu Great Seal” and didn’t know to be afraid, and so rushed out brazenly and fearlessly.

Snake Fourth Uncle hesitated for a moment, but ultimately could not be at ease. He reluctantly transformed back into two legs and chased after her.

The Shenmu tree branch flew straight to the waters of Wang Chuan. On top of the water, the black gas had already completely dissipated, revealing the deep, serene, and icy cold Wang Chuan water underneath. For a moment, the Dashen Mu hovered in the air. Then, it directly dove down.

Zhu Hong was instinctively a bit afraid of the Wang Chuan waters, but she thought of her promise. After a momentary pause, she steeled her resolves, shifted into the original shape of a python, and with a “putong” sound, also dove down. Snake Fourth Uncle immediately followed after her.

To the eyes of others, these two snakes were practically throwing away their lives. Although for some unknown reason, it was currently quiet, who knew what the actual situation was at the Great

t Seal? A new round of eruptions could potentially be brewing. To jump down at this time... wasn't that looking for death?

Zhu Hong and Snake Fourth Uncle followed the Dashen Mu and sank all the way down. Snake Fourth Uncle's eyes suddenly flashed; he had a wide range of experience and knowledge and, at this moment, already had an idea in his heart—the direction that the Dashen Mu was sinking was exactly the direction of the legendary Ancient Tree of Merits.

Sure enough, not long after, they saw the lofty and withered Ancient Tree of Merits. The Ancient Tree of Merits, which had been motionless for thousands of years, suddenly stretched out its dried branches and slowly undulated up and down in the waters of Wang Chuan, shaking gently. The branches brought about light ripples, as if it was welcoming something.

The branch from the Da Shenmu landed next to the Ancient Tree of Merits, burying itself into the deepest part of the soil.

With a speed visible to the naked eye, it then rapidly took root and sprouted, growing branches and leaves. Before long, it was already standing straight and covered in rich canopy, contrasting with the Ancient Tree of Merits next to it.

Following, it reached out a lithe, thin, and long strand like a silk ribbon and tenderly entangled around the Ancient Tree of Merits that had been withered and dead for thousands of years. Suddenly, Zhu Hong covered her mouth in astonishment—small tender buds started growing on the dead tree!

The two giant trees continued to grow thick and tall until they were thousands of zhang long, and persisted until they emerged from the turbulent waters of Wang Chuan. The green shade covered the entirety of the Yan King Hall, which had already been reduced to desolate, broken walls. Even then, they continued to flourish. Looking from afar, the crown of the tree seemed furious in its rolling density, and it was nearly impossible to see the top.

The wounds on Snake Fourth Uncle's body miraculously healed underneath the tree. His gaze finally landed behind the Ancient Tree of Merits—the Houtu Great Seal rock that had existed before was already nowhere to be seen.

The Houtu Great Seal disintegrated, and the land that was pervaded with black gas and the sound of ghosts suddenly broke out in raging fires. The four pillars returned to their original spots—maybe a new Great Seal would be finished soon, or maybe...

Above ground, Wang Zheng suddenly muttered, "What... is that sound?"

"It's mountains." Shennong bowed and listened for a moment. "The sound of ten thousand mountains crying together."

Wang Zheng opened her eyes wide. "Mountains can cry too?"

Shennong bowl was briefly silent. “They can. Legend says that the mountains cried together only when Pangu fell. Not even when Kunlun Jun’s body became the Guardian Lamp was there a sound like this, probably because at that time it wasn’t truly the complete extinguishment of body and soul.”

Wang Zheng stood blankly for quite a while before she reacted to the meaning behind his words. Whether it was Shen Wei or the Ghost Slayer, she hadn’t had much interaction with either, but by the time she’d realized it her face was already streaming with tears, to her own surprise— she knew in her heart that ghosts could not easily shed tears, but she couldn’t suppress them no matter what.

Sang Zan sighed, and reached out to take her into his arms.

At that moment, a familiar voice suddenly, softly said, “Foolish girl, what’s with the crying?”

Stupefied, Wang Zheng looked down. Zhao Yunlan had opened his eyes at some point, and slowly got to his feet.

Wang Zheng met his eyes, but suddenly felt there was something ineffably strange; that person was definitely Chief Zhao who she interacted with daily, and yet it seemed... there was some unspoken difference.

Her heart seized up wildly— could it be that Shen Wei had really taken away all of his memories?

However, Shennong bowl looked him up and down with bewilderment for a moment, then suddenly retreated three steps back, sl

owly knelt down, and with the utmost deference performed a greeting: “This one pays respects to the Mountain Saint.”

Zhao Yunlan... Kunlun Jun put his hands behind his back, and waved him up as he pleased.

Wang Zheng felt as if the scene before her eyes was blurring, for just then the scrunched and wrinkled windbreaker on the man’s body had flashed into long-sleeved and girded green robes, like the flickering vision of that person who had emerged thousands of years ago in the chaotic times.

Shennong bowl quietly said, “Master forced down and suppressed the Mountain Saint’s primordial essence; and when he sent you off into the wheel of reincarnation, he entered into a contract with the Ghost Slayer, which decreed that for generation after generation he would live or die with the Great Seal. Now, great calamity has come upon the mortal world, and the Houtu Great Seal had broken down; the Ghost Slayer sacrificed himself for the Great Seal, so all karma has already been settled.”

The blazing inferno had turned the color of warm orange, its fire reflecting in Kunlun Jun’s eyes. He was silent for a long time before he said, softly, “I know.”

Shennong bowl continued, “The Ghost Slayer was a Ghost King who ascended to sagehood, seeking goodness to attain goodness, and in the end eliminated your...”

“Alright, don’t say any more.” Kunlun Jun didn’t turn his head back, his handsome face gathering an unspeakably deep melancholy. “I know this all.”

Shennong bowed responded by lowering his head with deferential respect. Only after a while did he go on, “When Master departed this world, he ordered me to oversee the contract between him and the Ghost Slayer. This humble one can now retire with merit gained.”

Kunlun Jun didn’t take notice of him at all, but spread open both hands. In them lay the scale Nuwa had left behind, which had once sustained a small eleven-year reincarnation wheel. Kunlun Jun said lowly to himself, “Shennong, just what exactly did you want to tell me?”

At that moment, a tremor passed delicately through the earth; everyone startled at once, like birds frightened by the twang of a bow, but only saw the land beneath themselves moving loosely. Then, the top of a great tree suddenly broke through the earth—luxuriant in branch and leaf, jade-green and glistening, as if the leaves bore the dew from another world that dripped upon the ground. The wrinkles of the earth, originally caused by the shattered Great Seal, gradually joined together.

What was permanence?

Why must there be good and evil, right and wrong?

What was life? And what was death?

Kunlun Jun's faintly furrowed brow finally relaxed a little. He stretched out a hand, just in time to catch a fallen leaf.

He suddenly asked, "You were the one who transferred Guo Changcheng to the SID?"

Shennong bowed respectfully, "Yes. When Master was alive, he ordered me to look for a person without the divine eye, who yet could see through to truth: a nobody, who yet bears great merit from Heaven."

"So that's how it is." Kunlun Jun heaved a sigh and softly said, "I understand, many thanks."

In an instant, Nuwa's snake scale crumbled to dust in his palm.

Da Qing finally couldn't help but ask, "Just what is going on?"

Kunlun Jun sat down with legs crossed underneath the Guardian Lamp, and softly stroked the black cat's head. "Don't worry, the Guardian Lamp is still lit."

With that, he sat as if in meditation and closed his eyes, like the image of a god silent from ancient times to the present. Behind him was a tiny flame that crowned the great lamp.

The little electric rod on Guo Changcheng's body did not have any reaction—

he had no time for being horrified or scared, and his mind was blank. In his eyes, there was only the falling Chu Shuzhi.

He desperately reached out and, with both hands, grabbed Chu Shuzhi's arm. With his eyes squeezed shut tightly, he listened to the howling mountain winds roaring past his ears.

Right at this time, Guo Changcheng suddenly felt that his body stopped in its descent.

Guo Changcheng opened his eyes in amazement, only to see that when he fell down, he had accidentally broken open the satchel that Chu Shuzhi gave him. The soul-bottles all rolled out, their lids crashing onto the guardrails on either side and shattering. From within, the souls that he had collected all rushed out.

They did not carry human shapes; just like in the bottle, they were luminous and colorful light clusters. Together with the girl on the bridge, the spirits of seven or eight people connected with each other, forming a large net that spread down from the suspension bridge, precariously catching the two people in the center.

Chu Shuzhi was thoroughly startled. However, he knew that now was not the time for him to dawdle on his thoughts. With a low voice, he said thank you and then picked up Guo Changcheng, lightly leveraged himself against the soul net, and leapt up. Following, his toes alighted briefly on the guardrails and he quickly landed on one end of the suspension bridge. Turning his hand, he threw Guo Changcheng into the cave entrance behind him and then tossed out twelve talismans in succession. With a vicious assault, he aimed directly towards the red-eyed ghost tribe that surrounded them. The thunder and lightning of nine days descended, sound first, and transformed the suspension bridge into a high voltage electric fence.

Behind the battle, the souls that formed a net changed into a string of light spots, circling around Guo Changcheng.

The body of the unattractive youth suddenly flashed a light orange halo, like the warm light of a fire. The souls around him seemed as though they felt something and involuntarily approached him.

Guo Changcheng seemed to have a voice in his heart, and he was unable to restrain himself from blurting out at that moment: "Suppress the souls of the living, calm the hearts of the dead..."

A ray of light came from far away. In the stretching pitch darkness of the human world, that ray of light was first exceedingly faint, but began to burn a wider and wider boundary. At last, it spread to edges of places beyond where the eyes could detect, covering the entirety of the vastland.

The red-

eyed ghost tribe, who had gained the upper hand and almost forced Chu Shuzhi back onto the suspension bridge, abruptly screeched. He covered his eyes and backed up multiple times in succession, dropping down to sit onto his butt on the swaying suspension bridge. Then, he twisted and shriveled up, ultimately melting alive from the burning ray of light.

Chu Shuzhi was shocked, and twisted his head to look towards Guo Changcheng. In that moment, he had the illusion that Guo Changcheng's entire person had become a cluster of flames, the frequency of its flickering coinciding miraculously with the flames spanning the entire great earth.

The Corpse King was a bit worried and strode over in large steps. Exploringly, he put his hand into the flickering flames on Guo Changcheng's body, only to feel that there was a strange type of temperature within in, not at all burning.

Guo Changcheng couldn't see the flames on his body and continued to dumbly read out the last half, following the voice in his heart: "...atone the sins of the survivors, reincarnate those who are unfinished."

His voice seemed to coincide with something from within the vast land, giving rise to abounding resonance and reverberation. Chu Shuzhi felt something and lifted his head. He saw the souls that died in the resort town, the ones that they had looked for all night but couldn't completely gather, drift up from the foot of the mountain one by one to float up to Guo Changcheng.

The book that Guo Changcheng carried on him recorded in detail every description the families offered of the missing persons. It additionally had every small town owner's respective names, ages, physical features, etcetera.

The souls lined up and each found their own page. Some of them lifted a pen and wrote "give so-and-so this message" on the side; some saw their lopsided names written by what looks like a children's handwriting, and seemed to let go of their worries.

At last, they disappeared into the air one by one, forming into countless dots of light and flying towards the sky.

A sound like thunder in spring time resonated from the horizon and the sky peeked through the coverage of dark clouds. Then, from the south, two massive trees broke through the ground at an indeterminate time, surpassing houses, surpassing high-rise buildings...and even surpassing the grand mountains.

The souls gathered next to Guo Changcheng had almost all left, with the exception of one. It landed on the ground and revealed the appearance of the express deliveryman, Feng Dawei.

“Older brothers,” He called out to Chu Shuzhi and Guo Changcheng excitedly, “Thank you both. There is a next life...I believe it. When I am born again, I will once again be the son of my parents and the sibling of my brother...I will spend my time well, live well, and do more good things to make up for this life.”

As Feng Dawei spoke, his soul became more and more transparent, until it also scattered into broken light points and finally floated into the endless cycle of reincarnation.

The light on Guo Changcheng’s body reached peak brightness before it swiftly broke away from his body. Like a shooting star, it flew towards the distance.

Sitting at the foot of the Guardian Lamp, the sage of the great wilderness and mountains suddenly opened his eyes. A ball of fire, as brilliant as the morning sun, landed inside the Guardian Lamp; and the flames, once pea-sized, leapt up a hundred meters.

Kunlun Jun stood up. His hands, pressed to the Guardian Lamp, shone orange from the flames. He kept his back to the others, and as he gazed at the Guardian Lamp there was finally a flash of indescribable apprehension and anticipation.

The shadow of a human figure gradually took shape within the flames and broke away from the blaze to fly out, landing directly in Kunlun Jun's embrace. That person wasn't heavy at all, but

Kunlun Jun looked as if he'd used all his strength to catch him and uncontrollably staggered a step—

holding that person in his arms, they fell together to the ground. The shoots of early spring so easily overlooked by people. The mortals on earth would not remember that there once had passed this sunless calamity.

Just then, the first ray of daylight pierced the black clouds—for dawn had come.

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