



Chapter 3 – Guardian Spirit

The sacrificial platform was made from layers of huge rocks. It was quite wide, and its establishment neighbored the old and broken willow tree. Upon it lied a small mountain of fierce beasts.

Sanguine beast blood dyed the large stone platform scarlet as it trickled along the engravings on the face of the stone. A brilliant red shone on the tough and long beasts' fur, and cold light flickering on their scales malevolent horns as well. It was a horrifying scene that shook one's heart, and there was a bitter desolate air assaulting everyone's nostrils.

Under the guidance of the old Chief, Stone Village's residents all gathered to pray and request for the Willow Tree's protection. This was a solemn event of offering sacrifices, as well as a type of usual practice. This was carried out each time a hunt ended.

The scorched black tree's body stayed just as quiet as before, as if it didn't react in the slightest. It never used the offerings as always, but some of the village residents knew that it actually had a spirit!

Finally, the sacrificial procedures were finished. The villagers all released a large breath of air and once again happily smiled. They began to move the bodies of those fierce beasts in preparation of draining their blood and cutting them up.

"Many years have passed already, yet the guardian spirit hasn't moved once after our offerings. Do we still need to offer sacrifices every time?" A youngster murmured in a low voice.

“You stinky brat, what kind of garbage are you spouting!” His father’s bronze eyes opened wide, and lifted his huge palm-leaf hands to beat him.

The old Chief gestured with his hands and stopped him from doing so. In a soft voice, he said, “We have offered sacrifices towards this guardian spirit, and it has provided for us. Only by remembering it sincerely within our hearts and treating it piously would it guard, bless and protect our village.”

The youngster’s face was completely red, and in hurriedly replied, “Chief, it’s not that my heart is not sincere. It’s just that I think that the guardian spirit does not really need all of these offerings, as it has never moved or utilized them.”

“As long as your intent is good then that’s enough.” Shi Yunfeng patted his shoulders, and carefully explained.

The guardian spirit was also called the ‘Spirit of Sacrifice’. It was an abbreviation for the tribe’s ‘Spirit of Sacrifice and Support’. It protected the village, and it intimidated the great desolate area’s vicious beasts, keeping them away.

The village’s Elder still remembered that this same guardian spirit was not quite the same ten years ago. There was instead a rather strange rock, and each time, the offerings would quickly lose more than half its blood essence from its absorption.

One day deep into the night, however, the old willow came, and that block of stone decided to go far away, and everything completely changed after that.

Thinking back to that rainy night, the old chief felt slightly distracted. That was when he was still a young youth, and at that time saw for himself that shocking and frightening scene.

During that late night, lightning flashed and thunder roared, and the heavy rainstorm was majestic. The rainstorm was violent till its utmost limits, and the

mountains were heavily battered by the thunder and lightning. The mountain torrent seemed like an ocean, and vicious beasts were running away frantically like the tides; the scene was terrifying.

And right at that time, a large willow tree broke through the boundary of the heavens and appeared within the clouds. It bathed in the sea of thunder, and allowed the lightning from the mountains to course through itself. Tens of thousands of willow branches formed strips of burning divine chains and pierced into the heavens as if it was battling something

Finally, the large willow tree snapped, and its entire body was charred black. It was reduced to its current size before it fell down and took root within Stone Village. At that time, the lightning disappeared, and the downpour of torrential rain retreated. That night, the stone that the villagers sacrificed to and received supply from left.

Every time he recalled this scene, the old chief would always feel his heart tremble. The old willow tree was not created from a random root within the mountains, but rather descended from the heavens. The reason it was damaged was due to the endless seas of thunder, and within the village, not many people knew about this.

In its first ten years, its entire body was scorched black and didn't have a single hint of life force. It appeared as if it was completely dead, and only ten years ago did it finally show a single tender green branch. Since then, it has yet to undergo another change.

'Stinky brats, you all should be careful. We rarely reap such good harvests of vicious beasts. Their blood essence, muscles, vessels as well as parts of their bones are all extraordinarily precious, so don't waste their precious properties.' The old chief warned.

The villagers in their prime chopped with silver knives. While they were disassembling the giant creatures, there were sonorous sounds as sparks flew everywhere from hitting the giant creatures' shockingly hard skeletons.

Someone had prepared a large jar long in advance to collect the special blood essence from within the beast's body. This was a refined blood medicine, extremely rare and precious.

Among this pile of beast corpses, the most precious one was the Pi Xiu 1. Although it was just a descendant and was quite far from a pure-blooded Pi Xiu King, it still possessed a portion of the true blood that had astonishing value.

It has already been two years since they last caught a mythical beast type like the Pi Xiu, as they were excessively savage and large. A single swipe from their claws would easily take the life of a strong individual, making them simply too horrifying to handle.

One could say that the harvest this time was so luxurious it made them speechless.

"Wu, the true blood flowing from the Two-Headed Flame Rhinoceros's horn really is quite extraordinary. It's not inferior to the Pi Xiu at all!" An older grandpa personally used his knife to remove the rhinoceros horn from the flesh. It was as tough as metal and stone, and from that area dripped out a gush of scarlet-red true blood, making the carcass look like it was releasing fiery light.

Suddenly, the blood unexpectedly changed into a clump of red radiance, and a palm-length Two-Headed Flame Rhinoceros appeared before everyone's eyes. Its entire body was scarlet red, and it was vivid and lifelike as it let out an angry roar.

“Good stuff. This true blood’s medicinal qualities are extremely strong, and are not inferior to those of mythical beasts!” The old grandpa who held the knife laughed heartily, and quickly utilized that jar to collect that rhinoceros blood before firmly closing the jar cover.

“Chief, this Dragon Horned Elephant’s horn is also good stuff. When we found it, it was already close to dying. Otherwise we wouldn’t have been able to handle it.” A youth spoke.

Shi Yunfeng nodded and said, “It really is quite a rare sight. The dragon horn growing on its head has already matured. Once it is carefully extracted, it can be used as a precious medicine that can repair bones.”

“The one-legged demon beast’s leg has really tough and durable strips of muscles. Even axes cannot chop through it.”

“This is all good stuff. You stinky youngsters need to be careful, don’t let the precious blood from the Flying Python’s two wings go to waste!”

The villagers were all happy, and their faces were full of smiles.

Only the children withdrew their necks before quickly disappearing. They knew that the majority of these blood and bone medicines would be used on their bodies, causing them to once again need to ‘suffer’.

Only after an entire half day passed did the precious treasure growing from the fierce beasts’ bodies get plucked clean. The Chief as well as several other elders nodded their heads in satisfaction before collecting the jars and storing them.

“There is so much prey. In a little while, we should preserve a portion, and afterwards smoke them and make it into meat jerky.” Some of the experienced elders were saying.

With the fierce beasts piled up like a small mountain, the villagers could not finish it even after many days. If they simply allowed it to rot, then it would be too much of a waste. For the villages that have faced food shortages, there was no way they would permit that.

The women from each of the households came up to divide the meat. All of them had sincere smiles on their faces, since previously they felt anxious with all the men outside. Now that they all returned peacefully and with such a luxurious harvest, it was truly one of heaven's best gifts.

Smoke rose in spirals from the households' chimneys, and after half an hour, the fragrant smell of meat began to spread. The households' iron pots had almost finished stewing the meat chunks until they were soft, and the children couldn't wait any longer. In addition, the beast meat roasting atop the bonfires were also beginning to develop a golden and oily luster, and as the oil dripped onto the fire, sputtering noises were created. Those sturdy men all could not hold themselves back any longer, and began to tear off strips of meat. With big appetites, they bit into the meat, releasing a mouthful of juices.

"Small child, this is Pi Xiu meat. Eating a lot of it will give you big strength. It's truly a rare type of meat."

"Stinky youngster, eat more, this is meat from the Two-Headed Flame Rhinoceros. Eating more of it can help your skin and bone become tough like iron, so stop eating that useless Tree Pig meat."

All types of different fierce beasts made up the villagers rich evening meal. The enticing meat fragrance wafted through the streets, drawing in the appetites of the residents as waves of merry laughter rang throughout the festive village.

1. Pi Xiu: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pixiu>