

## GUARDIAN

### Chapter: 89

Shen Wei only now realized that he'd been fooled. "So...you're ok?"

So what would happen if he didn't buy that damn book then? What if he just threw this roll of white paper directly into the water of Wang Chuan?

Zhao Yunlan thought of this and so he did it. With a lift of his hand he threw the white roll of paper into Wang Chuan with a "gu dong" sound. After a splash it slowly sank down. He waited for a while and yet nobody came to give him a fee for littering.

Zhao Yunlan turned his head and walked towards the pagoda tree.

He decided to first go buy a pack of cigarettes to wash out his lungs and then book a room at a hotel, eat a good meal, and sleep. After that he will once again go stalk Shen Wei and have him come up with an idea to send him back...Zhao Yunlan's footsteps suddenly stopped.

Can he affirm that the Shen Wei he just saw was actually Shen Wei?

Maybe that's why "intelligence" and "wisdom" were two completely different concepts. At the time Zhao Yunlan threw the book, he actually chose the right response—

some things aren't supposed to be investigated, when you're supposed to be confused you should stay confused.

However, in that moment when he turned around, he couldn't control his own thoughts. When he catches tiny strands of information, he couldn't help but to want to string them together. This had almost become an instinct and he did it without thinking.

Zhao Yunlan's pace slowed down subconsciously. He thought, if he really just left things behind here and went back to eleven years later...

If it were all fake then there would be no issues. He would need to ponder on who created such an environment and made him hear such words that he couldn't make heads or tails of.

But if we were to assume that the things that happened here were all real, then if he didn't buy that book home, eleven years later the SID would not have "Secret Ancient Records" and he would also be unable to find those secret stories that allowed him to infer that Nuwa created people and then became Houtu Great Seal etcetera. Not to mention in order to stay safe, he might have never even gone up to Kunlun Mountain. He wouldn't have known where the Brush of Merits landed, wouldn't go to look at what's inside the Dashen Mu (Godly Tree), and the following would never have happened.

In that way, he might never even have gone down Huang Quan. Even if he came back here by chance, he would not have known that his dad's body was taken over by Shennong Bowl. He may have gone home to look at his mother, not caring at all what his dad was doing. Of course he wouldn't have secretly flagged a

taxi to follow him and wouldn't have squatted on Huang Quan road pondering the stupid question of whether he should buy a book—because that book didn't exist.

According to the famous Grandfather Paradox mentioned by garlic nosed Einstein, none of this would have happened unless he entered a parallel universe, in other words a completely different world.

Unless...

Zhao Yunlan stopped. He closed his eyes. In his ears all that was left was the murmuring sound of the water of Wang Chuan, the netherworld becoming as quiet as though it was an empty abyss. Zhao Yunlan suddenly thought of what he heard in Houtu Dafeng (Houtu Great Seal)—the words that seemed to come out of his own mouth: “Fate is but one moment...you can go to heaven or go down to the earth but you will only ever leave one path for yourself...”

His breathing gradually slowed down.

Zhao Yunlan obviously knew the thoughts in his own heart. Like crazy, he wanted to know whether Shen Wei and the medicine bowl that was inhabiting his dad's body really did go behind his back to meet and say those words eleven years ago; he wanted to know if Shen Wei really had a contract with Shennong that he didn't know about, if he had a side of him that's completely different from the gentlemanly appearance that he puts on.

Additionally...did Shen Wei really not know that the underworld had always been using him? If he knew, how could he completely not care? Or...could he have a plan already?

Half a minute later, Zhao Yunlan finally turned back around without saying a word. With a piece of essence-concealing leaf in his mouth, he took long strides towards the Ghost City.

The little owner of the general store had the appearance of a 7 or 8 year old girl. She didn't seem surprised to see him. When Zhao Yunlan asked for the "Secret Ancient Records", she merely lightly quoted him the price in the form of bank notes for the dead. Then she brought over a huge book used for bookkeeping and had him write his name down.

In a flash of white light, "Guardian Order Chief" and the year appeared behind the words "Zhao Yunlan".

This time, no one in Ghost City discovered that he was a living creature. Zhao Yunlan successfully walked away with the "Secret Ancient Records" in hand. He headed straight towards his own home, concealed his breath, flipped over the wall, and climbed into his bedroom through the double windows.

Neither Zhao Yunlan nor the Da Qing of eleven years ago were there. On the table there was only one computer and a pile of messy college English final exam review materials. Next to it was the word "bullshit" written in a wild scribble that was full of unique character.

Zhao Yunlan couldn't help but to gently touch that indecent word and laugh. He felt as though he was looking into a mirror reflection of his younger cocky and full-of-it self.

Then he turned and gently lifted the board on his bed—that was where he used to hide all his unorthodox books, cinnabar, yellow talisman paper, and tools.

Zhao Yunlan easily found the section meant for hiding books. For the sake of preventing the book from being too conspicuous, he used the same method that he used of hiding the other books. From his drawer he pulled out an expired calendar, pulled out a page from the middle, and agilely wrapped it around the cover of the “Secret Ancient Records”. On the snow white cover he wrote the small words: “Nuwa created people, mended the sky...”

He originally meant to write “Nuwa created people, mended the sky, and then transformed her body into Houtu, Fuxi created the big seal using the eight trigrams, Shennong sacrificed himself to taste hundreds of herbs, Gong Gong the mystical dragon struck Buzhou in anger” and the other information that were useful to his future self on the book. Who would have thought he only managed to write a few words before a person's voice drifted in from the hallway corridor.

Zhao Yunlan hurriedly threw aside the book and closed the board, narrowly missing getting caught.

The ears of the person outside, however, were atypically sharp. A knock sounded on the door and he heard the voice of his mom

from eleven years ago: “Little scoundrel, where are you in the house? Why are you making all that nonstop racket?”

Zhao Yunlan’s throat moved but he didn’t dare reply. The knocking from the person outside increased: “Zhao Yunlan?”

Zhao Yunlan had no choice but to pitch his voice thinly and say: “meow—”

“It’s a cat?” The woman outside muttered, “I thought it doesn’t come home until night time. Maybe it’s pregnant? I’ve been saying that we should have brought it in for neutering.”

Zhao Yunlan: “.....”

He couldn’t imagine how Mister Da Qing would react if he heard this.

Fortunately, he was able to fool his mom. Just as Zhao Yunlan was about to be relieved and fill in the rest of the sentence on the book, he heard the sound of a car outside. He opened his window, carefully looked out, and discovered that his split-personality family-ruiner dad had come home.

This idea was too rigid. Zhao Yunlan promptly made a decision, immediately jumped agilely out the window again, and landed soundlessly on the grass. He circled from the opposite direction that the car came from and successfully became a thief in his own home for the first time.

He went through the little housing community and emerged into the big street, unsure of what he should do next. Suddenly, Zhao Yunlan felt the ground shake violently. At first he thought it was an earthquake, but when he looked closely, he saw that all the

people were still walking calmly. The houses on the sides were also standing still. Not even a speck of dust fell.

Zhao Yunlan recovered his senses and realized that his world was the only one that was spinning. Everything around him suddenly collapsed and the ground underneath his foot disappeared. When he lifted his head again, he found that he was back on that white road and the person in front of his eye was once again the person who he suspected as Shennong.

Zhao Yunlan walked over in big strides and grabbed the old man's collar: "Tell me clearly, this is..."

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The old man finally opened his mouth. Using a very strange tone he interrupted his question: "Do you know what 'death' is?"

Zhao Yunlan's brows furrowed deeply. They stared at each other for two seconds. When he judged from the old man's eyes that he would not be able to get any information through coercion or deception, he slowly released his hand, thought for a while, and then tentatively gave the other a straight and narrow answer: "Death is when the body's vital signs stop?"

The old man's voice was hoarse: "Then what is soul? What are the six cycles of reincarnation?"

Zhao Yunlan quickly chose another explanation: “Then death is the end of one life and the beginning of another.”

The old man laughed widely and asked: “Then what is the ghost tribe? What is The Profane Land?”

Zhao Yunlan: “....”

After a while, Zhao Yunlan asked: “Then what do you think it is?”

Both of the old man’s eyes suddenly burst with a bright light. For a second, he seemed to even be a bit terrifying. He grabbed Zhao Yunlan’s arms, his grip so tight that he could almost go through the skin and flesh: “Did you forget? Kunlun, death actually is...”

As he was saying this, he seemed like an almost dying extra from TV shows—sniffing for a long time without being able to say the name of the killer, as soon as they spit out a hint they die—only that this old man was split open in front of his eyes.

He was split from the head all the way down to the feet. With overwhelming force, that blade cleanly cut the man into two even halves as if it was cutting a watermelon. The blade struck the ground, carrying a cold current with it, and left a deep ditch almost one meter thick. Even if there were people standing to the side they would be able to feel the ground trembling from the fierce blow.

Until now, the man who was split was still standing upright, the expression on his face fixed with an indescribable feverishness.



Zhao Yunlan was dazed for a second. After a while, he instinctively took a step back to the side. The scene in front of his eyes was really “blood splattering for three chi” (血濺三尺 where 3 chi = 1 meter)

He only slowly lifted his head after a long while to see Shen Wei standing in front of him. His throat moved slightly with great difficulty but he wasn't able to say anything.

“Are you ok? Hurry, come with me.” Shen Wei reached out his hand but he quickly noticed that Zhao Yunlan's pupils contracted violently in that moment. Shen Wei lowered his head and saw that his hands were covered in blood, almost like someone from a pig slaughterhouse. Immediately, he uneasily withdrew his hand and wiped it on his body with force. Despite this, he felt that no matter how much he wiped, they wouldn't be clean. In his heart he felt an indescribable sense of nausea and disgust, and thus no longer wanted to touch him. As if he couldn't evade quickly enough, Shen Wei brought both hands back into his sleeves. Using a repressed and restrained voice, he said: “Earlier when you suddenly disappeared from my sight, I...”

At this moment, Zhao Yunlan finally regained his senses, strode over, and grabbed Shen Wei's hand. Shen Wei shrank violently and instinctively flinched, only to be grabbed more tightly by Zhao Yunlan. Insensitively, he said: “So you are the one from eleven years later? Then do you remember how many times we had messy sex after drinking?”

Shen Wei was silent.

After a moment of silence, Shen Wei finally decided to ignore that part of his sentence and no longer talk nonsense with him. He lifted his hand and snatched the water dragon pearl from Zhao Yunlan's neck. When the water dragon pearl touched his palm, it was as if the bottom of a burnt pot was splashed in cold water. With a "si la" sound, heavy black smoke rose from it before it transformed into a piece of scale. Zhao Yunlan opened his eyes wide. Just as he wanted to look more closely, Shen Wei turned his hand over and the scale disappeared.

"Wait, what was that?" Zhao Yunlan asked, "It doesn't look like fish scales. It's a type of crawling creature...is it snake?"

"You don't know what it is yet you hang it around your neck." Shen Wei said in a nasty mood, "And it...and it comes from someone else's body. Do you not think it's dirty?" Zhao Yunlan looked at him innocently.

They stared at each other for a moment. Then, at the end of his tolerance, Shen Wei turned his head. Behind him suddenly appeared a big hole that was seemingly ripped open. He pushed Zhao Yunlan's head down and roughly threw him inside.

In front of him lights and shadows flowed. Zhao Yunlan felt as though he was surrounded by a large body of water. He was caught off guard and forgot that he no longer had the ability to breathe underwater. He didn't hold his breath in time and lowly called out "crap!". Just as he was preparing to come in contact with the water and choke on a mouthful, his body was lifted by someone. The other person used a soft tongue to pry open his lips and passed breath into him.

Shen Wei then rapidly swam up with him in tow. Every time he was out of breath, Shen Wei would pass another breath over. Not even 4 or 5 times of this later, they had already arrived above water.

Zhao Yunlan thought back on his dive down where he had nearly fallen asleep in the middle. This time, he firmly experienced what could be called traveling at light speed.

Shen Wei lifted him up to a ferry boat without sparing a glance at the ferryman who was trembling and huddled to the side. He lifted a hand to grab Zhao Yunlan's chin. "Wang Chuan water cannot be drunk by human beings. Did you choke? How are you feeling?"

Zhao Yunlan wiped off the water on his face, carefully thought back on the seemingly short trip, and concluded: "...I feel like I came up on a torpedo."

Shen Wei let him go. Perhaps because Zhao Yunlan just came out of the water, his legs were a bit shaky. He fell heavily onto the ferry, nearly knocking it over. Within the next moment, a "putong" sound could be heard. The senseless ferryman finally couldn't bear it anymore and jumped overboard into the river.

Shen Wei was startled and quickly bent over to grab his arm. "What's wrong?"

Zhao Yunlan didn't utilize Shen Wei's strength to stand up. The hand that had been soaking in the waters of Wang Chuan was white and weak so much so that it almost slipped out of Shen Wei's grasp.

Zhao Yunlan had already been under Huang Quan for too long. His lips were almost bloodless. He leaned against the edge of the boat and closed his eyes heavily, groaning in a low voice, “I feel dizzy.”

“I’ll immediately send you up.” As Shen Wei spoke, he tried to help Zhao Yunlan stand up. But for some reason, whether it was that Zhao Yunlan was purposefully not going along with it or that he was really out of strength, he kept sliding down. Shen Wei could only reach out with the intent to carry him. However, Zhao Yunlan wasn’t some feeble bodied little girl. Even if Shen Wei didn’t mind how heavy he was, Zhao Yunlan’s height made carrying him very awkward. When Zhao Yunlan was passed out, it was still alright...but maybe because Zhao Yunlan felt a little uncomfortable, he kept moving around. Whenever he moved around, Shen Wei’s grip would slip. In the end, Shen Wei had no choice but to change their position and carry Zhao Yunlan on his back.

Zhao Yunlan vaguely spoke against Shen Wei’s ear, “There’s still clothes.”

Shen Wei said, “What clothes?”

As he was speaking, a little ferry ghost emerged from the water and approached a ferry boat. He put the folded coat neatly on top, leaving not even a corner messy. Shen Wei paused for a bit and had no choice but to take the coat along with them.

Shen Wei carried Zhao Yunlan on his back all the way back to his home and put him gently down on his bed. He turned to go to the kitchen to pour some hot water. Who knew that the

moment he moved, the “dying” Zhao Yunlan suddenly leaped up from the bed and jumped onto Shen Wei like a tiger, pinning him to the bed. His eyes, originally closed, now shone with a devilish light. He lowered his head and touched Shen Wei’s nose with his. “What are you going to do?”

Shen Wei only now realized that he’d been fooled. “So...you’re alright?”

Zhao Yunlan’s eyes curved and he laughed soundlessly, “I have a problem...it’s a big one...my wife ran away from home. Ay...baby...you should stop running...You’re so easy to be fooled. What if you get abducted and sold?”

Shen Wei was so angry he almost couldn’t speak. He lifted his hand and pushed Zhao Yunlan away. Shen Wei was unable to express his feelings until finally the words “you’re bullshitting” exploded out of his mouth. (lit: you are farting...which has the same connotation as bullshitting)

“Aiya! You’re scolding me! On this world another baby panda must have been born! It sounds good! Scold me more!”

Shen Wei felt that his actions were almost like one of a sex maniac so he reached out a hand to wrestle that coat away from Zhao Yunlan: “Give it to me!”

Zhao Yunlan kept rolling around on the bed and holding the coat like he was crazy. He opened his mouth and said perversely: “I won’t give it to you. If I give it to you what will I use to masturbate with?”

Shen Wei couldn't reply. His eyebrows furrowed and his face turned completely red with some unknown thought.

Zhao Yunlan lifted his head and said solemnly: "You look like you really want to murder your husband."

Shen Wei didn't reply. He kneeled on the bed and pounced over to wrestle for the coat. Zhao Yunlan kept rolling. Shen Wei grabbed a corner of the coat and pulled but Zhao Yunlan continued to roll. Then, without warning, he rolled onto the floor with a "bang" sound.

The two stared at each other. After a while they couldn't hold it in and both started laughing.

Zhao Yunlan sat up from the ground, his upper body leaning on the bed, and looked at Shen Wei with eyes curved from smiling. He suddenly spoke, "Hey, baby, let me ask you something."

Shen Wei lowered his gaze to look at him.

Zhao Yunlan used a tone as if he was only casually chatting, "Is the Houtu seal about to break? What do you intend to do?"

Shen Wei was stunned.

Zhao Yunlan continued. "Do you wish that I could be with you forever? Die together with you?"

The hand that Shen Wei had rested on the blanket clenched suddenly. Zhao Yunlan quickly reached over and held it. His smile was genuine and clear, without a hint of falsity or haziness.

“In fact, the ‘death’ that Shennong mentioned...is chaos isn’t it?” Zhao Yunlan’s gentle voice seemed like thunder in Shen Wei’s ears. “You didn’t let Shennong finish...but I could guess it.”

As he spoke, he stood up from the ground, bent over, and held Shen Wei’s tense body in his arms: “You’ve never asked me for anything...so even when I wanted to curry your favor, I couldn’t. Truthfully, if there is anything you want, you can directly tell me...as long as I have it...why would you lie to me?”