

GUARDIAN

Chapter: 97

“Bastard!” Zhu Hong bent over to pick up a rock from the ground. The female snake demon was certainly no soft lady; her arm strength was a spectacle. Additionally, she definitely had a way with smashing things: very steady, accurate, and ruthless. With a “clank”, it crashed onto the rear boot of their business car, and a piece of outer coating very clearly and obviously fell from it.

Zhao Yunlan didn't even care, let alone stop the car.

Just at this moment, the phone in Zhu Hong's pocket sounded and she took it out to have a look. It was a text from Chu Shuzhi that said: “Chief Zhao told me to let you know that the money for damaging official property will be taken out of your monthly reward. You can damage a few more spots too. When he's taken away all of your reward money then it'll be taken out of your salary. Hold back a little, don't make it so that you don't have a single cent to take away when you resign.”

Zhu Hong squeezed the edge of her phone flat, and then gave a loud roar: “Zhao Yunlan, you dickhead!”

Guo Changcheng's face was like the color of dirt as he watched this act of unacceptable rebellion. That a coworker would dare to clash with a superior above them, his fragile, vulnerable, little heart suffered from considerable fright.

Zhu Hong turned her head, glaring at him with reddened eyes: “What are you looking at! Hurry up and get going!”

Guo Changcheng scuttled after her.

Zhu Hong raged again: “Are you a man at all? If you’re a man, go drive! Have you ever seen a man who makes a woman drive?!”

Guo Changcheng blinked at her, and recognized that she was completely venting her anger out on him— Driving a beat-up car wasn’t like going to a public bathroom with male and female divisions. Besides, in his heart Zhu Hong wasn’t a human. Guo Changcheng wasn’t particularly fearful, so he honestly said: “Zhu Hong, actually you also aren’t a woman—”

Zhu Hong’s expression was heavy with disdain, as though she was a King Cobra about to give a deadly strike, almost spitting out a forked tongue. Guo Changcheng instinctively felt the danger, and dove into the car without daring to even let out a fart.

However, she herself didn’t get on the car. She slammed the door of the passenger side and waved a hand towards Guo Changcheng: “Fuck off by yourself, I’m going to find Zhao Yunlan.”

Guo Changcheng, from the beginning to the end, didn’t even have time to formulate an opinion that he could express before Zhu Hong had already speedily left.

Da Qing and Chu Shuzhi who sat in Zhao Yunlan’s car were also suffering considerably—

A great God who looks vastly different from his past appearance sat in the front passenger’s seat.

After knowing he was the Ghost Slayer, whether if it was the King of Corpses or the old cat, they all found it hard to once again f

ind the innocent heart from the past where they acted shamelessly to any random person.

Their atmosphere was apprehensive, and like that they drove the whole way in silence without a sound until they reached the front entrance of the little healing resort town.

The imposing couple of big words “Spring Bay Holiday Resort” sculpted into marble stood within a bunch of flowers that have a strong sense of design, and it was unknown whether it was due to the material or the weather, but the words carved into the stone had a kind of unspokendimness.

At the door, there were two security booths and two entrances. The roads for cars on both sides were blocked off, not allowing passage. On the side, there was an automatic door card machine for the business owner, but it wasn't lit up, and it seemed like the electricity was already cut off.

Zhao Yunlan parked the car at the entrance, then took out his phone to have a look. Only the last bit of the signal remained, so little that it might as well not be there. He waved it around slightly, and that bit was completely gone too.

The window of the security booth was somehow open, with a tiny little delivery package on the windowsill. A notebook was placed next to it, with an uncapped pen on top.

No matter if it was the windowsill, or these objects, they all had a strange layer of dust on them.

Zhao Yunlan put on his gloves and took down the notebook for a closer look. He realized that it was a record for deliveries with substitute recipients: the guard at the door received the delivery package in someone's stead, signed in, and then handed it to the business owner, and the owner also had to sign at the back.

In the last entry, the date recorded just happened to be that of the previous day, and "10A owner Mr. Li, bag—" was written on the back.

The word "bag" was only half-written, the hook at the end of the character wasn't even hooked in time, before it was suddenly stopped in its tracks.

Zhao Yunlan closed his eyes and could almost even imagine that scene: the delivery man who brought the delivery passed the package in through the window, then took the sign in sheet, wrote the information about the package stroke by stroke, the "bag" character only half-written before being interrupted due to some reason.

Interrupted by what?

Right now, the item was still at the original location. Where did the person go?

At this time, Shen Wei, who got off the car at some unknown time, also walked over. He reached out with a hand to wipe a handful of that fine, somewhat strangely colored, dust from the window sill.

Shen Wei rubbed his fingers together, carefully observing for a moment, then casually said to Zhao Yunlan in a light tone: “It hasn’t been a long time since it’s settled.”

Zhao Yunlan was virtually about to kneel for this professional who was an expert at looking at traces with the naked eye: “Dust settling? You can even figure that out? How did you do it?”

Shen Wei patted his hands clean: “I can’t tell with other kinds of dust, but these are ashes (*’bone dust’ in Chinese) that haven’t settled for very long and still very fresh. I personally believe it wouldn’t have been longer than 2 or 3 days.”

Zhao Yunlan: “...”

Shen Wei’s tone was as though he was saying “the milk was just squeezed out, still very fresh”.

Zhao Yunlan dazedly lifted up the notebook and fished out an evidence bag to tightly pack it in. He was unbelievably thankful that he sent Guo Changcheng away, otherwise the result of that person peeing himself in fright would be to be indiscriminately attacked by the electric stick for vengeful ghosts.

“But what did you say? These are ashes from bone? Why do I feel they don’t look like that.” Zhao Yunlan subconsciously thought of the ashes packed into the little boxes after cremation, and was skeptical for a moment.

Shen Wei patiently explained: “It’s not the kind of ash that have been burnt. You know ‘grinding bones down after death’ right? At the time that person could have been standing right here, and then their body of flesh would have been disintegrated apart in a moment, bone shredded into fine powder, then landing on the windowsill.”

Chu Shuzhi, who had also followed over at an unknown time, asked incredulously: “What about that person’s blood and flesh?”

“Melted.” Shen Wei pushed up his glasses, “Blood and flesh don’t have the same resilient ability that bones do. It’s very difficult for those to leave any traces.”

Chu Shuzhi carefully formulated a sentence: “Hearing that, it seems that Your Honor knows how the people here disappeared, right?”

Shen Wei politely nodded, modest and well-mannered, saying: “I don’t know that much, but I do indeed happen to know a bit about this.”

And then, in sight of two people and a cat, he used a kind of tone as though he was giving a run-down on common knowledge of ancient texts, and said at a nice even pace: “During the times of great chaos, after Gonggong knocked down Buzhou Mountain, the skies shattered and the earth cr

acked. When the underground Ghost tribe came to the world for the first time, the people, creatures, and beasts within a 10 li (1 li=500 meters) radius were just like this, melted into powder in the blink of an eye. Within a 100 li radius, not a single blade of grass grew.”

He raised a hand to point below the door plaque of the resort, at the flower bed that still flourished despite being in the middle of winter: “So the flowers over there should all be fake.”

“But there isn’t 10 li of this small resort town,” Zhao Yunlan pointed out, “The main door over there have two big pine trees, and are definitely not outside of 100 li...”

“Because of that.”

They gazed in the direction that Shen Wei’s finger pointed, only to see the little flower garden at the entrance of the small town. A venue surrounded the flower garden on all sides. The venue was not one level, but split into many small buildings of various heights that delicately circled around the little flower garden, like a wall, providing a sense of privacy for the business owner inside.

“The pond in the middle is in the shape of a flower petal. The water flows in all four directions, perfectly connecting up the couple of little buildings.” Chu Shuzhi was usually exceptionally arrogant, but at this moment his level of arrogance was lowered to an extreme and he humbly asked, “May I ask, Your Honor... That is the five plum blossom petals strategy (a formation used in Chinese chess to completely trap one’s opponent), right?”

“Yes, Mr. Chu is vastly knowledgeable—the plum blossom strategy is used in protecting the home and exorcising evil to bring about peace,” Shen Wei said, “Therefore, the dark energy had been cut off inside here and cannot leave for a while. At most, it could only affect this short stretch of road at the entrance. However, if it could be controlled by this roughly curated and clumsily made plum blossom strategy, I think the Houtu Great Seal should probably be alright. It just happened to have a gap here. Once it’s patched up, it should be fine.”

Chu Shuzhi and Da Qing didn’t know what the Houtu Great Seal was exactly. After they heard Shen Wei talk, they felt as though it was as if a button fell off and all that needed to do was sew it back on.

Zhao Yunlan couldn’t help but glance at him. At a glance, Shen Wei this person seemed as though he kept everything within a limited boundary, not stepping out of line at all, but in reality, there wasn’t a single place where he didn’t step out of line.

At this time, Zhao Yunlan already approximately clearly understood—

Shen Wei already got what he wanted. It’s probable that his mood was very relaxed. He might not even care about the Houtu Great Seal to begin with. Zhao Yunlan suspected that he didn’t even care about his own life or death.

“No wonder the underworld worked up such a big racket. They’ve already upturned the entire place by now right?” Shen Wei subconsciously smiled for a moment, but then in the next second, he seemed to feel that he over-expressed the delightful emotions in his own heart. He felt that it was a bit impolite and so immediately retracted his smile and lightly coughed, “It’s not a bother. Everyone stay close to me.”

Chu Shuzhi and Da Qing immediately abandoned their leader, and decided to tightly hug the leg of this influential “Leader’s Wife” like their life depended on it.

Zhao Yunlan didn’t actually say anything, only silently followed. He had a sort of ominous premonition in his heart. To borrow a life...when he passed the problem to Lin Jing, he was dizzy and out of it at the time and didn’t have time to consider it in detail. Now that he thought of it, didn’t this perfectly match up to the Sundial of Reincarnation case from before?

But the problem was, the Sundial of Reincarnation... It was in Gui Mian’s hands.

The power of the Great Seal was minute; it could control the majority of the Ghost Tribe, but already it could not contain a Ghost King of hundreds and thousands of years. Three of the four Holy Tools have already appeared. Other than the Sundial of Reincarnation, all the others were actually in the possession of their own people. However, the four pillars were like four feet—the four feet didn’t necessarily have to all be together. As long as two feet are removed, that was sufficient to overturn the entire Great Seal.

Who knew what that Dragon God's mysterious, elusive Guardian Lamp really was?

They walked in from the pedestrian access road next to the main door. A gust of indescribably uncomfortable heavy, thick air of death blew right at them. Despite following Shen Wei, Da Qing still couldn't help how his fur bristled. The Guardian Whip secretly crawled down Zhao Yunlan's arm, with a little tip of it sticking out at his wrist, and his other hand touched the little dagger that was hidden in his sleeve.

The little hot spring resort town in front of them, in Zhao Yunlan's eyes, was actually more like an ambush trap. Lin Jing's video did not, in fact, film him going inside. Based on Lin Jing's carefulness and cautiousness, under such unpleasant conditions, he would never have gone in by himself without contacting the headquarters.

There was something that misled him or... forced him, which already made him lose his five senses and his sixth sense before he even had time to step into this area of the town.

Even if Lin Jing was the right-hand-man of Dharma (Bodhidharma, a notable historical Buddhist monk), he still wouldn't be able to fend off that air of suffering that came from thousands of feet below the underworld when the Great Seal cracked open. Would it not have been easier to directly kill him?

Keeping him alive... was it to attract someone here?

The Guardian Order or Shen Wei?

The little man-made pathway was very ambient and empty; every house was all strangely-shaped and empty, without even a single shadow of a ghost. It was unknown when the black cloak on Shen Wei's body materialized. He probably also felt something, his hand clasping the Soul Severing Blade.

The footsteps of the three people and one cat on the ground were particularly obvious. Echoes rang out a long distance—there was a kind of darkness and fear that could not be expressed

Originally, there was a slightly sinking evening sun in mid-air, but from some unknown moment onwards, that evening sun already turned from a warm orange-red color to an unexplainable deathly blood red color...just like what was pasted onto the faces of the paper people (paper-cut-out of human figures that are made to be burnt as part of a ritual during funerals) in mourning shops (‘longevity clothes shop’

shop that sells items that are used to mourn the dead). That kind of red cheek created from a heaped ball of cinnabar was creepy as hell.

It dragged out the shadows of people on the ground, and left behind shockingly long black shadows. Just at that moment, Zhao Yunlan suddenly reached out with a foot to kick aside the black cat

that followed by his feet. At the same time, he took a huge step forward. He didn't have time to turn his body around before he'd already brought the dagger in his hand up against his back behind his heart. A sound of teeth-aching collision rang out. The youchu lost a couple of big front teeth and the iron blade cracked from the impact.

Immediately, Zhao Yunlan used one foot as a pivoting point, and was just thinking about turning around in a circle to give this youchu another additional slash when an extremely horrified expression suddenly appeared on the youchu's face. Its entire hideous body was just like an ugly balloon with its air let out, and it was sucked into the center of Shen Wei's palm.

Countless sounds of bells from afar simultaneously started ringing and a layer of black fog two feet high rose up from the spotlessly clean pavement of the little town. The black cat let out a high-

- pitched scream and dashed up Zhao Yunlan's shoulder: hands covered in pus-filled warts were reaching out from the ground!

The youchu who climbed onto the roof at some unknown time was like those zombies that suddenly appear behind someone in movies. It jumped down from the ceiling in a whoosh. A giant claw grabbed hold of Chu Shuzhi's head in one go and it opened its mouth to bite down. Chu Shuzhi's thin hand became as stiff as a rock in the blink of an eye, and then viciously shoved it into the youchu's throat. The youchu retreated backwards two to three steps, fell on the ground, and didn't even have time to take its last breath when countless even more strangely shaped and ghastly for

med Ghost tribe members pounced over and ate the youchu's bones and flesh altogether in no time at all.

Infinite Ghost tribe creatures crawled out from the ground, hundreds of hideous appearances on show.

The corner of Shen Wei's eye jumped for a moment. He initially came from the Ghost tribe himself, and had an unshakable hate down to his core for these kinds of fellow tribe members. Particularly...they even dared to appear in front of Zhao Yunlan.

With a 'clatter' sound he pulled out the Soul Severing Blade. Zhao Yunlan caught sight of it from the corner of his eye: "Shen Wei, slow down, isn't this—"

But it was already too late. The Soul Severing Blade reached out for meters long, sweeping over countless Ghost tribe who turned into flying dust and disappeared like smoke under the knife in the blink of an eye, destroyed like crumbs. Shen Wei's gaze was cold like ice, subsequently flicking his wrist downwards. The blade of his knife carried tremendous strength and crushed down, fierce and unstoppable. That one slash of his knife forced aside the black fog that was multiple chi underground. With a whoosh, it was all scattered away and dispersed cleanly. Then, the blade of the knife fell onto the ground and left a long and narrow tear approximately 10 meters deep into the earth. An inhuman scream rang out to the ends of the earth, and the man stared down the crack in the ground with a hostile gaze: "Get out here."

His movements were awfully fast with shocking destructiveness.

Up until now, Zhao Yunlan who was initially only 5 steps distance away from him finally grabbed hold of his arm, finishing his

wn sentence from earlier: “This isn’t a break in the Great Seal. I suspect it is only an altered Shadow Blitz (t/n from ch 54/55). Do n’t act rashly!”

Shrill sharp laughter suddenly sounded out, circling over from all directions: “Yes, it’s a shame that the Guardian Order Chief’s brain and mouth are not as fast as the Lord Soul Slayer’s blade.”

The entire surface of the ground that was split open by Shen Wei was torn apart into two sides. Shen Wei dragged Zhao Yunlan into his arms, while Chu Shuzhi and the black cat Da Qing landed on the other side. The crack grew larger and larger, as though the great land itself was turned over. In the blink of an eye, the people on the two different sides could no longer see each other.

Shen Wei suddenly let out a groan under his breath, tightly grabbing onto Zhao Yunlan’s hand as though he was being forcefully pulled away by something. Like a sticky spiderweb, a swirl of black energy entangled his arm.