

GUARDIAN

Chapter: 99

The magistrate and his company had not even come back to their senses after that sudden outburst when they saw a long whip like a venomous snake curl towards Gui Mian. The Guardian Whip tangled around Gui Mian's neck with unrivalled accuracy.

With a "whoosh", the one slash of the whip triggered a sharp wind that made the skin on people's faces sting. The ghost messengers on the side actually felt like they were collectively mightily slapped across the face. It burned and stung where they were exposed to the air, and they all unanimously turned their faces and retreated without discussion.

The bitterness within the magistrate's heart was almost shaken up enough for him to vomit it out—
it was more and more impossible to ignore the disturbance to the Great Seal, but from the looks of it, all those with authority have silently agreed on choosing to turn away.

Everyone that had reached the level of being able to know these ancient secrets of the Great Seal were at the moment either already demons that were hundreds and thousands of years old and long been the elders of their tribe, or they already experienced countless challenges, cultivated themselves, and became immortal.

Five hundred years ago when the Great Seal first expressed signs of loosening, led by the Underworld, the various branches of au

thority were once brought together and discussed this issue. At the time hundreds of voices responded to every call, the various senior gods were affectionate and enthusiastic, each and every one of them prioritizing justice. All their words were about the commoners and mortals under the skies, continuously stating that they would willingly serve those in power, and wouldn't give up even if they were to die a ten thousand times.

But ever since that battle on the Kunlun Mountain Peak, it was almost as though these people planned it together and they collectively went missing.

They were all people in the midst of cultivation, they all knew that it wasn't something particularly impressive or promising for the future. Cultivation is an incredibly long process, where one must experience dangers that others could not even imagine and loneliness that bystanders could not understand. The natural-born traits of the person must be good, they must already be rare and unique, with a persistent mind, and they must walk alone on that path. They must not be impatient to achieve small successes or be prone to giving up halfway, and must be one in a million. This wasn't even counting that, regardless of how good their natural qualities are, regardless of how hard they strive, if they were missing that little bit of luck, it would still be an almost-success-turned-failure—

who wouldn't show off their feathers as a result of this cultivation as though they've been through a lifetime of hardship?

If it wasn't the Great Seal that was damaged and the Underworld needing to step forward as the result of being the first that would have been impacted, then the magistrate silently examined his o

own conscience and concluded—

he felt like he would have hidden away as far as he possibly could. Even if it was Ten Halls of Yanluo Kings and not a mere magistrate, they dared to make who knew how many little tricks as they could see that the Ghost Slayer would not bother them over it due to self-

restraining his identity. But in the instance that they really go too far, which one of them would have the guts to step forward and face the Ghost King straight on?

There was even less need to mention that two-faced, strange Gui Mian, with his unusual delights and sorrows.

The magistrate's expression was complicated and his expression fell onto Zhao Yunlan—pretty much only those true natural-born gods and demons, before the flood broke, had that kind of large skill, that kind of mindset where they did not care even if they died.

...Even if he was just a mortal now, he still dared to reach out with his long whip and strangle the Ghost King's neck without a second thought.

The magistrate felt somewhat uneasy in his heart. He found it difficult to understand that kind of sentiment of gambling with life and death, difficult to imagine that kind of insistence like moths flying into flame despite hundreds and thousands of people preventing it. So it was even harder for him to reach their level of sky-opening and ground-cracking fearlessness towards the Great Wilderness in the past.

Without mentioning Kunlun Jun, who had already silently disappeared into the cycle of reincarnation, this man in front of him was clearly just a slick-tongued mortal. What right did he have to dare to not be fearful and terrified? Could a soul be unafraid despite already losing the authority and power of the Primordial Mountain God only based on the fact that it was polished countless times by reincarnations?

At the last second, Shen Wei bunched up his 10 fingers and the white light in his hands suddenly died out. The chaos just then was completely engulfed, and then his body suddenly violently convulsed. Black lines like a spider's web suddenly emerged from the icicle that was pierced into his chest and tangled together. In the blink of an eye, as though it was a gigantic cocoon, it wrapped up the entire person within it.

Gui Mian clutched onto a corner of the icicle in one hand, and he was able to stick his other hand in between before the Guardian Whip wrapped around his neck.

Then, in the air, he distantly met eyes with the mortals below. Within the eyes of that man, there felt like the glow of a fire that scorched people even more than the soul fire that ignited the entire Profane Land.

“If the Guardian Order wasn’t damaged,” Gui Mian’s voice seemed raspy and close to shattering underneath the long whip that Zhao Yunlan tried to strangle him alive with, “Perhaps my neck would have already had a layer of skin ripped off by you by this point. Tch, what a shame...”

Zhao Yunlan seemingly gritted out a sentence through his teeth: “Let. Him. Go.”

Gui Mian expressionlessly looked at him: “He and I are both Ghost Kings, despite certain circumstances that caused us to have clashing temperaments, I still do not wish to hurt him. It’s she who forced me into a dead-end step by step. You want him, that’s fine too, as long as you give me the Guardian Lamp in exchange.”

Zhao Yunlan did not care to listen to this kind of “swapping host ages” condition. Suddenly, some kind of extremely silent dismay appeared on the handsome space between his brows: “Then let me advise you. If you’re smart enough, it’s best to give me an icicle too, or else I’ll make it so that you never attain reincarnation for eternity.”

Gui Mian listened, fell silent for a moment, then burst out into loud laughter: “If it was Kunlun Jun, I would certainly not let you come out alive by yourself even if I lose my life today. As for...”

His body gave a violent shudder, and in the blink of an eye the Guardian Whip that lost its protection from the immortal tree (t/n aka Dashen Mu the tree the Guardian Order was made from) shattered into countless segments. The impact slashed open a bloody mark that almost reached the bone on the palm of Zhao Yunlan’s

hand as it flew out: “My Ling Zhu* you...sigh...I’m grateful for you letting me borrow your fire (t/n: a metaphor describing when one person smokes, another person uses the lit cigarette to light their own cigarette), but I’ve also been influenced by him. I can’t help it... I do actually like you a little bit, it wouldn’t hurt to keep you around.”

Gui Mian finished talking and a black fog rose up along with the sound of his shrill laughter. Suddenly, he and Shen Wei, who was wrapped up in the black cocoon, simultaneously disappeared.

It was unknown how long Zhao Yunlan stood in the same place for. His palm was already fully covered with fresh blood. The magistrate finally couldn’t hold it in and cleared his throat: “LingZhu, you...”

Zhao Yunlan was suddenly startled back to reality by his voice and extremely slowly raised his head to give him a look. The corner of his eyes slanted upwards, with a hint of dark red that looked inexplicably different somehow. His inky black pupils were frighteningly deep and he raised his own hand to gently lick the wound on his palm. His upper eyelid seemed immensely deep, thick and dense eyelashes casting bottomless shadows over his eyes.

The magistrate instinctively shuddered.

“I need to trouble you with something, magistrate.” Zhao Yunlan spoke with a kind of suspiciously calm tone, “Please take me to see the real Wheel of Reincarnation amongst the Youming (T/N: ghost).”

For a moment, the magistrate felt like he was a bit unfamiliar. He spoke in a mismatched way only after a long while passed: “I

—
I thought Ling Zhu wanted to ask about the Guardian Lamp...”

“Guardian Lamp?” Zhao Yunlan’s left brow slightly jumped upwards in a shudder-

like movement. His finger on his left hand subconsciously pressed onto the wound on his right hand, but it wasn’t long until an expanse of bright red covered his fingertip. There was a moment where the magistrate was terrified with the thought that Zhao Yunlan was going to say certain

horrific words, but Zhao Yunlan only continued his unnatural peacefulness. His eyelid drooped ever so slightly, eventually not revealing even a little slit. He only simply said, “Please walk ahead to show me the way.”

“Chief Zhao!” a woman’s voice suddenly sounded out from behind them. Zhao Yunlan didn’t need to turn his head around to know that it was Zhu Hong.

“Mm,” Zhao Yunlan didn’t even lose his temper, and didn’t have a particularly big reaction either. He only more or less casually gave a hum as a response, as though he had forgotten that he already sent Zhu Hong away himself and that she disobeyed his command to come back on her own accord. Then, Zhao Yunlan’s footsteps paused, “If you bump into Chu Shuzhi and Da Qing, tell them to continue to look for Lin Jing. I have something to attend to, I’ll be leaving for a bit first.”

Zhu Hong: "I'll go with you!"

Zhao Yunlan gave her an expressionless look: "No need. It's inconvenient to bring you along. Cultivate a couple more years, little snake."

Zhu Hong was practically emitting smoke from her ears and nostrils: "Little snake? I'm a little snake? Then what are you? Those that are your age in our tribe would still be gnawing on their own eggshells! You mortal."

Zhao Yunlan didn't even turn his head, only the corners of his mouth silently revealed a cold smile. He replied, so quietly his words were hardly audible: "There's no rush, soon I won't be."

Lin Jing, who everyone was searching for, was currently meditating with difficulty. He didn't know where he was. When his own five senses recovered, he realised that he was already tied up by someone here. An abnormally shaped large rock was behind him, while a tree so tall he couldn't see the top of when he raised his head stood beside the rock. It seemed like he was surrounded by water, but his body seemed to be within a large transparent enclosure, and was not affected by the water.

In front of him, on either side of him, were all strangely shaped youchu... some were typical youchu, some looked more human, and some were basically a pile of mud. This group of "youchu" densely surrounded him, almost immediately triggering a certain fragile-minded man's trypophobia.

Lin Jing instinctively closed his eyes and started to recite scriptures.

Unfortunately, Lin Jing had just started, only chanted two lines, when he realized that Buddhist scriptures seemed to anger these “neighbours” around him that were already intensely eyeing him up. The youchus began to become unsettled, the large and small all began to resound in roars and growls.

Lin Jing gulped with difficulty and squeezed out an unattractive smile: “That... That um, I didn't know we had a rule against reciting scriptures here. I'm not a person with particularly high education, I'll correct myself immediately, I'll correct myself.”

The greedy gaze of the youchu closest to Lin Jing darkened and it couldn't help but shuffle forward a step. It pricked up its nose, carefully sniffing the smell of fresh blood and meat on the man.

With an expression of anguish, Lin Jing cried: “I haven't showered for three days by now. This comrade here do not be uncivil and touch me. Watch your manners!”

That youchu suddenly opened its mouth wide at him, taking a big bite in his direction. Right at this moment, a different youchu that looked more human-like suddenly reached out with a hand. It grabbed the one before it that dared to eat on its own by the back of its neck. Its fingers, with their wrinkled skin, gave a hard squeeze. Then, that other youchu that was relatively low ranked became like a head-shaped wind chime in its hands, jingling and jangling as it hungt here, dead.

The one that suddenly reached out with a hand to kill its tribemate let out a shrill sound and dripped off an entire ear from the corpse. Without even needing any soy sauce or vinegar, it put it straight into its mouth, and ate it.

Then, it very generously raised its hand and threw the body. As though hearing the bells of New Years, countless youchu pounced on it with overflowing passion. Hardly half a minute passed when the youchu from before had hardly any remains left, not even its skin and bones.

Lin Jing watched with wide eyes speechless: “Ami—Amita bha, my Buddha have mercy. Please, Good Samaritans, watch your table manners.”

They all growled at him together, probably wanting to use him to practice exerting greater table manners.

“Alright, alright, alright, if you don’t want to watch it then don’t, do as you all please!”

Right at this moment, a high-pitched whistle suddenly sounded from far away, all the youchu

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all the ghost tribe entirely fell quiet. Then, as though a great fog blown away by wind, they were all abruptly removed spotlessly.

Lin Jing only thought that gust of wind swept by him, and then a person was thrown down from mid-

air with a clatter, and was pinned onto that great big weird tree off to the side.

Four lines of inky black shackles grew out of the trunk of the great tree, securely clamping down. That person had a single three-foot long or so icicle stuck in his chest where his heart lay—he was really “pinned” onto the tree, and there was a moment where Lin Jing held his breath, thinking that the person was dead.

But just at that moment, the person pinned onto the tree suddenly opened his eyes.

Although even his breathing was trembling, he didn't show an ounce of it on his face. It was at this moment that Lin Jing called out in shock: “Teacher Shen!”

Shen Wei lowered his head and scanned over him, not letting out a sound. However, Lin Jing could see the cold sweat that covered his head and his lips which were so pale they were like paper. Looking closely, his body seemed to be ceaselessly trembling, but aside from that, his face did not reveal a single hint of pain.

Gui Mian, who immediately followed, landed and stood opposite Shen Wei. He gazed at him while grinning, and, after a while, Gui Mian slowly raised his hand and took off the mask on his face.

Lin Jing sucked in a breath of cold air: “My Buddha, have mercy, quickly grant your disciple a pair of glasses! These incompetent eyes... How come, how come it looks like two Teacher Shens?”

However, upon closer inspection, the “Teacher Shen” that wore the mask had skin that was even more ghostly pale—not the usual pale but pale to the point of looking blue. It was basically as though he had just climbed out of formalin, and, because of that, he carried a kind of indescribable air about him.

There seemed to be an unexplainable air of resentment and darkness. Even with Shen Wei’s facial features that were as handsome as though he walked right out of an artwork, it became more like a painted face that hung on a skull. The better looking, the more terrifying.

Lin Jing’s eyes were widened to the point of nearly popping out of its sockets, and he decided in the blink of an eye that the person who came later was truly shameless. He must have done cosmetic surgery to look like their “leader’s wife”. Clearly, he’s an uglier faker!

He only heard the faker sluggishly start talking: “I’m a pretty nostalgic person, but you push me to desperation with every step. I really can’t do anything but get rid of you, my brother.”

When Gui Mian said this, his eyes glinted with a strange light, seemingly both regretful and eager at the same time—

He and Shen Wei were both Ghost Kings. It needn’t be mentioned that Shen Wei later received Kunlun Jun’s shield and gained the right to Godhood....

“If I swallowed you, do you think the entire Great Seal would be broken open by me?”

Shen Wei was pinned onto the Ancient Tree of Merits by him, pained to the point of weakly sweating all over his body. However, when he opened his mouth the first thing that came out was a cynical laugh: “What, you can’t take the road of the Four Holy Tools? Did something happen to the Reincarnation Dial? Did it turn into a normal rock?”

“It’s you!”

Gui Mian’s eyelid violently gave a few shudders, then he reached up with a hand to land a slap on Shen Wei’s face. Shen Wei was hit so hard that his head snapped to one side. Just then he clenched his teeth too tightly, so all of a sudden it broke the skin of his mouth. However, he didn’t feel it. Casually spitting out the blood in his mouth and laughing aloud: “The Reincarnation Dial was born out of the Stone of Three Lives**, but the Stone of Three Lives and the Ancient Tree of Merits each sealed one spirit out of the three souls and seven spirits. They are connected to each other through ten thousand souls, but only the Mountain-River Awl was born from both lightness and darkness, and became an entity on its own that could trap anything in the world—I didn’t use the Mountain-River Awl in vain to lure you here, to land the Soul-Chasing Lure on your body. However, you indeed did not let anyone down and took out the big cauldron***. In front of everyone, you burned the Merit Brush. You think I don’t know that the most needed hearthstone in the Soul Refining Furnace is the Stone of Three Lives? Where are you going to find a shard of the Ston

e of Three Lives...actually even if you don't say it, I'd still know. When the Merit Brush was born, that was when I found the Reincarnation Dial, the moment when I pressed it into the Mountain-River Awl—

Otherwise how do you think the great cauldron fell into your hands so easily? Do you really think it's because you have particularly good fortune, and that someone would bring you a pillow whenever you fall asleep?" (T/N: basically saying 'you don't need to do anything yourself')

"The Mountain-River Awl...The Mountain-River Awl was in your hands from the very beginning?"

"Can't you read? Mountain-River, Mountain-River, Kunlun was where the 36 Mountains and Rivers originated. I inherited the Mountain Saint. There were already a hundred thousand great mountains joined together to begin with, why would I have to come all the way to fight with you over... something that was always just under my nose?"

Shen Wei's cold sweat dripped into his mouth, and he carelessly smudged it away with a purse of his lips, "Right now, I think perhaps there is still one more thing that you also want to know—What you used to lure me in just then, what you released in order to contain me... that one thread of chaos that you took out from your own body, where did I put it now?"

The blueish and reddish tones on Gui Mian's face alternated for a long while, expression so twisted that it became almost hideous. Suddenly his hand reached out to grasp onto the icicle that was stuck into Shen Wei's chest. Blood had already soaked right thro

ugh Shen Wei's longrobes, skin and flesh tightly stuck together with the lapels of his clothes. The man looked extraordinarily wr etched.

With a heave of strength, Gui Mian gave a hard twist to the icicle in Shen Wei's chest. Shen Weididn't let out the sounds of agony that he wanted to hear, but he couldn't say anything anymore.

"I don't want to know even a single bit," Gui Mian's breathing was harsh, and he leaned in closeto Shen Wei's face to say lowly , "I could know nothing, I could just let out all the blood in your heart just like this, so that you cannot maintain this human body. I could extract the Kunluntendon on your primordial spirit, and then swallow you down one mouthful by one mouthful. From the n on, the world will only have one Ghost King. I am truly the one. Unparalleled. In. the. World."

Shen Wei couldn't say a single word in his pain, but the corner of his mouth still held that cynical smile, as if he was saying to Gui Mian—you could try it, then.

Guo Mian lifted a hand to pull out half of the icicle in his chest, and then ruthlessly pierced itback in again. Shen Wei's body jerk ed severely. He finally fainted and his head dangled down,unmoving.

Gui Mian didn't even spare a glance towards Lin Jing, who was both in shock and horror, andwalked away in long strides. In the blink of an eye, he was gone into the bottomless darkness.