

Tales of Herding Gods

Chapter 2: The Blood Of The Four Spirits

Granny Si smiled as she excitedly pulled Qin Mu into the village. “Stop looking out there and come here. Quickly! Today is your big day! Village Chief, Old Ma, everyone, get out here!”

A bonfire illuminated the village. As Village Chief was once again carried out on a stretcher, he solemnly asked, “Have the four spirits been found?”

“They’ve all been found.”

One-armed Old Ma dragged out a huge jade-green snake that was dozens of yards long. The snake reeked of blood, but it was still alive. In spite of that, it couldn’t move under Old Ma’s one-handed grip.

At the same time, Mute the blacksmith came over carrying a huge bird that was slightly bigger than him. Both of the bird’s wings and legs were bound, and whenever it tried to struggle, sparks bounced from its feathers. The crackling noises that its struggling created were terrifying.

Blind then carried out a giant tortoise that was much larger than a table. Only god knew how long this giant tortoise had lived, for even its shell had turned golden with age. All four limbs of the beast were hidden inside of its shell. A claw would sneakily stretch out from time to time, and one instance in which it did, Qin Mu saw steam coming from the bottom of it. The steam looked as if it were strong enough to lift the golden tortoise up and help it escape.

The only reason the tortoise was unable to do so was the fact that Blind had a hook piercing its nose.

“The Green Dragon, the White Tiger, the Vermillion Bird, and the Black Tortoise—even though we haven’t been able to find the blood of these four spirits, we can still refine some by using the Green Dragon Snake, the Iron Bone Tiger, the Lightning Bird, and the Golden Tortoise as replacements. They will be enough.”

Village Chief gave the village’s resident butcher a nod. Butcher grinned and used his hands and arms to move forward. He was a man who only had the upper half of his body left. Every part below his waist had been cleanly chopped off.

Four vats had been placed in front of the Green Dragon Snake, Iron Bone Tiger, Lightning Bird, and Golden Tortoise. Slicing into each of them a single time, Butcher let out the blood of these ferocious beasts. Soon enough, the fresh blood of these four beasts ran dry.

“Apothecary,” Village Chief called out.

The village’s apothecary stepped forward. He had no face. His nose, the skin on his face, and half of his lips seemed to have been sliced off by someone. He was the ugliest, scariest person in the village, but Qin Mu felt that Grandpa Apothecary was the nicest.

Apothecary stepped forward and took out four peculiar red leaves. On each leaf was a snow white insect egg. Apothecary dropped a leaf into every vat. In each one, a larva could be seen hatching from its egg, coming to rest on the leaf, and drinking the blood.

The more blood these larvae drank, the bigger their bodies became. The blood in all four vats quickly disappeared, leaving behind a big fat worm in all four vats.

Apothecary scattered some white, crystalline foam that resembled salt into each vat, and Qin Mu could actually see the four worms rapidly shrink. The sight made him click his tongue in wonder.

A moment later, Apothecary picked the four worms up. Each of the worms was only the size of a person’s palm. Taking out four white porcelain cups, he tightly squeezed one of the worms, causing it to squeak loudly. Crystal clear amber blood flowed from its mouth, filling up a cup.

Doing the same thing to the other three bugs, Apothecary squeezed the blood from each one’s stomach into the remaining cups, then placed all four in front of Qin Mu while shaking his head. “Only this much spirit blood could be refined. They aren’t the real spirit beasts after all.”

“Mu’er, there are seven great treasure vaults in the human body: Spirit Embryo, Five Elements, Six Directions, Seven Stars, Celestial Being, Life and Death, and Divine Bridge. These seven great treasure vaults are inherently sealed, just like hidden treasures that are locked away. As a result, they are referred to as the Seven Great Divine Treasures.”

“The Seven Great Divine Treasures are normally sealed and require a warrior to unseal it themselves,” Village Chief said. His aura was intimidating as the light of the bonfire’s blaze flickered across his face “Walls are what stand in the way of a warrior trying to awaken their divine treasures. There is one for each treasure: the Spirit Embryo Wall, the Five Elements Wall, the Six Directions Wall, the Seven Stars Wall, the Celestial Being Wall, the Life and Death Wall, and the Divine Bridge Wall. The process of breaking through these seven walls is called Wall Break.”

Grandpa Ma gently caressed Qin Mu's head with his remaining hand and smiled. "It is impossible for a person to cultivate if a wall can't be broken. Some people are blessed by the heavens. When such a person is born, their Spirit Embryo Wall will have already been broken, naturally unsealing their Spirit Embryo Divine Treasure. This kind of constitution is called a Spirit Body, gifted by the heavens as the perfect seedling for cultivation. People with a Spirit Body have talent superior to that of normal people, allowing them to cultivate twice as fast."

"There are four elements for Spirit Embryo, which means that there are also four kinds of Spirit Bodies: the Green Dragon Spirit Body, the White Tiger Spirit Body, the Vermillion Bird Spirit Body, and the Black Tortoise Spirit Body. The blood of these four spirits is needed in order to check if one possesses a Spirit Body."

"If you possess a Green Dragon Spirit Body, you will awaken the Qi of the Green Dragon after drinking Green Dragon spirit blood, just like Old Ma," Apothecary said.

One-armed Old Ma unbuttoned his shirt and took it off, standing topless in front of Qin Mu. He turned his back to Qin Mu before unleashing a deep shout.

Qin Mu immediately saw a green qi emerge from Old Ma's back. From his tailbone to the back of his head, the green qi slowly formed a green dragon. As the scales, beard, and hair of the dragon appeared, a dragon claw extended Old Ma's only arm while another two dragon claws coiled around his legs.

"This is a Green Dragon Spirit Body." One-armed Old Ma put his shirt back on. "Old Woman Si has a White Tiger Spirit Body."

Granny Si rolled her eyes and said, "I won't take off my clothes and let you old dogs take advantage of me. I shall show Qin Mu by shaping my qi."

Granny Si's body shook slightly as the indistinct figure of a ferocious White Tiger appeared behind her, a faint bestial roar resonating from it.

"Everyone in the village has a Spirit Body. Back in the day, we were glorious. Now, however, we're all just a bunch of old, disabled elderly."

Granny Si smiled. "There's nothing that we, the disabled elderly, can give you. These four cups of blood from four different spirits are the key to awakening a Spirit Body. Like with a Green Dragon Spirit Body, if you have a White Tiger Spirit Body, drinking White Tiger spirit blood would awaken the Qi of the White Tiger within your Spirit Embryo. If you have a Vermillion Bird Spirit Body, Vermillion Bird spirit blood would awaken the Qi of the Vermillion Bird within your Spirit Embryo. The same goes for a Black Tortoise Spirit Body."

"Now drink."

Village Chief, Granny Si, and everyone else looked at Qin Mu, revealing expressions of anticipation.

Qin Mu's heart pumped wildly. Even though he had drunk countless strange concoctions while learning how to gather and refine herbs from Apothecary, it had never been this strange.

Qin Mu lifted one of the porcelain cups. Since the cup held Vermillion Bird spirit blood, the sanguine liquid was blistering hot. He drank all of it in one shot and felt a burning sensation spread from his throat to his limbs and then his bones. He felt a raging blaze inside of his body, one that was so hot his blood seemed to be boiling.

After a moment, the burning feeling faded.

"Mute, does he have a Vermillion Bird Spirit Body?" Village Chief asked.

Mute the Blacksmith shook his head.

"Continue, Qin Mu," Village Chief said.

Qin Mu took the second white porcelain cup that contained White Tiger spirit blood. Drinking it felt like drinking molten iron filled slag, tasted like copper, and stung his mouth. He felt that same stinging sensation throughout his body, which then faded soon after.

"He doesn't have a White Tiger Spirit Body." Granny Si shook her head in slight disappointment.

"Qin Mu, the third cup," Village Chief said solemnly.

Qin Mu drank from the third cup. It contained Green Dragon spirit blood that had been refined from the huge green snake. This cup of spirit blood made him feel as if the blood in his muscles had begun to swell, uncomfortably squeezing his organs. However, this bloated feeling quickly faded as well.

Old Ma shook his head with a disappointed look on his face. "He doesn't have a Green Dragon Spirit Body."

"In that case, he must have a Black Tortoise Spirit Body," Apothecary revealed a rare smile, looking even more sinister than usual.

Qin Mu drank the last cup that was full of Black Tortoise spirit blood. His body became as light as a feather as he drank it, it was like he was immersed in the water of a river. However, like before, the feeling quickly vanished.

"He doesn't have a Black Tortoise Spirit Body." Apothecary shook his head.

The villagers around the bonfire became silent, then Butcher said, "If that's the case, he's just an ordinary human."

Granny Si suddenly began to cry, struggling to speak. "All of us are old and disabled. Qin Mu won't be able to continue living if we die. It's so dangerous here. He wouldn't survive for even a day..."

Qin Mu grabbed Granny Si's hand and gently said, "Don't cry granny. You and all the grandpas are good people. Nobody will die..."

"Good people? Hehe..." Old Ma laughed at himself. "We were all forced to retreat to the Great Ruins, struggling to live at death's doorstep. The Great Ruins are too dangerous, so it'll definitely be difficult for Mu'er to survive without us. We should send him out of the Great Ruins where it's much safer..."

"We will be discovered and killed if we send him out. Since he is associated with us, he would die as well," Butcher said coldly.

Disabled Elderly Village went silent once again.

Suddenly, Village Chief spoke. "Good."

Confused, Granny Si asked, "What's good about this?"

Village Chief smiled. "I'm referring to his constitution. It's a good—no, it's a great seedling."

Butcher, Apothecary, and the rest of the villagers gave him blank stares, unable to understand why Qin Mu's constitution was great. Village Chief smiled and explained, "My guess is that Mu'er has another type of constitution, one that combines the strengths of the four great constitutions—an Overlord Body!"

"An Overlord Body?" Granny Si and the rest wore skeptical looks. All of them were experienced, knowledgeable people, but they had never heard of an Overlord Body before.

"Yes, an Overlord Body."

Village Chief grinned. "It's difficult for normal spirit blood to awaken an Overlord Body. Blood from the four great spirit beasts must be collected for the Overlord Body to show itself. None of the four great spirit beasts remain in the Great Ruins, but it shouldn't be too hard to find their descendants. Continue capturing beasts and refining their blood. Once Qin Mu drinks enough spirit blood, his Overlord Body will awaken naturally."

Everyone trusted Village Chief, so all of the disabled elderly in the village were overjoyed to hear him say all of this. "Tomorrow I'll go with Cripple to catch a tiger! Rest early, Mu'er. You'll still have to drink more spirit blood tomorrow!"

Once everyone dispersed, Apothecary and Mute brought Village Chief back to his room. After Mute left, Apothecary remained in the room and softly said, "The Overlord Body doesn't exist."

Village Chief nodded. "I said that without thinking. However, if I hadn't said anything, it would've been hard for everyone else to continue living."

Apothecary was at a loss for words. Everyone in Disabled Elderly Village had their own history, but they were all forced to move to the Great Ruins. Struggling to survive, all of their sorrows weighed heavily upon them. Qin Mu was partially the reason why everyone could continue living up to this point.

It was the appearance of this healthy little baby that had cleansed the sorrow from everyone's hearts. As they raised Qin Mu, they began to view this little boy as their most precious family member. It was Qin Mu that held the fragile hearts of the people in Disabled Elderly Village together.

If the villagers knew that Qin Mu only had an ordinary body and wouldn't be able to survive in the Great Ruins by himself, all of them might actually lose control and do the unthinkable.

Apothecary was expressionless. "You can't hide the truth from them forever. All of us will die of old age someday and leave Qin Mu behind."

"That's why we'll never tell him that the Overlord Body doesn't exist. Keep it a secret from him for eternity," Village Chief said solemnly. "Let him believe that he has the one and only Overlord Body!"

Apothecary was stunned as he examined Village Chief's face. Under the dim light from the oil lamp, Village Chief's face seemed to be particularly bewitching as he smiled. "I want to see if an ordinary person with unparalleled faith can achieve something that even we, people with Spirit Bodies, can't."

Apothecary gave him a blank stare. "Mortal Body... to Overlord Body?"

Village Chief nodded deeply. "As long as there's faith, a Mortal Body will become an Overlord Body!"