

Tales of Herding Gods

Chapter 3: Divine Arts

Apothecary had his own way of doing things. “Make Qin Mu drink as much spirit blood as possible... drown him in it if need be! Even if his Spirit Body doesn’t awaken, his physical body will get stronger every time he drinks spirit blood. His physical body will become much more powerful than any Spirit Body!”

“He’ll be able to kill a dragon with one punch.” Village Chief laughed. “Such a thing would definitely terrify those bastards outside the Great Ruins.”

Both of them looked at each other with glee, then Apothecary walked out of the room and closed the door.

The next day, the villagers managed to get a hold of a few more Iron Bone Tigers, Green Dragon Snakes, Lightning Birds, and Golden Tortoises. With a goal to strive for, all of them were eager to work. Apothecary, however, got angry. “Qin Mu will drown if he drinks so much Spirit Blood in one go!”

Mute the Blacksmith dragged two Lightning Birds over and laughed mischievously, revealing his tongueless mouth.

“Mu’er can endure it!” Granny Si had faith in Qin Mu.

Yet Apothecary just stared at them and went silent. He took out the larvae and carried on refining the blood, but things still went wrong. The amount of spirit blood was too much for Qin Mu, causing his body to inflate as if he were filling with air. All of the elderly villagers became extremely nervous, worried that Qin Mu would explode with a bang.

Apothecary took out a few hollow silver needles, stabbing them into Qin Mu’s back and the top of his head. Red, blue, and purple gases spewed from the holes in the protruding end of each needle.

After some time, the stream of gas from each needle stemmed and stopped. Apothecary then removed each needle and glared at the others. “Take things at a steady pace, step by step! All of you trying to force feed him as if he were a glutton will just kill him! He’s unbearably bloated right now, so all of you make yourselves busy. To

help him digest the spirit blood, he'll be training his knife skills with Butcher, his fists with Old Ma, and his legs with Cripple."

"Mu'er, it's time for some knife training!"

Butcher shoved both his hands against the ground, actually launching himself into the air and landing on a nearby pile of wood. Since he didn't have a lower body, the combined height of the pile of wood and his upper body allowed him to match Qin Mu.

Butcher held a pair of Pig Slaughtering Knives in both his hands, but these knives were different from the norm. Normal Pig Slaughtering Knives had blades that were curved into a crescent moon and were no more than a foot long. In addition to that, they had circular wooden handles.

On the other hand, Butcher's Pig Slaughtering Knives had a similar design, yet were significantly larger. The blade of each knife stretched out to a yard in length. The backs of the blades were thick while the edges were very thin, and both sparkled with a polished sheen. Side by side, both knives were terrifyingly huge and resembled an arched doorway.

Although he only had one, Qin Mu's Pig Slaughtering Knife was the same size as Butcher's. It was extremely heavy, weighing over ten kilograms. Qin Mu would usually be able to just barely lift that single knife, but after consuming the blood of the four spirits, his strength had increased by leaps and bounds. Lifting up the Pig Slaughtering Knife with just one hand no longer felt like a struggle to him.

"Watch out, Grandpa Butcher!"

Qin Mu wielded the knife with one hand and rushed at Butcher who was on the wooden pile. Butcher laughed loudly, radiating a heroic aura despite having only half his body.

Midnight Battle Across Stormy Cities!

Qin Mu swung his knife up and down as he moved toward Butcher. The knife flashed faster and faster, creating whistlings of wind.

"Slow, slow, slow! You are too slow!"

Butcher started to make a big fuss as his blades became a flurry of metal in front of him. His blades clashed against Qin Mu's, creating a din that sounded like a storm terrorizing pear blossom trees. "Faster! Go faster! Your Pig Slaughtering Knife can still go faster! Speed is the essence of 'Midnight Battle Across Stormy Cities.' The Pig Slaughtering Knife must be as fast as the storm at night, sweeping across all the cities! I want to see you go faster!"

The continuous flash of knives grew faster, as if three silver dragons were writhing up, down, and around the wooden pile. The sound of cutting wind grew louder, and among it, blade energy swirled about. Whenever the blade energy struck the ground, a deep gouge appeared in the earth.

Those were marks from their blades.

“Magnificent! That’s the way to do it! The faster your knife is, the more powerful its blade energy will be. However, you still aren’t fast enough. You must become so fast that your blade becomes a raging inferno, burning and incinerating all!”

Butcher continued to swing his knives in a whirlwind of motion, seemingly going into a frenzy. The sight dazzled Qin Mu.

“Burn! Burn! Let your knives burn, let your aura burn, and let your spirit burn! Once you’ve set your knives aflame, that is when you’ll know you’ve completed the divine art!”

Whoosh——!

As Butcher continued to unleash a whirlwind of slashes with his knives, the friction between the two of them actually created a spark and set the air on fire. The two knives actually moved back and forth like flaming dragons, creating an awe-inspiring sight.

The flame dragons hurtled toward Qin Mu, who was clearly unable to block them. At the last moment, right before they struck him, the flame dragons twisted upward, tearing the darkness of the night sky above Disabled Elderly Village to shreds.

Qin Mu stared blankly upwards, a testament to Butcher’s terrifying knife-wielding prowess.

Soon enough, darkness swarmed back toward the village, devouring every bit of the flame dragons and the blade energy that formed them.

The darkness above seemed to be angry at Butcher for raising his knives against them. The pitch black swarmed down toward the village, threatening to devour it whole.

However, the stone statues at the four corners of the village suddenly grew brighter, pushing back the darkness.

“Goddamn sky!”

Still propped up on the pile of wood, Butcher brandished his knives with both hands as he shouted toward the heavens. “I will cleave through this darkness and slaughter my way back someday! My waist was chopped off, not my head! I may have lost my legs, but I’ll still slaughter...”

“Grandpa Butcher’s gone crazy again. His knives really were too fast though. How long will I have to train to be as fast as him and turn my knife skills into a divine art?”

Qin Mu gazed at the enraged Butcher in respect. Then he put his Pig Slaughtering Knife back down and went to look for one-armed Old Ma.

“While Butcher’s knife-wielding needs to create flames before being considered a divine art, my fist movements have to create the sound of thunder before qualifying as a divine art!”

Old Ma clenched his fist, a serious expression on his face as crackling sounds emanated from his bones. “Mu’er, when you are able to hold lightning in your hands, your fists will have achieved the smallest of successes. Butcher’s knives are extremely fast, but my fist explodes with unrivaled strength, surpassing the limits of sound and air! One arm can train the fist, one arm can be a thousand arms, one arm can create the sound of thunder!”

Boom——!

Muffled explosions resembling the dull rumble of thunder rang out from Old Ma’s fist as he punched the air in front of him.

Boom boom boom!

Qin Mu couldn’t tell how fast Old Ma’s fist was moving as the one-armed man unleashed a series of punches. With his naked eye, Qin Mu could only see afterimages of Old Ma’s fist, making it seem as if he had a thousand arms instead of just one.

Old Ma’s fist started to move even faster. Lightning flashed in the palms of all one thousand of the man’s hands, popping and crackling. Thunder accompanied every strike as well, sparks flying in every direction!

“This is Thousand-Armed Buddha of the Thunderclap Eight Strikes! As long as your fists are faster than the speed of sound, you’ll be able to control the sound of thunder. Every punch and every palm strike of this divine art is capable of destroying the opponent’s body and soul, consigning them to eternal damnation, and preventing them from ever reincarnating!”

Old Ma reined his fist in and solemnly said, “Use the Thunderclap Eight Strikes I taught you. Attack me. Control both lightning and thunder in your hands as you strike!”

Qin Mu remained calm. The abilities that Grandpa Ma and Grandpa Butcher taught him today were different than usual. The last time he trained with either of them, both had only taught him the normal knife and fist skills. This time, both brought up the same term—

—Divine Art!

Since this was his first time coming across the term, Qin Mu was unfamiliar with it.

Qin Mu used the Thunderclap Eight Strikes to attack Old Ma. Despite having only one arm, he blocked all of Qin Mu's strikes effortlessly.

Although Butcher seemed to go into a frenzy when training with Qin Mu, every clash between the two of them was precisely calculated so that he'd never hurt the boy. Unlike Butcher, Old Ma struck without mercy. Whenever Qin Mu revealed a gap in his defenses, a punch would strike him. Even though the punches weren't heavy, Qin Mu's nose still ended up bloody and swollen.

Old Ma only let Qin Mu rest when he couldn't fight any longer.

"Legs are the wind, the land, and the root of all strength," Cripple said as he leaned on a crutch.

Despite the fact that he only had one leg left, Cripple was the one teaching Qin Mu leg techniques. Qin Mu had originally thought that Grandpa Cripple was the most normal person in the village. The old man always smiled warmly and always felt reliable.

However, ever since Cripple stabbed the woman that had emerged from the cowskin, with the same warm smile no less, Qin Mu was no longer certain about him.

Cripple was good at hiding a dagger behind a smile. No one knew whether that smile was genuine or fake.

Cripple smiled at Qin Mu. "Mu'er, Butcher praised his knives while Old Ma praised his fists. However, real divine arts lie within one's legs. When you are unable to chop or beat your opponent, what do you do? You run of course! Staying alive is what's most important! Life isn't all sunshine and rainbows. Things can go wrong. That's why staying alive can also be considered a victory! As long as you run fast enough, you can sprint on walls, on water, and even through the sky! Everything, even fire or air, becomes a foothold if you run fast enough! The moment you are able to run faster than sound is the moment you will have reached the rudimentary level of leg skill required for divine arts."

"Come, Mu'er. Put these iron weights on."