

# Tales of Herding Gods

## Chapter 8: Granny's Skin

"Granny once said that, if I got lost in the Great Ruins and couldn't return to the village, I shouldn't panic," Qin Mu thought to himself calmly. "There are many remnants of civilization in the Great Ruins. If I can find one to hide in, I might be able to survive. Two conditions need to be met for a remnant to be considered safe. First, it has to have stone statues similar to the ones in the village. Second, I need to check if there are a large amount of strange beasts in the remnant. Most are intelligent, so they'd know where to go to escape the darkness..."

Many remnants of civilization existed in the Great Ruins. Qin Mu had passed by traces of abandoned cities and villages earlier on. Considering their crumbling fences and dilapidated walls, they were extremely ancient. However, he hadn't had time to stop and check if they had stone statues.

All of a sudden, the entire world went eerily silent, so quiet that it could drive a person insane.

The setting sun had already reached the horizon, only half of it visible.

Immediately after silence fell upon the Great Ruins, the beating of wings could be heard. Looking up, Qin Mu saw a huge flock of giant birds flying overhead, forming a dense cluster in the sky. Then the ground began to tremble, and the forest around him began to fall apart. One by one, strange beasts split the earth, emerging from tunnels they had been digging and began to scramble frantically.

Qin Mu even heard water erupt from the swamp, looking over to see a few scarlet fish several yards in length leaping from the water's surface and using their fins to flee on land as if they were legs!

The sight confused Qin Mu. Were fish still considered fish if they could sprint on land?

"All of these strange beasts are heading the same direction. I'll definitely be able to hide from the darkness there!"

Spirits high, Qin Mu dashed alongside the beasts.

As the sky grew dimmer and dimmer, the darkness in the distance came swarming in like a tidal wave. That darkness was nothing like a simple transition between day and night. It resembled a huge flood, engulfing every mountain, valley, and all of the wilderness it came across. Even though it wasn't his first time seeing the darkness overtake the land, Qin Mu still considered it an extremely stunning sight.

The darkness flooded towards Qin Mu and the herd of strange beasts like a torrential downpour, yet all of the animals continued to furiously charge in its direction.

Qin Mu hesitated for a moment.

Was there really a safe place ahead in which he could take shelter from the darkness

Wouldn't he suffer a tragic end if that weren't the case?

"The darkness is fast approaching. Even if I turned back now, I wouldn't be able to make it to the village. I'd never be able to outrun the darkness."

Gritting his teeth, he desperately rushed forward.

"No use worrying. I can only continue running with the beasts!"

Three miles down the river that ran by Disabled Elderly Village, the battle between Granny Si and the Li River's Five Elders had reached a breaking point. Originally, only four elders had been attacking Granny Si. However, since they hadn't been able to promptly take her down, the fifth elder who had been watching the battle from the cliff, Qi Yanbing, joined the fray. Adding him to their onslaught, they set up their Five Elements Devil Purifying Trigram.

Up to this point, Granny Si had only been able to just barely fend off the attacks of the four elders. However, her strength surprisingly increased when Qi Yanbing added to their efforts. Even their Five Element Devil Purifying Trigram could not trap this old woman.

This realization startled the five elders, and they soon grew frustrated. Only now did they figure out that this old woman wanted to take care of them all at once. To that end, she had pretended to be weak, intent on luring Qi Yanbing into the battle and prevent him from escaping.

Light on her feet, Granny Si flickered through the area like a phantom. The silver needles from her basket moved as if they had minds of their own, instantly covering the Li River's Five Elders in wounds. Threads that had been attached to the needles were now running through the five elders, binding their souls and bodies and preventing them from moving.

Granny Si walked towards them, scissors in hand and a bright smile on her face. “Granny me hasn’t treated human skin for a long time... I wonder if my skills have gotten rusty...”

As soon as she came to stand in front of Qi Yanbing, he suddenly opened his mouth. A silver pellet shot from his mouth and streaked towards Granny Si’s face.

The moment the silver pellet came into contact with the air, it grew in size. The pellet instantly became a hundred times larger, expanding into a sphere made of ten thousand pure sword lights!

This sudden change caught Granny Si off guard, and she immediately moved backward in retreat. Her body went bizarrely limp, and like an earthworm squirming through the air, she dodged the sword lights. At the same time, she threw out the scissors in her hand. Like two silver dragons, the scissors flashed through the air, cutting and snipping at the sword lights.

As nimble as she was, Granny Si had still been caught off guard.

One of the myriad sword lights had managed to strike her from behind, and since she was a hunchback, the sword light had essentially found her blindspot.

Soon enough, the sword lights that had filled the sky vanished as pieces of broken swords came crashing to the ground, covering several acres of the area.

The silver pellet that the sword lights came from returned to its original, diminutive size and fell to the ground with a crack.

Granny Si returned to the ground as well, pulling the sword out of her back with a frown.

“You still dodged it...” croaked Qi Yanbi, the leader of the five elders. Despair filled his face as he cried, “Six thousand eight hundred and forty-two swords were hidden inside that silver pellet. Yet... at such a close range... you still managed to dodge them! You definitely aren’t an ordinary figure among the devils... but an old woman like you has never been seen among their number. Just who are you...?”

The second he asked that question, he noticed something strange about Granny Si’s back. Although her hunchback did have a wound that the sword caused, there wasn’t any blood flowing from it. Instead, light shined on it, revealing that the inside was hollow.

“This isn’t your true appearance.” The realization made Qi Yanbing’s hair stand on end. “You’re... you’re wearing someone else’s skin...”

“You tore my skin.” Granny Si frowned.

The voice that came from her mouth didn't sound like that of an old woman. Instead, it sounded soft and sweet. Whoever heard that voice would think that its owner was a gorgeous lady in her prime, not someone with one foot in the grave.

"Ah. The air is leaking," Granny Si muttered, sighing as she pressed a hand to her throat.

Taking out a needle and thread from her basket, she sewed the tear on her back and tested out her voice, which then returned to normal.

But the strange voice had long since provoked a drastic change in Qi Yanbing. He looked as if he had seen a ghost.

"I've heard that voice before..." he said, trembling. "I know who you are! You're that woman... the Heavenly Devil Cult Mis—"

As Qi Yanbing spoke, Granny Si's expression changed slightly. She tugged at the thread binding all of them together, and right before he could finish his sentence, the Li River's Five Elders were sliced to pieces. Their gory remains fell to the ground with a wet thud.

Surprisingly enough, the thread wasn't stained with blood after that. Then, as if it were alive, it coiled back into a ball and returned to the basket on its own.

Granny Si snorted in derision, then chuckled to herself.

"How long have you been there, you damned cripple?"

A short distance behind her, Cripple hobbled over using his crutch for support, a wide grin on his face. "I only just got here, dear sister. I didn't see or hear anything."

Granny Si glanced at him, then gave him a bright smile. "As long as you didn't hear anything, seeing is fine. Let us return to the village."

Instead of immediately agreeing, Cripple hesitated.

"For his entire life, sect master Li Tianxing of the Heavenly Devil Cult was revered as wise and powerful. In spite of that, in his later years, he made it stupid, pitiable mistake. He suddenly fancied one of the prettiest demonesses of the younger generation. He disposed of his original wife and took the young demoness as his new one, throwing the Heavenly Devil Cult into an uproar," Cripple said, calmly reciting the story from memory. "However, during their first night as husband and wife, just as they were about to consummate their marriage, Li Tianxing's new wife assassinated him and stole the Heavenly Devil Cult's Devil Bible. Every single elder of the Heavenly Devil Cult came out of closed cultivation to pursue her, yet she still managed to escape"

“Such a thing happened?” Granny Si asked innocently.

“Even now, no sign of her has been found,” Cripple replied.

“Well, in the good old days, this old woman heard tell of a man who had trained his legs to a godly level. He reached a point where people referred to his legs as divine legs. Nobody in the world could match his speed,” Granny Si said with a laugh. “However, that man realized he could use his godly speed to steal. The act excited him, and he grew addicted to it, eventually making a name for himself as the world’s greatest Thief God who could never be caught. Since he wasn’t a god, his title, which had ‘god’ in it, angered those who were. As if it were decreed by the gods, when the man went to Eternal Peace Empire to steal the Disk of the Emperor, he was discovered by the Imperial Preceptor. Although he lost a leg in the ensuing battle, the man still managed to escape from the Imperial Preceptor, taking the Disk of the Emperor and disappearing without a trace.. Despite his reputation as number one man below the gods, the Imperial Preceptor wasn’t able to catch the Thief God. In fact... he probably still has one of the Thief God’s divine legs and is still waiting to return it to its rightful owner.”

Granny Si stared at Cripple thoughtfully, and the two shared a laugh.

“Granny, we’re all disabled people from the same village,” Cripple said, his grin growing wider and wider. “We have our own secrets and made a promise to not ask about another person’s history.

“From now on... I am also deaf and mute,” he swore. “I won’t say a word.”

Granny Si snorted once more, then started walking towards the village, basket in tow. “Did Mu’er tell you what happened and ask you to come for me?”

Cripple shook his head. “You and those five old men caused such a commotion. All of us could sense residual waves of your battle from the village, so the village chief sent me to check on you.”

The expression on Granny Si’s face changed, and she anxiously asked, “Has Mu’er returned to the village?”

“I didn’t see him on the way here...”

“This is bad!”

The two of them rushed back to Disabled Elderly Village, and even before they got there, the sun finished setting as darkness rose on the horizon. It climbed higher and higher into the sky, spreading across the horizon and enveloping everything in its path like a raging tidal wave!

Granny Si ran through the village, searching high and low for Qin Mu.

“Mu’er isn’t back yet?” she asked frantically.

Then the darkness engulfed Disabled Elderly Village.

“There’s no need to worry, granny.”

Sitting on a stretcher that Cripple and Apothecary were carrying out, Village Chief stopped Granny Si from taking a stone statue to look for Qin Mu. In a reassuring voice, he said, “We’ve taught him everything he needs to know. As long as he had learned them, Qin Mu should be able to survive in the Great Ruins. The sky has already gone dark, so it’s pointless for you to go out now.”

The village chief’s words devastated Granny Si, but she knew he was telling the truth. The darkness had already overwhelmed the Great Ruins. As long as Qin Mu was still alive, he wouldn’t need her to save him. He’d be able to survive the night. If he were dead, then there would be no point in her carrying the stone statue outside to find him.

“He still has that jade pendant with him...” Granny Si thought to herself.

However, even though the pendant on Qin Mu’s chest came to mind, she knew that it had a limited range of protection meant for protecting a small baby. Since Qin Mu had grown up, the jade pendant’s protective glow was only large enough to cover his chest.

“Be smart, Mu’er,” Granny Si muttered. “You’ll definitely survive.”