

Tales of Herding Gods

Chapter 9: Pink Skeletons

As he ran with the herd of strange beasts, Qin Mu saw that the land ahead of them suddenly sloped downwards into a valley. Ancient, untouched structures were strewn throughout the village, such as ruined palaces, an enormous plaza, and even majestic skyscrapers.

“So there really was remnant of civilization ahead of us!” Qin Mu exclaimed.

At the very front of these decaying ruins was a towering gate that spanned the entrance to the valley. Marble pillars made up the bulk of this gate, dragons sculpted into the marble of each one so that they appeared to coil upward.

The herd of strange beasts turned towards the gate, rushing toward the ruins.

Qin Mu inadvertently glanced upwards, and his scalp went numb. The darkness was flowing down into the valley like a wave of ink!

“It’s here!” he screamed internally.

The darkness would soon reach the gate to the ruins and engulf it!

As if they could sense this as well, the strange beasts running alongside Qin Mu grew frantic. They rushed the gate with even more ferocity than before, ramming into and crushing other more careless beasts to death.

Now definitely wasn’t the time to be calm and orderly—If they couldn’t reach the ruins in front of them before the darkness arrived, they would die horrible deaths!

Sprinting forward madly, Qin Mu grabbed onto a behemoth’s tail. Unaware of the human hitching a ride on it, the behemoth bolted forward like a majestic black mountain, pushing aside and trampling all of the other beasts in its path.

Some of the beasts that the behemoth left in its wake leaped forward and latched onto its tail as well, allowing it to bring them into the ruins.

As he gripped the behemoth’s tail, Qin Mu looked below him and saw that all of the strange beasts that had been ferocious during the day were now trembling in fear. They

clung to the behemoth's tail for their very lives. When he turned to look farther behind them, he also saw the five youths frantically chasing the behemoth, scrambling for the ruins.

Finally, just before the darkness engulfed the gate, the behemoth burst through it, rushing into the ruins like a gust of wind.

At that same exact moment, the five Li River's disciples rushed in through the gate as well. However, of the five youths, only three of them managed to make it all the way through before the darkness engulfed it. Senior Brother Qu, Senior Sister Qing, and one other youth made it through, but the other two disciples were a hair too late. Between the two, one only managed to get an arm through the gate. The other only got the front half of his body through—the back half had been claimed by the darkness.

As Senior Brother Qu passed through the gate, he immediately tried to grab onto his two junior brothers.

Taking hold of the visible arm, he forcefully pulled it towards him, causing a horrifying white skeleton to emerge from the darkness.

Before Senior Brother Qu could even reach for the other youth, he collapsed to the ground.

The blood of the surviving disciples ran cold. Flesh, blood, and clothing still covered the front half of the youth, but all of the other half of his body had been stripped down to the bone, devoured by some unknown thing in the darkness

"Why does this darkness exist!" Senior Sister Qing screamed. "What lurks inside of it!"

Senior Brother Qu struggled to stay composed, then released a trembling breath.

"Death is like a lamp going out. Our two junior brothers were brave and heroic. They died trying to vanquish a devil," he solemnly said. "That devil brat purposely came to these ruins at the last possible minute to take advantage of the darkness and use it to kill us!"

"He's somewhere in these ruins. He won't be able to escape us with the darkness everywhere," said the youth who survived. Ruthless fury could be heard in his voice, a clear indication of how much the deaths of his fellow disciples affected him. "Let's find him! We'll avenge our junior brothers by chopping that devil brat into a thousand pieces!"

"He's over there!" Senior Sister Qing exclaimed, seeing Qin Mu jump from the tail of the behemoth. "You still have the audacity to try and escape after causing the deaths of two of my junior brothers, little devil?"

Her accusations annoyed Qin Mu.

“You were the ones who chased me for no reason. How are their deaths my fault when it was you who decided to relentlessly chase me until nightfall? I didn’t provoke you in any way, yet you pursued me with the intent of taking my life. Aren’t I the one who’s innocent here?”

Senior Sister Qing gritted her teeth. “How dare you try to argue with me, you little devil...!”

“You’re the devil!” Qin Mu yelled, flying into a rage. “Granny and I only killed an elk to make clothing and you called us devils. You guys killed an entire herd of them, yet you still dare to say we’re the devils in this situation?”

A dark expression appeared on Senior Brother Qu’s face and he stepped forwards.

“The little devil is skilled at stirring up the doubt in our hearts. We don’t need to waste time talking... we just need to kill him!”

As soon as he said this, the three of them prepared to attack.

However, the moment they did, a low growl resounded throughout the ruins. They looked around to find out where it came from, and what they saw instilled shock in their hearts. Gathered throughout the ruins were hundreds of thousands of strange beasts. There were even plenty of beasts that were powerful enough to have their own territories. Every single beast looked down at the three remaining disciples maliciously, an ominous glint in all of their eyes.

Realizing that something was wrong, Senior Brother Qu retreated backward a step. Taking this as an indication that they weren’t going to attack, the surrounding beasts went quiet.

Qin Mu watched this scene in awe. During the day, the strange beasts of the Great Ruins normally fought over territory and hunted for prey. However, when night came, all of them existed in harmony with one another. It was a bizarre sight.

“Could these strange beasts have established a rule prohibiting conflict within this remnant of civilization?”

Qin Mu blinked as the thought occurred to him. Many of the beasts here were natural enemies, yet they left each other alone in these ruins, confirming Qin Mu’s hypothesis. The villagers had always told him that strange beasts were intelligent. Considering the fact that the devil ape from earlier was capable of speech, constantly saying “young’un” or “die,” the possibility of them creating such a rule was likely.

Senior Brother Qu reached the same conclusion as Qin Mu and released a sigh of relief, whispering, "Let's not make a move tonight. Once the sun rises, we'll kill him!"

Senior Sister Qing and the other youth nodded in agreement.

After taking a good look at his surroundings, Qin Mu saw that the ruins were extremely spacious, like a city within the valley. There were strange beasts everywhere within the ruins—

—everywhere except the plaza.

Hundreds of human skeletons filled the plaza. All of them wore luxurious clothes, and the manner in which they had died couldn't be easily ascertained.

However, as he approached the plaza, Qin Mu was able to determine one thing.

"All of these people were female."

The weird thing was, the women had been sitting cross-legged in an orderly fashion when they died. There were fifteen rows of skeletons, and each row had fifteen skeletons. It seemed as if they had been in the middle of meditating when a disaster struck, killing them so quickly that they didn't even have a chance to try and escape.

Arriving at the front of the plaza, Qin Mu carefully examined the area and discovered that a skeleton sat in the front of the first row, clearly signifying that they had a leader.

All of the skeletons, including the leader, were facing the same direction.

They were oriented towards the towering gate in the distance.

"Senior brother, look!"

Senior Sister Qing's eyes gleamed as she pointed at the skeletons in the plaza, "There are precious artifacts in the hands of those skeletons! Every skeleton has one!"

Senior Brother Qi looked in the direction she was indicating, and his heart started pumping with excitement. Each skeleton held various artifacts, including treasure swords, horsetail whisks, jade pendants, priceless vases, and all kinds of other weapons.

These precious artifacts glowed brilliantly as if they had just been forged. All of them were clearly extraordinary treasures!

The most eye-catching artifact among them was a pearl floating just above the palm of the leader skeleton. A hazy mist seemed to be swirling inside of that pearl.

This plaza was actually an enormous treasure vault!

“If we could get our hands on those treasures...” Senior Sister Qing whispered, her breathing becoming ragged.

Even the treasure vault of Li River’s Five Elders didn’t contain a fraction of the wealth in this plaza!

If the three of them could acquire these treasures, they would be able to start their own sect if they wanted to!

Senior Brother Qu’s gaze flickered and he laughed. “The heavens have decided to treat us well! Fifth junior brother, go bring those precious artifacts back here.”

The youth did as he was told and entered the plaza. The moment he did, however, he saw the hairs of a horsetail whisk flutter gently. They suddenly started to slowly grow in length, and one strand moved towards him as if it were alive.

That strand of horsehair resembled an extremely thin spirit snake as it lifted its tip to examine the youth.

“Senior Brother Qu...” The youth’s voice trembled as he called out to his senior, not daring to turn his head away.

“The owners of those precious artifacts are dead,” Senior Brother Qu said solemnly. “Don’t worry, fifth junior bro...”

Before Senior Brother Qu could even finish his sentence, the strand of hair shot forwards like lightning and penetrated the eye of his fifth junior brother. The other strands of hair came flying over as well, digging into both of the boy’s eyes.

The youth opened his mouth to scream, but no sound came out.

From his position nearby, Qin Mu watched as the youth’s body quickly shriveled up, instantly becoming a desiccated corpse.

The horsetail whisk didn’t stop there and instead continued to coil around the youth. Soon enough, even the skin and bones of the corpse melted away, leaving just a set of clothes and a pair of shoes on the ground.

