

# Chosen Mate of the Beastmen Empire by Lewis Reed

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On the first day of taking over the canteen, Nyx took a stroll through the kitchen to check things out.

A single meal set cost a hundred low-grade spirit stones or merit points—way too pricey. Most outer sect disciples couldn't afford it, and even inner sect disciples hesitated to spend so much. They could only sniff the aroma and watch enviously as their better-off peers dug in.

Nyx's senior brothers and sisters were already there, eating for a while, their plates stacked up like a fortress wall. They usually worked hard cultivating and traded the spiritual plants they grew for heaps of merit points and spirit stones.

They weren't as loaded as pill refiners or talisman makers, but compared to the disciples from Demon-Subduing Peak or Swork Peak—who blew all their spirit stones on pills or sword-forging—they were still pretty well-off. Over the years, they'd saved up a decent stash and wouldn't go broke anytime soon.

Nyx watched for a bit before turning to her master. "Did you set the price too high?" Most people couldn't afford it, after all.

Cyan smiled kindly and shook his head. He even thought it was too low.

This spiritual food combined the effects of fasting pills and spirit-gathering pills but was cheaper than actual pills- practically a steal.

"It's exactly because not everyone can afford it that they'll work harder to cultivate just for a bite," he explained.

The work culture at Herb Peak was awful—people who ended up there often had a self-defeating mindset, with terrible attitudes toward cultivation. They always came dead last in sect tournaments.

He'd been trying to fix this vibe for a while, using all sorts of incentives as bait, but the results were always so-so. Hopefully, this time would work wonders.

Cyan had a lot of faith in the allure of spiritual food. He was certain nobody could resist the temptation, sniffing that aroma every day.

Nyx wasn't so sure and had doubts about the canteen's future, but she went along with her master's decision. They agreed to settle accounts every season, and she became a hands-off manager, focusing only on farming.

A hundred white bamboos quickly multiplied into thousands, producing heaps of fresh shoots daily. Nyx also planted a few other common vegetables and spiritual grains.

While her senior siblings' fields were all medicinal plots, hers looked like a veggie patch. It didn't have much flair, but judging by the density of spiritual qi, her fields were absolutely on par.

The spiritual plants she nurtured brimmed with vitality and absorbed heaven—and-earth energy far better. The herbs she'd planted before were of such high quality that they didn't even make it to the Treasure Pavilion for sale—Pill Cauldron Peak disciples swooped in and snatched them up the moment they were harvested.

"Come on, let's go, we're already here—might as well hit up Herb Peak's kitchen!"

"Wonder if they've got braised bamboo shoots today."

Nyx saw them heading to the kitchen arm-in-arm and gave them a suspicious look. "How do you guys know Herb Peak's kitchen has this stuff?"

'Has Magnus told them?' she wondered.

But Magnus usually cared a lot about appearances and had plenty of rules despite his gluttony. He didn't seem the type to chat with disciples about food.

A few Pill Cauldron Peak disciples grinned cheekily. "It's all over the Celestial! Everyone knows Herb Peak's kitchen is

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serving all sorts of spiritual meals."

"Our peaks are so close, and we've got a good relationship—we come by to mooch meals all the time."

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It started with some Herb Peak disciples inviting friends to eat here. Then disciples from other peaks got a taste of the heavenly flavors and spread the word back home. Word of mouth snowballed, and more and more people came to try it.

At first, folks weren't too interested in spiritual meals and didn't buy the hype about the taste or benefits. But the curious ones who gave it a shot ended up hooked, raving to everyone they met. The buzz grew like a snowball, and the crowds kept coming.

Nyx quietly followed a few Pill Cauldron Peak disciples to the kitchen and was shocked, her eyes going wide.

It'd been a while since she last visited, and the place had completely transformed. The line stretched out like a dragon- more packed than any holiday tourist spot she'd ever seen.

In the crowd, Nyx even spotted familiar faces from Demon-Subduing Peak, disciples from Swork Peak with all sorts of swords strapped to their backs, and even the lofty main peak disciples had to line up obediently here.

Taking a closer look, the line was still mostly Herb Peak disciples. The ones from other peaks were usually tagging along with a Herb Peak buddy.

"The kitchen was a mess for a while. A few days ago, Cyan ordered that spiritual meals be limited to Herb Peak disciples only -one portion per person per day. Things finally calmed down a bit," a sharp-eyed kitchen servant explained to Nyx when he noticed her.

Sure, some Herb Peak disciples still sold their portions to others, but most preferred to eat it themselves. Once they'd tasted spiritual food, no one wanted to go back to plain grub.

Folks who used to slack off were now busting their butts cultivating to earn more cash, all for an extra bite.

Plenty of disciples from other peaks couldn't buy it even if they wanted to—only the ones with good connections could snag a portion or half from their Herb Peak friends.

While they were chatting, the crowd suddenly got rowdy.

"Nyx is here!"

"Where? Which one's her?"

"That one over there."

Nyx's fur stood on end, sensing trouble. She wanted to bolt, but disciples from all the peaks surrounded her.

"Nyx!"

"You're Nyx?"

"Can you grow more veggies and supply other kitchens too?"

"Come to our main peak!"

"Here's my communication talisman."

"Can I buy your veggies directly? Name your price."

"I heard you're a rabbit demon—so cute."

Amidst the flattery and buzzing voices coming from all directions, people tried to poach her or buy her produce at high

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prices. Nyx barely managed to slip away and escape back to her cave abode.

Her turf had a barrier set up by her master—no outsiders could enter without permission, so it was safe enough. She never thought farming would make her a sect celebrity.

Still shaken, Nyx didn't dare wander to the kitchen casually anymore. If she had questions, she'd ask Ernest. But Ernest wasn't great at explaining things. No matter what she asked, he'd just beam and say business was great—not nearly as articulate as that servant she'd met earlier.

It wasn't until the first season's earnings in spirit stones and merit points rolled in that Nyx truly grasped what "good business" really meant.

Overnight riches. She lay there dazed on a mountain of spirit stones, hugging a high-grade one, finally realizing she'd become wealthy.

Sure, she couldn't compare to the big shots who'd cultivated for thousands of years, but she had a decent little fortune now.

With money, she could buy stuff for Kian. Like a sugar mama spoiling her boy, Nyx browsed around the Treasure Pavilion and picked out a sword for Kian.

The blade was black and gold, with faint ink-colored dragon-snake runes shimmering on it—perfectly matching Black Mamba.

The price was steep, though. The spirit stones she'd just earned didn't even have time to warm her pocket before she handed them over. It wasn't even the full amount—the Treasure Pavilion folks let her pay in installments because of who she was.

The moment the sword came out, Magnus was floored. "The Demon-Breaking Sword?"

"Did you go rob the Treasure Pavilion?" he asked, eyeing the little rabbit up and down, not believing she had the chops for that.

Nyx huffed. "I bought it."

"Bought it?" Magnus recalled the price of heavenly treasures at the Treasure Pavilion and let out a hiss, his tone sour. "Why're you so good to this kid."

'She probably emptied her pockets for this gift, huh? Silly girl!' he thought.

"It's a great sword, but it has a real weird temper. It doesn't easily accept a master. It's been through a few owners who couldn't tame it, so it's just been sitting in the Treasure Pavilion," Magnus said, rubbing the little rabbit's head, trying to talk sense into her.

"If he can't wield it either, take it back to the Treasure Pavilion and swap it for another one."

The quiet ink-black longsword suddenly buzzed and shot toward Magnus with a fierce stab.

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