

The Sacred Ruins

#Chapter 1 - Read The Sacred Ruins Chapter 1

Chapter 1: Spider Lilies of the Desert

The vast and boundless desert stretched as far as the eye could see, its dunes lofty and vigorous. Within its majesty, however, was also a hint of desolation. The sun was easing gradually towards the west and soon, the horizon was painted a dusky red.

The fumes of the distant past had all but dissipated along the passage of time, but the ancient Yellow River had remained relatively unchanged, despite the baptism of vicissitudes.

Chu Feng was traveling alone. He lay exhausted on the yellow sand and, gazing at the sanguineous twilight, he wondered when he would be able to leave this desert.

He had graduated several days ago, and at that very day, he said his farewells to the campus goddess. That was quite possibly their last meeting for she had told him that they were destined to part and that it was time to let go.

Thus, he embarked on a journey after leaving college.

The setting sun had a deep red hue as it hung above the desert's end, its beauty exuding an aura of tranquility amidst the vast emptiness.

After sitting up to drink some water, Chu Feng was somewhat rejuvenated and felt his tiredness receding. He was a man of a tall and strong build and possessed excellent stamina.

He stood up to gaze into the distance and felt he had come quite close to the desert's borders. He thus decided to press on.

He headed due west while leaving a long trail of footsteps in the sand.

Without so much as a warning, mist had risen over the desert—a rare occurrence in these parts.

Chu Feng was astonished because the mist was actually of a blue color which doused the traveler with the slight chill of autumn.

The mist, imperceptibly thickening and suffused by a hazy blue, soon enshrouded the entirety of the desert region.

The setting sun and fiery clouds over the horizon seemed somewhat odd—they were gradually turning blue—the whole scene was pervaded by an eerie sense of beauty.

Chu Feng frowned. He knew the desert weather was rather fickle, but this was obviously too abnormal.

Everything went silent as he halted his steps.

Before his journey into the desert, some old shepherds had warned him that one might hear strange sounds or odd visions while traveling alone and that he needed to be wary.

He didn't pay those words much heed at that time.

Everything was as quiet as ever. Seeing that nothing was out of the ordinary with the exception of the blue mist, Chu Feng hastened his steps and sought to exit this place with due swiftness.

The bizarre blue sunset had dyed the western sky with its glow, but it too was about to disappear over the horizon.

Chu Feng walked faster and faster before breaking into a sprint. He didn't want to linger around this odd and unfamiliar area.

Mirages mostly happened under the glaring desert sun, and as such, this present abnormality was most likely something of a different nature.

Suddenly, a sound was transmitted from somewhere ahead as if something was breaking through the sand with a rapidly increasing number and density.

Chu Feng suddenly halted his steps to stare at the desert in front of him where the ground was dotted with starry blue specks as though countless blue pearls were scattered therein. Sparkling and translucent, they glittered under the dying glow of the sunset.

They were actually sprouts of a particular plant. These inch-tall seedlings, which had broken through the desert sand, carried with them a beautiful glow of enchanting purity.

After a short pause, these sprouts began to emit rustling sounds as they started to grow at a visible rate. In mere moments, the patch of resplendent blue vegetation had grown to full size.

The blue sun was sinking over the horizon and would soon disappear. Mist filled the air and blanketed the boundless desert with an eerie blue veil.

Pop!

The sound of a blooming flower rang out—the sea of azure flowers burst into bloom at the exact moment of the sunset.

The numerous flowers blooming in the desert were all sparkling blue and translucent. The scene felt surreal and somewhat intoxicating.

The plants, over thirty centimeters tall, were entirely translucent like blue coral, its petals coquettish and mesmerizing. The mere sight of these ethereal blossoms was enough to captivate the soul.

Chu Feng backed up a few steps only to find, behind him, a similar sea of boundless blue.

He was greatly surprised and looked on attentively, trying hard to identify the flowers. It looked very much like red spider lilies—its petal strands unfolded and gradually curved backward—truly a beautiful sight to behold.

But red spider lilies were mostly bright red while these flowers were blue. He had never heard of blue spider lilies.

The actual red spider lilies, related to several religions, had always been steeped in mysteries and legends, but Chu Feng scarcely believed in such superstitions and was more alarmed by the current scene instead.

Only a few plants with extraordinary tolerance to drought could be seen scattered within the arid desert. It was virtually impossible for the red spider lily, which favored dark and humid climates, to appear in such a place and with such enchanting vigor.

The whole land, as far as the eye could see, was covered with these flowers.

The bluish mist permeated even the most remote corners of the boundless and once empty desert, now carpeted by these blue spider lilies. It was absolutely bizarre and mysterious!

A faint yet intoxicating fragrance drifted in from the distance.

Chu Feng shook his head and carefully trod forward, cautiously avoiding these flowers. He found that only one area was devoid of plants—the ancient Yellow River.

The Yellow River had changed its path several times throughout the ages and, at one point, also flowed through the great desert. But today, all that remained was a dried riverbed embraced on both sides by the countless blue flowers.

The flowers bloomed on the opposite banks, gazing at each other from a distance.

Finally, the sun completely set, and it was also at that exact moment that the flowers had bloomed to their greatest extent, forming an ocean of vibrant blue.

Although darkness had fallen, the land was illuminated by the lingering blue glow, an absolutely dazzling sight to behold.

Chu Feng could hardly calm down as he walked along the ancient Yellow River's riverbed. He swiftly picked up the pace because he didn't want to linger in this area.

The sky was growing dark and the final remnants of the day soon vanished.

The flowers were in full bloom within this splendid blue desert, but soon afterward a sudden bang was heard, whereupon, within but a split second, all of them began to wither at the same time.

The coquettish petals wilted, soon followed by the withering of the entire plant. They lost their vibrant colors and were soon drained of all vitality, rapidly turning yellow as if they had suddenly lost tens of years of lifespan.

“Bang!”

At the final moment, the dried red spider lilies completely broke down and turned to dust.

The strange scene was rather difficult to elucidate.

Their beauty was comparable to that of the resplendent but invariably fleeting splendor of fireworks. They were destined to wilt and return to the dust.

The yellow particles landed upon the desert and soon became indistinguishable under the twilight glow. The blue mist had long since dispersed, and the great desert once again returned to its previous state. All was quiet as though nothing had ever happened.

Chu Feng didn't stop at all. He strode forth in large strides, crossing over numerous dunes under the starlight. Finally, the mountains came into view over the horizon which meant he would soon leave the desert.

It was still dark when he walked out of the desert. He could clearly see the mountainous region and the vague silhouette of the shepherds' tents at its base.

He turned around to glance at the vast desert behind him, which was now completely silent as if absolutely nothing had happened out of the ordinary.

Lights flickered up on the hilly region before him, and he could hear the commotion even at a fair distance from the base of the mountain—something seemed to have happened over there.

Moreover, the cries of terrified livestock could be heard along with the growls of mastiffs.

“I wonder what’s wrong?” Chu Feng sped up and soon approached the shepherds’ settlement.

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