

## The Ages 1031

### Chapter 1031 - Birth of a Xenofiend

As long as he was alive, there was hope. Everyone thought that Ye Lingfeng was gone for good. When Tianming heard the wondersky fairy talk about xenofiends, his hopes had fallen to rock bottom. But now, Ye Lingfeng was standing right before him. It was a delightful surprise, to say the least.

They hadn't met in far too long. Even though he was only a caelum in the wondersky realm, it made no difference. Ye Lingfeng was just like before, simple and pure, but with more life experience. There was a hint of depth and maturity in his eyes, compared to the time when he was eating worms.

"So, what state are you in right now?" Tianming asked, forcing himself to stay as calm as he could.

"I was banished to the xenomemory space and have been wandering this whole time. Then I saw a butterfly-like world and had the soulfiend send my caelum here.

"That's how you ended up in Violetglory Star's wondersky realm?"

It was far too much of a coincidence that depended on Tianming getting the wondersky gate all the way back at Flamehaven before he even met Ye Lingfeng. Even then, there were more than three thousand legacy lands in this particular wondersky realm. It wouldn't be odd for them to not meet for centuries.

"Come to think of it, what kind of place is this? How'd you come here?" Ye Lingfeng asked.

Tianming briefed him about his experiences, including Li Wudi's departure and task for him, as well as the true nature of the wondersky realm.

"It's amazing indeed," Ye Lingfeng said. "That means we met out of sheer luck."

"What do you know about that? It's a karmic bond, that must be it," Ying Huo said.

"Shut up, tattoo," Tianming said.

"Chicken Bro is a bird on a bird," Meow Meow teased.

"You two are on buttcheeks! You have no right to mock me!" Ying Huo snapped.

Tianming ignored them and patted Ye Lingfeng on the shoulder. "I have a few questions for you."

"Alright."

"Who brought you and Qingyu to the Divine Moon Realm?"

"I don't really know. It felt like a gust of wind that was only going to bring her. I happened to be nearby and held onto her, so I got dragged along with her. The soulfiend did the same as well."

"A gust of wind? Then what about when you reached the moon? Did you see the person that took you there?"

"No. The two of us were just wandering around an unfamiliar place. We could barely survive, thanks to our weak cultivation. But when we cultivated using the stellunar source, we started being able to defend

ourselves. As for the rest, you already know about it. It's all my fault for not being smart enough to lay low..."

"What's happened has happened. Don't get too hung up over it. Let's just think of what we can do to change it," Tianming consoled. "Do you think it's good or bad that Qingyu went to the celestial orderians?"

"I can't say for sure. The two of us knew almost nothing from beginning to end. I heard she was called the Ninemoon Goddess because she had nine bane-rings, so it might not be a bad thing. She was even able to stop the celestial orderians from killing me. Come to think of it, you had ten. Didn't you cause even more of a commotion than her?"

"I hid it. I can't afford to go to Orderia yet. I have to save you first." Tianming showed him the four bane texts on his arms.

"You're the more experienced one, as usual. If Qingyu and I knew to hide it, I wouldn't be so close to dying right now."

"What're you talking about? We've already met, so there's no way I'll let you die. Come to think of it, did you leave any traces of blood before being banished to the xenomemory space?"

"What good would that do if I did?"

"Sovereign Xi has a dimensional rope that I can use to pull us back once I find you using your blood."

"Is that true?!" Ye Lingfeng's eyes brightened for a moment, but he soon shook his head. "Sovereign Xi wanted to kill me! If it weren't for Qingyu's pleading, I wouldn't have lived. Not to mention, the celestial orderians ordered her to banish me here. There's no way she'll agree, unless you can somehow control her."

It didn't seem like there was much hope for him.

"Control? It isn't impossible. I broke my Lifesbane curse and am rapidly growing. Not to mention, I managed to come to Violetglory Star. This place is even better than Orderia for cultivation. I'll definitely be able to grow stronger than her one day. As long as you can survive in the xenomemory space, there's hope."

Saving Ye Lingfeng could well put him in the bad graces of the celestial orderians and make things much harder for Tianming in the future. Even so, his path was one of changing fate. If death was Ye Lingfeng's destiny, he would fight to his death to change it.

Seeing Tianming so resolute about saving him, some hope returned to Ye Lingfeng. However, he seemed to have something troubling him.

"Is there any difficulty with that?" Tianming asked.

"Brother Tianming, I was discovered by the xenofiends. Now, one of them is born."

"What happens then?"

"I'm not too sure. It is rather bad. It's destroying my body from the inside. The soulfiend says it'll continue proliferating. Once there are five or six xenofiends in my body, I'll die."

"How many are there now?"

"Just one."

"I got it." That meant Tianming couldn't afford to go about it at a leisurely pace. If it weren't for the xenofiends, Ye Lingfeng could've waited for a few years, but now it was a race against time.

"Entering the xenomemory space is as good as dying. It's far too difficult to leave. If it's too risky, leave me be. I don't want you to get into trouble for saving me. You have a bright future. Don't offend the divine moonrace and celestial orderians for my sake," Ye Lingfeng said.

"What are you talking about?" He smacked the back of Ye Lingfeng's head. "Snap out of it. You're my brother. How could I not save you when you're in trouble?! Think about it. If we changed places, would you just watch as I helplessly waste away?"

Ye Lingfeng gave it some thought and believed he wouldn't as well. Since the day he was freed, he had been prepared to give his life for Tianming.

"I just feel that the only reason I was able to leave the Infernal Soul Purgatory was due to you. Yet now I need you to save me again without being able to offer any help. I'm too pathetic."

"What's the rush? Anything can happen with enough time. Maybe you'll get stronger than me one day, and it'll be your turn to protect me." Plus, the only reason Feiling had survived in the Tomb of the Ancients was thanks to Ye Lingfeng, not to mention the battle at Decimo Dao Palace. He had done far too much.

"Alright, it's a promise!" Ye Lingfeng pledged to do just that.

Tianming changed to a more serious tone and said, "Additionally, there's something you need to hear..."

### **Chapter 1032 - Struggle to the Death**

Tianming held Ye Lingfeng's shoulders with a strong grip. "I'll do all I can to save you, but whether you survive this isn't just up to me. You will be the main factor. I want you to focus on saving yourself! No matter what it takes, resist the xenofiends and survive. We shouldn't disappoint those that care about us, got it? Qingyu and I are looking forward to reuniting with you. As long as you never give up to save yourself, nothing we do will be in vain. Don't just sit idly by and wait while I work hard outside to save you, alright? Don't let me down."

He had no choice but to make it clear, as he was afraid Ye Lingfeng would give in. Even though he didn't understand the xenofiends, he knew they were definitely something very terrifying. He knew resisting them wouldn't be easy, but he still hoped that what he said could inspire Ye Lingfeng to resist his fate for the sake of survival.

"Don't forget that you're the hope of all eighty thousand of your kin. They stand together with you. If you die, their hopes and dreams die with you. You bear a great burden, and those that do so can never

give up so easily. You've come up from one hell already, so you shouldn't stay in another. You must strive toward the light to live out your life and all it has to offer, got it? Never die, never surrender. You've been chosen by the Primordial Demonlord too! If you can't even survive this predicament, that would end up becoming a joke! We're both talented and possess amazing legacies. All we lack is a clan backing. Do you dare fight fate without giving up like me?"

As his voice got louder, Ye Lingfeng's gaze slowly burned with passion. "I got it. I can't disappoint all of you." Those words had touched him the most. He knew that Tianming and the souls of his kin all cared about him. "I can't disappoint all of you, never! I'm not an isolated being! There's people who care for me, like my brother and my kin!"

He had been far too lonely. It took someone courageous and spirited like Tianming to spark the fire in his heart.

"Feng..." Tianming stretched out his hand to hold Ye Lingfeng's. "Let's fight together like the time at the Divine Capital! Right now, we only managed to reunite as caeli. When we finally reunite for real, let's conquer the stars and travel the universe. No matter how many people become our enemies, we can never give up. You aren't supposed to die like a coward in a corner without anyone else like this! The fact that you came out of the Infernal Soul Purgatory and obtained a legacy at the Tomb of the Ancients means that you're destined to be someone amazing."

"I don't want to become someone amazing. All I want to be is your weapon! I'll kill anyone you tell me to, whether they be people, gods, or fiends! I won't hesitate!" Ye Lingfeng declared. He seemed to have matured to have his own views and desires.

"Do you think I'm some murderous maniac or something? I don't need a hitman. We only fight to make things better, right?"

"That's right!" Ye Lingfeng agreed.

"When you finally emerge from your predicament, let's go moon viewing."

"The Divine Moon Realm is the moon, you know."

"Then let's go sun viewing."

Ying Huo couldn't help but butt in. "Oooh, sounds like a date... A salacious rendezvous... Which one of you will be the top? Who's the bottom? Who'll be the one who moans the most?"

Tianming had the urge to squash it flat. How could it ruin such a heartfelt moment like that?

After that, he discussed future plans with Ye Lingfeng. When he left the wondersky realm, he would head straight to the Divine Moon Realm. Ye Lingfeng had no wondersky fairy of his own, so all he could do was move from one location to the other on the surface of the world butterfly.

"Do you see that violet pagoda over there?" Tianming asked.

"Yes."

"Just transfer yourself there. It's called Violetglory Tower. I spend quite a lot of time there."

After awakening, the caelum would return to the body. Tianming would go back to the Flameyellow Continent, while Ye Lingfeng would remain in the xenomemory space. So, even if they could meet again, the only way for him to survive was to leave this world.

"Alright."

"If you have nothing better to do, go to the Violetglory Pagoda. You'll at least be able to cultivate there. I'll go there every day to look for you," Tianming said.

"Okay." After the lecture, Ye Lingfeng seemed to have dropped his fatalist attitude. When they first met, he seemed so dispirited that he didn't even look like he knew where he was going. But now there was a lighthouse that would guide him on the right path.

"Wait for it, Feng. Your knight in shining armor will come riding with a two-headed tortoise to rescue you. After that, you'll have ten thousand years of blissful love," Ying Huo added right before Tianming decided to wake up.

"You little sh\*t! When we get out, I'll push your face against Meow Meow's so you kiss!" Tianming snapped.

"Forget it. I deserve better than that thing on your butt," Ying Huo said proudly.

"Hey, Chicken Bro! What'd I do to deserve those insults? You're the one that's fully seasoned in Li Tianming's nether odor! I'm the one who should avoid you!" Meow Meow said.

"Forget it. It's better we don't kill each other," Ying Huo said.

Meanwhile, Xian Xian took up most of Tianming's body and watched the two beasts mess around with each other.

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Tianming returned from the wondersky realm and immediately told Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao about ye Lingfeng.

"Isn't that too coincidental? It's almost magical," Feiling said.

"It is. However, we aren't in the clear yet. Xenofiends are hard to deal with. I'm not sure how long he can last, so I have to go back to the Divine Moon Realm to see Sovereign Xi and judge what kind of person she is. Besides, I'm probably reaching Dipole Sky soon, so I need to go back and absorb stellar source."

That wasn't something that he could sit on, so he made his move swiftly. If he took too long, Ye Lingfeng could die.

"Alright," Feiling assented.

"Xiaoxiao, have your Archaionfiend take back the caeli of the divine moonrace from the Old Deepstar Path," Tianming instructed.

"Got it." They would be taking the caeli with them just as a precaution.

"When will you be able to return after you leave?" Xuanyuan Dao asked.

"I'm not too sure. Don't worry, we can come and go as we please now. So if the specters cause trouble, use the transmission stone to notify the divine moonrace. Now, the specters have no elites among them, so they aren't worth fearing. But Bodhi is a peak elite. However, he wouldn't care about the humans of the Flameyellow Continent at his level. As someone he has a grudge against, if I'm at the Divine Moon Realm, you should be safe here. However, I can't say for sure that the continent won't get involved. It's best to be on alert and prevent people from gathering in large numbers."

"So we'll do it the old way then. Spread out and survive," Xuanyuan Dao agreed. They were already laying rather low to begin with.

"When will all of this finally blow over?" Li Caiwei asked.

"When Bodhi dies," Tianming said.

"Understood."

It wasn't an easy matter. After he bade them farewell, he headed for the Divine Moon Realm together with Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao.

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In the xenomemory space, a colorful butterfly flapped its wings in the void, scattering sparkling light in all directions, making a repetitive flapping sound.

Ye Lingfeng took a deep breath as he awakened. In front of him was the three-headed six-armed soulfiend, looking at him with the head that had an expression of rage. There was a cold purple eye on the side of Ye Lingfeng's face that looked back at the soulfiend.

"There's two now, huh..." It had begun spreading.

### **Chapter 1033 - Good and Bad News**

There was now some faith in Ye Lingfeng's dark red eyes. He stood up, his face now bearing a new purple eye that matched the one on his abdomen, which was about as large as a fist. The two purple eyes seemed really cold and didn't blink at all, doing nothing more than embedding themselves into Ye Lingfeng.

Each and every moment was one of sore numbness. He grit his teeth and glared at the two eyeballs, then took out a blood-colored dagger and showed it to the eyes, but they seemed hardly perturbed. Every time Ye Lingfeng tried to stab them, they would retreat into his flesh, causing him to endlessly injure himself.

"Ugh..."

The soulfiend shook its head disapprovingly. It was a futile act that would only leave thousands of holes in him without harming them in the slightest.

"I know my parents were the ones that gave me this body. But if I don't even survive this, what would be the point of caring for it?" His eyes were bloodshot as he had the soulfiend quiet down. Since leaving the wondersky realm, he had already made up his mind. Back then, he didn't dare to do anything for the lack of hope. But now he was willing to go harder on himself.

"I can't disappoint those who care about me. Even the soulfiend cares about me. I'm not someone inconsequential. My death will make them sad." Now, these were the words that kept him going. He recalled the moment where the girl his age knelt and begged for him to be spared, and even threatened suicide for it. If he gave up despite all that, all of her effort and sacrifice would have been in vain.

Now, he held the dagger toward his face and stabbed. The instant he did, the eye disappeared. The dagger pierced until it reached bone, drawing lots of blood. Soon, the purple eye resurfaced on his chest, seemingly mocking him. However, Ye Lingfeng seemed to join in the laughter as his face bled out. It felt a little like whack-a-mole.

"You want to play? I'll play with you."

Once again, he thrust the dagger towards his chest. However, he stopped right before it pierced his flesh. Naturally, the eye vanished rapidly. It was one step ahead of him.

"One more time!" Ye Lingfeng did it again, aiming his dagger toward the large eye. This time, he went at it for real and plunged the blade into his stomach, but the eye disappeared even faster, reappearing on his left arm.

It hurt a lot when he tore the dagger out. This was a game where he was the sole loser. He wouldn't be able to harm the xenofiends at all. Even so, he was all too happy to play it. He thrust the blade at the small purple eye that appeared at his shoulder but stopped short without going through with it.

Sometimes, he actually thrust it in, but other times, he did not. He focused on the smaller eye that seemed really energetic. It almost seemed happy to be messing with Ye Lingfeng, delighted to see him torture himself like that. Sometimes, it would even arrogantly not disappear when Ye Lingfeng faked a thrust.

"Wwuuuu!" The soulfiend shook its head again.

"Are you saying this is pointless? It can tell if I'm going to pierce for real?"

"Mmm!" The soulfiend nodded.

"I don't believe it!" he roared as he continued. Even with the feints, his body soon got more and more wounded. The little eye seemed more and more excited to see it. Whack-a-mole might just be its favorite game now.

One time, it even appeared right next to the bigger eye. The two of them fit on his palm, though they had to squeeze a bit. They gleefully looked at Ye Lingfeng. Did he really think he could mess with them? They squinted slightly, as if they were smiling. Toying with their host was most entertaining.

Ye Lingfeng continued nevertheless, causing the soulfiend to slam its chest in frustration, unable to do anything. He thrust once more toward the two eyes at the back of his left hand. Was he going to do it

for real this time? The two eyes always vanished at the last moment. However, he changed the trajectory of the dagger and cut toward his lower arm, slicing it off!

"Aaaaagh!" He shrieked from the searing pain of amputation. Gritting his teeth, he tossed the amputated lower arm far away. Since he was faking a thrust at the eyes, they didn't vanish this time around, knowing that he wouldn't go through with it. However, he cut off his lower arm instead. He had wanted to lure them to the same spot from the very beginning. Since other spots were harder to cut off, he drove them to his arm. As horrifying as it was, he had finally found some hope in the depths of suffering.

"I won't disappoint you all! Never!" He grit his teeth, focusing his mind on Tianming. Then he stood up and swapped the dagger for the Evil Suppression Pillar. Wielding the black staff, he radiated a menacing aura.

The soulfierd was shocked in the beginning, but it soon understood what he was doing. He had to cut off part of himself to survive, much like a lizard.

The two eyes on the amputated arm were stunned, then writhed in fury. They squeezed their way out of the arm and rapidly expanded into two gigantic creatures. In the place of heads, they had a single, large purple eye. The two xenofierds, one large and one small, had assumed their original forms.

Ye Lingfeng didn't know what kind of creature they were, but they seemed focused on taking over his body. They couldn't help themselves from going berserk after they were tricked.

"Die!" Ye Lingfeng roared with courage and a desire to survive. With the soulfierd, they became demons of battle. This time, they were fighting in their real bodies, not as caeli, but they were doing so outside the wondersky realm.

A black formation came out of the Evil Suppression Pillar. Within the rampaging formation, Ye Lingfeng and the soulfierd clashed with the two xenofierds. Last time, he had only gotten invaded because he wasn't careful. But he wouldn't repeat that mistake.

He struck the xenofierds with his staff, smashing away chunks of flesh. The xenofierds angrily hissed in an ear-piercing voice. Despite the bloody battle, the disciples in the nearby wondersky realm were none the wiser.

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After Tianming reached the Divine Moon Realm, he started absorbing some stellunar source. He had a divine will and a heavenly will in his astral discs. His Imperial Will, in the shape of the Grand-Orient Sword, looked really large, while his Lifesbane Will, in the shape of the Prime Tower, was only a tenth of its size. At the very least, it was now fully formed.

Tianming relied on Lifesbane Will to absorb large amounts of stellunar source into his astral discs. He and all four of his beasts broke through to Dipole Sky when they reached the threshold. He also needed some stellunar source to charge up his totems so that they would reach the limits of the second level.

"I wonder if I can fly to the Dipole Sky now, or even the Pentarcenic Sky..."



It was said that astralforce could help free one from the binding of the Welkin plane. It wasn't based on the level of the cultivator, but rather the density of the astralforce itself. If that really was the case, Tianming should be able to reach the Pentarcanic Sky.

"In other words, I only need to be at the ninth or tenth level to reach the Orderian Sky."

The astralforce of Primordial Chaos Beasts was truly high quality. Before he reached the Ascension stage, there was no way he could get to the moon no matter how hard he tried because of his lack of astralforce.

Currently, he was at a rural area on the moon. Before he headed for the palace, he decided to go to the wondersky realm once more. This time around, he rescanned his abilities, showing many of his tricks once to the heavenly locus formation, as well as some of his beasts'.

Apart from that, he also had three more godswords registered, giving him a total of seven in the wondersky realm and making him among the peak bane race members without showing off his last three swords. The three new swords he scanned were from the three characters of his right arm: life, time, and heaven.

The one corresponding to life was the Sentient Karma, the one corresponding to heaven was the Ordinem Imperius, and the one corresponding to time was the Grandvoid Universum. Coupled with his four cardinal godswords, his abilities got a magnificent boost.

He wanted to check on Ye Lingfeng while he was at it, so came to the pagoda. He thought he would have to wait a while at first, but he didn't think Ye Lingfeng would be waiting for him.

"Brother Tianming, I have good news and bad news." Though he seemed a little tired, he did seem to be burning with passion.

"Let's hear the good news first."

"I cut off my arm and forced the xenofiends out before killing them."

"Can your hand be recovered?"

"Yes. They said I had the fiendgod bloodline of specters, so I possess really powerful vitality. My arm will grow back in a matter of months."

"Then what's the bad news?"

"Before the xenofiends died, they called the others. There's a few hundred xenofiends looking for me near the wondersky realm."

"Damn..."

## **Chapter 1034 - Rocketing Fame**

"Are you safer now, or in more danger?" Tianming asked. It sounded like the xenofiends had wanted to consume him before, only to be killed by him instead. They managed to call for reinforcements right before dying.

"I'll be fine as long as I'm not discovered for the moment. But when I am, it'll be over for me. They won't show any mercy after I killed some of them," Ye Lingfeng said.

It seemed that he was now in real danger. He was no longer just waiting to die; instead, they were actively hunting him down. It was much riskier than before.

"I might come here less often. If necessary, I might even leave this wondersky realm. The only thing I fear is that I won't be able to find my way back here later," Ye Lingfeng said.

"No matter what, I want you to survive," Tianming said with a strict look.

"I will." Even with the debilitating circumstances, he still seemed to possess a strong drive to survive. Tianming was relieved to see that he was even dedicated enough to cut his arm off. "Brother Tianming, I'll be leaving now."

He pursed his lips and smiled. It wouldn't be easy for them to meet again.

"Go on your way, young man," Tianming said.

Ye Lingfeng's caelum vanished, returning to his physical body. This could be the last time they met. Tianming stood there for a moment blankly. It seemed that there was a common theme linking Li Wudi, Qingyu, and Ye Lingfeng's affairs: experimentation.

"I'll seek out an answer starting from Feng, then!" Tianming had the advantage of talent and a limitlessly bright future. However, he was hampered by not having proper backing, which always came at the expense of obstacles in his journey.

"However, I have Ying Huo, Meow Meow, Lan Huang, and Xian Xian! Not to mention, I have Ling'er and Xiaoxiao's help. If I can get Qingyu and Feng to join me in the future, the five of us can grow stronger together and rebel against fate."

Tianming knew that all of them possessed different perks and strengths. They all had to face their own respective tribulations.

"As their boss, I have to toughen up."

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After returning to the Divine Moon Realm, the three of them went to a nearby city to keep an ear out for recent news. They went to a rather busy inn. Almost immediately, Tianming heard about the most discussed topic in the Divine Moon Realm.

"Are they talking about Huiye Shi?" He couldn't be sure if he was hearing things.

"That's right, pretty boy," said a seductive woman in red behind him. She served him some moon tea and smiled. "I'm the hostess here. Just call me Sister Yin."

"What happened to Huiye Shi?" he asked.

"It's a long story."

"I'd love to hear it, Sister Yin."

Sister Yin smiled and glanced at him. "I heard others describe how you look before. You're the Li Tianming, are you not?"

That was the reason she had taken the initiative to talk to him to begin with. However, she was just a fresh ascendant, so wasn't an elite by the area's standards. Since she hadn't caused a commotion, Tianming wasn't afraid of being found out.

Initially, he had wanted to get an update on the killer; however, now he was more curious about his sudden fame and Huiye Shi's whereabouts.

"That's right. I'm Li Tianming. But it really makes me wonder why so many people know of me now. I'm just a nameless passerby."

"Far from it. Your name will turn heads on the streets." She couldn't help but sigh in awe as she watched him closely. "Are you really seventeen? My own child is about your age, but he looks like a dumb fool."

"How did I get that famous?" Was it just from destroying a bane-ring? He knew that Huiyue Jie was dead, but nobody could possibly pin it on him.

"Looks like you've been in hiding for quite some time. You've guessed right. Ruining one of Huiyue Jie's bane-rings wasn't enough to spread your name all across the Divine Moon Realm. However, we've been informed that as long as you don't show up within half a month, Sovereign Xi will have Huiye Shi killed. There's only a few days left."

All three of them were shocked to hear that. It made no sense for the whole Divine Moon Realm to be notified to seek him out just because of a single bane-ring!

"It has nothing to do with Huiyue Jie. Think about it. You're a seventeen-year-old rootbeast and even defeated Huiyue Jie with your impressive talent. Your future is endless," Sister Yin said.

"So? Does she want to be my master or something?"

"What're you talking about? She wants you to be her man."

Tianming spat out all the moon tea in his mouth. "Isn't... isn't she more than five hundred years old? How many generations of my ancestors have died while she was alive?"

Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao were surprised to hear it too. They didn't know much about Sovereign Xi.

"What're you talking about? Even if Her Majesty's age is a little... advanced... she's the top beauty across the whole realm. She stands at the very apex of beauty and power. Even now, any man that has seen her can vouch that time hasn't left a mark on her. You can say what you want now, but once you meet the sovereign, you'll see what a real woman is. At the very least, Her Majesty is far superior to those two lasses," Yin said with a worshipful tone. Feiling had used Dreamdemon Arcana to change her looks, only to be belittled by her.

"The recent batch that entered the royal harem are all below the age of fifty. However, there hasn't been one as young as seventeen before. You're one lucky child. You managed to charm the most beautiful woman in the realm into spoiling you. I bet you'll definitely be the most treasured concubine in the harem, second to Her Majesty alone."

She seemed all too envious of Tianming, which confused him even more. He couldn't help but say, "Are the divine moonrace sick in the head?"

He had heard Huiye Shi mention the sovereign's harem before, though he never would have imagined he would one day be among their ranks.

"How could you say that? Isn't it only natural for talented men to be paired with talented women? All of the talented men across the realm have been taken into Her Majesty's harem. Huiyue Jie was supposed to join, too, but you defeated him, proving your talent. So it was only a matter of time until you got taken in."

"Huiyue Jie?" Tianming furrowed his brows. His doubts were finally cleared when he heard that. Huiyue Jie probably provoked him for no good reason to get him to take his place in the harem.

"You should look past the matter with Huiye Shi. Many people think Her Majesty is just using this chance to spread the word. So stop hiding and leap into Her Majesty's embrace. You get to enjoy unlimited wealth and love in exchange for your looks and talent. Isn't that just prime?" Yin said.

There's nothing good about that! Tianming was rather confused. He had returned to try to reach Sovereign Xi in the first place, and was considering how he could sneak into Divine Moon Skycity to find a way to rescue Ye Lingfeng, but it seemed the doors had opened themselves for him.

"Young one, you may hesitate now, but once you get a taste of what a real woman is like, you'll know how lucky you were. Stop waiting and head straight to Divine Moon Skycity. Her Majesty has been waiting for a long time."

"I'll take my leave now!" Tianming took Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao with him and left hurriedly.

"Wow, he's going just like that? Come to think of it, I was the first one to find him. Do I get credit for that?" Sister Yin said, face full of smiles.

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The three of them went to the city's outskirts.

"Sounds like this sovereign is an old vixen that preys on talented young men!" Feiling spat.

"She isn't a good person by any stretch of the imagination. What's troubling is that Feng's survival depends on her," Tianming said.

"Big Brother, even Huiyue Jie didn't seem too willing to join the harem and tried all kinds of tricks to get you to replace him," Feiling reminded.

"I know. It definitely won't be simple."

"However, Feng has been surrounded by xenofiends. You have no choice but to look into it."

"I know. But joining a harem as a concubine... it's too distasteful!"

"Did I hurt your manly pride?"

"Of course not. If I could, I would've wanted to sneak into the skycity under another identity. If it weren't for Feng's urgent situation, I could probably get close to Sovereign Xi in a year or two."

"However, Shishi might die because of that," Feiling said.

"Yeah..."

Huiye Shi wasn't someone they could just ignore. Despite starting off rough, they didn't want her to die for their sake.

"Then you should go. At the very least, even if Sovereign Xi doesn't save Feng, you should be able to figure things out somehow," Feiling said. It was far better to stay there and wait for a chance. How could he know if it was hopeless without even trying?

"Then we have to think of a way to protect your chastity..." Ying Huo said. It wasn't a joke.

### **Chapter 1035 - Separation**

A five-centuries old crone who had countless other men in her harem... Putting aside whether or not Feiling would be fine with that, even Tianming felt a little gross at the mere notion. However, he had no choice, considering that Ye Lingfeng and Huiye Shi's matters depended on it. He had to take that dangerous path. Not to mention, based on what had happened to Huiyue Jie, it was no longer a simple matter of his personal integrity.

"If I'm alone, I'll be able to enter the Prime Tower as a last-ditch effort to keep myself safe. It's a divine artifact from Perpetia, so even Sovereign Xi should have a hard time breaking it. While I couldn't really train in Prime Tower back then, now I can use the wondersky gate to train on Violetglory Star instead. The Prime Tower can also absorb the necessary stellunar source I need. That way, I can just hide away if anything goes wrong." After more thought, Tianming made his decision. This was the safest choice he had.

"Don't worry, Ling'er. If Little Li ever does something to disappoint you, I'll mobilize my brothers to beat him up!" Xian Xian said, haughtily standing above Tianming's head.

"That's easy. If that old witch wants to defile him, we'll retreat into the Prime Tower like a tortoise. If she's that desperate, she can satisfy herself using the tip of the tower," Ying Huo joked.

It was too insulting, even for it. With Ying Huo and the rest around, Feiling wasn't too worried. After all, their relationship was a pure and plain one. She was only concerned that Tianming would be forced to do what Sovereign Xi wanted. As long as Tianming went away, she wouldn't be there to watch him, and that was always worrying. However, she didn't want her worry to dampen Tianming's enthusiasm for saving Ye Lingfeng. All she could do was trust him, so they came to a decision after a short discussion.

"Ling'er, trust me." He held her hand tight in his.

"Of course I will. However, it's going to be dangerous either way. You must always be prepared."

"Okay." He could only embark on this path alone. "After I head to Divine Moon Skycity, bring Huiye Shi to the Flameyellow Continent and don't come back for now, lest she gets into trouble again."

"Okay."

He didn't want to leave anything for his enemies to take advantage of. "Let's go to Huiyue City first."

Soon, they reached the outskirts of the city; it was about time for them to part. Once he went in, there was no saying when he would return. Though he stepped forward, he still turned back. The last time he had infiltrated the Huiyue Clan, he only wanted to use them to further his own cultivation. Not to mention, Feiling was by his side then. But this time around, there was no saying whether he'd live or die. Nobody could predict what the sovereign would do, so Feiling wouldn't be accompanying him. It would be just like the time he entered the Kilostar Domain. All she could do was wait for him. Tianming believed that she was definitely feigning how relaxed she looked.

"Big Brother, what's wrong?" she pretended to ask.

"Come, give me a hug." He opened his arms wide.

"Okay!" She ran straight into his arms and they enjoyed each other's presence as much as they could.

"You have to stay safe, you hear me?"

"Of course. I haven't been through all I have for nothing."

"You can't be corrupted, either. Never let her touch you."

"Nonsense. Do you think a five-hundred-year-old crone can possibly take me down? Even you, someone whose age seems to be infinite, haven't taken me yet."

"Idiot! You're infinitely old!" Feiling was laughing so hard tears came out.

Tianming stroked her hair and pinched her face. "You're the real idiot. Don't you know that I'm a picky eater? There's only one dish in this world I'll eat, and it's called Jiang Feiling."

"That's right! I won't let you eat any soggy ancient spinach. I'll beat her up if I have a chance," she said, gritting her teeth.

Hearing her vent, Tianming felt much better. Love was always selfish, to some degree, so mutual respect was important. No matter how seductive or beautiful someone was, they could never hope to match up against someone who had gone through bliss and hardship with them.

"See you, seventeen-year-old brat," she said, waving him away as her long hair fluttered in the wind.

"See you, infinitely old crone!" Tianming said from afar before finally disappearing in the glow of the moon.

Feiling stood there for a long, melancholic moment after he was out of sight.

"Ling'er, do we leave right after Huiye Shi comes out?" Lin Xiaoxiao asked.

"I don't really want to go back. You should take her back for me," Feiling said, biting her lip.

"What about you?"

"I want to go to the Divine Moon Skycity. Even if I'm just waiting outside, I want to be as close to him as possible. That way I can help him when he needs me the most," she said resolutely with her hands tightly clenched.

"You have my support!" Lin Xiaoxiao said passionately.

"What kind of support?"

"We'll beat up those vixens that dare to steal a taken man!"

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Underneath the moonlight, Tianming waved toward Huiyue City, causing an uproar almost immediately.

"Quick, let him in!"

"Inform Granny Yuehe and Prince Fengyue immediately!"

Tianming was immediately guided inside by a large group of people. The divine moonrace that used to look down on him a lot suddenly took on a respectful tone. Many even bowed, fearful of offending him even the slightest bit, and all of that was due to the fact that he had caught the attention of Sovereign Xi.

How much must their empress like him if she even spread the word all across the Divine Moon Realm for his sake alone? Even though it was said that pets of the sovereign usually stopped showing up in public after joining the harem, they would at least have public appearances with the sovereign before they hit the age of fifty. Their mistress's power and authority also rubbed off on them.

Once he was back, the first one to receive him was Yuehe.

"How's Huiye Shi doing?" Tianming asked.

"She's fine! She's doing well, in fact!" Yuehe answered. Based on her tone of voice, Tianming could tell that she didn't suspect him to be behind Huiyue Jie's death at all.

"To be honest, whether she lives or not isn't my concern. However, I've already caused her a lot of grief once, so I think she's suffered enough. Release her immediately now that I'm back," he said expressionlessly.

"I'll arrange for her freedom to be restored immediately!"

"Alright."

"Please, come this way." Though she wanted to take him to Prince Fengyue immediately, he had already come over himself.

"So you're Li Tianming?" Prince Fengyue said, looking him up and down.

"Yes, I am."

"Did you kill Huiyue Hai, a sixth-level ascendant?"

"He wanted to kill me, so I returned the favor. Is there a problem with that?"

## Chapter 1036 - Perpetual Nirvana

"No problem... There won't be a problem at all. Nobody in the Divine Moon Realm in the past two million years has managed to achieve such a miraculous result ever before! In terms of talent, you might reign at the top if we don't include the Ninemoon Goddess. Her situation is different, though, since she started proper cultivation far too late in life," Prince Fengyue praised. Like Sister Yin from the inn, he seemed to like Tianming the more he saw him.

"It was so-so. Hardly difficult," Tianming said.

"And that spunk!" Fengyue shot him a thumbs-up. He knew Sovereign Xi loved young men with strong personalities. Turning to Yuehe, he said, "This Li Tianming is of far better quality than I anticipated. We'll consider it a boon the Huiyue Clan has rendered us. From now on, we'll give you enough resources to cultivate your descendants and beyond!"

"Thank you, Your Highness!" Yuehe immediately knelt and prostrated herself.

"Your Highness, I heard Her Majesty is looking for me. When are we departing for Divine Moon Skycity?" Tianming asked, getting straight to the point. Since he was going to go there sooner or later, there was no sense in delaying the inevitable.

"Why're you in such a rush? We'll leave tomorrow."

"I'm not the one in a rush... I think Her Majesty might be though."

"Hahaha!" the prince laughed heartily. "He's only seventeen? Sublime!"

For someone at his age to dare to say something as scandalous as that was rare indeed.

"This child has a way with words. You managed to pinpoint where he belongs on the hierarchy, so now that he's assuming his rightful place, you'd do well to serve him from now on," Fengyue said to Yuehe.

"Understood!"

Fengyue tasked Yuehe to take good care of Tianming and went about the preparations. Before the prince left, he turned back and looked at Tianming while he was surrounded by a flurry of people. I wonder if this is a blessing or a curse... These young men all face the same fate. Yet when it's their turn to enter the harem, they still think they've hit the jackpot. Huiyue Jie managed to see through the facade, but it's a shame that he's no more. Now that the disaster has changed its target, nobody will be able to escape. Thank goodness that I'm her younger brother and not someone unrelated by blood.

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Meanwhile at Duyue Mansion.

"You're free now! Leave Huiyue City tonight and head to the Flameyellow Continent with Ling'er. Don't ever return without my say so, lest you affect my plans," Tianming said.

"You bastard!" Huiye Shi said, glaring at him.



"Hey, cease the senseless allegations! Do you even know why I'm heading to Divine Moon Skycity in the first place? If your life wasn't threatened, I wouldn't have bothered coming back that soon!"

She already knew about his plans for Ye Lingfeng, so she knew he was bound to return sooner or later.

"Oh? And I'm supposed to be touched, right? Why don't I thank you with my body then?"

"Stay away, capisce?"

"Fine, fine. I'll leave in a bit."

"I won't be seeing you off then."

She took a few steps away and turned back. "I suspect you're just using this chance as an excuse to get rid of Ling'er and marry up instead. Disgusting!"

"Your imagination knows no bounds!" Tianming was exasperated that she could even think of something like that.

"Just a word of caution. That old wench isn't a good person by any stretch," Huiye Shi said.

"Isn't she your idol?"

"No way! Every time I hear her name now, I want to puke. That shameless evil whore!"

Tianming knew that Huiye Shi had always been a little... different... so he let her be. He had fulfilled his obligation by coming to see her spared, and that was enough.

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At dawn the next day, Fengyue personally took Tianming to the central area of the Divine Moon Realm—the capital, Divine Moon Skycity. As Bodhi was still roaming around, Fengyue traveled with Tianming alone to keep a low profile. After dropping Tianming off, he still had to return to Huiyue City to deal with the aftermath of Bodhi's slaughter.

Before Tianming even went to Huiyue City, the hostess Sister Yin had already reported his whereabouts to the authorities, so when Tianming and Fengyue showed up, there were a lot of people welcoming them. The sheer size of that 'parade' was a sign of how much Sovereign Xi treasured him and a sign of his future status in the Divine Moon Realm. While he didn't think too much of it, he wouldn't hesitate to exploit it for his own convenience.

"Looks like Her Majesty is here to welcome you. You're the only one to provoke such a response, despite the many others who've joined the harem over the centuries," Fengyue remarked.

Tianming saw a grand palanquin amidst the huge crowd, hoisted by close to a hundred people. It was a grand show indeed. The rumored sovereign must be within it. Fengyue brought him straight to the palanquin. At that moment, all eyes fell straight on Tianming as chatter broke out.

He scanned the whole place, seeing gazes of envy, admiration, and doubt. At the very least, they could tell from his aura alone that he was no normal person. The huge crowd immediately fell silent when the person within the palanquin made a light hum. Then a lazily seductive female voice came ringing from within.

"Come in. Our shoulders need rubbing."

That voice was so intoxicating that hearing the sentence alone was enough to make many a man drunk. The envious gazes Tianming felt grew even stronger.

"Go ahead," Fengyue said, giving him a light push.

Tianming wasn't the least bit afraid. Be it human, fiend, or tiger, he would face it all the same. He swiftly boarded the palanquin.

"Bring us back to the palace," said the sovereign. The palanquin immediately began moving, accompanied by the grand parade. The sovereign returned to the city, satisfied.

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On a tree located far away from the city were three girls who witnessed the whole procession.

"It's over! Once he's in there, he'll never escape! He's probably already serving that old whore now!" Huiye Shi said with a worried look.

"Stop making things up. Tianming isn't a pushover," Lin Xiaoxiao said.

"Sigh, you simply don't know how alluring that whore is! Legend says that no man is able to resist her allure. She has more than enough tricks to break him! Every single one of her husbands strives to get her attention and time! Those that join her harem will even kneel and lick her toes if they have to!" Huiye Shi said as she shot Feiling a pitiful look.

"Just stop making things up, alright?" Lin Xiaoxiao said.

"It's fine if you don't believe me. I wouldn't bother lying to you about this."

"Ling'er, don't listen to her. Tianming can take care of himself."

Feiling merely watched without saying a word.

"Will we simply be waiting here?" Huiye Shi asked.

"I can take you down first before coming back," Lin Xiaoxiao said.

"Forget it, I'll stay and accompany Ling'er. Sigh, how pitiful. I know you love each other so much that even I wasn't able to squeeze in, but it might not be the case with that whore!"

"Just shut up, won't you?"

"Alright. The more I say the more worried I get anyway."

Then, Feiling turned around abruptly. Her gaze was sharp and piercing and her stern expression even seemed to shift as a cold aura began emanating from her.

"Ling'er..." Huiye Shi blanked out. She knew that Feiling was entering that weird state of mind once more. Even though she seemed to have recovered after the Moonsoul Blooddragon came off, that terrifying look of hers was back! And this time, it showed no sign of receding.

The two watched as the aura of a divine being grew thicker and thicker around Feiling. Then, patterns representing Perpetia appeared on her body. She had been holding a branch in her left hand, but almost instantly, the whole tree disintegrated into ashes that immediately scattered.

"What's going on?!"

Both Lin Xiaoxiao and Huiye Shi backed away in fear.

"There's some kind of apex divine being dwelling in her body! Or rather, she's that very same being! I knew we shouldn't have provoked her," the Archaionfiend said.

Lin Xiaoxiao was completely speechless. She wasn't able to approach at all as what she thought was Feiling turned to look at Divine Moon Skycity.

"Blood..." Huiye Shi shrieked. From where she was, she noticed that Feiling's back seemed to be bleeding. The fresh blood seeped through her clothes, dyeing her entire back red. It was as if there was something trying to break out of her body.

"Ling'er, snap out of it! Are you conscious?!" Lin Xiaoxiao cried out in worry.

"I... am. My head... hurts..." Feiling was still in the same state and spoke in a cold tone. However, she seemed to at least be conscious of her actions.

"What do we do?"

"Nothing." Feiling stretched her fingers out before her eyes. Her nails sparkled beautifully.

"The first Perpetual Nirvana has begun. It turns out that Xuanyuan Xi died during the same thing. There are three in total, but she didn't even last through one. Now it's my turn. Only by being reborn through Perpetual Nirvana can I live on perpetually..."

She could hear every single albus in her body shaking. In that instant, her whole arm turned into snow-like crystal powder, shocking the other two so much that they shrieked.

Feiling furrowed her brow in a look of considerable suffering. Was her arm gone just like that? The next instant, the billions of fine powder fragments reassembled themselves into her arm. Her new arm seemed glossy and strengthened.

A series of nonstop destruction and reassembly occurred. Throughout the entire process, the stellar source of the entire Divine Moon Realm seemed to be devoured, gathering towards her arm. Then her head burst into white crystal powder and soon reformed. She turned to look at Lin Xiaoxiao, who saw countless stars in her eyes. It looked like there was a whole universe in each of them.

### **Chapter 1037 - Living Forever is a Sin**

The sight completely shocked Huiye Shi. How could Feiling's head reform after exploding? "Is she still human?"

There was a hint of fearful chatter in her voice. She watched as Feiling's smooth skin glowed a slight blue and her eyes shone like pearls. The nails on her slender fingers were perfect in shape and glowed like

jewels. Her body itself was just like a vortex that sucked in the power of the stellar source from beneath her nonstop.

In the next few moments, more of her body parts crumbled into crystal dust. Each time it happened, she wore an expression of pain. However, all of them reformed to become stronger and filled with more vigor than before. It was a transformation, no doubt, but one accompanied by searing pain. Not to mention, nobody could say for sure whether the exploded parts could reform like before. Though Lin Xiaoxiao and Huiye Shi were astonished at the sight, there was nothing they could do to help.

"Ling'er, are you feeling better now?" Lin Xiaoxiao said, seeing the glow dim slightly.

"Don't come here," Feiling said, raising her hand to stop her. Though the light in her eyes also dimmed, every single albus in her glowed piercingly. Then, her expression contorted to one of terror. She had an inkling of what was going to happen. Life and death would be decided in that instant, and the person she wanted to rely on the most was currently not by her side.

"Ling'er!" Lin Xiaoxiao cried.

At that moment, Feiling was surrounded by a strong glow. She forced a smile and her whole body, her hair included, scattered into countless motes of crystal dust that filled a radius of a kilometer around them. Her silhouette was no more, leaving only her clothes, spatial ring and a dark city of magic that glowed ominously under the moonlight behind.

Amidst the dust was a necklace that seemed covered entirely in very small dust fragments. The dust seemed to be her albi. That was the very same Ling'er's Love that Tianming had given her back in the Grand-Orient Realm.

All Lin Xiaoxiao could pay attention to was the glittering dust that filled the entire area. For a long while, she was speechless, but then she suddenly shrieked.

"Is... is she dead?" Huiye Shi said forebodingly, watching the glittering dust fly further and further away. It seemed like she would never return.

"Ling'er!" Lin Xiaoxiao yelled, desperately hoping that she could still hear her. "You can't die! Tianming doesn't know anything yet! At the very least, you have to tell him goodbye yourself! You know better than anyone how terrible he'd feel if you just up and leave on your own!"

She was already crying. Even though they didn't have much to do with each other back at Ignispolis, Feiling was someone nobody could really bring themselves to hate. She was sincere and caring. Not to mention, she had changed Lin Xiaoxiao's life completely by reining in the Archaiionfiend using the Bloodrose Curse. The last thing she wanted was for her to vanish just like that.

"That's right! If you're gone, your man will be eaten up by that old vixen whore! Maybe I'll even manage to get a taste!" Huiye Shi yelled.

"Come back, Ling'er!"

They kept on yelling, not noticing that more and more dust was gathering at the necklace, rather than Perpetia City. Maybe that was the difference between Feiling and Xuanyuan Xi. Perpetia City might not

necessarily cause Xuanyuan Xi to return; however, strong emotions like love and reluctance to let go were strong drivers of survival. They were sources of lively vigor that one could tap into.

As Lin Xiaoxiao cried, the dust fragments seemed to resonate with life. An unseen will seemed to gather, thanks to the courage that birthed from the girl's strong will.

"Xiaoxiao, look!" Huiye Shi said.

She turned and saw the purple necklace floating in mid air as the lights gathered around it. The lights gathered from all directions like fireflies. Then a jade-like neck began forming inside the necklace and spread out to become a head, body, and limbs. An impeccable beauty soon took form, her eyes completely closed. Then Perpetia City infused itself within her body once more.

Lin Xiaoxiao watched, clasping her hands over her mouth as tears flowed nonstop. She didn't know how painful that must have been, but she knew that Feiling had undergone an unimaginably traumatic experience that most people wouldn't even be able to imagine. What kind of courage did it take for someone to come back after all that?

"Wow, I didn't think her figure would be that amazing. It's too salacious to even look at," Huiye Shi said with envy. She had thought she at least had Feiling beat in the figure department, but now it wasn't that different.

"You're really extra, you know that?!" Lin Xiaoxiao hurried to bring her clothes back. As Feiling was still unconscious, she helped her dress. When the light fully gathered, the nature of her life itself seemed to have changed. Then, the light vanished and she slumped into Lin Xiaoxiao's arms.

Lin Xiaoxiao hugged her and felt her breath, warmth, and heartbeat. She was alive without a doubt. When the light scattered, everything returned to normal. Even the changes on her back were nowhere to be seen.

"It's fine now...." Lin Xiaoxiao sat down and let Feiling's head rest on her thighs while she waited for her to wake up.

However, Feiling's eyes snapped open and she gripped Lin Xiaoxiao tightly.

"Ling'er, it's fine now!" Feiling's fingers were drawing blood at her waist while she was pale and breathing heavily.

"I... I saw the sky turn into a vortex. Is that reincarnation?" Feiling took a look around at her surroundings and clutched her chest. Based on what she saw, she concluded that she was alive. She took the necklace in her hand, stared at it closely, and soon teared up. "Xiaoxiao, I heard what you said. Thank you. I don't want to leave without saying goodbye, or he'll always be living in pain. You were the one who gave me the courage to fight."

"What about me? You have to thank me too, right? You must be feeling more anxious after hearing that someone's gonna take your man, right?" Huiye Shi said.

"Yes, I owe you my thanks too, Shishi." Feiling chuckled at her easygoing nature.

"What's going on? Stop laughing. You make it seem like I'm the clown of the group! I'm a princess, alright?"

"Maybe after your hair grows back out," Lin Xiaoxiao said.

Huiye Shi subconsciously touched her scalp and freaked out, though she was still in a better mood than before. At the very least, they seemed to forget the terror that they had just experienced.

"Ling'er, what in the world happened?" Lin Xiaoxiao asked.

"What happened to my body is kind of similar to Tianming's Lifesbane, but it isn't quite the same either. It's hard to explain. Basically, if I don't overcome it, I die. While breaking Lifesbane is akin to breaking a seal on talent, mine is just for survival."

"Will something like that happen again?"

"It will. Ninety-nine more times."

"Really?!" Lin Xiaoxiao drew a cold breath. She had almost died in one time alone, yet there were many more to go. What Feiling didn't tell her was that the other ninety-nine times only counted as the first Perpetual Nirvana. She had no idea what the other two would entail.

"Living forever is the greatest sin in this universe. A huge price has to be paid because of it," Feiling said with a blank, ancient look.

"What did you say?" Lin Xiaoxiao didn't quite get it.

"What? Did I say something just now?" Feiling asked, tilting her head.

"You said something about living forever, sin, and some price. I didn't quite hear the whole thing."

"I see...." At this point, nothing was weird to her anymore.

"Ling'er, let's go back to the Flameyellow Continent, alright? Your situation makes people worry too much."

"I won't go back," she said, looking at the city. She wanted to be able to go to his aid as soon as possible if he ever needed it. Now that she had taken the place of Xuanyuan Xi, her life would be a perilous one. Every time she died and came back, something would change. This time around, many memories about cultivation came flooding back to her mind. Now that she had come back to life, she would do her best to change everything to protect the one she loved. "Let's cultivate, Xiaoxiao."

"Right here?"

"Yes. I want to see who's faster. Him, or me?"

"You're a couple that's a little off in the head, huh?" Huiye Shi said.

"What do you mean?"

"People usually compete to see who lasts longer, not who's faster," she said with a mischievous smile.

The other two were speechless.

**Chapter 1038 - Within the Palace**

At the rear of the palace in Divine Moon Skycity was the harem of Sovereign Xi. Entry was forbidden to anyone but the sovereign herself. There were no servants or guards there, either. Only the sovereign and her concubines lived there.

It was said that the palace was a place of unlimited debauchery where all desires of the flesh could be satisfied without exception. Countless tales and songs spoke about the glamorous lives the concubines and the sovereign lived there. It was a place that all in the Divine Moon Realm yearned to be in.

Word was that the sovereign's beautiful looks could only be appreciated within these grounds. Countless royals lingered around the palace, constantly dreaming of being allowed to enter paradise and being spoiled by their sovereign.

Even though the concubines eventually stopped showing themselves to the public, most people would never get to meet them anyway. Even if there were unpleasant rumors about the place in the Divine Moon Realm, they would always be nipped in the bud. Sometimes, entire families were eradicated for the slightest whisper of the rumors.

The sovereign was the ultimate authority in the Divine Moon Realm, as well as the object of desire of all. It was a small, isolated world. Nobody could ascend to the astralscape of order, nor would anyone dare to ruin the order of the world below. It was the kind of world where Sovereign Xi reigned supreme.

There were many pleasant rumors about the palace as well; however, Tianming noticed immediately that it was nothing like the rumors when he first set foot in it. Sure, the moonlight glowed beautifully, illuminating the intricately fashioned landscape, trees, ponds, fake hills, and so on.

When night fell, the glow from the stellar source was even more apparent, casting a silvery white light across the whole area. Paradise was the only word fit to describe it. Shades of pink and white adorned the grand residence, and the intoxicating fragrance of flowers made one feel extremely pleasant. It was a place of ultimate bliss that even Tianming could appreciate, one that was so beautiful that time spent in it felt fleeting.

However, the legends spoke of three thousand harem complexes that were endlessly merry and lively. The reality was completely different, with a dead silence encompassing the whole area. Since he had entered, Tianming took a stroll with the sovereign for half an hour and hadn't seen another soul. It was so quiet it was eerie. The only sounds he heard were the rhythmic footfalls of the woman in front of him as she paced along the cobblestone path.

Tianming was indeed stunned when he saw her within the palanquin. Even with the white cat mask she wore that covered her looks, her aura and figure were undoubtedly marks of supreme beauty. The mask only added to her mystery and intrigue, subtly encouraging the imaginations of those who looked at her to go wild as each individual pictured their own perfect face in their minds to take the place of the mask.

Tianming looked up to the night sky. The alluring woman was not more than five meters away from him, swaying her body like a water snake. Her silvery-white hair was waist length and tidy. A little below that was her plentiful waistline that served as yet another eye magnet. Incidentally, the effect of its attraction was stronger from behind, where Tianming was standing. He had been counting how many times she swayed her body since they came in. When it swayed the five thousandth time, that would mean she took five thousand steps.

By now, they were deep within the palace. There wasn't a single soul to be seen within a few kilometers around them. She took her time during the stroll, not talking to Tianming one bit. In fact, since Tianming had entered the palanquin, all she did was leave him standing, staring at him the whole time through the mask. Tianming merely stared back, wanting to understand this woman for any advantage he could get.

They hadn't talked the entire time. It was as if she was trying to whet his appetite. When they finally reached a large building, she finally said, "Have you stared enough?"

Tianming stopped in his tracks without answering. She turned around and looked at him. "You don't seem to have any untoward thoughts. Why force yourself to look?"

"I was under the impression Your Majesty kept walking to give me a good look. I felt it would be impolite to look away if that was the case," Tianming said.

"But you forcing yourself is even more impolite." She didn't sound angry, though, and merely smiled at him.

"I am sorry for my transgressions. Please drive me out of the palace as punishment, Your Majesty."

"That won't do. This merits a death sentence."

"Then I accept my fate," he said expressionlessly.

She looked at him for a good while before covering her mouth and chuckling. "Why do you brats always like to play games with Us whenever you come in for the first time? We might like it more if you surprised Us by leaping into Our bosom and calling Us mommy."

"I'll take that into account, Your Majesty."

"How obedient. However, you're a rather unique one."

"Might I ask in what way?"

"You counted five thousand, yet your little junior didn't so much as twitch. That shows you're not the least bit interested in Us."

"I am still too young, Your Majesty. I haven't gone through puberty yet."

Sovereign Xi broke into laughter. "Very well. Then We shall wait until you finish puberty. It won't do you any good to let you indulge in the pleasures of flesh during your formative years."

Tianming was constantly testing her boundaries to understand her throughout the conversation. He needed to know whether she would help or hinder him. As such, he didn't dare to antagonize her. However, he wouldn't get too intimate with her, either. It now appeared that she wasn't that desperate to drag Tianming into bed with her. Had that been the case, all he could do would be to hide in the Prime Tower.

Sovereign Xi continued intently observing him, so Tianming let her feast her eyes.

"The youngest of Our pets to enter the palace was thirty. You're too young now, so We feel like raising you to our liking."



"A pet? So, like a pet dog?" Tianming asked seriously.

"Of course not. Don't be so sensitive. I meant pet as in... petting... and spoiling you nicely."

"Understood."

"Alright, this will be it for now. Welcome to Our secret garden." She stretched her arms open for a hug, but Tianming didn't move. "Playing hard to get?"

"Yup."

"Child's play, but We'll permit it." She seemed to like him a lot, and didn't force him to do anything. After a moment of silence, she said, "We like to consider Ourselves generous. Since it's your first day here, We shall grant you any gift you desire."

Tianming went straight out and said, "I want manna, as high quality and as many as possible."

She seemed a little taken aback. "What happened to the reservation from before?"

"That childish trick wouldn't work twice on Your Majesty," Tianming said. "Hahahaha! Very well. We will permit it."

"Many thanks, Your Majesty."

"Don't be so polite with Us. You're Our pet, so expect to be spoiled."

"Is that so? I have a few other requests. May I voice them?"

"Go ahead. This is a place of freedom. We are generous and tolerant. Speak anything on your mind."

"I want to cultivate at the location with the best concentration of stellunar source."

"This will be it." She pointed at the palace building behind her. "The Grandfowl Water Palace has the highest concentration. We spoil Our concubines there. Do you dare move in here?"

"This place? No problem." Tianming saw a large hall with abundant space. Since he was already in the palace complex anyway, there was no need to fear her.

"Any other requests?"

"I'd like to be able to leave the palace as I please to roam about the Divine Moon Realm."

"That won't do. You're precious to Us, so We can't let you run away. How about this... We'll permit you freedom within Divine Moon Skycity, but not outside."

"That works for me too." It would be hard for him to meet Feiling this way, but the fact that she relented and let him out into the city was a compromise enough. She truly did cherish Tianming. After all, the other men in her harem could only roam about her palace. And peculiarly, they showed up less frequently as time went on.

"Not only can you roam about in the city, you may also cultivate in the Moonnight Patio. If you need anything else, talk to the imperial guide."

Tianming had heard of that place before. It was a sacred cultivation area akin to the Flameyellow Scions Institute in Vermillion Bird. However, it was only for members of the divine moonrace. Huiyue Jie had cultivated there before. The imperial guide was the second most powerful person in the Divine Moon Realm and the administrator of Moonnight Patio, who also has duties similar to a prime minister.

Being able to move as he pleased and cultivate with the best resources showed that the sovereign was intent on cultivating Tianming like precious talent. Her word was law in the Divine Moon Realm. As for whether he should be thankful for that, he reserved that particular judgment for later. Per his principles, he would treat those that treated him kindly just as well. If the sovereign really did render him a great boon, he would do his best to repay her. That wasn't in conflict with his goals at all.

### **Chapter 1039 - Blood Lake, White Bone, Sovereign**

Now that Tianming had access to the wondersky realm, he no longer cared too much about the resources of the Divine Moon Realm. However, the wondersky realm still wasn't able to get him everything he needed, as it was limited to battle arts, techniques and caelum legacies. Physical resources like manna, weapons, spirit herbs, ores, and hazards couldn't be obtained there. Most importantly, there was no stellunar source there either.

As such, relying on the wondersky realm alone wasn't enough for him to make progress. He needed other ways to grow stronger in reality as well, so he needed a firm foundation.

"Have you stated all of your requests?" Sovereign Xi asked gently. She didn't seem to want to throw her weight around with Tianming. Instead, she maintained a gentle visage filled with an air of mystique and interest.

"Yes, I have. Knowing when to stop is also a key aspect of grace, after all," Tianming said.

"So you know about grace as well." Sovereign Xi seemed to like him more the more she observed him. "Follow Us in. From now on, the Grandfowl Water Palace will be your home."

She entered the hall ahead of them. Tianming followed her inside and found himself in a well-illuminated paradise that smelled rather fragrant. After entering, the sovereign was nowhere to be seen. However, her voice resonated across the entire hall. "Child, grow up fast. We will wait for the day you knock down the door to Our heart."

Her voice sounded like a warm breeze, though it sensually tickled him as it entered his ears. Tianming chuckled in his heart at the sensation.

He chose to stay in the quarters in the east, Origin Hall. There was a thick mist within it, a sign of the highest density stellunar source filling the area. Cultivating there would have the best results. It was the best location to cultivate in all across the Divine Moon Hall. Not to mention, he was quite happy that the sovereign wouldn't be interrupting him.

This was his first day in the palace, and so far, he didn't seem to be in immediate danger. In fact, it was perfect. Sovereign Xi was also gentle and pleasant all around. "Come to think of it, she's someone who controls the lives of billions. There's no way she's someone who doesn't have any understanding of the human psyche."

For now, his impression of the 'old whore' had changed considerably. There was only one thing he doubted, though... "A harem of three thousand? Why isn't there a single person here? Even the core area, the Grandfowl Water Palace, doesn't have anyone apart from the two of us!"

This was the biggest question in his mind, but since he didn't ask, the sovereign wouldn't mention it either. He knew she would definitely have something ready to tell him if he did, but he wouldn't be able to ascertain the truth of it.

"Looks like the water isn't as shallow as it seems here."

That night, Tianming didn't train in the wondersky realm as the sovereign would be sending someone to bring him manna sooner or later. He sat in the courtyard considering every detail of their earlier conversation. As he wasn't able to see her expression under the mask, it was hard for him to discern the true emotion hidden beneath the gentle voice, if it was even fake to begin with.

"I should explore the area and familiarize myself with the surroundings." He got up and went poking around in the Grandfowl Water Palace. There were hundreds of halls here, but it was all quiet. If not for the brilliant glow of the moon, it would look like a ghost town. A silvery mist permeated the corridors and circled around the palace, carrying a somber aura with it. Tianming closed his eyes and felt himself in endless darkness.

"Did you notice anything?" Tianming asked. "Notice what?" Ying Huo said.

"This is the area with the densest stellunar source. Normally, it should be packed with people. But it just so happens that there's not a single soul here."

"How would I know? I'm not even outside."

"Then come out, will you?"

"No way. I wouldn't want to risk catching the old vixen's eye."

"Stop messing around!" Tianming snapped, then continued blindly roaming around.

Not long later, he exited the palace from the rear entrance and saw a large, silver lake in front of him.

"This is breathtaking."

The lake looked like a bright full moon. The power of the stellunar source seemed to be rising from the depths of the lake, giving the whole lake a glow. It was as if the surface of the lake was covered in pearls. Tianming approached it and opened his arms wide, feeling the surging power of the thick stellunar source.

"This is the perfect place for cultivation!" he marveled. The glowing lake seemed clear and free from impurities. It also seemed a little warm, like a hot spring, with steam rising from the surface. All of a sudden, a thought occurred to him. "How many people have fooled around here with that woman?"

It just so happened that this was also the perfect place for some sensual activities. "Forget it. It has nothing to do with me."

He knelt and stretched out his hand, wanting to touch the warm lake water. Feeling the cold outside was making him a little queasy. However, his fingers seemed to stop right before touching the surface. "It's a formation."

A formless formation seemed to cover the surface of the lake. The only thing that seemed able to pass through was the rising steam. If he had directly jumped into it, he might have slipped and fell onto the formation like it was glass instead.

"It's just a lake. What's the point of walling it off with a formation?" He smirked and switched to his left hand. His black arm easily tore open a small hole and poked into the lake. Using the Plundering Eye, he saw a completely different sight within the lake. His actual eyes opened wide and his brows furrowed.

This was no clear lake whose bottom was clearly visible. It was a pool of blood so pure that it didn't seem to contain the slightest bit of water. That was why the lake didn't seem too big. The pool of blood seemed to have coagulated after a long time and it wasn't warm at all. Instead, it was the source of the chill!

The other sensations were all illusions. What shocked him even more were the three thousand poles in the middle of the lake. On each of them was a complete skeleton held on by countless nails. The skulls, and even their finger digits were properly arranged and nailed. There were three thousand sets of skeletons in total. All three thousand people who were unaccounted for were dead! Their empty eye sockets were pointed in Tianming's direction, though they didn't move in the slightest. He felt chills running down his spine.

"So this is where your harem of three thousand is..." That instant, he drew a cold breath that spread throughout his body and even seemingly numbed his heart. He finally knew the nature of the place he had found himself in. What kind of perverse ritual was that woman up to?!

#### **Chapter 1040 - Tianming's Ultimate Move**

The thought that he would become a skeleton as well and be nailed onto a pole in the lake made Tianming feel butterflies in his stomach. Right at that moment, he heard an alluring female voice ring out from behind him.

"Dearie, why would you come here? It's getting cold out here. You wouldn't want to catch a cold, would you?"

He felt his hairs stand on end. Closing his eyes, he carefully withdrew his hand from the formation. He turned back and saw a lightly dressed woman, smiling at him. The moonlight seemed to add a sheen of luster to her skin that was adorned by her lustrous hair. The curve of her smile made her look like a pixie under the moonlight, exuding boundless womanly seduction. Anyone who saw it would unconsciously feel a thirst, but Tianming felt only a threat.

However, he wasn't someone that couldn't control his impulses. After seeing the skeletons, he immediately perceived her as a venomous snake, and he was probably its next target. But in an instant, he calmed himself and feigned ignorance, turning to meet the sovereign's gaze.

"Why aren't you resting this late at night? Finding it hard to sleep in a foreign place? Feeling a little homesick? Do you need consolation?" she said as she approached.

"I thought this was my home now," Tianming said.

"That's right. It's your first day in your new home. One would think that you'd be able to rest easier with a warm hug, right?" Between her lazy-sounding words, she had already made her way in front of Tianming, looking closely at his eyes. Her eyes seemed to be smiling as well.

Being so close to her, Tianming could smell the fragrance she exuded. Sovereign Xi stretched out a hand and placed it against Tianming's cheek, then tugged his head to angle his gaze toward her twin peaks. She whispered in his ear, "Do you like it? You can do anything you want, you know."

As tempting as it was, Tianming immediately recalled the skeletons and knew the consequences of succumbing to it. Ying Huo, save me!

Tianming had no choice but to use his ultimate move. Before the sovereign could push his face into her bosom, a little red phoenix appeared between them, staring wide eyed at the both of them.

"Damn, this is some radical sh\*t! Beauty, how did you do it?! It's too amazing! Can I touch it?" Ying Huo asked, perched on Tianming's head. It immediately turned the situation awkward.

"I'm really sorry." Tianming hurried to pull back Ying Huo and took a few steps back. "This beast hasn't been properly tamed."

"Nonsense! I don't need your taming!" Ying Huo struggled free. "Beauty, I consider myself a connoisseur of all things concerning human mating rituals. May I be granted the precious opportunity to observe your upcoming session of intercourse? Worry not, for I will stay silent and do nothing but watch... from a close distance, that is."

Sovereign Xi merely stared blankly at Ying Huo without reacting.

"Wait, surely that can't be a refusal? That won't do! Someone like you must be incredibly experienced! Please teach me your ways!" Ying Huo begged.

"Hahaha..." Sovereign Xi couldn't hold back her laughter after a few moments. "Your lifebound beast truly is interesting."

"As a result of being a wildbeast before the blood pact, its nature is wild and hard to control. I worry that its mental faculties suffered as a result," Tianming said.

"Hey!" Are you calling me a retard for stepping out to save you?! "Nonsense. My request was nothing but reasonable."

After laughing for a while, Sovereign Xi turned to Ying Huo. "For a lifebound beast bound by a blood pact to grow to this degree is rare indeed."

"I only wish its intelligence kept up with its growth," Tianming said. The move was effective as expected. Its googly eyes could defuse even the tensest of situations. It seemed that Sovereign Xi wouldn't continue pressing her seduction, and more fortunately, she wasn't aware that Tianming had already seen the lake of blood. He was relieved to have dodged that bullet.

It'll be difficult to save Feng! However, I have to be ready before I'm exposed. Since he had chosen to risk coming here, he cast his fear away.

Sovereign Xi no longer seemed interested in flirting. "We brought the manna you desired. Don't go running around next time. We wasted quite some time locating you. The palace is really big, you know?"

"Understood! It was my fault." He secretly rejoiced that he had learned what he had. Otherwise, he wouldn't know what had happened to the rest.

"Aren't you curious why there's only the two of us here?"

"I am a little."

"All of them angered Us, so We killed them. They're buried within this lake," she said without warning.

While Tianming couldn't see her expression under the mask, he was shocked to hear that. Turning back to look, he said, "Surely Your Majesty jests..."

"It was a joke, of course. They're all cultivating in Nullity Hall. Our concubines are all geniuses in their own right. They make up Our strongest fighting force and are in charge of administration and security. When you grow up, you'll join them. Perhaps you might even take your place by Our side one day."

"Understood! I will endeavor to work hard like my seniors!"

"They're all working hard to repay Us. So, sometimes, you'll be the only one from whom We can seek company. We're lonely, you know."

"I will do my best." Enough nonsense! Hand me the manna!

As if she heard his inner thoughts, Sovereign Xi removed a white-jade ring from her finger and placed it in his palm. "There's eighteen universal manna in total. The ones of the highest grade among them have four stars. Since you have four lifebound beasts, I prepared four of the highest grade. If your beasts fail to evolve with those, use the others. These treasures are now yours. Even though we see no good use for manna, it must be unimaginably precious for the rootbeast race. And now these treasures are all yours, just because you're someone We dearly wish to spoil."

Tianming received it. She was generous indeed, though Tianming wasn't in a grateful mood at all. All he had his mind on was trying to dig this femme fatale's gold dry. Perhaps that might just be what he needed to survive! "I'm extremely grateful, Your Majesty."

"Me too, beauty! Are you going to do it after all? Quick, I can't wait!" Ying Huo said.

"Damn you, stupid bird!" Tianming smacked it on the head.

"Hehehe..." Sovereign Xi turned around and chuckled before taking her leave. Not long after, she vanished from their sight.

"We'll have plenty of time to enjoy ourselves." Her last words reverberated in Tianming's ears.

"I succeeded in defending your chastity today!" Ying Huo said as it posed, wings on its waist.

"We already got what we wanted, so get back inside!" Tianming stuffed it back into the lifebound space and was about to head back to Origin Hall. As he left, he turned to look at the blood pool behind him one last time. "Let's hope that isn't how my story ends. If she's going to be that cruel, she can't blame me for returning the favor."

Now, his eyes were far colder than before. Nobody else knew what the lake really was.

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Since there wasn't anyone else around, Tianming let his beasts roam freely around Origin Hall; it was large enough for them anyway. Though they were a little noisy, they took a little bit away from the eerie silence in the area.

"Since I'm able to act freely in Divine Moon Skycity, doesn't that mean I can also leave as I please? There's a defensive formation of the highest caliber here. Not even Bodhi has come here yet. It's plain that Huiyue Hai saw me leaving the Veneramoon Formation though. The fact that they didn't inquire more into it must mean they think the formation malfunctioned."

So far, Sovereign Xi might still be unaware of his ability to nullify formations. Having seen what he had tonight, he decided to make plans for what he intended to do. He had the Prime Tower and his Plundering Arm as fallback plans.

With backup plans in mind, he intended to enrich himself as much as possible to gain more power for even more options. Among them, manna was the one thing he looked forward to gaining the most from the sovereign. She was the ruler of the entire Divine Moon Realm, so she definitely possessed the best manna obtainable. Since the divine moonrace didn't have any need for them, they had plenty of manna to go around, which was to Tianming's benefit.

Ying Huo and the rest's current star count of about a thousand was considered average at the Ascension stage. But that aside, Tianming was more concerned about unlocking their bloodline aspects than using the manna to strengthen them.

"This is something I can't get from the wondersky realm." The cultivation resources in the wondersky realm were exclusively ethereal and abstract, whereas weapons, manna, and the stellunar source were only available in corporeal reality. Now, he finally had access to manna and a stellunar source as planned.

"Since she has plans for my life, I shouldn't get too hung up on using her treasures," Tianming said.

"Yep, you shouldn't. Not even if you suck her entire realm dry," Ying Huo said.

"That's right. Then don't hold back on me."

"Who's going to hold back? Enough chit chat. Give me the goods, bring out all eighteen of them! Let me pick!" Ying Huo said, jumping up and down.

"What's the rush?"

"How can I not rush? I'm already a divine beast! I can't wait to unlock some bloodline shackles and see if I can grow a little larger! I don't want to be a little chicken for life!"

