



SYNOPSIS:

As the assault on the city reached its climax, I returned – and not a moment too late either. With me came four uniquely talented “persons”. *Hmm... Those two can pass off for “persons”, I guess!* What effect will Lü Jing, Gu Yun Fei, Kenshin, and Sunshine’s abilities have on the battle? What will the outcome of the battle be?

Wah! Are you people serious? Even if the treasury’s short on funds, surely you’re not going to force the “important and powerful” me onto the streets to earn money with my voice and looks? It’s fine if you just want me to be a singer, but now you want to produce a photo album? And you want me to go topless? (Hey, the reporters have been too close for comfort recently; I think I’d better be more careful...)

I’ve been promoted from busker to the spokesperson for Second Life? First let me clarify – am I going to be a female spokesperson, or a male one? This is a fine mess...

Fairsky’s fallen in love with someone else? Oooh, thank God! So who did she fall in love with? I must properly convey my gratitude to him. What? It’s S.U.N.S.H.I.N.E! Fairsky, you...! Can’t you fall in love with a normal person? At least fall in love with a “person”!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Yu Wo:

Who am I? Sometimes I am like a warrior, wielding a sword on the battlefield with limitless passion and energy. At other times, I resemble a mage, with a mind devoted to research, completely absorbed in the things I like. Or I might be like a thief, leading a free and easy life, letting fate lead me to distant and unfamiliar lands. Occasionally, however I am similar to a priest, with a gentle heart, filled with compassion towards the living things of this world. Ultimately, I am a kindly Fantastical world

The Buskers of Infinite City

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Original novel in Chinese by: 御我 (Yu Wo)

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Chapter 1: Infinite City Will Never Fall

“Don’t bother about me! Hurry up and riddle them with arrows!” howled Fan, who was pinned to the ground under Wolf-dàgē’s foot.

I raised my eyebrows, but just as I was about to say something...

“The mages have already cast a protective barrier around us, so long-range attacks from archers should be useless against us,” Broken Sword said doubtfully. “Has Fan become so consumed with rage that he’s lost his mind? Why would he give such an order?”

“Even if he were to give orders, why would he so openly announce them? Why didn’t he use the PM system?” Wicked analyzed calmly. “I think he must have given a different order via the PM system. Looking at the current situation, he probably ordered them to charge and then have the thieves or warriors with high agility rescue him during the attack.”

“That’s right; we must not fall into his trap. We should start forming our defensive line right away.” A woman with a commanding aura walked up to us. She looked like she was going to give orders, but after some hesitation, she looked at me, “Liege lord, is the formation of our defensive line at this time acceptable?”

I smiled while looking at her, *Wow, such a cool, smart, and beautiful girl—but who on earth is she?* I was puzzled, but still dutifully answered, “Of course it is, but please ask the mages to remove the protective barrier and attack the enemy’s rear with AoE¹ magic attacks, or help our side defend with simple spells.”

She was struck dumb, then replied frantically, “No, we can’t do that! If the opponent switched to attacking us with arrows or spells, we would sustain heavy damages due to our tight formation.”

“Believe me, there will be no problems.” I looked at her resolutely, “There is no time to explain now. Please, just follow my orders.”

Despite my words, she continued to look dubious. She turned towards Zui as though looking for help. “Do as the liege lord orders,” Nan Gong Zui said without any hesitation, as though it was the most natural thing in the world.

¹ **AoE:** (Area of Effect) Spells that have an area of effect from around the target or a radius from the caster.

² **Guazi:** A popular snack for the Chinese. They usually are made from melon seeds, but other variation

“Prince, please stand back a bit.” Wicked said coolly, “You are our leader; your job is to give us instruction and to be our pillar of spiritual support. The front line is not your place.”

My face dropped. *But I want to fight too!* I stared at Wicked with a pitiful expression, but even acting pitiable was of no use this time, as Wicked’s determined expression did not even flicker, so I could only rub my nose and obediently listen to his words.

“I will stand back. Kenshin, remember to help me protect them,” I said to Kenshin, feeling disgruntled.

I walked to the back and stood in front of the group of mages. I saw that our opponents already stood in their offensive formation and White Bird had also given the orders for defense, so now both sides seemed to be waiting for a signal to start the battle.

“Prince, are we really going to remove the protective barriers?” Rose and the other mages asked with some hesitation.

I gave a wave of my hand while keeping my eyes trained on the tense situation in front, “Yes! All of you should just attack with spells without worries.”

I suddenly thought of something, and turned towards Sunshine to ask, “Sunshine, can you use the spell that’s able to chase people? The one you told me about before?”

Sunshine smiled gracefully, “Guided Arcane Missiles? Yes I can, but I will need a long time to lock onto the enemies.”

“Mm, you can take all the time you need; just make sure you cast it before the battle ends.” I nodded and then returned my gaze to the front line.

Eh? Why hasn’t it started after so long? I’m almost falling asleep. Feeling extremely displeased, I shouted at Kenshin listlessly, “Kenshin, did you fall asleep? Quickly start the battle.”

Kenshin turned his head to look (glare?) coldly at me, slowly drew his katana out, then suddenly disappeared from his location.

In the blink of an eye, while everyone was still stunned, the sound of a howl suddenly came from the enemy’s side. After that, the sounds of different people’s howls seemed endless. Everyone stared at the sight of a red figure that jumped here and there without pause. Wherever he went, enemies’ stomachs were cut open and intestines flowed out. Bodies lay all over the place and the flowing blood formed a river.

Sigh! Kenshin, can you stop disembowling our opponents? We could easily slip if we stepped on the intestines that have been dropped onto the ground! You should consider the effects for our side.

The opponents, who were only able to react after their initial shock wore off, finally started to hunt down Kenshin. I snorted, *If even I was unable to follow the speed of a level 100 Kenshin, how would it be possible for you all to catch Kenshin? If you all can even touch a corner of Kenshin's clothes, you would already be considered incredible.*

“Everyone, quick, follow the original plan; don’t be distracted by him!” a warrior who was pretty good-looking yelled with all his might as he saw the situation going amiss.

Under the roar of this person, everyone from the enemy side suddenly rushed towards Infinite City. When they drew near the defensive line, countless Fireballs, Ice Spears, Wind Blades and Jaws of Hell “greeted” them and killed a row of enemies straight away. Then, before I could even clap my hands and applaud them, another wave of spells attacked. It was so fast between waves that there wasn’t time enough to bat an eyelash. I looked over to the group of mages, slightly perplexed. *Ooooh! So they are attacking in turns. Furthermore, they are moving with perfect coordination, taking turns and casting spells without missing a step.*

“Magical attacks? They have removed their protective barriers? Mages, quickly attack!” There was another anxious roar from the opponent side.

Then, as our side watched on with some fear in their eyes, I admired the sight of a multitude of spells—plus one smelly sock that came out of nowhere—being hurled in my direction. *Sigh, a liege lord is a liege lord indeed; eight out of ten spells were aimed at me.* I raised my eyebrows, unconcerned, but Gui, who was at my side, suddenly rushed out to stand in front of me, and hugged me tightly. A vein throbbed on my temple while I smiled tightly.

Gui, I am really touched that you are willing to help me block the attacks, but I’m more angry than touched about the fact that you slyly hugged me again. I ruthlessly pinched Gui’s face, hard.

“Ouch!”

Then, as I expected, the sound of many cries went up again.

“What is happening?” Gui, who was originally prepared to be a meat shield, had forgotten about the pain from my pinch. He stared in a daze as the spells that flew close to his head suddenly reversed their direction and blasted the enemy mages into the sky.

“Good job, Yun,” I praised Yun, who also stood quite close to me, and he signaled a “V” to me.

Facing the shocked stares displayed by both sides, I calmly explained, “Rebound Barrier is a special skill in a job that is extremely obscure—the Barrier Master. It’s just nice that there was a Barrier Master, Gu Yun Fei, among the people I brought back.”

Everyone looked towards Yun. Just when Yun was feeling high spirited and proud...

Gui looked at Yun, smiled, then said, “Yun Fei, you had only scored a C in your mid-term literature exam, please work harder for the final exam. You should learn from Lü Jing, as her grade was A+.”

Yun looked overjoyed instead of disappointed and he mumbled to himself, “I scored a C! I thought my exam result this time would have definitely been closer to the cup size of Tian Xin, a F.”

I wonder what I scored on the exam? I really, REALLY want to ask... I fiercely tried to control my mouth in case I asked Gui accidentally.

“You should quickly set up your Rebound Barrier,” I could only order Yun with a bit of resentment, since I couldn’t ask about my result.

Yun exaggeratedly gave me a 90 degree bow, “Yes Dàgē.”

The battle had cooled down for a bit as the opponent side seemed helplessly bewildered. I couldn’t help but laugh loudly as I leisurely walked to the side of Legolas. “Do you have an extra set of bow and arrows?”

Legolas stood bewildered for a moment, then handed me a bow and a quiver of arrows. I waved my hand to call Jing over, drew the bow and notched an arrow, while Jing automatically tied a piece of *fu* paper to the tip of the arrow. I released the arrow ...and hit some unlucky man on the shoulder, then the *fu* suddenly exploded, sending the man and a few unlucky people around him up to see Buddha.

When everyone looked at me with admiration, I revealed a faint smile as usual, but I was actually thinking in my heart...*Shit! I missed the target! Originally I wanted to shoot the warrior on the left that was so ugly he hurt my eyes. How did I hit the people on the right instead?* I furrowed my brow, drew the bow again and shot another arrow.

Damn! Why did I miss again? Being slightly annoyed now, I swiftly pulled the bow and continuously shot the arrows like mad. I was shooting so fast that Jing almost had no time to tie the *Fu* on to the arrows in the quiver.

In the end, the entire front row of people died, except for the ugly warrior that was still standing and looking at me with wobbly feet. *Hmph, this time I will kill you for sure.* I drew my bow again, aimed, and shot the arrow...

“.....” With a swipe of his sword, Kenshin deflected the arrow that was flying towards him. Coincidentally, the deflected arrow struck the ugly warrior.

Good thing I didn't choose to be an archer in the beginning, I rejoiced silently and then smiled innocently at Kenshin while the latter speechlessly glared at me.

“Sharpshooter!” Hearing the shouts of admiration from our side and seeing the terror in the eyes of the opponents, I scratched my face, *This...really is a beautiful misunderstanding*.

The opponents seemed to be at an impasse now. I thought, *Well it's to be expected; they can't use spells and arrows since they are worried about the attacks being reflected back and if they charged at us directly they have to face both warriors and mages at the same time. What can they do even if they outnumber us?* I started to feel bored, as the outcome of the battle seemed to be decided. So, I took out a packet of guazi² from my pouch and started to crack them open.

“Hey Prince, the battle is still going on, don't you think you are too relaxed?” Lolidragon said while watching my actions with a vein throbbing on her temple.

I continued to chew on my guazi. Just when I tried to explain to her that I was feeling bored, a huge beam of light rose up and shot toward the sky behind my back. As I raised my head to observe the light and crack my second guazi, the beam of light divided into one hundred smaller beams of light in the air, and descended from the sky. Everyone finally realized what was happening when the first small light beam killed an opponent.

Guided Arcane Missiles, is an ability similar to guided missiles. The only difference between them is that while guided missiles can only target one target, Guided Arcane Missiles can target one hundred people at once. However, its disadvantage is that not only does it have a casting time long enough to make one fall asleep, the caster also must look at each and every target in the eye in order to lock on. Therefore, this ability is extremely useful for defending castles but not much else, similar to Yun's Barrier Master abilities that are only useful for defending too.

As this attack had killed one hundred people simultaneously, the morale of the attacking side was dropping lower and lower; some people had even went as far as to stand there helplessly without doing anything. I saw a man with green hair and blue eyes roar, “Stop!”

Everyone in the attacking side froze immediately, while everyone from the defending side looked towards me. *Oh? So it's my turn to talk now? But my mouth is full of guazi...* Thus I was forced to suavely raise my right hand and everyone from our side stopped instantly too.

² **Guazi:** A popular snack for the Chinese. They usually are made from melon seeds, but other variation such as sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds are common too.

The green-haired blue-eyed man drew a deep breath and said, “We surrender.”

“Kui, you are not allowed to surrender!” Fan roared angrily.

That man, Kui, looked dejectedly at Fan, “Fan, it’s over. There is no need to make our brothers pointlessly lose levels.”

“No matter what the situation is, I forbid you to surrender to him.” Fan said while giving me a malicious glare.

I swallowed the guazi in my mouth calmly and turned to give Wolf-dàgē a look... Wolf-dàgē immediately stomped hard on Fan’s chest. I watched with satisfaction as Fan vomited a few mouthfuls of blood and was unable to talk again. Then I turned in Kui’s direction and said, “Surrender? Won’t you regret it? You still have a lot of people that can fight.”

Kui smiled bitterly, “Fight? From the moment you dropped from the sky, I should have known that it was over. When that man who was so agile that he was like a ghost started to butcher our people, I had faintly guessed the outcome in my heart. When I learned of the Rebound Barrier, I could only pray for a miracle to happen. But what really made me give up was the fact that after you used the bow to shoot us one by one like in an FPS³ game, you took out the guazi to eat. It was then that I realized that you never took us seriously, and that this whole battle was only a game to you.

“‘GAMESTART’, really was game start.” Kui said while smiling with a touch of bitterness.

After listening to Kui’s words, I raised my head and laughed while saying, “You are really interesting. Are you interested in joining Infinite City?”

Kui was stunned for a moment, and then he replied, “I have already joined Fan’s Divine Coalition.”

With a smile that was dripping with malice, I said, “If you refuse to join Infinite City, I will kill all your comrades present here and declare all members of Divine Coalition to be KOS.”

Kui’s face was filled with anger.

³ **FPS:** (First-person shooter) A video game genre which centers the gameplay around gun- and projectile weapon-based combat through the first person perspective; i.e., the player experiences the action through the eyes of a protagonist. See Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-person_shooter) for more information.

I ignored his anger and roared on, “Anyone from Divine Coalition that joins Infinite City will be treated as a comrade. Those who don’t will be banned forever from Infinite City and hunted down within its walls.”

The opponents started to riot upon my declaration and many of them were infuriated. When I saw this, I smiled faintly and said, “What are you all being angry for? I’m just helping you find a reason to quit Divine Coalition.”

“.....” Kui and the other members of Divine Coalition quieted down after they heard this and looked undecided.

If they are in doubt, it means that they actually want to join Infinite City very much; it’s just that they are still undecided because of worthless reasons such as loyalty, their strength of character, and reputation. So, without waiting for them to agree to join Infinite City, I raised my brows and told Nan Gong Zui, “Zui, go and ask Kui how many members there are in Divine Coalition and discuss with him how to fit the people into Infinite City.”

Zui nodded and walked to Kui. Kui smiled with bitterness for a moment, then stopped doubting and started to discuss intently with Zui.

I revealed an extremely malicious smile as I crouched down to see Fan’s eyes that visibly shone with anger and hatred, and said, “Fan, oh Fan, what do you suggest I do with you now?” I deliberately paced around as if unsure and continued, “You can’t beat me in a one-on-one duel and now you also lost in a battle. What can you do now?”

At this time, Kui walked over with a pleading expression. He watched his former superior Fan with a sorrowful gaze and said, “Prince, can you please let Fan go?”

“Let Fan go?” I asked with a soft voice and furrowed my brows deeply.

“Please Prince, let Fan go,” Ice Phoenix, who had been standing silently with her head bowed at the side all this time, suddenly raised her head and pleaded with me.

I sighed deeply and said solemnly, “If I let Fan go, will you let yourself go?”

Ice Phoenix lowered her head and didn’t say a single word while crying continually. My heart ached as I watched her cry... *Erm, my heart aches because we both are women, so I know her feelings; don’t think too much everyone... I still prefer handsome men.*

“Never mind. Wolf-dàgē, heal him up and then let him go.” I ordered helplessly. *Really, originally I had wanted to try The Ten Torture Methods of the Manchu Dynasty on him!*

After being healed, Fan stood up calmly; his eyes were so calm that it was unsettling. He said, “Prince, you are indeed a worthy adversary. I, Fan, swear to you that I will return and the next time, I will defeat you fair and square.”

I raised my brows and said, “I will be waiting for you at Infinite City.”

Fan gave me a last look before his lonesome figure walked out of Infinite City.

“Wicked and Broken Sword, we should lead the surviving comrades to tidy up Infinite City. The city is a mess now and it’s an eyesore!” I said. After I watched Fan walk out of the gates of Infinite City, I suddenly realized the gates were slanted and barely hanging on their hinges. It really went against my virtue of cleanliness so I couldn’t help but feel like wanting to tidy it up.

Therefore, a fierce battle for a city that shocked the heaven and earth and made both the devil and god cry, ended clumsily, with the sound of us hastily moving bricks and wood.

“This battle that wasted countless amounts of money and levels of comrades just suddenly ended with a mess like this? Who is going to be responsible for the financial loss?” Yu Lian-dàsǎo sobbed tearlessly in Wolf-dàgē’s lap.

“Mm, after accepting everyone from Divine Coalition, our military strength has greatly increased. I think there isn’t anyone who would dare to attack us for now,” said Madame White Bird, who seemed quite happy.

“We have to redesign and reconstruct the gates again.” Gui said, releasing a heartfelt sigh while observing from afar the terrible state of the four gates.

“I wonder how much money Yu Lian will agree to give us?” Fairsky was depressed too; the battle between The Social and Construction Department and The Financial Department would just be starting now.

“I have to lay the traps all over again...” Lolidragon said with a pale face. *Thousands of traps!*

“Prince, you are finally back.” Nan Gong Zui said to me.

“Yep, did you miss me?” I asked him with a smiling face.

Nan Gong Zui contemplated for a moment and replied, “I rather did, especially when the battle was drawing near.”

“Who said that he missed Prince very much?” Wicked, Gui, and Fairsky, three people that were separated in three different corners turned their head back as one and roared.

Their eyes plainly showed that they would kill the next person that dared to join the battle for Prince.

Zui's face was expressionless, although I saw that he was dripping cold sweat... He turned his head slowly and said, "I'm saying, Liege Lord, welcome back to Infinite City!"

"Liege Lord, welcome back to Infinite City!" some random person suddenly roared, whom I strongly suspect to be that fellow, Kong Kong.

"Liege Lord, welcome back to Infinite City!" Everyone roared joyfully. The battle just now had ended so fast that everyone hadn't had time to react to it yet. Now the joy of successfully defending our city had finally burst out.

I also laughed wildly while raising my Black Dao high, and yelled, "Infinite City shall never fall!"

Chapter 2: Snake Kiss

“Prince, the people you’ve brought back are rather remarkable, aren’t they?” Lolidragon asked suspiciously. “Where on earth did you find them?”

I shrugged. “Jing and Yun are my classmates; it’s just a coincidental meeting. Plus they just found out that I’m Prince. As for Kenshin and Sunshine...” I hesitated. *Should I tell her?*

“They’re NPCs from a hidden quest, right?” Lolidragon stated matter-of-factly.

“How did you know?” I demanded, shocked.

Lolidragon froze for a moment, and then she retorted, “I’m a hidden GM, remember?”

“Oh...,” I scratched my cheek. *Didn’t she say that hidden GMs are exactly like normal players? That’s why I thought she wouldn’t know!*

Lolidragon sighed deeply and shook her head in disbelief. “You’re one lucky dog, to even be able to complete this super-duper disgustingly difficult hidden mission! You know, Lantis and Kenshin were only created for fun; no one ever expected anyone to complete the mission!”

“Uh, there’s actually a reason behind that,” *Should I tell Lolidragon about Kenshin and Sunshine’s ‘awakening’?* I hesitated a little; after all, Lolidragon was a Second Life employee. Who knew if she would report this incident?

“It would be best for you to tell everyone that they’re your humanoid pets soon; I’ve already seen a lot of people treating them like players,” Lolidragon nagged.

“No, I can’t tell.” I waved my hands frantically.

Lolidragon asked suspiciously, “Why?”

“Uh, because they’ve gained self-awareness now and I have no intention of treating them as humanoid pets. In fact, I want them to be just like normal players.” I explained everything in one breath.

“Self-awareness?” Lolidragon paled.

As expected, it really is shocking... I took a deep breath, and then said seriously, “Lolidragon, could you please not tell? Don’t inform anyone else about this, okay? Especially not the people from the game company, or else Sunshine and Kenshin would be in danger. I don’t want them to be deleted, so please.”

Lolidragon's stern expression remained in place for a moment, leaving me in suspense. Finally, she lost it, bursting out into a guffaw. Waving her hand, she said, "Relax, I won't say a thing. It's not every day that NPCs gain self-awareness. Something as fun as this, how could I tell the company and let them spoil my fun?"

I was speechless. *Whichever company that had hired Lolidragon must be really unfortunate.*

The door opened with a thump – Lolidragon and I looked toward the entrance, as a familiar petite figure leapt into my arms and murmured into my ear, "Prince, you've finally come back, oh how I've missed you!"

I looked down, expressionless. *Fairsky really is like an unstoppable, determined roach...* Then another very familiar black-haired head latched onto my back. I looked back in stoic silence. This one had even more vitality than Fairsky – Gui, with skin so tough that even bullets could not penetrate it, was looking at me with tear-filled eyes. "Your Highness, you've finally returned! I've been so worried!"

Worse still, standing in front of me with popping veins on his head, Wicked had long since drawn his sword. I looked impassively at him as he kicked Fairsky and Gui off, and then gave them the beating of their lives... The beaten duo, not wanting to take this sitting down, ganged up against Wicked. Fairsky blocked Wicked's attacks, while Gui shot cold arrows⁴ at him, turning Wicked into a bloody pincushion.

"Not stopping them?" Lolidragon asked coolly.

"It's a good show to watch, why stop it?" I replied in the same cool manner.

Just then, Wicked's longsword was flung into the air by Fairsky, grazing my cheek and leaving a bloody line... The three brawlers paused to look back at me with regret and heartache in their eyes. I wiped the blood from my cheek with the back of my hand, smiling slightly. "Hitting me too? Interesting!"

Finally, Lolidragon ended up munching on guazi while watching as I thrashed the trio, chatting with me the whole time. "Prince, why don't you take Phoenix on as well? She's been moaning about Fan day and night; Nan Gong Zui's frustrated, as is White Bird."

"Who's White Bird?" I punched Gui with my right hand, stepped on Wicked with my left leg, and tickled Fairsky with my left hand using all my strength.

"Oh, you still don't know. I'll tell you all about what's happened!"

Lolidragon told me everything that had transpired during my absence.

⁴ **Cold arrows:** A term in Chinese that literally means sneaky attacks using arrows.

“What? Rose and Broken Sword are together?” I paled; in shock, wondering if we had to give them red packets⁵ soon. *It can’t be, right? Recently mom’s been running out to play all the time and she hasn’t written any manuscripts; our house’s finances are a mess. Where am I supposed to get the money for the red packets?* When I thought of this, I lashed out more violently at the trio on the floor.

“Are you jealous?” Lolidragon lifted an eyebrow.

At this time, the almost dead trio on the floor leapt up suddenly, looking at me with worried faces. I replied hotly, “No way!”

“That’s good,” someone from the side sighed in relief. I looked over to spot Broken Sword, Rose, and... everyone else.

“When did everyone arrive?” I asked stupidly.

“They started trickling in when you began beating the trio up.” Lolidragon shrugged.

I smiled awkwardly at all of them. “Uh, hello guys.”

“Pfft!” Yun suddenly burst out laughing... *Hey, what’s wrong with you, guys don’t go “pfft”, only girls do that! What business do you, a grown man, have laughing like that?* “Dàgē, how come you’re becoming more and more stupid? In the beginning, you were even the picture of sternness.”

I aimed a flying kick at him. *Exposing my cover? Are you courting death?* After kicking him, I smoothed my clothes, and gestured at the four people I was about to introduce to everyone. “This is Gu Yun Fei, a barrier master; Lu Jing, an exorcist; Sunshine, a mage; and Kenshin, a warrior.”

Yun, who had been thrown to the floor by my kick, looked sullen before posing like a mermaid. “Hi everyone, I’m the Gu Yun Fei who’s always bullied by dàgē.”

“I’m Lu Jing. I’m really happy to meet everyone,” Jing posed shamelessly in a cutesy manner in front of the crowd.

“I’m Sunshine, pleased to meet you,” Sunshine smiled elegantly with a tinge of warmth.

⁵ **Red packets:** These are mainly presented at social and family gatherings such as weddings or on holidays such as the Lunar New Year. The red color of the envelope symbolizes good luck and is supposed to ward off evil spirits. The act of requesting for red packets is normally called (Mandarin): 討紅包, 要利是. (Cantonese): 逗利是. A married person would not turn down such request as it would mean that he or she would be “out of luck” in the new year. In keeping with Chinese customs, newly wedded couples are also usually expected to be extremely generous with the amount offered in the red packets, so as to receive blessings for a blissful marriage. See wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_envelope) for more information.

“Kenshin,” Kenshin said curtly.

Seeing as all four had finished their self-introductions, I guessed that it was time for me to introduce everyone else to them. But... I counted the amount of people present, and decided to forget about the introductions. I said carelessly, “You guys mingle slowly and get acquainted with each other.”

“Prince, the comrades you’ve brought back this time are extremely talented!” Wolf-dàgē patted my head fondly.

“Of course they’re strong; you don’t know how much time and effort I’ve spent on them!” I sighed, misty-eyed, thinking back to that time...



I had finished the arduous climb up the highest peak, Azure Mountain, only to find the three old prophets standing in front of the stone monument, saying, “Come on! Young one, if you defeat us, you can become the Demon King...” Ah, that’s not right! Defeat them, and they would give me a pile of dung. I stared at it, face full of disbelief, as I thought, *What would I need a pile of dung for? I’m not planting any crops, so I don’t need fertilizer, right?*

“The main point of this mission is to give you a Great Returning Pill. The stone monument’s name and the prophecies are extras,” Kenshin explained slowly. Seeing the disgusted look on my face as I looked at the pile of ‘Returning Pills’, Kenshin added, “If you eat the Great Returning Pill, your experience points will be multiplied by ten during a period of three days.”

“Oh? That’s quite impressive,” I smiled nicely at the three old farts. Respect to the elderly was an alien thought at the moment.

Kenshin and I gave the three old farts a good beating before taking the dung and stone monument down the mountain along with us, finding there the two familiar people who were in the midst of a good barbeque.

“The two of you share this pile of dung and then we’ll go to the Ghost Cove and train.” I snatched away the aromatic freshly-roasted meat and, ignoring the shocked expressions on their faces, force-fed them a half of the pile each. Seeing that both of them had fainted immediately after, Kenshin and I had no choice but to carry one each and rush back to Ghost Cove.

When we returned to Ghost Cove, I struggled for what seemed like forever at Broken Cliff before being kicked down by an impatient Kenshin... After saving Sunshine, we helped Jing and Yun to train like mad at Ghost Cove. With the help of the Great Returning Pill, both of them managed to level up nearly 15 levels. Lastly, we used

Sunshine's flying carpet to hurry back to Infinite City. Because I was afraid that we wouldn't make it back in time, I had even threatened the carpet, forcing it to fly at a breakneck speed... If it didn't, I would have used it as an entrance mat at Infinite City, free for all passers-by to clean their shoes on.



Sigh! These two life-long friends of mine and the two NPCs who had gained self-awareness spent a lot of my time and effort! Ah well, the end justifies the means.

I stopped reminiscing and looked back at everyone else, only to notice that they all looked frustrated yet were at a loss of what to do. When I followed their gaze I saw... Ice Phoenix! Ah, I sighed, *I had already promised Nan Gong Zui that I'd take care of his god-sister, plus Lolidragon has also told me to take Phoenix under my wing, so it looks like I can't escape this matter anymore.*

"Phoenix..." I affixed an angst-ridden expression on my face and walked toward Phoenix.

Phoenix yelled at me in panic. "Don't come over here!"

I stopped in mid-step and softly said one line. "I didn't know you hated me that much."

"No, no, it's just that you..." Phoenix didn't know what to say for a while, and then she started crying.

I actually made Phoenix cry! I became flustered too. *At a time like this, what should I do?* In the midst of the panic and disorder, I seemed to hear Lolidragon whisper, "Go and hug her, you idiot."

Roar! Easy for you to say! But seeing that Phoenix was crying so miserably, I could only bury my sighs deep in my heart and hug Phoenix gently, while consoling her. "It's alright, don't cry, no one will blame you."

At first, Phoenix struggled in my arms, but the more she struggled the tighter I held her until she was finally snug in my embrace, weeping her heart out.

"Sorry, I didn't mean it, b-because Fan he- he begged me, and I still can't forget him..." Phoenix wailed her explanations out in my arms.

Was I too merciful to Fan, to just let him off like that? Ay, I'm becoming less and less bloody; next time I will improve!

"It's okay, you can start forgetting now. If you think of him, you can just come and hug me." As I spoke, I stroked Phoenix's long hair; I was beginning to understand why men

love girls with long-hair; smooth and fragrant, long hair is really a pleasure to touch indeed.

“Prince...” Phoenix shyly buried her face in my chest until only two red ear tips were visible.

“Hmm?” I lifted my nose out from Phoenix’s silky hair and realized that I really shouldn’t have looked up, as I immediately noticed three vengeful spirits... Gui was being held up by Wolf-dàgē in mid-air with his legs kicking out at the air; Wicked was held back by Zui and White Bird, his eyes blood-shot; Fairsky was being pulled back by Rose and Broken Sword, so angry that her cheeks were puffed up.

I broke out in a cold sweat and stiffened – Phoenix obviously noticed that too as she lifted her head up shyly. She then noticed the three vengeful spirits... Her expression changed; she looked at me with a strange resolve... Ugh, I suddenly had a very bad premonition, and while my instincts have never been right about good predictions, they’re superb when it comes to the bad.

“Prince, if you really accept me, then kiss me.” Phoenix closed her eyes and lifted her head high, every inch the picture of a maiden waiting to be ravished.

Ugh... I was right again. Kissing her would be no problem at all, since I’ve already kissed more interesting people – for girls I’ve kissed my own cousin, for guys I’ve kissed the game’s NPC, Kenshin. What more could frighten me? However, if I were to kiss her in front of the three angry spirits, I’ll never have another peaceful day. Gui would cry until the Great Wall of China falls down⁶, Wicked would nag to me about girls’ chastity, and Fairsky would go crazy; she might even challenge Phoenix to a duel.

In my hesitation, Phoenix had already opened her tear-filled eyes, but she was doing her utmost to hold back those tears. How... extremely heart-wrenching!

I made my decision. No longer hesitant, I lifted her shocked face, and kissed her roughly.

“Snake kiss⁷, Prince, give her a snake kiss, then she’ll really be yours, heart and soul.” Lolidragon seemed unusually excited as she cheered us on in the sidelines.

Snake kiss? What’s a snake kiss? Kissing a snake? I was baffled.

⁶ “...cry until the Great Wall of China falls down”: There’s a story about this saying. The building of Great Wall of China caused a lot of people’s deaths so the people in ancient China were unwilling to go build it. However, the emperor of that time forced the men to leave their homes to build the Great Wall. A woman called Meng Jiang Nv had just married when her husband was forced to go build the Great Wall, and he died. Legend said Meng Jiang Nv cried days and nights under the Great Wall after her husband death until the unfinished part of Great Wall was shaken and fell down.

⁷ **Snake kiss:** Snake kiss is pronounced the same in Chinese as ‘tongue kiss’...which, as you can guess, is a French kiss.

“Stick your tongue in Phoenix’s mouth and move it around; that’s a snake kiss.”
Lolidragon’s voice rang out in the PM channel.

Oh.... I did as I was instructed, and stuck my tongue into Phoenix’s mouth and moved it around... Finally, when I ran out of breath, I stopped the snake kiss, and licked my own lips, wondering Had Phoenix eaten some candy? Why does her mouth taste sweet?

“So stimulating...” Lolidragon said dumbly. I shot her a glance, thinking, *Lolidragon, even if you want to try it out, please don’t look so eager! Have some self-restraint, alright?*

I looked down to see how Phoenix was faring, only to see that her eyes had already formed two giant hearts and her entire body was limp, remaining upright only through the support of my two arms... *How could this be? I only felt that it was a little numbing, and sweet!* I scratched my cheek and decided not to think about it any further. As long as I could seduce Phoenix away from Fan, all was well! *But I still have the problem of the three vengeful spirits to deal with!*

I handed a still-swooning Phoenix to her sister, White Bird, and moved toward the team of resentful spirits who were standing like statues, frozen to the ground with shock at what I had just done. First, I walked to Fairsky’s side and smiled at her. She couldn’t help but to smile back, then... I repeated my actions and gave her a good snake kiss. Looking at another heart-shaped-eyed girl in my arms, I suddenly felt that it was extremely fun!

I threw Fairsky over to Rose and turned my head to look towards the two men. I frowned. *I don’t mind kissing girls, but if it’s men... After all, I’m a young maiden; it wouldn’t seem too good if I did that, right? But, I really want to know if kissing guys or girls feels more comfortable.*

“Prince, your highness....” Gui’s tears had already formed two waterfalls, and his voice was full with grief.

I was thinking, *Okay, I’ll kiss him once, seeing that he’s so pitiful...* But just as I was about to walk toward him, and Gui looked extremely ecstatic when...

“You’re not allowed to kiss him; I’ll leave the issue of you kissing girls alone, but... You! Must! Not! Kiss! Gui!” Wicked’s flames of wrath were strong, almost to the point of materializing. I stopped walking, for the safety of my life, and shrugged at Gui.

“Wicked, what quarrel do you have with me?” Gui’s eyes were full of pain and anger.

“Hatred as deep as Blood Sea!”⁸ Wicked glared right back.

I turned around, no longer caring about the brawling duo and stretched lazily, only to find out that... I was hungry. “Lolidragon, I’m hungry.”

Lolidragon looked unfazed, as if she already knew that was coming. “The food has already been prepared, and you can familiarize yourself with the new members White Bird, her husband Outside Window, Feng Wu Qing’s ‘parents’, and so on while you are eating.”

“Feng Wu Qing’s ‘parents’?” I emphasized on the word ‘parents’. *If I’m not wrong, doesn’t Feng Wu Qing have the same parents as me?*

“Yeah, this time in the siege, Feng Wu Qing’s ‘parents’ helped out a lot, plus they’ve already decided to settle down in Infinite City,” said Lolidragon, emphasizing the word ‘parents’ as I had.

“...” My shoulders slumped down; I had just managed to get out of one storm, when another one comes – I was beginning to suspect that I hadn’t yet made my peace with any unhappy deities somewhere.

I followed Lolidragon to the dining room...and started sweating like mad. *Is there someone getting married? How come it looks like a wedding feast?! I could only see row upon row of lanterns and ribbons, all with a red theme color, and counted scores of round tables with everyone sitting in their proper places, all wide-eyed with excitement, watching my entrance. Suddenly I felt as if Lolidragon and I were the long anticipated bride and groom. I even looked back to check if there was a giant ‘Congratulations’ stuck to the wall behind me.*

What the...? That’s what I get for turning back to look; it’s unknown whether the word was painted on with coloring or whether it was actual blood. It looked like it had just been written because it was still dripping.

“Liege Lord, would you like to go over the city’s operations or finances first?” An unfamiliar face... This should be the White Bird that Lolidragon was talking about! She was holding a thick stack of paper, blocking my way toward my lovely dining table, her expression respectful yet not too humble.

“Let’s eat first!” I waved my hand; nothing is more important than my wonderful food.

Upon hearing that, White Bird put away the papers in her hand and said, “Yes, my Lord. Then would you please announce the commencement of dinner?”

⁸ **“Hatred as deep as the Blood Sea”**: Usually this phrase is used for a really deep hatred, for example when the enemy had killed your parents...hence the blood sea part. The blood sea part also can mean that you hate your enemy so much that you want to see his blood flowing out so much that it can form a ‘sea’.

I rubbed my nose; I wasn't used to being addressed so politely. "Everyone, it's time to eat."

The quiet crowd suddenly roared back to life, and I too was eager to sit down and enjoy my exquisite meal of... White rice, meat floss, and egg soup? I blinked but it was still those three things. *It can't be... Are those appetizers?* "Lolidragon, these are..."

"Main dishes." Seemingly knowing what I was thinking, Lolidragon replied without a moment's hesitation.

"This..." The corner of my mouth cramped as I recalled Zhuo-gēge telling me something about Infinite City's financial woes. *But is it really this bad?*

"What's the matter? The person who spent 5000 crystal coins taking a ship to Eastern Continent isn't satisfied with the food?" Yu Lian-dàsǎo's warm voice rang out, but I felt like I'd fallen into an ice pit and couldn't stop shivering.

"These dishes are wondrous; I haven't had such, such healthy food in ages!" To prove my point, I even lifted up my rice bowl and started shoveling huge amounts of plain rice into my mouth.

Yu Lian-dàsǎo gave a small smile once again. "Prince should have been rather well-fed during this trip, right?"

Right... I started sweating violently. Suddenly, I had an inspiration that I hoped would save my skin; I snatched up my backpack and dug out a gleaming red ruby (*Remember which one this was? The one on a certain someone's large door... I had hacked it down before leaving.*) I presented it with shaking hands. "Dàsǎo, this is little brother's small gift of appreciation, please accept it."

Yu Lian-dàsǎo signaled for Phoenix to take the ruby. Phoenix actually...sniffed the ruby before saying, "3000 crystal coins."

Oi, you're a phoenix, not a dog...yet you sniff?

Yu Lian-dàsǎo used her eyes to cue Lolidragon next, who threw down her chopsticks hurriedly to say in a calm and dignified manner, "Prince, because of the city's economy crisis, we've decided to send you out to earn money."

I pointed to my own nose, face full of shock, thinking *Me? Earn money? Spending it all is more likely... What if! What if they really want me to work as something like a male host?* I paled and asked, "How am I going to do that?"

Doll suddenly broke out in a radiant smile, "Prince-gēge is so good-looking."

Lolidragon nodded. “Plus Blood Elf’s name is so well-known.”

I’m done for, I’m done for; they really want me to work as a male host? My first part time job and I have to sell my body? No way, this will never do, if news of this spreads, how am I, a little maiden, supposed to continue living? It’s impossible... But – I eyed Yu Lian-dàsão’s widening smile... Ugh, I’ll at most be a male escort, selling my smile and not my body; I can still tolerate that... I looked at Yu Lian-dàsão’s smiling face again... Ugh, at the very most, I’ll accept selling my body to ‘beauties’.

“According to what Lolidragon said, you can sing rather well?” Wolf-dàgē suddenly asked out of the blue.

I was stunned. *Do I sing well?* I turned toward to Lolidragon, face full of puzzlement.

“Didn’t you sing ‘It’s My Life’ to me before?” Lolidragon lifted an eyebrow. “I dare say that at the very least you’re a match for the original singer.”

“Prince, you sing, and I’ll help you to play the accompaniment!” Gui raised up his guqing and started tuning.

Use a guqing to play rock and roll songs? We’d better not, right? Even if the original singer didn’t turn in his grave, the guqing string would surely break... But, looking at the anticipation in the eyes of the crowd, I was too embarrassed to say no, so I had no choice but to discuss the choice of songs with Gui. “Let’s change it to a song with more sentimental feelings, that one isn’t very suited for accompaniment on guqing.”

“Which one then?” Gui asked.

I didn’t need to think twice, “Dreams Want to Fly.”

As Gui played the first note, I too immersed myself in the song’s lyrics. I opened my mouth and sang:

*Dreams want to fly
Flying with wings wouldn’t be amazing any longer, feathers are too soft
Dreams are heavy and burdening, nothing seems more difficult than taking-off
I jump, I leap, I will try
I fall, I’m hurt, I pity myself*

*Crossing over heart, over hardships, but not over feelings,
Taking the final step, hurting myself, hurting others, but I can’t hurt eternity,
Legends, created with sadness, bitterness and sorrow
Touched only by wanting to fly, and flying
Dreams want to fly*

<Dreams Want to Fly> by Yu Wo

I stopped singing, took a deep breath, and came back to reality. When I opened my eyes again, everyone in the audience seemed absorbed in my singing. I could only scratch my cheek; *did I really sing that well?*

Yu Lian-dàsǎo was the first to open her eyes; they shone with bright excitement as she said, “We’ve struck gold!”

“Huh?” *What does she mean? How come I feel so uneasy again, especially after spotting my parents sitting at the table to my left, looking like they’re deep in thought?* My heart started racing at the thought.

Chapter 3: The Busking Tour Group

“You want me to be a singer, and have a concert?” I began to feel slightly dizzy. *What on earth is everyone thinking? Aren’t I the Lord of the city? How did I turn into a singer?*

“Yeah, just take a look at yourself.” Lolidragon shoved a mirror at me. “Look at that invincible, super-duper handsome face and tall, perfectly proportioned body. Look at that cool and elegant poise (as long as you don’t open your mouth), plus those power vocals! If you don’t sell your bo— I mean, records, isn’t that a heinous waste of natural resources?”

I glanced at Lolidragon, wondering if I had heard her beginning to say ‘body’. “But, this is an online game. Who becomes a singer in a game, and actually holds concerts?”

“And has a photo-shoot,” Lolidragon added, and whereupon catching me paling at an alarming rate, quickly quipped, “Don’t worry, we won’t have you bear it all; at most just a little, little bit...”

“A little, little bit?” I asked with a hint of suspicion. “Really just a little, little bit?”

“Yeah, a little, little bit!” Lolidragon laughed with deep sincerity. I later found out that Lolidragon’s ‘a little, little bit’ had two ‘little’s in it, so in her mind that defined two particular little bits...⁹ *Lolidragon, who on earth taught you your Chinese?*

“Wait a minute, this isn’t the point! How am I supposed to become a singer? I’m not even a bard,” I retorted.

Lolidragon lifted an eyebrow. “When did you start being concerned over what we can and can’t do in the game? Do what you feel like doing—isn’t that your style? The crux is in whether you want to do it or not.”

That gave me some pause. *Before... Yeah, I think I really did whatever I wanted to do. A singer...* I tilted my head to the side. *Sounds rather interesting!* In the end I laughed aloud. “Alright, being a singer seems rather tempting.”

“Great, now let me think... First off, you guys will have to tour through the three cities of Sun, Moon, and Star in order to publicize and make a name for yourselves. — And earn some money while you’re at that,” Lolidragon added hurriedly upon catching Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s brilliant smile. Seeing that her smile had warmed a little, Lolidragon heaved a sigh of relief and continued, “Lastly, after you gain popularity, come back to Infinite City

⁹ “...defined two particular little bits”: In Chinese, it is said “exposing three bits” when the guy is exposing both his nipples and XXX. So when Lolidragon says “a little, little bit” here, she actually means the exposing Prince’s nipples.

to hold a concert. This is because, one, we can earn money from that and, two, it can help us boost Infinite City's population. It's definitely killing two birds with one stone."

I thought for a while, before asking, "So do I have to bring Gui along as my musical accompaniment?"

Hearing this, Gui's eyes lighted up immediately. "Can I follow His Highness Prince, please?"

"Not only Gui—I think we have to look for a few other people and form a band," Lolidragon said. "After all, Second Life has no audio tracks that we can make use of." She hesitated. "I don't know if Second Life's craftsmen can make things like instruments, though..."

"I don't know about drums, but they can make guitars," Fairsky suddenly blurted out. She stuck a hand into her bag and drew out a guitar. "I have one."

"You know how to play the guitar?" Lolidragon's eyes shone.

Fairsky nodded regally. "Of course. I've been learning for ten years; I play really well."

"Great, we've got one more member!" Lolidragon noted down happily.

I chowed down on my meat floss¹⁰ on rice mixed with scrambled egg soup, slightly dubious over whether people could mix guitars and *guqins* together. *Whatever. Anyway, I'm only responsible for singing, so I'll leave the rest up to Lolidragon! Hmm...meat floss scrambled egg porridge doesn't taste bad!*

"I want to go too," Wicked said coldly, glaring at Gui. "I won't let Gui have the chance to be alone with Prince."

"You—!" Gui clenched his fists in anger.

"Can you play any instruments?" Lolidragon asked with great interest. Her eagerness for more chaos was written across her face.

¹⁰ **Meat floss:** Also called rou song in Chinese. It is a dried Chinese meat item that has a light and fluffy texture similar to coarse cotton and it is made by stewing cuts of pork in a sweetened soy sauce mixture until individual muscle fibers can be easily teased apart with a fork. This usually happens when the collagen and elastin that normally hold the fibers have been cooked out of the meat. The teased-apart meat is then strained and dried in the oven. After a light drying, the meat is mashed and beaten while being dry cooked in a large wok until it is completely dry.

“The Chinese flute¹¹,” Wicked answered simply.

Wow, that’s just great. Guqin, guitar, and the Chinese flute? That’s a mix comparable to the bowl of messy things in my hand.

“And me!” Phoenix said hurriedly, seeing that three of the four admirers of Prince had already joined.

“And what can you play?”

“I can play the drums, and have been at it for ten years too,” Phoenix boasted, irking Fairsky who was at her side. “I’ll look for craftsmen to make a drum set for me immediately. They can definitely do it!”

“Okay, Gui plays the *guqin*, Wicked the Chinese flute, Fairsky the guitar, and Phoenix the drums.” Lolidragon noted that down before wrinkling her brows. “We’ll split into two groups then, with the guys being in charge of the more sentimental songs, and the girls the rock songs.”

I sighed heartily and looked into the distance. “Times have really changed. The guys are all choosing to be more sensitive, while the girls all like rock music – it seems like I’m getting old.”

Lolidragon whacked me soundly on the head and PMed to me, “That’s why you, neither female nor male, have to sing both kinds of songs!”

Ouch! With tears threatening to spill over, I pouted and muttered sullenly, “I said I’ll sing already! Why did you have to hit me on the head? I’ll become stupid!”

“Heh heh heh, so the members of Infinite Band are decided,” Lolidragon said. “Gui, get to work on the lyrics and the tunes of the songs. Wicked, get started on choreography. Prince, start memorizing the lyrics. Fairsky and Phoenix, let’s go prepare the performing costumes.” Lolidragon’s eyes shone as she grabbed the two girls and left so fast that they seemed to have teleported away.

“Gui... Do you know how to write songs?” *Why didn’t I know that Gui knew how to compose music and lyrics?*

Gui’s expression was extremely troubled. “Me? I’ve never written a song before.”

We sunk in silence for a moment, then I turned to Wicked harboring a tiny glint of hope. “You know how to dance?”

¹¹ **Chinese flute:** There are many different types of Chinese flutes, but the one that is being played by Wicked is called Xiao in Chinese. It is an end-blown flute and generally made from dark brown bamboo. Please refer to this link for more information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xiao_%28flute%29.

“Yeah,” Wicked replied, and my hope blossomed. “I’ve folk-danced before.”

My heart chilled abruptly, turning as cold and hard as a frozen fish that could be used as a murder weapon.

Lolidragon suddenly stuck her head back into the room, “If you guys don’t do well, you’ll be kicked out of Infinite Band. Prince is the exception, but if he doesn’t do well, he can only eat plain rice for all his meals.” After saying that, she drew her head back to wherever she had come from.

Two bulging veins throbbed on my forehead. If my heart was as cold as a frozen fish before, it was a volcano now. *Damn that Lolidragon, always using food to threaten me! Don’t let me find any of your weaknesses, or I’ll @#^&%!* you!* (Due to excessive violence, this phrase was censored so that the author would not be banned by the writing community!)



In the days following this event, a particular literature professor was seen determinedly reading elementary school music textbooks while giving lectures on the history of literature. What was more ridiculous was that he actually managed to make sense in his teaching. *Hey! Genius shouldn’t be used like that!* Besides that, another particular icy hunk would suddenly break into dance hip-hop, waltz, and even Taiwanese opera while conducting experiments in his post-graduate class, leading people to suspect that the experiments had somehow messed with his brain. It had even instigated an ongoing investigation.

As for me, because the songs were not done yet, I was forced to train my vocals, singing ‘Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti’ continuously. Lolidragon, Fairsky, and Phoenix also kept hauling me away for measurements, or for impromptu fashion shows in which I was the model. Originally, as a girl, I quite liked picking out clothes, but every time I changed into a new suit, I had to face the lecherous eyes of three female perverts. That’s not fun at all, especially when I realized that the amount of cloth was rapidly declining... I ran away in panic.

However, after I ran away, and when they failed in getting Wicked to participate in their ‘fashion shows’, they eventually got hold of defenseless Gui and were making him wear swimming trunks... What? How would I know? What rubbish; how could I miss out on such eye-candy?

All in all, Infinite Band had thus come into existence, and the first song, dance-steps, and costumes were soon ready.

The first rehearsal made its debut in the square of Infinite City.

I wore a black and red themed, skin-tight suit that exposed half of my shoulder plus arm and long boots, oozing sex appeal while looking cool. Behind me were two sexy beauties dressed in the same theme, with one wearing a mini-skirt and the other hot-pants. In her short boots, Fairsky was as feisty and pretty as a dancing fire, while in high heels, Phoenix was as sophisticated and cool as cold ice. With both of them trailing behind me, we stepped onto the makeshift stage.

Looking at the pairs of longing eyes below the stage, I felt a sudden urge to sing my heart out, to satisfy both the audience's and my own desires. I closed my eyes, thought about the first song Gui had written and submerged myself in the lyrics of the song. It was highly emotional, and I began to sing in a high and powerful voice bearing a tinge of sorrow, like how the moth is attracted to flame.

*You laugh, you cry, your every action is my Bible that I recite with care.
I'm happy, I'm sad, I give up my freedom in life for you, I want to be directed by you.
You are fire, you are wind, you are a devil weaving a web, a temptation from the angels.*

From: Swallowtail Butterfly

Lyric and song by: Ah Xin (a singer in the famous Chinese band, May Day).

I sung, accompanied by Phoenix's strong drum-beats and Fairsky's wild guitar chords, dancing Wicked's sensually choreographed dance, just as if I were the moth that was flying to the flame, singing out my swan song, surrendering my body to passionate love without a care.

When the song was done, the people under the stage looked intoxicated. *It seems like I really can sing rather well!* I thought happily.

"This song doesn't seem as well-sung as *Dreams Want to Fly!*" Lolidragon said with a frown.

Her comment hit me on the head like a giant iron hammer; I looked at Lolidragon tearfully, wailing, "How can that be? I've practiced this song for a long time!"

"Maybe you're lacking in emotion." Lolidragon glanced at Gui. "It's very obvious that you've never been in love, especially the one-sided, bitter-sweet sort."

As Lolidragon spoke, Gui's expression darkened. In the end, he opened his mouth and sang the same song. *(To avoid the suspicion that I'm filling in the words for more money, the lyrics have been removed...)*¹²

Even though we had sung the same song, the depth of emotions conveyed had such a huge difference. I understood what Lolidragon had said about 'lacking in emotion' – I

¹² Yu Wo started off as an internet writer. Chinese internet sites usually pay money depending on the words count. The normal rate is about 3 cents for 1000 words * the number of people who subscribe to the text.

didn't know how complicated Gui's voice could be, so sad yet determined, so hurt yet sweet, especially when he was staring at me. I almost, almost did not dare look in his eyes; I was afraid that if I did, if I was not careful, I might...anger Wicked further, whose glare had gone beyond freezing point. If Gui had made a single movement, Wicked would have started making human meat buns.

Especially with those two women behind me, who were equally eager to make human meat buns... *You've got to be joking! Only I can thrash Gui, other people don't even need to think about it!*

Thinking about that, it seemed like a long time since I had last beaten Gui up... I summoned a warm smile, and spoke in my warmest tone, "Gui, teach me how to sing."

"Yes, Your Highness!" Gui ran toward me with a touched expression, and I too watched him run toward me with happiness, before carrying him up with a single hand. Leaving behind a "I'm off to practice", I dragged Gui into a random room and— Heh heh heh!

"In any case, we'd best up the pace of our practice. We're going to kick you off to the three cities to for your tour within a week, maximum. Remember not to ruin the reputation of Infinite City," Lolidragon nagged at the remaining members of the Infinite Band.

"Yes!"



One day, after finishing singing practice, I suddenly had the feeling that I had been ignoring a certain four people that I had brought to the city. *I wonder what're they up to?* Feeling a little guilty, I PM-ed them.

"Jing, Yun? Where are you guys?" I asked with a bit of worry.

Yun replied immediately in high spirits, "We're picking out a house!"

"Picking out a house?" I paused.

"Yeah, as a citizen of Infinite City, Gui said we can buy property for half-price here!" Yun said excitedly.

"After selling the ship ticket that we didn't use, plus a bit of our savings, we can buy a rather nice place!" Jing couldn't hold in her excitement either. "That's why we went to choose a house now; if we wait until Infinite City opens its gates officially, we'll be competing for houses with a lot of people."

“Ohhh, so should I get started choosing a house soon too?” I asked urgently, but then I remembered that all of my money had been taken away by Yu Lian-dàsǎo. *Ugh, I can’t afford a house! Don’t tell me I, as Lord of this city, will have to live on the streets?*

Yun asked me in a funny tone, “Dàgē, you should be staying at the palace, right? What do you need a house for?”

Jing, on the other hand, sounded as if she didn’t know whether to cry or to laugh, “Dàgē, Odd Squad, Dark Emperor, Rose Team, Nan Gong Zui, and so on, all the important people in Infinite City, stay in the palace. You’re the Lord; you can’t be expected to use money from your own pocket to stay outside, right?”

“Oh, so that’s how it is,” I realized. “Tell me when you guys are done choosing a house, and remember to invite me over sometime!”

“Of course!” Yun replied.

I suddenly remembered my other question. “Oh yeah, do you know where Sunshine and Kenshin are?” I asked.

“They seem to be at Infinite Inn a lot.” Jing thought for a while. “If not, they’d be walking around Infinite City.”

“I’ll go look for them then,” I said as I started to worry. *After Jing and Yun pick their houses, what’s going to happen to Kenshin and Sunshine? Where are they going to stay? I don’t have extra money to help them buy property...* I scratched my face and decided that, at most, they would move in with me! *I don’t think I’ll be using my rooms a lot anyway.*

I ran hurriedly to the inn, immediately spotting the duo sitting together and drinking tea. I sat down, grabbed Kenshin’s tea, and gulped it down, before asking in a calm tone, “How’ve you been these days?”

Kenshin glared at the cup in my hands, then took another cup without a word and poured himself a new cup of tea. Meanwhile Sunshine replied, smiling, “We’re fine. We’ve been walking around this city, people-watching and drinking tea here.”

“That sounds so boring!” I felt guilty for bringing them over and then neglecting them. “Why don’t you guys come with me on the concert tour? This way you’ll get to see other cities.”

“A concert tour?” Sunshine looked perplexed.

I scratched my head in embarrassment. “A concert tour is putting it nicely. Actually, we’re just busking in the three cities.”

“Busking?” Again, Sunshine looked confused.

“Singing songs on the streets,” I explained again.

“Why do you want to sing on the streets?” Sunshine asked with an elegant smile.

“To earn money...” *Huh, how come I feel like I’ve met another Meat Bun?*

“Why do you want to earn money?” Sunshine asked tirelessly.

I shot a glance at Kenshin who was doing nothing. “Well, why don’t you ask Kenshin? I’m not very sure of this myself.”

Sunshine frowned. “When I ask questions, Kenshin doesn’t reply.”

I looked at the silent Kenshin and kind of understood why he kept his silence. If I were to be alone with Sunshine for several months, I think even a chatter-box like me would learn the meaning behind “silence is golden”. I started to think that maybe the noisy Yun and overly-curious Sunshine would get along nicely.

“Anyway, just follow me on the tour,” I changed the topic.

Sunshine gave me another warm smile. “Okay.”

“Those two people have been looking like they want to come over and talk for a while already,” Kenshin spoke up suddenly, pointing behind my right shoulder.

“Oh?” I turned to look, and immediately stiffened. I couldn’t move, because the two people who were mirrored in my eyes were my two good-for-nothing, play-the-entire-day-away-without-cooking-or-working parents.

They became very excited when they saw me turn around and started waving their hands at me frantically while running over to my table. My mom looked super excited as she started speaking. “How are you, Lord? Do you remember us? We once met at the Adventurers’ Tournament and our son is Feng Wu Qing of Dark Emperor!”

Yeah, and your daughter’s the Lord of Infinite City too. How could I forget my mom and dad? I thought helplessly, whilst still plastering a smile on my face. “Of course. You’re Lovely-dovey Husband and Lovely-dovey Wife, right?”

“See, hubby, the Lord really remembers us!” My mom looked touched as she said that.

“I told you! How could the Lord forget us? Think about the day of the siege, and how full of vigor, all-powerful, and almost godly the Lord was! He scared the enemies so much

that they lost control of their bowels and immediately knelt and surrendered. A Lord like this could hardly forget us!” My dad thumped the table emphatically.

“Don’t- don’t get too excited,” I said hurriedly, thinking, *Almost godly? I really want to know which god descends like how I had when I fell from the carpet.*

Dad rubbed his head rather apologetically. “I’m sorry, I got too worked up. But the Lord really is great! My wife and I willingly accept our loss; our past grudges are all forgotten.”

Forgotten is fine, forgotten is fine. I heaved a sigh of relief.

“And the Lord isn’t just good at martial arts, even his voice is wonderful!” My mom said, looking at me with a bright smile.

“Not really.” I put on a smile as well.

“But Xiao Lan, don’t you like *It’s My Life* the most? Why didn’t you sing that, or sing your second favorite, *Dreams Want to Fly*, instead?” Mom asked, puzzled.

“Oh, that’s because the *guqin* isn’t suited to rock music, so I had to choose something more sentimental,” I replied while smiling.

“Oh, so that’s why!” The three of us laughed, our smiling expressions surprisingly similar.

“Prince, your nickname is Xiao Lan?” Kenshin quipped from the side.

My smile froze, as I finally realized what my mom and dad had said. My eyes popped and I sweated a few buckets of cold sweat before I swallowed with difficulty and looked at the two grinning people.

“You, I, no—” I stuttered.

“Don’t deny it, Xiao Lan. Do you think that the part of our brains that recognizes people is naturally retarded, like Yang Ming?” Mom’s voiced floated over the PM channel.

“How did you find out?” I asked, a little put out.

“It’s very simple,” Dad explained gleefully. “First, Yang Ming said that you were a gender-swapped in Second Life (*Stupid brother, your mouth is too big!*). Second, Ling Bin likes Xiao Lan, but he pesters Prince in the game – taking that guy’s stubborn nature into account, the chances of him two-timing you is below zero, so the most likely conclusion is that Prince and Xiao Lan are the same person in the first place. Third, Xiao Lan, you’re

always singing those two songs, so who wouldn't recognize that voice? Uh...except for my stupid son, Yang Ming."

I paused for a second, before coming out with only more questions. "What did you say? Zhuo-gēgē likes me? Doesn't he like Yang Ming?"

Mom and Dad paused for a while, too. "Ling Bin likes Yang Ming? How is that possible? Doesn't he pester you a lot?"

"Zhuo-gēgē only wants to protect me, right?" I questioned stupidly. *According to what I had concluded before, isn't Zhuo-gēgē competing against Gui for my brother's affections? Huh? That's strange... Then why are they always sticking to me in the game, and not Feng Wu Qing?*

My dad and mom were stunned... And then my mom fell into my dad's arms, sobbing. "Hubby! Why are both our children so retarded?"

"Ay, it must be because we forgot to pray to the fertility goddess before they were born." My dad shook his head, sighing.

"So does Zhuo-gēgē like Yang Ming after all?" I tilted my head to one side, biting my fingers while deep in thought.

"Of course not!" my dad and mom yelled in unison. My mom even grabbed my ear (*Ow ow ow!*) and shouted, "You shouldn't let down his devotion! Ling Bin has liked you for eight years! He's a top scholar, and a hunk to boot. If you don't bring him home and get married to him, who're you going to marry?"

I snatched back my own ear, rubbing it morosely, "Zhuo-gēgē has liked me for eight years? Then..." I suddenly recalled the fight between Zhuo-gēgē and Gui — *Could it be that the person they were fighting over wasn't Yang Ming? It was me?!*

"Say, are you going to bring that hunk Ling Bin back so mom can have some eye candy?" Mom had my poor ear back in her pincer-grip again.

Mom, you've finally shown your true colors! "But, but, I don't know if I like Zhuo-gēgē or not!" I replied helplessly. "And if I marry Zhou-gēgē, Gui will definitely cry until the Great Wall falls down."

"Gui?" Mom batted two large, innocent eyes. "Is that the drool-worthy hunk of a bard?"

"Yeah, and he's my university's professor!" *Hey! Mom, it isn't good to drool over other guys in front of your husband... Even though dad seems to have gotten used to your fetish for pretty boys.*

“A professor! Really?” Mom’s face filled with longing, before she blinked her eyes at me. “He’s handsome too. A different type from Ling Bin, but both are undeniable hunks that can feed you for life. Ahaha, not bad, not bad, Xiao Lan! Just choose either of them; Mommy has no objections.”

Of course you are fine with any hunk as your eye candy! What objections would you have? I sighed, thinking about going out soon with two guys and two girls to busk, plus the fact that they were all my admirers... *Things are going to get messy.*

“Anyway, mom, don’t say anything about my secret.” I looked stern. “Not even to Yang Ming. If you tell anyone, I’ll marry an ugly guy and pollute your eyes.”

Mom looked horrified. “Don’t, don’t! I swear I won’t say a word. Xiao Lan, you have to remember that you must choose one out of the two hunks to marry!”

I nodded my head tiredly. *Who should I choose? Forget it, I’ll cross that bridge when I get there.*

As for whether my dad would spill the beans... Have you ever heard of “hen-pecked”? What my mom says, is what my dad says! You get it now, right?

Once again snatching Kenshin’s tea, I deliberately ignored Sunshine’s “I’ve got a question” expression while rubbing my temples. *Ay, it seems like things are getting out of hand.*

Chapter 4: The Most Important Matter in Meatbun's Life

“Roll call! Prince, check. Gui, check. Wicked, check. Fairsky, check. Phoenix, check. Kenshin, check. Sunshine, check,” Lolidragon muttered to herself as she confirmed everyone's attendance. “Seeing as we're all here, I shall begin. Today is the day we start the busking tour and, after much deliberation, it has been decided that we will start the tour from Star City, then on to Moon City and finally, Sun City.”

A slight quizzical look spread across my face. *Much deliberation? Throwing dice is considered deliberation? Ok, maybe if we count the fact that we took forever to choose the color of the dice.*

“First, you guys will perform publicly at the town square of each city once, then at different bars a few times, and then once more at the plaza. An important reminder: after each performance remember to say that you guys are from Infinite City and that there will be a concert in Infinite City in about a month. Understand?” Lolidragon said with a stern expression.

Everyone nodded their head wearily, since we had already heard this hundreds of times. Our band's main goal right now was to build Infinite City's fame and get a big fan base, and also to earn money.

“Alright, Infinite Band, depart!” Lolidragon shouted enthusiastically. With our blood boiling with excitement as well, we shouted, “HERE WE GO!”

“Oh yeah, as a side note, Yu Lian said there aren't enough funds, so she asked you guys to cover your travel and living expenses by killing mobs,” Lolidragon added casually.

Ah...no wonder Yu Lian-dàsão took all my money yesterday. I turned and looked at the others, all of whom were wearing a grave expression. *Oh lord, looks like we were all robbed yesterday.*

“We'll have to kill mobs for money I guess...” I said somberly. *You've gotta be joking! We need to transverse the entire continent in a month, and perform in all three cities? You want me to run for president or something? Even a presidential candidate gets a jeep!*

“We can use my flying carpet,” Sunshine suggested with a faint smile.

I turned my head sharply in Sunshine's direction and gazed at him, touched by his offer. *Rescuing him was indeed a great idea.* “It's settled then, we will ride on the carpet,” I said happily.

“It’s lucky that we still have roasted meat to eat.” A sigh of relief escaped my mouth as I wolfed down the delicious pile of roasted meat in my hand. Above me Meatbun was riding atop of Fire Phoenix, having the time of their lives in the air.

“Yeah,” Gui sighed, “after I wrestled some lodging money from Lolidragon, I completely forgot about food expenses. Fortunately, we have Fire Phoenix and Meatbun here, so we don’t have to go hungry.”

Fairsky and Phoenix, now slaves to the great taste of the roasted meat, lost all their lady-like composure as they wolfed down the food, eating almost as fast as me. As for Kenshin and Sunshine, Sunshine kept bombarding the ever silent Kenshin with questions as the two of them ate together.

“Where are we going to stay tonight?” Wicked casually asked.

“In the park?” I suggested. “That way we can use the money to buy food.”

“Prince, you shouldn’t be going through this...” Gui said with a pained and tender look, then suggested, “Actually, we should sleep in the town square; that way we can wake up tomorrow and sing right off the bat.”

I nodded. “You’re right.”

“What?! Sleep in the town square?” Fairsky and Phoenix both spluttered out incredulously after they anxiously swallowed their roasted meat.

“Why not? It’s just a bit of sleeping time before you log off and after you log on.” I shrugged, not caring about their disbelief.

“NO!” Fairsky shouted with a blazing red face. “What kind of joke is this? We can’t do that, even if it’s only for a little while. A girl’s sleeping form should NEVER be seen by strangers!”

Even Phoenix, who rarely agreed with Fairsky, was nodding furiously.

“Let’s stay in an inn then; girls should not carelessly let others see them while they sleep,” Wicked said while glancing at me with a meaningful look. *Oh yeah, I’m one of the girls too, huh... I almost forgot.* I rubbed the back of my head with a foolish smile on my face.

“Then we shall rent three rooms. Fairsky will share a room with Phoenix, Sunshine will share the room with Kenshin, and Wicked and Gui will take the last room...” I tilted my head in thought. *What about me? I don’t think I can share a room with Phoenix and Fairsky, right? After all, I’m a full-blown male in game with a XX! What if the two of them decided to use force with me? ...What should I do?*

Yet, I can't possibly sleep in the same room as Gui and Wicked, since I'm still technically a girl...must have...restraint... (The definition of restraint: Even though I want it very much in my heart, on the surface I must still pretend that I don't want to do it...if only Zhuo-gēge didn't know who I was, how great would that be! I could stare at two super attractive guys...while they sleep...I can't help but want to drool as I imagine the scene.)

So annoying! This is the first time that I have found my trans identity to be annoying. "I'll sleep with Sunshine and Kenshin then." Finally, I made my decision. *It should be alright, since both of them aren't really "human" anyway, and they are pretty good looking too.*

Upon hearing that, both Gui and Wicked turned to look at me expressionlessly. Then, Gui started to show sadness, disappointment, self pity, and other such emotions across his face while Wicked squinted his eyes dangerously and fire started to sprout from his irises...

I began sweating furiously, and so I said, "Fine, I'll sleep by myself."

Upon arriving at the inn, I said goodbye to everyone in a plaintive voice and headed toward my room, planning on retreating into a corner.

"Prince," Gui suddenly called out, dashing towards me. He summoned Fire Phoenix before continuing. "Here, take Fire Phoenix. Then, if you get hungry, you can have some roasted meat to eat."

"Gui..." Touched, I gave him a look of gratitude, happily took the food supply, and walked to my room.

Once in my room, I hastily took out Meatbun, wanting to get some food in me before I logged off. "Meatbun, spit out some meat."

"Okay Mommy!" Meatbun happily spat out a pile of meat. Fire Phoenix, knowing the drill, instantly breathed a flame out and grilled the meat to perfection. I happily wolfed down the food while observing the two pets playing at the side. They seemed to be getting along really well.

"Fire Phoenix, Meat-bunbun wants to ride on your back!" Meatbun said while earnestly rubbing Fire Phoenix's leg with its head in a cajoling manner.

Fire Phoenix haughtily raised its head at first, then it glanced at Meatbun's wide and innocent eyes, and sighed, *(I swear to god, I really saw it sigh!)* "What am I going to do with you? ...Get on."

Meatbun cheered as Fire Phoenix hoisted it onto their back with its beak.

“Fiery fly fly!” Meatbun started to shout again, and Fire Phoenix’s eyes was filled with a helpless expression as it flew in a circle around the room with Meatbun on its back.

My mouth was slightly ajar. *Is this normal interaction between pets? Pets with AI are really something. Even their emotions seem so real. The helpless expression in Fire Phoenix’s eyes is exactly the same as my expression every time I have a conversation with Meatbun...* I closed my mouth and continued chewing my roasted meat.

Meatbun continued cheering non-stop while saying, “Fiery is the bestest! Meat-bunbun wants to fly with you forever!”

“Really?” Fire Phoenix’s flame seems to get a little hotter. ...*Kind of like...blushing? What an absurd idea...*

“Yeah! Meat-bunbun’s favoritest one is Fiery!” Meatbun shouted out, “Just like Mommy!”

I proudly nodded, *Good Meatbun, you didn’t forget your good ol’ mom.*

“Then Meatbun, would you...like to marry me?” Fire Phoenix asked slowly.

...*My eyes widened with shock, and my delicious barbeque fell out of my now O shaped mouth.*

“What is ‘marry’?” Meatbun asked, blinking its big, innocent eyes.

Fire Phoenix said solemnly, “I’m not too sure myself. I only know that if we get married, we can always stay together.”

Meatbun started to jump around wildly on Fire Phoenix’s back, “Okay! Meat-bunbun wants to be with you forever! Marry, marry!”

I closed my mouth, picked up the fallen meat, and stuffed it back in my mouth and continued chewing. *What is this? Did a bird just propose to a meat bun? What’s worse, that particular meat bun is my daughter! This...this...is more ridiculous than a science fiction novel and scarier than a horror story!*

Lolidragon’s words came back to me. *I think she said that two pets can have children? What kind of messed up children would they have?! Meatbun stuffed with Phoenix meat...? That...is actually the best scenario...I mean, what if they gave birth to a Phoenix with a Meat bun for a head...ugh, I think I’m about to faint.*

When I was still imagining how a phoenix with meat bun head would look like, Meatbun and Fire Phoenix had already approached me and Meatbun was happily squealing at me, “Mommy! Meat-bunbun is gonna marry Fire Phoenix!”

I was totally stumped. *What should I say? Do I congratulate them?* Jumping up, I grabbed the two pets, kicked open my door, and stomped towards Gui and Wicked's room.

"Gui! Your son seduced my daughter!" I roared as I kicked their door down as well.

After I made my entrance, I looked at the two people in the room, rubbed my eyes and looked again. Then my jaw dropped. This wasn't my imagination; I was really seeing Gui on top of Wicked. To be more specific, both of them were on the ground tangled together, and Gui, who was on top of Wicked, looked up at me, obviously shocked as well.

"Uh... Sorry to disturb you guys. I'm so sorry." After a moment, I rubbed the back of my head, slightly embarrassed, and closed the door.

"Prince, Your Highness! Wait! This is a misunderstanding!" Gui's desperate cries rang out from behind the door.

Then, with a cry, Gui crashed through the door. I dodged nimbly and watched as Gui landed in a heap beside me. I looked back into the room and saw Wicked standing straight as a pole, with a vein popping out of his forehead and his right foot out. Clearly, the culprit responsible for Gui's sudden flight out of the room had to be Wicked.

I glanced at Gui, who was now dazed from the fall, then at the furious Wicked, and I asked stupidly, "Are you guys playing SM?"

"NO WAY!" Wicked said through clenched teeth.

"Then why did you kick Gui out? Weren't both of you...?" I paused there and coughed; it is something that should not come out of a lady's mouth.

"NO!" Gui and Wicked shouted at the same time.

"He suddenly jumped on me!" Wicked said while shooting daggers at Gui with his eyes.

"Oh Gui, aren't you a bit too rough?" I asked with a shake of my head.

Gui's blood drained from his face and he hastily tried to explain. "That was an accident, I didn't mean to...!"

I interrupted, "Oh, so you couldn't stop yourself?" I nodded in understanding. *Well after all, Wicked is a hottie as well. Of course Gui couldn't resist the temptation, so he jumped Wicked...*

“...I just heard your cry all of a sudden, so I tripped and accidentally fell on Wicked! That is all!” Gui finished his sentence. Then when he heard what I had said, his face went blank.

“Prince!” Wicked’s passive face had suddenly changed. “Your left hand...!”

My left hand? I looked down. My poor left hand had been holding onto Fire Phoenix the whole time and now the smell of freshly roasted meat was wafting from it.

“Ahhh!”

After everyone had been drawn over by my scream, they all stared at me with bewildered eyes. Hence, I was forced to explain why I had kicked Gui and Wicked’s door open while Ice Phoenix tended to my mutilated left hand with red potions.

“In summary, Meatbun and Fire Phoenix are getting married,” I finished.

Upon hearing the news, their reactions all mirrored my own—mouths and eyes wide with disbelief.

“I know that pets are able to get married...but I’ve never heard of such a ridiculous pairing.” Fairsky said while giving weird looks to the nuzzling love bird and meat bun.

“Master, I am going to marry Meatbun,” Fire Phoenix told Gui in an almost commanding tone.

“Oh...” replied a bemused Gui who didn’t look like a master in the least. Then he frowned. “But how do you get married?”

“No idea,” Fire Phoenix said nonchalantly.

“Do you really want to marry my Meatbun?” Seeing Fire Phoenix so void of responsibility, I immediately thought with some anger, *I don’t want to marry my cute little Meatbun to this, this haughty chicken! What if it takes advantage of my Meatbun? What if it cheats on my Meatbun?*

Fire Phoenix nodded seriously. “I really like Meatbun.”

I attempted to stare Fire Phoenix down, but it didn’t back down. Instead, it raised its wing in a protective position around Meatbun. At last, I sighed and thought, *It looks like Fire Phoenix sincerely likes Meatbun.* I shook my head. *In this day and age, not only can you not keep a grown-up daughter from marrying, you can’t even keep a daughter that is a meat bun from marrying... But thinking on the bright side, at least from now on this couple can specialize in making me barbeque anytime I want.*

With the heavy heart of one about to be parted with their only child, I said, “Then it’s settled, let me consult my game guide and check how pets get married.”

“Game guide?” Phoenix asked suspiciously. “Second Life has gaming guides?”

I shrugged, “I don’t know about others’, but mine is called Lolidragon.”

Opening the PM channel, I briefly told Lolidragon what happened. As usual, she laughed until she almost died before answering me. “Pet marriages are simple, as long as the pets themselves agree. Then, just have the one of the masters express the wish to be wedded and when the other agrees, the ceremony is complete.”

“Gui, do you agree for your pet Fire Phoenix to take my Meatbun as its bride?” I asked as soon as Lolidragon finished.

Gui, under the fiery gaze of Fire Phoenix, said without hesitation, “Yes, I agree.”

<System Notice: Ceremony failed.>

Gui and I were both stunned. *Failed?* I asked Lolidragon again, and I even told Lolidragon verbatim our phrase usage.

“That’s strange, there’s nothing wrong. Are you sure they want to get married?” Lolidragon asked in confusion.

“Of course; they are the ones who suggested it in the first place.”

Lolidragon was silent for a moment. Finally she said hesitantly, “Prince...ask Fire Phoenix and Meatbun about their genders... I just remembered that Phoenixes come in pairs—they can be both male and female. Seeing as Fire Phoenix is a “Fire Phoenix”¹³, then...”

“Fire Phoenix... are you ...female...?” I asked with a blank face.

“I’ve always been female,” Fire Phoenix said angrily.

Black lines dropped from my face. *What the hell is this? It’s enough that I met a bunch of gays around, now even pets are doing it? What has this world come to?* With this revelation, my head began to ache horribly. “You’re female and Meatbun is female, so how can two girls get married?”

¹³ **Fire Phoenix:** Since phoenixes are called “凤凰”, they say that “凤” refers to males, “凰” refers to females, and the two words together refer to phoenixes in general. Here Fire Phoenix is addressed as “火凰”.

“What are you talking about? Meatbun is male,” Fire Phoenix retorted in an annoyed tone.

Everyone’s widened eyes immediately turned towards Meatbun. *Meatbun...is male?*

Don’t tell me...the reason for the failure before... I said hesitantly, “Gui, do you agree to let my pet Meatbun take your pet, Fire Phoenix, as its bride?”

Gui paused, and then answered, “I agree.”

<System Notice: Ceremony successful. Meatbun is now married to Fire Phoenix.>

...What the hell?

Chapter 5: The Diary of a Suffering Street Musician

After the members of Infinite Band put their heads together, they finally came up with a method to gather as big an audience as possible. First, the members would split up into four groups and travel different roads. Wicked, Gui and I would each go alone, while Phoenix and Fairsky would go together, accompanied by two bodyguards – Kenshin and Sunshine. We would start from the Eastern, Western, Southern, and Northern gates respectively, following the road to the central square. Then, we would begin our performance.

Looking at the increasing horde of people behind my back, I thought, *This should be about enough... With the horde attracted by the others, the square might end up being packed to the point of bursting!* I walked into the square while thinking, and coincidentally saw Gui walk into the square from another road at the same time. Gui was definitely a handsome guy whose beauty could compete with mine, and the number of lascivious women following him was also overwhelming.

I waved to Gui and he ran towards me. “So the rest haven’t reached here yet?” I asked.

Gui beamed as he said, “I did see Fairsky and Phoenix, and the two of them have attracted quite a number of men.”

“Oh?” Using my hand as a support, I jumped onto the fountain in the center of the square and pulled Gui up. The two of us sat in this fashion on the rim of the fountain, allowing the crowd to admire us even as we casually kept a lookout for the others’ arrival.

“It’s a good thing we brought them along; otherwise we wouldn’t have attracted even a single guy.” I said half-joking. “After all, we can’t let Infinite City become the City of Women.”

“With Your Highness here, I’m afraid that it’ll really become the City of Women,” Gui replied with a smile.

“Whaaaat... Like all of you don’t have any responsibility for this,” I said sarcastically. “You and Wicked are also extremely handsome guys that people don’t see around very often. That reminds me, Kenshin and Sunshine can also be called beautiful men. There’s also Nan Gong Zui, who is rather good-looking. Broken Sword’s not bad too, although he’s already taken. Wah, I didn’t realize we had so many handsome guys in Infinite City!”

“In front of you, Prince, nobody can say that they are good-looking,” Gui spoke with a slow and infatuated tone. His hand gently brushed away the white hair that had fallen in front of my forehead, and then he... was pushed into the fountain by a jump kick.

Please don't misunderstand; I'm not the one who kicked Gui. Look! The person who kicked Gui down, Wicked, was hovering near me, looking threatening. He was even glowering down at Gui in the fountain.

"You're here! Wahhhh, Wicked's really popular too." I looked at the sea of faces in the square and nodded my head, satisfied.

"Phoenix and Fairsky are behind us; they should be reaching here soon," Wicked answered as he reluctantly pulled Gui out of the fountain.

"Uh, I already see them." I broke into a cold sweat, watching the two ultra-beauties walk slowly here, the road cleared by the two bodyguards I had sent – Sunshine and Kenshin. And behind them was a crowd as dense as a swarm of ants: a horde of perverts with an excess of male hormones. Looks like Lolidragon's clothing designs worked well. The top was sexy, leopard-printed, and strapless. The bottom was an extra-short, figure-hugging leather skirt, along with a pair of high-heeled boots for footwear. These items were surely the top three godly weapons needed to attract males. On Fairsky and Phoenix, the effects of the clothes were even more devastating –it was enough to make males drool until they died from dehydration.

"Looks like the members of Infinite Band are all here." I smiled lightly, looking at the two unbelievably cool beauties. "Let's start with something exciting. Fairsky, Phoenix, are you ready?"

Fairsky took out her guitar and gently plucked a few notes, gesturing an "Okay" to me while Phoenix set up her drum set with the help of the remaining four men. After she picked up her drumsticks and casually played out a beat, she too nodded at me.

Standing on the fountain and looking at the large audience below, I haughtily said, "Then don't say anything. Let us sing a song first! Let them see the musical prowess of our Infinite Band."

"No problem!" Fairsky and Phoenix said simultaneously. As soon as they spoke, Phoenix vigorously beat out a rhythm, causing the originally noisy crowd to quiet down.

At the same moment, Fairsky violently strummed across the surface of the guitar. I sent a roar to the heavens, and began our concert tour's first song. Following the intense rhythm and the sonorous singing, I danced wildly, as though I was fighting. With heated abandon I flew, I leapt, I poured all of myself into my performance, as though fire was coursing through my veins and setting alight the hearts of all who were present.

At last, I sang the final note. Regaining my senses after the passionate dancing, I stood silently on the spot. Without our performance, the square remained soundless. It was so quiet that I could only hear my own breathing...

“Ahhhhhhh!” A loud shrill from a female suddenly emerged from the crowd, nearly piercing my eardrums.

With the silence broken, the voices were like the explosion of meteorites hitting the earth, which even led to a chain reaction. “Encore, Encore!”, “It’s too wonderful, sing another song!”, “Ahhhh! So handsome!”, “What a hot babe! Damn! I nearly had a nosebleed...”

As I saw the scene start to get rowdy, I cocked an eyebrow. “Now let’s calm down the atmosphere. Gui, Wicked, no problem, right?”

“Of course not, Your Highness.” Gui took his guqin and sat on the fountain elegantly.

“Let’s start.” Wicked took out his flute¹⁴ and stood unmoving. The tall, proud, and lonely figure was a perfect match for the flute.

Just like that, the sound of the flute started to ring amidst of all the clamor, but for some reason, the noise was unable to block that melancholic sound. The sound of the flute wove through the crowd, through the noise, directly into everyone’s ears. Very quickly, there was pin-drop silence in the square, all except that melancholic sound of the flute.

Following it was the faint and touching sound of Gui’s guqin, and then I lightly opened my mouth and sang in a voice entirely different from the one before, a voice filled with sorrow.

Another song ended, and there was yet another round of silence. I recalled our main objective – to publicize Infinite City.

“Hello everybody. We are Infinite Band, under the jurisdiction of Infinite City. From today onwards, we will start our concert tour in the Sun, Moon and Star Cities. We will also be holding a string of concerts in Infinite City a month later, so I hope that everyone will be able to attend our huge performance then.”

“Now, let us do a self-introduction. I’m the lead singer, the Blood Elf Prince.” I revealed a devilish smile.

“Guitarist, Fairsky.” Fairsky cutely stuck out her small pink tongue.

“Drummer, Ice Phoenix.” Phoenix’s lazy smile radiated with charm.

“I am Guiliastes, performing the guqin.” Gui smiled without restraint.

“Wicked, my instrument is the flute,” Wicked coolly finished with a few brief words.

¹⁴ **Flute:** It is actually “Xiao”, “箫”, which is a Chinese vertical end-blown flute. Go here (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xiao_%28flute%29) for more information.

Now, looking at the countless number of infatuated eyes below the stage, I had a feeling that this was the calm before the storm. I only could PM everyone, asking, “Ugh, should we make a run for it before they regain their senses?”

“Agreed!” Threatened by the frightening silence, the opinions of the members of Infinite Band were in sync for once.

“AHHHHHHH!” Another piercing shrill rang out...

“Sunshine, take out your flying carpet!” Looking at the crowd that was crazily pushing towards us, all the members of Infinite Band gave out heartrending cries simultaneously, as if by prior agreement.

“Hurry and get on!” After I landed on the carpet with a flying jump, I extended a hand to pull Gui up. Then the tug-of-war between me and the pile of females below clutching Gui’s legs began...

“Your Highness! Save meeee!” Gui begged with teary eyes.

Women! When it comes to snatching handsome guys, their strength is inexhaustible... I, whose body had been half-dragged off the carpet, struggled desperately against them.

“Wicked, Kenshin, hurry up and help me!”

“Uh...” Wicked sounded as though he was willing to help but was unable to do so. I looked at him from the corner of my eye, only to see his face in agony. His upper body was on the flying carpet, but both his hands were grabbing the carpet with a death grip while five pretty girls were hugging the lower half of his body that he couldn’t free himself from.

“Go and die, you pervert,” Fairsky impatiently cried out. She kicked off the man who was hugging her thigh, but immediately another pervert clung on.

“*Flame arrow, Flame arrow, Flame—*” Sunshine was also casting *Flame Arrow* without pause, helping Fairsky to shoot the perverts off the carpet.

“Ugh... How scary!” Phoenix hid behind the only person who could save her, Kenshin. Even though Kenshin’s blade was already dyed red, the men still climbed up one by one, paying no thought to their lives.

“Meatbun’s super gross *Machine Gun Meat Attack!*” I grabbed Meatbun and aimed under Gui’s legs, manically shooting out meat that was still raw and dripping blood. After the beautiful girls underneath were all covered in meat, their feeling of disgust finally overcame their determination for snatching handsome guys. They let go of Gui’s leg one after another, and finally I managed to pull him up onto the carpet. After that, I rushed to go help Wicked.

“*Meat Attaaaack!*” After forcing back another bunch of girls and rescuing Wicked, I turned around in Fairsky and Phoenix’s direction.

“*Heaven’s Blazing Flame,*” Gui commanded his Fire Phoenix to breathe fire at a bunch of perverts, and before long, a pile of charcoal black perverts dropped down in succession from mid-air...

“Sunshine, hurry up and go!” I roared.

“Alright.” After Sunshine gave commands to the flying carpet, our party finally managed to escape.

With a pale face, I asked, “Is this going to be the lifestyle we’ll be living for the next month?”

“OH GODDDD!” Our party let out an inhuman cry.

It was only from then on that I realized that the path to becoming a singer was such an arduous one...

<Concert Tour Day 2>

“First group reporting, the main door has already been blocked. I repeat, the main door has already been blocked. Definitely don’t go out by the main door. How are the other groups’ situations?” I asked, PMing the second and third groups.

Wicked’s and Gui’s voices were transmitted over. “Second group reporting, the back door has already been occupied by the enemy. I repeat, the back door has already been occupied by the enemy.”

“Third group reporting as well. The windows have also been jostled open!” Fairsky wailed pitifully.

“The inn room that we just rented today has been captured by fans again!” I wanted to cry, but no tears flowed out. *If I had known this earlier, I wouldn’t have rented it! Why didn’t I use the money to eat instead?*

“What should we do?” the others asked me. Furrowing my brows, I replied, “I guess we can only take out sleeping bags to sleep outside the city...”

“Fourth group reporting,” Sunshine replied casually. “Outside the city, there are people searching for you guys everywhere.”

“Sleep on the flying carpet then, although it’s a little crowded,” I helplessly replied.

A group of people on a flying carpet that isn't very big...

"I want to sleep beside Prince." Fairsky pouted as she hugged me tightly, refusing to let go.

And Phoenix had long since been lying in my arms docilely...

"I also want to hug Your Highness!" Gui, who was being stepped under Wicked's foot, could only grab my calf and struggle with all his might.

At last, I lay down, with my left arm being tightly hugged by Fairsky, and the right side of my body being pressed down by Phoenix. The person grabbing my right calf refusing to let go was Gui, and the person seizing Gui's collar, wanting to throw him off the carpet, was Wicked... Sunshine and Kenshin lay near us, beside the pile of human bodies that we formed.

"How cramped!" Kenshin commented coldly.

<Concert Tour Day 5>

"Everyone, are you wearing your cloaks?" I asked, lowering my voice. The six people behind me all nodded. Looking at the sight, I said with satisfaction, "That's good. Let's go; we still have to teleport to Moon City!"

"Hurry up and go! I already can't stand the feeling of being chased." Fairsky's voice came from under one of the cloaks, obviously wanting no delay in leaving.

"Lower your voice! If we get revealed as the members of Infinite Band, things will become troublesome," Wicked reprimanded.

"Let's go!" I said while I walked towards the teleportation station not too far off.

The further I walked, the more I felt that something was wrong. *Although there isn't usually a lack of customers at the station, it still shouldn't be to the extent of having such a sea of people, right?* Our party walked towards the station with feelings of anxiety.

"Wait a minute. If you want to use the teleportation system, you have to take off your cloak first. It's for security reasons." A large, burly fellow blocked our path.

Take it off? Will I still be able walk away then? The thought of the miserable situation that I might experience if we got discovered as the members of Infinite Band made me unable to restrain myself from replying in a cold tone. "What? Is the teleport station operated by your family? Do we need your consent in order to use it?"

The man scratched his head, a bit embarrassed. “That’s not it,” he said. “It’s just that someone employed me to stop players here, so I have to make sure that none of the people passing by are the ones I have to block. It would be disastrous if I missed them.”

“Block who?” *I think I probably know the answer to that.*

The beefy man simpered. “It is the recently very famous Infinite Band!”

As expected... I thought helplessly. I conveniently PMed everyone, asking what we should do. However, every single person replied to me with nothing but silence.

“Barge through,” was Kenshin’s single sentence.

“Okay!” I shouted enthusiastically, since I couldn’t think of any other solutions anyway.

With a ram from me, I knocked away the heavily built guy. Taken by surprise, he was butted far away. However, before he was sent flying from the blow, he extended his hand to grab my cloak...

“AHHHHH!! It’s Prince!” A terrifying shrill rang out.

My forehead perspired furiously. *WE. ARE. DOOMED!*

<Concert Tour Day 10>

“Ugh, I don’t want to eat roasted meat any more. For ten consecutive days, all three meals have been roasted meat! I’ll vomit if I have to eat more of it!” wept Phoenix as she took a bite from the roasted meat in her hands, finally passing her limits of endurance.

BARF

I stared with cool detachment at Gui who was off to the side, puking so much that it was almost tragic. “We don’t have any other choice. I also want to eat other kinds of food, but even Sunshine and Kenshin can’t go out to buy food anymore. Whenever people see us or anyone in a disguise, they’ll rush up as though they were all crazy.”

Sunshine, who had always been smiling elegantly, revealed a rare glum face. With a sorrowful heart, he said, “The last time I went out to buy food for all of you, I nearly didn’t manage to come back!”

“Having something at all to eat is already great,” said Wicked coldly.

“Most importantly, we’re going to be all out of meat buns soon. After that, what is Meatbun going to eat?” I stared, frustrated, at Meatbun who was currently playing the “Fly Fly” game with his wife, Fire Phoenix.

“Knead the roasted meat into the shape of a ball, and treat it as a skinless meat bun to feed it?” *Who was the one who thought of such a rotten idea...?*

<Concert Tour Day 15>

“Everyone, hurry and run,” Fairsky shouted at the top of her voice while running wildly, escaping from the square where we had just held our concert. Behind her, a long trail of perverts followed.

“Fairsky, come over here,” Sunshine shouted to her from his flying carpet. He flew low in her direction and then extended a hand to pull her up.

“Phew! I should have everyone now, right?” Sunshine asked as he wiped away his sweat, relieved.

However, Gui’s face was pale with fear as he cried out, “Where’s my Highness, Prince?!”

Somewhere in the human pile, I yelled miserably, “HELP. ME. AHHHH! Don’t pull off my jacket! Give me back my pants! Oh god, I’m only left with this piece of clothing! Please don’t take off my underwear!”

Chapter 6: Second Life's Spokesperson

“Xiao Lan, I can overlook the fact you swapped genders. I can even overlook the fact that you have become so handsome. But after all that, you actually went and became a *singer*...”

Early in the morning, I was roused unceremoniously from my sleep by my mom. I blearily watched my parents as they sprayed out a mouthful of saliva as they ranted on, inwardly thinking it was lucky that I had been awoken by mom, otherwise I don't know if I could have kept my underwear from those fangirls...

Finally, my mother really couldn't stand my dazed, uncomprehending look anymore. Yanking my ear, she bellowed, “Do you know that the entire world is searching for the Blood Elf Prince?!”

“What?” I was instantly shocked out of my stupor. *The entire world?* “Mom, you mean the entire *Second Life*, right?”

“Not just *Second Life*, but the real world is also looking for you!” Dad said, dropping the bomb on me and clearly relishing in it.

“Why is the real world looking for me?” I asked, perplexed.

Mom massaged her forehead, as if she had a headache. “Don't you realize that your singing is amazing? Many talent agencies, modeling companies and even *Second Life's* corporation are looking for you to be their spokesperson.”

My mouth dropped open. “*Second Life's* corporation? How could that be? Don't they know that I'm trans?”

“How would I know?” Mom retorted crossly. “I only know that they've posted screenshots of you on the home page of *Second Life's* official site. I've even printed them out.”

I snatched the pictures from my Mom's hand. The first picture was a shot of me using my dao to chop down an unknown person, the second was a close-up of my kiss with Phoenix and Fairsky, and the third was the Infinite Band's performance at the plaza. Every picture had a sensational caption, such as ‘The crème de la crème of *Second Life* – the Blood Elf Prince’, ‘Do you want to be like Prince, constantly surrounded by girls?’, ‘Have you dreamed of becoming world-famous like Prince?’, and ‘There's nothing you can't do, only things you never thought of doing. A world that's 99% realistic – *Second Life* awaits you!’

My hands trembled as I looked through the stack of Prince pictures. *What happened?* I thought. *How did things turn out like this? Surely you realized that, with these screenshots posted on the home page of the world's most popular online game, Second Life, the exposure is even N times higher than the nude photos of female celebrities!*

I yelled in desperation, "What, what should I do?"

My parents looked at me with solemn faces and said, "First, go and cook breakfast."

"Mom, Dad, that's hardly the point here!" A vein popped on my head. *I can't rely on them after all...*

But under the fierce gaze of my parents and my stupid brother, I was nevertheless forced to make breakfast before I went to university. I chewed on my egg on toast as I rode the bus to school and, to my surprise, I discovered that there was a group of news reporters' vans outside the university. *What exactly is happening?* I wondered. My mind was full of questions as I entered the grounds and stepped into the classroom.

My brother, Feng Yang Ming, who was walking next to me, gave a small whistle as he saw the crowd of reporters surrounding Professor Min Gui Wen. With a gloating tone, he said, "This time, the professor is in trouble."

"Excuse me, why did you decide to form a band within *Second Life*?" asked a male reporter who was pointing a microphone at Professor Min Gui Wen.

"Sorry, I'm starting my class now, so please leave before I call security," Professor Min Gui Wen responded frankly.

"So handsome..." said a nameless female reporter, with two hearts in her eyes.

The male reporter unrelentingly asked another question, "Do you know the whereabouts of Prince right now?"

"No comment!" Professor Min Gui Wen answered icily, his expression darkening.

"Then..."

At last, the security guard uncle rushed over and chased out the crowd of reporters. I sat dazedly on my seat, watching Professor Min Gui Wen, who was obviously having a headache, while listening to the gossip king Gu Yun Fei giving the class a report on how the whole situation had unfolded.

"Ever since our Infinite City's Infinite Band began their concert tour, they have become extremely popular, and a lot of people followed them from Star City all the way to Moon

and Sun Cities to watch their performance!” Yun had a very proud expression, and he even turned towards Professor Min Gui Wen and called, “Isn’t that right, Professor?”

Professor Min Gui Wen revealed a pained expression. “Yes, we were chased until we almost went crazy.”

“I never expected that Prince would really be so handsome,” said a female student, firmly holding onto the pile of photos I saw this morning.

“I heard that a lot of talent agencies are looking for Dàgē,” Jing mentioned worriedly.

Yun also scratched the side of his ear. “Dàgē really can hide; even Professor was found the next day, but there hasn’t been any news about Dàgē at all.

“What a pity. If Prince appeared, it would definitely cause a sensation,” another female student said disappointedly.

Cause a sensation? If I, the only gender swapped person of Second Life’s, were to appear, the sensation caused would probably be as great as the one surrounding Second Life’s release onto the market! I thought helplessly on the side.

“That’s for sure; Prince is so handsome, and he sings so well. If he were to become a singer, he would be incredibly popular with the whole world!” said another female student who was so enchanted that she was buried within the pictures.

“That’s right; I went on *Second Life*’s official site and downloaded Prince’s songs. There’s *It’s My Life* and *Dreams Want to Fly*.” A person held up the CDs.

There— there are even songs you can download? I was going to faint.

“Gui! Come out for a minute.” Zhuo-gēge’s voice came in from the doorway. I looked up in surprise at his unpleasant expression... and the group of reporters behind him.

“No matter what, I *am* a professor, you should have some manners,” Gui exasperatedly grumbled. He instructed us to self-study for a while, before walking out.

Zhuo-gēge met my gaze for a moment **SHIVER** and then stood at the classroom entrance and said to the reporters, “The professor and I do not know of Prince’s whereabouts, nor of anything related to the issue of *Second Life*’s spokesperson. For all matters, please wait until after things have settled down, then Infinite City will release a statement.”

“In regards to Infinite City’s concert, it will continue as planned,” Gui added.

The group of reporters continued to ask questions incessantly. After a long while, seeing that Zhuo-gēge and Gui weren't going to say anything else, they all hurried off in swarms saying, "Hurry, go back and write the report, otherwise we won't make the evening papers."

After all the reporters had finally left, Gui concernedly asked Zhuo-gēge, "How is Prince's situation?"

"He hasn't been found out yet," Zhuo-gēge replied without changing expression. "Although, I think he should be careful and make sure that he doesn't tell anybody about his real identity, otherwise things will become problematic."

The last sentence was obviously directed at me.



ONLINE

After I finished class as if I was sitting on a needled carpet, I virtually ran home, pulled on the game headset, opened the PM channel, and promptly started wailing out Lolidragon's name. "Lolidragon, what the heck is this *Second Life*'s spokesperson thing all about?!"

Lolidragon's helpless voice came back, "I'm sorry, that was the corporation higher-ups' decision. I couldn't do anything."

"What do you mean 'you couldn't do anything'?" I demanded. "You *know* I'm trans, I simply can't be the *Second Life* spokesperson!"

"Of course you can, you're just going to be a virtual spokesperson."

"Virtual spokesperson?" *What on earth is that?* I thought, knitting my eyebrows together.

"The only thing you can't do is appear in real life. Everything else, like photos, advertisements, or even songs, they're not a problem. That's why the higher-ups decided to let you be an online and TV spokesperson," explained Lolidragon. "You have no need to reveal your true identity."

"But, but..." I tried to fight against it.

"This will also create a lot of benefits for Infinite City and Infinite Band," said Lolidragon excitedly. "Even if it's just for the point of building Infinite City's reputation, there are already many benefits. Did you know that even though Infinite City isn't open yet, there are already tons of people waiting outside of the city? Not to mention the

people who want to join the Infinite City's army! There are so many that we need a strict selection process now."

"But..." I still wanted to protest.

"There's another point as well. The photo album we talked about before had difficulties in implementation, and distributing books and CDs in *Second Life* used to be an impossible thing. However, because of you, the corporation now has specially developed these new functions. You should know how big of a help this is to Infinite City's economy, right?" Lolidragon's final words were just about to shatter my still-protesting heart.

"I still..."

"There's also spokesperson compensation; just give me your bank details and the money will be transferred to you," Lolidragon added her final attack.

"I am very pleased to be *Second Life*'s spokesperson. Please teach me well, Lolidragon," I said without any hesitation.

"..."

Money! Wonderful, I can finally solve the difficult situation I'm facing due to my parents' still not earning money. Tonight we'll all eat Snowflake beef¹⁵ hotpot to celebrate! I thought, all smiles. There's beef to eat. The feeling of being a spokesperson isn't bad at all!

While I was still rejoicing about having beef hotpot to eat, four shadows suddenly appeared. They were the people who had gone offline at the same time same place as me last night—the members of the Infinite Band. Surrounding me with ill expressions on their faces, they yelled in unison, "Prince! What exactly is going on with this spokesperson thing?"

"Uh..." I could only repeat exactly what Lolidragon had just said to me.

"...In short, I have, without reason, become *Second Life*'s official spokesperson," I sighed. *I really am too ignorant; I didn't know that playing a game could cause problems. See, now Second Life has explained away my ignorance as to the real way to play a 99% realistic fantasy game*, I thought dizzily.

After listening to my explanation, the members of the Infinite Band all looked at me exasperatedly.

¹⁵ **Snowflake beef:** A type of high grade beef wherein the marbling of intramuscular fat that looks like snowflakes, hence the name.

They stayed like that for a while. I, wanting to break the serious silence, had no choice but to put on a happy, smiling expression and say, “We still have to hold a concert in Sun City, is everybody ready?”

“Can we say no?” everybody asked me, pale-faced.

My face also fell. “I also want to say no, but today we have to finish this concert, and then hurry back to Infinite City, because Lolidragon says we have to make a photo album...”

“What? Photo album?” Wicked and Gui’s expressions both changed, especially Wicked’s, whose expression was freezing.

“Yes, photo album.” I helplessly shrugged my shoulders. “Don’t think that I’m the only one who has to make it; all of the Infinite Band members have to.”

“But Prince, it’s only your photos that will go on the official website, so don’t! Why do you have to be the official spokesperson? There’ll be even more love rivals!” Fairsky shouted willfully.

“Ay...” Phoenix sighed, distressed.

“Don’t be the spokesperson, Prince.” Fairsky anxiously gripped my arm.

“I can’t, I’ve already told *Second Life*’s corporation that I’ve agreed...” *More importantly, I’ve already taken half the money and ate the hotpot; what else can I do?*

“Don’t!” Fairsky looked at me with angry eyes.

“I can’t, I have to.” I couldn’t release my arm from Fairsky’s grasp, so I could only drag her to the flying carpet with me. “Let’s go everyone, and finish up the last concert of this tour.”

“I forbid you to be a spokesperson, otherwise I won’t perform anymore!” In a moment of desperation, Fairsky actually threatened me.

This is annoying me to death, I thought as two veins appeared, crossing my forehead. Being chased by countless female wolves, having to be the spokesperson, having to hold concerts, and even having to make a photo album... More importantly, I can’t allow anyone to find out my real identity, especially with Jing and Yun continuously interrogating me at school for my current whereabouts in game... The recent events have had me annoyed and vexed and I still have to deal with Fairsky’s willfulness. I don’t have that much time!

“Stop being annoying. I will definitely be the spokesperson, whether or not you want to perform is up to you!” I angrily rebuked her.

“You, you...” Tears welled up in Fairsky’s eyes, but she stubbornly didn’t allow them to fall.

Looking on, half of my heart softened, instantly regretting yelling at Fairsky for no reason. *Even if I’m in a bad mood, I can’t take it all out on Fairsky.* I was just about to open my mouth and apologize when...

Her head hanging, Fairsky’s tears finally fell. She wiped them on her sleeve, then turned around and ran off...

“Fairsky!” I gave a start and shouted, but she didn’t stop.

“It’s way past the scheduled time for the concert,” Wicked said, frowning.

“But what about Fairsky?” I anxiously watched as Fairsky turned into some alley.

“I’ll go and find her,” said Sunshine. “Kenshin and I have been walking around this area a lot lately, and we’re familiar with the roads.

I worriedly pondered it for a minute. “Ok, Sunshine, you go find Fairsky. Kenshin, you should stay with us; you still have to watch over Phoenix later.”

“Ok,” replied both Kenshin and Sunshine.

I looked towards the direction Fairsky had run off one last time, filled with boundless self-reproach, hoping that I hadn’t committed an irreversible mistake.

It felt quite strange performing with one person missing. Even though I sang the best I could, I had a perturbed feeling on my mind, hoping that Sunshine would find Fairsky quickly and also that she wasn’t truly angry with me.

It was only when we had finished the concert and spotted Fairsky’s silhouette on the flying carpet Sunshine had brought to rescue us that I let go of the burden on my heart.

“Fairsky, I’m sorry, it was only because I was in a troubled mood that I yelled at you. Please forgive me!” Hands together, I apologized towards Fairsky.

“Hmph!” Fairsky pouted and turned away.

I helplessly scratched my face. “Later we have to take photos, Fairsky, do you want to take them? Unless... You want to leave the band?”

Hearing that, Fairsky turned back and shouted, “I’m not leaving! I want to take them.”

Seeing Fairsky’s pouting face, I couldn’t help but chuckle, and then used a coaxing tone and said, “Ok, ok, we’ll take them together.”

“Your Highness, we have arrived at Infinite City.” Gui pointed down excitedly from the flying carpet.

“Wonderful, we’ve finally arrived home.” I happily looked at our home, Infinite City.

Home really does have a familiar feeling. Look! Lolidragon is over there shouting and waving at us. I thought, cheerfully and vigorously waving back at Lolidragon.

Lolidragon’s broken voice came to us. “Prince, be careful! We’re testing a new barrier, don’t come close...”

“Eh?” We were still wondering what Lolidragon meant when...

BANG!

Lolidragon watched as the people on the flying carpet were each flattened against the barrier, and then slowly slid down the round-shaped shield, as if they were small birds hitting a glass window. She could only mutter to herself, “Too late.”

“The Giant Egg Shield, like its name suggests, is shaped like a giant eggshell, and can firmly protect whatever you wish to protect. The area it covers continues to expand as I level, and right now it covers about one fifth of Infinite City. If I don’t drink mana potions, I can only hold it for about 10 minutes, but if I have an infinite amount of mana potions to use, then I can hold it for at least two hours. It’ll definitely be of a very, very big help in protecting the city.”

After saying this, Yun embarrassedly scratched the back of his head. “Except I never thought that its first experimental target would be you guys, Dàgē.”

“Next time, explain what your Egg Shield thingy does *before* I break my nose, okay?” I replied with an unpleasant expression.

“It’s a Giant Egg Shield,” Yun corrected.

“Dàgē, I’ve invented new Illusionary *Fu*,” Jing hurriedly took out a pile of *fu* to show me, as if she was presenting a precious treasure.

I asked curiously, “Illusionary *Fu*? What do they do?”

Jing coughed a few times and began to explain, “Illusionary *Fu* are able to create illusions, as indicated by their name. To use them, firstly, when the exorcist is making the *fu*, they insert various illusions into it. Then, when you use the *fu*, whichever illusion was inserted at the time will appear in the area. For example, if I werethinking of a desert at the time, then when I used that *fu*, the image of a desert would appear. Even though the creations are only untouchable illusions, these *fu* will definitely be a great help in confusing enemies.”

“Oh? That seems interesting, let me try.” I enthusiastically took one to play with. As I reached out my hand and threw out the *fu*, everybody craned their necks, waiting to see the result.

“Everybody seems so carefree. Don’t any of you have things to do?” Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s voice suddenly came from behind, in that exceptionally gentle tone scared me so much that goose-bumps appeared all over my skin.

“T-there’s things to do, I will go and do them right now.” I turned around and the first thing that entered my sight could only be Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s deathly scary shadow smile.

“Then aren’t you going to quickly go and do it?” Yu Lian-dàsǎo spoke again, smiling.

“Y-Yes...” I looked left and right, wishing that there would instantly be a job I could do...

Jing coughed again. “Er, Dàgē, that is...”

“Don’t disturb me; I’m looking for something that I can do.” *Oh, over there seems busy, I think I’ll just go over there and help to move the timbers.* Seeing Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s smile, I picked up my feet and ran to join the ranks of the timber-movers.

“Dàgē...” Jing looked exasperatedly at me, as I enthusiastically moved the lumber.

“Prince, what are you doing?” Lolidragon, who had just rushed over, looked over with surprise at the timber-shifting me.

I put down the timber with an embarrassed expression. “Er, Yu Lian-dàsǎo told me to look for a job to do.”

“Yu Lian?” Lolidragon’s face was one of complete confusion. “Isn’t she in the Finance Department office? Just now when I came out, I saw her still in there.”

“How could it be? Isn’t Dàsǎo right th—...” I pointed to where Yu Lian-dàsǎo was a moment ago, only to find that she was no longer there. I was completely confused. *What on earth happened?*

Jing smiled helplessly. “Dàgē, that was the illusion which came out of the Illusionary *Fu*. Just as I was inserting an illusion into that *fu*, Yu Lian-dàsǎo was going around supervising peoples’ work, so...”

“So you accidentally inserted that image in, and I coincidentally happened to take it?” The corner of my mouth was twitching. *That’s not any ordinary luck.*

Jing smiled at me apologetically.

“Forget it, forget it. Really, I almost got scared to death by you two clowns,” I said as I patted my chest in relief, still shaken from before.

“Dàgē is so easily scared, I fear that later he really will be scared to death,” said Jing, smiling radiantly.

I gulped, thinking, *That sentence seems to hold some sort of hidden message? And it’s not a very pleasant hidden message either!* “What do you mean?”

“Military. Parade. Ceremony!” Lolidragon said, voice resonating.

“Huh?” I was still confused about what a Military Parade Ceremony was, even though Lolidragon had already impatiently dragged me away.

After Lolidragon had pulled me into the room, she pulled a set of shining, light-weight silver armor out of her inventory bag, which looked as if it was meant for me.

“Why do I have to go to a military parade?” I asked, terrified, limbs shaking. *Is there some sort of mistake? Me, a girl who doesn’t even need to join the army, actually has to go to a military parade?*

“Because everybody wants to see what kind of personality the liege lord has.” Lolidragon replied casually as she helped me put on the light-weight, silver armor.

“Isn’t it just this personality?” I said, laughing bitterly.

Lolidragon shook her head. “I have to warn you first: if you bring your normal nonsense personality to the military parade, I promise that the military department will be the first to kill you.

“Oh, the Finance Department and the City Planning Department won’t let you get away either,” she added, distracted. “Now that you’ve become the spokesperson, your majestic manner has recruited a lot of soldiers for us, so the Military Department is extremely pleased. Moreover, there is a huge crowd of tourists waiting outside the gates and there are so many people waiting in line to buy houses in Infinite City that there are duels for

them. The Financial and City Planning Departments have been able to heave a huge sigh of relief!”

“Also, you, the spokesperson is very important to *Second Life*, so if you dare ruin your image at the ceremony, then the amount of people trying to kill you would fill the Pacific Ocean.”

I made a face and said, “True, and if I were to announce my status as trans, then the Atlantic Ocean might as well be filled too.”

“Ok, ok, don’t be so depressed. It’s only putting on the attitude of the Blood Elf, going on stage and saying a few words. After that there’s nothing else,” Lolidragon said, patting my back after she had finished fastening up my armor.

“But I’ll get nervous.” Crestfallen, I thought, *Listening to Lolidragon just then, there’s bound to be five thousand soldiers. Five thousand! Where on earth did they all come from? I only became spokesperson a few days ago right? Ay, thinking about five thousand pairs, that is, ten thousand eyes looking at me, how can I not be nervous?*

Lolidragon laughed loudly a few times. “Calm down, calm down, you think I still don’t understand you? As soon as you get on stage you automatically turn into the fearless Blood Elf.”

“Really?” I asked, depressed.

“Really. Now go!” Lolidragon pushed me forcefully.

It’s not necessary to push me that hard. I grumbled quietly, looking towards the corridor leading to the practice grounds. Usually, you could just casually take a few steps and already be at the end, but today, the corridor seemed like an abnormally difficult, long and dark corridor. And while my footsteps were normally quick and light, now even lifting my feet seemed strenuous.

“Let’s go.” Lolidragon patted my shoulder.

“Prince, how come you’re still here? Everybody’s waiting for you.” Wolf-dàgē came over with his familiar ugly smile.

“Prince-gēge, you came back! Doll missed you!” Doll threw herself at me, giving me a big hug.

I returned the hug, smiling. “You aren’t afraid that I’ll steal your food?”

Doll poked her tongue out cutely.

“Prince, that armor really suits you!” Gui’s eyes were filled with infatuation, and I gave him a whack on the head.

“Hurry and go, Prince.” Yu Lian-dàsǎo was still smiling, a smile filled with encouragement.

“Yes, let’s go.” I gave a relaxed smile, brisk footsteps steadily moving towards the dazzling light at the end of the corridor, with my fellow team members from Odd Squad following behind.

As soon as I walked out of the corridor, the overpowering sunlight was so bright that I could hardly open my eyes. I rested the back of my hand on my forehead to shade my eyes until they got used to the light, before putting my hand back down and looking out amongst the people. Rose and Broken Sword were smiling radiantly at me, Legolas still had a cold demeanor, Li’l Strong was carrying his large battleaxe, and For Healing Only remained, out of all the priests I’d seen, the priest who looked most like a priest.

I walked smilingly past Rose Team, after them were the members of Dark Emperor. Ming Huang’s arrogance seemed like he still required more discipline, Feng Wu Qing with his irritatingly fake charming air, and Wicked had his usual icy expression, only his eyes showed his concern and anxiousness.

Nan Gong Zui, along with Ice Phoenix, White Bird, Kong Kong and the rest of the Righteous Blades, looked down proudly at the other soldiers as if they were showing off a treasure. At the same time, they were also nervously watching for any signs of dissatisfaction from me.

At this point, I finally saw the large practice ground clearly, which was currently packed with people, and directly in front of me was a podium. It was very obvious—I had to go on the stage, and then use the manner of the Blood Prince and my status as Infinite City’s liege lord to greet everyone.

In an exceptionally calm mood, I slowly stepped up the stairs step by step to the podium. Under everyone’s expectant gazes, I stood there with a smile that was calm and steady.

“I am Infinite City’s liege lord, also known as the Blood Elf, Prince.” Straight to the point, I identified my status.

“It really isn’t anything extraordinary; it is just my position in Infinite City. Just like how you are the city’s soldiers and protectors, I am the liege lord. To me, whether you are a soldier in the army, or a lord in a castle, we are all a part of Infinite City. In other words, we are all Infinite City, and Infinite City represents us. Together, let us expand Infinite City infinitely, and create an everlasting presence within Second Life,” I finished, sonorous and forceful.

Under the glowing, adoring gazes of those beneath the stage, I majestically left the stage, while the military department took over and began to arrange the soldiers into groups, and explain the military operations and training exercises etc. In short, all this had nothing to do with me, and I couldn't understand military organization anyway. I walked off the podium, saw Lolidragon fiercely waving at me, and I had no choice but to follow her...

"I didn't think that someone like you up on stage, can actually talk like a human," Lolidragon whispered in a low voice in front of me.

"Hey! What kind of attitude is that? I speak like a normal human easily!" I rebutted, rolling my eyes.

"Oh really? 'I'm hungry' also counts as speaking like a human?" Lolidragon asked.

Slightly guilty, I said, "Humans can also get hungry... In any case, where are you taking me?"

"Making. Photo. Album!" Another three sonorous and forceful words.

Chapter 7: Portfolio

“First, let me introduce you to the must-have tools for making a portfolio! Number one is this creature I have here. Small, light and portable, this creature can be used both indoors and outdoors! You can even put it in a parcel, so that it’s convenient to carry around.” Lolidragon nodded toward the thing floating in midair that seemed to be a giant eyeball with bat wings, no matter how you looked at it.

Seeing that everyone was staring blankly at the eyeball/bat hybrid, Lolidragon coughed twice, to regain our attention. “I gave it a name; it’s called a Photocritter. The Photocritter’s biggest features are its ability to take photos, its memory capacity of five hundred photos, and its ability to record up to five hours of video. In addition, if you buy extra memory, you gain even more storage capacity. Another point that needs mentioning is this creature’s digital clarity, which goes up to ten megapixels. Its uses range from taking photos during vacation for souvenirs, to photographing a murder crime scene for evidence! There’s nothing it can’t be used for!” Lastly, Lolidragon added, “Right now, the Photocritter is on sale at all major pet shops! But hurry! There are only five thousand critters in the first batch!

“Next, the second tool, which Jing created, was discovered completely by accident. This is an illusion charm with a 100% quality guarantee! It can portray all kind of illusions, from historical backgrounds to ornamental decorations! It’s a real help when it comes to making portfolios!” Lolidragon said, spluttering saliva as she ranted on. She was clutching a stack of charms.

“Lolidragon, have you been watching the ETTV shopping channel too much lately?” I asked seriously.

“I wouldn’t buy anything from that channel!” she cried, but then blushed and added, “But, as you know, Chanel recently changed seasons, so I went and got a job as ETTV’s anchorwoman to earn a little something and go shopping¹⁶.”

“...” Everyone was speechless for a while.

I suddenly remembered. “After we finish the portfolio, how are we going to distribute it?”

“I’m going to take it to *Second Life*’s official publishing office, and get an estimate on the price. After deciding on the print volume, they will probably send it over in a couple of days.” Lolidragon said. “We are planning to sell it in the accessory store.”

¹⁶ This is actually a Chinese pun, 血拼. It sounds like shopping in English, however here it means to spend a lot of money while shopping. Especially at a *very* expensive store.

What? So now my portfolio is an accessory? What use could it possibly have? Do we distract our enemies with it? I thought helplessly. Suddenly, an idea flitted through my mind. “What about a book store?”

“Open a book store? Is that a good idea?” Lolidragon said, hesitating.

“That’s not a bad idea!” Gui suddenly spoke with excitement. “After publishing books becomes a possibility, there will be lots of players trying to publish their own works, but not many can be like us and put their books on sale in the accessories shop. But, if we open a book shop and allow players to consign their books, the commission we receive would also be a good way to earn money.”

“But will there be any potential customers?” Wicked commented cautiously.

“That will depend on how good the books are. We will have to choose carefully the books to be consigned. After a while, I think some good authors will turn up. Good authors means lots of customers. Actually, most people don’t have time to read while they are awake, but they can read books using the sleeping headset! That would be useful for a lot of people!” Gui said happily.

“And since that will add another unique asset to Infinite City, there will be more people joining!” Fairsky clutched her fists in excitement.

Lolidragon shrugged. “Then let’s do a book store. Since it’s part of the construction department’s job, I’ll leave it to those two leaders to discuss amongst themselves.”

Gui nodded, eyes gleaming. He turned to Fairsky, whose eyes were also gleaming, and they started chattering about the bookstore.

“What I meant was, you can talk later, but now, let’s start making our portfolio!” Lolidragon said with a smile that made everyone’s hair stand on end. But then she said something that made the hair rise even higher. “Okay, then. Take it off.”

“Take it off? Take what off?” I asked dumbly.

Lolidragon’s eyes drifted from my face to my chest. That look... I couldn’t help but grab my collar tightly. Then, her eyes drifted even further down... I grabbed my belt tightly, thinking, *Oh my God, Lolidragon, don’t fool around, or else my portfolio might turn into an adult-only sort of thing—*



“Can I rest for a bit now?” I asked, still woozy. I never thought that making a portfolio would be so hard. It was a test of strength, endurance, and the ability to survive intense pain.

The Test of Strength: I had to pose in various positions of unimaginable difficulty for Lolidragon to take shots of. Sometimes I had to stay in a pose for up to half an hour. I suspected that Lolidragon was sketching my portrait instead of taking a photo.

The Test of Endurance: Under Lolidragon's insistence that I expose the two points, I thought, *Fine*, and agreed reluctantly. *Oh well, a guy's two points aren't that attractive anyway.* But, under the coercion of Wicked's "Don't you dare or you are d-e-a-d!" look and Gui's "Your majesty, you can't endure such humiliation" large and teary eyes, my move to take off my clothes froze in mid-motion. Then, I watched on as Lolidragon leading Phoenix and Fairsky going against Wicked and Gui. The two gangs started to argue very loudly about whether I should expose the two points or not, forcing me to be stuck in between taking off and putting on my clothes. *Really, exactly to whom do the two points belong to anyways?*

Finally, I lost my temper. With a dark expression, I roared, "Shut up!"

Five of them turned to glare at me in unison. Together, they said, "You make the decision then!"

With five pairs of eyes staring at me, my anger disappeared completely. I said fearfully, "Then what about...what about going half exposed?"

"Taking off your shirt but not exposing the other point?" Lolidragon muttered, and then said unwillingly, "Fine, that settles it."

"Never! This one here will still see it!" Wicked gestured towards Gui.

"That's my line! Prince's body should never be seen by *you*!" Gui said furiously, gritting his teeth.

"So, what do we do now?" I asked, scratching my face. *This won't work and that won't work. Those guys are even more annoying than the girls...* I thought. *Shhiikkkk...* Suddenly, a weird sound reached my ears. It sounded like...sticky tape? We turned around. There was Phoenix, with two pieces of sticky tape. She was looking at my chest...

Afterwards: If anyone ever says that the pain produced from taking sticky tape off an important spot is on par with that of giving birth, I will totally agree!

I turned my back on the site of that ghastly photo shoot, looking at Lolidragon with teary eyes.

"Can I rest now?" I begged.

“You can rest...” Lolidragon replied. My eyes lit up. *I can finally tour Infinite City! I can't wait to find out what delicious specialty foods my city has!* I thought, excited.

“...For a brief moment. We are starting rehearsal for the concert tomorrow.”

“Rehearsal for the concert?” I repeated stupidly.

“Yep! Yu Lian is supervising because a lot of money had been spent on the concert,” Lolidragon whispered quietly into my ear.

Waaaaaaaaa! This is hell! I thought, close to tears.



“Dàgê, even if we start rehearsing tomorrow and there is no time for you to come out and eat food then, you don't have to eat like that, do you?” Yun asked. He looked helplessly at me. I hadn't even spoken a sentence to them before starting my battle with the food.

Seeing that I gave no reaction at all, Jing also said helplessly, “Dàgê, if you want to eat something during rehearsal, just PM us and we'll send it over.”

Hearing that, I finally set down the chicken leg in my hand, took a drink to wash the food down and said with a little embarrassment, “Thanks.”

“Slow down. No one's trying to take the food from you.” Wicked grumbled, not too happy.

“Your Majesty, would you like another order of french fries?” Gui happily passed me a napkin to wipe my hands, and Phoenix wiped my mouth with a handkerchief, while Jing and Yun looked on enviously.

“Hey, where is Fairsky?” Yun suddenly asked, confused.

“And Sunshine?” Jing added.

“Oh, they went on a stroll.” I said, waving the subject aside. *But I wonder why Kenshin didn't go... Don't harbor any suspicions — this guy never leaves my side, it's just that he's too quiet.* (Even this author didn't know how to tell everyone that he actually was still there. You can't just always say that he's sitting there icily with a poker face, can you?)

“Wow! That's rare. Fairsky actually bears to leave your side.” Jing said, astonished.

“She said that she was going to check out the location of our bookstore.” I said vaguely as I couldn't help stuffing myself with the fries Gui had just ordered for me.

“Book store? What book store?” Yun asked dumbly.

“Infinite Bookstore, the one we’re setting up soon; the first book store in Second Life,” Gui told them with sparkling eyes. *Geez, no wonder he’s a professor. Start talking about books and he goes crazy*, I thought as I ate the fries.

“So, where are we getting the books we’re going to sell?” Jing asked, doubtful.

“First, we will have our Infinite Band portfolio on sale. Plus, I will write a few books to sell. Then, when we become recognized, we’ll let others consign their books in our bookshop, or even solicit manuscripts, and we’ll help them publish the book. These things aren’t really hard for me.” Gui’s eyes lit up with the intelligence of 200 IQ points.

“Really? So... Um...” Yun mumbled like there was something embarrassing to ask.

I suddenly remembered. *Jing and Yun like to write stories. They often chose me as their first reader for their Saddest-Story-in-the-Universe-and-History-of-Mankind tragedies. Well, truthfully, their stories aren’t bad; it’s just that the titles are so bad that one can’t even comment on them. What kind of titles, you ask? The “Saddest-Story-in-the-Universe-and-History-of-Mankind” that you just read, of course.*

“Can we consign our books in your store?” Jing cried, impatient.

“Of course! Since you guys are free these few days, take this chance to write it out. I will check it over, publish it, and we should be able to put it up at the opening ceremony.” Gui was happy that there was someone here to help to write some books.

“Yes!” Jing and Yun hugged each other in excitement.

“Right, Jing, Yun, have you bought a house yet?” I suddenly remembered that they were choosing a house last time. *I wonder how it’s going?*

“We just bought one. It’s a really cute white cottage that even comes with a garden!” Yun said happily.

“Oh, I want to see!” I suddenly stood up. “Waiter, I’m taking away the rest of the food.”

“Sorry, I can’t stay any longer, Prince.” Gui stood as well, sighing deeply. “Yu Lian told me to get back to designing the stage for the concert. There are also the bookshop designs too, and don’t forget the books that I need to write.”

“Wow, you sure are busy.” *I really don’t know how much time he spends on our class material. Ten minutes? Maybe even less...*

“Your Majesty, even though I am not here in person, my heart will always be with you.” Gui, with large teary eyes, kept looking back at me, until he was kicked out by a deeply annoyed me.

“Since Gui’s not here, I have to go back to the military department. A lot of unfinished work has accumulated.” Wicked said.

So, if Gui’s here, you’d rather not care about the military department?!

“In that case, I better go back to the finance department; Yu Lian is on the verge of exploding from stress...” Phoenix blanched horribly.

“Heh heh, it’s ok, you can all go back. Whether something or nothing happens, don’t come and find me again.” I waved good-bye happily. *It’s so rare! There’s actually a day when I can get away from those four and just relax. I’ve got to enjoy the peace.*

“Dàgê, don’t look so happy. It makes them really sad. They all had ghost fires floating beside them when they left.” Yun was barely suppressing his laughter.

I relaxed. “If they hadn’t left soon, I’d probably have exploded. Now, let’s go and see that house of yours.”

On the way to the house, Yun suddenly said, “Dàgê, there’s a question we’ve been wanting to ask you...” I stared at him. *Yun usually just says whatever he wants. Since when did he start asking for permission?*

“What is it?” I asked.

“Dàgê, do you know Feng Lan?” Jing questioned and my heart skipped a few beats.

I stopped. *Why did she ask me that? Has she found out? No way! Is it that easy to tell?* I thought. I used the calmest voice I could muster at that moment and said “Feng Lan? I don’t know her. Why do you ask?”

“Just as I thought...” Jing mumbled.

I sighed in relief.

“After all, saying that you know yourself sounds pretty weird. Isn’t that right, Xiao Lan?” Jing added lightly.

After my pulse stopped for an entire three seconds, then I covered my face, close to tears. *I knew it, they found out. I’m finished! This is the worst scenario, to have my secret be discovered by Yun, the super broadcasting station! Once the news leaks out, just think*

*about the fans swarming enough to fill out the Atlantic and Pacific oceans...
Waaaaahhh! Where is my future?*

Jing patted me on the shoulder. “It’s ok. I understand your problems, Xiao Lan. I’ve already used karate on Yun and warned him that if he told anyone your secret, my next karate moves will be used on a guy’s most vulnerable spot. So he definitely won’t leak the news.”

Whew! That was close. But how was I discovered? “How did you guys find out?” I asked. “Don’t you always call me Dàgê?”

“It was because you would not tell us your in-game-name; we had to ask your brother and he said that you are a trans person in game,” Yun put in.

BROTHER, YOU IMBECILE! Don’t force me to kill you to defend my honor! I clenched my fist and started thinking about whether adding pesticides or rat poison to dinner would be the faster method.

“So we thought, you are a trans player and you love bishies as much as I do, but you have no interest in a famous hottie like Prince. The only reason we could think of was that you were Prince himself. Also, although your appearance in-game and in real life are extremely different, your basic features are still very similar, so we recognized you immediately.” Jing shrugged, unconcerned.

“But you know, you Feng siblings are so oblivious that it could go down in history. To think that your brother Yang Ming never realized that you were Prince, and he even knew that you were trans,” Yun said with a face full of admiration.

“No one could be as good at guessing as you guys are.” I mumbled.

“Well if it weren’t for the fact that we can guess well, how else could we know about your real identity? And what’s with making us call you the Dàgê here and Dàgê there?!” Jing gave me a knock on my head. *Oww... Why are all the women I know so violent? And they all seemed to like hitting my head.*

“I was saying that there was no one that was stupid enough to continue trusting us after so many betrayals from us. So it was you after all, Xiao Lan. No wonder you kept helping us.” Yun couldn’t help but complain. He and Jing had actually been so touched that they swore to follow Prince forever.

At this, what else can I do except rub the back of my head and laugh stupidly?

“That’s not the point; the important point is, in that romantic and thrilling love triangle, who are you going to choose? The professor or the senior?” Jing stared at me.

“Don’t ask the same questions as my mom, Jing. I don’t know!” *Romantic and thrilling?! Jing, your descriptions are a bit too exaggerated.* I helplessly sighed.

“What are you worrying about? Just date them both.” Yun mumbled.

“Hey! Are you a man? Why are you telling a woman to have two boyfriends?!” Jing pulled and shouted in Yun’s ear.

I asked, as if puzzled. “Didn’t we already agree that he’s not a guy?”

“Xiao Lan!” Jing suddenly grabbed me, “Let’s do an experiment.”

“Experiment?” I asked stupidly.

“Go on a date with both of them in real life!” Jing’s eyes sparkled in an extremely scary way.

“Eh?”

Chapter 8: Dating Diary

“Professor, you really didn’t have to go to all this trouble...” In tearless grief, I looked at Professor Min Gui Wen as he sat across from me.

“Don’t worry. So long as I can settle my students’ problems, a small favor like this isn’t any trouble!” Gui’s smile spread across his whole face as he took a sip of his beverage.

Jing! You really will be the death of me. I never would have thought that in order to get Professor Min to go on a date with me, Jing would actually weave such an outrageous lie. Even I thought that her story was beyond logic when I heard it. What was even more incredible was that Professor Min actually believed it...

The story goes like this: Yesterday after class Jing pulled me over right in front of Professor Min.

“Professor, there is a very grave and urgent matter that I hope you can help us with.” Jing put on an expression of profound grief and distress. At the time, I wasn’t very sure what she was grieved and distressed about.

Professor Min, seeing that the matter looked quite serious, comforted Jing with his usual gentle smile. “What’s the matter? Say it slowly; don’t be nervous.”

“Actually, it is Xiao Lan’s problem. There’s a stalker who’s been harassing Xiao Lan. He has been bothering her for over a year, but still he refuses to leave her alone.” Jing knitted her eyebrows together, teary-eyed.

“Is this true? Xiao Lan, are you unable to accept that person?” asked Professor Min.

That person? Who is that person...? I was thoroughly puzzled and only stared with blank eyes.

Jing suddenly shouted loudly, “Professor, look! Xiao Lan has been scared out of her mind by that guy’s frightening harassment.”

“Oh?” Professor Min frowned. “No wonder Feng Lan has recently been looking a little absentminded in class and is always running off in a hurry after school.”

“...” I was looking absentminded because I was intimidated by the reporters outside trying to ask you where to find Prince... And if I don’t leave in a hurry after school, some reporter with far-too-keen eyes might realize that I look like Prince. Wouldn’t I be dead meat if that were to happen?

“That’s right. Professor, you don’t know how scary that guy is. Xiao Lan told him that she’d rather die than love him, but it was no use! Even kicking his ass with my karate didn’t work. After that, all that we could do was tell him that Xiao Lan already had a perfect man who was handsome, mature, and reliable. However, he says that he refuses to believe it, unless...” At this point, Jing’s face started to show signs of reluctance and embarrassment.

“Unless what?” Professor Min asked, extremely serious.

“... Unless he sees that man with his own eyes!” Jin sighed. “But where could we find someone to help us put on this show?” Jing shook her head in distress.

I suddenly had a look of epiphany. *I finally understand what Jing is trying to do! But, but this lie is too lousy. Anyone with a bit of brain wouldn’t fall for it, let alone Professor Min Gui Wen with his IQ of 200!*

“I understand. I will help to put up this show!” Professor Min let out a smile.

It can’t be! Professor Min, where did your IQ of 200 go? I was incredulous as I looked at Professor Min’s earnest face.

“That’s wonderful, Professor! Then tomorrow after school, you can take Xiao Lan out for coffee or go shopping or something. I’ll be responsible for bringing that guy over, so that he’ll finally believe Xiao Lan’s words!” Jing happily exclaimed.

“Okay.” Professor Min’s face still held the same gentle smile.

Thus explains how Professor Min and I happened to be sitting in this open-air café drinking coffee for no apparent reason. I continued to have doubts as to how Professor Min could have fallen for Jing’s story.

“Student Feng Lan, why hasn’t that person come yet?” Professor Min wore a smile on his face.

“I, I don’t know either...” *That person had better exist!* I cursed Jing, whose current whereabouts were unknown, behind her back.

Professor Min’s face suddenly became serious and he sighed. “Student Feng Lan, I don’t think that person is coming, is he? Or rather, that person doesn’t even exist.”

“You knew?” I said in surprise. *Since he knew the truth, why would he still go out with me?*

Professor Min put on a forced smile. “Ever since I started teaching, I have heard all sorts of reasons for asking me out. However, the reason that you two came up with was the most exaggerated.”

Hearing this, I could only smile foolishly. *That makes more sense!*

“Student Feng Lan, I want to tell you that I already have someone in my heart, so...” Professor Min abruptly showed an awkward expression. “So I’m afraid I can’t accept your feelings.”

I sat there stunned for some time before I realized that he thought the reason I invited him out was to confess my feelings for him.

“Student Feng Lan, don’t be too upset. I truly have someone in my heart. It’s not that you’re not good enough...” Professor Min probably saw my dumbfounded look and started panicking as he tried to explain with everything he had.

“Pfft!” I couldn’t help but laugh. It’s not my fault. When Professor Min is flustered, he suddenly has Gui’s foolish look. Seeing Professor’s refined and serious appearance, wearing glasses and a white dress shirt, but revealing a look of foolishness is just too funny.

“Why are you laughing now? Women nowadays are so hard to understand,” Gui muttered to himself.

“Is Professor’s crush Prince?” I suddenly wanted to hear Professor Min say it out loud in real life, as himself.

“Yes, it’s Prince.” Although he wanted to feign calmness, Gui’s face still reddened slightly and he looked embarrassed.

After a round of silence, I suddenly blurted out, “Won’t you regret it? Prince is a man.”

When he heard my question, Gui’s expression suddenly changed into one of profundity. “Regret...? Prince is like a rose with thorns. If at first I had known about its thorns, then perhaps I would not have picked it up. However, I have already picked the rose up, smelled its fragrance and seen its beauty. If I put it down now, the suffering borne by my heart would be more painful than the pain of my bleeding hand, torn open by the thorns. Therefore, I cannot put it down.”

After a good while, Gui’s intense gaze faded away and he looked at me with a red face. “Sorry, that must have sounded strange,” he said.

Smiling, I shook my head and then said solemnly, “Professor, promise me one thing, then we can end it here today.”

“What is it?” Gui was noticeably trembling in fear.

With gleaming eyes, I pointed at the menu and said, “Would you please treat me to spaghetti with clams in white wine sauce¹⁷ and borscht¹⁸?”

“Huh?”

Thus, after eating spaghetti with clams in white wine sauce and borscht to my heart’s content, Professor Min bewilderedly paid the bill, and my date with Professor Min came to a satisfactory conclusion.



That night, Jing and Yun excitedly dragged me out.

“Where are we going?” I asked uncertainly.

“What kind of nonsense are you spouting? It’s to meet your next date, of course,” Jing barked crossly.

“Oh...”

“Over there!” Jing hid behind a lamp-post, her finger pointing at Zhuo-gege, who was standing some distance away. “Xiao Lan, I told Zhuo Ling Bin that you really wanted to visit the night market¹⁹, but I didn’t have time to accompany you so I asked him to go with you in my place. Understood?”

“Understood.”

“Then hurry up and go! Remember to compare the two prospects.” Yun suddenly pushed me out from behind the lamp-post. I had no choice but to walk towards Zhuo-gege.

“You’re here, Xiao Lan.” Zhuo-gege smiled at me.

“Yeah.” I nodded my head.

¹⁷ **Spaghetti with clams in white wine sauce:** This is what it looks like: http://i2.dpfile.com/2008-10-09/1031423_b.jpg. And here the recipe for anyone who is interested (and can cook): <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/giada-de-laurentiis/spaghetti-with-clams-recipe/index.html>.

¹⁸ **Borscht:** A soup of Ukrainian origin that is popular in many Eastern and Central European countries. It is usually made with beetroot and/or tomatoes, which give it a reddish-purple color. For more information, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borscht>.

¹⁹ **Night Market:** Also known as night bazaars, these are street markets which operate at night and are generally dedicated to more leisurely strolling, shopping, and eating than more businesslike day markets.

“Where do you want to shop first? Or do you want to eat something first?” Zhuo-gege asked very considerately.

“Eat.” *I never had any intention to shop around, so I can only say eat. It’s really not because I’m a glutton!*

By the end of our stroll, I was holding fried chicken in my left hand, red tea in my right hand, and I was still chewing the french fries that I had just stuffed into my mouth... Zhuo-gege was even helping me hold the chicken kebabs and liquor escargots.

“Do you want anything else to eat, Xiao Lan?” Zhuo-gege asked attentively.

I shook my head, pointing to a park bench not far away. “Let’s just go sit down there and take our time eating.”

“Okay.”

While I worked on the food, I thought of my mother’s words. *She said Zhuo-gege likes me? Hmmm... I have to ask him.* Thinking of this, I absent-mindedly opened my mouth to ask, “Zhuo-gege, do you like me?”

Zhuo-gege’s body froze rather noticeably. He slowly turned his head to face me, his eyes filled with the uncertainty of whether to feel happy or helpless. He was silent for a long time. Finally he only said, “Yeah, I have liked you for eight years.”

Eight years? My heart skipped a beat. *Has he really liked me for such a long time?*

“Liked me for eight years? Am I worth it?”

“Of course,” Zhuo-gege replied without hesitation.

“But, I don’t know whether I like you or not... I can’t decide.” Seeing that Zhuo-gege’s mood was clearly a little downcast, I felt a bit at a loss of what to do. *Isn’t this extremely unfair for Zhuo-gege? Eight years... That’s such a heavy burden that just hearing about it makes me gasp for breath.*

“Never mind, I will wait for you.” Zhuo-gege replied in another simple sentence.

I hesitated a little. “You...don’t regret it? Maybe, maybe I...”

Zhuo-gege stood up with his back facing me, using a dreamy tone that I had never heard him using before. “The sunflower always faces the sun without regret or complaint. In the face of wind or rain, it always awaits the sun’s warm smile. Although the time spent waiting for the sun is always so painful, the sunflower has never regretted and will never regret it.”

Seeing Zhuo-gege's broad and lonely figure, I abruptly realized that his ears were as red as a thoroughly ripe tomato.

"Sunflower, huh?" I quietly chewed on my food, not even noticing the taste inside my mouth.



"What do you think of yesterday's dates?" asked Jing and Yun the next day, their eyes opened wide in excitement.

"Quite good." I scratched my cheek.

"So how are the prospects on both sides?" Yun was itching to know.

"Hmm... On one party's side, although he only paid once, the price for that one time was quite significant, and it left me with an endless aftertaste. On the other party's side, he paid continuously. Although the price he paid each time was small, and even though the taste was inferior to the former, the combined total was still remarkable," I said in accordance with the facts.

"What does that mean?" Yun asked in puzzlement.

Smacking Yun on the head, Jing said, "Dummy, can't you even understand a metaphor? The meaning is this: although Professor Min loved her for a shorter time, he still fell in love with her even though he thought that Xiao Lan was a guy. This sacrifice is of course very impressive. In addition, Professor's love is as passionate as fire. Thus, it definitely leaves a lingering aftertaste. On the contrary, Zhuo Ling Bin's love is as gentle as water. However, it's also like a slow and steady stream. His continuous sacrifices aren't as impressive as the sacrifice made by the Professor, but when we take into account the total time that he had loved Xiao Lan, the sacrifice he made isn't any less significant than Professor's. Do you understand?"

"I get it now," Yun realized with sudden comprehension.

"Yes. Isn't that right, Xiao Lan?" Jing asked proudly, showing off.

"No... I was referring to the food." I scratched my head.

"Food?" Jing and Yun stared at me with eyes wide open.

I nodded my head as if that were the most natural explanation. "Yeah, although Gui only treated me to spaghetti with clams in white wine sauce and borscht, the price of the meal

was over eight hundred dollars²⁰. It was really expensive, and the spaghetti was so delicious that I keep remembering its aftertaste. As for the night market snacks that Zhuo-gege treated me to, although they weren't as delicious as the spaghetti, there was a great variety. I really ate to my heart's content, so the total cost might not be less than that of Gui's treat."

"..." For reasons unbeknownst to me, the two of them began foaming at the mouth. Then, they glared at me with wide, white eyes.

Finally, Jing concluded, "Whoever falls in love with you will be cursed for eight generations."

Achoo! Min Gui Wen and Zhuo Lin Bin simultaneously sneezed in two different locations.

Is someone cursing me? The two thought at the same time.

²⁰ **Eight hundred dollars:** This is in New Taiwan Dollars, not US dollars. 800 TWD is equal to approximately 26 USD (as of December 2010).

Chapter 9: The Concert

Online

“Prince, hurry up and get over here! The concert hall has finished being constructed.” I heard Yu Lian-dàsao’s excited and slightly distressed voice just as I came online.

“Really? I’ll come take a look.” *I wonder what the hall looks like. It ought to be pretty luxurious; after all, we did spend a fortune on it.* I thought to myself as I picked up my pace and dashed to the site. I was following Yu Lian-dàsao’s directions, which led me just to the left of the castle.

Everyone was waiting for me when I arrived. Barely containing my excitement, I walked closer, wishing to examine carefully the concert hall where I would be performing.

“I-Impossible...” I stammered with my jaw dropped. *Heavens! This looks like something that came straight out of our textbooks... An ancient Roman coliseum?!*

“Hehe, welcome to Infinite City’s— No, it should be Second Life’s, first concert hall: Infinite Rhapsody!” Yu Lian greeted with a laugh.

“This is awesome!” I said. With excitement spreading across my face, I let my eyes frantically take in the grandeur of the architecture. It was circular in shape and stood around twenty stories high. The primitive engravings on the ash-colored walls gave a rather ancient look. I walked closer to get a better view and saw that the engravings consisted of simple strokes depicting the various races holding different kinds of instruments. I ran my fingers across the engravings, unable to keep my hands off them.

“The theme of the engravings here is music,” Yu Lian-dàsao explained, “The other sides show combat, nature, and all kinds of handicrafts.”

“Prince! Don’t just stand at the doorway, getting dazzled by only the exterior. Come and take a look inside!” Wolf-dàgê said as he walked out from the door. He hurriedly dragged me through the massive double-arched passage, which was large enough for several dozen people to walk through at once.

Stepping through the door, I stared in excitement at the incredibly magnificent scene before me. As I stood in the center of the arena, looking up and around at the rows upon rows of seats that seemed to stretch into the clouds, I impulsively blurted out, “Is this really where I will be performing?”

“That’s right,” Lolidragon replied as she walked towards me, smiling sweetly. “How is it? Is the place good enough for Your Highness to perform in?”

“It’s more than enough!” I answered, blushing. “It’s *ridiculously* spacious! It’d be an accomplishment if the audience could even fill up one tenth of the space here.”

“Prince-gege is mistaken. This place is going to be packed to capacity,” Doll refuted as she skipped over. “Doll has sore hands from selling too many concert tickets this past week.”

“That’s right!” Yu Lian-dàsao said, nodding. “If it weren’t for the earnings from selling those tickets, we wouldn’t have had enough funds to build this hall.”

“I told you guys that Prince would draw out a large crowd,” laughed Wolf-dàgê as he slapped me on the back energetically. “Though I will admit that I didn’t predict that you’d become Second Life’s spokesperson, Prince.”

“I didn’t think that would happen either...” I shrugged helplessly.

“In any case, Prince, just settle down and become one of the highlights of Infinite City,” Yu Lian laughed heartily. An uneasy feeling formed in the bottom of my heart. *Don’t tell me there’s something else they’re going to make me do?*

As I was still thinking this, Yu Lian continued. “I heard the Construction Department is planning on building two bookstores. Prince, after the concert is over and the bookstores are built, you can conveniently hold an autograph session as well.”

“Oh, sure.” I sighed in relief upon hearing that it was just about an autograph session.

I turned towards the audience seating again and muttered with excitement, plus a hint of nervousness, “So this place is going to be jam-packed with people, eh...”



“Prince! Prince!” Listening to the deafening roar of the crowd coming from outside, I felt tremendously nervous. I frantically did some breathing exercises. *Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out...*

“Ugh, still feeling pretty nervous.” I looked helplessly at my fellow band members.

Gui was chattering like a parakeet, trying to calm me down. “Don’t be nervous, Your Highness. Just pretend that the students—er, no, the fans—are rocks, and you’ll be fine. Just perform like you normally do and it’ll be okay.” Gui looked at my pale face worriedly. I rolled my eyes in response. *Don’t pretend that I didn’t hear that bit about students. So we’re nothing but rocks to you eh, Professor?!*

“Just ignore them.” Wicked frowned slightly and patted me on the back in an attempt to calm my erratic breathing.

“What are you afraid of? It’s just a bunch of people, that’s all.” Fairsky threw a haughty glance towards the crowd that consisted of as many people as there were grains of sand on a beach.

“I’m a little nervous too.” Phoenix’s face was just as pale as mine. *Finally, someone who is normal like me*, I thought with satisfaction.

“Let’s get this show on the road! Everyone still remembers the way we make our entrance as rehearsed?” Lolidragon poked out her head suddenly, smiling a Mona Lisa-like smile at my pale complexion.

I closed my eyes once more and breathed in deeply. When my eyes snapped open, only tranquility was left on my face. “Let’s do this.”



<Passerby A’s Concert Experience>

He was one of Second Life’s professional players, but he had never thought that it would actually be possible to hold a concert in an online game. So, when he heard that Infinite City was planning to hold a concert, starring none other than the recently popular Infinite Band, he decided to set out for Infinite City to broaden his horizons.

“Damn, I had to wait five whole hours in queue before I could buy the ticket! Is this band really all that great?” he muttered to himself. He was feeling peeved by the long wait, yet he was also glad that he decided to come and witness such an epic event. How else could he have fulfilled his curiosity if he were to miss it?

There sure are a lot of attractions worth visiting in Infinite City. Seeing the crescent shaped fountain in the Central Plaza alone makes up for the price of the ticket. Moreover, the actual city itself is so opulent and majestic! I wonder how much it took to finance its construction. He admired the streets that were even wider and neater than those of the pre-programmed Sun, Star and Moon cities. The shops and markets beside the streets were all beautiful and unique in their own special way. He wondered how much it would cost to rent a shop and began calculating in his head.

But nothing could compare to the shock that the residential area gave him. *Is... is this still part of a game?* He gaped, wide eyed and dumbstruck, at street after street of lovely gardened mansions, all so beautiful that it was hard to even take your eyes off them. He scanned each one greedily. After browsing and coveting the last of the mansions, he heaved a long sigh and said, “I should get one of these and sell off the house I have in Moon City. Once everyone discovers how lovely these houses are, the real estate demand in the pre-programmed cities will most likely slump.”

The next day, he hurried to the concert venue at the crack of dawn, hoping to get a good seat, but he miscalculated. There was already a huge line of people in front of him.

“How long have you been waiting here?!” he asked the ones in front of him in shock.

“We came here after dinner yesterday.” The people near the end of the line said.

“We pitched our tents here right after we bought the tickets two days ago,” a group of girls in the middle replied.

“Ha! That’s nothing! I’m telling you, I watched as they built Infinite Rhapsody, brick by brick!” The man who was first in the line proudly boasted.

He was left completely speechless. With enough curiosity to kill a cat, he wondered impatiently exactly how strong the allure of Infinite Band was and what Prince, Second Life’s rumored spokesperson, was using to draw out all these fans.

“Prince! Prince!” The girls next to him were cheering so loudly that he felt like his eardrums were on the verge of rupturing. He couldn’t help but let out a sigh, wondering why he had allowed himself to be drawn into such pandemonium. *It really is way too crowded, noisy, and tiresome*, he thought while massaging his exhausted body. All he could do now was hope that this Infinite Band was talented enough to not make him leave disappointed.

All of a sudden, snow began falling from the sky. Startled, he examined the snowflakes as they drifted down toward him. Even the girls who had been screaming next to him just a moment before fell silent, bedazzled by the beautiful falling snow. *This is probably the work of a mage*, he thought to himself.

Five pillars of ice suddenly solidified, starting from the sky to the ground. As everyone was still looking up in surprise, five blurry individuals came sliding down, one from the top of each pillar. Just as they were all about to reach the ground, the ice pillars suddenly shattered into countless tiny crystals, sprinkling themselves throughout the entire coliseum. The place was completely covered in a dazzling radiance, proclaiming the arrival of these five exceptional people.

“So this is Infinite Band?” He could clearly see the five people now, and indeed each of them had their own type of charisma. There was the proud and aloof flutist, the handsome and bewitching guqin player, the sexy and sassy female guitarist, the mature yet charming female drummer, and lastly the one wearing a blood tiara, the indescribably gorgeous lead singer wearing a faint and coy smile on his face. Is that...Prince?

Prince gave a small bewitching smile, lightly raised a finger to his lips and made a small shhh-ing sound, and spoke in a laid back yet mesmerizing voice. “No need to say anything more, so let’s just start with a song.”

*This life, this love, this moment squandered away
As I exhaust my color onto your skies
Your desires, your words, your every demand
Actually brings me happiness all because you are
My source of joy, my source of pain*

*Adapted from: Swallowtail Butterfly
Lyrics and song by: Ah Xin, MayDay*

How should he describe his emotions upon hearing the sound of Prince singing? The voice was resounding and emotionally stirring, and yet it had a hint of trembling, like a butterfly humming without regret as it flutters into a fire. Moreover, the intense beat of the drums and the hearty vibrations of the guitar made his heart pound along wildly to the rhythm of the music, almost to the point of bursting apart.

After that intense experience, the first song was finally over and everyone, including him, was left completely speechless. But the craze was still shining through their eyes and drops of sweat fell as they gazed up towards the Infinite Band members onstage.

“Did you guys enjoy it?” Prince suddenly laughed without restraint, a laugh infectious enough to liberate the tense feelings in the hearts of everyone in the crowd.

“Yes! You were awesome!” someone shouted before anyone else could react, leading the entire stadium to then be filled with cheers and roars. He let his own voice join in the rumbles of the masses too.

“In that case...” Prince closed his eyes, as if pondering something. The fans in the audience, afraid to disturb his train of thought, quieted down one by one...

Prince slowly opened his eyes again, eyes that were filled with sentiment as he spoke in a gentle voice, as if whispering sweet nothings across a bed. “Love is always such a dilemma. Should you choose the one who loves you, or the one whom you love?”

The sound of the flute, hopelessly sorrowful, yet with an inkling of sweetness, suddenly reverberated throughout Infinite Rhapsody. The guqin then joined in, with an airy and flowing melody that accentuated the flute’s lonely tune. Finally, Prince’s voice emerged, low and warm, like the murmurs of a lover, completely different from the intense and resounding sound from the previous song...

In this manner, he was continually entranced by Prince’s voice, from the first, second...fifth...to the tenth song, but he still couldn’t get enough, and craved more.

“The next song will be the last one for today and is my favorite one of all: ‘It’s My Life’. Could everyone repeat with me loudly, ‘It’s My Life’?” Prince’s words brought along regret and happiness at the same time.

“...It’s my life!” As Prince sang out the final stanza, the entire crowd fell into an unprecedented and complete silence, where only the sound of heartbeats could be heard throughout the arena.

“Die, Prince!” a cold voice rang out without warning, and only a flash of silver could be seen as everyone looked up. On the stage, Prince quickly staggered back.

“You’re hurt, Prince!” From the stands, he could see the guqin player fearfully trying to step forward to take a closer look at Prince’s left arm, which was drenched in blood. A female swordmaster was glaring angrily at Prince from the opposite side.

Prince gave a wave with his hand, paying no attention to his injured left arm. He calmly said, “If I recall correctly, I don’t actually know you, so why do you want to assassinate me and ruin my concert?” As he listened from offstage, he began to tremble unconsciously. Though Prince’s tone was indifferent, an unquestionable thought was formed in his heart—Prince is angry.

“Your lover took away my beloved from me, so I am here to kill you and make that bastard feel the pain of losing a loved one.” The female swordmaster’s eyes burned like a raging inferno.

Prince blinked conspicuously, and then asked in total confusion, “My lover? Are you referring to a guy or a girl?”

The female swordmaster’s rage was enough to burn through the nine layers of heaven. “Of course he’s a guy!”

Watching from the crowd, he didn’t feel that the answer was obvious at all. He analyzed the situation, puzzled. *How strange. How could it be a guy? A guy stole away your lover? What gender is your lover, then?* Prince, however, did not seem to be the least bit surprised. He just scratched his head, gestured towards the guqin player and the flutist, asking, “Which one is it?”

“Guileastes, do you still remember me, sonny²¹?” bellowed the female swordmaster.

Gui, the guqin player who was being called out, shook his head, clueless. “Who are you?”

The female swordmaster grinded her teeth and roared again, “How dare you freaking forget about me?! Bastard, did you forget about Lovely Consort as well?!”

²¹ **Sonny:** In Chinese, it’s actually the fencer referring to himself as “老子”, lit. “old man/father”, so he’s saying he is a generation higher, and thus deserving of respect. Basically an insult. Kind of like how white people called black men “boy” during the Jim Crow days. This insult is generally used by men only. There is a woman alternative “老娘”, lit “old lady/mother”.

The color of the guqin player's face suddenly changed. He then asked with quite a bit of hesitation, "Who are you to her?"

"Sonny, you bastard! I'm Lovely Consort's husband. You have some nerve, forgetting about me." The female swordmaster looked angry enough to erupt anytime.

"Lovely Consort's husband? You are XiMen Feng²²?" the guqin player asked incredulously.

"That's right, sonny." The female (?)²³ swordmaster replied with a fiendish visage, a difficult feat, considering her elegant and exquisite face.

"How... how did you become like this?" the guqin player asked, his face pale with horror.

"It was all your fault to begin with! And what's with all this damn chit-chat? It's time for me to slaughter your lover, this Prince fellow," XiMen Feng shouted. Then, he suddenly drew forth a sword to attack Prince.

The following scene would be etched into his memory forever as he watched from the sidelines. That swordmaster called XiMen Feng was indeed strong – probably around level seventy according to his own estimates. Yet, she couldn't do anything against the completely unarmed Prince. Prince effortlessly dodged XiMen Feng's greatsword, and even analyzed her up and down with great interest.

Prince finally couldn't hold back any longer and asked, "You keep calling out 'sonny' like you're some old man, and you say that you're Lovely Consort's husband, but you clearly look like a girl. So really, are you a guy or a girl?"

The female swordmaster didn't reply, but vigorously continued to direct attacks towards Prince until her cheeks were flushed red with rage. She yelled loudly, "Bastard, are you even a man? All you do is dodge."

"Don't tell me you're expecting me to stand still obediently for you to hack at," Prince responded with a chuckle, amused.

"Exactly!" XiMen Feng bellowed with sword raised in preparation for another attack on Prince. This time, Prince actually did stand still, not budging from his original spot. Seeing Prince about to get his blood splattered all over the stage, everyone cried out in alarm... However, Prince suddenly gave a swift kick, sending the swordmaster's blade high into the air. Next, he saw Prince actually using a roundhouse kick to send XiMen Feng out of the arena and then casually catching the sword as it fell from the sky.

²² **XiMen Feng:** The manhua calls him Western Wind, but we're going with XiMen Feng since Xi Men doesn't actually mean western; it's just a surname.

²³ **(?):** Yes, this was in the original and is therefore being left as is.

Prince paid no heed to the female swordmaster who was coughing up blood furiously on the ground, her face full of hatred. He leisurely turned to face the audience and apologized with a faint smile. “I’m sorry for this interruption to the concert. I hope nobody minds. In any case, this marks the close to today’s concert. I hope everyone will continue to support Infinite Band by buying a copy of our upcoming portfolio at Infinite City’s bookstore, which should be opening very soon.”

The concert drew to a close, but he was still thinking about all that had happened as he walked through the wide streets of Infinite City. He reminisced about Infinite Band’s extraordinary performance and the even more astonishing battle skills displayed by Prince. He always thought Prince became a spokesperson only through the virtue of his face. Who knew that his display of strength could be so exciting to watch? He couldn’t help but mutter, “It really wouldn’t be a bad idea at all to become a citizen of Infinite City.”

Chapter 10: XiMen Feng, Someone in the Same Situation as Me?

With his face pulled down into a troubled frown, Gui spoke in a deeply apologetic tone, “I’m truly sorry, everyone. My personal affairs have caused the concert to be interrupted.”

“It doesn’t matter; it wasn’t that big of a deal anyway. But what is the truth about the situation between you and XiMen Feng?” I replied as Wolf-dàgē healed the wound on my arm.

“He robbed me of my lover, don’t you FREAKIN’ understand?!” XiMen Feng, who was tied up tightly off to the side, roared suddenly.

“Besides my Prince, you’ve stolen someone else’s man as well?” Fairsky looked at Gui in disbelief.

Gui’s face flushed bright red, and he roared back with clenched fists, “I did not, and Prince is not yours either!”

Wicked coldly asked, “Then why would this girl make such an accusation?”

Hearing Wicked’s words, Gui deflated like a punctured balloon. He replied, as if tormented by a splitting migraine, “I don’t understand either, but since she said that she’s XiMen Feng, and even mentioned Lovely Consort... So I guess it must be related to that incident. Before joining Odd Squad, I had teamed up with a couple, namely XiMen Feng and Lovely Consort. However, Lovely Consort later confessed that she had fallen in love with me. In order to avoid Lovely Consort’s constant badgering and XiMen Feng’s onslaught, I had no choice but to flee.”

“Bastard, it’s all because of you that Lovely Consort had a change of heart,” XiMen Feng was so angry that the veins on her head were bulging out, a sight unbefitting of her elegant face.

“Uh... sorry, I have a question.” Looking at XiMen Feng’s noticeably busty chest, I hesitantly spoke up. “You... are a girl, right? And Lovely Consort, it sounds like she’s a girl too, right? Don’t get me wrong... I have nothing against homosexuals.”

“You’re the damn homo! I’m a guy, sonny!” XiMen Feng glared at me fiercely.

A guy? Could this XiMen Feng be like Ming Huang, a male who looks like a female? I was a bit suspicious. But that can’t be; Ming Huang’s chest is as flat as an iron board and XiMen Feng’s chest... Hmph, it’s two sizes larger than mine as a girl. How could this be a guy?

I tilted my head, doubtfully studying XiMen Feng's pair of meat jugs. *Don't tell me these are fake?* I absent-mindedly placed my palms on the two blobs of flesh. *Mmm, they're soft. I squeezed them twice. They're quite bouncy too. Strange, they have to be real!*

"P-Prince, Your Highness...!" Gui's eyes bulged out, fixated on me...well, on my hands.

Phoenix and Fairsky were also staring at my hands with flushed faces. I wasn't sure whether or not I was seeing things, but it seemed like both of them were swallowing their saliva and looking at my hands with expressions of desire.

"Get your filthy hands off me, sonny!" XiMen Feng, who had froze up in shock, finally snapped. XiMen Feng's eyes were staring at my hands so hard that they looked ready to jump out of their sockets. Flustered, I withdrew my hand to avoid the possibility of her putting her neck on the line to bite off my hand.

"You're obviously a girl," I pointed out the truth without any reservations.

Everyone nodded. I had already so brazenly grabbed her for confirmation, so could there still be any room for error?

"If it weren't for that bastard Guileastes, I wouldn't have fallen to this state!" XiMen Feng bellowed angrily.

"What do you mean?" I scratched my head, still unable to make heads or tails of the situation²⁴. *Don't tell me Gui can even perform a sex-change operation?*

Acting like he owned the place, Boss²⁵ XiMen Feng sat down without any courtesy. With his legs crossed, he snorted a little, and began telling his tale.

²⁴ **Unable to make heads or tails of the situation:** Here, Yu Wo uses “丈八摸不着头脑”, (zhàng bā mō bu zháo tóu nǎo) which is the shortened/slang version of a Chinese idiom, ‘丈二金剛，摸不着头脑’ (zhàng èr jīn gāng mō bu zháo tóu nǎo).

In some Chinese idioms, the first phrase is a description for a riddle, while the following phrase offers the explanation. In this case, the first phrase 丈二金剛 (zhàng èr jīn gāng) means ‘Twelve foot tall Monk (Also known as Vajrapani)’, the following phrase 摸不着头脑 (mō bu zháo tóu nǎo) means ‘can't touch his head’. Literally, it means the monk is so tall that you can't touch his head. The whole idiom basically means something that is so surprising or bizarre that one wouldn't know what to do immediately. It best describes the confusion/questions one usually has in the middle of a thought process (i.e. Imagine you're in the middle of solving a murder case, ‘how could the murder occur when the room is locked from the inside?’ is such confusion).

Yu Wo, however, exaggerates the idiom by saying that the monk (problem) is eighteen feet tall, and thus Prince could not reach its head (understand). [Credit to Erihppas]

“Damn it, after I found out Lovely Consort had a change of heart, I vowed to PK²⁶ that punk Guileastes until he returned to level one. Who would have guessed that the punk would preemptively escape, forcing me to hunt him down for many miles.”

At that, Gui smiled helplessly.

“Luckily, that punk Guileastes was so conspicuous that you could find his whereabouts just by asking around casually. I pursued him all the way to a cliff and I found a piece of that bastard’s clothing by the edge. Surely, that bastard must have hid under the cliff to hide from me! Hmph, you think I’d just give up like that, sonny? I lowered a rope on the spot and continued the chase.” XiMen Feng seemed particularly proud of his own perseverance.

My gaze shifted to Gui. He doesn’t seemed like one that would climb down a cliff just to avoid someone; a bard’s stamina isn’t that great, and he could very well lose his grip halfway and fall to his death.

Presently, Gui had assumed a resigned expression and he wordlessly mouthed the words: diversion tactic.

That explains it. I scratched my head. Looks like Gui also realized that XiMen Feng is not one to look before he leaps.

“Who would have thought that instead of finding that punk, I’d encounter some sort of hidden quest instead?” XiMen Feng made a strange face. “That damn mythical beast even went as far as to say that I would receive a random divine punishment if I couldn’t defeat it. There was no way in hell that I could defeat that freak of a monster whose hide was as thick as a steel wall, so I had to receive its divine punishment. Who would have imagined that the random divine punishment would turn me into a girl!” XiMen Feng complained loudly.

At that, Lolidragon’s, Wicked’s and my own expression changed slightly. Never would we have thought that I wasn’t the only gender swapped player in Second Life! To think that I have a comrade here! The only difference is that I’m a woman who became a man, and he’s a man who became a woman. I wonder who is more unfortunate?

After a while, as both of us were in the same boat, I half-heartedly opened my mouth to comfort XiMen Feng. “Err, at least you still look quite pretty.”

“Bullshit, it’s darn troublesome!” XiMen Feng roared loudly.

²⁵ **Boss:** 老大 usually means boss. Prince was just jokingly calling XiMen Feng that because he acts like he can just do whatever he wants, as if he owned the place. [Credit to Erihppas]

²⁶ **PK:** Gamer term for Player Kill in this case, though PK can also refer to general player vs player combat.

Troublesome? I thought it's alright. At least the game doesn't simulate women's monthly 'problem' ... I thought.

“Are you looking down on women?” Lolidragon snorted coldly.

“Women mean nothing.” XiMen Feng slowly stood up, and walked towards the window as his legs were untied, allowing the final rays of the sunset bathe his body. “The trouble I mentioned ain’t gotta do with women, but...”

As the sun set, night suddenly descended outside, and XiMen Feng’s body also began to change: her body slowly grew taller and brawnier, her long hairstyle became a buzz cut, the curves of her chest slowly flattened down, until finally, she became a he.

We gaped in surprise at the inconceivable transformation, unable to snap out of it for quite a while, until at last, I let out a breath and said, “That sure is faster than a sex change operation.”

“XiMen Feng, what exactly is going on here?” Gui asked in bewilderment.

“It’s all that mythical beast’s fault.” XiMen Feng spoke in a rough, manly voice that suited his crude language. He impatiently creased his brow. “I didn’t want to become a woman, so the result of our negotiation was that I’d become a woman in the morning, and transform back into a man when night falls.”

“That sure is troublesome,” I said, resisting with difficulty the urge to smile.

“No shit! Oi, untie me quickly. The rope is freakin’ tight,” XiMen Feng had an expression of discomfort.

Gui looked at me with a bit of hesitation. After I shrugged, indicating that it didn’t matter, Gui turned to face XiMen Feng again. “Before I untie you, you must first promise that you will never harm Prince.”

XiMen Feng scoffed. “No can do. Even if I don’t fight him for the sake of revenge, I’d still like to challenge him, sonny. This pretty boy got some skills.”

I burst into loud laughter. “Why don’t you just join Infinite City? Then you’d be able to challenge me whenever you want.”

“Prince, that’s not a good idea. What if he hurts you?” Gui had concern written all over his face.

I replied without any fear, “It’ll be fine. I haven’t fought any monsters for some time now and I’m feeling rusty. At least now I’ll have someone to spar with. If I get injured, I’ll just have to find Wolf-dàgē for healing and if I die, it would just mean that I have to

practice harder. But,” I confidently challenged XiMen Feng, “I have no intention of losing.”

XiMen Feng’s eyes lit up. “Ha! Looks like pretty boy got some guts!”

“Stop calling me pretty boy, or I’ll start calling you hot babe,” I said to XiMen Feng in a semi-threatening manner.

“You wouldn’t dare!” XiMen Feng roared furiously.

“Of course I dare to, XiMen you hot babe with C-sized cups,” I unsheathed Black Dao and cut open the rope that bound XiMen Feng with one slash.

XiMen Feng’s eyes shone with excitement as he brandished his sword, gazing at me like a greedy tiger. I could see that he was also a lover of combat.

“Don’t disappoint me, XiMen Feng.” I held up Black Dao, eyes sparkling with the excitement of returning to battle.

XiMen Feng immediately charged forward without thinking. I shook my head. *XiMen Feng may like fighting, but he doesn’t like to use his brain to fight.* I shifted aside my body slightly, dodging XiMen Feng’s incoming thrust while simultaneously giving him a push, forcing him to almost fall flat on his back.

“Damnit!” XiMen Feng growled loudly. Dissatisfied by his loss, he charged towards me again.

Seeing that he still hadn’t understood the point, I raised my eyebrows slightly. *It seems I will have to let his body remember the lesson instead.* I found an opening, grabbed a hold of XiMen Feng’s wrist that was holding his sword, and fiercely landed a kick to his stomach with my right foot. He painfully gritted his teeth while I snatched away his sword, smiling faintly. *Let the massacre begin!*

I used all four limbs, plus both sword and sheathe as lethal weapons... Head butt combo! Cross cutter! I even kicked my boots off toward him as I shouted repeatedly, “Lets see if you dare to interrupt my concert ever again!”

“Whew! That fight felt so liberating,” I said as I happily put my Black Dao away, cracked my neck and did some stretches. *Alright! Time to eat.* Before I left, I didn’t forget to turn around, gesture at the lump of bloody flesh on the ground, and give instructions to Wicked, who was in charge of the military department. “Remember to recruit XiMen Feng into the army. His level and martial arts skill aren’t bad at all, and he can even freely use sex appeal as a tactic. It would be difficult to recruit even a single person with this kind of talent in ten years.”

“Yes,” Wicked said as he gazed at XiMen Feng with furrowed brows, probably plotting to find the most screwed up, overworked unit for him to join.

“Alright, let us all head to the Infinite Restaurant to eat!” I led the group joyfully, preparing to go to my most beloved Infinite Restaurant for a free meal... *Hehehe, not having to pay for meals at the Infinite Restaurant has proven to be the biggest perk since I became the liege lord.*

“I’ve already made plans with Sunshine to try the foods from street vendors, so I won’t be coming along,” Fairsky said with a bit of hesitation.

“Oh,” I replied while biting my thumb. *Fairsky and Sunshine seemed to be getting closer these days. Have they become good friends? That’s not a bad thing... At least it keeps Fairsky happy.*

“Alright, let’s go eat!” Just as I was about to raise my legs and walk in front, two hands suddenly rested on my shoulder.

“Prince, the bookshop is almost ready and the autograph session for the portfolio is next week. Please remember to practice making your signature look neater.” I turned around to see Yu Lian-dàsǎo smiling at me. She then turned towards Gui and asked, “How are the books coming along?”

Gui nodded and answered, “I have two books that are ready to be published, plus the one that Jing and Yun gave me. So there are a total of three books that can be displayed on the day of the grand opening.”

“Prince, the construction of Infinite Rhapsody has caused Infinite City’s budget to be in the red again,” Yu Lian-dàsǎo’s smile was bright beyond comparison. “We’ll have to organize more concerts and sell more portfolios in order to earn some cash, so please work hard on singing and selling your portfolios, do you understand?”

“Understood...” I swallowed stiffly, and my head felt numb from thinking about what I had to do.

The days that followed were a living nightmare. Within two weeks, Infinite Band had performed five concerts. Moreover, in order to attract audiences, every concert featured new stunts, such as jumping through hoops of fire to appear on stage and descending onto the stage dressed up as angels.

(That was when I finally realized why angels in paintings are always depicted standing up, straight as an arrow with only their arms stretching out slightly... It’s obvious! If you’re carrying a pair of wings weighing over thirty kilograms on your back, what can you do besides stand up straight?!)

What was even stranger was the fans seemed to really like the minor interruption that XiMen Feng stirred up during the first concert. Thus, in every subsequent concert, XiMen Feng, under the smiling supervision of Yu Lian-dàsǎo, was forced to challenge me in front of the audience. Then I'd have to start kicking his ass. The harder he got his ass kicked, the happier the fans would be.

Sigh, it must have been hard on you, hot babe XiMen Feng.

(XiMen Feng furiously roars: I'm a guy, damn it!)

Next, the bookstores were finally done being constructed thanks to all the hard work from Gui, Fairsky, and the others. They built two bookstores. One was in the middle of downtown and the other was combined with a café, built on the lakeside with a nice atmosphere and great lighting, specifically designed to be a couples-trap. Therefore, my signature, which I had spent many days practicing, would finally be put to good use.

On the day of the autograph session, there was a surging sea of people... Wait, what? That phrase is too ordinary—it's not my style? Alright then, that horrendous autograph session was swamped with so many people that it seemed as if Jolin Tsai²⁷, Jay Chou²⁸, Andy Lau²⁹ plus Stephanie³⁰ all appeared together in Ximending³¹. In short, people of all ages and genders huddled together in one massive crowd. There were men, women, and lechers, with ages ranging from five to fifty.

"Thank goodness we have the flying carpet! I don't think we could enter the bookstore otherwise." I released a sigh, looking down at the horrifyingly jam-packed crowd.

²⁷ **Jolin Tsai (蔡依林, Cài Yīlín):** A Golden Melody award-winning Taiwanese Mandopop singer. She is extremely popular in not only Taiwan and China, but has also seen great success in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia, as well as having a strong fanbase in the United States. (For more information, please refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jolin_Tsai)

²⁸ **Jay Chou (周杰倫, Zhōu Jiélún):** A Taiwanese musician, singer, music and film producer, actor, and director. He is known for composing all his own songs and songs for other singers. His music has gained recognition throughout Asia and his career now extends into directing, acting, and running his own record company, JVR Music. (For more information, please refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Chou)

²⁹ **Andy Lau (劉德華, Liú Déhuá):** A Hong Kong Cantopop singer, film actor, and producer. He has been one of Hong Kong's most commercially successful film actors since the mid-1980s while maintaining a successful singing career at the same time. In the 1990s he was branded by the media as one of the Four Heavenly Kings of Cantopop (四大天王) with Aaron Kwok, Jacky Cheung, and Leon Lai. (For more information, please refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Lau)

³⁰ **Stephanie (蕭薔, Xiāo Qiáng):** Famous in Taiwan as a model and actress. She was extremely popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s and was branded by the media as Taiwan's Number One Most Beautiful Woman. (For more information, please refer to http://wiki.d-addicts.com/Xiao_Qiang)

³¹ **Ximending (西门町, Xī mén ding, also known as HsiMenDing):** A well-known neighborhood and shopping district in Taipei that is largest pedestrian zone in Taiwan. It is located in the northeastern part of Wanhua District and is also the most important consumer district in the west side of Taipei. It is the source of Taiwan's fashion, subculture, and Japanese culture.

“Sunshine, land on that makeshift stage,” Gui said as he gestured at a very small stage, complete with tables and chairs, surrounded by soldiers led by Nan Gong Zui for security purposes, to prevent the fans from running onto the stage.

“Sure.” Sunshine obediently directed his flying carpet to land slowly on the stage.

I jumped off the flying carpet first, smiling slightly at the screaming female fans below the stage. Then I walked to a pre-arranged table and sat in the chair.

“The autograph session shall now begin,” I said as I exhaled deeply, picking up the pen prepared by the workers as I readied myself for the possibility that I might have to sign until my arm fell off.

“Thank you for your support.”, “Handshakes are fine.”, “Uh, kisses are not acceptable!”, and “Zui! Hurry and drag this fan off the stage!” were my various comments as I signed.

I gave out autographs while answering each and every fan’s questions with a gentle smile. From time to time, there would be fans who wanted to kiss me, and some of them were so unwilling to be rejected that they would just forcefully throw themselves at me. Only after Nan Gong Zui dragged them away could I continue signing autographs. This cycle continued to be play out: sign, answer, be offered a kiss, be forced a kiss, and watch them get taken away...

Out of the corner of my eyes, I would occasionally sneak a peek toward the other members of Infinite Band. Gui’s situation was no different than mine, except that as a bard with not much strength, he had already been kissed forcibly on his cheeks by “wolves” several times... Gui was currently holding back tears of grief as he continued signing and was even using XiMen Feng, who was previously enjoying a break, as his shield. The jealous fangirls had already used their wolf claws to scratch several bloody crosses on poor XiMen Feng the hot babe, and he wasn’t even allowed to retaliate.

(As Yu Lian-dàsǎo would say, the paying customer is king, so no matter what the fans do, they are always right.)

In contrast, Wicked was in a much better situation. Being a warrior and with his aloof face, hardly any fangirls dared to approach him wantonly with their mouths. Instead, they gazed at him in a tender, yearning manner, as though ready to swallow him up if the opportunity came.

Since Phoenix and Fairsky were both girls, allowing the male fans to do as they pleased with them was obviously out of the question. The duo was surrounded by so many Infinite City warriors that I could barely even see their silhouettes... *What kind of attitude is this? Why is Zui the only warrior protecting me? A bunch of lechers who’d forget about their liege lord at the sight of women...*

The autograph session went on like this until even XiMen Feng the hot babe had become XiMen Feng with the buzz cut. We continued signing autographs, except now it wasn't just Gui, but everyone in the group who were holding back tears as they signed. If there weren't any fans looking at me, there was a very good chance that I would have cried out loud. I glanced at my right hand mournfully, which was shaking uncontrollably as though as I had a stroke, while keeping count in my mind how many people were still lined up.

"The last one..." I finished giving out my final signature, feeling deeply moved. Luckily, it was a dude and it was quite obvious from the way he kept looking back towards Fairsky and Phoenix that he wasn't the slightest bit interested in me. *What a perfect ending.* I felt touched beyond words.

Sure enough, just as I finished signing, he immediately ran towards the duo, and ended up sliding into a half-kneeling position on the floor. A colossal bouquet of red roses appeared out of nowhere in his left hand and an enormous ring with a diamond the size of a baseball appeared unexpectedly in his right hand.

"O dearest Lady Fairsky, my love for you flows ceaselessly like the Yellow River, stretches on infinitely like the white clouds above, and crashes wave after wave like the ocean tide..." Such nauseating drivel gushed forth endlessly from this animal's mouth, and the sounds of people puking all around flowed ceaselessly like the Yellow River as well.

"...So, beloved Lady Fairsky, please marry me!"

"Sorry, I have to tell everyone, there's already someone that I'm in love with," Fairsky announced straightly, not even sparing a glance at the mongrel onstage, and then bowed towards her fans below the stage to express her apologies.

"Who is it? Who is the one that dares to steal away my woman without regard for his own life?" Below the stage, Fairsky's fans began to riot. I sighed helplessly. *I probably have the most enemies in the world.*

Then, Fairsky inhaled deeply and raised her head to gaze at the sky towards Sunshine, who was sitting on the flying carpet. "He is the one that I like."

"Ehh?" Including mine and Sunshine's, there were five "ehh" sounds.

Fairsky gazed at the astonished Sunshine with her cheeks flushed red. After a long while, she turned and bowed to me. "Sorry Prince, but I realized that I have fallen in love with Sunshine, so I can't have feelings for you anymore."

"T-this..." I stuttered awkwardly for quite a while, but couldn't seem to squeeze out even half a sentence.

Oh, why does my head hurt more now compared to the time Fairsky tried to force me to marry her? Fairsky, if you had a change of heart and fell in love with someone else I would be 120% supportive, but couldn't you pick a more normal partner? First you fall for a trans person like me, and now you pick him? You might as well continue loving me because that would be just homosexual, but you're now in love with an NPC! What would that be called?

Even bestiality is better than falling in love with a NPC. At least a beast has a physical body, but NPCs... Don't tell me you would insist and say, "That's right; I'm in love with several lines of computer code."?

"Sunshine, don't you like me?" Fairsky asked in a calm tone as she gazed at Sunshine earnestly, sounding fully confident.³²

"I... I..." Sunshine knitted his eyebrows tightly; he was clearly at a loss.

"You really like Fairsky as well?" I paled in shock. *Sunshine is an NPC. Even though he has gained self-awareness, he is still different from an ordinary human being. For example, he does not know how to tell a lie, so he cannot comfort people with white lies. If he didn't have feelings for Fairsky, he would have said so directly, and yet he could not seem to speak? Does that mean...?*

Sunshine turned towards me, confusion written in his eyes.

"Prince, this is not a good place for an interrogation!" Gui pulled me away, gesturing at the audience below the stage.

"You're right." I could only forcibly suppress my anxiety, reassuming the appearance of the Blood Elf Prince.

I put on a polite smile and said with a charming tone, "The autograph session shall end here for today. Infinite Band shall work harder in the future, and we hope that you would continue to support us. Thank you."

The seconds I waited as the crowd dispersed felt like years. Then, I immediately dragged Fairsky and Sunshine away with me. *Where to go?* I hesitated for a moment. *Right, to Jing and Yun's house.* After making up my mind, I swiftly PMed Jing and Yun, telling them to wait for me at their home.

³² **Sounding fully confident:** Here Yu Wo uses the idiom “胸有成竹” (xiōng yǒu chéng zhú), literally “having had the images of the bamboo ready in one's bosom”. It is later used to refer to making extensive preparation before doing something, and having full confidence in the final success. It also indicates that someone can remain composed no matter what happens. Refer to this website for the story the idiom originated from: http://www.mychinese.org/Chinese/Idiom_Detail.aspx?id=51.

Just as I started walking, I suddenly stopped and turned to face the other Infinite Band members that were following close behind. I said in a highly threatening tone, “No one is allowed to come along, you hear?”

The trio behind me froze conspicuously. Seeing my stern expression, they all nodded in unison.

Chapter 11: The Great Patch

After I had dragged Fairsky, Sunshine, Jing, and Yun into the room urgently, I rested my hands on Fairsky's shoulders and said very solemnly, "Fairsky, you cannot love Sunshine." I ignored Jing and Yun for the time being as they stood on the sidelines. Upon hearing my words, they were so surprised that their eyes looked like they were about to pop out of their heads.

Fairsky opened her mouth and then closed it again, before finally managing to spit out a single word: "Why?"

I knitted my eyebrows tightly, looking at Sunshine and wondering whether or not to reveal the fact that he was an NPC. In response Sunshine knitted his eyebrows in the same way.

"Allow me to explain, Prince," Sunshine said in a pained voice.

"Then tell me, why can't I love you?" Fairsky asked with a trembling voice. "I refuse to believe...I *definitely* refuse to believe that you don't have any feelings for me. After all, we've gotten along so well these past few days, haven't we?"

Gotten along really well? When did this happen? I thought, frowning.

"No wonder the chances of us seeing Fairsky around Dàgē have been lower recently. She was actually off falling in love with someone else," Yun muttered to himself before the "two" females, Jing and I, quickly covered his mouth.

"But I have no way to love you. I can't possibly love you, I..." Sunshine hadn't even finished his sentence when he was suddenly forcefully kissed by Fairsky. He was so shocked that his arms waved frantically, trying with all his might to push Fairsky away. But the game's cruelty was in play here – a mage's strength cannot compare to a thief's.

Meanwhile we, the three outsiders, stared open-mouthed at Sunshine as he was forcefully kissed without any guilt in our consciences. Then the scene which often appears in romance novels simply unfolded before our eyes: The person being forcefully kissed (usually the female lead, but in our situation it happened to be the opposite) begins by struggling for a while, but when they can't pull away, they helplessly allow themselves to be kissed, until finally they even begin to tightly embrace the person who is forcefully kissing them... Now Jing, Yun, and I stared dazedly at Sunshine and Fairsky hugging and French kissing each other, the two looking deeply intoxicated.

"Such deep feelings, how moving!" Jing took out a handkerchief and began wiping questionably genuine tears away from the corners of her eyes.

Yun patted my shoulder, winked and said, “Dàgē, it’s not as if you need Fairsky, so why don’t you just give her to Sunshine?”

“Don’t need, my foot. That’s not the point; the point is that Sunshine isn’t even human!” I yelled loudly. These two best friends of mine hadn’t even grasped the circumstances!

As I finished yelling, I noticed that Jing and Yun were staring directly behind me while wearing exceedingly awkward expressions. I turned around and saw that Fairsky had finally broken off that long make out session while I was speaking and was now standing behind me, visibly fuming.

SLAP I was hit across the face with a force so great that I nearly sprained my neck.

“I misjudged you, Prince. Even if I don’t like you any more, you shouldn’t insult Sunshine and say that he isn’t human³³.” Fairsky held back tears, her disappointed gaze fixed upon me.

This is a huge misunderstanding. I wasn’t insulting him, I was only pointing out the truth, I thought, rubbing the painful area of my cheek.

“Fairsky, Prince is telling the truth, I really am not human,” Sunshine said with great difficulty.

“Sunshine, why are you insulting yourself as well?!” Fairsky’s expression changed to extreme disapproval as she shouted at Sunshine.

Sunshine held Fairsky’s shoulders tightly and, with a level of agitation I had never seen before, said, “I’m not insulting myself, Fairsky. I am not of the human race: I am only a self-aware NPC.”

Fairsky froze for a long time. Then, with a tone of tremendous disbelief, she faintly said, “What did you say?”

“I am an NPC,” Sunshine repeated, sounding pained.

“That’s impossible. That’s utterly impossible. How can you be an NPC? You’re lying to me!” Fairsky yelled. “Even if you don’t like me, you don’t have to lie to me like this!”

“Fairsky, this is the truth. Sunshine and Kenshin are both my humanoid pets. The difference between them and regular NPCs is that they’ve achieved self-awareness.” I sternly shattered Fairsky’s last shred of hope. *Short term suffering...is better than long-term suffering, right?*

³³ “...say that he isn’t human”: 不是人 (bú shì rén), literally “Not human”. This is a common insult in Chinese that means the person doesn’t have any human conscience anymore, or that the person is an animal.

“How can this be...?” Fairsky knelt weakly on the ground, her tears falling like a broken string of pearls and her choking sobs heartbreaking to hear.

Aside from allowing Fairsky to cry to her heart’s content, there was nothing else we could do, so we stood dumbly off to the side.

“Fairsky...” Sunshine knelt down next to her with a dismayed expression and Fairsky buried herself in his chest, crying her heart out.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to intentionally hide it from you.” Sunshine embraced Fairsky dearly, his eyes filled with infinite regret.

“It’s your fault! It’s all your fault for deceiving me!” Fairsky began to violently and uncontrollably pound her fists against Sunshine’s chest, howling in sorrow. “How can this be?! I even thought that I had finally found my true love! You big liar, why were you being so nice to me? So nice to the point that I couldn’t help but fall in love with you, and only then do you tell me that you’re an NPC! How do you expect me to accept all this?!”

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have tricked you.” Sunshine could only apologize profusely, his haggard expression a startling sight to behold.

Seeing this pair, one crying like a waterfall and the other continuously blaming himself, I felt pity towards them, and couldn’t help but open my mouth to comfort Fairsky. “Fairsky, it’s not like Sunshine was doing it on purpose. Even though he’s an NPC, I’m sure his feelings for you are real and that he really wasn’t deliberately trying to hide it from you. So there’s no need to blame him anymore.”

Beyond all expectations, Sunshine unyieldingly replied, “No, this is precisely my fault. No matter what, I shouldn’t have allowed Fairsky to get her feelings hurt.”

As Sunshine finished speaking, the sound of Fairsky’s sobs suddenly faded. She lifted her head with a captivated expression and the look in her eyes...was one that made my hair stand on end, as it had the sort of determination shown when putting one’s life on the line.

“Sunshine, when all is said and done, do you love me or not?”

Sunshine gave a beautiful, mournful smile. (*The description is strange, but believe me, there are no words more suitable.*)³⁴ “Is it possible for me to love somebody? Fairsky, I am only a sequence of numbers, a computer program. I don’t understand love, nor do I know whether or not I can love someone.”

³⁴ “**The description is strange, but believe me, there are no words more suitable.**”: This is a real sentence from Yu Wo. The description is strange in Chinese because it is usually used to describe a *female* smile.

Fairsky looked directly at Sunshine. “Do you like being together with me?”

Sunshine stiffened slightly, and then nodded his head.

“Aside from me, is there anyone else whom you have the same feelings for?”

Sunshine firmly shook his head.

“Then, ignoring everything else, would you be willing to stay with me forever?”

Fairsky’s expression was one of extreme yearning.

Sunshine considered this very seriously, and as I said before, he cannot tell lies, so he earnestly replied, “I am willing. In fact, it’s one of my greatest desires to be able to spend an eternity with you, Fairsky.”

This is bad! My internal alarm began ringing incessantly.

“Then I am willing as well,” Fairsky said with a resolute expression. “I don’t care if you’re a human or not. To me, you have more emotions than a human. I don’t care whether or not you understand love. If you don’t, then I will help you to understand it.”

“But Fairsky, I don’t have forever, and there is no way for me to stay with you forever.” Sunshine had a happy but worried expression. After all, he was living a life that wasn’t really a life, merely bound to a game system.

“People say it’s ok that we don’t have forever, it’s more than enough that we have this time together. Regardless of what the future might be like, right now I just want to be with you! Do you understand?” Fairsky asked.

“I understand.” Sunshine’s smile was as radiant as his namesake.

“Uwaah, what a speech! Just live in the present. It’s so moving!” Jing held a handkerchief and was desperately blowing her nose.

“Ay, this is just fate, Dàgē, so don’t rain on their parade any longer!” Yun patted my shoulder once again.

Hearing those two spouting nonsense, Sunshine and Fairsky spun around, looking at me with frightened yet longing expressions. It was the type of expression made by a daughter who is scared that her evil stepmother won’t let her marry the person she loves... *Hey, don’t get me wrong, do you really think I’m that cruel?*

I was also moved and so after robbing Jing’s handkerchief and blowing my nose with it, I said in a sobbing voice, “Since neither of you have any objections, do as you please.”

“That’s wonderful, Sunshine!” Fairsky grabbed Sunshine, and then hugged and spun him around in circles, before once again forcefully kissing him.

Fairsky, show some reservation... If not, at least consider the fact that there are three singles watching right over here. This kind of lovey-dovey display will only make us die of envy.

“Prince, what on earth happened?” Lolidragon’s voice suddenly came up on the PM channel, giving me a huge fright. “I just heard a very strange rumor.”

“You’re talking about Fairsky being in love with Sunshine, right?” I replied helplessly, watching the happily spinning and kissing couple.

“So it’s true?” Lolidragon sounded dumbfounded, as though she had just heard that her Chanel brand products were fake. “Have you told her that Sunshine is an NPC?”

“I told her, but after she finished crying, she said she didn’t care and the two of them are currently reveling in the celebration of their love.”

“Celebration, my foot!” Lolidragon abruptly bellowed, almost deafening me. “This situation is very serious! Think about it; even if *Second Life* could exist forever, the news that Sunshine is self-aware can get out at any time. If Sunshine then gets erased, what would Fairsky do?”

“But those two said they don’t care about what happens in the future and just want to live in the present...” I frowned, thinking, *Even if they did say that, if Sunshine were to disappear then Fairsky would definitely be very heartbroken, wouldn’t she?*

“And also, no matter how self-aware Sunshine may be, he is still only a sequence of numbers. Perhaps he simply cannot understand the meaning of love.” Lolidragon’s tone grew progressively worse.

I considered this calmly. “I think he understands.”

“How would you know —?”

I interrupted Lolidragon and said with conviction, “Fairsky is very sincere about this, and I think that if Sunshine doesn’t understand what love is, there’s no way that he could have made Fairsky fall in love with him this seriously. There’s nothing we can do about it.”

Lolidragon was silent for a while, before slowly saying, “No matter what, this situation is bound to end up in tragedy, Prince.”

“Maybe a miracle will happen.” I gave a speculative look at the couple drunk with happiness, although even I was not putting much faith in the chances of such a miracle happening.

“Okay then, we’ll leave Fairsky’s situation alone for now. After all, we don’t have any other ideas.” *It seems as if Lolidragon has more she wants to say?*

Lolidragon took a deep breath before continuing. “Prince, I have something important to tell you: *Second Life* is going to have a great patch.”

“A...great...patch?” I repeated as I froze. *A patch? I haven’t even played through the game thoroughly and it’s already going to have an update patch?*

“Yeah, and the biggest change is that the three pre-programmed cities, Sun, Star, and Moon, are going to be opened for player invasion,” Lolidragon said excitedly, “Right now everyone is discussing which city they’ll invade first, and they all agreed that they will wait for the liege lord’s decision. Prince, can we capture Star City? I love the European feel of Star City!”

“We’re going to invade cities?” My expression changed slightly. *Infinite City has only just finished construction and we already have to invade more cities? Seems like I really have a life of hard work; I can’t even rest for half a moment.*

“Yes, ‘Infinite City’s Liege Lord’, and this time you better not sneakily disappear again,” Lolidragon replied mockingly.

I shrugged. “As long as Nan Gong Zui doesn’t ask me to go drinking again, I think I can obediently stay in Infinite City this time.”

Extra Chapter: The Sun should Shine in the Fair Sky

“Stop being annoying. I will definitely be the spokesperson, but whether or not you want to perform is up to you!” Prince angrily rebuked.

Even after she had run away, she could still vividly see Prince’s impatient face as he scolded her.

“Prince really stepped over the line this time. I like him so much, but how can he be such a playboy? And he even accepts both males and females!” Fairsky cursed as she cried. The strong words that Prince had used had really hurt her.

“I ran away so long ago... Why hasn’t anyone chased after me yet?” Fairsky wondered, looking over her shoulder as she ran. *Don’t tell me that they really don’t want me anymore? That’s bad!* Fairsky started to run back anxiously.

Pow! She crashed into someone else as she ran around a corner.

“Hey! Don’t you know that you should open your eyes and look around when you are walking?” Fairsky scolded angrily as she massaged her red and painfully swollen forehead.

“Fairsky, it’s me, Sunshine,” the man she’d crashed into said. As a physically weak mage, Sunshine had sustained far greater damage than Fairsky, and was in a state of dizziness. If it weren’t for Fairsky’s familiar loud voice, he wouldn’t have even realized it was her who he had crashed into.

Fairsky finally saw that the dying person lying on the ground was one of her own teammates.

“Sunshine? Why are you here?” Fairsky asked.

“I came to find you.” Sunshine replied as he slowly got back to his feet.

“So only you came to get me... I don’t want to go back,” Fairsky said while childishly refusing to get up from the ground. When she thought about how everyone didn’t care about her, her heart filled with resentment and her eyes started to moisten.

“We were really overdue for the start of our concert, so everyone had to go perform first,” Sunshine explained gently.

“I don’t care. I won’t go back. No one likes me anyway.” As Fairsky spoke, tears started to fall from her eyes. *That’s right; Prince has always disliked me for being unreasonable, while Phoenix, Wicked, and Gui are my love rivals.*

“There are people who like you. Like me; I like you very much,” Sunshine said, smiling. He had always thought that this girl who liked to shout and voice her opinions loudly was interesting. *She always speaks her mind and expresses her feelings honestly, not like others who think one thing and say another. Those people really give me a headache.*

Hearing such a straightforward answer from Sunshine, even an outspoken girl like Fairsky couldn’t help but blush and say, “You are lying! I’m so unladylike! I don’t know where to draw the line when I speak, I’m not as pretty as Lolidragon or Phoenix, and I’m always being unreasonable...!” As she listed out her shortcomings, Fairsky realized that she really did have many faults and began to sob. *No wonder no one likes me. But if they want me to be gentle like Phoenix, or charming and beautiful like Lolidragon, I can’t do that either. Is it my fate to never have a place in Prince’s heart?*

Sunshine couldn’t help but laugh as he watched Fairsky ignoring him and sinking into depression by herself. *She’s really a cute girl*, he thought.

“But you are honest, not like others who always hide their real feelings,” he said.

“Really...?” Fairsky asked doubtfully in a quiet voice. “But everyone else said I was being unreasonable like this.”

“You *are* unreasonable. If you weren’t unreasonable, you wouldn’t be you,” Sunshine replied with a smile.

“What? I am not unreasonable!” Fairsky’s temper flared up again.

“Well it’s true. If Wicked wasn’t always serious, he wouldn’t be Wicked. If Gui stopped being weird, he wouldn’t be Gui either. Furthermore, there is Kenshin.” Sunshine laughed aloud. “If one day Kenshin suddenly became a chatterbox, I probably would think he had gone crazy.” Sunshine continued gently, “This is why your honesty is the most appealing part about you, Fairsky. Don’t force yourself to become gentle, because you would lose your shine if you did that.”

“Really?” Being spoken of by Sunshine like that, Fairsky blushed uncharacteristically.

“Yes!” Sunshine nodded with conviction.

Fairsky stood up with a pouting mouth and said reluctantly, “Ok then, let’s go back.”

“Ok.” Sunshine smiled again while taking out his flying carpet, preparing for the “rescue operation” that the band would need. If they were late, those four people might even have all their clothes torn off, like last time, when Prince nearly suffered such a fate...

“You are such a weird person, always smiling. What’s so funny?” Fairsky continued to nag even as she got on the flying carpet.

Sunshine answered her with a laugh, “Since there is nothing to be sad about, of course I will smile.”

“What a weird person,” Fairsky mumbled, and yet she liked Sunshine’s warm smile a lot.



Fairsky was prepared to take a walk in the city in order to find a suitable site for building the bookshop. But Prince, being a glutton, was never going to abandon his food in favor of accompanying her for a walk in the city. Fairsky complained quietly to herself, *I wonder why Prince loves to eat so much...*

“Gui asked me to go look by myself. Hmph, as if no one knows he just wanted to stay by Prince’s side a moment more.” Fairsky pouted, reluctantly preparing to find a site alone.

Hearing Fairsky’s sulking mumble, Sunshine laughed and said, “Why don’t I go with you?”

At Sunshine’s words, Fairsky’s plaintive eyes immediately became pleading. “Are you really willing to go with me?” she asked.

“Of course I am. Kenshin, do you want to go as well?” After Sunshine answered Fairsky, he turned to look at Kenshin, who was being cold and quiet as usual.

Kenshin shook his head. “No.”

“Is that so? Then let’s go, Fairsky.” Sunshine looked at Fairsky with a smile, while the latter’s heart suddenly began to beat faster for no apparent reason.

“Sunshine, where do you think the best place to build the bookstore would be?” Fairsky asked while hugging Sunshine’s arm happily. “Should we build the bookstore in somewhere remote for the quiet, tranquil atmosphere, or in the downtown area where there is a lot of traffic?”

“Can’t we build at both sites?” Sunshine asked, puzzled.

“Build at both sites?” Fairsky repeated while her innate business mind started to race. *He has a point. Both bookstores target different people. We can build a normal bookshop in the downtown area first, and then when the first bookshop becomes popular, we can build another bookshop and café combination at somewhere quiet.*

“Sunshine, you are too clever.” After deciding on the sites, Fairsky was so happy that she forgot herself and she hugged and kissed Sunshine.

“Is that so?” Sunshine was totally mystified, but he still touched the cheek that had been kissed while smiling foolishly.

“Honestly, Infinite City is getting busier with each passing moment. It will definitely be a successful city,” Fairsky commented as she cheerfully watched the people around her walking on the streets that she had designed together with Gui, praising the beauty of Infinite City. She felt touched that this peaceful time had arrived after all the hardships she had gone through.

“Let’s go and take a walk in the city square!” Fairsky suggested. *The fountain in the city square is very beautiful. When I saw the design drawn by Gui, I swore to myself I would definitely go and take a look at it once it was built. Although Gui is a weird guy, a gay, and shamelessly tries to fight over Prince with me...his talent is the real thing.*

“Sure, I want to take a look too,” Sunshine answered.

“Wow! There are so many people here!” Fairsky gasped in surprise at the sea of people.

“Of course. This is one of the most famous tourist attractions of Infinite City after all—the Wishing Fountain of Love,” Passerby A suddenly said from beside them.

“The Wishing Fountain of Love?” Both Fairsky and Sunshine were stunned. Since when did it have a name like that?

“Yes. Rumor has it that if a couple throws coins into the fountain and the fountain sprays water, they will be granted eternal love. That’s why everyone is queuing up to throw coins,” Passerby A explained.

“Is there such a thing?” Fairsky asked in puzzlement.

“This rumor was spread by Yu Lian,” Sunshine remembered. He whispered gently in Fairsky’s ear, “She said that this is a good way to earn money as people in love always have a lower IQ.”

“Oh, I see. But now we can’t see what the fountain looks like,” Fairsky said while eagerly trying to catch a glimpse of the fountain from afar. “Since we don’t have other important things to do, why don’t we queue up to see the fountain too?” Fairsky suggested.

“Sure,” Sunshine gladly agreed. He always liked to stay in places where people gathered, to observe them.

After waiting for an extremely long time—until the sky had grown dark and the light of the stars shone upon the ground—Fairsky and Sunshine finally saw the fountain. Despite

the late hour, the two were actually lucky because the fountain's entire beauty could only be revealed at night.

"So beautiful!" Fairsky couldn't help but exclaim as she finally fulfilled her wish to stand beside the fountain. The fountain itself was shaped like a crescent moon and was made of a fully transparent material that had a silvery, sparkling powder encased in it. The silvery sparkling powder looked like stars hiding inside the fountain, winking at people who passed by. Over the top of the central water column was a gentle yellow sun, which bathed the city square in its soft, gentle light, giving the whole city square a romantic atmosphere. It was no wonder that couples in love would have lower IQs here.

"Let's throw coins too." Seeing other couples doing so, Sunshine couldn't help but want to dig out some coins as well.

"Alright. The money is going back to Infinite City anyway," Fairsky said as she failed to suppress her laughter. *Even if we don't throw the coins, they will eventually get robbed by Yu Lian anyway.*

"We should throw one together. Everyone else is doing it like this," Sunshine noted while taking Fairsky's hands and placing a coin in the middle of their cupped palms. He didn't notice Fairsky's blushing red face as they did this. On the other hand, even if he did notice Fairsky's red face, he probably wouldn't understand what was happening anyway.

"Throw!" both of them shouted together.

As the coin touched the surface of the water, a water column unexpectedly started to spray, and the lovely water dance was activated. While the graceful streams of water danced in the fountain, surrounding people gave them looks of blessing or envy. Fairsky and Sunshine both looked helplessly at each other with red faces and embarrassed expressions.

All of it was a coincidence! Wasn't it?

"Sunshine, what would you do if you loved a person very much, but that person didn't love you?" Fairsky asked while licking the Tanghulu³⁵ she had just bought. Sunshine was happily eating ice cream at her side.

After some thought, Sunshine answered, "I have never loved a person before, so I don't know what I'd do."

"You've never been in love before?" Fairsky asked, astonished. *Impossible! Sunshine, who looks like he's twenty-years-old or older, has never loved anyone before?*

³⁵ **Tanghulu:** A traditional winter snack. Please refer to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanghulu> for more information.

“I don’t think so. What kind of feeling is love?” Sunshine asked in bewilderment. He couldn’t help it. After all, it had been only half a year since he had gained self-awareness. Furthermore, he had never been outside of Demon Cave until two months ago. He couldn’t have understood what love is in such a short time.

However, Fairsky was startled too. *What is love?* She answered with slight hesitation, “If you love someone very much, you think of that person all the time, you want to stay by that person’s side, and when you are at that person’s side, you’re very happy...”

“I see. So Fairsky must like staying with Prince a lot? When you’re together with Prince, you’re very happy?” Sunshine asked Fairsky in response.

Fairsky was totally stunned. *Am I really happy?* When she thought back, it seemed like she was always angry over Prince’s attitude toward her, and she had to be the love rival of Phoenix, whom she actually got along with. It seemed that...she wasn’t happy at all?

“Fairsky?” Sunshine asked, looking at her uncertainly after not hearing an answer for a long time. Unexpectedly, he found that there were tears flowing down Fairsky’s cheeks. He couldn’t refrain from reaching out and wiping the tears off her face with his hand, asking, “What is the matter? Why are you crying?”

“I...I suddenly realized that when I’m with Prince, I’m not happy at all,” Fairsky replied in a choked voice.

“Isn’t everything fine then if you don’t stay with Prince?” Sunshine asked her, slightly puzzled as to why she continued to do something that didn’t make her happy.

“But...but...” Fairsky was reluctant. *I have chased after Prince for so long. If I give up now, it would be such a pity.*

“Moreover, Fairsky, you never laugh when you are at Prince’s side! I think you are more beautiful when you are laughing!” Sunshine said with a brilliant smile. “Just like this.”

“Really? I’m prettier like this?” Fairsky asked while she unconsciously started to smile too.

“Yes,” Sunshine said with conviction.

Fairsky continued to smile and said, somewhat touched, “Sunshine, I’m always very happy being with you! Are you happy too when you go out together with me?”

“I’m very happy,” Sunshine answered without even faltering, and then he seemed to abruptly realize something. “Oh! I like to stay with Fairsky a lot, and I can’t wait for every date with Fairsky. Am I in love with Fairsky then?”

“What nonsense are you saying?!” Fairsky exclaimed with a completely red face. *Sunshine always says whatever he wants without some consideration beforehand! He’s even gutsier than me!*

“It isn’t love?” Sunshine asked, slightly disappointed, as he had thought he had finally understood what love is.

Both of them walked in silence for some time, until Fairsky couldn’t take it anymore and asked, “Do you really, really like being with me?”

“I like it very much,” Sunshine said, nodding firmly.

When she saw that Sunshine answered her question without even a slight wavering, Fairsky blushed so deeply that even her ears turned red. She asked in a stuttering voice, “T-then do you have any other person whom you like more than me?”

Sunshine thought hard and answered, “I like Prince very much too, as he is also easy to get along with...”

He likes Prince? Is he a gay too? Fairsky heart started to sink...

“But, I like being with Fairsky more, because it’s easier to guess what you are thinking about than Prince, since you express everything on your face,” Sunshine explained with a smile. *Hahaha, Fairsky’s ever-changing expression always makes me feel like laughing.*

“I do not!” Fairsky denied loudly. *I totally don’t express all my emotion on my face.*

“Don’t you?” Sunshine couldn’t help but laugh out loud. *Then who is this person who’s pouting right now?*

“Stupid, of course I don’t,” Fairsky answered. She was so embarrassed that she became angry and slapped Sunshine’s back forcefully.

“Ouch, that’s painful! Don’t hit me; I’m only saying the truth,” Sunshine said, laughing loudly as he dodged Fairsky’s deadly slaps.

As she watched Sunshine protect his back with both of his hands while retreating backwards and watching her cautiously, Fairsky couldn’t help but chase him while yelling, “Don’t run, let me hit you!”

“I’ve caught you!” Fairsky ruthlessly pounced on Sunshine as though as she was a hungry tiger pouncing onto a lamb, knocking Sunshine on to the ground.

Looking at Sunshine’s brilliant smile, Fairsky couldn’t refrain from smiling too. She buried her face into Sunshine’s chest and repeated firmly, “I’ve caught you.”

“I’ve caught you too,” Sunshine said, as he hugged Fairsky back and ruffled her hair happily.