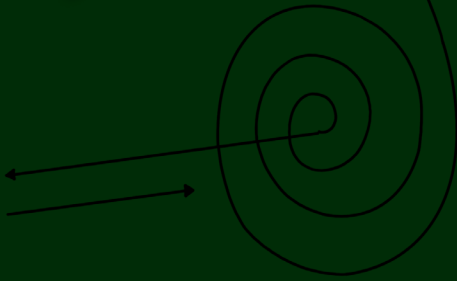




not yet lived

未生



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Thank you to the Play_Station team, Zac, Jana, my
brothers and my Umma.

In the garden of the gods, Huangdi and Shennong spent each day in fierce combat. They played without enmity (for this was in the days before hatred and anger) and were perfectly matched in all respects.

In sacred clearings, surrounded by lazily sighing firs, they traded blows with exact reciprocity; in cathedral-like caverns, water dripped in heavenly harmonies and they came to stalemates in the most ancient of board games; on high plateaus, rock and snow and ice were the only witnesses to their wrestles. Locked in each other's embrace they were like marble statues, so balanced was their strength.

I could not tell you how long was spent in these games. For unlike you and I whose toil is never done, who must continually pick up where we left off the day before, everything the gods wanted was always at their disposal. Thus there was no need for the imperfection of memory, and like all the lucky inhabitants of that time, they were without history. It was as if all their meetings happened at once and forever, the result always determined in advance by their nature, ideal shapes in a silk tapestry.

These were the days of eternity.



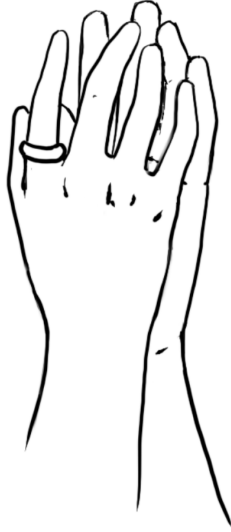
Yet even eternity had to end, for one morning Huangdi found himself distracted by Daiyu, a human who had wandered into the garden. Humans were not allowed in Paradise, and any god who came across a human was supposed to scare them back to earth.

However, as he watched Daiyu wander along the banks of a holy river, stopping every now and then to bathe her feet and hands with the grace of a dancer, her gentle countenance lit from below by the golden incandescent glow of the sun on the surface of the water, Huangdi discovered, divine fool that he was,

that he had fallen deeply in love with her.



She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her lips, cheeks, nose, eyes and skin all formed harmonies as perfect as that vast yearning night sky which forms Heaven's heavens. They alone might have been enough to wound any man. Yet more perfect even than all these features was her hair. Nothing in all Heaven was comparable. Long tresses of it, black and glossy and strangely lucent framed her face, gleaming like the moon on the night sea. Although he knew she was a human, and forbidden not only to the garden, but to him as consort, Huangdi could not resist Daiyu's terrible beauty.



Huangdi and Daiyu began a secret romance, finding each other in the mornings and evenings when the light was low. Still, Huangdi was careful to ensure that all their meetings took place only in hidden groves, thick forests, or caverns deep within Heaven, far from the spying eyes of the other deities.

When they met, Huangdi would often do nothing but hold Daiyu's hair, feeling it run through his fingers like silk, somehow ethereal and weighty at once. He especially liked to watch the way it reflected the light. Each day the quality of the gloss was quite different; yet each day the infinite coruscations of light which emanated from were every possible shade.

While this went on, strands of Daiyu's hair were getting left all over Paradise, and even on Huangdi's body. Huangdi did not notice, for how could he?



Being a god he was not used to people leaving things behind or messing things up. Daiyu noticed but did not think to tell Huangdi, because being a human she was used to people leaving things behind or messing things up. So really, we cannot blame either of them for what happened



It was a morning like any other in Paradise. A fiery breeze swept night off the horizon, and in its place came the perfect burning blue sky of summer, cumulonimbus-limned. Huangdi woke and went to see Daiyu. Blind as he was to change, he did not notice that he went slower than usual.

Afterward, as he made his way to the glade in which that fatal, final, engagement was to be made, he moved even slower than he had earlier in the morning.

By the time he arrived his legs could barely move, yet still he did not see. Instead, he greeted Shennong, and both withdrew to the edges of the clearing, where awaiting them were matching iron jian, their edges gleaming and greedy in the green light of the bamboo forest.

The two gods held their blades in front and approached. Eternity was still, as if it knew this was its terminal moment. A metallic flash pierced the forest and Huangdi fell.



Shennong dropped his jian and went to his friend's side. A vicious red mouth, newly bred, rent Huangdi's chest from his right shoulder to his left hip.

What had happened?

He had become entangled in Daiyu's hair. His arms and legs had been so tightly bound by those thick black strands that he could barely walk, let alone block Shennong's slashes. Light as he was, eternal and ageless as he was, he had been unable to perceive this, so foreign to him was the notion of change.

Now, weighed down by this wound, the terrible seed of the world's most familiar affliction began to grow in him. Marked by the scar of memory, no longer would the gods know eternity.



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