

Reading Mo Dao Zu Shi

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Reading Mo Dao Zu Shi

by [Athane](#)

Summary

After everything happened, there are still questions unanswered and some things unresolved, luckily a certain creature felt the need to share the story seen through the eyes of Wei WuXian.

I suck at summaries and own no rights to Mo Dao Zu Shi.

Rated M for the violence in the story. First time writing a story so no flames please.

Prologue

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Wei WuXian was shaken awake, he expected to be on his and Lan WangJi's shared bed in the JingShi, Lan WangJi's private study and bedroom, but instead of the familiar room, what greeted his eyes is a seemingly random huge hall that is completely unfamiliar to him.

“Huh? Wei WuXian mumbled drowsily his eyes trying to adjust to the brightness “Where am I?”

“I do not know.”

That is a voice not unfamiliar to Wei WuXian, it was his cultivation partner Lan WangJi who spent the last five minutes waking him up.

“Oh, Lan Zhan! Where are we? Do you think it's the incense burner* again?”

“Never seen this place before.”

“Never seen this place either, so it's probably not the incense burner...”

“...” Lan WangJi stared at Wei WuXian

“...?” ‘Am I not getting something here?’

Just then a bright light shined next to them, which they both turn away from, shielding their eyes.

“Huh? What is this? Where am I?” A man in purple robes appeared after the light fades away.

“Shimei*, you're here too?!” Wei WuXian called out to the purple robed man.

“Who are you calling Shimei?! Wei WuXian if this is one of your...” The leader of the Jiang sect Jiang Cheng trailed off as he fully registered Wei WuXian's appearance.

“...?” Wei WuXian felt strange ‘Why are they both staring at me?’

Then a couple more flashes of light appeared and more people showed up. The Lan juniors, Jin Ling, Lan XiChen, Lan QiRen, Nie HuaiSang and Wen Ning in his before death self.

Understandable confusion appeared on the newly arrived people as they took in their surroundings before noticing the three that are here before them.

“Wei Ying! Is this your doing?!” Not surprisingly Lan QiRen assumes the disaster that is Wei WuXian is to blame for this but to be fair, that seems to be a social norm nowadays still.

“It’s not me Uncle~ Not even this Wei is capable of something like this!” Wei WuXian replied cheerfully to which Lan QiRen fumed at the word ‘uncle’, his face turning different shades of red.

“Wait, you’re senior Wei?” Lan JingYi exclaimed “Why do you look different?”

“Huh?” ‘I look different? I guess that will explain the staring.’

“You looked like your past self, young master Wei.” Wen Ning who had been calmly standing next to Lan SiZhui spoke up.

The juniors who have turned to look at the ‘Ghost General’ in his past self who have never seen Wei WuXian before his reincarnation turn back to stared harder at Wei WuXian with this information.

“I looked like my past self? Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan, so this is the effect of the incense burner after all*?” “Mm”

“Yes”

Everyone simultaneously looked to where the inhuman sounding voice came from only to see a strange creature stood at a spot that was once empty.

Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi recognize this creature for it is what the incense burner was made to look like*.

“I bought you all here to fully understand the events that have taken place recently and thirteen years ago”

“Huh?!” Jin Ling and some of the Lan juniors exclaimed “You just bought us here all of a sudden...”

Lan XiChen raises his hand gently at Lan JingYi and looked to the creature.

“Forgive our rudeness but all of us are still very surprised by all this. You mentioned understanding the past... events, how are you going to do that?”

“I will give you a book which you can take turns to read. Though the book, the unanswered questions some of you may have will be answered.”

“What about the outside world?” Jiang Cheng asks still suspicious at the strange chimera that apparently brought them here just to read a book.

“You are all dreaming right now, I just made all of you have the same dream. Time has stopped outside of the dream world in a sense until the book is finished and you will wake up in the same bed you have slept in as you always have.”

“Hold on, what are you anyway?” Wei WuXian asked the chimera

“You may call me MengMo.”*

With that, the creature disappeared and in its place is a rather thick book.

Mo Dao Zu Shi

Chapter End Notes

1* The incense burner is from the second extra, if you haven't seen it you might be a bit confused about the setup

2* Shimei is a female junior of the same master or sect (Basically just WWX being a little sh*t)

3* In the extra, WWX and LWJ entered their dreamscapes due to the incense burner and WWX is in his past self's appearance

4* The incense burner mentioned was said to have the body of a bear, a nose like an elephant, eyes like a rhinoceros, a tail like an ox and feet like a tiger. (Or the ancient Chinese's description of a tapir since they don't know what a tapir is... --)

5* MengMo 梦貘 translates to dream tapir. Shi MengMo 食梦貘 or dream eating tapir is basically the Chinese Baku, the famed dream eater whose stories originated in China before spreading to Japan.

Next chapter: Reading the prologue of GDC

This is my first story so hopefully this first chapter is alright.

Here are some questions for you guys.

1. Do you want Jiang YanLi, Jin ZiXuan and Wen Qing to appear too? (I don't think I am going to add in NMJ, JGY, and the Yi city arc characters btw)

2. Who do you want to start reading first?

Also, do let me know if there are any errors in the text if there are any.

Reading the Prologue

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Wei WuXian came forward and picked up the book.

‘Mo Dao Zu Shi?’ Wei WuXian thought as he recognised the title of the book as one of the many titles given to him alongside YiLing LaoZu* ‘Is this book written in my perspective?’ Wei WuXian isn't sure what to feel about that.

“Before I forget...” The MengMo's voice resonates in the dreamscape before more bright flashes of light appeared.

“Shijie?*, Wen Qing?” Wei WuXian spoke in disbelief as he took in the newly arrived figures.

There stood Jiang YanLi, Jin ZiXuan and Wen Qing looking exactly like the last time they were seen.

“Jiejie... Jiejie*!” Wen Ning's eyes watered seeing his sister again running towards her.

Wei WuXian wasn't doing any better, standing in place as he stared at his beloved shijie.

“A-Xian! A-Cheng!” Jiang YanLi ran towards her shidi* and younger brother.

“Jie...” Jiang Cheng replied disbelieving looking at the sister he lost hugging him and his Shixiong* just like all those years ago. He hate to admit it but this is a dream he will dread to wake up from after all those years of being alone with Jin Ling as his only family member.

Jin Ling!

Jiang Cheng wiped the unshed tears that appeared in his eyes “Jin Ling! What are you still standing there for!? Come and pay your respects to your parents!”

Jin ZiXuan and Jiang YanLi looked to where Jiang Cheng is looking, to see a young boy, in his

mid-teens, wearing a bright gold robe with a peony embroidered on the chest, a bright vermilion spot on his forehead, looking like an exact younger replica of his father. He has grown so much, so unlike yet so similar to the baby once held in their arms.

Jin Ling as if pushed by an invisible hand dashed towards his parents' outstretching arms.

“All settled in? Then we will begin with Wei WuXian since you are already holding the book.”
MengMo spoke after all the reunions and the situation is explained to the newcomers, everyone sitting on cushions that appeared out of thin air.

Wei WuXian took a deep breath, flipping open the book to look at the first page which he paused at for a second before reading the ‘wonderful’ first sentence of the book.

“Wei WuXian is dead. What fantastic news!”

“...”

The atmosphere changed drastically from that one sentence. Lan WangJi’s face darken, Jiang Cheng’s eyes narrowed, teeth gritting, the juniors and Wen Ning’s faces fell, Wen Qing started to clench her fist tightly and Jiang YanLi felt her heart sunk.

Wei WuXian, seemingly the only one who is not affected as much, held Lan WangJi’s hand, smiling at him warmly before turning his attention back to the book.

He then proceeds to read the rest of the gossip that the public has about Wei WuXian’s death making the atmosphere darken with each word.

The three newcomers died before Wei WuXian, even though they were filled in somewhat, they didn’t expect such animosity from just the first paragraph of the story.

“Tch...” Jin Ling held back on commenting about people messing up the stories and gossiping when they do not understand anything.

After all, he blamed Wei WuXian and Wen Ning for his parents’ deaths when he blindly trusted the one behind it all as the rest of the world did.

...

After the YiLing LaoZu Wei WuXian’s death at the mass grave hill*, no one has been able to summon his soul.

Lan WangJi gripped Wei WuXian's hand even more tightly at that, to the point of it being painful but Wei WuXian returns the grip nonetheless.

‘I am sorry, for letting you wait so long...’

Even if he was once someone who summons storms with a flick of his hand, a day will arrive for him to be the one to topple over.

Nothing lasts forever, legends are only legends after all.

‘Yeah, but this legend hasn’t ended yet.’ Is the thought shared between the Lan juniors.

“And that is the end of the prologue. Wei WuXian, pass it to Wen Ning. You will all take turns in a clockwise manner.”*

Chapter End Notes

1* YiLing LaoZu 夷陵老祖 or the YiLing Patriarch whatever you prefer

2* Shijie is a female senior

3* Jiejie or Jie meaning older sister

4* Shidi is a male junior

5* Shixiong is a male senior

6* Luan Zang Gang 乱葬岗 or my sad attempt to translate that.

7* I imagine all of them to be sitting in a circle. In a clockwise order:

Wei WuXian, Wen Ning, Lan SiZhui, Wen Qing, Jiang YanLi, Jin Ling, Jin ZiXuan, Jiang Cheng, Nie HuaiSang, Lan junior A, Lan junior B, Lan junior C, Lan junior D, Lan JingYi, Lan XiChen, Lan QiRen, Lan WangJi.

Next chapter: Reading Chapter 2

So that's the prologue, hopefully you guys enjoyed it. And many thanks to those who commented, it means a lot!

Reading Chapter 2

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Sorry for taking so long, school work held me up a bit and now I am onto the longer actual chapters of the novel. So the future chapters would take a little longer than the first two.

Now on with the fic:

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wen Ning took the book from Wei WuXian and started to read.

When Wei WuXian opened his eyes, he immediately received a kick.

“Are all the chapters going to start like that?” One of the Lan juniors asked as a few people twitched at the corner of their lips at the first sentence of this chapter while Wei WuXian winced at the memory.

Who knew that when the YiLing LaoZu came back, the first thing he got was a scolding and a kick from some fat, bratty, teenage stranger?

Lan WangJi rubbed the back of Wei WuXian's hand with his thumb soothingly.

Wen Ning continues to read though Mo ZiYuan's temper tantrum and Wei WuXian coming to with the situation he is in.

“What a brat.” Jiang Cheng commented to himself as if his temper wasn't also that bad.

When Wen Ning describes Wei WuXian's makeup, the Lan juniors start chuckling to themselves, remembering what he looked like.

Jiang Cheng smirked: "So you woke up with that makeup already on, I thought you drew it yourself."

Wei WuXian glared and placed his hands on his hips in mock-anger: "Oi! I'll have you know I have far better taste and far superior drawing skills than that!"

Jiang Cheng waved a hand in dismissal.

Wei WuXian pouted at his partner: "Lan Zhan~ Did you believe I drew that on myself too?!"

Lan WangJi: "... " Unfortunately, Wei WuXian does come across as the type of person to do such a thing.

"Lan Zhan~" It's not like Wei WuXian doesn't understand his partner's inner conflict, it's more of making use of it to tease him a little.

And its not like Lan WangJi doesn't understand Wei WuXian either.

"Wei Ying, stop messing around."

Wei WuXian hugs him merrily.

Everyone else: "... "

He didn't steal a body, he was offered one.

Lan QiRen huffed at the thought of such a twisted form of cultivation.

...

Wei WuXian is upset by this.

How is he classified as a *Sinister ghost*?

Sure, his reputation was bad and had a horrifying, painful death but he didn't cause any trouble nor take revenge so he is willing to swear to the heavens and earth that you won't be able find another stray ghost as well-behaved as him.

That is true, the entire thirteen years after Wei WuXian died, he really didn't appear anywhere else besides in stories, mostly it was the many cultivation sects that fear his return and was paranoid enough to attempt at summoning Wei WuXian's soul for so many years.

...

..., when she was sixteen, the leader of a prominent cultivation sect passed by Mo village and took a shine to her.

Jin ZiXuan huffed, there was no doubt in his mind that this 'leader' was his womanizer father.

As Wen Ning continues to read the part about Mo XuanYu, the pity for this person grew stronger in not just Wen Ning but in others as well but many still chuckled when Wei WuXian found out he is stuck in a body of a lunatic cutsleeve*.

...

It's probably 'wiping out the Mo family' Anyone who has even a little contact with the cultivation world would know the most-commonly used phrases to describe himself-

Wen Ning cuts off his reading here to look to Wei WuXian next to him.

Wei WuXian smiles at him telling him to continue.

So, Wen Ning reluctantly continues, reading out those following phrases. Reverting the atmosphere back to how it is when reading the first chapter.

Jiang YanLi's heart broke even more, unconsciously blocking out the rest of the chapter.

Lan WangJi closes his eyes, tuning out the familiar phrases he is forced to endure listening to for years while Wei WuXian leans against him.

For once, Lan QiRen didn't openly show his displeasure at the display.

Finishing the last sentence, Wen Ning silently passes the book to Lan SiZhui.

Chapter End Notes

1* Cutsleeve / DuanXiu (斷袖) = Homosexual but male oriented only. Based on a well known case of homosexuality in ancient China of a gay emperor cutting his sleeve off when he woke up to find his partner sleeping on it in order to not wake him up.

Next Chapter: Reading Chapter 3

Thanks for reading!

Reading Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

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Busy with school for a while but enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Lan SiZhui flipped the page and start to read despite the less than positive atmosphere, continuing the part about Wei WuXian still comprehending and adapting to his situation.

...There was nothing to make him feel the joy of reincarnation at all!

The start of this chapter isn't helping. Even with the joke a little later about the YiLing LaoZu being the first 'sinister ghost' to die out of hunger merely minutes after reincarnating.

..., he really is a tiger in the plains chased by dogs, a dragon in the shallows with the shrimps and a phoenix without feathers being no different from a chicken.

"Poor senior Wei..." One of the juniors whispered

But Lan SiZhui continued until the part where the two servants A-Ding and A-Tong mention about the walking corpses and the invited cultivators.

"A famous sect's cultivators?" Jin Ling spoke out loud, remembering hearing about the Mo village case somewhere before.

The familiar situation ringed a bell in Lan SiZhui and the other Lan juniors, but as per usual, the first to speak his mind out loud is Lan JingYi.

"I remember this! It's when we first encountered the ghost hand!" With that, he and his fellow classmates got excited, they are going to appear soon!

'So when we first met 'young master Mo', he is already senior Wei.' Lan SiZhui thought to himself. 'It explains a lot, how his 'unstable mental state' doesn't seem consistent, his knowledge when dealing with the hand and all his well thought out, meaningful actions, not to mention the Mo family turning into fierce corpses to fight the ghost hand.'

Sure enough, the next part was Wei WuXian going to the Mo family's hall where the rest of the Mo family, the Lan juniors and a crowd of onlookers are, creating a ruckus. Though it doesn't look like the Lan sect members present here appreciate the comment about their uniforms looking like funereally clothing*(Particularly Lan QiRen), no matter how accurate the description is.

Wei WuXian ignores their looks. 'Hey, I never asked for my thoughts to be read.'

Lan SiZhui gave a fake cough, continuing. The rest of the scene was as hilarious as the Lan juniors remembered, even in text form. Wei WuXian himself tried to muffle his laughter from time to time.

...but Wei WuXian rolled over anyway, as if he was actually kicked, opening the front of his robes to show all the bruises and the footprint underneath that Mo ZiYuan left yesterday.

"That was very impressive acting, Wei-xiong*." Nie HuaiSang complimented

Wei WuXian smiled at him "Thank you, HuaiSang-xiong."

'But I am nowhere near as good as you.' He thinks to himself.

...

Running wild is something Wei WuXian is good at. (Cue snorts) In the past, Wei WuXian had to consider his reputation first-

"Since when?" Jiang Cheng muttered with a sneer.

"You, hush."

"..., if you don't care about yourself, that's fine by me. But don't ruin my innocence! I still want to find a nice man!"

Wei WuXian chuckled to himself. 'When I said that, it was only to humiliate the Mo family. I never thought that...' He looks at his cultivation partner. 'A nice man indeed.' Was Wei WuXian's last thought as he snuggles into Lan WangJi's side.

Lan SiZhui continues, hoping that nobody notices his flushing cheeks, not that he was alone in that department.

..., the young cultivator stood before the entrance immediately changing the topic at hand into a more serious one...

'It's a bit awkward to read about your past actions and words.' Lan SiZhui thought to himself, finishing that paragraph. But it was worth it, as Lan WangJi, Lan XiChen, Lan QiRen, Wen Ning and Wen Qing nodded at him approvingly, Wei WuXian grinning at him, raising his head from Lan WangJi's side.

Lan SiZhui felt a sense of pride swell inside of himself, looking back down at the book, trying to will his blush down.

'I can't imagine how senior Wei must feel about this.'

..., he found his time so far as a lunatic enjoyable, ...

'On second thought, never mind...'

...

It turns out the reason why Wei WuXian put up that performance in the Mo family hall was to see if the curse would be satisfied by just humiliation. Which was unfortunately not the case.

...During the siege on him, the Gusu Lan sect had played a huge part in it. However, at that time, some of these juniors aren't even born yet or only a few years old so he didn't hold any hatred towards them, ...

That seems reasonable and almost commonsensical, but just how many people would think like that? Even for something small, many are willing to take their revenge on not just the person who wronged them, but their families as well. Yet Wei WuXian is the one labelled as a 'monster' just because of the art he practices.

Goes to show how bias this world is.

Lan SiZhui looks at the next few word and paragraphs, recollecting the situation at the time.

...

That junior chased up to him, grabbing his arm shouting: "Give it back! If not, I will hit you!"

It wasn't hard to guess that junior is Lan JingYi. The junior in question felt chills up his spine when that sentence is read out.

Wei WuXian just muffles his laughter, feeling a bit of pity for the boy on the other end of his partner's glare.

...

During the whole 'tug-of-war', Wei WuXian had checked the flag thoroughly. There weren't any problems with the incantations drawn, all of them completed so there shouldn't be any problem in using these. It's just that the one who drew it was inexperienced...

Finishing the paragraph, Lan SiZhui saluted* Wei WuXian "Thank you for your concern that time, senior Wei." The other juniors quickly followed his lead.

"No need for that! Besides, it would look bad if something happens to you because of my invention wouldn't it? Ha ha ha"

Lan SiZhui just smiles, looking back to the book.

Then lightly blushed at the praise Wei WuXian gave him in the following paragraph, feeling even more awkward.

Wei WuXian looked over at the young man, refined and gentle-looking with a soft smile on his face. He is most likely to be the leader of this group of juniors, not only does he possess good manners, the flag formation was well-organized as well. Wei WuXian approves of this young seeding of a fine cultivator. In a sect as rigid and traditional as the Gusu Lan, who could have brought this junior up.

Wei WuXian smiles to himself while Wen Ning and Wen Qing both gave a salute to Lan WangJi who gave a light nod back.

Lan SiZhui finishes the chapter, at where Wei WuXian was dragged to the Mo family hall by angry villagers, passing the book to Wen Qing.

Chapter End Notes

1* Pi Ma Dai Xiao披麻戴孝 = mourning or funereal clothes. White is the color associated with death in Chinese and in ancient China, when mourning for a passed loved one, the people would only wear white hats and white clothes. (It roughly translates into ‘Wearing linen sackcloths’.)

2* Xiong 兄 means older brother or it can be used to greet a friend or classmate (Your age or older than you). It is similar to ‘bro’.

3* It’s the way they greet, pay respects and express gratitude to someone. It is not like the military salute. They cup their hands together, one in front of the other, at chest level and bow.

The chapters are getting longer, so I will need more time for all future chapters.

Thank you for reading and your patience!

p.s Do let me know if there are any typos or other errors.

Reading Chapter 4

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Wen Qing cleared her throat, picking up where was left off which is Wei WuXian getting dragged off to the Mo family hall in the middle of the night.

The juniors remember this well, it's when the body of Mo ZiYuan was just discovered in a hallway and brought to the hall.

When reading about Wei WuXian checking the body and Lan SiZhui knocking away the dagger Madam Mo attacked Wei WuXian with. Lan SiZhui is awarded another nod from Lan WangJi in gratitude and Wen Qing patting his head before she looks back to the book.

“Why is she blaming you?” Jin ZiXuan glanced over at Wei WuXian. All Wei WuXian has done was pretty much reading a diary and play tug-of-war.

Wei WuXian looked at him with the corner of his eye and shrugged. “It's just another day.”

Ignoring the rather depressing answer, Wen Qing continues reading, patting Lan SiZhui again when reading about him defending Wei WuXian.

Soon, how Mo ZiYuan died was cleared up when Wei WuXian pulled out an evil-attracting flag* out from Mo ZiYuan's robes.

Wei WuXian looked at his wrists to see that one of the cuts had healed. It seems that sacrificial contract deemed that the death of Mo ZiYuan was his doing since the evil-attraction flags were invented by him. What a lucky coincidence.

Wei WuXian glanced at Nie HuaiSang ‘Coincidence? Or amazing planning?’

...

Wen Qing continued reading even though she is getting annoyed at how Madam Mo was behaving and glaring when she threw a teacup and blamed Wei WuXian for her son's death but what really

ticked Wen Qing off is the next paragraph.

“And you! All of you are worthless! What cultivation? What exorcisms? You can’t even protect a child! He is still in his teens!”

‘How is Mo ZiYuan’s death the kids’ fault? They already warned everyone not go near the west courtyard.’ Wen Qing and many others thought, even the ever-gentle Lan XiChen was frowning. The juniors however, do not seem very affected for some reason but instead made a small salute to Wei WuXian.

Wen Qing smiled, looking at the next paragraph which proves her suspicion

Wei WuXian made a “Peh” sound before scolding: “Watch your tongue, who do you think you are scolding? Do you really think of them as your servants? These cultivators traveled so far to perform exorcisms for you without asking for anything in return and you think they owe you? How about your son, how old is he? At least seventeen, right? How is he still a ‘child’? Yet he couldn’t even understand basic human language. Didn’t these cultivators warned everyone to stay away from the formation and the west courtyard again and again yesterday? It’s your son that snuck out in the middle of the night despite the warnings. Is that my fault? Their fault?”

Trust Wei WuXian to stand up for a couple of strangers from a sect that had a role in his death.

-

Having read though master Mo’s death and the Lan juniors firing the signal, the mysterious ghost still hasn’t revealed itself and the people dealing with this was a group of teenagers who just started night-hunting on their own and has many people to protect. The odds are seriously not in favor of the juniors even if they actually have the YiLing LaoZu on their side.

Lan SiZhui gritted his teeth: “Stay, wait for reinforcements.”

Wen Qing had been filled in before they start reading but it is still hard to believe that Wen Yuan is still alive and is the junior sitting to her right. He has grown into such a fine cultivator and leader, its hard to imagine he was once the crybaby that clings to almost everyone’s leg most of the time.

And there is Wei WuXian, who chose to stay behind even though he could have hid somewhere and wait for all the Mo family members to die and he will be home free. But that will not be Wei WuXian if he did that, instead staying to help because if he didn’t, there will be more lives lost including the juniors. And not to mention, he is unarmed, in a body of low cultivation and the juniors has called for backup who could potentially recognize and eliminate him.

‘If I didn’t leave Wen Ning and the others that day... Will I be able to protect them? Then I wouldn’t have needed to drag Wei WuXian into my own families’ problem and Wen Ning wouldn’t have been beaten to death... If only I was faster...’

Before Wen Qing knew it, the chapter is over at somewhat of a cliffhanger. So, she quickly passed the book to her left for Jiang YanLi to take.

1* Zhao Yin Qi 招阴旗, one of WWX's inventions, a flag that attracts evil beings to it, using the person using it as bait.

Sorry for the wait!

Reading Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

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Jiang YanLi took the book with a smile, quickly flipping the page so she can begin.

The part about the servant, A-Tong snapping his own neck was unsettling, even more so since the culprit is still not revealed despite all of the talismans placed throughout the hall.

“Didn't you guys put up all those talismans? Don't tell me none of them are the 'Spirit repelling' kinds.” Jin Ling asked curiously but unintentionally making it sound like he is criticizing them

“Of course we did! But it didn't react!” Lan JingYi defended

Before the argument got any further, Jiang YanLi spoke up.

“Do not worry, the next sentence explains that.” She smiles gently at the boys who all calmed down in an instant.

Her voice is shrill and piercing, sending chills down the spines of everyone in the hall, believing her instantly. But Wei WuXian came to a different conclusion, they are not dealing with a feral ghost.

“It's *not* a feral ghost?!” Jin Ling exclaimed, this thing has killed three people in a single night and it is not considered a dangerous and aggressive ghost that should be dealt with utmost caution?!

Jiang YanLi was not particularly interested in cultivation or exorcisms but even she is curious as to why her shidi would say that.

...they would have to kill at least one person per month and continue this behavior for three months. Wei WuXian himself set that criteria (“...”) and it is still probably being used...

“You again?!” Jin Ling and Lan JingYi looked to Wei WuXian

“That's right~ Hey, I didn't force you to use my standards. Those are just for most case

scenarios...”

“Don’t you think things might have changed after all those years?” Jiang Cheng looked to Wei WuXian as well.

“Well, yeah-” Wei WuXian holds up his hand to stop the questioning before they begin. “But I was dead for thirteen years! You expect me to update my stuff?”

‘But they are still not updated...’ Was left unsaid since Lan WangJi doesn’t look too pleased.

‘I will think about the standards next time, I haven’t finished the modifications to the compass yet.’ Wei WuXian quickly stops his train of thought when Jiang YanLi started reading again.

The scene continues just as the Lan juniors remembers, lights going out, people panicking while they are trying to stay calm themselves. All of it written with great detail in the book, setting a mark for the juniors as the first time they handled something as dangerous and as a reminder of the type of career they are in.

...

Unless she is already dead.

“Oh, so that’s how you know that the hand is on Madam Mo that time!” One of the juniors excitedly said.

...He suddenly brusted out laughing. Lan JingYi spoke angrily: “You-”

Jiang YanLi looked at Lan JingYi, not sure whether to pity the boy.

“...?” Lan JingYi tries to remember what he said ‘...!’

“You moron... Jiang YanLi clears her throat before trying again, feeling even more sorry for the boy directly opposite of her that looked like he wanted nothing more than to wake up right now.

“You moron! How are you laughing at a time like this?” Then again, he’s an idiot, so he shouldn’t waste his breath arguing with him.

“JingYi”

“He...here!...”

“When we return, rules, two times.”

“Ye...yes...” Lan JingYi didn’t know whether he should cry.

The other Lan juniors felt an overwhelming pity for their classmate.

Wei WuXian stifles his laughter.

Lan JingYi pulls back his sleeve, annoyed: “No? What no? Aren’t you stupid-”

“Three times”

Lan JingYi: T~T

Now Lan XiChen is starting to feel bad for the boy too. ‘WangJi is not in a merciful mood

today...'

...

Lan JingYi couldn't take it anymore: "What are you playing at? Why are you looking so proud for?"

Wei WuXian finally feeling bad enough for the boy, tugged on his partner's sleeve before he upgrades the punishment to four.

Lan WangJi glances at Wei WuXian before closing his eyes.

'Unless WuXian says something to him.' Lan XiChen smiles to himself while the junior next to him sighs in relief.

Jiang YanLi looks at the couple smiling as well before turning back to the book.

Lan SiZhui on the other hand broke into cold sweat. Thinking back on it...

"You're really brought up by HanGuang-Jun*, just a small hint and you got it already!" Wei WuXian praised

Lan WangJi whispers to his partner "You taught him well too."

"Of course I did! Who do you think I am?"

"...Shameless." Jiang Cheng should really have been used to this by now.

...

Where it should have been a woman's hand, is a hand most definitely belonging to a man.

"..." Nie HuaiSang looks down, thinking about his older brother.

Lan XiChen doesn't look better.

...Lan JingYi scolded while removing his half-burnt outer uniform: "You damn lunatic, why did you kick me?! You nearly got me killed!"

Wei Wuxian ducked his head, scampering away like a rat: "It wasn't me!"

It is him.

But what can Lan JingYi do about it?

The Lan sect's outer uniform is embroidered with compacted rows of incantations, stitched into the uniform with a thin, similarly colored thread. It is used for protecting the disciple but against something as powerful as this thing. The incantations will be rendered useless with one use. Out of desperation, Wei WuXian could only kick Lan JingYi to serve as a shield for Lan SiZhui's neck.

Lan QiRen huffed, but he must admit the ingenuity Wei WuXian had displayed performing that. The incantations sewn all over the Lan sect's uniform was not unknown to the rest of the cultivation world but not much people, even some of the GuSuLan sect members know when or how to make use of this, making it easy to forget its existence to begin with.

The juniors may have survived this incident by the skin of their teeth, but they had learnt much valuable information that may be useful for future night-hunts.

-

With the creature finally reveal, gone is mystery and comes the horror. Jiang YanLi continues reading though the now unfortunately descriptive text that sounds like a nightmare come true.

Until Wei WuXian awakens the corpses outside which are more afraid of him than they are of this part of the story.

“I never heard of walking corpses being afraid of someone before.” Lan SiZhui commented

“They can tell who I am, usually the low-level corpses and ghosts stay away from me.”

“Heh, too ugly? Even the dead run away from you?”

“Aw, is Jiang shimei jealous of little old me? Don’t worry, I am sure someone will marry you if you lower your standards a little.”

“Your mother is your shimei!!!”

Jiang YanLi smiles waiting for them to finish before reading again.

...

Wei WuXian figured he could use the late Mo family to fight the ghost hand instead, saving the exhausted Lan juniors in the nick of time and awarding them with their first experience of a battle between undeads.

This is the part the juniors remembered the clearest and it is not the last time they will be seeing this sort of thing.

They have only heard of the fight between fierce corpses though rumours and read about it in books. So this is their first time witnessing such a gore-filled undead battle and are unable to advert their eyes. The only thought they had is ‘It is so trilling!’

Now the juniors are avoiding the look Lan QiRen is giving them. Looks like they will be accompanying Lan JingYi after this is over...

...

Seeing the three corpses being close to defeat, Wei WuXian was going to free the whistle he was suppressing but suddenly, two strums echoed though the courtyard from above.

“HanGuang-Jun has such an amazing entrance, as to be expected.” Wei WuXian praises ‘Hopefully he won’t be too mad later...’

...Once he heard the strums, he started to leave.

Wei WuXian tries to ignore the looks he is getting, particularly the one from his right.

Lan WangJi neutralised the ghost hand and the rest of the corpses easily and as most of the people here know, prepare to take the ghost hand back with him.

He tugged on Lan JingYi: “Where did he go?”

“Who? Which one?”

“Young master Mo.”

“Huh? Why do care about that lunatic? He knows that I am going to hit him, so he probably hightailed it out of here.”

Lan WangJi is still only focus on Wei WuXian...

“...”Lan SiZhui always have known that Lan JingYi is careless, tending to be single minded and never has any suspicions-

Lan JingYi looks to Lan SiZhui.

Lan SiZhui smiles back sheepishly.

...

It’s just his luck that the juniors brought someone from the Lan sect but worse than that, that person is Lan WangJi!

Wei WuXian feels the hand on his waist (That appeared when he wasn’t paying attention) tighten.

Something tells him he won’t be walking tomorrow...

...He went up to it and tugged on its reins towards the entrance, the donkey brayed loudly at him complaining. After some difficult coaxing, he convinced the donkey out of its stable and rode off as the sun rises in the horizon.

“So that’s how you got Little Apple*?”

“Of course, what did you expect?”

“But you told us HunGuang-Jun gave it to you!”

“Huh?” Wei WuXian never did have a good memory. “When?”

“At Yi city! You told us that after we said Jin Ling’s dog bit it!”

“And you believed me?”

“...”

Chapter End Notes

1* In case anyone forgot, Han Guang Jun 含光君 is LWJ’s title. It means the gentleman that holds the light. He is given this name due to the people’s belief of his righteousness as he is there wherever there is chaos, helping no matter how small the issue is.

2* The donkey’s name. Xiao PingGuo 小苹果 literally little apple

Hahaha, sorry not sorry to the juniors and WWX
Thanks for reading!

Break 1 - Lotus and pork rib soup

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Before Jiang YanLi can pass the book to her son next to her, MengMo, who has been silent for so long, quite a few of the people present has forgotten about its presence, spoke.

“That is the end of arc one, Mo village. Now, go and take a short break. You are allowed full access to every place in this dream.”

-

Wei WuXian, Wen Ning and the Lan juniors went to explore the place. While most of the adults sat at the stone chairs and tables in the garden, drinking conveniently placed tea.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen...

“How is this, YanLi-mei*?”

“That's perfect, Qing-jie! Now just slice it up. It's wonderful that they have YunMeng waxy lotus roots here!”

"The lotus roots varied by location?"

"Yes, because of the climate. YunMeng is extremely hot but humid. The plantations further up north where it's cold yeid starchy lotus roots. They are lovely mashed and made into paste or cakes but I would never stir-fry or stew them."

Wen Qing nodded: "I imagine those would disintegrate."

"It would turn our clear lotus root and pork rib soup into a creamy lotus porridge." Jiang YanLi giggled.

The only two women present in the dream got along well, despite their different personalities, finding many topics they can bond over such as their younger brothers.

Wen Qing's abundance of medical knowledge thoroughly impressed Jiang YanLi and in return, she told her about cooking which is what she is good at.

Then her famous lotus root and pork rib soup came up and here they are.

"Um, how thick should this be cut?"

Jiang YanLi looked away from where she is blanching the pork ribs to help Wen Qing.

"You can do it roughly. Not too thick but enough to add a crunch to the soup but can't be too-"

A light knock sounded outside the kitchen door.

When Jiang YanLi opened the door, she did not expect Lan WangJi.

...

Soon the three people finished preparing enough portions of soup to feed everyone on the stove.

"The longer you cook the lotus root, the more tender it becomes..."

Wen Qing looked at Lan WangJi who is paying close attention to Jiang YanLi. It's so strange, the second young master of the Lan clan showing up wanting to learn how to make this soup, but Wen Qing knew it must be for Wei WuXian as Jiang YanLi mentioned that this is his favorite.

'Not close my foot.' Wen Qing thought back to the conversation she had with Wei WuXian about Lan WangJi at the mass burial mounds thirteen years ago.

'But it's good to know that Wei WuXian is well care for now.' And she knows Jiang YanLi must be thinking the same.

...

Getting to learn swordplay from his father directly was more than Jin Ling could ever ask for.

He watches his father perform the moves of the Jin clan with SuiHua* like the sword is a part of him.

"Did you get that down? Show it to me-" Jin ZiXuan looked to the distance to notice his wife, Wen Qing and Lan WangJi, each holding a pot walking towards the tables.

...

While Jiang YanLi, Wen Qing and Lan WangJi served the soup, Wei WuXian, Wen Ning and the Lan juniors came back in time upon the scene.

"I know that smell any day! It's my shijie's lotus and pork rib soup!" Wei WuXian exclaimed excitedly dashing forward, the juniors behind him, leaving Wen Ning in their dust.

Wen Ning isn't sure if he should approach.

When ladling the soup for her shidi, Jiang YanLi notices Wen Ning standing awkwardly alone from where he and the others came from. Smiling, she gave the soup to Wei WuXian before ladling another bowl and passing the ladle to Wen Qing.

...

“Young master Wen?” Wen Ning saw someone stand before him, looking up to see Jiang YanLi in front of him.

“!...Mis- I mean, Mrs Jin...” Wen Ning stuttered in surprise.

Jiang YanLi held out the bowl to him like she did back at the mass graves hill.

“Drink it while its hot.” She smiles

“Bu...but...” Wen Ning felt his eyes water ‘I don’t deserve this...’

“You couldn’t drink this back then, correct? I would love to have you try too, now that you can.”

“Mrs Jin... I...”

The woman in front of him closes her eyes and shook her head.

“It is in the past, besides, I am no longer part of the real world anymore. I don’t blame A-Xian and I don’t blame you either. A-Xian always has a reason for the things he does, so I will assume you must have reason for what you did as well...”

She opens her eyes “I am sure that we will get to know about what really happened that day in the book.” She saluted him, turning around to walk back to the tables. “Your sister contributed to that soup too, sit down and enjoy it!”

Wen Ning stood there looking into the soup, holding it a small distance away from his face in hopes that his tears won’t fall into it.

...

Jiang YanLi went back to the serving table, ladled two bowls and walked over to where her husband and son are sitting.

“Be careful not to scald yourself, A-Ling” Jin Ling took the bowl with lightly foggy eyes carefully, fearing he will wake up any second from this dream.

Jiang YanLi smiled softly, sitting down beside Jin Ling before hearing two very familiar voices from the table behind her.

“Wei WuXian! How dare you! That rib was mine!”

“Oi, shimei! What’s wrong with letting your shixiong have this piece? Go get some more yourself.”

“Then why don’t *you* get more yourself? Rather than steal mine? And who are you callin- ”

Jiang YanLi felt a wave of nostalgia, watching her two brothers, reminding her of times they shared at the lotus pier*, when her parents were still alive, her two brothers playing with the about juniors and came back, covered in dirt and hungry, around the same time her soup has finish cooking.

‘How much things have changed, but yet still the same...’ She thought noticing a newcomer at the table, placing another two bowls of soup down and leaning over to wipe Wei WuXian’s lips with a white handkerchief while Jiang Cheng turns away in disgust.

She looked away from that smiling, to focus on her son, enjoying the first time he had ever tried

his mother's soup, not drinking too fast as he wants to savour the moment but afraid to drink it too slowly that the soup becomes cold.

While her attention is fully on her son, she felt someone moved to sit down next to her and held her hand gently.

Jiang YanLi closes her eyes, wishing that this moment will never end.

Chapter End Notes

1* Meimei or mei 妹 meaning younger sister or used in this case, a greeting for a younger female friend.

2* SuiHua 岁华 the name of Jin ZiXuan and now Jin Ling's sword.

And that's the end of the first break, hopefully you guys enjoyed it.

(And yes, I firmly believe that WWX's 'older sisters' will be great friends if they get to know each other. Also, I think Wen Ning needs to hear those words.)

The characters will have a break each time after finishing an arc. Let me know what you want them to do in the future breaks!

Reading Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

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Now that everyone's bellies and memories are full of delicious soup, they walked back to the hall.

A voice spoke lazily: “Finished? *Then we will begin with the first chapter of arc two ‘Dafan mountain’.*”

Jin Ling took the book from his mother, flipped to the right page and start reading in half excitement and half dread.

‘Dafan mountain... That's where I first encounter Wei WuXian. Please tell me I won't be appearing in this chapter! I don't want to read about myself being a brat!’ Jin Ling glanced to his left where his father is. ‘But I don't want my father to read that either...’

In just a few days, Wei WuXian realized that he may have made a mistake.

“Not surprising.”

“Yeah yeah.”

The donkey he conveniently attained has extremely high maintenance.

It's just a donkey but it would only specifically eat fresh, young, green grass with dewdrops hanging off of them and even if the tip is just a bit yellow, it won't eat it-

Light chuckles slips from the lips of some of the people present.

“I think this donkey suits you, young mistress Jin!”

“Wha- Don't compare me to a stupid donkey!”

Jin Ling's mother cups her hand over her mouth, holding her laughter back while patting the back of her son.

Jin ZiXuan doesn't look happy about the 'young mistress Jin' nickname, reminding him of the similar nicknames given to him in his youth. Most memorable being 'Jin peacock*' courtesy of one Wei WuXian.

...It is useless as a mount or a pet!

The juniors laugh to themselves, the donkey in question is still kept at the cloud recesses* although it is testing the Lan sect members' patience with all the noise akin to a rusty window in the wind it makes on a regular basis and almost all hours of the day.

Honestly, Wei WuXian thought they had nothing to complain about. It's free endurance training.

...

Most of the first part of this chapter is the antics between Wei WuXian and the still unnamed donkey which initiates much laughter.

Later on, when Wei WuXian was resting under a tree, some rouge cultivators* showed up to take a break from hunting for something at Dafan mountain.

...These few days, he had destroyed a few graves... Jin Ling's eyebrows furrowed but he doesn't show any of his disdain like he did before and moved on.

Lan QiRen is outright glaring at Wei WuXian.

...It has no effect on him.

...to be his ghost warrior, he decided to-

Jin Ling stopped, rubbing his eyes before looking back to the text.

-to test his luck at big rice mountain...? 'Is this a typo?'

"Oh, I mistook Budda for rice last time*."

A number of people deadpanned at him...

"What? It sounds the same! Anyone could have made that mistake!"

Jin Ling ignores him.

...the girl with the round face took an apple out of her back-basket* and gave it to him. "This is for you."

Most present smiled at the young girl's gesture.

Wei WuXian grinned, that girl is now apart of the GusuLan sect and he sometimes see her feeding the rabbits when the juniors are either in class or out night-hunting.

...Seeing how much the donkey wanted the apple, an idea stuck Wei WuXian...

Jin Ling looked at Wei WuXian with a bored expression

Using a tree branch and a fishing line, he made a simple fishing rod. After tying the apple onto the line, he dangled it in front of the donkey. The donkey smelled the light, sweet scent of the apple and ran forward to eat it. But the apple is always just a small distance away from it each time, making it run faster in order to catch up with it. Soon, it was out of sight, faster than any horse Wei WuXian had ever seen.

Of course, even Wei WuXian's donkey is out of the ordinary.

Nie HuaiSang chuckled "You're awful, Wei-xiong!"

"Hahaha... I know, but how else am I supposed to ride it?"

"Very true."

The 'fan' in Dafan is Buddha not rice, Wei WuXian realizes when he reached the mountain. The mountain is shape like a sitting, chubby and kind Buddha. And there is a small town at the foot of the mountain named Buddha's feet.

The Lan juniors are feeling excited again, they also went to Dafan mountain to night-hunt so they are probably going to appear in this chapter or the next one. Jin Ling on the other hand is the opposite.

...

The town on Buddha's feet is filled with cultivators from all over, trying to be the first to find and defeat the 'soul-consuming spirit or beast' that has been plaguing the residents of Buddha's feet.

Many are using the 'compass of evil*' to locate the evil being but to no avail. Like the cultivator whose conversations are being read out right now.

The two began to argue, Wei WuXian rode past them on the donkey, laughing his heart out. Who knew that after all these years, he is still such a hot topic among the cultivation world, chaos shall be upon who ever speaks of this Wei they said but the one whose popularity would last the longest is probably still Wei WuXian.

Unfortunately true...

Jin Ling looked at the next paragraph before asking Wei WuXian.

"The compass as of now is incomplete?"

The juniors and some of the others who have used the compass before look to Wei WuXian as well. To them, the compass seems just fine and always points to the direction where the dark energy is coming from.

"Technically its complete, but that is just the beta version which is not very accurate. Didn't get a chance to upgrade it."

Why didn't he get a chance to upgrade it? Everyone knows that answer.

Lan WangJi hugged him tightly.

Wei WuXian grins, nearly giving him a peck on his lips before stopping himself due to the expressions on everyone's face.

Laughing to himself, he snuggles into Lan WangJi. ‘Oh well, I guess I’ll be decent for once... Not like there isn’t time for that when we wake up.’

...All of a sudden, the young lady threw her hands into the air and begin dancing madly.

The people who participated in the night-hunt at Dafan mountain knows this is the second victim, Miss A-Yan, daughter of blacksmith Zheng, the third victim.

In the book, Wei WuXian understood the situation by listening to the gossips of the people in Buddha’s feet. At the same time, allowing the people present who didn’t participate in the hunt understand as well.

The conclusion that Wei WuXian came up with at first is that the culprit is likely a soul-consuming spirit, not a soul-consuming beast. Which everyone but the ones who were there agreed as the most plausible culprit.

After coming up with that, Wei WuXian headed off to the mountain unaware of the conversation between the cultivators nearby.

“I never seen someone so unreasonable!”

“He is the leader of a large, famous sect, why does he need to steal prey from us? He must have hunted plenty from a young age!”

Jiang Cheng’s eyes narrowed, figuring they must be talking about him given the current time and location in the book. Plus, he just knows its about him.

“What can we do about it? The guy is a sect leader. The last sect you want to make an enemy of is the Jiang sect, the last person you want to make an enemy of is Jiang Cheng...”

Wei WuXian gaped, he could have avoided everything if he had just stayed there for a few more seconds. But he stopped to think about that.

Would he want to have avoided the whole Dafan incident?

...

No, he wouldn’t have...

If he wasn’t on Dafan mountain that day, would Jin Ling and the Lan juniors still be alive? Would he have known that Wen Ning is still in one piece? Would... would Lan WangJi recognized him? Would he still get to know Lan WangJi? Slowly fall in love with him? And got together with him?

He doesn’t know, but all that matters is that he wouldn’t have it any other way.

...

Meanwhile, Jin Ling finished the chapter, not sure whether to sigh in relief or groan in trepidation as he passes the book to his father.

1* Jin Kong Que 金孔雀 = golden peacock. Jin means gold and kongque is peacock.
But calling him just golden peacock kinda makes it lose its meaning so Jin peacock.

2* Yun Shen Bu Zhi Chu 云深不知处 home of the Lan sect. Translates to
'Secluded/distant/hidden/faraway/unknown plane deep within the clouds'...

So I am sticking with cloud recesses.

3* Rouge cultivator are cultivators that travel around, not belonging to any sect.

4* Bei Xiang 背箱 Imagine a huge backpack made entirely out of wood with two
sticks protruding on top to support a piece of cloth that shields the head of the carrier
from the sun.

5* The place is called Dafan mountain 大梵山 meaning 'Great Buddha mountain' but
WWX mistook it as Dafan mountain 大饭山 meaning 'Big rice mountain' since Fan 梵
and Fan 饭 are homophones.

6* Evil wind compass 风邪盘

So... um thanks for reading...

Reading Chapter 7

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Jin ZiXuan started reading about Wei WuXian going through the forest on Buddha mountain but stopped due to the screams for help in the distance.

Disoriented, disembodied cries in the middle of nowhere are usually the work of an evil being but for Wei WuXian who was searching for such a being to fight for him, this was music to his ears.

Till he found out the voices did actually come from living, breathing people.

And those people are the same group of rouge cultivators that rested under the tree that time.

“They fell into someone's trap? And there's so many in one spot? Whoever it was must be quite rich.” Nie HuaiSang commented

Jin Ling started fidgeting next to Jin ZiXuan.

Jin ZiXuan just assumes he is a bit nervous about his reveal in the next paragraph.

From the darkness of the forest, a teenager dressed in a light-coloured uniform emerges.

This young man has a vermillion mark on his forehead, his features sharp but elegant. He looks young and adolescent, similar to Lan SiZhui, with a canister of arrows on his back and a long sword shining with a golden light while wielding a long bow. His uniform is delicate-looking with very intricate embroidery, sewn on the chest is a majestic white peony, the golden threads on the uniform illuminated amongst the darkness of the night.

Jin ZiXuan approves of this entrance, grinning while his wife ruffled the hair of their son.

And lost his grin a few sentences later.

...“Every single time, it’s always you useless lowlifes-

Jin Ling can feel the questioning looks his parents are giving him on either side of him.

Heck, even Jiang Cheng looked at him.

“Is this how you should be talking? You better hold your tongue now that you are a sect leader yourself.”

“Like you do?”

“Is that how you speak to your senior?”

Jiang YanLi got the feeling that this isn’t the first time these two argue like that.

...there are over four-hundred deity-trapping nets*...”

“Over four hundred...” Nie HuaiSang muttered

Lan QiRen frowned, stroking his beard.

“A-Cheng... even if you want to help A-Ling...” It’s obvious that it must have been Jiang Cheng that placed all the nets in order to help Jin Ling.

Jiang Cheng furrowed his eyebrows but commented nothing.

.....

‘How rich!’ Wei WuXian thought.

Light chuckles.

Wei WuXian pouted, ‘I can’t help it! I’m broke!’

Lan WangJi looks at him with doting eyes, his hand squeezing his cultivation partner’s shoulder.

Lan XiChen looks at them smiling, the look on his younger brother’s face told him he was thinking of all the things he was going to buy for Wei WuXian the next time they go down into town.

Lan QiRen and Jiang Cheng on the other hand, looked away as if their eyes were seared by the sight.

For everyone else, their faces feel a little warm.

Jin ZiXuan goes back to reading once he remembers the book.

...

The rouge cultivators pleaded Jin Ling to let them go which was refused by him because he didn’t want them to set off even more traps despite how dangerous for the cultivators it would be if they stayed defenseless in those nets overnight.

Each word made Jin Ling shift into his seat more, strangely feeling like he just gave his father his less than decent report card.

“See, young mistress Jin, even a donkey has more compassion than you!” Lan JingYi commented

when the part about Little Apple wanting to help the girl was read out.

“JingYi!” Lan SiZhui warned

“Alright already! I get it now, okay!” Jin Ling snapped back

Jin ZiXuan looked at his son. He knows he should feel disappointed in his son but if that was him back in his youth, he would probably have done the same thing, considering how much of a pampered and spoiled, arrogant brat he once was.

Looking to Jiang YanLi, he felt an immense amount of gratitude and love towards his wife. ‘I am really lucky, even with how I treated her in the past, she forgave me and gave me chance.’

...Don’t tell me, Mo XuanYu’s father isn’t the leader of some small sect, but the well-known Jin GuangShan?

‘I knew it...’ Jin ZiXuan thought, he had never liked his father’s womanizer ways.

But that doesn’t mean he wanted him to die, especially in such a way.

Oh, how they have been fooled by that man...

While he was daydreaming, the teenager in front of him looked at him in disgust: “Hurry up and get lost! Damn cutsleeve, just looking at you disgusts me.”

Jin Ling bit his lip.

Just going by age, Mo XuanYu could be this teen’s uncle or senior! And a junior dare to show him such disrespect. Wei WuXian felt that he needs to defend his body’s owner for his sake, and said-

Jin ZiXuan looked at Wei WuXian, not sure whether to be angry at him or not.

Wei WuXian looked down.

-said: “Had a mother to birth you but no mother to teach you.*”

Jiang YanLi covered her mouth in shock.

“I am sorry. I was not thinking straight and really didn’t know who you are at the time.” Wei WuXian gave apologetic salute to Jin Ling.

Jin Ling waves his hands frantically “It’s fine! You didn’t mean it. I’m used to it anyway.” He hates it when someone apologies to him so sincerely.

His parents were heartbroken the moment he said ‘I’m used to it’

Jin Ling held his parents’ hands, one on each side of him. ‘I do have parents, so they can say whatever they want.’

The next part was Jin Ling attacking Wei WuXian but Wei WuXian being much faster, trapped him under a human-shaped talisman* containing a spirit of a man who died from gluttony.

Jiang Cheng looked at Jin Ling in disappointment for him losing to a pathetic trick from a weaponless man with low-cultivation.

Even if said man was his shixiong.

...

“I am his uncle*, do you have any last words?”

Jiang Cheng looked up, he finally made his appearance.

Hearing about Wei WuXian’s response to his appearance, he hid a smirk. ‘Good to know he actually fears me at some point.’

...and quickly ran to Jiang Cheng’s side, pointing at Wei WuXian shouting “I am going to break your legs!”

“You know, that might as well be you and your jiujie’s catchphrase.” Wei WuXian commented despite the tense scene in the book.

The Lan juniors wholeheartedly agreed with him, Jin Ling said that phrase nearly every time they night-hunted together, towards them, a passer-by speaking nonsense or their target.

Jin Ling and Jiang Cheng looked at each other before glaring at Wei WuXian who just whistled to himself.

...now he even hates those that cultivate the same path as him!

“Tch...” ‘....I don’t... I *can’t*...hate you...’

...A flash of blue light from a sword appeared, meeting Jin Ling’s sword head on.

Wei WuXian grins hugging Lan WangJi “You’re the best!”

Lan WangJi hugs him back tenderly “Mm.”

‘Can I please get through this chapter first?...’ It’s bad enough that he got the biggest shock of his life? Afterlife?, learning that Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian, two people that seem like eternal rivals get together and married without being force-fed dog kibble*.

Lan WangJi finally made his official appearance.

And Wei WuXian’s description of him was absolutely lovely.

Mourning clothes!

Well, most of it is.

It really is like ‘Mourning clothes’. The rest of the cultivation world sings the praises of the Lan sect’s uniform as the best looking out of all the sect’s uniforms and paired up with Lan WangJi, who is an immortally gorgeous man that one could only have the honor to meet once in many lifetimes. But all that together could not help the deep bitterness in his expression as if his wife had passed.

...Which is unfortunately accurate.

Lan WangJi looked down, pulling Wei WuXian closer to himself.

...

Jiang Cheng greeted Lan WangJi with obvious disdain in his words, making it uncomfortable to listen to but not affecting Lan WangJi.

Instead, he got to the point, having Lan SiZhui speak to Jin Ling about his behavior to which he did not take in seriously.

Both Wei WuXian and Jiang YanLi sighed internally, the boy is just like his jiujiu.

Lan WangJi's brows furrowed. Later, Jin Ling found himself unable to speak-

Jin Ling grimaced at the memory. The juniors in the Lan sect had it rough.

...

Lan WangJi destroyed all the traps on Dafan mountain, provoking Jiang Cheng to stroke his ring as the chapter ends on that cliffhanger.

Chapter End Notes

1* Fu Xian Wang 缚仙网, special nets for trapping spirits and monsters. Expensive and can only be cut by a magical weapon.

2* You Niang sheng mei niang yang 有娘生没娘养 It's a phrase to scold a disrespectful child. It means 'you have a mother to give birth to you, but you don't have a mother to teach/raise you' seeing a how ill-mannered you are.

3* Ren Xing Zhi 人型纸 Human-shaped paper usually used in rites, curses and exorcisms. Like the Japanese 'Hitogata', it represents a human, a replacement for a human or a vessel for a human spirit.

4* In Chinese, the words for paternal uncle and maternal uncle are different. (It's different for aunt as well) In Chinese, JC is JL's Jiu Jiu 舅舅 while JGY is JL's Shu Shu 叔叔

5* Gou Liang 狗粮... It's... a Chinese joke. It means dog food. Those who are single are usually referred to as 'single dogs' and in this case, forced to watch a real couple's affection for each other.

Thanks for reading!

And, I have an announcement to make later or tomorrow, so... please read it when it's posted.

Reading Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
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“ ” = Talking

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Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

...

I'm back! Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Jin ZiXuan passes the book to Jiang Cheng who took it reluctantly, glaring at nothing in general.

Despite that, after stroking it for some time, Jiang Cheng forced himself to restrain his hostility.

Jiang Cheng rolled his eyes, looking at that. ‘Of course I couldn’t do anything! I had enough problems on my hands!’

But reading about your own actions and words still invokes some awkwardness in the reader so Jiang Cheng just breezes through the first part of the chapter.

...Jiang Cheng turned around and spoke in a voice barbed as if covered in spikes: “Why are you still standing there? Waiting for your prey to impale itself on your sword? Today, if you don’t catch this thing on Dafan mountain, don’t come and find me again!”

“ChengCheng~ You’ll hurt someone’s feelings saying that~

“Get lost”

The Jiang Cheng in the book left the scene, finally. Lan WangJi gave his orders to the Lan juniors, luckily ignoring Lan JingYi’s rule breaking.

Lan QiRen glares at the teen but closes one eye.

‘SiZhui is right... I need to think before I speak...’

...After some time, Lan WangJi spoke again: “Do what you can, never force anything.”

“ChengCheng, look! You should take notes from Lan Zhan, do you even how to raise a kid?”

“Shut up, like you can do any better!”

“Course I can, ask the juniors! He turned to look at the kids he had just place in a tight spot, grinning “Right?”

The Lan juniors and Jin Ling looked at each other reluctant to answer.

“Of course, senior Wei!” Lan SiZhui smiled back at him and the rest of the juniors followed, even Jin Ling nodded.

‘Whatever makes you happy, as long as HanGuang-Jun stops staring at us...’

Wei WuXian beamed, his face lighting up beautifully as his partner turns his eyes to stare at him adoringly.

Wen Qing looked at her nephew questionably, but he only gave a half-hearted smile and shrug to her.

Wen Ning stays silent.

Jiang Cheng was disgusted.

...

...While he was thinking, he noticed Lan WangJi giving him a nod in the corner of his eye-

Jiang Cheng looks to Lan WangJi: 'He must have recognized Wei WuXian on Dafan mountain, but it doesn't seem like he knows at this time.'

Lan WangJi has been a painfully serious person from a young age, a real stick in the mud, so rigid and dignified that he most likely had never been active before. Unable to tolerate even a single grain of sand in his eyes, he had always disapproved of the path Wei WuXian cultivates.

Lan WangJi frowns deeply at that, eyes still focused on Wei WuXian. ‘Is this the only impression I made on him back then?...’

He only disapproved of the ghost path as it damages the body and mind of the cultivator, but he never once asked him why is he cultivating it, if he had a reason for using it and only kept telling him to give it up, resulting in them fighting all the time.

He really was an idiot.

Wei WuXian and Lan XiChen frowns as well being the only people present here that can read Lan WangJi’s seemingly never changing face.

Wei WuXian changes his frown into a smile, squeezing Lan WangJi’s hand tigh-

Jiang Cheng angrily tore his eyes away from the sight.

‘Stupid Wei WuXian! Stupid cutsleeves! Let me finish the chapter already!’

...

He won't pursue the hunt anymore, no matter what creature resides in Dafan mountain. He Wei WuXian, will fight anyone for the prey but Jin Ling.

Jian YanLi smiles sadly. 'A-xian... It wasn't your fault...'

Jiang Cheng is having a hard time reading the next paragraph.

...If it were someone else who had said those words to Jin Ling, he would have taught him what is 'chaos is created from one's mouth*'. But the one who said that, was himself.

After a moment of silence, Wei WuXian gave himself a harsh slap.

"Aren't you remarkable?"

"..."

Jiang Cheng sneered, continuing to read the next sentence.

The sound of the impact echoed, his right cheek burning from the pain-

'It's always like this... every time, you must keep reminding me how much better you are than me...'

"Jiang Chen-"

"Zip it"

Jiang Cheng continues ignoring the guilt suffocating him.

...

As Wei WuXian heads down the mountain, paying no attention to the other cultivators that were now free from the traps after Lan WangJi cut them all down.

Wei WuXian decided not to interfere with the other cultivators, but Jiang Cheng wished he had so he doesn't have to read their gossip.

A group of disciples in many different sects' uniform complained as they walked: "Look at that young master Jin, the Jin and Jiang clan spoiled him too much, so arrogant and unreasonable at such a young age. Once he takes over the LanLing Jin sect, we're all doomed!"

Jiang Cheng strokes his ring with his thumb.

Wei WuXian slows down.

"Are you an idiot? Just go!" Jin Ling shouted at Wei WuXian

He grins at him "Aw~ you finally care about your shishu*!"

Jin Ling grits his teeth in frustration.

A soft-hearted female cultivator sighed: "How could they not dote on him? He lost his

parents when he is still so young.”

“ Shimei, you cannot think this way. There are many others who have lost their parents as well, if they all act like him, then what will this world be like?”

“I can’t believe that Wei Wu-

Jiang Cheng chucks the book to Nie HuaiSang on his left, who obediently continues reading for him.

-Wei WuXian is that cruel. Jin Ling’s mother is Jiang Cheng’s older sister by blood and the shijie that raised him.”

“ Jiang Yan-

“Read it faster!”

“O- okay!”

Nie HuaiSang sped past the gossips, stumbling over a few words. Not that anyone cares.

This is a young and unfamiliar face, not the YiLing LaoZu Wei WuXian that overtook the world by storm and has the blood of over a thousand people on his hands.

He stared at his face for some time, before wiping it and his eyes again. Then plopping down at the edge of the stream.

He was used to hearing others badmouthing him, it was his own choice after all, he is the one who chose to go down this path and his heart knows what it will lead to long ago. Always, he tells himself to remember the teachings of the Yunmeng Jiang sect – ‘To attempt the impossible.’

He tried to harden his heart. But in the end, he is a person. Not a tree.

Lan juniors lowered their heads, remembering what HanGuang-Jun told them when Wei WuXian collapsed on the boat.

‘He is human’

No matter how powerful is the YiLing LaoZu, he is human. And what human doesn’t get tired? Or sad?

...

Nie HuaiSang read about the donkey pulling Wei WuXian to some trees, where he found a QianKun bag* some unlucky cultivator dropped after escaping the trap and in it is many night-hunting supplies including a Yin energy-burning talisman* that burst into flames.

“There’s a ghost nearby?” The junior next Nie HuaiSang asked, trying to peek at the book.

It was an old man’s ghost, complaining about his hurting head.

“Weird, with the so-called ‘soul-consuming’ spirit out there, why is there a stray dead soul?” Wen Qing commented herself but Lan SiZhui next to her heard it clearly. ‘I saw the spirit of the old man

before, and many other stray spirits around but I didn't even think about how strange it is.' Lan SiZhui promises himself that he will be more observant. Like senior Wei and his aunt is.

...

The Wei WuXian in the book realized something is wrong and started heading up the mountain again.

The pieces coming together in everyone's minds as Wei WuXian learns about the goddess cave that the juniors had departed for.

The slugger's marriage, the coffin struck by lighting, the fiancé eaten by wolves, father and daughter losing their souls, the extravagant clothes... the beads are rolling into place now, the entire thing forming. No wonder the compass cannot detect anything and the flag not working. Everyone had underestimated the creature of Dafan mountain. It's not what they think it is !

'No, it certainly was not...' Jin Ling thought to himself

"You are amazing, senior Wei!" The junior three seats from Nie HuaiSang cheered "Just using these little clues, you figured out what everyone couldn't solve!"

Wei WuXian rubbed the bottom of his nose "Hahaha, it's nothing, it's nothing! Gain more experience, in the future, you will be able to figure these things out as well!"

The junior's eyes sparkled.

"You know, that's nice and all but I still don't know what that thing is."

"Jin peacock, that is your own problem. Don't ruin my encouragement!"

Jin ZiXuan frowned at the nickname, he wasn't as arrogant as he is in his youth anymore...

"Fine, don't spoil it then. HuaiSang-xiong, continue."

Nie HuaiSang's face emerges from behind the book.

"But, that's the end of the chapter."

"Technically, that's the end of shimei's chapter. You're suppose to read the next chapter."

"I don't know, if I read the next chapter. I would have ended up reading an extra half chapter."

"But if you don't read that, you'll only have read half a chapter."

"I really don't know..."

"Just read the next one already!"

"Alright, alright!"

"Shimei, that is called bullying~"

"Just get lost!"

Chapter End Notes

1*Huo Cong Kou Chu 祸从口出 a phrase meaning misfortune/chaos/trouble comes from one's words.

2* Shi Shu 师叔 An uncle related by sect/teacher rather than of blood.

3* QianKun Dai 乾坤袋 a cloth pouch with incantations on it to enable it to contain nearly limitless amount items in a different space. (Like Doraemon's pocket)

4*燃阴符 Yin-burning talisman

Thanks for your patience!

Reading Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

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Nie HuaiSang reluctantly flipped the page.

The Lan juniors and countless other cultivators were already in the goddess temple.

The goddess the villagers of Buddha's feet worshiped is a naturally formed statue of a woman dancing described as very detailed and life-like. So much so that there are many legends surrounding it, all quite decently well-known.

Nie HuaiSang with his love for art, always wanted to see it for himself. But, from what he heard, it's in pieces now. At least now he got to read about it.

A voice full of disdain came from outside the cave: “It's a stupid rock that god-knows which idiot claims to be a goddess and placed it here to receive incense and worship!”

Jin Ling shifted behind his parents slightly.

Jin Ling came in, arms crossed behind his back*. The silence spell* doesn't last very long and sure enough, once he can speak again, nothing good comes out.

Jin Ling shifts more as some of the Lan juniors turned to look at him.

‘Come on, how would I know that thing is legit...’

Glaring at the goddess statue, he spoke to everyone: “These villagers, when something happens, they always just pray to the gods instead of doing anything themselves. There are thousands of people in this world, the gods have their own problems already, why would they care about them? Not to mention this nameless wild god with no status. If it really is so effective, then I am going to make a wish now, I want the thing consuming souls on Dafan mountain to appear right before me now, can it do that?”

Jiang Cheng had turned to glare at Jin Ling halfway through the paragraph. He didn't know all the details of that night due to certain distractions, but he at least knew the creature in question is in fact the goddess statue which he now also knew started attacking due to his nephew's reckless words.

“Think before you speak next time! You could have died due to your foolish actions!”

Jin Ling lowers his head, clenching his fists but doesn't argue.

...

But, he felt a sense of familiarity from that smile, as if he had seen it somewhere before.

But where?

Now he knows, the maiden, A-Yan had the same smile on her face ever since her soul returned to her.

Nie HuaiSang already has his suspicions when a random cultivator suddenly suffers from the same symptoms as the other victims.

The goddess statue has revealed herself just as Jin Ling wished.

Wei WuXian rushed inside to attack the statue with what he found in the QianKun bag from before, warning everyone about the statue.

Sadly, as per usual, no one listens to him.

Wei WuXian sighs shaking his head “Here's a lesson for all of you, when you know you are outmatched, there is no shame in calling it quits.”

Jin Ling tsked, as the Lan juniors nodded at him attentively.

Nie HuaiSang wholeheartedly agreed with that statement, that's what he usually do.

Finally, the other cultivators realized how futile their efforts are being and started to escape from the statue. But that made Wei WuXian's task of finding Jin Ling more difficult and instead, bumped into the Lan juniors.

...Wei WuXian called out to them: “Children!”

‘Looks like that kid is in trouble again...’ Nie HuaiSang thought to himself, thank the goddess of mercy he only repeated school 3 times.

Lan JingYi replied: “Who are your children! Do you know what sect we're from? You think you are our senior now that you washed your face?!”

“Five times”

Nearly everyone turns to Lan WangJi, forgotten about the punishments.

“JingYi, rules, five times”

“Huh!?” ‘It's not over?! I thought it was three times, how did it increase by two?????’

“Rule one hundred and twenty-four, show respect to your seniors.”

Lan QiRen nodded proudly.

Lan JingYi wanted to cry so badly, remembering the times he was disrespectful to Wei WuXian.

Nie HuaiSang hid behind the book.

“Okay okay okay, gege. Fire a signal and get your sect’s... that Han Guang Jun up here!”

The juniors nodded, searching for the flare while running. A while later, Lan SiZhui answered: “The signal flare... all of it was used up that night at Mo village.”

‘Oh no...’ Is a shared thought between the Lan juniors...

Wei WuXian was shocked: “You didn’t restock?!”

The flares are usually only used once in a blue moon, Lan SiZhui mumbled: “We forgot...”

The Lan sect’s seniors present looked to the juniors in disappointment.

Wei WuXian tried to scare them: “Is this something you should forget? Once your HanGuang-Jun found out about this, all of you are in trouble!

Lan WangJi nodded as if agreeing. “Each one of you, ten times.”

Lan juniors: Σ(° □ ° ;)

Lan JingYi’s face is as pale as ash: “It’s over, Han Guang Jun is going to punish us to death this time...”

Nie HuaiSang reads, as if narrating the current scenario.

Wei WuXian: “Yes. You should be punished! Then you will remember next time.”

“Do the handstand as well.”

...

“Saw, and? What’s near the ancient gravesite?”

“What else, dead souls”

“Exactly, souls of the deceased. Therefore, it can’t be a soul-consuming beast or spirit. If it was either of these, with so many dead souls floating around, will it not eat those? No.”

The seniors present either agreed or finally understood.

More than one person asked this time: “Why?”

“What can-

Nie HuaiSang hid a smile.

“-What can I say about your GusuLan sect...” Wei WuXian couldn’t stand it anymore-

“...”

“Can’t they teach less long useless rubbish that needs to be memorized like cultivational etiquette and family history and teach more practical things?-

Lan QiRen wanted to continue glaring at Wei WuXian but couldn’t deny what he said.

Lan XiChen tries to calm his uncle down: “Uncle, calm down. WuXian does have a point...”

“Hmh! It was not long, *useless* rubbish! It is to show respect to those before you and improve yourself by learning from their actions!”

'Yeah, learning that some guy married some weaver girl 200 hundred years ago and had about five kids who just happened to be related to you totally teaches you to hunt ghosts better...' Wei WuXian thought but wisely kept his mouth shut on this one.

“-What is so difficult to understand? A dead soul is much easier to absorb compared to a living soul. The body of a living person is like a barrier, so you have to destroy this barrier in order to eat the soul. For example...” He looked to the donkey, panting and rolling it’s eyes while running: **“Like if an apple is placed in front of you and another is in a locked box, which one would you choose to eat? Obviously the one the front of you. This creature only eats living souls and has a way to obtain them, which means it is very picky and very powerful.”**

Jin Ling doesn’t want to admit it, but he was impressed. His mind trying to soak up the information.

Jiang YanLi clapped lightly “A-Xian is so clever!”

Wei WuXian grinned at her, taking a small bow. He loves being complimented, especially by his shijie and now that extends to Lan WangJi as well, feeling his grip tight on his shoulder.

Jiang Cheng rolls his eyes while Jin ZiXuan pouted.

Lan JingYi was astonished: “Is that how it is? That make a lot of sense! Wait, does that mean you’re not a lunatic?!”

“You’re so slow, Wei WuXian’s lunatic act isn’t even consistent.”

“Young mistress Jin, that is the pot calling the kettle black! You called him a lunatic as well!”

“Yeah, but I wasn’t at Mo village. Does his actions seem like what a madman would do?”

“He kicked me!”

“Hello~ If I didn’t kick you to block that attack, SiZhui-er* would have been dead, besides, you weren’t actually hurt.”

“Barely...”

“JingYi~ You must move on from the past, so you can look to the future~”

Lan JingYi huffed and was about to respond till he notices Lan WangJi staring at him pointedly (Not that he could tell).

'Rule one hundred and twenty-four, show respect to your seniors.'

"..." Lan JingYi wisely kept his mouth shut.

Nie HuaiSang carried on with the chapter where Wei WuXian explained how he knew it was the goddess statue.

Lan JingYi asks: "What's wrong?"

Wei WuXian replied: "Everything! How does a good-for-nothing broke afford to hold such a grand wedding?"

The teenagers are speechless. Not that you can blame them, the GusuLan clan certainly is a family that doesn't need to worry about money-

"Oh, so I guess only someone like senior Wei would notice something like this!"

Wei WuXian coughed: "Is that supposed to be a compliment?"

"But you were the only person who figured this case out!"

"Are you indirectly calling me broke?"

"You told us yourself at the mass burial hills, you can't possibly kidnap us because you don't have the money to hire people to do it."

Wei WuXian pouted, ever since he had been reborn, everything he does seems to backfire onto himself. Maybe he should let the juniors go on their next night hunt with limited allowance to teach them how valuable money is.

Lan WangJi bent down a little to whisper into Wei WuXian's ear, whatever he said, everyone else couldn't hear but it seems to cheer Wei WuXian up.

...

Nie HuaiSang reads out what Wei WuXian thinks happened to the first three victims.

Lan SiZhui asks: "How about Miss A-Yan?"

Wei WuXian answered: "Good question. All of you should have asked around before climbing up the mountain. A-Yan was just engaged, and all recently engaged girls would have the same wish.

Lan JingYi was bewildered: "What kind of wish?"

Wei WuXian responded: "No other than, 'I wish my husband will always care for me and love me for his whole life, only attracted to myself.'

"I promise"

"Huh?" Wei WuXian turned to where the voice came from.

Lan WangJi turned to look into his eyes tenderly.

"I promise" He repeated

Wei WuXian felt a rare warmth on his face and hugged him.

“Lan er-gege*! You’re the best!”

‘...Wei-xiong. I’m already full...can I go back to reading now?...‘

...

Nie HuaiSang finally finish reading the explanation for the goddess and the first three victims.

Lan JingYi exclaimed: “Hold on! Just now in the goddess temple, someone got their soul taken, but we didn’t hear him make a wish!”

Wei WuXian’s heart skipped a beat, stopping his movement: “Someone got their soul absorb in the goddess temple? Tell me what happen just now, everything, don’t leave out any details.”

As expected, it was Jin Ling’s reckless wish that provoked the goddess into attacking.

“A-Ling, I hoped you learned your lesson.”

“Yes, father...”

...The soul-consuming goddess’s features were originally vague, only her large eyes, nose and ears were visible but now that she has absorbed countless cultivator’s souls, she has developed clear facial features. A smiling woman with blood dripping from her mouth and gnawing on a severed arm.

The Lan juniors shivered from the description. Luckily, they don’t remember that scene well since they ran away on the first glance. And the woods being pitch black at the time helped.

The donkey immediately made a break for it.

Everyone immediately followed the donkey.

Lan SiZhui was terrified: “That’s not right! The YiLing LaoZu said that it is the high-level ones that consumes souls while the low-level ones eat flesh!”

Wei WuXian couldn’t help but comment: “Why are you blindly believing in him? Even his inventions were a mess!”

“...” ‘...’ “...”

“I never thought you were the type to self-hate...”

“...”

It seems to get awkward now that everyone knows that Mo XuanYu is actually the YiLing LaoZu Wei WuXian now...

“...”-these rules don’t always apply to every situation! Think of it as an infant, when it doesn’t have teeth, it can only eat stuff like congee, but once it grows up, it would want to eat

meat with it's teeth. Her powers had just grown drastically, so naturally she wants to taste something new!

“...There's something I don't get, why does everyone think my standards are absolute? It's always just a guide for most-case scenarios, not to be used on everything. Besides, this thing isn't even one of the four*, it's a goddess!”

‘Because you're the YiLing LaoZu...’ But nobody humored him with an answer.

...Jin Ling stood on a cliff not too far away, a second arrow already in place on his bow. He released it, sending another head-piecing shot, so powerful that the soul-consuming goddess was pushed back a few steps.

Jin ZiXuan would have been proud if his son isn't up against something that is immune to cultivational weapons...

Cultivators are dying left and right, Jin Ling is ignoring Lan SiZhui's request to fire a flare even though his arrows aren't having any effect on the goddess just as Wei WuXian said they wouldn't.

With both powerful veteran cultivators Lan WangJi and Jiang Cheng on standby all the way back in town, the only one who could stand chance against the goddess was Wei WuXian.

So, he took action, borrowing Lan SiZhui's sword to make a makeshift flute out of bamboo.

...Lan JingYi covered his ears, shouting: “Look at the situation right now, why are you playing a flute?! It's awful!”

“Why don't you try playing a flute that is just randomly chopped bamboo? Be glad it can even make a sound!” Wei WuXian complained indignantly.

“Yes! I am sorry!” ‘Please don't make me copy any more times...’

...his blood rushing to his head: “If couldn't cut her head off with this strike, I am going to die – so be it!”

“A-Ling!” Jiang YanLi hugged her son tightly

“I am sorry mom... I won't be so reckless anymore...”

All of a sudden, from within the forest on Dafan mountain, a clanging sound can be heard.

Wen Ning looked up.

...The sounds ended abruptly, a figure emerging from the darkness.

“Mr Ghost General's entrance was so cool!” One of the younger juniors cheered remembering the scene.

Wen Ning hid a small smile.

“...’The ghost general’, ‘it's the ghost general’, ‘it's Wen Ning!’

Wen Qing sighs.

Wei WuXian looks at Wen Ning, remembering the wave of emotions he felt that night when he found out Wen Ning hasn't really been turned to ash.

The title 'Ghost general, and the YiLing LaoZu's, are notoriously known far and wide, often appearing together.

The hall strangely smells like vinegar*...

Regardless, Nie HuaiSang finished the chapter and handed it over to the Lan junior next to him.

Chapter End Notes

1* In ancient China, men, usually the ones of high status, walk with their hands crossed behind their back to show superiority. Contrast to women, who walk with their hand covering the other in front of them.

2* Silence spell 禁言术 Jin Yan Shu (If you translate it literally, its 'stop/prevent speech/talk spell...')

3* SiZhui-er 思追儿 This is an affectionate way of addressing one's child.

4* Second brother Lan is kinda weird and not as endearing, so I went with Lan er-gege. (er 二 = two or second)

5* One of the four is referring to the four types of 'evil' creatures. Yao Mo Gui Guai 妖魔鬼怪 or Yao, Demon, Ghost, Monster

6* In Chinese, jealous is Chi Cu 吃醋 but if you translate in literally, it's 'eat vinegar'. Which is why LWJ is often referred to as a vinegar jar.

Reading Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

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The Lan junior took the book, saluting Nie HuaiSang at the same time.

His slightly younger classmate next to him leaned over curiously.

Wen Ning had his head down, his arms hung as if he were a marionette waiting for the orders of the one pulling his strings.

Wen Qing shook her head.

But what really upsets her is the mention of the chains on her younger brother.

She sighs again. Her silly little brother...

“Jie, it's fine now...”

...

Due to Wen Ning's sudden 'return from the dead', everyone on scene forgot about the soul-consuming goddess who took the opportunity to grab Jin Ling.

If weren't for the knowledge that their son is alive and well, Jin ZiXuan and Jiang YanLi may have already fainted by now.

When he saw her opened mouth getting closer to Jin Ling's face, Wei WuXian couldn't care less about his surprise and lifted the bamboo flute to his lips again. His hands are trembling a little, so the tune blown out is too. Along with the fact that this was a roughly crafted crude flute, the sound from it sounds hoarse and unpleasant. With a few notes, Wen Ning began to move.

Jin Ling bit his lip, Wei WuXian was risking his own life for his own stupidity.

‘This type of person... is so difficult to hate.’

Jin ZiXuan made a genuine salute to Wei WuXian in gratitude which he responded with his own.

...

Wen Ning proved to be effective on the soul-consuming goddess. With his strength, unrestrained unlike how it was when he was alive, he twisted her head to her back with a single smack, stunning her enough to chop off the hand holding Jin Ling and later smashing the goddess to bits with a boulder.

Not surprising, everyone here knows how powerful the Ghost General is. What’s more surprising is-

“What do you mean by A-Ning is ‘not conscious’?”

Wei WuXian sighed, answering her question but not giving too much away: “Exactly what it sounds like, he is not thinking for himself. Like a normal fierce corpse.”

“Is that why he never spoke all those times we see him before the second siege on mass graves hill?” The junior holding the book currently asks.

Wen Ning nodded

“I am sure we will know more about that from the book. GaoWen*, continue please.”

The junior obeys his sect leader at once.

Amidst the white pieces of the statue, a pearl with a snow-white glow rolled out. It is the core condensed after the soul-consuming goddess ate the living souls of over ten people, if handled carefully, the people who lost their souls not too long ago can be revived. But right now, no one cared about it and instead turn their swords that was once pointed at the goddess.

A cultivator shouted at the top of his lungs: “Surround him!”

“Yeah, let’s *totally* ignore the thing that could save the lives of many people and surround the guy that saved all of us...” The junior currently reading hears Lan JingYi muttering to himself.

He couldn’t agree more.

...

The other cultivator now target Wen Ning, believing it would bring them more glory. Somehow, they have the guts to try and face him even with how infamously powerful he was, and he had just literally destroyed a goddess they nearly died to a mere minute ago.

...That person shouted again: “What’s there to be afraid of, the YiLing LaoZu isn’t here!”

‘Yes, I am’

If you think about it again, that’s true, what’s there to be afraid of, his master... Fu GaoWen stops for a bit ...his master is already in pieces!

This is really nothing new. However, after getting to know the guy that now their (sometimes) beloved senior, the juniors couldn’t help but feel rage for his sake.

...

The cultivators drew closer and closer to Wen Ning but with a swing, the chain attached to Wen Ning became a deadly weapon, sending the swords flying.

Without his conscience and urgency of Wei WuXian's playing, Wen Ning is now attacking everyone nearby. Realizing this, Wei WuXian started to play a tune much more soothing to calm Wen Ning.

Wei WuXian's fingers entwined with Lan WangJi's.

Fu GaoWen and his fellow juniors remembered this part. Like the first song, it sounds terrible due to the roughness of the crude bamboo flute and it was difficult to tell, but this song is much calmer and gentler than the first song. If Wei WuXian plays this song now with ChenQing*, it would've been a lovely song.

Wen Ning, the only person here other than Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi who somewhat knew the significance of that song, smiled.

It really was lovely.

...

After some time, Wen Ning lessened his grip and dropping the cultivator on the floor, he lowered his arms and started walking towards Wei WuXian step by step.

"You know you're blowing your cover, right?" Wen Qing quirked an eyebrow

Wei WuXian shrugged "Going to happen sooner or later."

"What cover? You weren't even trying to act differently!"

"Shimei, I look different, people think I am crazy and a cutsleeve. What more do you need?"

"Anyone who knows you will be able to tell!"

"Then why would you need to set tha-that DOG on me to tell?!"

"Best way to confirm."

Wei WuXian: "Lan Zhan Lan Zhan... he bullied me..." ;_;

Lan WangJi: -Glare-

Jiang Cheng felt goosebumps "... 'Damn cutsleeves! Don't think that now you have second young master Lan I will be afraid of you!' "

'Should I read now?...' "

...

Wei WuXian continued playing and walking backwards until he bumped into a certain someone.

"Lan Zhan~ You gripped me soooo tightly that time! My wrist nearly snapped!" Wei WuXian pouted

“Won’t have”

“But still! You better make it up to me!”

“Mm”

“...Um, GaoWen-Shixiong...continue please...” Fu GaoWen goes back to reading with that encouragement from his fellow blushing junior beside him.

...

Lan WangJi gripped Wei WuXian’s wrist tightly, making it difficult for him to play the flute. Regardless, Wei WuXian withstood the pain and continued playing to get his old friend to leave.

...So what if he had seen? The amount of people who knows how to play a flute can reach tens of thousands and the sheer number of those who copy the YiLing LaoZu’s method of controlling corpses with a flute can form a whole sect. I won’t admit no matter what!

‘Ah, I didn’t know how futile my efforts were... He already knows...’

As if to prove that further, Wei WuXian’s hand was tightly squeezed.

...

Wei WuXian managed to get Wen Ning away before dropping the bamboo flute on the floor out of pain and the other cultivators to catch up.

Then Jiang Cheng showed up.

He made himself wait for news at the town of Buddha’s feet but before he even finished his cup of tea, a disciple hurried down the mountain and told him how ferocious the creature of Dafan mountain was. Hearing this, his heart skipped a beat and rushed up here shouting: “A-Ling!”

Jiang Cheng glared at Jin Ling, his eyes roughly conveying the message: ‘You only know how to cause trouble for me. If that Wei WuXian didn’t show up, you wouldn’t be sitting here now!’

Jin Ling looked away, abusing his lower lip.

...

Jiang Cheng proceeds to reprimand Jin Ling who responded as you will expect, resulting in yet another fight between uncle and nephew.

Those two are much alike that their personalities clash all the time.

Even if they won’t admit it.

Jin Ling, ‘I didn’t say anything wrong. Him scolding me for this makes him a hypocrite.’

Jiang Cheng, ‘Damn brat, didn’t discipline him enough...’

...

...A cultivator, his eyes still unmoving due to shock, spoke: “Sect- sect leader, it’s...it’s Wen

Ning...”

‘Huh?’

“I thought the problem was the sentient, people eating rock.” The junior beside Lan JingYi muttered to his classmates.

“Yes, but I don’t think I remembered it anymore after all that...” The gentler junior next to Fu GaoWen commented

“Me neither, I think...” Fu GaoWen responded back before continuing.

...

To say Jiang Cheng wasn’t pleased with this information is an understatement.

That disciple spoke: “It really was Wen Ning! Most definitely! I couldn’t have made a mistake! ...” He suddenly pointed to a side. “...He summoned him!”

And that cultivator just had to point out who summoned Wen Ning.

Jiang Cheng took notice of the Wei WuXian in Mo XuanYu’s body, still gripping Lan WangJi’s arm and whipped out ZiDian*.

Luckily, Lan WangJi took notice of the attack and blocked it with a strum of his WangJi* zither*.

“I love you so much Lan Zhan!” Wei WuXian hugs Lan WangJi from his side, head resting on his partner’s shoulder now that their height differences isn’t as much.

“Mm” Lan WangJi face seem indifferent to the untrained eye but Wei WuXian (and a select few) can see the pink tips of his ears.

Only when Lan QiRen coughed (containing his anger) from beside Lan WangJi that Wei WuXian remembered he was in front of others.

...

Lan WangJi and Jiang Cheng fought, the WangJi zither against the ZiDian whip.

Because of Lan WangJi defending him, Wei WuXian wasn’t hurt. Which made everyone(including the people here now) think Wei WuXian had a death wish when he ran off.

As expected, Jiang Cheng took notice of his target out of Lan WangJi’s protection and struck him in the back, sending him flying into the donkey.

“Jiang ChengCheng!~ You were so mean! It hurts!”

Jiang Cheng scoffed in disgust, “You deserved it.”

...

Despite flying off from the force of the whip, Wei WuXian seems quite unharmed. He just got up and started complaining.

But everyone else at the scene was confounded by that result.

ZiDian's ability is well known amongst the cultivational world and it was unheard of to fail in removing a possessing spirit before.

But Wei WuXian thought: "Of course ZiDian couldn't extract my soul. I am not possessing someone, I am offered a body. Offered on me by force!"

"Oh! So you were just trying to clear your name!"

"JingYi~ Of course I have a reason for doing that, who in the right mind would just allow themselves to be whipped like that?"

'...No offence senior Wei, but we have come to expect that sort of thing from you...'

Wei WuXian rubbed the bottom of his nose, he knew what the juniors are probably thinking but he sees no point in denying it.

Instead, he looked to his partner.

"Lan Zhan Lan Zhan, what do you think? Want to *try* that sometim-"

But he received a tight nearly desperate squeeze on his shoulder.

'?' Wei WuXian looked up to Lan WangJi's face.

Lan WangJi's eyes looked back almost heartbrokenly.

Wei WuXian gave him a light kiss on the neck.

He knew Lan WangJi enough to decipher that.

'If Mo XuanYu hadn't force upon a contract with me. Would I have willingly return to this world?'

They both knew the answer to that.

...

As mentioned, ZiDian has never failed before. But Jiang Cheng, fully convinced that this person is his once sworn-brother, refused to accept it and nearly tried again which was stopped by Lan JingYi's outburst.

A man that cares so much about his and his sect's reputation as much as Jiang Cheng couldn't risk losing his face* over this. So he simply asks (demanded) his identity.

A cultivator on the side-lines answered his question. Mo XuanYu, an ex-disciple from the LanLing Jin sect but from chased out due to his low cultivation and his apparent mental health condition.

Conveniently enough, Mo XuanYu's backstory made him an extremely unlikely candidate for Wei WuXian to choose.

...This extremely quick-tempered Jiang sect leader ranks at number five, one rank below. A fact that no one is willing to bring up...

Said quick-tempered Jiang sect leader's eyebrow twitched.

...Wei Ying was a care-free and shameless person who love having ties with beautiful women. Who knows how many girls had fallen victim to his charms...

‘...Why do I have to read this?...’ Fu GaoWen awkwardly shifts his eyes to Wei WuXian who actually looks uncomfortable for once.

Nearly everyone is staring at him actually.

Most prominent being Lan WangJi.

The vinegar smell from before made its return, stronger than ever and suffocating everyone in the hall.

Wei WuXian felt literal beads of sweat on the side of his face, “What are you looking at me for? Didn’t anyone tell you to not blindly believe in rumors? Sure, I flirted. But they were never serious!”

“...”

‘Seriously, I am being wrongly accused! Not that its new but still!!!’

He looked to Lan WangJi with hurt in his ~~puppy-dog~~ eyes.

“...” Lan WangJi’s half-hearted glare faded.

But the smell of vinegar lingers.

...

The past description of Wei WuXian served as prove of how Mo XuanYu couldn’t possibly be possessed by the YiLing LaoZu thankfully.

But that doesn’t mean Wei WuXian had to like the comments, especially when it comes to his flute playing.

“Why does everyone complain about that? I haven’t played for thirteen years and this flute is made from a few cuts on bamboo! If any of you can do any better, I will accept you as my master!”

Fu GaoWen hid his smile. ‘Senior Wei hasn’t changed.’

Wei WuXian felt offended: ‘...If you haven’t practiced for more than ten years and try playing a flute made from a few slices. If it sounds good, I will kneel down before you!’

Lan XiChen tries to avoid reading his brother’s considering face.

...

Despite the doubt, Jiang Cheng is a man who leaves no stones unturned and orders his men to bring ‘Mo XuanYu’ back to YunMeng.

Wei WuXian hid behind Lan WangJi holding the reins of the donkey and spoke with his hand against his chest: “Ah! What are you going to do to me!”

Fu GaoWen felt his face flush in embarrassment from just reading that.

Lan WangJi directed a look at him but tolerated his extremely ill-manner and noisy behaviour.

‘And still is, Han Guang Jun’s patience really is other-worldly!’ The juniors thought

Lan QiRen however, didn't share the same sentiment but settled for just glaring at the disgrace of his teaching career.

...

Lan WangJi stood in the way of 'Mo XuanYu' and Jiang Cheng.

Jiang Cheng spoke coldly: "Then, why is second young master Lan protecting this nameless stranger from the very beginning?"

Jiang Cheng tsked 'Now I know why... No, its possible that he was only defending him in gratitude for helping his sect's juniors at Mo village and fell for him during their journey together- Why am I thinking about this?!

He looked up to glare at the couple in question, only to be force-fed more dog kibble.

The two were snuggling again, Lan WangJi pressing his lips on the top of his partner's head.

'At least I could protect you in this life, Wei Ying... Your path was different, but the actions you used it for were righteous. I am sorry it took me so long to defend you for it.'

...

Wei WuXian made some sounds of suppressed laughter out of the blue.

'Here we go...'

He spoke: "Sect leader Jiang, um, you pestering me like this, is making things difficult for me."

Jiang Cheng's eyebrows furrowed, remembering what he said afterwards

Jiang Cheng's eyebrows twitched, he could tell whatever this person is going to say next can't be good.

Wei WuXian continued: "Thank you so much for your enthusiasm. However, you think too much, even if I'm only attracted to men, I'm won't be attracted to every man I meet or asks me to go with him. For your type, I am not interested."

Jiang YanLi giggled.

Jiang Cheng strokes his ring visibly when Wei WuXian grinned at him.

...

Wei WuXian's plan was to disgust both parties into releasing him. Using what he knew about Jiang Cheng and Lan WangJi to his advantage.

It worked wonders on the prideful, competitive Jiang Cheng.

Sure enough, Jiang Cheng's face darken: "Oh? Then enlighten me, what type do you prefer?"

Jiang Cheng wanted nothing more than to slap his past self for taking the bait so easily.

As for the no-nonsense Lan WangJi?

Wei WuXian responded: “What type do I prefer? Um, guys like HanGuang-Jun, then I really like.”

Only someone like Wei WuXian has a face thick enough to say something like this.

But, by right, this sentence should have triggered Lan WangJi from what Wei WuXian remembers about him.

But who would have expected that when Lan WangJi heard that sentence, he turned around.

He spoke, face expressionless: “You are the one who said this.”

Wei WuXian: “Huh?”

Lan WangJi turned back: “This person, I am bringing back to the Lan sect.” he spoke, perfectly mannered.

Wei WuXian: “...”

Wei WuXian: “...Huh?”

“...”

‘So that’s how WangJi brought WuXian back...?’ Lan XiChen thought

“Quite an anti-climactic ending for this arc it seems, go for another break before starting the next.” MengMo reminded the still silent group.

Chapter End Notes

1* Lan junior A: Fu GaoWen 富高文, just a name so I don’t actually call him Lan junior A.

2* Gui Di (Ghost flute) Chen Qing 鬼笛陈情 WWX’s infamous black flute. Its name has a special meaning, based from a certain Chinese phrase (Which I am not going to say right now but it can be used to describe WWX’s demonic cultivation perfectly)

3* Zi Dian 紫电 = Purple electricity/lightning. Mdm Yu’s and now JC’s magical whip. A magical relic passed down in Mdm Yu’s family (MeiShan Yu sect) that takes the form of a ring when dormant.

4* LWJ’s zither/guqin has the same name as his courtesy/common name.

5*I chose to call it ‘zither’ as Guqin 古琴 translates to ancient/old ‘piano’. So back then, it wasn’t called ‘Guqin’ but just ‘Qin’ which might be kinda confusing to non-Chinese speakers.

6* Losing/throwing face 丢脸 In Chinese, the word face can be used to describe pride or shame. (Ex. WWX has no face...) Just think of it this way, I’m so embarrassed, I couldn’t show my face anymore.

Break 2 - Memories

Chapter Notes

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The awkward tension faded from Wei WuXian when he registered the fact that it is break time.

He stood up and tugged on Lan WangJi's arm.

“Its finally break time again! Come with me Lan Zhan, I have something to show you!”

Lan WangJi allows himself to be dragged away from the hall, ignoring his uncle's irritated huffs knowing that his brother would take care of it.

“Heh, you really surprised me that time. I thought you were going to say ‘disgusting’ or ‘ridiculous’ or ‘pathetic’, something like that, like you did when I was studying at your sect.”

“Mm”

Wei WuXian laughed, “I said all that hoping the both of you would tell me to ‘Get Lost’ but instead, you dragged me back with you. When did you learned to be so forceful?”

“Mm”

“Mm? What do you mean Mm? Hahaha nevermind, I will stop teasing you now. Aren't you wondering why I took you away?”

“Mm”

“Remember during the first break, Wen Ning, the juniors and I went exploring around this place?”

“Mm”

“Of course you would! This dreamscape is so interesting, I was gonna tell you about it but I got distracted by Shijie's soup. Hah~ It's so good! Right Lan Zhan?”

“Mm”

“Right? So much better than those in the stores we tried, but of course yours is a close second Lan Zhan!”

“Mm” ‘I requested Mrs Jin to teach me her recipe. Now even when we woke up from this dream, Wei Ying will be able to enjoy her soup...’

...

Wei WuXian brought Lan WangJi down a corridor and into a strangely familiar courtyard.

“Mo family home’s courtyard.”

“That’s right! I actually forgot where this is when we first came here till SiZhui-er brought it up. Heh, I really need to improve my memory.”

“Mm”

Wei WuXian turns back to Lan WangJi.

“We looked around this place and everything is the same as last time! Even the dirty rag I hid under the bedding after using it to clean up the bloody array is there!”

“Mm”

“That’s not all! Look at that bamboo forest over there!”

“The bamboo forest around Cloud Recesses.”

Sure enough, on the other end of the courtyard is a thick bamboo forest, its color tranquil yet full of life as if its root had just been nourished by a spring shower. Despite the low altitude, there is a layer of mist surrounding the forest as if it was actually on a mountain.

“Weird right? The cloud bamboo forest next to the Mo village?”

“Dream”

Wei WuXian clapped

“Yup, we’re in a dream world most likely created by the MengMo. I suppose it can do anything it wishes here.”

“Mm”

“You know... Lan Zhan, I found something in your sect’s hidden library a few weeks ago. Don’t worry, I asked big brother Lan beforehand but get this, there is a book about an ancient spirit said to create and consume dreams. I think it’s talking about MengMo.”

“Mm”

“It must be, that book was written by one of your ancestors, Lan Xun. He was the one who invented the incense burner, there were a bunch of sketches about its design and properties in the book. Its most likely created to resemble and possess the abilities of the actual dream spirit.”

“The spirit consumed our dreams and used them to create this one.”

Wei WuXian gave his cultivation partner a quick peck on the lips.

“Wow, you got it so quickly!” Wei WuXian said excitedly, staring in amusement at Lan WangJi’s red ears. “It will explain why these places are in the dreamscape, cause they were from the dreams we had consumed by the MengMo.”

“Mm”

Wei WuXian suddenly faltered.

Lan WangJi looked at him in confusion but waited for him to speak.

“...Lan Zhan, if everything here is created from our dreams and given back to us, what about Shijie, Jin ZiXuan and Wen Qing? All three of them...have been... gone since thirteen years ago... so they can’t possibly be dreaming with us. Are they created by MengMo as well? So they aren’t real?...”

Lan WangJi hugged Wei WuXian tightly.

“...Strong memories may be replayed in our sleep. If the Mrs Jin, Master Jin and Miss Wen here were created from our dreams, they were created from our memories of them. Were those fake, Wei Ying?”

Wei WuXian lifted his head smiling.

“No, they weren’t...”

Lan WangJi kissed him lightly on the forehead as he removes his arms from around his partner but Wei WuXian maintains his grip on him.

“...”

“...Between you and me, there is no need for the words ‘Thank you’ and ‘I’m sorry’.”

“...”

Wei WuXian grins

“So, you’re getting a hug instead! Don’t tell me no hugs in gratitude either!”

Lan WangJi shows him a rare smile.

“Mm”

Chapter End Notes

There is a part two to this break btw.

p.s: I was tempted to name this chapter ‘Mm’ XD

Break 2.5 - Dream of the past

Chapter Notes

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Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wei WuXian pulled Lan WangJi into the bamboo forest.

They walked for a bit before stopping at a crossroad. Wei WuXian pointed to the right.

“The others and I went down this path during the first break. It leads to that garden we ate at. So let's try the path on the left!”

“Mm”

So they continued along the left path till they reach the side of a lake. Wei WuXian stepped forward first.

“This... is so familiar. Almost like...” He trailed off as he saw the gazebo surrounded by lotus flowers in the distance.

‘This is YunMeng! Not only that, the past YunMeng...’ His eyes fogging up taking in the gazebo, the past Lotus pier in the distance and the lotus cultivations plots before it was burnt to the ground by the Wen sect.

It is the place he always dream about returning to.

Just as he remembered it.

Lan WangJi walked up beside him.

“Lan Zhan! Look! This is the Lotus pier I wanted you to see, over there is Jiang family gazebo, Jiang Cheng and I will always lie there after training, then Shijie will bring us chilled peach juice but we always later got scolded by Madam Yu for getting the seats all sweaty hahaha.”

“Mm”

“And look at those gates to the Lotus pier! I fell asleep on uncle Jiang as he carried me back with him, when I woke up, that gate was the first thing I saw! Hah~ So nostalgic~”

“Mm”

“Ooh, those over there are the lotus plots owned by that mean old man. Remember? The one that hits us with a stick when the others and I got caught stealing his lotuses. But we always stole them together, yet he only hits me! Why?! Such injustice!”

“...”

“I know, I know. Yes, it was my idea but he wouldn’t have known that!”

“...”

“It was worth it though! The seeds from his lotuses were the sweetest, even Madam Yu likes them! Of course, I got a huge scolding when that old geezer actually came to the Lotus pier to complain. It’s just some pods... What’s the big deal?

“...”

“Yeah, they belong to him. But why can’t he be like everyone else, so friendly and nice. When I take something from their stalls, they would tell me to enjoy it and go directly to Uncle Jiang with the bill a month later.”

“...”

“Yes yes yes, I am very shameless. First time meeting me? Hahaha” He sighed to him himself afterwards. “It’s been so long since I’ve eaten those seeds...”

In a blink of an eye, Wei WuXian turned to Lan WangJi eyes sparking.

“Hey, now that I think about, there’s no one else in this dream except for all of us right?”

“Mm”

“Then this is the perfect time to steal the lotus pods! The geezer isn’t here, so I have nothing to fear!”

“...”

“And I get to pick as many as I want!...Though I will need something to hold all those pods...”

He looked to the town.

“I know! I will get a basket or something from town before I pick the lotus pods. I wonder how much time I have before break ends...” He looks at the water “It will be faster if I swim... See ya Lan Zhan! You will be the first to eat those seeds!”

Before Lan WangJi can respond, Wei WuXian pecked him on the cheek, jumped into the water and is already out of sight.

“...”

.....

Lan WangJi ended up walking around the lake towards the town conveniently on the other side of it.

Sadly, this dream doesn't include their swords, so no flying for any of them.

...

Lan WangJi did not know how long it took for him to reach town, but this experience will make him appreciate the ability to fly.

He walked down the streets of YunMeng, which felt more like a ghost town considering there is no one here but him.

He remembers some of these stalls, like the one selling pancakes* which they bought from after the second siege of mass graves hill.

Each tree Wei WuXian told him he had climbed.

The Lotus pier Wei WuXian saw for the first time.

“...”

If he had accepted Wei WuXian invitation all those years ago, would they have become close sooner? Maybe, he could have helped him or simply be there for him. When he had any trouble, he will come to him for help instead of dealing with it all alone...

With that thought, Lan WangJi stood in place, staring at the tree Wei WuXian first climbed in YunMeng.

...

Someone is approaching.

Lan WangJi could feel the strong aura of another cultivator.

“I wondered who it could be, so it's just you second young master Lan.”

“Mm” Lan WangJi turned around to greet the sect leader of YunMeng Jiang.

“...Where is that person? I thought the two of you are inseparable.”

“Picking lotus pods.”

“Tsk, that guy... does he ever grow up?...”

“...”

“...”

“...How is he lately? At the Cloud Recesses?”

“Fine”

“...He hasn't starved to death? With the plain water and tree bark your sect considers food?”

“He doesn't eat those.”

“...”

‘How could Wei WuXian stand this guy? It’s like talking to a rock!’

Jiang Cheng decides to ignore him and started looking around.

With Jin Ling spending more time with his parents than with his ‘grouchy old self’ as Jin Ling called him, Jiang Cheng decided to walk around to pass the time. (and to quell his anger)

A decision he regretted.

For this dream is the most nonsensical maze array he had ever seen.

From the large hall to the Qishan Wen archery competition grounds, to the Jinlin tower* in LanLing, to the outside some sort of tomb with obvious recently patched up holes, to CaiYi town* in Gusu, to Dafan mountain and finally here in Lotus pier.

This wouldn’t have been so bad if he still have his sword so he could fly up to get a bird’s eye view or fly around.

And no, he is not lost. Not at all.

But he is tempted to ask Lan WangJi for directions.

“This... is the past Yunmeng?” He ended up asking instead. Why? He had no idea. How would Lan WangJi, who had never visited Yunmeng until after the first siege on mass graves hill, know enough, to tell this is the Yunmeng before the Wen sect razed the place to the ground.

But unexpectedly, Lan WangJi gave a nod. “Mm”

‘...Right, that person probably told him...’

...Other than the lack of people, the past Yunmeng was exactly how he remembered it. After he took over as sect leader, he did his best to restore Yunmeng to its previous glory, but it never felt the same as when his father was in charge.

Jiang Cheng’s fist clenched, would his parents be proud of what he had accomplished? What will his father say if he could see Yunmeng now? Or what kind of leader he has become?

Most importantly, how would he feel about his and Wei WuXian’s relationship now? He grew to hate his once sworn brother, thinking he had betrayed him. But in the end, he was the one who had betrayed Wei Ying, not the other way around.

To attempt the impossible – The Jiang sect motto

This was what his father has always dislike about him and favoured Wei WuXian for.

Even though he was the heir to the Jiang sect, he never understood the motto while Wei Ying, followed the motto easily and died honouring it.

And him? He is supposed to be Wei WuXian’s brother in all but blood, but he didn’t understand him enough to see that there is something wrong. How could someone who loves sword-fighting and flying so much suddenly not use his sword anymore? No matter how bad Wei WuXian’s memory gets, he never left his sword behind.

Or how about Wei WuXian defending the remaining Wen people? Wei WuXian gave up

everything to protect them for saving their lives. Wei WuXian didn't have a good name, so he decided to shoulder the burden himself and cut ties with the Jiang sect so they won't be uncountable for his actions.

And he just let him.

He let his pride got to him, choosing his and his sect's name over his brother and forsaken the people who risked their lives to save them and bring his parents' ashes back to them.

Who gave him the right throw all the blame at Wei Ying when he was just doing what was best for him and the Yunmeng Jiang sect?

What gave him the right to feel jealous when Wei Ying called for Lan WangJi instead of him when encountering a dog?

How could he still be mad that Wei Ying chose to be with Lan WangJi, someone who believes in him and live at the Cloud Recesses with him rather than with the brother who didn't understand him even after growing up together?

Jiang Cheng's eyes fogged up, forcing himself not to cry. Especially with Lan WangJi so close to him.

Lan WangJi stood silently away from him, he had disliked Jiang Cheng ever since the first siege of Mass graves hill but tolerated him for the face of the Gusu Lan sect and Wei WuXian's past relationship with Jiang Cheng.

So right now, he will give the Jiang sect leader some space to think alone.

He started to walk away.

Jiang Cheng rubbed his eyes with his sleeve.

God, he had never been this emotional since his parents' deaths. And in front of Lan WangJi no less!

But better Lan WangJi than Wei WuXian, he would have said something during his internal mental breakdown.

For once, he respected Lan WangJi's silence.

"...Second young master Lan."

Lan WangJi stopped

"...Take good care of him. I don't need to tell you that, do I?"

"I will."

It was a quiet response, but it was filled with determination.

He will choose to believe in him.

Wei WuXian belongs with Lan WangJi.

Perhaps he knew that ever since Lan WangJi took him back with him to the Cloud Recesses that time on Dafan mountain.

Maybe that's why he didn't oppose that time.

He just didn't want to admit until now.

Jiang Cheng bit his lip.

"Bring that person to the Lotus Pier sometime... I am not forcing anything, if he doesn't want to, I don't give a damn."

"He will." This image of Yunmeng in the dreamscape is the proof of Wei WuXian's wish to return to his childhood home.

Jiang Cheng tsked and walked away.

"Do whatever you want."

.....

After parting ways with Jiang Cheng, Lan WangJi headed for the lotus plots Wei WuXian pointed out before.

The lotus cultivation plots are on a small island some distance away from town, so Lan WangJi took one of the boats to reach it.

Coming close to the island, he spotted Wei WuXian, soaking wet and washing lotus pods in the water with a grin on his face.

Lan WangJi's eyes soften.

"Huh? Oh, Lan Zhan!" Wei WuXian jumped onto the boat when it's close enough. "Thanks for coming to get me! Only after I picked the pods did I realise I can't swim holding this."

"Mm"

"And I kinda tried one already... I know I said you will get the first but..."

"It's fine"

"Lan Zhan~ Here, say aah!" Wei WuXian cheekily held a freshly peeled lotus seed to him.

Lan WangJi ate it obediently, staring at him the whole time.

Wei WuXian: "?"

Lan WangJi removed his own outer coat and placed it on his partner's shoulders.

"Don't catch a cold."

Wei WuXian's cheeks puffed up.

"Lan er-gege~ You're so sweet! But we're in a dream you know, I can't catch a cold here!"

"..."

Wei WuXian resisted the urge to hug his adorable partner. Dream or not, he refuse to get Lan WangJi's clothes dirty.

“How’s the past Yunmeng by the way? Find anything of interest?”

“...Mm”

“Great! I always wanted you to visit Yunmeng back then, but you always refuse me. I never thought there will still be a chance for you to see the Yunmeng I wanted you to visit!”

“Mm”

Wei WuXian looks around nostalgically.

“You know, it actually isn’t all that different from the Yunmeng now. Jiang Cheng did a wonderful job, much better than anyone could have if they were in his position. It’s almost like nothing has changed but at the same time, it’s a new, improved version of the Yunmeng I grew up in!” Wei WuXian looked to the Lotus Pier, getting further away as they travelled across the lake. “I wish Jiang Shushu and Madame Yu could have seen it, they would have been so proud of him...”

“Mm”

Wei WuXian grins, turning back to Lan WangJi and reaching back to squeeze the excess water out of his own long raven locks.

“How was the lotus seed by the way? Was it sweet?”

“Mm”

“Great! Let’s head back now and start peeling these pods. There’s enough here for everyone!”

“Mm”

“Still, I wish the old geezer was here... I want you to try getting hit with that stick of his!”

“...Mm”

Chapter End Notes

1* What I meant by pancakes is the Chinese snack bing 饼 which can mean either biscuits or the Chinese variation of pancakes which are made from dough instead of batter and pan fried with oil.

2* 金鳞塔 Also known as golden scale tower and koi tower in the English speaking fanbase. Jin 金 is gold, lin 鳞 is scale as in fish scale.

3* CaiYi town 彩衣镇 means colored clothes town, it’s where the Wen sect chased the water-borne abyss to.

。° (° 丌 °) °。

Reading Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It was a good thing Lan WangJi was with Wei WuXian. Otherwise, he might have gotten lost in this maze of a dreamscape.

Now that they have a boat, they rowed it all the way to the other side of the lake where they came from (Which Wei WuXian forgot where exactly) and simply backtracked till they are back in the hall.

And that leads them to the kitchen Jiang YanLi found during the first break with Wei WuXian, Lan WangJi, Jiang YanLi, Jin Ling, the Lan juniors, Wen Ning and Wen Qing picking apart the picked lotus pods.

“...Do I want to know why the stems are still attached to the pods?”

Fair question, the pods you find in a marketplace was already rid of everything else.

Wei WuXian faked gasped, “What kind of person who lives Yunmeng doesn't know that lotus seeds from pods still attached to its stems taste better!”

“...”

Wen Qing rolled her eyes.

Wen Ning continues removing the seeds.

“It's true, A-Ling!” Jiang YanLi supported her Shidi, giggling

“...” ‘Mom, you know that's a lie...’

“What bogus! That doesn't make sense, they are going to be removed sooner or later and we are not going to eat the stems, so how could it affect how the seeds taste?!”

All the stems contributes is giving them more work!

“Peh peh, you’re not from Yunmeng so of course you can’t tell the difference! The moment the stems are removed, they begin to lose their freshness. So I leave the stems to better preserve them.

Lan JingYi wanted to continue but Lan SiZhui nudged him.

“JingYi, be respectful to your seniors.” He whispered.

‘Crap’ He totally forgot Han Guang Jun is here as well!

Luckily, he seems much too concern about Wei WuXian’s health to care.

“...Is it cold?”

“Not at all! Besides, my whole body has dried ever since we left the past Yunmeng. This is a dream Lan Zhan, you don’t have to worry!

“Mm”

Wei WuXian smooched Lan WangJi full on the lips.

Jiang YanLi is the only person amused (Wen Qing won't admit it).

...

Soon, there were bowls of (very fresh) lotus seeds and cups of tea (from the first break) in front of everybody.

Well, almost everybody.

The seat between Jin ZiXuan and Nie HuaiSang is strangely empty.

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

A sleepy murmur came: “...Oh? Why... haven’t you start reading yet?”

“Uh, I don’t know if you noticed but not all of us are here...”

“Hmm, Jiang WanYin isn’t here. Hold on a moment...”*

A bright flash of light filled the hall before Jiang Cheng appeared like when he was first sent here.

“Shimei, where were you? Next time, we won’t wait for you!” Came his past ShiXiong but still annoyance's annoyingly teasing voice.

Jiang Cheng ignored him, just happy to finally be out of the city covered by permanent fog.

“Well, now that everyone’s accounted for. We will start arc three, ‘Cloud Recesses’.”

The next junior to read, Li KangYu* nodded and began.

The Lan sect resides on a secluded mountain just outside of Gusu-

“Huh? At the Cloud Recesses already? Guess our escorting senior Wei while keeping him from escaping and him being tied up on little apple aren’t mention-worthy.” Lan JingYi commented, slightly disappointed.

"May be for the best." Zhou YuanXiang muttered: "That was the most annoying escort mission we ever had."

Wei WuXian sulked, rubbing his arms. “Lan Zhan~ That was uncomfortable!”

“...Sorry.”

“It’s fine! I was teasing. Although...” Wei WuXian leaned in to whisper in Lan WangJi’s ear. “Be honest with me~ You have always wanted to tie me up even before then haven’t you?~”

Lan WangJi breathed deeply “...Yes.”

“Knew it! Oh Lan Zhan~ Don’t let your uncle kno-”

“Tonight”

“...What?”

“Again tonight”

The soreness from last night returned tenfold to Wei WuXian’s waist.

“...KangYu shidi...continue...please...”

The youngest Lan junior snapped out of his blush and returned to reading.

In this tranquil mountain, the heart is at peace, still as water. The sound of a bell from above is only sound piecing though the silence. Despite this not being a holy sanctuary, one can still

feel the lonesome energy of zen.

Lan QiRen nodded at the beautiful description of his beloved home.

Both which is ruined by the next paragraph.

This atmosphere was sudden destroyed by a loud, long wail, so much so that the members and disciples who were carrying out their morning readings and sword-work couldn't help but turn to look at the gates where the sound originated.

Lan QiRen's teeth are now gritted. 'Wei Ying! Always him!'

The most juniors on the other hand laughed between themselves. That description was absolutely perfect.

"Hahaha, I still remembered it. How senior Wei clings to little apple and crying like the world is going to end... my god..."

"And did you remember how Ming shidi came up to us after we got senior Wei into the Jingshi, asking if we have brought back a possessed lunatic... Man, his face when I said yes... hahaha."

Lan SiZhui resisted the urge to slap his own forehead.

"GaoWen, ZiRui, YuanXiang, JingYi. Two times."

"Uck... Yes, Han Guang Jun..."

'Something tells me this will be a repeated occurrence...'

Lan SiZhui noticed a small flash on his lap, leaving behind a brush and a notebook.

He flipped it open.

'For your convenience.' was written neatly.

'...Guess I better use it.'

...

.Lan SiZhui = 10

.Lan JingYi = 17

.Fu GaoWen = 12

.Li KangYu = 10

.Lan ZiRui = 12

.Zhou YuanXiang = 12

...

Li KangYu, thankful for his own shyness turns back to the book.

...

Wei WuXian continues his bawling, hoping that the noise he is making will discourage the Lan sect members from ~~dragging~~ bringing him into the place that prohibits noise. Along with four thousand and seventeen other rules...

Nie HuaiSang shivered visibly, never had he thought he was lucky to follow only three thousand rules.

Lan JingYi shouted: “Stop being so noisy! The Cloud Recesses prohibits noise!”

“...”

“You know, it would be a lot more convincing if you weren’t shouting as well...”

“SiZhui, one more for JingYi.”

Lan SiZhui added a ‘+1’ for Lan JingYi.

Lan JingYi: “...”

...

Wei WuXian knew, that if he was dragged into the Cloud Recesses, he would have a difficult time escaping due to the barrier surrounding the place.

Sadly for Wei WuXian, Lan WangJi doesn’t seem willing to let him go.

...He waited for Wei WuXian to quiet down a little before speaking: “Let him cry. Once he tires, drag him in.”

Wei WuXian cries harder, bumping his head against the donkey he is hugging.

Now even Jiang Cheng gave a smirk.

Lan QiRen on the otherhand is quivering in either anger or shock or possibly both.

...

When Zidian failed to remove his soul, Wei WuXian thought that was the end of it. Who knew his teasing would result in Lan WangJi bringing him back to Cloud Recesses.

But he hasn’t given up on escaping.

Wei WuXian continued: “I am attracted to men and there are so many beautiful men in your sect, I am afraid I can’t hold back.”

The poor junior’s face was completely red at the end of that sentence.

Wei WuXian might find that funny, if he wasn’t worrying about the hand squeezing his hip like a delayed punishment.

Back to the book, Lan SiZhui tried explaining to ‘Young master Mo’ that this is for his own good as the Jiang sect leader has brought back many people who were suspected of being the YiLing LaoZu, none of which had been let out again.

At that, a few eyes glanced at the Jiang sect leader himself.

“Tch, what are you looking at? They’re still alive, okay?”

How could he kill anyone that could possibly be his long lost brother?

Li KangYu looks back to the book and sweatdrops. ‘I think JingYi shixiong is going to be punished again...’

...As he said this, he remembered the ‘Do not speak behind ones back’ and sneaked a peek at Lan WangJi, only when he saw Han Guang Jun has no intention of punishing him did he dared to continue: “It’s all the YiLing LaoZu’s fault for starting this trend, there are too many people imitating his improper path instead of actually cultivating proper routes and with that Jiang sect leader being super paranoid-

Jiang Cheng gave a look to the offending junior...

-But even he couldn’t catch every one of them, right? Just look at yourself and your flute playing...heh.”

“...SiZhui, three more for JingYi.”

Lan SiZhui looked to Lan JingYi apologetically “...Yes, Han Guang Jun.” And obediently wrote it down.

Lan JingYi: “...”

This one ‘heh’ told them enough, making Wei WuXian feel the need to explain himself: “Um, actually, you might find this hard to believe, but I usually play the flute pretty well...”

“Believe me now?”

Lan JingYi is much too distressed to acknowledge him...

‘JingYi shixiong... hang in there...’

...

Wei WuXian didn’t get to finish his sentence as Lan XiChen came upon the very bizarre scene unfazed.

Wei WuXian grinned, letting go of the donkey and went over to him. The Gusu Lan takes respect to seniority very seriously, so if he babbled some nonsense in front of Lan XiChen, he will definitely be kicked out of Cloud Recesses.

‘So this is the first thought you had when you see me again after thirteen years?...’ Lan XiChen looked to his dixi* who looked back sheepishly, munching on a lotus seed.

-Who would have thought, just as he was ready to show what he is capable of, Lan WangJi gave him a look and Wei WuXian found his lips stuck together.

Lan QiRen nearly breathe a sigh of relief until present Wei WuXian pouted at his younger nephew.

“Lan Zhan! How dare you use the silence spell on me! Luckily, big brother is nicer than you~”

Whatever Lan QiRen was going to scold the troublemaker was reduced to sneezing as that vinegar

smell reappeared all of a sudden.

If it wasn't for all the discipline training he went through his whole life, Lan XiChen would have twitched when he felt his once adorable and reserved younger brother's eyes on him.

Wei WuXian almost giggled at his Lan Zhan's response. Oh, how he loves making his vinegar* loving partner jealous.

"But of course, I still love you the most!" Wei WuXian snuggled into his side once he had his fun.

Lan WangJi: "..."

Lan WangJi knew about his partner's hobby (Well, one of many) but still couldn't help but feel jealous.

"Mm, I love you too. Add one more round."

However, sometimes Wei WuXian forgotten about the fact that this Lan WangJi is much more formidable than the one he teased during his studies at the Cloud Recesses.

"...One more round of what?..."

"Tonight"

Wei WuXian: '...Why did I open my big mouth?...' (ㄟ_ㄟ)

Wen Ning sitting next to Wei WuXian, covered Lan SiZhui's ears while blushing his head off.

Unfortunately, Lan SiZhui heard enough to understand so his face rivals that of his uncle's.

Li KangYu on the other side didn't understand why that sentence would turn his eldest shixiong and the Ghost General's faces red so he continues anyway.

...

Lan WangJi turns back to talk to Lan XiChen as if nothing had happened: "Brother is going to visit LianFang-Zun* again?"

Lan XiChen frowned sadly

And it became more prominent in the following paragraph describing his old sworn brother, so much so that Lan QiRen, Lan WangJi, Wei WuXian and the Lan juniors look to him in concern.

Nie HuaiSang on the other hand, faced away from him.

...

Lan XiChen spoke again: "Uncle went to inspect the object you brought back from Mo village last time."

'The Ghost hand'

Hearing the words 'Mo village' directed Wei WuXian's attention to the conversation unconsciously and felt his lips part all of a sudden as Lan XiChen removed the silence spell on him: "It is rare for you to bring a guest back and be in such good spirits. You should treat

guests with more courtesy, not like this.”

Wei WuXian waved cheerfully at his older brother-in-law who nodded back with a smile on his face (While warily watching his brother’s face).

‘Good spirits?’ Wei WuXian observed Lan WangJi’s face.

‘How did you tell he is in good spirits?!’

‘I know now, the tiny crinkle in his eye, his (Slightly more) relaxed posture and the lighter aura surrounding him.’ Wei WuXian grinned at his fellow ‘Lan WangJi reader’ of a brother-in-law and leaned back against his full-time (not actually so) phlegmatic partner.

...

After Lan XiChen left, Lan WangJi told the Lan juniors to drag ‘Mo XuanYu’ into the Jingshi* surprising the juniors immensely but followed the order anyway.

“Uncle? Are you feeling unwell?” Lan XiChen asks his uncle cautiously.

Said uncle is practically shivering in rage, not knowing whether he should be directing his glare at Lan WangJi or Wei WuXian.

Lan XiChen held out a cup of tea to his uncle smiling so pleasantly that Lan QiRen’s eyes soften and calmed down.

Lan WangJi sent a look towards Li KangYu who starts to read again.

...

While Lan WangJi left the group to meet with his uncle, the Lan juniors as ordered, deposited Wei WuXian in the Jingshi and left, leaving Wei WuXian to his own devices.

Which is fine, without the token of passage, Wei WuXian won’t be able to leave the Cloud Recesses no matter how many times he surveys around the place.

Which leaves him no other choice than to return to the Jingshi.

...

Wei WuXian smiled at the mention of the sandalwood scent, the scent he had grown to associate Lan Zhan with all the time.

Feeling mischievous again (All thoughts of his upcoming punishment forgotten), he hugged Lan WangJi and snuggled into his coat breathing in the sandalwood scent.

“You smell so good, Lan Zhan~” He whispered into his partner’s ear.

‘Heh, the way he only blushes on the tips of his ears is so cute~’

And thus, any composure in Lan QiRen had has been ruined yet again.

But the next paragraph made him choke on his tea.

While thinking about it, he couldn’t help but shift closer to the incense. But with this one shift, he felt that the floorboard he is on is slightly different from the rest. Curious, Wei

WuXian started knocking on it. Being experience in digging graves in his past life, it wasn't long before he managed to pull out the floorboard.

The fact that there is a secret compartment in the Jingshi is startling enough, but what's worse is what is kept in it.

After the floorboard has been removed, the scent that was once hidden within the sandalwood smell admitted out from the seven or eight round black jars in the small, square shaped compartment.

Lan WangJi really has changed, he even started hiding alcohol!

Thud!

“Qing-jie! Doctor! Old ma- Senior Lan fainted!”

“I know! I can see that, get out of my way!”

Wen Qing went up to Lan QiRen and felt his pulse.

“Its nothing serious, give him a minute, he'll wake up soon.

To think that Lan QiRen was infuriated to the point of fainting...

Can't really blame him, everyone (but Lan XiChen) that isn't Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian were shocked to hear Lan WangJi hiding alcohol in his room.

“You found it back then?” Lan WangJi looked to Wei WuXian who grinned back

“Mm-hm, what a sight for sore eyes it was! I drank a bit, hope you don't mind?”

“It's all yours.”

Sadly, Lan QiRen woke up at that.

“You...Twenty times, both of you!”

“Yes uncle.” “Yes ol- uncle...”

Only Lan XiChen knew what that means, Lan WangJi will copy forty times...

Well, nothing he isn't used to.

Li KangYu sat there munching on lotus seeds, wishing he could just pass the book to someone else like sect leader Jiang did.

...

The alcohol is the Gusu specialty, the Emperor's smile and a personal favourite of Wei WuXian's.

Jiang Cheng glanced at Lan WangJi.

With the knowledge of Lan WangJi's feelings for Wei WuXian, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that the alcohol was a way for Lan WangJi to commemorate Wei WuXian during the thirteen years.

But the Wei WuXian that time obviously have no idea and as he had just confessed to Lan WangJi, drank two jars of the alcohol.

And came up with an idea, one that nearly made Lan QiRen gave him another twenty times of copying.

The Lan juniors' eyes widen, so that's why Wei WuXian came out of the cold springs, it wasn't to peak at HanGuang-Jun but to steal his token of passage.

A plan truly fit for someone as shameless as Wei WuXian but given the circumstances, he doesn't have much of a choice.

(Lan XiChen concerned himself more with watching his uncle's temper over the disappointment in his brother's eyes when he learned about Wei WuXian's plan.)

Having made up his mind, Wei WuXian filled the now empty jars with water and stashed them back in the secret compartment and got to work.

Although the Cloud Recesses had been burned before the Sunshot Campaign, the place was reconstructed to the way it was before. So, Wei WuXian had no issue navigating based on just his memories alone and finding the cold springs.

The Sunshot campaign...

Right... Before the YiLing LaoZu, there were once five great clans, before the rest of the cultivational world teamed up against the QiShan Wen sect.

The juniors looked to their seniors around them, all of them had been though the tyranny of the Wen sect and the Sunshot campaign...And made it out alive.

What they have been though, must not have been as simple as it is written in books. Like the Cloud Recesses, if they were not taught that it was burnt down before, they wouldn't have guessed it. Perhaps this book could allow them to learn what was it like during the Sunshot Campaign if it was at all mentioned.

...

When Wei WuXian made it to the cold springs, to his luck, there was already someone there.

As Wei WuXian carefully went through the painfully neat folded robes, he took notice of the person in the cold springs.

...

Li KangYu blushed at the next paragraph.

Wei WuXian was definitely not staring because of the beauty in the springs-

“...”

-No matter beautiful the person is, he is not actually attracted to men. It was what was on this person's back that caught his attention.

Wei WuXian felt Lan WangJi's shoulders slumped further down in... disappointment?

He hugged him “Lan Zhan~ I was fooling myself that time, really! I wasn’t really into men but now I’m into you! My Lan Zhan is the prettiest, prettier than any XianZi*!”

Cue more blushing on ear tips.

But the others are more interested in what is on this person’s back.

Lan XiChen and Lan QiRen’s faces darken at that.

Dozens of criss-crossing scars.

Wei WuXian hugged Lan WangJi tighter.

...

That person had dozens of criss-crossing scars from a discipline whip on his back.

This is something even the Lan juniors aren’t even aware of, all of them turning to Lan WangJi.

Hearing about the discipline whip, Jiang Cheng couldn’t suppress a shudder. He had been on the receiving end of one before and the scar is still present on his back.

Just what sort of offence did he commit for him to be punished this severely?

If that wasn’t enough, that person also has a brand burned into his chest near where his heart would be.

‘A brand...’ Jiang Cheng thought directing his line of sight to Lan WangJi. From how the juniors are reacting, the person in the springs is most likely Lan WangJi. And if that is true... Jiang Cheng recalled that time when Wei WuXian took a branding iron to his chest for that girl, ‘MianMian’, at the same place that Lan WangJi’s brand is.

‘Tsk’ Forget not having feelings for him until later, Lan WangJi is clearly a hopeless romantic long before!

Chapter End Notes

1* Jiang WanYin 江晚吟 is JC’s courtesy name just in case anyone forgot.

2* Lan junior B: Li KangYu 李康裕

3* Dixi 弟媳 it means sister-in-law, usually used to greet the one married to one’s younger brother but the word dixi itself is not gender-oriented so it’s fine to use it to describe WWX’s relationship to LXC.

4* LianFang-Zun 敛芳尊 is the title of Jin GuangYao in case anyone forgot.

5* Jingshi 静室 means Quiet room. LWJ’s study and bedroom.

6* Emperor’s smile 天子笑 The 天子 means ‘son of heaven/god’, a phrase often used to refer to the emperor.

7* Xian Zi 仙子 = Fairy (Yes, the dog’s name) XianZi or fairy is used to address beautiful female cultivators or goddesses.

Reading Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
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And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

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Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After the chapter finished, Li KangYu handed the book over to his slightly older Shixiong next to him.

Lan ZiRui* flipped the page and continue from where the previous chapter left off.

...

While Wei WuXian's attention is completely fixated on the familiar brand, the person in the springs took notice of his presence and understandably attacked.

The fame of HanGuang-Jun's personal sword 'Bichen' is known far and wide. Anyone would be able to recognize it. 'I'm so dead, that's Lan WangJi!'

“How convenient, I imagine if it was anyone else, you won't be here right now.”

Wei WuXian pouted at older woman “You made me sound like a perv... I wasn't there to peak at anyone! I just wanted a token pass!”

“But to steal a token of passage while someone is in the springs... That is something only senior Wei can do...”

“Oi stinky brat*! Are you telling me, I am acting out of line for trying to escape after being kidnapped?”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

‘...If you put it that way...’

There really wasn't anything else to add.

Lan XiChen watches his uncle's temper...

...

Fortunately, Wei WuXian's experience and agility allowed him to dodge the incoming attack and escaped from the cold springs.

And ran into the Lan juniors, literally.

When Wei WuXian saw that it is Lan JingYi and his friends, he was overjoyed-

Jin Ling looked at Wei WuXian ‘This can't be good’

-thinking he could finally be chased down the mountain and immediately went into action: “I didn't see! I didn't see anything! I definitely didn't peak at HanGuang-Jun while he's bathing!”

‘Wow I was desperate.’ Wei WuXian grinned as he thought to himself, ignoring the annoyed glares of his beloved Lan juniors.

Which is easy to do considering they grew up in a place as mild as Gusu, making their glares about as ferocious as a litter of annoyed kittens.

...Lan SiZhui was so frightened that his voice changed: “What? HanGuang-Jun? HanGuang-Jun's inside?!”

Infuriated, Lan JingYi screamed at him: “You damn cutsleeve! Is, is, is this something you should peak at?!”

Wei WuXian struck while the iron is still hot*, giving himself the final blow: “I most definitely didn't see what HanGuang-Jun looked like without his clothes!”

“Uncle! Please calm down!”

“Uncle, please calm down. Wei Ying has taken responsibility for his actions.”

...

Lan JingYi spit his tea on his unfortunate classmate next to him at that.

“JingYi, rule two hundred and fifty-six, ‘remain dignified at all times’, add one more time.”

Lan SiZhui noted another down.

Lan QiRen fainted once again.

Wei WuXian couldn't hold back anymore and laughed until his eyes teared up.

Jiang YanLi hid a smile behind her sleeve. It's faint, but there was a pink flush on her fellow married sibling's cheeks.

And this is the story of what inspired the idea of having privacy dividers around the male-only cold springs.

(Which they never thought they needed since no one was shameless enough to peak into the springs)

...

In the meantime, Lan WangJi gestured for the red-faced Lan ZiRui to continue.

Lan JingYi raged: “Yeah, and there isn't three-hundred taels of silver buried here*! If you telling the truth, then why were you acting so suspiciously? Look at yourself, you couldn't face anyone now!”

Wei WuXian covered his face with both hands: “Please don't be so loud, the Cloud Recesses prohibits noise.”

Lan WangJi nodded slowly: “SiZhui, one more for JingYi.”

Lan JingYi: ‘Favoritism...’

...

While Wei WuXian was messing with the juniors, Lan WangJi came up to them, fully dressed in that short amount of time.

...Lan JingYi immediately spoke: HanGuang-Jun, this Mo XuanYu, is really terrible. You brought him back with us in return for his help at Mo village, but he...he...”

Wei WuXian thought he will be kicked out for sure this time, but who would have thought, Lan WangJi simply glanced lightly at him and sheathed Bichen away after a moment of silence: “You are dismissed.”

With these three words, the Lan juniors left without a word. Lan WangJi lifted Wei WuXian by the collar and started making his way back to the JingShi.

Wei WuXian peaked at Lan QiRen's still unconscious body and breathed a sigh of relief.

It's probably for the best.

...

No matter how much Wei WuXian struggled, Lan WangJi was unrelenting and successfully brought him back to the Jingshi.

He went into the inner room and tossed Wei WuXian onto the bed.

He grew accustomed to the second young master Lan wearing a forehead ribbon, his long hair immaculate, everything flawless to the smallest detail and he had never seen him like

this, loose hair and clad in thin clothing, so he couldn't help but look at him a few more times. With the previous movement, Lan WangJi's closed collars came apart slightly, revealing his distinct collarbones and the deep red branding.

When he saw the brand, Wei WuXian couldn't look away.

'Why is he so interested in that branding?' The people unaware of Wei WuXian's brand thought.

While the people who are, Jiang Cheng, Jiang YanLi, Wen Ning, Wen Qing and Jin ZiXuan turned their eyes the pair.

Lan XiChen, who's helping his now conscious uncle up sighed deeply.

He already has his suspicions since the scene at the cold springs.

Lan ZiRui's eyes widen when he saw the next sentence.

Before he became the Yiling Laozu, he also has a brand like that on his body.

'I knew it'

After all, which of his younger brother's actions after Wei WuXian's death isn't related to the late Yiling Laozu?

Furthermore, the brand on Lan WangJi, is in every way identical to his own, be it the shape or position, so it couldn't be more familiar to Wei WuXian.

The juniors now stared at Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian, wondering where they got the brand on them and better understanding Lan WangJi's strong feelings for Wei WuXian.

All the Lan juniors besides Lan SiZhui, thought that Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian got together during their search for the dismembered body parts of ChiFeng-Zun*.

Wei WuXian leans against his partner, subconsciously touching his own chest where the brand should be on his original body.

His eyes widen when he realized it wasn't there.

That's not the only thing strange, there's also the thirty or more whip scars on Lan WangJi's back.

Wei WuXian's eyes fogged as he reached behind his lover's back and felt the completely smooth, unblemished skin through his clothing.

Lan WangJi became famous at a young age with a very high level of cultivation and one of the most respected cultivators in the cultivational world. He is one of the prided twin jades of Lan, a role model for every disciple in each cultivational sect so just what kind of felony did he commit to be punished this severely?

"Wei Ying"

Wei WuXian didn't notice he was crying until Lan WangJi wiped his tears off with his hand.

"It's over now."

“...Yeah.” ‘I got him dirty again...’

“It’s fine.”

“!- Lan Zhan! Did you read my mind*? How did you know what was thinking?!”

“Mm” Lan WangJi reaches down to rub Wei WuXian’s back in a comforting manner. “You think too much.”

“Lan Zhan~”

“Mm”

“Lan er-gege~”

“I’m here”

Dog food eating others: ‘We’re here too...’

...

With Wei WuXian much calmer and resting against Lan WangJi’s side, Lan ZiRui returned to the book.

There were over thirty whip lashes, with that many, they might as well have been trying to kill-

Lan WangJi resumes stroking Wei WuXian’s back soothingly.

-And once the whip hits, the scar left behind will never fade so that the one being punished will always remember it and will never commit it again.

But in this case, the offender would not ever hesitate to commit his offence again.

The newly woken Lan QiRen gritted his teeth at the memory of Lan WangJi on the day of the punishment. He had asked him if he had regretted his actions both before and after the thirty-three strikes.

“Never...”

He said without any hesitation right in front of him, in front of his brother, the sect leader and in front of the thirty-three elders he had hurt trying to save that man.

He had raised his nephews to be the perfect GusuLan cultivators, completely flawless in everyway in hopes that they will not end up making the same mistakes as their father, his own elder brother or worse, like their ‘Improper’ mother.

But the sins his favorite disciple ended up committing were far, far worse than those of his father’s.

Wei WuXian felt his uncle-in-law’s eyes on him and tightened his grip on Lan WangJi.

He couldn’t blame him, even if those scars on Lan WangJi’s back aren’t present in this dream, it doesn’t mean they aren’t still on his real body.

In addition, now everyone knew that the brand on Lan WangJi’s chest was related to himself as

well.

“Wei Ying”

“Lan Zhan... Let me see it later, ok?”

Lan WangJi knew he was talking about his back “Mm”

...

In the book, Lan WangJi followed Wei WuXian’s line of sight to the brand on his chest and covered it up. In the distance, the bell rung, signaling bedtime for the Gusu Lan sect.

With that, Lan WangJi left Wei WuXian to sleep in a different compartment in the Jingshi.

...

Wei WuXian did suspect that Lan WangJi figured out who he really is. However, that would not have made any sense. The ritual of sacrificing one’s body is highly forbidden and not widely known. With the scrolls passed down nowadays being just pieces of the original, it’s completely useless. So in the long run, fewer people knew or even believed in it. It’s not confirmed where Mo XuanYu got his hands on a scroll for this ritual.

Wei WuXian sneaked a glance at his old classmate across him.

Anyways, Lan WangJi couldn’t have recognized him from his awful flute playing.

‘He didn’t, it’s the song that gave me away. I didn’t even notice I played that song until I remembered our battle against the phony XuanWu*.’

It’s so poetic, the song Lan WangJi composed for Wei WuXian and sang to no other ended up being the reason Lan WangJi recognized him thirteen years later.

He asked himself if he had any kind of heartfelt moments in his past life with Lan WangJi-

Lan WangJi: “...”

Wei WuXian: (· _ · ;)...

-Although they studied, adventured and fought alongside each other, these experiences are like petals in a flowing stream, never everlasting. Lan WangJi is from the GusuLan sect, meaning he has to be ‘Righteous’, so not at all compatible with Wei WuXian.

Lan WangJi: “... ..”

Wei WuXian: ...(· _ · ;)...

Wei WuXian felt that their relationship isn’t bad, but he didn’t have the face to say that their relationship is good either.

Jiang Cheng: “Aren’t you always so sure that second young master Lan likes you even though he says otherwise?”

Wei WuXian coughs, glancing at Lan WangJi with the corner of his eye.

Lan WangJi: "... .."

Wei WuXian:(· _ · ;)... ..

He supposed that Lan WangJi thought of him like everyone else, 'Too carefree and not virtuous enough, so one day he going to cause a disaster'.

There's nothing too incorrect about that sentence but it still made Wei WuXian scoot away from his partner who's face is getting darker with each sentence.

Causing Wen Ning next to him to scoot as well to avoid any contact with Wei WuXian that could incur the wrath of the second young master of Lan.

After Wei WuXian left the YunmengJiang sect and became the Yiling Laozu, he had a good number of conflicts with the GusuLan, especially in the final few months before his death. If Lan WangJi knew that he is Wei WuXian, they would have fought till it's pitch black.

"Wei Ying"

Wei WuXian jumped at the sudden call of his name from his partner, moving to the left even more and causing Wen Ning to jump as well and moving more to the left making Lan SiZhui scoot as well to give them more space but bumped into Wen Qing who looked up to glare at Wei WuXian instead of moving as well.

"Oi, Wei WuXian! What's wrong with you? Sit properly!"

"Heh heh, sorry, Qing-jie..."

But Wei WuXian made no effort to adjust his position, a problem solved by a swing of Lan WangJi's arm, hooking around Wei WuXian waist and dragging him back to his side.

"..."

"Um... Lan Zha-"

"No heartfelt moments?"

"Yea- I mean, no, there are man-"

"Not at all compatible?"

"No! We're a match made in heaven! Real-"

"I'm like everyone else?"

"No no! You're different! You love me like no other!"

"If I knew who you were, we would have fought?"

"No, we won't! I couldn't even bear to see you dirty, how could I fight you! Besides, in that body, I would have been annihilated!"

"So, if you were in your real body, you will fight me?"

"That's not what I meant! I love you so much! I would never fight against you!"

“I know.”

“Yes, I will alw...” Wei WuXian’s eyes widen at Lan WangJi’s smiling face.

“Yo...you...You damn HanGuang-Jun! Why did you do that? I thought you were mad!”

“I’m not.”

Wei WuXian pouted at him but sighed in relief internally, at least he could save his waist from an extra round of *punishment*.

“You will still be punished.”

“!!!” Wei WuXian’s mouth opened in horror “You said you were not mad!”

“I’m not cross with you, but the punishment must still be served.”

‘Does anyone remember the book? Would it be disrespectful if I start reading again???’

...

Anyways, back to the book. Wei WuXian got off the bed and went into the other compartment where Lan WangJi is sleeping. He still hasn’t given up the plan of stealing a token pass from Lan WangJi to get out of the Cloud Recesses.

Sadly for him, Lan WangJi doesn’t seem as asleep as he looks.

But what will Wei WuXian do now?

Wei WuXian’s quickly made up his mind and threw himself on the bed.

Lan QiRen’s eyes nearly rolled back.

Lan JingYi and Lan SiZhui upon hearing this however, turned to Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi.

‘They did it already?... Right then?...’ Both their faces turned innocently red.

“Hey senior Wei! You weren’t pulling our leg back then?!”

“What are you talking about?”

“You know what!”

Wei WuXian pondered for a bit but judging from the two juniors’ red faces, he figured it must have been something perve- ‘!’

“Oi! What are the two of you thinking about?! Get your minds out of the gutter! Nothing happened!”

Figuring out what the conversation is about somewhat, nearly everyone else followed the first two juniors’ example and began to flush.

Lan WangJi on the other hand, is much calmer than his partner and simply nodded at Wei WuXian’s words.

“One more for both of you.”

Lan SiZhui noted it down...

...

He remembered that Lan WangJi hates physical contact with others (Wei WuXian scoffed slightly). **In the past, any offender would have been casted off. If he could endure this, then he couldn't have been Lan WangJi. He would suspect that he was possessed.**

True, if anyone's unaware of Lan WangJi's feelings, his later actions would have been very surprising.

...He was silent for a moment before speaking: "Get down."

Wei WuXian thickened his face: "No."

A pair of palely colored eyes made eye contact with him very closely and repeated: ".....Get down."

Wei WuXian replied: "No. You allowed me to sleep here, so you should be aware that something like this might happen."

'There I was like a fool, acting like a lunatic when he is already aware that its me...'

Lan WangJi asks him: "Are you sure about this?"

Everyone: "?!"

"WangJi, you-!!!"

"Ol- Uncle! Nothing happened, I swear!"

"..." He doesn't know why, but Wei WuXian felt that he must consider his reply very carefully.

Lan ZiRui gaped at the next paragraph, his eyes tilting up a little from the book to sneak a glance at HanGuang-Jun.

Just as he was going to smile, he felt his waist go numb and his legs could no longer support him. And in the next second, his whole body tumbled down on to Lan WangJi's bod-

"Lan WangJi!!! What do you think you're doing!" Jiang Cheng looked furiously at the person in question. 'Don't think now that I ~~ship~~ am fine with your relationship with my brother means that you can take advantage of him! The two of you weren't even a couple yet at the time of this book!!!'

"The heck are you thinking about?! How many times do I have to say this? *Nothing* happened that night!"

Jiang Cheng glared at Wei WuXian but flushed when he realized he made a scene by standing up unconsciously while shouting at the second young master of Lan and promptly sat back down.

Jin Ling turned to his mother when he heard her giggles.

...

With what was going to be a smile left frozen on his face, his head laying on the right side of Lan WangJi's chest and his body practically paralyzed, he heard Lan WangJi's voice from above.

His voice was deep and low, chest vibrating with each word:

“Then stay like this for the whole night.”

Lan XiChen shook his head but smiled.

Lan QiRen, however, is the complete opposite...

Wei WuXian never seen this coming and tried to get up, but his waist remains powerless and he could only shift slightly on spot while being firmly attached to another man. He was completely perplexed.

Some of the juniors including Jin Ling and a few adults laughed out loud at this.

“Wei-xiong, I never thought this day will come!”

“Hahaha...”

What happened to Lan Zhan in these past years, how did he became like this?

Is this even the same Lan Zhan from before?!

The one being possessed should be him, right?!?

Now even the more serious people started chuckling.

Lan WangJi felt no remorse nor shame.

That night, he had the most peaceful sleep in all of thirteen years.

His mind is in a mess right now, and suddenly, Lan WangJi slowly sat up. Wei WuXian perked up, thinking he couldn't stand it any longer. But who would have thought, Lan WangJi just lightly waved his hand.

The candle went out.

The laughter in the hall didn't quell down until MengMo spoke.

“The next chapter is the start of the first flashback in this book.”

“Flashback?”

“Yes, this book contains a number of flashbacks. The story can be further understood by seeing the events in the past and how it leads to the events in the future.”

The juniors looked at each other excitedly, they going to hear about the seniors in the past or even what they done when they were their age!

Lan ZiRui passed the book over to the next junior, who's now fortunately dry of the tea Lan JingYi spit on him earlier.

...

-Scoreboard-

Lan SiZhui = ~~10~~ + 1 11

Lan JingYi = ~~17~~ + 1 + 3 + 1 + 1 + 1 24

Fu GaoWen = 12

Li KangYu = 10

Lan ZiRui = 12

Zhou YuanXiang = 12

Chapter End Notes

1* Lan junior C: Lan ZiRui 蓝子睿

2* Stinky brat 臭小子, this phrase doesn't mean the person being scolded is smelly or something. It's used in the same way as 'sh*tty brat'. (Btw: 小子 xiao zi is more male oriented and '丫头' 【Yes, it is written like this...】 pronounced 'Ya-tou' is the female version and can also mean maid)

3* Struck while the iron is still hot 趁热打铁 This phrase means to do something while the opportunity is still there or good.

4* There isn't three-hundred taels of silver buried here 此地无银三百两 It's a popular proverb about a man who buried his money and placed a sign with this sentence above it. Basically, it means hiding something visibly behind a terrible lie.

5* ChiFeng-Zun 赤峰尊 in case anyone forgot, this is Nie MingJue's title. (Chi = red/crimson | feng = blade/sword) [So his title basically means: Honored man wielding a crimson blade]

6* I was going to write 'Are you a parasite in my stomach' 肚子里的蛔虫 but I figured nobody enjoys going into the glossary this often. Anyway, this commonly used phrase basically means 'You read my mind' or 'you know everything about me'. (Btw: The parasite in question 蛔虫 is roundworm. If you don't know what that is, good for you. Don't look it up.)

7* XuanWu 玄武 One of the gods in ancient Chinese astronomy. 'The black turtle of the north' also known as Genbu in Japan. (Funfact: The XuanWu isn't just any old turtle, its usually depicted as a snake-necked turtle, a species of turtle indigenous to the east that has a long neck and a face resembling a snake. Or it could be depicted as a turtle with a snake coiled around it. Or a chimera, a head and body of a turtle but its tail is an actual snake sticking out.)

Reading Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

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The next junior is the second oldest of the bunch, a year younger than Lan SiZhui but a few months older than Fu GaoWen.

Who's staring at his now dry, but still yellowish-brown robes inflicted on him from Lan JingYi's tea.

It's a good thing this is a dream, god knows how troublesome it is to wash a stain off *white* colored robes.

But it's unheard of to have a Lan disciple with dirty robes.

So he sent a look to Lan JingYi indignantly who grinned back sheepishly.

“I am sorry, YuanXiang-xiong! If it's any condolence, I got some on my robes too...”

Zhou YuanXiang* huffed but looked to the book.

...

Later on, Wei WuXian thought about it, his poor relationship with Lan WangJi can be traced back the time he came to the Cloud Recesses to study for three months with Jiang Cheng when he was fifteen years old.

“Oh? It's a flashback to that time?” Wei WuXian grinned from ear to ear

Poor Lan QiRen's chest began to hurt.

~~(Ah, the beginnings of his pain→)~~

...

There is a well-respected, prestigious elder in the GusuLan sect, Lan QiRen. Well-known in

the cultivational world as a meticulous, stubborn and strict teacher renowned for producing outstanding students. Although the first two characteristics made others stay away or secretly dislike him, the last one made them send their children to be taught by him even if it means losing their own heads. He had brought up a large number of excellent Lan disciples, even the most pathetic of students will turn out at least decent in etiquette after a year or so of his teachings. There were many parents that burst into tears of joy when they picked up their sons.

‘They probably just didn’t want to be send back to the Cloud Recesses’ With this thought, Zhou YuanXiang couldn’t help but chuckle. He, like Li KangYu and Fu GaoWen, were not born into the GusuLan clan but were instead sent there to study and become cultivators when their potential was realized.

All disciples not born into the GusuLan were completely overwhelmed by the sheer number of rules there and had been punished countless times during the course of their studies no matter how long that is. With so many rules to follow and the exhausting punishments, how could one not drop their bad habits?

At this, Wei WuXian responded: “Aren’t I decent enough already?”

...Unless your name is Wei WuXian.

With great foresight, Jiang Cheng replied: “You will definitely become a black mark on his entire teaching career.”

Many snickers filled the hall.

Lan QiRen gritted his teeth but forced himself to remain calm. Why did he accept Wei WuXian to study at Cloud Recesses that time? If he had refused, his painstakingly-raised cabbage* would be... Forget it, the rice has already been turned into porridge...

...

Alongside Jiang Cheng and Wei WuXian, there were also many other young masters from other clans sent here by their parents to study at the Cloud Recesses. Now that they met each other, they are getting along like a house on fire.

Soon, one of them asked about the Lotus Pier.

Wei WuXian laughed: “Whether its fun or not, depends on how you have fun. There are definitely not as many rules and you don’t have to wake up as early.”

The GusuLan sect wakes at five and sleeps at nine, not a minute late. Someone else asks: “What time do you guys wake up at? What do you do daily?”

Jiang Cheng huffed: “Him? Wakes at nine, sleeps at one-”

Jin Ling is very used to Jiang Cheng’s reprimanding words, which is why he could tell that this is how his uncle talks to or about people that are or he considers them his family despite them getting on his nerves.

‘They were just like real brothers...’ But Lan JingYi’s loud voice interrupted his thoughts.

“Hah? What kind of sleeping schedule is that? You spent the morning sleeping instead of the

night?”

“What can I say? I am more of a night person! And, I spend the day to the fullest!”

“Doing what?”

“-When he got up, he doesn’t practice his sword nor meditate and goes boating, swimming, picking lotus pods or shooting pheasants.”

Wei WuXian: “No matter how many pheasants I shoot, I am still number one.”

Zhou YuanXiang reads, answering Lan JingYi’s questions.

“How *are* you still number one? Are the other Yunmen-”

Zhou YuanXiang elbows his quick-mouthed junior.

“Sect leader Jiang’s here too, you really want to copy more that badly?” He hissed.

Lan JingYi closes his mouth.

Wei WuXian laughed, but answered “Hahaha, I don’t *always* play around~” He looked to the juniors in the room “Would you believe me if I say I do train?”

“Wait, you actually train? I always thought senior LaoZu is just so talented, you naturally didn’t need to train.” Lan ZiRui exclaimed

Wei WuXian laughed so hard that tears formed in his eyes “Hahahaha, Lan Zhan Lan Zhan! Look at your sect’s junior, such a flatterer, hahahaha...”

“...”

Lan SiZhui thought for a bit. “Boating, swimming, picking lotus pods and shooting pheasants, all of them are best enjoyed and safer during the daytime when it is easier to see, especially for pheasant hunting.” He looked to Wei WuXian “Assuming you only participate in these activities during the daytime and you spend the night outside, you train by night-hunting nearby when all those kinds of creatures are most active.”

Jiang Cheng raised his eyebrow at Wei WuXian

“...” Wei WuXian’s eyes widen at Lan SiZhui before clapping “Well done! Not surprising, you *are* the sapling I planted.” (Wen people: “...”) Wei WuXian grinned without shame “Although, I must correct you. Not only is it impractical to go pheasant hunting at night because its too dark to see anything but its also because you won’t find anything! Pheasants are diurnal!”

“...”

“And plus, I did go swimming at night, it’s the only time I can swim with nothing on without getting reprimanded-”

Lan WangJi’s face darken

-and if I come across any water ghouls, I just drag it to shore and kill it. Two birds with one stone!”

“...Shameless” Lan QiRen gritted out, tugging on his goatee so hard Wei WuXian thought it is going to come off.

“Hold up! I never heard of this until now!” Jiang Cheng remarked, his eyes set on Wei WuXian.

“Of course not, why would you want to know about my late night swims-”

“Not that! The night-hunting! You’re still a trainee at the time, do you know how dangerous that is?!”

“And nothing ever happened to me.” Wei WuXian answered back “I understand my own limits, Jiang Cheng~”

“When did it start? Why didn’t you tell me about it?”

“Oh, you know... One night, I couldn’t sleep and went out for a walk, ran into a lame hanged ghost* on a tree, took it out and decided ‘this is kinda fun’ and continued every single night~”

“...” Jiang Cheng nearly slapped his forehead like he did when he was still a teen.

“And I did tell you about it, but you scoffed at me and walked away!”

“I thought your ‘training’ is jumping though trees like a monkey!”

“Well, I did that too. So, you aren’t wrong. I don’t run into a malicious being every night you know.”

Jiang Cheng actually slapped his forehead this time.

Normally, Jin Ling would have the same reaction as his jiujiu, but getting stronger and making a name for himself is something he aspires to achieve ever since he started his training.

Back when he used to hate Wei WuXian, he couldn’t stand all the rumors surrounding him, before he betrayed the YunmengJiang, he was a talented cultivator and the top disciple of the Jiang sect, exceeding his peers including the sect leader’s son by pure luck and talent alone. This only frustrated him, he himself had struggled so many times in the past but the person he hates the most could have done all of that without breaking a sweat, such as the story of him slaying the XuanWu at a mere seventeen.

Looks like he does train after all...

“A-Ling, don’t do it too.”

Jin Ling looked to his mother smiling at him.

“The ones your Shishu fought are just simple creatures that only caused minor inconveniences to others nearby. When encountering much more powerful foes, please do not go alone.”

Jin Ling nodded but asked “You know about Wei Wu- Shi...Shishu’s night hunts?” Even Jiang Cheng didn’t know about this.

Jiang YanLi nodded, when she realized her Shidi changed his sleeping schedule and spent the night outdoors, she expressed her concerns to her father who returned recently from a conference. Jiang FengMian being the sect leader, couldn’t have not known about the simple disturbances quieting down over the past few weeks even though the reports and complaints about them were fresh.

Wei WuXian was allowed to continue his nightly activities as long as he doesn’t bite off more than he could chew.

“I’m not sure when exactly he started doing that but...” She glanced at her Shidi before leaning to whisper in her son’s ear. “You know something? A-Ling is not only like A-Cheng, you remind me of A-Xian as well.”

Jin Ling looked at her questionably

But Jiang YanLi simply ruffled his hair turned back when the junior began to read again.

Not many may know this, but Wei WuXian wasn’t always the confident and outgoing person he is now.

The night hunts were just one of the ways he came up with to stop being a burden to anyone.

To get stronger, so he could fight his own battles.

...

Another junior spoke: “I’m going to Yunmeng to study next year! Nobody will stop me!”

Nie HuaiSang smiled wryly to himself.

And he was doused by a bucket of cold water*: “No one is going to stop you. Your big brother will just break your legs.”

That teen’s shoulders slumped down. This is the second young master of the QingheNie sect, Nie HuaiSang.

“Sect leader Nie was classmates with senior Wei and sect leader Jiang?” Lan SiZhui asked politely

“And Lan Zhan as well!”

‘And me too...’ Jin ZiXuan sulked

...

The book continues introducing Nie HuaiSang and by extension, his older brother Nie MingJue.

Lan XiChen sighed deeply at that.

Nie HuaiSang’s eyes watered.

He feared his brother at times but there is no doubt that he loves him and vice versa.

His brother pushed him hard in the past, trying to prepare him to be the Nie sect leader one day if anything unfortunate happened upon him.

Nie HuaiSang didn’t want to be a cultivator nor a sect leader so he made no progress in his training.

Who would have thought the day he became sect leader due to his brother’s untimely death would actually come.

...

Wei WuXian spoke: “Actually, I found Gusu quite fun as well.”

Nie HuaiSang disagreed with him: “Wei-xiong, heed my genuine advice, the Cloud Recesses

are nothing like the Lotus Pier. Now that you are in Gusu, you must remember that there is a person you should never offend.”

Wei WuXian asked: “Who? Lan QiRen?”

Nie HuaiSang replied: “Not the old coot-

Due to the absence of his fan, the Nie sect leader could only hide his face behind the sleeves of his robes when Lan QiRen turned his eyes to him.

-You must be cautious of his pride and joy, named Lan Zhan.”

“Lan Zhan from the twin jades of Lan? Lan WangJi?” Wei WuXian questioned

...Nie HuaiSang replied: “Are there any other Lan Zhan? That’s him. Man, he’s the same age as you and me but he doesn’t have any youthful energy at all, strict and a stick in the mud, worse than his uncle.”

Lan QiRen’s eyes hardened even more when his beloved student is concerned.

Nie HuaiSang shrunk further into his seat.

Wei WuXian gave a “Oh” before asking: “Is he a rather handsome fellow?”

Jiang Cheng scoffed: “Is there anyone ugly in the GusuLan sect? His sect doesn’t even take in disciples with imperfect facial features. Why don’t you try finding one with an average face for me?”

Wei WuXian emphasized further: “Incredibly handsome.” He gestured his head: “Clothed in white, wearing a forehead ribbon and carrying a silver sword on his back. Good looking, but his face is emotionless, like he was attending a funeral.”

Lan juniors & Jin Ling: ‘???’

“It... sounds like senior Wei has been acquainted with HanGuang-Jun before?” Lan SiZhui looked to the couple in question.

Wei WuXian rubbed his nose self-consciously.

Lan WangJi on the other hand seemed more a little more interested in something else. (Hint: Something to do with WWX calling him ‘Incredibly handsome’.)

Lan XiChen paid more attention to his hyperventilating uncle than his lovestruck brother.

“...” Nie HuaiSang confirmed it: “That’s him!” But he paused before saying: But he has been in seclusion these past few days and you only arrived a day ago. When did you see him?”

“Last night.”

“Last nig... Last night?!” Jiang Cheng was stunned “The Cloud Recesses has a curfew, where did you meet him? How come I didn’t know about it?”

Wei WuXian pointed: “There.”

He pointed to a very tall wall.

Lan juniors: ‘!!!’

“Whoa! The Cloud Recesses prohibits going out at night!” Lan JingYi exclaimed

“Senior Wei, you broke a rule on your first day in the Cloud Recesses?!” Fu GaoWen continued, eyes wide.

“And you got caught by HanGuang-Jun... of all people...” Li KangYu quietly muttered

“Wait... Is that your first meeting with HanGuang-Jun?” Lan ZiRui asked after that.

“Correct! What do you expect from me?”

All the juniors but Lan SiZhui deadpanned.

“Since you are not punished, did HanGuang-Jun let you off?” Lan SiZhui asked ‘Did HanGuang-Jun already grew a soft spot for senior Wei on first sight?’

“Aren’t we listening to this scene right now?” Wei WuXian waved to Zhou YuanXiang. “Hey, Jing... Gao... kid with the giant stain, continue please~”

Zhou YuanXiang: “...” Flicks lotus seed at Lan JingYi’s face.

Everyone was speechless. Jiang Cheng’s head begun to hurt and he bit his lip: “You got into trouble the moment you arrived?! What happened?!”

Wei WuXian laughed: “Not much. Do you remember that liquor store called ‘Emperor’s smile’? Last night, I couldn’t stand it anymore, so I went down the mountain to go into town and brought two jars back-

“The Cloud Recesses prohibits alcohol!” Lan JingYi blurted out.

Zhou YuanXiang shook his head “Senior Wei broke two rules on his first day...” and continues reading.

-I had to, I wouldn’t be able to drink this in YunMeng.”

“A-Xian... you were only fifteen...”

“Hehe, don’t worry, shijie~ I never got drunk before in my life~”

Jiang Cheng on the other side of him rolls his eyes. 'Ya-right... Just because you don't remember, doesn't mean I forgot I dragged your childish drunk ass home.'

“Where is the alcohol now?” Jiang Cheng asked

Wei WuXian answered him: “When I was climbing over the wall, he caught me before I even got one of my legs in.”

Another youth spoke: “Wei-xiong has really amazing timing. He probably just came out of seclusion and was patrolling that night. And you just happened to be there to get caught by him.”

"Speaking of that, why were you in seclusion, Lan Zhan?"

"WangJi returned from a night hunt about two weeks ago and went into seclusion to regulate his inner balance after recovering from his injury." Lan XiChen answered for his not-much of a talker brother.

"Injury?! Was it serious, Lan Zhan?! Did it hurt? Where were you hurt? By wha-"

Lan WangJi presses a finger against his partner's lips. "Shh~"

Wei WuXian calmed before looking at him expectantly.

"Scratch on lower left arm, from wind spirit on Hanfeng* mountain."

Wei WuXian furrowed his eyebrows. Wind spirits are a more uncommon elemental spirit, rarer than the very common earth spirits but more common compared to fire and water. Wind spirits are formed when negative energy stays enveloped by low air-pressure winds for a long period of time.

The negative energy will be compressed into a core by the naturally counter-clockwise circling motion from the low-pressure winds and the low temperatures. The same types of winds that gives birth to storms which in turn gives birth to violent wind spirits. Thankfully, they are typically found on remote mountains and other high altitude and cold places. Where Yin energy is naturally denser and the amount of deaths in those places.

Wind spirits are highly aggressive, summoning strong mistrals down the mountains, passing their eternal bodies though living beings, freezing them alive and using the surrounding air as if they were sickles, not to mention they are barely visible. An attack from one decreases the body temperature severely and considering the fact you can only encounter these things in cold places... Yeah, if you were a normal person, you are probably going die of hypothermia.

"A wind spirit..., no wonder you need to go into seclusion, did it hurt?"

"Not much."

Lan WangJi is someone who will never downplay or exaggerate thing, so if he said 'not much', it must be not much but Wei WuXian can't help but place a kiss on his arm."

"There! A kiss makes everything better!"

"Mm" Lan WangJi kissed him back.

The juniors and Jin Ling who were just admiring the man who taken on a wind spirit and survived at such a young age simultaneously thought the floor is way more interesting.

Jiang Cheng spoke: "Those who return at night past curfew isn't allowed back inside. Why did he let you in?"

The juniors other than the one reading leaned forward.

Wei WuXian threw his hand up and answered: "He didn't. He demanded that my move back the leg I got over the wall. How am I supposed to move it back? Then he got onto the wall so lightly, like he floated up and asked me what was I holding."

Jiang Cheng's head hurts even more, having a bad feeling: "What did you answer?"

Wei WuXian responded: “ ‘Emperor’s smile! I’ll give you a jar, so can you pretend you never saw me?’ ”

“No”

“Wha- Even now...? You still won’t let me off the hook?”

“No”

“No? No to what? No to the alcohol? Or no to the pretend?? Or the let me off the hook???”

Lan WangJi leaned down to his ear. “No”

Wei WuXian felt flushed, feeling his breath heating up his ear. “No what?”

“I won’t let others know.”

“So... you will let me off the hook?”

“No, I will punish you myself.”

“...What about pretend you didn’t see me?”

“Impossible.”

“Wha- You damn Lan Zhan...”

As Wei WuXian continued his complaints, Lan WangJi’s focus is entirely fixated on his face.

It’s the same face, but a little older. And despite the complaints, his eyes still contain the same joy and laughter as that youth who broke three rules in a single night, his body half on one side of the wall and grinning at him as he offered one of the jars in his hand.

Pretend I never saw him?

Pretend I never met him?

Pretend I never knew him?

Impossible.

He wasn’t able to do that on that one fateful night.

Nor in those lonely thirteen years.

And most definitely not now after that he returned to him.

He bit the ear of his still complaining lover.

“Not possible, never will be possible.” He breathed into his ear

Wei WuXian stopped his complaints to blush as red as ChenQing’s tassel.

And cuddled his lover, hiding his face in his broad chest.

“Lan Zhan~ You’re such a romantic~ Where did you learn how to be so charming?~”

“You”

“Aw~ You flatter me~” Wei WuXian got up and placed his hands on his own hips, pushing his shoulders up in pride. “But it’s true, there’s no one better than me when it comes to that!”

“...Mm”

The smell of vinegar returned.

Wei WuXian, not realizing the ‘danger’ continued. “And you have definitely improved with my help! So what should you say to me?~”

“Everyday”

“...?” Wei WuXian hoped there is something wrong with his ears.

“Everyday”

Wei WuXian shuddered “Surely not..? I will be happy with just a ‘Thanks’...?”

“Everyday”

“Really! Such a privilege shouldn’t be rewarded to such a mediocre-”

Now it’s Lan WangJi’s turn to cuddle him.

“Everyday is everyday, Wei Ying.”

The YiLing LaoZu felt his eyes nearly rolled back.

‘I’m so sorry old man Lan if this is how you feel every time I pissed you off... I won’t do it again!!!’

Lan QiRen sneezed even harder than at the vinegar smell.

While the juniors kept quiet, all their comments on Wei WuXian’s first words to Lan WangJi died on their tongues.

Jin ZiXuan nudged Jin Ling beside him “Are they always like this...?”

“I don’t know them.”

“...Okay”

Jiang Cheng sat next to the older Jin, eyes closed, munching lotus seeds like he is taking his anger out on them.

Lan XiChen just continues smiling, gesturing to the junior to continue reading.

Preferably before his uncle retires permanently...

...

Zhou YuanXiang averted his eyes from the still cuddling couple.

Jiang Cheng sighed deeply: “...The Cloud Recesses prohibits alcohol. That’s a more serious offence.”

Wei WuXian replied: “That’s what he told me. So I asked him: ‘Why don’t you tell me, what doesn’t your sect prohibit?’ but it made him a little angry and he told me to look at the wall of rules myself. But for real, over three thousand rules, all written in seal font*, who will actually go and read it? Did you look at it? Or you? I sure didn’t. Why would you get mad about it?”

Lan QiRen broke the lotus seed in his hand.

“Um...Unc-”

Lan WangJi covered his partner’s mouth.

“Let him calm down on his own.”

If Wei WuXian speaks to him now, he will either faint again or give Wei WuXian another twenty times to copy. (Well, Lan WangJi will do it for him but he rather spend his free time with his lover than copy rules.)

“That’s right!” Everyone agreed with him and started voicing their complaints-

“Uncle... Please calm down, this stress will harm your body...”

Lan XiChen spoke soothingly while waving a hand behind his back to signal the junior to continue with the book.

...Wei WuXian was surprised: “What? Personal fights are also prohibited?”

“Senior Wei... Don’t tell me...”

That grin from Wei WuXian was enough to answer Lan SiZhui’s question.

Jiang Cheng answered: “...It’s prohibited. Don’t tell me you fought him as well.”

Wei WuXian replied: “We fought. Even broke a jar of emperor’s smile.”

“Senior Wei... I have new found respect for you now...” Fu GaoWen drawled out.

“*How* did you manage to break three rules on just your first day?...” Lan JingYi looked at Wei WuXian, not sure whether to laugh or to groan.

“*How* do you not? There are over three, now four thousand rules to follow that don’t repeat! And there are mostly things normal people do like run!” Wei WuXian looked thoughtful for a moment before asking: “Does that mean if there is an emergency you’ll still walk there?”

“Mm”

“Seriously? I don’t get it...”

Lan QiRen’s face is turning an interesting shade of red and green.

“YuanXiang-Shixiong...”

Zhou YuanXiang obeyed his junior and continued, hoping the next paragraph doesn’t make their elder any angrier.

Everyone slapped their thighs at that, what pity for a nice jar of alcohol.

Since it can't get any worse-

'Big mistake...'

-Jiang Cheng shifted his attention elsewhere: "Didn't you say you had two jars? Where's the other?"

"I drank it."

"Where?"

"Right in front of him."

Unaware people: "..."

"I said: 'Alright then, the Cloud Recesses prohibits alcohol, so I won't go in and drink it on this wall. That won't count as breaking the rule, right?'. And then I drank the whole thing in front of him."

"...And?"

"And then we fought."

Despite Lan XiChen's efforts, Lan QiRen toppled over once again, muttering something about his cabbage.

"This is how the two of you first met?..." Jin Ling finally asked

Wei WuXian snuggles against Lan WangJi nodding: "Mm-hm! Our fated meeting~ Wasn't it wonderful~"

Lan WangJi's ears turned red: "Mm"

Lan JingYi couldn't stand it anymore: "That's how the both of you met??? Shouldn't it be more romantic? Like 'Senior Wei got lost on his first day in the Cloud Recesses and stumbled near the garden of the Jingshi where HanGuang-Jun happened to be, strumming on his zither under the moonlight, looking every bit like an immortal descended from the heavens and you, entranced by the beauty of the music wandered into the garden. HanGuang-Jun sensed your presence and looked up. The both of you made eye contact for the first time and knew, that you are destined for each other.' Shouldn't it be something like that?"

A half of the other Lan juniors started chattering amongst themselves.

"That sounds great JingYi-xiong! And maybe HanGuang-Jun will walk him back to his room, promising to see him again tomorrow!"

"And he will show him around the Cloud Recesses after class so they would have even more time to know each other!"

"The both of them will get even more interested about each other as time goes on, realizing how different they are! They do say opposites attract!"

"And even better if that night wasn't actually their first meeting! What if, they met each other long

ago when they were little, but since it was so long ago, they could only remember bits and pieces and one day, they figured it out and that's what got them together?"

"Good idea! Or maybe we can add that their parents were old friends too?"

"It would be so cute! Especially if they arranged the two of them to be married when they weren't born yet but it has to be called off because they are both boys, but that one arrangement had intertwined their fates with each other's from then on!"

"That's perfect! I think I read something similar to that before..."

Everyone else: "..."

"Lan er-gege... What does your sect teach your disciples nowadays?"

"..."

"Just glad your uncle wasn't awake to hear this."

"...Mm"

"...Are you going to punish them?"

"...No"

Wei WuXian stared at Lan WangJi's 'Thoughtful' face, a strange feeling churning in his gut.

"...You want to recreate that 'first meeting' scene?..."

"Mm"

Lan WangJi's ears turned red.

'...This can't be good' "Next week...?"

"Tomorrow."

"!... Lan Zhan~ Have mercy on me~ I wanna go into town the day after tomorrow~"

"Carry"

"In town?! N..no thank you... I changed my mind..."

"Must"

"Hahaha..." 'Why? Just why...'

Lan QiRen is still unconscious.

...

"Wei-xiong" Nie HuaiSang was shocked: "You are really proud of yourself, huh."

Wei WuXian quirked an eyebrow: "Lan Zhan's pretty skilled."

"Mm"

“You seem to be in a good mood, little brother.” Lan XiChen commented from where he is fanning his uncle with a paper fan, courtesy of MengMo.

“Mm”

“You’re doomed, Wei-xiong! Lan Zhan has never been on the end of such humiliation before, he’s most likely targeting you now. Be careful, even though Lan Zhan doesn’t study with us, he is in charge of punishments in the GusuLan sect!”

“The biggest troublemaker ending up with the discipline master... Interesting match there...” Lan SiZhui sweatdrops at his aunt’s words.

“Senior Wei, didn’t you say you were classmates with HanGuang-Jun?”

“Well little one, you can say he is really on to me after that night~”

“...Mm”

“You’ll see in the next paragraph, ZiRui-shidi”

...

As expected, Lan WangJi is attending class with them.

Still lying on the floor, Lan QiRen mumbled something about how he shouldn’t have agreed to Lan WangJi’s request of attending his class to keep his eye on the troublemaker.

Lan XiChen continues his fanning.

...

Lan QiRen is standing straight, tall and thin. Even though he has a long black goatee, he is defiantly not old. And as per GusuLan tradition, he is a good-looking man. Zhou YuanXiang flinched at the next sentence but dutifully continued **So it’s unfortunate that his face is as stiff as he is a stick in the mud, so much so that addressing him as ‘old coot’ couldn’t be more fitting....**

Lan QiRen shot up so fast in anger that he smacked into the fan his older nephew is fanning him with, causing said nephew to stop in shock.

“WEI...” The elder rubbed his red face in pain “WEI YING!!!”

“I’m so sorry! I was immature back then, please forgive my younger self!”

‘Immature back then? Then what are you now???’ Everyone else thought to themselves.

Lan QiRen glared back but gave up, returning to lying on the floor, his face burning red.

Lan XiChen goes back to fanning his uncle’s face.

...Anyways, Lan QiRen had entered the Lanshi* and started ~~chanting~~ reading the three-thousand or so rules of the GusuLan sect.

So it’s no big surprise that everyone but Lan WangJi is not paying any attention.

The Lan juniors' eyes widen, if elder Lan came into class and started reading the now four-thousand rules, they might just quit school on that day.

Unfortunately, Lan QiRen noticed Wei WuXian's (and possibly many others') disinterest.

Suddenly, Lan QiRen threw the scroll on the ground and sneered: "It is all engraved on the wall, yet not one person could be bothered to look at it. That is the reason why I am reading it out one by one, so no one can use ignorance as an excuse but it seems like there are still those who could not pay attention. Very well, then I shall talk about something else."

Even though his words can apply to anyone in the Lanshi, Wei WuXian felt that these words are specifically for him.

"Tsk, of course it is. With that stunt you pulled the day before, do you really expect that goody-two-shoes to *not* report you?"

"Shh, Shimei. I'm paying attention right now."

"Hehe... Jiang-xiong... Try some of this tea, calm your nerves..."

'Sect leader Nie, you are a very brave man to approach my uncle now that he's like this...'

...

Of course, Lan QiRen called Wei WuXian out and begun to test him which he answered flawlessly until the last question.

"...I will ask another, there is an executioner with parents, a wife and children. He has executed more than a hundred people before his own passing in public and was left on the streets for seven days to pay for his sins. The accumulated resentful energy remained stagnant for seven whole days and began to haunt and harm the living. How would you resolve this?"

This time, Wei WuXian didn't immediately answer causing his classmates to believe he was stumped and felt uneasy. Lan QiRen scolded them: "What are you looking at him for? Think as well and you are not allowed to touch your textbooks!"

Wei WuXian still didn't answer after some time, so Lan QiRen asked Lan WangJi to answer instead.

Which marks the end of this chapter and Zhou YuanXiang passed it to Lan JingYi beside him.

"SiZhui"

"Yes, HanGuang-Jun?"

"Try"

Lan SiZhui thought for a second before replying: "Liberation comes first, if the resentful energy of the executioner can be liberated by just burying his body or some other simple wish that should be always the step to take. If that is not possible, then it goes into the suppression stage. Suppress the resentful energy until it is manageable and can be liberated. If that is not possible either, there is no other choice but to eliminate it. It should always be in this order, no matter the target."

Reading Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Finally being his turn to read, Lan JingYi immediately grabbed the book from his shixiong.

...

As Wei Wuxian said, Lan WangJi's answer to the question is very similar to Lan SiZhui's.

With that, Lan QiRen began to lecture about how being over confident in ones own abilities will lead to their own downfall or something.

Basically, he is targeting Wei WuXian.

However, he had underestimated how thick Wei WuXian's face is.

He opened his mouth: "I have a question."

Jiang Cheng groaned out loud, remembering this part.

Lan QiRen replied: "Speak"

Wei WuXian spoke: " 'Liberation' may be the first step, but it is often impossible. 'Appease the spirit by granting his dying wish', is easier said than done. If his dying wish is simply new clothing that's fine but if it is something like kill a bunch of people for revenge?"

Lan WangJi answered him: "Suppress alongside liberation, eliminate if necessary."

Wei WuXian smiled lightly and said: "It's such a waste." But he paused a bit before continuing: "Just now, it's not like I didn't know the answer. I was just thinking of a fourth route."

"A fourth route?" Lan ZiRui and Jin Ling asked at the same time.

Lan QiRen replied: “I have never heard of a so called ‘Fourth route’.”

Lan JingYi’s eyes widen at the next paragraph: “Senior Wei, you already thought of ghost cultivation*?!”

Wei WuXian placed his hand on his chin and recalled for a second: “Well... I wasn’t serious then, I only said it because I thought it would be interesting...”

Lan WangJi held his partner close.

Wei WuXian spoke his mind: “Due to the way this executer died, it is inevitable that he turned into a fierce corpse. Since he had executed more than a hundred people before his own death, why not awaken the resentful energies of those people from their graves, collect their heads and use them to fight the executor...”

Lan QiRen trembled so much at the familiar words that everyone thought he was going into shock. (Don’t worry, Wen Qing checked, just extreme stress and he probably should take a leave once they are out of the dream...)

Moving on, in the book, Lan QiRen predictably threw a fuss, but the shameless Wei WuXian countered with his own ideals and logic leading to-

Lan QiRen threw another book: “Then, I will ask you this! How would you ensure that the resentful energy only obeys you and leave others unharmed?!”

Wei WuXian dodged the incoming projectile: “Haven’t thought of that yet!”

Lan QiRen was furious: “If you had thought of it, the rest of the cultivation world will never tolerate your existence! Scram!”

Lan JingYi bit his lip, looking at Wei WuXian guiltily expecting a reaction.

But he didn’t get any, instead Wei WuXian flashed a grin at him when he noticed his eyes on him.

So Lan JingYi turned back to the book missing the action of Lan WangJi stroking Wei WuXian’s hand and pressing his lips against his head.

Wei WuXian couldn’t ask for anything better and he immediately scrambled.

Lan JingYi chuckled as he read it out, his mood lifting up already.

...

After class ended, Jiang Cheng, Nie HuaiSang and some of their classmates searched for Wei WuXian for some time before they found him sitting on top of a wall, a piece of grass between his lips.

...A teen pointed at him: “Wei-xiong! You are so gutsy, he asked you to scram and you actually scrambled! Hahahaha...”

Lan WangJi glanced at his uncle as he continues massaging the back of his partner’s hand.

“He took a while to notice after you left, his face was so dark!”

Wei WuXian chewed on a piece of grass and shouted down: “I answered when asked, I scrambled when I was told to scram, what else does he want from me?”

“WEI YING!!!”

“I’m sorry! And I know, respect my seniors and don’t speak behind other’s backs!”

“YOU KNOW AND YET YOU DON-cough-cough- DON’T -cough-”

“Watch your health, uncle!”

Lan QiRen was reduced to wheezing now.

“Qing-jie! Is he okay?!”

“Does he look okay to you?”

“Hush, shimei. I’m talking to the actual doctor.”

Wen Qing rolled her eyes but humored him anyways. “He is just stressed. Besides, aren’t you the one going on about how this is a dream?”

Wei WuXian leaned over to her side to whisper: “I know, but I need to show concern for both Lan Zhan and me!”

Lan WangJi dutifully nodded.

Lan SiZhui saluted: “I see, senior Wei always have good reason for his actions.”

Wen Qing: ???

Wen Ning: “...”

...

Nie HuaiSang spoke: “Old man Lan seems like he is extra strict with you, always directing his scolding at you.”

Jiang Cheng tsked: “He deserves it. Just look at what he answered just now. He should only spout this kind of rubbish at home, but he actually said it in front of Lan QiRen. He has a death wish!”

Wei WuXian responded: “No matter what my answer is, he will still detest me, so I might as well say what I want. Furthermore, I didn’t insult him and only answered honestly.”

“Normal people would try *not* to make him hate themselves even more.” Jin Ling commented while rolling his eyes.

“I never once said I was a normal person.”

“That’s why I used the word ‘Normal’ in the first place and not ‘other’.” Jin Ling deadpanned back.

Wei WuXian faked a pout and turned to his shijie.

“Shijie~ Look at your son, so rude to his senior~”

Jin Ling: ‘!...You with the surname Wei, don’t get my mom involved!!!’

“A-Ling-”

“Sorry Mom!”

“-it looks like the two of you get along very well, I’m relieved.”

“...”

Which part of our interactions gives you the impression we get along well?!

Wei WuXian grinned: “Isn’t that great my nephew? Your mom thinks we get along well!”

Jiang Cheng sneezed

Lan JingYi just continued

...

Nie HuaiSang showed interest in Wei WuXian’s idea and discussed it further with him.

Jiang Cheng warned him: “That’s enough. Only talk about it, don’t actually go down such a crooked path.”

Wei WuXian smiled: “Why would I not take the bright, broad road in front of me and take the dark, single plank bridge?”

Many eyes turned to Wei WuXian. Back then, it seems like he wasn’t actually interested in going down the path of ghost cultivation.

So, why *did* he go down this single-plank bridge?

‘Because I didn’t have a choice.’

“If it is that great, someone would have used it already. Relax, he asked and I answered. Hey, there’s still time before curfew , I’m gonna go hunt pheasants. Want to join me?”

“Are there any pheasants? I never saw any on the mountain before.” Lan ZiRui asked out of curiosity.

“Nope, not even one. But there were quite a few bunny rabbits.”

Quite a few indeed, with how well they are ‘getting along’, there are probably more rabbits on Cloud Recesses grounds than there are people in the whole of Gusu.

Jiang Cheng reprimanded: “What ‘hunting for pheasants’, where are you going to find pheasants here? Go and copy the <Righteous volume*>, Lan QiRen told me to tell you to copy the <Virtue> section of the <Righteous volume> three times so that you will learn what is natural law and morality.

Wei WuXian predictably complained: **“Copy it three times? Just one time is enough to send me to heaven. I am not a part of the Lan family and have no intention to marry into the Lan clan-** Lan WangJi: “...” **-so why should I copy his family’s rules. I’m not doing it.”**

“Have no intention to marry into the Lan clan?”

“...” Beads of sweat dripped down Wei WuXian’s face. ‘I can’t even guess what he is thinking when he gets like that... Just please don’t think anything ‘everyday’ related, there is only so much I can take!!!’

“Have no intention to marry into the Lan clan now?” Lan WangJi asked

“No! I married you then, I will marry you now and marry you in the future, again and again if I could! I’m yours in this life and in the next life! And in the next one, and the nex-”

“Mm”

This is a face Wei WuXian recognized, Lan WangJi is very satisfied with his answer.

‘This man... I can’t keep up with him... In more ways than one...’

During their couple moment, Lan QiRen who just felt well enough to get up fell back down again.

Lan JingYi is just glad ZeWu-Jun* is sitting next to him, separating him and the Lan elder, otherwise, he might have had a heart attack already.

Nie HuaiSang immediately offered: “I will do it! I will copy for you!”

The Lan QiRen at this point doesn’t have the strength to talk.

Good for Nie HuaiSang, who know the Lan elder would probably find a way to punish him even when he is no longer his student.

“If there is nothing to gain, there will be no effort nor traitors and thieves*. Just say it out, what do you need me for?”

Nie HuaiSang elaborated: “You see, Wei-xiong, old man Lan has a bad habit, he....”

He stopped in the middle of his sentence and coughed dryly, opened his fan and moved to the side-

“What’s elder Lan’s bad habit?” Jin Ling asked softly so only the people on his side can hear him.

“He likes to test our memory, rules, family trees, scrolls, books, famous cultivators... so on.” Jin ZiXuan answered his son, lightly grimacing when he remembered all the tests and exams he had taken. Never had he ever wished his memory was better until those three months.

-Wei WuXian had a bad feeling and turned around, of course, it’s Lan WangJi with Bichen on his back, standing under an ancient but flourishing tree and stared in their direction.

Nie HuaiSang discreetly avoided looking at Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian across from him, back then, he noticed Lan WangJi staring at him first, in a way that reminds him of a jealous fiancé...

But... Lan WangJi doesn’t have feelings for Wei WuXian at the time, right? Right?

...

After noticing him, Wei WuXian called out to him and was promptly ignored by the fifteen years old second young master of Lan.

“Lan Zhan... Look at you back then, ignoring me all the time and now you get mad when I said I didn’t want to marry into the Lan clan~” Wei WuXian bit his lip pitifully and showed his big eyes, filled with (fake) unshed tears at him, looking every bit like a young wife who has been wronged.

“...Sorry, never again.” The tips of Lan WangJi’s ears long became red but he couldn’t take his eyes off of Wei WuXian’s face...

...A dry cough from the smiling Lan XiChen reminded him they are not the only ones here.

“He ignored me.”

“Yeah” Nie HuaiSang responded: “It looks like really hates you, Wei-xiong- Nie HuaiSang felt a chill in the air -Lan WangJi usually...no, he never shows such disrespect.”

Wei WuXian replied: “He hates me? But I wanted to admit my wrongdoings to him.”

Jiang Cheng mocked: “Admit your wrongdoings now? It’s too late! He definitely thinks you’re immoral and evil to the core and couldn’t be bother to deal with you, just like his uncle.”

Now it’s Jiang Cheng’s turn to feel the chill.

Jiang Cheng: ‘???’

Wei WuXian thought otherwise and chuckled: “I don’t care that he ignores me, is he that pretty?” Then again, he thought, he really is pretty. So, he cheerfully threw the desire to twitch his lips at the back of his mind.

“You were already a cutsleeve then?!”

“No I wasn’t! What, can’t a bro appreciate another bro’s good looks?”

“...”

...

It was three days later, did Wei WuXian finally know what Lan QiRen’s bad habit was.

Everything Lan QiRen went though in class is tested and everyone is expected to remember every detail, right down to a quote said by some famous cultivator’s great grandson.

Jin Ling visibly shivered, even though he had become sect leader, he was still young and inexperience. So, some of the Jin sect elders are thinking of sending him to Cloud Recesses to study for a couple of months. At first, he was enthusiastic about that idea, to study with his new friends in their sect. Now... after his father’s words and this book...

...

Anyways, Nie HuaiSang has copied the rules for Wei WuXian and requested Wei WuXian to help him cheat during the exams for he has repeated twice already.

Well, it didn’t go as planned since Lan WangJi caught them sending notes.

And for some odd reason, only Wei WuXian got the blame.

“That’s peculiar, senior Wei is not the only one cheating, many others including sect leader Nie are as well. All of them broke the rules yet only senior Wei was punished?” asked Lan SiZhui, mystified.

Lan XiChen frowned: “Young master Wei was the only one punished due to him being the mastermind and for being a bad influence on his classmates.”

‘And WangJi insisted that only young master Wei have to copy in the library and he would watch over him...’ He left that unsaid...For now.

...

This time, Nie HuaiSang couldn’t help Wei WuXian with the copying this time as Wei WuXian has to copy both virtue and conduct, not to mention that Lan QiRen specially said that no one is to help him copy.

Wei WuXian wondered: “How would he know whether I copied it or not? Don’t tell me he going to get someone to watch me.”

Everyone: ‘Starting to see how this is going...’

Jiang Cheng answered: “That is the case.”

“...” Wei WuXian asked: “What did you just say?”

Jiang Cheng answered him: “He doesn’t allow you to go outside, copy the rules in the library and face the wall to reflect upon your mistakes. Of course, there’s going to be someone watching you. As for who that is person, I don’t think I need to tell you, do I?”

“I regret allowing WangJi to watch over that...” Lan WangJi hears his uncle’s barely audible words and simply snuggled with his partner.

Wei WuXian beside Lan WangJi could only hear ‘-gret allowing Wang-’ from his uncle-in-law, but it was enough to draw a conclusion.

“Lan Zhan... You volunteered to watch over me in the library?”

“...Mm”

‘His ears are redder than usual...’

“...Is there something you’re not telling me?”

“...”

“Come on, spit it out~”

“...”

Lan XiChen coughed lightly: “It was WangJi who suggested that you copy virtue and conduct, along with copying in the library where he will be watching.

Lan WangJi turned to look at his brother in betrayal.

Wei WuXian turned back to his partner: “The copying was also your ide...” He trailed of

remembering a line that was read out recently...

“Lan Zhan~”

“...Mm”

“Lan er-gege!”

“Mm...?”

Wei WuXian grinned wider: “ ‘I am not a part of the Lan family and have no intention to marry into the Lan clan so why should I copy his family’s rules.’ ”

“!”

‘Gotcha~’

“Lan Zhan” Wei WuXian started in a serious tone: “If you want to propose that badly, I can think of a hundred more *effective* ways than this.”

The blush started to spread onto the not so stoic second young master Lan’s cheeks now: “No... that’s not my intention...”

“Oh? Then you just want us to spend time together? You could have just asked you know! Or come with us when we head into town!”

The vinegar smell returned at the words ‘us’ and ‘we’.

Wei WuXian: “...”

“You wanted me all to yourself?”

He felt a strong grip on his hip: “Mm”

“You don’t anyone else with us? Including the townspeople?”

“Mm!”

“And you don’t want to be obvious with your intention?”

“...”

He is probably digging his own grave: “And because you heard me say that, you want me to copy more of your sect’s rules since in your mind, I’m already part of the Lan-”

Lan WangJi bit his ear.

“HEY!!! OWWW!! OW! LAN ZHAN!!! LET GO YOU DOG!!!” Lan WangJi removed the pressure so that it wasn’t hurting Wei WuXian anymore but remained where he is. “What? Can’t stand it when I say out the truth?”

Lan WangJi bit down again.

“OWWWWWWWW!!!!!!!!!!”

Lan XiChen supported his dizzy uncle yet again. ‘WangJi... Only around young master Wei do you show another side of yourself. I am so proud...’

...

With the current situation getting nowhere, Lan JingYi watched until sect leader Jiang told him, in quote on quote: 'What are you waiting for?! An invitation? Or for them to... JUST CONTINUE!!!'.

The junior can only obey.

...

As Jiang cheng had said, Lan WangJi sat in the library, waiting for him.

Looking at Lan WangJi directly in front of him, Wei WuXian remembered how all the girls back at Yunmeng envied him for having the chance to study with the twin jades of Lan. And started thinking nonsense: 'He is quite good looking. No fault in his features whatsoever. Its just that those girls should come and look at him for themselves, with a face that look like he is constantly suffering, it doesn't matter- Lan WangJi bit down again -how- Wei WuXian: "OWWWW!!!" -good-looking his face is.'

While Wei WuXian was thinking, Lan WangJi paid him no mind and continued rewriting some of his clan's ancient scrolls.

His strokes are slow and precise, neat yet clean and strong. Wei WuXian couldn't help but compliment him: "Great characters! Top quality!"

Lan XiChen held back a chuckle when both his younger brother and his uncle's chests puffed out his pride. Both for different reasons, of course.

Lan WangJi didn't react.

Lan XiChen nearly chuckled out loud 'WangJi, did you forget 'conduct' yourself? You must always be polite, and a simple 'Thank you' would have been enough!'

It is rare for Wei WuXian to keep his mouth shut for so long, thinking: 'This person is so stuffy and I have to sit in front of him for hours everyday, for a whole month! Do they want my life?'"

Both uncle and nephew deflated and turned to look at Wei WuXian, one visibly angrier than the other.

"...Sorry?"

Lan WangJi bit back down.

Chapter End Notes

1* I know it's always called demonic cultivation but it just doesn't...make sense. As mentioned in the novel, Yao, Demon, Ghost and Monster are completely different creatures. WWX ONLY cultivates ghosts so it shouldn't be called 'demonic'. (I mean, the nature of his cultivation can be described as 'Demonic' but demons exist in this world...I don't know...)

4* 无事献殷勤非奸即盗’If there is nothing to gain, there will be no effort nor traitors and thieves.’ I tried my best to translate this phrase but WWX basically meant Nie HuaiSang is helping him in exchange for something..

[illegible]

Sorry for the wait! School is taking up so much time... T_T

P.s Happy birthday to everyone's favorite YiLing LaoZu, Wei WuXian!!! May you forever shine, as bright and everlasting as your star! 31/Oct

Reading Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“OWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Lan Xichen took the book from the gobsmacked and blushing Lan JingYi.

Lan WangJi released Wei WuXian's ear in time to listen to his brother reading.

Wei WuXian: 'I can't believe he did it in front of everyone ...I need to get back at him for this'

...

Wei WuXian was bored out of his mind, so he decided to play around with Lan WangJi in front of him.

He called out to him- “WangJi-xiong~” Wei WuXian called out for real.

Current Lan WangJi's ears blushed.

Lan WangJi remains motionless.

Wei WuXian tried again- This time Lan XiChen stopped on his own. “WangJi~” Wei WuXian called out again.

Jiang Cheng felt goosebumps on his arms.

It seemed like he didn't hear anything.

Wei WuXian tried yet again- “Lan WangJi~”

Lan XiChen chuckled at his brother.

Before Wei WuXian finally settled on: “Lan Zhan!”

“Mm!”

Satisfied, Wei WuXian poked his partner's cheek: “Lan er-gege~ You finally acknowledged poor little me now~ You were so mean as a teenager, never responding when I called you~” To amplify the effect, he bit his lower lip, tilted his head to one side, closed his eyes halfway, forcing more crocodile tears out, puffed out his chest out a bit more to show more skin and for the final touch, his other hand resting against his mouth in a cute, innocent way like the many girls do when they flirt with him. “Lan~ Er~ Ge~ Ge~ He winked.

Lan WangJi: “...”

Lan WangJi (Internally): ‘Only your fated person is allowed to touch your forehead ribbon, Shoulder the weight of morality, Uphold the value of justice, Without trust, nothing is the truth, Do not pick on the weak, Help the underprivileged, Have courtesy and integrity, Be earnest and love generously, honour your teachers and guidance, Perform acts of chivalry Destroy the five poisons maintain your own disciplined do not hold grudges strain your body and your mind:

Lan XiChen: ‘...I lost my brother’

But he continues reading admirably.

Lan WangJi finally stops writing and looked up at him coldly. Wei WuXian moved back, raising his arms in a defensive stance: “Don’t look at me that way, I only called out your name because you didn’t respond when I called you WangJi. If you’re not happy about it, you can also call me by my name back.”

When Wei WuXian heard the offer he made that time, he smiled slightly, keeping it in mind for later use (teasing).

Lan WangJi spoke: “Put your leg away.”

Wei Wuxian was overjoyed when Lan WangJi finally responded to him and placed his leg away, changing his improper position into a different but still improper position.

Hearing about all his ‘Improper positions’, Wei WuXian huffed: “Then enlighten me, just what is a ‘proper’ position?”

Lan QiRen doesn’t even bother with him.

“Like how we are sitting, senior Wei?” Lan SiZhui tried to answer his senior’s question like a good junior.

“Rhetorical questions shouldn’t be answered, SiZhui-er~ Learn to tell the difference.”

Lan SiZhui flushed: “I...see.”

“Besides, I know how you GusuLan people sit. Yeah, it looks kinda good, completely straight and legs all tucked in, but do you really have to sit like that all the time, for hours? Sitting is supposed to be a resting position, if you don’t sit in the way that is comfortable to you, what’s the point?” He reached behind his partner to run his fingers across Lan WangJi’s spine. “So stiff, no wonder you GusuLan people don’t run... Thankfully, Lan Zhan *bends down* often, otherwise, I might be worried that you are a future chiropractic patient...”

Still lovestuck Lan WangJi: “Mm...”

Some of the Lan juniors chuckled at that, some of the Lan elders do indeed have back problems, even though most of them had practiced martial arts in their youth.

Lan XiChen poured a fresh cup of tea for his fuming uncle while thinking about his uncle's recent back problems.

Maybe he should introduce some compulsory stretching exercises at the start of each day...

...

...He asked seriously: "Lan Zhan, let me ask you this. Do you.....really hate me a lot?"

"Why... would you ask that?..." Li KangYu asked so quietly Wei WuXian almost didn't hear him.

"I just want to know if he really thinks that way, if he answered 'yes', then it means he likes me enough to humor me (Everyone: "..."), then I will ask him what does he hate about me, if it's something simple, I guess I could change it."

Lan WangJi hugged him closer.

"Hahahaha, I know Lan Zhan. I'm perfect the way I am~"

"Mm"

"I don't understand, the two of you are so different, you just met each other and he seems to detest you so why do you want to be friends with him so badly?" Now Fu GaoWen asks.

"Not because I like-like him that time, if that's what you are think~"

"Who still says 'Like-like' at your age?"

"Hush, ChengCheng, I'm talking to kids."

Kids: 'We are not *that* young...'

"Anyways, if you think I like him in that way back then, no I don't. Forgive me, Lan Zhan~"

"..."

"It's because he is so interesting! I have never met someone like him before, hahahaha." Wei WuXian poked Lan WangJi on the cheek "Just look at this handsome emotionless face, aren't you interested to see what his other expressions look like?"

"I...guess..."

"Well, there you go! My reason is completely justified! Don't you agree, Lan er-gege?~"

"...Mm"

Juniors: 'Whatever you say...'

...

Lan WangJi didn't acknowledge his question.

"Lan Zhan Lan Zhan~"

“No, don’t hate you.”

“I knew it! How can anyone hate me... back then...”

Lan WangJi hugged him tighter and presses a kiss against his head.

“Mm”

...

Lan WangJi went back to looking at his writings. **Wei WuXian immediately spoke: “Don’t be like that. After two words you go back to ignoring me. I want to admit my mistakes and apologize to you, so look at me.”**

With a pause, he added: “Don’t want to? That’s okay, I will talk anyway. I am to blame that night, I was wrong. I shouldn’t have climbed over the wall, nor should I be drinking, and I shouldn’t have fought you. But I swear! I didn’t provoke you on purpose, I really didn’t look at your sect’s rules. In the Jiang sect, all the rules were told to us verbally, none of them were written down. Or else I definitely wouldn’t do it.” Wouldn’t have drank the emperor’s smile right in front of you, I would have hidden it and drink it secretly in my room, drink it everyday, share it with everyone else till we had enough.

Lan QiRen is having trouble breathing.

Lan WangJi: “...”

Wei WuXian fidgets uncomfortably.

Lan XiChen: “...”

Lan XiChen, professional brother-reader’s translation: ‘...Hide, ...everyday, till we had enough...’

‘His selective hearing is improving...’

He turns his eyes back to the book, his face is now very warm.

Wei WuXian spoke again: “Also, let’s be reasonable, who is the one who started the fight? It’s you. If you didn’t attack me first, we can talk it out, till its clear. But if someone attacks me, I must defend myself.

‘If someone attacks them, they will defend themselves’, that is basic human self-defense instincts.

So why couldn’t they see that when Jin ZiXun was the one that first attacked him on QiongQi road?

During the bloodbathed nightless days, the cultivation world attacked Wei WuXian first.

And they act like he started slaughtering people for no reason.

Lan WangJi went back to hugging his partner. ‘If only I was there on QiongQi road that day... Should have been more persistent... I want to protect him, but Wei Ying is not willing to come back with me, so I should have stayed with him on the mass graves hills instead...’

Wei WuXian smiled softly, enjoying the comfort from his partner’s arms.

So not everything should be blamed on me. Lan Zhan, are you listening to me? Look at me. Young master Lan?” He snapped his fingers: “Lan er-gege-

(So weird to have ZeWu-Jun say that...)

-just do me a favour and look at me.”

Lan WangJi didn’t even look up: “Copy another time.”

Wei WuXian bended down his body a little: “Don’t be like that. It’s all my fault.”

Lan WangJi saw though him mercilessly: “It is clear that you do not feel remorse.”

Wei WuXian continued with no dignity whatsoever:

“Sorrysorrysorrysorrysorrysorrysorrysorry. I will repeat this as many times as you want, I can even say it kneeling down.”

Wen Qing glanced over to the YiLing LaoZu: “So you always have been this annoying.”

“What do you mean ‘annoying’? I was sincerely apologizing for my faults.”

“What’s sincere about your apology?”

“Everything! I said sorry eight times in a row and offered to kneel down, look at how sincere is that!”

Jiang Cheng let out an exasperated sigh, his father should have named him Wei WuLian* not Wei WuXian.

...

Lan WangJi placed his brush down so Wei WuXian thought he finally reached his breaking point and is going to punch him now-

“So you *are* annoying him on purpose?”

“You mean you haven’t figured it out? As future cultivators, you must be quick and decisive.”

“But you just said you were sincerely apologizing!”

“As future cultivators, you also must have good judgement. You need to know when to take my words with a grain of salt and when not to. Learn from this beautiful Miss Wen here!”

Wen Qing sneezed

“Right Lan Zhan? Aren’t my teachings correct?”

“Mm”

Everyone else: “...”

Wei WuXian snickered at everyone’s expression: “Hahaha, I was just kidding. Not about Miss Wen’s looks, she is very pretty-

Wen Qing rolled her eyes.

-And Lan Zhan you're the best for agreeing with me, I was only kidding about the judging me but during night hunting, having good judgement and being decisive might determine whether you live or not!"

Lan WangJi nodded as if he was a student.

Lan QiRen took deep breathes.

...

-he was going to grin but found his upper lip and bottom lip stuck together as if they have been glued, making it impossible to laugh.

His face paled and started to struggle: "Hm? Hmhmhm!"

A few in the room -cough-Jiang Cheng, Jin Ling, Wen Qing-cough- sighed in relief before smirking.

"If only I could do that to you all the time."

"Jiang Cheng~ What did I do to deserve that?!"

He wisely ignored him.

Wei WuXian turned to Lan WangJi with more (fake) tears in his eyes instead: "What about you? You won't silence me anymore now right?"

"Mm" Lan WangJi hummed softly as he wiped away the tears tenderly.

'WangJi, I am truly happy for you but did the fact that uncle is sitting next to you slipped from your mind?'

...

With Wei WuXian silenced, Lan WangJi finally have some peace and quiet. He went back to writing while Wei WuXian struggled against the silence spell but to no avail. In a last futile attempt, he quickly wrote a message on a piece of paper and threw it at Lan WangJi who barely glanced at it before crumpling it into a ball and throwing it away. "Pathetic"

"Took the words out of my mouth."

"Yeah yeah, whatever."

"But what did you write, senior Wei?"

" 'I'm am so very sorry, second young master Lan. Please remove the silence spell, thank you.' What did you expect me to write?"

"..."

Wei WuXian rolled on the ground in frustration, crawled up and wrote a new message which was slammed onto the table in front of Lan WangJi, to be crumpled into a ball and thrown away again.

The silence spell lasted until he had finished copying before releasing him. When he came

back to the library on next day, all the paper balls from yesterday had been cleared out.

Wei WuXian is the type to forget the pain once the wound has healed. So even though he suffered from the silence spell on the first day, after sitting a while, his mouth started to itch again. But when he foolishly opened his mouth, he was silenced again. So, everything that happened on the first day was repeated.

And this repeated again daily until the final day of Wei WuXian's punishment.

The Lan juniors were awed by this, senior Wei and HanGuang-Jun's interactions and behavior towards each other were so different in the past!

They all looked to the couple in question simultaneously and regretting instantly when their eyes have the misfortune to landed upon their currently PDAing seniors.

...

...On the last day of Wei WuXian's reflection, Lan WangJi thought he was a bit different.

During his stay in the Cloud Recesses, he left his sword all around the place and never saw him carry it on his person before, but he brought it with him today, tossed it onto the desk and started copying without a word. So unlike his usual antics of annoying Lan WangJi and so strangely obedient.

Jiang Cheng and Nie HuaiSang remembered this, it's that time when Wei WuXian wanted to prank Lan WangJi with the porn book.

Nie HuaiSang's lips twitched slightly, he is going to hear more about what happened that time.

Jiang Cheng, although not as into it as his ex-classmate turned fellow sect leader, he would be lying if he said he wasn't interested in the full story.

Lan WangJi was not given any reason to silence him so far, but he kept an eye on him, like he isn't convinced that he had suddenly became decent.

Which is fine, no one here is convinced either.

As predicted, Wei WuXian reverted back to his old tricks after sitting awhile and gave him a sheet of paper for him to look at.

Lan WangJi originally thought it was a bunch nonsensical phrases again, but a quick glance informed him that it was a portrait of someone sitting upright, quietly reading next to a window with very realistic features. It was himself.

"Eh? You didn't tell us about this, Wei-xiong."

Wei WuXian laughed: "Slipped my mind, that wasn't the main part of this prank after all~"

Lan WangJi glowered (Which only Lan XiChen and Wei WuXian can tell)

"Aw~ Don't be like that~ At least I made an effort to make it look good, right?"

"...Mm"

Wei WuXian chuckled and hugged Lan WangJi, one of his hands playfully reaching back to tug on one of the ends of his partner's forehead ribbon: "But you liked it, didn't you? I bet you kept it afterwards, where is it now?"

Lan WangJi hugged him tightly and sighed.

Wei WuXian sat up to look at him: "Mm? You lost it?"

"Fire"

"..."

Wei WuXian immediately knew he was referring to that time when the library was burnt down by the Wen sect...

Wei WuXian caressed the side of his partner's cheek: "...Was it in the library when the... Wen sect came... that time?"

Lan WangJi leaned further into his hand: "...Mm"

Wei WuXian pressed his forehead against his: "I will draw a new one for you, exactly like how it was!"

"Mm!"

"Lan Zhan? It's really no problem, just a drawing I can draw as many as you want. So, I hope that wasn't why you stood against the Wen sect that day."

"..."

"...Lan Zhan?"

Lan WangJi has visited the library since he was too young to remember, it might as well be his second room. The familiarity it gives, the priceless antiques passed down from generation to generation, they were all worth fighting for. But to Lan WangJi, nothing is as precious as the lingering presence of the trouble-making youth who spent a whole month with him there and the very limited things he had left behind. Although that time is short, it has become one of Lan WangJi's most cherished memories. And on that day, the library, all the paper balls and the portrait he stashed there, all were burnt to the ground.

"...We spent a month there."

"..." With widen eyes, Wei WuXian's lips curved into a smile: "We did, and we will spend the rest of our lives together from now on. Don't think too much about it, it's not something worth losing your life over. Heh, and you think I am the reckless one~"

He felt Lan WangJi's hand on his head: "Mm"

Jiang YanLi held up her hand to her mouth, giggling. Back then, who was the one telling her that he will not like someone too much. Now, that same someone is forcing feeding everyone his and his cultivational partner's 'dog food'.

...

Wei WuXian noticed that he didn't look away from it for quite some time and smiled, raised

an eyebrow, giving him a wink. There was no need for words, the message was clear: Isn't it accurate? Is it good?

“Mm”

“Hahahaha, that's to be expected. I *am* the best in art class at the Lotus Pier!”

Lan XiChen looked up in interest: “Really, young master Wei? Perhaps we can do some drawings together sometime.”

Wei WuXian saluted, grinning: “Of course! It would be an honor!”

Lan XiChen smiled serenely back before returning to the book.

Lan WangJi slowly responded: “You have spare time, yet you did not use it to copy rules and instead for random sketches. I will tell you this, you will never see the end of your punishment.”

The Lan juniors glanced over to the couple again. They were really so different in the past, if they aren't cuddling in front of them right now, no one would have guessed that they will become a thing from what's being read out.

“HanGuang-Jun~ So mean~”

“...Mm” The sound of a small peck could be heard in the otherwise silent hall.

“But, it's okay! I forgive you!”

“Mm!”

Lan XiChen gave a concerned glance over to his uncle before continuing.

While blowing the ink dry, Wei WuXian spoke indifferently: “I already finished copying, so I won't be coming here tomorrow!”

“...he...heh...Lan Zhan...not so tightly~ I forgave you for that just now, so forgive my past ignorance, kay?”

“...Mm” Lan WangJi reluctantly weaken his hold around Wei WuXian's waist.

Lan XiChen inconspicuously sneaked yet another glance at his uncle.

Lan WangJi's long and slender fingers on an old, yellow tinted book halted for a second before flipping the page but he didn't silence him.

Wei WuXian pushed his chuckle back into his stomach. ‘Me not spending time with Lan Zhan anymore really upset him... If only I knew of his feelings back then...’

When Wei WuXian saw that he wasn't going to get anything out of him, he threw the drawing lightly at him: “You can keep it.”

The drawing was thrown onto the mat; however, Lan WangJi has no intention of picking it up. During the days they spent together, Wei WuXian wrote to scold him, to cajole him, to admit him wrongdoings, plead with him and some other random scrawl, all of which ended

up in the same state, so he is used to it and didn't think too much of it and suddenly spoke: "I forgot, I have to add something for you."

After saying that, he picked up the paper and a brush and added a few strokes. Looking back and forth between the drawing and the actual person, he dropped onto the ground and laughed.

Some people looked to Wei WuXian out of the corners of their eyes, with a bored expression on their faces: 'What did this very bored* guy do this time?...'

Lan WangJi placed down his book and glanced. It turns out, he added a flower onto the side of the head of his portrait.

Very very bored guy indeed...

When Wei WuXian saw the corners of his lips twitched, he got up and spoke before he did: "You are very bored*, right? I knew that is what you're going to say. Can't you change your lines? Or maybe add another word to it?"

"Extremely bored*"

Some people snorted

Wei WuXian clapped: "You really added another word. Thank you!"

Lan juniors/Jin Ling: 'Senior Wei/Senior LaoZu/Wei WuXian is so annoying... I'm surprised HanGuang-Jun hasn't kicked him out yet...'

Lan XiChen only smiled and focused on the next few paragraphs he is going to read out...

Lan XiChen: "... " Looks to his uncle...

"Big brother? Is something wrong?"

He looked to his concerned dadi and younger brother.

Let's hope for the best for their dear uncle's old heart.

...

Lan WangJi turned away and picked up the book he previously placed on the desk- Wei WuXian remembered now and laughed into his hand -flipping it back to the page he was on. With only one look, he threw the book away as if it was on fire.

Nie HuaiSang stifled his chuckle, finally, they had reached this part.

Lan QiRen felt a sense of foreboding...

He was originally reading a Buddhist sutra, but after that one flip- Lan XiChen took a deep breath -all he could see were naked, intertwining bodies-

Lan QiRen dropped his tea cup.

-completely unsightly to his eyes. The book he was reading initially had been replaced with a

... pornographic book disguised as a Buddhist sutra.

The Lan juniors' jaw dropped to the ground.

Jiang YanLi and Wen Ning flushed.

Jiang Cheng rolled his eyes, ignoring the Nie sect leader's louder stifled laughs.

Lan QiRen stared at his smashed tea cup, his eyes unfocused.

You don't even have to think to know who the perpetrator is. He must have switched the books when Lan WangJi was distracted with the drawing. Even more so when Wei WuXian didn't even bother hiding it and continued to slap the table while laughing:

“Hahahahahahahahahahahahaha!”

“wei ying... WEI YING!!!”

Wei WuXian hid behind his partner.

Lan WangJi treats the book that was tossed onto the ground like a venomous snake, scrambling to one of the corners of the library, infuriated, he roared out: “WEI YING----!”

Wei WuXian, still quivering behind his lover, kept that information for future use.

Wei WuXian laughed so hard that he nearly rolled beneath the bookshelves, he raised a hand with some difficulty: “Here! I'm here!”

Lan QiRen wanted to shout, but he found himself incapable of doing that as a liquid filled his mouth and ended up needing to swallow it. Thankfully, there's no metallic taste to it. (Yet...)

Lan WangJi swiftly unsheathed BiChen. From the time they first met till now, Wei WuXian never saw him so discomposed before and rushed over to his own sword, the metal gleamed as it came a third out of its sheath. He warned: “Conduct! Second young master Lan! Watch your conduct! I brought my sword today, if we started fighting, your sect's library won't hold!” He already predicted that Lan WangJi will be embarrassed to the point of rage and specially brought his sword for self-defense, just in case Lan WangJi killed when he was blinded by rage. Lan WangJi pointed his blade at him, his pale-colored eyes seemingly breathing fire: “What kind of person are you!”

The juniors/Jin Ling shivered from the description.

Wei WuXian responded: “What else can I be? A man!”

Lan WangJi lashed out: “Shameless!”

Wei WuXian replied: “You have to be ashamed about this too? Don't tell me you never saw this kind of stuff before. I won't believe you.”

“Um, senior Wei... We are not supposed to look at this kind of... things. It's regarded as being unfaithful to your fa...fated partner... whether you have met them already or not.”

Wei WuXian peered over to the blushing Lan SiZhui ‘He resembles Wen Ning a bit more now, with this blushing and stuttering.’ He thought before putting on another huge grin.

“Boys and girls living separately in the Cloud Recesses *and* you can’t look at erotic arts? What terrible lives for a bunch of healthy, maturing young boys~”

More young boys blushing

“Like I said, all normal guys would have at least seen this kind of stuff once in their lives and you don’t see girls refusing proposals just because the guy had seen porn, do you? Besides, I think they might appreciate what you have learned from it once you got married-”

“WEI YING!!! -cough-cough-COUGH-COUGH-

“Uncle!” “Uncle, watch your health.” The twin jades of Lan immediately attended to their uncle.

-COUGH-COUGH- A metallic taste finally filled his mouth.

Wen Qing gave a side-glared to Wei WuXian before walking over to the Lan elder in quick strides.

“The blood in the phlegm is due to prolonged coughing, I wouldn’t say it is serious, so I suggest he should drink more fluids for the time being.”

Wen Qing turned to Wei WuXian the second she finished her diagnosis: “And you! Can’t you just sit there with your mouth shut? Is it so hard for you to not cause so many problems in a single chapter?!”

Wei WuXian clapped his hands together: “Thank you for the teachings, oh great legendary lady doctor, this young one will try to behave for the rest of the chapter~ A great person like you must have a great amount of mercy, so let me go this time~”

Wen Qing threw her arms up in the air exasperatedly, said nothing and went back to her seat.

...

With the Lan elder feeling better after drinking more tea (from WangJi’s cup because his previous one was smashed), Lan XiChen thought it was safe to continue.

After enduring it for moment, Lan WangJi lifted his sword and attacked, his face cold, Wei WuXian was shocked by this: “What? You are really going to fight?!” and fought back. Just like that, the two started fighting in the library.

Lan QiRen took deep breathes to calm himself, trying to pay more attention to the aroma of his tea than his older nephew’s reading.

“The two of you fought in the library too?!” Lan JingYi, of course, exclaimed first, with Nie HuaiSang asking (much more quietly) after that: “You left this out as well, Wei-xiong?”

Wei WuXian frowned in confusion, he was sure he and Lan WangJi didn’t fight with their swords in the library that day... But he shrugged it off, he probably remembered it wrong, something he is very used to considering how reliable his memory is.”

Lan WangJi: “...?”

While fighting, Wei WuXian started to tease him: “Okay okay okay, you can definitely wield a sword! You have both a good technique and good moves! Although, Lan Zhan Lan Zhan, just look at yourself, so red. Is it red due the exertion of fighting with me? Or is it red from the ‘good stuff’ just now?”

Lan QiRen breathed in some air though his mouth to aerate the flavor of the tea... 'Calm down, do not pay attention to the book...'

Wei WuXian bit down on his lip slightly to prevent himself from commenting about the Lan elder technically breaking the 'When someone speaks to you, listen attentively' rule.

Lan WangJi's face wasn't red at all. He swung his sword: "Nonsense!"

With a bend of Wei WuXian's waist, he did an extremely flexible half-somersault, straightened after that and quickly reached out to pinch Lan WangJi's soft, white cheek: "Nonsense? Why don't you feel it yourself? Your face is so warm, hahahaha!"

As Wei WuXian listened, he felt some familiarity in the words. 'Maybe I did remember wrongly.' Despite that, he couldn't shake off the strange foreboding...

Lan WangJi on the otherhand, is coming to a very serious conclusion as a bead of sweat started forming on his forehead.

Lan WangJi's face alternated between red and white, reaching out to slap away his hand, but Wei WuXian lets go first, dodging the hit and spun around with the ease that came from practice: "Oh, Lan Zhan Lan Zhan, it's not that I want to reprimand you, but look at the others your age, none of them acts like you do, a little bit and you became this flushed. You really are so innocent, can't even tolerate a bit of excitement."

That bead of sweat dripped down the side of Lan WangJi's face...

Wei WuXian continued: "Copying text is so boring, so why don't I copy while teaching you about these things? Take it as a reward for watching me..."

Lan WangJi finally couldn't stand listening to his rubbish any longer and BiChen flew across, colliding with the other sword, resulting in both of them flying out the window. When Wei WuXian saw SuiBian left his hand, he was shocked: "Ah! My sword!"

Wei WuXian: '???'

Lan WangJi: '!!!'

While yelling, he nearly fell out the window to get his sword, but Lan WangJi threw himself onto him, pressing him onto the ground. Wei WuXian's head knocked against the floor and he started struggling frantically, like this, after a few seconds, the two people are fighting with their limbs randomly tangled up with each other's.

Wei WuXian struggled with all his might, but his efforts bore no fruits as Lan WangJi's more superior arm strength kept him pinned down like a metal net.

"Lan Zhan! Lan Zhan, what are you doing?! I was just joking around, its just a joke! Why are you so serious for?!"

Lan WangJi grabbed both of his wrists in one hand and held them behind Wei WuXian's back. He spoke lowly: "Just now, you said, you want to teach me something."

Lan XiChen peered up to Lan WangJi's paler than normal face.

Wei WuXian: ‘...? I still feel like I heard all this before, but I don’t remember the feeling of being pinned down back then...?’

Nie HuaiSang turned to Jiang Cheng: “I don’t remember Wei-xiong telling us all of this...?”

Jiang Cheng: “Neither did I and it’s unlike him to leave this out considering his whole plan is to make second young master Lan react...”

Lan WangJi came to a realization, his heart rate increased, not sure of what to do in this situation or how to tell his partner without him freaking or shouting it out.

His tone is cold, and his eyes are burning with the same intensity as an erupting volcano.

Worse than that, his elder brother is not stopping but he cannot just tell him to stop without the others questioning him.

Normally the two would have been evenly matched, but due to Wei WuXian’s slip up, he got pinned to the ground. Therefore, the only tactic he could use is playing the fool: “What? Did I say something just now?”

Lan WangJi responded: “Did not say anything?”

Wei WuXian stood his ground: “Nope”

He continued: “Lan Zhan, don’t be so serious, you don’t have to take everything I say to heart, you believed all the stupid things I said, they are not worth getting angry over. I will just stop talking, okay? So let me go already, I haven’t finished copying today, not going to play anymore.”

Jiang Cheng: ‘I wouldn’t believe that...’

Hearing that, Lan WangJi’s expression softened slightly and started releasing his grip. With that, Wei WuXian freed one of his hands, curved a brow, turned his line of vision and threw a fist. However, Lan WangJi was prepared for this and pinned him down harder than before after he caught his wrist. Wei WuXian panicked and shouted when his wrist was being twisted into a more vicious angle: “I said it was a joke! Lan Zhan! Don’t be so sensitive!”

Lan Wa-

Lan WangJi couldn’t bear with it any longer and hugged Wei WuXian.

Wei WuXian turned to him: “What is it?”

Lan WangJi whispered urgently: “...Dream!”

Wei WuXian: ???

Meanwhile, Lan XiChen is finishing up the last sentence of that paragraph.

...-removed the ribbon on his forehead, wrapped it around Wei WuXian’s-

“HE TIED HIS FOREHEAD RIBBON ON YOU ALREADY?!” The Lan juniors shouted, horrified.

Jiang Cheng gritted his teeth, staring at the couple.

Lan QiRen coughed out blood again.

Wei WuXian: ‘Wha... Tha...that’s not right, he didn’t...’ Lan WangJi’s word finally sunk in ‘Wait... IS THIS HIS DREAM FROM LAST TIME?!’

...-Lan-

“Wait!!! Stop reading, big brother!!!”

Lan XiChen stopped, turning to him questionably

Wei WuXian’s face was uncharacteristically flushed: “I think there is a problem with the book, that’s not what happened!”

Jiang Cheng glared: “So what? Aren’t you the type to continue just to see what happens next?” He turned to Lan XiChen: “Continue please, sect leader Lan. I want to see what would make this person so flustered.”

“WHAT?! What’s there to see?! This is inaccurate!” ‘I can’t let them know I’m the bottom!!! I still have a reputation to hold!!!’

Lan XiChen nodded politely but looked at his brother and duxi before continuing.

‘I am sorry, WangJi, WuXian... the MengMo spirit did not tell me to skip this part...’ (And I am very curious as well)

...Lan WangJi indifferently asked: “Who said I didn’t know?”

Wei WuXian: ‘He read until this point already?!’

Wei WuXian arched an eyebrow, smiling: “Oh? Is that so? Don’t bother arguing, like hell you will know this stuff, hahahahahahaha...ah!”

He screamed out suddenly, because Lan WangJi suddenly grabbed onto a- Lan XiChen’s eyes widen ...-a...certain part of him down below...

Everyone: “...”

Nie HuaiSang broke the silence: “Wei-xiong... I can see why you left this out...”

The hall erupted into chaos at that.

Lan QiRen’s eyes rolled back and he disappeared with a non-existent poof.

But no one paid attention to that.

“SENIOR WEI!!! YOU DID THAT WITH HANGUANG-JUN WHEN THE BOTH OF YOU WERE FIFTEEN?!”

"WangJi...?"

“LAN WANGJI!!! HOW DARE YOU #@\$& WEI WUXIAN THAT ^%#\$&...

“MY INNOCENT EARS!!!”

"Han...HanGuang-Jun and senior... Wei..."

“WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!”

“AHHHHH!!! WHAT DID I JUST HEAR??!!”

"Hmn, that Wei WuXian..."

"A-Xian?!"

"Yo... young master Wei... and young..."

"Were they together already back then...?"

“NO!!! WE DIDN’T DO ANYTHING BACK THEN!!! DON’T RUIN LAN ZHAN AND MY INNOCENCE!!! I WASN’T A CUTSLEEVE BACK THEN!!! MENGMO! MENGMO, CAN YOU HEAR ME?”

A loud disembodied yawn pieced though the shouting.

“ -Yawn- What is it? You were making such a ruckus...”

‘Wha... was it asleep just now? Do dream spirits need sleep? Can you even sleep inside a dream?’ Wei WuXian paused before seemingly teleported to grab the book from Lan XiChen: “This! It’s not right! This is from that other dream!”

“...?”

The book floated out of the LaoZu’s hand.

“...Oh, I... mixed up... the two memories... my apologies.” For a disembodied voice in their heads, it sounds almost flustered.

With a bright glow the book disappeared before returning to Lan XiChen’s hands.

...

...

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...

“Um, so that didn’t really happen, right?”

Lan SiZhui flinched when he found the YiLing LaoZu’s bright red eyes suddenly boring into his own.

Looking at his favorite junior's nervous face made (his motherly-instincts overboard) him

eventually closed his eyes and sighed: "No, SiZhui... It did... not... happen."

"...Yes, ~~mom~~ sir... I am sorry I asked..."

Everyone in the room finally calmed down.

"...Didn't MengMo say that it mixed up the memories? But you said it didn't happen..." Nie HuaiSang hid behind his sleeve immediately afterwards before his scary ex-classmate turned to him.

"I heard that too... And didn't senior Wei say that that... scene is from a dream..."

Wei WuXian felt nearly everyone's accusing eyes on him.

"...Why are you looking at me? You think I am the one who dreamt of that..."

Jiang Cheng tsked: "Who else?!"

'But it's not me!!! It's this pervert you all call HanGuang-Jun!!! What Jun*?! More like \$#@%&^\$...' Wei WuXian could only return to his seat angrily, unable to say anything due to Lan WangJi figuring out he can still use the silence spell in the dream world.

But that doesn't stop him from using both hands to point at Lan WangJi like some madman.

Everyone: 'Are you seriously trying to tell me it's HanGuang-Jun who had that dream???'

Jiang Cheng didn't know whether to believe him or not, but usually Wei WuXian has no problems confessing he is the perpetrator. Looking at him now all flushed and pointing at someone else is really out of character for him.

Lan WangJi of course, didn't let Wei WuXian kept pointing his fingers at him and grabbed them both, forcing them down into their owners lap.

Wei WuXian's eyes widen, turning to look at the blushing man next to him: 'How dare you! And didn't you say you're not going to silence me anymore?! Have fun with your hands tonight *\$^#&@\$^...'

Lan WangJi closed his eyes, trying his hardest to compose himself.

Lan XiChen flipped though the chapter trying to find where he should restart from. '...?'

"Revered MengMo? May I ask about my uncle's current whereabouts..."

Everyone then realized the Lan elder's absence.

"...Hm? Oh, Lan QiRen woke up on his own."

"He... woke up?"

"Seems like he was infuriated to consciousness in the real world... How interesting, this is the first time someone is able to wake up from a dream I induced on their own..."

Luckily for Lan WangJi, Wei WuXian forgot about him for now and started laughing (Lan WangJi removed the silence spell just before that).

"No matter, I will just call him bac-"

“Wa- hahaha -wait, don’t do it MengMo- hahahahaha” Wei WuXian interrupted before calming himself “Don’t call him back! Doctor Wen gave him a medical leave!”

Wen Qing rolled her eyes slightly, not paying too much attention as she and Jiang YanLi were still disappointed from not getting to hear the rest of that dream.

“...I believe he is the next in line to read?”

“Then, just don’t call him back till this chapter’s over?”

“...Very well.”

...

“Big brother?”

“Hm?”

“Sorry about just now~”

Lan XiChen chuckled lightly: “Think nothing of it.”

“Big brother is the best~”

Lan WangJi’s face darkened and a vinegar smell returned.

Wei WuXian ignored him, he was already used to *that* particular brand of vinegar.

Lan WangJi: “...”

Lan WangJi (Internally): ‘Wei Ying...’ ° (° ʘ °) °

Lan XiChen smiled ‘Don’t worry, my younger brother, even the best of couples have disagreements (Cold wars) once in a while.’

...

“What kind of person are you!”

Wei WuXian responded: “What else can I be? A man!”

Lan WangJi lashed out: “Shameless!”

Wei WuXian replied: “You have to be ashamed about this too? Don’t tell me you never seen this kind of stuff before. I won’t believe you.”

“Yeah, I remember this part happening for real. But we didn’t actually have a full-on sword fight afterwards.”

Lan XiChen nodded at the confirmation and continued.

The one thing Lan WangJi lacked is the ability to argue back. After holding it in for a brief moment, he pointed his sword at him, his face cold as frost: “Go out. We fought before.”

Lan juniors let out the breath they didn’t know they were holding. ‘Now that’s the HanGuang-Jun we were expecting!’

Wei WuXian shook his head, acting obedient: “Nah-ah. Didn’t you know, young master Lan? The Cloud Recesses prohibits personal fights.”

Wei WuXian laughed at his own words, this time without the Lan elder’s glare on him for once. (Replaced by the staring of an abandoned puppy -cough-Lan WangJi-cough-)

...

Wei WuXian tried to get the book back, but Lan WangJi got to it first. **Figuring out that he is going to take this evidence to report him, so he deliberately said: “Why are you snatching it? I thought you have no intention of looking at it. But now you are interested? You don’t need to snatch it, I borrowed it so I can let you read it. Once you seen my porn, you’ll become my friend and the two of us can continue discussing and so much more...”**

Everyone expected the esteemed Lan elder to start shouting or coughing again but then remembered that he is on ‘leave’.

Lan WangJi’s entire face paled: “I, Will, Not, Read, It.” He said, one word at a time.

Wei WuXian continued his nonsense, in order to convince or manipulate Lan WangJi into not reporting him by stating the fact that if he gave the porn to his uncle, his uncle would have suspected that he had seen it as well.

However, instead of Lan WangJi letting him and the prized book go, he tore it to shreds with his spiritual energy.

Nie HuaiSang shared a chuckle with Wei WuXian, one being the mastermind and the other being the ‘equipment’ supplier for this prank.

“Well, now you know what happened to your treasure, HuaiSang-xiong!”

“Haha, no worries, it’s something easily replaceable. Even if it’s not, it’s worth it.”

“That was sect leader Nie’s...book?”

“Ah-huh, you should have seen his collection! So many varieties for whatever possible!” Wei WuXian hooks an arm around Wen Ning’s shoulders (Pointedly not giving a damn about his partner’s glare): “If only you were there too, Wen Ning! I’m sure reading one or two of those would get you to come out of your shell!”

“Hu-Huh?!”

“WEI WUXIAN! If you don’t want your face, fine! Just don’t drag A-Ning down with you!”

“Um, Jie...It’s fin-”

“What’s the problem? I’m saying if only we were classmates back then...”

Lan XiChen coughed, he hated to break up this conversation, but this chapter is taking way too long at this point. (Besides, he's pretty sure that he is the only one worried for the old man back home.)

...

Lan WangJi, after enduring time and time again, finally couldn’t put up with this any

longer: “Get Lost!~”

To others, this sounds normal, something someone might say at the heat of the moment.

But out of all the words Lan WangJi had said to Wei WuXian before he became the YiLing LaoZu, this is the one he regretted the most.

At the heat of the moment, coupled with the fear and embarrassment of believing Wei WuXian to have found out his feelings and is using the porn book to make fun of him such as the insecurity of someone young and new to love, he told him that word.

He had never said this to anyone before in his life before this moment and when he did, it was to this person.

[“Get Lost”

“Wei Ying...”

“GET LOST!”]

It only makes sense when those ended up being his last words to him.

Lan XiChen sighed deeply, he didn’t know his brother said that to Wei WuXian before...

...

The Wei WuXian at the time just shrugged it off and teased him for his use of such improper language. Which Lan WangJi responded with a thrust of his sword. **Wei WuXian hopped onto the windowsill in a hurry: “Fine, you want me to get lost then I will get lost. I’m the best at ‘getting lost’. No need to see me out!”**

Lan WangJi: ‘No... I... want you to stay with me... did not mean that...’

Lan XiChen: ‘Tell that to him yourself, brother...’

Wei WuXian: -Laughs without a care-

...

Wei WuXian jumped out the window, laughing like a madman, towards his awaiting friends. **Nie HuaiSang asked: “Well? Did he see it? What’s his expression?”**

Wei WuXian answered: “What expression? Heh! Shouted so loudly just now, didn’t you guys hear?”

Nie HuaiSang’s face is filled with admiration: “We heard it! He wants you to get lost!- Nie HuaiSang felt another strange chill -Wei-xiong, this is the first time I heard Lan WangJi telling someone to ‘Get Lost’! How did you accomplish that?”

Wei WuXian was completely self-satisfied, for he had singlehandedly taken down the self-control from Lan WangJi’s upbringing.

Jiang Cheng was not impressed.

Jiang Cheng sneered: “You’ve offended both Lan WangJi and Lan QiRen thoughonly,

you're so dead tomorrow. Nobody is going to pick up your corpse."

Wei WuXian stopped laughing.

Wei WuXian waved his hand and hooked an arm around Jiang Cheng's shoulders: "Don't think so much. I'll think about that kind of stuff after I teased him. You cleaned up my corpse so many times already, what's one more?"

In the end, there really was nobody to clean up the corpse anymore.

Neither was there a corpse to clean up.

"Wei Ying..." Lan WangJi grabbed him by the waist to press his nose into his hair.

Wei WuXian actually forgave him for silencing him eons ago but hid a smile to put up appearances.

Which is the sight that greeted Jiang Cheng when he turned to look at his shixiong.

His guilt turned into disgust in a mere second.

Lan XiChen simply let out a sigh of relief and placed the book down on his lap.

It felt like it would never end...

Chapter End Notes

1* Most of you should know this by now, but WuXian无羡 means 'no envies' but the joke here is that JC changed Xian羡 into Lian脸 which is 'face' making his name mean 'No face' 无脸. (Doesn't sound as good though...)

2* Bored in Chinese is Wu Liao无聊 but it is also commonly used to describe someone who will do stupid/annoying/weird things just because he is bored. (Maybe Wei Ying should have been named Wei WuLiao... Also doesn't sound as good though...)

3* I know most people think LWJ called WWX pathetic in their teens all the time, but in the original Chinese novel, he called him 'bored' or 'Wu Liao' as I had explained in 2*. Which is understandable, there is no way to translate the alternate meaning of 'Wu Liao' (And a whole lot of other Chinese words -mumble-mumble-)

4* In the original Chinese novel, WWX actually asked LWJ to add two characters to his 'Wu Liao 无聊' which LWJ obeys and said 'Wu Liao Zhi Ji 无聊至极' meaning extremely bored.

5* Jun 君 means gentleman XD

6* In Chinese, this is only one character 滚 Gun (Pronounced Gu-un, kind of? I dunno how to describe it but it's one of the harsher sounding words). It can mean roll but in this case, it is a very harsh 'get lost'. (Why am I explaining this? Well, now you know why they said 'one word' ToT)

I'm So sorry for the long wait! School was awful...

(...I think I may have overdone it with this chapter... ah well...)

Happy extremely late birthday to the straightest JiuJiu in the universe! 5/Nov

(Happy late birthday to myself as well... 10/Nov)

Happy slightly earlier birthday to young mistress Jin! 21/Nov

Reading Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

MengMo's voice resonated though the hall again.

“Now that this chapter is over...”

With that said, a flash of light brought the groggy Lan elder back into the dream.

“Uncle! How are you feeling?”

“...XiChen? What is this...?” He looked around and stopped on Wei WuXian.

The familiar feeling of rage reignited: “WEI YING! Is this your doing?!”

Wei WuXian: ???

...

As it turns out, due to the Lan elder waking up from the dream halfway, he could only remember

So, everyone has to re-explain the situation and describe a few key parts of what they read so far.

Of course, the whole... catastrophe from before was completely left out for the sake of his mental health.

...

Now that that's done, Lan XiChen (reluctantly) passed the book to his uncle.

Lan QiRen cleared his throat and from the looks of it, ready to start reading like he did for the three thousand rules of his sect all those years ago.

Wei WuXian felt a yawn threatening to break free already.

...

Just in case the-

“WEI YING!!!”

‘Already?!’ Wei WuXian grinned sheepishly, one hand rubbing the back of his neck: “I’m sorry? For whatever I don’t remember doing?”

Lan XiChen saluted his uncle: “Uncle, dixi has apologized, furthermore, this is just a book about him, not everything was in his perspective or was his thoughts.”

Lan QiRen huffed, its not like he didn’t know that, but for some reason, he felt more agitated than usual.

Just in case the old stick-in-the-mud and the little stick-in-the-mud-

Lan WangJi’s heart warmed at the familiar nickname*. (Warm in a different way than his uncle.)

-with the surname Lan decides to drag him out of bed for punishment in the middle of the night, Wei WuXian hugged his sword to sleep for the entire night.

Lan juniors: “...”

“Um, senior Wei?”

“I know what you’re going to say, the Cloud Recesses strictly wake at five in the morning, so what I did was useless. But hey, it pays to be prepared.”

“...”

...

...The next day, Nie HuaiSang approached him ecstatically: “Wei-xiong, you’ve stuck gold! The old coot-

Nie HuaiSang re-hid behind his sleeve for obvious reasons.

-left for QingHe* to attend my sect’s Conference last night. So we don’t have lessons for these couple of days!”

Now that the old one is gone, there is only the little one, so much easier to handle!

Old stick-in-the-mud and little stick-in-the-mud: “...”

...

Jiang Cheng as per usual, poured cold water on his plans: **“Wait till he returns, you won’t avoid punishment for long.”**

Wei WuXian responded: “Who cares about the after-life when they are still alive*? I will enjoy myself for as long as the time I’m given.”

Wei WuXian sighed, how ironic.

...

The three boys passed by the reception room* to see two young masters that look nearly identical.

They are dressed the same way, both carrying a sword, and both have gorgeous jade-like faces. But their auras and expressions are different, one cold and one warm and gentle, making it easy for Wei WuXian to differentiate them.

The current Lan XiChen smiled, it's the first time he met Young master Wei.

Lan WangJi scrunched his eyebrows when he saw Wei WuXian, glaring at him with a nearly 'baleful' look-

Lan WangJi: "... 'Did I really gave that impression to him?...' "

...

Lan XiChen, Jiang Cheng and Wei WuXian greeted and introduced themselves to each other.

When Wei WuXian switched the topic from Nie HuaiSang's studies to what the older Lan brother is doing currently.

Lan XiChen answered: "Exterminating water ghouls. But we are short on manpower, so I returned to recruit WangJi."

Lan XiChen, Lan WangJi, Wei WuXian, Jiang Cheng and Jin ZiXuan knew then, this is the time when Lan QiRen wasn't present, leaving Lan XiChen to take his place as leader and by duty, attending to the reports of water ghouls in CaiYi town.

Lan WangJi spoke coldly: "There is no need to explain, brother. We should not delay this any longer, we leave at once."

Wei WuXian quickly responded: "Wait wait wait, catching water ghouls? I know how to, why don't ZeWu-Jun bring us along?"

Lan QiRen coughed, he wasn't present when the hunt for the water ghouls occurred, but he was given a report afterwards, which is how he knew that the troublemaker came along with them. What could have made Lan XiChen bring him along?!

Lan XiChen smiled, but stayed silent.

Lan WangJi answered: "Does not abide the rules."

The Lan juniors tilted their heads to one side: 'What was against the rules???'

Wei WuXian replied back: "What about it is not abiding the rules? We often catch water ghouls back at YunMeng. Furthermore, we don't have class for these few days."

Yunmeng has many lakes and bodies of water and therefore, many water ghouls. So this really is the Jiang sect's area of expertise, and Jiang Cheng needed to make up all the face for the Jiang sect that Wei WuXian lost: "It's true, ZeWu-Jun. We will definitely be of help."

"No need. The Gusu Lan sect is also..." Lan WangJi didn't finish his sentence as Lan XiChen spoke, his smile still present: "Sounds good, I will thank you in advance. Do make

your necessary preparations and we will leave as a group. Do you want to come along, HuaiSang?”

“Heh, thank you so much for believing in us, big brother/ZeWu-Jun!” Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng saluted

Lan XiChen saluted back: “No, no. It was an honor to hunt alongside young master Jiang and young master Wei, I learnt much from the both of you.”

Lan QiRen exhaled deeply, not believing that Wei WuXian could have taught anything new to his nephews who he had taught personally since a young age, but he looked back to the book anyway.

...

Nie HuaiSang wanted to come along, but he instead decided that his grades were his main priority and stayed back to study (and maybe Lan XiChen would put in a good word for him in front of his brother after he heard his words). Soon, the three returned to their designated rooms, one to study, the other two to prepare for their hunt.

Lan WangJi watched the two’s back, not understanding: “Why did brother choose to bring them along? Exterminating ghouls is not a joking matter.”

Jiang Cheng sent a glare over to both Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi. If a young master from another sect associates Wei WuXian with joking around, that’s perfectly reasonable, but why was he also included?!

Lan QiRen just nodded at his nephew’s past words, his cabbage was still untainted at this point.

Lan XiChen answered: “Both sect leader Jiang’s head disciple and son are both well known in Yunmeng, so surely they should know more than just joking around.”

Jiang Cheng’s scowl deepen at the words ‘they’ and ‘joking around’.

Lan WangJi stayed silent, but his face has ‘I do not agree’ written all over it.

Lan WangJi held his lover tighter when he saw the indignant pout on his lips.

Lan XiChen continued: “And, did you not want him to go?”

Wei WuXian paid more attention now.

Lan QiRen gritted his teeth at the next two sentences. His beloved cabbage...

Lan WangJi paused

Lan XiChen elaborated: “Based on your demeanor, it seems that you really want sect leader Jiang’s head disciple to come along. That is the reason why I agreed.”

Wei WuXian has full confidence in Lan XiChen’s ability and took on the chance to tease his partner again (Completely forgetting about his plan of giving him the cold shoulder): “Lan Zhan! So, you *did* already have feelings for me that time!”

Lan WangJi was so overjoyed when Wei WuXian started teasing him again that he answered without thinking: “Mm!”

That was enough to make the just returned Lan QiRen coughed violently and faint again.

“...”

Lan XiChen and Lan WangJi locked eyes for a couple of seconds before the latter shrugged in a way that says, ‘You do it.’.

Lan XiChen nearly pouted but did not argue and picked up the book to read yet again...

Lan XiChen (Internally): (-_-||)

...

The air in the room turned as cold as ice.

After a moment of silence, Lan WangJi forced out: “There was no such thing.”

Wei WuXian huffed: “You say ‘Mm’ now, but look at you back then, in such denial.”

Lan WangJi: “...I...my fault...”

Wei WuXian: “Well, duh it’s your fault. Unless you’re saying it’s my fault? Anyways, now that it’s confirmed that you like me back then, I will be keeping track of this and you better repay me for each time you confused me!”

To say that Wei WuXian was more confused by Lan WangJi than the other way around was stretching it, but Lan WangJi obediently replied: “Mm”

...

Lan WangJi didn’t have the chance to explain further before Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng returned.

And so, they traveled to CaiYi town in Gusu, which is not too far from the Cloud Recesses.

While they made their way to where the water ghouls are, two boats bumped into one another, spilling some jars of rice wine on one of them, causing the two boatmen to argue.

And as mentioned before, Gusu is a very mild place. So even the angry argument of the two men sound like two chirping birds.

Wei WuXian watched with interest, buying two jars of wine made from glutinous rice and giving one to Jiang Cheng-

“A-Xian... A-Cheng... how old were the two of you?”

“Sorry, jie...” “Sorry, shijie... but it was good... and nobody got drunk?”

Jiang YanLi shook her head with exasperated fondness.

-saying: “The way Gusu people talk is so sweet. How is this arguing? They should look at how Yunmeng people argue, might just scare them to death...”

“Oh? Is that really so, senior Wei?”

“Are Yunmeng people really that fierce, senior Wei? You don’t give off that impression.”

Wei WuXian grinned and pointed to the man right across from him: “You kids forgetting someone? Isn’t he a good enough example?”

“Wei WuXian! Are you tired of living?!”

Wei WuXian ducked behind his partner: “No no, I quite like it here with Lan Zhan~”

Lan WangJi: “Mm”

The juniors nodded to themselves in understanding, after all, the words this man had shouted during the ...mix-up are still fresh in their heads...

Lan XiChen wisely moved on.

...Lan Zhan, what are you looking at me for? It’s not that I’m stingy and didn’t buy you one, but doesn’t your sect forbid alcohol?”

“See, Lan Zhan~ So mean all the time~ How am I supposed to know you like me?”

“Mm”

Wei WuXian looked thoughtful for a bit: ‘CaiYi town...’

“Lan Zhan!”

“Mm!”

“Buy me that delicious frozen dessert there the next time we go! That will make up for this time!”

“Alright, as many as you want.” The tone of the second young master Lan was as gentle as the flowing water in a creek.”

“Lan Zhan~”

“Mm”

The unfortunate person next to Wei WuXian: ‘Young master...’

The other unfortunate person next to Lan WangJi: -Still out cold-

...

Back in the story, Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng both got individual boats, gathering information while racing each other.

The waterway they were currently in leads to a large lake, known as BiLing lake*. Although there is a large amount of water bodies, the people in CaiYi were adept around water, so there were very few drowning cases and therefore, it’s very rare for them to have water ghouls. But recently, more people started falling and empty boats strangely sunk into this waterway and BiLing lake for no apparent reason.

Lan XiChen had casted nets all over the general area, expecting one or two water ghouls to get caught, but they caught over ten of them.

The Lan juniors and Jin Ling were shocked, which is to be expected. All of them haven’t been in their career for a long time and had never encountered such a huge number of ghosts in one place

other than Yi-city, but for this to occurred in such a nice place like CaiYi town.

Despite his turning stomach “Is this the case of the waterborne abyss plaguing BiLing lake over twenty years ago? The one in chapter forty-six of our textbook?”

Lan WangJi nodded in response to Lan SiZhui’s question.

Hearing about the waterborne abyss in CaiYi town jogged the other Lan juniors’ memory.

But before they start chattering, Lan XiChen intervened: “Why don’t we wait and see how this book describes it? It would be a great way to recap before your test the next week.”

Lan SiZhui, Fu GaoWen, Li KangYu and Zhou YuanXiang nodded while Lan JingYi and Lan ZiRui sobbed internally at the thought of yet another (not very) surprise test Lan QiRen is so fond of giving...

...

What’s even stranger about those water ghouls was that they couldn’t identify most of them with the locals, meaning there are from elsewhere.

Wei WuXian commented: “It doesn’t seem like they drowned somewhere else and was carried here by the water. And water ghouls are very picky about where they stay, which is usually where they drowned and rarely ever leave.”

Lan SiZhui began to take notes down out of habit in his ‘score-keeping’ notebook.

Lan WangJi nodded as he observed him out of the corner of his eye.

“Write a reflection journal* of what you have learnt when we return, you have until tomorrow night to submit.”

Lan JingYi and Lan ZiRui’s internal sobs increased.

Lan SiZhui: ‘...Sorry?’

Wei WuXian: “Don’t they have punishment?”

Lan WangJi: “Journal first, copy rules after.”

Wei WuXian: ‘Oh, wow...’ XD

...

Lan XiChen nodded in agreement: “Exactly. That is why I thought this is no simple case, and brought WangJi with me, as a precaution.”

Lan QiRen mustered all the strength he has to nod once in approval before laying his head back down.

Wei WuXian spoke: ZeWu-Jun, water ghouls are very intelligent. With us looking for them slowly on boats, what if they continue to hide in the water? Wouldn’t we have to search forever? What if we never find them?”

“If only the spirit-attraction flag was invented already back then...” Lan SiZhui commented,

pausing in his note-taking.

Fu GaoWen nodded immediately: “Yeah! It would be a breeze! We’ll even be able to lure all the water ghouls in whatever direction we want”

Zhou YuanXiang continued: “The deity trapping nets can be hung in between two boats and there could be another boat right behind the net with an attraction flag, and all the lured water ghouls will just go straight into the net!”

Wei WuXian stifled his laughter at elder Lan’s nearly seizure-like shaking: “Hahaha, that’s why I created the spirit attraction flags after all! So you won’t have to turn over each rock or wait around for the thing to show up. But it can be very dangerous, and it is still considered a dark artifact, so try not to use it unless the situation really calls for it, okay?”

Although he said it all with a smile, his tone was as serious as it was light and kind. With his imposing YiLing LaoZu appearance, the juniors, even Jin Ling, nodded attentively.

Lan XiChen looked to his sect’s juniors in interest, it seems that not only was Wei WuXian good with them, he can be a great teacher when he puts his mind to it...

Most importantly, they don’t look the least bit drowsy when he speaks, unlike during...

He gave an apologetic glance towards his uncle on the floor.

...

Lan WangJi answered: “Search until we find them, that is our duty.”

“Lan Zhan~ You know that’s not what meant! I won’t abandon the hunt, it just that it was too tedious to look for them like that, there must be a better way! The sooner they are caught the better and this was taking way too long!”

Lan WangJi held up his balled-up hands: “Mm”

Lan XiChen patted his uncle’s chest to help him with his coughing fit.

...

Wei WuXian asked: “Only by using nets?”

Lan XiChen asked: “Yes. Does the Yunmeng Jiang sect have another method?”

Jin Ling frowned, for water ghouls, both the Jin sect and Jiang sect uses nets like this as well (although Jiang Cheng forbid any use of Wei WuXian’s inventions to pair along unlike the Jin sect who used them extensively as if they invented them themselves much to both Jiang Cheng and Jin Ling’s ire). There was nothing different from what the Gusu Lan were doing, so what was this man talking about...? ‘Didn’t I hear something similar a while ago...!’

“Were you suggesting to the GusuLan that they should dive in and catch the water ghouls by hand?!”

“Ultimately, I didn’t suggest it to them. But you have to admit, it’s faster this way!”

“More reckless is more like it!”

“Oh? And you aren’t? Then who is the one saying ‘I want the thing consuming souls on Dafan

mountain to appear right in front of me'? It certainly wasn't me."

"You!...Th-that's..."

Jiang YanLi clapped: "Alright, that's enough~ Both A-Xian and A-Ling's actions were dangerous, but A-Xian knew what he was doing while A-Ling..." She paused to pat her son on the head: "A-Ling... you know what did wrong, right?"

Her voice is so comforting, gentle but Jin Ling can hear the tremble in her tone. He lowered his head, not complaining about his mother ruffling up his hair.

Wei WuXian watched them silently, eyes tearing up but a smile remained on his face.

Lan WangJi hugged him from behind, kissing him on the head.

Jiang YanLi giggled when she saw the scene: "A-Xian, you as well. I know how capable you are, but now that you are married, you should think of your partner when you consider your actions. Don't worry him anymore, hm?"

Wei WuXian grinned, returning a kiss to his partner right in front of everyone.

Lan WangJi: "Mm..." (',•ω•,,)♡

Jiang YanLi: -Internal squeal-

Jin Ling: ...

...

As Jin Ling figured, Wei WuXian was thinking about jumping in and dragging the water ghouls to shore but did not suggest it as this solution is far too dangerous and he will definitely receive a scolding later if he did that in front of the Gusu Lan sect members -

"Then why can't you think like that before you did everything else?! Do you have any idea of how much face the Yunmeng Jiang sect lost just from your one month stay at the Cloud Recesses?!"

Wei WuXian placed both of his hands behind his neck: "So what? My actions were not so different from what I did back home, I doubt I can lose even more face in just a month."

Jiang Cheng clenched his fist tightly: "Of course you wouldn't think so, you don't have to deal with the aftermath of your actions. Did you ever consider that you were staying in another sect? And you acted like you did back home! After you left, the whole Lan sect and the disciples from the other sects probably thinks the Yunmeng Jiang sect teaches clowns like you!"

Wei WuXian shrugged: "They aren't wrong"

"Um, senior Wei?"

Wei WuXian directed his attention to Lan ZiRui now: "Yes?"

"I thought you and sect leader Jiang were going to study at the Cloud Recesses for a year, but now, both of you are saying you only stayed there for three months?"

Jin ZiXuan shifted uncomfortably.

Wei WuXian looked at the peacock uncommittedly before grinning: "My trip got cut short. Did

you really think someone like me can sit still in a place like the Cloud Recesses for a whole year? I decided that place was not for me and I wasn't welcomed there anyway, so I did everyone a favor and kicked myself out."

"..."

He wasn't lying about the 'kicked himself out part...'

But Jin ZiXuan knew that Wei WuXian did not elaborate what got him kicked out for a reason.

They were going to hear about that part in due time, so why rush?

Lan XiChen coughed, politely preventing more questions.

...

...He changed the subject: "If only there is something, like bait that will lure the water ghouls out-

Everyone: 'Spirit-attraction flags'

-Or point out their direction, just like a compass."

'Evil-wind compass...'

"Senior Wei has already thought of the spirit-attraction flags and the evil-wind compass?"

Wei WuXian placed his hands on his hips proudly: "I know! I'm such a genius!" 'Actually, I am pretty sure it was just my fifteen-year-old imagination at the time. I completely forgot about it until I dreamt of it when I was on the mass-graves hill with the Wen family...'

Most of the adults rolled their eyes at him. The juniors on the other hand, surrounded Wei WuXian with their voices alone.

"You were amazing, senior Wei!"

"Can't believe you just thought of new types of equipment when you were our age!"

"Are you going to invent more new equipment? Or new spells?"

"If you are, we will test them for you!"

"Yeah! You can teach us how to use it!"

"Senior Wei, do you think you can teach me how to draw the spir-?"

"Senior LaoZu! Do you think you can make something that allows us to-"

"Whoa whoa whoa, slow down! One at a time!" Despite his words, Wei WuXian was beaming:

"First things first, yes, I'm going to invent more stuff, but for now, I will only be upgrading my old stuff like the compass and you guys were complaining about the feral ghost detecting standards just now, right? Besides, you don't have to offer yourself, I was already planning on asking you to test my inventions for me sometimes\!"

The juniors were well aware they were probably selling their souls to the devil, but they nodded eagerly anyway.

~~Poor Lan QiRen... aka, the only white cabbage left...~~

Lan XiChen continued

...

Jiang Cheng spoke: “Lower your head and continue watching the water, concentrate on the task at hand. Your imagination is running again.”

Wei WuXian replied: “Cultivation and flying on swords, was once someone’s imagination too!”

Wei WuXian sent a cocky smirk towards his adoptive brother, the ‘I told you so~’ clear on his face.

Jiang Cheng looked away pointedly, the phrase ‘To attempt the impossible’ playing in his head again.

By lowering his head, he happened to look at the bottom of the boat Lan WangJi is on. A thought flashed through his mind and called out: “Lan Zhan! Look at me!”

Everyone: ‘What now?...’

Lan WangJi, who is on high alert, looked to him in an instant, only to see Wei WuXian lifting up his bamboo paddle and sending droplets of water flying.

Now that Wei WuXian is a 'third person', it allowed him to think back on his past actions. Even if he was trying to help Lan WangJi with those water ghouls, there were many other ways to inform the other without alerting the undeads. So why did he resort to such a attention-seeking method?

‘Was I already a cutsleeve then..?’ Wei WuXian shook his head furiously all of a sudden, confusing the surrounding people who ignored him when they realized that it’s him.

Lan WangJi lightly jumped onto another boat with a small press of his foot, evading this splash of water. Thinking he was only making fun of him again, he said: “Pathetic”

“Wei Ying...!”

“It’s for a good reason!”

“He is telling the truth, uncle. You will see in the next paragraph.”

“Hm!”

However, Wei WuXian kicked the boat he was initially on and turned it over with his bamboo paddle, exposing the bottom. And clinging onto the planks, are three waterlogged, ashen skinned water ghouls!”

Lan QiRen finally got up and saluted Wei WuXian begrudgingly, not making eye contact with him.

“Wow... How did you know they were there, senior Wei?”

“I asked the same, so it is reflected in the book.”

The nearby disciples quickly dealt with the three. Lan XiChen smiled: “Young master Wei,

how did you know they were under the boat?”

Wei WuXian knocked on the side of the boat: “Simple! The water displacement was wrong. He was the only person on the boat, yet the displacement was heavier than a boat with two people, therefore, there must be something clinging onto the bottom.”

Lan XiChen praised: “You really are experienced.”

“You got that just by the displacement of the boat?”

Wei WuXian nodded: “Think of it this way, the boat floats on top of the water due to it being less dense than water but it’s bound to have some displacement, the water being pushed aside to make way for the extra object. When someone sits in it, the weight of that person pushes the boat down and in turn, more water had to be displaced, to create more space for the boat to sink down deeper. And it gets deeper the more people got onto it. Some of the other boats have two Lan disciples on them, giving me something to compare Lan Zhan’s boat to. And I noticed his boat’s water displacement was heavier than the ones with two people on them, but he was the only one on it...” He trailed off.

“Since he was the only one on the boat, something else is affecting the volume of the boat?”

“And what else could it be, other than the water ghouls dragging the boat down from below!”

Wei WuXian nodded, satisfied: “Exactly! That’s how they attack! Either one clings onto the boat and slows you down until you got fed up enough and decided to push the boat yourself or swim instead, or in this case, more and more water ghouls cling onto the same boat until it was too heavy to stay afloat and sunk down.”

Lan SiZhui furiously wrote it all down.

The other Lan juniors: ‘We are rooting for you, SiZhui-xiong! So help us out when we get back! You are our only one hope!’

Jin Ling was also listening attentively, even if he found ~~his first junior~~ Wei WuXian annoying, he can’t deny that he was at least very knowledgeable about all things night hunting: “Okay... But I still don’t understand something. You knew about the water ghouls under HanGuang-Jun’s boat, so why didn’t you just tell him? Instead of splashing water to get him to leave?”

Wei WuXian tutted, wagging his index finger: “Jin Ling~ Such bad memory, at such a young age too~

Jin Ling gritted his teeth: “As if you have the right to say that! Your memory is WAY worse than mine, old man!”

Wei WuXian dramatically held a hand to his chest: “So rude~ And hey, if I’m an old man, then what is my beloved Lan Zhan? Or big brother Lan? Both of them are older than me~” (~~Let’s leave the actual old man out of this...~~)

Lan WangJi: “...”

Lan XiChen: -coughs-

Jin Ling flinched, giving an apologetic salute to HanGuang-Jun and ZeWu-Jun but returning to glare at Wei WuXian afterwards.

...

Wei WuXian rowed over to Lan WangJi: **“Lan Zhan, just now, I didn’t mean to splash water on you. It’s just that water ghouls are intelligent, if I had said it out loud, they would have escaped.**

Jin Ling grumbled: ‘Why can’t he just answer like that instead of... -more grumbles-’

...

Lan WangJi couldn’t ignore him for long and gave in: **“Why did you come with us?”**

Wei WuXian sincerely replied: “I came to apologize. Last night was my fault, I’m sorry.”

Lan WangJi’s features’ darken. Most likely he hasn’t forgotten how Wei WuXian ‘apologized’ to him before-

Lan QiRen’s eyebrow twitched

-Knowing this, Wei WuXian deliberately asked: “Why so gloomy? Don’t worry, I am really here to help.”

“Mm”

“Lan-er gege~”

“WangJi, XiChen. I do not recall you mentioning this so-called, ‘apology from last night’.”

Well, that was the part of the retelling they left out for good reasons...

“Um... It really was not much of a concern, uncle...” Lan XiChen spoke slowly: “WuXian merely teased WangJi again under the guise of an apology, it was not anything unusual, so we left it out.”

“...How did he *teased* him...?” Lan QiRen tugged on his beard, feeling rather... agitated (More than usual)

“...He drew a portrait of me with a flower in my hair... teased and left though the window afterwards.” Lan WangJi answered.

Believing in his younger nephew instantly, the Lan elder only sent a glare at Wei WuXian and turned away.

Wei WuXian gave his partner a peck the moment he turned: ‘Lan Zhan~ You technically lied to your uncle~ For my sake~’

Lan WangJi: ‘Forgive me uncle, I did not tell you the entire truth. But Wei Ying has suffered the repercussions for his actions, therefore, there is no need for you to punish him further.’

Lan XiChen pretends he hasn’t read his brother’s expression...

Everyone else made an unspoken agreement, to not mention that again.

...

Jiang Cheng could continue watching any longer: “If you really want to help, stop sprouting

nonsense and get over here!”

A disciple shouted: “The net moved!”

Indeed, the robes of the net shook. Wei WuXian was alerted: “It’s here! It’s here!”

Nie HuaiSang sighed, he missed so much... it certainly sounds more fun than looking though the textbook for the four hundredth time.

The boats were surrounded by black, hair-like tendrils and white arms emerging from the water to grab onto the side of the boats. Lan WangJi went into action, drawing BiChen and the dozens of arms on the left side were simultaneously chopped off. **When he was going to deal with those on the right side, a red light flash and Wei WuXian was already sheathing his sword.**

The juniors turned to Wei WuXian, they were not surprised about Lan WangJi’s superior sword skills, but from this, it seems like Wei WuXian’s skills with the sword was at least on par with Lan WangJi’s.

They never saw the present Wei WuXian wielding a sword, but that’s easily justified considering Mo XuanYu’s low cultivation and lack of a golden core. However, the brings up another question. Wei WuXian’s past body has a high cultivation and a powerful golden core, yet, since he became the YiLing LaoZu he was never mentioned with a sword again other than the gossips of him being so arrogant and heavily reliant of his ghost path that he just threw his sword aside or not bringing it on purpose to spite others.

The juniors refuse to accept that as fact, but they will wait and see if there is flashback or something to explain it.

...

...Although Wei WuXian’s sword attack was extremely fast, Lan WangJi could tell it is a spiritual sword of very fine quality and workmanship. He pensively asked: “What is the name of the sword?”

Wei WuXian replied: “SuiBian*”

As if reminded of unpleasant memories, Jiang Cheng groaned, facepalming.

Lan XiChen and Jiang YanLi chuckled

Lan QiRen started muttering something under breath.

Most just rolled their eyes ~~more~~.

Lan WangJi just stared at him. So Wei WuXian thought that he didn’t hear him properly and repeated: “SuiBian.”

Lan WangJi furrowed his eyebrows, speaking in a disapproving tone: “The sword has a spirit, to call it whatever I wish, would be disrespectful.”

Completely relatable, many others had the same reaction upon learning the sword’s name.

Wei WuXian sighed: “Why can’t you think out of the box? I wasn’t telling you to call it whatever you want. My sword is literally called ‘SuiBian’. Here, take a look.” While he was

speaking, he moved the sword closer to him so that Lan WangJi could get a clear view of the words engraved on the sword. Amidst the patterns on the sheath of the sword, are two ancient characters. It really is the characters for ‘SuiBian’.

Lan WangJi was silent for a long while.

Wei WuXian stifled his laughter, that trick always works... ‘It has been such a long time since I used it... If sword spirits talk, I wonder how SuiBian thinks of me now...’

Lan WangJi has been helping him in his research and supporting his cultivation of a new golden core. It may take a while, but someday, he would be able to fight alongside Lan Zhan just as they had during the waterborne abyss, this time, as cultivational partners.

As if he could read his mind, Lan WangJi held his hand assuring.

...

Wei WuXian continued emphatically: “You don’t have say it, I know. Without a doubt, you want to ask me why was it called that. Everybody asked, if it had a special meaning. Actually, it doesn’t have any special meaning at all. It’s just that when it’s time for Uncle Jiang to presented a sword to me, he asked me what I want to call it. I thought of over twenty names, but I wasn’t satisfied with any of them. So I decided to let uncle Jiang name it for me and answered ‘Whatever!’. Who would have known that when the sword was forged, these two characters were really on it. Uncle Jiang said: ‘If that is the case, this sword shall be named SuiBian.’ This name isn’t too bad, right?”

Everyone: “...”

“So... it was the past sect leader Jiang who had named... the sword?”

Suddenly, Wei WuXian, Jiang Cheng and Jin Ling’s ‘naming sense’ was explained.

“-cough-cough- No offence, senior Wei... But I always thought you named it.” Honestly, it was completely reasonable why anyone would think that way. Just the donkey, officially known as Little Apple, is a great example.

“Hahahaha, of course you would think that the person behind such an ingenious name would be your senior Wei hahahahaha...” ‘I know I don’t have the best naming sense, and usually, I don’t really care...’ There was once he did care, and spent some time thinking of a name with a well thought out intention... Look at how well that turned out...

He instinctively went to touch it, but all he could feel is his left hip bone. Right, he's in a dream now...

But he went back to listening when Lan XiChen started reading again when he spaced out.

...“...Preposterous!”

Wei WuXian propped the sword on his shoulder: “You are such a boring guy. This name is so fun to use, especially messing with serious people like you, and it works every time, hahahahaha!”

“...Mm”

“Hahaha...” ‘No, Lan Zhan... I think I got enough punishments waiting for me...’

With one more paragraph, Lan XiChen did not waste time.

Meanwhile, within the viridian waters of the lake, a long shadow darted around the small boat. Jiang Cheng was keeping an eye out for any more water ghouls they may have missed after he dealt with his side, upon seeing the shadow, he shouted: “It’s back!”

Lan XiChen sighed, over again. He decided to pass the book to his brother instead of his uncle.

No explanation is required for that, right?

Chapter End Notes

1* In Chinese, stick-in-the-mud, fuddy-duddy or whatever is just 古板, also meaning old-fashioned.

2* QingHe 清河 is where the Nie (written as [Traditional] 聂 or [modern] 聂) sect is located.

3* Who cares about the after-life when they are still alive? I will enjoy myself so as long as the time I’m given. 生前那管生后，浪得几日是几日。

4* 会客厅雅室 It’s kind of the first room you see usually when you enter places like the Cloud Recesses or the home of some noble family. It’s the room used for meetings and greeting guests.

5* BiLing lake 碧灵湖

6* Bi Ji 笔记 or notes. After a night hunt, the Lan juniors must submit a ‘reflection journal’ of what they learned, encountered and done in that hunt to LWJ, which has a part in their grades for that hunt.

7* SuiBian 随便 Most of you should know this already but Sui Bian is Chinese for Whatever/ Whichever / Anyhow.

Sorry for the late update! Had a busy week of dealing with a project, but I managed to squeeze this chapter out before I was given the next project T_T
Hope you enjoyed!

Reading Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Understanding his brother, Lan Wangji stood up and walked over to retrieve the book.

Their uncle watched silently.

“Uncle, I will read the next chapter. Please rest.”

And went back his seat, leaving no space for arguments.

...

The disciples leaped into action, chasing after the shadow in the water. But one of them noticed another shadow, also darting around as well. The disciples managed to cover this one with the nets, but it just passed though them without being snagged on.

Wei WuXian observed it: “That’s weird. The shape of this shadow doesn’t resemble a human. Not to mention it is sometimes long, sometimes short, sometimes big and sometimes small..... Lan Zhan, next to your boat!”

Despite this being a dramatic action scene, Lan Wangji read with his regular monotone voice, as if he was reading a textbook in class...

It’s not sleep inducing like his uncle’s at least, but still...

Wei WuXian wasn’t sure how he managed to keep his laughter in, but he didn’t know how long he could last. “Heh- Lan Zhan, why -haha- don’t you let me read...”

“No”

“You really want to read?”

“Mm”

If there's a word only those like Wei WuXian and Lan XiChen would use to describe the younger jade, it would be 'stubborn'.

“...Haha... Well... alright... But, Lan Zhan? Can you read it with a little more... emotion?”

Lan WangJi: “...”

“You know... like... read faster during action scenes? Or read slower during sad or foreboding scenes? And... try to voice act a little when someone’s talking?”

“...I will try”

“It’s okay if you can’t... I think you are doing great already...” ‘I mean... this was far more than you have ever spoken in a day...’

“Mm”

“...”

...

...

...

“Let’s go back to the book?”

“Mm”

Lan WangJi turned back to the book.

‘Sometimes I wonder if I got married to a log...’

‘And yet he was so sweet when we were alone... and so... passionate during our ‘everyday’ ... Okay, I really shouldn’t be thinking about this now... ><’

...

The BiChen on Lan WangJi’s back came out of its sheath and pierced into the water.

Wei WuXian: ‘Okay, vast improvement there. Least he’s reading it like a story book now...’

After a moment, BiChen came back out of the water, but it hadn’t pierced anything.

He held the sword in his hand, a grave expression on his face. Just as he is going to speak, another disciple at the side also drew his sword and drove it into the water towards the shadow.

Lan WangJi’s eyes narrowed.

However, after his sword went into the water, it did not return. No matter how many times he chanted the sword incantation, nothing is being drawn from the water.

The Lan juniors facepalmed but couldn’t help but pity this senior of theirs.

Lan WangJi's current emotions, were complete contrary to theirs'.

Wei WuXian turned to Lan WangJi in concern, not understanding his why he is so... livid.

Lan XiChen mirrored Wei WuXian's action.

It was like the sword had been swallowed by the lake and completely disappeared. The disciple who was a teen about the same age as Wei WuXian and the others, paled now that he lost his cultivational sword. An older disciple next to him spoke: "Su She-

'Oh..., no wonder Lan Zhan doesn't seem too pleased...' Wei WuXian didn't know what to think about that man himself...

-we haven't confirmed what is in the water yet, why would you send your sword into the water?"

"Su She? Is it talking about the late leader of the MoLing Su sect, Su MinShan?" Most likely only Lan SiZhui would still show such courtesy when speaking about this person. The reason why the disciples of GusuLan did not say anything was because of the rule 'do not speak behind someone's back'. But it was no secret that the everyone in the Lan sect including elders, dislike the MoLing Su sect and especially it's leader.

Both Jiang Cheng and Jin Ling had bad reminder from hearing that name again, when they learnt of the truth in the temple, with Jiang Cheng practically seething in rage.

That name sounded familiar now that Jin ZiXuan thought about it, not just as another Lan disciple. 'Was it that person I seen Jin GuangYao spoke to a couple of times? The one always clad in white like a Lan sect member?'

Lan XiChen sighed, now he knew why his brother was reacting so strongly. This was the man Jin GuangYao had made to do all his dirty work. He knew of Jin GuangYao's support of the small, mediocre MoLing Su sect and he never questioned it, even considered the act kind. To think that it was just another part of his elaborate schemes.

Wei WuXian patted his partner's hand, telling him to continue.

Su She panicked, but his expression can still be considered calm: "I saw the second young master sending his sword into the water..."

"Is he stupid? Did he really think he's on the same level as HanGuang-Jun?"

"JingYi..."

Lan SiZhui's gentle warning reminded him that the very same HanGuang-Jun is just three seats away from him.

The expected punishment did not come, however, as Lan WangJi just continued reading.

Before he finished his sentence, he understood how ignorant he sounded. Whether is it Lan WangJi or the sword BiChen, neither are comparable with others. Lan WangJi can plunge his sword into the waters in pursuit of the unidentified enemy in the waters, but it might not be the case for others. His pale face now exhibits a flush from embarrassment, as if he had

been disgraced and sneaked a glanced at Lan WangJi.

Seeing that he is not going to be punished, Lan JingYi huffed: “Hm! At least he realized his place.”

“Yeah, for that one moment. Don’t forget where he got all of his sect’s techniques from.”

“And he acts like he came up with all of them himself and it gave him the right to start his own sect!”

“Guys! Please, no matter what, he was still a sect leader and we shouldn’t speak badly behind their backs!”

Lan WangJi remained passive, not acknowledging Lan SiZhui or the other Lan juniors.

Wei WuXian: ‘Lan Zhan...’

Lan WangJi didn’t look at him, paying all his attention to the water. In a blink of an eye, BiChen unsheathed itself again.

This time, the blade didn’t completely enter the water, just the tip grazed the water when the shadow past and flicked. A wet and black mess plopped onto the ship. Wei WuXian tiptoed to take a look at it. It was a piece of clothing.

Wei WuXian laughed so hard he nearly fell into the river: “Lan Zhan, you are truly amazing! This is the first time I saw someone pull off a water ghoul’s clothing when they are catching water ghouls.”

The moment he finished that paragraph, he turned to send his partner a look: “Mm...”

Wei WuXian: ‘(ಠ_ಠ)’

Lan XiChen: ‘...I did not see anything...’

Lan WangJi scrutinized the tip of his sword, determined to not engage himself with him. Jiang Cheng spoke: “Just shut your mouth. The thing that swam in the water just now really wasn’t a water ghoul, it’s this piece of clothing!”

There was no way Wei WuXian would have not seen it, but he just had to mess with Lan WangJi. He replied: **“The thing swimming around just now, was this piece of clothing? No wonder the nets couldn’t catch it, the sword couldn’t pierce it and its shape constantly changes. But a piece of clothing, couldn’t possibly swallow a sword. There must be something else in the water.**

When the boats were drifting close to the middle of the lake, Lan WangJi spoke: **“We must retreat at once.”**

‘He still isn’t very good at impersonating me or anyone else that isn’t himself, but his voice really suits these serious parts.’ Wei WuXian smiled to himself.

Lan XiChen asked: “Why?”

Lan WangJi answered: “The entity in the water led the boats to the center of BiLing lake on purpose.”

Just as his voice faded, everyone felt their boats sink.

“Urg... It’s too late, HanGuang-Jun and the other seniors are being sucked in.”

“Don’t worry, KangYu! Aren’t they fine? I bet they just jumped onto their swords and booked out of there immediately!”

“But still, for that being to lure them to the center like this so it can catch them all in one go...”

“That’s just how it goes, abysses of any kind will stop at nothing to get more ‘tributes’ and are capable of and have no qualms about controlling every spirit they have in their disposal from their past unfortunate victims.”

“So, all the water ghouls you encountered so far, were being controlled by the abyss to lead you to the center?”

“Not initially.” This time, Lan WangJi spoke up.

“As expected of HanGuang-Jun~” Wei WuXian turned back to the juniors: “Remember how they tried to sink his boat? Only after we dealt with them, did that shadowy thing showed up. It’s probably used to the common folks from CaiYi and decided it would have more luck facing us itself when it realized that we can handle the water ghouls.”

Lan WangJi nodded, returning to the book.

Lan SiZhui hurried his note writing so he could listen.

...

The waters of BiLing lake turned black, its water filling the boat as they sink while being sucked in by a huge whirlpool that appeared out of nowhere. The boats went around and around, getting closer to the mouth-like middle with each revolution.

The cultivators got onto their swords, flying to safety. But the same cannot be said for Su She, who’s sword was most likely already in the whirlpool. He stood in his water-filled boat completely motionless, probably due to fear.

Wei WuXian bent down without hesitation and reaching out to grab his hand, pulling him up.

Lan WangJi somehow glowered at the book even harder, his anger steeping into his aura and lowering the temperature of the room.

Jiang Cheng didn’t look better than him.

All the cheers for their senior Wei went back down the juniors’ throats from the frigid atmosphere.

The sword he was standing on was pulled down by another person’s weight, but it continued ascending. However, it didn’t ascend much when a huge force came from Su She’s side, nearly dragging Wei WuXian down from his sword.

Lan XiChen sighed deeply: ‘Sect leader Su devoted his life to third- no, Jin GuangYao for simply acknowledging him but was willing to do something of such a scale to young master Wei who risked his life to save him...’

The human mind truly works in incomprehensible ways

...

Su She was being sucked into the whirlpool, dragged down by whatever that is inside of it. Jiang Cheng, originally watching from above on his SanDu*, hurried down: **“What are you doing now?!”**

The suction from BiLing lake grew stronger and stronger. Wei WuXian’s sword was forged with agility in mind, therefore lacking in the strength department and was forced down to the point of contact with the lake surface. He steadied himself, using both hands to hold Su She while shouting: “Can someone help me out?! If I couldn’t pull him up any longer, I’m gonna let go!”

“You should have...” Jiang Cheng muttered

Jin ZiXuan to his right: “?”

Nie HuaiSang to his left: “...”

...

Suddenly, Wei WuXian’s collar tightened and his body was lifted into the air by someone. He tilts his head back to see Lan WangJi holding onto the back of his collar with one hand.

Everyone that is not a Lan: ‘As expected of the Lan clan’s superior strength!’

Wei WuXian winced and subconsciously raised a hand to massage his neck.

Only to realize Lan WangJi had beaten him to the punch and is now rubbing his neck ruefully.

Wei WuXian: ‘...I *guess* I can forgive him this time~’ (‘.,•ω•.,)♡

Lan WangJi: ‘Mm’ (|_ |)◇

Everyone else now: ‘More dog food...’ (— __ —)

...

Contrary to how Lan WangJi is currently looking in a different direction with an indifferent expression, both him and his sword are withstanding the weight of three people and the suction force of the unidentified being in the lake, not to mention ascending from their original position. It shocked Jiang Cheng quite a bit: ‘If it were me who got to Wei WuXian first, I wouldn’t have been able to fly up so quickly or with so much stability on SanDu. Lan WangJi wasn’t that much older than me...’

“Tsk!” ‘Why does this book feel the need to include my thoughts?!’

Lan WangJi couldn’t care less and moved on.

Wei WuXian: XD

Wei WuXian took that moment to ask: “Lan Zhan, your sword’s quite strong, huh? Thank you thank you, but why are you holding onto my collar? Why not hold onto me? I’m so

uncomfortable like this. How about I give you my hand and you hold me by it?”

“What kind of person are you?! Can’t you keep your mouth shut when you are being suspended in mid-air by your collar?!” Jin Ling blurted out, unable to stand it any longer.

The Lan juniors snickered.

Jiang Cheng: “...”

Wei WuXian pouted: “But it really was uncomfortable...”

Lan WangJi: “Wei Ying...”

“Aw, I’m not mad at you~”

Jin Ling: ‘Nevermind, just go back to reading already...’

...

Lan WangJi replied coldly: “I do not have physical contact with other people*.”

Lan WangJi stared at the ‘other people’ that he just read out.

Yet another word he regretted.

Everytime he broke the rule of ‘Do not speak against your heart’, it bites back in the worst possible ways.

“...”

Now is not the time for such thoughts.

Wei WuXian responded: “But we are so close already, am I really still just another person?”

‘No...’

Lan WangJi answered: “Not close”

A select few (Lan XiChen, Jiang YanLi, Wen Qing, Lan juniors) sighed.

No wonder these two need two lifetimes to get together... ~~(I mean, it is a cold tsundere and a super oblivious guy)~~

Wei WuXian pretended to be hurt: “Why are you like that...”

Lan WangJi rested his head against his lover’s.

Lan QiRen wisely chose to ignore it.

Jiang Cheng couldn’t stand it any longer and scolded: “Why are *You* like that?! Can’t you have less things to say when you are being held by your collar in mid-air?!”

Jin Ling turned to Jiang Cheng with narrowed eyes.

“What are you looking at?! Just continue listening!”

Jin Ling: "..."

Wei WuXian & Jiang YanLi: XD

...

With that, the cultivators were able to identify the being in the lake as a waterborne abyss.

Lan WangJi looked up from his reading: "...YuanXiang"

The boy Wei WuXian only remembered by the still present tea stain answered: "A waterborne abyss is not particular evil being but rather an entire body of water developed a conscience on its own due to the negative energy from a large amount of past drowning victims whose body has mostly likely not been retrieved. That body of water will then want more lives or tributes sacrificed to it and will try to get it on its own if it does not receive them."

Lan WangJi nodded, looking to Fu GaoWen next: "How do you eliminate one?"

The junior answered diligently: "One way is to drain away the water and clean up the lakebed before exposing it to sunlight for some time, which depends on the size of body of water. Another way is to directly attack it with spells, which does not destroy it, but rather force it to inhabit another body of water connected to it. So this way should never be used. Finally, the newest discovered way to deal with them is to suppress them with extremely purified water. Introducing clean water might weaken a waterborne abyss enough to decrease its size and contain it but not defeat it. This method should only be used if there is no way for the waterborne abyss to flee to as this method may force the abyss to abandon that body of water like it will when directly attacked."

Lan WangJi nodded again.

Lan QiRen looked to his nephew and the current juniors proudly, until-

"Now that you mentioned forcing the waterborne abyss elsewhere... It is only not recommended because you can't control where the waterborne abyss will go to next, not to mention that it will continue to wreak havoc on anything or anyone along its path. But, what if... you *can* control where you want it to go?"

Jin Ling frowned: "What are you going on about?"

Surprisingly, it was Lan JingYi answered: "Senior Wei, are you saying we can use the spirit-attraction flag to lure it to where we want it to be?"

"In theory, yes. But waterborne abysses are completely different from ghosts... maybe I need to make so... chang... to ... inscript...mumble...mumble..."

Everyone else: "..."

...mumble...it wou... good... works... method... resource consuming... Lan Zhan!" He suddenly called out

"Mm?"

"How did the Lan sect handle the waterborne abyss?"

"Relocated the water to nearby dried creek, cleaned lakebed afterwards."

"Oh, the traditional meth...mumble...mumble..."

“...”

The two people here who lived with him at the mass graves hills (Who remembered) knew when the YiLing LaoZu is in a state like this, it is best not to bother him. (Wen Ning knows it better, his sister acts this way sometimes too...)

The glint their eyes have during those times were honestly quite terrifying, even to the ghost general. (~~Guess who was their undead guinea pig?~~)

Wen Qing: “Second young master Lan, please continue. This will take a while.”

The word ‘hypocrite’ popped into Lan SiZhui’s head for some reason.

...

Lan WangJi asked: “Has another location suffered from a waterborne abyss recently?”

Lan XiChen pointed upwards.

What he was pointing at was no other than the sun itself. Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng looked at each other in understanding. The QishanWen sect.

The fact that the waterborne abyss terrorizing CaiYi town was originally chased from QishanWen territory was not left out in their textbook. At the reminder, the juniors show their indignation on their faces.

“Hm! Some amazing sect they claim to be! They don’t want to deal with this thing, so they just chucked it into our territory!”

“I feel bad for the people of CaiYi...”

“Yeah, not just for the drowned, the people of CaiYi’s livelihoods depended on the water. After all that water is drained, they wouldn’t be able to fish and lose one of their main sources of food! Not to mention the water itself!”

“And who knows how many lives it has taken on its way to BiLing lake? The Wen sect were really so shameless! They rather save money than save more lives!”

The Wen currently present shifted uncomfortably.

A junior noticed the impact of their wording: “Oh! I’m sorry, Mr ghost general and Miss Wen! I didn’t mean you!”

“We’re sorry!”

“We are talking about the other Wen sect members!”

“Sorry...”

Wen Qing waved her hand dismissively.

Wen Ning sighed, he was a part of the medical group for that group assigned to handle the waterborne abyss. Their sect leader ordered them to get rid of it, but when they got there, their group leader, an older senior told all his cultivators to simply force it away as dealing with it would require too much resources and time. There were quite a few young cultivators around his age that

didn't like this idea but couldn't argue with the leader.

Overtime, they begin to change in the way they think in order to climb up in their rankings. Those that don't? Well, since they were considered a burden, they either got kicked out, sent to do labor work or worse, be bait for their next night hunt. Without their knowledge, of course.

Lan WangJi finally decided to punish them for 'do not use words to hurt others': "Add one time for all five of you."

Lan SiZhui noted his classmates' punishment down.

Now that another's problem had been tossed onto them, the GusuLan sect will be troubled for some time. Lan XiChen sighed: "Let it rest for now. We will return to town."

They got on new boats and started making their journey back to town.

Halfway though, Wei WuXian was at it again.

Lan WangJi's eyebrows furrowed as he read out the next few paragraphs.

He left his paddle aside, stepped on one side of his boat to check his hair out in the water. Then he acted as if he hadn't just fought countless water ghouls and escaped from a waterborne abyss' gaping mouth, to start flirtatiously winking: "JieJie, how much for one pound of loquats?"

The bad atmosphere lifted from that as many gave up frowning in favor of rolling their eyes.

Jiang Cheng: 'Get used to it, this is what I had to endure for over ten years...'

He was young and good-looking, with his lively personality, he really was like a peach blossom pursuing a running stream with no constraints*. One of the women lifted her bamboo hat and smiled: "Young beau, how about I give you one for free?"

Lan WangJi was conflicted between approving and disapproving the description of his partner: "..."

Her Wu dialect* was sweet and soft, refreshing to the ear. The tone's 'fragrance' lingers on the speaker's lips, while the listener is enveloped by it. Wei WuXian clapped: "JieJie is giving it, so of course I want it!"

'Senior Wei... So smooth, a free loquat from just one question?' All of a sudden, the juniors realized that their senior Wei was also a source of 'knowledge' outside of night-hunting.

The woman placed her hand into the basket and threw him a round, golden loquat: "You needn't be so polite, for how handsome you are!"

Everyone: 'Yeah, like you need to stroke his ego...'

Wei WuXian somehow feel both warmth and dread from the compliment his partner just read out.

Lan WangJi stared at him awhile longer before turning back to the book.

The boats travel quickly, so when the two boats met, they only briefly brushed pass, Wei WuXian turned around to catch it, smiling: “JieJie is even prettier!”

Lan WangJi: “...”

“Lan... er-gege~ She gave me a free loquat and complimented me, I was only being polite~”

“...”

‘Damnit... I really won’t be going anywhere tomorrow, huh?’

While he was simultaneously showing off and flirting, Lan WangJi stared ahead, unimpeachable and quintessential as always. Wei WuXian smugly bounced the loquat in his hand, suddenly pointing at him with his other hand: “JieJie (he is calling to all the women), do you think he’s handsome?”

More eye rolls.

Lan WangJi never expected that he will be included in this, so at the moment he had no idea how he should respond, but at the same time, the women answered: “Even more handsome!” Amidst this was the laughter from several men.

‘Of course he is! My husband must be at least on par with me on both looks and cultivational skill!’

“...”

Wei WuXian continued: “So who’s going to give him one? If you only give me and not him, I am afraid he’s gonna take his jealousy out on me when we get back!”

‘Oh, you have no idea, my past self... It’s going to be quite different from what you have imagined, but nonetheless to be feared!’

“...Mm!”

The entire river was filled with laughter. Another woman paddled closer: “Alright alright, give two. Try mine! Young beau, catch!”

The second one fell into his hands as well, Wei WuXian shouted: “Not only is JieJie beautiful but kind-hearted as well! The next time I come, I will buy an entire basket!”

Lan QiRen doesn’t even bother...

That woman’s eyes shined, becoming bolder and pointed at Lan WangJi: “Bring him along, come and buy together!”

‘Such a pity~ Never really got a chance to do that after all~’

“Day after tomorrow.”

“Hm?”

“You want to visit town the day after tomorrow, we will go to CaiYi.”

“...The day you said you’re going to carry me everywhere?”

“Mm”

“...” ‘Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan... You’re getting more shameless day by day... I’m still a man, to be carried by another man in front of women... I’m so going to lose whatever face I have left...’

...

Wei WuXian held the loquat in front of Lan WangJi’s eyes. Lan WangJi continued staring ahead: “Take it away.”

Wei WuXian took it away-

‘You idiot.’ Wei WuXian mentally scolded his past self, ‘Can’t you tell he’s just acting? Why did you take it away?!’

“I knew you wouldn’t want it. So it wasn’t meant for you anyways. Jiang Cheng, catch!”

Jiang Cheng felt that same chill from before again but was able to identify the source this time and glared back.

‘Second young master Lan, please do not blame me for your (lack of) relationship problems. If you want something to blame, blame your own incompetence!’

The boat Jiang Cheng was on just happened to pass by, so he caught the loquat in one hand with a slight smile, then proceeded to sneer: “Flirting around again?”

Wei WuXian smugly replied: “Get lost!”, then turned back to ask: “Lan Zhan, you are a Gusu native, so you should be able to speak in their dialect, right? Teach me, how do you scold someone in Gusu dialect?”

“Fe Zhi Shi Ci!” Lan QiRen gritted out

“Fee-Zhi-Shiii-Chi?” Wei WuXian repeated, completely butchering it: “Oh! Is that how you scold in your dialect? Thank you for the lesson, uncle!”

‘More likely for scolding you, senior Wei... That’s Wu dialect for ‘shameless’...’

Lan WangJi just gave him another ‘pathetic (bored)’ and got onto another boat. Wei WuXian wasn’t expecting him to answer anyways, he just found the musically soft dialect here very interesting. There’s no doubt that Lan WangJi spoken in this dialect when he was younger, and he just wanted to tease him for that-

“So did you, Lan Zhan? Do speak like that when you were little?”

“...”

“He spoken in that dialect until he turned eight.”

Lan WangJi turned back to his brother in betrayal, again.

Lan XiChen smiled back: “He would call me ‘Daa - da’ every time we saw each other~ He was so adorable~” How he missed their younger days~

Lan WangJi never felt such betrayal before...

“Dada? Is that Gusu dialect for ‘Gege’?” Wei WuXian grinned: “Dada? Dada!”

Lan WangJi’s ears turned pink

“Lan Er-Dada! Is that right? Come on, call me Dada as well!”

“Wrong, it’s- ... You are very bored”

“Yeah, but that’s what you like about me~ Well? Continue, what’s wrong?”

“...”

“Come on~ Tell me what’s wrong or I’m going to keep calling you that~ Dada~”

“(- /// -)”

“It’s pronounced ‘Daa – da’, not ‘Dada’, young master Wei!”

“Daaaa – daaa?”

“No, it’s Daa – da. You drag out the first ‘Da’ a little longer than the second.”

“So, it’s Lan Er-Daa – da! Is it correct now, Daa – da?~”

To prevent his face from spontaneously combusting, the very red second young master of Lan turned back to the book...

He tilted his head back- “Eh~ Lan Er-Daa-da~ Don’t ignore meee~ **-t-to... take a gulp of rice wine, then carried that little, round black jar over to beat up Jiang Cheng with a swing of his paddle.**

Lan WangJi stood beside Lan XiChen, but this time their expressions also matched, both serious from their future troubles involving the waterborne abyss and what they are going to advise the town leader of CaiYi later on.

On the other side, an extremely weighted boat passed by carrying countless golden loquats-

Lan WangJi knew what’s coming was inevitable.

Lan WangJi glanced at it for a second before facing back to the front.

Lan XiChen, however, asked: “If you want to eat loquats, why don’t we buy a basket back?”

Lan WangJi: 'Brother's ability is terrifying...'

Wei WuXian: X'D

Lan WangJi flicked his sleeve: “I do not!”

And got onto yet another boat.

“Hahahaha! Lan Er-Daa-da~ If you want it so badly, you should have told me~ I would have given it to you instead of Jiang Cheng~

Jiang Cheng: "Tsk!"

You were always in such denial~ I lost count of how many times you broke that rule of 'do not speak against your heart'~ Aren't you the perfect gentleman, second jade of Lan who follows the rules? *Lan – Er – Daa – da ~"*

Lan Wangji found his teeth sinking into his partner's ear yet again...

Chapter End Notes

1* San Du 三毒 is Jiang Cheng's sword. It means 'Three poisons' The 'poisons' in question is from Buddhist scriptures, its meaning in this case is equivalent to 'Sins' (So... he basically named his sword 'Three sins'... the cringe...)

2* This word is actually 旁人 which means others or outsiders or strangers. When LWJ used it, he is stating that WWX is neither his family nor his friend but barely acquaintances and he will not touch someone he is unfamiliar with... (Sorry, I couldn't find a suitable English word for this word... Translation is harder than it seems... Kudos to the translators out there!)

3* really was like a peach blossom pursuing a running stream with no constraints 真是如轻薄桃花逐流水... a phrase from some poem (Basically, WWX is the peach blossom.)

4* Wu dialect 吴音 One of the many, many different dialects in China and the dialect used in Gusu.

I should be doing my work... T_T

Hope you enjoyed this chapter anyways!

Reading Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

All teasing and biting aside, it was once again Wei WuXian's turn to read.

Wei WuXian chuckled at the first sentence, it had been too long since he can buy whatever he wants with no consequences (Cause uncle Jiang pays for everything).

Now it's Lan WangJi who covers their expenses, although he would have bought anything Wei WuXian asked for without hesitation, Wei WuXian wasn't so shameless to ask him to buy useless novelties like he used to as a teenager.

Anyways, teen Wei WuXian bought many random items at CaiYi and distributed them to himself and the disciples from different sects. Due to the Lan elder's absence, the disciples played all day everyday...

Wei WuXian shrunk slightly at the glare from his kinda-legal uncle-in-law.

...When it's night, they all gather in Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng's shared room to eat, drink, wrestle, gambled and look at... picture books. One night-

‘Wow... Almost all of that was against the rules...’ The Lan juniors thought as they scoot away from where the Lan elder is.

Lan QiRen's eyelid strangely couldn't stop twitching at the words ‘picture book’.

“Uncle, do not worry. I will punish him personally.”

Wei WuXian looked up to his savior, only to be greeted with the sight of Lan WangJi's eyelid twitching as well...

Right, the Gusu vinegar king...

...O...One night, Wei WuXian lost a bet and has to climb over the wall and buy emperor's smile in town, so that they could satisfy their palate. But who would have expected that on the next day, before the sun even rose, someone opened the door to the room, revealing the disciples tangled up all over the floor, so out of it that they might as well a bunch of corpses.

“...”

Jiang Cheng had never felt much remorse for his teenage actions at the Cloud Recesses until now, when they are being optimistically read out to his fellow sect leaders and juniors (Most notably his nephew) by his ever shameless Shixiong.

The noise from opening the door woke up some of them and were instantly awake when their groggy eyes landed on the ice-cold, stone face of Lan WangJi in the doorway.

Wei WuXian and the Lan juniors winced.

Nie HuaiSang panickily shoved the currently sleeping with his head down and legs up Wei WuXian-

“Ah?! How did you-

“You slept while doing a handstand?!”

Wei WuXian shrugged.

“It wasn't a handstand it's... more like his shoulder and neck were supporting the rest of his body straight in the air?” Nie HuaiSang corrected unsurely.

That did not take away any of the shock present on the juniors' faces.

Wei WuXian tilted his head to the side, he didn't remember doing that... but he *was* pretty out of it... (And he doesn't have the best memory...)

-calling out: “Wei-xiong! Wei-xiong!”

After being shoved a couple of times, Wei WuXian drowsily asked: “Who? Who else is up for it? Jiang Cheng? It's on! You think I'm scared of you?!”

Half of the audience facepalmed

Lan QiRen went back to tugging on his goatee.

“Senior Wei is so busted...” One junior whispered

Jiang Cheng was still having a headache from how much he drank last night as he laid on the floor with his eyes shut. He threw the first thing he felt at the direction Wei WuXian's voice came from: “Shut up!”

Wei WuXian looked up from the book to pout at Jiang Cheng: “Now that's downright mean~ Is that anyway to treat your Shixiong?”

His pouting face only made Jiang Cheng's mood worse: “Get lost! Just hearing your voice made my headache worse!”

Then shifted his eyes to the man next to his Shixiong who had the audacity to glare at him now: 'Hey! You are the last person to be glaring at me for this, Mr in charge of punishments!'

That thing landed on Wei WuXian's chest, the impact caused a few of it's pages to be flipped. Nie HuaiSang peeked at it to see that the thing Jiang Cheng threw at Wei WuXian was one of his most prized pornographic books-

"NIE HUAISANG!"

"AHHH! I don't know! I don't know anything! Really don't know-

"DON'T YOU DARE GIVE ME THAT! WEI YING MAY HAVE BEEN MY WORST STUDENT IN TERMS OF ETIQUETTE, BUT HIS GRADES ARE -cough-cough- UNLIKE YOU -cough- who has to repeat -cough- three times -cough- and yet you -cough-cough-cough-

Cue, yet another of the many probably repetitive by now fainting spells...

Nie HuaiSang: "Yes... sir"

Wei WuXian: 'Was uncle praising me just now?'

-looked up to see Lan WangJi's stone cold face and nearly vomited his soul out of his mouth. Wei WuXian hugged that book while mumbling to himself, falling asleep again, so Lan WangJi entered the room, grabbed his collar and dragged him back towards the door.

Lan XiChen: '...WangJi, you shouldn't be treating the person you like that way. Even if they should be punished.'

Lan juniors: 'Is this also considered a 'loving bully'? But it fits senior Wei better than HanGuang-Jun... then again, HanGuang-Jun wasn't much of a 'oblivious victim'...'

After being strangely dragged a while, Wei WuXian was finally roused half-awake and tilted his head back: "What are you doing, Lan Zhan?"

Lan WangJi continued on his path, not paying attention to him as the other disciples start to wake up one by one. **When Jiang Cheng saw Wei WuXian being grabbed by Lan WangJi again, he hurried out: "What's going on? What are you doing?"**

Lan WangJi turned around, saying each syllable one at the time: "To discipline."

Everyone else: 'Starting to question if Lan WangJi really has feelings for Wei WuXian at this point...'

Due to being drunk before going to sleep, Jiang Cheng's reaction was delayed. Now that he thought about the mess in the room, he realizes that they broke countless rules in the Cloud Recesses and froze.

When Lan WangJi brought Wei WuXian to the ancestral hall of the GusuLan, there were already quite a few older disciples there, eight in total. Four of them are holding extremely long sandalwood rulers, each inscribed with numerous square-shaped characters.

The Lan juniors gulped. It's the discipline ruler used for punishing disciples who committed repeated offences or something quite serious.

It's truly a sombre scene. When they saw that Lan WangJi brought him in, two of them came up at once and held Wei WuXian in place. Half-kneeling, Wei WuXian found himself unable to fight back and spoke: "Lan Zhan, are you punishing me?"

Lan WangJi watched him coldly, staying silent.

Wei WuXian continued: "I don't agree to this."

"I do not understand." Lan SiZhui started: "Even if senior Wei was a repeated offender, he was not the only who broke the rules. Why was he the only one punished again?"

Lan WangJi: "..."

Wei WuXian: 'Should I say something?'

Suddenly, the rest of the other disciples now near-fully awake rushed over but was not permitted to enter the ancestral hall. So, they stood outside, scratching their head in worry but speechless on the sight of the discipline ruler. However, the next thing was Lan WangJi sweeping his robes to a side and also knelt down, next to Wei WuXian.

"Um... What was HanGuang-Jun doing?"

"Don't tell me..."

"THE THREE BOWS*?!"

"Hey hey Hey! There I was, going to get my hands and legs smashed and what were you guys thinking about?!"

Lan WangJi remained silent, a soft flush spreading throughout his face.

"Lan Zhan...?"

The juniors bar Lan SiZhui whispered among themselves: "Is this still about the 'not going to marry into the Lan family again?'"

"If it is, HanGuang-Jun really know how to hold a grudge..."

"But, isn't that a bit... extreme?"

Lan JingYi ended the conversation with a shook of his head: "It's called tough love."

Lan SiZhui on the other side: '...What are they whispering about...the three bows again? Hopefully, their volume is low enough for HanGuang-Jun to not overhear...'

Lan WangJi: "..."

This made Wei WuXian lose all the colors on his face and immediately tried to get up. But Lan WangJi ordered: "Strike!"

Wei WuXian's eyes were wide and mouth gaping in his shock: "Waitwaitwait I accept, I accept it, Lan Zhan, I was wrong...ah!~"

Lan WangJi: "... " -Blush intensified-

Wei WuXian grinned, highlighting the fact that his 'moan' was intentional: 'HanGuang-Jun, is something the matter?~'

Lan XiChen: 'I did not see anything, neither do I know anything...'

...

Their palms and legs both received roughly a hundred strikes-

The Lan juniors, Jiang YanLi and Wen Ning winced.

Lan WangJi: "...Wei Ying"

It's was really no wonder that Wei WuXian always misunderstood his intentions whenever he asked him to go back to the Cloud Recesses with him as bringing him back to be punished.

Because that was essentially all that he ever done to him.

It's not that Lan WangJi forgotten about that, but in his worry for Wei WuXian, all he could think about was bringing him back with him.

-There was no need to hold Lan WangJi down as he kept in an upright position the whole way, unlike Wei WuXian who did not hold back for all his wailing and howling-

Wei WuXian: "Hey! I think that was a perfectly reasonable reaction!"

MengMo: 'I wasn't the one who wrote it...'

Jiang YanLi: "A-Xian, I didn't know it was so serious. It must have hurt so much..."

"Nah, the Cloud Recesses' cold spring really does wonders, even if it's way too cold for my taste. Besides~ You know me, even without it, I will be fine in no time!"

Jiang Cheng: "Really? That's not what you said to me or did your rusty brain forgot that too?"

"If I didn't exaggerate it, would you have been so nice as to carry me? You would have made me climb up the mountain again in that state if you could!"

"I should have just left you wailing on the floor of your *wonderful* cultivational partner's ancestral hall."

Lan WangJi lowered his head.

"First of, Lan Zhan did nothing wrong, I had to be punished-

Everyone: "..."

And secondly, *you* wouldn't have been able to leave me there for more than five minutes before you come back in and carry me out because I was way too noisy and will ruin the Jiang sect's reputation."

"Tsk, at least you're self-aware."

Only Jiang YanLi and Jin Ling watched this banter like it was an everyday thing.

...

-the other disciples watching couldn't help but cringe from imagining his pain. When it was over, Lan WangJi silently stood up and gave a salute to all the disciples in the ancestral hall before leaving, like he hasn't just been beaten up. Wei WuXian however, was the exact opposite, after being carried out by Jiang Cheng, he hasn't stop groaning.

"Ow... Even if senior Wei deserve punishment, that is way too much!"

"Senior Wei has never experienced punishment like ours! That's too much for a first time!"

"Senior Wei must be a very forgiving person since he's still willing to marry HanGuang-Jun after that..."

"But now I really know how bad HanGuang-Jun was at love..."

"Poor senior Wei..."

Lan WangJi: "..."

The other teens surrounded them: "Wei-xiong, what's going on?"

"It's normal if Lan Zhan punishes you, but why did he let himself get beaten as well?"

On Jiang Cheng's back, Wei WuXian-

Even though he himself was to blame for this, Lan WangJi couldn't help but feel jealously whenever Jiang Cheng carrying Wei WuXian was mentioned.

-huffed: "Tch! An error on my part! It's a long story!"

Jiang Cheng scolded: "Cut the crap! Just what did you do?!"

Wei WuXian replied: "I didn't do anything! Remember how I lost the bet and have to buy emperor's smile last night?"

Jiang Cheng responded: ".....Don't tell me you ran into him again."

Wei WuXian answered: "Bullseye. I don't know what kind of luck this is, but when I was climbing over the wall with the emperor's smile, he caught me in the act again. I'm starting to suspect that he's always watching me."

"So, did you? Lan-Er-Daa-da?"

"..."

Lan XiChen smiled: "I see! So that is why you gone on patrols even when it was not your turn to!"

Lan WangJi: '...Please stop revealing everything, brother...'

Wei WuXian grinned: "Ehh~ So you did~ Are you so desperate to interact with me that you will go on extra patrols just to catch me just like how we met the first time? Lan-Er-Daa-Da~"

Lan WangJi inspected his perfectly trimmed nails.

"I'll take that as a yes~ Hah~ No wonder... every time I go out at night, you will always be on patrol... Luckily, I don't always get caught, even when I was stuck in that tree..." '...?' With that

realization, Wei WuXian turned to Jin ZiXuan: “Oh yeah, now that I think about it, I haven’t complained about your stupid dog!”

The suddenly involved Jin ZiXuan: “???”

“The Cloud Recesses forbids pets! Why does it have to be a dog?! And why didn’t you keep that beast on a leash?! What kind of owner are you, letting your dog free to chase people up trees?!”

Lan WangJi: ‘So he *was* in that tree...’

“Oh... No wonder Lance has been barking so much that night. He’s usually very obedient. Thanks to that, second young master Lan brought him back to me and he had to be sent back to LanLin...”
Jin ZiXuan sulked

“Hey! *I’m* the victim here! And who names your pet after a wea- ...Okay, I will give you that, when it ran, it’s like a thrown lance...” ‘And compared to Jiang Cheng’s and Jin Ling’s unfortunate dogs, this was at least not an embarrassing name...’

“Ho, so you used to have a dog as well?” ‘Maybe this Jin ZiXuan has better taste than I thought... But I still think that name is too plain...’

“Yes, I had Lance since he was a puppy. He was my spiritual dog.”

“Really, Dad? You had a spiritual dog too? Was it a black Husky? I currently owned one!”

Jin ZiXuan smiled proudly at his son: “Mine was a black Husky too! It looks like we have much in common! How old is yours now? What do you call it?”

Jin Ling happily replied: “Fairy! I raised him since he was a puppy as well! He’s nearly 4 years old now!”

“...” The smile fell from his father’s face and his mother started to giggle.

“Son, what gender is your dog*?”

“Hm? He’s male*, just like yours. Why do you ask?”

The Lan juniors started to laugh amongst themselves.

“...” Jin ZiXuan turned to look at Jiang Cheng who he knows was one of Jin Ling’s primary caretakers (And even as terrible as he turned out to be, he doubts Jin GuangYao to have such...) :
“What was the name of *your* dog?”

Wei WuXian answered for him: “He had three puppies, Jasmine, Princess and ‘Little’ Love.”

Some of the other more stoic ones began to smile.

Jiang Cheng felt indignation: ‘Why? What’s wrong, they were wonderful names!’

Jin ZiXuan smacked his own forehead: ‘First I made the mistake of allowing A-Li to ask Wei WuXian to give a courtesy name to my son and now this JiuJiu ruined my son’s taste for names! I’m so very sorry, my son. I left you much too soon...’

Jin Ling: “Dad?”

Jiang YanLi patted her husband’s shoulder.

...

Jiang Cheng replied: “You think he’s as bored as you? What happened afterwards?”

Wei WuXian answered: “Then I greeted him. I said: ‘Lan Zhan! What a coincidence it was to see you again!’ Of course, he ignored me again and tried to grab me without even a word. So I said: ‘Hey, is this really necessary?’ He replied that if a guest disciple has disobeyed the curfew multiple times, they have to be taken to the ancestral hall to be punished. I answered: ‘There’s only the two of us here, if you kept quiet and so do I, no one will know that I broke the rules, right? I swear that this is the last time, we are so close already, so can’t you do me this little favor?’”

Everyone: ‘Didn’t that guy tell you that you weren’t close? Why are you still asking that?!’

The others grimaced.

Wei WuXian continued: “He then told me that we are not close-

Hearing that line coming out of Wei WuXian’s mouth made it all the worse to Lan WangJi.

-, lifted his sword and charged. He didn’t even consider the bond between the two of us. I could only put the emperor’s smile aside and fight him. He kept on trying to grab me and boy was he fast and persistent! I couldn’t shake him off at all! Eventually, I got fed up with his chasing and said: ‘Are you really not going to let me go? For real?!’

“But he said: ‘Accept your punishment!’ anyway.”

Wei WuXian continued with the story he nearly forgot he had told, about how he got the second jade of Lan that was in charge of punishments outside of the Cloud Recesses after curfew.

Lan XiChen: ‘Well, that explains why WangJi was so agitated when he came back from night patrol...’

Lan juniors: ‘Only you, senior Wei...’

...I said: ‘How about that Lan Zhan? Now you are also outside of the Cloud Recesses, both of us had broken the same rule and you can’t treat yourself less strictly than how you treat others, if you punish me, you must punish yourself as well, both of us are treated equally, how’s that?’

Wei WuXian went on: “After that, his mood worsened. I sat beside him and told him not to worry as I won’t tell anyone, only the heavens, the earth, you and me know what happened today, then he left without a word. Who would have thought that he would appear this morning.....Jiang Cheng, walk slower, you’re gonna shake me off.”

Jiang Cheng not only wants to shake him off, wanted to bash his head on the floor so hard that it would leave a few dents-

“Wow Shimei, I never realized you harbored such malicious intentions for me back then~ What have I done wrong? You were giving an injured person a bumpy ride! I believe I had the right to complain!”

Jiang Cheng ignored Wei WuXian to conserve his energy for glaring back at the second young

master of Lan who had the nerve to glare at him again: ‘You still have no right to give me that look! Have you forgotten why I had to carry him in the first place?!’

...

: ‘I’m carrying you and you still dare to be choosy?!’

Wei WuXian replied: “I didn’t ask you to carry me.”

Jiang Cheng was pissed off: “If I didn’t carry you, you would have rolled around in their ancestral hall the whole day, I can’t allow you to throw away this face! Besides, Lan WangJi had been struck fifty more times than you and he walked away on his own-

“EHHHH?!”

“HanGuang-Jun... Why did you...?”

Lan WangJi glanced at the man next to him before turning back: “...To regulate myself, to discipline myself” ‘The only way I know how...’

It didn’t work.

‘Lan Zhan...’

How could Wei WuXian not understand what he was saying?

Taking note of his partner's discomfort, Wei WuXian returned to the book.

-yet you still have the nerve to act like you’re crippled. I don’t feel like carrying you now, piss off!”

Wei WuXian responded: “I’m not getting off, I’m a wounded person.”

Wen Qing: ‘If you can still flap your lips like that, you’re fine!’ -Doctor’s words

Wen Ning: ‘Young master Wei... it must have been painful...’ -Doctor’s younger brother/assistant’s words

...

The group continued to their way until they ran into the elder jade of Lan.

Lan XiChen smiled as he asked: “What is the situation here?”

Jiang Cheng felt incredibly awkward, he had no idea what to answer. However, Nie HuaiSang answered first: “XiChen-ge, Wei-xiong had been punished with more than a hundred strokes! Do you have any ointment?!”

“Ah, leave it to HuaiSang-xiong to be more compassionate than my Shimei!”

“Heh, no problem Wei-xiong!”

“Hey! I carried you and how many times must I tell you to not call me that!”

Wei WuXian went back to the book.

The fact that person in charge of punishments in the Cloud Recesses is Lan WangJi and the pained cries from Wei WuXian while being surrounded by others made the situation look extremely dire, so Lan XiChen immediately went up to them: “You were punished by WangJi? Is young master Wei unable to walk? What happened?”

“Thank you for your concern, big brother~” Wei WuXian flashed a huge smile.

“I am happy to be of help, WuXian.”

...

Jiang Cheng of course, couldn't tell Lan XiChen what had really happened, so he tried to downplay the situation to no avail as Wei WuXian showed his swollen hands and mention Lan WangJi.

Lan XiChen looked over his palms: “Ah, this punishment was indeed quite severe. I'm afraid that the swelling will not lesson even with three- or four-days' time.”

Lan WangJi looked down in guilt, tilting his head slightly to look at the pale, long since healed hand of the man next to him.

Wei WuXian reached over to grab both of his hands in his own: “Aw, don't feel bad~ Look at them, aren't they fine now?”

Lan WangJi felt his heart speeding up: “Mm”

Everyone else: ‘Go back to reading, no one wants your dog food.’

...

Jiang Cheng had no idea that it was so serious: “What? The swelling won't go away even after three or four days? His legs and back were beaten as well. How could Lan WangJi do this?!”

Upon seeing Lan WangJi's crestfallen face again, Wei WuXian scolded Jiang Cheng: “Oi! Don't talk behind someone's back! Look, now you hurt his feelings!”

Jiang Cheng glared back, ignoring the feeling to show him the unfamiliar yet strangely vulgar act of sticking his middle finger up at him. ‘Hey! I was defending you! Now that the two of you are all well and lovely-dovely you just forget how he treated you in the past?!’

Love is most definitely blind; this book was reminding Jiang Cheng how his two brother-in-laws aren't good enough for his siblings.

Jin ZiXuan covered his mouth as he sneezed.

The last sentence was filled with discontent, but he only became aware of it after Wei WuXian sneakily smacked him. Lan XiChen didn't seem to mind as he smiled: “But it is nothing to worry about so an ointment is unnecessary. I will tell you a way for it to be cured in just a few hours, young master Wei.”

Recalling that Wei WuXian was told to visit the cold springs by his brother, Lan WangJi narrowed his eyes at his brother in question, since he must have known Lan WangJi would have been there himself.

Lan XiChen smiled back innocently.

...

Night time, Cloud Recesses, cold springs.

Lan WangJi was reposed as he soaked in the ice-cold spring waters with his eyes closed. But suddenly, he heard a voice beside his ear: “Lan Zhan.”

Lan juniors: ‘Seriously? This was totally like a scene in some romance novel or drama...’

“.....”

Lan WangJi immediately opened his eyes. Sure enough, Wei WuXian laid on his stomach on the blue-green stones next to the cold springs, head tilted and smiling at him.

Lan QiRen -long since woken up and currently massaging his forehead-: ‘Why...Why was he there? Why am I not aware that the troublemaker and my nephew had this many interactions during their schooling?!’

“How did you get in?!” Lan WangJi blurted out

Wei WuXian slowly got up and continued speaking while undoing his sash belt: “ZeWu-Jun gave me permission to.”

Lan QiRen turned to his older nephew in shock.

Lan XiChen turned to look at him: “I just thought that it would have been a great way for them to get to know each other better, uncle. WangJi was fond of young master Wei and it would be nice if he had a friend his age.”

Lan QiRen: “...”

Lan XiChen continued: “Young mas- WuXian may be mischievous at times but he is very intelligent and kind-hearted. I was sure WangJi would benefit from their relationship, no matter what it may be. And I still do.”

Lan QiRen: “...”

“Aw, big brother. I never thought you thought so highly of me~”

Lan XiChen turned to his now dixi: “I only spoken the truth, WuXian.”

Lan WangJi: “Mm!”

Wei WuXian: (*^▽^*)

Lan QiRen: “...”

...

Lan WangJi asked: “What are you doing?”

Wei WuXian kicked his boots off while leaving clothing all over the floor-

Lan WangJi blushed.

‘Lan er-gege, is this really the time to be thinking about this?’ XD

Lan QiRen: ‘Shameless! Utterly shameless!’

-“I already stripped, so what do you think I came here for? I heard that your sect’s cold springs has healing properties other than just helping ones cultivation, so your brother told me to come here and soak with you. Although, it’s kind of unreasonable of you to come and heal alone. Wah! It’s really cold! Brr...

Due to the cold, Wei WuXian started jumping and rolling around in an effort to warm himself up. Lan WangJi quickly placed more distance between the two of them: **“I came here for cultivational purposes, not to heal----- stop flailing about!”**

Jiang Cheng smacked his forehead: “This is so embarrassing! What kind of head disciple of the Jiang sect were you if you can’t stand a bit of cold?!”

Wei WuXian pouted back indignantly: “That was not ‘a bit of cold’, it was absolutely freezing! I still don’t get why the water hasn’t frozen over.”

“Probably because you were over-exaggerating.”

“How would you know? You never been in there before. I’ll like to see you jump in there and tell me it’s not cold!”

Everyone else: ‘Can we just get through this chapter already?!’

...

Wei WuXian’s thrashing finally got on Lan WangJi’s nerves: **“Stop moving!”**

While speaking, he reached out and grabbed Wei WuXian’s shoulder.

Wei WuXian felt warmth flowing into him immediately and felt better, so he instinctively moved closer to his side. Lan WangJi warned him warily: “What?”

Wei WuXian responded innocently: “Nothing, it just seems warmer on your side.”

Lan WangJi kept his arm between the two of them in order to maintain their distance: “It is not.” He spoke sternly.

Wei WuXian leaned against him: “Yeah it’s not, cause it’s you whose warm, Lan-Er-Daa-da~”

Lan WangJi flushed but hugged him anyway: “Mm”

...

Due to Lan WangJi’s less than welcoming behavior, Wei WuXian stayed where he is, untroubled. Instead, he looked at Lan WangJi’s palms and shoulder, all still covered in wounds, so he really wasn’t here to treat them. **“Lan Zhan, I really admire you. You actually punished yourself as well, not even holding back a little. I have nothing else to say.”**

Lan WangJi closed his eyes again, staying silent.

Wei WuXian continued: “Really, I never met someone like you, so proper and firm. I could never do something like that myself. You’re really amazing.

Lan WangJi ignored him.

No longer feeling cold, Wei WuXian started swimming around. After a while, he couldn’t stand any longer and swam back to Lan WangJi: “Lan Zhan, didn’t you hear what I was doing?”

Lan WangJi replied: “I do not know.”

Wei WuXian responded: “You don’t even know this? I was praising you, trying to get more acquainted with you.”

Lan WangJi glanced at him: “What are you trying to accomplish?”

Wei WuXian answered: “Lan Zhan, lets be friends, we are already so familiar with each other.”

Lan WangJi replied: “Not familiar.”

Some of the audience sighed. 'This is so tiring to listen to...'

Lan WangJi: 'I am sorry, brother. Your efforts were wasted on me...'

Lan XiChen: 'Worry not, I honestly did not hold much hope for that attempt...'

...

Wei WuXian continued trying to persuade Lan WangJi to be friends with him, going as far as to claim there are ‘benefits’ from becoming friends with him.

Lan WangJi asked: “Like?”

Wei WuXian swam to the edge of the springs, back laying on the blue-green stones and arms propped on them: “I’m always very loyal to my friends, for example, if I got my hands on a new porn-

“Is that all you think about?!”

“Hey, I was a healthy growing boy.” ‘Before I caught the cutsleeve disease and got together with Lan Zhan...’

“Shameless!”

“If you want to be friends with him, why did keep bringing up what he couldn’t tolerate?”

“Cause he’s cute when he’s flustered, duh.”

“Aren’t you straight back then?”

“Yea, so? Like I said, nothing wrong about appreciating your friend’s looks even if you aren’t into them.”

Lan WangJi: "..."

"...Before."

"Mm"

...

Anyways, in the book Wei WuXian continued trying to convince Lan WangJi to be his friend and even invited him to Yunmeng.

Lan WangJi answered: "No."

Wei WuXian replied: "Don't keep saying 'no', it sounds so cold. Girls wouldn't like that-

Everyone: 'What's with this guy...'

Wei WuXian: 'Hm?'

Let me tell you, the girls in Yunmeng are really pretty, a different kind of pretty than the girls here in Gusu." He winked his left eye at Lan WangJi in pride: "Are you sure you don't want to come?"

As if he couldn't focus on something so long, Wei WuXian turned to Lan WangJi after finishing that paragraph: "It's a shame that there isn't anyone else in this dream aside from us. With your looks, you would be swarmed by girls when we were in this dream's Yunmeng."

"..."

"Don't give me that look, I was complimenting you! The girls in Yunmeng have pretty high standards and once you meet it, they can be quite bold and assertive!"

"Wei WuXian, you truly don't care about your face! Get back to the book!"

"Oh? So what if I brag about the girls fawning over me? What about you, Mr oblivious and single?"

Everyone: 'Shouldn't the word oblivious be used on you instead?'

Wei WuXian, of course noticed the stares: "Okay, I admit that I was a bit oblivious when it comes to Lan Zhan. But at least I could tell if a girl is interested in me and knows how to treat them, unlike Jiang Cheng~"

Jiang Cheng stroked his un-usable ring: "Oh? Then mind telling me when did a girl show interest in me?" 'Wasn't I always avoided by them...?'

"Er... Which one? That time a Yunmeng native asked you for directions? Or that time a girl tripped over nothing in a restaurant conveniently right next to you when you were getting up? Or that time when that girl we rescued kept clingin-

"Wha...? I don't even remember that first one, but how would you know she's a Yunmeng native? And the secon-

"How do I know she's a Yunmeng native? She's the daughter of the owner of chrysanthemum inn that's right outside of the Lotus pier! She always waves at us when we pass by. She lived in

Yunmeng her entire life! And yet she went up to you of all people to ask for directions to the freaking moon elder's* shrine?! And it was the day before QiXi* too!"

"Well, I lived in Yunmeng all my life as well and I wouldn't know where everything is. Do you? Yunmeng is huge, alright?! Or do you not remember that?"

"Please, *please* trust me when I say that every girl in Yunmeng that are at least of age, knows where the moon elder's shrine is. But let's assume that she doesn't know and you just told her the directions, but she did not just leave immediately and insists that you bring her there."

"So what? She's probably just bad with directions and prefers it if someone brings her there instead."

"Yeah, and even after you rejected her a few times with a grumpy face she still keeps begging you to? If her goal wasn't to specifically get you to bring her there, she would have asked me or someone else to bring her there after your first rejection."

"She's-

"Not shy to ask someone else if she can just waltz up to the heir of the Yunmeng Jiang sect that everyone recognizes and asks him to bring her to a love shrine which she knows the location of, in the middle of a market street, while said heir was surrounded by other disciples."

Jiang Cheng: "..."

The others: "..."

Wei WuXian sighed in contentment: "Well? Anything else? If not-" He turned to Jin Ling: "Now you know why you still don't have an aunt."

Usually, Jin Ling will just ignore everything Wei WuXian says unless it's night hunt related, but for this, he nodded in response.

Jiang YanLi: XD

Jiang Cheng: "...Just go back to reading already"

"Alright alright, I shall take pity on this forever single shimei of-"

"READ!"

...

Lan WangJi hesitated but answered: "No..."

'I should have accepted his invitation... now it no longer stands...'

"Lan Zhan... We did go there together, remember? Just now, and that's more than I ever asked for."

Lan WangJi's eyes softened: "Mm"

Wei WuXian responded: "Rejecting me like that, not even considering my face. Aren't you afraid of me taking your clothes as well when I leave?"

Lan WangJi shouted: "Get lost!!!"

‘Why did I keep saying that...’

Lan XiChen sighed.

...

Soon, Lan QiRen finally returned from Qinghe and gave Wei WuXian a harsh scolding rather than leaving him with Lan WangJi in the library like before.

Lan QiRen breathed deeply, trying to hold back his anger at hearing how the troublemaker thought of his teachings in that troublemaker’s voice.

The moment Lan QiRen left, Wei WuXian sat down and spoke to Jiang Cheng: “Isn’t it a bit late to tell me to get lost? Telling me to get lost after I finished tainting that person? Way too late for that!”

Lan QiRen went back to drinking tea when the deep breaths lost their effectiveness.

...

Due to the waterborne abyss in CaiYi, the Lan sect and their acting leader, Lan QiRen had to spend much energy and resources to deal with it. As such, their lessons became much shorter, giving Wei WuXian more time to hang out with his friends.

One of those times, Wei WuXian just happened to see Lan WangJi sitting next to a window by himself.

Confused, Nie HuaiSang spoke: “Is he watching us? It couldn’t be, we weren’t that noisy. So why is he giving us the stink eye?”

‘Just jealous that I hang out with you guys without or instead of him. The over-sized vinegar jar.’

Lan WangJi: “...”

Wei WuXian replied: “Probably trying to find a fault with us he can penalize.”

“...”

Wei WuXian quickly continued before his partner gets any ideas.

Jiang Cheng spoke: “Wrong. It’s not ‘us’, but ‘me’. From what I can see, he’s only looking at you.”

Everyone: ‘...Does he like Wei WuXian or not? So many mixed signals.’

“Mm!”

Wei WuXian responded: “Heh. Just wait. We’ll see how I’ll deal with him.”

Lan WangJi turned to Wei WuXian: “ ‘Deal with him’ ?”

Wei WuXian glared at Jiang Cheng: ‘Look at what you’ve done!’

Jiang Cheng: ‘The heck???’

Jiang Cheng replied: “Didn’t you think of him as boring and serious? Then stop bothering him so much. It’s practically like pulling a tiger’s whiskers above it’s mouth or standing on a crumbling cliff, stop seeking your death.”

Wei WuXian disagreed: “Wrong. It’s *because* a living person can be so boring that it’s fun.”

“... Young master? Emm...are you sure you don’t have feelings for second young master Lan in the past?”

“Huh? What brought this up? And I already said no.”

Wen Qing rolled her eyes: ‘If my innocent little brother suspects something, it means it’s as clear as day, you with the surname Wei!’

...

After Wei WuXian and others returned to the Cloud Recesses, Lan WangJi received a not-very surprising visitor who came in through the window.

Wei WuXian cheerfully greeted him but Lan WangJi continued tidying like he wasn’t there.

Wei WuXian deliberately misunderstood his lack of response: “You don’t have to tell me, I know you definitely missed me. If not, why would you watch me from this window just now?”

Lan WangJi glanced at him instantly, eyes filled with silent accusations. Wei WuXian sat on the windowsill: “Look at you, a few words and you caught the bait already. You’re way too easy to catch. Can’t keep your composure.”

Lan WangJi spoke: “Leave.”

Wei WuXian replied: “Will you throw me down if I don’t?”

Considering how Lan WangJi’s face looked, Wei WuXian immediately clarified that he brought apology gifts before Lan WangJi actually throws him out.

Lan WangJi rejected without a thought: “I do not want it.”

Wei WuXian continued: “You really don’t want it?” Upon seeing the defensiveness in Lan WangJi’s eyes, he pulled out two rabbits as if he was performing a magic trick.

Lan QiRen’s eyes widen when he heard the words ‘two rabbits’.

He held them by their ears, making it seem like he is holding two round and chubby snowballs which are still kicking about. He held them to Lan WangJi’s line of sight: “Your place is so strange, no pheasants but there are so many wild rabbits and they aren’t even afraid of humans. What do you think? Aren’t they fat? Do you want them?”

“I see, so HanGuang-Jun’s pet rabbits are the descendants of the two senior Wei gave him!” Lan SiZhui smiled softly

Audience: ‘So he does like him... Glad to get that confirmed’

Lan QiRen is starting to question just what wasn’t influenced by that disaster incarnate.

Wei WuXian: ‘Descendants? ...I know my memory’s pretty bad, but aren’t those two male?...Nah, maybe he just loves them so much he went and caught more. Heh, can’t wait to tease him about it~’

Nobody noticed Lan WangJi’s subtlety down-casting eyes.

Lan WangJi stared at him coldly.

So Wei WuXian said: “Alright. If you don’t want them, I’ll give them to someone else. My mouth’s really lacking something flavorful anyways.

‘Oh yeah, that’s what he tried to do as well after HanGuang-Jun brought him back from Dafan...’

Lan XiChen: ‘So that is how WuXian convinced WangJi.’

Lan QiRen: ‘No killing within the cloud recesses!!!’

When he heard that last sentence, Lan WangJi spoke: “Hold on.”

Wei WuXian extended his arms: “I didn’t leave.”

Lan WangJi continued: “Who are you going to give them to?”

Wei WuXian answered: “To whoever roasts rabbit meat the best.”

Lan WangJi spoke: “The Cloud Recesses prohibits killing. It’s the third rule on the wall of rules.”

Wei WuXian replied: “Fine. I’ll go down the mountain and kill them outside, then bring them back up to be roasted. You don’t want them anyway, so why do you care so much?”

‘Another one of senior Wei’s ‘loopholes’ ...’

“Uncle, why not have more of those lotus seeds... I find them quite refreshing!”

Wei WuXian got the hint and went back to the book.

“.....” Lan WangJi spoke, a word at a time: “Give. Them. To. me.”

Wei WuXian sat on the windowsill laughing: “Now you want them? You’re always like this.”

Both rabbits are plump and round, like little fluffy snowballs. One had dead-fish eyes and laid on floor unmoving, it’s pink mouth moving in a languid manner as it chews lettuce. The other one acts like it has taken battle cricket pills* and was constantly hopping around. It played with it’s companion, leaped, ran and hopped, all without stopping.

Everyone: ‘Wow, these two rabbit are nearly carbon-copies of Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi! Coincidence?’ A number of them turned to the two.

“Heh, Lan Zhan~ I just realized that those two acted like us! That quiet one even eats slowly, just like you do! And that other one, it was so fast I nearly gave up catching it but I beat it anyway!”

“Mm”

Apparently, it was.

...

Wei WuXian tossed more pieces of lettuce from nowhere. Suddenly, he called out: “Lan Zhan. Lan Zhan!”

That energetic rabbit seemed to have stepped in Lan WangJi’s inkstone and had left a trail of ink pawprints on the table. Lan WangJi had no idea what to do, holding a piece of paper and was considering how he was going to wipe this, so he didn’t want to pay attention to him, but hearing his unusual tone, he thought there was a problem: “What is it?”

Wei WuXian elaborated: “Look at how one of them is on top of the other... are they...?”

Audience: ‘Wow... just wow...’

Lan QiRen didn’t look too good.

The mistake from before may have traumatized him for this kind of stuff...

MengMo: ‘...Sorry.’

Lan WangJi exclaimed: “Both of these are male!”

Audience: ‘Even more wow... Cutsleeve bunnies... And in the library again... Wei Wuxian sure knows how to pick them.’

“Both rabbits are male? Then how did...” Lan SiZhui didn’t have to finish his question for everyone to know what he is asking.

Wei WuXian hummed: “Good question, but I always thought HanGuang-Jun caught more as companions for the first two. So~ Did you, Lan Er-Daa-da?”

Lan WangJi didn’t rise to that bait this time.

Lan XiChen: “WangJi only started raising that group of rabbits about ten years ago.”

“Ten years ago...” “Three years after my death... Speaking of which, those rabbits couldn’t be still alive, right? How long is a rabbit’s lifespan?”

“Lan Zhan, those two, are they still alive?”

Lan WangJi shook his head slowly.

“...Did you catch all those other rabbits after those two passed?”

“...Mm”

He had to keep his promise, after all.

He kept the first two for more than seven years, way passed the lifespan of their wild counterparts.

But no matter how well he cared for them, they could never escape the inevitable fate of death by old age.

Lan WangJi had raised them well, both of them were satisfied and happy. They were always together and even if you separate them or if the energetic one ran off somewhere, they will go after

the other, whether it is the energetic one returning to the quiet one's side or the quiet one following behind the energetic one.

But one day, almost two years after *his* death... YingYing stopped moving.

The rabbit that was once brimming with as much energy as his namesake even in his old age stopped moving. Huddled in a corner of the JingShi's garden, YingYing remained there, no longer needing anything but a burial.

YingYing returns to ZhanZhan or ZhanZhan goes after YingYing. It has always been that way with these two little rabbits ever since they came into the care of the second young master Lan.

This was no exception.

Since YingYing was unable to return to him, ZhanZhan follows him.

When he found YingYing's corpse, he was devastated, so he too, huddles in that corner, right next to his companion and remained there, refusing both water and food, for three whole days.

Lan WangJi knew there was nothing he could do but watch over them.

Being an old rabbit as well, ZhanZhan wasn't miserable for too long. After those three days, Lan WangJi buried them under the magnolia tree where they remained together to this day.

Unfortunately, he can't be like them. They only had each other, while he has a brother, an uncle, a little orphaned boy and a whole sect depending on him.

He couldn't be like his great ancestor, his sect's founder, and leave the world the moment his love left.

Since he was unable to follow his loved one, he could only wait for him to return to his side.

But he was distraught, he had lost one of the very few things that person gave him. One of the things he had told that person that he still has and were well during his confession.

[

“I still have the two rabbits you gave me. They are both well. I am raising them in the Cloud Recesses. ...Do you want to see them? Go back to Cloud Recesses with me? Although, you cannot always say you want to roast them...”

“GET LOST!”

]

...

Even Lan WangJi wasn't sure what happened after that. There were brief memories of heading down the mountain, a heat in his throat as if he had drank liquid fire and lastly, opening his eyes in his garden, surrounded by ten or so rabbits.

...

“Lan Zhan? Lan Zhan?”

Lan WangJi opened his eyes: “Mm?”

His mind is now filled with the sight of that person: “You were out of it for sometime, is something the matter? Are you feeling okay?”

“Wei Ying.”

“I’m here! What is it?”

“Wei Ying... Do you like the rabbits?”

“Huh? The rabbits? ...Are you talking about those two, or that huge herd of rabbits?”

“All of them.”

“ ? ...Of course! I mean, I don’t like how they run away from me, but I still love them... roasted and already in my stomach~”

“... You cannot always say you want to roast them.”

“Hahahahaha, I was kidding! I was kidding! But who told them to run away from me~ They woke up my hunter’s instincts and that makes me hungry~ Too bad they are yours though~ And you raised them so well~ So chubby and covered in meat~”

Lan WangJi snuggled him, his mouth right next to his ear: “I’m glad.”

Wei WuXian flushed from the sensation of the breath brushing his ear: “Hm???”

~~The multiple third wheels: ‘Hey! Did you forget we’re still here?!’~~

~~Jiang YanLi & Wen Qing: -Internal squeals-~~

~~MengMo: ‘I brought you here to read, you know...’~~

...

Sometime later-

Wei WuXian spoke: “Male? That’s really weird.” He lifted them up by the ears to check: “They are really both male. It’s doesn’t really matter, I haven’t even finished my sentence yet, why are you so strict? Did something come to mind? Speaking of which, I was the one who caught these two and I didn’t even confirm their gender and yet you looked at their...”

“...”

“Hahahaha, let me finish my chapter, okay?”

Lan WangJi finally threw him out of the library.

Wei WuXian laughed in mid-air: “Hahahahahahahahahahaha!”

Lan QiRen & Jiang Cheng: ‘Shameless!’

With a bang, Lan WangJi shut the window close and stumbled back to the table.

His eyes swept over the messy sight of rice paper and ink pawprints all over the floor, along with the two rabbits rolling around, dragging lettuce leaves. He closed his eyes and covered

both ears.

Wei WuXian felt a pang of guilt.

The quivering branches of the magnolia tree had been locked outside the window, yet, no matter how hard he resisted, he couldn't shut out Wei WuXian's vibrant and carefree laughter.

The next day, Lan WangJi stopped coming to lessons.

If only he had been stronger and continued coming to class, he could have intervened in the fight between Wei WuXian and Jin ZiXuan...

Then he could have spent more time with him...

Wei WuXian: "..."

...

Wei WuXian continued his lessons as normal. As in getting moved to the front so Lan QiRen can ~~glare at~~ keep an eye on him everyday.

Sadly, it couldn't last.

One day, the lesson about the GusuLan's founder, Lan An, brought them to the wall of murals depicting special events in his life.

-With his ancestor being such a person, how come he has such unromantic descendants?"

"Unromantic?"

"Heh heh, I was blind~ You're an exception~"

Strangely, Lan QiRen didn't comment.

Lan XiChen: 'Am I unromantic too?'

Some Lan juniors: 'We are plenty romantic, senior Wei!'

...

The lesson of the founder and his cultivation partner sparked the topic of their own future cultivation partners amongst the disciples.

Someone asked: "ZiXuan-xiong, which girl (The word used is actually XianZi 仙子 fairy, as mentioned before, they are talking about specifically girls in the cultivation world) **do you think is the best?"**

Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng frowned.

Jin Ling: 'Is that even a question? My mother, of course!'

Jin ZiXuan: "..."

Jiang YanLi: 'This must the time A-Xian got sent back because he fought with ZiXuan...'

When Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng hear this, they looked at the youth sitting in the front row of the Lanshi.

It was the teenage Jin ZiXuan, sent to the GusuLan to study from LanlingJin.

Another person spoke: “Don’t ask ZiXuan-xiong about this, he already has a fiancée, so his answer would certainly be his fiancée.”

Jin Ling nodded proudly.

Wei WuXian & Jiang Cheng: (눈_눈)

Jin ZiXuan: “...”

Upon hearing the word ‘fiancée’, Jin ZiXuan’s lips seemed to have twitched, his face showing discontent-

Jin Ling: ‘???’

Wei WuXian turned to Jiang YanLi only for her to have anticipated his actions and gave him a nod to continue.

The disciple who asked the question first seems to be quite oblivious as he cheerfully continued asking: “Really? Which sect is she from? She must be extraordinarily talented!”

Jiang YanLi shook her head sadly.

‘A-Li...’

Wei WuXian took a deep breath as he continued.

Jin ZiXuan raised an eyebrow: “There’s no need to continue this.”

Wei WuXian suddenly spoke: “What do you mean by ‘There’s no need to continue this’? “

“A-Xian, I appreciate that you cared so much about me, but there really wasn’t any reason to get into trouble for it...”

“What are you talking about, Jie? If Wei WuXian hasn’t done anything yet, I would have!”

“That’s right! For you, I will punch him a hund- no, a thousand more times!”

They were rewarded with a grateful smile from their sister.

Jin Ling: ‘Can someone explain what’s going on? Why was my dad saying those things? What was that about punching? Weren’t my parents deeply in love? The couple of the century???’

Jin ZiXuan: ‘A thousand more times...’

...

Everyone else in the Lanshi was surprised, Wei WuXian has always been friendly and all smiles with a good temperament. Never had they seen him so hostile before, even Jiang Cheng only sat next to him with a frown on his face.

Jin ZiXuan spoke slowly: “ ‘There’s no need to continue this’ Is this sentence that difficult to understand?”

Wei WuXian gritted his teeth.

Wei WuXian sneered: “The sentence wasn’t difficult to understand, what I don’t understand is how my Shijie is dissatisfactory for you.”

Now the other disciples understood the problem. Jin ZiXuan was engaged to the first daughter of the YunmengJiang sect, Jiang YanLi by their mothers who were very close friends since childhood. Despite her gentle temperament and sweet voice, she was plain-looking, low in cultivation and has nothing notable when compared to other the female cultivators. For the prideful young master of Jin, she was not good enough for him and detested the engagement forced on him by his mother.

Lan juniors: ‘The heck?! We’ll have you know that lady Jiang is the nicest lady we have ever met!’

Wen Qing: ‘Such a shallow way of thinking! *You* are the one that’s not good enough for YanLi-me!’

Jin Ling: ‘What is all this? This is not what I’ve been told! Everyone, jiujiu, shushu and the older servants all told me they were a happy couple! And they seem fine here!’

Even Lan XiChen and Lan QiRen are shaking their heads in disapproval. It was not just the number of rules Jin ZiXuan has broken, he isn't even showing basic courtesy and respect.

Lan WangJi: ‘...I should have been there.’

Wen Ning: ‘Mrs Jin...’

Jiang Cheng -internally-: ‘@%\$#...’

Since he was given the opportunity, he let his frustrations. Jin ZiXu-

Wei WuXian passed the book to his left: “I don’t feel like reading anymore, mind continuing for me?”

“Ah?! Um... yo- young master W- Wei...” ‘I don’t think I want to read this either...’

Wen Qing grabbed the book held in front of her brother: “If you don’t feel up to it, don’t. I’ll do it. Don’t force what you don’t want on others, Wei WuXian!”

Wei WuXian waved her off.

Wen Qing just continues where he lefted off.

Jin ZiXuan replied by asking: “Why don’t you ask, just what about her satisfies me?”

Wen Qing: ‘This @-hole...’

Wei WuXian & Jiang Cheng: ‘Feel like punching him now...’

The others turned to Jiang YanLi in concern.

Jiang YanLi smiles back, eyes dimmer than usual.

Jin ZiXuan: "I'm so sorry! Ah-Li!!!"

Jiang YanLi smiled at him, but the smile didn't quite reach her eyes: "It's alright."

Silly was the word to describe her back then, always hoping that her love would be requited someday if she remain patient, that the fact they practically grew up together would allow him to see past her lackluster appearance and skill...

When she heard of the news, she kept calm and tried not to cry. She never blamed Wei WuXian, she only blamed her appearance and fate when he came to apologies to her with guilt-ridden eyes. She told him in response to his apology: "You don't need to apologize to me, it would happen sooner or later. If Jin ZiXuan was not meant to be my husband, then so be it. What is meant to be mine, will be mine, what is not meant to be mine, don't force it. It would only bring harm." Like what happened with her parents.

She may have said that, but it still hurts, even after so long, to see what he thought of her in the past. Even if he no longer thinks that way, it doesn't change the fact that he once thought that way. These words were proof of it. What had lead her less temperamental of the two brothers to lift a finger on him. She knew it was coming, but it still hurts, her heart hurts a lot.

Jin Ling stared at his parents, utterly disappointed.

Jiang Cheng promptly stood up.

Wei WuXian shoved him back and blocked him by standing in front of him-

Jiang Cheng: "...Tch"

He sneered: "You think you are so satisfying? Where did you get the right to be so choosy?!"

Due to this engagement, Jin ZiXuan thought nothing positive about the Yunmeng Jiang and has disliked Wei WuXian's behavior for some time now-

Wei WuXian waved dismissively: "Feeling's mutual."

Besides, he boasted about being unmatched among his peers and has never been looked down upon before. In the heat of the moment, blood rushed to his head and he blurted out-

Wen Qing's eyebrow twitched

: "If she isn't satisfied, ask her to have this engagement annulled! In short, I don't care about your 'good' shijie! If you care so much about her, go ask her father for her! Doesn't he treat you better than his own son?"

Wen Qing patted Jiang YanLi's hand in apology.

Jiang Cheng took a deep breath... He can't allow this to cloud his judgement any longer...

Wei WuXian shot a look at his 'brother-in-law'.

Jin ZiXuan: "sorry..."

Jin Ling: ‘Everything I have been told is a lie...’

...

Jiang Cheng froze when he heard that last sentence, but Wei WuXian was enraged and threw a punch at the Jin ZiXuan who didn't expect him to react so quickly.

Jin Ling grunted: “Good! Teach that ungrateful brat a lesson!”

Jin ZiXuan lower his head between his shoulders.

Jin Ling ignored him.

Jiang YanLi: ‘Oh dear...’

Wei WuXian & Jiang Cheng: ‘Attaboy!’

...

Fight between the head disciple of YunmengJiang and the young master of LanlingJin brought the two sect leaders to Gusu.

After understanding the situation, Jiang FengMian brought up the topic of cancelling the engagement.

Wei WuXian sighed at this, he didn't think what he had done was wrong but he should have considered his shijie's feelings even if he thinks that bastard wasn't good enough for her.

He told Jin GuangShan: “This engagement was set due to Ah-Li's mother's persistence, I had never approved of it. From what we can see here, it seems that both parties are unwilling, so we should not force it any longer.”

‘...No, father-in-law... this Jin is willing...’

Jiang YanLi commented nothing, she always had known that her father doesn't like arranged marriages. He was afraid she and ZiXuan would end up like he and mother.

Maybe the break is a blessing in disguise. If it was never broken, Jin ZiXuan might always see her as the plain girl he was forced to marry and never attempt to understand her.

Jin GuangShan was shocked and hesitated as breaking off an engagement to a prominent sect was never a good thing. He spoke: “What does a child know? Let them fool around, we do not need to pay attention to them, FengMian-xiong.”

Jiang FengMian replied: “Jin-xiong, even though we can arrange a marriage for them, we cannot marry in their place. After all, the ones who have to spend the rest of their lives together is them.”

Many nodded in respect at the past Jiang sect leader's words.

This engagement has never been the intention of Jin GuangShan. If he wanted to strengthen his sect through marriage, the Yunmeng Jiang sect is neither the only choice nor the best choice.

Wei WuXian, Jiang Cheng & Jin Ling: “Hey!”

MengMo: 'I wasn't the one who wrote this...'

It was only because of his fear of disobeying Mrs Jin. Besides, it was the Jiang sect leader who proposed this, furthermore, the groom is on the Jin sect's side so they don't have as much concerns as the bride's side, there was no reason to worry over it. Besides, he was always aware that Jin ZiXuan has always been dissatisfied with having Jiang YanLi as his fiancée. After some considerations, Jin GuangShan brought out some courage and agreed.

Jin ZiXuan lowered his eyes, he wasn't fond of his father's ways, ideals and how he treated his mother, but the man did care about him...

Afterall, the scolding his mother gave the both of them after he returned were still ringing in his ears...

After scanning though the next few paragraphs, Wen Qing tossed the book back to Wei WuXian: "There, I read those for you, read the rest yourself.

Wei WuXian grinned as he expertly caught the book: "Thanks a bunch, Qing-jie! "

Wen Qing scoffed a response.

...

Wei WuXian had no idea what his fight had broke up as he continued to kneel on the stone path. Eventually, Jiang Cheng came to check on him.

-But that spoiled brat Jin ZiXuan most definitely never knelt before. If he didn't kneel until he cries for his parents, then my surname is not Wei!"

Jin ZiXuan stayed quiet, it is true that he had never knelt since that day... His knees scraped against the ground and bleed but he still has to continue kneeling there-

"..."

Jiang Cheng lowered his head for a while: "Father came."

'If it were him who got into a fight, would he still come...?'

Wei WuXian asked: "Did shijie come?"

Jiang Cheng replied: "Why would she come? To see how you throw her face? If she did come, would she not bring you medicine and accompany you?"

Wei WuXian let out a sigh: "...It would be nice if shijie came. Thank goodness you didn't take action."

Jiang Cheng responded: "I wanted to. If you hadn't pushed me away, the other side of Jin ZiXuan's face can't be shown to public anymore."

Wei WuXian replied: "Don't, his current mismatched face is way uglier-

"Want to test it out, Jiang Cheng?"

"Test what out?"

“Test which looks worse, one half a face punched or both sides punched.”

Jiang Cheng pondered: “...Fine, but you had your chance last time, so I will get the first punch.”

“Yeah, whatever. I’m incredibly generous, so go ahead.”

A bead of sweat trickles down the side of Jin ZiXuan’s face as he looked to both his wife and son for support only to find one giggling and one smirking.

...He will just stay away from his brother-in-laws during all the breaks from now on so they don't get a chance to attempt their 'experiment'.

...

Wei WuXian continued making fun of Jin ZiXuan’s condition but unknowingly touched a certain sore spot for Jiang Cheng regarding the relationship between him and his father.

Wei WuXian quickly read though those.

Seeing his expression, Wei WuXian thought he was still upset by what Jin ZiXuan said: “Go, you don’t need to accompany me. You’ll be caught if Lan WangJi comes by again. If you have free time, go and see how that moron Jin ZiXuan is kneeling.”

Lan juniors: ‘HanGuang-Jun again...’

Jiang Cheng was slightly alarmed by this: “Lan WangJi? Why did he come here? He still dares to come see you?”

Lan WangJi: “...”

Wei WuXian responded: “Yeah, I also thought that he was very courageous to come and see me-

Lan WangJi: “...”

Wei WuXian: -Quickly moves on-

-He was most likely asked by his uncle to check if I was kneeling properly.”

Lan QiRen: ‘As if I would send my nephew to you again!’

Jiang Cheng felt an uneasy sense of foreboding: “So were you kneeling properly at the time?”

Wei WuXian: “I was kneeling properly. After he walked a distance, I picked up a twig, bent my head down and began to dig a hole next to me. There, right next to your feet is an ant hill, I had a tough time finding it.

Lan WangJi: -Turns to Wei WuXian-

Wei WuXian: -Trying his hardest to ignore-

When he turned, he saw my shoulders shaking, so he definitely thought I was crying or something and came over to ask me. You should have seen his expression when he saw the ant hill.”

Lan WangJi: -Stares-

Wei WuXian: -Inched away-

“...” Jiang Cheng replied: “Scram back to Yunmeng! From what I can see, he probably never wants to see you again.”

Wei WuXian mentally thanked Jiang Cheng when Lan WangJi directed his glare elsewhere.

Jiang Cheng: ‘Quit pinning the blame on me! I may have influenced some of his perception of you, but that’s your fault for being SO vague that even I didn’t notice!’ (~~Even you, huh. Keep telling yourself that, Jiang Cheng~~)

So, on that night, Wei WuXian packed up and ‘scrammed’ back to Yunmeng with Jiang FengMain.

Lan WangJi stopped glaring at Jiang Cheng to look at Wei WuXian sadly. It was always this way, Wei WuXian suddenly appearing in his life and then leaving just as suddenly. He was sure that he was the last to find out that Wei WuXian returned to Yunmeng nine months earlier...

He should have been there, why can he not be honest with his feelings...?

...

Wei WuXian passed the book over to Wen Ning again.

MengMo: “That is the end of the first flashback, go for another break.”

Wei WuXian stood up and stretched: “Ha~ That was the longest we went without a break~ Hmm?” He turned to his left at Wen Ning: “Err... It’s break you know.”

Wen Ning was currently reading the next chapter: “I... I know-w, young master Wei... But I want to get so...some practice before-beforehand.”

Wei WuXian shrugged: “If that’s how you want to spend your break.” Then Wei WuXian spun on his heel and tugged Lan WangJi somewhere again.

Chapter End Notes

1* The three bows/prayers or san bai 三拜 Is an important ceremony in traditional Chinese weddings. The couple will bow three times in the groom’s family ancestral hall, the first bow to the heavens and earth, the second bow to both parents and the last bow to each other.

2* In Chinese, He 他, She 她 and It 它 are pronounced exactly the same way. (Ta)

3* Why did I make Fairy male? Well, I asked my younger sister what she thinks Fairy’s gender is and she said male. So there you go.

4* Moon elder/ or old man under the moon – 月老/月下老人 is the god of love and marriage (Of Heterosexual couples). Many young girls would pray to him for a good marriage or to have their affections returned by the one they like.

5* QiXi 七夕 is the Chinese equivalent of Valentine’s day. It falls on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month on the Chinese calendar (Which is different from your typical

6* Battle cricket pills 斗蟋丸 A cute titbit used by the author. In ancient China, this was a popular sport of making two wild caught male crickets fight, usually a favourite pastime among children. (They can be quite energetic during the fight depending on the quality of the cricket and how much they were purposefully agitated before the match, hence the phrase)

Sorry for the late update... I have nothing to say T_T

But happy early birthday to best kid Lan SiZhui! 12 January

Break 3 - The words left unheard

Chapter Notes

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“This spot looks good.”

The two stopped in the middle of a small glade in the cloud forest before Wei WuXian released his partner's hand.

He looked around, peering behind tree to tree with the experience of a seasoned pro.

“It should be fine here, even if anyone else decides to walk around in this dream, they shouldn't come across this place. This dreamscape is confusing as heck.”

“Mm”

“Then again, maybe *because* it's confusing as heck that someone might just happen to end up here. I mean, we did.”

“Mm”

“What I'm saying is... I hope you remembered the way back. Don't wanna end up like Jiang Cheng~”

“Mm”

-Somewhere within the same dream, a man in purple sneezed-

“Nevermind that for now, you know what I brought you here for, right?”

“...”

Wei WuXian turned back to him with a serious smile: “Then strip.”

“...!”

Lan WangJi felt his entire face warm.

...

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..?

“Well? Aren’t you going to let me see your back?”

“...”

Wei WuXian couldn’t keep his face straight any longer: “Pfff... Hahahahaha! You should look at yourself in the mirror just now... Hahahaha, oh dear- hahahahaha! My dear esteemed HanGuang-Jun, *just* were you thinking about? Hahahahaha!”

Lan WangJi took a deep breath before silently staring at him: “...”

“Aw, don’t that way~” Wei WuXian wrapped both of his arms around his partner’s neck in an embrace: “I’m already yours, heart, body and soul. So why hurry? We have plenty of time~”

Lan WangJi embraced him back: “Mm!”

His enthusiasm made Wei WuXian flush: “Heh~ You’re so cute~” He gave him a peck: “Back on topic, take off your robes anyway. I want to see your back.”

Lan WangJi nodded back in response and did what he asked.

Wei WuXian watched as the back he was all so familiar yet so unfamiliar was revealed to him.

Unbeknownst to even him, his hand has already pressed itself on that completely smooth back, free of any kind of blemish.

“Wei Ying”

-Drip-Drip-Drip-

Tenderly, Lan WangJi brushed away the tears Wei WuXian wasn't even aware of.

“Lan Zhan...” ‘Your back really is free of the scars...’

“Mm, not reflected in the dream.”

“That's... Um, let me...?”

With a nod, Lan WangJi turned back around.

Wei WuXian pounced, snuggling into the smooth, muscular back. How it should have been if it wasn't for him...

“Lan Zhan, why? Why did you do it?”

“...”

“It was hopeless, everyone wanted me dead ever since QiongQi road. My fate was sealed the moment I took up the ghost path. You didn't need to protect me in nightless city nor in that cave, my death is only in a matter of time-Mm!”

Lan WangJi forced his lips onto his partner's, unwilling to listen to another word.

“Eh- It's true though -Mm- You shouldn't have do -hah- done... that. You injured your own elders, for... the sake of this dying demonic cultivator-”

“WEI YING!”

Wei WuXian jumped at the sudden outburst from the man in front of him.

Lan WangJi's voice trembled as he continued: “Wei... Ying, I never regretted it, you. were. worth. it, for you to live longer... to continue living...” ‘Even if you are not by my side, I am content just to wonder where you are and what are you doing...’

“Heh” Wei WuXian choked out a laugh, reaching up to caress his face: “My dear HanGuang-Jun, why are you so silly? Why are you so wonderful? An idiot making the worse life decisions asked you to leave him and you, the even stupider stayed to defend me... we really are meant for each other it seems...”

“Mm!”

Wei WuXian hugged him tighter, his hands still touching his back.

“Lan Zhan, did it hurt?”

Why did he ask? Of course it did...

“...Would you believe me if I said ‘no’?”

“...Yeah, it was a pretty stupid question...”

“It was my choice.”

“I know... I just wish it didn’t have to come to this...”

“It was worth it.”

“...How was it worth it?! You didn’t accomplish anything! You didn’t get a reward worth the punishment and you tell me it’s worth it?! Those marks are still on your real body and they will never come off!”

“They will never come off, as they represented that I once protected someone precious to me and that person will definitely remember me. You taught me that.”

“?! When did I... teach you something as idiotic as that?! It didn’t even work! I didn’t even remember what you did for me! How you suffered because of me!”

“You did.”

“...Huh?”

“You remembered my song, you told me when you returned. It gave me another chance. You stayed by my side, you remembered our time together after you returned. That is more than I will ever ask for.”

For once, Wei WuXian was speechless.

Hearing no further complains, Lan WangJi tilted his head down slightly and pressed his lips against his lover’s.

Wei WuXian responded eagerly, his lips moving against his partner’s in a desperate manner after their owner got over his initial shock.

Lan WangJi pressed down harder to match his lover’s pace, the additional force causing Wei WuXian to step back, bringing Lan WangJi down with him when he tripped over a small stone.

Wei WuXian laughed while trying to replenish his body’s lack of oxygen. Lan WangJi stopping everything to check his lover for injuries.

“Hahahahaha, I’m fine, Lan Zhan! I’m not that fragile, and this most definitely not the first time I tripped!”

Lan WangJi continued checking anyways, only stopping when he was sure Wei WuXian really has not sustain any injuries from the fall.

Wei WuXian poked his lover’s face: “Such a worrywart~ I’m fine!”

Lan WangJi paid no mind to his teasing and simply pressed his lips down onto his forehead: “Mm”

Wei WuXian smiled, staring down at where both of his hands are being held by a pair of slightly larger hands. A very familiar feeling, one felt by the hands from this old body of his... in a cave... covered in blood and injuries... a ringing in his ears... his... mind blank... were there tears? Was he crying...?

“...”

“Wei Ying?” Lan WangJi felt his race in worry when he saw that blank expression again.

“Lan... Zhan.”

“I’m here”

“Tell me, what did you say to me? Let me hear it.”

“...”

“Please...”

Lan WangJi sighed, lifting the both of them and setting Wei WuXian on the tree stump nearby, himself kneeling in front of him, both of his hands still cradled in his own.

He took a deep breath and spoke:

“Wei Ying? Can you hear me?”

Wei WuXian nodded.

Lan WangJi continued in the same tone, then Wei WuXian realized that it was part of what he said to him.

“Wei Ying, it is alright now. You are safe now.”

“Look at me, listen to what I have to say.”

'get lost...'

Lan WangJi pushed the memory to the back of his mind.

“Wei Ying, come back with me to the Cloud Recesses, alright?”

'Get lost...'

“There is your favorite emperor’s smile there, you can have as much as you want.”

Wei WuXian felt his lips twitch.

Lan WangJi felt his eyes tear up at the sight:

“I still have the two rabbits you gave me. They are both well. I am raising them in the Cloud Recesses. ...Do you want to see them? Go back to Cloud Recesses with me? Although, you cannot always say you want to roast them...”

Wei WuXian chuckled, a huge contrast of the image the same man with unblinking, soulless eyes, tears falling from them continuously, his body covered in the blood of others as he repeated that same phrase in response to his words that appeared in his mind again.

“You can stay in the JingShi, I will handle everything else. I will shoulder the aftermath of the nightless city with you.”

'Get Lost'

“I failed to realize why you insisted on using this cultivation of yours, but now I know, there is an issue with your golden core and I will try everything within my power to help you with that as well.”

'GET LOST..!'

“Everything will get better soon, the day that everything today will be put to rest will come. Until then and if you allow me, for the rest of our lives, I promise to protect you and stay by your side. So please, come back with me.”

'GET LOS-'

Wei WuXian began nodding his head like his life depended on it, breaking through the old memory.

Lan WangJi stared at him, at the same face he told these exact words to thirteen years ago, now smiling lovingly at him and nodding in agreement to his words.

After taking another shaky breath, he finished his last sentence.

“Wei Ying, I love you. My heart beats for you. Ever since we first met.”

Wei WuXian has tears streaming down his face as he hugged his lover.

“Me too! I love you, my heart beats for you too! I’ll go back to the Cloud Recesses together with you! I want to be with you forever!”

“Mm!”

Lan WangJi couldn't hold himself back any longer and pulled his lover into an embrace.

It was all he had ever dreamed of, so much that he shuddered and held on tighter like he would just wake up in bed all alone like one of his many dreams induced by his broken heart.

"Wei Ying..."

It is a dream, but the person he tightly embracing *is* real.

"I'm here."

"Wei Ying!"

"I'm here. I'm here, Lan Zhan..."

Lan WangJi let out the breath he wasn't aware of holding. Lips still trembling, he loosened his grip to stare at his love in the face.

Wei WuXian smile brightly back at him before using the arms already wrapped around his neck to bring his lips to his own.

The kiss shared between them this time was gentle.

For a dream, every sensation is as vibrant as it should be in the real world, the scent of their lover, the smoothness of their skin, their long hair brushing each other's faces, the slightly chapped lips moving together just as they have a few minutes ago.

“I love you, Lan Zhan~” Wei WuXian repeated in between kisses

“I love you as well, Wei Ying. So much...” Lan WangJi replied.

The two continue whispering their confessions of love amongst their kisses, with each one, the passion between them grew and it was not long before the two began-

“HanGuang-Jun! Senior Weeehhh?!”

...

“I knew this was a bad spot...”

“...Mm”

Chapter End Notes

I might make some changes here and there...

Sorry! I was really very busy but I really wanted to update on Lan WangJi's birthday so... hehehe, forgive this rough as heck draft...

Happy birthday to everyone's favorite second brother Lan, the esteemed HanGuang-Jun, Lan WangJi, Lan Zhan!

Break 3.5 While waiting...

Chapter Notes

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Getting up and separating himself from his lover, Wei WuXian addressed the juniors after adjusting where his robes had been loosened.

“What are you brats doing here anyways? And aren't you guys too old to be playing hide and seek? Besides, if you're gonna hide, at least hide better! If there's some great demonic beast, all of you will be it's dinner already! Is this what I taught you?” Wei WuXian teased as if he wasn't just caught in a public intimate act as the juniors continued to hide behind their individual trees like little street brats playing hide and seek with their white (one gold) robes and long hair sticking out. It was a pretty comical sight considering their ages and occupations.

Pissed off, Jin Ling ran out of his not-hiding spot: “Whose playing hide and seek?! What about you? Doing this kind of... outdoors where anyone can stumble upon, shameless!”

Suddenly, Jin Ling was given a noogie by the Wei WuXian who seemingly teleported to his side: “What ‘shameless’? Don't go all Jiang Cheng on me! Is that how you speak to your seniors?”

“Le- Let me go! Stop it! Stop touching my head! Men don't get- their heads touched!”

“Men? You think a little brat like you count as a man? Wait for another three years! What's wrong with letting your Da-jiu* mess with his favorite (only) nephew?”

With the tension released, the other juniors started coming out of hiding and saluted the two: “HanGuang-Jun, senior Wei.”

Lan WangJi's ears are still flushed, but his face remained emotionless as ever as he tidied his robes while acknowledging them: “Mm”

Despite his usual monotonous response, the Lan junior still felt the waves of annoyance from him.

So Lan SiZhui took the initiative to answer Wei WuXian's question: “Replying to senior Wei's

question, young master Jin was not feeling too well, so we are accompanying him for a short period of time.”

Hearing that, Wei WuXian stopped messing with Jin Ling’s hair in favor of cupping his face with both hands and kneeling down in front of him like a concerned parent with their child: “Not feeling too well? Aw~ What’s the matter with little RuLan*?~”

Jin Ling backed out of his grip: “Don’t call me that!”

Wei WuXian pouted: “Why not? It’s your courtesy name.”

Jin Ling huffed: “Well, I don’t like it! It’s too girly! I have no idea what my uncle was thinking!”

Wei WuXian hummed deciding against telling him that he was the ‘uncle’ who came up with that name. The kid is really so similar his xiao-jiu*...

“You still haven’t answered me, are you unwell? Ate something wrong? I’m sure I washed every lotus seed...”

“Who said I’m having a stomach ache?! I just don’t want to be with my father nor my uncle right now!”

Wei WuXian nodded in understanding: “Ah, still mad at that pea- your dad?”

“Tch...”

Being reminded of that, Lan JingYi commented: “Your dad was really ungrateful back then, huh? Your mom is amazing! I never tasted a better soup!”

Jin Ling smiled in pride: “Of course! Everyone in Yunmeng sings praises for her cooking!”

The other juniors nodded.

Wei WuXian grinned: “That’s right! She’s the best cook and the best Shijie in the world! She is good enough to marry anyone she wants! ...If only she had better taste in grooms...”

Lan ZiRui nodded furiously: “Yeah! Such a wonderful lady should be married to an emperor! But Jin ZiXuan doesn’t even know what an honor that has been bestowed upon him and even dissed her!”

“Right! She should be married to someone like... Big brother Lan!”

-Somewhere within the same dream, another man in white politely sneezed-

Lan WangJi: “...”

“Handsome, talented, rich, a sect leader and most importantly, a kind man who knows how to cherish her! And added bonus, she will be my sister-in-law! I can drink her soup everyday and leave Jiang Cheng all alone at the lotus pier with nothing!”

-Somewhere within the same dream, a man in purple sneezed harshly-

“But then, she chose the peacock anyways... I don’t know what she sees in him, but it was her choice...”

Jin Ling turned away: “Whatever, just don’t want to see him for now. I bumped into these Lan

people when I was looking for a place to do some sword training, I bumped into them and we decided to find somewhere together. We could use the garden but that where they are now...”

Lan SiZhui smiled in concern: “But young master Jin, you cannot avoid him forever. He is your father and... there is not much time you can spend with him or with your mother.”

Jin Ling lowered his head at the reminder: “...I know”

After a while, Wei WuXian asked: “Sword training? How are we supposed to do that without our swords?”

Jin Ling pulled something off his back, it was SuiHua.

‘How did I miss that...?’ “Where did you get that from?” He asked

“During the first break, when we were in the garden. Dad wanted to show me a few of his own moves and it just appeared. But it disappeared when we stopped to get soup from mom.”

“So... our swords or even other things can be summoned into this dream as well? Would have been nice to know sooner.., right Lan Zhan?”

“Mm”

“Let us come along! This will be a great way to spend our break time!”

Juniors: ‘Want to refuse but can’t situation...’

Lan SiZhui smiled: “Of course! It’s an honor to have HanGuang-Jun and senior Wei watch our training.”

Jin Ling backed away when Lan SiZhui is the next victim of the YiLing LaoZu noogie.

...

Reluctantly, the juniors continued looking for a viable sparing ground with the world’s most lovely-dovely couple.

The group traversed though the dreamscape, from the forest to mountains, to lakes, every path leading to them completely unrelated but recognizable.

“This is...”

“It’s our sect! Our training grounds!”

“...It’s more of just the training grounds than our whole sect.”

“It’s much quieter without Little Apple tied here...”

“...You kept that noisy donkey of yours at the Lan sect’s practice grounds?”

“It’s the only place he can be kept at without disturbing lessons.”

“...”

“Hahahaha, details, details. Now that we’re here...” Wei WuXian stepped into the field, held out his hands and closed his eyes to imagine...

He opened his eyes again when he felt the weight in his hands.

It really was SuiBian.

“Lan Zhan! Look! SuiBian’s here!”

Lan WangJi smiled: “Mm”

“Now that think of it, we only fought each other with swords once. Back in the Cloud Resseses.”

“Mm”

Wei WuXian tested his sword, removing it from its sheath and swinging around without difficulty, as if he had a golden core in his body. He released his hair from their loose restraint to tie it back to the ponytail he always had in his youth and currently in Mo XuanYu’s body.

He pointed the sword at Lan WangJi with a grin: “Well? Second master Lan? Would you honour me with a duel?”

The juniors’ eyes shone, looking from one senior to another, anticipating an awe-inspiring sword fight to happen any moment.

Lan WangJi stared at the face of his husband, the grin on *that* face and his hair tied in a ponytail... It was meeting the disciple who climbed over the wall in the middle of the night with two jars of wine.

He smiled: “Mm!” And stepped forward, BiChen materializing in his hand.

Chapter End Notes

Just a filler before the next chapter to read, I will try to write when I can. (I’m going through some problems now... But I’ll pull through, I’m sorry I’m always so slow at updating...) ToT

On a side note, happy Lunar New Year!

.....

1*Da-jiu 大舅 Eldest maternal uncle

2*Jin RuLan/ RuLan 如兰 is Jin Ling's courtesy name in case anyone forgot. (Ru如 can mean ‘To be like’ and Lan 兰 can mean orchid or just flower)

3* Xiao-jiu 小舅 Youngest maternal uncle

Reading Chapter 19

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Now that they are preoccupied, time passed very quickly for Wei WuXian and co. Soon, it was time to return to reading.

“Did you just crawl out of the mass graves hill?”

When everyone returned from their break to continue with the book, they were greeted with the image of a more frazzled than usual YiLing LaoZu. Robes drooping, face covered in dirt and gone was the handsome ponytail he tied for his duels and in it's place is his unbounded hair, filled with leaves and sticking all over the place like he hasn't combed it in at least a week, trademark red ribbon nowhere in sight. (It's actually in Lan WangJi's hand but nobody has the brain capacity to pay that any attention.)

“...Shut up, get lost like that thing over there!”

“Bark, bark!”

“Ahhhhhh! L- Lan Z- Zha- Zhan! HanGuang-Jun! Save me! Keep it away from me!”

“Mm!”

“Wei WuXian! You're such an embarrassment! It's just a young Husky!”

“Oh dear, it seems like Wei-xiong is truly terrified of dogs...”

“Is that... Fairy?”

“Oh? A-Ling's dog? He really resembles ZiXuan's dog..”

“He does, maybe they are related...”

“Quit chatting while I'm suffering!!! Take it away!!!”

“Woof!”

“AHHH!!! It’s coming over! Lan Zhan!!! Protect me! Stay with me!!!” ㄟ(̎ ̎ ; ㄟ)

“Mm, alright.”

“WangJi seemed quite happy…”

“Senior Wei’s climbing up HanGuang-Jun like a tree…”

“Young mistress Jin, what are you waiting for?! Send your stupid dog away!”

“Tch, how old is he… What kind of YiLing LaoZu is that? If this gets out, he would just be a laughing stock…”

Jin Ling whistled and the dog stopped trying to get to the interesting black-robed person holding onto the scary white-robed person from behind like his life depended on it.

The dog panted in excitement when his owner knelt in front of him and patted his head: “Woof!”

“W- What’s taking so l- long?! Send that monster away!!!”

“Not scared of ghosts or corpses but scared of a well-trained, adorable dog like my Fairy…”

“Why don’t you say that after one bite you!”

“My Fairy would *never* bite anyone! You are so paranoid! If you ever got bitten it’s cause you messed with them!”

“A-Ling”

Jin Ling obeyed his mother reluctantly, wishing that his dog could stay just a bit longer: “Good boy, go back!”

Fairy’s ears drooped down, and he made a sad whimper, understanding what was being asked of him.

He walked away to the far side of the room dejectedly.

“...Why is it still here?!”

“It’s different with a living creature, now that you summon him here, the only way he would leave is if he wakes up.”

“WHAT?! I can’t be stuck with that thing in the same room! You’re the great, honourable, powerful dream spirit! Kick it out!!!”

“...Now that it has been summoned here once, it will come right back when it falls back asleep.”

“NOOOOO! Just pop it somewhere else!”

The Jiang sect leader couldn’t stand it any longer and ordered Fairy to go stay in the gardens outside.

Fairy: ‘What did I do wrong?..’

...

“Why was that dog here anyways?”

“Jin Ling called him here.”

-Extremely recent flashback-

[The multiple sparing sessions left nearly everyone exhausted as they slowly made their way back to the hall.

Wei WuXian stretched, yawning in an exaggerated manner: “Ahhh! That hit the spot, a good spar after sitting for so long~ It’s been far too long~”

“Mm” Was the reply of his ever-dutiful partner.

“You were awesome, senior Wei! Your skills always were but I had not witnessed your swordplay until today!”

“It was amazing, a different type of amazing from HanGuang-Jun’s. Please, teach us sometimes!”

“Hahahaha! Why, don’t you have a sweet mouth on you~” Wei WuXian patted the head of that junior: “I guess I can give some tips, but I’m afraid this will be the last time I use a sword until I developed a golden core in that body of mine.”

“Aw...”

“We should have made notes...”

“It’s better if you don’t use his techniques.” Jin Ling interrupted: “They are all either Jiang sect techniques or based on Jiang sect techniques. It wouldn’t look good if the juniors from a different sect to use the techniques from another sect.”

Wei WuXian puffed his cheeks: “What’s wrong with that? That Su... whatever his name got away with stealing the Lan sect’s techniques for such a long time but me, a guy legally married into the Lan sect can’t teach his juniors what he knows?”

“Actually... Young master Jin has a point senior Wei, your presence in the cultivation world is still... unstable. It would be best if we do not give others more topics to gossip about when it concerns you...” ‘And I am certain elder Lan would have a stroke if he caught us using a different sect’s techniques... especially if you taught it to us...’

Wei WuXian huffed: “Why should I care about what a bunch of busybodies say? I’ll say, let them. I have HanGuang-Jun to protect me~ Right, Lan Zhan?”

“Mm”

“So how was it, Lan Zhan? I haven’t heard your opinion on our fight~ Was I good or was I rusty? I feel like I’m pretty rusty...” ‘Over twenty years almost...’

Lan WangJi shook his head: “No. You were... flawless. Just like before.”

Wei WuXian pounced back on Lan WangJi: “You are the best~ Such a sweet mouth~ I’m such a great influence on you~”

“Mm”

The red-faced juniors behind them turned their heads away and coughed into their hands

awkwardly.

“They are at it again...”

“Stop blushing... You are making me blush...”

“*You* stop blushing!”

“Shhhh... We should not disturb them...”

The couple paid no attention to them.

“Just like before? Was it really? Or were you just flattering me? Not that I mind~”

“No, just like when we first met.”

Wei WuXian was in bliss, listening to the flattering words his partner showers him with and being the type of person he is, craved more. So, he continued with his prompting: “When we first met? Right~ When the esteemed, living god descended HanGuang-Jun fell for me on first sight~ So what *did* you think of me? Come on~”

“...”

The juniors stopped their squabbling to eavesdrop better.

“...”

“Lan er-daa-da~”

“Shameless”

“Hahahahaha, don’t be like th-”

Lan WangJi stared deeply back at him: “Shameless, loud, unruly, undisciplin-”

The mouths belonging to Wei WuXian and the juniors are now wide enough to catch flies.

Wei WuXian got off his husband and pointed at him in shock: “Y-You Lan WangJi! Bad-mouthing me in front of the juniors! I got you red-handed!” Wei WuXian scolded him mockingly.

“-Bored, mischievous, improper, trouble-seeking, irritating and indecent. There will be some that might consider these flaws, which no human is without. They are just as important as his courage, compassion, creativity, willingness to help others, selflessness, talent, loyalty and determination, which all are the traits that define him as Wei WuXian, the... man I love, who... was like the sun who shined into my life despite the darkness of the night when we met...” Lan WangJi said, the blush on his ears becoming more prominent by the second.

Wei WuXian: “...”

Every junior: “...”

A loud squeal nearly raptured everyone else’s ear drums while a blur in black and red jumped back into Lan WangJi’s arms.

“Lan Zhan! Lan WangJi! Lan-er-gege! Lan-er-daa-da! You can’t just... I love you so much!”

Lan WangJi returned the embrace: “Mm!”

Every junior: ...

“Eh? What are you guys running away for?”

“It’s okay, senior Wei! HanGuang-Jun! We will find our way back on our own!”

“Is this not the path we took just now?”

“I thought it’s the other way?!”

“Hahahahahaha! Just admit it, you brats need us (Read: HanGuang-jun) to get back! Get back over here!”

“Who needs you! I bet you don’t remember the way back yourself!” Jin Ling retorted, but not denying the previous statement.

“Aren’t you the same? If you don’t come with us, you’re gonna end up like Jiang Cheng just now~”

“Tch...”

“Besides, wherever I am, Lan Zhan is too. Right, Lan Zhan?”

“Mm!”

Jin Ling felt goosebumps all over his body.

“So~ Admit it! You need me and like to spend time with your Da-jiu!”

“W-What brought that up?!”

“It’s obvious and long overdue~ Come on, say it! And I will let HanGuang-Jun guide all of you back~” Wei WuXian chirped as he walked close to him.

Other juniors: ‘When were we in this conversation..?’

Jin Ling bit his lip. And when he parted them, he did what he always did when he wanted Wei WuXian to stay away from him.

“Fairy!” He called out.

Wei WuXian stopped when he heard that name.

‘...Why did I call him?!’

Wei WuXian: “Eh?”

‘He’s not her-’

Wei WuXian: “Eh?!?”

‘I just called for him instan-’

Wei WuXian: “EH?!?”

“What wrong with you, stop being so nois-”

“WAH!!! OH MY GOD!!! A- A DOG!!! WHY IS THERE A DOG HERE?!!! AHHHHHH!!! STAY- STAY AWAY!!! I- I’M GONNA TO DIE!!! L-LAN ZHAN! Lan Zhan!!! Save me!!!”

“Jin Ling! It’s Fairy!”

“Dogs can be summoned here too?!”

“Senior Wei, it’s alrig-”

“LAN ZHANNN!!!!!!”

] -End of extremely recent but not short flashback

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

Lan XiChen cleared his throat: “Well, now that we established the fact that young master Jin’s dog is here to stay... There is nothing that can be done... WuXian, you have to ...endure it’s presence for the time being.”

Wei WuXian furiously shook his head.

Lan WangJi hugged him: “Do not worry, I am here.”

Jin Ling & Wen Qing: ‘This is worse than dealing with a three-year old...’

Jiang Cheng: ‘I know, right?’

MengMo: -Cough- “I apologise for the inconvenience, young master Wei. But with that out of the way, we will start with arc four, ‘Man-eating castle’.”

Nie HuaiSang and Jin Ling began to sweat visibly.

“Man-eating castle? That sounds really familiar...” One of the juniors mumbled

“I think it is referring to the popular urban legend around QingHe.” The junior next to him, Zhou YuanXiang answered him.

Lan ZiRui’s eyes widen: “So it’s really true?”

“ZiRui, YuanXiang.”

The juniors clammed up, allowing the person who was too shy to interrupt them to read.

...

After the flashback, the story returns to Wei WuXian, paralyzed on Lan WangJi's bed for the whole night. When he woke, Lan WangJi was nowhere in sight and he had been arranged into the official sleeping position of the Lan sect.

(Which Wei WuXian still found ridiculous. The Lan sect were already dressed like they were constantly attending funerals, why would they feel the need to sleep like they were the deceased?)

Unaware of his thoughts, Lan WangJi's ears flushed pink as image of how cute his spouse looked curled up on his chest, sleeping soundly popped into his mind, telling him that it was not at all a dream and the man he yearned for thirteen whole years really returned to him.

Also unaware of his thoughts, Wen Ning continued his slow, precise and well-practiced reading.

Wei WuXian threw off the blanket covering his body and buried the fingers of his right hand into his hair, the absurd and inexplicable feelings in his heart from yesterday's events still lingering.

It was then, at this moment that two light knocks came from the JingShi's door. Lan SiZhui's voice came from the other side: "Young master Mo? Are you awake?"

Wei WuXian complained: "Why are you calling me so early in the morning?!"

Lan SiZhui was confused: "Ea- Early? ...But, it's already nine."

Jiang Cheng and Wen Qing felt their eyes roll.

Not caring about the others, Wei WuXian snuggled against Lan WangJi, knowing that Lan WangJi had been considerate enough to allow him to sleep until nine.

"Mm..."

...

As mentioned before, the Lan sect sleeps at nine and wakes at five, unlike Wei WuXian who sleeps at one and wakes at nine, a whole four hours later.

For half of the night, he had laid on his front causing him to have back and waist pains. He told them upright: "I can't get up."

Lan WangJi didn't wait for Wei WuXian to demand anything from him and started rubbing his back.

Wei WuXian leaned back into the hand, enjoying himself: 'Not bad, not bad at all! I guess I'll have to forgive him...'

Wen Ning distanced himself away from the couple a little.

Lan SiZhui asked: "Um, what is the matter now?"

Wei WuXian answered: "What's the matter? I got bedded by your HanGuang-Jun!"

Lan WangJi stopped rubbing his partner's back: "..."

Lan juniors: -Turned to look at Wei WuXian, some glaring-

Everyone else: "..."

Wei WuXian mocked gasped: "What are you looking at me for? He made me share the same bed with him for the whole night! And it made my waist and back hurt so bad the next day! Is that not the definition of being bedded by him?"

The others couldn't find the words to argue against him. But then again, they weren't even trying.

Lan WangJi on the other hand whispered into his ear.

"Allow me to 'correct' that definition once we return."

Wei WuXian: "..."

'Am I allowed to refuse..?'

Wei WuXian's left hand swung out, lightly hitting against Wen Ning's shoulder.

Wen Ning obediently went back to reading.

...

Angrily, Lan JingYi also called out: "If you dare to continue spouting nonsense, we are not going to let it slide! Come out!"

Lan WangJi turned his attention away from Wei WuXian to the junior: "JingYi, disrespect shown to seniors. Add two for repeated offence."

Lan SiZhui noted it down...

Lan JingYi: 'I'm seriously reconsidering all my life choices...'

Wei WuXian spoke like he had been wronged: "Really! He bedded me for the whole night! I'm not going out, I don't have the face to see other people!"

"You don't have one to begin with."

"Blah blah blah, moving on~"

The living quarters of HanGuang-Jun can't be entered by just anyone, so they couldn't just go in and drag Wei WuXian out, leaving the helplessly frustrated juniors standing there and looking at each other.

Lan JingYi snapped: "You are really shameless! How could HanGuang-Jun have bedded you?! He is not a cutsleeve!"

Irony

I will thank the gods if *you* did not bed him! Get up! Take that donkey of yours away and deal with it! Its so noisy!"

"Repeated repeated offence, three more."

[Lan JingYi = $1+7+1+3+1+1+1+1+1 = 25 + 2 + 3$]

Lan SiZhui sighed at the sight.

When his mount was mentioned, Wei WuXian immediately got up: “What have you done with little Apple?! Don’t touch it!-

Some might think that Wei WuXian cares quite a bit for his mount and only companion after he left Mo village all the way to Dafan mountain.

-it kicks.”

Others will disagreed.

Lan JingYi asked: “What is ‘Little Apple’?”

Wei WuXian answered: “My donkey!” He exited the JingShi and made the several juniors take him to his mount. Lead to a grassy field by someone, the donkey was incredibly noisy, braying ceaselessly. The reason being that it wanted to eat the grass, but that field was being over-populated with tens of round white fluff balls, blocking it’s way between it and the grass.”

Wei WuXian cheered: “So many rabbits! Come on, come on, stick them up and start roasting!”

The Lan juniors sighed.

“Wei Ying...”

“I know~ I shouldn’t always say I want to roast them~ You know me~ I was never serious about that~”

Lan juniors: ‘Then stop saying you want to!’

Lan JingYi raged: “The Cloud Recesses forbids killing! Hurry and shut it up! Those from the earlier classes came by to ask about it quite a few times already! If this continues, we will be scolded to death!”

“...Another three.”

[Lan JingYi = 47 + 1 + 3 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 25 + 2 + 3 + 3]

‘Oh, little JingYi~ If *this* continues, you will be punished to death~’

Lan JingYi: T_T

...

The donkey stopped making noises after Wei WuXian fed it the apple from his breakfast. As he stood there stroking the neck of the donkey, he continued contemplating on how he could get out of the Cloud Recesses.

-he pointed at the round white rabbits everywhere: “I really can’t roast them? Will I be kicked off the mountain if I did?”

‘He was that desperate to leave the Cloud Recesses?’ Despite what Wei WuXian always says, Lan WangJi knew that the rabbits got under Wei WuXian’s skin like they did for him... To think he considered roasting them just to get away...

...He was probably just saying that to get the juniors riled up again.

As if seeing him as a threat, Lan JingYi immediately stood in front of him with his arms spread out: “These are HanGuang-Jun’s, we just occasionally help care for them! Don’t you dare to roast them!”

When Wei WuXian heard that, he nearly fell on the floor due to his laughter. He thought to himself: ‘This Lan Zhan! In the past, he didn’t want the rabbits when I gave them to him and now he’s secretly raising a whole herd of them. Doesn’t want them, who is he trying to fool?’

Wei WuXian stifled his laughter: ‘Himself, of course~’

Oh man, I bet he actually likes these kinds of little, white, fuzzy things! A straight face HanGuang-Jun with a bunny in his arms... Oh god, I’m not gonna make it...’

“Come on, Wen Ning! A little happier! I don’t sound like that! You made it sound like I was really going to die!”

“Young master... Wen Ning will try his best...”

Wei WuXian laughed, patting on Wen Ning’s head, trying to distract himself from the man with the straight face looking at him: “You can do it! You heard me talk so much so surely you can mimic it a little!”

Wen Ning smiled and nodded, he will try it on the next sentence.

But when he remembered the scene of him laying on Lan WangJi last night, he couldn’t continue laughing.

“Why are you reading that with a cheerful voice?!”

Wen Ning looked back innocently: “You said to sound happier..?”

Wei WuXian waved his hand: “It depends on the sentence... Just stick back to your usual...”

Wen Ning nodded: “Understood, young master Wei.”

Wei WuXian: ‘I’m surrounded by logs...’

Wen Qing wasn’t sure if she should laugh or facepalm...

...

Suddenly, the sound of a bell ringing came from the western part of the Cloud Recesses.

Those who were present knew what this was. The summoning of the dismembered arm’s owner’s soul had gone wrong.

This bell is different from the one that tells the time, it sounds as if a madman is ringing it, violent and frantic. Upon hearing this, the juniors dropped everything and hurried to where the sound is coming from. Feeling uneasy as well, Wei WuXian immediately followed them.

The sound came from the watchtower known as the 'MingShi*', a place specially made to summon spirits and contain them. Above, the bell is ringing on it's own, meaning something has gone wrong with a summoning.

Lan XiChen was not present at the time, but he heard enough from the other disciples that the spirit they were trying to summon's immense negative and resentful energy was too much for the people summoning, including his own uncle and even his younger brother was struggling against it.

'Eldest brother...'

...

More and more Lan disciples gathered outside of the watchtower, but none actually entered it. The heavy, black door can only be opened from the inside and is ridiculously difficult to open from the outside, not to mention that it is forbidden to. Since barely any accidents had happened in the past, nobody had tried to intervene in a summoning before, so there is no telling what could happen.

The people that weren't there are at the edge of their seats, hoping that there were no casualties from this incident. Except for Wen Ning, who had read this chapter ten times over during the break.

Wei WuXian had a bad feeling when Lan WangJi hasn't showed up. If Lan WangJi is currently in the Cloud Recesses, he should have rushed over here when he heard the bell as well, unless... All of a sudden, the black doors flew open and a white robed disciple stumbled outside.

His legs were not steady, so the moment he came out, he tumbled down the stairs. The doors of the MingShi automatically shut itself, like someone had slammed it shut.

The onlookers scrambled to support the that disciple. After he has been lifted up, he fell down again, unable to control the tears all over his face.

The ever gentle Jiang YanLi shook from hearing about that disciple's condition.

One of the Lan juniors, Fu GaoWen sighed: "Poor BeiLi Shixiong, I heard from him that the moment they started the ritual, the arm moved, the candles went out, the room got colder with this intense pressure causing their chest to hurt and the younger disciples started fainting one by one... There was blood everywhere and these... indescribable whispers in his ears... He only lasted so long because he was new and they placed him at the back of the formation. He barely made it out after elder Lan fainted as well. Even HanGuang-Jun's mouth was bleeding..."

Just how much hatred does Nie MingJue hold for Jin GuangYao for him to have so much resentful energy after death?

Nie HuaiSang: "..."

He grabbed at the others: “Should not have summoned.... Should not have summoned it...”

Wei WuXian grabbed his hand and asked grimly: “What thing’s soul is being summoned? Who else is inside? Where is HanGuang-Jun?!”

Lan WangJi’s heart fluttered at the thought of Wei WuXian being concerned for him before they even got together.

That disciple seems to have difficulty breathing, he opened his mouth: “HanGuang-Jun, told me to escape...”

He didn’t get to finish his sentence as dark red blood gushed out from his nose and mouth. Wei WuXian pushed the person into Lan SiZhui’s arms, the hastily made bamboo flute still stuffed into his waistband, he ascended the countless stairs in a few strides and kicked the door of the MingShi, firmly commanding: “Open!”

Lan juniors: ‘Senior Wei, so cool!’

Lan WangJi: ‘Wei Ying... He was worried about me...’

Jin Ling: ‘Tch, anyone can go kick a door. It’s not like he could open it...’

As if it opened its mouth to laugh maniacally, the doors of the MingShi threw open.

Jin Ling: ‘...Fine, he’s pretty cool. Just don’t expect me to admit it to him.’

“At the time, with all that was happening, I never got the chance to ask how senior Wei did that.”
Lan SiZhui spoke up.

“Hm? Oh, the resentful energy opened it for me.”

Lan QiRen’s frown deepened.

“Huh, why would it do that?”

“I’m the YiLing LaoZu, most ghosts and other Yin* creatures recognise me or can at least tell that I’m different. When it opened the door to let me in, think of it as an arrogant lord that allowed a peasant to speak against him because he knows or thinks that they can’t do anything against him in order to entertain himself.”

“It let you in because it did not consider you as a threat, but you are interesting compared to the rest of us?” A different junior asked, who Wei WuXian assumes is Lan ZiRui because he is the only other junior who wears a cloud-patterned forehead ribbon other Lan SiZhui and Lan JingYi, the only juniors he can recognise without issue.

“Basically.”

“But do you not control the resentful energy? Like their master? Why would it think it can hurt you?” The timid junior next to Lan ZiRui asked.

“Using resentful energy is quite different from your spiritual energy. It’s not like I’m controlling it, it’s more like I guide it, coax it into doing what it desires, which usually is to hurt other living beings, but I made them attack who I want it to attack. It’s mostly a battle of willpower, so the

more resentful they are, the easier to manipulate them cause all they care about is getting what they want.”

“...Is that why you have a hard time with those walking corpses at the Mo village?”

“Walking corpses only exist because they were either infected by corpse poison before they died or influenced by another’s resentment or simply bad FengShui in the area, rarely their own resentment. Since they don’t have resentment to act upon, their residual mindset from their life affects how they act after death. Normal people don’t usually kill someone when they were told to, do they?”

“...What does that have to do with whether they have their own resentment or not? Jin Ling eventually asks.

“If they are something like fierce corpses, who only act out of resentment, it takes over their past mindsets. Without that restraint, they won’t hesitate when they hear a good suggestion that allowed them to act upon that resentment. Like a normal person when they are angry, usually they don’t think much.”

“...” Lan JingYi massages his forehead.

Wei WuXian shrugged: “It’s okay, it’s hard to understand the mind of a genius. I will just say, I don’t and will never recommend the ghost path to anyone and move on.”

He lightly nudged Wen Ning in time with the words ‘move on’.

Wen Ning moved on...

Everyone is still a lost from all the information dumped on them but decided it would be wise to follow his advice and forget about it.

Wei WuXian entered in an instant and the door slammed shut right behind him. The disciples were shocked and immediately went after him, but that door couldn’t be opened no matter what was tried. A guest disciple pressed against the door, in rage and shock, he blurted out: “Just who was that just now?!”

“The great YiLing LaoZu of course!” Wei WuXian boasted

“Yeah, the biggest nuisance in the history of nuisances...” Jiang Cheng mumbled to himself.

“What was that, Shimei?”

“Stop interrupting the reading.”

“You’re no fun~ It’s our commenting that makes this worthwhile to read~”

“I don’t see the appeal. “

“Can you imagine us just sitting here, listening to the book silently the whole way? That’s sooo boring~ I rather read the book by myself for all the difference it makes. It’s cause you’re miserable that you think that way~”

“Get lost.”

“But we are stuck in here till we finish the book~”

“That’s why I said stop interrupting!”

...

After approximately ten minutes, Wen Ning went back to the book.

Lan SiZhui held that disciple, speaking through clenched teeth: “...Help me first. His seven orifices are bleeding!”

Wen Qing sighed deeply, pressing two fingers on each side of her head: “Severe damage to the body’s spiritual balance. He must have taken in an intolerable amount of resentful energy. His body is unable rid itself of the malicious excess energy and is going into shock.”

Lan SiZhui nodded in response to his aunt’s diagnosis: “Everyone who participated in the summon bar HanGuang-Jun suffered from the same condition.”

“I too, was afflicted by the resentful energy. My condition was not as severe solely because Wei Ying lent his assistance in the nick of time.” Lan WangJi corrected, somehow conveying his pride though his deep, emotionless voice alongside his emotionless face.

Wei WuXian smiled warmly at him, a light flush dusting his cheeks.

Lan XiChen smiled serenely: ‘More words and more emotion than usual. WuXian truly is the best for you, little brother.’

Lan QiRen stayed silent, accepting the truth in the words of his younger nephew begrudgingly.

Afterall, saving others with a most definitely intentionally heart attack-inducing flute playing is simply unacceptable!

...

Once he stepped into the MingShi, Wei WuXian felt a sense of oppression from the dark energy inside.

In the middle of the array in the middle of the MingShi with quite a few unconscious people laid in the corners, the object being summoned is visible, surrounded by the powerful to the point of being seen dark energy.

It was nothing more than an arm. The same one from Mo village!

The people that weren’t aware of the failed summoning remembered the mention of elder Lan examining an item that Lan WangJi brought back from Mo village before starting the flashback.

The whole flashback into their studying days nearly made them forgot about that offhanded sentence.

So Lan XiChen was referring to the ghost hand.

Speaking of said ghost hand, it stood straight up, index-finger pointing upwards like it was angrily pointing at somebody. It was the origin of the resentful energy.

The people who took part in the summoning has either ran away or collapsed. Only Lan WangJi remained properly sitting on the east main position.

Lan QiRen smiled slightly in pride, but in a situation like this, he would prefer it if Lan WangJi escapes as well.

Currently, Lan WangJi sat there with his zither by his side and looked to Wei WuXian when he sensed another's presence.

Upon noticing the unconscious Lan QiRen, Wei WuXian took his place at the west main position on the opposite side of Lan WangJi and readying his flute to his lips.

Since the unintentional partnership of Wei WuXian's whistling and Lan WangJi's zither was what suppressed the arm back in Mo village, it only made sense for them to team up once again. In understanding, Lan WangJi began to play his zither, Wei WuXian following with his flute after.

(And that was the very first official partnership of the world's no 1 (power) couple since Wei WuXian's return.)

Some of the Lan juniors pouted, what they would give to see that for themselves...

Lan XiChen and Lan QiRen simultaneously gave a salute to Wei WuXian. (Although Lan QiRen was still upset over the poor flute playing that nearly sent him into a cardiac arrest then and there. It would be a pretty sad way to go...)

Lan WangJi smiled discreetly to himself. Even though Wei Ying was confused and unsure of the situation, he still helped even though this was actually the perfect time to get away. And the thought didn't even cross his mind.

Willing to help others, selfless. That is the Wei Ying he fell for.

The two began duetting the song known as Evocation*, which uses a person's body, piece of the body or loved object as a catalyst to summon the soul to it. Usually, soul appears with just one section of the song, but no soul came even when the song was ending.

"ChiFeng-Zun's soul... was it torn apart as well..?" Jin ZiXuan half-asked, half mumbled to himself. Before they started reading, the future events were briefly explained to the ones that weren't present, so they knew about Jin GuangYao, but Jin ZiXuan never even thought that his half-brother would take the life of his oldest sworn brother, let alone cut his soul apart as well.

Wen Qing and Jiang YanLi lowered their heads for the respectable late sect leader of Nie.

Nie HuaiSang's lip trembled in rage, tears filling his eyes.

Lan XiChen closed his eyes.

Wen Ning hurried along.

Not only did Evocation had no effect, it seemingly made the arm angrier, increasing the amount and potency of the resentful energy to the point where if the west side wasn't Wei WuXian, they would have ended up like Lan QiRen.

Though this, Wei WuXian was able to conclude that the owner of this arm's soul had been torn apart alongside their body.

It looks like this good fellow's death is just a little worse than his own. Despite the fact that his corpse was bitten to shreds, his soul was at least intact.

It was only because of his numerals practice beforehand that Wen Ning can read this out before his tears escape his eyes.

Not that anyone would blame him if he did cry before he finished the sentence.

(Cause pretty much everyone is in the same mood as him)

Wei WuXian remained smiling as he leaned against his partner after giving Wen Ning's back a comforting pat.

Since Evocation is ineffective, Lan WangJi's fingers changed the tone and started playing another song.

Wei WuXian followed without the worries of being suspected since both Evocation and the current song, Rest were well-known in the cultivational world.

But to keep up pretences, Wei WuXian purposefully played the song with as many mistakes as possible while still having the song keep its effects.

Lan WangJi closed his eyes, asking: "If that was the reason, why did you only do it to one song?"

Wei WuXian rubbed the back of his neck: "I kinda forgot to do that for the first one, I only realized it when we started playing Rest."

"...Mm"

Wei WuXian placed a hand on his shoulder: "Well, I didn't know you already figured me out, so I still have to keep acting~

Lan SiZhui placed a hand to his chin: "But really, to play a mystic song wrong on purpose and yet still allowing it's affects to work..."

Wen Qing sighed at the admiration under her nephew's tone: "Yes yes, very talented." She mumbles sarcastically.

"Aw, thank you Qing-Jie~" Wei WuXian took a bow at her direction.

"How did you it, senior Wei? When we make a little mistake, the song becomes ineffective."

Time for another (hopefully not as hairbrained) YiLing LaoZu's lesson: "Then you could have made a mistake at a crucial part. What I mess up is the things that won't affect the power of the

song, like breathing and unimportant powerless notes.”

“Unimportant notes? Is there such a thing?!” Lan JingYi asks wide eyed.

“Of course! Not every note contains the mystic properties of the song. Most of the time, just a few notes or string of notes in a section actually have powers. Sometimes, it’s not even the notes that have the powers, it can be other things. The other unimportant notes are just there to sync up the song and make it sound good but has no other purpose than that. So, I only mess those up, since it wouldn’t change anything.”

The juniors opened their mouths in understanding: “Does that apply to talismans as well?” Lan SiZhui asks, remembering the times he had been given a hastily drawn talisman missing some strokes by Wei WuXian and them still working like they are supposed to.

Wei WuXian grinned: “Good memory! Yes, only some of the strokes or characters have mystic properties and the others are just for show.” He turned to the other juniors.

“It would be helpful if you go and experiment with it to find out what is actually useful. If you’re drawing talismans to paste somewhere, it’s understandable if you want them to look better, but during a battle when you need their effects immediately and are going to be disposed of afterwards, just draw what is necessary. What’s the point of it looking nice if you take too long to add those extra lines? It’s like swordplay, do what is necessary unless you’re performing for others.”

Lan JingYi fist-pumped into the air: “Alright! I always been bad at talisman drawin-” He stopped when he felt Lan QiRen’s glare on him.

Lan QiRen huffed, misguiding his students as always, that Wei Ying: “All of you, two times! And an extra five more for Wei Ying!”

“Huh?! But uncle~ I’m teaching them *survival* skills~” Wei WuXian cried.

Lan WangJi turned to his brother.

Lan XiChen sighed: “Uncle... He may have a point. It is important to prioritize, especially in a situation with insufficient time nor resources...”

Lan QiRen sighed, still pulling on the end of his beard (Wei WuXian swears that he might one day pull it off in rage): “Only in that situation should this method be used, if I found out that any of you chose to slack under normal circumstances or in class, that is the punishment that will befall you. Do you understand?”

The juniors nodded.

“But senior Wei... There’s something I do not understand...” A junior raised their hand like they were in class: “If the excess strokes are really so unimportant, why does every textbook say the same thing? Everyone always draw the same thing, it’s like it has become mandatory.”

Wei WuXian smiled: “That’s just it, it has become a standard to draw them like this. Perhaps someone started drawing some extra lines to make them look better to pass them as decorations in their home? Or someone drew them like this, claiming that they are stronger and selling them at a higher price? Or maybe when it’s just the original strokes, nobody took them seriously? No matter, it’s already been passed on as the ‘correct’ way to draw them.”

“Then... how did you know about this? If the current method has been passed on as true for so long, how did you..?”

Strangely, Wei WuXian didn't answer enthusiastically like he always did.

His lips are pressed tightly together as he thought about something before morphing back to his usual self.

“What can I say? I played around with them~”

Deciding not to look more into it, the junior replied with an: “I see...”

Jiang Cheng and Lan WangJi stayed silent, while Wei WuXian always had an unnatural proficiency with talismans or anything else cultivating related, he only started investing in them after he developed the ghost path.

Another question arises...

Wen Ning continued with the book once the conversation showed no signs of continuing.

Wei WuXian resumes his awful duetting, ignoring the look Lan WangJi given him.

Only to see the previously unconscious Lan QiRen sitting up and pointed at him with a trembling hand in rage, blood all over his face: “Stop playing! Get Lost! GET LOST NOW! Do not-”

He didn't get to finish ‘Do not’ what before spitting out a mouthful of blood, falling back down and returning back to a state of unconsciousness.

Lan WangJi: “...”

“Hm... So just now was not the first instance of that happening...” MengMo remarked, out of the blue.

“Pfff...” Since Wei WuXian was kinda walking on thin ice with his uncle-in-law, he refrained from bursting into laughter.

Everyone else followed Lan WangJi's past response.

Lan QiRen drank his tea.

Wei WuXian gaped.

He knew what was behind Lan QiRen's ‘Do not’: Do not play! Do not play together! Do not stain his favourite disciple, Lan WangJi's zither notes!

Lan QiRen gave a pointed glare to Wei WuXian.

Their zither and flute duet angered Lan QiRen to the point of awakening and fainting again... It shows how terrible it must have been...

That was the sentence that was running through everyone's mind before Wen Ning even read it out.

“Pffff... hahahaha...”

...Anyways, the good news is that the duet successfully got the ghost hand under control. **Wei WuXian thought without a hint of shame: ‘As long as it works, it doesn’t matter how awful it was.’**

Juniors: ‘...Maybe all those extra notes do serve a purpose after all...’

The last sounds of the zither strings stopped, the door of the MingShi burst open, allowing the sun to shine inside. It’s probably because the alarm bell upstairs stopped and the disciples who had been outside the MingShi rushed in. All of them calling out "HanGuang-jun".

Lan WangJi stopped his vibrating strings and went over to feel his uncle’s pulse. With this, the others calmed down and started taking care of the unconscious.

Some of them spoke worriedly: “HanGuang-Jun, neither medicine nor acupuncture is working. What should we do?”

Lan WangJi stayed silent, deep in thought.

On the other side Wei WuXian tucked his flute away and examined the bronze bell but noticed Lan SiZhui’s downcasted expression and asked him.

Lan SiZhui already knew that he wasn’t an ordinary person. Hesitating a little, he replied quietly: “I just felt some guilt.”

The other juniors turned to Lan SiZhui

Wei WuXian asked: “Guilt for what?”

Lan SiZhui answered: “This ghost hand, it was meant for us.”

Wei WuXian glanced at Nie HuaiSang none too kindly, but discreetly and not for long.

The other juniors sighed, in response to his words, feeling their own guilt.

Wei WuXian smiled: “How do you know that?”

Lan SiZhui replied: “The different levels of evil-attraction flags are drawn in different ways and have different strengths. The ones we drew back at Mo village only had range of twenty-five hundred meters* in circumference . But this ghost hand has such a strong killing intent, feeding on human flesh and bone. If it was within the range vicinity to begin with, with that degree of maliciousness, Mo village would have been a river of blood long ago. However, it showed up only after we came all of a sudden... it must mean it had been planted there at that time and place by someone harboring ill intent.”

While Lan SiZhui’s two families praise him, Wei WuXian sneaked another peak at his ex-classmate.

Wei WuXian responded: “Strong academies, that was a pretty good analysis.”

Lan SiZhui lowered his head: “So it means that the lives lost at Mo village, we... were responsible... and now Mister Lan and the others could not wake up...”

“How could you blame yourself for this?! You were the ones being attacked! The fault is on that attacker!” Jin Ling shouted indiantly.

“That’s right! Jin Ling is right! We still have no idea who is that guy but wait till I get my hands on him...” Lan JingYi gritted out.

The man sitting between Jiang Cheng and Fu GaoWen shifted a little in his seat.

After a moment of silence, Wei WuXian patted him on the shoulder: “The one who’s responsible should not be you guys, it’s the person who released the ghost hand. There are some things that are impossible for you to control.”

Wei WuXian closed his eyes.

On the other side, Lan WangJi removed his hand and the Lan sect members immediately asked: “HanGuang-Jun, how is it?”

Lan WangJi answered: “Trace the source.”

Wei WuXian agreed: “That’s right. Trace its source, look for the whole corpse of this ghost hand, identify him, then we will naturally have a way to save them.”

Even though Lan JingYi already knew that he definitely wasn’t a lunatic, but he couldn’t help but speak to him in a criticizing tone-

“Four-

“Hahahaha, Lan Zhan~ No need for four times~ He’s acting this way because of how I acted before~ In a way, he’s complimenting my lunatic act... So... give me some face~”

“...One time.”

Lan JingYi nearly want to bow down at Wei WuXian’s feet but wisely decided against it.

: “Easy for you to say, not even Evocation can summon its soul and it created such a mess. Where are you supposed to look?”

Lan WangJi answered: “The northwest.”

Lan SiZhui enquired: “The northwest? HanGuang-Jun, why is it the northwest?”

Wei WuXian responded: “Isn’t it already been pointed out to you?”

Lan JingYi doubted him-

-Sneaks a peek at HanGuang-Jun...-

-and asks: “Pointed out to me? Who? Who pointed? HanGuang-Jun did not?”

Wei WuXian replied: “It.”

Then everyone realized what it was pointing at, the ghost hand!

The hand is fixed in a position, even if you moved it, it will turn back to it's original position.

...Lan JingYi stuttered: “It? What... what is it pointing at?!”

Wei WuXian answered: “What else could he be pointing at? Its either the location of the other parts of his body, or, the murderer who made him this way.”

After hearing that, the youths that just happened to be standing in the northwest quickly moved aside.

Wei WuXian covered his mouth as he laughed: ‘The young disciples in the GusuLan are so adorable~ Unlike their older counterparts...’ He resisted the urge to glance at his uncle-in-law.

Lan WangJi gave him a look and slowly got up. He instructs the disciples: “Take care of uncle.”

They nodded: “Understood! Are you heading down the mountain?”

Lan WangJi gave a small nod. Wei WuXian discretely snuck behind him, laughing as he spoke to himself loudly: “Good good good, we can finally leave this mountain and elope together!”

Lan QiRen choked on his tea when he tried to shout... again...: “WE-cough-cough-

Wei WuXian shrugged: ‘Guess we really can’t get through a chapter without the old man shouting my name at least once...’

Wen Ning stuttered out the final paragraph of the chapter, hoping to get it over with.

Ev- Every... Everyone else’s expression looks extremely grim, particularly the older ones since the younger ones are a little used to it by now. Only Lan QiRen, who laid on the ground, unconscious but seems to be twitching slightly. Everyone thought: "If this person says any more words, Mister Lan might be angered awake by him again..."

‘Been there, done that~ But that might be a good idea too... Aren’t they worried that Lan QiRen couldn’t wake up? Who knows, maybe he could have recovered faster-’

As if sensing immediate danger, Wen Ning quickly passed the book back to his nephew.

Chapter End Notes

1* MingShi 冥室 Ming冥 means darkness or from 冥界 Ming Jie, meaning underworld and Shi室 is room.

2* FengShui 风水 , Feng 风 means wind and Shui 水 is water, but together, their

meaning is completely different. ‘Also known as Chinese geomancy, is a pseudoscience originating from China, which claims to use energy forces to harmonize individuals with their surrounding environment.’ (Yes, it’s from Wikipedia cause I have no idea how to explain this...) Anyway, good FengShui means good luck, better health, better wealth, more spiritual energy in the air, better life... blah blah blah... that kind of stuff. People still believe in it till this day but is usually more popular amongst the wealthy.

3* Seven orifices, Qi Qiao 七窍 refers to the seven openings on one’s face. (Two ears, two eyes, a pair of nostrils and the mouth)

4* Evocation, in Chinese, the name of this song is 招魂 Zhao Hun, meaning summon/calling over/beckon the soul.

5* The measurement used here is 5 Li 里 in circumference... One Li is 500 meters but I decided to save my non-chinese speaking readers the brain storage space from remembering yet another thing XD

Alright, this is the last chapter I'll be writing until my exams are over. Wish me luck and thank you for sticking around for so long! :D

Reading Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = Story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Lan SiZhui took the book and continued with the next chapter quickly.

Most cultivators night hunt in groups, even famed and experienced ones. However, Lan WangJi prefers to work alone and taking the fact of how much of a threat this enigma of a ghost hand is into consideration, he did not bring any of his juniors along with him on his quest.

...Basically, Lan WangJi only took Wei WuXian along with him to ~~elope~~ locate the body or other body parts of this ghost hand.

Besides, who in the right mind will leave Wei WuXian in the Cloud Recesses? It's not like he will be staying there for long on his own anyways, he will find a way out.

Which is probably one of the reasons why HanGuang-Jun took him with him, because he's really making it difficult for Wei WuXian to even slip away for half a second.

‘I mean, the closest I got to escaping is my twelfth? Thirteenth? attempt, and got caught by him immediately after I went out the window... It was so humiliating... Even that auntie and uncle wouldn't help me... In fact, they think I'm the one pestering Lan Zhan! What kind of logic is that?!’

The corner of Lan WangJi's lip twitched slightly in a smile.

...

After all that, he changed his tactics to disgusting Lan WangJi into letting him go. Based on what he knew about Lan WangJi (Teenager), it's bound to work!

...

Like every other Wei WuXian's plan to escape Lan WangJi so far, it fails miserably.

Although, if he had used it on anyone else in this room, it would have worked just fine. They can and would attest to that.

Since Wei WuXian's new course of action is to cling onto him, most particularly, during the night where he will crawl into the same bed as him. As mentioned, it backfired as Lan WangJi did the same thing he did the first time he attempted this. Paralyze him on the bed for the whole night.

While almost everyone else are being entertained by his past dilemmas, Wei WuXian peeked at Lan WangJi guiltily.

'I did all that I could to disgust you and persisted without realizing why he puts up with it...' Lan WangJi had no knowledge that his confession went unheard by the mentally distraught Wei WuXian after the events of the nightless city.

The thought of the nightless city still made Wei WuXian's eyes foggy, glancing at the Wen siblings, his beloved Shijie... and Lan Zhan...

He dragged them all down with him...

Lan WangJi presses a tender kiss to the crown of his head: "Do not think about it." He whispered soothingly: "I, no- We were willing. No regrets."

Wei WuXian shook his head slightly but then contradicted that action by nodding.

It was probably a long way from *that* painful walk down the twisted memory lane, he shouldn't worry them more than necessary.

...

With the left hand's guidance, the two journeyed to the northwest. They duetted Rest daily, in order to suppress its anger and murder intent temporarily. When they traveled near QingHe, the hand who had maintained its position to guide them suddenly changed, tucking its finger back in into a fist.

Which means, what the hand is pointing to, is around this area.

Inquiring as they continued traveling, they arrived in a small city in QingHe. Being daytime, the streets were crowded with people. While he scurried after Lan WangJi, the pungent smell of cosmetics pricked at Wei WuXian's nose suddenly.

"...Bleh..." Wei WuXian stuck his tongue out at the reminder and stuffed his face into his partner's shoulder: "Lan Zhan's scent is sooooo much better than that cheap stuff."

"Mm" 'I must remain dignified... in front of uncle...'

Since he has become accustomed to the gentle sandalwood scent on Lan WangJi, in response to the piercing smell, Wei WuXian blurted out: "What are you selling? Why does it smell like that?"

The aroma originated from the cosmetics a trader in cultivation robes (who is very clearly a

swindler) is selling.

He grinned when someone asked him: “I sell everything! Rouge and many more of high quality and low prices. Will this young master browse?”

Wei WuXian accepted: “Alright, let’s see.”

The trader asked: “For your wife?”

Lan WangJi: “...”

Wei WuXian smiled: “For myself.”

Lan WangJi nodded internally.

Lan XiChen chuckled.

“Oh? Interested in makeup, A-Xian? You want me to show you a few tips?” Jiang YanLi cheerfully teased.

Wei WuXian waved his hands while shaking his head: “No no, no need! I was just trying to annoy Lan Zhan. That’s all there is!”

Jiang Cheng & Jin Ling: ‘Well, you successfully annoyed me.’

“...” The trader’s smile froze, thinking to himself: ‘Are you messing with me?!’

“Of course I am. Who knows what’s in that stuff? How could something of ‘high quality’ be so cheap and smell so bad? If I used it, my delicate face could have been ruined~” Wei WuXian whined dramatically before turning to Lan WangJi: “If anything happened to my face, would you still love me? Lan Zhan?”

Lan WangJi decided against reminding him that he gave the suspicious rogue away to those farm girls in favor of humoring him: “Of course. You are beautiful no matter what happens.”

“Hahahahahaha~ Lan er-Daa-da~”

“Mm”

At the reappearance of sparkles and... pink stuff surrounding the main couple, Jiang Cheng almost wished he could scratch out his eyeballs....

...

The trader nearly ran away when Lan WangJi approached them, recognizing his uniform since he had become slightly acquainted with the cultivation world with his ‘pretending to be a cultivator’. But came back when Wei WuXian claims his intentions to do business with him.

Lan WangJi questioned: “Do you have the money for it?”

Wei WuXian replied: “You can just give me money if I don’t.” While speaking, he reached inside his robe. He wasn’t expecting to find anything but in just a few moments, he found a delicate money pouch, weighted down with money.

The Lan juniors pursed their lips: ‘He really just took HanGuang-Jun’s wallet like that...’

Lan WangJi: 'My money is Wei Ying's money.'

(Behind the scenes motivational commentary, Lan er-gege's XianXian: "I wish you luck for your future or current life partner!~ May him/her be as generous and loving as my Lan er-gege, because you deserve it~")

Extra commentary, XianXian's Lan er-gege: -Thumbs up- "Mm"

Writer's commentary: "I don't know what came over me T_T"

-Now back to your [Not very] regularly scheduled reading-)

This doesn't seem at all something Lan WangJi would carry on his person-

Wei WuXian snickers like he's in on some inside joke.

Lan WangJi's ears changed colors...

-However, this is not the first unimaginable thing about Lan WangJi he had discovered these few days, so Wei WuXian didn't think much about it and just took the money pouch. As expected, Lan WangJi allows him, without a word of disagreement. If it wasn't for the little knowledge of Lan WangJi's character, righteousness and his extremely good reputation, he might have suspected that Lan WangJi and Mo XuanYu may have some sort of unspeakable, chaotic entanglement.

Lan WangJi furrowed his eyebrows: "No." Then he added: "Never met him."

I have never met Mo XuanYu before he became you.

But no matter his reasons, I have nothing but gratitude for this man I have never met.

Like Wei Ying, fate has dealt him an unfair hand. May he find solace and happiness like I hope to have given Wei Ying in a new life.

...

Meanwhile... the others laughed at yet another one of Wei WuXian's hopeless attempt to get away from his future husband.

Till they got another toothache inducing moment of Wei WuXian's subconscious telling him not to leave Lan WangJi behind.

...Ruined by a third party's shout in the book.

"YiLing LaoZu, five wen* for one, ten wen for three!" Lan SiZhui read out awkwardly.

Wei WuXian, who was leaning against his partner grimaced.

So did Jin Ling.

Wei WuXian exclaimed: "Who?!"

He rushed over to find out who was selling him, only to find that very same fake cultivator/trader. He packed up his low-quality powders and replaced them with a stack of talismans* with a figure more terrifying than the door gods* drawn on them-

The juniors, Jiang Cheng and Jin Ling snickered.

Wei WuXian grimaced.

-He called out: “Five wen for one, ten wen for three, you can’t suffer losses with such a price! I recommend three. Paste one on the front door, one in the main room and the last one above your bed. With their strong resentful and malicious energy, it is like using poison against poison*, it is guaranteed to ward off every other malicious beings from getting close to you!”

At this point, even Lan SiZhui feels like laughing himself.

Lan QiRen pressed a hand against his forehead just from the sheer stupidity of the trader’s claims.

“Hahahahahaha! Do people actually buy that?! Who was this guy trying to fool? Hahahaha! My stomach hurts! Hahaha!” Lan JingYi wheezed out through his laughter.

“Hahaha, how it probably works is by scaring ghosts away with the drawing!” Another junior pitched in.

Even the corners of the stoic Lan WangJi’s lips are curved upwards slightly.

But not so strangely, the person most prone to laughing doesn’t find this reminder very amusing: “How could someone draw me like that?! I, Wei WuXian, am a man graced with fine looks ranked just below the twin jades and a peacock, but still fourth place among the cultivators of my generation!” Wei WuXian huffed before grinning: “If I look like that, what would Jiang Cheng and everyone else be like? They would have to be uglier than even that!”

“Wei WuXian!!! Are you so @\$*#?& tired of living?!!”

“Not really. But if I’m actually dead, I know who I’ll haunt for the rest of his life. That will be the only reason why those things would ever have resentful energy.”

Wei WuXian spoke: “Now *that’s* shameless bragging! If they are really so effective, why are you only selling them for five wen?!”

The trader replied: “Why is it you again? If you’re gonna buy, buy. If not, go away. If you want to spend fifty wen on each one, I’m willing.”

“Wow, there’s someone even more shad- I mean shameless than senior Wei?”

“I take offence to that.”

“ZiRui, one time.”

Wei WuXian flipped through the stack of ‘Evil-warding YiLing LaoZu portraits’ and just could not accept the fact that the stocky figure with the green face and fangs in the portrait was himself.

More laughter erupt from the description.

Wei WuXian continues sulking.

His spouse rubs his back: “I will draw you well later.” ~~Then he could keep it with him and look at~~

~~it on the rare occasions that they are not together whenever he needs to see his face...~~

Wei WuXian looked up at him: “Mm! You do that! Make sure it looks good! I must look even more handsome than you!”

“Mm, more handsome than me.” ‘You already are.’

“Then we can distribute it all over and everyone will believe it cause it’s HanGuang-Jun! Ha, I’ll like to see the look that scammer makes when he sees *that*!”

Lan WangJi: “...Mm” ‘But I want to keep it for myself...’

Lan SiZhui went back to reading, face unbearably warm from the extravagant flirting.

He continued to argue: “Wei WuXian is a man whose looks are known far and wide. What the heck did you draw?! Even if you’ve never seen the actual person before, don’t anyhow draw! You’re leading the younger generation astray!”

“Kind of late for that, senior Wei.” Fu GaoWen commented with a smile.

The junior next to him nodded: “Almost anyone who claims to have seen you before, either says that you are as... grotesque as a fierce corpse or a... otherworldly monster/shapeshifter who takes on the shape of a sinfully seductive man like death incarnate with glowing red eyes... long canines, drinks blood like it’s wine, and... um...”

“...Pfff” Wei WuXian’s lip twitched

The junior waved his hands: “B- but, there are some who said that you were really nice-looking and talented in your youth... very few... but there ... are..?”

Lan JingYi: -cough- “Is” -cough-

-Cough- “All that aside-” Another junior started: “We took every rumor we heard with a grain of salt (tried to) but now we have been shown the truth! You’re nothing like what they said you were, you’re not scary looking at all (Other than the times you’ve another of those ideas of yours swirling in your head) and you are really nice! (Other than the times you pranked us all and got us into trouble but you yourself is totally fine because HanG-grumble-grumble-). You’re really cool to be around and have with us on night hunts! (That much is true.)”

Wei WuXian burst out laughing and the juniors received their reward in that thumbs up HanGuang-Jun subtly gave them.

Lan SiZhui went back to reading cheerfully.

When the trader was going to reply, Wei WuXian suddenly felt a gust of wind on his back and dodged out of the way.

Jin Ling braced himself... Here we go again...

He successfully dodged it, but the trader got thrown aside alongside his pinwheel stall. The scene was a jumble of hands and feet, some helped the trader up, others picking up the stuff on the ground. The trader was going to curse, but saw that the one who kicked him is a young master-

Lan SiZhui peeked at the young master in concern before proceeding.

-whose whole body shined in golden sparkles, making him look very wealthy and aristocratic.

The moment the word 'golden' was read out, all eyes were on Jin Ling.

"Jin Ling, what is the meaning of this?"

Jin Ling bit his lip.

Jiang Cheng turned to him, arms crossed with a scowl on his face: "First you go and make yourself a target to a wild god, and then you kick people in broad daylight, in the middle of a street? Is this how a member of the Jin and Jiang sect should act? Are you tired of living? Need me to break your legs?!"

"Tch... He was... selling stupid stuff anyways..."

Jiang Cheng clicked his tongue, he's well aware that Jin Ling did that because of the trader mentioning the name 'Wei WuXian'.

...He is partially responsible for him being that way. So punishing him is hypocritical of him.

"...I'll deal with you after this mess."

But he still has to show something to the rest.

Jiang YanLi shook her head at both.

Looking again, the chest of the other person is embroidered with a 'golden sparks amongst snow' peony* made him deflate. But he still felt that it was unfair that he got kicked for no reason, so he weakly asked: "Why did you kick me?"

That young master is in fact, Jin Ling-

Jin Ling shrunk back from the attention.

-He crossed his arms, replying coldly: "Kick you? For those who dare to speak the three words 'Wei WuXian' in front of me, they should be thankful if I didn't kill them on the spot and you still dare to complain? You're looking for death!"

The Lan juniors sighed, Jin Ling should be thankful that he wasn't a part of the GusuLan. That could get him quite a few strokes of the cane.

Jin ZiXuan reprimanded his son, despite knowing that he probably wouldn't take him seriously after the last chapter of the flashback: "A-Ling, a gentleman only ever moves his mouth, never the fist. Even if you disagree with them."

Jin Ling turned away to the other side, ignoring him.

Jiang YanLi gently turned her son's head back: "A-Ling." She coaxed softly but firmly.

Jin Ling tilted down his head and offered an apology for his past actions.

Lan SiZhui started again.

Wei WuXian did not expect Jin Ling to appear here, but what was more surprising is his conduct and thought to himself: "What's with this child's personality? He is both temperamental and violent, looking down on everyone due to his arrogance. He has learnt all of his uncle's and his father bad habits but none of his mother's good. If I don't fiddle around with him a bit, he will suffer in the future."

Jin Ling, Jiang Cheng and Jin ZiXuan stared at Wei WuXian.

Wei WuXian shrugged: "What? I didn't say anything wrong. The arrogant posturing from the peacock and the anger induced violence from shimei, has any of those traits helped you in any situation? And Jin Ling has both! You want him to end up a preening, forever single angry guy?"

Jin Ling glowered but said nothing, because really, his short-temper got him into all sorts of trouble and he was unable to find friends his age that could put up with him until the Lan juniors. (And he agreed that he was not the saint his mother is.)

Jin ZiXuan looked away, his arrogance did nearly cost him the person he loved...

And Jiang Cheng...

"And you are any better?! Let me remind you that you straight up punched Jin ZiXuan that time!"

"Hey, *you* were going to first and I pushed you aside so that I will be the one to punch him and get the blame but it's fine since I'm not the next sect leader. See? I think first."

"But both sect leaders came anyway! And you were sent home early! Everyone knows about it, so *how* is that ANY BETTER?!"

"He needs someone to smack some sense into him and I'm the better option out of the two. Just admit it, your temper gets you into trouble and made you the first ever bachelor among the five to be blacklisted by every matchmake-"

"WEI WUXIAN!!! I'M GONNA BREAK-

"My legs, right? Jiang Cheng, it's been over ten years, change your phrase. It's getting very redundant."

"YOU-

"Did I say anything wrong? Girls hate you and you know it. Only shijie's fine because she's your sister, right shijie?"

Jiang YanLi giggled as if sharing an inside joke with him: "A-Xian, stop bullying your shidi. He still has time to learn how to treat girls~"

Jiang Cheng felt the sky crumble on top of him when his sister agreed with that pest...

“Hahahaha, does shijie still remember that girl? The one- hahaha-

“Ah, miss Tong? Yes, shijie still remembers -giggles-”

Jiang Cheng turned to her in disbelief: “Jie... What are you..?”

Wei WuXian interrupted: “Remember the third incident I mentioned just now? Shijie was there too since we were only heading back from LuoYang.”

Jiang YanLi nodded: “On the way there, there was a young miss being harassed by a small group of bandits. After a-Cheng and a-Xian chased them away, that girl, miss Tong, seems to have taken a liking to a-Cheng and started clinging to him, telling him: ‘It’s getting late, why don’t you come and stay at my place for a night?’. But a-Cheng told her: ‘No it’s not, we can go home just fine.’.”

Wei WuXian laughed: “Hahahahahahaha! Yeah, and that girl’s so pissed off that she tossed him arm aside and walked away, even turning back to see if he followed her. But- hahahaha- guess what he said afterwards?”

He imitated his shidi’s voice: “ ‘That girl was so rude, she didn’t even thank us for rescuing her. Ungrateful.’ Hahahahaha!”

Everyone nodded to themselves: ‘He deserves his single status...’

Jiang Cheng: ??????????????

Jin Ling: ‘...I can’t end up like that, I promise I’ll do better and... not look down on others... that way, I will not be blind to wonderful people like mother...’

Jin ZiXuan sneezed

Back to the actual story, Wei WuXian called out to Jin Ling.

That trader remained silent, but his eyes were filled with gratitude. Jin Ling turned to Wei WuXian and spoke in disdain: “You haven’t ran away? Might as well.”

Wei WuXian grinned: “Oh yeah? Then who was the one who was pushed onto the ground and couldn’t get up?”

Jin ZiXuan sent a look to Wei WuXian protectively but was ignored.

Jin Ling smirked before whistling. Wei WuXian did not understand the intentions behind it, but after a while, the huffing and puffing of some beast came from a distance.

Jiang Cheng had an evil smirk on his face.

Wei WuXian groaned.

As everyone expected, a huge black spiritual dog* dashed onto the scene, scaring all those currently there.

But none of their fear even came close to that of those belonging to Wei Wuxian as he made a

break for it on first sight, the description nearly convincing Lan QiRen to keep a dog at the Cloud Recesses if not for the noise it makes.

Lan SiZhui's eyes widen as he looked at the next paragraph, turning to his senior Wei in shock.

Wei Wuxian: ?????????

“Senior... Wei...” Lan SiZhui doesn't even know how to...

Instead, he stood up and walked over to him and presented the book to him, pointing to the paragraph he wanted him to look at.

Wei WuXian fell silent.

Then he opened his mouth: “It's alright, I never tried to keep it hidden.”

Lan SiZhui returned to his seat solemnly, eyes from the others all on him.

It was a difficult topic for him, but the YiLing LaoZu, despite his invincibility, is actually helpless when facing a dog.

Everyone: ‘We already knew this-

This cannot be helped, since- -in his childhood, before he was taken home by Jiang FengMian, he lived on the streets and fought with wild dogs often for food...

The people in the room felt their heart sink.

After suffering from the chases and bites from wild dogs, he became fearful of all dog-

Jiang Cheng slammed his hands down on the floor.

“Why...” He gritted out: “WHY! Why did you never tell me this?! Even when I blamed you for... even when I teased you... why did you never explain? I always... always thought...”

It was a simple irrational fear, not trauma.

He was not alone in that assumption.

For people who had much more safer childhoods, they can never understand one who spent theirs on the streets, the loneliness, helplessness, the constant fear if they were going to wake up the next day, if they would be able to eat that day, where to hide when it starts to rain and what beasts or even people might find them in both their sleeping and waking hours.

Even if they have family issues, they ate three meals a day, have a roof over their heads, bathe and change into clean clothes, saw dogs as only a loyal, friendly companions.

Lan WangJi felt tears in his eyes as those thoughts replayed and replayed in his head. He knew about Wei WuXian's parents and temporary rough childhood, but never asked for more details since his partner has no desire to share that faint memory. He did not push him, after all, he knew what it's like to lose your parents... at such a young age. However, he always assumed Wei WuXian was adopted by Jiang FengMian shortly after the accident...

Wei WuXian kissed his spouse's tears away before replying his shidi: “There is nothing to explain.”

Unnecessary

Why does he need to tell anyone? He could barely remember it himself.

He doesn't remember what his parents told him before leaving him at an inn...

...Which inn was it again? In YiLing for sure... that's where uncle Jiang said he found him...

~~'Truly irony there, started alone in YiLing and I ended up alone in YiLing at the end...'~~

He can't remember...

He doesn't think the man... the inn owner? was very nice, after he had stayed longer than his parents had paid for, he was chased out.

He felt lighter too afterwards... his body and head... much colder too...

Did the man take the pretty new clothes and hair accessories his parents got for him on his birthday?

Guess it was fair... He couldn't pay for those extra days he spent there after all.

But it's cold outside...

That maid girl who worked at the inn was nice... She stuffed a warm dumpling in his hands when the man wasn't looking... He made sure to smile at her.

Hope she didn't get into trouble...

"Wei Ying."

He hid in the alleyway beside the inn... Mom and dad told him to wait there...

That's right... 'Be good, A-Ying. Wait here, mom and dad won't be gone for long.' That's what they told him...

...

...

...

It's getting late... When are they coming back?

...He's really hungry... It's cold...

He felt guilty... But he can't keep staying there to wait... 'Mom, dad...' The boy thought: 'I need to find something to eat... I will come back soon...'

...

The little boy drooled at the sight of the food in the food stalls... He reached into his pockets like he always saw his parents do...

Nothing... Empty...

He can't buy them...

...

The owner is away now... He could take one of those pancakes...

But mom told him to be good... Taking something without paying is bad...

Mommy? A-Ying really is a good kid... Can you buy one for A-Ying later? He is a good kid, good kids can wait...

The boy walked into another alleyway...

...

It's dirty, that alleyway... The boy's feet itched... His nose doesn't like it either... smells weird...

It's alright, mom will bathe him later.

But...

'There's a dumpling on the floor... half a dumpling... but a dumpling... it looks good... there's meat in it...' The boy thought joyfully, running over, scaring the rats who were also interested in the delicacy.

He picked it up and was going to take a bite...

...

What is that sound? Barking? A dog? A big dog... It's coming closer... It looks... mad... Did he do something wrong?

"Wei Ying!"

...

It hurts... Did he do something wrong? Is it because he didn't pay for that dumpling?

He was so sure it didn't belong to anyone...

He wanted to cry... But his mother gets sad if he cries...

That dog took the meat from the dumpling... But the boy still has the skin of it...

It should be good enough for now...

"Wei Ying! Look at me! Wake up!"

Wei WuXian opened his eyes with a gasp.

????

'Where is my dumpling skin?'

'Is mom and dad back?'

"Wei Ying..." He turned to the sound.

A beautiful man stared back, his eyes moist again.

That made him sad.

“Lan Zhan... Don’t cry...”

Lan Wangji held him tightly: “Wei Ying... It’s alright. You are safe.”

Wei Wuxian allowed him to hold him...

Oh

That was just his memories...

Strange... He usually couldn’t remember more than those scary dogs...

Does it have to do with him being in a dream world?

Wei Wuxian flinched, the feeling of teeth sinking into the flesh of his arm nearly made him scream.

No...It’s nothing, just a memory.

He was safe.

Wei Wuxian hugged his lover: “I’m safe...” ‘Look mom, dad... I found someone like the two of you did. Please rest in peace. You will never have to worry about me again... Thank you, uncle Jiang, for never giving up on finding me. Thank you, Madame Yu, for giving me a chance to become part of your family.’

“Mm! Always, as long as I breathe.” Lan Wangji replied breathlessly.

Wei Wuxian hummed back in response.

“...Senior Wei” Wei Wuxian heard another’s voice.

Lan Sizhui... A-Yuan...

He was around little A-Yuan’s age... Wasn’t he?

Little A-Yuan suffered too... Because of his incompetence.

Lan Zhan... I know, you hate to hear this... But thank you!

Thank you for your love and devotion. Thank you for taking A-Yuan in. He’s such a fine young man now... Wen Ning and Wen Qing are so, so grateful as well.

“Hm? Yes, little Sizhui-er?”

Lan Sizhui blushed at the endearing nickname: “Nothing much... Do I need to stop? Or I should... skip?”

“Nono, go on. I’m fine!” Wei Wuxian smiled

Everyone remained silent

“Okay...” Lan Sizhui turned back to the book.

Lan Wangji maintained his hold on Wei Wuxian's waist.

Wei Wuxian leaned into his warm embrace, not planning to pay any attention to the book.

He closed his eyes.

An image suddenly flashed in his mind.

One that didn't scare him like the previous ones.

A blurry image of something small and black, sitting on a wooden barrel.

It's not a dog.

It's not attacking.

It's staring at him.

It's jade-green eyes stared at both him and the dirty quarter meat-filled pancake in his hand as it-
'He' His mind informed him, as he pleaded at him with his eyes, an almost human-like intelligence shone from within those orbs.

He was just like him, tiny and insignificant, all alone as he searched the streets for food, starvation leaving their bones visible against their skin. Abandoned by the world.

He could spare him a piece.

...

The image faded.

Wei Wuxian shook his head, he felt... strange: 'What... was that?' He asked himself.

Was it real? Maybe another memory brought up by the dreamscape?

...If it was, how is that little guy doing?

What was it? It's not a dog... A cat of some kind? But it looked young, a baby.

It can't be an ordinary house cat then. It's about the same size as one of those adult stray cats. Yet, he could tell it was just a child. It was more... built than a house cat too, he could tell even with how skinny the little guy was. It also had this glossy black fur... intelligent, big round eyes with such beauty equal to that of a prized imperial jade, worthy of an emperor to admire...

...His head hurts. ><

-regardless of it's size, Jiang Cheng laughed at him often for that.

Jiang Cheng closed his eyes tightly.

Of course he would... he never had to fight them in order to survive.

His father brought Wei Wuxian back when he was only nine.

How long has he been on the streets before his father finally found him?

He lived in comfort and his welcome for him is to blame him for stealing his father and being the reason he couldn't keep his cute puppies.

And how did he treat Wei WuXian when he lost his own parents? Blame him, as if he is the only one who lost his parents.

Jiang YanLi trembled as she looked at her brother.

If this was mentioned out, not only would it be an embarrassment but almost no one would believe it, hence why the rumor was not spread. Wei WuXian's soul nearly left him when he saw a tall, elegant figure in white and immediately yelled at the top of his lungs: "Lan Zhan, save me!!!"

Nobody commented other than the minuscule 'Mm!' from Lan WangJi.

Jin Ling lowered his head, vowing to never use his dog to scare him ever again. 'He's like me, lost his parents young... but I had jiujiu... he doesn't have anyone else...'

In the book, Jin Ling paled when he saw HanGuang-Jun and the dog, with it's human-like intelligence, recognized the man as someone to not be trifled with and retreated behind his master.

While Jin Ling waited for his and his dog's impending doom, Wei WuXian hopped on to Lan WangJi distracting him. So Jin Ling used that distraction to get away...

Distracting himself, Wei WuXian chuckled as he thought: 'Good to know this pecking order!' (LWJ > Dogs > WWX > LWJ)

~~'I'm glad the book didn't went into detail on my past...'~~

Lan WangJi: 'Mm, keep that dog from my Wei Ying. And every other canine for the rest of his life.'

Jiang Cheng: 'That little brat... Embarrassing...'

Jin Ling: 'Fairy, please stay where you are...'

Fairy: '?????'

...

The trader thought of Wei WuXian as his savior and offered him his inaccurate, ineffective, hideous talismans.

Even Lan WangJi chose to not comment on them.

Wei WuXian refused them, instead, asking for information.

The trader replied: "Curious incidents? You are asking the right person, as I stay here often and became known as the 'Qinghe-know-it-all'. What kind of curious incidents are you looking for?"

But it's nice to not think about something else.

...

You really cannot judge a book by it's cover.

Even their senior Wei is a carefree spirit who carries his own weight while smiling at them.

1* Wen 文 is a currency used in ancient China until the late 19 century. In the form of copper coins with a square shaped hole in the center, they are the lowest of worth amongst all of the different currencies used back then. Which is why the hole was made, so that a string can tie many of them in a single line since they were almost never used individually. (Think of them as the ‘Cents’ of ancient China)

2*Couldn't find a better substitute for this word. 贴纸 It means stickers, but in this case, it is referring to the talismans you would paste all over your home in means of protection or good fortune.

3* The door gods 门神 are a pair of gods who were believed to ‘scare off’ any malicious beings and misfortune with their terrifying appearances and only allow good fortune to pass though the main doors where they are placed as either pasted drawings, carvings or whole statues.

4* 毒攻毒 using poison against poison. This phrase means to counteract something unfavorable with something similar in nature. The Chinese believe that you can neutralize poison with poison of the same potency. Ancient and modern-day Chinese medicine follows this, as many of the herbs used are poisonous to all but the person it is prescribed to as it was uniquely blended to counteract against that person's ailments. (Personal experience: "It's quite effective! Though I don't recommend it for people who dislike bitter stuff.")

5* 金星雪浪白牡丹 is the symbol of the Jin clan. A real species of Peony. 金星 can mean the planet Venus, gold star or golden spark. 雪浪 is snow wave and the 白牡丹 is white peony.

6* Spiritual dog 灵犬. The 犬 means dog or canine, the 灵 can mean spirit but in this case, it means that this animal (or even item) has a 'spirit' or mind. Unlike a normal animal, this one is capable of thought almost like a human can.

7* XingLu 行路 just means road, nothing more.

[illegible]

Thank you to you all! My exams are finally over!!!

Reading Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wen Qing took over the reading just as she had done just two chapters ago.

Although concerned for her admittedly good friend, she was a doctor specializing in the human body, not the mind nor the spirit.

This is something he must walk out of himself, there is nothing she could do for him other than not giving him more stress. If he does not want to talk about it, no one should force him.

When he does feel like it one day, Lan Wangji will be there for him.

In the book, Wei WuXian pressed more information from the shady trader.

“That’s right! It’s said that, within the forest surrounding the ridge, there is a ‘Man-eating castle’ which lives a monster that feeds on humans. Intruders will be devoured entirely, not even bones are left behind! No corpses have ever been found, no exceptions! Terrifying, right?”

No wonder Jin Ling showed up here, he didn’t take down the soul-consuming goddess on Dafan mountain, so he must after the monster of Xinglu ridge.

Hearing that made Jiang Cheng remember the condition Jin Ling returned in. Infuriated, he spoke: “Instead of reflecting upon your actions, you decided you actually want to die. Why *didn’t* you just tell me? I’ll send you down to the other world myself!”

“I need to make a name for myself! On my own! Nobody will take me seriously if I’m always with my jiujiu during these hunts! They will all think you’re the one who exterminated everything while I did nothing!” Jin Ling snapped back.

“I’ll just break-

“They will still think like that, even if you announced it to the whole cultivation world! ‘That young master Jin is so pathetic, he can’t get anything on his own, he even needs his jiujiu to give him credit for his own accomplishments! How can we entrust the future of the Jin sect to him?!’ That’s what they are going to say!”

Jiang Cheng: “...”

“Young master Jin, many experienced cultivators still travel in a small group during hunts. That is because of how dangerous it really is, even during seemingly simple hunts. Many cultivators have lost their lives due to their recklessness from underestimating their opponents and in their hurry to gain fame.” Lan XiChen smiled: “You are still young, with plenty of time to get stronger and encounter stronger foes. There is no need to rush.”

Jin Ling fell silent when one of the twin jades spoke up.

Lan SiZhui saluted his sect leader: “ZeWu-Jun is correct. Jin Ling, we have been on a few hunts together, have we not? No one should have anything against a group of juniors hunting together, you are welcomed to join us anytime if you like, we could use your skills for every hunt we will go on in the future. If you do not mind us, of course.”

Lan JingYi pitched in: “Yeah, you are a bit temperamental, but it’s cool to have you with us. You can bring us along for any hunts you have gotten too!”

“Sect leader Jiang, is the arrangement by my sect’s disciples satisfactory?” Lan QiRen inquired, proud of his students and saw it as a good opportunity to strengthen the bond between the three families. “I believe this is a good opportunity for these juniors and will gladly give them permission to leave the Cloud Recesses should they wish to accompany your nephew on a hunt.”

Jiang Cheng nodded in approval. It wasn’t like he didn’t know of his nephew’s dilemma, but it was simply much too dangerous for Jin Ling to go on his own and he had no friends to team up with until now. He supposed it’s best to make this official, rather than have Jin Ling sneak away from his sect leader duties to night hunt with his new found friends all the time. (He knows cause he stalks follows them out of paranoia) He spoke: “Thank you, elder Lan, I will apologize in advance for the troubles.” He turned back to Jin Ling: “Don’t forget that you are a sect leader and manage your time properly. And make sure you pick something you brats can handle, the emergency signals are useless if no one made it in time to save you!”

Wei WuXian raised his hand: “I volunteer go with them! I won’t interfere unless necessary, we’ve done it before!”

“You? If you have that much free time, go train out a golden core in that new body of yours. As you are now, you chaperoning them is the same as having nobody chaperoning them. If it’s HanGuang-Jun, then I don’t have an issue.”

Wei WuXian pouted: “I’m working on it! And I’ve done well so far without one!”

Jiang Cheng ignored him: “Let’s return to the book.”

...

Wei WuXian replied: “So scary! But, if bones aren’t even left behind and no corpses were found, then may I ask how you knew they were eaten?”

Nie HuaiSang: 'Because the rumor was spread that way... Hysteria did the rest of the work.'

The trader paused and then answered: "Obviously, someone has seen it."

"You just said all intruders were devoured." Lan JingYi raised an eyebrow.

Wei WuXian spoke with admiration: "But didn't you just say, all intruders will be devoured with no bones left behind, no exceptions? So who is this amazing person who spread this rumor, to be still alive to tell the tale after witnessing such an image?"

Nie HuaiSang felt his shoulders slump in exhaustion: 'Wei-xiong... It's people like you that I worry about the most...'

"..." The trader responded: "That's how the rumor goes, how would I know?"

Lan JingYi smirked in self-satisfaction: 'Senior Wei agreed with me!'

Wei WuXian continued: "Then, do you know how many people have been eaten at Xinglu ridge? When were they eaten? Age? Gender? First and last names? Where did they live?"

Nie HuaiSang: '...'

Juniors: 'Senior Wei... Did you have nothing better to do?... Its obvious he doesn't know squat.'

Wei WuXian: -laughs to himself-

Wen Qing rolled her eyes but continued.

Trader: "Don't know."

Wei WuXian: "Qinghe know-it-all? Heh?"

The trader packed up his basket in anger: "The rumors never had this kind of information!"

Wei WuXian laughingly spoke: "No no no, don't go~ Let me ask another question. Isn't that XingLu ridge within Qinghe? And isn't Qinghe the Nie sect's territory? If there really are man-eating monsters at Xinglu ridge, why aren't they doing anything about it?"

Everyone turned to the sect leader of Nie who already has his face behind a paper fan from nowhere.

Instead of answering 'Don't know', the trader answered with a hint of contempt: "The Nie sect? If it was the past Nie sect, of course they wouldn't ignore it. They would have lead an assault on that monster-filled place on the second day that rumour was spread. But now, isn't the Nie sect leader, hehe, isn't he that 'Head shaker*"?'

Lan QiRen huffed, he couldn't believe that a student of his turned out that way.

After some exposition about the past Nie sect leader sullen both the current Lan and Nie sect leader's moods, Wei WuXian asked the trader about Nie HuaiSang's nickname.

The trader answered: “You don’t know the story behind it? No matter what others ask this Nie sect leader, if he doesn’t know, he will answer ‘I don’t know’, if he knows, he’s too afraid to say it. If he’s being pressured too much, he will shake his head while crying: ‘I don’t know, I don’t know, I really don’t know!’ and beg the others to let him go. Isn’t that a ‘head shaker’?”

As more exposition against his favor are being read out loud, Nie HuaiSang lowered his head, face still behind the thin barrier of his paper fan, like he’s embarrassed.

But Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi knew better than to buy that performance anymore.

After helping the trader’s business, Wei WuXian tucked the money pouch into his clothes, seeing as Lan WangJi hasn’t asked for it back...

‘He has a second money pouch anyways.’ Wei WuXian and the juniors shrugged to themselves.

Even though they didn’t quite believe in the trader’s tale due to the lack of evidence and details, they still visited the huge cedar forest at Xinglu ridge.

After almost an hour, they finally ran into something. Walking corpses, of the lowest level too. Like, so weak, they are bullied by their own kind and even ordinary people can escape from them or even defeat them if they are strong enough.

Knowing what was going to happen, Wei WuXian lowered his head and retreated behind Lan WangJi. As expected, the terrified walking corpses turned back and started walking away two or three times faster.

The juniors chuckled at that, having walking corpse being the scared ones and ‘running’ away was still new to them but no less funny, especially when they get to experience it first-hand.

Wei WuXian scampered to find an excuse to ward off Lan WangJi’s suspicions: **“Wow! HanGuang-Jun, you’re incredible! They ran away the moment they saw you! Haha.”**

Lan WangJi was silent.

So was everyone else.

Wei WuXian gave a light smack to his partner’s arm: “It’s all your fault, if you knew who I was already, why didn’t you tell me? Look at how stupid you made me look.”

Lan WangJi nodded, his eyes tender as he agreed: “Mm, my fault.”

Wei WuXian: “...” He snuggled back into his side and pouted: “...Just so you know.”

The duo were planning to leave after the fruitless encounter when they heard barking in the distance.

Wei WuXian hid behind Lan WangJi immediately, hugging his waist and sunk onto the ground in terror.

‘Ah, it’s Fairy barking for help after I so stupidly entered that stone structure by myself...’ Jin Ling thought to himself guiltily, feeling bad for scaring Wei WuXian. But if it wasn’t for Fairy, Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian would have left... leaving him stuck in that wall.

He shivered.

Lan WangJi spoke: “...It is still far away, why are you hiding?”

Because how early you are able to react to a threat will decide your fate in the wild. Live to see another day. Or end up another nameless body on the side.

Lan WangJi closed his eyes and brought Wei WuXian closer, savoring his presence, his warmth, his scent and that strong, thumping heart.

Wei WuXian stuttered: “I-I-I-I-I’ll h-hide first. Where is it? Where is it?!”

Lan WangJi listened closely for a moment: “It is Jin Ling’s black-haired spiritual dog.”

Jiang Cheng glared at Jin Ling, 'tripped' his ass!

More beads of sweat trickled down Jin Ling’s forehead...

Wei WuXian stood up when he heard Jin Ling’s name but squatted back down from another round of barking. Lan WangJi continued: “For a spiritual dog to bark so furiously, something must have occurred.”

Wei WuXian let out a grunt of complaint but stood up on his shaking legs: “W-w-w-w-w-we should go l-l-l-l-look!”

Jin Ling was touched, his cynophobic da-jiu was willing to brave his fear of dogs out of concern for him without a moment's hesitation...

His mother ruffled his hair: “Remember to thank him later, this has always been something very difficult for him to overcome.” She whispered into his ear.

Lan WangJi didn’t move an inch, so Wei WuXian cried: "HanGuang-Jun, please move, move! If you don’t, what am I supposed to do?!”

Although, whether Wei WuXian would have still gone if he didn’t have Lan WangJi with him is still up for interpretation.

After a moment of silence, Lan WangJi finally spoke: “You.... Let go first.”

The two followed the sound of barking, stumbling about due to Wei WuXian's strong reluctance and extreme need to use Lan WangJi as a shield. However, they ended up walking in circles around the cedar forest as a result of a maze array*.

The maze array has to have been set up by someone, which means... That someone or a group was trying to keep people out...

-

Eventually, the two navigated themselves out of the maze array by continuing to follow the prolonged barking and found the large stone castles within the forest.

Nie HuaiSang bit his lip as he glanced at Jin Ling. The boy must have been really fricking determined if all those countermeasures didn't make him give up and head back home.

Now what is he going to say to the others who are most likely going to learn the Nie family secret too?

There were indeed stone castles there, made of grayish-white stones, covered by ivy and fallen leaves. All of them shaped like a semi-circle dome, like giant bowls flipped upside down on the ground.

Jiang Cheng's eye twitched, when he was lost exploring the dream, he came across some stone buildings that matched the description given by the book.

Although the castle's existence has been proven, the supposed man-eating monster's still remained a mystery.

Jin Ling's black-haired spiritual dog ran around the outside of the castle, making sounds ranging from low grunts to loud barks. When it spotted the approaching Lan WangJi, it tried to direct their attention to one of the stone castles despite it's fear of the man.

Wei WuXian hid behind Lan WangJi, he lamented: "Why isn't it going away? ...Where is it's owner? Why is it's owner not here?!"

Jiang YanLi had her hands grasping tightly together in front of her, even though she knew her son was still alright in present time.

Jin Ling must have been the one who brought his dog here and broke the maze array.

Yet, he was nowhere to be seen or even heard.

Lan WangJi suggested: "We should enter and look inside."

Wei WuXian questioned: "How? There isn't a door."

Nie HuaiSang: ‘That’s because no one other than Nie sect members were supposed to enter them!!!!’

Understanding their problem, the spiritual dog grew excited and is ready to lead the way but being is too afraid to drag Lan WangJi, it chose the only other person available.

Wei WuXian’s soul nearly left his body as he held out both hands to Lan WangJi: “Lan Zhan.....Lan Zhan Lan Zhan...LanZhanLanZhanLan Zhan!!!”

Usually, Wei WuXian’s fear of dogs sparks another round of laughter for whoever is there to witness it.

Now, nobody could even bring themselves to smile.

Jin Ling: ‘I *must* train Fairy to stay away from Wei WuXian from now on!’

Fairy, still in the garden: “Woof?”

The spiritual dog dragged Wei WuXian, who is dragging Lan WangJi, all the way to the other side of the stone castle, where they noticed a human-sized hole in the wall. Going by it’s irregular shape and the rubble around it, someone has blasted this part of the wall open with some kind of explosive.

Clearly, Jin Ling must have done it and went missing after he entered.

Wen Qing and the other adults glanced at Jin Ling with a look that could only be described as reprimanding.

The other juniors looked more concerned than anything else.

Jin Ling: ‘...I learnt my lesson, okay?’

BiChen unsheathed itself by an inch. It’s blade emitted a icy-cold, pale blue glow, illuminating the pitch-black path ahead. Lan WangJi bent down and entered first. Wei WuXian, almost stirred crazy by the dog, rushed inside as well and nearly collided with him. Lan WangJi held his hand to support him and shook his head, either out of disapproval or resignation.

Lan WangJi parted his lips: “I...”

Wei WuXian held up a finger: “No need.” Then his lips curled as he smiled sweetly at him: “How about you give me a kiss? Lan er-gege, won’t you kiss XianXian?”

Of course, Lan WangJi did not hesitate.

The others: ‘You are making it extremely difficult to remain sympathetic towards you if you keep doing this to us...’

Unable to enter the castle due to some sort of invisible barrier, the dog remained outside. Needless to say, that is Wei WuXian's dream come true since he's probably the only guy in the room who prefers being inside a dark, cold, creepy tomb rumored to house a 'man-eating monster' that his own nephew had disappeared in than being outside of said tomb with a friendly dog.

They continued deeper into the castle, their surroundings gradually getting darker as they leave the entrance behind.

The stone castle's roof was spherical. Wei WuXian kicked the pieces of rock next to his feet and it echoed back slightly at him.

He finally couldn't stand it any longer and stopped, pressing his right hand on his right temple, his eyebrows furrowing.

Lan WangJi turned around: "What is it?"

Wei WuXian answered: "...It's so noisy."

"Noisy? But it's completely silent in there, no noise whatsoever." Jin Ling commented

"I wasn't talking about physical noise."

"It seems that the book will go into more detail, young master Jin." Wen Qing answered before either of them continued.

There is only dead silence within the stone castle, just like a tomb. It already looks like a tomb, actually.

However, in Wei WuXian's ears, they are currently surrounded by noise.

"So it's something only senior Wei can hear? Spirits, maybe?" One of the juniors asks.

"Mm." Wei WuXian nodded: "It's the voices of many dead spirits."

The juniors shivered: "Ar... are they the spirits of the people devoured by the monster?!"

Wei WuXian shrugged: "Maybe."

Lan WangJi: "..."

With that uncommitted response, the juniors turned to Wen Qing.

She rolls her eyes: "That's the end of this chapter." She tells them, handing the book to Jiang YanLi on her left again.

Chapter End Notes

1* Nie HuaiSang's nickname in Chinese is 一问三不知 which is a Chinese phrase. It roughly translates to, 'ask once, get three types of I don't know', since if you ask Nie HuaiSang a question, he will have three types of 'don't knows' to answer you. (I can't use that nickname in English without it sounding weird, soooooo I'll stick to what ERS used.)

Reading Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

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And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

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Jiang YanLi quickly took the book, in a hurry to see if her only son was safe.

The noise came from all around them.

In front, behind, left, right, above, below, the noise came from all directions like a torrent, filled with whispering, rustling and laughter. The voices were either male or female, old or young, loud or soft. Wei WuXian could make out a few sporadic sentences, but since they come and go, he couldn't catch a specific word.

It's way too noisy.

Honestly, it really was noisy. But nothing comparable to the three months he spent in the mass graves hills. Wei WuXian reflected in silence.

While a hand presses against his temple, the other reached into his QianKun bag for a compass of evil.

The needle of the compass of evil spun shakily twice before picking up speed, not before long, it started spinning madly!

The juniors' eyes widen, most of them had used a compass of evil before and never once had an experience like that.

“Senior Wei, what does that mean?” The junior next to Nie HuaiSang asked.

“What do you think it means?” Wei WuXian asked back.

The junior mumbled out: “The compass points to the closest or strongest source of resentful energy... Is it picking up multiple energies of the same strength or distance at once?”

“Don’t tell me... you’re surrounded by ghosts right now? That’s why you’re hearing those voices?!” Lan JingYi babbled out after him.

“About right, but if the spirits are really surrounding me, why can’t I sense their presences?”

“...Something was separating the spirits and you? Like they are in a different chamber next to you?” Lan ZiRui answered

“Then what’s stopping them from simply passing through the walls? Unless they are walking corpses, but how could they be above senior Wei?” Zhou YuanXiang pointed out.

Wei WuXian nodded in approval: “An excellent point from all of you, keep it up. The answer is further in the book.” He finished, signalling to his shijie to continue.

That time on Dafan mountain, it was already quite peculiar when the compass of evil is unable to point out the direction. But this time, it spun on it’s own, not stopping for a single moment. This reaction is even more unbelievable than the needle not moving at all.

‘Nah, that compass is still just a prototype. It wasn’t meant to be the end product. I need to swap out the needle for one much sharper...’ Wei WuXian thought to himself, planning ahead of time some of the adjustments he would have to make when he returned. (After he recovers from his beloved’s... *night-time activities* that is.)

The sense of dread in Wei WuXian grew denser, he shouted: “Jin Ling!”

So did the sense of dread within the audiences grew denser, some for other reasons as Jin Ling waited for his relatives’ (Excluding Wei WuXian) reactions.

Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian found nothing after walking about in the stone castle for some time and nothing responded to Wei WuXian’s calls. Eventually, the two found a pitch-black coffin in the center of a chamber deep inside the castle.

While this coffin’s presence here was curious, it was made from an intensely black wood and it’s shape was crafted skillfully beautiful. The more Wei WuXian looked at it, the more affinity he felt for it and gave it a few pats, the wood is sturdy and the sound was firm. He praised: “It’s a good coffin.”

Despite the horror he felt from finding out how three people had disturbed his family’s tomb, Nie HuaiSang still preened at the compliment as a sucker for good art and craftsmanship as well.

The others, however, turned to look at Wei WuXian oddly.

“...What? I’m a craftsman too, why can’t I appreciate good quality work?”

“...”

Then Wei WuXian made a sound of understanding before exclaiming: “Ohhh, I get it. Now I’m offended. Just because I use the undead, doesn’t mean I have some kind of weird fetish! How could you even accuse me of that?!” He complained, wiping ‘tears’ from his eyes.

His doting husband rubbed his back, sending an ice-cold glare to everyone else.

If the ability for a human to petrify people with just a look exists, this would be it.

Everyone else: ‘Urgh... More dog food...’

Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian stood on opposite sides of it. Their eyes met for a brief moment before they reached out and opened the coffin at the same time.

Nie HuaiSang nearly sprung from his seat when he heard that: ‘They OPENED the coffin?!’

Lan WangJi & Wei WuXian: “Pardon the offence...”

After they opened it, the voices multiplied in Wei WuXian’s ears. Like the owners of eyes watching their every move got excited by them opening the coffin. Wei WuXian was prepared for all kinds of outcomes, most of them bad, but there was a sliver of hope that he would find Jin Ling inside...

...The coffin was empty.

“Empty?????” The loudest of the juniors (also known as Lan JingYi) cried: “All that hype for an empty box?!”

Nie HuaiSang squirmed in his seat: ‘EMPTY??! Where’s the saber? ...No, maybe they haven’t seen it yet since they were expecting something much larger. I hope...’

Upon further investigation, the coffin is not empty but rather, it’s contents was just smaller than anticipated.

Inside the coffin, laid a saber.

A saber...

Which means that these stone castles have more to do with the Nie sect than meets the eye.

The Nie HuaiSang who had just released a sigh of relief found everyone’s eyes on him.

Hesitantly (and shakingly), Nie HuaiSang began: “I don’t know-

Everyone: (ㄣ_ㄣ)

...I don’t know. I really don’t know...” He finished anyway, unconvincingly.

Jiang YanLi decides to spare him (And her son’s whereabouts are still unknown), so she went back

to reading.

After looking at the killing-intent heavy saber, the two closed the coffin and moved on to the other chambers where they found more coffins like the first one, all of different ages and containing a saber.

Nie HuaiSang: 'THEY OPENED MORE THAN ONE????!!!!'

Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian: '...Pardon the offence'

Still no sign of Jin Ling.

When Lan WangJi saw his furrowed eyebrows, he thought for a second and placed his zither on the coffin. Raising his hands, a melody poured from his fingers.

He only played a short verse and moved his right hand away from the zither, then stared attentively at the still vibrating strings.

The Lan sect members got it immediately, Lan WangJi is using Inquiry*.

Jin Ling remembered this; he was about to be summoned... (Hopefully his parents won't react too strongly to his death... though temporary...)

Suddenly, the strings quivered, giving out a single note on its own.

Wei WuXian asked: "Inquiry?"

The GusuLan's well-known way of contacting spirits whose names were unknown, and it looks like Lan WangJi has already summoned one.

The language of the zither is a secret technique unique to the GusuLan. Although Wei WuXian is capable of a wide range skills, he can't know everything, like the language of the zither-

Lan WangJi hummed: "I will teach."

Wei WuXian: "Ah? Why? I don't use a zither like you. Besides, it's your family's secret."

Lan WangJi corrected: "...*Our* family's."

Wei WuXian: "?"

Lan WangJi repeated: "Our."

Wei WuXian gave in: "Alright, alright. Our family's."

Lan WangJi's eyes reflected the satisfaction he felt now: "Mm, teach."

Wei WuXian laughed: "Hahahaha, so eager to teach me?"

His partner nodded.

Wei WuXian giggled and chuckled: “Then who am I to refuse such a generous offer? Alright, I’m sure it will come in handy. But I warn you, I’ve have no experience with the zither at all~”

Lan WangJi nodded again: “I know, will be patient with you.”

“Mark your words~”

“Mm.”

Jiang YanLi giggled at the show of affection between her shidi and his husband (and at everyone else’s <minus the Lan juniors & the Wen siblings who remained neutral.> faces.)

He spoke softly: “HanGuang-Jun, ask them for me. What is this place? What is it for? And who built it?”

Jin Ling: ‘How should I know?’

Being a master at the language, Lan WangJi asked flawlessly and without hesitation. Soon, they responded with two notes.

Wei WuXian immediately asked: “What did they say?”

Lan WangJi replied: “Don’t know.”

Everyone: ‘Huh?!’

Wei WuXian: “Huh?”

Lan WangJi elaborated slowly: “They said, ‘Don’t know.’.”

Everyone: -Sighs in relief-

“...” Wei WuXian stared at him and thought of the conversation involving ‘SuBian’ many years ago. He was speechless as he rubbed his nose, thinking to himself: ‘Lan Zhan has improved, he even learned to prank me.’

The corner of Lan WangJi’s lip twitched: “Mm”

Wei Ying was right, it was pretty enjoyable. ~~(Revenge was sweet.)~~

Since they got nothing from those questions, Lan WangJi asked one of his own and got the same answer.

“What did you ask?”

Lan WangJi answered: “Cause of death.”

Jin Ling: ‘Dunno, when I got into that chamber, my eyes went black instantly.’

Wei WuXian spoke: “If they were killed when they were unaware, it’s possible for them to not know how they died. Why don’t you ask if they know who killed them.”

Lan WangJi did so. Again, same reply.

Lan JingYi narrowed his eyes: “Don’t know what this place is, don’t know how they died, don’t know who killed them. Never have I seen a ghost so clueless before.”

Jin Ling glared.

Lan JingYi: ‘...What is the young mistress angry at now?’

“Let’s change the question. Ask for their gender. They can’t not know that.”

...”Male.”

Wei WuXian spoke: “We finally know something. Now ask if a boy about fifteen to sixteen came here or not.”

...”Yes.”

Wei WuXian asked again: “Where is he now?”

...”Right here.”

A chill went up everyone’s spine, particularly the people with the closest bond to Jin Ling.

The ‘here’ must be referring to this stone castle, which they already searched every nook and cranny of.

Wei WuXian questioned: “He can’t lie, right?”

Lan WangJi responded: “I am here, so he cannot.”

...After pondering for a bit, he played two verses. After receiving the answer, his face changed slightly. Alarmed by this, Wei WuXian asked: “What did you ask?”

Lan WangJi answered: “His age; where was he from.”

Out of worry and the sense of foreboding she felt, Jiang YanLi read ahead a few...

...No, she must have read it wrong... She thought as she re-read that sentence.

...No, it can't... be...

Her vision went black immediately once her mind registered it as the truth.

“Mom!!!”

“Shijie!!!”

“Jie!!!”

“A-Li!!!”

“Mrs Jin!”

“Lady Jiang!”

Shouts filled the hall as multiple hands hurried to support Jiang YanLi’s figure.

...

Both Wen Qing and Jin Ling next to her grabbed on to her and settled her on the ground gently.

“A sudden drop in blood pressure. Most likely due to shock from whatever she’s seen or... read in this case.” Wen Qing explained after checking her pulse, nodding her head towards the abandoned book: “But, she will be fine.”

Jin ZiXuan breathe out a long sigh of relief at the doctor’s diagnosis and picked up the book... he had his suspicions...

He flipped opened the book and briefly scanned though the page his wife was reading previously.

He paused at a certain sentence.

His face was dark as he passed the book to his son: “Read the rest out in your mother’s place.”

Jin Ling bit his lip, reaching for the book...

...Lan WangJi answered: “Fifteen years old, from LanLing.”

...

...

...

Everyone: “...”

Lan JingYi jumped from his seat: “Huh?!! Jin Ling, you are dead?!!!”

Jin Ling: “You’re the one that’s dead, Lan JingYi! I’m alive!”

Jiang Cheng clicked his tongue: “Well, now I know why you didn’t say anything. Aren’t you tired of nearly dying and needing another’s rescue all the time?!”

Feeling bad for his nephew, Wei WuXian spoke up: “Jiang Cheng, he’s learned his lesson. We’ve been though this before. No reason to keep scolding him for the same thing. If it doesn't stick, it doesn't stick.”

Jiang Cheng glanced at him out of the corner of his eye: “Tch, if I don’t, will he register the fact

that he actually *nearly died* into that head of his? ...Whatever, I'm tired of this anyways, I'm just wasting my saliva. Jin Ling, you better apologize to your mother later when she wakes up."

Jin Ling slowly nodded, eyes filled with regret.

Now that they knew Lan WangJi had summoned Jin Ling's still living spirit as it was leaving his body, he strummed a few more verses and waited for the reply.

The reply this time was much longer. After that, Lan WangJi told instructed Wei WuXian: "From your current position, face the southwest and listen for strums. With every strum, take a step forward. When the zither stops, it will be right before you.' "

The Lan juniors are on the edge of their seats now.

Wei WuXian turned to the southwest wordlessly. Behind him, the zither sounded seven times and he took seven steps. However, there was nothing in front of him.

The zither continued, but the distance between each note grew more and more, so he walked slower. Another step, two steps, three steps...

The zither finally stopped at the sixth step and stayed silent.

And in front of him, is only a wall.

The wall was made from grayish-white stone bricks, pieced together tightly. Wei WuXian turned around, exclaiming: "...He's in the wall?!"

Everyone shivered, eyes widening.

Nie HuaiSang covered his face.

Jiang YanLi is still unconscious, it's probably for the best if she doesn't hear this part.

BiChen unsheathed, four streaks of blue light came forth and a 井 * is carved neatly into the wall. The two went up to it and started taking apart the wall by hand, revealing the large amount of black dirt.

The walls of the castle are doubled layer, with black dirt filled in between the two layers of stone bricks.

With his bare hands, Wei WuXian dug out a large patch of dirt. There, surrounded by black dirt, was a human's face with their eyes tightly shut.

It was the missing Jin Ling!

Jin ZiXuan, Jiang Cheng and the Lan juniors released the breath they weren't even aware they were holding.

Now that Jin Ling's face wasn't completely buried under dirt, he could finally breathe, resuscitating him from the brink of death. It was just sheer luck that Lan WangJi's Inquiry had caught Jin Ling's spirit before it could have left its body for good as it dies of asphyxiation.

Jin ZiXuan had never felt gratitude comparable to his wife's forgiveness until now as he saluted Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian: "You have my gratitude for saving my son's life, HanGuang-Jun, young master Wei."

Jin Ling followed; his words much softer in volume compared to his father's: "Thank you very much... A...and I apologize for the trouble I have caused."

Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian saluted back.

But now that Jin Ling's near escape from death has been uncovered, the more suspicious the Nie sect became.

Nie HuaiSang: 'My sect and I had nothing to do with this... Young master Jin destroyed that wall and entered on his own accord...'

The two dug him out hastily. However, unexpectedly like pulling dirt up along with the carrot, after Jin Ling's upper body had been pulled out, the sword on his back dragged out something else.

An ashen human arm bone!

Another chill shot up every junior's spine, Jin Ling's included.

While Lan WangJi checked Jin Ling's pulse, Wei WuXian poked around the dirt where the arm bone is using BiChen as his shovel. It wasn't long before an entire skeleton was unearthed. It was exactly like how Jin Ling was, standing straight up and encased in dirt. Wei WuXian dug a little more and found a second skeleton. This one hasn't finished decomposing, so some parts of her features and clothing are still visible. She was bending, unlike the previous one due to the third skeleton squatting beside her.

Wei WuXian decides against digging further.

He backed away a few steps, the noise in his ears turbulent as tidal waves.

He was sure of it now. This entire stone castle's thick walls, are completely filled with human corpses.

Above, below, southeast, northwest; standing, sitting, lying, squatting...

Just what on earth was this place?!

Nie HuaiSang: 'My families' ancestral tomb...'

Jin Ling swiftly passed the book to his father.

Jin ZiXuan took the book, but his eyes were focused on his wife: "If it is alright with the rest of you, I'll like to wait for my wife to wake up before reading."

While the rest nodded in agreement, Wen Qing checked Jiang YanLi's pulse again: "Her blood pressure has returned to normal, she should wake up in a few minutes time."

Chapter End Notes

1* Inquiry or 问灵 / Wen Ling, it directly translates to 'asking spirits'.

2* 井 Jing, this character means 'well' as in the well you would fetch water from.

Reading Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Sorry for the joke I played on April Fools, here's the actual chapter XD

Chapter Notes

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Jiang YanLi woke up about three minutes after Jin Ling had finished the previous chapter.

Despite being groggy from her light slumber, she sat up and enveloped Jin Ling in a tight hug the moment she could even barely make out her son's face.

Jin Ling felt his eyes water: "...Mom, I'm sorry. I really am. And... I'm still alive, mom. HanGuang-Jun and Wei Wu- Da-jiu saved me."

Jiang YanLi pulled back and smiled at her son: "As long as you are alright. That's all that matters. I'm sorry for overreacting, it must have given you such scare."

Jin Ling nodded, relaxing in his mother and later, also his father's hold on both of them.

...

Eventually, Jiang YanLi reluctantly lefted her husband's arms and bowed to the rest: "I apologise for all the trouble my overreaction may have caused."

Lan XiChen shook his head: "Mrs Jin, that reaction is normal for a mother to have. You have caused no trouble at all."

Lan SiZhui gave a nod: "My sect leader speaks the truth, Mrs Jin. We are simply relieved that it

was nothing serious.”

“I nearly had a heart attack when I heard that too, but then I was like ‘HanGuang-Jun and senior Wei were there, so Jin Ling *must* be fine.” Lan JingYi chimed in.

Jiang YanLi giggled and turned to give her thanks to both Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian for saving Jin Ling.

Wei WuXian placed his hands behind his head in a relaxed manner: “Why thank me? Jin Ling is my nephew too~”

Lan WangJi saluted: “Of course, Mrs Jin.”

Jiang YanLi giggled again: “A-Zhan, didn’t I tell you just now to call me shijie as well?”

“Mm, Mrs- shijie.”

After his wife had been filled in on what she had missed, Jin ZiXuan returned to the book.

At this moment, the unconscious Jin Ling sat up all of a sudden.

In front of the two, he clumsily crawled up from the ground with his eyes still closed.

“Is he... sleepwalking?” Lan JingYi asked incredulously, looking like he is just barely holding his laughter in.

Jin Ling huffed, feeling his cheeks warming. His reputation was really taking a toll.

Curious as to what he is going to do, Wei WuXian didn’t do anything-

Jin Ling sent an annoyed glare over to the man.

He watched as he slowly walked around himself and with a single stride, re-entered the wall, right where he was buried with both hands at his side just like the position he was in just now.

Everyone: “...”

“Is he... possessed?” Lan JingYi asked again.

Wei WuXian chuckled: “Sort of.”

Wei WuXian got him out of the wall again, finding the situation both hilarious as well as bizarre. He was just about to tell Lan WangJi that they shouldn’t stay here for long until he was trembling in fear because of the distant but furious barks of a dog. Ever since they entered, that black-haired spiritual dog has been obediently sitting outside the entrance wagging its tail, anxiously and quite pathetically waiting for them to bring its owner back out.

Jiang Cheng & Jin ZiXuan: 'Dogs are the best!'

Jin Ling: 'Of course! Especially, Fairy! I trained him myself!'

Wei WuXian, while the three above are busy fanclubbing over the existence of the canine family: 'I don't give a sh*t, keep it, him, her, whatever away from me!!!'

Anyways, the dog never once barked while it waited unlike what it is doing now.

Lan WangJi spoke: "Something happened outside the castle."

With Wei WuXian carrying Jin Ling, the two rushed outside the castle.

...The black-haired spiritual dog's back faced them as it growled lowly in a certain direction. Although, Wei WuXian was able to force himself to come out, he couldn't stand hearing this kind of sounds and started taking a few steps backwards. But when the dog turned its head back and when it spotted Jin Ling on his back, it practically pounced over. Wei WuXian screamed and nearly tried to throw Jin Ling over-

Jiang Cheng, Jin Ling and Jin ZiXuan glared at Wei WuXian.

Wei WuXian held his hands up: "Ultimately, I didn't do that."

-but Lan WangJi shifted in front of him.

The black-haired spiritual dog immediately stopped; tail tucked in between its legs again. Its tongue was not sticking out due to the presence of something in its mouth which Lan WangJi retrieved and gave to Wei WuXian to examine. It was a piece of someone's robe. A someone who must have been suspiciously roaming around here recently, otherwise, the spiritual dog wouldn't have been so hostile.

Nie HuaiSang: '...My perfectly nice robe...'

Wei WuXian spoke: "They must not have gone far yet. Let's go after them!"

However, Lan WangJi replied: "Unnecessary. I know who it is."

Wei WuXian responded: "I know as well. It must be the same group who spread the rumours of XingLu Ridge, released the walking corpses, set up the maze array and built the stone castle. Not to mention those sabers. If we don't catch them now, it will bothersome to do so later.

'I will much prefer it if you just go to the Unclean Realm and find me! Rather than have HanGuang-Jun chase after the flightless me on BiChen...' Nie HuaiSang thought to himself as he continues to shield himself from *everyone's* accusing eyes he could still feel on him.

Lan WangJi spoke: "I will go after them. What about you and Jin Ling?"

Wei WuXian answered: "I'll take him down XingLu Ridge and settle down somewhere in QingHe, around the area we met that trader. We'll meet up there."

Lan WangJi hesitated a little so Wei WuXian continued: **“Go, any later and that person would have escaped. I’ll show up!”**

After hearing that that ‘I’ll show up’, Lan WangJi took a deep look at him and turned to leave without further words.

Wei WuXian smiled (dreamily) to himself. Nope, not running away anymore. Lan Zhan, you’re stuck with me forever now.

Lan WangJi hugged him tightly.

Jin ZiXuan: ‘Why am I read out their lovey-dovey moments..?’

But the moment was ruined when Lan WangJi got out of the way and the spiritual dog tried to pounce again. **Wei WuXian immediately yelped: “W-w-w-wait! Take the dog away! Take it away!!!”**

And so Lan WangJi has to go back and take the dog with him...

Despite knowing his reasons, some chuckles escaped from the juniors’ mouths.

It was still pretty funny...

Now that the dog is following Lan WangJi instead of him, Wei WuXian calmed down and started heading back to QingHe.

It was nearly dusk when they reached QingHe, getting a lot of attention from onlookers for being a muddy person carrying another muddy person. So Wei WuXian bought two new sets of clothing for the two of them and got a room in an inn using the money from Lan WangJi’s pouch.

When Wei WuXian was removing Jin Ling’s muddied clothing, he stopped suddenly.

Jin ZiXuan’s eyebrows furrowed in worry upon reading the following lines.

There seems to be an area of shadow on Jin Ling’s leg. Wei WuXian knelt down to roll his pants up higher to find out that it wasn’t a shadow, but a patch of darkness. It wasn’t a like this due to a bruising, but rather a curse mark.

Upon listening to the description of a curse mark, Jiang YanLi immediately pulled up her son’s pant legs, only to reveal legs free of any kind of blemish or discoloration.

As Jin Ling comforted his mother of his safety, he was confused, he didn’t see black markings of any kind on either of his legs at all. While he searched through his memories, he could hear the familiar sound of his uncle reprimanding him.

“-didn’t even tell me you have a curse mark on you?! Were you not paying attention in your classes? A curse mark must be handled immediately! Do you not want your legs?!”

“I know that! But I didn’t see any curse marks on my body!”

On that note, they all turned to the only person who knew of the curse mark.

Wei WuXian: "..."

Jin Ling figured that Wei WuXian must have gotten rid of it for him, considering the amount of skills this man has under his sleeves is pretty much endless, he wouldn't be surprised if he knew of a way to get rid of a curse mark. "...Did you get rid of it? Thank you... Da-jiu."

Wei WuXian gave a huge smile back, disguising the discomfort he is currently feeling.

Jin ZiXuan read out the later paragraphs to himself, eyes narrowing in confusion as he saw no sign of Wei WuXian getting rid of the curse mark from his son's leg. Yet, at least.

But he went back to reading it out loud.

The curse mark was an extremely powerful one, Jin Ling's leg had turned black almost entirely. Fortunately, the curse mark seems to only inhabit his leg when Wei WuXian removed more of his clothing (please insert vinegar here.) to check his upper body.

Unfortunately, this is when Jin Ling chose to wake up.

And he reacted like a normal boy would to a confirmed homosexual guy in such a close proximity to his (horrifyingly) undressed body.

He immediately got up, his face bright red as he screeched: "W-WH-WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!"

Some people burst into laughter while Jin Ling turned red like he had before.

Wei WuXian grinned: "Oh, you're awake."

Like he had just suffered a great shock, Jin Ling held his inner robes* together and darted to the corner of the bed: "What do you want?! Where are clothes?! Where's my sword?! Where's my dog?!"

Wei WuXian replied: "I was just about to dress you."

Although both his expression and tone were as kind hearted as a grandmother about to place a coat on her grandson. Jin Ling stuck to the wall with his disheveled hair: "I'M NOT A CUTSLEEVE!!!"

The laughter that had just stopped came right back, louder than ever as more people joined in.

Wei WuXian laughed: "Hahahaha! The one with the impure thoughts was you, my dear nephew!"

"Who wouldn't think like that in this situation?!" Jin Ling yelled back

Wei WuXian beamed: "What a coincidence, I am!"

Somehow, the Lan juniors found themselves laughing even harder. 'Senior Wei just could not cut him some slack!' They thought to themselves now that they were not the butt of said man's teasing.

Jin Ling glared harder at his laughing eldest uncle.

Even Jin ZiXuan was struggling to continue reading as was holding back laughter as well. No reason to anger his son any more especially since they kind of made up.

Jin Ling took up his sword propped next to his bed to sort of defend himself (or commit suicide to protect his chastity, same thing) as Wei WuXian finally managed to stop himself from laughing:
“What are you scared of? It was just a joke! I put so much effort into digging you out of that wall and you didn’t thank me.”

“Yeah, haven’t thanked me and HanGuang-Jun until just now.”

“...I-I have now.” Jin Ling turned his face away from him, face flushed slightly again.

Amid the ruckus, Jin Ling ran his hand through his hair to tidy it up a little to look a bit more decent as he continued to rage: “If it wasn’t for that, I would have killed you ten thousand times already for t-t-taking of my clothes!”

Wei WuXian replied: “Don’t. Dying once was already painful enough-

Jin ZiXuan paused mid-sentence to glance over to Wei WuXian.

Feeling everyone’s eyes on him, Wei WuXian simply smiled and beckoned to Jin ZiXuan to continue with the story.

Lan WangJi pressed his lips to Wei WuXian head again, with no complaints from anyone.

Jin Ling stared at his hands, now he knew what Wei WuXian meant by that.

Later on, after Wei WuXian’s identity was exposed... he...

Guess they will get to that a lot later...

Confused by that last statement, Jin Ling lowered his sword.

It turns out that has some memories from his time being in the wall and the Inquiry. While he was embarrassed for being rescued by the ‘lunatic’, he realized how much time has passed, took his own clothing and ran out of the inn before Wei WuXian had gave him the new clothing.

Wei WuXian was about to let him go until he remembered the serious problem that is the curse mark still present on Jin Ling’s leg.

‘Oh, so he didn’t get rid of the curse mark before I was awake... Then when did he do it..?’ Jin Ling thought to himself, half-listening at this point since he knew what was going to happen.

Wei WuXian called for him to return which Jin Ling responded with a yell: “Don’t follow me!”
He was nimble and easily got out of the inn with a few strides of his long legs. Wei WuXian

chased after him for a couple of blocks but actually lost him later.

“Jin Ling.” Jin ZiXuan, Jiang YanLi and Jiang Cheng all called out at the same time.

Jin Ling: “...I’m sorry.”

“*For?*” Jin ZiXuan pressed.

“...Causing trouble for you.”

Wei WuXian’s lip twitch upward in amusement: “So difficult? I did so much for you and it’s so hard for you to say sorry or thank you? You owe me a lot more than just this.”

Jin Ling gave him a look.

Wei WuXian waved him off.

After searching for some time, twilight falls, the number of people out on the streets also falls. Wei WuXian was very frustrated now: “Damnit. This kid is so unreasonable.”

Jin Ling bit the inside of his cheek, reading about his actions from Wei WuXian’s perspective made him feel like such an ungrateful little brat when all he does is make things difficult for the people who care for him.

Just as he was about to give up-

Jin Ling: “...”

Everyone turned to Wei WuXian with the same question in their minds: ‘You were going to *give up*?!’

Wei WuXian held up his hands: “Give up on chasing him! Not give up on dealing with the curse mark! I was just thinking of regrouping with HanGuang-Jun and have him talk to Jiang Cheng and Jin Ling about it for me because I sure can’t! Without the temperamental whip-happy guy in purple striking me with ZiDian the moment he saw me again, that is.”

That reminder made Lan WangJi send an ice-cold death glare to the man in purple.

Jiang Cheng glares back.

-the infuriated voice of a young man came from in front of him, at the far end of the street: “Say a few things about you and you disappear. Are you a young mistress? Your temper has been getting worse!”

‘He learnt it from his jiujiu, obviously. Even if he didn’t inherit that attitude, constantly having to listen to his nagging probably fuelled his rebellious streak and temper. And if he is already annoyed, what other way of responding to someone shouting at him other than shouting back or walking out on it?’ Wei WuXian deadpanned at both jiujiu and nephew: ‘It really didn’t help that Jin Ling’s personality *is* like that... urgh... how did our gentle shijie’s child turned out to be the spitting image of Jiang Cheng’s temper?’

Jiang Cheng turned to glare at his shixiong, almost like he knew what he was thinking.

Jiang YanLi giggled: “Look, A-Ling. Aren’t you lucky? You have two amazing jiujiu’s who love you so much in their own way~” She whispered.

Then she paused and hugged her son, ruffling his hair.

“Try not to worry them. But you can rely on your two jiujiu if you do run into inevitable trouble. Your father and I will have nothing to worry about when it is time for us to return to the heavens.”

Jin Ling’s eyes watered.

Jin ZiXuan pulled his family into a tight hug as much as he could with only one arm as he still needs to read.

That reprimanding voice belongs to Jiang Cheng.

While the uncle and nephew argue, Wei WuXian hid in an alleyway.

Jiang Cheng spoke: “Nothing? You look like you just rolled in a muddy ditch and you say, ‘nothing’s happen’? Aren’t you embarrassed to be wearing your sect uniform like that? Hurry back and change it! Now tell me, what did you encounter today?”

Jin Ling replied impatiently: “I told you, I didn’t encounter anything. I just tripped. It was a complete waste of time. Ow!” He shouted: “Don’t tug on me like that! I’m not three years old!”

Jin ZiXuan glanced at his sulking son in slight disapproval.

Jiang YanLi, on the other hand, giggled. Mrs Jin, Jin ZiXuan’s mother told her about her son’s childhood and the way her own son is acting matches the description Mrs Jin had gave about kid Jin ZiXuan.

Jiang Cheng spoke harshly: “I can’t discipline you now? Let me tell you now, I can still tug on you even when you are thirty. The next time you dare to run off on your own without telling anyone, the whip awaits you!”

Jin Ling responded: “It’s because I don’t want anyone’s help or anyone to discipline me that I went alone.”

Jiang Cheng glared at Jin Ling: “If it wasn’t for this book, I would never have known you nearly died that day. And I wouldn’t even be able to bury a body!”

Jin Ling sighed at the nagging but didn’t argue.

Wei WuXian thought to himself: ‘I don’t know about anything else, but Jiang Cheng was right about his young mistress temper.’

Jin Ling: “...”

Jiang Cheng questioned: “So? What did you catch? Where is that black-haired spiritual dog your shushu gave you?”

Speaking of the devil (also bane of Wei WuXian's existence), a familiar bark came.

Immediately, Wei WuXian dashed out of his hiding place, revealing himself to the Jiang sect leader, his nephew and a whole lot of Jiang sect disciples.

Lan WangJi mentally beat himself over the fact that Jiang Cheng only caught Wei WuXian due to his much too early release of Fairy. After he had caught the person snooping around and placed him in an inn where Wei WuXian told him they will meet. Figuring that Wei WuXian was just a little late, he waited downstairs for him and sent the dog on its way back to where he came from so that Wei WuXian wouldn't have to see it when he shows up.

That one mistake could have cost him Wei WuXian a second time.

When Wei WuXian saw what he had done, he immediately turned around and tried to make a break for it.

And as Wei WuXian predicted, Jiang Cheng's first course of action is to whip out ZiDian.

And then dragged Wei WuXian into an inn after (scaring then) paying the owner, Jin Ling and the Jiang sect disciples left to stand guard outside.

The gloomy face that was always filled with arrogance and satire, suddenly came alive in every corner of it. Although, it was difficult to deduce it as resentful wrath, bone-seeping hatred or immense ecstasy.

At the last few words, Lan WangJi pushed his cultivational partner behind him (as much as he could with both of them remaining seated) protectively and shot a glare of warning at Jiang Cheng.

Jiang Cheng: '\$%&*#@^ Cutsleeves...'

Chapter End Notes

1* Unclean Realm 不淨世, home of the QingHe Nie sect.

2* Their clothing comprise of more than one layer. {Coat (Not always), Outer robes, inner robes, undergarments (Mostly pants and an extra small top for women.)

[illegible]

Happy early birthday to Wen Ning, our guardian angel! 11 April

Reading Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

...Sorry for the long wait, I was just really unsure of this chapter...

Chapter Notes

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Ironically, Jiang Cheng is next to read.

Also ironically, this is the chapter he is supposed to read.

He turned to his side to realized that Nie HuaiSang has scooted away from him, just in case he decides to ~~enuek~~ hand the book over to him again.

...

F*ck it.

Jiang Cheng continued: “Lend me your dog.”

Wei WuXian gulped at the memory: ‘Was that *really* necessary?! Or was that sadist using ‘confirming my identity’ as an excuse to torture me?!’

Wei WuXian reacted just as Jiang Cheng had expected him to if he was really who he thought he was.

Proving that he was who Jiang Cheng suspected him of being.

But after a moment of silence, Jiang Cheng knocked the steaming cup of tea he had just poured, shattering it.

The people in the room could just feel the tension.

Jiang Cheng's lip twitched: "You.....don't have anything to say to me?"

Jiang Cheng breathe in deeply; this was absolutely embarrassing to read out. Since he now knows he had no right to act this way...

Wei WuXian peeked at Jiang Cheng in concern but remained silent.

With a sincere tone, Wei WuXian replied: "I don't know what to say to you."

Jiang Cheng whispered back: "You really haven't learnt anything."

In the past, their conversations were always full of resorting and arguing, so Wei WuXian blurted out thoughtlessly: "You haven't made any progress either."

Enraged, Jiang Cheng laughed: "Alright, then let's see, who is the one that has not made any progress."

Jiang Cheng's and surprisingly also Wei WuXian's faces had both turned red.

This all sounds... very childish.

Jiang YanLi wasn't sure if she should laugh or sigh.

It was obvious to her that her little brothers still care about each other to the point of subconsciously treating each other the same as have done in the past.

If only the two would just talk. No arguments, no teasing, no blaming, no temper tantrums, just talk.

But this was Jiang Cheng and Wei WuXian we were talking about, so its never going to happen.

Childish argument or not, Jiang Cheng decides to prove his point.

Which was scaring Wei WuXian on purpose with the dog.

So now he's the one on the other end of multiple glares from every direction, most prominent being from the second young master of Lan himself.

Jin Ling: "I can't believe you used Fairy for that! Shouldn't have lent him to you."

Jiang Cheng seethed and was about to-

"A-Cheng."

A firm but gentle voice stops him.

His sister is still smiling gently as she continued slowly.

“No soup for you later.”

“...”

Jiang Cheng’s eyebrows unfurrowed slowly as he fully comprehended what was just said.

Wei WuXian however, sent a smug smirk at him before he raised the pitch of his voice to what almost resembled one of a young girl’s: “Shijie~ ChengCheng bullied me! He knew XianXian's afraid of dogs and he still did that to XianXian! XianXian’s scared, XianXian wants shijie’s lotus and pork rip soup!”

Almost everyone’s face morphed into an annoyed (some disgusted) scowl but Jiang YanLi, however, giggled: “Alright alright, shijie will make soup later. XianXian’s bullied by ChengCheng. So you get his portion of soup, alright?”

“Mm! XianXian can wait! XianXian loves shijie’s soup! XianXian wants to drink a lot of soup! Nothing for ChengCheng!”

“Mm-hm, nothing for A-Cheng.”

Jiang Cheng: ‘Jie... Am I not your real younger brother..?’

“Nothing for Jin peacock either!”

“Okay, nothing for ZiXuan.”

Jin ZiXuan: ‘What?! You can’t be serio-

“Make enough for everyone else too~”

“Of course~ A-Zhan can help out too, your soup is excellent as well!”

Lan WangJi saluted: “Thank you, shijie.”

Wei WuXian immediately glued himself to his partner's side: "Of course it is~ Gege practiced all the time just for his beloved little XianXian~"

"Mm"

Only some outside invisible force is prohibiting Jiang Cheng from going to the other side of the room and strangling his shameless shixiong to death...

Unlike the present time Wei WuXian, the one in the past aka in the book, was not in the best situation.

Jiang Cheng gritted his teeth as he read out the next few sentences, feeling the guilt twisting his guts.

...He is trembling from head to toe. He couldn’t remember much of his childhood years on the streets, but there is something he remembers, and it was the terror of being chased, the

pierc- Jiang Cheng stopped for a deep breath- **-piercing pain of claws and teeth sinking into flesh. The fear from those times wedged itself deep in his heart and it couldn't be overcome or eased no matter what he tried.**

Wei WuXian snuggled into his husband's tight embrace.

Jiang Cheng moved on with another disgusted scowl on his face.

Suddenly, Jiang Cheng glanced at him sideways: "Who were you calling?"

Being so terrified, Wei WuXian wasn't even aware that he had subconsciously called out a certain someone's name.

Jiang Cheng called the dog away and asked: "Speaking of which, I forgot to ask you, since when was your relationship with Lan WangJi so good?"

The name he called out was Lan WangJi's.

Not the name Jiang Cheng like he used to in the past, but the name of the second jade of Lan.

Jiang Cheng closed his eyes.

Unbeknownst to him, Lan WangJi was also beating himself over his inability to express his feelings. It really seems that everyone, but his brother thinks he and Wei WuXian didn't have a good relationship. And he didn't even notice that thanks to his limited social capabilities.

Jiang Cheng looked at the next lines, preparing himself to be yelled at. Again.

Jiang Cheng smiled sinisterly: "Back on Dafan mountain, isn't it curious how he went that far to defend you?"

At this reminder, Wei WuXian got out of his lover's embrace to glare at his sworn brother.

A second later, he corrected: "No. Lan WangJi might not necessarily be defending you. I'm sure the GusuLan hasn't forgotten what you have done with that dog of yours-

The Lan family members' faces darkened.

"No! That... h-has nothing to do with young master Wei! I-I went out of control! I alone am responsible for-

Wei WuXian clapped a hand on his shoulder: "Wen Ning, enough. It has nothing to do with you."

"Young master... Wei. But Wen Ning-

Wen Qing got up and walked into the center of the room, where she knelt down in front of the Lan sect leader and the elder: "My brother's sins, were due to my inability to educate him and control him. The Lan disciples who have lost their lives that day, was all my fault. I will never ask for your forgiveness but the one who should be blamed was me!"

"Jiejie!"

“Keep quiet, A-Ning!”

“Qing-jie! I’m the one who controls him-

“Miss Wen, please stand up.” Lan QiRen spoke quietly.

Everyone turned to look at him.

“What has happened cannot be changed, and no matter what you, your brother and Wei WuXian will tell us, those disciples of my sect’s will never return. There is no need for your apologies.”

Wen Ning lowered his head to hide his teary eyes, standing up to help his sister up.

Wei WuXian covered his face with his hands.

Seeing his partner like this, Lan WangJi spoke: “Uncle...

“WangJi, there is nothing more to say. Perhaps they were desperate, perhaps they have been given an unjustified sentence or dare I say, fell into the Jin sect’s plans for their conquest for power. Even if all of this is true, they still slaughtered our innocent family members. They still slaughtered our innocent family members, even after you spoke in their defense for them. No matter how many apologies they give us, our kin remain dead! How could we accept their apology?! Do you expect me to forgive them? Can you forgive them?”

A strange, boiling sensation made itself known in Lan WangJi. He replied clearly: “...Yes. Because they have forgiven us. For not helping them.”

Everyone turned to him in shock.

“YOU-

“Uncle, our sect values righteousness. We were to help the weak. Yet, the GusuLan did not defend those innocents, whose only sin was to have the surname ‘Wen’. One cannot decide their birthright, but they can decide their actions in life. I believe that applies to them. But nobody heeds their pleas nor stand up for them other than one Wei WuXian. One person. No sects. Not even our most ‘righteous’ sect stood up for them. Perhaps our fellow sect members deaths were simply retribution-”

The Lan elder felt his blood boiling as he interrupted: “LAN WANGJI! HAVE YOU DEFECTED?! YOU-

“Elder Lan! Please... wait. Lan Zhan he-

“Uncle.” Lan XiChen spoke up: “Please. WangJi, you as well.”

“Brother...”

“You are claiming that our sect was punished because we did not live up to our belief. Indirectly, you were actually accusing me for it. The sect leader, for the actions or lack of actions of a sect were depended on his decision.”

Lan WangJi’s eyes widen, but when he tried to decline, his brother continued.

Lan XiChen sighed: “Perhaps it is true.”

Lan WangJi: “!!!”

Lan QiRen: “XiChen... you-

“Uncle, please. Ever since I found out about what Jin GuangYao has been doing, I was already questioning if I was even fit to carry the role of being sect leader to our GusuLan.” He continued, the words that had occupied his mind for the entire duration of his seclusion came tumbling out at increasing speeds: “There were many actions that were performed because he told me to, there were things I ignored *because* he told me to. I played a role in his malicious schemes dozens of times! Because of him, I ignored my eldest sworn brother’s words and it got him killed. In fact, *I* was the one that taught him a family secret that he used to carry out his scheme. WangJi had pleaded with me to help him with Wei WuXian and the remnants of the Wen sect. I asked *him* for advice as well! He told me that the Wen remnants were definitely prisoners of war who have contributed in the murder of many of the Jin sect members and WangJi was merely acting upon irrational, undetermined feelings for young master Wei! I blindly listened to him, uncle! The ghost general who we have blamed for killing our sect members?! I created him! Our sect members’ deaths, the orphaned young master Jin, the innocent Wen remnants’ deaths, WangJi and young master Wei’s sufferings, the murder and dismemberment of ChiFeng-zun, my eldest sworn brother... It was all because I was blind and spineless!” He cried, his tears making themselves known as they streamed down his face.

Everyone felt their hearts drop.

But none as much as Lan QiRen and Lan WangJi.

“Brother, I never once thought that...

“I know, WangJi. You would never have. And I am sure it was the same for young master Wei. You were both, far more righteous than I have and will ever be.” The elder jade of Lan wiped his tears away, stood up and bowed gracefully to all the occupants in the room.

With a ‘I seemed to have made myself a joke in front of you all. For that, I sincerely apologize and will excuse myself out.’ He left the hall.

Lan WangJi immediately got up.

“WangJi.”

“Uncle...”

“Let him go.” Lan QiRen sighed before also excusing himself.

...

Wen Ning trembled: “I-I-I am so s-s-sorry! I made s-s-such a-a m-mess!”

Wen Qing hugged her brother tightly, tears making an appearance in her eyes as well.

Lan WangJi covered his mouth, silently casting a silence spell on himself as punishment. He tried to speak his mind to multiple people for once and it ended up like this. Talking just is not meant for him, he should have kept to his one line responses. In regret, he promised himself that this is the last time he will attempt that.

Wei WuXian held his hand: “Why... did you-

Lan WangJi silenced him as well and held him tightly to himself, shaking in self-blame.

He had no idea what got into him either.

Chaos really does originate from one's mouth.

Rule Eighty-five: Speak meagerly, for too many words only bring harm.

He will continue to obey that rule.

The Jin family were completely silent, why was ZeWu-Jun blaming himself for the sins of their sect?

If there is anyone to blame, it was them.

Jiang YanLi suppressed a sob.

Jin ZiXuan had his head and shoulders bowed, as if he was all to blame.

The juniors were both depressed and confused.

Nie HuaiSang remained neutral, his face was indescribable as he stared at the ground.

Jiang Cheng berated himself in his head, this was all because of his past words.

Besides, it was... far from ZeWu-Jun's fault alone...

...

MengMo's voice resonated throughout the room.

"We will have a break earlier than usual then."

Chapter End Notes

How did this happen? Don't know, and I'm the one who wrote it... Going with the flow isn't the best plan after all.

If everyone is a bit more emotional than usual (Totally OOC), I blame it all on 'it's because they are in their own mind, where there is no emotional barriers and they will react if give the proper trigger.' Cause they need to TALK.

Excuses excuses~

Break 4 - Two sides of the same coin

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No one argued with the mythical dream creature as the remaining group split up. Some followed the Lan sect leader and elder's example and left the hall, while the rest stayed there in silence.

“...” With a heavy heart, Jiang Cheng placed the book down, got up and left as well, no longer sitting there as Jin ZiXuan tries to sooth his upset wife.

...

Taking another exit this time so that he doesn't end up in that endless route he had gotten lost in previously, Jiang Cheng released a breath when he walked into the fancy courtyard of some noble families' home.

At least it wasn't the QishanWen archery competition grounds again. If he got lost a second time in here, he knew he will never hear the end of it from that annoyance.

...

He walked until he found his sworn brother ('Past-sworn brother' He reminded himself) currently engaged in a swordfight with their nephew. HanGuang-Jun and the Lan juniors watching them on the sidelines of some training ground he presumes belong to the Lan sect after noticing that the decorative banners on all corners of the field have the 'Drifting Clouds' motif.

While a good spar here and there was nice and all, everyone knows its being used as a means of distraction from what happened just a moment ago.

Jiang Cheng finally stopped walking to lean against a nearby tree and watched as Jin Ling rolled behind Wei WuXian in order to dodge a strike from the older male and retaliated with a bottom upwards strike to his back. Having predicted his move, Wei WuXian turned immediately, using the momentum to accurately interpret his nephew's strike, simultaneously knocking the golden sword

out of his hand, grip weaken by his current lack of stability from rolling on the ground.

Jiang Cheng stared at Wei WuXian.

His hair was tied into his typical ponytail, much more practical for a swordfight than the hairstyle he donned ever since he began to wield ChenQing.

ChenQing... Now that he thought about it, that was the only competent name Wei WuXian had ever given something. ChenQing... As in former friendships? Affection? To express oneself? Or was it some random name Wei WuXian came up with because it sounded nice?

...Nowadays, he found himself questioning if he had really grown up with the man.

He knew many things about Wei WuXian, but at the same time, he didn't know anything about him at all.

From across the field, Lan WangJi made eye contact with him and nodded to acknowledge his presence after a while like it was a second thought.

Jiang Cheng briefly nodded back with the same amount of dismissiveness and stalked off in another direction just as Fairy worriedly rushed to his owner, scaring Wei WuXian half to death once again.

...

Baifeng mountain... Qinghe... Damnit, he's just getting himself lost again, isn't he?

Jiang Cheng grumbled to himself as came to a stop. His mind already playing the words Wei WuXian will definitely tease his with.

Wei WuXian...

'...Hold on.' He thought to himself as he slowed down.

Come to think of it, Wei WuXian and Jin Ling were sparing with their swords just now.

They have SuiBian and SuiHua...

And Jin Ling said that Fairy appeared just by calling his name...

Which means he should be able to call for SanDu as well...

And fly...

...

The F*ck is he still walking around for?!

...

...

...

...

...

...

He nearly forgot how much of a luxury flying on swords was. Definitely not walking for the rest of the time he will be spending in this dream from now on. (Or rather, he should not be walking in here at all.)

Still, he could how messed up the dreamworld really was from so high up.

It was like if someone had cut up a map of North-eastern China, removed most of the parts, then arranged the remaining unrelated locations together to form some sort of weird map with the strangest geography.

Jiang Cheng decided not to give it much thought.

...

To the south of the GusuLan training fields was an enormous lake. Based on the running theme of the dreamscape, this lake probably appeared in the book at some point.

Perhaps BiLing lake? But without CaiYi town nearby, its difficult to tell if it really was Biling lake. Its not from YunMeng as far as he could tell.

Not that he cared.

He was going to fly past the lake and find a way back to the hall. (He didn't even notice what the outside of the hall looked like...)

Until he caught a flash of pure white out of the corner of his eye.

He stopped and took a double take.

ZeWu-Jun stood silently at eastern edge of the lake, staring at his own reflection yet still as regal and poised as he always have. As expected from the man ranking first on the list of male cultivators and a member of the GusuLan.

Why does he keep running into GusuLan people in this dream? This confusing and gigantic dream at that. Though, if he absolutely has to meet one of them, ZeWu-Jun was his much preferred choice out of the two jades. Even after the mental breakdown he had that gave them the early break.

As he mulled over that, he felt the drop in altitude as he descended.

...

Sensing another's presence, the Lan sect leader and first jade turned around hesitantly.

They made eye-contact for a moment, blinking owlishly before Lan XiChen saluted politely but abit awkwardly and looked away again.

It seemed like he just needed a quiet place to calm himself down with no one else to bother him. Like he hasn't done that enough by going into seclusion after Jin GuangYao's death. He doesn't know anything outside of the rumors about the Lan sect leader but from what he heard just now was enough to know that he could use a quiet place to mull over the more difficult thoughts.

But those thoughts were eating him up from the inside.

Usually Jiang Cheng would gladly ignore someone like that without a second thought.

But the topic was much too relatable for him to.

“Sect leader Lan, do you truly believe in those words you told us just now?”

“...”

Jiang Cheng crossed his arms while he waited for an answer.

“Sect leader Jiang, I believed I have made that perfectly clear.” Lan XiChen spoke without turning around: “Why are you here? Is it just to speak to me about this?”

Jiang Cheng: “...Tsk, like I don’t have better things to do than this. So listen up, I’m only going to say this once. You were not the only one who messed up thirteen years ago nor the only one who failed to judge character.”

Lan XiChen turned around and gave him what was an attempt at a glare.

Not the least bit intimidated, the man in purple continued: “You think you were to blame? I don’t care if you have been fooled by that golden prostitute’s son longer than the rest of the world have, or that you should have listened to your other brothers over that manipulative bastard. Everyone else fell for it as well, and made him chief cultivator for crying out loud.”

The frown on the first jade deepened ever so slightly: “To be a good leader, one needs to display good judgement. As the sect leader of the GusuLan, I should have held that belief and my sect’s teachin-”

In anger, Jiang Cheng blurted out: “You don’t to live up to your family’s teachings and beliefs? Didn’t believe in your brother when you should have? Listened to someone else or the masses when you should have made your own judgement? You’re not the only one. And if you think that those are good enough reasons to put yourself in seclusion and neglect your duties to your sect, then by all means, lock me in a room as well!”

Lan XiChen’s eyes widen.

Jiang Cheng calmed himself down: “Both of us screwed up thirteen years ago. I have falsely judged my own sworn brother, hadn’t been there when he needed me the most and then lead a f*cking siege against him. The sad thing was that I realized I never actually intended to kill him after he had died. I hate him, for creating the ghost path, for breaking his promise to me, for creating that undead Wen dog of his and for getting my sister killed. But my rage made me fail to realize that he was the only one in my family I had left and he just... died... just like that. I was left all alone. But it was easy for me to cover it up by fooling myself that I hate him and intended to slain him that day but then it turns out that the reason why he went down that demonic path in the first place was because the moron sacrificed his f*cking GOLDEN CORE for me. My reasons for all those years of pretending to hate him? All suddenly revealed to be just something I was left out of the loop for.”

Lan XiChen listened quietly, while the story Jiang Cheng was telling him now was heart-wrenching, he doesn’t understand the purpose for him to tell him this.

Jiang Cheng noticed this and let out a exasperated sigh before clarifying: “You GusuLan people and your stupid ass- What I am trying to say is, I have f*cked up a hundred times more than you have and I beat myself over it all the time like you do. But, I didn’t lock myself in a room to mope around nor did neglect my duties to my sect as the sect leader. I think you know what I am getting at here. So let me ask you this, from one sect leader to another. Decide for yourself and for the

future of your sect. Stay in there and pass the position to your uncle or your younger brother? Or are you going to get your sorry ass out of seclusion and redeem yourself by becoming a better sect leader from now on?"

The Lan sect leader did not reply, the words that were just given to him was all he could focus on.

Having said his piece, Jiang Cheng turned to walk away.

"...Thank you."

The man in purple stopped.

"I needed to hear that."

Jiang Cheng took a deep breath: "Don't thank me... It's just that you and I have much in common. Besides, that stupid self-sacrificing shixiong of mine is... *married* to your younger brother. We're all family now, even if I hate to admit it."

Lan XiChen smiled and nodded wordlessly.

Lips slightly twitched upwards in a smile, the sect leader of Jiang took a step-

"Sect leader Jiang?"

"...Yeah?"

"I do not mean to be impolite, but do you know the way back?"

"..."

Taking the silence as an answer, Lan XiChen chuckled: "Well, you could come with me. Making sure you do not find yourself lost again is the least I could do for you. And if you do not mind, please enlighten me how you summon your sword here?"

Chapter End Notes

Disclaimer: I don't ship XiCheng. But if you do, take this however you like.

On a side note, sorry for taking so long. The first thing my school gave us after holidays is a project and tons of work and now I caught the flu... T_T (I've seen the doctor already, and I think I'm feeling a little better... at least I think my fever has dropped. I think? Don't have a thermometer.)

Reading Chapter 24.5

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Wei WuXian, Lan WangJi and the juniors returned, almost everyone was already in the hall.

Including Lan XiChen.

Lan WangJi stared until he went up to him with a light shove on the back by his partner.

“Brother...” Lan WangJi called out softly, heart still laced with guilt.

Lan XiChen met his gaze with a smile and stood up.

He was not mad at his younger brother. Especially now that his mind had cleared.

On the contrary, he was relieved that his brother had unleashed those feelings he had kept inside for so long.

Those feelings of unadulterated rage, the desire to speak out and blame every person and circumstance that had resulted in the premature death of his beloved. The feelings that were overshadowed by the sheer amount of grief and longing that barely existed now that his beloved Wei WuXian has returned to the land of the living and by his side.

Without the grief and longing that came from losing Wei WuXian, there was almost nothing to prevent the part of him that wanted revenge against those who have caused harm to his loved one in the first place.

Almost nothing.

Because this was Lan WangJi. The renowned HanGuang-Jun who kept a great deal of restrain even after losing the one he loved alongside his complete faith in the ideas of righteousness and rules he grew up with, the very same that he had once believed to guide him in his life. And subjected

himself to self-blame instead of pinning it on someone else like many others would have.

Not to mention that he didn't put an end to the cultivational world thousands of years earlier than its supposed to.

Lan XiChen wouldn't doubt that his brother might be capable of that in his grief.

He began slowly: "I know what you want to say, and I will like to tell you that it is unnecessary. You have only spoken the truth..." He stopped and beckoned for his dizi to come closer.

Wei WuXian went over hesitantly: "...Big brother Lan?"

Lan XiChen dipped his head slightly, soft smile appearing on his face from the familiar greeting.

"...I am sorry. To the both of you. While the GusuLan has not been involved in the capture of the remaining Wen family and the decision for the first siege upon the Mass Graves Hills, the GusuLan has failed to live up to our beliefs and failed to exercise proper judgement upon both the Wen remnants and young master Wei. Furthermore, I as a sect leader has led the GusuLan and the world down by being played into Jin GuangYao's hands. While I cannot amend the past, I can amend the sect and myself for the future, as someone had kindly informed me. Thus, I cannot continue to ignore the sect that requires my presence any longer."

His smile widened: "From this point onwards, my seclusion is over and I shall resume my duties as sect leader. But this time, it *will* be different." His face becomes so serious that it made him almost undifferentiable from his brother: "I will make my own judgement and lead GusuLan the way that Lan An must have done in the past. I swear to make our forefathers proud. No longer will the GusuLan's motto be just some words in an empty promise, it shall be proven as fact by the sect's future actions. To be righteous is helping those who needed it, wherever they may be, whoever they may be, regardless of social statuses and exercising righteous judgement to those that deserved it."

Both Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian listened attentively, pride blooming within them for the older man. They two locked eyes, now the cultivational lacked a clear leader with the death of LianFang-Zun Jin GuangYao. If Lan XiChen could pull off what he promised, he would be for sure be the next appointed chief cultivator. One that everyone can rely and expect absolute righteousness from.

"...No simple feat." Lan WangJi spoke softly after awhile.

Lan XiChen knew what he meant: "I will handle the elders, they may be our seniors and our esteemed elders, but I am the sect leader and its time they listen to me for a change."

Lan XiChen's smile returned: "Taking into consideration of the past events, this will be a huge change for the GusuLan, but it is also the next step for our sect. I wish to ask for your continued assistance as it was the two of you who have brought upon this change. For everything, I sincerely thank you." He saluted the both of them gratefully.

Wei WuXian nearly fainted from that: "P- Please, big brother Lan... You don't need to do that. I can't stand someone thanking me so sincerely! Let alone you! My heart can't take this!"

The elder jade chuckled: "But I must, young master Wei. I must exercise righteous judgement to those who deserve it. And you deserve my thanks." He stopped, and then added teasingly: "I can definitely see why my brother fell in love with you."

Wei WuXian's face turned beet red.

His partner next to him couldn't help but changed his facial expression ever so-slightly from being proud of his brother to being jealous of someone other than himself making his significant other blush.

If anything, Lan XiChen chuckled louder: 'Do not fret, little brother of mine. He's all yours.' And with that, he left the couple alone to approach the man standing silently behind them.

Lan XiChen saluted him.

"Uncle... What are your opinions for all that I have said?"

Lan QiRen stared silently; he had heard everything his elder nephew had just said to the couple.

The ~~boy~~ man has his father's eyes and appearance. And now, he has displayed the goal and determination as his father had, before he had met the woman who became the mother of the twin jades and turned his brother's vows into mere fiction.

Now, the current sect leader had promised the same thing and is now right in front of him, body still bent forward in his salutation, patiently awaiting his reply.

A strange bitterness rose from within.

"Straighten up, Sect leader Lan. Do what you wish, both your brother and you alike have long since outgrown your need for my guidance." The Lan elder then returned to his seat, arms folded behind him as always.

Lan XiChen sighed softly and followed suit.

As they waited for others, Lan XiChen made eye contact with the Jiang sect leader, smiling which only lasted a second as the other man swiftly nodded and turned back to the book.

Stupid GusuLan and their stupid problems...

...

Eventually, last person has returned, which is Nie HuaiSang this time.

Those more observant noticed that the corners of his eyes were both red and slightly moist.

MengMo waited for the Nie sect leader to be seated before speaking: *"We will resume with chapter 24. If you please, sect leader of Jiang."*

Jiang Cheng nodded in response, returning to the book, purposefully avoiding the words that started such a mess.

...How could a person so celebrated for his righteousness put up with your existence? Who knows, he could have something with the owner of this body you stole."

Lan QiRen immediately gave the Jiang sect leader a look.

Jiang Cheng bit the inside of his cheek but offered a salute of apology before he continues.

His words were cruel and sinister, seemingly well-meaning but was in fact a slanderous comment. Wei WuXian couldn't bear to listen any longer: "Watch your words."

Jiang Cheng replied: “I never cared about such matters, don’t tell me you’ve forgotten?”

Wei WuXian jeered: “Oh, right.”

Jiang Cheng snorted: “You still have the face to tell me to watch my words. Do you remember if you watch the words you said to Jin Ling last time on Dafan mountain?”

Wei WuXian stiffened.

While Jin ZiXuan huffed lightly at the reminder, but Jin Ling commented: “Why were you so hung up about that? He has never met me before and you expect him to tell it’s me on first glance?”

Jiang Cheng seethed indignantly: “I was defending your ungrateful ass! Just who was the one crying to me about the ‘cutsleeve’ that scolded him?”

Jin Ling’s cheeks turned slightly red: “Never happened!”

Now that he had the upper hand again, Jiang Cheng returned to looking satisfied. He sneered: “ ‘ Had a mother to birth you but no mother to teach you. ’, aren’t you great at scolding? You really know how to strike where it hurts most, don’t you? The reason Jin Ling is being made fun of was because of you! A forgetful old man like you may have forgotten all the promises you have made before, but don’t forget, just how did his parents die!”

Lan WangJi has been glaring at the man reading since the start of the paragraph.

But listening to these words made it very obvious that Jiang Cheng was just using this opportunity to vent out his anger and sorrows onto the person he used to love as brother.

Alone he was for thirteen years, with no where to cry out.

Wei WuXian, Jiang YanLi and Jin Ling commented nothing and just watched Jiang Cheng’s face carefully with downcasted eyes.

But Jiang Cheng looked to the Lan sect leader like he was gesturing something to him before quickly returning to the book.

Lan XiChen gave a sad smile.

Wei WuXian’s head immediately raised: “I didn’t forget! It’s just...”

He didn’t know what else to say after that ‘just’.

Jiang Cheng spoke: “Just what? Can’t say it out? It’s alright, you can take your time back in the Lotus Pier, in front of my parents’ tablets*.”

Wei WuXian placed a hand on his partner’s shoulder and then lightly shook his head once he had gotten his attention.

Lan WangJi obeyed and redrew his glare.

Jiang Cheng glanced at the couple with slight irritation.

Which grew when he read the following sentence.

Wei WuXian calmed himself down and began to think of a way out of this situation. Even though he has always dreamed of returning to the Lotus Pier, he didn't want to visit this unrecognizable Lotus Pier!

“Just what do you mean by that?” Jiang Cheng asked in feigned polite curiosity: “Was there something you found unsatisfying about my home? Or is it my sect? Or perhaps myself?”

Wei WuXian shrugged, deciding against starting another fight or an emotional scene: “I'm not sure you really wanna know.”

Jiang Cheng also decided to refrain from digging in deeper wisely, definitely not because his gentle sister gave him a look that said: ‘A-Cheng, if you do not want to lower your chances of getting soup further, I suggest moving on.’

Anyways, Jin Ling's voice came from outside the door.

Jiang Cheng raised his voice: “Didn't I tell you stay where you were? What are you doing here?!”

Jin Ling replied: “Jiujiu, I have something very important to tell you.”

“Oh yeah, I haven't dealt with you for that yet.” Jiang Cheng smiled sinisterly.

Jin Ling: ‘...Surely the Lan people wouldn't mind me crashing at their place for while? No, I still have some pride...’

Jin Ling entered after arguing with his uncle a little and claimed to have seen Wen Ning.

Wen Ning tilted his head to one side in confusion.

Jiang Cheng's eyebrows narrowed, placing a hand on his sword. His face was stern as he asked: “When? Where?!”

Jin Ling answered: “This afternoon. There was this rundown shack a few miles south of here. I went there because I heard rumors of something strange there, but who would have known there was a fierce corpse inside.”

“...Wen Ning d-does not remember seeing young master J-Jin.” Wen Ning spoke quietly, stuttering slightly as he did when he was alive.

Wei WuXian smacked his own thigh in his laughter: “Hahahahaha! I didn't get to compliment you last time, but that was some lying! Shimei completely fell for it!”

Jin Ling's flushed lightly at the compliment, Wei WuXian gave praises as easily as he speaks. He wasn't used to this yet.

Before Wei WuXian could tease further, Jiang Cheng begun reading the next paragraph angrily.

Jin Ling's claims sounded quite believable. However, in Wei WuXian's ears, they were all

nonsense. He knew exactly where Jin Ling was this afternoon. Not to mention that once Wen Ning went into hiding, unless he was summoned on purpose, there was no way a junior would have found him so easily.

However, Jiang Cheng fell for it hook, line and sinker.

Much to his current embarrassment and anger.

...When he saw Jiang Cheng turned around, Wei WuXian immediately pulled the complicated expression of ‘I’m shocked’, ‘My secret’s out’, ‘Wen Ning has been discovered, what do I do’.

“Would have been more believable if you were less dramatic about it.”

“Does it matter? He fell for it anyway.”

“You really bring that obedient dog of yours everywhere you go!”

Wen Qing sent a death glare.

Compared to Lan XiChen’s, Jiang Cheng could feel a cold shudder run through him on the sight of this one.

Wei WuXian responded: “He has long since been a dead man, and I have died once too, just what else do you want?”

Jiang Cheng held his whip as he pointed at him: “What else do I want? Even if he dies another thousand times my hatred for him will never cease! So he hasn’t been reduced to ash back then. Very well! Today, I will personally destroy him and scatter his ashes right before you!”

Wen Qing’s glare darkened.

Wei WuXian and Wen Ning remained silent.

Jin Ling too, remained silent.

Jiang YanLi watched Jiang Cheng with sad eyes.

Jin ZiXuan mumbled something to himself, shaking his head slightly all the while.

Jiang Cheng carried on as if the words had no impact on him.

Jiang Cheng left Jin Ling to watch over the prisoner and took a handful of disciples on the wild goose chase.

Not without first threatening Wei WuXian indirectly first.

Now Lan WangJi joined Wen Qing with the glaring.

Jiang Cheng doesn’t care about them.

No matter how terrifying the combination is.

After Jin Ling gave instructions to the remaining Jiang disciples, he entered and released Wei WuXian from ZiDian.

Because of Jin Ling's intentionally odd placement of the Jiang disciples, there was a blind spot for the Jin heir to sneak Wei WuXian out of.

“Shouldn't have made him ZiDian's secondary master just yet.” Jiang Cheng grumbled to himself.

But deep down inside, he was proud of how clever his nephew was.

When they escaped into the forest, Wei WuXian heard something behind him.

“Why is it following us?! Make it go away!”

Jin Ling made his dog leave but his criticism brought another serious problem to light.

Wei WuXian: “Hold on. What did you call it?”

Jin Ling: “Fairy. Its name.”

Wei Wuxian: “You gave a dog a name like that?!”

The juniors snickered.

Jin Ling frowned in confusion.

Like Jiang Cheng did.

Jin Ling spoke matter-of-factly: “What's wrong with this name? Its name was Little Fairy when it was younger, but I can't keep calling it that now that its bigger.”

“That's not the issue here...” Jin ZiXuan and Wei WuXian muttered before staring at each other in disgust.

Jiang YanLi giggled.

Wei WuXian disagreed: “No no no, the problem isn't that its big or small!_____Who taught you this method of naming?!”

There was no need for a confirmation from Jin Ling as Jiang Cheng's naming sense for his own puppies was brought up again...

...Which sound like the names of expensive girls in a brothel-

Everyone but Jiang Cheng and Jin Ling nodded solemnly at the description.

Jiang Cheng and Jin Ling: ‘No they don't!’

Everyone: ‘Whatever you say... We are not going to argue with people lacking common naming sense...’

Jin Ling couldn't care less of the cutsleeve's opinion of his dog's name: “ A true man doesn't bother himself with small matters. So why are you pestering me about this?! Okay!-

This line reveals that this isn't the first time someone questioned dog's name choice...'

-Stop. Now that you have offended my jiujiu, you're already half-dead. Now I'm letting you go, we're even.”

Wei WuXian asked: “Do you know why your jiujiu wants me?”

Jin Ling replied: “Yeah. He suspects you are Wei WuXian.”

Its no longer 'suspect' at this point: “What about you? Don't you suspect me?”

Jin Ling spoke: “This isn't the first time my jiujiu has done something like this and he has never once let anyone go even if they were proven to be wrong. However, if ZiDian couldn't draw out your soul, I will believe that you are not. Besides. The one with the surname Wei isn't a cutsleeve, but you... even dare to harass...”

Jin Ling facepalmed, that *was* Wei WuXian and he for some reason didn't consider the possibility of Mo XuanYu being possessed *after* being chased out of the Lanling Jin.

And Wei WuXian did turn out to be a cutsleeve after all... (For Lan WangJi only)

Wei WuXian chuckled but he wonders: 'Was Mo XuanYu actually a cutsleeve? Or was the story of Mo XuanYu harassing his half-brother just another tale of fiction weaved by Jin GuangYao to get rid of his competition? Or was it true and Jin GuangYao made use of that to get rid of him... Or Mo XuanYu had found something LianFang-Zun didn't want anyone to see?'

Who knows?

As Jin Ling was about to leave, he noticed that Wei WuXian hasn't: “Why are you still standing there? Hurry up and leave. Or are you waiting for my uncle to catch you again? Let me inform you, don't think for a moment that I will be grateful just because you saved me, nor expect me to say those cringe-worthy words to you.”

“A-Ling.” Jin ZiXuan started.

Jin Ling sighed “Didn't I thanked him just now..?”

“But, A-Ling... ‘Thank you’ is a simple phrase that conveys your gratitude, so it must always be said. No matter the situation, no matter the recipient. It does not matter the number of times you have said it, you still feel gratitude towards that person.”

“Yes, mom.” Jin Ling answered obediently.

Jin ZiXuan: ‘Why does he only listen to her...’

Wei WuXian had his arms behind his back as he walked over: “Young man, there are two cringe-worthy phrases in one’s life that must be said, no matter what.”

Jin Ling asked: “Which two?”

Wei WuXian answered: “ ‘Thank you’ and ‘I’m sorry’. ”

Lan WangJi pressed a kiss to Wei WuXian’s lips.

Two words that Wei WuXian always say to others, but not enough were said to him.

Jin Ling taunted: “I am not saying it. Who can make me?”

Wei WuXian responded: “One of these days, you will say those words in tears.”

Jin Ling turned away from both of his uncles.

Jin Ling clicked his tongue just as Wei WuXian suddenly spoke: “I’m sorry.”

Jin Ling paused: “What?”

Wei WuXian continued: “For what I said on Dafan mountain, I’m sorry.”

Jiang Cheng and Jin ZiXuan’s features soften slightly.

Jiang YanLi smiled warmly.

While it wasn’t the first time Jin Ling was scolded that, this was the first time someone has apologized so sincerely for it to him. So he didn’t know how to respond.

Wei WuXian returned a gentle smile, and just when he was going to speak, his expression changed suddenly: “Jiang Cheng? You!”

Since Jin Ling was already feeling guilty from stealing ZiDian and letting Wei WuXian go secretly, he fell for the trick easily giving Wei WuXian the opportunity to knock him unconscious.

“Oh right, you haven’t told me why you hit me! I helped you!”

Jin ZiXuan’s features stiffened back up: “Wei Wu-

-he pulled up his pant leg and examined the curse mark on his leg.

Everyone had pretty much forgotten about the curse mark.

Wei WuXian couldn’t get rid of it no matter what he tried, so he transferred it onto himself.

Jin Ling felt his heart warm.

His dajiu was so good to him...

On the side, Jiang Cheng pursed his lips...

He would have done it too... If he knew how or even know about that possibility...

Jin Ling woke up eventually after some time, angry to the point of drawing his sword when he remembered what happened : “You dare hit me?! Even my jiujiu has never once hit me!”

Wei WuXian exclaimed: “Really? Doesn’t he always say he’s going to break your legs?”

Jin Ling raged: “He was just saying that! You damn cutsleeve, what were you trying to pull, I...”

Wei WuXian cupped his own face and called out behind him: “Ah, HangGuang-Jun!”

Jin Ling fell for this one as well. But being more afraid of Lan WangJi than his own uncle made him take off immediately.

Jiang Cheng couldn’t help but reprimand: “Useless! Haven’t you heard of the phrase ‘Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me’?”

Jin Ling’s face darkened: “HangGuang-Jun suddenly appeared just now as well! Now that he’s following Wei WuXian wherever he goes, that bluff was believable!”

“Why were you afraid of second Lan? He can’t do anything to you without the Jin and Jiang sects paying a visit his Cloud Recesses later.”

“...He silenced me on Dafan.”

“And that’s worth scurrying away like a rat for?”

“...” ‘He’s super scary, alright! Like to see you in my shoes!’

“Why so quiet all of a sudden? Afraid to admit you’re scared of him? Yack it up.”

“Shut up!”

“You have some nerve-

“Shimei~ Wei WuXian drawled: “Shut up and continue reading, we aren’t here to listen to this.”

Jiang Cheng’s glare was blocked by Lan WangJi’s body that moved in front of his intended target.

‘Damn it, I’m not here to watch the two of you flaunting your love to me!!!’

Jiang Cheng directed his eyes back to the book immediately.

(Wei WuXian gave a thumbs up to Jin Ling and gave a kiss to his husband for cooperating with him.

Lan WangJi’s ears flushed: “Mm”

Jin Ling let out a sigh of relief and began to massage his head.

Jiang YanLi suppressed her giggles to not give them away.)

Wei WuXian laughed when Jin Ling ran away but that gave him time to reminisce.

It was about his childhood and how he came to live with the Jiangs.

Jiang YanLi smiled when her name was mentioned.

She told him, when her father heard of his parents' deaths, he never stopped trying to find the child these late friends of his had left behind.

Smiles appeared on the faces of the audience.

Even Lan WangJi had slight smile on as he kept a tight hold on his husband.

After searching for some time, he finally found the child in YiLing.

Wei WuXian sighed lightly, the irony.

Lost his original family in YiLing, then given a new life and family in YiLing with the Jiangs and the Wens, then lost his life and both families in Yiling.

Perhaps the title of YiLing LaoZu suit him afterall.

Lan WangJi however, frowned in thought.

'Wei Ying was roaming around in YiLing...'

When he first saw him, he was kneeling on the ground and eating the fruit peels someone threw away.

The smiles went away as Jiang Cheng continues reading further.

Jiang YanLi rubbed at her eyes, moist with tears from remembering how Wei WuXian had acted after her father first brought him home and having their first dinner together.

Shocked, disbelieving, scared, timid, quiet and polite he remained as he kept refusing the beautiful dishes placed in front of him and her father answering by repeatedly piling some of every dish into his rice bowl, a warm smile on his face, telling him the names of each dish and how good it is while not eating any of it himself.

She looked back upon the memory fondly, even though she also remembered seeing the jealousy on her other younger brother's face beside their mother's empty seat.

For the juniors, just the mental image of their ever cheerful senior Wei kneeling on the ground and eating discarded fruit peels was enough for them appreciate what they had...

...When he lifted his head, one can see the smile he wore between his red, chapped and frozen cheeks.

Jiang YanLi told him, he was born with a smile on his face. No matter what happens, he

won't take it to heart. So he can be happy no matter the situation. It may sound heartless, but it wasn't a bad thing.

Lan WangJi hugged Wei WuXian tighter, he wished he could ask the heavens and all the mortals who live under them how they could be so cruel to one as precious as Wei WuXian.

Wei WuXian lets him with a smile, even though he could barely breathe from how tight the hug was.

After Jiang FengMian had given him a piece of melon, he allowed the man to bring him home. Unfortunately, due to his severe phobia of dogs, the puppies the eight to nine years old Jiang Cheng owned at the time had to be given away. To say that the young Jiang Cheng was upset by that was an understatement.

Thankfully, the young Jiang Cheng eventually let go of the 'grudge' he had against the young Wei WuXian after playing together for some time. From then on, Jiang Cheng was the one who would chase the dogs away from him.

He always believed that Jiang Cheng would be on his side, while Lan WangJi would always be on the opposite. He never would have guessed that it was the exact opposite.

Both Jiang Cheng and Lan WangJi lowered their heads at that...

Wei WuXian slowly made his way to the spot he and Lan WangJi were supposed to meet. Lan WangJi was already there, waiting silently in the dimly lit streets, head low.

Before Wei WuXian could greet him, Lan WangJi raised his head, thus seeing him. After a moment, he begun to approach him with a dark expression on his face.

For reasons he wasn't aware of, Wei WuXian took an unconscious step backwards.

He could almost see scarlet streaks of blood in Lan WangJi's eyes. He had to admit... this look on Lan WangJi, was quite terrifying.

Wei WuXian felt a pang of guilt in his heart, his partner must have...

"You thought that I had ran away?"

Lan WangJi nodded guiltily.

Wei WuXian squeezed his hand: "I never once thought of that during the time."

Lan WangJi's frown deepened ever so slightly: "...I should have trusted you more."

Wei WuXian shook his head: "I would have thought that as well if it were me. I feel bad for making you worry, it must have been a long wait."

Lan WangJi squeezed his hand back immediately: "As long as you return to me, I do not care."

'Right, he tried to summon my spirit for thirteen whole years non-stop.' Wei WuXian thought, now realizing he had said something dumb.

Lan Wangji's thumb lovingly ran back and forth on his knuckles.

Chapter End Notes

1* He's referring to memorial tablets, which are tablets with the name of an ancestor carved on each of them in order to honor them for generations to come. The memorial tablets are usually placed in an ancestral hall if the family is wealthy and large enough.

Reading Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

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And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

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Jiang Cheng turned away from the couple and passed the book over to Nie HuaiSang on his left who looked much better now that his eyes weren't swollen like it was just now.

Abruptly, Wei WuXian nearly fell the moment he took a step back, causing Lan WangJi to immediately reach out and grabbed his wrist to support him. Afterwards, he got down on one knee to examine his leg practically giving Wei WuXian a heart attack in the process.

Wei WuXian wasn't able stop him as Lan WangJi uncovered the pitch-black cursed mark on his leg.

Lan WangJi stared at it for a short while before finally speaking in a bitter tone: "...I only left for a few hours."

Wei WuXian shrugged: "A few hours is a long time, anything could have happened. There, there, straighten up."

Truly a long time, a long time for anything to happen.

One could have their lives changed forever...

One could lose their own life...

Lose their meaning to live...

Lose their home...

All of this could happen to anyone and everyone.

All in just a few minutes, let alone couple of hours.

All the veterans currently here have learnt that lesson the hard way years ago.

...

Wei WuXian brushed the cursed mark topic off and started asking about the person sneaking around the stone castles as he tried walking even though his leg was still numb from the electricity of the ZiDian whip.

Standing behind him, Lan WangJi suddenly called out: “Wei Ying.”

Anyone with half a brain already figured out that Lan WangJi knew the true identity of ‘Mo XuanYu’ so no one gave even a slight reaction to this revelation.

The Lan elder, Jiang sect leader and many more were probably just relieved to not have to hear of more of ‘Wei WuXian’s way of getting away from a block of ice with a less than zero success rate’.

Wei WuXian’s figure paused, but in the next second, he acted as though he hadn’t heard the name and responded: “Yes?”

‘You moron, the charade’s up already. Why continue acting???’ Wei WuXian berated himself in his head.

Lan WangJi has already figured out that the cursed mark originated from Jin Ling’s own leg and that Wei WuXian has encountered Jiang Cheng by the electrical burn and whip marks that were infamously unique to the famed ZiDian whip.

After Wei WuXian dismissed that, Lan WangJi changed the topic.

Lan WangJi spoke: “You should not be walking.*”

Wei WuXian replied sarcastically: “If I stop walking, what then? You’ll carry me there?”

Ah, here’s what created what could have been the most trauma inducing event in Nie HuaiSang’s life...

“...” Lan WangJi stared silently at him. Wei WuXian’s smile froze, a foreboding feeling passing though him.

“Oh god, tell me he’s not going to carry you on his back all the way to an inn in the middle of town at night...” Lan JingYi moaned at the image.

Wei WuXian smiled: “He didn’t.”

-

Wei WuXian was against this idea as well, immediately rejecting the idea the moment Lan WangJi showed his seriousness by walking up to him and started to kneel down: “Waitwaitwait, I wasn’t serious about that. My leg is just numb from being struck by ZiDian a few times, not broken. Besides, it would look bad for a full-grown man like me to be carried around.”

Lan WangJi asked: “Would it look bad?”

Wei WuXian asked back: “Would it look good?”

After a moment of silence, Lan WangJi spoke: “But you have carried me before.”

Everyone else: ‘He did?’

Wei WuXian stretched out a bit: “You know, Lan Zhan... Those were way different circumstances. We were in danger, you were injured and there was no one else around.”

“Mm”

After hearing that, the two brothers of the couple figured that it must have been during the famed battle against the XuanWu of Slaughter.

Wei WuXian replied: “Such a thing happened? How come I couldn’t remember?”

Lan WangJi answered in an indifferent tone: “You never remember these things.”

Wei WuXian sulked: “Er-gege~ I’m sorry it took me so long to remember~ I promise to never forget another of our shared memories!”

Lan WangJi’s lip twitched: “Mm”

...When Nie HuaiSang planned the return of the YiLing LaoZu, he didn’t have this in mind...

Wei WuXian responded: “Everyone tells me my memory is awful. Alright, fine, its awful. Anyways, I’m not going to be carried on your back.”

Lan WangJi questioned: “No?”

Wei WuXian confirmed: “No.”

The two stood facing each other for a moment. Suddenly, Lan WangJi wrapped an arm around his back, bent down, and the other arm went to support the back of his knees-

“You said he didn’t carry you!”

“You asked if he carried me on his back. He didn’t.”

Lan QiRen cradled his forehead in pain.

Nie HuaiSang continues, having already witnessed the traumatic scene up close and personal (unless you're into it) currently being read.

Poor Wei WuXian didn’t expect this when he told the second jade to not carry him on his back. Being the first time he was treated this way (when he was a child excluded) he yelped.

Lan WangJi walked with him in his arms, both his balance and tone steady as he replied: “You said you do not want to be carried.”

Wei WuXian muttered: “But I didn’t say I want to be carried like this!”

“Ai-ya, Lan Zhan Lan Zhan~ Look at you~ When we were younger, you wouldn’t even hold on to my hand, now you are carrying me in your arms~” Wei WuXian teased.

Lan WangJi grabbed his hand immediately: “Mm”

The dynamic between these two contrasts so much to that of their younger self that those ignorant might have assume the famed HanGuang-Jun was exacting revenge on the troublemaker that was Wei WuXian.

That was how said troublemaker had interpreted his actions.

But he didn’t continue pushing on the subject, there was something else he rather clarify.

Wei WuXian asked: “Lan Zhan, did you already recognize me back on Dafan mountain?”

Lan WangJi answered: “Mm”

Wei WuXian was curious now: “How?”

That’s what the audience really wants to know as well.

Lan WangJi lowered his eyes on to him: “You want to know?”

A few of the juniors nodded their heads.

Wei WuXian responded clearly: “Yes.”

Lan WangJi replied: “You told me yourself.”

That wasn’t the answer they were looking for...

Wei WuXian responded: “I told you? It is because of Jin Ling? Or because I summoned Wen Ning? It was neither of those, right?”

It was as if something rippled in Lan WangJi’s eyes. But in an instant, the disturbance was gone, and his eyes returned to being still pools of water.

He answered seriously: “Think for yourself.”

The curious juniors slumped in their seats in disappointment.

The adult audience were more focused on what could have triggered a reaction in Lan WangJi like that. Going by what they know, it most likely that Lan WangJi had recognized Wei WuXian with some kind of ‘lovey-dovey’ thing shared only between that’s completely mushy and cavity-inducing. They weren’t in a rush for that.

Wen Ning smiled gently, he already had a good guess on what it was.

Wei WuXian gave his partner a little nudge for not satisfying his curiosity, but understood his desire of having the person he love to recall that memory by himself.

No matter what Wei WuXian says afterwards, nothing got Lan WangJi to budge on the topic. They eventually got to the inn, went up the stairs (simultaneously scarring the front desk guy mentally for life) and got to the room where the second jade has left the person he had caught.

Wei WuXian spoke: “Alright, we’re here. Time to put me down. You don’t have a third arm to open the door...”

Nie HuaiSang definitely remembered this part, he’s sure a few years of his life had left him from witnessing that scene.

Before he had finished his sentence, Lan WangJi did something extremely improper. And its probably the most improper thing he had ever done in his life.

The left eyelid of poor Lan QiRen begun twitching almost violently...

He, while still carrying Wei WuXian in his arms, kicked the door open.

It was only because of the mental preparation he had done just a minute prior ago that the Lan elder *nearly* blacked out.

“Mm, worry not uncle. WangJi will copy another ten times of the rules as punishment for his misconduct.” Lan WangJi reassured indifferently.

That didn’t seem to relieve the old man in the slightest...

Nie HuaiSang continued carefully.

The doors flew open (somehow not flying off it's hinges) prompting the person sitting inside to start wailing again : “HanGuang-Jun, I don’t know, I don’t know, I...”

It was ironic that Nie HuaiSang ended up having to read his own infamous catchphrase out...

When he registered the position the two men were in when they entered, he stared blankly at them as he lamely finished the last part of his sentence: “...I really don’t know.”

It really was the head shaker.

Lan WangJi paid no attention to him and placed Wei WuXian down on the mat. While Wei WuXian inspected his old classmate and friend, the second Lan took out the piece of fabric bitten off by Fairy prior and placed it onto the table.

Nie HuaiSang felt the part of his sleeve that was missing a piece and then replied miserably: “I just happen to pass by. I really don’t know anything.”

A couple of people raised their eyebrows at the Nie sect leader. “The sect leader of the area who shown neither interest in cultivation nor night-hunting just happened to pass by the famed Man-eating castle of XingLu ridge hidden behind a maze array hidden behind a group of walking corpses? Just who were you trying to fool?” They thought.

Nie HuaiSang shrunk.

Wei WuXian spoke: “You don’t know, then allow me to explain. Perhaps you might know something after listening.”

He proceeded to give a recount everything, the three defences and the fact that no one other than the Nie sect could have set up such a thing on their territory.

“What was the goal of building a Man-eating castle in XingLu ridge for the QingheNie sect? Where did those corpses inside the walls come from? Were they eaten? Sect leader Nie, if you don’t give us a proper explanation today, I’m afraid that when this is exposed, all the other different sects and clans are going to come to you for answers. When that time comes, even if you want to explain... no one will be willing to listen, nor believe in whatever you are going to say...

Nie HuaiSang was miffed, not appreciating the spot his old friend placed him in.

Nor the eyes currently on him right now, most of them just worriedly curious, only a select few were a bit more... oppressive -cough- Jiang Cheng, Jin ZiXuan & Lan QiRen -cough-

Now that his family’s secret was going to be revealed (by his own mouth again), he begged requested: “Please forgive me but this is not any kind of threat, I promise. For all the information I am about to reveal, I only ask for everyone’s cooperation on the secrecy of the matter...”

Only after receiving nods from everyone in the room (excluding Wei WuXian, Lan WangJi and Lan XiChen who already knew) did the Nie sect leader continue.

Nie HuaiSang finally yielded: “...That was never a ‘Man-eating castle’. Its...Its just my sect’s ancestral burial ground!”

Some eyebrows rose.

Nie HuaiSang hurried along before they start interrogating him.

Wei WuXian responded: “Ancestral burial ground? Whose ancestral burial ground buries sabers instead of corpses?”

Nie HuaiSang cried, pleading for the two to keep what he was about to disclose a secret just as he had for his new current audience.

Lan WangJi agreed: “As you wish.”

Wei WuXian asked: “You said it was never a Man-eating castle. Does that mean it has never eaten a person?”

Jin Ling raised an eyebrow at Wei WuXian, did he forget what nearly happened to him?

Nie HuaiSang clenched his teeth, answering honestly: “...It has.”

Wei WuXian: “Wow.”

Giant understatement.

Everyone: “...”

Nie HuaiSang quickly read before anyone has anything to say.

Nie HuaiSang immediately added on: “But it was only once! And it wasn’t our sect’s fault, and it was tens of years ago! The rumours of the Man-eating Castle of XingLu ridge also started then. I... I only fanned the flames and intensified the rumours.”

Now that the audience seemed somewhat satisfied with the clarification, Nie HuaiSang quickly passed the book to the junior next to him.

Chapter End Notes

1* 你别走了。 This sentence is usually translated as ‘Don’t go’ (Cue fangirls screaming somewhere) but because LWJ meant for him to stop walking on his injured leg. I just translated it this way to make things easier. (The character for walk and go are the same ‘走’ in Chinese.)

2* This joke is better in Chinese where ‘Carrying something/someone on one’s back’ and ‘Carrying something/someone in one’s arms’ are different characters. ‘背’ & ‘抱’ respectively.

.....
...I'll be putting up an announcement tomorrow.

Reading Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

I'm back~ (For a fleeting moment cause next week is my final exam but I don't want you guys to wait even longer.)

Sorry for the long wait, here's a chapter for now. The second one will be uploaded a little later.

Thank you for sticking with me for soooooooooo long! ๑♡๑(๑••๑)

Chapter Notes

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Fu GaoWen didn't even realize the chapter was over until sect leader Nie literally shoved the book into his hands.

He quickly started reading to not interrupt the pacing of the story.

Lan WangJi spoke: “Details, please.”

Then he went and sat down. That polite sentence as powerful as a threat, squeezing an explanation on of Nie HuaiSang.

He started: “HanGuang-Jun, you all already know this, but our Nie sect is different from other cultivational sects. Because our founder was a butcher, we, unlike other sects who cultivate the path of swords, cultivate the path of sabers.”

That was a commonly known fact.

Nie HuaiSang continued: “Because our cultivation method is different from other sects, and that our founder was a butcher, it was inevitable for blood to be shed. The sabers of our past sect leaders were all hostile and full of murder intent. Almost every sect leader suffered from Qi deviation, resulting in their sudden deaths via Qi explosion. Their irritable tempers were also related to this.”

Lan XiChen closed his eyes, taking in a deep breath at the difficult subject.

Nie HuaiSang turned misty again.

His in book counterpart also was reminded of his brother and said: “When these sect leaders were alive, their sabers’s violent nature can be suppressed by their owners. However, after the death of their owners, there is no one to control them and will become a murderous weapon.”

Wei WuXian raised an eyebrow: “That sounds quite close to demonic cultivation*.”

The Lan elder’s eyebrow twitched at the mention of it.

Nie HuaiSang immediately continued: “It’s not the same! Demonic cultivation is demonic cultivation because it uses human lives. But our sect’s sabers don’t use the lives of humans, rather only those of malevolent spirits and beasts-

It was no surprise that Nie HuaiSang jump to defend his sects chosen art immediately. Not all the younger generation know this and the topic wasn’t brought up among the older since the Nie sect became one of the great sects, but their art of the sabers was once considered a form of ‘demonic cultivation’ for its violent and dangerous tendencies when their founder first used it and formed the sect.

-Since they killed these creatures their whole lives, if they don’t have these to kill, they will cause trouble on their own, disrupting the sect. And the sabers spirits will only acknowledge one master and will never permit another to wield them. Its not like we later generations can melt down the sabers. First of, it is disrespectful to our ancestors and secondly, melting the sabers down is not guaranteed to solve the problem.”

“For our swords, even when they have cultivated enough for a sword spirit to manifest, they were still tied to the sword which they came from. If the sword was destroyed, the sword spirit is destroyed along with it. Is that not the same with the sabers?” Fu GaoWen asked after he had finished the paragraph.

“Well... The way that the spirits inside the saber are cultivated is vastly different from the way sword spirits are. And there were no known records of someone who had successfully or even attempted destroying the spirit by destroying its saber. There was no guaranteed that the spirit wouldn’t just be freed after the saber was melted, just like how a human spirit leaves their dead body does. We simply cannot take the chance of releasing such a violent and powerful spirit into the world to cause harm if we can help it.” Nie HuaiSang explained soberly.

His explanation both satisfied the curiosity younger generation and the quelled the suspicions of the older for the Nie sect’s intentions.

Wei WuXian commented: “Aren’t they conceited.” (He’s referring to the sabers)

Nie HuaiSang replied: “Indeed. They had fought and cultivated alongside our ancestors as their paired cultivational sabers, so they have every right to be conceited.”

He continued: “As the cultivation continues improving by each generation, the problem becomes much more severe. Until our sixth sect leader came up with a solution.”

Wei WuXian questioned: “Which is to build the man-eating castle?”

Nie HuaiSang answered: “No no. Although they are related, that solution was thought up at a later date. What our sixth sect leader did was this; he built two coffins for the sabers of his father and grandfather and dug a tomb. In this tomb, in place of any valuable treasures, he placed hundreds of human corpses that were about to transform*.”

Lan WangJi frowned slightly. As did his family members.

Terrified, Nie HuaiSang immediately explained: “HanGuang-Jun, I can explain! These people weren’t killed by my sect’s people! They were all painstakingly gathered from different places! Quite a few of them were brought for high prices as well. The sixth sect leader’s words were, ‘If these saber spirits wanted to fight evil spirits, then we will give them evil spirits to fight for all eternity. These not far from transforming corpses were buried alongside the coffins, as burial goods for these sabers. The sabers will suppress the transform of the corpses, at the same time those corpses will alleviate the desires and violent tendencies of the sabers. Maintain the balance like this and the two sides will keep each other in check. Only with this method, could the future generation attain peace.”

“That sounds like suuucch a hassle! And you have to do this every time a saber wielder in your sect dies?!” The junior in the middle, Lan... something (Wei WuXian will have to ask Lan WangJi for his name later), the one that looks almost identical to Lan JingYi moaned.

Nie HuaiSang’s shoulders sagged: “It cannot be helped, there’s just no better solution. Fortunately, most of the sect members who were capable of wielding a saber aren’t strong enough for their sabers to require their own tombs, so they can just be kept in a single large tomb and we will just add one or two more corpses for them in the walls. Its only the powerful veterans and past sect leaders’ sabers that require a whole tomb filled with corpses per saber...”

“...And how many corpses is that?” The current reader hesitantly asked.

“It... depends on the strength of the wielder but on average... two hundred or so.”

“What?! Two hundred per saber?! How... Where did you..?” Lan JingYi babbled while the others had their mouths or eyes open wide.

Nie HuaiSang sighed, luckily he didn’t tell them that his father’s and brother’s both needed over three hundred corpses just to quell.

Lan SiZhui had listened attentively and taken down notes. But when he read though what he had just written, a thought came to mind.

“A question for senior Wei, the Nie sect’s method of cultivation has a high risk of Qi deviation due to their unique and violent way of cultivation, would that not be the case as well if not more for your ghost cultivation? How did you manage it? Maybe the Nie sect can utilize the same method?”

Wei WuXian stared at the boy for a good while, trying to register his question. Then his face morphed back into a smile: “A good thought, while the ghost path does not require the use of spiritual energy, it does have its own form of ‘Qi deviation’ which is when one loses control of the resentful energy because their mental strength isn’t able outweigh the vengeful desires of the corpses.”

Wei WuXian experienced this backlash first-hand after all. Like the Nie sect members, his temper became extremely irritable and he had no one to vent his troubles with or have a method of suppressing his emotions. While his time with the Wens remnants helped, he lost control when someone accused him of yet another he didn’t commit.

“While the normal cultivation routes deals with the physical and spiritual side of the user. The ghost path is very mentally and emotionally taxing, only a very mentally stable person can utilize it to its full potential.”

The reason why he created the Yin Tiger Seal, during the Sunshot Campaign when he needed a way to efficiently lead an army of resentful corpses without exhausting himself or letting the negative emotions get to him too much. Big mistake.

Speaking of which, he had never lost control ever since he returned from the dead.

He liked to think that it is the power of having someone support and love you no matter what. A person he can always depend and lean upon whenever life is rough and would always be there for you. A stability he lacked back when he was the YiLing LaoZu.

Lan Zhan...

Wei WuXian smiled fondly but pushed the thought aside for now: “But the Nie sect’s form of cultivation deals with suppressing the violent and bloodthirsty energy of the sabers for malicious beings but at the same time, using spiritual energy like the ways of the sword as well as the physical. Also, due to spirits, they have very irritable tempers due to all the negative emotions not unlike from demonic cultivation. That made the Nie sect’s technique focus on physical, spiritual, mental *and* emotional parts of the user, a combination of the normal path and the ghost path.”

Wei WuXian turned to Nie HuaiSang: “I’m no Nie sect member, so I won’t make assumptions nor ask further. But my best guess is that the problem lies with the spiritual side of training, since the effects were Qi deviation which is caused by improper, flawed or failed technique. The Nie sect’s creator was a butcher who decided to turn his saber towards the fiends, without any basics in cultivation or anyone to learn the way of the sabers from. So what else can he do?”

One of the juniors answered promptly: “He could only learn the only cultivation basics and theories available from other experienced cultivators, the ones who utilize the way of the sword.”

If Wei WuXian remembered correctly, this boy with the stains from Lan JingYi’s tea is the son of a rouge cultivator which explains why the boy understood what he was going for.

“Nice for you to see my logic kiddo, I remember something about how you are a fourth-generation rouge cultivator before deciding to enrol into the GusuLan. Did you go on any night hunts with your parents? How old were you when you enrol? Did you encounter anything cool? Did you guys travel around? On a donkey maybe? Did you miss it-

Before Zhou YuanXiang even attempted to answer the avalanche of questions thrown at him by his very enthusiastic senior, Lan WangJi interfered: “Wei Ying, focus.”

Wei WuXian blinked before continuing: “Ah, right. Ur...so yeah, he learned from other cultivators who had no idea whether its okay to use the same spiritual cultivation with sabers? Was I explaining that? Anyways, most likely the current spiritual training doesn’t pair well with the much more violent sabers. Either they switch to using their minds to control the saber spirits like I do, which I recommend since it doesn’t heat up the body but doubt you’ll want to follow the ways of the YiLing LaoZu. Or find another type of spiritual cultivation that could withstand those violent spirits but either way, some extra mental and emotional practices on the side to deal with the stress is highly recommended. Qi deviation explosions are usually caused by blocked meridians* after all, compressed by the intense anger they always feel. I believe the root is at the liver, the absolute Yin liver Meridian. The emotion anger and stress affect there the most since its in charge of cleaning the excess filth. Wen Qing?”

Wen Qing glanced at him but gave a quick nod: “The absolute Yin liver Meridian is the most susceptible to anger and stress, but the other Meridian that shares the ‘wood’ element will also be affected, the minor Yang gallbladder Meridian. The two organs and their respective meridians play the role of purifying the body of impurities, including the ones from negative emotions. With those two blocked, the ‘clean’ wood element of the body is out of balance, manifesting in anger, frustration, and irritability whereas when it is in harmony, it's manifested as compassion, kindness, and acceptance. There for, the two are responsible for the smooth, clean flow of Qi in the body.”

Wei WuXian grinned: “As expected for the legendary doctor, explanation adequate, informative and simple to understand. Right Lan Zhan?”

“Mm, you done well as well.”

“Mm! But I don’t know as much about *living* energy as she does. I’m the death science expert, she’s the life science expert but the two go hand in hand most of the time, comes in handy during investigations. Anyways, with the liver and gallbladder Meridians out of commission, the body cannot rid itself of the filth from the negative energy and is just recycling the unclean Qi again and again. Also, the Qi stuck at the two Meridians stagnates and creates liver heat and ‘fire’. This liver heat and fire can dry out the body's Yin energy and create blood stasis, not even the Minor Yin Kidney Meridian which creates the natural Yin energy for the body and the Major Yin Spleen Meridian that converts nutrients into Qi and Yin energy be able to outweigh the Yang energy increase in the body. Especially with them weakened too. Then insufficient Qi and Yin creates more internal heat. It’s no wonder it causes Qi explosions!”

Wen Qing eyed him from the side: “For your information, eating **overly** spicy foods too much will damage the Major Yin Spleen Meridian.”

Wei WuXian shrugged: “I know that, but I have enough Yin energy in my body anyways. The heat will help balance it out.”

Others (Other than the three older Lan clan members and Wen Ning): ‘Did anyone understand what these two were talking about for almost a quarter of this chapter??!’

Lan QiRen has turned to watch Wei WuXian and Wen Qing for a while now, stroking his goatee in thought.

Jiang Cheng frowned, their sect doesn’t teach these kinds of medical theories to the normal disciples, so where did Wei WuXian learn this? He know he messes with medicine and helps at the healers often but he didn't expect him to be so advanced in medical studies. Why couldn’t they learn it together..?

“Um...” Lan SiZhui regretted his question a little (but HanGuang-Jun seems happy that senior Wei

can show off so...) but he continued: "So how does it relate to the Nie sect using the same spiritual cultivation as the other sects?"

"The ways of the sword is peaceful, the saber's is erratic." Lan WangJi answered

Wei WuXian cuddled with him: "Yes~ The sword is calm and balanced, not that much Yang energy is needed to wield them and it doesn't produce as much to worry about balancing out with Yin energy. But the Nie sect's cultivate a tremendous amount of Yang energy compared to the sword and therefore need more Yin energy from the user to balance it out. But no changes or not enough changes have been made to fix that, not to mention that Qi itself is in fact Yang. Which is why I suggested not using spiritual energy in the first place."

Nie HuaiSang: "..."

What can he said? He didn't make any arguments because Wei WuXian and Wen Qing was correct, he had studied at other (just the GusuLan actually) sects before and their spiritual theory is almost identical to the QingheNie's. It's curious that after so long, the Nie sect is still using an improper technique. It's not like outsiders could just question a great sect's technique and it is considered a huge disrespect for the descendants to question their ancestors' teachings.

Lan XiChen thought about how Jin GuangYao had gotten Nie MingJue into Qi deviation earlier under the guise of playing the Sound of Clarity for him that could have seriously helped him if it was made routine. He asked: "If say a Nie sect member went into Qi deviation at this exact moment, can either the two of you help?"

Wei WuXian spoke first: "I never attempted, but the vicious energy of the saber is not too different from the resentful energy of a fierce corpse so there is a chance I could suppress it. I'm not too sure about the Qi deviation itself though. If it's not negative energy related, I will not be of much help. You'll need Qing-jie."

Wen Qing eyed him slightly: "I dealt with Qi deviation before, but never with a member of the Qinghe Nie sect. Not that they will be willing to be treated by a Wen, but I can try if..." Did she want to boost his ego more? She continued: "If someone could restrain him and suppress the negative energy long enough for me."

A huge grin appeared on the YiLing LaoZu's face as he started babbling out how amazing of a team he and Wen Qing would make in the medical department much to Wen Qing's dismay.

Unbeknownst to them, Lan XiChen slumped slightly with the confirmation he was expecting.

He had helped to kill these talented people, people who could have saved his eldest sworn brother, helped the rest of the Nie sect and continue to offer their inventions, theories and techniques for the greater good of the cultivational world.

There was nothing he could do to bring Wen Qing back, but he could start making it up to the Nie sect and Nie HuaiSang by offering emotional control techniques and songs, while continuing to support reincarnated Wei WuXian alongside his brother.

Luckily, people eventually remembered the book, unluckily for Nie HuaiSang, the 'man-eating' part of the castle got revisited again.

Wei WuXian asks: "Then why was it reconstructed as a stone castle afterwards? Why bury

the corpses in the walls? And you said it has eaten people?”

Nie HuaiSang answered: “All these questions are actually the same question. I guess you can say... it ate a few people. But it was not intentional!!! While what our sixth sect leader constructed was a saber hall, it was made to look like a common tomb and the later generations followed him and did the same. However, about fifty or so years ago, this tomb was dug up by some grave robbers.”

All was made clear by that last statement and Nie HuaiSang could finally breathe without the oppressing feeling from all those questioning stares weighing down on him.

Nie HuaiSang: ‘How does Wei-xiong put up with this all the time..?’

The presence of a few young, healthy and male intruders was enough to disturb the balance between the sabers and the corpses, completing the transformation of the ones closest. As any normal, well prepared grave robber would do, they retaliated and destroyed those ten or so weak corpses. Little do they know that they had sealed their own fate, for the castle absorbed the grave robbers in to make up for corpses they destroyed. A fate Jin Ling almost suffered.

Jin Ling shivered but simultaneously tensed in anticipation of another round of scolding which never came. (Jiang Cheng was satisfied with his reaction, so he didn’t bother wasting more saliva.)

Back on topic, the incident with the grave robbers led to the Nie sect leader of the time to relocate the sabers to a saber hall in QingLu ridge and hid the corpses in the wall to prevent such an incident to happen again. Additionally, the rumours of a ‘Man-eating castle’ was spread throughout, discouraging potential robberies.

On hindsight, maybe they should have planned against young temperamental cultivator brats desperate to prove themselves to their equally temperamental uncle because Jin Ling went and destroyed one of the corpses when he blew up the wall despite the countermeasures taken and the fact this is QingheNie territory.

Again, Jin Ling waited for the scolding that never came. Strangely, that made it worse.

Jiang Cheng peered at him subtly, wondering to himself if this is a better method to punish Jin Ling with.

It certainly makes him reflect on his wrongdoings longer than scolding him did, and he didn’t even have to say anything.

...

After Nie HuaiSang left pleading for them to keep this secret, Lan WangJi knelt in front of Wei WuXian again.

“Waitwaitwait, again?”

Lan WangJi replied: “Removing the curse mark is priority.”

Was it? Wei WuXian felt like that plotline was completely forgotten somewhere down the road.

Lan WangJi: ‘No Wei Ying, it disappeared after you Empathize with the late ChiFeng-Zun. Both your memory and concern for yourself require improvement. I will attend to both personally.’

Reading Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

Surprise! Second chapter! (Not exactly a surprise cause I promised earlier... but surprise anyway!)

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Li KangYu knew that the only reason why he noticed the open book being placed onto his lap by his slightly less flustered classmate next to him was because it was where he chose to avert his eyes to at the first sign of yet another WangXian moment.

“Should I just begin?” He whispered to both sides.

“...Go for it, I am certain all of us would appreciate a distraction.” Came the calmer of the three on his right, his voice clearly showing how hard he is trying to remain that way.

“And I doubt that soft voice of yours will disturb their intimate moment. When they are in a world only the two of them exist in, *they are in a world only the two of them exist in.*” Came the more brazen of the three, his words clearly said as unfiltered and without much thought as his cousin, Lan JingYi.

Resisting the urge to sigh heavily (Because its against the rules), Li KangYu turned his attention to the book.

Thankfully to the audience, the moment and any further teasing from Wei WuXian was interrupted by an ear-piercing shatter from the smashed teacups and teapot the evil-sealing QianKun pouch

containing the ghost hand knocked down.

The duo went straight to work, duetting another round of Rest to quell its resentment.

Wei WuXian reached for the bamboo flute on his waist, but hand found nothing. When he turned around, he found out that Lan WangJi already has the bamboo flute in his hands. His head was tilted downwards as he delicately carved on the bamboo flute before returning it to him. When Wei WuXian got it back, he noticed that the alterations had made even rough details such as the finger holes much more refined.

Lan WangJi spoke: “Play properly.”

Some of the juniors burst into laughter.

“HAHAHA, even HanGuang-Jun cann-hahaha-stand it any longer. Hahahaha” Lan JingYi wheezed.

Jiang Cheng wore a smirk on his face: “I only heard it once on Dafan mountain, when I was making my way up. I never once thought it was you. Truly an atrocious piece of work. How low you have fallen.”

Wei WuXian stuck his tongue out at him like the mature person he is: “Want to try? There’s plenty more lousy bamboo flutes to try playing. You had never been good on the flute, so let’s see who’s the one that’s embarrassing.”

Lan QiRen thought of that unspeakable duet that still haunts his dreams (current dream included) to this day and gritted his teeth. Thank heavens Wei WuXian was just pretending he was atrocious at the flute or else he could have just dominated the sunshot campaign with bad music.

Wei WuXian was amused that Lan WangJi had tolerated his awful playing for so long and decided to finally take it seriously. One would think that playing Rest properly for a change would improve its affects, but it did the opposite.

Wei WuXian stopped playing with a ‘tut’: “What’s wrong? Now that it’s used to my bad playing it doesn’t like it when I am playing properly for once?”

Nie HuaiSang/Lan XiChen: ‘Not possible, big brother was fond of good music. It’s already an insult to play him terrible rendition of Rest for so long.’

As if confirming that, the QianKun pouch containing the hand flew at Wei WuXian before being stopped by Lan WangJi. Then the two attempted Rest again.

This time, the hand settled.

Wei WuXian tucked away his flute and commented: “During these few days, it has never been as agitated as it did today. It’s like something provoked it.”

Lan WangJi gave a quick nod, turning to face him: “And, it’s something on you.”

The Curse Mark.

Nie HuaiSang nodded slightly, so that’s how they knew another of his brother’s body parts was hidden in the wall.

“So that means that whatever marked me was related to the ghost hand?” Jin Ling asked

Wei WuXian turned to him with a small smile on his face: “Didn’t think that something useful would come out of your little adventure, huh? I was surprised too. Who would have guessed LianFang-Zun somehow managed to hide a body part in there?”

“It’s most likely from the time we helped HuaiSang source corpses for big brother’s saber.” Lan XiChen answered quietly.

“ChiFeng-Zun’s saber? The same saber in the coffin in that room? The first we opened up?”

Nie HuaiSang nodded meekly.

Lan WangJi, Wei WuXian and Jin ZiXuan (for his son) bowed in apology.

Now that the two knew the rest of his body or another body part of the ghost hand is in the wall of the Nie sect saber hall, they rushed back to XingLu ridge.

Nie HuaiSang was already there, patching up the hole Jin Ling made.

Wei WuXian’s lip twitched, as did many others while the older and more mature (Lan QiRen, Lan XiChen, Wen Qing, Wen Ning, Jiang YanLi and the current reader) turned to Nie HuaiSang in sympathy. That wall has to go.

When he turned around, his legs nearly gave. He quickly pulled a lose smile onto his face: “HanGuang-Jun... and this good sir...”

Wei WuXian glanced at the man, there’s no way Nie HuaiSang wouldn’t had known it was him.

Wei WuXian waved his hand as he grinned: “You’re assembling the wall, Sect leader Nie?”

Nie HuaiSang wiped his sweat with a handkerchief so many times he almost took a layer of skin off: “Yesyesyes...”

Wei WuXian continued, his tone apologetic and empathetic with just a hint of meekness: “I’m sorry, but you will have reassemble it up again later.”

Nie HuaiSang: “Yesyes...ah?! Wait!”

He didn’t get to finish his sentence before BiChen flew out of its sheath. And thus Nie HuaiSang watched as the wall he just managed fix got destroyed once again.

While Wei WuXian and other childish people laugh their hearts out, Lan XiChen and Lan QiRen apologized for their brother/nephew’s actions.

Nie HuaiSang: ‘What’s the use of apologising to me? I still had to fix that wall twice...’

The wall fell apart easily and Wei WuXian begun digging though while Lan WangJi explained the situation to a teary-eyed Nie sect leader who (reluctantly) allowed them to take apart the wall afterwards.

With the Nie disciples' help, it only took an hour to dismantle the wall Jin Ling was found buried in and lined up the male corpses on the floor. Unfortunately, none of them were missing an arm.

Thankfully for the younger Nie's sanity, there is no reason to take down any more walls beyond this one due to the severity of the Curse Mark. What they seek must be in this wall.

And taking out the left arm to let it search around on its own isn't the safest thing to attempt in world. Especially with the amount of resentful energy this place has.

Wei WuXian shook his head, deep in thought: 'Unless this arm doesn't belong to a man? No, I can tell a man's and a woman's arm apart... Don't tell me it's master had three arms?!'

Immediately, that last line set off a round of snickering.

"Three...arms hahahaha!" Lan JingYi laughed.

Jiang Cheng smirked at his brother: "Where did all the smarts come from just now? You sure you and him were the same person?"

Wei WuXian wasn't bothered: "It was just a joke I made for myself, this isn't the first day you know me for. And a guy with three arms isn't *that* unbelievable, just imagine! Was the man unwanted and made fun of? So much so that he took his own life or cut off that extra arm? Wouldn't that make the arm extremely resentful? Then it goes around consuming the arms of live humans so that it could be an ordinary arm that no one would judge differently?"

Lan JingYi: "...You are a weirdo senior Wei. Why would you come up with such a scenario?"

"Then you're a weirdo too, coming up with those clique scenarios for me and Lan Zhan." Wei WuXian immediately pointed out.

"That's pure talent. Not the same thing. Please do not lump them together." Lan JingYi folded his arm resolutely, his cousin cheering two seats away from him.

Wei WuXian: '...Did I just let a stinky brat have the last say?'

Nie HuaiSang: 'Can we *please* get through this part already???'

Just as he was about to laugh at the thought, Lan WangJi spoke again: "Legs."

At the reminder, Wei WuXian recalled how the Cursed Mark only affects the legs.

He immediately shouted out:

Li KangYu blushed, unable to read out what their shameless senior shouted.

Said shameless senior cheered: "**Take off their pants! Take off their pants..? ...Why did you stop reading?**"

Jiang Cheng snorted: "You think everyone is as shameless as you? Saying those words out loud

like that?”

Wei WuXian blew a raspberry: “Thbbftttt, all words were created to be used at some point.”

Lan WangJi mumbled: “On the bed only.”

Wei WuXian shot up and stared at him: “Did you just say something?”

Lan WangJi stared back: “You misheard.”

Li KangYu tried to will his blush down while he continued.

Nie HuaiSang was completely stunned by shock: “Why do you say such shameful things in front of HanGuang-Jun?!”

Wei WuXian replied: “We’re all male, what’s there to be ashamed about? Help me get all these pants off. Only the male corpses, this has nothing to do with the female corpses!” As he was saying that he begun reaching the belt sashes of the corpses.

The poor boy’s blush never went down.

If any random onlooker need any more confirmation Mo XuanYu is a cutsleeve, this will be it.

Lan WangJi’s face turned dark.

Poor Nie HuaiSang never expected that after confessing everything yesterday that today, he has to remove the pants of the corpses in his ancestral saber hall, and its those of male corpses. When he’s dead himself, he’s going to be slapped by the QingheNie ancestors until he reincarnated as a crippled person as his next life. Picturing this, he couldn’t stop the tears running down his face.”

Wei WuXian nearly busted a gut laughing.

Nie HuaiSang wept: “What are you laughing for?! I don’t have such a heartless friend like you!”

Now the juniors joined in on the laughing.

Thankfully, Wei WuXian’s actions would halted by Lan WangJi. Just when Nie HuaiSang was about to praise how worthy of his HanGuang-Jun title he was, he heard him speak: “I will do it.”

Now the jaws of the juniors drop, like how Lan QiRen nearly did.

“You will do it?!” WangJi...cough...”

Lan XiChen supported his uncle: “WangJi, you did not... did you?”

Lan WangJi: “...”

Sect leader Lan paled.

Wei WuXian responded: “You will do it? Are you really going to do such a thing?”

The corners of Lan WangJi’s eyebrows seemed to be twitching slightly, as if he was holding something back. He repeated: “Do not move. I will do it.”

‘Eyebrow twitching? That just means what he’s holding back is his vinegar~ What a vinegar jar, did he really get jealous just at the thought of me removing the pants off of male *corpses*?! I may be a lot of things but I am NOT necrophilic.’ Wei WuXian snickered.

Lan WangJi gave Wei WuXian a look when he heard the snickers, a light vinegary smell emanated from him slightly, confirming his partner’s thoughts.

Fortunately for everyone’s pristine image of HanGuang-Jun, he only subjected his sword that was supposed to BiChen (Avoid dust and worldly affairs) to the defiling act by cutting open the pants of the corpses slightly until he found a one of dubious nature.

This corpse’s legs were sewn on and obviously not belonging to him now that his pants aren’t obstructing the view.

-

Now that the WangXian duo has the next body part in hand, they bid farewell to the poor Nie HuaiSang who probably never wanted to see them again (Nie HuaiSang: 〇 (〇 ‘T’ 〇) 〇) and headed in the direction the ghost hand is pointing to now.

-

YueYang, in the South-east.

Chapter End Notes

Alright, last chapter of before my exams. Wish me luck and hoped you enjoyed~

Break 5 - A chat between friends

Chapter Notes

This chapter contains mentions of M-preg. You have been warned, if this upsets you or makes you uncomfortable, please feel free to ignore this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Li KangYu passed the book to Lan ZiRui who took it with a grin.

After entering the cit-

“I apologise for the interruption, young master Lan.” Jiang YanLi suddenly spoke: “But the previous chapter felt like the end of the arc. Would there not be a break now?”

Lan ZiRui looked confused, but he politely answered (For once): “MengMo would have said something, right?”

They waited for an answer.

-Silence-

“Did it ditch us?” Jin Ling asked impatiently.

“Be polite, A-Ling~” Jiang YanLi turned back to the ceiling: “MengMo? Can you hear me?”

- Silence ensues-

“MEEENNGMOOO!!!” Wei WuXian shouted out to the dismay of the old man.

-Yawns-

“What?”

“It’s asleep again?!”

“JingYi, shush...”

“Did some-yawn-one call me?”

“I did, revered dream spirit. I just wondering if it was the end of an arc yet?”

The book in Lan ZiRui’s hand flipped a few pages back on it own, as if someone is flipping though it.

“ ...Ah,yes. That is the end of the ‘Man-eating castle’ arc, thank you for pointing it out, Mrs Jin. Would like a break now?”

Lan ZiRui deflated in disappointment.

Jiang YanLi however, smiled: “I don’t mind continuing. But I have been hoping to use the next

break to feed my three-year-old baby brother XianXian~”

Everyone perked up immediately, Wei WuXian most of all: “Yay~ Shijie is making soup! XianXian’s favorite Shijie’s world famous soup!”

Jiang YanLi giggled: “But XianXian, don’t you want to continue the story?”

Lan ZiRui immediately replied: “I can read later! I will love some soup as well, Mrs Jin!~”

Jiang YanLi giggled: “Okay~ Lotus root and pork rib soup coming up!” Facing everyone instead of Jiang Cheng and Jin ZiXuan.

Jiang Cheng glared at Wei WuXian, he knows he won’t be getting any soup. His sister tends to remember when she ban someone from food.

Jin ZiXuan: ‘Are you still mad about what I said, A-Li? I really want soup too...’

With a clap, Jiang YanLi stood up: “Alright, let’s get started. I have a lot of mouths to feed, any volunteers?”

Lan WangJi and Jin Ling immediately stood up, while many other raised their hands. One of was oddly, not Wei WuXian.

“A-Xian? Is something the matter? You usually love to help me in the kitchen.”

Wei WuXian rubbed the back of his neck: “I do, shijie. It’s just that I kinda want to talk to Qing-jie and NingNing for a bit. I’ll help out when I’m done.”

Wen Ning cringed the nickname while Wen Qing turned to this very troublesome person with a suspicious look on her face, her eyebrows narrowed. But both lowered their hands.

Lan WangJi turned to his partner; his eyebrows narrowed just a tiny bit as well.

“What’s wrong?” Wei WuXian teased knowingly: “I just want to have a nice chat with some old friends for a little bit in private. It’s not like I’m eloping with them.”

“Who will elope with you?” Wen Qing clicked her tongue but did not protest against his request.

“Lan Zhan obviously! We done it before and we’ll do it again!”

Lan XiChen coughed.

‘Right, uncle is still here...’ Wei WuXian thought as he quickly excused himself, pulling the Wen siblings along with him in a random direction.

...

Turns out that was the way to the garden, the current location Jiang Cheng had ordered the dog Fairy to stay at.

It went as you will expect it to.

Dog was napping in the sunlight from whose knows where, staying in the exact spot Jiang Cheng told him to stay at.

Wei WuXian freaked out, waking the dog up in the process.

Dog and Wei WuXian chased around the two Wens, trapping them within the never-ending man and dog barrier.

Before either of them attempted to help chase the dog away, Lan WangJi rushed over first.

Just the sight of Lan WangJi's downright murderous face in the distance was enough for Fairy to scamper off, tail between his legs.

"Lan Zhannnn!~" Something black screeched as it hurled itself into the jade's arms.

"Mm, I'm here." Lan WangJi replied, holding him tight but his pale eyes turned to the Wen siblings with a slight glint in them.

Wen Qing: 'Is he mad that we didn't help?'

Wen Ning: '...Second young master Lan takes very good young master Wei. No need for me to third wheel...'

...

After Wei WuXian got Lan WangJi to take Fairy away ("No Lan er-gege you still can't follow us. It won't be long~ Mm, I'll miss you too. Mwah~"), he led the siblings further into the garden where he hoped to not be overheard.

The garden was a perfect replica of ones around the JinLin tower, Wei WuXian realized. The first time he got to see it was during the most recent discussion conference where they couldn't stay that long due to more pressing matters at the time.

Instead of thirteen years ago, when he came to see little Jin Ling during his full month like he imagined he would...

The moment they stopped, Wen Qing asked: "So what is it you brought us out here to ask?"

Wei WuXian smiled softly as if reminiscing: "What makes you think I brought you guys out here to ask for something? Can't we hang out like the good-old-days?"

It may not be the YiLing Mass Graves Hills, but Wei WuXian looked like his original self, Wen Qing is here and currently well, and Wen Ning is no longer a sentient corpse and is back to his timid, stuttering self for the time being.

It's definitely the closest they could have to the 'Good-old-days', three of them chatting (Wen Qing scolding Wei WuXian for something and Wen Ning stood there) in the little cave on top of the hellscape they made into their home.

She was grateful for it, of course. But Wen Qing crossed her arms and spoke: "If you are not going to ask your question, then I will start first." Then a strange look crossed her face: "You and Lan WangJi, huh?"

"I can tell you were dying to ask me this for a while now."

Wen Qing made a familiar motion (Which may or may not be the one she does whenever she brandishes her needles) and Wei WuXian shuts his mouth.

"How does he treat you?"

Wei WuXian's lips pulled up into a smile: "Aw, Qing-jiejie is concerned about my marriage life~"

Don't worry, he treats me *very* well. Like you just heard in the book~ He cooks for me, he takes punishments for me, he takes me sightseeing, he buys me everything I want, he lets me sleep to nine, he cuddles me when I'm cold, he lets me lean on him when I'm hot, he sits beside me when I'm sick, he sings to me when I can't sleep, he listens to me talk for all day attentively, he drinks my portion of the nasty herbal soup for me, he tolerates everything I do, he tells me he loves me everyday, he ties his forehead ribbon on me 'everyday', he makes sure we have 'everyday' everyday, he takes care of me after our 'everyday' everyday, he never fails to send me into ecstasy during '*everyday*' ever--"

Wen Qing put up her hand: "Okay, stop right there. I asked if he is treating you right, not how much he spoils you nor how active your sex life with your husband is." She said, bluntly.

Even the red-faced Wen Ning figured that 'everyday' was some sort of codeword of sexual nature for the couple.

(That was the day the Wen brother and sister duo swore off ever using the word 'Everyday' ever again.)

"But that is my answer! Don't you think he is a wonderful husband? Right, Wen Ning?" Wei WuXian blabbed cheerfully, suddenly settling his palms on his timid friend's shoulder.

Startled, Wen Ning nodded: "Em... H-HanGuang-Jun is, v-very g-good for y-you!"

Wen Qing swatted the man's hands away from her brother: "A-Ning, control that stuttering for yours, you still have many chapters to read later."

Wen Ning: "Y-yes, j-jiejie..."

Wen Qing rolled her eyes, turning back to face Wei WuXian again: "If you have so much to praise about that second master Lan, I'll trust your word for it." Honestly, she just wanted to hear from Wei WuXian himself. After all, if she just wanted proof, just now the man himself entered the kitchen, a place no man let alone a young master of a prominent cultivation clan should enter, and for what? To learn how to make his husband's favorite soup from his shijie?! It was something she never thought of ever seeing. In life nor afterlife.

"He *is* the best!" Wei WuXian insisted as if he hasn't driven that point home yet, his cheeks red and eyes half-lidded in thought, longing for his cultivational partner and now regretted leaving him behind although temporarily.

Wen Ning nodded again, more firmly this time without the pressure of Wei WuXian right in front of him: "Jiejie has no need to worry about young master Wei anymore."

"Who said I was ever worried about him?"

"Qing-jie~ Don't be tsundere~ I already have Jiang Cheng, Jin Ling, the peacock and younger Lan... Zhan... Wow, I never realized how many tsunderes I have to deal with in my life. Please don't be another one~"

Wen Qing ignored him: "I asked my piece. Now, what is it that you want to ask?"

Any additional comments to stall for time die on Wei WuXian's tongue when his old friend/second sister figure glared at him pointedly. 'No more running around the topic, you were the one who dragged me here. Any longer and I'm leaving without listening to your question' her eyes obviously conveyed to him.

“...” Wei WuXian smiled awkwardly, one of his hands reaching behind his neck: “Guess there is no avoiding it... It’s... It’s a strange request... But I want to know if...”

“Don’t speak in broken pieces. Spit it out.”

Wei WuXian flushed, holding out his hand in front of him: “Finefine, yes Mdm.”

He took a deep breath but blurted out halfway though it: “Do you know if there is a way for me to make babies with Lan Zhan?!”

Wen Ning: “...”

Wen Qing: “...”

...

Wen Qing felt a headache coming: “Come again?”

Wei WuXian sighed, shoulders slagged: “That didn’t come out the way I want it to... But you heard right.”

“Babies..?” Wen Ning whispered, as if he was trying figure out what that meant.

Wen Qing pressed her fingers to her forehead: “...What brought this up in that head of yours?”

Wei WuXian grinned, surprisingly shy for someone like him, his hand rubbing his neck again: “What more reason do you need? I love Lan Zhan and he loves me, so I want us to have a child of our own. Technically, we had A-Yuan. But he’s all grown up already and Lan Zhan did most of the raising... I want to give him a child we could both raise and guide them from young to adult. And if I could give Lan Zhan an heir, the Lan sect might be more accepting of me...”

“Wanting your own child with your loved one, I can accept. But trying to get the rest of his wooden family to accept you? Since when do you care about that? Besides, its only the elders, right? The main clan’s HanGuang-Jun worships the ground you walk on, the sect leader likes and respects you and even that Lan QiRen is silently tolerating your marriage to his pride and joy.”

“A-and these j-juniors and most of the later g-generations of GusuLan like and look up to y-you.” Wen Ning added.

Wei WuXian snorted: “Barely, old man Lan is just *barely* tolerating me because of Lan Zhan and you should have seen how big brother Lan despises me for hurting his brother just a couple of months ago. And rightfully so. Lan Zhan suffered so much because of my arrogance. And he still has to put up with other cultivators and his own family disapproving of our marriage. Because of me, he couldn’t have a normal family, with a gentle beauty of a wife who will give him children to carry on his bloodline, all of which will be accepted by his family and the world. He can never have a normal marriage life and be a father because of me. If I could somehow carry a child for him, whether by some medically backed-up miracle or me switching genders, it is the least I could do.”

Wen Qing let out an exasperated, elongated sigh after a long moment of silence: “This is why I asked what’s gotten into that head of yours.”

At the word ‘head’ she knocked her fist lightly on Wei WuXian forehead: “You always worry

about everything excessively except yourself. Let those people express their distaste for your existence and your marriage all they want. There's nothing they can do about it. But you want to go against the laws of nature and carry a child in your male body."

Without her consent, her voice became louder and more frantic: "Do you even realize the extent of what you are asking for?! Don't you think your husband knows what he was getting into?! Yet he still chose to be with you because he loves you so much, he couldn't care less about the fact you are a male and that the both of you can never conceive children! Even if Lan WangJi wanted children out of this marriage, he would never had once thought of them coming out of you! If you want to raise children with him so badly, there's plenty on the streets for you to bring home! Why do feel the need to risk your life so badly? You already lost your first life! Pray tell, if you *somehow* managed to get yourself pregnant, how would you ensure both you and your child will be fine? Where is your child going to stay inside you? How would you even give birth?! Even if I'm still alive to oversee this, I can't even say I will do my best to assist you! This is not just transferring a golden core from one person to another! You can actually die just attempting this! And don't you dare tell me 'attempt the impossible'! This is your *second* life you're talking about! Don't waste it! What do you think would happen to your husband if you die because of this *idiocy*?!"

What about the rest of us? Me, A-Ning, fourth-uncle, grandma, A-Yuan, everyone, your shijie, your parents? Even that stupid shidi of yours? I *know* we are all thanking the heavens for giving you a second chance and you are throwing your guaranteed happy ending away!!!! For this???

Wei WuXian watched a tear slide down her face, stunned silent.

Wen Ning watched silently, his face serious and stern for once, he looks almost identical to his sister.

Wei WuXian hugged his second sister figure tightly: "...I'm sorry."

"But I have to try."

"You-"

"After that little Nie sect spiritual cultivation discussion, I knew that you are the only one I can approach for this. It's not *just* for the Lan elders acceptance, I wanted this. While I would adopt any kid in a heartbeat, but I would love a little young master Lan of my own. One that can accompany us or at least, Lan Zhan could see me in our child when I'm no longer there beside him..."

"Young master Wei, what are you talking about?!" Wen Ning asked without a single stutter, alarmed.

Wei WuXian smiled sadly: "Like your sister said, I might not survive the birthing process. That's just one problem though. I want to give Lan Zhan something to live on for after I die before he does. Mo XuanYu's body was so weak from malnourishment and abuse his family put him through. And he is way passed the prime age for spiritual cultivation and core forming. I don't know if it can ever develop one or one that could allow me to live as long as Lan Zhan's core would allow him to."

The most well-known and famous reason that makes the cultivation route such a coveted path, the longer life expectancy and improved immune system or even immortality. The very moment they exist, mankind seeks the path to immortality, not unlike the ones belonging solely to the gods above. With the cultivation of a golden core, it opened the door to that possibility. Of course, it

was still a rare feat accomplished only by a number of people in the single digits till this day, tens of thousands of years since the start of the cultivation era. A famous example, BaoShen SanRen herself.

While the immortality is a blessing that was only bequeath to one once a millennium, the longer life expectancy is much easier and practical to obtain with most cultivators trained from a young age in powerful sects to live much longer than ordinary humans.

HanGuang-Jun developed his golden core at a remarkably young age and has become strong enough to rival his own elder brother, three years his senior.

It was only natural that his golden core would prolong his lifespan far beyond that of an average cultivator... Or most importantly, Wei WuXian's current host body of Mo XuanYu.

Mo XuanYu may have some spiritual bloodline from his ~~seumbag~~ ^{seumbag} of a father, but he wasn't anything special nor gifted like Wei WuXian's original body had been and he didn't begun even the slightest of training until he was brought to the JinLin tower during his teens, even then he didn't stay for long.

Combined with the mentally damaging event of getting kicked out of the sect for being a 'cutsleeve' and his mother's death, the mental and physical abuse from the rest of his mother's family and less than ideal diet for a young man, this body gets sick even from a few minutes getting drenched in the rain.

Lan WangJi's efforts in nourishing his body with the best nutritious foods money can buy and their daily dual cultivation increases the chance of core development, but that may be it.

To say the least, Wei WuXian just wasn't confident that his new body can produce a golden core strong enough for him to live just pass a normal human's lifespan, let alone spend the rest of their lives together.

"So, I want to give him something live for if I did die before, so he would not be left alone agai-"

The side of Wen Qing's hand slammed down onto Wei WuXian's head, harshly.

Wei WuXian immediately stopped talking and started jumping around in pain.

"OW!!! What was that about?!"

"Young master Wei. Wei WuXian." Wen Ning spoke, looking more serious than Wei WuXian had ever seen him.

"You are going to live a full and happy life with second master Lan. HanGuang-Jun would never allow anything to happen to you. He would rather die than have you die before him again."

Wen Qing nodded proudly at her brother before glaring at the idiot: "The issue with your golden core, that I can help with. Please don't create a much larger problem from something so small again. Do you understand me?"

Wei WuXian: "..."

His silence pleased Wen Qing, a smile finally showing on her face as she turned her head skyward.

"Dream spirit? Revered MengMo? Can you hear me? I have a favor to ask of you."

-Silence-

“MengMo?”

-Silence ensues-

“Don’t tell me its asleep again... This MengMo is somehow lazier than me?”

“...You somehow have the face to say that?”

Wei WuXian pretend he didn’t hear that and cupped his hands around his mouth:

“MEEENNGMOOO!!! YOU THERE?!!”

...

...

...

-Yawn-

This time, MengMo itself appeared in front of them, in all of its abnormal glory. It sat it’s large, dark, bear-like body on the ground, orange and striped tiger legs tucked inwards like a deer does, a greyish-ox like tail swishing around lazily and behind its greenish-grey elephant like nose, beady black eyes belonging to a rhinoceros looked back at them as sleepy as far they can tell which... isn’t far at all.

A drowsy “Yes?” came from it, although no mouth was seen opening.

Wen Qing got over seeing the strange creature again quicker than the other two: “Sorry to disturb your slumber, but I need a set of stationary and a notebook please.”

“Sure...”

With a wave of its long trunk, a redish-brown notebook with an accompanying brush and ink set appeared.

Wen Qing picked them up: “Thank you!”

“Care to fill us in now?”

Wen Qing didn’t turn to him but answered: “What else? I am going to write all that I know about your little golden core problem in here. And whatever theories I can come up with for your suicidal experiment. You’re most definitely not going to give up on it. So I rather help out than see you in the afterlife so soon.”

Wei WuXian gaped.

Wen Qing: “Somehow, you made yourself look stupid-”

The only person in black energetically glomped her: “Qing-jiejie~ You are -sniff- too good to me!!!”

“I’m rather surprised at myself as well.” She replied dryly.

Wen Ning smiles gently.

Even the half-back asleep MengMo tried curving its lips upwards, not that you can tell with its trunk in the way.

“So... I will be hand-handing this book over to -yawns- young master Wei when the dream is -yawn- over?”

Wei WuXian held his hand beneath his chin in thought: “No.”

“No?” MengMo’s head tilted to the side, like a cute ~~puppy~~ kitten does.

“Give it to Wen Ning instead. I would probably lose it within a week. What a waste that would be. If I need it, I’ll just lend it from him.”

And it would give Wen Ning a memento of his sister to keep.

Wen Ning understood perfectly: “Young master Wei...” He whispered, teary-eyed.

But Wen Qing glared furiously: *“Probably lose it within a week?! Ungrateful stinky brat!”*

“You know me well enough ahead- Ah! Qing-jie don’t- ow! You can’t hit me with the book like that! It’s gonna spoil! Even more of a wast- Ow!”

The doctor huffed: “I agreed, I wouldn’t leave this in your hands.” (WWX: “If you agree, why did you hit me for?!”) She lifted up the book to straighten it of its wrinkles from its time as a smacking weapon: “I’m thinking of writing all of the medical theories and remedies I can think of in this book, to pass it down. Perhaps you can or find someone who will put this to good use. This includes the stuff we discussed earlier.”

Wei WuXian beamed, clapping enthusiastically: “Genius! Qing-jiejie’s legendary medical knowledge is about to be recorded in a notebook.”

MengMo stared in confusion: *“...Would a scroll be more preferable instead?”*

“Don’t humor him.”

“Oh.”

Stifling his laughter, Wei WuXian straighten up: “But seriously, thank you Qing-jie. This could save lives. And it might just be what I need to help me realize my dream of growing old with Lan Zhan and having children to call our own. While I cannot pass on my own genes, I can at least pass on Lan Zhan’s....”

“Hmm... I wouldn’t be so sure about that...”

They turned to the dream spirit.

Wei WuXian asked: “Wouldn’t be so sure about what?”

MengMo lifted it’s head higher as if to keep itself from falling back asleep: “Not being able to pass down your genes. Have you not noticed, young master Wei? That the body you now inhabit resembles your original self more as time goes by?”

“No?”

“...Well, it did.” To prove its point, it changed Wei WuXian into his real-life form with a flick of its trunk momentarily.

Even someone like Wei WuXian could immediately tell when he's gone being taller to shorter than his timid friend next to him: "Hey! I missed being tall." He pouted.

The Wen siblings stared closely at him, mostly Wen Qing.

"Urrrr... I know this body isn't half-bad looking but-

"It does resemble your old self." Wen Qing interrupted: "Mostly the eyes. And that mouth."

"T-the face is still s-softer than your o-original one, like the nose is still the same. B-but it has changed significantly f-from when I f-first saw you on D-Dafan mountain. B-besides, Mo XuanYu had always looked like he could be r-related to you..." Wen Ning added.

Wei WuXian walked over to the edge of the large koi pond nearby.

"Now that you mention it..." Wei WuXian stared at his reflection, imagining the face he saw when he saw cleaned the face of makeup: "Why didn't mention it before, Wen Ning?"

"A-ah? I thought y-young master Wei did it yourself?"

Wei WuXian shook his head: "I have that kind of skill." Turning towards MengMo, he asked: "What does this mean?"

MengMo pushed its head back up: *"It was a miracle that someone like Mo XuanYu could summon a lost soul with no intentions of returning with an amateurly drawn array. How did he succeed when countless others far more experienced like your HanGuang-Jun failed?"*

MengMo pointed at Wei WuXian with its trunk: *"A soul is a fickle thing, one cannot force a soul to possess a body it is not compatible with. Although Body-offering arrays will force the body upon the soul when it was summon, it is the summoning part that usually fail as the soul gets to decide if it should come or not. If the soul was forced into the body it is not compatible with, the soul will reject the body, destroying the body and damaging the host. Regardless of the result, the summoner will die from just an attempting without guarantee of success, making this array partially useless and thus, fade into obscurity."*

"So, the reason Mo XuanYu could successfully offer his body to me was because my soul willingly got summoned him?"

"In a nutshell. Mo XuanYu must possess traits that drew your soul to him, be it physical appearance, family bloodline, personality, past actions, soul or familiarity to the summoned. It was no coincidence Nie HuaiSang chose him to be your vessel."

"Sect leader Nie? He was involved?" Wen Qing immediately asked.

Wei WuXian nodded: "Yeah, turns out he was behind my return because he wanted me investigate something for him. You'll see."

Wen Qing has a grim look on her face. If Nie HuaiSang could pull off summoning Wei WuXian's soul after his death thirteen years later, he must not be as incompetent as he made himself to be. What were his intentions for Wei WuXian? Is it over? If there's any indication he's going to use him for anything sinister, she is going to skin that man alive.

MengMo swished its tail in amusement, this was actually its first attempt at recreating a departed within a dream. Seems to be doing better than it hoped.

“Back to young master Wei’s current host. Although his soul is satisfied enough to not reject the body, a soul would always wish for its shell to be of its desired shape and will slowly mold the body on its own.”

Wei WuXian perked up: “That’s really cool! I never thought a soul could do any of those things on its own. Not even the ‘Superior Soul’! That’s the one making the decision, right? It must be, ‘Inferiors’ just float around after death. Hey! This this mean I’ll get back my original height?!!”

MengMo chuckled: *“Yes, it’s the ‘Superior Soul’ as you called it, but they do these things because they instinctively desire to, rather than consciously making the decision to. They still have that in common with the ‘Inferiors’. And... most unfortunately, your height won’t be changing any time soon.”*

“Huh??? Why not?!” Wei WuXian sulked.

“If Mo XuanYu’s body is still developing, it might reach your original height... But...”

“Waahh noooo!” Wei WuXian wailed in despair like one of his many undead followers: “How could this be?! Doesn’t my soul desire to be the same height as before?!”

“Height, weight, build, age and gender are insignificant.”

“How the hell is *gender* insignificant?!!”

“...It just is?”

‘So if Mo XuanYu was a girl, it would have still worked???’ Wei WuXian sulked further: “Just change me back, I want to enjoy being tall longer.”

“I don’t know, I think I like you better like this.” Wen Qing patted his head ‘comfortingly’, making a show of how easily she could reach the top of his head now.

“Meanie.”

Wei WuXian was changed back, and Wen Qing is no longer touching (or is able to) his head.

“To think y-young master Wei could look like his o-old self again, HanGuang-Jun would be o-overjoyed.” Wen Ning encouraged.

“Even so, that is just appearance.” Wen Qing stated: “I’m afraid I don’t quite understand MengMo’s statement from just now.”

Confused, Wei WuXian asked: “What statement?”

MengMo: *“How you still can pass on your own genes.”*

‘Oh, right. That...’ Wei WuXian quickly played it off: “Does the body being morph by my soul permanently affect its genetic code?”

“It does. You can’t see it yet, but ever since this body was offered to you, the genetic code has been modified. Despite that, the morphing is a much longer process because the old cells remaining from the previous soul must die before they could be replaced by the new ones. Of course, this method isn’t foolproof as seen with your... lack of height. Like... as if your body has four parents. Wei ChangZe, CangSe SanRen, Jin GuangShan and Mo MiaoJing.”

Wei WuXian grimaced: “Oh my god. Please do not remind me that I am even remotely related to

that oversized horny peacock.”

“I’m so s-sorry young master W-Wei.”

“That’s a truly tragic fate I don’t even think you deserve.”

“My condolences. Any nightmare that man was in was the foulest that ever touched my tongue.”

Wei WuXian laughed: “Thanks, guys. But beggars can’t choosers I suppose, I am lucky to be given a second chance and still be able to pass a half of my genes down.” A fond smile made itself known on his face: “Its strange, I never once thought of having a family one day. I may flirt here and there but I always assumed I’m going to remain Jiang Cheng’s right-hand man, my loyalty and duty only belonging to him. Now? Now that I’m married to Lan Zhan, all I could think of is expanding our little family.”

Wen Qing paused in her writing: “Why can’t you just focus on giving us a peace of mind?”

MengMo laughed quietly: *“Punished a thousand times, but his heart can’t be restrained it seems. Even in his dreams is he so carefree, a refreshing addition akin to introducing a brightly colored koi to the stagnant pond that is the GusuLan.”*

“Hahahaha, thank you for your high praise! Hear that, Wen Qing?”

Wen Qing went back to writing.

Wei WuXian pouted, inching his way next to his friend: “Qing-jiejie~ Didn’t you hear that? Answer meee~”

“If you still want this, don’t disturb me.”

“Yes, Madam.” Wei WuXian chirped peeking at the book, overjoyed to see the medical theories and even some related old legends she had heard of as research material she has already written on the last few pages of the notebook dedicated to Wei WuXian original request.

“As expected of Qing-jie, efficient. And still able to think in terms of the normal, respectable path. If it were me, I would have kept straying to the darker path. With Wen Qing’s theories, I can prove that the method I used was not a form of demonic cultivation. Otherwise the elders might-”

Wen Qing stopped writing, gritting her teeth as she forced out her words: “The *elders* again? You’re throwing aside your dignity to take the role of the child-bearer and they might not accept it if you used less than honorable methods?! Who did they think they are? Gods?! They were barely better than the Jin sect themselves.”

“Jiejie...”

MengMo sighed deeply: *“I never imagined myself saying this, but I found it more favorable during that Lan Xun brat’s days. In the beginning, they had righteous intentions. But striving to be perfect when the world they live in isn’t, how could you be absolutely righteous when right and wrong were often so muddled together? They may have two hundred rules to follow but they were not blinded by prejudice nor have as many corrupt branch members using the Lan sect and its beliefs to their advantage, just stubborn and boring. Even their dreams were so tasteless...”* An odd look crossed its face: *“With the exception of Lan An, his mate, the brat and his mate I suppose. Their dreams were just as traumatizing as yours and your mates’.”*

“As traumatizing?..” Wei WuXian wondered what it was referring to...

A very recent scene replayed itself in his mind.

After enduring it for moment, Lan WangJi lifted his sword and attacked, his face cold, Wei WuXian was shocked by this: “What? You are really going to fight?!” and fought back. Just like that, the two started fighting in the library.

“Wait!!! Stop reading, big brother!!!”

He screamed out suddenly, because Lan WangJi suddenly grabbed onto a- Lan XiChen’s eyes widen ...-a...certain part of him down below...

...

...

...

!!!

“You... Were you-

MengMo turned away bashfully: “Yea.” He answered simply: “I may have been dormant, but burner draws power from me to amplify your dreams, with me entering it.”

Wei WuXian: “...”

Wen Qing and Wen Ning: “???”

MengMo turned back, its face flushed for a usually emotionless creature: “I am truly sorry for the confusion just now, young master Wei WuXian. Due to the ... one of many memorable experiences, I may have thought of that time instead of the real one when assembling the book...” It tilted its head down in a bow.

Half-listening, Wei WuXian thought of all those times he and Lan WangJi used the incense burner for their pleasure... Dreams they unknowingly forced a poor creature to witness numerous times...

With a breathy exhale, Wei WuXian said: “I’m sorry too.”

Wen Qing and Wen Ning: “...”

Awkwardly, MengMo nodded: “...If there isn’t anything else, I can escort you there. Mrs Jin has finished the soup from what I can tell.”

“Ah?! How long were we here for?!” Wei WuXian immediately panicked: “If I didn’t at least help set up the tables, Jiang Cheng is going to convince shijie to omit my portion!”

.....

“Look finally decides to show himself.” Jiang Cheng smirks, making a show of himself tossing a rib bone on a plate.

“No talking when eating.” Lan WangJi said at the same time Wei WuXian asked: “Why are you eating?! You’re not allowed to have soup!”

Worse still, not only was Jiang Cheng eating, so was Jin ZiXuan.

Jiang YanLi walked over, supporting four bowls on a tray. With a sweet smile she explains: “They aren’t drinking soup, only eating the pork ribs and lotus roots.”

Jiang Cheng gave a smug look: “We deserve it, considering we did more work than you because you decided to talk to those Wens for so long.”

Wei WuXian pursed his lips in annoyance: “The soup is the best part anyway.”

“A-Cheng, don’t be rude. I was already planning to give you and ZiXuan the ribs and lotus roots from the beginning.” Placing down the bowls on the table Lan WangJi is on, Jiang YanLi nodded over to the bowls of soup: “Here you go, please enjoy!”

“Thank you shijie! Sorry for taking so long! I’ll help clean later.”

“I’ll hold on to that, XianXian~” Jiang YanLi nodded at him before offering the fourth bowl to MengMo: “It may not be much, but would you like to try this?”

“...” MengMo seemed a little at loss for words: “...*This one’s diet consists of a vastly different type of substance than those of your species’. However, I thank your generosity, Mrs Jin. You can just offer that portion to young master Wei instead. I was simply guiding young master Wei, Miss Wen and young master Wen here. I will be taking my leave now.*”

“Are you going back to sleep? You weren’t so tired when you first summoned us.” Wei WuXian ask in between spoons of soup.

MengMo smiled: “*Certain current events are energy consuming. Be patient and just enjoy the book first.*” With a glance at Wei WuXian’s right, MengMo vanished.

Although curious, Wei WuXian pays no more mind to it and continues his soup.

From his right, a voice that couldn’t be more familiar to him came: “Wei Ying.”

“Hmm?”

“You were away with Miss Wen and young master Wen for some time.” (Translation: “You were away from me for so long, what was it that you wanted to talk to them about?”)

“My marriage life~” A semi-truth. “And how A-Yuan is our adopted son.”

Lan WangJi’s ears flush: “Mm”

Setting his first empty bowl down, Wei WuXian snuggled into his husband’s side, taking in the cold sandalwood scent he has come to associate with Lan WangJi.

With a fond chuckle, he spoke: “Did you know, Lan Zhan? That I used to bury A-Yuan in the ground like a radish and told him he would grow faster that way and have new friends?”

Lan WangJi blinked but replied with a: “Mm”

Wei WuXian laughed: “Being a little brat, he believed me. And you know how excited he was? He told me he wanted ‘three little geges and two little jiebies’.”

Tenderly, Lan WangJi pressed his lips on top of his head: “...Allow fate to take its course.” (Translation: “If fate brought us another child to raise together, we will take them home to the

Cloud Recesses with us.”)

“Hahaha, you indulge me with my every desire, HanGuang-Jun.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for taking so long! Had to prepare for my internship that starts tomorrow T_T

I dunno if I'll be able to find time to write on the weekdays... Wish me luck.

P.s I haven't proof-read this chapter yet, forgive the grammar and stuff for now :P

Reading Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Just like in the very first break they had, the soup quickly vanished, bones, roots, peanuts, berries and all. (The bones were quickly given to Fairy this time around to prevent him from approaching any further for the comfort of the resident ghost path patriarch.

This time around, Wei WuXian (and Lan WangJi alongside) cleaned up so many bowls so quickly that Jiang Cheng barely touched two bowls, thus shutting him up.

Wei WuXian was practically glowing by the time they were done and still is much to the delight of his partner, skipping all over the place around his fellow dreamers. (Mostly around Jiang Cheng just to spite him further.)

Everyone thanked Jiang YanLi for her delicious work yet again. It was no wonder Wei WuXian praises his shijie to the heavens and beyond, lotus root and pork ribs soup may have become their favourite dish.

Most impressively, her soup made Lan QiRen actually consider adding a little salt to the dishes in the Cloud Recesses. Something ‘attempt the impossible Wei WuXian’ has long since given up on.

Soon, everyone collectively agreed its time to continue with the book and headed back inside.

The moment she sat down, Wen Qing organized all her stationary neatly, dipped her brush in the ink and start writing again.

Few people wondered what she was writing.

Lan ZiRui rushed back to his seat to find a tiny scrap of paper on the book he left there.

“Welcome back, you will now commence with Arc 5, Yi City.” He read out loud.

The juniors exchanged glances at the title, they have finally reached this part.

Excited as they were for their returned appearance in the book, the juniors remembered the seniors in the room ready to give them a scolding for their 'detour'. (Sure, they were punished already, but being the nagging adults their seniors were, they couldn't be too sure.)

Deciding against commenting on the title, Jin Ling spoke with both his hands on his hips: “So, that creature ditched us after all. To take a nap?”

Lan ZiRui shrugged, a rather undignified act for a GusuLan clan member: “That’s what it said just now. But why would a dream spirit even need sleep?”

“Perhaps its tired from keeping us here? Or from creating this world?” Fu GaoWen suggested.

“Possible, remember it mentioning about ‘certain current events’. Could be referring to that.” Zhao YuanXiang pitched in: “But these speculations are not going get us anywhere now, I thought you were itching to read, ZiRui-shidi?”

“No need to remind me!” Lan ZiRui promptly tossed whatever remaining questions out of his head and sat down.

After entering the city, the two walked side by side though the jostling crowd. All of a sudden, Lan WangJi asked: “How is the Curse Mark?”

Wei WuXian replied: “Jin Ling was buried too close to our Good Friend at the time and got stained with quite a lot of resentful energy. It has faded a little but hasn’t completely disappeared yet. Its most likely that we must find the whole corpse or at least the head before we could remove it. It’s not a big deal.”

‘Good Friend’ is referring to no other than the dismembered man. They didn’t know who he was, so Wei WuXian suggested that they use ‘Good Friend’ when referring to him-

“Who’s your ‘Good Friend’?!” Nie HuaiSang cried out to no avail.

“I can’t call him ‘The left hand’ in public, I’ll get looks.”

“And when has that ever stopped you?” Jiang Cheng deadpanned.

“I believe.” Lan XiChen quickly spoke before anything else escalates: “That eldest brother would have gotten along very well with WuXian if they had a chance to know each other. Wouldn't you agree, HuaiSang?”

Nie HuaiSang flinched slightly at the mention of his brother but tentatively nodded: “I suppose. Especially if he gotten to know Wei-xiong before all the YiLing LaoZu business.”

“Isn’t the late ChiFeng-Zun a righteous man who hates people like me the most?” Wei WuXian asked jokingly.

“Brother is reasonable, even when you were the YiLing LaoZu, he never once made any assumptions of you based off that fact alone.” Lan XiChen told him, a fond smile on his face.

He may be gone, but he will now strive to be a leader like Nie MingJue was.

“Yea, he remembers the good you had done as both the YunMeng head disciple and the YiLing LaoZu. He used to compare me to you all the time.” Nie HuaiSang sighed: “As a Nie sect cultivator, he would be a bit more understanding towards matters regarding 'unusual' cultivational methods.”

“Oh.” After empathizing though his memories confirms that ChiFeng-Zun was indeed the honourable man everyone said he was. Being the head disciple of the YunMengJiang, of course he had met the man numerous of times but now, he wondered how well he would have gotten along with the man if they had a chance to know each other better.

Would he still stand against him in the end like Jiang Cheng did or still believe in him like Nie HauiSang did? He may not have known the man, but most likely the former option.

Seeing as the conversation ended, Lan ZiRui went back to reading.

When Lan WangJi heard this, he didn't respond, but he did not object against it either, so it can be considered an approval. Naturally, he himself won't be using this term.

Thank heavens.

Lan WangJi asked: “How much is a little?”

Wei WuXian gestured to his leg : “A little is a little. How do I explain it? Should I take my pants off so you can see?”

Groans fill the hall as the elder turned purple.

Lan WangJi's eyebrows furrowed, like he was genuinely worried that Wei WuXian would disrobe right here in the middle of the streets. He spoke coolly: “Disrobe after we returned.”

Wei WuXian snickered, poking his stoic partner's side: “I still have some shame, HanGuang-Jun~ You on the other hand, be honest. That is totally what you wanted me to do once we exit this dream, don't deny it.” He whispered teasingly as his hand traveled lower, contradicting his first sentence.

Lan WangJi grabbed his hand: “Behave.”

HanGuang-Jun's reputation was really taking a toll during these reading sessions...

Lan QiRen's vision blurred.

Although it was nothing compared to what was read out next. What Wei WuXian did under the guise of the mentally unstable cutsleeve, Mo XuanYu. From climbing into Lan WangJi's bed at night to sharing a bathtub togeth-

And the old man is out like a light again.

“Is he alright, jiejie?” Wen Ning asked in concern.

Wen Qing didn't even look away from her writing as she waved dismissively.

“A person like you can still be quantified as a doctor?”

“Do you still want this book?”

Wei WuXian closed his mouth.

Lan XiChen adjusts his cushion under his uncle’s head.

After he was done laughing, Wei WuXian assumed a serious face: “HanGuang-Jun, do you think that the ones who threw the arm of our Good Friend at Mo village and left it to attack your sect’s juniors and the ones who buried his legs in the wall were the same group of people?”

Despite how he refers to Lan WangJi by his name in his mind in the past and present, now that he daily called him by his title, he became used to it. Besides, him using this title created a sort of exaggerated seriousness in his voice, which was really amusing. So, he continues to call him that while outside.

“Mm.” Lan WangJi nodded at the explanation for why Wei WuXian developed the habit of calling him by his title instead of his usual ‘Lan Zhan Lan Zhan’s. However: “I prefer Lan Zhan.” He spoke softly.

“How come?” Wei WuXian grinned at him knowingly.

His partner’s ears flush: “Everyone addresses me by title, not the same for birth name.”
(Translation: “Anyone, even strangers can freely call me HanGuang-Jun, but only the three people closest to me here can refer to me by the name I was given when I was first brought into this world, Zhan of the Lan clan, Lan Zhan. I prefer hearing you call me Lan Zhan, it means we are close, important to each other.”)

Wei WuXian glomped him after hearing what he expected to hear from his stoic husband: “I loveeee you so much!!!~” He practically cooed

Lan WangJi closed his eyes to better restrain himself.

“Mm” He answered, quietly, undisturbed to the untrained eye.

Lan WangJi answered: “Two groups.”

“Ah? Two separate groups? But Jin GuangYao was the only one to know about ChiFeng-Zun’s dismemberment, right? Only other person is Su She but he is on team Jin GuangYao. Who else could be connected to it?” Lan JingYi asked.

“HanGuang-Jun and senior Wei did not even know about LianFang-Zun and master Su’s involvement at the time. There must be something that convinced them that Mo village and the Man-Eating castle is the result of two separate groups.” Fu GaoWen reasoned.

“Best guess is motive. If it’s two separate groups.” Zhou YuanXiang added.

Lan ZiRui : "Oh, I get it now. Maybe the group that released the hand at Mo village wanted to use it’s intense resentful energy to kill others, while the other group knew how dangerous the corpse was, cut it up and seal them away."

Nie HuaiSang hid his expression behind his fan.

“That does not sound like what a righteous group would do... Cutting up someone’s body and scattering them far away from each other. Even if it was to save lives, that’s too cruel.” Li KangYu stated quietly, his hands tightly clenched in his lap.

“Besides that.” Lan SiZhui started: “The first group’s intentions were not to slaughter mindlessly. I firmly still believe that the hand was tossed specifically on the night of our arrival. The Mo family were just collateral damage, the real target was us. Or in other words, the GusuLan.” At his last sentence, his tone was gravely serious.

“But, how did this group even know we were going to night hunt there anyways?!” Lan ZiRui nearly shouted his question.

“If it’s Jin GuangYao, he might have known. He and ZeWu-Jun were close.” Zhou YuanXiang answered quietly, hoping to not upset his sect leader too much.

Lan XiChen’s face paled. He had mentioned his juniors going for a simple night hunt at Mo village to Jin GuangYao. Had he been the reason for their near demise that night?

Seeing this from the corner of his eye, Wei WuXian intervened: “JingYi, just continue reading.”

“But I am Lan ZiRui!” “Senior Wei! I am over here!” Two similar sounding voices complained.

Wei WuXian waved them off: “I was just making sure you two were paying attention~ Go on, ZiOui.”

“It’s ZiRui...” But he turned back to the book.

Wei WuXian spoke: “My thoughts exactly. Its so much effort to sew the legs onto another body and hid it in the castle walls. If that’s the case, they wouldn’t have purposely released the left hand to attack GusuLan members which will draw attention to it and be investigated. One did everything in their power to hide it, while one attacks recklessly, like they were afraid people *didn’t* notice it. They must be different groups of people.”

“Right... It was LiangFang-Zun who hid the legs in the castle.” Fu GaoWen had a hand pressed to his head, smiling in embarrassment.

“And how he kept ChiFeng-Zun’s head with him. He was the leader of the group that wished to keep ChiFeng-Zun’s dismemberment a secret.” Lan SiZhui added on, internally laughing at himself as well.

The juniors laughed amongst themselves with their senior Wei praising their silly theorising.

However, one unanswered question lingers at the minds of those unaware. Who was the group that wanted the hand to be discovered and investigated that badly to have directly attacked the GusuLan? If it was not Jin GuangYao, how would they have known about the juniors’ night hunt?

This new underlying threat unsettled even the GusuLan elder, concerned for his sect’s younger generation.

Unlike the rest, now armed with the new information they had received during the last break, Wen Qing and Wen Ning knew exactly where to turn their eyes to.

The man’s own eyes stayed behind the safety provided by the paper barrier.

Having said everything that needed to be said, Lan WangJi didn't have anything else to add on. But he still gave a "Mm" in reply.

Wei WuXian turned back around, speaking as he walked: "The person who hid the legs knew about the QingheNie's tradition with the saber hall, while the person who released the left arm knew the GusuLan's plans. This may not be so simple. There no mysteries now."

As if he had came into contact with lightning, Lan XiChen jolted before shifting his eyes to Nie HuaiSang.

...It cannot be. He thought, the memories of the night in the GuanYin temple playing back in his head like one of his many recurring nightmares he had during his seclusion.

Lan WangJi replied: "One by one."

Wei WuXian asked: "How did you recognised me?"

A few people did a double-take at the off-topic question, including the current reader.

Lan WangJi, however, was not taken off guard: "Figure it out yourself."

With their bouncing of questions and answers back and forth non-stop, Wei WuXian had been planning to catch Lan WangJi off guard by asking this question last.

Wei WuXian pouted into his husband's arm: "How did you know I was going to ask that?"

Lan WangJi answered him slowly: "I did not."

If anything, Wei WuXian pouted more: "You evolved~ You are too good at this now~ I want the old, easy to handle Lan Zhan back~~~~"

"Mm." (Translation: "What you see is what you get.")

With Wei WuXian's plan to know how the stoic man recognise him ending in failure, he moved on to the task at hand: "I have never been here in YueYang before. In the past, I always have others to gather information for me. This time, I'm gonna slack off and make you do the work. Hope HanGuang-Jun doesn't mind?"

Jiang Cheng and Wen Qing rolled their eyes: "And what have you done to require such a break?" They muttered before glaring at each other.

Wei WuXian chuckled at their antics.

Lan WangJi immediately took off in a direction, leading Wei WuXian to question his intended destination.

Lan WangJi turned his head back: "To find the cultivational clan of this town."

Jiang Cheng broke off eye contact with the doctor to comment: "What good will that do? No cultivational clan would just hand you information like that about their own tuft. I never expected

that the HanGuang-Jun who 'appears wherever chaos is' would not have known such a basic thing." He spoke with a haughty tone, with full intentions to rile up the other.

Lan WangJi didn't even glance at him.

But Wei WuXian agreed with that statement and ended up taking the lead after all. Not that the second Lan minds at all.

The energetic man lead them to a store selling liquor.

That, even Jiang Cheng would agree is one of the most ideal places to gather information. With young curious waiters who overhears literally anything and everything from their customers, sober and drunk alike.

If only it wasn't so obvious that the main reason Wei WuXian chose the place was because he just wanted a drink. As confirmed by the face Lan WangJi himself was making.

Wei WuXian acted as if he didn't understand the face he is making. With another tug of the other's sword tassel, he stepped into the streets lined with liquor shops with bleaming eyes. Instantly, waiters from five or six different shops flanked them, the next more enthusiastic than the last. "Would you like a taste? The He family's liquor is well-known in these parts!"

"Young master, try this! Free of charge! If you like it, please visit our shop!"

"This one doesn't smell that strong, but wait till you try it out!"

Lan ZiRui's currently having a blast, reading out the lines with different voice-acting and levels of enthusiasm for each waiter like a fish to water without even a single pause.

His fellow juniors, Jiang YanLi and Wei WuXian clapped at his performance.

"That was amazing, ZiRui-xiong!"

"I nearly thought there were really five extra people here!"

"You read that almost exactly like how senior Wei reads!"

"That was really great, ZiRui-xiong"

"Nice one cousin! As your TangGe*, I cannot lose to you!" Lan JingYi cheered, slinging an arm around his cousin.

Lan ZiRui's cheeks were flushed, but he has this huge grin on his face.

"Hmm, truly not bad." Wei WuXian hummed in interest: "If you ever consider a change in career you might have a future as a liquor salesman."

Compliments from Wei WuXian are not exactly rare, but for a bunch of teens who grew up in a stuffy sect, this will always be music to their ears. No matter what the compliment is for.

Lan ZiRui bleamed, completely going starry-eyed: "Really, senior Wei?! You think I can?!!!"

Touching his chin with his hand, he played around with the idea in his head: “Since senior Wei said so...”

"Focus on your reading and do not think about such nonsense!" Ever the destroyer of anything fun, Lan QiRen berated the junior.

"Okay, elder!" Good mood not deterred even the slightest, the young boy went back to reading.

"If you can still stand after drinking this, I'll adopt your last name!"

"Hoh, so did he live up to his promise?" Jiang Cheng smirked, there was no way Wei WuXian would not use this opportunity to show off his high liquor tolerance: "Is there another Wei I need to keep track of?"

Wei WuXian laughed: "Wait and see~"

Lan WangJi: "..."

Hearing this, Wei WuXian responded: “Alright then!” He took the liquor bowl from that waiter and downed it in one go, then showing him the empty bowl with a grin: “Adopt my last name?”

Not only was the waiter not afraid, he stuck his head up and with confidence, he said: “I meant finishing an entire jar.”

“Wow, how shameless.” Lan JingYi muttered.

“It’s a marketing strategy, how else would they be able to gain more customers with all these other liquor stalls around?” Zhou YuanXiang explained, being the most experienced with the mundane world among his peers (Which isn’t the most impressive accomplishment.)

Wei WuXian nodded: “Only the boldest survive~ It would be a whole new experience~” He added teasingly.

Lan ZiRui nodded with interest, his face scrunched in heavy consideration.

Li KangYu tapped the book in his classmate’s hand lightly to urge him to read, warning him of their elder’s intense glowering.

Wei WuXian replied: “Then give me ----- three jars.”

The waiter was delighted, immediately rushing back to his shop. Wei WuXian turned to Lan WangJi: “This is doing business, first help their business, other things can come later. Once that’s done, those mouths will loosen.”

Lan WangJi prepared the money to pay their bill.

“Must nice to have someone be your new willing moneybag...” Jiang Cheng glanced at the couple with a strange resignation in his eyes.

Lan WangJi didn't mind, in fact, he likes to use this method to inquire. He obtains both good amounts of information and some gifts for his beloved liquor-loving wife spouse.

Business completed, its time to get back to the serious stuff. Wei WuXian began asking about strange events.

That waiter happened to be talkative one. Rubbing his hands together, he asked: “What kind of strange events?”

“Haunted houses, wild graves, dismembered corpses, so on.”

The waiter's eyes darted between the two of them: “Oh... What do you guys do for a living? You and him.”

Wei WuXian answered: “ Haven't you already figured it out? ”

The waiter responded: "Of course, it was obvious. The two of you must be those cultivators who fly around in the clouds. Especially the one next to you, I have never seen such a..."

Wei WuXian grinned: "Such a pretty person."

Collective eye-rows.

The waiter laughed: "If you say this, the young master next to you will be displeased.(As if) As for unusual events, there's one. But it wasn't recent, it happened ten years ago. Continue in this direction. After leaving the city, walk for another two miles and you will come across a rather beautifully constructed residence*. I don't know if the signboard is still there but that was the Chang clan's residence."

Wei WuXian asked: "What's wrong with the residence?"

"The entire clan died!" The waiter answered: "You asked for strange events, so I'm telling you the strangest of events. The whole family died and I heard that they were all frightened to death!"

Like Lan WangJi, those who had heard of this (Or were there for the trial) before were starting to remember.

"He is talking about the YueYangChang Clan's massacre, the one Xue ChengMei* was behind?"
Lan SiZhui asked.

"Yeah, that's how I even knew that rascal existed."

'And Xiao Shishu*.' Wei WuXian thought wistfully to himself.

Wei WuXian asked the waiter why hadn't the cultivation sect in charge of this town do anything, but as it turns out, the Chang clan *was* the cultivational family stationed in YueYang.

The revelation stunned Wei WuXian, who or what could have completely massacred an entire cultivational clan in a single night?!

Way to also remind the juniors just how much danger they were once in at Yi City.

Wei WuXian asked for more details, this involves the sound of slamming doors from inside the house with doors that open from the inside belonging to the only cultivational family in a small town made up of tens of so men and women and a few dozen servants.

The owner of the liquor shop turned around and scolded: "Do you want to die?! Why are you not working but telling ancient stories about people dying?!"

Wei WuXian ordered: "Five more jars, please."

"Excessive drinking also damages the absolute Yin liver Meridian and Major Yin Spleen Meridian."

"It's for the road! It's for the road! Right, Lan Zhan?"

Lan WangJi obediently nodded: "For the road."

Wen Qing rolled her eyes up to the ceiling: "Oh, why did I even bother. Get alcohol poisoning for all I care."

But she made a note of alcohol consummation during pregnancy in her notebook. Don't say she never warned him.

Predictable, but the owner was all smiles when he accepted the payment for the absurd amount of liquor and instructed the waiter to 'properly care for the customers and don't run off'.

Continuing with the story the best he could, the waiter told them about how the slamming sounds continued even after the incident every night for a while, even though the clan leader, Chang Ping survived...

"But he said the whole clan died!" Lan JingYi exclaimed.

Wei WuXian pointed out: "Didn't you say the whole clan died?"

Lan JingYi cheered.

But quickly started to complain: "Why do these people always tell their stories this way? Don't

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Reading Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation)by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Eventually, Wei WuXian had enough of laughing and teasing the little junior to allow the next junior in line to read.

As it turns out, the waiter was not technically wrong. Its just that Chang Ping's demise came a few years later than those of his fellow clan members. In much more painful and gruesome way.

LingChi 凌迟 *, the infamous 'death by a thousand cuts', 'lingering death' or the 'slow slicing'. No matter the name you chose to remember it by, it stuck fear into the hearts of many as one of the most painful ways to die. Although it is a method reserved for the executions of the offenders of the most heinous crimes, it was more of a brutal, drawn-out method of torture that tests how many cuts the offender can stand before dying or falling unconscious rather than quick killing blows most executions are. It was the method that fully embodies its intended purpose, which is to punish.

The offender is tied to a wooden post, then have their flesh sliced off in small pieces at a time slowly with a knife (Or in this case, a sword) usually starting from the chest until ribcage is nearly visible before moving on to slice the arms and legs in larger portions. While the depth of each incision and time taken depends on the severity of the crime and skill level of the executioner but most people would be dead by this point, so the body will then be dismembered and placed inside a basket, to condemn the offender for this life and their next. (On a brighter note, this method was banned more than a hundred years ago as of now.)

Of course Wei WuXian wouldn't not know what LingChi was. If a book known as the 'A Thousand brutal deaths' needs to be written, he would have been the most qualified person to write it-

Afterall, during the sunshot campaign, Wei WuXian *was* the most creative and held the record for the highest body count in countless numerous upon numerous kinds of ways.

But Lan WangJi and Wen Ning could only think about Wei WuXian's own death, torn apart and devoured alive by his own corpse army turning on upon their master when he wasn't mentally stable enough to command them.

Wei WuXian looked around knowingly: "What's the matter? That wasn't any mind-blowing information that none of you don't know about, let's head back to the book before I lose track of where we were."

Continuing with the story, the waiter went on about how the Chang clan must have offended someone they shouldn't have, it was even related to a famous villain.

Wei WuXian smiled as he held the liquor bowl to his lips, glancing at him from the side: "Let me guess, you don't know who this villain is."

The waiter laughed: "Nope. I know this one, I think he was called something like... Lao Guai* (Wei WuXian made a noise of indignation here) ... No, Lao Zu. YiLing LaoZu!"

"Senior Wei really gets unjustly blamed for everything." Zhou YuanXiang stopped reading to comment: "You were not even around at the time."

Wei WuXian sighed: "You mean I was still a poor, lonely and nameless soul floating around aimlessly when this happened. And yet they still think I did it. I don't even know a YueYang Chang clan. I have never even been to YueYang before! Man, people sure are good at making up stories. I just can't keep up~" He told the juniors teasingly.

Lan JingYi raised his eyebrow at him.

Wei WuXian choked, letting out a bunch of bubbles into his liquor bowl with a splash:
"What?"

Him again?

The waiter confirmed it (and continued talking to said 'villain' unknowingly): "Yep, that's right. His surname is Wei, I think his name was Wei WuQian*-"

This is where Zhou YuanXiang has to stop himself when his urge to grin became too strong: 'Calm down, YuanXiang. Control... Discipline yourself. You are the second eldest disciple, do not go raking up punishment like Lan JingYi shidi does...'

Thankfully he was saved by his before-mentioned junior who immediately laughed: "Senior Wei-hahahaha- Senior Wei WuQian, that name sure suits you! Hahahahahaha!"

Zhou YuanXiang: 'Idiot...'

Wei WuXian puffed up his cheeks and reached his hand out to his husband who immediately gave him the tiny pink drawstring bag that serves as a money pouch. He shook the small pouch, filling the hall with the loud, clanging sounds of coins and ingots hitting each other: "Then, little JingYi. Tell me what is this in my hand?"

Lan JingYi pointed at the pouch rather rudely: "Are you shameless? That's HanGuang-Jun's, you literally made him hand it to you right in front of me!"

Wei WuXian yawned, playing with the heavy pouch in his hand: "HanGuang-Jun's money is my money. It's just that he's more responsible and is more likely to not misplace it, that's why he is in charge of keeping it." He said matter-of-factly.

"Mm" Lan WangJi agrees.

Lan JingYi didn't back down: "You mean you take his money. HanGuang-Jun's money is from the GusuLan which you are not even a part of until a few months ago! How could you say-"

"Kid." Wei WuXian interrupted, his tone so serious Lan JingYi thought he had overstepped something.

But Wei WuXian continued: "What if I tell you, this money pouch." He shook it again: "Used to belong to me?"

"Wha..?" Everyone turned their eyes to the tiny, delicate, feminine, pink pouch that serves as Lan WangJi's 'everlasting money source'.

Wei WuXian grinned: "I took HanGuang-Jun's money, you say? But *he* 'took' this pouch from me years ago, when I'm asleep too~" He shook the pouch again, the clanging sound filling the hall like a clap of thunder for dramatic effect: "Of course, I'm not mad at him but at the same time, I never officially gave it to him. So it still belongs to me. *So*, HanGuang-Jun's money is stored inside *my* pouch. Which makes it *my* money."

Silence...

Then, Lan JingYi shouted: "*Now* you are expecting me to believe *HanGuang-Jun* stole that tiny, girly pouch from you when you were asleep?!"

Wei WuXian shrugged: "I know right? I was surprised myself."

Lan QiRen gritted his teeth: "Nonsense."

Wei WuXian looked straight into everyone's disbelieving eyes, grinning from ear to ear: "Don't believe me? No problem, just keep it in mind as we progress though the story. The story is in my perspective, so you'll get your evidence in due time~"

Lan WangJi flushed to the tips of his ears.

Lan XiChen: 'Ah, no wonder he treasures that little pouch so much. But WangJi, taking something without someone's permission is theft...'

Jiang YanLi giggled: "A-Xian used to own this cute pouch? Such a delicate piece of work, I wonder which girl gave it to you. I don't think I ever seen it before."

Jiang Cheng stared at the pouch, it *was* a little familiar now that he mentioned it. But he can't remember where he seen it before.

The Wei WuXian in the book was upset as well but before anything else, Lan WangJi stood up: "Go."

In understanding, Wei WuXian asked for the bill and had the waiter secure their purchased liquor until they returned which he happily agreed.

This waiter has an outgoing personality and is quick to be a tad too friendly with strangers. Although they only chatted for a short while, he already considers him a friend and slung his arm over Wei WuXian's shoulders (The strange vinegary smell made its reappearance): "Is this line of work the two of you are in tough? Do you earn a lot? It must be a lot! What a reputable occupation! Let me ask, is it difficult to get started? I..."

"Yea, it can be. You're putting your life on the line after all. And it depends, rogue cultivators are usually hired and are paid by their employers. Yeah, I guess. And it can be, no matter where you start from. You could join a sect and be trained properly but bound to the sect and paid by them, assuming you were even accepted in the first place. Most people joined at younger ages but you're still acceptable. Or you can be a rogue cultivator and have to rely on yourself for everything, money, clothes, food, weapons and jobs. But you aren't bound to a place and higher ups but it's tougher to make a name for yourself without the name of a sect backing you up, but if you do, the glory is yours alone." Wei WuXian suddenly answered like he was actually replying the waiter: "Another young man inspiring to become a cultivator working as a liquor shop waiter... And here we have a little cultivator boy with high potential to do well serving alcohol. What do you say, wanna switch your occupations?"

"Wei Ying, stop teasing." (Uncle is turning into a mixture of red and purple.)

Lan ZiRui considered the possibility: "YueYang is a little far from Gusu though... Oh, and I cannot drink alcohol, so I would not be able to describe the taste accurately to customers."

Since he first started drinking, Wei WuXian loved to encourage his peers to try the amazing beverage that is alcohol at least once (and he loves seeing how they act when drunk), but one look to the boy's cloud patterned forehead ribbon had him saying: "Yeah... You're right, you are definitely better off not drinking."

Everyone stared at him like he just proclaimed his love for dogs.

Lan WangJi flushed.

**As he rambled on, he suddenly stopped and nervously look to the side. He whispered:
"Young master, the one next to you... why is he staring at me?"**

(Lan XiChen, Wen Qing, juniors: 'You have an arm around his over-10-years-love interest, young man/stupid.')

But by the time Wei WuXian turned his head to see for himself, Lan WangJi had already turned away (Missed opportunity there, HanGuang-Jun). So Wei Ying just mentioned something about his stoic family's upbringing making him not like people being all friendly and comfortable with each other like the statues his family might as well be. (Lans: "...")

The waiter awkwardly took him arm away, continuing to whisper: "Weird. With the way he was looking at me, you would think the one I placed my arm on was his wife."

-cough-

**With Lan WangJi's hearing ability, it's impossible for him to miss even a whisper.
Wondering what is currently going through his head-**

Lan WangJi: 'Jealous, so jealous, jealousjealousjealous, so jealous this man can just touch Wei Ying only after half an hour jealousjealous.'

Wei WuXian tried so hard not to laugh that his stomach hurt. He quickly told the waiter: "I finished a jar."

"What?"

The waiter: "What?"

Wei WuXian pointed towards himself: "Still standing."

The waiter finally remembered his own words: "Oh, ohhhhh!"

"Looks like someone is regretting his own words~" Wei WuXian sang.

"Why is this the only time you can remember something?" Jiang Cheng grumbled, forcing down the smirk forming on his lips.

"Um...Amazing! I'm not exaggerating here, this is the first time I saw someone who can still stand and speak properly after finishing an entire jar. Young master, what is your surname?"

Zhou YuanXiang raised an eyebrow at Wei WuXian's reply.

Wei WuXian replied: "My surname..." But then he thought back on the waiter mentioning 'Wei WuQian'. The corners of his lips twitched as he transitioned smoothly to: "Is Lan."

Jiang Cheng nearly spat his tea out.

Jiang YanLi giggled: "XianXian is so amazing, you haven't even married HanGuang-Jun yet!"

Nie HuaiSang clapped softly in the background.

The waiter was also another person with a thick skin, stating without a change in his expression: "Ok. From today onwards, my surname is Lan."

Lan XiChen blinked: "Should I seek this young man out instead? He now carries our family name and has shown interest in the cultivation path after all."

"No" Both Lan WangJi and Lan QiRen firmly announced at the same time.

Wei WuXian laughed: "Lan is a pretty rare surname anyways, if he chose to cultivate, that surname might help him down the road."

Under the bright red banners of the liquor store, Lan WangJi's figure seemed to have stumbled for a split second ever so slightly.

Lan WangJi felt his ears heat up. Honestly, when he heard that at the time, it filled his heart with hope. Even if Wei Ying *seemed* to be ignoring his past confession of love at the time.

With a mischievous smile on his face, Wei WuXian walked over with his hands behind his back and patted his shoulder: " To replay HanGuang-Jun for playing the bill, I made him take on your surname. "

"..."

Waiting until they got out of town, Wei WuXian questioned what instigated Lan WangJi's previous decision.

Lan WangJi explained: "I suddenly remembered, I have heard of the YueYang Chang clan incident. There is no need for further enquires."

Wei WuXian: "Before you tell me about it, let me ask you something first. Help me confirm that, that Chang clan massacre wasn't done by me?"

Other than how he died ten years ago, his soul had been quite stable. There was no way that he massacre an entire clan and not remember it!

Lan WangJi held Wei WuXian closer.

Lan WangJi answered: "No"

Wei WuXian said: "Oh" It was just like his life before he died, worse than a sewer rat's, despised by everyone. He played a role in every unpleasant event . If the neighbouring old man's grandson was not eating well and lost 0.5 kilograms, it was because the child was terrified of the stories of the YiLing LaoZu ordering the Ghost General to kill people.

If Wei WuXian didn't know any better, the great HanGuang-Jun was trying smother him alive.

The hall was silent, until...

Lan JingYi: "Who told a kid that kind of bedtime story anyways? Its their own fault if the little brat cannot stomach his food."

Jin Ling, Zhou YuanXiang and Lan ZiRui snickered.

However, Lan WangJi spoke again: "They were not killed by you, but it was related to you."

What part of the plot wasn't related to him?

Wei WuXian asked: "Related in what way?"

Lan WangJi answered: "Related in two ways. First is that one of the people involved has a relation to your mother."

Wei WuXian stopped in his tracks.

The famed CangSe SanRen*, a rogue cultivating beauty known for her cultivation, looks, accomplishments and carefree personality (and eccentricity). The pride and joy of the great immortal cultivator BaoShan SanRen*, wife of Wei CangZe and Wei WuXian's biological mother.

And another pain in Lan QiRen's beard.

While both Jiang FengMian and his wife Yu ZiYuan were quite familiar with Wei WuXian's parents, Jiang FengMian never reminisces his old friends in front of Wei WuXian-

Like he would want to sow more seeds of turmoil in his family if anyone else heard him telling Wei WuXian about his parents and telling Yu ZiYuan about it, or worse, *she* overhears her husband talking about CangSe SanRen and sends Wei WuXian to the ancestral hall to start an argument with Jiang FengMian for the what time this month.

-and besides, his wife Yu ZiYuan would never speak to Wei WuXian normally. He's considered lucky if she doesn't whip him a few times and send him to the ancestral hall to kneel just to keep him away from Jiang Cheng.

Many eyebrows furrowed deeply.

Lan WangJi glared at the floor, cursing his younger self for punishing Wei WuXian so much as though he haven't been unjustly punished enough back in the Jiang Sect.

The juniors and Wen Ning glanced around at each other, rumors of the late Madam of the Jiang's dislike of Wei WuXian has not escaped their ears but having the rumors confirmed just made them more upset at Wei WuXian's treatment in his own home but not making any comments at the moment out of respect.

Wei WuXian looked down at his feet, wondering if he had never been found by Jiang FengMian or he leaving the Jiang Sect to become a rogue cultivator as soon as he can would make the Jiang family situation any better. (Doubtful...)

Most of what he knew of his parents was from other people, but he honestly didn't know any more than outsiders.

A child should and has the right to learn all they can about their parents. But Wei WuXian was denied such a simple thing even though he lived with his parents' best friend just because of the man's wife and little to no information left behind, with his father's parents being dead already and CangSe SanRen's on a mountain of legends.

Lan XiChen glanced at Wei WuXian silently, he and his brother would know what it was like.

Jin Ling was silent. Both Wei WuXian and him had lost their parents at a young age and that's all their childhood had in common. He is the heir of the rich Lanling Jin Sect and nephew to the sect leader of the YunMeng Jiang Sect while Wei WuXian was a servant's son left homeless and penniless after his parent's death without any other family members to turn to or a home to return to, running down the streets, eating what others tossed away and getting chased by vicious dogs for years before being adopted into a family whose Madam preferred if he had died on the streets, let alone even allowing anyone to tell the orphan boy anything about his late parents. While Jin Ling literally has maids that could tell him how his gentle mother was a good cook and how his proud father was one of the most proficient swordsmen to have been born into Lanling Jin.

Yet Wei WuXian never once complained.

While he goes around whining that he had no parents because of Wei WuXian.

Wei WuXian sighed dismissively, it was hard to miss what you don't remember having.

Lan Wangji stopped as well and turned to look at him: "Have you heard of Xiao Xingchen*?"

Wei WuXian raked through his brain carefully: "Never."

Lan Wangji replied: "'Never' is correct. He was well known when he came down the mountain twelve years ago. But no one mentions him now."

Twelve years ago... Exactly a year after the siege on the YiLing Mass Graves Hills.

Wei WuXian asked: "Which mountain? Who is his master?"

Lan Wangji answered: "I do not know which mountain. His master is a cultivator. Xiao Xingchen is a disciple of BaoShan SangRen."

The closest thing Wei WuXian has to a real family member and he came down a mere year after his Shizhi*'s death.

Its no wonder Xiao XingChen was a great deal, as the third cultivator to descend from the celestial mountain after being raised by the immortal BaoShan SanRen herself.

The first two were YanLing DaoRen* and CangSe SanRen. Both of which, met a tragic end as BaoShan SanRen predicted and warn against any of her students going down the mountain for they are unaware of the dangers of the outside world and the greed of it's inhabitants.

And if people aren't talking about this Xiao XingChen any longer, it was safe to assume the same has happened to him as Lan WangJi told him his story.

When Xiao XingChen left the mountain, he was seventeen.

' Because having a Shishu younger than you is one of the perks of having an immortal grandma, amiright?' Wei WuXian thought jokingly but the smile on his face wasn't reaching his eyes.

He sighed as he toned out the summarized version of what Lan WangJi told him before.

His upbringing and personality makes him treasure and be content with what he has, but he wondered what it would be like to meet this Xiao Shishu of his.

Chapter End Notes

1* LingChi 凌迟: An execution method and method of torture used in China (and later Vietnam as well) roughly beginning in the Qin dynasty and continued to be used scarcely until it was banned in 1905. A brutal punishment administered to the worse of offenders (Crimes include treason, mass murders, patricide/matricide, etc), as a means to humiliate, torture and condemn the person even into the afterlife, as to be cut to pieces meant that the body of the victim would not be "whole" in spiritual life after death. (So you can see how Nie MingJue's fate affected the characters.)

2* LaoZu 老祖 means ancestor, founder or patriarch, but the Lao 老 itself means old. Guai 怪 means monster or strange. Therefore, Lao Guai 老怪 together is Old Monster.

3* Mentioned before, but WuXian 无羡 means 'No Envy'. The Xian 羡 in this case is changed to Qian 钱 meaning money. So WuQian 无钱 means 'No Money'. (Which is true, sorry to say.)

4* CangSe SanRen 藏色散人 Cang 藏 means to conceal while Se 色 means colors/good looks means SanRen means 'rogue cultivator'. Maybe it means Rouge cultivator who hides her true colors? I dunno.

5* BaoShan SanRen 抱山散人, BaoShan means 'hugging a mountain'. Fitting for a rogue cultivator that spends most and the rest of her immortal life on a mountain.

6* Xiao XingChen 晓星尘, Xiao 晓 is a surname meaning dawn/daybreak. Xing 星 is star and Chen 尘 is dust/this world (Same Chen in BiChen). Cute name for our DaoZhang.

7* Shizhi 师侄 Nephew, but related by sect or masters rather than of blood.

8* YanLing DaoRen 延灵道人, Yan 延 means to delay but it is also used as a surname and Ling 灵 means spirit or soul. DaoRen 道人 has basically the same meaning as SanRen although this term is more for a Taoist rather than an average cultivator.

.....
...So... How are you guys doing..?

I don't even know how long it has been since I updated... And I am not checking, lest I disappoint myself.

The chapter is a little rushed, so feel free to point out any grammar or spelling mistakes.

Reading Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

I don't own Mo Dao Zu Shi 魔道祖师(also known as founder of diabolism and also known as the grandmaster of demonic cultivation) by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu 墨香铜臭
To read the story in English, visit Exiled Rebel Scanlations who are translating the story.

By the way, major spoiler warnings since the story's setup is post-canon so read this at your own risk.

And potential ooc, sorry in advance.

“ ” = Talking

‘ ’ = Thoughts

Italic = MengMo

Bold words = Story reading

Underline = story summary

[] = Flashback

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Zhou YuanXiang quickly finished what almost everyone knew and handed it over to Lan JingYi.

Lan JingYi's was grumpy as he flipped through the first few pages of the chapter he was about to read.

"Urgh, these are just exposition to things we already know..." Lan JingYi grumbled.

"Um, little Lan?" Jin ZiXuan waved: "Did you forget that three among you were dead when the YueYang Chang clan was killed off? Assuming that is the exposition you were talking about?" He said, gesturing to himself and the two ladies.

"Five actually, if you count me and Wen Ning." Wei WuXian piped up.

"...Three that were dead and continued to remain dead unlike the two that have the privilege to go back to the world of the living to be informed of such an incident." Jin ZiXuan corrected with a glare at Wei WuXian's direction.

Lan JingYi pouted but tried to read a little more enthusiastically. (It's still a boring chapter to him.)

One day, the clan leader of the YueYang Chang clan Chang Ping took a few other family members on a night hunt for about half a month-

"Oh, I thought only the clan leader survived. Guess these extra survivors of the family slipped off that waiter's mind -grumble-grumble-." Lan JingYi complained, sour look on his face.

"Yeah, you have proven to us how untrustworthy the word of mouth is, Lan JingYi. Move on." Jing Ling responded in boredom.

"What's with him and untrustworthy testimonies?" Wei WuXian whispered to Lan SiZhui

"To answer senior Wei." Lan SiZhui whispered back: "I think he is still... upset over that night hunt we had in SuZhou more than a year ago. The key witness was the Madam that owned the inn some of the victims stayed in before their demise. She was... quite enthusiastic about having cultivators over to investigate her inn and was also *very* enthusiastic to give her testimonies to us."

"Let me guess, you ended up being lead in circles and dead ends because of her exaggerated stories only to go back and get another exaggerated story from her. So by the time you finished the case, you have exceeded your deadline and were punished, since it's Lan sect." Wei WuXian grinned.

Lan SiZhui sighed and nodded reluctantly: "We exceeded our given deadline by four days without a reasonable explanation. So we had to copy the rules forty times. It took two entire weeks of JingYi's free time to finish it. Including the weekends. I suppose that left an impression on him."

"Say what? Forty?! Two weeks?!"

"Ten for each extra day." Lan SiZhui clarified.

Wei WuXian gulped, such horrific punishment for something he often does: "So severe? Is that against the rules?"

Lan WangJi nodded: "Rule one hundred and seventy five."

Wei WuXian said: "...Cool."

While on his not so one-man night hunt, Chang Ping received an alarming message that their remaining clansman back in YueYang had perished. There was no other evidence or information left behind in the crime scene other than that their protective barrier has been tampered with and malicious spirits have been lead inside.

-

This happened just after the siege of the YiLing Mass Graves hills.

"Well, they didn't waste any time putting my inventions to work..." Wei WuXian sighed drily.

Wen Qing clicked her tongue in response. Fricking *Jins*. Just who *are* the villains here?

Its scary how prejudice can blind a whole world.

Unsurprisingly, this was thought as Wei WuXian's revenge until Xiao XingChen and his friend, Song Lan courtesy name, Song ZiChen found the real culprit to be a young guest disciple of the Jin Sect named Xue Yang.

Wen Qing and Jiang YanLi cringed at the mention of Xue Yang being under the Jin sect.

'*That's* why they took in Xue Yang?! What has that man been doing after I died? Certainly not mourning for me nor A-Li... or taking good care of my son...' Jin ZiXuan glared at the floor, thinking of the man who used his invitation and death as a way to get Wei WuXian's power for himself.

He should have seen it coming.

The others were outraged that Xue Yang massacred an entire clan because he has some past with the previous *late* clan leader.

Wei WuXian wondered if he would have turned out the same if the Jiang sect hadn't taken him in.

Wei WuXian asked: "He was a guest disciple? But LanLing Jin is already one of the most prominent sects, why would they invite a little hooligan to be a guest disciple?"

Lan WangJi replied: "That is the second relation."

He stared into Wei WuXian's eyes and continued slowly: "Because of the Yin Tiger Seal*."

'Its always because of that stupid thing... If only I never created it, the old peacock may not have targeted me as much or so early... Maybe I could have saved the Wens and Shijie. Or at the very least, not have gave Xue Yang so much power. Then Xiao Shishu may not have died...'

The Yin Tiger Seal, by far the most powerful, well known and most sought after of all of Wei WuXian's creations. Like it's name implies, it's a Tiger Seal that gives the holder the ability to summon and command an army, except that this particular one summons an army of the undead to do it's user's bidding. However, the main problem was that unlike the Ghost Flute ChenQing, the Yin Tiger Seal doesn't listen to one master which means *anyone* can wield it.

Wei WuXian only wanted something to help reduce the burden of Ghost Cultivation on himself, thus forging an artefact from some special mineral he found in a beast's stomach. Unfortunately, it did more harm than good.

Lan WangJi's eyebrows furrowed at 'special mineral he found in a beast's stomach'.

It might be something else he wasn't there for (He felt a painful pang in his heart at that) but if that was not the case, there is only one thing this 'mineral' could be.

The Yin Tiger Seal's power was far beyond what Wei WuXian intended, even exceeding its own creator. In the two times it was used, it left only destruction in its wake. Wei WuXian had decided to spit the Seal in half just in case, choosing not to destroy it due to the effort of both creating it and destroying it would take. But after its second use, just before the seige on the Mass Graves Hills, Wei WuXian only had time to destroy half of it, rendering the other half completely useless. It was

good enough for the limited time he had left.

Or so he thought.

Jin GuangYao managed to find someone with an affinity towards the ghost path and was talented enough to recreate the other half of the Yin Tiger Seal if given the intact half as reference.

That someone was Xue Yang.

The recreated Yin Tiger Seal was not as powerful as the original due to the lack of the special material Wei WuXian used but it was more than enough to decimate sects.

While Xue Yang wanted to take revenge on the Chang Clan, it was believed that what happened with the Chang Clan doubled as a test run for the newly recreated Yin Tiger Seal.

It was obvious why this was related to Wei WuXian, because he created it in the first place and got the blame, as per usual.

"Senior Wei never misused it. He even destroyed it before his death! It was the Jin Sect that chose to recreate it and use it as a weapon! The blame should be on them!" Lan ZiRui raged.

"Makes you wonder why the Yin Tiger Seal was still with the Jin Sect when Xue Yang was caught. Why did the other sects not give it to another sect to guard it or find a way to destroy it?" (Because everyone but Lan WangJi, Wei WuXian and Nie MingJue is bad at their job and/or useless, JingYi.)

"Eldest brother was really the only person pursuing Xue Yang's execution and had not known about the Yin Tiger Seal yet. Other than Xiao DaoZhang* and Song DaoZhang of course." Lan XiChen explained remorsefully.

"And this *is* the LanLing Jin Sect we are talking about, one of the four great sects. No other sect below them would try anything against them without a powerful backing." Wei WuXian further explained quickly.

Without a powerful backing. What other backing could it be other than the other three major sects? Even though the Nie sect was clearly pushing on it, the Jiang sect did nothing and without Lan WangJi, Lan Sect only has Lan XiChen with any weight to throw but he would not push it due to his friendship with Jin GuangYao.

The Nie sect is against Jin, Jiang is not doing anything and Lan is not willing to pursue this matter. Without all three agreeing, the other smaller sects would not dare to voice their opinions or take a side to avoid trouble for themselves in case something went sour down the road.

"Then after my brother died, Chang Ping stopped pressing charges, Xue Yang was released and took revenge on the two DaoZhangs. No one brought up Xue Yang and the Yin Tiger Seal again. Especially when LiangFang-Zun took over LanLing Jin." Nie HuaiSang finished.

The Lan junior raised their eyebrows like 'Seriously?' (I did say they were incompetent, didn't I?)

Listening quietly, Lan WangJi closed his eyes and whispered: "I am sorry."

Wei WuXian kissed him: "No 'thank you's and 'I'm sorry's between us, remember?"

'The reason you could not help during the trial and save my shishu's life was because of me. For it was because you injured your own elders to protect me.'

A mere year of recovery could never be enough for Lan WangJi to leave the JingShi. With how severe his wounds were.

Because of Xue Yang's apparent usefulness, LanLing Jin fought tooth and nail to defend him.

Jin Ling and his father, Jin ZiXuan had turned red long ago, whether from shame or anger is unclear but most likely both. The only thing Jin Ling could do was to smack his forehead and lament about all the things he needed to fix as new sect leader.

Xiao XingChen did not back down and eventually, the matter was made known to ChiFeng-Zun, Nie MingJue who came down to the discussion he wasn't keen on participating and demanded Xue Yang's execution so strongly that the Jin Sect caved.

Since he was taken to the JinLing Tower by Xiao XingChen, he has yet to show fear. Even with Nie MingJue's saber pressed against his neck, he still had a grin on his face. Just before he was taken away, he spoke in an (disgustingly) affectionate tone to Xiao XingChen: "DaoZhang, you won't forget me, would you? Let us wait and see~"

Lan JingYi felt goosebumps just from hearing these words out of his own mouth, shivering for a bit before turning his eyes back to the book.

Hearing this part, Wei WuXian knew that this 'Wait and see' will make Xiao XingChen pay an agonizing price.

Wei WuXian smiled sombrely, his Xiao shishu really shares the same bad luck as him.

The LanLing Jin Sect truly is the sect with the thickest face-

The only two thin faced Jins here turned even redder with shame.

For instead of executing him like they agreed to, they locked Xue Yang up the moment Nie MingJue left and called it 'Life Imprisonment'. And to top off this disaster, Nie MingJue passed away from Qi deviation not long after he tried to press the matter again ever so conveniently.

He cultivated faster than any previous Nie sect leaders, but he also died earlier than any of them.

Nie HuaiSang hid his teary eyes behind his paper fan as Lan XiChen clench his fists tightly.

With everything written out and read to them in just a matter of seconds, it was all so clear and obvious that it felt like the book was just salt to rub on their wounds .

Neither Nie HuaiSang wanted to hear about how his elder brother was taken out by a person of low moral stature* nor Lan XiChen wanted to hear about his naive past self's decisions.

With the most troublesome person out of the way, the Jin sect ran amok doing anything they want (because the other sects are non-existent apparently), taking Xue Yang out of imprisonment and get back to work on Neo Yin Tiger Seal.

Wen Qing clicked her tongue, sending daggers with her eyes to the Jiang Sect leader and the two of the Lan Sect. The so called prominent 'righteous' sects, not doing anything until they become involved. Xue Yang, a literal murderer is free to tinker with the Yin Tiger Seal and her own younger brother, the main reasons Wei WuXian was killed for. And they didn't even question it.

Her fists clenched at the thought of her little brother, her little, timid brother. Under the grasps of the LanLing Jin for *thirteen years*, subjected to their experiments... All alone, his family alongside his benefactor and first friend slaughtered like the dogs they were always referred to. No one did a thing. It does not matter that the outside world did not know about Wen Ning. If they aren't doing anything about the Yin Tiger Seal, a far more superior threat...

Why would anything be different if they knew about Wen Ning?

Only Lan XiChen had the decency to shrunk down further at the end of her glower, angering her further.

GuSu Lan, YunMeng Jiang...

Yes, her own sect strayed from their founder's teachings and deserved their fate. But these other sects were no better, in her opinion.

She glared especially hard at the current sect leader of Jiang who glared back in defense rather than understanding why she was doing it to begin with.

If she didn't know this as a fact, she would never have believed this man grew up alongside Wei WuXian.

To take a mass murderer out of imprisonment requires a valid reason so they pressured Chang Ping to not pursue the matter any longer and take back all his words. Xue Yang has nothing to do with his clan's massacre.

When Xiao XingChen went to inquire, Chang Ping can only said that he had no choice if he wanted his clan to continue existing and begged Xiao XingChen to drop the matter as well before it does the Chang clan more harm than good.

Needless to say neither is it a good move nor approved by anyone listening.

This man, in order to protect his remaining family from the Jin Sect, allowed said sect (still lacking of any morals, mind you) to take his family's murderer out of captivity, free to come back and finish the job?

Just how much of an imbecile was this man?

Honestly, if it were Wei WuXian, he would have finished the job himself even if he goes down with him. In ways that make Lan QiRen tremble. So Lan JingYi quickly finished off that section.

As non-fear ridden minds guessed, the first thing Xue Yang did was to seek revenge. But this time, on Xiao XingChen.

Most people know this part, Xue Yang wiped out Song Lan's home, BaiXue Temple* and blinded Song Lan. Now that he was experienced with committing massacres, he left behind no definitive evidence linking him to the crimes even though every man and his dog knew it was him. But what use does that have? Jin GuangShan was hell bent on protecting him and his greatest opposer was dead.

At this Wei WuXian wonders why someone like Lan WangJi who absolutely cannot tolerate any kind of wrongdoings, possibly even more than Nie HuaiSang's brother, did not take any actions. He had never liked the way the dishonest ways of the LanLin Jin Sect and never bothered to hide it. Why would he ignore such an incident?

Lan QiRen sent a look to Wei WuXian, as if to tell him 'Because of you.'

Lan WangJi sent his uncle a respectful but stern warning look back at him, moving slightly forward to shield his partner from his uncle's sight.

Lan XiChen sighed: "Uncle..."

Lan QiRen: "..."-Sighs-

As he was about to ask, he remembered the discipline whip scars on Lan WangJi's back.

Lan WangJi lowered his head to whisper: "You knew then?"

Wei WuXian nodded and whispered back: "It's the only logical explanation."

Jiang Cheng, Jiang YanLi, Wen Qing and Jin ZiXuan agreed with Wei WuXian's hypothesis... But that means, HanGuang-Jun must have committed a great offence and was punished for it after Wei WuXian's death but before a whole year has pass, rendering him bedridden for even longer than that.

For some reason, those scars concerned Wei WuXian deeply, but he chose to not inquire further and instead asked more about Xiao XingChen after the massacre of BaiXue Temple.

The answer, was quite unfortunate. Xiao XingChen brought the grieving and blind Song Lan up the mountain he came down from against his vow and begged his ex-master to save his best friend, which she did for the sake that they were once master and disciple. But not even the renowned BaoShan SanRen could magically heal a pair of poisoned eyes, leading Xiao XingChen to give his own eyes to his friend who Xue Yang only blinded to get to him.

Then he left the mountain, blind and never to be seen again. Song Lan followed a year later, his past friend's eyes where his own once occupied.

He initially wanted to take revenge on Xue Yang, but was unable to as the newly appointed Jin sect leader at Jin GuangShan's death, Jin GuangYao had taken care of Xue Yang the moment he came into power and many other things to restore the LanLing Jin Sects' reputation. So, Song Lan tried to find his friend instead, visiting town after town and asking everyone there until he too was never heard from again. Eventually, this topic slipped off the world's mind.

After listening to the long story, Wei WuXian sighed softly. Regret sprouted inside him, meeting such an end because of something not related to him at all, it really was... 'If Xiao XingChen was born a few years earlier or if I died a few years later, things might not end up like this. If I was alive, how would I not taken part in the matter? How could I not befriend such a person?'

"Not your fault. Never your fault." Lan WangJi told Wei WuXian the moment the sentence finished, with what was lacking in volume being made up by the firmness of that statement.

Wei WuXian smiled back at him.

Immediately afterwards, he laughed at himself bitterly: 'I would've done something? What could I have done? If I was still alive back then, perhaps the YueyangChang Sect's case didn't even need to be investigated before everyone decided that I did it. If the Daozhang Xiao XingChen bumped into me on the streets and I chatted with him, invite him to drink together, it's likely that he'd hit me with his horsetail whisk, haha.'

Wei WuXian kept his smile up, imagining a cat and mouse scene of the Xiao XingChen from A-Qing's memory chasing him around with a look of disdain not unlike that of Lan QiRen on his face and the horsetail whisk held up high, ready to strike the moment it could.

"He would never..." Someone whispers in his ear.

?!

Wei WuXian quickly snapped out of it and looked around. Lan WangJi and Wen Ning beside him turned to him in confusion.

"Youn... Young master Wei?" Wen Ning asked.

Wei WuXian coughed: "Ahem, did you or Lan Zhan say something?"

"Youn... Young master Wei?"

"Before that!"

"N-no?"

"Wei Ying?" Lan WangJi questioned.

"..." Wei WuXian straighten himself up: "It's nothing, I thought I heard something."

Now that he thought back on it, it kind of sounded like a woman's voice.

With the end of what is known of Xiao XingChen, the two made their way to the former Chang Sect residence.

When Wei WuXian saw the character '常' (Chang) on the gateway, he asked: "Then why did Chang Ping die afterwards? Who killed the remaining members of his clan?"

Before Lan WangJi could answer, a series of bangs came from amid the blue-tinted dusk.

Lan JingYi grinned. Finally something interesting!

The noise sounded a lot like someone pounding on doors, but it wasn't. The bangs were carried out with force and at a fast pace, all without stopping. They sounded somewhat muffled, as if there was something separating them from the outside world.

The duo's faces immediately changed.

The fifty or so members of the Chang Clan pounding on the inside of their coffins like something terrified them, just like the night they were killed.

It was just as the waiter described!

But... He also informed them that this hadn't happened since ten years ago. Why would it happen again for them to hear?

The two quickly soften their breathing and entered the graveyard silently.

Where they found a deep, recently dug up hole.

Someone was here digging up graves?

"Digging up graves?" Lan SiZhui echoed.

"That is... a bit odd." Fu GaoWen commented

"It is *very* odd! No sane person goes digging up graves! Especially in a rumoured haunted graveyard!" Lan ZiRui exclaimed

The man infamous for digging up graves for his undead army: "..."

"Maybe this disturbance was what roused the resting Chang Clan members again." Li KangYu added in.

"But *who* would do something like this?" Lan ZiRui pressed.

Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian looked at each other, wondering how the others would take to the gravedigger's identity.

They make out two figures emerging from the freshly dug grave in the darkness, one carrying another on their back.

A man carrying a lifeless corpse, freshly dug up actually. Upon closer inspection.

Who turned around and spotted our protagonists.

But his face was shrouded by a black mist, making it impossible to make out any of his features.

Wei WuXian knew that he must have casted some kind of strange spell to obscure his face. Lan WangJi had already unsheathed Bichen, darted into the cemetery and started a battle. The gravedigger's reaction was extremely fast. Seeing the attack of Bichen's blue sword glare, he also summoned a sword glare. The sword glare was the same as his face, surrounded by dense mist, and made it so that it was impossible to see what its colour and style was. With a corpse on his back, the gravedigger fought in a strange way. The two sword glares clashed a few times. Lan WangJi summoned Bichen back and held it in his hand, a layer of frost climbing over his face.

Wei WuXian knew why his face suddenly turned cold. It was because during the fight, even an outsider like him could tell that the gravedigger was extremely familiar with Lan WangJi's sword moves!

"This gravedigger was extremely familiar with the Gusu Lan sword style?!" Lan ZiRui burst out

"Wait..." Zhou YuanXiang started: "Clothed in black... and has some sort of black fog spell over his face and sword? Does that not describe..."

"That man who trapped us in the YiLing Mass Graves Hills." Li KangYu quietly answered.

"Not only that. We know now that was set up by Jin GuangYao, so this man works for him and happens to be familiar with Gusu Lan's sword style, specifically, HanGuang-Jun's? Ring any bells for anyone else?"

"SU SHE!!!" Lan JingYi and Jin Ling exclaimed at the same time.

Jiang Cheng gritted his teeth: "That *dog* again. He really f*cking does every and any kind of dirty work for that *LianFang-Zun*. And here I thought who was this gravedigger so desperately trying to not be recognised?"

"I would not have even recognised him even if he did not put that stuff over his face." Lan JingYi muttered.

"You and me both." Wei WuXian agreed.

"And the nerve he had to kidnap us and show up later with his disciples with the rest of the sects to 'rescue' us! And then trying to pin all the blame on senior Wei!" Lan ZiRui said to the agreement of his classmates.

Lan QiRen stayed quiet, although his face rivals a tomato as per usual when he's near boiling point. (Which was extremely often this night) If he were to be honest (It's a rule, he must be) Su MingShan was hundreds of times worse than Wei WuXian and his late mother, and was also considered the biggest disgrace in Gusu Lan history amongst the entire sect, especially after his deeds for Jin GuangYao came to light. No one could think of Su She without also thinking that he was once accepted and taught in the Gusu Lan as a sect member. (I wonder why, his face resembles a weasel to me. I thought they only accept good looking students. Sorry to all the weasels out there...)

Lan WangJi said nothing. Bichen's attacks were striking deeper and deeper, attacking with tremendous force. The gravedigger fell back a few times. As if he knew that, with a corpse on his back, he wouldn't be able to win against Lan WangJi-

"He wouldn't have even come close to winning anyways. Even if he has a sword in each hand, a pouch full of talismans and charms, has backup, has fifty more years of cultivation and not fighting in a cluttered graveyard at night time.." Wei WuXian rolled his eyes.

"...Sect leader Su was rather well known for his... one sided rivalry with HanGuang-Jun." Lan SiZhui voiced with a strained smile.

Jin Ling huffed: "Lan SiZhui, you don't have to force yourself to be so polite about that Su dog. His sect only lasted so long because he had the support of my shushu (JGY) and the scriptures and techniques he stole from your sect."

"Young mistress Jin is right! SiZhui, think of what he did to senior Wei even though he saved him from the waterborne abyss because of his own stupidity! And then he goes around digging up graves and kidnapping us! Do you think someone like that deserves the title of 'Sect leader'?"

"It has nothing to do with how I think of him, I merely gave the respect he as my senior and a sect leader was entitled to in the first place. You would never see me defend his actions." Lan SiZhui declared unwaveringly. In the privacy of his mind, he thought of the man's actions, how he caused

the death of his remaining family and the sufferings his dear senior Wei who he looked up to as both a father figure and a mentor had to go through. He would never forgive him. Addressing him respectfully as a sect leader is only what the Gusu Lan and HanGuang-Jun taught him to do. Su She just was not worth it.

Lan WangJi nodded approvingly: "SiZhui, remove a time you have to copy. JingYi, no speaking behind a person's back."

Lan SiZhui shook his head at that and made no changes to his punishment number.

Wei WuXian leans onto his partner: "Look at what you turn our son into~ I would have given anything to have a reduced number of times I have to copy those rules~ "

"Mm" Lan WangJi leaned down to whisper: "but Wei Ying no longer needs to copy rules."

"Just saying~ "

-and, if they continued to fight, he'd be captured alive. He suddenly fished out a dark-blue talisman from his waist.

A Transportation Talisman!

Wei WuXian supports his head on his hand, looking bored now: "He loves using that thing, doesn't he? Where is he getting his Qi Replenishment pills from?"

Seeing that he was about to escape, Wei WuXian briskly clapped twice, got down on a knee and slammed his fist on the ground.

The impact of his punch travelled through the layers of dirt, reached the depths of the soil and penetrated the thick coffin lids, provoking the corpses kept inside. With crackling noises, four bloodied arms shot up from the ground, grabbing both of the gravedigger's legs!

"Awesome! Senior Wei is so cool!" Lan JingYi cheered.

"I would love to see that in person." Lan SiZhui admitted.

"Heh, I'm sure you'll see me in action soon. But I'll keep that move you want to see in mind." Wei WuXian winked.

The gravedigger seemed as if he didn't care at all. He poured his spiritual energy toward the bottom of his legs, blasting the four corpses' hands away. Wei WuXian pulled out his bamboo flute. A shrill, piercing melody ripped open the curtain of darkness that had fallen. Two human heads emerged from the ground along with their bodies, climbing upward from the gravedigger's legs and winding around his body like snakes.

Opening their mouths, they prepared to bite down on his neck and arms. The gravedigger snorted with disdain, as if he was saying "what a petty trick", and sent spiritual energy throughout his body.

Jiang Cheng, Wen Qing and Jin ZiXuan scoffed immediately.

but this time, only after he released his energy did he realize that he had been fooled.

He sent the corpse on his back flying off as well!

Lan JingYi finished the sentence with a raspberry escaping his lips: "Pfft... Hahahahaha!!!"

"Such stupidity, but I guess that level of intelligence was expected from someone who thinks they can compare themselves to HanGuang-Jun." Jin Ling smirked lightly

Wei WuXian laughed uncontrollably as he smacked the tombstone while Lan WangJi caught the flaccid corpse with one hand and attacked with Bichen with other. Seeing that what he had just dug out snatched away, that he couldn't even win solo against Lan WangJi (and never will), let alone the mischief of another person, he didn't dare to stick around any longer. He hurling the Transportation Talisman on the ground and with a loud noise, blue flames surged up toward his sky. His figure disappeared into the flames.

With that transportation talisman on hand, the gravedigger could have gotten away even if they did manage to capture him, making that pointless. Instead, they directed their attention to the corpse they successfully stole. Who's head they noticed, was spit open.

A few immature gagging sounds.

Within the cut, there wasn't any blood or brains leaking out but blackened cotton. Wei WuXian easily pulled the corpse's head off.

Not the whole corpse was made of cotton, just the head, legs and arms were. Stitched onto the torso as an attempt to trick it into believing it was a whole corpse.

It was a piece of their 'Dear Friend' !

This is what the gravedigger was after.

Wei WuXian straightened up: "It looks like that the person who hid the corpse already noticed that we're investigating this and came to move the torso elsewhere in case come we find it. To come on time is better than to come early. We just happen to bump into him, haha. Although..." With a change of tone, he continued: "How was the mist-faced gravedigger so familiar with your sect's sword style?"

Lan QiRen breathe deeply at the reminder.

Obviously, Lan WangJi was also thinking about this matter, icy look on his face yet to fade. Wei WuXian spoke again: "His cultivation is quite high, enough to support the use of one Transportation Talisman. He had casted spells on both his face and sword. On his face was understandable of course, he wouldn't have wanted to be recognized.

"Like we established just now, I wouldn't have recognized him." Wei WuXian sighed: "But then again, HanGuang-Jun here would have."

The second Jade made a reluctant 'Mm' of agreement.

But most lesser-known cultivators wouldn't have needed to cast a spell on their sword to cover it, unless it was either somewhat or very famous in the cultivation world. He'd then have had to cover it, because if everyone could recognize his sword glare, his identity would be revealed as soon as his sword was revealed."

"Pfft, he wish." Jin Ling couldn't help but taunt.

"Honestly, he would have gotten away with pretending to be a Gusu Lan member. They are far more famous and recognisable. He could frame it all on them and have no one remember his sect enough to suspect them. With how reputable the Gusu Lan is, people would love a scandal like this." Wei WuXian drawls: "Isn't that sword of his also provided by the Lan sect? There's really no reason to hide it."

"We can easily suspect the Su sect though. If we have evidence that it is definitely not one of us." The (tea-stained) junior next to Lan JingYi pointed out.

"There's that I suppose. But hiding his sword is not much help when his fighting style is so alike the Lan's style."

"I t-think his pride would never a-allow him to s-seem like he was i-imitating the G-Gusu Lan." Wen Ning quietly contributed.

"Huh, good point. His ego about wanting to be just like Lan Zhan yet hates it when people point out he is copying him."

Wei WuXian asked tentatively: "HanGuang-Jun, from your fight before, do you think that he's someone you know really well?" It'd be inconvenient for him to be more specific, such as Lan XiChen or Lan QiRen.

Lan QiRen bristled in disbelief while Lan XiChen turned to Wei WuXian looking nothing short of the word sad.

Wei WuXian clapped his hands together in apology but then shrugged afterwards, as if to say leave no stones unturned.

Lan WangJi answered assuredly: “No.” Wei WuXian was quite confident in Lan WangJi’s answer. To him, Lan WangJi wasn’t the kind of person who’d hide or run away from the truth. If he denied it, that meant it must have been wrong. He didn’t like to lie, either. In Wei WuXian’s opinion, if someone asked Lan WangJi to lie, he’d rather silence himself and not talk at all. Thus, Wei WuXian immediately excluded the possibility of the gravedigger being these two: "That makes it more complicated."

A hint of a smile graced Lan WangJi's impassive face.

Having no reason to stick around, the two packed up the newly acquired torso and returned to the liquor store.

The waiter kept his promise, the store was still open despite them returning after hours, the how many jars of wine where they left them.

The waiter was outside, eating from a large bowl. Seeing them, he beamed: “You’re back! We kept our word, didn’t we? Did you two see anything?”

Wei WuXian laughed as he answered, walking back to the table they sat during the day with Lan WangJi. With liquor jars crowding the table and by his feet, he spoke, “Right, what were we talking about? Before we were interrupted by the gravedigger, I still don’t know how Chang Ping died.”

Long story short, few years later after the first Chang massacre, Chang Ping and his remaining family died of LingChi in a night, Chang Ping's eyes were dug out. Case left unsolved, no leads were left behind other than the weapon used on the Changs was determined to be ShuangHua, the famed sword of Xiao XingChen due to the characteristic mark left behind on the wounds, but there is no way to confirm that the perpetrator was the man himself.

"They've been LingChi to death by Xiao XingChen's sword? Then it wasn't him who did it?"

Lan WangJi answered: "Xiao XingChen has disappeared. There were no conclusive evidence."

Wei WuXian: “If he couldn’t be found alive, then has anyone tried soul-summoning?”

Lan WangJi: “Yes. To no avail.”

Most of the readers know now that Xiao XingChen was pretty much dead at this point, his soul shattered into pieces, unable to be summoned by anyone. Xue Yang was the murderer again and had committed the crimes with the deceased Xiao XingChen's sword.

But with the lack of information at the moment, it was just assumed that Xiao XingChen had taken revenge against the Chang Clan.

Lan WangJi slowly shook his head: “One should not comment without understanding the whole picture.”

Wei WuXian greatly admired his attitude and principles.

Lan WangJi glanced at his cultivation partner, the last two decades of his life had taught him that while many of the Gusu Lan's rules were either hypocritical or self-righteous, this was one of the few rules that should always be respected and followed. Never allow others opinions to influence your own or to make assumptions without any proof and most importantly, never spread those baseless information. Keep an open mind or you will blind yourself and others to the truth.

That was exactly what caused Wei WuXian's downfall thirteen years ago.

It was the rule that the Gusu Lan failed to follow thirteen years ago.

They were no different from the other sects.

Worse, they were a sect that claims to be righteous, acts as if they were not mortal humans themselves and only avoids things that bring them needless trouble.

Who gave them the right to decide what is right or wrong in the first place?

Not that he could express his thoughts out to the rest of his sect, they only listen to what they want

to hear, self-righteous as most of them are after living with those ideals for so long.

He would like to avoid another repeat of what happened with his brother and uncle if possible, at least for now.

If his own sect cannot live up to their own motto, he had to take initiative for himself. To protect the one his heart holds dear.

Wei WuXian hugged his husband from the side: "Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan~ What are you thinking so hard about? Why don't you pay attention to me instead? Any longer, your eyebrows would be permanently furrowed. What a waste that would be~"

Lan WangJi shifted his attention to him as requested: "If that does happen, would Wei Ying still love me?"

When Wei WuXian took a moment too long to give a definitive answer, Lan WangJi furrowed his eyebrows even harder than before.

Wei WuXian bursted into laughter: "OkayOkay! I'll stop teasing you~ Of course I would, silly~ HanGuang-Jun would always be beautiful to me!"

"Mm"

The juniors shared a look, the importance of that rule has been ingrained into them ever since they found out the truth behind the YiLing LaoZu and LianFang-Zun. This must have been what was weighing down on HanGuang-Jun seeing as how the person he loves had suffered.

In any case, both Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian did not believe that Xiao XingChen was the culprit and left it as that for now.

And Wei WuXian's everlasting desire to make the second jade consume alcohol rears its head as it always did thirteen years ago and before.

Lan QiRen glared at Wei WuXian, if he really were impressed with how Lan WangJi carries

himself then why is he always trying to make him break the rules?!

He had already prepared himself to be bluntly rejected, but who knew that Lan WangJi replied: "I will drink."

"..." Were his ears malfunctioning from his old age? Or did his distant relative's son just read that his nephew agreed to consume alcohol?

The Lan disciples are staring at Lan WangJi in disbelief.

Lan JingYi continued, this chapter was getting more and more interesting by the minute. He hasn't complained since the part with the gravedigger.

Wei WuXian didn't know what to think, he never told Lan WangJi the entire truth of what he did that night while drunk.

He poured a bowl for Lan WangJi. Without any thought, Lan WangJi took it and drank it up.

Lan QiRen stared furiously at the book, scarring poor Lan JingYi terribly.

Lan XiChen looked more worried, he still remembered when his brother drank alcohol for the first time very clearly, the same that left the sun brand on the second jade's chest. This might not end well.

Wei WuXian was unusually excited, staring at his face wondering when it would turn red. Yet, even after he stared for a while, neither the color of Lan WangJi's face nor his expression changed, just staring at him calmly with pale colored eyes. There wasn't any change at all!

The juniors mentally cheered, that is the HanGuang-Jun they look up to! He was completely fine even though this was his first time (as far as they know) drinking alcohol!

Lan WangJi silently waited for the story to continue.

Wei WuXian was extremely disappointed. As he was about to urge him for another jar, (The old man popped another vein.) suddenly, Lan WangJi frowned and lightly rubbed at between his brows.

'Delayed reaction?' The juniors thought, leaning closer.

In a few moments, with a hand supporting his forehead, he closed his eyes. ...He fell asleep? ...He fell asleep!

'Oh...!' The juniors sat back in disappointment.

After most people drank so much liquor, they would become drunk first and then sleep. How could Lan WangJi skip the step of getting drunk and go to sleep immediately?!

“Drunken” was the part that he wanted to see!

'Same...!' The juniors thought, in secret.

"Is this why you told me to never drink alcohol, senior Wei? I would fall asleep immediately?" Lan ZiRui asks.

"Wait for it..."

Lan JingYi caught the hint and went back to the book.

After a few seconds of trying to get a reaction out of the now snoozing but still sitting upright second jade, Wei WuXian concluded that the man was one of those who collapses after one bowl of alcohol. After all, abstaining from anything alcoholic all your life doesn't typically give you a good alcohol tolerance.

With that, Wei WuXian reaped what he sowed and ended up having to pull the sleeping, extremely muscled-heavy 188cm full grown man out of the shop, checked into the nearest inn and put him to bed.

In a desolated area, Wei WuXian took out his flute by his waist, placed it by his lips and played a melody. Then he waited in silence.

Wen Ning gulped.

In these past few days, Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi spent their days and nights together. He didn't have any time to himself, so he couldn't summon Wen Ning.

Lan WangJi furrowed his eyebrows slightly.

Aside from hiding his identity in the beginning, there was another reason.

Wen Ning had killed the GusuLan Sect's people before. Even if Lan WangJi treated Wei WuXian well, he couldn't summon Wen Ning right in front of him. Or, perhaps, it was because Lan WangJi treated him well that he didn't have the face to summon Wen Ning in front of him. No matter how thick his face was, this wasn't the time to have a thick face.

"All parties were at fault, Wei Ying needn't shoulder all responsibility'."

A soft sigh, "...I know, Lan Zhan."

Before he knew it, the eerie jingling noises sounded again.

With his head lowered, Wen Ning's figure appeared from the shadows of the city wall ahead.

He wore all black, melting into the darkness surrounding him. Only his pupil-less eyes were a glaring, hideous white.

Wei WuXian put his hands behind him and slowly paced around Wen Ning.

Wen Ning shifted, as if wanting to follow his steps and walk in circles as well. Wei WuXian commanded: “Stand properly.”

He complied and stopped moving. It seemed as if his delicate features appeared even more dejected.

Wen Qing poked her brother's head with a finger: "Even like this you were still such a lost puppy dog."

Wen Ning's delicate features went back to dejected.

Wei WuXian: “Hand.”

Wen Ning extended his right arm. Wei WuXian grabbed his wrist and lifted it up, closely examining the iron cuff and chains locked onto it.

The juniors felt perplexed, this behaviour was oddly serious for someone like senior Wei.

This wasn't an ordinary chain. Whenever Wen Ning goes on a rampage, he becomes extremely violent and was capable of twisting iron into sludge, so he wouldn't have left it as it is to drag around like this. It was likely that this was a set of chains created to specially restrain Wen Ning.

Turned to ashes?

Wei WuXian, Wen Qing and Lan SiZhui grimaces.

Trying as hard as they could to restore the remaining half of the Yin Tiger Seal, of course some sects salivated at the Ghost General as well. How would they have been willing to turn him to ashes?

'They', mostly refers to the LanLing Jin of course, no need to be said.

Jin Ling felt his cheeks color from both anger and shame, his father wouldn't have died so early if it wasn't for his grandfather and sect's lust for Wei WuXian's power. Wei WuXian never once abused his powers, he was just an easy scapegoat then and for future easily fooled generations like him to continue blaming for their misfortunes. Each time the book reminds him of his past behaviour felt like a slap in the face.

Both leading figures of Lan didn't look too good, working with the Jin sect on the siege technically made them had a hand in this conspiracy. (And stellar lack of judgement due to extremely foggy 'righteous' goggles.)

With a bitter laugh, he stood by Wen Ning's side. After considering for a moment, he started to press his fingers into Wen Ning's hair.

Wen Ning winced and touched his head at the memory.

And found the back ends of the nails preventing Wen Ning from thinking for himself.

NEVER anger Wen Qing. Enemies of the people she cares about beware. Dead or not, this woman will defy all laws of nature and come for you with her old sword that has been magically proofed back into existence.

Thankfully, none of the only Jins here had incurred her wrath but nonetheless, they moved further away for good measure.

Wei WuXian carefully pulled the two long, thick black nails from Wen Ning's skull.

Just the thought of that made the more queasy ones cringe.

Judging from the intricate, complex lines carved onto the nails, their origin must be unique, the creator was fairly skilled.

"One of your copycats?" Wen Qing gritted out. "That Xue Yang?"

"Mm" Wei WuXian responded sternly: "But Lan Zhan dealt with him."

"He's dead for sure?"

"No one could have survive that. The sheer blood loss would kill anyone, even with outside help. If he even has any. His past acquaintances cared more for what's on him rather than him."

"I look forward to that part then."

"It's in this arc." Wei WuXian informed with a smirk

"Nice." The smirk was quickly mirrored.

Wen Ning sighed softly, but he could feel how warm his heart became.

It would take a while before Wen Ning would be himself again, so Wei WuXian shifted his focus to the chains. He needs a cultivational sword for this and the only one he had access to right here and now is BiChen.

Having made up his mind, Wei WuXian turned around to return to the inn and borrow the sleeping Lan WangJi's sword for a bit.

Only to find the aforementioned 'sleeping' man standing behind him.

Chapter End Notes

1* Yin Tiger Seal 阴虎符 A tiger seal is an amulet in the shape of a tiger based on the white tiger of the west, divine beast of war and symbol of justice. It is usually made of bronze or gold and spat in two halves down the middle. An empereror would keep the

right half with him and award the left half to his general. Only when the two halves are united may one of the amulet holders have the right to dispatch troops. The Yin (from YinYang) is for the fact this one summons an army of the undead instead. WWX developed a good naming sense after being the YiLing LaoZu... oh wait, Jin RuLan. (Nothing wrong with the name actually, it's just a little feminine for a young master. 'To be like an orchid'.)

2* DaoZhang People should know what this is, but basically Taoist

3* Its what we call Xiao Ren 小人 in Chinese, very common term. Think of it as a petty fool with low morals that resorts to sabotage, spreading rumors and stuff. (Su She, Wang LingQiao, Jin GuangShan, Jin GuangYao and the annoying little insignificance (Whose name I couldn't be bothered to look up) in the DongHua and audio drama always talking sh*t, fall under the Xiao Ren category. Does Jiang Cheng fall under this category? ...I'll leave him out for now...)

4* BaiXue Temple 白雪 BaiXue means white snow.

.....

Welp, my stupid internship and post-internship school stuff is finally over...

Sorry for the wait

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