An Unexpected Lesson
by femmedefandom

Summary

After coming back from Yi City, these junior disciples finally get to relax at an inn with HanGuang Jun and Senior Mo. But who would have thought that those two seniors weren't just night hunting together...but were something more?

Notes

Hello everyone! I'm posting this story because I love these disciples that LWJ and WWX half adopt throughout the story and I really wanted to write out their reaction to the realization that LWJ and WWX are "together." (Even if WWX still hadn't figured that out yet) ;)

I hope you enjoy! Kudos and comments are always appreciated!

Bai FeiYun was picking up more dishes of snacks and jugs of wine when he heard the noise. A loud crash of something shattering in the dining room where the rest of the boys were staying. He could hear Jin Ling’s voice raised as he ranted. He wondered how he had gotten so familiar as to automatically recognize his voice? Well, life and death situations would certainly encourage familiarity. And Jin Ling was usually yelling about something or another. But this time the tone was off, he seemed really distressed. He quickly picked up all the dishes and made his way back.
Young Master Jin’s voice was getting louder as he went on and Bai FeiYun didn’t even need to be close before he could hear each word. “Didn’t he also say that ‘the founder of the path may not have intended harm with it’? Who was ‘the founder of this path’? Go on, tell me, who else could it be except for Wei Ying?! I just can’t seem to understand you. Your Gusu Lan Sect is also a prominent sect, and back then you also lost quiet a number of people in Wei Ying’s hands, didn’t you? Was it hard, killing all those corpses and whatnot that were under his control? Lan Yuan, why are you speaking from such a strong standpoint? From the way you talk, don’t tell me that you’re making excuses for Wei Ying!”

Bai FeiYun cringed at the way he talked about Wei WuXian and the way he disdained the Lan Sect disciples. It’s not like they were there to experience the attack in the Cloud Recesses. Wei WuXian was a demonic cultivator who descended into madness yes, but his father had always said that the man was instrumental in destroying the absolute tyranny of the Wen Sect. His father had lost all three of his brothers fighting against the Wen dogs, so maybe that was why he never seemed to hate the YiLing Patriarch as much as the others. He’d killed thousands of cultivators, but he also avenged their family’s deaths. But Bai FeiYun figured that regardless of his own feelings on the matter, some more snacks might be a nice distraction from such a heavy topic. And looking at the smashed plates on the table, he came just in time. He came upon the scene of Jin Ling standing in front of everyone, face flushed with emotion, and probably a little wine. He was staring down Lan SiZhui when he said, “Nobody actually saw whether or not Chang Ping was killed by Daozhang Xiao XingChen. All they had were guesses, so why are you calling them claims? Just try and count how many cultivators lost their lives to Wei Ying, to Wen Ning, to the Tiger Seal during the battles at the Qiongqi Path and the Nightless Day! These are truths that everyone accepts, that nobody can deny! And what else I’ll never forget is that he ordered Wen Ning to kill my father and mother!”

Jin Ling continued, “My uncle grew up with him, my grandfather saw him as his own child, my grandmother wasn’t horrible to him either, but what did he do? He made Lotus Pier the lair of the Wen Sect, he wrecked the entire YunmengJiang Sect, he caused the death of both my parents and grandparents, and now my uncle is the only one left! He brought about his own death through the havoc he created and ended up leaving not even a whole corpse behind him! Just which part of the entire situation do you not understand? Just what excuses are you still making for him?!” He argued forcefully while Lan SiZhui didn’t reply at all.

A moment later, one of the other boys spoke up. ZiZhen, he thought, was his name. “Why are we suddenly getting so heated over such a thing? Let’s just drop the subject alright? We haven’t finished eating yet. The food’s gonna go cold.”

Bai FeiYun agreed. Guessing Lan SiZhui said something without any other intentions that set Jin Ling off he said, “ZiZhen is right. We should stop arguing. SiZhui simply forgot to choose his words carefully. It was only an offhand comment—how could he have thought about so much? Sit down, Young Master Jin. Let us continue to eat.”

Bai FeiYun’s younger brother saw him come in and waved him over to help set down the dishes. “That’s right. All of us had just left Yi City, so technically we’ve already been through life and death together….We really shouldn’t argue over such a careless mistake.”
Jin Ling snorted. Lan SiZhui finally responded, his tone as polite as ever, “I am sorry. I should have put more thought to wording, Young Master Jin, please sit back down. We would not want to continue and bring HanGuang Jun down here as well.”

Immediately Jin Ling stopped, not making another noise as he sat back down. The hall quickly refilled with clamor, and the boys’ voices were soon drowned out by the clinks of bowls and dishes. A drinking game was even started up, led by one of the disciples from the Nie Sect. Very quickly, the boys’ voices became just a touch louder, their lips a little looser, and their inhibitions a little lowered.

Jin Ling had started to grin again as everyone talked and joked and got to know each other better. Even though they were the same age, coming from different sects necessitated a distance between them that had been bridged by their experiences in Yi City. This would be the third night hunt that Bai FeiYun had been on with his brother, Bai LiXuan. He was only fourteen years old so it was his job as elder brother to guide him and instruct how to defend himself. But even though it was a teaching opportunity meant to hone their skills, they were both excited to see more of the world outside their sect. After all, not many had had opportunities to visit a ghost city, see “living” corpses, come face to face with the heroic spirit of a young girl, and experience that phenomenon of demonic cultivation right in front of their eyes. Such an emotional day had naturally formed the bonds of friendship between them all.

One of the boys spoke up in reverence, “That HanGuang Jun is incredible though! He was alone in that foggy city where no one could see and he took down dozens of fierce corpses all by himself. Xue Yang too!”

A chorus of agreements sounded out and even Jin Ling couldn’t help but nod as well. Lan JinYi puffed up as if he were the one being bragged about. “Of course! Our HanGuang Jun is the best! No one can defeat him!”

Arrogant though the words seemed, they were not entirely untrue. Since his youth, Lan Wangji had been at the peak of the cultivators in his generation, and occasionally beyond it. His calm demeanor and unrivaled dedication to his skills were undeniable. However, his cold exterior usually stopped any adulation of his achievements in its tracks. No matter how idolized, most would think twice before being able to speak in front of the icy man. Most…but not all.

Bai FeiYun spoke up a little hesitantly. “But who was that Young Master Mo with him? I thought HanGuang Jun was always alone?”

The Lan sect boys all shifted in their seats and some let out a few awkward coughs. It was Lan
SiZhui who spoke up. “We met young master Mo in his village a few weeks ago and he helped us handle some fierce corpses. On Dafan Mountain, he’s the one who was able to take down the soul eating goddess as well. HanGuang Jun brought him back to our sect and they’ve been traveling together since.”

Jin Ling snorts. “You make him sound so magnificent, Lan Yuan. He’s just a crazy cut sleeve who’s obsessed with HanGuang Jun, following him around everywhere. His cultivation skills and behavior are so bad he was kicked out of my sect and he’s resorted to demonic cultivation ever since.”

And awkward silence ensues once more. Jin Ling is a young boy, but often he’s just as prickly as an old man. ZiZhen mumbles, “but he did help us with the corpse poisoning.”

At that, Lan JinYi laughs. “And probably gave us food poisoning at the same time.”

The mood lightens again as all the boys laugh, remembering the spicy congee. Those that ate it grimace at the taste still lingering in their mouths and those that didn’t shudder at the thought of having to eat it. Bai LiXuan raises a cup of wine and cheers, “here’s to good food, not cooked by Senior Mo!”

The others raise their cups as well and all cheer before descending like children on the fresh steaming bowls of food. Even the Lan Sect boys try a sip of wine, eyes darting to the side in case they get caught. Some even join in on the drinking game. One boy is set up at the foot of the stairs on the lookout for HanGaung Jun on the off chance he comes to check on them.

Of course that effort proves to be in vain when a few minutes later when the man in question comes bursting through the front door with Young Master Mo trailing behind him. Everyone froze. The man stood tall, towering over all of them, while Senior Mo remained half hidden behind him. Something seemed off, but Bai FeiYun can’t put his finger on it. Before he could say anything, Lan JinYi hurled himself at the cup of liquor on the table. Hoping to cover it up, he knocked over a few bowls and dishes along the way. Bai FeiYun cringed at the awful attempted cover-up, but it didn’t look like HanGuang Jun is there to reprimand them. Lan SiZhui stood up, “H-HanGuang Jun, why have you come inside through this entrance again?”

He didn’t respond, but it’s Young Master Mo who spoke up with a laugh, “Haha, your HanGuang Jun was feeling a bit too hot and decided to take a stroll outside so that he could also catch all of you off guard. You see? Here you are, drinking when you’re not supposed to.”

Everyone exchanged looks with each other. While the Lan Sect disciples are strict, it seemed a bit
out of character for one of the Twin Jades of Lan to monitor unaffiliated cultivators during a night
hunt. Even more so when just resting at an inn. HanGuang Jun suddenly dragged Senior Mo
toward their table. Suddenly, Lan SiZhui lets out a startled gasp. “HanGuang Jun, your forehead
ribbon…”

Bai FeiYun finally realizes what’s wrong. HanGuang Jun wasn’t wearing his forehead ribbon. The
rest of the boys have the same realization and they all look down at Senior Mo’s hands. HanGuang
Jun’s forehead ribbon was tied around his wrists, used to drag him along. As though he felt that not
enough people noticed this fact, he held up the ends of the ribbon, pulling the other man’s hands up
even higher and displayed them for everyone to see. The chicken wing that Lan JinYi was holding
in his mouth plopped into his bowl, splattering the sauce onto the front of his clothes.

Jin Ling was bewildered, and asked what all the rest of the disciples were wondering. “…What’s
he doing?”

Senior Mo let out a careless grin. “Showing you guys a special way to use the Lan Sect’s forehead
ribbon.”

Lan SiZhui muttered with a still dumbfounded expression. “What special way…”

“When you find a really strange corpse and you feel that you should take it back to examine it
properly, you can take off your forehead ribbon and bring it back like this.”

Lan JinYi blurted, “But you cannot do that! Our sect’s forehead ribbon is…”

Lan SiZhui stuffed the chicken wing back into his mouth. “Oh, I see! I did not know that it can be
used in such a way!”

Ignoring the strange looks that other people gave them, HanGuang Jun dragged Senior Mo up the
stairs. There was a sound of a closing door and a dragging scraping of moving furniture. And then
a bang of wood against a wall. Wei WuXian’s voice carried down, no specific words, but clearly
him in exclamation. Until his voice rose loud enough to hear, “It hurts! It hurts so much! Take off
the ribbon and let me go, okay? Okay?”

Silence came after that. Shuffling above and then the creak of footsteps and banging of furniture.
Bai FeiYun looked around the room to see that all the rest of the boys sported red faces at the
ambiguous sounds. After it was quiet for a bit, he hesitated before asking, “Uh, what’s so special
about your sect’s forehead ribbon?”

The Lan Sect disciples, who had slowly started to recover their composure, immediately flushed red again. Lan SiZhui, as seemed to be his role, acted as the spokesperson for his sect. He took a sip of wine and a deep breath before starting. He was staring at his hands the whole time, but his voice was calm as he explained. “The forehead ribbon the of the Gusu Lan Sect means to ‘regulate oneself.’” He raised his hand to rub along the ribbon before continuing.

“And the founder of the Gusu Lan Sect, Lan An, had said that one can only let go of all regulations when they are with one they love and cherish. So the message that has been passed down the generations is that our sect’s forehead ribbon is a special object that is very personal and sensitive. One cannot easily give another permission to touch it, one cannot take it off as they please, and one absolutely cannot tie it on someone else. It’s absolutely prohibited unless…unless that person is their chosen lifelong cultivation partner.”

Absolute silence greeted him. Until one after another the boys shouted out their surprise. Jin Ling, in particular was very vocal about his disapproval. “How could HanGuang Jun be a cut sleeve for…that person? He’s never been interested in anyone, but he falls for him?”

Bai LiXuan felt he had to speak up for Senior Mo, as one of the ones cured of corpse poisoning. “But he’s not so bad, right? He even took care of us in Yi City, and he seems very knowledgeable.”

Another boy spoke up. “But he’s just so outrageous! And HanGuang Jun’s…not.”

ZiZhen protested. “Maybe that’s why it works! Maybe the reason HanGuang Jun’s been alone this whole time is because he was waiting for someone special! And Senior Mo is that person!” The boys eyes were lit up at the thought of such a romantic pursuit.

Bai LiXuan agreed. “That’s right. If that forehead ribbon really means what you say, than wouldn’t HanGuang Jun know that better than anyone? He must really be serious about Senior Mo!”

Lan JinYi’s frozen face finally started to show some signs of life. “But that’s crazy! Senior Mo’s been after him this whole time and HanGuang Jun has never shown any reaction! There has to be something we’re missing.”

Lan SiZhui calmly reminded them. “HanGuang Jun doesn’t show much reaction about anything, JinYi. And I think…they seem to work well together.”
Jin Ling scoffs. “Mo XuanYu is just an irredeemable flirt. HanGuang Jun is a fool for liking someone like him!”

Lan SiZhui rubbed his chin in thought. “Who knows? Either way, it’s not our business to be talking about them like this.”

The rest of the boys are suitably chastened, and they changed the direction of conversation, but they were all more noticeably subdued. Bai FeiYun ended up sitting next to his brother and ZiZhen again. Bai LiXuan whispered to him, “did you think that they were together like that? I had no idea!”

Bai FeiYun just sighed at his brother’s antics and shook his head. “LiXuan, you have a lot to learn.”

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