Summary

Wei Ying knew what his duty was - to marry in the Gusu Lan Sect. That doesn't mean he will behave like the proper omega everyone expects him to be!
Wei Ying knew from childhood that there will come a time when he will leave Lotus Pier and move to a new home, far away from his adopted family. He was very angry when he was young that not only his shijie has to marry that stupid Jin Zixuan, but he has to marry a recluse from Gusu Lan, who he has never met. He always hated that he was born an omega, a pawn used in the politics of the main cultivation families. He sometimes wondered what would have happened if his parents didn’t die so young. Could they have allowed him to be free and marry who he wanted, if he even wanted to?

He heard Jiang Cheng entering his room. Wei Ying was sitting on his bed, with his head down. He wished he didn’t have to do this.

“Wei Ying, it’s time.” Jiang Cheng had a sour look on his face. He was just as unhappy as Wei Wuxian about the whole situation, but his mother’s will couldn’t be bulged.

Wei Ying looked at his brother with a fake smile, trying to be brave one last time. There was no point of being sad anymore, there was nothing he could do anymore. He tried so hard to misbehave, to skip all his omega classes and to be as loud and obnoxious as possible, maybe Madam Yu could be to ashamed to send him away, fearing he will taint the Jiang Clan name, but she just scolded and beat him and reminded him the only thing he was meant to do was to be a Lan’s omega. He rose from the bed and went to Jiang Cheng.

“What’s with the long face? Don’t worry, I’m sure you can visit me soon enough! Or maybe they won’t like me and send me back home in no time hahahaha” said Wei Wuxian while putting his arm on Jiang Cheng’s shoulders.

“I’m going to break your legs if you bring shame to our family name! Wei Wuxian, you have to behave there!”

“Hahaha, Jiang Cheng! Your face!! I will, I will, don’t worry. Now you need to find a proper wife too, but you need to calm down with all those rules or you’ll never find anyone!”

Jiang Cheng responded by hitting Wei Wuxian hard on his arm. “Don’t talk nonsense. Let’s hurry before mother gets angry.”

In the grand room of Lotus Pier, Jiang Fengmian, Madam Yu, Jiang Yanli and two people wearing white clothes, clearly from the Gusu Lan Sect, were sitting and speaking quietly and drinking tea.

“Ah, you’re finally here.” Uncle Jiang and everyone rose and they all bowed to each other.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, young master Wei. My name is Lan Huan, courtesy name Lan Xichen. This is my uncle, Lan Qiren. My brother can’t wait to see you. He’s waiting for our arrival in Cloud Recesses.”

Lan Huan looked like a friendly beta, and his uncle seemed to be beta as well, though he had a scary face, maybe even more so than Madam Yu. He will be fun to annoy, Wei Ying was sure of that.

“Well, then. You’ll depart in a few hours. I hope you packed everything you need, Wei Ying.” Jiang Fengmian looked kindly at him while he took a seat.

“Yes, uncle Jiang.” Wei Ying decided to eat in silence for once in his life. His stomach was all in knots and he couldn’t even enjoy his sister’s lotus root and pork soup. The lunch lasted what seemed an eternity, but it still wasn’t enough time to get used to the idea that he will soon leave and never
return. Or at least, he won’t return the same boy he left.

Saying goodbye to everyone was hard, especially his brother and sister. Lan Xichen and Lan Qiren stayed behind to leave him some privacy to say goodbye to his family.

Uncle Jiang gave him a hug saying “I’m proud of you. Your parents would have been as well”. Wei Ying hugs him back, with all his might “Thank you for everything, uncle. You’ve given me more than I could have asked for.”

Next, shijie gave him a big hug with a smile on her face.

“A Xian, don’t worry, everything will be alright. The Lans are said to be cold and strict, but I’m sure they have a kind heart. Try to open up to them and they will love you.”

Jiang Cheng was looking at the ground, not saying anything.

“Come, A Cheng, and give A Xian a hug as well.” Jiang Cheng came slowly to the two of them and embraced both of them. “I’ll miss you, Wei Ying. If that bastard treats you badly, you send word and I will come and break his legs for you!”

All of them laughed. Wei Ying knew they were empty words. His faith was in the hands of Lan Wangji and no one could really help him. If his marriage was going to be happy or sad wasn’t his decision. Thanks to the 3000 rules that the Gusu Lan Clan abided by, Wei Ying knew he hasn’t going to be treated truly bad, but no one could guarantee his happiness.

They left soon after, on swords. Riding on Suibian was a comfort for him, he always enjoyed to do it and also to use it in battle. He was the best disciple of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect, after all.

“Welcome to Cloud Recess, young master Wei. Someone will show you to your room and then we can have dinner. Here, the curfew is 9, so we take our dinner earlier and than you’re probably used to. I hope you’ll like your rooms.” Said Lan Xichen with a kind, but somehow sad smile.

“Could you mind if I ate in my room? I’d like to be alone, just for tonight.”

“As you wish, young master Wei. I’ll send someone with your food.”

A boy, a few years younger than his 18 years, showed him to his rooms. Everything seemed so quiet and clean here. He wanted to wander and see what kind of fun there was to do here. The boy showed him a beautiful house surrounded by purple gentians, that seemed so colourful in the dull white surroundings.

“The flowers are very beautiful. How come this is the only place that has them?” Wei Wuxian was very curious, they seem so out of character in comparison to everything else.

“The previous Madam Lan took care of them. Since she’s been gone, Lan Xichen has been taking care of the flowers until a new Madam or Master was going to move in.” The explanation didn’t bode well with Wei Ying. He didn’t have the patience or the talent to take care of flowers, but he’ll have to try his best.

Once alone in the little house, he didn’t waste much time and went out. He already felt stifled by this foreign place. He saw on his way the mountain covered in the thousands of rules. He’s never going to be able to follow all of them. This people had to be crazy not to break any!
Using his invitation, he went outside the Cloud Recess and into Caiyi Town, which Wei Ying knew had one of the best alcohols in the world – Emperor’s Smile! He bought two of them and tried to sneak in quietly, but a voice stopped him when he tried to climb in.

“Late returners are not allowed in until the end of Mao Shi. Get out.”
“It’s Emperor’s Smile. Have a jar! And give a smile, you’ll look much cuter!” The boy who caught him was dressed in mourning clothes like the rest of the Gusu Lan Sect, but he was much beautiful than all of then. He could smell sandalwood coming from him and the unmistakable alpha pheromones, even if they were not that obvious. He hoped he could bribe this beautiful alpha with a jar of wine and his smile and could go and enjoy his Emperor’s Smile until late.

“Alcohol is forbidden in the Cloud Recesses.” The alpha responds in a monotonous voice.
“What exactly isn’t forbidden here?” he laments. The other boy seems unimpressed and looked toward the mountain.

“The rules are clearly written on the Wall of Discipline. Go read it.” Wei Ying sighs internally.
These people were obsessed with their rules. He wasn’t going to read 3000 rules! Then he thought of a way to drink his alcohol and not break the rules.

“I won't go in. I’ll sit and drink it here, on the roof. That’s not breaking any rules, right?” He barely got to take a few gulps from one jar, then he saw a sword flying his way. He immediately started to fight, and it was a close one! He enjoyed the fight. He lost both the jars in the fight, but he wasn’t that angry. He had fun. He went to sleep that night with an easy heart. He hoped to meet that boy again and fight a second time and win!
The next day was horrible. He had been woken up at 5 in the morning, and made to eat a bland congee.

After, he met with an old lady, who took his measurements for his new clothes. After the wedding, he will have to wear the Gusu Lan uniform, like everyone here. Wei Ying knew how he was, and knew his clothes will never look as white as everyone else’s. There was no way he wasn’t going to get them dirty as soon as he put them on.

His next stop was to a class where people from all sects seem to participate in. He saw in the front the guy from last night, so he took a seat as close as possible to him to see him better. He truly was a handsome man! He saw the other boy look at him briefly, so he started to wave his hand and smile. His only response was a “hm” and then he looked ahead at Teacher Lan, who just entered the class.

“Today, you’re going to learn the rules from the Wall of Discipline that are going to be helpful in your marriages. Alcohol is forbidden, promiscuity is forbidden, meeting with your mate before marriage is forbidden…” He went on and on, for a long time. Wei Ying didn’t pay any attention and continued to stare at the beautiful face near him. He saw in class many beautiful women, but none really compared to that boy. He wondered what his name was, or who his partner was going to be. He certainly deserved a proper mate, who had no facial expression and followed all the rules, and they could have children that looked the same. He started laughing to himself when he imagined an expressionless baby, that looked impassively at his dad and recited rules as soon as it was born.

“Wei Wuxian! What are you laughing at?” said Lan Qiren while hitting his hand on the table. Everyone looked at him, even the beautiful boy. Man, it was the first day and he already made a mistake.

“Nothing. I was just thinking that you all look like in mourning. Who died?”

“Wei Wuxian!” Lan Qiren threw a book at him, that almost hit him. Wei Ying started laughing again. “Get out! Write the rules 300 times!” Wei Ying was more than happy to leave; he almost fell asleep listening to all their boring rules. He went out, but found nothing to distract himself. There was almost no one outside, everyone was busy doing something. He felt like the outsider he was, even if he’ll become part of this Sect in a few days.

I wonder how Lan Wangji looks like. They say he’s as handsome as his brother. I also wonder if he’s kind like him too. I miss shijie and Jiang Cheng, I hope to see them soon. Wei Ying wished the rules didn’t stop his family from coming with him. He had no one to talk to.

He saw a group of boys decorating the houses with red ribbons and red lanterns, getting ready for the wedding. His wedding, that he didn’t like to think too much about. Suddenly dejected, he goes to his small house and asks someone to apologise to Sect Leader Lan, but he’d prefer to eat his lunch alone because he’s not feeling too well. He gets his food soon enough, with regards from Lan Xichen and a message that tells him to “feel better soon”.

Hours pass slow, with nothing but his thoughts as company. He hears from far away a beautiful song, so he goes to investigate. As an after thought, he takes his dizi, Chenquing. He sees the same beautiful man he keeps meeting, playing on his guqin. He looked like a water god, with his clothes.
looking ethereal in the night. His hair was long and silky looking, reflecting the light of the moon. He has such a serious expression and his song was so sad. Wei Ying wondered what happened to him to make such sad music. He tried to just listen to him in silence, but apparently he was still heard, because the other boy looked at him.

“You shouldn’t be here. Go back to your room or somewhere else” he said in a serious tone. Wei Ying was having none of it.

“No! I got so bored by myself. And I still have to write the rules. What song is this? Can I listen some more? Could I play with you? Hey, what are you doing here by yourself? Aren’t you lonely?” He was babbling already and could see that the other was annoyed at his many questions.

“Go back to your room.”

“No!” He said finally and sat on the ground near him. After a while, the man started playing again, with a sigh in defeat. Wei Ying joined with his dizi, when he got a hang of the notes. He thought it sounded quite nice, even if the song was slow and sad. After they finished, they just stood in silence, looking at the stars and the mountains. The boy gave him a long look before taking his giqin and departing.

“It was nice playing with you, Pan An!” That got him a glare. Well, he should be proud to be called after Pan Yue, one of the most handsome men in history! He was practically the definition of a beautiful man. ‘Pan An’ gave him a long, confused look, but didn’t say anything and left.

Wei Ying considered this day a successful one. All he had to do was endure dinner with the Lans. In the end, it wasn’t so bad. Lan Qiren gave him angry looks and kept asking if he started writing the rules and Lan Xichen talked politely with him, always with a small smile on his face. The dinner itself was a quiet affair, since the rules didn’t allow them to talk while eating.

The next days where equally as uneventful. He went to class, tried to write the rules, Lan Qiren was always furious with him for some reason and the food was so bland he was sure he will starve to death one day.

He met with ‘Pan An’ only in class and he usually didn’t even glance his way, even though Wei Ying tried his best to get his attention.

Two days before his wedding, he was on a mission. He still didn’t get a glimpse of his future husband and was curious how he looked like. All the men of the Gusu Lan Sect looked so similar, he couldn’t find out all by himself who he was. He decided to find ‘Pan An’ and ask for his help. He surely knew how Hunguang-Jun looked like.

He found him near the place where they played together that night. Wei was sitting outside, looking deep in thought. He looked nice near all the red decorations in the Cloud Recesses.

“Pan An! Hi! Did you miss me? I missed you!” Wei Wuxian goes near him, but trips and almost falls. Good thing the other boy was fast and caught him at the last second. He almost fell on his face! He started laughing at the whole situation. “Ahahaha, sorry, I’m so clumsy! Ah, your forehead ribbon is crooked, let me fix it!”

He goes to touch the ribbon, but his hand is slapped away.

“Don’t touch it. And don’t touch me. You shouldn’t be here.”
“Ah, aren’t we close already? I wanted to invite you on my quest to find someone! I think you probably know him and you could help. You know how Lan Wangji looks like, right? Could you help me find him?”

‘Pan An’ looks at him funny, like he suddenly grew a second head. What did he say wrong? Immediately, his face goes from confused to angry. “Are you making fun of me? Please leave.”

Then ‘Pan An’ just walked away, without saying anything. Obviously, Wei Ying followed him, trying again to get him to help. He just walked wherever the other went, trying to gain his attention with all his might. The other boy didn’t even acknowledge him, pretending he wasn’t there! This took some time, but Wei Ying was nothing if persistent. In the end, they spend hours walking, Wei Ying talking about Lotus Pier and his family, and the other ignoring him and saying nothing. Even if he didn’t find Lan Wangji, he felt he was closer to his friend. Tomorrow, his family will come and his wedding will be closer than ever.

Chapter End Notes

More on who Pan An was here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_Yue_(poet)
Wedding day

On the day before the wedding, his family from Lotus Pier came to attend his ceremony. He couldn’t immediately greet them, because they arrived when he was in class. He entered the festivities room. Even that room was ready for his wedding, with beautiful red and gold decoration everywhere. The whole Cloud Recesses was red and vibrant, so different from his first day here. Everyone in the room rose and they bowed. They had a pensive, but excited look on their faces.

“Uncle Jiang, Madam Yu, Jiang Yanli, Jiang Cheng, I’m glad you arrived safely” he says with a big smile. He was happy to see them again. The week he spent without them was quite lonely, but for the few moments he spent with ‘Pan An’, and he missed them everyday.

His sister was the first to greet him “A Xian, you look well. How have you been?”
“I’ve been great! I didn’t cause that much trouble.”
“I think that’s a big stretch, Wei Wuxian. You could behave better.” Interjects Lan Qiren, while entering with Lan Xichen.

They had a sombre lunch, no one talked while they ate. Festivities in Gusu Lan where closer to funerals than anything else.

I can’t believe I have to live like this for the rest of my life. Where’s the fun? The jokes? The love? Wei Wuxian sighed. It’s not like he had a choice anyway. If he left tonight, he’s bring shame to his adopted family. As terrified as he was of his wedding night and all the nights after, he just had to endure it and try to find ways to entertain himself.

After the meal, he went on a walk with uncle Jiang.

“Listen, A Xian, you know I never wanted this for you. I wish you could have chosen someone you loved and that loved you back equally as much. I know how it is to be in a loveless marriage. I wish you’ll somehow find a way with Lan Wangji to compromise and maybe love will come along. He seems like a good young man.”

“Thank you, uncle. I’m sure everything will be alright. You don't need to worry about me!” Wei Ying smiled at his uncle, knowing it will put him at ease.

He spent the rest of the day with his siblings, showing them around Cloud Recesses. It was quite beautiful, if he was honest. They went in his house, still surrounded by colourful gentians.


“Alcohol? It’s forbidden here, I’m surprised you managed to get any in!” Jiang Cheng takes something from a bag and shows him the jars.

“Emperor’s Smile?! Jiang Cheng, you’re a hero! Let’s drink, let’s drink!” Yanli smiled. Even if she didn’t approve of drinking when their hosts forbade it, she wanted her brothers to be happy, so she joined them.

They drunk most of the night. Jiang Cheng was splayed all over the floor, hugging an empty jar, and Wei Ying was sleeping with his head on the bed, but with the rest of his body on the floor. Only Yanli was sleeping properly on the bed, but dressed in her clothes from yesterday. Too soon, the bell rang to announce that 5 in the morning arrived and they had to wake up and get ready. Before Wei Ying had to go with some Gusu Lan disciples to take a bath and get dressed, Yanli stopped him and
took him in the corner of his room, to have some privacy.

“Xian, you shouldn’t be scared of your wedding night. Everything is going to be fine.”

They both knew it was going to be scary regardless of how Lan Wangji was going to be like or even if something was going to happen. He hoped for the latter. Maybe, even if the rule said that they had to consummate the marriage, they could just wait and go slow. He tried to think positively, Wei Wuxian wasn’t going to get depressed about something as boring as a wedding night!

“Thank you, shijie. I’m going to be alright. See you in a few hours, I have to get myself pretty for Huanguang-Jun!” He gave her and then Jiang Cheng a last hug, then went outside to a big bathhouse to get ready.

A pair of omega boys helped him scrub himself and wash his hair. Then, they combed and dried his hair, put nice smelling oils and put his hair in a beautiful ponytail, wrapped with a red ribbon with golden clouds on it. His wedding clothes where flowy, of a fiery red, with beautiful, delicate patterns sown all over. His clothes were made in Lotus Pier, in the style that they had. His sleeves had lotus flowers on them. The last details were his red lips and red powder on the corner of his eyes and the lotus ornament on his head, that kept in place his red, sheer, long veil. He couldn’t really see through it well, but he could manage. His attire was quite uncomfortable and heavy. He already wanted to get it off.

He went outside, where a group of beta and omega disciples waited to lead him to the altar. Everything was beautiful, but so quiet. No one was cheering. He felt it was his funeral, not his wedding. Looking ahead, he could see his family waiting at the stairs of the temple. It was a beautiful day, he just wished he knew his husband before marrying him. At least as well as he knew ‘Pan An’. Even a day with him could have eased some of his worries. Hearing Lan Wangji was a fair and good man from others wasn’t enough for Wei Ying. He wanted to be sure. But alas, he didn’t get the chance.

He walked the stairs to the temple, surrounded by people he loved and people he didn’t even know, but he never felt more alone than in that moment. At the end of the stairs, he could see a figure dressed in red and Lan Xichen talking to his brother, looking sad. He saw his future husband shaking his head as if answering with a ‘no’. At the very top, Lan Qiren looked seriously over everyone. When he finally reached the step where his husband was, he could look at him, terrified for some reason. Lan Qiren was talking about something, but Wei Ying wasn’t really paying attention.

Be brave, Wei Ying. There’s nothing scary about this, about him. Just take a peek, see if he’s as handsome as they say.

Unfortunately, the ceremony began in earnest, after Teacher Lan’s speech. They walked to the temple and kneeled. They bowed to the heaven and earth, to pay respect to he gods and their ancestors. Then bowed to his parents and to Wangji’s family, Wei Ying quickly send a thank you to his biological parents as well, for taking care of him. And then, finally, they bowed to each other, to show the respect they have for each other. And they didn’t even know how they looked like, the irony! He looked down while his husband put on a Gusu Lan ribbon on his forehead. It looked so light when he saw it, but it felt very heavy on his head and in his heart. The veil was put on for a second time and his world became red yet again.

The ceremony was done; they were married now. The last bow was very hard for Wei Ying to do, it seemed so final. We tried to look at his husband while he bowed to him, but the veil was too thick to see anything clearly. He was already starting to sweat in his clothes, he wanted to get them off right now, but it was probably too much of a prank even for him. Teacher Lan could surely faint if he did that.
The banquet after that passed in a blur. He had to stay on his knees for hours on end and look as others were having fun. In the end, with so many people from other sects present, even a Gusu Lan festivity became lively. He couldn’t see very well, but he could hear Jin Zixuan, who was standing close to his sister. He was glad he didn’t have to marry him, at least. He couldn’t really eat anything, feeling anxious. He could feel that his husband, who was sitting on his right, barely moved at all. He didn’t even say anything, not even when Wei Ying tried to call his name. He tried calling him “Wanji, Huanguang-Jun, Lan Zhan”, but he didn’t respond to any of his names. He wondered if he just married a statue.

After what felt like an eternity, he heard a gong. It was time for him and his husband to retire to their room.

They arrived in silence. He quickly took his veil off, wanting to finally see his husband.

“PAN AN? You’re Lan Wangji?!”
“You didn’t know?” Lan Wanji asks coldly.

“I didn’t! No one told me how you looked like, just that you were very handsome. And you are! You’re beautiful, Huanguang-Jun!”

“Shameless!” Lan Wangji says that, but Wei Ying could see his ears getting red. Does that mean he likes getting complimented?

Wei Ying was so relieved. His only friend here ended up being his husband! The gods were kind to him, for once.
He saw the bed and hopped on it, feeling all his fears go away. He could talk his way out of this and have a nice, long sleep until tomorrow. He was ready to tell Lan Wangji his plan, but saw him undressing slowly, folding his clothes neatly on a chair.

“What are you doing, Lan Zhan?!” Wei Ying was starting to panic. He was hoping to skip this part until he was ready.

“Undressing. You should do the same.” Wangji wasn’t even looking at him, keeping his gaze down. He looked unhappy.

“We don’t have to do anything, right? I mean, I know where are rules about this and such, but could we wait for some time? Get to know each other, become friends, then move on to other things?”

“That’s forbidden. It’s written on the Wall of Discipline that a marriage has to be consumed to be legal. Get undressed.”

“But, Lan Zhan, no one will know! We could just keep it a secret, the two of us.” Even if he kept arguing, he could tell Lan Wangji already made his mind on this subject. He was almost naked, just in his underclothes. Wei Ying started to tremble a little, but decided it couldn’t be helped and tried to undo his outer robe, but he couldn’t. Lan Zhan saw he struggled, so he helped him get all his clothes off, until there was nothing left but his new, white ribbon. Wei Ying put his hand on his body, trying to cover for some modesty. Lan Zhan wasn’t even properly looking at him.

“Go lay on the bed.” Wei Ying was terrified, but he had nowhere to go. He laid himself on the bed, on his belly. He didn’t even get a kiss from his husband, and he didn’t seem like he’ll get any gentle handling either. He wished suddenly he never knew him beforehand. At least he wouldn’t have felt betrayed. He also wished he had some experience and his first time to not be so loveless. Nothing he imagined for himself came true.

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He looked over his shoulder and saw Lan Wangji getting off his last piece of clothing. He didn’t
look aroused at all. Wei Ying was wondering how it was going to work out, if he couldn’t get it up. He wanted to make a joke about it, but couldn’t find the voice to do so.

Lan Zhan kneeled near him and didn’t move for some time. Wei Ying was scared, but he was also curious, so he looked at what his husband was doing. He seemed to meditate or think about something, and he was slowly getting aroused by whatever he was thinking about. Wei Ying wondered who was in Lan Wangji’s mind to have such an effect on him. He decided it wasn’t his business. He could feel getting a bit turned on himself. Lan Zhan was indeed the most handsome alpha he’s ever seen, and he smelled nice. He tried again to bargain with him:

“Lan Zhan, really, I’m sure no one will notice if we do it or not. Could we at least do it in a week? To have some time together? Please, Lan Zhan, Lan Wangji. I’m just scared.”

“… We have to do this.” Lan Zhan draped himself over Wei Ying’s body, looking unsure what to do. He just lowered himself over Wei Ying’s body. He could feel his half hard prick close to his entrance and tensed up everywhere. This was scary, he wanted to fight, but he also wanted to get it over with. We felt getting penetrated slowly, but it still hurt a lot, especially the first few thrusts. Lan Zhan had to try a few times to put it in before it stayed in, because he was so tense and he was barely aroused. He was too dry and he could feel the friction.

Have people in Gusu Lan never heard of foreplay? Did they just do it like this, without any touching first?

Wei Ying had no experience, but he read a lot of porn books and liked to hear about other people’s experiences. He knew that first times were painful and awkward, but he somehow hoped his could be different.

It was very quiet and quick after that. He just stood there, petrified, while Lan Zhan moved inside him. He just thrust inside him, deep and slow, at a regular pace. It was very clinical in a way. Wei Ying could feel some kind of pleasurable pressure, but it wasn’t that much. He could only clench his hands in the bedding and tried to stay as still as possible. He had tears in his eyes. It wasn’t that painful, but he felt humiliated and betrayed. He wanted it to be over fast. Wei Ying felt Lan Zhan’s breath on his nape and knew what was coming. He felt teeth, then a very painful bite. He was truly mated from that point on.

After some time, he felt something wet hitting his back. He looked over his shoulder and saw Lan Zhan with a blank face, but with tears in his eyes. He looked sad. He took sometimes heavier breaths, like he was keeping himself back.

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Once it was over, Lan Zhan put his head on his shoulder blades and Wei Ying could feel the tears on his back coming even faster. He wanted to be angry at this situation and to hate Lan Zhan, but he understood he had no choice in this marriage, like Wei Ying himself. He was only thinking about himself and forgot that maybe the other wasn’t willing either. His bonding mark throbbed painfully.

“Lan Zhan, it’s fine. Don’t cry, I should be the one crying.” Wei Ying winched as he turned around to get on his back and get Lan Zhan off him. Wei Ying was looking at the ceiling. He didn’t feel any different than before he stepped in this room. He thought there was going to be some kind of big, monumental change, but it didn’t seem like it. He was sad at the situation too. It was just unfair, that they didn’t get to chose who to marry. Maybe if they met in different circumstances, they could have been friends, or more.

In the end, Wei Ying started crying too. He was still scared, but he swallowed his emotions and put one hand over his eyes and the other on top of Lan Zhan’s, who was looking blankly at the window,
tears already dry on his cheeks. They stayed like that, with their hearts broken and their hands intertwined. The end of their ribbons also overlapped on the bed, looking beautiful, in a situation that was anything but that. They both mourned the relationship that they never got to have with each other.

“Lan Zhan, what are you thinking about?”
“My mother.” He answered quietly. Wei Ying was surprised he even answered.

“What was she like?” Wei Ying already knew Lan Zhan’s mother passed away many years ago. He wanted to know who she was.

“She was kind. She married my father because she had no choice. She had to stay inside the house where you’re living now and me and my brother could only visit her once a month. She was happy to see us every time, but I saw how unhappy her life was. I never wanted that for anyone else. For you.”

Wei Ying never heard him talk so much or so openly. He was glad they shared something so intimate. It felt more intimate than what they just did.

“I don’t really remember my mother. Or my father. The only memory I have is that we had a donkey and I used to ride it with my mother, while my father had the reins. I think we were happy to have each other. I remember we laughed.”

They didn’t speak after that. Enough was said and done between them for one night. They held each other’s hand until the morning.

Chapter End Notes

I found not long ago that many countries don't even have a law against marital rape. That's not a think in many countries, even civilised ones. Even then, many people don't recognise they've been wronged and never seek help.

Please don't hate Lan Zhan, everything will be explained later.
Wei Ying didn’t feel like leaving the bed, but he had to, at some point. Lan Zhan wasn’t there, he just have left early. When Wei Ying woke up, there was no sign he has been here for many hours, even his body was wiped clean of any evidence of what had happened last night.

He saw a bowl of congee left on the table and that the bathtub was filled with warm water. He decided a bath was definitely a priority. He washed himself slowly, his body sore from being so stiff last night. There was still some makeup on his face. The bond mark was still painful.

He felt a lot better after he finished bathing. He was looking forward to seeing his Senior Sister and Jiang Cheng, even if only briefly.

The congee wasn’t as bland as he remembered. It had a bit of spice in it, usually it had a medicinal and boring taste.

*Weird, I wonder who made this.*

If he’s going to live here for the rest of his life, he’s going to look up into how to grow some condiments and red peppers somewhere near his house.

He wanted to stay in some more, but he never liked to be still for too long. He looked where his clothes where and he remembered that he’ll have to wear the Gusu Lan uniform from now on. He struggled to pun on all the layers and his ribbon by himself, but managed it. Hopefully, it wasn’t too crooked. Looking into the mirror, he couldn’t recognise himself. He looked older in white.

*White is just not my colour. These people need some purple or red, or they’ll go blind because of the lack of colour.*

Walking to the rooms where he knew his siblings where, he noticed the looks he got and the whispers that soon followed. For a nation who didn’t allow gossip, they sure didn’t try to hide it too well.

The wedding decorations were no where to be seen. They were very fast about it. Wei Ying didn’t dwell too much on it; he didn’t want to think about last night in too much detail. It was best to forget unpleasant memories and move on. The past can’t be changed, but you can do something about the present and the future. He always managed to get up, even when people put him down because of his second gender or his modest roots, or when Madam Yu beat him for almost no reason.

He saw Jiang Cheng and shijie talking to each other, as if they were waiting for him. He saw their surprised expression from afar.

“You look very handsome, A-Xian!” his shijie always knew how to make him feel better. Jiang Cheng just looked surprised and wasn’t saying anything. Wei Ying looked worried for a
second, what has Jiang Cheng thinking?

A few seconds of silence passed, until Jiang Cheng finally moved. “HA. Ha. Ahahahaha, what are you wearing? Who died? You last brain cell?” Jiang Cheng was pointing his finger at him and laughing hysterically.

They all started to laugh with him. He did look a bit funny dressed like this, he was the first to agree!

“I’m mourning your lost chances of ever finding a wife, Jiang Cheng!”

“Come here, you!”

They started to go after each other like children, hiding behind Yanli and having some fun.

They saw two figures approaching them.

“Running and talking loudly is forbidden in the Cloud Recesses.” Said a cold voice. It was Lan Zhan, who was walking alongside his brother.

“Young Master Jiang, Young Master Wei, Lady Jiang, good day. You don’t need to abide by the rules so strictly, we know not everyone is familiar with all our rules, right Wangji?”

“…” Lan Wangji looked at his brother as if there was something wrong with him.

Wei Ying felt uneasy to see him again, so soon, even if they were outside and fully clothed. He was still a little bitter Lan Zhan wasn’t willing to bend the rules a little for his comfort.

Lan Xichen looked at Wei Ying with a small smile on his face, but his eyes looked worried “Master Wei, I see you’re in good spirits.”

“I’m fine, where are you two going?”

“To exterminate water ghouls. We are short of hands, so I returned to get Wangji.”

“I know how to catch water ghouls! We catch water ghouls all the time in Yunmeng!” Wei Ying was so excited, finally something interesting to do.

“Zewu-ju, could you take us with you?”

Eveyone looked at Lan Zhan expectantly, with the exception of Wei Ying. Omegas, once married, could not participate in any night hunts or dangerous missions, without their alpha’s accord. But Wangji wasn’t saying anything, just looked at Wei Ying.

“Wangji, what do you think?” Lan Xichen asked his brother with an indulgent smile.

“Hmm. He can do whatever he wants.” After that, Lan Zhan just left, without saying anything else.

They went in Caiyi Town and rented a boat each. Wei Ying looked longingly at the vendors who were selling Emperor’s Smile, but he had no money with him, and he wasn’t sure how to sneak in one jar with everyone looking at him. All the vendors and people of Caiyi were looking at him, it seemed, and congratulating him for his wedding to the second master Lan. He smiled and waved at everyone, and thanked them as sincerely as he could.

He looked behind to get a glimpse of Lan Wangji, and noticed something was off about his boat. It
looked too heavy. He knew immediately what he had to do.

“Lan Zhan, look at me!” He did just that, so Wei Ying took his oar and splashed water in Lan Wangji’s direction. He looked extremely angry at that. But as soon as he flipped over his boat and a water ghoul came into view, latched on the bottom of the boat, he didn’t look angry anymore. They easily killed the ghoul with their swords.

He had to explain to everyone how he knew the demon was there and some were clearly impressed with his deductive skills. Lan Zhan didn’t have a very impressed face, though. But, he did ask:

“What’s the name of your sword?”

“Whatever.”

“…”

He probably didn’t understand what he meant, so he showed him his sword, that had the name ‘Whatever’ engraved on it. He told him how Uncle Jiang gave him the sword and decided on this name in the end. There wasn’t really any special meaning behind it all.

They didn’t have much time to talk, because the water turned black, suddenly full of ghouls, and a magical whirlpool appeared in the middle of the lake, sucking them in. They all mounted their swords, abandoning the boats.

Wei Ying saw that one of the Lan disciples lost his sword and was in danger, so he went over to try and save him. But as Wei Ying tried to get him off the boat, the water tried to catch the disciple. He knew he was in big trouble; he couldn’t hang on to him anymore.

He felt a hand on his shoulder, lifting him easily.

“Lan Zhan!” he exclaimed without thinking. He didn’t expect to be saved by him, of all people.

“It’s a waterborne abyss!” They all retreated and tried to make sense of how it ended up here. Such a thing wasn’t common in Gusu Lan at all!

The next weeks were calm. His family left for Yunmeng, leaving him alone. Now, he truly had no way of returning home. He lived a quiet life in his home surrounded by gentians and played his flute to get over the creeping loneliness.

He had to attend classes and this time, he had to sit next to Lan Zhan, who ignored him. All the better. He also had to write the rules, Wangji being there to supervise him to write them properly. They didn’t really talk then either. Wei Ying just tried to write as fast as possible, even if his calligraphy had to suffer. Lan Zhan complained about that a lot, but he was such an annoying perfectionist.

When he didn’t have any more patience to write, he doodled. Today was his last day and Wangji came late after a trip to Caiyi Town with his brother. Because he was happy for it to be over, he decided to be nice to Wangji for some reason and painted him a portrait. But because he couldn’t help himself, he had to add an extra detail – a huge flower in his hair!

“Here. Look!”
The portrait of Wangji was quite beautiful, if he said so himself. Wei Ying has always liked to paint. Lan Zhan seemed impressed by his skill.

“Thank you.”, he said.

Wei Ying almost wanted to exchange the book Lan Wangji was reading with a porn book from his collection, but he felt awkward doing it, so he stopped himself.

When he returned at night to his room, he found a jar of Emperor’s Smile on his desk.

*Who put this here?*

It didn’t really matter. The wine was amazing and it made him feel lighter.
The boys really, really need a heart-to-heart. The sooner, the better.

His days were very repetitive. The only thing he liked to eat was the congee that was brought to his house every morning, because it had some spice in it. All the rest of the meals, which he had to take in silence with the others in the hall, were bland and medicinal and not to his tastes at all. Sometimes he found other jars of Emperor’s Smile in his room, left by someone. Other times, he got interesting mythology books and one day, a beautiful red hair ribbon, with intricate patterns on it. He wanted to wear it, but didn’t want people to accuse him of something unsavoury. He tried asking around to find this mysterious person who was sending him gifts, but no one knew anything.

At the least, he had plenty of time to fool around, even if he was alone. The rest of the Lan disciples seemed wary of him, because he sometimes ran or spoke too loudly. What a stupid excuse! He found a beautiful lake, where he sometimes went fishing and grilled them. He also found some rabbits, but he decided just to pet them, even if it went through his mind to eat them. Too bad pets were forbidden in the Cloud Recesses, they could be funny to have around and eat at the scrolls and books in the Library. Old man Lan could fain for sure!

His interactions with Lan Wangji were minimal. They only greeted each other politely and that was about it. He was never summoned in the jingshi after that first night, and he was happy about it.

But miracles don’t last forever. One day, Lan Qiren informed him they had to talk. That didn’t seem like a good thing. He couldn’t tell what went wrong. Did they find out he’s the one that put purple dye in Lan Qiren’s soap? He was sure he left no clues that could lead to him…

He entered a room where he saw Lan Qiren, with his new purple beard and Lan Wangji, sitting calmly.

He tried his best not to laugh, he really did, but when Teacher Lan started stroking his beard and then stopped and looked at his tinted, purple hand, he couldn’t hold the laugh in!

“Ahahahaha, it really suits you! Ahahaha, I like the change!”

The teacher threw a book at him.

“Wei Wuxian! I know it was you, even if I have no proof!! Sit down!”

Wei Ying sat casually, knowing they will be annoyed at his improper way of sitting. He tried to read the atmosphere, and could tell whatever was coming, he wouldn’t like it.

“Wei Wuxian, Wangji…” Lan Qiren started saying, looking very awkward and uncomfortable.

“… you have to know that there are certain… expectations from you. There is no hurry, but you should try to engage in… certain activities together more often. There cannot be any smoke without a fire. You should try more… to get to know each other, even if saying this pains me.”

Wei Ying looked at the floor. He hated this conversation. Lan Wangji looked a bit white in the face,
like he had seen a ghost.

“We’ll try our best”, the second master Lan said and they left, relieved for this horrible conversation to be over.

When they went outside, Lan Wangji took hold of his arm and told him “Come to the jingshi this night, before 9.” Wei Ying wanted to argue, to say ‘no’, but he knew he had a duty here, and he couldn’t avoid it any longer. He was surprised he hasn’t been summoned earlier. Maybe Lan Wangji had a heart, but his curtesy stopped today.

Wei Ying sighed and told him he’ll be there.

He didn’t know if he should’ve worn something special, so he went in his usual clothes. He got used to his new Gusu Lan uniform, he even became a bit fond of it. He found the forehead ribbon hard to tie properly, and it was annoying that he had to comb his hair everyday, but he managed it.

He went to the jingshi with a heavy heart, but at least he was more prepared this time. He knew what awaited him.

He entered after a voice told him to come in. He saw Lan Wangji with his hair undone, still a bit wet, like he just took a bath not long ago. He was sitting on the bed, clearly waiting for him.

“Come here and undress, get on the bed” So, it was going to be like the last time. He took all his clothes off, his hands trembling just a little. At least he could do it by himself this time. He went near Lan Wangji, who got up and took off his underclothes. He took this opportunity to lay on the bed the same way he did last time he was here, on his belly.

--- WARNING for non-con ---

He tried to take a deep breath when he felt Lan Wangji’s body hovering over him. Yet again, some seconds or even minutes passed by, nothing happening. He heard him masturbating and there was a sweet smell in the hair, like a flower fragrance or oil. He finally felt Wangji on him and then, he opened his legs a bit to make some room. He entered pretty easily. He didn’t know if he was a bit aroused or the oil helped. Maybe both.

It was pretty different compared to last time. The pace changed from a slow one to a faster one, and when Wangji was close to finishing, he was thrusting inside very hard and fast, hitting a very pleasurable place. It was a good kind of pressure. They were pretty quiet, but for a few gaps.

The thrust became too deep, and Wei Ying couldn’t handle them.

“Lan Wangji, please, please, slow down. It hurts.”

That stopped him instantly. He continued at a slower pace, but he could feel Lan Wangji was getting soft and he wasn’t going to come now. He stopped entirely and got off Wei Ying. But before Wei Ying could turn to face him, he felt a small kiss on a shoulder blade. Was that an apology?

--- Warning over ---

“I’m sorry, Wei Ying.” Lan Zhan looked sadly at him. He looked hurt again, like he didn’t want to do this any more than he did.
Then why did he insist they do this? Why isn’t he kissing me, or taking care of my pleasure?

This clearly wasn’t working. Wei Ying had no real frame of reference, but knew that people did this because it felt good. Clearly, something had to change to make it better.

“Lan Zhan… I’m sorry too.”

“There’s no need to apologise to me. I’m the one hurting you.”

“Maybe we could get dressed and… talk about this?”

They got cleaned and dressed in their undergarments. Wei Ying was in bed, Lan Zhan sitting at the end of the bed, looking at him without saying anything. Wei Ying had to start this conversation, it seemed. He wished he could say a joke to get rid of the tension in the air, but nothing came to his mind. It was really distressing how he couldn’t be his usual self in front of the man he had to spend the rest of his days with.

(picture from The Untamed, the live tv show inspired my Mdsz)

They stood there for some time until Wei Ying couldn’t take the silence anymore.

“Let’s go to Caiyi tomorrow?”

“Why, do you need anything?”

“I heard some disciples say there was a festival in down and I wondered if we could go together, spend some fun time? Festivals are fun, right?”
“I’ve never been. I don’t like crowds.”

“That can’t do! We have to go and try the foods there! And have some Emperor’s Smile too!”

“Are you unsatisfied with the jars I send you?”

“What?! You are the one that sends me gifts?” Wei Ying was truly shocked! Wangji was the one to send him all those things? He couldn’t believe it!

“En. Who else could it be?” Lan Zhan had a frown between his eyes.

“No one. I had no one in mind, I thought maybe a nice ghost was helping me out? Ahahaha”

“Do you like it?”

“What?”

“The ribbon. You never wore it. Did you not like it?”

“Oh, I did! It was very pretty. I’ll wear it from now on, thank you.”

Wei Ying was feeling a little brave, so he slowly went closer to Lan Zhan, who just looked at him. He gave him a soft kiss on his cheek, as a thank you.

They went to sleep soon after, tired after everything. The night ended in a better note than it started. Wei Ying was worried they still haven’t talked about their relationship, but at least they finally made some plans to spend some time together. Maybe they’ll find a way to make things better. Wei Ying was hopeful.
Wei Ying woke up with a startle. Something had woken him up. Lan Zhan was near his bed, with a tray with something on it.

“What happened?”

“Wei Ying. I brought you breakfast.”

“Oh, thanks, what time is it?”

“12.”

“I missed classes!!” That was weird. Usually, someone woke him up in time to get to classes. Did they forget about him? Did no one remember to wake him up? Teacher Lan probably took out all his beard hairs in anger.

He tried to hurry and dress, but Lan Wangji stopped him.

“Don’t worry. I told uncle. Have breakfast, we can go to the festival later.”

“Oh. Yes, I do want! When do he leave?”

“Eat. After that.”

Breakfast was the same congee he’s been having every morning. It was good, he remembered again he should look into how to plant some spicy condiments, he keep forgetting to. His memory was so bad. I wish it was even spicier.

“I can put some more spice next time, if you want”
“What do you mean?”

“I can put some more spice. For next time.”

“I understood that, but why would you do it?”

“… I made it. I’ve made it everyday. For you.” Lan Zhan said and his ears got a bit red. Cute. This is really unexpected. Why is he doing this many nice things for me, but can’t be nice to me when we’re… intimate?

“Thank you.” he tried to give him an honest smile, but he didn’t know if it looked like it. It was hard to act too close to Lan Wangji when the memories of last night were so fresh. Lan Zhan seemed satisfied with that.

He went to his room to take a bath and change and, at the last moment, he put on the red ribbon in his hair. It looked pretty. He always liked red ribbons in his hair, it made a nice contrast with his black hair.

They met near the gate of Cloud Recesses. Lan Wangji looked beautiful in the sunlight, with his ethereal appearance. It always surprised him how handsome he was.

They went at a slow pace down the stairs and then walked a long way to Caiyi Town. He was glad they didn’t fly by sword, he got to admire the scenery. He didn’t realise how green and beautiful it was.

The town was even more colourful than usual. The contrast between Cloud Recesses and Caiyi was already very stark, now it was crazy! People were dancing, drinking, singing randomly on the street. He regretted not taking his flute with him! Though, people here probably didn’t know lewd songs from Yunmeng Jiang. He could teach them something new, on the other hand…

“What do you want to do, Lan Wangji?” he asked curiously. Even if he’s never been to a festival, Lan Zhan had to have some vague idea about that was he wanted to try.

“Whatever you want.”

“Ha. Leave it to me!” He was really to have some fun! They went and looked at all the food stalls
and he chose some dumplings, some with meat for himself and some with vegetables for Lan Zhan. He made sure to have so much spicy sauce, it looked more like a soup with dumplings. They walked near the river and took a seat. All over the grass near the river there were couples and families, enjoying the food and joyful atmosphere. They stood apart, not wanting to get too much in the private space of the other.

Wei Ying didn’t know what to ask at first, so he said the first thing that came to his mind:

“So, what’s your favourite animal?”

It took a few seconds to get a response and then heard: “Rabbits.”

“Ahaahaha, bunnies? That’s not what I was thinking! I thought you were going to say some mythical beast! A dragon, maybe? Why do you like bunnies?”

“They’re fluffy.” Lan Wangji’s ears were red again, it seemed he did that a lot in his presence.

“Ahaahaha. Well, mine are all animals, besides dogs. Dogs are evil creatures meant to torture us.”

Lan Zhan looked worried. So he told him the story of his years when he was an orphan and he had to fight dogs for scraps of food, how they bit him all over to take the little food he found. He remembered the hunger and he pain very well. He was glad Uncle Jiang found him and took him in. He’ll be forever grateful. Gods know what could have happened to an orphan omega on the streets when he got older. He could imagine some horrible possibilities.

He was glad to tell Lan Wangji something about himself. He did want to get closer to him.

“I’ll protect you.” But who will protect me from you?

They spent some more time wandering around. Some girls were throwing flowers from their window at men they liked. Hanguang-jun got so many, but he didn’t seem to pay any attention. He just looked angrily at the flowers Wei Ying got and glared at the girls. It actually made him feel nice.

Wei Ying saw a group of girls from afar, in colourful hanfus. He didn’t understand that they were doing on that small hill, but he suddenly saw it and got EXTREMELY excited.
A swing!! I haven’t been on one in years!

He was so excited that he quickly took Lan Wangji by his sleeve and started to run laughing towards the swing. It was one of those swings where you could either sit or stand up on. He always preferred to stand, it moved faster that way. Even if they could fly on swords way higher, his first experience of feeling like he could fly was on a swing. Back then, shijie helped him to do it. Since then, he loved being in the air. He didn’t know what he’d do without the ability to mount his sword.

They went right in front of the swing. The girls made space for them to get there and bowed to them, as a sign of respect. People here really respected Lan Wangji, it seemed. Even if they knew Hanguang-jun was married to HIM, and he was RIGHT THERE, they fluttered their lashes at him and tried to engage in conversation, but Lan Zhan didn’t pay them any attention.

Good.

“Wangji, have you even been on a swing?”

“No.”

“Then get on! It’s fun!”

Lan Zhan awkwardly stepped on the swing and just stood there, unmoving, like a statue. He wasn’t moving at all. He clearly had to give him some instructions.

“Lan Wangji, just move your hips! It’s easy, just use your body to move the swing forward!”

Since he clearly had no idea what he was talking about, he went behind him and did it himself. He pushed for both of them. It was a bit hard at first, since they were both quite heavy, but got the hang of it fast. When the swing started to move faster and higher, Wei Ying started to laugh from happiness. He missed this feeling! He got as high as he could, without the swing turning them upside down and falling over, but it got very close. Lan Zhan wasn’t complaining at all, trusting him to not let them fall. From where he was, he couldn’t tell if Wangji had any expression or he was his stoic self.

When he finally stopped, to let the girls enjoy the swing too, Lan Zhan turned to face him, and he could see a very small smile on his face. He almost couldn’t breathe! Lan Zhan had the sincerest smile he’s ever seen.
“Did you enjoy it?”

“En.”

From then on, Wei Ying got more comfortable. He started talking and talking, even teasing Lan Wangji a little. It was a good day. They bought some dumplings (well, Lan Zhan did, Wei Ying had no money on him, even if he had a big allowance, he always forgot to bring the money pouch with him). They went back near the river to eat. All over, there were still a lot of couples and families, but now they stood closer to each other. If one of them moved a little, their shoulders could touch.

The sky was dark. They spend so many hours together, he didn’t know how time went by so fast. He heard a loud noise and looked up to see fireworks! They were truly beautiful and the perfect way to end the day. He looked at Lan Zhan, to tell him how pretty he found the fireworks, but saw that he wasn’t even watching them, but looking at him. Was there something wrong with his face? They looked at each other for a few moments and could feel Lan Zhan leaning towards him. His breath stopped.

_is what I think going to happen?_ He didn't have to wait long, Lan Zhan’s lips pressed for a second on his, very softly. It felt like a warm breeze. It was over as soon as it started. Wei Ying wanted to take some initiative as well, so he put his hand on the back of Wangji’s head and made him lean over again. He gave him a longer, better kiss. It was almost sensual. When they finally took a breath, they looked at each other, flustered.

“That was my first kiss, Wangji. You have to take responsibility.”

Lan Zhan looked a bit sadly at him “I will. It was mine too.”

“Can I ask for one more thing before we go?”

“En.”

“Let's have some Emperor’s Smile!”

Hanguang-jun didn’t remind him that ‘alcohol was forbidden’ and just went to a random tavern that
looked lively. They sat at a table and ordered some peanuts and two jars of wine. He filled two
glasses and gave Lan Zhan one too.

“Here! Let’s cheers for a nice day!” Then he drank the whole glass in one go. He looked at Lan
Zhan, who looked at his glass as if it offended him in some way. He took a sip after a while. When
he wanted to ask him something, he noticed that Wangji was just looking into space. He waved his
hand in front of his face and… nothing. He truly became a statue!

“Lan Zhan?”

Out of nowhere, Wangji just fell on the table, his head directly in the peanut shells Wei Ying casually
threw there.

“Aahahaha, you got drunk after a sip? Ahaha, so weak! If only people knew!” After he laughed some
more, he understood it wasn’t so funny. How was he going to carry him home? After some
consideration, he decided to rend a room of the night. With the help of the innkeeper, they managed
to put Wangji in the bed.

He drank some more Emperor’s Smile by himself, just observing Lan Zhan. But that didn’t last, as
Lan Zhan got up and looked at him, unblinking.

“Lan Zhan? Are you ok, can we go home?”

“Wei Ying?”

“Yes, I’m here.”

“Yes, you gave me that. Why did you give me such an expensive ribbon?”

“I thought you’ll look pretty in it. You’re already beautiful though, it’s only an accessory.” Now this
was interesting. Lan Zhan was so sincere while drunk. He could ask him anything and he’ll respond
without any issues. Maybe he won’t even remember this conversation, he could do and ask so many things and get out of it! One thing was really heavy on his heart and soul, so he had to ask it. It seemed the only opportunity to find out.

“Why do you do it so roughly at night? Why aren’t you more gentle? And why didn’t you wait for me?” He didn’t realise how much it was weighing on him until he got it out of his system. He hoped the answer wouldn’t break his heart further – what if he liked hurting Wei Ying for no reason?

“I saw that you were in pain, but I don’t know what to do. It was my first time and I didn’t know what was good or not. I don’t know how to do it so you feel good. I want you to feel good.”

So, that was that. It was just inexperience. He was still angry that he didn’t look into it for the sake of Wei Ying’s poor body, but he knew how to fix this. He didn’t know very sure what to do exactly either, but he knew there were to find the answers they needed.

“And what about the other question?”

He didn’t even finish his question. Lan Zhan fell on the pillow and fell asleep. Wei Ying sighed, he still had some things he had to get out of his husband, but for now he had to go out and purchase some books. He knew a certain vendor, who had a certain section of books where he could find what he wanted. He took some of Wangji’s money and went outside. At least he knew what he had to do now. He had some power to change things, even if Huanguang-jun might not like his was of… studying.
A night to remember

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the lovely comments and for the kudos!

They woke up next morning, Lan Zhan looking the same as always. It seemed the Lans got drunk very fast, but had no hangovers. Interesting. When they returned to Cloud Recesses, they got a scolding from Lan Qiren, but for some reason, Zewu-ju looked at them with a small smile and looked pleased. He sometimes couldn’t understand his brother-in-law.

After eating lunch, he went to the library, where someone told him Lan Wangji was. He went with apprehension, but the feeling he could get things accomplished today. He saw Wangji reading a book, in quiet. He watched him for some time and observed that he barely moved, only doing so when he turned the pages of the book.

He went to him with a smile and a pounding heart.

“Hanguang-jun, funny to see you here!”

Lan Zhan immediately turned his head in his direction and he could swear he saw a smile for a blink second.

He then frowned at him and asked “Wei Ying, what's the matter?”

“Nothing, just looking for you.” Wei Ying sat in front of him and looked for the right way to start this conversation. After some minutes of silence, Lan Wangji put his book down neatly, on the corner of the table.

“Is something wrong, Wei Ying?” he asked him looking concerned.

“Look! There’s something outside!” He says and, of course, as naïve Wangji was, he turned to look.
That was the right moment to change whatever book Lan Zhan was reading with the book he bought yesterday in the city. At least he could get to laugh before they got into the deep things.

“Sorry, my bad. It was just a shadow.”

Lan Zhan picks his book again and when he opens it, the reaction is instantaneous. He puts it down hard and takes his sword out.

“WEI YING! What is this? Shameless!”

“Ahahaha, your face! Ahahaha, sorry Wangji, put your sword down! Fighting is forbidden in the library, have you forgotten?” That reaction was hilarious.

Lan Zhan did indeed calm down and sat down again. He looked at Wei Ying angrily.

“Listen, Hanguang-jun, it wasn’t just a joke. I read that book and I learned some interesting things. Could you read it too and we can talk about it tonight? Please.”

“It’s forbidden.”

“I know! Everything fun and nice is in here! Just do it for me…”

Lan Zhan had nothing to say to that, just let his eye gaze fall down.

Wei Ying left after that, unsure if he’ll be listened to. It was so hard to get Lan Zhan to open up about some things. Wei Ying rarely got annoyed at people, but he was starting to get annoyed at Lan Zhan.

The night came too fast. Wei Ying took a bath and when he opened his door, he saw Lan Zhan waiting at his door.

*How long did he wait here? Why didn’t he come in?*

“Oh, Hanguang-jun. I was going to meet you in the jingshi. Do you want to… talk here?”
“Mm.”

“Come in, then.”

They sat awkwardly, none of them really wanting to start speaking. Wei Ying realised he had to be the one to take charge. But when he opened his mouth to say something, Lan Zhan beat him to it.

“I read the book. I didn’t know I was doing so wrong. I apologise.”

That wasn't enough of an apology for Wei Ying.

“You’ve been hurting me a lot, Lan Zhan. I don’t think you know how much. Just because we’ve been married by our families and your sect wants you to produce an heir fast, it doesn’t mean you can treat people like this.”

“The rules were the only thing I knew. I abided by them, thinking they will guide me well.”

“Sometimes, rules are meant to be broken. Sometimes they are good, but this is not the case.”

They just looked at each other, not knowing where to go from here. Wei Ying had another plan for today, so when he saw Lan Wangji standing up to leave, he stopped him.

“I want to try some things I saw in the book. Could you stay?”

Lan Zhan seemed shocked by that, his eyes going slightly bigger. He nodded and started to take his clothes off.

“Stop.” Wei Ying said. “Let me do it for you.”

Wei Ying slowly took Wangji’s clothes off, admiring his flawless body. He was white as porcelain and had strong arms and legs, signs of his hard training. After he took everything off, he made a sign
at Lan Zhan to help him take his own clothes off. It was a nice experience, to be taken care of.

They went slowly to the bed and told Lan Zhan to lay on the bed side by side to him. He realised then it was the first time they were together in this room.

“Could you touch me? Maybe kiss me?”

They were on their sides, facing each other. Lan Wangji was using his right hand to slowly touch his chest and arms. Wei Ying was getting goose bumps, but it was nice. He then touched his face and stroked his cheeks in a tender manner, like he meant something. His heart skipped a beat at that. Then, he came closer to him and kissed his neck, then went down to his chest, kissing it all over. He kissed where his heart beat as well, looking at Wei Ying after each kiss he gave. He slowly kissed down, until he got to his organ. Lan Zhan hovered a bit over it, his breath tickling Wei Ying a little. He started to lick in small strokes and finally, put it in his mouth. He started sucking messily. The sounds he made were embarrassing, but Wei Ying couldn’t care less. He was in heaven, it felt amazing and he wanted to show his appreciation to his husband.

It didn’t last long; he came in a few minutes. After it was over, he saw Lan Zhan swallowing his seed, having no expression whatsoever. Didn’t it taste horribly?

“You didn’t have to swallow, you know?”

“I wanted to.”

Oh.

Wei Ying wanted to give the favour back, so he did the same thing for Lan Zhan – the same kisses and touches, the same oral sex. It was all about equality this night. Luckily, Lan Zhan didn’t last long as well, and after that, he swallowed as well.

“Yuck! I don't understand how you could swallow without any problem.”

They laid in bed for another minute or so, until Wei Ying started feeling very hot. He got wet minutes ago and now it was unbearable. He was clenching on nothing and he wanted to be touched there too.
“Lan Zhan? Could you... touch me... there too?” He nodded and went to get a small vial of oil from where his clothes were.

“How do you want it?”

“Just a finger or two.”

Lan Zhan did exactly what he asked. He slowly touched him, first just rubbing some oil on the outer part, then slowly putting a finger in. It felt pretty good. Then he just moved it for some time, in and out, until he put in the second one too. It was a little tighter, but it still felt very good. He just did this for minutes. Wei Ying got hard again, so he used his hand to masturbate at the same time. It was very good. He was feeling something, like he was going to come, but in a different way. He felt all his muscles tense, then almost his whole body rose like he was pulled by a string attached to his mid section. Only his head, shoulders and soles of his feet remained on his bed. He just had the most amazing orgasm of his life. He couldn’t say anything, he couldn’t control his voice or how his body trembled all over.

“…Wei Ying?” He heard after some time.

“I’m fine! I’m more than fine.” He said without breath.

After that, they cleaned and went to bed, together. Lan Zhan was hard too, but he took care of it by himself. He just pumped a few times and he was done. He probably liked what he saw.

Tonight felt like a big step in their relationship. He hoped more good things were to come. Tomorrow was another day.
It's a short and sweet one today. Prepare for worse times :/
incredible, it reached a part of him that was incredibly pleasurable and satisfying. He then used his palms on Wangji’s chest to get himself up and down, slow at first, then taking a faster pace.

Lan Zhan’s hands, that were clenching the sheets at first, went to Wei Ying’s hips. Wei Ying nodded.

“You can put them there. Will you help me move better?”

Lan Zhan was looking with such amazement and gratefulness in his eyes; it was hard to keep looking at him. Wangji started to help his movements by moving him up and down with his hands and also rotating his hips. It was heaven. It lasted for what felt like a long time, but it probably wasn’t. They were looking at each other, happy to finally do this the right way. Wei Ying was also sad tough, mourning his first time, that should have been loving and gentle and pleasurable like this. If only Lan Zhan would have been more understanding then as he is now…

They made love another time after that, Wei Ying laying down and Lan Zhan on top of him, being a bit rougher and faster than the first, and he realised he liked it like this too. He liked Lan Zhan manhandling him and biting him all over, being possessive, but kind and considerate if he was in any pain.

Many nights after that were spent making love and being happy. Wei Ying started to feel loved. They also spend time walking around Cloud Recesses or just staying in each other’s company while reading. They played together on their instruments from time to time. It seemed Wei Ying’s life finally was getting better, even if he sometimes got lonely.

One day, he was playing with his bunnies outside, when he thought of bringing Lan Zhan some and see he he’d react. He knew pets were forbidden in the Cloud Recesses, but it was fun to try and rile him up.

He saw from the window Wangji writing in the Library Pavilion, so he climbed the wall to get to him and asked:

“How have you missed me, Lan Zhan? I brought you presents!” and gave him a big smile.

Lan Zhan looked a bit pissed to be stopped from work, but came at the window where Wei Ying has hanging with a hand from. That was the moment he showed him the two rabbits he brought with him.
“Look! It’s really quite weird here! There are no pheasants here, but there are many wild rabbits! They aren’t even scared of people!” He said that and one of the bunnies started to chew on the ends of his forehead ribbon. It was cute.

He put the rabbits in Lan Zhan’s face and said “Fat, aren’t they? Do you want them?”

“…”

“No? Fine, it’ll give them to someone else then!” and mimed he was going to leave, but Wangji stopped him immediately.

“Stop! Who are you going to give them too?” Was Hanguang-jun jealous?

“To someone who can roast them, of course!” he joked.

Then, Wangji lectured him how it was forbidden to kill in the Cloud Recesses and it was a rule, *bla, bla, bla*, he already knew. But then, he accepted the bunnies and put them on the table, where they hopped everywhere, even in the ink and then on Lan Zhan’s papers. His prank was complete. He then said ‘good bye’, kissed Lan Zhan’s lips quickly and left laughing.

But Wei Ying never had much luck in life and nothing he loved ever lasted long.

The very next day, the some disciples from the Wen Sect came to Cloud Recesses and demanded that one head disciple at the least had to go to the Nightless Celestial City to train and learn the rules of the Wens. That kind of demand has never happened before. The Gusu Lan Sect refused.

The Cloud Recesses was burned to ashes. Lan Qiren was injured, many were killed and Lan Xichen had to flee with some ancient books of the Lan Clan, to preserve their wisdom.

Wei Ying and Lan Zhan, who was wounded his leg, were taken to the Nightless City against their will.
The rule of the Wen sect was merciless and unfair.
Together we shall prevail

Chapter Notes

Hope you like it! I like how you’re thinking about what’s to come next in the comments! Some of you are asking good questions and some of you even guessed where this is heading!

They walked all the way to The Nightless Celestial City, Lan Zhan clearly enduring the pain from his leg without saying anything. He acted as if nothing was wrong, but he could see him sometimes limp or a tiny winch showing on his face.

“Lan Zhan, here, lean on me, you shouldn’t put so much pressure on your leg.”

“No need.” Well, I don’t think so.

“You’re my husband, aren’t you? What’s the point of being married if not to lean on each other when we’re in a bad situation?”

“…” Guess that worked, huh?

Lan Zhan finally went to him and put his hand on his shoulder, to get some weight off his right leg. He could see it helped a little, but he really needed some medicine for him.

Once they arrived, they could see that people from all the sects were gathered in the centre, Wen Chao and Wen Zhuliu on the stairs, overlooking all of them.

“Wei Ying!” he heard someone shout. Oh, it was Jiang Cheng! He wanted to run to him, but he still had Lan Zhan using him as a human crutch. Jiang Cheng came to him and gave him a big hug, minding Wanji.

“What happened to you two? We heard Cloud Recesses was destroyed and we didn’t know what had happened to you.”
“They came and burned it down. Teacher Lan was wounded and Lan Xichen is gone. Lan Zhan’s leg is injured too…We barely survived and many people died. Jiang Cheng, are you and everyone in Yunmeng alright?”

“Yes, don’t worry about us. Shijie and father were so worried about you. I’m glad nothing happened to you.”

“Yeah…”

All this time, Lan Wangji just looked at the interaction between the two brothers, without really saying anything.

“Let me introduce you to some of the friends I made. We’ve been here a few days already.”

They all went to the front, where the most important disciples were gathered and they greeted each other – Jin Zixuan was there, Nie Huaisang too. They were all brought here against their will.

Wen Chao was looking down on them, looking disgusted. He clearly was a good for nothing, if not for that Core Melding Hand he had as a guardian dog. He kept blabbing about some Wen rules and teachings Wei Ying couldn’t care less about. They gave them copies of ‘Quintessence of the Wen Sect’ with sayings of their past leaders.

He wasn’t listening to a word he was saying, worried about Lan Zhan and thinking about how they could escape from here.

Every day, they were made to learn the rules and listen to whatever Wen Chao had in mind that day or they went on night hunts. Wei Ying spend his days getting closer to the other disciples, sometimes even making some innocent pranks with Nie Huaisang, to the horror of Jiang Cheng. Lan Zhan just looked worried, but didn’t try to stop his fun. As much as his freedom was taken from him here, he felt a little less lonely than in Cloud Recesses, because he was surrounded by so many people he cared about and had something to do everyday. Even if that meant memorizing things he didn’t care about. The only things he hated was the lack of food, they all had to experience inedia.

Today, they were meant to go to Dusk-Creek Mountain and find some cave. Wei Ying saw some girls talk about perfume sachets that had medicinal plants in them. Thinking to get one for Lan Zhan’s injuries, he went up to them and started to talk to one of them.
“Mianmian, save me one too!” he said jokingly, hearing her name from one of her friends.

She turned to him, frowning “Who are you to call me Mianmian?”

“Your name is Mianmian, no?”

“Don't call me that!” she said angrily. He can hear Lan Zhan looking down from where he left him. He hoped he wouldn’t take it the wrong way! He was just normally flirty, it wasn’t his fault!

“My name is YuaoDao, remember it.” He said laughing at his own joke. It didn't seem she got it. Lan Zhan showed up near them and explained the pun. He didn’t seem happy at all.

“Wei Ying, you’re shameless! You’re a married man! Your husband is right here! Have we taught you nothing about propriety?” Jiang Cheng shouted. He looked extremely angry, but Lan Zhan wasn’t at all. He wondered if he even cared?

In the end, he did get a sachet and they went on to find that cave.

Jiang Cheng did take him aside and told him “Can’t you see what you’re doing? Why are you always like this? Didn’t you see his face?! You can’t act like you aren’t married.”

“I know, Jiang Cheng! I’m sure Lan Zhan knows it’s nothing. Don’t worry so much!”

They found the entrance of the cave and Wen Chao ordered them to go inside. Since their swords were taken away on the first day there arrived here, they had to go down by rope. They went inside the cave, Wen Chao following in the back. He didn’t even tell them what kind of beast they were hunting. They were truly in the dark and in high alert. They found there a big lake. Wen Chao ordered someone to be used as bait and the girl, Mianmian, was chosen. They tried defending her, and Wei Ying saw a moment to get Wen Chao and a sword a jump on a cliff in the middle of the lake, to make everyone to stop. This was his way out. When he was trying to get everyone to listen to his plan, suddenly he felt an earthquake.

“It’s not an earthquake, it's the thing you’re on!” shouted Jiang Cheng. He was right! He had to get down, but lost his grip on Wen Chao as a result.
It was a large... tortoise, with the head of a snake. It wasn’t the average tortoise though. The monster was dangerous and fed on slaughter. They had to fight it, but to no avail. No sword or arrow could hurt it. As they were fighting, he heard Wen Chao say:

“Retreat! Retreat now!”

All the Wens hurried at the exit of the cave and by the time the rest of the disciples of the other sects tried to retreat too, they saw the Wens cut the ropes to get out. They were truly stuck here.

Lan Zhan suddenly went back to the pool.

“Where are you going, Lan Zhan? It’s dangerous!” Wei Ying said.

“The pool. It had leaves inside, but there are no trees here.” He then explained his theory that there had to be an entrance inside the lake. And true enough, there was one. Wei Ying knew what he had to do. He took a torch and went to the beast, trying to get its attention and leave time for the others to leave.

“What are you doing?” Jiang Cheng shouted at him. That seemed like something he did a lot this day.

“What are you doing? Get them out! You know the way!”

He then tried to distract the beast and, of course, Lan Zhan couldn’t listen and stayed with him too. He was relieved when he saw the last person dive in the lake. He hoped all of them will get out safely.

Lan Zhan and Wei Ying fought with the beast for what seemed like hours, always looking after each other. In the end, Wei Ying had to get inside the shell of the tortoise and Lan Zhan had to kill it from the outside. They prevailed together, working like the perfect team. Like the perfect couple.

They were exhausted, but they were alive and they still had each other. That was what mattered. He had to help Lan Zhan sit, his leg was getting even worse. At least he still had the medicine. He put some on and then found some wood to use to keep Wangji’s leg straight, but he didn’t have anything to tie it with.
“Do you have some rope?” Ah, it didn’t matter, he knew what he could use! He took his own forehead ribbon off, but it still didn’t look too secure, so he took Lan Zhan’s too, without asking.

Lan Zhan’s eyes went wide “You…!” but then calmed down. Maybe he should’ve asked first, but he was his husband, so why did it matter? Their intertwined ribbons looked secure enough now, Wei Ying was happy with his work. Lan Zhan was looking a bit pale, even paler than usual. He looked like he was very sick. He knew that he had to help him get the bad blood out, but what could shock Lan Zhan badly enough?

“Lan Zhan?” He looked him dead in the eyes.

“I’m pregnant with Lan Xichen’s child!” Wangji’s reaction was immediate. He started throwing up black blood. Good, it worked.

He patted him on the back.

“There, there. It was a joke! No need to thank me!” Lan Zhan was looking furiously at him, but it didn’t matter. It worked, right?

“Can you not make such a joke again?!” Ah, so he crossed a line.

He told him he had to, but promised not to. Lan Zhan just called him ‘ridiculous’ and they started talking about how they had to hang on for days until someone could finally get to them. The entrance of the cave and the entrance inside the lake were both blocked. They were tired, hungry and cold. They made a fire, but Wei Ying was feeling very faint already.

“Wei Ying…” he heard him say. He felt Lan Zhan kissing his bare forehead and his cheeks. He didn’t know if they were going to make it.

“Lan Zhan, sing me a song?” and he did. It was the same song they sang together on some nights in Gusu. Cloud Recesses was now gone. The people they knew there were dead, wounded, lost… Even if they will somehow escaped this cave and got back, nothing will ever be the same. Wei Ying closed his eyes and thought of those good nights he had in Gusu, together with Lan Zhan…
He woke with a start. The room he woke up in was somewhat familiar.

_Is this Gusu?_ He thought. No, it wasn’t. Cloud Recesses was burned to the grounds. It was his room in Lotus Pier! How did he get here? He couldn’t remember anything. He guessed they were saved and someone brought him here. But where was Lan Zhan then?

He tried getting up, but he heard Jiang Cheng come up to him.

“Are you an idiot? Sit back down! You’re still hurt.”

“Where’s Lan Zhan?” he asked.

“You have it bad if he’s the first thing you ask about. He went to Gusu to find his brother. The Wen dogs transformed what was left of Cloud Recesses in their base. They killed everyone that was still there…” Jiang Cheng looked down with a frown. He was clearly very unhappy and angry about this.

“You let him go there? His leg was injured and we didn’t eat for days! How did I even get here?” he had many questions and he was panicking. What was Wangji thinking when he just left like that?

“I had to run for days without sleep to get to Lotus Pier so fast! You’re welcome, by the way. I couldn’t stop Lan Wangji even if I wanted to. And I didn’t. It’s not my responsibility what he does with his time. You rest now. Here, shijie made some lotus root and pork soup. Eat it while it’s still hot.”

Wei Ying was really worried, but knew he couldn’t do anything if he was so weak. So he ate and slept and tried to regain his strength for a few days. Then, he was ready to leave and find his
husband.

Before leaving, he put on some simple clothes, so he wouldn’t be recognised. He took his forehead ribbon off too, looking fondly at it. He didn’t like it so much when he first put it on, but he now liked it. He liked to see Lan Zhan looking lovingly when he put it on. But, it was too recognisable, so he wrapped it around his wrist, to keep it safe.

He said goodbye to his family and went on his way to Gusu. He hoped to find Lan Zhan safe.

The road was long without his sword. It was still somewhere in the Nightless City. He should return there and get it back and put it through Wen Chao while he was at it. He certainly deserved it.

He was in Caiyi City when he saw Wen guards patrolling everywhere. He should be careful not to get their attention, but he was really hungry and wanted to get some buns and maybe a jar of Emperor’s Smile. He saw some kids begging for food on one street and bought some extra buns to give to them. He suddenly didn’t feel that hungry when he saw the suffering that the Wens brought to this beautiful city. He will take his revenge for this, for all the deaths they brought and the suffering they made. But today wasn’t that day. He had no weapon and no army.

When he went to the kids to give them the hot buns, he suddenly heard hurried steps going his direction and he was some Wen disciples coming his way. He was ready to flee, but heard them turning around. They apparently were interested in catching someone else, huh? Poor fellow. He won’t have an easy time if he was caught.

Happy he fed the children, he went quietly through the forest that led to Cloud Recesses, knowing there was a hidden place at the back of the mountain where he might find some Lan survivors. Hiding in plain sight was the best way to do it.

He had to avoid some Wens on his way, but managed to find it. Now, how will he enter? He saw no entrance. When he came close to the rock of the mountain, he felt something like a spiritual barrier. He put his hand to it, fearing it will retaliate, but his hand just went through it. Without really thinking too much, he just put his whole body through the barrier.

What greeted him were familiar white clothes and tired faces. He found them!

Everyone looked shocked at him.

“Young master Wei?” someone said. Zewu-ju! He was alive!
“Brother-in-law! I’m so glad to see you!” he bowed to him, then to Lan Qiren, who was there too, and to the other elders. Everyone was looking over his shoulder, as if looking for someone. He turned too, to see what happened.

“What are you looking for?”

“Young master Wei, where is Wangji?” Lan Xichen said with a frown.

“What do you mean?” Wei Ying asked.

“He went to Caiyi town not long ago, hearing you were on your way here. Didn’t you meet him on your way?”

“No… I didn’t see him. Maybe we just missed each other?”

…” Everyone knew that couldn’t be the case. What could have happened to him?

They waited for hours for Lan Wangji to return, but he never did. Wei Ying couldn’t stay here anymore, waiting. What if Lan Zhan was in danger?

He snuck into Cloud Recesses. He was the red banners of the Wen Sect everywhere and he felt sick in his gut. He heard two guard taking to each other.

“That Lan master is really something. We beat him so hard everyday, he didn’t give him anything to eat or drink and he’s still not talking. Now that’s an alpha, right?”

“He will crack at some point. Now that Zhuliu took care of him… he wouldn’t be able to keep his composure for long. Or he’ll just die, it makes no difference to master Wen Chao.”

Wen Zhuliu? The Core Melding Hand? He hoped it didn’t mean what he thought it did! He had to get to Lan Zhan fast, but he couldn’t just get in the dungeon like this. He needed a plan. He saw a Wen that looked of importance from the clothes he wore and snatched him and covered his mouth so he wouldn’t scream. He could use him to bargain, or at least try. He had to do something.
“If you scream, I will kill you.” He said and took his hand off after the boy nodded.

“It's me, master Wei! It’s Wen Ning!” he whispered. Wei Ying couldn’t remember anyone with that name.

“I don’t know any Wen criminals!”

“But you do! You helped me practice my arrow skills when you were in the Nightless City. You always nodded at me when we met. You were the only one that was nice to me…” he said with a sad face.

“Oh, I remember now. Wen Ning, you said? Could you help me with something?” it could be a long shot, but maybe this Wen Ning could be useful. He nodded with enthusiasm. “Can you help me get Lan Zhan out of prison?”

“I can do that! And my sister, she’s a physician, she could help him get better.” That sounded like a plan.

Wen Ning left soon after and left him alone again. He couldn’t trust him and Wei Ying feared an army of Wens will come and kill him, but he had no other plan. He waited for hours, until he saw Wen Ning and a girl dressed in Wen red carrying an unconscious Lan Zhan! He couldn’t believe his eyes!

He immediately went to help and asked “Lan Zhan?”, but he didn’t move. Was he…?

“He’s just unconscious, don’t worry. He has some broken ribs.” She said.

“Thank you. I’ll take him now. You can leave, I don’t want you to be in danger anymore.”

“Well go with you, master Wei!” Wen Ning said. “We want to help.”

Wei Ying nodded, he didn’t know what else to do. It could be a trap, but Wei Ying always was too
trusting. He showed them the way to the back of the mountain. He entered with Lan Zhan first. Everyone looked so relieved to see them.

“Why are there two Wens outside, Wei Wuxian?” Lan Qiren asked looking furious.

“They helped me get Lan Zhan. They’re good people. Can we let them in?”

After that, a verbal fight started. He never saw Lans so angry at each other, or saw them shout. He guessed limit situations like this made them loose control.

“Let them in.” Lan Xichen said, loudly, but calmly. He was the Master of Cloud Recesses, after all, and his word was final.

The next days were tense. They had little food and people were wary of Wen Ning and Wen Qing, but they were so of Wei Ying himself too. They didn’t trust them. Lan Zhan was recuperating, but they found his golden core was indeed gone. Lan Xichen took it the hardest, knowing his little brother will never be the same without cultivation. He dedicated so much time and work to his cultivation, that he didn’t know if he could move on. He was worried for the moment Wangji will find out.

When Lan Zhan finally woke up, he looked drained. But when he was Wei Ying, his eyes went soft and he said:

“I’m glad you’re unhurt.” What did Lan Zhan mean?

When Wangji found his core was gone, he didn’t even blink. He looked like he wasn’t mad at all, like it was something as simple as losing a piece of clothing. He didn’t say anything, but Wei Ying knew Lan Zhan better and could see the sadness sometimes. He knew Wangji couldn’t live like this happily.

One day, he took Wen Qing aside, who he found was a very talented doctor, and asked her if there was any way to grow a core back. She said there wasn’t such a thing.

“But… there is something…” she started saying, but stopped herself.

“What? Tell me, please!” he begged.
“You could transfer the core from one person to the other. It's never been done successfully until now.” She said.

“…” Wei Ying knew what that meant. But in this world, Wei Ying knew Lan Zhan was the most important to him. He couldn't let him live a half life, with no purpose. He made his resolve. Lan Zhan could never accept such a thing for him, so he'll never tell him. He’ll make everyone else never tell him, so he’ll take the secret to the grave.

“I want to do it. Can you do it in a few days? I need to talk to Zewu-ju.” Wen Qing didn’t look happy about his decision, but didn’t try to dissuade him. He already made his mind. He told Lan Xichen next, who hated the idea.

“He wouldn’t want you to do it. He’d hate himself for the rest of his life if he knew.”

“So don’t tell him! This is what I decided. I’m going to do it anyway. There is no need for an omega like me to do cultivation, but Lan Zhan truly needs it.”

Lan Xichen gave up, in the end, but always looked at him sadly, even if he probably was happy his brother will be well.

The thing Wei Ying hated the most was lying to Lan Zhan. He had to tell him they found an ancient way to revive his core and that Wen Qing will do the operation. Lan Wangji looked helpful and Wei Ying has happy to be there with him.

On the day of the operation, Wei Ying was the one to feed Lan Zhan a potion that will make him sleep and then saw Wen Qing put in the needles to put in down to sleep deeply. He nodded at her and Wei Ying drank the same potion and laid next to his husband. He felt his eyes drop and a tear fall down and then there was only darkness.
The Wen problem

Chapter Notes

I don't think we're far from the end. I write a chapter a day and I only have a vague plan of where this is going. What would you like to see included before I end the story? :)

The pain of getting his golden core removed was something he had never felt before. He tried to be strong for the sake of Lan Xichen, who was there with them, because he didn’t want him to get Wen Qing to stop for his sake. He had to be awake for this procedure to be successful, and the medicine to numb some of the pain out was superficial. The pain was so intense he almost fainted a few times. It was a never-ending agony, but he somehow managed to go through it. At the end of the second day, Wen Qing told them it was done. Wei Ying felt an emptiness inside him, like he was missing a vital part of his being. Maybe he was. But he wasn’t going to regret it.

As he was recuperating and waiting for Lan Zhan to wake up, they heard loud voices from outside.

“Wei Wuxian! We know you’re there! If you don’t come out, we’ll burn the whole mountain!” It was Wen Chao.

He looked tiredly to Lan Xichen, seeking for an answer.

“If you come out now, we’ll spare the rest of them. I promise!” the Wen said laughing.

He couldn’t trust Wen Chao, but it was the least he could do. The Lans were his family and he could do anything for his family. He tried getting up, but almost fell. It was good Lan Xichen was there to catch him.

“Young Master Wei, you can’t go. He’s trying to rile us up.”

“Brother-in-law, this is our only choice. My life is not worth the lives of everyone here.” He said sadly. It was the last thing he’ll do for them. He hoped Lan Zhan will learn to forgive him one day for this. He could hear Wen Chao continue to shout outside, counting the seconds he had to come out.
He turned to Lan Zhan, who was still unconscious, and whispered to him:

“I want you to know I like you, Lan Zhan. I love you, I care for you.” And gave him the softest kiss on his lips.

He turned and looked at everyone there.

“Thank you, for everything.” And went outside the cave.

“Wei Wuxian!” he heard Lan Xichen scream after him, but he didn’t turn around.

If he did, he could see Lan Zhan, still asleep, but with tears on his cheeks, as if he knew what was about to come. Even if he was willing to sacrifice for them, he didn’t even get a pat on the back as a thank you. He knew then how dispensable he was… but didn’t have the heart to blame them. He didn’t want to die either…

As soon as he was outside, Wen Chao ordered his guards to beat him. He tried to be as quiet as possible. He wasn’t going to show him any weakness. We was beat so heavily, he gave up, thinking there was no point to resist anymore. This was the end, he told himself.

He was then taken by two of them on sword and they left the mountain. He was grateful that Wen Chao kept his promise not to burn what was left of the Lans, at least. They flew for a long time, Wei Ying trying his hardest to remain awake.

“Do you know what the Burian Mounds in Yiling are, Wei Wuxian?” Wen Chao asked him. Wei Ying heard of them, but wasn’t sure from where.

“This place is so full of resentful energy, all the cultivators who came here to release it, never came back. Your soul and body will shatter to pieces, never to return.” He said with a satisfied smile.

Wei Ying looked defiantly at him. “I will come back and haunt you.”

Wen Chao looked worried for a second, but made a sign to release him. Wei Ying felt himself fall and fall. He had no sword and no way to stop his fall. From this height, he had no chance. As he fell, he remembered all the peaceful nights with Lan Zhan in Gusu, all the fun days with Jiang Cheng, all the good food his shijie made for him… all the love his parents and Uncle Jiang gave him. He felt he had a good life, even if a short one. He was grateful for it.
As he was ready to hit the ground, he felt a black shadow, a demonic spirit that carried the screams of the unjustly murdered, surrounding him. He tried to fight it, but it covered his body and heart like a demonic hand. It filled every part of his being. He welcomed it, if it meant it will be his salvation. He spent many days and weeks in darkness, surrounded by screams and coldness, trying to absorb the demonic magic inside him. All he was thinking about was revenge. Death of the Wens who hurt him.

*Make them all pay.*

He finally rose, full of resolve. He didn’t know how much time he spent there. He climbed from the Burial Mounds and went on the long way to all the cities who were overtaken by the Wens and killed everyone who ever hurt someone, in all kind of different, painful ways. He went to Yunmeng, that fell while he was away, and he cleansed it from Wens. He left only the innocent Wens alive. He stopped himself when he saw the dead bodies of Uncle Jiang and Lady Yu. He was too late for them. They showed him kindness and he couldn’t save them…

He travelled to Gusu, with the resolve to kill them all. If something happened to Lan Zhan while he was away…

As soon as he saw the stairs that went to Cloud Recesses, he could hear fighting. He saw there people from all sects fighting the remaining Wens.

Someone started his fight early. He put his dizi at his lips and started playing. The corpses rose like puppets on strings and started dancing his deadly dance. The Wens stood no chance. Everyone else started screaming, not understanding what was happening. He barely got to do anything, then he heard someone coming to him. When he opened his eyes, he saw him…

“Wei Ying…” Lan Zhan looked terrible. He’s never seen him so unkempt and so tired looking. He looked like he aged years in the time they’ve been apart. He came closer to Wei Ying and put his arms around him, tightly.

Wei Ying didn’t know what to do with that. He was sure showing affection in public was forbidden. What happened to Lan Zhan? He didn’t know where to put his arms, so he let them float awkwardly at his sides. He felt Wangji crushing him even tighter, then he put him at arms length and looked at him, without blinking:

“Where have you been? I couldn’t find you.” he whispered.
“Haha, you know me, Lan Zhan. I got lost.” He joked. Lan Zhan didn’t look amused at all.

He didn’t realise how much he missed Wangji. He was glad he was alright. He wondered if his core worked well.

Lan Zhan suddenly put his hand on Wei Ying’s chest, hitting him hard, until he fell.

“What was that for?!” he asked.

“Your golden core. Why did you do it?” he’s never seen Lan Zhan so angry. He was almost shouting. *How did he find out? Did his brother tell him?*

“What are talking about?”

“I know what you did. You think I wouldn’t?”

They didn’t have time to talk anymore. They had a fight to finish. After they retook Cloud Recesses, they all went to the Nightless Celestial City, where they were to take the last Wen bastion.

The fight was long and bloody. The remaining Wens didn’t go without trying. But in the end, the united clans were stronger.

“We should imprison them all” Nie Mingjue said.

“No! They didn’t do anything wrong!” Wei Wuxian argued. “Why should they pay for something they didn’t do?” What fault could they find in Wen Ning or Wen Qing, or Granny Wen? Or all the Wen children? Didn’t they deserve mercy?

“Why are you arguing for them? They’re just Wen dogs!” Jiang Cheng said. Almost everyone nodded.

The problem of the remaining Wens was a tense one for the leaders of the Clans. What were they to do with them? No one wanted them and the only solution was their imprisonment. But Wei Ying couldn’t stand for it. Almost all of them were children, old and crippled people. They couldn’t fight against anyone and they couldn’t survive imprisonment…Wei Ying had to do something. He was
thinking of going to them and taking them to Yiling. He’ll have to do something about the
resentment in the land, but he’ll think of something when they arrived there. He always wanted an
easy, simple life, and he could give that to the Wens there.

“I’ll take them, then. I’ll take them where they won’t be a problem for anyone.” He said.

“Young Master Wei, they’re not your problem. You’re part of the Lan Clan now, you can’t just go
and do whatever you want.” Lan Xichen said, angrily. “You have responsibilities.” What he was
saying was that he had to be a good husband to Lan Wangji and make as many babies for the Lan
sect as his body was able. He wasn’t going to listen to them anymore.

“No.” he told him. “I’m going to take them and you can’t stop me.”

“We can take them to Gusu.” Someone said.

“Wangji…” Xichen said. “That’s up to the elders, we can’t take a decision like this by ourselves.”

“Then I’m going with Wei Ying.” Wei Ying was surprised Lan Zhan was willing to go against his
family and clan like this. The two brothers argued until, in the end, Lan Xichen sighed and gave in.

“The Lan Clan will be responsible for the remaining Wen survivors. I promise we’ll do our best.”

Wei Ying wasn’t keen to return to the 3000 rules of Cloud Recesses, but knew this was the best
option they had. He’ll have to give up his freedom for the well being of these people who lost
everything. This was another sacrifice Wei Ying was willing to make.
They left the next day, at a very slow pace. It was hard to travel with so many children and injured people. Wei Ying was right next to Lan Zhan. They didn’t talk at all. Wei Ying was surprised he wasn’t sought out the night before by him. He knew Lan Zhan’s body, but he didn’t know his heart. He didn’t know if he’ll put everything behind and continue as if nothing ever happened, or they will at least talk it out. But all the way, Lan Zhan wasn’t even looking at him. Wei Ying wanted to say a joke to loosen up the atmosphere, but didn’t have the energy for it.

He just fought and fought and had nothing more to give.

In Gusu, he helped everyone find a place to sleep and something to eat. The Wens got distributed to different parts of Cloud Recesses. Wei Ying felt his mission was finally over and he could breathe. But it wasn’t over, because he got summoned in the Pavilion.

He found Lan Qiren, Lan Xichen, Lan Wangji and the Elders all waiting for them. So he was going to get judged, huh?

“Wei Wuxian, take a seat.” Lan Qiren said and showed him to the empty seat left. He wondered if he got to say something himself or he was going to have to just listen and obey.

“Young Master Wei, we are grateful for what you did in the campaign against the Wens. For that, we commend you. But using demonic cultivation…” Lan Xichen started, but didn’t continue, he just looked at his uncle.

“We don’t tolerate the use of demonic cultivation. We know that you only had this option left. But, it has to stop. You’re forbidden to ever use it. You are forbidden to talk about it. You are also forbidden to go on night hunts for the time being.” Teacher Lan continued. No one was saying anything now.

Wei Ying clenched his hands in his robe, angry. He looked at Lan Zhan, who was quiet and looked at anything but Wei Ying. So he wasn’t going to help him in any way. He wasn’t going to cross over his uncle for his own husband.
“I understand.” He said, even if he really didn’t. What was he to do now? It really sunk in. He was nothing now. All the training, all the work… he was now a low born, an omega who was expected to just exist.

They all nodded, impressed it went this easy. He knew he had no way of pressing them for a different opinion, so he didn’t. He’ll make do with what he had, as he always did. He left, Lan Zhan following him outside.

“Wei Ying, come to the jingshi with me.”

“Nuh-huh, what’s the secret word?”

“Wei Ying, please” That’s what he wanted! Was it hard for people to show him politeness?

“That’s the word! I’m coming, I’m coming.”

Inside the jingshi, there was a stifling heat and a heavy smell of incense. He went straight for the bed and threw himself there, not minding he was ruining the perfectly arranged blanket and pillows.

“Aren’t you going to say anything?” Wei Ying asked.

“Why did you give me your core?” Lan Zhan said.

“Because I can live without mine, but you can’t.” No one in Gusu could keep a secret, it seemed.

“I could. I knew when I got caught by the Wen guards in Caiyi that I will have to leave without a golden core if even made it out alive. I sacrificed it to keep you safe, and instead, you decided to do this.”

“What do you mean, what happened that day in Caiyi?” Was Lan Zhan the reason those Wen guards didn’t come his way and went for someone else?

“I saw you in Caiyi, but so did some Wen disciples. The only way to distract them was to get them far from you by revealing my identity to them.”

Wei Ying hadn’t known this. Was Lan Zhan willing to sacrifice himself for his sake like this? When did he start to care?

“Wei Ying, I want you to be happy. Tell me what to do…” Lan Zhan looked at him as if he were
begging with his eyes. He really did care.

“I… I don’t like it here.” He started saying. Then, the words couldn’t stop. He went to Lan Zhan, put his head on his shoulder and told him everything – how hard it was for him to obey so many rules, how he spent his time in the Burial Mounds, how scared he was of his own newfound power sometimes. How he wanted a family with Lan Zhan, how he dreamed of a little family that travelled all over the word on a donkey and owned a small, simple home. How he wanted to hunt peasants and have spicy food everyday… he told Lan Zhan all he was and all he dreamed to have and be. He was listened to the end, without any prejudice or scorn. Even if nothing he wanted came true, he was happy he at least got to say them. To make them somehow real.

They decided Wei Ying had to come every night in the jingshi and Lan Zhan will play him ‘Rest’ to calm down some of the resentful energy he absorbed. He did it every night, without ever missing one. They used this time to talk and just spend time together. They started slowly to make love again, too. His life started resembling some kind of normality.

His days were spent helping the Wens fit in. Some of them received domestic responsibilities, such as cleaning and cooking. None of them were given activities that had to do with cultivation, but he heard Lan Xichen talk with his uncle that they will allow the children to join classes with the Lan disciples when they were old enough, and, if deserving, they will be adopted into the Lan clan.

Speaking of children… Wei Ying had a soft spot for one of the children. He was called A-Yuan and was the cutest thing Wei Ying has ever seen. He followed him everywhere, like a duckling, calling him “Xian-Gege, Xian-Gege”. He liked playing with him, showing him the bunnies and giving him hugs.

One day, he was in his room with A-Yuan, trying to teach him how to use a spoon properly, while teaching him how good spicy food was. Lan Zhan decided to eat with them, for once. A-Yuan was making a mess, Wei Ying had to clean his face every few seconds. The rice was everywhere – on the table, on A-Yuan’s clothes, in his hair, on the floor… it will be tough to clean it all, but A-Yuan was so cute it didn’t matter.

“A-Yuan, look, do it like this.” And tried to show him how to position his fingers on the spoon shaft. He couldn’t do it, his fingers were too small for his spoon.

Lan Zhan suddenly picked A-Yuan up and put him in his lap. He put his hand on A-Yuan’s and helped him eat, until there was no congee left. He even blew on the congee so A-Yuan didn’t burn his tongue! He didn’t know Lan Zhan could play nice like this!

“Say thank you to Gege, A-Yuan.” He said fondly.

“Thank you, Gege!” A-Yuan said with his mouth full.

“Talking is forbidden while eating.” Of course Lan Zhan could say that!
They decided to go in Caiyi Town to buy some clothes for A-Yuan, and some supplies for Wen Qing. She was already very respected in the Lan Sect for her medical knowledge. Even old man Lan liked her.

Wei Ying picked A-Yuan up and put him on his hip and they went on foot to town. There, A-Yuan was pointing his fingers to all the shiny and colourful things he saw on the stands. Of course, Lan Zhan didn’t stop himself at all and bought everything A-Yuan wanted even if Wei Ying told him he spoiled the child too much. They arrived at the fabric store, where they looked at materials. He was looking at a reasonably priced fabric, when Lan Zhan took his hand and showed him to the silk section.

“We can’t buy him silk, Lan Zhan. He’s a child, we’ll ruin his clothes in no time.”
“We’ll buy him many robes, then.”

“Lan Zhan, no! It’s too expensive!”

“I’ll pay. You choose.” Wei Ying gave up. If Lan Zhan wanted to buy something expensive, it was his money and could do as he pleased. He chose the cutest material he found, with an animal pattern. It had small bunnies and butterflies on it. It was a bit girly maybe, but it suited A-Yuan just fine.

They bought everything they needed from the store and then the pharmacy and went home. They stopped to buy some Emperor’s Smile too, that Wei Ying hid well from Lan Qiren’s eyes.

Wei Ying wasn’t feeling too well. He felt a bit hot all day, but didn’t say anything, afraid Lan Zhan will nag him. He left A-Yuan with Wen Ning and gave him the supplies and retired early. He tried to go to sleep, but couldn't. He felt too hot, too uncomfortable, as if his skin was on fire.

Wait… has he in heat?
“You’re already in full blown heat. How could you not notice this sooner? Do you know nothing about your body?” Wen Qing nagged at him. He was already miserable; he didn’t deserve to be scolded like this.

“I didn’t know. The last time I had a heat I was 14, since then I took suppressants. They took my medicine once I married, so I didn’t know when it was coming back.” Wei Ying said.

Wen Qing sighted at him. “You need plenty of water and try to eat now, while you still can. It looks like it will be a rough one, they always are after surpressing them for so long. This is why I advocate for getting off them gradually, so omegas wouldn’t have to suffer like this. You already have too much on your plate…” Wen Qing left after that, gave him with some medicine for the pain and even put a dose of contraceptives, in case he wanted them. The Lans forbade the use of contraceptives for omegas who hadn’t had at least 2 children, but Wen Qing didn’t care so much for their patriarchal rules.

Wei Ying wasn’t going to take the contraceptives. There was no point in prolonging anything. He did need to give the Lans an heir, like he promised.

Lan Zhan came late in the night. Wei Ying was ready for him. He tried masturbating, but it didn’t feel fulfilling at all. His whole body was hot, ready for an alpha. His bond bite was throbbing, he needed release right now.

Typically, heats ended either when the seed took root, or after days of trying. Some suffered for up to a week, with few moments of clarity.

Wei Ying had no clothes on, but Lan Zhan was fully clothed. Wei Ying saw him approaching the bed, so he automatically opened his legs, showing him his lewd side:
“Come here.” Wei Ying said, opening his arms too, to get Lan Zhan to hurry up. Wangji got undressed quickly, throwing his clothes unneatly on the floor.

Lan Zhan started to prepare him, but he didn’t need it. He pushed his hand away, telling him he didn’t need it. He’s been ready for hours.

“I was lonely without you, Lan Zhan” he said and bit him on his ear, as punishment. Lan Zhan’s ears were so red, they looked cute.

The first round was rough and quick. Wei Ying didn’t need much to get his first orgasm. As soon as Lan Zhan touched his member, he knew he’ll finish in a second. He came so many times, he lost count at some point. Lan Zhan just kept ponding him all night and all morning, without taking almost no breaks in between. He seemed possessed. Wei Ying lost consciousness at some point. He remembered only Lan Zhan on top and inside him and the sweat coming off from him.

He expected his heat to last for days, but it was gone in less than a day. He couldn’t say it was enjoyable or not, because it was exhausting, but had many peaks as well. He’s never seen Lan Zhan so demanding and giving. He put Wei Ying in so many different positions and gave him so many lovebites, it was crazy.

As soon as they, finished, they cuddled. They both knew what it meant if the heat was over so soon. It dawned at them the meaning of it. Obviously, they had to wait a few weeks to check and be sure the embryo will be fine, especially since Wei Ying’s body has been through a lot after falling in the Burial Mounds, but alas, they could hope for a little one soon.

While Wei Ying was happy, he feared it meant the end of whatever freedom he still had left.

“Wei Ying.” Lan Zhan said. “Whatever happens, I’ll stay with you.” Wei Ying hoped that was the case, because it hasn’t really been like that. He would do with some support from his husband.

The next days were awkward. Everyone was waiting for a conclusive result if he was pregnant or not. After 7 days, Wen Qing made her examination and told everyone that, indeed, the seed took root. Wei Ying did it.

They celebrated in Gusu Lan fashion, with bland food and medicinal tea. After they left, Wei Ying went with Lan Zhan to meet with the Wens. There, he was surprised to find a party for him!

It was way livelier than the one they came from. They sang and told funny stories and they even
gave him flavourful food. Wei Ying didn’t know where they found condiments, but he suspected Lan Zhan may have had something to do with it.

Little A-Yuan danced when he sung a song on his dizi, dancing in circles around the feet of the adults and falling down so many times, but immediately rising up and clapping from happiness.

“Wei Wuxian.” Old granny Wen said. “Here, for you.” And showed him a tiny baby robe, with a red pattern. It was clearly hand sown, and he loved it. He told her that, but his voice gave and tears started coming from his eyes. He was grateful for the love these people showed him.

They left when they got too tired. Lan Zhan still kept a 5 to 9 program and tried to reinforce it on Wei Ying too, but with mixed success rates. In bed, they talked a bit about what they hoped for the future of their child.

“I just hope they’ll be happy.” He told Lan Zhan. That’s what mattered the most to him.

“I’ll make sure of it.” He responded.

Wei Ying didn’t know how that will come to be in the dreary society of the Lan Clan, but Wei Ying will try his best. At least he had his husband with him to show him how.

“Were you happy as a child here?” he asked.

“I was the happiest when I could visit mother.” Lan Zhan said.

Wei Ying was really curious about something, but didn’t know if it was insensitive to ask, but did it anyway “Do you miss her?”

“More now than ever. I don’t know how a father is supposed to be like. It was like I never had one.”

“You’ll be a good father, I can tell.” He told him and smiled.

Lan Zhan went and played him ‘Rest’ while Wei Ying tried to meditate. The night ended in silence after that.

Chapter End Notes

I wrote a very short one-shot, you should check it out! :)
Wedding

Chapter Notes

Sorry I haven't written anything in a few days. I don't really know where the story is headed exactly and I kept not wanting to write. I hope you enjoy the chapter!

Weeks went by fast. With time, nothing seemed to change. He ate breakfast by himself in his room, since he never woke up early enough to eat with everyone else. He spent his day either annoying Lan Zhan, helping the Wens, playing with A-Yuan or hunting outside of Cloud Recesses.

One day, an invitation came. It wasn’t unexpected in any way, but Wei Ying made a grimace when he saw it. The date for his shijie’s wedding was coming upon them soon. Wei Ying wasn’t thrilled to have that peacock as a brother-in-law. He still believed his sister deserved better.

They were going to use that occasion to tell everyone about the baby as well, since the most critical time of the pregnancy will be over.

He got used to this kind of life now.

The day of shijie’s wedding arrived very fast, when life was so repetitive. Don’t get him wrong, he was left in peace and him and Lan Zhan finally understood each other and had some kind of routine that worked for both of them. He couldn’t say he was having a bad time – just not the best he could have. Wei Ying never considered himself an optimist, but, for some reason, he sometimes dreamed of his ideal life. He woke up so melancholic after them. He hoped to talk about them with his sister, she knew more about dreams and family life and such than he ever will.

The wedding preparations of the Jin sect were so grand Wei Ying was intimidated. They arrived with a day to spare in Carp Tower. Everything was decorated. Wei Ying even saw rocks with decorations on them. They sure didn’t spare any money for the wedding. His sister did deserve a beautiful wedding. Everyone who saw them stopped and looked. They walked in formation, very neatly. The Lans all had expressionless faces, but Wei Ying smiled at people and waved when he saw them looking at him. They were probably a thing to behold, all in pure white and in a perfect line among all the colourful decorations.

They were put into some grand rooms, that smelled freshly cleaned. Wei Ying did appreciate the care the Jins took to look impressive. He expected the food will be delicious too. They had some time to relax a bit and then went to eat. Lan Zhan took care he had enough rest and food on his plate. He did
see his sister in the centre table, together with her fiancé and his family and then on the other side, the Jiang Cheng. He waved at Jiang Cheng, who rolled his eyes and waved a little too. He couldn’t wait to talk to them when they finished.

The dinner was a boring affair, full of speeches and traditions from both sects. The Jins took an eternity and a half for each speech. Wei Ying wasn’t impressed. He almost missed the sombre affair of a Lan wedding. At least it was simple, short and straightforward. If this was the day before the wedding, he didn’t want to know what awaited for tomorrow.

When it was over, he saw Jiang Cheng waving him over, so he told Lan Zhan he’ll come to their room later.

“I’m going to talk to shijie and Jiang Cheng. Don’t wait for me if you’re tired.” He said.

“I’ll wait.” Then Lan Zhan left, looking like he’d rather stay.

Wei Ying had to take a deep breath before he went to his siblings. He wanted to show them the best part of himself. He didn’t think it was lying if he hid some things, because he didn’t want them to worry about him. It was his fault he couldn’t be satisfied with the simple and regimented life he had. He should be grateful he had a loving husband and he ate well. Many omegas couldn't say the same.

“Shijie!” he said and hugged her tight. “I missed you! You look so beautiful!” then kissed her cheek.

She blushed and told him “A-Xian, behave! I missed you too. You’re the beautiful one, look at you, you’re glowing! I think white suits you.”

“Ah, about that…” he started. “Jiang Cheng, how are you? If you frown like that you’ll get wrinkles soon and no one will marry you! Ahahaha!” he said and ran Jiang Cheng ran after him, trying to catch him.

They were all at the table, having tea or alcohol. Shijie started pouring him a glass of wine, but he quickly said:

“Oh, no alcohol for me, just some tea, please!” and made a mocking sad face.

They looked at him. He guessed that was a hint enough.
“I wanted to tell you privately before we announced it publicly. I’m three months pregnant.” He told them with a small, proud smile.

“A-Xian, that’s great! Congratulations!” his sister said and embraced him.

Jiang Cheng looked like he had tears in his eyes, but Wei Ying could just have seen things. He got a hug from him too, and grumbled a ‘congratulations’ in his shoulder.

They celebrated in their small family. They asked him why Lan Zhan wasn’t there with them, and he explained he wanted it to be a moment in their family and his husband understood.

They soon got tired and his sister had to wake up early to prepare for her wedding. When he left, A-Ling took him aside, with a blush on her cheeks.

“A-Xian, I wanted to ask… what is the wedding night like?”

Wei Ying didn’t know what to tell her. He didn’t want to scare her, but he could still vividly remember his traumatising wedding night and didn’t wish to tell her anything about it. He could just hope Jin Zixuan was a gentler and more understanding man.

“Shijie… it’s probably not going to be perfect, but take your time and communicate with your husband and all will be well.” He told her with a smile, fake smile.

She could probably tell it wasn’t a subject he wanted to talk about. She didn’t insist anymore. It was normal she was curious, and he wished he could tell her a beautiful, romantic story, about a fun and candle lit night, but he had none of that, and he couldn’t lie about everything.

They said their goodbyes and he went in his room. Lan Zhan was meditating on the bed, still as a statue. His hair was loose and shiny.

“How! I’m back!” he said, and then threw himself on the bed. It was really soft, nothing like the hard beds in Cloud Recesses. “I told my parents and sister and Jiang Cheng. They were happy for us.” He continued.
“Hm.” Was the only response he got. They then went to bed, without doing anything else. He got a good night kiss though. Lan Zhan was very sweet sometimes.

The wedding was as long and tedious as he feared. His shijie looked amazing in her wedding dress and her hair was braided in an intricate style, that suited her very well. He had to say even the peacock looked handsome in his groom garb. The parents looked proud and content with the decision they made.

But, his eyes did go from time to time to his own husband, who looked the most beautiful of all of them. It didn’t matter that Lan Zhan wore simple, white clothes, his looks compensated for the simplicity. He could wear a sack and he’d still look pretty.

The biggest disappointment for Wei Ying was the food. He hoped for some local delicacies. While there where some, the food they got was obviously changed to suit the taste of the Lan Sect. His dream of eating some flavoursome food was dead.

At the very least, the dances and music was something to behold of. He’d never seen so many talented troops dancing and acting and singing. He was impressed. It was a wedding deserving of his beloved sister.

The festivities lasted long into the night. Shijie looked happy the whole time and even the peacock smiled a little. He hoped the best for them.

The time for the new bride and groom to go to the bedchamber approached and Wei Ying started to feel a little unwell. He was sweating a little and Lan Zhan kept giving him looks and asking if he was alright. He kept telling him he was fine, but knew he dreaded the moment his sister will leave. Will she be ok? Will he treat her gently and patiently or will she suffer like he did?

He felt a hand on his. He looked up and saw Lan Zhan looking at him.

“She’s going to be fine. I can tell the young master Jin is a good man and loves her already. They won’t have to go through what he did...” and then Lan Zhan squeezed his hand tighter. He gave him a little smile and nodded. He’s like to believe that.
He saw Lan Xichen get up and starting to speak:

“Thank you, Master Jin, for inviting us to your son’s wedding. We wish the couple a happy marriage and many children. I’d like to announce we have some happy news as well. My brother, Lan Wangji and his spouse, young master Wei Ying, are expecting their first child in half a year.”

Everyone started applauding and looking at them. Lan Zhan made him stand up and bow a little to the people and then many of them came to congratulate them in person. He didn’t know most of these people, but his memory has always been bad.

It took a long time to thank all the well wishers. After they dwindled, he saw the new couple raising as well and congratulating them. They then went to the bedchamber, to the applause and whistles of the others. He tried giving his sister a ‘it’s going to be alright’ look, but he didn’t know if he looked the part.

Alas, they went and he didn’t know if his sister will ever tell him what happened. It’s not like he ever told anyone either. Some things had to remain private.

It was an exhausting day and Wei Ying was glad it was over. They soon retired as well, with all the other Lans. People from the other sects were already drunk and having fun and the Lan Clan didn’t want to participate in something so… crass like having fun.

He went to sleep holding Lan Zhan’s hand, with his head on his shoulder.
A birth

Months passed one after the other. With them, Wei Ying’s pregnancy advanced. He heard it was going to the most beautiful time in his life, even if he’s going to be uncomfortable and have many cravings. But Wei Ying didn’t feel like it was that bad, besides having to pee very often; he didn’t have any cravings. He wished he could have some spicy food or meat, but they didn’t let him have any, because it was bad for the baby, they told him. So he resigned himself that his meals will never be to his tastes.

The worst times where when Lan Zhan had to go night hunting. Because he was already in his last stages of pregnancy, his husband never left for too long, fearing he’ll miss the birth, but it was hard to see him go even for a few hours. And truth be told, Wei Ying was jealous he couldn’t go with them. He’ll never be able to go ever again, even after giving birth.

The thing he found the hardest were the stares he got. The Lans couldn’t gossip, but they sure liked to look. He didn’t truly understand if the looks he got were something good or bad. Were they happy their second master was having an heir or were they unhappy he was the mother? What did these people think? He didn’t care that much, but he didn’t like knowing his son or daughter will have to deal with the judgement. The people of Gusu Lan could never be unkind or unfair, because that was against the rules, but they didn’t have to be nice either. Indifference was sometimes harder to deal with than hatred.

He was ready to give birth. He didn’t see the beauty of being pregnant. His sister announced not long after her wedding that she was pregnant. He didn't know if she was lucky or unlucky. She seemed happy in her letter. She hoped for a little boy. Wei Ying didn’t have any preference, but could see how Lan Zhan looked longingly at A-Yuan, so maybe he was partial to a boy as well.

Speaking of A-Yuan, he was growing so fast. The last months he ate well and started training in the Gusu Lan way, learning to read, write and memorizing the rules. He seemed fascinated by the romantic legends of the Clan and Wei Ying liked listening to Lan Zhan when he told them. He usually put A-Yuan on his lap and the child listen carefully and quietly. It was cute and he could see Lan Zhan do the same with the child they will have.

By the last weeks of his pregnancy, he was over it. It was very hard to walk at a speedy pace, like
he used to do. At last, he was walking at a snail pace like everyone here. He could feel in the last
days that the baby was going to come soon. Everyone was waiting for it to happen. He didn’t usually
see any women from the Clan, but since he’d fallen pregnant, he felt he spent most of his time with
the Lan midwives. Wen Qing was there for him too, of course. Everyone was anxious for the baby to
come.

The most anxious of them all was, surprisingly, Lan Zhan. Some time ago, Lan Zhan kept coming in
late and breaking curfew, which was very weird. He kept asking what was happening, fearing he
was in some kind of trouble and not telling Wei Ying anything.

One night, he was dying to know, so he followed Lan Zhan at the outskirts of Cloud Recesses, in a
small house. He found him inside, working on something, so he tried to sneak on him:

“Ya, Lan Zhan, what are you doing here by your lonesome?” he asked.

Lan Zhan didn’t even flinch. He guessed he wasn’t as silent as he used to be, since he was 20
kilograms fatter. No surprise there. Lan Zhan just raised his eyebrow.

“Wei Ying, you should be sleeping.”

“I can’t sleep without my husband there; the bed is too cold!” he said jokingly.

He looked at what Lan Zhan was doing. Was that a crib?

“What are you doing?”

“A rocking crib and a rocking chair. It was a surprise.” He looked a bit disappointed he didn’t get to
give the gifts when they were done. Lan Zhan looked expectantly at him.

“They look beautiful.” That was an understatement. Both of them had intricate details, and they
looked made by some kind of master carpenter. They where pure white and had light blue details,
that looked like clouds and bunnies. He probably spent hours carving them. Wei Ying never thought
he was an emotional person, but, for some reason, he felt his breath stop and his heart beating fast
and then tears started falling from his eyes. He never felt so much love. He didn’t know if he ever felt
such intense feelings. It was so intense he didn’t know what to do. He put his hand on his mouth and
started crying quietly.
Lan Zhan came near him and slowly wiped his tears and then gave him a hug. It was a little funny, because his belly was so big the hug was a little awkward. He started laughing, because he didn’t like how the atmosphere was so serious.

They hugged for a little bit, then Lan Zhan moved to the crib and took something white from inside it. It was very tiny. He put it in Wei Ying’s hand and he saw it was a stuffed bunny, with a cute, fluffy tail and red eyes, that looked like rubies.

“Are these rubies??” he asked, indignant.

“Yes.”

“Lan Zhan, it’s a child! How will they appreciate something so expensive? They’ll destroy it anyway!” he laughed.

“They deserve it.” His husband said seriously, with a frown.

“You’re a softy.” He told him. He loved this side of Lan Zhan.

Lan Zhan moved the things in the jingshi soon after, when they were done. Wei Ying had moved in the jingshi months before, after Lan Zhan insisted he wanted to be close to him always. Wei Ying sometimes missed the privacy of having his own house, but he liked having company too. He felt protected.

One day, Wei Ying felt quite strange. He had felt kicks and he could tell the baby was restless, but that day was even worse. He started feeling some mild pain in the morning, but thought none of it. By midday, the pain was a worse and he thought of saying something to Lan Zhan, who was studying in the Library Pavilion. But, Wei Ying didn’t want to be a bother if it wasn’t anything, so he kept quiet. He somehow went through having lunch without anyone saying anything to him. Lan Zhan did frown and commented he was being very quiet, but he made a few jokes and was left alone.

When afternoon came, Wei Ying knew he had to tell someone. He kept pacing inside the jingshi, trying to forget some of the pain. It helped when de stood up and rotated his hips, getting some of the pressure off. He was sweating all over and he felt like he had just ran for days, without pause.

Lan Zhan entered the jingshi exactly in the moment Wei Ying decided to go to Wen Qing and ask for help, as if he knew he needed him.

“Wei Ying?”
“Lan Zhan… I think the baby is coming. Could you go and get Wen Qing and some midwives?”

Lan Zhan just looked at him, not moving. Was he ok? Hadn’t he heard? Lan Zhan looked as if he had seen a ghost. He was pale and he saw his hands trembling. Wei Ying went to him and said:

“Lan Zhan, alpha, it’s going to be alright. Get Wen Qing and a midwife, ok? I need help, the baby is coming soon.” He tried to smile in an encouraging way. Lan Zhan nodded and left, almost running.

Wei Ying took the time he had alone to get into bed and reflect. He hoped everything will go smoothly and he will hold his son or daughter in his arms soon. He wanted to see if they had Lan Zhan’s eyes or if they had his smile. If they will be brave and kind. He hoped to teach them to be a good person and how to have fun from time to time. His name is not Wei Ying if he won’t show his child how to have fun, regardless of the rules.

He suddenly felt something wet going in his legs. It was probably his waters breaking, but when he put his hand and touched the sheets, his hand came up red. Like blood. He wished Lan Zhan could hurry. The pain was getting too bad to handle; he didn’t know if he could keep quiet anymore. Tears started falling, he was feeling helpless.

Why were things always so hard on him? Why wasn’t there anything easy or going smoothly? Why does he have to suffer so much and gain so little happy moments? Was he the only one that had so many trials, or was everyone the same and he didn’t notice because he was selfish?

He wanted to push, the urge to do it was intense, but he wasn’t sure it was a good idea or not. His body told him to, and he couldn’t keep up anymore. He started bearing down, while clenching the sheets with his hands, as if life itself depended on it. He could hear the sheets rip in his hands from the strain.

He never felt pain like this in his life. Falling in the Burial Mounds was now a distant memory. All he wanted was for this to be over. So he stared to scream. He screamed at the injustice of it all, of not being able to choose his husband, or choose what to do with his body, or choose to fight, or live freely like he wanted. He cried for his baby, that will have to live the life he didn’t choose for him or her. He just wanted to have choices.

He finally heard steps coming his way. He could barely concentrate on what people where saying, he just kept pushing when he had the urge. He felt hands on his body, someone was on each of his sides, keeping his legs up, bended from the knee. He saw Wen Qing and the oldest midwife looking at him, touching to see how dilated he was.

“You’re already fully dilated, why haven’t you said anything sooner?” Wen Qing asked. “You’re bleeding internally; it doesn’t look good.”
“Where’s Lan Zhan? Lan Zhan?” he cried after him.

“Boy, he can’t enter while you give birth. Lan alphas have never been present for a birth in generations.” The old hag said. Of course he couldn’t even have that. He was going to this alone.

He heard some noise from outside, but paid it no mind, since he was told then:

“Push when we tell you.” And he did. He listened to everything they said, trying to keep his screams at the minimum. They gave him some knotted fabric to bite on, so he wouldn’t make so much noise. He was grateful he had something to bite on.

It lasted for hours. He thought not once that he will faint from the pain and exertion, but the women and omega men who were there encouraged and petted him on the head and praised him, saying he was doing great and it will be over soon. He pushed and pushed until the felt the worst pain of his life.

“It’s the shoulders! Stop pushing!” someone told him. How could he stop? His body was screaming at him to push, but he stopped anyway. He put a hand and felt the head of his baby. He or she was here! He felt someone’s hand on the baby’s shoulders and then they rotated the body and it came out in one go. He felt something rip. He couldn’t describe the feeling. He was in pain and he was in ecstasy at the same time. His whole body was trembling, like he took a bath in the coldest stream. The baby was quickly cleaned and given to him. He put his hand around the child and cried and cried and cried from happiness, wailing like he had never before.

“Tell them it’s an omega boy.” The old midwife said. He looked to confirm too. It was a boy just like him! He couldn’t wait to teach him everything he knew! He counted his little fingers and toes and was happy to see he had five on each limb. He had a bit of hair and his head had a funny shape, from the whole birthing process. He was a little red, but he was very beautiful in his eyes. He looked at the baby and didn’t notice the silence in the room.

They took the baby away, bathing him near him, while he delivered the afterbirth. That was almost as bad as the birth itself, since he also ripped something when the baby out. The felt after that someone was sewing him back, but couldn’t care less. He had his little boy in his arms. They told him the bleeding wasn't as bad as they thought and he didn't have to worry.

They helped him get cleaned and dressed in some special underwear, so he couldn’t ruin the bed sheets. The new ones, the ones he gave birth in were taken away, probably to be burned, they didn’t
look like they could be washed anymore. The women and men all congratulated him and then, the doors of the jingshi finally opened and he could see Lan Zhan and Lan Xichen coming in. Lan Zhan hurried at his side and hugged him tightly and then looked longingly at the child. He could hear the gongs being hit to announce the birth to everyone.

“It’s a boy.” He said and wanted to give Lan Zhan the baby to hold, but in that moment, the little one started to open his eyes. He had his father’s golden eyes! He was the most beautiful child he’s ever seen! He kissed his little hands and cheeks and looked at Lan Zhan.

“He looks just like you!” Lan Zhan slowly took the baby in his arms and put his head on the little one’s head and then he kissed his forehead. He never thought he’ll ever see Lan Zhan cry, but he started to do it heavily.

“Thank you, Wei Ying.”

“Thank you too, Lan Zhan” he responded and put his hand over Lan Zhan’s who was now holding the boy’s little fingers.

He now looked better at Lan Zhan and saw his hair in disarray and that he had blood on his shoulders. He looked to Lan Xichen, but saw he had a black eye! What had happened? Where they attacked by something?

“Why are you hurt?” Lan Zhan looked ashamed and didn’t say anything, so his brother had to explain.

“My brother insisted he wanted to come here and assist, but the Elders forbade it. You have to understand, young master Wei, that there are certain rules that cannot be broken. We tried to reason with the Elders, to no avail. When Wangji saw there was no way to do it through dialogue, he started a sword fight with the guards, injuring some of them. Even I got punched! My brother really wanted to see you. Unfortunately, he was stopped and took the discipline whip. One strike for every injured man, beside myself. I asked to be disciplined too, since I couldn’t stop him properly…”

“I wanted to be there for you, Wei Ying.” Lan Zhan said.

“Thank you for trying.” He said and he meant it. So Lan Zhan could break some rules after all.

The three of them stood in silence admiring the baby for a long while. He got hungry and asked for some food. He got some Yumneng Jiang dishes, which surprised him. Apparently, the cooks themselves asked for recipes to cook the dishes for him for this occasion.
“At least the Elders will be happy now they have the heir they asked for.” He told them. Lan Xichen was holding the baby now, letting the new parents eat a little.

Lan Zhan and his brother looked at each other, then at Wei Ying, not really saying whatever they were thinking.

“Young master Wei… omega heirs are very rare in the Cloud Recesses. There have been cases, but we prefer an alpha or beta ruler. If any of your future children will be anything else than omega, they will be the one to inherit. We will be happy with any heir at this point, since I am unable to sire any myself, but… as it stands, the chances of this child of being the heir are slim. I’m sorry, Master Wei, I thought you knew.”

Wei Ying was angry. How dare they? How dare they belittle someone just for being omega? His child wasn’t enough because he was born a certain secondary gender? Who does that? Only the Wens did that! Even the Jins allowed omegas to inherit the throne! Lans and their stupid rules!

“I’m sick of your rules!” he said.

“Pardon?” Lan Xichen asked.

“I said, I’M SICK OF YOUR RULES!” he screamed at them. He couldn’t stay here anymore. He’ll stay for a while and then leave. He couldn’t raise his children in this place. He’ll figure something out. He had no desire to eat anymore. He took his baby in his arms and started planning what to do next.
Wei Ying might have spoken too soon. He couldn’t leave now, even if he wanted to. He needed time to heal. Without his core, he healed very slowly. He struggled a lot with taking care of the baby too. He thought it was going to be easy, just feed him, change him and put him to sleep, right? Wrong. He just cried so often and Wei Ying had no idea why. It was overwhelming. Lan Zhan was of great help, he seemed to know what to do better than him. Lan Zhan just glanced at the baby and knew exactly what he wanted. It was a blessing.

On the third day, they decided the name of the boy. Apparently, he got to choose. The rules said the family of the omega decided the name. Since he was all alone in the world, he tried to talk about it with Lan Zhan. But his husband said he’d accept any name he wanted to give the boy, that it didn’t matter as long as he liked it.

Wei Ying thought a long while. What name could he give him, that he could always remember where he came from? He decided on the name ‘Yun’, born in the clouds. Even if he was going to live far away from the Cloud Recesses, he hoped A-Yun will never forget where his roots were. So he told Lan Zhan he decided. Lan Zhan nodded.

“I decided to name him ‘Yun’” he said.

Lan Zhan looked impressed by his decision. He was glad he approved.

“Welcome to the world, Lan Yun” Wei Ying told his baby and kissed his rosy cheeks. He looked like he smiled at him! His precious little boy… he’d do anything for him.

At the naming ceremony that soon followed, all sects were invited. Even if he might never be the heir, the Gusu Lan didn’t want to seem ungrateful. The ceremony was beautiful and Wei Ying
smiled the whole time. Lan Zhan looked proud as well, carrying his first born in his arms.

His siblings were there too. Both of them were genuinely happy for him, but his sister looked worriedly at him.

“A-Xian, are you ok? You look tired…”

“Ahaa, shijie, I’m just sleepy! Taking care of a baby is hard work, you’ll see!” he said, looking at his sister’s belly. She put her hands on it, caressing the child inside. She seemed very happy for it.

“A-Xian, could you give a courtesy name?”

“What courtesy name?” Wei Ying asked, as if he didn’t know.

Jiang Cheng rolled his eyes “The courtesy name of my unborn nephew.”

The child wasn’t even born and yet they were already giving a courtesy name. Wei WuXian didn’t find anything strange about it and answered:

“Sure. The next generation of the LanlingJin Sect is named Ru. How about Jin RuLan?”

Jiang Yanli nodded, she seemed happy with his answer “That’s great!”

Jiang Cheng didn’t approve, it seemed. “No! It sounds like Jin RuLan, Lan being the Lan from the Lan sect. Why should the descendant of the LanlingJin sect and the YunmengJiang sect be like someone of the Lan sect?”

It seems Jiang Cheng caught him red handed. But it was a good name and the child will have a good future if he was even a little like Lan Zhan!

He gave some explanation about the Lan flower and finally, Jiang Cheng conceded as well. He was happy with what he accomplished. It wasn’t as if he believed the Lan clan was better than the rest. They sure had many issues. But when it came to righteousness and beauty, they were without comparison.
He hoped the name will be a good omen for his future nephew.

Months passed. He got stronger and so did his child. A-Yuan got closer to him too, and it was hard to know he will have to leave him behind. But, one day, that decision was made for him by Granny Wen and Lan Zhan.

The three of them were all sitting at a table, which was a bit unusual, but was glad to see Granny Wen anyway. He was thinking there was more to this than drinking tea, but couldn’t put his finger exactly what was happening here.

“Master Wei” she started “I’m not getting younger”.

“That’s not true! You look great, Granny!” he argued. She smiled at that.

“Be as it may, I don’t know how many years I have left and A-Yuan will be alone in the world. He has relatives, but I believe he deserves a real, loving family. I already talked to your husband, but what do you think about adopting A-Yuan as your son and giving him a family, Master Wei?”

Wei Ying was speechless. He looked at Lan Zhan, who nodded at him. He didn’t even know he wanted this, but not everything clicked. He could see himself caring for these two boys and letting them play together all day.

“Yes! Yes, if that’s what you want and feel is best, Granny…” he said. Then he gave her a hug. He didn’t think any words were enough to ever thank her.

It was very fast after that, the adoption process. It seemed it was quite common practice in GusuLan, since they didn’t have so many children of their own.

At first, A-Yuan was a little confused of the changes, but soon got used to the new clothes and new programme.

One day, when they were eating just the four of them, their little family, he heard A-Yuan say something quietly and couldn’t pick up what he said.
“What’s that, A-Yuan? I couldn’t hear.”

“Mommy, can I have some more rice, please?” Wei Ying almost died that moment from the shock. He never asked A-Yuan to call him that. He just snatched A-Yuan and put in his lap and gave him the biggest hug and laughed from joy.

“Ahahaha, of course, A-Yuan! You can have as many bowls as you want! Let mommy put you some in your bowl…”

Lan Zhan was smiling too. And he wasn’t even complaining that they were talking while eating!

He cherished these moments. He hoped to carry them forever in his heart. He was feeling bad to leave Lan Zhan behind, but he knew he’d never accept to betray his brother and sect like this. He hoped he will find a way to forgive him one day.

One day, maybe 6 months after the birth of his son, he woke up feeling this was the day. He had been preparing, writing charms, putting things away in a pouch and getting his soul ready for the long journey in the unknown. He didn’t know exactly where he was heading to, but knew he had to stay under the radar for many years, until, most likely, they will give up on him and they will move on. He hoped Lan Zhan could be able to find love somehow and he happy even without him.

That day, A-Yuan was attending a class and he was alone with A-Yun. He just fed him and he was sleeping in his crib, the very one Lan Zhan carved for him. He had his precious bunny tight in his hand.

He had time to think and write a letter for his siblings, telling them to not look for him. If he felt it necessary, even to say to the world Wei Ying wasn’t part of YunmengJiang sect in any way and let him go. He also told them he loved them and he didn’t think they’ll be able to see each other in a long time. He wished his sister an easy labour. He didn’t give many details as to why he decided to leave. He just told them he was unhappy here and wanted to take his life in his own hands.

To Lan Zhan, he wrote a simple letter. He knew Lan Zhan was a man of few words. He told him he loved him, even if Lan Zhan didn’t feel the same, even if their marriage had a rocky start and they both suffered. He didn’t apologise for leaving. It was something he truly believed it will benefit the children and Wei Ying himself. He told him to find someone else to fulfil what Wei Ying couldn’t. He was sorry A-Yun will never be able to know his father properly, but told Lan Zhan he will tell him good stories of his brave and beautiful father. He ended the letter by telling Lan Zhan he was sad they couldn’t have a different faith.
He hid the letter and made dinner. The four of them ate in his house surrounded by gentians, where he now resided with the children, as they usually did these days, in private. A-Yuan now was used to being with them and calling them mother and father. It felt like a real family. But Wei Ying already made up his mind.

After they ate, he put the children away, in a separate room. There was one thing he wanted to do before they left.

He looked at Lan Zhan and asked if he wanted a bath. He already prepared it before he came. When Lan Zhan was in the tub, Wei Ying also got naked and got in with him. His back to his husband’s chest. They stood like that a while. Lan Zhan probably didn’t know what he wanted, which was understandable. Wei Ying refused any intimate contact after the birth, and they didn’t do anything for months leading to the birth either.

He turned to face Lan Zhan and they looked at each other, their hair wet and steam all around them. Their faces were very close together, Wei Ying just had to lean in a little bit and their lips could touch. Lan Zhan wasn’t moving at all. So, Wei Ying did just that, he first gave him a small peck, then looked for any reaction of disapproval. Lan Zhan just nodded at him. He gave him more kisses, then moved to give him some love bites on his neck. He could feel Lan Zhan getting hard and he felt himself getting hard too.

“Let’s go to bed?” he said, with a trembling voice. He didn’t know why he was so scared of. He wasn’t a virgin anymore! They had a child!

Lan Zhan picked him up effortlessly, and put him near the tub to dry him with a towel, then himself. Then, they went to bed, Lan Zhan carrying him like a bride. Wei Ying squeezed his neck tightly all the way. He’s going to miss the intimacy. He lay on the soft bed, Lan Zhan on top of him. His husband took good care of him, kissing him and caressing him and giving him an orgasm before even hinting of touching his most intimate part.

He could feel he was very tight, almost like that first night. But this time, Lan Zhan knew he had to use oil and take his time preparing him. He managed to loosen up after many minutes of preparation, and he told Lan Zhan when he was ready.

“You can do it now.” He told him, looking straight in his eyes, not wanting to miss a second of Lan Zhan’s expressions.

Lan Zhan slowly pushed in, looking for any discomfort. He was still a little tight, but maybe it was nerves too. It wasn’t their wildest night, or even their best sex. It was intimate and slow, trying to
rediscover themselves. Wei Ying liked the pressure and sometimes Lan Zhan hit his good spot too. It was an enjoyable time for both of them, he felt. The best part was having Lan Zhan’s hands caressing him and embracing him with his arms, and his breath in his ear, his heart beating fast together with Wei Ying’s. They both finished almost at the same time. Wei Ying could feel a few tears coming, but wiped them quickly.

“It was amazing, Lan Zhan, thank you.”

“Are you hurt, Wei Ying? Why are you crying?”

“They’re tears of happiness. You just make me very happy.” He told him.

After that, Lan Zhan took one of the towels they used and cleaned him up. When Lan Zhan wanted to go to bed, he told him he had a surprise. He put his undergarments on and went outside, where a tea was still brewing at an almost extinguished fire. He took the pot with him inside.

“I made you some tea. It’s a special recipe from YunmengJiang, I made it for you.” He said and poured Lan Zhan a cup. “Here, try it and tell me if it’s any good!”

Lan Zhan tried it and he could barely tell from his expression that that taste must be horrible.

“Good, isn’t it? Drink it all, or I’ll be sad!” He felt bad for doing this, but he had no other choice.

Lan Zhan, trying to be encouraging, drank the whole cup and then asked for another one. He didn’t get to finish the second cup, because his head fell on the table, but not after looking confused at Wei Ying and then, for a moment, looking betrayed. But, alas, he was now sound asleep.

Wei Ying put so many sleeping plants in this tea, he feared Lan Zhan will sleep for days. Maybe that was for the best. He put his husband into bed, tucking him in. He put the letters on the table, then got dressed in some simple clothes, that couldn’t be recognized. He took the pouch with the food and supplies he managed to pick up and then took two big fabrics, that he fastened expertly on his body. Inside the fabric in the front, he put little A-Yun, who was sound asleep and on his back he put A-Yuan, who was starting to wake up.

“Shh, A-Yuan, go to sleep. We’re just going on a walk.”
The child believed him and went back to sleep.

The last thing he did was to take off his forehead ribbon, that was still on. He didn’t deserve it anymore. He didn’t know if he ever did.

He looked at his tiny home for one more time and at his husband, and then told no one in particular.

“I hope to never return here as a prisoner I once were.”

He then turned around and left, hidden by the shadows of the night. He knew very well the patrolling schedule and the way outside Cloud Recesses. He never once looked back.
I was surprised of some of the comments. I think some of you must be terribly young. Leaving a dysfunctional family is the best decision you can make. You can't raise children in a toxic environment.

Since he never took popular paths, he didn’t hear a lot of news. Dressed like they were, people couldn’t really tell who he was. He just looked like a poor, abandoned omega with his two children. The people who met him all gave him pitying looks. If only they knew he was happier now than he ever was.

He even managed to buy a donkey, that wasn’t very tame, but did his job, and travelled freely whatever direction he wanted. When the children were safely sleeping, he made experiments. In the last weeks, he made a compass that showed him where danger was. He knew to never go that way, he didn’t want the children to be hurt in any way, and he didn’t have a core anymore…

Days were simple, but so exciting for Wei Ying. He just travelled and, if he somehow found something suspicious, he used his talismans, which he perfected as well, to be more effective. Of course, he still had Chequing if thing went really badly. He wasn’t pressured by the Lans anymore not to use demonic cultivation, but he didn’t want the children to be so close to it, if he could help it.

At this pace, he could evade detection for 13 years and no one could be the wiser!

He got to hunt peasants everyday, and A-Yuan and himself got to eat meat often. He had quite a sum of money with him too, since he never really used his dowry or allowance on anything until he left. He used that money to buy vegetables when they ventured in small villages. And he rented inn rooms often. He made toys from wood for the boys and entertained them with stories that made no sense, but they loved him. He still breastfed, which wasn’t the most comfortable thing to do in the woods.

A-Yun was the sweetest baby. He rarely cried now, and he was giving him toothless smiles almost every time Wei Ying looked at him. His big, golden eyes shined every time he did. It was beautiful to look at, it made his day. He now liked to bounce up and down everyday, that was his favourite activity. Wei Ying could hold his hands and he just jumped until he got tired. He couldn’t wait to see him walk too. He sometimes wished Lan Zhan were here to see it too.
Maybe two months after they left, he realised something was very, very wrong with him. First, he was feeling nauseous, but A-Yuan and A-Yun didn’t seem to have anything. If the food was bad or he caught something, the children could get it too, right?

It took him a while to recognise what it was. He felt like such a fool when he did. It was of his own doing, after all. His sentimentalism for his husband got the better of him and now he had to lay in the bed he made for himself. This complicated things. This ruined things, actually. It meant he had to find a permanent home to stay for a few months at least, and he needed help too. He couldn’t do this alone, with two young children counting on him. He didn’t really know what to do anymore. He didn’t expect to fall pregnant outside a heat. It was quite rare and he only tried once… he must have been extremely lucky, or unlucky, depending on how you see it.

He knew there were herbs he could still take and just forget this ever happened… but could he do that to a child he and Lan Zhan made? Was that fair for them? Wei Ying had to take responsibility. For now, he was going to keep this information buried deep in his brain and heart and try to resolve it after they found somewhere to live.

Wei Ying knew what he wanted. If he had to settle, he knew exactly where he wanted the children to grow up. They arrived in Yiling around midday one day months later, when he was close to his fifth month. He saw some colourful toys and A-Yuan immediately started tugging him that way, wanting some new toy to play with. Little Apple, as he named the donkey, was unhappy to follow, as usual. He let the child choose whatever he wanted. There was another man looking at the toys, but he didn’t look closely at him. He just saw his modest clothes and his short hair, without any accessories. He must’ve been a simple man, but carried himself with dignity and a straight back, clearly having some kind of training.

As he reached his hand to pay the clerk, he saw the man pay the seller.

“For that child’s toy.” He said.

What in the world… he could recognize that deep voice anywhere. Was that… Lan Zhan?

He looked at him now. He had never seen Lan Zhan in clothes made of any material other than the best silks, and his hair… why was it so short? Where was his forehead ribbon?

“Wei Ying, I found you.” He gave A-Yuan his toy and then picked him up and hugged him and Wei Ying, who was carrying A-Yun. He embraced them all. Wei Ying was so shocked he didn’t know what to say.
“Lan Zhan, what happened?” he asked. He was very concerned.

“Let’s talk somewhere else. I prepared everything in advance.”

They arrived at a small house that overlooked the mountains. The house had a small garden and he could see a stall with a donkey inside. There were colourful flowers everywhere and he could see rabbits hopping all over. Did Lan Zhan do all of this?

“How did you know we were coming to Yiling?” he was very confused. Even Wei Ying himself didn’t know where he was headed each day.

“I didn’t. I just waited.” That was the only reply he got.

Inside, the house wasn’t simple at all. He saw Gusu Lan decorations, while walls and intricate wooden panels. There was even a small library. There were three rooms, and the kitchen was outside, in a different part of the construction. It looked like a smaller jingshi. He couldn’t have made this after he left, which meant...

“Tea?” Lan Zhan asked and put A-Yuan down on a tiny bed, who fell asleep in his father’s arms and clutching his new toy. Wei Ying put A-Yun down in the crib near A-Yuan and took a seat while Lan Zhan prepared the tea. He used that time to look at the rooms. All of them where separated from each other with sliding doors, for some privacy. He saw a big bathtub too. He really liked the feeling of this place. He could see even purple decorations from Yunmeng! It was familiar, yet new. He liked that not everything was put in perfect order.

“What happened, Lan Zhan?” he asked. He really wanted to know. Nothing made sense. Why was Lan Zhan in this state?

“It’s a long story.” He got in reply.

“We have time, tell me.”

There was some silence after, but Lan Zhan answered him “I promised myself I will be a fair alpha and husband. I didn't want to be my father, but I failed. I chose my clan instead of you. I could see
the rules were breaking your spirit, the one I saw before we married. I wasn’t there when you needed me the most.”

“That’s not true! You did your best!” Wei Ying argued.

“I could have been better. But I realized you were never going to be happy there. So, I asked your brother for a piece of land here in Yiling, since it now belongs to the YunmengJiang Clan. I wanted to give you a home where you could live freely. I’ve been building this house since you became pregnant. Your sister helped me decorate, she send me some of your old things…”

Wei Ying didn’t know what to say. He didn’t know Lan Zhan at all, it seemed. All this time, he thought he didn’t care, that he was alone and the only escape was by doing everything himself. Why couldn’t Lan Zhan just talk to him and just… acknowledge him and his struggle? Wei Ying guessed he wasn’t too forthcoming either. But he didn’t have any idea what Lan Zhan was thinking! His actions never showed he cared for Wei Ying’s well being when it mattered.

But all this didn’t explain his appearance. Why did Lan Zhan cut his hair? He got his answer without delay:

“When I woke up the morning you left, I read your letter and I was devastated. You just left me. I understand why. I sent the letter to you siblings and then went to the Elders to explain to them what had happened. They accused you of kidnapping and running away. I told them I already decided to leave too, with you, and we couldn’t return. They refused.” Lan Zhan told him with angry eyes.

“Of course they refused.” He told him sadly. There was no winning with the Elders.

“I begged for 5 days and nights on my knees in front of the Pavilion, but my brother and the Elders didn’t respond. The day they were planning to send troops after you and the children, I told them I didn’t want to belong to the GusuLan sect if this is how they were planning to treat you. Hunt you like a criminal and imprison you for life like they did to my mother.”

There was no surprise the Elders couldn’t listen to reason.

“I told them I’m leaving, and if that meant giving up my name and Clan, then so be it. They conceded only after a written letter of denouncing my name and cutting my hair in shame. I couldn’t take any money or possessions with me, but the Wens came to me when I left and gave me some supplies. Wen Ning and Wen Qing were very angry with our decision to leave, but I told them I will
contact them when we settle.”

Why could Lan Zhan do all that for him? He gave up everything! He was no one. Wei Ying started to cry.

“You don’t belong to any clan now and you left everything behind just for me? Why?”

“I belong to you, Wei Ying, and our family. If you’ll have me. I love you. That’s all I’ll ever need.” Lan Zhan said it so sincerely, he had to believe him. He hugged him and told him he loved him back.

“I have to tell you something, Lan Zhan! Don’t be too surprised.”

“Hm?”

“I’m pregnant again…”

Lan Zhan’s expression of pure happiness was a sight to behold, and his kiss was the sweetest he has ever received.

Chapter End Notes

I liked the aesthetic of the Untamed actors in the Bazaar pictures, this is how I imagine Lan Zhan's new hair could look like:

https://ninhoemy.tumblr.com/post/186709071238/arienareed-190725-stylosophy-weibo-update
The next months were the happiest in Wei Ying’s life. All day he tended to the vegetables in the garden and played with the kids and the bunnies. He got to try new experiments with talismans when Lan Zhan was looking after the kids. He loved the quiet moments the most, when the kids were sleeping and Lan Zhan was reading and Wei Ying just got to lay down and relax.

He tried cooking, but after a few attempts, he left it to Lan Zhan. Lan Zhan was also the one to mend the clothes and repair around the house when things broke. He maybe shouldn’t have left A-Yuan to play with a ball inside. Or play catch with him either.

The nights, which he dreaded once, were now the time he was looking forward to the most. If with his first pregnancy his libido was non-existent, this time around he seemed to always be aroused. Every time he saw his husband, he felt a desire like never before. He didn’t know if the reason why he felt like this was because he finally ate well, felt no pressure to conform to the rules or was finally happy in a real way in his marriage. But, regardless of reason, he got to do all kind of filthy things to Lan Zhan every night. His husband was more than welcoming of the new attitude and serviced him every night. Wei Ying loved being made love to. He loved staring into Lan Zhan’s eyes and embracing him close to his body, receiving him as deep as he could.

He thought maybe Lan Zhan will refuse him when he got bigger and bigger into his pregnancy, but he told him he was beautiful in every shape or form. That he’ll love him regardless of how he’d look. ‘Wei Ying is Wei Ying’, Lan Zhan told him.

They always said ‘I love you’ before falling asleep.

The first people to visit them were Jiang Cheng and Jiang YanLi with little Jin Ling.

His sister was very disappointed he left like that and didn’t tell them what was wrong, but gave him his little nephew to hold anyway. He showed his kids their cousin too and they loved him, even if he seemed like a fussy baby. Of course he could take that from his father.

Jiang Cheng’s expression when he first saw him was like nothing he’d ever seen.
At first, Wei Ying was ignored. He didn’t even get a ‘hello’. Then, after hours of not talking to him, Jiang Cheng just… exploded. At that time, the kids were all asleep in a room, the adults were having some tea at the table. Jiang Cheng suddenly hit the table with his hand, seemingly out of nowhere, then rose.

Wei Ying and Lan Zhan, did the same. He then took Zidian and hit Lan Zhan twice!

“Jiang Cheng! What are you doing?! Stop!” Wei Ying told him. He went to Lan Zhan, who was now on the floor, with his head down.

“You promised me you’ll take care of him!! You promised me you’ll make him happy!!” Jiang Cheng screamed. Then he went to his knees and started to cry heavily.

Wei Ying went to him and hugged his head, not being able to do anything else, since he was so big in his final months of pregnancy.

“I’m so sorry, Wei Ying, I should have fought my parents and never sent you there. I should have taken you back when I became the leader of YunmengJiang. Why didn’t you tell me you were so unhappy? Why? Am I not your brother?” he said and cried. Wei Ying didn’t know people worried so much for him.

“I wanted to manage the impossible and do well by the YunmengJiang sect. I couldn’t just leave if thinks were a little bad. I didn’t want to cause problems for you.”

“Are you stupid?! Your happiness is more important to me than clan connections. We could have found other ways.”

His sister came near them and they hugged. He told Lan Zhan to come too, and he did, carefully, not to anger Jiang Cheng further.

He was glad to get to talk to his siblings. Before they left, he gave his sister a gift for Jin Ling, a bell to protect him from harm. Jiang Cheng told him to send a letter if he ever got into trouble and come visit soon too. The disciples of Lotus Pier missed him too. He will always be welcomed back home.

In the last weeks of pregnancy, they got new visitors. Wen Ning, Wen Qing and Granny Wen all came to visit. A-Yuan was very happy to see them again. Wei Ying felt bad and couldn’t look them in the eyes.
When they got to sit and talk, Wen Qing was the first one to say something, before he got to apologize:

“There’s no need to apologize. I understand why you had to do it. But. You should have told us, we could have helped, we could have come with you! What if something happened and you couldn’t take care of the children? And you’re pregnant too! It’s just irresponsible. We are here for you, you weren’t alone.” She said.

He didn’t know that. At the time, he thought he had no one to ask help from.

“I’m still sorry. Granny, you gave me A-Yuan to care for and I left with him without saying anything…”

The old omega just looked at him with kind eyes and nodded.

“I forgive you, child. I understand how hard it is to be a caged omega. I was one too, once. I wish I had had the courage you did and left too.”

They spend the rest of the night talking. They heard that Lan Xichen took some initiative and changed some of the Elders on the main board, some of the more omega-phobic of them. He tried to redeem some of his brother’s honour too, but it didn’t seem he had much success. Wei Ying was glad to hear that. He liked the look Lan Zhan had on his face. He was happy his brother was standing up to him.

The Wens wanted to remain here until after his child will be born. But in the end, they actually started building a house next to theirs and wanted to stay. They felt GusuLan wasn’t exactly the place they fit the best. Wei Ying was very happy A-Yuan got to spend time with his blood relatives.

Everyone was excited to meet the new baby. Wei Ying was just tired of being pregnant. He asked Wen Qing to teach him how to make the tea he could take to never become pregnant again. He was done having children. When he told Lan Zhan, he said it was Wei Ying’s body and he could what he felt was the best for him. He could never force Wei Ying to give birth again if he didn’t want it.

This birth was so different from the first. He felt the contractions in the night and woke up, the pain a little too bad to sleep. Lan Zhan immediately woke up as well.
“Wei Ying, what’s wrong? Is it the baby?”

“Yeah, I think he or she is coming. Could you call Wen Qing?”

The birth itself, Wei Ying couldn’t remember very well. He was in extreme pain, but this time he only had Wen Qing and Lan Zhan by his side. He felt loved and protected by these two alphas. He was glad Wen Ning and Granny Wen were looking after the children.

It took a long time to give birth this time too. Maybe he just wasn’t made to have an easy, short birth. The pain was excruciating, and he could only remember how he was crushing Lan Zhan’s hands in his and how loud he screamed. He was sweaty all over and he was very weak by the time his son was born. He had Lan Zhan tell him encouraging words all the time. He ruined the bed with blood and he even ripped Lan Zhan’s robe when he was clutching it in his hand.

They gave him his son to nurse, after Wen Qing cleaned him a bit. He was as beautiful as his brother. No one told him what secondary sender he was. When he looked if all his fingers where there and if there was nothing wrong with him, he could see he was an alpha. Well, it didn’t matter.

What mattered was the fact he was healthy. He promised himself he will teach his son how to treat an omega and how to be a kind man. He will not have him repeat the mistakes of his forefathers.

It was hard, raising three children. They all demanded all his time. Even if he had Lan Zhan and the Wens with him, the children always sought him out and wanted their mother to do everything. It was fulfilling, but exhausting.

Recuperating after a birth was hard. He felt something was missing and he was sad without understanding exactly why. Granny Wen told him it was normal for many omegas to feel like this after giving birth and it will pass with time.

They gave their child the name Wei Kai, meaning victory or start. He was the start of the new life his parents created. Wei Ying hoped this name will bring him luck. All of them had the name Wei now, which Wei Ying was very proud of. He wondered what his own parents could think. But, even if Lan Zhan was now Wei Zhan, Wei Ying couldn’t get himself to say that name yet. It was a bit strange for him.

The years passed very quickly, it seemed. Their home grew, many people coming to build houses
near them, people who didn’t belong anywhere else. Lan Zhan and Wei Ying went often on night hunts, and they took care of their family. The children grew. He got to be there when they first walked, talked, ate by themselves. Wei Ying taught them how to make kites and use an arrow, Lan Zhan thought them to read and write and be virtuous and how to use a sword.

And in this peaceful and simple way, 13 years passed. Until, one day, HE came to their door and everything changed.
Marriage of love

Chapter Notes

This is the end, folks! Thank you for being here with me. I hope you enjoyed my first story. I'm not going to continue with the present arc, you can imagine whatever you like. It's a happy end for everyone.

Mulțumesc :)

Wei Ying couldn’t say he was surprised to see him here. This meeting was long overdue. And he wasn’t alone either. Lan Qiren entered when Wei Ying showed him he could come in. He was with Lan Xichen and what looked like disciples A-Yuan’s age.

Lan Zhan was away, teaching reading and writing to the kids of the villages near them. Their children were away too, playing somewhere. Wei Ying was alone.

“Tea, everyone?” he asked and smiled. He went and took some cups and started pouring them some. Silence followed. Wei Ying wished Lan Qiren could just say his piece and leave. But it was Lan Xichen who spoke up first:

“Is your husband coming home soon?” It seemed Lan Xichen couldn’t even say Lan Zhan’s name. Amazingly, as if he knew something, Lan Zhan arrived home, earlier than he usually does.

Everyone looked at him. He could tell they all had mixed feelings. Lan Zhan had the same air he had before he left his sect, but his clothes were undeniably cheap and his hair had remained short all this while. Wei Ying actually liked his hair, it was easy to wash and style and he brushed his hair every night. Even if they only had ribbons, Wei Ying liked to experiment with braids in Lan Zhan’s hair and put different coloured ribbons. It was their ritual of sorts.

Lan Zhan, by keeping his hair this way, showed the world he never forgot what he gave up. But it never bothered him.

Wei Ying patted the chair next to his, so Lan Zhan could sit by him. He saw Lan Zhan eye his brother and watching him. Lan Xichen held his gaze. Wei Ying wondered what the two brothers were saying without any words, if they had some kind of invisible, spiritual bond.
Lan Zhan bowed to everyone before sitting. Lan Qiren was caressing his beard and looking at them and then said:

“I decided to step down and move to a temple. I came to say that I regret it has come to this, nephew, and that, once I leave, your name will be redeemed. If you want, you could return. Your children could receive the name of Lan. And, of course, they can attend the classes of Cloud Recesses.”

Wei Ying looked at Lan Zhan to see what he thought. Wei Ying didn’t want to return there, but if their children could study there for a year or two, maybe that could be good for them.

“I promised Wi Ying we’ll never go back there permanently, but, if he wants it too, I think the children will benefit from studying there.” Lan Zhan said.

Wei Ying approved. He nodded in acceptance.

“There’s also the problem of the next GusuLan leader…” Lan Xichen started and Wei Ying froze.

“If you are willing, we will have your first born as our leader. Regardless of his secondary gender.”

Wei Ying was surprised by the change. The problem was, in the end, his oldest child did conform to the parameters of what the Lans wanted and it pissed Wei Ying off. He looked at Lan Zhan, who looked back at him. It seemed Wei Ying was the one to decide.

“Our oldest son is A-Yuan. I guess you did get what you wanted in the end. An alpha boy to rule GusuLan, huh? If he wants it, he can do whatever he wants. I won’t force him into anything. And no arranged marriage either!”

Those were his terms. The Lans all nodded. His child will have the last say, as it should have been for him or Lan Zhan too, when it came to their union.

He saw Lan Zhan go with Lan Xichen to the side, where they talked alone. All he heard was “Wangji” and then saw Lan Xichen bring a guqin, the one Lan Zhan had to leave behind in Cloud Recesses! He left the brothers talk in peace and he returned to the people in from of him. The disciples introduced themselves and he was surprised to see an omega named Jingyi, who looked very unruly. It seemed GusuLan changed a lot of its ways.
The children came home too, and he could introduce them to their uncle and grand-uncle, but the boys eyed them with scepticism. They knew a little about their history and they weren’t thrilled to meet them.

At least Wei Ying had the opportunity to brag about his kids. He loved to talk to anyone who would listen about how handsome, brave and righteous his children were. A-Yuan was the quietest of them and the most diligent. A-Yun was the jokester and the bravest. A-Wei was the strongest and the most sensitive – even if he was the tallest, he needed his brothers’ approval before he did anything. They were all sweethearts and Wei Ying couldn’t be prouder. Lan Zhan too.

Lan Zhan and his brother finished their discussion and saw them hug, which was sweet to see. He could tell Lan Zhan was happy he reconciled with his family.

“This isn’t the only reason we came, young master Wei. Last night, some of our disciples ran into some trouble at the Manor of the Mo family. Have you heard of them?”

Wei Ying hasn’t and told him as much.

“There we found a possessed hand. I thought you and my brother will be interested in discovering this mystery...”

He heard the entire story. Wei Ying looked at Lan Zhan, it could be good to have a longer journey. They could leave the children in Cloud Recesses to study and they will try to discover what happened.

Their marriage maybe was born out of duty, but looking at Lan Zhan now, he knew he was a lucky man. His marriage was a happy one. He got to spend his life, until his last breath, with his very own Pan An. Together, there was nothing they couldn’t go against.

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