

love & longing, rabbit edition.

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love & longing, rabbit edition.

by [jaws_3](#)

Summary

Lan Wangji makes a (minor) miscalculation and gets turned into a rabbit. He then makes the (*ridiculous!*) mistake of seeking out Wei Ying for help.

Notes

yes this is another bunny fic and yes I maybe have like two regrets
you also may be like “where are the wens?” “what time does this take place in?” “what about canon?” and to that I say... spills water pitcher and runs
enjoy!

small content warning for some bullying of poor bunji. halfway through the fic he is harassed a bit by a jealous Jiang Cheng. he sustains no injuries and is only frightened but it upset one reader who wanted me to make a mention of it so here u go!

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

- Translation into Español available: [amor y añoranza, edición conejo](#) by [evirtual3](#)

Lan Wangji wonders if this is punishment for his pride. After all, his brother had told him that, should he need it, he was free to request aid from the YunmengJiang sect. The Sect Leader had even offered to handle the issue entirely after they explained the ghoul they were seeking was hiding out in a cave in his region. But, Lan Wangji had refused, for it had originated in Gusu and so was their problem to deal with.

(Lan Wangji briefly finds himself wishing he had taken the Sect Leader up on his offer before shaking his head lightly to scold himself.)

“I’m sure Young Master Wei wouldn’t mind helping you, Wangji.” His brother had said with an easy smile when Lan Wangji had prepared to depart. “Be sure to seek him out if you find yourself in trouble.”

Ridiculous, Lan Wangji had thought. Surely he would have no need of Wei Ying’s help. Besides, how much help would he be? He would spend the whole trip teasing Lan Wangji. With a mischievous grin and bright eyes and glowing skin and—

Lan Wangji huffs and wiggles on the ground he finds himself on. Ridiculous, he repeats to himself. Even if he had needed— *wanted* —! Even if Wei Ying *had* been here to help, Lan Wangji finds himself doubtful it would have changed the outcome much.

(*He would have noticed*, a voice in his head tells him. *He is clever. He would have stopped the blow.*)

Lan Wangji huffs again and, after he finally manages to right himself, stomps his back foot.

That’s hardly something befitting the great Hanguang-Jun! He can just hear Wei Ying say and Lan Wangji makes sure to forcibly still his foot when it tries to act out again. It’s instinctual of the rabbit body he now finds himself inhabiting but that doesn’t mean it’s something he should submit to.

After a calming breath, Lan Wangji straightens his newly acquired rabbit ears and takes in his surroundings. His rabbit hearing is a bit sharper than his own but he doesn’t find it too difficult to sort through the information they easily provide him: the location of several songbirds, the gentle rush of a nearby stream, and the loud, steady thrum of summer insects.

He doesn’t sense anymore ghouls or ghosts and is grateful he managed to wipe them all out before the transformation curse that had been thrown at him, the target’s last desperate attempt, had taken full effect. It wouldn’t do to leave such things to roam and bother any more of the villagers.

With a derisive nod, Lan Wangji decides on his next course of action. He tugs on the string at the hilt of Bichen until he manages to hide it from obvious sight. His guqin is still in the open, but there is little he can do about that so he simply commits the area to memory so he may find it later. He then begins his long trek home, hopping forward as elegantly as he is able.

He manages to make it to the stream before accepting that this simply isn't going to work.

Without his sword and as a human, his trip home would take him several days. In the least. As a rabbit, it'll likely be over a week and that isn't counting the energy he'll have to expend avoiding predators. Three times already he's found himself flat against the ground, his body instinctively reacting to the screech of a hawk or the rustle of a deer tugging at a bush several feet away. He gives an annoyed grunt as he thinks about it, finding himself too irritated to try and subdue it.

You're so expressive as a rabbit! Wei Ying's voice sounds in his head again. *It's cute~ Lan er*

Lan Wangji quickly shakes his head and scolds himself for such... such *thoughts*.

He takes shelter in a small recess he finds amongst some tree roots and begins to rethink his plans. To try and hop home is both ridiculous and dangerous. Trying to approach a civilian or another cultivator could prove fatal as his cultivation had been taken with his body and they could see him as a possible meal. A child would be less likely to eat him, but they may also try to keep him as a pet, which wouldn't do.

A huff. Lan Wangji looks up to the sky and watches as the sun reaches it's noon-day point, his brother's words ringing in his ears.

Be sure to seek him out if you find yourself in trouble.

From here, his home is over a week away. From here, Lotus Pier is hardly half a day's journey, even as a rabbit.

Lan Wangji continues to stare at the sky, the bright, never ending blue, and decides that, yes, this is definitely a punishment for his pride.

It has been almost two years since Lan Wangji has seen Wei Ying. After he left without so much as a goodbye— *had he really expected him to bid him farewell?* —leaving behind the strangest fracture in Lan Wangji's heart. He had spent two foolish weeks distracted, glancing out the window, wondering, *hoping* , to see Wei Ying's grinning face staring back at him, or hear his laughter echoing through the trees. He remembers glaring at an error he had made during one such distraction and punished himself by writing the word over a hundred times, the strain on his hand to be a firm reminder of what his first priority should be.

He's nearing the edge of the Lotus Pier compound and feels his heart begin to pound even louder in his chest; a mix of fear and excitement overwhelming him at the potential of seeing Wei Ying again. He wants to scold himself. He wants to run even faster.

He noses his way under some low lying bushes and begins to make his way over a rather expansive field. He pauses at some of the kites he finds littered across it, one an impressive distance from the other end, and reasons the disciples must be practicing and gives a nod of approval. He's past the halfway point when his ears pick up the noisy cheers and chatter of the Yunmeng disciples and instinct freezes him.

They don't spot him right away, too enraptured in their conversations or in their playful jeers and shoves as they begin to collect the kites they had pierced from the sky. But, as soon as one of the younger children too loudly shouts, "A rabbit!", chaos erupts and the disciples quickly forget about their kites in order to chase after him instead. Lan Wangji immediately tries to dart for the safety of the bushes but the Yunmeng disciples work well together and quickly cut off all his escape routes.

They call and shout and command each other with a practiced ease and Lan Wangji finds himself both affronted and concerned at how easily he is cornered.

Many of them try and grab him and he hops to and fro as he dodges the numerous sets of hands. He receives a small break, his chest heaving, when one of the younger female cultivators, perhaps newly arrived, stomps her foot to scold them.

"Be nice!!! He's probably scared!!!"

Lan Wangji is only gifted three slow and contained breaths before another disciple is waving her off.

"Don't be such a girl! We just wanna see it!!"

Chaos erupts again and Lan Wangji finds himself wondering how anyone could work around such noise.

"What is taking you all so long!" Lan Wangji suddenly hears someone shout over the din and he almost falls over at the relief that floods his body when he recognizes the voice.

"Senior Wei!" One of the disciples chirp. "It's a bunny!"

"A bunny?" Wei Ying repeats, confusion sounding in his melodious voice. "Don't lie! Lotus Pier doesn't have rabbits."

"It's true!" Another disciples yells back before lunging for Lan Wangji who just barely hops out of the way. "Look!"

Lan Wangji can feel his heart hammering painfully against his fragile ribcage and wonders if it'll give out before he makes it anywhere near Wei Ying. He looks for alternative escape routes, but the curious disciples still have him surrounded on all sides so he's left to keep himself low to the ground and on high alert for any sudden movement.

"Let me see!" Wei Ying says, breaking through the ring, and Lan Wangji quickly scrambles out of reach of the next young disciple to make a turn at him to launch himself at Wei Ying. His fear overriding any such embarrassment he might feel at the act.

“Oh!” Wei Ying cries in surprise as he awkwardly fumbles the rabbit Lan Wangji. He nearly falls back to the ground but Wei Ying just manages to get a proper hold on him and bring him into his chest.

“He didn’t do that for us!” One of the disciplines whines, pressing in close to try and grab him. “Let us see!”

“You’re going to scare him!” Wei Ying scolds, lifting Lan Wangji up and away from them. “You have to keep quiet around rabbits!”

Like you’re ever quiet. Lan Wangji thinks to himself as he tries to slow his racing heart.

“Let’s have a look at you.” Wei Ying says when the children around him have calmed down, bringing Lan Wangji in close to meet his gaze head on. For a moment, when their eyes meet, Lan Wangji entertains a ridiculous hope that Wei Ying will recognize him for who he is. This - *ridiculous!* - hope is crushed when Wei Ying grins at him and says, “You’re a big one, aren’t ya? Plenty of meat for roasting!”

Ah. Lan Wangji’s numb mind remembers. *Wei Ying likes rabbit meat.*

The group around them is then divided, half demanding a piece of him while the other half drowns them out with distressed cries of, “Don’t eat him!”

Wei Ying’s bright laughter filters through all this noise and Lan Wangji weakly lifts his head to meet the smiling face of his captor. He could run, but he finds himself too exhausted to try.

“Don’t worry, don’t worry!” Wei Ying says to the bickering disciples as he stands and motions for them to finish up. “I want to show Shijie first. We’ll decide what to do with him after.”

This does little to quell the disciples’ shouts.

“If you don’t want him, can I have him?”

“I want to try rabbit meat, I haven’t had it before!!”

“Yeah, I’m tired of fish!”

“He’s wild, we should release him!”

The noise is too much for Lan Wangji’s sensitive ears and they fall back to press into his body as he squishes into Wei Ying’s arms. A dopey part of him is almost grateful to have at least learned what it’s like to be in them before his untimely death.

Thankfully, when they reach Lady Jiang, the disciples have been called away for other duties and it’s just the three of them seated at a low table in one of the mansion’s courtyards.

“He just hopped into your arms?” Lady Jiang asks with wonder, tracing another finger down Lan Wangji’s back. He wiggles away from it out of instinct but she’s isn’t offended. Instead,

she smiles at him again and gently taps his forehead before returning her attention to her brother.

“Yup! Probably trying to get away from all the noise!” Wei Ying replies with a laugh. “Silly rabbit!” he grins, picking up and holding a, now rather affronted, Lan Wangji under his front paws, leaving his back legs to dangle helplessly.

“I wonder...” Lady Jiang hums softly, catching Wei Ying’s attention.

“What is it, Shijie?” He asks, immediately enraptured.

“Do you think... Could he be someone’s pet?” She asks, moving so she can sit beside Wei Ying and also look at Lan Wangji’s face. “I doubt a wild rabbit would leap into someone’s arms, no matter how frightened. And see how relaxed he is with you? He has to be used to humans.”

“O-Oh...” Wei Ying stumbles, likely remembering his earlier plan to *roast him* .

“What are you going to do with him?” Lady Jiang asks when Wei Ying doesn’t offer up any more to the conversation.

“Well,” an awkward laugh. “I was going to cook him.”

“A-Xian!” She scolds. Lightly, but the feeling is there.

“I didn’t think he was someone’s pet!! Don’t worry, Shijie, I won’t cook him! If he really does belong to someone, we should probably help him get home, huh? Maybe I’ll bring him around tomorrow and ask at some of the farms!” Wei Ying seems to brighten at the idea and Lan Wangji feels himself finally relax when Wei Ying turn’s his (beautiful) grin back onto him. “What do you think, little rabbit? Want to go home?”

Yes . Lan Wangji thinks and startles himself when a small squeak actually sounds out of him. Wei Ying looks stunned for a moment before breaking into a fit of laughter.

“I’ll take that as a ‘yes’ then! Come on then, little rabbit! Let’s get you some food, okay? Can’t bring you home hungry, now can I!”

They bid Lady Jiang goodbye, but only after Wei Ying promises her he isn’t bringing him to the kitchens to cook him—much to Lan Wangji’s relief—and Wei Ying hums cheerfully as he carries Lan Wangji down the numerous turns that seem to make up his home. It is quite beautiful, Lan Wangji admits, as he takes in the dark finished wood and swaying flowers, and he can understand why Wei Ying boasted about it so loudly back in Cloud Recesses.

Wei Ying greets the kitchen staff with his usual amount of cheer and they receive him with both kind smiles and playful scoldings as he sweeps in, swiping at several dishes they’re busy preparing. One even threatens him with a ladle, but it’s clear they’re hardly serious about it, with their barely hidden grin and Wei Ying’s smug smirk.

“Do you have anything for rabbits?” He asks, falling onto a stool with practiced ease. The servant who had brandished the ladle against him turns with a raised brow.

“You mean, something that will go well with rabbit?” He eyes Lan Wangji as he speaks and Lan Wangji only just manages to hold in an offered grunt, turning his gaze away. His vision suddenly goes a little dark as Wei Ying drops a hand over his head and ears, pinning them down lightly. A futile effort to keep Lan Wangji from hearing. An effort Lan Wangji finds inexplicably adorable.

“No!” Wei Ying cries, aghast despite having the same plan not twenty minutes earlier. “I *mean*, do you have anything I could *feed* him! We’re not cooking him!”

“Too bad,” the same servant sighs. Lan Wangji can only imagine the look on his face. “Rabbit is delicious in stews.”

“Why don’t you feed him a lotus leaf or something?” A younger servant asks. “They eat leaves and stuff, don’t they?”

Lan Wangji would frown had he the muscles. A rabbit’s diet is more complex than *leaves and stuff*, but unfortunately for him, it’s all Wei Ying has to go on and he jumps back up with a shout, darting off to grab exactly that.

Twenty minutes later finds Wei Ying sprawled on his stomach, lotus stalk and leaf in hand, brandishing it towards an indifferent Lan Wangji who keeps his back turned and sets to work trying to clean himself. Wei Ying whines and wiggles the leaf, trying to tempt him, but Lan Wangji adamantly refuses. He will not eat a *leaf*. Wei Ying sighs in defeat.

“You know who I wish was here, little rabbit?” He asks him softly, still gently waving the lotus leaf in his direction. Lan Wangji pauses in his cleaning to look over at him, one ear flicking to indicate he is listening. “Lan Zhan.”

Lan Wangji’s heart nearly stumbles out of his chest.

“Do you know Lan Zhan, little rabbit?” Wei Ying asks him, an adorable smile growing on his face. “He’s my friend. He’s a really good cultivator from Gusu who’s *almost* better at sword fighting than me. *Almost*.” Lan Wangji remains still, his mind still working on the phrase ‘He’s my friend.’ “I gave him two rabbits once. He pretended he didn’t want them but then he wouldn’t let me take them back! He’s funny like that. I bet you he loves rabbits but just didn’t want to admit it.”

Here, Wei Ying leans further onto his arm, stretching it out just a bit more to try and entice Lan Wangji with the leaf in his hand. When Lan Wangji, still frozen at Wei Ying’s confession, doesn’t move, he sighs and continues.

“If Lan Zhan were here, he’d know what to do with you.” Wei Ying says decisively and Lan Wangji feels a sense of joy at his belief in him. Even over such a mundane activity. “He’s good with rabbits. ...Probably. He’s good at a lot of things.”

Lan Wangji swallows, the world finally slowing its rush around him, and takes two steps towards Wei Ying who perks up immediately.

“Are you finally hungry, little rabbit?” He grins, waving the leaf a bit more. While Lan Wangji will admit to the hunger in his stomach, he will not eat the leaf and moves past Wei Ying to head back towards the kitchen. Once there, he nudges at some of the other containers, to Wei Ying and the kitchen staff’s amusement. Eventually they find some vegetables that don’t bode ill for Lan Wangji’s sensitive stomach and Wei Ying is petting him lightly down his back as he eats.

“Don’t worry, Little Rabbit. If we don’t find your owner tomorrow, I’ll be sure to ask some farmers if they have any advice on taking care of you.”

Wei Ying takes him on a tour of Lotus Pier after Lan Wangji’s late lunch and Lan Wangji listens attentively to everything. Memorizing the turns and locations and all the stories Wei Ying has of them. It seems as though he has caused mischief in every corner of his home and Lan Wangji shakes his head at himself for being surprised.

They run into Jiang Wanyin training in one of the courtyards and neither are particularly invested in the introduction Wei Ying gives for them. Lan Wangji turning away when Jiang Wanyin tries to touch him.

“Why aren’t you cooking him? Don’t tell me Cloud Recesses turned you soft.” Jiang Wanyin huffs, pulling his arms across his chest in a defensive stance. A familiar stance. Lan Wangji vaguely recalls seeing the young man in it the few times Lan Wangji bothered to glance at the two boys that always seemed to trail Wei Ying during their time at Cloud Recesses.

“*Ha ha* .” Wei Ying mocks, shoving at his brother. “Shijie doesn’t want to cook him either! Besides he might belong to someone!”

“Yeah, and? They’ll probably just cook him too.”

“Not everyone eats rabbit! Lan Zhan doesn’t!”

Lan Wangji starts at his name and tilts his head up to look for Wei Ying’s face.

“Lan Wangji doesn’t eat any meat!” Jiang Wanyin says in rebuttal, “He doesn’t count.”

“*You* don’t count.” Wei Ying grumbles back before lifting Lan Wangji to face him again. “Come on, Little Rabbit! Let’s leave Mr. Grumpy—” “HEY!” “—to continue with his training! There’s still lots more places I can show you!”

Jiang Wanyin aims a kick at Wei Ying, who hops away from it with an overdramatic yelp, and the two of them continue with their tour. There are several areas they avoid out of politeness, Wei Ying dropping his voice when he points out Madam Jiang, whom he calls Madam Yu, out on her favourite pavilion. They also return to the younger disciples, out practicing their swordsmanship on a training field, and Lan Wangji is grateful they’re being

kept busy by Sect Leader Jiang as he's not sure he could handle much more of their chaos that day.

Wei Ying even shows him his "super secret spot!", a gorgeous and secluded pavilion off in a far corner of the mansion, surrounded by the quiet lapping of the pond and rustle of lotus flowers. It's not an area Lan Wangji would have thought Wei Wuxian would appreciate but he sees the peace and joy that flutters across Wei Ying's face as he tells Lan Wangji about how he enjoys coming here to rest or when he needs a break from Jiang Wanyin.

"Don't tell anyone about this place, okay?" Wei Ying tells him seriously, lifting him so they're eye to eye. Lan Wangji attempts what might look like a nod and Wei Ying grins at him. "Good!"

They rush back for dinner, Wei Ying dropping him off in his room with a quick apology. "I don't think Madam Yu would appreciate a rabbit at dinner!" he says while laughing. Lan Wangji understands and makes no fuss about being placed on the ground of Wei Ying's room. It's messy, which doesn't surprise him, but it's filled with notes and scrolls and books, so Lan Wangji finds himself still silently approving.

"I'll be back soon, okay? And I'll bring you some dinner too!"

Wei Ying gives him a small tap on his forehead before he's darting out of his room. Lan Wangji listens to him go—until his footsteps are too far to make out, his voice mixing too much with the other sounds that make of Lotus Pier—before taking his surroundings in properly. The room is modest but so incredibly *Wei Ying* that Lan Wangji's heart flutters in his chest at the very fact he's able to experience it.

He doesn't investigate too much, that would be invasive and impolite, and instead takes a respectful look around, hopping carefully over anything on the ground and tidying up some of the books out of habit.

When he completes his own mini tour, Lan Wangji settles onto one of the cushions that had fallen to the floor and begins to meditate, in hopes of finding a solution to his transformation. He's low on options, seeing as his golden core has been nullified, leaving him without his cultivation, and knows, despite the twitch his legs gives, he needs to inform Wei Ying of who he truly is in order to get the help he needs.

He's in the middle of deciding the best way of doing so when Wei Ying comes fumbling into the room, a collection of vegetables in his arms.

"Little Rabbit! I have dinner for you!" He sings out before he interrupts himself with a yelp, several of the items dropping to the floor. "You seemed so picky earlier so I got a few different things, okay? You gotta like at least *one* of them."

The gesture is so... so incredibly *sweet* that Lan Wangji's logic is quickly usurped by his heart and he quietly decides that keeping Wei Ying in the dark for a little while longer isn't too bad. Although, later, he briefly regrets his decision when Wei Ying prepares for bed and drops his robes without ceremony, leaving Lan Wangji to hastily turn his back to him in an embarrassed huff.

(Wei Ying, predictably, laughs at him.)

Lan Wangji is given a small makeshift bed for the night, a blanket that Wei Ying forms into a small nest atop a larger cushion, and Lan Wangji's eyes automatically droop when nine p.m. comes about, to Wei Ying's quiet amusement.

"Good night, Little Rabbit." A soft tap. "I hope you don't wake up too early."

The next morning, when Wei Ying finally wakes—Lan Wangji had awoken at his usual time but opted to let the sleeping Wei Ying lie, finding it too rude to try and disturb him—with as much cheer as ever, the duo have some breakfast and then immediately set out to wander the town. Looking for Lan Wangji's nonexistent owner.

They hardly make it past the front gate before Wei Ying is being distracted by the stalls loudly shouting their wares. Lan Wangji briefly recalls Wei Ying explaining to him that Lotus Pier is not at all disconnected from the town surrounding it. How many village children were actually allowed to join the disciples for certain exercises and how the frequent stall owners know almost all of them by name.

"Young Master!" A feminine voice cries and Lan Wangji can *feel* Wei Ying's body perk up. "Young Master, come try some of our watermelon! We already have some sliced up! It's sweet and delicious, perfect for a summer morning!"

"Sweet and delicious? Not nearly as sweet as you, I bet!" Wei Ying flirts and Lan Wangji has to hold himself back from leaping away. The stall owner giggles behind her hand and offers him a piece.

"Young Master is too kind! Please, try some! If you like, we can send some to Lotus Pier! Surely you need something delicious for after your hard training in this heat!"

Wei Ying makes an unrestrained sound of delight after he takes his first bite, dropping some of the juice onto Lan Wangji's head, who instinctively shakes it off. "Ahh, sorry, Little Rabbit! Would you like a bite?" Here Wei Ying does bring the watermelon close to him, and while Lan Wangji knows melons are safe for him to eat, he still turns his head away. "Full from breakfast, huh?"

"Your rabbit is so cute, Young Master!" The stall owner smiles, "What's his name?"

"Ahh, he's not mine!" Wei Ying laughs, "I found him at Lotus Pier. Do you know of any farmers that keep rabbits? I'm hoping to find his owner today."

"You could try in the northern part of town!" A stall owner working nearby shouts to them. "Heard they got all sorts of things up there."

“Really? Thank you!” Wei Ying replies, pausing to thank the girl who gave him his watermelon and to ask for her to send a few up to Lotus Pier later in the afternoon. “All right! Let’s go, Little Bunny!!”

Wei Ying’s stories continue as they weave through the bustling marketplace and through the just as bustling city. It’s a bit overwhelming for Lan Wangji as a rabbit, but Wei Ying makes sure to keep a firm grip on him and distracts him every so often by pulling off the street to show him a tavern or inn or store he frequents.

“When Lan Zhan visits me, I want to bring him here!” Wei Ying says of a peaceful looking restaurant, with modest decorations and pleasant looking staff. “I heard they have really good vegetarian options, and since he doesn’t eat meat, I figured this would be the best spot!” When Lan Wangji looks up in his shock— *Wei Ying, you’ve thought this far ahead?* —he sees just how excited Wei Ying is at the simple *prospect* of him visiting. This excitement dims to a more flustered and closed off expression after a moment. “Although, I guess I should say *if* he visits. He’s so mean to me, Little Rabbit! I told him to come play with me at Yunmeng and he turned me down! Even after I told him about all the pretty girls!”

Lan Wangji wants to bite him, but holds back on account of the small spark of guilt that comes at this confession. It’s not as though Lan Wangji had even been entirely sure why he reacted so vehemently back then, only gaining a proper grasp of his feelings once Wei Ying left. (And with the patient help from his brother.)

“Maybe I’ll just have to go drag him from Gusu myself!” Wei Ying chirps suddenly, bouncing Lan Wangji in his arms. “Come on, we’re almost at the farms!”

They have no luck, naturally, but a few farmers do eye Lan Wangji with an appraising look and make Wei Ying several offers to buy him. Whether they want him for show or food, Lan Wangji does not care and adamantly refuses to budge from Wei Ying’s arms whenever a farmer expresses any interest.

“A loyal bunny, aren’t you?” Wei Ying asks him as they begin to trek back to Lotus Pier, holding him up under his small rabbit arms. “That last farm looked very nice, and the farmer even promised not to eat you! Look how happy her other bunnies were! But you wouldn’t even give her a glance, you bad, bad boy!” Lan Wangji wriggles and avoids making eye contact. “Oh well! I guess we’ll just have to try again tomorrow, huh? Hope you don’t mind keeping me company again, Little Rabbit!”

Lan Wangji does not mind in the least and ignores his own reminder of having to tell Wei Ying the truth.

They spend the next two days like this, wandering the markets—Wei Ying sharing the food Lan Wangji knows won’t bother his stomach too much—and then the farms looking for

someone Lan Wangji knows they will not find. The guilt that had started to build in his heart begins to drag more as Lan Wangji takes notice of the exhaustion in Wei Ying's eyes.

He gives in to it at one point, nearly letting himself be taken by a farmer who offhandedly mentions he makes frequent trips to Gusu, reasoning he could simply hide and make his way home that way. However, after only two bounds towards the farm and farmer, Wei Ying suddenly startles and snatches Lan Wangji off the ground; bringing him in close and stumbling over an apology.

"S-Sorry, I, uh, just remembered I have another farm to check out! Goodbye!"

Wei Ying doesn't explain why he takes Lan Wangji back, and they don't visit anymore farms that day either, Wei Ying determinedly making his way home with Lan Wangji tight in his grasp. Lan Wangji can't find it in himself to complain and selfishly takes this time to bury his head in the crook of Wei Ying's neck.

Upon arrival back at Lotus Pier they run into Jiang Wanyin studying in one of the courtyards so Wei Ying releases a dramatic sigh and lands with a huff next to his brother.

"Do you still have that rabbit?" Jiang Wanyin asks, after greeting Wei Ying with a grunt, wrinkling his nose at Lan Wangji.

"Yeah? What about it?" Wei Ying replies, a touch defensive, curling one arm around the seated Lan Wangji.

Jiang Wanyin rolls his eyes and doesn't reply, so Wei Ying slouches onto the table, evidently in need of a nap. Lan Wangji decides to take this time to clean himself. He makes the mistake of keeping his back to Jiang Wanyin, who he learns does not take his eyes off him.

"What's so great about rabbits anyways?" He asks suddenly and Lan Wangji is mid turn when he feels rough fingers grab at the nape of his neck and haul him up off the table. It's either this movement or the strangled cry Lan Wangji unwillingly gives that catches Wei Ying's attention and he's snapping forward to try and grab him back immediately.

"Jiang Cheng!" He says in warning but his brother appears indifferent, easily dodging any attempts Wei Ying makes at taking Lan Wangji back. One particularly close reach pushes him to his feet and he moves away from Wei Ying and closer to the water's edge.

"Can rabbits swim?" Jiang Wanyin asks offhandedly, staring between the wriggling Lan Wangji and the water with a curious expression. Lan Wangji's heart rate quickly increases and he lets out a small squeal without meaning to.

"Would you give him back!" Wei Ying snaps, nearing outrage, lunging forward to try and snatch at Lan Wangji again. "I don't know if they can and I don't want to find out if they can't!"

Jiang Wanyin is obviously startled by his brother's aggression and this morphs his expression into one of anger as he holds Lan Wangji out of reach—and above the tranquil waters that surround Lotus Pier.

“What’s the big deal? It’s just a stupid rabbit! They’re not real pets, they’re food!”

“You’re gonna be food if you don’t give him back to me!” Wei Ying shouts back at him, pitch rising a bit when Lan Wangji lets out another unbidden squeal, his wriggling increasing the longer Jiang Wanyin holds him at his neck. “Jiang Cheng, I am warning you!”

There’s a moment, in the brief silence, that Lan Wangji worries Jiang Wanyin really will drop him in the water and he finds himself stupidly thinking about how of all people to bring his demise, it’s *him*. Finally, after what feels like forever, Jiang Wanyin gives up on tormenting him and grumpily drops him back into Wei Ying’s arms. Lan Wangji may allow himself to briefly cuddle in closer, burying himself in Wei Ying’s chest, taking in the unique scent that is Wei Ying, as he feels his heart begin to slow and warm arms hold him in close.

“Poor little rabbit!” Wei Ying soothes, gently running his fingers down Lan Wangji’s back. “Was mean ol’ Jiang Cheng bullying you? Don’t worry, I’ll beat him up!”

“Just try me!” Jiang Wanyin scoffs. “I thought you were looking for its owner?”

“I am!” Wei Ying replies with a small pout. “I just... haven’t found them yet.”

“Whatever. I don’t see why you care so much about it.” Jiang Wanyin tosses back his robes to settle back down at the table he had been reading at.

“You’re just jealous ‘cause he doesn’t like you!” Wei Ying replies with a huff, turning his back to his brother.

“You...!” Jiang Wanyin starts before reigning himself in with a grumble. “You better hurry it up, I doubt Mom will let you keep goofing off around town with it much longer.”

Lan Wangji feels Wei Ying still but can’t read the expression on his face when he looks for it.

They return to Wei Ying’s room and Wei Ying takes to sprawling across his floor with a distant look. Lan Wangji tries to push at him, hoping Wei Ying will reveal what is wrong, but he instead regrettably learns that even the chattiest person can fall silent. It persists until dinner, when all Lan Wangji is given is a soft tap on his forehead and the quiet promise of some food later. The silence that invades Wei Ying’s room feels oppressive and Lan Wangji feels a restless and anxious energy build up in him. He doesn’t remember the room not carrying at least an echo of Wei Ying’s laugh.

I’m fine, I’m fine~ Wei Ying would say, shrugging him off if Lan Wangji were even able to question him and his heart clenches at the thought.

He hops for him immediately when Wei Ying returns, but the smile that greets him is dim as Wei Ying deposits the assortment of vegetables and fruit on the table for him. He then returns to his position on the floor, ignoring the world. With a brief twitch of his nose, Lan Wangji hops onto the table to look through the offerings. He knows Wei Ying isn’t fond of raw vegetables, but perhaps a fruit...

He makes a pleased noise when he finds a plum that he promptly pushes at with his nose, rolling it off the table. Wei Ying doesn't even twitch. Lan Wangji then slowly and carefully rolls the fruit to Wei Ying's hand, bumping it against him. Wei Ying's fingers curl around it instinctively, but he doesn't do anything with it, so Lan Wangji delivers a small nip to his pinkie to get his attention.

"Ah!?" Wei Ying sits up with a jolt. Lan Wangji blinks up at him plainly when Wei Ying looks at him, rather offended. "Little Rabbit? What was that for?" He doesn't seem to realize the plum is in his hand until he tries to pet Lan Wangji, and it's here his expression widens with wonder. "Is... Is this for me?"

He offers the plum back to Lan Wangji who nudges it back towards him, affirming it as a gift.

"Oh." Wei Ying says, staring at it. Lan Wangji continues to wait patiently. Soon, he is rewarded with a wide grin breaking across Wei Ying's face and Wei Ying falling to the ground near him to gather Lan Wangji up close to his face. "Ah!!! Little Rabbit!! You're so cute!!! Giving me a plum! Did you want to make me feel better? Thank you, Little Rabbit!!! I love you!"

Lan Wangji can't help the rush of emotions that flood him at this profession. He *knows* Wei Ying believes he's speaking to a simple rabbit, but the words make a home so quickly in Lan Wangji's heart, the surge of affection rising up and over his previous anxiety so easily that he can't help but vibrate in Wei Ying's hold. Wei Ying, who releases him with a loud laugh and a small apology for squeezing him. Wei Ying, who probably doesn't even realize how big of a gift he's just given.

Lan Wangji's rabbit body is ill-fit to deal with the emotions Wei Ying has ignited and as soon as he's released from Wei Ying's hug, Lan Wangji begins to leap and bound around the room. It's incredibly embarrassing, being so happy over something so simple and showing it in such an extravagant way, but Lan Wangji is unable to stop himself. Wei Ying's laughter follows his racing and once he's worn himself out, Wei Ying's hands are gentle as they lift him and put him back near his food.

After, Lan Wangji is pleased to find Wei Ying in a considerably better mood. The other now chatting idly to Lan Wangji as he sorts through some papers, explaining his plans for new talismans he wishes to create. Lan Wangji is happy to listen to him, settled in his own bed, until nine comes around and his eyes fall shut of their own accord.

(Wei Ying notices he's stopped listening almost an hour later.)

"Where is your owner, little bunny?" Wei Ying sighs softly at him, with a light touch that just barely rouses Lan Wangji from his rest. In this drowsy state, Lan Wangji simply noses and licks at Wei Ying's fingers in what's almost a greeting before nuzzling his way underneath his hand, safe and content. He falls asleep again before he can hear what Wei Ying says next.

The next morning Lan Wangji begins his new attempt of trying to fix Wei Ying's sleeping schedule, hopping onto his bed next to his pillow to push at his face and nibble at his fingers. Wei Ying wakes slowly, groggy, and Lan Wangji easily hops away from his searching hands. With a groan, Wei Ying forces his eyes open to properly locate and grab Lan Wangji, who he lifts over his sleeping body.

"Ahh, little rabbit, little rabbit!" Wei Ying sings at him, all drowsy and slow and adorable, gently swinging him in his hands. "Come to wake me up~ And from such a good dream!" He drops his tune for the scolding, bringing Lan Wangji in close to his face to reprimand him—which is hardly a punishment for Lan Wangji. "What is it then? Are you hungry? I left you food so you *wouldn't* do this, you know!"

Lan Wangji just stares at him with unblinking eyes, one ear flicking as it sorts through the quiet of Lotus Pier. A wide grin begins to grow on Wei Ying's face as the staring contest continues, until it's breaking with a giggle and Wei Ying is nuzzling their foreheads together.

Wei Ying?! Lan Wangji starts, heartbeat rising rapidly.

"You know who you remind me of, little rabbit?" Wei Ying asks with a delighted but shy smile. He actually pauses, as if he expects Lan Wangji to answer. "Lan Zhan!" Lan Wangji's breath stutters to a stop. "You have his pretty eyes, little bunny! Golden, like the summer sun or autumn leaves or... whatever the poets says."

Here, Wei Ying pauses with a blush. Perhaps flustered by his poetry attempt. To Lan Wangji, whose heart is still fluttering over the fact Wei Ying thinks his eyes are pretty, the attempt is the most beautiful thing he's ever heard.

"He would also wake me up, you know. And scold me for sleeping so late!" Wei Ying continues with a huff, ignoring the blush on his face. "In Gusu, you have to wake up at five a.m. Five, Little Rabbit! Can you believe that? I don't know how Lan Zhan does it every day."

If you went to bed at a reasonable hour it would be much easier.

"I guess I could go to bed earlier, huh?" Wei Ying laughs and Lan Wangji has a ridiculous moment where he thinks Wei Ying has heard him. "At least, that's probably what Lan Zhan would say."

Wei Ying interrupts himself with a loud yawn, then stretches and rolls over to one side, curling his arms and body around the rabbit Lan Wangji with a sleepy hum. "Just five more minutes, okay, Little Rabbit? Then we'll get up. Just... five more..."

Lan Wangji wants to object, truly, but the steady, soothing pattern of Wei Ying's breathing rings like a lullaby in his ears and, for the first time in his life, Lan Wangji decides to sleep in.

They don't return to the farms that day. Or the day after. Or the day after that. Instead, Wei Ying refocuses his attention on Lotus Pier, practising with Jiang Wanyin (who pretends he is not happy with the company) or helping the younger disciples with their training. Although, Lan Wangji thinks, as he watches the disciples scatter into the water from an outraged Lady Yu, it seems like he only helps them to get into trouble.

(Wei Ying like smuggles him in whenever he's sent to kneel and Lan Wangji is both happy to keep him company and annoyed at how flippantly Wei Ying treats his punishments.)

He keeps Lan Wangji with him at all times, which Lan Wangji is grateful for, and takes to boasting about how well-behaved "his rabbit" is when he sees how patiently Lan Wangji will wait for him wherever he is. Jiang Wanyin, of course, immediately takes to refuting this, shouting, "He's not your stupid rabbit!" but this claim goes quieter and quieter as the days wear on.

One evening, they decide to go looking for fireflies with Lady Jiang. She gives the drowsy Lan Wangji an affectionate pat that he weakly acknowledges, as it's already past his bedtime, and smiles as she listens to Wei Ying's newly acquired stories about him.

The group they amassed decides to pause at the collection of stalls just outside, and Lan Wangji finally gives in and nips at Wei Ying when he spends just a moment too long flirting with a pretty worker. This does not work in Lan Wangji's favour, unfortunately, as it only earns Wei Ying a round of rambunctious laughter—at his expense—and a free dumpling from said pretty worker. Wei Ying then *persists* with his flirting so Lan Wangji wiggles free from his arms to sulk in Lady Jiang's instead.

The group laughs again, one disciple grinning as they say, "I think your rabbit broke up with you!" to Wei Ying's chagrin and distressed cries. Lan Wangji makes sure to then refuse any food offered to him by Wei Ying, but accept small bites from Lady Jiang or the other disciples. He even lets Jiang Wanyin tap his nose.

"Little Rabbit!" Wei Ying wails, latching onto his brother in a dramatic fit. "How could you do this to me!"

Jiang Wanyin actually pats his back in sympathy.

"Come on, you would have had to leave him with JieJie to catch fireflies anyways."

They spend, in Lan Wangji's opinion, far too long catching the small insects, and he nearly falls asleep in Lady Jiang's arms on three different occasions. When the disciples take to happily trying to shove as many as they can into a paper lantern they bought earlier Lan Wangji returns to Wei Ying's hold, happy to drift off.

"Shijie..." Wei Ying asks quietly as they begin to make the trek back, listening to the loud shouts of Jiang Wanyin further head, as the younger disciples crowd him. "Do you think they

have fireflies in Gusu?” Lady Jiang shakes her head, unsure. “I don’t think they would. It’s so cold up there at night!! You’re lucky you didn’t have to live there.”

She only smiles. A knowing one, one that Lan Wangji often saw on his brother’s face when speaking with him.

“Do you think Lan Zhan has ever seen fireflies?” Wei Ying asks, with an unnecessary amount of urgency. “He needs to! They’re so pretty!” A huff. “I really just need to go drag Lan Zhan away from Gusu and bring him to Lotus Pier! I told him I’d treat him to all sorts of things if he came to play with me and he still refused. Don’t you think he’s mean, Shijie?”

“What was Second Master Lan thinking,” Lady Jiang teases, tucking her hand into the crook of Wei Ying’s arm. “Turning down our A-Xian!”

They continue to speak as they walk through the night air. It is not as cool as it would be in Gusu, but Lan Wangji still presses closer into Wei Ying’s warmth. He has indeed seen fireflies before, thanks to his brother, but he would watch them a million times more if he meant watching them beside Wei Ying.

It’s like a dream, being able to spend this time with him. It’s making it harder and harder for Lan Wangji to dredge up the energy he needs to break it and admit to Wei Ying who he is. And, with the more Wei Ying shares with him, the more Lan Wangji begins to blindly hope a solution will simply pop out of the air, leaving him with his body and Wei Ying none the wiser.

It is not kind of Lan Wangji, but he is selfish and so very far gone.

It’s been just under two weeks since Lan Wangji found himself living as a rabbit, and he’s dozing lazily beside a languid Wei Ying, the heat stealing any energy they may try to round up, when the dream finally comes to an end.

“A-Xian!” Lady Jiang calls, knocking lightly at his door. Wei Ying perks up immediately. “Zewu-Jun is here!”

“Eh?” Wei Ying replies as Lan Wangji blinks. *Brother...?* “Zewu-Jun is here?” He quickly scrambles to his feet and nearly forgets to grab Lan Wangji before stumbling out of his room. Lan Wangji finds himself feeling a bit miffed. Since when is Wei Ying so fond of his brother...?

Lady Jiang just smiles at him.

“He’s in the front room! He’s asking for you.”

"Hah? Me? Why?"

“He didn’t say.” She says, shaking her head before tapping at his nose with a fond look. “But you shouldn’t keep him waiting.”

Wei Ying bids his sister goodbye with a bright grin before quickly darting down the hall that led to the entrance. Wei Ying is practically vibrating as they make their way down the, now incredibly familiar, twists and turns that make up the sprawling mansion of Lotus Pier. Lan Wangji knows they’re close when Wei Ying can’t seem to contain himself anymore and rushes for the door.

“Zewu-Jun!” Wei Ying beams, giving him a formal salute, with Lan Wangji still in his hands. Lan Wangji gives a small huff, ignoring the burn of jealousy he feels climbing into his heart. “Welcome!” Wei Ying continues to sound overly cheerful, and Lan Wangji keeps his gaze pointed petulantly to the ground when Wei Ying brings him back in towards his chest.

“Is...?” Wei Ying begins to ask and Lan Wangji can feel his body shift - Wei Ying often expressed himself with the entirety of his body - as he seems to look around the room, as if expecting someone else. When he speaks again - a soft, “Oh...” - disappointment now floods him, which catches Lan Wangji’s attention.

“Young Master Wei,” he hears his brother say, and Lan Wangji realizes with a jolt just how tired he sounds. “It’s good to see you are well.”

“Ah, yes! You as well, Zewu-Jun...” The delight that had been previously shining has dimmed rapidly, his tone now sounding almost overly polite in comparison. “How can I help you?”

“I was wondering if Wangji was with you, truth be told.” His brother admits and Lan Wangji peeks over at him, shame pricking at his heart. He’s sure his brother looks perfectly composed to any who would glance upon him, but Lan Wangji *knows* his brother, and he knows how to find the shadows under his eyes and the tightness in his face.

“Lan Zhan?” Wei Ying asks with a startled sound. “Why would Lan Zhan be here? I thought he’d be with you.”

A pained look flashes briefly on his brother’s face and Lan Wangji finds himself torn between guilt and the spark of hope that ignites as he wonders if the reason Wei Ying had been so excited to see his brother had been because he expected Lan Wangji to be with him as well.

“Unfortunately... I don’t know where Wangji is. He went out to eradicate a ghoul that fled from Gusu into your territory and hasn’t returned. I followed his tracks and found both Bichen and Wangji, his guqin, but...” His brother releases a sigh here and Lan Wangji presses further into Wei Ying’s arms, a weak attempt at hiding. “I told him to ask for help from the Yunmeng sect if he needed it so I hoped...”

“Lan Zhan is missing?” Wei Ying asks after a moment of silence, something new in his tone. Lan Xichen nods and it’s here Lan Wangji catches his attention. “We have to find him!” Wei Ying says in a sudden burst, jumping forward as if to grab Lan Xichen and drag him off to do just that.

“I will be able to handle it,” His brother replies, his tone distracted as he tries to look at Lan Wangji. “Young Master Wei, may I inquire about your rabbit?”

“My...?” Wei Ying replies dumbly, gaze dropping to Lan Wangji who is still working hard at avoiding his brother’s eyes. “I? I found him a couple weeks ago... I think he’s someone’s pet but I haven’t been able to find his owner... Why?”

“May I see him?”

“He doesn’t let a lot of people hold him but I guess...?”

Lan Xichen smiles at Wei Ying when he takes Lan Wangji into his arms, who only gives a token protest, and when their eyes meet, Lan Wangji knows he’s been found out. There is no one better able to read him than his brother, after all, and Lan Wangji finds himself feeling relieved when he doesn’t see any anger in his brother’s eyes, only relief at his well being.

“Zewu-Jun...?” Wei Ying hesitantly interrupts. “If you don’t mind, could you give me more information of the case Lan Zhan was following? And where you found his things, so I know where to start looking.”

“You’ll help me find him?” His brother asks, holding back a small smirk as he continues to stare at Lan Wangji, who finds himself grateful the hot embarrassment he feels crawling up his skin isn’t visible.

“Of course!” Wei Ying replies, a bit offended. Even more so when his brother can’t contain a disbelieving laugh. “Zewu-Jun!”

“I apologize, Young Master Wei.” Lan Xichen says as he hands Lan Wangji back over to him. “I am just happy to know Wangji has such good friends. It’s good to know there are others who care for him.”

“O-oh!” Wei Ying falters, almost fumbling with Lan Wangji. “Of course!”

“Has something happened to Second Master Lan...?” Lady Jiang asks, a servant sliding open the door for her so she may enter with a tray of tea.

Wei Ying leaps to her side almost immediately to explain the situation to her. He wants to leave right away, and Lan Wangji is both touched and embarrassed by this, but he’s soothed by his sister and Lan Xichen into waiting until tomorrow, so they could take their time to plan it. Wei Ying seems doubtful, and Lady Jiang has to make him promise numerous times not to leave in the middle of the night.

The next morning, Wei Ying is up earlier than Lan Wangji has ever seen before and starts packing as soon as his feet hit the floor, having distracted himself the night before prepping his talismans. He nearly forgets Lan Wangji for a second time in his haste, and tries to shoo him back into the room with promises of sending him breakfast but Lan Wangji refuses. It’s *his* search party after all. In another first, Wei Ying actually expresses some irritation towards him, impatience running him thin, and gives in with a groan and a threat to be left with Jiang Wanyin if he started causing too much trouble.

“Zewu-Jun!” Wei Ying cries when he sees him, waving him down from his spot at the entrance. Lan Xichen gives him a small look of surprise. “Are you ready to go?”

A brief flash of sympathy crosses Lan Xichen’s face and Lan Wangji knows it is time for him to leave.

“I truly appreciate your willingness to help me with this, Young Master Wei,” Lan Xichen starts slowly, voice taking a soothing tone, “But it seems it won’t be necessary.”

Wei Ying centres his stance as faces Lan Xichen, almost bristling.

“I received some news on Wangji’s whereabouts,” Lan Xichen explains, easing into a genuine smile. He is not lying, but evading details. “He doesn’t seem to be in any trouble and I’m heading off now.”

Wei Ying is reluctant to let go, his body clinging to the adrenaline that had been ignited. After a few slow moments, Wei Ying awkwardly sways and asks, “Are you sure...?”

“Yes.” Lan Xichen says, and Lan Wangji knows they can both hear the note of finality in it. “There’s no need to worry.”

“All right...” Wei Ying concedes with a sigh. Lan Wangji wishes he could offer more at this moment, wishes he could stay to comfort Wei Ying after his brother leaves, but he knows his best—and only—option is to leave as well.

“Another thing,” his brother says gently, “Could I take your rabbit?”

Wei Ying stares at him, stunned.

“Hah?” He asks loudly, covering Lan Wangji with one of his arms like he does when Jiang Wanyin makes too many rude comments about his ears.

“I thought I recognized him the other day.” Lan Xichen explains with a smile. “I believe I know his owner and can bring him back to him when I go to fetch Wangji. If you don’t mind.”

“Oh. Uh. No... I guess not...” There’s an ache to Wei Ying’s words that breaks Lan Wangji’s heart. He gives a soft keen when Wei Ying lifts him so they’re eye to eye, sounding rather miserable but trying his best to hide it. “Bye bye, Little Rabbit. I’ll miss you. Be good, okay? Don’t run away anymore!”

Lan Wangji gives a small nod of his head, not that it’ll be recognized and keeps Wei Ying’s gaze as he’s passed over to his brother. Lan Xichen bids Wei Ying goodbye, promising to inform him of Lan Wangji’s return, but it’s only once they’ve made it outside and Lan Xichen takes to his sword, that his brother speaks to him directly.

“Oh, Wangji... You really are too much.”

His punishment is light, considering the situation. Lan Wangji suspects his brother had something to do with it. The transformation hadn't been hard to undo, his brother tells him Wei Ying might have been able to do it himself, had he the tools and had he actually known who his "Little Rabbit" was. Lan Wangji pointedly turns away from his brother's amused smile when he says this.

After three days of punishment, and two lectures from his uncle, Lan Wangji meets his brother for breakfast, his first step in falling back into his usual routine.

His brother makes short work of that.

"You should go visit Young Master Wei, Wangji." Lan Xichen says once they've finished their meal and Lan Wangji has poured them both a cup of tea. Which Lan Wangji nearly spills over the table. "I'm sure he would appreciate knowing you're okay."

Lan Wangji can only stare at him. His brother offers him a gentle smile.

"Go see him, Wangji. I've already received permission from Uncle for you."

A slow breath. Lan Wangji gives a small nod and a deep salute.

"Thank you."

He packs quickly and only for a night. He doesn't expect to stay nearly as long as he did last time. As he leaves, he notices the stark difference between how the servants of Gusu treat him—distantly, respectfully, quietly—to how the servants of Lotus Pier treat Wei Ying, where they greet him with bright smiles and playful jibes. Lan Wangji attempts to greet one who hands him a small and modest lunch for his travels, but they startle so badly they nearly take off once they complete their job and Lan Wangji isn't entirely sure what to make of it.

His trip to Lotus Pier takes entirely too long and is staggeringly short. He walks by the now familiar stalls and nearly stops to buy one of Wei Ying's favourite treats. He backs out when he doesn't know how he would explain it away.

Lan Wangji gives his name at the entrance and is welcomed in immediately. The servant who receives him seems to believe he is then fine to be left alone and returns to his work, leaving Lan Wangji to pause awkwardly three steps into the Lotus Pier compound.

He is unaccustomed to travelling to other sects without his brother, or for any other reason beside cultivation business so he is incredibly out of his element. As he watches several other servants shoot him curious looks, he finds himself wondering what Wei Ying would do.

“Second Master Lan!” A familiar voice calls out and Lan Wangji turns to greet Lady Jiang as she approaches him, a sweet smile on her face. “You’re all right!”

She seems to be on her way out so Lan Wangji is grateful to be recognized.

“Are you here to see A-Xian?” She asks with a knowing smile and Lan Wangji feels himself jerk back a bit in surprise before he gives a shaky nod. “I’m glad! He was a mess when he heard you were missing. He’ll be happy to see you.” Another pause, Lan Wangji hopes the reddening of his ears isn’t visible. “Would you like me to take you to him?”

Lan Wangji almost denies the request, but he remembers he’s supposed to be a stranger to Lotus Pier so he instead thanks her and motions for her to lead.

She fills the air with gentle chatter. Not nearly as rambunctious as Wei Ying but not at all as jagged as Jiang Wanyin. Lan Wangji finds himself a bit off balance, unused to such easy conversation, but she doesn’t seem to mind, smiling the whole time they walk.

When they arrive at Wei Ying’s room, she brings her finger to her lips in a shushing motion, a mischievous look in her eyes that reminds Lan Wangji so much of Wei Ying, before she reaches up to knock lightly on the door.

“A-Xian? Are you in there?” A brief moment of silence follows her call, then, a rustling sound comes from the other side along with a low groan. “You have a guest. May we come in?”

“A guest...?” Wei Ying repeats, his voice low and groggy from sleep. “Uh, ah.. sure... just a second, Shijie!” Lady Jiang shares with Lan Wangji a small giggle as they listen to the obvious sounds of Wei Ying quickly tossing his room into some semblance of order. “Come in!”

She motions for him to go ahead and Lan Wangji hopes she doesn’t notice the tremor in his hands as he opens the door to Wei Ying’s room. Wei Ying is in the middle of shoving some of his papers off the sparse chairs he has in his room when he looks up and freezes.

“Lan Zhan!” Wei Ying cries and Lan Wangji nearly stumbles at the obvious joy that radiates within those two words. “Lan Zhan, you’re okay!!” Wei Ying darts for him here and Lan Wangji recoils out of habit, but not by much, still giving Wei Ying a nod of acknowledgement when he stops and sways in front of him. “What are you doing here?”

“My brother told me to come.” Lan Wangji admits. “He told me it would be best to tell you of my return in person.”

“Oh!” Wei Ying almost seems to stumble. Almost seems disappointed. “Oh, well, I’m glad! I’m glad you’re okay, Lan Zhan! I can’t believe you went missing!! What happened!”

“A... miscalculation. It won’t happen again.”

“It better not! Otherwise, I’ll have to go scouring the whole countryside looking for you!” A light flush grows on Wei Ying’s cheeks that entrances Lan Wangji for a moment. “How long

are you here for?”

“I...” Lan Wangji falters. “Not long. I’ll likely leave after greeting Sect Leader Jiang and Madam Yu.”

“Hah?! You can’t leave so quickly! That’s not fair! You finally came to visit me! You can’t just leave!”

“A-Xian is right,” Lady Jiang pipes in with a smile. “Second Master Lan, it’s a far trip from Gusu. Please, spend a few days with us. I can tell mother and father of your arrival.”

“I should still greet them...” Lan Wangji tries, his voice finding an unfamiliar awkwardness. Wei Ying doesn’t seem to mind, however, still grinning when he grabs at Lan Wangji’s sleeve.

“Wait for me! I’ll go with you and then I can show you around, okay? Just one second! I’ll be quick!” Wei Ying pleads with him, fingers still twisted in Lan Wangji’s sleeve as he awaits his answer. Lan Wangji supposes it *is* the polite thing to do and eventually nods a confirmation, which earns him another blinding grin and Wei Ying hopping farther back into his room in a rush. “I’ll be super quick! I just need to change!”

“Hm?” Lan Wangji hums, brows furrowing briefly before his eyes snap wide open at Wei Ying practically *ripping* his robe open and off his shoulders. The, “Shameless!” that comes out next is one of habit and embarrassment and this time it’s Lady Jiang’s laughter that follows him as he quickly makes his way outside the room.

The Sect Leader and his wife are courteous to him and also extend the same welcome as their children, leaving Lan Wangji unable to regret it.

Wei Ying is grabbing him the moment they leave the elders’ view, face bright and enthralling. He draws Lan Wangji in easily, fingers curling around his arm, leaving a warmth that clings to Lan Wangji’s skin.

“Come with me!” Wei Ying says and they’re already moving in tandem. “I want to show you around Lotus Pier!”

The tour is much the same as the one he had been given as a rabbit, with a few new stories peppered in and Wei Ying’s delighted face now glancing at Lan Wangji’s more frequently. Lan Wangji doesn’t respond with much more than a, “Mm.” but it’s enough for Wei Ying. He also asks a lot of questions, some of which he answers himself—“Do you swim Lan Zhan...? Ah, of course you swim!”—and has Lan Wangji promise he’ll go out with him in a boat at some point so they can pick lotus pods, waving him off when Lan Wangji tries to object with, “Don’t they belong to someone?”

They also run into Jiang Wanyin and, once more, both are polite but disinterested in the greeting Wei Ying makes for them.

“Mom wants to know where you plan on putting Lan Wangji.” Jiang Wanyin says in a huff, obviously displeased at playing messenger.

“He can stay in my room!” Wei Ying replies quickly and Lan Wangji turns to him, startled. Wei Ying meets his surprise with a sheepish grin. “Don’t worry, Lan Zhan! I’ll clean it up.”

“Why would he want to stay there?” Jiang Wanyin scowls. “Just put him in a guest room.”

“No!” Wei Ying’s rejection is swift, perhaps too much so as it earns him an odd look from his brother. “It’s fine! He can stay with me! Come on, Lan Zhan! There’s more to see!” He pulls on Lan Wangji before anyone can try to arrange any more protests, ignoring the shout of his name as they push onto one of Lotus Pier’s exits.

He brings Lan Wangji out to the stalls next, happily telling him which ones were best for which type of food, and protests whenever Lan Wangji attempts to pay.

“Uncle Jiang will cover it, don’t worry!” Wei Ying insists, shooing Lan Wangji’s hands away from the stall owners who confirm this with a laugh. Lan Wangji still frowns.

“I am a guest. It is rude.” He then forces the money into the stall owner’s hands and refuses to take it back. Wei Ying makes a great dramatic show of it, but Lan Wangji manages to just catch the delighted smile that blossoms on his face when Lan Wangji hands him the treat he had paid for.

In the end, they eat entirely too much and Lan Wangji feels as though he’s had more excitement in one day than he’s had in a collective year at home. He has to, regrettably, turn down Wei Ying’s offer to go for dinner at the restaurant he had mentioned when Lan Wangji had still been a rabbit, as he is genuinely too full to try and eat anymore.

“Sorry,” Wei Ying says shyly after the’ve returned to his room and Lan Wangji is finally resting at one of his desks. “I guess I got a little carried away.”

“It is fine.” Lan Wangji replies, trying not to let any of his weariness into his voice. Wei Ying, who had been attempting to begin tidying his room, falls into the seat across from Lan Wangji, with a new wave of, slightly hushed, excitement.

“Hey, Lan Zhan! Do you want to go out on the boats with me tomorrow? And then we can go out to eat after! What do you say?”

“Do you have lessons?” Lan Wangji inquires but Wei Ying pouts and weakly swats at him.

“Lan Zhan! This isn’t Gusu! It’s fine to play around a bit!”

“You will get in trouble.”

“I won’t, I won’t! I swear!” Wei Ying lifts three fingers to the sky as he promises before dropping them after a moment of hesitation. “Or, well, I won’t let *you* get into trouble for it.”

The next day Wei Ying does receive punishment (for “Wasting Second Master Lan’s time!” despite Lan Wangji’s protests) and this time Lan Wangji is unable to keep him company, so Lady Jiang invites him to sit with her and have tea as they wait for Wei Ying to finish kneeling.

It is quickly obvious he learned nothing from it and he drags Lan Wangji onto a boat almost immediately. They are also joined by a not quite sulking Jiang Wanyin, who takes his own boat, and several other enthusiastic disciples, who crowd another, despite Wei Ying’s objections. He then spends most of the outing distracted, exchanging quips with the juniors or tossing foliage at his brother. The only time Lan Wangji manages to capture his attention is when they both go to grab a lotus pod flung at them and off balance the boat, tipping it and sending them both straight into the water.

“Lan Zhan!” Wei Ying splutters as soon as they resurface. “Lan Zhan, are you alright!” There’s an obvious note of panic to his voice as he splashes his way over, but Lan Wangji is unable to answer him right away, coughing and wiping at his face as he reaches for the overturned boat. “Lan Zhan!”

“I am fine.” Lan Wangji manages eventually, blinking through the haze of water droplets caught on his eyelashes. He’s greeted with Wei Ying’s concerned face, a hair closer than close friends and entirely too close for casual acquaintances, and Lan Wangji is suddenly incredibly thankful for the cool water they’re submerged in.

“Good,” he says softly before shoving at Lan Wangji and laughing. “I can’t believe you tipped us over! Lan Zhan! What did I say when we got on the boat! Don’t tell me you weren’t listening!”

“Don’t lie, Senior Wei!” The disciples on the other boat shout, crowding to one edge but maintaining balance. “You moved too! It’s your fault too!”

Wei Ying make a sound of mock outrage before swimming towards them, threatening to tip them himself, but Jiang Wanyin interrupts him, shouting, “Turn your stupid boat over first, you *idiot* !”

They have to return to the docks, Lan Wangji admittedly uncomfortable in his watered down robes, with much less “treasure” than expected and the others scatter to different parts of Lotus Pier, leaving Lan Wangji and Wei Ying to try and dry themselves out in the midday sun.

Wei Ying happily strips down to his under robes, that he only keeps on for Lan Wangji’s sake, laying his outer robe out to dry more quickly. Lan Wangji refuses to remove his own, despite Wei Ying repeats assurances it would make the whole ordeal much easier. Wei Ying concedes to him, in the end, with a small huff.

“I got a rabbit, you know.” Wei Ying tells him suddenly, swinging his legs over the edge of the pier and startling Lan Wangji out of his meditative state. The sun is warm in Yunmeng, warmer than in Gusu, and while Wei Ying should be used to it, Lan Wangji notices the barest hint of a flush growing across his cheeks. “Well, had one.”

“Oh?” Lan Wangji replies, unable to think of anything else to say. He is well versed in the affairs of Wei Ying’s rabbit after all.

“Yeah. I found him around Lotus Pier and he lived with me for a couple weeks. He was really funny.” Wei Yin grins softly to himself and Lan Wangji blinks, wondering when he ever did anything Wei Ying might find humorous. “But, when your brother came to visit, he took him with him. I was very sad.”

“Oh.” Lan Wangji repeats. His hands curls in his lap and he wishes he had Wei Ying’s penchant for chatter.

“My rabbit had your eyes.” Wei Ying says in what’s almost a rush, kicking his legs even higher as he continues to avoid eye contact. “Very cute.”

“His eyes?”

“No, he—! Lan Zhan, was that a *joke*?” Wei Ying asks, briefly stunned before he erupts into laughter. “Well, yes, his eyes were very cute but *he* was also very cute. Possibly the cutest bunny ever. With very pretty eyes.”

Lan Wangji only replies with his customary, “Mm.” but as he listens to Wei Ying, he has to wonder how much of their conversations he’s misunderstood before. Had he only heard this part, he would not have guessed Wei Ying to be telling him that he found *his* eyes pretty too. He likely would have been miffed at being compared to a rabbit.

“How are the bunnies I gave you?” Wei Ying asks, leaning back to finally meet his gaze properly.

“They are well.” Lan Wangji tells him. “One is like you—“ “Oh?” “—As he likes to get into constant mischief.”

“Lan Zhan!” Wei Ying cries with a delighted shriek of laughter, ruining any attempt he might have at sounding annoyed. “I did more than cause trouble, you know!”

“I do not.” Lan Wangji replies, with the barest hint of a smile. The pounding of his heart is not painful for once, as it flutters and jumps in his chest when Wei Ying calls his name again, laughter bright on his lips, and knocks their shoulders together. He is warm, content. Wei Ying had called them friends before, many times in fact, and Lan Wangji wonders why he had taken so long to concede to the notion.

“I’m glad they’re well,” Wei Ying says softly when his laughter subsides. He’s sitting closer than before. “And I’m glad someone is there to get into trouble!” Another grin is gifted to Lan Wangji as Wei Ying turns his head and leans in. “And to keep you company, of course!”

Lan Wangji doesn’t reply, he only nods—they have been excellent company—and something in Wei Ying’s expression changes as he looks at him.

“You know, Lan Zhan...” he murmurs and Lan Wangji angles himself to face him more fully. “You really do have pretty eyes.”

Lan Wangji blinks, startled. Wei Ying's face is so close to him now, so open and warm and expressive, his soft lips gently parting as he watches Lan Wangji watch him. Lan Wangji rapidly recalls why befriending Wei Ying is a bad idea. He's struggling to keep his breathing even and it's taking every shred of his will power to keep his hands to himself. Such a basic lesson, taught so early on, and it's crumbling quickly under Wei Ying's continued presence.

"You *are* ranked second amongst the cultivators, after all." Wei Ying continues with a tease, although there's the same flush to his skin. Lan Wangji can hear him swallow. He fights to keep his eyes from trailing the movement. "Second most handsome out of all of us."

Lan Wangji frowns. This has always bothered him. "You are ranked fourth."

"Oh, so you *do* know about it!" Wei Ying sounds oddly delighted. "Well, do you agree? Do you think I'm handsome, Lan er gege~?"

Wei Ying is somehow even closer, head tilted and voice lilting. He looks a bit of a mess, hair untamed and robe falling open and Lan Wangji desperately wants to tell him how he finds him so much more than handsome. How he's the most beautiful person Lan Wangji has ever known. Magnificent. Kind. Caring. How his smile makes Lan Wangji feel like nothing else. How, if he were in charge of the list, Wei Ying would be ranked first and no other name would follow, as no other would be able to compare. But, he doesn't trust his leaden tongue, weighed down by the pressure of Wei Ying moving in so, so *close*, so he just says, "Yes."

Wei Ying seems to fall apart at this. Beautiful eyes widening at the admission, lips falling into an even wider 'O' as his breath stutters out. The pretty pink that had been growing on his face darkens to an alluring red and Lan Wangji's hands twitch from where they're clenched in his lap.

"O-Oh." Wei Ying stammers. Lan Wangji did not think he would ever have such an effect on him. "*Oh.*"

He's unable to continue, unable to tease Lan Wangji for such an admission, as three young disciplines find them and make short work of the air they had created.

"Senior Wei, Senior Wei!! There you are!!! Come shoot kites with us!!"

In an instant Wei Ying is stumbling out of his daze, body whipping around to face the newcomers with a loud, "Hah?!" spilling from his lips. Lan Wangji maintains his composure and his posture as he turns as well, both grateful and irritated at the interruption.

"Senior Jiang said he was too busy and to come bother you!" The tallest of the trio whines as Lan Wangji and Wei Ying stand and approach them. "Come on, Senior Wei! And Second Master Lan, you too!"

"Yeah!" One of the younger disciples chirp immediately. "You and Senior Wei should have a contest! Senior Wei is the best out of all of us, it'll be fun to see him lose!"

"Hey!" Wei Ying cries immediately, arms crossing into a defensive position. "What makes you think I'll lose to him?"

“Didn’t you say your sword fight was a draw?” Lan Wangji finds himself surprised that they know so much of their encounters. “Maybe this one will be too!”

“Yeah, or one where you lose *miserably* !” The tallest grins, looking extremely proud.

“I’ll show you!” Wei Ying cries, feigning a rush on the disciples who laugh as they run, Wei Ying trailing after them. Lan Wangji has the sneaking suspicion they’ve been tricked but Wei Ying seems excited so he elects to stay quiet and follow, gathering Wei Ying’s now dry robe as he does so.

They’re brought to where a group of disciples are shooting at kites and are welcomed with, what Lan Wangji believes to be, an unnecessary amount of exuberance.

“Are you Second Master Lan?” They ask him, awed and demanding. They circle around, similarly fascinated with him as they had been when Lan Wangji had been a rabbit, and no less loud. When he nods to confirm his identity, their excitement breaks out even more.

“No way! Senior Wei said you were handsome. Do you have lots of girlfriends then? Have you ever been on any dates? Senior Wei is always teaching us how to flirt with girls, do you have any tips?” The younger disciples are relentless in their questions, their words all blending together and making it hard for Lan Wangji to distinguish which question belongs to who. Although, he’s not sure he’d be much help anyways. In the end, he turns to Wei Ying for both help and clarity and finds the other looking slightly horrified.

“Would you all be quiet?” He hisses, leaping forward to shoo them away from Lan Wangji. “You’re worse than the housewives in the market! All this gossip! Gossip is forbidden, you know!”

“Says who?” One disciple huffs. Wei Ying whacks him on the head with Suiban.

“Says the GusuLan Sect!”

“We’re not *at* the GusuLan sect!” The same disciple replies, with a dramatic roll of his eyes. Lan Wangji can’t *imagine* where he learned such improper behaviour.

“Well, Lan Zhan is! And he always follows the rules you know!” Wei Ying says with finality and Lan Wangji finds himself curious to when this turned into a good thing. The disciplines groan around him and Wei Ying looks briefly pleased at having subdued them.

“Fine. Let’s have a contest then!! Senior Wei, if you win, Second Master Lan has to answer whatever question we ask! And, uh, if he wins he...” The young disciple falters with a frown, unsure of what to give Lan Wangji.

“Senior Wei has to do whatever Second Master Lan wants him to for a **WHOLE** day!” A female disciple pipes in, sounding absolutely delighted. Wei Ying does not.

“No!!” He wails, “Lan Zhan will make me study or train or something *boring* ! And why do I have to shoot for you? You’re the ones who want to ask him things!”

“But, you’re the best shooter out of all of us! Come on! You *have* to represent us! Unless...” another sly grin. “You think you’re going to LOSE?”

“Of course not!” Wei Ying cries, with mock outrage, snatching up a bow. “Just watch!”

Lan Wangji doesn’t recall agreeing but correctly assumes he has little choice when one disciple shyly hands him a bow to use as well. They release the kites and as both Lan Wangji’s and Wei Ying’s float farther and farther away, the younger disciples begin to shoot down their own. Lan Wangji compliments one with excellent form, gently tapping his shoulder to instruct him to relax it during his next shot, and is immediately hounded by the others afterwards, all evidently desperate for their own praise.

“Your kites are going to fly away!” Wei Ying shouts at them, annoyed. “What are you going to do? Your poor Gege can’t help *all* of you shoot!”

He tries to apologize for his disciples eagerness, but Lan Wangji can hear the affection he genuinely holds for them and shakes his head, insisting, “It is no trouble.”

Eventually, only Lan Wangji and Wei Ying’s kites remain, and the junior chatter restlessly around them. From this distance, it’s to see which one had flown farther, but when Lan Wangji knows his kite is about to fall out of his range, he finally takes his stance and hits it dead centre. Wei Ying whistles, impressed, as his kite falls and then waits a few more minutes to shoot at his own, letting out a barely audible sigh of relief when he does make the shot.

“All right, all right! Go, go, go! Since Lan Zhan is our guest and we both shot the farthest, you all get to go collect them!”

There’s whining and complaints and weak denials but the juniors do begin the far trek to collect them. Wei Ying turns to him with a grin before he leans in to knock their shoulders together with a groan, “Lan Zhan, I thought you were never going to shoot! Do you know how worried I was? What will I do if you take all my darling juniors away from me? You’re so mean to me, Lan er gege!”

“Your kite was farther.” Lan Wangji replies, ignoring the flush that climbs to his ears.

“We’ll see about that! It was hard to tell at this distance. If you do win, you’ll be kind to me, won’t you, Er Gege?” Wei Ying leans in farther here, batting his eyelashes and curling his mouth in an enticing way that has Lan Wangji’s stomach doing somersaults. He jerks his gaze away to watch for the returning disciples.

“We’ll see.”

“Ah? Lan Zhan? You will be nice to me, right? Why, what are you planning?” Wei Ying begins to crumble into a panic that grows higher in pitch when Lan Wangji refuses to reply.

The disciples return quite quickly, evidently too excited to announce the winner, and crowd and hide around one female disciple who seems to be carrying the winning kite. When they reach Lan Wangji and Wei Ying, they forcibly subdue down their giggles and jitters.

“And the winner is...” The female disciple grins, pausing to create an air of suspense. “Senior Wei!” She holds Wei Ying’s kite high as she announces it and the disciples instantly break into a loud cheer.

“You know what that means! Senior Lan! You have to tell the truth!” They crowd in close and Lan Wangji’s hand goes to his sword in a protective reflex. “Have you ever kissed anyone?”

“No,” Lan Wangji replies immediately, surprising himself a bit at how easily he admits it. It is not a fact he is ashamed of, but it’s hardly a proper topic of conversation and definitely not what he thought was going to be questioned on. There’s a small pause, before shocked cries sound out and the disciples seem to surge in even closer.

“What? No way! Really?” Some of them shout at him while others huff and jerk their chins into their air, muttering, “See? He’s not *that* cool.”

“Alright, alright! That’s enough now!” Wei Ying says, coming to his rescue for a second time as he waves the inquiring juniors away. “Lan Zhan fulfilled his end and I think we’ve played with you long enough! Come on, Lan Zhan! Let’s go!”

Lan Wangji nods once and bids the—now pleading—juniors goodbye before following after Wei Ying, who seems now wholly uninterested in any new game his disciples wish to play. He doesn’t speak as they make their way back to Lotus Pier and Lan Wangji has to scold himself when he finds himself missing Wei Ying’s usual chatter.

Wei Ying ends up distracted and they stay in Lotus Pier for dinner, leaving Lan Wangji to fend off Madam Yu’s needling questions.

They return to Wei Ying’s room that night, at the other’s insistence and after assuring Sect Leader Jiang he doesn’t mind. He feels selfish, being allowed to reside in the same quarters as Wei Ying, but even without mentioning this Wei Ying has assured him several times that he’s quite alright with it.

Wei Ying chatters to him for a bit when they first return, as he digs through his scrolls and papers scattered across his floor, Lan Wangji listening and replying with a small, “Mm,” when necessary.

“Lan Zhan, have you really not kissed anyone?” Wei Ying asks suddenly, startling Lan Wangji where he’s sitting and reading. Lan Wangji looks up with a blink and finds Wei Ying leaning over his own desk across the room, staring at his hands.

“I have not.” Lan Wangji confirms and this gives him the full force of Wei Ying’s stare.

“How ?!” Lan Wangji really isn’t sure why this is so surprising. Wei Ying ends up crawling over to sit next to him in a huff. “The great Lan Wangji? Really? If it’s true, you’ve really only yourself to blame, Lan Zhan! You need to be more friendly! You probably scare girls away with your frosty face!”

Lan Wangji feels his finger twitch, clutching at the book in his hand tighter. When he notices this causes unnecessary creases in the paper, he smooths them out and places the book down.

“Have you kissed anyone?” He asks, ignoring the jab at his appearance. Wei Ying’s eyes go wide.

“Ah?” He replies with a bout of laughter higher in pitch than normal. “What do *you* think?”

Lan Wangji frowns. He does not want to think of Wei Ying kissing other people. He lets out a sigh and shakes his head before reaching forward to return to his book, deciding to no longer partake in this ridiculous conversation, but Wei Ying interrupts him, grabbing at the book with his own hand to stop him.

“I’ll kiss you!” He blurts and Lan Wangji nearly drops the book as his attention snaps to Wei Ying who seems almost as surprised as Lan Wangji at his words. “A-As your friend!” He says in clarification, stumbling a bit with it. “I can’t let rumours get out that the great Lan Wangji hasn’t kissed anyone! How would you save your face? You never need to say *who* you kissed, y-you... You can just say that you have!”

He grows more resolute with his claim the longer he tries to defend it and Lan Wangji is too dizzy to try and refute it properly. But he knows he has to. He can’t kiss Wei Ying, he... he *can’t*.

He tugs his hand out from under where it had been stuck when Wei Ying grabbed both it and the book in his haste and tries to move away. Wei Ying moves faster and traps him between his arms, practically in his lap, his face now entirely too close.

“Lan Zhan!” Lan Wangji can feel Wei Ying’s breath. He could kiss him now and it would take no effort. “Here I am being a good friend and you ignore me! It’s-It’s not like it has to be a *deep* kiss!”

Lan Wangji lets out a slow exhale and feels it falter. This is surely a trial designed by the gods to test the self control he is known for. Had it been any other to invade his personal space like this, Lan Wangji would have pulled away easily. In fact, no one else would have even been able to make it this close. The logical steps Lan Wangji needs to take to end this are easy to recite, but growing harder to recollect the more Wei Ying moves in.

“Lan *Zhan*!” Wei Ying whines again and Lan Wangji makes the mistake of meeting his eyes. “Come on!”

He should call him shameless. Push him off and storm out, demanding another room and refuse to speak with him again. These are all things Lan Wangji *should* do. But he is dazed and finding himself utterly too complacent when locked in Wei Ying’s hold. Too tangled with the other to try and deny him. He responds with a shaky nod and leans in by a fraction. It’s a

hush of a kiss—a delicate touch that is all Lan Wangji dares to give. It is enough for him, almost too much, but evidently not enough for Wei Ying who whines against his mouth and curls his arms around Lan Wangji's neck.

“That doesn't count! Kiss me *properly* !” The words are a command but the voice that gives them is shaky. Wei Ying tugs as he speaks and Lan Wangji moves with him so easily. He responds before he has the chance to stop himself, pressing his lips more firmly against Wei Ying's this time.

Wei Ying's lips are soft. He tastes sweet. He also curves a bit into Lan Wangji when their lips meet and Lan Wangji replies by moving his mouth from more than a static press—more than something *safe* —a gesture that Wei Ying returns quite happily. Lan Wangji knows he could spend his entire life kissing Wei Ying but he can't, he *can't* and when he manages to gather the last shred of coherence he has, he breaks the kiss.

“Lan Zhan,” Wei Ying groans into him. His breathing is uneven. Lan Wangji stutters over his own breathing and realizes it might be his own gasping he's hearing. He needs to pull away. He's already done too much. But, when he tries, Wei Ying is tightening his hold on him again and demanding his attention. His pupils are wide and Lan Wangji's self restraint is snapping like a guqin strung too tight. “*Kiss me.*”

The force of Lan Wangji's wanting surges him forward. A spark igniting within him that maybe this is not forcing, that he is not stealing these precious and intimate gifts from Wei Ying like he feared he one day might if ever broke from the man's teasing. That maybe he is being given them; that maybe he is allowed to have them.

Wei Ying is loud when he kisses. A fact Lan Wangji feels he should have expected. He eagerly expresses his delight with groans and whines and panting breaths and moans at various octaves. He even stumbles over Lan Wangji's name when Lan Wangji takes his bottom lip between his teeth. Lan Wangji tries to swallow them all, commit them to memory, and then drag out even more as he pushes in closer and closer. He's the only one holding them up at this point, his hands on either side of Wei Ying, stabilizing the both of them, while Wei Ying clings desperately to his neck and presses their chests together.

When they need to break for air one of Wei Ying's hands is tangling in his hair and Wei Ying is moaning his appreciation into Lan Wangji's, likely bright red, ear, “Lan Zhan, Lan *Zhan* , you're so good...! So good!” Lan Wangji's fingers curl into the wood beneath them as he stops himself from slamming Wei Ying back into the floor to kiss him senseless once more. He needs more air, otherwise he won't be able to kiss him for as long. “But I think you lied to me!” Wei Ying continues, voice breathy but mischievous. “Saying you've never kissed anyone before? I don't believe you, Lan Zhan! You must be lying. You have to have kissed *someone* before this!”

“Not lying.” Lan Wangji replies immediately. He manages a brief kiss on Wei Ying's ear before he continues. “Wei Ying is the only one.”

This causes Wei Ying to still in his arms and Lan Wangji worries he's said something wrong. He tries to pull back, to try and read Wei Ying's face, but the other refuses him, letting out a

loud keen that sounds roughly like Lan Wangji's name as he buries his face into Lan Wangji's neck.

"You...!" He starts, face warm and burning where it's pressed against Lan Wangji. "How can you sound so earnest saying that? You're going to be the death of me!" His face is beautiful when Lan Wangji tugs it gently out of hiding. The red blooming on his cheeks, expression so incredibly open, mouth in a pout, dark and begging to be kissed again. Lan Wangji wants to commit this sight to his memory. He wants to make an even bigger mess of him.

"So I'm the only one, huh? Lan er gege?" Wei Ying purrs after he manages to collect himself, tugging at a stray piece of Lan Wangji's hair. He sounds delighted. "*Good*."

Lan Wangji has to kiss him.

This time he does push Wei Ying to the ground but the other has no complaints, fitting himself nicely beneath Lan Wangji and arching into him. Lan Wangji quickly kisses his mouth open and presses his tongue in. Wei Ying doesn't seem to know what to do at first, but his groans go louder when Lan Wangji coaxes him to respond. Which he does, quite enthusiastically. And for quite some time.

"It's simply not fair," Wei Ying gasps when they finally break apart. Lan Wangji immediately drops his head to leave a trail of kisses down Wei Ying's neck, greatly enjoying how the other presses further into him at every one. "You're so good at this. How am I supposed to kiss anyone else now?"

Lan Wangji freezes and, with a rush of possessiveness that only seems to ignite around Wei Ying, replaces his next kiss with a sharp bite. Right at the juncture of Wei Ying's neck.

"Lan Zhan!" Wei Ying squeaks, jolting at the attack and trying to wiggle away. Lan Wangji refuses this, pressing down harder to trap him before leaving another bite a little higher. He won't leave a dark bruise, but he will leave a reminder. He might feel more sympathy as well, for the whining and wriggling Wei Ying, if the other's arms weren't still tightly encircling his neck and back, refusing to let him go if he actually desired it. "Lan Zhan, you *brute* ! You bully! You—! *Ah* !" Another bite, but Lan Wangji covers it with kiss. "*Stooooopppp!*"

Lan Wangji goes to whisper into Wei Ying's ear, a faint smirk curling at his mouth at the continued gasps and pants beneath him, but there's a new voice bellowing across them as a door slams open.

"Wei Wuxian!"

Before, if you had asked Lan Wangji his opinion on Jiang Wanyin's voice, he would have had none. Now, if pressed, he would have to honestly say there were nearly a hundred others he preferred more.

"Jiang Cheng?!" Wei Ying shrieks back, startling in Lan Wangji's hold. They're not given any time to separate, with Jiang Wanyin storming right in, and they both look up rather awkwardly at their uninvited guest from their collapsed position on the ground. After a couple heavy breaths, Wei Ying pushes at Lan Wangji's chest, who gives way immediately,

giving them both the room to stand up properly as Wei Ying stutters over, “Wh-what are you doing?! What do you want! Don’t just come barging into my room!”

Jiang Wanyin ignores him.

“You!” He shouts, now pointing his unsheathed sword at Lan Wangji. “What were you doing to my brother!”

Lan Wangji blinks. *Ah* . He should have foreseen an outcome like this.

“Jiang Cheng!” Wei Ying hisses, tossing one of his arms out in front of Lan Wangji’s chest to position him behind him. “What the hell do you think you’re doing!”

“Defending you!” Jiang Wanyin replies, sounding rather offended. “He—! He was attacking you!”

It’s nearing Lan Wangji bedtime and he suddenly finds himself too exhausted to deal with this. But he’d almost be amused, had he the energy, as Jiang Wanyin isn’t *entirely* wrong.

“He wasn’t...! That’s not...!” Wei Ying’s face is somehow turning an even brighter red. Lan Wangji suspects they never thought they’d have such a conversation. “*It was mutual!*” Wei Ying finally grits out and Jiang Wanyin goes pale for a moment, before a blush is sparking across his face too.

“WHAT?” He shouts, voice straining. Both look mortified.

“Gods, just...! Come here!” Wei Ying snaps, lunging forward to grab Jiang Wanyin’s arm and haul him outside, the duo bickering loudly as they went. Lan Wangji listens to them leave, hears their voices vanish into some corner of Lotus Pier and blinks.

Ah.

It’s nearly time for him to rest, so he moves methodically as he begins preparing for bed. He listens for Wei Ying as he does, pausing every so often when he believes he’s caught a wisp of his voice, but each time he’s left disappointed and the thrum in his heart grows quieter.

This is best . He tells himself. Trying to assure himself this is more than he ever thought he would have in the first place. The memory of Wei Ying’s kisses; his smile as he looked at Lan Wangji in-between them; his pride at being the only one to ever have such an experience. Lan Wangji tells himself this is enough. To want more is... (His heart stumbles over a beat. Painful.) It’s ridiculous.

He extinguishes the candles nearest his bed, like he had the night before, gently folds his ribbon, and lays down to sleep.

He’s awoken nearly an hour later.

Wei Ying is not quiet when he stumbles back into his room, muttering half-baked complaints about Jiang Wanyin. Lan Wangji wakes slowly, body unhappy to be dredged out of it’s usual

pattern, and blearily wonders if he's only dreaming. Wei Ying seems to notice he's in bed belatedly, and with a small gasp, and pads over quietly.

"Lan Zhan?" He calls softly. From the angle his voice is coming from, Lan Wangji reasons he's now kneeling. He doesn't reply, however, still fumbling with his consciousness. "Ahhh, please don't tell me you fell asleep already..." A sigh and the rustle of clothing as Wei Ying folds his arms on his mattress and leans onto them. "Although, I guess it is past your bedtime..."

"Wei Ying?" Lan Wangji somehow manages, turning his head so he can face his guest. Wei Ying perks up immediately.

"Lan Zhan!" His voice is quiet but eager. "Lan Zhan, why are you sleeping?"

"It is time to rest..." Lan Wangji mumbles, struggling to sit up. He has to stifle a yawn. Wei Ying follows him up eagerly and sits beside him. "Jiang Wanyin?" Lan Wangji asks, although he doesn't particularly care. But he knows Wei Ying loves his brother dearly and Lan Wangji doesn't wish to be a thorn between them.

"Ahh, forget about him!" Wei Ying groans, weakly pulling at Lan Wangji's arms. "He was just surprised. He thought you were attacking me and he was defending my honour." Wei Ying rolls his eyes before turning to Lan Wangji with a mischievous grin. "Although, if these bite marks bruise as badly as I think they will, then I supposed he wasn't too far off!"

Lan Wangji feels his ears burn. He ducks his head to hide away.

"I am sorry." He says and he is genuine. "I went too far."

"No!" Wei Ying replies quickly, suddenly closer than before. "No, don't, don't apologize! It's fine, I—" Lan Wangji lifts his head back up and when their eyes meet, Wei Ying suddenly stops. Lan Wangji can hear the pace of his breathing quicken before he abruptly asks, "Were you mad? When I talked about kissing about people?"

The same possessiveness from before sparks, angry and hot, until Lan Wangji manages to extinguish it. It is not within his right to feel such a way. He drops his gaze again. Unable to reply and unable to lie.

"You have to answer me." Wei Ying insists and one of his hands has lifted to clutch at the front of Lan Wangji's robe. "Were you angry, Lan Zhan? Do you not want me to kiss other people? Tell me. You can't lie! You're not allowed to lie."

Lan Wangji filters through reasons as to why Wei Ying is so adamant in finding out, but he finds he doesn't truly care and so concedes with a sigh.

"Yes."

A breath. And then Wei Ying is pushing at him and crawling into his lap.

"Good," Wei Ying says, hands grabbing at Lan Wangji. "*Good*. I like it when you're mad. And for your honesty I even have a reward, Lan Zhan. *You were my first kiss too.*" The hands

that had already found their way to Wei Ying's waist automatically tighten, golden eyes wide. "Are you surprised? Well, it's true! Lan Zhan, you're the only person I've ever kissed. Are you happy? Well?"

"Yes," Lan Wangji tells him, completely awed. He doesn't know if he'll be able to keep anything from Wei Ying now. Wei Ying, whose faintly flushed cheeks are barely visible in this low light. Wei Ying, who's smiling so widely Lan Wangji thinks he might burst.

"Good. I'm happy too." He giggles and drops his head so their foreheads are pressed together. "You're very good, you know. Ruined me for anyone else." Lan Wangji still frowns at the idea of Wei Ying kissing another. He cannot help it. Wei Ying quickly takes care of it with a brief peck and another grin. "So, I think, the only way to make up for this is to simply keep kissing me."

"Tonight?" Lan Wangji asks, eyes wide, face softly puzzled.

"No, silly! Well, yes, if you have the energy I wouldn't complain, but, no, I mean... Like. Tomorrow. And the next day. You could keep kissing me." He seems embarrassed and plays with the front of Lan Wangji's robe as he speaks.

"Oh." Lan Wangji replies.

"If you want," Wei Ying says in a rush. "But, I think it's a pretty fair offer."

"You..." Lan Wangji searches the flustered face in front of him. He can hardly believe what he's being given. "You want me to?" He has to make sure. He can't risk misunderstanding Wei Ying *now* of all times. Wei Ying, who stills at the question and nails him with a look that is both shocked and affronted.

"Lan Wangji!" He cries in a huff, hands now yanking at the front of Lan Wangji's robes. "I am in your *lap*. I just told you about how you were my first and only kiss! I—! I practically *begged* you to kiss me earlier! How shameless do you want me to *be*?"

These are all fair points. Lan Wangji considers them as he continues to breathe slowly, reaching up to take one of Wei Ying's hands in his own and place it along his cheek. He leans into it as he meets Wei Ying's eyes and asks, again, "You want me to kiss you?"

He needs to know. He needs to be *sure*. He needs to hear it.

Something in Wei Ying's expression softens as he seems to understand this and he reaches up with his other hand to cradle Lan Wangji's jaw. Lan Wangji can't remember the last time he was treated as if he were fragile.

"Yes, Lan Zhan. I want you to kiss me. I want you to kiss me everyday. I want to talk to you everyday. I want to tell you stories and bring you out on boats and pick lotus pods with you. I want to night hunt with you. I want to sword fight with you. I want to tease you until you yell at me and then kiss you until you forgive me. I want anything you're willingly to give me."

"Anything." Lan Wangji responds in a hush.

“Yes, Lan Zhan. Anything.” Wei Ying giggles and Lan Wangji can feel it against his mouth that curves into his own small smile.

“No.” He clarifies. “Wei Ying can have anything he wants from me.”

Once more, at the earnestness of Lan Wangji’s words, Wei Ying falls apart in his lap.

“Lan Zhaaaan!” He whines, burying his head in his own hands. “You have GOT to warn me before you say things like that!”

Lan Wangji just hums noncommittally and leaves a gentle kiss on one of his knuckles.

He manages to coax Wei Ying to bed after, although Lan Wangji, quite unfortunately, only has the energy for a few slow good night kisses. But Wei Ying doesn’t seem to mind, happily snuggling into Lan Wangji’s side and quietly mumbling about various subjects as Lan Wangji slips in and out of sleep. Eventually, Wei Ying takes sympathy on him and extinguishes the last of the candles and murmurs for him to go to bed.

The next morning Lan Wangji wakes at his usual time and slowly detangles himself from a clingy Wei Ying. He leaves soft kisses of apology on his sleepy mouth when Wei Ying whines at the movement and soon he’s soothed back into sleep. When he does wake, several hours later to Lan Wangji practicing his guqin, he immediately restores the room to its usual amount of chaos.

“Lan Zhan!” He huffs as he scrambles from the bed and crawls toward him. “Don’t tell me you got up at five! This isn’t Cloud Recesses, you know! You can sleep in!” Lan Wangji doesn’t reply, he just blinks and returns to playing his music. It does not matter if he is home or not, his schedule is important. “Lan Zhaaaan, I wanted to wake up in your arms, but instead, I wake up to an empty bed! How cruel!”

Delight blooms in Lan Wangji’s chest at Wei Ying’s admission, but he keeps his face neutral as he plucks out a gentle melody.

“Wake up earlier.”

“Lan Zhan!” Wei Ying tries to sound angry, but amusement is filtering through, and he lands at Lan Wangji’s side, leaning his head on his shoulder as he listens to him play.

When the song finishes, Lan Wangji keeps his hands still, resting atop his guqin. He wants to stay in this moment, but he knows all things must come to an end eventually. The letter he received earlier that morning presses against his heart, reminding him of this.

“Wei Ying,” he starts and Wei Ying lets out a contented hum in response. “I have to go.”

Wei Ying freezes. After a moment he forces out a laugh and asks, voice too incredibly small, “Oh? Why?”

“My brother,” Lan Wangji begins to explain, pulling out the letter. “He’s requested my aid with a night hunt so I need to return.”

Wei Ying stares owlshly at him for a moment before wailing and suddenly, Lan Wangji finds himself with an armful of Wei Ying.

“Don’t! Don’t *scare* me like that! I thought you meant...! Gods, you should have just said you need to go help your brother!!” Lan Wangji finds himself very startled. He *did* say that. “You’re impossible! Don’t scare your Wei Ying like that!”

Wei Ying settles into Lan Wangji’s arms after his outburst, full of complaints but evidently not wishing to move any time soon. Lan Wangji finds himself off balance, his mind now a scattered mess. ‘Your Wei Ying’. *Your* Wei Ying. It’s nearly too much.

“When are you leaving?” Wei Ying asks, voice muffled by Lan Wangji’s chest.

“Noon.”

“Noon?! But that’s! That’s so soon!”

“Mm. I need to return home before nightfall.”

Wei Ying groans. “Fine! But, you have to come visit me again soon, okay? And I’ll come see you! And, and you have to write me letters! Every day! I’ll write to you too!”

“I...” Lan Wangji fumbles. “I do not believe my letters will be very interesting.” He admits in a low tone. His days are methodical and for once, Lan Wangji regrets it.

“I don’t care!” Wei Ying replies, shaking his head. “I don’t care if all you write is: today I practiced my guqin and fed my rabbits. I just want to hear from you, okay? Promise? I want to hear from you every day I’m not with you. Tell me about your night hunts too! And if you need help with one you better ask me next time! I won’t be held responsible for what I’ll do if you go missing again!”

Lan Wangji’s heart, that had been rising rapidly at Wei Ying’s pure desire to speak with him, stutters with a small pang at the last sentence. With his ears slowly darkening, Lan Wangji ducks his head to the side.

“Wei Ying, I... I have a confession.”

“Oh? A confession, from the great Lan Wangji? Well! Let’s hear it then!” His grin is so bright Lan Wangji almost can’t look at it.

“I... Do you remember your rabbit?”

“My...?” Wei Ying begins to repeat, face scrunching in confusion for the second time as one more Lan changes the course of their conversation so suddenly. “Little Rabbit? What about him?”

Lan Wangji contemplates defending himself first, but he knows Wei Ying deserves the truth.

“That was me.”

“... *Hah?!*”

“The complication,” Lan Wangji says, trying not to rush. He can feel his ears burn even hotter. “I was hit with a transformation spell that turned me into a rabbit. Cloud Recesses was too far, so I came to Lotus Pier instead to... to find you. I’m sorry. I should have found a way to inform you and—“

“You,” Wei Ying interrupts. “You were my rabbit?”

Lan Wangji swallows his next sentence and nods.

Wei Ying bursts into a loud and unrestrained fit of laughter.

“Y-You? You were Little Rabbit? That’s...!” His laughter overwhelms his words once more. “Lan Zhan, that is *hilarious*. You were my bunny! You were my little bunny! You—! No wonder you reminded me so much of yourself!” He still laughing helplessly, still clinging to Lan Wangji who grows more baffled by the second. “My Lan Zhan! My little rabbit!”

“You’re... not angry?” Lan Wangji asks carefully as Wei Ying continues to giggle into his neck.

“Angry?” He repeats, pulling back. “Why would I be angry? You came to me! You...!” Wei Ying’s expression softens as he calms and gently traces Lan Wangji’s nose. “You came to me for help. How could I be angry about that? Although... I should apologize for threatening to eat you.”

A frown reappears on Lan Wangji’s face when he remembers this.

“I’m sorry!” Wei Ying amends quickly, darting forward to kiss him. “Don’t worry, I’ll never threaten to eat a bunny again.” A wide grin. “Until after I’ve checked to make sure they’re not you.”

“*Wei Ying!*” Lan Wangji scolds and Wei Ying’s bright laughter is filling the air around them once again and Lan Wangji knows there is no where else he would rather be.

End Notes

lwj: I have a confession

wwx, thinking he's going to tell him he loves him: OH?

lwj: I was ur rabbit

wwx: oH?!

tfw u just wanna write about dumbass teenagers. this was incredibly self indulgent and turned out to be way longer than expected but I guess that just how my life is now

it was fun writing from lwj's perspective tbh, although figuring out how he would address ppl was a pain. it's very cute tho using "Wei Ying" instead of wei wuxian ;v; I read a fic once from lwj's perspective that did that and really liked it so voila!

I wrote this in like.... a week and a half????? mostly to avoid my other fic ahhahaah;;;;; this is unbeta'd so pls forgive my mistakes... it might go through another edit but..... don't hold ur breath sdfgds

tysm for reading!!! I hope u had a good time ;v;

Works inspired by this one

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