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Mo Dao Zu Shi





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#### **GDC Chapter 1: Prologue 魔道祖师 by 墨香铜臭**

**Alternative name :** The Founder of Diabolism **Genres:** Action, Adventure, Comedy, Mystery, Supernatural, Xianxia, WuxiaWorld, **BL, YAOi (GAY**

**ROMANCE)**

**Novel status:** Finished, 126 chapters (113+13 extras) **Raws:** Official raws bought on jjwxc (and smut chapters) **Translator:** K

**Editor:** Addis

~~~~Brought to you by ExR~~~~

#### **SUMMARY:**

As the grandmaster who founded the Demonic Sect, Wei WuXian roamed the world in his wanton ways, hated by millions for the chaos he created. In the end, he was backstabbed by his dearest shidi and killed by powerful clans that combined to overpower him. He incarnates into the body of a lunatic who was abandoned by his clan and is later, unwillingly, taken away by a famous cultivator among the clans—Lan WangJi, his archenemy. This marks the start of a thrilling yet hilarious journey of attacking monsters, solving mysteries, and raising children. From the mutual flirtation along the way, Wei WuXian slowly realizes that Lan WangJi, a seemingly haughty and indifferent poker-face, holds more feelings for Wei WuXian than he is letting on.

**(NOTE to all the readers coming here after watching ‘The Untamed,’ this novel is a DANMEI (a romance novel featuring two MEN) we are not adding anything to these chapters. There will be sex scenes in later chapters, if you feel uncomfortable about two MEN kissing and loving one another, please, go away.**

**Do not claim we are adding anything.) Prologue**

“Great news! Wei WuXian has died!”



Less than a day has passed since the siege in LuanZang Hill, and the news spreads through the cultivation world as if it sprouted wings, surpassing even the speed of warfare.

For a while, from the most prominent clans to rogue cultivators, everyone is discussing the siege that was lead by the Four Great Clans and followed by hundreds of smaller ones.

“The YiLing Patriarch has died? Who could have killed him?”

“Who other than his shidi, Jiang Cheng, putting an end to his own relative for the greater good. Jiang Cheng led the Four Clans of YunmengJiang, LanlingJin, GusuLan, and QingheNie to destroy his “den”—LuanZang Hill.”

“I must say, good riddance!”

“Good riddance indeed! We finally eliminated this scourge.”

“If not for the YunmengJiang clan’s adopting and teaching him, he would have been a hobo living on the streets, let alone causing mayhem as bold as the ones these days. The head of the Jiang clan raised him as her own child, yet he defected them and became the enemy of the cultivation world, bringing shame upon the the Jiang clan, even leading to its near-extirmination. He is the prime example of biting the hand that feeds him!”

“Jiang Cheng allowed this fellow to live for too long. If I were him, at the time of the defection, I wouldn’t have just stabbed him. In fact, I would have thoroughly examined the disciples of the clan again, so that he doesn’t do those crazy things he did later on. Who cares about the so called ‘considerations’ that he gave to his childhood friend.”

“That’s merely hearsay. Although Jiang Cheng was one of the main forces, he did not give Wei WuXian the final blow.

Because he cultivates the Demon Path, Wei WuXian’s powers had backfired and he was ripped to pieces.”

“Hahahaha... That’s karma! The ghost soldiers that he created are like unleashed dogs, biting everyone that they come across. It serves him right to

be chewed to death!”

“But, if not for Jiang Cheng making a plan that aimed at Wei WuXian’s weaknesses, the siege might not have succeeded. Should I remind you folks of the item that Wei WuXian possesses? Did you forget about the day that three thousand skilled cultivators were completely annihilated?”

“I heard that it was more than three thousand, possibly five thousand.”

“He’s most certainly out of his mind.”

“It’s a good thing that he destroyed that evil weapon before he died. Otherwise, if it was left in this world to harm humankind, his sins would have been worse.”

“Oh well... You know, back then, Wei WuXian was one of the most promising cultivators, coming from a highly distinguished clan and finding success at a young age. How on Earth did he end up where he is now?”

“This proves that one can only cultivate by following the right path. Using these dishonest practices would only seem beneficial at first glance. Look, what happened in the end?

Not even a whole corpse was left of him.”

“Not everything was because of his cultivation path. Wei WuXian’s personality is quite immoral. One’s deeds will be paid, one way or another; what goes around always comes around.”

...

After Wei WuXian’s death, the period is drawn on the topic. The discussions of the people are mostly the same, with a few unconventional opinions being brought down immediately.

However, the elephant in the room stayed in the back of everyone’s mind.

Nobody could summon Wei WuXian’s soul, which meant that his soul had disappeared.

It might have been torn apart by the millions of ghosts that devoured him.

Or, it might have escaped.

If was the first, then all is well. Then again, nobody doubts the fact that the YiLing Patriarch has the power to move mountains and empty seas. If was the last, his soul would eventually return to revive in his body. When the day comes, the cultivation world, or even all of mortal land, would be faced with the most insane damnation and revenge, sinking into nothing but chaos and despair.

The various clans set one hundred and twenty stone beasts on top of LuanZang Hill and initiated frequent soul-summoning rituals, followed by heightened vigilance and searches for strange occurrences from all over the world.

In the first year, nothing happened.

In the second year, nothing happened.

In the third year, nothing happened.

...

In the thirteenth year, nothing happened either.

More and more people were starting to believe that, maybe, the YiLing Patriarch actually perished.

Even if he was capable of turning the world upside down, it was finally his turn to be toppled over.

Nobody would remain at the top for all of eternity—

legends are only legends.

**GDC Chapter 2:**

# Reincarnation

Wei WuXian received a kick just as he opened his eyes.

A voice thundered beside his ear, “Stop playing dead!”

The kick threw him backwards, headfirst onto the ground.

Fighting the urge to vomit, a thought formed in his head—

that’s quite a lot of courage you have to kick me, the Patriarch.

It was his first time hearing a human voice in quite a few years, let alone such a loud, fierce shriek. His head swirled and ears buzzed with the echoes of the voice, “Whose land do you think you’re living on? Whose rice are you eating?

Whose money are you spending? What’s wrong with taking a few of your belongings? Everything you own should be mine, anyways!”

Aside from this adolescent, duck-like voice, there were the clunks

of ransacking chests and smashing objects as well. His eyes gradually cleared up.

A dimly-lit ceiling appeared in his sight, followed by a slant-browed person with a sickly composition, drenching him with spittle, “How dare you tell Father and Mother? Did you really think that anybody in this house is going to listen to you? You actually thought I was scared of you!”

A few servant-like hunks shifted over, “Young Master, everything is smashed!”

The young master asked, “How did you finish it this quickly?”

A manservant replied, “There’s nothing much inside this shack anyways.”

The young master seemed to be quite pleased, poking Wei WuXian forcefully on the nose, “You dared to tell on me, and look at you now, playing dead on the ground! For whom? As if anyone actually wants these piles of junk! Now that I’ve smashed everything, let’s see how you’re gonna tell on me in the future! Are you proud of yourself just because you’ve studied cultivation for a few years? Well, how does it feel when you’ve been kicked back home like a stray dog?”

Wei WuXian thought wearily.

I’m not pretending to be dead at all, since I’ve actually been dead for a couple of years.

Who is this?

Where am I?

When did I do something as immoral as stealing another’s body?

The young master let out enough anger by kicking the person and wrecking the house, and strutted out with his two man-servants, slamming the door with a “bang”. He shouted his orders, “Watch carefully. Don’t let him outside anytime this month, or he’ll make a fool of himself again!”

As the group went away, silence fell upon the room. Wei WuXian thought about getting up.

However, his limbs failed to uphold themselves, so he lay down again. He turned on his side and stared dizzily at the strange environment and the heaps of mess on the ground.

A bronze mirror rested on the side, probably thrown onto the ground. Wei WuXian grabbed it and looked into the mirror, only to see a ghastly pale face, with two asymmetrical piles of red on each side of his cheek. Add a blood-red tongue onto the features, and he would look like a hanged ghost. He tossed the mirror to the side and wiped his face, finding his hand covered with white powder.

Fortunately, the body wasn't born this way—it was only one of the owner's penchants. He was no-doubt a man, yet he was covered with makeup (not to mention, badly applied makeup). Ugh, how unbearable!

Taken back by the shock, some energy came back to him, and he finally sat up, noticing the circular **array**\* beneath him.

The array was scarlet in color and crooked in shape, appearing to be drawn by hand, using blood as the medium, still damp and emitting a strong scent. The array was filled with warped scribbles of incantations, which were somewhat smudged by his body, but came across as gruesome nonetheless.

After all, Wei WuXian was known as the Supreme Leader and Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation, so he was most certainly accustomed to vile-looking arrays such as this one.

It turned out that, in fact, he did not seize the body of another—he was offered one.

It was an ancient, forbidden technique. Compared to an array, it resembled a curse more. The caster of the array injures themselves by creating incisions on their body, and draws the array and writes the incantations using their own blood, finishing by sitting in the center of the array. They can then summon an extremely villainous ghoul and ask for it to complete their wish. The price to pay was to offer their body to the evil spirit, with their own soul returning back to Earth.

This was the forbidden technique opposite to stealing another's body—offering one's body.

Because of the grave sacrifices, only few people were brave enough to put it into effect. After all, there were hardly any wishes strong enough for a living person to willingly sacrifice everything that they own. Over thousands of years, only three or four examples have been proven to be true and recorded by history. Without exception, the three or four people's wishes were the same—to take revenge.

Wei WuXian refused to accept this.

Why would he be put into the category of “extremely villainous ghouls?”

Although his reputation wasn't great and he had died in a horrifying way, he neither haunts the living nor seeks vengeance. He could swear that one can't find another wandering ghost as harmless as him.

The difficult part was that, as soon as the evil spirit has taken over the body of the caster, the contract is sealed by default. The evil spirit must grant their wish, or else the curse will cause a backlash. The spirit in possession of the body will be completely annihilated, never to be born again!

Wei WuXian raised his hands to find that, unsurprisingly, both of his wrists were crisscrossed with multiple cuts. He proceeded to take off his belt. Under the black clothes, his chest and stomach areas were also covered with what seemed to be lacerations from a sharp tool. Although the bleeding had stopped, Wei WuXian knew that these weren't normal wounds. If he didn't fulfill the wish of the body's owner, the wounds would not be able to heal. It would worsen as the time goes on, and if the time limit was passed, both his soul and this body would be ripped apart.

Wei WuXian confirmed his situation several times, repeating “how can this happen to me?” in his heart even more times, and could finally stand upright, leaning against the wall.

Even though the house was large in size, it was empty and shabby, with sheets and blankets looking like they hadn't been changed in a long while. There was a bamboo basket in the corner. It was supposed to be for storing trash, but, having been kicked over earlier, the scraps all tumbled out onto the ground. Wei WuXian scanned around the room and picked up a crumpled piece of paper. He unfolded it and was surprised to see it crammed with words. He hurriedly gathered all of the paper.

The words on the paper must have been written by the owner of this body to vent when he felt stressed. Some sentences were incoherent and disordered; anxiety leaped off of the page through the distorted handwriting. Wei WuXian sat through every single piece of paper, and began to notice that something was wrong.

He took a few guesses and roughly understood the state of things.

It turned out to be that the owner of this body was named Mo XuanYu. His location was called Mo Village.

Mo XuanYu's grandfather was from a rich family of the area. His family was few in number, and, although he tried at it, he only had two daughters. Their names were not mentioned, but the elder one was the daughter of his principal wife, looking for a husband to marry into the family, while the younger one was the daughter of a servant. The Mo family originally wanted to hastily give her to someone, but an adventure awaited her. When she was sixteen, the leader of a well-known cultivation family was passing by the area, and fell in love with her at first sight.

Everyone admires cultivators. Cultivation families, in the eyes of common folk, are like people favored by God, mysterious yet noble. In the beginning, the people of Mo Village regarded the topic with contempt, but because the **Sect Leader\*** often helped out, the Mo family received plenty of advantages. And so, the direction of the discussions changed, and the Mo family took pride in the matter, while everyone else also envied the opportunity. The second-lady of Mo bore one son for the leader—Mo XuanYu.

But, not for long, since the Sect Leader was only involved with her to experiment with something new, he grew tired of it in a few years. After Mo XuanYu turned four, his father never came back again.

Gradually, the opinions of the Mo Village's people changed again. The original contempt and scorn returned, alongside with disdainful pity.

The second-lady of Mo did not want to accept this; she firmly believed that the Sect Leader would not turn a deaf

ear to his own son. Sure enough, when Mo XuanYu turned fourteen, the Sect Leader took him back.

The second-lady stuck her nose up in the air again, and told everyone that her son would most certainly become an **Immortal\*** as fast as he could, and bring glory on his ancestors.



However, before Mo XuanYu achieve success in cultivation and inherit his father's position, he was driven back.

On top of that, he was driven back shamefully.

Mo XuanYu was homosexual, and had enough nerve to harass the other disciples. The scandal was revealed to the public and, as he had few achievements in terms of cultivation, there were no reasons for him to stay in the clan.

Like adding frost to snow, aside from the event itself, when Mo XuanYu returned, he often behaved in a crazy manner, almost as if his life was scared out of him.

The story was almost too complex to be put into words.

Wei WuXian's eyebrows twitched.

Not only a lunatic, a homosexual lunatic as well.

That explained why there were enough rouge and powder on his face to make him look like a hanged ghost, and also why nobody was surprised at the large, bloody array on the ground. Even if Mo XuanYu painted the whole room red with blood, from the tiles on the ground to the walls to the ceiling, the others wouldn't be overly surprised. After all, everyone knew that his head had a screw loose!

After he went back home dejectedly, he was bombarded with ridicule. The situation seemed like it was beyond redemption, and the second-lady of Mo was not able to withstand the blow, shortly choking to death because of the trauma.

At this time, Mo XuanYu's grandfather had already passed away. The first-lady of Mo was in charge of the family, but, ever since a young age, she had been unable to stand her younger sister, including her sister's son. She had an only child, Mo ZiYuan, who happened to be the person who ransacked the place earlier. When Mo XuanYu was taken away by his father, the first-lady was jealous, and wanted to have even the slightest relationship with a cultivation Sect.

She hoped that the envoy who came would take Mo ZiYuan to cultivate as well.

Of course, she was refused, or rather, ignored.

This was most certainly not a case of selling cabbage. One simply can't bargain, much less buy one and get another for free.

Strangely confident, this family all held the thought that Mo ZiYuan had potential and talent. They believed that if, back then, he was sent instead, he would have won recognition from the Sect, unlike his disappointing cousin.

Although, when Mo XuanYu left, Mo ZiYuan was still young, he was repeatedly instilled with nonsense such as this, and believed in them wholeheartedly. Every two or three days, he would find Mo XuanYu and humiliate him, cursing him for snatching his road to cultivation. At the same time, he was found great interest in the talismans, elixirs, and magic tools, regarding all of them as his possessions and doing whatever he wanted with them.

Although Mo XuanYu often switched in and out of being a lunatic, he did understand that he was degraded by others.

He tolerated it, but Mo ZiYuan further intensified his behaviour, almost emptying his whole room. His patience had finally drained out and he complained to his aunt and uncle, causing Mo ZiYuan's commotion from this morning.

The words on the paper were small and compact, which hurt Wei WuXian's eyes. He thought to himself, "How fucked up is this person's life?"

No wonder Mo XuanYu would rather use the forbidden technique to sacrifice his body and ask villainous ghouls to take revenge.

The pain from his eyes transferred to his head.

Supposedly, to use the forbidden technique, the caster would chant their wish silently. As the evil spirit being summoned, Wei WuXian should have been able to hear his specific requirements.

However, it was likely that Mo XuanYu copied fragmented excerpts of the technique somewhere, and skipped this step. Although Wei Wuxian guessed that he wanted to take revenge on the Mo family, but how should he do it? To what extent? To retrieve the items that were taken from him? Or to beat up everyone of the Mo family?

Or... To wipe out the whole family?

In all likelihood, it was probably to wipe out the whole family. After all, anyone who touched upon the cultivation world would know what phrases were used most often to describe him—ungrateful, eccentric, not recognizing his own family, intolerable by Heaven, and other spectacular terms.

Was there anyone else more “villainous” than him? If Mo

XuanYu had dared to summon him specifically, the wish was most likely not an easily fulfilled one.

Wei WuXian couldn't help but to say, “You've got the wrong person...”

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Translator Notes:

\*Array: a magical formation drawn on the ground to cast spells and such

\*Sect Leader: the leader of an organization dedicated towards the practice of cultivation

\*Immortal: beings who gained immortality from cultivation practices

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 3:**

## Aggression

(Sorry for the delay in getting this out, K, our translator, had several exams she needed to get through before she could finish translating this chapter. Thank you for waiting and bearing with us.)

Wei WuXian wanted to wash his face to have gaze upon the face of his body's owner after death, but there wasn't any water in the room, not even for drinking or washing.

The only basin-like container was probably, he suspected, for lavatory purposes instead of cleansing.

He pushed the door, but it was fastened with a latch, probably to prevent him from wandering outside.

None of these things made him feel the joy of reincarnation at all!

He figured that he might as well sit in the Lotus position\*

and get used to his new home. Time flew by, and the day had passed. When he opened his eyes, sunlight seeped inside from the gaps of the door and windows. Although he could stand up and walk around, his still felt lightheaded.

Wei WuXian was puzzled,

Mo XuanYu's amount spiritual powers are insignificant enough to be ignored, so there shouldn't be a reason as to why I can't control this body properly. Why doesn't it work?

Then, a noise came from his stomach, and he realized that this wasn't related to his spiritual powers at all. In fact, it was because this body had not practiced inedia, and felt hunger. If he didn't scavenge for food, he might become the first villainous ghoulish who starved to death upon arrival.

Wei WuXian lifted his foot and was about to kick the door open, when suddenly, the sound of approaching footsteps appeared. Someone stomped

on the door and grunted, “It’s mealtime!”

Nonetheless, there was no indication of the door being opened. Wei WuXian lowered his head and saw a miniature door on the bottom of this one opening, with a small bowl set in front of it.

The servant outside shouted again, “Chop-chop! What are you waiting for? Take the bowl out after you finish!”

The door was slightly smaller than the kind for dogs to crawl through—it didn’t allow the passage of humans, but bowls could be easily taken inside. There were two dishes and one serving of rice, which looked quite unpleasant.

Wei WuXian played with the pair of chopsticks that were stuck into the rice, feeling quite bitter.

The YiLing Patriarch had just returned to the mortal world, but the first thing he came upon was a kick and a scolding, not to mention the leftovers that served as his welcoming-meal. Where were the blood and gore? The ruthless slaughter? The absolute destruction? Who would believe him? He was like the tiger in a flatland, the dragon in shallow water, the phoenix without feathers, losing his advantage and belittled by those weaker than him.

Then, the servant outside spoke again, but with laughter this time, “A-Ding\*! Come here!”

\*The prefix “A” (pronounced “ah”) can often be found in front of the names of servants.

The sweet voice of a girl answered from a distance, “A-Tong, are you delivering the meal to the one in there again?”

A-Tong clicked his tongue, “Why else would I come to this ominous courtyard?”

A-Ding’s voice sounded closer, as if she was in front of the door, “You just deliver one meal a day, and nobody cares if you’re lazy. This is such an idle

task, yet you think it's ominous. Look at me. I'm busy to the point that I can't even go outside to play."

A-Tong complained, "Delivering his meal is not the only work I do! How can you dare to go outside these days?"

With so many walking corpses\* out there, everyone's locking themselves in their houses."

Wu WuXian squatted by the door and listened while eating.

It appeared to be that, ever since a while ago, the Mo Village hadn't been peaceful. Walking corpses, like their name, were dead people who could move, a type of low-level altered corpse\*. Unless the deceased person held strong resentment, they were usually dull-eyed and sluggish. They weren't overly dangerous, but they were

enough to alarm the average person, especially their vomit-inducing stench.

However, to Wei WuXian, they were the most obeying puppets. When he heard them being mentioned, he even felt a sense of familiarity.

A-Tong seemed to be making a face, "If you want to go outside, you'll have to take me so that I can protect you..."

A-Ding replied, "You? Protect me? Stop bragging. Are you sure you can defeat those things?"

A-Tong said bitterly, "If I can't defeat them, other people can't either."

A-Ding laughed, "How do you know that other people can't defeat them? Let me tell you—today, some cultivators came to Mo Village. I heard that they were from a very prominent clan! The madam is talking to them in the main hall, and everyone in town is watching. Can't you hear the noise? I don't have time to play around with you; they might give me more work afterwards."

Wei WuXian listened attentively. Sure enough, the faint bustling sounds of people came from the east. He pondered for a moment, stood up, and kicked the door. It cracked with a

clank.

At the moment, the two servants, A-Ding and A-Tong, were flirting with each other, and screamed when the door suddenly flung open. Wei WuXian threw away his bowl and walked outside, flinching from the glare of the sunlight. He brought his hand to the tip of his brow and closed his eyes for a moment. Just now, A-Tong screamed even louder than

A-Ding, but as he took a closer look and realized that it was Mo XuanYu, the person whom everyone could humiliate, his courage came back to him. He figured that he probably lost face in front of A-Ding, and wanted to make up for it, so he jumped over and waved his hands like he was reproaching a dog, “Shoo! Shoo! Go away! Why did you come out?”

A-Tong treated him even worse than he treated a beggar or a fly. Most of the time, all of the servants of the Mo family treated Mo XuanYu like this because he never resisted. Wei WuXian gave A-Tong a light kick, knocking him over, and laughed, “How daring of a mere errand-running child to humiliate others like this.”

With that, he headed towards the commotion in the east.

Quite a lot of people crowded in and around the East Hall.

Just as Wei WuXian stepped into the courtyard, a woman spoke in a voice a few pitches louder than the others’, “A member from the younger generations of our family use to be a cultivator as well...”

It must have been Madam Mo trying to make connections with the cultivation family again. Wei WuXian didn’t wait for her to finish speaking, and quickly hustled through the crowd, into the hall, and grinned, “I’m coming, I’m coming.

Right here!”

A middle-aged lady sat in the hall, with well maintained health and wearing extravagant clothing. She was Madam Mo. Her husband sat below her, and the opposite side sat a few white-robed boys\*. Because of how an unkempt freak just appeared from within the people, all of the chatter came to a halt, but Wei WuXian spoke shamelessly, as if he did not notice the motionless atmosphere at all, “Who was calling me earlier? I am the only one who use to be a cultivator!”

\*In this case, the word “boys” refers to older youths in their teenage years.

There was too much powder on his face, and as he smiled, the powder sprinkled off. A younger cultivator was on the brink of laughing, letting out a pfft

sound. His face grew serious again as another one, seemingly the leader of the group, gave him a disapproving look.

Wei WuXian followed the voice and scanned over. He thought that the servants were being ignorant and exaggerated the situation, but he was surprised to see that they were really disciples of a “prominent clan”.

The boys wore robes with drifting sleeves and flowing belts, appearing to be ikemen and

doubtlessly a treat to the eyes. Looking at the uniform, it was obvious that they were from the GusuLan clan. They must have also been younger generations of blood-relationship to the Lan family, as they all wore white forehead ribbons around a finger’s width, with cloud patterns sewn onto them.

The motto of the GusuLan clan was “righteousness”. The forehead ribbon implied to “conduct oneself well”, and the cloud pattern was the official pattern of the Lan family, of which cultivators who came from other families did not have the right to wear. Wei WuXian got toothaches whenever he saw anybody from the Lan clan. In his past life, he had



always thought of his clan's uniform as "mourning clothes", which was why he would never mistake it.

Lady Mo hadn't seen this nephew of hers in a while, and only got over her dismay after a long time, when she realized who the heavily-makeuped person was. She was furious, but she didn't want to lose her temper and discompose herself, so she lowered her voice at her husband, "Who let him out? Get him back there!"

Her husband promptly smiled to calm her and walked over with an irksome look, ready to pull him out of here.

However, Wei WuXian suddenly dropped to the ground, his limbs tightly clinging to the floor. Nobody could get him up, even after more servants were called to help. As Lady Mo's face darkened bit by bit, her husband was also sweating. He scolded, "... You... Damn madman! If you don't go back now, wait and see how I'll punish you!"

Although everyone in the Mo Village knew that the Mo family had a young master who lost his marbles, Mo XuanYu had already hid in that dark room for a couple of years, scared to come outside. After seeing how both his face and actions were like those of a monster's, the people whispered among themselves, looking forward to a good show to watch. Wei WuXian spoke, "I could go back if you wanted me to," he pointed at Mo ZiYuan, "But tell him to return the things that he stole from me first."

Mo ZiYuan did not expect that the good-for-nothing lunatic had the guts to cause trouble here, even after his disciplining yesterday. His face grew pale, "That's nonsense!

When did I ever steal your things? Would, would I need to steal anything from you?"

Wei WuXian said, "Yeah, yeah. You didn't steal, you robbed!"

Madam Mo didn't say anything yet, but Mo ZiYuan was furious, raising his foot to kick him. However, a white-robed boy carrying a sword moved his finger slightly, and Mo ZiYuan's feet slipped, falling to the ground with his foot only scraping him. Even so, Wei WuXian still rolled on the ground, as if

he was really kicked over, and pulled open the front of his robe, showing the footprint that Mo ZiYuan made yesterday.

The others thought that, obviously, Mo XuanYu couldn't have kicked himself. Along with the fact that Mo ZiYuan had always been imprudent and arrogant, who else could have done it? No matter what, the Mo family had been being too ruthless to their own blood relative. It was plain to see that, when he first came back, he wasn't this insane, and so it must have been worsened by the people of this family.

Nevertheless, all is well as long as there was a good show to watch. This one was much more interesting than the cultivators!

Before this, Madam Mo ignored him, as she didn't bother to argue with a sick person. She ordered the others to take him out. Now she knew—Mo XuanYu had definitely come prepared. His head was completely clear and deliberately disgraced them. She felt both shock and hatred, “You made a big scene on purpose, didn't you?”

Wei WuXian replied blankly, “He stole my belongings, and I'm here to retrieve them. Does that also count as making a big scene?”

With so many pairs of eyes staring, Madam Mo could neither hit him nor throw him out. Anger welled up deep

inside her, and she could only forcefully compromise the two sides, “Stealing? Robbing? That's a bit disrespectful, if you ask me. We are all part of one family, and he only wanted to take a look at them. A-Yuan\* is your younger brother, so what's wrong with taking a few of your things?

As an older brother, you shouldn't be reluctant to lend one or two playthings, should you? It's not as if he won't return them.”

\*The “A” prefix can also be used to refer to someone you're close to. A-Yuan refers to Mo ZiYuan.

The boys from the Lan clan stared speechlessly at one another. These young boys grew up in a cultivation clan, exposed to splendor and that only. They'd probably never seen farces like this, or even heard of this kind of logic. Wei

WuXian laughed hysterically in his mind, and extended his hand, “Then, return them.”

Of course, it was impossible for Mo ZiYuan to return anything, having either thrown them out or disassembled them. Even if he was able to return them, his pride wouldn’t have allowed it. His face turned purple with anger and he shouted, “... Mom!” His glare raged,

are you really allowing him to treat me like this?

Lady Mo glowered at him, signaling for him to not worsen the situation. However, Wei WuXian spoke again, “Not only should he not have stolen my belongings, he shouldn’t have stolen them in the middle of the night. Everyone knows that I am into men. Even if he was not ashamed, I knew to not look suspicious.”

Lady Mo gasped and shouted, “What are you talking about, in front of the villagers? How shameless—A-Yuan is your cousin!”

In terms of running wild, Wei WuXian was definitely a master. In the past, if he wanted to run wild, he would have to keep his status in mind, but now, he was a lunatic anyways, which meant that he could do whatever he wanted to, whichever way he wanted. He stiffened his neck and argued defiantly, “Even though he knew that I was his cousin, he chose to not avoid me, so who was more shameless? I don’t care about your reputation, but don’t ruin my innocence! I still want to find a good man!”

Mo ZiYuan let out a loud scream and started swinging a chair at him. As soon as Wei WuXian saw that his anger finally went out of control, he rolled over and climbed up, dodging so that the chair only smashed on the ground, falling apart in the process. The mass of people in the East Hall were originally gloating at the disgrace of the Mo family, but, after the fight started, they’d all fled away. Wei WuXian bolted towards the group of boys from the Lan clan, who all gaped at the scene, and yelled, “Did everyone see that? Did you? The burglar is also beating someone up! How heartless!”

Mo ZiYuan chased him, and was close to pouncing on him, when the leader of the boys hurriedly stopped him, “Please calm down. Words are more

powerful than weapons.”

Madam Mo saw that the boy was deliberately protecting the lunatic, and pulled a smile warily, “This is my younger sister’s son. He’s not so bright

here

; everyone from the Mo Village knows that he is a lunatic, and often speaks strange words that shouldn’t be taken seriously. Cultivator, please...”

Before she finished her sentence, Wei WuXian’s head peeked from behind the boy’s back and glared, “Who said that my words shouldn’t be taken seriously? Next time, try stealing anything from me again. You steal once, and I cut off one of your hands!”

Mo ZiYuan was originally held down by his father, but, after hearing this, he was close to losing his temper again.

Wei WuXian lept outside quickly, and the boy blocked the entrance at once, switching to another topic with a serious tone, “Then, we will borrow the West Courtyard for the night. Please remember the things that I’ve talked about—

after nightfall, close all of the windows, don’t come outside, or worse, walk toward the courtyard.”

Madam Mo was shaking from anger, “Yes, yes, please...”

Mo ZiYuan found it beyond belief, “Mom! The lunatic insulted me in front of so many people, and that’s it? You told me before; you told me that he was only a...”

Madam Mo commanded, “Be quiet. Can’t you wait until we go back?”

Mo ZiYuan had never been at such a disadvantage or been disgraced like this before, with his mother’s scolding making the situation worse. He was full of hatred, and thought, this lunatic is going down tonight!

After Wei WuXian finished flipping out, he walked out the door of the Mo family's place, and showed his face around the Mo village. Although he surprised countless people, he was, in fact, loving every second of it, and finally realized the delight of being a lunatic. He was even starting to approve of the makeup that resembled a hanged ghost, almost unwilling to wash it away. He fixed his hair and looked at his wrists. The cuts didn't seem like they were

healing at all, which meant that a slight revenge like this would not be approved by the forbidden technique.

Would he really have to eliminate the Mo family?

To be honest, it wouldn't be too difficult of a task.

Wei WuXian strolled back to the Mo family's West Courtyard. The disciples of the Lan clan were standing on top of the roofs and walls, discussing with a solemn look.

Although the GusuLan clan contributed greatly during the siege on him, at that time, these juniors were either not born yet or still young children. He shouldn't direct his hate towards them, so Wei WuXian decided to linger around and observe what they were going to do. After a while, he felt like something was wrong.

Why did the fluttering black flags on top of the roofs and walls look so familiar to him?

This type of flags was called the "Phantom Attraction Flag". If it was set on a living person, it would attract all of the spirits, wronged ghosts, moving corpses, or evil beings within a certain area, so that they would only attack that person. Because the flag-bearing person would be turned into a living target, it was also called the "Target Flag." It could also be set on a house, but the house must have living humans inside of it. Then, the attack range would expand to include everyone inside the house. Because of how there would always be a sinister energy that surrounded the area in which the flag was set in, as if there was a swirling black wind, they were also called "Black Wind Flags". Arranging the flag formation in the West Courtyard and

not allowing anyone to approach them must have meant that they wanted to lead the Walking Corpses here and capture them in one go.

As for why they looked familiar... How could they have not come across as familiar? The creator of Phantom Attraction Flags was none other than the YiLing Patriarch!

It seemed like that, although the cultivation world hated him on the surface, they still used the the inventions that he came up with.

A disciple standing on the roof saw him lingering around, and spoke, "Please go back. This isn't where a person like you should come."

Although he was being driven away, it was out of kindness, and the tone also differed from those of the servants in the Mo family. Wei WuXian caught him off guard and quickly hopped up, grabbing one of the flags.

The disciple was startled and jumped down to chase him,

"Do not move. That is not something you should take."

Wei WuXian yelled while running away, looking like a real lunatic with his hair disheveled and limbs flinging about,

"I'm not giving it back, I'm not giving it back! I want this thing! I want this!"

The disciple caught up to him in a few strides and grabbed his arm, "If you are not going to give it back, I am going to hit you!"

Wei WuXian held onto the flag, unwilling to let go of it. The leader of the boys was setting up the flag formation, and lightly hopped off the roof when he heard of the ruckus,

"JingYi, cut it out. Do not make a fuss about it and just take the flag."

Lan JingYi spoke, "SiZhui, I did not actually hit him! Look at him, messing up the flag formation!"

During the tug-of-war, Wei WuXian had already checked over the Phantom Attraction Flag in his hands. The motifs were drawn correctly and the incantations were complete.

There wasn't any errors, so nothing would go wrong while using them. However, the person who drew on the flag was lacking in experience, so it would only attract evil being and moving corpses from within five li\*. That should be enough, though. There shouldn't be any malicious creatures in a place as small as the Mo Village.

Lan SiZhui smiled at him, "Young Master Mo, the sky is growing dark, and we are going to start capturing the walking corpses soon. It will be dangerous at night time, so it would be best for you to return to your room."

Wei WuXian looked him over. He was fair and refined, with a dignified appearance and smiling faintly. Wei WuXian silently approved of him. The flag formation was set in an organized way, and his mannerisms were also respectful, making him a disciple with astonishing potential. He didn't know that, at a conservative clan such as the Lan clan, who on Earth brought up such a junior.

Lan SiZhui spoke again, "This flag..." Before he finished, Wei WuXian threw the Phantom Attraction Flag onto the ground and humphed, "It's just a flag, so what's the big deal? I can draw way better than this!"

He sprinted off the moment he threw the flag away. The boys who stood on the roof to watch the bustle almost fell off from the laughter, after hearing his ridiculous words. Lan JingYi also chuckled from anger and picked up the Phantom Attraction Flag, "What a maniac!"

Wei WuXian continued to roam around, doing nothing, and finally moved back to the small courtyard that belonged to

Mo XuanYu.

He ignored the broken bolt and the mess on the ground, picked a relatively clean spot, and sat in the lotus position again.

However, before daylight came, he was pulled out of meditation by some noise from the outside.

A series of chaotic footsteps quickly approached, along with cries and screams. Wei WuXian heard a few phrases being repeated, "... Barge in and drag him out!" "Notify the officers!" "What do you mean 'notify the officers'? Beat him to death!"

He opened his eyes to see that a few servants had already come in.

The whole courtyard was set alight with fire. Someone cried out, "Drag the insane murderer to the Main Hall and make him pay for it with his life!"

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Lotus position: a cross-legged position for meditation purposes

\*Altered corpse: a corpse that had become alive, usually due to human interference

\*The "A" prefix can also be used to refer to someone you're close to. A-Yuan refers to Mo ZiYuan.

\*one li is 500 meters or 1/3 of a mile.

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**GDC Chapter 4:**



## Aggression

Wei WuXian's first thought was that something went wrong with the flag formation that the boys set up.

His inventions needed to be used extremely carefully, or else disasters could happen. This was also why he went to check if there was anything wrong with the motifs that were drawn.

As a few pairs of big hands came to drag him outside, Wei WuXian straightened his body and allowed them to do so without difficulty, so that he wouldn't have to walk by himself. The East Hall was bustling with people, almost more crowded than when the villagers of Mo Village gathered here. All of the servants and relatives were present. Some were still in their undergarments and didn't yet have the time to brush their hair, but everyone looked terrified.

Madam Mo was collapsed in her seat, as if she just woke up from a swoon. The streaks of tears could be seen on her cheeks, and tears still lingered in her eyes. But, as Wei WuXian was dragged inside, her sorrowful gaze immediately became hateful.

A human-shaped object lay on the ground, with its body covered by a white cloth and only the head being revealed.

Lan SiZhui and the other boys wore heavy expressions, bending down to check the situation and talking in soft voices. The conversation leaked into Wei WuXian's ears.

"... Less than three minutes have passed since the body was discovered?"

"After subduing the walking corpse, we hurried from the West Courtyard to the East Courtyard, and found the corpse by the hallway."

The human-shaped thing was, apparently, Mo ZiYuan. Wei WuXian took one glance at it, and couldn't help but to look again.

The corpse looked like Mo ZiYuan in some ways, but unlike him in other ways. Although the features were clearly that of his petty cousin's, the cheekbones were deeply sunken, eyes bulging, and skin wrinkled. Compared to the youthful Mo ZiYuan before this, it was as if he aged twenty years. It also seemed like his blood and flesh were sucked out of him, turning him into a skeleton with only a thin layer of skin on the outside. If, before this, Mo ZiYuan was just ugly, now, his corpse was both old and ugly.

As Wei WuXian was scrutinizing the corpse, Madam Mo suddenly rushed towards him, with a gleaming dagger in her hand. Being light on his feet, Lan SiZhui quickly knocked the dagger off. Before he had a chance to talk, Madam Mo shrieked at him, "My son died a tragic death, so I am only avenging him! What are you stopping me for?"

Wei WuXian hid behind Lan SiZhui's back again, and spoke while squatting, "How does your son's tragic death concern me?"

During the day, Lan SiZhui saw Wei WuXian make a scene in the East Hall, and, afterwards, he also heard a lot of exaggerated rumours from other people. He felt extremely sympathetic to the invalid, and couldn't help but to take his side, "Madam Mo, seeing from your son's condition, his flesh and essence have been drawn out of him, which means that he was killed by evil beings, not

him."

Madam Mo's chest heaved, "You know nothing! The lunatic's father was a cultivator. He must have learned a lot of demonic spells from him!"

Lan SiZhui turned around to look at the seemingly dull-witted Wei WuXian, and spoke again, "Uhm, Madam, there is a lack of evidence, so..."

"The evidence is on my son!" Madam Mo pointed at the corpse on the ground, "Look for yourselves! A-Yuan's remains already told me who murdered him!"

Not needing other people to do it, Wei WuXian lifted the white cloth by himself, from the head down to the feet.

There was something missing on Mo ZiYuan's dead body.

His left arm, severed from below his shoulder, had disappeared!

Madam Mo spoke, "Do you see this? Everyone who were here heard what the lunatic said, right? He said that, if A-Yuan touched his belongings again, he would cut off his hand!"

After the burst of emotion, she covered her face and sobbed, "... My poor A-Yuan... Although he didn't do anything to him at all, he was not only framed, but also killed as well... The lunatic is out of his mind..."

Out of his mind!

It had been a few years since he last heard the phrase being used to describe him, so it was quite cordial. Wei WuXian pointed at himself, but no words came to him. He didn't know if he was the ill one or if it was Madam Mo.

When he was younger, he talked quite a lot about exterminating entire families and clans, killing millions of people, creating rivers of blood, and other cruel actions. But, most of the time, they were empty words. If he could actually do the things that he said, he would have long been dominating the cultivation world. Madam Mo's true intention wasn't to avenge for him, but to find someone to let out her resentment on.

Wu WuXian didn't want to be bothered with her. He thought for a moment, and stuck his hand into Mo ZiYuan's arms. He fished around for a moment and pulled something out, unfolding it in front of him. Surprisingly, it was a Phantom Attraction Flag.

Instantly, he realized what was going on, and uttered under his breath,

he had it coming!

When Lan SiZhui and the others saw what was taken out of Mo ZiYuan's arms, they also understood the situation.

Associating this with the farce that happened today, the cause was easy to guess. During the day, Mo ZiYuan lost face because of Mo XuanYu's crazy

behavior and loathed him, still wanting to square up with him. However, Mo XuanYu wandered outside for a long while, so Mo ZiYuan planned to sneak up on him at night, when he would be returning.

When night had fallen, he secretly went outside, and was passing the West Courtyard when he saw the Phantom Attraction Flags on the walls. Although he was repeatedly told not to go outside or near the West Courtyard at night, and especially to stay away from these black flags, Mo

ZiYuan thought that he was told to do so because they were scared of people stealing the valuable weapons.

He had no idea about the dangerous effects of these Phantom Attraction Flags, or that if he held it, he would be turned into a living target. He got addicted to stealing his cousin's talismans and magic tools, and he would always itch to take odd items like this, not giving up until he obtained it. Therefore, when the owners of the flags were subduing walking corpses in the West Courtyard, he quietly took one.

The flag formation utilized six flags, of which five were set in the West Courtyard, with the boys from the Lan family as baits. However, they were all carrying countless magic tools on them, and, although Mo ZiYuan only took a single flag, he didn't have any tools for protection on him. It was common sense to pick on the weak, so the evil beings would naturally be attracted to him. If there were only walking corpses, then it wouldn't matter too much. Even if he was bitten, he wouldn't die immediately and could still be saved.

Unfortunately, the Phantom Attraction Flag accidentally attracted something worse than a walking corpse. The unknown being was what killed Mo ZiYuan and took his arm!

Wei WuXian raised his wrist. Sure enough, one of the cuts on his right hand had healed. It looked like that he had scored a lucky hit—the sacrificial contract had already deemed the death of Mo ZiYuan as his doing.

Madam Mo was well aware of her son's foibles, but she wasn't willing to admit that Mo ZiYuan caused his own death. Due to impatience and rage,

she grabbed a teacup and threw it in the direction of Wei WuXian's head, "If you didn't frame him in front of so many people yesterday,

would he go out in the middle of the night? It's all your fault, you son of a bitch!"

Wei WuXian saw it coming, and dodged to the side.

Madam Mo turned to Lan SiZhui and screeched, "And you!

You bunch of useless fools! You cultivate and ward off evil spirits, but you can't even protect him! A-Yuan is still a child\*!"

\*The actual word used here meant "from ten-years-old to nineteen-years-old", but, although they say "in one's twenties", people don't say "in one's tens", so the word was replaced by "a child" instead.

The boys were still young. They hadn't been outside much and were too inexperienced to find anything wrong with the area, which was why they felt sorry for not detecting an evil being as fierce as this one. Nonetheless, after Madam Mo's senseless scolding, they all looked blue in the face. After all, they grew up in a prominent family, so nobody dared to treat them like this. The GusuLan Clan was extremely strict to its disciples, forbidding violence against the powerless every man, not even allowing disrespect. Therefore, even if they felt displeased, they had to keep everything down with dark expressions.

However, Wei WuXian couldn't stand it any longer, and thought,

it has been so many years, but the Lan Clan's values are still the same. What's the use their so-called "self-restraint"? Watch me do this the right way!

He spat loudly and spoke, "Who do you think you're taking out your anger on? Did you really see them as your servants? They traveled far and wide to come here and exorcise evil spirits for you without taking a penny. Do they

owe you anything? How old is your son? He should be at least seventeen, and so, how is he still a 'child'? How young of a child does he have to be to

not understand basic human language? Did they or did they not repeatedly instruct him to not touch anything in the formation and not approach the West Courtyard? Your son sneaked outside at night on his own. Is it my fault? Or is it his?”

Lan JingYi and the others let out a breath of air, faces not so dark anymore. Madam Mo was both extremely mournful and resentful, and all she could think about was the word

“death.” Not her own death so that she could be with her son, but the deaths of everyone in the world, especially the ones in front of her right now.

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he had a habit of ordering her husband to do everything, and so she knocked him, “Call everyone! Call everyone inside!”

Even so, her husband was in a trance. Possibly because of the trauma from his only child passing away, he went as far as to backhandedly push her. It caught Madam Mo by surprise, and she fell onto the ground.

In the past, Madam Mo didn’t even need to push him. If she just raised her voice, he would comply immediately.

How could he dare to strike back today?

The servants were all scared out of their wits from her expression. A-Ding helped her up while quivering. Madam Mo clutched her chest and spoke in a trembling voice,

“You... You... You, get out of here as well!”

Her husband seemed like he didn’t hear anything. A-Ding gave a few looks to A-Tong, and A-Tong hurriedly helped his

master to walk outside. The East Hall was in chaos. As Wei WuXian saw that the family had finally silenced, he intended to examine the corpse again. However, before he took another look at it, another high-pitched scream pierced through the air. It was from the courtyard.

The people in the hall all rushed outside. On the ground of the East Courtyard, there were two twitching bodies. The first was that of A-Tong's, still alive, collapsed on the ground.

The other fallen body was wrinkled and withered, as if the blood and the flesh had been emptied dry. The left arm was already gone, but no blood came out of the wound. The condition of the corpse was the same as Mo ZiYuan's.

Madam Mo brushed off A-Ding's supporting hand a second ago, but as she saw the corpse on the ground, her eyes widened, and she was finally out of energy to throw another fit. As she fainted, Wei WuXian happened to be next to her, and gave her a hand, passing her to A-Ding, who came running. He looked at his right hand to see that another one of the cuts was also gone.

It was merely a few seconds before they walked over the threshold of the hall, not even past the East Courtyard yet, and saw Madam Mo's husband die distressingly. Lan SiZhui, Lan JingYi, and the others also grew pale in the face. Lan SiZhui was the first to calm down and asked A-Tong, who lay on the ground, "Did you see what it was?"

A-Tong was almost scared to death, unable to open his mouth. Even after a few moments of asking, A-Tong still couldn't answer, and only shook his head repeatedly. Lan SiZhui was burning with anxiety. He asked another disciple to take him back inside, and turned to Lan JingYi, "Did you send the signal?"

Lan JingYi answered, "I did, but if there are no seniors who can assist us in the area, it would take at least an hour for our people to come here. What should we do now? We don't even know what it was."

Of course, it would be impossible for them to leave. If the disciples of a clan only cared about their own well-being when facing evil spirits, it would not only be bringing disgrace upon the clan, they themselves would also be ashamed to face others. The frightened people of the Mo family couldn't go either, because it was likely that the evil being was among them, so nothing would be gained from going away. Lan SiZhui gritted his teeth, "Wait here, for the reinforcements!"

Now that the signal for help had been sent, other cultivators would come to aid them within a short period of time. To prevent things from getting out of hand, Wei WuXian should withdraw and keep away from the situation.

If the persons who came happened to know him or fought with him before, it would be hard to say what was going to happen next.

However, with the curse, he couldn't leave Mo Village anytime soon. In addition, the being that was attracted here had taken the lives of two people within such a short amount of time, which meant that it must have been extremely vicious. If Wei WuXian left now, when the helpers came, the streets of Mo Village might be packed with corpses who lost their left arms, including a few disciples of blood relations to the GusuLan Clan as well.

After pondering for a moment, Wei WuXian told himself, finish it quickly.

T/N: Good news, the seme is going to briefly appear in the next chapter.

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**GDC Chapter 5:**



## Aggression

The boys on the side were all young and inexperienced.

However, although they all looked nervous, they strictly stuck to their positions and protected the Mo family's house, fixing talismans onto the walls. The servant named A-Tong was already carried into the hall. Lan SiZhui felt his pulse with his left hand and supported Madame Mo's back with his right. He couldn't save both of them at once, and was in a terrible fix when A-Tong crawled up from the ground.

A-Ding exclaimed, "A-Tong, you're awake!"

Before her face had the time to light up, A-Tong raised his left hand and clutched his own neck.

Seeing this, Lan SiZhui tapped on a few of his acupoints for three times. Wei WuXian knew that, although they looked gentle, the people from the Lan clan had arm strength that were the opposite of gentle. With a force like this, it would be hard for anyone to move. However, A-Tong seemed like he didn't feel anything, and his left hand's grip tightened, his expressions looking more painful and twisted.

Lan JingYi proceeded to grab his left hand, but it was like breaking off a chunk of iron, having no effect at all. After a moment, a

crack

came from his neck, and A-Tong's head drooped down. His neck was already broken.

He actually strangled himself in front everyone's eyes!

Seeing the situation, A-Ding's voice wavered, "... A ghost!

There's an invisible ghost here. It made A-Tong strangle himself!"

Her tone was sharp and her voice was shrill, making everyone's blood run cold, and so they believed it effortlessly. Wei WuXian's judgement happened to be the opposite—it wasn't a ferocious ghost.

He had examined the talismans that the boys chose; all of them were spirit-fending ones, and the East Hall was literally covered with them. If it really was a ferocious ghost, then, as it went into the East Hall, the talismans would have incinerated green flames. Yet, nothing was happening right now.

It was not the group of kids' fault for reacting too slow, but the creature was indeed cruel. The cultivation world had a strict definition for the category of "ferocious ghosts"—they had to kill at least one person a month and continue the behaviour for at least three months. The criterion was set by Wei WuXian himself, and it was probably still being used. He was the best at dealing with this kind. To him, killing one person in seven days would be considered as a ferocious ghost who killed frequently. This thing killed three people at once, and within such a short period of time. It would be hard for even a capable cultivator to think of a solution immediately, let alone these juniors who had just started their careers.

As he was thinking, the candlelight flickered. A sinister wind passed, and all of the lanterns and candles in the courtyard and the East Hall died out.

The moment the lights were extinguished, screams came from everywhere. Everyone pushed and pulled, wanting to escape as fast as they could, stumbling and falling in the process. Lan JingYi shouted, "Stay where you are and don't run! I'm gonna catch whoever runs!"

He wasn't merely saying this to alarm the people. In fact, evil beings loved to cause trouble in the dark and make profits in times of trouble. The worse the crying and chaos, the more likely it was to unknowingly attract danger. At times like this, being isolated or becoming nervous was extremely unsafe. However, everyone was frightened to death, so how could they still have ears for words like this?

After a while, the East Hall grew quiet, with only a few light breaths and faint sobs. It was likely that only a few people were left.

Amidst the dark, a fire lit up suddenly. Lan SiZhui ignited a Flame Talisman.

The fire from the Flame Talisman would not be extinguished by sinister winds. He used the talisman to light up the candle again, and the rest of the boys went to comfort the others. Under the light, Wei WuXian casually looked at his wrists. Another cut had healed.

After looking, he suddenly realized that there was something wrong about the number of cuts.

Originally, he had two cuts on each of his wrists. One healed when Mo ZiYuan died, and another healed when Mo ZiYuan's father died. The death of the servant, A-Tong, healed one more of the cuts. Adding it up, only three cuts should have healed, with the last cut being the deepest and most hate-filled one.

But, right now, no cuts remained on his wrists.

Wei WuXian knew that Madame Mo was definitely one of Mo XuanYu's targets of vengeance. The longest and deepest cut was probably saved for her. Yet, it had disappeared.

Did Mo XuanYu suddenly reach a point of epiphany and let go of his hate? That'd be impossible. His soul had already been sacrificed as the price for summoning Wei WuXian.

Only the death of Madame Mo could heal the wound.

His gaze slowly moved towards the pale-faced Madame Mo, who recently woke up and was surrounded by everyone.

Unless, she was already dead.

Wei WuXian was sure that something was already possessing Madame Mo's body. If the being wasn't a spirit, then what was it?

Suddenly, A-Ding cried, "Hand... His hand! A-Tong's hand!"

Lan SiZhui moved the Flame Talisman to above A-Tong's body. Sure enough, his left hand had disappeared as well.

Left hand!

With lightning speed, Wei WuXian's mind became clear, with the being that was wrecking havoc and the missing left arms finally completing the puzzle. He promptly bursted out laughing. Lan JingYi snapped, "You idiot! How can you still laugh in a situation like this?" But, after a second thought, he knew that he was an idiot anyways, so what's the use of haggling over him?

Wei WuXian tugged at his sleeve, "No, no!"

Lan JingYi was annoyed, pulling his sleeve back, "What

'no'? You're not an idiot? Stop fooling around! Nobody has the time to pay attention to you."

Wei WuXian pointed at the corpses of Mo ZiYuan's father and A-Tong, which lay on the ground, and spoke, "These are not them."

Lan SiZhui stopped the fuming Lan JingYi and asked,

"What do you mean by 'these are not them'?"

Wei WuXian stated solemnly, "This is not Mo ZiYuan's dad, and this is not A-Tong either."

With his makeup-covered face, the more solemn he looked, the more he seemed like an actual lunatic. Yet, surrounded by the dim candlelight, his words sent chills up everyone's backs. Lan SiZhui stared for a second, and asked in spite of himself, "Why?"

Wei WuXian exclaimed proudly, "Their hands. None of them were left-handed. I'm sure of this, because they'd always hit me with their right hands."

Lan JingYi spat, running out of patience, "What are you being proud for? Look at how complacent you are!"

However, Lan SiZhui broke into a sweat. Thinking back, A-Tong had used his left hand to strangle himself, and Madame Mo's husband also used his left hand to push his wife.

But, during the day, when Mo XuanYu was causing trouble in the East Hall, the two were rushing to get him out of there, both using their right hands. It was impossible for them to suddenly turn left-handed before they died.

Although he didn't know why, in order to figure out what the creature was, they had to think in the direction of "left hands." After Lan SiZhui realized this, he felt surprised and looked at Wei WuXian. He couldn't help but to think, suddenly saying this... It doesn't seem like a coincidence

.

Wei WuXian only smiled. He knew that the hint was too deliberate, but he couldn't have helped it. The good thing was that Lan SiZhui didn't think too much about it either, and thought,

anyways, if Young Master Mo was willing to remind me of it, he probably didn't mean any harm

. His eyes moved away from him, passing A-Ding, who fainted from crying too much, and landed on Madame Mo.

His gaze traveled from her face down to her hands. Her arms were hanging down and were mostly hidden inside her sleeves, with only half of the fingers showing. Her right hand had fair, thin fingers, undoubtedly those of a woman who lived comfortably and never worked.

However, the fingers on her left hand were much longer than the ones on her right. They were also thicker. The knuckles were bent, full of power.

The hand isn't that of a woman's—it was a man's hand!

Lan SiZhui commanded, "Take hold of her!"

A few boys grabbed Madame Mo. Lan SiZhui said "excuse me" and was prepared to slap down a talisman when

Madame Mo's left hand suddenly twisted in an absurd way, aiming for his throat.

Unless one's bones had been broken, it was impossible for a living person to twist their arm like this. She attacked quickly, and was extremely close to grabbing onto his neck, when at the same time, Lan JingYi shouted "hey" and threw himself in front of Lan SiZhui, blocking the hand for him.

A flash passed, and as soon as the arm grabbed Lan JingYi's shoulder, green flames ignited on his arm, making it loosen its grip. Lan SiZhui escaped death, and was about to thank Lan JingYi for it, when he saw that half of the latter's uniform had already been burnt to ashes, looking quite awkward. Lan JingYi took off the other half of his uniform and scolded, fuming with rage, "Why did you kick me, you lunatic? Did you want to kill me?"

Wei WuXian scampered away like a frightened rat, "It wasn't me!"

It was

him. Inside of the Lan clan's uniform jacket, there were compact stitchings of incantations using thin threads of the same color, included for protection. However, against strong ones like this, it could only be used once before it became invalid. During the emergency, he could only kick Lan JingYi and use his body to protect Lan SiZhui's neck. Lan JingYi wanted to scold him again, but Madame Mo fell onto the ground, with all of the blood and flesh on her face being drained until only a thin layer of skin was left on the skull.

The male arm that didn't belong to her had fallen off her shoulders. Its fingers bent freely, as if it was stretching or exercising, and the throbs of its veins were clearly visible.

This was the evil being that the Phantom Attraction Flag had attracted.

Being dismembered was a classic example of a distressing death. It was only somewhat more dignified than the way Wei WuXian died. Unlike the situation of being crushed to powder, the limbs and parts of the corpse would be tainted with some of the resentment of the person who died, and it would want to reunite with the other parts and die with a whole corpse. Therefore, it would come up with strategies to find the other parts of the body. If it

found it, it might be satisfied and rest in peace, or it might stir up more trouble.

If it couldn't find it, the body part would have to put up with the second best option.

What would the second best option be? It would have to make do with the bodies of living humans.

It was like this left hand—eat the left hand of a living person, and replace it. After draining all of the person's blood and energy, it would abandon the body and find another container for parasitism, until it finally collected all of the other parts of its corpse.

As soon as the arm had possessed a person, they would die immediately. But, before all of the flesh had been eaten, they would still be able to walk around, under its control, as if the person was still alive. After it was attracted, the first container that it found was Mo ZiYuan. The second one was Mo ZiYuan's father. When Madame Mo told her husband to go away, he acted out of the norm and pushed her. Wei WuXian originally thought that it was because he was grieving his son's death and also tired of his wife's arrogance. Now that he thought about it again, it wasn't what a father who had just lost his son should look like. It wasn't the indifference from feeling hopeless. It was a

deadly tranquility—the tranquility coming from an already-deceased person.

The third container was A-Tong, and the fourth one was Madame Mo. During the chaos from when the lights suddenly went out, the ghost hand had transferred onto her body. When Madame Mo died, the last cut on Wei WuXian's wrists also disappeared.

The boys from the Lan clan saw that, although talismans didn't work, clothing did, and all took off their coats to cover the left hand. The layers of clothing looked like a white cocoon. After a second, the ball of white clothes ignited with a

whoosh

, creating a green, abnormal inferno. Although it would take care of the moment, after a while, when the uniforms were completely burnt, the hand would emerge from within the ashes. While nobody was looking, Wei WuXian ran towards the West Courtyard.

The ten-or-so walking corpses that were subdued by the boys stood silently in the courtyard,



## sealed

by the incantations drawn on the ground. Wei WuXian kicked one of the symbols, destroying the entire formation.

He clapped twice. Suddenly, with a jolt, the whites of the walking corpses' eyes all turned upward, as if they were woken up by a bolt of thunder.

Wei WuXian spoke, "Wake up. It's time to work!"

He usually didn't need complex incantations to control these corpse puppets—a straightforward command would do as well. The walking corpses in front of him moved a few quivering steps. But, as they approached Wei WuXian, their legs grew weak and they collapsed onto the ground, as if they were real humans.

Wei WuXian found it both funny and annoying. He clapped his hands again, this time lighter. However, these walking corpses were probably born in Mo Village and died here as well, not having experienced life fully. They instinctively followed the summoner's commands, but were also horrified at the summoner, lying on the ground and afraid to get up.

The crueller the being was, the better Wei WuXian could control it. These walking corpses hadn't been trained by him and couldn't withstand direct manipulations from him. He didn't have any materials on him, which meant that he couldn't immediately make tools to ease the walking corpses. He couldn't even muddle and assemble bits and pieces. The soaring green flames in the East Courtyard gradually grew dimmer. Suddenly, Wei WuXian found a solution.

Why would he need to come outside and find a dead person with strong resentment and a cruel personality?

There were not only one, but multiple corpses in the East Hall!

He ran back to the East Courtyard. As Lan SiZhui's first solution failed, he found a second one. The disciples pulled out their swords and stuck them

into the ground, making a sword fence. The ghost hand crashed into the fence, and they spent all their energy compressing their hilts so that it didn't break out, paying no attention to who was entering

and leaving. Wei WuXian strode into the East Hall and grabbed Madame Mo and Mo ZiYuan's corpses, one on each hand, and spoke in a low voice, "Wake up!"

In a split second, Madame Mo and Mo ZiYuan's eye whites turned up, and started making the shrill and powerful shrieks that ferocious ghosts made after they came back to life.

Amidst the shrieks, another corpse trembled and crawled up, making the lowest and faintest shriek. It was Madame Mo's husband.

The shrieks were loud enough and the resentment was strong enough. Wei WuXian smiled, feeling quite satisfied,

"Do you recognize the hand outside?"

He commanded, "Tear it apart."

The three members of the Mo family whipped out like three clouds of black wind.

The left arm fractured one of the swords, and was about to break out, when three cruel corpses without left arms came at it.

Aside from being unable to defy Wei WuXian's command, the family also loathed the creature that killed them, and let out their anger on the ghost hand. The main attacker was undoubtedly Madame Mo. Because female corpses were often especially fierce after they were modified, her hair was loose and her eyes were bloodshot. With nails that multiplied in length, foam gathering at the corners of her mouth, and shrieks that were enough to uplift the ceiling, she looked extremely insane. Behind her followed Mo ZiYuan, who cooperated with her and used both his teeth and his hands. His father was at the end, covering for the

gaps between the attacks of the other two corpses. The struggling boys were stricken dumb with amazement.

They had only seen these battles between multiple fierce corpses in books and hearsay, and they all gaped as they saw the gore-splattered scene for the first time, unable to avert their gazes. They all thought that it was... Absolutely thrilling!

The three corpses and the hand were in the middle of a tough battle, when Mo ZiYuan abruptly moved out of the way. His abdomen area was attacked by the hand, causing a few chunks of his intestines to spill out. As Madame Mo saw this, she screamed incessantly and shielded her son behind herself. Her attacks were more violent, the strength of her fingers almost comparable to that of steel and iron weapons. But, Wei WuXian knew that she was gradually being overpowered.

Even three cruel corpses who recently died couldn't subdue this single arm!

Wei WuXian was watching the battle attentively. His tongue was slightly curled, suppressing a sharp whistle inside of his lips, preparing it to be let out. The whistle would be able to evoke even more hostility in the cruel corpses, which might turn the tables. Then, however, it would be difficult to ensure that nobody knew that it was his doing. In the blink of an eye, the hand moved like lightning, ruthlessly and precisely breaking Madame Mo's neck.

Watching as the Mo family grew closer to defeat, Wei WuXian prepared to blow the whistle that he suppressed under his tongue. At the same time, the echoes of two strums on a stringed instrument came from far away.

The sound seemed to have been played by a human. The timbre was ethereal and clear, carrying

### **the bleak chills of windswept pines**

. The creatures battling in the courtyard all stiffened as they heard the sound.

Instantaneously, the boys from the GusuLan clan started beaming, as if they were born again. Lan SiZhui wiped the blood off his face and raised his

head, happily exclaiming, “

**HanGuang-Jun!”**

As soon as he heard the two faraway strums of the **zither**, Wei WuXian turned around and began to leave.

The sound of another strum came. This time, the pitch was higher, piercing through the sky with a few degrees of bitterness. The three cruel corpses backed off and covered one ear with their right hands. However, it was impossible to block out the

## **Eradication Tone**

of the GusuLan clan by means such as this. They had just retreated a few steps, and slight bursting sounds came from within their skulls.

Because the arm had just endured a tough fight, after hearing the sound of the strings again, it instantly fell onto the ground. Although the fingers were still flinching, the arm was unable to move.

After a short moment of silence, the boys couldn't help but to cheer loudly, celebrating the joy of surviving the

incident. They had struggled through the exhilarating night, and their clan's reinforcement had finally come. Even if they'd be punished because of reasons such as "being discourteous and making noise is harmful to the clan's reputation," they didn't care.

After waving towards the moon, Lan SiZhui suddenly realized that someone had disappeared. He tugged Lan JingYi, "Where is he?"

Lan JingYi was absorbed in the act of rejoicing, "Who?

Which one?"

Lan SiZhui replied, "Young Master Mo."

Lan JingYi said, "Hmm? Why are you looking for that lunatic? Who knows where he ran off to. He's probably frightened by my threats to hit him."

"..." Lan SiZhui knew that Lan JingYi had always been careless and straightforward, not thinking twice about anything or suspecting anyone. He thought,

I'll wait for HanGuang-Jun to come, and then tell him about everything

.

Mo Village was still asleep, but it was difficult to tell whether it was a real slumber or a faked one. Although the corpse fight was a mass of blood and gore, the villagers didn't wake up during the early morning to watch. After all, even bystanders needed to choose which events to show up at. One that involved lots of screaming was definitely not the safest type.

Wei WuXian eliminated all evidence of the sacrificial formation in Mo XuanYu's room as fast as he could, and ran out the door.

Unfortunately, the person who came happened to be from the Lan clan, but even more unfortunately, he happened to be Lan WangJi!

This was one of the people who had fought with him before, so he should retreat quickly. He was in a hurry to find a mount, as he passed a courtyard and saw a big millstone inside. A donkey was tied to the handle, chewing on its mouth. When it saw him run over rashly, it seemed like it was surprised, and eyed him sideways as if it was a real person. Wei WuXian made eye contact with him for one second, and was immediately touched by the minuscule amount of contempt in its eyes.

He tried to grab onto the rope and pull it out, but the donkey complained by making a few loud noises. Therefore, Wei WuXian had to use both his words and his strength to deceive it and get it onto the road. As dawn came over the horizon, they went off onto the main path.

**Translator's Notes:**

## Seal

: This does not mean to seal a piece of paper. It means to “apply a sort of power to an object/person so that they cannot use one or more of their usual powers” (“Baidu Baike”).

### **The bleak chills of windswept pines**

: Here, the author makes reference to a poem by Liu ChangQing. The translation of this phrase used [chinesepoems.blogspot.ca](http://chinesepoems.blogspot.ca) as a reference.

### **HanGuang-Jun**

: HanGuang-Jun is the same’s “alternative name” or

“hao”. An alternative name is usually a title given to a person by themselves or others. In this case, the “-Jun”

suffix at the end directly translates to “gentleman” or “a man of noble character”. Interesting enough, the “-kun”

suffix in Japanese derived from this, although the two are used differently.

**Zither:** Here, the zither refers to the Chinese zither.

## **Eradication Tone**

: The literal meaning is “sounds that can overcome obstacles”. It is often used while attacking.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 6: Arrogance**



## Important Note

: From now on, the GusuLan Clan will be referred to as the GusuLan Sect. I, the translator, accidentally mistook the definition of a sect as that of a clan's. For clarification purposes, a sect is an organization for cultivation that may or may not be related by blood, while a clan is a cultivation family related by blood. This means that GusuLan is a sect, with the Lan clan being the leaders of the sect. This is what Wei WuXian referred to as he was talking about the uniforms of the disciples who came—only those part of the clan are allowed to wear cloud patterns, excluding the common members of the sect. Again, I apologize for the miscommunication \(';Д` )

Only a few days passed, and Wei WuXian realized that he might have made a wrong choice.

The donkey that he conveniently picked up was too hard to please.

Although it was only a donkey, it would exclusively eat fresh, young grass with dewdrops still hanging off them. If the tip of the grass had a streak of yellow, it wouldn't eat it.

Passing a farm, Wei WuXian stole some wheat straws to feed it, but after chewing them, it spit it out with a ptoo

, even louder than that of its human counterparts. If it didn't eat high-quality food, it wouldn't budge, and it'd lose its temper and kick around. For multiple times, Wei WuXian

was almost kicked by it. Aside from that, its brays also sounded extremely horrible to the ear.

It was useless, no matter as a mount or a pet!

Wei WuXian couldn't help but to think of his sword. The sword was probably collected by the leader of a prominent clan and would have hanged on a wall as a trophy that they could show other people.

After pushing and pulling along for a few blocks, the road reached a vast farmland of some village. Under the scorching sun, there was a large pagoda tree and thick, green grass underneath it. Beside the tree, there was an old well, with a barrel and a dipper on the side, placed there by the farmers for any passersby to quench their thirst. The donkey ran over there and nothing could make it leave. Wei WuXian hopped down and slapped its honoured buttocks,

“You’re definitely destined for wealth, even harder to please than me.”

The donkey spat at him.

While they fooled around aimlessly, a group of people approached from within the fields.

The people carried handmade bamboo baskets, and wore cotton clothes and straw sandals, emitting the rustic airs of rural villagers. In the group, there was a young girl with a round face that could be considered delicate. Possibly because of walking for too long under the sun, they also wanted to come over to rest by the shade and have some water. However, seeing that there was a wild donkey tied to the tree and a lunatic with heavy makeup and dishevelled hair, they were reluctant to go over.

Wei WuXian had always thought of himself as one who was courteous towards women, so he moved over, emptying some space, and went to struggle with the donkey. After realizing that he was harmless, the people were finally at ease to come over. All of them were drenched in sweat and had ruddy cheeks; some were fanning themselves and some fetching water. The girl sat by the well and smiled at Wei WuXian, as if she knew that he purposely moved away.

One of the people held a compass in his hand. He looked into the distance, and then lowered his head questioningly,

“We’re already at the foot of Dafan Mountain, so why hasn’t the pointer started moving yet?”

The designs and pointer on the compass looked strange, indicating that it wasn’t a normal compass. It wasn’t one that showed the North, South, East,

and West, but one that showed the directions malicious creatures, also known as a

“

## Compass of Evil

.” Wei WuXian realized that this was probably a poor cultivation clan from the countryside. Aside from highbrow, affluent clans, there were also smaller clans like this, who closed their doors and cultivated on their own. Wei WuXian thought that they might have left their village to either find a clan whom they were distant relatives to, or to go night-hunting.

The middle-aged man leading the group called for people to take a drink and replied, “Your compass might be broken; I’ll get you a new one later. Dafan Mountain is less than ten miles ahead of us, which means that we cannot rest for too long. We have struggled through the whole journey, and if we relax now and fall behind, with other people beating us to it, it wouldn’t have been worth it.”

As expected, it was a night-hunt. A lot of refined cultivation clans called travelling to places and exorcising evil beings “*hunting*.” Because of how these creatures often appear at night, it was also called “*night-hunting*.” There were countless cultivation clans, but only a few were distinguished. Without the contributions from its ancestors, if an average clan wanted to become famous and receive respect in the cultivation world, it would have to show its abilities. Only if a clan captured a fierce monster or a terrorizing being, could it have then been treated seriously.

This was originally Wei WuXian’s specialty area. However, during the days of travelling, he destroyed a few graves, but only found small ghosts. He happened to need a ghost soldier to do evil for him, and decided to go to **Rice Mountain** to try his luck. If he found a good one, he’d capture it and put it to use.

After the group of people finished resting, they prepared to move on. Before they left, the round-faced girl took a small, partly-ripened apple out of her basket and handed it to him, “Here you go.”

Wei WuXian extended his hand to receive it, grinning broadly, but the donkey also opened its mouth and bit at it.

Wei WuXian quickly took the apple away. Seeing that the donkey craved the apple so much, he thought of a good idea. He gathered a long stick and a fishing thread, hanged the apple on one end, and dangled it in front of the donkey.

The donkey smelled the apple's refreshing scent from in front of him and wanted to eat it, chasing the apple which

was always a centimeter away from him. Its speed was faster than the best horses Wei WuXian had ever seen, leaving only dust behind it.

Without stopping, Wei WuXian arrived at Dafan Shan before dark. Upon arriving at the foot of the mountain, he finally realized that the "fan" wasn't the one he thought it was. It got its name because, looking from far away, the mountain looked like a kind, chubby buddha. There was a small town below the mountain, named Buddha's Feet.

The number of cultivators who gathered here were far more than what he had expected. Everything was a jumble, with people from different sects and clans walking down the streets, all in uniforms of different colours, almost blinding to the eye. For some reason, all of them wore distressed expressions. Nobody bothered to laugh at him even though they saw his strange appearance.

In the center of the long street, a group of cultivators gathered, talking in serious tones. It seemed as if their opinions differed greatly. Even from afar, Wei WuXian could hear them talking. In the beginning, everything was fine, but they suddenly became agitated.

"... I think that there are no soul-consuming beasts or spirits in the area at all. It's clear that none of the Compasses of Evil showed anything."

"If there isn't, then how did the seven people lose their souls? They couldn't have all attained the same disease, could they? I, for one, haven't heard of this disease at all!"

"Even if the Compass of Evil is not showing anything, does it mean that there's nothing in the area? It can only point out an approximate direction,

without any specifics, so it shouldn't be fully trusted. Maybe there's something here that can interfere with the pointer's direction."

"Do you remember who created the Compass of Evil? I've never heard of anything that can interfere with its pointer's direction."

"What do you mean? Are you implying anything with that tone of yours? Of course, I know that

## Wei Ying

created the Compass of Evil. But, it's not as if his creations are flawless. Aren't we allowed the option of doubt, at least?"

"I never said that you can't doubt it, much less his creations are flawless, so why accuse me?"

And so, their argument had turned to another direction.

Wei WuXian passed them on his donkey, giggling and laughing. He didn't expect that, after so many years had passed, he was still alive in the cultivators' conversations.

This was the so-called "much ado about Wei." If there was ever a poll to find out whose popularity was the most lasting in the cultivation world, the winner would be no other than Wei WuXian.

To be honest, the cultivator wasn't wrong. The Compasses of Evil in use today was the first version that he made, and were, indeed, not specific enough. He was in the middle of making improvements when his "den" was destroyed, so he had to put everyone through the inconvenience of using the imprecise version one.

Anyways, creatures that ate blood and flesh were usually low in level, such as walking corpses. Only the more refined

high-level monsters or ghosts were capable of eating and digesting souls. This one ate seven at once—no wonder so many clans had gathered here. Since the prey was by no means a trivial matter, it was inevitable for the Compasses of Evil to make mistakes.

Wei WuXian reined in the rope and hopped off the donkey's back, holding the apple, which had been ahead of it for the whole journey, in front of its mouth, "One bite. One bite only... Hmph, are you trying to eat my whole hand with that bite of yours?"

He ate a few bites from the other side of the apple, and stuffed it back into the donkey's mouth, pondering upon how he came down to the point of sharing an apple with a donkey, when, suddenly, someone bumped into his back. He turned around to see a girl. Although she bumped into him, she didn't acknowledge him at all. Her eyes were dull and she had a smile on her face, staring into the distance without blinking.

Wei WuXian followed her gaze, and saw the dense mountaintop of Dafan Mountain.

All of a sudden, the girl started dancing in front of him without saying anything.

The dance was wild, with her arms flinging about savagely. Wei WuXian was watching the performance with keen pleasure when a woman ran over, lifting her dress slightly. She embraced the girl and cried, "A-Yan, let's go back, let's go back!"

A-Yan brushed her off with force, her smile still unfaded, creating a terrifying sort of affection, and continued to dance. The woman had to chase her down the street, sobbing while running. A street vendor on the side spoke,

"How awful. A-Yan from Blacksmith Zheng's family has escaped again."

"It must be horrible for her mom. A-Yan, A-Yan's husband, and her husband... All of them were..."

Wei WuXian wandered around, piecing together the strange event that happened here from picking up on different people's conversations.

On Dafan Mountain, there was a burial ground. Most of the ancestors of the townspeople from Buddha's Feet were buried here and, sometimes, unidentifiable corpses would also receive a spot and a wooden plaque here. A few months ago, in a dark and stormy night, the wind and the rain caused a piece of land on Dafan Mountain to slide and collapse, which happened to be the burial ground. Many older graves were destroyed, and a few coffins were exposed to the air and struck by lightning, causing both the corpses and the coffins to be charred black.



The townspeople of Buddha's Feet were extremely uneasy.

After a few rounds of prayers, they rebuilt the burial ground again, assuming that everything would be just fine.

However, ever since then, people in the town started to lose their souls.

The first one was a sluggard. He was a poor wretch, loafing about and doing no work at all. Because he loved to hike on the mountain and catch birds, he happened to be stuck in the mountain during the night of the landslide. He was frightened to death, but, luckily, he was safe. The peculiar thing was that, after a few days, he suddenly married someone. His wedding was quite large, and he said that he wanted to be charitable from now on and settle down.

On the night of the wedding, he was completely drunken, having never woken up ever since he lay on the bed. The bride didn't receive an answer as she called him. Only when she pushed him over did she realize that the groom had dreary eyes and a cold body. Aside from being able to breathe, he was no different from a dead person. After a few days of lying on the bed, not eating or drinking anything, he was finally buried. Unfortunately, the bride had become a widow shortly after she married.

The second one was A-Yan, from Blacksmith Zheng's family. The young girl had just received an engagement when her future husband was killed by a wolf on the second day, while he was hunting in the mountains. After she got the news, she also became like the sluggard. Luckily, after some time, her soul-losing disease was cured on its own.

However, after this, she went crazy, cheerfully dancing to other people when she was outside.

The third one was A-Yan's father, Blacksmith Zheng. Until now, this had happened to seven people.

Wei WuXian considered the situation, and figured that it was most likely a soul-consuming spirit, not a soul-consuming beast.

Although only one word was different between the two, they were completely different beings. A spirit was a ghost, while a beast was a monster. To him, it was likely that the landslide had destroyed an ancient tomb, and, with lightning splitting the coffin open, a resting spirit had been let out. If he looked at the type of coffin and the presence of any seals on it, he could figure out whether or not this was the case.

However, the townsfolk of Buddha's Feet had already buried the charred coffins somewhere else and laid the corpses to

rest again, which meant that there wouldn't be a great deal of evidence left.

To go up the mountain, one had to hike up trail that started in the town. Wei WuXian sat on his donkey and rode up the hill slowly. After a while, a few people walked down with ominous expressions on their faces.

Some of them had scars on their faces, and they were talking all at once. With the darkening sky, they all jumped as they saw a person who looked like a hanged ghost approaching them. After cursing, they walked around him quickly. Wei WuXian turned his head around and thought, maybe they were frustrated because it was a strong prey?

He didn't think too much about it and slapped the donkey's buttocks, making it jog faster up the mountain.

Coincidentally, he missed the group's whining, which happened shortly afterward.

"I haven't seen anyone like this!"

"Would the leader of a big clan like that need to fight over a soul-consuming spirit with us? He probably killed tons of them when he was young."

"What can we do? He's a sect leader. No matter which clan you choose to offend, you shouldn't offend the Jiang clan, and no matter which person you choose to offend, you shouldn't offend Jiang Cheng. Let's just pack up, leave, and feel sorry for ourselves!"

## **Compass of Evil**

: The literal translation is “Wind-evil Compass”.

### **Rice Mountain**

: The “fan” in “Dafan Mountain” means “relating to Buddhism,” but it also sounds similar to “rice,” so Wei WuXian mistakenly thought that it means “big rice mountain.”

## Wei Ying

: This is Wei WuXian's birth name. In Ancient China, people usually don't call others by their birth names, unless they were of the same age and close acquaintances with each other. It was considered disrespectful to even mention an elder's birth name. The common name, or the "zi," was another name given to the person by their parents, which other people can freely mention. In this case, by referring to Wei WuXian by his birth name, the speaker is showing his disregard for him.

Like Loading...

### GDC Chapter 7: Arrogance

If it was darker, then one would need a torch to move freely about in the mountain's forest. Wei WuXian walked for a while, but he didn't meet many cultivators. He was quite surprised,

is it possible that half of the clans who came were in Buddha's Feet arguing and talking empty words, while the other half could only come back defeated, like the group of people who just passed by?

Suddenly, cries for help came from in front of him.

"Is anyone there?"

"Help us!"

Both male and female voices could be heard, and all sounded panicked, probably not faked. Cries for help from desolate mountains were usually the works of evil creatures, to lure ignorant people into traps. Yet, Wei WuXian was extremely happy.

The eviler the creature was, the better it was for him!

He directed the donkey toward the direction of the voices, but couldn't find anything around him. As he looked upward, instead of spirits or monsters, it

was the rural clan that he met by the field earlier on, hung on the trees by a huge, golden web.

The middle-aged man was originally patrolling and scouting in the forest with a few others. However, rather than meeting the prey that they had hoped for, they

stepped into a net trap, probably set up by some wealthy clan, which was why they were hanging on the trees, complaining and calling for help.

After seeing that someone approached, they immediately brightened up, but the hope faded as they saw that it was a lunatic who came. Although the threads of the deity-binding net were thin, the material was fine in quality, making them difficult to break. No matter human, god, demon, spirit, or monster, it would take a long while for the intruder to struggle out since it could only be broken by a superior magical tool. The lunatic probably didn't even know what it was, much less how to get them out of it.

He was about to call others to come help him when the crisp sounds of parting branches and stepping on leaves approached. A boy wearing a light-colored robe emerged from within the dark forest.

The boy had a **vermilion mark** in between his eyebrows, his features delicate yet sharp. He was quite young, around the same age as Lan SiZhui—still in his adolescence. He carried a bamboo canister of feathered arrows and a luminous sword on his back, holding a longbow in his hand.

The embroidery on his clothes was extremely delicate, forming a magnificent white peony in front of his chest. The golden threads glistened against the dark nighttime shades surrounding him.

Wei WuXian silently exclaimed, "How wealthy!"

This must have been a young master studying in the LanlingJin Sect, since the sect was the only one with a white peony as the clan pattern, using the king of all flowers to suggest that they were the king of all cultivators. The **vermilion mark**

implied the meaning of “opening the doors toward wisdom and aspiration; illuminating the world with the vermilion light.”

The young master already had an arrow on his bow and was preparing to shoot it, when he realized that the deity-binding nets only caught humans. After an initial moment of disappointment, he quickly became annoyed, “I find you idiots every single time. There are more than four hundred deity-binding nets in the mountain, but you guys have already broken ten or so, and I haven’t even seen the prey yet!”

Wei WuXian thought, again, “How wealthy!”

A single deity-binding net was already expensive, yet he had set up four hundred all at once. A smaller clan would’ve become bankrupt after buying so many, but then, of course, this was the LanlingJin Sect. However, wasting deity-binding webs like this and not caring about what they caught shouldn’t be considered night-hunting at all. In fact, it was almost as if they were chasing people away, not allowing others the chance of contributing to the process. It seemed that the cultivators who retreated earlier didn’t do it because the prey was difficult, but rather because this sect was one that shouldn’t be angered.

After a few days of traveling slowly and listening to the intriguing conversations at Buddha’s Feet, Wei WuXian gathered a lot of information about the changes to the cultivation world. As the final winner of the hundred-year-long cultivational disruption, the LanlingJin Sect was the head of all clans and sects—its leader was even referred to as the “commander” of all cultivators.

Even before this, the Jin Clan was arrogant, admirers of extravagant splendor. After the years of being at the top and while strengthening the sect, it had trained all of its disciples to do whatever they wanted to. Even a slightly weaker clan would have to submit to their humiliation, much less a small, rural clan such as this one. This was why, although the people trapped in the nets were red with fury, because of the mean words of the boy, they could not talk back.

The middle-aged man spoke with tolerance, "Please, **Young Master**, do us a small favor and let us down."

The boy was restless with the anxiety of his prey still not arriving, and it was convenient for him to direct his anger toward the country bumpkins. He crossed his arms, "You guys should just stay here, in case you mess around and get in my way again! I'll let you down after I catch the spirit-consuming beast, that is, if I still remember you."

If they really stayed on the trees for the whole night and happened to bump into the creature that haunted Dafan Mountain, being unable to move, all they could do would be to wait for their souls to be sucked dry. The round-faced girl who gave an apple to Wei WuXian felt scared and started crying. Wei WuXian was originally cross-legged on the donkey, but as it heard the sob, his long ears quivered, and it suddenly leaped forward.

Following the leap came a long bray. If not for how horrible the bray sounded, its unstoppable vigor could almost pass for a purebred horse. Unprepared for this, Wei WuXian was thrown off of its back, almost injuring his head as he fell.

The donkey ran head-first toward the boy as if it believed that it could knock him off his feet with its head. The boy's

arrow was still poised on the bow, conveniently drawing the bow toward its direction. Wei WuXian didn't want to find a new mount so soon, so he quickly yanked on its reins. The boy took a look at him, a look of shock to suddenly appear on his face.

After a second, the shock turned into disdain. His mouth twitched, "So, it's you."

The tone was made of twenty percent surprise and eighty percent disgust, making Wei WuXian blink. The boy spoke again, "Did you lose your marbles after you were thrown back to your village? How could they let you outside when you looked as freaky as this?"

Did he really just hear something of such significance?

Might it be, Wei WuXian suddenly realized,

that Mo XuanYu's father isn't the head of some small sect, but the famous Jin GuangShan?

Jin GuangShan was the last leader of the LanlingJin Sect, having already passed away. On the topic of this man, one sentence could not tell the whole story. He had a fierce wife from a prominent family and, in fact, he was known for being scared of her. However, even if he was scared, it never stopped him from going to other women. No matter how fierce Madame Jin was, it was impossible for her to follow him twenty-four hours a day. Therefore, from ladies of distinguished statuses to prostitutes in rural areas, if he could get his hands on one, he wouldn't miss the chance.

And, although he enjoyed casual relationships and flirted everywhere, having an uncountable amount of illegitimate children, it was extremely easy for him to get bored.

After he grew tired a woman, he would forget about her completely, without any responsibility or whatsoever.

Among all of his illegitimate children, there was only one who proved to be exceptionally talented and ended up being taken back—the current leader of the LanlingJin Sect, Jin GuangYao. Moreover, Jin GuangShan didn't die honorably either. He believed that he was old but vigorous, and wanted to challenge himself, fooling around with a group of women. However, unfortunately, he failed and passed away during the act. This was too humiliating, and so, the LanlingJin Sect told the public that the old leader died from overworking himself. All of the other clans decided to keep silent about the matter and pretended that they didn't know anything. Anyways, those were the real reasons behind his

“fame.”

During the siege in Luanzang Hill, aside from Jiang Cheng, Jin GuangShan was the second-greatest contributor. And now, Wei WuXian had taken over the body of his own illegitimate son. He really didn't know if they were even with each other.



Seeing that he was spacing out, the boy grew even more annoyed, “Get out of here! It’s disgusting just looking at you, you damn gay!”

In terms of his generation, it was highly possible for Mo XuanYu to be an elder to the boy, maybe an uncle. After being humiliated by a junior like this, Wei WuXian thought that even if not for his own sake, he needed to return the humiliation for Mo XuanYu’s body, “What an attitude! I suppose that you didn’t have a mother to teach you?”

Hearing his words, two raging flames sparked in the boy’s eyes. He unsheathed the sword on his back and threatened,

“What... Did you say?”

The blade of the sword shone a golden light. It was a rare sword of high quality—most clans probably couldn’t get a small piece of it even if they spent their whole lives saving for it. Wei WuXian examined it attentively, somehow thinking that the sword seemed familiar to him. Then again, he had seen his share of gold, top-notch swords. He didn’t think too much about it and began to spin a tiny cloth bag that he held in his hand.

It was a makeshift “spirit-locking bag” that he had created a few days ago, using the scraps and pieces of things. As the boy wielded the sword and came toward him, he fished a piece of human-shaped paper out of the spirit-locking bag.

He shifted to the side, avoiding the attack, and slapped the paper onto his opponent’s back.

The boy’s movements were already fast, but Wei WuXian had done a lot of “tripping someone while slapping a talisman onto their back”, which meant that he was faster.

The boy suddenly felt his torso become numb, his back weakening, and he unwillingly collapsed onto the ground, with his sword also falling to the side with a clunk

. He couldn’t get up no matter how hard he tried, as if a mountain was on top of him. On his back, there was a ghost who had died from gluttony, crushing

him to the point that he couldn't even breathe. Although the ghost was weak, it was completely capable of dealing with brats like this one.

Wei WuXian picked up his sword, weighed it in his hands, and swung toward the direction of the deity-binding net, splitting it in half.

The family fell to the ground in an awkward way, but they sprinted off without saying anything. The round-faced girl

seemed as if she wanted to thank him, but she was pulled away by an elder, who was scared that Young Master Jin would hate them even more. The boy on the ground was fuming, "You damn gay! Good for you, taking this sort of wrong path because you didn't have enough spiritual powers to do anything! Watch out for your life! Do you know who came today? Today, I..."

Although the cultivation method that he used in the past was often criticized and, in the long term, it harmed the cultivator's health, it could be mastered quickly. It was also especially attractive because there were no limitations as to the cultivator's spiritual powers or talent, making it so that there were always people who secretly practiced it to find a shortcut. The boy presumed that, after being chased from the LanlingJin Sect, Mo XuanYu had chosen the dishonorable path, which was a reasonable conclusion to draw, saving Wei WuXian from a lot of unnecessary trouble.

The boy pushed on the ground, but couldn't get up even after a few tries. His face was scarlet and he gritted his teeth, "If you don't stop, I'm gonna tell my uncle, and you're gonna wait for your death!"

Wei WuXian wondered, "Why is it your uncle, not your dad? Who's your uncle, again?"

A voice suddenly came from behind him, a mixture of being bitter and cold.

"I am his uncle. Do you have any last words?"

Hearing the voice, all of the blood from Wei WuXian's body traveled to his head and drained away a moment later. The good thing was that his face was already a pile of white. A shade whiter wouldn't make too much of a difference.

A violet-clothed youth approached in confident steps, his **jianxiu**

robe flowing smoothly and his hand pressing on the hilt of his sword. A silver bell hung by his waist, although it made no sound as he walked.

The young man had thin brows and almond eyes. His features were handsome in a sharp way, and his eyes held a composed vigor, with a slight intention of attack, appearing to be two bolts of lightning as he stared. He stood ten steps away from Wei WuXian, his expression resembling a honed arrow on the bow, ready to be released at any moment.

Even his posture emitted an air of arrogance and overconfidence.

He frowned, “Jin Ling, why did you linger for so long? Do you really need me to come and pick you up? Look at what a terrible situation you’re in right now, and get up!”

After the initial numbing of his head, Wei WuXian quickly realized what was going on. He curled a finger inside his sleeve and made the piece of paper retreat. Jin Ling felt his back lighten and immediately rolled up, grabbing his sword in the process. He shifted near Jiang Cheng and pointed at Wei WuXian accusingly, “I’m gonna break your legs!”

With the pair of uncle and nephew standing beside each other, it was clear that they shared a close resemblance, probably able to pass for brothers. Jiang Cheng moved his finger, and the paper doll swiftly flew out of Wei WuXian’s hand and into his own. After taking one look at it, hostility came over his face. He pressured his fingers, and the paper was ignited, burning to dust with the screams of dark spirits.

Jiang Cheng spoke grimly, “Break his legs? Haven’t I told you? If you see this sort of evil and crooked practice, kill the cultivator and feed him to your dogs!”

Wei WuXian couldn’t even attempt to grab his donkey, backing away at rapid speed. He thought that, after so many years, no matter how much hatred Jiang Cheng had held for him, it would have disappeared long ago. He didn’t expect that not only did it not disappear, it became richer, as if it was a

**jar**

of aged alcohol. At the present time, his hatred had grown to affect even people who cultivated like him!

With someone backing him up, Jin Ling's attacks became more aggressive. Wei WuXian slid two fingers into the spirit-locking bag, about to take something out, when suddenly, the blue glare of a sword slashed out like lightning. It collided with Jin Ling's sword, breaking the powerful sword's golden rays in an instant.

It wasn't because of the quality of the swords, but rather the great disparity in the strengths of the persons using the swords. Wei WuXian had originally calculated the timing, but his movements were suddenly interrupted by the sword's glare, causing him to trip. He fell toward the ground, right on top of a pair of snow-white boots. After pausing for a moment, he slowly lifted his head.

What first came into his sight was a long, slender blade, crystalline and translucent, as if it was made of ice.

In the cultivation world, this sword was one of the most famous ones. Wei WuXian had experienced its powers countless times, including both battles fought beside it and

against it. The hilt of the sword was forged from pure silver that had been refined with secret techniques. The blade of the sword was extremely thin, almost transparent, sending forth the cold breaths of ice and snow. However, at the same time, it could cut through iron like cutting through mud. This was why, although the sword looked light, as if it could fly away any instant, it was actually quite heavy, unable to be wielded by the average person.

Its name was “**Bichen.**”

The blade turned, and the clank

of the sword being inserted back into the scabbard sounded from above Wei WuXian. At the same time, Jiang Cheng's voice came from afar, "And I was wondering who it was. So, it is you, Second Young Master Lan."

The pair of white boots passed around Wei WuXian and calmly walked three steps forward. Wei WuXian raised his head and got up. As he walked past the former, slightly brushing their shoulders, he made eye contact with him for a short moment, pretending that it was unintentional.

He had an aura of smooth moonlight. The seven-stringed zither that he carried on his back was narrower than most.

Its body was black, made using wood of soft color.

The man wore a forehead ribbon with cloud patterns. His skin was fair, features both refined and elegant, as if he was a piece of polished jade. The color of his eyes was especially light, like they were made of colored glass, causing his gaze to be overly distant. His expression held the traces of frost and snow, stern to the degree of being stiff, unwavering even as he saw Wei WuXian's ridiculous face.

There wasn't a single spec of dust or wrinkled spot on him, from his head to his feet. It was impossible to find any fault with his appearance. Even so, two capitalized words jumped into Wei WuXian's mind.

Mourning clothes!

Mourning clothes, indeed. Although all of the clans in the cultivation world used extravagant words to describe the GusuLan Sect's uniform as the best-looking uniform and Lan WangJi as an incomparable beauty who only appeared once in a blue moon, nothing could help the bitter facial expression that made him look as though his wife had passed away.

In an unlucky year, enemies would often find their paths to cross; good news always traveled alone, but one disaster always followed the next... Thus, the situation right now.

Lan WangJi was silent, staring straight ahead, standing motionlessly in front of Jiang Cheng. Jiang Cheng was already exceptionally handsome, but as

they stood face to face with each other, he still seemed a few degrees inferior.

He raised one brow and spoke, “HanGuang-Jun, you sure live up to your reputation of ‘being wherever the chaos is’. So, you had time to come to this remote area today?”

Powerful cultivators from prominent clans usually didn’t care to pay attention to lower level preys. However, Lan WangJi was an exception. He never cared for the prey of a night-hunt, and wouldn’t refuse to go just because the creature was not threatening enough to increase his fame. If anyone wanted help, he would be there. He had been like this ever since he was young. “Being wherever the chaos is”

was the comment that the public gave him for his night-hunts and, also, praise for his moral character. Right now,

Jiang Cheng really didn’t seem too polite as he said the words in such a tone. Even the juniors who came following Lan WangJi didn’t seem comfortable hearing it.

Lan JingYi spoke straightforwardly, “Isn’t Sect Leader Jiang here as well?”

Jiang Cheng replied grimly, “Tsk

, do you really think that you should butt in when your seniors are conversing? The GusuLan Sect has always been known for its respectful conduct. Is this really how it teaches its disciples?”

Lan WangJi seemed as if he didn’t want to engage in conversation, throwing Lan SiZhui a look. The latter understood and told the juniors to speak among themselves. Afterward, he spoke to Jin Ling, “Young Master Jin, night-hunts have always been fair competitions amongst the different clans and sects. However, to set up nets all over Dafan Mountain is clearly hindering the cultivators, causing them to fall into the traps. Is this or is this not against the rules of night-hunting?”

Jin Ling’s grim expression was exactly the same as his uncle’s, “What can I do? It was their own fault for stepping into the traps. I’ll solve everything

after I finish capturing the prey.”

Lan WangJi frowned. Jin Ling was about to speak again, but he suddenly realized that, shockingly, he could neither open his mouth nor make any sounds. Seeing that Jin Ling’s upper and lower lips became inseparable as if they were glued together, anger appeared on Jiang Cheng’s face. The sloppy manners that he upheld before this were all gotten rid of, “You, with the Lan surname! What do you mean by

this? It’s not your turn to discipline Jin Ling yet, so release the spell, now!”

The silence spell was used by the Lan Sect to reprimand its disciples. Wei WuXian had suffered a ton from this little trick. Although it wasn’t anything too complicated or obscure, only people of the Lan Clan could release the spell.

If one wanted to forcibly speak, it would result in either their lips being ripped bloody or a hoarse throat for a couple of days. The only solution was to stay silent and reflect upon the wrongdoings until the time limit of the punishment was over. Lan SiZhui spoke, “Sect Leader Jiang, there is no need for anger. As long as he does not break the spell forcefully, it would release on its own, after thirty minutes.”

Before Jiang Cheng opened his mouth to speak, a purple-clothed man in the Jiang Sect’s uniform ran toward them from within the forest. He shouted, “Sect Leader!” However, after seeing Lan WangJi’s presence, he hesitated. Jiang Cheng spoke satirically, “Talk. Is there more bad news?”

The man spoke in a low voice, “Not long ago, a blue sword flew over and destroyed the deity-binding nets that you had set up.”

Jiang Cheng glanced at Lan WangJi harshly, his displeasure plastered all over his face, “How many were broken?”

The man replied carefully, “... All of them...”

That’s more than four hundred!

Jiang Cheng seethed with anger.

He didn't expect the journey to be this unlucky. Originally, he came to help Jin Ling out. Jin Ling would be turning fifteen this year, the age of which he should already be

making his debut and starting to compete with the juniors of other clans. Jiang Cheng considered the decision carefully before choosing Dafan Mountain as the location of the hunt.

He also set up nets everywhere and threatened the cultivators of other clans, showing them the consequences so that they would retreat, in order to let Jin Ling take the top prize without anyone fighting against him.

Although four hundred deity-binding nets were a whopping price, it wasn't too much for the YunmengJiang Sect. Nonetheless, losing the nets were a small matter, but losing face was not. With Lan Wangji's actions, Jiang Cheng felt a whirlpool of anger at the bottom of his heart, rising higher by every second. He narrowed his eyes, his left hand casually stroking the ring on his right hand's index finger.

This was a dangerous sign.

Everyone knew that the ring was a menacing, strong magical weapon. Whenever Clan Leader Jiang started touching it, it meant that he had the intent to kill.



## **Vermilion mark**

: In the past, vermillion marks were drawn on children to

“pierce through ignorance” in hope of them being good students later on in life, thus what the implied meaning referred to.

## **Young Master**

: Although the man wasn't the boy's servant, in Ancient China, one should still refer to the young master of any family as "Young Master", especially if the family was of higher status than the speaker's.

## **Jianxiu**

: This is a type clothing with sleeves that are wider on the shoulder end and becomes quite narrow by the time it reaches the wrist. However, this really doesn't matter, because most fanart show him dressed in other ways.

# Jar

: In Ancient China, alcohol were stored in large jars made of clay.

## Bichen

: The name means “to avoid dust.” However, please do not pronounce it like bitchin’. The correct pronunciation is bee-chen, with the en sounding like the en in enough.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 8: Arrogance** However, after stroking it for a while, Jiang Cheng compelled himself to restrain his hostility.

Although he was displeased, as the leader of a sect, he needed to take more things into consideration, which meant that he couldn’t be as impulsive as Jin Ling. After the fall of the QingheNie Sect, among the Three Great Sects, the LanlingJin Sect and the GusuLan Sect were quite close due to the personal relationship between the two leaders. By leading the YunmengJiang Sect alone, he was already in an isolated situation among the three. HanGuang-Jun, or Lan WangJi, was quite a prestigious cultivator, while his elder brother ZeWu-Jun, or Lan XiChen, was the leader of the GusuLan Sect. The two brothers had always been on good terms with each other. It was best to not openly dispute with Lan WangJi.

Also, Jiang Cheng’s sword, “**Sandu**

,” had never made actual contact with Lan WangJi’s sword, “Bichen,” and it was not yet decidable **whose hands would the deer die on**. Although he owned the powerful ring, “**Zidian** ,” a family heirloom of his, Lan WangJi’s zither, “

## Wangji

”, was also known for its abilities. The thing that Jiang Cheng hated the most was to be disadvantageous during a

fight. Without complete confidence in his success, he would not consider fighting with Lan WangJi.

Jiang Cheng slowly took away his left hand, ceasing to stroke his ring. It seemed as if Lan WangJi was determined to take part in this matter, so it wouldn't help if he continued to play the antagonist. Jiang Cheng made the decision to, for the time being, owe him a favour, and turned around to see Jin Ling still covering his mouth angrily, “HanGuang-Jun wants to punish you, so just let him do it for this one time. It's not easy for him, either, to discipline juniors from other clans.”

His tone was sarcastic, but it wasn't clear who he was mocking. Lan WangJi never fought to win his way with words, and looked as if he didn't hear anything. Jiang Cheng turned again, his words covered with thorns, “Why are you still standing there? Waiting for the prey to come and throw itself onto your sword? If, today, you don't catch the creature hunting Dafan Mountain, don't come to me ever again!”

Jin Ling threw Wei WuXian a tough look, but was too scared to look at Lan WangJi, the person who had silenced him. He put his sword back into its scabbard, saluted the two seniors, and retreated with the bow in his hand. Lan SiZhui spoke, “Sect Leader Jiang, the GusuLan Sect will return the exact number of spirit-binding nets that had been destroyed.”

Jiang Cheng sneered, “No need.” He chose the opposite direction and walked down calmly. The man who had come from the forest followed behind him, pulling a long face because he knew that it'd be impossible to escape a lecture when he returned.

After their figures disappeared, Lan JingYi spoke, “How could the Sect Leader Jiang act like this?” Only afterward, did he remember the Lan Clan's

rule of not talking behind others' backs. He looked meekly at HanGuang-Jun and shut his mouth. Lan SiZhui smiled softly toward Wei WuXian,

“Young Master Mo, we meet again.”

As Wei WuXian pulled the corners of his mouth, Lan WangJi spoke again, “Do your tasks.” The command was simplistic and clear, without any fancy vocabulary for decoration.

The juniors finally remembered the reason behind why they came to Dafan Mountain. They gathered their thoughts and respectfully waited for further instructions. After a moment, Lan WangJi spoke again, “Do what you can. Don't force anything.”

The voice was deep and alluring. If one was too near, the tip of their heart would tremble. The juniors replied mannerly, afraid to linger for too long, and walked into the depths of the forest. Wei WuXian thought that, undeniably, Jiang Cheng and

## Lan Zhan

were extremely different from each other. Even their advice for juniors were the complete opposite. While thinking, he suddenly saw Lan WangJi give an almost unnoticeable nod to him. He was quite surprised.

Ever since a young age, Lan WangJi had been so prim and proper that it was painful to watch. He had always been solemn and stiff, as if he had never been lively before. He couldn't let a single grain of sand appear in his eyes, which was why he had never approved of Wei WuXian cultivating the dark path. Lan SiZhui had probably informed Lan WangJi

of his suspicious behaviour in Mo Village already. Even so, he had nodded in acknowledgement, probably thanking him for helping out the juniors from the Lan Sect. Without thinking, Wei WuXian immediately returned a salute. When he looked up again, Lan WangJi had already disappeared.

After pausing for a second, he turned around to travel down the mountain.

No matter what prey haunted Dafan Mountain, he couldn't take it. Wei WuXian could fight for it against anyone, except for Jin Ling.

Why did it turn out to be Jin Ling?

With so many disciples in the Jin Sect, he really didn't expect that the person he met happened to be Jin Ling. If he knew, he definitely wouldn't mock Jin Ling for "having no mother to teach him." If someone else had said the same words to Jin Ling, he would teach them about what it means to bring misfortune upon oneself with careless talk. Yet, the person who had said so turned out to be himself.

After standing still for a moment, Wei WuXian raised his hand and gave himself a slap on the face.

The slap was both loud and hard, causing his right cheek to sting. Suddenly, shuffling sounds came from a thicket on the side, and Wei WuXian saw a donkey emerge from within.



As he dropped his hand, the donkey actually approached on its own, unlike other times. Wei WuXian pulled on its long ears and forced a smile, “You wanted to save the damsel in distress, but asked me to be the hero to the rescue.”

The donkey whined, just as a wave of cultivators approached from the bottom of the hill. After the four-hundred-or-so spirit-binding nets were destroyed by Lan

Wangji’s sword, the hesitant cultivators in Buddha’s Feet all rushed up again. Everyone here was probably Jin Ling’s opponent. Wei WuXian considered for a moment, about whether or not to make them retreat again with force. But, after thinking about it, he ended up silently walking out of the way, letting them pass.

The disciples from different sects, wearing differently colored uniforms, complained as they walked, “Both the Jin Sect and the Jiang Sect spoil Young Master Jin too much.

He’s still so young, but he’s already this arrogant and rude.

If they let him have the LanlingJin Sect, who knows what chaos would happen? I don’t think we’d even survive.”

Wei WuXian slowed his pace.

A soft-hearted female cultivator sighed, “How can they not spoil him? He lost both his parents at such a young age.”

“Shimei, that’s not how it works. So what, if both his parents died? There are tons who lost both of their parents.

If everyone acted like him, then what would happen?”

“I’m surprised that Wei WuXian was cruel enough to harm her. Jin Ling’s mother was Jiang Cheng’s elder sister from birth—the shijie who brought him up.”

“It really was too bad for Jiang YanLi, bringing up a wolf that bites the owner’s hand. Jin ZiXuan had it even worse.

Just because he had something to do with Wei WuXian, he ended up like that.”

“Why does Wei WuXian have something to do with everyone...”

“Indeed. Have you heard him being close with anyone other than the mad dogs that he raised? His enemies were

everywhere, and he did wrong to everyone. Even with HanGuang-Jun, they were like fire and water, hating each other.”

“Speaking of it, today, if it wasn’t for HanGuang-Jun...”

After walking for a while, the gurgling sounds of a running stream came into Wei WuXian’s ears.

He didn’t hear this when he came up. Wei WuXian finally realized that he walked the wrong path down the mountain, and onto another one that forked off.

Holding the reins of the donkey, he stood beside the running water. The moon could be seen high in the sky. With no branches or leaves on the banks of the stream, fragments of white reflected over the surface. In the reflection, Wei WuXian saw a face, ever-changing from the flow of the water.

He slammed his palm into the water, dissolving the ridiculous features. He lifted his dripping wet palms and wiped away the powder on his face.

A handsome, graceful youth appeared in the reflections of the water. He looked as pure as if he had been cleansed by moonlight, with smooth brows, bright eyes, and lips curving slightly upward. Yet, as he lowered his head to stare at himself, the drops of water hanging from his lashes rolled off, as if they were drops of tears.

It was a young and unfamiliar face, not the YiLing Patriarch who had overturned the world and killed thousands—Wei WuXian.

After taking a few more looks at this face, Wei WuXian wiped his face again and rubbed his eyes. He sat beside the

stream with a

thud.

It wasn't as if he couldn't withstand the words of attack.

After all, back when he made the decision, he fully understood the situations that he had to face. Ever since then, he had reminded himself of the YunmengJiang Sect's motto—do it even if it was impossible.

However, although he thought that his heart was like a stone, in the end, he was still human, not some emotionless grass or plant.

The donkey seemed as if it knew that he wasn't in a great mood, and for once, it wasn't being loud out of impatience.

A moment of silence passed, and it turned around to leave.

Wei WuXian sat by the stream, not responding at all. It turned around to look, throwing its hooves onto the ground, but Wei WuXian still paid no attention to it. The donkey had to come back sulkily, biting and tugging on the corner of Wei WuXian's collar.

He could choose to go, and he could choose to not go.

Seeing that the donkey had went as far as to use his mouth, Wei WuXian decided to follow him. The donkey took him to a few trees and circled around an area of grass. In the grass, there lay a

## **qiankun bag**

, with a ragged golden net hanging above it. It probably fell off as an unlucky cultivator struggled their way out. Wei WuXian picked up the bag and opened it. There were quite a few items in it, such as

## **gourds**

of medicinal liquor, talismans, miniature demon-reflecting mirrors, and so on.

He fished around for some time and happened to pull out a talisman. Immediately, a ball of fire appeared in his hand.

The burning item was an gloom-burning talisman, which, like its name, used dark energy as fuel. It would burn automatically if it made contact with dark energy. The more energy there was, the stronger the flame was. It lit up as soon as it was taken out, meaning that there was a spirit not far away from Wei WuXian.

Seeing the light of the fire, Wei WuXian held it to detect the spirit's direction, watching attentively. When he turned to the east, the fire weakened; when he turned to the west, the fire suddenly intensified. He walked a few steps toward the direction, and saw a white, stooping figure appear under a tree.

The talisman had finished burning, and the ashes fell from his fingertips. An old man was sitting with his back to him, speaking in faint murmurs.

Wei WuXian slowly approached. The words that the old man murmured became clear.

“It hurts, it hurts.”

Wei WuXian asked, “Where does it hurt?”

The old man answered, “Head. My head.”

Wei WuXian replied, “Let me take a look at it.”

He walked a few steps to the side of the old man, and saw a bloodied, large hole on his forehead. This was a ghost,

probably killed with a weapon which was smashed onto his head. He was dressed in a burial robe made with fine material and craftsmanship, meaning that he had already been en-coffined and buried properly. This wasn't the soul that a living human had lost.

However, ghosts like this shouldn't have appeared on Dafan Mountain.

Wei WuXian did not find an explanation to this implausible scenario. Feeling quite worried, he jumped onto the donkey's back, slapped it with a shout, and rode toward the direction of where Jin Ling came up the mountain.

Around the area of the ancient tombs, there were a lot of cultivators who wandered around, in hope of

### **a hare crashing into the tree trunk**

. Somebody dared to hold a spirit-attraction flag, but only attracted a bunch of dark spirits who wept despairingly. Wei WuXian pulled on the reins, scanned around, and asked in a loud, clear voice, "Excuse me and sorry for the interruption, but where did the young masters from the Jin Clan and the Lan Clan go?"

Sure enough, after washing his face, people actually acknowledged him. One cultivator answered, "They left here, for Goddess Temple."

Wei WuXian spoke, "Goddess Temple?"

The rural clan from back then had sneaked up the mountain again and joined the group of night-hunters, after hearing that all of the deity-binding nets were destroyed.

The middle-aged man recognized his clothing and the grimacing donkey, realizing that he was lunatic who'd saved

them earlier. He felt quite awkward, and pretended that nothing had happened. Nonetheless, the round-faced girl showed him the path, "Over there. It's a divine temple in a cave on the mountain."

Wei WuXian inquired again, “Which deity is the temple built for?”

The round-faced girl spoke, “I, I think it’s a natural stone statue of a goddess.”

Wei WuXian nodded, “Thank you.”

After the conversation, he immediately ran toward the direction of Goddess Temple.

The sluggard’s marriage, lightning that destroyed coffins, the fiancé eaten by wolves, the father and daughter losing their souls, the extravagant burial clothes... It was as if a string was being pulled through all of the beads, tying everything into one perfect strand. No wonder the compasses of evil didn’t pick up anything, and the spirit-attraction flags didn’t work either. Everyone had underestimated the creature in Dafan Mountain.

It wasn’t at all what they thought it was!

## **Sandu**

: This literally translates to “three types of poison”.

**Whose hands would the deer die on** : This proverb means that it is impossible to determine who’s more powerful and who will win, if a match happens between the two of them.

## **Zidian**

: This literally translates to “purple lightning”.



## Wangji

: The two Chinese characters of the zither's name are exactly the same as Lan WangJi's name. The term is a Daoist phrase that means to “get rid of a heart of deceit”. It usually refers to finding pleasure in tranquility, forgetting about material matters, and being at peace with the world.

The name does, indeed, reflect WangJi's personality (that is, until the uke starts flirting with him).

## **Lan Zhan**

: This is Lan WangJi's birth name. The "Lan" surname means the colour blue, and "Zhan" is an adjective that is often used to describe an azure blue. This also implies that, by calling him with his birth name, Wei WuXian used to be very close with him.

## **Qiankun bag**

: Qiankun means “Heaven and Earth”. A qiankun bag is basically a dimensional bag, holding a lot of items although it looks tiny.

## Gourds

: Ancient Chinese people liked to carry everything around in gourds, from the average liquor to level-enhancing elixirs that help with cultivation.

### **A hare crashing into the tree trunk**

: This proverb originated from a story of a farmer who didn't want to do actual work and waited for a rabbit to kill itself by crashing into a tree. It describes the act of waiting.

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### **GDC Chapter 9: Arrogance Part Four**

Translated by K of Exiled Rebels Scanlations On the other hand, Lan SiZhui and the other disciples did not find anything in the area of the ancient tombs and had moved on to search for clues in Goddess Temple.

In Dafan Mountain, aside from the tombs of the Buddha's Feet ancestors, there was also the Goddess Temple. The being of worship was neither Buddha nor

**GuanYin**, but the statue of a "dancing goddess."

A few hundred years ago, a hunter from Buddha's Feet ventured into the mountains and found an extraordinary stone in a cave. It was around three meters in height, formed naturally, and appeared strangely like a human, with four limbs making a dancing pose. The more peculiar thing was that human features could vaguely be seen on the statue, appearing to be that of a smiling lady.

The townspeople of Buddha's Feet were all astonished and thought that it was a magical stone formed by gathering the energy of Heaven and Earth, making up a series of legends about it. Some told the story of an

**immortal** falling in love with the **Goddess of the Nine Heavens**

and carved a stone statue from the goddess's appearance to convey the hardships of being lovesick. After discovering

this, the goddess was furious, so the unfinished statue had to be left alone. Others told the story of the **Jade Emperor**

and his beloved daughter who died young. The emperor's longing for his daughter had, supposedly, turned into this statue.

Anyhow, there were all sorts of myths, able to make anyone gawk. In the end, the townspeople themselves also started to believe in these legends which came out of their own mouths. Hence, someone turned the stone cave into a temple and the stone platform into a holy seat. The statue was named "Dancing Goddess," and there were worshippers all year round.

The inside of the cave was spacious, similar to the size of an

## erjin temple

, with the statue of the goddess set in the center. At first sight, it did indeed look like a human—the maiden's waist could even be considered lithe and graceful. However, after taking a closer look at it, it would seem rougher. Then again, a naturally-formed statue being so similar to an actual human was enough to make most people gasp in awe.

Lan JingYi lifted and lowered the compass of evil, but its pointer still didn't move. A thick layer of incense ashes covered the table for offerings, and disordered candles lay on there as well. A sickly sweet scent came from the plates for holding fruits. Most of the people from the GusuLan Sect had some degree of minor mysophobia. He fanned at the air in front of his nose and spoke, "The locals said that it is quite effective to pray at Goddess Temple, but how can it be

this ruined? They should at least come and clean once in a while."

Lan SiZhui spoke, "There have already been seven people who lost their souls. Everyone is saying that lightning has let out a fierce creature from the ancient graves of Buddha's Feet, so would anybody dare to come up the mountain?

There is no attendance at the temple and so, naturally, there is nobody to clean the place."

A disdainful voice came from outside of the cave, "It's only a stupid rock, given the title of a goddess by who-knows-who, and people dare to put it here, accepting incense and worship!"

Jin Ling came inside, with his hands crossed behind his back. The time limit for the silence spell was not long, so his mouth could already open. However, nothing nice came out of that mouth of his, as he looked at the goddess statue and humphed, "These rural villagers don't work hard when they face difficulties, but instead pray to the Buddha and other things every day. There are thousands and millions of people in the world, but gods and Buddhas are already hands-full with their own matters, so who would care

about them? Let alone a powerless goddess without status, like this one. If it's really that effective, then I'm gonna pray for the soul-consuming creature in Dafan Mountain to appear in front of me right now. Can the statue do it?"

A few cultivators from smaller clans came in behind him, and everyone laughed right after hearing him, agreeing with his words. The originally quiet temple became bustling with noise after the group of people had rushed forth, and the space also seemed more cramped. Lan SiZhui silently shook his head, turning around and glancing without any aim. His

gaze landed on the head of the goddess statue; the features of a compassionately smiling face could vaguely be seen.

Yet, he felt a strange sense of familiarity toward the smile, as if he had seen it somewhere before this.

Where on Earth had he seen it before?

Lan SiZhui thought that it must be a very important matter, and couldn't help but to approach the statue, wanting to examine the goddess's features carefully. At the same time, someone bumped into him.

A cultivator who was originally standing behind him had fallen down without any noise. The others were alert with surprise. Jin Ling spoke in a vigilant tone, "What happened to him?"

Lan SiZhui held his sword and bent down to examine it.

There was nothing wrong with the cultivator's breathing, like he had just suddenly fallen asleep. Yet, no matter how hard he was pushed or called, he would not wake up. Lan SiZhui stood up, "He seems as if..."

Before he finished his sentence, the dark cave abruptly lit up. The cave was suddenly covered in a red light, as if a waterfall of blood was rolling off its walls. The candles on the platform for offerings and in the corners of the cave had ignited on their own.

With a few shings

, everyone in the cave had either drawn their swords or taken out their talismans. At the same time, a person suddenly burst in from outside the temple, holding a gourd of medicinal alcohol. He threw it toward the stone statue,

and raging flames sprouted from it, illuminating the stone cave so that it could even pass for daytime.

Wei WuXian used up all of the items he had found in the qiankun bag. He threw it away and shouted, “Everyone, go back outside! Be cautious of the soul-consuming goddess on the inside!”

Someone yelled in surprise, “The goddess’s pose had changed!”

Before, the statute clearly had one foot lifted and both of its arms raised upward, of which one was pointing directly at the sky, its form graceful. However, amid the crimson and yellow flames, it had lowered both its arms and its foot.

There was no doubt—it definitely wasn’t a mistake of the eye!

The next moment, the statue lifted one foot again, and stepped out of the fire!

Wei WuXian shouted, “Run, run, run! Stop slashing around! It won’t work!”

Most of the cultivators ignored him. The soul-consuming monster that they had tried so hard to find had finally appeared, so why would they miss out on the chance?

However, even with so many swords chopping and stabbing, and so many talismans and magical tools being thrown at it, the statue’s advance didn’t stop at all. It was around three meters tall, resembling a titan as it moved, giving off a strong sense of oppression. It picked up two cultivators and lifted them in front of its face. The stone mouth seemed like

it opened and closed, and the swords in the cultivators’



hands dropped to the ground with two

clanks

. Their heads drooped. Their souls were sucked away.

With no attack methods working properly, the others were finally willing to listen to Wei WuXian's words. Everyone gushed outside, scattering in all directions as fast as they could. With so many people and faces, the more anxious Wei WuXian became, the longer it took to find Jin Ling. Wei WuXian rode on the donkey and ran into a bamboo forest, encountering the juniors from the Lan Clan as he turned around.

Wei WuXian called for them, "Children!"

Lan JingYi replied, "Who are your children? Do you know which sect we are from? Did you really think that you would be considered a senior just because you washed your face?"

Wei WuXian spoke, "Okay, okay, okay, **gege**

-s. Send a signal and get your clan's... HanGuang-Jun up here!"

The juniors nodded a few times, and ran around while searching for signals. Lan SiZhui spoke, "The signal firelights... were all used up during the night at Mo Village."

Wei WuXian was shocked, "You guys didn't restock afterwards?"

The signal firelights were usually only needed once in over eight hundred years. Lan SiZhui replied bashfully, "We forgot."

Wei WuXian tried to scare them, "Is this a matter that you should forget about? If HanGuang-Jun knew about this, he's going to make you sorry."

Lan JingYi's face was pale with terror, "It's over. This time, we are gonna be punished to death by HanGuang-Jun..."

Wei WuXian, “Indeed, he should punish you! Without punishment, you wouldn’t remember the next time.”

Lan SiZhui, “Young Master Mo, Young Master Mo! How did you know that it was not a spirit-consuming spirit or beast, but the goddess statue instead?”

Wei WuXian searched for Jin Ling as he ran, “How did I know? I saw.”

Lan JingYi also caught up. They each ran on one side of him, “What did you see? We also saw lots of things.”

“You saw, so what happens next? What things were in the area of the ancient tombs?”

“What else could there be? There were only dead souls.”

“Correct, there were dead souls. This is why it can’t be a soul-consuming spirit or beast. It’s simple—if it was either of these two, with so many dead spirits in the area, would it have chosen to not eat them? No, it wouldn’t have.”

This time, there were more than one person who asked,

“Why?”

“Just what can I say about your GusuLan Sect...” Wei WuXian could not tolerate it any more, “Why can’t you teach less annoying, lengthy nonsense like cultivational etiquette, family trees, and history which requires

memorization, and teach more practical things? How is this hard to understand? Dead souls are a lot easier to absorb than living souls. The physical body of a living person is like a shield, and if it wants to eat a live soul, it would have to break the shield. For example...” He looked at the donkey, which panted while running, rolling its eyes, “For example, if an apple is put in front of you, and another one is put inside a locked box, which one would you choose to eat? Of course, it would be the one in front of you. This creature only eats living souls, and knows of a way to obtain them. It is both powerful and selective in terms of food.”

Lan JingYi was astonished, “So that’s how it works? It makes a lot of sense! Wait, so you’re really not a lunatic?”

Lan SiZhui explained as he ran, “We all thought that, because the landslide and lightning led to the series of events, it must be a soul-consuming spirit.”

Wei WuXian spoke, “Wrong.”

“What is wrong?”

“The order and the correlation is wrong. Let me ask you—

for the landslide and the soul-consuming events, which ones were the first and second, the cause and effect?”

Lan SiZhui answered without thinking twice, “The landslide was the first, and the soul-consumption was the second. The first was the cause, and the latter was the effect.”

Wei WuXian spoke, “Completely wrong. The soul-consumption was first, and the the landslide was second.

The soul-consumption was the cause, and the landslide was the effect! During the night of the landslide, a storm suddenly started, and a streak of lightning broke a coffin—

remember this. This first person to lose their soul, the sluggard, was trapped in the mountains for the whole night, and married a few days later.”

Lan JingYi asked, “Where is it wrong?”

Wei WuXian replied, “It is all wrong! Where would a good-for-nothing and penniless person obtain the money to form such a grand wedding?”

The boys were rendered speechless. But, it couldn’t have been helped, since the GusuLan Sect was a sect that did not need to worry about matters of wealth. Wei WuXian spoke again, “Did you take a look at all of the dead souls floating in Dafan Mountain? There was an old man who died from a hit to the head, wearing burial clothes that were made with fine

craftsmanship and fabric. With such extravagant burial clothes, his coffin couldn't have been empty, and there must have been a few burial items to protect it. The coffin that was broken by the lightning was most likely his. Yet, the people who came to retrieve the corpse did not find any burial items, which meant that they were definitely taken away by the sluggard, explaining why he suddenly became rich. The sluggard suddenly decided to marry someone after the night of the landslide, so something unusual must have happened during the night. On that evening, there was a harsh storm and he took cover in the mountain. Where on Dafan Mountain is it possible to take cover from the rain?

Goddess Temple. And, when most people go into a temple, there is one thing that they would do.”

Lan SiZhui asked, “Pray?”

“That’s right. For example, he would pray for himself to be lucky, to become wealthy, to have enough money to marry, and so on. The goddess fulfilled his wish with the lightning

that split open the grave, letting him see the treasures in the coffin. His prayers came true and, as the sacrifice, the goddess came to him on the evening of his marriage, and took his soul away!”

Lan JingYi, “All of these are just your guesses, right?”

Wei WuXian, “Yes, they are guesses. But, following this train of logic, all of the things that happened afterward could be explained.”

Lan SiZhui, “How can this explain what happened with the girl, A-Yan?”

Wei WuXian, “Great question. You guys probably asked around before you came up the mountain. A-Yan had just got engaged during those days. All recently-engaged girls will definitely have the same wish.”

Lan JingYi was befuddled, “What wish?”

Wei WuXian replied, “None other than something that goes like, ‘I wish my husband would love me and care for me for his whole life, attracted to only

myself’.”

The boys were at a loss, “Would a wish like this really be able to be granted?”

Wei WuXian held his palms out, “It’s simple. If her husband’s ‘whole life’ immediately ended, wouldn’t it count as ‘loving only one person for his entire life’?”

Lan JingYi finally understood and shouted excitedly, “Oh, oh! So, so, so, the reason behind her husband being eaten by wolves the day after her engagement was that it was highly possible for A-Yan to have been to Goddess Temple to pray!”

Wei WuXian **struck while the iron was still hot**

, “It was hard to say whether he was attacked by a wolf or something else. There is another factor that is unique to A-Yan: why is that, out of all of the victims, only A-Yan’s soul returned? How is she different from everyone else? The difference is that she has a relative who also lost his soul.

Or, in other words, a relative replaced her! Blacksmith Zheng is A-Yan’s father, especially one who loved his daughter. So, when he saw that his daughter lost her soul, and there were no ways to deal with it, what was the only thing that he could do?”

This time, Lan SiZhui was quick to reply, “He could only entrust his hope to the Heavens. Therefore, he also went to Goddess Temple to pray, the wish being ‘I wish my daughter A-Yan’s soul can be found’!”

Wei WuXian spoke with appraise, “This is why only A-Yan’s soul came back, and also the reason behind Blacksmith Zheng losing his soul. However, although A-Yan’s soul was given back, it was still slightly fractured. After her soul returned, she had unconsciously started to imitate the goddess statue’s dance and even its smile.”

The similarity of the people who lost their souls was that, most likely, they had all prayed in front of the goddess statue. The prices to pay for their wishes were their souls.

The goddess statue was originally just an average rock which happened to look like a person. Having accepted a few hundred years' worth of worship without any reason, it had gained some powers. Yet, because it was greedy and its thoughts ventured off the wrong path, it had wanted to quickly increase its powers by eating souls. These were souls that it obtained by means of swapping wishes, and

could be considered as the voluntarily sacrificed souls of the people who prayed. The two sides had a fair deal, one wish for another, and it seemed to be just and moral. This was why the pointers of the compasses of evil did not move, why the spirit-attraction flags did not work, and why the powers of the swords and talismans were all nullified—the creature in Dafan Mountain wasn't any sprite, demon, ghost, or monster, but a goddess! This was an untitled goddess born from the hundreds of years of incense. Using the items used to deal with evil spirits and beasts to deal with it would be like using fire to distinguish fire!

Lan JingYi shouted loudly, "Wait! Before this, in the temple, someone's soul was also taken away, but we didn't hear him wish!"

Wei WuXian's heart suddenly jumped. He stopped his footsteps, "Someone's soul was taken away in the temple?"

Describe to me everything that happened earlier, without missing a single word."

Lan SiZhui repeated the scenario both clearly and quickly.

When he heard Jin Ling's talk of "if it's really that effective, then I'm gonna pray for the soul-consuming creature in Dafan Mountain appear in front of me right now. Can the statue do it?" Wei WuXian spoke, "How is this not wishing? It most definitely is a wish!"

The others agreed with Jin Ling, so it was accepted that they had all wished the same thing. At the time, the soul-consuming goddess was right in front of them, so the wish was granted. Then, it was time to seize the sacrifice!

Suddenly, the donkey halted, and ran toward the opposite direction. Wei WuXian was, again, swung off unprepared, but grabbed on to the rope no

matter what. However, in the

bushes in front of him, there came a noise of chewing, complete with crunches and slurps. An immense figure was crawling in the bush, its huge head on the ground and moving using its stomach. Hearing the noise, it immediately lifted its head. Their eyes met.

In the beginning, the soul-consuming goddess's features were vague, and there were only the shapes of eyes, nose, mouth, and ears on its face, but after it had eaten the souls of a few cultivators all at once, it could already form clear features. It was the face of a smiling woman, with blood dripping down the corners of its mouth, munching on an arm that had been torn off.

Everyone, following the donkey, ran in the other direction.

Lan SiZhui was breaking down, "That is not supposed to happen! The YiLing Patriarch had said before, that high-level ones eat souls, and only low-level ones eat flesh!"

Wei WuXian couldn't help but to comment, "Why are you blindly worshipping him? Even his own inventions were a mess! No rules stay the same in all situations. You can think of it as an infant—when it lacks teeth, it can only eat congee and soup, but when it grows up, it would, of course, also want to eat meat using its teeth. Her powers had just risen greatly, so naturally she'd want to taste something new!"

The soul-consuming goddess stood up from the ground.

Her body was tall. She used her arms and her legs to dance with uncontrollable excitement, seeming like she was extremely pleased. Out of the blue, an arrow came with a whoosh

and pierced her forehead, the arrowhead appearing out of the back of her head.

Hearing the sound of the bow's release, Wei WuXian's looked toward its direction. Jin Ling stood atop a tall hill, not far away, and already had his second feathered arrow on the bow. He pulled to the maximum, and another

head-penetrating arrow was released, the strength causing the soul-consuming goddess to stagger a few steps backward.

Lan SiZhui yelled, “Young Master Jin! Send off the signal on you!”

Jin Ling turned a deaf ear to his words, determined to kill the monster. With a solemn face, he set three arrows onto the bow at once. Although she was shot in the head twice, the soul-consuming goddess was not angered, and advanced toward Jin Ling with the same smile plastered on her face. Although she danced while walking, her speed was terrifyingly fast, decreasing the distance between them by half in just a few moments. A few cultivators appeared from the side and fought with her, hindering her strides. Jin Ling shot each arrow as the goddess took each step, probably intending to use up all of the feathered arrows first, before fighting in a closer range with the soul-consuming goddess.

His arm was quite steady, and his shots were accurate, but all magical weapons were useless against it!

Both Jiang Cheng and Lan Wangji were at Buddha’s Feet, waiting for any news, so who knows how long it would take for them to realize that something was wrong and come up here. To extinguish fire, water was needed. Therefore, if magical weapons didn’t work, what about dark sorcery?

Wei WuXian unsheathed the sword on Lan SiZhui’s waist and chopped off a piece of a thin bamboo, swiftly making it into a flute. He lifted it up in front of his lips and took a deep breath. The shrill timbre of the flute was like an arrow, slicing through the night sky and shooting into the clouds.

This should have been a last resort for him, but however, with the situation already like this, it didn’t matter what he summoned. It’d be fine as long as the dark energy was strong enough and the killing intent was keen enough, so that it could rip the soul-consuming goddess into pieces!

Lan SiZhui was shocked to the point that he couldn’t even move, while Lan Jingyi covered his ears, “Look at what situation we are in, and you are still playing the flute? It sounds horrible!”



In the battle, three or four of the cultivators who were fighting with the soul-consuming goddess had lost their souls. Jin Ling pulled out his sword. He was already less than two

## zhang

away from the soul-consuming goddess. His heart thumped like crazy and all of the blood in his body went toward his head,

if I can't slice off her head with this blow, I will die here—

death it is, then!

At the same time, from within the forests of Dafan Mountain, a tinkling sound appeared.

Tinkle tinkle, tinkle tinkle

. It was sometimes faster, sometimes slower; sometimes pausing, sometimes continuing. It echoed in the silent woods, resembling the sound of iron chains colliding and being dragged on the ground. It came closer, and became louder.

For some reason, the sound gave the people an uneasy sense of threat. Even the soul-consuming goddess stopped dancing. It raised its arms, blankly staring into the dark of which the sound came from.

Wei WuXian put away his flute and carefully looked into the direction.

The ominous feeling that he felt became stronger and stronger, but because it was willing to come due to the summoning, it would at least be something that listened to him.

Then, all of a sudden, the noise stopped. A figure emerged from within the darkness.

After having a clear view of the figure and the face, the cultivators' expressions became twisted.

Even when facing the goddess statue that could suck away their souls at any minute, the group did not cower or show any fear, but however, their shouting voices right now were filled with terror that they could not conceal.

“... The ‘Ghost General’, it’s the ‘Ghost General’, it’s Wen Ning!”

The title of the “Ghost General” was as infamous as that of the YiLing Patriarch’s. Most of the time, the two appeared together.

The word only referred one person—the right-hand man of the YiLing Patriarch Wei Ying, who had helped with the tyrant’s crimes, stirred upwind and waves, played the jackal to the tiger, overturned the world with him, and most of all was a fierce corpse who should have been turned into ashes a long time ago—Wen Ning!

### **GuanYin**

: This is the most famous goddess in the traditional religion of China. She originated from a male Bodhisattva in Buddhism—when the religion was passed through the Silk Road, she somehow ended up becoming a female goddess.

# **Immortal**

: An immortal is a heavenly being or someone from the heavens. They can either be born an immortal or become an immortal through practices such as cultivation. All cultivators aim to become an immortal.

## **Goddess of the Nine Heavens**

: This is the goddess of war, sexuality, and longevity (“Wikipedia”).

# **Jade Emperor**

: He is the monarch of all deities in heaven, from the Daoist religion or just Chinese folklore in general.

## Erjin temple

: This is a type of temple which is usually set in remote mountains or forests, with monks living in them and few visitors. Because of its nature, erjin temples are usually quite large in size.

**Gege**: This means “older brother”.

**Struck while the iron was still hot** : This proverb means to grab onto a good chance/opportunity when it comes **Zhang**: One zhang is around 3.3 meters.

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**GDC Chapter 10:**

## Arrogance

Sorry for the late release of chapter 10. Our translator had a big competition that was more important than translating.

She had to travel a lot and was unable to find time to actually finish it these last couple days.

Wen Ning's head was slightly lowered and his arms hung down, as if he was a marionette waiting for the orders of his master.

His face was pale and delicate, and could be considered handsome in a melancholy sort of way. However, there were no pupils in his eyes, but only a flat cloud of white, along with a number of black, cracking lines which climbed up his face from his neck, so the melancholy turned into a frightening gloom. The lower hem and sleeves of his robe were ragged and torn, showing a pair of wrists that were the same ashen shade as his face, with black cuffs and chains on both his wrists and ankles. The tinkling sound was produced when he dragged the iron chains on the ground. If he stopped moving, everything would be silent again.

It wasn't hard to guess why all of the cultivators were scared out of their wits. Wei WuXian wasn't any calmer than any of them either. In fact, the storm in his chest had already crashed over the top of his head.

It wasn't that Wen Ning shouldn't be here

, but that Wen Ning shouldn't be in this world at all. He was turned into ashes even before the siege at Luanzang

Hill.

Hearing the others call Wen Ning's name, Jin Ling's blade, which originally pointed at the direction of the soul-consuming goddess, couldn't help but to turn toward another direction. Seeing that he was distracted, the soul-consuming goddess gladly extended her arm and picked him up.



As Wei WuXian saw her opened mouth approaching Jin Ling, he didn't have time to be surprised. He raised the wooden flute again, hands slightly shaking, and therefore, the notes that he played also trembled. Aside from this, the flute was roughly crafted, so the sound produced could be described as coarse and unpleasant to the ear. With two notes, Wen Ning started to move.

Within the blink of an eye, he had already shifted in front of the soul-consuming goddess. Wen Ning used the side of his palm and gave a blow. The soul-consuming goddess's neck cracked, and although her body didn't move, her head was twisted around because of the force. She faced the direction of which her back originally faced, but kept on smiling. Wen Ning gave another blow with his hand, and the soul-consuming goddess's right hand, which was holding Jin Ling, was cleanly cut off.

She bowed her head to look at the wrist which broke off sharply. Instead of turning her head toward the correct direction, her entire body turned around, so that she was facing Wen Ning with her face and her back. Wei WuXian didn't dare to relax. He took a deep breath and commanded Wen Ning to fight. However, not long had passed, and he became even more shocked.

Low-level corpses were unable to think on their own and needed his orders to lead them. Powerful

## fierce corpses

, on the other hand, were usually delirious or unconscious.

Yet, Wen Ning's case was different—he was created by Wei WuXian, which meant that he could easily be called the strongest fierce corpse in the current world. He was the only one who was capable of thought. Aside from not fearing injuries, fire, the cold, poison, and whatever living humans feared, he was the same as a one.

However, at that moment, Wen Ning clearly wasn't conscious!

He was both shocked and doubtful as a few cries of alarm came threshing from the crowd. Using both his arms and legs, Wen Ning had secured the soul-consuming goddess on the ground. He picked up a rock which lay on the side, taller than the height of humans, and lifted it above the soul-consuming goddess. He started to slam it onto her with great force. Each strike sounded as loud as thunder, continuing until the stone body of the soul-consuming goddess was pounded to pieces!

Amid the white pile of rocks scattered on the ground, a marble-sized sphere rolled out, radiating a circle of light in the colour of snow. It was the core that condensed in the soul-consuming goddess after she devoured the souls of ten-or-so living people. If it was brought back and handled carefully, some people, who had their souls eaten recently, could be restored back to life. However, at the moment, nobody made any effort to pick up the sphere. The blades which were aimed at the soul-consuming goddess all turned around.

One cultivator shouted at the top of his lungs, "Close in on him!"

Some people replied hesitantly, but more people were indecisive, walking backward slowly. The cultivator shouted again, "Fellow cultivators, we have to block him so that he doesn't escape. This is

Wen Ning we're facing!"

These words convinced the crowd. What was a mere soul-consuming monster compared to the Ghost General?

Although the reason as to his appearance was unknown, it was obvious that killing one thousand soul-consuming spirits couldn't even compare to capturing one single Wen Ning.

After all, this was the most obeying mad dog under the YiLing Patriarch, which bit people without making any noise.

If it was captured, they would surely become famous in the cultivation world and quickly rise to success! Their original goal from attending the Dafan Mountain night-hunt was to fight for

## **fairies**

, beasts, and evil spirits to add to their experiences. With the shouts, it was certain that some people were interested.

Yet, the older cultivators who saw with their own eyes how wild Wen Ning was when he broke out were still cautious to make a move. Hence, the person shouted once more, “What are you scared of? It’s not as if the YiLing Patriarch is here right now.”

After another thought, the words made sense to them.

What was there to be scared of? His master was already in pieces!

With these remarks, the ring of swords which circled around Wen Ning had suddenly decreased in size. Wen Ning waved his arm, and the black iron chains swept past heavily, hitting the swords so that the directions of their blades slanted off to the side. Right afterward, he took a stride forward and gripped the neck of the person closest to him. With a light pull, he was lifted off the ground. Seeing the situation, Wei WuXian knew that the flute notes were too hurried and abrupt, causing him to develop a killing intent.

To stifle it, Wei WuXian calmed his feelings and assuredly played another melody.

The melody had drifted over his mind naturally. It was relaxed and tranquil, contrasting with the bizarre and ear-piercing one from before. Hearing the sound, Wen Ning froze, and slowly turned toward the direction of which the melody came from. Wei WuXian stood in the same spot, staring into his pupil-less eyes.

After a moment, Wen Ning released his hand, throwing the cultivator on the ground. He let down his arms and walked toward Wei WuXian at a slow pace.

His head was lowered and he dragged a large amount of iron chains, even seeming as if he looked dejected. Wei WuXian retreated while playing the

flute, guiding him to follow. Walking like this for a short distance, they moved into the forest, when suddenly, Wei WuXian caught the chilly scent of sandalwood.

Immediately after, his back bumped into someone. With an abrupt pain on his wrist, the flute melody had stopped.

Wei WuXian thought,

oh no

, and turned around to look. His sight collided with Lan WangJi's eyes. They were light-coloured to the point of appearing to be physically cold.

The situation looked unpromising. Lan WangJi had seen him use the flute to control corpses with his own eyes.

Lan WangJi used one hand to steadily grip Wei WuXian.

Wen Ning stood still at about two zhang away from them, slowly looking around as if he was searching for the flute melody that had suddenly disappeared. From far into the forest, the light of flames and sound of human voices were spreading. Wei WuXian thought quickly and made his decision at once—so what, if Lan WangJi had seen him do this before? There were tens of thousands of people who knew how to play the flute, and the number of people who imitated the YiLing Patriarch's method of using it to control corpses could form a sect on their own. He wouldn't confess no matter what!

He decisively ignored the hand that gripped him and raised his arm to continue playing. This time, the tempo was faster, as if it was urging or scolding. His air was not steady and each note cracked at the end, sounding shrill and harsh.

Suddenly, Lan WangJi's hand tightened, almost causing his wrist to break. Wei WuXian's fingers loosened from the pain and the wooden flute dropped to the ground.

Fortunately, his orders were clear enough. Wen Ning retreated quickly, disappearing into the dark and gloomy forest without a sound. Wei WuXian

feared that Lan WangJi would chase after Wen Ning, so he backhandedly grabbed him instead. But, surprisingly, Lan WangJi never even looked at Wen Ning once, but stared at Wei WuXian the whole time.

The two stood face to face, gripping each other's arms, and stared.

At the same time, Jiang Cheng arrived.

He maintained his patience and waited for the results in Buddha's Feet, but before he finished a single cup of tea, a disciple ran from the mountain hastily and told him about how powerful and cruel the thing in Dafan Mountain was.

Hearing this, his heart jumped and he rushed up here again.

He shouted, "A-Ling!"

Jin Ling almost had his soul taken away a moment ago, but he was fine now, and stood on the ground properly,

"Uncle!"

Seeing that Jin Ling was safe, Jiang Cheng finally calmed down. Quickly afterward, he scolded angrily, "Didn't you bring signal firelights with you? Don't you know to use them when you meet something like this? What are you pretending to be strong for? Scram over here!"

Jin Ling was also angered from not capturing the soul-consuming goddess, "Weren't you the one who told me that I have to catch it? And, if I don't catch it, I shouldn't go see you?"

Jiang Cheng seriously wanted to slap the rotten brat so hard that he went back inside his mother's stomach.

However, he really did say so himself, and he shouldn't prove himself wrong. He could only turn to the cultivators who lay collapsed on the ground, speaking with satire,

"What on Earth could it be, beating you up in such a dignified way?"

Among the cultivators who wore differently-coloured clothing, a bunch were the disguised disciples of the YunmengJiang Sect, ordered by Jiang Cheng to secretly assist Jin Ling, in case he couldn't overcome the challenge.

He was quite the responsible elder, going to such great lengths. One cultivator still hadn't overcome the shock,

“Sect, Sect Leader, it's... It's Wen Ning...”

Jiang Cheng thought that he had misheard, “What did you say?”

The person replied, “Wen Ning is back!”

In an instant, shock, disgust, anger, and disbelief all crossed Jiang Cheng's face.

After a long while passed, he finally spoke bitterly, “The thing was ground to dust in front of everyone long ago, so how can it come back?”

The disciple spoke, “It really is Wen Ning! There's no way for it to be wrong! My eyes couldn't have mislooked!” He suddenly pointed to the side, “... He was the one who summoned him!”

Wei WuXian was still in a stalemate with Lan WangJi.

Instantly, they were the center of everyone's attention.

Jiang Cheng's lightning-like gaze also moved toward where he stood.

After a moment, the corners of Jiang Cheng's lips pulled into a twisted smile. His left hand started to unconsciously stroke the ring again. He spoke softly, “... Well, well. So you're back?”

He let go of his left hand, and a long whip dangled from it.

The whip was extremely slender. Like its name, it was a streak of purple lightning which sizzled, as if it had just been taken away from a sky full of

storm clouds. He held one side of it in his grip. As it was brandished, it seemed to let out rapid slashes of lightning!

Before Wei WuXian moved, Lan WangJi had already placed his zither in front of him. With an assured stroke, it was as if a rock had created thousands of waves in water. The sound of the zither had created countless ripples in the air, colliding with Zidian. The latter waned, and the former waxed.

Jiang Cheng's considerations of "not rashly fighting with him" and "not displeasing the Lan Clan" were as if they were eaten by dogs. The night sky above Dafan Mountain's forest was sometimes surging with purple light, and sometimes as bright as daytime; there were sometimes deafening roars of thunder, and sometimes waves of the zither's notes. The rest of the cultivators quickly retreated into a safe distance away from the scene, standing on the side and watching.

They were both frightened to death and staring in awe. After all, rarely did one have the chance to watch two famous cultivators of prominent families combat directly, which was why everyone hoped that the fight was more violent and intense. Among these thoughts, there were also some unspeakable hopes for the relationship between the Lan Clan and the Jiang Clan to fall apart, creating an interesting scenario. On the other hand, Wei WuXian waited for his chance, and suddenly sprinted off.

The crowd was extremely surprised. He hadn't been hit by the whip yet only because Lan WangJi acted as a barricade in front of him. For him, running away like this was the same as seeking his own death!

Sure enough, as if eyes grew on his back, Jiang Cheng saw that he went outside Lan WangJi's area of protection, and was determined to grasp the chance. With a slanting crack of his whip, Zidian slashed out with the semblance of a poisonous dragon, precisely landing on the center of his back!

Wei WuXian was almost flung away from the attack of the whip. If not for the donkey blocking him, he would have directly crashed into a tree.



However, after the blow, both Lan WangJi and Jiang Cheng stopped, looking quite stunned.

Wei WuXian massaged the back side of his waist, and crawled up with the support of the donkey. He hid behind it and yelled angrily, “How amazing! You really can do anything when you’re from a powerful clan, can’t you? You can even beat up anyone you want!

Tsk tsk tsk!”

Lan WangJi, “...”

Jiang Cheng, “...”

He was both shocked and enraged, “What is going on?”

One unique power of “Zidian” was that, if it hit someone who seized another’s body, their soul and physical form would immediately separate. Without any exceptions, the person’s soul would be whipped away from the body. Yet, Wei WuXian was still moving properly and running about after he was hit. The only explanation was that he did not seize this body.

Wei WuXian thought,

of course Zidian couldn’t whip out my soul. I didn’t seize anyone’s body, but was forcibly given one!

Bewilderment could be seen on Jiang Cheng’s face as he prepared to whip again, when Lan JingYi suddenly shouted,

“Sect Leader Jiang, this should be enough, right? It was Zidian!”

It was absolutely impossible for the first strike to fail and the second to succeed, for a magical weapon of such high level like Zidian. If nothing was taken out, nothing would be taken out; if it wasn’t the seizing of a body, it wouldn’t be the seizing of a body. In fact, the shout made Jiang Cheng, who cared about maintaining his reputation above anything else, unable to make another move.

However, if it wasn't Wei WuXian, who else could have summoned and controlled Wen Ning?

Even after thinking it over multiple times, Jiang Cheng still couldn't accept the fact. He pointed at Wei WuXian and scowled, "Who on Earth are you?"

Finally, a meddlesome bystander added a word to the conversation. He coughed, "Sect Leader Jiang, you might have not paid attention to these things so didn't know about this. Mo XuanYu was the LanlingJin Sect's...

Ahem

, he used to be a foreign disciple of the Jin Sect. But, because his spiritual powers were low and he didn't work hard in his studies, and also had

that

... He harassed a peer and was thrown out of the LanlingJin Sect. I've also heard that he lost his marbles? In my opinion, he was probably bitter from being unable to cultivate using the correct method, he ventured off onto the wrong path. It might not be... the YiLing Patriarch seizing this body."

Jiang Cheng asked, "That? Which?"

"That... As in that..."

Someone couldn't help but to comment, "The **cut-sleeve** pendant!"

Jiang Cheng's eyebrows twitched. His eyes which stared at Wei WuXian seemed more disgusted than before. There were more comments on the matter, but nobody dared to say them in front of Jiang Cheng.

Although he was infamous, people had to admit that, before the YiLing Patriarch Wei WuXian had betrayed the YunmengJiang Sect, he was known for being a handsome young man and a refined cultivator skilled in the **six arts**

. He ranked the fourth among all of the young masters in the cultivation world, being described as lively and cheerful.

On the other hand, the ill-tempered Sect Leader Jiang ranked five, surpassed by him, so most people weren't so bold as to mention the matter. Wei Ying was a frivolous and wanton person who loved to have tangled ties with pretty girls. Nobody knew how many female cultivators he had troubled with his charms, but it was yet unheard of that he was also attracted to men. Even if he wanted to steal a body and seek revenge... according to Wei Ying's taste, he definitely wouldn't have chosen a lunatic cut-sleeve who rode a donkey while eating fruits and painted his face to resemble a hanged ghost!

Someone else muttered, "It's not him no matter how you look at it... The flute was also played horribly... This is definitely a case of blind imitation, hearing how inferior it sounded."

During the **"Sunshot Campaign**

," the YiLing Patriarch stood on the battlefield and played his flute throughout the whole night, controlling the ghost soldiers as if they were a living army. He swept away all obstacles—whether a human or god was standing in front of him, he had defeated them. The sound of his flute was as if it was played by an immortal, absolutely incomparable to the terrible moans made by the abandoned son of the Jin Clan. No matter how horrible Wei WuXian's character was, it was too insulting to compare them like this.

Wei WuXian felt somewhat offended,

... Why don't you try playing a few notes after ten-or-so years of not practicing, using a lousy flute made with just a few slices and cuts? If it sounds pleasant, I'll kneel in front of you!

A moment ago, Jiang Cheng was certain that this person was Wei WuXian, and all of the blood in his body started to boil. Yet, now, Zidian was clearly telling him that he wasn't.

Zidian definitely wouldn't deceive him or make a mistake, so he quickly calmed himself and thought,

this doesn't mean anything. I should first find an excuse to take him back and use every possible method to get information out of him. It's impossible

for him to not confess anything or give himself away. I've done things like this in the past anyways

. After thinking it through, he made a gesture. The disciples understood his intention and came over.

Wei WuXian hurriedly jumped behind Lan WangJi with the donkey, and exclaimed while holding a hand over his chest,

“

Ah! What are you going to do to me?”

Lan WangJi gave him a look, putting up with his extremely discourteous, noisy, and exaggerated behavior.

Seeing that he had no means of moving over, Jiang Cheng spoke, “Second Young Master Lan, are you purposely making it difficult for me?”

Everyone in the cultivation world knew that the young leader of the Jiang Clan watched out for Wei WuXian in an almost crazed manner. He would rather catch the wrong person than let go of any possibility, and took anyone who seemed like they held the soul of Wei WuXian away to the YunmengJiang Sect, inflicting severe torture on his victim. If he wanted to take someone back, the opposition would surely lose half of their life. Lan SiZhui spoke, “Sect Leader Jiang. The evidence is clear—Mo XuanYu's body was not taken. If so, why should you want to trouble an unimportant person such as him?”

Jiang Cheng replied coldly, “Then, why is Second Young Master Lan going to such great lengths to protect an unimportant person such as him?”

Out of the blue, Wei WuXian made a few sounds of suppressed laughter.

He spoke, “Sect Leader Jiang, umm

, I'll feel very troubled if you keep on bothering me like this.”

Jiang Cheng's eyebrow twitched again. His instincts told him that this person would definitely not say anything that pleased him.

Wei WuXian spoke, "Thank you for being so enthusiastic.

However, your thoughts are quite off. Even if I am attracted

to men, I don't like just any type of man, much less follow anyone who waves at me. For example, I'm not interested in ones like you."

Wei WuXian was purposely trying to disgust him. Jiang Cheng had always hated being defeated while compared with others, no matter how pointless the comparison was. If anyone said that he wasn't as good as someone else, he'd be angered and not think about anything else until he won against the person. As expected, Jiang Cheng's face darkened, "Oh, really? Then, may I ask which type you're interested in?"

Wei WuXian replied, "Which type? Well, I am very much attracted to people like HanGuang-Jun."

Lan WangJi could not tolerate this sort of frivolous and foolish joke at all. If he felt disgusted, he would definitely draw a line between them and keep his distance. Disgusting two people at once—this was killing two birds with one stone!

However, as Lan WangJi heard this, he turned around.

His face was emotionless, "Mark your words."

Wei WuXian, "Hmm?"

Lan WangJi turned back, speaking in a mannerly yet resolute way, "I will take this person back to the Lan Sect."

Wei WuXian, "..."

Wei WuXian, "...Huh?"

**Fierce corpses:** From now on, the term fierce corpse

will describe the certain type of moving corpse/live corpse instead of a powerful corpse (with

fierce

being part of the noun instead of an adjective to corpse).

## **Fairies**

: This does not refer the Western fairies that fly around fluttering their miniscule wings. These will be further explained in a few chapters, but for a better understanding of the story, a fairy is formed when a living creature gains consciousness. This is sometimes translated as spirit

, such as the kitsune spirit in Japanese and Chinese folklore, but the term

fairy

will be used here, so that it can be distinguished from the evil spirits that also appears often.

## **Cut-sleeve**

: This is another term for homosexuality (male-oriented only), originating from the ancient story of a homosexual emperor. When the emperor woke up, one day, his lover was still asleep, with the emperor's sleeve under him. Therefore, he cut off his sleeve when he left the bed, so that his lover wouldn't be woken up. This has been left like this because the term "homosexuality" sounds too scientific , while the term "gay" doesn't have that romantic or poetic feeling to

it, and any other terms are somewhat offensive. This will be used as both noun and adjective.

## **Six arts**

: Traditionally, the six arts involved rites, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics (“Wikipedia”).

However, it is fine to not interpret this literally and assume that he was skilled in a lot of areas, in general.



## **Sunshot Campaign**

: This does not have anything to do with brand names called “Sunshot.” Literally, it means “the campaign to shoot down the sun,” but it has been simplified. The nature of this campaign will be explained later in the story.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 11:**

## **Refinement**

The residence of the Lan Sect was located in a remote mountain outside the city of Gusu.

Mist constantly enveloped the white walls and black roofs of the buildings, which stretched along the picturesque garden of the waterside pavilion, as if it was an ocean of clouds in the immortal realm. At dawn, the first rays of the morning sun shone through the hazy billows of mist that drifted far and wide, perfectly complementing its name—the

“

**Cloud Recesses.”**

In such a tranquil place, one's heart would be like still water. Only the echoes of the bell tower could be heard vibrating through the air. Although it was incomparable to a holy temple, the cold mountains still send forth a lonesome air of Zen.

However, the ambience was suddenly shattered by a long wail, giving a few shudders down the backs of the disciples who were training or doing their

## morning readings

. They couldn't help but to glance at the direction of the main entrance, where the sound came from.

Wei WuXian was crying in front of the entrance, clinging onto his donkey. Lan JingYi spoke, "Stop crying! You said that

you liked HanGuang-Jun yourself, so what are you wailing for, now that he has taken you back?"

Wei WuXian pulled a long face.

He never had the chance to summon Wen Ning again, after the night at Dafan Mountain. Neither did he have any opportunities to find out why Wen Ning was unconscious or why he had appeared in this world again, before he was carried back by Lan WangJi.

When he was in his early youth, he had come to study at the Lan Sect for three months, along with the disciples of other clans, so he had experienced the GusuLan Sect's dull, boring atmosphere in person. In fact, he still shuddered at the thought of the three-thousand-or-so sect rules which crammed onto the Wall of Discipline. As he was tugged up the mountain, he passed by the rock wall again, and saw that a thousand more were carved on. Now, there were more than four thousand. Four thousand!

Lan JingYi spoke, "There, there! Stop making a ruckus.

Noise is prohibited in the Cloud Recesses."

He was making loud noises exactly because he didn't want to enter the Cloud Recesses!

If he was dragged inside, it would be extremely difficult for him to come outside again. Back then, when he came to study, all of the disciples were given a jade token for passage. Only with the token, would a person be able to enter and leave freely, or else they couldn't pass through the protective

barrier of the Cloud Recesses. After ten years had passed, the security could only have gotten stricter, instead of looser.

Lan WangJi stood still in front of the entrance, turning a deaf ear to him, and watched the scene with an indifferent look. When Wei WuXian's voice had somewhat quieted, he spoke, "Let him cry. When he becomes tired, drag him inside."

Wei WuXian hugged the donkey and cried even harder, bumping his head against it.

How misfortunate! He thought that with a whip from Zidian, all of his doubts would be cleared. At the moment, he felt satisfied with himself and, along with his mouthful of teasing words, he offhandedly gave Lan WangJi a few repulsive comments. Yet, who knew that Lan WangJi didn't follow the routine he had followed before? What was this all about? Was it possible that, after so many years, his level of cultivation had increased, but he became more intolerant?

Wei WuXian spoke, "I'm attracted to men, so with so many beautiful young men in your sect, I'm afraid that I won't be able to control myself."

Lan SiZhui tried to reason with him, "Young Master Mo, it was for your sake that HanGuang-Jun brought you here. If you do not follow us, Sect Leader Jiang will not be willing to let the matter go. During these years, there were countless people whom he caught and took back to

**Lotus Pier**, and none of those people were ever let out."

Lan JingYi spoke, "That is right. You have seen Sect Leader Jiang's methods, have you not? They are quite cruel..." He paused here, remembering the rule that stated "talking behind other people's backs" was prohibited, and secretly glanced at Lan WangJi. Seeing that HanGuang-Jun didn't show any means to chastise him, he was bold enough as to mumble on, "It is all because of the unhealthy trend that the

YiLing Patriarch started. There are so many people who copy him and cultivate that foolish method. With Sect Leader Jiang being so suspicious of

everyone, is it even possible for him to catch all of them? Just look at you and your flute skills...

Heh.”

The heh

told more words than what any sentences could describe.

Wei WuXian felt like he really needed to defend himself,

“Well, actually, you might not believe me, but I usually play the flute quite well...”

Before he finished his defense, a few white-clothed cultivators walked through the door.

Each person wore the Lan Sect’s uniform, with flowing, plain robes as white as snow. The man standing in front was tall and slender. Hanging on his waist was a **xiao**

made of white jade, aside from his sword. As Lan WangJi saw them, he slightly bowed his head to show respect, and the person did the same. He looked at Wei WuXian and smiled, “WangJi never brings guests home. This is?”

As the person stood in front of Lan WangJi, it was as if they were mirror images. However, the color of Lan WangJi’s eyes was extremely light, as if they were tinted crystals, while his eyes were of a gentler, darker shade.

This was **Lan Huan**, the leader of the GusuLan Sect—

**ZeWu-Jun, Lan XiChen.**

Each place brought up the same kind of people. The GusuLan Sect had always been known for nurturing a lot of handsome men, especially the

## two jades

of the clan's current generation. Even though the two were not twins, they looked extremely similar to each other, which made it difficult to tell who was the superior one. Yet, although their appearances were similar, their personalities were not. Lan XiChen was gentle and benevolent, while Lan WangJi was overly aloof and stern, keeping everyone at an arm's length and being the opposite of amiable. This was why, in the list of the best-looking young masters in the cultivation world, the former ranked first, and the latter ranked second.

Lan XiChen proved himself worthy of being the leader of a sect. Even as he saw Wei WuXian embracing a donkey, he did not appear to be affected at all. Wei WuXian let go of the donkey with a beaming smile on his face and approached him. The GusuLan Sect placed a lot of regard on the order of seniority. If he talked nonsense to Lan XiChen, he would most definitely be chased off the Cloud Recesses. However, when he just got ready to show his capabilities, Lan WangJi looked at him. Immediately, his lips were sealed close.

Lan WangJi turned around and continued his polite conversation with Lan XiChen, "Brother, are you going to visit LianFang-Zun again?"

Lan XiChen nodded, "To negotiate about the next Discussion Conference at Jinlin Tower."

Wei WuXian was unable to open his mouth, so he sourly walked back to the donkey.

LianFang-Zun was the current leader of the LanlingJin Sect

—Jin GuangYao, the only illegitimate son whom Jin GuangShan approved of. He was Jin Ling's youngest uncle, being half-blooded brothers with both Jin Ling's father, Jin ZiXuan, and Mo XuanYu. However, although they were both illegitimate sons, they were extremely different. While Mo XuanYu was in Mo Village, sleeping on the ground and eating leftovers, Jin GuangYao was sitting in the highest seat of the cultivation world,

## **summoning the winds and controlling the rain**

. If he wanted to talk to Lan XiCheng or initiate a Discussion Conference, he could do so however he wanted to. Then again, no wonder the sect leaders of the Lan and Jin sects personally went along quite well—after all, they were

**sworn brothers.**

Lan XiChen spoke, “Uncle has taken and examined what you brought back from Mo Village.”

Hearing the words “Mo Village”, Wei WuXian automatically started to pay attention. Unexpectedly, he felt his lips part.

Lan XiChen had released his silence and spoke to Lan WangJi, “It is not often that you bring somebody home, being in such good spirits. You need to treat your guest with courtesy, unlike this.”

Good spirits?

Wei WuXian carefully looked at Lan WangJi’s face.

How could he tell that he was in good spirits?!

After watching Lan XiChen leave, Lan WangJi spoke, “Drag him inside.”

Then, Wei WuXian was, indeed, dragged into a place which he swore not to step inside again.

In the past, only distinguished cultivators had come to visit the Lan Sect, and never had anyone seen a guest like him before. The juniors all crowded around him, interested by this new turn of events. If not for the sect rules being so strict, there would definitely be bouts of laughter along the journey. Lan JingYi asked, “HanGuang-Jun, where should we drag him to?”

Lan WangJi replied, “The **jingshi**.”

“... The jingshi?!”

Wei WuXian didn't know what was going on. The rest stared among themselves, afraid to make any sound.

It was HanGuang-Jun's bedroom and study, which he had never invited anyone inside...

The furniture in the jingshi was extremely simplistic, without any unnecessary belongings. On the accordion partition, there was a painting of drifting clouds, floating and morphing with its fine brushwork. A



## guqin

table lay horizontally in front of it. On top of the three-legged incense stand in the corner, a hollowed out incense burner made of white jade emitted soft, lingering smoke, filling the whole room with the chilling scent of sandalwood.

Lan WangJi went to see his uncle to discuss serious matters, while Wei WuXian was pushed into the room. Right after Lan WangJi left, Wei WuXian also went outside. He strolled around the Cloud Recesses, and found that, as he had expected, without the jade token for passage, even if he climbed up the white walls of a few zhangs' height, he would be immediately flung off by the barrier, attracting the attentions of the nearby patrolmen at once.

Wei WuXian could only go back to the jingshi.

He never really worried about anything, no matter what he came across. He walked around the jingshi with his arms behind his back, firmly believing that, sooner or later, there would be a solution. The refreshing scent of the sandalwood was cold and clear. Although it wasn't sentimental, it had its own way of tugging one's heartstrings. With nothing to do, he started to think random thoughts,

Lan Zhan happened to smell like this scent. His clothes were probably tinged with the fragrance when he was practicing his guqin or meditating here

.

After these thoughts, he couldn't help but to shift closer to the incense stand at the corner. With this shift, he became aware that, beneath his foot, one piece of wood was significantly different from the other places. Wei WuXian bent down and started to knock here and there, due to curiosity. In his past life, he did a lot of digging pits, excavating graves, and finding holes in the ground. After a few moments, he turned a piece of board up.

Finding a secretive space in Lan WangJi's room was already more than enough to surprise Wei WuXian.

However, after he saw what was hidden inside, he was even more surprised.

After flipping the wooden board open, a mellow aroma had filled the air, unnoticeable when it was mixed with the sandalwood scent. Seven or eight black jars were packed into a small, square cellar.

Sure enough, Lan WangJi had changed—he even started to hide liquor!

The Cloud Recesses prohibited liquor. Because of this, the first time they met, they had a small fight. Lan WangJi ended up spilling a jar of the “Emperor's Smile” which he brought back from the city of Gusu.

After he returned from Gusu to Yunmeng, Wei WuXian never had the chance to drink the “Emperor's Smile” made exclusively by Gusu's experts ever again. He had thought about this for his entire life, always telling himself to come back to taste it if he ever received the opportunity. But, the opportunity never came. Hidden in here was no other than the liquor—he didn't even need to open and taste it, and knew that it was an “Emperor's Smile” just by the smell of it. He would never have thought that he would find a liquor-hiding vault in the room of a person as scrupulous and abstinent as Lan WangJi's. Karma really outdid itself with this reincarnation.

As Wei WuXian exclaimed upon the matter, he finished one jar already. He had a high tolerance for alcohol and loved to drink. After he came to the conclusion that Lan WangJi still owed him a jar of Emperor's Smile and it was time to collect his interests, he drank another jar. When he was just starting to get tipsy, a thought suddenly passed his mind. How hard was it to get the jade token? In the Cloud

Recesses, there was a cold spring with a lot of miraculous effects, for the male cultivators to use. It was said to be able to calm down one's heart, clear one's mind,

**quench one's fire**

, and so on. When he went into the cold spring, he was bound to take off his clothing. Then, with his clothing already off, there would be no where to put it aside from holding it in his mouth, which was definitely out of question.

Wei WuXian clapped his hands and finished the last gulp in the jar. After searching, he found that there were no places to throw it away, so he filled the empty jars with clear water and sealed the lids again, stuffing them back inside and closing the wooden board. With this done, he ventured out to find the jade token.

Although the Cloud Recesses had been burnt down before the “Sunshot Campaign” happened, the rebuilt structure of the area was the same. Wei WuXian walked through the winding paths from memory, and soon found the cold spring, situated at a quiet and obscure place.

The disciple on duty for watching over the cold spring was quite a distance away. The female cultivators were in another quarter of the Cloud Recesses and didn’t come here to use it. Nobody in the Lan Sect did an impudent thing such as coming to the cold spring to watch others bathe, anyway.

Therefore, the security wasn’t strict at all and it was extremely easy to overcome, making it easy for Wei WuXian to go and shame himself. And, coincidentally, there was a set of white clothes on top of the white rocks behind the crisscrossed eupatorium grasses, meaning that someone had already come.

The set of white clothes was folded extremely neatly, almost making one’s hair rise. It looked like a snow-white piece of tofu—even the forehead ribbon was folded without any creases. As Wei WuXian put his hand in and searched for the jade token of passage, he was almost reluctant to mess it up. Afterward, stepping over the bushes of eupatorium grasses, his gaze passed over the spring, and suddenly halted.

The water in the cold spring was freezing. Unlike a hot spring, there wasn’t any vapour to shroud one’s eyes, so it was possible to take a clear look at the upper half of the person in the spring who stood with his back to him.

The person in the spring was quite tall. His skin was fair and his hair was black, wet and gathered to one side. The lines which outlined his waist and back were smooth, graceful yet holding strength. In simpler terms, he was a beauty.

However, Wei WuXian was definitely not stunned and unable to avert his gaze because he was looking at a bathing beauty. No matter how beautiful he was, he wouldn't actually be attracted to men. Really, it was the things on the person's back that made him unable to avert his gaze.

There were dozens of intersecting scars.

They were the scars from a discipline whip. In the different sects, there was a type of discipline whip to punish disciples of that sect who made significant mistakes. After the torture, the scars would never disappear. Although Wei WuXian had never been hit by a discipline whip before, Jiang Cheng had been. Even after desperately trying, he couldn't

make the disgracing imprint fade one bit. This was why Wei WuXian would never misremember scars like this.

Usually, with only one or two strikes of the discipline whip, it would already be enough of a punishment for the bearer to remember it for their whole life, never to make the same mistake ever again. The amount of scars on this person's back accumulated thirty at the least. Just what sort of monstrous crime did he commit for him to be whipped so many times? If it really was a monstrous crime, why didn't they kill him?

At the moment, the person in the spring turned around.

Beneath his collarbone and near his heart, there was a clear scar. Seeing the scar, Wei WuXian's shock instantly reached its highest peak.

## Cloud Recesses

: The name of the Lan Sect's residence came from the last phrase of Jia Dao's poem. A

very

beautiful and accurate translation of this poem can be found here:

<http://chinesepoemsinenglish.blogspot.ca/2010/03/jia-dao-visiting-absent-hermit.html>

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## **Morning readings**

: A common practice in China is for students to read out loud in their morning classes, because it makes them memorize the passages/teachings better.

### **Lotus Pier**

: The specifics of this place will be explained later.

However, this name also came from a poem. It was the name of a poem by the famous poet—Wang Wei. I cannot find the translation of this poem online, but it doesn't matter too much, as this doesn't influence anything in the story.

**Xiao:** This is a vertical flute.

### **Lan Huan, ZeWu-Jun, Lan XiChen**

: Lan Huan is his birth name, Lan XiChen is his common name, and ZeWu-Jun is his “alternative name” or “hao” (but, in case anyone forgot, a hao is a name given by one to oneself).

## **Two jades**

: This term refers to two people who are especially good at something, on a generally equal level.

## **Summoning the winds and controlling the wind**

: There is nothing special to this proverb. It just means that he is very powerful and could do whatever he wanted to do.

## **Sworn brothers**

: The author of FoDC/GDC had stated that everyone in this book, apart from Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi, are straight.

However, that does nothing to stop the fangirls from shipping practically every character with every other character. Feel free to ship Lan XiChen and Jin GuangYao, or any other characters you're interested in, whichever way you'd like to do so.



## **Jingshi**

: This literally translates into “quiet room”. As there doesn’t seem to be any appropriate terms for this in English, it is kept as pinyin.

## **Guqin**

: This is the term for the type of zither that Lan WangJi plays. In past chapters, it was referred to as a zither , but the guqin is one specific type of zither, so it has been changed.

## **Quench one's fire**

: Here, the exact term used is “quench one's evil fire”. Wei WuXian may be referencing Chinese medicine, or he may be making an innuendo (which I happen to know because it is one of the most overused terms to describe the seme's desires in Chinese BL smut). Who knows?

Like Loading...

## **GDC Chapter 12:**

## Refinement

The sear took away all of Wei WuXian's attention, making him doubt that he had mislooked. He couldn't even pay attention to the person's face, and his breaths also stuttered for a few times. Suddenly, a flash of white appeared before his eyes, as if snow had fallen before him. Quickly afterward, the blue glare of a sword penetrated through the snow, slashing toward him with an arctic blast of wind.

Who didn't know that it was HanGuang-Jun's famous sword— "Bichen"?  
Crap, it's Lan WangJi!

Wei WuXian was quite adept at running away and dodging swords. With a roll on the ground, he closely avoided the sword. He even had the time to pull off a leaf that stuck to his hair when he rushed out of the cold spring. He ran like a headless fly, right into a few people who were passing by from nightwatching. They grabbed him and scolded, "What are you running around for? Running is prohibited in the Cloud Recesses!"

Wei WuXian, seeing that it was Lan JingYi and the others, were ecstatic, thinking that he could finally be chased down the mountain. He presented himself at once, "I didn't see! I didn't see anything! I'm definitely not here to peep at HanGuang-Jun bathing!"

The juniors were shocked speechless by his impudence.

No matter where he was, HanGuang-Jun was a high, holy mountain to behold in awe, especially respected among the junior disciples in the sect. He was near the cold spring to

watch HanGuang-Jun bathe! Just thinking about such a thing would be the greatest crime, never to be forgiven. Lan SiZhui was frightened to the point that his voice even changed, "What? HanGuang-Jun? HanGuang-Jun is inside?!"

Lan JingYi seized him furiously, "You damn cut-sleeve! I-i-is he someone you could peek at?!"

Wei WuXian struck the iron when it was still hot and confirmed his conviction, “I didn’t see a single peek of how HanGuang-Jun looks like without his clothes!”

Lan JingYi fumed, “You are saying that three-hundred taels are not buried here! Well, if you did not, why are you sneaking around here? Look at you—you have no face to see anyone!”

Wei WuXian covered his face with his hands, “Don’t be so loud... Noise is prohibited in the Cloud Recesses.”

Amid the ruckus, Lan WangJi walked out from behind the layers of eupatorium grasses with his hair down, wearing a white robe. The conversation hadn’t even finished yet, and he was already dressed in an orderly fashion, Bichen still unsheathed. The juniors hurried to greet him. Lan JingYi rushed to speak, “HanGuang-Jun, Mo XuanYu really is awful.

You only brought him back seeing that he assisted us at Mo Village, yet he... he...”

Wei WuXian thought that, this time, it would be beyond his endurance and kicked out of the sect. However, Lan WangJi only lightly glimpsed at him. After a moment of silence, he sheathed Bichen with a shing and spoke, “You are dismissed.”

It was only three toneless words, but it was powerful enough for no second option to be allowed. The crowd

dispersed immediately, while Lan WangJi calmly held Wei WuXian by the back of his collar and dragged him toward the jingshi. In his past life, the two were of similar height, both somewhat slender and tall. Wei WuXian was only shorter than Lan WangJi by a tiny bit. When they stood together, the difference of less than one cun between them were almost unnoticeable. However, after waking up in another body, he was more than two cun shorter than Lan WangJi. While being held in his hand, he couldn’t even struggle against him. Wei WuXian staggered, wanting to shout, but Lan WangJi spoke coldly, “Those who make noise will be silenced.”

He would love to be thrown off the mountain, but wouldn't want to be silenced. Wei WuXian couldn't understand it at all—since when did the Lan Sect tolerate something as shameless as peeking at one of the Lan Clan's most distinguished cultivators bathing?!

Lan WangJi carried him to the jingshi, walked straight toward the inner room, and threw him down onto the bed with a thump. Wei WuXian yelped from the pain. He couldn't get up at the moment, wriggling upright after a while. He originally wanted to whine a few times in a flirtatious manner, so that he would detest him. However, as he raised his head, he saw that Lan WangJi was holding Bichen with one hand, looking down at him commandingly.

He was used to seeing Lan WangJi with his forehead ribbon, neat, long hair, scrupulous to every detail, but had never seen him like this, with his hair a bit loose and wearing thin clothing. Wei WuXian couldn't help to glance a few more times. After the effort of carrying and throwing him on the bed, Lan WangJi's collars, which were closed in the beginning, came slightly apart, showing his distinct collarbones and the deep red sear under them.

As he saw the sear, Wei WuXian's attention was captured again.

When he hadn't become the YiLing Patriarch yet, he also had a sear like this on his body.

And, the sear on Lan WangJi's body was exactly the same as the one on his body in his past life, no matter the position or the shape, so it was only natural for him to recognize it and become surprised.

Speaking of it, aside from this sear, the thirty-or-so scars of the discipline whip on his back were also surprising.

Lan WangJi became famous at a young age. With his high appraisal, he was one of the most acknowledged cultivators in the cultivation world, and also part of the Two Jades of which the GusuLan Sect was so proud of. Every word and action of his was set as examples of excellence by the elders of each sect for their disciples. Just what unforgivable mistake did he make for him to be punished like this?

Seeing from the thirty-or-so scars of the discipline whip, the executor might as well have killed him. As soon as the discipline whip had been delivered, it wouldn't disappear for the rest of the bearer's life, so that they would remember it forever and never make the same mistake again.

Following his gaze, Lan WangJi lowered his eyes. He pulled his collar so that it covered his collarbones and sear, becoming the indifferent HanGuang-Jun once again. At the moment, the deep toll of the bell came from far away.

The Lan Sect had strict sect rules, including a precise schedule of sleeping at nine in the evening and rising at five in the morning. The bell was a reminder for that. Lan WangJi

listened attentively to the tolls, and spoke to Wei WuXian,

“You will be sleeping here.”

Without giving Wei WuXian a chance to reply, he turned to another compartment of the jingshi, leaving Wei WuXian alone, sprawled on the bed alone and feeling confused.

He did doubt that Lan WangJi might have guessed who he was. However, the doubt was lacking in both sense and reason. As sacrificing one's body was a prohibited practice, there were probably not a lot of people who knew about it.

The scrolls passed down the generations were most likely partial pieces of the entire work, unable to reach their full potential. Things continued like this, and so there were less and less people who believed in it. Mo XuanYu only summoned Wei WuXian by looking at a secret scroll, wherever he found it in the first place. Anyhow, Lan WangJi couldn't have recognized him just from the awful flute melodies that he played.

He asked himself whether or not he had a heartfelt relationship with Lan WangJi in his past life. Although they had studied with each other, went on adventures, and fought together, all of these experiences were like falling petals and flowing water—coming and going. Lan WangJi was a disciple of the GusuLan Sect, which meant that he had to be “righteous,” quite incompatible with Wei WuXian's personality. Wei WuXian thought that their

relationship wasn't exactly bad, but it wasn't that good either. The chances were that Lan WangJi's opinion of him was the same as everyone else's—being overly wanton and not virtuous enough, it would have been only a matter of time before he caused a disaster. After Wei WuXian betrayed the YunmengJiang Sect and became the YiLing Patriarch, he had a few significant disputes with the Lan Sect, especially during the few months before his death. If Lan WangJi was

sure that he was Wei WuXian, they should have already been engaged in a large-scale fight.

Yet, he wasn't sure what to make of the current situation—

in the past, no matter what he did, Lan WangJi didn't tolerate anything, but now, even though he used whatever methods he had up his sleeve, Lan WangJi could still tolerate him. Should he be congratulated because of his progress?!

After a while of staring at nothing, Wei WuXian turned around and went off the bed. He lightly moved to the other chamber.

Lan WangJi lay sideways on the bed, appearing to be already asleep. Without making a sound, Wei WuXian approached him.

He was still not giving up, hoping to fish the jade token for passage out of him. However, as he just extended his hand, Lan WangJi's long lashes fluttered, and he opened his eyes.

Wei WuXian quickly made up his mind. He threw himself onto the bed.

He remembered that Lan WangJi hated physical contact with other people. In the past, just with one touch and the offender would have been hurled out. If, even like this, he endured it, then the person was definitely not Lan WangJi.

He would even doubt that Lan WangJi's body was taken!

Wei WuXian's entire body was above Lan WangJi's, with legs separated, kneeling with one on each side of his waist.

His hands were against the wooden bed, trapping Lan WangJi in between his arms. He gradually lowered his head.

The distance between the two faces became closer and closer. Closer and closer. At the point where it became hard

for Wei WuXian to breathe, Lan WangJi finally opened his mouth.

He stayed silent for a few moments, “Get off.”

Wei WuXian thickened his face, “No.”

A pair of pale-colored eyes looked at Wei WuXian at a very close distance. Lan WangJi stared fixedly at him, and repeated, “... Get off.”

Wei WuXian spoke, “No. If you allowed me to sleep here, you should have known that something like this would happen.”

Lan WangJi spoke, “Are you sure that this is what you want?”

“...” For some reason, Wei WuXian felt that he should carefully consider his reply.

As he was about to curl his lips into a smile, a numbness suddenly came from his waist, and his legs gave out. With a thump, he fell onto Lan WangJi’s body.

The curvature of a half-smile was frozen on his lips. His head was at the right side of Lan WangJi chest and he couldn’t move at all. Lan WangJi’s voice came from above him.

His voice was low and deep. His chest vibrated slightly as he spoke each word.

“Then stay like this for the whole night.”

Wei WuXian didn’t expect it to end up like this at all. He shifted around, wanting to get up, but his waist continued to



ache and felt limp. He could only be attached to another man in such an awkward situation, feeling a bit befuddled.

Just what in the world happened to Lan Zhan in the past few years, turning him into a person like this?

Was this the same Lan Zhan as before?!

Shouldn't he have been the person whose body was seized?!?!?

Suddenly, as his thoughts were as jumbled as a hurricane, Lan WangJi slightly shifted. Wei WuXian's spirits lifted, assuming that he finally couldn't bear it any more. However, Lan WangJi simply waived his hand.

The lights went out.

#### Translator's Notes

Three-hundred taels are not buried here: This is a very famous proverb in China. It tells the story of a man who buried his money under the ground, and added a sign that said something along the lines of "three-hundred taels are not buried here". This is an example of someone conspicuously protecting his innocence and making a very poor lie.

Cun: This is pronounced like tswun instead of kahn. Do not mistake the n with an m, or else you will be confused.

Wooden bed: In the past (and in traditional households in the present), beds are hard and made of wood.

Thickened his face: As most of you probably know already, to lose face means to embarrass oneself. To thicken one's face, on the other hand, means to be not afraid of losing face, pretty much saying that one has too thick of a face to lose any layers.

Like Loading...

#### **GDC Chapter 13:**

## Refinement

At a later time, Wei WuXian pondered upon the reason why his relationship with Lan WangJi wasn't good. Getting to the root of the matter, everything started when he was fifteen, coming to the GusuLan Sect with Jiang Cheng to study for three months.

There was a virtuous and prestigious elder in the GusuLan Sect—Lan QiRen. Everyone in the cultivation world accepted three characteristics which described him: pedantic, stubborn, and a strict teacher who produced outstanding students. Although the first two points kept a lot of people at a respective distance to him, some even to the point of secret dislike, the last one made them try everything they could to send their children to study under him. He had brought up quite a number of excellent disciples of the Lan Sect. As long as they stayed a few years in his classroom, no matter how pathetically useless they were when they first entered, they would at least seem to be decent when they depart, especially in terms of appearance and etiquette. There were plenty of parents who were so excited that tears flowed down their cheeks when they picked up their sons.

To this matter, Wei WuXian declared, “Do I not seem decent enough as of right now?”

Jiang Cheng replied with a great deal of foresight, “You'd definitely be a mark of shame in his entire teaching career.”

In that year, aside from the YunmengJiang Sect, there were also the young masters from other clans, sent to study here from parents who heard of the reputation. The young masters were all around fifteen or sixteen. Because the sects all knew the others, although they weren't close, they had seen others' faces before. It was widely known that, although Wei WuXian's surname was not Jiang, he was the leading disciple of the sect leader of the YunmengJiang Sect

—Jiang FengMian, and also the son of his friend who had passed away. In fact, the sect leader regarded him as his own child. This, along with how youths were not as concerned with status and ancestry as elders, they were

soon friends. Only a few sentences passed, and everyone started to call others older brothers or younger brothers.

Somebody asked, “The Lotus Pier of the Jiang Clan is much more fun than here, right?”

Wei WuXian laughed, “Fun or not fun depends on how fun you make it to be. There’s definitely less rules than here, and no need to wake up so early.”

The GusuLan Sect wakes at five in the morning and rests at nine in the evening, not allowing any delay. Somebody else asked, “When do you guys wake up? What do you do during the day?”

Jiang Cheng humphed, “Him? He wakes at nine in the morning and sleeps at one during the night. When he wakes up, he doesn’t practice his sword or meditate; he goes boating, swims around, picks lotus seedpods, and hunts for pheasants.”

Wei WuXian replied, “No matter how much pheasants I hunt, I’m still number one.”

One youth spoke, “Next year, I’m going to Yunmeng to study! Nobody can hold me back!”

**A bucket of cold water was thrown on him**

, “Nobody would hold you back. Your older brother would just break your legs.”

The youth drooped at once. This was the second young master of the QingheNie Sect—Nie HuaiSang. His brother, Nie MingJue, was extremely resolute when carrying out orders, quite renowned in the cultivation world. Although the brothers were not born from the same mother, their relationship was quite solid. Nie MingJue had always taught his younger brother with extreme harshness, particularly caring for his studies. This was why, even though Nie HuaiSang respected his older brother, he was the most scared of Nie MingJue mentioning his schoolwork.

Wei WuXian spoke, “To be honest, Gusu is quite fun as well.”

Nie HuaiSang spoke, “**Wei-xiong**

, listen to a sincere advice of mine. The Cloud Recesses is nothing like Lotus Pier. On this trip to Gusu, remember that there’s one person whom you shouldn’t provoke.”

Wei WuXian asked, “Who? Lan QiRen?”

Nie HuaiSang replied, “Not that old man. The one you need to be careful of is his proudest disciple, named Lan Zhan.”

Wei WuXian spoke, “The Lan Zhan from the Two Jades of Lan? Lan WangJi?”

The respectable title of the Two Jades of Lan were given to the two sons of the GusuLan Sect’s current sect leader—Lan Huan and Lan Zhan. Just after they passed fourteen, they were deemed by the elders of each sect as exemplary models to compare with their own disciples. They were exceptionally famous among the juniors, so it was only natural that everyone recognized the names. Nie HuaiSang spoke, “What other Lan Zhan is there? Yes, it’s that one. Oh gosh, he’s the same age as you and I, but he has none of the energy of a teen. He’s stiff and strict, even worse than his uncle.”

Wei WuXian made the sound of an oh and asked, “Is he a lad who looks quite pretty?”

Jiang Cheng sneered, “Is there anyone who looks ugly in the GusuLan Sect? His sect doesn’t even accept disciples with unclean features. If you can, find me one who has an average face.”

Wei WuXian emphasized, “Very pretty.” He pointed at his head, “White from top to bottom, wearing a forehead ribbon, and carrying a silver sword on his back. He looked rather handsome, but with his straight face, he looked like he was mourning.”

“...” Nie HuaiSang spoke assuredly, “That’s him!” After a pause, he spoke again, “But he had been doing **secluded meditation**

for the past few days. You just came yesterday; when did you have the chance to see him?

“Yesterday night”

“Yesterday... Yesterday night?!” Jiang Cheng was stunned,

“There’s a curfew in the Cloud Recesses. Where did you see him? Why don’t I know about this?”

Wei WuXian pointed, “There.”

He pointed to the top of a very tall wall.

The others were out of speech. Jiang Cheng even felt his head growing larger and clenched his teeth, “We just came and you got into trouble! What’s the matter about?”

Wei WuXian replied with a grin, “There really isn’t much.

When we came, we passed that liquor shop called

‘Emperor’s Smile’, right? Yesterday at night, I was tossing and turning, and couldn’t stand it any longer, so I went down the mountain, into the city, and brought back two jars.

Mind you, we don’t have the chance to drink this in Yunmeng.”

Jiang Cheng, “Then, where’s the liquor?”

Wei WuXian, “Well, when I just flipped over the top of the wall, before I even had one leg inside, I was caught by him.”

One youth remarked, “Wei-xiong, you must have struck gold. He probably just got out of seclusion and went on night patrol, and caught you red-handed.”

Jiang Cheng spoke, “Those who return at night won’t be let in before seven in the morning. How come he let you inside?”

Wei WuXian threw up his hands, “So, he didn’t let me in.

He wanted me to move back the leg that had already stepped in. You tell me—how would I do that? And then, he

came up, as light as a feather, and asked me what I had in my hands.”

Jiang Cheng felt his head start to ache, indicating a foreboding feeling, “What did you say?”

Wei WuXian spoke, ““It’s Emperor’s Smile! If I share a jar with you, can you pretend that you never saw me?””

Jiang Cheng sighed, “... Alcohol is forbidden in the Cloud Recesses. That’s a worse crime.”

Wei WuXian spoke, “He said the same thing to me. And I asked, ‘Why don’t you tell me what exactly is not forbidden in your sect?’ He seemed like he was a bit angry and wanted me to look at the Wall of Rules in front of the mountain. Honestly, there were over three thousand, and everything was written in

## seal script

. Who would read them? Did you read them? Anyways, I didn't. What's angering about this?"

"That's right!" Everyone felt the same way, and all started to complain about the strange, outdated conventions in the Cloud Recesses, regretting that they didn't meet sooner, "Whose sect rules are over three thousand in number, and don't even repeat? Things like 'killing livestock within the area is prohibited, fighting without permission is prohibited, promiscuity is prohibited, venturing at night is prohibited, causing noise is prohibited, running is prohibited' are tolerable, but there're even ones like 'sneering for no reason is prohibited, sitting improperly is prohibited, eating more than three bowls is prohibited'..." Wei WuXian suddenly added, "What? Fighting without permission is also prohibited?"

Jiang Cheng, "... Yes. Don't tell me you fought with him."

Wei WuXian, "I did. And we broke a jar of Emperor's Smile."

Everyone **slapped their legs** and exclaimed in regret.

In any case, the situation couldn't have been any worse, causing Jiang Cheng's focus to switch, "Didn't you bring back two jars? Where's the other one?"

"I drank it."

Jiang Cheng, "Where did you drink it?"

"In front of him. I said, 'Okay, if alcohol is prohibited in the Cloud Recesses, then I won't go in. I'll drink it standing on the wall. That wouldn't count as violating the rules, would it?' Then I drank everything in one gulp, right in front of him."

"... And then?"

"And then we started fighting."

“Wei-xiong.” Nie HuaiSang blurted out, “You’re so smug.”

Wei WuXian lifted his brows, “Lan Zhan’s skills were quite good.”

“You’re gonna die, Wei-xiong! Lan Zhan had never been at such a loss before. He’s probably after you. You should be careful. Although Lan Zhan doesn’t go to classes with us, he’s in charge of punishments in the Lan Sect!”

Wei WuXian was not frightened at all, waving his hand,

“What’s there to be scared of? Didn’t everyone say that Lan Zhan had been a prodigy since he was very young? If he’s so smart from such an early age, then he probably finished learning everything his uncle taught and do secluded meditation all the time. How would he have time to come after me? I...”

Before his sentence was finished, as the group walked around a wall with a hollowed out window, they saw a white-clothed boy sitting in a rigidly upright position in the room, with long hair tied up and wearing a forehead ribbon, emitting an aura of ice and frost. He swept a cold look at them.

At once, it was as if the ten-or-so mouths were silenced.

They quietly entered the room, quietly picked their seats to sit, and quietly avoided the desks around Lan WangJi.

Jiang Cheng patted Wei WuXian’s shoulder and whispered,

“He’s after you. Hope for the best.”

When Wei WuXian turned his head, he could see the side of Lan WangJi’s face. His lashes were long, appearing to be extremely delicate and elegant. His posture was also very upright, looking straight ahead. As he was just thinking about starting a conversation with him, Lan QiRen walked into the room.

Lan QiRen was tall and thin, standing with a straight back.



Although he had a long, black goatee, he was definitely not old. And, according to the tradition of the GusuLan Clan producing beautiful men each generation, he was definitely not bad-looking either. Yet, unfortunately, with the pedantic and stiff air that surrounded him, nothing would feel wrong if one called him an old man. He entered with a scroll in one hand. The long scroll of paper rolled all over the ground as soon as he opened it, and he started to talk about the rules of the Lan Sect. The faces of everyone in the room started to grow dark. As Wei WuXian was bored, his gaze flew everywhere, and landed on the side face of Lan WangJi. He was shocked as he saw concentration and seriousness that were nothing like a facade, “How can he listen so attentively to something so boring?”

Immediately, in the front, Lan QiRen slammed the scroll onto the ground and smiled bitterly, “I am only repeating this one by one because nobody reads it, even though it was carved onto the rock wall. Hence, nobody will be able to violate them using ignorance as an excuse again. Even if I do this, there are still people who do not pay attention. Very well, I will proceed to talk about something else.”

Although his words could be applied to everyone in the room, Wei WuXian’s intuition told him that it was a warning directed at him. As he expected, Lan QiRen spoke, “Wei Ying.”

Wei WuXian answered, “Here.”

“Let me ask you. Are yao, demons, ghosts, and monsters the same things?”

Wei WuXian smiled, “No.”

“Why not? How are they differentiated?”

“Yao are formed from living, non-human beings; demons are formed from living humans; ghosts are formed from dead humans; monsters are formed from dead, non-human beings.”

“‘Yao’ and ‘monsters’ are often confused. What is an example that distinguishes the two?”

“That’s easy.” Wei WuXian pointed at the viridian tree outside of the room and replied, “For example, a living tree was tainted with the energy of books, cultivated into a conscious being, and causes mischief, it would be a ‘yao’. If I took an axe and cut it in the middle, so that only a dead tree-stump was left, and then it cultivates into a being, it would be a ‘monster.’”

“What was the profession of the progenitor of the QingheNie Sect?”

“A butcher.”

“The heraldry of the LanlingJin Sect is a white peony.

Which type of white peony is it?”

**“Sparks Amidst Snow.”**

“Who was the first in the cultivation world to focus on the rise of his clan rather than his sect?”

“The progenitor of the QishanWen Sect, Wen Mao.”

His fluent answers made everyone’s hearts skip a few beats. Although they felt lucky, they all prayed for him to not be stumped by any questions, so that Lan QiRen wouldn’t have the opportunity to pick on other people. Yet, Lan QiRen spoke, “As a disciple of the YunmengJiang Sect, you should have been very familiar with these and known them by heart since long ago, so there is nothing to be proud of even if you answered correctly. Let me ask you again—there is an executioner with parents, a wife, and children, but before he died, he executed more than one hundred people. He suddenly died in the public and, to punish him for his deeds, he was left on the streets for seven days. With the repressed energy of resentment, he started to haunt and kill. What should be done?”

This time, Wei WuXian didn’t answer immediately. The others thought that he was confused, and were all feeling restless. Lan QiRen scolded, “Why are you looking at him?”

Think about this as well. Don’t open your books!”

The disciples took their hands away from the books that they intended on quickly flipping through. They were confused as well—having died in the public and left on the streets for seven days, it was definitely a fierce ghost and a ferocious corpse, and therefore a question hard to solve.

Everyone hoped that the old man Lan wouldn't pick on them to answer. After a few moments, seeing that Wei WuXian didn't answer, Lan QiRen seemed like he was thinking, and spoke again, "WangJi, you can tell him what should be done."

**A bucket of cold water was thrown on him** : This should be interpreted figuratively instead of literally.

It is a common saying to pour or throw a bucket of cold water onto someone, to imply that one's words reduced another's hopes for something.

**Wei-xiong**: The xiong

suffix means "older brother". However, it doesn't have to be the speaker's actual older brother. It is usually used to indicate respect for someone older than you, as it was impolite to call the names of others (especially older than you) directly.

## **Secluded meditation**

: In cultivation, it is common practice to do secluded meditation, or to meditate on your own for a long amount of time in a secluded space. The length of this time period depends on how skilled the cultivator is.

## **Seal script**

: This is simply a “font” or type of script which the ancient Chinese used during the Qin Dynasty. In the context of this novel, as it is not based on any specific dynasty or period of history, it implies that the seal script is hard to read and not commonly used by most people in the world.

## **Slapped their legs**

: A common reaction that goes after a sudden realization or some other sort of emotion that requires a shout (or a sigh, in some cases) is to slap one's legs.

## **Sparks Amidst Snow**

: In fact, this is actually a real type of peony in China. The literal translation of this is

Golden Stars/Sparks Amidst Waves of Snow

, but the name has been shortened for it to fit better within the translated version.

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**GDC Chapter 14:**

# Refinement

## Chapter 14

### Refinement—Part Four

Lan WangJi did not look at Wei WuXian. He nodded to indicate respect and spoke in a monotonous voice, “First, liberate; second, suppress; third, eliminate. The initial approach is to utilize the gratitude of his relatives and grant his dying wish, set free what he could not let go of. If it fails, suppress it. If the crimes were extremely wrongful, and its energy of resentment does not dissipate, exterminate it completely. The cultivation world should precisely keep to this order of measures. No errors should be allowed.”

Everyone let out a long breath, thanking the Heavens because Lan WangJi was the one the old man selected. Else, if it was their turn, it would be hard to not overlook a few steps or mix up the order. Lan QiRen nodded with satisfaction, “Not a single mistake was made.” With a pause, he spoke again, “No matter in terms of cultivation or as a person, one needs to be as solid as this. If one becomes complacent and proud just because they defeated a few simple mountain beings in their home and hold some empty reputations, one would definitely bring disgrace upon themselves, sooner or later.”

Wei WuXian raised his brows and took a look at the side of Lan WangJi’s face. He thought, so, apparently this old man meant it for me. He called his best pupil to listen with us in order for me to watch.

He spoke, “I have a question.”

Lan QiRen replied, “Speak.”

Wei WuXian, “Although ‘liberation’ comes first, it is often impossible. ‘To grant his dying wish’ sounds simple—it would be easy, if the wish was a new piece of clothing, but what if the wish was to kill lots of people for revenge?”

Lan WangJi, “Thus, suppression assists liberation. If it is necessary, elimination would also follow.”

Wei WuXian smiled, “Such a waste.” He paused, and continued, “It wasn’t that I didn’t know of this answer, I was only thinking of a fourth path.”

Lan QiRen spoke, “I have never heard of any fourth paths.”

Wei WuXian spoke, “Because the executioner died in such a way, it is only natural that he turned into a ferocious corpse. Since he executed more than one hundred people before he died, why not dig up the graves of these people, arouse their energy of resentment, collect the heads of those hundred people, and use them to fight with the ferocious corpse...”

Lan WangJi finally turned around to look at him. His brows were knit, still expressionless. Lan QiRen was so angered that his goatee was quivering. He shouted, “How dare you!”

Everyone in the room was stunned. Lan QiRen sprang to his feet, “The essence of exorcising demons and annihilating ghosts is to liberate! You do not study the methods of liberation, and even think about increasing their energy of resentment! You reverse the natural order, and ignore ethics and morality!”

Wei WuXian replied, “There are some things that have no use after liberation, so why not find a way to make use of them? When Yu the Great tamed the flood, obstruction was

the inferior method, and redirection was the superior.

Suppression is the same as obstruction, so isn’t it inferior...”

Lan QiRen hurled a book toward him, but he flinched to the side and avoided it. His expression remained unchanged, and continued to talk nonsense, “Spiritual energy is energy; resentful energy is energy as well. Spiritual energy is stored in the dantian. It can split mountains and fill oceans, available for human use. If so, then why can’t resentful energy also be used by humans?”



Another book came flying from Lan QiRen. He spoke harshly, “Then, let me ask you again! How do you make sure that the resentful energy only listens to you and does not harm others?”

Wei WuXian ducked while speaking, “I haven’t thought of it yet!”

Lan QiRen raged, “If you thought of it, the cultivation world would not allow your existence! Get out!”

Wei WuXian couldn’t be more glad, and quickly went out.

He wandered about the Cloud Recesses for the morning, picking flowers and playing with grasses. After everyone finished the lesson, they finally found him on the roof of a tall wall. Wei WuXian was sitting on the grey tiles of the ledge, holding a piece of grass in his mouth. His right hand was under his cheek, and sat with one leg propped up and the other hanging down, swaying slightly. The disciples down there pointed at him, “Wei-xiong! How admirable of you! He told you to get out, and you really went outside!

Hahahaha...”

“After you went out, a long while passed before he finally understood what happened. His face was so purple!”

Wei WuXian chewed on the grass and shouted toward below him, “He asks, and I answer. If he tells me to get out, I will get out. What else does he want me to do?”

Nie HuaiSang spoke, “Why does it seem like old man Lan is especially strict towards you? He always directs his scoldings at you.”

Jiang Cheng humphed, “It serves him right. What sort of answer is that? It’s fine if he spouts these nonsense at home, but he dared to say these in front of Lan QiRen. He’s seeking his own death!”

Wei WuXian spoke, “No matter how I answered it, he wouldn’t like me, so I might as well just say what I wanted to say. Anyways, I didn’t try to offend him. I was just answering properly.”

After thinking for a few moments, an expression of envy and yearning appeared on Nie HuaiSang's face, "To be honest, Wei-xiong's words were quite interesting. Spiritual energy can only be obtained through cultivation and taking great pains to form a golden core. It would take I-don't-know-how-many years to do, especially for someone like me, whose talent seems as if it was gnawed by a dog when I was in my mother's womb. But, resentful energy are from the fierce ghosts. If they can easily be taken and used, it would be beyond wonderful."

A golden core was a core formed by cultivators after they had cultivated to a certain point. It can store and control spiritual energy. After the core was formed, the cultivator's level of cultivation would increase at a rapid speed, and become better and better. Else, they would only be a low-end cultivator. If disciple from a prominent clan forms the core at a later age, it would be a disgrace to tell other

people of it, yet Nie HuaiSang didn't feel ashamed at all.

Wei WuXian also laughed, "I know, right? No harm comes from using it."

Jiang Cheng warned, "That's enough. It's fine if you talk about it, but don't actually walk such a crooked path."

Wei WuXian smiled, "Why would I leave the nice, broad road, and walk on a single-plank bridge on a dark, narrow river instead? If it really is that easy, people would have already walked on it. Don't worry, he was just asking, and I was just answering. Hey, are you guys coming? Since it's not curfew yet, hunt for pheasants with me."

Jiang Cheng scolded, "What do you mean 'hunt for pheasants'? Why would there be pheasants here?! First, go copy Righteousness. Lan QiRen asked me to tell you to copy the Virtue section of Righteousness for three times, so that you can learn what natural law and morality is."

Righteousness was the collection of the Lan Sect's sect rules. The sect rules here was too long, so Lan QiRen revised them into a thick collection. The sections Virtue and Conduct were four fifth of the whole book. Wei WuXian spat out the grass which he held in his mouth and dusted his boots, "Three

times? I'd fly up to Heaven if I just copied them once. I'm not from the Lan Sect, and don't intend to marry into the Lan Clan, so why should I copy the sect rules of his sect? I'm not gonna copy."

Nie HuaiSang quickly spoke, "I'll copy for you! I'll copy for you!"

Wei WuXian, "No good person does favours for others out of the blue. Tell me, what do you want me to do?"

Nie Huai Sang replied, "It's like this. Wei-xiong, old man Lan has a bad habit. He..."

In the middle of his sentence, he suddenly paused and coughed drily, opening up his fan and shifting to the side.

Wei WuXian knew that something was wrong. He turned around and, sure enough, Lan WangJi stood under an ancient, verdant tree and gazed in their direction, carrying the Bichen sword on his back. He looked like a jade tree, reflecting the mottled shadows of leaves and sunlight.

However, his stare wasn't kind at all, as if it could lock them in a cavern made of ice. Everyone knew that their shouts were a bit too loud, and the noise had probably led him over, so they all shut their mouths. Yet, Wei WuXian jumped down and gravitated toward him, "WangJi-xiong!"

Lan WangJi turned around and immediately walked away.

Wei WuXian cheerfully went after him and yelled, "WangJi-xiong, wait for me!"

The white clothed figure flashed behind the tree, and suddenly disappeared without a trace, clearly showing that Lan WangJi didn't want to converse with him. Having received only a view from behind, Wei WuXian turned around and complained to the others, "He ignored me."

"Yeah," Nie HuaiSang spoke, "It looks like he really hates you, Wei-xiong. Lan WangJi usually... No, he never does something so impolite."

Wei WuXian, "He hates me already? I wanted to apologize to him."

Jiang Cheng sneered, “Apologizing now? Too late! Like his uncle, he surely thinks that you are evil and unruly to the core, and didn’t bother to pay you any attention.”

Wei WuXian thought otherwise. He chuckled, “Who cares if he ignored me? Does he look pretty?” After a thought, he realized that Lan WangJi did look pretty. And so, he happily threw away his desire to twitch his lips.

Only after three days, did Wei WuXian finally know of Lan QiRen’s bad habit.

Lan QiRen’s lessons were not only tediously long, but everything was also tested on. The generational changes of important clans in the cultivation world, the division of their areas of power, famous quotes by famous cultivators, family trees...

Although he didn’t understand a single bit as he listened in class, Nie HuaiSang worked as hard as a slave when the date of the test approached. He copied Virtue two times for Wei WuXian, and begged before the test, “Please, Wei-xiong, if my grade is lower than yi, my brother would really break my legs! Stuff like telling apart direct lineage, collateral lineage, main clan, clan branches... For us disciples from big clans, we can’t even distinguish our relationships with our own relatives, randomly calling everyone who are more than two tiers away from us aunts and uncles. Does anyone have enough capacity in their brain to remember those of other clans?!”

As a result of cheating notes flying everywhere in the air, Lan WangJi suddenly attacked during the test, and caught a few initiators of the commotion. Lan QiRen exploded with anger, writing letters to the prominent clans to tell on them.

He loathed Wei WuXian—in the beginning, although these disciples could hardly sit still, at least nobody started anything, and their buttocks were able to stick to their legs.

However, now that Wei Ying came, the originally spineless brats were influenced by his encouragement, venturing out

at night and drinking alcohol however they pleased. The unhealthy practices grew greater and greater. As he had expected, Wei Ying was one of the biggest threats to humanity!

Jiang FengMian replied, “Ying has always been like this.

Please take care to discipline him, Mr. Lan.”

And so, Wei WuXian was punished again.

At first, he didn’t think too much of it. It was only copying texts, and he never lacked people who copied for him. Yet, this time, Nie HuaiSang spoke, “Wei-xiong, even if I want to help you, I can’t any more. You’d have to endure it on your own.”

Wei WuXian asked, “What happened?”

Nie HuaiSang, “Old... Mr. Lan said that you have to copy both Virtue and Conduct.”

Conduct was the most complicated section of the twelve sections in the Lan Sect’s sect rules. It cited a lot of classics, was terribly long, and had a lot of rarely-used characters.

Copy it one time, and one would lose all interest in life. Copy it ten times, and one would fly to Heaven on the spot. Nie HuaiSang added, “He also said that, during the time of the punishment, nobody is allowed to fool around with you or copy them for you.”

Wei WuXian wondered, “How would he know if someone copied them for me or not? Surely it doesn’t mean that he’s making someone watch me.”

Jiang Cheng spoke, “That’s exactly the case.”

“...” Wei WuXian spoke, “What did you say?”

Jiang Cheng, “He told you that you’re not allowed to go outside and have to go to the Library Pavilion to copy, and also face the wall and reflect upon

your mistakes. Of course, there will be someone to watch you. I don't need to tell you who he is, do I?"

Inside the Library Pavilion—

There was one bamboo seat, one wooden desk, two candlesticks, and two people. One sat in a proper position, but, on the other side, Wei WuXian had already copied Conduct for more than ten pages. His head felt dizzy and his heart felt bored, so he dropped his pen to take a breath and looked across.

When he was still in Yunmeng, there were a lot of girls who envied that he could come and study with Lan WangJi.

They said that each generation was full of nice-looking men, especially the brothers part of the Two Jades in the current generation. Before this, Wei WuXian never had the chance to carefully examine the front of his face. Now that he had a look at it, he started to think random thoughts, He looks quite nice indeed. Yet, if only those girls could come and see him with their own eyes. Looking as bitter as if everyone had offended him or his parents died, it wouldn't matter no matter how nice his face looks.

Lan WangJi was recopying ancient books, which were not only old but also unavailable to most others, in the Lan Sect's Library Pavilion. His brushstrokes were slow and steady, and his handwriting was neat yet sharply vigorous.

Wei WuXian couldn't help but to compliment him sincerely,

"Those are some great characters! They're of the top level."

Lan WangJi remained indifferent.

Wei WuXian rarely kept his mouth shut for such a long amount of time. Feeling suffocated, he thought, I have to sit in front of such a stuffy person for so many hours each day, for a month. Would I even survive?

At this point of thought, he couldn't help but slightly tilted his body forward.

Translator's Notes

Yu the Great: This was a famous person in the history of China. He was known for introducing a method of controlling and stopping the floods from destroying villages.

Dantian: This refers to the region in the body where a person's Qi, or energy, is concentrated. It is located three finger widths below and two finger widths behind the navel, where girls' period cramps happen (not really, but you get the idea). The definition comes from

<https://immortalmountain.wordpress.com/glossary/wuxia-xianxia-xuanhuan-terms/#world>.

Fly up to Heaven: This is what happens when a cultivator is of such a high level that they finally become an Immortal and fly up to Heaven. This usually happens in high fantasy, but GDC is low fantasy, so nobody actually flies up to Heaven. If you're interested in settings involving gods and Immortals, check out the author's new work—Heavenly Blessings. No group is translating this yet, but the fanart is quite nice.

Yi: There are four grades—jia, yi, bing, and ding. Yi is the second level, so it is pretty much a B in terms of the American grading system.

Two tiers: This means that there are two levels of relationship between them, such as the cousin of a cousin and so on.

Seat: Seats in Ancient China were made of bamboo weaved together into a flat piece of mat on the ground to sit on.

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**GDC Chapter 15:**

## Refinement

Wei WuXian was someone who was skilled at finding fun for himself, especially talented in the area of seeking joy amid dull circumstances. Since there wasn't anything else to play with, he could only play with Lan WangJi. He called,

“WangJi-xiong.”

Lan WangJi remained motionless.

Wei WuXian, “WangJi.”

He appeared as if he didn't hear anything.

Wei WuXian, “Lan WangJi.”

Wei WuXian, “Lan Zhan!”

Lan WangJi finally stopped writing, and looked up at him with a cold gaze. Wei WuXian shifted backward, raising his hands as if he was defending himself, “Don't look at me like this. I only called your name because you didn't answer when I called you WangJi. If you're upset, you can also call me back with my name.”

Lan WangJi spoke, “Put your legs down.”

Wei WuXian's sitting posture was extremely improper, with a slanted body and legs propped up. Seeing that he finally teased Lan WangJi to the point that he started to talk, the former silently chuckled to himself, as if he finally saw the clouds disperse and the moon appear[1]. Listening to Lan WangJi's words, he put his legs down, but his upper

body inched unnoticeably closer, and he pressed his arms onto the desk. It was still an unacceptable sitting posture.

He asked in a serious tone, “Lan Zhan. Let me ask you a question. Do you... really hate me that much?”



Lan WangJi looked down, his lashes casting light shadows onto his jade-like cheeks. Wei WuXian hurriedly added,

“Hey, don’t be like this, ignoring me again after saying so few words. I want to admit my fault and apologize to you.

Look at me.”

After a pause, he spoke again, “You don’t want to look at me? Sure, then. I’ll just start talking. It was my fault during that night. I was wrong. I shouldn’t have climbed the wall, I shouldn’t have drank alcohol, and I shouldn’t have fought with you. But, I swear! It wasn’t that I provoked you on purpose—I really didn’t look at the sect rules. The sect rules in the Jiang Sect are all told verbally; none of them are written down. Or else, I definitely wouldn’t have done that.”

I definitely wouldn’t have finished the jar of Emperor’s Smile in front of you. I would have tucked it away and carried it back into my room, secretly drinking it every day and sharing it with everyone until we all had enough.

Wei WuXian continued, “And, let’s be reasonable—which of us attacked first? It was you. If you didn’t attack, we could’ve communicated nicely and cleared everything up.

However, if someone hits me, I’d have to hit them back.

This isn’t all my fault. Lan Zhan, are you listening? Look at me. Young Master Lan?” He snapped his fingers, “Second Brother Lan[2], why don’t you do me a favor and look at me?”

Lan WangJi didn’t even lift his eyes, “Copy it one additional time.”

Wei WuXian’s body immediately slanted, “Don’t be like this. It’s my fault, alright?”

Lan WangJi exposed his lie mercilessly, “You do not feel any remorse.”

Wei WuXian spoke as if he didn’t have any dignity, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry. I can repeat it however

many times you want me to. I can even say it while kneeling down.”

Lan WangJi put his brush down. Wei WuXian thought that the other couldn't endure it any longer and finally wanted to beat him up. Just as he got ready to put on a goofy grin, he discovered that his upper and lower lips seemed like they were glued together, so he couldn't laugh.

His face quickly changed. He struggled to talk, “Mmph?”

Mmph mmph mmph!”

Lan WangJi closed his eyes and let out a faint breath of air.

When he opened his eyes, the calm expression returned again. He picked up the brush again, as if nothing had happened. Wei WuXian had been aware of the hated silencing spell of the Lan Sect since long ago, and he refused to believe it. Yet, after making every effort, scratching the corners of his lips red, he still couldn't open his mouth no matter what. And so, he grabbed a piece of paper, wrote as if his brush was flying, and threw the paper over. Lan WangJi glanced at it. “Pathetic,” he responded, crumpling it into a ball and tossing it away.

Wei WuXian was so angry that he rolled around on the mat, climbed up, and wrote another one, slamming it in front of Lan WangJi. Again, it was crumpled into a ball and tossed away.

The silencing spell was only removed after he finished copying. The second day, when he came to the Library Pavilion again, the balls of paper which landed everywhere were all taken out.

Wei WuXian had always forgot about the pain after the cut healed[3]. Although, on the first day, he suffered greatly from the silencing spell, after a few moments, his mouth started to itch again. After recklessly speaking a few times, he was silenced once more. He couldn't open his mouth, so he scribbled on paper and pushed them to Lan WangJi, who crumpled it and threw it onto the ground. The same thing happened on the third day.

He was silenced time after time. However, on the last day of him having to “face the wall and reflect,” Lan WangJi noticed that Wei WuXian seemed

somewhat different.

During his stay at Gusu, he left his sword all around the place, and was never seen carrying it properly. Yet, he took it with him today, loudly slamming it onto the desk. He even went as far as to start writing without a word, contrasting his usual behavior of relentlessly harassing Lan WangJi in every way possible. He was so obedient that it was strange.

Lan WangJi didn't have a reason to silence him, so he took a few more glances at him, as if he didn't believe that Wei WuXian was finally willing to behave himself. As he had expected, after a short while of sitting down, Wei WuXian repeated his past conduct again, giving Lan WangJi a piece of paper for him to see.

Lan WangJi originally thought that it was going to be a mess of lame phrases again, but after a coincidental glimpse, he was surprised to find the drawing of a person,

sitting upright and reading by the window, with a vividly realistic expression on his face. It was himself.

Seeing that he didn't avert his gaze at once, Wei WuXian curled his lips, and raised his eyebrow with a wink. No words were needed, since the meaning was plain to see—Does it look like you? Is it good?

Lan WangJi slowly spoke, “You have spare time, yet you scribble instead of copy the text. In my opinion, the day of your release from this punishment will never come.”

Wei WuXian blew on the ink which hadn't dried yet and spoke nonchalantly, “I already finished copying, so I won't be coming tomorrow!”

Lan WangJi's slender fingers seemed to have paused before flipping over the next yellow-tinted page.

Surprisingly, Wei WuXian wasn't silenced. As he didn't provoke any reaction, Wei WuXian lightly threw the drawing,

“It's yours.”

The drawing was thrown onto the mat, but Lan WangJi didn't have any intention of picking it up. During these days, the paper which Wei WuXian wrote on to curse him, cajole him, apologize to him, beg him, and other messy scribbles all ended up this way. He was used to it and didn't mind. He suddenly added, "I forgot. I need to add something else."

After his words, he picked up the paper and his brush, and added a few strokes. He glanced at the drawing, then, the actual person, and fell toward the ground in laughter. Lan WangJi put down the book, and saw that Wei WuXian added a flower onto the drawing, where the side of his head was.

The corners of his lip seemed to have twitched. Wei WuXian crawled up and spoke before him, "'Pathetic', right?"

I just know that you're gonna say pathetic. Can't you switch to something else? Or add another word to it?"

Lan WangJi replied coldly, "Extremely pathetic."

Wei WuXian clapped his hands, "So you really added another word to it. Thank you!"

Lan WangJi turned his gaze away, picked up the book which he put on the desk, and opened it again. He only took one look at before he hurled the book away, as if he was burnt by fire.

He was initially reading a Buddhist text, but when he had looked at the page flipped open, he was presented with naked, intertwining figures, intolerable to his eye. The book that he was reading was substituted with a pornographic book, its cover disguised as a Buddhist text.

Even someone without a brain would have guessed who had done the deed. It must have been done when when somebody took the opportunity that opened up when his attention turned to the drawing, let alone the fact that Wei WuXian didn't even bother to cover it up, slapping the table as he laughed hysterically,

"Hahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

As the book was thrown on the ground, Lan WangJi seemed as if he was escaping from snakes or scorpions, falling back to the corner of the Library Pavilion in less than a second. He roared with rage, “Wei Ying——!”

Wei WuXian almost rolled under the desk from laughter, raising a hand with much difficulty, “Here! I’m here!”

Lan WangJi swiftly drew his sword, Bichen. Ever since they had met, Wei WuXian had never seen him appear so

discomposed. He hastily grabbed his own sword. Drawing his sword so that a third of the blade was out, he reminded Lan WangJi, “Manners! Second Master Lan! Watch your manners! I brought my sword today as well. If we start fighting, would your Library Pavilion be fine?” He knew that Lan WangJi would be shamed into anger, so he went out of his way to carry his sword for self-defence, so that he wouldn’t be accidentally stabbed to death. The blade of Lan WangJi’s sword pointed at him. Fire could almost be seen sprouting from his pair of light-colored eyes, “What sort of person are you?!”

Wei WuXian responded, “What sort of person could I be? A man!”

Lan WangJi lashed out “You have no shame!”

Wei WuXian, “Do I need to be ashamed about this? Don’t tell me you’ve never seen something like this before. I don’t believe you.”

Lan WangJi’s weak point was that he didn’t know how to argue. After a moment of silently holding back, he pointed his sword at Wei WuXian. He spoke with a frigid face, “You, go outside. We have fought before.”

Wei WuXian shook his head a couple of times, pretending to be docile, “Nope, nope. Didn’t you know, Young Master Lan? Fighting without permission is prohibited in the Cloud Recesses.” He proceeded to pick up the book which was thrown away, but Lan WangJi went before him, snatching it in his hand. Wei WuXian quickly guessed that he was going to use this as evidence to report him. He deliberately spoke,

“Why are you grabbing it? I thought that you didn’t want to read it. Now you do? Actually, even if you want to read it, you don’t have to fight for it. I borrowed it exclusively for

you, anyways. Now that you’ve seen my porn, you’ve become my friend. We can continue to exchange opinions, and...”

Lan WangJi’s whole face turned white. He spoke one word at a time, “I. Will. Not. Read. It.”

Wei WuXian continued to distort the facts, “If you won’t read it, why did you grab it? Secretly keeping it? You can’t do that. I borrowed this from someone else, so I’d have to return it after you read it... Hey, hey, hey, don’t come here.

You’re too close; I feel nervous. Let’s talk nicely. You’re not gonna hand this in, are you? Hand it in to whom? Old... Your uncle? Second Young Master Lan, do you think that you can let the elders see this? He’d definitely think that you already read it. With a face as thin as yours, you’d be so ashamed that you’d die...”

Lan WangJi filled his right hand with spiritual energy, and the book broke into thousands of millions of pieces, fluttering downward. As Wei WuXian saw that he successfully provoked Lan WangJi to the point that the evidence was destroyed, he finally felt relieved, and spoke with fake regret, “What a waste!” Then, he picked up a piece of paper which had fallen on his hair, raising it up to show the fuming, pale-faced Lan WangJi, “Lan Zhan, everything about you is great, except that you like to throw things everywhere. Tell me, how many wads of paper have you thrown onto the ground, in these past few days? Today, you aren’t even satisfied with throwing paper wads anymore, and instead ripped paper. You ripped it, so you clean it up yourself. I’m not gonna help.” Of course, he had never helped anyway.

Lan WangJi tried again and again to put up with him, but he couldn’t do it any more. He thundered, “Get lost!”

Wei WuXian spoke, “Well, well, look at you, Lan Zhan.

Everyone says that you're a gentleman of excellence, a bright pearl in the world, carrying yourself with incomparable courtesy, so it seems that this is all there is.

Didn't you know that causing noise is prohibited in the Cloud Recesses? And, you actually told me to "get lost." Is this the first time that you used this phrase on somebody..."

Lan Wangji drew his sword and went at him. Wei Wuxian hurriedly hopped onto the windowsill, "Get lost it is, then.

Getting lost is my best skill. It's not necessary for you to see me out!"

He jumped down the Library Pavilion, laughing like a maniac as he barged into the forest. There was already a group of people waiting for him. Nie Huaisang asked, "How did it go? Did he read it? What was he like?"

Wei Wuxian replied, "What was he like? Ha! Didn't you guys hear that loud shout he gave?"

Nie Huaisang was full of admiration, "I heard it—he told you to get lost! Wei-xiong, it was my first time hearing Lan Wangji tell someone to 'get lost'! How did you do it?"

Satisfaction was plastered all over Wei Wuxian's face,

"Good thing that I helped him achieve this 'first'. You all saw it, didn't you? The self-restraint and etiquette that Second Young Master Lan was praised so strongly for were all weak and useless against me."

Jiang Cheng scolded with a darkened expression, "What are you proud of?! What is there to be proud of with this?!"

Do you think that it's a glorious thing to be told by someone to get lost? You bring so much shame upon our sect!"

Wei Wuxian spoke, "I really wanted to apologize to him, but he never paid attention to me. He silenced me for so

many days, so what's wrong with me having a little fun with him? I presented him the book with a nice intention.

HuaiSang-xiong, what happened to your treasured porn was really a pity. I didn't even get to finish it; it was so good! Lan Zhan definitely doesn't understand proper relationships. I gave it to him, yet he was still unhappy. It's such a waste of that face of his."

Nie HuaiSang blurted, "It's not a pity at all! You can have as many as you want."

Jiang Cheng sneered, "You've seriously offended both Lan WangJi and Lan QiRen. Just wait for your death tomorrow!

Nobody's gonna bury your corpse."

Wei WuXian waved his hands, putting his arm around Jiang Cheng's shoulders, "Who cares, as long as I tease him first?

You've already buried my corpse so many times, so what's wrong with once more?"

Jiang Cheng responded with a kick, "Shoo, shoo, shoo!

Next time, if you do such a thing, don't let me know! Don't ask me to watch, either!"

1. To see the clouds disperse and the moon appear means to finally see results after being patient and waiting for a long time.

2. The nickname "Second Brother Lan" will appear quite a lot of times in the future. The literal translation is

"Second Older Brother Lan", and is meant to be said in a jokingly way. In China, calling someone an older brother, especially for girls towards guys, is usually meant to be flirtatious. The word meaning "older brother" in Chinese is gege, and people (specifically readers of Heavenly Blessings) often describe it as having a soft, dough-like undertone to it, sounding like a little girl as one speaks.



The end of the phrase swishes upwards, as if it's a smooth, flowing ribbon tugging at one's heartstrings. In simpler terms, this sounds like oppa in Korean or onii-san in Japanese.

3. To forget about the pain after the cut heals means that one quickly forgets about the things they should've learnt from a punishment.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 16:**

## Refinement

In order to defend himself if ol' fuddy-duddy and lil' fuddy-duddy came to drag him out of his bed in the middle of the night, Wei WuXian slept while clinging on to his sword. Yet, the night went smoothly. On the second day, Nie HuaiSang came to him with an overjoyed expression, "Wei-xiong, you really struck it lucky. The old man went to our sect's Discussion Conference last night, so we don't have classes for a few days!"

Now that the old one is gone, the young one can be easily taken care of! Wei WuXian quickly climbed up, beaming as he put on his boots, "A lucky strike, indeed, almost as if Heaven is blessing me with its clouds."

Jiang Cheng stood on the side, carefully cleaning his sword, and threw cold water on this notion, "When he comes back, you're still gonna get your punishment."

Wei WuXian responded, "Why would a living person worry about what happens after they die? I'll just live freely as long as possible. Let's go. I refuse to believe that I can't find any pheasants on this mountain of the Lan Sect."

The three walked together, passing through the reception room of the Cloud Recesses. Suddenly, Wei WuXian stopped in his tracks and exclaimed, "There are two lil' fuddy... Lan Zhan-s!"

A few people walked out of the room. Of the two youths at the front, both looked as if they were carved out of ice and

jade, both wore the same snow-white robes, and both had sword tassels which swayed in the breeze, alongside ribbons on their clothes. The only differences were their ambiances and facial expressions. Wei WuXian could tell at once that, if the one with a stern face was Lan WangJi, the gentle one must be the other Jade of the Lan Sect—ZeWu-Jun, Lan XiChen.

As Lan WangJi saw Wei WuXian, he scrunched his brows, giving him a glare in an almost "glowering" fashion. As if he would be tainted if he

looked a moment longer, he moved his gaze away and stared into the distance. On the other hand, Lan XiChen smiled, “And you are...?”

Jiang Cheng showed his respect with a salute, “Jiang WanYin of Yunmeng.”

Wei WuXian followed, “Wei WuXian of Yunmeng.”

Lan XiChen returned the salute. Nie HuaiSang whispered in the volume of a gnat, “Brother XiChen.”

Lan XiChen turned to him, “HuaiSang, a while ago, as I returned from Qinghe, your brother asked of your studies.

How is it? This year, will you be able to pass?”

Nie HuaiSang replied, “Generally speaking, yes...” He seemed like a wilted cucumber, looking at Wei WuXian in a helpless way. Wei WuXian grinned, “ZeWu-Jun, what are you two going out for?”

Lan XiChen, “To exterminate a water ghoul. We were short of hands, so I came back to find WangJi.”

Lan WangJi spoke coldly, “Brother, we do not need to engage in small talk. This matter permits no delay; it is time for us to depart.”

Wei WuXian hurried, “Wait, wait, wait. I know how to catch water ghouls. ZeWu-Jun, why don’t you take us along?”

Lan XiChen smiled without words. Lan WangJi declared, “It is against the rules.”

Wei WuXian, “How is it against the rules? We used to catch water ghouls all the time in Yunmeng. Besides, we don’t have classes these days anyways.”

Yunmeng was abundant in lakes and water, so it teemed with water ghouls. It was true that people of the Jiang Sect were adept at this, and Jiang Cheng also wanted to make up for the face which the YunmengJiang Sect lost during this stay at the Lan Sect, “That’s right. ZeWu-Jun, we’d definitely be of help.”

“It is not necessary. The GusuLan Sect is also...” Before Lan WangJi finished talking, Lan XiChen spoke while smiling,

“Sure, then. Many thanks for your help. Do some preparations, and we can depart together. HuaiSang, are you coming as well?”

Nie HuaiSang also wanted to join in, but he had been reminded of his older brother as he met Lan XiChen.

Cringing silently, he didn’t dare to have fun, “I’ll pass and go back so that I can review...” With this act, he hoped that Lan XiChen would put in some good words for him to his brother.

Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng went back to their rooms to prepare.

Lan WangJi looked at them from behind, his brows knitted with confusion, “Brother, why did you decide to bring them?

Exterminating ghouls is not suited for joking around.”

Lan XiChen answered, “The head disciple and only son of Sect Leader Jiang are quite well-known in Yunmeng. It is

likely that they know more than joking around.”

Although Lan WangJi didn’t express his opinion, the phrase

“I beg to differ” was written all over his face.

Lan XiChen spoke again, “And, also, you wish for him to go as well, do you not?”

Lan WangJi was stunned.

Lan XiChen, “I only agreed because you looked as if you wanted the head disciple of Sect Leader Jiang to come with you.”

A silence fell upon them, as if the air was frozen solid.

Only after a while did Lan WangJi finally respond, speaking with great difficulty, “There was no such thing.”

He wanted to defend himself further, but Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng already grabbed their swords and headed over, so Lan WangJi had to shut his mouth. The group mounted their swords[1] and set off.

The place where the water ghouls haunted was named Caiyi Town, about ten kilometers away from the Cloud Recesses.

Caiyi Town was connected with paths of water. It was either a net of rivers densely covering the town, or dwellings packed on either sides of the web-like water paths. The houses had white walls and grey roofs, and the rivers were filled with boats of baskets and people. On the banks, they sold flowers, fruits, bamboo crafts, pastries, tea, and silk.

Gusu was in the Jiangnan area, and all the voices one could hear were soft and gentle. As two boats crashed into

each other, and a few jars of rice wine were spilled, even the arguments of the two boatmen sounded like chirps of the oriole. Although Yunmeng had many lakes, there weren’t a lot of small towns with so much water. Wei WuXian found it quite interesting. He bought two jars of rice wine and gave one to Jiang Cheng, “Gusu people talk in such a sugary way.

How is this arguing? If they see how Yunmeng people argue, they might be scared to death... Why are you looking at me, Lan Zhan? It’s not that I’m too stingy to buy you any—aren’t people from your sect prohibited from drinking alcohol?”

Having only stayed for a short time, the group boarded ten-or-so narrow boats, and rowed toward where the water ghouls gathered. Gradually, the number of houses on the banks decreased, and the river path became quieter as well.

Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng each had a boat, competing who could row faster while listening to events in the area that concerned water ghouls.

This water path led to a large lake ahead of them, named Biling Lake. Caiyi Town hadn't been haunted by water ghouls ever since tens of years ago, yet, for the past few months, people had started to fall into this path and Biling Lake.

Boats which carried goods also sunk without any reasons. A few days ago, Lan XiChen casted a few nets over this area.

He expected to catch one or two water ghouls, but got about a dozen instead. He cleaned the corpses and carried them to a nearby part of the town, only to find that some corpses were not familiar to any of the local people, and remained unclaimed. Yesterday, he set up the net formation again, and caught quite a few again.

Wei WuXian spoke, "It doesn't seem like that the corpses drowned somewhere else and floated here either. Water ghouls are picky about their area. Most of the time, the only

place they settle on is the place they drowned at, and they usually don't leave there."

Lan XiChen nodded, "That is correct. This was why I thought that it was no trivial matter, and asked WangJi to come along, in case something happens."

Wei WuXian asked, "ZeWu-Jun, water ghouls are really clever. If we use the boats and take our time like this, isn't it possible that they'll hide underwater and not come out?"

Won't we have to keep on searching forever? What if we can't find them?"

Lan WangJi replied, "We will wait until we find them. After all, we do what we must."

Wei WuXian, "Just by using nets?"

Lan XiChen, "That is right. Does the YunmengJiang Sect have other methods?"

Wei WuXian smiled but didn't respond. Of course, the YunmengJiang Sect used nets as well. But, because he was a good swimmer, he had always jumped into the river and dragged water ghouls out. However, this method was too dangerous; he definitely couldn't do it in front of the Lan Sect's people. If it travelled into Lan QiRen's ears, he would definitely face another lecture. He switched the topic, "It'd be great if there's something that can attract the water ghouls like a fishing bait. Or something that can point out their directions, like a compass."

Jiang Cheng spoke, "Look down at the water and concentrate on finding them. You're letting your imagination run again."

Wei WuXian, "Cultivation and riding on swords also used to be just imagination!"

As he looked down, he happened to be able to see the bottom of the boat which Lan WangJi was on. An idea flashed across his head, and he shouted, "Lan Zhan, look at me!"

At the moment, Lan WangJi was keeping a sharp lookout.

As he heard the words, he looked up, only to see Wei WuXian's bamboo paddle sweep up a splash of water and strike it toward him. With a tap of his foot, Lan WangJi lightly hopped onto another boat, dodging the spray. He was quite angered, thinking to himself that, sure enough, Wei WuXian was here to fool around, "Pathetic!"

However, Wei WuXian kicked the side of the boat which he was standing on, and tipped it over using the bamboo paddle. On the bottom of the boat, there were three water ghouls with swelling faces and ashen skin, tightly clinging onto the wooden boards!

A disciple who stood nearby immediately suppressed the three. Lan XiChen smiled, "Young Master Wei, how did you know that they were below the boats?"

Wei WuXian knocked on the side of the boat, "Simple! The displacement of water was wrong. He was the only person who stood on the boat, yet the

displacement was greater than those of boats that carried two people. There must have been something on the bottom.”

Lan XiChen praised him, “You are experienced indeed.”

Wei WuXian’s paddle lightly glided through the water, and the boat’s speed quickened, so that he was right next to Lan WangJi’s boat. He spoke, “Lan Zhan, I didn’t splash water on

you on purpose. Water ghouls are really clever. If I said it out loud, they would’ve heard it and got away. Hey, don’t ignore me. Why don’t you look at me, Second Young Master Lan?”

Lan WangJi finally condescended and gave him a glance,

“Why did you come?”

Wei WuXian spoke with sincerity, “I’m here to apologize to you. Last night was my fault. I was wrong.”

Lan WangJi’s countenance was slightly dark, most likely because he still didn’t forget how Wei WuXian “apologized”

to him. Wei WuXian asked although he knew the answer,

“Why do you look so gloomy? Don’t worry. Today, I’m really here to help.”

Jiang Cheng couldn’t watch the scene any longer, “If you want to help, then stop chattering and come here!”

A disciple shouted, “The net moved!”

Sure enough, the ropes of the net started to wobble. Wei WuXian beamed, “It’s here, it’s here!”

Thick, long hair formed veils of black satin, surging and swelling around the boats. Amid them, pairs of ghastly hands gripped onto the sides. Lan WangJi backhandedly drew his sword, Bichen, and severed ten-or-so wrists on the left of the boat, leaving only palms with fingers digging deep into the wood.



As he was about to cut the ones on the right, a red light flashed past, and Wei WuXian's sword was already back in its sheath.

The strange shifts of the water had ceased, and the net also became still once more. Although, a few moments ago, Wei WuXian's sword attacked at an extremely fast speed, Lan WangJi could already tell that the sword he carried was

of very high quality. He asked with a serious face, "What is the name of this sword?"

Wei WuXian answered, "Suibian[2]."

Lan WangJi stared at him. Wei WuXian thought that he didn't hear properly, so he repeated it again, "Suibian."

Lan WangJi frowned and refused, "This sword has a spirit.

Calling it as one pleases is disrespectful."

Wei WuXian let out a sigh, "Think outside the box, won't you? I wasn't asking you to call it whatever you wanted to, but the name of my sword just happens to be 'Suibian'.

Here, look." As he spoke, he passed the sword over for Lan WangJi to see the characters on the sword. Surrounded by lines and patterns, two ancient characters were carved onto the sheath. It was "Suibian", indeed.

For a few moments, Lan WangJi was at a loss for words.

Wei WuXian showed his consideration, "You don't need to talk. I know that you definitely want to ask me why it's called this name. Everyone asks if it has some special meaning to it. Actually, there's no special meaning at all. It was just that, when Uncle Jiang gave me the sword and asked me what I wanted to call it, I came up with more than twenty names, but wasn't satisfied with any of them. I thought that I could let Uncle Jiang give it a name, so I answered, 'Whatever!' But, who knew that, after the sword had been forged and taken out, these two characters were on it. Uncle Jiang said,

‘If this is the case, then why not let this sword be named Suibian?’ To be honest, this name isn’t bad either, right?”

Finally, Lan WangJi spoke through his gritted teeth, “...

Ridiculous!”

Wei WuXian carried his sword on his shoulder, “You’re such a boring person. Don’t you see how fun this name is?

It’s especially good at tricking serious ones like you, and it works every single time. Haha!”

At the same time, from within the virid lake, a long shadow darted around the small boat. After Jiang Cheng finished the water ghouls on his side, he was still watching out for any that they had missed. Seeing the shadow, he immediately yelled, “It’s coming again!”

Translator’s Notes

Cultivators have the ability to use their swords to hover in the air as a way to travel. It usually uses spiritual energy and is one of the things a cultivator learns in their earlier stages. They just stand on the sword (as if it’s a skateboard).

The word suibian in Chinese means “whatever”.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 17:**

## Refinement

A few disciples paddled and used nets to chase after the underwater shadow. Someone shouted from the other side,

“There are some here as well!”

On the other side, a mass of black shadows also whooshed past. A number of narrow boats dragged nets and went over, but they didn't catch anything. Wei WuXian spoke, “That's strange. The shape of this shadow doesn't seem like a human. It's also sometimes long and sometimes short, sometimes large and sometimes small... Lan Zhan, beside your boat!”

Instantly, the Bichen on Lan WangJi's back unsheathed and stabbed into the water. After a moment, it flew out of the river with a sharp resonance, taking with it a crescent of water. Yet, it didn't pierce anything.

He held the sword in his hand with a stern expression. As he was about to speak, a disciple on the other side also drew out his sword, thrusting it toward a dark shadow which swiftly swam by in the water.

However, after his sword went underwater, it never came out again. He chanted the **sword incantation** for a few more times, but nothing was retrieved from the water. It was as if his sword had been devoured by the lake, disappearing without a trace. The disciple looked like he was a youth of similar age as Wei WuXian and the others. Without his sword, his face grew paler and paler. An older disciple beside him spoke, “Su She, right now, we still haven't

determined what the thing inside the water is. Why did you act on your own and make your sword go underwater?”

Su She seemed like he was somewhat flustered, but his expression was relatively calm, “I saw that Second Young Master also...”

He realized, before he even finished speaking, how unsuitable this sentence was. No matter what, the Bichen sword or Lan WangJi were not comparable

with others. Lan WangJi could enter his sword into water when the opponent was unknown and be just fine, but it might not be the case for others. An embarrassed shade of red seeped through his pale complexion, as if he had been disgraced. He glimpsed at Lan WangJi, but Lan WangJi didn't look at him, and instead attentively observed the water. In an instant, Bichen was unsheathed again.

This time, the blade of the sword wasn't inserted into water, but instead, the tip of the sword jolted, and whisked up a piece of shadow from within the water. A pile of wet, black mess fell onto the floor of the boat with a plop. Wei WuXian went on his toes to have a look. To his surprise, it was a piece of clothing.

Wei WuXian laughed so hard that he almost toppled into the river, "Lan Zhan, you're so impressive! This is my first time seeing someone remove a water ghouls' clothing when they're catching water ghouls."

Lan WangJi simply examined Bichen's tip to see if there was anything strange, seeming to have decided to not converse with him. Jiang Cheng spoke, "You should shut up."

The thing that swam underwater really wasn't a water ghouls. There was only a piece of clothing!"

Of course, Wei WuXian also saw it clearly. He just didn't feel satisfied without teasing Lan WangJi a few times. He spoke, "So, the thing that was sneaking around was just this piece of clothing? Now that's why the nets couldn't catch it and swords couldn't pierce it. Its shape was always different. However, a piece of clothing couldn't have swallowed up a whole sword. There must be something else inside the water."

At the moment, the boats already floated toward the center of Biling Lake. The color of the lake was an extremely dark shade of green. Suddenly, Lan WangJi slightly lifted his head, "Go back immediately."

Lan XiChen asked, "Why?"

Lan WangJi answered, "The underwater beings led the boats to the center of Biling Lake on purpose."

Just as he finished his words, everyone suddenly felt their boats sinking.

Water immediately started to spread into the boats. Wei WuXian suddenly noticed that the color of Biling Lake's water wasn't dark green any more, but almost black.

Surrounding the area close to the center, a large whirlpool had formed without anybody realizing. The ten-or-so boats circled around, following the currents of the whirlpool. They sunk as they spun, as if they were going to be sucked inside a gigantic, black mouth!

The clang-s of drawing swords chorused in the air. One after another, everyone mounted their swords and flew upward. Wei WuXian already hovered above. He looked downward, only to see that the disciple who drove his sword underwater, Su She, was already knee-deep inside the water, the board of his boat already engulfed in Biling Lake.

Although his face was full of panic, he didn't call for help, possibly frightened rigid. Without hesitation, Wei WuXian bent down and stretched his arm out, grabbing Su She's wrist and pulling him up.

Having added another person, the sword under his feet dipped abruptly, but it continued to ascend. However, not long after, a strong force suddenly came from from Su She, almost pulling Wei WuXian off of his sword.

The lower part of Su She's body was already submerged inside the black whirlpool in the lake. The whirlpool spun faster and faster, and his body also sunk deeper and deeper.

There seemed to be something hiding underwater, holding onto his legs and pulling them down. Jiang Cheng originally stood on his Sandu and calmly ascended to about seventy meters above the surface of the lake. As he looked down, he dashed toward them with an annoyed expression, "What are you doing, now?!"

The sucking force of the lake became stronger and stronger. Wei WuXian's sword was superior in terms of agility, but inferior in terms of strength. He was almost weighed down to the point of hovering right above the surface of the lake. He steadied himself while using both hands to haul Su She, and

shouted, “Can somebody come here to help?! If I still can’t pull him up, I’m gonna let go!”

Suddenly, Wei WuXian felt his collar tighten, and he was lifted into the air. He turned around to see Lan WangJi holding the back of his collar with one hand. Although Lan WangJi merely looked into another direction with an indifferent look, he and his sword carried the weight of three people, and fought with the mysterious force of the lake at the same time. Moreover, their position was still rising at a steady pace. Jiang Cheng was rather shocked, If I went down

to pull Wei WuXian before him, using Sandu, I probably couldn’t have ascended so quickly and steadily. Lan WangJi is only around my age...

At this point, Wei WuXian spoke, “Lan Zhan, your sword is quite strong, isn’t it? Thank you, thank you. But why did you pull my collar? Can’t you hold on to me? I don’t feel comfortable if you do this. Why don’t I stretch my hand to you and you can grab it?”

Lan WangJi replied with a cold voice, “I do not have physical contact with others.”

Wei WuXian, “We’re already this familiar with each other, so how am I ‘others’?”

Lan WangJi, “We are not.”

Wei WuXian pretended to be hurt, “You can’t do this...”

Jiang Cheng really couldn’t hold it any more. He scolded,

“You can’t do this!!! Can’t you speak a few sentences less while you’re held in mid-air by your collar?!”

The group travelled on their swords and evacuated Biling Lake as fast as they could. When they landed, Lan WangJi let go of Wei WuXian’s back collar and calmly turned to Lan XiChen, “It is a waterborne abyss.”

Lan XiChen shook his head, “Then, this is going to be difficult.”

As they heard the name “waterborne abyss”, Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng understood immediately. The scariest part about Biling Lake wasn’t water ghouls, but the water which flowed in it.

Because of reasons such as terrain or currents, some rivers or lakes often encountered sinking ships and drowning people. As time went on, the area of water would develop a personality. It was like a spoiled young mistress who couldn’t tolerate a shortage of the luxurious lifestyle. If no boats of goods or living humans sunk into the water as sacrifices, it would stir up trouble and obtain them on its own.

The people of the Caiyi Town area were all familiar with water, so sunken boats and drowning deaths rarely happened. It was impossible for a waterborne abyss to grow out of here. Now that one had appeared here, there was only one possibility—that it had been chased here from somewhere else.

Once a waterborne abyss emerged, it meant that the whole body of water was turned into a monster. It was extremely hard to get rid of, impossible to remove unless every single drop of water was taken out, all of the people and goods which sunk were fished up, and riverbed was exposed to strong sunlight for a few years. Nevertheless, there was a method that could solve the immediate problem at the expense of others—to chase it to another river or pond and let it wreck somewhere else.

Lan WangJi asked, “Recently, has there been any place which suffered from a waterborne abyss?”

Lan XiChen pointed at the sky.

He was pointing at nothing else but the sun. Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng looked at each other, understanding it perfectly, It’s the QishanWen Sect.

Among the cultivation world, there was a countless number of sects and clans, exceeding even the number of

stars in the sky. And, among these, there was a titan which stood above the others without a doubt—the QishanWen Sect.

The Wen Clan used the sun as the motif of their clan, signifying that they could “compete with the sun for radiance, match the sun in longevity”. Its sect residence was quite large, almost comparable to a city. It was named the Nightless Sky, also called the Nightless Celestial City, because it was said that there was no nightfall in the city. It could be described as a titan for the fact that no matter in terms of the number of disciples, power, land, or magical tools, there were no other families which could compare to it. A great deal of cultivators took being a foreign disciple to the Wen Sect as a supreme honour. Based on the Wen Sect’s style of doing things, it was highly possible that the waterborne abyss in Caiyi Town was chased here by them.

Although they knew where the waterborne abyss came from, everyone grew silent.

If it was done by people of the Wen Sect, then there would be no result no matter how hard they accused or criticized.

First of all, the sect wouldn’t admit it, and second, there wouldn’t be any compensation either.

One disciple complained, “Caiyi Town will be seriously harmed with that sect having chased the waterborne abyss over. If the waterborne abyss grows larger and expands onto the river paths in the town, all those people’s lives would be up to the monster. This is so...”

If it became responsible for the problem passed to them by someone else, the GusuLan Sect would definitely face countless troubles. Lan XiChen sighed, “Let it down. Let it down. Let us go back to the town.”

They boarded new boats at the crossing point and paddled toward an area of town where a lot of people gathered.

After passing the arch bridge and entering the river paths, Wei WuXian started to go at it again.

Abandoning his paddle, he put one foot on the side of his boat and looked into his reflection in the water, examining if his hair was messed up. As if he didn’t just catch tons of water ghouls and escaped from the mouth of the



waterborne abyss, Wei WuXian assuredly threw a series of charming winks at both sides of the path, “**Sisters**, how much for half a kilogram of loquats?”

His age was young, and his appearance was handsome.

With such high spirits, it really was a scene of **frivolous peach blossoms pursuing the running stream**. One woman lifted her **bamboo hat**, smiling with her head raised, “Young beau, you needn’t pay. How ’bout I can give you one for free?”

The **Wu dialect** was soft, sounding refreshing and sweet.

The speaker’s lips moved melodiously, and the listener’s ears would be enveloped in fragrance. Wei WuXian cupped his hands together, “If it’s given to me by Sister, then I definitely want it!”

The woman put her hand into the basket, and threw him a round, golden loquat, “You needn’t be such polite. It’s for how handsome you look!”

The boats moved at a fast speed. As the two boats met, they immediately passed each other. Wei WuXian turned around, perfectly catching it, and grinned, “Sister looks even prettier!”

As he showed off and flirted on the side, Lan WangJi was staring straight ahead, appearing quite virtuous. Wei WuXian smugly tossed the loquat in his hand, and suddenly pointed at him, “Sisters, do you think that he looks handsome?”

Lan WangJi didn’t expect Wei WuXian to suddenly talk about him at all. Just as he was unsure of how to respond, the women on the river spoke in harmony, “Even more handsome!” Amid this, there seemed to be the laughter of a few men.

Wei WuXian spoke, “Then, does anyone want to give him one? If you only give me and not him, I’m afraid he might be jealous when we go back!”

Chirp-like laughter echoed through the whole river.

Another woman came from in front of them, standing on her boat, “Okay, okay, you get two. Heads up, young beau, catch!”

After the second one also landed in his hand, Wei WuXian shouted, “Sister, you’re not only pretty, but you’re nice as well. The next time I come here, I’m gonna buy a whole basket!”

The woman’s voice was vibrant, and she was more daring than the other. She pointed at Lan WangJi, “Get him to come as well. You all can come here and get them!”

Wei WuXian held the loquat in front of Lan WangJi’s eyes.

Lan WangJi didn’t move his gaze, “Move.”

And, so, Wei WuXian moved it away, “I knew that you definitely wouldn’t accept it, so I never intended to give it to you. Jiang Cheng, catch!”

Just then, the boat which Jiang Cheng was on whirled past.

He caught the loquat with one hand, a slight smile appearing on his face, but immediately snorted, “You’re being all flirty again?”

Wei WuXian smirked, proud of his success, “Get lost!”

Then, he turned around and asked, “Lan Zhan, you’re from Gusu, so you know how to speak in this dialect, right? Teach me. How do you swear in the Gusu dialect?”

Lan WangJi threw a “pathetic” at him, and got on another boat. Wei WuXian didn’t expect him to really answer. He just wanted to tease him, after hearing the amusingly soft Gusu dialect and thinking that Lan WangJi undoubtedly also spoke this dialect when he was young. After raising his head to swallow another gulp of the rice wine, he carried the plump, jet-black jar in one hand, picked up the paddle, and charged over to beat up Jiang Cheng.

On the other hand, Lan WangJi stood side by side to Lan XiChen. This time, even their expressions were similar. Both looked as if they were preoccupied

by troubles as they thought about things such as how to deal with the waterborne abyss and what to say to the mayor of Caiyi Town.

An extremely heavy boat came from in front of them, filled with buckets of large, golden loquats. Lan Wangji took one glance at it, and continued to look straight ahead.

Yet, Lan XiChen spoke to him, “If you want to eat loquats, should we buy one basket?”

“ ... ”

Lan Wangji went off with a flick of his sleeves, “I do not!”

He went to stand on another boat.

Translator’s Notes

**Sword incantation:** These are what one says to command or summon one’s sword.

**Sisters:** In China, it is respect to refer to someone older than you as Sister or Brother, and Younger Sister or Younger Brother if the person is younger than you.

**Frivolous peach blossoms pursuing the running stream:** Again, this phrase comes from a poem by the famous poet Du Fu. This scene of blossoms and the stream implies that Wei WuXian is the “frivolous peach blossom” in this case, and flirts with the women in the river without caring about his conduct.

**Bamboo hat:** As Caiyi Town is a “water town”, much of the residents there wear bamboo hats which form a conic shape, resembling the famous Vietnamese hats. It is also called a conic hat or a rice hat.

**Wu dialect:** This is one of the many dialects of Chinese.

Translator and Editor note:

\*\*\* The next chapter involves 9000 Chinese characters, which would result in around 7000-8000 words in English.

Most chapters so far are 2900-5000 characters, so do not be surprised this takes longer than usual to get translated. It will more than likely be at least five days before the next chapter is out due to this length.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 18:**

## Refinement



Wei WuXian bought a bunch of quirky gadgets in Caiyi Town and took them back to the Cloud Recesses. After he arrived, everything was shared between the disciples from other sects. Because Lan QiRen went to Qinghe and there were no classes for a few days, all of the boys played around in complete chaos, rushing into Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng's room to sleep there. All through the nights, they ate, drank, wrestled, gambled, and viewed **picture books**. During one of the nights, Wei WuXian lost in a game of dice, and was sent to sneak down the mountain and buy jars of Emperor's Smile.

This time, everyone finally had the chance to satisfy their taste buds. However, on the second day, before daylight even appeared, someone opened the door of the room, revealing the disciples who spread out on the floor in a tangle, sleeping as if they were a group of corpses.

The noise from opening the door startled a few people. As they saw the stone-faced Lan WangJi at the door through their sleepy eyes, they were instantly waken up. Nie HuaiSang furiously pushed Wei WuXian, who ended up in a position with his legs at the top and head at the bottom,

“Wei-xiong! Wei-xiong!”

Having been shoved for a few times, Wei WuXian spoke drowsily, “Who? Is anyone else up for it?! Jiang Cheng? The fight is on—like I’m scared of you!”

Jiang Cheng drank too much last night, and his head still ached as he lay on the ground with his eyes closed. He randomly grabbed something and hurled it at where Wei WuXian’s voice came from, “Shut up!”

The object landed on Wei WuXian’s chest, its pages flipping open. Nie HuaiSang eyed it, only to find that the item Jiang Cheng used to hit Wei WuXian was one of his treasured out-of-print illustrated pornography books. As he looked up and saw Lan WangJi’s frigid gaze, he almost died on the spot. Wei

WuXian mumbled a few sentences, hugging the book to his chest, and went to sleep again. Lan WangJi stepped into the room. He used one hand to grip Wei WuXian’s back collar, lifted him up, and dragged him in the direction of the door.

After a few puzzled moments as he was carried by Lan WangJi, he was finally half-awake. He turned around, “Lan Zhan, what are you doing?”

Lan WangJi didn’t say any words, continuing to drag him forward. Wei WuXian woke up a bit more, along with the lying corpses on the ground who gained consciousness one after another. Seeing that Wei WuXian was caught by Lan WangJi again, he hurried outside and asked, “What’s happening?”

What are you doing?”

Lan WangJi turned his head, speaking one word at a time,

“To receive. His. Punishment.”

Jiang Cheng had a slow reaction from his sleep and drinking too much, so he just remembered the mess of a floor in the room. Recalling that they broke a countless number of sect rules of the Cloud Recesses last night, his face immediately froze.

Lan WangJi dragged Wei WuXian to the front of the Lan Sect's ancestral hall. There were already a few older disciples of the Lan Sect waiting there, eight in total. Of them, four carried discipline rulers made of sandalwood which were extremely long in length, having numerous square-shaped characters carved onto them. It was a solemn-looking scene, indeed. As Lan WangJi dragged the person over, two of them immediately came up, firmly holding Wei WuXian in place.

Wei WuXian half-knelt on the ground, being allowed no room for struggle, "Lan Zhan, are you going to punish me?"

Lan WangJi stared at him coldly, maintaining his silence.

Wei WuXian spoke, "I won't accept this."

At this point, the boys who had woken up also rushed over, but they were blocked outside the ancestral hall, not allowed to go in. They scratched their heads, scared speechless from seeing the discipline ruler. Then, however, Lan WangJi lifted the bottom of his white clothes, and knelt down beside Wei WuXian.

Seeing this, Wei WuXian turned pale with fear. He tried to get up, but Lan WangJi commanded, "Strike!"

Wei WuXian gaped with astonishment. He hurriedly spoke,

"Wait, wait, I accept this, I accept this, Lan Zhan. I was wrong... Gah!"

The palms and legs of both of them received about a hundred strikes of the discipline ruler. Lan WangJi didn't need anyone to hold him down. His back was upright and his kneeling position stayed proper for the whole duration. On the other hand, Wei WuXian wailed and howled without holding back at all, making the disciples watching the scene cringe from imagining the pain. After the beating finished, Lan WangJi silently stood up and walked outside after saluting toward the the disciples in the ancestral hall, showing no evidence that he had been injured. Wei WuXian was the exact opposite. After he was carried onto Jiang Cheng's back, he groaned for the whole way. The youths all surrounded them, asking, "Wei-xiong, what in the world happened?"

“It’s understandable for Lan Zhan to punish you, but why did he himself also get the beating?”

Wei WuXian sighed, leaning on Jiang Cheng’s back, “What a miscalculation! It’s a long story!”

Jiang Cheng spoke, “Cut the crap! What on Earth did you do?!”

Wei WuXian answered, “I didn’t do anything! Last night, didn’t I lose the dice game and go down to buy some Emperor’s Smile?”

Jiang Cheng, “... Don’t tell me you met him again.”

Wei WuXian, “That’s actually it. Who knew what was wrong with my luck—when I carried the jars of Emperor’s Smile and came up here, he stopped right in front of me again. I’m doubting that maybe he really watches me every single day.”

Jiang Cheng, “Not everyone has so much time on their hands. What happened next?”

Wei WuXian, “And then I said hello to him again. I said, ‘Lan Zhan! What a coincidence—it’s you again!’. Of course, he ignored me again. His hand came at me without any words. I said, ‘Hey, what’s the use of doing this?’ He said that if a guest disciple violates the curfew so many times, they need to go to the Lan Sect’s ancestral hall to receive their punishment. And I said, ‘There’s only the two of us here. If you don’t say it, and I don’t say it, then nobody would know whether or not I violated the curfew, right? I promise that there’s no next time. We’re already this familiar with each other, so can’t you just do me a small favor?’”

Everyone looked as if they couldn’t bear to listen to this any longer.

Wei WuXian continued, “In the end, he said that we weren’t familiar with a long face, grabbed his sword, and charged over. He paid no heed to our friendship or whatsoever, so I could only put down the Emperor’s Smile and start passing a few moves. His attacks were fast and chased after me so



close that I couldn't even throw him off! Eventually, I really was annoyed from him chasing me. I asked, 'Are you really not gonna let go? Huh?!'

"He still said, 'Take your punishment.'"

The boys were filled with the thrill of the story, and Wei WuXian was enraptured as he spoke. He forgot the fact that he was still on Jiang Cheng's back, and gave Jiang Cheng's shoulder a hard smack, "I said, 'Fine!'. Then, I stopped dodging, threw myself over, clung to him, and plummeted outside the wall of the Cloud Recesses!"

"..."

Wei WuXian, "And so, the two of us fell outside the area of the Cloud Recesses together! It was such a bad fall that I saw stars before my eyes."

Nie HuaiSang was dumbstruck, "... He didn't break free?"

Wei WuXian replied, "Oh, he did try. But with me locking him in my arms and legs, he couldn't break free even though he wanted to, unable to even get up from my body. He was as hard as a board. I said, 'How about this, Lan Zhan? Now, you're also outside the Cloud Recesses. We both broke the curfew, and you can't be harsh toward others and loose toward yourself. If you punish me, you'd have to punish yourself as well. Equal treatment. How does that sound?'"

Wei WuXian, "After he got up, he looked like he really wasn't in a good mood. I sat on the side and told him not to worry, that I won't tell anyone else, and that the only ones who knew about this was the sky, the Earth, and us two. And then, he walked off without saying anything. Who knew that he'd do something like this in the morning... Jiang Cheng, walk slower. You're almost shaking me off."

Jiang Cheng wanted to not only shake him off, but, even more so, to make a few man-shaped dents on the ground by slamming his head down, "Is simply carrying you not up to your standards?!"

Wei WuXian, "I never asked you to carry me, in the beginning."

Jiang Cheng was enraged, "If I don't carry you, you'd probably stay in their ancestral hall and roll on the ground all day long. I don't have that thick of a face to lose! Lan WangJi even had fifty more strikes than you, and he even walked by himself. Yet, you have the nerve to pretend that you're crippled. I don't want to carry you any more. Get off, now!"

Wei WuXian, "No, I'm wounded."

The group joked around on the narrow path made of white stones. They walked right into a person in white robes, holding a book as he passed by. Lan XiChen stopped with wonder and smiled, "What is going on, here?"

Jiang Cheng felt extremely awkward, not knowing how to reply. Nie HuaiSang answered before him, "**XiChen-ge**, Wei-xiong was punished with more than a hundred strikes of the ruler. Is there any medicine?!"

The person responsible for punishment in the Cloud Recesses was Lan WangJi. With Wei WuXian's pained cries amid the group which surrounded him, it appeared as if his condition was extremely severe. Lan XiChen immediately came up to them, "Was this done by WangJi? Is Young Master Wei still able to walk? What in the world happened?"

Of course, Jiang Cheng didn't dare to say that Wei WuXian was at fault. Thinking back, it was them who urged Wei WuXian to buy liquor. Each and every one of them should

have been punished. He could only speak in a vague way,

"It's fine, it's fine; it's not that serious! He can walk. Wei WuXian, why are you still up there?!"

Wei WuXian spoke, "I can't walk." He raised his red palms, which were swollen a few sizes larger, and complained to Lan XiChen, "ZeWu-Jun, your younger brother is so cruel."

Lan XiChen examined his palms, "Yes, the punishment is quite severe, indeed. It is likely that the swelling will not subside until after three or four days."

Jiang Cheng really didn't know that the beating was so severe. He exclaimed, "What? Not after three or four days?"

His legs and his back were also hit by the discipline rulers.

How can Lan WangJi do this?!" He spoke the last sentence with resentment in spite of himself, and only realized it after Wei WuXian secretly smacked him. However, Lan XiChen didn't mind it at all. He smiled, "Nevertheless, it is not severe enough to require medication. Young Master Wei, let me tell you a way for your injuries to be healed in just a few hours."

It was nighttime, at the cold spring of the Cloud Recesses.

Lan WangJi's eyes were closed as he relaxed in the ice-cold water. Suddenly, a voice rang beside his ears, "Lan Zhan."

"..."

Lan WangJi's eyes sprang open. Sure enough, Wei WuXian was lying on his stomach, above the blue stones beside the cold spring, tilting his head and smiling at him.

Lan WangJi blurted out, "How did you come in?!"

Wei WuXian slowly crawled up, and spoke as he took off his sash belt, "ZeWu-Jun told me to come in."

Lan WangJi, "What are you doing?"

Wei WuXian kicked off his boots while leaving piles of clothing all over the ground, "I already stripped, so what do you think I'm here for? I heard that your sect's cold spring can cure injuries aside from helping with one's cultivation. So, your brother told me to come here and bathe with you.

Except, it's really not nice of you to come here to heal alone.

Eep! It really is cold. Brr..."

He went into the water, rolling about due to the freezing water of the spring. Lan WangJi quickly distanced himself a few meters away from Wei WuXian, “I came here for cultivation purposes, not to heal... Do not leap around!”

Wei WuXian spoke, “But it’s so cold, it’s so cold...”

This time, he didn’t intend to emphasize or cause trouble. It was true that most people couldn’t become use to the GusuLan Sect’s cold spring in a short amount of time, feeling as if their bodies and blood would freeze if they stayed still for just a few moments. So, he could only jump around, intending to warm his body from the movement. Lan WangJi was originally meditating in peace, but with Wei WuXian jumping about, a few splashes of water was thrown on his face. A few droplets trickled down his long lashes and ink-black hair. It was beyond his endurance, “Do not move!”

As he spoke, he extended an arm, and put his hand on Wei WuXian’s shoulder.

Wei WuXian instantly felt a surge of warmth coming from where their bodies connected. Feeling better, he couldn’t help but to shift closer over there. Lan WangJi was wary of this, “What?”

Wei WuXian replied in an innocent tone, “Nothing. It seems like your side is warmer.”

Lan WangJi firmly kept his arm between the two of them, maintaining the distance. He sternly declared, “It is not.”

Wei WuXian wanted to get closer to Lan WangJi so that it was more convenient for him to flatter the other. Even though he couldn’t go over and was given the cold shoulder, he wasn’t angered at all. He glanced at Lan WangJi’s palms and shoulder. The bruises were still there, meaning that Lan WangJi really wasn’t here to heal. Wei WuXian spoke sincerely, “Lan Zhan, I admire you so much. You really did punish yourself as well, without treating yourself any better. I don’t have anything else to say.”

Lan WangJi shut his eyes again, without any words.

Wei WuXian spoke again, “Really, I’ve never seen someone as prim and proper as you. It’d be impossible for me to do something like this. You’re so cool.”

Lan WangJi still paid him no attention.

After Wei WuXian stopped feeling cold, he started to swim around the cold spring. He swam for a while, but still went near Lan WangJi, “Lan Zhan, didn’t you notice what I was doing when I talked to you?”

Lan WangJi, “I do not know.”

Wei WuXian, “You don’t even know about this? I was complimenting you, trying to become more casual with you.”

Lan WangJi glanced at him, “What do you want to do?”

Wei WuXian, “Lan Zhan, why don’t we become friends?”

We’re already so familiar.”

Lan WangJi, “We are not.”

Wei WuXian slapped the surface of the water, “Now, you’re being boring again. Really. There are lots of benefits if you become friends with me.”

Lan WangJi, “For example?”

Wei WuXian swam near the edge of the spring, and leaned back with his arms on the blue rocks, “I’m always really loyal towards my friends. For example, I’d definitely let you be the first person to look at new porn that I get hold of... Hey, hey, come back! It’s fine if you don’t look at them. Have you been to Yunmeng? Yunmeng is really fun. Yunmeng’s food is also good. I don’t know if it’s Gusu’s or the Cloud Recesses’s problem, but the food in your sect are so bad. If you come to Lotus Pier, you can eat lots of delicious food. I can take you to pick lotus seed pods and water chestnuts. Lan Zhan, do you wanna come?”

Lan WangJi, “No.”

Wei WuXian, “Don’t answer everything with negative words.

You sound so uncaring; girls won’t like it. Let me tell you—the girls in Yunmeng look very pretty, different from the sort of pretty in Gusu.” He winked his left eye at Lan in a proud way,

“You sure you don’t wanna come?”

Lan WangJi hesitated, but still replied, “No...”

Wei WuXian, “Rejecting me without giving me any respect—

aren’t you scared that I’d conveniently take away your clothes when I leave?”

Lan WangJi, “Get lost!!!”

After Lan QiRen left Qinghe and returned to Gusu, he didn’t make Wei WuXian go to the Library Pavilion to copy the Lan

Sect’s sect rules again, but simply gave him a harsh scolding in front of everyone. Without the parts where he quoted ancient scriptures, it all boiled down to how he had never seen someone so unruly and shameless before, so please get lost, as soon and as far as possible. Please don’t go near the other pupils, and especially refrain from tainting his favorite one—Lan WangJi.

As he scolded, Wei WuXian only grinned while listening, feeling no humiliation or anger at all. Immediately after Lan QiRen left, Wei WuXian sat down and spoke to Jiang Cheng,

“Don’t you think that it’s a bit too late, telling me to get lost now? He only told me to get lost after I finished tainting his person. It’s too late!”

The waterborne abyss in Caiyi Town created a great deal of trouble for the GusuLan Sect. It was impossible to completely destroy it, and the Lan Sect couldn’t chase it to somewhere else like the Wen Sect did. The sect leader of the Lan Sect was in secluded meditation most of the time, so Lan QiRen used all of his energy on this matter. With the lessons becoming shorter and

shorter, Wei WuXian's time spent with his friends in the mountains became longer and longer.

Today, Wei WuXian intended on going outside with a group of seven or eight people again. As they passed the Lan Sect's Library Pavilion, he looked through the drape of magnolia branches, and he could just about see Lan WangJi sitting alone by the window.

Nie HuaiSang spoke in a puzzled tone, "Is he looking at us?"

That's strange. We didn't make too much noise, so why does he still look at us like that?"

Wei WuXian, "He's probably thinking of how to find faults with us."

Jiang Cheng interrupted, "Wrong. Not 'us', but 'me'. I think the only person he's watching is you."

Wei WuXian, "Heh. Just let him wait. I'll deal with him after I get back."

Jiang Cheng, "Don't you dislike how he's boring and how he's not fun? Then, you should stop teasing him. This is like pulling whiskers from a tiger's mouth—stop looking for your own death."

Wei WuXian replied, "No. It's exceptionally fun, precisely because of how a living person can be so not fun."

They only returned to the Cloud Recesses when the time almost reached noon. Lan WangJi sat before the desk, organizing the stack of paper which he wrote on, as heard a creaking noise coming from the window. He looked up to see someone hop inside.

Wei WuXian came up by climbing the magnolia tree outside of the Library Pavilion. His face was beaming, "Lan Zhan, I'm back! Did you miss me? Huh? Without me copying texts for these past few days?"

Lan WangJi seemed like an old monk in a state of meditation, seeing everything as nothing. He even continued to organize the pile of books with a numb expression. Wei WuXian deliberately misinterpreted his silence, "I

know, even if you don't say it, that you definitely missed me. Or else, earlier on, why did you look at me through the window?"

Lan WangJi immediately shot him a glance, his eyes full of silent accusations. Wei WuXian sat atop the windowsill, "Look at you, rising to the bait after just a few sentences. You're so easy to catch. This way, you won't be able to maintain your composure."

Lan WangJi, "You, leave."

Wei WuXian, "If I don't leave, will you throw me down?"

Looking at Lan WangJi's face, Wei WuXian suspected that if he spoke one more sentence, Lan WangJi would really abandon the small amount of self-restraint he had left and nail him onto the window at once. Wei WuXian quickly added,

"Don't be so scary! I'm here to apologize by giving you a present."

Lan WangJi refused at once, without thinking twice about it,

"No."

Wei WuXian, "Are you sure?" Seeing that a guarded look leaked from Lan WangJi's eyes, he fished out two rabbits from his arms, as if he was performing a magic trick. As he held onto them by their ears, it seemed like he was holding two round, chubby snowballs. The snowballs even kicked their legs around. He lifted them in front of Lan WangJi's eyes, "It's actually quite strange here. There aren't any pheasants, but there are lots of wild rabbits. They aren't even scared of people. What do you think? Aren't they fat? Do you want them?"

Lan WangJi stared at him indifferently.

Wei WuXian, "Fine. If you don't want them, I'm gonna give them to other people. We aren't having much flavors in our mouths, anyways."

After he heard the last sentence, Lan WangJi spoke, "Stop."



Wei WuXian extended his arms, “I’m not going anywhere.”

Lan WangJi, “Who are you giving them to?”

Wei WuXian answered, “I’m gonna give them to whoever’s good at roasting rabbit meat.”

Lan WangJi, “Killing is forbidden in the Cloud Recesses. It is the third rule on the Wall of Rules.”

Wei WuXian, “Fine, then. I’ll go down the mountain, kill it outside, and then bring it back to roast it. You don’t want it, anyway, so why do you care so much about it?”

“...” Lan WangJi spoke one word at a time, “Give. It. To. me.”

Wei WuXian grinned on the windowsill, “Now you want it?

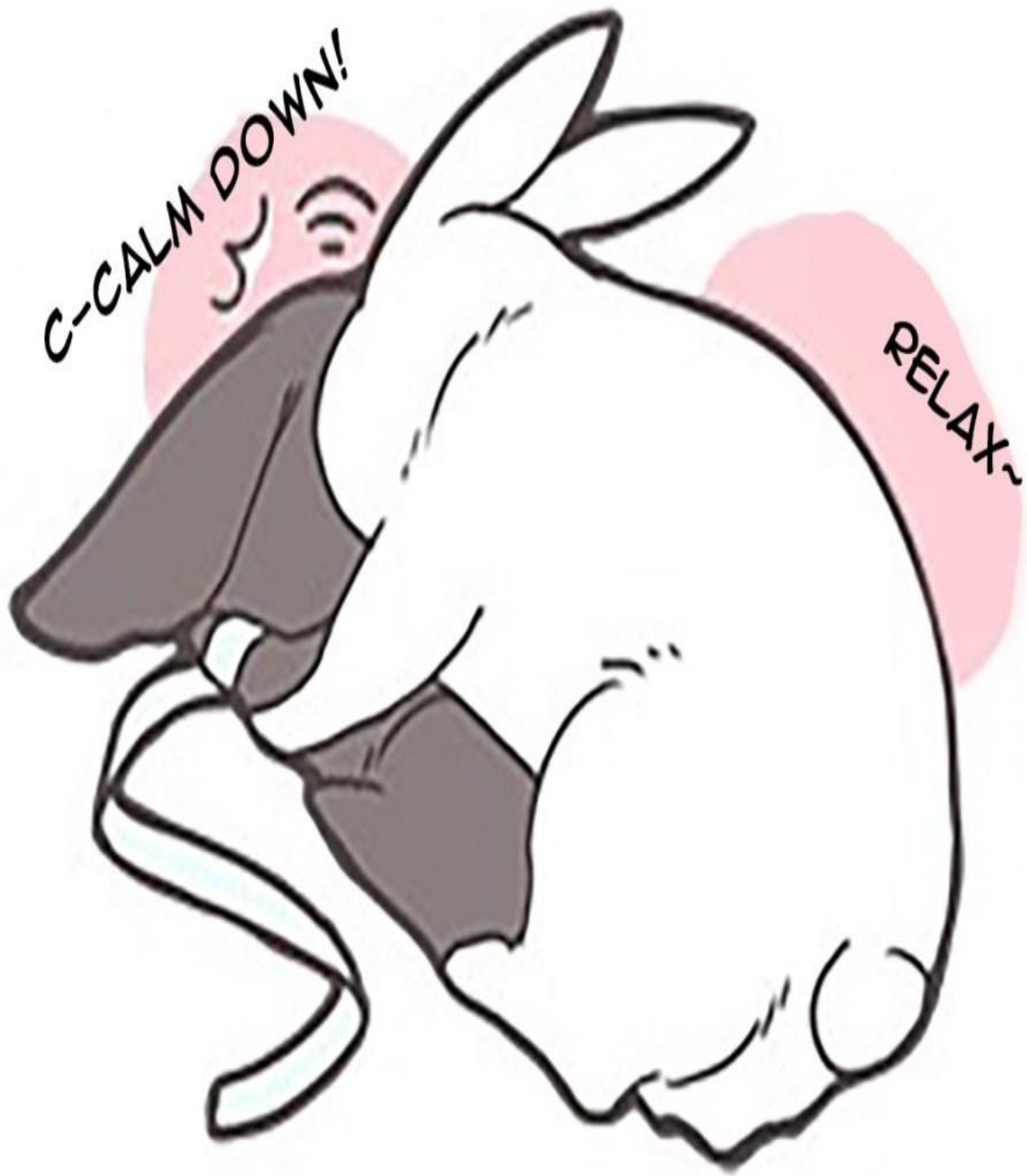
Look at you—you’re always like this.”

Both of these rabbits were chubby and round, appearing to two balls made of fluffy snowflakes. One had **bleary eyes**, and lay on its stomach, remaining motionless even after a long while. As it chewed on the lettuce, its pink mouth moved in a leisurely manner. The other one seemed as if it was actually a cricket, constantly hopping up and down. It played around with its companion, wriggling and leaping nonstop.

Wei WuXian tossed over a few pieces of lettuce which he took out of nowhere. He suddenly called, “Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan!”

The energetic rabbit had stepped on Lan WangJi’s inkstone and left a line of black footsteps on the desk. Lan WangJi was unsure of what to do, holding a piece of paper and considering different ways to wipe it off. He didn’t want to pay Wei WuXian any attention, but hearing the exaggerated tone, he thought that there might be an issue, “What?”

Wei WuXian, “Look at how one is on top of the other... Are they...?”



Lan WangJi, “Both of these are male!”

Wei WuXian, “Male? How weird.” He lifted them by the ears, examined them, and confirmed, “They really are male. Well, then, I didn’t even finish my sentence. Why are you so stern?”

What were you thinking of? Now that I think about it, I was the one who caught them, and I didn't even notice whether they are male or female, but you even looked at their..."

Lan WangJi finally threw him down the Library Pavilion.

Wei WuXian laughed while in midair,

"Hahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

With a bang, Lan WangJi slammed the window close, and stumbled back to the desk.

As he swept a look at the messy piles of rice paper and ink pawprints on the ground, as well as the two white rabbits which rolled around while dragging pieces of lettuce leaves, he closed his eyes and covered his ears.

The clusters of quivering magnolia branches were shut outside the window. Yet, no matter how hard he resisted, he couldn't shut out Wei WuXian's vibrant, unrestrained laughter.

On the second day, Lan WangJi finally stopped having classes with them.

Wei WuXian's seat changed three times. He originally sat beside Jiang Cheng, but Jiang Cheng paid attention to the lessons, and sat in the front row in order look good for the YunmengJiang Sect. This position was too conspicuous, allowing Wei WuXian no room to fool around, so he abandoned Jiang Cheng and sat behind Lan WangJi. When Lan QiRen was teaching in the front, Lan WangJi sat as straight as a wall made of iron. Behind him, Wei WuXian would either sleep like a log or draw scribbles as he pleased. Aside from Lan WangJi occasionally blocking the crumpled pieces of paper he threw toward other people, it was an excellent place to be at. However, soon afterward, Lan QiRen became aware of this trick, so he switched their seats. Ever since then, whenever Wei WuXian's sitting posture became a bit tilted, he could feel a cold, sharp gaze staring at his back. Lan QiRen would also throw him a glowering look. It was extremely uncomfortable for him to be monitored by the old one and the young one all the time. Moreover, after the Pornography Case and the Rabbit Case, Lan QiRen was certain that Wei WuXian was a basin full of jet-black dye, and

feared that his favorite pupil would be stained, which was why he hastened to tell Lan WangJi to stop going to lessons.

And so, Wei WuXian sat back in his old spot, and half a month of peace followed.

Unfortunately, the good things never lasted long for someone like Wei WuXian.

In the Cloud Recesses, there was a long wall. Every seven steps, there would be a **hollowed out window** with intricate designs. All of the designs were different—playing an instrument amid tall mountains, flying in the air on a sword, fighting monsters and beasts, and so on. Lan QiRen explained that the designs of every hollowed out window on this wall was about the life of each ancestor of the GusuLan Clan. The oldest and most famous four windows told the life of the founder of the Lan Sect, Lan An.

This founder was born in a temple. He grew up listening to the chanting of sutras, and thus became a famous monk at a very young age. At the age of twenty, he used the “Lan” from

“**qielan**” as his last name and resumed the worldly life, becoming a musician. During his path of cultivation, he met the “fated person” he searched for in Gusu, became **cultivation partners** with her, and founded the Lan Sect.

After his partner passed away, he returned to the temple and ended his life there. The four windows were “qielan”,

“**xiyue**”, “**daolu**”, and “**guiji**”.

During these past few days, the lessons seldomly involved a topic as interesting as this. Although Lan QiRen introduced it with boring timelines, Wei WuXian absorbed the knowledge for once. After class, he laughed, “So, the founder of the Lan Sect was a monk—no wonder! He ventured into the mortal world to meet one person, and, as she went, he went as well, leaving nothing behind on this Earth. But why would a person like him produce such unromantic descendants?”

Since nobody expected the Lan Sect, which was famous for being orthodox, to have such a founder, they started to chat among themselves. As they chatted, the center of the conversation tipped toward the direction of “cultivation

partners”, and they started to discuss the cultivation partners of their dreams, evaluating the well-known girls in the different sects. At this point, someone asked, “ZiXuan-xiong, who do you think is the best girl?”

As Wei WuXian and Jiang Cheng heard this, they both looked toward a boy in the front rows of the classroom.

The boy had proud, handsome features, with a vermilion mark on his forehead. His collar, cuffs, and sash belt all had the white peony named Sparks Amidst Snow sewn on. This was the young master sent to study in Gusu by the LanlingJin Sect—Jin ZiXuan.

Another person spoke, “It’s best for you to not ask ZiXuan-xiong about this. He’s already got a fiancée, so his answer would definitely be his fiancée.”

Hearing the word “fiancée”, Jin ZiXuan’s lips seemed to twitch, showing a slight expression of displeasure. The disciple who asked was quite oblivious, continuing with a cheerful face, “Really? Which sect is she from? She must be extremely talented!”

Jian ZiXuan raised a brow, “Forget it.”

Wei WuXian suddenly spoke, “What do you mean by ‘forget it’?”

Everyone in the room looked at him with surprise. Usually, Wei WuXian was always grinning. He had never really been angered, even when he was scolded or punished. Yet, at the moment, there was an obvious streak of hostility on his face.

Jiang Cheng didn’t criticize Wei WuXian, either, for making trouble out of nothing, as he usually did. He simply sat beside him with a dark face.

Jin ZiXuan spoke in an arrogant tone, “Is the phrase ‘forget it’ too difficult to understand?”

Wei WuXian smiled sardonically, “The phrase isn’t hard to understand. Instead, it’s hard to understand how on Earth you are unsatisfied with my shijie.”

Everyone whispered to one another. They only understood, after the exchange of words, that they had accidentally stirred up a hornets’ nest—Jin ZiXuan’s fiancée just happened to be Jiang YanLi of the YunmengJiang Sect.

Jiang YanLi was the oldest child of Jiang FengMian and Jiang Cheng’s older sister. Her personality was mild, with nothing too notable; her voice was smooth, with nothing too memorable. Her appearance was only above average, and her talents weren’t astonishing either. Amid the girls from the other prominent clans, it was only natural that she seemed a bit average. On the other hand, her fiancé, Jin ZiXuan, was the exact opposite. He was the only official son of Jin GuangShan, with outstanding looks and exceptional talents.

According to common sense, with Jiang YanLi’s conditions, it was true that they weren’t well-matched with each other. She wasn’t even qualified enough to compete with the other girls.

The only reason why Jiang YanLi was able to enter an engagement with Jin ZiXuan was because her mother was from the MeishanYu Sect, and the MeishanYu Sect was quite friendly with the sect of which Jin ZiXuan’s mother was from.

The two madams grew up together, and they had a close relationship.

The ways of the Jin Sect were proud, and Jin ZiXuan inherited every single drop of this. With his high standards, he had been unsatisfied with this engagement since a long time ago. He was not only unsatisfied with the candidate, but even more so with her mother taking the liberty to decide for him, making him grow more and more rebellious at heart.

Today, he took the opportunity to break out. Jin ZiXuan asked in reply, “Why don’t you ask me how on Earth can I be satisfied with her?”

Jiang Cheng instantly stood up.

Pushing him to the side, Wei WuXian walked in front of him and sneered, “You sure think that you’re pretty satisfying, don’t you? Where did you get the guts to be all choosy here?”

Because of this engagement, Jin ZiXuan had no positive impressions of the YunmengJiang Sect, and had frowned upon Wei WuXian’s behavior since some time ago. On top of that, he boasted himself to be unrivaled among the juniors, without ever having been looked down upon like this. All of the blood in his body rose to his head, and he blurted, “If she’s unsatisfied, then tell her to get rid of this engagement!”

In conclusion, I don’t care for your shijie. If you care for her, ask her father about it! Doesn’t he treat you better than treating his own child or something?”

Hearing the last sentence, Jiang Cheng’s eyes stiffened.

With uncontrollable anger, Wei WuXian rushed over and sent out a punch. Although Jin ZiXuan was prepared, he didn’t expect Wei WuXian to attack so quickly, before he even finished his sentence. Having suffered one punch, half of his face numbed. He immediately struck back without speaking a word.

This fight startled both of the two prominent sects. On the same day, Jiang FengMian and Jin GuangShan hastened to Gusu from Yunmeng and Lanling.

After the two sect leaders went to see the two who were punished to kneel, and received a severe scolding from Lan QiRen, they wiped some sweat from their foreheads and

started to engage in small talk. Jiang FengMian soon brought up the idea of cancelling the engagement.

He told Jin GuangShan, “A-Li’s mother was the one who insisted on having this engagement, in the first place, and I didn’t agree. Looking at it now, as neither of them are keen, it’s best if we don’t force it.”

Jin GuangShan was shocked. He felt a bit hesitant, as it was never a good thing to end an engagement with another prominent sect, no matter how one

looked at it. He responded, “What do the children know? They can play around however they want to. FengMian-xiong, you and I don’t need to pay them any attention.”

Jiang FengMian, “Jin-xiong, although we can set the engagement for them, we can’t carry out the marriage in place of them. After all, they are the ones who will be spending the rest of their lives together.”

This engagement had never been the intention of Jin GuangShan. If he wanted to strengthen his sect’s power by a marriage with another sect, the YunmengJiang Sect was neither the only choice nor the best choice. It was only that he had never dared to go against Madame Jin. Anyhow, this was initially proposed by the Jiang Sect. Since the Jin Sect was the husband’s side, they didn’t have as many concerns as the wife’s side, so what was the point of worrying over it?

Moreover, he knew that Jin ZiXuan had always been resentful toward Jiang YanLi’s status as his fiancée. After some consideration, Jin GuangShan conjured up the courage and agreed to this matter.

At this time, Wei WuXian still didn’t know what this fight broke up, as he knelt on the stone path that Lan QiRen assigned him to. From a distance, Jiang Cheng approached

with a sneer on his face, “Look at how well-behaved you are, kneeling so properly.”

Wei WuXian was gloating, “Of course, I kneel all the time.

But Jin ZiXuan is a spoiled brat, so he’s definitely never knelt before. If I don’t make him kneel to the point that he cries for his parents, **my last name won’t be Wei anymore.**”

Jiang Cheng lowered his head, pausing for a few moments, and spoke in a soft voice, “Father came.”

Wei WuXian, “Shijie didn’t come, did she?”



Jiang Cheng, “Why would she come? To see how you lost face for her? If she did come, would she not come to your side and bring you medicine?”

Wei WuXian sighed, “... It’d be nice if shijie came. It’s fortunate that you didn’t hit him.”

Jiang Cheng, “I was going to. If you didn’t push me, the other side of Jin ZiXuan’s face would also be ruined.”

Wei WuXian, “Nah. He looks uglier right now, with an asymmetrical face. I heard that he values his face a lot, like a peacock. I wonder what he’d think after he looked into a mirror! Hahahaha...” After rolling on the ground with laughter, Wei WuXian spoke again, “Actually, I should have let you hit him, and I should have watched on the side. This way, maybe Uncle Jiang wouldn’t have come. But there was no choice. I couldn’t help it!”

Jiang Cheng humphed lightly, “You wish.”

Although it was only Wei WuXian’s casual words, he held mixed feelings, because he knew that this wasn’t a lie.

Jiang FengMian had never hurried to another sect in one day for anything related him, no matter if the issue was good or bad, large or small.

Never.

As Wei WuXian saw his melancholy face, he thought that he was still annoyed at Jin ZiXuan’s words, “You should go. You don’t need to stay with me. If Lan WangJi comes again, you’d be caught by him. If you have time, go visit Jin ZiXuan and look at how idiotic he looks kneeling down.”

Jiang Cheng was somewhat surprised, “Lan WangJi? Why did he come? He still dared to come see you?”

Wei WuXian replied, “Yeah, I also thought that he should be praised for having the courage to come see me. He was probably told by his uncle to come check if I was kneeling properly.”

Jiang Cheng instinctively felt a foreboding sensation, “Were you kneeling properly?”

Wei WuXian, “I was kneeling properly. After he was some distance away, I found a stick and started to dig in the dirt.

The pile beside your foot. There’s an ant hole there that I went through tons of trouble to find. When he turned his head, he saw that my shoulders were shaking, and he definitely thought that I was crying. He even came back to ask me. You really should have seen his expression as he saw the ant hole.”

“...” Jiang Cheng spoke, “You should get lost and go back to Yunmeng as soon as possible! I don’t think that he wants to see you ever again.”

And so, on that night, Wei WuXian packed up his things and returned to Yunmeng with Jiang FengMian.



### Translator’s Notes

**Picture books:** These most likely refer to those books of erotic illustrations. As this has already appeared a few times in the story, it might be a good idea

to check out what they actually look like. This is an example of a cut-sleeve illustration:

Note: the Ancient Chinese people have a strange art style.

**XiChen-ge**: This is the same as “xxx-xiong”.

**bleary eyes**: The literal translation of this is “dead fish eyes”. One famous example of this are the eyes of Captain

Levi, from Attack on Titan.

**hollowed out window**: Hollowed out windows are made from carving out parts of the wall into designs. There is no glass because it’s Ancient China.

**qielan**: This comes from the word for “temple” in Sanskrit.

This has been left untranslated because the latter three (xiyue, daolu, and guiji) are also left untranslated.

**cultivation partners**: When two cultivators become a couple, marry, and cultivate together, they become cultivation partners. Some call this “cultivation buddies”

because it sounds amusing.

**xiyue**: Learning music.

**daolu**: Becoming cultivation partners.

**guiji**: Returning to nothingness.

**my last name won’t be Wei anymore**: In Chinese, it is a popular saying often said after betting on something. For example, “if that guy’s not the criminal, my last name won’t be Jia anymore”, or “if I can’t do this, my last name won’t be Yi anymore”.

Editor note:

K and I were giggling for so long over the thought of two gay humping male bunnies. I think it was for over an hour.

Now we have a whole bunch of GDC bunny pictures. XD

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 19:**

## Contentment

Wei WuXian lay on his stomach for the whole night. The first half of the night was spent thinking about what in the world had happened to Lan WangJi during these years, and he only drifted off during the second half. When he opened his eyes the next morning, Lan WangJi had already disappeared into nowhere. On the other hand, he lay on the bed properly, with his arms placed on the sides of his body in a position that made him seem well-behaved.

Wei WuXian immediately took off the blanket that covered him. He dug the fingers of his right hand into his hair. The unexplainable feeling of absurdity and fright still couldn't be erased from his mind.

At this time, two knocks came from the jingshi's wooden door. Lan SiZhui's voice came from outside, "Young Master Mo? Have you waken?"

Wei WuXian, "Why are you calling me so early in the morning?!"

Lan SiZhui, "E-early? ... But, it is already nine."

Everyone of the Lan Sect rose at five and slept at nine in a very systematic manner. Wei WuXian, on the other hand, rose at nine and slept at one in a similarly systematic manner, precisely four hours later than those the Lan Sect.

Because he lay on his front for half of the night, his waist and back were both aching. He spoke in an honest tone, "I can't get up."

Lan SiZhui, "Uhm, what is wrong, this time?"

Wei WuXian, "What is wrong? I got done by your sect's HanGuang-Jun."

Lan JingYi's angry voice also appeared, "If you continue to speak nonsense like this, you will pay for it. Come out!"

Wei WuXian spoke as if he had been wronged, "Really! He did me for the whole night! I can't go out. I don't have the face to see anyone."

A few juniors stared at each other dumbfoundedly outside the door. People couldn't go into HanGuang-Jun's place without permission, so they couldn't just go inside and drag him out. Lan JingYi raged, "You have no shame at all!

HanGuang-Jun is not a cut sleeve. He did you?! I would be more than grateful if you tell me that you did not do him.

Get up! Take away that donkey of yours and train it properly.

It makes so much noise!"

Hearing his method of transportation being mentioned, Wei WuXian quickly climbed up, "What did you do to my Lil'

Apple?! Don't touch it. It's gonna kick you."

Lan JingYi asked, "What is Lil' Apple?"

Wei WuXian, "My donkey!" Exiting the jingshi, he shooed the juniors to take him to his mount. He was led to a field of grass. The donkey was there, crying nonstop and making a lot of noise. The cries were because it wanted to eat grass, but a few dozens of round, white pompons gathered on the field, making it so that it couldn't eat.

Wei WuXian was delighted, "So many rabbits! Here, here, let's put them on a stick and start roasting!"

Lan JingYi fumed with anger, "Killing is forbidden in the Cloud Recesses! Make it shut up, right now. The disciples doing early readings have already come to ask a few times!

If this keeps up, we will be scolded to death!"

Wei WuXian fed it the apple that was given to him for breakfast. As he expected, the donkey stopped making noise as it chewed on the apple, crunching its teeth together. Wei WuXian stroked the back of its neck as he thought about the passage tokens on these juniors and pointed at the round

rabbits all over the ground, “I really can’t roast them? If I roast them, would I be chased off the mountain?”

Appearing as if he faced an imminent threat, Lan JingYi hastened to block in front of Wei WuXian with his arms stretched wide, “These are HanGuang-Jun’s. We just occasionally help him look after them. You cannot dare to roast them!”

As Wei WuXian heard this, he laughed so hard that he almost fell on the ground. He thought, What an interesting person Lan Zhan is! In the past, he didn’t even accept them when I gave them out for free, but now, he secretly raised a whole bunch. And he said he didn’t want them. Who was he kidding? Oh please, I bet he actually likes this sort of white, fuzzy things. HanGuang-Jun, holding a rabbit while keeping up a straight face. My gosh, I’m gonna die...

However, as he thought of the situation of him lying on top of Lan WangJi last night, his laughter stopped abruptly.

Suddenly, rings of the bell came from the the western side of the Cloud Recesses.

These rings were completely different from the ones that told the time. They were hurried and violent, as if a

madman was striking it. With a sudden change in their faces, Lan JingYi and Lan SiZhui both stopped joking around with him, dashing toward the bell at once. Wei WuXian knew that something was wrong and quickly followed.

The sound came from a watchtower.

The watchtower was called the “**mingshi**”. It was the building the Lan Sect used to summon spirits, with walls made from a special material and incantations carved on them. When the bell of the watchtower started to ring on its own, it only meant one thing—that an accident happened to the people performing the summoning ritual inside.

Outside of the watchtower, more and more of the Lan Sect’s disciples started to crowd around, but nobody dared to go in without careful consideration.

The door of the mingshi was black and made of wood. It was tightly locked, only able to be opened from inside. It was not only difficult to violently destroy it from the outside, but it was also forbidden to do so. It was extremely scary for an accident to happen during the spirit summoning ritual, since nobody would know what being it would summon or what would happen if someone broke in. And, ever since the mingshi was built, there were almost no cases where the summoning failed. This made everyone more worried.

Seeing that Lan WangJi didn't appear, Wei WuXian had a foreboding feeling. If Lan WangJi was still in the Cloud Recesses, he would have hurried over immediately, as he heard the alarming chimes of the bell, unless... Suddenly, the black door bursted open with a bang. A white-clothed disciple rushed outside, staggering and stumbling.

As his legs weren't steady, he rolled down the stairs as soon as he came out. The door of the mingshi instantly

closed again, as if someone angrily slammed it shut.

In confusion, the bystanders quickly helped the disciple up. After he stood up, he immediately fell down again, his face covered in tears beyond his control. He held onto the people around him, "We should have... shouldn't have summoned..."

Wei WuXian grabbed his hand at once, speaking in a low voice, "Which being's spirit are you summoning? Who else is inside? Where's HanGuang-Jun?!"

It seemed as if the disciple had trouble breathing,

"HanGuang-Jun told me to run away..."

Before he finished his sentence, dark-red blood gushed out of his nose and mouth. Wei WuXian pushed him into Lan SiZhui's arms. With the hastily created bamboo flute still by his waist, he went up the stairs in just a few strides. He kicked the mingshi's door and commanded, "Open!"



The mingshi's door opened abruptly, as if it was laughing wildly with a gaping mouth. Wei WuXian entered in a flash, and the door closed right behind him. A few disciples followed him in shock, but the door couldn't be opened again, no matter what. A guest disciple rushed at the door, shock and anger on his face, and blurted out, "Who on Earth was that person?!"

Lan SiZhui held the earlier disciple up and spoke through clenched teeth, "... Come help me first. His **qiqiao** are bleeding!"

As soon as he entered the mingshi, Wei WuXian felt a dark energy coming over him.

The dark energy seemed like a combination of the energies of resentment, anger, and arrogance, almost visible to the human eye. Surrounded by it, one's chest would feel a constricted sense of pain. The inside of the mingshi was about ten meters in both length and width. By its corners, a few people lay motionless on the ground. The object of this summoning was set in the center of the array on the ground.

It was nothing else but an arm—the one taken back from Mo Village!

It stood on the ground, as straight as a stick, with the side where it was cut off on the bottom. Four of its fingers were clenched into a fist, yet its index finger pointed toward the sky, as if it was angrily pointing at someone. The steady flow of dark energy that filled the mingshi was emitted by this.

Everyone participating in this spirit summoning ritual had either ran away or passed out. Lan WangJi was the only one still seated properly, at the main position on the east side.

A guqin lay on his side. Although his hand wasn't on the strings, they continued to vibrate on their own. He appeared to be lost in thought or listening to something, only raising his head as he sensed that someone came in.

Since Lan WangJi's face was always placid, Wei WuXian had no idea what he was thinking about. Lan QiRen, who was originally responsible for one section of the mingshi, now lay collapsed and unconscious on the side, his qiqiao bleeding like the disciple who escaped the mingshi. Wei WuXian

replaced into his position, turning around and stepping toward the far west, directly across of Lan WangJi.

He pulled the bamboo flute from beside his waist, and lifted it to his lips.

During the night at Mo Village, Wei WuXian first used the whistling sound to distract it, then Lan WangJi attacked it from afar with notes of the zither. They only suppressed the arm while unintentionally collaborating like this. Lan WangJi met his gaze, a look of understanding on his face. As he raised his right hand, a melody poured out from the guqin.

Wei WuXian quickly joined with the flute.

The song that they played was named “Evocation”. It used the corpse, part of the corpse, or loved object of a deceased person as a medium for the spirit to follow the melody. Usually, only one section was needed for the spirit to appear within the array. Yet, the song had almost ended, but there was no spirit being summoned.

The arm seemed as if it was angered, with veins twitching visibly. The sense of suppression in the air felt heavier. If someone else was guarding the west side, they would have fallen long ago and ended up in the same way as Lan QiRen with their qiqiao bleeding. Wei WuXian was secretly shocked. It was almost impossible that the spirit couldn’t be summoned with Lan WangJi and him playing “Evocation”

together, unless... Unless the dead person’s soul was cut apart alongside with his corpse!

It appeared that this good fellow’s death was a bit worse than his. Although his corpse was chomped into more pieces, at least his soul was complete.

Since “Evocation” didn’t work, Lan WangJi’s fingers shifted, and started playing another tune.

This song had a calm melody, different than the sinister, questioning one from before. Its name was “Rest”. Because

both of these songs were quite well-known in the cultivation world, it wouldn't be strange for anyone to know how to play them, and Wei WuXian naturally followed him.

The YiLing Patriarch's ghost flute, "Chenqing", was known far and wide. Yet, right now, with his bamboo flute, he purposely played it with many mistakes and short breaths of air, to a point where it was heartbreaking to hear. Lan WangJi had probably never played with someone with such terrible skills before. After a while, he finally couldn't bear to continue as if nothing was wrong any longer, and raised his head to look at Wei WuXian with an expressionless face.

Wei WuXian thickened his face, pretending that he didn't see anything, his tune venturing even more off. As he turned around to continue playing, something strange happened behind him. He turned around to look, and was shocked as he saw it. Lan QiRen, who had lost consciousness, actually sat upright again. He pointed at Wei WuXian with a trembling hand, his face covered in blood and rage, and shouted in a hoarse voice, "Stop playing! Get out!

Get out now! Stop..."

Before he even finished saying what to stop doing, he spat out a mouthful of blood, and fell down in the same place, sinking into the deep coma yet again.

Lan WangJi, "..."

Wei WuXian gaped.

He knew what followed Lan QiRen's "stop"— Stop playing!

Stop duetting! Stop tainting his favorite disciple WangJi's guqin notes!

Their guqin and flute duet actually angered Lan QiRen so much that he woke up and fainted again. This showed how

horrible it sounded...

Yet, even so, the hand still drooped gradually, under the combined forces of the guqin and the flute. Wei WuXian thought shamelessly, Although it sounds bad, it doesn't matter as long as it works.

Instantly, after the last echo of the guqin, the doors of the mingshi sprang open, pouring in a flood of sunlight. It was likely that the alarms of the watchtower stopped ringing. All of the disciples who surrounded the mingshi rushed inside, their voices calling "HanGuang-Jun".

Lan WangJi pressed his hand on the guqin, suppressing the residual sound of the strings' vibration, and walked over to Lan QiRen to check his pulse. With him leading, the rest of the people soon calmed down. The older seniors laid the bodies of the bleeding few flat on the ground and started to treat them. As they used **needles** and medicine, another group of disciples carried a large bell over, intending to cage the arm inside. Although it was a bustling scene, everything unfolded in an orderly fashion. Everyone whispered softly, with nobody making loud noises.

A few people worried, "HanGuang-Jun, neither elixirs nor acupuncture work. What should we do?"

With three fingers still set on Lan QiRen's wrist, Lan WangJi remained silent. Lan QiRen had directed at least eight hundred, if not a thousand, spirit summoning ceremonies before. Of those, a lot included fierce spirits.

Seeing even he was harmed by the energy of resentment, it was clear that the amount of resentful energy within this ghost hand was unprecedentedly strong.

Wei WuXian stuck the bamboo flute back beside his waist.

He squatted down beside the bronze bell and gently stroked

the inscriptions on it. As he was thinking, he suddenly saw a downcast expression on Lan SiZhui's face, "What's wrong?"

Lan SiZhui already knew that he wasn't an ordinary person. After hesitation, he spoke in a low voice, "It is just that I feel slightly guilty."

Wei WuXian asked, “Guilty for what?”

Lan SiZhui, “This hand was coming for us.”

Wei WuXian smiled, “How do you know?”

Lan SiZhui, “Spirit-attraction flags of different levels are drawn in different ways and have different amounts of power. The spirit-attraction flags we drew at Mo Village had a range of only twenty-five hundred meters in circumference. Yet, this ghost hand has a strong killing intent, feeding on human flesh and bone. If it had been within that range in the beginning, with its level of malice, Mo Village would have been a river of blood since long ago.

However, it appeared after we arrived... This means that it must have been set there purposely at that time, by someone with ill intentions.”

Wei WuXian responded, “Your academics are quite strong.

That was a great analyzation.”

Lan SiZhui lowered his head, “If so, for the lives lost at Mo Village, we should... we should also be responsible. And, now, we also involved Lan QiRen and the others in this matter...”

After a while of silence, Wei WuXian patted his shoulder,

“The one responsible shouldn’t be you guys, but the person who sent out the ghost hand. In this world, there are some things impossible for one to control.”

On the other side, Lan WangJi removed his hand. The people of the Lan Sect hurried to ask, “HanGuang-Jun, how is it?”

Lan WangJi replied, “Trace to its source.”

Wei WuXian, “That’s right. If we trace to its source, find the full corpse of this ghost hand, understand who he really is, then there’d naturally be a way to save them.”

Although Lan JingYi already knew that he definitely wasn't a lunatic, he still couldn't help but to speak in a criticizing tone, "You make it sound so simple. The spirit-summoning did not work, and it became this big of a mess. How can we possibly find it?"

Lan WangJi stated, "The northwest."

Lan SiZhui wondered, "The northwest? HanGuang-Jun, why is it the northwest?"

Wei WuXian, "Hasn't it already been shown to you guys?"

Lan JingYi was puzzled, "Shown to me? Who? Who showed it? HanGuang-Jun did not."

Wei WuXian spoke, "It."

The people suddenly realized that what he was pointing at was the ghost hand!

The arm steadily pointed at one direction. As someone changed its position, it stubbornly turned back around, back to where it originally faced. Nobody had ever seen a situation like this before, and all were shocked. Lan JingYi stammered, "It? What... What is it pointing towards?!"

Wei WuXian replied, "What else can it be pointing towards? It's either the other parts of its corpse, or the murderer who made him this way."

Hearing this, a few boys who stood in the northwestern direction quickly shuffled aside. Giving him a look, Lan WangJi slowly rose, speaking to the disciples, "Care for Uncle properly."

The few nodded, "Okay! Are you going to travel down the mountain?"

Lan WangJi gave a slight nod. Wei WuXian had already stealthily shifted behind him, talking to himself in a loud, cheerful way, "Yes, yes, yes, we can finally get off this mountain and elope together!"

Everyone looked as if they couldn't bear to watch the scene any longer. The expressions of the older disciples were especially scary, but a few of the boys were already used to it. Lan QiRen's face seemed to twitch again, as he lay unconscious on the ground. The disciples thought, If he spoke a few more sentences, maybe Mr. Lan would be angered awake again...

Translator's Notes

**Mingshi:** This literally translates into "the room of darkness/evil".

**Qiqiao:** Qiqiao refers to the seven openings of one's head, basically eyes, nose, ears, and mouth.

**needles:** In traditional Chinese medicine, needles and acupuncture are often used to cure sicknesses.

**\*\*\*LONG RANT\*\*\***

**Before the translation comes in, I am sure all of you have already heard of the miscommunication we had a few days ago with another fellow translator. If you are still puzzled on what's going on, here's a short recap. This will be a VERY long explanation, so if you are not interested in it, feel free to scroll down to where it says "END", and enjoy the new chapter.**

**As I was practicing piano some time last week (and yes, the reason behind this being released after so long is because of today's piano examination) (which I failed), I was notified that another translator had uploaded the translation for GDC/FoD's Chapter 19**

**somewhere else (MTL). At first, I was a bit unsure of things, since it is always impolite to suddenly take on a chapter without talking to the original group first. I read through their work and what their thoughts were on the matter. They said that they thought it was nice to give the readers a new perspective on things. Of course, this was a very valid reason.**

**Even some published novels have different translations that allow the readers to choose from. They also seemed quite nice at the end, saying**

that they were new and even adding in a link to our site.

And then, I read the actual translation. Upon first read, I could tell that they were working alone, from the grammar issues that scattered around. If you read my translations, you can probably tell that Addis and I are quite keen on making sure that no mistakes exist (and if you find one, please comment). Addis does it because she is my proofreader; I do it because I want the best quality of work for my favorite novel. Then again, I couldn't just judge someone because there were tiny issues in their work, so I stopped reading once I got a sense of what this translator was like, so that my own work wouldn't be unconsciously influenced. I was still uncertain on whether or not to let them continue, until, someone posted a screenshot of one section in the chapter. The number "1800" instantly stood out.

That's it, I told myself, this isn't the level of Chinese that can translate GDC. The original text meant "if not 1000, then 800." I have no idea how they made a mistake like this.

Mistakes are fine, but making such a low-level one really made me doubt the existence of their semi-fluent Chinese.

Thus, this was why we were intent on them taking the translation down. Although their level of Chinese may not be enough to translate GDC, it may be enough to translate a modern-day type of danmei. There are countless good danmei in this world, still left untranslated, and a lot of those do not require as strong of a language ability. However, although they said, in their original post, that they will take it down if we asked them to, they did not actually take it down, and instead posted it somewhere so that "those who want to read it can read it." If someone understands how this counts as "taking it down", please contact me and I can give you a gold medal for your reading comprehension abilities.

Countless people have already made it a point that this process of translation itself has no rules, so she can do whatever she wants, because nobody said that it was necessarily wrong to perform such an action. Well, fine. They can keep it up. We cannot do anything to stop them.



Although I am a mafia boss, I'm incapable of flying over to wherever they live and watch them delete the post.

Now, onto my second point, from the comments in the various places, I see that a bunch of you are still confused on what happened with the previous translator, Enxiao. When I first joined ExR, after hearing the news that my favorite manga translation group would also be translating Chinese novels, I was ecstatic. Being the effervescent little newbie to the translating world I was, I simply did a quick search of "mo dao zu shi" and left it at that. I most certainly did not know what Novel Updates was. After posting the first chapter, I quickly realized that, oh crap, someone was in the middle of translating this. As the initial stages of panic passed, we notified Enxiao, they gave the okay sign, and I continued translating. I do recognize that it was entirely my fault for wasting a part of Enxiao's work, as they were in the middle of translating a chapter. I admit that I should have searched more carefully to see if it was already in the process of being translated. If I knew that Enxiao was already translating, I definitely would have contacted them.

However, the case is different for this translator. They knew that I was already translating, yet they still continued. The problem here is not because they didn't know the underlying

"rules" of the translation world, it is that they think it is okay for two versions to exist, and I think otherwise. I understand that, most likely, they are going to keep translating, no matter what I say, and I also understand that, as humans, we only believe what we choose to, so there must still be a number of people who think I did the same thing to Enxiao. Most of all, I understand that, if they continue to translate, there will be less people who read my version because, although my work quality is higher, my speed is slower, and that is what most readers value. Therefore, it is only common sense that I will drop this project sooner or later and move on.

But, I will not. This is my favorite novel, my favorite author, my favorite writing style, and I will most definitely continue. A famous story told the tale of two mothers, one real, one fake, fighting over an infant, resulting

**in the real mother letting go, or else her baby would be torn apart. I guess, from now on, that we'll have to exist alongside each other. I remain firmly against the notion that two versions of a translation can exist peacefully together.**

**They remain firmly supporting of it. I will give in to them by saying that, fine, you can translate this however you want to, but, at the same time, I will prove them wrong by raising my child to be the best that it can possibly be. For now, let the fire die. Wouldn't want this to spoil anyone's appetite for the coming events in the story. Spoiler: flashbacks end.**

**\*\*\*END OF LONG RANT\*\*\***

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 20:**

## Contentment

When cultivators from prominent clans went out on night-hunts, there were usually crowds of people who surrounded them, appearing similar to a parade. Yet, Lan Wangji had always preferred being alone. This arm was quite strange, and could possibly harm other people if it wasn't handled with caution. Therefore, he didn't bring any other disciples of his sect, and took only Wei Wuxian, watching him as close as he could.

Wei Wuxian originally wanted to sneak away during their expedition off the mountain. However, even though he attempted to run away multiple times, it always ended with Lan Wangji carrying him back with one hand holding the back of his collar. He changed his strategy, sticking to Lan Wangji as hard as he could. At night, especially, he would persistently climb into Lan Wangji's bed, with the intention that Lan Wangji would become disgusted and use his sword to throw him away. Despite this, no matter how hard he messed around, Lan Wangji steadily stood his ground.

Whenever Wei Wuxian wriggled into his blankets, he would use a light slap to make Wei Wuxian's body rigid, and then stuff him into the other set of blankets in a proper position, where he would remain until daylight broke. Wei Wuxian suffered a ton of losses and complaint about his sore body after he woke up. He couldn't help but thought, Now that he grew up, he also became less fun than before. In the past, he would become shy whenever he was teased, not to mention that he did it in quite an amusing way. But now, not

only does he remain unmovable no matter what, he even learned how to counterattack. How can this be?!

Following the left hand's direction, the two went toward the northwest. They duetted Rest every single day, in order to temporarily calm its anger and killing intent. As they travelled near Qinghe, the posture that the arm maintained to show them the way suddenly changed. Its index finger curled back, and it formed a fist.

This meant that what the hand pointed at was just around the area.

They inquired into the matter as they travelled, and arrived at a small city in Qinghe. It was daytime. The streets were crowded with people hurrying to and fro. Wei WuXian was trotting behind Lan WangJi when, suddenly, he was overwhelmed by the pungent fragrance of cosmetics.

As he became used to the mild scent of sandalwood on Lan WangJi, Wei WuXian instantly cringed at the odour. He blurted out, “What are you selling? How does it smell like this?”

The fragrance came from a charlatan, who wore the robes of a cultivator and had the word “deceiving” plastered all over his face. He carried a chest, selling a few items to passerbys. Seeing that someone asked, he beamed, “I sell everything! The rouge and powder here are both cheap and fine. Young Master, take a look?”

Wei WuXian, “Sure, I’ll take a look.”

The charlatan spoke, “For your wife?”

Wei WuXian gave him a grin, “For myself.”

“...” The charlatan’s smile froze, thinking to himself, Are you joking with me?

Before he lost his temper, another young man turned around and came over. He spoke with an emotionless face,

“Do not bother others if you are not going to buy it.”

This man was extremely handsome, his robes and forehead ribbon whiter than snow. His eyes were light-coloured and he had a long sword hung by his waist. As the charlatan was a fake cultivator, he knew a few things about the cultivation world. Having recognized the Lan Sect’s sect motif, he didn’t dare to cause trouble, and ran away carrying his chest. Wei WuXian called after him, “What are you running away for? I really wanted to buy it!”

Lan WangJi spoke, “Do you have the money?”

Wei WuXian replied, “If I don’t, you can give me money.”

As he spoke, he extended his hand to search. He didn't expect to actually find anything, but after a few moments, he did find a delicate, heavy pouch with money in it.

This didn't seem like something Lan WangJi would carry around at all. Then again, during these past few days, Lan WangJi did quite a lot of things that he could never have imagined. Wei WuXian didn't even find it strange anymore and took the pouch at once. As he had expected, he could take anything from Lan WangJi if he wanted to, without the other becoming dissatisfied at all. If it wasn't that he had a tiny bit of knowledge about Lan WangJi's personal integrity and how good HanGuang-Jun's reputation was, he almost doubted that Lan WangJi and Mo XuanYu had been involved in some helpless, chaotic entanglement of a relationship.

Or else, why would Lan WangJi be able to endure it, after him going to such great lengths already?!

After walking for some distance, Wei WuXian unintentionally turned around and looked. Lan WangJi was behind him, still standing at the same place, staring toward his direction.

Wei WuXian couldn't help but slowed his footsteps.

He didn't know why, but he vaguely felt that maybe he shouldn't walk so fast, leaving Lan WangJi behind like this.

At this point, someone on the side shouted, "The YiLing Patriarch, five coins for one, ten coins for three!"

Wei WuXian, "Who?!"

He hurried over to look at who was selling him, only to see that it was the fake cultivator. He packed away the low-grade rouge and powder, and now held a stack of paper that had someone even more malicious-looking than **door-gods** drawn on them. He chattered, "Five coins for one, ten coins for three—such a low price wouldn't cost you anything! I recommend three. One for the door, one for the hall, and stick the last on your bedroom wall. With the strong, dense evil energy, it uses poison to cure poison, making sure that no evil beings can come near you!"

Wei WuXian spoke, “That’s some shameless boasting! If it’s really that effective, would you still be selling one for five coins?!”

The charlatan replied, “Why is it you again? If you’re gonna buy it, then buy it; if you’re not gonna buy it, go away. If you want to spend fifty coins on each of these, that’s fine with me.”

Wei WuXian flipped through the stack of “The YiLing Patriarch’s Evil-Suppressing Portraits”. He really couldn’t

accept that the scary-faced, hunky man was himself.

He tried to argue with facts, “Wei WuXian was a man famous for his good looks. What is this that you’ve drawn?!”

If you haven’t seen the actual person, then don’t draw anything. You’re gonna mislead the younger generation.”

As the charlatan was about to reply, Wei WuXian suddenly felt a gust of wind from behind. He dodged to the side.

Although he avoided the attack, the charlatan was thrown off, crashing into a pinwheel stand beside the street. Some people helped him up, while others gathered the fallen items—the scene was a jumble. The charlatan wanted to curse, but as he saw that the person who kicked him was a young master that sparkled all over, appearing to be either rich or royalty, his imposing attitude immediately dropped.

Looking again, he saw that the white peony Sparks Amidst Snow was sewn in front of his chest, and he was deflated at once. Despite this, he couldn’t take receiving such a kick without any reason, so he asked feebly, “Why did you kick me?”

The young master just happened to be Jin Ling. Crossing his arms, he spoke coldly, “Kick you? Anyone who dares to mention the words “Wei WuXian” in front of me should be kneeling in gratitude if I don’t kill them. Yet, you’re shouting right in the middle of the streets. Do you want to die?!”

Wei WuXian didn't expect Jin Ling to appear here at all, much less how arrogant he behaved, thinking to himself, I wonder how did this child's personality turn it this way, with a poor temper and strong hostility. He learned all of his uncle and father's faults, but none of his mother's strengths.

If I don't do some tinkering with him, he'd definitely suffer great losses in the future. Seeing that Jin Ling seemed as if

he was still angered and walked a few more steps toward the man on the ground, Wei WuXian interrupted, "Jin Ling!"

The charlatan didn't dare to make a sound, but his eyes were full of appreciation. Jin Ling turned to Wei WuXian, his words overflowing with contempt, "You still haven't ran away yet? Well, you may as well stay."

Wei WuXian laughed, "Huh. Who was it again that was forced down onto the ground, unable to get up?"

Jin Ling sneered and blew a short whistle. Wei WuXian didn't understand the reason behind it, but, after a while, the heavy huffs and puffs of some sort of beast came from afar.

As he turned around to look, a black-haired **spiritual dog** of waist height went out of a corner, dashing straight at him.

The cries of fear on the street came closer and closer, louder and louder, "A mad dog's on the loose!"

With an immediate change in his face, Wei WuXian fled as fast as he could.

It had always been hard for him to bring it up, but, although the YiLing Patriarch was known for being ever-so invincible, he'd become a coward whenever he faced a dog.

This couldn't be helped, though. When he was still young, before Jiang FengMian had brought him home, he grew up on the streets, often having to fight for food with vicious dogs. After several bites and chases, he gradually became extremely scared of all dogs, no matter the size. Jiang Cheng

laughed at him because of this quite a lot of times. If he told others this, it would not only be shameful, but also believed by only a few people, which was why practically nobody knew of it. Wei WuXian almost died from the fright.

As he saw a tall, white figure, he quickly shouted at the top of his lungs, “Lan Zhan, save me!”

Finding Lan WangJi after chasing this far, Jin Ling was shocked, Why would this lunatic show up alongside him again?! Lan WangJi had a serious personality and never chattered or joked. Even a few disciples of the same generation as him feel nervous when they see him, much less these juniors. His level of intimidation was even worse than Lan QiRen’s, back in those days. The dog underwent harsh training. Being different from the average dog, it was quite intelligent. As if it also knew that it couldn’t behave rudely in front of this person, it howled a few times, then hid behind Jin Ling with its tail between its legs.

This black-haired spiritual dog was a rare species given to Jin Ling by Jin GuangYao. When most people heard that it was a present from LianFangZun, they didn’t dare to offend him. However, Lan WangJi was different from most people.

He didn’t care for who gave it or who owned it, disciplining them all in the same strict way. As Jin Ling was using his dog to chase Wei WuXian down the streets and happened to be caught by Lan WangJi, his heart sank, It’s all over. He’d definitely kill the spiritual dog that I took such lengths to train, and then give me a harsh beating!

Yet, Wei WuXian ducked under Lan WangJi’s arm and went behind him, seeming as if he wanted to climb up like climbing a pole. Feeling a pair of arms clasp around him, Lan WangJi froze for an instant. Taking this opportunity, Jin Ling blew two more whistles, and ran off with his black-haired spiritual dog.

The charlatan on the side struggled to get up, still in a state of shock, “The moral degeneration of the world is



getting worse day by day. How terrifying are the disciples from prominent clans these days! How terrifying!”

As Wei WuXian heard the barks gradually leave, he finally came out from behind Lan WangJi. He put his hands behind him and agreed as if nothing happened, “That’s right, it’s getting worse day by day. Men are not what they were in the past.”

The charlatan looked at him as if he was looking at his saviour, and hurriedly tossed the stack of “The YiLing Patriarch’s Evil-Suppressing Portraits” into Wei WuXian’s hands like it was a hot potato, “Brother, thank you so much for what happened earlier! This is a gift for you. If you cut the price and sell one for three coins, you’d still end up earning at least three hundred.”

Lan WangJi took a look at the scary-faced hunk in the portrait and did not comment. Wei WuXian, seeing that his price became lower and lower, didn’t know whether to frown or laugh, “This is to thank me? If you really want to thank me, you can draw him in a prettier way! ...Stop, don’t go yet. There’s something I want to ask you. Doing your business here, have you ever heard of any strange events?

Or seen any odd things?”

The charlatan replied, “Strange events? Good thing that you asked me. I stay here most of the year, known as the know-it-all of Qinghe. What sort of strange events are you looking for?”

Wei WuXian, “For example, evil spirits haunting around, cases of dismembered corpses, incidents in which whole clans were destroyed...”

The charlatan, “There’s isn’t any here, but if you go a bit less than two miles ahead, there’s a mountain ridge named

Xinglu Ridge. I suggest you don’t go there.”

Wei WuXian asked, “Why is that?”

The charlatan, “The Xinglu Ridge is also called the Man-Eating Ridge. Why do you think that is?”

## Translator's Notes

**Door-gods:** These are a type of god that is supposedly able to protect households. On the lunar new year, people often put up their portraits on their doors to fend off evil spirits.

**Spiritual dog:** A spiritual dog is a dog which had been trained to gain near-human intelligence.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 21:**

## Contentment

Wei WuXian replied, “Huh, so there’s an evil being that eats humans there?”

Having heard of at least thousands of legends like this and killed at least hundreds of them with his own hands, he found it somewhat boring. The charlatan continued, his voice rising and falling, “That’s right! It is said that, in the ridge’s forest, there is a ‘man-eating castle’ with monsters that feed on the humans living inside it. The monsters will devour anyone who ventures inside it without leaving a single crumb behind. No corpses could be found—there wasn’t a single exception! It’s scary, isn’t it?”

No wonder that Jin Ling also came here. Unable to suppress the soul-consuming goddess at Dafan Mountain, he definitely came for the monster in the Xinglu Ridge again. Wei WuXian exclaimed, “Scary indeed! But, if nothing was left behind, and no corpses could be found, how can it be known that they were eaten?”

After a pause, the charlatan answered, “Of course someone saw it.”

Wei WuXian expressed his admiration, “But, before this, didn’t you say that anyone who ventures inside it would be devoured without any crumbs being left behind, no exception? Then, who on Earth could have started this legend? How powerful would they have to be, having lived to tell the tale after seeing this kind of scene?”

“...” The charlatan, “That’s how the legend goes. How would I know?”

Wei WuXian, “Then, do you know how many people were eaten in the Xinglu Ridge? When were they eaten? Their ages? Their gender? What their names were? Where they lived?”

The charlatan, “I don’t know.”

Wei WuXian, “Qinghe’s know-it-all? Huh?”

The charlatan picked up his basket in a fury, “The legends didn’t have this kind of information!”

Wei WuXian laughed, “No, no, don’t go yet. Let me ask you something else. Is the Xinglu Ridge a part of the Qinghe region? Isn’t Qinghe the Nie Sect’s area? If there really are monsters roaming around Xinglu Ridge, why are they ignoring it?”

To his surprise, this time, the charlatan didn’t answer “I don’t know” again. Instead, a smudge of disdain appeared on his face, “The Nie Sect? If it were the Nie Sect from back then, it definitely wouldn’t be ignored. Before the second day of the legend’s appearance, the Nie Sect would have raided where the monsters roamed at once, in the most resolute way possible. But, isn’t the sect leader of the Nie Sect now, heh, that ‘**head shaker**’?”

The leader of the QingheNie Sect used to be ChiFeng-Zun, Nie MingJue. After his father, the last sect leader, was outraged to death by the leader of the QishanWen Sect, Wen RuoHan, he took over the Nie Sect before he even reached twenty, doing everything in a direct, forceful fashion. He was also sworn brothers with ZeWu-Jun, Lan XiChen, and LianFang-Zun, Jin GuangYao. After the Sunshot

Campaign, the Nie Sect was quite powerful with him in the lead, its influence almost reaching that of the LanlingJin Sect’s. But, after a **qi deviation**, he died in front of the public’s eyes, and so, the next person in line for the sect leader position must have been his younger brother, Nie HuaiSang. Wei WuXian inquired, “Why is he called the ‘head shaker’?”

The charlatan, “Don’t you know the story behind it? No matter what other people ask Sect Leader Nie, if he doesn’t know it, he won’t say anything; if he does know it, he’s too scared to say anything. If you ask too harshly and force him, he’d shake his head again and again, saying as he cries, ‘I don’t know, I don’t know, I really don’t know!’ He’d then beg the other to let him go. Isn’t it obvious why he’s called the

‘head shaker’?”

In the past, Wei WuXian and Nie HuaiSang studied together, so there were a few things he could comment about this person. Nie HuaiSang wasn't an unkind person. It wasn't that he was not clever, but that his heart was set somewhere else and used his smarts on other areas, such as painting on fans, searching for birds, skipping classes, and catching fish. Because his talent in terms of cultivation really was poor, he formed his core around eight or nine years later than the other disciples of the same generation as him. When he lived, Nie MingJue was often exasperated by the fact that his brother didn't meet his expectations, so he disciplined him strictly. Despite this, he still didn't improve much. Now, without his older brother protecting and supervising him, under his lead, the QingheNie Sect declined day by day. After he grew up, especially after he became the sect leader, he was often troubled by all kinds of affairs unfamiliar to him and looked for helpers everywhere, mainly his brother's two sworn brothers. One day he'd go to Jinling Tower to complain to Jin GuangYao,

and the next day he'd go to the Cloud Recesses to whine to Lan XiChen. With the two leaders of the Jin and Lan Sects supporting him, he still barely managed to settle on the sect leader position. Nowadays, whenever people mentioned Nie HuaiSang, although they didn't say anything on the surface, the same phrase was written on their faces—good-for-nothing.

Remembering the things that happened in the past, he couldn't help but to sigh at it.

After Wei WuXian finished asking about the Xinglu Ridge, he still helped the charlatan's business by buying two compacts of rouge. He tucked them into his clothes and walked back to Lan WangJi. The latter still didn't appear to have any intention of asking for the pouch back. In silence, they walked toward the direction that the charlatan pointed at together.

There was a large cedarwood forest on the Xinglu Ridge, with a wide trail amid the shade of the trees. After a while of walking, they didn't meet anything out of the usual.

Regardless, in the beginning, they didn't hold high hopes anyway, and only came here just in case. If a frightening legend of any area was true, then there would definitely be detailed information. At Dafan Mountain, where

the soul-consuming goddess haunted, it was easy to find out where the victims lived and what their names were—even the nickname of A-Yan's fiancée. But, if the charlatan was unsure of the names and details of the victims, it was most likely a case of exaggerated hearsay.

After a bit less than an hour, they finally met a setback.

From ahead came seven or eight figures, staggering toward them. Their eyes were white and they wore ragged clothing, appearing as if even a light breeze would be enough to blow

them over. With their extremely slow speed, it was easy to see that they were a group of walking corpses of the lowest level possible.

Not only were these types of corpses bullied among their peers, if they met a slightly strong human, one could kick over a row of them; if they met a slightly fast child, they would soon be outran by a few blocks. Even if the victim was extraordinarily unlucky and had a few gulps of **yang energy** sucked out of them, they wouldn't die from it anyway. Aside from how awful the corpses looked and smelled, they weren't threatening at all. And thus, if they appeared during a night-hunt, most of the elders simply ignored them and left them for the juniors. This followed the same logic as hunting tigers and panthers instead of rats.

Seeing them walk over, Wei WuXian knew that something was going to go wrong, and ducked back behind Lan WangJi again. As he had expected, when these walking corpses wobbled to about twenty meters ahead of them, as they saw Wei WuXian, they were so terrified that they immediately turned around to retreat, their speed two or three times faster than when they came over. Wei WuXian rubbed his temples, turned around, and spoke in a fearful voice, "Wow, HanGuang-Jun, you're so cool! They were so scared when they saw you that they ran away at once!

Haha."

Lan WangJi was speechless.

Wei WuXian pushed him while laughing, "Let's go, let's go.

Let's get off this ridge. I don't think that there are any other monsters. The people here are so gossipy that a few useless walking corpses became ruthless monsters in their mouths.

Things like the 'man-eating castle' must have been fabricated as well. Such a waste of efforts, don't you think?"

Lan WangJi only started walking after a few more pushes from him. Before Wei WuXian caught up, a series of wild barks suddenly came from far away in the cedarwood forest.

Wei WuXian's face changed instantly. He shifted behind Lan WangJi in lightning speed and squatted into a ball, arms hugging the other's waist.

Lan WangJi, "... It is still far away. What are you hiding for?"

Wei WuXian, "I-I-I-I-I-I'm gonna hide first then see. Where is it? Where is it?!"

Lan WangJi listened intently for a moment, and responded,

"It is Jin Ling's black-haired spiritual dog."

Hearing Jin Ling's name, Wei WuXian stood up at once, but squatted back down after hearing a few more barks. Lan WangJi continued, "If a spiritual dog is barking in such a way, something must have happened."

Wei WuXian groaned a few times, then stood up with effort, his legs still trembling, "Th-th-th-th-th-th-then let's go and see!"

Lan WangJi didn't move at all. Wei WuXian cried,

"HanGuang-Jun, why don't you move? Move! If you don't move, what do I do?!"

After a moment of silence, Lan WangJi replied, "First... let go."

The two pushed and staggered. Although they followed the barks of the dog, they only circled two times around the cedarwood forest. The spiritual dog's

barks also appeared sometimes near, sometimes far. Having listened to a long

while of barking, Wei WuXian finally grew somewhat used to it, at least ceasing to stammer as he spoke, “There’s a **maze array** here?”

This maze array was definitely created by a person. A while ago, he said that the legends of the ridge were all hearsay, but, now, things were getting interesting.

After about fifteen minutes of barking, the black-haired spiritual dog still wasn’t tired out. The two followed the sound after they found the method to exit the maze array.

Not long afterward, the silhouettes of creepy, stone castles appeared amid the cedarwood forest.

The castles were made of greyish-white stones, its surface covered in green vines and fallen leaves. Every one of them was made into strange semi-spheres, appearing as if a few large bowls were turned over on the ground.

Who would have known that there really were such stone castles inside the Xinglu Ridge? It seemed that the legends didn’t appear out of thin air after all. However, it’d be hard to say whether or not this was a “man-eating castle”, and what beings were inside of it.

Jin Ling’s black-haired spiritual dog was outside of the cluster of stone castles. It ran around them, sometimes grunting in a low voice and sometimes barking wildly.

Seeing that Lan WangJi approached, it backed off slightly out of fear, but, instead of running away, it barked even louder at them. It then looked toward the stone castles, its front paws restlessly digging into the ground. Wei WuXian hid behind Lan WangJi and spoke in a pained voice, “Why is it still not going away...? Where’s its owner? Why is its owner gone?!”

From upon hearing the barks until now, they hadn’t heard anything coming from Jin Ling at all, not even cries for help.



This black-haired spiritual dog must have been brought here by him, and it must have been the one who broke the maze array as well. Yet, it seemed as if a living person just disappeared like that.

Lan WangJi spoke, “Let us go inside to see.”

Wei WuXian, “How? There’s no door.”

There really wasn’t a door. The grey-white stones were stuck tightly together, without any space for doors or windows. The dog yelped as it leaped. It seemed as if it wanted to bite the corner of Lan WangJi’s robes, but didn’t dare to, so it went around him to bite Wei WuXian’s clothes instead, tugging him in a certain direction.

Wei WuXian’s soul almost flew out of him. He extended his arms toward Lan WangJi, “Lan Zhan... Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan...”

Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan!!!”

The dog dragged Wei WuXian, and Wei WuXian dragged Lan WangJi. The dog lead them halfway around, to the back of the stone castle. To his surprise, there was an entrance about a person’s height in the wall. The shape was uneven, and there were fragmented pieces of rocks on the ground, which meant that it had just been violently blasted open with the use of a magical tool. The inside of the entrance was too dark for anything to be seen, aside from a red light that faintly shone. The dog loosened its teeth. It made another series of barks toward the inside, and madly wagged its tail at the two of them.

It was clear that Jin Ling must have broke open the stone castle by force, but something happened to him after he entered.

Bichen unsheathed on its own by an inch. The blade of the sword emitted a cold glow of light blue, illuminating the dark path ahead. Lan WangJi bent down and went inside first. Wei WuXian was almost stirred crazy by the dog, and rushed inside as well, nearly crashing into him. Lan WangJi held his hand to support him, and shook his head, either out of dissatisfaction or unwilling resignation.

The black-haired spiritual dog appeared like it really wanted to follow him, also trying to rush inside, but it seemed as if it was blocked outside by some sort of a force.

It couldn't break the barrier no matter how hard it tried, so it could only sit down outside of the entrance, its tail wagging faster and faster. Wei WuXian was so glad that he almost knelt down for it. Taking his hand away, he walked a few steps inside. The distant shade of blue light coming from the sword almost appeared to be white when surrounded in this darkness.

The Xinglu Ridge was covered in a tall, deep forest, so it was quite chilly. And, inside of the stone castle, it was colder than it was outside. Wearing only light clothing, there was wind blowing through Wei WuXian's cuffs and behind his back—the cold sweat due to the dog had already dried. The light at the entrance had disappeared as if it was a candle having been snuff out. The deeper they went inside, the darker and more spacious it became.

The top of the stone castle was spherical. Wei WuXian kicked a few pieces of rocks on the ground. He could hear a slight echo.

He finally couldn't endure it any longer and stopped in his tracks, pressing his right hand on his temple and scrunching his brows.

Lan WangJi turned around to ask, "What happened?"

Wei WuXian replied, "... It's so loud."

Inside the stone castle, there was only dead silence. It was as quiet as a cemetery. Actually, it itself also seemed similar to a cemetery.

But, in Wei WuXian's ears, right now, they were already surrounded by noise.

Translator's Notes

**Head shaker:** The original phrase used for this was a traditional Chinese saying, which pretty much means that Nie HuaiSang answers "I don't know" for every question directed towards him. As an adequate translation has yet to be found, this has been slightly modified to keep the flow of the English.

**Qi deviation:** A qi deviation, or a qigong deviation, refers to a physiological or psychological disorder that happens when someone cultivates using an “improper” method or a flawed technique

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zou\\_huo\\_ru\\_mo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zou_huo_ru_mo)).

**Yang energy:** The “yang” here refers to the “yang” in

“yin yang”. Yang energy represents life and goodness, while yin energy (also translated as “dark energy” or “evil energy” for a couple of times) represents death and evil.

**Maze array:** A maze array is most likely an array that can be used to confuse people’s sense of direction in order to trap them somewhere.

Like Loading...

**GDC Chapter 22:**

## Contentment

The noise came from all around them.

It was an ocean of whispers, rustles, and giggles, from in front and behind, above and below. The voices involved both male and female, old and young, loud and quiet. Wei WuXian could even hear a few fragmented sentences, but they came and went, not allowing him to catch any specific words.

It really was too loud.

Wei WuXian continued to press on his temple with one hand, and used the other to grab a palm-sized Compass of Evil from the Qiankun Bag. The pointers on the compass shakily spun two times, then started to spin faster and faster. A few moments later, it spun madly around!

Last time, on Dafan Mountain, it had already been strange when the Compass of Evil didn't find the direction. This time, it went as far as to spin all by itself, without pausing for a single moment. This situation was even more unbelievable than the pointers not moving at all!

The foreboding shadow in Wei WuXian's heart grew denser. He called out loud, "Jin Ling!"

The two had already walked for a while inside the stone castle, but they hadn't seen anyone. Wei WuXian had shouted a few times, without receiving any reply. The first

stone rooms were all empty, but, as they went in deeper, in the center of one of the rooms, there was a black coffin.

It was quite odd for a coffin to appear here. However, the wood used was a deep black, and the shape was also crafted in a skilled way. Seeing this, Wei WuXian had an exceptionally strong affinity toward it. He couldn't help but patted it a few times. The wood was sturdy and the sound was firm. He praised it, "What a nice coffin."

Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian stood on opposite sides of the coffin. After passing a look between them, they extended their arms at the same time and opened the lid.

The moment the lid was opened, the noise around them suddenly multiplied, flooding through Wei WuXian's ears in the manner of tidal water. It was as if, before this, they were secretly watched by countless pairs of eyes—the owners of the eyes silently monitored and discussed every word they spoke, every action they performed, and suddenly became agitated as they saw that the coffin was about to be opened. Wei WuXian thought of a few dozen possibilities, already prepared to fend against strong odours of rancidity, stretching claws of monsters, an overflow of poisonous water, toxic smoke that dispersed quickly, or attacks from resentful spectres. Of course, his greatest wish was to see Jin Ling. Despite this, nothing happened. Nothing.

Surprisingly, this was an empty coffin.

Wei WuXian was a bit startled, but also a bit disappointed at the fact that Jin Ling wasn't stuck in here. Lan WangJi went slightly nearer. Bichen unsheathed by itself for a few inches, its cold light shining on the bottom of the coffin.

Only then, did Wei WuXian notice how it wasn't that the coffin was empty, but that the object inside was a lot

smaller than what he had expected, and hid inside the deepest part of the coffin.

Inside the coffin, there lay a long **sword**.

The sword had no sheath. The hilt seemed to have been casted from gold, appearing to be quite heavy in weight. Its body was slender and its blade shone. Resting on a layer of red cloth at the bottom of the coffin, it reflected a bloody shade of scarlet, emitting a chilling air of destruction.

A sword was put inside a coffin instead of a corpse. There really wasn't anywhere not peculiar about these stone castles in the Xinglu Ridge, revealing mysteries every step they took.

The two closed the coffin lid and continued walking. They found other coffins like this in some other rooms. Looking at the texture of the wood, their ages were all different. And, within every coffin, there was a long sword. Even until they went inside the last room, there still wasn't any trace of Jin Ling. Wei WuXian closed the lid of the coffin, feeling slightly worried.

Seeing his knitted eyebrows, Lan WangJi thought for a moment, put the guqin horizontally on the coffin, and raised his hand. A melody poured from his fingers.

He only played a short excerpt, and then took his right hand away from the guqin. He stared attentively at the still-vibrating strings.

Suddenly, the strings quivered, and one note sounded on its own.

Wei WuXian asked, “**Inquiry?**”

Inquiry was a famous piece composed by an ancestor in the GusuLan Sect. Different from Evocation, it was used when the victim's identity was unknown and there wasn't a medium. The player used notes of the guqin to inquire, asking questions to the victim, while the victim's answers would be transformed into melodies by Inquiry and shown on the strings.

If the strings vibrated on their own, it meant that Lan WangJi had already brought a spirit in the castle here. After this, the two would start asking and answering using the language of the guqin.

The language of the guqin was a special skill unique to the GusuLan Sect. Although Wei WuXian knew a wide variety of things, there were still some that he was unable to learn, such as the language of the guqin. He whispered,

“HanGuang-Jun, help me ask what is this place, what is it for, and who built it.”

As he mastered the language, without any hesitation, Lan WangJi confidently played a few limpid notes. After a few moments, the strings played two notes on their own. Wei WuXian quickly asked, “What did it say?”

Lan WangJi, “I do not know.”

Wei WuXian, “What?”

Lan WangJi replied in an unhurried manner, “It said, ‘I do not know’.”

“...” Wei WuXian looked at him, suddenly remembering a conversation about “whatever” a few years ago. Touching his nose, he was at a loss for words, and thought, Lan Zhan is so bright. He even learned how to make me speechless.

With the first question unanswered, Lan WangJi played another sentence. The strings responded again, with the same two notes as before. Wei WuXian could tell that, this time, the answer was “I don’t know” as well. He asked,

“What did you ask it, this time?”

Lan WangJi, “How it died.”

Wei WuXian, “If it was secretly killed when it was not paying attention, then it’d explain why it doesn’t know how it died. Why don’t you ask it if it knows who killed it?”

Lan WangJi raised his hands to play another phrase. Yet, the answer was the same two notes— “I don’t know”.

It was a spirit who had been trapped here, yet it didn’t know where this was, how it died, and who killed it. This was also Wei WuXian’s first time meeting such a deceased person. With a change of thought, he spoke again, “Then, let’s ask something else. Ask him whether it’s a man or a woman. There’s no way that it doesn’t know this.”

Lan WangJi did as he was told. After he took away his hands, another string sounded in a strong way. Lan WangJi translated, “A man.”

Wei WuXian, “We finally know about something, huh? Ask again, whether or not a boy of fifteen or sixteen entered here.”

It answered, “Yes.”

Wei WuXian asked again, “Then where is he right now?”

The strings paused for a moment, then replied. Wei WuXian hurried to ask, “What did he say?”

Lan WangJi’s face was solemn, “It said, ‘Right here.’”

Wei WuXian was dumbfounded.

“Here” probably referred to this stone castle. But, before this, they searched through the whole place, and hadn’t seen Jin Ling. Wei WuXian spoke, “It can’t lie, right?”

Lan WangJi, “I am here, so it cannot.”

Indeed, it couldn’t. The person inquiring was HanGuang-Jun. Under his control, the spirit who came was unable to lie, and had definitely been answering the truth. Wei WuXian proceeded to search around this room, looking for any mechanisms or secret rooms that he had missed. After a thinking for a moment, he played a few more phrases.

However, after he received the answer, his expression changed slightly. Seeing this, Wei WuXian asked, “What did you ask this time?”

Lan WangJi, “How old he was; where he was from.”

Both of these questions were attempts to find out the identity of the spirit. Wei WuXian knew that he definitely received some sort of an unconventional answer, “How was it?”

Lan WangJi, “Fifteen, from Lanling.”

Wei WuXian’s expression changed as well.

The soul that “Inquire” had found was Jin Ling?!



He listened intently. Amid the noise that seemed to have bombarded here, there really seemed to be a few weak shouts coming from Jin Ling. They were faint, however, and indistinct.

Lan WangJi continued to ask. Wei WuXian knew that he was asking for the precise location, so he stared fixedly at the strings of the guqin, waiting for Jin Ling's answer.

This time, the answer came a bit slower. After he finished listening, Lan WangJi spoke to Wei WuXian, ““Stand at where you are, face the southwest, and listen to the strings. After each note is played, walk forward one step. When the sound stops, it will be right in front of you.””

Without saying a word, Wei WuXian turned toward the southwest. Behind him came seven notes of the guqin, so he walked seven steps forward. However, nothing had appeared in front of him.

The notes continued, but the pause between them grew longer and longer, and he also walked slower and slower.

Another step, and another, and another...

After the sixth step, the guqin finally silenced. No more notes sounded.

And, before him, there was only a wall.

The wall was made of grey-white rock bricks, pieced together tightly. Wei WuXian turned around, “... He's in the wall?!”

Bichen unsheathed. Four streaks of blue light swept past, and a neat pound sign had been carved onto the wall. The two went forward to take apart the bricks. After removing some of them, a large sheet of black dirt was exposed.

It seemed that the stone castle was made to be double-layered, filled with dirt between the two layers of hard rock.

Using his bare hands, Wei WuXian dug out a large chunk of

dirt. Surrounded by the coal-black dirt, there was a human's face, eyes tightly shut.

It was the missing Jin Ling!

Having his face enveloped in dirt, as soon as it appeared, air poured into Jin Ling's mouth and nose. He immediately started to cough and breathe. As Wei WuXian saw that he was still alive, his heart finally calmed. Jin Ling really did almost die. Or else, "Inquiry" wouldn't have caught the still-alive soul that was about to leave his body. The good thing was that only a short while passed after he was buried into the wall. If it took them any longer, he would have suffocated to death.

The two hastened to dig him out of the wall. However, who knew that, as if dirt clung onto a carrot being pulled out of the ground, the moment Jin Ling's upper body emerged from the dirt, the sword on his back caught on something else and dragged it out.

It was the ashen bone of a human arm!

Lan Wangji laid Jin Ling flat onto the ground and felt for his pulse. Wei WuXian, on the other hand, took up the sheath of Bichen, and skillfully started to poke around in the dirt, following the length of the bone. After a short while, a complete skeleton appeared before their eyes.

This skeleton was the same as how Jin Ling looked, buried inside the wall in a standing position. With ghastly pale bones and pitch-black dirt—the contrast was distinct yet glaring to the eye. Wei WuXian dug a bit more through the ground, and broke away a few pieces of bricks on the side.

After some more rustling around, sure enough, he found another skeleton nearby.

This one hadn't decayed completely yet. There were still some flesh on the bones, and long, messy hair on the skull.

From the ragged clothing in the shade of a watered down red, he could tell that this was a woman. However, she wasn't standing, with her skeleton

bending down. The reason of this was that there was a third skeleton beside her, squatting down by her feet.

Wei WuXian stopped digging further.

He took a few steps back. The noise in his ears was as wild and turbulent as tidal waves.

He could almost be sure of it. The inside of this stone castle's thick walls was packed with human corpses.

Above, below, southeast, northwest; standing, sitting, lying, squatting...

Just what on Earth was this place?!

Translator's Notes

**Sword:** Although this was translated as a “sword”, the Chinese character of this is different from that of a sword's.

The character used here means “knife.” The difference between a “sword” and a “knife” is that the first attacks by stabbing, while the second attacks by slicing or chopping.

However, they both look like a “sword” in Western standards.

**Inquiry:** The literal meaning of this is “to ask a spirit.”

Like Loading...

## **GDC Chapter 23: Malice**

At this moment, the unconscious Jin Ling suddenly sat up.

In front of the two, he clumsily stood up with closed eyes.

Wei WuXian wanted to see what he was going to do, so he didn't do anything as Jin Ling slowly walked around him, took one stride, and stepped

back into the wall where he stood just a while ago. He placed his arms flat beside his body. Even the position was the same as before.

Wei WuXian pulled him out of the wall again, feeling that the situation was both hilarious and strange. As he was about to tell Lan WangJi that it was best not to stay here for long, he suddenly quivered out of fright, hearing a few barks that came from afar. Ever since they went in, the black-haired spiritual dog behaved itself, wagging its tail as it sat before the entrance. It waited for them to bring back its master in an anxious yet pathetic way, without barking anymore. However, right now, its barks were fiercer than ever.

Lan WangJi spoke, "Something is wrong outside of the castle."

As he reached out to help Jin Ling, Wei WuXian beat him to it and carried Jin Ling up on his back, "Let's go out and see!"

The two quickly went back the same way they came.

Bending down to exit, they saw the spiritual dog face them with its back, growling with the bottom of its throat at a certain direction. Although Wei WuXian managed to come over, he really couldn't bear this type of sound, and involuntarily took a few steps backward. When the dog

turned around and saw that he had Jin Ling on his back, it instantly dashed over, causing Wei WuXian to scream. Lan WangJi shifted in front of him just as he was about to throw Jin Ling down.

The spiritual dog immediately stopped, its tail between its legs again. The reason why it didn't stick its tongue out was that it held something inside its mouth. Lan WangJi went forth, bent down, took out a scrap of cloth from between its teeth, and handed it over to Wei WuXian. It seemed like it was part of a piece of clothing. Before this, there must have been someone either roaming or spying around the area, and they must have appeared suspicious, or else the dog's barks wouldn't have been teeming with hostility. Wei WuXian declared, "They haven't gone far yet. Let's go after them!"

Yet, Lan WangJi responded, "That is not necessary. I know who they are."

Wei WuXian, “I also know. It must have been the same group of people who spread rumors of the Xinglu Ridge, let out the walking corpses, set up the maze array, and built the stone castles. And those **sabers**. But, if we don’t catch them now, it’d be a bother to find them later.”

Lan WangJi, “I will go after them. What about you and Jin Ling?”

Wei WuXian, “I’ll take him down the Xinglu Ridge and settle down somewhere in Qinghe, around where we met that charlatan. Let’s meet up there.”

The pace of the conversation was extremely fast. Lan WangJi only paused for a moment, and Wei WuXian added,

“Go. Any later and the person would have run away. I’ll be back!”

Hearing the ‘I’ll be back’, Lan WangJi took one deep look at him and walked off without any more words. The spiritual dog wanted to throw itself over again. Wei WuXian immediately shouted, “W-w-w-wait! Take the dog away! Take it!!!”

Lan WangJi had to come back again. He looked down at the black-haired spiritual dog. Too scared to put up any resistance, it yapped as it trailed behind Lan WangJi, turning around to look at Jin Ling once in awhile. Wei WuXian wiped a few drops of sweat from his forehead. After he looked at the group of white castles once more, he picked up Jin Ling again and went down the Xinglu Ridge.

At the moment, it was already near dusk. With a boy on his back and both of them covered in dirt, they received a lot of attention from passersby. Wei WuXian went back to the street where Jin Ling used the dog to chase him and found an inn. Using the money he fished out of Lan WangJi, he bought two new outfits and got a room. He first took off Jin Ling’s sect robe, which had been crumpled after it was buried in dirt, then pulled off his boots. Suddenly, his movements came to a halt.

There appeared to be an area of shadow on Jin Ling’s lower leg. Squatting down and rolling up the boy’s trousers, Wei WuXian discovered that this

wasn't a shadow, but a black bruise. And, it wasn't a bruise that came from being injured, it was a **Curse Mark**.

A Curse Mark was a marking made by an evil being on its prey. If it appeared, it meant that the person had offended something of extreme malice. If it left a mark, it would find you no matter what, possibly after a long time, and possibly tonight. The consequences ranged from having the body part with the marking taken away or just death.

Jin Ling's whole leg had turned black, and the bruise was still stretching upward. Wei WuXian had never seen a Curse Mark in such an intense shade of black and covering such a large area. The more he looked at it, the sterner his face grew. He put Jin Ling's legs down and undid Jin Ling's **undergarment**. He only felt relief after he saw that his chest and stomach areas were all clean, not affected by the Curse Mark yet.

At this moment, Jin Ling opened his eyes.

He was confused for quite a while. With his body naked and cold all around, he came to at once. He immediately got up and roared with a flushed face, "Wh-wh-wh-what are you doing?!"

Wei WuXian grinned, "Oh hey, you're awake."

Appearing as if he had encountered a great shock, Jin Ling shut the front of his undergarment and shrunk toward the corner of the bed, "What do you want?! Where are my clothes?! Where's my sword?! Where's my dog?!"

Wei WuXian spoke, "I was just about to put on your clothes for you."

His expression and tone were as kind as those of a grandmother who wanted to put on a jacket for her grandson. Jin Ling leaned against the wall with disheveled hair, "I am not a cut-sleeve!!!"

Wei WuXian beamed, "What a coincidence—I am!!!"

Jin Ling snatched the sword that lay beside the bed in a manner so courageous that it seemed if Wei WuXian walked one more step forward, he

would kill him and then commit suicide to prove his innocence. Wei WuXian finally managed

to stop laughing, “Why are you so scared? It was only a joke! I spent so much effort to dig you out of the wall, and you don’t even thank me.”

Amid the ruckus, Jin Ling combed his hand through his messy hair so that it looked a bit more decent, and continued to rage, “If not for this, the fact that y-y-y-you dared to take off my clothes w-w-would’ve gotten you killed for thousands of times!”

Wei WuXian, “Please don’t. Dying once was already painful enough. There, there. Put the sword down.”

With a muddled look, Jin Ling did as he was told and put the sword down.

When they played Inquiry, although Jin Ling’s soul left his body and he couldn’t remember a lot of things, amid the haze, he knew that it was the person in front of him who dug him out and carried him down the mountain. For some time, after he was buried in the wall, he had been conscious for a while, the fear and despair in his heart at their height.

Yet, he really didn’t expect that the one who freed him from his fear and despair was this person whom he had hated ever since the first time they met. The color of his face switched back and forth between white and red. He was also both dizzy and embarrassed, his thoughts still fluttering everywhere. Suddenly, his eyes went toward the window and was shocked to see that the sky was already dark, with a few stars scattered here and there. Coincidentally, Wei WuXian bent down to pick up the new clothes that fell on the ground. Jin Ling hopped off the bed, put on his boots, grabbed his jacket, and sprinted out of the room.

Wei WuXian originally thought that, after going through so much, he would probably stay listless for a while. Who knew

that young people were so energetic, as he disappeared into the distance like a gust of wind. Remembering the Curse Mark on his leg that was no trivial matter, he quickly shouted, “What are you running away for?! Come back!”

Jin Ling ran as he put on his soiled, crumpled sect robe,

“Don’t follow me!” He was light on his feet and stepped out of the inn in a few long strides. After chasing for a few blocks, Wei WuXian actually lost him.

After searching for a while, twilight came, and the people on the streets also lessened. Wei WuXian was quite annoyed, “Damn. How can this child do such a thing?!”

As he was about to give up, the angered voice of a young man came from in front of him, at the far end of the street,

“I only said a few things about you, and you disappeared into nowhere. Are you some young mistress? Your temper has been growing worse and worse!”

Jiang Cheng!

Wei WuXian immediately slid into an alleyway. A second later, Jin Ling’s voice also appeared, “I already came back with nothing wrong with me, didn’t I? Stop nagging!”

It appeared that Jin Ling didn’t come to Qinghe alone.

Well, no wonder. Last time, at Dafan Mountain, Jiang Cheng had been there to assist him, so why wouldn’t he have come this time? However, looking at this now, it seemed that the two had a quarrel in the town of Qinghe, which was why Jin Ling went up the Xinglu Ridge alone. The reason why he hastened to run away was probably that Jiang Cheng threatened to do something to him if he didn’t come back before dark or something like that.

Jiang Cheng, “Nothing wrong? You look like you just rolled around in a muddy ditch, and you say there’s nothing wrong with you! Don’t you think that it’s an embarrassment to be wearing your sect’s uniform? Hurry back and change into something else! Speak. What did you run into today?”

Jin Ling replied impatiently, “I already said that I didn’t run into anything. I tripped, and it was a waste of time. Ow!” He shouted, “Don’t tug on me like that! I’m not three-years-old!”



Jiang Cheng spoke in a harsh tone, “Is it that you think I can’t discipline you any longer? Let me tell you that, even if you’re thirty, I’d still be able to tug you. Next time, if you dare to run around without telling anyone again, the whip waits upon you!”

Jin Ling, “I went alone exactly because I didn’t want anyone to help or discipline me.”

Wei WuXian considered, I don’t know about anything else, but Jiang Cheng was quite right when he scolded that Jin Ling had the temper of a young mistress.

Jiang Cheng, “So, what now? What did you catch? Where’s the spiritual dog that your uncle gave you?”

It was chased into some random corner by Lan Zhan. Just as Wei WuXian was thinking, two familiar barks came from the other side of the alley.

Wei WuXian’s demeanor changed at once. Legs moving on their own, he rushed outside as if he was chased by poisonous arrows. The black-haired spiritual dog sprinted over from the other end, passed Wei WuXian, and threw itself toward Jin Ling’s legs, affectionately brushing him with its tail.

With the dog appearing here, it must have meant that Lan Wangji had already caught whoever was spying near the stone castles and went to point of rendezvous that they settled on earlier. However, at the moment, Wei WuXian had no time to think about these things.

As he ran, he just happened to end up right before Jiang Cheng, Jin Ling, and a bunch of other Jiang Sect’s disciples.

After both sides stayed still for a moment, Wei WuXian silently turned around and fled.

Having only managed a short distance, he heard a sizzling noise, and a purple electric current wrapped around his lower leg as if it was a snake. Numbness and pain surged through his body from bottom to top, and he fell at once, after a pull from behind. Then, someone picked him up with the

back of his collar. Wei WuXian immediately tried to find the Spirit-Locking Bag, but the other grabbed it before him.

Jiang Cheng walked a few steps while holding him, entered the nearest shop, and kicked open the wooden bolt that was already half-latched.

The owner was getting ready to close the shop for the night. Suddenly, seeing that a fancy-clothed, dark-faced young man kicked open the door and walked inside with someone in his hand, appearing as if he was going to disembowel the victim right here, the owner was so frightened that he couldn't speak. A disciple went up and whispered a few things in his ear. With some silver pushed into his hands, he quickly fled to the back of the hall and never came out again. Without any further instructions, the Jiang Sect's disciples instantly spread out from the inside to the outside, making it so that nothing could enter or escape the place.

Jin Ling stood on the side, seeming as if he wanted to say a few things, but was too shocked to do so. Jiang Cheng glowered at him, "I'll take care of you later. Stay here!"

From the beginning of his memory until now, Jin Ling had never seen such a look on Jiang Cheng's face before. This uncle of his who led the prominent YunmengJiang Sect ever since a young age had always been cold and dark. When he spoke, he was willing to neither show mercy nor do good.

Yet, right now, although he was trying hard to suppress unnecessary facial expressions, his eyes were alarmingly intense.

Although his face had always been clouded, marked with arrogance and satire, it seemed as if every corner of it had come alive. It was difficult to determine whether it was vengeful wrath, fathomless hatred, or raving ecstasy.

#### Translator's Notes

**Sabers:** This was translated as "sword" in the last chapter, but, thanks to a few commenters, it is now changed to saber, a more accurate phrase.

**Curse Mark:** The literal translation is "evil curse mark/scar".

**Undergarment:** In the Ancient Chinese style of clothing, a set of undergarments can include a shirt and a pair of trousers, a shirt and a skirt, or a long robe. All pieces are white in color and loose-fitting. The shirt is worn in a wraparound way, like a bathrobe. Although they are called undergarments, they are more like sleeping attire but worn both to sleep and under normal clothing. Yes, people still wear “underwear” under these, so, technically, Wei WuXian is not peeling Jin Ling’s underwear off, unlike most of what

your fujo brains are thinking at the moment (e.g. “oh nooo WWX is looking at another person’s \*\*\*\*\*!”)

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## **GDC Chapter 24: Malice**

Jiang Cheng added, “Lend me your dog.”

Jin Ling pulled himself out of the daze. He hesitated for a moment and only whistled after Jiang Cheng shot him two lightning-sharp beams from his eyes. The dog dashed over in just a few leaps. Wei WuXian, body as stiff as an iron board, could only be dragged forward, walking one step at a time.

Jiang Cheng found an empty room and threw Wei WuXian inside, closing the door behind him. The dog followed them inside and sat by the door. Wei WuXian had his eyes tightly locked on it, afraid that it would pounce on him at the next possible moment. Remembering how he had been controlled in just a short amount of time, he exclaimed in his heart that Jiang Cheng really knew the best way to deal with him.

Meanwhile, Jiang Cheng slowly sat down by the table and poured himself a cup of tea.

For a moment, no one spoke a word. The cup of tea was still steaming hot. Without having a single sip of it, he hurled it onto the ground.

Jiang Cheng pulled a curt smile on his face, “... Don’t you have anything to say to me?”

Growing up, Jiang Cheng had seen Wei WuXian's awful state countless times as he ran away from dogs. Others may have believed him if he denied it, but, in front of someone

who knew him so thoroughly, it'd be impossible to argue.

This was an obstacle harder to overcome than Zidian.

With a sincere tone, Wei WuXian replied: "I don't know what to say to you."

Jiang Cheng whispered: "You really don't learn, do you?"

Ever since long ago, their conversations had been full of retorting and arguing. Wei WuXian blurted out with thinking: "And you have not made any progress either..."

Jiang Cheng laughed from the anger, "Sure, then let's see which of us is the one who hasn't made any progress."

Remaining seated at the table, he shouted in a commanding way. The dog stood up immediately!

Being in the same room as it already made Wei WuXian sweat in uneasiness. Seeing that the large, snarling dog closed in on him in less than a second, his ears were full of its low howls and his entire body numbed. He had forgotten about much of his early years of wandering on the streets.

The only things he still remembered was the terror he felt as he was chased by dogs and the slicing pain of teeth and claws digging into his flesh. The fear that had been planted deep within his heart couldn't be overcome or eased no how he tried.

Suddenly, Jiang Cheng glanced sideways at him, "Whose name did you call?"

Wei WuXian was in such a state of distress that he couldn't remember whether or not he called someone's name at all. He only managed to pull himself together after Jiang Cheng commanded the dog to back away. After a moment of hesitation, he abruptly turned his head away. On

the other hand, Jiang Cheng left his seat. There was a whip attached beside his waist. With one hand on it, he bent down to look at Wei WuXian's face. After a pause, he straightened up and asked, "Speaking of it, since when have you been so close to Lan WangJi?"

Wei WuXian immediately understood whose name he had unconsciously called out.

Jiang Cheng smiled menacingly, "It really is quite curious how far he went to protect you, back on Dafan Mountain."

A moment later, he corrected himself, "No. You weren't necessarily the one whom Lan WangJi was protecting. After all, the GusuLan Sect couldn't have forgotten what you did with that loyal dog of yours. How could someone so celebrated for his righteousness tolerate the likes of you?

Maybe he's familiar with this body that you stole instead."

His words were cruel and sinister. Every sentence seemed well-meaning on the surface, but was actually derogatory.

Wei WuXian couldn't bear with it any longer, "Watch your language."

Jiang Cheng responded, "I've never cared for such things, don't you remember?"

Wei WuXian mocked, "Oh, right."

Jiang Cheng snorted, "So you think that you're qualified to make me watch my language. Do you still remember? Last time, on Dafan Mountain, did you watch your language when talking to Jin Ling?"

Wei WuXian's face stiffened.

Having regained the upper hand in the conversation, Jiang Cheng looked satisfied again. He sneered, "'I suppose that you didn't have a mother to teach you.' Now, you really know where it hurts the most, don't you? The person who caused Jin Ling to be criticized behind his back in such a way is nobody else but you. You're quite the forgetful old man, aren't you? Have

you forgotten the things you said and the promises you made? Then, do you still remember how his parents died?!”

Wei WuXian immediately raised his head, “I haven’t forgotten! It’s just that...”

Yet, he just couldn’t find the right words to put after it.

Jiang Cheng interrupted, “It’s just what? You can’t say it?

Don’t worry, you can go back to Lotus Pier and say your excuses while kneeling in front of my parents’ graves.”

Wei WuXian calmed himself down and searched as fast as he could for a way out of the situation at hand. Although he had always dreamed of returning to Lotus Pier once more, he didn’t want to go back to the tattered one nowadays!

Suddenly, a series of hurried footsteps approached, and the door was pounded on loudly. Jin Ling shouted from outside, “Uncle!”

Jiang Cheng raised his voice, “Didn’t I tell you to stay where you were? Why did you come here?”

Jin Ling, “Uncle, I have something really important to tell you.”

Jiang Cheng, “If there’s something important, why didn’t you decide to speak up when I was scolding you?”

“I didn’t want to say it exactly because you kept on scolding me! Are you gonna listen or not? If not, I’m just not gonna say it!” Jin Ling replied in an angry voice.

Jiang Cheng opened the door with a fuming look on his face, “Tell me, then get out!”

As soon as the wooden door opened, Jin Ling stepped inside. He had already changed into a new set of the white uniform. “I really did encounter something troublesome today. I think I might have ran into Wen Ning!”

Jiang Cheng's brow twitched. With a hostile expression, he placed his hand on his sword at once, "Where? When?!"

Jin Ling told him, "It was this afternoon. There's a worn-down house about a dozen miles south of here. I went because I heard that something strange had happened there, but who could have guessed that there was a fierce corpse hiding inside."

Jin Ling's word sounded quite believable. However, in Wei WuXian's ears, all those sentences were nonsense. He knew precisely where Jin Ling was this afternoon. Moreover, if Wen Ning hid himself, unless he summoned him on purpose, there'd be no way that a junior would find him so easily.

Jiang Cheng, "Why didn't you say so earlier?!"

Jin Ling, "I wasn't certain. The corpse moved at a really fast speed and ran away as soon as I entered. I only saw a blurry figure. But I heard the chain noises he made on Dafan Mountain, which was why I suspected that it might have been him. If you didn't scold me like that, I would have told you right after I came back. If he ran away and you can't catch him, it'd be because of your bad temper, not me." He

still wanted to peek inside, but Jiang Cheng was so angered that he slammed the door right in front of his face. Through the closed door, Jiang Cheng shouted, "I'll deal with you later. Get lost!"

Jin Ling replied with an "oh," and his footsteps faded into the distance. Seeing Jiang Cheng turn around, Wei WuXian immediately pulled a mixed expression of "I'm so shocked,"

"my secret has been disclosed," and "what do I do now that Wen Ning had been found." Jin Ling was actually quite clever. Knowing that Jiang Cheng hated Wen Ning more than anything, he made up such a smooth lie with the previous knowledge he had. Jiang Cheng knew that the YiLing Patriarch and the Ghost General often appeared together, so he already suspected that Wen Ning was in the area. Having heard Jin Ling's words, he was already mostly convinced, and Wei WuXian's expression convinced him even further.

On top of that, he burst into fury whenever he heard the mention of Wen Ning's name. With his eyes blinded by wrath, how could he still have doubted? The hostility that built in his chest was almost making him explode. He flicked his whip, hitting the ground beside Wei WuXian, and spoke through clenched teeth, "You really take this obeying dog of yours everywhere, don't you?!"

Wei WuXian spoke, "He's been dead since a long time ago, and I've died once as well. What else do you want?!"

Jiang Cheng pointed the whip at him, "So what? My hatred would persist, even if he dies thousands of times! He didn't perish back then. Very well! I shall destroy him today, with my own hands. I'm going to burn him right now, and scatter his ashes right in front of your face!"

He slammed the door shut behind him and walked toward the main hall, ordering Jin Ling, "You keep a close eye on

him. Don't believe or listen to anything he says! Don't let him make any sound. If he dares to whistle or play his flute, block his mouth first. If it doesn't work, just slice off his hand or cut off his tongue!"

Wei WuXian knew that Jiang Cheng spoke these words especially for him to hear, threatening him against doing anything. The reason why Jiang Cheng didn't bring him along was so that he didn't use the opportunity to control Wen Ning. Jin Ling replied in a nonchalant tone, "I know. Of course I'll be able to watch him. Uncle, why did you shut yourself inside along with that damn cut-sleeve? What did he do this time?"

Jiang Cheng answered, "This isn't a question you should ask. Remember to watch him properly. If I return to see that he disappeared, I'll break your leg for sure!" After a few more questions about the exact location, he left with half of the disciples and went to chase the nonexistent Wen Ning.

After some time of waiting, Jin Ling's arrogant voice travelled through, "You go stand over there. You, go wait on the side. All of you go stand in front of the main entrance.

I'm gonna go inside and meet him."



None of the disciples dared to disobey. In a short while, the door had been opened again and Jin Ling stuck his head in, eyes darting around the room. Wei WuXian sat up straight. Jin Ling put a finger in front of his lips, walked in quietly, put his hand on Zidian, then whispered something.

Zidian could only work if it recognized its owner. Jiang Cheng had probably allowed it to recognize Jin Ling. The electric currents went out at once, and it transformed into a silver ring embedded with a purple crystal, lying on top of Jin Ling's fair-colored palms.

Jin Ling said in a quiet voice, "Let's go."

After the senseless orders, the YunmengJiang Sect's disciples had been scattered all over the place. The two stealthily flipped over the window and the walls. Having left the shop, they sprinted without making any noise. As they entered a forest, Wei WuXian heard something strange coming from behind him. Turning around, he was almost scared to death, "Why is it coming along as well?! Tell it to go away!"

Jin Ling whistled twice, and the dog rolled out its long tongue. Whimpering softly, its pointy ears twitched, and it ran away disheartened. Jin Ling sneered in contempt,

"Such a loser. Fairy never bites. It just looks scary. It's a spiritual dog trained to only bite evil beings. Did you really think that it's just a regular dog?"

Wei WuXian, "Hold on. What did you call it?"

Jin Ling, "Fairy. Its name."

Wei WuXian, "You named a dog something like this?!"

Jin Ling replied assuredly, "What's wrong with this name?"

When it was younger, it was called Little Fairy. Now that it grew up, I can't keep on calling it that."

Wei WuXian refused, "No. No. No. The point isn't whether it's little or not! ... Who in the world taught you such a way of naming?!" Without doubt, it

must have been his uncle. In the past, Jiang Cheng also had a few puppies. The names he chose were things like ‘Jasmine’, ‘Princess’, ‘Love’, and so on, which sounded like the names of expensive girls in brothels. Jin Ling continued, “True men don’t care for such trifles. Why are you stressing over such details? Okay! Stop.

Now that you offended my uncle, you’re already half dead.

Now, I’m letting you go. We’re even.”

Wei WuXian asked, “Do you know why your uncle wants me?”

Jin Ling answered, “Yeah. He believes that you’re Wei WuXian.”

Wei WuXian thought, ‘This time, it’s not merely ‘suspect’

anymore. He’s got the right person.’ He asked again, “Then, what about you? Don’t you suspect it as well?”

Jin Ling, “It’s not the first time my uncle did such a thing.

He has never let any of them go, even if it was possible that he caught the wrong ones. But, if Zidian couldn’t draw out your spirit, I’m just gonna trust that you’re not. Besides, he wasn’t a cut-sleeve, but you even dared to harass...”

With a disgusted look, he stopped before mentioning who Wei WuXian harassed and made a fanning gesture as if he was shooing away flies. “Anyways, from now on, you have nothing to do with the LanlingJin Sect anymore! If you’re gonna go at it again, don’t find anyone from my sect! Or else, I won’t let you off!”

Having finished speaking, Jin Ling spun around to leave.

After walking a few steps, he turned to him again, “What are you doing still standing there? Go. Are you waiting for my uncle to come and get you? Let me tell you—don’t think that I’ll be grateful just because you saved me. Don’t expect me to say anything cringe worthy either.”

Wei WuXian put his hands behind his back and walked over, “Young man, there are two cringe worthy phrases in one’s life that must be said, no matter what.”

Jin Ling asked, “Which two?”

Wei WuXian replied, “‘Thank you’, and ‘I’m sorry’.”

Jin Ling taunted, “What can anybody do to me if I don’t say them?”

Wei WuXian, “Someday, you’ll say those words in tears.”

Jin Ling made a spitting noise, just as Wei WuXian suddenly spoke to him, “I’m sorry.”

Jin Ling paused, “What?”

Wei WuXian, “I’m sorry for the words I said to you on Dafan Mountain.”

It wasn’t the first time that Jin Ling was told he had ‘no mother to teach him’, but it was the first time someone apologized to him in such a serious way. With an ‘I’m sorry’

shoved right into his face, he didn’t know why, but he suddenly felt a bit uneasy.

He wildly waved his arms around, “It’s nothing. You weren’t the first person to say so, anyways. It’s true that I had no mother to teach me. However, I won’t be inferior to anyone because of this! In fact, I’m gonna open you eyes and make you see that I am a lot stronger than all of you!”

Wei WuXian smiled. As he was about to speak, his expression suddenly changed, “Jiang Cheng? You!”

Jin Ling was already feeling guilty since he stole Zidian and let Wei WuXian go. Hearing the name, he whirled around to look. Using the chance, Wei WuXian hit Jin Ling’s neck, forming a blade with his hand. He laid Jin Ling flat on the ground, rolled up the bottom of his trousers, and

examined the Curse Mark on his leg. He tried a few methods, but none of them made it fade. After a moment, he sighed, knowing that it'd be difficult.

However, although there were some curse marks that he was unable to remove, he could transfer them to his own body.

Jin Ling slowly woke up after a while. Putting his hand to his neck, some pain could still be felt. He was so angry that he jumped up and unsheathed his sword at once, "How dare you hit me! My uncle hadn't even hit me before!"

Wei WuXian exclaimed, "Really? Doesn't he say that he'll break your legs all the time?"

Jin Ling fumed, "He's only saying that! You damn cut-sleeve, what on Earth do you want? I..."

Wei WuXian covered his face and shouted toward behind Jin Ling, "Ah! HanGuang-Jun!"

Jin Ling was more scared of Lan WangJi than he was of his uncle. After all, his uncle was from his own clan, but HanGuang-Jun was from someone else's. Frightened, he fled at once, shouting as he ran, "You damn cut-sleeve!

Disgusting maniac! I'll remember you! This is not over yet!"

Behind him, Wei WuXian laughed so hard that he couldn't breathe. After Jin Ling disappeared into the distance, his chest itched in a stuffy way, and finally managed to stop the laughter after a while of coughing. Only then, did he have time to think.

Wei WuXian was taken home by Jiang FengMian when he was nine.

Most memories from back then were already blurred. Yet, Jin Ling's mother, Jiang YanLi, remembered all of them, and even told him quite a few.

She said that, after his father heard of the news that his parents both died in battle, he had always dedicated himself to finding the child that these past friends had left behind.

After searching for a while, he finally found the child in Yiling. The first time they met, Wei WuXian was kneeling on the ground, eating the fruit peels that somebody tossed on the ground.

Yiling's winter and spring were quite cold, yet the child only wore thin layers. His knees were already tattered, and on his feet were two different shoes that didn't fit at all. As he was looking down, searching for fruit peels, Jiang FengMian called him. He still remembered that there was a

“Ying” in his name, so he lifted his head. Although his cheeks were both red and chapped from the cold, he still wore a smile.

Jiang YanLi said that he was born with a smiling look. No matter what unfortunate thing happened, he wouldn't cling on to them; no matter what situation he was in, he would be happy. Although it sounded a bit heartless, it really wasn't bad.

Jiang FengMian fed him a piece of melon, and he let Jiang FengMian carry him back. Back then, Jiang Cheng was also around eight or nine. He kept a few puppies to play with him in Lotus Pier. Finding out that Wei WuXian was extremely scared of dogs, Jiang FengMian suggested for Jiang Cheng to send the dogs away. Jiang Cheng was really unwilling. After throwing a tantrum of breaking things, pouting, and bawling his eyes out, he finally sent the dogs away.

Although, because of this, he held hostility toward Wei WuXian for a long time, after the two grew familiar, they had begun to cause mischief together. Whenever he ran into dogs, Jiang Cheng would always chase them away, then have a good laugh at Wei WuXian, who jumped onto a tree.

He had always thought that Jiang Cheng would be on his side, and Lan WangJi on the side opposite to him. He could never have imagined that things would turn out so differently.

Wei WuXian walked toward the rendezvous point that he and Lan WangJi were supposed to meet at. Nobody walked among the sparse lights that flickered in the night. Without having to look around, the white-robed figure stood at the end of the street, standing motionless with his head hung low.

Before Wei WuXian made any sound, Lan WangJi looked up and saw him. After some hesitation, he walked over with a darkened expression.

Wei WuXian didn't know why, but he involuntarily took a step backward.

He could almost see scarlet streaks of blood by the corners of Lan WangJi's eyes. He had to admit... Lan WangJi's face really did look quite scary.

Surprise! There are none!

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## **GDC Chapter 25: Malice**

However, having taken only one step back, his ankle twisted, and he seemed as if he almost collapsed on the ground. With a change in expression, Lan WangJi hurried over and tightly gripped his wrist like what he did last time, back in Dafan Mountain. After Wei WuXian had been steadied, Lan WangJi knelt down on one knee to examine his leg. Wei WuXian was rather shocked, "N-n-no, HanGuang-Jun. You don't have to do this."

Lan WangJi raised his head slightly, the pair of light-colored eyes boring into him, then looked down again and continued to roll up the leg of his trousers. Still under his grip, Wei WuXian could do nothing except to look up at the sky.

His entire leg was covered with the black bruise of the Curse Mark.

After staring at it for a while, Lan WangJi spoke in a bitter voice, "... I only left for a few hours."

Wei WuXian shrugged, "A few hours is a long time.

Anything could have happened. There, there. Straighten up."

He backhandedly pulled Lan WangJi up, "It's only the average Curse Mark. We can just kill it when it comes to find me. HanGuang-Jun, you'll need to help me. If you don't, I won't be able to handle it. Have you caught the person? Is it him? Where is he now?"

Lan WangJi looked in the direction of a signboard that stood in front of a shop far down the street. Wei WuXian continued, "Let's deal with the stone castle issue first." He then walked toward the shop. He didn't notice before, but his leg felt a bit numb, probably from Zidian. It was a good thing that Jiang Cheng controlled Zidian's force so that he wasn't made into a scorched corpse that had been struck by lightning.

Lan WangJi stood behind him. He suddenly called out,

**"Wei Ying."**

Wei WuXian's figure paused. A second later, he pretended as if he didn't hear the name, and answered, "What?"

Lan WangJi, "This was transferred from Jin Ling's body, was it not."

It wasn't a question, but a statement.

Wei WuXian didn't say anything. Lan WangJi spoke again,

"You met Jiang WanYin."

It wasn't hard to figure out due to the mark that Zidian left on top of the Curse Mark. Wei WuXian turned around, "As long as both of us are alive in this world, we'd meet for sure, sooner or later."

Lan WangJi, "Do not go..."

Wei WuXian, "If I don't go, how am I supposed to leave?"

"Are you gonna carry me on your back or something?"

"..." Lan WangJi looked at him in silence. Wei WuXian's smile froze on his face, just as a foreboding feeling crossed his mind.

If it were the Lan Zhan from back then, he would definitely be shocked speechless by these words, and either leave with a cold face or completely ignore him. However, it'd be hard to say how the Lan Zhan now would respond. As he had expected, hearing these words, Lan WangJi walked in

front of him, as if he really was going to bend down, kneel, and carry Wei WuXian on his back, despite his honorable status. Shock came upon Wei WuXian once more, “Stop, stop. I wasn’t being serious. It’s only numb because I got hit by Zidian a few times, not that it broke. It’d look bad for a full-grown man like me to be carried on somebody else’s back.”

Lan WangJi asked, “Would it look bad?”

Wei WuXian replied, “Would it look good?”

After a moment of silence, Lan WangJi responded, “But you have also carried me on your back before.”

Wei WuXian, “Did such a thing ever happen? Why don’t I remember?”

Lan WangJi answered in an indifferent tone, “You never remember such things.”

Wei WuXian, “Everyone says that I have a bad memory.

Alright, fine. Anyways, I’m not letting you carry me on your back.”

Lan WangJi, “Are you sure?”

Wei WuXian replied in a resolute manner, “I’m sure.”

The two stayed silent for a while. Suddenly, one of Lan WangJi’s arms wrapped around his back and, as Lan WangJi

bent down slightly, another went toward the back of his knees.

Wei WuXian was both shorter and lighter than him.

Therefore, he was picked up easily, his body was embraced in a pair of firm arms. Wei WuXian didn’t expect his answer to lead to this at all. Both in his past and current lives, it was the first time that he had been treated like this by anyone.

He was horrified, “Lan Zhan!!!”



Carrying him, Lan WangJi both walked and replied to him steadily, “You said that you didn’t want to be carried on my back.”

Wei WuXian, “I didn’t say that I wanted to be carried like this either.”

Fortunately, it was already late into the night. There weren’t any people walking on the streets, so it wasn’t that embarrassing. Wei WuXian wasn’t someone with a thin face either. Having been carried for a few steps, he quickly relaxed. He grinned as he played with the front of Lan WangJi’s clothes, pretending to tug at it, “So you want to see whose face is thicker?”

The cold scent of sandalwood enveloped him. Without paying him attention, Lan WangJi looked straight forward and made no reaction, maintaining the righteous, serious expression. Seeing that nothing could affect him, Wei WuXian thought to himself as he continued to play with Lan WangJi’s clothes, It seems that Lan Zhan’s heart for revenge is actually quite strong. He’s going to make me pay for however many times I’ve teased him in the past and take the fun away. This is such an improvement. Not only has his level of cultivation improved, his face also improved.

Wei WuXian asked, “Lan Zhan, you’ve known that it was me ever since we were at Dafan Mountain, right?”

Lan WangJi, “Yes.”

Wei WuXian wondered, “How could you tell?”

Lan WangJi looked down at him, “You want to know?”

Wei WuXian declared, “Yes.”

Lan WangJi, “You told me yourself.”

Wei WuXian, “Myself? Because of Jin Ling? Because I summoned Wen Ning? None of these, right?”

It seemed as if something had sent ripples through Lan WangJi’s eyes. Yet, the slight waves faded immediately, and his eyes were a still pool of water again.

He spoke in a serious tone, “Think.”

Wei WuXian replied, “I only asked you because I can’t think of the reason.”

This time, no matter how he asked, Lan WangJi refused to answer. With Wei WuXian in his arms, he stepped into an inn. Aside from the front desk clerk who choked on some water, none of the bystanders acted strangely. As they arrived at the door of the room, Wei WuXian spoke, “Okay.

We’re here. It’s time for you to let me down. You don’t have a third hand to open the door...”

Before he finished his words, Lan WangJi did something that was extremely impolite. It was possibly the first time in his whole life that he had ever done such a rude act.

Carrying Wei WuXian, he kicked the door open.

The two doors sprang open, and the person who sat nervously inside instantly wailed, “HanGuang-Jun, I don’t know, I don’t know, I...”

After he realized in what posture the two of them came inside, he stared blankly at them, barely managing to finish the last sentence, “... I really don’t know.”

It really was the “Head Shaker”.

Acting as if he didn’t see anything, Lan WangJi carried Wei WuXian inside and put him on the bamboo mat. Nie HuaiSang’s seemed as if he couldn’t bear to look at the scene, and immediately opened his fan, covering his face with it. Wei WuXian walked around the fan to examine him.

Even after so many years, his past classmate didn’t bear many changes. He looked the same as he did back then.

Although he was born with an elegant, attractive face, his expression made him seem as if one could do anything to him. His stylish outfit showed a fine taste in clothing, which meant that he definitely put plenty of thought into it.

Compared to the leader of a sect, he further resembled a wealthy idler. Even if he wore an imperial robe, he wouldn't seem like a prince; even if he held a saber, he wouldn't seem like a cultivator.

He denied it no matter what, so Lan Wangji put the piece of fabric that the spiritual dog had bitten off onto the table.

Nie HuaiSang felt for his sleeve that lacked a certain scrap, then replied miserably, "I just happened to pass by. I really don't know anything."

Wei WuXian, "If you don't know, I'll talk. As you listen to me, maybe you'll figure that you do know some things after all."

Nie HuaiSang opened and closed his mouth a few times, unable to provide a response. Wei WuXian proceeded, "In the area of Qinghe's Xinglu Ridge, there have been rumors of the 'Man-Eating Ridge' and 'Man-Eating Castle', but there haven't been any actual victims, which is why it's mere hearsay. The hearsay would make it so that normal people avoid the Xinglu Ridge. Thus, its real function is to act as a defense line—the first one, in fact.

"If there's a first, there must be a second. The second defense line is the walking corpses on the Xinglu Ridge.

Even if someone who's not scared of the Man-Eating Castle rumors either purposely or accidentally went inside the ridge, after they see the walking dead, they will definitely flee. However, these walking corpses are small in number and weak in terms of power, so they won't cause any real harm.

"The third defense line is the maze array by the stone castle. The first two are to defend against normal people; only this one is to defend against cultivators. But, nevertheless, it only works against average cultivators. If a cultivator who holds a spiritual weapon or dog and specializes in maze arrays comes, or a cultivator as powerful as HanGuang-Jun, this defense line will have to be broken.

"The three defense measures exist in order for the stone castle on the Xinglu Ridge to remain hidden from the public.

The identity of the people who built the stone castle is quite clear. This is the Nie Sect's area. Aside from the Nie Sect, nobody else is capable of easily setting up these three obstacles in Qinghe. And, moreover, you happened to appear near the stone castle and leave evidence."

"What exactly is the QingheNie Sect's goal of building the Man-Eating Castle on the Xinglu Ridge? Where did the

corpses in the wall come from? Were they eaten? Sect Leader Nie, if you don't give us a proper explanation here, I'm afraid that, after the secret is exposed, all of the sects and clans come here to interrogate you. When the time comes, even if you want to explain things, there won't be anyone to listen to or believe in you."

Nie HuaiSang replied desperately, as if he had given up,

"... It isn't a Man-Eating Castle at all. It's... It's just my sect's ancestral burial ground!"

Wei WuXian questioned, "Ancestral burial ground? Whose ancestral burial ground buries sabers instead of corpses?"

Nie HuaiSang responded with a sullen face, "HanGuang-Jun, before I explain things, can you promise me something?"

Seeing that our two sects have known each other for long and that our older brothers have sworn, no matter what I say after this, you... and the one beside you, must not tell anyone. If the secret is exposed in the future, I'd greatly appreciate it if the two of you can say a few good things as witnesses. You've always been true to your words. If you promise, I'll believe you."

Lan WangJi, "As you wish."

Wei WuXian asked, "You said that it's not a Man-Eating Castle after all, so does it mean that it hasn't eaten anyone?"

Nie HuaiSang clenched his teeth and answered obediently, "... It has."

Wei WuXian, "Wow."

Nie HuaiSang immediately added, “But it was only once!

And the one at fault wasn’t our sect, and it was dozens of

years ago! The rumors of the Man-Eating Castle on the Xinglu Ridge also started since then. I... I only fanned the flames and magnified the rumors.”

**Wei Ying:** In case anyone has forgotten (aka people like Addis the Editor), Wei Ying is Wei WuXian’s birth name.

One’s birth name could only be called by a close friend/family member, or else it would have been considered rude. Lan WangJi calls Wei WuXian Wei Ying because they were classmates once.

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## **GDC Chapter 26: Malice**

Lan WangJi, “The details, please.”

Sitting down, his polite words were almost as powerful as a threat. Nie HuaiSang finally started his explanation.

He began, “HanGuang-Jun, you know that we, the Nie Sect, are different from the other sects. Because our sect’s founder was a butcher, the other sects cultivate using swords, while our sect, on the other hand, cultivates using sabers.”

This was known by everyone and was by no means a secret. Even the sect motif of the QingheNie Sect was the vicious head of a beast that resembled a dog or a pig. Nie HuaiSang continued, “Because our cultivation method was different from those of the other sects’ and our founder was originally a butcher, it was only natural for blood to be shed.

The sabers of our past sect leaders were all heavy with hostile energy and killing intent. Almost every single sect leader met a sudden death from a qi deviation explosion.

Their irritable tempers also had a lot to do with this.”

Wei WuXian raised a brow, “Now, this is getting quite close to demonic cultivation.”

Nie HuaiSang quickly defended, “It’s different! Demonic cultivation is only demonic cultivation because it uses human lives. But, instead of human lives, our sect’s sabers use the lives of those evil spirits and beasts. Throughout their whole lives, they’ve been killing such things, so if they aren’t able to kill them any longer, they’d cause trouble and disrupt the sect. A saber spirit only deems one person as its

master, allowing nobody else to use it. It’s not like we later generations can melt the sabers. First, it’d be disrespectful to the ancestors; second, it’s possible that even melting them won’t solve the problem.”

Wei WuXian commented, “Quite full of themselves, aren’t they?”

Nie HuaiSang, “Indeed. The sabers who fought and cultivated alongside our ancestors are indeed in a position to be full of themselves.”

He continued, “As the generations went on, the sect leaders had higher levels of cultivation, and the problem also worsened. That is, until the sixth sect leader came up with a solution.”

Wei WuXian asked, “To build the Man-Eating Castle?”

Nie HuaiSang, “No, no. Although they are connected, this solution only appeared later. The sixth sect leader did this: he built two coffins for his father’s and his grandfather’s sabers, then dug a tomb. Inside the tomb, instead of any valuable treasures, he put hundreds of corpses that were about to **transform**.”

Lan WangJi frowned slightly. Nie HuaiSang immediately blurted, “HanGuang-Jun, I can explain! They weren’t killed by our sect’s people! We had to gather them from place to place! We also bought a bunch of them at high prices. The sixth sect leader said that, if the saber spirits wanted to fight with evil beings, then give them evil beings for them to fight forever. The pre-transformation corpses were buried along with the sword-containing coffins, like they were burial goods for the saber spirits. The saber spirits

would suppress the transformation of the corpses and, at the same time, the corpses would calm the sword spirits' desire and fury. The

situation would go on as they were, with the two sides keeping each other in check. Only by this method did the future generations attain peace.”

Wei WuXian asked again, “Then why was a stone castle built afterward? Why were the corpses buried inside the walls? And, didn’t you say that it did eat a few people?”

Nie HuaiSang answered, “These questions are actually the same question. I guess... you can say that it did eat people.

But it wasn’t on purpose!!! Our sixth sect leader constructed the saber tomb in such a way that it looked like the average tomb, and the future generations followed how he did it.

But, about fifty years ago, the tomb was dug up by some grave robbers.”

Wei WuXian made an “oh” sound. He silently exclaimed, What a case of waking the sleeping lion.

Nie HuaiSang, “For an event as big as building a tomb, no matter how cautious and discreet one can be, it’s impossible for everything to stay hidden. The grave robbers pried into the matter and firmly believed that there was a huge tomb from past dynasties in the Xinglu Ridge. They planned this out a long time ago and came prepared. Among the unruly group of people, there were actually one or two who had true skills, allowing the mob to locate the orientation, pass the maze array, and find our saber tomb. They’ve seen enough dead people in their lives, so, after digging a hole and entering the tomb, they weren’t really scared of the corpses. But they searched everywhere for gold and treasures, breathing next to the corpses, and, even worse, they were youthful men in the prime of their lives, filled with yang energy. Remember, the corpses lying inside were all about to transform!

“It wasn’t hard to figure out what happened. Ten-or-so corpses transformed immediately.

“However, these grave robbers weren’t average people.

With a complete set of tools, they actually managed to somehow kill the walking corpses once more. After the fight, there was flesh and blood all over the ground. They finally realized that the tomb was dangerous and got ready to leave. But, just as they were leaving, they were eaten!

“The number of corpses put in the tomb was strictly controlled. It was neither more, neither less, just enough to be at a balance with the saber spirits. It would’ve been fine if the grave robbers caused just the transformation, since, after they left, the saber spirits would’ve suppressed the transformation again. But, with the chaos they caused, the corpses were all cut to pieces, and so there were suddenly a few less corpses than it began with. For the saber tomb to ensure that there were enough fierce corpses and sword spirits to suppress each other, it... it could only... close itself off and trap them inside the tomb for the group to make up for the shortage they had caused.

“Since the saber tomb was destroyed, the sect leader at that time began to think of different methods. He chose another spot on the Xinglu Ridge and built a saber hall instead of a saber tomb. In case grave robbers came again, he hid the corpses inside the walls in disguise.

“The sword hall was the rumored ‘Man-Eating Castle’.

When the grave robbers came to Qinghe, they pretended to be hunters. They never returned after going into the Xinglu Ridge and left no corpses behind, so people started to say that they were devoured by a monster in the ridge. Then, after the stone castles were built, before the new maze array was set up, a passerby accidentally came upon it

again. Luckily, no doors were built on the castles, so he couldn’t venture inside. But, after leaving the ridge, he told everyone that there were a group of strange, white castles in the Xinglu Ridge and that the man-eating monster must have dwelled there. We thought that it’d be beneficial for the rumors to spread so that nobody dared to go near the area, so we exaggerated a bit and created the legend of the



‘Man-Eating Castle’. But it really can eat humans!”

Nie HuaiSang took out a handkerchief and a white stone the size of a garlic head from within his **sleeves**. He used the handkerchief to wipe away sweat and passed the white stone over, “The two of you can take a look at this.”

Wei WuXian took the stone. After having a better look at it, he found something white that protruded from the stone.

It looked like... the bone of a human’s finger.

He immediately realized what was going on. Nie HuaiSang finished wiping his sweat and continued, “That... Young Master Jin... somehow made an explosion that created a hole in the wall. To be able to break such a thick wall must have meant that he also carried a lot of spiritual tools on him—but wait, that’s not the point... What I’m saying is that the area he blew up just happened to be the earliest saber hall we built in the Xinglu Ridge. Back then, we didn’t think of using stone bricks on the both sides and filling the center with soil to prevent yang energy from going in, so that they can’t easily transform. We simply put the corpses inside. So, when Young Master Jin made the opening, he didn’t realize that he also destroyed a skeleton that was buried inside.

Before long, he was sucked into the walls of the castle, in place of the corpse that he blew up... Every so often, I go to the Xinglu Ridge to check things out. Today, when I went, I found this. Just as I picked up the stone, a dog came after

me. Ah... The sword hall is pretty much our ancestral tomb. I really...”

The more Nie HuaiSang talked, the more miserable he felt,

“Most cultivators know that this is our area, so they’d never night-hunt around Qinghe. Who knew that...”

Who knew that he had such bad luck. First, the disobedient Jin Ling had his mind set on the Xinglu Ridge, and then the two in search of where the ghost hand pointed, Lan WangJi and Wei WuXian, came as well. He spoke again,

“HanGuang-Jun and you... I already said that you mustn't tell anyone else about this. Or else...”

Or else, seeing from the QingheNie Sect's half-dead situation right now, if this was released to the public, Nie HuaiSang would become a sinner, a disgrace to his ancestors even if he died. It was only natural that he'd rather be the secret laughingstock of all the sects instead of focusing on cultivation or daring to sharpen his saber's blade. If his cultivation reached a certain level, he would gradually become more irritable and, in the end, die with anger the same way that his brother and ancestors died.

Even after his death, his sword would haunt the living and disrupt the peace of the whole sect. If so, being a worthless person even seemed better.

It was quite an unsolvable problem. Ever since the founder of the Nie Sect, this had been the same. Surely it didn't mean that the future generations would have to deny the path and basis that the founder forged? All of the cultivation sects were skilled in different areas. Similar to how the GusuLan Sect was skilled at music, the violence and power of the QingheNie Sect's saber spirits were how it outshone the other sects. If it abandoned its founder's ideal and started anew in search of a different path, who knew

how many years it'd take, or if it'd even succeed or not.

Moreover, Nie HuaiSang would never dare to betray the Nie Sect and cultivate a different path. Because of this, his only choice was to be a good-for-nothing.

If he weren't a sect leader and spent his whole life the same way as he did back in the Cloud Recesses, fooling around for entire days, he'd certainly be in a more comfortable position than he was now. But, since his brother had passed away already, no matter how hard it was for him, he'd still have to take the responsibility on his shoulders and stumble forward.

Nie HuaiSang left after telling them again and again not to say anything, and Wei WuXian blanked out for a while.

Suddenly, he felt Lan WangJi walk over. Lan WangJi knelt with a single leg in front of him, then proceeded to roll up his trousers with an earnest

face. He hurriedly spoke, “Wait, again?”

Lan WangJi, “We will remove the Curse Mark first.”

Within one day, HanGuang-Jun had kneeled in such a way so many times in front of him. Although Lan WangJi looked quite serious, he really couldn’t bear to look at the scene.

Wei WuXian spoke, “I’ll do it myself.” Quickly rolling up the trouser legs, he could see that the Curse Mark covered the entire lower half of his leg, passed his knees, and climbed onto the upper half. Wei WuXian took a glance at it, “It’s already passed my thighs.”

Lan WangJi turned his head away and did not answer. Wei WuXian found it quite odd, “Lan Zhan?”

**Transform:** This refers to the turning of a normal corpse to a “walking corpse” or “fierce corpse”. If anyone calls this process “zombify” or these corpses “zombies” (such as the

translator of Daomu Biji), I will send knives to their house.

**Sleeves:** In Ancient Chinese clothing, there were openings inside of sleeves for storing things.

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## **GDC Chapter 27: Malice**

Only then did Lan WangJi turn to the front again, gaze still slightly off to the side. Seeing this, Wei WuXian blinked his eyes, wanting to make fun of him for some reason. Just as he was about to tease Lan WangJi, a shattering sound suddenly came from by the desk.

They both stood up to look. The teacups and teapot broke to pieces on the ground. A **Qiankun Pouch** lay amid the white shards of porcelain and the tea that spilled out. The surface of the bag went up and down, as if something was trapped inside, eager to come out.

Although the Qiankun Pouch was only the size of a fist, it was specially made to store things. Complex incantations were also sewn on both the inside and the outside, adding a few more sealing layers. Lan WangJi originally sealed the arm inside the pouch and put it under a teacup on the table.

Now, seeing its agitation, they finally remembered that it was time to perform Rest. If not for the short nightly duets they perform to calm it, no matter how strong the Qiankun Pouch's power of suppression was, it couldn't trap the ghost hand alone.

Wei WuXian felt for the bamboo flute that had been by his waist, but he found nothing. Turning around, he saw that Lan WangJi already had the flute in his hands. Lan WangJi's head tilted slightly downward. He only handed the flute back after carving on it for a while, in a dedicated manner.

Taking the flute back, Wei WuXian noticed that, after it had been adjusted, even rough details such as the finger holes were much finer.

Lan WangJi, "Play it properly."

Remembering the horrible duet they played in the Mingshi that angered Lan QiRen to the point of waking up from a coma and fainting again, Wei WuXian laughed so hard that he almost fell on the ground, thinking to himself, It must have been tough for him these few days, tolerating this for so long. He stopped himself from fooling around any longer and, with a serious expression, raised the flute to his lips.

However, having only played a few notes, the Qiankun Pouch suddenly multiplied in size and stood upright on the ground!

A note cracked with a "tut". Wei WuXian commented, "Has it gotten too used to the bad playing? I'm playing properly for once, and it doesn't even like it."

As if replying him, the Qiankun Pouch flung itself at Wei WuXian. Lan WangJi's melody took a sharp turn. With one smooth gesture, the seven strings vibrated at once, emitting a noise so strong that it almost seemed like an avalanche.

After the sound, the Qiankun Pouch fell backward to the ground again. As if nothing had happened, Wei WuXian continued playing. Lan WangJi's wrist softened. Following the tune of Rest, the guqin's melody became calm once more, and gradually blended with the flute's.

The song finished, and the Qiankun Pouch finally shrunk to the size it had been, remaining motionless. Wei WuXian stuck the flute back by his waist, "In these few days, it's never looked as impatient as this before. It seems as if it was provoked by something."

Lan WangJi nodded and turned to him, "And, it was something on you."

Wei WuXian immediately looked downward at himself.

Today, there was only one thing on him that was different—

the Curse Mark that had been transferred to him from Jin Ling.

Jin Ling's Curse Mark was left on him when he was at the stone castles of the Xinglu Ridge. Seeing how strongly the ghost hand reacted to the Curse Mark, did it mean that...

Wei WuXian, "Do you mean that another part of his body might be within the walls of the Nie Sect's Saber Hall?"

On the next morning, the two departed again, heading back to the Xinglu Ridge.

Yesterday, Nie HuaiSang had been caught and confessed everything. Over the night, he called for all of the sect's reliable disciples to clean up the mess that the intruders created. When Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi walked over, the piece of wall that Wei WuXian dug Jin Ling out of had just been filled and a new corpse was already put inside.

Watching the white bricks stack up neatly, he wiped some sweat off his brows. However, as he turned around, his legs almost gave out. He pulled a cringing smile onto his face,

"HanGuang-Jun...and you..."

Wei WuXian waved his hands as he grinned, “Sect Leader Nie, you’re building the walls?”

Nie HuaiSang wiped sweat away with his handkerchief, rubbing so many times that he almost took a layer of skin away, “Yes, yes...”

Wei WuXian said in a voice filled with much empathy and a dash of timidity, “My apologies. I’m really sorry for the inconvenience, but you might need to build the wall again afterwards.”

Nie HuaiSang, “Yes, yes... What?! Wait!”

Before he could finish his sentence, Bichen unsheathed.

Nie HuaiSang gaped as he watched the brick wall, which he repaired mere moment ago, crack open again.

Destruction was always easier than restoration. Wei WuXian’s speed at taking bricks down was countless times faster than their speed at stacking bricks. Nie HuaiSang trembled as he tightly gripped his fan, feeling so wronged that he was on the verge of bursting into tears. Yet, since HanGuang-Jun stood on the side and commented nothing, he didn’t dare to say anything either. After Lan WangJi explained the situation to him in a concise manner, he immediately swore to the Heavens and Earth, “Nonsense!

That’s utter nonsense! The corpses that our Saber Hall uses are all complete with each limb attached. It’s impossible for there to be some armless male corpse. If you don’t believe me, I’ll take apart the wall with you and prove my innocence. But afterwards you must put them back as soon as possible, without any delay. After all, this is our ancestral burial ground...”

A few disciples of the Nie Sect also joined them. Now that there were other people doing the work, Wei WuXian backed off and stood on the side, waiting for results. After an hour, the stone bricks on the wall that Jin Ling had been buried in were mostly taken off. Some disciples put on face masks while others swallowed special red-colored pills, so that the breathing and human energy didn’t cause corpse transformations. Among the black dirt, an ashen hand or a vein-laced foot sometimes poked out, in addition to the

tangled, grimey hair plastered everywhere. Each and every male corpse was hastily cleaned and set row-by-row on the ground.

The corpses came in all shapes and sizes—some were already skeletons, some were in the process of rotting, some were still quite fresh. However, every single one of them had a complete body. They didn't find any male corpse that was missing a left arm.

Nie HuaiSang spoke warily, "Taking apart this one wall is enough, isn't it? Does any more need to be taken down?

Probably not, right?"

It was indeed enough. The Curse Mark on Jin Ling's body was extremely dark in color, so the being that created it was most likely buried nearby him and the range would definitely not exceed this wall. Wei WuXian squatted down by a row of corpses. After pondering for a few moments, he turned to Lan WangJi, "Should we get the Qiankun Pouch?"

Taking the left hand out of the Qiankun Pouch for it to identify the body on its own wouldn't be a bad idea.

However, if it was too close to the other limbs of the corpse, it'd be hard not to agitate it and trigger worse situations.

And, due to the abundance of dark energy in this special location, the level of danger multiplied. This was why they carefully chose to come during daytime. Wei WuXian shook his head and thought to himself, This doesn't mean that the arm doesn't belong to a man, does it? No, that'd be impossible. I can tell whether a hand belongs to a man or a woman at first sight... Then, would it mean that the owner has three arms?!

Just as he was about to laugh at his own thought, Lan WangJi spoke again, "The legs."

With his reminder, Wei WuXian finally remembered. He overlooked the fact that the Curse Mark didn't spread any

further than his legs. He quickly called, "Take off the pants!

Take off the pants!”

Nie HuaiSang was shocked to death, “Why would you say such a shameful thing in front of HanGuang-Jun?”

Wei WuXian responded, “How was it shameful? We’re all men, anyways. Help me take off all of the corpses’ pants.

Only the male corpses! This has nothing to do with the female ones.” As he spoke, he started reaching out toward the belt sashes of the corpses on the ground. It really was unfortunate for Nie HuaiSang. He didn’t expect at all that, after confessing everything yesterday, today, he needed to take off the corpses’ pants right inside the Saber Hall of his ancestors. Moreover, they were male corpses. With a face full of tears, he thought that, for sure, after he died, he would be slapped once on the face by every ancestor in the QingheNie Sect and end up injured so badly that he’d be handicapped even after he reincarnated. Luckily, Wei WuXian’s act was stopped by Lan WangJi. Just as Nie HuaiSang was about to praise how worthy of his title HanGuang-Jun was, he heard him speak, “I will do it.”

Wei WuXian, “You’ll do it? You’re really going to do such a thing?”

The corners of Lan WangJi’s brows seemed to be twitching slightly, as if he was holding something back. He repeated,

“Do not move. I will do it.”

This was the worst of all the shocks Nie HuaiSang experienced today.

Of course, Lan WangJi wouldn’t actually use his hands to pull on the corpses’ pants. He simply used Bichen and lightly sliced open the clothing on the corpses, revealing the skin inside. This wasn’t needed for some of the corpses, as

the clothes were already quite ragged. A few moments later, he spoke up, “I found it.”

Everyone immediately looked toward the ground. On both thighs of the corpse beside Lan WangJi’s white boots, there were two light, circular



marks. The stitches of the flesh-colored threads were tightly sewn around. There was a faint difference between the colors of the skin above and below the stitches. Clearly, the legs and upper body of the corpse didn't belong to the same person.

This pair of legs was sewn on by someone!

Nie HuaiSang was already shocked speechless. Wei WuXian inquired, "Who chooses the corpses that the Nie Sect uses for the Saber Hall?"

Nie HuaiSang replied with a glazed expression, "Usually, the past sect leaders chose and stored them when they were still alive. My brother passed away at an earlier age.

He didn't have enough, so I also helped him choose some...

I kept whichever corpses that were complete with all limbs. I don't know about anything other than this..."

It'd be impossible to get anything out of him as to who exactly sneaked the corpse inside. From the people who provided the corpses to the disciples of the Nie Sect, there were countless suspects. It was likely that the truth would be revealed only if they found all body parts and pieced the corpse and soul together.

Finally having managed to separate the pair of legs and the other half of the male corpse, Wei WuXian put them inside a new Qiankun Pouch as he spoke to Lan WangJi,

"Looks like our dear friend here was cut to pieces. And, not only that, the parts were scattered all over the place—one piece here, one piece there. Just how much hatred did the

murderer hold for him? We can only hope that the pieces aren't too tiny."

Although Nie HuaiSang still said "see you" when they set off, judging from his frightened face, he most likely didn't want to see them ever again for the rest of his life. The two left the Xinglu Ridge and returned to the inn. Upon arriving at the relatively safe place, they took out the three limbs and started

to examine them. As they had expected, the pair of legs were of the same color as the severed arm. And, if they were put close together, they would react strongly, vibrating nonstop as if they wanted to join together. But the efforts were useless, as there was still one part of the body between them that was missing. It was certain that they belonged to the same person.

Aside from the fact that this was a man with a tall physique, long limbs, a muscular body, and a high level of cultivation, they knew nothing else about the mysterious corpse. Fortunately, the ghost hand soon pointed at where the next step would take place—the Southwest.

Following its direction, Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi made their way to Yueyang.

**Qiankun Pouch:** This was called the Qiankun Bag in past chapters, but now it has been changed to Qiankun Pouch because it is more suitable for its size.

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## **GDC Chapter 28: Dew**

After entering the city, the two walked side-by-side through the bustling crowd. All of a sudden, Lan WangJi asked, “How is the Curse Mark?”

Wei WuXian, “Jin Ling was buried too close to our dear friend and got stained with quite a lot of resentful energy. It faded a bit, but it’s not completely gone. The chances are we can only find a way to remove it after we find the whole corpse or at least the head. It doesn’t really cause much trouble anyways.”

The “dear friend” was none other than the man that had been cut to pieces. Since they didn’t know who he was, Wei WuXian suggested that they referred to him as a “dear friend”. Lan WangJi didn’t say anything after hearing it, but he didn’t object to it either, which could be interpreted as a silent approval. Of course, he himself wouldn’t ever use the word.

Lan WangJi, “How much is ‘a bit’?”

Wei WuXian indicated with his hands, “A bit is just a bit.

How do I explain it? Should I take my clothes off and show you?”

Lan WangJi’s brows shifted slightly, as if he was actually worried that Wei WuXian would strip right here and right now. He replied with an indifferent tone, “Take them off after we return.”

Wei WuXian laughed, whirled around, and walked a few steps facing backward. Before, in order to escape as soon as

possible, he desperately tried to disgust others, from feigning madness to purposely losing face. Now that his identity was revealed, if he were anyone else, he would’ve felt extremely ashamed remembering all those things he did. Only someone with a face as thick as Wei WuXian would carry on as if he wasn’t involved in anything. Speaking of it, if he were anyone else with at least some face, he would never have done ridiculous things such as climbing into someone’s bed at night, insisting on sharing a **bathtub** together, and asking if he looked pretty after putting on makeup. Since he pretended that he didn’t remember anything, Lan WangJi naturally refrained from bringing up the subject, the two acting as if nothing had happened.

Today was the first time he made such a joke again after his identity was no longer a secret. When he finished laughing, Wei WuXian immediately put on a serious face, “HanGuang-Jun, do you think that the people who set our dear friend’s hand in Mo Village and made it attack your juniors, and the people who sewed his legs on another corpse and buried them in the wall, are the same group of people?”

Both in the past and the present, in his mind, he directly called Lan WangJi by his first name, but he got used to the last few days of calling him by his **title**. Besides, him calling this name created a tone of exaggerated seriousness, sounding unexplainably funny. Thus, when they were outside, he continued to call him in such a semi-earnest way.

Lan WangJi, “There are two groups.”

Wei WuXian, “Well, I agree. Taking such pains to sew the legs to another corpse and hide them in a wall obviously meant that they didn’t want the

limbs to be discovered. If so, they wouldn't have purposely tossed out the left hand to attack the GusuLan Sect's people, since it would definitely

have caused attention and investigation. One went to great lengths to hide everything, while the other attacked rashly, almost as if it wanted to be discovered. They're probably not the same group of people."

Everything that needed to be said had been said. Lan WangJi seemed like he didn't have anything else to say anymore, but responded with an approving "mnn" anyway.

Wei WuXian turned around, speaking as he walked, "The people who hid the legs knew about the QingheNie Sect's Saber Hall tradition, while the people who let the left hand loose knew about the GusuLan Sect's plans. I don't think any of them have simple intents. There are more and more secrets."

Lan WangJi, "One step at a time."

Wei WuXian, "How did you recognize me?"

Lan WangJi, "Think for yourself."

Questions and answers passed quickly between them, without even a moment of rest. Wei WuXian originally wanted to wait until Lan WangJi was not paying attention and make him blurt out the answer to the last question.

Even though he still didn't succeed, he wasn't discouraged at all and continued to switch the topics of their conversation at a quick pace, "I've never been to Yueyang.

Before, I've always had other people to inquire about things for me. This time, I'm gonna take a break and you can go ask around. Would you mind, HanGuang-Jun?"

Lan WangJi turned around and got going at once. Wei WuXian immediately interrupted, "Wait. HanGuang-Jun, may I ask where you're going?"

Lan WangJi looked back, "To find the cultivational sect of this area."

Wei WuXian tugged at his **sword tassel** and dragged him in the opposite direction, “Why would you find them? This is their area; even if they know, they wouldn’t tell you. They either couldn’t deal with it and hid it so that they didn’t lose face, or tried as hard as they could since they didn’t want other people to meddle with things. My honorable HanGuang-Jun, it isn’t that I want to purposely shame you, but you really can’t do without me when handling things outside. If you ask around in such a manner, I’d be surprised if you actually managed to get results.”

Although these words were a bit rude, tenderness pooled within Lan WangJi’s eyes. Again, he spoke in a low voice,

“Mnn.”

Wei WuXian laughed, “What did you ‘mnn’ for? That’s not how you should’ve responded.” Meanwhile, in his heart, he commented gleefully, “Mnn” is the only thing he knows to say. He’s still so stuffy!

Lan WangJi, “Then, how should I ask?”

Wei WuXian pointed to the side, “Go over there, of course.”

He pointed toward a wide street. Bright red banners of all shapes and sizes hung on both sides of the street, fluttering in the wind. Every single shop opened its doors widely, with round, black jars placed from within to outside the entrance.

There were also waiters holding trays of small **liquor bowls**, recommending their shops to the passerby.

The strong scent of liquor drifted throughout the street.

No wonder Wei WuXian walked slower and slower. He

stopped altogether when they arrived at the next street corner, and even dragged Lan WangJi to a halt.

Wei WuXian put on a serious face, “The waiters here are usually young and hardworking. With so many customers a day and so many mouths spreading

gossip, nothing strange going on around the area would escape their ears and eyes.”

Lan WangJi replied with a “mnn”, but it was written all over his face that “you just want to have a few drinks, don’t you?”

Wei WuXian pretended as if he couldn’t understand Lan WangJi’s expression. Continuing to pull on the other’s sword tassel, he stepped into the street of liquor shops with beaming eyes. At once, the waiters from five or six different shops came over, each more enthusiastic than the next,

“Would you like a taste? The He family’s liquor is well-known all around the area!”

“Young Master, have a taste of this. You don’t have to pay.

If you enjoyed the liquor, then come to our shop.”

“This one doesn’t smell strong, but wait until you drink it up!”

“If you can still stand after you finish this, I’ll adopt your surname!”

Hearing this, Wei WuXian responded, “Very well!” He took over the liquor bowl that waiter held, drank it up, and showed him the emptied bowl with a grin, “Adopt my surname?”

Surprisingly, the waiter wasn’t scared. Sticking his chin up, he looked even more confident, “I meant if you drink a

whole jar!”

Wei WuXian, “Then, give me... three jars.”

The waiter was more than delighted and rushed back inside the shop. Wei WuXian turned to Lan WangJi, “We’re doing business here, aren’t we? First we help their business, then we talk about other things. After we pay, it’ll be easy to get them talking.”

Lan WangJi took out money to pay.

The two walked inside the shop. Inside, there were wooden tables and chairs for the customers to rest and chat. One of the other waiters in the shop saw how Lan Wangji looked and figured that he wasn't the average person. Not daring to slight him, he only directed them to a table after he wiped the table and chairs for a long while.

With two jars by his foot and another in his hand, Wei WuXian chatted with the waiter for a few moments, then cut to the chase, asking again for any strange things that had happened in the area. The waiter was also a talkative person. He rubbed his hands together, "What sort of strange things?"

"Haunted houses, deserted cemeteries, corpses that were cut apart and so on."

The waiter's eyes darted back and forth between them,

"Hmm... What do you do for a living? You and him."

Wei WuXian, "Haven't you guessed it already?"

The waiter understood, "Of course. It's easy to guess. You two must be one of those cultivators who fly around in the clouds and Heavens. Especially the one next to you. Among average folks, I've never seen such a... such a..."

Wei WuXian grinned, "Such a pretty person."

The waiter laughed, "If you say this, the young master next to you will be displeased. Strange things, wasn't it?"

They did happen. Not now, but ten years ago. Walk in this direction. After you leave the city, walk for around two miles, and you'd see quite a lovely residence. I don't know if their signboard is still there or not. It's the Chang Clan's residence."

Wei WuXian, "What's wrong with the residence?"

"The entire clan died!" The waiter said, "You asked for strange things, so of course I'm telling you the strangest of things. The entire clan was wiped out,

and I heard that they were frightened to death!”

Hearing this, Lan WangJi was absorbed in thought, appearing as if he remembered something. On the other hand, Wei WuXian didn’t notice anything, “Is there any cultivational sects stationed around the area?” It must have been an extremely cruel being if it was able to frighten all members of an entire clan to death. Not every sect was like the QingheNie Sect, having difficulties that it couldn’t mention. Most sects would never tolerate the appearance of something like this in their area. The waiter replied, “Yes. Of course there is.”

Wei WuXian, “Then how did they deal with the situation?”

“Deal with the situation?” The waiter swung the cleaning rag onto his shoulder and also sat down, revealing the secret that he had been keeping in for so long, “Young Master, do you know what the surname of the cultivational sect in Yueyang was? It was Chang. The clan who died was their **clan**! If everyone died, who would there be to deal with the situation?”

The Chang Clan that was wiped out had been the cultivational sect stationed in this area?!

Wei WuXian had never heard of some YueyangChang Sect before, meaning that it definitely wasn’t a prominent sect, but the fact that a whole clan had been wiped out was definitely a significant event. He immediately asked, “How was the Chang Clan wiped out?”

The waiter, “This is what I’ve heard. One night, the noise of slamming on doors suddenly came from the Chang Clan’s residence.”

Wei WuXian, “The noise of slamming on doors?”

“That’s right! The slamming was so loud that it almost reached the Heavens. In it, there came screams and cries as if everyone was locked inside, unable to come out. Strange, isn’t it? The door was bolted from within, so if you were on the inside and you wanted to get out, you could’ve just just opened it. Why would you slam on the doors? Even if you slam on them, the people outside wouldn’t be able to get you out. Besides, if you couldn’t get out from the doors, couldn’t you climb over the walls?



“The people outside were quite confused. Everyone knew that the Chang Clan was very powerful in the area because the people there cultivated. The head of their clan, Chang Ping, I think, had a sword that could fly and have him stand on it as it flew! Say, something really happened inside and even his own clan couldn’t take care of it, if ordinary people went over, wouldn’t they have been searching for their own deaths? This was why nobody built any ladders or climbed over the walls to peek inside. Just like this, the night passed, and the wailing inside grew quieter and quieter. On the next

day, as the sun came out, the doors of the Chang Clan opened on their own.

“Within the house, among the men and women, ten-or-so masters, and a few dozens of servants, some sat, some lay, vomiting their bladders out. All of them were frightened to death.”

The owner of the liquor shop turned around and scolded,

“You’re gonna die! Why are you not doing work and telling old tales about people dying?”

Wei WuXian, “Five more jars, please.”

Lan WangJi paid the price for ten jars. The owner beamed at once, warning the waiter, “Look after the customers properly. Don’t go running around!”

Wei WuXian, “You can continue.”

Without anything else to worry about, the waiter tried as hard as he could and continued the story in an animated voice, “After then, for a long time, anyone who walked by the Chang Residence at night could hear the noises of slamming on walls coming from the inside!

“Think about it. People like them who fly in the skies have seen countless ghosts and monsters before, yet they were frightened to death. How frightening would that have had to be? If you’re often out at night, you’d definitely bump into some ghosts. Even after they were buried, you can hear them slamming on their coffins! Although the head of their clan, Chang Ping, was away from home and survived...”

Wei WuXian, “Didn’t you say that the whole clan died?”

### Translator’s Notes

**Bathtub:** The bathtub here refers to a large, wooden bucket that was used in Ancient China for bathing purposes.

It’d be quite cramped in there if two people bathe together.

**Title:** This used to be called an “alternative name”. It will now be changed to “title” as it seems more suitable.

**Sword tassel:** Sword tassels are tassels hung on the swords’ hilts, mostly for decorative purposes. They come in all kinds of color, but Lan WangJi’s is probably white.

**Mnn:** When reading out loud in your head, do not imagine a moaning sound. This serves a similar purpose as

“mhm/uh-huh”.

**Liquor bowls:** They look flatter and are shallower than the average cups. This image shows common sizes of liquor bowls:

[https://cbu01.alicdn.com/img/ibank/2014/633/677/1834776336\\_1727173324.jpg](https://cbu01.alicdn.com/img/ibank/2014/633/677/1834776336_1727173324.jpg) (from left to right: 50 ml, 75 ml 100 ml,

and 150 ml). Also, a small jar of liquor holds around a half to one whole liter, while a large jar can hold up to five liters. In this case, the shop is most likely selling smaller jars.

**Clan:** To recap (in case anyone forgot), a clan is the family descending from the founder of the sect. In this case, “clan”

is used instead of “sect” because the Chang Clan is quite small in size, which meant that it probably didn’t have any outer disciples/disciples from foreign sects.

Like Loading...

## **GDC Chapter 29: Dew**

The waiter, “Take it easy. I was just about to mention that.

Everyone did die. Although I said that he survived, it was only for a short while. After a few years, the clan’s head, Chang Ping, died as well. This time, the death was even more horrifying. He was killed by lingchi with a sword! I don’t need to tell you what lingchi is, do I? It’s when the flesh on someone’s body is piece by piece sliced off with a saber or a sword for three thousand and six hundred times, until all of the flesh is gone and there’s only a skeleton left...”

Of course, it was impossible for Wei WuXian not to know what lingchi was. If somebody wanted a book called A Thousand Ways to Die Agonizing Deaths, he’d have been the person who was most qualified to write it. He raised a hand, “I understand. Then, do you know why the Chang Clan was wiped out?”

The waiter, “I heard that it was planned by another cultivational sect. That’s for sure, right? Or else, why did a bunch of people who could cultivate fail to escape? They were definitely trapped inside by something or someone.”

In case the conversation wasn’t going well, the owner of the shop even brought over two side dishes of peanuts and sunflower seeds. Wei WuXian nodded in acknowledgement, and continued while eating sunflower seeds, “Did anyone find out what exactly the something or someone was?”

The waiter laughed, “Young Master, now you’re just joking.

How could we ordinary people who are just trying to get through life know anything about those who fly around in

the skies? Logically, you guys should know more than me since you all cultivate. I’ve only heard some vague talk of how they offended someone whom they shouldn’t have!

Anyways, after that, nobody was left in charge of the evil beings around Yueyang.”

Wei WuXian pondered, “Somebody whom they shouldn’t have offended?”

“That’s right.” The waiter ate two peanuts, “These sects or whatever indeed hold grudges against the others. I’m thinking that the Chang Clan must have been targeted by the other cultivators. Isn’t killing people for the sake of treasures common or something? Those books all said so.

Tales and legends as well. Although I don’t know who exactly did it, it was apparently related to a very famous villain.”

Wei WuXian smiled as he lifted the liquor bowl to his lips, glancing sideways at him, “Let me guess. You’re gonna say that you don’t know who the villain was?”

The waiter cracked up, “Guess again. I definitely know this one. He was called something along the lines of ‘peculiar’...

Right, ‘patriarch’. The YiLing Patriarch!”

Wei WuXian choked, letting out a series of bubbles into the liquor bowl with a splash, “What?”

Him again?!

The waiter confirmed, “Yep, that’s right! His surname was Wei. He’s called **Wei WuQian**, I think. People sound both hateful and scared when they mention him.”

“ ... ”

Wei WuXian thought over it and determined two things—

One: He had never been to Yueyang before, and two: Among all of the people he had killed, none of them died by lingchi.

He felt that this was a bit absurd and looked over at Lan WangJi, as if he wanted an explanation. Lan WangJi had been waiting for this look since quite a while ago. He replied, “We are leaving.”

Wei WuXian immediately understood. Lan WangJi had something to say to him and it couldn’t be said in the liquor shop, under everyone’s noses. He stood up, “Then let’s leave. How much... Right, it’s been paid already. I’m leaving the liquor here for now. I’ll continue drinking after we finish.”

He added, half-jokingly, “Make sure it’s still here when I get back.”

Having already finished more than half of the plate of peanuts, the waiter responded, “Of course! Our shop is honest to everyone, from the old to the young. Leave ‘em here and don’t worry. We’ll wait until you come back to close our shop. Hey, Young Masters, are you going to the Chang Residence right now? Whoa, now that’s pretty cool—I’m from the area and I haven’t even been there! I’ve only dared to sneak a few looks at it from far away. Are you two going inside? What are you going to do?”

Wei WuXian, “We’re also just gonna sneak a few looks, from far away.”

The young waiter had an outgoing personality, getting friendly with strangers a bit too quickly. Although they only chatted for a short while, he was already treating Wei WuXian as if they were friends. He came over to put his arm around Wei WuXian’s shoulder, “Is the work that you two do hard? Do you earn lots of money? Probably a ton, right?”

What a respectable job. Let me ask you something—is it difficult to get started? I...”

As he babbled, he suddenly shut his mouth, nervously looking to the side. He whispered, “Young Master, why is the one beside you... staring at me?”

Wei WuXian followed his gaze just to see Lan WangJi turn around, stand up, and walk outside the liquor shop, “Oh, him. This friend of mine was brought up strictly. He absolutely hates it when other people are being too comfortable with each other in front of him. Isn’t that strange?”

The waiter awkwardly took away his arm, replying in a hushed voice, "Strange indeed. The way he looked over, you'd think that I was putting my arm around his wife..."

With Lan WangJi's hearing ability, it was impossible for him to not catch something just because it was with a lowered voice. Imagining how he'd feel right now, Wei WuXian tried so hard not to laugh that his stomach hurted.

He quickly said to the waiter, "I finished a jar."

The waiter, "I'm sorry?"

Wei WuXian pointed at himself, "I'm standing."

Finally recalling the "if you can still stand after you finish this, I'll adopt your surname" that he said earlier, he blurted out, "Oh... Ohhh! Uhm... Wow! I'm not kidding, but this is my first time seeing someone who can still stand and speak properly after downing a jar. Young Master, what's your surname?"

Wei WuXian, "My surname..." Suddenly remembering the

"Wei WuQian" that the waiter mentioned, the corners of his

lips twitched. He smoothly transitioned, "Is Lan."

The waiter was also someone with a thick face, announcing without any change of expression, "Yes. From today on, my surname will be Lan!"

Under the bright-red banners of the liquor shop, it seemed as if, for one second, Lan WangJi's figure stumbled ever so slightly. With a mischievous smile on his face, Wei WuXian walked over with his hands behind his back and patted his shoulder, "HanGuang-Jun, to thank you for paying the bill, I made him adopt your surname."

After they left the city, the two walked in the direction of where the waiter pointed at. The number of people gradually decreased, while the number of trees increased.

Wei WuXian asked, “Back then, why did you not let me continue asking him?”

Lan WangJi, “I suddenly remembered hearing about what happened in Yueyang. There was no need to continue asking.”

Wei WuXian, “Before you tell me, let me ask you something. Confirm for me that the, uh, wiping out of the Chang Clan wasn’t done by me, was it?”

Other than how he died ten years ago and his soul had been fairly stable, it was impossible that he killed an entire clan and didn’t remember anything!

Lan WangJi, “No.”

Wei WuXian, “Oh.”

It was as if he returned to those days, before he died, of being even worse than a sewer rat, despised by everyone.

He played a role in everything; he was to be blamed for everything. Even if one’s neighbor’s grandson didn’t eat properly and lost five pounds, it was because the child was frightened by stories of the YiLing Patriarch commanding the Ghost General to murder people.

However, Lan WangJi spoke again, “The killing was not done by you, but it was related to you.”

Wei WuXian, “What’s the relationship?”

Lan WangJi, “There are two relationships. First, one of the people who were connected to it shared a past with your mother.”

Wei WuXian stopped in his tracks.

He didn’t know what he was feeling at the moment or how his face looked. Pausing for a moment, he spoke, “... My mother?”

Wei WuXian was the son of Wei ChangZe, a servant of the YunmengJiang Sect, and ZangSe **SanRen**, a **rogue cultivator**. Both Jiang FengMian and his

wife, Yu ZiYuan, were quite familiar with Wei WuXian's parents. Despite this, Jiang FengMian never reminisced about his old friend in front of Wei WuXian and, moreover, Yu ZiYuan never spoke properly to Wei WuXian at all. It was lucky for him if she didn't give him a few whips and send him to kneel in the ancestral hall so that he'd keep his distance from Jiang Cheng. Other people told him most of the things he knew about his parents. He really didn't know much more than what everyone else knew.

Lan WangJi also halted, turning around to look at him,

“Have you heard of the name ‘Xiao XingChen’?”

Wei WuXian searched through his memories, “No.”

Lan WangJi, “‘No’ is correct. He was well-known when he left the mountain twelve years ago. Now, nobody mentions him.”

Twelve years ago just happened to be one year after the siege at YiLing's LuanZang Hill, which meant that he only just missed it. Wei WuXian asked, “What's the mountain?”

Who taught him?”

Lan WangJi, “I do not know which mountain it was. His was taught by a cultivator. Xiao XingChen was a pupil of BaoShan SanRen.”

Wei WuXian finally understood why Lan WangJi said that this person shared a past with his mother, “So, that mean's Xiao XingChen is my **shishu**.”

ZangSe SanRen was also a pupil of BaoShan SanRen.

BaoShan SanRen was a cultivator who lived secluded from the rest of the world, rumored to be of the same generation as Wen Mao and Lan An. Most of the heroes from that generation had already returned to dust, yet BaoShan SanRen was said to have still remained unfallen. If it really was so, then she must be hundreds of years old and have quite a high level of cultivation. Back then, with the lead of Wen Mao, the cultivation world focused on the rise of clans instead of sects, and cultivational forces connected by blood ties rose as if they were bamboo shoots after a spring rain.



Without exception, every cultivator who was slightly famous chose to found a sect. Yet, this cultivator decided to retire into solitude, living in a mountain under the **cultivational name** of **BaoShan SanRen**. Nobody knows, though, which mountain she was embracing. Speaking of it, it was only called retiring into solitude because nobody knew. If after

one retired into solitude, they could still be found easily, it wouldn't be called retiring into solitude anymore.

She lived in an unknown **celestial mountain** and would often secretly take abandoned children up the mountain to be her pupils. However, all of the pupils had to vow that they would devote their whole lives to cultivation, never leaving the mountain or entering human society. Or else, no matter what the reason was, they were never to go back again. They'd need to depend on themselves to survive in the mortal world, cutting all ties with their teacher.

Everyone spoke highly of BaoShan SanRen for her foresight in setting this rule. This was because, during the few hundreds of years, only three of her pupils left the mountain—YanLing **DaoRen**, ZangSe SanRen, and Xiao XingChen. Of these three pupils, none died a peaceful death.

Wei WuXian knew about the fates of the first and second pupils ever since he was young, so no further explanations were needed. Thus, Lan WangJi told him the stories of the last pupil, his shishu.

When Xiao XingChen left the mountain, he was only seventeen. Lan WangJi had never met him in person, but he had heard about Xiao XingChen's talent from others.

At that time, the Sunshot Campaign only finished a few years ago and the siege at Yiling's Luanzang Hill had just ended. All of the prominent sects were recruiting qualified cultivators from all around to be part of them. Xiao XingChen left the mountain in hopes of saving the world.

With his excellent talent and capable teacher, during his first night-hunt, he held a **horsetail whisk** in one hand and

a long sword in the other, entering the mountain alone and claiming first place—he became famous overnight.

As the sects saw such a bright, gifted cultivator at such a young age, they all invited him to their sects. Yet, Xiao XingChen turned down all of the offers. He said that he didn't want to depend on any sects, but he wanted to build a new sect with a close friend that didn't value a bloodline.

He had a soft personality but a solid heart, gentle on the outside but determined on the inside. Whenever someone had a difficult matter at hand, the first thing they thought of was to find him for help. As a person of moral integrity, he never refused either, which was why people often spoke of him with appraisal.

That was around when the wiping out of the Yueyang Clan happened.

**Wei WuQian:** WuXian means “no envies”, while WuQian means “no money”.

**Rogue cultivator:** A rogue cultivator is a cultivator who doesn't belong to any sects and cultivates alone.

**SanRen:** This pretty much means “rogue cultivator”, but it has been kept as pinyin to maintain the flow of the story.

**Shishu:** Similar to shidi and shijie, shishu is used by someone to refer to their “disciple uncle”, their mother's shidi.

**Cultivational name:** This is just another type of name.

It's not important at all, so don't panic because of how “oh my god they already have three to four names and here comes another”.

**BaoShan:** This literally translates as “to embrace a mountain”.

**Celestial mountain:** This refers to a mountain, but more celestial/spiritual there, allowing cultivators to absorb more of the energy there and reach higher levels faster.

**DaoRen:** Similar to SanRen, this just means “cultivator”.

**Horsetail whisk:** A horsetail whisk is often used by cultivators or Daoists in general. It has a variety of meanings and those meanings will not be important. Just understanding that it’s probably white in color and makes Xiao XingChen look like a white lotus should be enough.

Like Loading...

### **GDC Chapter 30: Dew**

One day, the Yueyang Clan’s leader went out night-hunting with a few family members for about half a month.

In the middle of the night, without any warning, they received the bad news and immediately hurried back. After the mourning, they only found out that someone purposely destroyed their protective array and let in a group of powerful evil spirits. Other than that, they knew nothing.

In most cases, only few people knew about the tragedies that happened in smaller clans, but the circumstances back then were different. The Sunshot Campaign finished long ago, while the siege at Luanzang Hill only just ended. On the surface, the situation seemed rather stable. With the sudden disclosure of this event, the entire cultivation world was bubbling with discussion, some even exaggerating that it was the revenge of the revived YiLing Patriarch, Wei WuXian. However, there wasn’t any evidence, so it had been impossible to find the killer. Of course, Xiao XingChen didn’t sit back and do nothing. He volunteered to be responsible for the matter and find out the truth for Chang Ping. After a month, the murderer was finally discovered.

The murderer’s name was Xue Yang.

Xue Yang was even younger than Xiao XingChen, nothing more than just a boy. Despite this, he definitely didn’t tone down on his cruelty just because he was young. Ever since the age of fifteen, he had been a delinquent in the area of Kuizhou, known far and wide for his radiant smile, inhumane means, and merciless personality. Everyone’s expressions changed whenever he was brought up in a conversation.

When he was a child dwelling in the streets, it was said that

he developed a hatred that lasted for years toward Chang Ping's father. He committed this crime in vengeance and for some other reasons.

After Xiao XingChen found out the truth, he went across three provinces and Xue Yang was still happily picking fights with others. Taking advantage of the Discussion Conference that was happening at the Jinling Tower of the LanlingJin Sect's residence, when the most prominent sects met up and discussed cultivation methods, Xiao XingChen brought him over, explained the situation, and demanded severe punishment.

With his straightforward list of evidence, most sects didn't have any objections, except for one—the LanlingJin Sect.

Wei WuXian, "Objecting in such a situation would be placing itself against the entire world. Could it be that Xue Yang was a favorite with Jin GuangShan?"

Lan WangJi, "A guest disciple."

Wei WuXian, "He was a foreign disciple? Back then, the LanlingJin Sect was already one of the four most prominent sects, right? Why would they have invited a delinquent to be a guest disciple?"

Lan WangJi, "This is the second connection."

He stared into Wei WuXian's eyes, "Because of the Stygian **Tiger Seal**."

Wei WuXian's heart immediately skipped a beat.

The phrase was definitely not a stranger to him. On the contrary, nobody was more familiar to those three words than him.

Among all of the spiritual weapons he had forged when he was still alive, this was the scariest and most famous one.

When Wei WuXian first created it, he didn't think too much about it. Single-handedly controlling corpses and spirits, of course he'd occasionally grow

tired. Remembering a rare piece of iron ore he happened to have seen in a beast's stomach, he used it to cast a Tiger Seal.

But, after the Tiger Seal had been created, Wei WuXian only used it once before finding out that it did more harm than good.

The Stygian Tiger Seal's powers were considerably greater than what he had imagined. He originally wanted to use it to assist him, but its powers were almost exceeding him, its creator. Moreover, it didn't settle on one single master. This meant that if someone got hold of it, no matter who they were, whether they were good or bad, friend or foe, they were able to use it.

After the seal had been forged, it wasn't that Wei WuXian never thought about destroying it, but since the seal was created with much difficulty, it would've been extremely hard to destroy, costing him both time and energy. And, back then, he had already vaguely understood that he wasn't in a good situation and would be hated by everyone sooner or later. With a weapon as appalling as the Stygian Tiger Seal, others didn't dare to act rashly, so he temporarily kept it. He separated the seal into two halves, making it so that they could only be of use when they were put together, and never used without careful consideration.

He had only used it two times before, and both times caused great bloodshed. The first time was during the Sunshot Campaign. After using it for the second time, he

finally decided to destroy one half of the seal. Before he could completely destroy the other half, the siege at Luanzang Hill happened, and it had since then been beyond his capabilities.

Toward his own creation, Wei WuXian was confident to say that even if the sect that got hold of it, made a temple for it, and offered it incense every single day, the remaining half of the Tiger Seal was just a piece of scrap iron. However, Lan WangJi told him something shocking—it appeared that Xue Yang could rebuild the other half of the seal!

Although Xue Yang was young, he was also quite clever, a bizarre eccentric. The LanlingJin Sect discovered that he could use the remaining half of the

seal to roughly piece together the other half. Even though the recreated version wasn't as powerful and couldn't be used for as long, it could already result in terrible catastrophes.

Wei WuXian understood, "The LanlingJin needed to keep Xue Yang so that he could continue to restore the Stygian Tiger Seal, so they had to protect him."

Perhaps, Xue Yang destroying the Chang Clan wasn't entirely to avenge what they did to him when he was young.

He might have been testing on this clan of live humans what exactly was the extent of the restored Stygian Tiger Seal's powers!

No wonder the rumors connected the case to him. Wei WuXian could almost imagine those cultivators clenching their teeth, "That Wei WuXian! If he didn't make this, our world wouldn't have encountered so many disasters!!!"

Returning to the original thread of conversation, they continued about what happened at the Jinling Tower.

Although the LanlingJin Sect was determined on protecting Xue Yang, Xiao XingChen didn't waver either. As the stalemate continued, they finally startled ChiFeng-Zun, Nie MingJue, who didn't intend on participating in the Discussion Conference. He hurried over to Jinling Tower from far away.

In spite of Nie MingJue being a junior to Jin GuangShan, he conducted himself in a strict manner and refused to tolerate Xue Yang no matter what. With an angry lecture, Jin GuangShan was left with no words and a great deal of embarrassment. Nie MingJue, as the irritable person he was, unsheathed his saber on the spot with the intention of killing Xue Yang. Even when his sworn younger brother LianFang-Zun, Jin GuangYao, attempted to ease the situation, he ordered him to leave. After a harsh scolding, Jin GuangYao hid behind Lan XiChen, not daring to say anything else. In the end, the LanlingJin Sect could only give in.

Ever since Xue Yang was brought to Jinling Tower by Xiao XingChen, he hadn't been scared at all. Even when Nie MingJue's saber was pressed against his neck, he still had a grin on his face. Before he was taken away, he

spoke affectionately to Xiao XingChen, “**Daozhang**, you wouldn’t forget me, would you? Let’s wait and see.”

At this point, Wei WuXian knew that the “wait and see”

would make Xiao XingChen pay an agonizing price.

The LanlingJin Sect was indeed the sect with the thickest face. Although, on Jinling Tower, it promised in front of all of the sects that Xue Yang would be executed, when it left Nie MingJue’s sight, it immediately shut Xue Yang into the dungeons and changed the original decision to a life sentence. Hearing about the matter, Nie MingJue was enraged and pressed on them again. The LanlingJin Sect rambled about, refusing to give him Xue Yang no matter

how hard he tried. All of the other sects watched them from the sidelines, but, shortly afterward, Nie MingJue passed away from Qi deviation.

He cultivated at a faster speed than any other past leader of the Nie Sect, and also died sooner than any of them.

Now that the person who was most difficult to deal with was gone, the LanlingJin Sect became more and more reckless and started to think of worse ideas. Jin GuangShan started to try as hard as he could to get Xue Yang out of the dungeons so that he could continue to restore and examine the Stygian Tiger Seal.

However, this wasn’t exactly something to be proud of. It was impossible for him to save the murderer of an entire clan from the dungeons without a valid reason.

So, they turned their attention to Chang Ping.

From coercion to harassment, in the end, the LanlingJin Sect finally pressured Chang Ping into correcting his words, invalidating all of his past speeches. He announced that the wiping out of the Chang Clan had nothing to do with Xue Yang.

Hearing the news, Xiao XingChen visited him to inquire upon the matter. Chang Ping responded helplessly, “What can I do aside from this? If I don’t tolerate it, the rest of our clan’s people wouldn’t be safe for long. I’m really grateful, Daozhang, but... please don’t help me anymore. Now, helping me would be harming me. I don’t want the YueyangChang Sect to end yet.”

And thus, the tiger had been set free back to the mountains.

Wei WuXian stayed silent.

If he were Chang Ping, he wouldn’t have cared how prominent or powerful the LanlingJin Sect was, or how much glory the road ahead offered him, and he wouldn’t have let the matter go. Instead, he would’ve went to the dungeons on his own, cut Xue Yang up so that he was nothing more than a puddle of flesh on the ground, and summoned his soul back to repeat the process to the point that he regretted ever being born in this world.

But, not everyone was like him, preferring to perish together with his enemy. Some of the Chang Clan’s people were still alive. Chang Ping was also still young, single, and childless, having just took his first few steps on the path of cultivation. No matter if he was threatened with the lives of his remaining family members or his own future and cultivation, he had to think carefully.

Of course, he wasn’t Chang Ping himself. He couldn’t be angered or worried in place of Chang Ping, and he couldn’t bear Chang Ping’s share of mental and physical torment.

After Xue Yang had been released, he started to take revenge again. However, this time, the revenge wasn’t on Xiao XingChen himself.

Xiao XingChen left the mountain alone and had no family.

He only had a friend that he met afterward, named Song Lan. Song Lan was also a cultivator of the time. He was a righteous, determined person and had a fair amount of appraisal. Both of them wanted to build a sect that valued common ideals instead of blood ties, which made them the closest and most like-minded of friends. The people of the time described them as such—Xiao XingChen the bright



moon and gentle breeze; Song **ZiChen** the distant snow and cold frost.

Xue Yang put his hands to this side. Repeating his past technique, he wiped out the Baixue Temple where Song Lan grew up and studied at, and used poison to blind Song Lan's eyes.

This time, with his experience of wiping out a sect, he made sure to not leave any evidence. Although everybody knew that he was the one who did it, what would be the use of that? There wasn't any evidence. And, with Jin GuangShan's deliberate protection and the death of the violent ChiFeng-Zun, nobody could do anything about him.

Wei WuXian found this a bit strange. Although Lan WangJi looked as if he didn't care about anything, from Wei WuXian's past experiences with him, he absolutely couldn't stand wrongdoings, possibly even more than Nie HuaiSang's brother. Back then, the LanlingJin Sect had some dishonest ways of doing things, and Lan WangJi never bothered to be subtle about them. Even until now, he always refused to go to their sect's Discussion Conferences. If two cruel massacres happened, the news would've probably spread over the entire cultivational world and Lan WangJi definitely wouldn't have turned a blind eye to them. Why did he not go and give Xue Yang what he deserved?

Just as he was about to ask, he remembered the scars that the discipline whip gave him.

One lash of the discipline whip would already be quite severe. If Lan WangJi made some sort of a grave mistake and received so many lashes, he had probably been grounded for a few years. It was likely that he was either going through his punishment or waiting for his wounds to

heal during the years when the incidents happened. No wonder he said had only "heard" about what happened.

For some reason, in his heart, Wei WuXian cared quite a lot about those scars. However, it was inconvenient for him to ask directly, so he had to hold his thoughts for now,

"Then, what happened to the Daozhang Xiao XingChen afterwards?"

What happened afterward was certainly a tragic ending.

When he left the mountain and his teacher, Xiao XingChen vowed that he would never go back again. He was a man of his words, but since Song Lan was not only blind but also badly injured, he broke his vow and carried Song Lan back to BaoShan SanRen's residence, asking her to save his friend.

For the sake that they were once teacher and pupil, BaoShan SanRen agreed. Thus, Xiao XingChen left the mountain once more, and he was never seen again.

A year later, Song Lan also left the mountain. To everyone's surprise, his eyes, which were completely blinded, saw light again. However, it wasn't that BaoShan SanRen's medical skills created a miracle, but that Xiao XingChen... dug his own eyes out and gave them to Song Lan, who was only involved in this because of him.

Song Lan originally wanted to seek revenge on Xue Yang.

At this time, Jin GuangShan had already passed away. Jin GuangYao took over the LanlingJin Sect and the position of Sect Leader. To show that things were going to be different, the first thing he did after he came to power was to get rid of Xue Yang. Aside from never mentioning the Stygian Tiger Seal again, he also made amends to restore the sect's reputation, suppressing the rumors. Song Lan went to

search for his past friend's whereabouts. At first, people still heard talk about where he traveled to. After some time, he also disappeared. Moreover, the YueyangChang Sect was a small clan that was generally unheard of. And thus, a lot of things gradually faded away.

Having finished listening to the long story, Wei WuXian sighed softly. A feeling of regret sprouted inside him, Meeting such an end because of something not related to him at all, it really was... If Xiao XingChen was born a few years earlier or if I died a few years later, things wouldn't have had to be like this. If I was alive, how would I have not taken part in the matter? How would I have not made friends with such a person?

Immediately afterward, he laughed at himself bitterly, I would've done something? What could I have done? If I was still alive back then, perhaps the YueyangChang Sect's case didn't even need to be investigated before everyone decided that I did it. If the Daozhang Xiao XingChen bumped into me on the streets and I chatted with him, invite him to drink together, it's likely that he'd hit me with his horsetail whisk, haha.

They had already walked past the Chang Residence, toward a cemetery nearby. Wei WuXian saw the dark-red character of “Chang” on the **pailou** and asked, “Then, why did Chang Ping die afterward? Who killed the remaining members of his clan?”

Before Lan WangJi could answer, a series of bangs came from amid the blue-tinted dusk.

The noise sounded a lot like slamming on doors, but it wasn't. The bangs were carried out with force and at a fast pace, without a moment of rest. They sounded somewhat

muffled, as if there was something separating them from the outside world.

Their faces immediately changed.

The fifty-or-so people of the YueyangChang Sect were currently lying in their coffins, slamming on their coffin lids from the inside. It was at night they were frightened to death—they madly slammed on the doors, but there wasn't anyone to let them out.

This was the slamming on coffins in the Chang Clan's cemetery that the liquor shop's waiter talked about!

However, the waiter said that the haunting was ten years ago and stopped long before now. Why would the slamming happen to start again when they came?

Without passing any words between them, Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi both softened their breathing, stealthily moving without making a sound.

Propping themselves against the pillars of the pailou, they both saw that, in the center of the cemetery, there was a hole amid the tombstones.

It was a deep, recently-created hole with piles of dirt surrounding it. Faint noises came from within the hole.

Someone was digging out a grave.

The two of them held their breaths, attentively waiting for the person in the hole to come out on their own.

Before an hour passed, two people hopped up from inside the opened grave.

Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi could tell that these were two people only because they had good vision. These two appeared as if they were conjoined twins. One carrying the other on their back, they were tightly connected together.

With both of them wearing entirely black clothes, it was extremely hard to tell the two apart.

The person that hopped up had long legs and long arms, standing with his back toward them. The one that he carried seemed lifeless, their head and limbs hanging down. This was only natural. Since the person was dug out from a grave, then it must have been dead. Lifeless was what should've been expected of it.

As he thought, the gravedigger suddenly spun around and saw them.

There was a mass of thick, black mist over the man's face, making it so that nobody could see how their face and features looked!

Wei WuXian knew that he must have casted some sort of strange spell to block his face. Lan WangJi had already unsheathed Bichen, darted into the cemetery, and started the fight. The gravedigger's reaction was extremely quick.

Seeing the attack of Bichen's blue sword glare, he made a **hand seal** and also summoned a sword glare. The sword glare was the same as his face,

surrounded by dense mist, and made it so that it was impossible to see what its color and style was. With a corpse on his back, the gravedigger fought in a strange way. The two sword glares clashed a few times. Lan WangJi summoned Bichen back and held it in his hand, a layer of frost climbing over his face.

Wei WuXian knew why his face suddenly turned cold. It was because, during the fight, even an outsider like him

could tell that the gravedigger was extremely familiar with Lan WangJi's sword moves!

Lan WangJi said nothing. Bichen's attacks were deeper and deeper, attacking with tremendous force. The gravedigger fell back a few times. As if he knew that, with a dead person on his back, he wouldn't be able to win against Lan WangJi and, if they continued to fight, he'd be captured alive, he suddenly fished out a dark-blue talisman from his waist.

A Transportation Talisman!

This type of talisman could instantly transport someone to hundreds of miles away, but it also expended a great amount of spiritual energy. It would take a long time for the user to regain their energy. Those with spiritual energy that wasn't powerful enough wouldn't be able to use them. Thus, although they were of very high quality, it was rare for anybody to use them. Seeing that he was about to escape, Wei WuXian hurriedly clapped twice, got down on one knee, and slammed his fist on the ground.

The strength of his punch passed through layers of dirt, reached the depths of the soil, and penetrated the thick coffin lids, provoking the corpses trapped inside. With crackling noises, four bloodied arms shot up from the ground, grabbing both of the gravedigger's legs!

The gravedigger seemed as if he didn't care at all. He poured his spiritual energy toward the bottom of his legs, blasting the four corpse hands away. Wei WuXian pulled out his bamboo flute. A shrill, piercing melody ripped open the curtain of darkness that had fallen. Two human heads emerged from

the ground along with their bodies, climbing upward from the gravedigger's legs and winding around his

body as if they were snakes. Opening their mouths, they prepared to bite down at his neck and arms.

The gravedigger snorted with disdain, as if he was saying

“what a petty trick”, and sent spiritual energy throughout his body. Yet, this time, only after he released his energy did he realize that he had been fooled.

He sent the corpse that he carried on his back flying off as well!

Wei WuXian laughed uncontrollably as he smacked the tombstone, while Lan WangJi caught the flaccid corpse with one hand and attacked with Bichen using the other. Seeing that what he had just dug out had been snatched away, that he couldn't even win solo against Lan WangJi, let alone the mischief of another person, he didn't dare to stay any longer. He hurling the Transportation Talisman on the ground. After a loud noise, blue flames surged up toward his sky. His figure disappeared into the fire.

Wei WuXian knew that the gravedigger had a

Transportation Talisman on him, which meant that, even if they caught him, he could find an opportunity to escape.

The corpse that he dug out was already a clue, so he didn't have any regrets. He walked over to Lan WangJi, “Let's see who he dug out.”

As he glanced at it, he was somewhat surprised. The head of the corpse had already been split open. From within the cut, there wasn't any blood or brains leaking out, but wads of blackened cotton.

Wei WuXian easily jerked the corpse's head off. With the delicately-crafted dummy head, he sope, “What is this supposed to mean? There's a fake corpse made of cotton and rags buried in the Chang Clan's cemetery?”

Having had weighed the corpse in his hands when he took it, Lan WangJi knew what was wrong, “Not all of it is fake.”

Wei WuXian felt the corpse from head to toe and discovered that, aside from its drooping limbs, only its chest and abdomen felt firm and real. After he tore off the clothes, as he expected, he found that only the torso was real. All of the other body parts were fake.

The head and limbs made from cotton were to “deceive”

the torso, so that it still thought it was attached to its owner’s body. Seeing from the skin tone and the part where the left shoulder cut off, this must be the torso of the dear friend. The gravedigger was here for this.

Wei WuXian straightened up, “It looks like that the person who hid the corpse already noticed that we’re investigating the issue and came to transfer the torso somewhere else in case we find it. To come early isn’t as good as to come in time. We just happened to bump into him, haha. But,” with a change of tone, he continued, “Why was the mist-faced gravedigger so familiar with your sect’s sword style?”

It was obvious that Lan WangJi was also thinking about this matter, the coldness on his face yet to fade. Wei WuXian spoke again, “His cultivation is quite high, enough to support the energy used for one Transportation Talisman.

He casted spells on both his face and sword. It’s understandable that he casted a spell on his face—after all, he wouldn’t have wanted to be seen. But most lesser-known cultivators wouldn’t have needed to cast a spell on their sword to cover it, unless, of course, it was either somewhat or very famous in the cultivation world. He’d then have had to cover it, because if everyone could recognize his sword glare, his identity would be revealed as soon as his sword was revealed.”

Wei WuXian asked suggestively, “HanGuang-Jun, from your fight before, do you think that he’s someone you know really well?”

It’d be inconvenient for him to be more specific, such as Lan XiChen or Lan QiRen.

Lan WangJi answered assuredly, “No.”

Wei WuXian was quite confident in Lan WangJi's answer. To him, Lan WangJi wasn't the kind of person who'd hide or run away from the truth. If he denied it, that meant it must have been wrong. He didn't like to lie, either. In Wei WuXian's opinion, if someone asked Lan WangJi to lie, he'd rather silence himself and not talk at all. Thus, Wei WuXian immediately excluded the possibility of the gravedigger being these two.

Lan WangJi put the torso into another double-layered Qiankun Pouch and put it away properly. The two walked around for a while and wandered back to the street of the liquor shop.

The young waiter was true to his words. Most of the other liquor shops on this street had closed already, but their banner was still up and their lights were still on. The waiter was outside, eating from a large bowl. Seeing them, he beamed, "You're back! We kept our word, didn't we? Did you two see anything?"

Wei WuXian laughed as he answered. With Lan WangJi, he walked back to the table they sat during the day.

With liquor jars crowding on the table and by his feet, he spoke, "Right, what were we talking about? Suddenly interrupted by the gravedigger, I still don't know how Chang Ping died."

Lan WangJi continued the explanation with simple, direct words.

Xue Yang, Xiao XingChen, and Song Lan left one by one.

Some disappearing, some passing away. Quite a few years after the incident passed, one day, Chang Ping and the remainder of his clan's members died overnight due to lingchi. Moreover, Chang Ping's eyes were dug out.

This time, nobody could find out who the murderer was.

After all, everyone apart of it had vanished. However, there was one thing that could be determined.

From the wounds, it could be verified that the sword that was used to lingchi them had been Xiao XingChen's sword, Shuanghua.



The bowl of liquor that Wei WuXian was holding stopped in front of his mouth. He was shocked by this turn of events,

“He was lingchi-ed by Xiao XingChen’s sword? Then was he the one who did it?”

Lan WangJi, “Xiao XingChen had disappeared. There were no conclusive evidence.”

Wei WuXian, “If he couldn’t be found alive, then has anyone tried soul-summoning?”

Lan WangJi, “Yes. Nothing was found.”

Nothing was found. He either didn’t die, or his soul had dissolved. As a someone who specialized in the area, Wei WuXian had to comment on the matter, “Things like soul-summoning, you can’t rely on them too much. Time, place, and person all play a part in it, so of course it’d sometimes go wrong. I’m guessing that a lot of people think that it was

Xiao XingChen’s revenge? HanGuang-Jun, what about you?

What do you think?

Lan WangJi slowly shook his head, “One should not comment without understanding the whole picture.”

Wei WuXian admired his attitude and principles a lot.

Grinning as he drank another gulp of liquor, he heard Lan WangJi speak again, “What about you?”

Wei WuXian, “Lingchi is a type of torture. Its meaning involves “punishment”, anyways. Digging out the eyes also makes it quite hard not to associate it with Xiao XingChen, who also dug out his eyes. Thus, there’s nothing wrong with these people guessing that it was Xiao XingChen’s revenge.

However,” he thought about how to phrase it, “I think that, in the beginning, Xiao XingChen never asked for Chang Ping’s gratitude when he first stepped in. I...”

Before he finished thinking of what should follow the “I”, the waiter eagerly brought over two dishes of peanuts.

Having been interrupted, Wei WuXian didn’t need to continue anymore. He looked up at Lan WangJi and smiled,

“HanGuang-Jun, why are you looking at me like this? I’m not saying anything. Just like you, I don’t understand the whole picture, so I’m not going to comment either. You’re right.

Before knowing all of the turns and twists, causes and effects, nobody should presume anything about anything. I only ordered five jars, but you bought five more jars for me, so I’m afraid I won’t be able to finish all of them by myself.

How about if you drink with me? This isn’t the Cloud Recesses, so it doesn’t violate anything, right?”

He had already prepared himself to be bluntly rejected, but who knew that Lan WangJi replied, “I will drink.”

Wei WuXian clicked his tongue, “HanGuang-Jun, you really have changed. Before, I drank a tiny jar in front of you, and you got so mad. You even threw me off the wall and hit me.

Now, though, you’re hiding jars of Emperor’s Smile in your room and secretly drinking.”

Fixing his collars, he answered in a calm voice, “I did not touch any jar of Emperor’s Smile.”

Wei WuXian, “Why did you hide them if you’re not drinking anything? Saving them for me? Fine, fine. You didn’t touch them. I’ll believe you, okay? Let’s talk about something else.

Come. I really need to see just how many cups would it take to make an abstinent disciple of the GusuLan Sect drunk.”

He poured a bowl for Lan WangJi. Without any thought, Lan WangJi took it over and drank up. Wei WuXian was unusually excited, staring at his face to see when it would turn red. Yet, even after he stared for a while, neither Lan WangJi’s face color or expression changed, staring at him calmly with light-colored eyes. There wasn’t any change at all!

Wei WuXian was extremely disappointed. As he was about to urge him for another jar, suddenly, Lan WangJi frowned and lightly rubbed at between his brows. After a few moments, with a hand supporting his forehead, he closed his eyes.

... He fell asleep?

... He fell asleep!

After most people drank so much liquor, they should become drunk first, and then sleep. How could Lan WangJi skip the step of getting drunk and go to sleep immediately?!

“Drunken” was the part that he wanted to see!

Wei WuXian waved at Lan WangJi, whose face remained serious even after he was asleep, then clapped beside his ears. There was no reaction.

Lan WangJi was surprisingly the type who collapses after just one bowl.

Wei WuXian didn’t expect this sort of situation to happen at all. Thinking as he shook his legs, he put Lan WangJi’s right arm around his arm, and dragged him out of the liquor shop.

He had already familiarized himself with the action of fishing things from Lan WangJi. After taking out the pouch containing money, he found an inn and asked for two rooms.

He carried Lan WangJi to one of the rooms, took off his boots, tucked him in, and slipped into the night.

Stopping at a desolated area, Wei WuXian took out his flute by his waist, placed it by his lips, and played a melody.

After this, he waited silently.

In these past few days, Wei WuXian and Lan WangJi spent their days and nights together. He didn't have any alone time, so he couldn't summon Wen Ning. Aside from hiding his identity in the beginning, there was another reason.

Wen Ning had killed the GusuLan Sect's people before.

Even if Lan WangJi treated Wei WuXian well, he couldn't summon Wen Ning right in front of him. Or, perhaps, it was because Lan WangJi treated him well that he didn't have the face to summon Wen Ning in front of him. No matter how thick his face was, this wasn't the time to have a thick face.

Before he knew it, the eerie jingling noises sounded again.

With his head lowered, Wen Ning's figure appeared from the shadows of the city wall ahead.

He wore all black, melting into the darkness surrounding him. Only his pupil-less eyes were a glaring, hideous white.

Wei WuXian put his hands behind him and slowly paced around Wen Ning.

Wen Ning shifted, as if wanting to follow his steps and walk in circles as well. Wei WuXian commanded, "Stand properly."

He complied and stopped moving. It seemed as if his delicate features appeared even more dejected.

Wei WuXian, "Hand."

Wen Ning extended his right arm. Wei WuXian grabbed his wrist and lifted it up, closely examining the iron cuff and chain locked onto it.

This wasn't an ordinary chain. When Wen Ning flipped out, he became extremely violent, capable of twisting iron into sludge, so he wouldn't have let it drag around like this. It was likely that this was a set of chains created especially to restrain Wen Ning.

Turned to ashes?

Trying as hard as they could to restore a damaged piece of Stygian Tiger Seal, of course some sects salivated at the Ghost General as well. How would they have been willing to turn him to ashes?

With a bitter laugh, he stood by Wen Ning's side. After considering for a moment, he started to press his fingers

into Wen Ning's hair.

The person who kept and restrained Wen Ning must have prevented him from thinking on his own. To make him listen to other people's orders, Wen Ning's sanity must have been destroyed, which meant that they must've planted something inside his head. As he had expected, after pushing around a few times, Wei WuXian found a hard nib on an acupoint of the right side of his head. He put his other hand on the left side of Wen Ning's head and found the same thing, resembling the end of a needle.

Wei WuXian pinched both needle ends at the same time and gradually pulled two black, long nails from within Wen Ning's skull.

The two nails buried deep inside of Wen Ning were around an inch long and as thick as the red strings used for jade pendants. As soon as the nails left his head, Wen Ning's features quivered faintly. A layer of black lines that resembled strands of blood climbed across the whites of Wen Ning's eyes. It seemed as if he was trying hard to endure the pain.

How strange was it that, although he had died, he could still experience feelings of "pain".

Judging from the intricate, complex lines carved onto the nails, it must have came from a unique source. Their creator was fairly skilled. It'd take quite some time for Wen Ning to heal completely. Putting them away, Wei

WuXian looked down at the chains on Wen Ning's wrists and ankles, thinking to himself that it'd be a bit inconvenient for them to hang around and make noise. He'd need to use a cultivational sword to cut them off.

The first that he thought of was, of course, Lan WangJi's Bichen. Although it somewhat unbecoming to use the sword of someone from the Lan Sect to cut off Wen Ning's chains, it was the best cultivational sword that he could get his hands on. He really couldn't let Wen Ning drag so many burdensome things behind him.

Wei WuXian thought to himself, Okay. I'll go back to the inn first. If Lan Zhan is awake, then I won't do anything. If Lan Zhan is still asleep, I'll quickly borrow Bichen for a while.

Having made his decision, he turned around. However, what he didn't expect was that Lan WangJi was standing right behind him.

**Tiger Seal:** A tiger seal is a seal shaped like a tiger, traditionally used when commanding troops, with one half in the emperor's hands and the other in the general's. Only when both of them are put together can the general command the troops.

**Daozhang:** This is an honorific used to address Daoist priests or simply cultivators in general. The character dao means "path", the same character from the word Daoist, while zhang means "leader". Interesting fact: Daozhang sounds best when the seme is younger than the uke, in which case, Xue Yang just so happens to be. This was one of the first reasons why a lot of people started to ship the two.

**ZiChen:** Song Lan is his birth name (which was what Xiao XingChen called him by—they were close), while Song ZiChen is his common name. Don't worry. I know that you're all thinking "it can't possibly get any more complicated", but it does. Luckily, there's a character and sect guide to prevent memory loss! As the evil person I am, I refuse to provide the link because I think you should exercise your

brains in preparation for what happens later in the story.

Angry/sad because it's inconvenient? You should exercise your hearts too, since I'm not sure if you can handle what's about to come.

**Pailou:** A pailou is simply Chinese-style archway. Since

“links don't work”, search it up on Google Don't worry, I believe in you.

**Hand seal:** Yes. Pretty much those things in Naruto (wait, you thought they were from Japan?). The hand seal, in this case, is used to command the gravedigger's sword.

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