

Snowfall on Steady Peak

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Snowfall on Steady Peak

by [fishpoets](#)

Summary

Long-distance relationships are hard even when you're a powerful demon lord. Mobei-jun visits An Ding Peak, saves some of his husband's pitiful disciples, and gets some much needed cuddles.

[Moshang Week Day 2: Rescue & Day 3: Hug]

Notes

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

Day 2: Rescue

Mobei-jun was bored.

Bored of his vassals. Bored of this endless, interminable meeting. Bored of his relatives and courtiers, their pretty schemes and squabbles and whining. The walls and ceiling of the throne room Mobei-jun had spent hours staring at, day upon day, and knew by heart – these, too, were boring. This kingdom was his and he dedicated himself to it with pride, but so much of the everyday work involved in ruling it was tedious in the extreme.

Especially without Shang Qinghua there to streamline proceedings. Cang Qiong had stolen him for 'the foreseeable future', some cultivator nonsense going on which Mobei-jun had not paid attention to that apparently desperately required Shang Qinghua's oversight. Shang Qinghua had not even given him a date for his return, though he'd promised it should not be more than two weeks.

It had been ten days.

Everything seemed so much more dull, so much more dreary without him.

Mobei-jun had not even had a good fight in a while. Ripping off a head or two would bring some much welcome stress relief, but recently none of the demons in his court dared to challenge him.

Cowards.

Sighing, Mobei-jun shifted in his seat to prop his chin in his left hand instead of his right. He hadn't been sleeping well; it made no sense, but for some reason the bed had been feeling less comfortable than usual. Mobei-jun kept tossing and turning, waking every shichen with his arms stretched out over the empty space beside him. The lack of rest was making this meeting even more tiresome.

His gaze left the courtier droning on and drifted into the shadows between ice columns, searching out the small scurrying shape of his husband. Didn't see him, of course. There was nothing to see. He was far away from here.

He hadn't been in Mobei-jun's bed for ten days. He wouldn't be tonight, either.

If Shang Qinghua were here to keep an eye on proceedings he could take a nap on his throne, but Mobei-jun's little human had insisted on maintaining his status on his little human mountain and kept routinely disappearing there, despite all the complaints he made about having double the workload. Work that he more often than not allocated to himself. Baffling. Mobei-jun had long given up trying to make full sense of him – such was a fool's errand. It was better (simpler, easier) just to accept.

If Shang Qinghua were here Mobei-jun could blow off his afternoon appointments and go to him, find him wherever he was and fall asleep to the sounds of his indignant muttering, to his brush scratching over paperwork. Or he could sit and watch him, make teasing comments and play obtuse until Shang Qinghua got riled up and started ranting at him, spitting rapid-fire nonsensical things. Or silently stare until Shang Qinghua's face turned blotchy and his round ears blushed pink, and he fidgeted his hands and squirmed in that enticing way, and then Mobei-jun would pounce, and they would fuck over Shang Qinghua's desk or right there on the floor--

But Shang Qinghua wasn't here.

Still. Nothing was preventing Mobei-jun from going to him anyway.

It felt like hours more before he could leave for the human realm, though when he arrived it was still early in the afternoon, the sun high and blazing. Mobei-jun stood on a rise overlooking a valley of trees, all afire with the bright colours of autumn. In the distance, the twelve peaks of Cang Qiong Sect rose into the clouds.

It was a pleasant enough day he decided to take his time, instead of going straight to Shang Qinghua's house as he'd originally planned. His husband probably wouldn't be there at this hour, and Mobei-jun couldn't go searching the whole of Cang Qiong for him without someone getting alarmed. If Shang Qinghua was at his house he would probably have one or more of the other Peak Lords with him – and for some reason he always became deeply, unhappily anxious whenever Mobei-jun was near them. Mobei-jun didn't know why. They couldn't attack him without breaking the peace with Lord Luo, and even if they did, only the War God and the Xuan Su Sword would pose Mobei-jun any threat. So what was the problem? What was there to be so worried about?

Shang Qinghua didn't appreciate Mobei-jun reaffirming his claim in front of his martial siblings, either. Some human impropriety that made no sense.

There had to be some entertainment to be found in the forests surrounding the Tian Gong mountain range. The An Ding trade routes passed near here, Mobei-jun recalled – the ones he used to patrol as a young demon, when he and Shang Qinghua had first known each other. Any time he needed an escape from the palace he had come here, where no one would think to look for him. Sometimes he would come across monsters or bandits to fight, or the odd rogue cultivator. Sometimes he might come across Shang Qinghua working. Though Shang Qinghua had always panicked when he showed himself, frightened the others would notice. As if Mobei-jun would have let him come to harm. Even back then, he would not have allowed anyone else to lay their hands on the human he had accepted under his protection.

He did concede it was better to keep their connection veiled from Cang Qiong, however – Shang Qinghua's point that he couldn't be a very effective spy if his sect had him killed was a fair one.

Now they were married, and all the cultivation world knew it. Ostensibly Cang Qiong's ban on Luo Binghe also applied to his lieutenants, but in practice that was more a guideline than a rule, mainly for show. Mobei-jun had been coming to-and-from Shang Qinghua's quarters for years; he would like to see Cang Qiong try and keep him out.

The strong Northeastern breeze was mild but refreshing. Sunlight streamed through the rustling trees, shaking dappled shadows over the forest floor. Leaves crunched under his boots, crusted over in the frost he left in his path.

The shadows lengthened, the sun slipped from its zenith. Yet there were no beasts or bandits to hunt. Mobei-jun couldn't even find any short-haired monsters. How long did it take monsters to breed? Shouldn't there be more of them around by now? Maybe he did too good a job clearing out the area when he was younger, when Shang Qinghua was still running errands...

How tedious.

Mobei-jun growled. What was this – nothing to hunt, nothing to kill – now he was frustrated as well as bored! He should have gone straight to An Ding and not wasted his time--!

A sudden gust of wind tossed his hair. Mobei-jun paused and straightened, ears pricked. It was faint, distant, but carried by the wind were the shouts and cries of fighting. He breathed deep, and there was a distinct tang of blood on the air.

Finally something interesting!

Intrigued, he stepped through the shadows towards the sounds.

The scene he came across was nostalgic: a muddy road, a wagon full of crates, six or seven young humans all dressed in familiar colours. Disciples of An Ding Peak.

A shrill shriek pierced the air, followed by a yelp of pain. One of the disciples soared through the air and landed on his side with a grunt, sliding through the mud to come to a stop at Mobei-jun's feet. He lay there, eyes screwed shut, groaning pitifully.

Mobei-jun crossed his arms and leant against the trunk of the nearest maple tree to watch the show.

The beast the disciples were fighting was only a fairy-song tiger crane – a harmless, powerless thing, its aura too weak for Mobei-jun to have sensed from further away. Despite this it was still giving them trouble. Mobei-jun shook his head. What was Shang Qinghua

teaching them? An Ding wasn't known for its martial skill, no, but surely they should be able to defend themselves. Or at least be accompanied by guards. Maybe Mobei-jun should order someone to watch the An Ding patrols like he used to with Shang Qinghua..?

Hm. On second thought, too much effort. If fairy-song tiger cranes were the only thing around to bother them, these disciples should be able to save themselves. If they couldn't – well. It was their own fault for not getting stronger.

With a flap of its wings the tiger crane blew three more disciples away, a burst of wind that sent them flying and tumbling into the undergrowth. It was a juvenile – each wing was only about as far across as Mobei-jun was tall, and the sharp spikes extending through the feathers at its wrist weren't yet dripping with venom. A female disciple with a face round as a steamed bun was the only one left within its grasp. The tiger crane opened its fang-filled beak and lunged. She dodged narrowly, taking the opening to slash it across the neck with her sword.

Bright red blood splattered on deep red leaves.

Angered, the fairy-song tiger crane reeled back and let out another earsplitting shriek. Mobei-jun winced. Young it may be but its voice was fully developed. The beast knocked a dazed boy back to the ground with another sweep of its wings, cutting his shoulder open with its wrist spike, and leapt at the girl who had managed to hurt it. This time she was too slow. The crane pinned her easily beneath one taloned foot and reared up ready to peck out her eyes.

Mobei-jun frowned.

This wasn't his business. These humans weren't his responsibility.

Except, from a certain viewpoint, they *were*.

Traditionally, when powerful demons married, an agreement was made that they would each protect their spouse's people and territory as if their own. Shang Qinghua was no demon, but he had spent years protecting Mobei-jun's kingdom in his own way, long before they'd ever courted. How many times had Shang Qinghua saved Mobei-jun's life?

Shang Qinghua was no demon, but he was Mobei-jun's treasured husband all the same. An Ding Peak was his territory; these human weaklings his people. Was Mobei-jun not therefore bound by duty – by his own honour – to protect them?

Besides, Shang Qinghua would be happier if the shipment wasn't delayed – and if his pitiful disciples didn't die, Mobei-jun supposed. If he let them get killed Shang Qinghua would make a fuss, it would make more work he'd insist on doing, and his return home would be delayed even longer...

No. Enough of this.

Mobei-jun stepped out onto the road and let his aura flex free.

Frost rippled out across the mud. The tiger crane's beak shut with a click. Its head swivelled round on its long neck to look at him, the pupils in its four red eyes tightening to pin pricks before blooming wide.

It was young, stupid enough to see Mobei-jun and think only that he would make a heartier meal than some skinny scraps of human children. It didn't take its last chance to fly away.

Black qi gathered in Mobei-jun's hand.

The fairy-song tiger crane released the girl. It took one step towards him, two, three – and dropped dead in the leaf litter without a sound, struck through with thousands of glittering ice-sharp needles.

Mobei-jun lowered his arm.

A kill, but one small gesture hardly qualified as a fight. How disappointing. Maybe he should have played with it a little first...

Rustling and panting and clinks of metal drew his attention back to the disciples.

They'd all survived, it seemed – muddy and bruised, one boy with a bloody gash across his brow and several others with cuts, but all breathing. They'd grouped up and gathered in the road between him and their precious wagon, and the swords that had been brandished against the fairy-song tiger crane were now turned on him.

Looking at them properly Mobei-jun was struck again by that strange sense of nostalgia. They must have been 17 or 18 in age, and in their An Ding robes with the scent of fresh blood on the breeze, Mobei-jun couldn't help be reminded of Shang Qinghua when they'd first met...

These children at least seemed like they could tell one end of a sword from the other, though still far more likely to cut themselves or each other on their blades than mount an effective attack against any foe. The idea of them trying to take down *Mobei-jun* was laughable.

At least none were about to throw themselves at his feet and cling to him.

He hoped.

Shining, barely used swords shook in sweating hands. Like brandishing toothpicks at a black moon rhinoceros python. At *him!* They couldn't even flank properly, instead bunched in a vague semicircle in front of him – a formation he could eliminate with one easy, convenient wave of a finger, if he so wished.

Had Shang Qinghua been quite so pathetic when they met?

They hadn't tried offering any of their own up for slaughter, though, nor attempted escape – that was the only point in their favour. So perhaps they were braver than Shang Qinghua's generation of disciples had been. Or just more stupid.

“We are disciples of Cang Qiong Sect,” the girl in the middle announced – the one with the round face, who had drawn the tiger crane's blood. Her voice shook less than her sword; she would do better without it. “The largest and most powerful of all cultivation sects. This area is under our jurisdiction. State your purposes, demon.”

Insolent. Slowly Mobei-jun cocked his head, playing up the glow from his eyes and demon mark, just because he could. “Hunting,” he said plainly.

“Hunting what?” the girl asked.

Mobei-jun glanced at the dead fairy-song tiger crane, looked back, and raised a brow.

“...Hm.” The girl wavered, like she was trying to do some very difficult calculations in her head very quickly, then seemed to come to a decision. She flapped a few hasty, unsubtle hand gestures at the others and lowered her sword, bending into a quick bow. “In that case we must thank you for your assistance, Master Demon. But we are needed at our Sect, so if you will excuse us, we will part ways here.”

“You are returning to An Ding Peak.”

The girl paused. “We are,” she said in a tone of caution, hand straying to her sword hip.

“Then it is good fortune we met,” said Mobei-jun. “I will escort you back to your mountain. You will move faster without fear of encountering any more beasts.”

The disciples' pale faces drained of blood clearly said they'd rather take their chances with the beasts than spend more time near him. Not *too* stupid, then.

The girl swallowed. “This one thanks Master Demon for the generous offer, but we travel this route often. There is no need to burden you with our care.”

“I was going to An Ding anyway,” Mobei-jun told her. “I have business with Shang Qinghua.”

Now they were all staring at him again.

These children had no practice masking their emotions; it was written all over the girl's face how much she wished to refuse. It was equally obvious she didn't know how, not without being rude and risking inciting this scary, mysterious demon to murder. “This one's name is Nu Bing,” she said with great reluctance. “And Master Demon's name...?”

Was his identity not obvious? What other demons would dare visit Shang Qinghua at his peak, be calling him by name instead of title? But then, these children had probably never seen Mobei-jun's face before – they were too young to have witnessed the battle at Maigu Ridge. For all the times he had visited An Ding he had rarely left Shang Qinghua's house, and had never strolled in openly through the gates.

“It's not important,” said Mobei-jun. He fought down a smirk at the girl's poorly hidden annoyance and clasped his hands lazily behind his back.

The group looked at each other, then with a bobbing of bows like small fat birds pecking for bugs in the soil, backed away towards their wagon.

Amused, Mobei-jun watched as they resettled the frightened horses and tried to straighten the wagon. One of the wagon's front wheels had gotten embedded in a mud-filled rut in the road, and the disciples crowded around it, arguing about what to do. Two of the larger boys tried heaving the wheel out, to no avail. It was sunk deep and stuck fast.

After another minute of aggravated gesturing Mobei-jun lost his patience. He rolled his eyes. If they moved the heavy goods to one end of the wagon to form a counterweight, then all lifted from the other side, they could prise out the wheel without issue.

“Are you stuck?” he called out.

The sound of his voice provoked ducked heads and hunched shoulders, frozen limbs and wide eyes at the reminder of this looming presence they had been frantically ignoring.

He sighed and strode over.

“Step aside,” he growled. The disciples obeyed, tugging at each other and stumbling over their feet to get out of his way. They huddled together on the side of the road as Mobei-jun stopped by the wheel and knelt to examine it, judging the angle of approach. Brute force would just snap the wood and delay them even further – but if he put one hand under the body of the wagon, and the other under the wheel axle, and lifted--

With a slick sucking noise the wheel came free.

Mobei-jun froze the mud around the wagon solid and firm and set the wheel down again. There. Easy.

He brushed off his hands and stepped away. The disciples broke out into heated whispering, nudging each other until the round-faced girl stepped forward again, her expression mulish.

“It seems we owe Master Demon our gratitude once again,” she said.

Mobei-jun hummed.

Her eyes darted to the lightly glowing mark on his forehead, the blue eyes, the frosted-over road, the dead carcass, skewered with icy needles that were starting to melt away. Mobei-jun watched as she pulled the clues together, raking them into a conclusion.

“The Master Demon accompanying us,” she said tentatively, “might he be the esteemed Mobei-jun?”

Mobei-jun smirked to show his fangs. “I am,” he said. He turned and started walking up the road. “Daylight is wasting. We should leave now, if you wish to make it to An Ding before dark.”

Soon the wagon wheels started squeaking and clicking behind him.

Mobei-jun found he was in a good mood. Even the sour stink of human anxiety clouding his nostrils was amusing – the fact they so obviously wished he would go away but had no way to make him leave was... *funny*. He entertained himself keeping pace with the wagon at an awkward distance, and smiling with his teeth bared each time one of them looked his way.

Not that his presence stopped the disciples gossiping. Did they not realise Mobei-jun could hear them?

“I told you lot it was Mobei-jun.”

“That's Shifu's husband?! No way-!”

“Right?! Looking like that!!”

“You guys are stupid.”

“And how do you know he's not lying, huh, genius? It could be any ice demon! I can't tell the difference, can you?”

“Why else would he help us?”

“She's got a point. No one helps An Ding.”

“I don't know! Maybe he's going to eat us!”

“If he was going to he would've done it back in the forest where he found us, not in the middle of the road to Cang Qiong!”

“Ow, don't hit me-!”

“Stupid!!”

Mobei-jun scoffed and tuned them out again. Eat them? These pathetic human youths? No. Far too stringy with too little meat on them, even if he cared for the taste of human flesh, which he did not. And why the disbelief? Why the surprise that *he* was the one Shang Qinghua had married? They thought it an unlikely match? Thought their master was not good enough for a demon of Mobei-jun's calibre?

Idiots. The girl was the only one with anything approaching sense.

No wonder Shang Qinghua always complained about them; their own children would not be nearly so foolish.

Ah.

His and Shang Qinghua's...?

Hm.

“Hey, if he's married to Shifu...”

“Yeah?”

“Oh, this better be good.”

“...does that mean we should call him...shimu...?”

Mobei-jun's eyebrows shot to his hairline. On the wagon someone choked.

“If you want to die, go right ahead,” the girl hissed. She clicked her tongue at the horses to make them speed up. *“Now shut up, will you? All of you!”*

Mobei-jun chuckled. To the disciples, not used to deciphering the perplexing moods of terrifying ice demon monarchs, his good mood looked like just another flavour of borderline homicidal. It proved far more effective at subduing them to silence than their shijie's threats. And so the rest of Mobei-jun's journey to An Ding was peaceful and undisturbed.

A small, beloved figure stood in the middle of the courtyard in front of the An Ding warehouses. A dark blue robe graced his shoulders, embroidered with fine silver thread that caught the light, shining like icicles in moonlight.

At the approaching clomp of horse hooves and rattle of wheels, Shang Qinghua looked up. His lips moved as his gaze roved over the wagon, assessing its state with a critical eye, counting his disciples. Brown eyes passed briefly over Mobei-jun and turned away.

Then Shang Qinghua visibly startled and did a double-take.

A cool, light feeling fluttered in Mobei-jun's chest, like the soft touch of falling flakes of snow settling on his heart.

Shang Qinghua smiled wide. Mobei-jun swept right past the wagon to greet him.

“My king!” Shang Qinghua called, quieter than usual with his disciples gawping, completely absent of subtlety. “What are you doing here? And arriving on foot, too.”

Mobei-jun shrugged. “I was bored. Took a walk.” He frowned down at his husband. “There's hardly any beasts in the forests any more.”

“Ah, yeah, I made enough of a fuss that Yue Qingyuan finally made Bai Zhan do something about it,” Shang Qinghua said. He patted Mobei-jun's arm. “Sorry, my king. So you bumped into my disciples on the road?”

“Mn. Being attacked by a fairy-song tiger crane.”

“A what?!” Shang Qinghua whirled round to check them again.

“Just a juvenile. They're fine.” And only bleeding a little bit.

“It's dead, right? You killed it?”

“Obviously.”

Shang Qinghua laughed breathlessly. His grip tightened around Mobei-jun's bicep. “Yeah, yeah, obviously.” His pink tongue darted out to wet his lips. “Did you--”

“Um. Shifu?”

Shang Qinghua hastily let go and needlessly patted down his robes. He coughed. “Yes? Yes. Ah, Nu Bing, can I help you?”

“We've finished unloading the crates,” the round-faced girl reported. “All the goods are accounted for.”

“Right, yeah, good. Mobei-jun tells me you fought a fairy-song tiger crane?”

The girl flicked a glance at Mobei-jun and bowed. “It is true,” she said, in a tone dull with forced politeness. “These humble disciples were saved by Mobei-jun. This one again thanks Mobei-jun.”

Mobei-jun acknowledged this with a grunt. He zoned out while the girl finished making her report. Now he was here, with Shang Qinghua finally within his grasp, all these insignificant humans scurrying around like ants had completely lost his interest. All he wanted was to get Shang Qinghua alone, to drag him back to his house and its tiny bed, where Mobei-jun could sate himself on his scent and his taste and the touch of his skin.

He would have to return to the palace early tomorrow, there were duties he could not avoid, but forget that for now. He was going to have Shang Qinghua all to himself, all night long.

As soon as the girl left he took Shang Qinghua's arm, ignored his half-hearted bleated protests, and steered him away from the warehouses. Away from his work.

When they were alone Shang Qinghua let out a great sigh, leaning into Mobei-jun's side. “I'm glad you came,” he said quietly. “You know, my king, before this I was having a really shit day. But now you've showed up and saved it! Turned it all around.” He looked up, a small smile playing on his lips. “Have you eaten, my king? I just realised I haven't eaten since breakfast – I'm starving! Do you feel like noodles? I really want noodles...”

His hair was burnished chestnut under the setting sun, strands falling loose from his bun to frame his face. His cheeks were pink, his eyes tired but warm.

Yes. Mobei-jun was glad too.

Day 3: Hug

Mobei-jun stepped through the shadows into Shang Qinghua's house long after darkness had fallen. Dawn was only a shichen away. He was tired, irritated; he'd spent all day dealing with a problem Lord Luo had dropped in his lap without warning, since Lord Luo was disappearing into the wilderness again with his precious Shizun and was thus far too busy to bother himself with the disputes of his vassals. In his absence the burden fell to Mobei-jun instead – and who cared if he'd barely seen his own husband in three weeks?

After that kind of day the thought of crawling into his large empty bed, alone...

He didn't want to.

So despite the lateness of the hour, or the fact Shang Qinghua would by now be fast asleep, Mobei-jun had made his way to An Ding Peak.

The Peak Lord's house was quiet and still. Mobei-jun crept silently through the small front room to the private room at the back, where Shang Qinghua kept his desk and his bed, along with all the mess he felt the need to hide away from visitors.

To Mobei-jun's surprise, a faint light was flickering from under the door.

Shang Qinghua was slumped over a mess of papers, elbow on the desk, one hand clutching his head as the other clutched a brush. He wasn't writing. Just sitting there.

“It's late,” said Mobei-jun.

Shang Qinghua jumped with a yelp and almost knocked over his candle.

“My king!!” He dropped the brush and put his hand over his heart. “My king, ah, you startled me...”

Mobei-jun stepped closer, shutting the door behind him. “It's late. Why are you still awake?”

“Hm? Oh, ah... I need to, you know, all this...” Shang Qinghua waved his hand vaguely at the piles on his desk. “It's – really very boring, my king, you don't need to trouble yourself with it.”

“I wasn't.” Shang Qinghua straightened as Mobei-jun stopped right behind his seat. He picked the brush up again and fidgeted with it. His shoulders were tense; Mobei-jun dropped his hands to them and squeezed. “Nor should you. Surely none of this is so important it can't be left for daylight.”

“Yeah, daylight, when there'll be a million other stupid things to do,” Shang Qinghua muttered. He pinched between his brows and rolled his shoulders, shook Mobei-jun off. Just go sleep, my king. I'll get this done quicker without you nagging me...

Mobei-jun caught the back of Shang Qinghua's robes in his fist and hoisted him to his feet. Shang Qinghua squawked and flailed so Mobei-jun pulled him close, trapping Shang Qinghua's arms between their bodies and wrapping his own around him to keep him still, one around the waist, one across the back. He cupped his palm over Shang Qinghua's nape and gently pressed down.

It was a gesture meant to calm, to soothe, but Shang Qinghua was too agitated and wouldn't be soothed. He squirmed and spat.

“Hey! I need to – fucking *let go of me*, you--!”

Ah. Cursing. He wasn't excited, so that meant he was feeling a large amount of stress. Mobei-jun adjusted him more comfortably in his arms, held him tighter, and waited.

Shang Qinghua pushed against his chest, his small body stiff with resistance.

Mobei-jun started counting down from ten in his head. As he reached zero, Shang Qinghua let out a wobbly sigh. All the steel thawed from his spine and he melted against Mobei-jun, dropping his head to his collar. His cheeks were very warm where they pressed into the bare skin of Mobei-jun's chest.

Small arms snuck under Mobei-jun's cloak to clasp around his waist. Mobei-jun balanced his footing, let Shang Qinghua lean all his weight into him.

They stood there like that for a while.

Two writing brushes were pinning the mussed bundle of Shang Qinghua's hair back from his face. Mobei-jun plucked them out and set them on the desk. Shang Qinghua's hair drooped around his shoulders, as limp and tired as the rest of him. Mobei-jun set about neatening it with careful strokes of his claws through the strands.

Shang Qinghua hummed. He sounded on the verge of sleep.

“Qinghua.” Mobei-jun pinched his cheek. “Bed.”

Shang Qinghua wrinkled his nose and grumbled. He batted Mobei-jun's hand away and tottered over to the bed, falling into it face first. He was already dressed down to socks and inner robes; he must have prepared for bed and then gotten distracted, and ended up working all night.

His thin robes had slipped up to expose a sliver of soft, pale thigh.

Mobei-jun closed his eyes and breathed out slow and deliberate, pushing down the rising hunger that always simmered inside him, eager to devour.

Patience. Patience. This separation would be over soon enough, and then he would feast.

He kicked off his boots, dropped his cloak and outer robes to the floor and blew out the candle.

He clambered into the narrow bed behind Shang Qinghua, curling around the shape of him in the dark, and pulled the covers over them both.

Shang Qinghua's scent enveloped him. His warmth.

His arm slid back around Shang Qinghua's waist. Shang Qinghua covered it with his own, slotted their fingers together over his chest. Mobei-jun tucked him close and buried his nose in his hair.

“How long more of this,” he murmured.

Shang Qinghua sighed. “Well, the peak competition is in two days, and then we'll need a day after that to tidy up, so, three? Three more days.”

“When you left you said it would take two weeks,” Mobei-jun grumbled. It had been almost four.

“It should have! But there was an explosion on Zui Xian Peak – fireworks got taken there by mistake, long story – and hundreds of wine barrels went up in flames, and can you hold an event without any alcohol? No! You can't! It would be an even huger disaster than normal! So then we had to rush to find suppliers who could deliver bulk orders on a short timescale, and that meant everything else got delayed, and--” Another heavy sigh. “It's all been. A lot.”

“Hmm.”

“...I'm sorry it's taken so long, my king.”

“Husband.”

“Haha, okay okay, husband.”

Mobei-jun found the curve of Shang Qinghua's ear beneath his lips and nipped it lightly. “You'll come home soon,” he mumbled.

“Yeah. Yeah, I'll be home.” There was something odd about Shang Qinghua's voice, something throaty and soft, but Mobei-jun was drifting off and couldn't make sense of it. Maybe it had been his imagination. “Goodnight, husband. I'll see you in the morning.”

End Notes

MBJ, a demon who can teleport any time he likes: man i haven't seen my hubby in a while, this sucks :////

me, an ordinary human in these times of covid, with friends & family on totally different continents: bro you don't even know how good you got it

This year's been rough, I hope you're all doing okay ♥

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