

W old still, Jiang Cheng, I'll do your hair?"
 Softly, stroke by stroke, Wei Wuxian combed through the tangles, whistling a lullaby as he went. The hair had grown brittle, so he took more care pulling it up than he ever had with his own, lest he break something that couldn't be repaired.

Side by side, they entered the sect leaders' tent. Cries of outrage met them. "Jiang Wanyin is the heir of Yunmeng Jiang," said Wei Wuxian. "He attends the meeting."

Yu Ziyuan rose, turned, and left without a word.

The black veins lining Jiang Cheng's unseeing face inched higher.

HAT TIME, IT WAS PURPLE lightning, between them, illuminating their prey in the night. Even then they had their reputations, and knew each other.

Zhao Zhuliu with his fists, Yu Ziyuan with her whip, neither fought with the sword. Zhao Zhuliu without his clan, Yu Ziyuan without her husband—

For a night-hunt, for a night, they found more alike between them than all the ties that bound them to the world.

But purple lightning pales under the harsh fire of the sun, and all they share now is the dim glow of a golden core as it fades into darkness.

SENIOR WEI? The title still comes more naturally than *father*, than any of the other names Wei Wuxian had suggested. Sizhui has begun to remember hints of his past, but he still isn't sure just how Wei Wuxian fits into his life now. "Do you know the names of my parents?"

Wei Wuxian falls still. "You should ask Wen Ning," he says, finally. "I never knew. I never asked."

"...Senior Wei?"

"They were Wens," Wei Wuxian says, simply. "They died during the Sunshot Campaign." His hand falls to Chenqing at his waist, and he doesn't have to say the rest.

INSIDE THE LIBRARY pavilion, magnolias bloom anew. In the end, it was the Wen library that was lost," Lan Xichen observes. "Their medical techniques were unparalleled. A-Yao, I know your memory, Did you read any Wen manuals, in the Nightless City?"

Hesitatingly, "I have. Could it be you wish to preserve those, too?"

"I won't force extra work on you. Should you ever wish to write them down, I'll ask one of our disciples to make a copy."

"You have a disciple who can be trusted with such knowledge?"

Lan Xichen nods. "Sizhui has a good hand. He'll do well."

HE FLOWER PETAL CURSE falls upon Meng Yao too fast and too late, after Lan Xichen is safe and beyond his reach. He does not panic, though he knows well how it can upend a life. Instead he gives himself a week, to indulge in impossible hopes and dreams. Then he cuts the flowers out, then he departs for Qinghe.

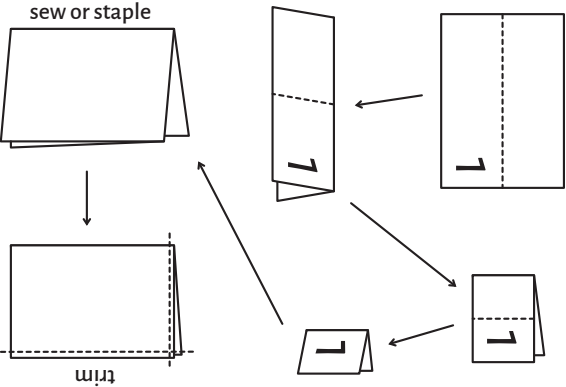
Ever since then, he makes a point to treat Lan Xichen with great care, knowing what he once meant to him, and every moment he spends by Lan Xichen's side he wonders what it feels like to be in love.

IN LING HAS ALWAYS CARRIED his father's sword. Once, though, he asked his uncle how to wield a blade like Hensheng. "It is your good fortune," Jin Guangyao had said, "that you'll only ever need to wield an honest blade."

And yeah, Suihua's good. Like a story — like his father.

But Hensheng's not a story. Hensheng is the reality he's left with.

Jin Ling takes up Hensheng, wraps it around his waist. Let everyone think he destroyed it. Let them think all his love for his uncle was wiped away. Hensheng was always meant to be worn in secret anyway.



Print double sided, flip on shortedge, and if that doesn't work, try longedge. Printers, right?

One Hundred Words
 & an average of 573 characters per page
 A drabble collection & font sampler by E. Hyde