Twitter Thread by the local yiling panera



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@yiling_panera



a little book designer wwx au for the birthday

so he forgets his birthday every year because it's not like it's that big a deal, right,

and he knows wen ning will get bullied into getting a card and some rando candy to pass around the office for everyone to sign even though god knows no one in sales actually knows him by name so why are they even signing the CARD— it's all kind of embarrassing, really

which! he's grateful for! he's very grateful, he sits through an off-chorus round of happy birthday every year. he nibbles at the teeth-aching sweet icing of the office cupcakes bought for him and pointedly does not think about feeling more and more divorced from his body

he's prepared for another round. it's not going to be special just because lan zhan asked him out a month ago! why would it? it'd be selfish to expect lan zhan's pampering to amp up for a silly birthday.

then the first email from editorial bounces back.

wei ying stares at an automated response he does not remember setting, face growing hotter with a weird fluttering, hesitant glee as he reads it:

Hello, I will be unavailable this afternoon and unable to answer emails. For emergencies, please contact Nie Huaisang. Thank you.

it's 11:59 am. lan zhan appears at his side as his desktop clock hits noon, soft leather satchel at his hip and camel colored autumn coat already on. he's holding wei ying's leather jacket and scrappy backpack with the care of an old-fashioned valet. he's beautiful.

wei ying stares. he doesn't even know when lan zhan snuck onto his computer. "i don't even capitalize my auto responses," is all he can get out.

lan zhan shrugs. as much as he ever does, anyways, just a suggestion of a movement. conceptual. "we have a reservation."

(nie huaisang's eyes don't even leave his screen—he's building a pinterest vision board for his next title, it's an important part of the process and he cannot be BOTHERED—but wei ying's phone pings with a text from him anyways.

it's three eggplants and a birthday cake.)

lan zhan waits patiently (how is he always so patient, wei ying is a mess, lan zhan can't even work if a single pen is out of place on his desk, it defies explanation) as wei ying saves things and shuts things down. he stands so close wei ying can hear him breathe in and out.

wei ying has spent his whole life blithely dancing around prickly people. he does not know what to do with laser-guided tenderness. the whole office gets to watch lan zhan hold out the battered leather jacket like the finest silk, gently coaxing it onto wei ying, face aflame

and, okay, maybe he feels a little dissociative as lan zhan refuses to let him carry his own bag, placing a large hand at the small of his back to guide him to the elevators as the bank of junior designers chirp HAPPY BIRTHDAY SIR as he passes. it feels like a dream.

he doesn't like thinking he might deserve something nice. it feels like hubris. it feels like setting up another thing that will be taken away and he'll have to learn to live without, a vestigial limb from homelessness that he'll never lose.

lan zhan kisses him in the elevator.

he is warm, and here, and his mouth tastes like wei ying's favorite cinnamon gum—he doesn't even care for that gum. but wei ying pictures him chewing it in his office, deliberately and slowly, counting down until noon.

surely, this time, he can have this.

later, after lan zhan shuttles them from lunch at hangawi to the whitney for an exhibit wei ying's been dying to see for months, after wei ying kisses him in front a painting because that serious and contemplative look on lan zhan's face was too much

later, after he begs lan zhan to cancel dinner because his whole body has oriented to lan zhan now, like magnetic north, every single cell desperate for him—

later, after lan zhan cancels the rest of his thoughtfully planned day to take him home—

later, after his hot skin is pressed chest-first into the cool granite of lan zhan's kitchen counter, a hand twined in his hair to bend his neck for lan zhan's teeth and lan zhan deep inside him and it's so so good—

later, golden hour light painting his lovely face, lan zhan will press a single kiss to his ear and say "i am thankful for you."

he won't even let go when wei ying cries.