

## Barbecuing with Woon

A Green Bone Saga slice-of-life scene in support of *Locus Magazine*

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Author's note: takes place shortly before Chapter 32 of *Jade Legacy*

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Woon Papidonwa, retired Sealgiver of the No Peak clan and former chief of staff to the Weather Man, did not, for the most part, miss his office on Ship Street. Many people, including his own wife, thought he'd retired too young; fifty-four was not old on the business side of the clan, but given everything he'd been through, Woon felt as if he'd aged as quickly as any of the Fists on the greener side. Once more, he basted the meat and turned it over on the grill. For someone who used to barely cook at all, achieving the perfect level of flavor and tenderness on a cut of pork belly demanded as much care and precision as navigating a difficult negotiation or crafting a press statement to the Royal Council, but was fortunately far less stress-inducing.

"Da! Da! *Daaaaaaa!*" Tia called from the back of the house.

Woon found his daughter pointing up at the roof where her doll sprawled across the tiles, strapped to the air rocket that Tia's cousin Ru had given her for her birthday. Her other cousin, Jaya, who sometimes came over to babysit, had come up with the game of tying Tia's dolls and stuffed animals to the projectiles to make them "practice their Lightness."

Woon sighed and looked around for a handy ladder or stepstool. Finding none, he reluctantly crouched and gathered his jade energy, as if drawing a deep breath before diving into a swimming pool. Tia ran up and grabbed him around the waist from behind. "Me too, me too," she insisted, the frills of her purple dress bouncing in time with her antics. "Up, Da, up!"

Woon hefted the five-year-old securely onto his back. “Hold on tight,” he instructed, then coughed as her small arms squeezed his neck. Leaping Light onto the roof of the house required more effort than it used to, but Tia’s squeal of delight as they launched from the ground made the twinge of pain in his hip worth it. Woon had never prided himself on being especially green—there were plenty of men in the clan more martially driven and his own talents were more intellectual—and he was by no means a young father, but he was glad that he could still seem a powerful warrior to his daughter. If he was no longer called upon to use his jade abilities for anything except leaping around with Tia on his back, he wouldn’t mind.

“I can see everything from up here,” Tia exclaimed. “There’s Auntie Wen! And Koko! And Juen-jen’s car!” Woon kept a firm hand on his daughter’s arm as she balanced excitedly on the slope of the roof.

As they landed Lightly back on the grass with Tia’s doll in hand, the phone rang inside the house. Woon went in and answered it. Terin Bin, the current Sealgiver, said in his typical rapid-fire fashion, “Woon-jen, I’m very sorry to bother you at home, but you did say to call you if there were any issues with the proposed takeover of the Jo Sun clan. We have everything well in hand over here, but there’s a bit of disagreement over how we ought to resolve their rank inflation. It makes a big difference to the long-term cost projections. Can you remind me of how you dealt with this years ago with the Green Bones who came over from Six Hands Unity?”

Woon nodded at the unsurprising predicament. It was not uncommon for minor clans such as Jo Sun to title their warriors more highly than a Green Bone of equivalent experience and ability in a major clan such as No Peak. Of course, there was some talent to be found in the small clans, but on the whole, the first rank Fists of Jo Sun could not expect to come into No Peak with the same high status they held previously. Woon spoke with Terin at length about the process

he'd employed in previous annexations, with the approval of the Weather Man and the Horn, to fairly handle the retitling of transferred warriors. "I'll send over my spreadsheets," he promised.

In the background of Terin's call, Woon could hear ringing telephones and the noise of animated conversation that suggested things were feverishly busy at the Ship Street office today. Despite himself, Woon felt a pang of nostalgia that made him wish he was there. He wondered when Shae would be getting home and what she'd have to say about the events of the day.

Terin thanked him and hung up. Through the window, Woon saw the toy rocket and its payload fly up into the air and out of sight. A second later, "Da! *Daaaaa!*"

"Not again," Woon muttered under his breath in exasperation. "Tia-se," he began sternly as he came out of the house, "I am *not* taking you up onto the roof every time you—  
*Godsdammit!*"

Woon rushed to the grill and groaned at the smell of charred meat. Overcooked again!