

Chapter: 31

Scales

Long Yu Heng stood still on the spot for a long time.

After he had broken the news about Su Ruan leaving Capital City and had no plan to return for a while, Long Fei has been sitting on his chair and looked out the window with a dazed look on his face.

No one knew what was going on in his mind and Long Yu Heng did not dare to disturb him in this situation.

Almost ten minutes have passed. Long Fei finally heaved a breath and turned around to look at his cousin again. "If she's not planning to return, then let her."

Long Yu Heng observed his face cautiously. "Are you planning to head over to F City and find her? You could... work on the branch over in F City."

"No."

His expression froze. Long Yu Heng certainly did not expect him to decline. "Do you have any other plan?"

Long Fei has been looking for Su Ruan for years. It has not been easy for them to finally find her and figure out her identity.

For the past few weeks, Long Yu Heng has been observing Long Fei's condition.

Usually, Long Fei would not be able to stay in Capital City or somewhere away from D Town where there was a large source of clean water.

However, this time, Long Fei was able to stay in Capital City because Su Ruan was in the same city. Long Yu Heng watched as Long Fei leave to look at Su Ruan and each time that he returned, his body condition would be at his best.

Initially, when their grandfather had brought up this matter, they had refused to believe that Su Ruan's presence beside Long Fei would be very helpful to him.

But now that he had seen things for himself, Long Yu Heng knew that Su Ruan was someone that Long Fei had to get close with.

Long Fei exhaled loudly and spoke. "Yu Heng, I have already done everything to get close to her. But she only moved farther away. Perhaps, the two of us are not meant to be."

His body grew cold upon hearing Long Fei's words. "No. I refused to let you give up." He took a few steps closer, wanting to get close to Long Fei, and convinced him to rethink his decision.

However, Long Fei raised his hand, motioning his cousin to stop. "No. I have already made up my decision."

"No. You have to think again." Long Yu Heng walked closer. "Don't forget that the elders had said..." His words were left unfinished as he suddenly realized that there was something different about his cousin.

Long Yu Heng lowered his gaze and was surprised to see the scale that had started to form on the man's arms. "Long Fei, you..."

It was at this time that he recalled that it has been two weeks since Su Ruan had left Capital City.

Perhaps, he was starting to get used to seeing Long Fei living like an ordinary person that he had momentarily forgotten that Long Fei has not been close to Su Ruan for a long time.

They were so confident that the girl would return to Capital City and things would be normal for Long Fei again.

It has been two weeks! Just how did Long Fei had forced himself to bear with his condition.

Quickly, Long Yu Heng turned around and grabbed several drinking water bottles in his arms. "Long Fei, drink this."

Long Fei looked at the bottles and frowned. Then, he saw the scale on his arms and quickly understood Long Yu Heng's movement. Long Fei forced himself to calm down. He grabbed the bottle and emptied it within seconds.

"This cannot do. Long Fei, we are returning to D Town as soon as possible," Long Yu Heng said. He took out his phone and began to make several calls.

Knowing that his condition was not at its best, Long Fei decided not to say a word and let Long Yu Heng handle everything.

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F City.

Su Ruan walked along the small path while accompanying an elder who was sitting in a wheelchair. There was a smile on her face and she was humming a melody. The gentle breeze swept on her face, messing up her hair a little bit.

Su Ruan tucked a few strands of hair behind her ears and continued to push the wheelchair until they arrived under a big, shady tree.

She adjusted the wheelchair and finally looked at the old man. "Grandfather, how is it, are you comfortable?"

The old man heaved a satisfied sigh. "Un. It's good."

Su Ruan smiled happily and sat on the garden chair beside her grandfather's wheelchair. "If you like it, how about I accompany you here for a while longer?"

"This girl... I already told you that I'll be fine. What are you staying in this small town longer for? Quickly return to the big city and do what you like."

"Does that mean that you don't like me staying by your side anymore?"

The look on Su Yan's face stiffened. He looked at his granddaughter again and his expression turned softer. "You know that I don't mean it like that. Grandfather likes having you by my side the most."

The smile on Su Ruan's face widened. "Un... I like Grandfather the most too."

Su Yan heaved another sigh. "I know that at this time, you should be busy building up your career. Grandfather just did not want to hold you back. Don't worry about me. I still have your father to look after me."

Su Ruan thought about how she had lost her job with the previous company. Later, Blue Media had called her for a job interview but she could not make it to attend the interview.

Thinking about everything that had happened around here the past few months made her feel that she should take a break for a while.

"Moreover, your grandmother and I were worried that you would be uncomfortable." Su Yan's gentle voice was heard again. "How long are you planning to stay in F City this time?"

Su Ruan knew what her paternal grandparents were worried about.

After her parents were divorced, she had followed her father to F City. A while later, her father had remarried and had his own family. The wife he was married to had brought along a son and a daughter from her previous marriage. Since they were both younger, her father doted on them a lot.

Su Ruan mostly stayed around with her grandparents.

Seeing her stepsiblings made her feel uncomfortable. Although her father had always loved her, Su Ruan had always thought that her stepsiblings were stealing her father from her.

Later, she chose to study in a university farther away and chose to work in Capital City so that she would not see them.

Su Ruan looked at her grandfather again and forced a smile. She knew that her grandfather was mostly worried about her. "Grandfather, don't worry. I'm only staying around to celebrate the new year with you.. Once the holiday ended, I'll head back to work."

Chapter: 32

I Won t Let Myself Suffer

D Town was always a quiet and peaceful place.

It was a small town surrounded by orchards as well as nature. Living in this town was always very relaxing. The people woke up early to work and went back to their homes early to rest with their families.

At night, the only sound that could be heard was the sound of the gentle breeze, the rustling of leaves, the rippling of water as well as the singing of insects.

However, on this particular night, there was something very different.

The usually quiet night turned a little lively, especially nearby Long's family residence. A few people went out to look at what was going on but no one could find out what was going on. In the end, the town's residents could only go back home empty-handed.

The Long family was an old family in D Town. Their land was so large and there was a rumor that said that the lake behind their house also belonged to the family.

However, many had thought that this rumor was nothing but merely a rumor.

The Long family was rich but no one would think that they were so rich that they would own a lake.

Inside the hall of the main building, the elders of the Long family sat down with a worried look on their faces. Their eyes were glued to the partition wall at the corner of the room.

Long Yuan, the patriarch of the family were seated at the front of the hall. His head lowered in solemn. By his side, his grandson, Long Yu Heng stood up straight as he gave his report of what was going on during their journey back to the town.

Hearing about everything that Long Fei had to suffer made his heart ache.

As the firstborn male during his generation, Long Yuan was someone who had experienced what Long Fei had experienced. Naturally, he knew best how painful it would be once the scales started to appear on his body.

However, the generations before Long Fei had always stayed in D Town before they were married. Long Fei was the only one who had left the town frequently.

In the past, Long Yuan had reminded this grandson that he should not go out too frequently. However, the boy refused to listen to him.

When Long Fei told him that he was leaving D Town to search for that young girl, Long Yuan and the elders in the family had no other choice but to let him leave.

Long Fei has been coming and leaving D Town for years but this was the first time that they finally had news about that young girl.

Just as they had thought that they could make the girl stay close to Long Fei, the girl had left Capital City and went somewhere farther.

Long Yuan closed his eyes as he tried to figure out what they should do next. He looked at Long Yu Heng again and spoke in a low voice, "If nothing works out, it's not too bad for us to bring the girl to this town forcefully."

"Grandfather, I'm afraid that this is something that Long Fei would not agree to do," Long Yu Heng said. "He already said that he is not going to force the girl to stay beside him. If she is not willing to stay, then it was just not fated between them."

"Nonsense!" Long Yuan hit the armrest hard.

The hall shook with his loud voice.

"Now that things are at this phase and he still wanted to do things as he pleased? Is he planning to die and end our Long family?"

"Grandfather."

Hearing the voice, everyone turned their head to look at the man who came out from behind the partition wall.

"You don't have to force that girl to come over to this place," Long Fei said. "It's fine if I stay in D Town, right? As long as I dipped into the lake every day, I will not change, right? I won't let myself suffer."

"You might not have to suffer if you stay but Ah Fei, the lineage will end with you."

Long Fei pursed his lips into a thin line. He had always thought that he wanted this line to end with him. If he had a child, his descendant will continue to suffer from this blood inside of them. He did not want that to happen.

However, Long Fei did not dare to mention this idea out loud. The last time he had told his grandfather about his idea, his grandfather had locked him in the ancestral hall and made him reflect on his mistake.

Long Fei did not think that he was making any mistake but he could only pretend to repent to get out of that punishment.

"I am aware of how important that girl is to myself," Long Fei said. "However, I hope that you could let me do this my way. Grandfather, I know what I am doing."

Long Yuan studied his grandson's expression for a long time. Once he detected that Long Fei was not lying to him, Long Yuan flicked his sleeves and looked away.

However, Long Yun did not know that Long Fei has been lying to him a lot of times that he was starting to get used to it. These days, it was not difficult for Long Fei to hide things from his grandfather.

A breath of relief escaped him.

For now, Long Fei knew that his grandfather had agreed with him. He could only buy time with this method.

"Physician Yang, how is he?" Long Yuan turned his attention to the old physician who came out from behind the partition wall with Long Fei earlier.

"Old man, you don't have to worry." The physician glanced at Long Fei and continued, "Long Fei's body has stabilized. Fortunately, Yu Heng was around to assist him when he started to show some changes on his body."

Long Fei glanced at the elders who were listening to the physician's report worriedly. He wondered just how many of them were genuinely worried about him and how many were worried that the family might crumble because of him.

He turned around and head out the hall without waiting for the physician to finish.

Long Yu Heng saw that he was leaving and started to chase after him. "Long Fei, where are you going?"

"Swimming.. With my condition, isn't it better for me to swim in the lake?" He looked at his cousin and raised a brow. "Do you want to come?"

Chapter: 33

Their King

Long Yu Heng followed his cousin to the lake and watched as he stripped off his shirt.

It was nighttime and the water was too dark.

At a time like this, usually, the town's residents would not dare to enter the water. However, it was different for the Long Fei and the other first-born male in the family.

It was during this time that he could swim in the water peacefully.

Long Fei's toes touched the water and he slowly entered. As he dived into the water, he could no longer see the man's body.

The rippling of the water suggested that there was a large creature inside the water. From where he stood, Long Yu Heng could almost see the glitter in the water. Then, the tip of the tail came out, and with a whip, the water splashed into his face.

Long Yu Heng screamed and cursed as he wiped the droplets on his face. "Long Fei!"

That man was doing this on purpose!

Long Yu Heng looked at his wet shirt and regretted that he decided to follow this man to the lake.

"Are you not going into the water?"

The voice came to his mind.

This was something that Long Fei could do when he had shifted into another form.

Long Yu Heng hesitated for a few seconds before deciding to take off his wet shirt and enter the water. Unlike Long Fei or his grandfather, Long Yu Heng's body would not shift to another form.

As he dived into the water, he saw Long Fei's blue and glistening scales underwater. His body was big and long. His scales were the shade of blue and purple. If anyone saw Long Fei in this form, that person would probably die in shock.

No one would believe that a dragon really exists in this world.

Long Fei continued to swim around him, leading him further into the lake water. The fishes saw the dragon and quickly parted to make way for him. They did not dare to get close to him but at the same time, they longed to get close to him.

As the dragon of the lake, Long Fei had certain power that would make the creature in the water look up to him.

To them, he was their king.

The longer he swam in the water, Long Yu Heng could feel his tiredness gradually swept away.

This was the power of the lake.

The lake was so pure that it could heal and made one feel very refreshed, especially when they were swimming alongside Long Fei.

A few minutes later, Long Yu Heng had no other choice but to swim up to breathe. He looked at the creature underneath his feet and felt slightly jealous that the man did not have to swim up to take a breath.

However, when he thought of everything that Long Fei had to suffer, Long Yu Heng thought that being born without the ability to shift was actually a good thing.

Their grandfather had always said that the blood in their body was a blessing. But after spending his time with Long Fei ever since he was a little kid, Long Yu Heng was starting to believe that this was more of a curse.

Long Fei might have a certain ability that most people did not have but to have that, he could not live life like a normal person.

After swimming around for a while, the cousins swam back to the shore.

The moment Long Fei came out of the water, the scale on his body had disappeared. Looking at him now, anyone would think of him as a normal person.

Long Yu Heng grabbed the towel which was prepared at the side cabin and threw it to Long Fei. He watched as the man wiped the water from his hair and asked, "Are you feeling better now."

"Hmm..." Each time that he entered the lake water, every discomfort on his body would immediately disappear.

However, Long Fei did not like it that he was too reliant on this lake.

Long Yu Heng chuckled. After spending a long time beside Long Fei, how could he not understand what was going on in Long Fei's mind?

The two of them sat at the wooden platform as they watched the calm lake water as well as the twinkling stars in the sky.

"Will you blame me if the blood ended with me and the family might not be able to enjoy as much wealth as we did now?" Long Fei spoke after a long silence between them.

"Of course, not." Long Yu Heng looked at his cousin and sighed. "You know very well that I don't mind the wealth. What we have now is enough to last for a few generations."

"But not everyone had the same thinking like you."

Long Fei trusted his cousin, Long Yu Heng a lot.

To him, this cousin was different than the rest of his family members. This was the reason why he had chosen Long Yu Heng as the person who would assist him in this life.

Long Fei thought about how the elders would look at him. They were always so respectful towards him, the junior. However, Long Fei knew that there was a reason for it.

Behind his back, most of them thought of him as a freak.

If only this power was something that could be transferred over, Long Fei did not doubt that the member of his family would try to do something to take this power away from him.

Unfortunately, this power was something that he was born with and would disappear once he died.

The elders and the rest of his family members could only protect his life because they do not want what they have to disappear.

"Are you sure that this is what you want?" Long Yu Heng asked, snapping Long Fei out of his thought. "You have spent a while being close to her. You know very well how she could make you feel. You don't have to rely on the lake as much with Miss Su by your side."

Long Fei let out a long breath. "Yu Heng, don't try to persuade me anymore. I have already made my decision. Perhaps, the two of us are really not meant to be. Perhaps, I am destined to live alone in this life."

A deep frown appeared on Long Yu Heng's face. He did not like the words that Long Fei had spoken.

"Don't think too much of it.. If we are really fated, then the two of us will surely meet again."

Chapter: 34

New Year

The atmosphere in the Su's old residence was especially lively.

It was the New Year and everyone especially wore something nice and festive. The sounds of laughter and chatting were heard from their neighborhood as well.

Su Ruan walked over to join their family for breakfast. Her stepmother, Xia Ru Yan greeted her and motioned her to sit down.

The family had their New Year's breakfast together. Su Ruan ate her food quietly while observing the happy atmosphere between the family members.

Her stepsiblings were chatting happily with her father about their school and her stepmother would speak and inserted a few words to praise her kids.

Su Ruan's gaze shifted to her father. She could also see the proud look on his face as he continued to listen to his stepchildren's achievements.

The four of them looked like a complete family. Meanwhile, she could only watch everything from the side.

Su Ruan could only coax herself that her stepsiblings were still young and they had a lot to tell. However, it could not stop her from feeling like an outsider. It made her feel lonely.

If it was not for her paternal grandparents, Su Ruan thought that she would not be brave enough to join them for a meal.

Her father was not a bad parent. Her relationship with her father had always been good ever since she was a little child. This was one of the reasons why she had willingly followed her father after the divorce.

Her father, Su Yu, was a good father. However, after he was remarried, whenever he was with his stepchildren, his attention would always focus on them.

Su Ruan lowered her head to hide her disappointment. A second later, she looked up again when her grandmother placed her favorite dish on her bowl.

The two exchanged a look and Su Ruan could only force a smile to assure her grandparents that she would be alright.

After having her breakfast, Su Ruan escaped by taking her grandfather in the garden for a walk. She finally stopped as they reached the small fish pond.

Su Ruan grabbed the small bottle on the shelf and watched as her grandfather feed the koi fishes.

The fishes rushed over to eat and suddenly, Su Ruan found herself lost as she watched the ripple of the water.

"Su Ruan."

Her grandfather's soft voice snapped her out of her thoughts. Su Ruan flashed him a smile and helped her grandfather to clean his hand with a wet tissue.

She turned around to throw the used tissue into the wastepaper basket and when she looked at her grandfather again, the old man was holding a red packet in his hand.

"Quickly take it before the others would see it," Su Yan urged.

Su Ruan took the red packet and was surprised to find that it was thick. She hide the red packet in her pocket and leaned over to kiss him. "Grandfather, thank you."

"Un." The old man nodded in satisfaction. "Don't let the other know about this."

The two of them continued to chat a little bit and Su Yan asked, "When are you planning to head back to Capital City?"

The smile on her face stiffened. Su Ruan had not told her grandparents that she no longer had a job in Capital City. Her grandfather was still recovering after he had fallen down the stairs a few weeks ago. She did not want them to worry.

"I'll stay around for a few more days," Su Ruan said. "Grandfather, even if I went back to Capital City this early, the department I was working at would still be closed. Everyone was taking a long break for this festivity."

A soft sigh escaped him. Since his granddaughter would often take a long break for the New Year holiday, Su Yan did not find anything strange when he heard her words.

However, he was still worried over this one granddaughter.

It was not as if he did not notice the look on Su Ruan's face during breakfast.

Each time that Su Ruan comes back, she would only force herself to be strong as she watched the family of four. However, there was nothing that he could do about it. Su Yan had reminded his son to never neglect Su Ruan. But Su Yu had always thought that Su Ruan was a good daughter and grown enough to look after herself.

Su Yan thought that he could only compensate Su Ruan by giving her endless love. However, how can a grandparents' love be the same as parents'?

"Just tell me when you are heading back," Su Yu said. "I will let your grandmother prepare a lot of your favorite food for you. Take them back to your apartment and share them with your friends."

Su Ruan smiled and hugged her grandfather. "Thank you. I know that you and grandmother loved me the best."

After taking a short walk, the two of them went back into the house.

The stepsiblings were in the living room, playing games on their phones.

Su Ruan went into the kitchen to take a drink before she pulled out her phone.

There were a few messages from her friends, all wishing her a happy new year.

Su Ruan replied to them one by one and later, her eyes stayed on Yu Zhi Yi's name for a long time. She had gotten his message last night but she still hasn't replied to him.

As she thought of the scene and the words that Yu Zhi Yi's fiance had said to her, Su Ruan knew that she needed to distance herself from this man.

They... could no longer be as close as they used to be. Su Ruan finally clicked on his message and replied to him.

Before she could slide her phone back into her pocket, the notification rang, signaling that there was a new message.

It was Yu Zhi Yi again.

"It took you long enough to reply."

"Sorry. My phone was out of battery."

"Your family did not make you sad again, right?"

In the past, Su Ruan was used to telling Yu Zhi Yi about her family relationship and how they would make her feel each time they gathered for the New Year. However, this time, she did not feel like doing so.

"It's the same. But I am already used to it." Su Ruan included a few smiling faces.

"How long are you going to stay in F City? When you get back, we should hang out together again."

Su Ruan reread the message over and over again and finally replied, "I'm planning to stay here longer. I'm not sure when I will return to Capital City."

After she sent that message, Su Ruan slid her phone into her pocket and heaved a long sigh. Her mood plummeted after this brief conversation with Yu Zhi Yi.

Su Ruan walked out, intending to join the others to watch the television. Just then, her phone started to ring. A deep frown appeared on her face as she wondered why was Yu Zhi Yi this persistent when she had finally decided to move on.

However, the caller ID told her that it was not the person she had expected to be.

Chapter: 35

A Change Of Air

Su Ruan walked out to the garden again before she answered the phone call. "Grandpa, happy new year!"

The person who called her at this time was her maternal grandfather, Ma Hao Dong.

The old man laughed happily as he heard his granddaughter's voice. "Su Ruan, happy new year."

"Grandpa, I was planning to call you a while later," Su Ruan said. "I didn't expect that you would call me first."

"Are you sure it's not that you have forgotten to call me?" Ma Hao Dong joked.

"Grandpa, that's not true. I was busy helping around my grandmother earlier," Su Ruan said.

"I know. Grandpa was only joking." Ma Hao Dong laughed happily and the two of them began to chat happily about their new year activity.

Her grandpa mentioned that the house was full of his young grandchildren that he decided to find a quiet place to relax. This was how he had found a chance to call Su Ruan.

"How's my mother? I haven't got the chance to call her yet." Su Ruan held her phone tighter as she recalled her mother.

"She's fine. She's busy helping your grandma to entertain the guests," Ma Hao Dong said. "You know how it is... D Town is a small place. Our neighbors are very close. Just now, a few of them come over to play mahjong."

"You're not playing with them?"

"Your grandma keeps saying that I am going to lose a lot of money. She won't let me play."

Su Ruan laughed as she imagined her grandma scolding her grandpa and how her grandpa would pull that pitiful puppy look on his face.

"Is your grandfather getting better?" Ma Hao Dong asked.

A while ago, Su Ruan had mentioned that her paternal grandfather fell down the stairs and had to stay home to recuperate.

"Mmm... His condition is getting better," Su Ruan said. "The doctor said that he needs a lot of rest to fully recover."

"That's good. That's good."

Ma Hao Dong heaved a sigh. It seemed that he had something to say but was reluctant to say them out loud.

"Grandpa, what is it? Is there something you wanted to say to me?"

Ma Hao Dong pursed his lips into a thin line. "Grandpa just missed you too much."

He wanted to ask again when would she be willing to come to D Town and visit him and her grandmother. However, Ma Hao Dong did not want to pressure his granddaughter too much.

If he kept asking, perhaps, Su Ruan would find him annoying.

Later, it would be difficult for him to see her again.

Ma Hao Dong and his wife had many grandchildren and they loved Su Ruan all the same. But because Su Ruan's parents were divorced, Ma Hao Dong would try to pay more attention to Su Ruan.

He would always worry about her and wanted her to live life happily.

However, it was hard for him to find out if Su Ruan was happy as she live far away when she decided to stay with her father. Moreover, this girl was very good at hiding her feelings and she was too considerate of the people around her.

Sometimes, Ma Hao Dong really wished that Su Ruan would be a little selfish and throw some tantrums to get her parents' attention.

"Grandpa, I missed you and grandma a lot as well." Her voice was soft as she spoke.

At this moment, Su Ruan suddenly thought about the dilemma that she has been having for the past few days.

Her grandpa had often asked her to come and visit him in D Town. Then, she would often give her excuse, telling him that she was too busy with work.

However, she had now lost her job and had her heart broken by that man that she had loved for years.

Capital City gave her bad memories that she was not willing to return to that place at this time.

After she returned to F City to visit her paternal grandfather, Su Ruan had decided to take a break and figure out what she wanted to do next.

However, she couldn't stay in F City. First, she did not want her paternal grandparents to worry. Second, she found that seeing her stepmother and stepsiblings made her feel a little uncomfortable.

Since her grandpa had often asked her to visit D Town, perhaps, this would be a good time... right?

Su Ruan cleared her throat and spoke, "Grandpa, you often invited me to visit you and grandma in D Town. Is that invitation still valid?"

Ma Hao Dong's expression froze. For a few seconds, he had thought that he had misheard things. Su Ruan would always give him excuses whenever he asked her to come over.

But this time, it was her who had mentioned this matter?

"What invitation?" Ma Hao Dong finally spoke after a few seconds of silence. His voice contained a hint of excitement as he spoke. "Su Ruan, you are welcome to come over to my place whenever you want to. Your grandma and I will always welcome you."

Her lips tilted up into a smile. Su Ruan had not thought that her grandpa would be this happy when she mentioned this matter to him.

"Then, how about I visit you and stay there for a while?"

"Of course. Of course. We would be happy to see you. Just tell me when are you coming. I will ask your grandmother to prepare some of your favorite food."

Su Ruan laughed happily as she listened to her grandpa's enthusiasm. At the same time, she was relieved that she finally found a place where she could escape.

She had always lived in the city. Perhaps a change of air is what she needed and staying with her maternal grandparents in D Town would be a good thing for her.

"Then, I will come over and visit you after the festivity is over, is that alright with you?"

"That's good. At that time, your cousins had all returned to their homes. There will be only me and your grandma. It's good that we will have you to accompany us," Ma Hao Dong could not hide his excitement.. "Later, I will show you around. Su Ruan, I think you are going to love this town"