**Suddenly this summer** 

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Suddenly this summer review. Suddenly this summer novel. Suddenly this summer ending. Suddenly this summer east. Suddenly this summer ep 1. Suddenly this summer eng sub. Suddenly this summer dramacool.

Story 8.5 Acting/Cast 9.0 Music 8.5 Rewatch Value 7.0 Watching this drama actually feels like peeking into the different stages of life for these characters. Cinematography wise, it is gorgeous and really well done. You can tell that much care was put into the lighting, coloring, and setting of each scene. STORY: It details the lives of the two main characters and their group of friends through roughly ten episodes set in high school, ten in college, and the last ten as they grow and mature throughout the story. (Not sure if this will be fixed later, but the synopsis on this site is slightly incorrect). There's really no villain, rather the story is driven by time and the changes in the characters as they mature. ACTING/CAST: I'm sure the male lead is pretty recognizable from the very popular dramas Love O2O and Guardian. The female lead, however, is relatively new to acting and she's VERY good. In fact, most if not all of the acting in this drama is really natural. Granted, they look a little too old to be playing in the first arc as high schoolers, but ignoring that fact, they really make you believe in these characters. MUSIC: It was quite good actually. If I remember correctly, they had the leads each do a song. There was nothing I particularly loved but the songs fit well into the drama. Overall, I think this drama is very well made and pretty underappreciated. Sure, it's a simple story, but it was definitely a good quality production. Read More Was this review helpful to you? He Luo, a high school student often ranked at the bottom of her class, decides that she will go to college and aim for Qing Hua - the country's top university. With the help of classmate Zha... Read allHe Luo, a high school student often ranked at the bottom of her class, decides that she will go to college and aim for Qing Hua - the country's top university. With the help of classmate Zhang Yuan, He Luo, a high school student often ranked at the bottom of her class, decides that she will go to college and aim for Qing Hua - the country's top university. With the help of classmate Zhang Yuan, He Luo starts preparing for examinations. You have no recently viewed pages We and our partners use cookies and similar technologies to understand how you use our site and to improve your experience. This includes providing, analysing and enhancing site functionality and usage, enabling social features, and personalising advertisements, content and our services. By clicking "Reject All", you will reject all cookies except for strictly necessary cookies. Learn More THE SHORT VERDICT: An earthy youth-to-young adult story of growing up, and learning to love yourself and others, Suddenly This Summer is understated, poignant and relatable in all the right ways. Because Show is more slice-of-life than its cuter drama cousins like A Love So Beautiful and Put Your Head On My Shoulder, it can feel like a slow watch. But what Show lacks in trendy cuteness, it more than makes up for, with characters - even the secondary ones - who feel like real people earnestly doing their best in their individual life journeys. Even though Show is heart-pinching at times, it feels refreshing in its gentle earthiness. THE LONG VERDICT: While watching this show, it suddenly occurred to me that this feels like a younger, gentler version of The Third Charm - emphasis on gentler. I personally very much enjoyed The Third Charm, and found it a compelling and poignant coming-of-age story, despite some of its harsher narrative arcs. Not everyone agreed with me, certainly, and there were definitely folks who were frustrated with where Show left the OTP at the end. To alleviate any fears that you might have about this drama, I'm here to tell you guys that Suddenly This Summer brings to the table most of the same good things - poignance, warmth, growth, with some sweet tinging the bitter - but at the same time, Show is generally milder (read: less traumatizing to both viewers and characters) and comes with a sweeter, more solid OTP ending. Essentially, this watch experience kinda-sorta feels like watching a more bittersweet version of slice-of-life youthy C-dramas like When We Were Young 2018. Not a bad thing at all, in my books. STUFF I LIKED: A QUICK OVERVIEW Before we delve into exploring this drama world's characters and relationships, I thought I'd give a guick overview of the things I appreciated about this show on a more macro level. 1. Everything feels raw and real This show feels more down-to-earth and relatable than Put Your Head On My Shoulder or A Love So Beautiful. Generally speaking, I found this closer to real life in flavor, and less manhwa-inspired, even though there are actual manhwa sequences included, which I'll talk about later in this review. From key characters to supporting ones, our characters feel like real people living realistic lives, and I appreciated this a lot. Here are just 2 small examples: [MINOR SPOILER ALERT] E5. It's realistic, that even after a year of work, Luo Luo (Bu Guan Jin) is not yet achieving the results she'd hoped for. After being consistently clueless about school work for so long, she's still got a long way to go, to catch up, even after a year of hard work. In a more fantastical drama, she'd be acing everything by now, but not in this show, and I rather like that. E6. It sucks that Mom won't listen when Luo Luo tries to explain that Zhang Yuan (Bai Yu) has been helping her with her school work, but it also feels true to life. Chinese parents, especially in a retro time period like this, frown on campus romances, so it's not surprising that Mom is concerned and disapproving. [END SPOILER] 2. There are no evil scheming characters Despite the fact that we eventually get a love quadrangle of sorts later in our story, I really like the fact that there are no evil scheming characters in this drama world. Our second leads are both very decent people who don't resort to underhanded tactics in the name of love, and I found frustrating to watch, like Luo Luo's uncle, I could still understand why he would think the way he did, even though I didn't agree with his actions. 3. The emphasis on friendship, despite the romance-centric narrative Our story starts in high school, where our main characters Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo share a tight circle of friends. I found it heartwarming and refreshing to see that these characters continued to nurture their friendship even after high school, despite the fact that most of their paths had diverged. There are some solid #friendshipgoals right there. 4. Show's general management of the passage of time Given the fact that our story covers high school, college and even several of our characters' working years within a 30-episode framework, time necessarily moves fast in this drama world. For example, in just 5 episodes, our characters move from being in their first year in high school, to being on the cusp of their third year. Yet, it all doesn't feel too much like a highlight reel. Show is smart in choosing where to zoom us in, so that we share in the key milestones of our characters, and the emotions that go with, and I appreciated that a lot. SPOTLIGHT ON KEY CHARACTERS Bai Yu as Zhang Yuan Zhang Yuan is, essentially, super smart, loyal and good-hearted, but too proud for his own good. He was a character that I liked a lot and sincerely wanted to root for, but sometimes found myself wanting to slap the upside of the head instead, because he was being pigheaded and stubborn. Bai Yu does a very solid job bringing Zhang Yuan to life in all of his facets and nuances; this, despite the fact that Bai Yu looks nothing like an actual high school, so this slight dissonance eventually became a non-issue. Additionally, Bai Yu's signature crinkly-eyed smile was very much bonus indeed. I will talk more about Zhang Yuan later, in the OTP section, but first, here's a quick sampling of some examples of Zhang Yuan does desire to help Luo Luo prove the teachers wrong. E5. That's sweet of Zhang Yuan to find something more immediately rewarding and fun for Luo Luo to work towards. Using video games as a reward system is way more accessible than just constantly dreaming about Hua Qing, and I'm happy to see Luo Luo regain her fighting spirit, thanks to Zhang Yuan's fun reward system. E17. I will say that Zhang Yuan really did intend to give up his game development opportunity for Luo Luo's sake, even though he knew the opportunity cost would be high. It was only the promise of the chance to go to Beijing that caused him to change his mind. It's a reckless decision on his part, but that does speak of how irrational and deep his desire is, to be near Luo Luo. He cares, and he cares deeply. The not-so-good E4. Zhang Yuan can be too proud though. Both times that Luo Luo's asked for help with tutoring, he's been adamant about turning her down, until she's pretty much ready to give up. It's only then that he caves and agrees to help her. E18. It's wrong of Zhang Yuan to lie to Luo Luo about why he's in Beijing, and I can see why she's so angry, but I can also see why he would hesitate to tell her what he's doing, because she would never agree to it, though, why would he still go ahead and do it, and then get all defensive about it? Ultimately, this probably has more to do with his self-confidence and sense of self-worth, than he'd like to admit. E24. Zhang Yuan always throws his health under the bus, insisting that he's fine. Drinking so much strong liquor with a history of gastritis is really reckless, and even more so, when he admits that he'd been having gastric pain for the past several days prior. That is so reckless and immature. Seriously, if you can't take care of yourself, how do you expect to take care of other people? [END SPOILER] Bu Guan Jin as Luo Luo one of the main draws of Luo Luo as a character, is how very ordinary, but serves up a very cute and stylish pretty girl while doing so. Bu Guan Jin, while pleasantly pretty, looks more like a regular girl-next-door than the lead female character in a drama. In fact, if she'd been cast as a secondary character, she would have completely looked the part. This, to me, was her greatest appeal. Because of this, I found her consistently relatable. It also helps that I found Bu Guan Jin's delivery extremely natural and organic. All of Luo Luo's emotions and expressions felt lived-in and real, even in the most difficult scenes, and I applaud Bu Guan Jin for her excellent delivery. Luo Luo does become a more withdrawn character later in our story, with valid reason, and I'll talk more about that later. In the earlier stretch of our story, though, I found Luo Luo's earnest underdog story in high school very relatable, and with every milestone that she crossed, I couldn't help but feel proud of her. Here's a quick sprinkling of Luo Luo's struggle to find a new path relatable. She was great at running, but didn't want to be defined by it, and afterwards, nothing else that she's tried has seemed to fit. I have to admire her determination, though it's partly fueled by naiveté. E3. I like the fact that Luo Luo working hard to do well in a subject where she's always struggled, strikes a chord with me. When she makes improvements or manages to solve a question. I can't help but feel victorious on her behalf. E6. Luo Luo's speech to her mom, expressing her desire to stay and work towards achieving the goal she'd set for herself, is so heartfelt and moving. So much fervor and passion, palpable through my screen, E6. Bu Guan Iin really is so natural. The tears that just fall from her eyes as Luo Luo hugs Mom with gratitude, are so effortless and real. I could feel how overwhelmed Luo Luo was, in that moment. [END SPOILER] Lü Peng as Feng Xiao, as a character. [MINOR SPOILERS] It's clear that he does have a soft spot for Luo Luo, but instead of trying to steal her away from Zhang Yuan or cause her feelings for Zhang Yuan to weaken in any way, he always genuinely tries to help. And he seems sincerely supportive of their relationship with Luo Luo, but he consistently holds those feelings in check. He never tries to push those feelings on Luo Luo, nor does he ever try to take advantage of the fact that Zhang Yuan is far away, while he has daily access to Luo Luo. He seems to truly just want to be of help to Luo Luo, nor does he ever try to take advantage of the fact that Zhang Yuan is far away, while he has daily access to Luo Luo. He seems to truly just want to be of help to Luo Luo and make her life better, and just comes across as such a decent guy, that I couldn't help growing rather affectionate of him. [END MINOR] SPOILERS] I have to admit that I found Lü Peng's delivery a little one-note as a general rule, but Feng Xiao was such a decent, earnest sort of character, that I found that Lü Peng as Feng Xiao gives me inexplicable Seo Kang Joon vibes, even though they don't look that much alike. Yang Yue as Wei Rui I have to admit that it took me some time to warm to Wei Rui as a character. When we first meet her, she generally comes across as brusque, aggressive and pushy, and she often crosses the line in terms of how she bosses her classmates around - Zhang Yuan included. However, Show mellows Wei Rui out over time, and I eventually grew to appreciate her care for Zhang Yuan. I also respected her for being a decent second female lead, who, despite liking Zhang Yuan, keeps a respectful distance when it comes to his relationship with Luo Luo. Similar to Feng Xiao, Wei Rui knows not to overstep her boundaries, and doesn't actually try to snatch Zhang Yuan away from Luo Luo. I had to appreciate her for that. SPOTLIGHT ON THE RELATIONSHIPS Zhang Yuan & Luo Luo forms the backbone of our story, so it's no surprise that the bulk of our screen time is dedicated to the development of their story. What's helpful to know, I think, is that their road to happiness is not a straightforward one. They encounter setbacks and break up more than once. Importantly, these setbacks and break-ups don't come across as plot devices put in there just to inflate Show's episode count. Instead, they feel true-to-life, like anyone in Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo's shoes would struggle similarly. In this sense, I feel like this story would resonate more with viewers who've had at least a moderate amount of life miles under their belt. If you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had at least a moderate amount of life miles under their belt. If you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had at least a moderate amount of life miles under their belt. If you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had at least a moderate amount of life miles under their belt. If you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had at least a moderate amount of life miles under their belt. If you've had relationship struggles before; if you've had relationship struggles before the had relationshi foibles. I personally found the highs of this OTP heartwarming and touching, and their lows, heart-pinching and poignant. While I sometimes wished that they didn't need to take the longer road around, I recognize that sometimes wished that they didn't need to take the longer way around is necessary, for the experience and impact of the journey. Overall, I found this couple's journey a worthwhile one, even in its angstier seasons. Here's a slightly sprawling look at the various stages of their journey together. [SPOILER ALERT] Initial bonds E3. The messages that Luo Luo is exchanging with the comic book fellow fan is clearly with Zhang Yuan, so this does have a You've Got Mail flavor to it, because the dynamic of their written exchanges is so different from their in-person conversations. E3. I'm curious to see how the mutual tutoring will go. So far, I already feel like Zhang Yuan's softening towards Luo Luo, mainly because of she works hard, but I think also because she's perky and grateful and bubbly, all at the same time. E3. I thought it was endearing that Luo Luo went to see Supervisor Qiu (Zhang Lei), to confess that she'd been the reason that Zhang Yuan's grades deteriorated, and to ask if Zhang Yuan solid be transferred to the Science 1 class. She really is so sincere about it all, that it's easy to see why Zhang Yuan is softening towards her. E4. A familiar bond is forming between Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan, and it's pretty endearing to see them study together and helping each other. Growing affection E4. A leaked smile, hidden petty jealousy, it's all starting to rear its head between Luo Luo, while she's more buried in her books than anything. E6. The burgeoning mutual care between Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan is nicely done. It feels natural and unforced, and it's clear that they are each keeping the other in mind in all things, and close to their hearts. E7. I felt moved by the dedication and promise that Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan carry for each other. Even though everyone seems to suddenly be working to keep them apart, they work hard individually, to be able to keep the promise they've made with each other. So much simplicity and determination. E8. That moment, though, when Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan finally meet again, after the exam, is so bashful and sweet. I loved watching them laugh in the breeze, as they rode the scooter together. What a wonderful memory that must make. A new relationship E8. Zhang Yuan finally making his feelings clear, short of an actual love confession, is a big turning point. I do like that he tells Luo Luo that it's fine if they keep things quiet, but then it would possibly give rise to misunderstandings if other girls approach him. It sounds a little braggy, and he is teasing, but it is also true; he just had to turn down a very aggressive suitor. E9. Aw, there's actually not a lot of happy bliss, before the truth comes out and crushes Luo Luo. I can see why Zhang Yuan kept it from her; he didn't want her to be sad and so he kept the illusion up for as long as possible. But I can also see why this crushes her so much. The dream that she thought she'd achieved, isn't quite what she thought she'd be going to Hua Qing without him. That's a huge blow to a blossoming young relationship. E9. I could really feel both of their pain this episode. Yes, it's an early life milestone, but it means a lot to them, and I can feel how gutted they both are, now that the truth is on the table. E10. Gulp. This episode made me cry real tears. That's not something that just any drama manages to do, so this is a pretty big deal, for me. I could feel the Luo Luo's angst, of being cut off from Zhang Yuan, and the additional pain of discovering that her uncle probably contributed to Zhang Yuan's less than ideal results. I could also see where Zhang Yuan was coming from, not wanting to be the thing that holds Luo Luo back, in discovering new horizons. Yes, Luo Luo needed a bit of assurance and pushing from her friends, but I really was proud of her for going after Zhang Yuan. She didn't manage to get him to see her immediately, but her chalk drawings definitely got through to him. I love that he knew just where to find her after that, and that she was sniffling while muttering her woeful pronouncements that he's a jerk, while playing the game that they'd always played. It's just like Zhang Yuan, to just join in the game and not let her react immediately to his presence. But I do love that he then turns to her and says sincerely, "From now on, I'll always listen to you." And, awww, the way Luo Luo starts bawling is just so endearing. All her pain and fear and frustration all comes flooding out in her tears, and yet, through it all, she remembers to make sure that he still means to keep his promise, that they'll be together forever. The hugs and assuring hand holds become a naturally at this point, that it doesn't even look like their first hug. There's something really endearing about that; that they've built up their relationship and connection for so long, that the hugs and hand holds become a natural expression of their bond, and because it's so organically grown, there's simply no awkwardness about even the very first hug. I love it. Long distance love: the bitter with the sweet E11. It's kind of sweet to each other over the phone, even while they each explore their new schools and get to know new friends. E12. The video calls between Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan are very endearing. the happy looks on their faces because they get to see each other, are so precious. E13. Aw. Zhang Yuan standing for so many hours on the train, so that he would be able to visit Luo Luo in Beijing as promised. That's dedication. E13. My heart is beginning to bleed for Zhang Yuan a little bit. Luo Luo's right, there's some angst beneath the surface, and Zhang Yuan is covering it up with his signature warm grin, but it's still there. I think it's partly because this is the school that he'd wanted to come to, where everyone widely agrees he belongs; and there's the angst that Luo Luo is there and he isn't; and there's the angst of worrying that there are other boys around Luo Luo who are interested in her. E13. I wish Luo Luo wouldn't rib him so much, and treat him with more overt tenderness. I felt sorry for him, when she dragged him to do bike duty, when he's already so tired. E13. But, the first kiss is sweet, and Zhang Yuan's wonder and joy at finally kissing Luo Luo is so endearing. E13. It's also realistic that Zhang Yuan would want more, and soon, given that his hormones are raging at this age, and also, the fact that Luo Luo felt strong enough to stand her ground and draw her boundaries, and that despite this little hiccup, that they found a way to be together through the night, and maximize their time together, without Luo Luo having to compromise for marriage. So much tearful emotion, from being together after being apart, from the prospect of being apart again, from raging hormones; it's all a bit much, and it's completely realistic to me, that this conversation is tinged with tears. I can feel through my screen how much this couple misses each other, and I hope that Luo Luo's suggestion of Zhang Yuan doing his postgraduate studies at Hua Qing will come true. But.. from what I understand of this show's trajectory, that's probably not going to happen. E14. It's a pity that Zhang Yuan feels the sting of not being at Hua Qing, and that this was his dream too, and now he can only see it from afar, through Luo Luo's experiences. E15. Aw, this was a poignant episode. Luo Luo getting jealous of Wei Rui and rushing home early, only to get more upset and more jealous when she sees Wei Rui and Zhang Yuan and getting mistaken for his girlfriend, insecurity that Wei Rui is prettier than she is, jealousy that Wei Rui gets to share in Zhang Yuan's world, and a feeling of exclusion from Zhang Yuan's new world at college. I can totally understand how her feelings would overwhelm her and cause her to run away in a fit of emotion. Sweet Zhang Yuan comes through, in a way that is so him, designing a game that is dedicated to their relationship, which is something that is so quintessentially them too. Really nice. And it was so poignant to see Luo Luo cry at having to say goodbye, at the end of the term break. The way she cries is so plaintive, and the way Zhang Yuan comforts her is so good-natured. I really like watching them together. E16. Aw. So much sincerity and sweetness, tinged with a hard dash of bitterness. It was sweet to watch Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan put so much thought and effort and sacrifice into the gifts they prepared for each other, and it was really nice of Feng Xiao to get Luo Luo time off from school so that she could go celebrate Zhang Yuan's birthday. But.. it was such a downer for both of them, that things just didn't go so well. Luo Luo seeing that the notes she'd painstakingly copied for Zhang Yuan were stained with chilli sauce, seemingly untouched, was really a stab in the heart. Zhang Yuan's reaction of trying to distract her with other thoughts instead of apologizing properly didn't help, and then Luo Luo seeing that he'd received a birthday present from Wei Rui, was just the last straw for her. E17. Show is really good at portraying the difficulties that Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan face; the heartache and insecurity born of the distance between them, the helplessness as they notice more and more symptoms of the growing divide in their experiences, it's all so poignant and heart-pinching. And then there's the draw of the immediacy and relevance of the people who are around them; people who can understand their current situation, particularly Zhang Yuan about his decision to pursue the development of his game. Luo Luo consistently won't support him on this because it interferes with their plan to do their postgraduate studies together, and on the other side of things, Wei Rui is eager to support Zhang Yuan, and even does the development alongside him. And on top of it all, Zhang Yuan doesn't even tell Luo Luo about his decision (which is driven mainly by the lure of being in Beijing and therefore near her), so that she won't worry. This will surely combine to drive a deeper wedge between Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo. E18. I feel that Luo Luo cries at the end of the episode, not only because she realizes how muted Zhang Yuan's countenance has been since high school, now that she sees how bright and alive he looks while doing his game spiel, but also because deep down, she also realizes that this is the path that is right for him - and it's different from the path that's right for her. E19. Zhang Yuan is really making some regrettable choices and is showing problematic behavior. Not only is he not taking care of his health and his studies, he's also lying to Luo Luo and to his business partner. This is, I suppose, what I would call youthful arrogance. He really does think he's doing the right thing, and that all will be alright, and he doesn't want to listen to anyone who tries to talk him around. I can see that he's a good person, but right now, he's really misguided. I do think it's because he's unhappy with his college posting, and is desperate enough to be with Luo Luo, that he's willing to take a gamble. The problem is, the more he gambles, the bigger risks he's willing to take, because he's not willing to lose. And now, it looks like things are going to spiral out of control. He's on the verge of getting kicked out of school, and the game development potential has been truncated because he sold the rights. I will say that Luo Luo's been more than patient with him. Even when she finds out that he's been lying again and again, and even though she can see that he's not listening to her when she tries to persuade him to be more prudent, she continues to choose to love and support him. I don't think there's more that she could have done, honestly. The first break-up E20. I get where Luo Luo is coming from, in her decision to break up with Zhang Yuan. She's gotten herself completely in the groove of having her entire life revolve around him; even her goals are built around him, would be enough to make her feel very much betrayed. On top of that, there's the realization that while she's lost her sense of self in building her life around Zhang Yuan, he's continued to make decisions without consulting her, and why she feels that she just can't, with Zhang Yuan, anymore. Of course, there have been consistent flaws in their communication. Even thought to himself and agreed. And then, operating under the assumption that this is something they both want, Luo Luo keeps making reference to this goal and promise that she assumes is shared, but is really Zhang Yuan yielding to her wishes. Zhang Yuan is proving to be a person with little patience. While he was patient in tutoring Luo Luo in high school, he's impatient in the face of setbacks and failures. Ever since he didn't

make it to Hua Qing, he's been impatient to prove himself; impatient to narrow the distance between himself and Luo Luo; impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to narrow the distance between himself and Luo Luo; impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing. His impatient to fulfill her dream of having a home in Beijing impatient to move forward with his plans and therefore doesn't discuss them with Luo Luo first, and he's too impatient to want to listen to her worries and nagging and so he keeps his decisions from her. All these small instances of him breaking her trust in him, results in a gaping wound where she feels that she just can't trust him anymore. The initial reconciliation E21. The thing about a cold war is that there's an implied winner and loser; I feel like Luo Luo being cold to Zhang Yuan even though she desperately wants to make up with her. It's not the most helpful way of approaching the situation, certainly. But Zhang Yuan does come in strong with the small window of time he has left before Luo Luo reaches Beijing. That meeting of trains, and the 5-minute Valentine, with the returning of the ring and long hugs and tearful, lingering goodbyes, really did bring a tear to my eye. The second break-up E22. Although I don't approve Zhang Yuan's non-communicativeness, I do understand why he feels that he needs to break up with Luo Luo. He's at a point where he's lost everything, and he doesn't know what tomorrow might bring, or if he will have a tomorrow. If he tells Luo Luo the truth of his situation, he knows that she will stick by him. But he has no future to promise her, and he can't allow himself to stand in her way, which is why he breaks up with her. What Zhang Yuan said, that they lost each other along the way, is not completely untrue. Although they worked hard to keep their relationship alive, their different experiences inevitably caused them to grow in different directions. The break-up aftermath E23. Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo clearly still miss each other. He keeps a clock on her time zone in his office, so that he'll know instantly what time it is for her, and when she almost dies of carbon monoxide poisoning, her final hallucinating thoughts before being rescued, are all of Zhang Yuan. E26. Luo Luo pretends to be over it all, when she's with Zhang Yuan, but it's obvious that it takes a lot out of her. I do respect that she draws clear boundaries with him, out of considerate boyfriend. If this were real life and not a drama, Feng Xiao would be a great eventual partner to spend her life with, after the bittersweet foibles and lessons of a failed first love. E28. At this point, I don't really know whether I want Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo to end up together, I can see that they both miss each other, and perhaps that alone is reason enough to root for their reunion. But I hope Show does a decent job of showing us that they're going to be able to work through the problems that had driven them apart to begin with. [END SPOILER] Feng Xiao & Luo Luo and Wei Rui & Zhang Yuan Once Zhang Yuan Once Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo go to separate universities and embark on a long distance relationship, Show introduces a potential love rival on each side. While this could be considered a little tropey, I found it believable because both Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo are shown to be outstanding individuals in their own right. It's not surprising that they would attract others, just by being themselves. I've talked a little bit about both Feng Xiao and Wei Rui, and how I found both of them very decent people. In this section, I just wanted to shine the spotlight a little bit, on how things resolve for each of their longstanding crushes. [SPOILER ALERT] Feng Xiao and Luo Luo While Feng Xiao's never made a move to snatch Luo Luo away from Zhang Yuan, he does make an effort to get closer to her, when she and Zhang Yuan break up, and she goes to the US for her postgraduate studies. Even though it takes him almost a year, he gets himself to the same city in the US, so that he might have a chance at winning her heart. That's dedication, especially given that Luo Luo, he doesn't cross the line to be pushy. He generally keeps a respectful distance, and if Luo Luo indicates that she's not comfortable with something, he's more likely to withdraw than press in. Feng Xiao's confession in episode 24 is rather sweet, I have to admit. And when Luo Luo, whether or not you've changed, some things have never changed for me. It will never change." Then he slowly takes her hands, and gently draws her to himself. It's very sweet, and completely unforced, and I like it. Luo Luo reciprocates the hug, and I feel like this is her giving herself a new chance at a fresh start. And I appreciate that when Zhang Yuan finally calls, she doesn't omit this information, that she has a boyfriend. She could've easily done that, to avoid awkwardness, but she doesn't, and I feel glad for it. I feel that she says it to own it, rather than to hurt Zhang Yuan. Zhang Yuan being all confused and torn up by this new development in Luo Luo's life is hard to see, coz I know that he loves her. But, he was the one who basically chased her away. He can't expect her world to stay still while he figures himself out. He gave her no promises and no assurances; he'd made it sound completely final. Of course Luo Luo needs to take care of herself, and if she feels ready to move on, she has every right to do so, without having to worry about Zhang Yuan's feelings. However, over time, it's clear to see that Luo Luo isn't as invested in the relationship as Feng Xiao is. And when she sees Zhang Yuan hugging a girl whom she assumes is his new love, it casts a shadow over her. She doesn't want to admit it, but she still cares about Zhang Yuan hugging a girl whom she assumes is his new love, it casts a shadow over her. 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Now that he's her boyfriend, I feel like sometimes the overly bright smile and cheer that he puts on, like we see in the video call this episode, is about him tamping down jealousy over Luo Luo's lingering attachment to Zhang Yuan. This puts a whole different spin on things, and somehow, I don't like the fact that he's pretending not to notice that Luo Luo's still affected by Zhang Yuan. That's not a healthy way of doing things. and I'd previously pegged him as someone with a much more healthy, emotionally grounded way of approaching things. In episode 29, we finally have an admission from Luo Luo, that she wishes she could love Feng Xiao as much as he loves her, but she's just not able to. I feel sorry for Feng Xiao. He came all this way hoping to finally win Luo Luo's heart, but while she's agreed to be in a relationship with him, it's becoming clearer and clearer that her heart isn't quite in it, and I can see that it's affecting him. He always laughs it off, but this is the kind of thing that never actually goes away; that disappointment and rejection will only show itself later. Feng Xiao and Luo Luo finally break up in episode 30, which I'll talk about later. Wei Rui and Zhang Yuan Between Feng Xiao and Wei Rui always found a way to hover around Zhang Yuan, in hopes that he would one day reciprocate her feelings for him. While Wei Rui doesn't actually date Zhang Yuan, she does become a trusted companion and a close friend, especially after she joins his company. Importantly, while it's true that she sought Zhang Yuan out in order to work with him because she liked him, Wei Rui doesn't put pressure on him to take things in a romantic direction. She was willing to put herself near him, at an emotional cost to herself, because she couldn't stop herself from liking him, even though she knew she didn't actually have much of a chance with him. In episode 28, Wei Rui actively encourages Zhang Yuan to go after Luo Luo, because she's finally realized that Luo Luo is the only person who can make him truly happy. I appreciate that sentiment, that she wants the best for him, and wants him to be happy, even if that happiness entails her own heartbreak. Afterwards, Wei Rui weeps heartbrokenly, but I'm glad that she's finally starting to achieve some closer for herself, on this matter. In episode 29, we see that Wei Rui's decided to stop planning her life around Zhang Yuan. I like that when Zhang Yuan left the company, instead of saying like everyone else that she'd be waiting for him to return, she announces that she's decided to travel the world. That's something that's she's doing for herself, and I'm glad for it. It's high time she enjoy the liberty of living without factoring in where Zhang Yuan is, in that picture, and move on to bigger and happier things. [END SPOILER] Zhao Cheng Jie and Tian Xin (Fang Wen Qiang and Hou Qing Zi Zi) ended up touching me more than I thought it would, and I wanted to give them the quick spotlight. Essentially, Cheng Jie's worshipped Tian Xin since their high school days, and even though she ignores his affections and pretends not to notice him, he continues to offer up his heart to her, and even moves cities in order to be near her. It got to a point where I felt really frustrated with Tian Xin, and I wished that Cheng Jie would just ignore her and move on with his life. I just wanted him to stop getting rejected and humiliated by her, y'know? [SPOILER ALERT] The thing is, when Cheng Jie does move on and get engaged to someone else, I was surprised at how affecting I found the scene in episode 28, where a slightly tipsy Tian Xin asks that he sit with her, and they talk about, well, everything. I was perhaps most surprised by Tian Xin's tears over Zhao Cheng Jie's marriage plans. We'd seen her be cold and indifferent towards him so many times before, but it's here that her true feelings come to light. She's never been able to see him as more than a friend - and we should have all been there, in one way or another, and understand that the heart wants what it wants, and you can't force yourself to see someone romantically just because you will it - and it was out of guilt, of hurting him and of wasting his time, that she kept a distance from him and wasn't overly kind to him, all these years. It wasn't because she disliked him; she just didn't know how else to hurt him less, because she was going to hurt him regardless because she couldn't like him back. And now that he's finally getting married to someone else, all the bittersweet, poignant, wistful feelings are overwhelming her in full force. Wistful, that she couldn't like him even though she knew he's a very good person. And remembering all of the past sweet actions he'd taken for her, with a great deal of bittersweet poignance, because she knows that those are now firmly in the past, and he will now never again do those kinds of things for her. It's the passing of a milestone, and I really loved this scene because she's finally able to tell him what a good person he is, and how she wishes she could have liked him back. I can understand the tears that reach both their eyes. You can't pass such a large emotional milestone in your life, without it stirring up a lot of deep feelings. I'm glad they had this moment, just the two of them. I feel like it was necessary and cathartic not just for Tian Xin, but for Cheng Jie as well, to have this closure. [END SPOILER] Yun Wei and Chang Feng The loveline between Yun Wei as a character, and so I just wanted to give her loveline a shout-out. [SPOILER ALERT] From the moment in episode 8 that Chang Feng sacrificed his university entrance exams to take care of Yun Wei's grandmother, I knew that these two were meant to be together. I mean, what a real way to demonstrate your care for the girl that you like. The thing is, Chang Feng is a bit of a wild card, and Yun Wei often seems to be getting the short end of the stick. Chang Feng is a bit of a wild card, and Yun Wei often seems to be getting the short end of the stick. stuff to worry about, and then in episode 26, he even disappears, because he feels guilty for his part in Zhang Yuan's game being stolen and launched under another company. Through it all, Yun Wei continues to soldier on with a smile, simply hoping that he's alright, so as not to worry the people around her. Not only does she tamp down her own worries, she continues to care for her friends, and regularly offers a listening ear or advice to Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan. She's too good, seriously. For the sake of her happiness, I was glad that Chang Feng reunites with Yun Wei in episode 27. Their reunion scene felt so raw and real. The way she slapped and hit him; the way he started hitting himself; the eventual hugs and tears. I can feel all of the angst being given an outlet, and then being overtaken by relief and love. When they eventually get married and celebrate their wedding, I was happy for these two, that they're now able to live happily together, squabbles and all. [END SPOILER] STUFF I LIKED LESS There isn't a lot I dislike about this drama, but here's the guick list, just for the record. The manhwa interludes We get a good handful of manhwa sequences in the show, thanks to Luo Luo's interest in comic books mingling with her imagination as well as her dreamscape. This is completely subjective, but, these.. were not my favorite things. I found them on the cheesy-cringey side of things, and it didn't help that the narrative arcs of these manhwa characters were supposed to mirror the journey of our OTP, to some extent. I don't hate the inclusion of the manhwa sequences, but at the same time, I wouldn't exactly have mourned their absence, if they'd been omitted. Luo Luo's styling getting stuck in a time rut Perhaps it's a symbolic thing, but Luo Luo's styling in Show's later stretch sometimes seems to be dressing in a more grown-up, mature way. Yun Wei in particular looks so graceful and lovely in her officer wear; I love her in her soft palazzo pants and her low side ponytail. And yet, Luo Luo mostly seems stuck in teenager-esque styles. Like in episode 28, when she wears a pinafore dress over a white t-shirt and white trainers - to a wedding. Why, right? THOUGHTS ON THE ENDING [SPOILERS] I fully expected a bittersweet sort of ending, and Show delivered. Zhang Yuan goes to the US to seek out Luo Luo, and finally tells her how he's felt all this time. Luo Luo turns him down, but eventually ends up breaking up with Feng Xiao. It was hard to watch Luo Luo's break-up with Feng Xiao the way that he loves her; the way that he deserves to be loved, and the distance that she's been subconsciously and consciously been putting between them for the duration of their relationship has finally worn him down. His angry outburst was hard to watch because it didn't feel like the Feng Xiao I'd come to know, but I could rationalize it easily. He'd been bottling up all his insecurities - and how he not feel insecure, when he felt distant from his own girlfriend? - and with Zhang Yuan's visit to Luo Luo while he was away, that was the straw that broke the camel's back. All the frustration that he'd been tamping down rushed to the surface and out of his mouth in the form of spiteful, accusatory words before he could stop himself. I feel like if Luo Luo had apologized and made an attempt to smooth things over, that their relationship would have gone back to normal. But, the crux of the matter is, that normal wasn't doing either of them any good. In the end, I feel it was healthier for both Luo Luo and Feng Xiao, to end their romantic relationship. At the same time, I'm glad that Luo Luo made that decision independent of whether or not she would have a chance to rekindle things with Zhang Yuan. I'm so glad that instead of looking up Zhang Yuan, Luo Luo poured herself; it's so much more important than finding your life partner. Luo Luo had a lot of emotional baggage to work through, and I'm glad she took the time to do it. I feel like by the time she meets Zhang Yuan again, she's in a better place; more mature, more gracious, and more able to look beyond the hurts of the past, to explore the possibilities of the future. That moment where Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo lock gazes, both barely holding in tears of wonder, relief and gladness, is pregnant with possibility. I feel like now, finally, after both more mature, better people who will be better able to love each other. Certainly, not every broken relationship that feels like the lost Big Love of our lives gets a second chance, and if Show had ended without this reunion between Zhang Yuan and Luo Luo, it wouldn't have surprised me. After all, Show has felt so much like a reflection of real life than a purveyor of fantasy. But, I have to admit, I am not at all opposed to this little sprinkle of fairy dust, for Luo Luo and Zhang Yuan. And I'd like to imagine that in the days to come, with this hard-earned greater ability to cherish and love each other, that they'll enjoy life's journey together, even more now than they could have ever dreamed of, before. THE FINAL GRADE: B++ TEASER: MV: WHERE TO WATCH: You can check out this show on Viki here. 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