

Suddenly this summer

I'm not robot!



Make it to **Yuan Qing**, he's been impatient to prove himself, impatient to narrow the distance between himself and Luo Luo, 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 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 reconcile with him, has to do with this. She wants him to demonstrate that he's truly sorry and 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 consideration for Feng Xiao. And Feng Xiao really is a sweet and supportive and considerate boyfriend. In 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 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's already rejected him more than once. What I like about Feng Xiao is that even as he makes to pursue 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 finally accepted his heart in episode 25, I actually felt happy for him. He's so gentle with her, too. "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 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 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, she doesn't want to admit it, but she still cares about Zhang Yuan. Also, I have to say, I found that I liked Feng Xiao more when he wasn't Luo Luo's boyfriend. When he was just her friend, his bright smile, which might occasionally seemed forced, told of him tamping down his feelings for her in order to be a good friend to her. He knew she had a boyfriend, and he continued to be her friend and support her and her relationship in very real and practical ways. 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 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, I always felt that Wei Rui was the slightly more forward one. Whether in university or at work, 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 Even though theirs is considered a secondary arc, the connection between 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 allowing herself to be honest and upfront with him, after evading his feelings all these years, and 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 lovehine between Yun Wei and Chang Feng (Zhang Shu Ya and Liu Lin) is a rather muted one, but I really like Yun Wei as a character, and so I just wanted to give her lovehine 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 regularly gives her 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 she 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 quick 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 stuck in the past, while everyone else in the group 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, even though I knew that this was the better decision for them both. Luo Luo's cognizant of the fact that she isn't able to love 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 into a bigger, more important task: that of finding herself. I heartily endorse the importance of finding oneself; 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 of them have worked through their individual issues and healed from their wounds, they're both more mature, better people who will be better able to love each other. Certainly, not every broken relationship that feels like the last 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 VERDICT: A poignant, real and raw coming-of-age story that manages to feel quite universally relatable. FINAL GRADE: B++ TEASER: MV. WHERE TO WATCH: You can check out this show on Viki here. GETTING AROUND GEO-RESTRICTIONS If you're geo-restricted, a VPN service would help you get around that. Not only does it provide online safety, it also gives you access to lots of great geo-restricted content. I personally use NordVPN. You can find my review of NordVPN here. You can use my affiliate link (here!) to enjoy up to 60% * off, with prices starting as low as US\$3.29 per month. * This used to say 73%, but because NordVPN's changed the way it calculates the discount, it now says 60%. BUT, it's the same great price, starting from US\$3.29 a month! An article on why it's not illegal to use a VPN to access legal streaming content can be found here. Related