

## Dragon King's Son-In-Law Chapter 4 –

: Cottage by the Beach

After ditching the mysterious little girl, Hao Ren went to the second floor of the library to look up some information. In the end, he borrowed a few books that he found were relevant and walked out of the library.

As he expected, the little girl was nowhere in sight when he got out

Looking up at the gloomy sky, Hao Ren was still thinking about this whole incident involving the little girl. He wondered if he'd be doomed next week.

If her parents really came to see him about it, how annoying would that be... It was completely her own fault for losing her belonging. Yet, she blamed him for it just so she could shirk any responsibility of her own.

When he returned to the dorm room, his roommates were all concerned with the cause and the aftermath of the incident. However, all Hao Ren told them was that it was smoothly resolved and did not go into any details. He didn't want to drag his roommates into something so troublesome and annoying.

"The little girl is very pretty though. Just give her a few years, she'll definitely become the most popular girl in any school." Zhao Jiayi sighed in admiration while patting Hao Ren's shoulder as he tried to comfort him.

Sure, she was pretty, but she was also a huge troublemaker. Therefore, the smart thing to do would be to avoid any contact with her.

"Didn't you have to go home this week? Did you finish looking up all the information you needed?" Zhao Jiayi asked.

"Yep, I am just getting ready to leave for home now." Hao Ren placed the books he borrowed from the library onto the desk and took out another empty backpack.

"Come back earlier tomorrow, so we can play cards in the evening!" Again, Zhao Jiayi patted Hao Ren's shoulder while instilling a friendly reminder.

"Sure, I will. Thanks for your help today. " Hao Ren waved to his dormmates as he left.

On the bus home, Hao Ren couldn't help but roll up his sleeve to examine his wrist again.

The green marks were very much like dragon scales. Thanks to his mighty scrubbing, the color had lightened a lot.

He imagined if his grandma saw this, she would surely think he had been hanging out with the wrong crowd in school and got himself a tattoo... Hao Ren let out a heavy sigh. As he opened the window, a cool breeze came in and lightly caressed his face. Gradually, he fell asleep.

When Hao Ren woke up, the bus had already traveled for more than an hour – he was almost home.

Sleepy and dazed, he grabbed his backpack and got off the bus. He started walking along a wide concrete path.

From time to time, there were expensive and fancy cars driving by him. In contrast, as he was carrying a backpack and walking on foot, Hao Ren seemed a little miserable.

It took him exactly thirty minutes to walk to an area where there were houses.

If Hao Ren's classmates had seen this, they would definitely be astounded. Hao Ren's home was actually located in the harbor area which had the finest views of the ocean in East Ocean City. Moreover, embedded among the group of cottages, his house was the seemingly ordinary looking two-story cottage that was only two hundred meters away from the beach.

"Grandma!" Feeling a little exhausted, Hao Ren shouted as he pushed open a carved-through iron gate.

"Ren, you're back!" A kind and benign looking elder came out of the house and welcomed Hao Ren with an everlasting smile. "How come you are so late today?"

"Heehee, I have an assignment that is due next week, so I had to look up some more information before I could leave." Following his grandma inside the house, Hao Ren asked, "How was your week, grandma?"

"Business as usual – did some cleaning around the house, took some walks along the beach, tended to the flowers and lawn, and did some stock trading as well. Uncle Wang is off this weekend. Let grandma show off her cooking this time," grandma answered with a chuckle.

"Stock trading? How much did you earn this week?" Hao Ren inquired lightheartedly.

"It is not a business where you can just make money every week. In fact, I lost 6000 Yuan this week. But you know, this is not what Grandma cares about nowadays. Actually, there was news from Norway, your parents are about to finish their expedition

and might be able to come home next month.” Grandma explained to Hao Ren as she walked into the kitchen.

“Oh, next month? That is soon.” Hao Ren followed her into the kitchen to help out.

Actually, they had hired a cook – Uncle Wang. It was so that someone could cook for Grandma and keep her company here in the cottage. As Hao Ren’s parents were abroad and Hao Ren had to go to school during the week, it could get boring and lonely for Grandma.

However, Uncle Wang had to go home this weekend due to some family business. Therefore, although there was not much to do at home for Hao Ren, he had to come home to make sure his grandma had company.

Besides his parents who were elusive and rarely home, he was closest to his grandma.

“Grandma, there is a question I have been thinking about today.” While cutting up vegetables, Hao Ren asked, “do you think dragons exist?”

“Dragons?” Grandma seemed to be interested in such topic. Her eyes lit up as she thought, “Apparently, some residents of East Ocean City had had encounters with dragons here back in the days.”

“Really?” Hao Ren was now genuinely engaged as well.

“Yes. Actually, I had an encounter myself. I was young then, in my 20s. One day, I was working in the field, and a storm had come upon us out of nowhere. A good friend of mine and I were trying to find a place to shelter ourselves. It was then that I saw a chunk of awfully thick cloud suddenly descend to a low altitude...”

Along with his grandma’s story, Hao Ren felt as though his heart had been suspending in midair. He urged, “Then what, Grandma? Keep going!”

“Well, at the time, I saw a flash of dragon-shaped lightning protrude out of the cloud and swam across the sky for a bit. I was terrified. I later thought it was an illusion. Yet, when I thought of it more, the cloud was greyish to white, very different from the other clouds in the sky which were pitch-black.” Grandma seemed deeply lost in thought as she recalled the incident.

“Lightning... I guess it was a natural phenomenon after all,” Hao Ren stated.

“That was what your father said to me as well. But you know, he never had any interest or tolerance for supernatural phenomena. However, that good friend of mine later told me that she indeed saw a white dragon come out of the cloud and start sucking up water from the lake. She also saw a broad spout of water ascend skyward from the

lake. I asked if it was true, and she said she was absolutely sure about it and would never lie to me.”

Grandma’s description was so vivid and detailed that it was giving Hao Ren goosebumps.

If dragons really did exist, then...

“Why did you want to ask about dragons all of a sudden?” Snapping out of her reminiscence, Grandma asked Hao Ren.

“Oh, I was just curious.” Retracting his surprised expression, Hao Ren lowered his head and continued chopping vegetables.

“Here in East Ocean City, it is said that many people have seen dragons in the past. Also, according to legends from the past, there was supposedly a dragon palace nearby. Allegedly, East Ocean City got its name for this reason,” Grandma added.

“Like the East Ocean Dragon Palace from the legends?” Hao Ren turned and asked.

“Haha, maybe.” As she finished washing the vegetables, Grandma placed them into the pot.

“How come we don’t see dragons anymore then?” Hao Ren inquired.

“It could be due to the change of environment. With the deterioration of the environment, many creatures have gone extinct.” Grandma’s response had left Hao Ren speechless.

Just like that, the two chatted intermittently about various topics and finished dinner. After watching TV together for a while, they went to their beds respectively.

After he went to his room, Hao Ren had trouble sleeping. He opened the window and gazed up at the splendid starry sky. Coupled with the sound of waves from far away, he thought about the story that his grandmother told him earlier. He had developed an intense desire to find out whether dragons existed in this world or not.

Lifting his wrist, the green colored imprint was still evident on his arm. The more he looked at it, the more he felt that the pattern resembled dragon scales.

“Ay, I’m probably overthinking this...” He closed the window, turned off the light, and proceeded to sleep.