

Leap of Faith

Commissioned by Luxuria

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Levi's parents sat at the dining table of the kitchen as he stood by the door. They were looking at him expectantly, waiting for him to tell them something. Something that had been on his mind for ages.

Everything was just the way it normally was. The ceiling fan humming softly to anyone who would pay attention to it. The fluorescent lights casting their pale yellow light upon the walls. The tablecloth on the table, stained from years of use.

But tonight was different.

Levi took a deep breath.

Five years. Five years ago, his younger brother Callie told his parents he was gay. That he had found a boyfriend he really liked. That he hoped his parents would grant them their blessings.

They didn't.

His mum cried out in anger. His dad chased him out of the house. Callie must've run to the local park. Cried his eyes out until his boyfriend came and took him away.

But Levi stayed. Stayed at home, kneeling beside his mum on the tiled floor of the living room. His dad sat beside her, passing her tissue after tissue until she gave up and collapsed on the floor.

"You..." she gasped, "You must be a good boy. Get a good girl. Give me many, many grandchildren. Don't be like Callie."

Levi bit his lip.

Today. Today, he would have to break her heart. Or perhaps his parents had changed their minds. Perhaps five years was enough to give them a new perspective on things. Perhaps...

"I..."

His parents were looking at him. Almost as if they knew the words his lips were about to speak. His mum's sceptical eyes, as if able to will his sexuality to be straight. His dad's steady glare, as if warning him of the consequences if he so much as whispered the confession.

His eyes shifted to the corner of the dining table where a large brown stain sat over the petal of a floral print. A stain he had left when he was playing with his chicken stew and spilt it all over the table and onto his legs. The hot stew spilling on his feet were painful, but they were nothing compared to when his father caned him with the rattan cane after that.

His heart was beating loudly in his chest. Did he dare to do it?

"Ma. Pa. I'm gay."

The words that had been hanging over his head for the past decade came out like the most natural thing in the world.

But natural was the last thing on his parent's mind.

"What?" his mum shrieked. She stumbled off the chair, her eyes burning with anger. With a loud bang, she flung open the kitchen cabinet where fine china sat on display behind the glass window. A plate flew across the kitchen, hitting the wall beside Levi. He flinched as his eyes turned to the ground as if trying to make himself smaller. To fade into the ground and disappear.

On the ground were shards of china. He had broken a plate in the past when he was really young. A stray baseball while playing with his brother, then a crash, and then a huge scolding. "These plates and cups are very expensive, you know?" his mum had told them.

Another plate sailed above his head and into the living room. Then a crash as it hit the ground. Then a cup. A third plate. This one hit him on the bridge of Levi's nose and he fell backwards onto the floor. Blood. Drops of blood on the white tiles from his bleeding nose.

He scrambled to his feet as more porcelain fell around him, running straight into his room. He slammed the door shut and locked it. There was a loud crash as an entire row of cups were pushed off the kitchen shelf and onto the wooden countertop. Then his mum screaming in agony again.

Levi grabbed a backpack off the hook on the wall and threw it onto his bed. A few shirts. Pants. Underwear. He bundled them into a ball and shoved them into the backpack.

"I have no son!" came his mum's voice from the kitchen. His dad's soft words of comfort could barely be heard from the room.

He didn't stop. Wallet. A box where he had kept his savings from the past few years. Phone. Charger. All into the side pockets of the backpack.

"I'm a failure!" his mum was sobbing, "God tasked me to raise two sons. Two sons!"

There was a photo frame on his bedside drawer. A family picture with one corner torn out. The corner where a smiling Callie used to be. Levi fumbled the latches on the back, pulling out a scrap of paper.

Callie's face smiled back at him.

He had dug through the trash the day that his mum tore the photo. Found the missing scrap, crumpled and dirty but still intact.

"I'm the worst mum in the world. The worst! Even the eighteenth level of hell wouldn't take me!"

Levi hurriedly shut the frame back together and hid it among his clothes. In a swift motion, he zipped the backpack up.

From the kitchen was the sound of sobbing. No more breaking china.

Cautiously, he exited his room and made for the kitchen, leaving his backpack hidden by the kitchen doorway.

His mum had fallen on her knees. The porcelain shards had cut her shins and she was bleeding over her nightgown. Her face was buried in her husband's chest, muffling the sound of her cries.

"Dear heavens, what did I do wrong?" she lamented, "Why am I cursed?"

His dad turned up to look at him. A cold glare that screamed of accusations despite its silence. He had wanted a grandchild. A granddaughter, specifically.

"One day," he had told Levi, "You'll bless this household with a beautiful grandchild. Three generations in one family photo."

That was a request Levi couldn't fulfil.

"Boy. Just go."

Boy.

Just boy.

Not son.

Levi took a step back. His hand reached out for the handle of the backpack and swung it across his back. He ran for the door. Fumbled the keys. Unlocked the iron gate, then the door. Latched it close behind him.

He was out.

He ran.

Beads of sweat formed on his forehead as he flew down the pavements. He only stopped when his feet had carried him to the local park where a wooden table and bench sat stood in the moonlight.

He sat down on the bench and caught his breath, wiping off the sweat from his brow. Some of the sweat had mixed in with his tears and he wiped them off with his shirt sleeve. Through his teary eyes, he looked down at his hands still clutching the keys.

From keychain that held the keys hung a jade pebble. He had gotten the keychain during a family holiday. When Callie was still around.

"Oh, yes, all four of these stones were from the same jade rock," the shopkeeper was telling them, "Buy them all for your family, and they will stay together through thick and thin."

It was a simpler time.

Wincing in pain as he closed his eyes, Levi flung the keys into the grassy field.

His breath slowly steadied.

And then he looked up. His hands felt oddly empty. He couldn't just leave the keys here.

He dashed into the grass, getting his jeans wet with the dew of the night. It should've fallen somewhere here.

Or did it go somewhere further?

Gahh!

His efforts finally paid off as a glint in the moonlight gave away the location of the keys. He quickly picked it up off the ground. A little wet and muddy. He wiped it on his jeans and put it back into his pocket.

Levi trudged back to the wooden table and sat down.

He had nowhere to go.

No one to help him.

Perhaps...

He pulled out the phone from his pocket and dialled. There was the sound of ringing. And then a familiar voice.

"Huh? Bro? What are you calling me for, it's like, two in the morning"

"I..."

"Oh, you finally did it eh?" Callie chuckled.

Levi bit his lip.

"You okay?" Callie must've felt Levi's misery for the tone of his voice lowered, "Tell you what, where are you right now?"

"I'm at the park. The one next to the reservoir."

"Okay. Stay there, we're coming over to pick you up."

Levi nodded glumly. Realizing that Callie couldn't see him, he mumbled, "Yeah...yeah."

There was a click as Callie ended the call. Wiping his tears from his eyes, Levi pulled his feet onto the bench and hugged his knees.

He had done it. He had liberated himself.

And with his liberation, he had broken his parent's hearts.

The wounds would never heal.

~ End ~