

2017 The Phoenix Paradox : Conclusion

Cast:

YOUNG TOMO: Suzaku's daughter and future mascot/kami for Naka-Kon
Use Kanji 朝 meaning "morning, dawn."

SUZAKU: Celestial Guardian Kami of the South, Phoenix

NURARIHYON: Leader of the yokai, has a potato shaped head

CHIORI: Tomo's friend, human, Naka-Kon's Miko

DAISUKE: Suzaku's servant, human

INARI: Kami of harvest, has fox servants, future mentor to Tomo

TOMO'S FOLLOWERS: Friends and Generals who support Tomo and run Naka-Kon

Act 2 Scene 1: Hard-Won Victory

Suzaku, Tomo, Daisuke, Inari, Chiori, and Tomo's Followers gather once again in Suzaku's garden, this time joined by Nurarihyon. His challenges have been met and conquered. Humbly Nurarihyon approaches and bows deeply to acknowledge his defeat

NURARIHYON: "Lady Suzaku, Lord Inari, Chiori-san... It is time we spoke of important matters." Without any forewarning or explanation, he snaps his fingers and Tomo, along with all Tomo's Followers aside from Chiori, abruptly sit down and fall asleep.

Alarmed, Suzaku catches Tomo to gently lower her to the floor. Inari is surprised, but Chiori looks guilty. Suzaku looks between Chiori and Nurarihyon

SUZAKU: "You will explain. NOW."

Chiori opens her mouth to speak, but Nurarihyon cuts her off with a gesture. Suzaku is enraged and raises a hand threateningly.

NURARIHYON: "Lady Suzaku, I don't know how you came to have an egg, but Tomo's very existence throws off the balance of nature. I *know* you can sense this." He eyes her measuringly.

Suzaku's anger fades slightly. She is still suspicious but gives the barest nod of her head.

NURARIHYON: "It is clear that she was hatched with love and has brought you much joy. But the fact remains: Nature demands that there be only **one** Phoenix."

Suzaku looks down at her daughter, stroking her sleeping face. She takes a long, deep breath and begins to explain how Tomo came into being.

SUZAKU: "It was time for the ceremony of renewal. All the preparations had been completed, and Our regenerative powers were at their peak. But the war broke without warning... The *Dragon* was intent on conquering us all and becoming the *Supreme Lord*. To complete the process of renewal would leave Our realm defenseless to Seiryu, and We could not allow that. We summoned the power, not to die and be reborn, but to strengthen Ourselves... It... was beyond Our control, but... We were able to channel the energy and as the inferno dissipated it left an egg. A single, beautiful egg. We... I.. hid the egg, until the war was over. She hatched, then....and has been my light, my secret treasure..." She quietly trailed off still gently stroking Tomo's face.

Nurarihyon mutters to himself about one thing becoming clearer and turns to Chiori.

NURARIHYON: "You knew more than you have led the others to believe. I suspect you knew all along. What are you to Tomo? Why do you follow her?"

Suzaku also eyes Chiori with wary curiosity. It was obvious that Chiori wasn't a threat, but what was she?

For a moment Chiori looked alarmed, trapped, and looked down guiltily. In a moment she came to a conclusion and sighed with resignation and maybe a little relief. It was time to tell the whole truth.

CHIORI: "She needed me. After rising from the ashes..." She paused seeing Suzaku look up with shock, her daughter had already died and regenerated? When Suzaku didn't say anything, Chiori cautiously continued. "She needed guidance. Someone to show her the way to grow into her power. She sought out Inari, but he is a kami of harvest. Despite his wisdom, he didn't know how to care for a phoenix, how to help her control her powers. I wanted to guide her without giving myself away..."

Chiori sighs and approaches Suzaku and kneels, bowing to her and the prone Tomo, then sitting up to converse.

CHIORI: "My Lady, Tomo is too powerful to be hidden much longer, even though she is only a child. More danger will present itself. More enemies will seek her out. In my time, her presence has already caught the attention of Lord Byakko and the Yokai. Lord Byakko dueled her and she was slain..."

Suzaku looks horrified and takes the still sleeping Tomo in her arms. Still, she does not interrupt. Chiori reaches out and takes Suzaku's hand reassuringly.

CHIORI: "Her loyal friends resurrected her by gathering her feathers and ashes, and her power has continued to grow since then. Nurarihyon sensed Tomo in our time and caused a Yokai invasion. I don't know why he sent us here for his challenge. But somehow, we arrived without *our* Tomo... possibly due to *your* Tomo already being here. "

NURARIHYON: "After witnessing her strength I knew we would have to come somewhere that we were stronger. I had meant for Tomo to come here, to see and understand the imbalance for herself. But she resisted and my power could only send her so far into the past. And so we cannot do what needs to be done."

Suzaku looks as though she is imagining the worst. Chiori squeezes her hand.

CHIORI: "My Lady, is not as bad as you are imagining. Her power cannot be allowed to go on unchecked as it is. That's why I'm here. I can be Tomo's... spiritual guide."

Chiori shows her a rose quartz magatama necklace. Suzaku recognizes the shape, but not the meaning. She brings out another necklace hidden under her robe. A green magatama on a silken cord and both necklaces glow slightly.

CHIORI: "I think our necklaces are part of the same set even though they are made from different stones, they were made by the same hands. In our time, Inari had the other, the green jade one. After Tomo went seeking his help, he gave her challenges and eventually the stone. After that my visions became clearer. My family told me they were unnatural and never to speak of them, but..."

Nurarihyon interrupted Chiori before she could go off on a tangent.

NURARIHYON: "Tomo, the future Tomo, must surrender her power. In doing so, she will no longer be a phoenix-clone, still your daughter. Instead, she will become something new... and she will live a long life, surrounded by her friends. She will be safe, Lady Suzaku. Chiori-san, the three of us..."

Nurarihyon gestures to himself, Inari and Suzaku and indicates where they each need to stand as he continues speaking.

NURARIHYON: "...must combine our powers to send you and your friends forward in time. You must find Tomo, and persuade her to give up her power, for the good of all. When that is done, the balance of the universe will be set right, and you will find yourselves home, in your proper time and place, once more."

Chiori nods in agreement.

NURARIHYON: "Very well, then. Tomo's fate, and the fate of the world...rests in your hands, Chiori."

Nurarihyon claps his hands, and all of Tomo's Followers awaken and rise, shaking their heads. Chiori gathers them together while Inari and Nurarihyon position themselves to form a triangle around the group with Suzaku.

SUZAKU: "Please...look after Our Tomo..."

Chiori and Tomo's followers agree, bow, and disappear.

Act 2, Scene 2: The Final Conversation

Nurarihyon looks at Suzaku. She takes her seat.

SUZAKU: "I will miss them."

NURARIYHON: "I am sorry my Lady, I'm afraid today's ordeals are not yet over. Your Tomo cannot remain here now. It is too dangerous. A rare gift of knowing part of the future has been presented to you by our visitors... You know what you must do, to protect your daughter and ensure her future comes to pass as we know it

Suzaku nods sadly. Inari comes to set his hand on Suzaku's shoulder as she draws her still unconscious daughter into her arms. Her hands begin to glow, red and gold, until the light pulses brightly before fading. Suzaku held a large, beautiful egg still glowing faintly and warm to the touch. She chokes back a sob.

SUZAKU: "We must find a safe place in the West, as it was foretold, for Our Tomo...We will not be able to aid Tomo and Chiori in the future. Lord Inari, please record all that has happened, and help them..."

INARI: "Yes my Lady..."

Before he can continue, she asks them both to go so she may prepare to take the egg someplace safe. They both bow and leave. Once alone Lady Suzaku creates an illusion so she can transport it unnoticed.

Once she had hidden the egg and ensured its safety until the day it would eventually be discovered, she returned home and sets about performing her renewal ceremony once again.

Or at least the illusion of it. This time she allows rumors of the failed renewal and of a priceless clutch of eggs. As predicted there was an attack, and she was able to show her devastation as they are all broken.

Now free to show her very real grief, Lady Suzaku goes into seclusion and is not heard from for quite some time.

End Scene