

FFXIV Stories

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Change in Plans

setting: Shirogane, FC house

background: Liyana was from Radz-at-Han and left after her parents were killed during The Final Days. She was previously an apprentice at the Weavers Guild.

A knock sounded at the open office door, and a small voice on the verge of tears asked, "Kydani? Got a moment?"

"Always for you, my dear."

Kydani looked up as Liyana poked her face around the door. Her friend was clearly upset, eyes red-rimmed from crying. She stood in alarm and approached the small Au Ra, taking her hands and sitting with her in the chairs near her desk.

"What's wrong Liya? Are you ok?"

Liyana shook her head, wiping away a tear trailing down her cheek. She took a deep breath, composing herself.

"I...don't want to go. On the trip. To Tural." She didn't seem to be finished, so Kydani wrapped one arm around her shoulders and gently prompted, "no problem, but is there more to it?"

"I think..." She paused and took another deep breath. The tears that had threatened broke through, and her voice shook. "I want to go home. To Radz-at-Han."

Kydani wrapped both arms around her friend and let her cry, making soothing noises as she rested her chin on Liyana's shiny black hair. She wasn't entirely surprised. As the shock and trauma of The Final Days wore down and became less immediate, she'd expected Liyana would want to go back and help with rebuilding efforts and re-establish her own life. She'd done well as an adventurer, but she'd never had the thrill for it that some people had. Liyana had seemed increasingly restless and unhappy as the date for the Tural trip approached. This certainly explained why.

"Sweetie, that's fine. There's nothing wrong with wanting to go back."

"But I'll let you all down. And them. And Kiran."

Kydani shrugged as she answered, "Not at all. I'll go instead. Truth be told, I'm stagnating in this office. I'll just let Rorik and Kiran know, and the rest is just paperwork."

Liyana hiccuped a little laugh. Kydani notoriously hated paperwork, though she dealt with it because someone had to, and she was the nominal head of the free company. What she actually meant was that she'd tell Erenville, and he'd have the guild make whatever arrangements. Kydani pulled away and patted her back soothingly, keeping one arm around Liyana's shoulders while she handed her a handkerchief.

"Have you told Kiran?" Kydani knew they'd been involved to some degree, but had no idea how serious that relationship was.

Liyana shook her head again. "Not yet. I think I needed to tell someone else first and feel like everyone wasn't going to hate me. Weren't? Whatever. But I will. I know he deserves that from me. It's always been casual. Maybe in another time and another place..." she trailed off and shrugged, wringing the handkerchief in her hands nervously. "He's such a sweetheart, and he's been so kind to me. I don't want to hurt him. But I think he'll be ok."

Kydani nodded. She didn't know the newest free company member well, aside from that Rorik thought he was a good person with a lot of potential. That was enough for her to accept him. Hearing Liyana speak well of him too gave him another few points in her book. She wished she had more time to get to know him and possibly train with him before the trip, but they'd make do. The trip itself would probably provide some time to at least chat.

"Well then, that's settled. We'll get you booked on a ship back to Thavnair. Any plans yet for your return home?"

Liyana nodded and smiled, her face lighting up with excitement. "Yes, I've been corresponding with an old friend who's been working with the Weaver's Guild as they've been rebuilding. I've been showing her my designs and we've been chatting about how to preserve our customs and traditions while..."

Kydani clasped her hands in her lap and leaned forward, smiling and listening attentively as Liyana detailed her plans. Yes, THIS was her true passion, and she should get to pursue it. As Liyana wound down, Kydani couldn't help a small clap of excitement.

"That sounds so wonderful and just perfect for you. I'm SO glad you're getting this opportunity! I do expect both updates and a discount." She winked at Liyana, then turned serious again for a moment as she held her hands. "You ALWAYS have a place here, if you ever want or need it. I know you'll be successful, and you'll thrive. But we are your friends and will always be here for you."

Liyana's eyes filled with tears again as she hugged Kydani tightly and knew she would be ok.

On the Way to Tural

setting: on the ship to Tural

background: Because we've always played the MSQ together, I treat our characters as (very elite) adventurers who are "deployed" together as a team of two - like special ops minus the military connotation. Kydani still has some white hair here because it hasn't finished growing out after Shadowbringers. It's gone later on.

Kiran leaned his arms on the rail of the ship, watching the moonlight dance over the gentle waves. They'd been on the ocean for two days, and he felt like he was just now decompressing from the flurry of activity and changes before the trip. His thoughts bounced around restlessly. New combat forms, Liyana, new combat forms, advice, new combat forms, Kydani... Oh no. He'd forgotten to give her the snack box he'd picked up at The Last Stand. He mentally noted to do that first thing tomorrow.

A woman's quiet voice asked, "mind if I join you?" Without looking, he gestured to the railing nearby. "Be my guest. It's a beautiful view."

The person leaned on the rail beside him, close enough for conversation but far enough to allow him space if he preferred. He covertly studied his new neighbor as much as the moonlight allowed. Miqo'te, dark hair pulled into a braid, cute face, well toned arms that indicated she worked them often. He snuck another glance. Make that very cute.

Kydani closed her eyes, enjoying the sea wind on her face. A smile spread across her lips. She was glad to be out again, on the way to a new land even. The promise of adventure and new experiences made up for the press of last minute preparation. She was relieved that Rorik understood her need to go, to do. It was strange to embark on a journey without him. Not that they were inseparable, but they had shared so much. Working so closely with someone else would be different. Kydani let another few minutes pass in silence, allowing her thoughts to wander. She knew Kiran was trying to study her without being obvious.

"You don't recognize me, do you?" she asked, her grin obvious in her voice. She saved him from answering by turning her face toward him, revealing the white lock of hair over her right eye.

"Oh! Um, Kydani. Hey." Kiran was glad the night hid his blush as he realized he'd been inadvertently checking out his free company leader and new partner. Again.

"Hey. Sorry I caught you off guard." She paused and added tentatively, "I'm sorry about Liyana too. Are you ok?"

It should have been incredibly awkward, but it was clear she genuinely cared and wasn't asking idly. Liyana was Kydani's friend, and she likely missed her also. He decided to answer sincerely instead of giving her a glib response.

"I miss her." He lapsed into silence, gathering his thoughts. "I think I knew that was coming. I'm happy for her. But yeah, I miss her."

Kydani reached over and patted his arm. More silence, but it was comfortable. He preferred that to platitudes. Eventually he spoke again.

"Thank you for coming on this mission...trip...quest."

She beamed. "I'm glad to. I love traveling. I know it's not a pleasure trip, but I hope we have some down time. I've been driving Erenville nuts asking questions. Did you know they grow coffee actually IN Tural? They have lots of varieties. The elevation and climate is perfect for it." She wrinkled her nose. "There's a special and expensive variety where the beans are eaten by a monkey or something and pooped out. I don't think I'm interested in trying that."

Kiran blinked at the sudden torrent of... Coffee information. Kydani noticed and stopped instantly.

"Sorry. I get carried away sometimes."

He smiled at her. "No, it's ok. It's nice to listen to someone talk about something that they're excited about." A small pang, as he thought of Liyana telling him her plans. He ignored it. "So you're a red mage?"

"Was. I needed a change. I brought chakram and a katana. We'll see what strikes my fancy."

"Could try combining them. Make up an entirely new something or other."

She laughed. "I like to improvise and try new things, but that might be a bit much. What about you? What's your weapon of choice?"

Kiran hesitated for a moment and thought about his voidsent pact. He didn't think he was ready to tell her about that specialty, and he didn't want to start off his working relationship on a lie. Thankfully he could still give her a truthful answer. "Well, I heard about a dual sword technique they practice in Tural. It was developed for hunting ...well, monsters? Big ones, like primals. I've been practicing that."

She nodded. "Sounds pretty useful. We could practice together? Spar a little? The ship's huge. I'm sure we could snag a little space on the deck."

"Good plan. Maybe in the morning after you finish your forms? They're the same ones Rorik does, right?"

"They are! I started doing them with him a few years ago, and it's just habit now." She gave him a friendly and inviting smile. "You could join me? They're good exercise even if it's not your style of

swordplay."

"Sure. Tomorrow morning then."

Kydani gave him a friendly slap on his shoulder and turned to walk away.

"Hey," he called after her. "Do you want to come to my cabin?" Her face went blank as her eyebrows shot up. "For snacks! Food! Last Stand!"

She laughed heartily, and he joined after a moment. "I thought it was awfully soon for you to start propositioning me."

Since Kydani was clearly unbothered, he couldn't resist winking and adding, "unless..."

She laughed again, rolling her eyes and giving his arm a solid whack. "Calm down there loverboy. I will take your snacks, and I will share my cookies."

It was Kiran's turn to raise his eyebrows. She ignored it and continued proudly, "coffee biscuits. I made them myself. Had to wrestle someone for the recipe."

She kept a straight face and slight smile as he stared skeptically, then giggled. "Ok, fine. I did make them myself, but no wrestling was involved."

Kydani turned away and gestured back to him. "C'mon. We gonna go eat or what?" Kiran smiled and followed. She didn't need to know he was admiring the view along the way.