

1 - 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.