

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. Migo'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.

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