

Miyuki sat down with a whoof of breath, though that may have been a generous word for it. Sitting would imply it had been a controlled, deliberate motion. More accurately, she backed up to the armchair and leaned into it until her center of gravity was pushed too far, and then simply fell into it. She was far less graceful than she once was, and had failed to get used to the way her shifting weight settled on her body. To an outsider, she would seem merely average, but to her she had become nothing but plodding and clumsy. She sighed and rested her face in her palm, using her hand to shut out the light for a moment and just be alone in the dark.

The monk was getting stir-crazy. A few weeks prior she had temporarily suspended her lessons. She didn't want to, but she felt she had lost her ability to teach as well as she could. And Aura had been gently pressuring her to do so. Since the beginning of her pregnancy, her wife had been nervous about any accidents, or the vigorous movements, harming her cubs. Miyuki couldn't blame her. There weren't any accidents, even any close calls, but she understood the fears and had them herself. She previously was confident her skill and vitality would keep her babes safe, but as she slowed down and lost her coordination she began to admit herself it had to stop.

Without her classes to occupy her time, and with how quickly she grew tired from the most simple of tasks, Miyuki had little to keep busy. She tried gardening, but her knees got sore too easily, getting to them and standing again became a monumental labor, and she lacked the energy to dig. She tried sumi-e, but with her swelling midsection she couldn't sit at any of the tables without being so far away from the paper, and her feet were too tender to stand and paint. She could still read, sure, and play music on her shakuhachi, though she would shortly run out of breath. It seemed to the pandaren all she could do for the last month was eat, sleep, and be pregnant.

Miyuki missed being active. She missed deciding she was going to run off and follow wherever her feet led her. She missed...running, not being exhausted because she walked from the kitchen to the parlor, not having to relieve herself every half hour. A knot formed in her throat and she pressed her face into both hands. She took a deep, ragged breath, trying to remain calm. Miyuki had been told often over the years her family name, Fireheart, was certainly deserved, but even *she* started feeling she was becoming emotional and prone to mood swings. Despite the breathing exercises, trying to focus and blank her mind, it was no use. Tears welled up in her eyes. She hated feeling slow, tired, weak...vulnerable. Dependent. That was it. She had lost her independence.

Her womb quivered, the gentle flutter of one of her cubs shifting around. They didn't kick so much now, not that they didn't try, but there simply wasn't the room for it. She looked down at the white, furry watermelon in her lap.

"I know," she muttered, "I know, it's not your fault, I'm not mad at you, I'm just...not used to this." With one hand she rubbed thoughtfully where she felt her child kick and with the other she wiped away her tears. There was another flutter, close to her back, another one of her babes jostling for a more comfortable position. Her other paw joined the first and she smiled weakly. "Shhh, it's okay little ones. Mommy's just adjusting." She closed her eyes again and

held her belly, feeling the tiny, subtle motions within. “Nothing you could ever do would change my mind,” she whispered, “I will always love you.” She took a breath, as deep as she could manage with her uterus pressing up into her diaphragm. “Even if it is getting frustrating having you all cooped up in there,” she added with a chuckle. It quickly faded and she looked around at the too-familiar walls of the parlor with a grimace. “I know how you feel... No wonder you’re acting like you all want out so badly.” Her mind vaguely wandered to the fact that she’d be giving birth to them all soon. Her early contractions were bad enough; she didn’t want to consider that ordeal just yet.

Miyuki slumped back in her chair and closed her eyes. She had only woken up a couple hours prior, but already she felt like sleeping again. Was bathing and eating breakfast, without any cooking or preparation no less, really so draining? She quickly put it out of her mind, lest she retread fresh wounds. Her mind grew hazy as she sat there, blanking into a dull cloud. It wasn’t the empty thoughts of a meditation, more the fog of languor. Shapes stirred in the mist, echoes of memories and imagination and sensation. She drifted through them, like a ship slowly making its way through clouded seas, all quiet and still save for the odd churning of the vapor as she passed. She wasn’t sure how long she sat there, alone with her thoughts and the cubs stirring inside her. After what must have been hours, a form solidified through the veil, a memory of her adventure to the Stranglethorn Jungle with Aura and the mysterious temple that hid there. She reminisced of the...goddess they met, the strange magic she had bestowed upon them both. She thought about how it felt, such power and the raw energy of life swelling up within Miyuki’s womb. At the time, she had thought it would be an accurate representation of what it would be like to be pregnant. It was similar, to be sure, but she had felt invigorated by it, and it certainly wasn’t as heavy. As a result, her back didn’t hurt at all like it did now, her feet hadn’t swollen, and she never got the unpredictable aches and pains that plagued her.

But even with all that, the pandaren didn’t regret her decision. She was comfortable with where her life had gone and was satisfied with what she did. She loved her wife and was excited to finally be a mother, a desire that came to her many times over the years. Perhaps the nagging feeling was just that she rushed into all of this a bit more recklessly than she should have. Miyuki smirked. It was far from the first time she chided herself for being impulsive, and she knew full well it wouldn’t be the last. Maybe she just wished she could go on one last adventure. Her paw rested against her belly, feeling the heat coming from it and the soft shape of it. She wasn’t going anywhere, and it would be a long time until her children would be old enough that she would be comfortable leaving them alone for so long.

After taking a deep breath, a child fidgeting from the pressure of her expanding lungs, she felt herself calm a bit, at least enough to feel in control of her emotions again. It wasn’t as though she were living in some hovel, or out in the middle of nowhere. Aura’s home was quite opulent. Maybe that was part of why she felt out of place, Miyuki just wasn’t used to that kind of life. Her family had lived simply, and her even more so when she went to the monastery to train. Having servants still felt so strange, and while she couldn’t complain about having almost any need she could think of attended, it wasn’t something she felt comfortable doing yet.

The solid oak door in the front foyer creaked open, its bronzed iron latch clattering resolutely. Miyuki recognized the clack of heels on the slate floor and turned, opening her eyes. She rubbed at them, blinking, and smiled softly. “Welcome home, Aura,” she greeted, voice still quiet.

“I missed you this morning,” she said, removing her boots and setting them aside. “Did you sleep well?”

“Apparently not enough,” she replied, yawning, “I got ready, came down here, and-” Miyuki stopped as she glanced at the clock. Only half an hour? It was unlikely she had actually fallen asleep, then. “I guess I’m just still tired.”

The worgen rose off the bench adjacent the door and walked to Miyuki, her long, red dress swishing back and forth. She smartly bent down to kiss the pandaren, who returned it with a muted hum of contentment.

“I am sorry I had to leave. Leorajh came by and told me a representative from the Bilgewater Cartel had been stirring up trouble in the square. I had to handle it.” She sat on the floor beside Miyuki’s feet, her tail thumping the hardwood once as she leaned in and rested her arms on the pandaren’s knees. “But I came home as swiftly as I could.”

“Oh, goblins, your favorite. Anyway, I know your work keeps you out at strange hours. It’s okay.”

Aura’s sharp eyes looked up at Miyuki’s, which were gazing off. She extended a hand up and rested it on her wife’s. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m just tired, like I said.”

“You are a terrible liar.”

Miyuki looked askance at Aura. “You never miss a thing, do you?”

“I certainly try not to.” She flashed a grin and squeezed Miyuki’s hand. “Come, now, tell me what is on your mind.”

The pandaren looked away again, her expression growing blank. In others, that might be an attempt to bluff or hide her thoughts, but Aura knew better. For Miyuki, it meant clashing emotions were struggling for dominance inside her. The worgen leaned her head forward and kissed Miyuki’s knuckles.

“Miyuki, when was the last time you went out? I do not think you have even visited the gardens in days.”

She looked down at Aura sharply before quickly fighting down the reaction she was about to have and looking away again. “I...haven’t gone out in a week. No, wait, today is...ten days.”

Aura frowned. “Why not?”

Miyuki swallowed. “I...don’t want to be seen in public like this.”

The worgen looked her up and down, the jade silk robes hanging loosely from her and barely making her modest. But surely that’s not what she meant. A year ago she had boldly strode into Aura’s town almost topless, just her harness covering her chest and otherwise all her trunk and arms free to any who wished to look upon them. She remembered some of the more

prim townsfolk muttering their disapproval, suggesting without having ever met Miyuki only the Horde would encourage such public undress, how uncouth it all was. On top of that, even a month ago she would still wear exactly that and go on walks just to see the town and socialize. Aura's brow furrowed.

"I do not understand. What do you mean?"

"I'm tired, Aura." She saw the response coming but pressed on. "I don't just mean right now, I mean...I feel drained. I feel like I'm made of lead when I move, all heavy and slow."

"Well, if you would like, I can help you into something else and we can go into town, just you and me. I do not mind taking my time." She reassuringly rubbed Miyuki's hand. "We will go at whatever pace you need. Wait here. I will get your clothes."

"They won't fit."

Aura blinked.

"I had Richards go into town to get my harness adjusted, it's the only thing I trust to give me any sort of support, but unless I'm going to wrap myself in a bedsheet nothing but my robe fits right now." She looked down, the pin in the chest straining at the fabric. "And even then not very well."

"I thought your harness was adjustable."

Miyuki sighed. "It is, but when I had it made, I never thought..." she gestured vaguely at her chest, "I never thought my breasts would grow as big as my head. It was too tight, it pinched painfully and I thought I'd suffocate with how little room there was to breathe. The new cut won't be done for a couple days."

Aura sat for a moment longer, reflecting on what Miyuki had said and perhaps more importantly what she wasn't saying. She nodded and stood, offering her hands. "Come, let's go."

Miyuki looked up at her, face creased with confusion and a hint of irritation. "Aura, I said I don't want to be seen like this."

"I promise no one will." She paused and corrected herself. "Well, maybe by the help as we leave, but it will just be you and me."

Miyuki frowned, watching the outstretched hands before her. "Alone?"

"Not a single set of prying eyes."

She exhaled hard through her nose. "I don't know..." She slumped a little more, opening and closing her mouth a few times as she tried to think of what to say.

Aura crouched down, taking both of Miyuki's hands in hers and holding them up. She kissed them once and said, "Miyuki, something is clearly bothering you. I would like for you to share what it is with me, I want to help, but I will not force the matter if you do not want to talk. That said, I do not like that you have locked yourself indoors for over a week. It is not like you, and it worries me." She squeezed her hands. "Please, I promise you have nothing to be embarrassed about, nothing to worry. The two of us will go for a nice walk someplace private, secluded. I know you will like it." Finished speaking her piece, she rested her chin on Miyuki's paws and gazed into her eyes.

It is said that the eyes are the window to the soul. While Aura wasn't certain she believed that particular aphorism, she made an exception when it came to Miyuki. The pandaren's eyes were always so expressive, and she learned quickly Miyuki spoke with them almost as much as her mouth, truly an impressive remark considering how loquacious she could be. Normally when Aura looked deeply, she saw flashing jade eyes overflowing with love and hope, yet with a constant, quiet fire inside that seemed unquenchable. Indeed, even still that fire burned, still she saw Miyuki's love. Her expression softened as she returned Aura's gaze, but as it did so the worgen saw that the fire seemed dimmed, like a lantern flickering in the wind. Something weighed her down, but seeing it so plainly, a crease in the corner of Miyuki's eyes, lingering moisture to those beautiful gems, made it appear so much real to Aura. Had she been crying? It broke Aura's heart to see something getting to Miyuki so much. She kissed the pandaren's hands again.

Miyuki blinked and looked away. Another puff of air escaped her nose. Then she asked, "Where are we going?"

The worgen smiled, eyes glittering. "It is a surprise."

The pandaren took a breath and nodded slowly. "Okay...okay. I suppose I should get out. It's been too long."

Aura fought to contain her relief that she got through to her and stood again, once more offering to help Miyuki. The pandaren pointedly ignored the outstretched hands and planted her own on the armrests. She heaved and grunted, pushing herself forward and out of the chair. She kicked off with her legs and slowly lumbered to her feet. Finally standing, her hand fell back to the armrest behind her, the other to her midsection, as she huffed. When Miyuki's breathing slowed Aura smiled and offered her arm. The pandaren accepted, snaking hers around it, though she couldn't help but notice how exhausting that endeavor had felt. She had to wonder if maybe a nap wouldn't be a better idea.

They made their way through their home, Aura making sure not to push Miyuki faster than she wanted. She noted, though, that this didn't seem especially slow. It was a comfortable walking pace, casual and relaxed. That said, the pandaren usually danced from place to place with great energy, so in comparison Aura could certainly understand why it was bothering her, particularly if this was about as fast as she could easily move. She felt the gentle swaying in Miyuki's strides, waddling from the large weight settled into her hips. She dare not say it now, but she thought it was very cute. Nonetheless, a small smirk crept onto her lips.

They exited out a large set of glass doors framed and reinforced with brass filigree. The doorway led down into a patio surrounded on all sides by high trees and bordered with hedges, only a simple wooden gate in an arch set into a gap in hedges leading away. Aura held the gate open for Miyuki, who smiled and thanked her as she passed through. Passed the hedges were the gardens of the estate, sprawling and well maintained to keep a certain wild air despite the very deliberate manner in which everything had been planted. Some of Aura's employees worked on them, weeding the gardens, watering the thirstier herbs, and keeping the hedgerows in check.

Aura nodded courteously at them as they passed, though Miyuki smiled shyly and averted her eyes.

Spring had come in strong, the breath of summer swelling behind it. The days had grown quite warm, but the nights bore a refreshing coolness to them that was hard to resist. The past few weeks had been good weather for stargazing. The bright sun shone through the trees, their boughs high and reaching over the manicured path, and created scintillating patterns of emerald and gold as the breeze set the leaves to dancing.

Aura's gaze wandered about the expanse of growth around her, the flowers of the gardens fully in bloom, the verdant might of the trees stretching to the sky and fighting each other for the sun's glorious radiance. Her trained eyes saw the birds flit about, small winged insects buzz from one blossom to another. She heard the chittering of squirrels hidden in the timbers, the whisper of the wind. The worgen took a deep breath and sighed contentedly. She turned, a soft smile on her face, to look over to Miyuki. The pandaren was less enthusiastic. Her expression was pensive, eyes cast to the ground and unfocused. Her other hand stayed at her side, wrapped around her belly and her fingers gently caressing her hide. Occasionally, Aura saw Miyuki shift her paw to a nearby area, her sensitive ears detecting the pandaren inhale in time.

"How are they?"

Miyuki filled her lungs and answered with a sigh, "Oh, lively and strong."

Aura hugged her arm a little tighter around Miyuki's. "Just like their mother."

Miyuki looked back and smiled weakly. "Oh, I'm not so sure about that recently."

The worgen scanned ahead. The planned wildness of the gardens was slowly giving way to actual untamed growth as their property came to an end. The wrought iron fence marking the rear edge had a plain gate at the end of the stone path which persisted into a rough trail. Aura opened it for Miyuki and she passed through. She was surprised that the pandaren didn't look up or thank her, and heard her breathing more heavily than she would have expected. She frowned and closed the gate behind her before closing the gap again with two strides of her long legs. Miyuki had shifted her hands to place them on her hips, thumbs massaging her lower back. Aura looked down and saw her brow knit as she did so, grimacing slightly from discomfort.

"Would you like me to-?"

"No." Miyuki cut her off. She quickly realized how harsh it had come out and continued, "No, thank you, I've got it taken care of."

"Are you sure? I would not mind."

"Aura, it's just a little sore, I can handle it."

"And I would not think otherwise. I simply wanted to help."

Miyuki looked up at her and the worgen almost recoiled. It wasn't that the expression that disturbed her, but more the sudden appearance of frustration and pain in Miyuki's eyes that caught her off guard.

"I can handle it." She looked down the ground. "At least I can do something..."

Aura reached out and grabbed Miyuki on the shoulder. The pandaren stopped, but otherwise did not react.

“Miyuki...” she paused, uncertain of what to say. Aura brushed a stray lock from her face and took a step forward, hugging her wife. She spoke in a faint whisper, but was so close it was perfectly clear. “Please let me help you. Even if you do not want me to do anything, at least tell me what is wrong.”

Aura felt the hesitation, Miyuki’s posture becoming stiff, but soon she melted into the embrace and wrapped her arms under Aura’s and held her tight. There was no answer. The worgen listened to the rustle of leaves in the wind, Miyuki’s breathing. It suddenly came in hard and ragged, her wife shuddering in her arms. She tried to pull away to see what was the trouble but Miyuki only held her tighter. Not long after, she felt her shoulder grow damp and warm through the thin fabric of her top. She squeezed Miyuki in her arms, tacitly saying she was there for her. They stood there for some time, the pandaren quietly draining out her tears. Finally, the pandaren pulled back, revealing her bloodshot eyes. Their gazes met for only a moment before Miyuki turned away and continued walking down the path. Aura followed, watching the tension in Miyuki’s jaw and shoulders build, shift, and fall as she assembled her thoughts.

“I’m sorry I’ve been a burden on you,” the monk said at last.

It was not the statement Aura was expecting. “Burden? No, dear, you have not been a burden on me.”

“How can you say that?” She shook her head. “I can’t imagine what kind of trouble I have made for your political career, the scandal of marrying a member of the Horde, and a pandaren no less. I was a wandering monk. I have no fortune, and all I have, then, had to come from your own estate. And here I am, carrying your cubs at my suggestion, and I have become so slow and lethargic I can barely do anything for myself.” She attempted to stare Aura down. “In what way does that not make me a burden?”

The worgen was tempted to return the stare, show dominance and control, but decided it would do more harm than good. She only kept contact for a moment before averting her eyes. They took another few steps in silence before she said, “You are forgetting something important.”

“What’s that?”

“It is not a burden if I wanted it. You did not trick me into having children with you. It was my desire, too. We knew there would be challenges, but I was willing to take them. And as for the others? I knew they would come, too. Your desires are not exactly expensive, Miyuki, some rare foods that have to be imported from Pandaria aside. You have always lived a simple life, and continue to do so.” She laughed. “You even refuse to accept gifts if you think they are too rich.”

“I do not!”

“So when I bought you that violet kimono and gold kanzashi?”

“I didn’t think I would have use for it, and I didn’t want you wasting your money.”

“Even though we both knew the following week you would need it for-”

“Okay, okay. I just...still don’t think you should spend that kind of money on me. And I seem to recall making a fool of us at that banquet anyway.”

“And that brings me to the last point. You do not honestly think that I of all people did not consider what it might mean for the future of my House to marry a Horde...” she trailed off, trying to think of a more civil word to use.

“Commoner.”

“I did not want to say-”

“I am a commoner, Aura, you can say it. My family was mostly a bunch of farmers. Even on the Wandering Isle we are commoners. No titles, no nobility.”

“Regardless, even before I met you I was at best indifferent to the Alliance nobles who were courting me. Before you came along, there was a good chance I would die a spinster, if I did not wed purely out of convenience. I knew there would be a price in so permanently refusing all those who would have my hand, and more unsavory sorts that would attempt to use you and your background to harm me, but they have not done so.”

They paused, no words exchanged.

“And as for needing help,” she placed a hand around the small of Miyuki’s back and began to massage the tense muscles there. She focused and sought out the wild energy of the land around her, requesting it lend her some of its strength. The emerald power sank into the sore fibers and rejuvenated them. Miyuki shivered, fur standing on end. “I am only too pleased to do so. Why would I not want to help the mother of my children? Do you think I do not love you enough for that?”

The pandaren’s head snapped up to Aura, her expression hurt. “No, how could you think that?”

Aura smiled. “How could you think I would not want to be with you, ease your pain, and help you?”

They continued onwards, Miyuki considering what she had heard. Aura noticed she was almost to the point of panting now. “Do you need to rest?”

“Can we?”

“We are actually almost there, if you think you can hold on for another minute.”

Miyuki nodded. “Yes, I can make it.”

The trail had become overgrown, only a well-trained eye noticing where it turned through the stout trunks of venerable trees and the thick underbrush. Aura moved ahead and cleared the way for Miyuki, gently reaching out to the odd thorny plant and asking it to bend from their path. The ground began to climb up as it approached the mountains, and the pandaren had finally slowed noticeably from her exertion. Just as she felt certain she could go no further, the tree line suddenly broke and they came across a large clearing, surrounded on all sides by the tall, watchful timbers. While Aura walked casually into it and looked around, beaming at the scenery, Miyuki quickly walked up to a large stone near the middle of the clearing and sat down against it, air rushing out of her as her chest was suddenly compressed. Her hands clutched her heaving belly as she regained her breath. Aura joined her on the ground, her dress fluttering like the wings of a landing bird.

“Well,” she asked, “What do you think?”



Miyuki craned her head every which way to absorb her surroundings. The grass was lush and thick, creating a natural carpet for them to rest on. The wooden pillars upheld the grand, lush canopy all around them, and here and there sunlight pierced through the ceiling and created shimmering shafts of brilliance. The bushes near the edge of the clearing held mountain flowers freshly in bloom, offering themselves to the bees that diligently tended to them. As morning had passed the birdsong faded, but had not silenced, a few still giving their chirping arias. Far off in the distance she could hear gently running water, quite possible the same water that fed into the river that passed by her training grounds. Miyuki tried to find where they had entered the clearing, but saw no evidence of their passage. The dense growth at the base of the trees was undamaged with no obvious partings to be found. And with how tall it had grown, it would certainly be difficult to sneak up on them without either breaking a great number of branches or else being a druid like Aura to make the land cooperate.

"It's beautiful," she admitted, "I'm glad you brought me here." Miyuki looked to Aura and saw she had been watching her, rather than the clearing. "What?"

"Well, I am biased, but I think it is only the second most beautiful thing to see right now."

"Oh, stop," Miyuki said, feeling her cheeks grow hot, "I look terrible."

Aura leaned in close, wrapping her arm around Miyuki's shoulder and rubbing her cheek to hers. She puckered her lips and bent forward the short distance to kiss the crook of her neck. "Miyuki," she whispered, "Do you know what I thought when I first saw you?"

"You wanted to know what that fat pandaren's butt would feel like on your lap."

Aura snorted and broke into laughter, the answer taking her by surprise. Miyuki smiled, the first time she seemed genuinely happy to Aura all day. She calmed with a sigh and continued. "Well, you are not wrong." She giggled again, replaying the statement in her mind. "How about my second thought, then?"

"I don't know. What was it?"

Aura carefully placed a paw on Miyuki's cheek and pushed, turning her to come face to face. She kissed her again, slow and passionate. When their lips parted, she looked deeply into the jade pools that glistened before her. Much of the pain she had seen before was still there, but the fire began to rekindle.

"That your beauty was beyond compare, your eyes shining brighter than all the stars in the heavens, your heart blazed with warmth and light to eclipse the sun. Yes, you are correct, I wanted to...*know* you the moment I saw you, but I was so smitten by you. You were gorgeous in ways that could not be captured merely in a painting. There was a quality in you I had never seen before, a capacity for love and compassion I had never known could be real. And that brought out the same in me." She moved her hand to the fertile ball of creamy white fur. "And believe me, those feelings have never waned." She smirked. "They have only grown as you have." She began to work her way down, starting from her cheek and slowly kissing Miyuki again a little lower each time. "You are a fiercely independent woman. I know exactly what that's like, believe me, but right now you are going through a very difficult time. Your body has

one goal in mind, and, yes, it will be demanding and exhausting. I know you are used to being swift as the wind and tireless as a river. I know you have spent most of your life living off the land and your strength carrying you through everything that came your way. But you do not need to handle this all on your own. I am here for you. And further, I think you have failed to consider that I *enjoy* caring for my wife. I want excuses to help you, to give you a hand, to make you comfortable, because I love you.”

The worgen was now kneeling and bent all the way forward, kissing Miyuki’s belly. “You are not a burden, you are the beautiful woman I love and wanted to be the mother of my children. Lean on me, let my strength be yours.” She glanced up and saw Miyuki had begun weeping once more, but the monk smiled softly.

The pandaren reached out and placed her hand on Aura’s back, the other moving to caress her belly once more, and murmured simply, “Thank you. Thank you, thank you...” She inhaled and held her breath, trying to calm down, but she shook and it came rushing out once more with another wave of relieved tears, touched by Aura’s words. The worgen closed her eyes and rubbed her cheek against the tummy that held her children, humming with satisfaction that Miyuki felt better. A second later a jolt hit her face, and she moved away suddenly. They both gasped in surprise from the motion. The couple laughed and Aura returned her face to the same spot, feeling her child kick.

Miyuki shifted her legs under her and reached out to Aura. She took her hand and helped her down to lay beside her on the thick grass. They embraced and nestled the womb between them. Aura remarked at how warm it felt, pressed to her own abdomen. She stroked Miyuki’s hair and face with the back of her hand, her other fingers tracing the curves of her hip and rounded belly. Miyuki’s tears dried quickly, and her eyes fluttered close as she lay there, enjoying Aura’s delicate caress.

“Aura?” she asked, after a time.

“Yes, dear?”

“Would you mind if I slept here for a while before we go back?”

Aura smiled. “Not at all.” She draped her arm across Miyuki’s back and pulled her close. “In fact, I think I may join you. It is certainly peaceful enough, here.”

Miyuki blindly sought Aura’s muzzle with her own, their noses bumping together, and she planted a kiss there upon finding her quarry. She sighed. “Thank you.” Miyuki lowered her head and slipped her bottom arm under Aura, the other continuing to pet the tender hide that protected her babes.

“Rest well, my love,” she said before her own eyes followed suit.