

Reko sat up and promptly regretted it as he banged his horns on the desk over him. He rubbed at them and leaned out before getting up once again. He looked over his handiwork, the new security station installed in his work area. He used to have the space all to himself, but orders had come down to move the camera feeds down here. The demon patted himself off, scattering dust and dirt to the ground.

“Figures, one of the best things about this job and I lose it. I hope they’re not too stuck up.” He grumbled wordlessly and looked over to his switchboard. “Not like I have much to do in the first place, but if I seriously have to spend all night pretending to work, I’m going to lose my shit...”

Reko glanced up at the camera that hovered over the station. “Well, at least I’ll know who’s watching me ‘work,’ now.” He stepped over to his seat and sank into it with a sigh.

A floor above, Miyuki slowly walked up to the security office, weighed down by her pregnant belly, late in her second trimester. She stopped, seeing the lights off and a notice posted on the door. Some manager decided to move the station, with no word of warning that the change would be coming. She glowered at the note, reaching a hand up to the small of her back to massage the tense muscles there. The pandaren sighed and shrugged, making note of the new room number.

“Down in the basement, great...” She adjusted the strap of her bag on her shoulder before making her way to her new desk.

The room number sounded familiar, like she’d been there before. She took the stairs, deciding a little extra exercise might improve her mood, or at least she’d read that somewhere. By the time she reached the bottom, she felt flushed and was breathing rhythmically, heart beating strong with the exertion, though she didn’t feel out of breath. She started noting the numbers on the hall, becoming increasingly certain she knew where this was. It dawned on her just as she spotted the door: IT. There was no way that entire suite had been emptied, and she realized she’d likely be sharing an office. She didn’t mind having company. On the contrary, she enjoyed having someone to talk with, but she was concerned anyway. What if they weren’t the social sort, or if they were simply uninteresting to her? Normally, with nothing to do, she’d busy herself with a book or her phone, or studying for nursing school during the semester, but while management turned their head on that it technically wasn’t what she was supposed to be doing. And if her coworker should happen to be uptight, that might make this job insufferable.

Miyuki set her shoulders, took a breath, and put on a friendly face as she pushed open the door. She looked around, seeing neither her new station nor anyone present. Half the lights were off, providing only enough illumination to not trip on anything. The place was a bit of mess, boxes and papers strewn here and there. She was able to pick up on certain patterns in the labeling, controlled chaos, but she had to imagine their bosses would be quite angry to learn City Hall’s IT was so disorganized. Then again, they probably wouldn’t be surprised, either.

She took another couple steps in. The space smelled a little musty, common for the basements of old buildings. Dust, ozone from the computers and network banks, recycled air, perhaps a little mildew growing somewhere, turpentine, and slowly yellowing paper from

documents yet to be converted to digital formats greeted her nose. Though there was something else in the air, something mysterious and vaguely tangy. It was hard to place. In her reverie, she forgot to catch the door behind her and it slammed shut.

“Hello?” a gruff voice called out.

“Oh, yes, hi, I’m the overnight security guard,” she answered, beginning to walk in the direction of the voice.

“Ah, right, yeah you’re down here.” The owner of the voice stood up, towering above the divider walls and easily a foot or foot and a half taller than her.

Miyuki gazed up at the demon. His head, mostly a bare skull, looked back, the singular, central eye socket burning dimly like a candle. “*Damn, I guess people do sell their souls for more bandwidth,*” she thought to herself.

He looked back down at her, noting the security uniform hugging her rounded shape. It was clearly a bit snug, but still crisp and professional. While the fabric of her black button-down shirt was drawn tight around her full breasts and heavy belly, her pants slightly strained at her wide hips, it didn’t look slovenly, still clearly fitting even if she’d need a new uniform quite soon. He took extra time to stare at her breasts, still rising and falling with her somewhat labored breathing from her walk down to the office. The embers of his eye flickered a little brighter for just a moment as he feasted on her motherly form. He was quite pleased to lack definite eyes. From her perspective, he was just as likely making eye contact as looking her over. “*Hello, bearmama!*” he thought, “*Maybe this won’t be so bad after all.*”

He extended a hand, “Hey there, I’m Reko.”

Miyuki took it and shook it firmly, “It’s a pleasure to meet you, Reko. My name is Miyuki.”

Reko’s head turned from the seats in the somewhat cramped space of his desk and back over to Miyuki, gaze drifting to her tummy that looked like she had swallowed a small honeydew. “Here, let me help you get settled in.”

“Oh, thank you, you’re too kind.”

He pushed in his own chair all the way and pulled out Miyuki’s. She slipped off her bag and passed it under the counter before moving in front of the chair and sitting down. She descended smoothly at first, but her shifted center of gravity made her more or less fall for the last half. She landed with a whoof and Reko pushed her seat in for her. She caught her breath for a moment and beamed up at him. “Such a gentleman. Thank you.”

“Hey, least I can do for such a pretty lady.”

Miyuki’s eyes narrowed with suspicion, but her smile didn’t fade. As he settled into his own chair, she replied, “Hmm, I’ll have to keep that in mind.”

His jaws parted a little, the embers of his eye glowing brighter again. A smile, perhaps?

Miyuki looked over the screens before her, the building entirely empty except for them and some overnight cleaners. She noticed one of the cameras wasn’t working. She reached forward for the folders next to the monitor, feeling her breath forced out of her as her womb pressed into her diaphragm, and pulled out a report form to note the problem.

After a few more moments of silence, aside from the scratching of her pen and her attempts to refill her lungs with oxygen after having it all squeezed out, Reko turned his head slightly and asked, “So, how far along are you, if you don’t mind me asking?”

“Twenty-seven weeks,” she responded without hesitation.

“I hope they’ve been treating their mother kindly.”

She laughed, turning to face him, “Oh, they’re not mine, I’m renting out my uterus for a couple across town, but they’ve been gentle enough.”

“Hey, being a surrogate doesn’t make you any less of a mother.”

Miyuki grinned. “Well, certainly it’s still my body that gets all the joys of growing and pushing out a watermelon!”

“What made you look into surrogacy?”

She put down her pen and took a breath, gathering her thoughts. “I’ve always liked children. I’ve got a big family, used to be a babysitter back in high school, and so on. I know I’d like to be a mom someday, but my life just isn’t in order enough to do it yet. Still, I’ve wanted to know for myself for a long time what it’s like.” Her eyes fell down to look at the large mound in her lap as she rubbed it with her off hand. “And I figured getting that experience while doing a kindness for someone who can’t have children without help was a good idea.”

“Was it?”

“Was it what? Oh! Ah, too soon to say, the hardest part has yet to come, of course. But so far? Definitely!”

“That’s wonderful to hear. And I’d agree, it’s very kind, too.”

Quiet fell again, the topic exhausted. Miyuki returned to her paperwork, diligently filling out the blanks to get all her shift information taken care of ahead of time, rather than quickly jotting it all down at the last minute. Reko drummed his fingers on the counter, boredom already filling him. He clacked his jaw once, trying to decide how long he had to wait before looking for alternate entertainment to still appear professional. Little did he know the pandaren was doing the same, only filling out her paperwork to look busy. She had an audio book she wanted to return to, or perhaps music to listen to. She felt the itch to check her frequented websites again, but sniffled and pushed the thought from her mind, stymieing the urge to take out her smartphone. She caught an odd scent of smoke, not like cigarettes or something ablaze, but more like hickory chips and a cedar plank, mesquite and spices.

Reko gave in first. He pulled out his own phone...probably more a small tablet but in his massive hands it just looked like a phone, and began browsing. Miyuki glanced at the camera feeds again and saw, through the feed that watched their cubicle, that he had succumbed to his boredom. She smirked, deciding to wait a little longer before doing so, herself. She had to look good, right, that she was the bigger woman? A flutter from her womb reminded her that at least in one way she was most certainly bigger than Reko.

A few minutes later, she reached into her pocket and removed her own phone, promptly going to the browser, not wanting to make any noise yet. Trying to use her cell surreptitiously didn’t work well nowadays. Her already generous breasts felt like they had nearly doubled in

size over the course of her pregnancy and, confined in her uniform and bra, they were forced to perch atop her swelling midsection, pushing them even closer to her face. Sometimes she felt like if she slumped too low in her chair they might threaten to smother her. Wouldn't that be an embarrassing way to go? But, as the majority of the lower field of her vision was dominated by a heavy, milk-filled bosom, so large that when clothed it even hid her baby bump from view, she had no choice but to hold her phone up high, resting her forearms gently on her belly to provide her limbs some comfort and support.

Voices suddenly burst from Reko's phone, sounding like a television show of some kind. They were quickly muted and the demon passively gave a, "Whoops."

"What are you watching?" she asked.

"Porn," he answered unabashedly.

Her cheeks flared hot and she hastily flipped over her phone on the desk, hiding its screen from view. "W-what?"

He turned his chair around to look at her. "You heard me!" The demon glanced to see the phone, face-down on the desk. "You put that down awfully hard."

"You surprised me, is all," she said. Her tone was quite matter-of-fact and confident, but her face didn't match.

The light of his eye brightened and he chuckled. "What were you looking at, Miyuki?"

"The cameras!"

"Uh-huh..." He stared at her, letting the silence do the work.

"Oh...fine, I was looking at porn, too."

He laughed jovially. "What kind? What are you into?"

Her cheeks burned hotter. "I think that's an entirely inappropriate line of questioning."

He shrugged. "Suit yourself." He turned back a little.

Miyuki hesitated and then asked, "What was that sound that played?"

"Oh, I went into an art stream, forgot I didn't have my media muted."

"Porn drawn while you wait?" she asked, knowing full well what he meant.

"Something like that..." He clicked his teeth again. She knew something.

Silence returned once more. After her nerves settled a little more, she picked up her phone again and returned to her own art browsing. She was too engrossed to notice Reko carefully craning his neck around to spy on her screen without drawing attention. Her eyes flicked back up to the cameras and jumped.

"Damn it, Reko!"

"Whatcha lookin' at?"

"Nothing," she lied, trying to turn back.

"I like that site, always something good on there."

Miyuki paused. Maybe she had misjudged this. How often had she seen him screwing around before the office moved? Maybe she didn't need to be so uptight, considering he was into the same stuff, it seemed. "Oh yeah?" she said, "You go first, what are you into?"

Reko's eye brightened and his jaw parted slightly, a thin trail of smoke leaking from the corners of his mouth.