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# Arrival

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*Mid-morning, Weavercraft Hall, Windsong territory*

The ebbing wind ruffled Reyda's long brown hair which was kept mostly in place by a light blue handkerchief. She hoped that her dress, one made lovingly by her journeyman weaver father, would give the right impression to the important members of the Weyr if she were to come across any when she arrived. The deep-red dress was trimmed with a sunset-yellow silk ribbon. Her father had made it in the latest fashion, a jewel-neck design, one where the neckline of the dress was cut to mimic the shape a necklace would take around the neck, with elbow-length sleeves and a full-length skirt that flared nicely at the end. Currently that skirt was being bothersome as it twisted around her legs due to the winds. Last night there had been a rough storm, heavier than the normal rains for the season. The crisp air chilled her causing her to rub her arms to warm them up.

Her mother leaned forward, brushed a few remaining tears away from Reyda's cheeks and then gave her daughter a warm hug. "Take care of yourself and don't let those weyrmen take advantage of you. You're a good and proper young lady, you know what is right." Her mother kissed her forehead before looking over Reyda's shoulder at the woman waiting next to a blue dragon.

"Saleanna, give the girl some room before you choke her." Her father's gruff voice broke the tension and her mother let go.

Reyda had never had to say goodbyes before. She nodded stiffly and picked up her carisak. It wasn't very heavy as it only held a few things and a change of clothes, but it was everything she owned. Reyda's mother rested against her father's shoulder, her swollen, pregnant belly causing her to wobble some before Reyda's father's strong arms lent her support.

"Mind your manners and do what you're told by who's in charge. Remember, our family has had the honor of you being chosen. To become a dragonrider will be a good opportunity for us. Make us proud!" Her father's angular face broke into a grin and he held Seleanna closer. The loving scene of her parents standing there as she prepared to leave her life behind was something she wanted to etch into her memory forever.

"I will, Papa. I love all of you!" Reyda bit her tongue to keep from crying again and waved to her siblings and cousins one more time before turning to face the bluerider. "I'm ready."

The woman handed her a leather jacket and smiled gently. "Hello Reyda, I'm Olissia. My Taebareth here Searched you and I'm glad to be able to pick you up today. I try to bring all of his Searched candidates to the Weyr if I can. Here, put this on, *between* is very cold and I don't need you getting frostbite while we take you to the Weyr. I'm going to mount up, let me strap in and I'll pull you up behind me. Don't worry, Taebareth is a kind blue and will carry you safely to Kadanzer before you know it," the bluerider, Olissia, remarked, and expertly climbed onto the dragon's shoulder, buckling leather straps onto a thick leather belt around her waist.

Being this close to a dragon was so different from the few times she had seen them fly over head. When this pair along with a man and his green had shown up two sevendays ago, she had been petrified. Those large clawed feet and mouths full of teeth were all she could focus on. Reyda had felt like a herdbeast waiting to be eaten as the dragons gazed at each person in line. When this blue had turned his wide faceted eyes on her, she had felt her heart leap into her throat. Yet, for some reason this very blue had chosen her to be a Candidate. Where Reyda was going she would see more dragons and she knew she would have to conquer her fear of them. The blue's cobalt form was rippling with muscle as he crouched down for her to climb up. Reyda swallowed hard, 'now's a good moment as any to begin working on those fears.' She told herself sternly and stepped forward.

Reyda pulled on the jacket, feeling the soft wool lining rub against her dress. She buttoned up the front and already began to feel hot despite the cooler weather. The dragonrider reached down from on top of her dragon, offering a gloved hand. Reyda took hold of Olissia's strong hand and she was pulled up behind the woman to rest between her and a large back ridge. "Take this strap and wrap it around your waist. It'll help hold you to me while we make the short jump *between*."

Reyda took hold of the leather strap, smooth as a finely woven silk cloth, and slipped it behind her back before handing it back to the bluerider. She heard the click and it was snapped into place. She slid her arms around the dragonrider's waist and leaned into the rider's back, her carisak nestled snugly between her and Olissia.

Taebareth's wings unfurled, casting a large shadow along the ground. "Hold on tight and when I tell you to, take a deep breath like you're going under water. Taebareth is going to take off now, be ready." The blue must have taken this as a sign to go because Reyda noticed the ground suddenly shift below her as the dragon crouched low. With a powerful thrust of his hindfeet Taebareth leapt into the air buffeting the ground with gusts from his wings. The few fellis and citrus trees that grew around the crafthall quickly shrunk as he gained height. The red-tiled roofs and whitewashed walls of the crafthall buildings passed beneath them and Reyda blanched at the sudden shift in distance from the ground. Her stomach dropped as Taebareth's wings continued to slice the sky to gain altitude.

Below, her family soon looked more like trundlebugs than people. After the first initial stomach-churning jolt, Reyda was able to relax and enjoy the rare view of the land from the sky. The cobalt dragon took one lazy circle over the

Weavercraft Hall, the family cots and smaller storage buildings. The rusty red roofs stood out amongst the green and brown backdrop of the surrounding land.

"We're going to go *between* now, Reyda. I want you to take that deep breath I mentioned! Hold tightly to me and remember I am here and so is Tae." Reyda wondered at the strange comment, of course they were here, she was holding the rider's waist and sitting on her blue's neck. As she puzzled this out she took a deep breath of the chill air. It was cooler than the soft breeze had been back on the ground. The rush of the wind over her round cheeks and arms made her glad that the rider had given her the warm jacket.

Then it was all *gone*. The sunlight, warmth, air and touch were gone in a blink of an eye. The vast blackness and indescribable cold were all that was left. She almost let go her breath to scream but held her mouth shut and closed her eyes. 'I can't tell whether my eyes are open or closed. I can't feel anything, myself, the dragon – nothing! The cold — it goes straight to my bones. Is this how it feels to die? Will I ever know warmth or life again?' When she felt like she couldn't stand the deathly blackness a moment longer, balmy winds and sunlight enveloped her body once more.

Reyda clung to the warm body in front of her, the scent of dragon musk and leather filling her senses. She began to shiver and reluctantly detached herself from Olissia to rub her arms. 'I'll never feel warm again.' The cobalt-blue dragon circled the Weyr once, calling out a greeting to the watch dragon before landing on the southern edge of a large earthen square. In the northern part of the grounds, smaller dragons and their riders were marching in lines, occasionally turning as someone shouted out instructions. When Olissia moved, unstrapping the buckles that held them in place, Reyda's stomach whirled as if firelizards were fighting inside it. Her hands quickly grabbed the leather straps holding her in place and she leaned back into the blue's strong spine-ridge, her lips pursed nervously.

"All right, wait for me to get down and I'll help you dismount. Really, Taebareth wouldn't let you get hurt so there's no fear. Sit tight!" The bluerider swung her legs over to one side and expertly slid down the many feet to the dirt packed ground below.

Reyda squeezed her eyes shut, gasping as suddenly a husky humming vibrated through the dragon underneath her. 'What's wrong now? Did something make the dragon angry? What would make a dragon angry? Shards, is honor for my family worth doing this for?' She took a calming breath; she didn't want to go home in shame. She would remain here and fulfill the duty to her family and Hold. As the humming continued Reyda noticed it sounded more like a cat's contented purr than an angry hiss or growl. She opened her eyes curiously. A large blue face enveloped her line of sight, Taebareth's large swirling green eye passively observing her fear. Reyda gasped and choked back a scream as she saw her face reflected a thousand-fold in his swiftly swirling eye. She wanted to run far away from him but she was frozen with fright and strapped in place. The blue turned away and Reyda let go a breath she didn't know she had held.

"All right, Taebareth says he's going to lie down. It'll be a bit wobbly but then the distance won't be as far." It was disturbing how Olissia's face became distant, looking off to nowhere, her eyes staring blankly. Reyda watched the

woman and after a moment, her green eyes turned back to Reyda. "He says you have a strong mind." Olissia gave a throaty laugh, slapping the blue on the foreleg, "That's why he Searched you when we were at the crafthall." Olissia removed her helmet, deep red-brown hair in tight braids swinging free. The auburn-haired woman stepped back and waved to Reyda. "Just sit tight and you'll be down in a moment."

The blue shifted and Reyda felt like she was riding in a cart rolling across a bumpy field. Her stomach flip-flopped again so she shut her eyes and waited, her hands clutching the ridge in front of her. When Taebareth settled she opened her eyes again and the distance to the ground wasn't that far at all.

"Just swing your left leg over to sit to one side, like I did. Then slide down and you'll land right in front of me. I'll be here in case you need help," Olissia instructed.

Reyda slowly and carefully lifted her leg over the dragon's neck. She was still feeling disoriented from *between* and worried that she might fall if she moved too fast. She tucked her skirt snugly beneath her, as was proper for a young woman, before she took a deep breath and pushed off the blue's back. When her feet touched the ground she let out the breath and grinned. "That wasn't so bad."

"Not at all, huh? Soon you'll want to be up in the air all the time," Olissia said wistfully, that faraway look in her eyes again. Reyda found it unnerving. "Follow me, I'm going to introduce you to the headsecond in charge of candidates."

Reyda crossed her hands in front of her and looked around as she walked. The Weyr was damp and cool just like back home. The storm that had swept past Windsong Hold and the Weavercraft Hall must have moved north during the night and passed here as well. A few firelizards flew past in a blur of blue, brown and green. The greenery was well maintained, with dirt paths heading off in different directions. Olissia brought her past a long, low building, where Reyda could hear voices coming from inside.

"That's the northern classroom. You'll have classes there as well once you're settled in. Here to our left," Olissia waved her hand, pointing, "is the Weyrling Barracks. Currently they're at lunch but if you look inside you can see the dragonets." The rider grinned and winked. "As long as you're quiet I'm sure it won't hurt to take a peek."

The long, low building seemed to loom above Reyda and sent a cool shadow across her as she moved inside, pushing in one wide hardwood door. Inside the building were rows of bunks and nestled into the earth next to each pair of beds lay dragons. Some were smaller than others but none were bigger than a small horse. They each looked like large, breathing, colored gems and glistened in the sunlight filtering through the door. In this moment they didn't seem so dangerous.

Olissia voice whispered softly at her shoulder, "Let's move along now. We don't want to wake them."

Reyda nodded and stepped quietly back out the door as Olissia shut it gently behind her. They moved around the backside of the barracks and came into view of a small cot sitting just off the back and in view of other cots between some trees.

Olissia stepped up the wide porch steps and knocked on the door frame. Reyda noticed a large slate hung next to the open door and a few notes were scribbled on it. Some of the writing was better than the rest.

"Here she is, headsecond. Another candidate for Nioranth's Hatching," the bluerider said as she gave Reyda a gentle push towards the woman seated behind the desk. "Don't worry, Resla will take good care of you. You'll love it here at Kadanzer!" Olissia smiled warmly once more and gave Reyda a pat on the shoulder. Reyda nervously watched Olissia step back out the door and make her way around the Weyrling Barracks before turning back to look around the room.

The front office of the headsecond was, in one word, cozy. Reyda felt comforted by the jumbled shelves, stacks of sewing supplies, worn chairs and the well-used couch. The couch and chairs were set up in a friendly circle in one corner behind the desk where Resla now sat. It might not be very big but it reminded her fondly of her father's crafthall.

"Reyda, is it? Come sit, and I'll get you settled in." The headsecond smiled warmly and waved her hand for Reyda to sit in the chair in front of her desk. The headsecond looked at the girl, as Reyda adjusted in the chair, sitting tall with her hands clasped in her lap. She hoped she would make a good first impression.

"So, Reyda, where are you from?" The woman's demeanor reminded Reyda of her mother and aunts back home. Resla wore her silvering brown hair up in a simple bun, from which some strands had broken loose. Reyda thought the woman had very manly arms; she had large upper arm muscles, broad shoulders and the man's shirt she wore instead of a dress made this more apparent to someone like Reyda, fresh from a crafthall. Reyda felt homesick at the realization that the headsecond was pregnant, having just left her mother who was due to give birth shortly. Resla took a scroll from a neatly set pile on the desk, unrolled it and dipped her pen in the inkwell.

"I'm from Windsong Hold's Weavercraft Hall, headsecond," the crafter girl replied simply. The girl's eyes met Resla's for a moment when she answered before she lowered them down to stare at her hands.

Resla wrote Reyda's home in the records as she asked her, "How old are you?"

"Fifteen Turns, headsecond," Reyda answered, then took a small breath. 'Shards but you're being meek! Stop being such a feather-head. Mother would be ready to pinch me if she saw me now. "Where's your father's fire?" she'd ask me and then I'd giggle, roll up my sleeves and work harder. Time I did than now. Why else am I here? I can't be a shy woolie or I'll be worthless to them, won't I?' Reyda let her breath out slowly and lifted her head up, determined to put on a good face. She just had not thought the trip here would be so — frightening, and the chill clung to her, making her nervous and afraid when she wouldn't be normally. She had this unreasonable fear that the *nothingness* of *between* was going to come from nowhere and grab her up again, or that she was still there —

"You needn't be so formal when we're alone. You may call me Resla." The headsecond smiled and set her quill down. "How was your ride here? Have you ever ridden a dragonback before?"

Reyda turned her attention back to Resla, her face paling at the question. "No. To be honest, heads-- Resla," she corrected, "it was terrifying! The dragon, it was so *big* and then the blackness..." Reyda couldn't bring herself to think about it anymore and gripped her hands on the arms of the chair just to feel the wood and know it was there. If she could feel it then she wasn't back in the black nothing. Again she wondered how dragonriders ever felt warm. Resla nodded in understanding. "The first time *between* is difficult for everyone. I won't say it gets easier, but you do learn how to prepare for it." Resla picked up her quill and dipped it in the inkpot. "What does your father do?"

"Oh, he's a journeyman weaver, ma'am. My mother is the daughter of a journeyman tailor, too! My father made the cloth for this dress." Reyda preened, and slid her small hands over her lap to flatten out the wrinkles.

Resla made some notes on the scroll and nodded. "So this would mean that you can sew, weave and maybe do some embroidery?" she asked.

"Oh yes! I like to embroider, but what I really love to do is weaving," Reyda exclaimed passionately. She smiled and her hands relaxed in her lap; having something normal to discuss was better than thinking about her trip here. "I can get lost in making rugs and blankets. I enjoy all the colors..."

Reyda watched Resla continue to write on the scroll while she talked. The headsecond waved her hand beckoning off to their left to a high shelf Reyda hadn't noticed before. A gold firelizard chirped from her perch then glided the short distance to the desk while a bronze with a bad wing remained on the top shelf, his head resting on the edge, his tail thumping, solidly disgruntled. The gold hummed as Resla looked at her with a similar far off look like the bluerider had had earlier. The firelizard then leapt into the air, winged for some height and popped *between*.

Reyda stiffened reflexively, her fear returning as the gold firelizard disappeared. The empty void of *between* was something she hadn't expected and couldn't shake. 'There I go again being foolish. I can't go getting startled every time a dragon or firelizard goes *between*. I'll end up giving the wrong impression.'

"That was Sunrise, and the one up there moping is Hope. Sunrise is going to find my assistant, Ellya, to help you get settled into the candidate barracks," the headsecond explained while jotting down another note, looking thoughtful. "Now then, let me tell you a little bit about where you will be living at Kadanzer," Resla said brightly and set down her pen. "I'll assign you to work with Madilayn, Kadanzer's Weyrtailor. Ellya will introduce you to her this afternoon.

"While at Kadanzer, you'll be staying in a barracks with other candidates. The girls' and boys' sides are separated and after sundown it is expected that you keep to your own side of the barracks. Candidates help with the many chores around the Weyr and are allowed to apprentice to a craft if they want, and the Weyrcrafter agrees." Resla stated then continued, "There will be no fighting or forgetting to do your duties while you're here. If I or the Weyrningmaster find out about any fights or laziness you will be returned home. If you have any problems, come to me or Ellya first,

we'll help solve the problem before it gets out of hand, all right?"

"Yes, Resla. I won't cause any trouble, promise. I don't want to be sent home in disgrace. My family is very proud to have the chance to have a dragonrider. I will make my family proud," Reyda said as something bronze caught the light from outside, glittering in the corner of her eye. The bronze firelizard, she remembered his name was Hope, had climbed down off the top shelf and creeled at Resla, his eyes a deep blue. "They look sad...poor fellow, it must be so hard not being able to fly."

Resla stood and stepped over to the shelf, picking up the small bronze with such gentle love. The headsecond turned and placed the bronze on her desk where he walked directly towards Reyda. "He wants you to rub his eyeridges. Always wants petting from the candidates and weyrlings who visit. Go ahead, he won't bite."

Reyda reached out her hand, stopping for a moment before the bronze's nose, worried. He might not bite his owner, but what about her? 'It can't be any worse than a puppy bite and I've had my share of those.' She touched the ridge above his eye and stroked it. The hide was so much softer than it looked and she enjoyed the warmth of Hope's hide against her chill hand.

As Reyda stroked Hope, Resla continued to inform her of the rules of the Weyr. Resla also asked if she had brought anything with her and Reyda informed the headsecond of the few things she had brought in her carisak. There was so much to take in the young woman hoped she could remember it all.

A soft knocking broke through the pause in conversation. "That'll be Ellya now. Come in!" Resla smiled as a thin woman with sable-brown hair entered. Her hair was covered with a pale yellow kerchief, and she wore a simple brown skirt and a pale blue blouse which matched her eyes. "Here's another new one to get settled in. Take her to see Madilayn after she's dropped her things at the candidate barracks," Resla said. "Welcome to Kadanzer, Reyda. My door is always open and you can come to see me whenever you like. My office is always available to my candidates and weyrlings to visit," Resla offered.

"Thank you very much, headsecond. It was nice to meet you." Reyda stood and curtsied. She rubbed Hope's eyeridge one last time before following Ellya outside.

A pair of young women were standing close together talking two baskets of laundry sat forgotten beside them. They both wore short knee-length trous showing off bare legs. But it wasn't their embarrassing show of leg that made Reyda look away, her face turning beet-red. The taller black-haired girl had reached out and lovingly caressed the other girl's cheek before pulling the short-haired girl's head closer and kissing — passionately. Headsecond Resla had said that this was acceptable but, so out in the open?

"Ladies, please leave your trysting for your spare time. Get back to your chores." Ellya said. The two girls swiftly separated, giggling and picked up their laundry. As she followed Ellya she saw a surprising amount of abhorrent behavior, from two grown men holding hands to a whole group of girls wearing trousers or sporting short-cut hair.

Reyda tucked away a wisp of hair that had escaped her kerchief and sped up to walk next to Ellya. To her, Ellya

was an example of a proper holder woman, dressed in a simple skirt, blouse and bodice. In a place so vastly different from her home Reyda had to try her best not to cling to the older woman.

"So, you like to sew, do you? I think you will find our tailor's room in the crafthall a good place to adjust to living in a Weyr." The speed of the woman's whispery voice matched the quick steps she made as they walked south. The small beaten pathway from the headsecond's cot quickly opened up past the tree line into a wider lane emptying out into a large, spacious square.

In many ways it reminded her of home. The buildings were long and had many wide windows to help cool the rooms inside during the humid summer months. People were busily walking or running from place to place. Reyda was taking in the enormous barn-like buildings in front of her when a brown dragon leapt from the southern corner of the square into the skies. She watched as he pulled for height and circled the Weyr before making his way south. 'I wonder where he's going?' she thought, then the dragon disappeared *between*. She shivered for a moment and rubbed her arms only briefly; the memory of *between* wasn't so scary in the warmth of midday.

Then a man with reddish-brown curly hair stepped out of a nearby building. His lean, well-muscled body was very handsome but his face — large, thick ropy scars masked the whole left side and disappeared under his shirt. He wore an eye patch over the affected eye, but was otherwise normal looking. If he had been facing away from her, Reyda would never have seen his horrible injury. She knew she had stopped and was staring; her face felt cold. 'How awful...'

"Hurry up, Reyda. You'll be going to class with the rest of the candidates this afternoon," Ellya said from half a dragonlength ahead.

Reyda nodded, picked up her skirt and ran to catch up. "Sorry. I'm still nervous around dragons." She smiled shyly and decided not to mention the man.

"You'll get used to it soon enough," Ellya said simply and turned to continue towards the candidate barracks.

"What're these large barns for?" Reyda asked, looking inside past the towering wooden columns. Inside lay a few dragons separated by cloth tarps. People moved with care around them. One deep-blue dragon had long, ugly lacerations along his neck. A smaller green groaned, her eyes rippling with yellow and white. When she flexed her wing, a scattering of holes could be seen dotting the mainsail. Reyda's stomach felt queasy and she quickly turned away, swallowing back the taste of bile. 'When I'd been told I was Searched, I didn't think about how it would be dangerous! I'd only thought of the prestige it would bring to my family and Hold if I Impressed. Or the opportunity I have to advance my weaving skills at the Weyr's Weavercraft Hall. What have I gotten myself into? I didn't think everything would be so different here.'

"That is the Dragon Infirmary. When dragons are sick or injured they are taken there. Those two, the green and the blue, were wounded in Threadfall," Ellya responded.

They passed by the two barns and then turned down another broad path facing more buildings headed toward one of the smaller ones. "This is the Candidate Barracks. This is where you'll live while at the Weyr."

The entrance to the building faced away from the Dragon Infirmary, Reyda was relieved to notice. 'It's so close to the Dragon Infirmary. I wonder if the dragons make a lot of noise when they're hurt, like horses or sheep sometimes do?' She glanced back at the barns as she stepped up the stairs to the barracks entrance. 'I'll have to ask the other candidates how well they sleep after 'Fall.'

"The right door is for girls and the left is the boys. Do not go inside the boys' side at night after the eighth bell." Ellya walked into the righthand doorway, glancing back once at Reyda.

"What bells?" Reyda asked as she followed the assistant.

"There are eight bells every day. The bell stands above the weyrling barracks and lets the weyrlings and candidates know what time of day it is. It's currently fourth bell but it should ring fifth bell soon." Ellya stopped inside the barracks to pick up a set of linens and a white robe from shelves to the left. "These are your linens and candidate robes. I'll get one of the girls to help you get your shoe size so you can get some sandals as well."

They walked down the middle aisle and paused by one set of bunks. A young woman was sitting on the floor on some cushions next to the bunks, engrossed in sewing while humming to herself. Her long black hair was loosely braided and rested over one shoulder. "Hanavi, would you mind showing Reyda around the Weyr? Make sure she gets to class all right, too." Ellya rested a soft hand on her shoulder. Reyda noticed Hanavi had a thin pale scar a fingerlength long running from her right ear to her right cheek bone. How common was it to have scars here? Though she was sure the girl's scar wasn't due to Thread, Reyda just had not thought what exactly threadfighting had meant till passing the Dragon Infirmary. She had only wanted to follow her father's wishes. She hadn't given deep thought to what being a dragonrider meant till today. 'However, I'm not going to back out now!' Reyda thought vehemently. She would see this through.

"Hmm? Oh, hello!" Hanavi quickly tucked her needle into the edge of the cloth and stood up. "Yes Ellya, I can do that." She grinned and Reyda saw that she had a small gap between her two front teeth. "I was just relaxing after lunch away from the rowdy boys. It's the only spare time we have during the day and I like it to be quiet."

Reyda curtsied, "Hello, nice to meet you. I'm Reyda."

Hanavi nodded, "Which bunk do you want? You can have any of the ones that aren't made up. You can choose top or bottom." Reyda looked down the rest of the row. There were a few beds bare on either side of the barracks.

"I need to go as I have some other business to get to. If you have any questions you can ask Hanavi, myself or Headsecond Resla. After class, I'll come by to take you to meet Weyrtailor Madilayn." Ellya nodded once to the both of them and quickly made her way back down the aisle and out the door.

"You'll have to hurry. The bell will ring any moment. Which one do you want?" Hanavi waved a klah-brown hand at the spare beds.

Reyda didn't want a top bunk. She pointed to the first lower bunk that was empty, two down from Hanavi's, "I'll take that one." She was curious about Hanavi's scar and

decided to take a chance at knowing more. "How did you get your scar? I've seen a few people since I arrived with scars. Is being a candidate as dangerous as being a dragonrider?" Reyda felt silly asking and busied herself by walking over to her bed, opening the trunk at its foot and laying the robe and her clothes inside. Both the top and bottom bunk of this set were empty so for now she had the whole trunk to herself.

Hanavi touched the scar on her face briefly, as if she hadn't thought of it in a while. "Oh I got this when I was younger. I was playing with my brothers and as we were running past some trees -- a branch swung back and caught me across my face." She shrugged. "No, being a candidate is just as dangerous or not dangerous as being home."

Rolling laughter and talk erupted outside the barracks and a few girls stepped inside. When they noticed Reyda most of them waved and Reyda grinned and waved back.

"Did you just arrive? I didn't see you in the dining hall," a slim girl with a long, thick black ponytail asked cheerfully. Her green eyes looked straight at Reyda with real interest.

"Ah, yes I did. Ellya just brought me here and Hanavi," Reyda pointed to the other candidate, "was just helping me choose a bunk."

"I was so hoping the new candidate was going to be a boy!," groaned a gorgeous young woman with short black hair.

"Don't mind Solea, she's like that towards everyone. Thinks every girl's competition with her for the boys" This last comment came from a slender girl with bright red hair and pale blue eyes. "My name's Lyra, this is my sister Nori and the overly cheerful one there," she winked at the last girl in the group, "is Tymania."

Solea just frowned at the other girls and shoved past Reyda to go to her trunk. Reyda chuckled nervously, but also with relief. This sort of banter was normal and made her feel at home. She moved back to the side of her bunk, making easy work of dressing the bed, and as she tucked in the last corner a deep ringing bell sounded.

"Class time," Hanavi smiled again and tucked her sewing into her own trunk.

Reyda noticed the clean details in the embroidery and was envious. "I like sewing too. But I enjoy weaving more, do you weave?" Reyda asked as they made their way out of the barracks.

"I find Hanavi's embroidery work very nice. I also love to embroider, so if you'd rather not I'll always be happy to decorate your dresses," Nori piped in.

"I prefer to do knitting or embroidery because I don't need to be at a loom to complete it. I can sit somewhere nice and relax while doing my work," Hanavi replied. Reyda nodded in understanding. This helped so much, being among other girls talking about something completely normal.

Lyra and Tymania followed shortly after talking happily while Solea walked farther behind. Adjusting to the Weyr might not be as difficult as she thought.



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