

TALES FROM THE WARS™ UNIVERSE

# WARSONG — Academy 27 —

Lethargy and Pixels

By James Wylder



"She hasn't left her room in days, you really need to drag her out of there."

The Hei Ran sighed, "That's not true. Sang Mi would never be that inconvenient to us. She comes out of her room for meals and to do chores. Then she goes back into her room."

Mrs. Jin, Jae Hyun's mother, gave her a look. "That's just never leaving her room with an asterisk on it. Can I be blunt with you?"

"You're going to be anyway so go for it."

"You've spoiled the child. I know she's your only girl, but she'll be a grown woman soon and she's not going to be able to get away with this sort of behavior then."

"Full offense," Hei Ran said, "but she's not your daughter."

The other woman frowned, "Do what you wish, but she's going to have to stop this nonsense at some point."

"It's hardly nonsense."

"She was your mother, it should be you this torn up."

"I am torn up."

"Then you shouldn't have to hold it in because your daughter is being a brat!"

Hei Ran gave a pleasant smile. "I hope you enjoyed the tea, but I need to attend to some matters."

She mumbled, but took the hint.

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"Sang Mi?" Sang Eun rapped at her door. There was no reply, but the door budged at the knock. His sister was there on her bed, VR headset covering her eyes and ears. She'd been logging into virtual reality far too much the last few days. The Gongen government technically had limited the amount of hours youth were allowed to spend in VR, but Sang Mi didn't have a hacker nickname for nothing. As Kalingkata, she easily knew how to fake her biometric data. He let

out a loud sigh, it's not like she could hear him anyway. Still, he had to get her attention somehow.

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"What do you come to me for, Drakesword?"

Sang Mi raised her sword to the dragon. "I need you to teach me the path of the scales, in order to..." She stopped. The dragon model was glitching, and now rotating while continuing its animation as though it still was sitting on the ground, which it was now clipping through. "...come on."

"It's because you installed too many mods."

She turned around to see another player avatar, this one an elf warrior with a bow. She stroked her digital beard. "Talinata?"

"That's me."

"What are you doing in my game? It's a single player game for a reason. Did you hack in?" she said bitterly.

"You installed like, two-thousand mods. Including the local multiplayer one."

She thought for a moment, "Haha, oh, whoops."

He nodded, "...So it's new years eve."

"Congratulations."

"Everyone from school is going to the celebrations."

"Well Mazel Tov to you all."

He rubbed his rather smooth elven forehead, "You should come with us. It'll be--"

"Fun? I'm good. No need to bother me. I'm having plenty of fun here in Welkinedge."

He gestured at the dragon, which was now twitching in a weird loop of animation as it was half clipped into the ground, "You've played this game like eighty times!"

"Well they keep porting it and improving the graphics instead of releasing a new one, so honestly this isn't a 'me' problem as far as I see it."

"Could you be serious?"

"Could you leave me alone?"

"Why are you being like this?"

"Just go to the festival without me Talinata, go have fun. I'll be just fine right here... after I reload the checkpoint so the dragon loads properly."

Talinata pulled up his bow, which caused his sister to raise an eyebrow and look at the dragon, but he instead shot her in the throat.

"What the hell?" she yelled as she pulled off the VR helmet, he lifted up his own.

"Sorry to resort to extreme measures. But everyone really wants to see you. You haven't hung out with any of our friends since..."

"...Yeah I know. Stop reminding me." She turned over in bed, pulling the covers over her head.

"So you're just going to not do anything?"

She shrugged beneath the sheets.

He hesitated to ask about her medical implant that injected her medications, like antidepressants, into her bloodstream directly but... maybe he had to. "Is your implant working?"

She pulled the sheets back to scowl at him, "Just because I'm sad doesn't mean my implant is broken. I can just have feelings. Those happen."

"...Sorry. Sorry. But... look everyone is worried about you."

"Then if I stay here long enough they'll forget about me and stop."

Talinata let out a sigh that was so long that his sister was actually a little impressed by it. "Stop it. Just... stop. Look, how about you get in the shower and get

dressed, and you meet me in the living room in half an hour, and if you don't I'll leave without you."

"Great, have a good trip."

He just sighed again, and left the room.

She put her VR Helmet back on, and for a few minutes began to play again, before she threw it off, and sat up in bed, moaning into the empty space.

"Shit," she said, and slowly made her way to the shower.

It took her 45 minutes, but Talinata had lied and waited for her anyway.

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The whole gang, which was so big that Talinata and Kalingkata were both sure they were going to break up into chunks pretty quickly, was assembled over by the Tori Gate in front of the Temple. She was



impressed that Talinata had somehow gotten Li Xiu, Ryan, Tsetseg, Bashrat, Jae Hyun, and even JackBox all in one place. Everyone was dressed up nice, which was fun to see.

"Why are we here?" Kalingkata asked right off.

"None of us are Shinto. Literally, not a single one of us is Shinto, like, come on now, are you Shinto, Li Xiu?"

"Good morning to you too, Sang Mi."

Talinata slid his sister's arm through the crook of his elbow, she latched on without complaint. "We all just thought it was appropriate we were to pay our respects, since the shrine is hosting the festival here."

"Mmm," Kalingkata replied. "And why do you need me for that?"

"Because you know all about how to properly pay your respects at these shrines, you taught me how to do it when we were kids, remember?"

She looked up at him incredulously, "I learned how to do that by watching anime. I am literally not an expert."

Her friends all looked at her expectantly.

"...You literally know how to do this as well, Talinata."

They continued to stare. They had clearly discussed this beforehand. Jerks.

"...Fine. So first off, you're not supposed to do this when you're mourning, so I can go back home now."

"But then who will tell us what to do?" Tsetseg said with the tone of someone reading a line off their phone.

Sang Mi sighed. "Cool. I'll just do the ritual purification part like... extra." She went up to the Tori Gate, and bowed, then walked around it. "Do what I do, and don't go through it. I forget why but that's important."

They all followed her directions, and then went over to the purification area, where they all used the

water to purify themselves. Sang Mi did it twice. There were tons of people at the shrine for the New Years, and it was obvious that everyone could have followed what all the other visitors were doing, and other than Ryan, they all had already done this before. Ryan had clearly looked up instructions online anyway. But, frustratingly, their plan was working. As she led them along, she didn't stop feeling sad, but her mind was elsewhere enough she didn't feel overwhelmed by it. The frustration also distracted her. So there was a lot to be annoyed about.

She led them through the motions, how many times to clap, tossing the coin in, ringing the bell, all while complaining, "I told you, I'm not even Shinto, I'm not even Japanese!" but by the time they'd all finished she was, while not joking along with everyone, at least not scoffing at their jokes. The weights around her ankles, the clouds above her head, they were still there, but she found it easier to drag herself forward. Tapping on her forearm, she scolded her implant.

“You couldn’t find it within yourself to give me a little extra juice today, huh?”

It did not respond.

“We were going to get lunch together,” her brother said, slipping her hand back into the crook of his arm.

“But mom and dad...”

“Are getting to have some time to themselves for once.”

“What about Min Jun?”

“He actually has friends too, you know.”

She gave a single laugh, despite herself. “Sounds fake.”

“I didn’t believe it at first either. I think he might even be dating this boy in his legal program.” He grinned at her look of obvious skepticism. “Come on then, have lunch with us.”

“It’s not like I have a choice, you’re just dragging me around.”

“Of course you have a choice.”

“Waiting at the train station till you're done?”

“Something like that.”

“My knight in shining armor.”

They entered the restaurant in much higher spirits, though Sang Mi was still a little distant. But at the very least she was rolling her eyes at Jae Hyun's unintentionally bad jokes, and Talinata's intentionally bad ones. However, when the host brought them over to their table and the waitress arrived, Sang Mi couldn't look away from her. There was something about her when she started speaking. She couldn't place it.

“And what would you like, Miss?”

“Huh?”

Li Xiu laughed. “You've been staring at her this whole time, it's rude to hit on the serving staff.”

She sighed, "I wasn't..." She looked back at the waitress. What the heck was so familiar with her.  
"...Lemon Chicken please."

She smiled back, and took the menu from her. The conversation kept going but her mind kept going to the waitress... This continued until someone was snapping in front of her face.

"Huh, what?"

Ryan sighed. "She returns from the depths."

"Something on your mind?" Tsetseg asked.

"...Something is unusual about the waitress."

Many eyebrows were raised. "Like?" Li Xiu asked.

"She was blonde?"

"Blonde people exist, Sang Mi."

"Like, naturally blonde."

"...Still exist, yeah."

"But like..." she gave up. But there was something about their waitress... she couldn't exactly place, but she seemed familiar. "...never mind."

Li Xiu looked at the others, and then made the decision to broach a topic they'd all been thinking of broaching openly, but hadn't. "Hey, Sang Mi. We're all here for you, you know that right?"

"Yes," Jae Hyun added in with perhaps too much enthusiasm. "We are definitely all here to support you, including me, who is also here."

Tsetseg gave him an awkward side eye.

"...Thanks everyone. It's just all been really hard on me... losing Grandma... and then everything with Kyon happened..."

There was a collective silence. JackBox looked at Talinata, Talinata looked at Li Xiu, Li Xiu looked at Jae Hyun, Jae Hyun looked at Ryan, Ryan looked at Tsetseg, who looked at Bashrat, who did not look up from his phone and spoiled the whole sequence.

JackBox made a fake coughing sound, "Heyyy, Kalingkata so um... what exactly happened with uh... Kyon?"

Sang Mi looked up, tears bubbling in her eyes, "Oh god, I guess I didn't tell you guys... I just assumed you saw it on social... sorry. I didn't..." she made a weak little 'hic' sound as she held back a sob. Talking about it was hard, and her other thoughts were wiped away by the flood of emotions. Jae Hyun and JackBox both looked like they were either about to pounce on Sang Mi with comfort or fight someone in the Flying Cat parking lot. Sang Eun looked confused and worried. Li Xiu was focused. Tsetseg was biting her fingernails. Ryan was glancing between everyone. Bashrat did not look up from his phone.

"...It's just..." she took a deep breath. "...Kyon and I... we..." She closed her eyes, and turned her head slightly to the side. "We broke up!" She immediately began crying. Long deep sobs that she covered her eyes to shield from view.



Everyone stared in confusion. Bashrat actually did look up from his phone. Many significant glances were then made.

*Did you know about this?* multiple glances conveyed to Talinata.

Talinata, who did not understand the full extent of the question, shook his head just slightly.

"When you say, broke up, you mean dissolved a business partnership?" Jae Hyun ventured.

Sang Mi tilted her head in confusion and lowered her hands. "N-no? Is that a joke?"

"...Then you mean you... broke up a thing called Kyon?"

Sang Mi just looked more baffled.

Her brother stepped in. "...She means Kyon, her now ex-boyfriend?"

Jae Hyun gave a very large nod. Comically large to the point he lost the balance of his chair a little.

"...So she's single?" JackBox said, then amended, "which is a bad thing."

"Yes, I'm also sorry to hear this news. Which is not good news that I didn't know was going to be good news and is kind of bad news--wait--no actually is bad news, because of... reasons."

Tsetseg reached a hand out. "We're all here for you, Sang Mi!"

"Oh, Tsetseg!" she got up, and instead of taking the hand ran around the table and hugged Tsetseg. JackBox and Jae Hyun quickly realized they had made a tactical blunder.

"...Yes, we're all behind you!" JackBox said standing up.

"...The most behind you!" Jae Hyun, somehow managing to stand up more than JackBox did, which would have seemed like a technical impossibility before that moment.

"Kyon is the worst!"

“Worse than Satan!”

“You deserve better!”

“He wasn’t good enough for you anyway!”

Sang Mi finished sobbing into Tsetseg’s breast and looked up, “You guyyysss!” she said, and then started crying again but in a different way.

They continued hurling affirmation at her till their food arrived, and it seemed like things were finally going well.

“...We met at church you know, he goes to Academy 2, as you all know,” - they didn’t - “and then we happened to be at the same track meet the last year of middle school—”

“Wait you do sports?” Bashrat asked.

“Er, yeah? Me and Talinata. We do Track and Field and Cross Country, we have since you’ve met us.... Right, like you guys all knew that?”

The rest of the table tried to awkwardly lie and nod that they absolutely had, except for Tsetseg who shook her head no. JackBox and Jae Hyun exchanged a look of mutual confusion.

"...After the 4 by 4 relay he offered me some Gatorade and we got talking, and then we just started going on dates. We would go to church together too, joke around in the pews before Mass..."

"...Then why didn't we see him on Christmas?" JackBox mused aloud.

Sang Mi's eyes began to water again. "Do you think that's why he dumped me? Because we weren't together on Christmas? But he said his family was going to Hozin—"

"No I'm sure that's not it!" JackBox said just below a shout, then hunched down as eyes turned.

"I just don't understand... why would he dump me like this so quickly after a year and a half? It just doesn't make sense!"

“...Wait after a year and a WHAT?” Jae Hyun said.

“I know, just threw all that time away so quickly...”

She shoved a giant chunk of lemon chicken in her mouth, and Li Xiu took this opportunity to change the subject with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer.

“So, when we get back from break, I was thinking of making a film...”

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The mood was a lot cheerier after they'd left the Flying Cat, and the conversation had shifted once again from Li Xiu's idea for a feature film (which none of them had quite been able to follow, as it was unclear if it was a sci-fi epic, a mobster flick, a romantic comedy, or starred a talking dog which they would make talk using peanut butter and then dub over in post production. Each of them pushed back the terrible suspicion that the true answer was "all of the above".) Now they were discussing the latest Janice Rose song, and whether she'd come to

Gongen as part of her tour again with how interplanetary politics were going.

"My dad actually listened to the song after he realized I kept listening to it," Tsetseg said. "I felt a little embarrassed then that most of the lyrics were the words 'love love baby'."

"I mean, I'm just glad he's trying to take an interest in what you like--" Ryan began, before trailing off as the words "Love Love Baby!" began to get louder. The co-incidence caused the group to veer towards the sound.

A big stage had been erected, where a group of bots dressed in stylish clothes was performing the same set of dance moves on an endless loop. To some of the group, those dance moves were instantly recognizable.

"Is that..." Sang Mi began.

"It is," her brother finished.

"...What is it?" Ryan asked.

"It looks like some sort of dance video game," Li Xiu said.

"Not just any dance game!" Kalingkata shot back.

"THE dance game!" Talinata finished.

"...Okay," Li Xiu said unimpressed.

"FREEDOM DANCE X-TREME!" the twins said together, doing a loosely in unison twirl and pose. JackBox and Jae Hyun clapped, with secondary motives. Tsetseg and Bashrat clapped, because it was well timed. Ryan clapped because everyone else was clapping.

Li Xiu just stared. "...When you say X-Treme, you're pronouncing the X separate like..."

"It's spelled with an X and a hyphen in roman letters, yeah."

Li Xiu let out a long tired breath. "You know I remember when I hung out with people who had taste."

"So... right now?" Kalingkata replied.

Li Xiu opened her mouth to give a witty retort, but her mouth slowly closed as she saw Kalingkata's eyes widen, and then narrow. All eyes then turned to follow her gaze. There, in the sign up line for the Freedom Dance X-Treme competition, were a boy and a girl, holding hands, and laughing together. Kalingkata seemed to be caving in on herself seeing them, her heart breaking again in real time. It did not take the rest of them long to figure out exactly what was going on.

"Is that--" Ryan asked.

Kalingkata just nodded, "I guess he did have someone else lined up..."

Jae Hyun and JackBox both looked ready to march off and declare war, but Talinata gave them a sharp look that made them both settle down. He looked back at his sister.

"Let's go enter. Together. Yeah?"



She looked back into his eyes, and nodded with a thin smile. "Yeah, together." She turned back to the others. "Cheer us on, yeah?"

JackBox and Jae Hyun whispered something to each other, and that was sure suspicious, but they assented that they would indeed cheer them on very much, so much, all the much. With that out of the way, the twins got in line. While there were a lot of people around them, they were all strangers, and it felt in a way like they were finally alone. Sang Mi exhaled, and Sang Eun got behind her and rubbed her shoulders. "You're tense as hell."

"It's been a big day. And we're entering the same contest as Kyon. Of course I'm tense."

He kept up the massage, "So, I have a suspicion."

"...Okay."

"I don't think everyone else realized you had a boyfriend."

She frowned, "That's impossible. It's not like I didn't mention him."

"You didn't very often, and when you did he was your all-star sports champion, in the top of his class, boyfriend who went to another school so you hadn't met him."

There was a long pause, "Oh shit they really didn't think I had a boyfriend!?!"

"Yep."

"That explains--"

'Yep."

"But then that means--"

"Uh huh."

There was a long silence. "...Let's trade off."

"No that's okay."

"Don't be a dummy." She forced him around, and dug her fingers into his shoulders. They were rock hard with tension.

She looked up at him, and he turned his head so she could see that he knew that she knew. "...How stressed are you?"

He slumped, closing his eyes, as someone told them to keep the line moving, and Kalingkata gave them some snark as she pushed her brother forward. "...I'm barely keeping it together," he said as she shoved him.

"That's not okay! You can't just keep this stuff in!"

He spun on her. "What else was I supposed to do? Mom has been a basket of nerves, she's on the verge of breaking down. Dad is even more exhausted than usual. Min Jun just shut himself away with his work. And... and you've been just gone. You just went into your games and disappeared for days." His eyes were bubbling with tears. "Someone had to hold things

together, Sang Mi. I didn't want it to be me, but someone had to--"

She wrapped her arms around him, and he stopped mid sentence. "I'm sorry."

"I miss her so much, Sang Mi. I miss grandma."

"...I know."

"It's been so hard."

"I know. You deserved better."

A man coughed loudly. "Could you please keep moving, you're up next."

He began fumbling for a tissue in his pockets, and Sang Mi reached up and wiped his tears with the cuff of her shirt.

"You'll get it all dirty."

"My brother is more important than my stupid shirt."

He gave a little laugh. "One of us should really bring tissues sometime."

"Not me, I'm not bringing a purse if I can help it."

"I could rock a purse."

"You know, I think you could. A lot of guys can't."

The man running the line, with some desperation, coughed even louder. "Yes, yes very touching, extremely moving sibling bonding moment, I'm honored to see it, now please get on stage before someone yells at me."

"--sorry!" the twins shouted in tandem and rushed up onto the platform in a hasty advance that put them right in the sights of Kyon and his female companion.

"The next match is between Kyon and Tetora of our local Academy 2, and Sang Mi and Sang Eun, twin siblings from over at Academy 27!"

The four participants walked up to each other.

Sang Mi looked ready to murder someone.

Sang Eun looked ready to happily assist in hiding a body.

Kyon looked terrified.

Tetora looked confused at the strange energy around her.

"Um, do you guys know each other?" she asked curiously, her hair was dark brown with straight bangs, the rest an even cut just below chin level. Frustratingly, she was wearing a Welkinridge t-shirt.

Sang Mi put on an obviously fake smile. "Oh, I just know this boy here because we dated for a year and a half. You know. As you do."

Tetora glanced between the two of them. "Oh! Well..." she extended a hand, trying to break the tension. "I'm Tetora, you must be Kalingkata then? Kyon and I have been dating for a little over a month now--"

Sang Mi shook her hand politely, and then her grip got a little too intense as she hit the end of her sentence. "A little over a month you say?" She looked at her brother. "Did you hear that, Talinata?"

"I sure did. What a very interesting amount of time."

Kyon gave an awkward laugh. "Yeah, look I wasn't thinking I was going to run into you here..."

"Oh you didn't?" Sang Mi said. "Sure seems like there were some things I deserved to know... I don't know... a little over a month ago?"

Tetora looked even more confused. "What's she talking about?"

"...We'll talk about that later--"

The announcer coughed into the microphone. "If the participants could stop talking, please, and get to their places...."

The two pairs scrambled over to their dance pads: each one was a touch-pad with markings delineating spots to hit with their feet. A giant hologram appeared in front of them of a fairly popular band, "Extra Sour Grapes," which waved to the audience as though they were really there.

As the fake band tore into the song, they started dancing.

Kyon and Tetora were in perfect sync, focused. Their feet moved in tandem, and they even pulled off some fancy moves for the audience, Kyon swinging her over to his pad as he leapt to hers.

Sang Mi and Sang Eun started just as good. Their feet moved in a flurry--they'd practiced this game together at home many times. They were good at it.

But then something happened.

Sang Mi put her hands up in the air, and moving them up and down, did a really silly little dance, looking over at her brother.

And he laughed, and did a little jig in time to the music, which made her laugh.

It only continued from there, each trying to top the other in being silly, making their sibling laugh more and more till they had forgotten they were on stage



at all, supporting each other at the shoulders as they cracked up into tearful fits of laughter.

"The winners are--Kyon and Tetora! Easily, surprisingly."

The couple waved to the crowd, and as they did so, the twins turned their back on them, and walked off the stage, arms around each other, still laughing.

Some distance away, Kyon and Tetora got down from the stage themselves, and looked on warmly at the departing siblings.

"...So really, what was that she was saying about over a month ago?"

Placing his hand on his girlfriend's shoulder he smiled. "...Don't worry about it. And look, they're happy. I guess things worked out in the end."

He felt a hand fall on his shoulder, and he and Tetora looked over to see JackBox and Jae Hyun who were smiling darkly at them.

"Oh, you thought this was over?" JackBox said.

“It’s nowhere near over,” Jae Hyun said, holding up his phone with their entry to the Free Dance X-treme Tournament on it. “The twins might be okay having fun with losing...”

Tetora and Kyon flinched back into each other’s arms as the Jae Hyun and JackBox’s glowers increased.

“But we’re going to annihilate you!” the romantic rivals said in unison, turning into a joint maniacal laugh.

Kalingkata looked over, “Aw, it looks like everyone is getting along.!”

Talinata coughed. “...Yeah sure let’s go with that.”

The next round of the tournament, Kyon and Tetora did in fact face JackBox and Jae Hyun, which didn’t make sense according to the tournament line up, but after a talking-to by JackBox the organizer seemed to understand that this was going to happen if he valued himself.

This round of the dance competition was indeed brutal.

Jae Hyun and JackBox were merciless, a word which had previously never been applied accurately to a family fun dance game tournament. The audience watched with awkward but impressed stares as they somehow did all of their dance moves while giving the other participants death-stares.

Needless to say, they won, leaving the other couple to walk off defeated, and then begin what appeared to be a very heated conversation offstage.

The rivals also won the whole tournament, which then led to a fight about which one of them would give Kalingkata the commemorative Teddy Bear they'd won.

Kalingkata looked on from a distance, licking an ice cream cone with her other friends.

“They look pretty good together,” she mused, as the pair began an intense rock paper scissors competition over Teddy Bear gifting rights.

Li Xiu laughed. “Oh man do not let them hear you say that.”

“Huh?” Sang Mi said.

“Huh?!?” Jae Hyun and JackBox said.

“It’s just great to see them spending time together, Jae Hyun is usually glued to me so it’s nice to see him take interest in another girl, you know?” Sang Mi meant something rather different than this sounded like to the rest of them. Of course, no one picked up on this except her twin.

Looking between the three of them, Li Xiu, who had previously come to the right conclusion, suddenly came to several wrong conclusions in very quick succession. “Oh my god, I totally misread that.” She hadn’t. “This whole time.. JackBox and Jae Hyun were flirting?”

“WHAT?” they said in unison.

“Oh my god they replied in unison,” Tsetseg said, dropping her candy bar.

Li Xiu squinted at JackBox as if assessing a threat.

“It’s not what you—” they continued in unison.

“Stop that!” They yelled at each other in unison, each getting more frustrated and red in the face.

“I don’t like anyone!” JackBox said.

“Well—I don’t like anyone either!” Jae Hyun protested too much. Sang Mi stared unconvinced.

“For the record, I, Cao Li Xiu, also don’t like anyone,” she said trying to sound cool and debonair but coming off more like a guy butting in to say ‘I agree with that’ at the end of a discussion.

Ryan, Tsetseg, and Bashrat tried hard not to get involved further by beginning a very boring conversation about if ‘blue’ counted as an ice cream flavor, and succeeded.

Sang Mi looked between the suddenly awkward situation and stood up; her brother looked up at her nervously, but she gave him a wink. “And I, Kalingkata, like all of you. Because you’re my best friends.”

The awkward tension fell away suddenly, and Tsetseg let out an audible “awww.”

Talinata grinned. “I think I could say the same.”

“Well now that we’ve resolved that no one is romantically interested in anyone, happy new year friends,” JackBox said.

“Happy 2387, I’ll be glad to leave 2386 in the gutter,” Kalingkata said, sitting back down.

Li Xiu smiled. “So, got any new year's resolutions?”

Sang Mi leaned her head on Sang Eun’s shoulder, watching as JackBox and Jae Hyun began a noisy discussion they hoped was overheard about all the reasons they could not be attracted to each other “Not really. I’m just happy to be here. This time last

year things weren't this lively. I went to school, went home, ran, did homework, played video games, and went to sleep. Same thing every day. And I wasn't unhappy with that honestly but..."

Li Xiu smiled. "The company is nice."

"Yeah," she agreed. "The company is good. Let's keep it that way."