

# AR'ISA

Ar'isa managed to fit the last of her books into the carry baskets and started packing the other bits and pieces she had left till last, thanking the Goddess that she hadn't got to pack fittings and furniture as well, she was glad she had resisted the temptation to ask the Goddess to intervene regarding the orders she had received. There was no point anyway

She had known that those orders would arrive eventually as the change in her abilities accelerated and there was no way to stop the change, it had happened to others before. She hated the thought of giving up what had been her home for the last two hundred years, if she could be a healer of people here, she wouldn't have minded so much. Yes that was illogical but it was the way she felt.

The remote station in the middle of the wilderness had suited her temperament perfectly, even as a youngerling she had been awkward in social situations and the thought of interacting with a lot of strangers for the rest of her life frightened her. First school again, then later her permanent post at one of the medical centers on the fringe of the wilderness would mean meeting lots of strangers, sick and hurt unicorns who would need reassurance and she was no good at giving it.

The fact that she had the ability to heal did not mean she would automatically know what to say to people, Ar'isa made up her mind that she would have to pick someone who was good at doing that and study how it was done or maybe there would be lessons on how to talk, to reassure, how to help. One thing she did know was, that dropping her in the deep end by making her do the duty of "Guardian of the Meet" wasn't going to help

She would do her best, she knew that, she couldn't help it and anyway she did not really expect problems with soaking up the academic knowledge she would need. Maybe there would be lessons on how to stop people's emotions getting to her. She suddenly wondered if her problem had always been empathy and she had just never known how to deal with it. If it was that, it was possible that others had coped and learned to deal with it, and if they had, she could.

Ar'isa gathered up the last of her equipment and stowed it in the carriers, "Now don't forget, two in the mornings and two before you go to bed" she told Mekit who was still looking sorry for herself. As Ar'isa turned to leave Mekit's quarters, she added "and don't worry, it will heal cleanly and it won't leave a scar, so long as you take those anti-infection tablets, you hear me now" Mekit nodded.

Ar'isa stepped out into the open and crossed the clearing, before slipping on the harness and then dropping the carriers into the nets either side of her back. Then she moved into shape-shifter mode and retracted her arms and hands, she wouldn't need them until she reached her own quarters attached to the Healer Station, they were still a bit of a nuisance and she felt like a good run.

The need to use Shape-shifter mode so often, was the only thing that still bothered her and she knew she ought to practice more, but today she felt so good, happy and content, she didn't want to spoil her mood with the frustration of dealing with limbs that didn't rightly belong on a Unicorn, never mind that as a Healer she had to use them. She decided that after a meal she would pop over to the Guardian's quarters and check for messages. That chore she had been used to doing over the course of the three centuries before her abilities changed and she was glad that something of her old life would remain with her at least for a while.

She had been told when the council asked her to take double duty, that it would be a long time until she could be relieved and that she might as well treat the double duty as a permanent assignment. On the plus side, the Guardian-Healer Station that the humans know as Frenchbeer Rock was an out of the way, sort of place and she was unlikely to find herself needing assistance.

Ar'isa had not been able to believe her luck, she could not have asked for a better start to her new duties. After her stint as Guardian of the Meet during First Spring, the humans would say Easter 2002 and all the schooling that followed, she could handle social situations far better, but she still loved the isolation of the open moor and Frenchbeer Rock was not that far from the open spaces. Even better those open spaces were also part of her territory as both Healer and as Guardian