

Aira, the Truespeaker: Fire. Do you know about fire, my children? Why, I am certain you do, for some of you may have enjoyed a warm fire and a warm bed for quite the first time in a long while. As the fire of the sun rises majestically over the horizon it looks onto a peaceful village that, now, has become quite a bit richer for the presence of five young heroines that set out to brave this world and all its wonders!

Aira, the Truespeaker: This is their story, and like all stories, it begins with a dream.

Aira, the Truespeaker: Who do they see in their dream? Why, me, of course. "Greetings, travellers. I've seen your path, written in the stars. If you just keep on searching you will one day see the future that you desire. I'll be waiting eagerly to see it happen, and if I can I'll help you any way I can~ I must go now, but remember. I'll always protect you with everything I have. Time to wake up now, goodbye!". And with that, my image fades from the young girl's minds, as the sun begins to wipe away the veil of sleep to reveal the Waking World in all its glory.

Aira, the Truespeaker: The room is warm, filled with the smell of hay, wood polish and warm bodies, the bed squaking as the first of our heroes slowly begin to wake.

Yumi: "Urghbrlluwzzat?" Declares a lump in the blankets somewhere around Serena's thigh in a groggy tone, as its owner battles warmth and comfort to awaken while the image of that cute, weird nee-san remains in her mind.(edited)

Natsumi: A heavy groan comes out of a mass hiding its face in a pillow. "No you'll let the morning in"

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori throws out her hand, as if she was trying to grab something, or someone. Seconds later, she throws it back down and begins snoring again. She begins mumbling in her sleep and rolls on over to the right, pushing over Natsumi.

Natsumi: Lets loose a sudden BWAH followed by the tump of her landing on the cold hard evil merciless floor.

Kiri: Kiri slowly raises her head after feeling the bed shake. Giving a quick look around and seeing nothing through the still-present veil of sleepiness, she opts to drop back and curl up on the cozy spot she secured the previous evening.(edited)

Yamauchi-Iori: "Bwah?" Iori sits up, her messy bedhair visible to all, and looks around the room. "Oh... is it morning already?" She yawns and gives a stretch, and, after rubbing her eyes, looks around the room again. "... Eh?" She begins counting. One, two, three... 'Oh, right. I'm remembering everything now.' She thinks to herself.(edited)

Yumi: Yumi lets out a somewhat lower groan as she shifts around, squeezing the nice soft thing wrapped in her arms for comfort. A foot breaches the sanctity of the blankets up towards the head of the bed, the cooler air hitting her sole sends a shiver right up her body.

Natsumi: "Dun wanna work, lemme lone"

Serena: The mixture of the noise in the room and her leg being squeezed causes Serena to wake up, yawning as she starts rubbing her eyes to take a look around the room. "Mornin' huh, that was a good sl-..." she stops mid sentence as she realizes that she's somehow ended up sharing a bed with a bunch of other girls. "Jus' how much did I drink?"(edited)

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori lets out an irritated groan. She shifts herself off of the bed, carefully making sure to step over Natsumi. Slipping on her purple sweater and her white coat (she slept in a purple

undershirt, for those who really care about the details), she takes a look at the sleeping girls and contemplates for a short while. After much thought, it turns out... she can't abandon these girls. Well, it'd be rude to do so, anyway! Besides, all of these cute little girls! being called a nee-san! The thoughts of being an older sister figure to the rest of these girls only fill her with delight she yearned for! Living with a family full of boys and being the only woman besides her mother always made her wish she had a little sister to take care of.

Yumi: "M'arm's still 'sleep." Yumi informs the room as she noncommittally pulls herself away from her improvised pillow, trying to stretch her legs out without accidentally kicking anyone.(edited)

Yamauchi-Iori: The idea of taking care of little girls who call her nee-san fills her with all sorts of ideas. How will she take care of these girls? Perhaps breakfast is the first thing to take of. Maybe a bath too? Oh, maybe shopping? She has to dress up these girls, after all! And, and... well. Iori thinks for a moment. She does have to move out of this village soon, after all. After all is said and done, Iori does have to leave and continue to build up her merchant experience. The village does need her to bring in some money, after all. Iori, lost in thought, wonders how she'll break this to the girls. And, well... she supposes she'll bring this up when it's convenient to!

Kiri: Kiri squirms on the bed, feeling the remnants of the dream gradually recede and yet unwilling to let go. As the bed is freed bit by bit, she unconsciously attempts to find the place that has absorbed the most warmth over the night.

Natsumi: Natsumi uses the distraction of the woken devil to steal as many blankets as she can.

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori's gears continue to turn in her mind. How will she prepare breakfast for the girls? Should she wake them all up and announce she's getting breakfast? Should she say that, attempting to corral the rest of them with the allure of food? Should she buy breakfast before hand? "I don't even know what they like to begin with anyway..." There's so many ways to do this, and all of the options are really good in their own ways! What to do, what to do, Iori ponders! And as soon as she comes close to a conclusion... her stomach rumbles. Loudly.

Yumi: Yumi spends a moment in deep thought as she considers her current situation. Near blind in the dim light that penetrates the blanket her free hand reaches out, patting a toned leg, nice hip and flat tummy before settling into thought for a moment more. "Who'z'is anyhow?" she queries the owner of the body next to her.

Serena: Serena finishes making a mental list of the events that happened leading up to her sleeping in the bed when she starts being patted. "Why are 'ya touchin' me like that? If you're gonna be talkin' to someone than get out from under there first."

Yumi: "Jus' seein' if I recognized ya." Yumi replies as she begins the work of extricating her numb arm from under the dancer girl's leg and slowly massaging life back into it.

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori lets out a 'phew', glad that none of them seemed to notice her stomach rumbling extremely loudly. She takes another look at them, giving a smile as she heads out of the room, sliding to the bathroom to fix up her appearance real quick before heading down to the lobby. She might as well first check up on her pack mule. She left it overnight at the nearby barn, after all, asking a local family she's spoken for a while to look after it.

Kiri: After just barely avoiding rolling off the bed Kiri manages to settle on a nice spot and sense sleep once again encroaching upon her mind. Sadly, this is then interrupted by the sudden conversation beginning next to her and the odd muttering a distance. Feeling the cover of dreams finally lift, she is forced to acknowledge that morning has come and so has the need to get up. Rubbing her eyes, Kiri slowly sits up on her knees and finally gives the surroundings a proper look.

Immediately, her eyes fall upon Serena and the girl who was arguing with the inn keeper yesterday. After her brain takes a moment to process the situation, she finally asks: "What are you doing?"

Yumi: Emerging from below the blankets right into the questioning face of Kiri, Yumi frowns. Her response is a tad petulant as she continues to rub her right arm and shoulder and flex the fingers of her right hand, "Dunno, what are you doing?"

Serena: Looking down at the girl that emerged from the blankets, it takes Serena a few minutes before she manages to recognize her as the one she laughed at a bit last night. Shortly after the realization she turns to Kiri, thinking over her question, "What do you think we're doin'? It should be pretty obvious Ki... Ki... what was your name again?"(edited)

Kiri: She shakes her head for a few seconds, feeling the mist in her head mostly recede. Taking a second look, she feels understanding dawn upon her and stifles a little giggle. Stretching a bit, she shuffles on her knees to turn her body towards the two. Hearing that Serena already forgot her name gave her a moment's pause, but she quickly disregarded it as an alcoholic thing. "It's Kiri, Serena," she then looks at the other girl, "And nice to meet you too, um..."

Yumi: "Yumi!" the girl chirps, "Pleased ta meetcha." Her frown is instantly replaced with a happy smile as she looks between the two girls, obviously concentrating on committing their names to memory.

Yamauchi-Iori: After getting her pack mule and waving to all of the orphans she's known for the past couple of days, she ties it up on a post and walks inside the inn. Waving to the innkeeper, she walks up to the room where all the girls are. After a lengthy walk, a handful of greetings and still operating on an empty stomach, she's finally come to a conclusion! She's getting food. But first, she has to get the rest of the girls. Maybe there, it'd be convenient to announce something to them. "Oh giiiiirls!~" She announces as soon as she walks back in. "Are we awake now?"

Natsumi: Natsumi lets off a massive yawn. "I guess I am now Ms"

Serena: She nods to Kiri once she's been reminded, "Ah, Kiri. Got it, won't forget again." After that she turns to look at Yumi again, patting the girl on the head as she does, "Pleased to meet 'ya too Yumi. Ya know, that kinda feels like the kind of thing we shouldn't be saying right after wakin' up." Serena: As Iori comes back into the room Serena waves her hand that isn't patting Yumi's head her way, "Looks like we're all awake, can't say how awake for some, though."

Yumi: Yumi grins in response to both Serena's comment and her petting. The girl's head snaps around to the doorway as Iori announces her return, directing a beaming smile in that direction too. "Mornin' nee-chan!" she calls happily.

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori begins giggling to herself. She clears her throat, however, getting straight to business. "So! Who's ready for breakfast?"

Natsumi: "mhmhmhmhm" Natsumi begins shuffling out of the room and away from the wonderful bed.

Yumi: Yumi's hand shoots straight into the air, now fully awake and bouncing with energy at the mention of food.

Kiri: She smiles back at the girl named Yumi. If nothing else, she seems like a genuinely nice girl. After she bolts towards Iori, Kiri looks around in search of the source of a familiar voice and after

moving around the edge of the bed discovers Natsumi getting up from the floor. Frowning, she looks over the girl with a bit of concern before carefully stepping down from the bed: "Did you fall down while sleeping? Did you hurt yourself?"

Yamauchi-Iori: "She seems fine to me. Anyway, what do you all want? I was just going to get waffles. The orphans seemed to be having them today!"

Natsumi: "mmm 'm alright Ms (I forgot Kiri's last name). No need to worry about me"

Serena: Serena nods to Iori at the mention of food, "Yeah, sure. Sounds good. May as well eat since I'm awake already."

Kiri: She looks at the girl, wondering she got off without a bruise after falling off like that, but finally nods before turning to Iori.

"Yeah, I'd love to have some waffles right now."

Aira, the Truespeaker: "I... You said HOW many waffles?" The Innkeep seems at once perplexed and pleased at hearing Yamauchi-san's order.

Yamauchi-Iori: "That many waffles." This commences to a lot of trade talk because I sure do love my Trader skill!

Natsumi: Natsumi lets loose another massive yawn. "So who are you two anyway?"

Yumi: "Me? I'm Yumi! Best hunter on this side of the mountain! Who're you?"(edited)

Aira, the Truespeaker: "Coming right up!" The Innkeep vanishes into the kitchen and soon (frighteningly soon, does he have goblins in there?) appears with a tablet bearing five heaped with waffles alongside goat cheese, acorn syrup, butter, honey and roasted bread.

Natsumi: "Natsumi a farmer girl from down south. It's nice to meet you Yumi." Natsumi begins to devour her food.

Yumi: Yumi's eyes positively sparkle as she sees the platter of food appear.

Natsumi: "his is really good" Natsumi points out with a mouth full of food.

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori begins to eat in a voracious manner. This is normal; she is from a mountain. Then, a light bulb sparks in her head. As she stands, trying to talk, she sits back down, grabs a nearby cup of water, and downs it immediately. "Ah! Anyway!" She clears her throat. "Girls, I have something to announce." She waits until she gets everyone's undivided attention. "Both Natsumi and the tiny girl have seen, but I am to depart from the town today. As a traveling merchant, especially one with a goal, it'd be unproductive to stay here for a living. So, alas..." She pauses her speech, to look at everyone's reactions first.

Natsumi: "I need a bath" Natsumi grumbles "Its been like a week"

Kiri: Kiri smiles at the sight of breakfast and promptly digs in, savoring the taste and appreciating the incredible spice called "hunger". It's only when Iori speaks that she stops, throwing the girl a questioning work.

Yumi: Yumi follows the other girls' lead, devouring her breakfast as if it might be snatched away at any moment. She pauses only when Iori starts speaking, listening to her words attentively. "So

we're leaving? Today?" Yumi thinks for a moment, somehow managing to entirely miss the assumption she's just made. "Where we going then?"

Serena: Serena stops silently eating her food when Iori makes her announcement and looks to her, fairly certain that she can guess what's about to be said.

Yamauchi-Iori: "Well, I was going to ask if any of you wanted to join! You know, because I didn't want to leave any of you behind." She presses her fingers together, looking away as she purses her lips together. "The image of you all heartbroken would make my hair instantly go white with grief!" She makes a dramatic pose along with that saying! "Anyway, the one with the cute hat is coming with me. Who else is going?"

Natsumi: "Well it's not like I've had any direction in my travelling until now." Natsumi gives a small shrug. "I'll tag along you've been nice to me so far"

Serena: "I was gonna be leavin' here in a few days anyways, only stayed as long as I did because the cold is terrible and the drinks are pretty good, even if they cause weird dreams. May as well join 'ya for a while at least."

Kiri: Kiri was starting to get a nagging suspicion that Iori had an ulterior motive, "Well.."
At the same time, she seemed nice and responsible enough that some things could probably be overlooked, "Sure, I'll tag along. I came this far because I wanted to explore places I've never been to before anyway."

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori claps her hands together. "Great! First things first," she says, pulling out a measuring tape, and... several other measuring tools. "It's gonna be cold out there, so if you don't mind, I'm going to need all of your height, weight, three sizes, head circumference, foot size, and favorite colors! We have to get shopping, after all!"

Yamauchi-Iori: "Or, well, if you want to all go to the public bath, that's cool too! I'll just be out shopping!"

Natsumi: "I really need a bath Ms Yamauchi. Is there a nice place in this town?" Natsumi nods her head "I couldn't tell you my sizes though but I like dark blues with a splash of red or orange."

Aira, the Truespeaker: The innkeep leans in, having just appeared out of nowhere. "We got a decent bath house here if a bucket don't strike your fancy. Got that old lightening power too". He jerks his thumb to one of the glowing bubbles hanging from the ceiling that augment the somewhat subdued daylight at this level of the house.

Natsumi: "You have hot water?" The drowsiness falls from Natsumi's face.

Kiri: Kiri, having begun eating once more, almost choked at the sight of all the tools Iori took out. She didn't want to just let someone pick out her clothes for her, but for some reason she felt that going with Iori would put her pride and self-respect at risk.

Natsumi: "Are you alright Kiri?"

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori looks around, waiting to see who wants to offer first. Upon putting her eye on Kiri, she is suddenly reminded of something. "Oh! Right!" She winks at her. "Don't worry, I won't forget what you wanted to get! Though, uhh... you never told me what kind you wanted."

Serena: "Yeah, no. Not letting 'ya put those tools anywhere near me, agreeing to requests like that never go well. Just take Kiri, if somethin' works for her it probably works for me. I'll take red."

Aira, the Truespeaker: "Quite hot, if I do say so myself".

Natsumi: "hhhhhhhaaaa I'm excited already" Finishing her food natsumi hops up "Lets get the measuring over with I have a bath to take"

Kiri: Taking a deep breath, she gives Natsumi a sign that she's fine before turning to Iori, "Oh.. I'd like a few herbs and a herb bottle. I lost the one I had while in the mountains. As for clothes colors, I prefer cream, orange and pink."

It takes a second before she registers Serena's words and nearly jumps at the girl in panic: "Wait, why me!? I don't want to do it either!"

Aira, the Truespeaker: He looks at her skeptically "Well. That's quite the excitement over water". He chuckles.

Natsumi: "Well I can't do it for either of you two" Natsumi grins at the inn keeper "It's the simple things that matter the most when you go without for a while"

Aira, the Truespeaker: He nods, and begins to turn. Then halts, and turns back. "Speaking of which... Yamauchi-san, we're almost out of dried elderberries, pepper and koriander. Could you try and get those for me? You know, because we've made such good business before".

Natsumi: "Anyway I'll head out on ahead if you lot want to keep eating" She walks over to Iori and spreads her arms. "Ms Yamauchi you wanted to take measurements?"

Yamauchi-Iori: "Eh? Already?" Iori asks, awestruck. "Well, I suppose I can't object. They aren't too far to gather from the village, are they?"

Serena: "It sounded like 'ya had somethin' to do with her anyways, so why not do that," Serena starts to grin as she continues to speak, "not like anything could go wrong durin' it anyways, right? Just a small bit of measurin' and you'll have all new clothes, right?"

Kiri: Kiri frowns. Right, she felt the need to preserve her dignity at any cost: "If that's what you really think, then why did you refuse to do it yourself?"(edited)

Aira, the Truespeaker: He sighs, sourly. "The first, you should get over in Rheinhaven. It's about a day's travel or so. The old coot I bought from last time scammed out halfway outta my livelihood last time, but you should have more luck. The latter two I don't expect you to get too quickly. Anything within a month is fine".

Natsumi: "Why don't I just take one of you with me so there's no issue?" Natsumi points out with a sly smile.

Yamauchi-Iori: "Alright then. Leave it to me, old man! I got a keen eye, ya know."

Serena: "Can't, 'ya see, I have a rule about not agreeing to shady requests that people are far too prepared for. Can't just be going off agreeing 'ta whatever after all. 'Ya seem to trust her though, so like I said, what's the worst that could happen?"

Natsumi: "Look I'll just take the one who doesn't get measured that way you can both be

embarrassed"

Yamauchi-Iori: "Anyway, excuse me," she turns around to the rest of the girls. "Who wanted to go first?"

Natsumi: Natsumi looks at you like you're kind of stupid

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori raises a brow. "What?"

Natsumi: Flaps her arms a bit

Kiri: Kiri rapidly shakes her head at Serena and Natsumi: "Oh no-no-no, I'm not playing by those rules. I have some dignity, you know!"

Yamauchi-Iori: "Oh! Whoops, hehe." She sticks her tongue out and taps her head. "Anyway, hold still." She commences the measuring. This doesn't take too long, though she can be quite tight when it comes to completely wrapping the tape around. She's got to be precise, after all!

Natsumi: "It's fiiiiine Kiri, we're all girls here no-one is going to judge"

Natsumi: "You can't tell me you've never had a bath with someone before"

Yamauchi-Iori: "Yeah, it's not like you have much to hide anyway!" She takes a look at Kiri, eyes going up and down. "It'll be fun!" She finishes up writing the measurements. "Next!"

Natsumi: "Time for you two to choose"

Kiri: "But I haven't!" Kiri looks down, shaking like a leaf in the wind. Suddenly, she turns to Serena, a resolution visible in her eyes.

"If I can't escape, I'll make sure take to drag you down too."(edited)

Serena: "Hey hey, that's not very nice, I'm not goin' anywhere near those tools. I'd sooner choose the bath, I'd really rather just have a drink though, sounds like this might be a long morning."

Natsumi: "No drinking before a bath. It's a health risk"

Yamauchi-Iori: After Iori finishes up measuring everyone (or whoever she can measure), she leaves the rest of the group 2 gold pieces to go inside of the public bath. "Alright!" She announces. "So, who's not going to the bath, or doesn't want to right now?"

Yumi: Yumi shakes her head at the silly arguments, "I'm gonna help Iori-nee carry her shopping." she announces definitively.

Natsumi: "Come on Kiri-chan" Natsumi grabs her hand and starts walking.

Kiri: Kiri shrieks as she's dragged away, desperately trying to grab onto Serena so as to share the dark fate that awaits her.

Natsumi: "Now now you've been traveling just like me." Natsumi picks the small girl up. "We both need a bath"

Serena: Serena makes sure to avoid being dragged along as she waves to Kiri as she's being dragged off, "Have fun in the bath. Don't worry, you'll probably end up fine, I've been in that situation once or twice."

Natsumi: As Natsumi walks toward the bath house carrying Kiri "So you've really never used a public bath before?"

Aira, the Truespeaker: "Oh, you're here for our FAMOUS mountain bathwater?" The attendant at the blue-and-green tiled house is a surprisingly diminutive blonde with low-tied hair and sapphire coloured eyes. "Why, you've come to JUST the place!"

Natsumi: "It sounds wonderful!" Natsumi hands over 4 gold "Just for me and my friend for now but the rest of our group may show up later"

Kiri: Kiri spends a few moments struggling with all her might, but finally relents and just crosses her arms over her chest with a displeased look: "No I didn't. So what?"(edited)

Aira, the Truespeaker: "They're not sleeping in, are they?" She pockets the money and hands over a small ring of keys glinting in the early morning sun. "I've allowed myself to give you shared wardrobes for your belongings. This one" she holds up a larger key "opens one of the smaller side baths, I hope that's okay?"

Natsumi: "Thank you very much" Natsumi bows and starts moving into the changing room "Wow I mean wow, could you afford your own abth then? That's amazing Kiri"

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori looks over to Yumi. "Well, looks like we're gonna be busy for a bit, little one! Ah, I didn't catch your favorite color, by the way..."

Kiri: "Is it really that impressive? I guess my family might have been a bit more well-off than most, but a bath shouldn't be all that incredible, right?"(edited)

Yumi: Yumi thinks it over. "I um... I guess I like yellow?" she say, a little unsure of herself.

Natsumi: "I mean just everyone used the public bath where I'm from" Natsumi put Kiri down and starts undressing "Right I'll have to teach you then. First things first lose the clothes"

Yamauchi-Iori: "Got a favorite animal?" She begins walking through the village, looking for the various shops she's glanced through every now and again.

Kiri: Kiri fidgets on the spot, unwilling to just get undressed when someone else is around. Sadly, she knew she'd have get used to it if she wanted to keep traveling. Just staying dirty was out of the question. Finally, she composes herself and starts taking off her clothes while checking for any rips or tears she might have gotten during the trip through the mountains.

Natsumi: "Now public bathing is a simple three step process. First you clean yourself at one of the sinks, Then you rinse all the soap and dirt off, Then the best bit is you soak in the actual bath."

Yumi: "Hmmm..." Yumi mulls over the question as she follows on Iori's heels, "I like watching the birds," she says, eventually, "I bet flying is super fun."

Yamauchi-Iori: "It probably is! I've been living up near the sky for most of my life, though. Don't know how new and exciting it'd be..." She stops right in front of the first shop, which sells clothing. "Ah, what am I saying? I bet it'd be great! Just imagine how much more quickly we can get to places! Feeling the wind in your hair is always a good feeling!"

Kiri: Ignoring the embarrassment gradually heating up her face, Kiri goes through with Natsumi's instructions, going to one of the sinks and fumbling a bit before grabbing the soap and starting to wash herself.

Natsumi: Natsumi starts scrubbing away at all the grime and muck "So why did you start your journey Kiri?"

Aira, the Truespeaker: "What may I do for you, Misses?" The store owner is a dignified -and really cute in a rugged sort of way if I do say so myself- mustached man in his late 20s wearing a baggy vest and matching pants, his grey-green eyes looking quite a bit older than the rest of him.

Kiri: Kiri abruptly freezes, taking her attention off the dirt around her ankles to glance at Natsumi expressionlessly. The time passes and she goes back to scraping off the black spots. before speaking: "Well... I just felt like I should see the world before settling down to become a herbalist like my grandfather. It's also a good way to learn of various new herbs that grow in faraway lands as well as the uses they might have."

Kiri: "What about you?"

Natsumi: "That's pretty amazing Kiri" while flashing a huge grin at the smaller girl. "I just wanted to see if there was something other than growing rice in mud for the rest fo my life" Natsumi finishes rinsing herself off and jump up. "Right now for the best part!"

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori begins talking with the man, asking him various questions such as wondering if they have capes and hats at various colors. (Trader!)

Yamauchi-Iori: She offers some of the warm capes and woolen hats to Yumi, even prompting her to put them on if she wants to, and puts the rest inside of the chest on the pack mule. She begins heading towards the camping shop to buy even more things! (More Trader stuff!)

Kiri: With the washing done, she finally rinses all the soap off her body and follows after Natsumi.
Aira, the Truespeaker: The camping shop is... shady, but the proprietor seems friendly enough after Iori applies some of that charm of hers.

Natsumi: "Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa" Natsumi lets out a massive sigh as she sinks into the beautiful hot water "This is so amazing"

Yamauchi-Iori: After waving the shopkeeper farewell, she then finally goes over to whomever is selling the local healing herbs of the area.

Kiri: Kiri also settles down, soaking in the water and letting herself relax. For an idle moment, she wonders if she'll just end up falling asleep again.

Aira, the Truespeaker: The basin is surprisingly huge for something dubbed only a 'side' bath, the tiled floor a nice cream colour with mosaics on the wall and ceiling depicting various scenes in the surrounding hills and forests such as a hunt, the gathering of wild herbs and majestic stags fighting during mating season. The sole exception is the wall they just stepped through, showing what looks like square wagons of green metal spewing fire at odd flying metal demons, the charred fields before them crisscrossed with deep chasms and littered with bodies. It's definitely not a nice picture.

Natsumi: "Did you used to be sick a lot Kiri?" Looks over and asks "I-I'm not trying to rude or anything you're just so small and thin for your age"

Aira, the Truespeaker: It takes a while to track down the herb store, probably because it looks more like a rickety shack than a shop at all. Eventually however it becomes clear that running past it three times in a row won't change matters. The inside is quite clean if STUFFED, the somewhat sleepy looking lady quite happy to have someone to talk.

Yamauchi-Iori: Finishing up her purchase and saying that she'll come back sooner or later (it's most certainly a fact, hopefully), she puts the herbs stuffed in the healing bottle inside of her backpack. "Alright, we're done shopping! Do you think you need anything else, Yumi?"

Kiri: Not giving Natsumi an immediate reply, Kiri instead moves around the bath, trying to get as close as she can to look at the pictures as she can. She pays a special amount of attention to the wall with the metal wagons and dragons. In a way, they reminded her of the tales her grandfather used to tell. Finally, she sinks deeper, mumbling something about being of normal height and build before raising her head and speaking up: "It's just a family thing. We're all not too tall and I just spent a lot more time studying than playing around as a kid. That's all."(edited)

Yumi: "Can't think of anything Iori-nee," she glances down at the purchases she's been trusted to carry, "Do you really need all this for travelling? I thought it was just, you know, going places"

Natsumi: "I guess that makes sense. Everyone in my family are like me as well" Natsumi looks around a bit "So this turned out better than you thought it would right?"

Yamauchi-Iori: Iori clicks her tongue three times. "Of course we need it all! You can never be too safe or too prepared when traveling. Especially for someone like me." She hopes that she doesn't sprain her ankle several times going to the towns. This source of embarrassment... it must be well hidden!

Kiri: Kiri keeps examining the walls, wondering if the herbs, hills and trees were drawn accurately or just given a general appearance. Once the path brings her back closer to Natsumi, she finally stops and nods as she goes back to relaxing in the hot water.(edited)

Natsumi: "You're weird Kiri" Natsumi gives her a big smile "I'm glad you're my friend"

Kiri: Looking at that radiant smile, she can't help but feel like sinking through the floor. Instead, she opts to sink underwater.

Aira, the Truespeaker: Natsumi feels a slight stirring in the air, accompanied with tiny footfalls coming closer. A smell like freshly fallen oak leaves fills the air as the 'presence' of something tickles at the back of her mind. Truly this is a time of mystery so let us support our heroes on their path!