

# Future Life Interesting

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*Kagome and Inuyasha has another fight and Kagome goes back to her time and goes to sleep. She wakes up and suddenly finds herself in her future life "Whats going on"*

*I nope the summary stinks but the story doesnt*

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## 1 - chap 1

“Stupid, stupid, stupid,” Kagome scolded herself, climbing into bed. “Why do you let him get under your skin like this? Why do you even listen?” Images of a certain scowling hanyou flashed across her thoughts like skittish animals. “He just likes to argue.” He hadn’t meant to hurt her feelings---it was just his nature to say infuriating things. She knew, from recounts from Sango and Shippo that when she went home Inuyasha almost always sulked for days after, and felt very guilty about whatever his newest insult had been. She knew he cared about her.....why couldn’t he just act like it?

The most recent argument had taken place that afternoon over something or another, spawning, of course, from Kagome’s announcement of departure.

\*\*\*FLASHBACK\*\*\*

“What do you mean ‘going home,’ wench?”

Kagome’s eyes flashed dangerously. “What do you think, Inuyasha? Or can you not even figure that out, being the incredible baka that you are?” Inuyasha fumed silently, searching for a fitting reply. “Well, here, puppy, let me help you puzzle it out. I’m going home for a few days, and then I’m coming back! There’s no simpler way to explain it to you!”

“Stupid! That wasn’t what I—you—you’re not going anywhere! This quest is way more important than all that homework nonsense!”

“Nonsense? It’s pretty important to me! If I don’t complete my stupid education, then what am I going to do after all this is finished?” The halfing had no answer to that. “Exactly! I’ll see you later!” She walked towards the bone-eater’s well with angry, piercing footsteps. From the sidelines, Sango, Miroku, and Shippo watched with mild interest. They had seen it all before.

“It’s amazing he hasn’t gotten sat yet,” Shippo observed to the others. “The way he’s provoking Kagome like that.”

“Ah. But she won’t take it much longer,” Miroku answered knowingly.

“Betcha he gets it before she leaves,” Sango said uninterestedly.

“You’re on,” Miroku and Shippo answered together, watching the scene again.

Inuyasha jumped in the schoolgirl’s path. “Hey! Didn’t you hear what I said?”

“I heard it,” Kagome answered coolly, in warning. “I’d move if I were you?”

“Or what?” Asked a very arrogant hanyou, without thinking. Immediately he regretted it.

“SIT, BOY!”

Crash! Inuyasha’s face met his familiar companion, the ground, in a poof of silt. By the time it all cleared, Kagome had disappeared through the well, and Miroku and Shippo were handing Sango two coins each.

\*\*\*END FLASHBACK\*\*\*

“The nerve,” Kagome muttered, switching out the light. She would go home the next day after her test, and everything would be back to normal. “Sixty- seven years old and he STILL hasn’t learned how to treat people.” Yet there was no longer any malice behind the words, only drowsiness. Her eyes closed, and she fell into a deep sleep.

BEEP! BEEP! The alarm clock’s shrill cry roused Kagome unkindly. ‘Umph.....7:00 already?’ She glanced with one bleary eye to the clock’s flashing green numbers, which read 6:02. ‘Why’d my clock go off so early? I know I set it for seven.’ She reached over and hit the sleep button, turning over into the mattress---

And then something grabbed her.

An arm snaked easily around her waist. “Morning,” came a sleepy greeting in her ear. Someone’s warm breath was tickling her ear. Kagome’s heart was pounding and her entire body had gone stiff and unresponsive; a single thought was fluttering through her head. ‘THERE’S SOMEONE IN MY BED!’ She was afraid to turn and see who it was, but she was spared the trouble. A chin came and rested on her shoulder warmly, still blowing tepid air on her face. “What’s wrong?” the person inquired. “What’re you all nervous for?” Kagome felt her neck being nuzzled gently and shuddered. ‘There is someone in my bed! Okay, better do this quick---’ She reached over slowly, grasped the lamp, and smashed him in the head with all her might.

There was a silence as Kagome was sure the man had been knocked unconscious- --and then he reached up and touched his head, staring at her blankly. “What was that for?” he asked, sounding bewildered. The voice was familiar, but in the dimness, she couldn’t see anything. How could he be so unfazed by such a heavy blow? Kagome backed away as the man leaned forward, and fell backwards off of the bed. Pain seared through her back and legs as she scuttled backwards desperately, trying to escape the stranger in her bed. She turned, jumped to her feet and dash towards the door, her hands stretching out for the knob---

But she didn’t make it out. The figure, in a way reminiscent of a grasshopper, (and a certain other something that Kagome failed to remember at the moment) leapt out of the covers and landed, from above, before the frightened girl. She yelped and tried to evade him, but quickly found herself enveloped tightly in some very strong arms. “Let me go,” she cried, squirming insistently. “Who are you? Creep! Let me go!”

“Oi! What’s wrong with you?” The voice was so familiar, and suddenly Kagome made the connection. A flood of a million moments came back to her. The words ‘Wench’ and ‘baka’ echoed most loudly---and suddenly she went limp. The man caught her with a muffled exclamation, staggering backwards.

"Inuyasha?" Kagome asked shakily, proving that she was indeed still awake.

"Yeah? Kagome, what---"

"Not what," the girl panted, shaking. "Where are we?"

"Where are---at our house. As always. What's going on?"

"I don't know what I'm doing here," she answered quietly. "I don't know where here is." There was an uneasy silence. At last, Inuyasha walked back to the bed, laid Kagome down, and pulled the covers up to her shoulders.

"You're sick," he said worriedly, kneeling by the bedside. "You're confused. Go back to sleep. You're not going to work today." Kagome was about to protest that she didn't know where \*work\* was either, but Inuyasha put a finger to her lips. "I'll stay home with you. I'm going to go get the kids up, and then I'll bring you some soup. Stay in bed." With that he turned and walked out of the room, shutting the door behind him.

## 2 - chap 2

Kagome stared numbly at a wall. The sun had risen, finally, and a few golden rays were creeping through the windowsill, casting odd shapes about the room. And as to the room---she knew it. It was her mother's. Why was she in her mother's room? And as a more pressing question, why had Inuyasha been in there WITH her? She shuddered again in disbelief or something like it, thinking only one thing.

'Gods above, I HAVE gone crazy.'

She shifted in the covers, turning and alternating sides and angles and positions just for the sheer sake of it. There really was no way to get comfortable when such odd questions refused to leave her alone. What in the world had happened to her? She had lain down in her bed, in a world that made sense---and woke up in her mother's in a world where down was up and north was south. If a pig had flown by her window, Kagome wouldn't have been entirely surprised. As she was pondering this, a light knock sounded on the door. "Come in," Kagome called automatically. She half expected Souta to walk in and tell her to get ready for school, but that was not what happened.

Instead, there was a pause. Two children walked into the bedroom shyly. One---the younger---was a silver-haired, blue-eyed girl. She looked over worriedly with wide eyes and a sort of childish innocence that didn't seem to belong with the features she had inherited. The other was a boy. Maybe two or three years older than his sister, he looked about eight. His hair was short and black like Souta's, but his eyes were a vibrant, intense indigo. He had the quality of a wayward sort of person, but his eyes shone with concern. "Morning, Okaasan," he said quietly, standing by the bed. "Tousan says you're not feeling well."

"Not feeling well?" Echoed the little girl sorrowfully from his elbow.

"Uhhh.....no," answered Kagome, flopping onto the bed with abandon.

"Poor Okaasan," The girl said in a low voice, locking her small arms loosely about Kagome's neck. "Gomen."

"It's okay," Kagome replied slowly, awkwardly patting the child. 'Who are these kids? Why are they calling me.....' An abrupt realization smacked her in the face. Inuyasha had been in the same room as she was, and he had called it 'their house'. 'Mother. They're calling me mother because.....' She felt a little faint, glancing at her hand. There was a wedding band on her right ring finger. 'Oh my.'

"Okaasan?" She looked up into the indigo pools again. Her \*son\* was leaning over her, his hands resting lightly on the sheets. "Are you alright?"

"Uh.....huh." Kagome nodded, forcing a smile. "Fine."

"C'mon, Saeko-chan. We'd better go." The boy stepped forward and pulled his sister back a half step. "Sayonara, Okaasan. Feel better."

“Feel better, Okaasan,” the little girl mimicked as her brother pulled her from the room, closing the door as Inuyasha had.

“Right,” Kagome muttered, looking at the ceiling. She could hear the front door shut as the two children left for school, and could hear their retreating voices. Birds were singing outside the window, which was now full of a bright golden light. Probably around seven or so—but she didn’t feel like looking at the clock. The rest of the room—and indeed, her own thoughts were enough to keep her from worrying over something so trivial as time.

Time.

Had the word itself become her enemy? It seemed that way, as the thing was calling her its prisoner. She was stuck lord-knows how many years in the future with no way home and a husband who was sure she was either delusional or nuts. The situation wasn’t exactly looking up, and with so many issues.....her head hurt. There was still the matter of where she was in her time, if she was here—but there was no point in pondering that, as she couldn’t do anything about it.

She’d just have to sort of.....wait it out and see what happened. Until then, playing along would probably be best as not to make her family think her completely crazy. Being placed in an asylum wouldn’t help anything.

Tap, tap. Someone was outside the door again, and there was only one possibility of who it could be. “Come in,” Kagome said, settling under the covers as if she’d never moved. At her words the door swung open a potion and Inuyasha walked in, balancing a tray in one hand. With the other he closed the door and moved to sit on the side of the bed with the tray in his lap.

“Okay,” he said, looking down. He pulled a thermometer from his pocket and stuck it into her mouth.

“Mmph?” Kagome asked in surprise. Inuyasha was acting like her mother.

“Just wait a minute,” he answered impatiently. Ah. That was the hanyou she knew. She managed an amused smile as the thermometer beeped. Inuyasha removed it and brought it before his eyes. “100.4. See, I wasn’t being paranoid.” His eyes showed worry and also relief. ‘At least she had a reason for acting that way before.....I was worried for a minute, but.....’ He smiled softly. “And I was right. You’re going to eat your soup and go back to sleep.”

Kagome watched him. “But I’m not sick—”

“Oh yes you are,” Inuyasha said stubbornly, handing her the thermometer. “See?”

“The thermometer must be off,” she said carefully. “I feel fine.” It almost worked. Her voice was so confident; Inuyasha might’ve almost believed her. He let her think he had long enough for her to clamber out of bed and take a step or two away before grasping her arm and pulling her backwards gently. He caught her in both arms with a grin.

“Nice try,” he said, setting his forehead against hers and looking her in the eyes. “You’re burning up,

baka.”

“Am not,” Kagome muttered as she found herself back under the covers. “I’m only two degrees above normal! I’m \*fine\*.”

“Yeah, yeah, uh-huh,” Inuyasha answered playfully, picking up the spoon. “Are you ready for breakfast?”

“I’m not hungry.” The hanyou’s expression became instantly serious.

“Really? Does anything hurt?”

“No,” she answered with annoyance, pushing away the hand that came to inspect. “I didn’t mean it like that. I’m just not hungry.” The hanyou looked her over for a few silent moments. “Look, there’s no reason for me to stay in bed all day—”

“Oh no you don’t. You’re staying in bed, and that’s final.”

Silence.

“Why do I feel like I’m talking to a pigeon?”

Inuyasha smiled. “Because that’s about how smart I am?”

Kagome blinked, then smiled back. “You know, that might be it. Or else.....have you ever considered being a mother? I think you’d be good at it.”

“You’ve got that role pretty well covered,” he answered, nuzzling her lovingly. “Go to sleep, dearest.” He took the tray and set it on the dresser. “Call me if you need anything.” He left the room again, closing it quietly.

### 3 - chap 3

Inuyasha returned to the room once every hour and glanced into the room. The second time he peeked through the door, Kagome didn't look up. He listened for her breathing for a moment. It was slow and even and deep, as it could only be in rest. He crept into the room with a washcloth in hand and knelt by the bedside. Kagome was sleeping, surely enough, but she was mumbling and tossing. Normally, her sleep was peaceful and restful (Inuyasha watched her slumber enough to be an expert on her habits.) Her face was distressed and covered in a fine sheen of sweat. Leaning forward, he dried her face with his sleeve, trying to catch the murmurings.

"Mmh.....don't.....stop it....."

Inuyasha laid his ear by her face.

"Please.....run....."

The hanyou's ears perked.

"Before.....it....."

She wasn't making any sense. What was all this about? A nightmare? Kagome hardly ever had nightmares.

"NOOOOOOOO!!!!" The sudden yelp scared Inuyasha senseless, not to mention made his ears pound. Kagome at bolt upright in bed, clutching the bed sheets desperately with white-knuckled palms. Inuyasha rubbed his head painfully, watching her expression. Her eyes were bleary and blank as she looked into his. After a moment they sparkled with a certain relief. "Oh.....it's you, Inuyasha....."

"Yeah.....what was all that about?" He looked down in surprise as Kagome wrapped her arms around his neck. "Kagome?"

"You're not mad at me anymore, are you?" She asked in a small voice. There was a moment of silence as Kagome clung to a certain hanyou and that hanyou wondered if his wife had gone crazy.

"What in the world are you talking about?"

The girl shifted uncomfortably for a moment or two, looking closely at the fabric of his shirt. The haori was missing, though. She missed its deep red already. But he couldn't wear that and expect to blend in with normal people, she rationalized. Why did she feel so cold? She shivered, and felt a hand come up to her back, reminding her that Inuyasha still expected her to answer.

"L-last time I l-left.....I s-sat you.....I th-though you'd be m-mad." Why were her teeth chattering so badly? Her temperature had only been a hundred!



Inuyasha watched the top of her head for a while, and noticed the shivering. He put the small body back onto the bed and pulled the warm covers up again. "You're not thinking straight," he said firmly. "It was just a dream. Go back to sleep, Kagome. Call me if—" He stopped, feeling a sweaty palm on his wrist.

"Don't leave," she pleaded weakly. "Please."

Inuyasha hesitated. Her face was so tired and so sad.....why? He couldn't understand it, other than it might've been a dream. She was delusional, and undoubtedly more feverish than before. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes cloudy; the small hand that still held his was clammy and trembling hard. He felt a rush of pity and worry, but said nothing. Nothing needed to be said. His expression softened and he crawled onto the bed, lying down beside her. Kagome felt an arm slip slowly around her waist and smiled vaguely, laying her head back on the pillow and nestling deep into the nest of blankets.

"Thank you," came the small and sleepy voice.

"You're welcome," Inuyasha replied into her ear. She relaxed and was soon asleep, her breathing slow and even again. The hanyou leaned forward slowly as not to rock the bed and nuzzled his face against hers. There was too much warmth there to be normal, and that worried him. But she was sleeping, and that would help. With a nearly silent sigh, he allowed his eyes to close as sleep came mercifully to him.

Kagome woke a few hours later in a sort of daze. The digital clock on the bed table read 2:10 in its flashing impatient numerals, demanding that she get up. When was the last time she had lain in bed so late? Probably as a little kid. What with shard hunting and schoolwork, she hadn't had a chance to really relax in a long, long, time. It felt nice to be in bed during the day, but also not. She wanted to get up.

But there was Inuyasha to reckon with. Of he woke up, he would force her back into bed. So carefully and painfully slow, she eased over and draped her arms over the side of the bed. With their support, she managed to pull one leg over, and then the other, until she was crouched steadily by the bed. She began the crab-walk feeling slightly foolish and slipped through the crack in the door, not daring to sigh in relief until she was safely downstairs! 'Maybe Inuyasha's senses aren't what they used to be,' she thought mischievously, walking to the open window and climbing out.

The sun warmed her face with a friendly caress, and a gentle breeze wafted through her hair, almost like an apology. She smiled and walked about the familiar place, liking the familiar feel of stone beneath her feet. The shrine was a few feet away, still looking regal and important. A few feet away, crouched as if put to shame, was the well house, which indeed still looked run-down and forgotten. An unconscious smile graced Kagome's lips as she thought about what would always lay beyond that well.

What had become of all her friends? Sango, Miroku, Shippo, and Kirara had so far not been mentioned. She thought, with a stab of panic, that maybe they had died? No, no, that wasn't right. They were probably still in the Feudal Era.

'Wonder if the well still works,' came the curious thought. Kagome smiled and made her way to the well house, thinking that she might make the trip for once without her oversized backpack. 'Only one way to find out.....'

## 4 - chap 4

FWOOF! Kagome found herself in the familiar dry well. She could hear village children playing in the distance, and farmers in the nearby fields. There was the chitter-chatter of housewives and the scraping of brooms against wooden floors. But in the forest was the sound of nature that she loved so—the innocent silence, the tranquility, and all else her world lacked. A blatant smile spread across her face as she climbed the ladder and pulled herself over the lip of the well, wandering into the village curiously.

As she walked over the village boundaries, there were several shouts of “She’s back!” and “You’ve returned!” A youngster or two even walked up and hugged her knees before going off with his mother. She had to admit, nothing had really changed. There were four or five new houses built, but that was about it. The trees had grown a bit closer to the village and the grass had grown taller.

“Kagome-sama!”

Kagome turned at once, expecting to see the only person that had ever called her by such a formal name. But she met eye-to-eye with an older villager. He grinned at her with a mouth absent of several teeth. It was definitely not Miroku.

“It is good that you have finally returned to us! It’s been so long.”

The old man reached forward and touched her hand softly, respectfully.

“But where is Inuyasha?”

Kagome brightened. There was something she could answer.

“Oh, he’s just.....resting. I’m sure he’ll be by later.” Come to think of it, he probably would—yelling at her for leaving. Kagome realized with a feeling of stupidity that she hadn’t told him where she was going. Oh well.....it was too late to fix it, anyway, so..... “Don’t worry about it. Please tell me, do you know where Sango and Miroku are?” The old man cocked his head to one side.

“Sango-sama and Houshi-sama? They’re still at their home.” Kagome gave him a blank look. “Do you have business there?”

“Sort of,” she answered with a smile. “But I can’t remember where it is.....”

“Oh! Don’t worry about a thing! You there!” One village boy looked up from his game and came over, puzzled.

“Yes, jiisan?”

“Kagome-sama needs an escort to Houshi-sama’s home.”

The boy's face went from puzzled to delighted. "Sure, I'll help!"

"Wonderful. Miss!"

A young woman came over at the old man's call.

"Yes, jiisan?"

"Could you please fetch a bow and a quiver of arrows for Kagome-sama? She's leaving the village on a short trek."

"Of course." The woman scurried off and returned seconds later with a bow and some arrows. Kagome took them when they were handed to her, looking uncertainly at the old man.

"Thank you."

"It's no trouble. Good luck on your venture!" Kagome followed the boy as he motioned for her to.

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"So, is it far off?" Kagome asked curiously. The village had long since fallen out of view; now they followed a curvy, forested path that she had never taken before.

"Not too far," the boy answered, glancing back. "Less than a day on foot."

'A.....day? HOLD THE PHONE!!! What's Inuyasha going to think? Going to SAY?' Aloud she said nothing, only smiled. "Great. Thank you, by the way, for bringing me out here."

"Oh it's no trouble, Kagome-sama. Not for you." He smiled at her admiringly. Why was everyone acting like that? It was really weird.

"Well, thanks anyway."

"You're welcome."

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Kagome and the little village boy walked nonstop for the rest of the afternoon. When at last he stopped her, it was mid-evening, and the sun was beginning to set. They stood before a quaint little cottage dead center in a sun drenched glen. Kagome smiled in wonder as the boy looked up timidly, wondering if he dare interrupt her thoughts. He must've decided to, because the next moment he cleared his voice and spoke.

"Here we are, Kagome-sama."

## 5 - chap 5

“Wow,” Kagome said softly with a smile. It was exactly as she would’ve guessed. Standing before them peacefully was the little sun drenched clearing. In the middle was a cabin—almost like Kaede’s, but bigger. She could hear voices inside. There was a vase of wildflowers sitting in every window. It was the picture of cheerfulness. It was only when her escort gave an uncomfortable cough that she remembered her place in all of it. Hesitating only slightly, she stepped forward and knocked on the wooden door.

There was a shuffling inside for a moment, followed by an excited little squeal. The door swung out sharply, making Kagome stagger and fall backwards.

A small face of a little girl was staring down at her. She had chin-length brown hair and starry black eyes that glittered as she rushed forward and flung her arms around Kagome’s neck. “Auntie! Auntie came to visit!” She squealed happily. There was a stampede of footfalls and several more small children emerged, also launching themselves into an embrace. There were many cries of “Auntie!” and “You came back!” and “Where’re Saeko and Sanji?” before Sango herself managed to fight her way through the now- clogged doorway.

“Kagome-chan!” she yelled over the racket, helping the girl up and then embracing her. “It’s nice to see you again!” She looked around for a moment, her expression suddenly suspicious. “But where’s that hanyou? You didn’t leave without telling him, did you? Are you two fighting again?”

“One out of two isn’t bad,” Kagome laughed. “We’re not fighting. I just.....er.....forgot to mention I was leaving.” Sango shook her head and “tsk- tsk”-ed mockingly, smiling.

“You’re really going to be in for it later,” she warned.

“I know,” Kagome answered just as Miroku walked from the house. The houshi was wearing his trademark “calm-and-collected-humble-priest” smile that often meant he was about to pull something. He pulled her into a respectful one-armed hug and didn’t try one thing. Her expression was so surprised that Sango suddenly produced a wooden spoon from her apron, looking at her husband threateningly.

“What’s wrong, Kagome? He didn’t try something, did he?” she brandished the spoon at Miroku who backed away waving his hands and smiling nervously.

“Of course not, Sango,” he said as the demon-exterminator loomed menacingly above him.

“No, he didn’t,” Kagome managed, looking to Miroku in wonder. Sango’s face regained its glad expression again and the priest smiled calmly. “I was just.....thinking.”

“Hmm. You left without telling Inuyasha again,” Miroku said knowingly.

“Yeah,” she admitted.

“Ooh! Auntie’s in trouble!” One of the kids crooned.

“Mizu,” Sango scolded. “Be respectful.”

“Sorry, Okaasan,” the girl said immediately.

“What do you say to having a cup of tea?” Sango asked in undertone.

“Sounds great,” Kagome answered immediately.

“Let’s go play, children,” Miroku said promptly, catching Sango’s suggesting glance. He stood and walked off rather quickly, leaving the two women with a flock of children following him like lambs following a shepherd. Sango motioned for Kagome to follow her inside and shut the door once they were inside. Both sat down on what appeared to be hand-woven rockers and stared at each other, allowing silence to hang heavy.

At last Sango gave a playful and curious smile.

“All right. Something’s amiss. Spill it.”

## 6 - chap 6

Kagome smiled at her shoes, unable to look at Sango for fear of bursting out in tears or laughter. Her friend had always been deft at sensing her feelings, but this was a bit much. She hadn't really said anything to point towards her secret. "How in the world do you do that?" she asked at last, unable to hide the wonder in her voice.

"Well, it's incredibly obvious," Sango answered gently. "I know you've been experiencing a lot of doubt with all this, and believe me, I know what you're going through. And on top of all that, you run away from home.....it's not like you to pull something at a time like this. Please tell me what's going on, Kagome-chan. Maybe I can help you."

'What is she talking about?' Kagome wondered, carefully guarding her expression. 'Going through.....what AM I going through?' She shuddered as many not-so-nice possibilities fluttered to mind.

"It's nothing. Really."

"Don't give me that. It's written all over your face."

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you, Sango."

"And what makes you think that?"

"It's stupid."

"I bet it's not. Tell me."

"Well....."

"Come on, Kagome. What's the worst thing that could happen?"

"You could think I'm crazy, put me in an asylum and have a bunch of crazed psychologists test my brain....."

Sango snorted. "Please. We're ALL a little crazy around here." Outside, a mound of wriggling little bodies tackled and buried Miroku, who began crying jokingly for help. "I live with a family that is the definition of crazy."

"And I don't?" Kagome muttered, smiling. Both girls laughed.

"True, true. Please tell me, though. I promise not to think you're crazy. You're the sanest person I know, after all." Kagome hesitated, looking up into the older woman's sincere expression. She had always been able to tell Sango everything.....why should now be any different? After all, if she didn't tell

SOMEONE she'd probably go crazy.....

"Okay, okay, I'll tell you."

There was a devious smile. "I knew you would."

There was yet another silence in which Sango gave her undivided attention and Kagome took a deep breath, finally spitting out the sentence so quickly that Sango had to ask her to repeat it.

"What was that?"

"I....." Pause. "What would you say if.....if I told you that I'm not who you think I am?"

Sango sat there for a moment, lost for words, and then, quick as lightning, produced another wooden spoon. "If you're a demon you'd better tell me now," she said ominously with the air of when she was threatening Miroku.

"N-no, nothing like that," Kagome said hurriedly. "I didn't mean it that way."

"Oh." The spoon disappeared once more into the folds of her apron. "What do you mean?"

"What I meant to say was.....that I AM the person you think I am.....but different."

"Different in what way?" There was a definite suspicion in that tone.

"No, no, not like that either," Kagome said, frustrated. "Maybe I'd just better come out and say it."

"That's generally best," Sango agreed, still sounding suspecting.

"Well.....I.....see.....Okay. I woke up this morning in MY house."

"Uh-huh.....that's usually where you wake up, Kagome-chan, unless there's something you haven't been telling me."

"No, see.....I wasn't there—here—yesterday, not in the same way. Yesterday I was eighteen years old. Inuyasha and I had had an argument again and I went home through the well.....I went to bed and then I woke up.....here. With children, and—and....." She blushed and looked to the floor.

"So you mean to tell me that you traveled through time and are in your future self's body?"

Kagome shifted nervously. "Uh.....yeah, pretty much."

"It's not impossible," Sango said lightly. "A time-rip could have opened."

"So.....you don't think I'm crazy?"

"No more than I did before," the other answered teasingly.

“Oh, Sango!” Kagome threw her arms around her friend's neck tightly.

“Maybe we'd better run this past Miroku,” she suggested. Kagome pulled back. “He'd believe it, I'm sure. He might even be able to do something about getting you back home. You DO want to go back to your time, don't you?”

“Well.....it IS sorta nice how Inuyasha treats me now,” she said, blushing and looking down.

“Ah. So, in your time, he's still calling you names and all that?” Sango looked fascinated.

“Yeah.....but I guess I do need to go back. I might mess up time if I don't.”

“The quest might never get completed,” Sango finished thoughtfully. “Yeah, I think it's best.....”

“Okay, if you say so. I'll tell Miroku.”



## 7 - chap 7

Miroku smiled warmly as Kagome sat back in her chair, a bit paranoid about what he would say. And that smile was making her nervous.....whenever he was that charming it usually meant he was about to brush cheeks with Sango's oversized boomerang. She had to keep reminding herself that Miroku had obviously changed—but Miroku was still Miroku, and that simply screamed for suspicion.....especially when she was in the cabin ALONE with him.....

"Don't worry, Kagome," he said quietly, noticeably not using her normally assumed title of 'Kagome-sama'. "I'm not going to try anything." The girl glanced up at him in confusion. Was the WHOLE family telepathic?

"So.....what'd you think?"

"I think," answered the houshi calmly, "that you have come here for a reason."

"A reason?"

"Yes. My guess is that it is to give you hope. We all know—or knew, if you prefer—of your doubts before Naraku was defeated. And even after. Perhaps you need to see that it will all turn out okay in the end, to give you the courage to keep trying."

"That makes sense, but.....why did I time travel? If somebody wants to give me hope, why didn't they just come talk to me?"

"Seeing for oneself is more powerful than hearing words," Miroku said, sounding for all the world a wise and honorable sage. "Perhaps no one in particular caused this to happen. It might've been yourself."

"What do you mean?" "I don't have that kind of power."

"I mean that you're more powerful than you have fully realized in your time." Kagome mentally slapped herself on the forehead. Telepath act II. "Your miko energies may have picked up on your doubt or unhappiness and tried to correct it. Emotions are a powerful thing sometimes."

Silence. Pure, wonderful silence as Kagome contemplated all that Miroku had told her in the past few minutes. It was all sensible, all believable, and most of all, all comforting.

"Thank you," she whispered breathlessly. The houshi took her hand and Kagome bristled, expecting the one thing she had been dreading since she arrived in the future, but Miroku smiled and shook his head.

"You're so skittish," he commented humorously. "I take it I'm still doing.....intolerable things in your time?"

"Yeah.....all the time," Kagome muttered, relaxing. "How am I gonna get home?"

“I’m sure this will correct itself in time,” Miroku answered. “If it does not, then we will simply have to wait.” He smiled wryly. “But I don’t think you need to worry.”

“M’kay,” she answered meekly, feeling strangely childish around the new wise Miroku. He was actually quite sweet when you weren’t expecting—

Just then, she bit her thoughtsww back, automatically grabbing one of Sango’s spoons from the table and whacking Miroku unceremoniously over the head with it.

## 8 - chap 8

When at last the two stumbled out of the hut, Kagome was blushing disgracefully and Miroku was stumbling around dizzily, holding his head. Sango took one look at the two of them and pulled out a spoon without a single word, clouting Miroku several times anywhere she could reach. The monk made a desperate attempt at running to escape the blows while Sango chased at his heels, taking every chance she had to hit him with the utensil. All the children had sat to watch, looking mildly interested with the air of someone checking homework.

After a while, Miroku collapsed and Sango was satisfied, coming back to stand beside Kagome with an annoyed expression on her face. "Shame on you, Miroku! Taking advantage of your friend when she came to you for help!"

"Shame, shame, tousan," chorused the children together, shaking their heads in a practiced movement.

"I'm sorry," Sango finally, shaking her head, apparently embarrassed. "And he is, too. Aren't you?" She glared at her husband sharply.

"Yes, sweetheart," he answered, cowering as the spoon waved threateningly in the air once more. "Forgive me, Kagome-sama. I didn't mean anything by it." Kagome smiled and nodded, thinking of what would've happened if Inuyasha had been standing there with them. She was certain his response to such things wouldn't have changed any more than Sango's had. But thinking of that also brought something back to her mind: Inuyasha was bound to come after her soon, and he would be furious. That was not a reunion she was looking forward to. It must've shown on her face because Sango looked worried.

"Don't worry, Kagome-chan. I'm sure Inuyasha won't be that mad at you. Not for long, anyway."

"That's right," Miroku chimed in, coming to stand at Sango's shoulders. "His resentment never lasts long. All that yelling is just his way of telling you that he was worried."

"It's really pretty cute," Sango added, and Kagome blushed again.

"Yeah, well.....all that aside.....I think I'm going to go for a walk now."

"But Kagome-chan.....it's dark, and you don't know your way around here." Sango said. It was true. The last pink tinges had faded away from the horizon, and she had never been to this place before—at least, that she remembered. But a walk could do wonders to clear a troubled mind, and she REALLY didn't want to be there when Inuyasha first got back.....

"It'll be okay, mommy." Sango stuck her tongue out in reply, and they might've had a friendly little bicker, except that Miroku intervened.

"All right, you two. Break it up." He moved between them with hands outstretched, looking very much

like one of the referees at a soccer game. “Don’t worry, Sango. I think Kagome can find her way back as long as she doesn’t go too far.” He glanced at the girl in question. “Isn’t that right?”

“Uh-huh,” Kagome answered on cue, nodding her head. “Don’t worry, I’ll be a good girl and stay close.”

“Well.....all right. But be careful, you,” Sango said at last, smacking her friend playfully on the shoulder. “Dinner’ll be ready when you get back.”

“Kay,” Kagome called, disappearing into the forest quickly. See you guys later!” \*\*\*

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\*\*\* Once out of sight, Kagome let out a little sigh. The forest was alive with the sound of crickets’ and night-birds’ cheerful conversations. The moon, a sparkling silver crescent, was high in the velvety night sky, surrounded with sparkling stars to match. It truly was a beautiful night—peaceful, and all in all everything she could’ve hoped for after such a day as that one.

The green summer grass was soft and green, and knee-deep around the edges of the trail. It had undoubtedly taken many days of Miroku and Sango bustling about with clumsy scythes to cut away all the plants that had grown up there over the years.

But then, with Sango’s cheerfulness and Miroku’s monk-like patience, it had probably not seemed a job at all. It was perfectly picturable: the two of them, together, sweeping away weeds and overgrowth. Miroku’d probably tried a few things, and Sango’d probably whacked him with a wooden spoon, and then they’d gone on as though nothing unusual had happened. In a way, they were a lot like herself and Inuyasha.

Inuyasha.

Why did all of her thoughts always lead back to him? The moon had reminded her, and the sunset, and even her musings about Sango and Miroku. He was probably worried sick about her, and on his way at that very moment, to yell and make a holy event out of it. But eventually he would quiet and say something sweet that made her forget her anger, and his expression would soften and she’d think that if the whole world could just stop then, it would be okay.

When he was around everything was okay, always. And why was that? It was a mixture of things, because everything about the hanyou was complex and complicated.

Well, maybe not everything.....

She knew he loved her, despite all his mocking, despite all his yelling, despite how he was fickle sometimes and downright ridiculous sometimes. She knew he cared, no matter how many times he had denied it and scorned the very idea and made her feel like an idiot for trying to get closer to him. Because he was a friend and always had been. He protected her—and everyone else, for that

matter—when even the slightest hint of danger reached his ears. Because whenever Kouga came around he was really and truly defensive, even jealous. Because no matter how many times she sat him, no matter how many times she went home after an argument, he came back. Always, without fail.

It really was dog-like, how loyal that hanyou was. It was loyalty that bound him to her, in a mixture with other things, and loyalty that had bound him once to Kikyou, despite her murder-attempts and all else.

Kagome stumbled along, completely lost in thought of her beloved friend with a dazed expression. She didn't realize just how far away she was getting from Miroku and Sango's home, nor that it was getting increasingly darker as the moon and stars were covered in cloud..... \*\*\*\*

## 9 - chap 9

“She WHAT?!”

Birds fluttered from the trees everywhere within fifty miles of the small cabin. Inside, a very flustered Miroku was trying to calm a very annoyed Inuyasha while Sango watched, smirking at her husband with an I-told-you-so sort of look. Sanji and Saeko sat with their cousins on the floor, watching curiously. The younger children of the household were finding it very amusing that their uncle was making their normally-calm father splutter and wave his hands and chuckle timidly.

“Please calm down, Inuyasha,” Miroku said exasperatedly. “Really, it’s not so much a concern as that.”

“Kagome was delirious when she left the house. She comes here, and you let her go wandering off by herself! Tell me it’s not a ‘concern!’”

“She wasn’t delirious,” the monk disagreed promptly. “Kagome-sama seemed perfectly normal to me.”

Inuyasha mumbled something under his breath that only his children managed to catch (they both looked away politely and said nothing of it.) There was a moment in which the wildlife outside crept uncertainly back to where they had been before the previous explosion.

“Fine then. I’ll be back in a little while.” He stood to leave, then stopped right before the door, turning. “You’ll watch Saeko and Sanji, right?”

“I think it’s the least—Miroku can do,” Sango said seriously, hiding her laughter cleverly behind a cough. All the children at her feet laughed for her, in a shrill chord. \*\*\*

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\*\*\* Meanwhile, the delirious girl in question began to realize where she was—or where she wasn’t. She \*wasn’t\* anywhere she knew, or anywhere close to where she had started. In the darkness, nothing was familiar from her afternoon trip—and her memory was faulty anyway. There was very little path left, and what there was forked off in two directions that both led into unpromising, shadowy lands.

“Good going, girl,” she scolded herself crossly. “You’ve gone and gotten yourself lost!” And after all the worrying from Sango.....she had been right. “Oh, \*why\* didn’t I pay attention to the trail?” She sat down on a particularly large moss-covered bolder, willing herself to come up with a solution. However, the thought process got no farther than that because it was at that moment that the bolder shifted—

—And Kagome found herself face to face with a demon that apparently did not appreciate her sitting on its back. It was a dragon-like thing that might’ve been expected in a fairy-tale—not in the middle of a clearing looking for all innocent passer-by like a mossy place to sit. Of course, it occurred to her that even the youngest village child would have his wits about him, while wandering around at night, to at

least be able to distinguish a demon from a rock. Traveling with Inuyasha (who more quickly protected her than thought about it) had obviously dulled her reflexes a lot.

The demon roared and snapped its teeth impatiently, and Kagome leapt to her feet with a squeal, staggering away from the predator clumsily. Of course, it was not about to let her go that easily. Within five minutes of constant cat-and-mouse, the previously lost human wench became the captured lost human wench, held tightly in the mouth of a not-so-friendly demon. Even as she was carried off into the shadows, Kagome didn't dare to move, for fear of the sharp, pearly fangs that surrounded her on all edges and poked into her uncomfortably.

'Oh, Kami, I've really done it now....'

It would've been helpful to yell, but the extreme pressure that came from all sides made it nearly impossible to breathe, let alone scream for help. It only took a few moments for her vision to grow hopelessly foggy and her head began to swim dizzily from lack of oxygen. 'If he doesn't loosen up, this thing's gonna strangle me!' She struggled for a few seconds, feeling an uncomfortable pain as the fangs sunk into her shoulders and back, but nothing else. The motion did nothing but to successfully aggravate the dragon-type thing, which in turn quickly whipped its mouth downwards, bringing Kagome's head in contact with the ground. The rather small body became instantly limp, and struggled no more.

Every step the captor took brought her farther away from the deep, familiar voice that was calling out worriedly without any reply to answer it..... \*\*\*

## 10 - chap 10

Miroku and Sango saw neither hide nor hair of their silver-haired friend for several hours. It was early, early morning when the hanyou at last burst abruptly into the cabin. All the children were sleeping at the feet of two rocking chairs where the adults were dozing lightly. At Inuyasha's entrance, Miroku stirred, looking up from where his head had been drooped against his chest. His eyes moved from the bothered expression to the empty door way with a quick and fluid movement of a priest. Without a word he reached down and untangled his arms from around Sango, located his staff, and stood at Inuyasha's side.

The two left together wordlessly, and indeed nothing was said until they were a fair distance from the house.

"You found nothing, Inuyasha?"

"No," the hanyou muttered roughly, his hands becoming fists at his sides.

"Don't worry, my friend. Kagome-sama could not have wandered very far."

Silence was the only thing to answer Miroku's comfort. \*\*\*

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\*\*\* "Kagome.....Kagome, wake up....."

That voice.....it was familiar, somehow. But how she was hearing voices was a mystery, unless there were other people in the demon's stomach. And that was odd enough in itself. But also, nothing was hurting. Was she dead? In Nirvana, lost to the world forever?

If that was so, she didn't \*want\* to open her eyes. But then.....what was that feeling about her? Warm and soft things.....like.....blankets? She moved her head slightly, experimentally, and felt an intense pain in her neck. Definitely not dead then.

Well, if \*that\* was so, then it would probably be best to open her eyes and see where in Kami's name she \*was\*.

Easier said than done, as it turned out. When at last the eyes managed to open and look around, the first thing Kagome could see was a blurry shape of a person, hovering right above her. She blinked and the person came into slightly better focus.

"You're awake," came the very relieved, soft voice of the person. A warm hand stroked her face softly, and Kagome winced as it moved over a cut she hadn't been aware of. "Sorry," the voice said apologetically, and Kagome blinked again. There it was. The person reminded her of Shippo! But it couldn't be.....the little kistune only came up to her knees, and this man was taller than she.....



But then.....15 years had passed, give or take.....

“Sh-shippo?”

“Yeah, it’s me.” Kagome felt herself shifted slowly into a sitting position—which still hurt quite a bit, despite Shippo’s efforts—and was aware a cup brought to her mouth. “Here, drink some water.” Obediently, she took a sip and allowed herself to be laid back down upon the blankets. “Kami, Kagome. I’ve seen you in some strange company, but reptilians? You should be more careful.”

“It’s not like I sought him out. I was going for a walk.”

“You didn’t mistake him as a bolder, did you?”

Telepath act III. It was really uncanny how they could ALL read her mind like that, if not a little unsettling.

“Well, actually.....”

“Oh, Kag. You’ve REALLY got to be more careful.”

“I know, I know,” Kagome said fairly. “But how did you tumble into this tangled web? Or rather—” She glanced around. “—How did I get here?”

“The same way, I think. I stumbled upon a certain someone being dragged around by some scaly idiot.” He shook his head. “Scared me to death. You wouldn’t answer me. I thought—”

“I’m sorry,” Kagome said quietly.

“But then,” Shippo continued, “I must not be the only one. I bet Inuyasha’s \*worried\* to death by now, along with Miroku and Sango. Isn’t that right?”

Kagome mentally slapped herself on the forehead. Yes, it was right, like all the other assumptions.

“We should probably get back, then,” Shippo said, reading her expression. “Tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?”

“Yeah. It’s almost dark now.”

Kagome bit her lip. That meant she’d been gone for an entire day and the previous night.

Her friends would all be worried sick. \*\*\*

\*\*\*

## 11 - chap 11

Inuyasha and Miroku returned soon after sunrise, on the second full day since Kagome's disappearance. A very anxious Sango met them at the door, with large eyes and unspoken questions. Miroku put an arm around her shoulders silently, but Inuyasha offered naught as he walked inside and sat on the floor desolately, saying nothing.

"You couldn't find anything, then?" Sango asked in hushed tones as they stood outside the front door. The monk shook his head. "Nothing?"

"Not a trace—physically, anyway. We found several trails, but the scent was old. Apparently...." He swallowed and lowered his voice further. ".....There was a demon around at about the same time that Kagome-sama went missing."

"Oh, Miroku, you don't think—"

"I'm not sure," he answered carefully. Sango buried her face in his shoulder and was quiet until at last they walked back into the house together—just as Inuyasha left.

Sango made to say something, but Miroku shook his head and pulled her back gently. "Let him go, Sango. He'll come back." \*\*\*

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\*\*\* They left Shippo's home in early morning, just an hour or two after daybreak, at Kagome's urging. Shippo had planned to wait until lunchtime but his guest refused—that would mean returning in mid-night, and she could not stand to worry her friends that long. She was dreading returning—Sango's motherly worry, Miroku's gentle concern, and Inuyasha's inevitable fury.

Shippo must've seen it in her eyes, for he babbled just as fervently as the smaller version she knew, about stories and do-you-remembers and memories. Only after a considerable hour or two did he manage to work far enough back for her to actually know what he was talking about—the battle with the Thunder Brothers, how they had first met.

"Of course I remember that," Kagome answered with a giggle. "I'll never forget it."

"It's funny," Shippo said dreamily.

"What is?"

"How different everything is, and how it's really all the same."

"What do you mean?"

“Well, back then.....Miroku and Sango were always driving each other insane with all the groupings and beatings and flirting....”

“They still are, Shippo.”

“Well, yeah, that would be one of the constants. But then there’s you and mister grouch, fighting and driving each other crazy—”

“We still are, too, Shippo.”

“But—but—ghaa! You’re confusing me!”

“Sorry,” Kagome said with a smile, kissing him on the nose. “What did you mean?”

“Well....oh, never mind.”

Silence.

“Never mind?”

“You know what I mean. When we were still traveling together.....you guys never let each other know how you felt. At least, not out loud.” He grinned mischievously. “I heard plenty of sleep-talks over the years, let me tell you.....”

“Oh, you,” Kagome said teasingly, bopping him over the head. “Where are you going with this?”

“I just think everything turned out for the better. I mean, look at it. We’re all still friends. And everything turned out just as we would’ve hoped.”

“It’s true, isn’t it?” Kagome said thoughtfully. She looked up with a smile that quickly disappeared.

“Hey, isn’t that Miroku and Sango’s house?”

“Yup, that’s it,” Shippo said, grinning on cue. “Something tells me your welcome’s gonna be one to remember, being away for almost three days.....”

“Yeah, I bet you’re right.” The kistune stepped through the doorway as they reached it, and Kagome hesitated for just a moment before following his suit.

They stood there together at the door way for several moments of shocked silence and stillness, until Sango, in one fluid movement hopped from her chair as though she had been burned and threw her arms around her friend, sobbing.

“Oh, Kagome-chan.....we were so worried.....”

Miroku joined the two, looping his arms around both women, who both blanched nervously. “Don’t worry, he assured them. “I won’t try anything.”

“Like Kami,” Shippo muttered under his breath, and everyone laughed. Several small arms looped about several knees, bringing many of the party crashing to the ground, which, in turn, brought many more hysterical giggles.

“But wait,” Kagome said slowly, in realization. “Where’s.....?”

The laughter quieted immediately.

“Outside, Kagome-sama.”

“You’d better go talk to him right away, Kagome-chan.”

Judging by the grave tones in even Sango’s voice, Kagome knew she was in for it. She gave a terse smile to all involved, untangled herself from the dog-pile, and walked out the door. \*\*\*

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## 12 - chap 12

Even as she walked through the forest, Kagome had to wonder if she was imagining the hush that seemed to have fallen upon the forest. Were the sparrows holding their breath, just as she was? But what reason had they to fear, when she was the one with a right to be dreading. Why, she wasn't sure—because she wasn't sure what to say, maybe. Perhaps because she was afraid of what HE would say—or do, for that matter. It couldn't be terrible, she reasoned, because if it got too out-of-hand, she would just start crying or something, and the situation would be subdued—as always. She actually deserved anything he cared to throw at her, for what she'd pulled.

But still.....

What path had she been following, anyway? It was like her feet were walking on their own accord.....

Were they? It wouldn't be the weirdest thing to happen—

Kagome stopped abruptly, finding herself on the edge of a sort of clearing. The woods opened up to a wide area of field—farm field, most likely, though there were no farmers in sight at the moment. The knee-high grass swayed in a soft breeze rhythmically—back and forth, back and forth, with a swishing noise to match. It didn't take long to spot the reason she had walked to the place—a glistening head of silver, concealed a bit by the cover of the meadow. His back was to her, of course, ramrod straight, despite the slack shoulders. He didn't move a muscle as she crept forward—normally, she would've been caught right away, but apparently the hanyou was not on his guard as usual.

She actually managed to make it a foot behind him before he glanced back at all.

The amber eyes met hers first, and the contact was fiery. Immediately, recognition crossed the features and softened them with light speed. Before Kagome had time to marvel at how she had been there several seconds and not suffered one sentence of wrath, she found herself held desperately tightly in two familiar arms. Her breath was nearly taken away—with the suddenness, and with the pure force that squeezed her to Inuyasha's chest.

“You're all right,” he whispered at last into her hair. “I was so worried about you.....”

“I....I....” No words that came to mind seemed worthy enough to be spoken. “G- gomen, Inuyasha.....I d-didn't mean to worry you.....”

“Why did you leave like that?” he demanded, immediately feeling guilt at how Kagome flinched at his tone.

“I'm s-sorry.....I d-didn't mean t-to—” And she was crying again, though it hadn't been her intention.

“Shhhh, shhhh.” His expression softened again as the anger was replaced with something meek. His hands ran through her hair soothingly and swept her tears away. “I didn't mean it. It's just.....” He

trailed off, his hands still continuing their journey along her face. “You scared me to death.”

“I’m sorry,” Kagome murmured again, her voice muffled slightly by his shoulder. She needed to say something meaningful, something to explain how incredibly guilty she felt about worrying him so yet how very relieved she was to be with him again.....there was no feeling in the world like being held by the hanyou, no way to feel safer or warmer than she felt with him.

“It’s okay,” came the soft reply. “You’re safe.....that’s all that matters.” There was a quiet moment as Inuyasha glanced at the pastel blue sky, his eyes glimmering with an unknown, shadowy something. “I was sitting out here yesterday, and I thought.....if something had happened to you, I’d never forgive myself. If you didn’t come back.....I don’t see how I could live with myself, knowing you’d gotten hurt and I hadn’t been there to help you.” His voice was thick with melancholy.

“Nothing could ever happen to me,” Kagome assured quietly, taking his hand.

“What?”

“Nothing could ever happen to me, Inuyasha, because you wouldn’t let it.”

“What are you talking about? I wasn’t there this time! What if—what if—”

“Shhhh.” She put a finger to his lips. “What if doesn’t matter. I’m back, and safe, and I don’t hold anything against you. It was my fault in the first place.” Inuyasha remained silent. “Look. You’ve got to trust yourself a bit more, Inuyasha. I trust you.”

“Kagome.....”

“Inuyasha. Everything turned out okay this time. You have to believe that everything will in the end.”

“Trust isn’t exactly one of my strong points,” he said at last with a smile.

“I don’t think that’s true,” Kagome said mischievously with a smile of her own. She reached up and kissed him—hesitantly at first, shyly, then with confidence. When she pulled back, she was breathless, but Inuyasha was not—merely smiling, reassured.

“Maybe you’re right,” he said slowly, bending down again to return her gesture. ‘Maybe you’re right.....’

## 13 - the end

Kagome smiled to the sun as she and Inuyasha walked along, hand-in-hand, back to the cabin. Everything was cleared up—she had nothing to worry about, nothing to dread. Inuyasha wasn't mad at her—for the moment, anyway. Sango and Miroku seemed to have reached a temporary truce—at least she couldn't hear one of their episodes from her position. Shippo had come—the whole group was back together—minus Kilala, wherever she was. Everything was wonderful; for the first time since she had come, she realized with a giggle, she wasn't worrying about getting back to her time.

Suddenly, as the thought crossed her mind, a bright light came, blocking out everything else and ebbing it into black. With a stumble, she crashed into Inuyasha who had been walking in front of her.

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“Is she okay, okaasan?”

“Yes, sweetie, she's fine. Kagome.....wake up, dear.”

“Nee-chan.....”

Kagome's eyes snapped open. She found herself lying in her bed—in HER time. Her room was full of present-day things. Daylight filtered through the windows. Her alarm clock—the pink one she'd had since she was four—was sitting on the bed table, flashing cheerfully in its neon numbers. Her mother and Souta were sitting on the edge of her bed. Her mother was holding her hands and looking relieved. What surprised her the most was that Inuyasha was there as well—sitting at the foot of the bed, avoiding everyone's eyes and looking awkward.

“Kagome, you're awake.” Her mother's hand drifted to her forehead. “How are you feeling?”

“Great,” she answered happily. She was back in her time, back in her room. She was still a high school student! She had homework again! Wait. Was that a good thing?

“Well, all right,” Mrs. Higarashi said. “Come on, Souta, let's.....” She glanced slyly at Inuyasha. “.....go make some cookies.”

“Cookies? Okay!” The two left the room as though someone had kicked them out, closing the door quietly.

And so the two were left in silence. Inuyasha twiddled his thumbs, fiddled with the fabric of his haori, and poked the lumps in the comforter around. Why was he acting so oddly?

“Inuyasha?”

“Yeah.....I.....” He looked at the ground as though fighting the urge to get up and leave right then,

squirming uncomfortably. "I'm sorry that I said that stuff."

"Huh?"

The hanyou looked both uncomfortable and embarrassed. "I'm sorry I said that stuff before you left. I didn't mean it."

Was he apologizing? Kagome could've fallen out of the bed—and she did, without intending to.

"Are you okay?"

"Fine, fine." She climbed back up onto the mattress. "I'm just surprised. You never apologize."

"Yeah, well, don't get used to it," he snapped grudgingly.

Kagome couldn't help it. She hugged him then, much to his surprise.

However much fun it had been to look into her future, it was good to be home.

@-}-----^-----{-@

"Is she okay, tousan?"

"Yes, Saeko, she's fine. Kagome, wake up."

"Okaasan....."

Kagome's eyes opened immediately at the sound of the voices. She sat up in bed, looking around curiously. All around her was the familiar cabin of Miroku and Sango, the two themselves, her nieces and nephews, her children, and her husband. They were all crowded around her small futon, ogling at her.

"Uh.....guys?"

"Sorry," they said together, backing up.

"Are you okay, Kagome-chan?"

"Fine, fine. Just a dizzy spell." She smiled cheerfully. "It's not all the abnormal, you know." Inuyasha smiled and kissed her cheek.

"Glad you're okay."

"Me too, okaasan."

"And me, okaasan!"



“And me!”

“And me!”

“And m—”

“Okay guys,” Sango interrupted with a smile. “Let’s let Auntie up, okay?” They all moved back obediently like parting oceans and allowed Kagome to crawl from her sheets. “Kagome, can I talk to you outside, please?”

“Sure.” Kagome smiled to her family once more before following her friend out the door and shutting it.

“So, are you back?” Sango’s whisper was curious.

“Yes,” Kagome whispered back with a smile. “Have fun with the younger me?”

“She was just as I remember,” came the dreamy reply. “Innocent, fiery, and.....actually, exactly the same as you are. Except maybe a little more high- strung.”

“Yeah. It was weird, Sango. I could see what she could see the whole time. It was like I was here but I wasn’t.....” A pause. “Miroku didn’t know it was ME he was grouping that time. He’s gonna get it.”

“Yeah,” Sango laughed. “Be my guest.”

“There’s only one thing. You didn’t tell her about the biggest surprise of all.”

Sango smiled apologetically. “She was so surprised that she had two kids—I couldn’t give her a heart attack and tell her she was gonna have three. Besides, if she knew, what fun would that be when she found out? This way, she’ll still come running to tell me—or my past self—when her time catches up. As you did.”

“Yeah,” Kagome sighed, putting a hand to her stomach. “I guess some things are better as surprises.”