

*Hey Edward,*

*Sorry about not emailing you more. It's been pretty crazy over here, and trying to send proper mails from my phone is problematic.*

*You might actually be interested in the rig I'm typing this on. Yarboan computers are few and far between, because they are late to the digital age, but what they have is very interesting.*

*The keyboard I'm using works a lot more like a piano than a typewriter, for example. You press all five fingers in a combination to type a character, with an array of special keys at the top of the keyboard.*

*It takes a very long time to get used to, especially when you're trying to use the accents and details of the language (which is done by rolling the keys a bit... each key has two pressure points rather than one).*

*Anyhow, it's a lot trickier than I expected, but Rinzen's brothers have been tremendously helpful. One of them rigged up the transliteration program for me that I'm using now.*

*Speaking of, Rinzen has surprisingly many brothers. Five of them, to be exact. I knew that Yarboans were inclined to have big families, especially through their extended families, but this was more than I was counting on.*

*Also, remember when I gave you crap when you started dating your first girlfriend? These guys love doing that kinda stuff.*

*The other day the younger two brothers came to eat with us. Rinzen stepped out for a second to try and wave down a friend who was looking for us.*

*In the moments that she was outside, the two guys leaned over to me, looked at me with stone faces, and told me in dead serious voices:*

*"We notice she misses a moon and you won't even make it to the city walls."*

*And with that they went back to joking around and talking about what food we should get.*

*I ended up asking Rinzen about it later. She was mad at her brothers at first, but said that she wasn't really surprised- her brothers care for her and I am an outsider.*

*The Yarboan media (if you can call it that) portrays cultures as endlessly lonely and therefore sex-crazed. I can't honestly say I can fault them for viewing us that way: Rinzen and I have had precious little time alone since we met, so by comparison...*

*The closest thing to alone time we have is when we're making food at my new place, but even then it's customary to keep the windows open, so I hardly have a chance to endanger Rinzen's "moons" as her brothers put it.*

*Conversely, I've noticed that the Yarboans have an extremely satisfying hanging out tradition. It's fine for people to spend most of their waking hours together, sharing all of their meals and free time.*

*So long as Rinzen's family doesn't get neglected, there's nothing really out of the ordinary. This means that I actually end up spending a lot of time at her family's place.*

*Naturally, this means I spend a lot of time with her brothers, who find ever more ways to give me a hard time about her. Most of it's very lighthearted though, the previous story is just a bit more memorable.*

*Anyhow, getting off track. Have I told you about my new lodgings?*

*Once I decided to stay in Yarboa for an extended period of time, it became obvious that I needed a real place to stay.*

*It ended up being Rinzen's brothers that came through for me: one of them had a coworker who needed some roommates, and wouldn't mind me.*

*The guy happens to be a mason, and is building a house around himself. It's pretty amazing what he can accomplish with seemingly crude tools.*

*As my roommate finishes his part of the building, he also runs closer and closer to the end of his budget. In order to keep everything in the air, he rents a finished room out to me for a very low price, because chunks of the house are missing.*

*It seems very dangerous at times, and probably hazardous to our lungs, but the Yarboans have a "take your own risks" kind of attitude.*

*Truth to be told it's very refreshing. My roommate is very intelligent, but practical in the extreme, and doesn't put up with any junk.*

*Talking to him about stuff is good for my perspective. Being an only child, he understands some of my difficulties in the Yarboan culture, but makes me man it up.*

*So I'm not living in a half-finished house with a guy who is six inches shorter than me but can probably lift three times as much as I can.*

*Good times.*

*The real upside to living in this house, however, is how good it is for just sitting. One of the side sections only has half a roof, so we'll sit on it and look at the stars.*

*Rinzen and her brothers will come over and we'll just talk about stuff. My roommate sleeps pretty early, and Rinzen also works mornings, so a lot of times it'll end up being just me and her brothers.*

*One night, after the younger brothers had headed home with Rinzen, her eldest brother and I sat up half the night talking about England.*

*It's weird how brothers end up being the same, even in totally different countries.*

*Sitting up there and explaining the plot of Lord of the Rings to Rinzen's brother strongly reminded me of camping trips back at home with you.*

*Even though I had to keep stopping to explain what orcs are and what chain mail is, I felt like I was in the same place I was years ago when we were growing up.*

*Maybe I've spent too long studying the unique aspects of Yarboa, but it came as a shock to find something so simple, and so similar.*

*I'll send you more details later. Give Mum a hug for me.*