Escorts
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This work of fluffy flash fiction (say that five times fast) came about due to an image prompt from my writers' group. The image was of three characters sitting in the middle of a dirt road. Saria is perhaps eight years old.

"Young ladies shouldn't go anywhere without an escort," they say.

I never did, of course. I always made sure to bring an escort with me when I wanted to roam the hills around Everhallow. "Tiva!"

The dog looked up from where she was sniffing around the prayer hall. Sarsalor was probably inside.

I patted my thigh through my skirts, and she bounded over to me, panting happily. Together, we returned to the stables at home, and I outfitted the smallest horse, Arlon, with a bridle and lead line.

Now that I had my escort, we could go anywhere!

I breathed in the smell of home as we trekked the dirt road winding around the forest by the lake. The grass and sunshine and road dust tickled my senses, and I giggled.

Arlon bumped my shoulder with his nose and grumbled.

I rubbed his face. "Don't pretend you don't enjoy this."

Tiva, meanwhile, scurried this way and that, running back to me with her tail whipping back and forth each time she made sure I hadn't fallen or gotten lost.

Once I judged we'd gone far enough, I released Arlon's lead line, squatted in the middle of the road, and simply enjoyed the scenery. Another forest rose in the distance. Beyond that, days of travel and then the palace. The palace with the glorious library.

Tiva sat beside me.

I scratched her side and decided, "I like being home better."

Arlon trotted to Tiva's other side and sat with a thump.

I smiled at them both and returned my attention to the forest. "You don't suppose dragons live there, do you?"

Tiva licked the side of my face, and I jerked back, giggling. "No, we're not going there. It's too far."

Arlon snorted his disapproval at the dog.

I was grateful that, when people were unavailable, animals were willing to take up the slack. Young ladies should never go anywhere without an escort, after all.