

DEMONS 1101

[Chapter 1101 1101 Still Killin' Time](#)

Kat had borrowed a few chairs from the stacks in the back corner. Kat had grabbed four chairs. One for Sylvie, one for Callisto, one for herself and one for the chess set. Lily didn't need a chair, because Kat was perfectly happy, and Lily very willing to just use Kat's lap instead. Kat herself didn't really need a chair if it wasn't for the fact she was trying to seem normal, but Kat was trying to be cautious. Kat and Lily chatted mentally as they pretended to watch the chess match.

Two matches in, a woman in floral dress rolled up to their booth and said, "What are you two doing?"

"Playing a game of chess," said Callisto with a glare.

"No, those two," said the woman, pointing to Kat and Lily.

Kat and Lily glanced at each other confused and Kat answered, "Watching a chess match,"

The woman frowned at that answer, her glare intensifying. She went to say something else, but the words caught in her throat. Instead of saying anything, in the end, she just huffed and stomped away. "Well that was fucking weird," muttered Kat.

"No swearing," said the woman as she continued on her way.

Kat looked at the woman's retreating back. "I stand by what I said,"

"I do not know who that was, but I believe she was just someone looking to create problems," said Callisto.

"Yeah, that's ol' Sue," said a guy, presumably a father, leaning against a post in the booth next to them. Kat looked over to see a man in jeans and a striped flannel shirt. Behind him, his kid, a young girl with messy blonde hair, was napping in the corner. They'd done up a rather nice looking model volcano, complete with a town nearby and a bunch of details on the eruption of Pompeii, that they'd presumably tried to mimic. "She just likes to cause trouble for people. I think it makes her feel powerful,"

Kat nearly choked as she heard the name. Sue! That woman's name is Sue! Oh my god, if she's really called Sue that's too funny. Imagine a meeting of the Sue's! "Why was she trying to find issue with us though?" asked Kat, trying not to laugh.

Man shrugged, "Eh, she might've thought you were easy targets till she got a good look at Callisto," Kat, Lily, and Sylvie looked at Callisto who didn't seem to be doing anything special at all. She wasn't even wearing her normal maid outfit, which was the weirdest part honestly. They saw nothing wrong with Callisto... until what the man said caught up to them.

"Wait, how do you know Callisto?" asked Kat, "Or...how did you recognise her?"

The man chuckled, "The name's Hank, and my daughter's name is Alice. As for how I recognise Callisto? Well, I'm a builder by trade and Callisto has released quite a few little devices to make my job easier. The fact she lives nearby and my boss is always trying to get a meeting with her, means I've been told who to look out for. Not sure if Sue recognised her or not, but Callisto just has that glare down,"

"I don't really see it..." said Kat uncertainly with Sylvie and Lily nodding along.

Hank just laughed, "Bah, you're clearly family so I doubt it seems all that scary too you, but trust me, it's pretty intimidating,"

Callisto took this observation in stride and simply smiled back. The shiver that ran down Hank's spine seemed to imply it wasn't a nice smile, but the girls still couldn't see anything wrong with it. "So, what have you and Alice designed?"

"Ah, it was mostly Alice's idea. I did read the rules and whatnot. Wouldn't want to get her in trouble. We went with building a model volcano. Bit of a classic, and perhaps it seems a bit simple compared to whatever genius ideas I'm sure you came up with, but Alice has my knack for building things, and her mother's knack for destroying them, so this seemed like a nice compromise. Had fun building it anyway," said Hank.

"Is that really something you should be saying about your wife?" asked Lily.

"Well why not," said Hank with a grin, knowing how he'd sounded. "She's the sight manager for a demolitions company. Always tells me I should pack up my construction job and have some real fun at work. I don't think I could keep myself interested if I'm being honest. Explosions are cool, sure, but every week? I feel like I'd be sick of them within the year, let alone the decades my wife has been working there,"

I'm somewhat surprised there's enough need for a demolitionist in our town.

[Well Kat, we're in the city now! Plus, they're probably just based here and move to where things need to be taken down. Old and unstable buildings, buildings that just need replacing. Tunnels for the train lines perhaps? Demolitions is a surprisingly wide field so I suspect Hank's wife will always have a job.]

"I see," said Lily, "If that's the case, what sort of career do you think Alice will try to get into? If she takes after both of you, that is," *nOvelnext.Com*

Hank shrugged, "I can't rightly say. Alice likes to say she'll be a firefighter, but last year it was astronaut, and before that it was superhero. All very dramatic and necessary jobs... but I don't think Alice has any firm idea of what she wants to do later in life just yet. Still, she's young and got time to work on it. Are you both still in school?"

Lily and Kat shook their heads, and Lily went first, "No, we finished up recently... or well, more like last year, which... is a while ago now."

"You manage to find work?" asked Hank, curious.

Kat and Lily nodded. What do we tell him?

[I don't know!]

Come on Lily, my brainier half, please come up with a reasonable idea.

[Um... trouble-shooters? Perhaps? We work for a decent sized company that deals with all sorts of problems. We get called in when necessary. We're pretty much told to go somewhere, and we go, check out the problem, fix it and then leave?]

Well it sure is accurate enough. Lily said, "We mostly do troubleshooting work. Our company has a bunch of clients, and when a problem comes up, someone from our company gets sent in. Sometimes it's handyman work, sometimes we're looking for lost files, sometimes we've got to help train up new people, it varies,"

"Huh, bit of a strange thing for someone so young to get into. I'm surprised you both have the skills for something like that," said Hank with a raised eyebrow.

Kat decided to jump in with, "I grew up in an orphanage, and I was sort of thrust into the role of caretaker alongside Gramps, the old man who runs the place. I know a little bit of everything because of that. Fixed a few broken pipes, know how to maintain the lawn and garden, I know how to keep people on task. Really whatever was needed and Lily..."

Kat gestured at Lily who took over, "I focus more on the clerical side of things. In school I loved to research anything that caught my interest so I know more about computers and tech, alongside the more technical stuff and horrible filing systems. Kat and I work as a team most of the time, with one of us taking a supporting role if it's not our area,"

"I s'pose that makes sense," said Hank with a nod. "I know we have that sort of trouble occasionally, though the boss' wife just handles it usually. Not sure we need a dedicated team for it..."

"Indeed, that's why the company we work for just does troubleshooting. We have people reach out to us. We're not just a department in a large company, if that makes sense," said Kat.

"Ah, yes that does make sense," said Hank with a nod. "So what sort of project did you work on... I'm afraid I don't know your name,"

"Sylvie," said Callisto.

"Sylvie," finished Hank.

Everyone looked at Sylvie, who shrank under everyone's gazes. Sylvie looked at Callisto, then Kat who both had reassuring smiles. It helped Sylvie find her courage. "Um... I wanted to do a paper on what it would mean if people have wings. That... that's why Kat is wearing those fake wings. A lot of people go to birds, but we're mammals, like bats so I took a different direction. I um... I've got a lot of calculations regarding the needing wingspan, the force necessary for flight, and what uses they might have, from flight, to threat displays, and mating dances,"

Hank nodded as he glanced over the calculations on the walls, "I'm sure that was very difficult,"

"The math wasn't too bad," said Sylvie, "The real issue was finding the biological proofs necessary for it as well as adjusting the skeletal structure to compensate for wings in all of the diagrams and models,"

"Right..." said Hank, not really understanding.

[Chapter 1102 1102 Little Math Wiz](#)

The science fair was now in full swing. Callisto had convinced Sylvie and Alice to go off and look around at the other exhibits. It was a tough argument, and in the end, Callisto had been forced to come along.

Hank stayed behind to watch over their stall, while Lily did the same. Kat? Well Kat was technically part of the exhibit.

Kat was pretty sure that most of the people that came to visit were also participants in the fair. It wasn't too busy, and only about half of the spaces that had been set aside for participants were actually filled with people. Kat was a little annoyed by that, wishing for a bit more space. She was constantly moving around to avoid smacking people with her wings, while still giving them the ability to see the posters.

A lot of the visitors were young children, five and below. Kat wasn't sure why that was, perhaps the older kids had grouped up? Most people didn't understand the diagrams or theorems Sylvie had laid out, they just looked at Kat's outfit and stared for a while before moving on. Granted, Kat could see them doing the same at other stalls as well, but it was a bit annoying.

Sylvie put in so much effort to work out what potential humans have for wings just so I could come and most of it's being ignored! It's all 'look at the pretty lady with wings' and sure, that's very nice of you children but that's really not the point. At least nobody is screaming demon.

Kat quickly tilted to the side as another kid tried to grab her wings, "Now, please no touching. These are quite heavy you know? I need to be really strong to lift them. I don't know if I could lift you AND the wings," said Kat, making sure not to lie. *That was close. Technically I don't know, for certain, that I can't lift him and the wings. Though that's more a question of if the wings will fall apart then if I have the strength it still counts.*

One of the nearby parents grabbed the kid and said, "Sorry about that, he's very curious,"

Kat nodded, "That's ok. I understand the desire to try and grab at things, especially when they're little. I've worked with a lot of young children so it's no surprise, and I'm not annoyed, but my sister did put a lot of effort into these so I don't want them damaged,"

"Oh, of course, of course, you have a good day now," said the parent as they started to walk away, whispering to the child as they left. "You can look, but not touch. I already told you how much effort some of the other kids put in. You wouldn't like it if someone ruined your sandcastle right?"

"No mamma," mumbled the kid.

"See, it's like that," said the mother.

Kat smiled as they walked off, knowing she wasn't supposed to hear that example. *That's not a bad way to explain it to a kid... might have to steal that one.*

[Kat, there aren't any beaches around here. How would most of the kids know what a sandcastle are?]

Um... sandpits?

Kat continued to stand around with Lily watching off from the sides on a chair, letting the crowds past by. Eventually, Lily needed to duck to the bathroom, and it was almost as if the gods themselves had planned it that way, because as soon as Lily was out of sight, a small child, looking to be about Sylvie's age, or slightly older was looking at the equations Sylvie had posted. "That one is wrong,"

"What?" asked Kat, completely shocked.

"That one, it's wrong," said the little girl pointing to one of the pages of equations. The girl in question had short messy copper hair, and looked remarkably like a young boy. Only Kat's many years of experience around children let her identify the difference. They had scuffed pants that looked like they'd seen better years and a black shirt with a smiling bear on it.

Kat looked over at the numbers and could already feel her brain starting to hurt. Sure she wasn't bad at math, but Kat had never done any of the advanced stuff, and had basically just memorised as much as possible to get good math grades. Sylvie was a much better mathematician, and so was Lily.

So Kat was looking at a mess of numbers, that frankly, meant nothing to her, and this small child was saying that it was wrong. No explanation as to why, just saying that it was. Um... Lily where are you at the moment?

[Just left the hall why?]

Ah... nothing. Kat closed the link carefully. *Can't bother Lily, she left for a reason. But what do I say?* "Is it?" asked Kat due to her panic.

The small child looked at Kat, with a pitying look. "I see... you're not very smart are you?"

Kat winced at the girl and looked around. Already a number of other guests and parents were starting to leave. *Shit I was hoping her parents would be around so I could see how they were reacting. I know if she was a kid at the orphanage I'd have words to her about talking to people like that... but she isn't my child, not even one I'm watching.*

"Why do you think that?" asked Kat to see what the girl would say. novelnext.com

"Because it's easy?" asked the girl, clearly confused as to why Kat would even ask. The girl truly did see the equation as easy. *Ah shit. I've got another Sylvie on my hands... though this one might just be limited to math.*

"I see... and what would your parents say if they heard you calling me stupid?" asked Kat.

"Well, I don't really know because my parents are dead and I didn't say you were stupid, just that you weren't smart," said the girl as if this was something completely reasonable to think.

"I see..." said Kat slowly. Right. Orphan. These are your specialty. "Well, I'm sure a smart girl like yourself can see how saying someone is 'not very smart' is quite similar to saying 'you're stupid' right?"

"Of course, but I was told not to call people names like stupid... so I didn't? I used other words, so it's fine," said the girl.

Ah... she's going to be one of those. "Well, it seems we're going to have a long conversation," *If only because I want to keep you here until Sylvie gets back to introduce you to her.* "so I'll introduce myself. My name is Kat, what's yours?"

"My name is Penny," said the girl firmly.

"Hello Penny, as I said before my name is Kat, and to answer your earlier question, I do not considered myself an idiot, but I surround myself with people much smarter then I am, and might have skewed my perceptions because of that. I cannot tell you if the equation is wrong, I didn't write it, and I was not the

person who double checked all of the math work. From what I know of them both, I'd be surprised if it was wrong, but perhaps they missed. Now that I've answered your question, can you answer one of mine?" said Kat.

"That seems fair," said Penny without actually agreeing with anything.

Kat wasn't sure if that was intentional, but Kat went forward with her question anyway, "I'd like to ask if you understand why what you said before was rude?"

"That's a funny question," said Penny.

"Well perhaps I'm a bit of a funny person," responded Kat.

"I guess... um... no, no I don't understand why it was rude," said Penny.

Huh, I'm a little surprised she didn't try to lie. Guess I can still do the 'you can tell me anything' look well.

"That's ok, you're still young-" Kat couldn't finish speaking because she was cut off by,

"I'm not young, I'm TEN" said Penny firmly.

Kat knew how to make the most of this though, "Really? Well I'm seventeen, and if you're not young... what does that make me?"

"Old, obviously," sneered Penny, in that cute way only children could.

"Well if I'm old, then what about my friend Chekov, he's over thirty?," asked Kat.

"He's SUPER old!" said Penny.

"But then what about Gramps? He's more than eighty" said Kat.

"He's very old," insisted Penny.

"Is that older then super old?" asked Kat.

Penny seemed to frown at this. Obviously no, eighty was bigger then thirty, Penny was great at math, so she knew her numbers. But calling someone very old was less impressive then 'super' old so that should mean Chekov was older? Penny was confused by the question. "Maybe?"

Right. Seems she's just a math wiz. "Well, eighty is more than thirty, so regardless of what you labelled them, Gramps is older," said Kat.

"What does this have to do with your earlier question though?" asked a confused Penny.

Kat smiled back, "Nothing, but my little sister Sylvie is now standing behind you, and she can answer your questions," Sylvie frowned at the sudden intense gaze the little redhead was sending her way.

[Chapter 1103 1103 Pre-Judging](#)

Penny, Alice and Sylvie wondered off with Callisto as a chaperone still. Kat smiled at the girls' retreating backs. *Seems like Sylvie might just come out of this with TWO friends. What a success!* Lily chose this

point in time to return, and saw what Kat was mentally talking about. "So... how did that happen?" asked Lily.

"Well, Penny tried to berate me for getting one of the equations wrong, I told her off lightly, then kept her occupied until Sylvie got back with Alice and now they sort of seem to be friends? I'm not sure how that worked out, but seems like it did," explained Kat.

"Was it wrong?" asked Lily.

"Eh... sort of," answered Kat.

"How can a math equation be sort of wrong?" asked Lily confused. "It's math, it's either correct, or it isn't,"

"That's true, but, at least from what I overheard, the agreement they reached was that Sylvie had written in the wrong variable, but answered the question as if she'd put the correct variable in anyway. So the answer was correct for the wider scope, and didn't effect any of the other equations. So... it was 'sort of' wrong," explained Kat.

"Oh... yeah ok that does make sense. It was sort of wrong. Though, did Sylvie fix it on the poster?" asked Lily. *noVelnext.COM*

"Well she was going to," said Kat, "But then Alice pointed out that we might not be able to swap it now that setup time has finished. So Sylvie and Callisto weren't sure if they could fix it or not. They did write this out," Kat pulled a piece of paper and a roll of tape, "so I can fix it if the judges allow me to do so, but they didn't want to get deducted points for tampering with their display after the deadline or something,"

People passed by, checking out the board and trying to find the incorrect equations, now that they'd heard there was one... but nobody else could spot it. Kat wasn't really sure what that meant for the general intelligence of the science fair, but Kat felt it probably wasn't related. It could be argued it was a typographical error, and not a mathematical one. The next interesting thing to happen was when a man in a suit rocked up to the booth and said, "You look a little old to be entering this contest,"

Kat looked back up at him, "Well you look a little young to be a judge, but I assume that's why you're complaining,"

The man barked out a hearty laugh, taking no offence to Kat's blunt reply, "Indeed I am, indeed I am. I'm actually just a junior researcher filling in for my boss at the moment. He's caught a cold and can't judge today... is what I've been told to say, but I'm pretty sure he's off golfing with a few of his buddies,"

Kat raised an eyebrow at that, "I was partially joking, I didn't realise there were veteran scientists here as the judges, I'd just assumed,"

The man waved dismissively, "It's no big deal. My name is Alexander, Alexander Armstrong, and I'm doing a basic scan of all the booths, making sure nobody is breaking any of the rules in more obvious manners... which does mean I was serious about that question earlier, even if I have a pretty decent guess,"

Kat nodded, "I'm just here watching the booth for my younger sister, technically I'm part of the display, but everything you see here, including the fake wings, were made by Sylvie. Well... I guess she didn't sew my clothes herself, but that wasn't really what you were asking,"

Alexander nodded and looked to Lily who said, "I'm just here to hang out with my girlfriend, and her sister, our chaperone is watching the kids,"

Alexander nodded, "Yeah I guessed as much, I just haven't seen any of the other parents... quite so actively participating as part of the display. I think there's only one or two older siblings here as well, it's mostly parents and their kids, both as competitors and as guests. A bit of a shame really, I know the organisers were hoping for a bigger turnout,"

"Really?" asked Kat, "Why?"

Alexander shrugged, "Probably looking for more money from the mayor, though I can't be sure. I'm not exactly on the committee for this, remember, I'm just the replacement,"

Kat rolled her eyes, "Well Mr Replacement, do you know if I'm allowed to tape this corrected answer over the current one? My sister worked it out, or more accurately, a girl called Penny called me out on it and eventually talked it out with my sister, whose name is Sylvie and they came up with this correction. One of the variables is wrong, but the answer is correct as if the variable was as well,"

Alexander chewed on his lip for a few moments, where Kat thought he was thinking about the question, but in truth he was looking at the handwriting on the paper and comparing it to the handwriting on the printout... only to realise the other math had all be types up so they weren't going to match anyway. "I'm not totally sure... I'm going to say that as long as it happens before the judges see it it's fine... and if they try to dock points for it, I'll take the hit as the 'dumb replacement who didn't know the rules',"

Kat shrugged, "If you're sure," she said as she turned around and fixed the paper over the equation correcting it. "Do you have any other questions?"

"Yeah... though this one is just for personal curiosity?" said Armstrong and Kat nodded, "Right well, I'm curious as to how those wings are holding their shape so well. I've seen fake wings before, but those are quite substantial and well done,"

"Metal framing," answered Kat. "It's supporting it in all the places it needs, then the leather was moulded over the top and painted afterwards,"

"Damm... isn't that heavy?" asked Alexander.

Kat shrugged letting the wings move visibly with her shoulders even if they didn't move quite so obviously in reality, "A lot of the weight is being taken by the harness so it all evens out. I'm not actually sure what the whole ensemble weighs, but it's not light I can tell you that. I'm not sure I'd want to be walking around all day with these on," *Of course, not for weight related reasons but once again, technical truths for the win!*

"Huh... that's some strength you've got hiding under that kimono," mumbled Alexander.

"I'm stronger then I look," confirmed Kat in what she hoped was a misleading enough way.

"Right... well I suppose while I'm here, I'll ask just to confirm, Sylvie, your sister, is solely responsible for this display?" asked Alexander, "Just for the record,"

"Well I certainly didn't help. She only told me she'd entered the science fair recently. She was keeping it a secret to surprise me. I'm not sure what you consider 'solely' I know the design for the wings took quite a while to get right. From what I know, Sylvie would design them, Callisto would make them, then the first few times they broke under the weight, and Sylvie would come up with a new design. Repeat until the final design where Sylvie made her own copy. Is that still Sylvie's work," asked Kat.

"Yes, that certainly counts. In fact, I do believe that's less assistance than some of the other, less impressive displays have received," said Alexander, as he ignored the glares from the other nearby booths.

"What would you know?" asked one of them.

Alexander looked back with a bored gaze, "Look, I'm not here to start problems, but I've seen a few displays where the handwriting is completely different for half of the notes! That's a pretty clear display of assistance to me, I don't even care which set of handwriting is the kid's, someone did half the work. Others have different amounts, and might get penalised or disqualified as well, but I'm not responsible for that,"

There were a few more grumbles at that but nobody said anything else afterwards. Alexander nodded at the silence and turned back to Kat, "Thank you for your time. Everything looks good to me, and while the other judges will be a bit harsher when we all come around again, I think what has been done is fantastic. Oh, but do remind your sister that she does need to be present during the judging so that she can answer questions, otherwise she'll be disqualified,"

"Sure thing," Kat agreed easily. "I'll tell her next time I see her, or send Lily off to find her if I see a group of judges coming this way,"

"Excellent," said Alexander with a nod as he moved off to inspect a few more booths. He was likely nearly done, and Kat was assuming the judging would start soon.

[Chapter 1104 1104 Science Fair Success Story](#)

The judging was not a fast process. And it wasn't limited to just Sylvie's exhibit either. The judges were taking the time to question each of the children involved in the projects after thoroughly examining the pieces on display, then using their own expertise (and google) to come up with on the fly questions for the kids. From what Callisto and Lily relayed back, most of the kids struggled to answer the questions. The only one who didn't struggle at all was Penny, Sylvie's knew friend, but they were just asking her math questions.

Eventually though, the group of judges made its way to Kat's station. Kat was poked and prodded more than she thought was entirely appropriate with multiple pens and one clipboard. Kat wasn't entirely pleased with that, especially not when her tail was jabbed twice. After that Kat had to ask, "Is this all really necessary? I'm not the science experiment, just the model for the wings,"

Alexander nodded along and added, "Indeed, leave the poor girl alone. I don't know why you all are so interested in jabbing Kat with pens, but I doubt it has much to do with the science fair,"

I'm not going to say it was entirely inappropriate. Most of those jabs were poking at the wings, likely testing out stable they are... but the two jabs to my midsection where I'm trying to hold my tail are a bit questionable, and the poking on my horns was just silly,

The other judges seemed to grumble a bit and step back, but one of the female judges said, "I see nothing wrong with our examination. Nothing untoward was happening, and judging by the weight of the wings, the harness... Kat, I believe you said? The harness itself might be worth looking into as well,"

Callisto stepped forward, "I think you'll find it is just a slightly modified rock climbing harness," Callisto's voice seemed normal, but it had an underlying chill to it, "If you want, I can even purchase you an additional copy, it will not be hard. Perhaps if it fascinates you so much, you can take a jump of a cliff and test it yourself?"

The judge glared at Callisto but didn't rise to the bait, simply huffing and moving away to examine the equations on the board. Before they got to the real questions though, a judge, that same judge in fact, noticed the correction that had been added to the wall, "What's this?"

"My correction," said Sylvie.

"And how did you discover the correction?" asked the judge.

Alexander stepped up this time, not willing to let Sylvie take the heat for this one, "Another contestant pointed it out to Sylvie, and, they double checked with me before placing the correction over the top of the incorrect equation. It is a minor typographical error," **novelnExt.com**

The judge glared at Alexander, "You didn't have the authority to do that,"

Alexander shrugged, "Well I DID authorise it, regardless of whether I should have authorised it or not, the fact remains that I did, and I'm afraid you'll just have to deal with it,"

"Who even let this upstart on the panel?" asked the judge.

This time, the second female judge stepped forward and said, "Alexander was sent as a replacement for Dr Botnick, who begged off on grounds of being sick today. Alexander is perfectly qualified for judging, and is currently working on his diploma under Dr Botnick. Additionally, it seems you've forgotten but the memo regarding the swap was sent out to everyone on the judging panel, and you accepted it as well as I,"

Kat mentally decided it was too confusing to keep the judges straight in her mind, so now, she was naming them. There was Angry Judge, or just Angry, obviously, then there was Sassy Judge who was defending them at the moment, Alexander of course, and two other male judges. One had a fabulous beard, and as such shall be dubbed, Beardman, and finally, the last guy who hadn't really done anything, thus he was Boring.

True to form, Boring just ignored the argument that was clearly starting to take shape, he just kept making notes as if nothing was wrong at all. Beardman was splitting his attention between the fight and taking his own notes, looking a bit tired as he did so, while of course, the other three were arguing.

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Angry, "I approved of nothing,"

"It was part of the final days checks," retorted Sassy, "You'd be getting alarms about not filling out the forms if you didn't accept it,"

Angry started to wind up for something else when Beardman smacked his pencil into the clipboard, dragging everyone's attention back to him, "Need I remind you both that we're currently being watched by a crowd of people as we judge a children's science fair? I would expect people in your position to know not to traumatise children. Imagine the paperwork," grumbled Beardman.

That seemed to kill the argument before it could get going, and the judges went back to making notes, until they eventually took to questioning Sylvie. Sylvie was faced with a solid thirty minutes of questions, most of which fielded by Angry who was clearly just trying to catch Sylvie out at this point. Callisto's glare was looking more and more menacing as the questions went on, even when Kat started to poor calming aura in Callisto's direction.

Still, Sylvie wasn't a genius for nothing, she managed to answer every single question without fail, and finally the judges had to leave them alone. "I am going to get us something to eat after that... display," said Callisto with a sneer, not even trying to hide her disdain, nor was she concerned with the fact the judges could definitely still hear here. "What would you like to eat Sylvie?"

"Um... I don't mind," mumbled the girl.

Callisto sighed and said, "Ok, if you really do not mind I shall see what is nearby and bring some food back. Hopefully I will not be too long,"

Callisto headed off and the judging continued, Callisto was pleased with her decision because when she returned twenty minutes later with a couple of pizza boxes for Kat, Lily, Sylvie and Sylvie's two friends, as well as spares for those who really wanted some, the judges were still judging.

Callisto, just to stir the pot a bit, handed off one of the boxes of pizza to Alexander and when the rest were distracted, zipping away before she could be caught. Kat watched from afar and had to stifle laughter as Angry did a double take when she turned around and saw Alexander with an open pizza box. Sadly, she did not take the bait.

When the judging was finally over, the judges made their way to the small stage, that was really just a collection of raised boxes, and turned on the microphone. Beardman was the spokesperson it seems, "Greetings one and all, I hope you have enjoyed the science fair. We will be asking contestants to leave the stands up for another hour at least, but officially the fair is over with the judging panel. It took us some deliberation to reach our top three... but first, let's go over the five honourable mentions, each of which will receive a \$50 gift voucher...

"The first of which goes to Alice, for her spectacular model volcano. While model volcanoes are a staple of science fairs, Alice has gone above and beyond making sure that the eruption produced an accurate mixture of fluids, and the details on the construction were stunning. Alas, as it IS a classic, and something seen many a time, we cannot give her a placing finish. Next up is Penny, with her 'Golden Ratio in real life'

"An impressive collection of pictures and observations, as well as mathematical proofs... but it lacks practical applications and is in reality a small project, a well done project, but a bit small in scope when compared to what we were looking for,"

Beardman went through the honourable mentions one at a time, giving general details of why they were interesting and why they didn't receive a final place. Then, came the winners, "In third place, is Sylvie, with her 'The potential arial capabilities of humans' exhibit. Sylvie achieved third place due to her dedication in not only providing biological, and mathematical proofs for her diagrams, but making fully realised models, even up to human scale, though fully human scale isn't flight capable, Sylvie did still detail the necessary wingspan and musculature to change that,"

Kat smiled and clapped as Sylvie went up on stage to collect her bronze medal. *Huh, I didn't know if Sylvie would get picked as a winner but there you go.* Kat found it hard to pay attention to the other winners, her mind was occupied by Sylvie's shy smile. Kat did hear that second place went to someone who managed to create a program that generated music based on a Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction, something Alice thought was 'very cool'. First place went to someone who managed to build a lego robot dinosaur... but none of the girls were impressed. In fact, Alice was pretty sure that was just an unreleased lego kit someone had gotten their hands on. Still, the girls were all smiles as they left the science fair later that day.

[Chapter 1105 1105 Friendship Drive](#)

The girls were thirty minutes into the drive. Lily was awake, for once, and somewhat inspired by Kat's need to hide her wings, Lily was attempting to do the same in her cat form. Well, that and her horns, though she was having no success with the latter. Lily managed to hide her wings with a bit of effort in about twenty minutes worth of attempts. The problem was Lily couldn't keep them hidden for more than a few seconds at a time. Definitely something to practice in the future.

On Kat's end of things, she was confident Sylvie had enough time to calm down from the event and would be open to discussing things, "So Sylvie, do you think Alice and Penny can be your friends?"

"Yes," said Sylvie.

Hmm, seems she was a bit more overwhelmed then I thought. "So you think they're good people?" asked Kat, trying to softly prompt Sylvie again.

"Yes," said Sylvie.

Right. "Were you excited with your third place win?" asked Kat.

"Yes," said Sylvie.

Kat rolled her eyes, "Sylvie, I understand there was a lot of people there and it was pretty overwhelming, but thirty minutes should be enough time to calm down, and at least put it off to the side to deal with later. I'm interested in your new friends and I'd like to hear from you what they're like, and if you think it will be worth sticking with them in the future,"

Sylvie frowned but Kat just pulled her deeper into a hug. "Come on Sylvie, I had to play model for HOURS and you were missing for much of that time. I only had Lily for company, but while she is lovely,

she also lives in my head 24/7 so I'm never missing her. You've been hiding away working on secret projects since I came back from a long contract. I want to hear you use your words Sylvie,"

Sylvie didn't say anything for a few moments so Kat just rearranged how she was holding Sylvie a bit, letting her tail snake out to hug Sylvie so her hands were free to pat Sylvie on the head. Eventually, the girl was relaxed enough to talk, "It was very loud. I am not sure we really got to talk properly because it was loud and we spent a lot of time looking at the stalls, but especially the second time through that was mostly an excuse.

"Alice... no I will get to Alice second despite meeting her first. Penny is a genius... but only for math. She seems to be able to find math in basically anything and her skill with it is above mine... but her abilities in just about everything else are much lower. Her social skills are even worse than you might think, she is horrendously blunt about almost anything, but I suspect her guardians told her not to say certain things...

"So she doesn't. But only those very specific things. Penny is perfectly willing to talk around her restrictions, but once again, only in the most blunt and technical way possible. Callisto told me about what she said to you, and that does sound very like Penny. She's not being mean about it, just stating what she considers to be fact. I am not sure if she doesn't understand that other people have feelings, or perhaps she simply believes that you should not take offence to the truth, I don't know.

"Her aunt and uncle probably don't help matters. They don't really care about her. Well... that's a bit rude, they are not so terrible people that they neglect her after her parents died, but they also don't really take the time to explain things in ways Penny can understand and never try to impress empathy upon her. Perhaps it's just an issue with child geniuses,

"I know you had to work hard to help me understand that other people aren't as smart as I am, and that is both ok, and something to keep in mind. Penny seems to think that while not everyone is like her, we aren't that different, which obviously is not true. Perhaps her aunt and uncle are like her, perhaps not. I don't think they treat her well... but as I said before it's more neglect, but not for a normal child? If that makes sense. I suppose it might still be neglect, but I cannot really say for certain.

"Still, Penny is interesting to talk to, and I like that I feel she is my intellectual equal. Perhaps her knowledge is not as broad as my own but I appreciate the dedication she has to maths, alongside her tremendous ability in the subject. I do wish to challenge her to a match of chess, but I am unsure if she will actually be any good. I give it even odds she's excellent or terrible," Sylvie paused and smiled for a few moments thinking of her first new friend.

Taking a breath, Sylvie continued "As for Alice, while it might be rude to say it, she's the more normal of the group. Smart she may be, but genius she is not. Despite that, her skill in her chosen fields, architecture and demolitions are quite impressive. Neither are things I've invested time into learning properly, and thus, despite her only somewhat above average intellect, she knows many things both Penny and I do not.

"What I truly appreciate her for though, is her social skill. Even if it seems she does not have close friends like you and Lily were, she does have a number of acquaintances. Alice is both easy to listen to, and a great listener herself. Alice was even better than myself at explaining certain nuances of things to

Penny. I'm envious of Alice's ability to simply be heard and understood, something I know I can struggle with at times when speaking with children my own age,"

"And here you were disparaging Penny's social skills when you've just said Alice is 'only somewhat above average intellect'" said Kat with a giggle.

Sylvie looked affronted, "I would never say something like that to Alice's face, unlike Penny. It also does not stop it from being the truth. I suspect her to be just slightly less intelligent than Lily but my estimation could be wrong," defended Sylvie.

Kat raised an eyebrow at that "I feel like I should defend my girlfriend here, she's a bit more than 'somewhat above average' when it comes to intelligence,"

Lily, deciding to test out a new trick, spoke while still in Memphis form. It was rough, and uncomfortable for Lily but she did manage it, "Kat, compared to Sylvie I am only somewhat above average, she's just at the very end of the bell curve for intelligence, the 1% of the 1% while I might only be top 5. I look smarter because of my research anyway,"

Kat sighed, "Well I've been outvoted it seems. Sylvie, please continue with your story,"

Sylvie nodded as if it was completely expected she'd be correct about her intelligence rating. Kat rolled her eyes at that, but let Sylvie speak without further interruption. "Well, from what I have seen Alice is very handy, her construction is great and she's a bit of an artist because of how much time she spends drawing plans. It is not a completely transferrable skill, but some does carry over from what I saw of her diagrams in the booth.

"Alice insisted she was not any good, but I used either Callisto's or Vivian's fancy drawing tools for my own diagrams, relying most heavily on rules and compasses to keep things uniform and prevent my own hand from causing imperfections. Writing I may do well, but art is not something I put time into. Alice seems to have picked up the skill incidentally, perhaps that is why she disparages her skill at it so much?

"Anyway, I think that if I can keep in contact with Alice and Penny I will have achieved a nice core friend group I can maintain until I reach adulthood and potentially reevaluate how they have turned out and if it is worth maintaining friendships past that point as I will likely have drastically different amounts of free time,"

"That's a somewhat clinical way of looking at what could potentially be the end of your friendship," said Kat.

"It is simply realistic. Most friendships do not survive past the end of high school, likely due to the lack of free time and outside pressure forcing you together. Two close friends should be sustainable, but if one or both of them prove to be disappointments it would be best to invest in different friends at whatever workplace I end up at," said Sylvie.

"I mean... yeah I suppose so, but you guys don't go to school together anyway, so if you stay friends you'll likely build up good habits... or something?" said Kat.

Sylvie gave Kat a deadpan look. "Kat, you have one friend on earth who later became your girlfriend. Depending on how you count Vivian, Callisto and Gramps you might have no friends on earth, I will take no attacks from you in this arena,"

[Chapter 1106 1106 Weekend Check](#)

It was Sunday now, Kat and Lily were sitting in Nira's office getting another routine check-up. Lily left the scanning equipment and bounded over to Kat before transforming back into her human form and leaning into Kat. "Well, everything seems to be in order once again," said Nira while looking at a holographic screen that contained the results of the scan. "I am a little concerned with how developed the link seems to be. We might need to keep that in mind for other sentient mind linkages. It's not meant to be quite so... broadly useful I suppose. The fact you can see through each other's eyes already is a surprise, and while it should eventually be possible, we're talking years down the line normally,"

"Is it something to be concerned about?" asked Kat. *nOvelNExt.com*

"No... not as far as I can see," said Nira with another glance at the charts. "There isn't any personality bleed, which is good. Despite how closely connected you two seem to be, the fact there is no personality bleed is great news. The data seems to suggest it won't ever be an issue for either of you, which is good, and certainly an interesting data point. Considering how close it has brought your minds, the fact that there is NO personality bleed at all? Very interesting,"

"So... what should there be personality bleed?" asked Kat.

"Eh..." Nira made a 'so-so' gesture, "It's not an intended feature of the link but it is an extremely common side effect. It's part of what makes animals that we connect to smarter, and it sometimes gives the sentient on the other end a few animal traits. Mental bonds between sentients, though perhaps not the specific one we've used with you both, also have personality bleed issues. It's only occasionally a worry, but it is more pronounced,"

"Are you sure? I feel like Lily and I have both picked up a few of each other's habits," said Kat.

Nira shrugged, "According to the data none of that is personality bleed. At least, not the medical definition anyway. You are still in each other's heads all the time. That means that you're constantly spending time with one another. Adopting certain traits from each other is just how that sort of thing goes, mental link or no mental link,"

I suppose that makes sense.

[I'm not sure why you asked at all, I felt it was pretty obvious why it was happening. Sure we were friends before but now we're dating and live in each other's head. I know what you're thinking and feeling almost all the time. The idea we wouldn't start to pick up things from each other is silly.]

Well yeah when you put it like that...

After seeing no response Nira asked, "So, with that, your link is officially stable and I don't anticipate the need for regular check-ups anymore. I would still like to see you in a professional capacity at least once a year, but that is something I recommend all my patients. Of course, unlike the rest of my patients, you're friends with my daughter so I CAN bug you about it if you decide to skip. Do you have any final questions for me?"

"Um... yes actually," said Lily as she turned to face Nira properly, still sitting on Kat's lap of course. "I've found that since my shadow magic affinity has kicked in I feel the constant need to pump mana into it and I'm not sure why, I mean, I could guess, but I'm not sure why,"

Nira nodded, "Welp back into the machine I guess. I'm no expert in shadow magic but I do know a good deal about Shadow biology from my work here at the hospital. I wonder if the instinct comes from your Memphis side or if it's purely a shadow magic affinity thing?" pondered Nira.

"I'm not sure," said Lily as she stepped into the scanner, "I had the same thoughts when it first came up. I know at least some of it has to be related to how different magically saturated shadows act,"

Nira waited for the results to come in before speaking, "Yes... I can see why that would be the case. As for what I have here? It seems like... your mana is trying to help establish additional mana pathways in your shadow. The best way I can explain it, would be to say that your mana is reaching out to your shadow and trying to make it a real part of your metaphysical body instead of just a shadow,"

"Is that a good thing?" asked Lily.

"It will have upsides and downsides," said Nira. "Once your shadow fully integrates into your magic system your control over it will be phenomenal, you'll be able to control it like any other part of your body, or separate it and use it as a second one. The problem is that it will likely come with the associated weaknesses as well. Bright magically empowered light will hurt you. You will find yourself more at home in deeper shadows. If someone attacks your shadow you can take real damage,"

"That doesn't sound good... can I... I dunno avoid all that somehow?" asked Lily.

"Not without crippling your shadow affinity. From what your results are telling me, it's a partially subconscious process. You would need to constantly fight yourself for centuries before breaking the habit, and never use shadow magic in all that time. I would say it just isn't worth attempting. And yes, that is my medical opinion as your doctor," said Nira.

"Well... what does it mean to be a metaphysical organ?" asked Lily.

"Metaphysical organs are organs normally attached to your magic or soul. They are not part of your soul, but they are usually attached to it instead of your body. Giving it a more direct link to your centre of being. It's how most things produce higher energy. Your shadow, right now, is just a shadow, the absence of light.

"However, once it becomes part of your magic, and an offshoot of your soul it will become more real in a sense. It will not just be a shadow, it will be a shadow body. If you leave it in its most natural state, acting only as your shadow, it will be quite resistant to damage, but the more actively you're manipulating it, the further you open it up to retaliation so be careful in the future," said Nira.

"I thought you said you weren't a shadow magic expert," said Lily.

"I'm not, but I also said I'm a doctor who can work on Shadows. They have similar rules. The closer they stick to a surface, and the less they interact with what we'd consider the 'real' world the less they can be effected by in turn. Of course, as they are completely shadow, they need to maintain a certain level of 'existence' to keep functioning. In fact, one of the deadliest diseases for Shadows is called 'The Fade'.

"It's quite rare now, the Shadow doctors were brutal in their attempts to eradicate it from their species, and they were mostly successful. Of course, I've been around quite a while and I've still seen the cases a few times. Think of it like... leprosy for shadows," explained Nira.

Lily flinched back at the idea, "Um... I don't have to worry about something like that right?"

Nira shrugged and said, "I imagine not, because you have your own body as an anchor. Your shadow can't suddenly stop existing either in full or in part so you should be fine... but that doesn't mean you are completely free from Shadow specific diseases so if you start to have issues please come in to see me and I can get you looked at,"

"You know... I'm starting to think that shadow magic might not be worth the cost," mumbled Lily as she slid back into Kat's lap and hugged her tightly.

"Oh just about every affinity opens you up to some affinity specific disease," said Nira casually as if she wasn't dropping a massive bomb on Lily. "They just aren't that common, and honestly the fact you have a body is a big boon for resisting shadow diseases. Your paper affinity comes with a weakness to certain magical bugs that try to eat your mana core from the inside out and space affinity increase your risk of sheering space and sending you into the void or letting horrors from beyond mortal ken escape into the real world,"

"Um... really?" asked Lily shakily.

Nira shrugged again, "The space sheering thing is a real worry but monstrous horrors of the void aren't. Those have all been exterminated. They are a pest that happens to be deadly for demons below Rank 5. The stronger members of our species ensured all of the non-sentient ones died, and the sentient ones won't attack randomly, we have treaties and everything. Though, sometimes things evolve back into void dwellers and we need to conduct a minor pest control movement again,"

[Hey Kat remember when magic was all sunshine and rainbows? I do. The real world is scary.]

Hey, Nira said these things are all very rare. Please don't worry too much about them.

[Chapter 1107 1107 Injuries Sustained In The Line Of Duty](#)

Kat and Lily walked down the front path to Kamiko's house. Nira had been oddly insistent they both visit and keep said visit a secret from Kamiko until they had arrived. Sure the plan was to visit anyway, so it wasn't an issue, but it was a bit strange. "I wonder what was up with Nira. I mean, don't get me wrong it's always nice to visit Kamiko but Nira was a bit weird about it wasn't she?" asked Kat.

"Yeah... maybe it's a mum thing? My mum does that from time to time. Or well, she used to back when I was friends with you-know-who," said Lily.

"The dark lord? What does he have to do with it?" asked Kat with a teasing grin.

Lily just rolled her eyes and pushed open the door, knowing fully well Kat was aware of who she was talking about. The flash of burning anger that quickly flashed across the link was rather telling. The house seemed empty, so they headed for Kamiko's room and knocked on the door.

"Come in!" said Kamiko.

Kat and Lily shrugged again and open the door. There Kamiko was, lying sideways on the bed with a large clear water and ice filled thing across her body. It took Kat a few moments of confusion to realise it was a giant ice pack. "What are you doing?" asked Kat.

Kamiko paled as she heard the voice properly, the combination of the door and the ice pack covering her ear distorting things a tad too much. Kamiko had mistakenly believed the person at the door was just one of her sisters. "Oh... um... hello... so... well... you see... I don't really want to say... but you are a friend... oh promise you won't make fun of me..." said Kamiko, stumbling over the words in her panic.

"Sure?" said Kat confused. "I mean... it looks like you might be injured so I wouldn't make fun of you for that... but it does look weird,"

"Urgh..." grumbled Kamiko. "Look... ok so I was out on a contract right? Well it wasn't anything too hard, just had to escort these kids up the mountain. The place used to be this quaint little village, and all the children would challenge the mountain once as a right of passage. It was to signify they had become adults in the eyes of the village...

"Or well... no the term wasn't quite adult, the translation was weird on it. A mixture of... the word... adult and also an implication of independence? The whole idea came from this one kid that ran away from his tribe after feeling stifled, so he set up a village where you could essentially 'run away' at any time...

"But it was like... no joke. Originally at least. See, as part of the contract I had to learn the whole history of the thing like the kids were encouraged to, but no I HAD to learn so now you have to suffer as well,"

[I have no complaints.]

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Kamiko continued "So anyway, this tradition has been going on for centuries at this point and the mountain really isn't scary at all anymore. Thousands of people made the trip and even though making something like a staircase would be super forbidden, the place that was once a village is now a large city that covers the base of the mountain. Most of the animals are gone, and all of the dangerous ones were wiped out.

"So anyway, it's a tradition about breaking free from tradition and making your own way that has been respected by forcing that tradition on their children, in a way that was supposed to encourage independence and opportunity seeking as well as prove that you had the right to move into your own house and start working. Now though... they go up in groups, on a set schedule every year as part of their graduation, normally from an apprenticeship.

"And this time? It was the Lord's son. He was a bit of a spoiled brat, but for nobility he wasn't too bad actually. I was tasked with guiding the son and his friends up the mountain safely... which is ridiculously overkill. As I said, the animals are gone, and the deadly ones are extinct but whatever, it's a job and I'm being paid to do it.

"I get them all the way up, no issues, because of course not. Well, one of the friends I was escorting up starts making a ruckus. Bragging about how easy it was, laughing at the challenge, badmouthing me as well... and then like god himself wanted to punish this kid for his hubris, he triggered an rock slide.

"Now, do remember a city sits around this mountain. No earthquakes are rock slides have been triggered in many years. It was completely unexpected, and I... well I didn't exactly deal with the surprise well. I spent a bit too long in shock before I got moving, and I was only able to get four of the kids to safety before the rocks started falling down. There was still a kid there, and I couldn't move him safely so I thought to myself... what would Kat do,"

There was the sound of flesh smacking flesh and Lily slapped herself in the face. "Hey!" said Kat turning around, "I'm not that bad am I?"

"Kamiko... you just stood in front of the rocks didn't you?" asked Lily with exasperation.

Kamiko groaned but nodded under the water cold pack. "I stood in front of the rocks and let them hit me instead of the kid. It turned my entire right side into a bruise... but the kid was ok, so... not a total loss I just ended up as one big bruise and well... this is the result," Kamiko waved vaguely at the ice pack above her. "I did rush everyone down the rest of the way before leaving before my bruises started to be too noticeable..."

"But well... my mother... she told me that while she could heal it, not even with her powers but with plenty of over the counter bruise cream... dealing with the humiliation and slower healing process was part of my punishment for slipping up so majorly. I've been trained since I was young to keep myself safe, and freezing up and something like a bit of rockfall was quite lax of me. Though I'm guessing mother sent you may way to rub salt in the wound a bit more,"

"Yeah..." mumbled Kat. "It might just be bad luck though, I mean, we just happened to come in for a check-up the same day, sure we knew about it in advance but I'm guessing it only took a day to go up and down the mountain?"

"Eh, two days, one up, camp at the summit and then one back down, but yes. Oh, you could totally make the trek in a day just sticking within standard human limits if the history lesson wasn't included, and you personally could just fly up in much less time, but yeah... didn't take long. So not enough time for it to have been planned out..." said Kamiko

Kat shrugged, "Probably just an 'attack of opportunity' so to speak. I mean, we were going to visit without prompting so it Nira could've just let things take their natural course, but I suppose she wanted you to know that she was intentionally trying to embarrass you or something?"

Kamiko sighed, "Yeah that sounds a lot like something my mother would do. I mean, I love her but she really does enjoy embarrassing her kids. I suppose I should just be thankful that she only sent you around to see me like this. Sue's fun, but I can't imagine the sort of jokes she'd make about me being bruised from head to toe. I can basically feel the mortification approaching..."

Kamiko shivered, yes. It was best that she healed before Sue turned up for one of her regular visits. The jokes would never end. Kamiko thought she'd be lucky to hear the end of it a decade from now. So of course...

"Hey bitches what's up!" said Sue as she walked into Kamiko's room not bothering to knock. "Guess who's finally Rank 2!" Sue beamed with a genuine smile on her face, happy to have caught up, at least somewhat, to her two best friends, for Sue was now certain of their place in her heart. Lily was up there too, even if she wasn't quite best friend status yet. Then Sue opened her eyes properly and looked at the scene in front of her, Kat and Lily off to the sides, and Kamiko with a giant ice pack covering her side. Presumably for all the bruises.

Sue paused. "Ok... what the fuck happened to you?"

Kamiko groaned, not wanting to tell the story AGAIN! She'd just finished telling Kat, and it was embarrassing enough the first time, Sue would never let her live this down. Then Kamiko met Sue's eyes and realised... there was no getting out of it and trying would just make it worse. So she sighed, and started her story again, "So... I just got back from a contract and it started like this..."

[Chapter 1108 1108 ROFLMAO](#)

Three girls were staring at a fourth, rolling on the floor and laughing. One of those three, Lily in fact, was trying not to laugh herself, while Kat and Kamiko were trying to look offended by all the laughing. "It's not that funny," said Kat and Kamiko together. It took a slight glance to sink up the reply, but the response was worth it.

Sue burst into a new round of uncontrollable laughter as she kept rolling across the floor and slamming her hands into the carpet. Kat and Kamiko were right. It wasn't funny... it was fucking hilarious. You see, Kamiko had just reached the part in her story where she thought 'what would Kat do' and Sue lost it before Kamiko could even explain what it was she ended up doing.

Kamiko had to get out from under the ice pack just to glare at Sue properly and it wasn't working if intimidation was the goal. "Seriously it's not," said Kat just as Sue was about to calm down, setting off another round of giggles which was entirely the point.

Kamiko, seeing what Kat was doing, waited until Sue was about to stop laughing then added, "I mean, it seemed like a good idea at the time," and set Sue off again. At this point, despite her demon physic her stomach was sore and her lungs were burning. She might not have needed as much air as a human but she'd been laughing for a long time, and the oxygen deprivation was getting to her making her lightheaded... and easier to rile up.

Kat was about to add something else to keep the train going but Lily slapped a hand over Kat's mouth. "I think that's enough Kat. Poor Sue will need to breathe eventually, and while this IS amusing, Nira would skin us alive if we injured Sue because we kept her laughing,"

Kat shivered. *Yeah she would do that. The scariest part would be the healing afterwards, as she gives us a disappointed look.* So Kat nodded... and started to lick Lily's fingers to get Lily to let go. Kat didn't think Lily should get out of stopping her fun completely unscathed.

So of course when Kat started to feel pleasure coming down the link from Lily's end, she paused and looked over concerned. Lily blushed and looked away, while Kamiko gave them odd looks. Sue, sensing a disturbance in the lewd force managed to pull herself together just enough to blink the tears out of her

eyes and check out the scene... and quickly coming to some correct conclusions. Which of course, led her to bursting out into another round of laughter.

"Lily! I didn't know you had it in you. Adding to poor Sue's suffering," said Kamiko with a grin. Sue kept laughing but she added a thumbs up even as she tried to blink back more tears and the pain in her midsection. It WAS hilarious, and the pain wasn't great, but adding the slightest touch of sexual stuff to the situation was making the pain a lot more bearable for Sue. Not that she was going to admit that. Especially when the pain started to spread lower and tingle a bit. Nope, no need to embarrass the poor kiddies.

After that everyone kept quiet. That didn't stop Sue looking up at them and going for one more round of laughs... but EVENTUALLY Sue did manage to get herself under control. She was panting, leaning on the bed for support. There were tears in her eyes, and a massive grin on her face. "Oh hells, I haven't laughed that much... in... damn I don't know if I've ever laughed that much,"

"Was it really that funny?" asked Kamiko with a pout.

Sue nodded, suppressing another chuckle bubbling up her throat with a force of will she didn't know she had. No more laughter just for now, "It was. I mean... I know exactly how you got your bruises now... and it's just so funny to me. It's even funnier because you're right that's EXACTLY what Kat would do in that situation, you just didn't think about the fact she also has regeneration when you did it,"

Kamiko winced but nodded, while Kat just shrugged, not really able to defend herself, not with everyone here knowing her so well. Heck, there was a decent chance that if Kat was in the same situation she would've just pulled all the teens close to her and block the rocks with her wings and back without even trying to race the clock and get them all out of the way. Kamiko at least made the effort not to be hit by tonnes of rocks.

"Do you want to hear the rest?" offered Kamiko.

Sue shrugged, "Did anything interesting happen after you got hit by falling rocks?"

"Not really," admitted Kamiko with a sigh.

"Then, not really," answered Sue. "It was hilarious and I'm glad you told me, but I've heard the punchline now, so I don't need to hear the rest,"

Kamiko sighed but nodded, "Understandable..." then paused for a moment, "... though... how about you tell us about getting to Rank 2? What ability did you get?"

Sue smiled, "I got... well I got the ability to read people's surface thoughts,"

"That seems super useful," said Kamiko with a smile.

"Eh... yeah it does but it's super obvious," said Sue.

"How is reading thoughts obvious?" asked Kamiko.

Sue tapped the side of her face right beside her eyes and then looked at Kamiko. As soon as she did, her eyes lit up with a bright blue light that made it seem like Sue had two lightbulbs in her head. "This is how it's obvious. Every time I even try to use it, my eyes light up brighter than a blushing teenager I've just

flashed. The annoying part is I have to be looking at the person as well, so I don't get an area where I can here everyone's surface thoughts, just where I'm looking. And yes Kamiko I can hear you thinking about my tits, thanks for the compliment,"

Kamiko glared at Sue, "I didn't think anything at all about your tits! How did you even manage to say that without getting caught!"

Sue smiled, "You only thought about them for a moment, and I took it as a compliment, but it was still long enough for it to be true. The compliment part was a bit of a stretch, but it didn't stop me from saying it, and it was deliciously misleading,"

"What would happen if you tried to read Kat or my mind? Considering they're connected?" asked Lily.

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Sue let her eyes dim before turning to Lily, "I don't know and I don't want to find out. Best case scenario, for me, is that it doesn't work, worst case scenario is I get stuck in an endless loop of back and force thoughts as I here your words echo across both your minds and my own in a never ending cycle that slowly drives me insane,"

"Is that... likely?" asked Lily, "Didn't you say you had to be looking at the person? Couldn't Kat and I just leave the room?"

Sue shrugged, "I don't know if a bit of surface reading is really all to my ability. I feel like it's not, but I don't want to push things just in case I do something that isn't so easily fixed. I might have to sign up an ability study to get this one tested safely, or at least with a medic on hand who can fix any mental issues I cause.

"As for if it's likely for me to get stuck in your heads? I'm going to say probably not... but having a pre-existing link might muck things up. I know that was one of the things we learnt in school, if you manage to get a mental ability, don't use it on people with active mental abilities. It talked about all sorts of weird effects that can have. If I was older, with more refined control over my ability I would probably be safe... but I just got it earlier today, so... yeah," said Sue.

Kamiko nodded then paused, "Actually... it's just occurred to me... why didn't you phone or send over a message to say that you were coming over?"

"Well, pretty much the moment I finished celebrating my rank up with my parents I was going to message you guys and try to meet up. I was expecting it to take a while, what with Kat only reachable via D.E.M.O.N.S but I found that Nira had sent me a message telling me to come over... so I just called it good timing," Sue chuckled. "Really good timing,"

Kamiko groaned and fell back onto her bed, hitting the ice pack with her head. Kat watched with a touch of dread, waiting for it to pop because of Kamiko's horns... but nothing happened. *Oh right, made for demons. It's probably quite sturdy.* "My mother really is too lucky sometimes. She manages to embarrass us all way too often," grumbled Kamiko.

[Chapter 1109 1109 I've Got Nothing Good For A Title](#)

Time passed, Kamiko got an excessive amount of jelly as a snack, and together, Kat and Sue, with some input from Lily, retold their latest adventure. "Seems like Kat's luck for strange contracts is rubbing off on you a bit Sue," said Kamiko.

Sue shrugged and said, "Eh for me it wasn't that strange. Spend time with noble kid, fuck noble kid, attend dinner party, pretend I'm not also trying to fuck all the staff. Sure there was the worry when Kat had to go off to potentially fight a Rank 4 cultivator and somehow made friends, but that didn't really have much to do with me, especially when I was fucking the staff while waiting. Had to 'raise the moral of the troops' or something patriotic like that,"

Kamiko just nodded, apparently at some point Sue just stopped being embarrassing to the small woman. "Yeah that makes sense," as soon as Kamiko said that with no change in expression, Sue had to take a second look. Kamiko looked just as she always did... but there was no blushing. Sue studied Kamiko intensely. "What?"

"Who are you and what have you done with our adorably innocent friend?" asked Sue, "The fact that you're not blushing up a storm is super weird... did you get laid or something?"

Kamiko coughed, blushing bright red as she looked away, trying to hide her face the best she could without moving much. Lily looked at this confused, "Wait... is she embarrassed because now she's thinking about getting laid or is she embarrassed because she did?"

"Of course I didn't!" hissed Kamiko, "I'm not just going to walk up to Lust and ask for a night with one of their employees! And I'm certainly not going to sleep with someone I've only been in a relationship with for a few weeks or days... or however long you might think I've had a boyfriend. Why would you even suggest that!"

Lily shrugged and said, "Well it did get you to answer didn't it?"

"Don't think you're off the hook either, Lily," said Sue. "I know you're almost as easy to fluster as Kamiko, though if you'd actually had sex with Kat I imagine you'd look a lot like a cat on catnip for a week after the event, so we can rule that out,"

This did of course cause critical damage to Lily's mental state. She blushed bright red and transformed back into her cat form so she could burry herself in Kat's arms and hide from the mean, well-endowed Succubus that was taunting her. Kamiko smirked at the turnabout until Sue turned her gaze back to the now smug Succubus, causing Kamiko's smirk to fall quickly.

"So... come on, what is it Kamiko? Where did your sudden confidence come from?" asked Sue.

Kamiko swallowed, "Ok... look, I'll admit to what it was as long as you swear not to ask any details,"

"Deal," said Kat and Lily together.

"Boooo," said Sue, not agreeing with the two that easily caved. "That's so boring, I want to know ALL the details about what made you more resistant to my teasing,"

Kamiko shook her head, "Look, I'll add that there really aren't many details to the experience, so it really isn't a big ask,"

"Ah but if there are only a few details, those few extra details might be very important," said Sue confidently.

"Look, you can take the deal or leave it," said Kamiko.

"Meh, I can leave, you can tell Kat, and then I can get the story from Kat and then use that knowledge to wheedle the extra details out of you, no problem. Or... I could use my fancy new glowing eyes," said Sue.

Kamiko held firm, "Do you accept?"

Sue groaned, seeing that Kamiko wasn't going to give in, "Ok fiiine," whined Sue, "I'll agree,"

"Right... soo..." Kamiko went red, as she started to recall the memory. It took a few seconds to fight down the embarrassment, "I was... well... I heard that my sister home, so I went to talk to her... she was no alone, or wearing clothes. I just... stared for a little bit till my brain rebooted and then yelled 'LOCK THE DOOR NEXT TIME' as I ran away,"

"Ok... and this is important, which sister was it... and was the partner a girl?" asked Sue.

"I said NO further details," retorted Kamiko.

"Yeah but you barely told us anything, I mean, which sister do I need to go up to and interrogate about this? Was it a mistake? Does she just enjoy exhibitionism? Was it your sisters partner or just someone the brought home? What happened after you left? These are all important questions that, while I don't need YOU to answer them, after all I did promise, I do want answers from someone," said Sue without a hint of shame.

"Well that's funny," said Kamiko with a thoughtful look on her face, "It's almost as if I'm friends with you and expected exactly that! Why, perhaps my choice of words was intentional, and I did not wish to direct you towards any of my sisters! Perhaps we get enough embarrassing shit from our mother,"

"Do you want an apology?" asked Sue with a slight wince on her face.

Kamiko shook her head, "No, no it's fine. I mean, I'm not really mad about it, and I get why you'd want to know, but I am serious about not wanting to cause issues for my sister. Granted, it does mean they won't be attempting to sell my secrets to you because of this, but you can be a bit intense. Plus, if it was one of my straight sisters, your first question would be 'can I join in', and I'd really rather not think of you doing... that... with one of my sisters. Thank god your straight," said Kamiko.

Sue grinned and said, "Hey, while I do respect that... I am totally into sex enough to sleep with your sisters just to cause you issues if I wanted to be petty. Sure I'd invite a few guys to join in as well, but that would probably just make it more embarrassing for you,"

"Could you... like... not do that?" said Kamiko.

Sue nodded, "Yeah... it's not a particularly strong desire, I can easily ignore it. It's mostly just a good thing to SAY to mess with you. Actually going through with it feels like a really good way to damage our friendship. That and I feel like I'd be asked 'when is the wedding' by your mother every time I see her after that,"

Kamiko grinned back, "Oh yes, Mum would totally do that to mess with you, and she'd probably justify it with 'well you were having sex with my daughter so that basically makes you family' all the while my dad glares menacingly from the corner 'You deflowered one of my girls, you should get married or else'. I can picture it now,"

Sue shook her head trying to clear the mental image, "Yup, nope. I want nothing at all to do with that. My parents aren't much for embarrassment normally but they would totally get on board... and oh god if they got my grandparents into it? Both sets of conservative grandparents? That is my hell." *nOvelnext.Com*

"Does this mean you're going to try and embarrass me less?" asked Kamiko hopefully while trying to look as adorable as possible to increase the chances that it would work. Kamiko was going for big puppy eyes, slight touch of water around the edges, mostly from keeping her eyes open so wide, and the shiest smile she could manage.

Sue opened her mouth to immediately deny it but paused. "Ok... so... I want to say no... but I also am trying to get away from the sex stuff so maybe I should promise to go easier on you anyway and then actually try to uphold that promise just because I want to and not for fear of the consequences?"

"If you're trying to have less to do with 'sex stuff' as you put it... I feel like you've failed," said Kamiko.

"Probably, but I'm trying to branch out a bit, not go cold turkey. It's a work in progress. Plus, I told you about my goals while I was retelling my section of the story! Did you zone out or something?" asked Sue.

"No... but I was thinking that you'd already given up considering all the embarrassment... and all the people you slept with while you were away, most notably all those servants," pointed out Kamiko.

Sue waved dismissively, "I didn't even sleep with half of them... ok maybe just barely half, but I did manage to say 'not half' so does that mean it was true? Or am I just not certain... hmm... has anyone tested that?"

"I'm not sure..." mumbled Kamiko, "I feel like it's got to have been covered in school, but I can't say I remember the answer if it was,"

[Chapter 1110 1110 Sassy Forms](#)

"Hey Kamiko, when do I need to sign up for Lust?" asked Kat.

"Um... I think you've got twelve months?" offered Kamiko "It's not a super tight deadline, we are encouraged to explore our options before committing... but it's not forever. Why, did you want to sign up soon?"

Kat nodded, "Yeah I mean... I guess I haven't spent too much time on it, but I just don't see myself picking any of others, even with my asexuality. Lust just seems... cool. The only other one I can see myself going for is Wrath but... I don't want combat to be my life, and Lust does have an enforcer division if that's something I ever want to get into,"

Kamiko nodded, "Yeah, no I understand. I've heard a lot of good things about Lust as a group. School has taught us that not all branches of Lust are quite as... family friendly, but the one here? They like to brag about having some of the highest approval ratings across all hubs. The head office for Lust is pretty happy with them despite the lack of overt sexuality everywhere,"

"Right... so how do I sign up?" asked Kat.

"You either go in person to fill out forms, download a bunch of forms, or look up the online version of the forms, and fill those out," said Kamiko.

"That's... shockingly normal," said Kat.

Kamiko and Sue shrugged together before Kamiko continued, "Yeah, filling it out doesn't even take that long, or so I've heard. In fact, if you want we can go through and fill it out now, seeing as you won't have access to it back on Earth. Though, if you'd rather I can print out a copy for you to take back home. You can just deliver the completed forms later,"

"I'll just do it later, I doubt you'd be interested in watching me fill out what are basically government forms," said Kat.

"No I totally want to see," said Kamiko, to Kat and Lily's surprise. "Apparently the 'additional information' sections are rife with a bunch of interesting little details that is more or less Lust insulting all the other factions, and sometimes themselves. I've never bothered to look them up... but this is a great excuse!"

Sue shrugged and said, "For me, I'll just fill out the forms as well and save them for when I get to Rank 3. I'll probably need to look over them again when I actually submit them for real, but I can make a good start, so I don't mind doing this together,"

Kat shrugged, "Well, if you're all ok with it," said Kat.

A round of nods followed Kat's declaration, everyone was happy enough to go through the forms now. It started out with basic stuff, name, date of birth, dimension of origin, confirmation that yes, Lust, is the faction you're trying to join and a few other standard things. It didn't take long, though Kat did have to think about who to put down in the 'parents' section. Luckily there was an option to tick to see Kat's guardians were her adopted parents, or well, just adopted mother in this case. No need to presume things about Callisto for now. When Kat got to the rules, she found her first bit of shade. It was to do with laws, and said the following.

'All members of the Lust faction are encouraged to uphold the law, both for the Hub, and whatever additional private arrangements building holders put in place. Lust will not protect you from any rule breaking, and will encourage law enforcement to be thorough in their punishments if it is deemed necessary.

Additionally, Lust has taken an additional interest in crimes of a sexual nature. In the event you get charged for any of the following: Public Indecency, Corrupting the Youth or Rape. Lust will force additional punishments onto the signer of this contract. While Lust does encourage freedom, self expression, and of course, casual sex, it must also be kept in mind that Lust offers services for these things. There are areas, including residential ones, where a number of riskier sexual fetishes can be

explored safely for all involved. Going out of your way to ignore these facilities and cause issue to the general public will be met with creative punishments. *novELNext.cOm*

Yes that's right, unlike Sloth who will shield you from the consequences of sleeping at work, Wrath who will pay for a certain amount of property damage if a fight breaks out, Envy who makes allowances for theft, Greed who champions tax evasion where possible, including handing out seminars on how to avoid as much tax as legally possible, Lust takes the opposite approach. You have been offered a chance to indulge. Use it responsibly or we will hurt you.'

"I see what you mean about insulting the other factions," said Kat pointing at the notice.

Kamiko nodded, "Yeah. It's not quite as bad as they make it out to be. Greed for example, would argue that since it isn't illegal it's technically not tax evasion. Sloth will still make you do the work you miss sleeping on the job, they just don't care if you stay late to finish it because you slept during the day,"

"What about Envy though?" asked Kat.

Sue spoke, "They have a rehabilitation program for kleptomaniacs... but they also have really good lawyers. As long as whatever is stolen has been returned in less than a week, and still remains in the condition it was found in, or better, then it's really hard to get anything to stick. They... nearly are as bad as Lust is making them out to be.

"Oh... right..." said Kat. "What about Gluttony and Pride?"

Kamiko answered with, "Gluttony doesn't make any excuses for their members either. It's why Lust isn't mentioning it. Gluttony also goes out of their way to provide ways for members to eat as much as they want, of basically whatever they want. Though that is a double edged sword... Mum complains a bit of weird Gluttony demons that like eating things very much not compatible with their bodies. Sure most of the time, it's technically edible because demons can eat anything... but in sufficient quantities it can become a problem,"

Sue then took the lead, "As for Pride demons, they have great lawyers as well, some of the best... but you do still have to pay for them. Pride demons sort of keep each other in check. Paying for a lawyer you don't need is shameful, as is getting caught doing something you're not supposed to... but if you didn't do it? The lawyers are basically free and they get to be all smug about it."

"Right," said Kat with a nod.

Kat kept going and found other entries that made fun of the other factions, such as one talking about the free benefits Lust gave away, poking shade at Greed for being willing to give away things. Other sections talking about the services on offer, with a note on the 'degradation sessions' that poked fun at Pride for needing a good working over. Surprisingly, the one that talked about food, instead of an attack on Gluttony, was an admittance that Lust's version wasn't as good. "Why do you think they'd admit something like that?"

"The surprise," said Sue, "Now you're really thinking about it. They can't just keep criticising everyone else otherwise it seems like they have unrealistic expectations of themselves. By admitting Gluttony does something better, they can show that they can self-reflect,"

Kat nodded and continued reading, mostly just brushing over all the sexual offers they had available, both as work, and as a service for pampering yourself. Sue kept pulling attention towards them, but she was mostly ignored. Each fetish listed, and god there were a lot of them, had their own little quip that were always related. Some of the... safer ones to mention were as follows.

For Humiliation, the note was: Only people with no other value in this world pick this option. They're basically worthless, and we don't really need them, but they need to go somewhere right?

For the other side, Domination the note was: We always need more people to punish the idiots. Sometimes we even get idiots from other factions, and you can put them in their place.

Sue insisted they were both very compelling arguments for people who enjoyed that sort of thing. Kat really wasn't sure what to make of any of them. Nothing seemed to stand out to her... but Lily blushed quite a few times looking through the rather extensive section. Kat knew that a lot of those memories would need to be locked away in 'The Talk' box, just because of the horrors learnt... but Sue's laughter every time Kat found something objectionable helped pull her mind away from the horrors and enjoy the time with her friends. While it did take longer to read with the running commentary, Kat wouldn't have wanted it any other way.