

DEMONS 1111

[Chapter 1111 1111 Wouldn't Have It Any Other Way](#)

Kat ended up leaving the forms with Kamiko, who promised to post them later, because apparently demons did still use post occasionally. It was a day later, Lily had been dropped off at her parents, Sylvie was at school, and Callisto was somewhere else. So it was just Vivian and Kat around for lunch. Vivian didn't exactly feel like spending the time to make anything proper, so she was quickly slapping together a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. When Vivian sat down to eat, Kat said, "You look like you'd prefer to be eating anything else,"

"Well you look like you want to have a proper discussion about something, but considering you stayed in bed, then ducked off to Lily's, and when you finally ask me something you instead comment about my poor skills in the kitchen, I'm going to guess it's nothing," said Vivian with a smirk.

Kat let out a groan and said, "Ok, maybe I do... but now I feel sort of invested in this sandwich thing. We can get to my problems later, why do you look so unhappy with your sandwich?"

"I don't actually like peanut butter much," answered Vivian.

"What?" asked Kat involuntary, as her mind skipped a beat.

"I don't like peanut butter. I mean, it's perfectly edible, but it's not something I particularly enjoy, not compared to other things I prefer," said Vivian.

"Why would you make them for yourself then?" asked Kat confused, "I mean... we have a whole kitchen full of food. I saw that the vegetable and fruit dishes were basically full when you got jam out of the fridge! Why do this to yourself?"

"I mean... it IS edible, I don't hate it, and it's very easy," answered Vivian.

"I didn't expect you to be so lazy," said Kat.

Vivian shrugged, "I just find it hard to get motivated when it comes to cooking. Callisto is so much better than I am at it that even if I took an hour prepping something nice I'd still fall short. Might as well just make something easy and edible so that I can stave off my hunger till dinner time and eat a good portion then,"

"That doesn't sound like a great habit to get into... what are you going to do if one day Callisto actually moves out or something?" asked Kat.

Vivian shrugged, "I dunno, curse her I guess? She's ruined 'normal' food for me at this point so there's really nothing I can do about it. Well, I suppose I could try to dedicate a large amount of time to learning to cook, but I don't really want to do that,"

Kat sucked in a deep breath and let the answer hang. "I suppose that sort of links up with what I wanted to talk to you about. It's connected at least... see... I had to fill in some forms on the demon side of things and one of the questions was putting down you as my adoptive mother... but I didn't add Callisto to the other half of things, so I guess... are you and Callisto together?"

"I mean, I get that you've never introduced her that way, and Callisto has been very clear that you're her best friend and that she enjoys acting as a maid... but I mean... that could've been just for Sylvie's benefit. Even if she is scarily perceptive, you might have wanted to keep something quiet... but I've never seen you guys kiss, or even get too touchy feely... but at the same time it seems like neither of you plan to ever leave each other's company, or like... date, so I guess I wonder. Which, well, this wasn't my original question but it's the one I'm asking now... so... yeah..."

Vivian finished off the half of the sandwich she was working on, then took a large drink of water from the glass beside her. Kat let Vivian take as much time as she needed, but eventually Vivian did answer the question, "I can't say I really know Kat. Callisto is certainly devoted to me, but I don't know if it's love, or at least, I cannot say if it's romantic love or not. I am sure you know she had a rough childhood, and I know she's not fond of her parents. They were both married, and perhaps that gives Callisto some sustain for love, romance and marriage... but perhaps not.

"As for me? I can't really say I know where I stand on the issue either. Callisto is important to me, and I can't say that I mind the idea of living with her for the rest of my life... but is it love? Eh... that's complicated. I find people beautiful, I find the world beautiful. I've laughed and cried over cartoon characters, actors in movies, and perhaps growing up I had a crush or two on a few teachers... *nOVelNExt.cOM*

"But I'm not sure I've ever had any romantic intentions towards any of my peers," Vivian sighed and turned to face Kat properly. "So if you ask me if I am in love with Callisto, the same way Lily loves you... I would have to say know, just from what I've observed of her. I cannot say I love Callisto the way you love Lily either. I am capable of sexual attraction... I think, but do I feel it towards Callisto?

"I don't know. I have known Callisto for a long time Kat. She has become part of my life, and I'd do anything for anything for her... but is it a sisterly love? Romantic? Friendly? I do not know, and I don't think I care to find out. You have not really seen it, but Callisto likes things to be easy to understand. She keeps things simple, she sticks to a routine, even if that routine can stretch out over months.

"I doubt you would notice, what with your leaving on Contracts so often, but Callisto has a rotation of meals that she cooks, in the same order, every time. Sure she takes weeks off, or has practice weeks, but she has a months' long cycle that is mostly unchanged cycle to cycle, year to year. She cleans the house in the same order every time, and the kitchen every day. You didn't see how Callisto acted when I told her I was adopting two girls. It was... something..."

Vivian sighed and took another sip from her water, "There was one time, when we were both much younger. I kissed Callisto you know? Just on the cheek. She was being adorable, and I wanted to do it. She completely broke down. Bawled like a toddler, hugged me for a few hours... and then avoided me like the plague for three months,"

Kat pursed her lips, stunned into silence. That didn't really sound like the Callisto she knew... and three months was quite a long time. "What... what happened after those three months?" asked Kat.

"I got fed up, confronted her, and told her that if she kept avoiding me I'd pin her to the wall and kiss her for a few hours if she kept trying to run away. I don't know how I feel about the fact she never tried to run after that... nor do I know what to think that clearly wanted nothing to do with my 'threat'. Was it

just too much to soon? Does she really have no interest in me at all? Does she prefer playing at the role of servant? Probably not because this was back when we were still in school," said Vivian.

"Well... shit. So... are you what... waiting for her to make a move on you?" asked Kat.

"I don't know Kat. I'm not sure I WANT her to make a move. That hurt teenage me quite a lot. Not just the avoidance, but the response afterwards. I mean... it wasn't the best thing to threaten her with... but it's not like I could contemplate really hurting her... so I just said the first thing that came to mind. Which... well I was a teenager, I was probably horny or something," mumbled Vivian.

"I feel like... as an adult with life experience and whatnot... you would have a better idea of your own feelings than me," said Kat.

Vivian just shrugged and took a bite out of her sandwich, grimacing at the taste before taking another bite. Kat glared at Vivian, who was still sitting side on and looking back at Kat. She didn't seem to be hiding, in fact Vivian clearly accepted this part of herself, and she didn't mind speaking on it... but answers were not forthcoming. "I don't really know what to suggest," said Kat eventually.

"I don't know either. I've read plenty of stories where two romantic partners sit in a sort of awkward limbo, both too scared to move forward. Perhaps there is some element of that in my choice to remain as we are... but at the same time, I'm not sure how much I'd care for anything else. In many ways, my relationship with Callisto is perfect already. I wouldn't trade it for anything. Certainly not for a few kisses, even if they are from Callisto,"

Kat sighed, "Look, as someone who's asexual I guess I can't criticise... but that doesn't seem like a great idea,"

Vivian shrugged, "I'm happy with my life. I love my job, my home is full of smiles, and what I have with Callisto is special, even if it's not romance. Yet, who's to say that it isn't our romance?"

[Chapter 1112 1112 Shrugs. Shrugs More](#)

*Welp. I guess that's that. Though part of me really wants to go and ask Callisto the same question just to see what she says in response... though based on what Vivian just said, Callisto might just ignore the question and run away. Perhaps if I got Sylvie to ask instead? The problem with that is Sylvie would likely figure out why I asked, and if Sylvie can, Callisto can as well.

Would she just play dumb? Callisto is smart... but how good is she really in social situations? She seems... fine, or perhaps even good. She managed to handle things at the science fair pretty well. I guess I don't have a proper understanding of how good Callisto is with people. She could probably fake ease of conversation with a tonne of effort and mental prowess... but from what I know of real life that's not quite how it works.

Smart Lily and Sylvie might be, but good at dealing with people they are not. Heck, Penny is a perfect example of my point. Lily is too scared of new people to speak normally with them if I'm not around. Sylvie subtly looks down on everyone who is either the same age, or much less intelligent... so when they're both she comes off very cold. Penny just doesn't understand the social contract, which... well it seems learned, or perhaps 'not corrected' is a better way of putting it.

So where does that leave me with Callisto? She is an adult, so I'd have higher expectations for her... but adults are really great at pretending things are fine when they really aren't, and I can see Callisto ending up in that category. Dammit, why does this have to be so hard? Vivian doesn't even want me to meddle with things. Perhaps her overly optimistic way of looking at the current situation is the right one. Look... I'll just sit on it for a while. I did have another question.* *noVeLnext.com*

"Hey Vivian," asked Kat as she turned to find Vivian now washing up in the sink, "So... what I was originally going to talk about was the fact I put you down as my mother on some forms recently, adopted sure... but I was wondering how you feel about that,"

Vivian nodded and smiled before saying, "I believe we've had similar conversations before, but in this instance I don't mind at all being your mother on paper... but that's not the question you're asking here is it?"

"No... I guess it's not. I'm still struggling to decide how to treat you exactly. I mean... no offence but you're not exactly old..." Vivian giggled at Kat's words, and Kat stuck her tongue out in response but kept speaking, "... it just means that our ages are fairly close... and you don't exactly feel like a mother to me... but I'm sure a big part of that is I'm not really allowing you to?"

"I'm away from home a bunch, and I don't really snugg up to you and tell you about my problems... I don't really see Sylvie doing it much either because she spends more time with Callisto... something I don't know how you feel about... but yeah... I guess it just leaves me wondering what YOU want,"

Vivian sighed, "I don't mind that Callisto and Sylvie have found common ground. I think it's very good for both of them... and besides, Sylvie still sneaks into my bed at night for cuddles fairly regularly when you're not here so I can't say that things are quite so tilted in favour of Callisto. That's not the real sticking point though... is it?" Vivian questioned. Kat shook her head in response.

"Yeah thought so. I mean... I get where you're coming from. And, not to say that I don't want you here, because I love having you and Lily around, but I did only adopt you because Sylvie insisted. As lovely as you are, and as little as I mind sharing a house with you... you didn't NEED a parent.

"I thought Sylvie was adorable, and finding out she was growing up in an orphanage I was struck with the desire to help. Callisto might find my impulsive, and sure, it certainly was an impulsive decision, but this house is pretty big, and I was thinking of perhaps moving to someplace smaller. Getting more people to live here was a much better decision. So much happier, and I do like this house. So an excuse to stay was great. Plus I can exercise my maternal instincts a bit.

"With that... I suppose you're still wondering how I see you. Well... I'm trying to get our relationship to be similar too siblings, specifically siblings with a reasonably large age gap. I'm not attempting to be your mother, and I don't think it would work if I tried. I don't think we're really at the 'siblings in all but blood' phase of our relationship though. At best we're good friends. Though, I suppose considering what happened with you and your best friend, perhaps it's for the best we're not quite so close,"

Kat recoiled from the joke, even as she tried to stifle her laughter. "Nope, no way, why would you put that image in my mind?" asked Kat.

"I just said we were at best 'good friends' so I've got to up my teasing obviously. Much more appropriate as an older sister," said Vivian.

Kat's eyes narrowed, "Have you been chatting with Nira?"

"Perhaps I have, perhaps I haven't," said Vivian with a grin.

"Well it's either Nira or Sue, but I'm guessing it has to be Nira, because Sue's just a friend and she's still willing to embarrass everyone by being overly raunchy nine times out of ten," said Kat.

Vivian just shrugged, "I shall not give up my source,"

Kat narrowed her eyes further, "Well that's just confirmed that someone did put you up to it... and I can probably just ask Kamiko, or Nira herself. Nira would certainly be happy to brag about corrupting a fellow parent in the ways of embarrassment, and Kamiko would be happy to know I share in her suffering. So... was it Nira?"

Vivian pouted, "Ruin my fun why don't you? Yes it was Nira. She's fun to talk to, even if we really only get to send one message to each other every day or so. It's kind of like having a pen pal again. That was something we used to do in school you know? Send letters to another school across the world. It was a cool way to learn about other cultures... is what I would say if the person I was writing to ever sent me back a proper letter. They just sent me back drawings which... well I didn't mind they were cool drawings, I might still have around somewhere... but it wasn't exactly informative you know?"

"Um... not really?" said Kat, "We did have to write letters a few times... but they were just for letter writing practice. We sent them to Santa Claus and I think the teachers? Maybe our parents once?"

"You guys still had letter writing classes?" asked Vivian surprised. "I know we're not that far apart in age, but my parents still got letters from friends and family pretty regularly when I was younger. Most of them switched to electronic stuff, either letters or just phone calls by the time I was fifteen."

"Yeah, well... most of the letter writing was from when I was very little, like, less than ten. Actually, I wonder if Sylvie still has letter writing classes? That might be worth asking about," said Kat.

Vivian nodded, drying off the dishes she'd washed up as well as her hands. "It just might be. It's a bit weird thinking about what things I learnt in school that are no longer applicable. Not the stuff that's wrong and was never correct in the first place, but the stuff that just isn't relevant like writing letters, or... hmm... I wonder. Do you still learn how to properly use the Dewey Decimal System in the library?"

"Um... I think so? Perhaps not properly? I think we only had like... half a class on it once when we got to primary school, and maybe a slight refresher a few years after that? It's not a focus, but it's not like it's particularly hard to use," said Kat.

"I suppose that's true. No other examples are coming to me though, that's what makes it so weird. I'm sure there's a bunch of stuff I learnt in school that you didn't and vice versa. I'm now quite curious as to what those things are. I wonder if there's a good website for tracking that sort of thing... I doubt it... but it would be a cool website," said Vivian.

"Did you learn how to make a website? That was like... a whole term long project once. The teachers thought everyone in my generation would NEED to know how to make a website for when we grew up," said Kat.

Vivian nodded, "It was covered... but only in computer class, which was an elective,"

"Eh, it was an elective for me as well... but if memory serves I think we also learnt in... English? I want to say..." offered Kat.

Vivian shrugged.

Kat shrugged back.

[Chapter 1113 1113 Lily And Evaline's Outdoor Adventure Part 1](#)

Lily's perspective.

Lily couldn't stop twitching at every sound nearby. Every snapped twig, bird song, or even just rustle of the wind seemed to set her off. Lily tried to just keep walking, but it was getting a bit much. "Look Lily, I know you aren't the biggest fan of the outdoors, but I thought this could be a nice way to bond. Nobody is around to overhear us, your dad is off with his buddies watching sports reruns. So I thought we'd be able to talk a bit... instead you look like you're freaking out. Did I do something wrong?"

Lily swallowed the drool pooling at the edge of her lips. "No, sorry mum. It's nothing you did. It's just... ever since those birds tried to swoop at us my feline instincts are freaking out a bit. It makes me want to catch one of the birds and eat them, or anything else wandering around the area. I'm trying to suppress it, but when I reflexively summoned my claws to strike back at those birds, I think I got my nose as well, and now I can't stop smelling... well basically food,"

"Oh," said Evaline not really sure how else to respond.

"Yeah... sorry if that's rude... and it's not like I didn't have breakfast... maybe I've been suppressing my instincts too much? Or perhaps indulging? I've been sleeping a lot... then again, it might just be that I'm not eating enough. Could be anything really," said Lily.

"Do you need a break to... what chase birds or something?" asked Evaline.

Lily shook her head, "No, I'm not hungry and despite what my Memphis side is saying I have no desire to eat raw bird," said Lily firmly. "What did you want to talk about anyway?"

"Just whatever," said Evaline. Which was a bit of a lie. Evaline had planned this outing in the woods mostly for the chance to see how Kat and Lily's relationship was going. If her daughter was going to be stuck with Kat for the rest of her life, Evaline was damn sure she was going to ensure Lily was happy with it.

Evaline had picked a less well known trail in the area. It wasn't popular for anything, and wasn't all that regularly maintained by the council either. It did mean there were parts the path had overgrown or mudslides that had taken out sections as well, but Evaline had enough experience with mountain trails to be fine, and Lily's Memphis instincts kept her even safer.

Though it was causing those urges. Lily was fighting the desire to just run into the trees and take what she wanted. *But what I want is NOTHING thank you very much. Dead bird does not sound appetising right now, not even normal chicken. I'm not hungry, and the idea of hunting something doesn't appeal

to me right now. Sure I know I can eat raw meat, and that one time I hunted with Kat during that trip with Xiang was great, but not now please.

What's even causing this? Is it nerves or something? Wait... no that could be it. Is something here triggering my flight or fight response? I guess I want to fight it... but I can't sense anything like that around, certainly nothing big enough to threaten me. So why am I panicking?*

Lily would later learn that a tiger had escaped from the transport truck while it was being moved between zoos and was camping out nearby. A Memphis certainly isn't going to be scared of a normal tiger, but Lily did feel the need to show it whose boss. Sadly, Lily didn't recognise the scent, and likely wouldn't have guessed even if she did recognise it. The tiger on the other hand, had booked it, and was currently trying to get as far away from Lily as possible.

"Soooo..." Lily kept the word going as she searched for a topic. "What have you been up to recently?"

"Really? I should be asking you that. There was the science fair, and of course, your off-world adventures. Compared to that, my life has been rather stale," said Evaline.

"Yeah but I mean, I've already told you about those, and you haven't really mentioned what you've been doing. So... what have you been up to?" asked Lily.

"Oh nothing of consequence. I got together to have lunch with a few friends, except it was cancelled because two of them got sick, the third was in a car accident, and the fourth just forgot so I called lunch off," said Evaline.

"Wait... who got into a car accident! Are they ok!" said Lily.

"Oh it was nothing too serious," said Evaline with a dismissive wave, "It was my friend Julie and she was fine. Just had somebody rear-end her car. It wasn't a big accident, Julie was completely unharmed and so was the jackass that rammed her. The real issue was that it took out her back tires, and it was a busy road. So the cops were called, and it took a bit of time to extract the other woman's details. Like pulling teeth apparently,"

Lily nodded along, until a thought struck her. "Wait... does that mean you ended up at lunch all by yourself before calling it off?"

"Ah, I didn't think you'd pick up on that little detail... but yes, that's exactly what happened. I did know beforehand about the two that had to call off because they were sick, but I'd expected Julie and Becca to show up... though with Becca I should've known better," said Evaline.

"She's the one who works night shift right?" asked Lily.

Evaline nodded, "Exactly, and she had work the night before. I'm not sure why she even agreed to it, but I was looking forward to seeing her despite that. So... when she didn't turn up I wasn't surprised. I don't know if she just forgot to put on an alarm, or if she slept through it, but when I called to see what was going on, she had clearly been woken up by my phone call.

"So I just said that Julie was in a minor car accident and lunch had been called off before she could realise that she was meant to be there ten minutes ago. In fact, I'm not entirely sure if Becca realises

that she was late, or if she just went back to sleep straight away without thinking about it," explained Evaline.

Lily bit her lip and then winced. *Note to self. Don't bite your lips when you've got fangs designed to tear through meat.* "Does it bother you that nobody turned up?" asked Lily, ignoring the blood in her mouth. It would hopefully heal quickly.

Evaline chuckled, "Lily, when you get to my age, something like that is just an unfortunate coincidence. Sure it's annoying I wasted a bit of time, but compared to my friends, I got off lightly. I just lost a bit of time. Two were bedridden, one needs to waste even more time dealing with insurance companies, and the fourth... well I suppose Becca got off easy, but I don't begrudge her that. Becca a night-shift nurse trying to become a real doctor. A bit late perhaps, but she's trying.

"Plus, this is just one of many lunches we've had. Most of the time everyone shows up, and we have them about once a month. Granted, Becca misses them often enough that I'm not really surprised, but once again, Becca is forced to keep bad hours and she's really giving her career her all. It's just life, it happens sometimes,"

Evaline jumped around a large root sticking out of the ground, watching as Lily did the same, before jokingly asking "Hasn't Kat ever stood you up?"

"No!" yelled Lily. "Kat would never do that to me,"

Evaline's eyes widened in surprise, "Really? Kat's never missed a single appointment with you?"

"Um... no?" said Lily, "At least... I don't think so? Nothing is coming to mind when I go over my memories,"

"Huh... I guess I really misjudged that girl," said Evaline.

"Yeah, I realised that a long time ago mum," huffed Lily.

"I do suppose you'll never let me live that down?" asked Evaline. *NoVELnExt.Comm*

"I doubt it... well no, I'm immortal so I guess I probably will, but it's going to take centuries! You had all these problems with my girlfriend, and they turned out to be nothing," said Lily.

"I will point out that she wasn't your girlfriend at the time, and I had valid reasons for my concern," said Evaline.

"Hmm..." hummed Lily in slight agreement. "Do... do you think you'll accept a way to become immortal, or at least... to stick around a bit longer?"

"I don't know Lily. That's a big ask for me and your father. I'm not necessarily opposed in principle... but I don't think it's something I particularly want. I might accept for your sake, but likely not for my own," said Evaline.

Lily sighed. *I'm not sure what I expected as mum's answer, but I can't say I particularly like the one I got.*

[Chapter 1114 1114 Lily And Evaline's Outdoor Adventure Part 2](#)

Evaline sat down on the large rock overlooking the forest. It was a nice clearing on the edge of the cliff-face. They were nearly at the top... but Evaline thought it was best that they were sitting down for this part of the conversation. Obviously Lily wasn't going to bring it up herself, so it was now Evaline's job to do it for her. "So how is your relationship with Kat going?"

"Good?" asked Lily confused, "I don't understand the question, I love her, she's made it clear she loves me. I'm quite happy with everything, and I've been quite happy to give the same answer whenever you ask that question. It's starting to get a bit weird,"

"I was trying to politely ease you into confessing about your sex life Lily. I already know that you sleep with Kat regularly, but because I know she's asexual and I know you're terribly shy, I doubt there was any actual sex involved," Lily's blush was already nuclear but Evaline wasn't done speaking yet, "I was trying to be polite about this, as I said, but I've given up hope of getting you to speak about it even with prompting. So I have to ask. Are you sexually frustrated?"

"MUM!" shouted Lily.

"DAUGHTER" shouted Evaline back with a lot less heat and a smirk on her face.

What the fuck Mum! How can you just ask something like that. Why would you ask something like that? "Because it needed to be asked," answered Evaline.

"Wait... did I say that out loud?" asked Lily.

"No, but it's not hard to guess what you're thinking Lily. Gods, it's almost like your my daughter and I've known you since you were in my womb. Odd that. I wonder when that happened?" asked Evaline.

"Oh, ha, ha, really funny Mum," said Lily.

"Well it must be fucking hilarious because otherwise you wouldn't be laughing, you'd be answering the question," said Evaline.

"I don't want to talk to my mother about my sex life!" hissed Lily.

"Well you need to talk to someone about it, and considering that all of your friends are also Kat's friends I doubt you'd actually be willing or able to confide in them about it. So now, I'm the one that's asking. Besides, I'm your mother. Do you think I've never had sex or something? Because if so Lily, I've got some bad news to share about me and your father, I hope it's not too much of a shock," said Evaline.

"Can... can you like not Mum?" asked Lily still bright red.

"No, Lily, this is important, but I also need you to not freak out completely and shut down so a mix of humour and mortification is pretty much exactly what you need right now. Though, I don't want you to think I missed what you said earlier. 'Don't want to talk to my mother about my sex life'. I'm quite surprised you have one, now please share," said Evaline.

"I don't have a sex life!" yelled Lily.

"That feels like a problem," said Evaline with a smirk.

Lily growled, pulling on her powers to summon up claws and slashed through a nearby bush, cutting the leaves to ribbons. "This isn't a joke Mum. It's super embarrassing and I don't want to talk about it," said Lily firmly.

"Well you're not getting out of it just because it's 'super embarrassing' as you put it. This conversation needs to happen," said Evaline.

Lily sucked in a painful breath. "Well... what about you and Dad? When was the first time you both had sex?"

"Together? Or like, at all?" asked Evaline, intentionally stirring the pot. *nOvElnext.cOm*

"MUM!" hissed Lily. Again. Evaline felt the responses her daughter was giving out were getting a bit repetitive.

"Well I'm sorry. I didn't find the perfect love of my life before my twentieth birthday and then bind our minds together so he could never get away. Forgive me if it took a bit of exploration on my part," huffed Evaline.

Lily slowly breathed in, then breathed out, still red but significantly calmer. "Right, um... ok when was the first time... you well... with Dad?"

"Hmm... well I can't be certain it was the first time, but my first memory of meeting your father was waking up with a blinding headache in bed with him at a college party," said Evaline, trying to sound wistful.

"What! Wait but you didn't go to college? Right?" asked Lily confused.

"No, I didn't, at least, not to learn anything, but college parties were the best!" said Evaline with a smile.

"You know what? I suddenly feel like I really don't want to know," said Lily.

"Does that mean you're willing to talk about your own sex life now?" asked Evaline.

"It isn't a sex life!" insisted Lily. Evaline just raised an unimpressed eyebrow. "Look... it's not important... and I mean... I'm not ready for that sort of thing... probably..."

Evaline rolled her eyes, "Lily, you're barely home, you spend all your time with Kat, and your not having sex with her. One day, you're going to be pent up, horny, and you're going to jump Kat, who is just going to let you because she doesn't see any reason not to, and then you're going to be the one dealing with the emotional consequences afterwards,"

"Why do you put it like that?" asked Lily suspiciously.

"Because Kat emotionally secure. At least, when it comes to your relationship. For her, sex isn't something to look forward to, it's an inevitability. When you both go all the way, Kat will smile, and be happy just that you were happy, and your emotions will be completely fucked up," said Evaline clearly.

"Why?" asked Lily softly.

Evaline sighed. "I'll admit this is just a guess, but normally, when you come down off the high of sex, you have a sort of epiphany. What that is going to be for you, I don't know. I skipped that part a lot at the

beginning by drinking too much and passing out afterwards, then having a headache to deal with in the morning. I doubt you'll get that luxury.

"Kat however, won't have that issue. I doubt she'll get all that worked up. She'll play you like a fiddle till you pass out from the pleasure, then be satisfied with a job well done and just go to sleep. When you wake up, if you weren't ready for that, it's going to suck for everyone involved.

"So I'm trying to make sure that you know when you're ready. It might be right now, it might be a year from now. What I really think, is that you need to encourage Kat to... explore a bit with you. Not full sex, but probably heaving petting until orgasm sometime soon otherwise you're going to try and dash through to the end straight away. Though... hmm... I suppose considering you're a lesbian maybe heavy petting is technically the end game? Food for thought,"

Lily groaned, "Look... Mum... I don't really know what to say?"

"Say you don't understand and ask questions obviously," said Evaline in response.

"Look... I haven't had any issues with... those sort of urges... I mean... not really..." Lily's mind flashed back to one particular dream during the recent Contract.

"I sense a story," said Evaline.

"You sense nothing!" hissed Lily.

"Come on..." said Evaline teasingly.

"Ok fine... look... I was maybe sort of having an erotic dream," Evaline nodded as Lily spoke, "And you also know that Kat's a demon right," Evaline nodded, that was obvious. "And you know how Kat can enter dreams?" Evaline hadn't really remembered that, but she could see where this was going, and it was BRILLIANT. "Right so... Kat sort of... walked in on me having dream sex with her... it was... um... something. Also not exactly... vanilla..."

Evaline burst out laughing. "Oh dear daughter. If that's not a sign you need to get laid I don't know what is,"

"Look... it was super awkward for me," said Lily.

Evaline managed to say "I'm sure it was Lily," between laughs.

"Yeah but it didn't go anywhere! I didn't make it weird, and I haven't felt... the need for that sort of thing since then," said Lily.

"Yes but I doubt that was much more than a stopgap measure. I really do think we need to talk about this Lily. I don't want you to rush into things and have you regret the outcome. Especially not when you're stuck with Kat. You can't just ghost her and avoid making contact ever again," said Evaline.

"Why do I feel like you're speaking from experience," asked Lily, not really wanting to know the answer but unable to stop herself.

Evaline grinned like the shark that caught the tuna, "You see Lily, after I had a horrible experience sleeping with my third boyfriend, I lost all interest in him. No, it wasn't rape or anything that bad, but he

was just so... soooo... bad in bed. It killed my interest in him. So instead of that awkward conversation, I just stopped talking to him,"

"I didn't want to know," answered Lily.

"Too bad," said Evaline. "Let me tell you about my first boyfriend. There at least, we were both awkward. See, we met..."

[Chapter 1115 1115 Lily And Evaline's Outdoor Adventure Part 3](#)

This one has a lot less lewd stuff.

"... and that's how I met both my third boyfriend, and my first, and only girlfriend," said Evaline with a smile.

"Ok... look, that does give me a pretty good idea of why you weren't concerned with me being gay, but can we just... skip to how you met dad or something? I can't say I've been particularly pleased with these stories. It's just weird,"

"Is it weird because it's hard to imagine me with someone who isn't your father, weird because you didn't think I had a sex life, or weird because I'm your mother?" asked Evaline curious as to the answer.

"Well... It's not like I really know the answer to that Mum. I mean... it just feels weird? I feel embarrassed about these facts? I think it's because you're my Mum. Obviously you had a sex life. I know way too much about it now. It also might be that it feels weird not to hear about you being with Dad... because well... I guess it feels a bit like cheating? Which is weird, because obviously this all happened before you and Dad met, so it's not... but it still feels wrong to me somehow," said Lily, trying to put a voice to her thoughts as best she could.

Evaline rubbed her chin thoughtfully, "Hmm... I suppose it's very different for you. You've only had a crush on two people, and arguably, only loved one of them," Lily winced, not really believing that second fact, but wishing it were true, "so to you, the idea that I'd need to... look around a bit first is clearly quite foreign to you. Perhaps I should ignore your protest. You need to get used to this sort of thing, even if it won't be for your relationship. You'll need to be able to empathise when others come to complain about their situation,"

"What about Sue?" asked Lily. "I don't constantly get embarrassed around her,"

"Yes, but you also don't recognise her as 'looking for a relationship'. Though I'm sure she has helped you get more comfortable with the idea of sex, and what that involves," said Evaline.

Lily sighed, "Ok, maybe I do need to get more used to the idea... but can we focus on how you and Dad got together first? I'm kinda interested now. I don't think I've ever asked before,"

Evaline nodded, "Right well, I already mentioned waking up after drinking too much?" Lily nodded, "Right well that really was the first time I met your father, at least, in memory. Nothing much happened after that. I was technically dating someone else at the time, but the last thing I remember before I started really drinking that night was my boyfriend of the time getting pulled into one of the guest

rooms by a fat chick. Look, no shame if that's your kink, but I wasn't, and never planned to be, a fat chick. So, I thought, 'next time I see that bastard I'm breaking up with him,' which I did. noVelnext.com

"Right, so I got up, and saw your father there, and he had abs. Great dick too, but I didn't remember that right at that moment. He looked particularly tasty, and I wasn't completely sure if I'd slept with him or not. Could go either way truth be told. Anyway, I left a note taped to his underwear that said 'if you ever need these removed by a professional call me'"

Lily slapped a hand over her face. "Why Mum? Why?" asked Lily.

"Hey, I was young, dumb, and way too hungover to think of something that doesn't sound like it's from a trashy romance novel. Anyway, I broke up with my boyfriend... after walking in on a few people 'enjoying' the morning. Took me a bit to remember the right room see. Anyway, I found him, slapped him awake and said I wasn't interested in someone so easily swayed. He tried to say something, but I didn't stick around to listen. He wasn't a great lay anyway, and I wasn't too broken up about it.

"I WAS crying at the time, but that was because I might've slapped him a bit hard and ripped off my fake nails and a good bit of skin on my fingers. Still, it looked suitably dramatic for everyone else to spread the story, so I got a tonne of sympathy points I didn't really deserve. Didn't help me with your father though,"

Evaline waited for a few moments and Lily sighed, "Why did it not help with Dad?" asked Lily with a dead voice.

"Two out of ten for enthusiasm Lily, it's almost like you don't want to hear this story," said Evaline. Honestly? I'm not sure I do anymore. "So it was a week later, and I still hadn't heard anything and I was getting a bit pent up. The last time I had sex, was a week ago, but the last time I remember having sex was like... two and a half weeks ago? Something like that. So anyway, I went out looking for a decent man.

"I walked into the nearby nightclub and low and behold, who do I find sitting on his own in the club?" Evaline paused, waiting for Lily to answer.

"Harold," said Lily with another sigh.

"Exactly, Harold Furos himself," said Evaline with a grin. He was alone at a table sort of off to the side, but not quite far enough for me to think he was actually there alone. He had a glass of what I'd assumed was a margarita, but the pansy was just drinking iced tea! So I slide into the chair next to him and start chatting him up.

"Now, perhaps I should've waited around a bit after sleeping with him, but he didn't really remember what I looked like, and didn't phone me afterwards because he'd heard about this big breakup that I was involved in and thought it was his fault. Anyway, I flirt with him for a while and he's not really picking up what I'm trying to deliver. So I just wait for him to lean forward to take a drink, and instead a pull on his tie and kiss him straight on the lips.

"He seemed so shocked, even asked why I did that. Well I was clear with him, that I'd been flirting with him for the past half hour, but he wasn't reacting at all, treating it like a normal conversation. I said if he wasn't interested, that was fine, but I WAS interested and I wanted to make his night a bit better.

"Anyway, we danced a bit, flirted a lot, and eventually I asked if he wanted to go back to his place. He said he didn't know me well enough for that, and I wanted to laugh, so I handed him my number and got ready to leave. Well, turns out he did save my number, listed it down in his address book, like a pen and paper address book. Had me listed as 'mystery girl'. Then asked, 'Hang on, are you the girl I slept with last week'? And that's when I found out he didn't remember me. God that was a blow to the ego.

"So I said yes, yes I was. That I was angry he didn't notice, but I did still want to jump his bones so I stormed off and told him to call me when he was free next. From there... things were a bit rocky, he eventually called me up and tried to get the full details about that breakup I had. Well, I calmly explained it to him... and I don't want to make it seem like Harold wasn't ok with things... but he didn't really know if he could trust me.

"As far as he could see, I was a bit flighty and unreliable. Which was true enough I suppose. Anyway, he said there would be no more sex until he felt comfortable, or I could find someone else. I think that's the first time I really started to see Harold as anything more than a guy I could sleep with,"

"Wait what! It took you that long!" hissed Lily.

Evaline shrugged, "I just wasn't looking for anything serious yet. And I'm not saying I was ready to marry Harold then and there... but he was such a doormat most of the time. When I met him at the club? He was there by himself because his friends were trying to pick up girls, succeeded, and then left without telling him. Despite the fact Harold didn't even want to be there. He was meant to drive everyone home, but it turns out his friends took taxis to a motel to fuck their dates for the night. Didn't tell him.

"He had to find out when they met up in class later," said Evaline with a sigh. "So yeah, I thought he was a bit of a doormat. But he was firm. No relationship, if that meant jumping straight to sex. I of course pointed out that we'd already done that, but he said it didn't matter. I thought about moving on... I really did... but there was just something about him. I couldn't just walk away. Perhaps it was because he'd just given me a challenge... but I wanted to meet it. I was feeling competitive, so I decided to give it a shot,"

[Chapter 1116 1116 Lily And Evaline's Outdoor Adventure Part 4](#)

Evaline stood up and said, "The next part won't be so shocking to hear so I guess we should get back to climbing,"

Lily shrugged. *I guess so? I'm sure my now natural grace will keep me from falling to my death as long as you don't say anything too shocking. Aw well, I'll trust myself not to be that clumsy anymore.*

Lily fell in behind Evaline as they started to make their way to the summit. There wasn't much climbing left anyway. Lily was pretty sure they'd finish the climb before the conversation. Hopefully there would be more convenient places to sit at the top, if not they might have to track back down the mountain to this rest spot to have lunch.

"Right... where was I?" asked Evaline two minutes into the climb. Before Lily could answer, Evaline supplied it herself, "Right, Harold had just unknowingly challenged my pride. So after that we started to go on dates. Looking back on it now... they were really cute, and super romantic. I didn't properly appreciate them at the time, I was always trying to figure out new ways to make him crack instead.

"The first date we went on was this lovely picnic in the local park. Or well, not the local park you know here, obviously we moved, but you might still remember it anyway. I know Harold and I actually took you there a few times. It was that park with the little river on the other side of town,"

Lily searched her memories and managed to dredge up a half forgotten memory of the park in question. "Is that the one where you took me... and my old best friend who shall not be named, to play that one time and we tackled Dad into the river?"

Evaline clapped and nodded, "Yes that's the one. I'm a little surprised you remember it. That was the first real date we had, or the first date your father planned, depending on how you want to look at it. He brought all the food, I know he said he made it, but I also know he isn't quite that good a cook so he probably worked on it with your grandmother. It was a nice afternoon, but he kept things very PG.

"I was practically draped over him by the end of the afternoon, but he just gave me a small peck on the forehead and told me he had to attend a night class at the university, and that he'd set up another date soon. I was too stunned to do anything other than nod. That was where I really started to get to him you know?

"Second date, I was prepared. He asked what I wanted to do, and I decided that we had to go swimming at the beach. I might have gained a little of chub around the waist now I'm older, but when I was younger I looked damn good in a swimsuit. So of course, we both went to the beach. I brought the food this time, because I wasn't going to be shown up in cooking skills. Of course, it wasn't anywhere near as good, so I was totally shown up in cooking skills, but Harold didn't mention that.

"I used every trick in the book I could to get him to agree to a night together. I convinced him to put sunscreen on me, but he was much too careful around my more... sensitive areas. I ended up getting some nasty sunburn around the area actually, which was fine, it would be a good excuse to force him to do better next time. Once that was done, I took him swimming.

"I was constantly jumping on his back, pressing my boobs to it or trying to get my hands in his pants, though he would just grab them and wrap my arms around his neck every time he caught me. God that man was patient. Perhaps he was also enjoying the challenge, and it was a wonderful date, minus the sunburn... but no, by the end of it I was the one who nearly cracked.

"He left, once again to go to classes, and I stomped home and abused the fact I knew some of his friends to get his class schedule. I can barely remember if I was pleased or annoyed with the fact he actually DID attend the later classes, so he wasn't lying. I would later find out that this is because he had a 'part time' job that basically kept him busy fulltime with the extra work they piled on him. He got paid for it at least. n**Ovel**Next.co**M**

"Anyway, now that I knew he was busy most days, with classes most nights I tried to think of a way to convince him to stick around. I managed to secure a date on a day without work, or classes and I started my plan. I got him to take me around the shopping centre. My plan, and god do I feel like a shallow bitch for coming up with it now, was to walk around and buy things, with his money, and then suggest we could always go home and spend some time together if it was getting too expensive,"

Evaline paused here, turning to face her daughter. Lily stopped, meeting Evaline's gaze. "Now, that date technically went well. I got all these things I wanted and Harold didn't complain. My plan failed, but I

wasn't too mad at the time. Now though? I feel disgusted with myself. I, being an idiot, assumed Harold was getting most of his money from his parents, despite the fact I knew he had a job. This is because I WAS still getting money from my parents.

"I do not want you to ever think what I did was a good idea Lily. It was shallow, it could have potentially cost me the love of my life, and I never should have done it. But I wanted to 'win' against your father, and I was an idiot. I didn't love him back then the way I do now, even if there was a spark burning already. So... when I explain how it went, I want you to understand that it happened, and I'm sharing the story, but I'm not proud of it, and I don't tell you this so you can emulate my behaviour,"

Lily nodded, "I understand. I... I'm not sure I could do that to Kat anyway..."

Evaline nodded and turned back to continue the climb, "Yes I suspect you won't repeat that particular mistake, but I felt the need to make it clear. Anyway, Harold put up with it the whole time. I didn't get anything too expensive, for the most part just things I could tell myself I needed. I didn't want to be thought of as a gold digger, and I did like him, so I wasn't trying to bankrupt the man... but I did buy a lot of things.

"Anyway, the day ended, I had all this new shit, and I still hadn't managed to make him crack. I thought about how I should go about my next idea, but it took me a while to plan things. We went on a few dinner dates, met up at his university a few times, went to some college parties but neither of us drank. Harold because he doesn't really like to, and me because I wasn't going to drink without him. Because at that point I was pretty focused on Harold. I'd decided to make him a long term boyfriend, I wasn't really thinking of marriage yet... but I was settling down. I just needed to know if he was good in bed or not,"

Evaline shook her head sighing, "It really does seem silly now. Your father was showing me a wonderful time. He proved he was willing to work. That he had money and would take care of me. That he cared for me as more than just a good lay, and I didn't understand how precious what I had was. Anyway, I planned another shopping trip. This time, I was going for appliances, more expensive things. I wanted him to crack...

"And he said no. He looked me in the eyes, and said 'I am your boyfriend, not your wallet. I'm not playing this game again. If you really need something, we can talk about it, and maybe I'll buy it for you, but I am not a credit card,'. Which, of course, was very understandable even to my younger self. But this was it. He'd cracked! Or so I thought. So I said to him, 'Ok, well if you're not going to indulge me with money, why not finally let me take you to the bedroom,'

"I was so sure I had him... so sure that he would cave. I was willing to go along with him. I didn't want him for the money, so it wasn't hard, but seeing him constantly deny my advances was getting to me. I was so sure... and yet he still said no. He said that he wasn't ready for that. I slapped him. Not particularly proud of that either, even if I'm not too mad about my younger self for it. So I slapped him once and said 'I don't know if you're waiting till marriage, or waiting for something closer, but I'm sick of waiting. I want you to think about that, and talk to me in a week,' then I stormed off,"

[Chapter 1117 1117 Lily And Evaline's Outdoor Adventure Part 5](#)

"What... what were you feeling when you did that?" asked Lily.

"Huh... oh well, a few things I guess? Why do you ask?" questioned Evaline.

"Well... I just can't imagine myself ever doing something like that to Kat. If she made me swear of sex in exchange for our relationship... that's something I'd totally do. I don't know how hard it would be, but I'd put in a fair bit of effort. It's also weird because your my mum I guess... but yeah... it's just weird to see that it was so important to you that you nearly broke it off with Dad... especially since I guess I know how this all turned out," explained Lily.

Evaline nodded in understanding and started to explain, "Right well... ok this is going to be a bit of a tangent from the 'story' part of the story so is that ok?" Lily nodded. Evaline wasn't surprised so she continued, "Right so... it wasn't really about the sex. Or at least, that wasn't the main part of why I was getting annoyed. In my eyes, I was asking for one thing, and I didn't consider it to be particularly valuable.

"I slept with people I liked enough after a few dates, and if they weren't any good in bed, and were only 'alright' to date I dumped them and moved on. I didn't see anything wrong with that... and I still don't really. It's a bit shallow, sure, but as I proved with your father, if they could make up for the bad, or in this case, lacking sex life, then I'd be okay keeping the relationship going.

"Your father... I found out later that he had a few issues with sex, and it makes me wonder if we really did sleep together that night I first met him. I'm also all but certain his drink was spiked, because Harold isn't one to get drunk, having issues with that as well. Anyway, I didn't know any of that, so all I saw was a young man that was denying my very obvious advances.

"It was a pretty big blow to my ego every time he turned me down, and while it was for the best, I felt rather attacked every time he brushed me off. Which, might seem a bit stupid, and perhaps it was, but I want you to think about how you'd feel if every time you asked Kat for a kiss, she patted your head, made an excuse, and then left,"

Lily winced at the instant pain that shot through her heart at the image. "Kat would NEVER do that to me!" Lily retorted hotly.

Evaline rolled her eyes, "Yes I'm aware of that Lily, but you can somewhat understand my point now can't you?"

Lily grit her teeth but nodded, "Yeah... and sorry I overreacted. Just... the idea that Kat would deny me something so basic... it's not a pleasant thought, and I felt the need to defend her, even though it was just an example,"

Evaline nodded, "Yes, and while I'm sure you don't see sex as something basic, especially not when you only have interest in one woman, but for me sex was something about on the level of an intimate kiss might be to you right now. For me, sex was a very expected part of a relationship. Every time he said no, I doubted his commitment to the relationship. It felt like I was the only one putting in any effort, and if you remember, I didn't appreciate the effort he went to, to earn money. So I didn't really count that either.

"It all just bubbled up there in front of the mall. In some ways, I think it was wrong of me to slap him. I mean, I'm no proponent for domestic abuse, and I certainly don't hit my husband regularly..." Evaline paused, then coughed and muttered, "outside of the bedroom."

"MUM!" hissed Lily. "I have CAT EARS. I can hear you very well and I really wish I COULDN'T. Why didn't you just say that in your head?"

Evaline shrugged, "ANYWAY. I certainly don't suggest slapping someone unless they enjoy it," Lily just glared at her mother as her blush dissipated, "but I feel like it was a good wakeup call. Slapping someone doesn't hurt too much, it mostly just stings. I wanted to make my point clear. Harold was hurting me with his constant dismissals, and I wanted to hurt him back, or at least show that I wasn't going to take being hurt like that without fighting back a bit. Does that make sense?"

Lily rubbed her tongue around her fangs as she thought on Evaline's points. "I get it. I'm not sure I'd ever be able to make a point like that to Kat... then again, even if I wanted to, she has regeneration and way too high a pain tolerance," said Lily.

"She could just be a masochist," offered Evaline.

Lily shook her head, "That would be weird, but I'd probably be less worried if she was. I can feel Kat's pain through our mental link sometimes, and I can tell she doesn't enjoy it. If she DID enjoy the pain then at least I could understand why she's so often hurt, but alas... Kat's just like that,"

"I understand," lied Evaline. Lily rolled her eyes but just gestured for her mother to continue. "Right well... that week I didn't know what to do. I kept reaching for my phone to call Harold and chat with him. My friends all saw that I was behaving oddly, but I kept brushing them off. I didn't really want to talk about it at all... until my mother sat me down and forced me to talk about it. It was... a bit of an enlightening conversation. I think the most interesting question she had for me was 'Are you angry at the lack of sex, or are you angry because the lack of sex makes you think Harold doesn't trust you' and that hit me hard, because I didn't know the answer."noVelnext.com

Evaline rolled her eyes at the shocked look on Lily's face, "Oh sure I know the answer right now, but please remember daughter, that I hadn't had a truly serious relationship in a few years at that point and I was getting antsy. My trust in... perhaps not men in general, but the ones I picked out was pretty abysmal. I felt like I'd finally found one that liked me as I was... but then he wouldn't sleep with me. I didn't know if he didn't think I was attractive, if he was just with me for a bet or something else negative.

"Still, that question from Hannah, in combination with Harold's firm stance with me really got me to think about what I wanted in life. Not to get too sappy, but it really did force me to take a good long look at my life choices and really think about the future for perhaps the first time ever. Oh sure they tried to get us to think about that sort of thing in school, but I never treated it all that seriously.

300

"So... the big meetup came. Harold met me at that park we had our first date and we sat down and really talked. Harold opened up to me about his problems with sex, and alcohol somewhat as well, then he tried to apologise, but I stopped him so I could explain my side of things first. Most of which I've already told you, so I'll skip it. When it was over, I apologised for making him uncomfortable, and for treating him like an ATM. He apologised for not realising what his constant denials of my advances were doing, especially since he did recognise we were in a relationship.

"We spent hours talking things out. We'd met up in the morning, we completely skipped over lunch and it was dark before we noticed. We still weren't finished talking... so I asked him to come back to my house and stay the night, and that I'd sleep on the floor and he could take my bed. Well, he insisted I take the bed in the end. I ignored him and we both slept on the floor, but anyway, we talked and talked all the way home. Then through a dinner my mother prepared... and that's how we really got together.

"There were some ups and downs after that. The first time we slept together was super awkward. That one time I got super drunk and he had to take me home, while I was trying to molest him was another. God I felt so bad about that one when I woke up, but he kept insisting it was fine even though it wasn't. That's what curbed my drinking habit actually. Anyway, I'm not sure if you'd care too much about the rest but... well... I hope my story helped," finished Evaline with a smile. Looking out over the top of the mountain. They'd reached it a little while back but Lily hadn't looked around yet.

"Mum... I have no idea how that story is supposed to help me..." said Lily awkwardly. "But... thanks for telling me anyway,"

[Chapter 1118 1118 Bad Tidings In Small Letters](#)

Back with Kat.

Things settled down a lot after that. Kat split her time between practicing dangerous water morphing, and hanging out with Sylvie until bed time, then hanging out with Lily after Sylvie had gone to sleep. Lily in mostly the same vein split her time between hanging out with Sylvie, hanging out with her parents, practicing her shadow magic, and spending time with Kat late at night. After the talk with Evaline Lily had been considering her relationship with Kat a bit more deeply... but she still felt no need to get things moving just yet. Perhaps one day, but Lily knew it just wasn't the time yet.

Lily was quite grateful for Kat's asexuality. It meant that she didn't need to worry about how long it took. Kat had no desire for that sort of thing, so there was no pressure on Lily's mind, worrying about waiting too long and causing a rift to form between the two of them. As such, Lily decided to just, leave it be. Perhaps she would need that push Evaline seemed worried Lily would abuse, but Lily felt that it might just be for the best if she did. For now, Lily was silent on the matter, but a bit more appraising of Kat when she looked, and more affectionate... in human form. In Memphis form nothing really changed considering she spent so much time sleeping on Kat in that form already.

When Friday came and went without being summoned, Kat was a bit surprised, but shrugged it off. If demons didn't want to send her anywhere, she wasn't going to complain. It just meant she could spend more time practicing or with Sylvie. It wasn't until Monday morning Kat saw that burning circle. Lily was woken up, and put in her backpack... promptly falling asleep again, and Kat went around the house saying her goodbyes before standing on the circle and letting herself be whisked away.

When Kat stepped out at the other end, she found Nixilei by herself with the smell of salt in the air. Kat looked around and saw they were on the edge of a cliff near the ocean with a town visible down below. It was a bit strange to be summoned in the middle of nowhere, and with just Nixilei, so Kat felt the need to ask, "Hey Nixilei, how are you doing? Where is everyone?"

"I am fine, thank you for asking," said Nixilei, before pausing a few moments. "As for the rest of the group... they are not as well. Sadly, it is nothing physical so I cannot simply heal away their injuries,"

"So... want to talk about it?" asked Kat.

"I suppose I will have to," said Nixilei with a sigh. "It is why I walked so far away to summon you, to give me time to go over things before we reached the others. Being so far away from town also gives us a good excuse to be late, if that's what it takes," Nixilei turned away from Kat and gestured over her shoulder for Kat to follow. There was a fairly well marked path of stones that looked like they'd lead them down the mountain.

"I'm a bit surprised that you left Green on her own. Not that she can't take care of herself of course... but you've always been a bit... protective," said Kat.

Nixilei scoffed, "As if you aren't twice as bad with Lily. Did she manage to transform yet?"

"Yup! Lily can swap freely now, and she's just managed to touch on Rank 2 magic. Still sleeps most of the time though," said Kat.

Nixilei laughed, though her smile looked pained, "It's good to hear that some things are not so easily changed. As for why I feel ok leaving Green alone... this is an important port. The enforcers here are always on the watch for troublemakers, and the rest of my group promised not to leave their room... not that I believe they would at the moment..."*nOVElNext.COM*

Kat inclined her head when Nixilei trailed off, "You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to..."

"No... no I should. It is something that you will likely be told, and it is not a secret to anyone anymore. It has to do with Gareth's great, grandfather. He passed away. No foul play is suspected, but it is not an auspicious time. Additionally Gareth, Green and Kress were quite close with the man. Still... that's not the real issue. Torston, that was the man's name, was a pretty major political player even in his old age. Though he wasn't expected to leave for any longer than another twenty years. As I said, he is old, was old, and his death, though sad, wasn't a surprise.

"No the real surprise is that he passed away before Green and Gareth could be married. He was a big part of what made that possible... and with his passing... there is some... contention with their union. It's not particularly clear at the moment if it will become a real concern... but if things start to look bleak, it might be too late to act.

"Kress has recovered... mostly, but Green and Gareth... their emotions are running high at the moment. They're both quite sad, but they're also angry at the situation, and they're pushing for different things. Green is of the opinion that they should be seriously trying for a child. It would give them an excuse to push the wedding up, and quite efficiently block any political pressure by pointing out the fact she was pregnant...

"But it would mean that Green could no longer participate in the tournament, and with us already in the second last round... giving up just before the finals essentially? It would leave a bad taste in quite a number of mouths, and potentially cost both of their families a lot of political capital. While it will be seen as acceptable for them to marry quickly after Green's pregnancy, it will also be seen as an

honourless and cowardly way to avoid losing in the final round of the tournament. Regardless of what their actual chances are..."

Kat bit her lip. *That's... really not a great situation. Wait shit. Lily should probably be awake for this. LILY GET UP. IMPORTANT NEWS.*

[What?]

Kat quickly pushed her memories of the recent conversation at Lily.

[Oh...]

Kat swallowed, and spoke, once Lily seemed caught up. "So that's what Green wants to do... but based on the fac they're arguing... Gareth has other ideas?"

Nixilei nodded, "Indeed. Gareth is instead pushing for the opposite. That they should pull themselves together, train their asses off, and win the tournament. It would give them the political capital to tell everyone to 'fuck off' to put it in crude language. They would have a proven track record of skill, their teamwork would be without reproach, and we would prove that nobility from both races could work together to achieve victory in a very important tournament.

"Gareth is also, arguing, rightly so, that even if he and Green were... actively and enthusiastically attempting to have a child... it might still take not months but YEARS of effort for them to actually conceive a child. It means that Green's plan is just as risky as Gareth's 'just win it all' idea, if in a different way. So now they're arguing about it..."

"Though I think a lot of it is just to have someone to yell at. They both feel rather hopeless at the moment. Torston's death... despite being expected still hit them hard. Torston had his affairs in order quite well... but still, with politics being what it is... I can't say what's going to happen. It might not even be a likely risk that anyone will even attempt to come between them... but well... it's hard to say, and I'm not kept up to date quite as often as some other spies due to my close proximity with Green."

Kat nodded, "Right. Um... though... um... hmm... hopefully this doesn't sound rude... but you seem remarkably okay with Torston's death... is there a reason for that?"

Nixilei giggled slightly as she hopped down three stone stairs in rapid succession, "Ah, I take no offence. It's a remarkably simple reason actually. Torston's wife was assassinated you see. He ripped the assassin in half after he caught her, but well... she was a fey assassin, and about as famous a spy as it gets.

"He never took that distaste out on me, and the whole reason a fey was sent was because Torston was trying to build bridges with the fey... but it does mean that he has no love for my profession, and was rather cold to me as a result. As he was one of the main voices support Green and Gareth's union I could leave Green alone with him without much fear. So I didn't have much to do with him, and what little I did have... was... stilted,"

"Ah... that's well it's not good but it's understandable," said Kat.

[Chapter 1119 1119 Chatting As We Go Down](#)

"So... what exactly is the plan going forward?" asked Kat.

Nixilei shrugged, "Medium term, we're committed to this round of the tournament. Not only have we summoned you for it already, we spent the time to travel here, and just backing out a literal day before the round starts would be seen as horribly poor form. Short term, I'm not totally sure. We need to get on a boat tomorrow morning, presumably with Thyme on it, but until then plans are quite flexible.

"The other three are too busy wallowing to allow them the chance to look around properly at the time, but you're free to do so once I show you where we're staying. The question of how hard we're going to try in this round... is one that will probably come up and also just as likely be dismissed. Nobody wants to intentionally lose the round, and with you on our side, victory is a real possibility. Not one we want to taint...**novELnext.COM**

"But as I've said a few times now, nobody is feeling 'good' going into this round. I suspect that depending on the challenge, we might be looking at a string of losses we'll have to work hard to overcome later on. Sorry Kat, but we'll be relying on you performing well to keep us afloat until emotions settle.

"As for long term? All our long term plans are potentially at risk and nobody is looking fondly at them for the moment. I suppose we're all sort of waiting to see if we can pull ourselves through this round despite the hardships before we seriously consider our plans... though depending on Gareth and Green's argument, we might have a plan before the end of the round. Not sure what Thyme has planned this time, he didn't tell us how many days we needed for it," explained Nixilei.

That's a bit of a bummer. I sort of want to explore the town, make it a bit of a date... but on the other hand I'm not sure I want to just leave Green and Gareth alone with each other and risk them fighting too much. Perhaps we could help calm things down? If we can't do it with words, my aura would be up for the task.

[While it would be a shame to miss out on a date, I'm pretty sure that no hidden assassins will prevent us from having a nice date after this is all over. So I'm perfectly fine with putting it off till the end. Of course... with that being said... I'm not sure how much we can really help. Grief is not an easy thing to deal with, and we don't know if your aura will help or hinder long term.]

[Sure, you can probably keep them calm in your presence, and stop any further arguments until the tournament is really going, but if we're separated like we have been in the past, then what happens? I don't think we've ever really tested it, and certainly not with something like grief. Anger is more of a temporary affliction. Once it's been squashed, it's gone. Grief though... just because you're not sad about something for a bit, doesn't mean you've stopped grieving.]

[What could be worse, is if all that grief is just pushed down instead of away. Like... looking at a messy table and throwing it off to get a clean one. If you throw it in the bin, it's dealt with, but if you just throw it on the floor you're going to trip as soon as you try to actually use the table for something.]

Bit of a strange way of explaining it, but I get the idea, and agree with it. I'm not even sure how we would test something like that properly. Though, I do wonder if even in the worst case scenario I should try using my aura while they sleep. Might be worth asking Nixilei if everyone has been managing to sleep well, because I could at least help with that. Even if all the issues pile on in the morning, a good nights rest will help deal with it.

[Yes... I suppose that might be worth it. Perhaps ask Nixilei?]

"Hey Nixilei, how has everyone been sleeping lately?" asked Kat.

"I do not understand the question," said Nixilei.

"Hmm... perhaps if I explain. So Lily and I were debating about what we wanted to do for the rest of the day, and that led us to the fact I can calm people with my aura... but we don't know if it would actually help at all. Grief is a lot less fleeting than anger. I don't know if I'm soothing the issue, or just suppressing it with my aura. So we decided it wouldn't be worth risking it...

"Until I mentioned that I could use it while everyone is asleep to help you all get a good night's rest. It still has the same risk of course... but I felt like giving everyone a chance for a better sleep might be worth it. I'd say it's likely to improve our chances at winning, and I've been sleeping almost every night during my break so I'm well rested enough to not be put out by my own lost sleep. In fact, I might spend the night practicing anyway, so it's really no issue," explained Kat.

Nixilei tapped her chin to show she was thinking about it before answering, "It's certainly worth considering. I doubt that Green or Gareth would agree to it... but technically I have permission from both of their parents to override their complaints when it comes to matters of their health. I could argue this is a treatment... and just give you permission myself. I'm not totally sold on the idea, but it's worth considering at the very least,"

"Not sure how I feel about not telling them... but it shouldn't be a major issue. If you think it's best I won't mention it. I do trust you enough, and they trust you as well. Especially Green. I know you'd never do something to hurt her... it just leaves a bit of a bad taste in my mouth to give them no warning at all," said Kat.

Nixilei nodded in understanding, "If that's the case we can tell them I'm going to enforce it. While it will potentially be an extra source of stress, if it's making you uncomfortable, I can just tell them, and then inform them they have no choice but to go through with it. Might be some arguments about it, but they won't be hard to win,"

"Thanks Nixilei. I'd just feel better if it was done that way. It's not mind control sure, but I don't exactly like using it on people without their permission. I'm sure it would have plenty of combat applications if I cared to test them out... but I really have no desire to test such a thing," said Kat.

"It's no problem, I understand. Most healers take a number of courses on ethics that cover what you should and should not do with your powers to avoid giving healers a bad name. Of course, I took a very different class about how to horribly exploit those same values as a spy, but I still try not to abuse my healing affinity much," admitted Nixilei.

"Does that come up often?" asked Kat.

"Surprisingly? No. Perhaps it's because I've mostly been assigned as bodyguard and counter intelligence for Green, but there have been very few situations where my healing powers could kill someone in a more efficient way than just stabbing whoever it was. Do remember though, I've been trained more for intelligence gathering. My job as a bodyguard does mean I have combat training...

"But I mostly got this role because I'm also a healer. They don't need to assign a healer, or medic as well as a bodyguard to Green this way. Green never wanted a big group of followers, but I can act more as her friend in most situations, so it's never put a strain on our relationship, either professionally, or personally. Though it does cause some minor annoyances of course," explained Nixilei

"Well I'm glad you haven't had to regularly compromise your morals," said Kat.

Nixilei shook her head quickly, "Oh I don't do it for any moral reason. I accept that I'm not a great person moral wise. I just recognise that deliberately damaging the reputation of healers is a good way to ruin yourself in the long term. It might mean less access to healing, for either myself or my friends. It may also mean that I'm kept from more powerful healing knowledge for fear I'll misuse it. Sure the moral argument is a small benefit, but really not the main one," retorted Nixilei.

"Oh... well thanks for sharing," said Kat awkwardly. *I mean... she's not wrong but I... well no she was pretty clear that her morals had been a bit skewed by her upbringing. Then again, I spent hours talking to Meng, and Nixilei seems well adjusted in comparison. Perhaps I just have higher expectations because Nixilei is a friend?*

[Chapter 1120 1120 Safe Harbour](#)

Kat was taking in the view of the city. It was a bit oddly shaped, but quite large. There was a small river that cut through the centre of the city with a few buildings alongside it. Most of those were twice the height of the next highest buildings from other sections of the city. From there, the city seemed to build around the river until splashing against the ocean and really spreading out. The city looked a lot like a squashed arrow, with the stem coming down from the river, and the point touching the ocean and spreading out. The land mass itself curved slightly to reinforce this position.

"What can you tell me about this place Nixilei?" asked Kat.

"I know a few things. This is considered the premier resort town in the elven lands. This is because it was actually founded by a few beastkin that got lost in a storm a long time ago. Before tensions rose, this city was founded on elven land by beastkin settlers and became a bit of a melting pot for cultures.

"It's quite famous for staying completely out of all wars both nations were involved in... well... at the time it was founded neither the beastkin nor the elves were considered to be one nation, but they still never got involved in any of the wars. The one time it happened was because one side attacked the town. It's unclear which side though...

"The history is quite clear that both sides accused the other of hiding elite spy units inside the town, and that the strike on the town was simply a strike against those individuals... but the records are quite clear that they were both doing it, and very unclear about who was actually responsible for the attack. It's further complicated by the fact that the only people who died in it was a well known businessman and his wife...

"But the husband was an elf, and the wife was a cat beastkin, so it really wasn't clear which, if any side they were supporting. Some researchers believe 'both' is the answer. They were a merchant couple after all, and smuggling supplies to either side of the war was profitable if they weren't getting caught.

"Anyway, their son found out about it, and he spent the next year drawing and enchanting a series of large stone pillars that created a massive shield around the town, cutting it off completely from the war at the time. Sadly, most of these pillars burnt out protecting the city from a tsunami a couple hundred years ago. They do still have two surviving pillars in a museum but the runes are still quite faded," explained Nixilei

"Ah, that would be why the city isn't larger then? Regular tsunamis?" asked Kat.

Nixilei made a 'so-so' gesture, "I wouldn't call them all that regular. Once every few decades, no more than other costal regions really. This city... oh I just realised I never named it. The city is called 'Safe Harbour' with Safe written in old elven, and Harbour written in ancient felin, the main language cat beastkin spoke. It's worth noting, even when the town was founded the languages were already old and not particularly well used. Not sure how it's translated to you though," said Nixilei.

"I just heard Safe Harbour, but I got a little bit of the context your explanation provided afterwards just from hearing you say it," replied Kat.

Nixilei let out a hum of interest, as she wondered if the translation left off more information because Nixilei intended to explain the rest, or if mixing languages was a problem area for it.

"Right well, it's become a bit of a party town and a good money maker for the elves, considering the fact that they still get the taxes for the place. Apparently staying out of wars is one thing, but taxes are another,"

Kat couldn't help but laugh at the idea. A 'completely neutral' city-state in the elven lands... except they still paid their taxes. "It makes sense but I just find it so silly," said Kat between laughter. "Do you think the elves would have left Safe Harbour alone for so long if they weren't getting taxes?"

"I'm not sure. The area is a great natural port with quite a few places for ships to drop off goods. The increased trade the city brings in might be worth it even without the taxes... but the taxes do certainly help," answered Nixilei.

"Do you know what Thyme is gathering us here for? Like, are we actually doing something inn town? Or are they going to teleport us somewhere else?" asked Kat. *noVELnext.com*

"I'm not sure," said Nixilei. "I try not to guess what goes on in Thyme's head. That way lies madness,"

"Surely some people spy on them though, right?" asked Kat.

Nixilei made a 'so-so' gesture, "Sort of? Thyme is really strong, and with their space affinity it's not hard for Thyme to just leave an area with no way to follow. Sure every spy would know to report Thyme's movements, but they aren't going to try to hide that fact. There just aren't many people who could avoid Thyme's notice, even when Thyme isn't trying. If Thyme wants to keep a secret? No spy is going to figure it out,"

Kat nodded along, conceding the point, "Right well, changing the topic a bit. Where are we staying?"

"We're staying at the 'Seaside Villa' which is neither on the seaside or much of a villa. We've booked out a section of six small, but well made wooden huts that are all in a circle. We picked up six just to have the whole section to ourselves. Each hut is basically just a bedroom, with a small kitchen and bathroom.

Each one has a double bed, so there should be space. I'm assuming you and Lily want to sleep together right? Green and Gareth are, despite the fights, but even if they weren't six huts is enough for everyone to have their own if we really wanted,"

Kat was about to answer but decided to introduce Lily properly. "Hold up Nixilei," said Kat, and Nixilei paused. Kat shifted around to open the backpack completely and Lily rolled her eyes and hopped out.

Lily transformed on the spot and huffed. "I was perfectly capable of getting out myself Kat. You're not that tall, and the backpack was designed so that I could slip out if I want to,"

Kat shrugged, "It's sort of like opening the door for you, it's just the chivalrous thing to do,"

Lily shook her head and sighed, "Anyway, as I'm sure you can guess, my name is Lily and I'm Kat's girlfriend. You did meet me last time, and we sort of talked but this is much more natural. Now, I'm going to jump on Kat's shoulders because I realise I don't have the best footwear for walking on slippery mountain terrain and I don't want mud on my feet,"

Lily then did just as she said, hopping onto Kat's shoulders with a leap. [Thankfully I wore pants today. Imagine if I'd worn a dress.]

You probably would've just turned back into a cat. "It's nice to see you as well Lily," said Nixilei with a slight bow, "I am glad you got your transformation under control. I am not sure what Thyme will allow you to do during the tournament, but hopefully you will not be bored,"

"Yeah... Thyme was somewhat unclear about the rules," said Lily.

"The rules are somewhat unclear about you, actually. The rules are clear, familiars are allowed... but the definition of familiars matches the bond you have with Kat... except for one specific line, being 'A animal chosen by...'. Now, obviously you're not an animal. If we treated beastkin with animal forms as animals then we'd never reach peace with them. As far as we were aware... a bond like you to share wasn't magically possible.

"That hypothesis is obviously incorrect, you exist, and your bond is real. So it leaves us in an odd area where the rules don't really account for you properly," explained Nixilei as they finally stepped off the mountain. The group started to navigate towards the nearby dirt road.

"You know... having a familiar seems like a good idea, why doesn't everyone have one? Even if it's just for the tournament. It seems like a boon," asked Lily.

Nixilei winced, "Well... the spell we use for it joins the life of two beings. It gives the weaker of the two strength and the dumber of the two intelligence... but the real issue is that it connects two being's life. With our version of the spell? If a familiar dies so does their owner... and most animals don't live as long as humans. Connecting your life to one regularly reduces the mage's lifespan to that of their familiar,"

"Huh... odd... I think you guys are doing something wrong because while, yes, it was heavily implied Kat and I will die at the same time, I got Kat's lifespan, she didn't get mine," said Lily.

Nixilei shrugged, "Demons might have so much lifespan that giving away large parts of it still leave them immortal. I don't know. It's just considered a big risk. Still... some people think it's worth it,"