

D.E.M.O.N.S: GETTING SUMMONED WEEKLY ISN'T SO BAD

Chapter 2: A Totally Normal Birthday Part 2



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At the end of the day Kat was getting ready to leave when Lily walked up to her

"Hey I, was just wondering, I mean, if you had nothing planned would you like to hang out at my house for your birthday?" Kat turned towards her friend *Do I ask about her parents? Do I accept? I didn't tell the old man I'd be out late but...*

"Sure that sounds fine with me, will it be alright with your parents though?" Kat asked?

Lily's eye twitched for just a fraction of a second before replying "Yeah, it should be fine, and I mean, I asked it's just, I don't know what their problem is."

You and me both Lily. You and me both. Grabbing her bag and heading for the door, the two walked for a while in companionable silence.

"So, I'm sorry I can't get you anything more but I hope you like it" Lily muttered holding out a worn looking piece of paper.

Kat grabbed the paper from her friend and noticed it was rolled shut. "Thanks Lily, it's fine really don't mind it, but uh can it wait till later to check out? We are just in the middle of the sidewalk and there isn't really anywhere to stop" Her friend went a bit red and turned away.

"Um, yeah, ah my bad, it um. Yeah, it can wait till my house I'm not really sure why I didn't just wait to be honest" *What is going on inside that girl's head sometimes. She's a good friend and she has great grades but sometimes I wonder.*

Picking up the pace the girls quickly arrived in a small neighbourhood, a bit out of the way for most, but for Kat it was about halfway between school and the Orphanage. *I wonder if I should visit more often, I haven't really had the chance to really talk with Lily recently outside of school.* Strolling up to a modern stone house with a small garden out the front, Lily walked up to the door and took a key out of her pocket only for the door to swing open to reveal an unimpressed woman examining the two. *Oh, yeah how could I forget.*

"Good evening Ms Furos thank you for having me over" Kat said as she walked in.

"No trouble at all Katarina, please come in" said Ms Furos with sharp eyes and a small smile.

Seriously, is it just me she doesn't like or is she naturally that creepy. The girls took off their shoes and headed for Lily's room. "Come in, I haven't really cleaned up but you've been here before, you know what I'm like" said Lily.

Messy the girls says, her room is nearly cleaner than mine and I have nothing in it. If she didn't have so many books lying around, the room would be spotless. Kat wandered in and left her bag by the door looking around for space to sit. Lily's room was a strange space, with dark walls and posters of strange symbols, a perfectly clean desk and literally piles of books lining the walls. *Ok well, the books are stacked pretty neatly but still Lily, why?*

Wondering over and throwing herself in Lily's desk chair Kat sighed stretching herself out finally able to relax.

"So shall I check out this scroll now?" Kat asked.

"Um, yeah sure" Lily said. Kat unfurled the scroll and started reading,

"*Thanks for everything Kat, I mean it, you've helped me a lot throughout these past two years and I really wanted to do something to express that. You know how I get sometimes stumbling over my words so I thought I'd do up a fancy 'ancient scroll' for your birthday. I wonder if my future self will even be confident enough to give this to you, probably, I'm not quite that bad, but Oh, did I force you to read it after you went home? If I did make sure to bonk me on the head next time you see me because I'm trying to be more confident in myself, I think. Really though I just needed to say thanks Kat.*" After that was a series of strange symbols Kat didn't recognise *Probably more demonic stuff, I think that's what she's been up to lately anyway.*

Kat beckoned to Lily who got up and slowly sunk towards her looking a bit like a small scared kitten. Kat wrapped her arms around the poor fool. "Thanks Lily, you're the best" Kat said.

"It's, it's nothing Kat, really I meant what I said."

"Bah, your plenty confident in class, you just need to talk with everyone else the same way you correct your teachers" Kat said with a grin.

Lily's face went a bright red at that one, but didn't say anything. *Ha she knows I'm right. I'll never forget the first time she corrected the maths teacher in the middle of class, didn't even put her hand up I nearly died laughing.* Kat's smile only got wider as Lily disentangled herself and hid half her face behind the pillows on the bed.

"So, what's the research topic of the week?" Kat asked.

"I take more than a week to research something you know, that was one time" Lily replied

"Yeah yeah, one time where you went through five major research binges in a month, I don't know where you even found half of those books" Kat said

"You know I research everything on the computer right?" Lily gestured towards the desk

"The sort of books I'd need are old and expensive most of these are literally junk I found around the place."

"... What?" Kat asked shocked.

"Wait I never told you Kat? Some of these books don't even have anything written in them I wish they were real," Lily said holding back laughter.

"Fine fine, I guess I see where you're going with this. Seriously though tell me what you've been up to I quite like to hear about your research" Kat said

Lily's eyes brightened, fixing her glasses and letting the pillow drop Lily starting talking, "Well, actually I've been back on demons again, I did a completely horrible job the first time really, it's just a bit hard because all the old myths have been so distorted in just the last 10-20 years where demons went from these horrible monsters that steal your souls to 'complex human character' and look don't get me wrong I love that take on them I really do but it makes it so hard to get into the history of demonic figures and what forms they used to take see even..." *Here she goes, I really wished she would be this happy about a few more things but at least this is something. Besides, her research always is interesting.*

Lily continued to, for the most part, complain about the difficulties of trying to uncover long forgotten accounts of demons and how their interpretations had changed over time slowly only to be completely upended and the legacy dashed in the last decade, before Kat glanced over at the clock.

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Shit, I listened to Lily go on for hours, I have to get back before Gramps starts freaking out

Lily, eyes still shining, noticed a shift in Kat's demeanour "What's up Kat? I'm not boring you am I?" Lily asked

"Lily, its past eleven, I have to get back before it gets too late. I'm lucky I can relax tomorrow but even still I have to be up to wake the kids" Kat said

Lily's eyes went wide "You can stay here if you want, I'm sure I can just convince me parents especially considering" Kat held up her hand getting Lily to stop

"It's fine I can't worry the old man again, not after last time... Anyway I have to go maybe we can catch up later. I'll see how things are going around the orphanage and if I have any jobs left for the weekend" Kat said grabbing her bag and making short time towards the door. Waving to her friend as she left, Kat quickly made her way down the street towards the orphanage, waving at Lily smiling in the doorway before she rounded the corner.

A short jog later and Kat was approaching the Orphanage grounds and noticed a light was on in the old man's office. *What's going on here? I know Gramps gets a bit worried but why is the office light on instead.* Silently making her way up the front lawn and opening the door she looked around and all was silent. The children asleep. Kat tiptoed as she made her way to the office.

Kat slowly opened the door before peaking in, spotting Gramps reading behind his desk. Kat stepped into the room. Gramps was an odd one. His office was filled with rugs of all shapes and sizes with the largest rug encircling the desk and a slightly smaller one encircling the sofa in front for the guest. The rugs all had various strange designs and none of it quite fit together, some rugs had spots others stripes, most rugs lined the floor but Kat was pretty sure the curtains were rugs as well and yet, even in the madness, the two largest stood out with intricate detailed linework in mesmerising patterns. Shaking her head to clear her thoughts Kat sat down on the sofa.

"Katarina" a pause, "Kat, I well" the old man sighed turning to face her "You've been here for a number of years, I've taken care of you most of your life and well..." sighing again Gramps struggled for his words. *What has gotten into him? Cheer up Gramps this isn't the old man I know and love.* But Kat held her tongue. This was important, she wanted to give him a bit more time.

"You're the oldest charge the orphanage has ever had, we have a surprising number of connections and manage to adopt practically everyone, I don't know how I do it but well..." *Gramps you're rambling again.*

"It's fine Gramps, just say what you need to say, it's clearly weighing on you" Kat said. The old man sighed. Air rushed out of him as he seemed to age a decade in a moment, but a resolve shone in his eye.

"Kat, I love you like a daughter, I do. But the rules that allow me to run the orphanage forbid me from taking in someone over eighteen. Honestly, I hate to even tell you this. If it was just me getting in trouble I'd probably shut up and not try to put your life on the clock but, because I care about you, and because this is your problem as well, I need to ask. Kat, can you promise me that you will find yourself a good place before you turn eighteen? Please?" Said Gramps. *Shit Gramps, I, I didn't know, I... No, I have a year, school finishes soon I have plenty of time to find a place to live, Gramps looks like he's being stern here but I can see the pain in his eyes... I have to try.*

"Gramps, I accept. I swear I'll find a place for myself." Kat said with resolve she almost felt

"Good, good, thanks Kat, please have this as payment. It's not much but I hope it's something" Gramps said, lifting a box up onto the counter.

Kat looked at the package examining it closely. *Gramps hasn't ever really given anyone much of anything for their birthday. There is just too many kids at the orphanage to give them birthday gifts especially with the high adoption

rate. Gramps is making a big deal out of this though... What is in this box?*

As Kat touched the lid of the box something burned through her. Kat smelled soot and ash and her body felt an uncomfortable heat. And then it was gone. nothing had happened, hardly even the memory remained. Kat paused for just a moment before lifting off the lid to reveal an intricately woven black kimono adorned with white flowers. Kat's eyes bulged. *Gramps what have you done, where did you... I mean... this is, woah.*

Flicking her yes up to Gramps in surprise she saw him laughing."It belonged to my wife, once upon a time, the fool told me to give it to the next lass I married, so I'd always remember my first." Gramps sighed and rubbed his eyes.

"That dammed fool, she should have known I was never getting married again, as if I could forget her." Said Gramps, staring at the ceiling.

"I hope she won't be to mad at this old man for giving it to his daughter instead" and with that Gramps seemed to sink back into his chair. He looked older now. Across the room, Gramps's old clock continued to count. Each thunk landing like a hammer fall on the silence. *Damn you, old man, I'm not crying.*

Walking over to Gramps and hugging him Kat said "Thanks Gramps, for everything, truly"

After patting her on the back a few times, Gramps picked himself up and headed for the door "This old fool needs to get himself to sleep, much too late for these old bones" he said and walked out the door.

Kat just stood there for awhile before carefully returning the garment to the box. She'd have to find a good way to store it but for now it would stay in the box. *Dammit old man, don't go giving away stuff like this, I already can't repay you for what you've done.* Sighing and carefully making her way up the

stairs Kat expertly navigated the halls in the dark with the ease that only came from sneaking around the building since she was a little girl. Returning to her room and placing the box on her desk Kat sighed and grabbed her pyjamas. A quick shower later and Kat was flopped against bed ready for sleep.

A flash of fire, and the sound of burning crackled next to Kat's ear. Half asleep Kat batted at the strange sound before a bright flash erupted and covered the room. After the light had dispersed, everything in the room seemed fine. There was no fire, no flames, bed and desk were in order and yet Kat was nowhere to be found.