

DEMONS 381

Chapter 381: Story of Her Life

Eventually, once Kamiko managed to get herself completely together she answered Kat's lingering question. "Yeah. Yeah I think I do."

Kamiko turned herself right-side up and move over to the edge where she could take a seat. Unlike Kat who could abuse her wings' surface area to easily float around Kamiko had to put in a little extra effort, and she wanted to make sure she didn't just fall under the water, so sitting was the way to go. The water was still relaxing, but she could already feel the change. It was now like it was pressing in on her rather than helping her relax properly, but she swallowed her fear as she thought of the similarities between her own story and Kat's.

"So, the first part of my story is a little like yours. Though... maybe I should start with my family. You mentioned that you didn't have anyone to talk to well... I had my family but I never wanted to complain about this to them, especially not properly. In some ways... it's their fault but they aren't to blame? If that makes sense.

"A lot of my issues are because of things they did... even if they never knew those things would end up being a problem for me." Kamiko let out a sigh. "I'm also certain my mother knows. She's never brought it up, but... sometimes she says things in certain ways that make it so I can't help but question how much she's already figured out."

Kamiko pulled herself together best she could and let out a long breath of air, trying to steady herself but it wasn't going the best. Still she pushed forward anyway. "So, the school stuff I mentioned? Well... it's not one school per district. Demons don't really tend to have enough children for that. For some reason, it gets harder and harder to have children in two ways. The first is power, the stronger the demon the harder it is without assistance from an artifact or something.

"The second is the number of children you already have. I... I don't think I've ever mentioned how weird my parents are seen by a lot of other demons for the number of children they have. It's... it's maybe not the most appropriate thought, but... one thing I did have to hear repeated a lot is that my parents have to be having sex like rabbits just to get the number of children they did. Not to even mention how rare triplets are. Twins are fairly common actually, not that much rarer than single children, maybe forty percent? But higher than that is rare.

"At the time... I was always so embarrassed. Though I guess now that I think about it those sorts of teasing only started when I was a little older. Continuing the point though, because there is one I swear, is that having as many kids as my parents do is rare. Nowadays, I think it's actually kind of romantic you know, that my parents clearly still care so much about each other. Clearly still LOVE each other even after all the years they've been together... and I take a lot of comfort in that now.

"At the time though, it was just another point to make fun of me for. Wait, I'm skipping around. School districts!" Kamiko splashed the water in minor irritation "Right, so, when we do our learning, it's in a schoolhouse that everyone from the district goes to, but there are normally quite a few districts that share a schoolhouse.

"Which is fine, of course, and there isn't too many kids but... it happens to be in THIS district, and I already talked about the issues with my mum's plants. Additionally, me and the triplets are at this slightly awkward age bracket. They are just old enough that none of the children would actually know who they are, having all graduated.

"But certainly not old enough that the teacher had forgotten them. This means I started as an outcast. Whereas my sisters managed to make due simply because there was three of them, and they all had their own area they could excel in and bring in new friends I... I just don't."

Kamiko sounded surprisingly sad to Kat's ears as she continued to speak. "They all have something they are brilliant at. Something that captures their passion but... I just have nothing. Books are nice, and I'm not the worst artist. Kerra let me destroy plenty of canvases to learn. I enjoy my time playing sports with Merra, but I don't care for them on their own... I guess I just lack a passion.

"This meant that... I was the weird kid from the weird house, and that fact was spread quickly by the teachers that weren't fond of my parents or siblings... AND the ones who were fond of me, believed that I would have some crazy specialty like they did... so I'd always get singled out in various activities. Looking back on it, they were just trying to help me find my... thing? So to speak.

"I think they saw that I wasn't exactly... the happiest even though I was always smiling, so they'd give me chances to find something that would make me happy... of course, picking the 'weird girl' to demonstrate one thing or another only made me stand out more and more, so the ostracization got worse.

"There was nothing too physical like you, any proper fighting was practically instantly put to a stop by the teachers. There are quite a few and they are much stronger than adolescent demons. But little things, bumping into me in the hallways, knocking my writing stuff from my hands.

"Stealing my lunch and leaving something else in its place to make it look like I'd grabbed the wrong thing from home... that one happened more than once." Kamiko set with a particularly bitter note in her tone. "So... I just wasn't able to get to know anyone I guess. Whenever I tried to get close to someone, a particularly nasty guy, called Craigne, would start picking on whoever showed me a hint of interest, and then double up my own bullying for the week.

"So I just... kept my head down, and spent time with my family. They all knew of course, that I had no friends... it's not like I could hide that part, but my sisters especially took time out of their schedules to play with me. To teach me things, and eventually my mother trained me in combat that you've seen."

Kamiko smiled at this, Kat could see through the fog with her eyes, but it looked somewhat sad as well. "It was lovely really, and I do love them for the fact that they helped me get through it all... but it wasn't what I wanted, nor I suspect, particularly what I NEEDED. Well, perhaps the combat training COULD have been, but it wasn't.

"I still wasn't taught to actually go after the things I wanted. Even with a bit of confidence and what were actually somewhat refined skills for my age group at the time... I was already the outcast and everyone knew it. People would move away from me if I approached them. The best I could get was a polite, if stiff conversation about simple things everyone should know the answer to.

"Also, it's worth noting, that our own version of schooling doesn't take up that many hours of the day. Most demons would play together or socialising afterwards but... of course, I wasn't welcome. So to home I would wander, hoping that one of my sisters would take the time out of their day to humour me.

"They didn't always, and I understood that, intellectually, but emotionally, it really hurt. There was three of them, and they didn't always have contracts so... I felt betrayed all of the times I was alone. The times they didn't have time for me. Which, is perhaps... somewhat horrible of me you know?

"They have their own lives. They have friends that they want to spend time with, and their own pursuits. If Erra wants to read a book... well actually she can read in the middle of a live combat and be fine, so if she was actually around and nobody else was she'd just hand me a book and give me space wherever it was that she happened to have taken up residence but... that was a bit more hollow than spending time with the other two triplets.

"Perhaps Kerra would be a better example. Sometimes, she was home, and yet she'd lock her door and enable the silencing panels on the walls to keep me from getting her attention. I understand why, but it did hurt.

"Perhaps though, the real reason it hurt so much, is that I have so much love for them. I've always been a very bouncy person, and I've loved hugs since before I could talk, or so I'm told. I just... I enjoy chatting with anyone I can, and speaking with people, but I'm just a kid to most people my parents know, and they're boring anyway. My sisters though... sit at that awkward area, where they are old enough to have a life, but young enough I wanted nothing more than to be a big part of it."

"Wait... what about Aslena? Didn't she grow up with you?" asked Kat. "Aren't you similar ages?"

Kamiko sighed. "Yes and No. She didn't go to the same school as the rest of us, she wanted to do the full education and headed somewhere else for it. So she wasn't home that often once we got older. It's... it's another story really, I'll talk about it another time... if we have one that is? I mean... I'd like that?"

Chapter 382: Story of Someone Else's life

Kat bit her lips as she went over the story Kamiko had just told her. It was strange, but she now knew more about Kamiko's past than she did Lily's. She'd asked of course, back when they were younger and newer friends and Kat had been politely, and surprisingly forcefully, especially for Lily, told the girl didn't wish to speak on it. Still, Kat was sure if she asked now she'd get an answer. Even if a small part of her denied that fact.

"I... I'd love to say I understand Kamiko, but you've heard my story and know I never can. The orphanage never had anyone around long enough to really get to know anyone as an older sibling.

"The only thing I can relate it to, is my... sort of half adoption with a girl called Sylvie. She was the first person I really considered to be family outside of Gramps, and I don't really know how it happened. I mean, now of course it is a bit more obvious because we've all moved into a nice home, but that's another issue and not really something we need to go over now" said Kat.

"That's alright" said Kamiko as she pushed herself away from the wall to resume her floating. "I think it might be better you don't try to understand. It's just nice to know that you've heard me. I'm more than

aware you could have said 'I understand' it's not enough of a lie to prevent you from speaking it, especially when you think about it a certain way"

Kat clicked her tongue. *Of course. That's something I hadn't really thought about. Kamiko knows what it's like to grow up unable to lie. I... I wonder what that does to a person? Is there anything I should know? I... I guess I could ask?*

"Um, what is that like exactly? I actually only recently had that penalty forced onto me. How do you go about not being able to lie to people?" asked Kat.

Kamiko giggled at Kat's question, seeing the precious naivety of the idea. "Oh Kat, it's much too easy to lie without lying. As much as I'd love to say it is a great experience, it really isn't. Double meanings are everywhere and you can say some shockingly incorrect things if you try."

"Could you give me an example?" asked Kat. "I can't really think of any off the top of my head."

"Oh, well a favourite insult of succubi everywhere, is to say, 'you look like you've gained weight' especially when it's amongst children" said Kamiko with a grimace. "The reason they can say that, is because we all get taller and, well it simply is a rather obvious truth when you think about it. Young children age and gain weight as they become taller.

"But you can see how that is used maliciously of course. Um, a really good one is to say stuff like, 'I think this' or 'I think that' because, especially if you think the words out in your head beforehand, you can say practically anything, because even if it is untrue, and you believe it's untrue, if you run the words through your mind, you have in fact, thought whatever it might be.

"So, um... to pick something that really would be rude to others but I think you won't mind. I'm able to say, I think your mother was a terrible person. This is easy to prove false because I've never met her and neither have you. We both have no reason to believe that she was a bad person, but if I think it I can add the words and say it" said Kamiko with a shrug more to herself than Kat.

Huh... I didn't really think of it like that. This... this curse isn't really all that restrictive is it?

"What's even the point then?" asked Kat "With tricks like that there really isn't all that much we can't say. Plus, we just can't speak lies, does it matter if people hear only part of something? Like could I 'I think your mother is a terrible person' and then silence the rest which would be 'when she tells me off for breaking stuff' or something?"

Kamiko twisted her mouth into a frown. "You know... I don't think I've ever asked. It might be like the angels, and that we aren't really allowed to talk about the specifics maybe? Depending on how you silenced yourself it would count as lying... I think, but test would have to be done and I really don't know how you'd do them"

Kat shrugged and let the motion carry through her wings which shuddered and stirred the water around them. "Neither do I, but now that I've thought of it, I have someone in mind that would likely have some ideas and the desire to test it. Her name is Callisto. She's... well she's something"

"Tell me about her, if you don't mind?" asked Kamiko, wanting to know more about the important figures in Kat's life knowing she lacked the sibling support Kamiko had.

"Hmm, well, I guess I can" said Kat "I'm not sure what I'd call her really. It's... it's not that we have a complicated relationship per se, it's that I have no idea what that relationship is... so, to get started, I guess I should mention that I got adopted by this lovely person named Vivian.

"She... she isn't really much older than I am, only a few years really, but the arrangement was mainly because Sylvie wouldn't have accepted if I didn't, and I'm turning eighteen in a bit less than a year's time so I'd have had to leave as well, and she already figured out the big secret that I was a demon, which was becoming hard to hide at the orphanage... so it was just convenient really.

"This... sort of means that Vivian should be a mother figure, but we both recognise that she's more of an older sister figure for me if anything, but I go along with it more for Sylvie than anything else because the age difference is enough there, and Sylvie's not that old so she really needs someone to fill that role for her." Said Kat, without suspecting a good chunk of that statement wasn't entirely correct, but she didn't know that.

"Now Callisto, she happens to live with Vivian and... I can't really get a proper idea of their relationship if I'm honest. I don't exactly have enough friends to compare it to anything but it doesn't seem normal.

"Callisto lives with Vivian, doesn't really pay rent, but she has her own space... she doesn't sleep practically ever, and she somehow always shows up to do the cooking whenever it needs doing. Also she wears a French maid outfit... though I guess you don't know what that is do you?" asked Kat

Kamiko shrugged and said, "Sort of? Like, part of the translation effect means I have something of an idea about what it is, like... it doesn't exactly SOUND like this, but I get the impression it's an inaccurate depiction of what servants used to wear? Except now it is also really formal? Which doesn't make a lot of sense to me."

Kat quickly describe what the outfit in it's entirely looked like to Kamiko, elaborating on the details when asked. "Do you get it now?"

"No..." said Kamiko "Well, yes, but no. I understand what it looks like... and I understand why some people would wear it, as it sounds like it's fairly appealing attire but... yeah I also don't understand the dynamic between those two. On the one hand she is kind of like a live-in servant, but on the other, she is also somewhat like Vivian's handler even though they are the same age"

Kat nodded vigorously "Yes, it's exactly like that. Vivian is consistently making impulsive, if somewhat well-reasoned, decisions, and Callisto is forever ensuring nothing too horrible is done under those orders and things run smoothly around the house. Which, I will add, is smaller than your own so it isn't a pain to clean."

"Why would it need cleaning?" asked Kamiko

"What?" asked Kat, only for Kamiko to repeat the question.

"Well now I'm confused" said Kat "Do you not need to clean things here? Dust things off and other such things? Surely the dirt builds up right?"

Kamiko shook her head. "No, everything other than the fridge and the cutlery is self-cleaning. You can't make them self-cleaning because it removes the food from them, which is obviously a problem"

"Huh... is that common?" asked Kat

Kamiko nodded, causing large ripples to be sent out. "Yup, practically everyone has their houses set up like that. It's cheap and it doesn't ever run out as long as you have enough people living in the space, or well, there is enough power that radiates off them."

Well damn. The more you know. I wonder if Callisto would love that or hate it? Giving her less to clean? A blessing or a curse?

Chapter 383: The Family

By some unspoken agreement, twenty minutes later Kamiko and Kat left the bath together. Abusing the fact that nothing sticks to their skin, the liquid from the bath simply slid off leaving them completely dry. Kat summoned her outfit on reflex, and Kamiko said in response. "Wait, do you not wear anything else?"

"No?" said Kat confused. "Nothing else fits because of my wings and tail. Well, maybe I could do something about the tail, but the wings certainly."

"Huh... that's... well" said Kamiko "I know I don't exactly wear a bunch of clothes but I have pyjamas at least. Do you not even have a set of them?"

Kat shook her head. "No, there isn't any higher energy in my home dimension so the only thing I can wear is this."

Kamiko's jaw dropped. "Wow, I... I can't even imagine. Practically all clothes have a fitting enchantment on them here. It doesn't increase the price at all it's so necessary. The only people who don't have stuff like that are the ones that need to squeeze those extra few enchantments onto a garment and can't afford it."

Kat shook her head. "Well, I had clothes before, a few sets, but this kimono is the only thing I've worn since my wings grew in." said Kat

"What?" asked Kamiko

"Did I not explain that? When I started taking contracts my various demonic features started to grow in. I could have sworn I mentioned it earlier... well nevermind." Said Kat

"Oh" said Kamiko somewhat despondently and seemingly unconcerned about her current state of undress. "That can't stand. Once my mum gets back we should take you shopping. Just to get you a few outfits. It'll be nice I promise. Even if you aren't one for shopping, you can double your wardrobe with just one purchase!

"Though... speaking of pyjamas, it has occurred to me that I've left mine back in my room." Mumbled Kamiko under her breath.

"Oh, I'm fine. I mean, that's lovely but...? I'm fine" said Kat. *I'm not sure I exactly have the money to buy anything at the moment with my debt and the whole trial thing that supposed to happen after my punishment is done.*

"No no, I insist... though it will need to wait till after we've finished with the punishments now that I think about it" said Kamiko.

"Right..." said Kat, hoping that perhaps Kamiko's non-perfect memory will be the saving grace here.

"Anyway, follow me up to my room" said Kamiko walking out the door and gesturing for Kat to follow, which she did. When they got to the drop Kamiko simply leapt back up to the second floor and Kat was able to follow easily.

You know, I thought their system for traversing floors was a gimmick, but when you can easily jump between floor two and three maybe it isn't so crazy. It's not even a hard jump or one where I need my wings. Though... the fact that the strange material at the bottom lets you jump is another mystery.

Kamiko walked down the hallway past the first few sets of doors, before pushing on the fifth one on the right-hand side and walking in. Kat wasn't sure what to expect, as she somewhat timidly followed behind her.

At this point, Kat hadn't really been into many peoples' bedrooms. She'd seen Lily's and a bunch of them at the orphanage, but Kat always felt that wasn't quite the same. She was so used to Lily's room now, and she'd spent time there before it dawned on her that a room was a private space where you brought friends, and not just a place to sleep that gets regular visitors in the night looking to calm down.

Still, Kat hadn't yet picked up the appeal of having her OWN room, mostly just treating it as a place to sleep. It would take time and knickknacks to make it a proper space for her. Kamiko's was already showing her influence from the second Kat walked into the room.

The first thing she saw, and stuck out instantly, was a huge painting on the back wall that sat above Kamiko's bed. It had most of her family, or what Kat was guessing was most of her family. In the centre of the frame were three identical people, Kat assumed were the triplets. *Though if that is the case who painted this? It IS a painting after all... maybe it's based on a picture?* They all had slightly different variations on the same set of clothes.

The main ensemble was a short tulip styled skirt that ended just above the triplets' knees, and seemed to hug their figures that was the same pink as Kamiko's and the triplets' hair. They all wore black shirts of differing styles. Merra had a basic t-shirt that proved that Succubi were capable of gaining muscles, showing them off alongside her muscled legs that were just as pale as the rest of the family.

Erra wore a black smock with pink highlights that covered most of her arms, leaving Kat with the odd impression that she wanted to be wearing a longer skirt but was forced into the whole thing for some reason. Kerra rounded them out with a short-sleeved blouse that while black as well, had a few obvious stains from painting, especially around the sleeves, which Kat noticed, but didn't realise the oddness of at the time.

They all had the same pink hair that Kamiko had, and shared with other figures on the wall, though Kat wasn't entirely clear as to who was who. The triplets kept their hair styled the same with a short bob on each of them, with small horns matching Kamiko's.

The main difference to Kamiko, was clearly in their eyes which seemed normal, and had a green tint to them, slightly clearer than anything human, but nothing too out of place. Moving on from them, Kamiko sat on a small chair in front of them, wearing a plain white sundress while looking back at her sisters and smiling, hair down around her neck much like its current appearance after it had been left down from the bath.

The only male in the picture, was over to the right, and had to be Kamiko's father. Kat was surprised to see that HE was the source of the family's pink hair and green eyes. He looked a little stretched to Kat's eyes. The suit he wore only amplifying this effect. He looked normal enough at first glance sure, but only the first one.

Trying to put that out of her mind, Kat tried to figure out who must have been who. There was still three other women in the picture and Kat was having a hard time figuring out which of them was which. The deciding factor was the eyes, Kat remembered Kamiko mentioning her eyes looked like a cross between her mother's and her sisters.

So Kat simply scraped the two with potential to be either of those, and looked to the third and final figure that had to be Elmony, her sister/aunt. Looking at her now, it made a lot of sense. Elmony had pink hair like many of Kamiko's other family members, and perhaps that was a part of what sold the ruse.

But she stood head and shoulders above the rest of them. She stood behind the triplets towering over them with large ram horns that spiralled out from the side of her head. Her eyes were a deep red and missing the pupil but for some reason Kat didn't find it all that unnerving. Her pink hair was long, and flowed down to her waist, much unlike the rest of the family, and Kat could see her slight smile revealed sharp jagged teeth that locked together rather than a normal human mouth.

The lower half of her was hidden by the triplets, but her shirt was the same black that the family seemed to be going for. It was a suit jacket like their father's but it strained to confine Elmony's assets that dwarfed the rest of the family, the triplets especially who were all rather... compact in that area.

So it came down to the final two people, and Kat honestly wasn't sure which was which. Aslena and Kamiko's mother looked shockingly similar to each other, and they'd made it hard in this painting by wearing the same outfit as well.

Doesn't help that nobody ages properly in this dammed dimension. They look similar enough that if you told me they were twins I'd believe it. Should I just ask Kamiko who is who? Though... it's an interesting puzzle that I kind of want to work out for myself.

The big difference was of course in the eyes, one had a large cross that took up her entire eye. Unlike Kamiko's which only took up a normal amount of space, this girl's looked like her eye was cut into four. The other, had black eyes with stars scattered across them, mimicking the night sky. Kat could almost see them shiny back at her from the painting.

Chapter 384: Which Witch is Which

Kat continued to look over both girls, or perhaps women would be a better description. They both looked older than Kamiko, heck, they both looked older than the triplets as well, which certainly didn't make sense. Kamiko and those three seemed to have an air of innocence to them, even though the triplets were at least trying to act mature in this picture.

The hair and horns didn't help either. One of them had ram horns similar to Elmony, while the other had the same horns as the rest of the family. Kat didn't exactly know enough about genetics to tell, and the fact that they both had seafoam green hair that was allowed to flow down their back and fade out into a surprisingly thick shield of hair, made Kat once more tempted to call it quits.

While she was doing this, Kamiko was opening up her cupboard. It took up almost the entire left side wall, but if Kat was to look into it, she would find it mostly empty of clothes. There was space yes, but not many outfits... if one was to look even closer you'd realise that at least half of them would never fit Kamiko, as they required someone just shy of Kat's height to fit properly.

Kamiko picked out a fluffy pink set of long pyjamas with teddy bears on them, which Kat caught out of the corner of her eye. When she saw this her mind wasn't able to catch up to her body which sprinted over to Kamiko and enveloped her into a big hug that included all her limbs.

Kat had her arms wrapped around Kamiko's shoulders, her tail around her midsection and her wings had come around to wrap up the rest of her. By the time Kat realised what she'd done she let out a minor squeak of concern. *Shit. I wasn't prepared. It seems I might actually be getting a little used to Sylvie because my memory is perfect now... I wasn't prepared for this though.*

"Your pyjamas are so cute" said Kat, having given up on trying to find any reasonable explanation for what was going on.

"Thanks" said Kamiko happily. "The hug is nice too. Oh, and Aslena actually made these for me. She made a lot of my clothes actually, in exchange for cupboard space that I don't really use."

Kat wanted to nod at this, but currently her head was resting on Kamiko's and she didn't really want to mess up the girl's hair too much. "Actually, I was just looking at that painting of yours and I was wondering who was who. I could pick most of them out but..."

As Kat trailed off Kamiko easily picked up the thought. "You couldn't figure out who Aslena and Mum was because while they don't look too similar when you know which is which, mostly because of the horns and eyes, they are very similar in body shape and I haven't given you any clues as to which is which?"

"Yup" said Kat "Well reasoned."

Kamiko grinned and said, "I'm glad I figured out what you were thinking. I've never really heard of it being a problem, but most people know one or the other beforehand. Aslena is popular enough because of her designs and Mum is known at the hospitals. You're my first friend, and anyone the twins know tend to have enough knowledge of the important demons nearby that they actually know at least one.

"Sorry, I'm getting sidetracked. To answer your question Kat, Aslena actually has the ram horns like Elmony, alongside the starry night eyes. I mean, Elmony is her aunt, so it isn't so surprising that the ram horns showed up, though with both Mum and Dad having matching horns it's actually pretty rare.

"I mean, if it was going to be anything, it would be ram horns, but... am I explaining this well Kat? I never did study how demonic traits are passed down past the basics. I just know people were surprised about Aslena. Not sure about Elmony because that was a long time ago, but maybe it was the fact that there is two of them?"

Kamiko shrugged and Kat hugged her tighter before saying. "That's fine, I just wanted to know who was who. I take it that She-Who-Will-Not-Be-Named isn't in the picture intentionally?"

Kamiko just sighed lightly before saying "Yeah, I never knew her, and that painting is actually based on a photo we all had done together. I got it as a birthday present actually. I'd been mentioning that I wanted

something better for my wall there. Before it was this old tapestry that was from Meradithna's room and I never liked it or what it was associated with. It was just some fancy colours.

"Around the same time, I also mentioned how happy I was with the photo we had all taken together. It was the first time the family was properly together for something in a while. Elmony only comes around every now and again you see? And the triplets are here a decent amount but they have projects, same as Aslena, so... it was just nice.

"And when I was told I had to leave my room for a second to get my last present, I was a little confused, but so very happy when I saw that on the wall. I cried like a baby when I saw it and I'm not afraid to admit it" said Kamiko.

Kat squeezed Kamiko once more before letting go. "That's wonderful Kamiko, it really is a nice picture, and it's the first thing you see when you enter the room"

Kamiko nodded. "Yup, I meant it to be like that"

Kat used the lull in conversation to look over the rest of the room. The bed, which Kat had overlooked originally, was huge, easily large enough to fit Kat's full wingspan three times over and took up a large amount of space. The other side of the room, the one without the closet, had a small bookshelf and desk.

The books didn't look all that well used, just a few nicks here and there to show that they'd been read, but probably only once, twice at the most. The walls were a soft pinkish white, much like the pink roses in the bathroom, if slightly whiter, but lacking in the shine the stone from the bathroom had, making it seem somehow darker overall.

Against the back wall stood a few boxes along the ground. They looked just professional enough to be a semi-permanent fixture of the room, but not so good that they looked like they belonged. They looked like cheap plastic but Kat hadn't actually seen any other plastic in the demon realm, and suspected it might actually be tinted glass.

"Um" Kamiko's nervous voice broke Kat from her thoughts. "So, um, I don't know what you'll want to do... but you... sort of have two options I guess...? In terms of sleeping arrangements that is.

"We, well, of course we have the guest room that I mentioned earlier. It actually has a few beds in it in a couple of sizes so you should be able to just... pick the best one and take it for yourself while you're staying...

"Or... well, that is to say, if you wanted we could share mine? I mean... it's more than large enough for the both of us... but I've never had a friend over let alone had them stay the night so...? I'm not sure if that's alright or not?"

"Well what would make you most comfortable?" said Kat without even needing to think about it. "I've grown up in an orphanage, so I don't really care about people sharing a bed with me, and you're right yours is more than large enough, but you seem really nervous about it, so if it would make you uncomfortable, I can just as easily sleep in the other room"

"Here!" said Kamiko. "Um... I meant to say here... please. I used t-, ok fine I can't say that because it's a lie. I still DO sleep with my sisters whenever I can. It's just nicer, I think, and while they aren't all as fond of it, they tend to humour me. And well... nobody else is here at the moment so I thought I'd ask?"

Kat shrugged and said "Seems fine to me"

Kamiko jumped onto the bed, vibrating in happiness as she patted the spot beside her. Kat followed suit not really thinking too much about it and watched as her tail phased through the bed. "What?" said Kat, not realising she'd vocalised the question.

"Oh, of course!" said Kamiko "This is a Succubi keyed bed. It's supposed to be comfortable for us, and you count. Try laying down!"

Kat did as she was asked and felt her wings sink into the soft mattress. They didn't sink that far though, before settling into their own comfortably snug hideaway just behind her tail. Kat couldn't keep herself from laughing, as she reached over and hugged Kamiko to her chest like a teddy bear. "This is great. Let me know if you're uncomfortable, but this is great"

Kamiko laughed as well. "Glad you like it. It helps a little with my wings and tail, but mine are small compared to yours and it isn't normally an issue"

Chapter 385: Big Boss

It was the next morning, and Kat woke up with Kamiko still in her arms. She was almost as cuddly as Sylvie, and it was a pleasant way to start the morning. Kat then tried to send off some messages to her Accomplices, but was told by the system that she couldn't while on punishment duty but they would be informed of this fact and that she'd tried.

Kat didn't spend too long focused on that though, she instead turned her mind to the fact that she actually slept. Not just meditated, but properly slept. She wasn't exactly sure what to do with that information. Meditation seemed to be able to replace sleep without much trouble, and she was unsure if this was a good thing or not.

Before an answer could be reached, Kamiko had partially awoken, and decided that Kat's shoulder was much too comfortable to leave. Desperately trying to snuggle back into the comfort Kat provided... sadly her plan was interrupted when her horns started to dig into Kat's shoulder.

In response, Kat had been forced to circulate some demonic energy to prevent herself from getting injured, but the sudden stirring of energy was apparently enough to wake Kamiko up more fully. *She can feel that? I didn't realise that demonic energy was a thing you could sense?*

What Kat didn't know, was that even her ability to faintly see demonic energy leaking out of people wasn't normal. Kamiko didn't realise it either, as her entire family had the ability, but it wasn't exactly common amongst the full demonic population. This is simply one of those questions that Kat would never ask, as it just seemed obvious.

When Kamiko finished waking up, she gave Kat a quick hug before dragging her out of the room so they could start arranging breakfast. Kat had stood next to the pole confused for a second after Kamiko had dragged her there... until it launched them both straight up. Both managed the trip well, Kamiko through practice and Kat because she had wings to help.

The house was quiet as they quickly ate breakfast, and shared some light conversation that didn't really have an impact on either of them, before the system contacted them to inform them the next stage of their punishment would happen in five minutes.

Kamiko had jumped back downstairs and put her pyjamas away, while Kat followed along, mostly so that they would be teleported together. When they'd finished running around, they grabbed each other's hands and a portal opened below them.

Lights flashed before Kat for a brief second before she found herself in a medium sized room. The floor was covered in circles of various sizes, from the largest in the centre that was easily twenty metres in diameter, to the smallest in the corners that were about the size of Kat's thumb.

The door swung open and a loud voice called out. "Is that my punishment workers? Come through the door, and keep going till you reach the end. Just open the big door you run into"

Kat felt a little confused by the voice, but Kamiko was on top of things, and pulled Kat along. Out of the teleportation room for the building. The corridor was made up of wooden slats and had a number of doors, but Kat didn't really take the time to take them all in. She did notice that each door had a unique design carved onto them, with some standouts being one with a sword, another with a dragon, and a third that had a waterfall.

Seeing these unique designs, Kat was somewhat prepared for the final doors, but not completely. They were a set of large double doors where the others had all been singular. The door handles seemed to be miniature dragons, with ruby eyes that seemed to follow Kat's eyes wherever she looked.

The rest of the door featured two skulls spewing gold from their mouths while gemstones occasionally fell from their eyes. She didn't need to interpret this, as the picture was actively flowing, albeit at a sedate pace. *Well, if I didn't know this was the Greed faction, I sure as heck do now.*

Kamiko finished dragging Kat to the door... but once they'd both arrived it seemed that Kamiko had used up her courage already, as she looked at the door like it was about to turn and bite her. Kat pretended not to notice and walked up to the door, rapping her hand against the flowing gold, which clinked, and moved away from her hand when she did so.

"Open!" said the voice. Now that she was closer Kat could hear more of it. The voice was strangely double layered, both like the bass singer in a choir and like someone who smoked heavily at the same time, both voices interplaying with each other to produce something both uncanny, and strangely endearing at the same time.

Kat didn't get as much time to dissect it as she wanted, because the doors flew open by themselves at the command, gold spilling out of the doors and clattering on the floor for a second before sinking into the floorboards. Kat found herself facing a small staircase. Leading Kamiko up it, Kat kept her face neutral as she entered the room, even though it was impressive.

The main feature, was of course, a large oak desk with the person they were presumably there to see behind it. The desk looked like it was made out of silvery coins that had been glued together. Some parts stuck out more than others and gave the illusion of more intricate designs even if the desks features were actually somewhat simple. The main thing that was notable though was its size, easily twice as

long as Kat's wingspan and filled with paperwork on one side and what had to be a floating computer monitor on the other.

The rest of the office wall space was filled with a number of graphs that seemed to be moving in real time. They seemed to have little bits of detail that hinted at what they were for. One was a glass of water that slowly filled up despite being sideways, another was stacks of gold coins that increased and decreased through no pattern Kat could discern.

Finally, the big man himself, and overall, that was a very accurate statement. He wasn't quite the tallest demon Kat had seen, and the fact he was sitting down didn't do him many favours, but he still had a powerful presence, like at any moment he could glare at you and you'd be melted.

His eyes were embossed gold coins, they didn't look like coins, they WERE coins, with a strange symbol Kat didn't recognise in the middle. It looked somewhat like the Eye of Horus, but the eye lacked the usually eyebrow, and instead had a clawed hand in its place. The whole coin shifted as the man looked around the room, not just the eye on the coin.

His face was awkward, and to Kat, looked more like someone had stuffed a plastic mask over another man's face and had a strange artificial feel to it. It was a round face, but was strangely sharp in what felt like the wrong places. The cheekbones practically shot out from his face, while his jaw was perfectly round. His forehead, instead of lines from worry, looked like it had a series of metal bars trying to escape his skin. His hair looked like somebody had glued an old black rug to the top of his head to complete the look.

When he saw the girls he smiled, it was accompanied by a feeling of reassurance, but Kat couldn't help but find it disturbing. The smile was too wide, and his face seemed to open up more than possible to reveal it, showing off four sets of teeth. These teeth were silver bars, not coated with silver but miniaturised silver ingots while his tongue looked to be made of brass and was thick and easily spotted amongst the rows of teeth and against the black cavernous look of what had to be his gums.

In his hand was a cigar, though Kat was certain it was a prop. He was tapping it rhythmically as he smiled and it fell down every time, but never got any shorter. Smoke seemed to billow from his nose as he smiled, and Kat was almost certain that wasn't how biology was supposed to work, but it really did complete his look somehow.

His clothes seemed to be taken straight from the industrial revolution. He had a black petticoat on with a white undershirt that strained to contain his large stomach. It looked more like a sack of coins attached to a head than a person, and while Kat would never learn it, her assumption was corrected, because when he moved you could hear the clinking of coins shifting around inside.

"Well now, it seems you're both on time. That's lovely. My name is Boss. I had another one, but you'll never hear it. I have a job for you both. Shouldn't be too deadly of course, but... I hear that one of you has Succubus regeneration correct?" asked Boss, in his strange double layered voice.

Chapter 386: The Job

Why does he want to know that? Kat wanted to spend more time on the question, but Kamiko was already starting to shake under the pressure of the man's gaze so she simply answered him. "That's correct I do. Why?"

Boss took a long drag on his cigar and further confirmed that something magical was happening when it didn't burn down at all. "That's good. Good you are asking questions as well. This may be a punishment but never go into a deal unprepared...

"Right. I have a warehouse full of items that we don't know the purpose of. Anything that could accidentally kill someone is always automatically taken by D.E.M.O.N.S, so we know it ain't gonna kill ya, but I can't honestly promise much more than that.

"Having Succubus Regeneration though, means that this is much less of a concern. Certainly not everything will be deadly, or even painful, heck you might have something that blows bubbles at you, I have no idea. But that's the point. I have. No. Idea.

"I can't very well sell artifacts that I have no knowledge of. So, I'll be getting you to test them all out. Just pour some energy into it, press a few buttons if it has any, give it a good whack against the target dummy and see what happens. If you can't figure it out, put it to the side...

"Though" Boss' eyes narrowed, his eye sockets closing over the coins in a strange fashion. It was also at that point Kat noticed he didn't have eyelashes. "I want you doing this properly. If you don't even give it a go, I won't be impressed. I've got recording devices in the room. Just video, so you are free to chat, but if I see at the end of the day a lacklustre performance, I'll check the tapes to make sure you weren't just messing around."

Kamiko swallowed, and while Kat was still digesting the statement, Kamiko asked. "Um sir, er ar, Boss? Is there a reason you don't make use of the identifying service D.E.M.O.N.S has?" *nOvelnext.cOM*

Boss took another puff of his cigar. "I suppose you wouldn't know. I'll answer that question then you'll be on the job deal?"

Kamiko nodded, and Boss continued speaking. "Right, well, when you first get the item, if you don't find out what it does during the contract, D.E.M.O.N.S will offer you a pretty good deal to find out. However, if you just find it around the hub, or take it from a bankrupt business without a proper organising system, you have to pay through the noses to get them all identified.

"A lot of the things you'll find wouldn't be worth the price of identification. Take that bubble blower I mentioned earlier. A toy basically, a nice novelty for the kids. I could sell those by the hundreds, easily, and it costs more to identify one of 'em than it does to make a whole new set of ten from scratch.

"It's only really the good stuff that's worth identifying, because it's a pricing bracket strategy and they are WIDE brackets. I'm honestly not expecting you girls to find much worthwhile in the warehouse. If it was worth it, I'd have kept track or the previous owner would have. Still, maybe we get lucky, find a philosopher's stone or some shit, or heck, could find a teleporter amongst the broken junk that was misplaced. It really is a toss-up. That's why I ain't paying anyone to do it."

Kamiko nodded and stepped back in line with Kat. Boss nodded between the two of them. "That all? No more questions? Especially relevant ones?"

"How do we get there?" asked Kat

Boss nodded. "Behind my desk, you'll find a transport circle. Can't be using standard D.E.M.O.N.S teleportation to go anywhere other than the main room, so you'll need to be using that one to get to the

warehouse. When I call you over the speakers, you are free to teleport out, but you cannot teleport in. By the way, I believe I have you for two days, so keep that in mind. If you find anything really noteworthy, you can brief me on it either tomorrow morning, or, tomorrow afternoon when you finish your second day. Any MORE questions?" said Boss, still seeming fairly happy about the whole thing.

When no more questions were forthcoming, Boss just jabbed his thumb backwards and went back to work. Looking over paperwork and comparing it with something on the screen. Kamiko and Kat shared a look before walking around the side of the desk and instantly spotting the circle in question. When they were situated in the middle, Boss hit one of the buttons Kat hadn't seen from the front that lined the bottom of his desk, and the Succubi vanished.

Kat had just enough time to blink, before the warehouse came into view. That's all it was really. She was a little disappointed after the grand showing that was made before, but there wasn't much to the place. She was standing at the back, in a little alcove that had been carved out for the teleportation circle, and was clearly only for Kat-sized passengers at that, so the cargo entrance had to be elsewhere.

In front of her was a wide-open area with a series of dummies that radiated out from the wall accompanied by semi-circular series of lines that ran underneath each dummy as well. The warehouse was maybe a hundred or so metres across from what Kat could see. Behind the dummies was boxes.

Lots and lots of boxes, all of a standard size that was about one wingspan wide stacked on top of each other, five boxes in one stack, that stretched as far as the eye could see. Which wasn't actually that far, on account of the boxes blocking a lot of the view, but Kat saw no obvious end. The stacks of boxes in the first row were all complete except for the two furthest to the right. There they could see a row with just one box on the ground, with one next to it only being two high instead of five.

Kat let out a breath she didn't know she'd been holding and listened to Kamiko do the same. "What was that?" asked Kat.

"What do you mean?" asked Kamiko "The feeling? The type of demon he was? Something else?"

"Um... I guess the first two then? I mostly meant the feeling, I wouldn't call another sentient creature a what... but it's a good question." Said Kat.

Kamiko nodded and said. "That's good. Some people have problems with that. If you haven't noticed, this hub is mostly humanoid demons and beholders. Beholders kinda just... don't care? Some others do though, so the Hubs tend to separate demons that look drastically different if there have historically been problems. It's normally not, but I'm not someone who has investigated that much.

"Um... right to your questions though. The first part, the feeling, that was a high Rank demon in their element. You've probably not seen it properly before but when a high Rank demon is focused on a task that they find worthwhile their aura gets stronger but also less... hmm, it not quite sure of the words, but it has less effects?

"It just feels like a wave of pressure. It isn't really suffocating, but it holds your attention, grasps your eyes and prevents you from functioning entirely normally, by... shutting off is the wrong word, but requiring you to think about certain automatic processes if that makes sense.

"So if we'd remembered to breathe, we would have been fine, but we forgot and didn't restart it manually so we just held our breath instead. As to what kind of demon... I honestly have no idea. I've not seen anyone who looks like that before" said Kamiko.

You know... I'm actually somewhat surprised Kamiko doesn't know. I shouldn't be, but for some reason I am. It's not like I know the nationality of every human on Earth, so surely there are plenty of demons Kamiko can't recognise on sight... but they are a lot more distinct... then again, with how they can mix heritages maybe it's easier to get weird combinations than I think.

"Definitely Greed though right?" asked Kat as she started to move over towards the single box, believing it to be a good starting point for their testing.

"Oh certainly" said Kamiko "Whatever he is, he can't be anything but a Greed demon... well actually I guess he could be a Gluttony demon that needs to eat precious metals, but he didn't really give off that vibe to me. Plus, we are working in a warehouse to find interesting items to sell that he acquired."

It's good to have that confirmed. Not sure if it's helpful, but I feel better knowing that. Boss is certainly the most... unique looking demon. I mean sure I've seen the beholders and they are their own kind of creepy, but there was a few of those. Boss just feels so... DISTINCT, yes with emphasis, that's how distinct he is. I wonder if higher level demons become more distinct looking? No, it's doubtful, I've already seen that Kamiko's youngest older system and their mother look quite similar.

Chapter 387: Kamiko. I Want You to Stab Me

A series of beeps echoed throughout the warehouse causing Kat to pause, then the voice of Boss came into being, alongside a hologram of his head in front of both Kamiko and Kat. "I have realised, I neglected to inform the individual, Kat, of a measure we have taken. In the first box, the one by itself, you will also find an amulet with a series of gems around the outside.

"It is designed to stop pain, and record it on the gems. Please note how many light up if you are required to test anything on yourself for damage. The dummies should do fine for the most part, but some things only work on a living creature. We do not want this to be a torture after all, and with your regeneration, the pain is the only concern, which I have of course taken steps to remove.

"Also, if you require time to regenerate your demonic energy at any point, please feel free to do so, both of you. Most artifacts will not take any additional energy past the activation cost, but if something does take more than that please make a note of it. Good day" And like that Boss' face vanished.

He sure left in a hurry. Sure, he gave us quite a lot of information but he left rather quickly. Aw well, I suppose he is busy and I'm glad he ended up telling me about the device. Kat looked at the empty air and gave it a wry smile. *If I'm honest, I didn't even think to ask about something like that after being told part of the reason we are here is because of my regeneration.*

I wonder if that's a bad sign, that I don't actually care all that much about pain anymore. Did I never learn that lesson as a child? Kat thought back to the fights she'd been in, the bruises she'd acquired STOPPING other fights, the damage she sustained that one time she fell down the stairs. *Huh... I guess I really didn't. It's not like I chose to do anything differently, and I wasn't ever any more careful going down the stairs.*

*Even thinking back to how painful it was getting stabbed. It's not like I'm particularly upset about that one from firebird. Wait... is that a nice thing to call him considering that was the plan? Hell forget about him, getting stabbed by my 'ally' was much worse pain wise... if only because I'd regenerated so much.

Also... looking back on it, am I a hypocrite for complaining about his healing items? It's not exactly like I stayed down either... though I didn't use any extra help so maybe it was fair of me to complain. Heck, let's go further back, ignore all the crazy adventures, the transformation into a full demon wasn't exactly pleasant.*

It was quite painful... but I never even thought about complaining. It was bad sure but it didn't last too long and I always got something cool out of it. Anyway... I'm getting distracted. Kat looked over at Kamiko, and was surprised to see the girl was actually rather pale.

"What's wrong?" asked Kat.

"I just..." mumbled Kamiko "I didn't really think I'd need to hurt you. I mean... sure he said your regeneration was helpful but I thought it was to shield you from the more dangerous stuff that would hurt you just using it... not that things would be tested on you. I'm not sure I can actually do that..."

Kat shrugged and said. "It's really not a big deal. I wasn't going to complain with the pain, and without it, it really is no trouble."

"Are you sure?" asked Kamiko with a shaky voice.

Kat nodded. "Yup, just make sure if I end up in pieces you put them back together so they reattach properly"

Kamiko grimaced at the joke, and looked away. She certainly wasn't happy with the assignment and she was far from comfortable with the task set out before them. Kat's cavalier attitude to injury was also something she wasn't a fan of, especially because of how seriously her mother had dealt with even the smallest of injuries, always explaining what had happened and what the appropriate responses had to be.

Deciding that it was best to pretend Kat hadn't said anything outrageous, she walked over to the box in question and pried it open. Kat was standing behind and was shocked to see how things were contained. Instead of packing peanuts, or just throwing everything in the box, it was filled with clear slime by the looks of things.

Sitting on top of it was the amulet in question which Kamiko handed off to Kat. It was simply constructed, a goldish chain, likely brass, with a wooden pendant at the end that had been coated with varnish. The gemstones in question were set around, there were twelve, like it was a clock, and each stone seemed to be completely clear, but Kat was expecting that to change when it was in use.

Taking the amulet and putting it on, Kat felt it heat up for a split second before the sensation vanished. Looking down, just to make sure that she wasn't on fire or something after having lost her sense of pain, found that there wasn't anything remarkable going on with the amulet as far as she could tell, though it hung low over her breasts, as it was clearly designed for someone either much taller, or with a much larger neck. A flash of Boss' face made Kat suspect the latter.

"Should we test this amulet a bit?" asked Kat "Just so that I won't be shocked by the effect?"

Kamiko grimaced. "How would you suggest?"

"Summoning your weapon and stabbing me? Probably through the hand?" said Kat with complete nonchalance.

"I'm not sure I'm ok with testing the other items on you Kat, let alone one of my own just to see if you still feel pain" said Kamiko.

Hmmm, how about... "Well, we did find the amulet in a box, we need to test it as well. Just because we've been told doesn't change that fact." Said Kat with an airy certainty as if it was of no importance but had to be done anyway.

Kamiko wasn't on board with this plan at all but summoned her naginata to her hand anyway. She looked to Kat once more for confirmation and received a slight nod for her troubles. Kamiko grit her teeth, knowing that it was a good idea, something they should do, even if she didn't like it. Powering her strike as much as she could, Kamiko waited for Kat to hold her hand out and stabbed towards it.

Kat felt the blade go into her hand in the loosest sense of the word. She could feel it pushing through the skin, feel the muscles being cut at some of the bones being shattered... but no pain was forthcoming. She could only tell the specifics so well because she could feel it fully as the cut happened with no pain blinding her.

When she focused too, she could feel everything slowly trying to nit itself back together though her regeneration wasn't sure how to remove the blade. It was being held in place, and while her regen could push out foreign substances, it wasn't able to be particularly forceful about it nor did it know which way to go.

Kamiko for her part, watched Kat glance lazily over at her hand, now with a blade embedded in it, before glancing down at the amulet which had five glowing stones now. The stones themselves started off blue and gained a more greenish hue as it went along towards the later numbers. Blue took up the first three, while green the second two at least, likely the second third. The transition was smooth though.

Kat yanked her hand backwards while watching the readout and didn't see a change in value at all, while her hand rapidly knit itself back together. "Huh. That was certainly an interesting experience..." mumbled Kat.

Kamiko bit her lip. "It... was?" were the words she settled on.

Kat nodded. "Yeah. I mean, I could always feel myself getting healed, but it was kind of in an abstract way? If that makes sense. Like... academically I could feel my bones pulling themselves back together through my bruised muscles, but mostly it was pain. A specific kind of pain for each injury, but pain nonetheless.

"Oh yeah amulet worked by the way. It's just... without the pain I can still feel things being put back together but I can feel it properly. Like... I can tell what things are moving where and I could probably hover a finger over a bone fragment and show the path it took back to its home. It's... a really weird feeling. Not bad per se, but certainly weird" said Kat

"Huh... I... don't really think I can relate and I don't particularly want to. Um... how much energy did that take?" asked Kamiko.

"Oh practically nothing. Just this talk regenerated whatever it might have cost me. It was just a small wound" said Kat.

Chapter 388: Pop Culture References are a little Lazy...

Kamiko was of the opinion, that if being impaled counted as a 'small wound', she didn't actually want to watch Kat deal with anything that would be consider 'a moderate wound' or heaven forbid 'a rather nasty wound' because she already considered having the bones in your hand destroyed as a somewhat serious matter.

"Right... well... I'm glad your ok" said Kamiko after more thought then she cared to admit.

Kat nodded along, noticing the uncomfortable face Kamiko was making and directed her attention to the forms that were stacked on a table off to the side. She hadn't noticed them before and walked over, picked up a pen and quickly filled it out. She had to place the item on the paper in question, tap it twice, and that would transfer a picture to the box on the top corner of said paper.

It reminded Kat that despite appearances she wasn't in some random warehouse, this was a demon warehouse in the Hub. It had magical devices everywhere, and fancy paper was just one part of it. Kat then wrote down what the amulet did and what testing they had done on it so far. Kat was tempted to point out to Kamiko, as a joke of course, that they hadn't seen what colours the later lights would show up as and she needed to be stabbed again, perhaps through the heart this time, but decided it wasn't worth it.

This amulet probably doesn't need a report anyway. It's good practice though. The form is simple and I understand how it works. More or less just What did it do, How did you test it, and the picture. Wait... where are we supposed to put everything once we are done?

"Hey Kamiko, where are we supposed to put items we've looked over" asked Kat

"Huh" said Kamiko "I... I hadn't thought about it? I mean... I guess just back in the box probably? I'm sure a warehouse as sophisticated as this has some organising system. Even if they don't know what each thing does, they are probably all marked in some way so they can be found easily. Did you notice how there aren't any markings on the boxes? That's why. It's an external system that keeps track. Boss probably has something in his office."

That makes quite a lot of sense. Well, it does still make me wonder why they don't have records of these things, but I suppose if that central server is destroyed you'd lose everything alongside it.

Kat moved over to the box and reached inside, ready for the next item. The feeling of the slime was weird. Her succubus skin seemed to repel it, and her hand glided oddly through the substance even as it tried to stick to her. Reaching in Kat found something and pulled it out.

It was a cylindrical object, about the length between her wrist and elbow, with a button that was set into a divot in the thing to ensure easy access but a lack of accidental presses. Taking a distance from Kamiko just in case, Kat pushed the button and found a beam of light shooting out from the top end.

Thank science class for basic safety protocols. I am ever so glad I wasn't trying to watch that turn on and get impaled on the beam. Kat waved the glowing stick around a bit and it made a weird noise as it cut through the air.

"You recognise this?" asked Kat

"Not really, but I'm no... weapon? Toy? Expert really? I mean, it could be either depending" said Kamiko.

"Depending on what?" asked Kat.

"Well... it could be contained plasma and exceptionally deadly. Or it could be fancy hard-light and about as deadly as a snowball. Give it a go against one of the dummies" said Kamiko

Kat slashed out at the nearest dummy and watched it get cut in two easily. "Welp. Deadly it is I guess" Kat mumbled somewhat under her breath.

Kamiko had rummaged around in the box and found another similarly shaped device. Where the first one was silver, this one, was gold instead. Kamiko moved to another dummy, pressed the button to activate it and slashed. Instead of cutting cleanly like Kat's though, it bounced off.

"Hmm." Mumbled Kamiko "Were you pushing anything into these? Demonic energy flow?"

Kat shook her head and said. "Nope I just pushed the button and whacked"

"Let's quickly switch" said Kamiko pressing the off button and moving towards Kat who was doing the same. "just to see if it matters who is holding it. I think there are a couple more in the box. They were all sorted together."

Kat's dummy had regenerated at this point, so she took another swing. Instead of bouncing off like Kamiko though, the blade shattered. Pieces simply disappeared as they spread out and the end sparked for a second before reforming into a blade. Kat checked Kamiko's swing which cleanly cut through the dummy.

"I think I found the strength limit on this one" said Kat "But I didn't think I hit it that hard..."

Kamiko hummed for a second as she thought. "Could you turn it back off and then on again, before testing it once more Kat?"

Kat did so and found the rod didn't break this time, despite, what she was almost certain, was the exact same application of force. Kat frowned at the development. "What's going on here?"

Kamiko spoke up. "I think I know actually. What you have is a training weapon, and what I have is a plasma sabre. The hard light ones are designed to break once they take a certain amount of damage. It isn't actually their limit, just an artificial one. It's used for training control. My mum used wooden moulds that did a similar thing."

Kat nodded. *That makes a lot of sense. Does that mean if I swing this again...* Kat swung once more and watched the 'blade' shatter once again. Satisfied with the result, Kat turned it off and looked towards Kamiko. "Did you say there was a few of these? Do we need to test them all?"

Kamiko shrugged while saying. "Maybe? I think they fit one of the two schemes. Either mostly silvery or mostly gold. I'd guess that the colour specifies which type they are but I'm not sure if we want to assume"

Kat nodded and said. "How about we test them all and put them to the left of the table if they are deadly, and to the right if they are hard-light. If the pattern holds true, then we can do them up as a big batch otherwise we'll have to individual label them"

Kamiko grimaced at the thought of having to write out a bunch of extra reports on virtually indistinguishable items but nodded knowing that Kat's idea was the right one. They quickly started with working on the idea. By some unspoken agreement, Kat went for the mostly silver ones and Kamiko mostly gold.

It was just slightly safer that way, and as they progressed through the contained, the pattern continued to hold steady, with the colour defining the type. That is, until Kat was on the second to last silver one, which bounced off the dummy when she swung.

Shit. "Kamiko I got a hard-light over here" grumbled Kat.

Kamiko frowned and picked up the last of her gold coloured ones and swung. She was happy to report it DID follow the pattern and bounced away. "Seems like that is the only odd one out." Sighed Kamiko

"Guess we can do them in batches and then have this one as the odd one out? Would that work? Oh, and you should probably swing one of these at me" said Kat.

"What why? I mean, that batch idea works, but why attack you with it?" asked Kamiko

"Well, it occurred to me that we don't know if these more dangerous ones actually hurt people or not. Sure it cut the dummy fine but maybe it has some sort of fail safe so you can't hurt people" said Kat.

"Look Kat... I... I dunno if we should. I mean would they really?" asked Kamiko.

Kat just shrugged in response and handed the hilt over to Kamiko, who sighed, and met Kat eyes. They stared at each other, and Kat watched Kamiko's eyes swirl slightly in a slow manner. Finally, they broke eye contact and Kamiko took the sabre, before very carefully lowering it down against Kat.

Kat felt it make contact but not much more than that. Kat raised an eyebrow at Kamiko who sighed and pressed down harder... but nothing happened. The blade refused to budge in the slightest. "Damn... I can't believe you're right."

"Ah" said Kat realising something else. "We might need to test the other 'deadly' ones now"

"Why?" said Kamiko with a long sigh, not wanting to have to try cutting Kat up with more swords.

"Well... that was the odd one out remember? Maybe the others are different. I'd really hate to say these are safe to use against other people and then find out some kid got cut up with it because we labelled it improperly" said Kat. Kamiko just groaned and walked over to the moderately sized pile of 'weapons'

Chapter 389: ...But Boy are they Fun

The demonic pair had finished their reports. It was a little bit of a surprise when the paper suddenly tripled in size so that all the sabres could fit onto it easily, but other than that, it was mostly just drudge work.

They then boxed everything up and put it to the side. They were planning to leave an open space between what they were working on and the rest of the warehouse. It was clear they weren't going to get through the whole thing in time, but they thought it would be easier for any person that came after them.

Upon opening the second box, the pair were even more confused. At least with the sabres they had clear buttons on them. What was contained in this box was just a bunch of sticks. It didn't even have the extra cushioning gel to keep things stable, just a box full to the brim with sticks. Nicely carved sticks perhaps, but it was nothing too spectacular.

Kamiko picked up one randomly, it was a strange greenish yellow with small carved vines snaking around the handle with acorns carved in place of leaves for the vine. Most of the sticks in the box had obvious handles of some sort, but this one was completely smooth.

Kat grabbed one as well, it was bleach white with an almost bone like handle and odd porous like markings just past the handle around the base of the stick. It was just under thirty-five centimetres in length and looked to be rather well used but cared for.

"Any ideas what these are?" asked Kamiko turning the stick around in her hand.

"Honestly... not really? I mean, I want to say they are magic wands but they just seem like sticks to me, if well carved." Said Kat. *Though really, having seen Chekov's work I'm not certain they actually do qualify as well carved anymore. I was able to say it though... I wonder if that implies they are well carved or I think they are carved 'well enough'*

"These probably aren't real wands though..." said Kamiko drifting off as she considered the implications "yeah I don't think they can be. Perhaps they do perform some magic tricks, but they just can't be proper wands. Firstly because demons have no use for proper wands anyway other than parts or selling to others.

"Secondly, they don't seem to have anywhere to store mana. Most wands are for people with mana issues, or people who can't channel mana fast enough through their bodies. So, what they do, is fill a crystal in their wand up with mana attuned to them and use that instead, or maybe if you can get REALLY lucky you can store it in the wood but that's pretty hard to do for a small stick like this."

Kat shrugged and pointed her wand at the dummy. "Abra Kadabra"

Truthfully, Kat wasn't expecting anything to happen. She was expecting at most, that there would be a brief flash of light. What happened instead was that the wand kicked back in her hand like she'd pulled the trigger on a shotgun. A poisonous emerald green light shot from the end of the, now certainly, wand and collided with the dummy's chest, setting it rocking back somewhat, only for the chain attaching it to the ground to pull it back down. Kat started to let out a breath, when all of a sudden, the dummy caught fire.

"Well" said Kat.

"Well indeed" said Kamiko. "It seems like they can at the very least do things. I wonder if it's one spell per wand? Do you think the words will work for mine as well?"

Kat shrugged. "I'm not sure but point it at me anyway. If it just sets you on fire that's nothing to me."

Kamiko nodded and pointed her wand at Kat and said "Abraadebra" not quite having heard Kat properly the first time.

That seemed to be enough though as the same emerald green light shot out straight towards Kat. She just stood there calmly until it impacted her chest. A second after the impact she found herself on fire. Looking down at the amulet it showed no gems lighting up at all.

Now, I wonder if nothing lighting up because this fire is just a fancy effect, or if it's because I'm immune to fire. Kat glanced over at the still flaming dummy. *Hmm, I'm not sure. The dummy seems fine, but they also are pretty hardy things, regenerating after you slash them with plasma sabres so... who knows.*

"Hey Kamiko, could you walk as close as you're comfortable and test these flames? They don't hurt me at all, but my resistance to heat is quite high" said Kat.

Kamiko grimaced at the idea but was willing to walk close to the flames anyway. Kat did have a point and it would be important to note for the documents. Steeling herself she walked slowly towards Kat with her hand outstretched. Of course, she did this with both hands, one with a WOODEN WAND.

Kat instantly backed up and held her hand out to stop Kamiko, who was really only a few steps away. "Kamiko. Please put down the wooden, and likely very flammable wand before you accidentally set it on fire. I don't want to risk it spreading down to your outfit."

Kamiko paled and stopped in place. "Um... woops?" said Kamiko somewhat embarrassed. Placing the wand gently back in the box she had claimed it from, she started her approach again. Hands out, and walking slowly, if slightly faster this time, towards it with her face pulled as far away from Kat as she could, as if that would shield her from the fire.

Kat felt a little bad if she was honest. Kamiko should have been close enough to feel the temperature difference if she was that close, and was about to tell her as such when anything thought came to her.

This is something she needs to overcome... maybe. The fact that demonic fire looks so much like well... fire is a big deal, and I think she needs to be able to deal with that in some ways. This could be good for her.

Kat waited, and eventually, Kamiko placed her hand on Kat's shoulder. As soon as she did so the flame started to spread and Kamiko flinched slightly but it was doing no damage to her. It was also at that moment, Kat realised she still had the wand she'd picked up in her hand. *Well... shit. There goes the idea they were flammable... or well no Kamiko is fine... so it's not real fire? Maybe?*

"Kamiko... are you ok?" said Kat wanting to hug the demon in question but not willing to subject her to that until she'd gotten used to being on fire, even if it didn't hurt.

Kamiko though, seemed to be sharing similar thoughts and pulled herself into Kat's body tightly wrapping herself around Kat the best she could. "I... I'm fine... I think. I just... I don't like thinking about it. Can you give me a hug?"

Kat was already bringing her own arms up, which was made a little harder by Kamiko's own, but it eventually worked itself out. "Hey, Kamiko?" said Kat in the best soothing voice she could while bringing out her aura. "It's fine, really. I know this is a little scary, but it's ok. You don't have to be scared."

After staying together like that for a few minutes, Kamiko finally started to separate herself from Kat saying. "I think we should get back to work"

"Yeah I guess so. You think these wands do anything else?" asked Kat

"Hmm" mumbled Kamiko, stepping back to the box and grabbing the wand she put down. She was a little surprised the wands didn't seem to catch the fire at all, but shrugged it off quickly before pointing her wand at another dummy and saying. "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"

Most as a joke, if Kamiko was honest, but a bright white light popped into existence on the end of the wand she was holding. "Huh... I didn't expect that to work" mumbled Kamiko.

Kat repeated the phrase with less enthusiasm but similar results. The pair nodded to themselves and looked at the light. They continued looking at the light for another minute before they started to realise something was wrong, or at least not going to plan.

"Um... how do we turn this off?" asked Kat, half expecting the word 'off' to actually trigger the light's dismissal.

"I... hmm, I'm not sure? Light? Let there be light? Darkness?" mumbled Kamiko trying for a trigger word. As soon as she finished saying 'dark' the light on the end of the wand snuffed out. Kat followed suit with the full 'darkness'.

"So... I guess these things have trigger words" said Kat "Do you think we are required to find them all? Or would that be too much work? I mean... it's not like we have a list of them lying around somewhere"

Kamiko bit her lip as she spoke. "That's actually a good point. I really doubt it would be considered a good use of our time but I can't exactly be sure... ok, how about we turn over one of the papers to use as a notetaking tool, and write that down to discuss with Boss at the end of the day."

Kat accepted the plan and they got to work.

Chapter 390: Her Eyes!

When trying to figure out how to move all the wands to the paper, Kamiko suggested boxing everything up again, and putting the box on the paper. This plan was accepted, with the slight alteration of putting the paper on the box, as suggested by Kat.

It worked out, and they labelled the item 'box of wands' explaining what they thought it was, and what words they'd said to get specific effects. Theorising that there were more words but that it would take a lot of time, and they weren't sure if it was worthwhile. The two they found were potentially good fun, but nothing spectacular or worth the time it would take to look for more.

Stacking the box of wands on top of the box of plasma sabres Kat opened the next box and found it filled with paper. Just... white paper. *Ok... that's a little weird.* Kat looked over and compared the paper to the ones they were using to write reports and found them to be essentially the same shade.

"Well this is just weird" mumbled Kat out loud still very confused about the paper in the box. Picking up a piece, Kat moved it around in her hands, twisted it slightly, ripped a tiny bit in the corner and folded it into an airplane to finish off.

"Ok I have no idea what makes this anything other than normal paper" said Kat.

Kamiko, was having similar thoughts with her own piece. She'd also tried using her naginata to cut it, which was more than simple, and used a little bit of her demonic fire on the part she sliced off, which promptly froze over and then crumbled when dropped.

"Yeah this just seems like normal paper to me" said Kamiko.

They walked over to the bench to try out the pens, and found them to work just fine on the paper.

"Well... that about covers it. I mean the only thing we haven't tried is paper cuts I guess, but those are kind hard to do intentionally, and at this point I think we can just say this is normal paper" said Kat.

"Hmm, I guess? But I feel like we should try anyway, just run your finger along the edge real quick I guess? That is, if you don't mind of course" said Kamiko.

Kat shrugged and did just as asked. She was expecting a small cut that would quickly heal when she did this. Instead, the cut seemed to explode, and a massive amount of blood drained from the tiny cut she'd made on her pointer finger as an example. Stumbling slightly from the blood loss as her regeneration quickly jumped into action, sealing the wound and then replenishing the lost blood Kat was stunned.

"That... that isn't normal" said Kat looking over at Kamiko whose wide eyes were spinning on a face that looked rather put out.

"That... no that is very much NOT normal. Kat are you ok?!" shouted Kamiko.

"Yeah I'm fine. Really that much blood is nothing to me. Or well, not nothing exactly but easily recoverable, I'm fine." Said Kat.

Kamiko took in a few deep breaths to steady herself before saying. "Well... that's awkward. We have a box of... I'm not really sure what we should call it? Blood paper? It's not quite right but it's the best I got"

Kat shrugged. "The real question is do we need to test the rest of them." Kat held up the now very damp and black stained paper. "They are pretty useless if we test them, they don't seem to soak up the blood any better than normal paper would so testing them would also make them useless to Boss"

Kamiko shrugged. "I'm not sure. What were you thinking?"

Kat gave a couple quick 'thank you's to her math teachers. "I have an idea. I forgot what it's called but... I think it's random sampling or something like that? What we can do is grab say... five pieces of paper from random places in the stacks and test them. Then if we find out that all five still produce the same result, the whole box is probably like that"

Kamiko nodded. "Seems like a plan Kat."

Kat and Kamiko got to work. Firstly, Kat pulled the stacks out of the box and then Kamiko would choose a random spot in the stack, from which Kat would lift, without looking too closely, and Kamiko would then choose the top paper that resulted from that arrangement. The four stacks of paper from the box

all had one paper each chosen from them, and then the second stack got an extra one taken straight from the bottom.

Kat was quick to test them, and found similar results. The by the fourth, the blood was somewhat less, and she took note at that point. The fifth again, had less blood loss then she was expecting. *Hmm, I think this is my body getting use to the type of damage. They might be like... poison coated or magic coated or something, but whatever it is, I think I'm getting used to it.*

Kat explained as much to Kamiko who carefully sliced off some of the dryer parts of the first papers they tested and handed it over to Kat who sliced her finger once again. As was expected, the cut did force Kat to lose a good chunk of blood, but noticeably less then when they'd started. They used the 'place the paper on the box' trick to deem the whole box to be identical, and then a very short writeup explaining it was normal paper that gave extreme paper cuts causing major blood loss.

Once that was done, they moved onto the next books, and couldn't help but let out twin smiles of joy. There, ensconced inside the protective gel, was a set of perhaps ten, bubble wands.

Kat couldn't help but snicker at Boss' accurate prediction, while Kamiko actually voiced the thought. "I can't believe Boss was right. Bubble wands in one of the boxes. I..." Kamiko stopped to laugh for a few more moments before continuing "I actually can't believe it. I wonder if he knew beforehand or was just guessing?"

Kat shrugged and grabbed the top bubble wand to wave around. It seemed that they already had a soapy mixture on them and Kat was more than willing to forsake her more mature attitude for a moment and play with the bubbles.

Kat set about trying to see how quickly she could make them. Dragging the wand through the air in fast swipes creating trails of small bubbles that actually rose up towards the ceiling as she did it despite the lack of wind on her part.

Kamiko was taking a different approach, trying to make the largest bubble possible. She was finding though, with slow careful movements... that she was getting way past her size estimates. With the bubble's slow ascent, she was carefully turning in place creating a spiral bubble that was rapidly approaching the ceiling.

Kat stopped to watch at this point, and was paying attention to when it hit the rooftop of the warehouse. Kat watched as the bubbles started to lie flat against the roof and merge together instead of bunching up. The layers of bubble blending together to become more like a large bubble connected to the rest, looking somewhat like the stem of a plasma ball, with the shifting colours adding to the effect.

However, just as the bubble was approaching the two metres across mark, it popped, sending the fluid crashing down the floor and all over Kamiko, who hissed slightly in pain. "Shit. Don't get this stuff in your eyes" grumbled the demon in question.

Kat quickly took off her amulet and pulled it around Kamiko who breathed out a sigh of relief. "Oh thank you for that"

"No problem." Said Kat, noticing the three gems lighting up. "Should we report that it rates a 3 on the pain scale? It isn't exactly a weapon but I guess we know now..."

Kamiko winced. "I'm not sure. I can still... almost feel it crawling over my eyes... or, maybe that's not quite right, but it isn't a pleasant situation even with the amulet. Um... can you look for a bit of water maybe? So I can wash my eyes out?"

Kat looked around for something resembling a water cooler or some way to get water when she noticed in the back corner, on the other side of the dummies near the entrance was a hose. *Well good thing I found that before it became necessary. Hey wait a minute I'm still on fire.* Kat quickly grabbed the hose, and turned it on herself. Luckily she did because the pressure was much too high to be pointing towards someone's eyes.

It did remove the fire though, and Kat quickly turned the pressure down before walking over to Kamiko. "Hold out your hands. I'll let the water drop their first, because it's still probably a bit much for your eyes"