

DEMONS 401

Chapter 401: Bath Time 2

The three Succubi continued to chat for a short time, before Kamiko suggested that they all go and take a bath. This was partly to escape her mother's arms, and partly because she was starting to feel tired. The stress of the day was getting to her, and even though Kat had assured her the attacks to test the various items were fine, it still weighed on her.

When she suggested as much though, her mother said. "Ugh, the way you said that means Kat has frost flames. I guess I'll have to just put up with the cold if I want to join you guys"

"Indeed" said Kat "It was a very nice experience that I don't really get, and I can see why Kamiko enjoys taking the chance when she can. I take it you have hot flames?"

Nira nodded. "Yeah I do. It's probably the only thing about my abilities I'm a little disappointed in. Demonic flame is one of the things that doesn't really care about your feelings, you just get what you're given. If you hate it too bad.

"I wanted pretty much anything except normal fire. I would have loved a lot of the more exotic ones of course, but I'd have been happy with anything. I'm glad one of my daughter's managed to snag ice but it does make bathing together a little annoying. I didn't consider that at the time."

With that, Nira stood up but kept Kamiko in her arms as she headed for the drop. Kat followed behind with a wry smirk. It was a quick trip back to the bathroom where Nira turned on the cold water with a sigh before throwing off her coat that disappeared when it left her body.

"Wait was that your Demonic Attire?" asked Kat

"Yes but not how you're thinking Kat" said Nira "Once you get to Rank 5 you can have a few of them at once, and with a little bit of effort you can change them around into a better form. I have an armoured set of robes that I use for my combat medic attire. It's lined with metal plates.

"What I can do is remove those plates, fluff the robes up a bit, and then use it as you just saw for lounging around the house. It's actually one of the more creative uses I came up for that outfit and I'm very happy with it."

"Oh, yeah I remember Kamiko doing some minor changes to her outfit when we were completing out Wrath punishment" said Kat

"No need to dress it up dear" said Nira "You were beating the shit out of each other weren't you?"

Kat shook her head. "No no no... other people. We were beating the shit out of other people." Finished Kat with a grin.

Nira gave an acknowledging nod. "So, what was your first Contract Kat?"

"Oh, Kamiko and I were sharing those stories the other day. My first contract was a bit weird. It went like this...

"... and that's where it ended and why I thought it was a dream for a bit." Explained Kat.

Nira giggled and the explanation, sounding more like a teen than a mother of... some later age before saying. "Ah that is amusing to hear. I never get good summoning stories like that. Though, Kamiko's second one was pretty good as well"

Kamiko rolled her eyes and said. "It wasn't that crazy Mum. I just got summoned to be a model for some clothes."

"Ok I really feel like I need some further explanations" said Kat.

Kamiko shook her head and said. "You don't really need much more to understand it Kat. See, the people who summoned me really wanted a Succubus to show off their new line of clothes. They even used some very specific runes to dictate what I looked like instead of what abilities I had. Of course, it didn't work out perfectly, because they didn't specify what colour hair they wanted me to have, and a lot of the outfits clashed"

Nira snorted. "A lot is an understatement. Try, basically all of them."

"The black suit wasn't too bad..." said Kamiko

Nira rolled her eyes and said. "Yeah not too bad except for the fact that it was too tight around your waist because of your wings and they couldn't fit you into it without cutting holes for them, but the main designer on it refused because your wings were the same colour as the outfit and it would have caused a bunch of other issues."

"Well, it wasn't my fault that they made the centrepiece of the show a long pink dress that's just slightly off colour from my hair. It drove them crazy seeing the slight colour shift. I know I saw one of the designers crying about it in a corner." Replied Kamiko

Nira shot back with. "It was their own fault really. Sure, they pretty much all had blonde hair on that world for some reason, but some people dyed it. I'm not sure why they expected you'd also have blonde hair. It isn't exactly a common colour for Succubi."

"It isn't?" asked Kat "What colour is normal?"

Nira shrugged and said. "I don't really think there is a normal colour, just that blonde is slightly rarer. Normally our hair trends towards... it's hard to describe? I can't say pastel colours, because black is also fairly common but... full? No that's not really right either.

"Perhaps I can just give you an example. It would be far more likely for a Succubus to have either white or yellow hair then blonde. Blonde is... more of a half measure to us? So it gets left by the wayside. Golden blonde, the rich deep kind that borders on yellow is probably the most common type, but Succubus hair doesn't exactly exist on a spectrum.

"Kamiko has the exact same shade of pink as her father, just as Aslena and I share the exact same kind of blueish green hair. I know elves for example can be a combination of parents or slightly different shades but we don't have that. It's what makes blonde hard to find. You don't really get it as a mix, and it doesn't spread well through the population unless they have a non-demon parent.

*Huh. I guess I've been thinking of demons as having strange hair colours but... maybe it's more strange that humans are limited to what... four? Red, Brown, Blonde, Black. And one could argue that brown is a

red and black combination somewhat. Eh maybe you can't, but still it seems so limiting when I consider it that way. Even my hair was weird before, a much brighter red than it really had any right to be without dye. Now of course, I imagine it's nothing strange at all. Should I ask?*

Once she thought of the question, Kat couldn't help but find it to be rather intriguing to her. It seemed kind of pointless, but the burning desire for the answer won out in the end. "How common would you say my hair colour is amongst demons? Or at least Succubi?"

"Well amongst demons" said Nira "Pretty rare. A shocking number of demons don't have hair, or have something that isn't really hair. So as a whole, yeah it's pretty rare." Nira stuck her tongue out at Kat knowing she hadn't answered the question at all.

"Still, amongst Succubi... it's probably about average rarity? I mean I wouldn't call it common, because we don't really have a common hair colour. It's as common as mine or Kamiko's, though obviously you're outnumbered in our household."

"Yeah I saw that on Kamiko's family picture" said Kat.

"Ah, a lovely piece of artwork" said Nira "I do wish Kerra would be more willing to allow copies to be made of her art. She seems to think that it's better to sell only the originals and to put a special anti-copy measure onto it instead of making copies to sell or in case one of us wants to have a copy of one of them."

"I dunno mum" said Kamiko as she floated across the water. "I'm honestly quite happy to know that my painting is MINE. Sure you have similar family pictures in your room, but that one is all mine and nobody else gets a copy"

Nira let out a deep breath. "Sure I guess. Still I'd love a copy of that one, and what happens if it gets damage?"

"Well to quote Kerra" said Kamiko " 'It is the knowledge that you hold the original in its pure form that grants it the most sentimentality. Couple this with the knowledge that improper care can lead to you losing that treasured scene, and you will find yourself taking much better care of it' "

Nira sighed. "I'd take great care of any of my lovely daughter's paintings copies or not. Still, I guess I do understand, as much as I wish she had her paintings widely known"

Chapter 402: Three is no Crowd

Kat shrugged as her tail waved through the water. After thinking for a moment, she said. "I think it depends what exactly the pictures are for. The ones she's made so far are important pieces either for herself or for family and she wants it to always be that way.

"Maybe if she wants to sell some others, she can do that too, but the ones that she makes for family are supposed to be important one of a kind pictures that are for their intended person and them alone. It's actually a really sweet gesture doing it that way."

Kamiko nodded happily as she wrapped her tail around herself. Nira just sighed. "I know that, or well I SHOULD know that but... I guess a lot of the time my instinct as a mother and a well known figure is to wish she was just as well known for her passion."

"Well, here is something to think on. What's more important to you. Your work or your daughters?" asked Kat

Nira gave a cold glare to Kat, that seemed to suggest choosing her next words carefully. "My daughters no question."

Kat nodded. "And yet, you're more well known for your medical prowess right?"

"Yeeess...?" said Nira

"Well, isn't it better that way? You love your family but it isn't the rest of the world that needs to know that, it's your daughters and your husband that matter in that instance. If everyone else thought you were a horrible parent but your daughters still thought you were great would that be preferable to the other way around?"

Nira swallowed hard. "Yes. Yes it really would be. I suppose I never thought of it that way. How... how did you come to that conclusion, when... and I do mean no disrespect, but as someone who lived in an orphanage how?"

"Ah that's easy" said Kat. "I used to get made fun of a good amount for not having a family, but all the kids I helped that came through the orphanage loved me. And really, what did I care about what a few ignorant classmates thought about me when all the people I lived with actually enjoyed my company and liked seeing me around?"

"Sorry you had to go through that Kat" said Kamiko.

"Bah" said Nira "I don't think it's anything to apologise for. Kat clearly believes she's had a good life and I doubt she'd trade it for anything else"

Kat nodded. "Yeah, as I mentioned to your daughter, if I didn't have to move out because I was getting too old, I'd have stayed in the orphanage for a long time. Maybe even forever. I might have just found a job and kept helping out, or made working at the orphanage my job."

"Do you enjoy the Contracts Kat?" asked Kamiko

"You don't have to answer that" said Nira shooting a glare at her daughter who looked away slightly embarrassed. "That's considered a rather rude question for a demon."

"No it's fine" said Kat. "I do quite enjoy them. It's not really what I thought I'd do with my life but it's certainly entertaining. I get to see such strange and varied places and the fact that magic is real is quite cool. If I gave up real magic my best friend might just murder me in my sleep."

"I'm surprised you can actually say that" said Nira.

Huh... I guess it is a little surprising that I can considering it must be the truth but... it's true enough I suppose. I'm sure Lily would try, maybe give me a good stab in protest. No, I can't see that actually. Why could I say that?

Kat, in an attempt to test a theory, tried to say the words again, but found them caught in her throat.

"Interesting. I can't seem to say it again." Said Kat.

"Oh that one's easy" said Kamiko. "It's something you sort of fringely believed as an errant thought, but I bet you considered it afterwards didn't you?" Kat nodded "Well, once you'd done that, you confirmed to yourself your friend would never do that even if they were angry and your words became less true.

"Many people can do things in anger, so you can sometimes make those kinds of statements when you don't give things proper thought. It's a loophole that you can't really exploit, because, for obvious reasons, you can't think about it and plan for it."

*I guess it's a bit like how way back when this all started and I was asked by Vivian if Sylvie was my sister. I answered that she wasn't, and then shortly after that she was. Wait... no I could do both... though... maybe I couldn't do that anymore.

If somebody asked me if she was my sister, I don't think I could say she isn't unless I specified that she wasn't my biological one. Might have to test that... but I'm not sure how. Maybe I'll just make a note for Callisto to follow up on it.*

"Does that sort of thing happen often?" Kat asked the two other Succubi.

Kamiko looked to Nira to answer the question, who smiled and looked to Kat and said. "That depends on what you mean by often. I can say with certainty that it happens more when you are younger. I'm not sure if that's because your demonic energy is less set in its ways and more willing to... be flexible I suppose, or if it's because younger demons are less sure of the truth of the world or something?

"For most people... I'd say the biggest deal is noticing it. You just don't really catch that sort of thing easily. You are saying what you mean, even if you don't fully believe it to be the truth. Especially considering you are a nondem. I'm actually not sure if that makes it less strict on you or not..."

"Oh actually..." said Kat "I know a bit about that. I can tell you that it was only partway through my transformation that I lost the ability to lie. It was a bit of a shock to me when it happened, even though I'd been prepared for it. I'd lied... well not really for a long time, but... little things you know?"

Nira raised an eyebrow as if to say 'really? Asking demons if they know what lying is like'. Kat grimaced and said. "Right sorry. Um... well I found out when I was caught out by someone who would later adopt me. She asked me a question I couldn't lie to her about and things sort of went from there..."

"Could you tell us?" asked Kamiko.

"Well alright. It's not a long story really. It all started because I needed to break into my best friend Lily's backyard..."

"... and that's pretty much how the afternoon went" said Kat.

"You were quite lucky Kat" said Nira. "I don't know how many humans would be willing to accept something like that. I know many demons that I'd doubt would behave as nobly as she did in the same situation."

"Yeah, this Vivian person sounds great" said Kamiko.

Kat nodded. "Yeah, Vivian is pretty special. I'm really not sure whe-" Kat choked on the words. "Ok fine lie detector. I do know that I'd still be in the orphanage, but if I looked towards my future then I don't know where I'd end up. Hearing that I was getting kicked out at eighteen was a surprise honestly."

"Is that normal?" asked Kamiko

Kat shrugged. "I think it might be a government thing? Like... once you're a full adult the orphanage can't be responsible for you anymore. They have to accept the younger children that wouldn't be able to take care of themselves.

"I know they do have places for people over eighteen but I don't know the details, or if there was a place for me in the town I grew up in. Probably would have had to move to the nearby city." Said Kat.

"What's the difference between a town and a city?" asked Kamiko.

Huh... does... does she not know? Surely that would have come up... Kat considered that the Hub was in some ways, one big interconnected city. Ok fine, maybe not here but... what about in the Summonings? Hmm... maybe not... it depends on how the translations worked...

"It's about size really" said Kat. "I'm not sure where the exact line is but a village is smaller than a town, which is smaller than a city, which is again smaller than a metropolis, but I know a lot of people just use city for a metropolis as well, even though they are different things."

"Is it a bit like the difference between a house and a cottage?" asked Kamiko.

I... I have no idea. I've never really thought about it like that. Kat sent a questioning glance to Nira who nodded. "Yes Kamiko that's right."

Chapter 403: Remembering how to Remember Memories.

After that, the demons let things lapse into silence and enjoyed the relaxation provided by the cool water. Or rather, Kat and Kamiko did while Nira enjoyed their company. You could see it in her face, as despite the smile she wore, it was the slightest bit pinched and somewhat static when she wasn't looking at Kamiko.

After a while, Kat had an interesting thought. "If you don't mind me asking..."

"You really don't need to keep saying that." said Nira jumping in, "You are more than polite enough to us both Kat. Don't feel the need to preface questions with something like that, just ask them. If I take offence I'll tell you."

"Sure Nira. I was just going to ask what your first mission was like?" asked Kat

"Oh nothing to spectacular" said Nira. "You know how Kamiko has poison in her nails?" Kat nodded.

"Well, I have that as well, but when I started it was the first healing ability I had. I didn't realise it was setting a trend at that point but I'm not really disappointed.

"Anyway, I was called in to heal someone. It wasn't anything special, just go across town, heal this person for me, don't kill anyone on the way or let anyone stop you. Luckily no one even tried. Just a quick pop a few streets over and then a jab in the arm and I was all done.

"Sat around drinking tea with everyone for a while just to make sure it did actually heal the girl of course. I think it took... Eh I don't really remember and it wasn't that important. It wasn't longer than an afternoon though I know that."

Hmm, maybe I should ask... She seems to have a good memory to even remember that much and mine is almost perfect but I still seem to forget things sometimes...

"Hey Nira?" asked Kat as Nira turned to face her. "You mentioned you don't quite remember the time well... how good is your memory exactly?"

"Eh, pretty much perfect at this point. Or as good as you can reasonably get." Said Nira

"Why do you make that sound so mundane?" asked Kat. "I have a perfect memory and it's amazing how much I can remember"

Nira tutted lightly. "I bet you'd be surprised how much you still can't recall."

"What do you mean?" asked Kat.

"It's a little complex, like so many of the other questions you've asked me. The basics of it though, is say you have your bedroom and a closet full of clothes," *Like that would happen. I didn't have that many clothes before and I have none that fit me now.* "can you find things better when they are on hangers or on the floor?"

"Hangers of course" said Kat easily.

"Right, well. When you try to recall memories it's a lot like looking for a specific shirt. If your closet is nice and ordered, it shouldn't take you all that long. You just have to search in the right section of your closet, look at a few other similar outfits, and find the thing you are looking for.

"However, without any organisation, your memories will be stored a lot like throwing all your clothes onto the floor of your closet. You know they are in the closet, and that you have every item you own in that closet, but it's somewhat hard to know where specifically. Sure, you can pick out the general area if it's recently been put there. Next to those jeans, or near that dress, or under those knickers you bought last week..."

The teasing look Nira sent Kamiko managed to get a mild blush from her, but she managed to stay strong for the most part as Nira continued. "But the trickiest part is when you don't quite recognise the clothing you're looking for, or you forget to look, or you forget you remember something."

"How can I forget to remember something?" asked Kat

"It isn't too common in someone your age. It gets worse as you grow older if you don't organise your mind with some regularity. Putting them in filing cabinets or books or something. Anyway, what happens is that you have all these memories you can see, but the ones that are easy to grab don't have all the little details.

"Let's say... um... hmm, what's a good example. Kamiko! Give me an example please." 'requested' Nira.

Kamiko floated around for a while as she considered the options. Her mother had explained this before so she did know what was being discussed, she just needed to remember what example was used last time or come up with a good one. "Ok, I got one" said Kamiko. "Say Kerra has some old paint cans lying around. She might remember that fact, or find something to remind her of the fact, but the colour of the paint in said cans might be buried somewhere. If they look somewhat untouched, she might not even realise she'd open them at all"

Nira nodded. "Yes a fine example. She might know she has cans, but cannot remember that she knows what's in them. Slightly different storage method when left untouched. Of course, remembering things because they are connected is a thing as well.

"You can sort of... follow the breadcrumbs a lot of the time. If we stick to Kamiko's example, if Kerra was reminded that she checks all of her paint, then she might be able to follow that thread to find out what colour they are. This is because she does technically still remember the information, her brain just can't find it."

Kat nodded, soaking up the information. "How do you try and order your mind?"

"It's a bit of a complex process at the higher level." Said Nira. "This is something I'm not actually an expert in. I get by well enough, but I'm not sure I could properly teach you. I believe, once you are meditating, you need to go to your memories instead of your resting place and just... sort them out.

"My mother actually organised my mind. She could enter people's mindscapes by locking eyes with them. Neither could move when she did this, but she could take serious damage if the other person managed to fight her off. I'm not sure I could ask her to do the same for you. It's a lengthy process and a bit invasive. I think you'd be best to find out how to do it yourself. I can only maintain my adequately, not well"

Yeah, I can see why that's a concern. "I wonder if I can do something like that." Wondered Kat aloud following her second train of thought. "I can go into people's dreams or I think I can? I haven't really tested it much and I've only done it once, but I have a similar ability."

"Probably won't work" said Kamiko, who looked to her mother for confirmation. When Nira nodded, Kamiko continued on. "It's only the same thing in so far as they are the same type of ability. But it's like... the difference between my poison nails and Mum's healing tincture nails.

"They are both very similar in a lot of ways, but I can't heal anyone with mine. I know that a mindscape is a lot more... actively participated in. It's more like the driver's seat than a dream which is a very different experience. Actually... I don't think you can enter the mindscapes of sleeping people, can you?"

Nira shrugged and said. "You sort of can. It's all dark and you can't find your way around. Or at least that's what my mum told me. It's possible to find things but very hard, and disturbing anything too much can lead to you waking the person you are trying to enter the mindscape of."

"Is that sort of thing rarer than my dream walking?" asked Kat somewhat interested.

"Eh... not necessarily? I mean, your dream walking is rare for someone so low in Rank, and it's not common for a Succubus to end up with it. Entering a mindscape is... probably about the same rarity, though more likely to show up at your Rank, but MUCH rarer in the Succubi population.

"We are somewhat connected to dreams after all. One of the more common abilities for Succubi is to have our bodies shift subtly to be more appealing to the person watching us. However, my family doesn't seem to ever end up with it. That's probably the rarest thing mentioned actually. Not a one of my extended family, but quite a few friends."

"I didn't realise something like that was so common. I mean... do I have it? I don't think I do..." wondered Kat.

"Probably not. I haven't noticed you changing at all, and you can tell somewhat. It is very common though. It's up there with the nail poisons, and the perfect skin. Not everyone has it, but you are more likely to find it tacked on to some other upgrade pretty early on than not.

Chapter 404: Recharging in your Sleep

Kat and the others let the conversation drift after their chat on common Succubi powers. They mostly covered the sort of artifacts they'd encountered during their time at Boss' warehouse. Kat was surprised that Nira, someone who healed people for a living, was shockingly ok with the practice.

When Kamiko asked her why, it was clear to Kat it wasn't a simple thing. The response was, "He seems to be taking proper precautions, and the system will probably stop anything that'd kill you, not that they'd be in those sorts of boxes anyway. On top of that, I'm not sure you realise how good your regeneration is Kat."

Trying to continue that line of questioning, and why Kat's regeneration was so good, delved into a lot more technical language that Kat wasn't actually equipped to understand. The best she got out of it, is that her body was so hard to mark because of Succubi regeneration that if she had found something to change that without relying on Tier 6 or above power on a much weaker demon, then she'd be hailed (or reviled) for her ground breaking discovery.

That took up the rest of their bath time. After that, Nira suggested Kat burn through as much energy as she could and then try to sleep instead of meditating. Nira turned on the heated pipes after shooing Kamiko out of the room, and got Kat to cool it all down until she gave the signal that she was out of energy, or close to it.

"Don't worry, I'll carry you out. Spend it all" said Nira.

Hmm, I'm not... well I guess I am willing. Really it isn't a question of trust is it? Nira is so strong that should she actually wish me harm there is nothing I can do about it at full power. Anything she does when I can't move is something she could do right now if she really wanted.

Kat sent the rest of her energy into the flames coating the water. She was actually more than a little surprised that it wasn't freezing over completely, but considering Nira and her husband were tier 5 and the bath was likely designed for them, it wasn't as strange as she was thinking.

Kat felt herself start to waver. Something in her energy telling her that pushing past that point would cause her to collapse. It was a strange sensation. In all the moments she had used her energy before this, she wasn't exactly calm during the experience. Because she was looking for it specifically, she could see the wavering of the energy situated within her and knew that pushing further would cause her to fall over.

Kat heisted for a moment, once again wondering if this was fine, but decided to just go with it. With a final blast of energy Kat felt herself falling. Before her knees had even bent though Nira had turned off the taps and grabbed Kat and pulled her into a bridal carry. It was a little awkward with Kat's wings but Nira was able to keep them folded up in her hold mostly well.

As soon as Nira left the room, Kamiko said. "Mum! What did you do to my friend?"

Nira smiled softly, seeing the real worry in her daughters face. "She's just used all her energy for the moment. She's fine. It's something that happens with high level regenerators. She's not completely out, but she's below the threshold her body is comfortable working at."

"I don't quite get it." Said Kamiko with a slight frown as she followed behind her mother who was leading the way back to Kamiko's room.

"It's a little funny detail that certain regenerators all share. Kat especially because she has Succubus Regeneration. They have a threshold. It's like... 2-5% of their total energy where if they dip below it, they just sort of collapse.

"It's still debated to this day if this is because they need a certain amount of energy to function, or if their regenerations stops them moving so that if some serious injury were to occur it could still heal them from the brink.

"Say... having your heart ripped out. If Kat stopped moving, she could still take one more major hit like that before she was actually out of luck, and even then, given time she could probably recover by herself.

"Personally, I think it's a bit of both. Some regenerators need the energy to function, while others it's a failsafe to prevent them from taking damage when they are so low on resources." Explained Nira.

Kamiko frowned. "That doesn't seem particularly safe though... what if she runs out of energy in the middle of combat or something?"

At that question Kat felt a light shudder run through her body as she regained the ability to move. As she does so though, she felt Nira grip her tighter, as if to say she was trapped for now, and Kat decided not to push her luck. She did however, answer the question. "Well, I don't know what happens all the time, but I know my tail will still protect me even when I can't move.

"I'm not sure when my regeneration stops exactly, but I know I can regenerate a surprising amount with only a bit of energy. It does somewhat depend on what the problem is. Little cuts can be healed all day, every day and, if they only come once every second or so, actually take less then I regenerate.

"Big things like missing my heart take a chunk of energy and a bit of time... though all things considered, even a heart is only a few percent all at once. Which isn't that bad when you consider what I'm missing. I will say. It's weird I can grow a heart back but not an arm. I don't quite get that."

"I can pick up that thought." Said Nira, "The main reason is that your regeneration focusing on both the worst injuries, and the easiest, as well as the fact that your energy is focused around your head and your heart.

"If you are missing an arm, the energy is only at the stump, and it's much simpler to keep you alive by just closing the wound up. Missing an organ however... is rather fatal in the long run and it's close to your centre of energy so it makes do with that as well.

"Gluttony regen doesn't have that problem. They can regrow in a snap. Though once you are a higher Rank, missing limbs problem won't be a problem. I mean, a Rank 5 can do most of what you can now without any ability in it.

"So as you climb there it should get much better. Probably not much faster for a long time though. Regen tends to try and fix everything before it speeds things up at all. Just the nature of the beast really. A bit like how it's easier to get more potency in your poisoned nails than a new mixture.

"I doubt Kamiko will find a third poison until Rank 4 at the very least, and that would be a rare thing"

"Why?" asked Kat.

"Oh can I do this one Mum?" asked Kamiko.

Nira inclined her head to her daughter as she pushed open Kamiko's room. Kamiko, taking the provided signal said. "It's to do with how the abilities work. It's much easier to put more power into them then it is fundamentally chain it.

"Think of it like... like cooking? Do you know how to cook?" seeing Kat's nod Kamiko continued. "It's rather easy to just add more ingredients to feed more people. If you know in advance it isn't hard at all. However, is suddenly a demon like the Living Shadows turns up and says they can't eat salt.

"Well then you have to change the whole dish around even if you can keep some things mostly the same."

Nira shook her head. Not terribly happy with the example her daughter was giving, but at least enjoying the attempt that was made. *Hmm, well, I guess I can see how that works somewhat... Salt probably isn't quite the ingredient that would change things too much. Maybe sugar in a cake instead? I do understand though. It's an easier change to add more power but to add more options is hard.*

Nira at this point, placed Kat gently down on Kamiko's bed before sweeping her daughter off her feet and putting her down beside Kat and pulling up the covers. Tucking the pair in, Nira gave Kamiko a light kiss on the forehead before heading towards the door. "Kat, do try and sleep tonight. It should be easy because of your low energy. You don't need to do this often. In fact I wouldn't recommend doing it more than twice a week at the most. But do try and get around to it when you can."

"Sure thing Doc" said Kat.

Chapter 405: Don't forget about Old Damage

When Kat woke up the next day, she found herself feeling very strange. The feeling was most closely likened to being a ringing gong. She felt disjointed and as if her movements weren't quite happening, the way she wanted them to, giving lead to a pressure on her mind when she tried to concentrate on it.

This wasn't help by the fact that she also felt energised, as if she'd been packed full of energy somehow and left to deal with it despite her desire to avoid motion. All in all, it was not a fun time.

Ugh, this feels so wrong. At least I don't feel like throwing up, but that's about all I can say is good about this. No, Nira being around to ask is also probably a good thing. I can go and ask her what the heck is causing this, though I have a good idea.

Kat carefully unwrapped her arms from around Kamiko. At some point during the night it was clear she'd crawled over and wrapped herself around the other demon and it was now a minor challenge to escape without waking her. Kamiko did stir just a little bit but seemed to be fine with Kat leaving.

Taking careful steps, Kat left the room and shut the door quietly and made her way upstairs. *Does it still count as upstairs if the house doesn't have any? A thing to consider.* When Kat got to the top she found the room empty and decided to just grab a chair until Kamiko woke up.

That was until a voice sounded off behind her. "Good morning Kat."

Kat whipped around, tail pulling in close instinctively to avoid whatever was behind her and came face to face with Nira. She had her hair done up around her horns like Kamiko normally wore, and was wearing what looked to be an old apron covering a dress with a splattering of flowers on it.

Ok that doesn't make any sense. Our clothes regenerate so why does that look old? I can even see several stains on the edges of the thing that have to be old as well as fresh stains on her knees which at least tells me where she's been.

"H-hi Nira" managed Kat.

"Hmm, how are you feeling?" asked Nira.

"Honestly... not the best. It's really weird. I feel both energised and like I really shouldn't be moving. If I stop to thinking about it, it gets worse" replied Kat.

Nira took this as a sign to grab Kat by the shoulders and lead her over towards the nearest chair. Taking the one next to Kat, she asked. "Would you like to talk about it?"

Kat nodded. "Yeah I did come up here for that actually. I mean, I'm not exactly hungry and it was tempting to just stay in bed but... this feels like something I need to deal with."

"Alright give me just a second" said Nira.

In that second, Nira swapped out her clothes. They disappeared for an instant and even Kat's eyes couldn't spot where the transition occurred. Now Nira had a tight white outfit that was strapped down specifically at the wrists to prevent the sleeves from getting anywhere. There were two bright red lines running down from either side of her neck and continuing the entire length of the coat.

The coat was joined together by a series of strings wrapped around buttons and revealed a black undershirt that hugged Nira's form as well. Her pants were black with the same red stripes, one on either leg, just to the side of the centre and her shoes were completely red.

Nira now had a pair of glasses on that looked like safety glasses however they didn't actually have any lenses in them at the moment. The coat had two large pockets at just above waist height but they didn't appear to have anything in them at the moment.

Nira then carefully put her hand on Kat's temple and closes her eyes. Kat felt a burst of energy travel down her entire body three times before Nira let her go. Next she lightly moved Kat's arms around, first the left and then the right, before tapping her horns very lightly with a fingernail while Nira's other hand rested on Kat's tail.

Next Nira stood up and ran two fingers down Kat's wings, letting out bursts of power as she did so. Kat knew it wasn't quite demonic energy but it was close in nature and she could feel her own energy try and reach out to grab it.

Once that was done Nira tried to do the same for Kat's tail but it twisted out of the way. Nira frowned slightly and tried again only for the same thing to occur. Nira gazed into Kat's eyes as she tried a third time and that same tail refused to cooperate.

"You aren't doing that intentionally are you?" asked Nira lips slightly upturned but eyes hard.

"No." said Kat clearly.

Nira clicked her tongue slightly and moved back. "Right well... it's a bit of a shame I can't double check, but honestly based on that involuntary reaction your tail is probably fine. My best guess with what is going on is that your body needed to clear out it's energy more thoroughly perhaps for the first time."

"Wait that doesn't make sense. I've used all my energy up quite a few times before." Said Kat.

"Yes I'm sure you have... but it isn't quite the same as using it all and then properly resting. Even meditation would be fine. Think of it like... hmm there isn't a great way to explain it but...

"Think of it like cleaning something. Using all your energy is like picking up the dust and pushing it off a tabletop, but it just ends up on the floor. Cleaning the tabletop is great, and you eat there, but things still build up on the floor.

"What seems to have happened is that your body has been able to keep in mostly good shape. In fact, from my examination it really shouldn't be feeling as strange as it does though I have some guesses about that. Essentially, you needed to use your energy then rest. Not just use your energy, be forced to rest, then get right back into things."

"Ok. Can you tell me where the issue came from?" asked Kat

"I think so. I called up your medical records, which, is something I was only able to do because of my high Rank and the fact that you are currently sleeping in my house of your own free will, to see that you were recently severely injured. The amount of damage was quite frankly staggering, and anyone without your regeneration would have been teleported out before it got to that point and still would have had a long recovery.

"What the issue is however, is that Kara likely didn't realise you had no demonic parents. It's clear she knew you were from offhub, but the fact you hadn't been told to use up your energy and rest to... let's go with completely reset your system.

"It's just such a common thing you know? Like... it's just something everyone knows so it probably didn't occur to her to even mention it. Normally you wouldn't have noticed the difference, but the injuries you sustained meant you'd probably accumulated, and keep in mind this is an analogy, accumulated an extra two or three months of waste in your energy system when it repaired itself."

Kat winced at that. "So if that was a few months' worth... how long should I wait before doing this sort of thing?"

Nira shrugged. "Well, you should definitely be doing this in your home dimension when you consider yourself safe. It's riskier to do it during Contracts, so you can avoid that if it isn't multiple months long, but your regeneration rate is good enough that you could probably get away with it."

"How does my regen compare?" asked Kat

Nira shrugged. "I didn't check it out all that closely but at the very least the top 75th percentile. I'd offer to test it properly but you need some specialised equipment to test to see if you will keep that regeneration rate or if you're just doing well for a Rank 2 and not something more innate."

"So... does regeneration not carry over?" asked Kat

"I'd say it's about fifty/fifty?" said Nira thinking about it. "Think of it as additional instead of exponential. Some people get say... an extra fifty points of regeneration every Rank, which while nice, quickly loosing meaning when you get to higher Ranks. Others though, regenerate in half the time, and keep that no matter how much energy they gain."

Kat bit her lip. "That's interesting. How well does Kamiko do? Or you?"

"Well," said Nira with a grin. "I actually have one of the best regeneration rates in the entire hub despite being Rank 5. I have a low maximum reserve, but my regeneration is possibly second to none. Kamiko, I believe, might have inherited that from me but time will tell."

Chapter 406: Back With Boss

Kat was now staring across the table at Boss. Kamiko was shaking in place, as he stared her down and Kat could feel her own aura trying to flare up to calm her down. *I'm just not sure if that's appropriate though... I don't want to make things worse for her... It's also not like Boss is trying to be intimidating... or at least I don't think he is...*

Boss, for his part was simply taking a long look at Kamiko as if to ensure that she was only telling the truth. The reason this was occurring was that Kamiko had mentioned the likely valuable socks. He confirmed as such by asking again. "Socks? Really?"

Boss deep voice seemed to vibrate through Kat and Kamiko shivered noticeably more, so Kat decided that despite Kamiko's prior instance she'd explaining, having cited knowing more about the organisational system then Kat, it was time to step up. "Yes indeed Boss. Socks. We tested them as best we could and from what we determined the chance they are something that should be in a low tier box is rather small."

Boss let out a low grumble. It sounded somewhere between a cascade of coins and the grinding of rocks, and Kat wasn't sure what it meant. *I mean... is he just clearing his throat? Is he annoyed? Is this just how he breaths? Probably not that last one considering I don't think he sounded like that when using his cigar... but I'm not sure it's a real cigar anyway. Dammit.*

"That is somewhat disturbing to hear... what made you reach that conclusion?" asked Boss letting out a particularly large smoke cloud as she did. Kat was half expecting to smell some of it or breath a part in, but the cloud simply disappeared into the air. *Ok, you can't just do that! Is the whole cigar thing just an elaborate illusion? I feel like I shouldn't be as considered about this as I am but I can't stop thinking about it.*

"Testing it on both Kamiko and myself produced different results, namely perfectly cool, or perfectly warm in my case. In could even sustain this temperature during and just after being hit with our cold demonic flame. We couldn't test other types as we are both ice attuned. Still, the socks in question

didn't so much as gain an ice crystal, it was the air around it that started to freeze" relayed Kat as calmly as she could.

Let's go over my memories. Boss took another long breath of the cigar before letting out a small cloud this time. While this was happening Kat scanned the conversation with Boss from last time, paying particular attention to the cigar, and noting that despite the flashes of fire and the fact that it looks like it was shrinking... it hadn't changed size at all.

*Dammit it is a trick cigar. Just... why? Does it taste like anything? Is it part of his body? That might seem silly except for the fact he's MADE OUT OF COINS. Is it just part of the look? If it is why not use a real cigar? I doubt someone made out of coins could ruin his lungs using cigars...

Except if you are made out of coins perhaps it's more obvious? I mean his teeth and... what neck? Body? Whatever you can see in his mouth, would that get stained black from the cigar? Now that I think about it, if he does care about appearances maybe it matters all the more that his cigar is actually fake.*

"Hmm" Boss' humming sounded rather normal, something Kat would be thankful for if she was busy having an existential crisis about the nature of his cigar. "That does make a compelling point. I trust that you didn't remove it from the warehouse?"

Another thing is... does the cigar count as part of his demonic attire? Could that be the reason it seems endless? If that's the case then surely it can't be fake... unless a fake cigar is part of his demonic attire?

Kat, luckily, was paying enough attention to respond. "We left it off to the side but within the warehouse, noting it as odd but we didn't think it would be right to remove it to bring it to your attention."

Another thing to consider... is has he always had the cigar? I can actually imagine a younger Boss with a real cigar and blackened insides from the habit needing to get it all cleaned out at some point. Then again... if his family all look like that, what are the chances they warned him about it? Unless it's some kind of rite of passage maybe?

"I'll commend you for that forethought. Please leave it aside for now and bring it with you this afternoon when we have our final discussion. It seems I'll have to test that product myself at the very least" said Boss.

I'm still hung up on if it counts as part of his attire though. Then again... I guess when I consider it fully is it really any different from his hat? Or my sash? It's not really part of the outfit but I do need it to keep it together. Heck, my shoes count as part of my outfit despite them not really touching my body.

So does having it in your mouth qualify? Like, if I had an old timey pipe that could blow bubbles would that have become part of my attire? Ok now that I think about it, that sounds like a lot of fun. Note to self, when I unlock the ability to have multiple sets of attire, acquire a pipe... and maybe a hat as well.

"Thank you for that. I believe that was the only item we had major issues with. Some we may not have totally catalogued the features off, such as the fake wands we found, but I don't believe them to be an issue." Said Kat

Wait, Boss just tapped his cigar and ash fell off. Did that ash go anywhere? Kat stole a quick glance at the only slightly visible ash tray sitting on Boss' desk. Sadly, the angle was bad and she couldn't make out if anything was in it.

"Tell me more about these wands. If they are strange enough to warrant mentioning at all, I may as well cover it with you just in case" said Boss.

Though, given that there is an ashtray at all, doesn't that imply there is ashes? He wouldn't need one if the ashes just disappeared. Wait, but if the ashes are real, doesn't that mean the cigar has to be. Unless he's got infinite ashes somehow, which I doubt, because they'd still be worth a tiny bit of money...

"One of the boxes we looked through had a number of different sticks in them, which we found to produce a number of different effects depending on what words you say." Explained Kat. "It is doubtful we found all the activation words, but we know of a few such as the water and fire settings."

Then again, maybe the ash just lasts for a little while? It could be enchanted or something to be a closed loop? Similar to how a water fountain can get by with mostly recycled water. It could be a very long lasting cigar that uses the leftovers again and again... though I'm not sure that would be a good cigar? I... I don't think I know enough about them to tell.

"That is fine." Said Boss. "My main concern is simply a preliminary listing of the items. As long as you can figure out in rough terms what a given item does, as well as at least a few ways to use it if the item has multiple you are free to move on. I'm not expecting perfectly detailed analysis from either of you. I have other people to do that job."

Kat nodded and looked over at Kamiko who said. "Understood sir" after seeing Kat's hint.

"Good. Have another pleasant day. I will see you before you leave" said Boss, stamping out the cigar in the ash tray. As Kat turned and headed to the platform though, she saw that the cigar had stood up fine, and wasn't being crushed under Boss' hand.

God dammit. That really doesn't answer anything does it. Thought Kat as the transportation took her. As soon as they stepped out into the room, Kat asked. "Hey Kamiko was that cigar real?"

"What?" asked Kamiko bewildered

"Was the cigar Boss used an illusion? A real cigar? Part of his demonic attire?" questioned Kat.

"Ah... well I don't know? I didn't really think about it I guess. I do know that consumables can't be part of your attire... but if it was a prop instead of a working cigar then it certainly could be," said Kamiko.

Curses! I didn't even consider that limitation. The fact that it is a consumable makes it vastly different then socks! I just got caught up in the fact he always seems to have it on him. Though... I guess I'm no closer to finding the answer.

Chapter 407: More Special Items

Kat pursed her lips as she held the glowing whip that was slowly draining her energy. The glow gave it a nice golden sheen that certainly enhanced the look but for the amount of energy it was draining Kat had to assume that it was doing something else.

"I just don't know what that something is..." said Kat as she managed her best attempt at a whip crack. It... landed... roughly on target. The dummy was completely unphased by the 'attack' and didn't even rock backwards.

Kat looked over at Kamiko who was still just observing at this point after moving the box over to the 'opened' section. "Do you know how to use a whip?"

"I was taught the bare basics when I was training to see what weapon I liked the best. I can't say that I'm good, but throughout my training I was able to at least manage to crack the whip and get some force behind my blows." Said Kamiko.

Kat happily surrendered the whip to Kamiko who winced as it changed hands. "Oof, yeah this thing is a real power hog," grumbled Kamiko. "It has to do something impressive if it takes this much energy... unless..."

Kamiko wrapped the whip around Kat and the glow got stronger. Kat however didn't really feel any different. "So is this supposed to be doing something?" asked Kat after a few seconds had passed.

"You're not feeling strange at all?" asked Kamiko

"Nope" Kat answered automatically.

"Well... that's very strange. This damned thing is still draining my strength. I'm going to drop it and see if it drains you" said Kamiko as she let go of the whip.

Kat watched it dropped and then saw the golden glow flickering for a little bit before holding strong. Kat took a few experimental steps around and flexed her wings. Having the whip settle in the crook between her wings and her back wasn't the most comfortable thing, but it wasn't bad enough to call a problem.

Kat spun around lightly in place, and determined that she wasn't being drained by the whip at all. What's the point of having a whip that drains its user instead of its enemies. "So... I'm guessing this has to have some sort of effect we aren't seeing" said Kat. "I'm not losing any energy at all. The amulet isn't lighting up, and I'm really not sure what else to do."

"Verbal commands?" queried Kamiko.

Kat shrugged and flicked the end of the whip back over to Kamiko who proceeded to say mostly random commands like 'water' and 'wind' trying a few others such as 'bind' or 'teleport' and 'disable' but nothing seemed to make the whip react at all. "Hmm, can you get out of the rope?" asked Kamiko

Kat tilted her head to the side and said. "Pretty sure I can yeah." Kat simply used her tail to lift the whole thing up and over her head freeing her arms.

"Well, so much for the idea that it could trap people. Surely they would have thought of that when designing it. Tails are common enough of a trait in demons." Mumbled Kamiko. "Guess we just need to bring it up with Boss"

Kat nodded and put away the whip, filling out the forms for it explaining the energy drain on the holder and the fact it didn't seem to do anything to the person. While Kat was doing the writing Kamiko opened the net box to reveal what looked to be a greyish silver sword with a blue core. Kamiko tapped it lightly and the metal rang indicating it was all one piece.

It had a darker grey cross guard and a red pommel. Kamiko swung lightly at the dummy and it connected. However, at the midpoint of the swing there was as bright flash of light and the dummy rocked back slightly. Kamiko also noticed her demonic energy had drained. Just a slight bit that was quickly regenerated, but it served to reinforce that something had in fact happened.

"Watcha got there?" asked Kat.

"An enchanted sword I think. Seems to pack an extra punch when it hits the target. Do you want me to try it on you?" asked Kamiko.

Kat shrugged. "You know how it is Kamiko, I'm not worried."

Kamiko still cringed at the response but agreed. She lined the sword up and swiped at Kat's shoulder. This time, it was a couple seconds after the sword connected that the burst of light came out of the weapon, and Kat felt like a second blade was stabbing into her for a moment.

Checking the gem, she found it was glowing at a seven, but that the 5th gem was also glowing brightly. *I wonder what that means? Could it be the first little bit was a five and the second was a seven? Perhaps the other way around?* Kat sighed as she realised the damage had already closed up and she couldn't use the healing process to judge which was worse.

"It seems to have a double strike enchantment or something," said Kat. "As you were cutting me it felt like I was stabbed a second time during your attack."

"I'm so sorry" said Kamiko

Kat looked at her like she was crazy and Kamiko's cheeks gained a bit of colour. "Look, I know because of the amulet it doesn't hurt, but I still feel bad."

"No harm done Kamiko, don't feel bad about it." Said Kat.

Kamiko kicked at the ground and gave the sword another swing mostly just because she felt like flicking her wrists out. However, as the sword reached the midpoint, a golden replica of it shot out of the end and flew into the wall of the warehouse. It shattered harmlessly there, but for five seconds nobody moved a muscle.

"Well" said Kat

"Well indeed" said Kamiko.

"What would you classify that as..." said Kat as she looked over her shoulder. The warehouse wall looked completely undamaged though Kat knew that the golden sword had at least a little bit of a kick to it.

"If I had to guess I'd say... projection enchantment? I'm not an enchanter so I don't know the names of these things off the top of my head, but they are mostly self-explanatory so I'd guess that I'm correct enough for it not to matter." Replied Kamiko as she started the write up. "Second strike was the more damaging one?"

"Not sure," said Kat as she shrugged. "I'd guess probably? We can test it again?"

"No" said Kamiko before Kat got the idea to far imbedded into her head.

"Well, alright then" said Kat moving on to the next box in the warehouse. Inside she found a tiny sceptre with a cartoonish bat on the end with glowing white eyes. Picking it up, Kat felt her energy drain for a split second then stop.

Hmm, now what does this do. Kat pointed the sceptre at one of the dummies and nothing happened. Frowning, Kat tried to push more energy into the sceptre and instantly a swarm of bats exploded from the tip.

Kat quickly stopped powering it but there were already easily thirty bats flying about. They all charged at the dummy flying straight through its form before returning to the sceptre and disappearing as they touched the cartoon bat.

Kat felt herself grinning. *This is actually really cool. I mean, the bats didn't seem to do any damage to the dummy but I imagine this will work better on a real target.* Kamiko up for some more testing?

Kamiko eyed the staff and shrugged, hoping that this wouldn't cause Kat too much pain. Handing the staff over, Kat took a few more steps back to give the bats plenty of time to swarm.

Kamiko pushed some energy into the staff and the bats burst out again. But unlike Kat, Kamiko kept channelling her energy into it, letting a steady flow feed into the sceptre. Kat stood still as the bats impacted her, flying through her chest. It felt like she'd been punched lightly over and over again as the flew through her. It wasn't so bad until she realised the bats were taking little bits of energy every time they made it through her chest.

Kat decided to try dodging a bit, seeing if the bats only moved in a straight line. They didn't. As Kat moved around the bats kept coming and kept draining away energy. It wasn't much but it was starting to become noticeable. "Kamiko I'm losing energy from each bat. It's not horrible I could probably stand up to a few minutes of this but it's the same amount ever time."

Kamiko lowered the weapon, but the bats kept coming. Nodding to herself, as if something had just been confirmed, Kamiko stopped the flow of energy and checked on Kat. Seeing that only two gems had lit up Kamiko through her hands around Kat and pulled her into a hug. "That... that was probably scarier then the sword." Said Kamiko into Kat's shoulder.

"Hey it wasn't that bad" said Kat rubbing circles on Kamiko's back to calm her down. "I've only lost ten percent of my energy and it's refilling fast. Plus look, two gems. It didn't hurt me."

Chapter 408: Let There be LIGHT

Kat and Kamiko quickly fell into an easy system when it came to testing items using the knowledge, they'd gained on their first day. The start was to go with the obvious, whatever that might be. Swinging swords, hitting things with staves, wearing the various items of clothing or pushing energy into the item if there was no other obvious thing to do.

If none of those yielded any results, they'd move onto the second sweep of testing. This involved saying various words hoping to hit upon a common key phrase, looking for hidden switches to activate things, or much to Kamiko's distaste, hitting Kat specifically with the item in question just in case it can only activate on living targets.

If there still wasn't anything showing up, they'd try to see if damaging the item was possible. They were always careful with things that got to this step, especially after the incident where they found some preserved flowers that instantly burned to a crisp when Kat's demonic fire got anywhere close to it.

Never mind the fact that Kat's flame remains cold attributed and that the flowers were nearly a wingspan away from her. It was as if the mere suggestion of violence was enough for the strange batch of flowers to call it quits.

Once they were passed the point of damage testing, it really was down to the individual item in question to dictate what steps were taken next, regardless of if they succeeded or failed. The same flowers for example, were boxed up and labelled 'fragile flowers' and added to the small pile to see Boss about.

Others, like a perfectly normal looking shirt that withstood the full brunt of Kat and Kamiko's combined demonic fire as well as their strength when they tried to pull it apart was designated as a 'strong shirt'. It wasn't exactly useful, as Kamiko could attest, because it didn't allow for her demonic traits to phase through the outfit. Kat couldn't even get it on because of her wings.

Another thing that had happened occasionally was that the pair would find duplicates of items they'd already tested. It made the second round of testing simpler, if a bit more careful. They normally went through the paper stack to find the original entry and add that there was a second box, though if they were different enough sometimes a new form would be made.

An example of this was a sword that set things on fire when you swung it the pair found during the first day of testing. Rather simple to understand, and rather weak in its flame abilities. Kat even had to be a bit careful with it because it had a poor cutting edge and the blade itself was rather weak.

On the second day, they found a similar sword, with a relatively close design when compared to the first. Low and behold it also set things on fire, but the sword was much better made. Razor shape edge that could cut through a dummy easily but wasn't quite a match to Kat's muscles, getting caught in her arm when Kamiko made a strike.

It held up well though, and seemed undamaged from their testing unlike the first which may have developed a slight bend. The only thing that was lacking was the fire enchantment. It seemed to be about the same quality though it was hard for the girls to test because Kat was immune and Kamiko was rather weak to fire, and even just standing near it was uncomfortable, but they didn't exactly test the limits.

It took a longer conversation then the pair liked to determine the second sword deserved its own entry in the catalogue. Sure, it did the same job on paper, but they decided it was like trying to tell someone a butter knife and a butcher's knife were basically the same. They did still make a note of the similarities in their new documentation as well as adding to the original, but that was as far as they wanted to go with that.

Another interesting find... was a black remote with a button on it. When Kamiko pointed it at a dummy pressed it, and she found herself in pitch blackness for a split second before she tapped the button again on instinct returning the light. "What the heck was that?" asked Kat

"I... I don't know? You couldn't see either?" asked Kamiko

Kat shook her head. "Nothing at all"

Kamiko bit her lips. "I just pressed this button. I'm not exactly sure what it does, but clearly it isn't something that needs aiming."

Kat moved over to Kamiko at this point and locked arms with the other demon. "Try pressing it again. We'll see if it just disables eyesight."

Kamiko did so, and was much calmer when the lights went out. *Well I can certainly still feel Kamiko's arm.* "I'm going make a bit of wind with my wings." Warned Kat, not wanting to scare the girl. Kat couldn't see Kamiko's nod, but the light squeeze on the arm and the lack of protest made her move forward.

Kat started to generate a bit of wind around them and even felt her own feet start to lift off a tiny bit before she stopped. "I can feel the wind easily as well" said Kamiko once the testing was done.

"Back to the light?" asked Kat.

Kamiko nodded and pressed the button again. "So, it looks like this is just a visual thing. What should we do now?"

Kat bit her lip thinking for a second. *What other tests can we do? Clearly it makes it impossible to see. My night vision is pretty good so something strange must be going on. Test the range maybe?*

"How about I head down a couple of rows of boxes. You call out when you're turning it off and I'll let you know if it effects a large area." Said Kat as she made her way down the hallway. Kamiko nodded and waited for Kat to call out to say she was in place. Once that was done Kamiko announced the beginning of the test and pressed the button.

Much to Kat's chagrin, even though she was all the way at the other end of the warehouse. She found herself in complete darkness once again. "Looks like it's distance is at least the length of the warehouse!" Kat shouted back down the stacks.

Kamiko cursed under her breath, but Kat was too far away to hear it. Kat jogged back down through the boxes, keeping an arm on them and a light touch just to guide herself while the darkness was going. Kamiko eventually pressed the button again allowing Kat to speed up.

"Any other ideas?" asked Kat

"Not really..." said Kamiko. "Do you want to try it?"

Kat shrugged and grabbed the button as it was passed to her. After sharing a look, she pressed down and darkness consumed them both. Kat gave out a long sigh, pushing some energy into it so that little licks of flame came out of her mouth when she did so. To the pairs surprise, the flame was very visible and lit up parts of the area.

"What?!" said Kamiko.

"Agreed... What?!" mirrored Kat.

Kat set her hand alight and the area directly around them lit up. "Kamiko please tell me you're not thinking what I'm thinking."

"In this instance I actually don't know..." said Kamiko. "I mean, it's nice our fire can fight whatever this is, but it's not exactly that unusual."

"Kamiko..." said Kat unsure of how to say this, and hoping she was wrong. "I think this might just be the light switch for the warehouse."

Kamiko let out a groan. "You're kidding me right? That's not possible? Or is it..."

Kat did point out though. "In our defence, it's not like our ability to see at night is bad at all. I'm more confused as to why we can't see anything with the lights off then the fact the light switch is in this box"

"I agree" said Kamiko "My own eyesight, at least in terms of low light condition, is actually at the very top of the line for our Rank. It should not be this dark. I'm not sure if that means there's something else going on with the remote or if the warehouse has an enchantment on it or something."

Kat gave out a light huff. "I just can't believe we were freaking out about a light switch though. Should we bring this to Boss?"

Kamiko nodded. "Yeah I think so. Either it's something more impressive that we aren't able to test properly and he'll be happy to give us confirmation or the light switch for the warehouse ended up lost in a box and he'll want it back."

I still can't believe I was a little scared of a light switch of all things. Sure getting cut up isn't that bad when you have regen and pain dampeners, but I really shouldn't have been even a little bit panicked throughout that. I think I'm getting a little too comfortable with some of my demon powers.

Chapter 409: Ok. Explain this to Me

It was two hours before the day should have ended when Boss' voice came over the speaker. "If the pair of you could finish the current item and then come to my office with the items you want me to look over that would be ideal"

Kat gave a nod to Kamiko who stabbed Kat with the spear they'd picked up. The blade was made out of water that continually moved around a small centre. It managed to slice well enough, but compared to some of the stranger metals it was a little lacklustre.

After two days, Kamiko had stopped complaining about injuring Kat on the regular. She still winced and Kat would give her a hug after any particularly bad injuries, but that was the worst of it. Seeing the blade struggle to slice much further than Kat's skin until Kamiko gave it a good swing was annoying. Being drenched when that same swing shot water everywhere instead of cutting wasn't even a concern.

Kat just flared her fire around her freezing all the water and watching the ice slide off her body. She'd noticed that, while water did run off her easily, it could still manage to pull in areas because the water didn't just leave, it mostly relied on a lack of friction and gravity. Kamiko wrote up the final report as Kat put away the weapon and started to stack the boxes.

"You know. I'm a little surprised how pleasant this has been. Boss has been very polite with us." Said Kat.

Kamiko frowned. "I was required to injure you regularly to test what's mostly weapons and largely swords with standard magical abilities. Why do you think he's nice?"

Kat shrugged and said. "Well, he's been polite, as I said, he didn't have to do that considering we are being punished. On top of that, he could have just told us to do it without the amulet to help with the pain."

Kamiko sighed, not really understanding why her friend was so blasé about getting stabbed, until she remembered something her mother once mentioned about some Succubi. "Wait... you aren't a masochist are you?"

"I don't know what this is." Said Kat as she put away the next box.

"It means you... uh... get sexual pleasure from pain." Mumbled Kamiko.

Kat of course, easily held the whole thing and looked over at her friend with a raised eyebrow before saying. "No...? I mean no. Definitely not. I... are there really people who like that? Why would you enjoy pain?"

Kamiko, as much as she didn't want to admit it, was surprised at the look of confusion on Kat's face. As she studied her friend, a large part of her said this shouldn't be her job to explain. A smaller part said if she didn't who would. The larger part decided throwing her mother under the buss was a good idea. The smaller part chimed in, and was ignored, when it informed her Nira would love the chance. "I don't really understand it myself." Is what Kamiko said to avoid the question further.

Hmm, even if I'm not a masochist... it does bring up the question of what I DO like. Kat gave it a moment and nothing really came to her. *Welp, guess I can just continue to ignore it then. At least I know it isn't pain. That would be embarrassing. Hang on... are people at Wrath like that?*

Kat looked over her memories from that punishment and quickly reached the conclusion that no, they weren't. *Or at the very least most of them aren't, and certainly none of the people I fought. Though... I guess with the beards in the way it's hard to tell... no never mind. Let's just go with none of them.*

"So back to the question beforehand" said Kat bringing the previous ideas and shoving them in a box 'to never think about' "Why is Boss polite?"

Kamiko tilted her head from side to side as she walked over to help with the boxes. "Well, Lust figured out centuries ago that happy demons work better, and that happy customers always come back. Eventually Greed picked it up. Some of them really are nice, but a lot of them only care about the bottom line and just understand being a bit polite about things gets them a lot more respect. Especially when grudges can last centuries or longer. Envy and Pride make the biggest deal about things like that, but no faction except maybe Sloth really escapes it.

"Even medical. You do NOT want an angry patient, but an angry Doctor or Nurse is much much worse. Young demons get that beaten out of them quickly. Sometimes literally from what I've heard. Mum has told me some rather... extreme things others have done to apologise for their children or to ensure they won't do something like that again.

"And I mean, I do get it. Not many people are as good at healing as Mum, and it's not like people at that strength can be picky. If you don't have regen by then you get sort of...? a baseline? Small cuts and stuff

can be shrugged off, but to damage you, you need to take attacks from even more powerful people and the... Intent? I believe it's called can linger."

"Is intent a concern for me?" asked Kat

"Intent" said Kamiko and Kat could really hear the capital letters. "Will make it harder for you to heal yes, but because you can regenerate you can just push more energy into the healing and infuse your own Intent into it to counter. Additionally, because you don't scar, you aren't on a time crunch to deal with it.

"In the very very rare event you do get scarred, you can push Intent and healing into the scar and remove it, but you'd have to have fucked up badly to get into a position where that's a concern."

"Why?" asked Kat putting the last of the boxes they were taking with them.

Kamiko sighed. "It's one of those things. Rank 5 is a big step and you have to be at or above that to infuse that sort of thing into attacks. It becomes automatic at Rank 6. As a Rank 2 demon you just won't deal with those kinds of people."

My money's on Thyme being at least Rank 5 equivalent if not more. Damn, I mean, I have no idea how far away from his tree he was. I wonder how much power he could bring to bear if we were right next to it. That was something Lilly found out about Dryads. Assuming he is one...

The teleporter activated at this point and they found themselves back in Boss' office. It was now twice the size it was before to easily accommodate the additional boxes. Kat looked around wildly, but Kamiko seemed to think this state of affairs was somewhat normal.

"So, what have you got for me?" said Boss with a puff of smoke.

"First off we have this," said Kamiko removing the remote from a pocket somewhere.

Boss examined the small black button turning it over a few times. "Well, what about this is strange to you? I assume the button does something?"

"It's the light switch for the warehouse, as far as we can tell." Responded Kamiko.

Boss frowned and bit down on her cigar. Turning to the screen on his desk he tapped at a holographic keyboard for a few seconds before bringing up the security feed for the warehouse. Pressing the button turned it dark. Boss eyes the corner of the screen which indicated the camera was still working.

"Very strange" grumbled Boss. "It seems that something strange has been done to the warehouse, or perhaps just this button. I know for a fact these cameras are infrared. They shouldn't care the lights are out..."

Kat jumped in as Boss trailed off. "We do know that lighting up demonic fire in the area pushes the darkness back, but I'm not sure how far it would extend if it was someone more powerful. For myself, even with more fire it's about..." Kat thought back to the measurements. "I'm going to say three metres."

Boss put down his cigar and tapped his hands rhythmically on the desk. Kat could hear the jingling of metal as the joints in his fingers danced. Boss clicked his tongue, or that was Kat's guess, it sounded

more like a small cymbal going off in his mouth before he continued talking. "Thank you for bringing this to me. Even I'm not quite sure what's going on with this just yet. I'll have to investigate or send someone more qualified. You've done well. What else do you have for me?"

Kamiko smiled, seeming to have gotten over most of her fear of the man, even though it was clear she still wasn't the most comfortable in his presence. Still her smile seemed to help steady her as she opened up the box. "Well, the next thing we have are these flowers..."

Chapter 410: Buy Greed.

After Kamiko explained the testing they did for the flowers Boss said. "Please pass me one. Just one."

Nodding, Kamiko separated out one of the flowers to hand over but just before Boss grabbed it, the flower burst into fire. Boss collected the ashes on his gloved hand and moved them to his face to breathe in the ash. "Hmm, I've not encountered this before but I have heard tales. I believe these are super sensitive plants. Any change in higher energy, or perhaps just demonic energy results in them catching fire. I produce significantly more excess than either of you two so it caught fire."

"Still, I'm a little surprised that it didn't catch fire from your own handling. Perhaps they do have some low level of tolerance before the change takes place. Please leave them all in my office. I'll find a suitable way to contain them. Just, keep them in the far corner. I'd hate for them all to catch fire because I walked past."

Kamiko nodded and packed them into a box and moved them to the side. While this was happening, Kat brought out the golden whip. "We aren't sure what this does. It drains energy from the wielder so it has to be doing something, but we can't figure out exactly what that is. Neither myself or Kamiko felt different when it was around us."

Boss held out his hand and Kat complied. Boss seemed to weigh it with his hands, lifting it up and down, while peering at the glow. "Hmm yes, that is quite the drain considering it isn't doing anything."

Boss gave the golden rope a hefty tug and there was a crack as the room shook from the force of the wind. The little trinkets in the room shifted and lightly chimed out when they hit each other. Kat took a slight step backwards to keep her balance and Kamiko hid behind Kat out of reflex.

"Very tough" said Boss, "that was something close to my full strength and there was no give in this once the rope was tugged. That alone probably classifies it as something worthwhile but this drain isn't enough if it was only powering some durability enchantments."

"We tried striking me, and wrapping each other in it to minimal affect." Replied Kat.

"Hmm, I'll keep this on me as well I think." Boss tapped his desk twice and an unseen drawer popped out of the side. Boss then proceeded to carefully wind the glowing whip up and place it in the drawer before closing it.

Kamiko took this as her queue. "Here is one of the wands we mentioned."

Kamiko handed over a gnarled and twisted wand that looked the most like a branch out of the entire lot. Really only the fact it was lacquered and with the rest of them convinced Kat it was of the same make.

"Fire" said Boss and a light flame came out of the end.

"Well it clearly works," huffed Boss, "but how is it powered? I didn't feel the slightest drain on my own reserves when I did that. Must be internal, but I wonder if there is a limit. How many of these are there?"

Kat and Kamiko shared a look, where Kamiko motioned towards Kat, knowing she had the better memory. Kat wanted to sigh, but decided not to in Boss' presence and tracked back to the recent memory of the box. It didn't help all that much. Pushing some energy to her mind time slowed down as she tried to count the number of wands she could see.

Ok so it's about five by three wands per layer and I know there was at least six layers per wand so... call it a hundred maybe? That might be the simplest measurement and not all wands were the same size so a few more here a few less there, and maybe one or two more layers.

"I'd guess around a hundred Boss. I didn't stop to count them but my memory was good enough to check. From what I could see, and guess from the glance I took at the box one hundred is the number I'd guess." Stated Kat in a slightly robotic manner as her mind wound down from the energy use.

Boss tapped the wand lightly on his desk a few times as he thought about the information Kat had provided him. "Depending on how quickly these recharge as well as if they can be recharged at all, they might need to be in a higher tier box. Just the one would probably be fine, but even for the water ability alone having so many is probably pushing the limit there..."

Boss trailed off and looked off to the side. He seemed willing to let the moment hang there for a while. Neither Kat nor Kamiko made a move to introduce any further items as it seemed he wanted to take his time to think about the current issue. Finally, seeming to reach a decision. "Is there any other items where you think their box needs to be upgraded?"

Kamiko spoke up in answer. "Not especially so. There were some items that seemed unbreakable but they lacked the ability to be properly worn by demons and had no other properties so that limits the value in a big way. Still, depending on the exact strength at which they would break... well there might be some that do qualify as a higher tier item."

Boss waved Kamiko off. "That's fine. I was going to need to test those all separately anyway. I can't expect two Rank 2's to determine what is and isn't indestructible. I'm glad you didn't bring any of those with you. Right. What's next?"

Kat brought forward a seemingly ordinary looking sword and Kamiko winced at the sight of it. "This was able to cause me pain even though I had the amulet on."

Boss took one look at the sword and waved it away. "Don't worry I recognise that. One of the pain swords an idiot made a while back. Not particularly useful because all they do is cause a bit of pain. Getting stabbed with them would normally hurt more and the pain doesn't stack. I didn't think it would work through the amulet, which is at least interesting, but otherwise I'm not too concerned.

Kamiko didn't really seem to know how to react to that one. Kat however was looking over the sword with a raised eyebrow. *Who bothers to make something like that? We held the blade edge, so it isn't just contact that causes pain. You need to stab someone with it. But if Boss is right, and let's be honest with myself, having been stabbed I know he's right. The sword just isn't that painful. Actually... a question...*

"Boss, a question if you don't mind?" asked Kat

Kamiko looked at Kat out of the corner of her eye liked she'd just walked up to Boss and slapped him in the face. Kat, trying to ignore the unease she was now feel, let out a breath when Boss nodded in her direction. "Does the sword override the pain? You said the pain was less then getting stabbed and it doesn't increase it... but does it decrease it?"

Boss paused. "That's an intriguing question" Boss himself straightened completely and looked at Kat with an unreadable expression on his face. "That does bear further investigation. I'll make a note of it for someone to do if we get time. It's not terribly important but that sort of thing is necessary if we ever sell the thing."

Kamiko nodded and brought out the last item they had for Boss. It was in a gold banded box instead of normal wood like the most, or the upgraded tier two boxes of a few. Boss' eyes grew wide as he looked at it. It was a staff with minimal adornments, being made of smooth wood and ending a clawed grip with a massive clear gemstone in it.

"This-" Before Kamiko could even get started she was cut off.

"Return that to the box." Said Boss with a surprisingly cold air to him. Kamiko froze like a deer in the headlights, and Boss' glare intensified, Kat moved swiftly, and grabbed the staff before putting it away as quickly as she could.

"How much testing did you two do on that?" asked Boss.

Kat was going to answer so that Kamiko didn't have to when Boss held up his hand once again, stopping the answer before it had even begun to form. "No, actually I don't want to know. You need to forget that staff. Don't think about it. Don't ask other people about it. Don't talk about it. Even I won't be doing any of those things. Shit I hate when this happens. Just. Shut the box, and leave it. Don't move it. Don't touch it. Don't look at it funny, and for the love of my little daughter, DO NOT put any more energy into it."

Kat swallowed and complied, slamming the lid shut perhaps harder than necessary. Boss then tapped a button and the room vanished. Kat looked over at Kamiko, questions clearly in her eyes, but Kamiko gave a hard shake of her head before grabbing Kat's arm and taking them back to her home.