

## DEMONS 441

### Chapter 441: Highest Tech Cookin

Once Freddy had finished detailing the various uses of the stovetop, and ensured there was no questions, he moved everyone over to the final feature. It was set off to the left of the door, and was a large cabinet without any shelving in it. The whole structure looked more than a little cyberpunk. Neon strips of light were constantly running along the edges and up into the ceiling flashing red, yellow, white, pink, most colours you could think of really. The top of it looked like heavy welded steel and had various tubes sticking out of it. The right side had a panel with numbers 1-9 and letters a-z on it with a holographic display above it.

"This right here, is the food summoner. Enter the code for the food you want and then the amount and you can get it sent straight here. Hitting enter twice without putting anything else in and you'll send things back. For example..." Freddy stopped speaking and strode up to the panel, with a flash of fingers and more than a few beeps and boops he'd punched in a code and pressed enter.

The colours running alongside the machine stilled for a second, keeping all to their current form for five seconds, before the cabinet lit up like the sun. Kat was forced to glance away as she felt her eyes started to burn, but the first thing she did was activate her slowed time and pumped as much energy as she could into her tail. Kamiko was reacting as well, but it was slower, and Kat wasn't having that. Shooting her tail up from behind her to block Kamiko's eyes to make sure she didn't take any damage.

Kat could feel the demonic energy rolling off the machine as Kat winced, shutting her eyes and scrunching them up while hoping the spade on her tail was enough to protect Kamiko from the lights. When the energy finally started to die down, Kat heard a "Woops" from Freddy

Lowering her tail and turning back to him, Freddy let out a light, embarrassed cough. "Um... sorry sorry misses. I... I somewhat forgot about that. I have resistance to light based attacks and er... I never had an issues with the machine. Sorry sorry"

Kat ignored the answer for now and turned to Kamiko. \*If Kamiko is fine, I'm willing to take that answer in good faith and just forget about it. I'm sure any damage, however major or minor I took from the flash was healed by my regeneration but Kamiko isn't so lucky.\* "Are you alright?" Kat asked.

As Kat lowered her tail, Kamiko took the chance to rub her eyes a bit before biting the inside of her lip. She could tell she was in a 'dangerous' situation. She couldn't lie of course, and she didn't want to mislead Kat... but she could feel her eyes watering and it wasn't the most comfortable feeling. Still, she had the strange feeling Kat would attack a higher ranking demon if she admitted to being hurt. That was silly though... right?

"I'm mostly fine Kat. You managed to get your tail to cover my eyes rather quickly after all" said Kamiko, hoping that Kat would accept that as her answer.

Kat, did not in fact accept that as an answer, but it did put her in an awkward situation. She'd been around more than enough children to recognise the face Kamiko was currently wearing that said 'I'm not really fine but it was an accident and I don't want to complain'. A bit complex, but something very familiar to her anyway. \*Well now I'm torn. Obviously Kamiko isn't completely fine, but the fact she was

able to say she was mostly fine is a comfort at least. I do want to chew Freddy out for this one, but Kamiko doesn't want me to...

And this isn't like back at the orphanage or at school. Plus Kamiko is a lot older than those kids were at the times I stepped in despite their wishes. Wait... how old IS Kamiko? I... I never asked? Though... it isn't really the type of thing you do ask human women. Does that still apply to de- yes, nevermind I remember Kamiko avoiding the topic when it came to her mother several times.\*

\*Still, now I'm not sure. She's shorter than me yes, but not that short. She seems childish but I get the impression we're not that far apart age wise... wait... could she be older than me? Kat almost shivered at the idea but without asking she couldn't confirm it. \*Ok you know what. Let's not ask about her age. I don't think I want to know either.\*

Kat turned back to face Freddy, arms lowered but her tail raised just behind her head. A smile on her face but her eyes hard. "Well, if no harm was done, I won't say anything else." Said Kat "Shall you continue the explanation Freddy?"

Freddy turned back to the machine to hide the wince noticing the way Kat had worded her dismissal. Taking it as the best he was going to get, Freddy gestured to the pile in the machine. It was a plate piled high with potatoes all stacked in a rough pyramid to fit more on the plate. "So, what I did was enter the command for potatoes, and here they are. Specifically sweet potatoes of course."

"Why was the light so bright just to bring in some potatoes?" asked Kat letting her teeth show when she smiled after asking.

Freddy though, was still a high-ranking demon, so he wasn't exactly intimidated. Still, what Kat and Kamiko didn't know was that safety was actually pretty important to Gluttony demons. There had been too many instances of people in that faction with regeneration powers that got overly careless when in danger, causing multiple issues, some weird then others.

These included, body parts in the food when someone chopped a finger off and couldn't be bothered to remove it from the meat, other times when demons took extreme damage from some cooking flames and used their regeneration stores up before nearly dying and falling into said fire.

Finally, a rather famous incident of two brothers in a cooking competition that someone ended with them, their four assistants, two bystanders, the panel of six judges and the cameraman all ended up in a coma, many lasting over a decade, with one of the brothers remaining in one for a century.

Thus, if Freddy's superiors found out he was being so blasé about Kamiko's injury caused by his own lack of knowledge in this area, he'd be skinned alive... literally. Of course he'd be healed afterwards and then forced to eat the cooked skin. But as I said, Kat and Kamiko didn't know this, so while he didn't want to risk it, he felt pretty safe.

"What, teleporting food across dimensional boundaries without use of D.E.M.O.N.S teleportation abilities has some side effects. Mostly energy dissipation once the food arrives, and we couldn't put it into heat or motion that might damage the food so we turned it all into light" explained Freddy

"Wait. You don't just have a warehouse full of food and a local teleportation array?" asked Kamiko, a confused look on her face.

Freddy shrugged. "I don't know the full details, just that it's more efficient for us this way. I believe it's because of how expensive warehouse pricing is, and that spatial expansion charms apparently have a negative effect on both shelf life and food stability, which we can't have because of the time reducing aspects we have in the oven and the stovetop.

"It does have some upsides though. The biggest one is that we can have a number of farms spread out across the multiverse in places where the land price is essentially zero. We then set up storage facilities and then sometimes we hire farm workers or some demons do it themselves. This allows all the food to be extra fresh.

"Also because seasons are different in each dimension we can stagger crops so that we always have everything fresh. These potatoes were probably picked this mornin if I had to guess. Or well, I doubt it was mornin wherever they were picked but you get the idea"

\*Huh. I guess... that makes some sense. Still, that's one hell of a distribution network. Multiple dimensions worth of crops just to feed a large amount of Gluttony demons. Still I wonder why Greed doesn't do that.\* "Um, if you don't mind my asking, why doesn't Greed do something similar?" asked Kat

Freddy grinned at that question and said. "A few interesting laws. You can't make final products off Hub. There are rules against it, and you can't transfer completed items away from the Hub unless they are a personal item. There are a few other reasons as well, such as large scale demonic enchantments being forbidden off Hub as well. They cause wonky stuff to happen if you ain't in a Hub after all"

#### **Chapter 442: Actual Hi-Tech Cookin**

"He's right you know" said Kamiko, when she noticed Kat's slight disbelief. "It's one of the things we're told about if we so much as glance in the direction of learning how to enchant. Demonic enchanting draws first on the energy in the demons nearby which is fine, we put off a lot of extra energy but the problem is when it needs more than that. It starts going after whatever it can, and if it absorbs mana or qi... strange things happen. It's a weakness to our enchantments but not one we've ever been able to fix"

"It's worse than that actually" said Freddy jumping in. "Other kinds of enchantments will just stop working when they run out of energy. Demonic ones won't ever have that problem. They will try and use whatever they can to keep going even as that warps them. That is, until it fails catastrophically."

\*Well... that's something I'll make sure to remember. I doubt it'll be an issue but... is there really no way for that sort of thing to be safe? Well, yes keeping it small. I suppose they did tell me that.\* "Thanks for the explanation" said Kat

"Well, well, that's fine. It was an easy thing to give anyway" said Freddy. "Anyway, I don't need to go over this here machine much because I'll be operating it for ya both. The last thing we need to cover is the central island table"

With this, Freddy gestured past them to the central piece of furniture, the kitchen island. It was made up of black stone that almost seemed to suck in the light, with a long glowing blue line right down the centre of it. Branching off from that was a few extra lines on either side separating the bench into a

number of rectangles. Underneath all this was normal cupboard doors set into more black stone, though the handles looked to be white marble.

Of course, Kat had a suspicion that the bench wasn't made of stone and the door handles weren't marble either. \*Perhaps the bench is magically treated obsidian? That's actually the most believable thing I can think of at the moment.\*

"Now now, this is actually a little simpler. In the cupboards ya'll find a large variety of knives as well as a few other necessary utensils like strainers and meat mallets if you need them. The top of the bench is where all of the workmanship is. Oh, before I get to that, you can slam these cupboards as well. No reason to, but they ain't cheap construction I can assure you of that.

"So, the bench here" Freddy said as he tapped the black 'stone' lightly. It let out a very slight humming sound when he did so at the blue lines flashed once. "Will react to what you want from it as best it can. So, for example" Freddy placed his hand on one of the rectangles and summoned a bit of demonic energy into his hand. The black 'stone' glowed and rippled before sinking slightly into the bench.

Once this was done, Freddy dashed through Kat and Kamiko quick as a flash to open up the food transporter and grab out the potatoes before dashing back through the pair. Once back at the bench, he dumped the potatoes into the indent which fit them perfectly. "As you can see, I've now made storage for potatoes. Youi can go one step further though!"

Freddy stepped to the side and spread two arms out across two separate rectangles and pushed more energy into both of them. The one on the right sunk down to match the one on the left, but the one in the middle rose up slightly before it hardened and took on a new texture. Where as the normal stone was smooth and, when Kat felt it, somewhat cool to the touch, allowing one's fingers to glide over it almost like it had been greased. This new surface that Freddy had called forth was somewhat rough.

It wasn't so extreme to be like sandpaper, but it had grip to it. It looked... actually, when Kat looked at it properly it seemed to hold the texture of a plastic cutting board, if likely a sturdier creation than most of those. Freddy then surprised Kat further by picking it up and waving it around before setting it back into its place.

"So now I've set up a basic workstation. Potatoes here," Freddy pointed as he said "then you cut them up on the cutting board here, before finally, you drop your prepared potatoes into the next receptacle and repeat the process."

\*Nice. I think we might actually be able to do this. Making the dish doesn't seem to hard, and everything makes a good deal of sense. With Freddy hear to call in the ingredients we should be fine. \*

"Well well, now that I've explained everything are you both ready to get started?" asked Freddy

"Yes!" said the demonesses together.

And with that, they were off. Freddy rapidly started to summon in the food as required. For the spices, there seemed to be an extra command in place because he was able to summon most of them in the form needed such as the ground paprika, which was in a small dish that contained about two tablespoons of finely ground spice. The olive oil and passata was the same, and from this, Kat decided to make the meals in standard size and go from there.

The first thing they all got to work on was Kat showing Kamiko how she wanted everything cut so that the other demon would always have something to work on. Kamiko watched, eyes glowing as Kat cut the foods easily. Not only could she tell the knives were excellent even with her limited experience, but Kat was a little surprised at her increased dexterity.

She did still need to slow down time once or twice during the demonstration to keep up with the faster pace she was trying to go at it but that was no real concern. What Kat was surprised at, was that once Kat finished the basic demonstration of how to prepare the ingredients Kamiko absolutely went to town.

Kat's plan had been to make a few sets of ingredients, separate them out, and then get started on the dishes in quick succession so she wouldn't have to stop to prepare more ingredients once they'd started. Kat was underestimating her new friend.

Once Kamiko knew how Kat wanted things cut, she became a real powerhouse. Kamiko's body radiated a faint pink fog, but it was only slight and Kat guessed she was using no more than her regeneration rate to do it.

All the same, Kamiko completed a full set of ingredients in under a minute. She was moving at a blistering speed with precision Kat simply couldn't match, and Kat actually did make an attempt. When Kat was finishing up her third set of ingredients, and Kamiko her seventh, Kat wanted to try and up her game. Kat used her full ability to slow her perception and speed herself up as much as possible... but found herself unable to compete with Kamiko anyway.

Her friend had a seemingly perfect understanding of where to cut, slicing rapidly through the ingredients without stopping. Kamiko used one hand to place the ingredients on the cutting board, her other hand to dice them as required, and then her tail to sweep it all into the storage section before repeating. Kat didn't quite have the trust in herself to do that without relying on her full powers but she could tell without much thought that would drain her far too much.

So instead, as the day got on, they settled into a different routine. Kat would simply deal with the process. Taking ingredients and putting them where they needed to be, which was mostly into the oven, and watching the onions cook. That was a depressingly large amount of their time. She was even helped on that front by Freddy who would watch over his own set of onions and always made sure that when she reached off to the side there was water in the jug for another batch of food.

Once that was done, and the food cooked, someone, usually Freddy would take the 'scalding' hot dish and place it into stasis for some other time. Kamiko made sure to stay on her own side of the bench the whole day, while Kat spent most of it on the other with Freddy. It was simply too hot for Kamiko, even with the enchantments. The continual opening and closing of ovens would not have been comfortable in the slightest for the ice aligned devil.

Thus, the three settled into their routine. They worked mostly in silence, with Kamiko's chopping as the accompanying music. Kamiko was clearly in the zone, a peaceful look on her face as she diced faster than any machine Kat had ever seen. Freddy seemed to be watching everything closely like a hawk, as if missing some small detail of Kat's cooking process would mean he forgot the recipe. And Kat... well, she found that keeping track of a dozen versions of the same dish was really hard, and making sure all the ingredients were added in even harder, especially when those same dishes required things throughout their cooking process.

## Chapter 443: Tired

As Kat walked down the garden path toward Kamiko's house she found herself shaking out her arms. She was very surprised to find that her body felt... not tired, that wasn't the right word for it. It was like she'd been stretched out by the ends of her arms and legs. After a full day of using her powers without stop, though Freddy did offer to let them make their own lunch at some point, Kat felt something weighing on her.

Her mind was also tired, more so than her body. Unlike her body's regeneration, her mind lacked the ability to patch itself up easily. As funny as it was to think about, today was probably Kat's most strenuous day since she became a demon. During her time with Minor it was mostly walking, even for the dream sequence, the Tournament had Green participating in a lot of events and... more walking.

Then there were the cultivation idiots. Sure, there was a massive fight and it HURT and the problems seemed to pile on, but her mind was able to push through it all. On top of that, her other early ventures were all very minor things. The talk with the King, scaring off that one guy for the system, letting the master and apprentice panic.

Heck, even the other Punishments weren't so bad. Wrath was half a day at most. Envy was fucking around really, Pride had been skipped, and while Greed was likely the next taxing, it was nowhere near as full on. Greed was mostly abusing her regeneration and messing around with interesting items. They could take it at their own pace, but at Gluttony because of the time dilation and Kamiko's excellent knife skills Kat was constantly managing multiple dishes the whole day without stop. Splitting her mind on them all to keep things running smoothly with little bits and pieces of help from Freddy mostly and occasionally Kamiko. So, yes, Kat found herself feeling tired.

\*And I wonder who I'm supposed to meet today? Based on the pattern it should be either Kamiko's father, or Aslena, or heck maybe it's even Meridithna. We always seem to meet someone knew so I suppose I need to prepare myself. Hopefully whoever it is will be kind to me. Aslena is probably the shortest straw. I know Kamiko doesn't like her.\*

Kat braced herself as Kamiko opened the door, for once Kat was solidly behind her demonic friend. This also let her see that Kamiko's tail was drooping, much like her own actual was, and realised that despite Kamiko's upbeat attitude at the end of the day, she was perhaps just as exhausted as Kat.

\*Well, that's just great. I'm scared of the family drama we are about to encounter. I don't want Kamiko to deal with that while she's tired. Please no Aslena... please no Aslena. Heck, can we get Elmony again, that seemed to be the best. No teasing from her mother, no issues with the triplets, no walking issue in the form of a fashion designer. Her Dad might be fine, let's just go with no Aslena as the wish though.\*

Kat was honestly surprised when the main part of her wish was granted. Kamiko strode inside to be greeted by...

Nothing. Nobody else was home and Kat honestly felt her heart soar. \*YES! We can relax. I need this.\* Kat didn't even question Kamiko who headed straight for the drop downstairs. Kat followed knowing exactly where her friend was headed. A short drop and a little walker later and they were in the bathroom. Kamiko swung the taps around letting the bath fill with liquid. She didn't wait for it to be full though before walking of the edge and faceplanting into the water.

Kat almost wanted to wince at the sight. It looked kinda painful after all. Then a larger part of her mind said 'that's just for humans though' and promptly did the same thing. Kat's body hit the water and it was a strange situation. Before, she'd always sunk in calmly, and her mostly hydrophobic skin didn't really change that process. Faceplanting it seemed. Did. When Kat hit the water, she was braced for the impact. She'd accepted that price for the privilege of spending less time standing.

Instead of a sharp pain though, she felt the water pushed away from her as it slowed her down. The water chased itself away, slowly bleeding out the energy before seemingly giving up and enveloping her. Kat was surprised at how gentle it ended up being. Instead of a sharp sting, it was more like somebody had tightened a blanket around her for just a moment before letting go.

\*Well. This was much less painful then I'd imagine I guess I count this as a win. Is that why Kamiko did this? Because it's not that bad for some reason?\* Kat decided very quickly that she didn't care. She'd used her brain enough today and until she got some rest in it didn't matter.

So, Kat just floated. Her wings had spread out as far as possible already assisting her in keeping herself afloat with their added surface area. Her tail had, at some point, curled itself around her leg, even that normal lively limb had decided it had indeed had enough for today. Thus, Kat simply floated there, almost like her meditation, as she let her mind relax. Meditating might have been better for this situation, but she wasn't thinking of it, and even if it was suggested she'd have complained.

It took her about ten minutes before she started to feel the need to breathe. It wasn't exactly a problem... well, it would become one, but the more immediate concern was that it was taking more energy to stop the need to breathe and Kat didn't feel like using anymore. Her energy reserves, while full, were not currently easy to draw upon. It certainly wasn't automatic, she needed to use her mind to practically drag the energy along for the ride, but with her mind as it was, Kat wasn't a fan of the process.

\*Hmm. What's more painful... dragging my uncooperative energy along for the ride, or flipping myself over. They both sound like so much effort at the moment.\* Kat wanted to just lay there and do nothing. She didn't feel like making any choice right now, and wondered how Freddy could do this all the time.

Of course, she what she didn't know, was that Kat and Kamiko had performed marvellously. Kat, perhaps more because of her regeneration, and Kamiko for her skill and powerful will. Constantly drawing their energy, even automatically, did use some mental energy. Keeping themselves constantly in a heightened state of power was not an easy thing. Even a ten minute break at some point would have halved the fatigue the pair were currently feeling, but alas, they worked through the whole day.

Freddy was fine because of his higher Rank and the fact that while they didn't notice it, he was hardly actually using his energy. It just wasn't necessary to keep up with them both while they were keeping their output at the same level as their regeneration. Which was of course, another reason for the difficulty. Keeping the output so precise the whole time was just one more layer of difficulty, and Freddy was very impressed.

It took another two minutes for Kat to decide to turn herself over. The tiebreaker vote was that she heard Kamiko doing the same thing during her mental angst which led Kat to believe that Kamiko must know something she didn't, which was also true.

Using demonic energy as a substitute for air was... not a good long-term solution. It was an automatic response, one made easier for Kat because of her regeneration, but the cost rises exponentially over time and wasn't really viable for anyone long term unless you had a specific ability for it.

And so Kat joined Kamiko in turning over, and stared at the ceiling. Kat was somewhat regretting her choice already. Compared to the dulled light of staring at the bottom of the bathtub, staring at the brightly lit and in large part, white room was hard on her eyes. Sure, it wasn't actually doing damage to them, and it was more that a part of her mind was screeching in protest as it declared the false sun an enemy of all good demons, but Kat still felt the pain, if perhaps more in her heart than her eyes.

Kamiko really wasn't any better. Her little wings were plastered against her back rather than slowly flapping under the water as normal. Kamiko's tail was wrapped around her leg as well, just like Kat's. She was also deciding the bright light was an enemy... but getting out of the bathtub to turn off the light was an even greater cause for concern. So she lay there in the cool water hoping it would chill her aching mind and body.

#### **Chapter 444: GET BACK**

"Should we get out yet?" asked Kamiko with a sigh in her voice. It was clear that she didn't want to and was only looking for an excuse to stay longer.

Kat was pretty sure they'd already been in the bath for an hour at this point, so obviously she said. "Nope. I'm just as tired as you are, I don't see a problem with staying longer." With as much of a smile as she could muster. Which was... honestly not very much.

Kamiko wanted to smile at the answer as well... that was too much effort though, and she settled for whistling slightly as she breathed. That counted for something right? Thus, the two exhausted demons continued to float around atop the water, that was heating up somewhat at this point.

Even though the bathroom was insulated and the water was chilled greatly, Kat herself, unlike Kamiko, still had proper body heat and was slowly warming the water up. It wasn't an issue yet, but the water was much less calming than it had been when they started. This would eventually force them to leave but for now... Kamiko put it out of her mind as she noticed it. It wasn't something to worry about now.

Kat, for her part, was now struggling with a dual feeling of energy and exhaustion. In her hour of nothing but cool water her body and energy had practically blazed back to life. If it was purely a matter of how ready her legs were, she knew she could run for a few hours without getting tired at all.

Her mind was another matter. It still wanted rest and she was finding it hard to let her thoughts do anything other than drift. The only reason Kat knew the time they'd been floating so well was that she could use her memories as a sort of measuring stick. Looking at her much she could see of herself just sitting in the bath that afternoon she could estimate the time.

It was surprisingly easy for her and intuitive, baked into her instincts somehow. Which was good, because otherwise she'd be too tired to guess anything close to the correct answer. However, despite the fog over her mind, she didn't feel like sleep at all, her body was telling her she'd rested already and should be ready to do more things.



Eventually though, neither Kat's confused mix of signals on if she should sleep or not and Kamiko's desire to float forever would matter because of a sharp knock Kat could hear on the other side of the door. "Kamiko, if you can get out soon that'd be great. I need to get clean after my Contract." Said what had to be Kamiko's dad as it was a recognisably male voice.

Kat's tail flicked in annoyance as best it could from its place around her leg. Looking over towards Kamiko, Kat asked the question with her eyes 'well?'.

Kamiko sighed. "I'd love to say don't worry about it. I also know that Dad, even if it was just me in here, won't ask twice unless he thinks I've fallen asleep in the bath or something. He'll just... accept however long it takes for me to be bothered getting out and I doubt he'll complain...

"On the other hand, though, the fact that he even asked at all must mean it's pretty bad. We can't really smell anything in here because the enchantments prevent smells getting in and out but... yeah if he's asking he must either smell horrible or be covered in muck. Sadly he did not get the smooth skin adaptation that most Succubi has. Dad only has it in his hair. It produced a few funny moments when we tried to prank him by throwing water over his head only for it all to bounce off because we forgot that particular point." Said Kamiko

Another five minutes past but neither demon spoke in that time. Finally, Kat said "You didn't exactly make a decision though. You just said your Dad probably really needs a bath"

Kamiko groaned and said. "Yeah I guess I did. Why is this my responsibility though?"

"Well" said Kat "I assume that you have more than one bath or at least a shower... I have to wonder why he isn't using them instead? It just seems a bit strange. Plus he's your Dad so I thought I'd let you make the final call"

"Huh... that's a very good point Kat. I... I actually don't know what's going on. Mum and Dad have a small shower in their room but it hardly ever gets used..." said Kamiko really not sure what to make of things now that she'd had this additionally information pointed out to her.

Still, for all Kamiko's complaints about her father she did love him, and she did know him extremely well. He would never ask something from her like this if it wasn't important. He'd certainly have found some other way to get around things if it was at all possible. Even if the task was extremely difficult he'd have found a way. Instead though, he'd asked for her to end her bath... well not early exactly she knew that she probably should have gotten out before the hour mark, so... before she chose to leave herself was the more correct term.

Kamiko flipped herself over and into the water to let out a long stream of bubbles. Keeping her head dunked for a bit Kamiko eventually righted herself and said with a sigh "Yeah we should leave" before swimming to the edge and hauling herself out... or at least she tried. Kamiko, unlike Kat, didn't have regeneration and had used her arms much more extensively. She could feel them shaking under her as she tried to put her weight on them to get herself out of the pool.

Seeing this, Kat reacted. Kamiko was already pretty close to slipping and slamming her head into the bathtub if she wasn't careful so Kat unravelled her tail and used it to help right herself before abusing her much larger wings to push her over towards Kamiko by digging them into the water and bringing them back away from her. Still, Kat wasn't exactly at full speed, but she made good enough time.

Reaching Kamiko's side she quickly pulled herself out of the water first and grabbed onto Kamiko's hands.

Kamiko looked up and gave Kat a tired smile. "Thanks" is what she said as Kat hauled her up and out of the water, which was easy enough with Kat's mostly available strength. Kamiko managed to get her feet under her and stood up. Her legs were fine, but she was certainly still tired.

A glance at each other told them that the best idea would be to walk together, so Kat hunched down slightly and they both put their arms over each other's shoulders. Of course, Kat didn't quite hunch as much as was needed, and was actually supporting most of the weight from both of them. Still, it got them moving. Both magicked on their clothes and made for the door simply allowing the water to easily slide off them both, not worrying about the need for a towel.

When they made it to the door, they both paused for a second to take a deep breath before opening it carefully. Even with this precaution both girls were hit with a horrid stench that seemed to worm its way into their nose and mouths. Eyes going wide Kat swung the door open and simply pulled Kamiko along, eager to get away from the smell coming from the edge of the room.

In the corner, as she glanced backwards, Kat saw what had to be Kamiko's father, but he was not having a good time. Kamiko's dad seemed to have some kind of wind or water manipulation because he was in a giant bubble and you could SEE the stench around him, a noxious brown and grey cloud with spots of black appearing as he stood there. Kat could see, the horrifying truth which was that the man was keeping most of the stench locked in with him. Kat didn't want to imagine what that was like.

Seeing two girls exit the door, he was a bit surprised, however he could also see the disgust on their faces and knew, though it wasn't a surprising fact, that he had failed to contain the smell, so rather than talking, he used all his concentration to move himself and the bubble around him into the bathroom and slam the door. The smell lightened slightly after that but it wasn't enough. Kat and Kamiko continued forward.

They stumbled up the jump platform up to the next level but found the smell still linger. Though if that was because it remained in their noses or because it was actually nearby was impossible for them to tell. Kamiko started to tug Kat in the direction of her room, but Kat tugged back and shook her head before gesturing upstairs. Confused, but willing to trust Kat, Kamiko complied, up the stairs and into the kitchen, the smell was still there.

However Kat's plan wasn't over. She pulled Kamiko quickly outside the back door before breathing deeply. "AH SWEET FRESH AIR"

#### **Chapter 445: Freedom?**

Kamiko and Kat weren't actually sure what to do once they were outside. They didn't want to run around in the garden or even just sit on the grass. They had literally just had a bath and with what happened to Kamiko's Dad, they didn't want to risk the need for another so they just stood awkwardly around on the edge of the patio which really, wasn't as clean as either of them would have liked.

Which of course, revealed an interesting fact. It seemed that there was something ingrained in sentient creatures, at least some of them, to keep themselves tidy. Kat and Kamiko had already forgotten that their skin just had dirt fall off of it. It was very hard for them to get dirty without it getting stuck

somewhere like under toenails or in the crooks of their necks. Despite this though, neither was even trying to get further away from the house.

Eventually, Kamiko made the decision that standing around was still too much effort and said, "Wait here for me I'll be right back" before dashing inside. Once there, she opened the cupboard full of extra furniture setups and found the outdoor lawn chair set before bringing it back outside. Setting it down, Kamiko enlarged them both to normal size and claimed one for herself.

Kat needed no prompting to follow that example and claim the other. Kat was beyond happy to note that the structure let her wings and tail phase through it just like Kamiko room, though Kat noticed her tail didn't really need that part because of the angle the chairs were at and decided to leave it draped over her midsection instead.

The two girls breathed a sigh of relief to be both away from the smell and once again lying down. Kat did feel the partial urge to get up and do something from her body, but Kat's mind slammed the idea down so fast she hardly twitched in place. She was going nowhere, and even the changing scenery was not something she wanted to deal with. A treadmill might have been acceptable, but looking for one was not.

This left them both to lounge around for about thirty minutes before Kat's mind actually formed an idea. She didn't like the idea she'd been given, and was certainly not keen to think about it further but once it was in her mind, it wouldn't go away. "Hey Kamiko..."

"Yeah Kat?" asked Kamiko after Kat had just left the words unsaid for another thirty seconds.

"Look... there's no easy way to ask this but... are we just stuck out here? How will the smell dissipate? Will we make it to your room? How far will that horrible smell spread?" asked Kat

Kamiko let out a pained sigh as she realised Kat had questions that really needed answers. She hadn't even thought that there might be issues going back into the house and Kat had managed to hit the nail on the head with all of her questions. "Well, in terms of spreading we should be mostly fine. The bathroom is sealed. It cycles air somehow but it's on a separate system to the rest of the house so that should be fine..."

"The rest though... I'm not too sure. Depending on what that smell actually was, the lingering stench might spread a bit and then stay in the house. I hesitate to open up windows lest we get a real complaint from the neighbours. Those can be serious for proper violations like chemical warfare." Kamiko said that last part with a grin.

"As to how or if we should go to my room. Honestly I'm as lost as you are Kat. I think we might be able to find some blankets in the extra furniture cupboard? I'm not certain about that but one of the tiny chests might have blankets and pillows in them so we could certainly make do out here if worse comes to worst

"I'm not sure how safe my bedroom is. I know Kerra's room was upgraded so that the paint fumes didn't cause her any health issues, Mum insisted on it, and then Erra asked for a similar upgrade to keep her books in healthy condition so those two rooms are probably safe. I'm not sure if my room got that treatment though, because the upgrades happened before I was born, so it's never really come up. The only reason I know about the upgrades is I came home crying one day when I was little and heard about

how deadly paint fumes could be if you used exotic stuff, which I knew Kerra did, and didn't air out the room." Explained Kamiko

"That sounds like really useful information right about now Kamiko" said Kat

"I'm not disagreeing with you, I'm just not sure if they'd have bothered to get the upgrade for all the bedrooms. It's a per room thing, and clearly it isn't covering the whole house because otherwise we wouldn't have dealt with the smell on the way out" explained Kamiko.

Kat wished that didn't make so much sense. One part of her didn't want to think through any more options. Just assume that Kamiko's room had been upgraded and be done with it. Another louder part though, said she wasn't nearly tired enough to avoid thinking about ways to avoid that truly foul odour, so she had to keep going through the options. "Is there any way to clean things up?" asked Kat

Kamiko bit her lip at that question before answering. "Well... sort of? In theory there should be. I've never seen my parents cleaning up the house, so there must be some way that it keeps itself clean. Maybe a master switch to clean certain things? I'm not sure. If there is, I don't know about it.

"Maybe it goes off once a week? I know some dust and grime do build up occasionally, but it's rare and very quickly disappears once you notice it." Said Kamiko

Kat lifted her tail a bit just to let it flop back down on her stomach as she asked, "Well what are the chances your dad knows how to clean things up and get rid of the stench?"

Kamiko bit her lip again, sucking on it for a few seconds as she trawled her tired mind for memories that might actually help answer Kat's question. You'd think it would be a simple thing but for demons, there were enchantments for this sort of thing. Nobody spent the time to clean things because vacuum cleaners didn't really exist for them. They had faded out long ago as an overly complicated piece of machinery that did a worse job than other cheaper enchantments.

This meant that Kamiko didn't really have any memories of ANYONE in her family cleaning up except Kerra, because paint was a bit of a grey area even when it was on the floor, and Kerra had picked up an ability early on to manipulate paint. It was horribly slow, and not at all combat viable but it let her take discarded paint and separate it out into useable forms once again so she would regularly clean up her room, but that was about the extent of it.

So Kamiko was forced to go on personality. Would her mother share that sort of thing with her dad? Probably yes. The better question though, was whose job was it to maintain it and did her father remember how to do it and where it was. Kamiko's mother was blessed with an improved memory like Kat early on, but her Father only picked it up at Rank 5 and it was nowhere near as easy to utilise, having not been used to the feature.

"I'm not sure Kat. I think... Dad certainly will fix things if he can. If he knows where the enchanting hub for the house is and if the cleaning is something he can manually do he'll certainly make sure it's done. I just don't know if he'd remember, or if he took the time to find out. It's very much something Mum would spend time getting very exact for maximum efficiency...

"And I just don't know if she'd have bothered to properly explain it. Dad would be more than happy to just let it be on of 'her things' and let it be. If I had to guess, I'd say he knows where the core of the enchanting is, but has no idea how to use any of it and likely won't be able to deal with the smell.

"Oh, and just like you I can't message people. The best we can do is wait for Dad to clean up, and PRAY that he is actually clean, and then get him to message Mum and have it explained... but it's probably too complicated to mess with just over messaging and Mum might be busy" explained Kamiko.

"Well, at least I don't have issues with the temperature" mumbled Kat "Will you be alright if we have to stay outside?"

Kamiko grimaced. "Hopefully?" she didn't sound convincing at all.

#### **Chapter 446: Beating the Heat**

It was very quickly proven to not be ok after about thirty minutes. The sun was shining, if it actually was a sun, Kat wasn't certain of that part, but the light and heat from the maybe sun, was shining directly on the pair and Kamiko wasn't having a good time of it. To compensate, Kamiko was burning demonic energy to help cool herself down a little and Kat was starting to notice.

This is because when she looked over at Kamiko the faintest traces of pink smoke could be seen. Most of it was hidden under her outfit and concentrated around her core body but it wasn't sustainable long term and Kat managed to catch glimpses of it leaking out of Kamiko's sleeves.

"You alright there?" asked Kat, who was starting to really recover. Her mind still wasn't in top condition but it was to the point where she could actually notice the details around her again properly and act on them. She wasn't certain if noticing the pink smoke even five minutes earlier would have let her figure out what was going on and what Kamiko's problem was.

"I'm fine" said Kamiko with a slightly tight voice that was never going to get past Kat when she was completely wiped let alone now that she was feeling somewhat better and was paying attention.

\*I'm honestly surprised she could say 'I'm fine' but I suppose she is fine right at this moment? It's clearly not sustainable or comfortable but it perhaps counts as fine right now. What I need, is a solution. Hmm, would that work? Just grab a blanket and use my powers to freeze it? Seems like it would work.\*

"Hey Kamiko where are the blankets?" asked Kat

\*Another question, I've just had. How does she go about her day normally? She was fine walking behind Freddy. Was the temperature better controlled? Are we just in a hotter area of the world?\* Kat was actually a little annoyed at her immunity to temperature for a second. She just couldn't tell the difference. To her, there was none. The temperature change was so small to her it might as well be non-existent but it was clearly enough for Kamiko.

\*Actually, all the compounds we've been to so far have caused her no issues with the temperature... Perhaps all the houses are in a much warmer part of the world? I could see the compounds being wherever the temperature is most consistent. That seems like a reasonable thing to do.\*

"Um... I mean... I know there's some in everyone's rooms... but I think we might have some spare in a shrunken chest in the kitchen?" said Kamiko not quite sure where Kat was going.

Kat nodded and pushed herself out of the chair while internally being surprised she wasn't feeling her body creak and groan. It made sense of course, her regeneration helped a tonne and even a normal demon wouldn't have those issues from lifting their own body weight but to Kat who had been human most of her life it was a slight shock. Shaking her head to clear the thought, Kat got ready. She took in the deepest breath she could, breathing as much air as possible right up until her lungs started to feel like they were pressing against her ribs. She let her energy infuse her limbs and slow down time. She didn't want to make a single wasted movement.

Kat took off. Moving at a 'walking' pace in her stopped time, which was still a blurry mess to the naked human eye. Kat was lucky demonic construction was rated for high rank demon, and that Kamiko's house was at least for Rank 6's (because it was always good to get the grade above just in case) otherwise she might have broken the door in her haste to get inside. Once the door was open Kat made her way to the cupboard containing the furniture and pulled it open to really get a good look.

This cupboard was one that stretched all the way from the ceiling to the floor but it wasn't very deep. Most of the setups were all in a line so that you didn't need to grab out multiple sets to get at one of the ones in the back. The few exceptions were for the full dinning table set ups that all seemed to have their own shelf.

There was also a blank shelf, right at arm height, that Kat assumed was where the set currently in use lived. For the other sections it was a surprisingly eclectic mix. There was a jungle themed dining set made of what looked like pelts and bamboo, another one that was glowing and looked to be made entirely of pieces that changed what colour they were brightly lit up, an interesting party option to be sure.

There was also one shelf dedicated half to spare beds and half to extra recliners that paired with the other sets of furniture, perhaps they were for use in other rooms. Some beds matched a dining set, like the primitive one that had a tiger patterned bed sheet, and others where entirely unique like the one with the old looking bed frame that supported the mattress with a 'spiderweb' that was made out of wood, and had 'tattered' sheets as the cover. It was all very fun looking but Kat could tell she was starting to burn up her time.

\*I don't want to spend too long admiring this. It's cool yes but I need to get out before I run out of stopped time. Air doesn't seem to be an issue. I've slowed things down enough that demonic energy will become a problem first after that massively deep breath. It was probably overkill but I can just shut off the time dilation and rely on that for a bit if I need to.\*

So, Kat stopped examining every interesting bit of furniture and focused on finding the box. The first box she found was labelled actually, and had 'camping supplies' on it so she quickly moved on, assuming correctly it stored tents, but would have been annoyed to note, also contained sleeping bags which would have sufficed. Not for her idea, but because one of them was enchanted for Kamiko.

At least the next box she found was more helpful. It was actually on a shelf of boxes, with quite a few. It did require her to get down on her knees, as it was the second lowest shelf in the cupboard, but Kat didn't care, time in the orphanage was regularly spent on the floor with the kids, so unlike some crouching down wasn't a problem.

The box she'd spotted, that sent her down this way, was labelled 'Elmony's Baby Clothes', only visible by enhancing her eyes because of the small size of the text. A very large part of Kat wanted to go through the box and have a look. Sadly, that part was quickly told off, because she had a job, and didn't want to anger Elmony next time they met. So Kat scanned the boxes, many of which included baby clothes for other siblings, until she found the one for blankets. Gently reaching back with two fingers Kat managed to grasp the chest and pull it out. It was somewhat difficult but Kat managed.

Once the box was safely in hand, Kat dropped the energy she was using to speed up her perception of time. She was down to fifty percent. Apparently stopping time so much was not good on her reserves. Using the air she had left, it was still easy to get back outside though. "Can you grow this for me Kamiko?" asked Kat handing over the box.

Kamiko shifted so that the box would grow and be positioned on the floor and not just over herself. Once there it started to grow, until Kamiko was forced to let go. She shifted a bit more and then continued to enlarge it back to its normal size. Once there, she opened the lock, knowing Kat wouldn't be keyed in.

"Ok, um, can you grab the oldest or just least enchanted blanket?" asked Kat

Kamiko nodded and started digging around. It didn't take long, because Kamiko had a particular blanket in mind. It was just a basic brown blanket they had. Reasonably soft for what it was, but entirely without enchantments. It only got used when one of her aunts that didn't like enchanted fabrics came to visit. Still it was well made.

Kat grabbed the blanket from Kamiko and gently laid it over her friend. Kamiko raised an eyebrow but Kat responded with a raised finger with a small amount of demonic fire at the end. "Oh dammit. How did I not think of that?" said Kamiko

Kat smiled at the acknowledgment her idea would work. Putting two hands spread out to be an equal distance from each other and the edge Kat pushed as much energy into the blanket as she could. It instantly lit up in purple fire freezing itself solid and remaining lit for now. "Oh yes" said Kamiko snuggling into the blanket "Thank you so much Kat"

Kat smiled back "No problem." \*I wonder if I should do a second for me?\* Then she realised that little trick used basically the rest of her energy and quickly decided not to worry.

#### **Chapter 447: The next Day**

As soon as Kat's body relaxed after handing over the extra blanket she collapsed. What she didn't realise, was that her demonic energy was actually helping offset her exhaustion while she was relaxing. It was only because she was had all her energy that her mind was able to function so well, and drastically dropping that removed the safety net around her mind causing a wave of tiredness to knock her out completely.

Kamiko, seeing her friend collapse after handing her a blanket was in two minds. One wanted to make sure she was alright. The other, wanted to accept the kindness in the spirit it was given and sleep peacefully. Kamiko somehow decided on a third option. Pushing herself shakily to her feet, blanket stretched over her shoulders, Kamiko pushed the two chairs together before wrapping Kat's arms around her and pulling the blanket over both of them.

Kamiko was surprised to note that as soon as her body came into contact with Kat's it reacted, lowering her core temperature to a much more comfortable level for Kamiko. The smaller demon made a note to tell Kat about that ability. It hadn't been noticed prior to this, and she had no idea exactly what it meant. Still, Kamiko was safe, she was cool and she was very tired. Wrapping her own tail around Kat and allowing herself to snuggle into her friend, Kamiko drifted off to sleep as well.

Some time later, Kamiko's father appeared, looking for his daughter and her friend only to find them asleep outside. A much fiercer version of Kamiko's debate raged in his mind. He was split between leaving them to sleep peacefully or trying to move them to Kamiko's bed for a better rest.

He stood in the doorway, just in case as he was still not truly certain he'd gotten rid of the stench, watching them. He could see the softly glowing blanket which was just now starting to run out of flame on it about an hour later, powered by Kat's leftover energy and the energy Kamiko unconsciously was leaking as well. This prevented the ice from freezing as well as driving it to even lower temperatures.

Kamiko's father, Trigrath was his name, and seeing his daughter smiling in the arms of someone other than her sisters gave him a warm feeling. He knew that she'd struggled to make friends, and he was glad she'd finally found someone that she could get along with.

Of course, another part of him wanted to know where his wife kept the shovel, the SHARP one for cutting back the plants that started to gain a little sapience and needed to be culled instead. However, he had quite a few means to detect the intentions of 'foes' and for a second, Kat counted more than enough for the skill to trigger.

His was almost disappointed to find that Kat had no untoward intentions towards Kamiko at all. Even using his x-ray vision to check the positions of Kat's arms didn't yield any results as Kamiko had pulled them around her neck like a scarf.

Still, these things were enough that Trigrath and he decided to leave them in peace. He knew Kamiko wouldn't stir, having carried her to bed many a time before, but he had no idea about Kat's tolerance for being moved in her sleep so decided to err on the side of caution and back away with a smile.

The next morning, Kamiko was the first to awake when her stomach protested the fact that it hadn't been fed after her workout yesterday. As Kamiko groggily came to and she heard her stomach sound off again she groaned, not really wanting to go inside and certainly not wanting to make a large breakfast for everyone. She could do it of course, but what she really wanted was to walk inside, find the food cupboard and just down whatever she could grab and call it good.

But no, she had a guest and as her mother had said to the triplets once 'very rude to eat garbage in front of guests, and ruder not to offer them any' so Kamiko got up. Well, she tried. At some point in the night Kat had locked her arms and legs around Kamiko rather expertly. Kat's arms were held by each other and just loose enough around Kamiko's neck to cause no problems but not loose enough for her head to escape. Kat's legs were in a similar position, with one going over the other under and her ankles locked around each other.

Kamiko pushed on Kat's hold lightly and found it didn't budge at all. She realised, this might be a bit more of a problem than she'd thought. Kamiko pushed some energy into her arms and tried to pry Kat's off her only to be rather annoyed to find a purple glow around Kat's own arms in response.



Kamiko huffed at that and muttered under her breath. "That'd be right. Of course, Kat can use demonic energy in her sleep. I mean, it's pretty common, Mum, Dad, all the triplets, Elmony, and... me... sometimes. Like half the time. Dammit, I should have known"

Now, Kat couldn't use her powers at full capacity, she was limited to increasing her strength. More serious responses would require she woke up, and would likely do so. Her tail might be able to make a few defensive manoeuvres but it would quickly wake her up if it got to that point.

Kamiko's solution was to use her tail to tickle Kat's side. It failed. Next step was to try and tickle the bottom of Kat's feet. Failure number two. Kamiko then repeated this action all over. Kat's cheek, her neck, the side of her legs, even a final attempt on Kat's stomach but nothing worked. Kamiko was cursing the redheads inability to be tickle and decided to go with her surefire technique, pinching Kat's nose and placing a hand over Kat's mouth.

From Kat's end of things, she woke up feeling very strange. She could feel a tightening in her chest and a slow drain on her reserves. Her eyes fluttered open and found a pouting Kamiko looking at her between arms that were on Kat's face for some reason. As soon as Kat's eyes opened, Kamiko removed the appendages and Kat drew in a deep breath realising what had happened.

"Woops, sorry, were you trying to wake me?" asked Kat

Kamiko nodded. "Yes. You've trapped me here. I put your arms around me so we could sleep comfortably, but now I need to get up and prepare breakfast but you won't let me go."

"Ehehehe sorry about that" said Kat pulling her arms away, this was enough for Kamiko to wiggle out of Kat's leg lock as well which was no longer quite as tight as it was before.

"It's fine Kat" said Kamiko as she got up. "I'm just glad you didn't attack me or anything. That's a pretty standard thing among demons. Some sort of ingrained response to being forced awake maybe? It's very common."

Kat winced at the idea, but thought of all the nights she'd spent on the road with Xian and realised that while she didn't necessarily want to pick up the habit it was very easy to see where it would come from.  
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"Anyway, let's deal with breakfast you can tell me what you want" said Kamiko, leading the way inside. Only to be stopped at the doorframe. Kat, using her extra height glanced over Kamiko's head to find what she was looking at.

She found the table had a few dishes on it. Nothing was as spectacular as the feast that Elmony prepared but there were a few dishes. A nice big bowl of jelly in the centre of course and two plates full of chopped fruit. It seemed to be slight pineapple, but blue in colour instead of yellow on the first, and the second had what looked like tiny apples that were a bit bigger then strawberries all peeled and chopped in half.

"Huh..." mumbled Kamiko as she stepped inside and noticed something on the bench. A note. Picking it up, Kamiko decided to read it allowed for Kat's benefit. "Good morning Dear,

"When you're reading this I will have already headed out. I'm heading to the early markets to try and stock up on some food and cleaning products. I don't think the enchantments in the bathroom quite

managed to deal with the mess on their own so I'll need to put in some work. Because of this, I've also sealed up the passageway to the lower floors for now. Hopefully I'll be done before the triplets make it back home.

"I would have messaged you but I know the punishment prevents that. To make up for kicking you guys out of the bath and also the house I've prepared breakfast. I imagine you didn't eat yesterday so I hope this will tie you over for the day. Good luck with the punishment.

Love Trigrath"

#### **Chapter 448: To End Gluttony**

When Kat and Kamiko came out of the teleportation they were surprised to find themselves back in the kitchen with everything as they'd left it for the most part. Even had a few meals leftover from yesterday in the cupboard. The only difference is that the end of the table in the middle had been converted into a chair somehow and Freddy was leaning back against the food summoning machine.

He looked the same as he did yesterday except for his chefs' hat which had been replaced with a new one that was now black and red. \*That causes so many questions. His had didn't behave like a normal hat... so is it a hat and this is a different if very similar hat in different colours, or is it a part of his head that he can change the colour of. Hell, people dye there hair all the time.\*

"Greetins Greetin ya two" said Freddy rolling his shoulder as he did so. He gestured towards the seat in a motion that indicated he wanted them to sit down. "Welcome back for another day of cookin"

"Thanks Freddy, and good morning to you to" said Kat

"Yeah! Happy to see you to Freddy" said Kamiko at the same time as Kat

"Now, I'm glad to see you've both been lookin forward to today so I hafta ask. Are you both alright workin on the same dish as yesterday? It went over really well, and while we could perhaps chose another dish from Kat's world, the time spent organisin that could be used to make more food, and sadly, that's what's in demand. Marketin a separate new dish probably wouldn't be as worthwhile, so it's easier for us to keep it the same. However, if ya want we can do somethin new." Said Freddy rubbing his hands together in anticipation.

Kat looked over to Kamiko, and decided to voice the main thought that was coming into her head. "Not that I want to sound rude but... why were we given the choice at all? Isn't this a punishment? Couldn't you just tell me what we're doing today?"

Freddy nodded. "Well, I sure could do that, but it just wouldn't be the same. Many people think that you can cook somethin great by just following the recipe, but after much intensive research and study we demons have discovered that emotion does in fact effect the taste of the dish. Most of the time, ya want happy people or at least, neutral people to be working on the dish.

"Because of that, not only is it the polite thing to do, ask, but it is also to our benefit as well. If you can't stand the idea of makin that same dish for us we can do somethin else, or if you have a real passion and love for somethin in particular ya might be able to persuade me to go with that instead" explained Freddy, gesturing wildly the whole time. He looked more like someone trying to dance or throw water

over everything in front of him, perhaps some combination of both, when speaking, mostly with his hands wide and sweeping, but with some leg movement as well.

Kat looked over at Kamiko who shrugged. \*Well, I'm not taking that as an answer.\* "Can I speak to Kamiko a bit?" asked Kat

"Sure sure. Just don't take too long ya hear. I'll be just outside the door. It's soundproof, so you'll need to open it to get me back in. If ya call out I won't be able to hear ya and we'd be wastin time" said Freddy, strangely happy about the delay as he walked outside a big grin on his face.

Once the door clicked shut, Kat turned to Kamiko and said. "So, how do you want to do this? I mean, are you even ok with doing this at all?"

Kamiko shrugged and gave Kat a slight nudge on the shoulder with her own. It was so light Kat barely felt it, but understood the sentiment and Kamiko didn't have a tonne of practice to know the correct level of power for a move like that. She began speaking once she settled back into speaking. "Honestly I'm fine with anyt-," Kamiko coughed slightly choking on the words because of the demonic curse. "Fine apparently I need to be a bit more specific,

"I am mostly fine with whatever we do here in the kitchen. I don't mind spending another day chopping things. It was tiring, and we should definitely take a break this time, but it's not a great hardship. I don't really care about making a new dish, it'll probably be more chopping for me but that's fine. I can't cook too well anyway, especially not so much food." Said Kamiko

Kat nodded and said, "Well, that's fine if that's what you want. I certainly don't want to make you feel uncomfortable. I'm fine with sticking with the Lamb tagine with dates & sweet potatoes as well. It's not like I was eating the dish so I haven't gotten sick of the taste or anything. Though, do you want to help with more of the cooking?"

Kamiko shook her head violently. "No way Kat, working with the ovens would be really unpleasant for me. Even from the other side of the table I could feel it a bit. My energy wasn't just speeding me up, it was also keeping me cool. For as good as the insulation in the ovens is, it's really hard to keep that insulation up when they're opened to the air. Oh, they try but it's just so expensive to get enchanting done that actually fixes that problem so they just do it 'well enough' for people like me."

"Oh, I didn't realise" said Kat \*Which means she might be even faster and more precise then I thought. If she was using energy to keep herself somewhat cool as well and not going off her regen rate her base speed with the knife must be even better then I thought.\* "Don't worry then, you're more than welcome to just keep working at the chopping then. Um... would water help maybe?"

Kamiko shrugged. "I mean, I guess cold water would help a bit, but it'd just bounce off for the most part so it wouldn't help as much as you might think. I could maybe keep a bucket of cold water around next to me, but honestly that'd just be more annoying then being slightly too hot the whole time. Having part of me be hot and part of me be the right temperature would be more noticeable and irritating."

"Yeah that makes sense. Guess I'll just call Freddy back in then?" asked Kat

Kamiko nodded, and the pair got up. Kamiko got to her station and started pulling out the knife she was using and Kat opened the door to let Freddy in. He zipped in as soon as she opened the door, somehow

managing to squeeze past her and into the room, leaving afterimages behind in his wake that seemed to linger.

\*Hmm, that has to be an ability and not just pure speed because they stuck around... but why can I see them still? Would my truesight not solve that?\*

Kat shrugged it off and closed the door before turning to Freddy, "We're ready and willing to continue with making the Lamb tagine today. Neither of us have any problems and we'll be doing the same rolls as yesterday if that's ok?"

Freddy nodded his head bobbing along with the motion "That's perfectly fine with me. Knowing the recipe, I can manage some dishes on my own. I'll ensure they are placed in the ovens furthest away from Kamiko so as to not cause issues because of her ice attunement. I'll still assist you Kat, but I know the process well enough to manage my duties from yesterday in addition to this"

And like that the three set off, falling into a familiar pattern without much fuss. Kamiko would chop as fast as she could, going through batches and batches of ingredients faster than Kat could blink, while Kat would take them and follow the recipe, mostly wasting time frying onions. Freddy, well he was a whole 'nother beast. It rapidly became clear to Kat why his afterimages were visible to her.

Three Freddy's could be seen at any one time. One watching over Kat, one chopping and another performing Kat's duties. The clones, and you could faintly tell the two on the other side of the bench were the clones, seemed much slower and needed to be replaced every now and again with a swift dash around by Freddy, was a strange addition, if a welcome one.

Freddy himself was probably doing about twice the work of Kamiko and Kat, however, this was still less than expected once Kat saw the clones come into play. It seemed to slow the original down a bit and his gaze was less focused. On the other hand, he could be doing multiple things at once and had a greater view of the whole process from start to finish. With a nice break for a special lunch of course.

#### **Chapter 449: Disaster Zone**

Walking down Kamiko's garden path, Kat felt much better than she had the previous day. Her body and mind seemed to burn, her energy, instead of being sluggish and unresponsive felt like it was producing heat and clinging to every part of her body spreading the fire around. Kat was actually surprised she didn't find the sensation displeasing. It was somewhat like the burn of a good workout but much more eclipsing in its presence, and didn't seem to care if you were moving or not.

Trying to use energy resulted in an even faster response time than normal for Kat, but it was accompanied by a sharp pain as well. Kat, being way past accepting of pain at this point, didn't consider it much of a downside unlike Kamiko who was currently wincing as she made her way down the path with Kat.

The lunch break had been a truly joyous occasion. Freddy had prepared something specifically for the two ice attuned demons. Kat wouldn't say it was the tastiest thing she'd ever eaten, but that hardly mattered when compared to the sheer amount of energy she seemed to have returned to her after just a few bites.

Kat was sceptical at first. When Freddy pulled the two meals out of thin air, she'd been wondering more about how common it was to be able to store something like that then she was looking forward to the meal. That quickly changed when Kamiko's face lit up like the sun peaking just over the nearby forest in the morning.

The dish was giving off billowing steam by the second, and looked like someone had poured liquid nitrogen over the meal and then left it to boil. It might actually have been, Kat didn't know what nitrogen tasted like, and the appearance was rather spot on. Still, that was just the start.

When Kat had the plate next to her, her energy had instantly calmed down. It wasn't like it had stopped moving completely, it was more like her entire energy system changed into a purring kitten that was happy to be fed. Under all that smoke, Kat could see a pastry of some kind, more the meat pie and quiche sort rather than a sweet like custard tart. Though, just from looking Kat was only 90% sure.

It was shaped like a croissant, with a light drizzling of 'watery' red sauce that covered the whole thing. The pastry itself though was actually a dark blue, almost black in colour that really stood out against the red. Little bits and pieces of pink seeped out of the sides, likely whatever filling had been put in.

Kat smiled and took a bit, and she could feel her whole body shiver at it. That first bite had been what she'd imagined drinking three cups of coffee in a row felt like. The taste was... somewhat mediocre in comparison but the joy she felt from the pick me up managed to completely do away with any disappointment she might have felt about that fact.

It was a rich dish, and very meaty in taste despite the pastry coating. She could hardly taste that at all, and it must have been thin because the casing melted rather quickly in her mouth. The sauce was a sharp, bitter taste that made her mouth water and beg for more of the treat. Taking a second bite, was much like the first. A hit of energy, this time causing her energy to feel like it's spinning.

At the time, Kat had wondered if she was imagining the sensation, simply trying to escalate in her mind the feeling of power she'd been experiencing. However, the third bite proved this was not the case. Upon biting into it, Kat felt her body once again shiver, but this time it also exhaled.

Kat found herself bursting into flames, but she knew these were not her own. Instead of her trademark purple it was a dark blue fire just like the colour of the pastry. Looking over at Kamiko, Kat found a similar scene. There was no pain from the fire, and it didn't feel like she was bursting with energy as if it had all been packed to tightly and now threatened to escape her control.

It was more like she'd been energised then had any stagnant energy pushed out of her accompanied by the energy that didn't properly settle into her system. She finished off the last bite and the flames shot out covering the kitchen for a moment before calming down. Kat was a tiny bit saddened the meal was so small, but could also tell that eating more would have done her no good so she didn't complain.

Still, it had been memorable, Kat mused, as she walked up to the house, unsure of what she was going to find. \*I wonder if Kamiko's dad will still be around. We didn't really get to talk to him yesterday so he might have stuck around. He did say he was going out, but only to do the shopping. Will anybody else be joining us I wonder?\*

This question was answered quickly when Kamiko pushed open the door for them both and Kat spotted her Dad in the kitchen with a number of baking trays nearby as well as a few other things.

It looked a little more like a disaster zone than she would ever willingly admit if asked later on. On the main table where they'd eaten before there was a number of thick towels laid out, likely to prevent the heat from the dishes burning the table or perhaps causing issues with the enchantments.

A number of trays were spread across it, and they looked the neatest out of everything Kat could see. There was a number of cupcakes still in their trays as well as two full cakes, and what looked like a batch of brownies as well. The slightly worrying thing about this scene is that Kat could see the heat wafting off them and moved so that she was now in front of Kamiko. Kat couldn't feel the temperature herself, but it would clearly not be pleasant for Kamiko at all.

The rest of the kitchen was much worse. Everything had at least a fine dusting of flour, while a number of other places had large servings of it. Batter was mixed in, in various places as well, with some food dye slowly spreading across the tabletop where it had hit the counter. There was no less than five mixing bowls, all with various states of complete mixture as Trigrath moved throughout the kitchen clearly lacking the skill and finesse Kat and Kamiko had started to display during their own cooking adventures.

Ingredients were spread across the table haphazardly. There was a bag of baking chocolates spilling into a punnet of what looked like strawberries, but the fact they were sizzling, glowing green, and were melting the chocolate, implied they were not the strawberries Kat knew from Earth. In another section there was a bowl of biscuit crumbs, what they were for, was unclear as they looked to be somewhat overcooked, but then, why go to the trouble of breaking them up?

"Daddy! What are you doing?" shouted Kamiko, right next to Kat's ear now that she'd been moved. Kat was surprised at the volume but more so the lack of pain from that. \*Do my ears protect themselves from loud sounds somehow?\*

"Ah! Kamiko darling! I'm glad to see you here. I'm mostly finished up with the things for your sisters, and I was going to start work on some cookies for you actually" said Trigrath with a smile.

He was currently shirtless but with a big apron that came all the way up to his neckline. He also currently had a pair of oven mitts on that must have had a cleaning enchantment because Kat could see the stains on them shrinking as he stood waving at them. Trigrath's hair was also not what Kat had seen in the painting of him. Now cut short, just barely more than stubble, giving him a somewhat odd look when it combined with the apron.

"Daaad..." Kamiko whined "You know you make a huge mess whenever you cook. Why did you have to do this today?"

Trigrath waved away Kamiko's concerns. "Don't worry it'll all be cleaned up in no time at all. I brought something special that came out recently just for that purpose Kamiko. I also won't be conscripting your help for this. I saw how tired you were yesterday. Feel free to relax in the bath or something for a bit and we can chat later!"

Kamiko looked over towards Kat with a raised eyebrow, but she just returned with a shrug. \*I don't mind what we do here. I mean, I guess I need to meet the whole family at this point so I don't mind talking with him. Plus a bath would be nice after the long day even if I'm much better than yesterday.\*

## **Chapter 450: Ahoge**

Kat and Kamiko enjoyed another long soak in the bath. This time, with slightly more success. The burning sensation in Kat's limbs was slowly leached away by the cool water, slowly retreating towards her core which continued to burn. It wasn't the perfect fix, but it helped improve the feeling of her arms and legs tremendously as well as clear her thoughts up somewhat.

Kamiko had a very similar experience, though with a few extra aches and pains being cleared up as well due to her lacking a regeneration ability. Her torn muscles would need to recover more naturally, though a good night's rest would do most of the job. She was no Kat, but she was still a healthy Rank 2 demon.

When they got out of the water an hour later, they headed back up to see Kamiko's father and prayed things would be a bit cleaner. They were lucky to find it was indeed the case. 'A bit' cleaner indeed. The dinning table had been cleared away leaving two couches in its place, one brown and the other black. The dishes from the table had seemingly been put away. The kitchen bench now had a small section clear of flour but not much of it.

"Ah, I'm glad to see you both back!" said Trigrath now covered in a face mask and bandanna over his hair. He had a real shirt on with long sleeves that had been rolled up along with short pants for some reason. Kat was surprised to see a he didn't have any hair on them as well. \*I wonder if that's natural. I haven't really met enough demons to know. I mean, I don't have hair on my legs or my arms now so it's likely I guess, at least for Succubi.\*

Trigrath spun in place as his clothes got swapped out for a much more normal t-shirt and shorts, though they were still longer than the ones he was wearing during the cleaning. Once out of his cleaning attire, Trigrath stepped out of the kitchen and held his arms open wide. Kamiko sighed with a big smile on her face and jumped at him. Trigrath easily took the weight and spun her around.

\*Wait... it just occurred to me that he doesn't need to do that. Normal humans use it to bleed momentum, but I could EASILY catch Kamiko without moving so he must be able to do the same. Why did he bother? How did he get into the habit? I have questions now and I don't know if I can bare to ask for the answers because they look cute like this.\*

Kamiko was being held aloft by her father easily, his hands tucked under her armpits as he spun her around a few times. Once that was done he, still spinning, moved over towards the couch and placed her down before taking the other couch for himself, knowing that Kamiko would want to sit with her friend. Trigrath had a soft smile on his face when he did this, not quite reaching his eyes.

Kamiko saw this, and jumped in place next to Trigrath, and he said "Don't you want to sit with Kat?"

"Dad, don't be silly. I haven't seen you for a while and I know you like spending time with me when you can. It's fine. We just spent an hour in the bath together, and even ignoring that we're spending the whole week together for the punishment. I can spare an hour or two in your lap silly" said Kamiko with a big smile on her face.

Trigrath's smile grew much more relaxed and he brought his daughter deeper into the hug. "Spouse you're right."

\*They are sweet together. I'm surprised she didn't do this with her mother but they seem to have a bit more of a... give and take relationship? Maybe?\* Kat examined the scene. Obviously she didn't have a

well of personal experience to fall back on but she had read books and seen a few films, so she had a guess.

\*Is it... does Trigrath still see her as a little girl while her mother recognises, she's... well I don't quite know if she counts as an adult in their society, but at least as a functioning human... er... demon being? Is that right?\*

Kat eventually made her way to the couch, taking a modest upright position with her legs crossed over and her tail in her lap. She wanted to show she was paying attention to Trigrath, though she was still leaning into the couch somewhat, she also wasn't trying to be overly stiff.

\*Maybe this time I can make sure neither of my friends parents hates me. Well... as I heard recently her Dad doesn't really hate me, he's just willing to go along with it all. Which... you know I almost think that's worse. I have no idea why Lily's mum hates me but at least she can form her own opinions no matter how wrong.\*

Suddenly, Trigrath tightened his grip on Kamiko. It wasn't painful, but she would have a much more difficult time escaping. "Dad?" Kamiko asked confused. Her confusion was answered when he reached into the couch and pulled out a large binder and her eyes went wide. "Dad no!"

"Dad yes!" said Trigrath. "My little shrine maiden, I must uphold the sacred traditions of fatherhood and embarrass you in front of your friends. However, because you only have one I have to be extra embarrassing"

Of course, in truth might have more to do with Trigrath getting revenge for seeing his daughter cuddled into someone without warning. That had shaved a century off his lifespan just from the shock, even if it wasn't as bad as he feared. "So... this is Kami's photos from when she was younger..."

Trigrath managed to use one hand positioned at the bottom of the book to open it with his fingers, and give Kat a perfect view. On the first page was a tiny little Kamiko swaddled in a blanket with almost know her. She actually had a tiny pink ahoge at the front calling everyone's attention.

"Wait that's Kamiko?" asked Kat confused not seeing any trace of the ahoge now.

"Yes, yes it is" said Trigrath "I can understand the shock. It's very rare for a baby born with an ahoge to lose it later in life. Normally they stick around and develop strange abilities but Kamiko's didn't. She's one of the few people who managed to escape it."

"Wait escape?" asked Kat confused

Kamiko was currently doing her best to examine what fabric her dad's shirt was made up of as she hid her face. Trigrath explained "Well, escape probably is the accurate term. Most of the abilities it develops are... not helpful to the demon in question. Such as giving away their real mood, or pointing to things that catch their interests. Why I knew one person with an ahoge that would vibrate when they lied, not a demon obviously, but it happened."

\*Wait... this... this is a real thing? This isn't a demonic thing either... what the heck? Isn't it just a funny bit of hair?\*



"Now, next..." said Trigrath taking Kat's silence as the cue to move on, was a picture of Kamiko surrounded by all her family baring Meridithna. Most of them looked exactly the same as Kat knew them, except for Aslena who was much smaller, clearly still a baby herself. Kat didn't like the look in her eyes though. If Kat knew better, which she did, she'd call it a spark of jealousy.

\*That is a weird look for a baby. I think I'm starting to see why Aslena and Kamiko never managed to get along. Aslena has actually been after her since day one. Man am I not looking forward to meeting her. I feel a deep need to beat her up and then declare my defence of Kamiko.

Is that allowed? I feel like it's actually somewhat more likely to be allowed then I'd really like to think. The demon world is just sort of like that isn't it?\*

"Oh, it was nice to see her when she was that little. This picture is actually from a few weeks after she was born. I think we have a picture from the day... but it's in another album. This one is more like the highlight reel, while that other one is just for the baby photos" said Trigrath

Kat's eyes widened as she really looked at the book for the first time he said that. The thing was huge, even if there was only one photo per page, it would easily hold a few hundred photos.

\*Seems like we're going through quite the highlight reel. Still, I'd like nothing more.\* "Well Trigrath, I'd be more than happy to go through them with you. I can tell you a bit about myself as well if you'd like"

Trigrath grinned, showing sharp pointed teeth and for the first time looking like a true demon "That sounds wonderful Kat" Kat didn't realise that she'd never introduced herself.