

DEMONS 541

Chapter 541: Meeting Back up with Kamiko

"Would you like to visit Kamiko before the day is over? It's getting late." said Lillian.

Kat let out a long breath of air as she looked out at the water filled with people laughing and having fun. She'd only been in this room for around ten minutes, and it wasn't exactly enough time to really relax... but she had spent quite a bit of time in the flying room and visited many others.

I suppose I should. "Will this be the end? The last day of Punishment?" asked Kat

Lillian nodded, "Yes. I can make an easy argument to convert your punishment into a recruitment pitch, but if I am to give you such an enjoyable day, I had to keep it to just one day. It's somewhat part of the unofficial rules, and somewhat part of the Punishment rules themselves"

Kat groaned and wrapped her arms around Lillian as she threw her legs over the edge and stood up. "Why is that?" asked Kat as she headed for the exit.

"It's because it is a non-standard punishment. Of course, it clearly isn't a punishment at all, but that's sort of the point. If we aren't getting you to do labour we can only keep you for a day. It's why you only spent one day with Wrath. Fighting is fun for them so even if it was a spar you had to join and you might not like it, they do. So it isn't considered a normal punishment" explained Lillian.

That's interesting to note. "How come Pride could skip punishing us?" asked Kat

"They reached an agreement with the rest of us. It's a bit complicated, but they don't take any Punishments unless the individual is from their Faction. Some others argued against the plan, but because whoever is being punished is normally used as free labour eventually Pride was able to get out of it with a few concessions. I think we got the better end of the deal, but not everyone agrees with me..." explained Lillian.

I wonder what they managed to get. Lillian would have mentioned it if she wanted me to know... and I really have no scale for reference to try and work out what could have been offered. For Lillian to say it was worth it... either she really doesn't care if Pride helps with Punishments or not... or alternatively she got a decent bonus out of it.

Kat pondered what Lillian might have gained as they made their way to Kamiko but couldn't really think of anything, without a frame of reference. For someone of Lillian's age and strength the things on offer were still far beyond what Kat could properly consider.

When Kat stepped out of the elevator, she was surprised to find herself already in a room not just a corridor. Sure it had some doors that obviously lead to other areas but it wasn't so large, and Kamiko was currently in the centre of it.

The walls were painted a soft blue with the colour darkening as it came closer to the ground. It contrasted well with the soft star like lights that dotted the ceiling. It was somewhat hard for Kat to tell just how well illuminated the room was because of that, as she could see fine regardless of the light but it felt like the room had to be on the slightly dim side.

In the corner there was a small pool of water that was just deep enough for someone to sit in and submerge their legs, with the wall having a back rest allowing for someone to use it as a lawn chair and spread out against it. The opposite corner had a small water feature comprised of three cascading mini waterfalls that filled the air with the natural sound of a flowing river. The next corner had a large number of blankets all stacked together of various thicknesses, and the last corner had a cupboard, though it wasn't clear what was contained within.

Kamiko was currently laid out on what looked like a massage bed but she wasn't being massaged at all. Instead, what seemed to be a large steel press was pushing her into the table. It looked a bit strange, and Kat really had no idea why someone would choose something like that... but surely Kamiko would complain if it was an issue?

And I can't see her face... but her body looks relaxed enough from what I can see. The question is why? Kat bit her lip as she continued to take in the room. It had a noticeable chill to it, which was surely something Kamiko would enjoy. Still, it didn't provide any idea as to what the metal press did. "Ok... why the press?" whispered Kat.

"Kat?" asked Kamiko, not quite hearing the question properly. Lillian, seeing that Kamiko was awake enough to participate in the conversation smiled and kept silent.

"Um... yes it's me" said Kat louder this time, "What's with the metal press? I... I don't quite understand the point..."

"Ah... yes well... I didn't understand it originally either but it's quite remarkable actually" said Kamiko "See, what it does, compress my muscles a bit. It's not painful, and it feels... not quite like a hug... not quite like blankets... it's... it's something else but quite enjoyable besides. I just finished having a massage and apparently this is the last part of it. You missed the assistant I had all day"

Now that Kat was paying attention, she could hear that Kamiko did sound very relaxed. There was a slightly breathy quality to her voice and she just sounded rather soothed. Of course, Kamiko, wanting to speak properly pushed herself up. There wasn't any strain. Once it was clear that she desired to move into a sitting position the press simply rose up into the ceiling and disappeared. Kamiko summoned her clothes once again and sat facing Kat before freezing in place.

Kamiko stared at the small form of Lillian who was currently doing her best impression of a doll. She'd shifted her features to be just a little bit less real. Slightly shinier and had completely frozen her movement in Kat's arms just to add to the illusion.

On the other hand, Kat was surprised out how different Kamiko looked. Something had been added to her skin to make her glow slightly putting of a light just a slightly different shade than her skin, with her hair reflecting it in multiple spots and shining a brighter pink than normal. Her hair was now down, which revealed her horns that had been polished to a reflective sheen.

"What's with the..." Kamiko tried to ask but trailed off. She didn't know what 'it' was but something told her whatever the answer was, it certainly wasn't 'doll'. Narrowing her eyes, she watched for any sign of movement from what she didn't yet know was Lillian but found none. For Lillian holding her breath was simple, and not moving was even easier. She had multiple ways of doing it as well.

"What's what Kamiko?" asked Kat after waiting twenty seconds without a reply. Kat glanced around and didn't see anything noteworthy having already accepted Lillian's appearance as normal. Plus, from Kat's line of sight, she was unable to see the changes Lillian had made to her face.

Kamiko pursed her lips and tried not to glare at whatever it was Kat held in her hands. All her senses were telling her it was unremarkable. A normal object, if a high quality one... but her gut was telling her otherwise. She hadn't heard of Lillian, yet but if she had she'd have picked out the gag in an instant. As it was... she just couldn't commit to a proper answer, and certainly didn't want to call a powerful enough demon to pull the trick off an 'it' if she was wrong.

Settling for potential embarrassment over potential offence, Kamiko finally asked. "Who are you carrying around and... um... why?"

Kat glanced down. "Oh this is Lillian" said Kat without a trace of just WHO it actually was. "She's been showing me around. She wanted to shapeshift to look like me for a bit of a laugh"

"Yeah, it's been great fun!" said Lillian cheerfully in her childish voice, not the one mimicking Kat. Still, without the tri-tone to it, the voice was practically impossible to place, and Kamiko had never heard the original anyway.

"I see..." said Kamiko noncommittally. "Well, I had a great time here all day. I'll have to thank that secretary or... maybe her boss? Whoever authorised my spa day I guess because it was amazing"

"Oh, that was Lillian here, so I guess she's the one you'll want to thank!" said Kat innocently.

Kamiko froze once again. Eyes going wide as she realised the implications of Kat's statement and then tried and failed to process the fact that Kat was casually carrying around the Rank 6 leader of the Lust faction IN HER ARMS.

Chapter 542: A Slow Exit Stage Left

Kat was happy to just take in the calming atmosphere of the room as Kamiko freaked out in the background. Truth be told, it was a nice room. Not really to Kat's taste, as she felt it was slightly overdone, but nice all told. The water feature was perhaps the best part to her mind, bringing calming waves to it with ease.

Eventually though, Lillian is the one who spoke up, for while she was not impatient, she knew it was time to let the other two go. "Is there anything either of you want to ask me before you leave?"

Hmm... not really? I mean... I had all my questions answered earlier I think. This place is quite nice and I should visit again. I do hope the prices aren't too high, the flying room especially... though I could probably do that anywhere. Still, the air currents in that room are something else...

While Kat was deliberating, Kamiko spoke her own thoughts, "I know you said you didn't need to convince me... but do you think I should join Lust? That I'd enjoy it here?" the words were said slowly, and with more than a slight bit of reverence in her tone that Kat simply didn't have.

"To speak my mind freely Kamiko... I would say it greatly depends on what you gain next time you Rank up" started Lillian, "for while this Faction is likely to do good for you and be something you can enjoy being a part of... I suspect that you would be even happier in Medical if you gain the required talents.

"You are more like your Mother in her young age then you might expect. She has changed quite a bit since the youth she once was. Though, her... teasing proclivities were still there, the rest of her personality was more like yours then perhaps any other of her daughters, which I find noteworthy"

Holy shit. It was strange to hear Lillian speak so casually about Nira's youth. It was clear that she wasn't overly familiar with Nira, more, likely not even an acquaintance, but the simple fact she was more than old enough to refer to it was something that Kat had, at times, issues grasping. It was one thing to be told Lillian is likely the oldest individual she'd ever met by a significant margin, and a completely different one to truly understand such a thing.

"I see..." mumbled Kamiko mulling over the words. "Thank you for the advice Lillian." Lillian actually sighed at the end of Kamiko's sentence. Watching how she nearly stumbled over just saying Lillian's name. Lillian was reminded once again, why she had gone so far out of her way for Kat.

Indeed, she actually turned her face up to stare into Kat's eyes as if asking, 'and what is your final question?'. I don't know... do I have... hmm... why not? Screw it! "Do you know where I can get some nice chairs? My home dimension doesn't have anything that allows for my wings"

Lillian raised two eyebrows at this before jumping out of Kat's arms and swapping back to her original appearance. When she spoke it was once again with the tri-tone. Though this time it was dripping with amusement. "No good chairs? Why that's a minor tragedy. On our way out I'll simply grab a spare from the store room for you. We by them by the thousands Kat. All shrunken down. You just need to pour a bit of energy into it and it'll change size."

"Oh... oh um thank you very much" said Kat shocked, "I... well I didn't think I'd just get one from you... but that's actually a huge help. Sure couches are nice and they aren't the worst thing on my wings but honestly it doesn't compare to a chair that's made properly for them"

Lillian nodded and started to lead the way out of the room. "Indeed, I spent quite some time finding the right chair for myself as well. It's hard because of my stature but I had the time and money to look for something that would work well for me, but now I have found it... well I regret nothing. Granted it took like a century... but I had more than then of those under my belt at the time"

It was another hit to Kat's idea that Lillian wasn't 'that' old... and yet it didn't really shake her any further. It was now simply a fact that Lillian was older then she was, and likely older then all the humanity on Earth... and yet it did not matter for she was adorable, and a passing acquaintance that she hoped to visit again.

They entered the elevators for what would be the last time today and Lillian took them to the store room. It opened into a space stacked high with boxes. Lillian disappeared for a blink before returning and offering Kat a small box that no doubt contained a chair she was after. "Thank you again. For this and the great day. It wasn't quite as relaxing as I might have hoped... but it was fun" said Kat.

Lillian just nodded happily and skipped to the back of the elevator as it shut again. Kamiko was standing off to the side trying not to be confused by what she felt was an absurd situation. Still, it didn't take long for the elevator to drop them back on the ground floor. The pair of taller demons stepped out and before they could really think about it properly, the door dinged behind them. Whirling around Kat saw Lillian waving as the door shut, and the day at Lust ended.

The walk outside was fast and once they exited the building Kat reached out to grab Kamiko's arm, but noticed she was looking out into the distance. "Ah... Kamiko?" asked Kat

"It seems this is it huh?" murmured Kamiko

"What do you mean?" asked Kat "The week is over sure but why do you make it sound so much more final?"

"I'm n-" Kamiko choked on the answer. "Fine ok, I do know why I think that... but at the same time I also don't really? I... I just... it's weird Kat. I already said to you that I didn't exactly have any friends before... and... and intellectually I know that I'm not about to say goodbye to you forever but... I FEEL like it is. I feel like I'm really losing something here"

"Kamiko..." Kat said softly as she came up from behind and wrapped her arms around the smaller demon. That alone was enough for tears to begin seeping from Kamiko's eyes. Seeing this, Kat slowly led the girl off to the side. They'd just stopped outside of the entrance before when Kat had been planning to leave. "Look... I..."

Kat sucked in a big breath as she kept walking, tightening her arms around Kamiko, half carrying her until they were completely off to the side. Finally Kat managed to find her words. "Perhaps I'm better at this" Kat's words were strong, but she too felt the sadness she couldn't quite keep from them, "because I've done this all before you see. I had... well... it was a long time ago so I'm not sure how true it was... but I like to think I had friends in the orphanage when I was younger.

"We laughed and played together and had the best of times I'm sure. I still wasn't the most social, but when you're so young you can move past that. Except... many of them were adopted. We didn't really get to know each other and for me... it was very quickly apparent that I couldn't have permanent friends. We were young and lacking in ways to keep in contact with each other.

"Over the years, plenty left, and I did not despair at that, for I understood that most kids truly desired a family again. Eventually, after this had happened enough I took steps back, emotionally I suppose. They became acquaintances or... or... charges, wards that I took care of. Even before I was ten I started to think like this.

"It wasn't because I was older, because in some cases I wasn't" Kat tried to ignore her own tears at this point but they were coming regardless of that. "It was because I'd been around the orphanage so much longer. I knew the way things worked. I had experience mending the hurt and broken children that came in. I couldn't fix them, they needed a family for that, but I did help, I think...

"So I know what it is like to see them leave. And I can imagine you feel much the same way... but Kamiko. I'm still here right now. You can see me again easily. This is not a final goodbye. Plus I was going to have dinner with your family before I left"

When Kat finished Kamiko snuggled further into the embrace, not taking proper account of her horns but Kat didn't mind, simply shifting her arm slightly so it was no longer digging in. *Huh... guess I was... carrying that around for a while. I don't regret my choices. But perhaps they were heavier than I recognised.*

Chapter 543: The Big Harrah

When Kamiko finally managed to reign in her tears the first thing she did was apologise to Kat. "I'm sorry about breaking down.... I mean... thank you for helping me calm down a bit... I don't kn-" Kamiko chocked on the words, "Fine. I know that it all hit me that my friend was going away, I admitted it already earlier but... I didn't think it'd hit me so hard."

Kat sucked in a deep breath before her answer of, "It was... shockingly hard for me as well. Not calming you down, that was something I consider to be very worth it. I'll always be happy to help. No... it was... I don't think I'd ever put into words what I felt all those years ago as I pulled and got closer to the other kids at the orphanage.

"I was a little unfair in saying that I distanced myself from them, but it's true enough to be said. While the distance was certainly there, I mostly filled a different role, no longer a friend but more a mentor and guardian. I don't regret that, and it's something that has always been enjoyable for the most part" Kat's mind went over a few specific instances at the orphanage but didn't voice any of them.

"Besides" said Kat as she dragged her mind out of the past "you've got Sue as well. I bet she'd be happy to spend time with you. Even if it's just to tease you a bit. I think she's actually a pretty decent person so connecting with her might be a good idea"

Kamiko nodded in Kat's arms and asked, "I might do that... but when do you think you'll be able to come visit next?"

That's a good question. Kat bit her lips and thought over the answer. "Honestly... probably not for a while. First I have to catch up with everyone back at home. Then I have to go to a hearing and sort out getting paid for previous Contract that I had issues with. Afterwards I'll probably start my weapons training if I have time because I really have been putting that off...

"Then I'll have a Contract to do, either before that or after which might take a while. Following that, depending on how things shape up... something important will probably happen with my friend. Not sure if I should mention it. Mostly because I'm not sure what things I'm allowed to mention or what is polite, but... and I'm sorry to be vague, but yeah that's important.

"Not sure how involved I'll be. It might be something I'll help with, maybe spend some time with them to ensure things work out... or maybe they'll have to manage it all on their own and I won't see them for however long and I'll have a bit of free time"

Kamiko twisted around in Kat's arms and returned the hug she'd been getting for a while now. "That's fine Kat. At least I know you're already thinking about it. We can catch up when you're free that's fine." Said Kamiko

"Actually. How do we get in contact with each other?" asked Kat

"If you ask D.E.M.O.N.S it can send a message to me, even if it is a bit stingy about how long it takes delivering them it's very safe and reliable. You just have to have me in mind when you ask and D.E.M.O.N.S will get it right" explained Kamiko.

"Cool" said Kat, "Is there anything else we need to do, or shall we head back to your house?"

Kamiko let out a long puff of air and released her grip on Kat before speaking, "I think we can head there. I'm not sure who will be around though. I think everyone wanted to celebrate when I finished but... not sure if they knew we were going to be done today"

Kat shrugged and linked up with Kamiko's arm, while Kamiko summoned them away. Standing once again in front of Kamiko's house Kat took in the appearance and the hints of the garden on display. Knowing that this would be the last time she'd see it for a while Kat tried to further impress the scene into her mind, hoping it would be easier to find when she next looked.

It's a lovely house. I'm quite glad I managed to meet the family that live here. It's been a crazy... what week and a half? Still despite how good Kamiko's bed actually is it will be very nice to sleep in my own.

When Kat stepped in she wasn't really expecting anything special. That was a poor assumption. As soon as the door opened a series of small explosions went off and Kat felt the world slowing down as she took in the scene.

Lined up on the couch, which was now facing the door, was most of the family. The three triplets sat in the middle, all with party poppers shooting out bright lights that looked more like fireworks than streamers you'd expect from them. It was unclear which was which, especially the identical grins that they wore as they looked to the door.

Aslena and Nira were off to the left side, with Nira joining in on the party popper action and Aslena looking slightly off to the side with her fingers trying and failing to hide the smile on her face that managed to peak out of the corners.

Trigrath was to the side of the triplets with a basket of flower petals and was throwing clumps of them into the air. He still was, even with the slowed time actually, the only one that was still moving at all. A more observant person than Kat would note it was to watch the expression on Kamiko's face for as long as possible while giving him plausible deniability.

Elmony stood behind the couch grinning with arms stretched out wide and two rockets on either hand that were in the process of spiralling towards the space between them all. Wings of blood that stretched the length of the couch were spread out behind her to complete the effect.

"Congratulations!" shouted everyone once the world started to speed back up from Kat's perspective and she couldn't help but grin. While Kat was just admiring the chaos, Kamiko sprinted into the group and threw herself at the triplets that took her weight easily and surrounded her in a big hug.

"Thank you guys so much" said Kamiko

"Anything for our littlest sister" said the Triplets "we were surprised you got on Punishment detail anyway... but it happens to the best of us, so we're just happy you made it through... though... you seemed to be glowing a bit"

Kamiko's cheeks coloured slightly. "Yes... I had a good time at Lust"

"Ooooh" said Nira with a massive grin, "my sweet baby girl is growing up!"

The slight colour on Kamiko's cheeks exploded, coating her entire face and part of her neck in red as she stammered and tried to answer Nira. "W-w-what? N-no... no. MUM! No I... I wouldn't! It's not like that!"

Meanwhile Trigrath was being held back by Elmony so that he couldn't get up and start ranting about how Kamiko was a hundred years too young to think about that sort of thing. The Triplets looked slightly torn between saving their sister and earning some points, or letting this play out. In the end they just grinned and squeezed Kamiko harder.

It was actually Aslena that spoke up. "I doubt it. She's so pure I'd be surprised if the doors for those rooms would even open for her. I bet she'd scare off all the degenerates by showing just how nice she is."

"Oh but dear Aslena" said Nira, "how would you know what I'm implying if you haven't gotten wrapped up in such things? Does that mean you deserve the same praise?"

Aslena just stared her mother in the eyes. "I've had no more or less sex than Kamiko."

Kamiko practically choked when she heard Aslena's answer. Nira though, didn't take the answer at it's obvious and instead said, "So you've been exploring together? I little outside of my own tastes but I suppose if that's what you both like I won't stand in the way. No children can come from it without assistance so it's fine for now"

Now it was time for Aslena to join Kamiko in being bright red. She didn't even consider Nira going that direction in her teasing and was woefully unprepared. Trigrath was taking more damage, now collapsed against the chair back while Elmony was rolling her eyes at the antics.

I suppose that's one way to silence the room. Not sure that was quite the effect you were going for Nira but... well good job I guess. Now I need to figure out some way to remove the mental image you've provide me from my mind. Hopefully there's a dedicated way to remove memories when you have perfect recall because I did not need that idea in my head.

Chapter 544: One Final Hub Surprise!

Kat would have loved it if things settled down a bit after that but Nira ended up spending a good while longer drawing out blushing responses from her two youngest daughters. The Triplets were no help as they just sat back and enjoyed the show. Whenever Nira tried to drag them into it they'd skilfully deflect the embarrassing statements back, or onto Kamiko and Aslena, when it was truly necessary. Trigrath just seemed to enjoy seeing his whole family interacting with each other and watched with a smile.

Eventually things did calm down enough to put away the couch and bring out the dining table. This one was larger than Kat had seen before and looked like it could seat ten demons. It wasn't a great fit for the room. Sure it did fit and there was space for everyone, but it didn't feel like the area could handle much more and it wasn't really feasible to wander around the table to get anywhere.

Not that it was necessary. Once the celebratory dishes came out it was very obvious there would be no need at all. Despite the rather spectacular looking display and wide variety of shapes and sizes of the dishes on offer... when one looked closer you would find that the entire buffet was actually made of jelly.

Kat couldn't help but smile at the absurdity of it all. It was something that was so quintessentially family for these Succubi and it made Kat happy just to see them all digging in. Even the way they were eating was an interesting viewing experience that Kat was currently enjoying way more than the food. Not to

say it was bad, but it just felt right to leave the jelly for the rest of them. She didn't have the obsession the rest did and they clearly loved the stuff. The idea of the family trading rare artifacts for jelly recipes sprung into her mind at one point causing her to laugh slightly as she continued to admire the scene.

The Triplets, for all their differences, ate completely in sync. They'd each grabbed a bowl of jelly and despite the differing aesthetics of their choice. Their tails wagged in sync, their hands moved the spoon to their mouths at almost the same pace. Kat had originally thought they were making the exact same movements, but upon closer inspection she noticed they actually accounted for the slightly different shape of their jelly and timed it not so they moved together but that their spoons left the bowls at the same time and entered the mouths at the same time before repeating the process.

Aslena and Kamiko had ended up together, their chairs pressed in closer than strictly necessary with their arms practically touching. Despite this Aslena was pointedly not looking at Kamiko even as her tail swished further and further in Kamiko's direction the longer she sat there. Aslena, while still eating a considerable amount of jelly, ate with slightly more refinement than the others. The movement was smooth and she seemed to savour the taste a bit more.

Kamiko almost looked like an excited chipmunk in comparison. She would shovel as much jelly as she could into her mouth, cheeks filling to accommodate more than was probably reasonable before she'd stop and allow herself to chew on the stuff with a big smile on her face as her mouth filled with flavour. Her eyes darting around taking in all her family and gleaming with happiness even if Aslena would look slightly further away when Kamiko looked that direction.

Nira and Elmony seemed to be a more shocking pair, or perhaps just Nira. Elmony took big chunks of jelly that she somehow managed to precariously balance on a normal sized spoon before taking it into her mouth and chewing on it for a while. Nira was doing a very similar thing. Normal spoon, big portions... but she was making incredibly erotic instead making it look more like she was taking a certain kind of meat into her mouth instead of soft jelly, occasionally flicking her tongue out to grab it before the spoon properly reached her mouth, and shooting glances at Aslena and Kamiko while making it looked like she was really directing them at Trigrath.

Who was actually being quite normal. He ate perhaps more quickly than could be considered normal, but compared to the uniqueness of the rest of his family it was quite standard. His eyes though, he took in everyone the same way Kat was, gathering fulfilment from watching his family rather than a nice meal.

Once the meal was done, Kat felt very tempted to stick around for a bit. Chat about things perhaps and go over the day. Alas, it was actually getting a bit late already and she didn't want to return home after Sylvie had decided, or been forced to head to bed, whichever was more likely these days.

So Kat said her goodbyes and offered hugs, which all but Trigrath and Aslena accepted. Once she'd gotten everyone Kat waved goodbye and headed outside. Just as she was about to leave, she heard a rustling sound nearby and turned to look, presuming it to be the wind. When Kat did though, something strange was happening. Nothing was there. It seemed like she had simply heard the wind... but she also felt like something was there.

Before she could properly consider the idea that something was being hidden from her eyes... they seemed to take offence to the idea and started to burn slightly. Kat grit her teeth and went to step

backwards out of reflex but halfway through the motion something clicked into place and all of a sudden she could see a cloaked figure standing nearby and stumbled instead of making a normal step.

Kat's tail fought and won the battle for balance and she ended up standing, but her mouth was open and her eyes were wide as she looked directly at the strange figure, wings opening to their full width to look more threatening.

"A shame. It seems the technique is imperfect" said the cloaked figure before moving so fast that she was in Kat's face before Kat could do anything. Kat's mind whirled into combat mode but even with her increased perception it wasn't enough. As soon as Kat entered the mode, the figure just smirked and grabbed Kat pulling her into a submission hold with Kat's arms stuck behind her back and her tail wrapped around her legs.

WHAT THE HECK! I didn't even notice! How did she tie my tail up? How is she so fast? Before Kat could blink she was suddenly in the back garden and even more confused. This feeling only got worse when the figure lightly pushed Kat away letting her stumble as her tail unwound and freed her legs.

"What the heck?!" said Kat

"I apologise but I moved you here to abuse my mother's privacy wards. They aren't the best, but combined with my own technique it should suffice to keep them from noticing anything is wrong" said Cloak.

"Ok... but what's goin on and why?" asked Kat coming up with an idea of who this was somewhat quickly.

"Firstly, I wish to confirm how you saw through my abilities. You are the first to notice me in quite some time" asked Cloak.

*I wonder if I should say? I mean... if this is Meridithna like I think it is... I don't really mind sharing that information. It isn't a secret... but if it isn't... * "Why should I Meridithna?" retorted Kat.

The figure let out a light snort. "That was a poor way to try and guess my name. Were you hoping for some sort of grander reaction?" asked Cloak "Now. How did you notice me?"

Perhaps it was but it's not like I had any better options with you hiding yourself in a cloak. And what a cloak it was. The cowl seemed to be complete darkness, not allowing any proper hint of what was there. The hands though, gave away plenty. If the voice wasn't already a clue, which given how much it sounded like Nira it certainly was, the hands that could only belong to a Succubus were another big hint.

"I'll answer you if you tell me why you weren't inside enjoy the party Meridithna" said Kat stressing the name.

The cloaked figure sighed. "Things are more complicated then you might think Kat" Cloak responded stressing the name as well, "I can't just tell you something like that even if I wanted to. Now. Are you going to tell me how you saw through my protections?"

"How about tell me a bit about how they work? Or at least why you thought they would?" asked Kat

The cloak leaned slightly to one side then the other, as if hopping from foot to foot. "I find this an acceptable trade"

Kat nodded. "True sight" was her simple answer.

Cloak cursed. It was interesting, Kat didn't really hear the word so much as she felt that it was an expletive in a language she wasn't supposed to know. It was a weird impression to say the least. Eventually, Cloak answered. "Damned True Sight. I thought I could get around it to. I wasn't actually hiding from your eyes, I was making sure that your brain decided I was unimportant. I'd thought that would work"

You know... I'm not actually that surprised it failed. I mean... if it was that easy to get around everyone would know how. True Sight seems really rare and really important after all. If it was so easily duped nobody would care.

When Kat broke from her thoughts though. Meridithna? Was gone.

Chapter 545: Back on Earth, and Glad for it.

Kat stared at the spot the cloaked figure had occupied just moments before. Some small part of her wanted to question things more and puzzle out what exactly was going on... a much larger part however was tired and was feeling the call of home. Despite relaxing today, which was nice, it wasn't quite as good as just going home in her mind. Sure Kamiko's family were lovely and she had a great time, but Kat felt a little wrung out after the past few days. She'd learned a lot, accepted her punishment, and made some friends.

So the last thing she really wanted to do was stick around and waste time trying to puzzle out a demon that was clearly much more powerful than her. *The simple fact that Nira didn't react meant that either she knew what was going on and was ok with it... or whoever that was is skilled enough that not even Nira noticed and if that's the case I've got no chance of dealing with her on my own terms.*

With that, Kat strolled back out of the garden, around the house and headed out to the front slowly. The temptation to up her speed and get home just a bit faster was there, but she decided that a garden such as this was no place to run about at full speed, especially not one that Nira, a Rank 5 medic, liked so much.

This time though, as she was about to leave... she couldn't help but turn her gaze once more to the front of Kamiko's house and flash through the times she'd ended up here since coming to the Hub. It was a place filled with a surprising number of fond memories and it brought a smile to her face, which was a little bit of a surprise.

I'm not sure I've spent time in a place with so many concentrated positive feelings other than the orphanage. School was too much of a mixed bag to really count, Lily's house wasn't great because her parents are annoying. I'm a little surprised that Vivian's house doesn't have them... but I guess it goes back to what I was thinking about in the mines. We aren't really a family yet.

Kat sighed once more before calling up the system to send her home. The fire came and she was lost in a world of colour. She'd missed this as well. *I wonder if I should mention the idea to Lillian? A little tweaking, maybe to the sensory deprivation tank and I think people would love this. Might get boring eventually but it hasn't yet. Pretty sure I've seen three colours that don't exist just in this trip alone.*

Kat felt her feet hit the floor as she voiced that last thought in her mind and breathed in a big gulp of air. Things felt... strange though. As if both a weight had been lifted and added at the same time. Swishing her arms through the air Kat couldn't find any difference though, they moved as they should and her tail 'happily' flicked in annoyance without encountering anything weird.

Kat examined the room, but it was perfectly clean. Callisto had obviously dusted recently and perhaps vacuumed the floor as well so the dirt wasn't causing the issue either. Kat pursed her lips as she tried to make sense of it but nothing was really coming to her. Letting out another long breath she walked over to the cupboard and placed the box containing her new chair in before heading for the door. She could find space for that later. Still, she could hear something going on somewhere on the ground floor and that meant people.

Heading downstairs she found Vivian watching a movie on tv with Sylvie on her lap curled up and asleep. It wasn't too late, though perhaps a bit for the young girl, being eight thirty according to the clock on the oven she could see from the stairs. Vivian seemed to be about as tired, looking as if she was contemplating the need to wake Sylvie up and go to bed as well or just sleep where she was. Based on the fact she hadn't moved, sleeping there seemed like the option she was choosing for now.

When Kat stepped on the tiled floor though, the sound of her shoes hitting them caused Vivian to turn and look, spotting Kat and causing her mouth to morph into a wide smile. She was in the process of shifting to get up when Sylvie squirmed in her lap snuggle more into Vivian's boobs that caused her to pause.

Vivian glanced down at the girl in her lap, and then back to the one near the stairs that had frozen at the sound and back a few times before pouting and deciding to make grabbing motions at Kat, beckoning her in for a hug as well. Kat smiled at this and dismissed her shoes now that she remembered she had them on and joined in.

Sylvie seemed to half recognise Kat's presence as she shifted in her sleep to press more into Kat once she joined the hug. Smiling at this Kat glanced over at Vivian with a raised eyebrow and a gesture towards the stairs. Vivian nodded slowly and Kat took that as an invitation to take Sylvie up into her arms. The little girl hardly stirred, simply gripping slightly onto Kat's clothes and burying her head into Kat's elbow.

Sylvie in hand, Kat made her journey back upstairs. It wasn't a surprise exactly, but she had expected to find the younger girl awake for some reason and hadn't intended to simply ferry her back upstairs to bed. The idea of taking Sylvie and cuddling with her was tempting but she wanted to speak with Vivian a bit before bed and decided she could always 'kidnap' Sylvie another day.

When she tried to put the girl in question down on her bed, she managed to cling more tightly to Kat's clothes as if it would prevent her from leaving. Kat simply dismissed her outfit leaving her mostly naked for a second before summoning it back after Sylvie's hands had failed to find purchase. She shuffled around on the bed a bit and found the pillow to be an acceptable substitute and curled around it before settling back down.

Vivian couldn't keep the 'naaw' from slipping out and didn't feel too bad once it had, just giving her youngest adoptive daughter a bright smile and a quick kiss on the forehead before glancing over at Kat

and heading out. Kat followed and they ended up in Kat's room. Vivian wrapped her in a big hug as soon as the door closed.

"Welcome back. I know why we didn't hear from you but it was still annoying" said Vivian, "I'm very glad they let us know what was going on though. I think I might have gone a little spare if the system just hadn't said anything and I thought you were ignoring me"

"I wouldn't do that" said Kat as she returned the hug and added her tail into the mix wrapping it around the two and pressing them together, "I might be a little forgetful sometimes when it comes to replying to that sort of thing, but I certainly wouldn't do it intentionally"

"I know dear" said Vivian softly face in Kat's hair, "but I worry even still. We didn't really get a good idea of how you were going to be punished so it was easy to assume the worst. Even if the demons don't sound like barbarians I was still a little worried. Until we were informed you were basically dealing with babies first punishment. That did help things"

Kat patted Vivian on the back lightly and started making circles. It wasn't strictly necessary, Vivian wasn't a worrier by nature and she was just happy to have Kat back for the most part... but the undercurrent of worry was detectable to one with enhanced senses and the desire to pay attention. "Yeah. It really wasn't bad at all. Some parts of it were practically a vacation and I even made a good friend. Not as good as Lily but still! Actually how is she?"

Vivian rolled her eyes, thankful that Kat couldn't see them at the moment. Vivian knew full well that Lily had hardly done anything except continue to go over that list of transformations again and again. Oh sure, she had managed to find a particularly good option she'd overlooked the first time, but she'd really retreated since Kat had left. Still, Vivian had seen her just yesterday, and while she wasn't in top shape, she was at least doing something she enjoyed. "She's... the very definition of fine I suppose. Refuses to come over for lunch regularly. Doesn't want to just relax for a bit. A bit sad you aren't around of course... but for the most part she seems to be doing well. She loves having a research project and this one is important."

Chapter 546: Recapping Part 1

After confirming Lily was well Kat headed off to get some sleep. She made also have set herself on fire a bit to use up her demonic energy and found it to be a vastly different experience compared to doing the same thing in the Hub. On Earth even though ice pooled at her feet and the cold seeped in somewhat... most of the fire just burnt out in the air because there was no real intent on it. She was just throwing it away and the universe seemed almost happy to oblige in removing a bit more of it from the world.

After that she collapsed into a dreamless sleep and felt like she woke up not a moment later. It was early in the morning based on the light barely streaming in from her window but that was fine. Heading downstairs she was met with Callisto casually preparing breakfast for everyone. It looked like she'd just started. When their eyes met, Callisto merely nodded and gestured for her to take a seat somewhere.

noVeln*ext.cOm*

A short time later Vivian bounced her way downstairs with Sylvie trailing after her. As soon as the smaller girl's eyes found Kat she broke into a sprint and jumped into Kat's arms. "You're back!" shouted Sylvie as she snuggled into Kat.

Kat returned the hug while running her hands through the younger girl's hair, happy to see her again. "Hey wait..." mumbled Sylvie, "Why didn't you wake me up when you got back? When did you get back?"

Kat sighed slightly knowing that Sylvie wasn't going to be pleased, and her answer of, "I got here after you'd fallen asleep watching that move" which caused Sylvie to pout adorably was any indication, it meant the younger girl wasn't particularly happy with that fact. Still, Kat could stand strong. Sylvie wasn't really asking for anything or even complaining she was just expressing some minor displeasure.

Still nothing came of it really. The pair just enjoyed the hugs while Callisto finished up breakfast. Callisto asked if Kat required any, but the offer was turned down. She didn't need the food and wasn't planning on doing anything strenuous for days. Still the humans did need to eat so eventually the hugs had to come to an end.

After everyone was fed and watered, they sat around in the lounge room. Vivian and Sylvie re-joined the hug pile while Callisto simply sat nearby and watched. It was clear Callisto was interested in hearing about her time away, but equally as clear she was willing to wait for Lily to turn up for that as well.

It worked well enough, only taking an extra hour for Lily to turn up. She had slight bags under her eyes but a gleam in her eye that meant Kat would have no luck scolding her for the lack of sleep. Vivian didn't even try and Callisto wasn't going to throw stones from her own glass house over that issue so it wasn't really commented on.

She settled into the hug pile, with Kat's tail unwrapping to include her. The scene looked a little indecent from a distance. Sylvie was sat on Kat's lap with Lily on one side and Vivian on the other. Vivian was cuddling them both turned mostly to the side, while Lily was mostly just snuggled up with Kat. Of course, only one person among them would even consider such indecent thoughts, but Sylvie's presence meant it was all very platonic in that individual's mind.

"Kat you have to tell me about your adventures. I have news as well but we can get to that later," said Lily

Kat smiled fondly at her friend clearly interested in what she'd encountered in the demon Hub. That desire for knew knowledge burning brightly. Of course, Callisto had a similar look and Sylvie was trying it out as well, with middling success. Despite her young age, she was more of the wise 'nod knowingly in the general direction' type then someone who craved knowledge only for its own sake. Vivian of course just wanted to hear what Kat was up to. Sure the other's felt that to some degree but it was Vivian's only motivation.

"Right... well... the first day started like this..." Kat started to speak, explaining she ended up in a large room and met Kamiko. Describing the girl, and briefly mentioning her family but Kat informed the rest that they'd get to them slowly as Kat did in person. Then it was on to explaining Wrath and the various people she'd met during the duels.

Kat didn't really go into details on the fights. It would have taken forever and ultimately it wasn't exactly relevant to the other three. Callisto would probably have enjoyed it at least somewhat but the other three clearly didn't care at all for the gritty details of combat. Once that was done she briefly explained

Kamiko's house in a general sense and even told a bit of Kamiko's own first adventure so that the other's could get a feel for the girl's personality.

"Is combat really that big of a deal for Wrath? Do they have a system of honour? How do they keep everything managed?" were the questions Callisto rattled off.

"Um... in order... yes combat is a big deal. In fact, I don't think it's just a big deal, it is in fact the biggest deal... if that makes sense? Following on and I guess continuing that thought they don't have honour per say... but it's more like they have a shared understanding? Combat is glorious but they don't necessarily go for the kill. They are in it for the fighting, and while none of them would shy away from death if it was necessary, I get the idea that they're just as happy to beat people up and then go for drinks afterward.

"As to how they manage it... I have no idea. Based on some stuff I learned later I'd guess that some Rank 6 demon keeps them in line mostly through brute force while that same demon is kept in check by the other Factions and a series of political agreements that are much older than we are."

"Fascinating" said Callisto brining out a notepad from her maid outfit... somewhere. Even Kat's eyes didn't quite catch where exactly. "A truly interesting system of governance. I suppose it is mostly possible because of the great personal power that high ranking demons can manage. I'm not sure how else you could keep them all together without major hassles.

"The idea of just throwing all the warriors together is an idea that's been attempted before without anywhere near as much success as they must have considering it sounds like the 7 major factions have been around for much longer then recorded human history. I'm not sure even I can fathom what it means to be an organisation so old"

"Did you enjoy the fights?" asked Lily trying to find more information about it from Kat's perspective.

"Eh..." Kat shrugged as she spoke, "I'd call it... alright. I enjoyed meeting some of the people there, and it wasn't bad per say... but it was made very clear that I have no training and that I was mostly just abusing my strength to beat them. It's not all that satisfying even if I liked combat. It wasn't bad though I guess. Like good homework. You're satisfied once it's over but it was still homework in the end."

Lily nodded, happy that Kat had so easily put it in terms she could understand, a product of their long friendship. Next up was Kat describing her days at Greed. Everyone was fascinated by her description of 'Boss' and confirmed several times what he looked like. They were also not amused when she brought up what exactly the job was, interrupting her story. "What the heck Kat!" grumbled Lily

"What's the issue?" asked Kat knowing the issue was probably the exact same one that Kamiko had.

"You just... just let yourself get stabbed or injured repeatedly to test some unsorted boxes? Do you have any idea how dangerous that was?! Why would you just go along with it! That's not Punishment that's torture!" shouted Lily.

Callisto actually looked surprisingly amused at the idea, while Kat tried to explain. "Look Lily... it really wasn't an issue. I didn't feel any pain it was just a little weird. My regeneration was MORE then sufficient to keep me completely healthy the entire time, plus Kamiko has already had this conversation with me."

Lily opened her mouth to complain but Kat cut her off, "Furthermore. Kamiko's mother is a very high ranking healer and she could have helped if any issues cropped up. Plus I would have been whisked off

to the hospital if anything truly bad was happening to me. It was no more dangerous then doing a normal stocktake, or like... sorting out the library. I just needed to check what things were where and what they did."

Three of the rooms occupants were clearly still unimpressed with the explanation.

Chapter 547: Recapping Part 2

If the humans in the lounge room were unimpressed when Kat told them the job at Greed. They were practically incensed to hear about the specific. Well, Callisto was asking about the exact nature of every magic item and all the details that came along with it and felt very little concern... but everyone else was quite annoyed. Kat found herself wishing the others would just agree with her and Callisto. She knew she was fine, and the damage hadn't even lasted for a day. It wasn't worth getting upset about it at all.

To avoid the uncomfortable questions they were short to ask once she announced the day at Greed had concluded, she just ploughed straight into the story about meeting Nira. Reactions were varied. Callisto was interested in Nira for her medical expertise, Vivian just thought she seemed fun to be around, Sylvie seemed to not really think much about her, and Lily was bright red just imagining the jokes that could have been made, despite the fact Kat had very carefully avoided mentioning the specifics of what had been said, just the idea of it was enough to bring a blush out of her bushy haired friend.

"She must have done considerable research on Succubi. I wonder if she'd let me look over any of her notes to try and work out how you interact with things here on Earth. Just knowing the mechanics behind your wings would be a great boon..." said Callisto as she tapped her cheek with a pencil.

Hmm... well, Nira does seem to enjoy her research. I don't know how much she safeguards that sort of thing... I imagine it's pretty basic textbook stuff that you could just find in like a library or on their version of the internet if they have it. Then again... I'm not sure if they'd share that sort of medical data with other races... guess it depends. Wait. Hey system do you know?

D.E.M.O.N.S cannot provide that information to User Kat as she is not a part of Medical without direct permission from someone in the Faction.

"Maybe? The system says it can't share it with me because it's Medicals stuff but at the same time... it did also seem to imply that anyone from that faction could tell me because they didn't give any specifications for like... a high ranking member or something" said Kat

Callisto nodded and made another note on her notebook. "She sounds like a lot of fun. I wonder if we could invite her around. It doesn't seem super safe for us to be on the Hub but they might be able to come here!" said Vivian happily.

Lily looked distinctly displeased with that idea, but Sylvie broke in as the voice of reason first, "We should wait to hear about the rest of the family first. We couldn't just invite one or two of them over by the sounds of things."

Things settled down at that proclamation and everyone turned to Kat to continue the story. So she did, mentioning the second day at Greed, trying this time to deliberately downplay the danger as best she could, but was limited somewhat because of her inability to lie so they still weren't terribly happy with that part of the story.

So, Kat once again quickly segued into meeting Elmony and the interesting things that came of that. The most combative member of the family and the one with a much bigger presence. For all the power Nira supposedly had, Elmony was simply intimidating by default. She talked about the blood wings, the interesting advice she'd been given.

"She sounds really cool" said Sylvie, "If the trend keeps up I think they are well worth inviting over. I wonder how well the blood manipulation would work on Earth. Assuming she starts off touching the blood it might be possible depending on how it works."

Callisto picked up the train of thought from Sylvie, "Indeed. If her demonic energy is inside the blood and moving it around that way... it might work. If however, it's a coating on the outside of the blood then I doubt it'd work at all. Her wings would actually be the more interesting question. It's very unclear how solid they are. How intrinsic are they? Are they an extension of her body or an extension of her blood manipulation ability? Interesting questions indeed"

Seems like at the rate we're going they'll want to invite them all over before I finish introducing them all. "Well, next up is Envy. They were weird..." Kat went on to explain how Envy had tried and failed rather badly to get information out of them. She explained that they could try, but not really and how it all felt mostly like a big joke to her... and how Kamiko decided she probably needed therapy because of it. Kat was a little hesitant to reveal that part, but considering Kamiko had managed to tell her own family and wasn't being shy about it anymore, Kat felt it was fine. Plus, who were they going to tell?

"I'm not impressed they could get away with even that much" said Vivian, "Sure I understand you're on punishment duty but I think I like the idea of Envy's punishment the least even if I'm not happy at all with Greed and you dealt with this one much better. I just don't think it's right to try and get information out of people who haven't done you wrong. Leaves a bad taste in my mouth"

"Not that I disagree but..." Callisto started. Vivian shot her a glare, attempting to get Callisto to stop there... she didn't listen "...if it actually got Kamiko to admit she needs therapy then I can only consider it a good thing. Keeping your mental health in order is a thing more people should do. Not everyone can be as sane as me"

Vivian rolled her eyes, "Are you sure you don't see yourself in her, trying to convince yourself that you also need therapy"

Callisto scoffed in response, "Don't be silly I meant what I said. Most people think I'm a little crazy, and I'm not disputing that. However I'd classify myself as perfectly sane. I know my mind very well and while I may hide things from others I do not hide anything from myself. I am at peace with my place in life. My only issue that a doctor would come at me for is my lack of sleep but I seem to suffer no ill effects from that and consider it a boon"

Vivian just sighed and didn't say anything. The words were mostly said in jest anyway, and it was clear this topic had come up before. Lily jumped in with, "Why didn't they just... ask nicely? I imagine that would have worked on Kat. Heck, the tactic they used on Kamiko would have done wonders"

"I honestly don't know" said Kat. "I was thinking the same thing honestly. The whole day was super weird. The Triplets didn't really help either..." Kat then went on to describe the meeting with the

Triplets. Everyone seemed rather interested in them, with only Vivian only thinking them mildly noteworthy.

Kat explained Kamiko's major hang up in them treating themselves as interchangeable and what issues had cropped up because of it. She left out most of Kamiko's rant but felt the core issue of interchangeability was too entwined with the Triplets to leave out of her story. Kat did mention how different they really were to further reinforce the point.

They all had such different interests and it really was a wonder how things got to where they were. Callisto actually laughed when she found out they didn't all know about the issue in the first place because they'd been left out of the loop. "How funny that Kamiko treated them too similarly as well even when making accusations"

"True..." said Vivian in such a way that it was clear she didn't necessarily agree with the word she was speaking even if it was a fact. "... but what else was she supposed to do? They'd given her no prior indication that she was wrong, and quite a few ways in which she was right. Surely you'd just consider it... testing a hypothesis? One that she'd nearly confirmed?"

"If you want to go down that route, it's very easy to argue that she was suffering from confirmation bias. She'd seen nothing to indicate they didn't all know and just assumed that it was the truth when no information about it came to light after such a long time. That's not really a good way to test things, in fact it's one of the specific things we're told to look out for in testing"

Vivian huffed. "Fine ok, maybe it's a fair assumption to make"

"Personally I wonder what it's like on the Triplet's end." Said Lily "I mean really, how often do people outside of family make that mistake? I can't decide if it would be common or not. They all clearly have their own niches and likely their own friend groups so it shouldn't happen... but if they look and talk similarly enough maybe they get mixed up all the time."

Chapter 548: Recapping Part 3

"I'm not sure..." said Kat thoughtfully, "I suppose it really depends on how often they go to the same place separately if that makes sense" Lily tilted her head and gestured for Kat to continue. "Right well... they like to speak in sync. So I know for a fact they all sound the same. They speak the same way, at least when they want to, and they wear matching clothes fairly often.

"So it's more a question of them confusing people then honest mistakes I think. They seemed like the kind to enjoy messing with others. So if I had to guess... I'd say they get mixed up quite often but it's normally intentional"

Lily nodded, "Yes I suppose that makes sense. I'm surprised that all three go along with it so easily. I'd have assumed that at least one did not enjoy playing pranks on people but it sounds like they all get a kick out of it."

"I wonder if it has anything to do with telepathic bleed over..." pondered Callisto

"What do you mean?" asked Lily

"Well, Kat mentioned that they can sync their minds up somewhat. It is unclear to what extent that is true, but at the very least they are mildly connected. Perhaps they have such different interests to keep themselves separate when they sync up? To keep their individuality? It would also explain why they all like pranks. Assuming two of them did originally... all of them continually syncing up and enjoying pranking together might make it so all three of them enjoy it now" explained Callisto.

That... is an awkward idea. I don't really know what that could mean. Except... wait... "But remember they got in a disagreement over how to treat Kamiko. How much bleed over can their really be if they missed something like that?" asked Kat

Callisto shrugged, "If they did not think about it, it just might not have come up. Imagine... hmm... depending on how they share thoughts it might be possible. If they can share ideas... I imagine that some bleed over is inevitable. They might not have all of each others' memories but I find it likely they share emotions when connected."

"I have no idea, I didn't really ask." Said Kat

"Well, we can add that to the reasons for inviting them over" said Vivian cheerily. This got everyone back on track somewhat and Kat started to describe the next outing which was her trip to Gluttony. She spoke about the endless rows of food stalls, Freddy their guide, and a bit about the dish she chose. Kat also spoke about just how hard it was. That she realised keeping up her work at such a high speed for the whole day was something that weighed heavily on her.

"What did you think about the kitchen?" asked Callisto

"I mean... I thought I covered that? It seemed fairly high tech but nothing too weird... why?" replied Kat

"I am just thinking... that perhaps they have other higher tech kitchens as well. I know you mentioned that Kamiko's family has a more normal kitchen... but I find it hard to believe that Gluttony would settle for a slightly better than modern set of appliances. It just doesn't seem realistic considering the strange and wonderful things that Greed had just lying around in a warehouse" explained Callisto.

"You make a good point" said Lily jumping in, "and Kat already confirmed that there was multiple kitchens. Just the fact they can essentially freeze food in time is weird. It's so far beyond what the rest of the room was capable of I can't help but imagine that they have other fancy appliances. At the very least they'd have dedicated machines for stuff like pizza or bread"

Vivian's eyes lit up at this, "Oh! We aren't even thinking big enough. They could also have fancy stuff for the fancy stuff... er... I mean. They might have dishes that rely on technology we haven't invented yet. They might have... I dunno... a fancy way of preparing fruit that we haven't even discovered yet. Or... OR! Wait, they might have entirely new food groups!"

That last comment jogged some of Kat's memories, "Actually I know for a fact they must. Not everyone can eat them but I know some demons just eat rocks. Actual rocks. I can't imagine you cook a rock the same way you prepare a meat and greens dish. Surely they need special equipment for that as well"

"Fascinating" said Callisto as she made more notes. "Yes, for something like rocks I cannot even begin to imagine the sort of prep work that would have to go into it. Truly there is much we could learn even from their chefs."

"That's all well and good... but Kat, tell us about who you met the next day!" said Sylvie, "The food is basically just speculation."

Kat grinned awkwardly at Sylvie's request. "Well... we didn't exactly meet Kamiko's dad Trigrath that day. We sort of did... look... ok so this is what happened..." Kat quickly explained their plan to take a bath and then grab a bit of food and collapse, then how Trigrath had shown up smelling horrible and trying to keep it around him. Explaining why they didn't really speak to him that day.

She then went straight on to describe her second day with Gluttony, which was more of the same really. Then she got to Trigrath's true introduction and the story of why Aslena doesn't deserve nice things. The occupants of the room were completely shocked by the end of the story.

"I can't believe she got away with it" said Lily

"I can" said Sylvie

"It does show a shocking lack of perception on the father's part..." mumbled Callisto

"Poor dear" said Vivian, "She deserves a hug. Kamiko that is. I might need to beat some sense into Aslena if she was to come over... I know she can take it. She's a demon... then again... don't want to overstep and have Nira come after me..."

I wonder if I should spoil what ends up happening when I meet Aslena... nah let's leave that for later. I want to see how they react when it comes up later. "So, after that was particular day finished up. We headed to Sloth and got sent... TO THE MINES! Really it was like this..." Kat described the room they ended up in first, and how they were sent into what was essentially the coat room for the miners.

She then detailed the meeting with Stone and the many things they needed to keep in mind while they worked underground. Kat supplemented this with tails of the rats once she started to work on them. How simple it was, and how much better Kamiko was at it. Kat was tempted to go into some of the thoughts she'd had down there... but decided it wasn't really the time.

Kat did want to talk about her place in the odd family they'd developed, but today was for retelling her adventures. It wasn't for dredging up that particularly heavy topic. Of course, she was ignoring the looks of shock already on the groups faces when they had found out she'd been forced to go into a mine to kill rats.

"I don't know if I should call that punishment excessive of appropriate" said Vivian while biting her lip.

"On the one hand... it clearly wasn't hard. More equivalent to spending a day picking up trash... but you're killing things by the thousands and I'm not sure how I feel about that. Sure they're just rats but... you know. It's a lot"

"If it makes you feel better they were a hivemind" said Kat, "So it was more like I was chopping of fingers instead of heads?"

Vivian gave Kat a raised eyebrow in response. Callisto however took the idea and ran with it, "A Hivemind you say? How efficient was it? Could it react and move troops around?"

"Eh..." mumbled Kat dragging the word out. "Not really? I mean... no. No it couldn't. Even though it was a hivemind of rats it really wasn't much smarter then... well a big bunch of rats. Perhaps even less smart

then a normal rat because they lack survival instinct. The only thing they had going for them was just how many there were"

"How do you even end a hivemind like that?" asked Lily

"Oh, that's the second day's adventure... it's a bit more... full on..." said Kat as she shifted somewhat awkwardly. This was made harder by the fact Lily was clinging to her and trying to stare Kat down. Sylvie of course found the whole thing very silly. Kat was fine and knew it was nothing to truly be worried about.

"Do you want to tell use something?" said Vivian turning further in place to add her own glare to Lily's.

Kat sighed, "Don't worry I'll get to that. I can't just go skipping around though. Especially because of how interesting what happened that afternoon was..."

Chapter 549: Recapping Part 4

Kat then went on to detail arriving back at Kamiko's home and finding Aslena there. Pointing out how she'd tried to antagonise Aslena but that it hadn't really worked... except that it did? Kat's explanation started to stall out. "Look it... it was strange really..." Kat could see the other's all gaining a 'get on with it' expression. "Fine... I guess I'll explain what I can.

"So, I started trying... set Aslena up I guess? I wanted to find out why she didn't get along with Kamiko... or bait her into attacking me and then fight back a bit. Nothing serious of course... but I didn't really like the things she'd done so I was prepared... or well, I thought I was prepared. How that day ended was certainly outside of my expectations...

"So... I niggled at her for a while, back and forth... then I just sort off..." Kat trailed off as she tried to explain what happened.

Lily jumped in though with, "You started easily answering her questions because that's just what you do?"

Kat sheepishly nodded, "...Yes exactly that. It turns out though... she was actually more surprised by my friendship with Kamiko than I thought. Things sort of... hit the girl hard. I'm not sure how much sympathy I really have for her... but... she burst out crying and Kamiko went after her after some emotional moments of her own. It seems to have worked out in the end though."

"You haven't exactly explained how it worked out though" said Callisto pointing her pencil over at Kat.

Kat glanced away at the rebuke. "As I said... it's complicated. I don't want to go too deep into things, but I already told you one of the many things Aslena did when Kamiko was younger. From what I know it never really got better but... for some reason while I was around it really hit her that she wasn't doing right by Kamiko. Not sure what it was honestly. I also wonder if she eased up a bit on Kamiko beforehand to get to that point. Kamiko made it sound like that wasn't the case... but I don't think she was keeping track"

"They sure keep the family interesting," said Vivian. "Not a dull moment from the sounds of things."

"I guess so. I also spoke with Nira a bit that night but I won't be repeating the things she told me." Said Kat. *Because I really don't want it getting back to her that somehow I spread the one secret she wants

to keep from her children. She could easily take me apart and put me back together with feet for hands or something. I bet it's possible, maybe even easy for someone of her skill.*

The others accepted Kat's secrecy knowing she must have had a good reason for it. That didn't stop them encouraging her to explain what happened next. Kat actually slowed down her perception of time for a bit just to drag the moments out to try and find a way to avoid talking about the mess that was her second mining expedition.

Sadly, she couldn't find a way to get out of it. Plus, she knew they'd already taken note of how she'd skim over fight scenes that were particularly brutal from other previous times she'd talked about her adventures so that would be out. So in the end she was forced to just get on with it.

First she explained Sue and mentioned her complaining, but also skipped ahead a bit to give a few examples of her less than appropriate jokes and the way she really came through in the end. She could see the others really wanted to say something but were waiting for the end of the story proper so Kat continued. She detailed the ice cave they ended up in for the start of the journey.

How Kat managed to carve out a path and then the giant rat that had taken a bit of effort. Kat actually described that fight in more or less its entirety and found everyone was remarkably ok with it. Concerned for sure, but much less annoyed than when she'd tried to downplay things. Riding that wave she talked about the tunnel a bit and the patrols they had found. Detailing the tactics that they needed to use to take out the Guard rats and how Sue just hammered the little ones.

Finally, she spoke at great length about the final room. Talking about the plans they'd come up with before deciding to wait on Stone. Kat waxed poetic about how Stone had charged in and cleared the area before taking on the role of holding the two biggest threats in place. Kat admittedly did skim over the final Guard Rat fights by downplaying the injuries significantly, but the spectacle of this part seemed to be enough for the others to accept it... well, Sylvie didn't seem to, but the others were willing to go along and Sylvie decided not to correct them.

Kat talked about the big final strike on the Crystal rat that took everyone working together, Sue, Kamiko, Kat and Stone. She talked about the trip back briefly and then wound the story down. "...and that's what I did in the mines. I've been told it was a bit more than I'd normally be expected to do on a Punishment, but it really did need to happen. Things could have gotten bad if it was just left around."

"That really sounds like something they should have sent more people on in the first place" said Vivian, "I know you can regen and they had someone to shield Kamiko a bit... but not that well all things considered. She was only a few steps from danger the whole time."

Kat shrugged. "Well, what could they do? I imagine healers are hard to come by and if we had more people that's less Sue could shield. I should have mentioned that she could only have two at a time. One on someone else and one on her. That's the limit."

Vivian sighed and said, "That still doesn't seem like a job for three people"

"Well it ended up taking four?" supplied Kat as happily as she could manage.

"If I was to take Vivian's side here I would advocate for Stone following the entire time. He is clearly strong enough to clear the rats out quickly and while he did need help in the final room, I wonder how much of that help is because he had you along and not that he truly needed the help" said Callisto.

"What do you mean?" asked Kat

"I am just considering the idea that if he was alone and didn't need to worry about the Crystal rat potentially attacking the three Succubi he had with him it might have been something he could deal with himself. Now I'm not saying that has to be true, but I think it is a likely thing" said Callisto.

Kat went over her memories and tried to work out if Callisto's assumption was correct. Kat personally found herself on the fence. *I think Stone could have easily sent us back if he really wanted to. He didn't need to take us. Callisto does make good points though... I suppose what it really boils down to is if Stone could have killed the Crystal Rat himself. He could only hold it in place and he didn't really have a good weapon to damage it.* Kat explained her main issue with Callisto's theory.

Lily chimed in supporting Kat's idea while Sylvie and Vivian seemed on the fence. Callisto answered with, "I can accept that as a possibility. I think however, the real question is if he could have killed the Summoner rat by himself. Maybe tanked a few hits from the Crystal rat to get at her. The again... there is every chance the Crystal rat was more independent then the others and could have kept going so maybe I am incorrect here. Still, food for thought I suppose."

"I just think he wouldn't have kept them around if it was really so much harder with them present" said Lily, "I mean. He was responsible for their safety I imagine. He was the person in charge at the time as well as their guide. If something bad happen to any of them then he'd be the one in trouble. I can't imagine he'd risk that sort of scandal just to make Kat, Kamiko and Sue feel a bit more important. It doesn't make sense"

"Ah, that is an angle I hadn't considered properly" mumbled Callisto as she scribbled on her pad.

"Looking at not if it was possible, but the potential motivations for doing so. Yes... and if we consider he knows Sue and her family it makes it even less likely he'd be willing to risk the safety of anyone in such a silly way. I think you make an excellent point Lily"

Chapter 550: Recapping Part 5, Finale

Kat then went on to explain just how tired they were after the fighting the rats and how nothing really came up that night. Then she started to speak about Lust. The final 'punishment' and how it was basically a vacation. She talked about the main conversation with Lilian as well as all the rooms she went to. "... and that sums up the last Faction"

"Was it really necessary to make that promise?" asked Vivian, "Seems odd to commit to joining Lust". Lily was currently trying to burry her bright red face in Kat's side and it was working somewhat well.

Kat brushed her thoughts on that aside to focus on what Vivian was asking her. "Well I got a cool chair out of it!" joked Kat.

"This is serious Kat," said Vivian, "it's such a big part of your future... and to just give Lust such a big head start... I hope you know what you're doing"

"Well I just had to say I was intending to join Lust at that moment and considered it likely I would in the future. If something major comes up I can easily pick something else... but I don't think I will. There's nothing wrong with the Faction, it really does seem to suit me best even if we ignore the day off they gave me."

"True but it may be an issue to so thoroughly tie yourself to the idea of Lust" said Callisto. "It's possible that joining a Faction has an effect on its members. I would hate to see you so thoroughly changed."

Kat decided there was a very easy counterpoint to Callisto's worry, and that was to just ask the system about it. *So D.E.M.O.N.S, is Callisto right? Is there any mental effect that changes people who join different Factions or more specifically Lust.*

No compulsions are present in the Faction system and applying a compulsion to User Kat while on the Hub is considered an illegal offence. Despite this many demons desire to adapt to the environment they have found themselves in and gain similar abilities to other nearby demons.

"There you go," stated Kat, "I just asked the system and it said that not only is there no compulsions when you are in a faction, but that compulsions are actually illegal in the Hub. Is that a satisfactory response?"

Callisto shrugged but made a note of it anyway before she spoke. "It is possible the system is lying to you. It may not be bound by the same limitations to tell the truth as other demons are. Still, it has given us no reason to believe that to be the case. I do expect peer pressure is a real and present thing for many demons. From what I know of Kat she is unlikely to be majorly effected."

"Yeah!" said Sylvie firmly, "Kat can take care of herself. She won't let anyone bully anyone else and she won't be forced to change for anyone's amusement. She could handle a bunch of rowdy kids at the orphanage for years."

Lily managed to recover enough of her blush to say, "True but she ended up in that role before she was actually the oldest. She was just the person who'd been at the orphanage the longest"

"She was the best person for the job. Big sis Kat is great, and she was especially nice to me. It's why I was more than happy to get her to come with me. I'm glad Vivian adopted her as well. I hope the orphanage can stay standing without her" said Sylvie.

*Well that's an interesting way of looking at things. I wonder who I consider more correct. Was I forced into a role before my time? Or was I able to distinguish myself amongst other kids, even the older ones and outperform them easily. Hmm... bit of both maybe? I certainly enjoyed the work and I don't regret it for a second. It was actually a little hard to give it up when Gramps convinced me to start handing over the reins.

On the other hand, I certainly got forced into it. I was probably a little young at the time... but I got so much practice as well. I can't even remember when exactly it was that they started to get me helping in between adoptions or the exact moment I took over. Hmm... I wonder if that's something I should have paid better attention to.*

"I think... isn't Lust a bit of a... well... erotic Faction? You didn't mention any areas like that but did you leave them out?" asked Lily with a bright red face after the silence had stretched on.

Kat moved her tail around to pat Lily on the head with it and said, "Not at all. Sure they have those kind of areas, but you can avoid them quite easily. Though I imagine it's split somewhere around fifty-fifty. By the sounds of things almost every activity has a family friendly version and one for... more adult things"

Lily was already bright red but somehow she managed to get even more colour in her cheeks as it started to flow down her neck. "Um... er... right... um... why didn't you go near those areas? Was it an age thing?" asked Lily in a voice that betrayed her as not really wanting the answer to those questions.

"It was because I wasn't interested at all" said Kat easily.

Light flashed in Callisto's eyes as she carefully noted something down making sure that her hand movements were small and easily missed. If Kat was to review the memory only the slight shaking of the pen in Callisto's hand would be visible, and she made it look more like she was just bouncing it around her fingers.

Vivian looked at the group. She wanted to know a bit more about Lust, even if Lillian herself seemed fine but she noticed that adding more ideas to Lily's head might cause the poor girl to pass out. Something Kat had sadly missed. So she took it upon herself to move things along. "So what happened after that?"

Kat explained the party and her meeting with maybe Meridithna. The others didn't have too much to say to that outside of Vivian's "That was really nice of them. I wonder where they get their jelly obsession from... is it genetic?"

"I am more interested in the cloaked figure. I wonder what the chances of it being Meridithna are? Seems quite likely but you might have been led to that conclusion" said Callisto. With Kat not narrating the exact conversation the few major clues that all but proved the cloaked figures identity weren't included in the retelling.

After that, things started to calm down. The group took a break from things to eat lunch and then sat around chatting about what the rest of them had been up to during the time Kat was away. Sylvie had been reading books supplied by Callisto and was greatly enjoying the current series she was on. Vivian had been working for a relatively boring client that was at least overpaying for things so she wasn't too annoyed.

And Callisto had been doing some research into evolution of all things. Mostly looking for any hint as to where Kat's biology might have come from. She didn't find anything and didn't exactly have much hope considering the confirmation that other worlds existed. Callisto thought it likely they originated somewhere else, but she was determined to make that guess a certainty.

Eventually though Lily moved over to Kat to ask, "Hey um... can we head up to your room? I'd like to chat a bit with... ah... just the two of us if that's alright."

Kat looked over a Lily who seemed nervous for some reason. *Why is she so nervous? Is it because I haven't made enough time for her recently? That would be annoying if that was the case. I really didn't mean to leave her out of things... I didn't think I did? Wait no. Why am I assuming she's annoyed? She doesn't look annoyed, and it's probably to do with her race change.*

"Sure, let's go!" said Kat projecting cheer she couldn't quite bring herself to truly feel, some niggling feeling that there was something missing pervading her mind.

When they got upstairs Kat flopped down on her bed, back against the headrest and wings out so they didn't get overly squashed. She patted the space beside her and Lily froze for a second before swallowing and climbing into the space Kat made for her. "So what's up?" asked Kat

"Well..." said Lily playing with her fingers, making sure not to look Kat directly in the eye. "I... I think I've decided what um... what race to go with... but... um... you see..." Lily started to stammer and gain a slight dusting of red in her cheeks as she failed to say what she wanted. Kat pulled Lily into a proper hug which caused Lily to blush even more. Lily bit her lip and took in a few deep breaths...