

DEMONS 581

Chapter 581: Lily's Morning Just Won't End

After repeatedly stating she wasn't engaging in any sort of activities with anyone, and watching the smirk on Evaline's face grow as Lily was barraged with variations of 'you doth protest to much' she finally managed to settle things down.

Lily wasn't entirely out of the woodwork though, as Evaline asked, "Now that I've had a bit of fun with you, I'd like a serious answer. Have you talked about it with Kat?"

"Yes" said Lily

Evaline starred her daughter down at the short answer. Lily cracked slightly but retorted with. "Look, we've discussed it. Why do you need to know Mum? It just feels so weird to talk about with you. Even if we include the madness that has been the whole conversation up to this point I feel like this is taking it a step too far."

"Maybe you're right" said Evaline with a long sigh. She glanced at her coffee before swallowing the rest of it and getting up to brew another cup. As she prepared the coffee maker she kept talking, a bit quicker then before just to get what she wanted to say out of the way before the noise started. "I just worry you know. Maybe I'm latching onto the obvious issue with Kat now that I can't just think of her as Stella 2.0. Which" Evaline held a hand up, "I will admit I was doing. I was wrong, but I don't really feel like apologising either."

"Maybe that's petty of me, and considering I'm in the wrong I'm not even going to deny that but Kat did nothing to defend herself from my taunts, or correct even a single one of my mistaken assumptions. I won't go so far as to say she's at fault for it, but neither of you really tried."

Lily spluttered but before she could answer the coffee machine started whirring much too loudly for any conversation and Lily felt herself starting to seethe a bit. *We DIDN'T TRY? I DID. I tried SO HARD to get you to see she wasn't just Stella. I used to tell you what we got up to daily to show you how much she was helping me. I told you how many times Kat saved my from the bullies when normally Stella WAS the bully or at least just let it happen.

The fact that you can say we didn't try IRKS ME. I'll maybe accept that Kat didn't try, but that's because she didn't want to get into a fight with you because you're my mother not because she couldn't. It was more important that your anger was directed at her and not me potentially so she just let you rant to her face.

Yet all the work I tried to put in, in the past, apparently has gone completely unnoticed?! Granted even I haven't bother too much in the last few months but I was busy with exams and then once school was over I didn't really need to justify anything or defend her overmuch... ok that's a lie, she was turning into a demon and I didn't know how to talk about it. Still don't really but it might be getting there.

You know me. I was this close to telling Mum about become a magic Kat sometime this week. I was going to do it. Maybe not the part about being magical stuck to Kat forever, but I was so very close to just telling her about it instead of using it as a bit of petty revenge. Now though. I'm not too sure. Mum seems sweet right now, even if she's embarrassing me.

She's listening though. Which seems to have been a rarity these last two years. I mean... what do I even say to the fact that she didn't even notice I'd been trying to show her Kat was nothing like Stella.* Lily, was of course forgetting how Stella was when they were younger, as she had helped with the bullies. Of course, Stella was more about redirecting them while Kat was happy to act as an enduring wall against Lily specifically and everyone else incidentally.

*So do I tell her? On the one hand, this might be the best time. She's listening to me and if her past behaviour is anything to go by I might not actually get a proper chance at that again for a long time, perhaps ever. On the other hand we've already gone over so much and I'm not quite so pleased with her anymore after being made fun of and then finding out she wasn't even listening to me!

I can put up with her being a bit invasive and trying to embarrass me. She's just asking questions out of concern and for a bit of glee, but she isn't being malicious about it. On the other hand... I wonder if she IS being malicious about how wilfully blind, she was... and maybe still is? Has she just separated 'Kat' and 'Lily's Girlfriend Kat' in her head or something?

That's not even getting into the whole 'revealing magic' thing. It's not illegal like in that one book series by JK, but I certainly don't want it to be spread further than it needs to be. Of course having your daughter turn into a Kat does seem like a good reason for 'needs to' but I just don't want to do it.

How would I even do it without Kat here? Plus I don't want Evaline going off about the fact Kat is a demon. Urgh, this is becoming such a mess. I just wanted to eat breakfast and head over to Kat's house. While I'll admit the start of this conversation was... ok no it was a bit rocky but I don't regret it at least. I feel annoyed now. And tired. And I just woke up too.*

The coffee machine finally silenced itself and Lily let out a sigh and put her head back onto the table. Perhaps not facing her problems (Evaline) in a more literal sense would help matters? Lily didn't really think so but she was willing to try it at this point.

Evaline breathed carefully over her full cup of coffee to ensure it didn't spill as she tried to cool it down. Glancing at her daughter, she wasn't really sure what to make of the current situation. She was wondering what exactly had pushed her daughter a bit too far. She could see that. That Lily had at some point already decided this conversation had become more effort than she was willing to put in and Evaline was on the fence about what she should do.

Giving up wasn't really an option. She could practically feel in the air that this was a chance she wouldn't get for some time if she didn't use it. Why that was, she couldn't say. Perhaps it was something in Lily's eyes or posture? Perhaps it was a hidden message in the half eating cereal bowl that her daughter seemed to have forgotten. Wherever the message was it felt real enough and Evaline was willing to listen.

Didn't mean she had a good answer for it in response though. Lily had clearly checked out mentally from this conversation. Dragging her daughter back into it would be hard, and likely met with no small amount of spite. So the question was how to do so. She knew her daughter well. Perhaps not well enough though.

Evaline took another sip of her coffee and found the taste to be more bitter than she was expecting, though perhaps it was simply the situation affecting the taste. Her options were certainly limited. She'd

never really had much success dragging Lily back into conversation anyway. Neither had her husband. Normally when it got to this point you just asked whatever really needed to be asked, accepted the slightly angry answer you got and moved on. Or you waited for another day.

Evaline could already tell both of those options would fail. Any 'angry' answer wouldn't be the one she needed and certainly wouldn't be one Lily actually wanted to give. Leaving it be didn't seem like a good option at the moment either so Evaline added a little more sugar to her drink and sipped it again. Still bitter.

Countless inane questions rose up into her mind. 'How are you', 'What do you want to do now school is over', 'Did you decide if you want to look for a job', 'What are you researching at the moment' were just a few of the questions in her mind that were instantly discarded. None of them were what was needed right now and there was about a fifty percent chance Lily simply wouldn't answer them.

Evaline dug through her mind, wondering what possible way she had available to her that would calm Lily down but she realised there was none. Something had upset her little girl and by the books she held dear, Lily would be staying that way till she had some alone time, or perhaps time with Kat. This was something Evaline knew. Then she got another idea. An idea she didn't like at all. But one that she felt might be her only shot.

"So, now that she's your girlfriend when is Kat coming to visit?"

Chapter 582: Chairway to Heaven

Kat flopped down on the couch mentally exhausted. Sylvie and Callisto were missing, probably up in Callisto's room doing something. She could hear Vivian at least, and knew the woman was in her office working. On what, wasn't exactly clear but Kat didn't want to focus on her hearing and figure it out. It wasn't really her business.

She'd gotten a good deal, or good enough deal, out of arbitration. It was a good chunk of money. Five whole Fireplaces, which was so much more than her debt had been it was a little ridiculous. It really hit her home how much it must have cost her to be summoned to Xiang and why things were such a mess. He overpaid so much that the ritual just sort of worked even though it really shouldn't have.

What do I want to do now? Kat didn't really have any answers for her thoughts. The couch wasn't exactly comfortable with her wings. *Wait that's something.* Kat hopped upstairs and grabbed the box with her new chair in and carried it back downstairs. When she opened the box she felt her eyes twitch slightly.

She hadn't really gotten a proper look at it at the time, but she was led to believe she'd been given a fairly standard chair. Even in miniature she could see that was a lie. Or, knowing demons, it was a 'creative application of the truth'. Shutting the box with a slight huff she set it down on the kitchen table and glanced at the couch and lounge chairs.

She had options here, but not many. In the end, Kat decided to just keep it simple and let Vivian deal with anything that looked too horrible afterward. It was her job after all, so she'd know how to work things out. What Kat ended up doing was separating the two single chairs as much as she could while leaving a path around them before putting her chair in the newly opened space.

As it expanded she could see that it tried to take up more space than was available, pause for a second then shrink ever so slightly to make sure it fit comfortably in the space it had been given. As it was, the chair fit Kat's size well enough. It didn't have a tonne of extra space like you would expect from a lounge chair but Kat was rather petite if you ignored the wings.

The chair itself was black. The exact same shade as her kimono which could not be a coincidence. Especially not when the wooden base that showed on the edges of the cushions was the same silver as the flowers on the same outfit. The back was stitched with diamond patterning spread out semi-evenly, held in place by red buttons the same colour as Kat's hair. The only thing stopping Kat from thinking this was a custom job was the time it had to have taken.

The silver wood on the edges was carved into graceful spirals with slight traces of veins that looked like those you'd find on a Succubi's wings. It was also clear that the silvery sheen was not a paint but the natural colour of the unnatural wood. The black material wasn't like anything Kat had seen before though. It didn't look like leather, but it seemed to be one big piece. How that happened without any stitching she was unsure.

Settling into it though, and letting her wings and tail phase easily into the back made her decide these questions didn't need answering. It was a great chair. More than she bargained for? Irrelevant. *I do wonder how it matches my colour scheme so well. Granted black on black isn't really what you want because you can hardly see where the outfit ends and the dress begins, but that just further proves the point something strange is going on.

I think, best guess, is that it can change colours, or have colours keyed into it. Though how the wood can change I'm not sure. Maybe the wood is the same colour as always and the rest of it was changed to match? Or they happened to have one in stock in the right colours? I suppose it really depends on how much stock they keep. Considering they shrink the chairs they can already store plenty of them with that alone.*

With that thought Kat closed her eyes and relaxed into the chair. Before she could get too comfortable though she heard a knock on the door. "I've got it!" shouted Kat so that Vivian wouldn't get up from her work. Her office was right by the door so that when clients had to visit the house, not something that happened often, they didn't have to go further than the office next to the door.

When Kat opened the door and saw that it was Lily she used her tail to keep the door propped open and grabbed the smaller girl into a big hug and lifted her up inside. "Lily!" said Kat with a smile. "I'm glad to see you here."

Lily couldn't help the massive grin that split her face. Kat hadn't been afraid to hug her in the past but she didn't seek it out overly often. The Kat she knew from just a week ago certainly wouldn't have just hugged her without any prompting. She loved this change. 'She' also had shoes on still. "Kat as much as I love this, I still need to take off my shoes" said Lily.

Kat glanced down and to the side to see that Lily was correct. Grinning sheepishly Kat lightly placed her girlfriend down on the ground outside the door and gave her a slight peck on the cheek as she bent over to take off her shoes. This caused Lily to stumble a bit as she was trying to reach her shoes and nearly fell over, only to be steadied by Kat's tail.

Lily looked down very pointedly at her shoes as she untied them because her already nearly manic grin had only grown. The level of attention and care Kat was already showing her was filling her with warmth she didn't know she was missing. A small part of her mind was warning her they were only just a knew couple. The larger part was determined to never give this feeling up. She would fight anyone and anything that tried to get between them.

Kat, unaware of Lily's inner conflict that was swiftly getting resolved just waited for Lily to get done with her shoes while she easily held the door open. Once that was done, they both made their way inside and Lily noticed the chair but didn't say anything about it. She just waited for Kat to sit down before taking her own seat... on Kat.

Lily was originally planning to sit next to Kat, but if the chair wasn't quite big enough for that, so she accepted the knew reality easily. The back of the chair was a bit low because of its reduced size but that was fine. "So what have you been up to Kat?" asked Lily mostly in an attempt to avoid talking about her own morning. When Kat gave her a slightly guilty look though, the question became real.

"Well... it went like this..." said Kat, and went on to explain the arbitration as well as the few things she'd learnt about during Arbitration as well as the course of the case itself. She made judicious use of her perfect memory. Recalling memories wholesale was much easier than looking for little details. Especially one so recent, she could simply call it up and basically get it to play everything back for her.

"You know... that all makes a strange sort of sense. Especially with the price to accuracy of runes ratio" said Lily.

"Yeah..." said Kat uncertainly as it just wasn't something she'd thought about too much yet. It did make sense, but only a certain amount. Mostly centring on why D.E.M.O.N.S could take people to and from the Hub with no issues and seemingly transported people without any complications. Perhaps it was just the call and not the response or it was more of a defence measure. "Question though. Would you rather I talked to you about it all before I left? I considered waking you up but decided against it"

Lily bit her lip at the question and let herself sink into Kat slightly. "I dunno. I don't think it'll really matter too much once we're bound together. For something like this... it's fine, but if you thought it was dangerous, I'd have wanted to know even if it would have been annoying to wake up to. Sure this was a potentially dangerous in other ways, but nothing major from what I know... certainly not as dangerous as my mother inviting you over to chat."

Kat was nodding along until the last few words. "I'm sorry what?" *nOvelnext.com*

Chapter 583: It Went a Little Somethin' Like This

"It was weird..." said Lily carefully, "My mother and I had a proper conversation with you as the subject for perhaps the first time... maybe only time in two years. It ended somewhat awkwardly or it was about to then out of nowhere she asked for you to come and chat with her at some point... and she implied anytime in the next few days would be fine"

Yeah that really does sound out of character. She never really wanted to spend time with me before.
"Why?" asked Kat

"Well... I might have mentioned a few things like the fact we're dating but I'm really not sure what triggered the request to meet you. At the start of the conversation it didn't look like she had any intention of meeting you. More like... she was planning to continue ignoring you existed for the most part if she was allowed. Then something happened and she seemed to just decide she needed to see you" explained Lily.

Kat glanced down at Lily and hugged her slightly tighter for a moment. "I'm sure your mother knows you quite well. Was there anything else that might cause it?"

Lily winced at the question and said, "I was actually thinking about explaining magic or a bit of it. I was planning to just go through with the Memphis stuff without telling her as punishment but when I saw her real sadness at the joke I made of us not being friends anymore because we're dating instead, well... I just felt a bit bad. Then she embarrassed me for a while..."

"Oh that's what it was I remember now!" Lily eye's lit up for a second before dulling drastically her body practically radiating annoyance. Kat decided to stop that spiral by giving her another kiss, this one right on the edge of her lips. The difference was as astonishing as it was immediate. It was like a lightbulb lit up behind Lily's eyes to chase away the darkness. Lily let herself bonelessly slide down so that she could bury her smile into Kat's chest. "Thanks"

"I needed that. Ok, um..." Lily breathed in the scent of her girlfriend happily to stabilise her mood a little further. Lily was very happy with the fact Kat didn't really get other smells stuck to her anymore. She always smelled the same way now and Lily was all for it. "Mother" a slight bite to the word, "was talking about how you weren't so bad after I'd mentioned a few other things, and how we really should have tried to explain earlier..."

"But I nearly lost it hearing that. I spent so much of those first few months we were friends subtly giving her hints that you weren't like Stella" Lily couldn't see it but Kat's eyes darkened slightly at the name, a promise of vengeance in them should they ever meet. "and she just didn't listen. I then tried to make things more obvious. Talking about how you dealt with the bullies, talking about all the work you did at the orphanage."

"Didn't make a lick of difference to her attitude but I tried very hard to convince her you were a good person for me. Apparently though, according to what I heard this morning, we'd never done anything to convince her that you were different from Stella at all and I just about strangled her, or slapped the coffee from her hand and left her to deal with the burns. I... I just don't understand how she could say that?"

"Now I'm not sure if I want to bother telling her about the transformation again. Oh and I AM NOT telling her about the magical binding part of it. Honestly... I probably should but I don't want to get into the fact you're a demon really. It would complicate things so much and then we'd probably have to talk to Dad as well... but I probably should. It's the right thing, even if she might not deserve it. Oh and can you promise not to tell her about the magical binding either?"

"If that's what you want" said Kat easily, "I promise not to tell her unless you ask me to. As for if we should tell her or not... I have no idea. I only care about her so far as she's your mother. I don't really respect her much as a person but I also don't care if she knows I'm a demon. If she causes too big of a ruckus then that's just how it is. I doubt she'd spread it around because you're dating me. A bit of a bitch"

yes, but from what you've told me still attempting to be a good mother. I doubt sicking the government or whatever on your daughter's significant other would be considered good manners or that you'd take it lying down."

"Yeah, until she thinks it's for my own good" grumbled Lily, "If she thought you were ensnaring me or something she might. Then again... considering she has eyes she can hopefully tell you're my type physically without any magic involved. Mentally as well of course but I'm not inclined to give Mum the benefit of the doubt there."

"It'd be her word against Vivian's though" said Kat with a slight tinge of worry, "if things really did get that far Vivian and Callisto would back us. I wouldn't be surprised if Callisto knows enough to be a semi-competent Lawyer. Actually I wouldn't be surprised if she has qualifications for it..."

"Nah I doubt she'd have those. They take a fair bit of busy work to get. Even if she was good enough to get one I doubt she'd want to waste the time" said Lily.

"Ok fair," responded Kat.

With that the pair just relaxed for a while. They didn't mind that the conversation had drifted off. In Kat's case she didn't have anything else to do and hugging Lily was a great experience that filled her with warmth. On Lily's end it was similar, though she could enjoy the experience for more reasons. She was also still a little tired and happily took the chance to take a short nap.

Eventually lunchtime came around and the two were forced to split up. It was surprisingly hard to convince themselves it was a good idea. Kat didn't need to eat lunch and had expressed as much to Callisto when she'd come downstairs and dropped Sylvie off with Vivian before Kat settled back into a doze.

Lily just didn't want to get up. Lunch smelled nice of course, but Kat smelled better, even if that smell wasn't food. She might not have been tired anymore but she wasn't going to let anyone know that even if Kat could probably tell. Still, Lily's stomach started to rumble and Kat decided her girlfriend would eat.

Of course, then the temptation was to just sit down and let Lily stay on her lap but the pair knew that way led to trouble. Sylvie would want to join in, and they wouldn't be able to deny the little girl then there would be three people in one spot and the arranging the food on the table would be an issue. Especially if they made it a habit and Kat was eating at the same time for once. In the end they settled for a bit of a compromise.

They took up seats next to each other, much closer then was normal, and Kat wrapped her tail around Lily just the once. It was long enough to do that without too much of an issue despite the distance the chairs forced them to have but the pair were quite happy with the compromise. Kat thought it the strangest though, because she could feel the act tickling part of her demonic instincts. The fact she could tell that specifically was part of what made it strange.

Why do I practically feel like purring? I've wrapped Lily up in my tail before and while I've had similar reactions before it isn't quite the same. What is causing the difference... is it because we're doing something else? That doesn't make much sense. I doubt I'd want to develop the habit of dragging Lily around attached to my tail... I have to be missing something. Should I ask? This is a little strange but I might need to know why I feel so content... and maybe slightly smug? Why do I feel smug about this?

Kat glanced around at the table and nothing was out of the ordinary. Callisto had prepared a small platter of sandwiches for everyone that looked quite nice. Nobody was acting strangely except for her as far as she could tell.

Perhaps this is something to investigate another time? We do have that other issue... "Hey Lily..." said Kat slowly, "are we going to visit your mum or not? Also do you want it to be just the two of us or drag along the everyone else to lighten the load so to speak?"

Chapter 584: Free Information for All

Lily jabbed at her food a few times as she considered the question, "I don't know. I mean... I'm pretty on the fence about the whole thing but... maybe it would help to have the others there?" Lily finished with a shrug and went back to poking at the sandwich.

"I think we should all go" said Vivian after finishing the rest of her sandwich in one bite. She was surprisingly eloquent despite the food still in her mouth. "we need everyone to make sure she knows it isn't a joke and I think we should go through with it now. You'll have to tell her eventually unless you never plan on seeing your mother again and I feel like we have time now and it could be handled somewhat well"

Lily looked over at Kat who just shrugged back, in her mind this was Lily's thing even if it was her own secrets technically. Seeing Kat wasn't going to be any help Lily looked over at Callisto who noticed and said, "I have no preference. I do not get along with my family and have no desire to ever speak with them again. A more normal person would urge you to reveal everything to them but I am not. I could not care less about never seeing my own parents ever again but I suppose you have a slightly better relationship with them than that."

Lily grimaced at that response not really sure how to take it. Callisto was normally so logical about things and while she did lay out the details fairly clearly it was such a... tainted perspective compared to her normal one it was actually quite the surprise. Shrugging it off Lily turned to Sylvie who seemed to have finished with the meal and was now just sipping lightly from a glass of water.

"I think you'll need to ask if you can forgive yourself and how long it will take for Evaline to forgive you" said Sylvie between sips.

"Um... what?" asked Lily confused.

Sylvie paused halfway between sips to look Lily dead in the eyes. "The way things are, if you tell Evaline now, you can then go off and do the transformation and hope she forgives you once it's over or some time later. If you wait till after the transformation you'll need to get her forgiveness while not being able to talk, and while cats are adorable the lack of speech will probably be a major issue.

"If things become a bigger issue and everything spirals without Lily being able to talk, even if she and Kat can understand each other or something, Evaline might not be willing to listen properly and it might be too late. If by the time Lily learns to transform and regain her ability to speak Evaline has decided it's not worth it or she can't forgive what has happened it will be up to Lily if she can live with herself afterwards.

"So, the question I think you should be asking Lily, is if you don't tell her now and the worst happens later and it becomes something you can't stop... can you live with yourself?"

Holy shit Sylvie where did that come from? I mean... you're probably right but still. She doesn't have parents so why does she know something like that? Even ignoring that why would any child be able to figure that out? She's the youngest one here and the only one that really thought of it.

Everyone was shell-shocked because of Sylvie's words and when Kat let her gaze drift to Lily the mixture of emotions on her face was especially potent. There was plenty of shame, confusion and determination mixed with smatterings of other feelings that Kat wasn't really able to parse out. She knew Lily extremely well but it was simply too much. "I guess we're telling her then" whispered Lily.

Kat heard it loud and clear but the others could get the gist of what was being said without too much trouble. There were only two answers really and the look on Lily's face was that of resigned acceptance. "I'm also not really hungry anymore" said Lily as she pushed away a mostly eaten sandwich piece. It was her third one at the very least but it wasn't exactly a full meal.

Vivian looked like she wanted to say something but when Callisto placed a light hand on her, she stopped whatever she was going to say and nodded instead. Sylvie, seemingly unaffected by the mode finished off her water before nodding to everyone. Taking that as a queue Vivian sped through another two sandwich slices as fast as she could while Kat and Callisto finished off their drinks. With that, most of the food was actually eaten though Kat wasn't sure exactly when that happened.

With everyone done they gathered themselves and started to head over to Lily's though the girl in question paused at the front door. "Are you going to change?" asked Lily with a look at Callisto who glanced down at the maid uniform she always wore. It still wasn't historically accurate but it was mostly accurate to popular perception with a few addons for her convenience. How she kept the white gloves clean was a secret many wondered about to this day.

"Why? I wear this all the time" said Callisto easily.

Lily opened her mouth to retort to that but stopped after realising that with the reveal of magic the last thing her mother was going to complain about was inappropriate attire especially on someone who wasn't Kat. As she left the door, the demon in residence had an idea, "Shall I just lift everyone over the fence? It'd save us walking around."

"That's a great idea" said Vivian taking the lead and headed back into the house, now with her shoes in hand. The group walked to the backyard together and got to the fence. Kat considered just dropping people over but decided to have a bit of fun. First Kat set Sylvie on her shoulder, held in place by the matching hand and took a light jump over the fence, making sure to use a bit of extra effort because it was Earth.

Easily clearing the fence, Kat depositing Sylvie down before hopping back over under her own power. Lily went next because Kat could just grab her into a bridal carry without worry. Lily blushed a bit at the hold but didn't have too much time to worry over it when Kat hopped her over the fence as well. Once Lily was safely deposited next to Sylvie Kat leapt the fence again and said, "So, how do you want me to take you both? Just lifting you up by the armpits might not be the safest..."

"However you want is fine" said Vivian, and with a shrug from Kat, the demon just pulled Vivian into a bridal carry as well and hopped her over the fence before coming back.

"I have an idea I want to test if you don't mind?" said Callisto

"Sure what were you thinking?" asked Kat

"I'm curious about if I could sit on your outstretched arm. You should be strong enough for it, it'll just come down to me," explained Callisto demonstrating the arm position with elbow down," responded Callisto.

Kat shrugged and bent down a bit and held out her arm. Callisto seated herself in the crook and Kat found the weight was still negligible even when keeping her arm outstretched as Callisto requested. Taking a moment to check her balance Kat found she could do it pretty much automatically. Accepting that for what it was, Kat kicked off the ground, slightly more on the left side where Callisto was placed, and kept herself level using her wings to make it over.

At the height of the jump she noticed that Callisto was rising a bit above her so she flared her wings to catch Callisto on the way down so they didn't hit the ground too hard. Callisto did sway slightly but she kept her balance well enough for Kat to make it to the ground and for her to slide off. "Hmm, not necessarily recommended I do not think. It requires a level of balance and co-ordination during the ride that a human might not be capable of keeping up with consistently. For such a short trip it was fine but I would not recommend it," noted Callisto.

Lily silently thanked Callisto with a look knowing that the maid had requested the strange method of transportation to give her a few seconds to compose herself for the confrontation that was about to happen. That's how Lily was going to take it, and to the surprise of some she would be correct in it. Still, the backyard was no polite way to enter a house so they made their way around to the front as carefully as they could so as not to spoil the surprise. When they got to the front door Lily sucked in a deep breath before pushing it open...

Chapter 585: Magic is Real and the Delusions are...

"Hi Mum I'm home," said Lily as she kicked off her shoes and stepped into the room.

Evaline was watching something on TV from the sounds of it and as Kat stepped in she saw the woman in question leaning backwards and saying, "Hell- Oh, I see you have guests. One moment and we can sit in the kitchen I suppose."

Evaline quickly turned off the television and made her way over towards the kitchen. Unlike Vivian's much larger two-story house, the lounge room for Lily was rather small. It was attached to the kitchen and dining area and only had the one couch that while enough for a family of three like Lily's to squeeze onto wasn't really appropriate for guests to sit on, not when there was so many. Lily's family did have a large dining table though. It sat six people normally and could be extended to fit another four if needed.

Evaline took a seat at the head of the table and looked out over the group as they filed in. Callisto and Vivian taking the back seats forcing Lily to choose to either sit opposite her mother or next to her. Lily grimaced at the sight and was annoyed she wouldn't be able to sit next to Kat because of it. Still, she took the next best thing which was one of the two front seats where Kat took the other one near

Evaline. This meant Sylvie sat at the other end of the table and it was somewhat funny to look at in Kat's mind, as if Evaline and Sylvie were the two heads of the respective houses. Shame it started make more sense the longer Kat thought about it.

As this was happening, Evaline couldn't help but glance between Callisto and Kat, mostly focusing on Kat. The made outfit was weird of course but that really did pale in comparison to demonic features. Seeing Lily starting to panic a little Kat moved her tail so that it snaked under the table and rested lightly next to Lily who instantly snatched it up in her hand to help calm herself down. "Well?" asked Evaline, "What's this all about" though she was facing Lily her eyes were locked on Kat.

"Um... so... eh... I was going? to mention it this morning but... you also kinda annoyed me a bit so I didn't but... right... well... magic is real?" managed Lily.

Evaline glanced over at Kat then back to her daughter. "Right... but why is that one wearing a maid outfit?"

Lily jerked backwards as if struck. "Are you... um... is that really your first question?"

"Yes" said Evaline firmly. "I'm currently choosing to ignore all evidence magic is real for the moment while I desperately try to process the fact that my daughter is trying to date what looks like an actual demon and that magic is real. So, Callisto I believe, what's with the maid outfit?"

"Well I am Vivian's made so what else would I wear?" asked Callisto with the fakest expression of innocence, she'd ever seen. Perhaps the fakest expression she'd ever seen in general.

"Callisto! I have told you a hundred times you are not my mind. Stop telling people that!" said Vivian with slightly mocking horror.

"But I cook, I clean, I watch the house when you are out. I have my own room for any projects I wish to pursue when not waiting for orders or cleaning, you have not cooked since I moved in except for that one time you tried and nearly blew up the kitchen, and I occasionally do the paperwork involving the bills. Does that not make me your personal maid or at least assistant?" asked Callisto with the same fake innocence.

"You know damned well I'd let you live there for free and that you clean so often that I've never so much as seen a speck of dust let alone needed to clean up the place. You tend to dust everything when I'm asleep. MANUALLY. Instead of using a damned vacuum cleaning like a normal person" said Vivian.

"I do use the vacuum. Occasionally" said Callisto.

Vivian just sighed and looked over at Evaline as if to say, 'you see what I have to deal with?' but Evaline was perhaps more confused and just as much in denial as she was at the stat of the conversation.

"Right," Evaline said hesitantly, "I suppose that addresses the maid in the room." Evaline glanced quickly at Kat once more, "Yeah... I'm not ready to deal with that yet. Though... let's say that I am. What kind of demon IS Kat? And has she always been one?"

Lily looked desperately at Kat as if praying for her to answer, seeing this Kat just nodded and looked over at Evaline and said, "The first part is easy, I'm a Succubus, but not a normal one. The second question is a bit harder to answer. I've certainly always had at least some demon blood in me otherwise I wouldn't have the well... the wings and stuff,

"But, other things are a little less clear. Like... demons can only be demons if they can use Demonic Energy. It's the demon equivalent of Mana, which is also real, and so is Qi if you know what that is. They're both different. Anyway, the to be a demon, you must be able to use Demonic Energy otherwise you just aren't one.

"However I know younger demons can't really control it. I'm not sure if the 'rules' for being a demon is just that Demonic Energy can't corrupt you, or if you need to actively use it. As I said though younger demons can't even full blooded ones, so I'm not sure when exactly along the timeline I count as a real demon.

"It is worth mentioning though, that I'm considered a Nondem because my demonic features didn't come in until later and I don't have a demon as either one of my parents. They were both human as far as I know and as far as everyone else knows. What this means... honestly I don't really know"

"How can you be a Succubus if you're asexual?" asked Evaline, "And have you done anything to my daughter to ensnare her?"

"No" said Kat. "Also it's worth mentioning I am now incapable of lying. Which now that I think about it, is a point towards me only becoming a demon recently because I remember the first day that I could no longer lie. It was the day I met Vivian actually. Um... right anyway..."

"It will probably also put your mind at ease that because I'm asexual I can't get pheromones to attract people because they work based on what you like. So a straight Succubus would have it work on most men, a gay one would have it work on women, and because I'm asexual even if I did get them it wouldn't do anything to Lily because I'm not attracted to anyone that way"

"Hmmm... how do I know about the lying business?" asked Evaline curiously.

Kat just shrugged and said, "I don't really know how to prove it. It's fairly noticeable because I'll get cut off in the middle of something but I suppose I could be faking it if I knew enough about what it's supposed to look like. For example I can't say that the sky is pink without context like this. Watch I'll try. Evaline, did you know the sky is p-"

Kat coughed lightly and cleared her throat after the answer got stuck in her mouth. Evaline didn't seem to be willing to just accept that as the answer though. "Why now?" asked Evaline. "Sure you can say it's because these pair are dating now, but I doubt it. Why am I just now being told about magic?"

Everyone in the room looked toward Lily who groaned. "Right... um... well... so Mum you know how magic is something I've always wanted?"

"I don't like where this is going but yes, I do. You never really grew out of it even when you said you had. It was something you quietly hoped for always. Why...?" asked Evaline with concern lacing her voice.

"Right well... um... Kat did some favours to some... thing? I guess? That's fairly powerful in demon society and she got two favours in return. She can use them for pretty much anything and well... one of those things is to turn me into another race, one that CAN use mana if I want." Said Lily.

"Right... I'm not even going to pretend that makes sense. However, because I can see everyone taking this seriously I'll return the favour and try. For now. I don't necessarily believe you Lily... not that I think

you'd lie about this but... give me some time. And don't give me proof any more than you already have. I want to wallow in my delusions a little longer once everyone leaves for the day"

Chapter 586: Way Down Deep Inside I've Got a Dream

"So, that's it?" said Lily shocked, "Magic is real, thanks for telling me. Now you can all leave?"

Evaline frowned at her daughter's insinuations and let the displeasure she now had show in her body language before saying, "I'm not sure you appreciate how difficult this is for me. You're not the only one who dreamed of magic once upon a time. Now though, not only do I found out that it's real, but that I probably won't ever interact with it because from the way you phrased things those favours of Kat's are rare and I wouldn't want to ask for one anyway. I might not like admitting it but I'm getting older Lily and I shouldn't be chasing after dreams anymore. To find out one of my more fantastical ones was actually possible is a bit of a hard pill to swallow"

"Oh" said Lily.

"Oh indeed" said Evaline in a matching tone of voice letting you hear the family resemblance easily. "I'm not sure that you can imagine what this is like for me. To have buried forever the idea that anything magical could happen to me. The closest thing I assumed I'd ever get was the day I got married to your father or the first time I held you in my arms. While they are a special kind of magic they aren't MAGIC and I took longer than I should have to accept that as a young adult.

"I'm glad you told me of course, but this is like twisting the knife and salting the wounds in many ways." Evaline sucked in a deep breath. "Dammit fine. Lily I want to know why you need to transform at all, why not just learn spells? What's the big issue?"

Lily didn't exactly know what to say. She was reeling from the fact her rather no-nonsense mother was admitting she'd dreamed of being a witch when she was younger. A small part of her was hurt because Evaline had tried convincing her to give it up in the past and she'd stopped talking about it because of it. That small part was also cheering because magic was real and she she'd now one upped her mother. The rest of her though was rather on the fence about it all.

Seeing that Lily wasn't in any shape Kat took it upon herself to bring it up instead. "I'll answer what I can then. So, there are multiple universes and dimensions. Those are different things by the way, and each dimension has rules regarding the higher energy in it. Our dimension, which I believe is made up of only one universe, actually supresses all kinds of higher energy. I'm only able to summon up small amounts of demonic energy and use my powers and much greater cost because demonic energy always finds a way in unlike mana and qi.

"I'm a lot weaker on Earth though, and most of the remaining strength comes from the fact that those abilities use demonic energy internally. Well that and my own natural toughness now. A basic knife swung at human strength would cut through skin but probably not much muscle. Now, the reason that Lily wants to change race... well she has a few but one of the big ones is that humans don't always have affinities for magic and...

"Well Earth has no mana on it. She has no way to test for it to see if she had any, and if she did it's highly likely she'd only have the one affinity. By changing race she can get three, and maybe extra if she had any naturally, depending on if they carry over. It ah... alsomaybeforlifespan reasons..."

"Lifespan reasons?" Evaline asked immediately, having spent more than enough time around a daughter who was prone to avoiding speaking about things properly in the same way.

Kat sighed. "I'm functionally immortal already more or less. Demons live a long time but my regeneration makes it even worse. Normally I'd need to be a bit stronger to live forever but I'm almost at that point and will certainly be at that point once I get a bit stronger."

"Huh. Good thing immortality was never one of my dreams," muttered Evaline under her breath before speaking up "Now, the knew question I have is... what's the point here? Obviously the lifespan issue plays a big part but nothing you've told me would let Lily use magic here on Earth."

"Ah" said Kat who now looked at Lily hoping for some help. She would fine none... until Sylvie brought attention to herself.

With a light tap on the table all eyes turned to the younger member of the discussion. "Lily wishes to accompany Kat on her tasks. She is allowed to have one person filling that role" not mentioning that person had to be bound to her in some way while she was still Rank 2, "and Lily is using it as a chance to help Kat and learn to use magic. It's unclear how much magic she can use back here on Earth. I'm not sure how magicians gather mana but we know Kat's demonic energy has to come from inside her because of context clues."

What context clues? As if summoned by the question Kat found a bunch of little bits and pieces flying around her mind granting her the answer. Normally it would have been harder to figure out on the fly but Kat had been considering this in the background for a while, Sylvie just brought the information forward.

Ah of course. Demonic energy corrupts the environment so if I had to draw it into me the environment would be corrupted already. It's also why demons stay on the Hub because we leak demonic energy if we aren't using it all. Though... I was told releasing it into the air wasn't dangerous and that I should keep up with it so it doesn't partially slow me down. Is it because there's only one of me in town? Aw well.

Evaline let her fingers tap the table to bleed off some of the nervous energy she was building up. The idea of letting them go now without getting any proof of magic was too much. As much as she wanted to continue to pretend otherwise, they had too much detail and didn't seem to be lying in the slightest. "Fine. What proof of magic can you give me?"

Everyone turned to Kat who shrugged and held her hands cupped together and across the table before summoning a small bit of demonic fire in her hands. The tug on her reserves was more than she wanted because of the need to force the flame out into the world. She could still keep it up for a considerable amount of time of course, but it wasn't comfortable. It was like trying to raise your arms above your head while keeping half a dozen shopping bags in your hands.

Evaline reached out for it without really thinking and Kat abused her demonic speed to pull her hands away before dismissing the flame. "Um... you really shouldn't do that. My fire won't burn you it will freeze you... it also likes to cling to things. Just a touch and I wouldn't be surprised if you lost a finger."

"That hardly seems safe" said Evaline with furrowed brows. "How do you plan to use it with Lily around if it's so hard to control"

Kat winced at that not wanting to answer but found she felt Evaline was just worrying about Lily, something Kat couldn't find fault in. "Well... I can stop my flames from hurting people... but it's not an exact science. It seems to be more about my perception of the person. So Lily would never be burnt by them but... I don't exactly like you?"

Evaline pursed her lips, finger tapping speeding up by about half again what it was before saying, "I'm not sure if I want to ask for proof it won't hurt Lily or not. I'm not sure I'd ever forgive myself for asking or you for accepting if I did... but I know I would feel a lot better if something like that could be confirmed."

"How about some water first?" asked Katt

"Water?" asked Evaline confused even as Lily used the chance to get up so that nobody could see her face when it went through all her emotions before letting out a big sigh.

"Yes, you can see my freezing the water in the cup. Oh and Lily would still be affected by the cold my flame generates on other things. It's just the flame itself that can't hurt her." Said Kat.

Evaline didn't say anything else. She just watched her daughter fill up a cup of water in the sink and then place it on the table. Kat reached out a loan finger and set fire to it before pushing it into the water. The effect was instantaneous. The first started spreading and the water froze as it branched out. The fire didn't get far before it seemed to hit some limit from Kat but the ice kept spreading. Lily took this chance to make a point though and pulled Kat's hand out and smothered the fire with her own. Of course, the flames just bent around the finger and moved back a bit, but she wasn't hurt.

Chapter 587: Glimpses of Heaven... or is it Hell?

"Well. Thank you for that horrifying demonstration," said Evaline taking a side glance over at her daughter. Lily wrapped her hand around Kat's to find the determination to glance right back and show that she was serious about her action, and it wasn't something she'd done on a whim. Seeing this glance Evaline set her lips into a line and continued, "but I think it would be best if you left for now. I have some things to think about."

Everyone glanced around the table unsure looks on their faces. Evaline knew about magic now sure, but she didn't really know about the choices Lily was making. Lily knew that she would be wanting to get the process started sooner rather than later to get it over with and perhaps to start practicing. Still, seeing everyone ensure as to how to respond Lily decided to take charge and stood up.

Evaline's face soured at the action but didn't say anything just yet. She let them all make confused glances and follow Lily to the door before saying. "Lily, I'd like you to stay behind. I have a few more things to discuss just with you."

Lily frowned at the ground not wanting to scowl directly at her mother and certainly not anyone else nearby. When Kat pulled her face up carefully by the chin though she was already smiling by the time their eyes met. When Kat kissed her that smile felt like it was glued to her face. She was still reeling from the sensation of Kat's soft lips and the slight taste she had yet to identify but was distinctly Kat. "You'll be fine Lily. You can come over as soon as you finish with your Mum. Besides, if things get bad and you yell enough I'll be able to hear you" said Kat though Lily hadn't quite recovered enough to pay proper attention to the words.

So she just nodded with a smile on her face and turned slowly to let her mother see her face, which was flushed and gave a good indication of the feelings she was experiencing at the moment. She found it was good payback for the moment. Kat gave one last pat on her arm before walking out the door.

I wish they'd stay. Lily resisted the urge to lick her lips as she turned back and watch Kat leave, shamelessly staring at her legs as she walked away and taking a few glances at her ass. Lily knew what she liked, especially on Kat and now that it was out there in the world... well she still felt shame. Considerable amounts of it for what she was doing. Her burning desire to engrave every inch of Kat's mind into her impressive memory was much much stronger though.

When Kat started to wrap her tail around one leg and squeeze slightly Lily wondered if her girlfriend was trying to kill her. However, double she glanced at the others for a second and saw Vivian trying not to laugh and was hit by the realisation that... Kat didn't realise what she was doing.

I don't know how I'm supposed to feel about that. I mean I know I feel really turned on at the moment, but the fact Kat's not even trying... I have such mixed feelings about that part. I wonder if she even knows that her tail moved at all? It seems to have a mind of its own a lot of the time... and I wonder if this is part of it. Shit. Now I have to go have a serious conversation with my mother while I'm horny. This is... dammit I can't say I regret the staring but I do wish I had time for a cold shower first.

Tearing her eyes away from Kat she closed the door. Much slower than needed, but nobody was going to call her out on it. Well, Evaline still might be that would likely be less painful than whatever else she planned to confront Lily about, or so she thought, so Lily considered it an easy risk to take. Marching back towards Evaline like she was heading for execution she nearly sat down, but decided to keep walking and get a fresh glass of water.

Proving Kat couldn't hurt her with demonic fire was one thing, trying to drink that water though was a bit of a risk and she wasn't willing to push those limits before she became a Memphis and no longer needed to worry about it.

"Well I see she's already ensnared you rather well" said Evaline with slight bitterness in her voice.

"MUM!" Growled Lily scandalised, "I've been smitten with her for years! You know this. You saw this. You worried she was going to be another Stella. She ISN'T. Why are you now so annoyed with this?"

"Well I might have liked to know your girlfriend was an ACTUAL DEMON LILY. How can I be sure she hasn't done anything to you," hissed Evaline in response.

"Mum..." whispered Lily shocked. "I... I don't really know why you think she'd need to if I'm completely honest" Evaline gave her daughter a scandalised look. "Oh don't you look at me like that. You know I have a type and it's hot red heads with legs to die for. Stella doesn't have half the beauty covered in professionally done makeup as Kat does with no effort at all.

"Even if I believed for a second Kat might have done something. Which I don't by the way. In case that isn't more than clear. What difference would it make really? She is the most beautiful girl I've ever seen. She's so nice and caring and puts so many others before herself. Her adopted sister Sylvie is adorable and I just want to keep her safe like Kat. Then she just... gives away the ability for me to practice magic because I'm her friend.

"For all that alone I'd do whatever she asked of me. Mum...

"Mum look. If she did use anything to snag me, it would be such a complete waste. She doesn't need any fancy succubus magic to have my heart because I gave it away LONG before now. The fact that it keeps getting better means I probably have no chance to ever reclaim it. She's the one for me Mum and I don't understand why the fact that she's a demon would change anything. She barely acts any different!"

Evaline growled in response and got up to have a drink. Angry at her daughter. Angry at herself. She didn't want to admit how true the words Lily spoke were. She knew her daughter had a crush on the red head. She knew that with the same certainty she knew the sun was going to rise in the morning. Even if she believed Kat actually was using powers to ensnare Lily... she knew her daughter was right. If Kat was bothering with any magic at this point it was massive overkill.

"How long has she been a demon" asked Evaline softly but still with a hint of tension.

"Um..." Lily thought on it. It was a little hard because thinking too specifically on when Kat's appearance changed just gave her flashes of Kat walking away again with her tail... Lily shook her head. While she didn't really want to dismiss the image she was supposed to be talking to her mother. "Um... like... a bit before school ended?"

"You think it happened then?" tested Evaline

"I KNOW it happened then. She came straight to me when she woke up one morning with a tail. Oh god... I... shit" Lily couldn't help but stop talking to drool a little as she remembered Kat showing off her tail and how it connected to her back. *How I managed to avoid drooling at that sight I'll never know. I got an eyeful back then.* "I can't believe she didn't notice me staring at her ass when that happened. She was pretty panicked though... um never mind. The point is Mum... I watched the transition happen."

"Could it have been faked?" asked Evaline seriously.

Lily glared at her mother in response to the question. A larger and larger part wanted to tell her mum to fuck off, but that wasn't exactly appropriate but she actually had an answer for this one. "I watched her balance get completely shot is why. Having a tail and a new set of instincts involving it were just one thing. The fact it completely changed her centre of mass another. Then she started wrapping it around her stomach to hide at school and it got worse because her tail was jerking this way and that to try and balance her despite being wrapped up. It was a tough week that one"

Evaline tried not to look like she'd swallowed a lemon but it was a good answer, one that she couldn't confirm of course, but did sound like something her daughter would notice. She certainly spent enough time staring at Kat. Unknowingly Evaline mirrored her daughter as she wondered how Kat had never noticed Lily staring at her ass all the time.

Chapter 588: The Crushing Weight of a Single Truth

As the silence between mother and daughter continued the tension in the room rose unchecked. For Lily, the whole conversation was rather pointless. She KNEW with one hundred percent certainty that Kat wasn't manipulating her. Not only was the taller girl horrible at manipulating things, it was also out of character for her to even bother trying as well as completely useless because Lily knew she'd do

basically anything for Kat as it was. Sure Kat would do the same thing but that wasn't the argument at the moment.

On Evaline's side she was trying to reconcile all this new information. Despite recently trying to repair her opinion of Kat she had then been thrown a curveball in the form of real magic before getting introduced to her daughter's Succubus girlfriend. And that just answered so many questions in Evaline's mind. Such as why Kat looked similar to Stella (she doesn't) and why they behaved similarly (they don't) alongside how quickly Lily and Kat became friends (it took weeks of effort on Kat's part and nervousness on Lily's).

Or even if that was all a coincidence (despite the fact none of her assumptions were true anyway) Evaline was willing to believe that Kat had ulterior motives for her daughter. Perhaps she was after Lily's soul (which isn't even something demons trade in anymore because they're basically useless) or was trying to get sexual favours. She was a Succubus after all (ignoring Kat's asexuality of course).

On the other hand though... her daughter was clearly annoyed with her assumptions and had presented reasonable counterpoints to the all. What sort of mother would she be if she didn't at least listen to her daughter... then again... if she was being influenced by Kat would she even know? So the two sat in silence. Evaline warring with her daughter's autonomy and safety and trying to judge how likely it was Kat could be influencing her. It wasn't getting very far.

Two years of dislike wasn't a short time and having so thoroughly soured her opinion of Kat it was hard for her to properly imagine a world in which Kat wasn't the bad guy she'd been in Evaline's mind. All the recent evidence said she was wrong though. The question for Evaline was... how much of that was genuine.

Eventually it got too much for Lily. She still had the lingering annoyance from the initial conversation with Evaline and the fact she wasn't quite willing to take Lily's word on a few things. That combined with her more recent round of questioning had her barking out, "Any further accusations to level at my girlfriend?"

"Now don't get defence here Lily-" started Evaline.

"No Mum!" said Lily sternly, "Don't try and say I'm being unreasonably defensive. Not only is Kat now my girlfriend but before that she was my best friend. MY ONLY friend for TWO YEARS MUM. I've defended her often but you hardly noticed that. I used to tell you all the little ways she differed from Stella but you ignored those two.

"Eventually I just gave up trying to convince. Clearly it wasn't working, and that's fine. I understand that you have concerns. The whole thing with Stella was horrible for me. The fact that I can talk about it calmly" well she was pretty annoyed at the moment, but not about Stella, "is a miracle quite frankly. Did you know, despite that I still had a few nightmares with Kat in Stella's place? Her rejecting me the same way?

"That was until somewhere around the beginning of second semester this year. I had that nightmare one last time before another version of Kat came in and punched the Stella version of herself in the face and say 'I hate bullies' and I never had that nightmare again. So look. It's not that I don't understand

your worry mum. Occasionally. When I was feeling sad and alone and I wasn't sleeping properly... I had those worries as well. I saw that scene play out.

"Sure it might seem silly now because I asked her out despite my fears and I she actually said yes, so if I was ever going to have that nightmare again I doubt that's possible now. Still, I just... Kat is a different person. A better person." Lily also mumbled, "a more attractive person" before returning to full volume, "and I know she'd do anything for me. Just as I would her.

"I just..." Lily took in a deep breath to calm herself. She'd been raising her voice continually except for that one mumbled sentence and at some point she'd stood up. When that happened she wasn't sure but Lily let herself relax into the chair and try and breathe out some of her tension. "Ok. I... I just... I feel very strongly about this Mum.

"I'm trying to share the secrets I've had for a while. Now that Kat's going out with me, I had the confidence to just tell you. Sure, it took a bit of a push from the others as well, mostly Sylvie, but I doubt the Lily of last week could have told you about magic. Did you know I planned to just tell you I'd be away for a week and then come back with a new body?

"I thought that would be a bit of payback. And, if you didn't recognise your daughter. Well... it depends how spiteful I was feeling at those moments. I'd either be crushed, or I'd laugh and say 'maybe you're more right than you know'. Of course, that would have been really mean to you but... I didn't know how to talk about magic and I didn't want to just reveal the fact Kat was a demon to you."

Lily sucked in more air as she rested both hands on the table, clenched together in a large fist. She let her weight rest on them as the tension tried to build back up for a second before she let it all go. Too much drained out of her, and the darkness came in. Anger was drenched by a clinging sadness that racked her frame when she tried to breathe.

Biting back tears Lily managed to get a few more words out. "Look. I'm sorry for kinda yelling, and I'm sorry that apparently we can't have a conversation without someone getting angry but. Mum... Kat has probably been the most important thing in my life for a long time. Now that she's my girlfriend I can admit it to myself and to others. That might not be the best thing, but now I also have a chance for magic. Magic Mum.

"Sure, that's still Kat's doing, but I have something else to care about. Something else to drive me forward. And then you just... you decided you didn't want to process the fact magic was real so that part of the conversation was difficult, and you found out Kat was a demon and then started throwing all sorts of accusations."

Lily stopped there as she felt tears started to leak from her eyes. Her words towards the end were starting to waver anyway and she didn't really know what else to say. Evaline let out a long sigh as she saw her daughter crying. Taking slow careful steps she moved towards the chair next to Lily as she felt her own pang of sadness doubled by the fact that Lily was never one for crocodile tears. When she sat down and Lily didn't even react to her presence Evaline sighed again before ever so slowly wrapping her daughter in a hug.

Lily made a garbled choking sound and leant into the hug as much as she could. "You know I love you Lily. I just don't want you to get hurt. I've heard so many bad things

ngs about demons and if magic is real, those stories must have some truth to it. I just worry about you getting hurt."

Lily bit back a retort to think it over more. Sadly, her instinctual answer seemed to be right, so with shaking breaths she said. "Mum. I mean this in the nicest way possible, and I do love you... but the person hearting me the most at the moment is you."

Evaline winced and tightened the hold she had on Lily. The words hit her worse than any amount of physical violence possibly could. No tantrum could compare to the pain of hearing those words... and knowing they were the truth. Evaline released her own shuddering breath as tears started to well up in her eyes. She knew Lily hadn't said that just to get back at her, and the pain was all the greater because of it. She could see the pain Lily had already endured from her words and the knife twisted deeper again.

"I'm sorry" whispered Evaline. To herself. To Lily. To Kat. To the world. The weight of her mistake dropping on her shoulders like a tonne of bricks.

Chapter 589: Lacking Belief but Championing Trust

The silence this time was much more solemn and punctuated by small sounds of sniffing while tears fell on each other. Lily gripped her mother just as tightly as Evaline gripped her and nothing more needed to be said. Both of them could feel themselves relaxing into the hug as time went on and a lot of the issues that had come up today suddenly seemed so much smaller to each of them. Sure, they were still important but they were family, and that was important as well.

Time passed calmly but quickly and before they knew it a full thirty minutes passed before they started to break apart. It wasn't because they wanted to, but because they hadn't picked the best position for this. Lily was leaning heavily into Evaline's side and pulling on that arm causing Evaline's shoulders to hurt. On Lily's end, the tight hold Evaline had on her was fine... but the rings on her fingers were starting to dig into her skin and causing a bit of pain.

By some unspoken agreement they separated slowly and looked at each other's eyes and let out a synchronised sigh. "I'm sorry" said Evaline softly.

"I'm sorry as well" said Lily, then she started to grin, "perhaps not as sorry, but I'm grateful as well. Thanks for worrying about me"

Evaline nodded at the answer and said, "Well, now that we've calmed down... I suppose I should ask you for the details on this transformation now. Why are you doing it and what will it do for you? Don't think I missed the fact you kept pushing me to ask about it. I just... I didn't really want to confront it properly I suppose. I didn't want to know WHY you would or the details, because having those details would make it more real.

"Even if a large part of me still doesn't want to believe in magic, I trust you enough to just sort of go along with things for now and pretend that it does for your sake." Lily went to interrupt but Evaline held up a hand, "Yes Lily, I can see that the signs are pointing to magic being real, and that I shouldn't have to just pretend I'm going along with it but I have f-" Evaline let out a light cough, "I have a lifetime of signs pointing to it not existing so how do I reconcile that?"

"By realising that magic doesn't exist in this dimension but it does in others?" offered Lily uncertainly.

"Don't get smart with me young lady," said Evaline without any bite to the words, "you're dating a demon. That's plenty magical enough for me. Not to mention what you're planning to do to yourself. So tell me. Lay it all out please. Why is this happening and what will it do? The whole story please. Where did it start?"

Lily swallowed as she looked over her memories and tried to think exactly how things had worked out the way they had. It took her a few moments to get her thoughts in order. It felt like so much time had passed, and the late nights looking over the list hadn't helped any. "Right um... so I guess it all started after Kat did that big favour and got two in return. We found out they can be used for pretty much ANYTHING. Like... Kat could probably ask for a country or maybe even a planet and just... get one.

"These favours are serious business Mum. When I say she can use them for basically anything, I really do mean ANYTHING. If it's within their power, which is considerable, it can be done with one of just two tokens she had. Instead of using it for herself though, Kat pretty quickly decided that I'd get one and Sylvie would get the other so that we could get magic and come with her on adventures. It wasn't even a question in her mind.

"Once that was established, I started looking into what options I had for magic and pretty quickly found out that changing my species or race was the best way to go about it. It would likely increase whatever mana capacity I have now, if I even have one, add additional affinities and likely just make me stronger all around. Now a bit later I'd realise I needed to look into specific features, but at the beginning the world was my oyster."

"Why is changing your race the better option?" asked Evaline curiously, "You said you could get it done in other ways but the race change seems to be so much better."

Lily shrugged, "That's because it is? I mean, you can't do it too often or if you're too old. It's... well some race changes like becoming a vampire aren't too bad but the major factor is how strong and how malleable your soul is. Older people have stronger souls but also more set in their ways. They couldn't handle the change without shattering. Also if you do it too often the soul might just give up so it's not super safe to do multiple times. This isn't a casual thing. You should treat the change as permanent because not everyone can survive multiple changes.

"Also, the reason it seems better is because it is as far as I can tell. Remember I'm using a favour to do this. It's not limited to the value of what I want, I get ONE thing and that thing can be basically anything. The reason you get so much from a race change is if you pick the right one, you can do a bunch of things at once...

"Hmm, how would I explain it. So... I don't have a tonne of information... but Oh I know! So, think of it this way. I can claim any one thing, so I could either pick say... one book that I liked, or I could ask for the latest collection of Encyclopedia Britannica and both of those would cost one favour. Even though technically I get a bunch of books with the second option, I'm only getting one collection. In this instance... instead of fixing one thing about me... I'm getting a whole new body"

Evaline frowned at the language used at the end and responded with, "Lily there is nothing wrong with you. You don't need... fixing..."

Lily grimaced at the retort knowing her mother meant well. *But I AM broken. Well, ok that sounds a lot worse then it actually is... but compared to Kat I might as well be a fragile little doll or a bug... though that might be a bit harsh... the thing is though... the scale we exist at is just so different. Even if I loved Kat all of my life before dying, and Kat stayed true to me for another century, that wouldn't account for even half of her lifetime. Heck, if she's careful it wouldn't even be a percentage of her lifetime in the end.

That's not even getting into the fact that I don't have magic. Something that I really do feel counts as being broken. Higher energy seems like it opens so many doors. It's like not having any legs or not being able to speak. It's a serious disability for me if I ever plan to stay around Kat for extended periods of time.*

In the end Lily sighed and said, "Look Mum... I know what you mean, and I don't really think that badly of myself but... if I stayed human... Mum... Kat is almost immortal already. She mentioned that earlier today remember? Even if we stayed together my whole life... that wouldn't be long for Kat."

"Just..." Evaline shook her head and continued, "Let's just move on. I don't like the idea this is one of your main reasons for it, but at the very least you aren't going to be bound to her forever if you do I suppose. Just living longer is fine"

Lily used the entirety of her willpower not to react to that statement. It was true, she didn't have to be bound to Kat forever, she just had to be bound to A demon forever... and she was certainly going to pick Kat. Despite the new understanding she was NOT going to be mentioning that part now, or possibly ever. She only had to lie about it for a hundred years or so. Evaline did say she didn't want to live forever after all...

"Right then" said Evaline shaking her head a bit, "what race did you pick in the end? I'm sure you spent much too long looking over your options and while I have no doubt quite a few of them were interesting for you, I don't know enough about magic and it just isn't all that important to me."

"I picked a race called a Memphis," said Lily

"What the hell is a Memphis?" asked Evaline

"Exactly" said Lily.

Evaline's hard stare because she didn't understand the joke just caused Lily to grin knowing this had to happen. Evaline couldn't know they were actually made in the real world equivalent after all.

Chapter 590: Only the Important Questions come to Mind

Eventually Lily crumbled under the unimpressed stare. "Ok fine. So... I'm not just picking Memphis, I'm picking a Memphis beast person."

"What's the difference?" asked Evaline instantly.

Lily gave her mother a wry grin. *I'm surprised she's suddenly taking such an interest. I was about to explain that but... well at least she's listening. Though is interrupting to ask for information you were going to hand out anyway listening? Aw well. I'll deal with it.* "So, a beast person is a catch all term for humanoids with some animal heritage.

"They're either born a beast person, or they start out as an animal, reach a high enough level of power to take a humanoid shape and then have kids. Normally with humans but sometimes with other races. Human is just the most standard because they are one of the most compatible of the humanoid races. Elves for example are really finicky. You can have half elves, but the other half is practically always human. It's too hard for the child otherwise.

"Anyway, it doesn't matter because the beast half is more than just a cosmetic difference and it digs into the other half pretty heavily. Genetically they're barely the same species as whatever they started out as. Anyway, a Memphis is a kind of feline that looks like a housecat with horns and wings. They're quite cute and they stay that way. By picking that as my beast half, I get most of the advantages from the species... along with their drawbacks as well, and the ability to switch between a humanoid form and a Memphis form."

Evaline nodded along with her daughter's explanation. She didn't know how scientific it all was but considering magic was real perhaps that threw a wrench into everything. Crossbreeding certainly had mana aid it, because she knew enough about crossbreed offspring to know it shouldn't work as well as Lily was suggesting. In fact, Evaline knew her daughter well enough to know Lily should also be aware of that fact. Still, that wasn't all that was bothering her. "What aren't you telling me?"

"Er..." Lily stumbled slightly at the direct question. "Well... I guess the big note is that I'll be pretty much stuck as a cat for a while... maybe a few weeks... or months... or years may be I don't know"

Evaline sighed and ran a hand down her face as she tried very hard not to berate her daughter for that answer. Clearly Lily was interested in this and she'd thought it through considerably. However now that she'd made her choice she'd stopped considering the issues. "Lily... how... I feel like that's a fairly big drawback."

"Not really" said Lily easily, "Compared to a lifespan of forever" because of the connection to Kat of course, "even if it takes a decade it really won't be too bad."

Evaline let out a longer sigh as she held back the myriad issues that her daughter was 'conveniently' ignoring. Internally she debated if it was worth bringing them up. Lily WOULD need to deal with at least some of them, and while she knew her daughter had thought about the pros and cons of the decision compared to other races, it was likely she hadn't considered the ways she would always be affected. Especially bureaucratic things.

Eventually, the decision came down to dealing with it now or later, and this would be a much easier conversation to have with her human daughter than a cat one. "Now darling, I'm not trying to dissuade you," Evaline pointedly ignored Lily's pout and eye roll "but have you thought about how this will effect your future here?" Evaline watched Lily's eyes narrow, "I'm not just talking about university, which I imagine you'll not be interested in anymore, but also getting a license and ID. How different will you look afterwards? Will anyone recognise you? What about your cousins?"

*Huh... I never thought about that. I just assumed that I'd look mostly the same. Will I still have glasses? I doubt it. With a whole new body my eyes will be fine... but what about everything else? I might not think I'm terribly beautiful but I've never had body image issues like some girls Stella was friends with... and I know Kat certainly doesn't.

Actually, does Kat like how I look? Is it even important to her? She's asexual sure but I imagine she can still appreciate beauty, right? I know she finds Sylvie adorable... so there's that at least. Does she think of me the same way? No? Yes? Maybe? Ok it can't be exactly the same way because Sylvie is firmly in the 'little sister' camp and I doubt I'd have been able to convince her to date me if she thought of me as a family member.

She's asexual so dating someone was probably a tough decision... though... * Lily licked her lips slightly as she thought back to Kat admitting she wouldn't be happy if Lily was dating someone else and revelled in that. Evaline gave her daughter a weird look that went unnoticed. Clearly Lily, in Evaline's mind at least, had managed to go from thinking about productive things to something inappropriate. Unaware that her thoughts didn't really go anywhere Evaline would consider appropriate at all.

What does that mean though? It can't be that she finds me sexually attractive. Romantically attractive is a possibility though... then again, I'm really not sure how that works. I can't imagine being with a man. Heck I can hardly picture being with anyone other than Kat. Then again... why would I? Evaline watched her daughter's eyes glaze over again and sighed.

"What is going on in that head of yours Lily" whispered Evaline. It was loud enough that Lily could have heard it if she was paying attention. So she heard nothing.

*No wait. Get back on track Lily. You were trying to work out what Kat thinks about how you look. Now, she obviously doesn't think I'm hot or sexy. Her mind just doesn't work like that... though I wonder if she can still make educated guesses? Wait. Lily stop. It is not the time for rabbit holes. Maybe you can ask Kat about it later.

Let's just say she can't. Sexy and hot are things that only apply to people... or cartoons... but let's not think about that right now. Anyway, it's a very sexual response so Kat probably doesn't or at least not in the same way. Then again it's not like I'd call myself sexy anyway unless dorky bookworm is a fetish. Oh god it's probably a fetish. Why do I find this disturbing all of a sudden?*

Lily tried very hard not to think about all the books she'd read where a dorkish bookworm like her was the main love interest. Books she'd read before. Books she'd very much enjoyed. Books that were not necessarily acceptable for a girl her age. So she pushed them very far out of her mind.

At least I don't have to worry about Kat having weird fetishes because... well they're always weird things that get people off. So... let's just not think about that. What does Kat think of my appearance? She does burry her face in my hair a lot. Is that just so she can burry it in my neck though... maybe? She doesn't play with my hair all that much... but that's pretty intimate for friends and I was never overly touchy feely so maybe that's the cause of it.

Evaline waved a hand in front of Lily and got exactly nothing as a reaction before sighing. Getting up she went over to the coffee maker and paused. "Now, do I want coffee to chase away the headache that's building and risk Lily snapping out of whatever batch of... thoughts... she's ended up in and noticing me gone... or should I say this is fine and get coffee anyway. Hmm... I've had a lot of coffee today already though... nah." Evaline turned on the machine and let it run, watching as Lily still didn't react at all. "Wow she's in deep. I'll probably finish the whole pot before she wakes up..."

*What about my eyes? I'll have to ask about the hair. But what about eyes? Kat's always staring at my face... but then again, she doesn't have distractions like I do. Seriously, why did I think it was a good idea to encourage using that kimono as demonic attire. It is SO HARD not to stare at her chest when I'm looking at her face, and even harder not to stare at her legs when I'm not talking to her. Does that mean she likes my eyes though...?

Actually, will I end up with Kat eyes? I think I will. Shit, will Kat find that creepy? What about the colour? Will that change along with my eyes? Hang on, going back to my hair, I'll definitely have cat ears. Maybe horns as well? Oh, I hope not or at it will be out of the way. Kat's are mostly out of the way but I do have to be careful kissing her that my forehead isn't too high up. I wonder if this is something I can ask about when the time comes. Damn I say that like I'm not planning to go in for this tomorrow or the next day if I can.*

Evaline took a long swig of coffee before looking at the pot and taking a second, larger swig, from the coffee pot. "This is going to take a while isn't it."