

DEMONS 621

Chapter 621 Bound Forever

Lily landed, finally exhausted from her flight. She'd lost track of time at some point and had been grounded by the soreness in her wings. They had muscle definition yes, but no proper practice with endurance and Lily was paying for it now. Kat managed to get away with a lot because of her regeneration, Lily... not so much.

Despite being soar across her entire body, exhaustion was a powerful foe and quickly sent Lily into restful sleep. When she woke up some time later, she found herself wrapped up tightly with blankets. She glanced out at the room and found herself in one of the relaxation rooms for calming patients down again. It may have been the same one, but her current view was obstructed by the blankets. It certainly looked similar but her memory wasn't perfect and she couldn't see the whole room.

Lily's ears twitched as she heard something shifting nearby. Before she could work out what it was, she felt the blankets around her being removed. Looking up she saw Nira was freeing her from the blanket wrapping. "Good to see you're awake" said Nira mostly to fill the silence with Lily unable to speak.

"If you're wondering why you were wrapped up so much... it's partially because of your soul not synchronising properly just yet. When you were asleep your body was moving around quite a lot and not really calming down without your mind to help mediate things. It was a way to ensure comfort and prevent you from hurting yourself too much. *nOveLnext.coM*

"Now, we're heading of to the binding room soon. Kat should be arriving sometime between twenty minutes and an hour. The process won't be too long and Slethnoth is hoping the binding will help your soul. It hasn't stabilised any further at all, not even in small increments so he's a little worried at the moment. It still isn't an issue, just long term it could become one if that makes sense."

Nira grabbed Lily up and held her in the crook of her arm, holding her more off to the side this time. It wasn't quite as warm or comforting but it was less awkward for Lily's horns. As Nira exited the room through the hidden tree door she kept speaking. "Now, we don't really know how the binding is going to affect you both because you have a proper mind in your head.

"Memphis are intelligent creatures but they aren't sentient. They never crossed the line, which of course, was intentional on our part. We didn't want to accidentally create a race of people dependant on us or one doomed to go insane so we stuck to mostly animal intelligence... even if I know the limit on that was pushed about as far as it can go.

"What this will mean for you, who has a full mind, are unclear. In the normal bond we don't really know what happens on the Memphis' end because it's not like they can tell us. We know at the very least it will siphon your demonic energy. We also know that demonic energy will slowly alter itself to be the same as Kat's.

"That's what we do know for sure. Things we can measure. We have a few other things that might happen. Just based on guesses you see. The first is that you should be able to know where Kat is at all times. We've been able to separate bound pairs and the Memphis is always able to find their partner. It doesn't matter how long it takes. They can always figure it out. Sometimes it's harder then others if we

put puzzles in the way, but they can follow a straight line to their bonded if that's an option. It's been done multiple times.

"The other thing, something that's less clear, is that we think you'll be able to tell Kat's emotional state. This is more speculation than proof, but Memphis have been observed to help cheer up saddened or depressed owners. Granted normal cats can do this as well, but the speed and success of the response are consistently higher than those standard cats so we think there's something going on there..."

Nira kept walking through the hallways as she chatted. Lily just zoned out. Despite her nape she still felt tired and the muscles that supported her wings were definitely a little tender. Her mind was split. Part of it wanted to start spinning up and examining all of her changes properly now that she had the time to focus on them, while the other wanted her to just go back to sleep. She settled for focusing on Nira's soothing voice, something that was actually a well practiced skill.

"Still I wouldn't worry too much. We've never had the bonds do anything that bad as far as we know. Obviously more testing will be required to confirm nothing has gone wrong once the binding is complete, but I have faith it will be fine," said Nira softly.

When they eventually exited the elevator Lily was surprised to find they weren't in the office. No they were in what looked to be an observation room. There were three terminals with holographic screens on them all overlooking a large mostly empty room. There wasn't anything in it... technically. What made it only mostly empty was the blood red markings on the ground that she could see were shifting and changing the longer she gazed at them. They never stopped in one position for too long.

Lily was slowly losing herself to the hypnotic flashing when Nira covered her eyes. "Sorry about that. I didn't consider what it might do to you. This is a rather high level ritual room. It's not the standard bond, but we decided that having more power available is better than not enough should it prove necessary. This also has a bunch of failsafe's built in just in case. The normal binding ritual is a very streamlined thing... this is... more improvised but hopefully just as safe.

Lily was still trying to pull her mind back together and remove the fog that had unknowingly crept in. "Please refrain from looking at it anymore, it actually reduced your synchronisation rate by a full percent." Lily whipped her head around to see Slethnoth had taken up residence in one of the chairs. Lily was certain he wasn't there before.

Unless I lost myself to the colours... how... how long did I stare at the room? Why are they all fine? I wish I could actually ask them questions.

Lily didn't get long to contemplate that question as the door opened to let in Kat, followed by Nobody who now looked like Slethnoth. Had anyone other than Kat walked through the door at the same time, Lily would have been trying to figure out how Nobody could mimic Slethnoth's unique racial feature of being sort of 2D. With Kat there though, it wasn't important.

Before she could blink, Lily was over in Kat's arms. How exactly she managed that she wasn't sure, but Lily did know that everything was alright in the world. She heard Kat chuckle, but it sounded distant as she purred contentedly in Kat's arms. "It's good to see you too Lily" whispered Kat, though of course, with high level demons in the room everyone heard it.

"Right this way please. Lily keep your eyes closed," said Nobody as she opened the door to the ritual room. Kat took her place, but when Nobody swapped back to Nira's body to carry Lily to her spot, Lily dug her claws in automatically. "Lily, please let go. It'll just be a moment and then you can go back," Lily reluctantly retracted her claws, knowing she really should have done so without being prompted. She didn't hear Nobody mumble, "Stronger reaction than anticipated. Keep an eye out for attachment issues."

Lily was placed in a circle opposite to Kat while Nobody stood in the exact centre of the formation. There was no warning when it started. Lily felt like her soul was suddenly exposed. Like something was looking at her. Judging all that she was. She shuddered under the gaze, she wanted to pull back, then all of a sudden. There was a feeling of home, of being safe, a feeling so similar to being in Kat's arms again.

Then the feeling receded. It didn't vanish completely but it was certainly lessened. Lily let out a shaky breath as her legs fell out from underneath her. *That... that certainly was something. I don't... I don't know how to describe it.*

[Well at least with me you don't have to.]

Lily's eyes shot opened and moved over to Kat, to spot her grinning. *Kat?*

[Yes Lily? Is something the matter?]

Lily's eyes went even wider. *Best. Upgrade. Ever. I can't believe... I mean... I didn't consider that... oh I'm so happy to be able to talk, even if it's only to you. Then there is the fact that we can talk to each other whenever we want and I love that and I love this.*

Lily suddenly felt a warm embrace even though Kat never moved. Lily's breath hitched as she realised what it was. Kat was projecting her happiness towards Lily.. *I need to figure out how to do that.*

Chapter 622 - 622 A Cat On Kat's Lap

Kat smiled down at Lily who was radiating happiness. Despite Lily's desire to 'figure out' how Kat was sharing emotions she was in fact already doing it. In Kat's mind there was the equivalent of two doors. One allowed Lily's thoughts and feelings to flow in, while the other allowed Kat's thoughts and feelings to flow out. For Kat, she could already feel the happiness Lily was generating as it washed into her mind.

Unlike Lily who couldn't safely look at the room, Kat could. It was a strange sight for some, but for Kat it reminded her of the fire she saw when she travelled only this time it was trapped in the floor. It shifted around carefully, but whenever Kat blinked the patterns all shifted drastically, as if it was slowing itself down just to be observed. Kat added credit to that theory because the it was ALWAYS when she blinked. Not when anyone else did, so she knew at least part of the appearance was something only she could see.

The question is then... do I see this as those flames because it's what my mind equates them to? Or does the floor actually look like those flames and I just see my own patterns in them. I wish I could ask Lily for her thoughts... actually... I wonder if we can also share memories and not just internal commentary?

Before Kat could test the idea out though, Nobody said, "Can I get you to both leave the room? Kat do you want to take Lily?"

Kat nodded and scooped Lily up in her arms and Lily started purring again as soon as she was in place. Kat could feel the contentment rolling off Lily. It was an interesting feeling. Lily's emotions weren't the same as Kat's, or more accurately she didn't interact with them the same way as she did her own. It was simply the nature of the bond. Kat wasn't experiencing the emotions alongside Lily she was getting a sensation of gifted emotion.

In this case, what Kat felt wasn't contentment or calm, it was like a warm blanket was wrapping around her mind with slight hints of fresh air accompanying it. The blanket didn't stay still either, it carefully roamed her mind shifting around and brushing against things almost like it was tenderly stroking her. It was a very interesting experience.

Subconsciously Kat started to run her fingers through Lily's fur and the sensation intensified. *Hmm. Might need to be careful with this. It feels nice certainly but it is also distracting. I don't want to close that door in my mind though. Not when the bond is so new. That would feel like sacrilege. I don't really think I want to get used to this sensation... I wonder if Lily has the same level of control as I do... that could be it. Not sure how I'd teach it though. The doors are just... there.*

When the three exited the room Slethnoth inputted a command into the console and the window into the ritual room slammed shut. Kat and Lily both flinched in sync at the noise, something that caught Nobody and Nira's eyes. Slethnoth... well... it was always hard to tell with them. Still, the girls were led over to a corner and another command was entered and three seats appeared, one for each demon, as everyone expected Lily to simply stay on Kat's lap.

As they sat down, Lily hardly twitched, she simply accepted her new place as she was moved from Kat's arms to her legs, something that nearly caused Kat to blush. The feeling of contentment in Lily practically doubled instantly and there was an undercurrent of a second flavour. To Kat's mind it was both spicy and soothing, as if you'd just drunk a glass of ice water after a hot meal, though more effective than in reality.

"It seems the binding has helped immensely," said Slethnoth 'turning' to face everyone else. "Lily's soul stabilisation is currently sitting at 85%. Still lower than I'd like in ideal circumstances but it is climbing now. Slowly of course, and Lily likely won't reach one hundred percent before the month is out, but it IS increasing, something that was missing before. I have hope that things will settle down and no issues will occur."

Nobody took over at this point before anyone else could speak up. "Her body is currently fine. From my observations the muscles were not quite developed to the point we were aiming for and I am unsure what has caused it. It may be purely a placebo effect but I am unsure at this time. Other than that she is a healthy young Memphis."

"Her immune system reads as fine, her bones and ligaments contain no issues, I've noticed that she hasn't picked up the ability to sense electrical pulses but that's normal. It normally comes in over the first week or two so nothing to worry about there. Based on the run through the obstacle course we had her do, her reaction time is actually lagging behind a decent amount however I suspect her mind has not properly caught up to its new speed. I foresee no problems in that area long term but it will need to be monitored. Now Kat do you have any questions?"

"Shouldn't you be asking Lily that?" questioned Kat and received a burst of happiness from the bundle of fur in her lap.

"Well... yes or no questions are quite limiting..." Nobody started but didn't get into it properly when she noticed Kat's very confused face. "What?"

"I can hear Lily's thoughts and she can hear mine. Was that not something you intended to happen?" asked Kat. [Nope. It wasn't]

Nobody, obviously not able to hear Lily's response also answered, "No. It was a hope of course, that with a more developed soul and mind there would be additional benefits to the bond." Nobody liked her lips, "In that case, Lily, is there anything you feel like bringing up? Any pain at all?"

[I still have some lingering soreness from flying but I doubt that really counts... hmm... I don't think so?]

Kat had to stifle a laugh. Despite the words Lily transmitted the rest of her thoughts were easy to pick up. Lily was much more interested in the fact she was snuggling against Kat's thighs than any potential issues she might be experiencing. Kat found it amusing that her knowledge obsessed, fr- girlfriend was giving up the chance at more information just to enjoy the sensation of her thighs.

I may never properly understand Lily's love for me, but the mental connection really does help. I can't believe just resting on my lap is such a pleasure for her. I mean, it's adorable and I like it as well, but the enjoyment coming from Lily's end makes my own feel so shallow. I wonder if I can ever understand. Anyway...

Lily, are you sure you don't have any questions? You can enjoy my thighs whenever you want.
Crashing waves of embarrassment flowed through the connection. It felt like trying to sit in a slightly too warm bath while a feast of your favourite food was nearby. Kat didn't really understand how that made any sense.

Still, it did get Lily to think properly about a few questions... after a brief flash of longing and acceptance for the fact she could do this in the future. [Let's see... my eyes are much better now. I didn't really think it would be such an improvement... though that isn't a problem... hmm... actually wait. How do I use magic? I have the affinities now right? How do I get that going?]

Kat relayed the question to Nobody who was about to answer before being cut off by Sleethnoth. "She doesn't. Not yet anyway. Magic is an art that calls on the soul. I don't believe it is particularly safe to learn magic until she is completely stable. Once Lily gains the use of her humanoid form, then it should be safe for Lily to start learning."

Irritation rolled off Lily invading Kat's mind again. It felt like being in the eye of a cyclone. Everything was whirling around her and the need to get out was strong, just as the futility of being unable to move was there as well. [Dammit. I can't believe I can't get start-] before Lily could sink too far into annoyance Kat started to scratch behind Lily's ears again and she melted into Kat's lap purrfectly content.

It's silly how effective this is. Kat thought to herself as the happiness radiated off of Lily. So many feelings flowed through the connection because of this action and none of them were negative. Kat could not believe how quickly it had changed Lily's mind. *I wonder if I should be concerned about this.

Just a couple of scratches and she's not just no longer annoyed, she's very happy with everything..*
Unbeknownst to Kat, the reaction was largely due to it being her specifically doing the scratching.

Chapter 623 - 623 Get A Room

Nobody clapped twice to get everyone's attention on her. It even managed to call up Lily's attention.
"With that done, we don't really have any more questions for you. We'll be showing you both a room, or two rooms if you want, for a day. We'll examine you both tomorrow and then you'll be free to go if there are no issues. We will also be calling you both back if any problems appear or when Lily manages a humanoid form. Unless you have questions for us?"

[No]

"No" said Kat.

"Good to hear. Please follow me then," said Nira. Kat stood up and transferred Lily to her shoulder. Lily wanted to pout at not being held but decided this was good practice. It wasn't too bad but as Kat moved Lily bounced slightly. She needed to make sure her legs moved alongside Kat's to stay in place rather than bouncing around.

Nobody and Slethnoth waved them out of the room and Kat waved back. Lily just gave them a nod. After that it was a relatively quick trip to the elevator then to the dorm floor. They actually saw a few other demons along the way but didn't take too much note of them as they were clearly going places. Eventually, Nira stopped outside a room labelled 666.

"Really?" asked Kat gesturing at the door number.

Nira shrugged, "I don't actually know what you see. They are enchanted to show people different gags. I'm surprised it works with your True Sight actually."

Kat looked closely at the door. *Hmm, I think it doesn't. I think this might actually be room 666. Lily what do you see?*

[It was room 13 for me until you said it was actually 666 then it changed in my view.]

Interesting. Kat pointed the discrepancy out and Nira tapped a finger to her cheek. "Well... I'm not sure if that means it doesn't work properly on Kat, or that sharing the knowledge between you both made it change to 666 in Lily's mind because she'd prefer to match you. Anyway it's not really relevant."

Nira pushed open the door to a rather spacious room. There was a king single sized bed against the wall with a Kat bed on a side table set at the end that took up the right side of the room. Kat rolled her eyes a little at the fact they thought there was even a small chance Lily would sleep anywhere other than next to her.

The rest of the room was actually quite stocked. There was a holographic screen in the middle of a bookshelf. Kat didn't recognise any of the titles but wasn't surprised by that fact. There was a desk set up against the back wall with a silver bar that likely produced a screen as well and several drawers. There was also a handle on the far left side of the left wall when you were looking at it. Kat wasn't sure what that was for.

[I bet it's a pull out closet]

Kat found her face twitching slightly at that. *I didn't realise I'd said that... well not out loud but let it go to Lily. Maybe I just radiated confusion looking at it? Something to be more careful about.*

"If you two need anything you should be able to call me from the desk. I won't be here instantly as I'll be going over the data from Lily's change with Nobody and Slethnoth or doing a bit of work here. Still I'll be around if you need me. Feel free to use whatever is in the room, though take care of it. Or don't? I'm not sure if damages would be covered in whatever weird package you brought for this operation. NORMALLY you'd be charged so... keep it in mind?" Nira shrugged at the end and waved the pair goodbye.

Kat let herself drop onto the bed, jolting Lily slightly despite waiting for the movement. She instantly took the chance to move once Kat was sitting down, to Kat's legs of course. Lily curled herself up into a ball and just started enjoying the feeling.

Now that it's just us do you have any concerns? Anything you want to tell me? Ask me? Would you rather I chat out loud or over mind for this? Anything you want to catch me up on?

[I'm fine. I mean... I might start noticing weird things later but for now this is all quite novel. Nothing feels like a problem. My body feels really responsive, my mind is working fine, my eyes are spectacular. I... er... no. You're my girlfriend. I can admit I have a weird fetish for your legs and that I enjoy laying here immensely. It's so much better than a normal lap pillow because I can just lay here. I don't even need to move to talk.

[So for now at least, everything is great though... the talking thing. It's a little annoying I have no real way to talk to people is to get you to repeat things for me but I don't mind it for me so much as I mind that it'll become annoying for you. Oh, and I want to know how you sent that wave of emotion. That was... very nice.]

Um... don't you realise you've already been doing that?

[Wait I have?]

Yeah you have, pretty much always. Wait... do you have those doors in your mind?

[What doors?]

Oh dear... Kat sucked in a deep breath. *Ok how do I explain this... wait can I just...* Kat tried to find the 'idea' of the doors, or the memory of 'finding' them in her mind and shoving that down the connection. When it got sucked into the door to Lily's mind.

[Woah. Ok that's... that's weird. I think we can send memories to each other Kat... and... yeah I see what you mean. I don't have doors in my head though, or anything that could be considered equivalent. I wonder why? Is it because I'm subordinate in this bond? Is it because my soul is weaker? Is it just because you're more powerful than me? You're essentially perfect recall? There is so many things it could be...]

Kat 'watched' as Lily's mind started to whirl around trying to work out all the variables that could possibly cause the bond to develop this way. For Kat it was astonishing how fast Lily's thought process was. Kat knew she could speed her own mind up with demonic energy and she'd never thought herself

slow, but seeing the endless stream of ideas and conclusions Lily was shifting through made her feel like her mind was drastically under utilised and much slower.

Of course, this wasn't really the case. Kat could push her mind just as fast as Lily when the situation called for it or close enough to not matter. With demonic energy she could of course push herself further but it was the passion that was missing. Lily's mind was usually working at full capacity when she found an interesting question. Kat's mind simply didn't. Perhaps it could be trained to though...

[Wait...] Lily's spinning thoughts suddenly halted [Does that mean you've been feeling my emotions this whole time?]

*Sort of? It's hard to explain it really. Your emotions aren't mine and sharing them with me doesn't make me feel them alongside you... it... hmm... it's not really something that can be described properly. Let me try and... *

Kat sent her calm through the link. Then she started to think about things that made her angry, mostly times Lily was hurt, and pushed that down the link. Then she thought of Gramps and pushed her love for him down the link before finally focusing on how she thought about Lily and sending that last.

Kat could sort of see the echo of what she'd done coming off Lily's mind. It was strange to 'watch' and she was really disconnected from the sensation. Perhaps it's to prevent feedback loops?

That snapped Lily out of the sensations. She instinctively pushed them down and returned to the now. [Yeah that... that can't really be described properly. What... um... what was that last one though?] Kat could feel Lily's curiosity as well as something underneath that.

That was my feelings for you.

[Oh] Kat wondered about that 'oh' thinking it was a strange response. She didn't really know how to react to it. It seemed so... lacking. There was hardly any emotion behind it. For a second. Then it was everywhere.

Kat felt it as her girlfriend unintentionally started shoving the equivalent feelings back. Kat was hit with everything Lily felt about her and it was an indescribable experience. Kat knew somehow that it was completely different to the way she felt about Lily, but no less strong. It burned like fire, was soothing like a cool breeze, was fast like a jet plane yet slow like a gentle stream.. Kat tried to make sense of all the conflicted sensations that somehow fit so well together.

Chapter 624 - 624 Real Flashbacks Part 1

[Sorry about that...] 'mumbled' Lily in her head. The fact it was still clearly mumbling a slight surprise to them both.

It's fine Lily. It was quite the experience and... I don't know exactly what to make of it but you shouldn't need to apologise for it.

Kat's insistence everything was fine did not stop the small flow of embarrassment Kat could feel coming from Lily. In an effort to try and distract her, Kat said, "Do you want me to use the mental connection to show you what happened during my training? That should be interesting. It'll be a real life flashback!"

Lily saw the question for what it was, a distraction... but it was a distraction involving Kat and she wanted to know. So despite a part of her wanting to wallow in embarrassment she sent an affirmative to Kat and got ready. She wasn't truly prepared for the experience.

Day 1 Afternoon (Some time after Kat met Mai but the same day)

"Now" said Mai with a rickety old voice. It was appropriate because for some reason she'd decided to pretend to be an old man. She had a robe, and it was clearly a robe not a kimono, at this point Kat was familiar with the differences, that was tattered and used. It had stains all around the edges and a few other stains in random places. They were all different colours as well. The ones that touched the ground were mostly brown with a few splotches of green but one of the stains on the shoulder was bright blue. It was clear that Mai was being mostly authentic but having a bit of fun with it.

On her feet, which showed occasionally when she walked, were large wooden shoes with stilts on them that gave around half a metre of height. It didn't help too much because Mai was currently still shorter than Kat, but considering that was a choice, it was clearly intentional. In her hand Mai had a gnarled wooden staff with a few slight chips in it. It shone slightly in the light indicating it had been varnished... then again considering it was just as likely to be made of Mai as the rest of the outfit that might have just been for appearances.

"What I'll be teaching is how to breathe. You might think you know what breathing is, but your wrong. We need you to breathe like a fighter not like a civilian. So when raise my arm, you breathe in, and when I drop it you breathe out."

Kat nodded and got ready. On the signal she breathed in slowly and carefully at a steady pace... only for Mai to appear next to her in a flash and smack her on the stomach with her staff. It didn't hurt, not because of Kat's defences but because Mai softened the stick to slime form allowing it to bend around Kat's midsection.

"You breathe well for a civilian but it is still wrong. You need to breathe with your stomach. You are pulling open your lungs when you breathe with your diaphragm. As it stands, you only use half the technique. You breathe deep, but do not allow you stomach to expand alongside it limiting yourself. AGAIN!" Mai said sternly, still with an old man's voice.

Kat breathed in for a bit before getting smacked a second time. It was a long afternoon...

Day 2 Morning

This time, instead of an old man, Mai was an old woman with a face so wrinkled it was starting to droop past her chin. The phrase 'baba yaga' would come to mind if Kat actually knew the legend in question. Mai retained the same clothes though Kat's eyes noticed that all of the stains had been changed. Mai's had no facial hair, not even eyebrows but the hair on her head was so long it spilled onto the ground... though considering this time she was only about seventy five centimetres tall it wasn't that impressive.

"Yesterday you learned how to breathe. We will come back to that lesson if need be. And I suspect there will be a need. Still, you at least have the knowledge on how to breathe. Now you need to learn to

stand," whispered Mai. It sounded like the air leaving her mouth was going to be her last every time. Yet more air continued to come out. Kat noticed, however, that she wasn't breathing.

"Wait how are YOU breathing?" asked Kat.

Mai smirked, something that looked very strange on her current face. "Unlike you, someone who needs to rely on lungs to breathe, I breathe everywhere. I can take in practically anything with oxygen through my entire body. I breathe like a human when in disguise but I don't need to. So much less efficient." Mai said shaking her head 'sadly' as if Kat would never be able to recover from the tragedy that is having lungs.

I want to point out that there is nothing wrong with having lungs... but Mai doesn't really have brain so why would not having lungs stop her? Though that does make me wonder if the bodies she makes are functional? Like does the brain she makes work like an extra brain? What about the lungs? She said she can breathe like me, but it is actually getting her oxygen? I'm suddenly interested in the answers to these questions.

Which of course meant Mai smacked Kat over the head. "No distractions. We are learning how to stand. First, take the stance you would use when you punch"

Kat moved so that her right leg was back slightly with both bent and her two arms bent at the elbow in front of her face at equal height. Mai smacked the left elbow at the bottom moving it up. "Close. Very close for a civilian. This is just one way to punch but you nearly have it. You either stand like this, or if you want to block bring both fists to just in front of your face, still with one slightly above the other but only a slight bit. Now PUNCH!"

There was a lot of small corrections and even more punching to follow.

Day 2 Afternoon

"So you've taken to the first stance quite well. This is good... but don't get a big head it is only the most basic of basics. It's so basic in fact that it isn't truly part of learning to use the fan, it is part of learning to fight. Something you seem adept enough at but clearly need a few corrections" said Mai still in her wheezy old woman form. She did change back to eat lunch, though now she was back in mentor form.

"I have a few more stances like that I want to show you. This next one might look a little silly but it can be considered the base for the main stance you will use with your fans so don't mock it." Mai glared at Kat's perfect posture. "You clearly get to cheat in regards to posture and strength so maybe not. Still, I agreed to teach you and I will do so properly. Now, Horse Riding Stance."

Mai changed into a copy of Kat and demonstrated the pose. It looked much like it sounded. Feet two shoulder lengths apart with knees bent at around a forty degree angle. Feet forward with the rest of the body following. Back perfectly straight and arms palm up tucked in close to the sides. Kat mirrored the stance, though imperfectly, her knees were slightly too bent and her tail was assisting her remain in place. Mai glared at it and said, "Hmm, I forgot about that tail of yours. I don't train many individual with access to a tail that can be used for more than balance. Hmm... I'll need to think on that. For now tail

UP! No cheating. You probably won't feel the burn like a normal person but we want this stance perfect!"

Kat let out a long slow breath. She wasn't sighing of course, simply using the breathing she learnt on the first day. Obviously.

Back in the present

So how did that work?

[It was a little weird actually... I think it sort of skipped over things. It's hard to get into words... but I suppose that it just sort of... I don't want to say skipped because I still know pretty much exactly how long you spent training those first few days but I didn't really experience it. I DID experience most of the starting chats with Mai but the rest... feels maybe a bit like a dream? As I said hard to describe.]

That's fine I guess. You don't really need those memories anyway. Maybe your mind was automatically skipping them? Or maybe I marked them as unimportant? Certainly something to test in the future. Do you want to keep going?

[Oh yes. This is fascinating for me. It's almost like I'm in your shoes. It's a little different to my own memories but it's pretty close.. This is such a unique chance to see a martial artist learning the craft in... almost real time without actually doing it myself.]

Chapter 625 - 625 Real Flashbacks Part 2

"Back to the flashbacks?" asked Kat.

Lily sent a feeling of confirmation down the link, quite happy to see of the world from Kat's perspective.

Day 3 Morning

Mai had redone her form for this next day. Now she stood at seven feet tall with wire thin limbs and a Fu Manchu moustache and eyebrows so long they could be ripped off and turned into a goatee easily.

"Yesterday, I taught you to stand, and to punch," Mai said with a slight accent. Kat wondered how Mai changed her accent around considering she was hearing a translation. It sounded vaguely Chinese.

"Today I will teach you to run."

That's the one thing I'm confident in already. I don't know if I'll be running to your standards but I'm certain I can run well. Kat was about to say as much before she looked at the small courtyard they had been using for practice. "Um... I can run quite fast and I personally think I run well. This area is quite small though... will we be practicing here?" asked Kat.

"I don't want you using any of your demonic energy for this Kat. Just the basics. One must learn to walk before you run. So to must you learn to run unaided before running with an outside power," said Mai trying to sound more mysterious then she was.

Kat would be willing to play along... had the assumption been correct. "Um... I can run a lot faster than a human without any demonic energy. I can run even faster with it of course, but trust me, running fast is easy with or without aid."

"Well... I wasn't going to break out the stairs just yet but if you need a way to test how fast you can run, and properly at that... they might be the best option..." mumbled Mai in such a way it was obvious she wanted Kat to overhear.

I'm not sure climbing a staircase will be a proper way to establish I know how to run... but I suppose if that's what we have to work with I can deal with it. "Sure thing, lead the way," said Kat.

Kat was led, not towards the mountaintop, but away from it. This garnered a frown as Kat knew that running down these stairs at any reasonable speed would be practically impossible. Her wings wouldn't even be the issue her speed would be.

When Kat saw the stairs, a sheer, uncomfortable looking set, she knew there was going to be an issue. "How am I supposed to run down this?" asked Kat

"Too hard for you? I thought you were confident in your running," retorted Mai.

"Mai... if I run down this I'm likely to go flying off the edge at the speeds I run at. That's not even getting into the fact I can just fly down if I really need to..." grumbled Kat.

"I thought you said you were fine with this?" questioned Mai.

"Mai... I thought I was climbing UP stairs. I don't know how you expect me to run down these without taken it slow. Unless of course I'm allowed to skip steps... but then what's the point of using a staircase instead of just using the side of the mountain?" asked Kat.

Mai grinned. It looked quite scary on the face they'd chosen to use. All sharp lines, framed by that thin moustache. "Exactly," said Mai confidently, "your first instinct when confined to the courtyard was 'it would be too small to reach your max speed'. Now, I admit I assumed you'd require the use of higher energy to get up to decent speeds, but the fact that your first instinct was to simply run as fast as you could and not to go at a decent pace says a lot. I want you to run down these stairs, taking every stair, as fast as you can. This is a lesson in control, and in running"

You don't have to look so smug about it. Sorry if I don't pace myself because my body can regenerate past muscle fatigue so running isn't really an issue of my body getting tired. I'll get tired from overuse of energy or from simple time passing before running unaided does me in.

Kat debated bringing this up with Mai, but something held her back. Perhaps it was her competitive drive, or perhaps it was the heartfelt request Grace had made pushing her to do things properly. So in the end Kat held her tongue and got running.

Of course she was smacked after only a few steps for neglecting her breathing. At least it was a long way till the bottom...

Day 3 Afternoon

Mai had hidden their lunch in her robe so the pair had eaten a little picnic lunch at the bottom of the stairs. Mai had been pleasantly surprised with Kat's progress. After a few false starts and more than one set of missed stairs Mai thought the girl had gotten things down well. It wasn't perfect yet, and Kat did mess up her breathing a few times but it was much better than Mai had planned for.

Originally Mai had planned of asking Kat to fly back to the top of the stairs before running down again, but Mai was willing to give her a pass when it came to control. When running at least. So now it was time for Kat to run up as fast as she could.

Day 3 Evening (Mai's Perspective. Unseen by Lily and Kat instory)

Mai gulped as she stood next to Kat at the top of the staircase. Kat was standing nearby relaxing slightly and waiting for a verdict. *I did not imagine she had so much power. No wonder demons are feared everywhere. Three runs up the staircases and she isn't breathing hard. I don't think she used any demonic energy either. It's hard to tell but I trust her enough not to cheat for something like this. She requested this, nobody is forcing her. If she is cheating already then there is no hope for her. Still... this power in such a normal looking body.

I didn't understand how fine her control already was. How she can manage to interact with us mere mortals and not break anything is beyond me. I suppose technique is what we need to work on next...*

Day 4 Morning (Kat's Perspective)

Mai had completely forgone a silly transformation today. She was the spitting image of Kat and had two fans in her hand. Before Kat could get a good look at them though Mai had put them away. "We are nearly at the stage where we start to look at your fans. Before that, I need to teach you one of the core stances for Tessenjutsu. This is more for defence, but it is still the first stance to learn. It's in some ways a combination between the stance you take when punching and horse riding stance, yet it is quite different to them as well.

Mai first moved into the stance she showed Kat for punching before turning her back foot ninety degrees to the side so that the foot was facing out and slowly lowered herself, bending just the back knee so that her full weight was resting on it. Instead of fists Mai's palms were both open. "Copy me to the best of your ability please."

So that's what Kat did... for the full 4th day.

Present

[Woah. That... that was a long time for just that one stance. Why does it work though? It feels? like it could never actually work. Too much weight on your back leg...]

"That's because it's a very different stance to the other two. It's designed for use against swords. You let the attacks flow around you. Plus, you can spring off your back foot surprisingly quickly. I'm surprised

you didn't see it but Mai took me through the variations on that form and how to move from one to the other.

"It was all about redirecting the force from attacks and sneaking in strikes from the edge of your fans as attacks slide past you. It isn't the best to deal with groups, apparently that requires a lot more movement. This is more a one on one fighting stance, but is still considered the main resting stance for the weapon. It's sort of like... hmm... it's like... when you don't know what's coming next that's what you should always fall back to," explained Kat.

[It still looks a little wonky to me. I don't think I have the leg strength to even try a stance like that. Well... actually... with my knew body I might be able to.. I'm not sure? I'll have to see how my muscles turn out in human form. If it's the same as Memphis then I could probably do without issue but not for more than like... five minutes]

Chapter 626 - 626 Real Flashbacks Part 3

"I think the next big event was during the 5th day. I did the same things in the afternoon as I did in the morning on the fourth day. Just shuffling through slight variations on the same stance. Urgh... it wasn't fun at the time and I still don't like to think on it overly much but I can FEEL those stances practically burnt into my mind. It's weird because I have such a good memory now but those stances are a level above even that. I feel like I couldn't forget them even if I tried" said Kat with some slight exasperation.

[Do we want to use it as a test? Try and show me those memories and see what happens?]

"I don't really want to use your mind as a place to experiment Lily. This bond is still knew, and while it will probably be fine, is this really something we want to test?" asked Kat worried. *novelNExt.COM*

Lily just scoffed internally. [Kat I can practically feel the concern radiating from you even without you actively sharing the emotion. I'll be fine. I trust that this bond will not do anything we wouldn't want and I know you'd never want to hurt me.]

Kat had to fight herself a little after Lily's words. Part of her was preening at the acknowledgment that she'd never hurt Lily. The fact Lily also seemed so sure of this filled her heart with warmth. The more logical side of her, however, was quite annoyed that those few words were making her so willing to go through with the test. Just because of Lily's belief it wouldn't hurt. *That's not a proper reason I can't just do something because Lily believes it will be ok. She normally tests things properly too so why now?*

Despite Kat's internal complaints and misgivings about being so easily swayed... she was easily swayed. Kat sent the memories to Lily and Lily received a slideshow in turn. It didn't go into detail at all, skimming over practically the entire afternoon. It was enough to get a vague idea of what Kat had done but nothing better than that. It seemed that while sharing memories was good for, well, sharing memories, sharing practice wasn't possible. Lily made a note to see if she could send information she knew Kat wasn't aware of at a later time.

With that bit of testing out of the way though, Kat sent her memories of the 5th day.

Day 5 Early Morning (before meeting up with Mai)

Kat looked around the room she'd been assigned. It was spacious but quite bare. All the room contained was a dresser and some bedding for the floor. That was it. Kat found the bedding a little inconvenient as well because it didn't have enough give to let her wings sink in. Granted a normal bed wasn't the best for that either but at least there was something. Kat had ended up sleeping on her stomach because of this and making use of her meditation technique to get peacefully through the night because it just felt to her to sleep like this.

Kat stood up and carefully poked at her muscles. *Ugh, I know I have regeneration but I swear I can still feel my muscles burning from yesterday. I didn't think I could even get muscle pains from working out anymore. Clearly I was proved wrong. Even if the pain now seems to be just in my head.*

Kat came to that conclusion based on the fact that poking various areas where she was sore didn't illicit any further pain as they should. It felt exactly the same as poking anywhere else despite the pain that seemingly radiated from the effected areas. *I know enough about muscles to know I've worked out a bunch of new ones... but this is just weird. How are they damaged or not?*

The air had no answers for her.

Day 5 Morning

Today it seemed Mai wanted to make fun of Enuko again because that was the form she took. "Good morning Kat. Today we'll be working on stretching. Something I completely forgot you need. Which, is my bad entirely. I'm not exactly sure why you need it, because I don't, but Enuko reminded me about it and I can't say she's wrong in this case. Still, I'll be wearing her face for a while because I feel like it."

Kat opened her mouth to respond before closing it again. *Wait... do I need to stretch? Is that why my muscles hurt? No that's dumb. I walked all day without trouble. I participated in that tournament and performed fairly vigorous exercises even getting into a few fights and I still wasn't a sore as I feel today. I'm not sure that I actually DO need to stretch. D.E.M.O.N.S?*

User Kat is correct. Stretching only provides minor benefits for a Succubus due to their natural flexibility. For standard activities Succubi do not require it. It is noted however that over extended periods of time, such as years or decades, stretching can further improve a Succubus' baseline flexibility.

Well that's not what I wanted to hear. 'You don't really need to be there is a benefit' I guess I can at least take comfort in knowing I'm not hurting myself. "Actually, despite what Enuko said I personally don't need to stretch or well, not personally, racially? I guess? It does have long term benefits for me but I can't be injured just from forgetting to stretch. If that makes sense" said Kat.

Mai pulled a tail forward to begin stroking it slowly. It looked exactly the same as Enuko's and Mai was even able to dig her hands into the fur. The detail in Mai's transformations was truly astonishing. "Hmm... I think I'll still teach you then. You'll want a lot of flexibility if you're going to sue a fan and even though you already have quite a lot, more is always better. I think it's worth adding to my teachings even if you don't use these stretches too often."

And that was how Kat learned how to stretch correctly. Before too many poses could be performed, she found the memory collapsing around them...

Present

Lily?! Kat called in her mind. In response she got sent an emotion. It was hot and burning, making her feel like she'd swallowed a bowl of chillies... or well, Kat barely felt those now, though she did know what that felt like having tried them once. Surprisingly crunchy and the burn lasts for a while.

It took a few moments for Lily to try to get the sensation under control. Despite being a Memphis at the moment she could certainly feel herself reacting. Her cheeks would have been glowing had she been a human and her mouth was watering. [I'm fine. I... I'll be fine. Dammit Kat I wasn't ready for that]

Ready for that? Asked Kat internally. She didn't feel like speaking aloud for some reason.

[God you really don't know. I mean, these are your memories so I know you don't know but... dammit Kat. I don't think you realise what a memory like that does to me!]

Kat just let her confusion radiated down the link and Kat felt Lily sigh in exasperation in her mind, alongside a slight bit of amusement because of the fact she COULD sigh in exasperation across the link.

[I don't know if this is better or worse that I can tell you don't know. It... it's so weird looking back on it as well. I can practically feel the 'this is normal' or no... better yet 'no problem here' radiating from you in those memories. I... Ok look Kat. I've told you before you're hot right? Like, you are exceptionally attractive. I know you can't really understand the distinction there but there is a very big separation between 'she looks nice' and 'I am instantly having illicit thoughts' levels of 'hot'.]

[Not only are you in the latter category you are also my girlfriend so that pushes me further down that road and Kat... even though I'm watching this from your perspective I still have my own thoughts on everything I'm seeing... and watching you contort into various poses where quite regularly you are looking down at your chest or sticking your ass out is HARD on me.]

[Ok maybe not that, I'm not a man so it's not literally hard but... dammit Kat it makes me want to jump you even as a Kat. It is not good for my poor little heart to see something so erotic couched in your memories that are basically telling me nothing interesting is happening here. It's such a weird clash in mentality Kat. But dammit if I don't want to see more of that.]

Not really sure how to take that one... I guess it's another thing I can add to the list of things I won't understand. "Do you want to skip over the rest of day 5 then?" asked Kat out loud to help with keeping her prior thoughts a secret. She didn't need to send anything down the link this way.

[Is there more sexy poses and stretching?]

"Yes" said Kat.

Lily was silent for a while. She knew it was probably a good idea to skip over the rest of the stretching, especially because she wasn't able to kiss Kat to relieve some of the tension she was starting to feel building.. At the same time... an excuse to watch her girlfriend doing those poses wasn't one she could turn down. [I'll just have to be strong!]

Chapter 627 - 627 Real Flashbacks Part 4

Lily had mixed feelings about her current form after finishing the second half of Kat's 5th day. The intellectual part of her mind had managed to sneak in the interesting observation about just how many different poses Kat had learned... but in the end it was still rather suppressed. Most of Lily's mind was being used to fill in the gaps Kat's view left them with. Lily had spent a long term watching Kat and knew, with surprising clarity at that, exactly how Kat's body moved. This meant that despite seeing everything from Kat's perspective, which did occasionally have joys of its own, she could easily imagine how it would look from the outside.

That was the other thing about the experience. With Kat's view of things being the dominant interpretation, it felt extremely intimate. Sure the poses were nice, and Lily enjoyed them greatly, but it started to mean more to be able to feel things from Kat's perspective. With the poses being relatively easy for the Succubus, Lily was able to seep into Kat's mind slightly.

She knew she didn't have the full scope, but it provided some more insight. Especially because Mai had taken Enuco's form. Something Kat hadn't noticed was that Enuco was a very good looking woman. She had a regal bearing and a quite poise that gave her a presence. This was magnified for Lily who could properly appreciate that look.

With Kat's perspective being around though, she could feel how Kat saw Enuco. Her appearance was just a sidenote to Kat. It was like saying 'this rock is grey' or 'the sun is out today' to Kat while Enuco WAS pretty, there was nothing else tied into the notion. Lily was shocked to see just how much her sexuality affected her view of everyone.

When Lily looked at Enuco, there was so much more there. There was the undercurrent of attraction she felt with most women, the comparisons she automatically made to Kat, automatically ticking off which boxes Enuco ticked on her list of attractive features and several other things besides. Kat treated her almost the way Lily would treat a painting, and furthermore, Lily got the sense this was basically how Kat saw everyone.

Lily wondered what she looked like in Kat's eyes, and her more curious mind wondered what men would look like to Kat. Lily wasn't a misandrist of course, but she had a natural aversion to them. She wasn't friends with them, and she didn't find them attractive at all. There was no malice for her, but a slight distaste was unavoidable. They weren't girls she could befriend nor were they potential romantic interests. Seeing the difference between her own view of Enuco and Kat's made her realise a little more about herself.

Now Kat of course, could feel the complex emotions rolling off Lily and hadn't initiated another round of flashbacks or started asking her questions. Even though Lily hadn't properly voiced any thoughts Kat did get the vague impressions and was happy to wait. While she did she carefully ran her fingers through Lily's fur, careful to avoid Lily's wings, unsure if Lily would enjoy those being touched or not. Best to stick with what she knew worked.

Eventually, Lily seemed to realise just how long she'd spent spaced out. [Um... sorry? Did you want to keep showing me things? I didn't mean to get distracted.]

Kat was about to respond but paused for a moment. *I could just say it's fine but... hmm... what about this...*

Kat released her hold on the door that regulated her thoughts and feelings from reaching Lily and allowed her feelings to rush through. Lily was instantly captured by the feeling of complete contentment. Her worries over wasting Kat's time completely melted away. For Lily, it was one thing for her to want to spend time with Kat, it allowed for many feelings to come to the surface with love being one of them. Perhaps not quite proper romantic love, but certainly more than love for a friend. Lily, while able to accept Kat liked having her around and knew they both wanted it to be in a more permanent fashion, didn't quite understand the depth of that.

For Lily, she'd somewhat assumed that Kat would have to have weaker feelings for her. Without sexual attraction, she'd falsely assumed that while Kat did favour her over others, it wasn't to the extent she favoured Kat. She believed Kat to just be more generally helpful and accepting. Feeling the depth of Kat's contentment though, made it hard to keep such silly notions in her mind. She could tell from the feelings she was receiving from Kat that the wasted time was no issue. Kat would happily sit here running her hands through Lily's hair for years before getting bored, something Lily wasn't even sure she could do.

Lily felt some embarrassment over this fact, and decided to distract them both. [Let's go back to the flashbacks]

Kat smiled and did just that.

Day 6 Morning

Mai hadn't taken an old master form this time, nor any of the others Kat had seen so far. Currently she looked like the protagonist of an old JRPG. She looked like a teenage boy on the cusp of adulthood with longish blue hair and a sword on his back. She wore close fitting leathers with minimal adornments. When Mai spoke though... it was with her default voice which clashed majorly. "Right. Up until now I've been teaching you the basics so that you can teach yourself in the future. Never forget those basics. You need plenty more time to get your forms perfect by yourself but... we don't have forever.

"I know you are going to be using your fans for real soon. While I have some misgivings about that... I can at least trust you not to cause more harm than good, to yourself or others... though your healing certainly helps with the first of those points. Then again, I wouldn't have been able to train you so much without it so perhaps that is a moot point.

"For the rest of our time together will be fighting you. Each day will be a different fighter. First up will be a novice swordsman. They are decidedly more dangerous than they might seem at first and if you want to avoid injuring them overmuch it will take more effort than you might think. To start with you just need to defeat me using your fans in any way you can. Later I will add additional conditions such as taking me in alive, alive and mostly unharmed, or adding in someone for you to defend.

"Now, two more things. First, I don't want you using demonic energy for this. I imagine it will be a crutch if you do, the same way mana can be. The second thing is that I ask you not to worry about causing me undue harm. I'll be simulating someone at the skill level of your current combatant. If you cut off a few arms or legs that's fine. My core will be safe, I have a multitude of ways to ensure that.

"So go nuts. Though be warned, I said I'll be regulating my strength and durability, so while I personally am fine with you taking of an arm or two dozen, a normal person won't be. So use this as a chance to figure out what level of force is appropriate. Now, READY"

As soon as Mai took her 'stance' if it could even be called that, Kat spotted a tonne of openings. The footwork was rather poor and the sword was being held much too low to protect her head in time. Kat dashed forward, fans in hand but closed, and smacked Mai in the head, making use of the opening. She was not prepared for Mai's head to explode, blue goop going everywhere.

Kat jumped back in fright, breath caught in her throat. "Now Kat. That was clearly too much force" said Mai, not even bothering to reform her head. "Let this be a lesson to you about just how weak some people can be. You might have been using your demonic energy but you hit VERY hard. Granted this is a bit of an exaggeration, you wouldn't have taken a real boy's head off, but you struck the temple perfectly. It would definitely have killed him."

Oops. I didn't use my film trick to spread out the blow... and... shit maybe I do need this more than I thought. What would I have done if I'd gone up against someone who just looked impressive.

Kat gained a new appreciation for her training in that moment, and renewed her determination to take it seriously. The rest of Day 6 was spent learning to regulate her strength. It was surprisingly difficult without using her demonic energy and found that for someone of her strength, kill and overkill, or rather defeat and death, were separated by a very thin line.. Even if healing magic could certainly help in these situations Kat had already been in a few situations where it wasn't.

Chapter 628 - 628 References. References Everywhere.

Kat's memories of Day 7, 8 and 9 had her facing off against increasingly stronger and more technically proficient versions of the boy she'd faced on Day 6. For some reason Kat didn't understand, every day his hair got longer and spikier and his sword got a little larger even though he wasn't any taller. Kat didn't know what to make of those changes, though Lily had suspicions.

Day 10 brought out a new character, this time it was a large hulking man with no visible weapons. 'He' was a massive 214cm tall (7 feet) with chest hair that looked a little bit like a lotus, and scars everywhere. 'His' head was shaved into a short Mohawk and Kat considered his beard to be quite impressive. It was a little strange that he only wore red underwear and nothing else but Kat didn't ever get long to worry about it. Mai didn't bother starting off weak after the 9th day and started fighting at 'full' strength straight away.

Day 10's fighter always moved to stay up close and personal with Kat, trying to catch her with heavy punches or grabs and throws. All of Mai's attacks in this form were massively telegraphed, they had to be when the body was so large both in height and width alongside the massive muscles. Quite often though, it didn't exactly help Kat. She learnt the hard way that despite her demonic strength there were things tougher than her. Kat knew that before but... she hadn't expected a human looking figure to be so much stronger.

Day 11 featured another fighter that didn't have any weapons. They had a large cross scar like Day 10's fighter, but this one was across the chest. This new person was actually around Kat's height with an

open red shirt and baggy blue shorts with white edging. For some reason they had a straw hat on their head that Mai removed immediately before starting to attack.

Kat wanted to complain about the 'no powers' rule because Mai in this new form was constantly stretching her arms and legs out to land extra hits when she could. This was balanced by the fact that Mai was constantly shouting THE NAMES OF HER ATTACKS out which really did help with dodging them most of the time. They were also the toughest fighter so far, in the literal sense. Kat slammed multiple full strength smacks with the edge of her closed fan to almost no effect. In the end, Kat was pretty sure she only 'won' those fights by outlasting Mai in that form, and it took HOURS. They were late for dinner on Day 11.

Day 12 featured an average size, or perhaps slightly short girl. She was a big departure from the previous days. Where as all the other figures looked somewhat weathered, this new one was clearly a younger girl. Kat thought she looked like a cross between little red riding hood and a vampire hunter... and also sort of felt like an energetic version of Lily for some reason. Lily agreed while watching the flashback. Neither could figure out why. Oh... there was also the GIANT SCYTHE twice as tall as this new form was.

Kat had never felt so slow in her life. Mai used this form to run circles around her and force Kat to use more defensive stances and learn to track fast moving foes without relying on slowing her mind down with demonic energy. Kat's eyes were also opened by seeing how Mai was using the scythe not just to attack, which she did a LOT, but also using it as a way to move around the battlefield constantly changing the way she was moving to keep Kat on her toes.

Day 13 seemed like a nice rest day. Mai was nowhere to be found and Major... er... Shizuka, was available to hang out with. Enuco had made herself scarce as well, so the girls had just spent a nice morning hanging out in the garden. They were having a small picnic when a hydra just showed up in next to them.

Massive teeth, glowing red eyes, the size of two busses stacked together with legs as thick as tree trunks and a tail that could nearly count as its own giant creature just appeared right next to them. This became an impromptu lesson in teamwork and co-ordination.

After chopping off the first head to reveal blue goop that quickly sprouted into two more heads, Kat realised this was Mai. That also lead her to realising that Mai was consistently attacking harder and faster whenever she went for Kat. This was even clearer with two heads.

It quickly became a mess, because once Kat realised it was Mai she stopped using her demonic fire to attack and things just went downhill from there. Mai regularly baited the pair into taking off a head, or if they left one overly injured the other heads would just rip it off so that two more could grow. By the time Shizuka collapsed from exhaustion Mai had over fifty heads and Kat was doing all she could just to keep Shizuka safe from most of them.

It was at this point Kat realised that Mai was REALLY strong. Sure Kat hadn't been using her demonic fire to even the odds, but the sheer size of the hydra really hit home that Mai could do creative things with her powers. While Enuco was strong, but semi-retired, it was clear Mai had never stopped and was easily the more powerful of the two now.

After the hydra from Day 13, Kat almost wanted to laugh at her opponent on Day 14. She didn't and would be thankful for that fact shortly. For that was the issue. Her next opponent was short. They were of stocky build and fit the idea of a 'dwarf' perfectly. They had a long braided orange beard and what looked like fine chainmail armour and a double sided axe. Kat would quickly learn the power of the short.

In Kat's mind, it was both strangely similar yet different to fighting her opponent from Day 10. Mai's knew form was all about getting up close and personal, like Day 10, but the difference was instead of abusing the additional power and mass, they abused their power and height. Constantly going for awkward places on her body like her knees and shins, forcing Kat to actually start flying around to combat them. Mai cackled like a madwomen and asked why Kat hadn't been flying before. When Kat's response was 'I thought we were fighting on the ground' Mai responded by asking if it took demonic energy to fly.

Day 15 was ariel combat. This was a day where Mai simply matched Kat's form, though with larger wings to allow for flight. Mai did grumble about that fact a little bit but wasn't willing to push the issue, especially when Kat asked Mai where the extra mass she clearly had when pretending to be a hydra went. They agreed to just ignore these things.

Sadly, Kat didn't exactly learn much this day. Mai lacked practice in flight and what really hit hard was the lack of instincts Kat seemed to possess. Kat could fly circles around Mai before lunch time, and while Mai still put up a decent fight with superior technique and her own set of fans, it wasn't enough to compare with Kat's instinctual control of the air. That was the end of flying lessons.

Day 16 Kat spent wondering if the whole day was dedicated to making sure she wasn't getting a big head. Lily struggle greatly to watch this day of training, though not for reasons you might expect. Mai decided to show Kat a more stereo typical look at hell.

Mai had altered Kat's form slightly to include black hair and red skin as well as changing up the proportions quite a bit. The only reason Kat knew it was based on her at all was the fact Mai kept her outfit which looked to be straining valiantly to contain Mai's new 'assets'. The moment Kat saw the whip in Mai's right hand she just sighed and accepted her fate. It was a moderately painful (so basically your average Tuesday for Kat) barrage of whip strikes, and choke holds that followed.

Occasionally Kat would find herself completely bound with just a few flicks of Mai's wrist, something that made Kat rethink her stance on not using whips as it seemed quite useful. Kat's lack of reaction always seemed to confuse Mai. Kat didn't know why, but the fact Lily was struggling to stay in the memory instead of just letting it break before retreating to her own fantasy seemed to indicate Lily DID know.

Day 17 was the final day and Mai picked... what looked like an ordinary schoolgirl. She had bigger than normal eyes and short blue hair that would look black in the right lighting. Kat was confused about what the lesson was today until Mai pulled out a massive hammer. Where the hammer came from. She didn't know.. She also would not learn, as that was when she was called away to meet Lily.

Chapter 629 - 629 Final Checks

"CONTENT" 'Lily' said. Will be used for when Kat repeats something at Lily's request. Notice the " around Lily's name. This is mostly just to keep things clean and save repeating things.

Lily let out a cute little yawn at the end of the flashback session and Kat realised it must have been getting kind of late. The room looked the same as it had before, and there were no windows so it was a quite hard to tell how much time had passed. Still, Kat wasn't going to keep Lily up any longer if her girlfriend was already yawning regardless of what time it was. Kat found the light 'switch' which was actually just a button and pushed it in.

With the lights 'off' there was actually still a faint glow coming from the ceiling, it was very soft and Kat could tell she was using her night vision to see properly. It was just barely enough for a normal human to see the edges of things. For Lily in Kat, it was easy on the eyes and they could see practically everything.

Kat smiled back at Lily whose orange eyes stared over at her. Kat could now feel the emotional command for Kat to go back to holding her. It was a little funny and Kat let out a small giggle as she hopped back into the bed and pulled Lily in close. Lily apparently had other ideas because she hopped up onto Kat's stomach and curled up into a ball under the covers. She wasn't heavy at all, and Kat was able to get used to the new weight easily. Like that, the pair were able to easily find sleep.

The next morning, they woke up and got their bearings. Lily found out she was surprisingly ok waking up as a cat if it meant she could sleep buried in Kat's clothes. Just being surrounded by the scent of her girlfriend was a considerable plus, and she could feel that her body wasn't suffering at all for sleeping curled up where it was, Lily was happy to stay resting exactly how she was until Kat woke up. Kat on the other hand woke up and made sure not to move at all lest she disturb Lily, worried that even disrupting her breathing too much would wake Lily... who had awoken at the same time because of the bond. Kat however, had closed both doors to sleep just in case and neither had noticed.

Thankfully they didn't spend too long trying not to wake each other as someone knocked on the door. Clearly the rooms were monitored... but considering it was a hospital that wasn't exactly strange. Lily scampered off of Kat's stomach and out from under the covers so that she could see. Kat, feeling the weight of Lily leave her, hopped up immediately and got opened the door to reveal Nira. "Good morning you two. Would you like to come in for a final check up now? We can put it off of course but I'm sure you're both ready to go home."

Kat instantly glanced over at Lily for confirmation. [Why are you looking at me? It's not like I can respond?]

That may be true but I'm happy to just hang around here if you want. Sure, we can hang around back on Earth but you might not have wanted to introduce yourself just yet. I know Sylvie will coo over you for a while, probably Vivian as well unless she feels like being a proper adult for a few minutes. Callisto will probably just pretend everything is business as usual but I don't want you to get overwhelmed.

Kat felt a burst of what she was guessing to be love travel down the link because of the concern she was showing. Kat gave a slight grin at it but internally was wondering if just showing what she considered to be basic care was enough to cause such a reaction that it might be dangerous to go too far out of her way for Lily. The feeling was already exceptional strong in Kat's mind. Still, Kat just kept staring because

bursts of emotion were not exactly clear answers. [Oh. Right. Um... yeah I'm happy to get the final check-ups done. No sense hiding away forever. Plus the real people I'm hiding from are my parents and I can still avoid them for a day or two at minimum.]

Kat rolled her eyes at that but scooped Lily up and followed Nira out of the room. They headed back to the room they were in yesterday and found it changed once again. Now it looked like a more standard doctor's office with the extra screens and two desks being the main difference. "Can you just place Lily on that examination table?" asked Slethnoth weird sounding voice and all.

Kat moved Lily over but let her jump out under her own power, a detail Kat didn't even notice consciously but the others in the room did. Lily softly padded around the table before curling up again. She wasn't tired exactly, but it felt right. If she was forced to explain it, she would say 'all of my instincts insist I'm safe so I rest' as her answer. Apparently curling into a ball was her default relaxed position now. Kat took a seat in one of the awkward looking doctor's chairs and was surprised at the fact her wings clipped through and that it was comfortable at all. Praise demonic technology!

Nobody, still in Nira's form, quickly ran through a few tests using the table. It was clear the examination table was also a scanner of some kind because Slethnoth was going through data seemingly from nowhere the table was likely providing. Still it didn't take long for Nobody to give Lily the all clear.

"Well Lily, it looks like everything is fine on my end. There isn't anything wrong with the body part of your new body. Slethnoth?" said Nobody.

At Nobody's prompting, Slethnoth picked up, "Additionally, Lily's soul is about where I'd expect it to be. Not as stable as projected, but after the new data from yesterday it has continued to slowly stabilise with help from the bond with Kat. I think she'll be safe to release"

"Great" said Nobody with a clap of her hands, "Now switch places"

Kat paused and looked over at Nobody who was clearly glancing between her and Lily. *What?*

[Oh don't worry Kat it's just a basic check up. I hardly even felt anything]

I'm not worried Lily just surprised. I wonder why they need to examine me at all.

Kat felt Lily's disbelief at that. [Ah yes, you totally didn't go through a life changing ritual to bind us together that might potentially cause problems because the whole thing is untested. Nope, clearly you are the perfect picture of health and haven't had any invasive medical procedures since you were born]

Kat grinned, happy to see Lily talking back to her a little bit. Even if it was mostly sarcasm, it was good to see that dating Lily hadn't suddenly turned her into a yes man. It wasn't a big worry, but Lily hadn't really gainsaid Kat all that much recently. Of course, Kat was forgetting that was rather in character for Lily and nothing had changed.

Still, the pair swapped. Lily hopped down to the ground, surprised at how easy it was on her legs before jumping up to take the chair Kat had been on specifically. Kat didn't notice right away, as she wasn't looking, but Nobody and Nira had big grins on their face at the action. "Lay down please" Nobody said offhandedly when she turned to see Kat just sitting. Accepting this Kat lay down and shivered a little bit out of habit.

Despite the table being metal, it was nowhere near cold enough to actually cause Kat to shiver from the cold. Still, it wasn't entirely comfortable either despite letting her wings phase through. In fact, Kat noted idly, this was the most uncomfortable she had been since becoming a demon if you didn't count combat encounters. Still, she wasn't a child, and forced herself to relax while being examined.

"How are things on your end Slethnoth?" Nobody asked as she poked various areas on Kat's body.

"It's a little harder for me. I've never had the privilege of examining a nondem's soul before so I don't really know what it's supposed to look like. I have to make a few educated guesses but I think these numbers look correct? Damn, I might not have been the best specialist for something like this. I have a lot of experience with souls, especially recovering ones, but nondem's aren't my area. I was never involved in nondem tests," grumbled Slethnoth.

Nobody shrugged, "Well on my end she's in better then perfect health. Her regeneration is clearly top quality and keeps her at peak performance. From my point of view she has what might just be the best body any Rank 2 demon could possess. Her bones are strong, her skin is smooth but decently tough. Her horns look healthy. The only thing to note really is that her tail is notably longer then average but that's not a medical condition or an issue. Her instincts clearly have adapted specifically for it."

Nobody shrugged again.. "I guess you're good to go? We can't really examine you as accurately as we can Lily, we didn't exactly run a tonne of simulations specifically for you after all."

Chapter 630 - 630 Cat In The Hat... No House

Reminder. 'Lily' said is for Kat speaking on Lily's behalf.

Kat waved to the three other demons with Lily in her arms. Lily just meowed at them while saying [Goodbye!] cheerily in their minds. As the flames surrounded them, Kat was rather happy that Lily actually remained there instead of getting sent separately. Lily watched the dancing flames surrounded them, while Kat, instead watched Lily watching those flames. She was able to note that they didn't properly cast light over things, and Lily had the same shadows she had when they left the room, despite the flames looking as though they gave off light.

Kat decided to leave open the door and allowed the sense of calm wonder that normally appeared during transit wash out, while accepting the burning curiosity with a dash of wonder to it from Lily. Of course, feeling these emotions, Lily wouldn't quite put together that Kat was watching her with those emotions and not the flames around them. For Kat, the feeling was surprisingly comparable. They travelled in silence, not even sending mental messages during the journey all the way until the flames receded to reveal Kat's room.

Kat half expected Lily to jump out and go exploring the house now that she was so much smaller. Take everything in from a new perspective. She was pleasantly mistaken. Lily, seeing the flames vanished, decided that whatever she could potentially looking at was less important than curling up in Kat's arms and just enjoying the embrace. So that's what she did. Lily twisted herself around so that she'd curled into a ball with her face against Kat's chest and relaxed completely.

Kat gave a slight smile at that and wished slightly for a free hand to stroke Lily while she was relaxing. It was quite the adorable site and Kat wasn't immune to it in any way. The only thing keeping her from just hopping onto the bed and relaxing alongside the bundle in her arms was the fact that she hadn't seen Sylvie in over two weeks. So, Kat got up and headed for the door.

With her hands full, Kat needed to use her tail to operate the door, and was rather thankful that the doors had lever action handles instead of round ones. Her tail was quite strong, but getting it to grip and turn a spherical metal object would have been a challenge. Stepping through the door, Kat turned her ears to listen for the others. When she heard all three of them downstairs eating Kat glanced out of the window to find the sun had just finished peaking over the horizon.

Must be eating breakfast. Should I stand up here like an idiot while waiting for them to finish? There isn't necessarily a reason to interrupt them... other than not wanting to stand around doing nothing... but I can just relax with Lily... but Sylvie will be sad if she finds out I didn't go straight to her... hmm... decisions decisions...

With my hearing it's possible to not get caught... Just as Kat was warming up the idea though she made the mistake of imagining Sylvie's face if she found out and really, the decision was made then and there. Kat walked downstairs, taking them slower than usual to not bounce her passenger around and stepped off onto the landing.

With the additional care she put in, nobody heard her coming down the stairs either. There was just a small moment where Vivian, the only one who could see the stairs while eating, glanced over and saw Kat along with the small bundle of fur and wings curled up in her arms. Vivian's face morphed into a large grin before disappearing so quickly even Kat wasn't completely sure she saw it until she reviewed the memory to confirm.

Vivian then started to use subtle hints with her eyes and posture to direct Kat to stand behind Sylvie before saying anything. Kat wanted to shrug and nod, but with Lily in her arms she settled for just nodding. Another few careful steps and she was behind Sylvie. "So when do you think Kat will be getting back?" asked Vivian as if she wasn't looking directly at Kat's face as she said it.

Callisto noticed this slightly odd angle instantly and glanced at the reflective cutlery to get a view of what was behind her and Sylvie. Seeing Kat in the reflection she debated over if it was best to spoil the answer or let Sylvie guess. Of course... Sylvie spent a lot of time around Callisto since moving in. Much of this was just watching Callisto go about her day and chatting.

So when Sylvie saw notably odd movements from Callisto, she made note of that and copied the motion perfectly. Callisto's face morphed into a big smile, watching Sylvie copy her movements, and Vivian couldn't keep her grin hidden any longer. Sadly for Sylvie... while she did know what Callisto did with her hands, she didn't know what Callisto was actually doing, and missed the reflection of Kat in the cutlery.

Wanting to help this play along, Kat moved her tail to sit just above Sylvie's head and channelled some demonic energy. As she did so, she felt the strangest sensation, as the energy flowed out of her she felt energy from Lily rushing in to fill the gaps. The visible light from Kat's flame clued Sylvie in that something was going on behind her, whipping around her eyes going wide as they spotted Kat's figure. "KAT!" shouted Sylvie happily as she bounced off the chair before hugging Kat around the waist. Kat smiled and shifted so that Lily was now more visible. "...cat?" 'repeated' Sylvie with audible confusion.

Apparently Lily's knew ears were good enough to here the difference in those words and pulled her head out of Kat's clothes to face Sylvie. The pair locked eyes, and something strange seemed to pass between them. Kat missed it completely, not understanding the war for the dominant force of cuteness in Kat's life going on right under the demon in question's nose.

The argument was fierce, Sylvie arguing for privilege as a little sister to always be the cute one, with Lily firing back that as Kat's girlfriend she got first priority. Sylvie returned fire with the fact Kat was a surrogate parental figure making her in many ways Kat's daughter, and, if Lily wanted to play the girlfriend card, her daughter as well if Lily's commitment was real.

That critical hit sent the silent war that not even the newly founded bond picked up on, to a crashing end with Sylvie victorious. Lily bowed to Sylvie's superior claim to the cutest in Kat's life without further complications. Granted, Lily didn't mind overmuch. Sylvie was adorable as well, and Lily knew in her heart that she didn't want Kat to just see her as 'cute' anyway. Sure it would have been nice, but to her mind it would have hindered her ability to initiate lewd things.

The next thing Kat made note of was Sylvie making adorable grabbing motions towards Lily and asking, "Can I hold her?"

Kat snorted lightly at that, because Sylvie wasn't looking at Lily to ask that request but to Kat. Lily couldn't help the faint bit of amusement she had at the situation, much happier in fact that Kat had been the one prompted and not her. Sadly, Kat would do the 'right' thing and instead of answering Sylvie, she asked Lily her thoughts.

Lily sighed internally and gave Kat an affirmation, mostly because of her loss in the silent war of cuteness. With that decided Kat shuffled Sylvie over to the couch before getting her to sit down and letting Lily free to hop on Sylvie's lap. This was because Kat had no idea how heavy Lily was. Her demonic strength prevented her from feeling the strain, and there was a slight worry that with the wings, and the horns, and perhaps other things separating Lily from a normal cat, she would be too heavy for the small girl. Granted, Kat didn't exactly know how much Sylvie could lift anyway, or if a normal cat would be within that range. It was just better to be safe than sorry.

"So what's it like being a cat?" asked Sylvie brimming with honest curiosity. Previous contention already forgotten... especially because of her win.

"It is both surprisingly comfortable and surprisingly strange. I... I don't feel weird being like this, if that's what you asking. While it would be NICE to have my humanoid body ready, it's not as large of a concern as I thought it would be. Mainly that I have no idea what to say, or rather, what to force Kat to say, to my parents about the whole being stuck as a cat thing. Not sure they really believed me when I told them before it happened" said 'Lily'

Sylvie gave an accepting hum as she started to carefully scratch behind Lily's ears. Lily couldn't help purring slightly at the action... though something that Kat noticed is that it wasn't the same sound as when she did the same.. Something to think about perhaps.