

DEMONS 941

Chapter 941 Unexpected Guests

Kat was surprised when she heard the doorbell ring. It was early in the morning and everyone else was sitting down having breakfast. Sylvie was smiling happily as she munched down on pancakes that seemed to be half syrup. As the only one not eating, Kat thought it was only polite she open the door.

Who is it? Lily would just walk in these days and I didn't think Sylvie had anyone else coming over...?

Kat abused her speed a bit to get over to the door, but just as she was about to put her hand on the handle, Callisto said, "Kat, no need to get up I'm more than happy to answer the door,"

Which was of course, rather strange because Kat was already AT the door in question. It was even stranger when Callisto came around the corner and looked Kat dead in the eyes and mouthed 'say something back'. Um... "It's really no trouble, I mean... I've finished with breakfast?" said Kat unsure.

Callisto nodded, "If you really must get up please head up to my room. There's something I left on the bed. Start getting it ready and I'll be there to help you in a moment,"

Kat nodded and headed for the staircase confused. As she passed Callisto whispered "I think I know what's going on. I'll explain in a moment when I meet you upstairs,"

Still confused but reassured that at least someone knew what was going on, Kat dashed upstairs. She didn't hear Callisto opening the door with a calm face and a polite greeting, nor did she see the two visitors faces just yet. If she had, it would've answered many questions. They were clearly a married couple, and Callisto wasn't attempting to stab them, so it could only mean one thing.

They were Vivian's parents. The resemblance was pretty strong. Long, thick blonde hair tied back. Bright sunny disposition, and great legs. A slight tan that wasn't present on Vivian and a wide smile that seemed to brighten up the room. They were also quite tall, even taller than Vivian in fact. Though that part wasn't a surprise considering her father was tall for a man let alone a woman.

Next to him stood Vivian's mother, who looked like a shorter red-headed version of Vivian. It was all in the face see, and she had a matching attitude with her husband. "Oh Callisto, it's so wonderful for you to greet us at the door. We're here for our grandchild's birthday so I hope we didn't interrupt any plans!" cheered Vivian's mother.

"Not at all," said Callisto, her voice betraying nothing. "Please head inside. There are still some pancakes and syrup available of you want. Vivian and Sylvie are just eating now,"

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"I think we might do just that!" cheered the small woman and she practically glided into the house. Her husband followed behind, a smile on his face chest puffed out, proud simply at the mention of grandchildren.

Callisto of course bowed to them as they entered, waiting to make sure they were well clear of the door before closing it herself and then dashing upstairs. Kat was able to hear the various exclamations of 'hello' and the scraping of chairs. Callisto managed to make her way upstairs during this and opened the door to her room. "How much have you worked out?"

“Um... I’m guessing that Vivian’s parents are visiting?” said Kat.

Callisto nodded, “Yes indeed. I should have expected it but they’ve never visited without giving due warning before. I suspect they are doing this as a bit of revenge for Vivian adopting two children without so much as talking to them about it first. Vivian’s mother is called Roxane, but prefers Roxy, while Vivian’s father is Bruce. They are... honestly they are both like older version of Vivian in both looks and personality. The only concern I have is that they happen to go to church a lot growing up with Vivian... not to say they would do anything but... well... there is a difference between dismissing the church’s teachings and adopting someone who is actually a demon,”

“Is it likely to be an issue? Should I go hang out at Lily’s for the day?” asked Kat, concern bubbling up her spine.

Callisto bit her lip as she considered it for a moment before shaking her head, “No, I do not know how long Bruce and Roxy intend to stick around and I very much doubt they plan to just be here for the day. You will need to meet them at some point during their stay. I suspect it will not be a problem... but Roxy will likely try to convince you that it IS a problem for a good while to start with,”

“What?” asked Kat confused.

“Roxy... likes messing with people. Bruce is more chill about things and is happy to watch his wife go about causing trouble... but Roxy is perfectly happy, and very skilled, at playing up anger and disappointment. It is the reason I called you up here for this. Roxy will likely say all sorts of things to try and annoy someone, probably Vivian. Just... just know that she means know harm. If she was actually angry Bruce would step in and start bashing heads so... yeah let us hope it does not get close to that point,” explained Callisto.

With that said, Callisto made her way back downstairs and Kat followed. Kat quickly took up a seat on the lounge, ducking down and slouching so that her horns weren’t poking over the back of the chair. Roxy and Bruce were seated facing the kitchen so this wasn’t too hard to accomplish. Kat thought Roxy or Bruce might say something like ‘why no hello’ or ‘hiding something from us’ but nothing was said. In fact, there was barely any sound.

After Roxy and Bruce had given Sylvie and Vivian their own respective hugs they sat down and started eating without a word and Vivian was starting to sweat a bit. Sylvie was managing much better. She had all sorts of questions but clearly some sort of strange silent game was taking place. The adults were being silly and Sylvie was determined to win. Of course, Sylvie had never really encountered the silent technique before. Silence was perfectly acceptable. She got a lot of her best thinking done in silence. So the chance to eat pancakes in silence on her birthday? Well that wasn’t strange at all in her mind.

Eventually, the food was finished and Callisto started to collect plates. Roxy didn’t say anything, she just joined in by grabbing the syrup with one hand a collection of cups in the other. The cups went to the sink, and the syrup the cupboard. “I am perfectly capable of completing the work by myself,” Callisto informed Roxy... who promptly ignored the statement. She didn’t say anything, but she kept working alongside Callisto. The interesting thing for the observers was that they were in almost perfect sync.

While that bit of showboating was going on, Bruce walked over to the couch and sat down, glancing over at Kat. When he caught sight of her, his eyebrows shot into his forehead and he opened his mouth

to say something... only to remember Roxy was trying not to say anything. So he clamped his mouth shut and schooled his face. Kat wasn't even sure what part of everything surprised him.

Was it the fact she was there at all? The outfit? The horns and wings? Did he actually think she was a demon or did he just assume it was all part of Kat's look for some reason? Whatever the case, he was clearly willing to follow Roxy's lead, just as Callisto said. That didn't mean he couldn't casually stare at Kat the entire time. *Lily. I'm freaking out a little bit. You busy?*

[About what? Also no not really. I was sort of asleep but I was waking up because I felt your agitation.]

Sorry about waking you up. As for what's happening... well Vivian's parents have shown up out of the blue and apparently they might or might not have issues with me being a demon.

[Why is that?]

Well to hear Callisto tell it, they are Catholic, but the real issue is that Roxanne, that's Vivian's mother by the way, well... apparently she likes to mess with people so she's going to play up the outrage for a while to get back at Vivian for not informing them she was adopting anyone until after the papers were signed.

[I'm not sure how you expect me to be able to help Kat. I mean, I could come over... but depending on how they want to play it introducing the fact you're dating a lesbian is only going to stir the pot. Better off waiting for that extra reveal. Hmm... should I stay away from the party later?]

No way. I want you to be here to see the look on Sylvie's face! Besides... hopefully this whole thing will just be a minor issue.

Chapter 942 Roxanne Goes Hard

In the kitchen, Roxy started to boil some water as soon as the washing up was done. Callisto didn't say a word, simply ducking to the storage room under the stairs and removing a bunch of small collapsible tables she set next to the couches. Vivian was sitting down on the couch with Sylvie on her lap like some kind of shield, Bruce still wasn't saying anything...

The silence was cut by the shrieking of the kettle. Kat didn't flinch, but only because she was able to hear the pressure boiling and had been watching out for it. Sylvie was fine as well, but Vivian jumped slightly, making Sylvie's indifference somewhat irrelevant. Callisto, Bruce and Roxy were able to ignore the sound.

Callisto grabbed a serving tray and a number of teacups that she filled with the pot before distributing them around the room for everyone to enjoy. Once the serving tray was put away, Callisto walked past and Vivian grabbed onto the edge of Callisto's skirt, shivering slightly like a frightened child. Kat had never seen Callisto move so fast. Between one blink and the next, Callisto managed to seat herself beside Vivian, blocking the view Roxy would have of Vivian if she took the final available chair.

Hmm... I wonder who planned that. Callisto was obviously waiting for an excuse to sit with Vivian and... perhaps defend her from Roxy. At the same time, Callisto was trying to be all proper. I'd be willing to bet if Vivian hadn't grabbed her she'd have taken the other spot. So... who is responsible for the planning? Maybe they just know each other well enough.

The silence continued for a few minutes before Roxy shattered it with her statement, "You know Vivian, I never minded the fact that you're obviously sleeping with your roommate. You never did like going to church. I just feel like adopting a demon is a step too far you know? There's being contrarian then there's... well this," Roxy's words were said in a weirdly polite tone that seemed to indicate she was doing this out of pure concern for her daughter.

Kat didn't really know how to take it, so she just kept her face as impassive as possible. Sylvie doing the same. Kat didn't know what Roxy actually thought of her, and Callisto's words earlier muddled the waters further. *Does Roxy think I am a demon? Or is she simply messing around with Vivian thinking that I'm wearing this as a costume for Sylvie's party?*

While Vivian was still trying to hide behind Sylvie, flinching at every word, Callisto was ready to respond. It was an easy answer for Callisto to give, and it kept the conversation focused squarely in her direction, "I am sorry to inform you that I am not in fact sleeping with your daughter,"

Roxy glared heavily at that response and fired back with her own, "Well that's hardly acceptable. You've been living together for years and the fact that you run around in a maid outfit... well that implied to me you were a bit more open with your fetishes than that. Really? More than five years in a house together and still not sleeping with my daughter? I'd ask if you think yourself too good for her but you ARE in a maid outfit. Is she shy? Do you not want to go any further without a collar and leash?" **nOvelnext.COM**

"I do believe it has been mentioned before but I simply don't sleep. Ever," stated Callisto plainly. Vivian was letting out minor squeaks of protest, but trying to burry them with Sylvie's back so that the sounds didn't alert anyone to her inner turmoil. Everyone noticed.

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Roxy gave out a long sigh and looked at Callisto with pity. "That is an acceptable explanation for not giving my daughter proper nightly attention I suppose," Vivian was of course bright red at this point, "but it is awfully depressing to hear. No sleep? Surely that cannot be healthy, either mentally or physically. Are you taking steps to correct the insomnia?"

"It is a medical issue," Callisto fired back with a completely professional tone, "it is not that I have insomnia or that I am capable of sleep. It is also not a new issue, I have been like this as long as I can remember. It is also not something I believe needs any fixing. It gives me significant additional time during the day, even if I do require a schedule to ensure mental downtime,"

"Well even with that I can't think it's too healthy," retorted Roxy. "the idea of spending your nights, cold, alone, perhaps a little dry?" Roxy flashed a slight smirk, only for half a second. A normal human might think it was just a trick of the light. Kat of course saw it in perfect clarity and Callisto had an eye for detail. Well, Vivian did as well but she wasn't even looking. "I hardly think it's all that comfortable to be up for hours at a time. No rest..."

"You seem to be mixing your metaphors a bit there Roxy, are you loosing your touch?" asked Callisto hoping to get a shot in.

Except she was being bated. "Oh? Might touch? I was under the impression you were more interested in my daughter, but is it perhaps the mother you are after? Small and bouncy your type? Of course Vivian is at least one of those things, and is attempting to make herself the latter considering she is using a

small child as a defence mechanism. Well? What do you have to safe for yourself?" Roxy turned to stare at Vivian to make this last point, trying to get the focus of the conversation back on her daughter.

Sadly for her... maybe... who knew what was going on in Roxy's head? Sylvie was the one who actually responded. "I find it quiet pleasing to be used as a defence mechanism," Sylvie was mimicking Callisto's tone shockingly well. Her voice was still a bit childish for obvious reasons, but if you didn't know about the adoption you'd be hard pressed to guess the two were unrelated. "Currently I am getting to spend time with my mother, and we are both happier for it. I do not know if I can say the same sort of interaction is occurring between you and your own daughter,"

Holy shit. Sylvie you savage.

[What did she do?]

*Um... hmm... well if you're not doing anything maybe try looking through my eyes? I'll try and push the memories towards you. Sylvie just roasted Vivian's mother. We're waiting for a response. *

"Well Vivian is a little large to have on my lap these days," said Roxy with a thoughtful look on her face, seemingly unconcerned with the retort, though the quick flash of surprise Kat saw it her eyes were delightful to notice. "Perhaps we could stack up? Though Vivian would have to be on the bottom... and I'm just not sure she can appreciate the position. I mean, she does have a maid after all. Unless that's the dynamic? I suppose I hadn't really considered it the specifics all that thoroughly..." Roxy was of course insinuating the opposite. That she had considered it. Thoroughly.

Vivian's blush was threatening to set fire to the nearby fabric. She was bright red all the way from her neck to her ears and sounded more like the tea kettle than a person. Roxy took a calm sip of tea, as if indicating she was willing to give Vivian a short reprieve just to recover... for more teasing of course. Bruce still remained silent but the slight smile on his face was enough to convey he was enjoying the whole ordeal.

"Vivian never requested me as a maid service, she simply will not let me pay her rent so I took this up as a way to repay my..." Callisto paused. She knew how to phrase this to give Roxy as little ammunition as possible but... she couldn't do it. The setup was exceptional. Vivian was embarrassed and it was... it was just too perfect. So instead of doing the 'right' thing, she leaned forward and continued in the most sultry voice possible, "deepest gratitude," Kat didn't think Callisto had it in her.

Vivian clearly didn't either because she squawked and then fell to the side, seemingly passing out from the pressure. Roxy was grinning like a shark that smelled blood in the water, Sylvie was wiggling a little to escape now that she'd been dragged 'down' with Vivian and wasn't really able to see everyone properly, Bruce was chuckle quietly and Kat... well Kat didn't know what to make of that.

[Holy heck. Remember how I said 'nobody knows what Callisto and Vivian are?' I take it back. Roxy might, and perhaps she's trying to get them to figure it out?]

Perhaps... but I feel like this is more about teasing her daughter and Callisto couldn't resist the setup properly. Nira does this a lot with her own kids.

[Oh now there is a horrifying thought. Imagine Roxy and Nira getting the whole family together. Especially considering the fact that they're all Succubi. The poor kids. They'd be decimated by the end.]

Poor Lily. You don't think we could escape either do you?

[Oh. OH NO. We cannot allow a meeting. Ever!]

Chapter 943 Roxanne Doesn't Stop

"Now, I suppose I shall return to the question of your second adopted ward, Kat. I've let myself get distracted by your comments Callisto, and it's been fun... but now I want to talk about the demon in the room. Is it attention? I very much doubt that Vivian is neglecting you. She's more likely to be smothering. Is that the reason? An attempt at rebelling away from her cute bubbly image? I mean the kimono is flattering but I can't see the appeal of the horns. Then again, I do suppose my daughter's chosen partner walks around the house in maid outfit. Hmm... are you being pressured into it Kat?" queried Roxy softly, with concern lacing her voice. Vivian wasn't quite recovered enough to retort... and likely wouldn't anyway.

Lily, help me backseat here. What's the best response?

[How should I know?]

Well, Roxy is apparently just messing with us so I'm looking for the best way to mess with her in turn. I'm open to suggestions here. The best idea I can come up with is just showing off my power in some irrefutable way.

[Why not just say they're real and then explain the story behind your kimono? She might think you're deflecting or just lying but by starting off with the truth it'll be all the funnier when the realisation sets in.]

I like the way you think girlfriend. The burst of joy from Lily at the address made Kat feel warm and fuzzy inside. Clearly it was a god way of thanking Lily for her advice. Callisto caught the shine in Kat's eye and decided to simply hold her tongue. It was clear to her at least that Kat had something planned and she wanted to see where it went. "Much like Callisto, I'm afraid I must correct a misconception. I am in fact a real demon. I wasn't always one, but things happen. As for my kimono, thanks for the compliment. It is a gift from the man who raised me. It belonged to his late wife and I take good care of it,"

Roxy got a slightly pinched look on her face. She wanted to call Kat straight out for 'lying' about being a demon, but Kat really did seem to believe it. Perhaps that meant she was worthy of pity? The problem then, was that Kat seemed to have things together... but why entertain such strange ideas then? Then there was the kimono. Roxanne didn't know how to react to that one. Was it appropriate to wear it so casually if it was so meaningful? Would a teenager understand clothes wore out? Then again... was this not a special occasion for Sylvie?

Of course, Kat was a real demon and the kimono she wore would likely outlive Roxanne herself... and then the orphanage... and the town... and the earth... the solar system. Heck depending on the lifespan of the universe that too might end before Kat's kimono crumbled to dust. On the other hand, without that information Roxy might suffer a minor heart attack if she found out that Kat didn't wear anything else. Something Lily had been a bit... distracted from working on mostly because of the other thoughts that always seemed to pop up. Were they just lewd thoughts...? Or perhaps... was Kat doing it intentionally to distract Lily?

Whatever the case, it was a mystery and Roxanne had decided on her answer. "Oh? That seems like quite the precious item. Would you tell me a bit more about the man who gave it to you and why you ended up adopted by my strange daughter?"

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Hmm... Kat didn't have any great play in mind for those questions so she decided to answer the only way she could, honestly. "Gramps is the one who gave this to me. Well, I CALL him Gramps but that's not his real name. I've lived at the orphanage in town for a-" Kat's throat closed up as she accidentally tried to speak a lie. "nearly as long as I can remember," amended Kat, because obviously she now also remembered living here with Vivian. "Gramps is in charge of the place and he practically raised me.

"As for how I ended up living here with Vivian, well that's mostly down to Sylvie. I'm nearly eighteen and I was informed by Gramps that I'd be forced to leave when I turned eighteen because of government regulations. This meant I was looking for options, and Sylvie made me promise that if I found a place I'd let her stay with me..." Roxanne gave Kat a 'that's hardly appropriate but continue' look.

"This meant that when someone, in this case Vivian, decided to adopt Sylvie... well... she thought it was only reasonable that she also request Vivian adopt me as well. I promised to take her with me when I left... so now she might be leaving first instead, Sylvie made it a condition of getting adopted, that I could come too," explained Kat.

"I'm not entirely pleased with the fact you were willing to make such a promise. Either you were lying to a lovely young girl... or you were planning to take care of a child... by yourself... at eighteen when you didn't even have a home lined up," said Roxanne with some annoyance in her tone. "Still... I suppose it is a matter of sisterhood and I can understand that at least. How did you meet Vivian though?"

This however, was an easy one to cause Roxy some grief over. "We met Vivian when Sylvie and I were attempting to use the fence in her backyard to sneak into the house on the other side!"

Roxy frowned and glared at her daughter... who still had not recovered. Seeing that the easy target was gone she looked to Callisto who smiled and said, "I was not present that day,".

Roxy was now getting a bit excited. She knew the girls were messing with her. The question was... were they lying? Perhaps... perhaps not. If they were playing the game properly it should at least be a somewhat twisted version of the truth. "I'm a little displeased that my dear daughter decided that was behaviour that she was willing to adopt you for. Though I suppose if she is able to curb any delinquent tendencies then it all balances out. Still... I must ask, what were you attempting to do?"

Hmm... do I say visit my girlfriend or visit me best friend? What's funnier? *nOvelnext.Com*

[I'm not sure. I mean, I wasn't your girlfriend at that point in time so you don't have to announce that just yet. She's already onto Callisto and Vivian and they're... well they're doing their own thing. Not sure how she'd take a confirmation of our relationship. Though... you could then bring up the fact I'm a cat girl. That would be another amusing reveal.]

I think that little factoid makes it the funnier answer. I can say 'I was trying to visit my cat-girl girlfriend but though at the time she wasn't a cat, or my girlfriend'. I want to see if she'll call me out on it, and I'll follow up with 'I can't lie' obviously. Then we'll just see how things play out.

[Oh yes please. I increasingly ridiculous answers that are true, and perhaps vaguely believable.]

"I happened to be visiting my catgirl girlfriend actually. She lives... I suppose next door is the best word for it. Of course, she wasn't my girlfriend at the time, or a cat girl, but this was quite some time ago now, so it's only natural some things change," said Kat.

Roxy held Kat's gaze for a few seconds as if trying to understand how such a ridiculous statement could come from someone who looked, for all intents and purposes, like she was telling the truth. "Are you a fan of Bluff? The card game Bluff?" asked Roxy.

Kat tilted her head and answered, "I'm not familiar with it, no,"

Roxy took a sip of tea and used that time to think. "I see..." she wasn't quite willing to call Kat out on any lies yet. She was assuming the girls bonded over a love of costuming or something. Kat was certainly pushing this little back and forth game they were having. Roxy wasn't quite willing to call foul, but things were heading in that direction. Of course, Kat was stating nothing but the truth. The fact it was so hard to believe only made it all the sweeter.

Things were actually starting to look up for the 'home team' as it were. Roxanne couldn't figure out what was going on with Kat at all. Bruce was starting to sit up straighter in his chair, and Vivian was able to use the focus on Kat to recover herself. Sylvie was a bit more put out from being dragged sideways but she was dealing with it well enough. Callisto was trying not to let her amusement show, it was difficult, but she had practice schooling her emotions and Roxy was rather focused just on Kat. Let's see if they could keep it that way.

Chapter 944 Musings of a Bruce

Despite the tension ratcheting up in the room, the home team felt that same silence was much more comfortable for them. Roxy was having trouble keeping up with what seemed like nonsense. The thing that was causing her more issues was actually just how honestly everyone was taking the information. Nobody was cracking, not even the slightest slip. Roxy knew Sylvie was a smart child... but she wasn't even ten. The idea she was being lied to, with no tells... well after all her years of practice she had some pride in those skills. Roxy wasn't willing to believe she'd gotten so rusty... so what the heck was going on here?

The answer that her pride wanted her to come to was that... it wasn't a lie. That everything being said was true. To admit otherwise would be disrespecting her skills... but her mind couldn't accept such a thing. Vivian was horrible at hiding things, even through letters. Could she really have hidden something like this? No, certainly not... right? Roxy took another sip of tea as the silence lingered.

Bruce took his own first sip of tea. He'd been watching the entire exchange and was able to notice a few more details. Kat wasn't lying... but something strange was going on. He'd picked up on her quick chats with Lily, but didn't have the context to know what it meant. He realised that Vivian had managed to find some interesting brats, and had gotten better at misleading her mother... even if she didn't have any resistance to Roxy's teasing. Bruce wanted to shake his head at that. Vivian could walk through an orgy fully clothed and just apologise for entering the wrong room with a straight face. He would know, he watched it happen once. Genuine accident, and Vivian was just so calm throughout the whole thing. He was actually the more put out of the two.

Yet, even still, Roxanne made a slight insinuation that she was having a romp in the sheets with Callisto and the girl just melts. Once again, Bruce had to resist shaking his head. He really did wish the pair would make up their minds in some way. Despite what Roxanne might want to believe, they weren't getting any younger. Time was marching onwards and bullying Vivian about a relationship that may or may not be serious was just growing to drag the whole thing out. Bruce wished Callisto would have a bit more input on the issue as a whole, but that'd be like trying to get blood from a stone. Callisto would go along with whatever Vivian wanted... and he never could figure out what exactly Callisto wanted other than that.

The fact that Vivian had managed to pick up one 'confirmed' lesbian was something that eased Bruce's mind. It wasn't quite true, but it did ease his mind. Bruce was of the opinion that little fact would do more to shake up Callisto and Vivian's relationship than anything Roxanne could ever hope to do. He didn't know which way the dominoes would fall, but if one of them could just ADMIT to something then they could both move forward. Bruce didn't care if that meant moving forward together, or apart but if either of them were a bit less successful he'd be worried about how much they were spinning the wheels.

Bruce suppressed the twitching in his fingers, the need to spread them out was strong but his will was stronger. Enough about things he wasn't going to interfere in. Roxanne would continue her ineffectual game, and enjoy doing it. Callisto would take two steps forward, and another two back during the whole episode... and Vivian would collapse under the embarrassment, wait till Roxanne left and then remove it all from her mind. What was interesting... was the new kids.

Sylvie, the younger one, actually interested him more. Despite being on Vivian's lap, the kid's demeanour screamed Callisto. Honestly, if didn't know how fiercely loyal Callisto was to his daughter, the first guess as to why they were adopting the kid was because Sylvie was actually Callisto's flesh and blood daughter. He supposed that Sister was possible as well... but how Callisto's parents managed to be blessed with such an intelligent child... well let him muse 'innocently' that it was a strong argument that God didn't exist. If those two could end up with a child so smart and skilled despite all their choices... well. Luck had to be the driving force of the world didn't it?

He could see that Sylvie was watching everything, and new from the letters he'd received that she knew a great deal as well. Anyone that could go up against Callisto in a game of chess and take a few rounds was impressive. Callisto wouldn't let anyone win against her more than once if she could help it. Going a bit easy to get people into the game? Sure. Consistently falling to someone to let them feel better? Never. Sylvie's intellect was extreme and it was quite clear the girl knew how to use it.

The problem that presented at the moment, was Roxanne wasn't making a great first impression on the girl. Sure pranking Vivian was fun, and it was deserved, Bruce would never deny that, he was against going about it this way. He'd argued they should call ahead. That they should at least warn Callisto, so she could inform the kids. He was ignored. It wasn't a great surprise, and he wasn't too beat up about it. Roxanne was correct in her arguments that Callisto would warn Vivian. It was an easy conclusion to reach... but he was regretting not fighting the decision harder. It didn't seem worth the damage they were currently doing. Irreparable, no, but certainly not ideal.

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As for the older girl... Bruce thought it likely she was warned about Roxanne. He wondered about that choice. Kat was holding her own, obviously, but did she really need the warning? Bruce knew that if he had to choose, Sylvie would've been warned about what to expect. She was clearly intelligent enough to understand the specifics and perhaps even the reasons behind them. So the fact that Kat had been warned instead something, especially considering it was Callisto who offered the warning.

Bruce wondered why that might be. He briefly entertained the idea that it was not to protect Kat, or Sylvie, but instead to protect him and his wife. See, if Kat really WAS a demon then Roxanne's game was suddenly much deadlier. The stakes had been drastically increased and only some of the players were aware of the stakes. That thought seemed to worm its way into his mind. It wiggled and agitated the surrounding thoughts until suddenly it was his focus. It was silly, ridiculous.

Yet at the same time...

Bruce and Roxanne weren't actually religious. Oh, Roxanna and he went to church regularly, and they taught the bible to kids growing up. Not because the church was good, but because the stories in that 'holy' book were all quite deep. They'd been refined over thousands of years. If they weren't worth reading, the whole thing would've fallen through. Additionally, the sense of community the church fostered was a wonderful thing for a child to have growing up. That being said...

Bruce had seen a lot of strange things in his travels. Most of these could be explained, and those that can't simply need a bit more research on them. Still... in so many regions throughout the world there is a sense of belief that imbues itself into the biggest personalities. Politicians, preachers, even just successful businessmen. There's something a little more to all of the good ones. So now, Bruce found himself really looking at Kat as if it was his first time seeing her.

The first thing he noted was that her horns clearly weren't plastic. They weren't painted either. Regardless of if they were actually stuck to the young woman's head, they were REAL horns. Perhaps they were just attached to a headband but now that he was looking, it wasn't hard to tell that they were no cheap props. The next thing he looked at were her wings. That's where things started to get strange.

Once again the quality of the 'crafting' on them was exceptional. The leather looked great and they moved as Kat shifted slightly in her seat. That's when he realised something else. They could twitch. It wasn't anything major, but they would fidget. Kat would roll her shoulders, and then, flex her wings just a bit... in clearly and distinctly separate motions. Bruce was starting to reach a conclusion about just who was playing the game better today... and he was thinking it wasn't Roxanne anymore. The real kicker was when he looked at Kat's tail. It moved and shifted lazily. It wasn't just a costume piece stuck to her back... it moved. Sure, it could be robotic... but it was much too smooth for that.

Bruce let out a breath of air from the corner of his mouth, as if that would relieve the pressure he was feeling. Roxy was in for a big surprise in a few moments. Bruce... well Bruce was going to sit back and enjoy the show.

Chapter 945 Bruce Takes the Lead

The silence continued as Roxanne struggled to think of something to say. Then her gaze sharpened and Bruce realised Roxanne was about to say something particularly nasty to try and trip Vivian and the kids up, perhaps even Callisto as well. Bruce firmed his decision in that moment. It was a risk, and maybe

he'd look like a fool... but Roxanne was definitely about to take things too far. "You know, I'm amazed you managed to keep the fact that magic is real a secret," said Bruce. Roxanne's mouth slammed shut as she glared at Bruce out of the corner of her eyes. She was shocked, and couldn't properly control her facial expression after such a declaration. "With that knowledge on the table... Kat... are you actually a demon? Or just a witch pretending to be one?"

Holy shit Bruce knows?! Might as well go big then. Roxy didn't look too pleased with Bruce's statement, but for him it was an easy choice to make. He recognised that his wife saw no lies, but didn't want to play the fool admitting it either under the circumstances. Well, he could play the fool. In this instance though... Kat pressed down on the mental button and exploded into purple smoke.

She manoeuvred around behind the chair and returned to normal leaning against the backrest, trying not to show how horribly draining that was. *Shit. If I wasn't linked with Lily, and didn't have the powerup from being Rank 3 I don't think I could have pulled that off. Earth really does hamper our abilities. Sure I wasn't using it as intended but I'm basically out of energy!* "I'm actually a demon," said Kat letting her wings spread out for good measure.

"I see," said Roxy stiffly before turning to Bruce, "Dear husband" the word husband was sounding an awful lot like an accusation to Bruce at that moment, "might you enlighten me as to how you were able to... deduce such a thing?"

"Well. Wife." Bruce shot back, "I would have to say that you're losing your touch. If you'd been watching Kat a bit more closely you might have noticed her wings fidget when held in place too long. On top of that, her horns are clearly not paper mache or plastic. Finally, her tail. It moves in such a lifelike way that unless Callisto suddenly took an interesting in advanced robotics and put the whole thing together in the few moments she was out of the room... then I have to conclude that it's all real,"

Roxy glanced at the room and didn't really know what to say. She seemed to be the only one that was surprised. "What... this... this is really not how the game is supposed to be played here. Storing ammunition to ensure that I embarrass my daughter is one thing... but you were basically keeping a nuclear bomb in the basement. I mean really, magic is real. How did you manage to hide such a thing? Why are you hiding such a thing?" grumbled irately.

Vivian of course, had no response of course, but Callisto was once again on the ball, "Firstly I could point out that we did not sign up for this 'game' in the first place. I could also then point out that we were given no warning of your arrival, and thus, the fact we had something to shock you so thoroughly is hardly something to be lain at our feet. Lastly... what else could we do really? It is not as though you could believe it all from a simple letter. Even now I can see the doubt in your eyes. Only the fact your husband is looking so smug about being correct is stopping you from checking for hallucinogens."

Roxy let out an exasperated sound, "To be fair, it wouldn't be the first time we were dosed with something strange before a big meeting. Bruce gets very huggy when he's like that though, so it's rather easy to tell he's in his right now,"

"Don't tempt me woman," fired off Bruce.

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"My Bruce, so forward," said Roxy with a husky tone of voice, "but I can't say it's appropriate right now. I mean, what sort of example would we be setting for the grandkids? I'd really rather not give them a show like that. What would they think of us?"

Bruce rolled his eyes, "Considering one of them is a little Callisto and the other has a girlfriend, I'd say one would be mortified, and the other would be taking notes about 'normal human mating rituals' as if they were some rare bird from another continent,"

Roxy nodded, conceding the point, "Yes that does indeed sound about right. I suppose it would be a bit much for a lesbian in a budding relationship to see us old folks partaking in our own pleasure. Probably not a family activity. Although..." Roxy took another glance at Kat, "I think Kat has to be a Succubus, so perhaps it IS appropriate,"

"No I'm asexual," Kat said firmly, cutting off that line of thought for the pair. It was already mortifying just to hear it. Kat had thought that after recently spending the day with Sue that she wouldn't be so flustered hearing stuff like this but apparently there was a whole new level of mortification that came with having the speakers be from an older generation.

"Wait then how did you end up with a girlfriend?" asked Roxy, genuinely curious on this point, "and how are you asexual AND a Succubus, because I noticed you didn't deny that part,"

Kat shrugged, "Same way as you can be asexual and human I suppose? I have heard that it's even rarer to see in Succubi but it does happen. It's much more common with other types of demons, but here we are. As for how I got a girlfriend... well... do you want to hear the long version or the short version?"

"Well, I am definitely interested in both..." said Roxy slowly, waiting to see if that would spark any reaction in Kat. It didn't, all that happened was Kat turning to face Roxy as she spoke, "...but we can just take the short version for now. We'll be staying in town for a while and we can get the full story later,"

Kat nodded and hopped back down into her seat, "The short version is that while I might not be sexually attracted to Lily, she is, if you ignore Sylvie, the most important person in my life by a considerable margin. Combine that with the fact she IS a lesbian and I apparently check all of her boxes, it was enough for her to ask me out, and for me to say yes. We've been best friends for years, and it was a little hard for her to not say anything because of the whole turning into a cat thing,"

"Oh... oh right you did say that..." mumbled Roxy as her brain caught up to the fact that Kat had in fact said that she was dating a 'catgirl'. Now Roxy didn't really know what that meant, but it was weird and the fact she'd let it slip her mind so easily was a failing on her part. She didn't take it overly hard, she did just find out magic was real, and hadn't had time to examine the conversation in light of that revelation. "I suppose the next question then is what is a 'cat girl' and how did Lily become one? Assuming she wasn't one before, considering you did say 'turning into...'?"

Kat nodded, "That story is a little longer and isn't really mine to tell. Lily is always in my thoughts and she'd be a bit put out if she couldn't explain it all herself. Especially when she lives just over the fence. If you don't mind waiting a few moments she can be over here to tell you herself,"

"While it is sweet that she's always in your thoughts, that doesn't mean you cannot speak on her behalf. Just the highlights are fine, no need to bother her getting here early. Assuming she is coming around for Sylvie's party?" said Roxy.

Kat shook her head, "No I mean that a bit more literally. As in Lily can hear my thoughts and has been watching the whole conversation,"

Roxy stared at Kat for a few moments. "That... that is an awfully close bond to have with someone. I can hardly picture what that would be like. While I do love my husband I'm not sure I'd want him to be privy to my every thought,"

"As if I've not already figured out 95% of them," chuckled Bruce.

"And I'd like to keep it at 95% thank you very much. Some things must not be shared!" insisted Roxy.

Kat shrugged, "Technically we can close it off if we try but Lily can't do that yet and I don't like to, both out of respect for that particular fact and because I don't have anything to hide from her,"

Chapter 946 Pspspspspspspspsp

Kat was already making her way over to the glass door when the sound of something smacking into it was heard. Roxy looked over and was confused to see a small kitten using the back of her paw to slap the glass. Her mind supplied the recently learned knowledge that the strange looking cat was probably Lily... but the logical part of her that still hadn't quite internalised the existence of magic was trying to work out what the weird cat was doing.

Kat opened the door and then swiftly returned to her seat, racing the cat, or at least that's how it looked. They managed to synchronise their landings, with a bit of mental trickery to ensure they were on the same page. Kat slid down into the chair, making it look like she was lounging there the whole time, and not running a moment ago. Then in a flash Lily was also there, human form and snuggling into Kat. "Hi Roxy!" said Lily.

"You know... for someone who said just moments ago that you're asexual... you do seem to have a fascination with pussy," said Roxy, not a hint of shame.

Lily went bright red, copying Vivian who didn't want to hear such things from her mother. Kat... well Kat had expected it. Honestly, she was expecting something a bit more pointed, "Well, my name is KAT after all. The fact that I have a bit of a thing for good pussy shouldn't be that much of a surprise,"

Roxy nodded as if this too, was an expected response. Lily was caught in the crossfire though, and started to squeak for a few moments before retreating to her cat form. Kat wasn't going to let that chance go and started to scratch Lily behind the ears, getting her to purr. "See, my girlfriend is purring after just a second under my fingers. I'm just a poor teen, no real experience to speak of. Can you match this sort of response Roxy?"

Roxy's gaze sharpened, "I'm afraid that with my own partner I'm much more efficient with my sharp tongue. Fingers just don't have the same... coverage... when it comes to men. You'll need to learn to adapt to these kinds of things, I'm sure,"

Kat shrugged, "I'm not totally sure I will. Perhaps you need to rely on escalation or an everchanging gallery of techniques to ensure the same end result but with just a few tricks I can make sure Lily is always satisfied by my company,"

"How about-" Roxy started but was cut off by Bruce.

“How about we STOP,” said Bruce firmly. “I do not want large sections of our first meeting with our grandchildren to be about sexual innuendos. This goes doubly so considering it’s also the first time we’re meeting our granddaughter’s girlfriend. Sure I can be amused by the games you play with Vivian, but she at least had her entire life to get used to us. So just... dial it back a few notches. Perhaps more than a few,”

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“It’s not that I don’t understand your concern Bruce... but I mean,” Roxy waves towards Kat, “At least half of these jokes right themselves. I mean, really, how can you expect me to ignore the opportunity in front of me when it was practically served right to my doorstep on a silver platter,”

“If you want to get technical about it, we came to there doorstep without warning, the fact that food has been prepared is a completely separate issue,” said Bruce, continuing the metaphor, but stretching it a bit out of shape.

Roxy sniffed, as she went take enough sip of tea, only to realise her cup was empty. Before she could comment on this Callisto was already moving over to pour her more. Roxy gave Callisto a polite nod for the service, waiting for Callisto to go back to her seat before speaking, “If that’s the how you want to take this metaphor, then I’d say that rather than showing up and coming face first to a delectable platter, we instead found an all-you-can-eat buffet with great quality and endless opportunities.

“Besides, Sylvie seems fine with it, she’s hardly blushing. I’ll admit it’s a bit of a shame because she hasn’t asked any awkward questions that would embarrass everyone further, but she seems fine. And, and, Kat has a girlfriend already. She’s not five. Kat’s basically an adult and if she can’t handle a bit of innuendo then I worry for her future. So really, I’m just doing her a favour!”

Bruce rolled his eyes and Sylvie decided to illuminate Roxy, “I’m perfectly aware of the biological realities of sex, as well as what terms are likely to be used for innuendos. While they do quite escape my notice at first, it is rather easy to pay attention to the way you all speak them. It is not hard to determine which words are innuendos just from that, and while they do not embarrass me, I could ask about them with intent to make things awkward if you want,”

Roxy stared at Sylvie for a few moments before turning to glare at Callisto, “What have you been teaching that girl?”

Callisto shrugged, “After Lily and Kat got the talk, Sylvie wondered what it was about. Vivian told me, ‘I want nothing to do with whatever nonsense this is going to turn into it’s your job’ so I gave Sylvie a brief biology lesson as well as some novels that speak on what feelings you experience as you go through puberty, and a few romance novels to top things off. She read through them pretty quickly, and not all of it was new information.”

You know. I can’t say I’m surprised.

[Neither am I. Not entirely pleased Callisto decided to educate Sylvie... but not surprised.]

Eh... Sylvie would’ve just looked it all up in the library or maybe found a way to get her hands on some medical lecture recordings. It’s probably best she learnt it all properly from Callisto then a bunch of random books that don’t explain the topic well.

[I guess... but isn't she a little young to be learning about this sort of stuff?]

I can't say. Callisto would have been very clinical with it all, and Sylvie hasn't even touched on the edges of puberty so there's no risk of her being overly awkward about it or of her misunderstanding something silly because of how her bodies changing. Instead it's just information that might be useful in the future. Like taxes.

[Do you need to worry about taxes?]

I'm pretty sure D.E.M.O.N.S takes a cut from all the jobs I do already so I'm going to go with 'no'. Then again... the fact remains that I'm earning money in another dimension... does that mean I'm committing tax evasion? Or is it tax fraud? Some other legally distinct version of tax issues? Because I am paying taxes... I think... just not to my government. Unless being a demon supersedes that? Which I guess it sort of does? The government probably wouldn't agree, but D.E.M.O.N.S could probably force the issue.

[I... I don't know. I'm also not sure how I count either. We didn't really test it but I'd be willing to be I can spend the Campfires, and Candles that you earn... or at the very least I'd guess I get a cut during your adventures. Does that mean I'm in the same position as you? My Mum will be so disappointed that her daughter is never planning to pay taxes.]

Roxy groaned at Callisto's admission, "I really don't know why you'd think that was a good idea,"

"Well I was not going to prevent her from learning, especially not after she came and asked me for the information. I would be a poor teacher if I simply said 'it's a grown-up thing' or 'it's best you don't know'. I did warn her that she would probably find most of it gross or irrelevant for now, but I certainly was not going to stop her," intoned Callisto.

"You aren't a teacher though!" retorted Roxy.

Hmm... now that's making me wonder if we're technically illegal immigrants? I mean we do leave and reenter the country pretty regularly without passports or anything.

[Yes but we live here and have citizenship. If we suddenly turned up in say... Egypt, then perhaps you'd have a point. Then again... can you also get in trouble for sneaking OUT of a country? I'm not too sure on the laws surrounding that. It's not something I've ever checked.]

Kat and Lily started to get lost in their own little world after that. Roxy's teasing, while not overly embarrassing for Kat, was a bit much. Kat also didn't like how easily she got caught up in Roxy's pace, responding with things that were just as bad, if not worse, then her 'grandmother' was throwing out. Lily was awfully embarrassed and it just wasn't the same as when Kat was politely teasing her and they were alone. Lily of course, had eyes only for Kat and as soon as the chance to get lost in their own conversation appeared, she jumped at it. Roxy and Callisto could argue if they wanted. It really wasn't their problem.

Chapter 947 Let's Get This Party Started

Eventually the conversation wrapped up for lunch, which then led into everyone moving to the spare room that had been set aside for the party. It was a bit cramped now that they had two additional guests, but Lily and Sylvie were happy to sit on Kat's and Vivian's laps respectively.

While they were getting situated, Bruce went back outside to grab their own gifts for Sylvie, before adding them to the large pile that was sitting on the table in the middle of the room. The plastic chairs everyone had taken weren't terribly comfortable, but that was fine. Kat was actually the only one having issues. She could hear the cheap plastic groaning as she sat and needed to abuse her tail and demonic strength to keep herself from falling. Something she regularly forgot was that she was denser now.

Her muscles and bones were tougher, not just because of magical nonsense, but also because they compacted themselves and gained density when she ranked up. For the higher quality furniture, both in the Hub and in other rooms, it wasn't an issue. For cheap plastic chairs that Callisto had picked up on sale by the dozen? It was a significant increase in weight and they just weren't built to handle it. *Well that can't be good.*

[Wait is that the chair? How did you get it to stop?]

I'm essentially doing that 'air chair' exercise at the moment while making it look like I'm sitting down on the chair. My tail is on the ground and helping with the fact that I don't want to put too much pressure on the wall either.

[That... that's not something I ever considered might be a problem. I wonder how often that comes up in the Hub. Does that mean you need furniture weighted for your 'weight class' essentially?]

Are you implying I'm fat now? Asked Kat knowing full well Lily was doing no such thing. She was surprised by the rush of mental images. Mostly centred around a Kat with a slightly fuller figure... mostly an expansion of her ass and tits with just a little extra on her thighs. *Oh? Is that what you'd prefer?* Taunted Kat, only to get a flash of panic before a deluge of more accurate mental images of Kat doing various stretches. Kat actually felt her own heart warm at the knowledge that Lily didn't actually want her to look any different, just have chances to show it off.

[WAIT NO!]

It's fine. Though it is good to see you prefer me the way I am.

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[Of course I do! But you had to put those thoughts in my head!]

Why I resent that implication. I did not send you a single salacious thought yet you forwarded a truly impressive number of lewd thoughts.

[It was because you brought up getting fat.]

Lily... if that's your idea of 'fat' I feel like we need to have a frank discussion about body image.

[That might be true if you weren't a Succubus Kat. I don't know if I could conceptualise you looking anything short of perfect, so while I can find the idea of you having more t&a to admire and... maybe play with a bit...] Lily shook her head to clear the images that were already rising back up. [Right well... despite that I still can't imagine you gaining too much weight to be attractive or that the weight would ever go to the wrong places. I mean... look at Sue! She has to have at least a third of her weight tied up in tits and ass!]

You know... I wonder about that. If she was a normal human, perhaps you might have a point... but how is a demon's weight distributed? I doubt we're made of the same sort of stuff and isn't it a sort of Succubus staple to have large breasts? Perhaps we evolved a way to make them large without needless weight.

[Counterpoint, you can bench press a tree.]

Ah yeah... that would probably negate the necessity of finding a way to remove back pain. Just have better muscles.

[Right... but can we get back to the party? I can hear Bruce climbing the stairs and I really don't want to be thinking about lewd things when Sylvie should be in the spotlight.]

Of course. And Sylvie has been so very patient, waiting till after lunch to even look at her presents! Kat and Lily left their conversation just as Bruce opened the door to bring in a medium sized box that was a little smaller than his chest, as well as a second smaller one that was about twice the size of a fist, placing it down with the rest of the presents.

Vivian clapped, to get everyone's attention. "Awesome! Now that everything for Sylvie is here I can announce that the first gift, mine... isn't actually here at all! Teehee" Vivian laughed a bit and poked her tongue out.

Sylvie gave Vivian a swift jab in the stomach, and Vivian played along, clutching at her side and toppling over, bringing Sylvie with her of course as she slumped off to the side of the chair. Which... really was a poor idea. The chairs didn't have any weight of their own and instantly started to topple. Only the fact Callisto must have seen the interaction coming saved further issues. The maid in question stomped a foot down on the leg of the chair forcing it to remain in place. Vivian bolted upright and gave a sheepish smile to the room. "No injuring the birthday girl," said Callisto, a slightly icy tone in her voice.

"Um... right sorry..." apologised Vivian as she gave Sylvie a kiss in the cheek and a few pats on the head. "I've got a shelf for all your books. It was a bit of effort getting something that matches Chekov's work, especially considering he didn't want to take another order from me until he finishes Kat's desk... something he still hasn't made much progress on apparently. It's in the garage at the moment under some covers. Kat can take it upstairs later,"

"And you're making your daughter lift that herself why?" questioned Roxy with a glare before Sylvie could even thank Vivian for the thought.

"It is likely because Kat could lift your car with a single hand and still not feel tired," interjected Callisto.

"Ah... right..." mumbled Roxy suitably chastised.

"Mhm!" mumbled Vivian with a nod, "Unlike some people, cough, Lily, cough, it's not a good idea to just stack books up on the floor. I thought now that you were starting to look for a few and keep them around a shelf was necessary!"

"You do know that you're supposed to cough instead of just saying the word 'cough' right Vivian?" said 'Lily'.

Vivian tilted her head and poked a finger into her cheek, "No... that can't be right..."

Roxy lightly smacked the back of Vivian's head, "Enough messing around, this is Sylvie's party not your comedy show,"

"Where do you think I get the habit from Mum?" retorted Vivian. Bruce snickered until Roxy turned to glare at him. When they locked eyes, Bruce simply projected an air of complete innocence.

Sylvie giggled at the byplay which seemed to completely diffuse what little tension was building. She also managed to wiggle free of Vivian's arms so that she could pick out her presents. Callisto instantly realised that was going to be a problem because the temporary table they'd set up in the room wasn't designed with small children in mind. Sylvie's eyeline didn't even match up to the tabletop let alone give her the ability to look over her spoils. Callisto lifted her up in a swift motion and whispered, "Which one do you want?"

Sylvie shrugged until Callisto turned her around to a pouting Vivian acting like a child that had just been told Christmas was cancelled. Sylvie burst into laughter when Callisto continued the circle and revealed that Roxy was wearing the exact same expression. Bruce had a small smile of his own while Lily was laughing quite a bit internally and Kat was enjoying the feeling immensely. It was silly yes, but Kat was starting to understand what Callisto had meant earlier when she said Roxy was doing it all just to mess with them.

Sure Roxy was still teasing Vivian but it was clear that mother and daughter were just as bubbly and prone to acting much younger than their true ages when the mood caught them. It was probably why Roxy was so good at embarrassing her daughter. It was highly probable that Roxy was using all the same tricks her own parents, or maybe friends, used against her in her youth. Lily was quite interested in which of the two it was. Was Roxy teased by her friends when she was younger and decided to train her daughter up to resist that pressure? Or did Roxy have to deal with her own mother teasing her mercilessly whenever she visited.

Chapter 948 Opening the Presents! Most of them...

After 'some' prodding from the children in the room, said children of course being Vivian and Roxy, regardless of what others might say, Sylvie chose a familiar shape as her first present. It was unmistakably a book, and rather appropriate considering the bookshelf Vivian claimed to have acquired.

When Sylvie tore into it though... instead of a fantasy novel or a science fiction story... it was a university level medical textbook. "Thanks so much Callisto!" cheered Sylvie.

"That is not the only present of mine, but I am glad you enjoyed it," returned Callisto with a smile on her face as Sylvie set the book off to the side. Kat and Lily nodded as if this was expected, and Vivian didn't even blink.

"Callisto... why are you giving a... actually I'm not sure if you ever mentioned Sylvie's exact age but she can't be more than nine I want to say? Not the point. Why are you giving her advanced medical textbooks? Isn't it a bit early to be pushing her towards being a doctor?"

"Sylvie is in fact ten today," said Callisto, "and the reason she was provided such books is because she was enjoying my digital copies until now, but professed both an interest in further reading and a proper book to look through when doing so. As such I see no reason not to supply her with said book. I also do not see how it would push her to becoming a doctor,"

"You don't think giving her medical books will push her towards being a doctor?" asked Bruce more in defence of Roxy than anything else. He already had an inkling as to what Callisto had done. Especially with the other suspiciously book shaped packages still on the table.

Callisto passed Sylvie the next present she was making her way towards and tore it open. This one was another book of course... but it was about high level mathematics instead of medical techniques. "I do believe Sylvie has inadvertently provided you with the answer to the question. The books are not all related to the medical profession, or even further restricted to topics required to become a doctor."

Roxy spluttered dramatically, hand over her heart as if she'd just taken a major blow. "Urgh, your plan is too much for me. I cannot withstand the sheer brilliance!" Roxy then slumped down onto the carpeted floor and made choking sounds.

Sylvie wiggled out of Callisto's arms easily and walked over to where Roxy was laying on the ground. Sylvie quickly poked a few places on Roxy's body, and ignored the slight twitching a few of the pokes caused. "My professional medical opinion is that she's beyond saving," said Sylvie 'sadly'.

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"Tell my grandchildren I love them!" coughed Roxy.

"Your grandchildren are all in this room, unless there's something you haven't told me Mum," accused Vivian. Roxy glared at her daughter but didn't get to respond...

"No, no. No secret nieces or nephews hidden away," said Bruce easily as Roxy remembered she was supposed to be playing dead and made a few more random noises before flopping back down on the ground. Sylvie thought that was a bit silly.

"I pronounced you dead. Stop getting back up," said Sylvie with a pout.

"Naw... does my granddaughter hate me so much?" whined Roxy with tears in her eyes.

"Your ability to cry on command will not save you this time," said Sylvie with confidence.

"Wait did Callisto warn you about that?" Roxy said with a large pout.

"No you just confirmed it to me right at this moment," said Sylvie easily.

"Ugh! Hoisted by my own petard!" 'coughed' Roxy.

"What is a petard?" questioned Sylvie.

Do you know Lily?

[I do not I'm afraid. Not sure I've ever thought to look it up]

"Err... um... Callisto?" asked Roxy after a few seconds of confusion. "Do you know because I don't,"

"It is a device from the 16th century. A sort of rudimentary cannon that was stuck against fortifications and filled with gunpowder to bring down fortress walls or doors," explained Callisto.

"Wait how can you be hoisted by a cannon?" asked Roxy very confused... and leaning up on her arm to get a better angle to look at everyone.

"I was curious myself but truth be told I do not think it is an entirely accurate saying. The cannon is not hoisted during operation, and I do not know how the petard could be used to hoist anyone. It is a saying made famous by Shakespeare, but I do not believe it made all that much sense back in his day and does not make any sense now that they are no longer in use," explained Callisto.

"Huh..." said Roxy as she finally got off the floor, giving Sylvie a quick kiss on the cheek as she did so, "I always just assumed that it was some form of underwear you know? Like a leotard meant to be worn as underclothes of something of that nature. To hear that it's a cannon... are you sure?"

Callisto nodded, "That is what I managed to uncover in my research. Admittedly I did not spend long on the topic because it was merely a fleeting interest but I did do enough work to confirm that a petard is a cannon,"

Vivian clapped her hands twice, "Right well, while I'm sure this is fun for you all to discuss and Sylvie is too nice to interrupt it, I feel like we should get through the rest of the presents! I want to see what else is in there!"

"You'd think it was your birthday," scoffed Roxy.

Vivian pouted but Roxy's comment was otherwise ignored as Sylvie made her way through two more books from Callisto and then got onto Kat's presents. The first happened to be DDK. Sylvie flipped the box and read through the little blurb on the back with a frown on her face before nodding and saying, "Thanks Kat," though it wasn't quite as genuine as the one she'd given Callisto.

"Hey don't forget Lily! She helped me pick it out. Plus, two more are from the both of us, not just that one," said Kat firmly.

Sylvie's eyes shone at the confirmation two more of the presents were from her big sister. She examined the pile again with newfound interest. There was of course the present from Bruce and Roxy, and then two more boxes. One had the same wrapping paper as the first board game, and Sylvie had mistakenly assumed that one was Lily's present to her. Now that she knew there was 3 combined gifts from the demonic duo... well that was much more interesting.

She was smart enough to work out DDK was probably to encourage her to play with friends. What else was there? Sylvie grabbed the other 'small' present from Kat and Lily tearing it open. It just so happened it was upside down. It was heavy and Sylvie struggled to lift it over to see what it was. Callisto reached over and helped the motion to reveal a gorgeous chess set made of gemstones in a nice wooden box. There was a glass window at the front showing of all the pieces. The board itself was hidden inside and made of black onyx and white quartz.

Sylvie nearly dropped the gift in her surprise, but Callisto held on tighter. "W-what?" whispered Sylvie shocked as she looked at the most wonderful chess set she'd ever seen.

"Damn Kat, Lily... making it hard to compete," muttered Vivian under her breath.

"This was actually the cheapest of Sylvie's gifts," said Kat offhandedly.

Vivian glared at that Kat who quickly waved the concern off. "No, no it was a great deal. For demons these gems just aren't all that valuable. That doesn't mean it looks anything less than spectacular but without any enchantments on it, they're just shiny rocks to a lot of demons no research and

development, just a fancy chess set. Sue thought it was likely someone's prototype for their graduation piece,"

Sylvie gulped and nodded before putting it to the side with Callisto's help. "Um... how am I even supposed to open that last one..."

It was a valid concern. The final box was much larger than Sylvie herself... in fact it took up most of the table all by itself. The other presents had been stacked on top of it. "Perhaps leave it to last? We can move the other presents first," said Callisto.

Sylvie nodded, and made for the final gift tearing into it. Sylvie looked at it with confusion as she looked over the box. It seemed to be a kit specialised in making bracelets out of... not quite rubber bands? "I don't understand what this is..."

"Ah... our bad," said Roxy with a small sigh. "It's a kit for making bracelets. From what Bruce and I knew of you... it was clear you were a little Callisto in most ways so... we thought getting you a good way to use your hands to make things would be nice. It's a bit like knitting your own bracelet, and you might be able to make some for friends but well... it does seem we might have underestimated your intelligence..."

Chapter 949 The Big One

Sylvie's Perspective. Yes that's right!

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Everyone got to work straightening things out. It was like an intermission in the middle of a stage show. Every single person felt a bubbly of excitement for what was coming next. Kat rushed off to move the bookcase into Sylvie's room, Callisto and Vivian started to carry off the books and Roxy helped with by moving the bracelet kit as well as DDK. Bruce sat back and watched it all until he realised that someone needed to move Sylvie's new chess set... but Lily got to it first. She left behind a suspiciously large backpack Bruce hadn't seen before.

It didn't take long for everything to find itself a new home. That home was the bookcase for basically everything. Proper places for the non-book presents could be found later, for now though it was all neatly out of the way and the big present was calling to everyone. Lily snuck back into the room first and transformed, taking her backpack with her.

Everyone had returned except Callisto, but it didn't take long for the 'maid' to make her presence known, as well as show off exactly what she was doing. Callisto walked in with a stool in hand so that Sylvie could stand on her own for this last present. "I believe this will be better than simply carrying Sylvie around for this last present. This is your day Sylvie, the fact that you cannot reach the table is a blunder on my part. One I hopefully will not repeat in future years.

Sylvie nodded and hopped up on the stool, a small tear in her eye. It was hard to notice sometimes, but Sylvie was a smart child. Sylvie knew Vivian adopted them mostly on a whim. Sylvie knew that getting adopted was no sure-fire way to obtain happiness. She knew it wasn't even a guaranteed way to receive a family. Still, Callisto's blunt, factual words were a wonderful gift made all the better for the fact that in Callisto's mind it was such a minor thing.

Sylvie had long since accepted the fact that she had a home here. She didn't doubt that she was loved by Vivian, or doted on by Callisto. Her mind had catalogued how their interactions had... well to say Vivian's changed would be a lie, Vivian had treated her like a daughter since day one. Callisto had tried certainly, but now... now Sylvie knew that regardless of what happened in the future, she would always be part of this family.

A dark part of her mind wanted to poke at the fact she'd ever doubted the fact she belonged, but it was easily pushed aside. Nobody here had given her those doubts, they were simply the product of reading a number of studies about the adoption system and how often kids would get shuffled around. Finding a house to leave, and a couple to take care of you for a bit was not the same as finding parents and a home.

Sylvie ran her hand gently over the large present as she wondered what exactly was going to be hiding behind the wrapping paper. That was the other reason she totally wasn't crying. Kat had been distant lately, only in the literal sense of course... but that didn't mean Sylvie could entirely suppress her displeasure at the circumstances. Kat didn't come home every day, or even every week now. Whenever she was home, they'd spend time together, and Sylvie knew that Kat couldn't lie so Kat had to mean it whenever she threw out compliments... *nOv£lnext.com*

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This was something else though. Her first birthday. Based on the expression she could see on Kat's face, this was the big one. Not the first board game, not the wonderous chess set, this box. Whatever it was, Kat clearly believed it to be something she'd love. *I wonder what Kat decided upon. Likely a board game... but I've never heard of one this large. I can't wait any longer. I have to see what it is.*

Sylvie started slowly, digging a finger into the corner to start peeling off the wrapping paper. A small voice in the back of her mind informed her she could have started at the tape to keep the wrapping paper but she squashed it. This was going to be an awesome present and it needed to be revealed properly, not in big chunks to save paper that cost so little and couldn't be re-used anyway.

Sylvie didn't wince, she didn't, as the paper slowly peeled away to reveal a shockingly detailed box art. Even just the corner contained more things then a standard box had on its entirety. It was a hill with a little house in it and banners on the side. Sylvie kept peeling to reveal more hills with houses, and a fence around the edges of the box. At the top of the hills was a man and a woman clashing swords. Both eyes glowing gold and a wave of pressure emanating out from them, but flowing upwards to the next section of the box.

Sylvie ignored how proper it was and hopped up on the table to keep peeling away. The next section of the art was a bundle of castles with portrait shots above them. There was a funny looking beastkin with a monocle, a proud king with his sceptre, an elf queen that smiled wide... but it was all sharpened teeth and the dagger she held hidden in her breast pocket seemed to glimmer as Sylvie's eyes traced over it. A cranky old man with three faces surrounding him, the sailor, the tavern keep... the spy. All of them had their own glow. Their own halo, and even though it was smaller then the fighters below, the cumulative glow seemed to brighten the entire picture.

Sylvie didn't waste any time on the last part, ripping the whole top third of the paper off in one clean swing. Sure there was still a little covering the top corner, but a swift gesture from Callisto had that

falling away as well. At the top, two groups of glowing hands, filtering around clouds. Some locked in combat, some throwing stuff down to other parts of the picture, and on those clouds, written in big, bold letters was the words 'Clash of Gods in a Mortal World'

"What... what IS this?" asked Sylvie with a little bit of awe in her voice.

Lily took this as her queue and hopped off of Kat's lap, transforming in one swift motion and slamming down a large tome that looked like it was an ancient religious text. The pages looked worn, and the cover had cracks all across the leather bindings. Only the words Clash of Gods in a Mortal World Rulebook, let the onlookers know Lily wasn't just showing off rare tomes. It was MASSIVE. "That Sylvie, is considered to be one of the most complex board games that demons have ever invented. It has been popular for centuries and can take days or weeks to finish a single match. This, this is your big birthday gift from Kat and I!"

Sylvie looked across the whole ensemble mystified. "This... this is a board game?"

Lily nodded eagerly, "Yup, and it's all completed unenchanted so it will work here on Earth perfectly well. The materials are all top notch and the paints are great quality. I had a bit of a glance into the rules myself just to see what it was all about... and it's very complex. It... honestly it might even be a bit beyond me. Maybe not if I had the time to properly research it... but a glance... I've got nothing. I'm hoping that you can learn the rules, understand them, and then play it with Callisto, and maybe others? It's really big in the demon world but I'm not sure how we'd work with that,"

"It looks and sounds wonderful," whispered Sylvie in a hushed tone, "Thank you so much, Lily, Kat... can you um... tell me a bit about how it's played?"

Lily nodded, "Yes, even though the rulebook is rather complex the idea is simple enough to explain. You're a god and you want the world to worship you instead of your rival. You get to play what is essentially three smaller games that effect each other. The Divine Champion level, completing specific tasks and objectives. The Empire level where you try to make favourable deals and keep the empire that starts off worshipping you happy. The final step is your godly domain where you can... well I'm not totally sure, but I know you can somewhat directly effect the other two and attack your opponent,"

Sylvie nodded, "Yes... this sounds very interesting indeed. Callisto? Will you do me the honours of learning this game together?"

"I'd love to," said Callisto softly, but voice brimming with emotion. She turned to Kat and Lily and gave them a strong nod, a small tear in her own eyes. It was one thing to get Sylvie a board game. It was another to get her something like this... and then a step further to make sure it really suited Sylvie's tastes even to the point that Kat herself would likely never play CoG herself. Lily would likely be able to as she gained power... but that would be some time from now. For now, this was a chance for Callisto and Sylvie to have something special... and Sylvie wasn't the only one that was brimming with happiness this day.

Chapter 950 Getting to Know the Grandparents

Back to Kat

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It was just after lunchtime a day later and Kat was sitting in the living room, Lily curled up against her side in human form and reading further ahead in that paper magic book. Vivian was working away in her office, while Sylvie and Callisto were... not so much getting started with Clash of God's in a Mortal World (CoG) as they were just seeing how everything was set up. Lily was adamant that they couldn't have read through the entire ruleset already. It was simply too much.

It was also too much for the table. After they'd cleared away the remains of lunch and the pair got to work setting things up it was very clear CoG wouldn't fit on just the one table. Now it was spread out across the table, and the kitchen bench and there was still more stuff in the box to lay out. Kat didn't know what to think as she looked at the thousands of pieces. There was at least 50 unique sets of them and that was without getting into the sets of things that had small variations. Kat just shook her head as she imagined trying to get into the game.

Kat was pretty sure that would be a great way to tangle her memories up once again. Nothing like that had happened since the time she tried to memorise the entire list of races in a few moments. Kat could practically feel her thoughts getting tangled just imagining herself dealing with CoG. Lily actually felt quite similarly. Though in her case it was the insane amount of research, going over the information again and again to make sure it stuck. She could feel her eyes watering at the thought. Too much work for a board game. Especially when she still had magic to master.

"So how did you two meet anyway?" asked Kat after a while. Roxy and Bruce had apparently booked a place in town to stay and headed back there for the night. They were visiting again, and planned to do so for six days, or something around that number. They'd missed Callisto's breakfast but had managed to stop by a local café.

Bruce and Roxy shared a look at Kat's question and Roxy let out a long laugh. While his wife was laughing, Bruce said, "The reason we're laughing is that it really depends on what you actually mean. If you mean, when did we start dating, that's a bit of a complicated journey. As for how we met just in more general terms? Well we actually grew up together!"

"Yeah but we hated each other's guts the whole time we were growing up!" laughed Roxy.

"I can't really imagine that," said Lily. "The only two people I've ever had feelings were also my best friends. One I fell for after we were friends, the other I fell for first, and then became friends with. The idea that you'd hate each other... is very strange to me,"

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"Oh? Strange are we? What do you think Kat? Willing to back up your girlfriend's statement?" Roxy asked confrontationally.

Kat just shrugged, "I mean I'm happy to support Lily if it comes down to it but I think it's more likely that Lily and I are the strange ones. At least, from a more normal perspective. Certainly, I think if you were to grab ten people off the street and ask who was stranger Lily and I would have more fingers pointing at us,"

Roxy nodded, "True true, but at least you're willing to stand by Lily in such trying times. Bruce would just abandon me," Roxy said as she leaned back heavily, hand over her forehead as if she was trying to prevent herself from fainting.

Bruce just rolled his eyes, "That's because you dig yourself into so many holes that it's only right you learn how to climb back out of them. The fact you'd smack my hand away if I tried to help is also a pretty big reason,"

"Ugh, my husband," Roxy whined, hand over her heart, "How can you say such hurtful things about your wife,"

"Because I speak only the truth, my dear. However painful it may be," said Bruce dryly.

"Well I literally can't lie so I understand the feeling," Kat said with a smile.

"Oh?" questioned Roxy with a raised eyebrow.

"Yeah it seems to be one of the only downsides to being a demon," said Kat. "We get a pretty good deal all things considered. The only issue I've had is that I can't lie, even about little things. It's not too hard to get around if you think about it a little. Just as an example... I've heard people say the sky is pink. All true, I have heard say people that. The sky is blue obviously, but I've HEARD otherwise sometimes, usually as a joke,"

"So, no issues with crosses? Holy water? The power of Christ does not compel you?" chortled Roxy, trying to keep the questions serious but couldn't stop herself picture an old priest screaming at Kat and throwing holy water at Kat and just having it do nothing.

Kat shook her head, "Nope, nothing at all. Though, my perfect memory is letting me notice the conversation has drifted. I thought we were talking about how you both got together?"

Roxy just waved Kat's concerns off and said, "Oh sure we can get to that but I have to admit while we're ALREADY on being a demon could you tell us a bit more about it? I mean... the no lying thing is a bit weird but is there anything else that stands out?"

"Um..." Kat thought for a seconds, an idea popped into her head but before she could do anything...

Callisto yelled, "You had better not be thinking of cutting open your hand to show your blood is black Kat!" Kat jolted in place, because she had in fact been doing that. "Not only is it painful for your girlfriend and the rest of us to watch, normal blood is a pain to get out of things. I do not want to find out how hard it is to get demon blood off the couch!"

Um...

[Callisto knows you well.]

Sorry... Kat apologised mentally as she felt Lily's anger wash over her. Kat recognised she might have gotten a little too used to pain. Sure she had regeneration, but Lily hated seeing her injured. Probably better to just... not go straight for the self-harm. Even if it wasn't really self-harm and very much temporary... yeah best not.

So Kat let out a light cough and looked away as her cheeks coloured a bit, "Yeah... as Callisto said my blood is black... I'm also pretty sure my pain tolerance has increased a lot... but I'm not sure if that's because it was already quite good and it got better, or if it came along with my regeneration... or if I'm just that bad at keeping myself safe when I know I don't have to worry about staying injured,

“Um... I know that everyone has a demonic flame,” Kat summoned a bit of purple fire to her hands, “it’s something all demons have and it takes a shape inside them. Mine looks like a person... and it can sort of thing by itself? I do mean ITSELF not herself as well. It’s... weird. I have all the memories of what it does, and it’s... only sort of like a person?”

“That’s very strange...” grumbled Bruce. “What exactly is that like?”

Kat shrugged, “Well it’s only happened once, it’s a recent thing. It... it’s sort of like a photocopy of me but run through the printer a hundred or so times, before it was given the original and told ‘Act like a perfect copy’ and it sort of tries? I’m not sure I’m explaining this well. Hmm...” Kat mused for a few seconds, “No I don’t really think it’s something I can explain. Also probably best I don’t try and use that ability on Earth. I don’t want to see what the backlash would be,”

“Why would there be a backlash?” asked Roxy.

“Earth suppress all forms of higher energy,” answered Lily. “It makes a lot of things harder. I can’t call up my spells at all despite practicing a bunch and making... some progress during Kat’s last stint off-world. Kat’s double is essentially concentrated energy. It could destabilise in moments, or be in untold agony as the world itself rejects its existence. Probably best not to,”

Roxy and Bruce winced in synch, “Yeah... I can see why that would be an issue...” It really didn’t sound pleasant. Lily hadn’t even brought up the fact that Kat would get all those memories afterwards or the fact that Kat felt that strange hollowness afterwards. Would that sensation get worse on Earth? Or would it carry even more disastrous consequences than simply feeling a bit off? It really wasn’t worth testing right now.