

DEMONS 321

Chapter 321: Lily's Desk Part 1

As Kat was led through the facility, she was surprised at the sheer variety of woodwork on display. There seemed to be nothing that Chekov couldn't make out of wood, and even what he did choose to make had variation within the category.

For example, the first clock that she saw near the entrance was a more standard grandfather clock with rounded bezzels and a smooth appearance. It was only when she looked closer did she notice that there were many hidden details faintly carved into the clock. Most of these seemed to be single sentence stories with a small picture to accompany them.

On the other side of the coin, the second clock she found was anything but ordinary. It was less a clock and more a wall. The main centrepiece was of course the massive hands and clock face, but it did not lack for further details across any part of it. Each number appeared to be an individualised person in some sort of pose, oftentimes with an object to help complete the shape.

For example, the three was a carving of a man and his dog, each making up half of the shape, and they were clearly wrapped around a large pile of pillows that sunk into the clock face. Some others, like the seven, just featured a person by themselves. It consisted of a young but grizzled looking man with a large pompadour leaning at the right angle to make himself into a seven.

Five was a young lady sitting in a wheelchair, and ten looked like a young boy playing with a soccer ball. Kat almost wanted to stop in place to further examine the clock, but Chekov marched onwards as if he hadn't just past one of the greatest woodworking marvels she'd ever seen.

Even still, that didn't prepare her for when Chekov turned the corner to reveal the desk he had been working on for Lily. Just before it came into view, Chekov said "I was going to show you the little one's first, but glasses' is much closer so... well here it is"

Chekov took a few more steps forward before stepping back to reveal his creation. To call it a desk would be underselling it. It was a clearly a piece of art. The first thing that stood out to Kat was the supporting structure on the sides. They were two thick pillars of wood on either side to support the desk's surface.

Each pillar looked to be a stack of books, all intricately carved, and were it not for the uniformity of the colour on them, you'd never think them anything other than that. Each book had its own title carved into the side. They were written in some strange set of runes, and the fact that Kat's translation power didn't turn them into anything originally made her think they weren't meant to be read.

That was until she focused on one title in particular and felt the meaning of the word jump into her mind. The 'book' in question was titled 'There is Only Needlework' a strange name for a book indeed, but Kat was so shocked that the 'lettering' actually had meaning that she simply dismissed it out of hand.

There were further details on each of the books, little chips around the edges as if they had been faded by age. Some staining of the wood in small splotches here and there as if something had been spilt on

them... but it was when Kat took a chance to look over the side of the structure that she lost what little breath remained in her lungs.

Chekov had gone through and cut the smallest, faintest series of lines along each book clearly marking where each 'page' would be. Kat abused her superior eyesight to see that each and every one of them was the same thickness. There was only a few exceptions that she could see looking over the construction.

In one book that was labelled 'The New Zodiac' there was a bend in the pages, as if something had been trapped in between them... and this radiated out to all the other pages in the book making the lines bend realistically around the obstruction. In others, there were clear 'tears' in the pages that also seemed to affect how the books sat.

And that was another thing Kat was starting to notice. Each book was a different size, and as she looked further to the side of the pillars, she realised it wasn't just the one book all the way through. The woodworking made it appear as if somebody had shoved a bunch of books together to hold up the table, each a different size and shape, contained more or less pages, and only by some miracle did they all manage to fit together like jigsaw puzzles.

Moving up from the base of the structure, Kat looked at the top at the desk. It featured two large book cases that stood taller than Kat was, and almost as tall as her wingspan was wide. Before examining that though, Kat's eyes were drawn to the tabletop.

It consisted of a number of carvings that played out a scene on it. Kat couldn't help but take flight slightly to see the whole thing, completely forgetting Chekov's presence as she did so. Before she could examine the carvings properly, she heard a light cough from behind her.

Whipping her head back around, Kat saw a rather non-plussed Chekov, who merely had a slightly raised eyebrow. A sighing Lily, Vivian with her face in her hands, and Sylvie reaching out towards Kat as if to request she be lifted alongside her.

Oh... Oh woops. "Um..." Kat tried but didn't know what to say.

"Is ok girl. I know when not to speak of things. Granted, this is stranger than most da? Still, I say nothing" said Chekov before Kat could figure out something intelligent to say. Blushing in embarrassment, Kat returned to the ground just long enough to pick up Sylvie before flying herself to the side and looking down at the tabletop carvings to distract herself.

What Kat had wanted to take a look at was the mural that seemed to make up the tabletop. She had been at a bad angle before and was unable to see it in its entirety, now though, it was much clearer and more complex than she had imagined.

It was clear that the mural featured a library, lined with shelves of books that yet again HAD NAMES ON THEM. How Chekov managed to carve something so small she'd never know. These bookshelves lined the sides of the desk and seemed to go onwards forever. Closer to the centre was a number of tables with books scattered across them. Each table seemed to have a small figurine on them, and there was at least twenty all counted up, ten on either side.

In the centre of the tables was a large podium that stood on a slightly raised section. Podium seemed to be covered in ancient parchment, that once again HAD REAL WORDS on them. It was clearly a completely different language to the rest of the books but there was just so much text squeezed into the tiny space. Kat didn't even try to read more than a bit of it. In the centre of the podium though, the main affair, was something else... or perhaps someone else.

Standing in the centre, was a familiar figure, if a bit older. It was clearly Lily, with her glasses on and a nice form fitting suit. She was gazing out over the 'library' hands on her hips with a satisfied smile on her face.

Which was cool, but Kat found herself more drawn to the other figures in the picture. At the table closest to the centre sat an individual with wings and a kimono, long flowing red hair, and a set of horns at the front of her head. She even had a tail curled around her arm as she flipped through a book. Kat would of course, recognise herself.

Another table, slightly further back but on the same side, contained a set of two people. One sitting on the others lap, and Kat recognised them to be Vivian and Sylvie, who seemed to be playing a board game of sorts, but it didn't stop there.

On the opposite side of the podium, were two people slumped against each other in one of the chairs, a book hugged against each of their chests. Kat could just barely make out their faces, and almost didn't recognise them with the peaceful expression they had on, but it was actually Lily's parents.

And, at the back, standing proudly in a maid uniform, holding a large feather duster and cleaning a few tables with her back turned slightly away from the viewer was Callisto, making sure the whole place was neat and tidy. *novElExt.cOM*

That of course begged the question. *How does Chekov know what those last three people look like?*

Chapter 322: Lily's Desk Continued

Kat couldn't be bothered asking for those answers right now though, so wrapped up in the scene that she continued to take in as much as she could. There were a few other people that weren't recognisable in the library, at least not to Kat.

I wonder if Lily knows them as well, or if they are just to fill in the space. Normally I'd say they were just random people but honestly, Chekov has already gone so far above and beyond what I would have expected from this that I wouldn't be surprised at all if Lily knew each and every one of them.

Kat, in her scanning of unfamiliar faces, almost overlooked one more familiar face. In the very back corner, to the furthest right was a man sitting in a pile of rugs. With a smile on his face and gleam in his eye. He looked younger than Kat knew him to be... but it was easily recognisable as the face of Gramps.

Ok now I have even more questions. I can accept that maybe Chekov got some photos from Vivian but... that doesn't explain how Chekov knows about Gramps and his rugs and... hey wait.

Kat looked at the pile of rugs closely and realised that she KNEW each and every one of those rugs. They were all ones that Gramps owned, and she could also just barely make out the patterning for the ugly fox rug she had been given by Enuco at the bottom of the pile. Her eyesight was good, but the picture was small, and the rug mostly covered by yet more rugs.

Seriously how did he do this?

Shaking her head Kat gave a quick look down at Sylvie in her hands to ensure that the girl wasn't uncomfortable. Kat found Sylvie staring happily down at the desk like she was. Though now that I think about it... *Sylvie probably can't see the details like I can... I wonder... well at the very least I'm sure she'll say something if she wants it. Or pout. Seeing as she is doing neither, I'll tentatively say that she isn't really having issues.*

Looking back to the mural, Kat followed the only thing that she hadn't really investigated, and that was the staircases at the back. It continued up and out of the mural, becoming a fully three-dimensional structure that split itself to act as the centre walls for the two bookcases. Each step had been rendered in perfect detail, even including the slightest hint of wear on the railings when they made a sharper turn.

The shelving had more fake book titles at the back of it, but Kat noticed they were the least interesting thing the whole desk had to offer. *I suppose it makes sense though. Once it's in use properly there would be no point in having elaborate carvings just for them to be covered up.*

"You good to go back down?" asked Kat

Sylvie nodded, and Kat lowered herself. As she did so she could hear a strange sniffing sound. Turning towards it, she found Lily with tears in her eyes, trying to pretend that nothing was wrong. Kat moved over to her, letting Sylvie out of her arms and for once the girl offered no pout in protest.

Kat wrapped her arms and tail around Lily and pulled her into a big hug. "Hey Lily what's wrong"

"This... this is more than I could have hoped for. This is the most beautiful thing... no second most beautiful thing I've ever seen. I... I don't know how I could afford even a fraction of what this is worth and... I have no idea how I'm going to get this into my room" said Lily through the tears. Kat noticed, that once she finished speaking, she had a massive grin on her face.

"You tink I am an amateur? Do not worry, you can separate the pieces so that they may be moved easily. They are not light but you should be able to fit them somehow da?" said Chekov

"Oh... thank you. Thank you again Chekov" said Lily

Chekov smirked and said "I haven't even shown you any of the secrets. Chin up glasses."

Lily jolted in Kat's arms, and Kat didn't blame her. It was obvious Lily had forgotten there was still more to the desk in question, and Kat was in the same boat. *Woah. I had completely forgotten about that myself.* *Novelnext.cOM*

Chekov took a step forward. "The first, and simplest trick I have for you is that any book with these symbol" Chekov pointed to a series of symbols. In order, they resembled an S, an M, a sideways V, an R, the same M as before and finally an arrow. Kat could tell it actually spelled out secret, and the book in question was 'Secret of the Lost Woods' "open up into a little compartment"

Chekov put his fingers on either side of the cover, and pulled back. The spine of the book was pulled out revealing a small draw, perhaps the size of Chekov's slightly larger than normal hand, that was currently empty. "There is a few of these around. I show you this one and you find the others da?"

Lily nodded. "Is that Berk?"

Chekov grinned "Ah, I make good choice da? You even recognise the language"

Lily nodded again. "Yeah vaguely. I mean... that's just the most common language for people to call 'runic' and it looks pretty fancy, especially when you put the letters close together. I don't know it all off the top of my head, but they seemed familiar and I just went with my best guess"

"Now, do not spill you secrets to me glasses. That's why I give you something to keep them hidden da? Need to keep yourself a bit of mystery da?" said Chekov

Lily nodded, and Chekov turned back to the construction. The next thing he did was go over to the right bookcase. He then proceeded to press on a few of the fake books in the background, each on eliciting a soft clicking sound.

After pressing six books, a pop sounded out, and the central staircase at the back centre of the desk split open into two halves, separating from the rest of the stairs. Pulling the halves apart revealed an alcove underneath the stairs that sunk into the desk slightly. The space was sizeable, perhaps thirty centimetres across and twenty centimetres wide. It was unclear, from this angle at least, how much additional space there was height wise with how the stairs sloped, but it had to be at least a few extra centimetres even at the lowest.

"This be the second secret, I call it the closet underneath the stairs. Plenty of space for something of a decent size, but not too large, for that you'll want the next one da?" said Chekov.

Lily tilted her head in confusion as Chekov took a step back and kneeled down, once again interacting with the fake books. This time though, he put his finger on the one book that looked to be kept slightly open due to something wedged within. Taking out a small screwdriver, Chekov poked it into the opening.

There was a loud click, and Chekov shuffled back slightly before gripping onto the sides of the support and pulling. A large part of the wood came away to reveal a large space. About enough size for Sylvie to sneak in and hide. "This be the largest little hideaway in the whole thing. It might not be too large, but for a hidden compartment it is massive" said Chekov with a grin.

Lily smiled back. "This is great. I'm sure I could hide some rare books in there once I get them or... maybe my computer? No, there's no point. My parents know I have one so there is no sense hiding it there... I don't exactly have a use for it right now but the ideas that it gives me a more than worth it already"

Chekov nodded and said "Da, it is good. I am glad you enjoy it glasses. Do you want me to show you how it all comes apart?"

"Um... yeah that would be really nice thanks" said Lily

Chekov nodded. "So, first thing you need to do is remove the staircase supports. You can see how they come apart when you lift them straight up like so" said Chekov following through with his motions. Once he had lifted the staircases away, he continued.

"Next, you need to pull the bookcases apart. They both split in the middle. This is as simple as turning them back just a little bit and then lifting up da? Following on from that you must turn the bottom half the other way which detaches it from the desk..."

Chekov continued his detailed instructions for the complete disassembly of the desk. Each step removing some part that had looked integral to the whole structure. As he did so, he also spoke of proper cleaning techniques for the wood and varnish, while, Kat assumed at least, giving subtle hints as to where some of the other secrets were hidden.

Chapter 323: Moving a Desk is Harder than You'd Think.

Once Lily's desk was divided into pieces and Chekov had given very clear and specific instructions, he turned to the girls and said "What do you wish to do now? Take this outside perhaps? Or go see the little one's desk?"

"Hmm, how close by is it?" asked Vivian

"Little one's is on the other side of the wall" said Chekov tapping the back of the cubicle. "But the only way to get there is by going all the way to the end or beginning. It seemed like a good idea having them so close, but I clearly wasn't thinking when I set this up"

Vivian eyed everyone and said. "I think we should take this back to the car first. Is that alright girls?" when Vivian finished, she was specifically looking at Sylvie, knowing that it was likely causing her the most inconvenience, as she would be missing out on seeing her own desk as well as being unlikely to be physically capable of carrying any of the pieces.

"It's fine. The sun is out so leaving Lily's desk outside won't be a problem and I can wait" said Sylvie.

Chekov nodded, and went to start handing out pieces. Before he got too far though, Kat gave Vivian a look, to which she responded. "What crazy idea do you have now Kat?"

"Well... Chekov has already seen me fly, so it's not like he's going to think I was normal anyway. Now that I'm rank 2, I can sort of... carry things without them falling apart despite my strength. I sort of support the structure with my energy. If Chekov put it all back together, I can carry it for everyone... though maybe leave the shelves and stairs. I'm not sure that it's quite that good. Just in case I bump it, or maybe hold it at a bad angle"

Vivian glanced at Chekov, who just gave a shrug as if to say 'I'll go with whatever you want'. Vivian sighed, but had a grin on her face as she gazed around at everyone else. They all seemed on board with Kat's idea, so she eventually gave Kat and Chekov the thumbs up. It took Chekov no time at all to put the desk halfway back together.

Once that was done, Chekov himself picked up one full side of the shelving, before directing Lily and Vivian to take the one half each of the left side of shelving. Once they'd grab them and cleared out of the cubicle it was Kat's turn.

Walking forward, Kat was sure that it was well within her strength limit, her main concern was making sure that it could withstand her grip. When Kat rest her hand on it, she let her energy form its thin film over the whole structure, before pushing more into it. Kat grinned when the barrier happily complied and strengthened itself. Once this was done, Kat, making sure to keep her hand on the desk and keeping the energy flowing to the shield, she bent her knees and locked her arms in place.

Lifting at the knees, Kat felt the desk leave the ground with minimal problems. This much weight was hardly a problem for her. The only issue was that there wasn't exactly enough room for Kat to turn the

desk around in the cubicle. The thought of flying up to turn around flashed through her head, but Kat ended up just slowly walking backwards, head turned away to make sure she hit nothing, and legs stepping carefully to ensure she wouldn't hit the sides.

The others all made sure they were out of her way. Chekov had chosen to step back, and would be keeping an eye out from behind the group, while Vivian had taken point with Sylvie standing next to her and Lily just a little bit behind that. Once Kat was free of the cubicle walls, it was easy to turn and face forward once again. Kat was happy to see that despite how easily Chekov had made sure the desk would be, the main thoroughfare they'd be walking through was wide enough to accommodate.

Once Kat was safely out, Vivian took off back to the doors. As they walked, Kat split her attention. Most of her focus was of course on not hitting anything and ensuring that the barrier keeping the desk from suffering any damage from how it was being carried, Kat was also trying to use her ears to try and make sure that there wasn't anybody nearby.

The fear was of course, that while it was easy enough to just ignore the demon horns and wings as someone who was a little crazy or on their way to a costume party. Someone with thin arms like herself easily carrying what was clearly a heavy wooden desk likely twice or three times her own weight, wouldn't go unnoticed, and would cause a few questions to be asked.

Sadly, her hearing really wasn't where it needed to be to be spying on the locals. Luckily it was no issue. The warehouse district was just as empty as it had been before and Kat's thought that Chekov owned most of the warehouses around this area was further reinforced. When they got to the doors, Vivian and Lily were a little stumped until Kat said "I got this"

Testing out a minor theory, Kat had Vivian and Lily stand to the side, while she put the desk down next to them. Keeping an eye on the barrier, Kat changed her hands over for just her tail and watched as the small energy barrier was maintained. Once she was sure of that fact, Kat pulled open the doors as much as she could with her tail 'tied' to the desk.

Once open, Kat had assumed there would be no further issues. There was however a slight problem that Kat only just now realised. While there was plenty of space while walking through the warehouse, plenty to cross the road, and even the door wasn't too much of a challenge... There was not such ample spacing between two warehouses that constituted the route back to the carpark and Kat could not simply open the pathway further.

Despite the fact that Chekov was at the back, it was actually he who actually realised the problem right after Kat. "Ah, da path is a little small for you isn't it... hmm, can you just fly over? Or do you want me to take the rest of it apart again?" asked Chekov the same way Kat assumed he'd ask if she preferred her coffee with milk or not.

Of course, the answer was that she didn't drink coffee, but for Chekov's second question it was a resounding... "I'm not actually sure. This will be the most I've ever tried to lift while flying and I'm not sure I want to risk things too much" **noVeInext.COM**

Chekov nodded. "That's understandable. Still, my constructions not so shoddy that a little jolt would destroy it. I say you try, if you are comfortable, and glasses doesn't object da?"

Kat's eyes went to Lily, who said "I trust you"

I don't though! Kat shouted back in her mind. *This just doesn't really seem worth the risk... aw well I guess the worst that can happen is a bit of damage to my knees. I can make sure not all of it gets carried over to the desk and all will be well... ish.*

Kat tightened her grip on the desk, but made sure that her barrier was as strong as ever, and made sure to also apply a light barrier to the ground beneath her feet before kicking off from the ground. Kat knew she wasn't going to be quite as high as she wanted for this, but her thoughts didn't waver, flaring her wings at the tip of her jump, Kat angled herself to try and make it most of the way across the warehouse and back to the parking lot. She kept her eyes peeled as well, for anyone that might see her. Scanning with her eyes full of energy yielded no results, so Kat returned her attention to her task.

Kat was barely gliding along, and despite the rhythmic wingbeats that accompanied her passage, she could feel the weight on her wings. *This is a bit too much for me, I think. At least on Earth that is. I wouldn't put it past me if I was in a dimension with at least some higher energy, but this isn't easy.*

Watching her gliding path, it became clear that Kat wasn't quite going to make it. Looking at the flimsy tin roof that graced the warehouse, Kat also wasn't very confident that it could take her weight alone. That was without considering the additional weight of the desk as well. Angling herself to make use of the gap, Kat was now hoping that she could use the slight extra time bought by lowering herself into the pathway while keeping the desk higher up.

Chapter 324: 1 800 DESK

Kat's eyes narrowed and her mind sped up as her shoes passed the warehouses lower roof limit. At this moment it was getting close to the point of no return. *I could maybe pull my feet back up but... I'm basically committed at this point.*

Kat started to lift the desk higher up, as far as she could, using her arms, Kat made sure that the desk was as high as she could make it. While this was happening though, Kat's wings were still working hard at moving her forward... but another, more immediate problem was becoming apparent.

Even if the desk was now above her head, stretching her arms to their limit, her wings were still in the strike zone. Quickly gauging the distance between the edge of the warehouse, and the length of her wings, Kat realised she certainly wasn't going to make it cleanly, and perhaps not at all.

Shit. I forgot to take that into account. I'll have to stop flapping my wings, because like the desk, they aren't actually wide enough to fit in the walkway, especially not while I'm flying as well.

Kat considered her options. *Ok, first off I can try and kick off the wall. That should be enough to keep me afloat and the desk in good condition but the wall will very likely be damaged, perhaps significantly. I don't have time to spread a film of energy across it so that the damage is dispersed enough to be negligible.

Second option... I can throw the desk up into the air, drop down, and then catch it again. I don't really like this idea because I'm not sure if the film will stay or not. I'm thinking not, and that would mean I can't catch the desk without risking damage to it when I stop its fall unless I time it perfectly with the top of its arc... and I'm not sure even the coating I have on it will be enough to keep it from breaking under the strain...*

Surely there is something else... a better idea somewhere. Kat examined the desk, wondering how she could possibly fit something so wide between the roof. Of course, she then realised she was being an idiot.

Or, third option Kat. Stop being an idiot and just turn the damn thing around, and carrying it lengthwise. Why the heck wasn't I just doing that from the start? How did we all miss this?

Quickly acting on the idea once it entered her mind, Kat pushed her energy into her arms, allowing for a smooth transition.

Kat flipped the desk onto its side, and grasped firmly onto the bottom of it before she let herself drop, just narrowly avoiding clipping her wings against the edges of the warehouse. Kat fell fast, without her wings to assist, it was a heavy landing which she took in her legs as best she could.

Kat could feel those muscles protesting slightly, but, after just a moment her regeneration had repaired the extremely minor damage as it was. Sighing, Kat took just five further steps and left the warehouse. Saddened at how close she was to the end, and ashamed she didn't think of the simpler solution to the problem.

When Kat turned around to look at the others, they all had suitably embarrassed faces except for Sylvie who looked like she'd expected this. "We are idiots" said Kat

"Yup" said Chekov, Vivian, and Lily as they walked through the pathway. Politely ignoring the clear indent Kat had left in the concrete.

Sylvie however poked her tongue out and said. "I can't believe you didn't think to turn it sideways. I was going to say something but you jumped up so quickly Kat"

Kat sighed. "Yup... my bad. I promise I'll do it the better way next time"

Sylvie nodded "Good. At least you were able to recover though. Lily's desk looks fine"

Kat nodded "Yeah I made sure of that. It was my mistake to think I could make the short glide in the first place."

"No, fault is mine. I proposed bad idea. Just because it was accepted did not make it less bad idea" said Chekov

"Hey, if anything I should have known this. One of my main concerns was getting my desk into my room. I thought of a few ways before I knew it all came apart, so I should have mentioned you could just turn it on its side like Sylvie, but I honestly didn't think about it at the time" said Lily.

"Honestly I share some blame as well. I've walked this very path with Chekov before when Callisto and I both got desks. I should have remembered how we did it" said Vivian

"You did it with a trolley" said Chekov "Hardly comparable"

Vivian just sighed, and kept walking to the car. Now that, that entire ordeal was over they could focus on loading everything up. Vivian put her section down in the back of the trailer and opened a box that was already there. Inside was a bunch of thick... to call them blankets would be wrong. They were old thick cotton squares that looked like they'd be more at home in a dark corner than on a bed.

Still, as Vivian was about to show, they were great for padding. Wrapping her own piece up in the thing, Vivian gestured for Lily to hand over her piece which had the same treatment. Chekov's larger section was then split in two and piled on top, before Kat was directed to put her large piece in next. This took some slight fengling with the not-blanket to ensure that it was covered on all sides, even the bottom, and that it wouldn't collide with the other pieces inside the trailer or Sylvie's desk when it joined the Lily's in the trailer.

From that same box, which Kat could see contained at least one more not-blanket, Vivian pulled out two ratchet straps, long pieces of tough fibre with a ratchet on one end and a hook on the other, that was handed to Kat to fly over instead of just throwing. Once there they were hooked under the side of the trailer and tightened down by Vivian.

Kat could see the straps biting into the cloth just slightly, which let them all know that the desk pieces wouldn't be going anywhere... at least once Vivian repeated the process once again for the largest piece as well to ensure they were all tied down.

"So... satisfied with my work Chekov?" asked Vivian once the second strap was in place. ~~no~~*next.COM*

"Da, I suppose so. I'd have one more probably, but I know you'll need the rest for the other desk so it not so bad. Should be safe enough with the cover you have for it all so I can forgive that" said Chekov

Vivian beamed "Great. I know last time you complained that we weren't doing it properly so I'm glad I've finally earned your stamp of approval"

Chekov gave a barking laugh. "Ha, you want stamp you need to do better than this. I said is acceptable, not that it was good. Need more straps, and maybe even 'nother layer to cover it before I give stamp"

Vivian just stuck her tongue out at Chekov and headed back towards the warehouse. Chekov laughed again as he saw her walk away, and followed behind. The other three shared a look of confusion. "It seems tied down really well to me what's the problem" asked Lily

"Hmm, I'm not sure" said Kat "I can see that the clamps are sinking into the fabric just a bit which should keep everything in place, and the fabric prevents the desk from getting damaged so I'm just not sure"

"It looks fine now" said Sylvie in a soft voice as she gestured for Kat to pick her up. Kat complied of course, then turned so that Sylvie could face Lily once again. "But right now, we aren't moving and we don't have a second desk in the trailer. It will probably be fine once that is done, but I suspect Chekov doesn't do probably when it comes to his masterpieces"

"Ah" murmured Lily "That actually makes a lot of sense. Thanks Sylvie. Do you really think it will be ok though?"

Sylvie shrugged and gestured for the other two to start walking. Lily and Kat started following the other two as Sylvie continued. "Well, its hard to say without seeing how large my desk is, but I guess that a bunch of that weird rug thing will have to be used to brace it against the front and back of the trailer. Sure it won't be moving side to side much with the clamp, but sliding just a bit forward and back might happen, and a bit of sharp movement is enough to make a dent"

Kat and Lily nodded at Sylvie's words of wisdom. They did somewhat wonder why Sylvie had these words to give to them, seeing as the girl likely hadn't had anything to do with moving desks before, but they just assumed it was probably Callisto's fault and left it at that.

Chapter 325: Just the Outline of Sylvie's desk

The group made the journey back into the warehouse, taking the other pathway this time. The journey seemed shorter to Kat now that they knew where they were going. Or perhaps it was that she had seen some of Chekov's best work, and the other things, while well made, were rather plain comparatively. Compared to Lily's desk, a simple well carved office desk with a few drawers was unbelievably boring.

Though... even with Lily's desk in mind, when Kat finally arrived at Sylvie's, she wasn't prepared. It was so completely different in style and appearance that it took a few seconds for Kat to realise that it even was a desk at all. It was only the strange colouring on the piece along with the extra details that helped clear that fact up.

The entire structure of the desk appeared to be a small tree, only slightly taller than Kat's own height when counting her horns. The colours were drastically different though. The bark was a soft white colour that matched Kat's own skin shockingly well. The leaves at the top of the tree were also pale, but they had the slightest tinge of blonde and looked more like Sylvie's hair than anything else.

Complimenting this, were thick green 'vines' that wound around the tree and had various flowers that hung from them. There were so many and in such a vast array of colours that Kat had to wonder if she could only make out the differences because of her advanced sight. Not a single colour was repeated, each and every flower had some slight difference in both colour and appearance.

The colours, while splashed semi-randomly, did seem to trend towards brightening as they got closer to the top. The lowest flower, a large rose that sat off to the right, was a pitch black, with its counterpart on the left a grey lotus flower. Those were about the only ones Kat recognised by name.

The thing that Kat still didn't understand though... was how exactly was this a desk? For all intents and appearances, it was just a small tree. A beautiful tree, and a work of art to be sure but just a tree. That was when Kat noticed Sylvie running up to it. Right in the very centre of the bark, and around the top of Sylvie's current reach, was bright lily of some kind. It was mostly yellow with a stripe of pink down the middle.

Sylvie walked up the flower in question and grasped it like a door handle. Turning it, gave off a clicking sound and as Sylvie stepped back the tree split down the middle, opening up to reveal a new scene. As it did so, Kat watched Sylvie's entire face light up, with her eyes going extremely wide, to compliment her huge smile.

Well, firstly it also revealed a desk which looked like it was covered in grass. Though, as Kat looked closely at it, she revised that idea. It didn't look like grass; she was fairly certain it was grass covered in varnish. It was nice, but nothing spectacular for the tabletop. Especially not when comparing it to Lily's elaborate library carving that included her friends.

Of course, Chekov wasn't one to just slack off like that, and so it was another part that received his attention. On the inside of the doors as well as the backing wall, was a series of small houses that

seemed to be set into the 'trunk' of the tree. He had created a small village with around ten houses, and each being about the size of Kat's palm.

There were rope bridges connected the various houses, as well as stairs that seemed to sneak into the bark and come out connected to other lower or higher landings. Kat traced a path through the village and found that it was rather well connected. The houses each had their own slightly different architectural style with each taking from their neighbours as well.

The first one was a mushroom house, that looked to be a very standard affair for fairies or something. Despite this, the windows were done in a more traditional Japanese style with paper covering them. This was because next to them, was what looked more like a traditional Japanese pagoda. The only difference was that the roof was covered in spots like a mushroom.

This blending of the styles continued, mixing and matching across the entire set piece. Just when Kat thought it couldn't get any better, she noticed Chekov was crouched in the corner. She had been more than a little distracted. There was a small click with whatever Chekov was doing, and once the sound rang out, Chekov gave a nod and said. "Pull lightly on that rope bridge"

Sylvie nodded, and gave the bridge between the first two a slight tug. When she did so, lights came on all over the desk. Each flower seemed to have their own backlight from what Kat could see, but that wasn't what impressed her, it was the fairy village.

Each house now had its own set of light coming from them, as well as little coloured lights along all of the rope bridges. What the light did though, was reveal a number of figures across the houses, and Kat smiled as she started to recognise them all.

Each of the figures had been 'fairyfied' in some way but were all instantly recognisable. In the mushroom house was a tiny Sylvie with glowing eyes and tiny feathery wings coming out of her back. The little figure gazed at the scene in wonder.

Next door to that was the pagoda, which had Callisto in her signature maid outfit. Behind her back was two wings that floated near her back, but clearly separate. She also seemed to have lights that ran up her arms and flashed occasionally. *novelnext.Com*

Next to that was a little cottage that was next in line and below the pagoda. It had tiles on the roof like the pagoda, but looked the most like a small house. Inside Kat could make out a number of bookshelves, and in front of them all sat a tiny copy of Lily. The biggest difference was that her glasses were much too large for her face, easily covering most of it. Her wings looked like they were made from folded paper, as if someone had made them with origami.

After that, was the very middle house. It looked like a tiny Taj Mahal, except the stone was completely black and it didn't have any of the extra pillars. Each dome looked to be made out of paper with some writing on it, while the rest of the structure looked to be completely black. Inside was a miniature version of... herself. The only difference was that instead of one set of wings, she instead had two sets. That was all though, and Kat found that of all the small figures, she looked the most like herself.

Next to that was actually a tiny copy of Vivian's house, and so it was no surprise that the figure inside would be Vivian herself. She was standing in the doorway looking to the side at all the others houses

with a thoughtful look on her face. Vivian's wings were a set of butterfly wings that must have had lights inside them as they seemed to shift colours extremely slowly.

The house after that was also very familiar to Kat. It was a smaller copy of the orphanage she and Sylvie used to live in. Looking through the window showed Gramps in his office surrounded by piles and piles of paper, with 'wings' made out of rugs that seemed to hover behind him. Each seemed to just float behind him, and didn't seem to care there was a chair in between him and the rugs. Gramps had the slightest smile on his face.

None of the other houses seemed to have anything in them except for the mushroom house on the very edge of the other side which seemed to be a mirrored copy of the first, fit with its own miniature Sylvie and all.

Kat was broken out of her admiration by Vivian's question. "This is fabulous but... Chekov, how would anyone actually sit down at a desk like that? There is no place for their feet"

Chekov chuckled "You tink I would forget something that simple? Vivian you wound me"

Chekov shared a glance with Sylvie who nodded and slipped off to the side. Taking Sylvie's old space Chekov bent down and reached towards one of the vines that covered the trunk. His finger slipped behind the vine, and the click that sounded out meant he must have pressed something.

Once again, the tree opened up. The doors this time weren't as large as the one for the desk, only large enough for a grown person's legs and not much more. However, inside that small space was a number of drawers. They were all really tiny, and set into either wall, but they covered the entire interior.

Sylvie smiled "I never doubted you Chekov"

Chekov returned that smile "See the little one believes in me!"

Chapter 326: The Secrets of the Fairy Hollow

"So what are the secrets oh master of the trees" said Sylvie in a 'loud' voice which was much closer to everyone else's normal speaking volume.

"Master o' the trees. I like that sound of that little one. Unless you'd prefer I call you da Namer?" said Chekov with a smile on his face.

Sylvie shrugged. "Either is fine"

"Little one it is then. It just seems more appropriate da?" said Chekov as he bent down. "So, first secret is this..." Chekov started to pull on various drawers on the left side. Once he'd pulled out four drawers as far as they would go, he reached far in to get the top right drawer deepest in the cupboard and pushed it in.

With a soft click, the outer left side of the tree swung open to reveal a large space. "You can put whatever you want in there. I thought about putting in some shelves... but you have enough space in the drawers I should think. Plus there are some others with shelves so it's fine da?"

Sylvie nodded along with Chekov's commentary as he closed the drawers up. "Can someone shut da door for me? The other side won't open if the first is." Said Chekov.

Kat used her tail to shut it with a click, to save any of the others from needing to move too much. Seeing this Chekov got to work on the other side. He pulled another set of four drawers out with none of them overlapping with the ones from the left hand side before reaching deep into the crevice to press in the bottom drawer this time.

The right side swung opened to reveal a similar hollow as before. Chekov also took this as his cue to crawl out. The opening this time was about the same as the other side, the only difference is that this one did in fact, have shelves. "Other than this, each and every one of da houses can actually be opened up. The bottom comes off if you turn it to the left just a bit first. The empty ones can be good for storage or for putting something else there, another figure perhaps"

Chekov then proceeded to do just that. With a slight twist the bottom easily came away and he just guided it down to show an empty box. Chekov then moved over to the one that had the Lily miniature and did the same thing. When it dropped down everyone could see that the wings were actually supported by hidden slivers of wood, and that the bookcases in the background were actually part of the wall.

"Be a bit careful with these. Da wings were hard to manage. Some of them are liable to fall off if you are too rough with them" said Chekov

"Will they be fine to transport?" asked Vivian

Chekov nodded "Yes. I've hidden it behind the windows but there are actually additional supports around all the wings when the floor is screwed in properly. They should be perfectly fine in transit as long as they are all screwed in"

"Are there any other secrets oh master of the trees?" asked Sylive.

"Da. There is one... or maybe two? It depends on how you want to count it. First, if you come back here" said Chekov, gesturing to the back where a line of cable was extending out and into the wall. "This is where the whole thing is powered. I wouldn't call it a secret exactly but the hatch is hidden"

Bending down, Chekov flicked a switch hidden in the same compartment and pulled the cables out as the lights dimmed. Once that was done, he twisted the nearby lily pad to cover the hole once again.
Huh... I guess that makes sense. It isn't exactly hidden when there is something so out of place to cover it.

"As I said, not really a secret da? So, the other secret. This two sort of go together more than anything else" said Chekov standing up to his full height. Reaching for the canopy section and all the leaves.

"Now, this part is little tricky. You will need to remember this a bit more closely ok?"

Sylvie nodded to signal her understanding and Chekov got to work. Instantly, it was clear that this secret was the magnum opus of Chekov's hidden things. He'd press on the leaves in some areas, turn vines in others, pull on flowers to get them to sit out, and even backtrack a few times undoing some of the previous steps, but with a confidence that told Kat they weren't mistakes he had made, but even more steps in the process.

Kat watched the whole thing, trying to commit it to memory before she could lock it away. She had no desire to know this secret unless Sylvie wanted her to. Even with her previous statements that said she DID want Kat to know this, it felt a bit too personal for some reason, in a way the others never really did.

Once Chekov had completed the process, the final step was to shift the entire thing to the right. Chekov gave the whole structure a twist by gripping on two rather prominent vines on either side. As he did this, the canopy that was once compact started to unwind itself, spreading out into more of a jungle tree's appearance, with a wide-reaching canopy instead of its original ball-like appearance.

"You will need someone else to do this da? You are a bit little, hence little one. Still, I suspect you will enjoy this for many years yet, so that's ok" said Chekov

Sylvie was breathless. Hanging from the canopy was various crystal looking things that caught the light and shined. They did hang down into the work space a bit, so that was probably why this was an optional feature. As Kat followed them back, she also realised that they would all be pulled back into the leaves, so the whole thing was still counted as a storage space still.

"Woah" said Sylvie

"Woah indeed" said Lily "I don't see any wiring to those crystals, but I bet with all the other lights, even if those don't have them, they'll still shine well"

Chekov nodded "Da, I should have left on. All lights are pointed at crystal. Each crystal have a few lights. The effect is great but... maybe it's best I give you at least one mystery to look into later da?"

Sylvie nodded vigorously and Kat could see Vivian was smiling. Of course, Kat was smiling as well. *This is perfect for Sylvie. To some, it might seem like a little girl's fairy dream, but the work is all to such a high standard, and they aren't really fairies, they are people she knows just like Lily. It's honestly magical looking at this thing set up...

It makes me wonder. System Chekov definitely doesn't have magic right? This isn't magical in the literal sense?*

Entity Chekov does not emit and mana. Additionally, there appears to be no mana in Entity Chekov's work. *novelnext.com*

Error

Analysing

Approving further examination

Potentially missing data...

Extrapolating...

D.E.M.O.N.S has determined that while Entity Chekov does not have mana, and Artifact designation "Sylvie's Fairy Hollow" also does not appear to have any magical properties. It is determined to be likely that if Sylvie's Fairy Hollow was soaked in mana or some other higher energy, it would become magical.

Kat froze up stunned. *How does that work?*

Entity Chekov is simply proficient enough at craftsmanship that this piece meets at least the minimum requirements to start absorbing higher energy. It is unclear if that will be possible in User Kat's home dimension.

Why is that?

User Kat is able to use Demonic Energy because it is inside User Kat for the most part, limiting Dimensional interference. Sylvie's Fairly Hollow however, is not an Entity, and possess no soul. It is unclear what would happen because of the strange Dimensional rule that suppresses all higher energy.

Well... shit I don't even know what to say. Is Lily's the same?

D.E.M.O.N.S believes it to be likely, but that Item has not been scanned.

*Hmm... should I tell them...? Nah let's just... not... *

While Kat was reeling from the revelation that Chekov could create not quite magical artifacts, the man in question was making sure that Sylvie and Vivian knew how to take apart the desk in question. Unlike Lily, it came apart in three large pieces.

Once that was done, it was up to Kat to carry the heaviest of the three pieces, which happened to be the top part, while Lily and Vivian split themselves across the bottom piece, and Chekov placed the middle piece on a trolley that was sitting nearby. Once that was done it was a simple matter of taking everything back to the car.

Well, it was a little bit of effort to fit everything, and it was decided that the middle piece would sit on Kat's lap inside the car both to make sure nothing was damaged and because it didn't really fit in the trailer... but it was fine really... promise. Kat didn't even nearly drop her piece this time.

Chapter 327: Winding Down

After that the gang headed home. The car right was exceptionally quiet, as Sylvie was curled up underneath Kat's left wing and wrapped in her tail sleeping peacefully. They considered stopping for lunch somewhere but nobody in the car was hungry enough to bring themselves to wake Sylvie up for it, so they just headed back home.

Once there, Kat carefully carried Sylvie onto the couch, before they ate the sandwiches Callisto left on the table. As Kat was biting into her second slice, she had a thought though... *How did Callisto know we'd need food? I don't think the plan ever came up and I'm not sure... no I'm certain I didn't see Vivian text Callisto while she was driving, and I certainly didn't. I don't think Lily did either... she looked like she had a short nap as well, but she was clearly awake when we got back... hmm...*

Kat just shrugged and decided not to mind the strange appearance of food... until she decided to just double check. *There isn't any magic in this right system?*

User Kat is consuming food without any traces of higher energy on it.

Thanks system. I mean I thought so but... well, with us coming straight from Chekov's I felt the need to ask. Makes me wonder what other magical things I might be able to find here on Earth. Sure it's not real magic, but we can get damn close... and I think that says something. Not sure what, but something certainly.

Though... I guess it isn't a 'we' anymore is it? I have magic and I'm not human... hmmm. These thoughts occupied Kat while she was happily eating lunch. Nobody else wanted to speak either with Sylvie so close nearby. The three had shared a few looks to figure out if it was better to take Sylvie up to her room, but decided the couch was better through silent communication. It was probably better she woke up and ate, even if it was close to three in the afternoon, rather than skipping the meal, but nobody could bring themselves to intentionally wake Sylvie so this was the compromise.

Luckily for them, Sylvie did start to stir just as everyone was finishing lunch. After rubbing her eyes, Sylvie got up and ate with everyone who was content to just sit around and wait. For some reason nobody was able to put their finger on, the silence continued though. It was peaceful and they wanted to keep that atmosphere for a bit longer.

By some unspoken agreement once Sylvie finished, the three moved to the couch to nap. Kat surrounded Vivian and Lily with a wing each and put Sylvie on her lap and wrapped the little girl in her tail before letting herself sink into meditation. This is how the three sat until Callisto came down much later, waking them to inform them that dinner was ready.

"Urgh... I didn't realise I was still so tired" said Lily as she pulled herself up from a sitting position.

"Nah, we just needed to relax" said Vivian getting up and doing a few stretches.

Kat herself, was able to simply sit straight up. Her mind coming together extremely fast once she heard Callisto's voice. Sylvie seemed similarly refreshed but clung to Kat anyway with a smile on her face.

As they sat down to eat however, Lily realised they were about to have a problem. "Um... eh..." mumbled Lily.

"What is it Lily? I can see that something's bothering you" said Vivian, implying that it wasn't due to the various attempts at talking that tipped her off.

"Well... um... it's just..." Lily stumbled over her words and Kat started to form a guess as to what was going on. Recently, it was much rarer that Lily would stutter so much in her speech, and it was normally around a few specific topics.

"Take your time" said Vivian. *novelnext.Com*

"Thanks" said Lily looking back down at her food and jabbing her steak with a fork a few times. Once Lily had sufficiently mangled the steak in question, she seemed to find some reserve of strength to explain the situation. "Imaybesorta... didn't... tellmyparents"

"Well, we can rectify that problem by informing them. Or simply using the fence and Kat's superior strength to lift it over and straight into your room. Then just pretend that nothing is unusual and wait till they call you on it. Once they do, simply deny everything. If they insist the desk wasn't always there, ask for proof" said Callisto

"Um..." said Lily slightly overwhelmed by Callisto's suggestions.

"Don't worry about her Lily. I can come and explain it to your parents if you want?" said Vivian.

Kat nodded along thinking that was probably for the best, and that she should make sure not to be in eyesight... or known as Vivian's adopted daughter... *Actually do Lily's parents already know that? They might... and that could cause Vivian issues... huh maybe Callisto does have the right idea.*

As if they could hear Kat's thoughts, Sylvie echoed them "I dunno, Callisto's idea has quite a lot of merit to it. I mean, we have ample evidence to suggest Lily's parents won't react to this situation in any proper manner. I wouldn't put it past them being unable to admit that they were unable to notice their daughter ending up with a work of art for a desk.

"In fact, because it is of such a high quality, they will wonder how Lily could have purchased it without them knowing, if that was in fact true. In addition to this, the figures inside of the library make it clear that the desk is Lily's. There is no room for interpretation, and it couldn't belong to anyone else.

"The only issue with that might be the fact that if they are looking so closely at the artwork to recognise the fact that it must belong to Lily, they will also be able to recognise Kat and see that she has demon wings and a tail. We might find that sight normal but if anyone was going to take that as a sign that Kat was completely irredeemable it would be Lily's parents. Furthermore, it isn't like we can show them Kat to prove she doesn't have them, because she very much does... and that would probably just make their attitude worse."

Lily groaned and moved her plate out of the way before letting her head fall onto the table. "Urgh... and to make matters worse, they already think Kat is an evil temptress that's always distracting me. If they found out she was a succubus, which is supposed to be a race of demons known for being an EVIL TEMPTRESS they might chain me to the wall and keep me locked up until they were certain I wasn't 'under her spell'" said Lily putting as much vehemence into the last few words as she could.

Vivian groaned. "That... that is something I hadn't considered. This has gotten more complicated hasn't it. Convincing them the desk is for you has some dangers, simply saying it is and just moving it in after I explain things might work... but yeah that carving of Kat might actually be a big problem"

Kat decided to add in some thoughts of her own, for once, not totally confident. "Um... well... I don't want you to take this the wrong way... but if you think your parents will react that badly... you could always just keep it in my room for the time being? I won't be here all the time and I'm perfectly happy for you to come into my room whenever to use it if you think it will be that bad"

Lily groaned from her position, admiring the table from an extremely close distance and said "Well... let's make that a last resort. Not that I wouldn't love an excuse to come over more often... but-"

"You don't need an excuse you are always welcome" said Vivian

As soon as Vivian finished, Lily continued as if nothing was said "I do want it in my own room. That might be a bit selfish... and I'm almost certain it will cause us a tonne of trouble at some point but... remember I'm planning to give up my humanity in the future. I still have some interesting races to go over a few more times but... if they can't even get over a desk with Kat's demonic appearance on it... how will I ever stand up to them as even a vampire let alone a slime or a fox."

As Lily continued speaking, she removed her head from the table and started to speak with a conviction she didn't have before. "I mean, I'll still do it. My parents would hate to hear this but... that is a dream I can't give up. I mean... I already gave it up once thinking it the impossible dream of a lonely book

obsessed child... I WILL NOT give it up again because of my parents, and I won't risk losing them over something like this if I don't talk to them. If I have the courage to get my whole body changed then I can look my parents in the eyes before and after I do it as well"

Chapter 328: Modern Problems Require Modern Solutions.

Kat moved before she really started to think properly. She was sitting next to Lily already, with Vivian at the head of the table on Kat's right, Lily on her left, Sylvie across from her, and Callisto next to Sylvie, Kat moved completely without thinking and wrapped Lily up in a big hug as she finished her speech.

It was a good thing too, because Kat started to feel her shoulder getting wet as Lily trembled in her arms. *Why is she crying? Why am I holding her? How did we get here? That speech was amazing. I don't know that I've ever seen Lily stand up for herself so properly. She had no hesitation there. Sure she's defended me against her parents before... but I... I don't think she's ever defended HERSELF when confronted by her parents before.*

Kat felt another set of arms wrap around her wings most of the way enveloping Lily further. Before Kat could think on it too much, Sylvie joined in and Callisto walked over and patted Lily on the head. That seemed to be some sort of limit for Lily because she went from quietly letting a few tears leak out of her eyes to full on sobbing. She clutched Kat's outfit tightly, and Kat pulled her closer.

"Hey it's ok" said Kat

"I know" sobbed Lily "I'm crying because I know"

The four stayed like that for a few minutes as Lily continued to cry. One might think it was a little weird with Callisto off to the side giving everyone a pat on their heads instead of a hug but to Kat it someone felt right.

Finally, the hug circle broke when Lily pulled her face out of Kat's shoulder. "S-sorry about that. I didn't really mean to get snot all over your dress" said Lily

Kat smirked and stepped back gesturing at her spotless outfit. "Remember, that sort of stuff slides off me since I became a demon... though it does mean you might want to wash your face instead" said Kat

Lily went red and lightly touched her face, finding Kat was rather correct in her statement. Quickly dashing over to the sink, Lily turned it on to wash her face off. While this was happening Callisto did a weird... not quite jogging thing to hop over to one of the cupboards and pull out a towel for Lily, which she held out to the girl once she finished soaking her face.

"Here, it should be cleaner than the dish rags" said Callisto

Lily mumbled her thanks and dried herself with the provided towel, before looking around slightly awkwardly for a place to put it. Callisto just grabbed it out of Lily's hand and dashed off towards the laundry.

"Feel better?" asked Kat with a smile knowing Lily certainly wasn't crying from sadness.

"Yeah. I mean... um... yeah actually that did help. I... I didn't realise just how much I needed to say something like that you know? I... I think it is a combination of having such a personal project that I love

working on, as well as having another dream of mine come true seems to have given me some confidence...

"Well, I mean... I haven't actually stood up to them just yet but... I feel like I can you know? Like... I feel different then I did just yesterday or something" said Lily as she took a seat on the sofa.

Kat was very tempted to continue hugging her best friend when she saw that but sensed the time for a more serious and formal conversation was at hand. Still, that didn't mean Kat couldn't grab Sylvie instead and take the other side of the couch. Vivian and Callisto each took one of the recliners. Once everyone was seated Callisto was the one who spoke first. "So, how are we doing this? It has become a more serious question."

"Well... I guess we can all agree we won't just sneak it in anymore..." said Lily

"Not necessarily" said Sylvie "We can use that as a starting point, and just have the rest of us waiting around to ambush your parents when they question it. Show them the desk fully together first for a bit of impact"

"Hmm, but if we are 'ambushing' them..." said Vivian with air quotes "do we want to have so many people with us? The way you put that Sylvie, you make it seem like we should all be there... and I don't disagree exactly but... Kat alone would leave quite the impression BEFORE she does any of her crazy stuff"

Lily looked over at Kat and tried to suppress a wince. "It wouldn't be that bad..." Lily didn't believe it. Kat didn't believe it. Nobody else did either. Just as everyone gazed around and reached a silent agreement... Kat got a bit of an evil idea. Winking at Sylvie, the little girl nodded as Kat put her down to take the centre of the room.

"What are you doing?" said Lily somewhat nervous.

"Showing off" said Kat. Flapping her wings, Kat started to rise up in place. As she did so, she also started to channel some demonic energy into her throat and eyes, causing them to glow. Once she saw Lily's sigh of acceptance Kat knew it was time to step it up.

Next up was forcing energy into her horns. She felt them greedily accept the energy she sent there way, pushing more and more towards it until Kat was sure they were glowing as well, before putting her hands to the sides and releasing large balls of flame. To further sell it, Kat pushed the flames around, so they looked like they were being moved by some kind of invisible wind.

"You dare call me names? Do you have an idea of the power I wield!" said Kat, with a booming voice that seemed to coat the room. It was slightly gravely as she spoke and wormed its way into everyone ears. "I will HUG YOU ALL. You cannot escape!"

Sylvie and Vivian instantly burst into laughter, swiftly followed by Kat and Lily. Callisto had a big smile on her face as Kat dropped from the air, focusing more on laughing than keeping her wings going. When the laughter started to die down, Kat knew what she had to do. Forcing a bit of energy into her throat again she said "Hugs I say!"

Which of course set everyone off a second time, even eliciting a small chuckle from Callisto that managed to escape her iron will. When they finally managed to recover it was Vivian who said. "Yeah... we might want to save that. We don't want them running for the hills."

Lily nodded "I agree... I think they might be more scared of Kat trying to hug them than anything else actually"

This was all that was needed to set the four into another round of giggles. Callisto, rolled her eyes at this one while hiding her massive smile behind a gloved hand. She waited for everyone to calm down, and for Kat to return Sylvie to her lap before saying "So how else could we start?"

"We could have Kat walk in carrying Lily's 'unconscious' body saying "She has finally succumbed to my power" or something like that" said Vivian

This just elicited a groan from Lily. "Come on... are we even trying to smooth this over with my parents anymore?" she said, but with a smile that still wouldn't leave her face and showed that there was no heat in her words.

"Well, sufficient application of fear and shock would probably get them to accept just about anything" said Callisto "I mean, the real concern would be pushing it too far and making them faint instead and think it was all just a dream. So, we have to moderate our terror appropriately"

Lily sighed. "Maybe Callisto. We'll put that in the Maybe pile. Anyone else?"

"Actually, I've got one" said Kat "We can sneak it in as planned. They notice and check, you say you bought it. Prove it by pointing out that it has everyone you are close with carved onto it. They ask why I have demon wings and you hit 'em with a "Wait? You guys can't see them? I thought that's why you never liked Kat""

Lily giggled at that. "That's practically EVIL Kat and I kind of love it. Not sure if it would work, because they would be able to see them next time you visited... but man would it be funny. Even I have to admit I kinda want to see the look on their faces when you do" *novelnext.Com*

"Another good plan could be to just have Kat walk through the house carrying pieces of it and just... not comment on the wings. If Lily's parents ask, we can just nod and go "yeah what about them? Didn't you notice before?" when they ask about it. Pretend it's normal same as we planned for the desk but with Kat instead" said Sylvie.

Chapter 329: The Calm before the Furos.

In the end, the girls went through a few other variations of how to break the news to Lily's parents, but they settled on a rather basic one. Step 1, meet up and put together Sylvie's desk. Step 2, have Vivian show up with the desk in a trailer and be ready to start unloading it. Step 3, have Vivian talking to Lily's parents while Kat unloads the pieces. Step 4, don't react. Step 5, ??? Step 6, all hug and go home.

nOveLnext.cOM

Now, obviously, it was recognised that step five was a massive hole in the plan, and Vivian kept trying to argue that it would go much smoother if she was wearing a fake moustache, but both of these issues were things the group was able to move past. Callisto commented that she could provide some

assistance, if needed, and it was decided that she would sit in the driver's seat just in case she needed to be on scene quickly.

Sylvie was free to do whatever she wanted, and said that she had her own plans. Nobody asked her about it. Once these were all decided, Lily headed back home and everyone else washed themselves and went to bed. Well... Callisto just got back to work, and Sylvie joined Kat once again instead of using her own bed... but those are just minor details.

In the early morning, Kat got to work putting Sylvie's desk together. With her strength it wasn't even hard, and with her constitution she really didn't feel like eating more after the past few days, so she just put the whole thing together during breakfast, with Sylvie stepping in right at the start to point out to Kat where she wanted the desk. Super strength combined with Chekov's expert woodwork made assembly a breeze.

It was around ten o'clock when Lily managed to get over. She had slight bags under her eyes, but had a smile on her face. Currently, Kat was watching Sylvie and Vivian play a game of poker... using Uno cards. Kat suspected they were just being silly... but the game had been going on for about an hour now, so Kat's confidence in that guess was waning. So when Lily showed up, she took it as the perfect chance to do something other than ponder that question.

Kat got up and gave her friend a quick hug. "Hi Lily, come in" said Kat

"Thanks" said Lily "What happened to Sylvie's desk? I noticed it wasn't in the trailer anymore"

Kat shrugged "I put it together instead of eating breakfast. It wasn't that hard really, and I was able to easily do it myself. I did ask Sylvie first before getting the go ahead"

"That girl would let you get away with anything, of course she said yes" said Vivian from her place at the table.

"That girl" said Sylvie "Is currently winning our card game"

"Yeah... um... what are they playing?" asked Lily confused.

"Poker? Or so they said" replied Kat

Vivian nodded "Yeah we are"

"... How?" asked Lily voice laced with confusion.

"Well, we seemed to have misplaced the normal cards so we are just using Uno cards instead. We took out the fancy cards, use zeros as tens, and ones as aces. We just pretend the other court cards don't exist and that basically lets us play by normal rules" said Sylvie.

"So... I guess it's time to go confront my parents then..." said Lily

"Yup" said Vivian raising her eyes... only to see how tired Lily looked. "Lily, are you ok dear?"

"I'm fine Vivian, thanks for asking" said Lily

"If you're sure dear. Just because your friends with Kat doesn't mean you can avoid sleeping properly like her just yet. Wait till you become a vampire slime fox or something. Then I'll let you stay up late" said Vivian poking her tongue out at the end.

Lily chuckled. "I'm fine really... it wasn't even intentional... I just needed something to take my mind of this morning a little. I mean... I'm confident but... I don't know that I'm ready?" said Lily

Vivian put her cards down so that she could stand up and pat Lily on the shoulder. As soon as she saw the younger girl leaning in, Vivian pulled her into a proper hug. "That's ok. We'll be right there with you. Plus, if you get kicked out, I can have a third daughter!" said Vivian with a joking smile.

Lily tried and failed to stifle her laughter, until Callisto spoke up from the staircase she was residing on. "I'm afraid I have to veto that one Vivian. In just a few months you've already picked up two of them. Getting a third so soon after that makes me worry just how many you want in the future. I might have to put my foot down here to save this house from bursting at the seams"

Vivian, in the most mature and adult fashion possible, stuck her tongue out and blew in Callisto's general direction. "I can do what I want, I'm a fully grown adult. I pay taxes and everything"

"Vivian, I am also your accountant. I pay your taxes" said Callisto

"Still my money you pay those taxes with" said Vivian with a pout. "Besides, it's Lily! Don't tell me you wouldn't be willing to adopt her with such a cute face like this" as Vivian finished speaking, she turned Lily around and hugged her from behind, showing off Lily's face to Callisto.

Lily was looking a bit red from Vivian's repeated teasing and had a strained smile on. Callisto decided to help the girl out a bit and deescalate. "Look, Lily is lovely indeed, and I'm sure you could convince me, but she has two perfectly serviceable parents that care for her already. We don't need to adopt her, and we don't have any more spare bedrooms anyway."

Sadly, this did not have the desired effect. Vivian smiled wide and hugged Lily tighter. "See, even Callisto admits we'd love to have you. Sure she didn't say that but she's a bit of a stick in the mud. Besides, if they can't even put up with Kat when she hasn't done anything wrong, they don't deserve to have such an adorable daughter anyway"

Lily's light touch of red, turned into a deep cherry as Vivian continued to embarrass her. Seeing this, Kat slid over and freed Lily from Vivian's grasp, before giving her a soft hug and dashing away. This... also did not have the desired effect as Vivian was on a roll this morning and said "Oh, the fair maiden has been saved by her knight in shining silk! Whatever shall I do to steal her back?"

Lily groaned and, to Kat's surprise, went even more red, and decided to hide her face in Kat's shoulder again. Kat gave Vivian a frown, but she was unrepentant and stuck her tongue out at Kat as well. Kat was tempted to say something, but Callisto spoke first "We've been played Kat. Vivian is on a roll today. I fear for the sanity of Lily's parents in but a few moments"

Lily burst out into laughter that she tried to stifle with Kat's kimono. Vivian smiled at this, and Sylvie pointed out. "Vivian was just trying to get your mind of your worries" said Sylvie "She might seem like a big child but she's actually pretty smart"

"Oh" huffed Vivian affectionately "Pretty smart? Why Sylvie I am positively offended. I am the smartest. I know all of the big words. My mummy taught them to me"

Sylvie gave a look that seemed to say 'this is what I mean' somehow with an almost completely deadpan expression. "She's right though" said Callisto "Just leave your parents to Vivian. She might be a few cards short of a full deck, but she has a surprising knack for talking to people... and insulting them without making enemies"

"That's a bit mean Callisto. I would never insult good, hardworking, or honest people" said Vivian.

Callisto nodded "Exactly"

Vivian beamed, and Kat sighed. Lily however, had managed to look confident once again, regaining the smile she had when she walked inside and the bags under her eyes seemed just a little bit lighter.

"Ok. I'm ready" said Lily

Everyone nodded at that and headed towards the car. Vivian was still driving, because "Callisto was never good with trailers" and the three younger girls were all sitting in the back. Kat was sitting as far forward as she could so that the others could sit with their legs poking through one of the more spacious gaps in her wings and not be squished too badly. Sylvie had tried to convince Kat to allow her onto Kat's lap, but Kat denied it for safety reasons.

"Everyone ready?" asked Vivian

"Yes!"

"Everyone remember the plan?" asked Vivian again as she started the car.

"Yes!"

"Excellent" said Vivian as she backed out of the driveway

Chapter 330: Meet the Mother

When everyone pulled up at the Furos' house, they all had their game faces on. This of course, meant that they were trying to look as polite and unassuming as possible with the minimal deviations from their normal resting faces. For Vivian this meant a dazzling smile, for Sylvie, a soft rise of the corners of her mouth.

For Lily, it was a slightly nervous trembling that still contained a soft smile and a solid confidence. For Callisto it was a completely flat face with almost no movement in her limbs, especially her fingers, which were kept perfectly still on the steering wheel once Vivian had given up her spot.

And of course, Kat, who has a smile slightly downturned, as she'd never had a good relationship with the Furos, and while normally she had a softer smile like Sylvie, or, more recently, a wide grin, she never did like the Furos, and this was what they had come to expect from her.

Kat took up her position behind the pieces of desk so that only the very tip of her horns could be seen. Making sure it was just enough to see the tips, but without revealing so much of them to make it clear

that they weren't anything other than an odd hairstyle choice. Sylvie was hidden behind Vivian as she walked confidently up to the Kuros' home.

Lily followed beside her nervously ringing her hands, but with a confident set to her shoulders. When Vivian made it to the door, she knocked with the firm authority of someone who knew what she was doing... and the bright smile of someone who had not a clue.

Kat strained her ears to hear the whole thing, and not miss her chance to act. When Kat heard the door open, and a female voice rang out, Kat knew it was Lily's mother before she even spoke. She could practically hear the derision from behind the desk. How that worked, not even the system knew.

"Hello? May I help you..." Lily's mother, Mrs. Furos, let the words hang as she tried to figure out the best way to address Vivian. Her youthful appearance and bright smile contrasting with the professional set of her bearing and the clipboard she had acquired just for this set up. "Miss?" was eventually what Mrs. Furos settled on.

"Just Vivian is fine dear, what might I call you Mrs. Furos?" responded Vivian brightly

"Ah... um, please call me Evaline?" said Evaline already questioning herself and wondering what was going on.

"Sure thing Evaline" Vivian said, radiating positivity. Kat could hear the faint hissing of Evaline as she desperately tried not to shy away from the light... or at least that's how the scene was going in Kat's head. "I'm just here to drop off a desk for young Lily here. Made by Master Chekov himself you know"

"Eh... um? Thank you for that?" said Evaline still not fully grasping the situation.

"Would you like to ask me any questions while we get everything set up? It's no big deal of course, but I'm sure someone intelligent like yourself must have at least a few for me? Lily, would you be a dear and direct the unloader?" said Vivian still radiating professionalism and positivity.

Lily gave a quick glance to her mother who shakily nodded, and stepped out of the way of the door. This was of course, Kat's queue to get moving. Without missing a beat, Kat picked up the first part of the desk and marched inside following Lily's lead. While she was doing this, Evaline was still trying to come up with a question for Vivian after she had been prompted.

Evaline didn't so much as glance at Kat as she made her way inside. While this was happening, Kat kept an ear out for when Evaline finally managed to think up a question. "So this... um... Master Chekov? You said...? What sort of work has he done?" managed Evaline after a good ten seconds of silence.

"Oh well, he's a rather impressive wood carver from Russia!" said Vivian practically bouncing in place as she spoke, as if this was just the question she was waiting for. "Well, he's practically a Grandmaster carver at this point, but he left Russia a few years back and has kept to himself since. Lily was rather lucky to get something so high quality from him"

Kat deposited the first desk part and went back out to grab another, as Evaline continued to founder in conversation with Vivian. "Um... that sounds lovely, why, what did our girl do to impress someone like him?"

Vivian sighed, putting her clenched fist holding her clipboard against her face, letting her radiance calm down a slight amount. "Well, Ms. Furos, Evaline, sorry. I don't rightly know. I mean, nothing against your daughter of course, she is quite a dear, but I wasn't present when he made that desk for her. I couldn't even hope to guess the motivations of someone so talented"

"Er um yes of course, how silly of me" said Evaline, only just barely grabbing onto the conversation as Kat brought the next piece inside. Kat, for good measure, even let her tail slightly graze the back of Evaline's leg, but she didn't even react. "So... this desk... what's it like exactly?"

"Well, now, I can't be spoiling the big surprise" said Vivian hiding her now very wide grin behind her clipboard. "That wouldn't be fair to Master Chekov or your daughter really. You are more than welcome to take a look once it's been put together of course. That will only take a few moments. Chekov ensured that all the pieces would fit together smoothly. Why, I doubt you could even tell where it separates if you didn't know!"

"Of course, of course, it will be much better to see it all together" said Evaline nodding along with Vivian. It was at this point Kat and Lily grabbed the last of the pieces and Kat spoke up. "Nearly done Vivian. Should be all together in just a second"

Evaline froze, instantly recognising the voice. Vivian watched as Evaline's neck slowly stuttered around to watch Kat walk inside following behind Lily. When she did so, she saw Kat's features and her mouth dropped open. Evaline pointed down the hall shakily and said... "That... um... wha?"

"Oh? Yes that's Kat. She's helping with the heavy lifting. Quite the lovely young girl you know. She's been a big help" said Vivian.

"Oh... er yes... but um" Evaline stumbled looking for a 'polite' way to point out Kat didn't look remotely human.

As she stumbled over the words, Lily and Kat put the finishing touches on the desk, and Lily shouted out. "We're done Mom. Did you want to come look?"

"Ah, sure honey!" said Evaline, snapping back into focusing. As she walked inside towards her daughter's room, she absentmindedly gestured for Vivian to follow. This meant that she didn't see Vivian removing her shoes and grinning evilly at her back.

When Evaline made it to Lily's room, the sight she was greeted with was Kat putting away the books that took up the space that now belonged to the desk in the new shelving. "Um... what?"

Lily turned to her mother and said "Fantastic isn't it? Chekov really went above and beyond with the carving. It has so many unique details"

Evaline looked from her daughter, to the desk, and back to Kat. "Um... yes, it looks lovely but um..." she gestured vaguely at Kat

Lily tilted her head, perfectly feigning genuine confusion. "What's up?"

"Can you not see the... you know?" said Evaline

"I mean, I can see Kat putting away those books. Actually, good point I really should be helping her" said Lily getting to work, assisting Kat.

Evaline looked around the room for some other assistance, and spotted Vivian in the doorway. "Do... do you not see the wings... and the tail... and the h-horns?"

Vivian nodded "Yeah of course I do?"

Evaline looked around again searching for someone else to help her. Seeing everyone acting so normally, she couldn't help but start to wonder if she was the one going crazy. Evaline gulped and addressed her daughter. "Lily what about you?"

"What about me what?" asked Lily

"The wings?" asked Evaline

"Yeah? I mean they are pretty hard to miss mum" said Lily

Evaline's eyes darted and finally reaching out for her only other option. "Kat... what do you have to say about this?"

"Um...?" Kat looked over at Evaline and raised an eyebrow. "I don't understand the question fully" *Ha lie prevention eat your heart out. I understand the question, but not 'fully'*

"Er... um..." Evaline looked around the room once more before saying "Shall I get your father? I'm sure he'd also like to see this desk of yours?"

"That sounds great" said Lily with a nod before returning to the bookshelf. Evaline left the room in a daze, off to find her husband, and maybe get some answers.