

DEMONS 601

Chapter 601: Two Thoughts are Better than One

"Again, I'm sorry" said Shizuka bowing slightly before Kat. For truly I am sorry.

Kat shrugged, "It's not a big deal" was her answer.

Shizuka gained a rather pinched expression at this. She thought on the words coming out of Kat's mouth and wondered how it could possibly not be a lie. She knew of many people who would have Enuko executed for less if they could, and Kat likely could, Shizuka had no doubts about that. While Kat herself might be unable to, Shizuka wondered about Kat's parents, friends, colleagues. The demon world was large and she was sure Kat could recruit someone to enact vengeance for what was done.

She also knew a pettier individual would have come after her instead. For all Grandma's talk to simply finding more ways to protect her, creating enemies was a horrible way to achieve that goal. It was hard to talk back though. Enuko had protected her many times. Some more directly than others. Now she was even using her influence to shield her from the beast kingdom.

Shizuka knew that was a bigger thing than it seemed. Enuko was STRONG. One of the strongest people on the continent. Not as strong as the entire Beast Kingdom of course, but if push came to shove Enuko could run forever if necessary. She could take out a large number of them. It would never be worth it to fight her. Enuko was a big stick to ward off the worry.

However, Shizuka was starting to wonder how much it was wearing on her grandma to be ready for something like that all the time. Seeing the plans for those runes left her with a bitter taste. The fact Kat didn't even seem to care she nearly died was worse. The fact she merely considered it rude. Shizuka didn't know what to do with that information honestly.

Then there was the fact that Minor could control her body if push truly came to shove. Minor knew she knew. Of course, Minor knew. Shizuka was more than aware that Minor could see her thoughts, especially if she didn't try to hide them or they were happening in real time. Shizuka also knew she could have fought. She provided a token resistance at best when Minor had tried.

"I think Minor is more correct in her dealings with you" said Shizuka, seemingly out of nowhere to Kat's mind.

"More correct?" asked Kat confused.

Shizuka bit her tongue unsure how to proceed. It was clear that Kat wasn't used to wordplay. The question was if she should point it out now that she knew her message had been missed. Shizuka decided that in repentance for the disrespect shown to Kat, she would. "It is my way of saying that while I do not believe my course of action was wrong, I believe that Minor's course was truer, more correct"

"So... you think Enuko was in the right?" asked Kat.

That's not what I'm saying at all Kat.

"It kinda is sis"

Shizuka glared internally at her sister. *It isn't the same thing at all. Perhaps you will listen when I explain my answer to Kat.* "I do not believe she chose the correct course of action, but at the same time I don't believe it truly matters how correct it was." Kat frowned at this, but Shizuka continued, "Euko is our guardian Kat. She is the one providing us shelter. Even if I am to be the next Queen, Euko was Queen once as well, and she has seniority, power, and current authority over me. Unlike Mother, Grandmother has not given us leave to question her so thoroughly."

"S-" "MINOR" "Minor believes that what Euko did to you was wrong, and therefore you should be defended and Euko should be corrected. I believe that Grandma is trying to keep us safe and regardless of our thoughts we should defer to her wisdom"

Kat gave a wan smile and said, "I hope you'll forgive me if I do not defer to the wisdom of someone who desired to see if she could kill me with a runic trap"

"She has a good point sis. She has no reason to care about Euko at all after that one."

Shizuka couldn't stop the cringe. *Why can't she be more upset with us? I could deal with the yelling, or at least the false blustering of how much offense she has treated an honoured guest with. Kat just shrugged the damned thing off. Why can't she curse us, or try to poison us to get back at Grandma or something.*

"Because unlike Euko, Kat is a good person"

Shizuka didn't really want to acknowledge Minor's response, but as they both shared real estate in the same brain it was much harder to ignore and basically impossible to pretend. Minor knew she'd gotten to Shizuka with that one. *Well what about how much effort she's going to help us? Grandma has always been kind to us.*

"Euko ensured that one of us would give the life for the other. It was only your love for me that saved us both"

Shizuka felt bile rising in her throat. "I'm sorry sister that was too far"

Yes Minor. Yes it was. I thought you didn't mind your current state?

"I don't mind it Shizuka. I'm happy as I am. If given the choice knowing what the future held for us both, I would likely agree with Euko that this is the correct course. That doesn't mean I like the way she made the choice. She hardly thought about it. As hard as it was she was happy to sacrifice one for the other. Granted it was the one who had no hope of life, but a life is a life sister."

"You can see it happening here. Euko decided that the risk to Kat's life was irrelevant for she does not care about it. She cares about herself and her extended family. I hesitantly include her adventuring friends in that but sometimes I do wonder. Euko is not a good person. I do not wish to be like her, and I do not wish you to be either sister."

"She may have once been a good Queen, but she is not Queen anymore. Now Euko is a paranoid hermit that cannot find it in herself to care for those she doesn't like. The only reason she didn't turn the room into even more of a deathtrap was the risk of upsetting me, and upsetting you through me. I truly wonder if Euko is psychotic."

"I do not truly think that. I know that she cared for her people... but for anyone she doesn't consider 'hers'... they are hardly worth anything to her. Granted they are treated better than Kat, but somehow Kat really pushes all her buttons. How Mother got into demon summoning I'll never know."

Shizuka couldn't force the bitter taste in her mouth to dissipate. Nothing Minor had said was in error, and she knew this. It was impossible to deceive each other when speaking so candidly within their minds. Hiding things was slightly possible, but when they opened more direct communications like this they pushed ideas as much as they did words.

Grandma just wants us to be safe. Replied Shizuka but the words lacked depth and honesty. There was no real attempt at persuasion. The thing was though, Minor did believe those words, to an even greater degree than Shizuka.

"Yes. She does. Shizuka that's all she wants. Now that you've said it actually, it makes me wonder. Did something shatter within her that night I 'died'? Is that why she is so paranoid? I had not considered it truly but she went from grieving for me for ten years, to finding my existence confirmed to you nearly dying with me rejecting a body sprinkled in. That can't have helped. It's no excuse but it can't have helped."

Indeed. It cannot.

It was at that moment when the pair heard Kat sit down that they realised they'd been speaking internally for a while. "Oh... um sorry. I was just talking to Minor" said Shizuka, "I didn't really mean to ignore you"

Shizuka saw Kat smile, and she couldn't decide if it was comfortable or not. She felt like there was just a little too much teeth in it, and the blinding white of them was harsh to look at. "It's fine, watching how your face changes so much when you do was amusing. When I started to really pay attention I found a bit of a pattern"

"Oh?" "Oh?" asked Shizuka with Minor mirroring the question in her thoughts.

"See right there. Your face changes ever so slightly when Minor is thinking. It's a minor, er, sorry a small thing and clearly not intentional but I think you have different resting faces. Even when Shizuka is in control if Minor is thinking loudly enough it switches a bit"

We'll need to work on that before we return to court. novelnext.com

"Yes. Yes we will."

Chapter 602: Mimicking Mai

With the revelation that Minor was affecting Shizuka's facial expressions sometimes things settled down a bit. Well, at least on the twin's side. Kat was already quite calm now that Enuko had left, it was mostly the 'internal' conflict between them that raised the tensions but with Kat's comment the whole issue got derailed.

It was hard for them to keep fighting while also trying to work out exactly what Kat meant and seeing just how unaffected she was, it was hard even for Minor to continue to argue. Sure she was still

unhappy with Enuco's decision, but Kat was here. What was the point of wasting time being angry when they could spend time together?

Well do you want to take over then?

"Maybe? I wouldn't be opposed I guess but I've had so much time with Kat already. She's already my friend maybe she can be yours as well? You need more friends Shizuka. You have... arguably one. I have just as many or more friends as you do if we want to get technical."

Shizuka was mildly annoyed at the fact Minor was correct. The voice in her head had a more robust network of friends than she did. Even if that voice was a real person, it didn't necessarily feel any better to acknowledge. I don't need your pity!

"It's not really pity it's more like sharing the love, I guess? Kat's great and I can't drive the body forever while she's visiting. You might as well start now rather than halfway through training because Kat will probably be distracted."

What am I supposed to say though? I don't even know if we have anything in common. I haven't paid that much attention to the memories with Kat in them. A lot of them are boring because it's all walking and the ones from you moving around in my mind I basically impossible to view properly for some reason. I mean I have guesses but that's it.

"You'll be fine Shizuka"

How can you know that? You were always the social one

"Shizuka, we were babies when we died. You can't use that argument. Where did you even get the idea? I've talked to like... 3 people total. You, Kat, and Grandma."

Huh... where did I get that idea?

"So... is there anything you can tell me about the person who is training me?" asked Kat all of a sudden. Of course, from Kat's perspective a decent chunk of time had past without anyone saying and she'd tried to get the attention of the twins for a while before asking but that didn't quite work on. Now they were caught slightly on the back foot.

Can we? Are we allowed?

"Who cares if we're allowed? Enuco isn't here right now and clearly if she left us alone with Kat she trusts Kat not to murder us or something. Plus, what is Mai going to do? Complain we told Kat about her? She's going to take Kat as a weapons apprentice. Nothing we could reveal about her that Kat won't be able to figure out or just get told about. She'll need to know quite a few of the things like why she won't hurt Mai or what's going on the first time she transforms into Kat."

I... yeah you're right.

"Actually there is a decent amount we can share," said Shizuka out loud, her voice was slightly off tone after chatting so much in her mind but Kat didn't really notice. "The name of your teacher is Mai, she's a slime, a Queen Slime I believe though I'm not completely certain about that."

"Huh..." said Kat confused, "how would a slime teach me how to use fans? I mean... if she travelled with your grandmother, I'm sure she's competent but... how would I be able to use her weapon forms?"

"She can transform into whatever she wants" said Shizuka, "so she'll probably turn into you for the first day and get used to your form as she explains the basics. Learning as you do I guess. She'll learn a lot faster of course because she's used to changing forms a balance all the time but that's for the best. She can't correct you if she doesn't know what you're doing wrong."

"That's pretty cool" said Kat honestly and the sincerity really did carry in the tone.

"Yeah. Aunt Mai is awesome. Tell her what Mai's main job is!"

Shizuka rolled her eyes but stopped partway through and glanced at Kat, "Sorry, I wasn't doing that to you but to Minor's response in my head. I REALLY need to make sure not to get into that habit for when return to court. The fact my facial expressions change is already a big deal. Oh, and in case you're wondering Minor can tell if she's paying attention because my vision shifts.

"So... Mai" said Shizuka after a pause, "she was the teams rouge and all rounder I guess? An excellent spy at first because of her small size she could sneak around as a blob and get into strange little places to overhear things. Then when she got better and learnt how to speak properly she started impersonating people.

"Being a slime, she is also a bit of a support tank on occasion because of how hard she is to take down. Normal slimes struggle to keep their core hidden but because Mai can change what she looks like she can make it seem like she has no core or hundreds of cores all over her body, whatever she thinks is better against the thing she's fighting.

"The only part of the standard rogue kit that Mai has issues with is trap making and dismantling. Not having hands for a number of years made it hard then later on she was strong enough to just let traps hit her a lot of the time. Most things aren't really equipped to deal with intelligent slimes. Swords can just go through her if she's careful."

"What do you mean by if she's careful?" asked Kat

"Well... slimes have two ways of keeping themselves together. The first is a thin vein of... not skin but I guess slightly tougher goop that keeps the rest of their more liquid insides together. It heals really rapidly but it's a bit fragile. They use it passively.

"The second way is a semi-permeable mana barrier. It's an instinctive thing and when you get to Mia's level of strength a slime can keep it on constantly without thinking about it at all, even in her sleep. That was actually something I was told took her forever, keeping her fake appearance when asleep" explained Shizuka.

"Sounds like I have an interesting teacher," said Kat. "Are intelligent slimes common?"

"No not at all," said Shizuka, "most slimes are weak things that reproduce by splitting once they have enough extra mana and mass. Mai is the only intelligent slime we know of but she insists that one in every ten trillion slimes is intelligent to her level. Which... well Euko has told us specifically that Mai is underselling herself. One in ten trillion have sapience and the ability to think for themselves but Mai is a genius in her own class.

"Oh, and ten trillion slimes might sound like a lot... but they breed like... well the saying here is breed like slimes. They multiple at ridiculous rates when they find a good spot... and they can still spread rapidly even in a bad one. They eat practically anything they can dissolve and convert it to mass and mana while sucking in mana from the surroundings if there is enough. Any random cave will normally have a few hundred slimes if nothing stronger has completely eradicated them. Which is nothing compared to high mana areas. If a slime gets there they'll number in the millions in less than a year."

"Yeah. Compound interest is a scary thing"

"I can't really relate but I'll take your word for it. We don't have slimes in my home dimension" said Kat.

"Not sure if that's a good thing or not. They... really aren't too bad. Sure they can swarm you but with decent armour you can be safe for a while and kicking them away is a valid tactic. Hard to kill within being able to hit the core, but not hard to survive. Just walking at a mild pace in the opposite direction is enough to escape most slimes" explained Shizuka.

"What colour are slimes? Actually what colour is Mai?" asked Kat

"I don't know" grumbled Shizuka. "Yeah she cheats" "Mai likes to return to a 'default' form with a different colour every time it happens. One time it'll be blue, the next orange, the time after that yellow. She SHOULD have a default colour that she was born with but whatever it is Mai isn't telling. I'm not even sure if Grandma knows because I've heard she's had the ability to change colours for longer than Grandma's known her."

Chapter 603: Meeting Mai

Back to Kat

After talking about Mai things settled down again. This time though, instead of letting the silence extend forever Shizuka asked for Kat to go over her adventures in more detail. Kat responded by asking if Shizuka was interested in all of them right from the start including her adventures with Minor.

Shizuka had to think about that one for a while. Minor had of course shared that information with her, but it isn't just a one to one transfer. Minor forgets things, and because she's the lesser individual in the relationship Shizuka can't easily go wandering around Minor's memories. So it was a lot more like she'd roughly described the parts she knew, and as Kat had mostly provided that information over D.E.M.O.N.S messages the information wasn't even that detailed to start with.

So Kat agreed and Shizuka moved them all to another room. This one was filled with pillows practically from top to bottom and Shizuka dived into one as soon as the door open before digging through them for a bit and stopping. "Oops" said Shizuka

"What's the problem?" asked Kat confused as she threw herself backwards onto another pile of pillows.

"I... um... sort of forgot you were there. Grandma doesn't use this room so I sort of just... jumped in and started to dig around. It's a bit unseemly for someone of my stature and promotes bad stereotypes about Kitsune. I really shouldn't allow others to see me like that" explained Shizuka

Kat shrugged, "I don't really care. You still want to hear my stories?"

When Shizuka nodded Kat got started, deciding to begin with the first story and explain her first week with a tail, not even leaving out the fact that she was human. It was something she'd sped up her mind to think about before speaking but in the end, she decided that she trusted them, and even if she didn't, there really wasn't anything terrible they could do with that information. Well, Kat didn't think so even if it would give certain individuals terrible ideas should they hear of it. Luckily the people she told were the daughters of a demon summon who knew well the dangers of demonic energy and had hammered that into their minds.

So she started at the beginning, with the dream that wasn't a dream and learning how to deal with a tail. Kat wasn't prepared for the commiseration that generated. Apparently it took some getting used to growing an extra tail. A little easier perhaps when they've gone through it before, but relatable certainly. Then Kat described her other small adventures, meeting with the king, skipping lightly over the favour she did and then eventually talking about her first encounter with the twins.

There was actually some discussion at that point, Shizuka talked about the other options their mother had considered before turning to demons. It was a surprisingly long list but it mostly boiled down to the desire to keep the tunnels a secret. Someone couldn't reveal, intentionally, accidentally or under duress, information they didn't know. The assumption on the Queen's part was that she'd summon a random demon from the countless, contract them to help her daughter, and then never hear from them again.

That particular part of the plan didn't exactly work out, but when she later found out about the time Kat saved them both by delving into their mind, the Queen decided it was one of the best decisions she'd ever made, even better than she'd initially expected.

Then it was the tournament and all the people she interacted with there as well as Thyme. There were a lot of questions about Thyme. Still once those were all answered and the tournament was over the girls knew what was coming next when they heard about the gem Kat had gotten. So Kat lightly touched on the testing Callisto had her do before jumping into the journey through the twins' mind. This time Minor actually contributed a few extra words through Shizuka. It was also at this point they realised they'd missed lunch so they had an late lunch, earlier dinner combination which Enuke was missing for.

Once that was tidied up and the plates were put away the stories resumed with Kat talking about Xiang and his quest for revenge and finally her punishments off on the demon Hub. The twins were quite surprised at how lax they all were. Even the combat didn't seem so bad for Kat especially when she outclassed them all by so much. Kamiko was a big hit with them, and both expressed a desire to meet her at some point.

After that Kat debated if she should continue her story, but something must have shown on her face because the pair, mostly Shizuka, managed to drag the answers from Kat who didn't notice the way her eyes lit up, literally, when she started talking about the Lily's confession and some of the events afterwards. The twins didn't feel the need to point out Kat was glowing at that point, and thoroughly amused themselves with the fact Kat didn't notice and the contents of the story of course.

Minor thought it was adorable, and Shizuka wanted to tease Kat about it but Minor shut that down by mentioning a certain beastkin, and pointing that it was already dark out, something neither of them had really noticed. There was a short, 'silent' debate between the twins over if it was better to find a room but the idea of finding and then preparing extra bedding for Kat was declared to be too much effort.

So they just decided to sleep in amongst the forest of pillows. It didn't take anyone long to fall asleep and soon it was morning. When they started stirring it was to find out that Shizuka had someone found the one patch of floor in the whole room with no pillows and was curled up around her tails. Kat just smiled at the sight before they left to make breakfast.

Enuko still hadn't shown up as far as they knew, but just before Shizuka had finished eating the sound of a rooster crowing echoed throughout the compound. Shizuka paused food halfway to her mouth, and gained a look of confusion for a split second before bolting out of the room. Kat glanced at where her friend had left and quickly finished her juice before heading out after her. With Kat's speed it wasn't hard to catch up and she managed to see Shizuka bolted across the grounds at a giant rooster.

As soon as Shizuka got close the figure transformed into a large man with bulging muscles who swept Shizuka up into a hug before transforming again into an old woman and then splitting in half down the middle leaving just the tips of the figures toes joined to become a copy of Shizuka and Minor. "Oh I'm so happy to see you dears. I can't wait to get to know Minor. I didn't even get to see her when she was a baby I was so busy at the time!"

As Kat approached the figure let Shizuka go and joined back together to become a copy of Kat before charging at her and wrapping her in a hug. Kat wasn't sure what she thought it would feel like, but feeling completely normal skin wasn't one of her guesses. As Mai wrapped her in a hug she felt their wings bumping against each other and a tail wrapping around her own. "And you must be my student! I'm curious to see what I can make of you. I hope you're ready for some hard work"

Mai then spun out of Kat's grip and took a glance at herself checking out every corner of Kat's body. Poking and prodding various areas. "You know, I was expecting you to be a bit more stacked. You are a Succubus right?"

I'm not sure how to respond to that? I mean... yes? "Yes I am but... why would I be stacked? I don't understand what you mean?" asked Kat.

Mai got a lewd grin on her face, which was Kat's at the moment. It looked somewhat odd to Kat who simply didn't get those kinds of thoughts. Before she could say anything Mai started to transform. She added two cup sizes to Kat's chest and increased the size of her but... without making the clothing any larger. Now it hardly fit on Mai's fake body and left little to the imagination. "More like this! See this is a real sexy body now. I mean, you are perfectly fine as you are, but not like I'd be willing to strip naked and have sex with you in the middle of the road hot you know?"

Kat decided the best answer was, "As someone who's asexual no. No I have no idea"

Mai literally deflated at that, returning her proportions to match Kat's again. "That explains it... or maybe it doesn't? Cool though. Little strange, but quite cool." Mai then looked herself over again, "Still, you got great legs. Nothing needs changing about them"

This of course caused Kat to get a bit red and look away. "Oh? What's this? Why did you react to that one? You didn't even blink when I inflated your tits or ass. Normally that gets a comment or two, but it's the legs, is it? How can you be a leg girl if you're asexual?"

Kat looked away pointedly. "Better tell me or I won't train you" said Mai with a cheeky grin.

Kat grimaced at that, not really believing it but considering the worth of the information. In the end she quietly muttered the answer. Which Mai didn't hear, "What was that dear?"

Kat mumbled it again. "What?" yelled Mai sliding right up next to Kat.

"Fine... I'm not a leg girl but my girlfriend is. Happy?" grumbled Kat with a smile on her face and red in her cheeks. Based on the fact the Mai spun herself away cackling Kat was going to say she was.

Chapter 604: Mirrored by Mai

"So where is Euko-chan? Normally she at least has the manners to so hello when I arrive? Has she started going senile in her old age?" asked Mai with far more energy than necessary. Kat however was caught up with her first question.

Why did I hear the chan in that statement? I know that's a Japanese or Chinese thing. At least I think I know that. I've heard Gramps mention it at some point I'm sure so it's probably Japanese... but why did I hear it when Mai spoke? Do the others use chan sometimes? Do I? System why am I just now hearing this?

But D.E.M.O.N.S was silent on the matter which only added to the confusion. While Kat was trying to figure out what was going on Shizuka was thinking of ways to avoid answering the question while Minor was thinking of ways to answer the question while painting Euko in the worst light she could. In the end, Shizuka settled for a bit of a middle ground knowing Mai wouldn't really care about what was said as long as there was something said, "Grandma is either sulking, fuming, or researching depending on the specifics and your interpretation"

Mai swirled around and turned into a copy of Euko, a clearly younger looking one, not that Euko looked old, but this version had noticeably fewer lines on her face. "Euko-chan? Sulking? Whatever for? What did she do this time? Is it anything like the time she instinctively took a hit for your Grandpa only to realise he'd set up a barrier so she got hit by the attack, and smashed into the barrier injuring her further? She was pouting for weeks! It was glorious!"

"Actually, yes sort of" said Shizuka. She was going to leave it at that but she watched Mai use her grandma's body to wiggle eyebrows at her and shivered realising that Mai wanted more information. "Fine. She tried to use some runes to trap Kat when we summoned her but they did literally nothing. It's unclear how powerful or dangerous they were but they did nothing. Didn't work at all"

Mai frowned at that and glanced over at Kat before changing her voice. Prior to this she'd kept the same chipper voice that was reminiscent of Vivian slightly. When she spoke next her voice matched the body she was in and sounding disturbingly like Euko. "I'm sorry for that Kat. I just worry so much all the time about my granddaughter, now granddaughters. I don't mean to be a massive bitch to everyone but I'm incapable of functioning like a normal sapient being as soon as my family is in danger.

"Which wouldn't normally be a problem but I'm so paranoid about demons, and mind control and mind controlling demons and spiders and snakes and anything that could possibly harm my poor granddaughters that I become a massive cunt occasionally. Of course, because I have no sense of time that means I'm an asshole all the time now. But I really am sorry" Mai crouched slightly with Euko's body so that she was making big watery up at Kat. She actually doubled the size of Euko's eyes just to improve the look.

Kat was gobsmacked at Mai's response but before she could properly process it Mai broke away and started cackling again, voice reverting to her own. Shizuka looked pained, but not in the same way as before. What Kat didn't know was that Minor was rolling around her mental landscape laughing all the while and Shizuka was trying not to do the same. It was a rather unflattering but accurate statement about Enuco. "Aren't you supposed to be friends?" asked Shizuka desperately pushing down her laughter.

"Well of course" said Mai swapping back to Kat's appearance though now she had blue hair instead of red and her tail was the shape of clubs from a deck of cards instead of a spade. Kat wondered if that was important. "she's been my friend for longer than you've been alive. Doesn't mean I can't tell her when she's being a bit of a cunt. Especially when she's being a considerable amount of a cunt and not just a bit. I mean who does that really? Trapping the entrance hall specifically when you know a friend is visiting. I'd say I was surprised if she hadn't done the same thing to me at least four times already."

"Wait what?" Kat blurted out.

"I meant it when I said she was paranoid," answered Mai, "Granted one of those times was before we really got to know each other, and the second time I was told about it but the third time was completely unjustified and the fact it happened three times just to me is sort of weird don't you think?"

"It starting to sound like this is just a thing she does" answered Shizuka.

I don't know if I feel better or worse about the fact I'm not the only one she's done this to. I also have no idea what to think about my fan teacher but I can't even decide if that's worth worrying about for the moment.

"Yeah well, pretty sure she's tried to, or maybe not tried to... certainly planned for the death of every one of her friends at one point or another. Sometimes it was more serious than others. She made the most serious attempts against me I think. Maybe our tank? Depends if you consider unleashing crossbow bolts onto them serious. Considering they're used to that kind of thing... maybe not?" Mai said mostly to herself. The fact that she'd split her head in two to have that conversation at her other face had no bearing on the weirdness. Right?

"So..." said Kat hoping to drag the conversation from... wherever weird places Mai was attempting to drag it, "I know what you're teaching me how to use fans... but what kind of weapons do you normally use?"

Mai merged her head back together and turned to Kat... before splitting them again, this time one had green hair and the other had purple. Both of them looked like Kat. Kat was deciding what the chances were Mai was just trying to get a reaction. She thought the chances were high. "Well, I can certainly use fans" said Green, "but what I actually do is transform my body into the weapon in question," said Purple.

"Still I know the basics of every style" said Green, "and quite a bit more on my favourites, one of which is fans. Granted the other is in some ways an oddly similar style with whips and whip arms" added Purple. "But don't worry about that" finished them both together.

Seeing Kat was just nodding along mostly to show she was paying attention Mai's double faces pouted before merging back into one though now this Kat head had rainbow coloured hair that was constantly shifting as she stood there. "Ok that's cool" said Kat pointing at Mai's hair.

"I'll take it!" said Mai happily spinning around. When she had her hands hidden behind her back she summoned up two fans one was black with white trimming and the other was white with black trimming. "I got at least something from you. It was a bit of a lacklustre 'that's cool' and I mean, I can do so much better than that normally but you seem really chill. Like shockingly chill. Like... do you know how many people complain about me looking like them within the first minute? Normally people find it weird.

"Especially when I start making them look better or worse, then they really start to have opinions and it gets kind of messy when I'm just messing around you know? How do you do it? Stay so calm about it all?" asked Mai.

Kat shrugged. "I mean it's not really my body it's your body looking like mine? As long as you aren't using it to play tricks on people I know it just sort of... doesn't bother me? I mean, I'm quite comfortable with my body the way it is," Even if I had to get used to the wings and the tail and the horns, "so I don't really care you can mix it up. And besides is it even still my body if you're changing things?"

"You're fun. I like you!" said Mai cheerily. Kat raised an eyebrow at the slight non-sequitur. "Well none of my friends are willing to indulge me with cool stuff like this you know? They all made me promise not to mess around with 'their body' without permission. Specific permission. I can sort of get away with looking like them normally because I coned them into accepting it as a necessity. I will admit, it's funny because they were all very specific about what I had to look like... so now I look younger than them all when in 'their' forms. It's hilarious to needle them about.

"Still, my point is I bet you'd be willing to pretend to be my twin or sister or something for a few jokes wouldn't you?" asked Mai.

Hmm. You know what? "That does actually sound fun... but what if we just pretend to both be me next time we meet Enuko?" said Kat with a grin. The fact that it was mirrored perfectly by Mai who had changed the hair back to Kat's normal red was the perfect answer for them both.

Chapter 605: Lily's Leaving!

Lily's Perspective moments after Kat disappeared.

Lily let out a long sigh as she stared at the spot Kat had vanished from. There was no sign of the pentagram now that Kat was gone and Lily felt herself a little sad about that fact. Kat was simply gone and there was no sign she'd even left.

Stop being so depressed Lily. She's gone on journeys before and now that you're dating she has all the more reason to come back. Perk up, you or Vivian will start mocking you for staring at the floor. Lily sighed and straightened up, listening to her internal commentary. Saying the words, even in her mind, helped them become more real. Still, she didn't expect Kat disappearing to hurt quite so much. So she took a seat back at the table and started to sip on her drink to not look like she was lost in her head.

*Seriously why does this hurt so much? It's nowhere near as bad as when Stella ripped out my heart of course so I can say I've been through worse but this isn't as easy as it was before. Why though? How

much has really changed? Kat would have done anything for me before, just as she would now. The fact that she gives me kisses now really shouldn't make this so different.*

Of course, that didn't change the reality of the situation. Even knowing that she would soon be able to go with Kat in the future didn't really help at the moment. It did however help pinpoint the problem. *I feel like I've been left behind? What? Why do I feel like I've been left behind? She's not even doing anything dangerous! She's just going for some training. Would I feel like this if she was just going down to the local dojo for martial arts training instead?*

Lily tried to ignore the small part of her mind that confirmed that she would in fact still feel left behind if that happened, especially if Kat didn't invite her along. Lily found herself a little annoyed with that part because Kat had warned her and had also planned it so it would be while she was getting her race changed.

Demons, can you set that up by the way?

Acknowledged. Acquaintance Lily wishes for Race Change to Memphis Beastkin in exchange for one Favour Token belonging to User Kat. Confirm?

Yes

Acknowledged. Final Warning. Change will be permanent and once confirmed this final time unavoidable. D.E.M.O.N.S will chase Acquaintance Lily down to the ends of existence to fulfill terms. Confirm?

Yes.

Lily braced herself for the transport... but nothing happened. When she opened her eyes again, she saw more text and felt a little silly.

Acknowledged. Subject Lily please schedule time for procedure. Procedure requires at least twelve hours' notice.

Ha. Haha. Woops. Um... can you schedule it for ten... er... ten thirty tomorrow? And can I ask for Nira to be involved?

Acknowledged.

Lily looked at the burning 'acknowledged' by itself. For some reason she could feel the finality radiating from the word. Something in her soul told her that the choice had been made and it could never truly be undone. Perhaps she could change her race again in the future, but that would be a separate matter. Soon she would no longer be human and there was nothing she could do to stop it.

At least I spent weeks thinking about this. There isn't any sense of regret which is also nice. It's strange that I can feel the finality in that damned word. I wonder if that's in my head or a real phenomenon. The fact that it connects to my mind makes that question a bit blurrier. If it's just projecting the thought to my mind how real is it this finality?

"So, are you going to stay here the night or head back home?" asked Vivian suddenly snapping Lily out of her thoughts. When she looked around, she also saw that at some point the table had been cleared and a slight dusting of red crawled onto her face.

"Sorry, I would have helped clean up if you'd told me" said Lily.

"It's fine, Callisto wouldn't have let you help anyway," said Vivian waving off Lily's concern, "but you didn't answer my question. Are you staying here?"

"Um... I mean..." Lily stopped talking to take a look outside and saw that it was already quite late and the sun had long set. At the same time it wasn't like her home was far away.

"You're free to stay here you know? I bet Kat wouldn't mind if you use her bed. She's not around to take up space," said Vivian with a cheeky grin.

Lily wanted to dismiss the idea immediately. It was a silly idea, she could just go home. But... the more she tried to convince herself it wasn't a good idea, the better it seemed. Kat did have the better bed after all, it was newer but not so new as to be uncomfortable from disuse. It was a better mattress to begin with, and of course, it smelled like Kat, something Lily couldn't deny was the largest draw.

Still, it seemed wildly inappropriate to stay the night for that reason alone. Lily turned her gaze away from Vivian hoping that would help remove the idea from her mind but, when she turned to Sylvie, a second idea wormed its way into her mind.

Hmm. I know Kat shares with Sylvie occasionally when she's around... maybe that's something I should do? It would give us both company for a night. I'm not Kat but perhaps she can still be a proper little sister for me. Plus I won't be tempted to do anything weird if Sylvie is around.

Catching Sylvie's eye Lily lifted one eyebrow and tried to ask what she thought with just a glance. Sylvie, being the smart cookie she was, understood the hidden question and took a few moments to turn it over in her own mind before nodding at Lily.

Turning back to Vivian Lily steeled herself. "I'll stay the night and then see my parents in the morning"

Vivian looked between the two girls who now had smiles on their faces but didn't say anything else. She just stood up, patted them both on the head and made her way to her office. With that done Sylvie and Lily headed off for a shower, and then later hopped into bed. Sylvie was going to sleep a bit early but that was fine. For Lily it was quite early but she wanted to make sure she was awake in time to visit her parents before she left... and get back to Vivian's house just in case she returned in the place she was summoned.

As she was getting ready to sleep, she found another message from D.E.M.O.N.S

Subject Lily is to be notified that prior to the operation Subject is not to consume any more food or any liquid other than water.

Well... I guess I don't need to have breakfast. Giving Sylvie a quick hug she hopped out of bed and headed for Callisto's room to let her know. Once that was done she tucked herself in and wrapped her arms around Sylvie before trying to go to sleep. It took a while, but Lily made sure to keep herself relaxed and her eyes closed, not wanting to risk waking Sylvie or staying up too late.

When she awoke, it was already nine o'clock so she quickly had a basic shower and got into her old clothes from yesterday before heading home. She greeted her mother as she headed for her room and

changed into her least favourite outfit, an old one that had been used for yard work quite a few times and was originally her mother's, though they no longer fit the older woman.

When Lily made it to the lounge room where Evaline had the ironing board set up she waved and Evaline responded with a flat sounding, "I see you stayed over at Kat's. Was it really so hard to not crawl into her bed just days after asking her out?"

Lily blushed furiously. "It's not like that Mum!"

"Oh, and if I was to ask Kat, who can't lie, if you slept with her yesterday?" asked Evaline with a slight grin.

Lily, realising the unintentional opportunity Evaline had provided, "Would easily be able to say no. Kat left on a Contract late yesterday after dinner. I stayed over, and I did sleep in her bed, but Kat was not in it at the time."

Evaline narrowed her eyes at that. "Hmmm, I see. And what are you doing now?"

"Well..." said Lilly awkwardly, "I thought I'd visit before getting sent in for that race change?"

Evaline paused the iron above the dress she was working on before carefully setting it to the side. "That's today?" Evaline's voice was a slight growl.

"Um... yes?" whispered Lily.

"Why am I just now being informed?" asked Evaline heavily.

"Ah... because... it was mostly just decided yesterday after Kat was called away?" Lily said but didn't sound convincing. That was likely because she'd planned on it happening today or at least some time soon anyway.

Chapter 606: Lily's Leaving Part 2, Because Apparently Pacing is Beyond Me

Lily's Perspective

"Fine whatever" grumbled Evaline. "I'm sure that something like this can't be moved. When is it?"

"Ten thirty. And yeah... the checkbox for accepting was weirdly insistent that once I accepted I had no choice but to go through with everything" said Lily.

"Oh? How so?" asked Evaline curiously.

"There may or may not have been implications that I'd be hunted across the multiverse to ensure that I went through with things. It seems like the favour token I'm using to get this done is a really big deal. Now that I've made the request the implication seems to be that nothing could stop the process now. Even if I haven't really started yet IT has," explained Lily.

"Right..." said Evaline not exactly happy with the information she was receiving but filing it away for later. "In that case I won't go on about it. Now, what about your appearance? Will I recognise you when this is done?"

"Probably?" said Lily who received a glare in turn. "Sorry it's just... well... I don't really know? You should be able to. I don't plan on changing much" Lily switched to a mumble, "especially not after Kat complimented me" before returning to normal speech, "but things will be different. I'll almost certainly have cat ears for example. I won't be able to change too much though. The more you change the less likely the soul is to be comfortable moving over. I'm getting a whole new body Mum but I can't just go wild with it."

"Oh? How many of these changes are you making for Kat?" asked Evaline who clearly didn't hear the mumbled words from before.

It was enough to cause Lily to go bright red though. "MUM! Kat would NEVER ask that of me. I actually did try to get her advice though. It was like pulling teeth to get her to give me any information at all." Lily grumbled slightly annoyed with just how hard it was. "Even then, most of what I got were things not to change. Like my height. Keeping that the same, and my hair. Apparently Kat actually likes my bushy hair. I don't know if you can understand how happy I was when I heard that!"

"Why your height? Does Kat have a thing for small girls? I thought she was asexual so it can't be a fetish right?" asked Evaline confused.

"I thought the exact same thing," said Lily with amusement. It seemed that she still had plenty in common with her mother. "but it's not about it. It's about the practical side of things. It turns out that we just happen to be the right height for a lot of things when compared to each other. Like if I sit on Kat's lap our heads are about the same height. I'm short enough to burry my face in her shoulders or chest, but we can both easily kiss each other even if I need to be on my toes for that. It just works."

Evaline grinned back finding her own amusement from the situation. "That is almost disturbingly practical. I can see it too. Well, not really, but I can understand the sentiment. Sometimes people just fit together in more ways than one. Now. Why did you really stay over? I doubt Kat's bed is that much more comfortable than your own. And you say she wasn't even in it... so what was the point?"

Oh god. Do I want to admit to my mother that I did it because Kat's room and especially bed smells like her? Is that weird? I think that's pretty weird... but Mum is married, and she does sleep in the same bed as Dad... maybe she will understand? Should I mention Sylvie? Nah that will just complicate things.

"Well... it IS better but you're right not by that much. It was a combination of that, the fact it was late when I finished eating, and well... I mean... Kat's stuff just smells nice. It smells like her and I really like that and I didn't realise just how comforting it was for a while but it is just... it's just nice Mum" explained Lily awkwardly.

"Gee you got lucky then," said Evaline with a wry smile.

"What do you mean?" asked Lily

"No offense to your father... but he stinks. Well, when he sweats he does. It's not often and he can handle the heat well... but sometimes on hot nights when I'm nearby as well it does reach that point and the smell... you can't get it out of anything. I have no idea why or how it happens. It's honestly a pain. Even washing everything doesn't really help, it just takes the edge off. I wonder if it's a lesbian thing?"

"What?!" shrieked Lily shocked at the question.

"Perhaps I wasn't quite clear. Though, does Kat like how you smell?" asked Evaline with an overly serious expression.

"I... I... I've never asked? Or thought to ask? Why would you say that? Why... why would you ask that?" asked Lily confused.

"Because I know your father has said the same thing about me. Likes the way I smell apparently. Which makes no sense to me because I wear perfume all the time, even switch it out occasionally. Though he says even without it I smell great. I don't really believe him, but... maybe it's just a thing I don't get as a straight woman? Maybe it's only other people that think we smell nice? What do you think Lily?" said Evaline.

"I think I want to run now. I can't believe you'd ask me that Mum. You've made this whole thing really weird. I mean, I guess it'd be interesting to know. Kat's input would be especially important because she's asexual, and we'd need more test subjects to find out- WAIT. NO. No it IS weird and I don't want to know if the reason I think girls smell nice is because I'm a lesbian. Or if it works for men too. That's such a weird thing to test Mum. We are not going there" exclaimed Lily.

"But now you're thinking about it, and how to test it?" asked Evaline 'innocently'

Lily growled but couldn't deny her mother was right. Finding men to survey would be easy. The hard task would be to find more lesbians to ask, and then also finding gay men to see how that changed things and finally acquiring information from a group of bisexual men and women and seeing if it was a big deal for them, or something they didn't even notice.

Then again, finding a hangout would give us a bunch of people to survey. If we told them what it was for they'd probably happily answer... but really to do things properly it should probably be hidden in the survey. Damn. Wait. Why am I thinking about this. NO. I am not doing this. Mum can find out on her own if she really wants to. Although... I wonder if someone has already looked into it- no. Nope not thinking about it.

"Nope. Nope I'm not doing it. I do not want to know how that works. It's weird and I don't want to find out it's just a weird fetish I have," said Lily with finality.

"What like your leg fetish?" asked Evaline.

Lily levelled her eyes at her mother. "That's a more serious accusation. I'll stand behind that one."

Evaline sighed, "You probably got it from your father..."

Lily glanced at her mother's legs and raised an eyebrow. Her mother was about average height and certainly did not have the kind of legs that fell within Lily's strike zone. That was of course ignoring the fact Evaline was her mother, but it was easy to do. She really wasn't Lily's type. "I can see you eyeing my legs daughter. Just because your father isn't as obsessed as you are doesn't mean it isn't one of his fetishes."

"Yeah... well... I don't think I want to know about your sex life Mum... so now that we've established you don't have amazing legs, what next?" asked Lily trying to shove the topic in another direction by making her mother mad.

It didn't work though. "Well, defend yourself. You said you'd stand by it. So why is that a proper fetish?"

Lily sighed. *Mum can't we just let it go?* Lily matched Evaline's gaze for a few seconds before she lost. "Look, it just... it just IS ok Mum? Plus, Kat has the best legs I've ever seen. The look nice and soft and you can squish the slightly and their silky smooth like the rest of her. But what really makes her legs top tier is the fact that there is steel underneath. Push hard enough and it's solid muscle. You can see it very slightly when she flexes or she's running." Lily had to wipe the slight drool on her face away when she finished explaining only to realise her Mum had left and was in the kitchen. "HEY!"

Evaline gave a shrug. "I regret nothing" said Evaline as Lily sprinted after her mother who was dancing around her daughter while holding a glass of water and cackling.

Chapter 607: Waiting Room

Lily's perspective

Evaline managed to show surprising speed and dexterity and remained out of Lily's reach the whole time. Lily was rapidly flagging, the lack of breakfast not having helped matters, when a pentagram appeared beneath her feet. It was ten thirty. Before she could recover from running so much and process what was going on, Evaline came up behind her and gave her a hug and a kiss on the cheek. "Good luck dear. Make sure to ask questions and try not to do anything I wouldn't do!" cheered Evaline.

Lily scoffed even as she leaned into the hug, "Mum, you wouldn't abandon your humanity to become a cat person so that you could live forever with your asexual demon girlfriend."

Evaline rolled her eyes and responded in jest, "Of course not, how you managed to find a demon girlfriend on Earth is beyond me, especially one that's asexual. Aw well, women never did anything for me anyway" Evaline let out a long fake sigh as if the weight of the world was crushing her at the injustice of not liking other women. Woah is Evaline.

The pair let out a set of synchronised giggling. "Thanks Mum. For... being pretty cool about this, and... thanks really for being ok with the fact I'm gay. I know... I know it might not seem like a big thing to care for your daughter but... I've read about plenty of girls whose parents kicked them out over it, and while the whole Stella thing sucked majorly... at least I had you by my side."

"Always Lily. Well, maybe not always, you'll outlive me in a big way, but while I'm still around I'll always have you back" said Evaline as she gave Lily a light push and the flames engulfed her daughter.

Lily instinctively closed her eyes to hide from the light but felt no burning nor could she feel flashes of light from behind her eyes. Carefully opening them she found a sea of flames, the same one Kat saw when teleporting, though less detailed. Lily's mind could not comprehend the full scope of what Kat saw, and Kat too could not comprehend the full scope of the fire.

This is beautiful. I guess I understand now why Kat complained about Thyme's teleportation. If she sees this every time she goes off on a contract... it's a breathtaking sight and the ride is so smooth. I just feel like I'm standing in place despite the movement.

Unlike Kat, Lily's journey was over quickly and she soon found herself dropped into a room. The walls were made in such a way to look like she was on a hill and the walls and floor almost perfectly mimicked the outside world. The corners were the only things to spoil the illusion but Lily had a suspicion that was

intentional. On the ground was a couple of chairs and some beanbags spread out over the floor. In one corner there was even a stack of blankets.

Right... so... I guess I'm in the right place? Do I just... well no now that I look I realise I can't see a door anywhere so I'll have to just sit down and wait. Not quite what I had in mind for a demon waiting room. I wonder how Kat's true sight would work with the walls.

Lily decided to take one of the chairs, she wasn't overly tired right now and didn't feel like taking a nap. The chair she grabbed was more like a lawn chair and let her gaze up at the 'ceiling' which was filled with clouds. She also noticed that despite seeing a sun, it didn't hurt her eyes to glance at and was thankful for the clear care that had been put into the room. Almost without noticing, tension bled out of her. It was unnaturally quick, and probably the work of an enchantment, but Lily's mind was able to accept this easily. It was no problem, she felt safe and the calming effect was nice.

Eventually, she heard a click that seemed to echo throughout the moon, and craned her neck to see where it came from. What she found was an open door in the wall right where one of the few trees she could see in the background was. Now that she'd noticed it, she also noted that the tree in question had a notable protrusion at about the height you'd expect a door handle to be.

The figure who stepped inside was immediately recognisable as Nira. Though her hair was up in a bun at the back of her head and she had on a heavy lab coat her face and eyes were exactly as described by Kat. The eyes in particular made it very hard for her to be mistaken as someone else. Still, Lily thought it best to check. "Hello, my name is Lily."

"Hello Lily, I'm Nira. I've been assigned as your attending because of the requests you and Kat made to include my presence. On top of that my history with the research and development side of medicine was able to push me above the other suitable candidates. Do you know what I am here for?" explained Nira.

"Not really?" said Lily honestly.

"Right well, just get comfortable because I have a few things to go over with you. Now, my main purpose is to inform you about the procedure and answer any questions you might have. I'm trading my time for the chance to observe the process but I was required to read up on exactly what is going to happen and have some prior experience with similar things so I should be able to answer everything.

"Firstly, I would ask you if you truly wish to go through with this. I'd ask at first right now, then after I describe the procedure and the details involved... however you will not have this choice. I don't fully understand but whatever was used to initiate this procedure required you to give your final confirmation. I instead need to warn you that while we will try to accommodate you as much as possible the procedure MUST go through.

"That being said, you shouldn't have much to worry about. While I would not call this operation entirely safe, with all the recovery options available long term damage is unlikely. The reason for this is that we'll be preserving your body during the operation and returning your soul to it is surprisingly easy in a controlled environment. The soul is also quite resilient. Damaging the soul is impossible difficult, it is the connection between body and soul that is at risk here, however, as I said, in this controlled environment the chance of that is minimal.

"On the other hand... I suppose the best thing to call them would be intended side effects, they are things you need to be made aware of. Your new body will be just that, knew, and because you have chosen Memphis as your beast heritage you will have to start out as a Memphis while your soul stabilises. This is because, unlike normal beastkin, your default form will be that of a Memphis.

"Furthermore, a Memphis body comes with certain instincts and while your sentience can and will help you ignore them, it's not a long term solution. You will need to learn which behaviours to lean into to relieve the pressure on your mind and instincts. It isn't too bad, as a Memphis has always been a manufactured creature, so they are less than a typical wild animal but the ones I need to warn you about...

"Firstly, you will be drawn to whoever you bond with. This is in a more literal sense. Your affection for them won't change" Lily went slightly red and Nira grinned at the response. She wanted to joke about it, very much so, but she was currently working and it wasn't appropriate so she held her tongue, "simply having your partner leave the room you are in will immediately cause agitation. Now, you will be able to tell the difference between that agitation and a sense of true danger from being too separated, but it won't exactly be pleasant. Memphis were designed as companion creatures and that is the most deeply ingrained instinct they have.

"Next is the desire to sleep. It's not overpowering but you will feel like you require additional sleep. You do not, as a matter of fact, but the desire will remain. You certainly CAN sleep as your body requests it, but it is not necessary. Personally, I would recommend utilising this instinct and the desire to remain close to your partner to sleep on their shoulder, head or around their neck. This satisfies two instincts at once.

"Another instinct to be aware of is the desire to consume. Now, this was is a feature we've since removed because it doesn't work properly, but when you see something powerful you will feel the urge to try and eat it. I'd recommend not giving in to this one. As we've tried to remove it, and been somewhat successful, with a bit of effort on your behalf you can remove it completely.

"That's all the big ones... but there are a few other minor ones you may want to be aware off...

Chapter 608: Habits and Changes

Lily's perspective

"... and that's about everything for the minor habits that may or may not show up. Any questions?" finished Nira.

Lily swallowed as she tried to keep in mind everything she'd just heard. It was hard. Her memory was exceptional for a normal human but it wasn't up to demonic standards. She had been provided a stack of papers with all the potential habits but she wasn't just going to keep referring to it forever. "I do have a question actually. Some of those habits I already have. How will that effect things?" asked Lily

Nira gave a so-so gesture. "Some of those habits are based in your mind, and some are based in your body. We're taking your mind and soul along for the ride while leaving your body behind, but, you'll still

remember having a lot of those habits so they'll be easy to do away with in some cases, or easy to keep them up if that's what you want. Is there any in particular that you want to ask about?"

"Well, um... chewing my nails is a big one? I was able to mostly get past that habit but it would pop up every now and again. Am I likely to be stuck with that one?" asked Lily

Nira inclined her head slightly as she reviewed the information on that particular habit. "Perhaps..." said Nira slowly, "you will need to keep your new claws sharp and maintain your nails even in humanoid form. It's a habit you WANT because while human nails growing isn't a terrible thing, failing to take care of your claws can actually cause a number of issues. So... you will probably feel the need, but be careful trying to ignore the habit completely, taking off old claw layers is important."

Lily sighed but nodded. "Ok I can understand that. Um, what about... right um... so this isn't a habit that I have now... well not really... um... see... the one about strong scents..."

Nira bit down hard on her cheek to stop her instinctive response. Knowing Kat, and knowing about Lily personally was making it hard. "Would you care to elaborate?" asked Nira, almost in physical pain from asking a normal question.

"Um... maybe? Are you alright?" asked Lily

"Fine" said Nira in a shockingly even voice. For someone with Lily's level of hearing it was impossible to hear the straining in it. Lily still looked carefully at Nira for a few more seconds, as if she was still able to hear something was off. Sadly, she had no proof and let it drop.

"I'm not sure I do want to voice it. I... the way this is worded isn't... overly specific and... it's just a minor concern really..." said Lily trying her best to hide her concern.

I can't just blurt out that I'm worried I'll start sniffing around Kat all the time. It says I might be inclined to seek out powerful and pleasant smells to investigate them and I certainly know what I'd want to search out if I could. I don't know that I really want to admit what I might do in cat form.

Nira was a doctor, she had centuries of practice, it was exceptionally easy to tell. The question was if she should call her 'patient' out on it. On the one hand, she was somewhat obligated to, to ensure that Lily had no issues with going through with everything. On the other hand, unlike most other clients for this procedure she did not have that choice any longer, so if it was decided this was a bad idea, it was too late.

In the end though, Lily was friends with Kat, the first friend of her youngest daughter. She needed to do right by them. "You can tell me anything Lily. Not only is what you are saying covered by patient-client confidentiality, I have seven daughters of my own across a most of the sexuality spectrum. I've been a succubus my entire life, one in MEDICINE. The amount of weird or embarrassing things I've been told or seen likely eclipses the number of WORDS you've read.

"I can't guarantee you won't be you won't be embarrassed talking about this, or that it won't cause you embarrassing meant in the future. Heck, I spend most of my time making questionably appropriate sexual jokes around my children because I find them funny for some bizarre reason and their reactions funnier. If you really want, I can even give you a few examples of some of the things I've seen and heard."

Lily frowned at the last part. "Why can you give me examples if it's protected by client-patient confidentiality?"

"Can't you figure it out Lily? You're a smart girl," said Nira with a soft smile that suddenly seemed exceptionally sinister.

Why can she tell me? I don't know anything about demon law... but the really obvious way is if they gave her permission. Why would they though? Surely if it's embarrassing or humiliating they'd want to hide it... but she sad a few... not as many as I want... wait... there's... they wouldn't...

"No." said Lily

"Yes" said Nira grinning.

"I... they... Why?" asked Lily struggling to discard the idea and the truth it presented.

"Lily, you've clearly figured it out. They get off on the idea. We have a checkbox on a special form just for these kinds of people. Some of them even get royalties from pictures taken during exams," said Nira.

"Perverts" said Lily as red crept up onto her face.

"That part is debateable. They do however all have at least a small voyeurism fetish and normally a humiliation one as well. Trust me Lily. I've heard and seen... well I won't say it all, every now and again someone manages to surprise me with something knew... but I doubt you have it."

"Fine," said Lily body drooping. She didn't exactly feel compelled to talk, more that she knew she should and she trusted Nira not to say anything about it unless she gave permission. "I'm a little worried I'd be... chasing after Kat's sent in a number of inappropriate ways."

"She's your girlfriend though," pointed out Nira, "so I think the line of what is and is not appropriate is further along then you might think Lily. Well, that and Kat is a heretic that wears her demonic attire everywhere so it's not like you'd feel compelled to go through her used underwear."

Lily went bright red. "I... that's not... ok yes that's kind of what I was worried about. You make a valid point though"

"Besides Kat will always smell better then her clothes. She's a Succubus, the smell doesn't linger unless we want it to, and I doubt Kat will ever develop the instinct for that level of control over her scent, and I doubt she'll get proper pheromones anyway so in that regard it's not an issue," explained Nira.

"Right. Ok. So. We've gone through the potential habits. That's all fine. What's next on my list of humiliations doc?" asked Lily.

"Well we can either talk about the fact you'll have to live as a Memphis for a while, or go over any changes you may want to make to your new body. Which would you rather go over?" asked Nira.

"Let's go with changes, I don't want to make too many of them," said Lily. "Actually, can you tell me what features will carry over from my Memphis form? So that I can get an idea of what things I'll need to deal with."

Nira nodded, "Right well, ears and tail are a certainty. It just... IS part of the beastkin blueprint. Some have more, but none have less. They can only escape it if the animal heritage is one without a tail or they physically remove it... which we COULD do I suppose, but it would not be comfortable, you'd also lose your tail in Memphis form. It would be like chopping off an arm. Possible certainly but should never be a first resort."

Lily gulped, "Yeah no. I... I like the idea of a tail." *I can wrap it around Kat's arm, or her waist, or her tail. I love her tail. I want one of my own.*

"Ok, good, ears are in the same boat so I imagine you'll be happy with them as well," Lily nodded, "perfect. Now, after that are things you can sort of control, but we could make default. See, something beastkin can do with enough practice in bring out aspects of their animal form. A common one is they transform their eyes for better eyesight, or hands to get claws, things like that, but we can make one or more of those things default. Technically you'd be able to go 'further' to get your 'normal' appearance back, but it would take continuous effort. On your behalf to do."

"I have a few ideas about that. Let's talk..." started Lily

Chapter 609: Build-A-Body Part 1

"Well, before you go too far, just note that every part of your basic humanoid body will be improved, but we can't go too far. We can actually push your Memphis body further, it's one of the reasons you'll be stuck in that form at first. That form will essentially drag your humanoid body up to acceptable levels.

"One of the little tricks we're using is for your soul to think of your Memphis body as a transformation, match it, then force the link to your new humanoid form instead of your old one. The fact that you couldn't actually go back to your old body is something we'll be... obfuscating from your soul, if that makes sense.

"Anyway, the point is that before you decide this or that needs to be changed, know that everything will be improved. Besides, not all Memphis features are better, quite a few are, but not all of them. Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off, well I did, but not for this long. Please ask what you wanted to ask" said Nira, somewhat apologetically towards the end.

Hmm... well nothing there changes my point with the eyes. I don't mind swapping them out for cat eyes and I think they'll pair well with the ears and tail. Which... I... I can probably hide those two things if I need to... but I just... I like the idea of having some part of the new me that can't be hidden. They'll also be subtle enough that even if I can't get good at changing them back to fully human they aren't super noticeable.

"I think I'd like Memphis eyes, assuming they are better than my humanoid forms ones?" said Lily just slightly unsure.

"Well both of them will be much better than your current set of eyes," said Nira gesturing at Lily's glasses, "but yes they should be better. Memphis eyes are better than what they are based on, and they are based on a very powerful mutated version of a shadow cat. They have excellent night vision and with a bit of mana can even see in pitch blackness.

"The only downside is that your peripheral vision will be harder to react to. It won't be smaller because of our upgrades, but compared to motion directly in front of you it won't trigger the same brain response and will take some getting used to. Actually, that is something I didn't quite cover, your brain will be different in both forms with more differences in your Memphis brain. It won't be a major issue, it'll just take some adjustment."

"No, that's fine, I'd like to have Memphis eyes in my default humanoid form. What colour will they be?" asked Lily.

"Either, orange, blue, or green. I don't recommend blue though, it will make your eyes quite sensitive to sunlight and due to the basics of cat eyes you won't even get better night vision. Unless you have a particular attachment to blue, I suggest picking one of the others. Furthermore, heterochromia isn't an option in a Memphis. It causes some issues with the genetics in the eyes so we don't offer it. If you want to change the colour of just one eye you can use cosmetics for it later," explained Nira.

Hmm. Blue is probably the colour I would have picked if there is no issue with it... and I don't want green eyes, so probably orange? Orange or blue certainly but am I willing to give have less than ideal eyes? I had to get used to glasses basically my whole life, do I really want imperfections in the perfect eyes I'm getting? No. No I don't want that. Besides, Nira said I there are cosmetics for them so I can change them to blue if I really want later on.

"I'll go with orange eyes please. I don't have an interest in green and I don't want to compromise them by making them blue," said Lily.

"Ok, good good," said Nira as she pulled out a tablet and started entering Lily's choice. "What about hair? The shadow cat heritage means Memphis hair pretty much only comes in black. We could change it, but that would be your only change to your Memphis body we could make if we did. Black colouring is pretty well stuck in the body. An alternative would be to change only your humanoid forms hair, but that would put a bit of stress on your soul, surprisingly more than just leaving it black instead of letting it stay brown, not to mention other colours."

Sounds like I don't really have a choice in the matter. "I'll just go with the black hair, I imagine it can be dyed pretty easily and it should work well with my shadow affinity," said Lily.

Nira noted it down, "Now that you've brought up your affinity which have you decided to add in?"

"Paper first, then shadow then space," said Lily.

Nira looked over the choice of magical affinities, "That can be a powerful combination, just be careful, those will take quite a bit of training to get good use out of. You won't be able to do anything too fancy right at the start with those three."

"That's fine, I picked them for that reason. Plus I have some confidence in paper," said Lily.

"Alright. Back to your humanoid form, anything else you want to carry over? Any changes you want to make? We still have... hmm... your soul can probably handle two or three changes without any issue. Memphis default changes included in that," asked Nira.

*Hmm, is there anything I want? Claws could be nice but I think I'd rather practice summoning them in human form rather than keep them around all the time. My ears and tail will stick around and I already

grabbed the eyes. Is there even anything else? Bones I guess but I have no idea how that would work. Fur? Yuck, I don't want to even think about that direction.*

"Is there even anything else I could carry over? Most things I can think of wouldn't work all that well except for claws which I don't want as a default," explained Lily.

"Oh yes there is actually, the main one is whiskers, a Memphis can use them to track electrical signals, even bioelectricity, so they might be worthwhile. Other than that... you could take Memphis ligaments and probably get away with it. It would make you more flexible but take a bit more focus to stay standing still. Hmm, your new muscles should mean it wouldn't be noticeable." Mumbled Nira.

Hmm, the ligaments... I don't know that I want them, feels like an accident waiting to happen. Whiskers though... I wonder how noticeable they'd be? That and how annoying it would be with electricity EVERYWHERE. It might be nice to have while I'm out helping Kat but imagine it'd be a big issue back on Earth.

"How hard is it to cut off the sensations from those whiskers? There is a lot of electricity back in our home dimension and I feel like there is a risk of going crazy if I had them permanently," said Lily. *That and I can't decide if they'd look cute or not.*

"It would likely be hell at first but something you could get used to," said Nira musing. "You can think of it like smells. You can't smell yourself or your room, but it certainly does smell like something. The it will be the same, you can learn to ignore it if it gets too much, but until you start to ignore it... things won't be great for you"

That's not necessarily what I want to hear. Another thing to put on the backburner then? I don't want to go crazy or something like that... then again... I'll be stuck as a Memphis for a while... and I'll have to get used to it anyway... "Will I need to get used to it in both forms or will one be enough?" asked Lily.

Nira glanced at her data pad for a second as she thought of an accurate response, "Hmm... from what I know, there will be quite a lot of overlap, but you'll need at least some time to get used to it in both forms because the brains are a bit too different for something like that. The humanoid brain doesn't have electric sensing by default so it has to be added in a special way to make things feel natural. It will probably be worse in your Memphis form though so it won't take long or be too bad if it carries over."

Hmmm... "How hard would it be to transform just the whiskers if I wanted to have them around later on. If that question makes sense?" asked Lily.

"Yes, I get what you're saying. As for that... well... certainly on the more difficult end of things. You don't really have an equivalent to help the transformation along. Nails to claws, hair to fur, sharpening teeth, oh yes teeth I'll need to ask about those. Anyway, the point is you're... almost but not quite growing a new arm. If that makes sense? You have to not only grow one, but get used to the sensations from it, which will be harder if you're using partial transformation for it," explained Nira.

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That's really not what I wanted to hear. Getting used to it later on sounds like a massive hassle... even still... "Put it on the maybe then. I don't want to waste on of my two changes on them when they can

cause issues like that if there is something else I want later on. Still, if nothing else takes up those changes I think I'll take it in the end..." said Lily.

Nira nodded and made a note of the request on her data pad, "Sure that's no problem we can come back to it. While I remember though, do you want your teeth changed? This is actually so minor of a change that it won't take any space up... on the other hand, because its so minor a change it will be stuck like that. No 'further humanoid' in this case like with your eyes, where as if you don't take the change, you can sharpen your teeth with practice," explained Nira.

Well... that sounds interesting... but I hadn't even thought about this. Damn, I wish I could ask Kat... but based on her previous responses she'd just smile and say whatever I wanted was best... but as Lily thought back to Kat's smile she realised something. KAT'S TEETH. They've been sharpened. I forgot about that. It's also pretty subtle but... hmm... yeah I want this. "As long as my teeth will fit in my mouth, I'll take them. Though... will they be an issue to wash?" asked Lily.

Nira shook her head, "No your spit is corrosive enough to keep them clean without issue, not like your current mouth. Of course, you can still clean them if you want, but no it won't be an issue at all," said Nira. "Now so far, that's yes on the teeth, no on the claws, maybe on the whiskers, yes on the eyes, black hair. Is there anything I'm missing?"

"That seems like everything," said Lily.

Nira nodded and swiped her tablet, "Ok in that case we can look at your Memphis form. You said you'll keep the black so that's fine, you went with orange eyes which is also fine... do you want to keep appposable thumbs? That's an option for your Memphis form but it'll take a point." Lily shook her head, having no desire for thumbs in cat form. "Right no problem... um... ah, of course how could I forget. Your horn or horns. By default, a Memphis only has one horn, but you can use a change to mess around with it a bit. Do you have anything in mind?"

Lily gulped and gave Nira what she hoped was a defiant look, practically begging her to just make the assumption. "You're not getting away that easily Lily. Didn't we have this discussion just a few minutes ago? Sure, I'm almost certain what you want to ask for, but from a professional standpoint I shouldn't know that information, and I NEED you to say it out loud if you want me to note it down."

Lily gave out a long sigh, "I want horns like Kat."

"See was that so hard?" said Nira slightly snarkily before her faced soften. "That will take up a slot for changes. Memphis aren't supposed to have two horns, it's just how things worked out. Still we can do that so no problem" Nira noted down the request.

"Anything else for your Memphis form? Perhaps humanoid taste buds?" asked Nira

"Why would I want that?" asked Lily.

"Cats, and Memphis as well, have significantly less taste buds. A normal housecat has about five hundred, a Memphis has one thousand, a dog has just under two thousand and you Lily, have around ten thousand. So, if you wanted better taste buds for your Memphis form, that's a thing I can do. Can't change your tongue though because Memphis do groom themselves with their tongue."

Lily sighed at the reminder of that particular habit she'd be stuck with. *Do I actually want better tastebuds for my Memphis form? Surely it would cause issues when eating meat or whatever... actually... that raises a good question.* "Before I make a decision on that... what exactly can I eat as a Memphis?"

"Oh basically anything," said Nira with a dismissive wave of her hand, "that's actually one of the few things the demonic energy you produce can be used for without causing corruption. Your new stomach will be able to break down almost anything just like a demon's. You could eat a steel bar and have no trouble digesting it. Granted it wouldn't have a lot of nutrients, but you CAN do it."

"Well how about nutrients? What should I be eating as a Memphis?" asked Lily.

"Well, it's worth noting that eating in one form does actually transfer over to the other, so a healthy diet with one is a healthy diet for the other. That being said, with the feline heritage of a Memphis taking in a bit more protein would probably be good. Especially if you're going to take the sharper teeth. You might feel the need to chew on things to keep your teeth in good condition," explained Nira.

"I think I'll just leave my Memphis tastebuds the way they are..." said Lily trying not to picture the issues it could cause.

"Are you sure?" asked Nira as she hovered the hand over the change, "all the other changes have been at least partly cosmetic so you could get things to alter their look here but adding tastebuds is just not something we've had work. The issue is how they connect to the brain and trust me if Gluttony was putting any more money into that research..." Nira shivered slightly. "Let's just say we're already working on it but it currently isn't possible ok. The only way to get more is right now."

It just doesn't sound that important. Plus, if I don't like something in Memphis form, I can just transform back. She did say that nutrition is shared. "Let's not go messing around with the tastebuds, it just seems like a bad idea."

Nira nodded and finished noting it down, "Ok with that I think we've covered everything. The ears and tail obviously need to stay on the Memphis form, the horn will be changed to two with a unique style, no opposable thumbs, ok looks good to me. We just have to make that decision about the whiskers."

I still don't really know about those. Without knowing how the look it's hard to say if it's a thing I wouldn't mind. Plus, how sensitive are they? Would they get annoying when I'm laying down in stuff? Maybe? Cats tend to just go places without much regard for them... "Is there a way to see what they look like?"

Nira gave a so-so gesture, "Not in this room. We need to scan you and then input the changes before we can create an accurate idea of how everything will fit together. I can give you a rough description but not a perfect picture."

Well that's annoying. "Can I say yes to them for the moment and have a look once I've been scanned? I think... I think it's a useful addition that I really should train with, and if I can get use to it will be very nice to have. I don't want to have to spend ages training just go summon them up. The appearance is just a bit of a hang up for me. If they don't look great or are quite noticeable from a distance it might not be worth it," said Lily after some thought.

"We should be able to get permission for that. It would be a minor change... as long as you don't want anything else I can probably approve that request. Still, it will either be whiskers or no whiskers, not say... no whiskers but claws instead. It would take too much time and power to run the simulations for something so different" explained Nira with a slight tinge of concern.

I think that's fine? Right? I don't want anything else and this was really the only thing in contention. Eyes, teeth, tails, ears, hair... wait. Hair? "What will happen to my other body hair?" asked Lily suddenly slightly concerned.

Nira wiggled her eyebrows for a moment before pausing and realising it isn't quite appropriate to answer the question the way she wanted to. She gave a light cough before answering with a proper explanation, "Well, the colour change will effect your more... prominent hair... but not the lesser stuff on your arms and legs. The thing to note though, is you might need to be careful when shaving if that's a thing you do. All of your hair will be tougher so while your regular equipment will work for now, you'll damage it, and eventually become too strong for it."

Well, that's something to keep in mind then. Still, not too bad. I'm quite lucky in that area because my body hair grows so slowly. One of the things I'm most thankful for. I might not have the best skin, or red lips or smooth hair, though that might get fixed a bit, but I do have slow growing body hair. Truly the peak of beauty. Lily couldn't stop the little giggle that came over her. Nira raised an eyebrow and pouted a bit at missing the joke.