

DEMONS 61

Chapter 61: The Results are in and...

After a moment of silence Kraks faced Kat and said. "As much as it pains me to say it, I believe you are not entitled to compensation, and you will need to pay for the additional 400 units of demonic energy as if you had chosen to do so"

"What, how is that a reasonable judgement" said Bob, spit flying slightly as he spoke.

I dunno. Seems mostly fair to me. It was decently painful, but I got a lot out of it.

"Young one, I believe Kraks is right. She is not entitled to anything" said Xoglaxuch

"But... what about you twins? Can you accept this" said Bob

"Honestly, yes. We have to make tough calls in the business, Kraks right, as mean as it might sound" said Xaz'gelen

"Boo, sis is boring but correct. I think she's cute enough to give some leeway to, but I suppose that's why I don't get assigned many cases" said Vraz'gelen

"It's fine guys. I'm not quite sure how I profited but a bit of extra debt doesn't phase me too much as long as the interest rate is low" said Kat

"Indeed, all rank 1 awakening materials will never accrue interest. The only question is if the additional 400 units fall under this" said Kraks.

"Well, how much do I owe for 500 units of demonic energy?" asked Kat

"Well, going by awakening rates, it would be around 5 fireplace, but I'm not sure if you should be charged awakening rates for the extra four hundred" said Kraks tapping his finger on the desk.

"Bah, don't pretend your doing the girl a favour. Demonic energy has been cheap recently, 5 fireplace is about standard rate anyway just give her that much" said Xoglaxuch tie bobbing with him.

"I suppose you're right" said Kraks sighing as he tapped something into the glass tablet.

"Um, why am I being charged in fireplaces?" said Kat

"Do you not know standard demon currency?" asked Xaz'gelen shifting her gaze to Kat

"Um no should I?" asked Kat

"Of course silly, every child knows the song" said Vraz'gelen to which her sister promptly wacked her on the top of the head with three of her tentacles.

"Ignore this fool. There is no song relating to the demonic currency system that I know of" said Xaz'gelen while Vraz'gelen poked her tongue out facing her sister.

"Yes Kat, well, you have Embers firstly, then 100 embers make a candle, 100 candles make a fireplace, 100 fireplaces make a bonfire, and so on. Things change a bit after that but you don't need to worry about them for now" said Kraks

System can you give me the full list of currency denominations? Thought Kat not quite believing Kraks

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Officially currency designations are as follows

Ember

Candle

Fireplace

Bonfire

Pyre

Inferno

Sun

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Uh, huh. I didn't actually think that was really the currency here. Um what's the conversation rate.

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Ember, Candle, Fireplace, Bonfire, Pyre require 100 of the previous denomination. Inferno requires 1000 Pyre, and Sun requires 10,000 Inferno

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Good to know I guess? "Why is the currency named that way? Surely you have something better?" said Kat

"Well, it's just how it's always been" said Xoglaxuch "Even as the oldest the currency system predates me by a number of years"

"Besides its perfectly serviceable and causes no real confusion considering the system manages it all" said Kraks.

"Isn't that kind of strange? Don't you guys have coins?" asked Kat

"Of course we do, but no one carries them around we just request them from the system when we need them" said Vraz'gelen while rolling her eye.

"Right... so is um, 5 fireplace expensive?" asked Kat.

"For someone as young as you probably" said Vraz'gelen with a big grin.

"I'd love to say ignore her, but she is mostly right. A fireplace is quite a lot. Um, what's some things I can use as an example... Oh, so a basic summoning is always at least 2 candle. And that's basically a weeks' worth of pocket money. It isn't something you would live on but it's not nothing either. A cheap meal is probably around 30 ember? I'd say?" asked Kraks trailing off a bit at the end

"Geeze Kraks, way to rub it in about how rich you are" said Vraz'gelen mockingly

"Look, I'm an old demon, I can afford to live a little luxuriously" snapped Kraks

"A decent meal is about 10 ember, and the nicer stuff without special effects is around 1 candle" said Vraz'gelen while glaring at Kraks.

I'm not sure how much this has helped me understand the value of things...

"Um, how much have I earned on my jobs up till now?" asked Kat

"Wait you don't know" said Vraz'gelen in shock.

"Nope, I was supposed to be informed after reaching rank 1 I think but then all this happened and it just kept getting delayed. Um I can ask the system if you guys want?" said Kat

"Sure, try that first" said Kraks

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User Kat is currently rank 0.5 and does not have access to total earnings at this time. Please resolve User Kat's errors for a finance report.

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"Nope, nothing available to me just yet. I need to solve these errors first" said Kat

"Well, I am part of the accounting office. I can bring that up if you want? Perhaps that will help you decide if you want to argue your case" said Kraks

"Is arguing an option?" asked Kat tilting her head to the side.

"Well, yes, but it's heavily discouraged. A formal complaint costs at least a fireplace and if the verdict remains unchanged you are normally required to pay extra for wasting peoples time. I think the system is a bit harsh but at the same time, you pay nothing if you are found to have a valid complaint, and it requires a great number of demons from the relevant department to here a complaint to ensure the maximum fairness possible" said Kraks

"Well, let's here my results then" said Kat.

"Ok, and just so you know, I only have a summoning case number and the amount you received for it" said Kraks brining out another glass tablet this one glowing with purple fire.

"Case 01, 2 Candle, Case 02, 50 Candle, case 03, Redacted, Case 04, 2 Fireplace... redacted? Why is your third case redacted?" asked Kraks

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If possible do not answer that question User Kat. D.E.M.O.N.S wishes this case to remain low profile to prevent similar tactics being used more carefully in the future.

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"Don't worry about that, I know why it's redacted and I'm not supposed to talk about it" said Kat

"Yeah, well in that case, why in the name of the eternal fire is your fourth case worth 2 fireplace? Weren't you just an unranked demon?" asked Vraz'gelen in shock

"Eh, I just had to kidnap a princess no big deal" said Kat

"What?! You seem so nice though, I can't imagine the system ever assigning you to something like that you poor thing" said Vraz'gelen

"Oh, no it was her mother that hired me on her behalf so it's fine" said Kat

"Right..." said Vraz'gelen looking supremely confused

Kraks clapped his hands together "Right, in that case, Kat your total balance assuming nothing strange from Case 03, is a debt of 2 Fireplace and 48 Candle. This is to be payed off in a maximum of two months and because you have already payed off more than half of your debt you will also gain access to the store however if you choose to purchase anything. Going into debt for shop items while remaining in debt you will have one year or 42 weeks to finish paying your debt off with a 2% non-compounding interest rate"

"Wait what? How is 42 weeks a year?" asked Kat

"That's your question about all this?" said Kraks

"Yes" said Kat firmly

"Well, um, I guess in that case... standardised working demon year, ask the system about it" said Xaz'gelen jumping in before her sister could get out another snide comment.

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User Kat is now a rank 1 demon due to fixing all associated errors. User Kat is now part of the demon working year. As a rank 1 demon you may choose to skip 1 summoning every 42 weeks. You have 1 available skip. Counting begins after using first skip. User Kat may save only 1 skip at a time.

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"Seems a bit harsh, only 1 day off every 42 weeks" said Kat

"Well, most summonings only last a day or two, and you can change your settings a bunch to make it easier on yourself. Explore that after you leave though" said Kraks.

"Boo, trying to kick me out already?" asked Kat

"Yeah trying to kick us out already" said Vraz'gelen

"Yes. This matter is now officially closed" said Kraks and waved his hand. The room vanished and Kat found herself in the hallway with the beholders. noVelNext.cOm

"Wait he can do that?" screamed Bob

"Hehe, that youngin has a few tricks up his sleeve" said Xoglxuch as he floated away down the corridor beside Tulvun

"Welp it's been fun, see you" said Vraz'gelen heading off in the opposite direction with her sister in tow. Bob just looked around awkwardly for a moment before chasing after Xoglaxuch and Tulvun.

Um, how do I leave? And with that thought, a summoning circle appeared below Kat, and she vanished. *Wait I forgot to ask about the chairs!*

Chapter 62: Callisto's secret hideout

Kat found herself returned to earth in her bedroom. Looking around in surprise everything seemed to be in place but that wasn't the issue. *Didn't I get summoned from the dining room? Why am I back here?*

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User Kat has assigned this room as Destination Home. You will default to being returned to this room.

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Wait, why didn't I end up at the orphanage then? If this is a matter of settings didn't you say I couldn't change those until rank 1?

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User Kat's place of residence was automatically updated when entering into a contract with Individual Vivian.

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Well, that's something I wish I'd known earlier. What would I have done if I'd ended up in my old room

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User Kat would have walked to Vivian's house.

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Kat just glared at the unhelpful text for a moment. Dismissing and resummoning her attire to fix anything that was out of place she carefully opened her bedroom door and looked around. She sensed no movement in the hallway and paused for a moment with slight indecision. Eventually with a shrug Kat headed downstairs.

Just as Kat reached the bottom of the stairs she was met with a pair of angry glares from Vivian and Sylvie and a sympathetic one from Lily who had all taken up residence in the lounge room.

"Well Kat, what do you have to say for yourself" said Vivian glaring at Kat with her hands on her hips.

The intimidation this provided was undermined by her tongue sticking out and her cheeks puffing out, so Kat responded in kind. "I went on a grand adventure to a world known as the accountant's offices"

Taking up a seat on the free armchair Kat lamented that it just wasn't as comfortable as the ones in the accounting offices.

"We were seriously worried Kat" said Lily whose point was undercut slightly by the book still open on her lap

"I've been going on summonings every week for a month now, why is it just becoming a concern" said Kat. *novElnext.cOm*

"I wasn't worried. I knew you'd be fine" said Sylvie puffing her cheeks out to match Vivian from her lap.

"See Lily, Sylvie wasn't worried" said Kat smiling at her friend.

Lily decided the best response to this was to hide her face behind her book and not comment.

"Well anyway, the real reason I wanted to talk to you Kat is about Callisto, I'm sure she's seen your note so perhaps it's too late. You probably need to talk about this hole thing with her soon" said Vivian hugging Sylvie tighter who responded by snuggling into her arms.

"Yeah..." said Kat trailing off.

Finding the ceiling to be fascinating Kat took the chance to observe it closely while Vivian and Sylvie grinned in response. *Should I just go for it like with Gramps? Probably. I'll double check with Vivian first though just in case.*

"So, Vivian, is there anything I should be aware of. I'll go talk to Callisto now if there is no problem" said Kat

"Nah, well, nah. You need not concern yourself with the whims of my roommate it will work out" said Vivian with a cheeky grin and a glint behind her eyes.

That sounds so much like trouble. I doubt Vivian would lie, it's just, clearly she isn't telling me something. Sighing Kat stood up and made for the stairs.

"I take it Callisto will be in her room?" asked Kat

"Of course" Vivian replied with a shooing motion before returning to hug Sylvie.

"Can't I go with Kat?" asked Sylvie turning around to face Vivian and pouting.

"Nah, they should probably sort this out amongst themselves. Don't you think Sylvie" said Vivian.

At this point Kat was already making her way upstairs so she missed the nod Sylvie had in response and the concerned glance Lily shot her way. Climbing the stairs Kat strode towards Callisto's door that stood alone at the end of the upstairs hallway. Taking a deep breath to steady herself, Kat knocked twice on the door.

After a moment the door cracked open and a single blue eye appeared. "Ah, you must be Katarina" a sharp intake of breath and a short pause later Callisto continued "I see, that name offends you. Kat then, please come in"

The door swung open to reveal a room completely filled with different projects. The room was surprisingly large, twice the size of Kats but somehow Callisto had managed to make it feel small. Scraps of paper littered the floor, crumpled and discarding clustering around one of the three desks within the room. The first desk surrounded by paper contained rows of pens that lined the sides of it, while the top

was filled with a surprisingly neat stack of paper in the corner and two sheets outlined in front of the chair. The desk had quills patterned on the legs but other than that was quite plain.

On the opposite side of the wall to that Callisto had a desk with a computer, this one however while suffering less from paper cluttered had neat orderly rows of wires that snaked and coiled around the desk, weaving patterns through the wood. The computer itself seemed to make up parts of the desk as well, Kat could identify at least two separate towers containing parts, but it looked like some others were part of the desks design of circuitry and wires someone, presumably Chekov, had carved into the sides.

The third and final that lined the back room commanded the most space by far. It wasn't pressed against the wall like the other two, instead it surrounded the chair assigned to it on both sides covering over half the room by itself. All sorts of drawers and shelves of various sizes lined the tops and underside of the desk and it had a series of faint carvings depicting everything from cogs and gears to fairies and elves.

It was only after taking everything in that Kat truly became aware of the fact that the room was hardly lit. The bulbs in the ceiling giving off the barest necessary light for a human to operate by... perhaps even a bit less, and while this didn't affect Kat's vision it was a bizarre sight. The second strange thing that struck Kat about the room was the distinct lack of additional furniture. There was no closet or bed in sight, and the room despite its increased size compared to her own did not seem to have the space for either of these fixtures even if they were hidden from her at the moment.

As Kat stepped into the room and Callisto let the door softly close behind her Kat felt herself pulling in. Her wings were folded against her back and her tail had coiled itself into a loop and flattened itself enough to phase completely through her kimono. Kat slowly turned to face Callisto, now more unsure than ever as to what she would see and yet she was still surprised at what she found

Callisto stood taller than even Kat by about a head, Kat found this strange as the eye that had peered back at her seemed to have matched her eyeline before perhaps indicating someone of smaller stature or hunched back but derailing these thoughts Callisto stood with perfect posture even looking down at Kat slightly. Her eyes were blue like Kat's own but they seemed to have a crazed light to them that made them glow despite their dark shade.

Callisto's outfit was even stranger, at first glance you could be mistaken for thinking it was an elaborate maid outfit, and yet so many things failed to line up with this idea. Firstly it extended so far as to brush against the floor, hiding her feet from view, with the sleeves ending in large drooping sleeves that would have been completely impractical for any sort of house work Kat knew Callisto regularly participated in from the meals and cleaned rooms Vivian insisted was never of her own doing. And the colour scheme seemed to further emphasise its impracticality. The main body of the dress was a pristine white with the frills outlining the neck and sleeve edges a deep blood red.

Callisto's hair as well stood out to Kat, it was easily as long as her own after her transformation. Kat couldn't tell quite how far it fell from the front especially with the full-length dress in the way but from the brief glimpse of it as she moved Kat was sure that extensive.

"I would guess that you have been suggested by Vivian to pay to me a visit" said Callisto "It seems she truly has gone through with this adoption business she has so ill conceived"

Pausing to place a sleeve in front of her mouth Callisto continued "Of course, I suppose that isn't really why you're here. The question of whether or not to adopt to young ladies was already made before I was consulted so I could only agree. It does however seeem. That. You. Both. Are. Interesting"

Chapter 63: 20 Questions

"Right..." said Kat drawing out the word as long as possible to allow her brain to catch up to what was going on. Originally Vivian seemed like quite the personality but despite Callisto's reclusive nature she seemed to trump Vivian in a number of ways.

"Can I ask what's with the room?" asked Kat after giving up on trying to just make sense of everything herself

"Yes, you can. We should even do a bit of back and forth then so that I can learn a bit more about my best friend's new daughter. I'll take that as your first question" said Callisto. *novElnext.cOm*

Kat was intending to wait for more information but when Callisto said nothing else Kat nodded in response. However at the moment of confirmation chains of purple fire surrounded the two linking them together. Layers upon layers of chains blazed into existence and rapidly cocooned the pair before dispersing.

"Shit" said Kat looking unimpressed towards Callisto

"My my, now that is certainly entertaining. I'd seen the note you left on the table and I wasn't quite sure what to make of it. But this? This is fascinating, I could see those chains appear before me. I've never entered into a contract with a demon before, how novel" said Callisto as she wafted her hand around the area the chains had connected them moments before. "Well then, for my first question, I suppose I'll ask what you are, in full please"

"Weren't you going to answer my question first?" asked Kat

"Why I did, I said that you could ask me about my room did I not?" replied Callisto with a grin "I had intended it as a slight joke, but now it seems to have escalated. I'll give you that answer for free though, no worries"

Why did Callisto trick me like that? Especially with a contract on the line? Wait it can't have been, she didn't know I was a real demon or even if she suspected I doubt she would know how the contracts work.

"I'm a Succubus, apparently a rare subtype but I wasn't told exactly what that is" said Kat returning Callisto's glare. Callisto just made an open-handed gesture implying for Kat to ask her own question.

"Can you explain how your room is set up and why the lights are dimmed and the bed is missing" said Kat

"My, getting ahead of ourselves aren't we. I'd say that's more than one question no? You should just pick one" said Callisto

"Fine, I'll go with the missing bed and cupboard. Why are they missing from your room?" asked Kat

"Well, as to the closet. Vivian has a rather large house here and when I first moved in, and even still now the amount of spare space in the cupboards astounds me. I simply make use of them and keep my outfits throughout the house. It can be quite fun to go on a hunt for a specific set of clothing" said Callisto

"Though of course, the matter of the bed is a bit different. I have something known as triple S, or Short Sleeper Syndrome. I simply don't need a full nights rest so I spend my time working instead. Those few hours of sleep I do get I simply flatten out that chair" Callisto motioned for the chair in front of her writing station "And grab a blanket from somewhere under that pile of paper"

After Callisto finished her answer she stared straight into Kat's eyes, for ten seconds as if waiting for some invisible cue. Whatever Callisto was waiting for she found because she followed it up with this question.

"Can I touch your wings?"

"Um?" Kat looked strangely at Callisto unsure if she had heard correctly even slower her perception of time slightly to get longer to consider the question. After confirming multiple times the question that had been asked she replied "Sure?" still very confused.

In the moment Kat blinked she found Callisto had disappeared. Wondering where she had gone Kat was about to start looking for her when she felt a tug on her left wing. Turning to face the side she found Callisto stretching out her wing with a tape measure in her mouth mumbling to herself.

"Doesn't seem large enough for prolonged flight, gliding perhaps? That doesn't make sense though, I'm not sure it's long enough for that either? Are her bones hollow? No that can't make sense, these weigh too much in my arms for even the wing bones to be hollow" stretching the measuring tape this way and that measuring various angles and areas of Kat's wing she bit the bullet and asked Callisto a question.

"What are you doing exactly"

Callisto's head immediately snapped towards Kat. "Well, your wings are fascinating, they simply shouldn't function at all, but I doubt they are purely for looks. Then again you're a succubus so maybe looks are extremely important to your species. It brings up other questions about your tail and horns but I don't really see how either of those would benefit you either" pausing for just a moment to breathe in Callisto continued "It's actually quite curious, tell me, can you actually fly with these wings?"

Kat opened her mouth to respond. Closed it. Then opened it again "Honestly Callisto I wish I knew. I know for a fact I can glide with them, but the only time I've had the chance to actually try flying with them I had to carry a girl with me and they are certainly not strong enough to lift us both. I could feel my muscles having trouble though, I think that was only when I was stopping a bank turn"

"Hmm" mumbled Callisto turning back to examine Kat's wings "Well, in my professional opinion your wings shouldn't even allow you to glide yourself let alone while carrying someone. I suspect that for whatever reason you can actually fly if it's just you, but I could be wrong"

"Actually wait back up a moment, how is it your professional opinion about if I can fly or not? What do you do for a job?" asked Kat

"Now, that's two questions right there. Take your pick" said Callisto

Of course, why couldn't she answer without being like this. At least the system is clear enough in it's answers. Hey wait, can I fly system?

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User Kat will need to test that. Many demon types with wings are unable to fly but around 65% of Succubi with wings have flight capacity, with a further 10% who have lost their ability to fly that they once had.

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Well, nice to know the odds are in my favour. "Tell me what your job is then" said Kat

"Well, if I wanted to make this difficult for you, I could say that I don't have a job. Though I would suppose this is only true in so far as I have no permanent employment arrangements. Initially my pride prevented me from working at something I considered unworthy of my time but living in Vivian's house for free humbled me quite a lot. I'd decided to find a job to pay her back but she kept eating my resume's I tried to mail out" said Callisto.

"Wait what? You didn't really answer the question and you can't just say Vivian ate your resume's without elaborating on that" said Kat shocked

"Of course I can, I answered the question, though I suppose it might not have been in full. To disclose properly then I make my money off of various side projects I work on in my spare time. A lot of that is helping Vivian's clients with smaller things, while I also build, art pieces. I suppose most would call them. I'd love to say I detest making the damned things but if given time and funding the challenge of building something is thrilling indeed" said Callisto with a glint in her eye that was actually a little off-putting considering she was still staring at Kat's wing in her hand as if it was responsible for all that is wrong with the world

"Hmm, yes, so much to explore. Oooh can I investigate your horns next?" asked Callisto standing up with a rubber mallet in hand.

"Um Callisto where did you get that mallet?" asked Kat

"Do you want that to be your question?"

"No..."

"So can I investigate your horns sometimes with this rubber mallet?"

"Fine.."

And so Kat resigned herself to the poking and prodding of Callisto. Thankfully she was actually quite careful in her investigations much like she was with her wings. Tapping lightly here and there, humming slightly to herself in a questioning tone she searched for something.

"Your horns are fascinating, whatever they are it isn't bone. Or maybe it is? It isn't human bone that's for sure" said Callisto after some time tapping away

"What do you mean?"

"It just doesn't sound right to me, listen" said Callisto giving her horns a significant wack. Kat strained her ears for any sort of sound but heard barely anything noteworthy, hardly even a thump.

"I don't really hear much of anything Callisto" said Kat

"That's exactly my point. Bone doesn't sound like nothing when you strike it. Oh the possibilities are endless" said Callisto as she cackled

Chapter 64: How I met Your Mother

After a full ten minutes of horn investigation Kat was getting a bit bored. Which was rare for someone like her who could find the joy in relaxing just about anywhere and understood the meaning of patience extremely well. This was however getting stretched nearly to its limit with Callisto. She hadn't said anything or done anything new in the past 5 minutes. Callisto would carefully tap a spot on Kat's horns wait for anything to happen and then repeat the process.

"Um Callisto? Don't you have anything better to do?" asked Kat

"Nope" said Callisto continuing her ongoing investigation of Kat's horns.

Kat was stunned. She hadn't expected someone to just outright admit they didn't have anything better to be doing than poking her with a stick to see what happened. *Is she serious? How could she possibly be learning anything new about my horns after the first hundred taps?*

"Would you perhaps like to do something else?" asked Kat

"That's two questions in a row" said Callisto "But I guess I'll answer anyway. Your body is extremely fascinating. It seems to break the laws of this universe, or at least I suspect it does. And I can't help but wonder what purpose each piece serves. Actually I guess I will ask my question, is there anything else you got when you became a demon?"

"Yes" said Kat *Two can play at the stupid answer game if you really want Callisto.*

"I suppose I deserve that one. Well go ahead then, I surrender myself to your questioning" said Callisto who, contrary to the statement she was surrendering, was in fact still investigating Kat's horns, though she moved on from minor tapping to running her hand along the edges.

What do I even ask? I hadn't really prepared questions unlike Callisto seems to have. Is there really anything I want to know about her? I mean, I guess it's actually a matter of which questions not to ask. The room already brings up several but I want to know more about her as a person if possible.

"Please tell me the story of how you and Vivian met" asked Kat

"Well, before I answer that I'd like clarification. Do you want to know how I met Vivian or how Vivian met me?" said Callisto

"Is there a difference?" asked Kat

"Why of course there is. I knew of Vivian's existence long before she ever knew of mine. I'm not sure which you'd prefer but they are both interesting enough tales to tell. Both with Vivian in the starring role of course" said Callisto

"Well, let's go with whichever one happened first then" said Kat

"Excellent let me set the scene" said Callisto running over to grab the chair for her computer desk she wheeled it behind Kat to let her sit down. Spinning the chair around once Callisto jumped back and began.

"So, for the first story we will have to be how I met Vivian. As I said I knew of her existence before mine, which I thought would imply it happened first? But anyway I'm already getting distracted by minor inconsistencies.

"It was a day of moderate temperature. Perhaps some would say it was too cold, but an equal number would say it was too hot. Of course none of this mattered truly because the school had air conditioning running. It was the first class after lunch, and it was woodwork. Vivian and I were the only women who actually chose to take it. I already knew how to cook and sew so I thought I'd do something useful with my time.

"Vivian on the other hand just seemed to think it would be more fun than anything else, or at least that's what she tells me. It was the second week of term and already she was causing problems. We were younger than, fresh out of primary school so people were starting to get to that awkward teenage phase.

"I actually quite safe in the woodworking class, I didn't look as immaculate as I do now. Back then I had horrible acne and tried to wear a nice scarf to cover it up. Of course I know now I just looked like the lunatic who wore a scarf to school everyday but that's in the past. Anyway, that coupled with my underdeveloped build and the fact I was sick the first two weeks meant that nobody had really noticed I was a girl.

"This meant that to the rest of the class Vivian was the only female present. The only one that shouldn't have been there in the eyes of most the class. Luckily the teacher didn't count among those numbers, but it was the start of term and they hadn't had to confront any students to directly yet, so everyone was trying to toe the line.

"The issue came when we were instructed to mess around a little with the carving tools and make something to show our parents. We were recommended to keep it simple, like carving our names into something or if we were feeling really adventurous to try and carve a scene into a block of wood.

"Now Vivian, Vivian took this as a challenge, so when the wood slab was provided for us instead of carving something minor like a normal person, she went into a flurry of movement, shaving bits and pieces of wood here and there. It was at this moment I'd stopped working on my own project just to watch her. The speed and accuracy that she managed to carve was astounding to my young self and even thinking back on it I doubt I could match the energy she displayed after learning woodworking and practicing it as part of my job.

"Of course before long I wasn't the only one watching Vivian carve, eventually it was a class wide event. Everyone had pretty much given up on completing their own work on time if it meant watching the spectacle Vivian had created.

"Quite some time passed. Even the teacher was enthralled with her. It wasn't until Vivian finally stopped moving did the spell finally break. Now at the time I didn't know how long it had been, I only later found

out we'd watched her carve this thing for over half an hour. After a minute of silence the teacher finally asked 'Vivian, what did you make' and she replied with that big bright smile on her face I'm sure you already know 'I made the world's greatest toothpick because I have lunch stuck in my teeth'

"You could hear a pin drop in that room. Here was this kid that we'd just watched carve up a storm with a passion and fire that nobody would argue was fake. And it had all been for a toothpick. Yelling and cussing rang out throughout the classroom. The kids accused her of being a show off, most of them said stuff along the lines of 'this is why girls can't do woodwork' and other such nonsense. Even the teacher looked quite irritated with her, but then he seemed to catch something out of the corner of his eye and he slammed his hand down on the desk

"He said 'Enough class. I said to make something simple, and Vivian seems to be the only person who even tried. Look at you all. You just spent the last half hour watching a girls first attempt at woodworking without trying anything yourselves and instead of congratulating her on being the first to finish something, you scream at her. Not only is what she made complete, it is also functional and useful. I'd give her full marks if I was grading this assessment now sit down and think about what you've done'

"Now I wasn't harassing her like the others. As much as I wish to say I was trying to defend her that would be a lie on my behalf. But no, I was sure she'd made something better, and when I saw that strange look pass over the teachers face I knew the others had all missed something. So I stared at her hands trying to figure out what she'd done, when I saw it. Vivian had carved a beautiful flower. The only problem of course was that it was carved into the desk and not the block of wood she'd been provided which she'd actually knocked off the desk when she went to grab her tools. *NOvelnExt.coM*

"I don't think anybody ever noticed that carving, and I also learnt the desks in the woodwork room are made from spare timber and easily replaced so as to avoid accidents not quite like this one. When I noticed the flower missing the second time, we had class I was actually a little devastated. It was such an amazing work, I was upset at the idea it had been destroyed. Yet I was the fool, the teacher knew that it was special, because if you looked closely, the front of the teacher's desk had been modified. It now had the carving of a flower slotted into the front with the edges trimmed well so as to look like a continuous piece of wood.

"No one else ever commented on the flower the teachers desk now held. I like to think they noticed, but I'm not sure they really did. It really was an amazing sight. It wasn't the best-looking flower you'd ever seen. The technique was sloppy, the edges weren't carved symmetrically, heck there were chips in the edges in a number of places as well. But that didn't matter to me, or clearly the teacher. We had seen the passion that led to it's creation and it was breathtaking to behold.

Chapter 65: Check This Out!

"Wow, I. Wow" said Kat rather stunned at Callisto's rendition of how she met Vivian. "She sure seems to be good at everything. You said that was her first attempt at woodworking?"

"You are somewhat correct in your assumption Kat. Vivian much to some individuals surprise is not in fact good at everything. Cooking for example, I wouldn't trust her anywhere near a kitchen if it's for anything more than heating food up. She'd disagree but I think it's just that she killed off her tastebuds enough times they were willing to accept anything" said Callisto

"In regard to her woodworking proficiency, well, there are indeed some things that Vivian seems to just take to without much effort. She told me it was her first time woodworking and I'd believe her considering her distaste towards lying to people. Which I do find amusing considering that she enjoys playing tricks on people and misleading them almost as much as I do" said Callisto "Now I do believe you owe me two questions"

Kat nodded in response as Callisto continued "So, I suppose I'll make use of them both somewhat together. Have you gained any sort of abilities from becoming a demon and what are they?"

"So that's your two questions?" asked Kat. Callisto just stared at her in response with her mouth in a thin line.

"Right..." said Kat "Well I've gained a calming aura that I can extend, and I've learnt how to manifest my Demonic Flame, but I think I'm supposed to be able to do something with it"

"Hmm, well please inform me about this calming aura first if you can. That seems a bit more interesting to me" said Callisto

"Well" said Kat, slamming the full weight of her aura into Callisto. To Kat's surprise she hardly even stumbled in response. Huh? I thought I'd gotten more powerful? I'm pretty sure I used more power than that time I knocked Major over...

"Oh, now this is fascinating" said Callisto slowly moving her hand around and examining it from multiple angles "I can't quite place my finger on what this does exactly, I feel mostly the same but, hmmm..."

Callisto looked steadily around the room, letting her eyes resting on different items before moving on never lingering on one thing for long. Kat was somewhat puzzled watching Callisto carry on her various examinations. I don't think that I've seen a reaction like this before? What is it actually doing to her?

"I think, my ideas seem to flow a bit smoother. Hmm, no that's not quite it. I'm less tightly wound, I think. My body isn't screaming for me to do something other than stand across from you. This is a strange feeling" said Callisto as she rolled her shoulders forward a few times. NoVelNext.com

"Huh, that's quite a different reaction to what most people have" said Kat

"Hmm..." Said Callisto humming "Guess I'll use my other question on that, what sort of reaction have other people had?"

"Well, everyone else seems to experience a general feeling of comfort. And there was that one person I dropped to the floor with it accidentally" said Kat

"Huh, I guess I can see how you reached the conclusion that's what it does, but I think your aura is more profound than that. I'd have to do some more testing but it's hard not being able to reach into anyone else's mind for answers, so I guess I'll leave this one for you to test some more."

"You make it sound like I should go around experimenting on various people I know to see what there reaction is" said Kat

"Yes" said Callisto

"Right..." said Kat intentionally moving her eyes to focus on the floor and the very interesting grey carpet instead of Callisto for a moment.

"Would you be willing to continue your tale of how you met Vivian?" said Kat

"I have concluded the full tale of how I met Vivian, though I do suppose you are talking about the time in which I believe Vivian to have met me?" said Callisto Kat nodded in response

"Well, in that case I suppose I shall begin to regale you with my tale. This event took place a few weeks after the woodworking incident. If you recall correctly, I mentioned I wore a scarf to hide my acne at the time. Well, maybe a month or two into my high school life to my immense satisfaction and amazement my acne was actually clearing up. For the first time in a grand number of years I didn't feel like a walking lightshow.

"Now, I did not achieve the graceful looks I now have for quite some time, but I had at least mustered the courage to abandon that dreadful scarf I wore all the time. Much to my discrediting it wasn't even a good scarf to begin with, so to my surprise everyone, and I mean everyone recognised me by that scarf. It was so bad that nobody actually recognised me.

"I hadn't even been sick for quite some time, so my voice was back to normal, but I guess that was the voice that stuck in everyone's heads even after I recovered. So instead of fading into the background now that I wasn't a lunatic wearing a scarf, I was instead the centre of attention as the weird new girl. Yes, I was still crazy even without my scarf, but I guess there was nothing to be done about it.

"Anyway, there was this group of girls, five of them if I remember correctly, lead by these two particularly nasty characters. Jannice and Lauraine. You'd think I'd set there house on fire, which I later did by the way, with the way they treated me and I couldn't escape them"

"Wait hold up. You set there house on fire?" asked Kat aghast

"That's a separate question. Do you want me to continue my story?" asked Callisto to which Kat shakily nodded her head.

"Right so where was I... Jannice and Lauraine. So I'd moved most of my activities to the library during lunch. You weren't allowed to eat so quite often I'd skip lunch, but at least teacher supervision was near constant so they didn't have the chance to pull any of there nastier stuff. The only issue was on this particular day, the teacher librarian in charge had called in sick, or at the very least they weren't present in the library.

"So, like any good scum of society when presented with a golden opportunity to ruin someone's perfectly good day they managed to find this little fact out. Which means someone told them, because those unintelligent fools never would have set foot in the library otherwise, plus they darted straight towards me like they knew where I was.

"So here's this group of five, beelining for me straight across the library and everyone else knew something was going down. A few people left so as to not be involved, most stepped back to watch from a safe distance.

"So Jannice and Lauraine stand in the front of their little group right in front of my table. Lauraine picks up one of the books I was working on and starts flipping through it. Now it wasn't anything incriminating

just my English homework I'd finished earlier, but I've always written in this ridiculous flowery script. So she says to me 'Gee, this book sure was written funny, reckon I should take this home and investigate Jannice'

"Who responds with 'I dunno, Lauraine, I've heard the author is a piece of trash' or something to that effect. Anyway after some more insults I never really cared to remember one of them decided, can't remember who, that it was a good idea to take it from me. So they were about to leave with the excuse of checking out a library book when Vivian comes in from the side.

"I expected her to reason with them, or perhaps admonish them for their poor behaviour. But nope she pulls out this massive tome of a book, hardcover, at least 800 pages, probably more like 1,200 and she slams, the thing right into Lauraine's head who in turn smashes into Jannice. Never had I seen 3 stooges so stunned by her appearance, and as Vivian swung in she'd said 'check this on out creeps'

"Oh, the sound, it was a brutal crunching sound, I'm pretty sure one of the girls had their skull cracked that day. But guess what, it didn't matter because not a person spoke of it. The school never addressed it after the fact, clearly no students ever told on Vivian, and we surprisingly didn't hear anything from the parents.

"But after that slamming Vivian said to me something I'll also never forget. 'Why did you put up with these guys? You're so much cooler than them' before walking away, slightly bloody book in hand.

"Best part is, I heard a rumour, though I never could confirm it, that the parents of those girls knew about the incident and kept quiet as well, some people even went so far as to say Vivian was payed to do it to teach them a lesson. I doubt it though, she wouldn't take money for something she was going to do anyway.

Chapter 66: Does God Exist?

"I wouldn't have thought Vivian was so violent" said Kat after hearing Callisto finish

"Well... I wouldn't say that she is. Nowadays, especially after seeing her adopt you and Sylvie I imagine her more like a very cuddly bear. Hugs are great and preferred but if you really cause problems, she has no problem knocking some sense into anyone. Actually, Chekov? You've met him right?" said Callisto to which Kat nodded in response "She met him on a job she was doing for some bigwig in the city. Chekov was arguing with one of the contractors because they thought he was stealing lumber from them because he always had so much. Well Vivian walks right up to the contractor and says 'if you've got a problem with him you can go through me' and obviously he laughed so she kicked him in the jaw and knocked him out"

"Huh, as strange as that sounds, I can picture that. Though I don't think I can imagine Chekov just taking that sort of abuse" said Kat

"Well, from what I heard he'd only just moved here and he hadn't recovered from his injuries he sustained during his escape. Of course, that was only because he didn't take a break like any sane man would and kept aggravating them but what can you do" said Callisto with a shrug.

"Right, right, yeah I can certainly imagine that part" said Kat. "Chekov seems... passionate about his work"

"That's putting it mildly" said Callisto "You should have seen the look on his face when I asked for three desks. With the way he looked at me I might as well have been God given form"

"Huh, now that's actually an interesting question for you Kat. Now that you're a demon do you think God is real. If so which one?" said Callisto

"Huh, I, I don't know really?" said Kat. "I never really thought about it before? I just sort of thought I didn't matter. Um how should I explain this... So, regardless of if God exists or not, we can't know that, not until we die, so I just believed that it was irrelevant to consider. It never mattered. Though now, maybe if God is real I could meet them? That's a bizarre thought"

"Why yes, I do suppose something like that is. Personally I never believed in him, because it just didn't seem realistic to me at all. Though, if magic is real, I guess the doors really open up don't they" said Callisto

Silence enveloped the room. Callisto seemed content to continue waving her arm around enjoying the sensation of Kat's calming aura but Kat herself was somewhat at a loss. What am I even supposed to say? Do I have any other questions for Callisto?

Kat wracked her brain thinking up a number of inane questions like what's your favourite colour or which elder god do you worship knowing that one day they will accidentally devour the universe, what your favourite food is, what's your favourite song, but none of those were really what Kat wanted. I guess one conversation with someone isn't enough to be comfortable with them even if your living with them. Or does that perhaps make it worse?

Kat finally managed to settle on the next question even if she wasn't entirely happy with it "Where do you buy your clothes? That outfit you have on is rather unique isn't it?"

"I buy all my fabric and make them myself. It is a minor effort on my behalf to do it this way but as I mentioned earlier, when you barely sleep time seems to open up to you." Said Callisto.

Pausing for a moment she turned to face Kat "It seems this conversation has run its course. Don't take this as me ejecting you from my abode but I do think the conversation has been buried in the grave. You should give the others some time of their own, they were more concerned than they let on when they read that note of yours"

Kat felt a small smile creep onto her face hearing that lifting the corner of her mouth just slightly "Well, don't you still have a question to ask me?"

Callisto let out a wicked laugh "I don't remember ever setting a time limit on that. I'll hold onto my question for now. I'm certain I can utilise it at some point in the future. Now go on, you've spent enough time with this crazy recluse for one day.

With the end of Callisto's speech she walked over to the largest of her desks and brought out a stack of paper and started drawing. Kat looked at her for a moment longer to see if she really was ignoring her but after walking over and standing right behind Callisto with no reaction she decided it was time to go back to the others.

Returning downstairs she found the three of them seated at the dining table with a number of brochures spread out across it. Most of them were clustered around the centre where a small sculpture

of a wave normally sat, which was now moved to the kitchen bench. Putting a little bit of energy into her eyes she examined it further for the first time. After hearing about Vivian's woodworking escapades I wonder if this is something she's made herself. Actually are all the decorations around the house things she and Callisto have made? If that's the case why was she so insistent on Sylvie and I buying something when we went into the city?

"Hey guys, what are you looking over" said Kat.

Vivian waved her over with a big smile "Just going through some things. Lily can tell you more if she really wants to"

Lily seemed to shrink slightly now that she had been called out but answered anyway "These are brochures for some of the university's that can be considered nearby" Closing the brochure Lily continued "But uh, if you'd be willing to um, speak about the meeting you just had I'd prefer that"

"Are you sure Lily, this is important for you. I don't mind going over them with you" said Kat taking a sit beside Lily and across from Sylvie trying to keep her wings tucked in.

"No, I mean, I know but I don't really want to think about it right now. A distraction is probably a good thing right now." said Lily

"Yeah, tell us about your trip Kat. Plus all these uni's aren't very good" said Sylvie putting away the brochure in front of her.

"That's a little rude Sylvie" said Vivian.

"But they are. The course offerings are rather lacklustre. The prices are set to be around 1.5x what they are actually worth and the facilities they are boasting are at best second rate. Do you really think otherwise Vivi" said Sylvie with big eyes. *NoVeInext.com*

Vivian reached over and grabbed Sylvie to put her on her lap. After securing the girl in position she wrapped her arms around Sylvie and pouted. "Just because it's true doesn't make it less rude"

"Should I say untrue things so that I'm not rude then Vivi?" asked Sylvie however she looked at Kat as she asked this despite addressing Vivian.

Vivian and Kat shared a glance between the two of them and came to the unspoken agreement for Vivian to take the wheel.

"You make an excellent point my dear. If they are bad you should say so. I do suppose you weren't being overly rude, it just pains my heart to see such a cute girl exposed to the sub-par realities of the world.

Kat felt her smile twitching slightly. Why does that sentence sound so much more aggressive now that I know Vivian can happily smack someone in the side of the head with a book. Is it because I know she'd say bad things to someone's face if they were true? Or is it just that I'm seeing her more aggressively now after the talk with Callisto. Then again aren't those two things basically the same?

"They kinda suck don't they..." said Lily quietly "Maybe it's just because I don't know what to do with myself but looking at these brochures certainly didn't help"

"Well, dear, I suppose I could try and find the brochures for my old university. You've been sent stuff from around the country but I've not even heard of half of them if I'm honest" said Vivian

"Do you think I'd find a good place there?" asked Lily

"Well... maybe not? It was a design heavy place focusing on a few disciplines. At the very least the few options they do offer were top of the line when I still attended" said Vivian.

"Thanks for that, but really I want to hear about what happened Kat, tell us the full story" said Lily turning now to face her friend

"Well in that case, after I left that note I was teleported to a strange office, that had these really nice chairs...

Chapter 67: The Accomplices

Kat finished retelling her encounter with Kraks and his beholder friends and then sat back to let her friends have the field.

"Those chairs sound interesting dear, I wonder if you could convince Chekov to figure something out" said Vivian

"Why did you keep mentioning that anyway Kat? Surely it can't be that much of an improvement?" asked Lily

"I feel a bit bad saying this, but yes it is that much of an improvement but I don't think you could ever understand" Lily tried to interrupt but Kat held up a hand and continued "I'm not saying you can't empathise, but they are the only thing I have been remotely comfortable sitting in since I got my wings. Sleeping is awkward as well. Somehow, they just let me relax. Maybe there was enchantments on it or something, but those chairs were well worth mentioning"

"Do you think demons can enchant things? Have you heard of any enchantments at all?" asked Sylvie

"Yes. That time I was gone a few days I encountered a powerful enchantment, though I never really saw how it works properly" said Kat "At the very least I can confirm they exist"

"Hmmm" murmured Vivian "Do you think enchantments would work for us? We don't have magic to use them"

Kat thought on that for a moment before answering "I'm not sure. I've heard multiple times that this world suppresses all forms of higher energy, making nearly impossible to use anything other than demonic energy at all. But clearly, I can exist. I managed to develop these demonic traits, so maybe if you made the enchantments with my energy it would work? I'm not exactly sure how they stay powered"

"I think Callisto would enjoy learning enchanting" said Sylvie.

This surprised Kat, she didn't know when Sylvie had even seen Callisto let alone struck up a conversation with her. They'd only been living at Vivian's for a short time, when had she managed that?

"Your right Sylvie, she'd die for the chance to upgrade her crazy existing costumes" said Vivian.

Vivian, Sylvie and Kat all shared a knowing look and a nod, while Lily just sort of awkwardly looked at the others trying to decide how truthful the other three were being.

Kat noticing Lily's slight distress decided to redirect the conversation "So, shall we investigate the settings I've supposedly unlocked now that I'm rank 1? At the very least we should all decide when I get summoned every week"

"Yeah, it's rude to just vanish and not be around in the morning. You should make it a time when we can all wish you good luck" said Sylvie with Vivian and Lily nodding along.

"Even you Lily?" asked Kat

"Of course. If I can see you off, I'm not going to miss that chance" said Lily

Well, you heard them system. Open settings

Initialising Settings

Examining Rank

Displaying Options

Which of the following does User Kat wish to view

Summoning

Accomplices

Home Designation

System Reactivity

System Monitoring

Huh, some of those look interesting but I guess let's start with Summoning.

Summoning...

Please select from the following

Minimal Payment

Scheduling

Beacon Management

--Skillset Adjustment--

--Blacklisted Dimensions--

Why are two of the options crossed out? I mean why even display them at all?

In relation to Blacklisted Dimensions, User Kat has not yet been Blacklisted from any known Dimensions. As such while User Kat retains the rank required to view this option from the menu nothing can be done with it. *NoVeInext.com*

Right and the other one?

Skillset Adjustment lets a demon whose skillset has grown considerably to narrow down there focus to only specific kinds of requests. User Kat is not yet skilful enough at a variety of tasks to qualify for this option but your Rank allows it to be displayed.

Hey I can do plenty of things.

D.E.M.O.N.S stands by the previous statement

Kat felt her eye twitch slightly at that one. A decade of schooling and she wasn't even qualified to narrow down her options. Fine then, tell me about scheduling.

Welcome to the Scheduling Page. Would User Kat like to view the extended introduction to the Scheduling Page as D.E.M.O.N.S has detected this to be the first instance of User Kat accessing Scheduling Page.

"Hey Kat, everything alright" asked Lily

"Yeah, the system is just being difficult don't worry about it" replied Kat. Yes please.

Scheduling enables a User to select times they are willing to accept a Summoning. Default setting is any time. All Preferences will be overridden if a User has not completed a weekly Summoning with less than 24 hours remaining including those from other Settings. Additionally, a User may opt to take on additional Summonings before the week has ended, scheduling separate availability for each successive summoning up to 4.

Huh, that's actually pretty handy. As Kat thought this the message disappeared and in it's places a grid appeared hour increments separated into columns for days. At the top of the table four boxes with differing flames appeared. They each seemed to have a different pattern to them. The first perfectly matched the default flames. The second box had the flames waving side to side in a rhythmic motion almost like a wave. The third lot of flames seemed to bob up and down, though unlike the second which were in time the third seemed to spite that idea and bobbed randomly. The fourth made it seem like they'd run out of ideas because it was just a still image.

"Right, well, I've got a timetable up and I can select when I want to be summoned but if I haven't done a job 24 hours before reset it will ignore everything anyway" said Kat "Actually give me a second"

Hey system, I could send a message to these girls before so they could see you. Is there a way to do that again?

User Kat is recommended to select the Accomplices Page. This will allow other individuals to see D.E.M.O.N.S messages.

Fine, system go to Accomplices tab

Welcome to the Accomplices Page. Would User Kat like to view the extended introduction to the Accomplices Page as D.E.M.O.N.S has detected this to be the first instance of User Kat accessing Accomplices Page.

Well, I do suppose so considering you directed me here.

No need to be rude.

Wait what?

Accomplices allow User Kat to designate up to 5 individuals as Accomplices. At Rank 1 this allows Accomplices to view User Kat's messages. Warning at Rank 1 Accomplices cannot be removed unless they have been confirmed to be dead for more than 876,001 hours.

Why does it have to be such a specific number of hours?

Some Souls find it hard to remain deceased. However it was decided after 876,001 hours they have been deceased long enough to have any subsequent revivals count as a new Individual.

Well I suppose that does make a morbid kind of sense doesn't it?

"So do you guys want to become accomplices?" asked Kat

"Sure why not" shrugged Vivian, with Sylvie nodding along

"Um, Kat, what exactly do you mean by that. Accomplices is a bit of a strange word for whatever it is your planning" said Lily

"This will let you guys view my messages from the system. That way I don't have to relay everything all the time and you can actually understand what's going on" said Kat

"Yeah but why accomplice?" asked Lily

Kat shrugged "It's just what they are called"

"Fine... if that really is what it's called"

Cool, system designate Sylvie, Vivian, and Lily as Accomplices.

Is User Kat sure they wish to appoint Individual Sylvie, Individual Vivian, and Individual Lily as Accomplices. This process is irrevocable at User Kat's current Rank.

Yes

Has User Kat given proper and thorough forethought as to the ramifications of this choice? Does User Kat still wish to appoint the Individuals [Vivian, Sylvie, Lily] as Accomplices.

Yes

Does User Kat solemnly swear that this choice will not be immediately regretted upon the enactment of the request for D.E.M.O.N.S to provide Individuals [Sylvie, Vivian, Lily] with irrevocable Accomplice permissions

Yes

Does User Kat

Kat swiped her hand through the forming text interrupting it. Are you really going to keep doing this? Is there a reason you need to repeat the damned question so many times? That's one of the few things that gets to me you know.

Kat waited for some form of reply and got none. Oh great, now you've got nothing for me. Seriously 4 times? How long would that have continued.

Until the Author got sick of writing new iterations of the same question.

Didn't that just happen?

What incident is User Kat referring to?

The... you know what. Never mind. Kat heard a gasp from the chair beside her. Turning to her right she saw Lily with wide eyes and a gaping mouth staring at the air in front of Kat where the D.E.M.O.N.S message had appeared.

"Is that... the system? That fiery red text that?" asked Lily

"Ooh, seems it worked. Congratulations on becoming my accomplice" said Kat with a grin

Chapter 68: Messing Around in the Settings

"You know Kat, when you said that it was flaming text, I didn't expect it looked more like fire that's been made into words rather than words made out of fire. It's an important difference" said Vivian

"Hah, if you think this is crazy you should see the flames involved in a summoning. It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen" said Kat

"You haven't mentioned that in any of your stories Kat" said Sylvie

"Well, it's not really something I could describe to you properly anyway. It's just immensely comforting and enjoyable to watch. The way the colours mix and flow between each other" said Kat "But let's not get distracted. We should first decide what to do with this"

Kat gestured towards the floating table that was the schedule option. Examining it properly it actually took up a surprising amount of space in front of the air. Huh, I didn't realise that was quite so big. Guess my improved vision makes it take up a lot loss of my field of view. Hey wait a minute.

Kat tried to rapidly shift her view throughout the room. An action like this had a decent chance of making her sick after her eyes had been upgraded but now there was no discomfort at all. Is it because I'm a full demon now? That doesn't really make any sense... Aw well, a problem for another time.

"Ah, Kat, are you all right? Why are you looking around so much" asked Lily as she watched Kat whip her head around

"Yeah, I'm more than alright. Whatever was messing with my eyes from before doesn't seem to affect me anymore. I hadn't noticed because I just sort of got used to the uncomfortable feeling I had when I looked around too much. Not sure when it disappeared but I have a decent guess" replied Kat.

"Well, I'm glad your feeling alright dear but are you not the one who just said we are getting distracted" said Vivian turning her head to give Kat a wry smile.

Kat just smiled wryly and looked at Sylvie instead. "What do you think Sylvie, when should I accept a summoning? Should I accept extra in a week?"

"Nope. For now you should spend more time with us. You don't really need to do more right?" asked Sylvie

"I guess not" said Kat and the additional flames above the table seemed to dim a little "But that still doesn't answer the when I'm free to be summoned. I mean it's basically whenever right?"

"Well, the question is does it matter? Do you just instantly get taken away or do you have other things you can do before you get transported?" asked Vivian

"Oh, I do actually get a bit of time. Not sure how much but at least a minute or two. I've already delayed accepting it long enough to get changed out of pyjamas before so, however long that is" said Kat

"Now dear, please tell me you fixed your hair before you left" said Vivian.

"My hair is exceptionally well behaved now, I have no issue with it" said Kat

"Your hair does look nice Kat, but wouldn't you have had your attire for the summonings that happened after your hair got fixed? This must have happened before that" said Sylvie

"You have no proof of that claim" said Kat choosing now to look at Lily instead of Vivian or Sylvie.

"Right... well Kat, how about just making the summonings school hours or a workday or something like that" suggested Lily

"Booo, I have to do more work starting next week so I might not be around" said Vivian

"Wait when do you work Vivian? I know you said you took the week off but I'm not actually certain about what you do" said Kat

"I work whenever I want to" replied Vivian with her signature grin. Kat let out a long sigh, exhaling deeply. I really don't mind when I get summoned. You were the ones worrying, why can't I just leave it as whenever I get first called?

User Kat is capable of keeping default settings.

System, are you ratting out my inner thoughts to my friends?

No. An Accomplice can see any part of D.E.M.O.N.S you give them access to, but this was clearly not a question User Kat wanted broadcast.

You're damn right.

"So does anyone have any real preference? I don't even mind leaving it as it was where I'd get summoned around 1 am Saturday morning" said Kat

"Well, I doubt I have much of a say in this. If you only have a few minutes regardless of when you get summoned I probably won't be able to wish you good luck" said Lily

Vivian bit her lip in response to this as she considered Kat's question. As much as it would be nice to watch over the girl it wasn't really something she wanted to control. This was an important, albeit strange part of Kat's life and while it would be nice to know when she was going to be out of the house, she didn't truly believe it was her place to dictate when that was. Besides, Callisto will probably be

available if she needed to notify someone, and the notes from last time were helpful just to let us know she was safe.

"Honestly, I think it's fine as it is unless you want to make sure you aren't woken up in the middle of the night" said Vivian.

Sylvie looked back at Vivian and then to Lily who was sitting across from them and seemed to understand why they didn't believe it was there place to pitch in and decided to go along with it as well. "Kat should pick the best time for her" said Sylvie.

"Huh, well in that case I'll just leave it as is. Despite sleep being nice I haven't felt tired really. I mean there was that time right after I finished my transformation. And that time I walked for around twelve hours. But I mean those are extreme examples right?" said Kat

Vivian and Lily just looked awkwardly between each other unsure how to respond. Luckily Sylvie had ideas. "Yeah, I doubt that you will transform into a demon again considering you're a demon now" no**VE|N**Ext.com

"You make a compelling argument Sylvie" said Kat as she swiped in the air and dismissed the timetable. The gesture was unnecessary, but it was fun to play it up a little now that the others could see Kat swiping at something rather than just looking like she was going slightly insane.

This brought Kat back to the summoning's option page and Lily's eyes lit up as she saw the beacon entry

"Kat you can make beacons? I mean those are real? Can you give us one so that we can summon you back if anything happens to you?" said Lily

"Um, I'm not sure, the system let me cheat the first time when I was making a beacon, so I don't actually know what that section would do" said Kat. Ok system bring it up and show the others.

Welcome to the Beacon Management Page. At Rank 1 you will see a list of all active Beacons.

False Beacon 1 - Shizuka Maemari/Minor

Um, can I make beacons of my own?

Yes.

Let me rephrase that can I make beacons for Lily like she asked

No. At Rank 1 User Kat is only allowed to make beacons for Summoners. Similar features will be unlocked at higher ranks for Accomplices, but User Kat does not have a high enough Rank.

Of course I don't.

"Guess you won't be getting a beacon just yet Lily" said Kat

Lily pouted at this and turned to Kat "How come this Shizuka person has a beacon? I don't remember you mentioning her before"

"Ah, she's the princess that I had to kidnap" said Kat

"Wait, but didn't the queen hire you for that job? That means she didn't summon you. Why is it that she gets a beacon?" asked Lily

"Good point. System?" asked Kat

Summoner Minor's situation is highly unusual. Combining that with User Kat's ongoing awakening and status as a wish token holder an exception was made due to the Beacon being a one time use False Beacon. Minor will need to Summon User Kat for a true Beacon.

"I thought you said her name was Shizuka? Why did the system call her Minor?" asked Sylvie.

"Huh, I forgot I hadn't actually told you guys the full story of the princess kidnapping stuff yet have I?" said Kat as she looking between the three of them.

"Nope" said Vivian. Sylvie shook her head in response and Lily said "You didn't"

"Well" said Kat glancing at the time and seeing it was still around 4 in the afternoon. "I guess we still have a good deal of time. I'll start telling you what happened. First off I was summoned by the fox queen..."

Chapter 69: A Rather Professional Summoning

In the end Kat's retelling of her princess adventure took well into the evening and Lily had to head home. The girls had planned to mess around with Kat's options menu more once everyone got together again but Lily wasn't available as her parents decided to take the rest of the week off to spend some time with her. Kat was tempted to go and rescue her friend a few times but Lily's text messages assured her that her parents weren't that bad to be around, and while Kat begged to differ at least in the specific case of Lily's parents it also wasn't her place to comment otherwise.

And so Friday night came and went and just as Saturday morning began a portal opened for Kat. She quickly knocked on Callisto's door to inform her she was leaving and received only a shrug in response. Collecting herself and resummoning her attire she stood in front of the portal.

You know, I really need to find a way to wear other clothes again. It's nice that my kimono shares the grime repelling attribute my skin has but sometimes I still feel like it's dirty even after resummoning it. Am I just making it up in my head?

Yes. Unless User Kat's soul is dirty. No dirt will contaminate User Kat's Demonic Attire.

A soul can be dirty? Is that something I have to watch out for?

No.

Shaking her head Kat pressed her hand against the flames and was whisked away. The fire that encapsulated Kat had returned to its vibrant shifting nature that seemed to bend and twist a number of colours together and let them swirl around Kat. There was one difference though, and Kat had to enhance her eyes to see it clearly, but everything was shifted slightly purple the tiniest amount. If she hadn't enjoyed the flames so much prior the subtle shift would have gone unnoticed, and it had indeed gone unnoticed by many demons before her.

Suddenly Kat's feet met the ground and she found herself in a well-lit room. The ceiling had plenty of light sources dotted around it but there was no window in site. Across from Kat was a very neatly dressed man in a white robe that had countless blood red symbols sewn into it that all lit up and danced with light as he stood there. Looking around further revealed another surprise for Kat. Unlike previous summonings where she stood in a rather small circle opposite a summoner this time they were separated by a large distance, around ten metres in fact. And yet it wasn't the distance that surprised Kat but the exceptional number of glyphs and sigils packed into the drastically larger circle that surrounded her. Kat turned around to study the full room and saw that the circle continued in all directions sigils overlapping and interlocking all glowing in the same blood red that matched the runes on the man's outfit.

A cough interrupted Kat's cursory investigation of the symbols and she returned her gaze to the man. In addition to his elaborate robes he stood straight and tall with the air of a professional who was having his time wasted. He had strange grey hair that let him keep his air of youth despite the age associated with the colour. It was slicked back flat against his head and had that shine you associated with too much hair gel. Kat gave him a questioning look. His impatience was strange, didn't he want her for a job?

"What never seen a real summoning circle before?" asked the robed man

"Well I guess not then. I've not seen anything so..." Kat paused not necessarily wanting to compliment the rude man but deciding it was true nonetheless "impressive"

"This is simply a standard set up for multiple consecutive demon summoning. Nothing so impressive as to get worked up over. I do suppose the criteria that needed to be set is to blame. I suppose the clients will be happy" said the robed man

"What do you mean?" asked Kat

"I run a respectable demon summoning business. You have been summoned to assist one of my clients, or a group in this case. I'll take you to the meeting room shortly but I'll get to the contract now.

"Demon, you are contracted to follow me down the corridor for exactly 50 metres, turn left and then enter the room before you. You will not stop moving until you are inside the room. Once inside you are required to remain within the room until you have accepted the deal offered to you by my client. In the event you decline their offer you will immediately be banished and receive twenty percent of the promised amount. In the name of Tobias Olesen. Are you willing to accept the terms of the contract"

"Ah..." Kat just stared at the man. What's up with this set up? Do I accept? What promised amount is he even talking about? *η0vεlNεxt.©0m*

The Payment for each job is sent to D.E.M.O.N.S to then be later distributed. This Summoner is aware that additional payment terms can be given in the initial contract. Certain figures would never be accepted by D.E.M.O.N.S. D.E.M.O.N.S has deemed 20% a reasonable fee in the event a User doesn't accept the request.

The system seems to think this is normal so I guess I just accept? "Sure..." said Kat and the chains appeared from Kat and the summoner. The chains originating from Kat was her trademark purple shade she had acquired after her awakening, but the chains that originated from the man were that deep blood red of the runes that coated the room. Kat's eyes grew wide as they wrapped around her and

sunk into her flesh. Kat was genuinely disturbed by the blood red dripping chains that emanated from this summoner

System, you better tell me why those chains were blood red or so help me.

Summoners that have taken extra steps will have their own representation in the contract. Powerful User's are capable of using their chains to influence the contract in their favour and skew the interpretation of the contract terms in the User's favour. This Summoner has drastically increased the number of necessary runes to ensure that deals remain neutral to both parties.

Why doesn't he try to skew it in his favour then?

The runes required to skew a contract away from a demon's favour are extravagantly complicated, strict in their requirements and uses. Additionally there would then be a contest of wills between the Summoner and the User, likely resulting in the Summoner losing as demons have an instinctual understanding of how to fight against them.

"Why do you look so shocked girl?" asked the man, despite the professional tone the girl part seemed like a sneer. Despite this Kat couldn't see any dismissal in the man's eyes.

"I've never seen chains that colour" said Kat

"Indeed, well then enough questions it is time I took you to the clients" said the man who chanted a quick spell and began to float towards the door.

Kat was about to step over the circle and follow him when the man whipped his head around and hissed "Do you have no respect for my profession. Fly over the runes you insensitive fool"

"Um, I haven't really learnt to fly properly, I don't even know if I can" said Kat

"Just flap your wings a bit, you're a demon it should be really easy" said the man who moved his body into a sitting position while still floating towards the door.

"Oh yeah like it's as easy as flapping your wings" said Kat as she flapped her wings for emphasis... And started flying.

Kat's eyes darted around the room as she could feel her wings rhythmically beating about once every two seconds and keeping her afloat.

"This doesn't make any sense?! Why is this so easy? I shouldn't be able to fly like this" said Kat who had enough knowledge for physics class to understand she shouldn't be able to fly, let alone hover in place with a wingspan this small consider how... light... Kat was.

The man just shrugged. "If only learning levitation was that easy" said the man clearly not believing Kat had just learnt to fly in that moment.

Kat just shook her head and followed the man out of the room annoyed that she hadn't even tried to fly during the few days she had been on earth, or even during the time she was with Minor.

It clearly isn't even hard! It just works. Who on earth knows why but it just works? Doesn't even take that much energy, I could just fly all over the place then. System, can you ease my suffering and tell me how easily most demons pick up flight?

Does User Kat mean demons possessing flight capabilities?

Yes

Almost instantaneously. User Kat may have taken the longest recorded instance to learn that flight was within their skillset. Certainly the longest among demons with functioning wings.

I regret I ever asked.

Chapter 70: Demon Client Professionalism Clearly only Extends to Summoners

Kat found herself in a hall that matched the previous room well. The corridor had wooden walls and lights all across the ceiling. The corridor extended for quite some ways into the distance, and Kat estimated it was around 200m, with doors every 10m's or so. Kat had the desire to open the doors that they had passed. So many of them looked identical and yet she had a feeling something interesting was behind at least one of them. Despite this desire though Kat continued to fly forward, every time she considered opening up a door she could hear the clink of chains in her ears and the words of the contract would come forth into her mind reminding her she'd promised to walk straight and enter a room without deviating from that.

It wasn't an uncomfortable feeling per say, even that fact it seemed to loom behind her wasn't all that concerning. It was more like a watchful parent that wanted to ensure the best for their children. The method might be harsh if called upon, but they ultimately wished for it go never come to that point for both of their sakes. Eventually Kat did arrive at the door. The robed man had walked slightly passed and then bowed extending his arm towards the door indicating for her to walk in.

Following the instructions Kat turned the door handle and carefully walked inside. To no surprise whatsoever this room also featured nothing but wooden walls and well lit ceilings. Would it kill you to put some decorations up? Or windows? Could you do windows? While Kat was complaining internally, she was also scanning the four people who happened to be in the room. It was of some surprise to Kat that there was four people in room considering that mage had talked about the client singular, but she guessed that a group could count as a client in these circumstances. The next thing that stuck out to Kat was the hair of the group, it was all vibrant colours. Not the usual lush hair but in the case of one girl it was a bright neon green.

The group was arranged somewhat professionally. One of the men stood in front of the others, with bright brown hair that was cut extremely short and close to his hair just barely long enough to avoid being labelled a buzz cut. His face had the radiance of youth and he worn a big, if somewhat forced smile. He had a full set of plate armour on though the material was strange to Kat. Instead of a shiny steel finish it had a blueish tint to it. None of the figures carried any weapons but the gauntlets on that plate mail armour looked deadly enough by themselves despite there unadorned nature, just the sheer bulk of the armour was more than enough to cause someone trouble.

To the man's right was a much taller and thinner man in a set of scale mail armour. The leather was a dark green and evoked images of dark swamps and mangroves. His hair was a matching brown with his

other companion, but his hair was a good deal longer. Not to the point that it even covered his neck, but more than long enough when compared to his friend. His face was a strange mix of youth and experience. He didn't seem older than the first man, but his face had a random assortment of scars in various places and angles and a particularly nasty one covering his left eye. Based on the fact he was staring at Kat with somewhat undisguised disapproval she could tell that his eyes still worked.

The final member that was grouped together was a tall woman, even taller than both her males' counterparts dwarfing Kat who was already quite tall for a woman by a significant margin. She had her face set in a hard line with a pair of thick glasses and stared at Kat like she was trying to look into her soul. There was no hostility like the second man, no judgement, only cold analysis of her and the situation at hand. Contrary to the armoured men beside her she had a robe that more closely resembled the mage outside. It was a dark blue much like her hair and was covered in runes that glowed faintly against the fabric. They were hard to make out, being the same colour as the cloak itself but Kat's eyesight more than met the challenge and was able to identify three distinct markings at least on the front. On the woman's back Kat could see the faint outline of something resembling wings. They were hard to make out but Kat was sure she could see them.

The final figure stood away from the group, around three large strides behind them to be exact. Kat couldn't see much of the last girl because she was hidden by her companions quite well. All Kat could see from this angle was her green eyes and wavy green hair. It wasn't as vibrant as the others and seemed to be trying to blend into the background. Of course, bright green hair against a brown wooden background still stood out well and Kat was able to notice her without any trouble.

Kat stopped around two metres away from the group. She was unsure what the proper etiquette was in this world, but such a distance would be far enough away to make it clear she wasn't encroaching on their personal space but easily close enough to have a conversation. Well, perhaps she was a bit further away than necessary but stepping closer to what looked to be veteran fighters of any kind wasn't high on Kat's to-do list.

The group just looked at Kat in return. The polite smile, the disapproval, the analysis, and now, from the hidden figure in the back-innocent curiosity. Kat was unsure what to make of a group like this. She couldn't help but wonder what sort of job they'd want from her. They all seemed capable in their roles... Well, the girl in the back was perhaps the least professional, but between them Kat couldn't figure out what skills she might have that they lacked.

Right, so we have platemail, grumpy, glasses, and... green? Eh that'll do for now I suppose.

"Are you our demon?" asked Platemail as he stepped half a step towards Kat.

"My name is Kat, and well, I certainly don't belong to anyone, but I am considering working for you" said Kat

"Oh great it's a smartass" said Grumpy

"Hey, these sorts of contracts are extremely binding, I have to be careful what I agree to. Wouldn't want to have a misunderstanding causing the contract to curse you now would you?" said Kat.

"Also you're being rude, the demon in front of you is almost certainly of the female variety and I for one would be rather put off if I was referred to as an 'it'" said Glasses "Besides we need her to accept the contract, we hardly have the time or funds to hire another demon" *NOvelnext.cOm*

"Well don't tell it that. Now it's got leverage. This is why I hate working with you" said Grumpy.

"Uh please don't fight" said Green in the back but was promptly ignored.

"Consider it your punishment. I won't have you treating her as anything less than a sentient being. I know you have your problems with demons... and dragonkin... and most of the other races but that isn't her fault" said Glasses

"Look you fairy bitch, just because the young master likes your whore of a charge, doesn't mean I-" Grumpy was cut off when Platemail slammed him in the face and sent him flying into the wall. A bright light coated them for a moment and he bounced off before the wall dimmed and Grumpy groaned on the floor.

"Fix your accursed mouth. I've let you accompany me on my adventures for years. We played together as children, but every time you insult my fiancé I get this much closer to kicking you out. I understand your problem, I really do, but now isn't the time for this" said Platemail.

"Indeed scum" hissed Glasses, "We need another teammate and your poor attitude is getting us nowhere"

"Why listen here, fairy bitch, I might not be able to insult you" Grumpy caught himself "Your lovely companion, but I can still insult you. So why don't you"

Kat tuned the bickering pair out at this point. Whatever it was they wanted to say, clearly it wasn't worth her attention. This was an old argument, and she doubted it would be resolved here and now. While this arguing was taking place however the final member of the group was sneaking around the outside of the room towards Kat.

The other didn't seem to notice her presence, as she walked past them towards Kat, but Green did pick up on Kat's eyes that followed her around the room. Walking around and past Kat she started speaking from behind Kat's wings

"I'm sorry for those two. We really need your help" said Green

"What with? I certainly can't fix their dysfunctional attitudes" said Kat

Kat could hear Green taking a big breath behind her and pausing for a moment as if afraid to speak the words Kat needed to hear. "We need you to enter a tournament"