

Band of Elements

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Corny as it sounds: five or six characters in a band, living in an incredibly isolated place, and they all have elemental swords. Then one of them gets orphaned, and sent to the mainland--but the majority of the country is taken over by demons!

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/zopponde/44619/Band-of-Elements>

Chapter 0 - In Which History is Reviewed	2
Chapter 1 - In Which School Nears its End	5
Chapter 2 - In Which Exams are Taken	11
Chapter 3 - In Which Trouble is Foreseen	15
Chapter 4 - In Which Mondays are Endured	20
Chapter 5 - In Which Plans Come Through	25
Chapter 6 - In Which the Cat Village is Visited	30

0 - In Which History is Reviewed

Fixed it! (mostly. The diagrams probably died, but I'm not sure I can help that so much.)

(Thanks to Werecat13, my best-friend-type-person (or something), the first not-me and still-alive creature that I can guarantee has ever been vaguely aware of this story. She also advised me as to whether or not to post this and another story, and I really trust her enough that I posted this with only her word and a little bit of...something. Pride, maybe? But I don't really think I have any of that ^-^; hehe...oh well. Here's to the great Werecat, to whom I probably owe a request or something at the very least. I should probably make that official, if only my workload would stop...having babies or something...why can't workloads be the kind of creature that eats its babies/is eaten by its babies?)

To avoid confusion, I'll make it clear that the prologue is basically a school lesson, told in the near-exact words of the teacher. And I tried to make diagrams, too, but I can't guarantee that they'll come out with any decency.

Anything in-between two *'s isn't really part of the story, just a comment on something wrong with the format or something.

Now enjoy/go away.)

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### *Prologue-*

A lecture from the mouth of a crazy history teacher

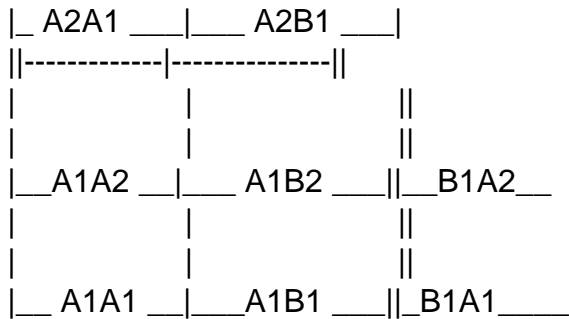
This land is divided into regions, which are divided into Greater Sections, which were divided into lesser sections [or at least, so was the case of the Human Continent]. Each section is square, with about five [out of several hundreds] making an exception, as they were rectangles [which are extremely similar to squares, if you don't already know]. Every lesser section was given a letter-number-letter-number name, the first letter and number being for the Greater, and the last letter and number being for the lesser section. Basically, the thing was on a graph like you see in math class, and the letters were the x-axis [where A=1, B=2, AA=27, BB=28, etc.], and the numbers were the y-axis. So, in the bottom left corner of a map, you saw:

|    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|
| A2 | B2 | C2 | D2 |
| A1 | B1 | C1 | D1 |

\*Those are supposed to be pretty much square\*

Most of these sectors also had “tourism” names, city names. For example, sector A1A1 was known as Dimin Town, but nobody really knows that after its residents.

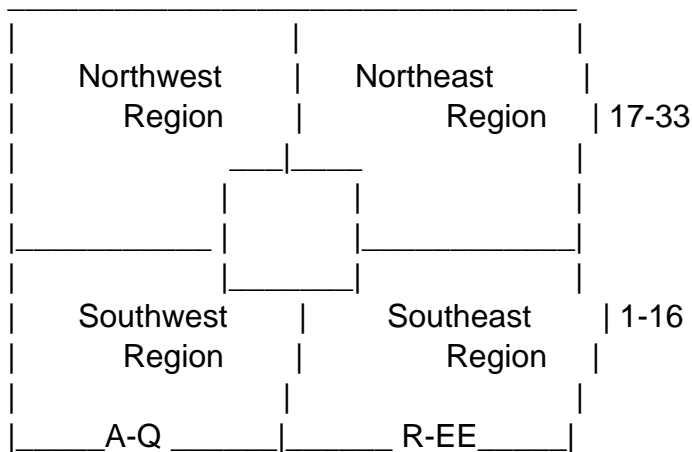
Speaking of, just to make sure you know [because you kids are always so ignorant], Dimin Town is the name of our town. As you may be more likely to know, Sector A1 is a very small Greater sector, and sector A1A1 is—oh, I’ll just draw it on the whiteboard. It looked something like this:



\*Those were, too\*

Basically, A1A1 is very small, and on the very border of the SW region of the Human Continent [and, of course, the Human Continent is a large section of land that the demons allowed the humans to use. It’s completely surrounded by the Demon Continent, except in sector CC33C3, where a small lake divides the Human and Demon continents. There are age-old legends of “oceans”, but such things are no doubt merely a part of demon-tolerant mythology]. It’s so close to the Demon Continent that demons have taken over all of A1 except for A1A1, and the residents there have long since learned defense if they hadn’t made friends with someone who did.

And now I explain the Regions. A basic map:



\*Again\*

The part in the middle is known as the Central Region. In the middle of this is the capital, where all the politics happen. All Greater sections are represented [except A1, which has a human population considered far too small for individual representation, so it shares a representative with B1]

Now while you get that down, I'm going to ramble about this place's past.

A long time ago [nobody knows when, they just remember parents saying what their parents said to them, otherwise we wouldn't even know this happened], demons ruled both continents. Humans had one hell of a time getting by, so there wasn't much trouble over politics and whatnot, just killing demons before the demons killed them.

Well, eventually, a more kind-hearted [or at least not as violent] demon took power over demons [and they DO have political problems because, unfortunately and contrary to popular belief, demons aren't just brainless animals], and he [or she; no living human knows which, but there are strong beliefs that he was a cat demon] decided that we really did have it rough, and decided that we could have our own plot of land. He gave a small piece of land to six families. Each family grew into a city, which grew into a Greater sector, which grew into a region, which ran into others, which formed the Human Continent. And I know that I only showed five regions. One of them is supposedly on an island, far out in one of those great oceans, if it even exists. The island is supposed to be a fairly large one, but ruled by some more violent demons, so the Sixth Region, to the Human Continent, has been dead for centuries.

Going back to the Human Continent, it eventually grew so large that many demons began attacking human settlements just because they were close enough. The ruling demon didn't stand for that, but he didn't like us expanding so much, either. So he settled it by drawing a line that no humans were to cross and moved the violent demons away from the line. Since there weren't rivers or anything to keep the humans in, he had to give up some imagination; hence why the Human Continent is a perfect square.

About halfway between the drawing of the line and the time of this story, A1 was a frightening sector, especially to "civilians". Demons were beginning to cross the line, though very few actually attacked humans. They were just paranoid because, well, they were demons. People refer to this time as "The Conquering of A1", though it wasn't a real conquering. Basically, people got so paranoid that they either learned to live alongside the demons like old friends, moved up to the front lines of A1A1, or retreated back to the city, which was easily the popular decision. It was only after the "conquering" that the representative idea came into play, so A1A1 was not actually included on the system until they protested enough to have their representation shared with B1.

And thus, my lecture ends. And I'm not going to repeat it, so don't you dare forget it.

~~~~~

(And thus ends my lovely lesson of a prologue. I hope you enjoyed. And if you didn't, go away. The next chapter or two should be up pretty soon. I'll explain a little more later.)

1 - In Which School Nears its End

Yeah, that took a while. My parents dragged me down to Florida for Spring Break and I couldn't do anything. And I'm going to be going somewhere else today, so don't expect much more up anytime soon. My appologies.

Katrina Starr and family belong(s) to Werecat13

All other characters are mine, with my main character being Teu Zopponde, if you can't tell from the last name.

Most last names generated here:

<http://www.kleimo.com/random/name.cfm>

Most demonic names generated somewhere on this site:

<http://www.seventhsanctum.com/>

Some names chosen from a list somewhere here:

<http://www.behindthename.com/>

Admittedly, Krystal is probably something like InuYasha's long-lost-twin-sister-or-maybe-just-him-in-an-alternate-reality kind of relation. You have no permission to flame me for it. I was really into InuYasha at that point in time, and thus the show greatly influenced the story. Live with it or go away.

Italics are thoughts and heavy emphasis(es); things between *'s are notes that aren't neccessarily directly related to the story, usually about format; I used [these] instead of (these) because I'm wierd that way; in sets of three indicate breaks.

Enjoy or go away.

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## **Chapter 1-**

Yay, story!

“Now, we have finished our review for the end-of-year exams,” the teacher said. “Your test will be tomorrow in computer lab 66, and you will be held there for all 6 periods while everyone finishes. You will have a break at the third period for lunch, then do the essay part. Any questions?”

Blake Garrington, his green eyes unusually awake, raised his hand.

“Yes, Blake?” the teacher asked, hoping he wasn’t asking for a repeat of what she just said.

“Can I go to the bathroom?”

The teacher sighed. “Can’t you wait for the—”

The bell rang. Blake stood, stretched, picked up his ripped-up binder, and left to head home. Halfway down the hallway, he saw a girl with black hair swept across her forehead stroll up to him, apparently deep in thought. He recognized her immediately as Teu Zopponde, his girlfriend.

“Yo Zap,” Blake greeted, calling her by her nickname.

“Blake, we need to talk.”

“Sorry, my dad wants me home in ten minutes. You can come with me.”

“Huh? Oh...no, it’s okay, I’ll tell you about it tomorrow.” She turned around and left.

Blake thought, What’s her problem? Does she need to study for the exams? ...Wait, then I won’t see her tomorrow! Crap! “Teu! Wait!” But she’d already left. He swore under his breath and continued his walk back home with a guilty slouch.

That day was June 5th, 1066 years after the conquering, a Thursday, just before the big Exam Day. To celebrate the end of cramming, tests, and generally grades, Blake was throwing a party in his basement, with the best band in all of Sector A1 [which isn’t really hard, but this was still a really good band], the Band of Elements, in which Blake played the drums. Tonight there was going to be a rehearsal, which was probably why his dad needed him home soon.

Blake reached the end of the pavement, checked to see that his combat boots were tied, and stepped into the “desert wasteland” that made Sector A1 famous [sort of] to begin his tiresome walk home.

After three minutes of walking, he saw the oasis that gave A1A1 about half of its scarce trees. He saw Violet Ameling, violinist for his band, glance over her shoulder from the edge of the small forest. Her ankle-length red hair was waving in the wind when she saw him and waved, face smiling, though her green eyes were too distant to even really notice him.

Blake returned the wave and continued walking, thinking about Violet. She usually looked fairly happy, or at least content, at school, but she seemed to be an orphan; however much she denied it, she doesn’t seem to have any parents. Anyone who asked was brought to that oasis, where she wandered for a while, ignoring the other person until they took their leave or she left the forest and remembered that they were with her.

Another three or so minutes later, he came to a waist-high stonewall with a dusty mailbox, the red flag still up from a week or so ago, next to the metal gate which was probably painted black, but Blake wouldn’t be one to know what kind of metal it was even if it was its natural color.

One minute later, Blake came up the steps to the small porch in front of his house, stepped up to the door, pulled out his key, and used it to unlock the door. He grabbed the handle, twisted it, began walking forward, and—SMACK! His head collided with the stationary door. Blake realized that his father left the door open—not a good idea here. He unlocked the door and walked in, successfully this time.

The carpet of the house was filthy with various trash items, mostly junk food wrappers and soda cans. Nobody really did any cleaning there. Blake's dad, who was sitting on the sofa reading a two-week-old newspaper, turned around when he came in.

"Blake," he said, folding the newspaper on his lap, "I have an important question for you."

"What is it?"

"Well, your girlfriend, Teu..."

"What's wrong?"

"Apparently, her mother passed away, and she wanted Teu to move in with her aunt in the Capital Sector."

So that's what she wanted to say, Blake thought.

"She doesn't want to go alone, and her aunt said that she can bring a friend with her. Do you want to go?"

Blake paused. He stood there stationary for almost a full minute, thinking, before his father interrupted, seeming to read his thoughts.

"Blake, this is a serious decision. You can sleep on it. In fact, they don't get out of school until much later there, so you'll have to finish school here. You have a week until school lets out."

"Thanks."

An awkward silence fell on the two, ended by the doorbell ringing.

"Hey," Blake said, going to answer the door, "they're early."

It rang again. Must be Krystal, Blake thought, Impatient as always.

And sure enough, it was Krystal Winterbottom, her bass guitar strapped to her back and her long white hair up in a ponytail, making her cat ears particularly obvious. Her short sword hung on her utility-style belt, sheathed. Her mismatched eyes, one red and one green, sparked with impatience at the time spent to answer the door.

"What took you?" she demanded, as Blake realized that Violet was with her, violin case in hand.

"We've been waiting for a full ten seconds!"

“Yeah, well, I can wait for twenty seconds without even ringing the bell twice,” Blake shot back.

“Haylay,” Violet said randomly, naming the band’s singer.

“What about her?” Krystal asked.

“I’m here, that’s what,” a cheerful voice answered from behind her.

“DAA--!!!! Don’t do that!!!!” Krystal exclaimed, turning to face Haylay.

“Why not?” Haylay asked, sky blue eyes gleaming with mischief.

“Because—” Krystal was cut off.

“Katrina,” Violet said.

Krystal looked and saw Katrina Starr, electric guitar strapped to her back, walking up the path between the gate and the house.

“Am I late?” she asked, somewhat breathless.

“No, we haven’t even come in yet,” Blake replied, leading the rest of the band into the basement.

Four hours later, the band emerged from the basement, satisfied with their ability to play their songs. Blake offered to serve supper, but only Violet and Krystal could stay. Haylay’s parents wanted her home soon and Katrina had to baby-sit her own twin brothers. They both left their equipment at Blake’s house.

“So,” Blake said, “what do you want to eat?”

“How about ramen?” Krystal suggested.

“Do we even have a choice?” Violet asked without expecting an answer.

“You know, I don’t think I’ve had anything but ramen here...” Krystal remarked.

“I haven’t either,” Violet added.

“Okay, so we only have ramen,” Blake confessed. “So what? ramen’s good!”

“Have you ever heard of a food pyramid?” Violet asked.

“Can we just have some ramen?”

“Fine, but next time I come here, I’m bringing a box of pasta...”



“Isn’t that basically ramen?”

“Maybe, but it’s still healthier and just as easy to prepare.”

“You do that. Good luck preparing it.”

“If you have a pot and a stove, I’m good.”

“What if I don’t?”

“Then I’ll take your sword and start a fire with it.”

“What about the pot?”

“Your skull would probably do the trick if it’s not too thick.”

“Violet, we can’t do that. The band needs a drummer,” Krystal interjected.

“We’ll find a new one.”

“Look, can I make the ramen now?” Blake asked.

“Fine. Go and make your stupid ramen.”

“It’s not stupid!”

Krystal sighed and opened the closest cabinet, which just so happened to be the one where the ramen was kept.

“Yes it is! My diet is better than yours!” Violet shot back, uncharacteristically shouting.

Krystal opened three packages of ramen and filled them with water from the sink.

“What’s so remarkable about that?” Blake yelled.

Krystal opened the microwave and put the ramen in, trying to figure out how to set the microwave for three minutes on high.

“I live in the forest!” Violet screamed, her face turning red. “All of my food comes from the forest!”

Krystal leaned on the counter next to the microwave, whistling, waiting for it to finish with its three minutes. She stopped to suggest, “Maybe our next rehearsal should be at Haylay’s house.”

“Yes, it should be! Maybe she knows that you can’t eat ramen for your whole life! Maybe she has multiple brain cells!”

"Maybe I do too, and you're just too...too...too forest-raised to know it!" Blake shot back.

"Maybe you don't because that ramen killed them all!"

"Ramen doesn't do that!"

"How do you know?"

The microwave beeped to signal that its three minutes were over.

"Ramen's done," Krystal pointed out, looking through the drawers for forks.

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2 - In Which Exams are Taken

Oh yeah, and I forgot to mention, I have "parts" to this story. As of yet, I have two parts, one of them incomplete.

Katrina Starr and family belong(s) to Werecat13.

All other characters (c) ME

Most names (but you haven't gotten to the point of that quite yet) generated somewhere on www.seventhsanctum.com All others selected from some list or another on www.behindthename.com

Italics are emphasis(es)/thoughts; [these] came in place of (these) because I felt like it; a long series of ~'s mark the beginning and end of the chapter; I think that's all that will ACTUALLY SHOW UP *glares pointedly at computer*

~~~~~

### **Chapter 2-** *Exam Day*

It was seven o' clock on Friday. Blake's alarm clock rang, so he woke up, thought, *I can sleep a little longer*, hit the snooze button, rolled over, and went back to sleep.

\* \* \*

Haylay's alarm clock rang, as always, at seven o' clock. She woke up and turned it off, getting out of bed. Her short blonde hair was fairly neat, as it was too short to get any real bed head, but at the front, where it was longer and dyed lavender, was in disarray. Haylay impatiently pulled at it with a brush as she used her other hand to shovel cereal into her mouth. She was always good at multitasking, a skill that all others in her family lacked.

She ran back to her room, where she glanced at the calendar, still brushing her hair. Then she remembered that it was Exam Day and she forgot to study. *Oh well*, she thought, *I'll survive...probably.*

Her room was typical, with unpainted walls covered with the idols of Central Region and popular bands and posters with cats on them that said something amusing but not necessarily funny, like, "Bright lights, big kitty".

"Haylay," her mother called, "are you getting dressed yet?"

"Yes, mother," Haylay replied.

She ran back down the stairs, dressed for school, still tugging at her hair and cursing it under her breath. Passing the kitchen, she saw her father eating his breakfast at the table with the other six children that

Haylay's parents took care of.

"Don't forget your sword today," he said.

"I won't," Haylay replied, looking in the mirror by the door at her reflection.

"That's what you said yesterday, but how true was that?"

"Sorry, dad," Haylay apologized, still playing with her hair.

"I didn't make you that sword so you could get attacked and killed by a demon because you forgot it, you know."

"Dad, I know," Haylay said, running out the door as she grabbed her sword from the umbrella stand and shoved it onto her belt before jogging to school.

\* \* \*

Blake's alarm clock went off again. He reached behind him and hit about where he thought the snooze button was and went back to sleep.

\* \* \*

Katrina's alarm went off at 7:15. She woke up and considered going back to sleep, but she realized that she had to get up in time for school on Exam Day. She got out of bed, got dressed, and ran downstairs to eat breakfast, her calico cat Namir following behind.

The house was unusually quiet. Usually, Kaleb and Quinn, Katrina's twin half-brothers, were running around, too. They probably slept through their alarm, Katrina thought.

After her breakfast, Katrina was sitting on the bench by the door to put on her shoes when her stepfather came down the stairs.

"Did the paper come today?" he asked.

Katrina opened the door and checked the doorstep for a new newspaper. All that she saw was their doormat with "Welcome" stamped on it in large letters. "No," Katrina answered.

"We haven't gotten any news in a week! I'm writing to the paper company telling them that we're not getting our paper." He turned around to go to his office and type a letter to the *Central Sector Times*.

Katrina grabbed her pencils and put them in her pocket. She made sure to take her sword from the shelf that she kept it on before going out the door. Something about the lack of newspaper had her on edge.

She unlocked her bicycle from its chain to a tree at the edge of her property, put the chain in her basket and dropped her sword on a special ledge she designed to hold it in place as she rode her bike. Then she started her half-hour ride to school.

\* \* \*

Once more, Blake's alarm went off, and he carelessly hit the snooze button and went back to sleep.

\* \* \*

Krystal woke up, all her school stuff in a small carved hole in the cave she slept in. The watch she pinned to the wall above her sleeping bed read 7:21. *Great*, she thought, *I slept through the alarm again*. She took her pencil case, sword, and a box with three somewhat stale doughnuts, and started on her way to school, already dressed, shoving the doughnuts into her mouth as she walked.

\* \* \*

Blake's father came into his room and turned on the lights. Blake groaned and cursed loudly. Mr. Garrington said, "Come on, you don't want to be late on Exam Day."

Blake suddenly remembered and thought, *Oh crap! I gotta get going! Now!* He jumped out of bed and ran around the house, grabbing a Pop-Tart, shoving on a shirt and pants, wrestling on his boots, and grabbing his sword, though neither in that order nor in a distantly organized way, all the time thinking, *Crap! Crap crap crap crap CRAP!*

He ran out the door, forgetting his pencils.

\* \* \*

Violet woke up to the voice of her parents, waking her up and reminding her that she had exams today. She got up, took a drink from the oasis, washed her face, put on new clothes, and brought twice as many pencils as she needed. After all, she knew Blake, and he probably slept in too late and forgot his pencils. She grabbed her sword, one of the five made by Haylay's father, and went on her way.

\* \* \*

The class sat in computer lab 66, chattering away, lucky to have a tolerant teacher watching them. Everyone was there, many out of breath, but none more so than Blake. Violet passed him half of her pencils, and he thanked her after he realized that he'd forgotten his.

The bell rang, a few short announcements [mostly club cancellations] were made, the bell rang again, and the test began.

\* \* \*

The final bell rang, and the students flocked from the classroom, each eager to go home after a long and tiring day of sitting on their butts and staring at a computer screen.

The band all walked to Blake's house, except for Katrina, who rode her bike alongside them.

“So,” Krystal said, smirking, “how’d the test go, Blake?”

“Shut up!” Blake snapped.

Haylay giggled, receiving a menacing glare from Blake.

“Not so great, eh?” Krystal taunted.

“I said shut up!” Blake yelled.

“Blake, calm down,” Violet said, tired from the testing.

“I will if she does,” Blake growled.

“Krystal, be quiet,” Violet sighed.

Krystal stuck out her tongue.

Violet sighed. “Where’s the duct tape when you need it?”

“Present!” Haylay piped, holding up a large roll of the semi-metallic gray tape.

“Um...” Violet started. “Why...?”

“I have...um...” Haylay counted her fingers. “...Six siblings. It’s almost a survival instinct.”

“Okay,” Violet said slowly. Then she turned to Krystal and Blake. “The next person to talk gets their mouth duct taped shut.”

The rest of the trip was silent.

~~~~~

Yeah, there's still more stuff that happens before anything real happens, but there's already been some deal of foreshadowing...

Oh, and the whole repeating-six thing going on? Well, when I rewrote this story, I got to this part in June last year--the whole 6/6/06 thing? Yeah. So I threw that tidbit in, and I guess that might be some form of an omen. Or maybe it was just an omen for Blake. He's the kind of person who would be panicking about it if he wasn't running so late.

3 - In Which Trouble is Foreseen

Okay. So everyone got drunk. Aaand I probably exaggerated it...a lot. But hey, I had fun, and I still find it rather amusing. So, really, a lot of the drunkenness is hyperbole for the sake of comedy.

Most names generated on www.seventhsanctum.com All other names are currently irrelevant or kind of obvious.

Italics are emphasis(es) or thoughts; ~s mark the beginning and end of the chapter; [these] replace (these) because I felt like it at the time.

Katrina Starr and family © Werecat13

Every other character, especially Teu Zopponde, © ME

Enjoy or go away.

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### **Chapter 3-** *Rising Action*

Blake woke up the next morning, in the middle of his basement floor. But...maybe it was on a ship on one of those lakes that are supposed to exist somewhere else. The floor couldn't stay still and the whole place was spinning.

He saw his dad come down the stairs and say, "You know, I thought I locked the beer up for the night."

"What happened?" Blake asked, not very clearly.

"I have very little idea, but I'm fairly certain that you found the beer. Half of your friends were being dragged out by their friends, and the other half didn't seem very articulate, either," his dad said, mildly amused. "I think Katrina was the only one who didn't drink anything."

"Remind me never to do that again."

"Do what?"

"Drink."

\* \* \*

A few hours later, the phone rang. Blake picked it up, and found that it was Krystal.

“Hey, Blake,” she started.

“What?” Blake asked.

“I think I left my...um...” she tried. “Look, I left something extremely personal there. Can I come over?”

“Yeah, sure,” Blake responded.

“Okay, see you in about half an hour.” Krystal hung up, shortly followed by Blake.

About five minutes later, the phone rang again. Once more, Blake picked it up, but this time it was Haylay.

“Blake, my best buddy in the whole wide world--” she started, but was cut off.

“What do you want?” Blake said, knowing that she only said that when she really wanted something.

“Well, you see,” she said, “I left something over there.”

“What did you leave?” Blake asked.

“Um...I’ll just come by. I’ll be there in about twenty minutes.”

“But wha--” he was cut off by her hanging up the phone. He frowned and followed suit.

Ten minutes later, the phone rang, Blake got it, and it was Katrina, who left her guitar. She told him she’d be there within half an hour.

Five minutes after that, the phone rang and Blake’s dad shouted, “You must be popular, Blake!” before Blake picked up the phone.

“Hey, Blake,” Violet meekly said. “I need to come by today.”

“Why?” Blake asked, tired of everyone coming over for unexplained reasons.

“I kinda left my...” she trailed.

The conversation halted for several seconds.

“Ah, I’ll just be there in five minutes or so.” She hung up before Blake could open his mouth.

\* \* \*

Five minutes later, Haylay and Violet arrived.

“Hi Blake,” Haylay said. “Man, that walk felt like it took forever! Where’s your bathroom?”



“You should know by now,” Blake replied.

“Yeah, well, I forgot.”

“Okay,” Blake sighed. “You go down that hall...”

“Thanks,” she said and hurried into the basement.

“Yeah, I need to go, too,” Violet said awkwardly, blushing, as she followed Krystal.

Blake glared at her back as she went to the basement. That wasn't where I said they should go, he thought.

Five minutes later, Krystal rang the doorbell, and Blake answered it.

“Hey Blake,” she said, abnormally cheerful, “I need to use the bathroom real quick.” She pushed past him into the basement.

Blake frowned by the door until Katrina came.

“Good morning,” she said. “Am I the only one here?”

“Seeing as Haylay, Violet, and Krystal haven't left the bathroom yet, I'd consider you to be.”

“Well, I'm not so sure I disagree with them, seeing as they...” she blushed. “Oh well. You were probably too drunk to remember.”

“Remember what?” Blake almost shouted.

“Nothing,” Katrina said, smirking. “I'll go downstairs and get my guitar.”

Blake followed her and saw that the bathroom was occupied. As he passed, he heard quiet voices that sounded like they belonged to his strangely behaving friends. *Sorry girls*, he thought, *I really need to know what's up here*. He put his ear to the door.

“...wasn't THAT drunk,” Haylay denied.

“Yes you were,” Violet said quietly. “You were marching around with that pair on your head!”

“Next you'll be saying that I passed out,” Haylay whispered.

“I was just about to say that you did,” Krystal murmured. “Katrina had to carry you home. I think that she left her guitar for that.”

“Well, if these are mine, these flowery ones are Krystal's,” Haylay quietly provided, probably pouting.

“Um, no,” Krystal refused. “I do NOT wear flower underwear!”

Blake realized what the “extremely personal things” were and slowly removed his ear from the door, suddenly glad that he couldn’t remember anything from the previous night.

\* \* \*

A cloaked figure stood at the top floor of The Tower, a great landmark of the Human Continent, looking out the shattered window overlooking the Capital Sector. He saw his life’s work there; the remnants of the great Capital, burning. He was Oronagi the Conqueror, the first demon ever to control the great Human Continent, with their complex gadgets and government and military, and ruled over them all. But there was still something wrong with his plan. His forces had started with a quiet infiltration, which meant avoiding Sector A1A1, who would probably kill his forces if they entered in the small forces that they had planned to enter with. And if they had been foolish enough to go in with enough soldiers to defeat this “Dimin Town”, they would draw too much attention to themselves and be defeated right then and there by the human army. And a compromise would bring both defeat by Dimin Town and increased defenses. So they took the stealthy way, entering A1A2 and A1B1, which were populated majorly by demons anyway. And since then, the army of demons took over the entire Human Continent.

The door behind Oronagi opened, and out of the elevator came a shadow on the ground.

“You know,” Oronagi told it, “that shadow is more conspicuous than your real form, Turchag.”

“My apologies, my lord,” said a voice in the shadow.

The shadow remained, but a male human image with blue eyes and blonde hair materialized to give an excuse for its presence.

“I do not appreciate stares from the human slaves, my lord, and they would never notice the shadow if it was their own,” the human image said. “I do believe you understand, my lord.”

“Do not make excuses, Turchag,” Oronagi growled. “Was there a reason for your visit, or do you merely wish to end your life earlier than planned?”

“My lord,” Turchag said, “I simply wished to ask if you needed me in your plans to take this Dimin Town.”

“No,” Oronagi answered, “you were not in my original plans. However, we have found some...complications. You may be of use to me in getting around this. I will alert you if I need you for anything. You may leave now.”

“Yes, my lord,” Turchag said, bowing himself onto the elevator, where the human image disintegrated and only the shadow remained until the elevator doors closed with a small clack.

~~~~~

To clarify, the main characters (the band) were named by me. But they didn't have last names. Their last names were generated via seventh sanctum. Most demon names came from seventh sanctum, too. Teu

is a name from a generator, and Zopponde is just my name.

4 - In Which Mondays are Endured

I feel very proud. I got off my lazy bum and wrote more of it. Of course, I can only think of one person who can read it for...probably any time this month at the very least, because I'm not uploading these fast enough.

Katrina Starr (and family) (c) Werecat13

All other characters (c) me, Zopponde

Italics=thoughts

* * *=break

[these]=(these)

~~~~~

### Chapter 5-

*Just another Monday*

Monday, June 9th, 1066, was a sunny day. Yet Violet, usually quite happy on sunny days, was pouting. When Blake looked her way to try and cheer her up, she glared and turned around. He leaned over to Krystal and whispered, "What's up with Violet?"

Krystal looked for herself and grinned. "She just holds a mean grudge," she told him.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Blake asked. "What did I do?"

"You served ramen again."

"What?"

"Remember that little 'conversation' we had Thursday?" Krystal supplied, eyes twinkling mischievously. "About how she really didn't want any more ramen?"

"Oh...But she was fine then."

"Remember Saturday when we came over? And you served ramen?"

"Oh."

"You're slow, you know that?"

\* \* \*

Finally, Oronagi realized what he had to do. All those days he had spent looking out at the ruined city, thinking about what to do, had not been in vain. He picked up his radio, keyed it, and spoke into it, "Janice, bring me Turchag."

All that time, how could he not have thought of it? It may not have been simple, but it most certainly was obvious.

\* \* \*

The elevator door opened to reveal that it was occupied by a shadow. "Still uncomfortable with the stares, eh, Turchag?"

"I apologize, my lord," a voice, though not that of Turchag's, said. "My father is terribly sick, and did not wish for you to fall ill as well, my lord."

Oronagi glared more deeply, but his voice was his usual one as he said, "Then who do I have the pleasure of being bothered by?"

"Arotu, my lord, son of Turchag," the shadow introduced itself.

"May I see your face?" Oronagi asked, his irritation slowly spreading into his speech. Chameleon demons can be such pains, he thought.

A young human boy materialized, long black hair pulled into a low hairdo that humans called a "ponytail", though it hardly resembled one. His green eyes showed no emotion as they glistened in the light of the tall candle lit after Turchag's last visit. Yet, even with the low light, this boy was extremely pale, so pale he almost seemed green.

Oronagi sighed. "I meant your REAL form. Not one of these human imitations you chameleons seem so fond of."

"My lord, this IS my true form," Arotu explained, looking at his feet. "Did Father not tell you? I am not a true demon."

"One of these 'half-human' things, I suppose?" Oronagi asked, one eyebrow rose. He was not fond of humans, though when they had children with a demon, the results were slightly more favorable. Not much more, but enough for him to trust one if Turchag was his father. Although, he thought he knew the demon parent of another...yes, it was Tuale Wartail, a great warrior until she fell to the human's side. Effectively stalled my plans of the invasion for quite some time, Oronagi reflected. But that daughter of hers...Krystal something-or-another. She took her father's name. She'll be some trouble to deal with. Then he realized what he needed to do. He needed to test this Arotu's loyalty. "Tell me, have you heard of Tuale Wartail? Great war hero in Sector A1, though probably not as admired in A1A1. Cat demon."

"Yes, my lord," Arotu responded quickly.

“You know she had one daughter with a human father?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“What would you do if you met her daughter as an enemy in battle?”

“I would kill her as an enemy, my lord.”

Oronagi frowned. “As of now, you are to refer to me as ‘sir’, not ‘my lord’.”

“Yes, sir,” Arotu adjusted.

“Good. Now that’s cleared up, I am sending you into Sector A1A1 in four days. I will send you information as I receive it. You will be commanding a small group of my troops.”

“How many, sir?”

“Probably ten or twenty.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“You may leave now.”

The elevator doors closed as Arotu’s image disappeared.

\* \* \*

The final bell rang, and Blake started home. However, on his way out of the school, Teu stopped him.

“Blake,” she said, eyes almost tearful.

“I know,” Blake said softly. “My dad told me. You’re moving to the Central Sector.”

“Oh...Will you...?”

“I don’t know. I’m still thinking about it.”

“Oh,” she said, looking at her feet.

“Look,” Blake said, “I wouldn’t give a moments hesitation, but I have a band that would need a drummer. And if I decide not to go, send me a postcard, okay? I promise I’ll write back. And I won’t be too jealous when you talk about your love life,” he added, grinning.

Teu smiled, but her eyes, if anything, became more fearful.

“What?” Blake asked, worried.

“Haven’t you noticed? Nobody’s mail has been picked up, or delivered, and we haven’t gotten a new newspaper in a week. I know that it usually takes it about a week to get here, but you know something’s really wrong when we haven’t gotten any for a week.”

Blake thought for a moment, then realized that it was true. “Can you come to my house?”

“Yes, but shouldn’t your dad know first?”

“He won’t mind. But I want to know, do you like ramen?”

“Yes, why?”

“I have a grudge held against me because that’s all we have.”

At that moment, Violet passed by and scowled at him.

\* \* \*

“So,” Blake started, once he and Teu had settled in his living room, “how are you getting there?”

“This Friday, someone’s supposed to pick me up from school in a wagon, then we go to my house to get my stuff, and then we go there,” Teu informed. “And if I have someone with me, we go to their house and get their stuff first.”

“A wagon?” Blake raised an eyebrow. “That’s pretty pointless. It’ll sink in the sand and it has no defense.”

“It’s specially designed. I don’t know how, but they say that it won’t sink in quicksand if it weighs a ton. I’m still going to be walking alongside as long as I can.”

“What about the whole defense thing?”

“They kept saying that they won’t be attacked. I don’t see why, seeing as the demons have been getting more and more restless and violent, but...” She trailed off, shrugging.

Blake thought about this, then realized how obvious it was. “We can be your defense.”

“‘We’?”

“The band.”

“I don’t think you explained this to me before...”

“You don’t know about the band?” Blake asked, confused.

“No, the whole thing where you guys would make a good defensive team.”

“Oh, that! You see, Haylay’s dad is a smith, and he made swords for her to give to the first people to be her good friends, so she gave us the swords. And they all have elemental powers. Mine has fire, Haylay’s has lightning, Krystal’s sword is ice and water, Katrina’s has wind, and Violet’s...” he tried to think of how to put it. “...is the sword of healing. Basically, any injuries made by it heal fast. It’s probably really useful if you need to get by without killing anything.”

“What do you mean?” Teu asked.

“Well, if you killed something with it, it’d die, but it’d be back on its feet as if nothing happened within a day. Usually less, I think,” he added. He really didn’t know much of Violet’s sword, since she got hers before Blake got his.

~~~~~

I'll try not to be too lazy about writing/posting more.

COMMENT PLEASE!!!! I will be nice to anyone who has anything to say about this (unless it's pure flame)

5 - In Which Plans Come Through

Nothing really to say about this chapter, but, well, enjoy!

The Starr family (c) Werecat13

All other characters (c) Zopponde

Italics=thoughts

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**Chapter 6-**

Pulling through

Blake had called all the band members and briefed them on what was going on, and they all agreed. It was a good opportunity to find out why the newspaper and mail stopped coming.

On that Friday, June 13, the three left class when the bell rang and went out to the front of the building. There, they saw a covered wagon, pulled by small black horse, surrounded by many of the students who had never seen a wagon before. Although, there weren't really any students who had seen one before, so it can only be expected that the students were so intrigued. Blake, Katrina, Krystal, Violet, and Haylay all stood nearby, waiting for Teu to come.

"Hey," Teu said when she came out the front door. "Ready to go?"

"I brought a backpack with all I need, but a bit more ramen will do," Blake said.

"I brought a week's worth of clothes," Violet said. "That should be enough, at least until I can shop for whatever else I need. I'll assume they have enough food for us."

"All I need is what I keep on me, but I brought some extra clothes to be sure," Krystal said, pulling the straps of her backpack.

"I have all that I need," Katrina added.

"I think I brought everything I need," Haylay said, nervously pulling the straps of a stuffed large

backpack. "Is it possible to go home just to be sure?"

"I don't think so," Teu told her. "If you all are allowed to come with us, I can't say I won't be surprised. It'd be about a miracle if they let anyone but me go to my home for supplies."

"Well," Blake said, checking the straps of his backpack and checking his combat boots, "let's get this over with. Teu, they're more likely to let us come if you go first."

Teu nodded and approached the wagon, the band following in her wake.

The wagon was covered in pure white cloth, seemingly fresh out of the wash. Krystal could still smell the detergent. A boy of a similar age to Blake, probably a bit younger, sat in the front seat to drive the two horses that pulled the wagon. He had short brown hair, a straight posture, and a black shirt with jeans dyed black. His green eyes stared at Teu and the band as they approached, but no emotion ever crossed them.

Teu looked at the boy, cleared her throat, and asked, "Is this wagon here to take Teu Zopponde to the Central Sector?"

The boy nodded.

"May I enter the wagon with my friends?" she asked.

The boy paused, then said, "You were only allowed one friend to take with you. Not"-- he counted them --"five."

"I will need a defense to cross the desert, will I not?" Teu asked.

"We will not be attacked by demons," the boy was sure.

"Why?" Teu asked. "Why won't they when they attack just about everything else that moves?"

After a pause, the boy said, "They won't."

"Yes, they will," Teu persisted, "and I can hardly fight. These are some of the best fighters of Dimin Town. I do not feel comfortable crossing the desert without an adequate escort.

"The best fighters of Dimin Town, eh?" the boy asked, interested. "Well, I suppose we can make an exception. Keep in mind; they probably will not be permitted out of Sector A1. And if they are, they cannot turn back. They will not be permitted back to Sector A1. Probably," he added, grinning, though his eyes did not change at all.

"We're coming with her as long as we can," Blake told him assertively. The other band members glanced at each other nervously, so Blake added, "Well, I am, anyway. They might be too chicken to tag along the whole way, but they're coming with to the edge of the sector, at least." A lack of confirmation from behind him made Blake sigh and add, "They're coming to the edge of the sector, or they're feeling the wrath of my flaming sword of death." Everyone agreed except Krystal, so Blake added, "of

doom.” Krystal grinned and said, “Sure, I just wanted to see how far you’d go.”

The boy smiled, and his eyes almost showed traces of that expression. “I suppose that since we’ll be traveling together, you should know my name,” he said. “I’m Peter. You are...?”

The band and Teu introduced themselves.

“Glad to meet you. I’ll be your guide as we cross the desert,” Peter said, bowing from the waist up. “We didn’t expect any more than two, so I guess you’ll have to walk along with us. But Lady Teu gets to ride up here with me,” he grinned.

Teu blushed. She had never been called a lady before. Blake glared at Peter as Teu climbed up into the seat next to him. Krystal noticed this and muttered to him, “A little jealous, are we?”

“Shut up,” he whispered back, “or feel the painful wrath of my flaming sword of death of doom.”

Krystal giggled.

\* \* \*

The journey continued just like that for the rest of the day. Blake kept to the front of the wagon, constantly glancing menacingly toward Peter and Teu. Krystal kept in front of the horses that pulled wagon, Violet and Katrina walked on either side around the middle, and Haylay kept to the back, every so often lagging enough that the wagon had to stop several times to keep her from falling too far behind.

“You sure you don’t want to sit up here?” Peter asked several times. Haylay declined every time but the last one.

“Wow, I should have come up here when he first asked,” Haylay commented.

Blake cast a look that genuinely said, “If you say one single word, I’m going to kill you in the most horrible, painful way that I can think of at the time.”

Haylay squeaked and turned around to mutter, “If looks could kill, I’d be on the ground twitching with the wind.”

\* \* \*

Finally, the sun came down, and Peter said, “Lets set up camp while we can still see well enough.”

He hopped down from his seat and put his hands together for a step for Teu to climb down on. Blake shoved him out of the way and crossed his hands to make a step. Peter shoved him back, and Blake kicked Peter in the shin, who winced a little before elbowing Blake in the ribs. Teu giggled, trying to say, “Fight! Fight! Fight!” Haylay sat there and pouted because nobody was going to help her down, while the boys continued their scuffle. Finally, Krystal sighed and pulled Blake away by the ear and Peter by the arm. Teu climbed down by herself, then helped Haylay. As soon as Haylay was down, Blake came over to pull Teu away before Peter could get any closer. Teu giggled.

“What’s so funny?” Blake snapped.

“You,” Teu replied, still giggling.

“What about me?”

“Just, you.”

“Whatever. Why do you like that Peter guy so much?” Blake demanded.

“I don’t like him!” Teu protested, blushing slightly. She realized it wouldn’t work with him and admitted, “He reminds me of you.”

“How?”

“I don’t know, he just does.”

\* \* \*

Around midnight, Arotu decided that the coast was clear enough to send his update to Oronagi. He found the device that humans called a “cell phone” that Oronagi had given him for communication purposes and called him.

There were a few long, low beeps before a scratching sound and Oronagi saying, “Who dares call me so late at night, when I think my best?”

Arotu grinned and replied, “This is Arotu, giving you the update that you requested for me to make daily, sir.”

“Ah, yes,” Oronagi said. “You’re late.”

“We have some complications, sir,” Arotu explained, “in the form of” he paused to count the escort “five humans. They claim to be the best fighters of Dimin Town.”

“What did you do with them?” Oronagi asked with an unpleasant tone in his voice.

“I allowed them to do as they requested, and follow with Miss Teu Zopponde, sir,” Arotu replied, adding, “because I thought that if I removed them from the town, they cannot help to defend it. And they were growing suspicious of my claims that we would not be attacked, sir.”

Oronagi paused, thinking about Arotu’s logic. Finally, he asked Arotu, “What do they know of you?”

“They think I am a human boy by the name of Peter, sir,” Arotu replied. “I do not know what else they think, but I sincerely doubt they know the truth.”

Oronagi paused, then finally said, “Good thinking. I will consider a reward for you upon your return.”

Good bye.” Another scratching noise followed, then the same low beeping from before.

Arotu pressed the red button that ended the beeping, then closed his eyes and thanked his many gods that Oronagi approved of his actions and prayed that the reaction would be similar in the future.

When he was finished, he realized that one of the humans was not asleep. He crept to the side of her sleeping bag and whispered, “Are you awake?”

The girl turned over to face him to reveal that her eyes were open, and Arotu decided that it was the one named Violet.

“No,” she told him, sarcastically, “I have my eyes open and talk to the people who talk to me in my sleep. Of course I’m awake! No thanks to you and that walking that you must think is quiet.”

“Did I wake you up?” Arotu asked.

“Yes, thank you for interrupting my good dream,” Violet retorted.

“My apologies.”

“Keep your apologies and get my bag, since you don’t seem to think that we can be trusted inside the wagon.”

Arotu obeyed.

“Thank you,” Violet told him. “I suggest you get some sleep. I have a bad feeling about tomorrow.”

Arotu nodded, climbed into the front seat, where he quickly fell asleep.

Violet opened her backpack and pulled out the framed picture of an old willow tree. She held it close and fell asleep with it in her arms.

~~~~~

Comments are welcome. If you comment nicely, I will be faster to post more.

6 - In Which the Cat Village is Visited

Ahhhh...I haven't added to this story...for...so...long....

Why it came to mind, I'll never know. It just did. I'm sitting around, bored, and I'm just like, "Hey, I should post more BoE! Yeah, totally!" and I post more. Yeah, like that. God, I haven't posted on this story since...*May*, for crying out loud! How could I deny my roots?

Shutting up now. After I whine about how long it's been since I didn't have to say that the whole thing doesn't belong to me. Just one...family, I suppose.

The Starr family (&pets, who are introduced here and now) (c) Werecat13

All other characters (c) Zopponde

Italics=thoughts

* * *=breaks

[these]=(these)

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The next day, the group woke up, had eggs for breakfast, and left their campsite in the same formation that they stopped in the day before. Amazingly, there were no stops or creatures on the road until Katrina saw a small calico cat and recognized it.

Blake was standing at the side of the wagon, glaring at Peter as he always did, when he realized that Katrina was walking away from the wagon.

"Hey Katrina," he asked her loudly, "Where are you going?"

Katrina kept going away until she stopped and squatted, then turned around and shouted, "I found my cat!"

"What?" Blake yelled back. "You sound your hat?" He turned to Peter and quietly added to him, "Hey could you stop for a moment?" Peter nodded and stopped the horses.

"No, I—oh, never mind, just come over here!" she replied.

Blake came over, followed by Teu and the rest of the band, and saw that Katrina was petting a small, mostly black cat, with white going over his shoulders, down his front and onto his belly, with four orange

paws.

“This is Namir,” Katrina explained. “He’s my cat.”

A hummingbird came over and began scratching images in the dirt.

“And this is my hummingbird Media,” she explained. “She’s very smart.” She observed the pictures and said, “I’m glad to see you, too, Media.”

Katrina glared at the hummingbird, following its movement with her eyes.

“Krystal,” Katrina started nervously, “could you please not eat my hummingbird?”

Krystal nodded, but didn’t stop her constant watching of Media.

They all walked back to the wagon with Katrina’s pets in the lead. When they reached the wagon, Peter said, “Your pets may come, but they will not be allowed inside the wagon.”

Katrina opened her mouth to protest, then closed it, then said, “Okay, but if Namir gets tired, can he sit up front with Haylay?”

Peter hesitated, then told her, “Yes, he may, but he may not go into the back of the wagon. Besides,” he added smiling, “he doesn’t seem to trust someone up here.”

Sure enough, Namir had his back arched and seemed on the verge of hissing.

Katrina nodded in agreement and made a mental note of this behavior. Namir usually could tell if someone could be trusted or not, though with three people he never met before in the front, he was the only one who could be sure as to which one shouldn’t be trusted.

The convoy continued its trek until Blake said, “When’s lunch?”

“How about now?” Krystal asked. “I’m really hungry.”

“I forgot to mention,” Peter said, “that we have left Dimin Town. We are currently in Sector A1B2, inhabited almost completely by demons. We only have about fifteen minutes until we reach a village belonging mostly to cat demons. I’ve made some friends there, so they should let us stay there for a night or two. They have some really good food.”

“What’s this village’s name?” Krystal asked sharply.

“Highfire Village,” Peter told her, “renamed ten years ago after their war hero, Kusise Highfire, who protected them when a forest fire—”

“I’m not going,” Krystal told him severely.

“Did you make some enemies there?” Peter asked.

Krystal said nothing.

“Look, if we have to go around it, then we have to go around it. No harm done, but that means we’re camping again and we’re probably having ramen—”

“You have one more vote for going there,” Violet interrupted.

“I think I’m for,” Katrina added.

“For!” Haylay enthusiastically told them.

“A real bed sounds great!” Teu exclaimed.

“Okay, more for than against, so we’re going,” Peter told Krystal.

Krystal looked at them, then shrugged, resigned, and told them over her shoulder, “Fine, but you can’t say I didn’t warn you.”

\* \* \*

Fifteen minutes later, as Peter had said, they reached Highfire Village.

Highfire Village was fairly simple, built on an oasis, with a wide variety of demons, though they were mostly cat demons. There were houses made out of various elements, though stone and adobe seemed most common, with several log houses. The demons dressed, for the most part, simply, though there were some in multi-layered velvet clothes, fit specifically for the wearer and trimmed with gold- and silver-colored lace. Blake hoped he didn’t have to wear anything like that here, seeing how hot it was.

“There’s a good hotel on the next street,” Peter told them. “The owners aren’t too greedy, either.”

“What’s that mean?” Haylay asked.

“Basically, it’s not expensive,” Krystal explained. “There isn’t any currency here, it’s all barter. Owners who aren’t greedy won’t ask as much as greedy owners will.”

“So it is,” Peter added, impressed at her knowledge of the town.

A minute or two later, the party came to a large house with the words, “The Cat’s Meow Inn” hanging over the large door.

“I’ll go in, make arrangements, and you come in when I come out and get you,” Peter instructed.

Ten minutes after he went in, Peter came out and told Teu and the band, “I got us a few suites, but there were only three open. I booked all three, but the owner would rather that we give up at least one. What do you think?”



“There’s seven of us,” Violet pointed out. “If we give up two, we have seven people in one room. We can only give up one if we plan to breathe.”

“Well, they’re suites, not rooms,” Peter explained. “They each have five multi-purpose rooms and two bathrooms. We could probably fit into one fairly comfortably.”

A short argument ended with the decision to give up two of the rooms.

Teu, Peter, and the band walked into the inn. As they climbed the steps to their rooms, the owner, Jali Shadowtail, stopped Krystal.

Jali’s ginger hair was pulled back into a tight bun with blue hair sticks to hold it together. One of her eyes resembled a window looking out to a bright blue sky, but the other was a small globe of glass with a white line of scar tissue running from above her eyebrow to the corner of her mouth. She wore a long blue shirt over baggy brown pants.

“You look familiar,” she told Krystal. “What’s your name?”

Krystal said the first name that came out of her mouth. “Kaiya Whiteshadow.”

“Well,” Jali stated, “I guess I don’t know you. Carry on.”

Krystal mentally sighed. *It wouldn’t be good if she recognized me, after what I did to her,* she thought.

Meanwhile, Blake, who was currently near the top of the stairs but could still overhear their conversation, opened his mouth and said, “But—” before Haylay, who was a few steps behind him, interrupted with, “I think we need to discuss something when we get upstairs, *Kayia*.” She emphasized the name to indicate that it was the entire problem.

“But that’s—” Blake tried again.

“Blake,” Violet interjected from several feet behind Haylay, “not now.”

Blake opened his mouth again to be shushed by Violet. He responded with a glare before ascending the remaining stairs.

\* \* \*

“Krystal,” Violet demanded after the band had settled into their suite, “you have some explaining to do.”

Krystal grinned sheepishly. “It’s a long story…”

“Fine then, we’ll just sit here until the clock strikes ten and we can go downstairs and join the party for the end of their school year,” Violet patiently responded.

“Okay,” Krystal sighed.

The clock on the wall ticked away the second.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Blake sighed.

Tick.

Tick.

“What time is it?” Krystal asked.

“About ten minutes past ten,” Violet replied.

“Well, party time!” Krystal exclaimed.

“...in the morning.”

Krystal paused, horrified, then said, “So, when’s lunch?”

“Twenty minutes should be a good time to wait,” Violet placidly told her.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

“What time is it?” Krystal asked, her hysteria creeping into her voice.

“It’s still ten past ten in the morning.”

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tock.

“Ha!” Krystal exclaimed desperately, making everyone jump. “A minute passed!”

“But nothing more,” Violet calmly told her.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

“AAAUUGH!” Krystal screamed, jumping out of her chair. “I CAN’T TAKE IT ANY MORE!”

“Well,” Violet told her, still perfectly calm, “we’d be able to pass quite a bit of time if you’d tell us this supposedly long story of yours.”

“Fine!” Krystal yelled at them. “I’ll tell you my freaking story already!”

“Could you please calm down first?” Peter asked her, emerging from the bathroom. “I don’t think you’re helping anyone with that screaming.”

Krystal glared at him, then took a deep breath and slowly exhaled. She calmly told them, “Fine. I’ll tell you.

“I used to live here,” Krystal started. “The other side of this town, if I remember right. I lived there all alone, because Dad was dragged to Central Capital for a court trial for, like, ‘the assistant of the unauthorized creation of a new species’, or something said in really long words that meant the same thing, and Mom died in our old house defending me from some demons that didn’t think I should exist.

“Well, from that in itself, you probably figured that nobody thought I was meant for this world. It wasn’t much different at school. I was teased for my appearance as well as my form. After all,” Krystal grimaced, “it’s almost hard not to tease a girl who would be considered albino if it wasn’t for a green eye.

“There was a lot that happened, if you want details, but I don’t want to get into them, and all you need

to know is that, well, I went berserk and killed half the town. Jali knew me; she's my mother's cousin. She tried to stop me from killing the whole town. And I slashed her eye out. That's why she has that glass eye. But it woke me up, so I ran away. It just so happened that I ran into Dimin Town, and from there I tried to rebuild my life. And I guess you guys all know what happened from there," she finished.

"Wow," Blake commented, "I guess it sucks to be half demon."

"I wasn't known as that," Krystal told him. "I was called half human."

"Of course she was," Peter said vaguely, startling the group sitting in the main room. "We all are."

Everyone stared at him. "Um... 'we'?" Krystal asked.

Peter seemed to realize what he just said and practically shook with fear.

"Well?" Krystal demanded, glaring suspiciously. "We're waiting."

Now there was no doubt—he was *definitely* shaking. "Well—I—um—erm—you see—hey look! An albino cardinal!" he stammered, pointing out the window.

Krystal glared at him. "Now I *know* something's weird about you."

"Yeah—well—I mean—I can explain this," Peter stuttered. "I-I have a—a sister—yeah, a sister—and she's a half demon—like you," He said to Krystal, still obviously terrified.

Krystal was still frowning suspiciously. "Then what about you? If she's your sister, you have the same parents, and you're a half demon, too."

"Uh—um—well—she's my, um, my half sister," he said nervously. "Her mother is my mother, and she's a human, and then my dad—ran away, and then Mom found this other guy, who was a demon, and then, well..."

Krystal's frown slowly faded as she told him, "All right, but I'm still going to keep my eye on you."

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Arotu sighed inwardly. That was a close call, he thought. If I had let my true identity slip, Lord Ororagi's plan would have failed. We wouldn't even have to worry about it if that damn Jenelle Zipponde person hadn't been so damn rebellious. Then we wouldn't have had to take care of her and her daughter wouldn't need to come here to avoid suspicion and I wouldn't have to lie about Rithe being my half-sister.

I'll have to apologize to my family for lying about them later. But for now, I should just watch my step. No sympathizing with Krystal, no matter how similar we may be. I cannot allow this plan to go awry. Father is depending on me to do as Lord Ororagi says, and I cannot be distracted by another half-demon...even if I fall in love.

Krystal yawned and announced, "I call the room on the far left," before picking up her bag and walking into it.

"Mind if I join you there?" Violet asked her, picking up her bag and following Krystal.

"Sure," Krystal could be heard.

"Is that a 'sure I mind', or 'sure, you can come in'?"

"I don't care, but if you want to be in this room, then come in."

Haylay picked up her bag and walked into the middle room without asking anyone or announcing it, but if anybody had any problems with it, they could deal with it.

"Is anyone using that room?" Teu asked, indicating the room to the right of Haylay's.

"Only if you do," Katrina told her.

"I'll join her in there," Blake decided.

"Oh no you don't," Krystal told him from her doorway. "You're going to sleep in the boys dormitory with Peter."

"Wha—"

"She's right," Katrina added, "you're stuck with Peter on the far right."

"But—"

"Blake, we can't leave you to sleep in the same room as an innocent girl," Krystal told him with a look on her face that had a sympathetic brow, amused eyes, and a smiling lips. "It's simply unacceptable."

"But—"

"Deal with it," Krystal suggested forcefully as Katrina left for the room to the left of Haylay's with her bag in hand.

Blake glared at Krystal's back as she returned to her room and closed the door.

"Blake," Peter suggested, "you should get some sleep if you want to go to that party. It'll be going into tomorrow morning, and there may be some plans to extend it to noon."

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Comments? I've gotten absolutely none on this story, ever. Pleeaaaaaase?