

“You summon me?”

The devil looked alarmingly normal. In spite of his red scaly skin and the horns protruding from his head, he wore a blue polo-shirt that wasn't even fully buttoned. He held a cup of coffee in one hand while messaging his forehead with another.

She swallowed. “Um. Yes.”

The devil sighed. “You couldn't have bothered to wait a couple of hours?” he asked. “It's not easy being king of Hell, you know. So many people want to make deals with you. There are souls to torment. Lives to ruin... you couldn't have let me have a minute alone with my coffee?” “I wasn't aware that you... needed... coffee,” Alyssa said belatedly. She felt suddenly very awkward sitting in her pentagram surrounded by lit candles. She stood up and shoved her hands into her jean pockets. “Um. I can call you later?”

“No, no, it's too late now.” The devil sighed. “What do you need?”

“It's kind of embarrassing now...”

“Whatever you're about to say,” the devil said. He took a large swig of his coffee. “I've heard worse.”

Alyssa took a deep breath and nodded. “Well,” she said, swallowing. “I know that you're always granting people power and what not, but what I want I think is really simple, so hopefully you don't laugh.”

“Spit it out already.”

“I want a PlayStation five!” Alyssa blurted out. “And free access to all the PlayStation games. Oh! And can you make it so that I can make any game come out when I want it to. I get so sick and tired of waiting ten years for a sequel to an epic saga only for the game to be mediocre...”

The devil gave her a deadpan stare. Alyssa trailed off and felt her face grow hot.

"You summoned the powers of hell..." the devil said slowly, arching an eyebrow. "So that you could play more video games?"

Alyssa nodded, twisting her hands together anxiously. "Too much?"

"Too much?" the devil scoffs, staring into his coffee mug. "She asks if it's too much. I've razed kingdoms, I've given infinite power to souls foolish enough to summon me, and she asks if it's too much to give her a PlayStation Five."

Alyssa grinned nervously. "Is that a yes, then?"

"Back in my day," the devil said. "People asked for normal things. They wanted the dead to come back to life. They wanted me to kill their enemies. They wanted to be immortal. You kids these days want the stupidest things. Do you know what I was asked for the other day?" Alyssa shook her head.

"I was asked for WORLD PEACE!" The devil flung his coffee behind him. The mug soared in an arch and crashed against the basement floor. Shards of glass and remnant coffee spilled everywhere. "Do you know who I am? I don't give a damn about world peace! I'm the devil!"

"You're very evil," Alyssa said, hoping to comfort him.

"And now you're asking me for a PlayStation Five. You're not even asking for a smart home. Those I can do beautifully. No. A PlayStation Five."

"Do you normally talk this much?" Alyssa asked.

"Well, I suppose it can be arranged." The devil banished his coffee from the floor and summoned a notepad instead. He held a pen and glanced at Alyssa with an exhausted expression. "Name?"

"Alyssa Jones," Alyssa said.

"Alyssa... Jones," the devil muttered as he wrote. "Okay, um... date... what day is it?"

can never tell.”

“October thirteenth,” Alyssa said. “2023.”

“Oh, that’s a Friday,” the devil says. “Very nice. Um, request… PlayStation Five—”

“And free games, and the ability to make games release whenever I want,” Alyssa said.

“Thus, forcing employees to crunch at supernatural speeds.” The devil nodded. “I like it. Puts more money in the pockets of greedy CEOs too.” He gave Alyssa a hopeful smile.

“How about I put a smart assistant in your PlayStation? Like an AI type thing?”

“I’m good.”

“Are you sure?” the devil asked. “I promise it won’t try to take over your Wi-Fi and kill you.”

“I’m pretty sure.”

“Ugh, boring.” The devil glanced further down the sheet. “Okay, um, the price is your immortal soul. You sure you’re good with that?”

“Yep!” Alyssa said.

“People are always far too cheerful about the eternal torment thing,” the devil muttered with a sigh. He turned the notepad toward her. “Sign here.”

Alyssa took the pen and signed her name. The devil flipped to another page. “And here so that we can keep you in our database.” Alyssa signed again. Another page flip. “Just one more time for terms and conditions. Oh, and privacy policy”

After signing her name a fourth time on a page with such miniscule text that Alyssa wasn’t going to begin to try to read it, the devil took the pen and snapped his fingers. A

PlayStation Five appeared out of nowhere. Alyssa beamed.

"Thank you!" she said.

The devil turned around and waved his hand flippantly. "See you in twenty years."

Twenty years later, Alyssa sat in the devil's office nervously. She hadn't really expected to die because she forgot to eat while playing video games. But it had been a *really* good game.

"Ah, Alyssa... you're that PlayStation girl." The devil flipped through his records and pushed his glasses closer to his face. "You know, you really made me think that day."

"About what?"

"About this job," the devil said. "I have a confession. I'm not the first devil."

"What?"

"It's true. The one before me retired back in the thirteen hundreds after his work with the bubonic plague." The devil leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands together. "You see, the thing about this job is that it's a lot of work. You mostly fulfill menial requests, you have to decide who deserves the worst punishment and who deserves to spend eternity trying to take apart really small Legos with their fingernails. It's pretty tough stuff." Alyssa nodded sympathetically.

"And I've been getting requests from our demon staff," the devil said. "Something about women not having enough authority. Which is absurd, because fifteen percent of our employees identify as women."

Alyssa frowned.

"But, anyway, I'm tired," the devil said. "And since you've been spending the past twenty years doing nothing but playing video games, I figure it's your turn to actually do some *work* for once in your life."

"You're giving me a job?" Alyssa asked.

“No,” the devil said. He took off his glasses and gave Alyssa a piercing stare. “I’m making you the devil.”

“Uh, can you do that?” Alyssa asked.

“Remember that time I made you sign the terms and conditions?” the devil asked. “there’s a clause that says I can make you a demon or even the devil if I so choose.”

“Oh.”

“Guess you should’ve read those.” The devil shook his head and sighed. “Nobody ever does.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Retirement,” the ex-devil stood up. “I hereby make you the devil, ruler of all hell, granter of all demands, yada yada yada, I’m going to play that new Resident Evil game. Bye.” The ex-devil disappeared in a puff of smoke. The devil sat on the wrong side of her desk in total confusion. She barely had time to process what had happened before she appeared in someone else’s shady basement.

“Oh, I’ve been summoned,” she said in alarm.

A person with bright pink hair smiled victoriously. “Hi!” they said. “Can I have the ability to summon stories into existence by daydreaming about them?”

Oh dear.