

Momo is starstruck by how familiar the garage looks, “Wow! This is just like in the TV show!”

Barbara concurs, “I know, right? I thought I was seeing things when I appeared out of nowhere.”

Mitsuru is busy hammering away at her computer’s keyboard again; “Could we please talk about establishing a response system? We have no experience with this sort of thing.”

Barbara chuckles and shifts back onto the main topic, “Sorry. It’s hard not to get swept up in all of this...”

“I know!” Momo gushed.

“If you want something like an effective surveillance and response system, without being in touch with the authorities, you might need to break a few laws.”

You snort, “Do you really think Mitsuru cares about that?”

“I thought not. We can leverage the pre-existing cameras to start off with. But the most important part is AI analysis.”

“AI?”

“That’s right. Whenever something is happening, people post about it online, or they call the police – we have wiretaps into those systems, and we can see when significant activity hotspots develop. The AI system automatically checks whether they’re an outlier and alerts us if something significant is occurring. We have a few other methods, but they involve more complex solutions that you can’t achieve at the moment.”

Mitsuru nods; “I know it’s a lot to ask of you, but could I possibly see a copy of the AI’s code?”

Barbara grimaces, “As long as you keep it a secret.”

“Don’t worry. Venelana has taught me a lot about the value of discretion!” For better or worse. A Mitsuru who knows how to evade regulation is your worst nightmare. She was already bad before she knew how to hide what she was doing.

“As for disaster response, you’re going to be better off leaving that to the professionals, or at least summoning someone who has the correct training. We don’t tend to interfere with the emergency services when they’re trying to recover people unless there’s an immediate threat to their safety. You can easily do more harm than good.”

“Alright, I’ll stay out of the way.” Barbara smiles at your compliance, now confident that you’ll listen to what she has to say. You have a lot to learn from veterans like her – so hopefully you can call her through to have training sessions like you do with Chun-Li. Barbara has been fighting crime for much longer than you have. On the way to the garage she revealed that she has been Batgirl for nearly eight years now, long beyond the point of becoming a Batwoman. That doesn’t roll off the tongue very well though.

Her orange hair, green eyes and professional looking glasses are a very pleasant sight. Barbara is stunning in a way that differs from the other girls you’ve summoned so far. The fact that she’s equally infatuated with you still feels like a bad joke, but the matching look of appreciation she gives you is enough evidence to ram it home. If only Nana was this easy to convince.

“I can get the AI analysis tool we use to you fairly fast if you send me back now. It should take me a day or so to compile it to a suitable size.”

“Thank you very much,” Mitsuru says, “We didn’t have much time to prepare our defences before they launched their incursion. I was so focused on building an appropriate weapon that building a surveillance network fell onto the backburner. We’ll have to rectify that mistake quickly.”

“You’ll need some heavy-duty hardware to handle that much data...”

“That’s already taken care of, Barbara. I’ve been building a data storage facility under this garage for some time now. It should be more than enough to handle the volume we’ll run through.”

“Under here?” Barbara replies in disbelief, “Isn’t it a little small to be building an entire data centre inside?”

“Nope!” Lala chirps, “Thanks to my space expanding gadgets, Mitsuru-chan can build whatever she wants without worrying about the space it needs! She’s been expanding this place in secret the whole time. Try not to get lost down there!”

You really want to know how labyrinthian things have gotten on the lower floors, but that conversation will have to wait. All of the rooms you’ve visited so far have been fairly straightforward, being self-contained spaces for specific purposes. There’s so much untapped potential involved in the concept; can you place a large compressed space room inside of another compressed space? Or connect them with corridors and just keep expanding it forever? At some point things are going to get out of hand, they always do when Mitsuru is involved. You’ll go down there in a few months and find an entire city and tram system just to get around the damn place.

At least she’s meticulous enough to keep a map, in that case.

“Jeeze. Maybe I could take a few of those and expand my workspace too,” Barbara laughs.

Mitsuru is optimistic about not needing it; “With the new processors we stole from them, we can reduce the floorspace demanded by our computer systems. If that’s your concern, we can share that information with you when we figure out how to reproduce them for ourselves.”

“Please.”

“Why don’t we just find the guy responsible and show him who’s boss!” Nana complains. All of this talking is starting to get on her nerves. Her tail lashes out angrily behind her as she closes in and gets up in your personal space. You hold your hands up and try to cool her head a little.

“We can’t. They’re teleporting to a space where we can’t find them. Mitsuru’s already checked Earth’s orbit for anything unusual.”

“That’s right,” Mitsuru explains, “I have reason to believe that they’ve slipped between the planes of our reality. They’re perfectly capable of navigating through those extra-dimensional spaces without the use of a teleportation relay. They may even have some kind of ship that they can use to support their efforts.”

Lala steps in and pulls Nana away, “I’ve been helping Mitsuru-chan for a while now and we haven’t made much progress on finding them.”

“Grr. Doesn’t that just mean you’re letting these guys cause a buttload of damage? You should be more proactive and take the fight to them!”

“We would if we could!”

“Just hurry up and send me back already.”

Nana turns away and huffs haughtily as you share a nervous glance with Lala. You grab the Sledgehammer from the table and insert her card, “Well... I’ll see you later, Nana.” She continues to give you the cold shoulder even as she disappears back into her home universe. You let loose a breath you didn’t know you were holding and lean back against the workbench.

“I’m really sorry about her, hubby.”

“It’s not your fault, Lala. I didn’t expect her to be on board with all of this anyway.”

Momo frowns, “She must have been expecting something more from you. She always gets like this when someone doesn’t meet her expectations.”

“And what does she expect from me?”

“She’s impatient. If she doesn’t see instant gratification from something it frustrates her. When she heard about you summoning Lala she was really excited to meet you – but when she learned that you don’t have all of the abilities that you do in the show, that dampened her anticipation. She always admired you for being the strongest in everything you did. She was hoping that you could showcase that strength to her.”

Lala is visibly upset; “Why can’t she appreciate hubby as he is now? It takes a whole bunch of volumes before he gets to that level!”

“That’s the part of the story that she doesn’t like,” Momo replies, “Nana only re-reads the later volumes after the Demonology Arc.”

The what arc?

“But seeing hubby progress his powers is why the story is so good!” Lala protests. You get the feeling that this kind of argument happens a lot between the trio. Without Nana here to present her case, both Lala and Momo are beating down on her.

Momo walks up to you and smiles, “We’re getting off topic. The point is, Nana is probably upset that you aren’t kicking down the door to their interdimensional base and blasting hundreds of them using magic. If you want to win her over and add her to the harem, you’ll need to demonstrate some aggression.”

“And what about you?”

Momo pulls off a teasing pose, holding a finger against her bottom lip; “I never said I needed anything to love you. Let’s just say that I’m already the newest member of your harem.”

Sisters secured.

Barbara is quick to butt in, “Hey, wait a second – can’t I get in on the action too?”

“Just like that?” you ask.

Barbara nods eagerly, “I’m not going to be caught napping while you’re scooping up pretty girls by the dozen. How about we go out on a date sometime? I’d like to get to know you in a more relaxed setting.”

You don’t see a problem with that, “Sure.”

Mitsuru clears her throat and pulls all of the room's eyes onto her, "Before you all start getting touchy-feely, I'd like to solve our detection problem first. Barbara, I'll summon you as soon as you have what we need. You can contact me using this phone."

Barbara accepts the cross-dimensional communication device and slips it into her pocket; "What's one more to add to my collection?" she jokes. Her secret lair is a messy pile of discarded devices used for various purposes. "Are you planning on summoning some other girls from my universe to come here? You have a lot of big fans."

"Uh, I'm trying to pace myself a little right now. But what kind of fans are you talking about?"

"I'm sure you already know their real identities, but I've heard things from Wonder Woman, Supergirl, Starfire, Huntress, Power Girl – hell, I even caught Raven reading one of the volumes when I dropped by to visit."

It's so, so hard not to jump at the chance to summon all of them right now. All of them are girls you'd love to have hanging from your arms. But you meant it when you said you're trying to preserve some of your cards. If they adopt a strategy that you can't counter effectively, you'll need them to formulate a strategy in response. Barbara has caught on already just because of the pained face you are now showing as you consider your options.

"Heh. Always thinking about who else to grab."

"I have to resist, I really mean it this time." You really have to remember those names for the future though. They could all bring some serious firepower to your team, especially the kryptonians. The only problem you can foresee is the enemy obtaining kryptonite from somewhere by travelling through the universes.

"Alright, I'll believe you for now – big guy. I'll head back and get that AI for you. Is everything out there?"

"I think we're good, Mitsuru?"

"I have nothing else to share. Thank you again for your assistance, Barbara."

"No problem. I'm always willing to lend a hand when innocent people are in danger."

You place her card into the Sledgehammer and send her off with a wave, leaving you with just Momo and Lala in your presence. You really don't know how to get through to Nana. She must have some level of interest in being with you. The entire reason Mitsuru picked their universe to pull from was because they're obsessed with you. She's the typical tsundere character, she's hiding her real feelings by qualifying them needlessly.

Momo's face turns dark as a wicked smirk spreads across her plump lips, "Hehehe. If Nana doesn't want to join the harem, that means we need to make her realise just how good the harem life can be!"

Big words from a girl who hadn't even met you until a few hours ago.

Lala jumps into the air, "That's right. We need a super amazing plan to convince Nana that this is a good thing!"

"Please don't do anything drastic," you beg. Lala always comes up with plans that would make Mitsuru blush with their reckless ambition.

“Don’t you worry one bit, hubby! By the time we’re finished – Nana will have no choice but to become the third Deviluke in your harem!” Momo nods along with the bold declaration, whisking her sister away into the office so that they can start discussing their devious plan out of earshot.

Mitsuru looks up from her work, “Is it okay to leave those two alone?”

You sigh, “I’m sure it’ll work out... somehow.”