

# The Comet Warlock

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Commission for Kota-Kun

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**Rated General**

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Kieros narrowed her eyes at the window. It was the same kind of narrowing done in the presence of dubious, fantastical, or otherwise impossible things.

“Is that so?” she asked the HELP WANTED sign skeptically.

The sign made no attempt to deny its authenticity. One way or another, it was genuine. Employment sought. Live bodies required. Time dilated. Compensation doled in fiat currency. The signs were all there, and yet...

Kieros' antennae twitched. It was telling how this largely human-looking, mostly mousy, mask-wearing alien in neon clothes was somehow less absurd than what she was looking at.

This whole situation was preposterous. Not the whole 'paying a livable wage for one's labor' phenomenon. That should have been a universal law among species, but unfortunately, it wasn't. What she was staring at – no, what she was staring into – was a candy shop. Not just a converted general store or a drug store or a brand outlet dumping its commercial waste product onto an unsuspecting market. This was a purpose-built, privately owned sugar emporium.



The Notal meteorologist leaned into the window until her mask hit the glass, muttering under her breath. “This shouldn't exist,” she said lowly. “This is an anomaly...”

From what she understood of early space age civilizations, that should have been right. In the transition from agrarian to industrial society, sentient species experience a sudden expansion of market opportunities. Put simply, before big corporations take over, small stores proliferate. And in that narrow gap of time between a burgeoning industry and a mass market economy, there's

room for all sorts of novelties that only exist for a generation and then disappear in all but the most tacit of references and yearnings for a simpler age.

What was this feeling? This tugging sensation in her heart... nostalgia? Kieros tittered at the prospect.

The store was called 'Lemres' Community Candy Shoppe.' The alteration was about as sweet as the stock. The name though – she couldn't tell who it belonged to. From what she could see, everything was hand-made. Human brands occupied one shelf, out of dozens. The rest? Chalked with goodies. Jawbreakers filled glass cisterns, individually wrapped. Chocolate bars lined the aisles like vinyl records, with hundreds of labels for hundreds of tastes. Truffle bon-bons hung from candeliers in suspended bowls. Peanut butter brittle stuck out of mason jars, next to licorice sticks, toffee bites and marshmallow figurines. Rollers behind a laquered counter stretched and rolled lines of hot taffy, before passing through a flash freezer and depositing goodies in front of the register. For free!

Even the lowly lollipop had a showcase stand inside the counter. They were arranged in a rainbow. Some were spotted, some were psychedelic, but all were hand-made.

“How did humans get a hold of such handicrafts?” Kieros asked herself, confounded. “... clearly, we have to investigate.”

This was Kieros' way of satisfying a couple gnawing urges. Making an expedition of it served a function – to get inside, and experience the atmosphere herself.

She pushed through the door. A bell tinkled over her head. Kieros stepped cautiously around, playing with the mechanism that caused the bell to ring in the first place and finding it amusing.

“Hello?” Kieros asked. And then louder: “Helloooo? Is there an owner present? A... manager? Anyone?”

A toy train whistled overhead. It passed along a track tied to the ceiling, chugging along with a cargo of what looked like freshly wrapped fruit chews in a line of hoppers. A wisp of smoke puffed out of its funnel as it came to a stop at a display stand that had been empty. The hoppers turned. With remarkable precision, each train loud dumped several feet to land in its designated place. Not one fell out of place.

It was magical to watch, and a little disconcerting. A little too neat.

Especially when it seemed like nobody was watching the store. Not a soul. Not even a mouse.

Kieros tread lightly. She took a spare sheet from under the wanted sign, holding it close to chest. The candy shop was almost intimidating in how bright it was, decorations to displays. It was almost brighter than her clothes – which was a feat. How could you beat a baby blue sweater and green jeans for sheer vibrancy? By apparently painting the walls in galactic swirls and placing carved jack'o lanterns on every other corner.

That's right – the human holiday Samhain was close. Or, were they calling it Halloween now? Hard to say.

The wonder in this place seemed to come from all sides. From kiosk to staging rack, from storefront to storerear, it generated a certain intentness to its glee.

Kieros wandered around in circles, getting lost in the whimsy – at least until she realized she wasn't totally alone.

After her third turn around the candy cane merry-go-round in the center of the shop, she saw a pen by the register. It hadn't been there before. The pen pointed at her. Nearby, there was a clink – a black cat hopping down to the ground.

Kieros blinked at it. The cat blinked back, slowly.

She smiled under the mask. “Are you the owner?” she asked, feeling immensely silly.

“Mrraaaow,” the black cat replied. His eyes had that saucer look to them, wide-eyed and brilliant yellow. She couldn't be sure, but they were inviting her to probe deeper.

“... did you leave that pen on the counter? For me?”

The cat flicked his tail, staring up at the alien. “Maow.”

“With logic like that, how could I say no? Silly thing.”

She knelt and scratched his head before heading to the counter. One black cat crossing another. Unluckily for her, she didn't notice the cat's shed hairs clinging to her fingers in a most peculiar way.

When she stacked up to the register, Kieros set herself to task. The surface prompted her to actually read what was on the sheet in her hand, instead of assuming it was a flier, or some kind of insistent promotional material. She scooped up the pen – a ball-point with a rainbow swirl bulb, very tasteful – and read the top line.

“Welcome to Lemres’,” she read. The French was rough on her tongue. “Lem-er-es... your magical source of happiness, a clinic for your hopes and dreams.”

Kieros rolled her eyes. What a claim. It didn't fail to put a smile on her face, but she was content to snark about a nakedly sweet lead-in like that.

“You'll notice we don't have that many staff at the moment. This is because we're new.” Well duh. “In order to extend our reach and delight people everywhere with a wide array of sweets, Lem-res-” that attempt was better, she was getting the hang of his name. His? Whatever. “-has put together a test to see which applicants are best suited for a role of magical aptitude.”

Kieros scratched the back of her head with a pen. Magical aptitude? That was pushing the

fantasy a bit far, wasn't it? She considered that as one silver hair sprouted out of a mostly black tangle.

Reading further, she started to get it. "Oh! Oh, I get it-" Sproing. "-it's on the other side. One of those career quiz things humans are getting into-" Pop! "Surprisingly modern for a rustic place, eh kitty?"

The black cat used a popsicle freezer to jump back into petting space. Kieros grinned, unaware that her roots were turning silver, and the tips of otherwise pixie-short hair were crowding around her mask. "Hehehe... I'll get to that in a bit. Human fetters come first."

She clicked the pen. Details hit onto the page.

Albeit... slowly.

Haltingly. One detail at a- Hm. A time.

She was sure that filling in text boxes was going to be the easiest part of this application, that she wasn't clearly doing for a job, obviously, but now that she was in the thick of it, trying to remember specific things about herself, the whole exercise-

Well, it seemed. Uncertain.

Let's start with something simple. The name box. Easy. Kieros' name is...

What was Kieros' name? It was right on the tip of her tongue!

She ignored that for now, come back to it when she was feeling more confident. The next few boxes were easier. Date, September 6<sup>th</sup>. Address, why not right here? She stepped out briefly to get the postal number.

As she stepped back in, the tongue and heel of her shoes sticking to her jeans, she kept thinking on what to put for a name. She hit a wall again and frowned. What was it? What was this block?

Prior occupation was next. It was safe to assume nobody would read this, so she thought of something fanciful to put down. Something utterly unbelievable.

She stuck out her tongue as she wrote 'Comet Warlock' in the box.

"There," Kieros beamed smugly. As she finished marking the K, a line was crossed. Pretending became reality, and reality became pretend. Scientific acumen misaligned. Expertise in weather patterns slid seamlessly into a familiar understanding of high level magic.

Not like she noticed.

She toyed with a wisp of sugar magic as she thought about where to go next. The page still had a lot of holes, and as long as she continued to draw a blank on the name box (why, that's so easy???)

, there was always something else to describe.

One box grabbed her attention. Build.

Kieros looked down at herself. Normally, the ideal description for her physique was “cute.” Frail might also apply, and so did small-breasted, slim-limbed and overall on the smaller side of average, but that didn't sit well with her self-image.

Especially as she took a fine look at her *pants*.

Her lip twitched under the mask, pursing. She stepped out, running a hand down the thigh, and another hand around her waist. Peering from different angles, gauging the difference in musculature. Something seemed off.

Was it the pants themselves? Kieros examined that. The last she looked, she had pedestrian jeans and sneakers on – but those had disappeared, and that would have struck Kieros as alarming if she remembered any of that. In their place, clinging tight to long legs, was a sort of pants/boots hybrid. She knew the type – it was more of a jumper than normal clothes. Heavy duty and fashionable, and soled underneath with orange rubber.

She moved around with them. Pivoted on a heel. It was hard to think anything was weird when it ran so tight against her..

Wait.

Wasn't she supposed to have wider hips? On second thought, maybe not. Kieros would've remembered distinctly if she had anything fuller and thicker than these boxy, slender flares and tight thighs.

On that note – her ass? Was it... no no no, of course not. She cupped one side of her now boyish, once girlish ass, and grunted with satisfaction.

A word was coming to mind. Kieros balled it around in her mouth, fiddling with a belt that had just decided to grow a pumpkin buckler.

“Tuh... twink?”

It clicked. The word fit inside her like a glove – or more accurately, like a one-piece pants jumper. She was a twink girl!

She blushed. Gosh, saying that in her head was so embarrassing. It was right, but... what kind of girl called herself a twink. That was an adjective accurately assigned to

**-FWOOM-**

Kieros hesitated. Tentatively, she adjusted her clothes – spontaneously appearing cape included. Underneath it, the bright blues of her sweater desaturated into darker and darker blacks. A gap

opened up, as the sweater opened up, and a striped undershirt the color of autumn and black cats fluttered out.

Her bust was nowhere to be seen. Neither were her hands.

No telling what happened to her breasts – or why she was worried to have had them at one point. A phantom worry, really, in a string of phantom worries. Once upon a time, Kieros at least had a pittance of boobers, but now, they'd been deflated. Softened and squeezed down into an admittedly adorable flat chest.

She pulled on the hood's drawstrings. A scintillating slide of inner lining across her collar, around her ribs and up her trapezous muscles put lingering fears away. She rather liked this.

Looking at it too, the gloves on her hands didn't seem out of place either. Or the two-toned cape. Or the popped collar, even. It fit her aesthetic.

Which was a lot more than she could say walking into Lemres' little establishment. For some reason, her style felt more consistent with the feeling of the world, rather than being a neon outlier – even though, by all rights, she should have been strutting around in warlock robes all day, Halloween decorations and all...

The fragile spell gently leading Kieros to her new fate was almost complete. She just needed to fill in two more boxes.

She eyed the cat lazily with the first one. "What do you think?"

The box was gender, and the cat was awfully laconic about that one. "Maow!"

"I think so too. I'm a twink already, so-"

Kieros wrote 'M' in the slot. He thought about scribbling over it, but as he shifted on his feet, his inclinations bent a little as he came to terms with self-perception.

He did always look like a guy, didn't he? Some might say 'femboy,' given his proportions, but Kieros(?) didn't have the sexuality to push it *that* far. It was easier to say he was fit, or boyish-looking, or simply underdeveloped, and he didn't mind the suggestion. Not at all. He felt comfortable being so trim and graceful in a warlock's cowl. Plus, it presented a non-threatening posture almost all the time, which was the goal of...

Working... in a candy shop...

He held his head. The dizziness came and went. Incongruent elements snapped back into place. He went back to what he was doing without thinking about why.

Kieros leaned into the generous suggestion that he was, in fact, delightfully male. "Let's go with that. I work here. And the final thing, *le nom de travailleur*..."

He lost it for a second – but then, in a flash, it struck the boy. “Aha! That was a silly thing to get hung up on.”

Lemres.

His name was Lemres.

As the last S hit the page, the warlock's cognition fundamentally shifted. The mask dropped, revealing a distinct, androgynous face underneath. Kieros disappeared into the application, sealed behind obfuscating letters, and the real owner of the candy shop, the one who set its magic in motion, came together in a moment of clarity.

“Oh dear,” said Lemres, pausing to take in his surroundings. Understanding opened his mind.

He glanced at his apprentice, the wide-eyed Monte, feeling a bit of guilt.

“... I suppose this stays between us, doesn't it?”

The cat blinked in quiet agreement. Lemres rolled up the completed application sheet, which had just finished inscribing Kieros' name and life onto its magical pages, and stored it away in his coat. One day he'll summon her back.

Maybe after Halloween, when the festivities were up, and the town's residents had had enough sweets to last them the rest of the year?

For now, though? Now Lemres had important things to get back to – like baking donuts, glazing bundt cakes, putting the icing to his waiting marble cake, or whipping the caramel, spicing pumpkins, dashing sprinkles...



There was really too much to do.

“You'll have to forgive me, *ma petite*,” he told the sheet containing Kieros, “but I can't stop now. I must press on. But don't worry. You will be safe with me. Once we deliver candy to all the world, I can find the time to make you whole again.”

Lemres pirouetted his way across his shop. The train above whistled. The brooms enchanted the clean up followed in his wake. Before he could even think about going back to work, one thing had to be set right.

He took down the ad in the window. After all, Lemres had all the help he could need at his fingertips.