

Unlike the last time, the hole Kay was pulled down was deep. Panicking as he dropped, Kay started wrapping himself in layers upon layers of blood, trying to make a shell that would survive the impact. It couldn't have been more than a few seconds, but it felt like hours as the air rushed by him and Kay slowly blanketed himself in red blood.

He didn't remember the impact.

He woke to the sound of shifting stone and rocks breaking. He automatically tried to sit up and let out a small scream of pain. It was only small because he didn't have much air in his lungs, and he collapsed back against the rough surface behind him as his entire body throbbed with pain and white-hot blades of agony flashed through his legs as he tried to move. When he stopped and laid still, the white-hot pain faded, left by an even deeper ache that throbbed and pulsed.

Multiple broken bones in my legs, probably more than that. Kay closed his eyes and grimaced. *I'm still alive, though, for what that's worth at the moment.* He took an extended moment to try and deal with the pain as best he could. *Actually, I'm probably not that bad off. It might take a while, but I can probably heal out of this, eventually.*

The sound of shifting stones and pieces of the broken floor drew his attention, and he stared in shock and fear at the sight above him.

The Eldritch Being was still there, even with its altar destroyed. It dug through the shattered pieces of rock with its still mostly-there tentacles, obviously searching for something as its giant eye flickered back and forth through the areas it uncovered. As he watched, the Being grew thinner and thinner, and the solid parts of it began to fade.

Okay, I just have to wait it out, then. It probably can't sustain itself anymore, and it just needs to fade away back to its own reality.

The search suddenly stopped, and multiple tentacles shot forward and grabbed something. The mangled, crushed body of the giant Rittian, his head still split in half from front to back, dangled loosely in the Eldritch Being's grasp. It drove its tentacles into the giant's body, and the body began to shudder.

Shit.

As the giant's body shook, it began to change; the limbs twisted and grew, cuts and breaks sealed themselves shut as pieces bulged and shifted, changing into new shapes and sizes. The giant's tail withdrew into the body, and strange growths started forming across his back that soon grew into a series of mouth-covered tentacles, just like the Being's. The head wound Kay had made to kill him warped and became a toothy mouth that gnashed at the air around it, and the original extra mouth on the giant's torso opened wide to reveal an eyeball growing inside, until it filled the entire mouth, teeth digging into it.

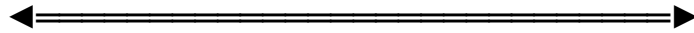
The Eldritch Being began to disappear, drawn into the giant's now moving body, which was growing even larger. As the Eldritch Being completely vanished inside the changed monstrosity, it dropped to the ground, shattering pieces of stone as the only thing holding it aloft faded away.

Kay waited in stunned and disgusted silence for whatever came next.

What came next was an abhorrent, nauseating roar from the creature that literally battered against Kay's injured body. His thoughts were filled with images of eating and consuming terrible things, nonsensical things. The pain and madness drove him back into unconsciousness.

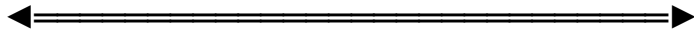
When he woke up again, it had only been a few moments. He could tell because the

creature was climbing up the wall of the pit they'd fallen into together, its strange tentacles dragging its twisted body upwards as its malformed arms hung loosely at its side.



Quest Update!

The Eldritch Being, robbed of its ritual and the altar it had corrupted to its purpose, has fused what was left of its being in this reality into the body of its greatest servant, forming a monstrosity like no other. While the threat of its corruption of reality has been stopped, the created monster must be destroyed to protect your people from its appetite! Destroy the being to complete the Quest!



"Fucking dammit. How the fuck am I supposed to do that from here? Huh, System? I mean, I know this series of events isn't your fault, but still, the fuck am I supposed to do!?"

The distorted rat giant-thing, now closer to thirty feet tall as it dragged itself upwards, ignored his screaming. Apparently, he wasn't worth eating. Or maybe it didn't have ears; who knew?

Staring up at it in disgust, rage, and not a little resignation, Kay started to drag what he could of his own blood under his magical control, hoping to make at least one attack on the thing before it got out of range. That's when the other disservice this entire series of events had caused reared its ugly head. As Kay reached with his magical sense towards his own blood, something writhed in the wound left in his side from the giant's claws. Something nasty and corrupted twitched and then started to attack from within Kay's body. Kay wretched as the same corruption from the Rittian's blood started to spread in his own blood, fighting against his magic and his very life.

All thoughts of attacking the monster fled his mind as he started pumping everything he could into the active part of Purify Blood, hoping to drive out whatever the fuck this was. Actually, he knew what it was; it was otherworldly corruption from an Eldritch Being that called a reality so different from his own home that it was poisoning him just having a piece of it inside him.

Will Purify Blood work against something like that? He asked himself as he focused.

The answer, as it turned out, was no, it didn't. The corruption drove on through his body, completely unaffected by the mana that was attempting to root it out. It spread, and spread, and spread, and Kay started to be affected by it. Images roiled in his brain, similar to the ones he'd experienced while battling the Being. Eating things, terrible things. Endless hunger, the need to consume all. *All.* **ALL MUST BE EATEN, FOR THE HUNGER NEVER ENDS.**

Kay devolved into a wreck, half of him pumping everything he could from his draining supply of mana into a desperate battle against the corruption, while the other half struggled painfully against the crazed images bombarding his very sense of self.

He hadn't noticed, but from the moment he'd awakened, his notifications light had been blinking. Growing brighter and brighter the longer he didn't open it, his notifications shone with bright silver light. A bright silver light that suddenly flared bright enough to

blind him temporarily and drove the images besieging him away.

"What the fuck?" he jerked away from the light, which dimmed into a mere painful brightness after the flash. "I... What?"

The light pulsed again, not as powerfully this time.

"Okay! Okay!" Kay mentally reached out and opened his notifications.

[~~~~~]

- Quest Updated!

- System Corruption Source Detected! Assistance Available!

- User In Combat, Automatically Beginning Assistance!

- Skill: Shape Blood has reached level 30!

- Class Upgrade Available!

- Class: Blood Melder, upgrade from Blood Shaper, is available!

- Skill: Purify Blood has changed!

- Skill: Blood Boost has reached level 5!

- Class: Blood Enhancer is available!

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The shimmering silver light that covered some of the words on his notification page was new, as was the mention of assistance from somewhere. "What the fuck?"

The silver light over the words Purify Blood flashed brighter than the rest for a moment.

"What does that mean? Am I supposed to-"

It flashed again.

"Alright then." Kay opened the description for Purify Blood.

[-----]

Skill: Purify Blood (Level 11)

- Born in battle against a deadly venom coursing through you, this skill purifies that which would kill you through your blood. This skill gives you a passive purifying effect to your blood that helps you resist poisons, venoms, diseases, and eldritch corruption in your body. The active effect of this skill uses magic to combat venoms, poisons, diseases, and eldritch corruption in your blood. Giving your blood to another person through Blood Transfusion gives the receiver a weakened version of the passive purifying effect with less power that only targets blood-based venoms, poisons, diseases, and eldritch corruption. Using the active effect of Purify Blood while transferring blood via Blood Transfusion gives the same effect you receive from active use of the skill, but at a higher mana drain.

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Kay stared at the glowing words. It took a second to get through his shock-addled brain, but when it did, he went back to pumping every bit of mana he could into Purify Blood. Unlike before, the corruption in his veins suddenly started to die as Kay's mana-infused blood seemed to eat it.

My white blood cells might actually be eating it actually. I'm not really sure how this

Skill works. Or how any of this shit works, apparently. He looked back at his still open notifications, where the line about the new Class, Blood Enhancer, was now shining brighter than the others.

[-----]

Class: Blood Enhancer

- Blood is strength, life, and power. More blood means more of each.

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The class description was weirdly short, but Kay didn't have time for weird. He accepted the Class, and a line about a new Skill called Enhance Blood appeared. He opened it up.

[-----]

Skill: Enhance Blood (Level 1)

- Many creatures carry magic or even are magic. Fill your veins with their blood, and gain their power. This skill amplifies the Blood Boost skill when blood from magical creatures is used, giving the user a portion of their magical ability of the blood used while the skill is active. This skill consumes the used blood at a heavily increased rate. Magical effects gained will increase in power or diversity at higher levels of this skill.

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The description of the Skill danced with silver light as Kay read it. He frowned once he reached the end. "Okay, great. How does that help me right now? I can't really move! I get you're trying to help me since this seems to be some kind of assistance feature I unlocked, but how does gaining the magical powers of other creatures from blood... help... me... The fucking hydra. Regeneration! Where's my damn flask!?"

The last bit of corruption dispelled from his body; Kay started to search the area around him with his senses to find his flask. It wasn't that far from him, only a few feet over and down, and he dug into the rocks with arms of blood. Grabbing the flask and pulling it open, he started to pump hydra blood into his veins.

He felt his strength and stamina increase from the Blood Boost, and small cuts on the surface of his skin started to seal up almost immediately as he activated Enhance Blood. As the magical hydra blood began spread in him, he saw another line pop up on his notifications.

[~~~~~]

Skill Effects Temporarily Enhanced

[~~~~~]

"If I live through this, we're having a talk about why you're helping me so much all of a sudden."

There was a pause, and then without a screen, the words just hovering at the center of his vision:

Bargain Accepted

"Well. Alright then."