

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 2

“Well, what have we here?”

As Aurelia spoke, I could hear traces of lust hidden behind amusement. I may be projecting the lust portion, but how could I not?

She's gorgeous! I don't know what this woman has in mind for me, and unless it's something dealing with a monster hentai fetish, I don't want anything to do with it. Blake, get a grip on yourself. I need to run – crawl away!

The problem was I had nowhere to go as I slunk further beneath the shelving.

“Ah, don't be scared. I have gone to a lot of trouble to summon your soul from beyond the veil. The last thing I would do is harm you. Still, I wasn't expecting your soul to graft itself to a dungeon slime and a pudding, no less. And after all the promising corpses I had collected for you. Fate can be a mischievous brat, but we must make do with what we've been provided. Let's see what you're working with, [Appraisal].”

A slight shiver swept over me. Any idea of hiding myself away vanished with that sensation. As it did, I suddenly felt naked and exposed. Well, I suppose I was naked.

“I can't tell you how long I've waited for this moment. Oh, Olin, be a dear and retrieve, my be – our champion, would you.”

Wait?!

Did she just tell that ghoul to retrieve me while giving off a devilish grin?

Oh shit, this isn't going to end well.

“Y-yeses, m-mistress.”

The ghoul commenced with his rigor mortis shuffle as he hobbled toward me as I lay beneath the shelf. The funny thing, I was overcome with a desire I had never experienced. It was as if I were a lioness preparing to pounce upon a carcass.

Eww! Don't do it, Blake!

I struggled to squeeze myself against the wall and out of view, but a hazed-over cataract eyeball came into view. The ghoul had gotten on his hands and knees to peek beneath the shelf at me. But before he could reach for me, I realized in horror that my actions weren't my own. I couldn't stop myself from pouncing!

NO! NO! NO – oh...god, this is amazing!

Olin let out a shriek of pain as he began to roll on the ground, scratching at his face as he futilely attempted to peel me off. However, I refused to let go as I slid past his clawing fingers into that hazy eyeball and into the depths of pure warmth, ecstasy, and deliciousness.

Oh yes, this feels better than sex!

You have taken **[Piercing]** damage.

Ouch, that freaking hurt! Wait, what am I doing?

It took me a moment, but the fog that clouded my mind started fading, and now I could clearly see my actions. I had latched onto the ghoul's face and slid a good portion of my tar-like body into his eyesocket, dissolving his left eye. I had even slid up his nostrils and into one of his ears.

Wait, what is he doing?

My victim had stopped his useless flailing. If only the shrieking would stop. Instead, he moved to position himself on his hands and knees. Before I could figure out what he was doing, Olin lifted his head and slammed it down, bashing his face into the ground with a sickening thud and me with it!

You have taken **[Blunt]** damage.

“Olin, I command you to stop resisting!”

The undead ghoul let out a deafening screech of defiance at Aurelia, or at least that's how I interpreted it. Then, he smashed his face into the stone floor with all his might with a disgusting splat.

You have taken **[Blunt]** damage.

You have defeated **[Undead Minion]**.

For a fraction of a second, utter pain collided with me like a tornado. As fast as it came in screaming, it was swept away by a tsunami of absolute blissfulness. I quickly figured out what was causing my moments of euphoria and elation. I felt oh so better as I ate away at his rotting flesh.

I mean, eating him out wasn't as good as the sensation of crawling into his eyesocket – oh gross, what's wrong with me?!

“That's the third Olin I've lost this year.”

Oops!

Glancing up, I noticed Aurelia carrying a stool toward me and the corpse I was still eating. Why was she smiling? Now that I've killed Olin – I don't like the sound of that! Now that I've defeated the zombie, I'm noticing it's much easier to dissolve his remains.

Why does he taste so good, like cinnamon and apples?

I should be disgusted with myself. Actually, I was disgusted, and yet I couldn't stop. Even as I slid into the ghoul's chest cavity as if it were made out of clouds, I couldn't stop.

Why can't I stop?! I really wish I could cry right now. Mmm!

Before I lost myself any further in this lovely feast, I mentally clicked, yes, on Absorb Undead Minion. And found myself jerked away from my heavenly meal as I spread out over what remained of Olin like a throw blanket, and just like that, his body disappeared as I shrunk back to my previous size. Actually, I was much bigger, albeit I still wasn't big. I had grown from a tarantula to a yorkie in size.

[Absorb] [Undead Minion] Successful.
Selectable: [Life Drain] [Blight] [Fear]

The universe has to either be punishing or mocking me! I mentally groaned out, **[Status]**.

Name: Blake Race: Black Pudding Class: Dungeon Monster Titles: None		
Racial Skills: [Corrosive] [Absorb] [Thermalsense] Spells: [Mana Sight] Abilities: [Veil Polyglot]	Vulnerabilities: [Fire] [Holy] Immunities: [Acid] [Poison] [Disease] [Darkness]	Unique: [Restricted] [Restricted] [Restricted] Selectable: [Stellar Void] [Venomous] [Spider Walk] [Silk Webbing] [Life Drain] [Blight] [Fear]

Aurelia leaned over me as she sat on her stool, grinning with a fierceness I'd never seen, even on socio and psychopaths, not even the ones from horror movies. With a wave of her hand, a little orb of light floated out from within me, causing an icy shiver to ripple through me.

Umm, what was that?

“Don't worry, my little pool of death. It's only Olin's soul.”

She leaned in even further to where I could feel every breath she took. I was instantly relieved not to have an uncontrollable urge to eat her, at least not a homicidal one.

Ugh, what's wrong with me?

“Hmm, it appears I’ll be replacing his body after all. But do be careful the next time you decide to eat Olin. It’s quite difficult to find durable bodies of his soul.”

With a flick of her wrist, Aurelia sent the orb of light sailing over her shoulder at a nearby table. Being as tiny as I was, I could not see what was up there, but a brief moment later, I heard something let out a gurgled gasp.

“Olin, be a dear and clean up this mess. I’ll be leaving with our dear Blake to meet the others.”

Wow, how does she know my name? Ugh, what I would give to be able to speak! I have so many questions to ask her.

“Yes, mistress,” a young boy replied.

Aurelia was blocking my view of the table, but as if stretched like an iron-filled slime by a magnet, I could feel my body reaching upward as I tried to peek at the child. He was young, maybe ten years old. I couldn’t identify his nationality, perhaps Filipino, but the boy looked like any typical kid his age. Then he regarded me, and the hatred in those hazy green eyes was unmistakable.

I hadn’t been in this world for thirty minutes, and I’d already found my first nemesis. Bracing myself for round two against the child ghoul, I was unceremoniously lifted into the air. Surprisingly, Aurelia held me like a teddy bear tight against her chest.

I can't say I don't mind, but how am I not melting her away?

“We’ve got a lot of work, the two of us, but first, you should meet the others. They’ll just love you! And if they don’t, you can eat their remains once I’m done,” Aurelia finished that last sentence with a soft chuckle.

Control over my three-hundred-and-sixty-degree perception had improved since the upgrade notification. Nonetheless, as Aurelia carried me out of the room and into a narrow stone hallway, I found the motion nauseating.

I think I have motion sickness.

You have been afflicted by [Sickness] .
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I hate my new life, uuugh.

As Aurelia strolled through the dark corridor humming to herself, I would catch glimpses here and there of open rooms filled with alchemy bottles and bubbling potions, which glowed like the things from a nightmare. Occasionally I would catch sight of a room overflowing with skeletons. Despite my nausea from the **[Sickness]** affliction, I could feel Aurelia’s hum reverberating off her chest

like a purring cat. I found it soothing, almost hypnotic, and my only real sense of peace since awakening.

[Sickness] affliction has been removed.

“All better?”

Wait, she knew I had that debuff?

Before I could finish my next string of thoughts, we entered a stadium-sized chamber with dozens of green-flamed firepits lining the walls. Pillars ran throughout the chamber that reached several stories high. There were even skeletons donning bronze-age-looking armor, standing perfectly still as they held spears and massive circular shields.

I went crosseyed once again as I tried to take everything in. However, Aurelia seemed unnerved as she walked toward a series of steps leading to a large elevated platform. I was getting some serious unholy vibes. But as we approached the top of the sanctuary, I saw several individuals lying about on shabby couches or locked in a heated argument with Niamh that appeared to be getting physical. Behind everyone, the floor seemed to have collapsed as if a sinkhole had opened up.

What a shithole!

Aurelia cleared her throat before speaking over the ruckus, “everyone, I present to you our champion!”

I want to go back to hiding beneath the shelf!

They all stopped what they were doing as they regarded me. Even Niamh paused her strangulation of a small woman with gray cat ears to stare at us.

That’s right, Aurelia had referred to me as their dark champion. Does that mean I’m supposed to be..., evil?

“Is that a slime,” a frog-faced man in a hooded black robe asked?

“No, Vorigan, it’s a Black Pudding! **Hahaha!** She’s outdone herself this time! Aurelia, why didn’t you tell me that pet was your candidate? Oh, my dark goddess, this is too funny!”

“Shut it, Niamh,” Aurelia hissed as her fingernails dug into me.

You have taken [Piercing] damage.

Her fingernails retracted the instant I received the notification. A hunched figure in black approached with a clicking sound as his staff made contact with the stone floor with every hobbled step. Most of his face was shrouded in darkness, but what I could see was sickly. However, his eyes were blazing with a demonic red light as they shined from beneath his hood.

“Lady Aurelia, we already have six candidates undergoing the trial. What makes this creature any different?”

“Lord Demidicus,” Aurelia replied with a bow. “He’s special.”

He?

“**Hahahaha!** Special? Hahaha! It’s a slime, you dimwit vamp,” Niamh gasped out between fits of laughter.

“Silence, demon! Lady Aurelia, special or not, your candidate must undergo the trial. This was our agreement.”

“He only just awoke, Lord Demidicus. Can I have some time to work with him?”

I’m not a dude! I am not...no. Just no.

“No, this is perhaps for the best. Lady Aurelia, toss the creature into the depths.”

Toss me into the depths?

I noticed the demoness walking over to the sinkhole in the floor, struggling to hold back another fit of laughter as she peeked over the edge.

Wait, can we talk about this first?

“Aww, don’t you worry, that pretty little head. I’ll do it for you, Aurie. Pfft!”

Aurelia lifted me close to her face and whispered. “Make it out, my champion, and back to me.” Then she looked at the demon with a sinister grin.

I don’t like where this is going!

“You know what, Niamh, sure,” Aurelia said and hurled me straight at the demoness!

With a wet splat, I hit the demon upside the face and unconsciously wrapped myself around her head, and before I knew it, we went over the edge together. The last thing I heard was Niamh’s muffled screams and Aurelia mentioning something about resummoning and demons.

I really do hate my new life!