

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 28

Hey there, fun fact time! I'm a fucking hypocrite, no doubt about it. These little glimpses into my mind's ramblings should've given that away. But hey, if you ever dare to call me out on it, I'll freakin' eat you! Kidding, sorta... I'll probably just unleash some serious doom on you first (murder), then let you dry-age like a tender wagyu steak—or should I say rot-age—before indulging in your succulent perfection (eat you). Oh, you're in for a treat! Sorry for the clarification, but it's essential to get that out there. Now, where were we? Ah, right—I was freakin' running like a coward!

Beardy, pointed-eared bastard, or whatever name I was deciding to call him, looked royally pissed, and I couldn't hold back my hysterical laughter as I dashed away on my baby legs—perhaps the laughter wasn't the smartest stealth move. But hey, I was surrounded by meat shields, or bystanders, semantics! Yeah, the whole situation was a bit ridiculous, I give you that—like something straight out of a trippy bad dream sequence.

But man, I was struggling to get my polymorphing to cooperate with me. Usually, it was so easy to shapeshift, barely requiring a thought, but right when I needed it the most, wham, a total pain in the ass... And speaking of asses, running with these tiny legs was like a glute workout from the fiery pits of hell, and trust me, my curvy pudding backside was feeling the burn!

Yeah, I'm well aware! My backside ain't exactly curvy right now, but you won't catch me calling it a baby's bottom or flat. It's a matter of pride, okay? Gotta cling on to whatever dignity I've got left in this whole chaotic mess!

To make matters worse, my shapeshifting demanded some mass, and half of mine got blown away at the navel. Talk about rotten luck! And let's not even talk about having no time for a decent meal to replenish it.

Whatever the heck was going on with me, I hauled ass as fast as these little legs could carry me amongst the stampede of fleeing prey. Everyone in the stadium seemed hell-bent on making a break for it all at once, and it turned into a shoulder-to-shoulder pushing match to squeeze out of there. But you know what? Being small did have its perks. I ducked and weaved, dashing between everyone's legs like a pro. And hey, my polymorph game seemed to be getting its act together, sorta. My remaining mass was finally cooperating, so I looked somewhat proportional—like a tiny four-year-old, just with these awkwardly large shoulders and arms, you know, like an orangutan, though I'll murder anyone if I heard them saying that. Definitely not my best look, if I had to say so myself.

Oh, right! About to get sidetracked again. So, Web of Whispers! Turns out that skill is even more epic than I expected. Well, okay, technically, it worked just as I imagined, but the results were mind-blowing! You see, casting magic is all about desire and imagination, and when I read the

name “Web of Whispers,” my brain went straight to horror-inducing ghost frights. So, naturally, that’s what I conjured up. I mean, who needs to read boring skill descriptions, right? Let the magic flow and embrace the chaos! Sure, it might backfire if my imagination falls short compared to the skill’s description, but hey, I’ll deal with that when it happens. No use crossing that bridge until I get to it.

Speaking of bridges, the section of the crowd I left behind must be snapping out of my spell’s influence by now, and Beardy’s probably flash teleporting all over the place like a caffeinated squirrel on a mission to find me. *So, what’s my next move? Hmmm... decisions, decisions!*

To be honest, I craved more area-of-attack spells, something that could really pack a punch. Petrifying Nightmare was an evolution of Paralysis, and I really wanted to give it a whirl, but it required me to physically touch someone to cast, and that just wasn’t cutting it for me. If my magic was all about imagination, I needed a better way to reach everyone at once. Plus, I wanted to cover a wider area—no repeat of the Plaguebringer incident, please!

As I pondered, it hit me like a bolt of inspiration! The reason one of my skills was so powerful while the other was a bit meh—well, Plaguebringer wasn’t pathetic, just not wide enough in its reach—though, I refused to say why just yet, I wanted to test my revelation first. Now that I had a theory, all I needed was to imagine Petrifying Nightmare utterly different from Nightmare Mist, even though they seemed awfully similar in my mind. Tricky, huh? But I’m up for the challenge! *Let’s see what crazy ideas I can cook up!*

On the verge of unleashing my next spell, about to set off a chain of magical frights, something caught my eye—that little girl in pink, amidst the chaotic sea of legs. She stood still, unaffected by the rush of people fleeing, and there was something eerie about her, a darkness darker than even my own twistedness. But when I turned my gaze toward her, she vanished without a trace. Strange, but hey, I had more pressing matters to deal with.

“Found you!” the pointed-eared bastard of a headmaster seethed, his voice oozing with rage, as he loomed over me. With a malevolent grin, he lifted his hand into the air, crackling with the deadly power of lightning.

Yep, this was the moment I should have puddied myself, but you know what? I was more jealous than scared—well, I was technically immortal, so there wasn’t any fear of death. No, this was more like that surprise when you turn a corner and find someone waiting for you kind of fright, and poof, it’s gone as quickly as it appeared. I mean, come on, I was seriously jealous of his spell! Why the heck couldn’t I have a badass lightning skill like that? Out of all the magic I craved since the moment I reincarnated into this reality as a Black Pudding, it was the petrifying magical might of lightning that I yearned for the most! A wicked grin crept across my face as I had a sudden realization—skill activations were all about imagination—holy shit!

“Before I meet death’s embrace, there’s one last thing I gotta say,” I grinned like a kid who got caught with her hand in the cookie jar. Beardy froze for just a moment, as if waiting for my profound last words. Well, here they come, buddy—.”



Thalador had finally cornered the abomination, poised to deliver the fatal blow that would put an end to the wretched creature once and for all. However, to his surprise, the creature spoke up, requesting its last words. Out of some speck of chivalry or honor, Thalador hesitated for a fraction of a second, granting the creature that final bit of dignity. He soon realized that that momentary pause had proven to be a grave mistake.

With a mischievous glint in her eyes and a smile spreading on her lips, she gazed up at him and spoke, “[**Nightmares’ Dominion**]!”

Thalador’s crackling hand dropped in a rush as he unleashed his arcane spell. The darkness swept over him and hundreds of terrified citizens, all desperately trying to flee the carnage. His spell, fueled by rage and anger at the girl masquerading as an elf, erupted with deadly force. But to his dismay, the darkness had already consumed him, obscuring the target. Despite the uncertainty, Thalador knew his spell found its mark.

Amidst the cacophony of screams from elves, gnomes, humans, and even dwarfs, a chilling silence fell over the chaos. Suddenly, a harrowing scream cut through the air, “Ow, you fucker! You blew off my head, you dick!” Thalador’s heart pounded in his chest, a mix of shock and horror gripping him.

But the moment of silence was short-lived, as the abomination retaliated with a bone-chilling tone, “Fine, you want to play like that, my turn, [**Petrifying Nightmare**]!”

Dread washed over Thalador as he realized the gravity of his mistake. The creature was far from defeated, and now, its own nightmarish power was unleashed upon the unsuspecting crowd. It started with an orange spark of light that streaked across the darkness, then another, and another, and before he knew it, Thalador realized that this creature had turned this darkness into a lightning storm. Each flash illuminated the silhouette of terrified citizens frozen in place with fear, their cries of panic drowned out by the petrifying onslaught of the lightning storm.

Amidst the chaos of cries and thunder, Thalador strained to hear the creature murmuring to herself, “Damn it! It was supposed to hit them with lightning, not mentally fuck with them with a lightning show. Fine, let’s try [**Plaguebringer**] once again.”

A dark fog, like a sinister shroud, swept past the headmaster, leaving a searing burn on the ring adorning his finger—a telltale sign that his protective wards had engaged. He recognized the spell from before, but within this creature’s created domain, its power had escalated drastically. The potency of the spell had been amplified, and it seemed to possess some kind of spatial manipulation. The once crowded space was now dispersed, confirming his suspicions.

Amidst the blinding flashes of electricity, Thalador’s heart pounded with trepidation as he bore witness to the horrifying effects of her last spell. The victims caught within her domain were reduced to fleeting silhouettes amidst the pulsating orange light. In the midst of chaos, one figure staggered closer, their face contorted in agonizing torment. The grotesque transformation made it impossible for Thalador to discern the elf’s gender, reminding him of ghastly flesh-eating afflictions he had seen before.

Though magical healing offered hope, escape was their only chance of survival. The creature's magical prison sealed their fate, leaving little time for the unfortunate elf before him.

“[Abyssal Flame],” the monster said with an almost cooing tone, conjuring a new orange light amidst the ceaseless flickering lightning, further adding to the chaotic scene.

As a silhouette amidst the darkness, the flame danced in her hand, illuminating her form as she drew closer. Thalador couldn't help but notice that she had returned to her former stature, though devoid of any attire or modesty, her full figure on display to be either scorned or admired, if not for the horrors unfolding before him. Her hips swayed like a predator circling its prey as she closed in, but as she neared, he saw that her once soft white flesh had transformed into that of a creature, a monster composed of pure darkness.

“I do not know why my mother sent me back into the past to this moment of the creation of your vile church and the rebirth of Slaethia, but I am so glad she did,” she taunted, her voice laced with venom. “Maybe now, I can forever rid my beloved of your kingdom's existence.”

Thalador froze at her words, as if they had sparked a memory, and a sudden realization of the nightmare that surrounded him. “The past?” he muttered, almost to himself, as a memory resurfaced from the depths of his mind. A smile spread across his face, a mix of amusement and determination. At that moment, his magic surged to life in his hand, arcane power so potent that it could obliterate a god—a level of power he could only conquer within his wildest dreams.



Alright, so Petrifying Nightmare may not have gone exactly as planned, but damn, it was a freakin' showstopper! And let me tell you, it was a gorgeous sight to behold, at least from my twisted perspective! Those poor folks were scared out of their minds, frozen in fear, like they were glued to the ground in Nightmares' Dominion. Ha, talk about a win in my book!

Oh, and you won't believe this! My hunch about Plaguebringer? Freakin' nailed it! My magic got a serious boost inside Nightmares' Dominion, just like when I cast spells with ambient mana in those super-concentrated spots, like back in that insane stadium. It's like my magic went goddess mode! Pure frickin' delight, I was absolutely stoked, feeling like a true sorceress on top of the world! Though, I was certain it was all thanks to one specific title.

[Scion of the Crone]

You are the Scion to the Goddess of Dreams and Nightmares.
Arcane potency amplified within the ethereal realms of Dreams and Nightmares.

Type
Title

Activation
Passive

I guess, Nightmares' Dominion counts as an ethereal realm of dreams and nightmares. So, you could imagine my confusion when that dipshit smiled and gave me a damn wink. And then, out of nowhere, magic so intense it blew my darkness away, filling my domain with blinding light. The worst part? He hadn't even cast the fucking spell; that explosion of power was just from gathering magic within the palm of his hand. And you know what? The crowd of people I had trapped within my magic? Poof, gone! It was just him and me, standing outside the stadium all alone.

Bracing myself for the inevitable respawn, let me tell you, what came next was beyond anything I could have imagined. I was about to scream at him some stupid insult or something—mostly, I was pissed that I had lost. I mean, I knew I was going to lose, but I had started coming around there at the possibility of a win at the end. Just as I was about to accept death, I caught sight of that little girl in her pink dress just watching us from a distance. “Odd,” I muttered.

“It's time to wake up,” was all he said.

Then he unleashed his spell upon himself and blasted his own dumbass clean away with enough magic that continued on at the stadium behind him, which I could have hit with a rock. We were that freakin' close. The spell suddenly flashed in a white light and sent me flying backward in a death roll as I pounced and thrashed about from an explosion that put any footage I'd seen of a nuclear explosion to shame. To be honest, I had no clue how I had even survived this long. I even managed to get a glimpse of a mushroom cloud, which was the last thing I saw as my gooey ass was seared away.