

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 24

After indulging in my little feast at what I've oh-so-affectionately dubbed the dining amphitheater, it was time to face the dreaded aftermath—those damn notifications. So, week one at the academy was finally over, and I had the glorious prospect of two whole days to figure shit out. You can bet I intended to make the most of it by diving headfirst into these stupid system notifications and seeing what this ridiculous class and race change I certainly did not pick had given me. Trust me, I'm not exactly thrilled about it, but it's gotta be done. Let's just hope it's not a total clusterfuck.

At this moment, I was basking in the blissful solitude of my dorm room. Thankfully, my nymph roommate—not a potential meal there—was off doing who-knows-what. Our interactions thus far had been nothing more than fleeting shitchat—I mean, chitchat—marked by friendly head nods and casual waves. It was the epitome of a picture-perfect roommate relationship if you asked me. Anyway, let's get back on track—notifications!

Name: Daughter of Nightmares

Race: Eldritch Pudding

Class: Nightmare Princess

Level: 69

Titles

Hopeless Crusader

Scion of the Crone

Unholy Mother

“No freakin’ way, level sixty-nine?! Are you shittin’ me?” I blurted out, feeling like Circe had to be messing with me. But hey, if my crappy math skills haven’t completely failed me, I should have, like, three freakin’ skill points to go wild with on some new badass skills. Now, let’s see what other annoying pop-ups and goodies I’ve got on this damn system page.

Notification

Access to the previously locked skills has now been restored.

“Oh, thank the Crone!” I exhaled in immense relief. Seriously, it felt like I had been fighting this whole time with five of my tentacles tied behind my back.

Notification

Black Pudding skills now unlocked as Eldritch Pudding skills.

“Eldritch Pudding?” I muttered, rolling my eyes. “Sure, fine, call me whatever you want. But deep down, I’m still a fuckin’ Black Pudding at heart,” I said, wearing a smug grin that was wasted on my empty dorm room.

The following Racial Skills have been converted:

[**Absorb**] has converted to [**Devourer**].
[**Corrosive**] has converted to [**Disintegration**].
[**Necrotic Flame**] has converted to [**Abyssal Flame**].
[**Polymorph**] has converted to [**Forms of Abomination**].
[**Stellar Void**] has converted to [**Void of Desolation**].
[**Thermalsense**] has converted to [**Aethereal Eyes**].

“Oh, hell no, no, no. Please, for the love of all that’s unholy, tell me that Devourer still works like Absorb,” I pleaded with the system as if it would bother to answer my desperate plea.

[**Devourer**]

The ability to consume the skills of more powerful entities and convert them into your own.

Type
Racial Skill

Activation
Passive

A wave of relief washed over me as I exhaled deeply, uncertain if it would function exactly like Absorb, but damn, it sounded pretty close. For now, I pushed aside my rising panic and embraced a brief moment of calm. However, that whole “more powerful” part had me a bit skeptical.

Notification

Dungeon Monster Class skills now unlocked as Nightmare Princess Class skills.

“Ugh, I’m a freakin’ Princess now? For fuck’s sake, at least I’m not some dumbass D-word Princess. But seriously, I always thought being a Princess was just a fancy title, not a stupid class,” I grumbled to myself, my frustration more than evident.

The following Spells have been converted:

[**Acid Breath**] has converted to [**Nightmare Mist**].
[**Blight**] has converted to [**Plaguebringer**].
[**Fear**] has converted to [**Nightmares’ Dominion**].
[**Mana Sight**] has converted to [**Netherborn Scry**].
[**Paralysis**] has converted to [**Petrifying Nightmare**].
[**Spirit Vessel**] has converted to [**Chains of the Chained**].

“That’s bizarre,” I mumbled under my breath. According to the system, I’ve lost Mana Sight, but here I am still using it like nothing happened. Though, to be honest, I’ve been utilizing it without any system commands, which means I should still be able to use Necrotic Flame, Blight, Polymorph, Spirit Vessel, and Silk Webbing without the system. Well, Polymorph and Silk Webbing were pretty obvious since I was using them right now to maintain my snow elf-like disguise. “Whatever,” I grumbled as I continued to read on.

The following Abilities have been converted:

[**Burst**] has converted to [**Phantom Surge**].
[**Poison Spit**] has converted to [**Nightmare Nectar**].
[**Silk Webbing**] has converted to [**Web of Whispers**].
[**Spider Walk**] has converted to [**Creeping Dread**].
[**Veil Polyglot**] has converted to [**Dark Babel**].
[**Venomous**] has converted to [**Nightmares’ Touch**].

I didn’t give a damn about the change from Corrosive to Disintegration. Actually, it sounded like an upgrade to me, so it didn’t even make me flinch when I saw it. But when the system decided to swap Venomous with Nightmares’ Touch, it felt like a freakin’ downgrade. Venomous had been one of my go-to attack moves. And to add insult to injury, Nightmares’ Touch sounds way too similar to Nightmares’ Dominion, Nightmare Mist, Petrifying Nightmare, and Nightmare Nectar. Seriously, talk about lacking creativity. *Ugh!*

Notification

Selectable skills now unlocked as Nightmare Princess and Eldritch Pudding skills.

“I guess that makes sense,” I muttered, scratching my cheek in contemplation. “I mean, I’ve been able to select Racial Skills from this list before, so it’s not too surprising.”

The following Selectable skills have been converted:

[**Astral Insight**] has converted to [**Omen of the Void**].
[**Brittle Bones**] has converted to [**Crumbling Corpse**].
[**Combat Proficiency**] has converted to [**Bloodlust**].
[**Decay Touch**] has converted to [**Touch of Oblivion**].
[**Fortress**] has converted to [**Bastion of Shadows**].
[**Leap**] has converted to [**Ascend**].
[**Life Drain**] has converted to [**Soul Harvest**].
[**Mindless Regeneration**] has converted to [**Zombification**].
[**Rotten Aura**] has converted to [**Aura of Decay**].
[**Shamble**] has converted to [**Stagger of the Lost**].
[**Shield Proficiency**] has converted to [**Aegis of the Abyss**].

“Well, at least those ones sound original,” I muttered to myself, feeling a hint of disappointment. “But I gotta admit, a couple of them sound more like necromancer skills than something befitting

a Nightmare Princess. It's a bit off if you ask me." I paused, a thought striking me. "Wait! Shouldn't I have gotten some new skills to choose from instead of all my old options being converted?" I grumbled, feeling a bit ripped off.

[**Restricted**] Unlocked.

[**Sovereign Heiress**] is now available.

"Wait, I unlocked a Restricted skill? Well, now we're talking!" I exclaimed, almost jumping off the bed where I had been sprawled, reviewing my system sheet. I couldn't contain my excitement—I was about to bust out my little pudding dance. But then, I read the damn skill description...

[**Sovereign Heiress**]

You are acknowledged as royalty of the realm of Dreams and Nightmares.

Type
Unique

Activation
Passive

"That doesn't tell me shit! It sounds more like another freaking title than a unique skill," I complained to no one in particular.

At this point, I was damn near fed up with these never-ending system notifications, feeling more let down than a deflated balloon. But hey, since I was finally starting to wrap my head around this damn system sheet, I figured it was high time to take a closer look at my titles and see if they had anything worthwhile to offer. Who knows, maybe these fancy titles were actually doing something useful all this time, and I just hadn't known it.

[**Hopeless Crusader**]

Celestial fortification when facing divine entities.

Type
Title

Activation
Passive

"No, no, no! You're telling me my damn titles work just like skills? Well, shit," I blurted out into the silence of my dorm room. "And did Circe really give me protection against other gods... why the hell would she do that?" As baffled as I was by that manipulative bitch's motives, I decided to move on to my next 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

“Wait, hold up! My mother, the Crone, is the freaking Goddess of Dreams and Nightmares? Well, shit, I’ve been mistaking her for Death all this damn time,” I mused to myself, a light bulb moment hitting me like a ton of bricks. Suddenly, it all started to make sense—the whole Nightmare Princess class, the dark and twistedness of my skills. But hey, no time to dwell on that now. Gotta keep moving on. “So, what’s next on my list?”

[**Unholy Mother**]

The undead are naturally inclined to perceive you as a divine entity.

Type

Title

Activation

Passive

I almost rolled off my damn bed, bursting into laughter. This title was a load of horse shit, in my humble experience. As far as I was concerned, the undead saw me as nothing more than a damn meal, and you know what? I felt the same way about them! So, this title of being seen as a divine entity by the undead? Utterly useless to me. As long as those rotting bastards crossed my path, I’d be devouring them. But I gotta admit, deep down in my twisted soul, I kinda missed that little shit of an undead goblin, Walrus, Willis, Warmest—ah, fuck it, I can’t even remember that little lich’s name.

After my fit of laughter subsided, I remained sprawled on my bed, the vibrant purple flames of the Necrotic Flame flickering in my left hand. A mischievous smile crept onto my lips as I reveled in the fact that I could still cast the spell without relying on the system’s aid. Meanwhile, my right hand skillfully weaved the [**Abyssal Flame**] through my fingers. To be perfectly frank, I had expected the Abyssal Flame to have a pitch-black hue, but to my surprise, it radiated an intense orange glow that mirrored the fiery brilliance of my own eyes. Despite my innate vulnerability to fire, I couldn’t help but be mesmerized by how the flames of my magic swirled and danced around my fingers without even the slightest harm befalling me.

Entranced by the flickering flames, I couldn’t resist the temptation to activate [**Aethereal Eyes**]. To my surprise, my vision didn’t transform into a Predator-like display as with Thermalsense. Instead, everything retained its original form, but now, a captivating oily rainbow effect adorned

everything, even the very air around me. I remained transfixed, spending nearly an hour alternating my gaze between the flames dancing in my hand and the enchanting display before me. And then, like a bolt of lightning, it struck me—I could see the intricate web of mana that permeated my surroundings!

To be honest, Aethereal Eyes felt more like a proper Mana Sight skill than the actual Mana Sight itself. Well, technically, I was still using Mana Sight, but without relying on the system's assistance. So, even though the spell was still accessible to me, I thought it was about time to test its newer converted version, [**Netherborn Scry**]. As the oil-like sheen of the world dissipated with the activation of my next skill, I eagerly anticipated what would unfold. And... nothing happened.

Despite using Mana Sight while activating Aethereal Eyes and continuing to do so with Netherborn Scry, there was no discernible difference in anything around me. I let out a frustrated sigh, realizing that maybe, just maybe, I should start reading those damn short descriptions for all my skills. But who the hell enjoys reading instructions before playing with a new toy? Besides, Circe once mentioned that casting magic was all about imagination and desire, so why let those measly descriptions influence that process? Maybe that's the problem—I just can't wrap my head around what the hell a Netherborn Scry is supposed to do.

[**Netherborn Scry**]

Pierce through the veil of reality to perceive a target's hidden potential.

Type
Spell

Activation
Cast

“Wow, wow, wow, did I just score myself an appraisal skill? Oh, hell yeah, I've gotta give this baby a whirl!” I burst into giggles of absolute glee. Yeah, I giggled. So what?

As I was about to climb out of my bed and embark on a little hunt, it suddenly dawned on me—I should have at least three precious skill points to spend. Glancing back at the Selectable skills, I instantly knew which four I wanted. No need to waste time reading those stupid descriptions. Aura of Decay, Bastion of Shadows, Aegis of the Abyss, and Ascend. I mean, Aura of Decay would pair perfectly with my meals, while Bastion of Shadows and Aegis of the Abyss were clearly defensive spells, something I desperately needed. Sure, I had been laboring over memorizing that ridiculous incantation for Astral Shield, but why bother when I could learn a defense spell from one of my own damn skills? And then there was Ascend, well, let's just say I refused to read its description. In my twisted imagination and insatiable desire, this skill had to be a damn flight spell above all else, and I wasn't about to let some mere description alter that belief.

Despite how much I wanted Ascend, the first skill I clicked on to accept was Aegis of the Abyss. It was honestly a toss-up between it and Bastion of Shadows, but I really liked the sound of Aegis, giving me the idea of some kind of divine shield.

[**Aegis of the Abyss**]

Immerse yourself within the embrace of the Abyss.

Type
Spell

Activation
Cast

Unlock?
Yes / No

“Yep, that sounds like a powerful shield spell to me,” I grinned mischievously as I eagerly clicked “yes.”

Notification
Error Detected

“Wait, what the fuck?” I exclaimed as I sat up abruptly. Panic coursed through me as I hastily clicked “yes” once more, hoping for a different result.

Notification
Error Detected

The selection of Selectable skills is unavailable.
User is currently fragmented across spacetime.

“SHIT, what the hell does that mean?” I groaned, frustration creeping into my voice. It seemed like Circe, or maybe even my mother, had something to do with this. Mother did apologize to me for something before sending me to this damn place. *Ugh, this is so damn frustrating!*

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Headmaster Thalador strode through the grand estate of the Duke, his mind focused on the pressing matter at hand. Everything had been progressing smoothly according to plan, but in the past days, there had been an unexpected halt in the supply of Soul Crystals. It was time to seek answers from Duke Vicar and uncover the truth behind this sudden disruption.

As Thalador stepped into the Duke’s private chamber, his eyes landed on an unfamiliar gnome dressed in pristine white robes. It wasn’t entirely unexpected, considering Duke Vicar himself was a gnome. However, the bearded elf headmaster couldn’t help but feel a tinge of apprehension about discussing their ongoing business arrangement with the Duke in the presence of this unknown individual.

“Ah, Thalador, good to have you here. Please, take a seat,” Vicar greeted warmly, gesturing for the elf to join them. “Allow me to introduce High Priest Nelzar, who is currently overseeing the

growing Church of Light. He is, in fact, our mysterious benefactor in our Mana Stone operation. You can feel at ease discussing matters in his presence.”

Thalador bowed his head respectfully as he settled into a seat across from the two gnomes. “I’ve come here today because it seems that the last shipment of Soul Crystals, as per our agreement, has not yet been delivered,” he said, addressing the matter at hand.

“Ah, I appreciate your directness,” Vicar responded with a grin, though his expression quickly turned serious. “Unfortunately, we have reason to suspect that the Queen has caught wind of our operation. Our warehouse was assaulted by a highly unusual assailant who managed to eliminate every guard we had stationed there.”

“The Duke and I have reached a decision to proceed to the next phase of our plan,” High Priest Nelzar interjected, surprising Thalador.

“Next phase?” Thalador inquired, his curiosity piqued.

“The armada we’ve been assembling in secret is now complete, and we believe it’s best to set sail for friendlier shores,” Vicar explained.

“It is truly regrettable that we are unable to seize the capital on this moon,” Nelzar sighed.

“Truly indeed. Unfortunately, that damn dryad pet of the Queen’s would singlehandedly thwart any invasion attempt,” Vicar grumbled, clearly frustrated. “But it’s fortunate that the creature can’t stray too far from the Elder Tree.”

“Do you have a specific destination in mind?” the headmaster inquired.

“We do have a destination in mind,” Nelzar quickly affirmed. “In order to advance our plans, we need to garner additional support from the gods, and to achieve that, we must establish ourselves as a recognized kingdom. There happens to be a fallen kingdom on Nyxoria, an outer rim moon that we aim to revive. By doing so, we will gain credibility among the gods and expand the influence of the Church of Light across Völuspá.”

Thalador reclined in his seat, contemplating the plan laid out by the two gnomes. The prospect of gaining the support of the gods not only aligned with their objectives but also offered an opportunity to fulfill his own personal ambitions. It would provide him with the means to create an abundant supply of Mana Stones from the souls of lesser creatures. Furthermore, considering the Queen’s increasing awareness of their activities, time was undoubtedly of the essence.

“What role do you require me to play in order to make this grand plan a reality?” Thalador inquired, his tone filled with determination and readiness to contribute.

The grins on the faces of the two gnomes widened, particularly on Nelzar’s, as he took the lead in responding, “To establish our claim and win the support of the hesitant elven gods, we require a royal of elven lineage who can serve as our new monarch in the revived Kingdom of Slaethia. Do you happen to be aware of anyone who possesses the ideal qualities to assume the role of our new king or queen?”

“Preferably someone who can be easily influenced and guided,” Vicar interjected with a sly tone.

The headmaster’s grin widened at those words, and he replied, “As a matter of fact, I believe I have just the candidate in mind. But what will we do about Queen Anna if she tries to stop us?”

It was Nelzar who spoke up again, a mischievous grin spreading across his face. “Oh, she’ll have her hands full dealing with the monster waves we plan to set into motion,” he chuckled.