

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 1

I was always told your entire life flashes before your eyes at this moment. Instead, I dreamt of another world, a world filled with magic!

“Did’s its works, m-mistress?”

“Another failure, I’m afraid.”

My beautiful dream evaporated as I overheard two individuals speaking. The first sounded like a nasal-infected old man. His voice grated on my nerves like sandpaper. The other had a seductive voice I found alluring, as if Elisabeth Hurley was whispering into my ear. I’ve always had a thing for accents. Normally I wouldn’t care so much about someone’s voice, but oddly enough, that was the only thing I could do since I could not see.

Oh god, am I blind?! How am I alive? Wait, how did I die again? I’m so confused – am I alive? No, I am alive. I know I am! But something’s off..

My body felt as if it were suspended in thick fluid, with each limb and nerve feeling numb and tingly.

Oh god, I can’t move either! It doesn’t help that I’m so thirsty that it’s almost maddening! Perhaps the nurse could get me something to drink?

However, as I tried to ask for some water, no sound escaped my lips.

“What’re wents wrongs, m-mistress?”

“The corpse wasn’t powerful enough to contain the summoned soul. Olin, return the girl’s body to the farmlands where you found it. We can’t have the elves or humans searching this deep into the forest for her and risk stumbling upon the dungeon ruins. If Lord Demidicus doesn’t, The Order will surely coffin me for a century or two if we compromise this location. Take the boy’s body as well. Make it appear as if a griffin mauled them. And Olin, retrieve me two more. Preferably not children this time. Their containers are too weak for what I need.”

“What’re abouts ones of those’s g-goblins, m-mistress?”

“Regrettably, Olin, it will suffer the same results. The necromancing ritual I’m using seems to shatter the container from the inside. It’s as if a higher power is blocking me. I need a sturdier corpse, preferably a powerful adventurer or the like. Oh, what I would give to dig my fangs into a healer and use their corpse. I might even be able to turn my...this summoned soul into a lich if I could find a phylactery. Mmm, the wicked deeds we’ll do together!

“Better yet! Olin, take Vorigan and Niamh with some skeletons and raid Elsternwick to the east. Bring me their corpses and any living prisoners you can capture. I’m feeling a little famished. And Olin, ensure it appears as if it were a border skirmish from the south.”

“As’s commands. And’s m-mistress, wheres, bo w-wen’s s-summons soul is?”

“**What?!**”

What the hell were they talking about? This has to be some kind of cruel joke! Where am I? What’s going on?

I could hear things starting to be flung about as metal and wood collided with stone and glass.

God, I wish I could see what is going on!

Before I could finish my next thought, for the first moment since awakening, I felt something other than the biting numbness. The sensation was odd, as if something were guiding me up, like a rollercoaster, then I felt a sudden jerk as if I was being thrown. Everything came to an abrupt halt with a sickening splat.

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

What. The. Fuck?!

Everything hurt as my mind spun. I felt like I was smeared across the ground by a freight train. To top things off, I couldn’t tell if I was reading a system notification or hallucination.

This is what I get for reading too much manga!

Thankfully the pain was drifting away as the numbness rolled back in. I tried and failed to stand, but I was thankful I could at least move if wobbling on my belly counted. It took all I had to crawl, but something was wrong. The numbness and the darkness worked together like a sensory deprivation tank. As I low crawled on the ground in the murky fog of my new reality, I felt a firm surface scrape my back. The sensation was still detached, but for an odd reason, I was reminded of when I wiggled under my bed as a child while playing hide and seek.

You have been afflicted by **[Poison]**.
[Poison] Immunity in effect.
[Poison] affliction has been canceled.

Poison? What’s going on?! I need to get out of here!

Relief washed over me as I felt something large enough to scale up to stand. If I was going to die again, I wouldn’t take it lying down. However, I quickly found the thing melting beneath my weight as I climbed. At first, it was like sinking into a beanbag chair, but it quickly became more like cotton candy as it dissolved underneath me.

I don’t know why, but I can taste sugar...

You have defeated [Trounce Spider].
Racial Skill Unlocked: [Absorb]
Do you wish to [Absorb] [Trounce Spider]? Yes / No

*Oh god, that feels good... Wait? **What?** No. No. **NO!** I've died and been sent to hell! That has to be it. Only hell would tease me with my own Isekai reincarnation, only for me to have eaten a freaking spider somehow. Alright, Blake, you can figure this out! I've watched enough people stream Pathfinder and watched enough anime to know what to do. That counts as life experience, right?*

*Let's analyze this, I can't speak, and I'm blind. My body feels weird and numb, almost like I have no limbs but can still crawl. A freaking spider just liquefied beneath me. **Eww, Gross!** It wasn't a wolf or something big, but a spider, maybe tarantula size, which means I'm probably tiny. So there's the riddle, what am I? Please don't be a mimic chest!*

*If I've learned anything from being a goth nerd obsessed with anime, there is always a character sheet...I hope! Hmph, let's get this over with. Please be something good – [**Status**].*

Name: Blake Race: Black Pudding Class: Dungeon Monster Titles: None		
<u>Racial Skills:</u> [Corrosive] [Absorb] <u>Spells:</u> None <u>Abilities:</u> [Veil Polyglot]	<u>Vulnerabilities:</u> [Fire] [Holy] <u>Immunities:</u> [Acid] [Poison] [Disease] [Darkness]	<u>Unique:</u> [Restricted] [Restricted] [Restricted] <u>Selectable:</u> [Stellar Void]
Do you wish to [Absorb] [Trounce Spider]? Yes / No		

Crap, I'm a slime, even worse, a Black Pudding! Aren't those the worst type of slime monsters? Maybe I should have listened to my mom and been less introverted. This has to be a punishment.

“Ugh! Olin, check the soul crystals on the shelves over there! He – The summoned soul couldn't have gone far.”

“Y-yeses, m-mistress.”

I could feel the reverberations of approaching footsteps, but I was still locked in perpetual darkness. My mind was drawn back to the Absorb notification, and despite my revulsion for spiders, I mentally clicked, yes.

What I would give to see. Heck! What I would give to lose this cotton candy taste in my mouth. Do I even have a mouth?

[Absorb] [Trounce Spider] Successful.
Selectable: [Mana Sight] [Venomous] [Spider Walk] [Silk Webbing]

If I had eyes, they would have been bulging out of my head at all those new skill options.

Do I even have a head? Huh, who needs a head when you can walk on walls!

“M-mistress, these’s crystals are’s empties.”

“Ugh, get Niamh. It loathes me to admit I need that soul sucker and her soul-sensing spell. Losing Bow – I mean, our dark champion is not an option if we are to survive this era.”

“Ates once’s, m-mistress.”

Dark champion, oh hell no! And did she just say soul sucker? I might have been an antisocial goth chick. Maybe a strong argument could be made for emo, but I’m not evil, am I? Okay, focus, Blake.

Glancing through the Selectable, I was drawn to Mana Sight. Anything that could help me see was what I needed right now.

[Mana Sight] 1st Tier – Type: Spell – Passive Gain the ability to perceive the world around you through innate magic.
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Regaining my sight was my first priority, but the description was exceedingly lacking, much to my annoyance. Nevertheless, I was blind, and Mana Sight was pretty clear it would fix that. There was no second-guessing or reconsidering needed. I didn’t even need to know what the other options were before mentally clicking, yes.

It was like a fog was lifted as the ability took effect, and I started to regard the world around me. The only problem was the around me portion. I had a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree view, and it was nauseating. A horrible memory of throwing up at the State Fair came to mind. Thinking back, I’m amazed we didn’t get kicked out of the Fair after I had hurled all over everyone on one of those stupid circular spinning rides. After that, I swore off carnival rides, even refusing to go to Disney Land when I was fifteen because of my hatred for the rides. And here I was, feeling like I would collapse while spewing my guts.

I hate my new life!

You have been afflicted by [Poison] . [Poison] Immunity in effect. [Poison] affliction has been canceled.
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Damn spiders!

I didn't see a health bar or anything like one. And yet, that Blunt damage I had taken still felt like someone had sucker punched me, knocking away any resemblance of my fragile sanity. The spiders, a creeping, writhing horde of terror, closed around me until I was trapped in the center of their dance floor, a dizzying dance of frights and horrors! My vision was a daze, like peering out of a miracle round spinning at ungodly speeds. What a nightmare world, but even this twisted view was a blessing compared to the unseeing terror of blindness. I saw everything, yet my mind could not grasp anything, leaving me staggering in a world gone mad.

That's when I noticed the black sludge or, rather, my tar-like body. As I moved, globs of inky black tendrils and slithering tentacles shot out like the arms of some nightmarish horror. I was revolted by my own appearance. Admittedly, I was never pretty. I was always the short and curvy girl with a permanent resting bitch face. Add some pale skin, green-dyed hair, and black lipstick. Also, throw in a shit load of tattoos, and you have yourself the former Blake Lyanna Jefferson.

I wish I could go back to being her...

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Before I could even run or crawl away, three spiders leaped on top of me. They were huge, or at least compared to me. Like before, I felt a sudden delight as the taste of cotton candy flowed into me. Despite dissolving three of their comrades, the remaining six weren't deterred as they pounced on top of me one after the other. *Idiots!* And like my previous victims, each one disintegrated into me like cotton candy in water, and the sensation tasted wonderful.

Oh no, I'm eating spiders and enjoying it – YUCK! I would cry right now if I could...

You have defeated [Trounce Spider] x 9.

I noticed something interesting. I found myself glaring at the notification... In other words, I focused on the notification despite having a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree nauseating field of view.

[Mana Sight] upgraded to 2nd Tier.

Like jumping into a refreshing shower, my nausea flowed off of me like water. *Ah, so much better.* My field of view hadn't changed, but I could now focus on what I wanted. It was like selective tunnel vision or, better yet, how phone videos get those blurry framed edges when played on a computer. However you explained it, it was a welcomed relief.

“M-mistress, eyes are’s r-r-r-returned’s wishes Niamh’s.

“Slow down, Olin. Don’t rush yourself when speaking. I would hate to replace you so soon.”

“Y-yeses, M-mistress.”

“Niamh, if you would.”

“Aurelia, if I would, what?”

I didn't need to be a rocket scientist to know they were searching for me. Listening to their conversation sent shivers down my...spine?

Maybe there's a mouse hole in the wall like those old cat and mouse cartoons.

Oddly enough, I didn't need to move to glance around myself to notice there weren't any holes in the wall. At least I confirmed I was underneath a set of shelves, not a bed, if that was any help.

I crept to the edge of the shelf and spied on the three of them. The first looked like a zombie or ghoul. His flesh looked like it was in various decomposing stages.

*Oh, god, I can smell him—wait, why does it feel like I'm salivating? **What the fuck is wrong with me?!***

Pulling my lingering gaze away from a potential meal... **NO!** Pulling my attention away from the ghoul, I stared at the other two simultaneously despite them being on opposite sides of the room. I felt like I was going cross-eyed, yet I couldn't stop myself.

One woman wore black and red trimmed robes that shimmered like silk in candlelight. She had long black hair, pale skin, almost ghostly white, rosy red lips, and stunning red eyes...

I think I'm in love! She must be Aurelia.

The other wasn't what I was expecting. I found the woman to be gorgeous but in a demonic sort of dangerous way. Her wardrobe looked more like a dominatrix's lingerie than clothes. She had

light gray skin and a long tail. What surprised me was the set of antelope-like horns protruding from her long shiny pink hair and the wings coming out from behind her curvy hips.

And that has to be Niamh—holy shit, those breasts are enormous!

“Niamh, would you be so kind as to use your oversized snout to sniff out a wandering soul?”

Even I felt the venom in those words. The two looked like they wanted to kill each other. That is probably why they remained on opposite sides of the room. Like a predator stalking their prey, I noticed a subtle movement. My attention snapped to the mouth-watering meal, almost protectively, worming his way back to Aurelia’s side. *Damnit, Blake, focus!*

I could hear the teeth grinding a brief moment before the demoness spoke. “And why tell is this soul so important, Aurelia? It’s not like you to give a damn about a lowly soul.”

“Niamh, that is unimportant.”

“Oh, but it is, seeing as she’s currently observing us. I do have to admit, that’s an interesting vessel you’ve chosen for her. So, Aurelia, what’s stopping me from devouring your little pet?”

“YOU WOULDN’T DARE!”

“Oh, but I would if I’m not given a reason not to.”

The room suddenly darkened despite the candles still flickering. An otherworldly presence swept into me as if a thousand needles were stabbing me at once. And at the center of it was Aurelia.

<p>You have been afflicted by [Darkness]. [Darkness] Immunity in effect. [Darkness] affliction has been canceled.</p>
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“Your reason is your life. Harm that soul, and I’ll be feasting on demon blood this night!”

“**Ha!** Hahaha! You’re so cute when angry, Aurie. Don’t worry that pretty necromancer head of yours. Your pet is below that shelf there. But do be careful; she is so very tiny. Ta-ta!”

Niamh turned and strolled out of the room, hips swaying, as she laughed the entire time. As she went, I returned my concentration to Aurelia, whose red-eyed gaze was upon me.

SHHHIT!