

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 29

I gazed upon the scene, spellbound by the explosive barrage of magic unleashed by the dungeon denizens upon the invading knights, who had stolen their prized possession. The absurdity of it all was not lost on me, as I would have snatched the dungeon core without a second thought, not caring about its purpose or consequences. But where had it disappeared to now?

A gnawing sense of dread churned in my gut.

“Ah, Lady Aurelia,” purred a feline figure as she materialized out of thin air. “It’s so delightful to see you’ve made it through the chaos unscathed.”

While freeing the prisoners, I had never taken the time to examine anyone other than Aurelia. Upon closer inspection of the petite figure before me, I was struck by a strange duality of her appearance. She seemed worldly-wise, like a mature Liberian, perhaps a naughty Liberian. Yet, she also possessed an innocent appearance like a young teenager. I couldn’t quite figure out her age.

Oh, she’s a hard one to read!

Seriously.

“Thank you, Lady Hikari,” replied Aurelia. “May I inquire as to the origin of this mob?”

“It seems our new priestess has rallied a small army in the name of the birth of our deity’s daughter,” revealed the cat girl.

“Daughters, plural,” I interjected, my tiny voice trembling as I found that my voice now matched my pitiful stature.

“My sincerest apologies,” corrected the catkin, “daughters.” Hikari glanced back to Aurelia, “Did you manage to secure the core?”

“I have. My darling Blake is keeping it safe and sound within her adorable little belly,” Aurelia replied with a smirk.

We are?

You don’t think it’s the gold ring she removed from Olin’s...thingy?

His cock ring? I hope not! And it’s not in our belly...it’s safely stored within Stellar Void.

Is there a difference? It’s all the same thing to us.

Yeah, probably. But I can’t shake the feeling that we’ve eaten something rancid, like bad Chinese food.

Hikari nodded eagerly, “Fantastic news! I’ll inform their Chief. It seems he brought some spell crystals to use as a decoy. This will be the ideal moment to retreat to the dungeon and set up a teleportation gate with the core.”

I ignored the cat girl and fixated on the symphony of explosions, each one more catastrophic than the last. The sky was illuminated by a relentless barrage of magic, painting the dark clouds of the night in hues of fire and sorcery. It was a sight that elicited both wonder and terror, a display of raw power so immense that it seemed impossible for anyone to escape unscathed. I lost sight of those within it.

My gaze was diverted to the sight of orcs, goblins, and even a handful of humans from the dungeon. Each one was scurrying about to set up a line of glittering crystals on tripods. It was reminiscent of the mortars from a war movie but with an added touch of glamour as the crystals glimmered and reflected the light from the ongoing barrage.

I found it strange that a few humans were among the creatures deemed monsters by the rest of the world...or were we on a moon? Regardless, it seemed that humans were a race that could be found anywhere there was conflict and strife, without any sense of loyalty or allegiance to anyone but themselves. At least, that was the impression I’ve always had of them. But then again, I had never held a high opinion of humanity before being reincarnated as a Black Pudding.

To my disappointment, Aurelia then decided to turn away from the mayhem. Watching those knights get obliterated was such a delightful spectacle. However, I was still quite tiny after losing a significant portion of my mass, so I remained nestled in Aurelia’s arms, cradled like a newborn. It wasn’t all that bad. I actually enjoyed the comfort of her embrace. Although, the thought of feasting on the soldiers being pounded by magic was tantalizing.

As I peeked around Aurelia’s arm, I beheld the crystals set up by the dungeon denizens spring to life. Each one unleashed a relentless barrage of magic that blanketed the enemy forces in a storm of exploding spells. The attackers, appearing to be completely spent, ceased their casting and gasped for air. Some rushed to support those who had collapsed. The realization dawned on me that the barrage was nothing more than a mere facade, a display of power that was not meant to last, as they had reached their limits. This was a rouse!

Oh shit, we need to get the hell out of here!

As we scampered back to the dungeon’s desolate ruins, the last place I wanted to be, the spell barrage raged on in the distance, its longevity uncertain. Suddenly, a massive explosion sent a shockwave barreling through the area, nearly sending Aurelia tumbling to the ground. But she was a resilient one, made of stronger stuff. Unfortunately, not everyone in our little group was as fortunate, as some were sent flying through the air like ragdolls. I surveyed the scene and saw a rainbow-colored pillar of neon light shoot skyward, like a volcano erupting, but there were two. Way off in the distance, I spotted another similarly towering pillar reaching toward the heavens.

“Wow, those crystals are amazing!” I exclaimed, in awe of their destructive power.

“That wasn’t from the mana crystals,” Aurelia replied.

“Do you think they’re all dead?” I asked, my morbid curiosity and hunger getting the better of me.

“I highly doubt it, my love.”

“Really?” I asked, in disbelief anyone could have survived that explosion. “So, they’re not all dead?”

“No, my beloved,” Aurelia replied with a hint of a smirk. “Magical barriers are highly effective when combined together with a spell linkage. It most likely kept their casualties to a minimum. I would estimate no more than a hundred fell from that little display.”

...Daaamn!

It took a few hours, a slow and grueling journey, all due to a few stragglers being drained of magic. We eventually stumbled back into the dungeon. Besides Aurelia and a few vampires, every last one of the dungeon folk looked like we had gone through the wringer, including the six bastards with whom I had gone through the trials. Despite the gnawing ache in my gut growing more and more unbearable, I was famished! Sure, I could have retrieved the bodies I had stored within Stellar Void, but why bother when there were delicious rotting corpses littering the ruins?! It was time to feast!

I must have resembled a ravenous infant, reaching out for the corpses and grunting with outstretched arms, too hungry to remember my words. My legs even flailed about, attempting to propel me toward a heap of bodies strewn across the corridor. Aurelia released a soft, melodic laugh, an innocent sound amidst the darkness, and lowered me to the ground. Possessed by a hunger that felt as old as time, I darted towards the mound of flesh, eager to indulge in a feast to satisfy my appetite.

My small size was quite disproportional, with my head being slightly too large for my body. I swayed and bobbed as I waddled as if it were my first-time walking. It was humiliating! Perhaps darted was too strong of a word.

“Awe, look at the little tyke go!”

The voice could have belonged to Sophia, but I couldn’t be sure, as my attention was fixed on not tumbling face-first while making my way toward my feast. Sadly, my efforts were in vain as I fell face-first into the hard stone floor, half my head splattering into a gooey mess. Undeterred, I reformed my face and crawled the final steps on my hands and knees. The taunting oohs and awes that accompanied me only fueled my ravenous hunger.

We’re going to kill them!

Yes, we are!

With my stomachache snarling like a beast from the depths, my ravenous hunger refused to be denied. I finally reached my prize and clung to a head that gazed upon me with a vacant stare. Regrettably, I lacked the mass to sprawl across the pile, so I opted for a wicked alternative. Morphing into my true form, a liquid-like tar, I slithered into that delectable eye socket, eager to feast on the morsels within.

The jeers that initially greeted me as I stumbled my way to the feast swiftly turned to dry retches as most of my onlookers, save for one, abandoned the grisly scene. While I couldn't see Aurelia as I voraciously consumed my meal from within, an inexplicable sensation told me she remained, delighting in the twisted spectacle of my gruesome dining experience as I ate a man out...quite literally!

To my dark delight, I discovered that decaying brains possessed a striking resemblance in taste to mashed potatoes smothered in gravy. Succumbing to the irresistible flavors, I ventured further, traveling down the spinal cord, devouring everything in my path. My corrosive nature rapidly disintegrated bone, leaving a taste reminiscent of a sinister fusion of jam and raspberry gelatin. But the pièce de résistance awaited in the stomach – **bile!** Its tangy liquid evoking the sinful pleasure of the sourest of candies. Oh, how wickedly divine, and I simply couldn't get enough!

Let's be clear, I wouldn't hesitate to feast upon a living person with wicked delight as they screamed. But my refined palate, much like those who fancy dry-aged meat, craved a more sophisticated flavor. Some cultures of my past life, too, appreciated rotting bile in various dishes. So it wasn't some monstrous quirk – merely a testament to my highly evolved taste buds. So, don't judge my exquisite tastes! The delectable allure of rotting flesh was simply unmatched by the more mundane taste of the fresh stuff.

With a pang of regret, I acknowledged the disappearance of my meager feast. At the same time, the disconcerting sensation in my gut stubbornly persisted, baffling me with its origin. Casting my gaze, I saw that only Aurelia remained, leaving us a party of two – or three, depending on how you count Ava and me. Time was of the essence; the knights were hot on our heels, depriving us of any chance to indulge our more salacious desires.

Undeterred, I began reassembling my form, rising from the dark, viscous substance that defined my being. Sticky tar coalesced into muscle and sinew, giving way to white gossamer threads that enveloped my black gooey frame in a soft casing that was my bare skin. I stood before her, fully nude and exposed. Time, the great spoiler, intervened with what we both craved. With a sigh, the tar beneath my newfound skin erupted into a gothic gown, tendrils weaving themselves into an exquisite demonic tapestry.

My radiant orange eyes met Aurelia's, and I sensed a similar hunger in the depths of her crimson gaze. Yet, as I've mentioned, time was not on our side. On the upside, I had reclaimed some of my height, not quite the towering presence I once had. Still, I was a respectable hundred and sixty centimeters, or a modest five-foot-three. Who was I kidding? I was still vertically challenged!

Vorigan, the toad-faced freak, entered the chamber and respectfully bowed to my gorgeous vampire. "Lady Aurelia, preparations for the core are finished."

"Ah, yes. My love may I have that bracelet I gave you."

We both know that was no bracelet.

"Of course!" I smiled.

I decided against tearing my new flesh to access the gold ring in my Stellar Void. Instead, I opted for a more unconventional method. I plunged my arm in my mouth, up to the elbow, delving into the dark recesses where the Void dwelled. I felt around, my fingers brushing against a round orb – not my target. Persisting, I probed deeper into my abyss until I finally found the elusive gold ring. With a swift motion, I yanked my arm out, dragging along Aurelia’s so-called bracelet. In haste, I couldn’t avoid tearing my silken skin, my cheeks splitting into a demonic grin. Though I’d have preferred to leave the grisly smile intact, I couldn’t leave it there with Aurelia watching. Reluctantly, I mended the damage, mourning the brief existence of my wicked jester smile.

Surprisingly, my stomach felt better! I handed over the gold trinket to my sexy vampire. Watching Aurelia glide her finger along the ring’s rim, I felt a pang of envy, wishing that was my...anyways! Suddenly, a glowing orb the size of a volleyball appeared out of thin air, just hovering there. My understanding of magic was still severely lacking. Yet, the aura of energy pulsating from it felt like I was standing before a miniature sun. I wanted to eat it!

Huh, it’s a special ring.

“Vorigan, I entrust this to you. I shall check on the reformed monsters managing the defense preparations.” Aurelia gestured nonchalantly, and the dungeon core drifted toward the amphibian.

“Understood,” Vorigan croaked. “However, I doubt they can establish a robust enough barrier with the core before the Slaethian knights regroup and lay siege to our position.”

“Indeed,” Aurelia conceded, nodding at Vorigan, “but it ought to endure long enough for the portal to be opened.” Aurelia glanced at me with a beaming smile, making my nonexistent heart flutter. “My love, please hold on to this for me.”

I smirked as I gratefully reclaimed the cock ring – I meant the bracelet back from Aurelia. My mouth gaped open, revealing a writhing, tentacle-like tongue that ensnared the ring and dragged it into the abyss of my maw, where it was swallowed by the Stellar Void. I could’ve sworn I detected a flicker of eager excitement in those mesmerizing vampiric eyes.

“Let’s go inspect the preparations, my love,” Aurelia purred, her voice laced with dark delight. She sauntered out of the chamber, her hips swaying hypnotically, bathed in an eerie orange glow.

Unfortunately, the gnawing stomachache returned as I followed Aurelia through the ruins.



Olin lay on his back, as still as a corpse, astonished by the distance he could be from his phylactery. In their urgency to scavenge weapons and armor from the carnage and pursue his mistress, the knights didn’t bother to examine or collect the dead. As he sat up, Olin’s gaze swept over the surroundings, taking in the fact that he was utterly alone. The most agonizing realization, though, was that his mistress had forgotten him.