

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 17

Thalassa reclined in the grand bath situated at the heart of House Baku, also known as the Hall of Oddities' dormitory. She couldn't help but be impressed by the opulence of the bathing chamber, crafted from chiseled abyssal marble with obsidian crystal decorations throughout. Even the blood candles that provided eerie illumination added to the room's sinister ambiance, which the more twisted residents of the dormitory preferred. As a nymph, Thalassa was well aware that her kind was not known for their kindness. In fact, she had led countless elves deeper into the woods, only to ensnare and ultimately consume them.

Nymphs may appear friendly and alluring, but beneath their beauty lay darkness and spite. However, with the newly forged treaties, Thalassa found herself attending the academy alongside creatures that were once considered prey. It was in this context that Thalassa found herself at a loss with her new roommate, Blake. While it was clear that Blake wasn't a snow elf, Thalassa couldn't quite discern what she truly was.

What made the situation even more peculiar was the fact that Blake had chosen not to join Thalassa in the luxurious bath. While it wouldn't normally be unusual for someone to decline, the sight of Blake, who appeared like a homeless beggar plucked straight from the streets, made it all the more intriguing. If anyone were in dire need of a bath, it was undoubtedly Blake, with her tattered rags passing as a dress and her matted white hair. Thalassa had always enjoyed solving enigmas, and Blake Pudding had become her current obsession. The nymph couldn't resist the temptation to unravel the mystery behind this peculiar roommate of hers.

Stepping out of the pool of water, Thalassa cast a long glance at herself in the mirror. She stood there completely nude, as nymphs preferred to be. With her smooth, maple wooden skin, she didn't need to dry herself off. The water clung to her perfectly sculpted body, absorbed by her thirsty form like a sapling. Her vibrant yellow flowered hair added to her ethereal beauty after the refreshing soak.

Grabbing her school robe, Thalassa slipped her arms through the sleeves, feeling the gritty texture of the fabric against her body with annoyance. But she knew that some discomfort was to be endured. The robe was made from refined Somniarachnid Dreamweavers, a rare and expensive material. She had thought she could tolerate wearing it during her stay at the academy. The robe hung down past her ankles, its large loose-fitting sleeves extending just past her elbows. Thalassa wore the black robe wide open, revealing her body within. This allowed her skin to breathe and prevented the fabric from completely touching her elegant form.

Returning to the room she shared with Blake, Thalassa entered to find the alleged snow elf fast asleep. While there was nothing inherently unusual about someone sleeping, Thalassa couldn't

help but notice the peculiarities of Blake's form. The girl lay there completely nude, sprawled out on top of her sheets as if she hadn't slept in a proper bed in years. What struck Thalassa as odd was that Blake seemed to lack certain anatomical features that most flesh-based beings possessed, such as nipples and other important bits.

Even more astonishing was the flawless condition of Blake's flesh, resembling pristine silk, with not a single blemish or imperfection. This perfection extended to Blake's gossamer-like hair, which didn't have a single tangle or knot. Thalassa's gaze shifted to a nearby stool where Blake's school robe lay. To her surprise, the once dirty rags Blake had been wearing had transformed into a beautiful short white dress devoid of any dirt or grime. Thalassa couldn't help but wonder why Blake appeared so flawless, especially since she had decided against taking a bath.

Thalassa went to lie down on her bed, but as she did, she couldn't help but cast another glance at her roommate. What she witnessed sent a jolt of terror down her spine. In front of her eyes, one of Blake's breasts suddenly collapsed as if all the substance within it had been sucked away. Thalassa's initial shock quickly transformed into morbid curiosity as she continued to observe. To her fascination, she witnessed the same phenomenon occurring to the other breast, followed by the collapse of a leg, an arm, and even Blake's face. It was as if the girl was undergoing a grotesque transformation, her body liquefying beneath her soft, snow-like flesh.

The sight left Thalassa speechless, her mind grappling with the impossibility of what she was witnessing. However, she realized that there was nothing she could do to solve this mystery at the moment, and the prospect of dealing with the drama of a dead roommate was not something she desired to face tonight. With that thought in mind, she managed to find some semblance of peace and drifted into a seemingly peaceful slumber. After all, death was a natural occurrence and one that nymphs had learned to embrace and even savor. As she slept, her mind was filled with dreams of dark forests, enchanting melodies, and the whispering secrets of the trees within. It was a lovely nightmare.



I greeted the morning with a yawn, sitting up in bed and stretching my arms behind my back. As I arched my chest out, I spoke in a casual sleepy tone, "Good morning."

Stretching may not have been necessary for my Black Pudding body, but it felt so satisfying and natural. As I fully woke up, I realized that I had liquified in my sleep, regrettably a common annoyance for me. Thankfully, my silk shell had effectively contained my dark, gooey form, which I hoped prevented my roommate from noticing. It served as a reminder to be more careful in the future, as revealing my true nature was the last thing I wanted. Sadly, subtlety had never been my strong virtue, to say the least. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but appreciate the comfort of the bed. It had been ages since I had slept on anything other than cold stone floors or hard altars. Though not the most luxurious mattress, it felt like sleeping on a cloud in comparison.

"M-Morning," my roommate stuttered.

I turned my head to look at her and noticed a puzzled expression on her face as if she was struggling to comprehend what she was seeing. However, I didn't pay much attention to her reaction. Instead,

I got out of bed and quickly slipped on my dress. As I went through the motions of getting ready for school, a sudden realization hit me—I hadn't woven any panties or a bra for myself during my time in this new realm. It was a routine that I had overlooked. Of course, I still had Aurelia's panties, but I had kept them safely stored away within Stellar Void after roaming around in the sewers.

Considering my options, I decided to make use of my magical abilities and utilize Silk Webbing to weave myself some undergarments. After all, being in a school of magic where everyone possessed unique powers, such an act wouldn't be deemed unusual. With a smile, I extended my hands and allowed the strands of silk to flow from my fingertips, weaving them into the desired shape. However, upon completion, I realized that the outcome was different from what I had initially envisioned. Instead of separate panties and a bra, the silk had formed a one-piece swimming suit. I suspected that my mental image of both the top and bottom had influenced the final result. Nevertheless, I proceeded to remove my dress and don the one-piece undergarment before putting my dress back on.

"D-Did you just weave silk?" she stammered, her voice filled with both surprise and understanding. "Oh. Oh! Everything makes so much more sense now," she continued, her words tumbling out in rapid succession. "You're a Corpseweaver Hive, a hivemind colony of spiders that live within corpses. No wonder you're a bit odd, and it explains why your body is hollow. Who else knows about your true nature?"

I paused for a moment, absorbing Thalassa's words. The idea of spiders inhabiting corpses and wearing them like skinsuits would have repulsed me in my previous life, but now, I couldn't help but feel a strange fascination and curiosity. I wondered what it would be like to encounter one of these corpseweaver hives. However, I didn't want to shatter Thalassa's perception of me, so I lifted a finger to my lips, gesturing for secrecy. While I hadn't explicitly confirmed her assumptions, I hadn't denied them either. In a way, I was allowing her to believe what she wanted to believe, keeping my true nature hidden beneath the surface.

Putting on my wizardly robe over my dress, I made my way towards the door, aware of Thalassa's gaze still fixed upon me. As I stepped out into the dormitory, I couldn't help but be struck by its immense size. It seemed peculiar as if it shouldn't be possible for everything to fit within this section of the academy. I reasoned that it must be the work of magic, for, in a fantasy realm, magic often served as the explanation for the inexplicable.

Glancing at my class schedule, I noted that my first class of the day was Mana Stone Theory and Creation, taught by Professor Morbane. With that in mind, I made my way to the classroom, expecting to find the halls filled with students bustling about. However, to my surprise, the corridors were eerily empty. It seemed as though I was the only one making my way to class.

As I arrived at the classroom, I opened the door and was greeted by a sight that caught me off guard. The room was much smaller than I had anticipated, resembling more of a high school chemistry lab than a traditional lecture hall. Stools were positioned behind countertops, each adorned with a variety of unfamiliar objects that I couldn't quite identify. And to add to the

strangeness, there were only twelve other students present in the room, far fewer than I had expected.

“Ah, Miss Pudding, Professor Stormrune informed me of your last-minute enrollment in my class. We are waiting for one more additional student to join us. Please take your seat, and we will proceed shortly with introductions and discuss the expectations for this semester,” a woman with dark gray, purple skin, white hair, amethyst eyes, and long pointed ears greeted me as I entered the classroom.

Giving the professor a simple nod, I located the closest vacant stool, and as I sat down, I noticed that I had unwittingly ended up next to Prince Asshat, or rather Rayne Thunderleaf, a wood elf. He greeted me with a wide grin and a snide comment, “Ah if it isn’t the street urchin. It’s good to see you finally found your way out of the sewers and into a bath.”

I was about to give Rayne Thunderleaf a less-than-friendly gesture, contemplating whether Veil Polyglot could translate the meaning of it when the classroom door swung open to reveal my roommate. She entered with her robe fluttering open, revealing everything underneath. Though I wore my robe in a similar fashion, I had a short white dress on, which blended seamlessly with my skin and hair, giving the illusion that I was wearing nothing under my robes from a distance. She took one look at me, then at who was seated beside me, and proceeded to walk straight towards me. She hooked her arm with mine and pulled me over to two vacant stools on the other side of the classroom. Normally, I wouldn’t appreciate being dragged around, but it provided a welcome escape from the wood elf without me having to resort to murdering him in front of everyone.

“Alright, everyone, welcome to the first day of class,” Professor Morbane began, addressing the students. “Today, I’ll provide some leniency for lateness, but moving forward, the classroom door will be locked at the start of class. If you find yourself locked out, you’ll need to seek permission from the Headmaster to rejoin the class.” The professor paused briefly before continuing, “Now, I am Professor Morbane, your instructor for Mana Stone Theory and Creation. This is a rare art that has yet to be mastered by any other known academy. Mana stones themselves are exceedingly rare, but they can be found naturally. They are often grown or mined from the floating celestial rocks found in the orbit of Völuspá.” The professor’s lecture commenced, delving into the intricate details of mana stones and their properties.

During her lecture, Professor Morbane momentarily halted her speech as a student raised his hand. “If mana stones can be obtained through mining, why do we go through the trouble of creating them with magic? Wouldn’t that consume unnecessary amounts of mana?”

“Yes, it is true that mana stones occur naturally, but as I mentioned earlier, they are incredibly rare. The reason for creating mana stones with magic is precisely because of their scarcity. In the past, creating mana stones required substantial amounts of mana, and a significant portion of that energy would go to waste during the process. However, recent discoveries have led to an alternative method of converting soul crystals into mana crystals. This breakthrough has revolutionized the creation of mana stones within our kingdom. In our studies, we will be working with prefilled mana-infused soul crystals and learning how to convert them into mana stones. The specifics of

how these crystals are infused with mana are regarded as a kingdom secret and cannot be disclosed, even to me.” Professor Morbane explained.

The rest of my day was filled with the ramblings and discussions surrounding mana stones. Initially, I had assumed that each class would span only a couple of hours, allowing me to move on to the next one. However, I soon realized that I was mistaken. To my surprise, each class lasted the entire day, and my first day at the academy was entirely dedicated to Mana Stone Theory and Creation. While my original intention for attending the academy may have been to steal a few mana stones, what truly sparked my excitement was the prospect of studying Spell Theory and Creation, as well as engaging in Combat Training. These were the classes I eagerly looked forward to, as I was keen to see I could learn new magical skills without relying solely on the system and, most importantly, test my skills against others.

New Class Available [Crystal Artificer]
--

“What the fuck!” I blurted out, causing everyone to turn and stare at me. “Shit, sorry, I’m just really passionate about this subject,” I lied, trying to play it off as if I was just overly enthusiastic.

I noticed a few eye rolls from my fellow students, clearly unimpressed by my outburst. However, to my surprise, the professor responded with a firm nod of approval, as if she appreciated my passion.

Thalassa leaned towards me and whispered, “So it’s true, Tourette’s is common among hiveminds.”