

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 6

I found myself in a peculiar predicament. It hadn't even been two hours, maybe less than an hour, since I'd been reincarnated, and here I was, deep within some crazy dungeon, following a wart-covered goblin child to a monster sanctuary of all things. Not to mention, I've killed a ghoul, a succubus, and a few spiders. And I've eaten all of their bodies, including a random girl's corpse. That doesn't even cover that I'm supposed to be some dark champion candidate competing against five others in a random sick game of dungeons and murder. What's worse, I'm looking forward to slaughtering them... *If they don't kill one another first!*

That's another thing! I've always been a rebellious goth girl. An argument could be made for antisocial emo, but when did I become cool with murder and cannibalism? I was never like this in my past life..., and here I am, enjoying it! *Ugh, this black pudding body is screwing with my mind. Aurelia was right! Fate is a mischievous brat. I don't know if I would be crying or smiling right now if I could.*

Hmm. I wonder what this goblin will taste like when I devour him? Damn it! Blake, he's just a kid... So, probably like candy.

The little goblin stopped talking as soon as I started following him, so I remained silent. Besides, it wasn't like I could talk. The cavern was enormous, and peeking around at everything like a tourist with my headless body was perhaps the only thing keeping me from gobbling up the poor child. After a while, I found myself lost in thought as my mind wandered. Tunnels and pathways crisscrossed over one another for what felt like miles as we marched deeper beneath the..., earth? *That's something I hadn't thought about yet, was I on another planet, another universe, or in a completely different reality? How crazy would it be if I was reincarnated on earth in a future that had magic! How do I feel about being some crazy psychopath? Do I want to be a dark champion, or should I find a way to escape this dungeon? No, I'll stay. I'm having too much fun. Feh, what's wrong with me?! My mind really did wonder there.*

Without warning, the tiny goblin came to a stop, almost causing me to trip over him. This kid really needs to be careful! A single touch from me, and I could kill him. His hand shot up, reaching for mine, the little green idiot! I flinched back, narrowly avoiding contact.

“It is good. Am [Acid] immune from last pet slime, Doodles.”

Oh, kid, I'm also [Venomous], and what do you mean last pet slime?

“Hmm, I give you name, you Muddy! Yes, good name. Come Muddy, entrance here. Oh, almost forgot... Accept first, or village, hunt you!”

A Pet Tamer has cast [Submission] on you!

Due to both target's **Intelligence** and **Wisdom** surpassing the caster, **[Submission]** cannot be forced.
Target may either **accept** or **deny** **[Submission]**.

As long as the target's **Intelligence** and **Wisdom** exceed the caster's, the target may cancel the **[Submission]** at any time.

[Submission] gives the caster full access to the target's **attribute** point distribution if one or more of the target's **Intelligence** and/or **Wisdom** are below the caster's **Intelligence** and/or **Wisdom**.

If the target accepts **[Submission]**, the caster and target will be granted partial access to view one another's **[Status]**. Information regarding **Racial Skills**, **Spells**, **Abilities**, and/or **Unique** will not appear. The **Unlockable** list will also not be visible or accessible to the **Tamer**.

If **[Submission]** is accepted, the caster and target will share **Immunities**.

Accept **[Submission]**?

Yes / No

I found this notification to be written like a shitty legal document. *Shouldn't it refer to me as the targeted or, better yet, the defendant? Ugh, and he wants me to submit to him... Gross! Alright, Blake, let's think this out. I can break this **[Submission]** at any time, and while it's in effect, I'll also share his **Immunities**... If he even has any! Hmm. I can't enter the village without a fight unless I accept... Fine! This should be fun, at least.*

I mentally clicked yes and was horrorstruck by the following notification.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have been **Tamed**.

-5 **Wisdom** points while **Tamed**.

Pet Tamer gains +5 **Wisdom** points while you are **Tamed**.

Pet Tamer's Wisdom now surpasses **Pet's** by +3 points.

Pet Name Change Successful: **Muddy**

WHAT?! You've got to be shitting me! I swear, to whatever god, goddess, or demon controlling these screwed-up notifications, I will kill you! You hear me, you bitch or bastard!

You have taken a vow to slay the Primordial Goddess of Magic, Circe.

You have earned the title: **[Hopeless Crusader]**

Best of Luck!

Bitch, it is! EEK, no, I mean, a-apologies...?

“Good boy! Muddy, follow. Come boy, go inside now.”

Ugh, boy?! Why you! That's it, I'm going to kill him! No, calm down, Muddy. Damn it, I meant Blake! Deep breaths... He's just a kid. A soon-to-be-dead kid! No! NO! I just pissed off a goddess. I should take a minute and collect myself. Besides, I shouldn't do anything until I've seen this village and know what I'm dealing with. I can't ruin my farming location before I've even stepped foot in it. Fine, if this kid wants a pet, I'll play the part. With a dark thought of my first opponent, I mentally called forth **[Polymorph]**.

My headless body began morphing and twisting as limbs tore, peeled, contracted, and stretched. Within a few seconds, I stood on eight legs, looking more like an octopus than a spider. Well, I suppose I did appear as an oily tar-like spider, but the lack of an exoskeleton wasn't helping with my jointless octopus-like legs. That said, I thought I was terrifying! And, if the staggered steps my new **Tamer** took as he backed away meant anything, he thought so too. *Funny, a headless person didn't scare the kid, but a spider does. Ha, I guess spiders are feared in every universe.*

“Muddy?”

I remained unmoving as I glared at the goblin child.

“Umm..., g-good boy, follow now,” he stuttered while patting his leg as if speaking to a fucking dog!

Don't kill him, Blake. At least not yet. Let's just see what I'm working with first.

<p>Name: Wartie Boneclaw Race: Goblin Subrace: Lesser Goblin</p> <p>Class: Pet Tamer Level: 10</p> <p>Tribe: Hensley's Lost</p> <p>Unspent Attribute Points: 0 [Auto-Distribution]</p> <p>Health: 60 / 60 Mana: 20 / 20 Stamina: 40 / 40</p> <p>Strength: 1 Dexterity: 2 Constitution: 3 Intelligence: 1 Wisdom: 3 (+5) Charisma: 0</p>	<p><u>Vulnerabilities:</u> [Mind] [Water]</p> <p><u>Immunities:</u> [Pet Link] - [Acid] [Pet Link] - [Darkness] [Pet Link] - [Disease] [Pet Link] - [Poison]</p>
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*He has **Vulnerabilities** to **[Water]** and **[Mind]**. Huh, so goblins hate baths and are easy to manipulate. Good to know! Hey, the little bastard doesn't have any **Immunities** to share with me. I'm getting ripped off in this arrangement! And what's with that **[Auto-Distribution]**? Ouch, his stats are horrible. Would this have been what my stats would have looked like without **[Absorb]**? That's pretty bad! I wonder what the other five candidates' stats are like? I need to hurry and get **[Appraisal]** unlocked. Ugh, but it's so expensive since it's tiered up, and I've only been getting one **Attribute** point per level.*

I didn't care to go through my whole **[Status]** sheet. Instead, I glanced at the first bracket and was immediately annoyed.

Name: Muddy

Race: Slime
Subrace: Black Pudding
Class: Dungeon Monster [**Tamed Pet**]
Level: 13
Unspent Spell Points: 0
Unspent Ability Points: 0
Unspent Attribute Points: 0
Health: 200 / 200
Mana: 400 / 400
Stamina: 180 / 180
Strength: 5
Dexterity: 9
Constitution: 10
Intelligence: 20
Wisdom: 10 (-5)
Charisma: 9

*My name really did change to Muddy! Now I know that damn goddess is just messing with me. We shall see just how hopeless my [**Hopeless Crusader**] title is.*

At least Muddy was better than Wartie! His parents must have really hated him.

Glancing up at the goblin, I watched as the little bastard turned, stuck out his chest, and started strutting through an entrance in the wall. I would not have noticed the opening at first if not for having just watched him go through it. Sighing, I reconsidered my situation, hoping to reframe it in a better light. The best I could come up with; I am just playing with my food. Certainly not a goblin child's pet! With that out of the way, I followed my new owner—PREY! My prey, not owner! *I am no one's pet... Well, maybe Aurelia's. Damn it, Blake, get your head out of the gutter!*

I scurried on after the kid with my eight legs. Moving so many limbs was strange, yet it was as if my body knew what to do on its own. Surprisingly, the opening I followed Wartie through wasn't much of a tunnel or hallway but an actual doorway leading to another cavern. On the other side were four goblins in mismatched leather and iron armor sets. Well, it wouldn't be fair to call them armor sets; they were more like poor excuses for scrap metal held together with torn leather straps. To top things off, they also wore loincloths that didn't cover much, especially from my unfortunate low perspective. Regardless of all that, these goblins towered over the kid and me. And they looked pissed!

“**WHERE GO,**” one of them bellowed out?

“Doodles ran again. I chased,” the kid replied while digging his toes beneath the dirt.

“**WHAT THAT?**” One of the other goblins was pointing a wooden club my way.

“Found Muddy, I did. New pet! Adventures killed Doodles. Muddy saved me. I and Muddy want revenge!”

Not quite how I remember it, but whatever.

“ADVENTURERS? How many? Saggy, get Chieftain!” The goblin seemed concerned, even terrified.

Little do they know, I’ll slaughter this whole village before I let them harm one hair on my future meals. Still, these goblins got the worst names, Wartie and now Saggy! One of the goblins nodded, turned, and started running. I couldn’t help but notice the goblin running bow-legged, and as he did, I caught a glimpse of something sagging beneath his loincloth. *Yuck, I could have gone without seeing those!*

The kid seemed almost apprehensive, but he stepped forward and held his head high. “T-there ten. Yeah, ten adventurers! Muddy fought all ten. Muddy greatest! Made adventurers run scared!”

Ha! You little fibber.

“That fought ten adventurers? Spider scary, sure, but you lie!” The fourth goblin stepped forward, almost as if he were challenging the kid to a fight.

“You challenge?”

“I do!”

“Me accept, Muddy, attack!”

What?! *Seriously, kid... I mean, sure, I don’t mind.* Before I could debate the merits of killing a goblin in front of a monster village I wanted to farm for experience points, a wooden club came crashing down on my spider head.

You have taken 30 points of [Blunt] damage. Current Health: 170 out of 200
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“Muddy, I say attack!”

The goblin pulled his club back up for another swing, but I saw that frown across that ugly face when he noticed how much of the wooden club had corroded away. However, I wasn’t a fan of being pummeled over the head. After the fight with my fellow candidates, I had a magic combo I’d wanted to try. With a sinister grin in the back of my mind, I focused on my spell, **[Blight]**. A black miasma engulfed the goblin as he let out a high-pitched shriek. I heard his club bounce off the ground a few times. As I prepared my follow-up with **[Life Drain]**, I realized I was too late. My opponent collapsed to the ground in a pool of pus and blood.

You have defeated a [Goblin] .

Do you wish to [Absorb] [Goblin] ? Yes / No
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*Still not enough for a level? I've now killed this goblin and Doodles, and still nothing. How many more do I need to kill, and what are the leveling requirements and experience points earned? **Hey, a-hole goddess, your system sucks!*** I braced myself for a notification, but thankfully nothing happened.

I stared at the pile of slop of what had been a goblin. Surprisingly, for once, I wasn't hungry. *I may have over did it... Just how weak are these goblins?* That said, I couldn't pass up an opportunity to gain new spells and abilities. With a sigh, I said yes. My body spread out over the goblin's corpse before disappearing within me as I reformed back into a spider.

<p>[Absorb] [Goblin] Unsuccessful. Target did not have a class.</p>

***What?!** You're telling me the spiders had classes! **That's bullshit!** Ugh, I'm now stuck with this salt and vinegar taste to top it off. I already hate this level farm.*

“T-THAT NOT SPIDER!”

Oh yeah, I forgot, I had an audience. Wartie stood tall with his head up and chest out, but I could see those eyes darting everywhere but at me. The other two Goblins that had observed the fight were slowly creeping away as if about to bolt. Then I noticed a dozen various creatures approaching.

Maybe one of them has a class... Wait, I need five minutes before eating anyone else.

One of the goblins who had been spectating my fight turned and called out to the group. **“CHIEF! Wartie brought foul monster! We must kill it!”**

I would like to see you try it! Calm down, Blake. Let's see how this plays out first.

A frizzled-looking werewolf creature stepped forward from the group. He appeared frail and far too lean to be healthy. He had a long gray beard that dragged on the ground behind him. The old beast wore a worn-out pink and black robe that hung open. The outfit came with a matching long skirt. It looked as if he had stolen it from a dead sorceress. There was, however, an impressive walking cane that he used. I don't know why, but something was off, almost like it was displacing light, air, or something.

“It seems you've found yourselves a leveler, boy. And it hasn't murdered all of us. Fascinating and peculiar. How very peculiar indeed... Boy, this pudding let you tame it?”

Yeah, I'm just as shocked.

“Yes, Chieftain.”

“Good. Good. Well, let's not dawdle about out here like idiots. Let's head back inside.”

“BUT CHIEFTAIN?! That thing ate Gaping!”

Oh god, why was that goblin's name Gaping? You know what, I don't want to know.

“Ah, I see. Boy, did you start the challenge, or did Gaping?”

“Gaping, Chieftain.”

“I see. I see. Well, Gaping always did take on more than he could handle. He was eventually going to encounter something too big even for him. But it was a challenge, so no rules were broken, even if the boy’s **Tamed Pet** ate the corpse.”

Ah... What...? I-I... Ugh, never mind.

“**But Chieftain?!?**”

“If a rule was broken, tell me. If not, the matter is resolved. Now come. Come, I’ve got questions about these adventurers.”

The werewolf-looking creature turned and started hobbling back the way he came. I gave a mental shrug and followed after him. *Maybe I should wait for the kid... Oh well, he’ll catch up! I wonder how many of these monsters I can challenge under these so-called rules before it becomes a problem?*