

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 9

With a wicked grin plastered across my face, I made a deliberate choice not to turn my encounter with the chimera into an epic battle of valor and heroism. Nah, that shit was way too predictable for my liking. Instead, I reveled in the twisted joy of my brilliant plan. Empowering my inner banshee, I let out a war cry that probably sounded more like a deranged squirrel on crack. I activated [**Burst**] with a system command that propelled me forward with the speed of a damn rocket. Going nearly supersonic, I zoomed toward the chimera like a bat out of hell, missing its ugly mug as I slipped right under it.

In a fit of sadistic glee, I mustered all the strength I could and unleashed a sucker punch from the depths of my twisted soul. With the force of a bullet train fueled by pure adrenaline, my fist found its mark in the chimera's tender crotch region. It was like an explosion of pain and humiliation, a one-two punch that left the creature reeling and questioning its life choices. I felt something give way, though I couldn't quite tell if it was my arm or its precious family jewels. Not that it mattered much to me at that moment.

A mixture of a shriek and a roar erupted from the chimera's throat, a symphony of suffering that sent a surge of wicked delight through me. Its mighty hind legs buckled under the sheer agony, collapsing like a deck of flimsy cards. As I reveled in my triumph, my momentum came to an abrupt halt, leaving me vulnerable and exposed beneath the writhing creature.

Suddenly, the chimera's cobra-like tail coiled underneath itself, swiftly lashing out in a vicious act of retaliation. Despite my depleted momentum, I managed to narrowly evade its initial strike with a combination of instinct and luck. Ah, who am I kidding? It was all luck. However, my relief was short-lived as I realized Burst wasn't reactivating. It seemed that skill was on cooldown, and I immediately hated my skill descriptions for not having those kinds of important details. Without Burst, I was trapped beneath the chimera's menacing presence, unable to run away fast enough, completely vulnerable against the impending wrath of its venomous tail. I was utterly screwed.

The snake-like tail coiled back, preparing for another strike, while the chimera's lion head emitted a pitiful screech akin to a wounded feline. The pain from my well-placed punch to its most sensitive region was clearly taking its toll. As if to add insult to injury, a yellow cloud of acidic fumes wheezed out from its maw. But none of that deterred me. With Burst failing to respond, I quickly unleashed a different system command, invoking the power of [**Necrotic Flame**]. A rush of purple flames erupted in all directions, the fire's eerie glow casting an otherworldly light. Yet, the cobra's head, tail, tail-head? Whatever! It remained undeterred as it collided with me, its fangs sinking deep into my side. Surprisingly, I felt more surprised than pain as the chimera's venomous bite pumped its toxic venom into my dark and cruel body during those fleeting seconds it had latched on.

[**Poison**] Resisted.

[**Acid**] Resisted.

I need to get out of here. Burst! Burst?! Fuck!

Above me loomed the chimera, its lion's head snarling and snapping, its pained roars reverberating in the air. Without hesitation, I prepared to deliver another strike, aiming for those two vulnerable orbs nestled between its crumpled and trembling hind legs. However, as my fist swung forward, I came face to face with the gruesome reality of my last punch. It wasn't the chimera's testicles that had liquified, but rather my arm! My right arm was gone. To add insult to injury, the cobra head was poised to strike once more, its venomous fangs ready to sink into my gooey form. I confirmed what I already knew. I was screwed.

In a desperate moment, panic took hold of me, and I mentally screamed the command for [**Burst**]. To my astonishment, it responded, only this time it propelled me upwards with incredible force until I collided with the inside of the chimera's open ribcage. I was a bit dumbfounded to find myself within the monstrous creature, my mind reeling from the unexpected turn of events.

Despite my unconventional predicament within the chimera's body, the relentless strikes of the cobra's head continued its attempts to reach me inside its own writhing form, narrowly missing its mark. Amidst the chaos, I took a moment to steady myself and assess the situation. With a swift survey of my surroundings, a plan began to form in my mind. It was time to employ a new skill from my vast repertoire, and as my eyes locked onto the menacing gaze of the cobra's head, I knew precisely which one I wanted.

[**Paralysis**]

Grants you the spell to inflict temporary paralysis.
Upon contact, the target's muscles seize up, rendering them immobilized.

Type
Spell

Activation
Passive

Would you like to select [**Paralysis**] as an active Spell?
Yes / No

With an evil grin spreading across my face, I eagerly clicked "yes" and initiated my assault from within the chimera's body. As a Black Pudding, I was a shapeless monstrosity that only resembled a woman if I chose. Well, at least I tried to resemble a woman, though it wasn't quite human looking yet. Regardless! My position inside the creature granted me a unique advantage, which I exploited with swift efficiency. Raising my arms, or rather, one arm and a stump, I unleashed thick, inky tendrils that shot forth with malevolent intent. They slithered and intertwined, entangling

themselves within the chimera's guts and intestines, twisting, pulling, and tearing without any calculated precision. I was lashing out at whatever I could grab.

To my delight, the monstrous chimera froze in place, its mighty muscles seizing up under the effect of my Paralysis. With my sadistic grin, I continued tearing at its organs until I noticed its heart. Lunging forward, I plunged my tentacles deep into its heart.

My plan was simple: to push the chimera's resistance to the limit and test its vulnerability to my corrosive acid and venomous poison. It was a risky move, but I couldn't resist the thrill of pushing the boundaries and discovering its weaknesses. However, to my disappointment, my Paralysis spell began to wear off far too quickly, allowing the chimera to regain some slight mobility. The beast responded with a defiant roar, its anger, and defiance echoing through the stadium. And to add insult to injury, the damn undead creature refused to collapse, even after I had torn out its heart and organs. As I observed my surroundings, a faint sizzling sound reached my ears, indicating that my dark pudding skin had indeed affected the creature's flesh. Though, it became apparent that while the chimera wasn't fully immune to those two skills, it possessed enough resistance to withstand them. It was clear that my two main passives combined with Paralysis wouldn't be enough to bring this bastard down.

As the last remnants of my Paralysis spell dissipated, I couldn't help but feel a tinge of regret for wasting a skill purchase on something that didn't quite deliver the desired results. Nevertheless, there was no time for dwelling on that now. The cobra's tail, like a relentless whip, resumed its vicious assault, striking at its own chest cavity in a futile attempt to reach me. It narrowly missed its mark as I continued my relentless onslaught, tearing out anything and everything that looked remotely important. I was in a precarious position, trapped inside the monster's body with no means of escape, but I refused to back down. The chimera's magical attacks had proven ineffective against me, but I couldn't be too sure about its physical blows. While I believed I was immune to them, I didn't particularly feel like testing that theory, considering I still experienced pain. My sole focus was on bringing this undead abomination to its final demise.

Having literally ripped out its heart and organs, one would think the damn thing would keel over and call it a day. But no, it stubbornly clung to life, or would it be unlife? Whatever! It defied my efforts regardless. Frustrated and running out of options, I decided to call forth [**Blight**]. As I unleashed this dark and cruel power, a remarkable change occurred within the chimera's insides. Pus-filled sores and lesions erupted throughout its twisted form, all while a sinister mist oozed out of me, enveloping the creature in a haze of diseases. Alas, even that wasn't enough. It seemed like I was less hurting the chimera and more annoying it as it continued its relentless attacks with the snake tail and its lion head shamelessly licking the wound I had inflicted with my powerful Burst-infused punch.

"Child, it's not just any undead. It's a lich!" Circe's exasperated voice called out to me, a hint of boredom evident in her tone. *"This monstrosity possesses not one, but two phylacteries. One for the cobra and the other for the lion head."*

"Oh, look who decided to grace me with their assistance!" I retorted.

“Say watch you will, but you won’t learn without first doing,” she replied.

As I continued my battle within the chimera’s chest cavity, I couldn’t physically see Circe’s ethereal form outside. However, her voice resonated in my mind as if she were right beside me. It was a strange sensation, her communicating directly into my thoughts. Despite my better judgment, I hadn’t unsummoned her, deciding to keep her around. While she could be a nuisance, there were times when she provided useful tidbits of information.

With an exasperated sigh, I responded to Circe’s revelation. “Well, thanks for the heads up. Now, do you have any idea what these phylacteries look like? Because I’ve pretty much torn this thing apart.”

With what could have only been a sarcastic chuckle, Circe seemed rather amused. *“Oh, come on now. I can’t do all the work for you. Where’s the fun in that? Best of luck figuring it out yourself!”*

“I hate you,” I groaned. “Where could this thing even hide two phylacteries? There’s not much left inside here – wait a minute... No. No. No! Ugh, yuck! I know exactly where they are!”

With a determined resolve, I turned around and crawled back through the chimera’s ribcage, making my way down its spine. A goddess’s laughter echoed outside of the beast, a mocking soundtrack to my endeavor. I pressed on, navigating past the rotting remnants of its stomach and intestines, narrowly evading strikes from its thrashing cobra tail. The interior of the monster was a gruesome sight, a grotesque display of decaying blood and torn guts. I couldn’t help but feel a pang of frustration. All I wanted was a moment to savor a meal, but there was no time for that now. To make matters worse, my Corrosive and Venomous touch proved ineffective, and the monster remained resistant to my Paralysis. My trademark weapons were rendered useless in this battle.

As I drew closer to the suspected location of the phylacteries, the chimera suddenly went into a frenzied fit, thrashing about like a deranged bull in an attempt to dislodge me. It jumped, jerked, and shook its body violently, desperate to rid itself of my presence. But I clung to its flesh and bones, resolved in my determination to remain inside the monster. I refused to be shaken loose. With every ounce of strength and tenacity, I crawled deeper into its insides, navigating through the tumultuous chaos. My tentacle-like arms propelled me forward, pushing through the grotesque maze of flesh and bone, inching closer to my objective. My will to survive burned fiercely within me, driving me onward into its pelvis.

I had done it! I was right above the motherfucker's scrotum, dangling there like a gooey, slimy spider. Now, I just needed to figure out how the hell to descend. But then, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I released Polymorph and transformed back into my true form, a sticky, tar-like Black Pudding. Nothing could stop me now as I slithered and oozed my way deep into the bastard's nut sack. And there they were, shining like two goddamn basketballs, those soft glowing rubies. No wonder my puny fists couldn't even make a dent. Whatever the hell those balls were made of, they were mine for the breaking. It was time to give his family jewels a good old-fashioned pounding.

"Umm... Circe, it just hit me that I don't have anything suitable to crack open these nuts," I confessed with a hint of frustration.

LEVEL UP!
LEVEL UP!
LEVEL UP!

You are now level 43.

You have unlocked 4 Selectable skill slots.

Do you wish to **[Absorb] [Lich King Chimera]**?
Yes / No

I had defeated the chimera without any... significant assistance or manipulation from Circe, the Primordial Goddess of, well, let's just call it bitchiness. Well, so am I, but hey, she's not all bad, just mostly annoying and entertaining to mess with. But enough about her! As I lay there within my dead foe's scrotum, triumphant, I noticed something strange happening to my body. It was as if the creature's defeat had rendered all its resistances null and void. With the phylacteries safely locked away within my newfound pocket dimension, Stellar Void, I was now able to melt through the undead creature. Instead of freely exploring its innermost depths, I took my time savoring my meal.

With a British-style breakfast of sausage and beans, I oozed my way back into the chimera's torn intestines and out of the hole in its abdomen. I was still in my true form as a Black Pudding and could have easily made a quick exit dissolving my way out from where I had just been. That said, the idea of leaking out of his nut sack, like the day I was first conceived, was a no-go. I was a girl with standards, after all.

In my tar-like form, I typically opted not to form physical eyes, preferring to rely on the full power of Mana Sight for perception. The disorienting panoramic view provided by Mana Sight is both fascinating and overwhelming. However, as I seeped out of the chimera's carcass, a desire to have a more focused perspective led me to reform my eyes. With a surge of mana, a pair of vibrant orange orbs emerged on my gooey form, providing me with a familiar sense of sight. My gaze immediately gravitated towards the spot where the three statues had once stood, now void of their presence.

"Umm, Circe, where did they go?" I asked the goddess as I surveyed the arena for the three missing statues.

"Hmm... Oh, don't worry about them. They decided to leave," Circe replied nonchalantly.

"Decided to leave? Bosses inside a dungeon can do that?"

"With the Dungeon Core gone, technically, this isn't a dungeon anymore. To be honest, I'm more surprised the Toad Barbarian decided to fight you at all. The chimera, sure, it was a mindless undead lich. But the barbarian? Without the core, there's no contract binding it here, let alone any chance of respawning after defeat."

I couldn't help but feel like someone just kicked me in the ovaries. Seriously, I went through all that trouble, crawling into a chimera's nut sack, and now I'm being told that the other bosses just decided to take a fucking hike? Are you kidding me? That's a potential thirty levels right there, just walking away like it's no big deal. It's enough to make a badass woman like me want to scream. Now I'm stuck here, contemplating whether I should kick some candidates' asses or go on a mission to steal back the Dungeon Core. Decisions, decisions. Time to weigh the options and see which one will bring me the most carnage and delight.

Before delving into the decision-making process, I decided to shift my form back to its human-like shape. As I reformed my body, I drew back the two orbs of Mana Sight, unleashing its full force. With an overwhelming awareness, I observed in awe as millions of delicate silk threads shot out from my body, branching out in all directions like a spider's web. They danced through the air, interweaving and entwining with each other until they formed a beautiful, white silk-like skin that encased my newly reformed body. It was a mesmerizing sight. However, as I took a moment to appreciate my transformation, I realized with mild embarrassment that I now appeared completely nude. In a quick and somewhat messy fashion, my black gooey form oozed out from beneath my newly formed silk skin, rapidly solidifying into a dress that covered my silk shell.

Up until this moment, my shapeshifting abilities had always felt somewhat instinctual, as if I lacked precise control. However, something had changed. Now, it felt like second nature, as if my body knew exactly how to mold itself to my desires. And I must admit, I was quite fond of the result. My face still had that otherworldly, alien-like appearance, but there was a certain cuteness to it, at least in my opinion. Now, my skin covered my entire body, even underneath the dress made from, well, me. Speaking of the dress, it had taken on a gothic ballgown style, which was a stark contrast to my past life preferences. Yet, I found myself oddly drawn to it. At first glance, the embroidery appeared intricate and detailed, but upon closer inspection, one could see that the threads were actually withering and squiggling tendrils. It was a fascinating blend of elegance and malevolent darkness, and I couldn't help but love it.

I glanced at the remains of the delicious rotting meal I had just vanquished, a thought suddenly dawning on me. It would have been far more convenient if I had consumed and absorbed the chimera's corpse before undergoing my shapeshifting. Now, I was faced with the messy prospect of reforming my body after the fact.

"Damn it," I sighed before mentally activating **[Absorb]**.

As I triggered the skill, my body underwent a violent transformation. It tore apart, returning to its original gooey state that spread out and enveloped the entire carcass of the chimera. The acidic properties of my form went to work, rapidly dissolving the once formidable creature. Within moments, there was nothing left but a pool of liquefied remains, consumed by my insatiable hunger. *So much for savoring my meal*, I thought as a few tentacles reached out to swab up the remaining juices.

<p>[Absorb] [Lich King Chimera] Successful.</p>
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Selectable
[Acid Breath]
[Poison Spit]

I couldn't help but feel a tinge of disappointment at the limited options presented to me. Perhaps I had been spoiled by the vast array of skills I gained from absorbing a horde of undead creatures. Plus, the absence of my dream spell, lightning magic, was particularly disheartening. Nonetheless, Acid Breath and Poison Spit sounded like they would offer some versatility to my repertoire at first glance by adding much-needed ranged capabilities, complementing my already formidable close-range attacks. I knew I needed to diversify my skillset to handle opponents who might possess resistance to acid and poison, but nothing else seemed to present itself.

With my body reformed, skin and dress intact, I wandered through the coliseum's arena, scanning for any overlooked corpses of the fallen undead. It's amusing how I, as a creature of darkness, don't find the act of consuming corpses to be gross or repulsive. In fact, it's a strangely satisfying sensation that I simply cannot resist. The temptation to feast on the remains is too great to ignore. However, to my disappointment, I found no stragglers lying about, depriving me of the opportunity for another delectable meal.

Sometime after my meal, Circe had chosen to vanish, a decision that took me by surprise. I hadn't anticipated her being able to disappear, considering I had to use Oracle to summon her in the first place. Still, the notion of a literal goddess being bound to my will seemed even more ludicrous to me. While I contemplated resummoning her, I ultimately decided to give my plaything a break. I would have plenty of opportunities to annoy her later.

With a quick glance at my skill list, I decided it was high time to allocate my four precious skill points to new magical abilities. It was a strategic move to do it now rather than fumbling around in the heat of battle. I mean, come on, only a complete lunatic would attempt such a thing...

[Acid Breath]

Acquire the spell to unleash a cloud of **[Acid]** upon your adversaries.

Type
Spell

Activation
Cast

[Poison Spit]

Acquire the ability to send a projectile of **[Poison]** at a target.

Type
Ability

Activation

Cast

I pondered my options, considering the best ways to enhance my abilities and expand my arsenal. There were several skills that caught my attention, each offering unique advantages in combat. It was time to make some strategic choices and increase my powers.

With my first two skill points, I wasted no time investing them into Acid Breath and Poison Spit. These ranged attacks would provide a valuable addition to my repertoire, granting me the ability to strike from a distance, an area where I had been lacking in. The thought of spewing acid and venomous poison at my enemies filled me with a sense of satisfaction and eager anticipation.

As for my next two skill points, I found myself faced with a more challenging decision. There were so many enticing options to choose from, each offering unique advantages and possibilities.

Selectable
[Astral Insight]
[Brittle Bones]
[Combat Proficiency]
[Decay Touch]
[Fear]
[Fortress]
[Leap]
[Life Drain]
[Mindless Regeneration]
[Rotten Aura]
[Shamble]
[Shield Proficiency]
[Spider Walk]
[Spirit Vessel]

I found myself repeatedly considering Life Drain and Mindless Regeneration, genuinely intrigued by the prospect of acquiring a healing skill. However, upon careful reflection, I realized that my natural resilience was already quite remarkable. While I didn't believe I was impervious to all harm, it seemed that I possessed a remarkable ability to recover swiftly from most injuries. As a result, I ultimately decided to forgo the healing options for the time being.

Opting for a different strategy, I began eliminating the obvious choices that didn't align with my current needs. I crossed out options like Shamble, Brittle Bones, and Leap, as they didn't offer much value to me at the moment. While Leap sounded tempting, I felt that it wasn't necessary, considering that I already had Burst.

Furthermore, I chose to postpone selecting Combat Proficiency and Shield Proficiency for the time being. Although I found Combat Proficiency tempting, it wasn't a priority at the moment. As for Shield Proficiency, it simply didn't align with my needs in the same manner as healing. Similarly, I discarded the option of Fortress, though a part of me wondered if I could use the skill to create actual bones and teeth instead of the silk caps that I found myself involuntarily touching with my

tentacle tongue. Spider Walk also caught my attention, but I decided to save it for a later round of skill selection, knowing it would likely be a valuable addition to my repertoire. And let's be honest, the idea of walking on walls was just too damn cool.

Decay Touch seemed like a viable option, but I couldn't ignore the fact that my touch combo with Paralysis, Venomous, and Corrosive was already pretty nasty. I wanted to branch out and try something new. Rotten Aura intrigued me for a while, with its ability to emit a foul odor and aura of decay. It sounded oddly delightful in a twisted way. However, the thought of repulsing Aurelia with my stench made me reconsider. So, I turned my attention to Fear, contemplating the psychological impact it could have on my opponents. Moreover, Fear had the advantage of being an aura spell, which happened to be an area I was currently lacking.

<p>[Fear]</p> <p>Gain the spell to spread an aura of [Fear] amongst your foes.</p> <p><u>Type</u> Spell</p> <p><u>Activation</u> Cast</p>
<p>Would you like to select [Fear] as an active Spell? Yes / No</p>

With a resolute decision, I mentally gave a firm "yes" and moved on to my last option. Although I contemplated saving it for future absorptions, particularly in the hope of acquiring a lightning spell, I ultimately decided to make the investment. After all, with two phylacteries securely stored within Stellar Void and two souls at my disposal to either utilize or discard for new ones, it seemed only fitting to delve into the realms of necromancy with Astral Insight or Spirit Vessel. Both skills held immense potential for my necromantic future, and the more I pondered, the more enticing they became. Additionally, the prospect of testing these abilities on two intriguing female champion candidates added another layer of intrigue to my decision-making process.

Unable to resist the allure of the phylacteries, I succumbed to the impulse and began toying with my own hands, an action resembling that of a deranged lunatic. "My preciouses," I muttered in my best Smeagol impression.

However, upon closer examination, I realized that Astral Insight would only grant me the ability to sense and discern the presence of souls in my vicinity. While it was certainly interesting, it didn't provide the level of control and manipulation over souls that I desired. That realization led me to the conclusion that Spirit Vessel was the skill I truly wanted.

<p>[Spirit Vessel]</p> <p>Tap into the energy of captured souls for various purposes.</p> <p><u>Type</u></p>

Spell <u>Activation</u> Cast
Would you like to select [Spirit Vessel] as an active Spell? Yes / No

The skill description wasn't exactly what I would call detailed, but according to Circe, the intentionally vague nature of skill descriptions provided the flexibility for the wielder to shape the spell's outcome within the confines of the skill's parameters. It gave me the freedom to determine the specific effects and applications of the spell based on my own interpretation. And as far as I understood it, this was going to be my first necromancer spell. I gave it a hard "yes!"

"Now, should I retrieve the Dungeon Core or pursue the other candidates?" I pondered aloud.