

BLACK PUDDING

EPILOGUE

Deep within the veil, where dreams and horrors intertwine, Magic flowed freely, unbound and divine. She was a force beyond comprehension, neither Life nor Death, but an equal with power beyond mention. Magic was among the first three creations, a Primordial, bearing witness to the birth of titans and gods with joy and elation.

But envy soon consumed her, and she tampered with creation, giving rise to the Eldritch, a cruel manifestation of Magic's bitterness and itch. The Great Cataclysm arose, a war that never ceased, Titans and Eldritch fought and battled, leaving nothing to mend or appease. Their war engulfed the realm and the heavens, leaving destruction in its wake, the gods powerless against the Eldritch cruel takes.

In a bid to end the war, Life intervened, but her actions proved futile, and she vanished beyond the veil, forever silent. Death mourned the loss of Life and ended the strife, shattering the Eldritch into tiny pieces, ending their dark life. But the damage was done, and only a few remained, the realm tainted and stained. Into the abyss Death vanished, never to return, while Magic toiled through endless eons, her errors to unlearn.

At her niece's quaint abode's brink did Magic linger, Goddess of Dreams and Nightmares, a Sovereign within the veil, the Crone so known. Of the divine few remained, in Death's stead she strove to serve. Cataclysm claimed nearly all their kind, leaving but mortal-born shades of godly ascendants, scarce upholding the realm's affairs. Were these imitations to fall in petty battles, Magic would rejoice; yet, her sister's works lay 'mongst the victims. Thus, she couldn't let it be.

Mortals warring on their behalf proved better, as their souls bore reincarnation's gift. And so, Magic thieved, collecting from realms unseen, amassing cosmic plunder. Whole planets, moons seized, to sate the twisted whims divine, and save her sister's creations from oblivion. All to keep them from astral streams untamed, at the cost of myriad souls, she'd act. In Magic's mind, the ends excused her means, and naught would halt her quest to mend her past.

There, upon the threshold, Magic faltered, courage failed to knock. But her fretting proved for naught, as door creaked, groaned, and opened, unbidden. Into the hilltop hut she stepped, where, at a table, niece did sit, ever watchful of her presence.

"What curious wind has blown you here to my abode?" the Goddess of Dreams and Nightmares inquired, suspicion dripping from her tongue.

"Dear niece, you have wandered into forbidden territory, dabbling with forces far beyond your control. Release that malevolent child you have taken in, lest it consumes you completely and incurs the wrath of other divine beings," Circe implored.

“In truth, no child I took, but two daughters I brought forth. Mine own, they shall remain, henceforth and evermore,” the goddess retorted to the Primordial, her aunt, Magic, with unwavering care.

“Daughters?”

“Aye, dear aunt, thy skill upon that soul wrought cruelty, indeed. In kindness, I sought to mend, yet erred, and split her essence, birthing daughters two. My divine spark within them cleaved, they are mine!” the Crone avowed, as veil’s shadows tensed, her words a looming threat to the divine, and verily, they were.

Circe drew in a breath, deep and rich with twisted glee, her power pouring forth like a symphony of chaos, shattering the dream that once dwelled within the veil and dismantling the enchantment’s hold. The once dreamlike ambiance dissolved, like sugar in a bitter brew, as she fixed her gaze upon her foolish niece with a sincerity that could outlast time itself. Her eyes danced with serious intent and a hint of something darker—unpredictable and callous—a sinister whisper that echoed through the fading dreamscape, mocking the vulnerability of the moment.

“Pay close attention, my dear niece, because I care for you deeply. However, that terrible creature is nothing more than a dark force meant to cause chaos and destruction. It was created for a single purpose before meeting its inevitable end, consumed by the unrelenting force of oblivion. If you accept this evil being as part of your own, you risk bringing about another Cataclysm, equal to the first.”

The Sovereign of Dreams and Nightmares surveyed her domain within the veil, observing how dreams and nightmares within the woods cowered in the presence of the Primordial of Magic. Yet, she remained unyielding, for she had a cause worth fighting for, something that truly mattered to her. Ever since her mother disappeared beyond the veil, and her other withdrew into the void, overwhelmed by sorrow, nothing new had emerged in this realm; only that which was seized. However, after what felt like an eternity, her dream was finally realized, she had forged something entirely new.

The goddess stood tall, locking eyes with her aunt and radiating an unyielding strength. “They are mine! Moreover, I have taken precautions to ensure their safety, at least for the time being.”



With a sinister grin, Jörmun watched as the gods erupted into political chaos. “Celebrate, for the Crone’s adopted pet, that faceless terror, has met her end in a dungeon older than the gods themselves!” shouted a god, an imposing figure draped in ethereal robes, his golden crown reflecting an eerie brilliance.

“Zarathos, that grotesque abomination mutilated my Champion, Orlaith, her beauty marred by the explosion’s cruel touch. The monster not only defiled a lost sanctum but also laid waste to the once-mighty air fleet of Slaethia,” hissed another god, a magnificent dragon with scales shimmering like emerald flames and eyes ablaze with molten gold.

Lyzara, a goddess with flowing silver hair and moonlit skin, chimed in with feigned innocence, “But do tell, how could the Dungeon Core slip past our watchful eyes and fade into nothingness?”

“Demoros, the Core is no more, an extinguished light in the void of our memories. We had thought it a casualty of the devastating blast,” roared Zarathos, his thunderous voice casting an ominous shadow across the Citadel, his angelic wings a darkened canvas that seemed to swallow the light.

With a sardonic sneer, Khyron bellowed, “To the damnable abyss of the Infernal Realms! The Crone’s sick games and her unhinged pet have brought this nightmare upon us!” The colossal figure loomed like a dark monolith, his eyes afire with the rage of a hellish inferno.

As Jörmun slinked through the Citadel’s consecrated halls, the veil enshrouding him like a malevolent cloak, he basked in the discordant symphony of the ascended gods’ twisted exultation. Oblivious to the divine assembly, a cunning serpent lay hidden among them, biding its time to strike with lethal precision.

“Oh, my dear sister of Dreams and Nightmares,” Jörmun cooed with a wicked grin, unheeding the commotion around him, “what tangled webs you’ve woven.” His words danced through the air, a sinister lullaby to the chaos unfolding around him.

~~~~~

|                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>SYSTEM REBOOT</b></p> <p><b>S</b><br/><sup>u</sup><br/><b>C</b><br/><b>C</b><br/><b>E</b><br/><b>S</b><br/><sup>s</sup><br/><b>FU</b><br/><b>L</b></p> |
| <p><b>Unique: [Paradigm Inversion]</b><br/><b>Passive Activated</b></p>                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Unique: [Soul Bonded]</b></p> <p><b>P</b><br/><b>A</b><br/><b>S</b><br/><b>S</b><br/><b>i</b></p>                                                      |

v  
e  
  
A  
C  
t  
I  
v  
A  
t  
e  
D

Dizziness overwhelmed me as I opened my eyes to a strange spectacle in the heavens. It took a moment to comprehend the sight before me. Jupiter seemed to dominate the night sky, but its colors were off—swirls of pink and blue hues painting its surface.

Reaching up as if to make contact, I noticed my Spider Silk flesh had already formed and reshaped. A smile crept across my face, for this was the first time I had awakened in my human form. Despite my elation, an unsettling feeling lingered within, as though something vital had shattered and scattered inside of me. A profound sadness welled up, and I longed to weep and mourn what was lost, yet I couldn't identify what was missing.

Taking in my surroundings, I realized that I lay upon a stone altar, or more accurately, a flat rock resting precariously upon some boulders. The chamber itself was rough-hewn and basic, with a large hole in the ceiling that allowed a view of the sky above and let in the snow to coat the area.

Dread crept into my heart, for I knew without a doubt that this was not the same planet or moon where I had been with Aurelia. If my assumptions were correct, I was now unimaginably far away from the one I loved. However, the sense of loss that had gnawed at me upon awakening differed from what I felt now.

“Ava?”

Turning my head, I stared into a pair of familiar orange eyes, surrounded by a sea of silky ivory skin devoid of any color and framed by hair that seemed to writhe with seductive darkness.

“Blake?” I whispered in response, hardly daring to believe what I was seeing.

“Ugh, Status!” I heard Blake exclaim as if uttering a profanity, and to my amazement, the interface materialized before me too.

**Name:** Daughters of Nightmares  
**Race:** Black Pudding  
**Class:** None  
**Level:** Restricted

|                                                                                                        |                                                                                                  |                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Titles:</u></b><br>[Hopeless Crusaders]<br>[Scions of the Crone]<br>[Restricted]<br>[Restricted] |                                                                                                  |                                                                                |
| <b><u>Racial skills:</u></b><br>[Corrosive]<br>[Stellar Void]                                          | <b><u>Vulnerabilities:</u></b><br>[Fire]<br>[Holy]                                               | <b><u>Unique:</u></b><br>[Restricted]<br>[Paradigm Inversion]<br>[Soul Bonded] |
| <b><u>Spells:</u></b>                                                                                  | <b><u>Immunities:</u></b><br>[Acid]<br>[Charm]<br>[Darkness]<br>[Disease]<br>[Poison]<br>[Sleep] |                                                                                |
| <b><u>Abilities:</u></b><br>[Veil Polyglot]<br>[Venomous]                                              |                                                                                                  |                                                                                |

“What the—.”

“SHHHIT!”