

BLACK 2 PUDDING

CHAPTER 16

Orientation ended without much hassle, and to be honest, it was rather dull, reminiscent of the college orientations I experienced in my past life at the start of a new semester. The nymph, Thalassa, introduced herself, but her presence didn't faze me. There was no homicidal urge or hunger, no desire to break her neck and discard her body in a shed to decompose into the perfect aroma for consumption. Yes, I know, I haven't had many opportunities for such indulgences, but a girl can fantasize. I suspected that my lack of murderous thoughts was due to the fact that I wasn't a vegetarian. I mean, who wants to nibble on a girl made out of bark?

Now, when it came to Prince Asshat, or was it Thunderclap? Either way, he was a different story altogether. I couldn't deny the immense satisfaction I would derive from decapitating him and skipping the delightful process of savoring a decomposing wood elf for a quick meal. *Damn, I really should have invested a skill point into Decay Touch when I had the chance. It would have elevated my culinary experiences to an entirely new level.* But alas, I buried those thoughts. I needed to maintain my cover while attending this school. Though, I must admit, the thought of a couple of missing students wouldn't exactly be the worst outcome.

Damn it! The thought of Decay Touch had triggered a cascade of frustration, with my broken status screen and the missed levels occupying my mind. It was infuriating to witness my progression come to a screeching halt as if something was intentionally blocking my advancement.

Name: Daughter of Nightmares Race: Black Pudding Class: None Level: Restricted <u>Titles</u> [Hopeless Crusader] [Scion of the Crone] [Restricted] [Restricted]		
<u>Racial Skills</u> [Corrosive] [Stellar Void] <u>Spells</u>	<u>Vulnerabilities</u> [Fire] [Holy] <u>Immunities</u> [Acid]	<u>Unique</u> [Oracle] [Restricted] [Restricted]

<u>Abilities</u> [Veil Polyglot] [Venomous]	[Charm] [Darkness] [Disease] [Poison] [Sleep]	
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The answer felt so close, almost within reach, yet elusive simultaneously. Sure, I had a possible idea as to what the problem might be, but I was at a loss as to how to acquire a new Class now that I was no longer a Dungeon Monster. I had sought Circe’s assistance, but true to her nature, she provided no helpful insights, not even a hint to steer me in the right direction. Her only reply at the time had been a shrug, which only added to my frustration. Wasn’t it my role to be the evil one, not her?

Despite the frustrating annoyance that was Circe, I was determined to explore the possibility of learning new magic without the system’s aid. While I had a few spells in my repertoire not listed by the system, such as Necrotic Flame, Blight, Polymorph, Spirit Vessel, and Silk Webbing, I had initially learned them through repeated casting with the assistance of the system. Unfortunately, I had never quite mastered Absorb, the main tool that allowed me to acquire new skills. It felt as if my wings had been clipped, and now I needed to learn how to soar once again, this time on my own.

“We’ve arrived at your dormitory,” our tour guide announced, his features tinged with an unusual mix of troll and elf. “If you need any further assistance, Lady Zephyra Amethyst will be your house mistress. She’ll be available to help you settle in and answer any questions you may have.”

After the orientation had concluded, we were divided into groups and taken on a brief tour of the campus. To be completely honest, it wasn’t much of a tour. We simply marched straight to our destination while our guide pointed out a few landmarks along the way. What struck me as odd was the composition of our group. There were no elves, humans, dwarves, or gnomes apart from myself, who only resembled a snow elf. It seemed as though the higher-ups were aware that I was not what I appeared to be. And the fact that we were segregated based on our races—or rather, species—raised questions in my mind about how the other races were treated within the academy.

We made a few stops along the way to drop off people in different dorms, and it seemed I was left in the last group. Well, calling it a group was a stretch, as it consisted only of myself and Thalassa, the nymph. She appeared unusually thrilled about being assigned to the same dorm as me. Personally, I couldn’t help but feel a tinge of disappointment, as I had no desire to murder and devour a talking tree.

I had just formed a question in my mind to ask the troll elf when the set of double doors to the dormitory swung open, revealing a woman unlike any I had ever seen before. She wore a flowing floral gown, but what caught my attention was her skin, which shimmered like cut diamonds. Another individual who was undoubtedly off the menu for me. *Could this day get any worse?*

“Welcome to House Baku, or as we fondly call it, the Hall of Oddities,” she greeted with a radiant smile. “We prefer this name over the less flattering nickname of Night Hags. But let’s put that aside for now. I won’t tolerate such talk in my dormitory.”

The woman exuded an endless stream of enthusiasm and positivity, instantly setting off alarm bells in my head. I could already sense that I was going to despise this place. Stepping through the doors into the chamber beyond, I was met with a sight that perfectly mirrored the woman’s persona. Crystal chandeliers adorned the ceiling, crystal furniture filled the space, and even the candle holders were made of crystal. The only thing that wasn’t made of some form of crystal were the nauseating flowers that seemed to be scattered everywhere. It was everything I dreaded and detested—a nauseatingly girly atmosphere that made me cringe.

“Thank you ever so kindly for bringing us our newest two additions, Trollanis,” she stated with a beaming smile before abruptly shutting the doors in our guide’s face. She then cast a mischievous glance around the room as if sharing a secret. “Alright, everyone, he’s gone.”

Suddenly, the chamber we were standing in underwent a transformation. The once bright and cheerful atmosphere faded, replaced by a dark and foreboding ambiance. The crystals that adorned the room now emitted a sinister glimmer, reflecting the eerie light of the candles that ignited on their own. As for the flowers, they withered and darkened, taking on a cruel and malevolent appearance that added to the overall atmosphere. This was more in line with my preferences, and I couldn’t help but beam with satisfaction.

As the chamber completed its dark transformation, my attention was drawn to the presence of several individuals who seemed to have materialized on the furniture. They appeared seemingly out of nowhere as if they had been lying in wait for this precise moment.

“Now, please allow me to introduce myself. I am Lady Zephyra Amethyst, but you can simply call me Zephyra. Let it be known that if any of you dare to refer to me as ‘den mother’ or any other nonsensical title, I will not hesitate to cast a charm spell upon you. You will find yourselves willingly scrubbing the less desired livestock pins without question for the remainder of your stay here. Do I make myself understood?”

“Yes, den mother,” I responded, giving her an affirmative nod.

I heard a chuckle emanating from one of the individuals sprawled on a nearby sofa, though it was difficult to discern exactly who it came from. Another voice chimed in, saying, “There’s always one who believes they’re immune to Zephyra’s charm,” prompting a chorus of additional laughter from the group.

As I glanced around, I counted roughly thirty or so individuals, all of whom bore distinctive racial features that I couldn’t quite place. Among them, I suspected a few were vampires, their pale complexion and subtle hints of fangs giving them away. However, my attention was drawn back to the den mother, who now wore a deep frown on her face. She let out a sigh of frustration and waved her hand in my direction as if casting a spell or dismissing my presence.

[Charm] Resisted.

Noticing the notification, I glanced up at her and mustered the most absurdly fake smile I could manage. “I think I may have made a mistake. This place seems rather dark and terrifying, and I’m just a lonely snow elf with no dark thoughts or emotions,” I said in a deliberately exaggerated tone.

A few snickers escaped from the others, indicating that they, too, found my attempt at innocence highly amusing. However, amidst the amusement, there was a noticeable shift in the atmosphere. The room grew remarkably quiet, and a sense of anticipation hung in the air. As hushed whispers began to fill the room, I could sense the growing tension. Even the den mother’s eyes widened in surprise at the realization that I had resisted her spell.

Thalassa, leaning in closer to me, voiced the question that was on everyone’s mind, her voice laced with disbelief, “Did you seriously just resist a charm spell?”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” I replied, a mischievous grin forming on my lips. “And by the way, why am I being placed in a house with what appears to be the gathering of all the mischievous and wicked students?” I scanned the room, meeting the gazes of those still staring at me in disbelief.

“Well, this is certainly a first,” Zephyra commented, her tone a mix of surprise and intrigue. “I suppose I’ll have to make an exception with you, considering you’re the first to resist my charm. But let me assure you, I will eventually succeed in casting it on you.” She paused for a moment, a thoughtful expression crossing her face. “As for why you’ve been assigned here, it’s true that you’re the first snow elf to be placed in this house. The school’s enchantments have never been wrong in assessing one’s virtues, and it was the magic within the school that determined your placement with us. So, the question remains, what makes you dark enough to be assigned here?”

I chose not to respond, opting instead to maintain a disturbingly wide grin as I looked up at her towering figure. The unnaturally stretched smile that reached from ear to ear seemed to give her a momentary pause. It was evident that the truth had been revealed, and everyone in the room now realized that I was no snow elf. Among these dark entities within the academy, I knew that I belonged with them, and now they, too, were aware that I was one of them. However, what they didn’t yet know was that beneath my humanoid guise, I was actually a Black Pudding, a creature of darkness and devourer of life.

“Well, den mother, it’s been a pleasure meeting you. My name is Blake, Blake Pudding,” I introduced myself, with a touch of mischief in my tone. “By the way, I couldn’t help but overhear during orientation something about a school uniform. Any chance you could provide me with one? As you can see,” I gestured to my tattered and dirty white dress, “I still look like a street urchin.”