

59 — The Gourmand's Unrequited Love?

Imu was sitting in the grass next to the enormous Hydra-Goose, scrolling through some text on a floating glass-like pane in front of him. He hummed and hawed as he read the text, but it was utter gibberish to my eyes.

After Bel had calmed down, she had vowed to bring the last species my settlement needed into the fold. Apparently she had her sunglass-covered eyes set on a strange type of creature known as a Niffler, which subsisted on negative energy. Given that, by her own words, my minions oozed an abundance of despair and existential dread at the meaninglessness of their lives, the Nifflers would be a good final addition to the Toad Town Kingdom. I'd never seen one of the creatures before, but apparently they were a black furry ball with a wide beak and legs like a chicken, which worked as a 'vacuum', whatever that was, for negative energy in the air. They did have a tendency to explode when consuming too much negative energy too fast, so Bel wanted to gather a large enough congregation of the Nifflers to mitigate this problem that, by her words, seemed unavoidable if they were introduced slowly like all the other species had been.

System was running around between the sectors of the settlement, chasing the Slugmen Translator, yelling something about wanting to hear her squeal. That is to say, she was back to her normal self.

"Hey Toady," Imu said.

I hopped over to where he sat cross-legged in the grass, his plump legs like the doughy logs my Bakery turned into baguettes.

"Do you remember the plan to feed Wolf's Bane to Pete?"

I tried to shrug, but it was still impossible for me, so I answered, "What's Wolf's Bane?"

Imu rubbed the bridge of his nose in annoyance, then flung his arm out, turning a small bit of text from his scrolling pane before him into a large floating wall above him. "Look:"



Angelic Fork ★

Personally, I thought it was a smart and creative idea Toad! Don't let the haters get you down.

What happened to plan Wolf's Bane though.

“That’s a comment from Chapter 13.”

“I’m drawing a blank on this,” I told him.

“It was a plan you came up with to poison the Hydra-Goose back in Chapter 7.”

His continual fourth-wall breaks were giving me a headache, so I was glad when Pete enlightened him with an answer.

“THE WOLF’S BANE WAS DELICIOUS. ITS PIQUANT FLAVOUR GOES WELL WITH THE RUBBERY FLESH OF A WHOMEN.”

“Wait, you ate my minions because they were delicious?” I asked, unsure if I should see it as a compliment or not.

“YES. THEY ARE THE QUINTESSENTIAL FLAVOUR-MIX OF RED BEEF AND FROG-LEGS, WITH THE FUN TEXTURE OF TOADFLESH.”

“I didn’t realise you were such a foodie,” Imu remarked.

“IF I DID NOT ENJOY DEVOURING FLESH, BONE, AND MARROW, MY EXISTENCE WOULD BE QUITE DULL. BUT, ALL GEESE SHARE MY PREDILCTION FOR TASTY TREATS.”

“I thought your kind were just assholes who killed everything around you, but I’m glad to know there were ulterior motives behind it. It somehow makes me feel slightly less terrible about all my minions you killed.”

“YOU’RE WELCOME. ALTHOUGH, I MUST SAY THAT NOTHING COMPARES TO THE FLAVOURFUL COFFEE BEAN AND THE HOT JUICE MADE FROM IT.”

Yopi, who had just arrived to oversee the brewing of another massive batch for the Hydra-Goose, looked up at the towering monstrosity and said, “I didn’t know you could talk.”

“THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THIS INSIGNIFICANT TOAD CRETIN, I HAVE BEEN GRANTED THE POWER TO VOICE MY INNER THOUGHTS.”

“Well, that’s good.”

“I LOVE YOU YOPI.”

Popi, the Fairy that always clung to the Barista, emerged from his messy hair and let out whispered, “What the fuck?”

“I love you too, Pete,” Yopi replied. “You’re like the brother I never had.”

“Damn, he just friend-zoned Pete,” I replied, knowing the pain the Hydra-Goose felt in that exact moment. “Reminds me of the time my cousin four-and-a-half-times-removed told me I was like a cousin to her... really broke my heart.”

Popi piped up and said, “Yopi is used to turning down romantic offers. As a Barista he faces a lot of fetishisation and thus had to learn the hard truth that coffee-drinkers have a tendency to romanticise the one who brews their coffee.”

“Maybe I should learn to brew coffee,” I replied. “I want to be fetishised.”

Popi sighed, but Yopi just put on a confused smile.

A loud wail rent the air and we all turned to its source: Pete. Five of his nine heads were streaming water from their eyes, while the last four looked ready to burn the garden, castle, and entire settlement to the ground.

“MY HEART IS IN RUINS. I NOW RELATE TO THE SONGS PLAYED BY THE MANY BARDS I ATE IN MY TRAVELS.”

“You can find someone better than me,” Yopi assured the enormous nine-headed Hydra-Goose. “Perhaps you are not the only one of your kind that exists.”

Pete let out another wail, before taking to the air and flying away. **“I NEED SOME TIME ALONE!”** he screamed as he disappeared into the clouds.

As we watched him from the grass of the castle’s gardens, Yopi asked, “Why was he wearing a cape with a picture of Lady Light and Kevin the Big-Lipped on it?”

“So that’s who that eyebrow-lacking woman is!” I blurted out.

“No wonder she hides her visage with blinding light,” Imu said with a chuckle. Then he turned to Yopi and asked, “Wait, how do you know that’s Lady Light?”

“A lot of White Elves worship her and use a similar painting of her as what was depicted on Pete’s cape. It’s why so many White Elves shave their eyebrows off. They want to be like her.”

Imu looked like he just had an epiphany. “I thought they just did it because they’re morons.”

“Did you know that prior to becoming a Goddess, she was actually a Support Imp?”

Imu and I both blinked in response.

“What!?” we then said in unison.