

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 12

Woohoo! I'm back in control of my body...

Pulling my eyes away from my freed hands and upwards, I gazed into hell as the undead chimera charged right at me like a raging bull, and suddenly, I hated my life!

Oh shit... I'm back in control of my body!

A funny thing about me, I've always been a bit extreme, often taking things way too far to make a stupid point. I was sort of a bitch that way. For example, before fully coming out of the closet, I had a boyfriend, Ethen, whom I met at college, and after he started cheating on me behind my back with Mia, my best friend, who was also my first crush, I wanted to hurt him just as bad, if not worse! Looking back, I think I was mostly angry that they lied to my face and never invited me... *Whatever!* Anyhow, I slept with his mother. I admit it was not one of my proudest moments, but he was more ashamed of it than I was. So, the victory was mine, and besides, she was a total MILF, perhaps not the best mother...

Let's just say she had a bit of a reputation around the local bar scene. The antibiotics I was on afterward only verified those rumors. Although, I did pick up a few nifty tricks from her. Still, the funniest thing, Ethen's last name, was, honest to god, Stifler. *I was the girl that banged Stifler's mom!* The jokes and teasing he endured lasted throughout his junior and senior years at ASU, while I had to deal with two weeks of burning whenever I went to the bathroom. *Worth it!* As for Mia, let us just say Ethen gave her his mother's chlamydia... *I love revenge!*

Yes, I'm a bitch, and yes, I enjoyed my triumph with a warm slice of American apple pie. Anyways, there's a point I'm trying to make. Attempting to kill myself to spite Ava, was on my very, very long list of stupid decisions, but the thought of being her personal puppet while she continued to lie to me was terrifying and infuriating. That all said, I wanted to live!

Raising my hand at the charging beast, I called forth Blight—but nothing happened! I shook my hand frantically as the chimera's shadow began to loom over me, followed by a massive set of teeth as the rushing fucker took a bite at me. I leapt to my right, avoiding being chomped on, but not so lucky to elude the oversized paws as the monster-truck-sized undead cat trampled over me like a crushed car at a monster truck rally. I had escaped the worst of it in the utter opposite of elegance and gracefulness as I tumbled across the sand after being thoroughly trashed about and kicked out the other side. Thankfully, the chimera had difficulty stopping in the sand-covered arena as it skidded past me for several meters.

Active Passive [Defense Boost]

All damage is reduced by 20%.
You have taken 8 points of [Blunt] damage. Current Health: 332 out of 340

“Crap, I don’t know if I’m happy or disappointed that lying bitch goddess isn’t here to deal with those annoying notifications. Ugh!”

I climbed back to my feet just as the chimera slid to a stop. Its lion head tilted back to eye me like a gazelle. Lifting my arm again, I called further Blight—but nothing happened once again! *Necrotic Flame! Life Drain?! Fear? Soul Sucker.* Nothing was working! At that moment, a dreadful thought crossed my mind, Ava had turned off my Spells and Abilities. *Fuck me! That fucking goddess is trying to kill me!*

Yes, I know I swear too much, fuck off! My frustration was bubbling over as I tried to cast anything, everything, something as if my life depended on it... Because it did! However, nothing worked, including Thermalsense. The bitch had sentenced me to death!

The chimera changed tactics as it started circling me like a cat cornering a mouse, all while its snake tail hissed at me. It was toying with me! Any hopes of returning to Aurelia were now lost to me, and that thought alone stung more than any betrayal I’d experienced. *Argh, this might be for the best, Blake. I’m no champion. I’m a murdering psychopath who enjoys eating her victims. Ugh, perhaps this new reality filled with magic and delicious corpses is better off without me.*

I sighed as the chimera stopped circling, leaned down low, stuck its snake tail high in the air, and started wiggling its butt about. I’d never owned a cat. I prefer dogs, more specifically, Great Danes. Always had one around since I was a little girl. Big lazy, snuggly giants. And yet, watching this chimera shake its booty, I knew exactly what was about to happen.

There was nowhere to hide, and I couldn’t run fast enough. I was screwed, about to be turned into black gooey cat shit. My only hope was in my Corrosive and Venomous passives. When it eats me, I’ll fuck it up, but Ava had mentioned passives could be turned off, which meant the bitch might have turned them off. **DAMNIT!** However, watching the yellow drool dripping from the lion’s head and the green from the snake’s, I could easily guess the undead beast had Acid and Poison immunity. I was dead either way.

Then the dreadful moment I knew was coming finally happened. The overgrown mutated lion pushed off the ground in an explosion of sand as it pounced. My world, in turn, was obscured with sand as the beast soared up before coming back down right at me. I started screaming out Spells and Abilities in a hectic rage. Most of the shit, I started screaming, I didn’t know what it did, but I didn’t care. ***I’m not dying here!***

“BLIGHT! Necrotic Flame, god damn you! **YOU FUCKING BITCH!** Life Drain, damnit! Fear! Silk Webbing! Fear! Charm, asshole! FEAR! You piece of shit! Soul Container! Mother fucking, Soul Sucker! Leap! Burst! Leap! LEAP! FUCKING LEAP! **[Burst].**”

My world suddenly froze! The lion's face mere centimeters from my own, mouth opened wide with its decaying lips curled back into a nasty snarl, exposing putrid gums and enormous yellowed teeth as it prepared to chomp down on me. However, the oddest thing started happening, I was propelled forward against my volition at an insane velocity. I passed under its front outstretched paws, under its decomposing belly, then I felt a hard whack upside the face as if I were struck by two massive steel orbs. The impact sent me into a daze. As a result, I lost my footing and collapsed into a barrel roll, tumbling across the entire coliseum arena.

You have taken 16 points of [Blunt] damage. Current Health: 316 out of 340
You have taken 40 points of [Fall] damage. Current Health: 276 out of 340

“Ouchie,” I groaned as I finished skipping across the arena like a pebble on water.

I started glancing around for the chimera as I pulled myself up, but the sand in the air was too dense to see beyond ten meters. And yet, I could hear a godawful high-pitched screeching noise as if a cat was suffering a truly horrendous death. I've always heard the expression, “It sounded like a dying cat.” I just didn't know what that sounded like until now.

“Holy shit, I just used Burst!”

The ability activated differently from when Ava pretended to be my split personality. Realization flooded into me at how obvious the solution was that I felt stupid for not doing it sooner. I couldn't just call or force a spell or ability to work. I had to command it to activate with my will. It was how I used them before Ava made it easy. *Argh, I'm an idiot!*

Taking the brief moment I had to finally breathe, I focused **[Mana Sight]** into the palm of my hand and took a quick peek at the damage done to my face. Relief washed into me that it worked. The spell was active when Ava had left, and I had been too scared to mess with it, worried I wouldn't be able to reactivate it. Thankfully, my beautifully formed face Ava had constructed came into view, but half of my spider silk skin she had woven had been torn clean off. *Ugh, I don't know how to fix it without her. God damnit! Hmm, I guess it would be goddess, damnit... Pfft.*

An uneasy sense of annoyance came over me, I refused to admit it out loud, but I was already missing that manipulative bitch. That said, I wasn't about to ask her for any help! Pulling **[Mana Sight]** out of my palm and back into my eyes, I found the sand in the air was starting to disperse. The first thing I noticed were the three marble statues... They were still watching me. *Fucking creepy!*

Then I spotted the huge rotting cat with its snake head tail tucked up underneath it. It was staggering about aimlessly as if its back legs refused to work as it continued making that horrid screeching, sounding like a high-pitched tornado siren. At that moment, a horrifying realization came over me as I lifted my hand and brushed the side of my face where the Silk Webbing had been torn off.

“He tea-bagged me!”

The undead beast was wounded, but I knew it wouldn't last... *Huh...* I believe I confirmed with my face that the chimera was a he and not an it. *Whatever, still an it!* I knew I needed a plan before his balls healed and it went back on the attack.

Considering my options, I noticed a few corpses scattered about the outer edges of the arena, leftovers from the first round Ava had fought. Thankfully one of them was nearby. I took off in a sprint toward it while the chimera was still distracted as he wailed. Unlike when Ava controlled my body, I had no fancy gymnastic capabilities, summersaults, or flips. I had no grace to speak of, so instead of coming to a stylish stop beside the corpse as if sliding into home plate, I tripped. Facefirst. Into its groin. Worst. Day. Ever!

Lying there, head buried in a putrid decaying corpse's crotch, I was ashamed to admit it, but I was salivating. *Why do I love the taste of dead things? Because they're delicious, Blake!* Everyone's tastebuds change over time. So why should I feel guilty for my highly evolved tastes? It's no different than aged meat... Right?

“**[Absorb]**,” I muffled out before I became too distracted with my tasty meal. By that point, my face had already corroded through the dead man's pelvis bone. Well, the portions not hidden behind my silk face had. *Oh shit, what does my face look like right now?*

[Absorb] [Undead Warrior] Successful. New Status Bounces and Unlocks are Awarded.	
+ 2 Strength + 1 Dexterity + 1 Constitution + 0 Intelligence + 0 Wisdom - 6 Charisma	<u>Unlockable:</u> [Weapon Proficiency]

Ugh, fucking awesome, my Charisma fell again... Wait, aren't I suppose to get three Unlockable skills from Absorb?

Glancing back at the chimera, the undead beast had stopped its wobbled pacing and was now busy licking its testicles. At least I knew where I would be attacking. A thought crossed my mind, Ava had used Absorb on three other corpses... *What did she get?* With a mental command, I called out **[Status]**.

Name: Blake Race: Black Pudding Class: Dungeon Monster Level: 26 <u>Titles:</u> [Hopeless Crusader]	<u>Racial Skills:</u> [Absorb] – III [Corrosive] – Max [Polymorph] – IV [Stellar Void] – I [Thermalsense] – III <u>Spells:</u>	<u>Vulnerabilities:</u> [Fire] [Holy] <u>Immunities:</u> [Acid] [Charm] [Darkness]
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<p>Unspent Spell Points: 5 Unspent Ability Points: 4 Unspent Attribute points: 6</p> <p>Health: 400 / 400 Mana: 500 / 500 Stamina: 260 / 260</p> <p>Strength: 15 Dexterity: 13 Constitution: 20 Intelligence: 25 Wisdom: 15 Charisma: -7</p>	<p>[Blight] – II [Charm] – I [Fear] – I [Life Drain] – II [Mana Sight] – Max [Necrotic Flame] – I [Soul Container] – I</p> <p><u>Abilities:</u> [Burst] – I [Defense Boost] – I [Leap] – I [Paralysis] – I [Silk Webbing] – I [Soul Sucker] – I [Soulsense] – I [Spider Walk] – II [Veil Polyglot] – Max [Venomous] – Max</p>	<p>[Disease] [Poison] [Sleep]</p> <p><u>Unique:</u> [Dissociative] [Restricted] [Restricted]</p> <p><u>Unlockable:</u> [Weapon Proficiency] - IV</p>
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Ava seemed to have leveled me up from the battle with the undead mobs in round one. *Just how high level is this area?* According to my Status, I didn't receive any significant upgrades to my Spells or Abilities from those levels and wouldn't until I either reached level fifty or defeated another dungeon boss. I was grateful to have the racial ability, Absorb as a cheat, and to use it for replenishing my Health, Mana, and Stamina pools while stealing Spells and Abilities with it was priceless. Alas, the undead mobs lying about only seemed to possess Weapon Proficiency for me to steal with Absorb, but I lacked sufficient points to activate it at tier four.

I heard a low growl and turned to see the chimera, freshly recovered from its wound, charging at me with ferocity as if guided by wrath and vengeance. Its lion's head started belching out a thick yellow cloud while its cobra snake tail spat liquid green globs at me. Ava had insisted before handing back control I was outclassed in this fight, but I didn't care. With a silent sigh, I straightened my gooey spine as I stood my ground, not backing down from this dangerous undead bastard. Despite its fearsome size, I was not afraid. I had a plan! I raised my arms and balled my fists, ready for the chimera's charge. As it closed in, I released a warcry of my own with all my might.

“**[Burst]**,” I shouted!

I refused to turn this into a fierce battle. I lacked the confidence and skill needed to be a badass warrior, at least right now, so I would play dirty! My body accelerated forward in a rush of high velocity at the fucker as if I were in a quarter-mile drag race, but this time I swung out my fist with the full force of Burst behind me. My punch connected with the lion's testicles like an arcade boxing machine. Upon impact, I felt something liquify. Whether or not that was my arm or its balls, I did not know yet. At the same moment, the chimera let out a cross between a shriek and a roar of pain as its back legs buckled.

Suddenly its cobra tail curled underneath itself, lashing out at me in retaliation. With my remaining momentum, I dodged its first attack easily enough, but I couldn't do it again. Burst was already fading, leaving me stuck beneath it, vulnerable to the cobra's full fury. *Fuck, I'm so dead!*

The snake pulled back for another strike, all while its lion's head shrieked out like a dying cat from the pain of my punch to its most vital area, all while a yellow cloud of Acid wheezed out from its mouth. However, I was not deterred. With a mental command, I cast [**Necrotic Flame**], sending a rush of purple flames out in all directions. And yet, the cobra tail was not deterred either.

You have taken 140 points of [Piercing] damage. Current Health: 320 out of 400
You have taken 0 points of [Poison] damage. Current Health: 260 out of 400
You have taken 0 points of [Acid] damage. Current Health: 260 out of 400

*Crap, that hurt! I need to get out of here. Burst! Burst?! **Fuck!** It's probably on cooldown.*

Standing above me was the chimera, its lion's head snarling, snapping, as it bellowed out in agony. I turned to swing a punch at those two dangling balls tucked between its crumpled rattling legs, but I immediately discovered what had liquified as I did. My right arm was gone! To make matters worse, the cobra head was about to lash out at me. *I'm so screwed!*

In another moment of desperation, I panicked and mentally screamed, [**Leap**]. I soared upward before smacking my head against the backside of the chimera's open ribcage. I was now inside the monster! A little dumbstruck, it took me a second to gather myself. The cobra's strikes were narrowly missing as it tried to bite at me within itself. I quickly surveyed my surroundings before planning my next move.

An evil grin crept on my face as I began my assault from within the chimera. I was a black pudding, a shapeless monstrosity in the form of a woman. I raised both my arms, well, one arm and a stump. Thick, inky tendrils shot forth, entangling the chimera's guts and intestines, twisting and pulling. I moved quickly and efficiently, taking advantage of my position inside the monster's body. With a fierce cry, I plunged my tentacles into the chimera's heart while releasing [**Life Drain**]. The chimera let out another roar, but it didn't sound like the pained shrieks from before. To make matters worse, the undead bastard did not collapse.

The cobra's tail was now lashing into its chest cavity to get me, narrowly missing as I continued my attack. I was in a dangerous position, unable to exit or risk another strike, but I was not backing down. I was determined to bring the undead chimera down once and for all. However, I had literally ripped its heart out, but it would not die. Another thought came to me, and I used [**Blight**]. I watched on as pus-filled sores and lesions formed throughout the creature's insides, all while a dark, cruel mist continued to seep out of me. But sadly, that, too, wasn't enough. It almost seemed like I wasn't so much hurting the creature as annoying it while it tended to the real wound.

Blake, it's not a normal undead. It's a lich! There should be a phylactery, possibly two, one for the cobra and the other for the lion!

“Oh, look who decided to show up! Come here to lie to me again and steal my body?”

I won't do anything without your permission. However, can we have this conversation once you're safe?

“Ugh, fine! But lie to me again, and I swear it will be my life's mission to kill a goddess! Also, I want a powerful Restricted unlocked for all this shit!”

Ha! Good luck! Now shut up and look for those phylacteries.

“You shut up. What does a phylactery even look like? Wait a minute... Fuck! I know exactly where they are!”

Where?

I turned around and crawled back through the ribcage and down its spine. I continued past the undead chimera's insides, past its stomach and intestines, narrowly avoiding strikes from its cobra tail coming through the opening, determined to reach my destination. The monster's inside was a mess of rotting blood and guts. Admittedly, I was quite frustrated; I couldn't take a second to stop and enjoy a meal. Also, my Corrosive and Venomous touch wasn't working, nor did the monster-truck-sized fucker freeze up from my Paralysis. My trademark weapons were useless!

Without much warning, the chimera collected itself from the wound I inflicted upon its balls and began jumping around like a mad bull, trying to shake me out. I clung to its bones and organs, determined to stay inside the monster. The chimera's jumps and jerks grew more and more violent, but I refused to let go. I had to reach my objective, no matter what. I was not going to let this monster defeat me. ***I refuse to die!*** I held on tight and continued to crawl with tentacle arms as I went deeper into its insides, determined to emerge victorious as I pushed my way into its pelvis.

I had done it! I was above the fucker's scrotum. I just had to figure out how to get down there... An idea came to me, and I released [**Polymorph**], turning back into my natural form, a sticky, slimy, gooey, tar-like, black pudding. Nothing could stop me as I slid deep into the bastard's nutsack. And there they were, two soft glowing rubies...? No wonder my fist couldn't hold up to punching those. Whatever his balls were made out of, they were now mine to break!

“Umm... Ava, I don't think I have anything that can crack these nuts open?”

They're phylacteries, not nuts. Did you collect the sword and shield?

“What! You're telling me you didn't even bother to watch the whole fight?”

Of course not! I was too pissed off at you. I thought you were going to die for sure.

“Ugh, you bitch! Pissed at me for what?! You're the one that manipulated me! And no, I did not collect... Oh shit... Ava, what will happen if I separate his nuts without destroying them?”

Nothing, it's a lich... Well... Maybe... It won't be able to go too far without its phylacteries at its low level. If you cut them out and tossed them outside the coliseum. The body might collapse, but the souls would remain within the phylacteries, seeking a new body to latch onto.

“How is this thing, low level?”

Blake, this is an ancient noob dungeon designed to get young levelers to level one hundred, so they can pick their first class.

I couldn't help myself as I began cackling like a mad woman! I didn't care if this was some noob dungeon and I was a weakling. I had just won; only the fucker hadn't realized it yet! My body was now coating the chimera's nuts—phylacteries! I didn't have anything to cut them out, and my key Spells and Abilities were useless. However, I did have one trick that Ava hadn't thought of, [**Stellar Void**].

You have defeated [Lich King Chimera] Floor Boss.
<p><u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u> <u>LEVEL UP!</u></p> <p>You are now level 38. 12 Attribute Points Awarded.</p>
<p>Achievement unlocked: You have defeated a Grotto of the Betrayed's Floor Boss.</p> <p>5 Ability Points Awarded. 5 Spell Points Awarded. 5 Attribute Points Awarded.</p>
<p>Achievement unlocked: You have solo defeated a Floor Boss.</p> <p>5 Ability Points Awarded. 5 Spell Points Awarded. 5 Attribute Points Awarded.</p>
<p>Achievement unlocked: You have defeated a Floor Boss more than 50 levels above your own.</p> <p>5 Ability Points Awarded. 5 Spell Points Awarded. 5 Attribute Points Awarded.</p>

“Wait... I thought those marble statues were the floor boss?”

Oh, they are!