

BLAKE PUDDING

CHAPTER 25

PRIMAL INSTINCTS

Yua leaned against the portcullis of the ruins, her body taut with tension. The impending doom seemed to press down upon her shoulders, a weighty burden that threatened to smother her spirit. Her instincts screamed for them to continue running, to escape from this place of death and despair. Yet, they had sought shelter within a fortress that had already endured a siege. She couldn't shake the thought that they might have unknowingly walked into a trap, a place where their journey could culminate in nothing but death.

The ascending sun seemed to mock them, casting a haunting light upon the contorted architecture and the tormented spirits that lurked within the shadows. The scene before them resembled the gates of hell thrown wide open, as if they were gazing directly into an abyss of despair. Yua half-expected a sinister clown to materialize from behind the rubble, but instead, they were met with the presence of Jason and, even more unsettling, Blake.

Reflecting on the final stages of the battle, Yua couldn't escape the sense of awe and terror that Aurelia's power had evoked. It was nearly incomprehensible to Yua that the necromancers had once been vanquished, especially after witnessing a lone vampire like Aurelia decimate an entire army. However, as the remnants of the enemy forces retreated into the obscurity of the night, a revelation dawned upon Yua: many of these creatures bore a significant weakness, the unrelenting power of the sun.

Yua was acutely aware of the dire situation they were in. The morning light was tightening its grip, and the encroaching day spelled trouble. She harbored doubts about their ability to hold out once the pursuing army caught up to them. In her heart, she longed to seize Heather's hand and make a desperate escape. But the newfound Crone's Priestess, now adorned with an aura of both confidence and beauty, had stepped into her role. Yua's thoughts teetered between the grim possibility of their demise and the comfort of having Heather by her side. The uncertainty gnawed at her: *did Heather share the same feelings?*

Dread gripped Yua's heart as she cast her gaze on a distant speck emerging from the southeast horizon. At first, it was a mere smudge against the sky, easily dismissible. But as she strained her eyes, the smudge morphed into a disturbing truth: a growing number of shapes, unmistakably airships, were converging towards them. A wave of fear, cold and stomach-churning, washed over Yua as her gaze darted around. The frog-faced man had been laboring on a magical barrier, yet to her dismay, there was no protective shield encircling the ruins. Vulnerability hung heavy in the air, leaving them utterly exposed. Desperation clawed at her as she searched for a place to hide, and the depths of the dungeon seemed the only option. *How wonderfully grim.*



A little girl's voice quivered with fear as she tentatively approached the Priestess, her bunny ears twitching with anxiety. "Have you seen my papa?" she asked, her eyes brimming with worry.

Heather's response was a soothing melody, her gentle smile a beacon of hope in the girl's troubled world. "I'm afraid not," she said in a soft voice, "but we can certainly look for him."

She took the child's hand, guiding her deeper into the ruins. The corridors were congested with clusters of refugees huddled together, mingling with dungeon dwellers and even a sprinkling of necromancers and vampires, a motley assembly brought together by circumstance. Haunted eyes and hollow cheeks bore witness to unspeakable horrors, a collective trauma etched into their expressions. Torn clothing draped over their frail frames, evidence of better days long gone. Amidst this scene of desolation, Heather couldn't shake the thought that perhaps they were all simply awaiting the embrace of death.

Heather was overcome with a sense of duty to these impoverished people. She didn't know why, but she felt it was her duty to bring them hope, to carry them to a brighter future. And for that, her nervousness had disappeared. Glancing down at the little girl's hand clutching her own, pale skin standing out in contrast against her grayish purple. The thought of them suffering any more than they had was almost unbearable to the dark elf from another world.

Heather had once lived a quiet, unassuming life, resigned to the prospect of solitude and a home filled with feline companions. But destiny had other designs, thrusting her into a new realm and embroiling her in a brutal competition for the title of Nightmares' Champion. Beneath her gentle exterior, Heather held a quiet yearning for retribution against the detestable Jason. Though inherently kind-hearted, even she couldn't help but savor the prospect of his downfall. It was, however, Blake who ultimately sealed the fate of both Jason and Heather, ending their lives in a single, fateful blow. Amid the grimness of that moment, Heather found herself harboring an odd admiration for the woman who had taken her life. And now, reborn as a Priestess of Dreams to the Crone, she bore a mantle she could never have fathomed, even in her darkest imaginings. The strangest part? Heather had come to feel an unexpected gratitude for this twisted turn of events.

The little bunny girl's voice quivered with fear and uncertainty as she spoke to Heather, her eyes brimming with tears. "Do you think my papa is okay?"

Heather felt a pang of sympathy as she caught her own reflection in the girl's glistening gaze. "Don't worry," Heather reassured her, "we'll go find out. What's your name?"

The little girl sniffed softly before introducing herself as "Lulu Willowy."

"Well, Lulu, it's nice to meet you. I'm—"

But Lulu interrupted with an exclamation of awe, "The Priestess!"

A gentle smile graced Heather's face as she observed the change in Lulu's expression, relief washing over her as she saw the pain dissipate from the bunny girl's eyes. "I am the Priestess," she confirmed, her voice warm and comforting.

Suddenly a piercing scream added to the symphony of spent tears and shattered spirits. It was as if a woman was violently torn apart, limb by limb. The mere sound of it was enough to fill the chambers of refugees and dungeon folk with the smell of urine and excrement.



With a twisted grin, Jason watched his prey from the shadows, relishing the moment he had been waiting for. The unsuspecting fool was wandering the halls alone, begging to be caught. But Jason didn't mind – he would savor every moment of skinning the frog who had summoned him into this twisted reality and feast on his heart.

As he moved through the darkness, Vorigan seemed almost still. Jason waited for the perfect moment to strike. Suddenly, he emerged from the shadows behind his prey, his sword poised to strike. But the frog moved quickly, evading the deadly blade by a hair's breadth. The thrill of the hunt only fueled Jason's desire for blood. He eagerly pursued his quarry, determined not to let him slip away again.

Vorigan bolted through the ruins, his pulse racing with twisted glee. He didn't flee for safety or help. No, he fled from anyone who might dare to offer him aid, his heart singing with the thrill of being hunted by a bloodthirsty, homicidal sadist. As he ran, he gradually slowed down, unable to resist the irresistible lure of being caught by his pursuer's serrated teeth. He could already taste the sweet nectar of pain and pleasure that awaited him.

Finally, Jason was catching up to the freak, surprised the stupid frog could run as fast as he did, but it looked like he had finally cornered him. Before the frog could get away, Jason lunged and took a swing with his sword, the sound of crunching bone echoed through the corridors, shattering the silence. Vorigan's bloodcurdling scream filled the air as Jason severed his right leg below the knee. The amphibian crashed to the ground, a pool of blood quickly forming around him as he wailed.

So much pleasure coursed through Vorigan as Jason manhandled him, tossing him onto his stomach with such untamed fury. Vorigan lay there, moaning in ecstasy as Jason mercilessly continued his rampage. The frog-like man couldn't believe his luck in being caught by his sadistic champion. Despite the violating pleasures being brought upon him, Vorigan couldn't help but feel blessed that he had chosen such a worthy man. After all, he had gone to great lengths to secure a Dark Fae body to suit Jason's cruel and sadistic nature.

Oh, how Vorigan loved the feeling of those razor-sharp teeth piercing him so deeply. Jason tore chunks of flesh free from Vorigan's back with each bite, exposing his ribcage from behind. Vorigan screamed in delight as the champion, which he had picked out for his cruel and sadistic soul, repeatedly bashed at his spine. The sound of bones cracking filled the hall as Jason yanked several ribs out and dug his fist deep in search of Vorigan's heart. Jason was quite literally and metaphorically stealing his heart.

With another tough jerk, Vorigan was flipped over. Like something out of a dark and twisted scene, Vorigan lay on his back, utterly entranced by the figure looming above him. It was as if Jason was a god of lust and pain, bringing pleasure and suffering to his helpless victim. He held Vorigan's

still-beating heart in one hand, a sight that would have spelled instant death for any ordinary vampire. But Vorigan's amphibian lineage meant he could survive for months without a heartbeat, a trait often used for hibernation. However, seeing Jason hold his heart only added to his twisted pleasure. Vorigan watched as Jason sank his teeth into his heart with reckless abandon. The quivering in his groin only added to the moment's ecstasy, a twisted dance of pain and pleasure that Vorigan knew he would never forget.

Jason's ascension to becoming the Nightmares' Champion had also altered him, for he was no longer a mere Dark Fae. He was given the subrace of Grimm Reaper, an agent of the Crone, her errand boy – *whatever* – he was a harbinger of death. Below him was the vile frog who had made it all possible, his heart tasting like a perfect mango fruit, its juices dripping from his chin. Jason's only sorrow was that the freak's suffering was over... Jason glanced down, noticing the mutilated frog was reaching into his robes and was—.”

“**WHAT THE FUCK?!** Are you jerking yourself off?!” Jason yelled.

“Oh gods, don't stop! Keep going, my champion.” Vorigan moaned as he continued to enjoy himself.

“You sick fuck!”

Jason kicked the frog's hand aside, revealing more of the amphibian's anatomy than he cared to see. He reached down and grasped the frog by his sensitive area, giving a sharp tug that separated the creature from what would have been any man's prized possession. To Jason's surprise, the frog's screams hadn't been of agony but rather pleasure. It was then that Jason was hit in the face with a thick fluid, getting the worst of it in his eyes. The burning sensation in his eyes was unbearable. The salty taste that leaked into his mouth made him gag as he stumbled backward, blinded and disorientated.

“Oh, gods. **OH, GODS!**” Vorigan screamed. “That was amazing!”

As several footsteps echoed down the corridor, Vorigan couldn't help but sigh in disappointment. Apparently, his screams of delight had not gone unheard. With a deep sigh, Vorigan's leg, heart, flesh, ribs, and cock began to regenerate, leaving no trace of the damage inflicted by Jason's sadistic pleasures. As the crowd drew near, Vorigan got up, already feeling the sensation of euphoria fading. Glancing at his champion, he was disappointed to see his poor Jason stumbling about, trying to wipe the frog's fluids from his eyes.

“Let me help you with that,” Vorigan said with a blissful chuckle, leaning in to lick the viscous substance from Jason's face and eyes with his still-stiff frog tongue.



Amid the urgency of erecting the barrier, Aurelia hastened to join forces with the dungeon folk's chieftain and Hikari. Regrettably, her current predicament had separated her from her beloved, Blake, amidst the labyrinthine corridors of the ruins. As she wrestled with thoughts of their potential activities, the looming threat of the approaching army should have been her primary concern. With daylight now casting its unwelcome rays, Aurelia found herself ensconced within

the dim heart of the ruin's central hall, a place that made her feel exposed and frail. Under different circumstances, she wouldn't have dared reveal herself to outsiders during the day. However, the situation demanded otherwise. Despite her vulnerabilities, her thoughts continued to wander to Blake, yearning for their reunion and hoping that their shared pleasures would soon conclude.

A chilling scream echoed throughout the ruins. Aurelia immediately recognized it as Vorigan's, even though it came from the opposite end of the structure.

A panicked fear spread throughout the hall, and someone exclaimed, "We're under attack!"

"Impossible," another voice responded, "None of our lookouts have reported anything."

A third voice chimed in, "They must have sent elite units ahead of their main force."

Aurelia's patience waned as the room buzzed with hysteria, prompting her to interject calmly, "There's no need to fret. I know that scream. It's not a cause for alarm." Confusion rippled through the gathered group, and a voice called for an explanation. With a weary sigh, Aurelia responded, "We can't afford to be sidetracked by it now. If it bothers you, gather a few others and investigate. Right now, our priority is setting up the barrier before addressing the portal."

Chief Hensley's voice cut through the chaos, "She's right. Let's get to work on the barrier."

The entrance of the new Priestess, accompanied by a young girl with bunny ears, barely registered with Aurelia. The child's tearful visage might have stirred empathy in others, but such sentiments held little sway over Aurelia. She refocused on her task of activating the barrier, relegating her attention to the critical matter at hand. Regrettably, Aurelia had to step in for Vorigan in this role, his magic falling short for the upcoming task. Doubts nagged at her regarding whether her magical reserves were sufficient to reignite the dungeon core in daylight – a task that was pivotal for their survival.

Heather's voice cut through the tense silence, her question hanging in the air like a heavyweight. "Has anyone seen this young girl's father?" she asked her gentle voice a stark contrast to the urgency of the situation.

At that moment, Blake entered the room, causing Aurelia's eyes to light up with a mix of joy and longing as her gaze fixed upon her beloved.

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"Ugh, the hunger still lingers," I groaned. I couldn't help but exhale in exasperation. The relentless gnawing of hunger persisted within me.

"Hey, at least that rabbit guy tasted pretty good," I replied to myself.

"No kidding," I sighed, feeling one of my souls twist in both horror and satisfaction by our actions.

"We need to find another one of those."

I noticed Heather holding the hand of a young beastkin child who looked similar to the rabbit guy we had consumed. "Hey, look at that. Heather has one that looks just like him."

"Do you think she'll let us babysit?" I grinned their way.

"What happened to 'no kids'?"

"Ugh, fine," I pouted to myself.

The grand doors of the great hall swung open with force, almost ripped from their hinges, as Yua burst into the room with wild and frenzied eyes. Her gaze seemed to reflect a glimpse of a demon from the depths of hell itself. Ragged gasps accompanied her heavy breath as she frantically scanned the room, her eyes darting back and forth in a crazed search for something or someone. They finally settled upon Heather.

"Hundreds of airships are heading this way!" Yua announced, her words igniting a frenzy of fear and chaos within the chamber.

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MOMENTS EARLIER!

I shadowed Aurelia's every movement with a hunger that matched a shooting star racing toward the horizon. My gaze remained ensnared by the entrancing sway of her hips, a rhythm that cast a spell upon me, holding me captive. The urge to feel the silkiness of her flawless skin once more consumed me, the desire for those passionate sensations consuming my thoughts entirely.

This sensation, this all-consuming emotion, was foreign to me. I'd never been one to fret over others' opinions or concerns, always doing as I pleased regardless of consequences. Yet now, I found myself perpetually lost in contemplation, entangled in an unending longing for both Aurelia's presence and her thoughts of me.

But the greatest enigma was why she referred to me as her beloved. I had no recollection of encountering her prior to my soul's summoning into this realm. Despite this, an invisible tether bound me to her, thoughts of her a constant presence in my mind. The way she moved, her voice's melody, the very essence of her scent—all these elements called out to me, igniting a fire of desire within that defied any rational explanation.

I ached to unravel her thoughts, to decipher the reasons behind her choice of me and her intentions for me. Yet, the more I delved into these mysteries, the deeper I sank into the abyss of my own yearning, ensnared by a desire that threatened to consume me whole. I walked a treacherous path, one that held both allure and danger, but my will was powerless against it. The yearning that coursed through my veins was an inferno I couldn't extinguish, a fire that only the touch of Aurelia could quell.

"Milady Aurelia," the frog's croak intruded, yanking me from my reverie, "they seek your aid in reactivating the dungeon core. I attempted it myself, yet my mana proved insufficient." The frog's interruption jolted me back to reality, shattering the dreamy cocoon that had enveloped me.

Aurelia let out a weary sigh, her graceful form tempting me to draw nearer. "Daybreak approaches, Vorigan. My mana is strained, but I'll give what I can. Is the dungeon denizens' Chieftain here? He possesses the power to reactivate the core."

"He is present, but he hesitates due to his pact with the Crone. He dreads being bound to the core once more."

Aurelia's frustration became evident through her dismissive gesture. "Very well then. Gather any stragglers lurking in the ruins and usher them to the Grand Hall. Also, station scouts and guards at the portcullis."

The frog obeyed without hesitation, but my gaze remained captivated by the one I yearned for. Aurelia was a compelling presence, a force that held sway over me without effort. I yearned to surrender to her every desire, to be engulfed by the intensity of her emotions.

I trailed behind Aurelia once again, my heart pounding with a mix of lust and anticipation as my gaze roamed the dimly lit corridors. The persistent stomach cramps were still present, but I pushed them aside, driven by a different kind of primal urge. In the distance, a figure caught my attention, igniting a completely different kind of desire within me. Without a second thought, I let Aurelia continue on her path, confident that she wouldn't notice my absence and that I could easily catch up later. For now, my focus shifted entirely to the exhilarating pursuit that lay ahead.

At first glance, he appeared like an ordinary man, but as my orange eyes settled on him, I couldn't miss the rabbit-like features that set him apart. Soft fur covered his body, and his farmer bibs added an endearing touch. The sight of him evoked a soft laugh from me, but as he approached with a smile, a different kind of hunger surged within me, one that I couldn't ignore. The notion of sinking into his flesh, tasting his blood, and experiencing his body dissolve around me consumed my thoughts. It was almost overwhelming. My acidic saliva pooled in my mouth as he drew closer, his rabbit-like attributes intensifying my desire. I yearned to feel his form entwined with mine, to devour him whole and relish the sensations that enveloped me. As he stood before me, the primal urges raged within, threatening to consume me entirely. The rabbit-man's smile only fueled my intrigue, and I couldn't help but wonder if he had any inkling of the deep desires that stirred within my very soul.

"I beg your pardon," he said with a concerned expression, his friendly smile never faltering. "I'm searching for my little Lulu."

I wrestled with the insatiable hunger that surged within me, threatening to overwhelm my self-control, the temptation to consume him whole almost too much to bear. "I'm afraid I haven't encountered anyone by that name," I managed to respond, my voice quivering as I struggled to rein in my monstrous instincts. "But I'd be more than willing to assist you in your search," I added, forcing a feeble smile, all the while devising a plan to entice him away from curious eyes and ears.

"Oh, how kind of you," he replied with a beaming smile, oblivious to the cruel lustful hunger that smoldered in my gaze. "I would forever be in your debt. I'm Elijah Willowy, and it's an honor to meet you."

“Blake,” I replied, my eyes raking over his body with a perverse hunger. His scent filled my being, and my primal instincts urged me to feast upon his flesh, to taste the sweet nectar of his blood as I played in his innards.

Aurelia had asked against me devouring the dead bodies that littered the ruins, for the necromancers would need them to bolster their numbers. However, she had said nothing about the refugees, an oversight on her part. So, with my incisional hunger growing stronger by the moment, I was left with no choice but to seek out my own meals. And it appeared that rabbit was on the menu.

At this moment, nothing else mattered except my hunger. The desire to consume and devour until my belly was full, a feat that could never be fully attained, for the hunger always lingered. Still, Elijah was merely a means to a short respite, a fleeting moment of satisfaction in an endless cycle of craving and desire. And so, I continued to allow myself to imagine the taste of his flesh, the feel of his bones dissolving against my skin, all the while knowing that he would soon become just another victim of my insatiable hunger.

“Are you a fighter or mage of any kind?” I asked, my voice cold and calculating.

“Oh, gods no,” he replied, his voice tinged with sadness. “I’m just a simple farmer trying to make my way in this cruel realm.”

When he spoke of the Kingdom of Slaethia taking his lands and killing his wife, I felt a surge of pleasure mixed with contempt. My heart stirred with a perverse delight, knowing he was a perfect victim of my desires. His loss only served to make him more vulnerable, and I longed to take advantage of his weakness.

“I see,” I replied with a false note of sympathy. “I’m so sorry for your loss.”

But in reality, I felt no remorse for his suffering. Instead, my mind was consumed by dark, twisted thoughts of taking him as my own, savoring him as I ate him slowly. The thought of his pain and terror only served to heighten my desire, and I longed to claim him for myself with every fiber of my being.

As we strolled down the corridor, Elijah prattled on about his Lulu. He was oblivious to the dark and twisted hunger that churned within me like a hurricane in a teacup. My eyes darted around, searching for the perfect alcove to indulge my darkest desires. And then, a piercing scream shattered the silence like a thousand fingernails on a chalkboard. It was like a woman was being ripped apart, her flesh torn to shreds and devoured by some unseen force. I could almost taste the metallic tang of blood in the air, like the scent of a rare delicacy.

Elijah quivered in fear, his scent wafting toward me like an irresistible fragrance that only stoked my appetite. It was akin to the aroma of freshly baked bread or a delectable roast, impossible to resist. My hunger surged with every passing moment, a blazing fire threatening to engulf me entirely. Primitive instincts urged me to delve my corrosive form into him, to taste his entrails as I slithered within his body until my cravings were sated. The darkness within me intensified, growing like an invasive weed that strangled all other emotions. In that instant, I was wholly

consumed by my lustful yearning. Giving in to a potent impulse, I forcefully propelled the rabbit into one of the chambers we traversed and slammed the door shut behind us, ensnaring the two of us in seclusion.

His fear was palpable, thick in the air like baked cookies in the breeze, as he stammered out the question that hung on his lips. “W-What are you doing?”

I could feel a grin spreading across my lips, relishing in the terror that radiated off him like heat from a flame. “What do you think I am, rabbit?” I taunted, knowing fully that my true nature was far more monstrous than he could ever imagine.

“R-Rabbit?!” he exclaimed, his voice trembling with fear and indignation. “Now you insult me. I don’t know what you are, but you appear human or even elf-like to me.”

I laughed cruelly at his ignorance, my amusement growing as I revealed a glimpse of my true form. “No, no, you poor rabbit,” I sneered. “I’m a Black Pudding.”

Before he could finish his sentence, the embroidery on my dress sprang to life with sudden animation, its tendrils wriggling in eagerness. Poor Elijah's voice was swallowed by a frightened yelp as both my legs and the lower hem of my dress transformed into a myriad of tentacles. In a desperate bid to put distance between us, he scrambled backward, but his efforts were in vain. Swiftly, I closed in on him, propelled by a twisted hunger that left me no choice, and he was trapped, ensnared in my grasp with no escape. The fragrance of his fear hung in the air, a seductive perfume that beckoned me closer. I inhaled it hungrily, relishing the anticipation of his impending demise.

My tentacles coiled around his limbs as he struggled fiercely against their grip. Yet, much to my satisfaction, he proved to be far weaker than I had expected. Drawing nearer to his face, I traced a finger down his forehead, a caress that left behind an acidic burn mark etched into his skin. The sound of his cries echoed within the chamber, but the door to the stone enclosure was thick, muffling the sound, and I doubted anyone beyond could hear him. This was a feast I intended to savor, a meal that I would take my time with.

I toyed with his lips, savoring the sensation of their flesh dissolving beneath my corrosive fingertip. His agonized screams only intensified my insatiable hunger, pushing me closer to the edge of devouring him entirely. However, I resisted the urge, choosing instead to prolong his suffering, toying with my prey like a predator playing with its catch. His futile struggles and desperate resistance were no match for the strength of my tentacles, rendering him utterly helpless and at the mercy of my dark desires. I drank in his pain and terror, relishing every moment of his torment as I indulged in the consumption of his flesh. Yet, amid the twisted pleasure, a sinister sadness flickered within me, an unsettling awareness of the cruelty of my actions, as his eyes clenched shut in terror.

"Why would he avert his gaze from something so exquisite?" I pondered, well, half of me did. It appeared that one of my souls was reveling in absolute delight, while the other fragment was attempting to avert her gaze—though still peeking with morbid curiosity.

I was determined not to let him avert his gaze. I was not someone to be denied pleasure, so I dissolved his eyelids with a sickening sizzle, ensuring he could witness every horrific, yet oddly captivating, detail of my consumption. With every passing moment, my hunger intensified, pushing me to revel in my darkest and most sadistic desires. As I consumed him piece by piece, I recognized there was no retreat from the twisted path I had embraced, a realization that strangely suited both of us.

Regrettably, the rabbit man perished while I was in the process of consuming him. It happened just as I had finished devouring his genitals—my appetite had taken me from his four limbs to that particular region. And even after this grisly consumption, my hunger remained unsated.

After our delectable repast, we made my way back toward the Great Hall, a heavy sigh escaping us. As I walked, our attention was drawn to the sight of Vorigan leading Jason by the hand, both of them moving in the same direction. The self-proclaimed champion seemed to be rubbing his reddened eyes as if he had been struck by some sort of blinding revelation – or perhaps a warning? Our heightened senses detected a distinctive scent in the air, one that was unmistakable.

"Oh, my gods!" I gasped.

"Do we think they're a couple?" I pondered aloud.

"I don't know," I tried to whisper. "Jason didn't come off as the type to me."

"I can't wait to tell the others." I waved my hands around excitedly, almost shouting.

"Since when was I the gossip type?" I tried to hush myself.

"Since always," I blurted out!

"No, I'm not," I replied in horror. "We're the antisocial type!"

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## BACK TO NOW!

As Yua burst into the Grand Hall, a wave of unease washed over everyone present, tingling along my senses like a delectable aroma. Her labored breaths and wild gaze ignited a thrilling excitement within me, a foretaste of the fear that had gripped her. The sudden cry that followed shattered the chamber's silence, a symphony of terror that resonated with my insatiable craving.

"Hundreds of airships are heading this way!" Yua blurted out.

Ah, the chaos, the destruction, the sheer ecstasy of it all! It was as if the world itself had orchestrated a grand celebration in my honor, and I stood there as the guest of honor. The thrill of anticipation coursed through my veins, a delicious shiver that seemed to resonate with the very core of my being. My metaphorical heart danced with exhilaration as the ground quivered beneath us, echoing the impending tumult. Debris cascaded around us like a symphony of devastation, and a wicked grin stretched across my face. Observing those nearby, their eyes wide with fear and despair, I couldn't help but pity their simplicity. They were oblivious to the true beauty of the chaos

and destruction unfolding before us. But I was different – I reveled in it, finding delight in the disorder that surrounded us.

Another desperate soul, one that struck a chord of familiarity within me, rushed into the chamber, his face contorted with panic. His presence ignited a flicker of recognition deep within me. "Rob, calm down!" Heather's voice rang out, her words a clear attempt to rein in the escalating hysteria.

It was amusing. Heather had initially come across as the quiet, stuttering type, but now, as she held the hand of a bunny-eared child, an air of confidence surrounded her. The others in the chamber looked up at her as if she held the key to their salvation. The scene bordered on the comical. As for me, fractured between minds and souls, a peculiar sense of elation settled over me.

Oh, how I relished the chaos and madness that enveloped my two fractured souls. Destruction had become our playground, a canvas upon which to splatter the hues of blood and insanity. Yet, amidst the tumult, our thoughts remained tethered to Aurelia, our fierce, sweet, and captivating Aurelia. She wrestled with the Dungeon Core, her struggle drawing our attention. How we yearned to feel her bare skin once again, to possess every part of her, even if it entailed tearing down all that stood in our path.

Aurelia's countenance glistened with sweat as she channeled her mana into the core. My mind was a maelstrom of turmoil, a chaotic tangle of conflicting impulses. One moment, an overwhelming urge to shield her, to become her unwavering defense, surged through me. The next, an insatiable hunger clawed at my senses, driving me to feast upon the very entrails of those in proximity, their fear and panic acting as gusts of wind fueling the blaze of my voracious desire. The bedlam and chaos beyond were but feeble distractions, pale in comparison to the tempest brewing within me.

Yet, their focus remained fixed on Aurelia's exertions, blissfully ignorant of the true monster lurking amidst them. Did they not realize they were but tantalizing morsels for my insatiable cravings? So long as Aurelia's forgetfulness persisted, they were pawns for my amusement and agony. The adversaries would find their conquest futile if I seized their quarry first. Though my hunger gnawed fiercely, they were mine to devour, to manipulate, to torment... TO SAVOR!

As I was lost in the thought of my next meal, Aurelia's voice jolted me back to reality. "Beloved, I need your help," she said, her beauty captivating me once again.

I approached Aurelia, my own core throbbing with anticipation. She stood as a vision of both beauty and power, and an unapologetic exhilaration surged through me. It was akin to a potent drug, an addiction I couldn't escape. With each passing moment, I found myself more entranced by her, yearning to fulfill her every wish. In this intricate reality, my mind twisted further into tumultuous disorder. Aurelia held a unique influence, coaxing forth an unexpected urge to care about others within me. Though, when I say others, I really mean just her.

Having a vampire, of all creatures, bring out the light within me was a peculiar sensation. It was almost as if she held the unique ability to perceive the hidden beauty within the depths of my fragmented souls. Without her, I sensed an incompleteness, a gnawing emptiness that was unsettling. Depending so heavily on her was both thrilling and frightening, as she became the beacon of guidance in a world that I had always preferred to be shrouded in darkness. Above all,

her absence left my shattered souls yearning for their missing piece. Yet, I struggled to articulate the profound strength of my emotions toward her. True, her allure was undeniable, but there was an enigmatic essence about her that defied explanation.

"My beloved, my mana is significantly depleted during the daylight hours. I lament not having enough reserves to activate the Dungeon Core myself. I implore you to establish a connection with it and infuse your mana into its core. As you do so, I will channel the magic into a protective barrier and initiate the portal," Aurelia explained with a mixture of yearning and a trace of concealed apprehension. It stirred an unsettling emotion within me, a blend of frustration and exasperation at her vulnerability.

The mere notion of Aurelia experiencing fear kindled an intense blaze of anger within me, fueling a desire to rend apart those accountable for tormenting her. Simultaneously, the torment of others was a source of dark delight, their pleas and supplications for mercy akin to a symphony of agony. Still, I couldn't afford to be overly consumed by my sadistic musings. The fear that gripped Aurelia was distinct. It was an unwelcome sensation, one that ignited a seething fury deep within me. I found myself yielding to the compulsion to venture outdoors and immerse in the feast of terror that awaited my indulgence.

Nonetheless, I possessed enough cunning to avoid a direct confrontation with the enemy. I had no desire to be entombed beneath these crumbling ruins. The tremors persisted around us. With a deep exhale, I locked my gaze onto Aurelia's captivating red irises. Despite the simmering rage within me, I painted a soft smile across my lips. A slight nod conveyed my understanding, a silent acknowledgment that her well-being took precedence for both of my souls.

As my fingers closed around the core, a whirlwind of emotions engulfed me—joy, fear, and an unsettling unease. The core's energy began to siphon my mana, yet I persisted, my grip unwavering. My resolve held steady even as my spider silk exterior unraveled, exposing the truth of my nature as a Black Pudding slime monster to everyone present.

The pleasant gasps from onlookers were drowned out by the sounds of explosions echoing through the ruins. Amidst the crumbling and burning world around us, I reveled in the illusion of power that the core brought me. Clutching the core felt like holding the universe itself, and despite my magic being drained, I felt invincible, as if nothing could obstruct my path.

The drain of mana began to blur my vision, flickering it in and out, but I clenched my eyes shut and persisted. I wouldn't release my grip! For Aurelia, I was ready to endure anything, even if it meant sacrificing everything. Yet, the core's power drain was too overwhelming to withstand, but I was determined to shield her at all costs, even if it meant embracing my own demise. The intensity of my emotions for her was baffling, a mystery I couldn't unravel.



Jeremy stationed himself at the portcullis, his fingers tightly gripping the corroded iron bars, his gaze fixed on the ominous airships hanging in the sky. Several vessels cast a disconcerting darkness over the land below, their looming shadows enveloping everything beneath. The remaining ships

circled like vultures in the sky, poised to descend and seize their impending prey. An inescapable sense of foreboding crawled up Jeremy's spine, threatening to swallow him whole.

Abruptly, a vivid burst of color erupted from one of the airships, accompanied by an ear-splitting explosion that rattled the ruins to their foundation. The ground quivered beneath Jeremy's feet, as if on the verge of collapsing. In that moment, he realized that their situation had taken a dire turn for the worse.

Jeremy had clung to the hope that the protective barrier enveloping their refuge would serve as their salvation, shielding them from the unrelenting assault of their adversaries. However, as the airships persisted in their barrage, unleashing torrents of magical artillery, it became all too clear that their hope had been misplaced. The coveted magical barrier had yet to manifest.

In the midst of the tumult and devastation brought on by the airships, a sense of panic took hold of those who cast their eyes upward. Desperation clouded the minds of everyone present, causing them to abandon hope and retreat into the depths of the ruins. Unfortunately, the long-anticipated barrier and portal, the supposed saviors, had yet to be conjured. With their fate hanging in the balance, they found themselves entirely vulnerable to the invaders hovering above, and the chances of survival were growing slimmer by the second. In their current predicament, the only alternative escape lay in traversing the eerie recesses of the derelict dungeon—a prospect that instilled a collective sense of dread and hesitance within them all.

Jeremy's gaze remained locked on the heavens, his heart sinking like a stone in a vast ocean of despair. He couldn't tear his eyes away from the horrifying spectacle of numerous colossal sections breaking away from several airships, hurtling down to the ground like ominous drop pods descending from the celestial heights. Amidst this onslaught, a handful of ships persisted in their relentless bombardment, unleashing havoc upon the ruins below. A quick survey of his surroundings revealed his solitary foolishness—everyone else had sought refuge within the crumbling edifice as soon as the vessels appeared on the horizon, even Yua had vanished into the depths of the structure.

Summoning a deep breath, Jeremy pivoted on his heel and dashed toward the relative safety that the structure promised. His heart pounded with a mixture of fear and determination, each footfall echoing the urgency of his escape as he sought refuge within the dilapidated ruins. He prayed that the shattered remnants of the building would provide at least a modicum of shelter from the relentless onslaught above.



Observing his incredible Mummy clutching the Dungeon Core, Wartie couldn't help but detect an absence of concern in the vampire's gaze. Rather, a broad grin adorned her face, suggesting the existence of some shared secret between her and Mummy. Wartie found Mummy's fondness for the vampire peculiar, knowing full well that she generally held little regard for people. Nonetheless, he cherished Mummy's tenderness and consideration, as it far surpassed any kindness he had ever experienced from others.

As a feral goblin, he had been left to fend for himself, scavenging for scraps wherever he could find them. Later, he found shelter among the dungeon folk, though life didn't improve significantly even with them. His only companions were the pet slimes he managed to tame. Sadly, those wretched companions of Mummy's had slain not one, but two of his cherished pets. However, Mummy changed everything. She granted him a sense of family he had never experienced before. She became a mother who even resurrected him after falling to a Paladin's blade, ushering him into a new life as a lich. The goddess, speaking through her High Priestess, even referred to Wartie as her grandchild, a notion that overwhelmed him. Discovering that Mummy was the offspring of a goddess, the Crone herself, added another layer of complexity. Though he still puzzled over the goddess calling Mummy her daughters when there was just one Mummy, he found solace in the newfound sense of belonging and love he had never known.

Fortunately, Wartie's ears were proportionately larger than his head, enabling him to catch every word whispered by the vampire into his precious Mummy's ear. "My beloved," she said, her voice carrying weight, "you possess a vast reservoir of mana, but you must cease letting the core siphon it from you. Unlike me, you are ambient mana wielder, and I'm certain of it—I have felt it, seen it. Rather than attempting to relinquish your mana to the core, let the magic around us flow through you and into the core."

The young goblin lich couldn't quite discern if his mother had acknowledged the vampire's words, yet he felt an unusual shift in the atmosphere. It was as if the warmth was gradually being drawn away, replaced by a bitter chill that settled in the air.



Aurelia's breath brushed against my neck, an icy dance that ignited an ecstatic chaos in the darkest corners of my mind. Oh, the irresistible desire to cast the cursed Dungeon Core into the gloomy chamber, to claim Aurelia as my own, heedless of any consequences! The once-alluring artifact had transformed into a despicable parasite, greedily draining my magical vitality with each monstrous pulse. The mana I sacrificed to the abhorrent sphere surpassed even my own capabilities.

Aurelia's soothing murmurs echoed within the labyrinthine corridors of my thoughts. Her honeyed words intertwined with the unsteady rhythm of my unbalanced mind. I was entranced, a hapless moth spiraling uncontrollably toward the voracious flame that beckoned me with its seductive heat. This enchantress, a fusion of magnetism and malevolence, wove a cloak of darkness tailored to ensnare my willing heart. And all of it she accomplished with naught but a whisper.

My thoughts ran rampant with desire, yet soon enough, I centered my attention on her words, "*She's right!*"

"*About utilizing ambient mana?*" my own thoughts echoed, or rather one of my souls retorted.

"*Yes, let's give it a try,*" my other soul chimed in, both operating in harmony as they coalesced into my consciousness.

My eyelids remained firmly shut as I clutched the Dungeon Core, the symphony of explosive tremors assaulting the ancient stone chamber. The screams that accompanied each violent impact were a twisted masterpiece to my senses, mingling with the acrid scent of fear and urine that hung in the air. A perverse delight blossomed within me at the very aroma.

Ignoring the growing ache in my stomach, which seemed to intensify with each passing moment, I extended my senses. I followed the faint trail of knowledge that Circe had begrudgingly imparted upon me. The goddess's boundless wisdom she half-heartedly trained into me, leaving me ill-equipped for the challenges that lay ahead. Nevertheless, both halves of my soul were united, and we had swiftly adapted to harnessing the ambient magic surrounding us to cast spells—an essential skill, given the ongoing malfunctioning of the system. Though, with Circe being the one who had locked me out of the system, I suspected she meant for me to fail.

Following Aurelia's guidance, I seized onto the ethereal strand of magic swirling around me. It was as if an invisible floodgate had been opened, releasing a torrent of mana that surged into me, coursing through my very being before flooding into the Dungeon Core. In the midst of this mystical tempest, I found myself intoxicated by the heady sensation of the energy flowing through my veins. I transformed into a mere conduit, a vessel through which the core could satisfy its insatiable hunger for mana.

In that fleeting moment, I recognized that the explosions had assumed a muffled quality, as if submerged beneath murky depths. Against all odds, I had succeeded—the Dungeon Core was awakened. Within the swirling tempest of magic, I felt the tender embrace of Aurelia's guidance. With her expertise, the core wove a shield around our sanctuary, and my heart... continued to swell with adoration for her. Amid the chaos of this reality, Aurelia had transformed into everything I had, needed, and wanted. Yet, the mystery persisted, leaving me to wonder why she held such a mesmerizing sway over my very souls.