

BLACK PUDDING

CHAPTER 2

As I trailed behind the rat-man, I couldn't help but feel a sense of suspicion toward him. He led me out of the chamber of my newest respawn point, but something in his demeanor made me feel like he was hiding something. Nevertheless, my attention was drawn to my dimensional storage space, Stellar Void. It was like a treasure trove of horrors, and I couldn't wait to see what was inside. With a sense of childlike joy, I began rummaging around in my chest cavity, my fingers digging through the darkness to find what secrets it held. The rodent glanced back, his eyes widening in horror at the sight. It must have appeared as if I was tearing myself apart. But I didn't care. *Let him be horrified*, I thought with a wicked grin. *It only adds to the fun.*

I continued to delve through the vast expanse of Stellar Void. As I did, I couldn't help but feel overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of items I had amassed. It was as if everything that had been stored in that damn dimensional cock ring was now residing within me. Coins, gems, and trinkets floated aimlessly in my storage space, yet I had yet to explore any of the items. It was like searching for a needle in a haystack, blindly grasping at anything that felt remotely useful. *Why did that arrogant goddess, Circe, never bother teaching me how to properly navigate this damn storage space?*

Sure, I could activate my Unique skill, Oracle, and ask Circe for help, but the mere thought of her smug face and that grating voice made me want to rip my own head off. It was best to avoid dealing with her altogether. If only some sort of inventory or list could show me what treasures lie hidden within.

The rodent scurried ahead of me, leading me through the dimly lit passages of the ancient sanctum. I felt a thrill of excitement as I brushed my fingers over a smooth, round object nestled in the void of my chest cavity. The baseball-sized sphere pulsed with necrotic magic. Realization suddenly dawned on me. I found one of the Chimera nuts I had taken, a phylactery containing Olin's soul. A sardonic grin spread across my face as I glared at the back of the rat-man's head.

"So, tell me," I drawled, my voice dripping with amusement. "How much farther until we meet this necromancer?" My words hinted at the dark thoughts and impulses that swirled within me, giving my question an unsettling edge.

"He's not the easiest to track down, My Blake," the rat's voice stuttered, fear evident in its echo against the walls. "But he'll find us soon enough. The exit of this sanctum is just up ahead. Look down, and you'll see the city of Thirion below."

I reveled in the rodent's pungent scent of terror that permeated the air, a sickly-sweet fragrance that fueled my twisted glee. "Well, it seems your usefulness has run out," I cooed with frenzied anticipation.

I stretched my arm out, elongating it into a grotesque tentacle that wrapped around his neck. The darkness within me stirred, a temptress whispering promises of sadistic pleasures. With ease, I lifted the writhing creature and slammed him onto the cold, hard stone floor, wheezing gasps escaping from his crushed lungs. I marveled at his resilience as his neck refused to snap.

“Well, well, well,” I muttered, a sick delight dripping from my words. “Looks like Olin’s new vessel might survive with an intact neck.”

The rat thrashed and squirmed beneath me, his pathetic cries falling on deaf ears. “Please, I have a family,” he wheezed, his voice strained and hoarse.

I tightly gripped the phylactery containing Olin’s soul in my free hand, feeling the power of the necrotic magic pulsing through it. “Hmm, does a lich really need all of its organs?” I pondered aloud, my twisted mind racing with excitement at the prospect of eating the useless organs while listening to the rodent’s screams. My hunger for flesh only intensified as I savored the thought of what I could do with this rat.

A grotesque third arm sprouted from my dress, its gooey tar-like fingers writhing with anticipation as they stroked my chin in a mocking display of deep contemplation. The rat’s feeble pleas for mercy only fueled my sadistic amusement as I reveled in the twisted pleasure as I reached up beneath his tattered robe with another freshly formed limb.



The darkness dissipated, and Olin blinked his eyes a few times, trying to focus on the figure standing above him. The grotesque creature his mistress held so dear was now before him, disguised as a beautiful madden swathed in an abyssal black dress that seemed alive with pure evil. Confusion churned in his mind as he struggled to remember how he’d ended up here. Flashes of the phylactery containing his soul swirled within his mind, followed by the strange sensation of being transferred into the body of General Ezad Anlyth. His memory then flickered to the ruins of Grotto of the Betrayed, exploding in a hellish inferno before everything went dark.

“Where is Lady Aurelia?”

“Don’t know,” the vile monster responded.

“Where are we?” Olin’s eyes shifted back and forth before returning to the woman standing over him like a vulture waiting for its next meal.

“I’m not sure where my dear mother sent me.”

“Mother?”

“The Crone,” she replied, her voice low and laced with a tone of reverence that made the fur on the back of Olin’s neck stand on end.

As Olin looked down at himself, and quickly realized he was no longer in General Anlyth’s body. Instead, he was occupying the body of a beastkin, confirmed by the sight of a rat’s tail protruding from his backside. Glaring at the woman standing before him, Olin struggled to rise. But as he

stood up, he felt something strange. His legs seemed unusually bent and bow-legged, and his stomach felt oddly empty, as if something important was missing. He realized what it was the moment he reached down to pat his groin.

“I was famished and figured, as a lich, you wouldn’t have any use for your internal organs,” she explained with a hint of amusement. “Or your testicles... and cock,” Blake finished with a soft laugh. “Oh yeah, I believe the rat mentioned something about Yaddith,” she added.

“Yaddith? I’ve never heard of such a place.”

“WHAT?!”

“There are hundreds of moons around Völuspá, and not all have been explored. And that doesn’t even begin to cover the planets and moons accessible through the ancient gates.”

“Habitable zone? What does that mean?”

As if explaining something to a child, Olin replied, “The habitable zone is the region around Völuspá where the atmosphere is thick enough to support life. Most of the moons within Völuspá’s orbit are covered by its massive atmosphere, which provides breathable air and contains potent mana that becomes denser the closer one gets to the planet. This atmosphere and, more importantly, the mana allow airships to traverse the Moons of Völuspá.”

“Can’t we just grab one of those airships and return to Aurelia?”

“Völuspá is no small planet. It’s massive, dwarfing most suns in scale,” Olin shook his head. “Traversing its moons to reach Nyxoria is a time-consuming process, and depending on this moon’s alignment, it can take months, even years, to reach a nearby moon.”

“FUCK!” she screamed, her voice bouncing off the walls. “Blown to bits, separated from Aurelia, then a stupid prophecy, and now stranded on this godforsaken rock! What’s next?!” Her words dripped with madness.

“What prophecy?” he asked cautiously.

Blake hesitated before answering, her face twisted in confusion. “Oh, something about Dreams and Nightmares,” she said, dragging out the words. “Or maybe stealing? Or was it devouring those who steal? Honestly, it was all blah blah blah to me. Dreams and nightmares, blah blah blah, consuming flesh and bone, blah blah blah. Daughters of Nightmares?”

“Shit! Do you know what this means?”

“Nope.”

The fear in Olin’s eyes was evident as he asked, “How long have we been gone?”

“A few hours?”

Olin’s anxiety grew as he realized the gravity of the situation. “Prophecies don’t just happen overnight,” he muttered. “They manifest over months, years, even centuries.”

The only sound that followed was the guttural scream of rage that erupted from Blake's throat.



This must have been why Mother apologized! I was filled with rage, wanting nothing more than to rip off that damn lich's head for delivering such terrible news. My love was out there somewhere among the stars, and I had no idea if she was even still alive. How long had I been gone? If what Olin said was true regarding prophecies, it could have been centuries since I last saw Aurelia. I didn't have words to express my anger and pain; I let out another furious roar. I turned my back to the lich and stomped toward the exit, my mind consumed with thoughts of Aurelia and what I had lost.

As I emerged from the cave, the snowfall did nothing to soothe my seething rage. The opening resembled more of a gash in the mountain than a proper entrance, with rough, jagged edges that looked like they had been torn apart by some unknown force. But as I took in the view of the city below, my fury was momentarily forgotten. The buildings were massive, constructed of stone and brick, surrounded by towering walls that made them look like fortresses. It was a sight to behold, which spread out for several kilometers in all directions, but all I could think about was the destruction I could wreak upon the inhabitants.

The mere thought of ripping people apart, limb by limb, sent a shiver of pleasure through my body. The twisted pleasure I got from the idea of causing destruction and chaos almost made me forget about my own pain. But then, Olin's footsteps grew closer, interrupting my pleasant distraction. I turned to face him, hiding my dark desires behind a fake smile. Oh, how I longed to carve him into pieces and transfer his soul into another body just to repeat the process all over again. But for now, I had to play the part of a sane comrade. After all, I was lost in the vast expanse of stars and needed his help to find my Aurelia. I took a deep breath and looked up at the massive pink and blue planet looming above. *Perhaps I could ask that prissy goddess for help? No, I'm not that desperate... yet.*

"Let's find one of those gate thingies you mentioned and keep going until we either stumble upon Aurelia's moon or at least find a general direction of where it might be," I finally said.

Olin nodded at me, "Well, it appears that option does seem to be a suitable one. But I believe acquiring further information may be more prudent if we're to get back to Nyxoria."

"Sure, but first, I'm hungry," I added with a dark grin as I gazed down at the city below.