

# BLAKE <sup>2</sup> PUDDING

## CHAPTER 28

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### EINARR'S ARENA

"We've made it," Vorigan declared with a flourish. "Welcome to the Kingdom of the Beastveil," he announced, spreading his arms wide to encompass the sprawling vista before them.

"Holy fucking shit! Are you seeing this utter bullshit?" Jason blurted out, his eyes wide with disbelief. "That's fucking insane!"

Vorigan, with his frog-like head, leaned over Jason's shoulder, almost touching him, a move he knew would infuriate the dark fae man. To his surprise, Jason completely ignored him, his gaze fixed on the chaotic scene in the ruined kingdom, particularly on the two figures fiercely battling each other.

"It seems two enemy champions are trying to kill one another," Vorigan croaked out, his disappointment palpable due to Jason's lack of reaction. "I say we let them," he huffed through his fish-like teeth, a mix of annoyance and resignation in his voice.

"No shit," Jason muttered, his voice tinged with a mix of awe and a dawning realization. Since being dubbed the Crone's Champion two years back, he'd beefed up quite a bit, but testing the full range of his badass powers? That was still on the to-do list. Watching those other champions tearing into each other, he felt a flicker of doubt—could he really hold his own in that kind of batshit crazy showdown? "Umm... screw this shit, let's bail," he finally blurted out, choosing to duck out of a clusterfuck he wasn't sure he could handle.

Vorigan half-heartedly nodded, kind of agreeing with Jason's call to bail. It wasn't like he'd have a problem with getting his ass pounded—uh, handed—to him by those two champions. Getting roughed up was, after all, beyond exhilarating, especially with his combo of vampiric and antimorphic healing factors. But Jason getting hurt? Hell no. Jason, the hardcore dom who loved to give him the works—from manhandling, torturing, maiming, dismembering, disemboweling, and castrating, to the occasional skull fuck—losing him would be too much to bear. No way in hell would Vorigan let anything bad happen to Jason, not even a damn scratch. That was a line he wouldn't cross, not for anything.

"Umm, why the fuck are you rubbing your nipples?" Jason groaned in exasperation.

Normally, such an act would earn Vorigan a delightful sword swing to the groin, but, to his dismay, no such thing happened. "He must be feeling out of his depth," Vorigan thought.

"Whatever," Jason grumbled, shaking his head as he turned his back on the unfolding battle. "That psycho pudding cunt is fucking on her own! Peace, I'm out," he declared, kissing his hand before

flipping two fingers behind him in a dismissive gesture as he strolled off in the direction they had come from.

Vorigan nodded in silent agreement, pulling his eyes away from Jason's alluring backside for one last glance at the battle. Abruptly, a startled scream burst from Jason's lips, making Vorigan jump. He quickly turned back to find Jason clutching his head, his face twisted in agony, his jagged needle-like teeth bared in a prolonged, silent scream.

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Nikola frantically raced to integrate the mana crystal from the queen into the seed embedded in the airship's skeletal frame. "No, no, no!" she blurted in a rush, the distant battle causing the vessel to shudder and creak as if in the grip of a tumultuous storm. "It feels like a superhero battle out there," she muttered, sensing the distant reverberations of conflict.

The crystal, already saturated with mana, required Nikola's focused efforts to coax the seed's roots into grasping it. This was a crucial juncture; the seed's growth and development depended on this connection, guided by the skeletal framework and the instructions encrypted in runes by Nikola. Her airships were an extraordinary feat of ingenuity. Even without an overcharged mana crystal, they necessitated a focal point—a stone that could be energized by magic.

The sapling's survival was contingent on this source of energy. These airships were more than just ordinary vessels; they were essentially living beings, the embryonic seeds of dryads. This was the true nature of a great tree, a dynamic and living dryad core.

Relief surged through Nikola as roots emerged from the seed's core, eagerly twining around the mana crystal. Accompanied by a subtle green luminescence, the seed sprang into growth. Branches and more roots followed, intertwining around the skeletal framework of the vessel like lively vines, rapidly coalescing to form the airship's structure.

"Great, now we just need to stall them for a day," Nikola murmured to herself. Observing the tree's swift growth, she revised her estimate, a hint of surprise in her tone, "Or perhaps just an hour?"

The sound of hurried footsteps reverberated from above deck, each one echoing down the staircases like the clash of metal on wood in a fury. Nikola, with a heavy exhale, clutched two of her three crystal-lock pistols, readying herself to face whoever had dared to board her vessel. "Well, to the last," she whispered resolutely, bracing to defend her latest creation, The Heart of Eternity—her airship's newly chosen name. Though a tad corny, it embodied her pride and attachment. In this second, or more accurately, third life—or fourth, if she counted those brief minutes in a ratkin body—she was unwavering in her resolve. She was adamant not to let anyone destroy or take her newest cherished airship, murmuring to herself, "Not this time."

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Deep within the catacombs, where the last of the beastkin had found refuge, the ferocity of the surface battle was acutely felt. The thunderous clashes of the Champion's hammer against the other's shield sent deep, resonating tremors through the stone walls, matched by the loud screams of fear from the inhabitants. These persistent, jarring vibrations served as a stark reminder of the relentless, brutal conflict raging just above. Each seismic wave that shook the catacombs dislodged dust and pebbles from the ceiling, heightening the sense of impending doom.

These vibrations, ominous and unyielding, echoed the battle's intensity to the beastkin sheltered below. With every heavy strike that resonated through their sanctuary, their anxiety deepened. The protracted battle posed a threat not only to their immediate safety but to the very structure of their subterranean haven. The palpable fear among them grew: if the battle continued, the catacombs might not withstand the unceasing barrage, potentially sealing the fate of the beastkin in their fragile, last bastion.

Kaida's authoritative tone commanded immediate attention. "Report!" she demanded from one of the scouts.

The scout, with a distinctly badger-like appearance but devoid of the elven traits some beastkin exhibited, stood stiffly at attention as he reported. "We've lost sight of the Crone's daughter after she was decimated by the Slaethian Champion, Einarr. The beastkin who were on the surface at the time are now seeking refuge in the ruins. However, the battle's shockwaves are causing casualties among them. We've also lost communication with the lich overseeing the airship's construction. Strangely, the vessel seems to be... growing. If it continues at this rate, it should be fully formed and operational by the time we complete the catacomb evacuation. The peculiar thing is, it appears to lack sails."

Kaida, processing this information, casually noted, "One of the Slaethian air vessels don't have sails either." She then swiftly shifted to logistical concerns. "Can we move all the beastkin currently sheltering in the rubble on the surface to the airship in time for its departure? Also, assign any available personnel to secure the airship," she instructed, her mind clearly strategizing their next moves.

Turning her gaze to Queen Rhyessa, who stood protectively with the twins, Kaida seemed to silently seek her input.

Queen Rhyessa nodded in agreement with Kaida, her appointed regent. "Our first priority is to evacuate as many survivors as possible. Currently, we lack the power to intervene in the surface battle," she stated firmly, her maternal instinct evident as she held the twins close. The sense of urgency was palpable as they worked together to navigate the chaos unfolding around them.

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"Ouchie," I groaned, gazing up into the sky. I attempted to sit up but quickly realized I had no arms, nor legs, or torso—shit, I was just my gooey face on the ground, devoid of a body. That damn dwarf had walloped me way too hard with his hammer that, after smashing through a shit ton of buildings, there was barely anything left of me.

I formed a tentacle, hoisting an eyeball from my liquefied face like a periscope to survey my surroundings, only to discover a path—or rather, a crash trail—carving a massive swath in my wake. I could see fragments of my Black Pudding form—well, technically, I'm an Eldritch Pudding, but I still identify as a Black Pudding—scattered across the zone of destruction. With a sigh, I retracted the tentacle, letting my eye sink back into my face. Lying there, I listened to the thunderous clash of champions battling nearby, wondering what to do next.

"That looked like it hurt," came the annoyingly cheerful voice of a little girl. Glancing back up, my view was filled with a large mop of vibrant pink hair.

"Ugh, am I dead?" I bumbled, feeling my face start to lose form as I began to liquify further.

Death, tapping her lower lip thoughtfully, replied, "No, not yet, anyway. Besides, I don't bother with collecting souls much these days," she added nonchalantly.

"So, what do you want, Grandma?" I gurgled out. After all, I bore the title 'Descendant of the End,' and she was the mother of my re-reincarnated newest mother, the Crone. That's how it works, right? I had been brought into this realm, reincarnated as a Black Pudding, died, then had a goddess rebuild my soul(s) almost from scratch, infusing a part of herself into me. She claimed both of my souls as hers, leading to a re-reincarnation and a new mom. It's a convoluted process, I know. Hardly makes sense—imagine how I feel trying to make heads or tails of it all! I was, however, somewhat relieved, thinking it couldn't get any more baffling than this. Or could it?

"Grandma?" Death grumbled, appearing somewhat taken aback. "I'm no Grandma," she scoffed. "If anything, I'm more like your stepmother. Well, my kid, Duskara did sort of adopt you—or was it a rebirth? I mean, she's essentially your half-sister—well, not just 'essentially,' but now, also your mother? Huh, I guess it's both?" Death mused, continuing to tap her lower lip, deep in thought. "Also, your cousin?" she threw out there as she gusted at me. Finally, she shrugged. "Heck if I know, it's a rather large family tree, after all. There must be billions of you little ones scuttling around in that other realm by now. Anyway, what exactly are you doing down there?"

"W-What?" I bubbled out, engulfed in confusion. Just when I thought I was getting a grip on this convoluted lineage, Death throws in several curveballs, further muddling my understanding.

*Are we inbred?*

*Oh no, just like our cousins from Montana.*

*Well, we do come from a long line of hillbillies.*

*I thought we were never to mention that.*

"I'll repeat it. What are you doing down there? I can't believe you let that weakling pummel you like that," Death scolded, wagging her finger at me as though I were a misbehaving child.

"He's at a higher level than me," I muttered between my blurbs, then quickly corrected myself, "I mean, why don't I have any levels?"

Observing the literal embodiment of Death, embodied in the form of a little girl in a pink dress with a massive puff of pink hair, glaring down at me, was surreal. Her childish huff and hands on her hips somehow diminished the gravity of the situation.

“The system is a training aid for learning magic. That fool over there, sure, he's nearly done with it, but it was designed for children,” Death harrumphed. “You don’t need it, except maybe to learn a few cool tricks,” she added.

"A training aid?" I echoed, still trying to wrap my head around her explanation.

"Not sure why my other kid is so set on destroying it, but whatever," Death said dismissively. “Yep! It’s a relic from the Eldritch War, designed to train baby Titans in magic and combat,” she gestured towards me, “you! Or rather, that vile, repulsive body your soul inhabits. Quite a lamentable situation, if you ask me. I can’t overstate my disdain for that detestable aunt of yours who created the Eldritch. Every time I see you, I have this urge to obliterate you. Luckily for you, you possess that soul, and Duskara has claimed you, otherwise, we wouldn’t be having this conversation.”

Overwhelmed by Death's onslaught of revelations, each more bewildering than the last, I lay there, the ground quaking beneath me as if vibrating to an intense bassline. Was Death truly diminishing the ferocious battle of champions to mere child's play? Once the chaos subsided, I promised myself to seek clearer answers from her.

Death, utterly unaware of my confused state—or perhaps it was just impossible to read my expression in my current form as a slime spread across the ground—pressed on. "Don't engage as a system wielder, a conqueror, or even an augments," she instructed, as if I had any understanding of her terminology (spoiler: I didn't). "Rise, gather yourself, and fight like a Titan. Or like an Eldritch—just embrace your true nature and fight."

"Titan?" I managed to burble out, still trying to process her words.

"Ugh, just pull yourself together," Death muttered with a hint of frustration. "At least kick that dwarf where it hurts and make a run for it, for all I care." And with those final words, she vanished as if she had never been there, leaving me alone with her cryptic advice.

“Well, that doesn’t help me,” I grumbled, reforming my diminished body into a tennis ball-sized spider. My form was severely depleted, and to add to my woes, I couldn't sense Phantasia anywhere within me.

I scuttled through the swath of destruction I had left behind, quickly locating each black clump of my gooey essence. It almost felt like they wanted to be found, with some portions actively crawling towards me on their own. This led me to wonder if I could replicate or reproduce by segmenting myself, or if these pieces were all part of me, instinctively drawn back by my subconscious—probably the latter.

I moved from one pudding blob to the next, reabsorbing every bit of myself I could find, all while the two champions continued their tumultuous battle nearby. It felt like something out of a Michael Bay movie: explosions all around, debris hurtling through the air, two unstoppable forces clashing

at breakneck speeds. Meanwhile, there I was, ducking and weaving in a frantic attempt to gather more of myself, like a surreal quest for the All Spark—except, in this case, it was a quest for more pudding.

As I scurried about in my quest to reassemble myself, I occasionally experienced a bizarre sensation: I was lifted slightly off the ground whenever the two champions passed by, as if gravity itself was being warped. I noticed rocks and debris momentarily defying gravity, levitating before being violently smashed back down. This strange phenomenon repeated with each swing of the dwarf's hammer.

Amidst my frantic movements, I stumbled upon beastkin who were hiding beneath the debris. Their faces were etched with a mix of awe and horror as they watched the two champions engage in their fierce duel. Observing their expressions of shock and fascination, I could tell that Von Von was struggling, pushed into a defensive stance. The maniacal laughter of the dwarf suggested he was not just fighting; he was toying with her. The battle was not just a display of raw power; it was a twisted game for the dwarf, and bitch of a Champion was desperately trying to hold her ground.

*Nightmare, how the heck are we supposed to fight that?*

*I thought we already established that.*

*And what was that again? 'Cause Granny Death sure as hell didn't give us shit to go on! Fight like a Titan—really?*

*We cheat, obviously!*

*But how?*

*Oh, Dream, I've got a 'hole' idea in mind. You might say it's our 'core' strategy.*

*Really? Puns, now? And from you? We must be seriously screwed.*

*Oh, shut up and let's go Super Saiyan on this bearded bastard.*

*Fine, but I call dibs on his intestines. I need a new jump rope.*

*What? An intestine necklace is way better!*

*Too late, I already called it.*

*Ugh, fine!*



Vanya gritted her teeth, her left arm having long lost feeling. Each clash against her shield reverberated up her arm, knitting a pattern of pain through her battered body. Yet, she remained steadfast, her shield an unwavering sentinel. Victory, once a beacon of distant hope, now flickered like a dying candle in the storm.

Amidst the frenzy of battle, Einarr's mocking laughter cut through the air, a dark symphony accompanying the thunderous crashes of his hammer. With each retraction of his weapon, the battlefield warped strangely. Vanya, along with the debris swirling around her, found themselves in a brief, surreal float, as if gravity had loosened its grip. The dwarf was toying with gravity itself—every hammer blow landed with the force of a mountain, only to be followed by a reversal that rendered everything weightless. This relentless alternation of push and pull only compounded the difficulty for Vanya to find any leverage. She was thoroughly outmatched in every aspect of the fight.

To make matters worse, Einarr was too fast. Vanya could just about keep up from behind her shield, but that was it—there was no gap for a counterattack, no pause long enough to unleash any Holy magic against him. She was essentially a puppet in the dwarf's relentless dance, reacting to his rhythm, forced to follow his lead without any room for her own strategy. The thought of escape flickered in her mind, but even that seemed futile, given the blistering speed of her adversary.

Complicating the situation further, Einarr's airship had moved a few kilometers away and was now descending. A mix of casters, knights, and barbarians began to disembark around the site where their own airship was still under construction. Any lingering thread of hope seemed to unravel. All Vanya could do, all she was doing, was delaying the inevitable.

A loud cry erupted from behind her, but Vanya refused to divert her gaze from Einarr, her formidable opponent. Despite her focus, the snarled voice cut through the chaos, shouting, “Fucking Crone!”

As the war cry resonated, Vanya felt a surge of magic, only for it to abruptly vanish, leaving a tangible void in its wake. This sudden shift even caused Einarr to hesitate mid-swing, his surprise momentarily breaking his rhythm. Seizing the opportunity, Vanya lunged forward, her sword thrusting towards the dwarf's face, targeting the exposed part of his helmet.

At that exact moment, the strange magic she had sensed earlier re-emerged, this time materializing behind Einarr. A dark fae burst into view, his needle-like teeth bared in a ferocious sneer. His black, stringy hair flew wildly around his head, and his eyes sparkled with a mad gleam. With a swift, decisive motion, he swung his sword towards Einarr's neck, aiming to strike from behind. The battlefield, already a frenzy of chaos, intensified with the sudden appearance of this new, fierce combatant.

Einarr, unfazed by the sudden onslaught, reacted with the precision and calm of a seasoned warrior. In the split second the attacks converged, he twisted his body with remarkable agility. By deftly manipulating his own weight, he dodged both the slash from behind and the frontal thrust. Utilizing his gravity manipulation skill, he shifted his weight into his shoulder, dragging himself sideways while lightening the rest of his body to enhance the movement. This tactic allowed him to evade the attacks with a swift duck and twist.

Then, in a seamless motion, Einarr redistributed his weight again. He anchored his feet by massively increasing their mass, grounding himself firmly. Simultaneously, he swung his hammer, now as light as a feather, to build up momentum. At the critical moment, he restored its mass to

something colossal, akin to the weight of a moon. The hammer whooshed through the air, narrowly missing the dark fae who had appeared from nowhere. The sheer force of the swing unleashed a shockwave so powerful that it blasted the fae backwards, creating the space Einarr needed.

Vanya, still believing in her shield's ability to block Einarr's strike, was about to face a harsh reality. The dwarf had been merely toying with her until this moment. Now, as he launched his full might in a devastating blow, she would soon realize the true extent of Einarr's power and the grave mistake of underestimating him.

The shield, a creation of Holy magic radiating with a golden yellow light, stood no chance against the ferocity of Einarr's strike. It shattered upon impact, fragments of light dissipating into nothingness. The swing of the dwarf's hammer was relentless, its momentum unbroken. It crashed into Vanya's arm, shattering every bone with a gruesome inevitability. The hammer's force didn't halt there; it continued its path of destruction into her ribs, breaking them one after another in a brutal sequence.

As Einarr's hammer struck with catastrophic force, Vanya's feet were torn from the ground, her body yielding to the brutal impact. She was hurled away, her form twisting helplessly in the air, propelled by a force akin to a violent tempest. The air around her crackled and boomed sonically, marking the path of her involuntary flight.

In the aftermath of his devastating attack, Einarr, with a sinister grin spreading across his face, slowly turned his head to fix his gaze on the fae who had dared to disrupt his battle. His eyes held a dark glint, a mixture of amusement and challenge, as he regarded the bold intruder who had the foolishness to step into—his arena!

"Oh, fuck me," Jason muttered, pulling himself back up to his feet.

"Aye, I might've fancied a go with the lass, but you, lad, aren't quite me type," Einarr chuckled, his voice laced with a rough, mocking humor.

As the sound of a boot scraping against stone echoed behind him, Einarr whirled around, his hammer raised for a swift, crushing blow on the new interloper. To his astonishment, it was a vampire standing boldly in the sunlight. An abhorrent sight, indeed. The creature before him, a vampiric frogkin, was in a perpetual cycle of its flesh searing under the sun's rays and healing almost instantly. To any casual observer, it might have seemed like a day walker, but Einarr's sharp eyes discerned the truth: a constant, agonizing cycle of destruction and regeneration.

"It must be a horrific existence," Einarr thought indifferently. With a decisive motion, his hammer came crashing down on the vampire with a thunderous blast! The impact sent a shockwave ripping through the surroundings, tearing buildings and debris from the ground and hurtling them in all directions. As the dust settled, only a grotesque smear of what once was the frogkin remained under Einarr's hammer—nothing but scattered remnants of the creature's existence.

Jason, reeling from the scene of carnage, blinked repeatedly, his mind a whirlwind of confusion and disbelief. On one hand, he'd relentlessly tried to off that frog bastard countless times, each attempt bringing him a perverse joy, knowing full well the freak would just spring back for more.



But now, staring at the grotesque spread of chunks and viscera, he couldn't fathom Vorigan recovering from this.

His initial shock erupted into a blood-curdling scream as he unleashed his shadow stepping technique. In a furious blur, he teleported, vanishing and reappearing unpredictably around Einarr. This dizzying display continued for a few moments without a single attack being launched.

Einarr, caught off guard by the fae's blistering speed, struggled to track Jason's movements. He hunkered down defensively, drawing back his hammer, and braced for an attack. Just as Jason materialized behind him for a strike at the base of his skull, Einarr altered his body's mass distribution, ducking swiftly out of the way. He spun around, ready to counterattack, but Jason had already vanished. The pattern repeated, and with another agile duck, Einarr felt the whisper of a blade shave hairs from the back of his neck. Soon, he discerned the predictability in Jason's movements, even a novice could have spotted it.

"Aye, ye be lackin' experience, lad," Einarr chuckled, his words carrying the unmistakable lilt of his dwarven accent as he deftly swung the base of his hammer handle behind him, connecting squarely with the groin of the materializing fae.

The sound of Jason's pained "umph" confirmed the hit.

Twisted by Einarr's deft maneuver with the handle of his hammer, Jason found himself flung to the ground. He lay there, sprawled on his back, staring up at the sky, bracing for the final blow. Einarr's manic laughter filled the air as he raised his hammer high, channeling into it the immense power of a dying star.

Jason tensed, his eyes tightly shut, awaiting the inevitable end. One second ticked by, then two, but death did not come. Hesitantly, with a mixture of fear and curiosity, Jason cracked open a single eye. To his astonishment, a woman stood over him, enshrouded in black, her hair undulating around her as if imbued with a life and power of its own. The most striking feature was the gaping hole in her chest, a surreal void where sunlight streamed through, casting a stark, foreboding shadow on the ground beneath her. Around her, magic rippled in the air, emanating from her chest in flashes that resembled orange lightning. Her eyes glowed fiercely, mirroring the color of a blazing sun. In a stunning display of strength, she held the other end of Einarr's hammer, halting its deadly descent.

As realization dawned upon Jason about who stood above him, he sighed and said, "Ah, fuck, it's you."



Somewhere off in the distance, unseen by all, stood a little girl. Her radiant pink hair and matching dress were in stark contrast to her dark, cracked ashen skin and eyes as endless as the void. With a groan, she face-palmed and uttered, "Ugh, that wasn't what I meant."