

# BLACK PUDDING

## CHAPTER 23

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Vorigan, a vampiric monstrosity with amphibian-like features, was not blessed with the fangs of his kin. Instead, his frog-like face housed a maw lined with miniature, fish-like teeth. He lacked an intimidating presence of any kind. The cruel joke was not lost on him, as even his tormentors now saw him as nothing more than a mere plaything, fit only to be toyed with and abused. Vorigan felt like a lamb led to the slaughter, dreading the impending impalement that was closing in once the two elves were done. And he really didn't want a wooden pike shoved up his ass, or did he? No, he most certainly did – not...

The two sadistic elf interrogators, despite their relentless efforts to beat out the information from him, had come up empty. Neither his loyalty nor lack thereof kept him from answering their questions. Nor was it a lack of determination on their part. Vorigan simply was as ignorant as they came. Yes, Vorigan was truly a fountain of nothingness, but that was proving to be a blessing in disguise.

The sound of heavy footsteps echoed through the chamber, causing the interrogators to pull their ruthless leers away from Vorigan in surprise. Descending the stairs was a towering figure, a behemoth of a man who Vorigan recognized as the General who had decimated his kin. Vorigan's heart raced as he gazed upon the leviathan-like figure, his skin as dark as sin and his muscles rippling like stormy seas. The amphibian could only pray that the man was about to join in the sickening depravities. The two elves gave respectful nods to the General before returning their full attention to Vorigan, ready to pick up where they had left off.

“Where has your lord sought asylum?!” A harsh slap across the face dazed the amphibian, “OUT WITH IT!” Another slap sound rang out. “**NOW!**”

Vorigan had already pointed them in the direction of the west. Still, the whereabouts of the coven Lord Demidicus had vanished to remain unknown to him. If he had known, the amphibian would've offered the information four sunsets prior, especially after witnessing the gory spectacle of the first vampire ruthlessly impaled. The image of his fellow creatures of the night being brutally held down and stripped nude before being skewered with a wooden stake still haunted Vorigan's mind with recurring lust – dread! They didn't even have the courtesy to spit on the tip. The thought of experiencing that same cruel fate filled him with such...elation!

The relentless barrage of violence carried on, each blow landing with the force of a blacksmith's hammer. Vorigan was battered, bruised, and bleeding but took it all in stride. If only his tormentors had known about his amphibian physiology. In that case, they might have been taken aback by how their blows only stoked his stiffening perverse desires. No, this was not torture, this was a pleasure, and Vorigan would have told these two hunky elves anything they wanted to hear, just to keep the beatings coming. To Vorigan, life was one long, sickening masquerade of pain and

pleasure. And this, this was his idea of a royal ball! He only hoped they could keep the dance going.

One of the interrogators stopped his wonderous beating to face the big brute. “General Ezad,” he growled, sounding more like a purr to Vorigan, “permission to start severing limbs? Let’s see if that’ll loosen the wretched freak’s tongue.”

*“Oh, so sorry, but my tongue is a little too stiff right now,”* Vorigan thought with such glee.

Vorigan appeared to be a spineless wimp, always avoiding confrontation. It was all just a rouse, a cunning act of playing hard to get. He basked in the moment’s thrill as he sat bound to this chair, vulnerable to the whims of his three hulking tormentors. The mere thought of losing a limb sent shivers of euphoria to his groin, a reaction his interrogators misinterpreted as trembling fear. But what did he care if they hacked away at him! After all, he was not only a vampire but also of amphibian lineage. He could regrow any amputated limb in mere moments. Vorigan could only hope that they’d started with his manhood.

Sadly, it was not meant to be. Vorigan felt a retching mix of relief and annoyance as he stared on as one of his tormentors sauntered past the stairwell to retrieve a gleaming butcher knife. But before the elf could lay his hands on it, a tendril of darkness shot out like a striking viper, snapping the elf’s neck with a stealthy crunch. And before the lifeless body could even hit the ground, it was snatched up into the stairwell, out of sight. The General and the remaining elf interrogator remained blissfully ignorant of the gruesome act that had just robbed Vorigan of one of his toys.



Aurelia lay within the confines of her prison cell. Her enemies were wise enough to know to drain her of her blood, or she would have slaughtered all of them. The thirst was almost maddening! And how she longed for Bowen or his new incarnation as Blake. But how she dreaded him seeing her like this, drained of blood, and appearing no better than a mummified corpse, such a horrid sight. Vorigan had avoided the same treatment, most likely since so few considered him a vampire. Oh, how appearances can be misleading.

Her time in captivity was nothing short of tedious, filled with utter boredom. The only downside was the blood they siphoned from her. Despite it all, she was a captive audience to the never-ending beatings Vorigan endured. Little did anyone know, except for Aurelia, that the frog-faced fiend was in a state of ecstasy. He had successfully concealed his depraved desires. But if there was one thing Aurelia was known for, it was her perceptive nature. That’s why she was shocked that she hadn’t noticed the disappearance of one of the interrogators. This thirst was seriously dulling her senses!

“Soldier! What’s keeping you?” The General bellowed, only further souring Aurelia’s mood. But to everyone’s surprise, there was no response from the missing man.

A sinister smile spread across her worn face, exposing a glimpse of the monster slumbering within and the unabated thirst. But relief was near, for she had spotted a tiny tendril of darkness slithered out from the top of the stairwell, a sneaky little spy that only vampiric eyes could easily detect.

Sadly, she had missed the murder of the elf, lost in her daydreams about her beloved, but she was wide awake now.

Aurelia had made attempts to conceal her emotions for Blake from the coven, a futile effort. But now that the coven was no more, along with The Dark Order, a sad collection of refugees seeking asylum in the shadows, there was no longer a need for her to maintain the pathetic rouse.

“It’s no use, human,” she teased. “You’ll be dead before you make it back to your pitiful Slaethia. My beloved will make sure of it.”

General Ezad Anlyth and his wife, Vanya Anlyth, were renowned as an unstoppable pair. Vanya, in particular, was a fierce paladin for the Kingdom of Slaethia, and Aurelia longed to take her down in front of Ezad. The mere thought of their suffering brought her a dark satisfaction, soothing her mind from the constant pain of her insatiable thirst. But nothing could compare to the eager excitement she felt at this moment, not only to be reunited with her beloved but to see what he would do next.

Ezad pivoted towards Aurelia’s cell with a smirk, but little did he know, her smile was far more sinister than his own. The other interrogator ceased his relentless assault on Vorigan and cautiously approached the stairwell. Despite their ignorance of Blake’s presence, the sudden silence aroused suspicions.

The true terror began as the second interrogator approached the table that held the knives and other torture instruments. A writhing mass of inky tendrils and tentacles descended upon the elf, who let out a scream of terror and pain that chilled the very air. General Ezad spun around, his face contorted in horror and fury as he charged forward, his massive fists raised to deliver punishing blows. But before he could intervene, a goopy tendril of tar-like substance snaked around the elf’s lower jaw, wrapping it in a web of sticky tentacles, and yanked.

With a ghastly tug, the jaw was ripped free and hurled toward the oncoming behemoth. With a flick of Ezad’s hand, he swatted the detached jaw out of his way, only to be pummeled over as the still-screaming elf was thrown right at him. The two tumbled in a tangled heap, with the elf’s howls of pain bellowing out from the depths of his throat and throughout the room. The General shoved the wailing elf off him and surged to his feet, but it was too late. A tentacle had already wrapped around his neck and pulled him close.

The only sound heard over the elf’s horrid howling was Aurelia’s laughter!

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*Dang, Blake, I didn’t even have to help this time!*

I clutched Anlyth’s lover tightly, his neck encircled by my writhing arm, not enough to snuff out his life but enough to render him powerless. He foolishly punched and clawed at my limb. Still, every time he tore away some of my sticky black sludge, it promptly refilled in a never-ending cycle. I also began reshaping my form back into my gorgeous, contoured self. Ava had insisted it best to surprise them in my natural shape, with wicked squirming tentacles snapping out in every direction. She had been right!

In a matter of moments, I had transformed into my human form, complete with my seductive curves, beautiful gothic dress, and skin like fine silk. My eyes reformed, casting an orange glow that lit up the General's face in an ominous light. As he finally caught sight of the face behind the monster, he ceased his futile struggles and locked his eyes onto mine, a look of hatred that I savored. The only thing ruining the moment was the jawless elf's sniveling mewling. Who am I kidding? I was enjoying that as well!

"What manner of abomination are you?!" Ezad snarled.

Aurelia cooed out from the depths of a dark prison cell, her voice as alluring as I remembered it. "Well, well, you're a woman and a gorgeous one at that! General Ezad, allow me to introduce you to our Dark Champion."

"Hi'ya," I stammered, my mouth unusually dry for being a Black Pudding.

*Hi'ya?! Are you kidding me? This is it! Our moment to shine, and you come up with that?*

*Cut me some slack. I'm nervous, okay!*

*Ugh!*

"Uh... I may not have exactly emerged victorious from the trial," I added.

*Fuck, Blake! You're messing this up big time!*

"No matter," Aurelia chimed in, almost soothingly, her tone hinting at a touch of relief. "You're still alive, so the Crone must have taken you in as one of her faithful."

"Not exactly," I corrected. "The Crone more or less adopted us as her daughters."

"Us?" Aurelia repeated, her voice a mere whisper.

"**WHAT?!**" The frog man, bound to a chair, roared out.

The General's eyes blazed with fury as he spat out, "I don't give a fuck who or what you are. My wife will avenge me! And I'll see you within the veil, you monster!"

"Wife? I thought you were with Anlyth, that paladin-looking guy. I saw him clinging to your arm earlier."

"What? Vanya is a woman," Ezad shouted at me.

"Huh, I did not see that coming," I replied before snapping Ezad's neck.

*Blake, haul that screeching elf to Aurelia's cell and chuck him in there with her!*

*One step ahead of you, Ava.*

With a rough grip on the interrogator's leg, I pulled him toward the cell where Aurelia was being held. The man was in a state of utter misery, still wailing in agony from having his jaw torn off. I resisted the urge to eat him myself. I knew that Aurelia needed his blood more than I needed a meal.

The cell was reminiscent of a prison from a bygone era, straight out of the seventeenth century. I placed my hand against the rusted iron bars and let my corrosive flesh dissolve the metal away. It was surprisingly easy, taking only a few seconds for the door to give way. With a twist of my hips, I tossed the elf into the cell, where he was met by a waiting, ravenous vampire.

Once the sacrificial elf came to a skidding stop within the cell, a famished vampire lunged at him. The sight that played out was nothing short of breathtaking. I couldn't see Aurelia in the darkness at first, but as soon as the elf was within her grasp, he kicked and flailed about as she attacked, ravenously feasting on his blood. Aurelia was an emaciated mummified figure that began to fill out as she fed. Her curves were slowly being restored before my eyes. Watching her was like watching a predator in the midst of a feeding frenzy, a shark in the depths of the ocean. My thoughts were clouded with either love, longing, or lust – I could never tell the difference. This, of course, had resulted in many disastrous relationships in the past. Nevertheless, I was in awe of her magnificence. She was stunning!

*Dibs!*

*Screw you, Ava!*

*That's the goal, isn't it?*

*...I hate you.*

As I savored the moment, the frog man's pitiful voice broke through my reverie. "Excuse me, could you release me from this chair?"

I glanced at the frog's face, utterly unimpressed. "Of course, but first, I have some unfinished business to attend to." With that, I retrieved the phylactery from within the void that contained Olin's annoying soul.

"And what do you have there?" Aurelia hummed.

As Aurelia stepped out of the prison cell's shadows, her piercing red gaze was drawn to the object in my hand. With each step she took, I couldn't help but admire her seductive movements – the gentle sway of her hips, her regal posture, and her stunning features. Oh, and the alluring blood still dripping from her gorgeous face.

*Dibs!*