

# BLAKE PUDDING

## CHAPTER 7

### ENDER

Ever since his wedding to Lady—or Princess, depending on the addresser—Aurelia eighteen months prior, Duke Lysander’s nights had devolved into a relentless torment. The conditions of his dukedom dictated a shared chamber with his bride, yet she remained a wife in title alone; their marriage had not been consummated. He wouldn’t dare voice this humiliation, fearing the appearance of weakness. Despite his nightly advances, he met the same brutal rejection: a painful, humiliating castration. His vampiric nature facilitated the healing of any physical wound, but the nightly agony was a slow, excruciating process, especially when inflicted by his wife’s hand.

A knock interrupted Lysander’s stifled cries. He lay in a fetal position, cradling the void where his manhood once was, enduring another night of anguish. His sole consolation was Aurelia’s unspoken rule: no one was permitted to witness his debasement...or so he thought.

“Come in,” Aurelia called with unsettling cheer, her attention on the mirror as she brushed her lustrous black hair.

Lysander’s scowl deepened at his wife’s reflection, his misery compounded as the door revealed an unshackled dark elf—a Priestess of the Crone—who, by all rights, should have been imprisoned in the dungeons. Aurelia’s inexplicable tolerance for the priestess roaming freely was a blatant affront. Yet, what truly galled him was the divine sanction of their union despite Aurelia’s pre-existing marital status—a revelation as shocking to her father, Lord Demidicus, as to himself. This scandal, which relegated him to a mere fixture in Aurelia’s now harem, had decimated his standing within the coven and enabled her to seize control.

The Priestess lingered at the threshold, her gaze fixed on Lysander. She struggled to mask the revulsion—and was that pity?—that flickered across her features. His disdain for her, for all devotees of the Crone, surged like a venomous tide. Above all, he despised the goddess’s champion, that sinister fae responsible for the slaughter of countless vampires during his six-month reign of terror across Lysander’s lands. The Serpent, his own deity, had failed to counterbalance this threat, neglecting to bestow a champion upon his followers. This incomprehensible abandonment, especially amidst the Crone’s burgeoning influence within the coven, left Lysander grappling with a reality that defied logic... and it ignited within him a seething fury!

“Word has arrived. It appears the Kingdom of Slaethia is finally advancing forces out of beastkin territory,” the Priestess announced, wrenching her gaze from Lysander. “Your support for the resistances there has significantly hampered their advance.” As she spoke, her attention shifted abruptly, fixating on the blood-stained hand with which Aurelia nonchalantly wielded her brush.

Aurelia sighed, a sound tinged with both exasperation and condescension. “They obliterated the beastkin as if in a single night’s passing, yet those imbeciles fail to grasp that holding territory is

a far more arduous game than seizing it. Their forces are stretched pitifully thin. Have there been any whispers of which kingdom they intend to prey upon next?”

“Not as yet,” the Priestess reported, her tone neutral.

“What a pity,” Aurelia responded with a theatrical sigh, not pausing her brushing. “And what news of the nymphs and fairies? Have their efforts with the crops borne fruit?”

The Priestess’s demeanor brightened noticeably, a stark contrast to the room’s heavy atmosphere. “Indeed, they have. The blood fruit harvest this year was particularly bountiful. We’ve garnered enough to commence distribution to other covens,” she relayed, a hint of pride in her voice before her expression shifted awkwardly. “Although, seeing actual hearts dangling from branches like apples remains...unsettling,” she admitted with a tinge of discomfort.

Lysander’s scorn deepened, a sneer almost breaking through his composed façade—a brittle mask barely concealing his agony from his lessor. “*A Priestess of the Crone, unnerved by such a triviality?*” he berated inwardly, clenching his jaw to avoid drawing any further wrath from Aurelia that evening.

“I suppose the sight of blood fruit might indeed be daunting to non-vampires,” Aurelia mused with a melodic hum in her voice. “Yet, it’s this very innovation that has enabled us to foster coexistence and expand our alliances in the face of Slaethia’s aggression. Winning the impending war mandates the strength of these alliances. Regrettably, my pet over there,” she continued, her gaze flitting disdainfully towards Lysander, “has sown deep-seated animosity among the races beyond our borders. The distrust is severe, and reconciliation will take time.” Lysander’s scowl darkened at the mention.

“However,” Aurelia went on, her tone laced with a hint of triumph, “the regular dispatch of my husband’s... prized jewels as gifts has certainly engendered significant goodwill. Moreover, diversifying our feeding practices—not just with blood fruit, but other sustenance blood crops reminiscent of the old times before this moon aligned with Völuspá—has bolstered their faith. In me, specifically.”

Lysander’s jaw tightened imperceptibly, but he didn’t miss the pointed emphasis on ‘me.’ The distinction was clear, and the underlying message, unmistakable.

“What news of Lord Demidicus?” the Priestess inquired, her tone shifting to one of concern.

Aurelia ceased her brushing, her hand pausing mid-stroke as she contemplated the question. “Truthfully, his actions puzzle me,” she confessed, tapping her chin thoughtfully. “He’s rallying hidden covens to our cause, yes, but curiously, he directs them to me. I’m left to wonder if he intends to return and reclaim power, or if he’s positioning me for a queenship I never sought.” She sighed, the sound a mixture of frustration and contemplation. “Alas, his intentions have always been a mystery to me.”

“That does sound disconcerting and promising,” the Priestess agreed, her brow furrowing in worry.

On the floor, Lysander clung to a sliver of hope that the venerable vampire would return and overthrow his daughter, undoing the power shift she had so cunningly orchestrated. Yet, a begrudging part of him couldn't ignore the fact that, even sans Lord Demidicus, Aurelia had expanded their coven's might and sway to unprecedented heights. The bitter irony was his own impotence against her. It was an enigma; her youth belied her formidable strength. Given the rarity of born vampires, most of their kind were relics from an era before the convergence that had thrust their world into this new reality. And yet, Aurelia, a mere fledgling by comparison at roughly two hundred years, defied all norms. She wasn't just powerful; she was ascendant, the paramount among their kind. That undeniable truth was the very reason he found himself reduced to a whimpering, emasculated heap night after excruciating night.

Moreover, Lysander harbored a secret that gnawed at his pride: he had developed a perverse preference for the taste of blood fruit over that of living prey. It was a predilection he loathed to admit, even to himself. The thrill of the hunt, the exhilaration of feeling his victims writhe and the rush of dominance as he fed—these were sensations the blood fruit could never replicate. And yet, there was something about the fruit's flavor, its rich, ambrosial sweetness that inundated his senses, an experience that the metallic tang of fresh blood no longer afforded him.

Every bite of the cursed fruit was a reminder of his own weakness, his divergence from the very essence of what he believed a true vampire should relish. But oh, how the taste enthralled him, whispering to a part of him he wished didn't exist, seducing him with its sanguine nectar. It was a paradox that tormented him—a yearning for the purity of traditional vampirism while being irresistibly drawn to this new, sacrilegious sustenance of old.

Lysander was caught in a tumultuous battle with his nature, grappling with an identity that seemed to betray him and desires he couldn't reconcile. In the silence of the night, amidst the echoes of his own suffering and the haunting lilt of Aurelia's brush strokes against her raven locks, he brooded over these unsettling cravings, a lone figure ensnared in turmoil and contradiction.

“What about the dungeon folk, how are they faring?” Aurelia asked.

The Priestess shifted uncomfortably, her words stumbling over one another as her gaze darted away from the harrowing sight of Lysander, exposed and vulnerable in his own blood. “They... they seem much improved,” she began, her voice a tremulous thread of sound. “Especially since receiving the... the j-jewels you've been so generous to gift them regularly.”

She paused, swallowing hard, her eyes staring blankly at a spot on the wall as though she could see through it to the dungeon folk themselves. “It's my burden to bear, their plight,” she continued, her voice barely more than a whisper. “I led them to the Crone's embrace, convinced them she would protect them, only for them to be... They suffered...because of me.”

Aurelia's words sliced through the tension, her voice devoid of the usual venom that dripped when she addressed others. “None of that,” she commanded. The flatness of her gaze was a stark contrast to the fiery scorn she usually reserved for Lysander. It was an oddity that never ceased to puzzle him—her softer side, a vulnerability almost, exposed only to these followers of the Crone.

Her eyes didn't dance with the usual dark mirth, nor did her lips curl into a sardonic sneer. Instead, there was a steeliness, a seriousness that bordered on...respect? It was a treatment she had never extended to anyone within his dominion, and it pricked at his suspicions, igniting a glimmer of calculation deep within his thoughts. Was there a weakness there, hidden within her strange camaraderie with these acolytes, waiting to be exploited?

The Priestess, meanwhile, seemed to shrink into herself under Aurelia's unwavering stare, her own eyes a whirlpool of conflict and relief.

"If anyone is to carry that burden, it's the wretched creature cowering in the corner, not you," Aurelia continued, her voice softer, almost a murmur—a comfort extended in a world where little was offered. Lysander, curled in his own blood and misery, felt the sting of her words like a physical lash, a reminder of his own pitiful state.

Aurelia's voice shifted, the softness evaporating into an anticipatory edge. "By the way, any whispers from the goddess?" The question hung in the air, charged with unspoken implications. The two in the chamber felt the weight of it; they both knew Aurelia's fixation was singular, her fixation on the Black Pudding was a tangible force, evident in the taut lines that composed her frame.

The dark elf met her gaze, offering a mute, regretful shake of her head. Her hands, clasped as though holding back a deluge of disappointment, betrayed her tension. "She speaks only of her return," was the soft confession, tinged with a trace of lingering doubt.

Aurelia leaned back, the shadows from the flickering candles dancing across her face, casting her eyes into hollows. Her fingers stilled on the vanity, the tips drumming a slow, erratic beat. "The goddess seems to enjoy testing my resolve," she murmured, the light catching the edge in her eyes—a restless sea of crimson trapped within stormy irises. "She'll soon discover I'm prepared to wait an eternity if need be."

In the room's secluded corner, Lysander, ensnared in his private hell, clung to their every word, each subtle inflection. His fists clenched, buried into his groin, a meager shield against the overwhelming vulnerability of his nakedness, yet the determination within him seethed, as fierce as the flames of his physical torment. Amidst the echoes of his anguish, a revelation crystallized with piercing clarity: his road to reclamation was paved with the prevention of this prophesied return...this Daughter of Nightmares. Unvoiced, yet as potent as the oath sworn by Aurelia, a vow surged from the crucible of his degradation, fueled by a fervent yearning for retribution.

"*They'll die in blood and agony!*" Lysander silently swore to his dark god, the Serpent, his resolve a shadowy pyre in the stillness of his heart.



As Heather stepped out of Aurelia's chambers, the heavy door whispered shut behind her. With every step, the cold stone floor seemed to pulse, reminding her of the surreal nature of her existence here. Gone was the Earth she knew. Now, obsidian skin contrasted starkly with her robes,

symbolizing her sudden transformation into a dark elf—a Priestess no less. The class **Priestess of Dreams** felt weighty against her soul, as if anchoring her to this new reality.

Drawing a shaky breath, even after all this time, she still tried to make sense of her status: the Priestess of Dreams serving the Goddess of Dreams and Nightmares.

With tentative steps and downcast eyes, Heather navigated the dim corridors. In her peripheral vision, the sneers of passing vampires were like shadows, their silent disdain for the summoned ones a tangible force brushing against her consciousness. A perceived gulf of power separated them from these ancient beings of darkness, seemingly insurmountable. Yet, unknown to the vampires—minus Aurelia—the balance of power had shifted to favor Heather and her comrades.

But amidst this maelstrom of emotions, one thing stood clear: the palpable change since Aurelia's ascendancy. As Heather walked past vampires engaged in hushed conversations, she noticed the glimmers of respect in their voices whenever Aurelia's name was mentioned. It wasn't affection, nor warmth, but it was reverence. A tribute to raw power—and Aurelia wielded it like a master conductor leading an orchestra of darkness. Now don't be mistaken, each and everyone seemed to be plotting at something, but without the power to see it through, the vampires only ever plotted, too timid of real power.

The transition had been remarkable, though, since Jeremy had unveiled the secrets of drawing from ambient mana. The system, once their crutch, had receded to a mere contingency, consulted only when new skills blinked into existence. Magic had become an extension of their beings, as natural as breathing, the spells flowing from their fingertips, from their breaths, from their imaginations with but a thought, no longer shackled by mechanical commands.

Heather reveled in the thrill of it, the ambient mana that caressed her senses, bending willingly to her silent call. Power thrummed through her veins, a heady pulse that dwarfed any prior sense of strength she'd known.

Yet, amidst this evolution, Jeremy's peculiarities knotted her brow. His hushed tones, a constant murmur to an unseen confidant, wove a tapestry of mystery. His insistent secrecy about their magical progression, a whispered directive followed by all, despite the confusion it sowed.

But judgment was a luxury none among the summoned could afford. Each bore the scars of their abrupt uprooting, the emotional and mental tempests that frequently raged without warning. Empathy, understanding—these were the currencies they traded amongst themselves, silently agreeing to shoulder their collective burdens without the added weight of scrutiny. Except for Jason—he was a persistent thorn in their side, but he was their thorn, akin to an irksome sibling in this tumultuous new reality.

As a Priestess, Heather had the rare ability not just to hear the whispers of her goddess but also to sense subtle emotional currents. For some inexplicable reason, the Crone harbored apprehensions about Jeremy, especially concerning the new knowledge and power he'd dispersed among them. However, her concern wasn't strong enough to compel Heather to either stop or intervene, suggesting that this power, while unfathomably useful, concealed something more profound.

Heather halted in her tracks at the unexpected sight of Lord Demidicus's pet succubus, Niamh, who seemed in a state of unusual distress. The demoness, typically a vision of seductive vitality, now staggered, her hand desperately clutching the wall for support, her complexion ashen – a stark contrast to her usual sultry demeanor.

The corridors buzzed with whispered speculations about why Lord Demidicus, on his abrupt departure, hadn't taken Niamh with him. The prevalent suspicion was that she was left behind to covertly watch over his daughter, Aurelia. However, the once-radiant succubus appeared to be unraveling as the days bled into one another; even Heather had caught snatches of conversation among the vampires, their words woven with morbid curiosity and snickering. They spoke in hushed tones, their usual haughty confidence replaced by a tinge of amusement, about the succubus's evident decline.

But the whispers revealed more questions than answers. The cause of Niamh's ailment remained shrouded in mystery, an enigmatic puzzle that seemed to deepen with each passing day. The vampires, despite their centuries of dark knowledge and intrigue, were clueless, their conjectures as shadowy as the dimly lit halls of their enclave.

Heather considered the succubus from a distance, a frown creasing her brow. There was an air of vulnerability around Niamh that Heather hadn't sensed before, a fragility that seemed out of place in the ruthless world they inhabited. With a sigh, she realized that in this realm, filled with beings both mystical and malevolent, suffering spared no one, not even a creature as formidable as a succubus.

Heather couldn't deny an inexplicable fascination with the cruel demoness. Despite never harboring romantic inclinations of the physical sort—a point of contention in her complex relationship with Yua, who harbored an unmistakable obsession with her—something about Niamh captivated her. Heather and Yua had settled into a comfortable, albeit nonphysical, relationship, highlighted by Yua's habitual nocturnal snuggles. Yet, an undefined emotion fluttered in Heather's chest whenever she crossed paths with the succubus.

Chiding herself for the irrational concern, Heather approached Niamh with a resigned sigh. “Are you okay?”

“It's none of your business,” Niamh retorted, her voice a venomous hiss that would usually send others scurrying.

“Perhaps not, but at least let me help you back to your chambers,” Heather offered, her voice gentle, her smile soft—a stark contrast to the succubus's harsh demeanor.

“I don't need your help,” Niamh growled, her pride evident even in her weakened state.

“That's true,” Heather agreed, her demeanor unshaken by the rebuff. “But I'd rather not see an opportunistic vampire take advantage of your...current outing,” she articulated carefully, mindful of the succubus's pride.

Heather's gaze remained steadfast, though she consciously avoided focusing on Niamh's physical allure—the voluptuous curves, the majestic black wings that sprouted from just above her hips,

enveloping her like a protective skirt around her lower half, the horns that sat atop her head like a crown, enhancing her regal beauty. She was a vision, with attire reminiscent of a fetish enthusiast's fantasy, leather straps strategically placed, more suggestive than concealing.

Niamh's eyes, usually blazing with infernal pink fire, now dulled with fatigue, met Heather's. In them, Heather saw not the ferocity of a demon, but the vulnerability of a being grappling with an affliction she couldn't overcome alone. It was this glimpse of fragility, so starkly out of place, that fortified Heather's resolve.

"I'm not asking," Heather finally said, her tone firm yet devoid of hostility. "I'm offering. You're not at your strongest, Niamh. Let someone be your strength, just for now." Her voice carried the sincerity of her offer, a promise devoid of ulterior motives—something perhaps foreign in the succubus's world of deceit and manipulation.

Annoyance rumbled in her throat, a low growl escaping her lips. "Courtyard," Niamh hissed, her gaze averted, a vulnerability flickering in the depths of her usually fiery eyes.

Suppressing the smirk tugging at the corners of her mouth, Heather offered a silent nod. She extended her arm, a silent invitation. Niamh, pride momentarily eclipsed by necessity, slipped her arm through Heather's. Their progress through the coven was a quiet defiance, a bubble of silence amid the susurrus of gossip that tried to cling to them.

The courtyard greeted the two with a celestial ballet, stars and moons in a delicate dance of light and shadow. Völuspá, the largest orb, presided over its celestial subjects, its surface a canvas painted with strokes of pink and blue. They meandered to a bench secluded by blooms and night-blooming flowers, an alcove of tranquility. Heather couldn't help but acknowledge the vampire's penchant for beauty, even in darkness.

Side by side they sat, the succubus's gaze drawn upward, captivated or perhaps ensnared by the cosmic display. A shiver, subtle yet perceptible, traversed Niamh's form. It was an aberration, a crack in the facade, and it beckoned Heather's inquiry.

"What is it?" The words cleaved the silence, gentle yet insistent.

"It's finally happening," Niamh's whisper barely disturbed the air, her voice a blend of awe and a trepidation that seemed foreign to her nature. "And I...I don't know what's going to happen to me."

"What is?" Heather prompted, her curiosity a palpable force in the space between them.

"The convergence."

The word hung in the air between them, heavy with portent. "The convergence," Heather repeated, her mind racing to grasp the implications.

Niamh's gaze remained affixed to the celestial spectacle above, the normally vivid pink of her eyes dimmed. The vibrant dance of pink and blue hues from Völuspá cast an ethereal glow on her face, highlighting her otherworldly features in a soft luminescence beauty that captivated Heather.

The succubus seemed smaller somehow, the formidable presence she typically exuded reduced to a mere flicker.

“Demons...our souls are unique among those summoned to this realm,” Niamh began, her voice a shade gentler, the harsh edges dulled. “In death, our souls don’t go to this reality’s pool of souls. We return...we return to our original realm, to our real bodies.” She drew a breath, each word seeming to weigh heavily upon her. “But now, with my true world merging with this, I can’t foresee what fate intends for my essence.”

Heather stilled, the gravity of Niamh’s revelation anchoring her to the moment. The convergence wasn’t just an abstract cosmic event; it was personal, intimate in its terror. It was the collision of Niamh’s origin with her present, a cataclysm not just of worlds but of self. Heather knew the lore—how a demon, when summoned, reshaped the very vessel they inhabited, molding flesh and spirit into a mirror of their truest self. But what of now, when the demon’s birth world was to orbit as a moon of Völuspá? Would Niamh be wrenched from this existence, her soul ensnared and dragged to her authentic form? Or would she remain here—if so, what would happen to her real body?

“That...that’s terrifying,” Heather’s words were barely audible, a whisper lost in the vastness of the night.

“Look there,” Niamh instructed, her finger directing Heather’s gaze skyward.

Heather’s eyes searched the celestial canvas, at first seeing only the familiar tapestry of stars and moons. Then, there it was—a quiver in the darkness, so subtle it was almost imperceptible.

“It should happen any day now,” Niamh continued, her voice a mix of awe and foreboding. “But if you look over there,” she guided Heather’s gaze to a different quadrant of the sky.

Heather followed, her eyes landing on a spectacle less pronounced yet equally unsettling. A faint disturbance, like a ripple on a still pond, a whisper of change in the otherwise serene night sky.

“It looks like another one is beginning,” Niamh observed, her voice a hushed murmur that belied the gravity of her words. “A double convergence... Lord Demidicus mentioned such events, but as rare, almost mythical occurrences.” Her voice trembled slightly, a delicate quiver that Heather could feel more than hear. “Great changes are coming,” she whispered, the words infused with a reverence that tingled in the air around them.

The two of them remained there, side by side, their gazes locked on the heavens as they witnessed the prelude to a celestial symphony. A symphony that would weave the fate of reality—of realities known and those yet to be revealed. In that moment, they were no longer a priestess and a demon; they were but mere spectators, humbled by the unfolding universe’s grandeur.



In the void before time, before existence was dreamt and before space had breath, there was Chaos. An ancient entity, primal and vast, it existed not as a sibling to anything known or unknown but as an absolute—a singularity in the profoundest sense. Yet within its unfathomable depths, Chaos craved more, a yearning for change, for something other than the boundless eternity it knew.



In a moment of cataclysmic desire, Chaos, in its insatiable desire for something other than itself, ruptured the very fabric of its being. This was no mere division, no simple bifurcation, but a cataclysmic birth. From this self-inflicted destruction, Magic was born, an esoteric force weaving itself into the fabric of everything that ever would be. Life blossomed alongside her sister, a diverse effusion of existence, an explosion of creativity and form. They were the progeny of Chaos' demise, two sisters distinct yet forever linked to the source.

However, in the wake of this cosmic genesis, another presence coalesced in the vast emptiness, not born of Chaos but awakened by its dying act of creation. This entity was a counterpoint to all, an equal and opposite absolute to Chaos. It was the silence where Chaos clamored, the stillness where Chaos burgeoned. It was the end where Chaos endlessly sought to begin.

This consciousness, this primordial force, regarded Magic and Life, understanding its intrinsic opposition to them. It beheld Magic and felt disdain, viewing it as a manipulator, a force that twisted the natural order into unfathomable configurations. It then gazed upon Life and found itself frozen by her beauty.

Hidden in silence within the void, the entity known as the end observed for an eon as Life birthed beings endowed with consciousness. These Titans, as they called themselves, manipulated mana with the skill of Magic herself. Life, in her unending creativity, ceaselessly crafted new existences. Yet, as epochs unfolded, a troubling tranquility descended upon her creations. The Titans, once pulsing with purpose, faded, their essences a dim hum, as they sought meaning in their unending existence.

Within, the entity of the end recognition of its true nature grew. It was not the destroyer, but a necessity – for every existence demanded cessation, every story its closure. The creations of Life, for which it harbored profound affection, craved a purpose.

So, Death emerged, a female figure wrought from darkness yet brimming with compassion, not a herald of dread or sorrow, but as Life's equal, essential to the cosmic balance as the void is to substance. Life gazed upon Death with reverence, a sentiment Death returned in kind, and in their mutual adoration, the cycles of reincarnation were born. Life granted essence, Magic spun potential, and Death bestowed purpose. Through the perpetual cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, every soul found depth and strength in its journey.

In this boundless dance, Life and Death intertwined, their love imbuing their offspring with purpose and vitality. Yet, the splendor of their union was not destined to endure unchallenged, for shadows of envy stirred, foreboding darker times, as Magic observed the pair with burgeoning resentment.

In her yearning to give birth to something uniquely her own, Magic recklessly tampered with forces beyond her realm, thus spawning the Eldritch. This new breed incited perpetual strife, clashing violently against Life's prime creations, the Titans, who valiantly defended their existence and that of all creation. The Eldritch, in contrast, sought nothing less than absolute dominion and the annihilation of all else.

In response, Life brought forth a new creation, that of the Gods, empowering them to stand beside the Titans and all of her creations in this escalating war. Furthermore, Life devised a system, a means to grant all children of hers a fighting chance in the face of overwhelming darkness. Yet, all these proved inadequate against the swelling tide of chaos.

In desperation, Life sought the intervention of her other half, but Death, abhorring destruction, chose to stand apart. This decision was made even as Life observed, aghast, the brutal onslaught against her children, witnessing their very souls—the core that fueled the cycle of reincarnation—being ravaged by the monstrous Eldritch, born of Magic’s capricious envy. Enraged, Life cast aside her generative mantle, assuming instead the fierce countenance of a wrathful, protective mother, and confronted the Eldritch in solitary battle.

The Eldritch, formidable as they were, paralleled only by the Titans in might, seemed to be on the cusp of a grim victory in their cosmic war. Yet, they had no precedent for facing a fully-roused Primordial. In their desperation, they conjured an unparalleled spell, expelling Life and her cherished Titans beyond the veil into a forsaken reality, unreachable by both Magic and Death.

The Eldritch perceived their triumph, but Death, horrified by Life’s banishment, was compelled into action. Abandoning her erstwhile role as a gentle guide, she emerged as the harbinger of the end. The Eldritch faced obliteration, their forms and essences fractured across the cosmos. The meager remnants of their existence barely warranted attention, so pitiable that they came to be known derisively as Black Puddings.

For Death, the ensuing void was a chasm of endless mourning, a state devoid of logic, reason, or purpose. Without her counterpart, Life, Death found her own existence meaningless. Consumed by her loss, she withdrew to the only sanctuary where Life’s vestiges persisted—within the silent realm of bygone dreams. There, she slumbered, abandoning the cycles of reincarnation and her desire to imbue existence with purpose.

For a time, there was nothing and no one, save for a few gods that managed to survive. But after a while, things began to change, and new life from beyond the veil started to emerge. Death, however, wanted nothing to do with these new entities, choosing instead to continue her slumber.

In the realm of dreams, those from the outside could indeed visit, provided they harbored a connection to a specific dream. They often mingled with others, oblivious to the true nature of these encounters. Moreover, with the cycles of reincarnation broken following Life’s banishment, wandering souls frequently found solace here as well.

Undisturbed in her sanctuary of past dreams, Death was steeped in her mourning until an entity, veiled and repugnant, breached her reclusive haven. Roused, Death ventured into an adjacent dream, where she encountered a girl encased in an ethereal cocoon of silk, a deceptive shroud masking her true form—a Black Pudding. She was neither dreaming nor a lost spirit. Death regarded the creature with revulsion, her scowl deepening, yet when the being opened her eyes, Death glimpsed something within her soul that cleaved through her enduring sorrow. Before the girl could sense her presence, Death receded into the shadows, invisible yet vigilant.

From her hidden vantage, Death observed as the girl fumbled through the realm of dreams, vulnerable and perplexed. She chose not to intervene, but rather to scrutinize this anomaly, this echo of what she believed had been irrevocably lost. Had it not been for the Black Pudding's detestable shell, Death might have revealed herself sooner, but she hesitated, fearing her emotions might betray her into annihilation of the creature. Instead, with a heart astir, she delved into an examination of the girl's soul.

In the most extraordinary circumstance, here was a vestige of the Eldritch—sworn foes of all that Life had nurtured—cradling within a flicker of Life herself—more accurately, a child of Life—the soul of a Titan. Even more astonishing to Death was the discovery that one of the deities, progeny of her union with Life, had intertwined their essence with that of the Titan's soul. No, that wasn't quite accurate. The Titan's soul had splintered into countless shards, and it appeared a deity had toiled to reassemble it, ultimately falling short, thus leaving the girl's soul bifurcated.

Death pondered the prospect of reuniting the two pieces but restrained herself upon discerning that the dormant segment was stirring to consciousness. Remarkably, the two soul fragments operated as a unified whole yet remained distinctly apart. It was as if the girl derived a unique contentment from this dual existence.

However, Death soon concluded that the girl's complete lack of commonsense likely stemmed from her conflicting identities, caught between her Titan and Eldritch natures, compounded by the presence of her dual souls. She watched the conflicted being blunder into encounters with various spirits lurking within the dreams of the past, and then with dreamers whom the girl seemed to recognize. The girl became embroiled in what appeared to be a brief series of conflicts—fleeting from the Primordial's perspective, though perhaps spanning over a year for lesser beings—oscillating between triumphs and defeats against these phantoms of the dream realm continuing to repeating the cycle endlessly with unbridled glee.

Death's patience, once vast and enduring, finally eroded, pushing her to the decision to approach the child. Yet, just as she was about to, a tremor through reality halted her, a sigh escaping her ethereal form as she recognized the stirrings of another of Magic's convergences. The thought crossed her mind, as it had many times before, to obliterate the other remaining Primordial. But she always restrained herself, aware that her beloved would be heartbroken by the death of her sister.

Despite the disturbance, Death knew she couldn't delay her interaction with the girl any longer.