

Dark Descent: Whispers From Beyond Vol 20

Good Little Minions

They always arrive before the sun, my little minions scurrying across the stone walkway like dirty rats. Every night the same, dozens of them carrying their latest offerings in the vain hope of being named the winner of 42 seconds of sunlight.

The first minion lays down a heart. It's heavy, veined, still faintly twitching as if clinging to the life it had before being ripped out. I cut into it. Blood beads, dark and metallic coating my tongue as wave after wave of energy explodes through me with every bite.

"Next" I screamed to the room of anxious beings trembling in fear as they patiently wait in line to serve me.

The next minion brings me lungs. Pale limp sacks that collapse when I pierce them, releasing a sigh that smells of delicious old cigar smoke. I chew. Air rushes through me that isn't mine. My chest stretches painfully wide. I gasp, choke, then laugh as borrowed breath fills every corner of my being.

Another minion brings a liver—slick, bitter. My tongue recoils, then laps it up greedily. Warm sludge coats my mouth as I chew.

Next a kidney bursts between my teeth, warming me with toxins so sharp it makes my eyes water.

Then the smallest minion I own steps forward. He carries a tongue, swollen and bruised, teeth marks still visible along its sides.

"My gift," he says as he hesitantly slides it across to me. As I bite down, the taste is electric—saliva, blood, and fear ground into flesh. I gag, struggling to swallow but I will persevere.

With satisfaction I Lick my lips—Perfection.

At sunrise, I crack the skylight. Light slides in across the floor. I point to the small minion. He stands in the golden glow, weeping silently for forty-two seconds.

Tonight, they will hunt, leaving a trail of blood behind them.

And I, will just wait for my breakfast.

Monsters

Up and down. Up and down.

That is what my life has become.

My spine grinds against the slick, sweaty hide of a foul-smelling horse as it lurches forward, dragging me from one screaming pit of existence to the next. I no longer ride—I cling. Fingers locked into coarse hair, nails split and bleeding, arms trembling as gravity toys with whether I am allowed to remain attached to this moment or be crushed beneath it. Survival is not living; it is simply not dying. Yet.

The sun is a blinding, merciless eye that doesn't shine. Just scorches long, weeping red streaks into my skin, branding me slowly, deliberately, as if I am being prepared for something much, much worse. My body withers beneath it, flesh cracking, lips splitting, sweat evaporating before it can cool me. I am being cooked alive, one agonising moment at a time, and the sun never looks away.

It has been years since the great ones took over the world.

Huge beings. Giant monsters. Colossal things that blot out the sky and turn daylight into a trembling shadow. They move with careless thought. Each step a sentence of death. Each footfall collapses eons of history into dust that suffocates my lungs when I breathe. They do not hunt. They take.

They trample entire cities as if they were inconsequential. They crush rivers into mud. They grind mountains into rubble. Anything that existed before them is just... in the way. Not out of rage. Not out of hunger.

Out of indifference.

It is worse than hatred. Hatred would require seeing us, acknowledging something more. They do not care.

All they want is the earth—its weight, its resources, its silence. They do not notice the screams that vibrate beneath their feet. They do not notice me clinging, crawling, bleeding, rationing scraps of existence from the rot they leave behind. I live on leftovers gnawed by rats and soaked in slime. I drink from puddles that taste of death and decay. I sleep with my heart pounding, waiting for the ground to shake again.

I am invisible.

And yet I persist. My latest mantra:

I am worthy of life.

I am worthy of survival.

For I am a worthy little ant.

The List

Blood dripped from every surface. Thick smears, scattered droplets, and long, lazy streaks slid down the walls like little red rivers. They twisted and curled as they moved, carving strange paths around the crooked picture frames still clinging to their hooks. The house smelled metallic and warm—like a butcher's shop forgotten in the sun. I watched one bead

of blood tremble at the tip of a frame before dropping with a polite little plink onto the floorboards.

The last name on my list was finally gone. Finished. Erased. I stood in the centre of the room, breathing slow and steady, my hands still trembling with the delicious aftershocks of my purpose. A deep warmth filled every hollow space inside me. Happiness—real, bone-settling happiness—washed over me in gentle tides. Every facet of my life had finally aligned, as if the universe itself had been quietly rearranged just to offer me peace.

I had worked for this. I had bled for this.

I had sacrificed the rude, the cruel, the ones who believed they could treat me as if I were nothing. One by one, I had removed the rot, pruning the world back until only silence and possibility remained.

It wasn't cruelty.

It was clarity.

And clarity, I'd decided, was the perfect gift to give myself this Christmas.

I took a slow step forward. My boots made faint, sticky echoes on the floor. The air hummed as I smiled to myself. No more whispered insults. No more dismissive comments of make believe. No more weight pressing on my chest every time someone spoke over me. Those days were gone—written into the walls in red.

Then headlights flared through the front window. Tyres crunched over gravel. A car door slammed.

My smile froze.

Through the glass, I saw silhouettes—small ones—bounding up the path. The squeal of excited children cut through the quiet, followed by a deeper voice calling, "Come on, inside! Mum will love it!"

The porch door swung open.

Tiny boots pattered across the boards.

The front door burst inward.

And there they stood—the father and two children—faces going pale as they stared at me.

At my boots.

At the blood.

At the wife and mother lying motionless on the floor.

I straightened slowly, wiping a crimson hand across my beard, the bells on my sleeve chiming softly. The list in my gloved hand unfurled like a scroll as I let them see the heading.

Naughty.

“Ho, ho, ho,” I whispered into the stunned silence before slinking away.