

Well, here I am. First day in Farquaad's dungeon. Smells like soup, but they didnt actually give me any. I heard squeaking in the wall. Could be rats. Could be ghosts. Percival, my cell rat, has yet to introduce himself formally. I tried waving.

He stared. I think that means 'hello.'

Each crack in the ceiling drips like a clock. I got my first beating today. A guard with a limp and a cruel sense of rhythm. Percival watched with judgment in his tiny rat eyes.

No soup. Still hungry. The rats seem to be on strike. Honestly, I support them.

I finally got soup! It hissed at me. I hissed back. Percival dipped a toe in and then offered it to me like a sommelier. The bouquet was 'swampy with hints of despair.'

No beatings today. Small mercies. I'm naming the soup Gerald. Gerald is hot and angry.

Rats. So many rats. And another beating. Thats two now. Im starting to learn the pattern. Soup? Not today. Bell? Not yet.

Just rats and regrets. Percival seems unbothered. He's riding one like a horse. I fear he has plans.

DONG. DONG. DONG. The bell rang today for the first time since I got here. Three times, loud enough to shake my fillings. No soup, no rats, no fists. Just me and the bell.

I started crying from sheer surprise. Percival patted my foot.

Dont know how many more of these I can take. Got soup again thats the second time now. Also got my third beating. My ribs now whistle when I breathe.

Percival staged a walkout. Came back five minutes later. Said he forgot his spoon.

One day without any major horrors. No beatings, no soup, no rats, no bell. I almost felt calm. Almost. I played tic-tac-toe with a scab.

Percival gave me a flower made of lint. It smelled like onions and hope.

Never trust a rat that whistles. The rats swarmed again second time thats happened. Also another beating. Thats four now. Percival just shrugged and gnawed on my boot.

I think Im developing Stockholm Syndrome, but for rodents.

Kettle of soup again third time now. No beatings today. Bell didnt ring. Percival thinks Im starting to enjoy the soup. I think Im starting to agree.

We named it Gerald II. He's chunkier and less aggressive than his predecessor.

Everything all at once. Fifth beating. Second bell. No rats, no soup. I wept quietly into a rock. Percival tried to comfort me. Bit me instead.

That counts as affection here. I think were engaged now.

Yodeling. I heard yodeling. I think Ive lost it. No events today. I saw my reflection in the soup bucket I wasnt there.

Percival says I'm becoming one with the dungeon. I didnt know he could talk.