

Duck Butter

It's... butter. Made from duck milk. At least, that's what the alchemists say: and never mind that ducks are waterfowl, and thus do not give milk. It would appear that somebody set off too much chaos magic in one place again.

Normally, this would result in a pretty standard Quest, except that there's a certain amount of power struggling going on behind the scenes this time. The problem is that duck butter tastes *delicious*. It tastes delicious, nobody can find anything Evil in it, and magically accelerating its effect on living beings only confirms that the stuff is great for clearing up acne. So there are beings in the Mage Guild who are seriously arguing that maybe, this one time, there's no need to send in the 'kill them all and let the alignment system sort them out' type of investigation team.

The standard retort to that, of course, is 'chaos magic.' *Maybe* this was a one-time thing, and there are just a bunch of true-breeding ducks out there with functional mammary glands. And *maybe* there's a thirty-foot-long bloated Duck Queen in a cave somewhere that trades its unholy milk for sentient sacrifices, all screaming as they

go under the bill. **You just don't know.** That's why they call it *chaos* magic, after all. If it was predictable, people would call it something else.

So, of course, there was a compromise. The various Guilds picked an existing team that already had the right mix of instantaneous mayhem and indiscriminate deal-making; and then they assigned you a couple of specialists. Somebody to talk, and somebody to hit - and *both* are reporting back to the Guilds, while you're just reporting to *them*. There is apparently a lot of both menace and opportunity represented in, off all things, duck butter. And you're mildly sure that one thing that both of your handlers are ready to agree upon is that any catastrophic failure is going to be the fault of **your** adventuring party.

Well, at least the job pays obscenely well.

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