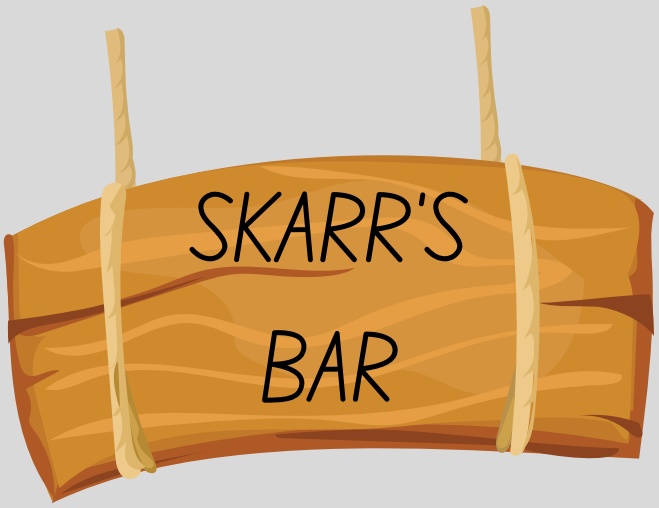


As the day goes on, with Colette writing her cousin and Tomas heading home in search of pecans, Skarr and Quin remain at the bar to hammer out the final details of the illustrious Spiced Rum Pecan Pie.

“We talked about the filling, but you mentioned the crust matters as well,” Skarr says, trying his best to pay attention to all the details Quin throws at him. “Do you have something in mind for it?”

Quin nods excitedly, almost falling off her stool. “Ya darn tootin’! I got me a crust I been usin’ since Grammy taught me ta bake! It’s an all butter crust that we’ll mix sum o’ tha spices inta. Give it a slight kick while still bein’ smooth, flacky, and good ole buttery-rich!”

“Then I better go ahead and ask about these spices.” Skarr sighs, wondering how this next conversation will go. He shakes his head to clear away the thoughts, focusing on the here and now. “What spices do you need?”

“I got me a list!” Quin pulls a scrunched-up piece of paper out of her apron pocket. “We’re gon’ need cinnamon, vanilla, cardamon, cloves, nutmeg, a bit o’ pepper, ginger, and tha signature spice, cayenne. We need enough ta spice tha rum an’ tha crust, so hopefully Sanasha can get us a heapin’ helpin’!”

“You stay here and try not to burn down the kitchen. I’ll go reach out to Sanasha.” Skarr stands with a grunt.

Quin lets out a hearty laugh. “It ain’t often that ya make jokes like that! I’m likin’ this side o’ ya, pardner!”

Skarr just shakes his head, turning to hide his smile. He exits the kitchen as Quin continues her onslaught on the old cookbooks. Each step creaks up the stairs toward the attic office, a place Skarr has spent many days and nights pouring over receipts, recipes, and expenses. The bar has been in business almost three years, each year with its own challenges to face. In that time, many boots have walked through his door, many meals served and drinks poured. As Skarr enters his office, he thinks back to his first few months in town, putting an end to D’Angelo’s hold on Summerton. Then last year with the whole Ozymandias debacle. It’s nice for the biggest challenge right now to be gathering ingredients for a pie.

“Invoke Domini,” Skarr says with a rumble in his throat. The number of times he has invoked Sanasha’s summons can be counted on one hand, and yet each time comes with its own set of nerves and butterflies.



In a puff of red smoke mixed with flecks of silver, Sanasha unfurls her form as she rises from the portal to Hell. “My, my. Unlike you to ring during business hours, Love. To what do I owe the pleasure?”

Skarr grimaces, his eyes daring to wander across his old flames devilish form. “This isn’t for me. Quin needs your help with something, and she asked me to reach out.”

Sanasha chuckles, a sultry, smooth whisper lapping at Skarr’s mind. “Come now, Love. Do you think me so vain? I’d never miss the chance to earn a favor from my favorite former dance partner, hmhm. Now, what does the young chef need from moi?”

“She’s baking a pie for a competition, and we need the best spices possible to make it. Quin is confident that Sin City has what we need and figured you’d be our best bet to getting them. I hope that isn’t an issue.” Skarr watches as Sanasha saunters over to him, running her hand over his chest as she circles him. In the past, this felt like a dance. Now, more of a predator stalking its prey.

“Spices, hmm? From the heart of Sin City itself, no less.” She steps back, snapping her fingers. “I can do this, for a price. As much spice as your little chef can dream of, all for a small cost.”

Skarr closes his eyes, hesitant to ask. Were this not for Quin, he wouldn’t risk deals with a devil. “What is your price?”

Sanasha moves behind Skarr, her hands digging into his shoulders. She turns him around, hellish playfulness in her eyes. Yet, something else lingers as well. The flick of her forked tongue, the glint behind the fire in her eyes, the hunger in her claws against Skarr’s body. Sanasha looks at Skarr, hovering to meet his gaze. Her unholy demeanor fades, even if for just a moment.

“Say you miss me.”