

Delta expected fanfare or a choir of holy angelic songs when she accepted her new role but nothing happened. She turned to Nu who stared back.

“Welcome to the show, now get your hat on and serve some Mother Wisdom. I’m going to do something interesting.” Nu said bluntly and vanished.

“Maybe it’s my imagination, but I am sure you are looking just this side of delicious now,” Wyin offered and Delta remembered gods ate each other with tartar sauce and glee. So she covered her torso with her arms and gave the tree a suspicious look.

Delta thanked them for their council and the lore lesson on gods before she stepped away to play with her new menu tab. It was a small tab labeled ‘Godly Duties’.

There were only two things in the drop-down section that appeared.

Follower Count: 64

Actions: Delta Bless. Cost 1 Fai- Man-

Points merged! Mana conquered Faith.

Total available Mana: four thousand (rounded to nearest hundred)

Actions: Delta Bless: 2 Mana.

Delta bless? That sounded fun!

Delta looked around and spotted a small squirrel critter minding its own business. Rolling her avatar’s sleeves, she wriggled some fingers and pointed at the critter.

“Be blessed!” she called and instead of a magic beam of faith and compassion, there was more like a heatwave and the squirrel stiffened.

Nothing happened and Delta frowned as it ran off, likely confused at the woman screaming at it to be blessed.

“Maybe there’s a trick to this thing?” she mused and walked the other way, trying the thing on some birds and insects as she went with the same result.

The squirrel ran through the bushes before it stopped and looked to the sky, its form rippling as it stretched. Nearby, Lyre watched as it expanded and began to snarl.

She smiled.

This god thing was *bogus*!

Delta had blessed ten birds, three squirrels, two foxes, and even some fish.

Weirdly, she was getting more followers, slowly, but surely. The second weird thing was the blessing was getting a skill description of sorts.

Delta Bless: To be more.

“Vague is not helping me give magic and I don’t want to use this on Giant just yet,” she muttered and sat near Bob’s basin.

With some thought, she decided she was being too narrow-minded. She could bless more than just critters.

“Pablam! Tree blessed! Bam! Rock blessed! Dododododod, lots of grass blessed! Woopah! Water blessed!” Delta used her guns like fingers, firing the blessings out like a rapid machine gun pistol.

“Something happen!” she cried and flopped to the ground.

Godhood ranked up.

Gained the skill: Delta Adopt!

“New skill!” she sat up and Delta saw her follower count had surpassed 75 now.

“I adopt you!” she said to a rock she picked up.

Error. Rocks cannot consent to adoption.

Delta pursed her lips then used some mana to draw eyes on it and a smile.

“I would love to be adopted, golly jee,” she said out the side of her mouth roughly.

Error: Rock is not sentient.

Delta could fix that! She lashed on some mana, shaped it, and even gave it the power to glow.

Glow Rock created: Made from perfect pebble. A druid weeps.

Glows.

So, if it glowed then light traveled fast, like thoughts, so if Delta just made the light into ideas then the rock might think? The screen nearby turned green.

“My game slowed down. Why are you trying to give a rock the curse of life?” Prim asked bluntly.

“I adopt you!” Delta pointed at Prim.

Prim is part of you. You cannot adopt your liver. Please don’t try.

“I’ve been trying to get goddesshood to work but it won’t. I’ve blessed a ton of things and nothing changed,” Delta explained.

“You’re a god now?” Prim asked in horror.

“And I really want Giant to have magic and a good time. All he wants is to have magic and it turns out magic is god sushi handed out on a global scale so I became a god to do the job myself,” Delta said, waving her hands.

“Magic is dead god sushi?” Prim echoed in disbelief.

“And I suck at being a god. Is it my tone? Am I not judgy enough? I just don’t think this rock has done anything worth being judged for and I would forgive it anyway because it’s my rock,” Delta finished, taking a deep breath.

“This must be like your art skills. They’re... raw,” Prim tried to say slowly but Delta remembered the islands and her face fell.

“What were you trying to bless?” Prim asked and Delta gestured to everything without shame.

“No, I mean, what aspect were you blessing? The tree, for example. The bark? The sap? The roots?” Prim clarified and Delta stared at her.

“I was supposed to be specific?” she asked, confused. Nearby, the tree groaned and its bark ruptured to reveal a pale spongy fleshy inside as white brittle branches replaced the old ones, forming dozens of cheery red mushrooms on its branches.

The trunk, where it was thickest, opened to reveal a bloodshot sideways eye that looked around without any sort of ‘intelligence’ about it.

“Oh. That is cursed,” Delta said faintly.

“No, it’s blessed actually,” Prim said as she brought up the menu.

Greatly Delta Bless Tree: The Eyes See.

A blessed tree that blooms in death and destruction. It defends the land from attackers and screams to indicate the passing of time. Every hour it screams on the dot.

"I don't think I've improved the quality of life for this tree at all," Delta said slowly as she tried to pet it and it began to vibrate and secrete an acidic sweat.

"This is less 'bless by thy name' and more 'you stepped into a ring of mushrooms' sort of blessing. The terms are loose in what they actually do. The only thing separating a curse and blessing is the blessing has to not totally be malicious." Prim pointed out.

"I would rather 'wake up feeling great every morning' blessing. Can we set it to that?" Delta asked as the rock nearby grew segmented legs and a dozen eyes as it walked away covered in a giant mushroom cap.

Suffocating Rock: The Legs Move

A rock that looks for people to sit on. Not to harm them but because it enjoys comfy things.

Some of the birds she blessed began to molt and soon became wispy-white things that floated through the air on mycelium threads, looking like beautiful but disturbing spirits with an eye on each wing.

Threaders: The Wings Carry

Peaceful birds that sing by inserting their wing threads into your ear. Takes some practice to get just the right length.

"Prim, why the eyes?" Delta asked as she moved around the tree slowly.

"I have no clue. Perhaps your blessing allows them to see the beauty of the world the way you do?" She said then paused, **"Not that beauty is something that is measured,"** she added quickly.

"I've committed a cardinal sin, I made RPG weak points," Delta mumbled as she stepped into a patch of grass.

She sat down to see a dozen blinking eyes with stalks of grass acting like eyelashes. The things blinked and brushed her leg in a gentle squeezing manner.

Grasping Straws: The Fingers Feel

Massaging grass that finds all lumps and knots. If left to do their thing, some say even your bones will become soft and relaxed at the end of the day,

"This is fine," Delta told Prim who didn't look convinced but did look pleased.

"Wonderful inspiration for my next mod," she said conversationally as a fox wandered past, pure white that looked normal otherwise.

"My heart says to have hope, my experience as a core tells me to wait for it," Delta said aloud.

The thing sat licking its paw as its tail separated into a dozen tendrils that felt around for scraps or friends, teasing a normal fox to come to play as it opened an eye on the back of its head. With some tease, it made three smaller tails that whipped around in a playful manner.

Foxglove: The Fox Plays

A harmless critter who can lead people on a merry chase. Its tendrils can tickle your brain.

"Birds, trees, foxes, rocks... Fish!" Delta ran to the river where beautiful white koi fish danced about at the bottom of the river.

She watched as the beautiful things burst into a dozen white-looking worm threads and reformed downstream playfully.

Alucarps: The Fish Dance

Playful fish that can turn into bait on a whim and survive being eaten and then passed, only to reform later with its waiting horde. They wish to experience the most divine stomachs.

"The river is only mildly affected by the blessing. Makes people's athlete foot less severe if they wade through it. Don't ask why, you don't want to know," Prim said far too calmly as she finished her own check.

"Athlete's foot exists here?" Delta asked, more surprised than upset.

"Yes, it forces people to run until their feet bleed. A terrible disease," Prim said sadly. Delta relaxed a little, finding most of these life forms were acceptable if a little creepy. She also learned by default her blessing was more with eyes and a dash of mushroom.

Not exactly a selling point to anyone who wasn't a Pygmy, to be honest. The important thing she now knew was that she had to aim her blessing when using it. Delta just needed to be more specific. Looking around, she spotted Lyre emerging with something in her arms.

“Oh my... god?” Delta said.

“Technically, we can use your name in vain,” Prim reminded, staring as Lyre held up a foaming raging wolverine-like creature with sharp teeth and two mushrooms where its ears should have been.

“Me-damn,” Delta amended as she saw the creature being put down and immediately trying to pick a fight with a tree.

Saberrel: The Teeth Desire

A temperamental creature who finds most things offensive. Squirrels naturally convert under Nu’s blessing by default due to their shared habit of wanting to horde and attack invaders. All Saberrels obey Lyre out of instinctual fear.

It snarled and at the back of its maw was a third glaring eyeball.

“What’s Nu’s blessing?” Delta mused to herself as she searched the menus.

Nu blessing: Get off my lawn. No solicitors. Do not make me come out there.

The Saberrel finished attacking the tree leaving a rough carving of a rectangular box with a little line at the bottom and the word that was either ‘Pears have it’ or ‘Perish’ written inside it. There were three of these things running around.

“How did it get from ‘I want to give Giant magic’ to ‘I made a company called with a name similar to Parasol’?” Delta asked herself seriously.

“I presume like any god, your hubris led you to making your own demons and unleashing them upon the world and wondering how it all went wrong,” Prim said confidently and Delta stared at her.

“My villain dialogue is bad, but I’ve been improving in my mods,” the system admitted.

Delta could see Prim winning an award from herself at this rate for the improvements each mod brought.

She turned to the Saberrels and tried to adopt them.

Saberrels automatically accept your adoption.

Would you like to assign them a test, blessing, curse, edict, and/or tithe?

“Just bless them to be normal squirrels most times!” Delta tried and there was some thinking.

Not enough godhood experience to alter existing grand bless. Would you like to make them be blessed to be slightly calmer?

It was like duct tape over her problems, a nice shiny strip of tape to hide all the issues.

Delta loved being a god.

Amenstar stared at his father who looked unusually somber.

"Did you step on a snail again? You do know they go to snail heaven," Amenstar said as they ate dinner together. Alpha stared between them and Poppy had to go home.

"There's a snail heaven?" the quiet boy asked and Amenstar shot him a grin.

"Sure, they don't even need a reaper. Snails are very easy to go with the flow and move on," he explained. In Amenstar's experience, squirrels had the most trouble moving on.

"It is nothing, son, just... I think someone new is in the area," Amenstar's father said and his tone was odd. Amenstar narrowed his eyes.

"You're not rushing off when you just got back to being roughly normal," he said and the priest looked a little embarrassed.

"No, not right away but if it is a bad summoning of an unsavory god then I should deal with it before it gains too many followers," the man said and Amenstar's face turned stoney.

"Mom isn't here to explain things. You can't just run off anymore," Amenstar insisted.

Amenstar had only gotten his dad back to acting like himself, he didn't want the damned 'Great Saint Wollom' coming back as well.

Amenstar didn't even have any way of contacting Mom from beyond the grave anymore to explain homework or why Dad was gone, she was too 'away'.

"I'm not running off. This is my church," the priest promised and turned to Alpha with a smile.

"Are you interested in joining the Church of the Two-Eyed Wanderer? You have some excellent talent and I see, rather suddenly, you have a connection to the divine! You'd make an excellent crusader!" the man said and Alpha blinked, looking lost.

"I don't trust religion as it's an organized group focused around group worship of a being that has societal expectations for me before and after I join," Alpha said politely and Amenstar nearly snorted into his soup.

"You need only swear off mutton and sometimes agree to get lost on the road to life and follow butterflies into the unknown," the man tried.

"Getting lost gives me anxiety," Alpha replied.

"You discover many wonderful little places with people if you do!"

"People give me anxiety."

"And those people have amazing tales and culture!"

"Culture gives me anxiety."

"...I see."

"Church life isn't for everyone. I'm still torn between being a priest or a dark gothic necromancer with a basement room somewhere," Amenstar told Alpha who thought about it.

"Death gives me anxiety," he mused.

"Anything that doesn't give you anxiety?" Wollom asked kindly as if he could go fetch it and cover Alpha in it like a cloak.

"I like bagels and naps," Alpha said, sounding confident.

"A humble desire, I respect that," Wollom said but eyes were still darting to the nearby window.

"Dad," Amenstar warned and the man looked apologetic.

"I just feel it, is all," he explained and Alpha spoke up.

"You said you were a saint? What is that?" he asked, looking more interested in why Amenstar's father was acting weird than his own soup.

"Oh it's very dry business," Wollom tried to deflect but Amenstar was an expert at making his father engage people honestly.

"A saint is someone who has over a conceptual 10% of their god or god's power. So Dad has a lot of actual divine power in him but it comes with some issues like being sensitive to other such beings and new religions. Churches are territorial," Amenstar said brightly.

"I'm very rusty. I thought you were a saint when you walked in," Wollow laughed with a good-natured smile to Alpha.

"Did your god like you that much?" Alpha blinked at Wollow, surprised at the information as if he expected all gods to be capricious selfish jerks.

Like Amenstar did.

"Oh no, I couldn't get it to pay attention to me at all. When I summoned it, it didn't even want to stick around, let alone be my god," Wollow admitted as he grabbed his glass of water, the glass a pale green as it sparkled in the orange light of dawn.

"But I followed it as it looked around, always looking around. I told it I wanted to be a hero and I wasn't giving up any time soon so it kicked me off a mountain and I lost it for a week," Wollow laughed again.

"I found it in a bookstore, eating books like a meal," he said, "and when it saw me again, it gave me a tiny bit of power. I could make coin flips truly unpredictable, even if they were fixed," he snorted.

"Then I just did good deeds and sometimes it would cross my path and I'd get a bit stronger. It seems to feel sorry for me but I didn't mind. I was up against this evil necromancer who had me bound to a table with bones and talking about ruling over the land with her iron fist. I managed to knock her off balance when she dropped some melted candle wax on me and I screamed like a girl. So, Amenstar's mother let me go, unable to take me seriously," Wollow went on and Amenstar groaned as he told this story but inside... he loved it.

His dad was just being a goofy dad.

"I wore her down and after winning the hand of the dark of my life, it was no trouble convincing a god to make me a saint," Wollow grinned and Alpha was smiling a little too.

"What's it like being a saint?" Alpha asked.

"Long hours with no thanks," Amenstar answered to his father's chagrin.

"Nothing really major unless I'm called down to end Abomination Dungeons. Made myself a name for that once or twice," the man admitted.

"Do abomination dungeons upset gods?" Alpha asked, carefully.

"Of course, Dungeons who break out of their confines and reach a god, and consume them, can create Abyssal Beings. Fallen angels and choirs with eyes of evil and unnatural dispositions.

Gods value their self, their total sense. Other gods don't take that but Dungeons do," Wollom said firmly.

"What if they go abomination and eat a god, but don't mean harm?" Alpha pressed and the man humored his question but Amenstar was giving Alpha an odd look.

"Well, even so, a Dungeon that consumes a god will eventually bring their star closer. Drawing in the tear in the night sky until it ravages the land. The dungeon who consumes the god literally grows a massive spotlight on themselves and puts the land in danger," Wollom said, sipping his water.

"A famous case is the blasted lands of an ancient kingdom called Turtog; a dungeon must have consumed a new god because its star collapsed on that fetid place and left very little behind," the priest said and Amenstar hadn't heard this tale before.

"So, the god cannot go back, if it survived?" Alpha asked, his eyes alert.

"I'm not a summoner but I presume it can go 'somewhere' if it is rejected back into the Abyss. Not home, but somewhere." Wollom guessed.

"How did you know a star collapsed? Does it give off a unique energy?" Alpha pressed for more details, even taking Amenstar's father back.

"Yes, a god's star fell on that land. A thing of life and growth. It was a real shame," Wollom said sadly.

"But there are other things that eat gods, right? Other gods, for power?" Alpha looked nervous, bouncing his knee now.

"No, all gods must bend to the accord upon being summoned. The Shattering War made gods limited, even new ones," Wollom explained gently as if sensing Alpha was getting distressed.

"What's wrong?" Wollom asked and Alpha looked at him and there was clear distrust on his face. There was a pause.

"I'm going to do dishes. Amenstar, why don't you walk Alpha back to the inn. Enjoy the cool evening air together," the man said and collected plates and bowls

Alpha let Amenstar guide him out of the house and down the road before he sighed.

"I'm worried about Delta. She's dealing with... gods," he admitted and Alpha looked highly uncomfortable about admitting it.

"Listen," Amenstar began but he didn't know how to begin to assure Alpha that while gods were terrifying beings of power... they were muzzled, disarmed, and only able to get to you if you let them, but he knew that wasn't exactly true.

Alpha looked puzzled but tilted his head as if to listen for something.

Amenstar fought off a smile.

"I hear it, a whirring noise," Alpha said after a moment. Amenstar heard it a moment later, a whump of superheated hair and a strange chopping noise.

A girl suddenly crashed into the ground, creating a small trench which settled a second with splattering mud and water.

"The gods attack with feminine charms," Alpha said, drawing his own sword in sudden aggression.

"Ow..." the girl groaned, not sitting up.

At her side, a strange sword gurgled and then it began to speak.

"Please take... all baggage when you depart Gamma flights," the sword said in a daze.

"You said... this suit had... landing gear," the girl moaned as she shuddered.

"I didn't say it was 'good' landing gear," the sword muttered to itself. Alpha walked over and nudged the girl over, the sword still in her hand.

"Oh it's a boy," the girl muttered with enough mud on her face that it was impossible to make her features out.

"Another one, you and your cute boys... wait, I know this one!" the sword said and the girl winced as she stood up and Amenstar eyed the heavens to see if any more weirdos would drop out of the sky.

"Apple!" the sword seemed to call and Alpha frowned.

"That's not my name," Alpha warned and the sword laughed with sheer delight.

"Of course not, remember? I call you Apple because your name is-" the sword began before the girl twisted and tossed the sword into a nearby pond.

"Screw you!" the girl screamed, her face swelling from the impact.

The pond bubbled a few times before it began to steam uselessly but the girl was limping down into town, looking like her body was still shaking from the fall and perhaps the flight.

“Do you want the sword or the girl?” Amenstar offered.

“Girl. I do not trust swords that might be thrown at me by bodies of water without provocation,” Alpha said with a frown.

Amenstar chose a rotten time to not ask for fish for dinner. Those bones would have saved him the effort of getting wet...

He sighed and began to wade into the water.

“Quack.”

“I get that. Thanks, your Majesty,” Beta muttered, looking at the ground.

“Quack.”

“I’ll tell him when I visit,” Beta nodded as the Duke of Wrath continued to give her words of encouragement. He gestured past the massive pulsing tower of Delta to the horizon where a portal out of the Abyss would open soon. Beta’s chance to get back to the world she was taken from by the ducks.

She flexed a muscle and from her back, elegant black wings formed like liquid.

Dark Drake Wings level 3: Progress gained. The presence of a majestic specimen has increased this progress greatly.

Turning, she moved with some speed, stopping before the tower as she put a hand on it and focused, causing the spongy flesh to collapse inwards into her own flesh until it became a second heart of sorts.

It beat like a peel of laughter.

She stared as a dozen eyes appeared on her flesh, more symbolic than functional...

“Weird,” she admitted but didn’t bother making them go away. She didn’t even use her own eyes now.

She sniffed her arm and sighed as her entire body radiated the sulfurous air of the Abyss. A dozen baths weren’t fixing this anytime soon.

All she had to do was roll up to Miss D, give regards from a Duke of Hell, pass on the Abyss tainted tower, and bail before she got emotional and punched someone.

Beta would then eat a tree as it was barbecued!

Beta just couldn't wait until-

Until they got their hands into the thick of it and showed these boonie folks and maybe that familiar aura... their many weapons. Gamma had evil necromantic sticks, and some demonic swords, oh they would love the spear of the saint killer they absorbed once, and while he was around try to find out whom they had to kick really hard for abusing their knockoffs for cheap labour.

Gamma couldn't wait-

Until he got back to Delta and figured out how to fight a god.

Alpha was mostly worried about that but something about the air was charged.

He knew that charge from the time before Delta. Unescapable questing. A touch of destiny.

Alpha had to figure out a plan! He just needed to figure out to-

"I bless thy leg!" Delta declared and the rabbit's feet grew fuzzy socks.

Something tugged at the back of mind as if she had something to do but getting Giant some magic for his growth was all she could focus on.

Nothing else could be that important right now.

Right?

She should really find that memo folder.

Something said it was important.