North from the Statue-Turned-Map room was what looked like a feast hall. It truly was a grand sized place. Not anywhere near the size of her jungle but Delta could see how a cult and their on-the-fence friends could easily fit in here. The style was simple but of good quality. The tables had various metal dishes with cutlery laid upon the surface, the black glossy wood had been sanded down to a level that ice would be jealous of. Delta eyed the forks; if they came alive with demon power, she was going to call them ‘cultlery’.

That or ‘French’. All that was missing was a clock, a candlestick, and a British teapot. The floor had some effort put into it, the simple flagstones replaced with a more solid stone surface. This was the first true room of this floor to not have any of the cave like surrounding to be seen. Swinging chandeliers of black wrought iron creaked above as their candles remained unlit.

The light came from the brightly lit corridor behind them as Delta’s Mana converted the dreary gothic hallway into a brightly lit hall with rugs and squishy armchairs for the tired. The stitched mushrooms on everything was something Delta ignored only by sheer willpower.

The far side of this grand hall was covered in a wall of shadows. Delta felt more than saw her Mana hit some weird wall before the entrance of the feast hall. Something was repelling her Mana with rather efficient ease. The feeling grew more intense as every light flickered on at once, dark dull flames on every candle and bracketed torch. Delta was sure… that wasn’t normal fire.

The feast hall only had two other doors. A tiny door near one corner that looked… sealed… if Delta had to guess, and the other was a large gate with criss-crossing iron bands and wooden bars about the size of an actual tree.

“The gate… tch, I’ve been distracted and the wastes of calcium have hackjobbed it back together.” Jack growled low in his throat. Delta wanted to assure him he had been gone maybe… *maybe* an hour.

If Jack had managed to keep this gate destroyed for 30-40 years, everyday… Jack was far more talented than she had guessed. That or the cult was weirdly inept in defence and security. The room was lit up but felt even darker as shadows now moved and danced at the corner of her sight.

Delta wasn’t worried about shadows, however. She stared at the lone figure surrounded by about ten skeletons in front of the massive gate. Giant chains at either side of the gate began to creak and screech as they pulled the bottom of the gate up a few inches and then the massive gate slowly rose like an executioner's axe.

The air that should have no reason to be trapped on that side of the gate flowed in the space under the gate and made Delta’s spine turn cold.

“Welcome, Lady Core of the Dungeon who has connected to our little home,” the man on the skeleton horse spoke and urged his beast around to show its twin glowing specks of black and silver. The glow was oddly darker than it was bright. Inverted light, if Delta had to put it into words.

Negative instead of colour..

Those twin black stars met her and this thing… this man could *see* her. Not even a Third Floor would cause sudden physical form, not this quickly.

This person could see her, unlike normal people.

“You don’t talk to her. Don’t you even look at her, you maggot of this rotten earth,” Devina stepped forward, a snarl under her words. The man tilted his head yet the finely crafted helmet covering his skull didn’t even slide. Like it was custom made for his bare skull, not a human head. The simple black tabard over a flowing chain mail that ended in dark leather gloves and chain boots didn’t scream ‘dangerous’ nor did the undead horse he rode. It looked a little sad.

But she felt a little wary at this creep and that was pissing her off.

“Did you just assume my gender?” she called and this made the horseman pause.

“I beg… your pardon?” came the smooth response. Delta floated forward slightly and raised her chin up a fraction.

“Beg harder. Were you waiting in the dark for that little show? That’s just sad,” she added. Nonsense, if she just threw enough nonsense at this thing, she could give herself time to think of a plan.

The gate rose higher and from the pitch dark beyond, countless dark eyes lit up. There was a literal army of dead, slimey, rotting, and… other things, crawling towards the gate in anticipation.

Not good… very *not good.*

Her small party, even with Jeb making up most of the bulk, wouldn’t be able to handle that number. Their options were to fall back or to rush forward and destroy the gate. Delta decided that she would rather not have an army chasing her. Jack had done it countless times, so he would be her lynchpin to do-

Her planning was cut off as the air rippled. The man’s hands were flung forward and a long dark spear was screaming through the air, right at her form. Delta’s mouth made a little ‘oh’. The horseman had just… attacked.

Well, Delta felt rather stupid for trying to be clever.

Rale was closest to her and even then, his powerful form wasn't going to reach her in time. That spear wasn't just going to pass through her, it glowed with that inverted light, malicious and hungry.

Delta raised one hand, almost as if to slow down the incoming projectile like she was some sunglass-wearing trench coat chosen One.

Her Menu shut down, her awareness felt limited now and her Dungeon space twitched as something exploded past the map room, down the hallway, and through the feast hall's doors like a rocket on drugs.

"You… fucking… touch her and I'll chew your souls apart into so many pieces that even my Dad would be impressed," Ruli hissed, steam radiating off her body so much that it swirled like an angry animal. Her usually dark skin was black and her hair curling and swaying.

That was when the limited physics in the Dungeon caught up and a howl of air and wind followed Ruli's path, exploding into the feast hall causing the tables and chandeliers to be ripped back and smash into the walls. Delta's monsters managed to hold each other down but a few skeletons were utterly crushed by the tables.

Ruli stood and Delta choked back a cry.

Sticking right through one of Ruli's hands was the spear. It had gone clean through and Ruli gave her a smirk, looking unbothered as she gripped it.

"What, never had a splinter before? Looking good, Delta… you're almost visible," Ruli commented and yanked the spear free before she dropped it.

It vanished and reappeared back in the horseman's grip.

"Huntress, you look… young. No… not her. A daughter perhaps?" the man mused and Ruli's red eyes blazed with the words.

"Did you just say I look like my Mum?" Ruli asked, voice flat. That seemed to upset her far more than a spear through a hand… speaking of which, her hand was already healing. Delta was a little wary about not being able to use her menu but… she'd take Ruli over a dozen traps and doors.

"Did I stutter? Yes, you look like that festering sow of a witch. I hoped the broken heart and broken soul we left her with would kill her but it seems like she lived on. How is mother dearest?

My Master would be thrilled to finish the task," the horseman sneered and twirled his lance as the gate behind him was almost open enough to let through crouching monsters.

"But I guess that his captain will have to do it. Whelp of that foul wench, I am Captain Levix and I will be glad to welcome you to the family," the man sounded far too smug and Delta glared at him.

"Ruli is going to kick your ass," Delta said confidently. Jack itched at his nose.

"She's strong but the guy isn't a pushover either. He's got some mojo that meant I could never explode him. Speaking of, the gates are almost open and then we are gonna have a lot of problems to deal with real soon," Jack pointed out calmly.

The gate creaked ever open and her monsters all tensed at the sight of…

Delta felt her mouth go dry. There were so many of them that some were crawling along the ceiling and walls in order to get to the hall faster.

Levix held up both hands.

"What is the matter, Lady Core? You would think a Dungeon would approve of the simplest of strategies. Numbers win. Numbers that never go down win ever faster. Huntress whelp, come! Let me offer one of the three bloods, tainted as it is, to my God. Let this prison be shattered!" Levix screamed and Delta truly saw the horseman was insane.

Completely and utterly *bone*kers.

Ruli's hair whipped wildly in a maelstrom that leaked off her skin. From the crown of black curly hair came two ebony-black curved horns. Ruli shrugged off her jacket, fiery red veins pulsing all over her black skin.

"If I wanted to listen to this kinda crap, I'd go watch Deo's puppet show for the toddlers he puts on every weekend. Every word you yammer is just boring. I got three things I want in life, captain," Ruli's voice was smooth and utterly human.

This seemed to confuse the loon more than Delta had managed to.

"I wanna drink, I wanna fish, and I want to hunt. I don't see any fish… and I left my drink upstairs. So that leaves me my last vice," Ruli rolled her neck as her aura turned a deeper red.

"Third Floor Mana does wonders for my half-breed shit. Compliments to Delta and for having a bar in her dungeon, she gets a favour from me," Ruli's red eyes met Delta's, *seeing her*.

“You’re cute for a core. Not that I had any doubts. Leave the worst for me, you got a hero incoming to deal with Bonehead, so I’ll do the boring job and end the army,” Ruli grinned, a fang sticking out.

Delta’s mind went silent for a few moments.

“Of course she’s cute… she’s our Momma,” Numb pointed out.

“No doubt,” Rale nodded.

“I get my best looks from Ma,” Jeb said from the back. Ruli eyed him and whistled.

“I’ve missed this so much, ah well. Next round is on me! Stories are best told over drinks and maybe after we clear this floor we can get some spare ribs to go with them,” she began to calmly *stroll* forward.

“ENOUGH!” Levix screamed and charged forward. Ruli didn’t break stride, she even began to whistle. The dark spear was pointed at Ruli’s head as the bone horse moved at alarming speed. That was when Delta felt it… finally letting what her Dungeon senses had picked up get through to her.

A shadow crashed into the room, leaping over Delta and her monsters before an almighty clang reverberated through the hall.

The lance of dark light struggled against a blazing orange spear.

“Who… are *you?!”* Levix said, glowing lights bugging out of his skull at the unblinking glare that stared back.

“A real fucking knight. Didn’t your ‘God’ know that the jackass is to be ridden, not promoted to captain? Do you have the guts to face me?” Fran growled as Bacon butted heads with the dead horse, piggy outrage showing all over Bacon’s face. Delta was so damn pleased to see him she didn’t even care he had sworn, and was that a pun?

“He’s all yours, Bossman. I’ll be back once I make some cosmic horrors horrors cry for their mommas,” Ruli stepped through the gate and with a crack of both hands, she lashed out and the gate screamed as it collapsed into rubble and metal.

Trapping the army with Ruli.

Poor monsters. Even Delta felt a little bad for them, they had nobody to love them.

“A filthy goblin on a pig? Is this some kind of joke?” Levix demanded as he gained some space between himself and Fran. Delta was ready to spread her monsters out when Fran gave her a look. It conveyed so much in so little time. This was his moment.

“Do I look amused?” Fran answered as Bacon stomped the ground in challenge.

“Guys… get to that sealed door, I don’t want Fran being ambushed by something,” she ordered. Rale frowned before he looked to Fran then he understood.

“We’re all a little pig-headed,” he grinned and Devina nearly strangled him.

“Show him the power of gobs!” Cois demanded. Cois had always… *always* respected Fran to such a level that he had never even sassed the boss in his own mind. Delta was sure of it. Numb and Billy shared the same grins.

Levix eyed them, sneering as he gathered odd dark Mana into his free hand.

Delta’s first monster… her very first monster and Boss faced down the bone captain. He pointed his spear at the captain and it burst into an aura of orange flames.

“You shouldn’t dismiss the gob on the hog,” Fran said simply before Bacon blurred forward.

“Bravery Lance!” Fran’s voice boomed and an explosion of orange light cut cleanly through the orb of inverted light.

“A skill? Monsters cannot learn skills!” Levix hissed, his own spear stopping the orange light from touching bare bone. Fran’s standing form grinned dangerously.

“I do a lot of things I shouldn’t. Guess the world hates you so much that even I can bend the rules if it means destroying you!” Fran shouted and Bacon sped away to the far side of the room, Fran lowering his spear with clear intent.

“You challenge me! I am the Lord’s weapon in this domain! You dare come into my hall?!” Levix would have spat if he had any fluids left in his body. His own lance lowered and the two went still for a moment.

Fran’s small grin grew.

“What you’re saying is that you are the Mini-boss of this floor? Then that’s all I need to hear,” Fran lowered his head, ready to charge.

“Finally getting the difference between our skills?” Levix sneered, his horse stomping the stone, causing sparks to fly.

“Yeah, you're not even the main event. You’re the lackey of a lackey,” Fran said simply. Levix took this insult with all the grace of an egomaniac.

“I am Captain Levix of the Lord of Ending Light! You are nothing!” Levix growled. Fran risked a glance at Delta. His smile went a little soft when she gave him a thumbs up.

“My hero!” she remembered Ruli’s words.

“Wrong, I am Sir Fran the Pig Knight. First born, First promoted, and First guardian. I am the lance of Mother Delta’s kindness and her shield against cretins like you. I am the first floor Boss, which means in Dungeon terms…I outrank you, *bitch*,” Fran charged and Levix screamed, charging as well.

Rale finally kicked the door open and Delta’s monsters rushed inside, leaving Jeb to guard the door.

Delta watched as Orange and not-light clashed. The room around them shook hard. Fran being outside his boss room caused… issues. This hall wasn’t Dungeon space proper yet. If he fell here… Delta shook her head and cheered.

She cheered her damn heart out.

Fran believed in himself so Delta could only do the same.

--

Ruli ripped a glow-zombie in two, using it’s glowing spine to whip a flying drooling bat creature down the middle.

Teeth, fangs, claws, suckers, soul tongues, tentacles… everything was flung at Ruli. It was just like her first bar crawl in the Abyss but slightly fewer imps died. Those that didn’t burn from her leaking demon power were shown what happens when Ruli doesn’t get to drink.

Things died.

She pushed through to another large room. Some fountain spurted black ooze and that sent her senses into ‘wary mode’. The fountain raised her hackles more than the monsters and undead. It was some type of garden space with… nine doors? Jeez, Delta was going to have a lot of fun with all this space.

Something crashed down from above and Ruli looked unimpressed as a giant lion with a snake for a tongue roared at her. On its side was that same symbol.

All the monsters, even Captain Bonehead with his fancy tabard, had that symbol.

Like a trident but the left prong and right prong curled in leaving only the middle prong erect. It was this cult's symbol and seeing it made Ruli's teeth ache for some reason. She felt demonic, nature, abyssal, angelic, spiritual… this place had collected creatures from all planes and branded them with that symbol.

Ruli glared as a hound of some god of justice snapped at her. They weren't stupid, they were pulling back the Nature and Abyss creatures to send holy things at her. It was clever, not a little pointless.

She was only… half-demon.

She kicked an angelic harpy hard enough that it rained feathers.

Still, numbers were numbers and she couldn't fight forever. She was sure she killed that one fish-dog thing three times now.

"Girlie! Catch!" a strong voice yelled and from a wall of eyes and teeth, something parted the wave of foes. Ruli caught the sword without really seeing what it was.

She saw a red form vanish through a door and Ruli felt her demon blood sing as the sword in her hand came alive.

It glowed with powerful runes that made even Ruli feel impressed at the craftsmanship.

She gave it a swing.

Lots of things died.

Ruli grinned darkly.

The army hesitated for a second and then heads began to roll.

Levix was a dick and an ass and every organ in between, but the man was skilled. Delta couldn't ignore that, as much as she wanted to.

Fran was sent skidding back as the lance smacked off his shield, unnatural strength giving the skeleton the advantage in a sheer physical match up. It wasn't all one sided, though - Fran

being shorter meant Levix had to overreach, and sometimes Fran managed to use that to smash a few ribs.

If Fran was fighting on Delta space proper, he would be stronger but there wasn't enough room to fight proper in the other rooms and letting this silence cult reach the second floor was not even being considered by Delta.

Fran and Levix passed each other and Fran was sent off course as Bacon took a hit. His steed was mighty but Bacon was also alive. It meant that the man could take jabs at Bacon as well as Fran while Fran's blows on the horse didn't seem to bother the creature.

"For a pig rider, you have some talent. I shall have to see about mounting your head on a wall somewhere. An honor, I assure you," Levix said, reattaching his jaw that Fran had almost knocked loose.

"I'll mount my lance in your skull," Fran replied coldly. Levix chuckled.

"You'll have to reach it first, you cocky goblin," he fired back and they charged once more. But something was different. The longer the captain fought, the more that energy seemed to expand and climb.

It was coming from the collapsed gate but Delta had no idea what was causing all this free energy to flow to Levix.

The sealed door her monsters had gone through led to a giant kitchen and just as Delta guessed, another sealed door lead to beyond the gate as well. A few of the smarter creatures had tried to use the door to sneak past the destroyed gate.

Like ants in a hive, they just never seemed to end!

Rale, wielding two pots, crushed skulls left and right as Billy fired oil-covered arrows for Cois to ignite over the ooze puddles with floating bones in them.

None of these things could be allowed to get past and help Levix! Jeb reached in and crunched another wallcrawler skeleton. The troll was doing great at catching the sneaky ones.

Delta needed Levix down so she could start trapping the hell out of this place.

She spun as Levix's spear glowed even deeper inverted, his power growing at stupid rates that Delta wanted to call 'hacks' on. What the hell was going on?

Levix raised his spear and two coronas of black light surged out, curving. It was broken in places and looked weird but Delta could see it was exactly the same as the symbol on his front.

That weirdly curved two-pronged trident. His Mana or whatever that dark energy was, looked exactly like it.

It was freaking Delta out, just looking at it.

“Two did bend and flee but the strong remains upright! The Silence arrives not with a bang but with a point!” Levix’s glowing eyes seemed to gleam as Fran was pushed back further and further with each clash.

“Fran!” Delta moved forward but his sharp gaze kept her still.

“Trust… in me,” he panted. Bacon looked exhausted, one of his tusks had broken off in the fight.

“I do, but I can’t lose you either,” she said, voice frail. Levix snorted.

“Ladies first? I can accommodate that,” he almost seemed to purr. Delta glared hard him.

“You’re a filthy cheater and I don’t know how or why… but you aren’t the only one who can cheat,” she warned. Levix didn’t seemed that scared of her words but the small break had given Fran time to catch his breath,

“You won’t touch her while I live,” Fran and Bacon stood at the ready. Levix’s dark aura grew thicker.

“Then I shall end this quickly… swine-rider,” Levix moved and he swung his large dark lance over and over. Fran’s flickering lance kept up for a few seconds but the growing gap in the power balance was quickly wearing Fran down.

This wasn’t… this wasn’t fair!

That was when the bravery of Sir Fran could no longer withstand the cruelty of power.

Delta moved before she thought. Before she could logically think about what she was doing, Delta wrapped her arms around Fran, tears dropping as the dark lance raced towards them both.

She felt Fran and Bacon’s warmth, their being, their souls…

She felt them and wept for what was to come.

Then she got pissed.

Sis watched with a frown as boss-module ‘F/B’ flickered then blinked out. The orb cracked a little as the boss creature met an end. Being outside the safe net of her power… Sis closed her eyes.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered. She reached over to maybe preserve some memory or seal the forming hole to prevent corruption from seeping in from the Silence when all her screens went black.

Sis had never experienced a shutdown before and just stared for a long moment.

Then one by one, her screens turned back on. Her calm white and blue screens crackled with orange sparks and one screen merely just overloaded.

“I think I might have to start isolating Delta from the overall matrix but… this is kind of fun,” Sis admitted.

She looked below her… way below her where another small form was curled around a glowing orb similar to the one under her own chair.

“Brother… you did pick an odd one this time,” she sighed. The boy grumbled, tossing as he slept. The full moon was soon, they could only talk when the eye of the left stared down and the eye of the right stared up.

She laid back and watched as her Delta connected to both eyes and turned them orange.

Physical shell in her brother. Soul in the Sister.

Dungeons truly did have access to the most importants bits. Shame they never did anything with them until Delta.

She just hoped no one freaked when the moon changed colour a brief moment.

Levix stared, he just… couldn’t understand.

His lance looked sad as the energy had been cut in half. He stared… at the creature of equal height.

The round pig, looking pitiful before, had now grown to a monstrous size with taut muscles and black eyes. The rider upon the back raised one hand and the wickedly barbed lance glowed with power.

Then he raised the second lance and the air between the two tips crackled loudly.

“What did that… bitch do?” Levix hissed. There was a thunderous roar and the entire right side of the hall was torn up and awash with orange energy. The silence that followed made Levix nervous… he felt… scared. No, that couldn’t be!

The sleeping avatar of the core was resting with her arms around the knight’s body. The goblin looked more like some ogre than any pest of a goblin.

“My Mother did what she does best. It’s a quirk I admire but wish to not inherit. It seems to be hazardous to logic and common rules,” the deep voice of a warrior said. He showed no reaction to having doubled in size and leaking far more power than he had any right to own.

“But if you wish to know… I guess that I was given the most powerful tool available to a boss,” the goblin said and the boar inched forward with deep snorts of hot air.

“What power can… could beat me?!” Levix sagged lower on his stead.

The goblin grinned.

“A second form.”

There was an ear shrieking blast and Levix fell… fell… and there was only silence.

If Delta was awake… she would have seen a simple box.
?
Sir Fran’s second boss stage is now unlocked due to… <Error: unknown>. Captain Fran the Defender can be fought in very rare circumstances. Cool down… 3 days.

Done and done ^^

I hope this was okay! It just sort of flowed out and didn’t stop.