

GAZZARIEL

CHARACTER BIO

- Goliath, Storm Giant ancestry
- 3rd-Level Cleric/Monk
- Alignment: Lawful Good with societal tendencies
- Motivations: Protecting his village, hunting down evil priests, experiencing new lands

BIRTHRIGHT

"We name this child Gazzariel in honor of Zepphadres and all Zepphadrene," my father said, hoisting me into the sky to receive the Dragonlord's blessing. "May our God of Storms light his path and grant gentle rain unto this blessed son of our clan."

I was born on a mundane day in early spring, like many others. I'm told a storm raged as my mother gave birth, heralding my coming. When my father and the clan chief saw my birthmarks, they rushed me to the Dragonlord for counsel.

The marks were portents of greatness. While others of our clan were born with smooth markings, mine held vestige of the Storm God Anhur's touch. Zepphadres, our great teacher, claimed I was destined for great things. A child who didn't yet know the world or those in it was destined to lead.

This knowledge was forced upon at a young age. No more play with clanmates. No stickstone with Agdak. No chasing birds up the cliffs. Rigorous study and regimented training became my life. My duty to the clan. My burden of prophecy.

So dire were the Storm God's markings that my greatness became our clan's task.

I did as I was asked. An entire life spent training for one moment, and that moment's clarity would surely elude me until it stared me in the eyes. A single strike of lightning that would come with no warning.

And so I prepared from that very young age. I honed my body and mind. My fists, once flesh, became stone. My mind, once clay, grew sharp like a sunshaft and wide like a stormcloud. I learned the ways of my ancestors and neighbors and why they guarded the ancient ruins our village was built upon, and I grew to deeply understand the movements of the earth below us and the sky above.

And each day, I learned from our great Zepphadres. His teachings gave me the knowledge of the sky and of the way of the world since ancient times. And from the age of fourteen, he taught me to withstand the sky. Daily, his breath struck me like lightning from the God of Storms himself. And I was grateful for the Dragonlord's lesson. The pain made my body like iron. I became a rod in the ground against the onslaught of the sky's mercy, and I learned to direct that pain into my own thunderous breath.



STORM'S THUNDER GOLIATH
GABRIELVITORIA_ (INSTAGRAM)

I knew that no warning would come when the lightning struck. I could only watch the clouds on the horizon as they swelled.

A TRAVELING PRIEST

"He's a simple traveler who came to the village with two other monks," Agdak told me as we finished summiting the mountain behind our clan village. "All three dressed in robes. Father thinks him a priest from western lands."

"What kind of robes?" I asked Agdak, curious. I planted our totem to Anhur in the rock. It was a simple metal rod twice my height in length, smithed by my own father and blessed by Agdak's. A storm brewed on the horizon, and the totem would help bring Anhur's light to our mountain.

"Black," Agdak answered. "With trimming of gold."

My face grew grim. "Doesn't sound simple. We should greet them and see what they want."

"If the chieftain is willing to welcome them, we have no place to doubt him. They brought gold from the west, and you know our mountain is barren of it. Gold pleases old Zepph."

"Zepphadres is the wisest among us. He's above accepting a tribute of gold from strangers in black robes. I believed your father wiser than that for a chieftain," I argued. "He should know better than to sell our clan to outsiders. They do not understand our ways or why we revere Anhur," I added, looking at the totem with pride.

"He may simply wish to pay fealty to our Dragonlord," Agdak said. "Zepph is the living avatar of Anhur. His council isn't for us alone, even if he chooses to dote on our clan."

The clouds grew closer.

"Let us return," I said, patting my friend on the back with a smirk. "We'll use our eyes to determine if this traveler is sincere."

He smiled in return and started down the cliff.

Something drew my eye, though, and gave me pause as the wind picked up. A raised tail and a small snout sniffing at the ground. A cat with fur the color of rock.

"Hello, little friend," I said, stooping down to the creature. "Mice don't venture this high up, and I brought no food for you. How did you get up here?"

"Who are you talking to?" Agdak yelled up to me.

"Head back without me!" I called back. "I'll be right behind you."

The cat meandered close, slowly. I held out a hand as if to say it was safe. "I will carry you down the mountain, little one. This is no place for you. The rain will come soon, and this mountain will alight with Anhur's blessing."

"It will alight, indeed," the cat responded. "I would speak with you, Son of Zepphadres."

I stood, my face turning grim.

"What are you?" I asked pointedly, ready to defend myself.

"I am no threat to one such as you, Stormchild. Far be it," the cat answered. "I speak through this little lion. You know what I am."

"My Lord Anhur," I said, kneeling. My hands and voice shook. "Hearing your voice is an honor to my ancestors."

"Stand up, Gazzariel Ironstrike. That name will soon be tested," Anhur said. "My regret is that I could not prepare you better for what is to come."

"May I ask what that is, my lord?"

The cat considered for a moment, settling on its hindquarters to lick its leg. "You may ask, but the answer will not come from this animal. Wait here with me for another minute, Son of the Zepphadrene. That is my only command."

And so I did. I stared into the distance as the clouds came closer. Lightning flashed across the sky as the rains fell in the distance. A low rumble of thunder hit my chest. I inhaled the sacred air, feeling the scent of rain from the northwest. I waited for the lightning to strike, prepared as I could be.

"Thank you, Gazzariel Ironstrike Zepphadrene," Anhur said after the silence. "Thank you for your patience and your reverence. And most of all, thank you for understanding. For what I ask of you would break even the stoutest iron. You must endure."

"My lord, I—" I began.

Lightning. Not at the totem as I expected, but down below. It was a familiar sound. The thunder came, and

with it a roar of breath from the Dragonlord. Anhur's Avatar.

I watched helplessly as Zepphadres was annihilating the village.

I leaped down the mountain, throwing caution to the sky.

There must be an explanation, I begged silently even as I watched the Dragonlord burning homes with electric breath and burying the ancient buildings we guarded in rubble. I saw people I had known my entire life turn to ash before my eyes while bounding toward them.

I would have time to mourn later.

I reached the village and saw Agdak fighting for his life. One of the monks in black robes had him on the ground by the neck and was seconds from breaking my friend's body. Muscles bulged from both of them as forces wracked each other, one threatening to overwhelm.

I let loose a battle scream as I ran toward the monk and shattered his spine in a flurry of blows, sparing my friend's life. Though Agdak was safe, he'd fallen unconscious from the pressure applied to his windpipe. I dragged him into cover to keep him from further harm.

Running for my home, another monk caught my eye. My father had him at axe's length near his forge. The old man could hold his own, but I saw plainly that these monks weren't foes to be trifled with.

The robed human weaved around my father's axe swing and struck him four times in less than a second at different pressure points, bringing my father down.

I hurled myself there as quickly as my legs would take me, but it wasn't fast enough. The monk delivered a killing blow, ending my father's life as I watched.

"NO!" I raged forth, unleashing pure thunder from my voice. It knocked the monk on his back like a child's doll where I leapt upon him and drove my fist into his body. Again and again, I channeled every bit of strength to strike until the life left his eyes.

Breathing hard, I looked at my father's body. Mother lay dead at his side, their hands touching.

Rain began to fall.

Zepphadres roared in the sky as lightning struck his blue scales, empowering him. He redirected the sky's fury into our village, roasting the few remaining to stand against him.

"You're different," I heard a shrill voice call out. "Those tattoos are interesting. Not like the other godless beasts here."

I looked up the hill to see a man standing there, robed like the others. He held staff in one hand and a crystal orb in the other, and he stared down at me intently.

"Are you the one who drove our Dragonlord mad?" I asked.

He sneered, glancing down at his crystal orb. "There is only one Storm Lord, mongrel. Your false god cannot be allowed to reign in the presence of the mighty Talos. When there is no one to worship him, he will fall."

My eyes narrowed as I walked toward the man.

"I will kill you for this," I said calmly.

He laughed. "Don't you want to know who I am?" he asked. "Don't you want to know the name of the man who ended your clan?"

"Dead men have little need of their name, and I have even less," I said, the cold rage of rain taking over me.

A roar behind me. Zepphadres was in a swoop coming toward me. I could feel the air crackle with electricity as his lightning enwreathed me.

A familiar feeling. It had been a long time since my teacher's breath threatened my iron flesh.

Absorbing the lightning, I redirected it into the man's body up the hill. His eyes grew wide as my satisfaction swelled. I watched the blood stream from his eyes and mix with the rain as his flesh turned gray. His robes burned, and red bolts of lightning scarred his skin underneath.

The crystal orb shattered. I could see the gold symbol upon it fall to the rock. Three lightning bolts in parallel.

A howl escaped Zepphadres's throat. One of grief at the atrocity he was forced to commit. Of sorrow and unimaginable pain at having to kill his own children.

My soul wept for him.

The man fell to the ground, and began moving his hands in a strange way. I could see his mouth chanting a spell in the rain, but I was too far away to stop it.

Magical energy sucked him into the very air itself, and he disappeared from our land.

All he left behind was death and anguish.

SURVIVAL

The village remained. Many were killed in the attack, but enough of our clan survived to give a meager go at rebuilding.

"You should stay and help us rebuild," Agdak said before I set off. "At least for a while. With Zepphadres having left in shame for what he was forced to do, Anhur knows we could use an extra guard at the very least."

"There is nothing left for me here, my friend," I told him wistfully. "My place is out there. If I can prevent harm from coming to this village again, I will. These priests of Talos must be eradicated. They have earned that, I think."

"I won't argue," Agdak said, slapping me on the shoulder. "As the new village chieftain, I suppose it's up to me then. I release you from your duties here, Gazzariel Zepphadrene."

"Not Ironstrike?" I asked.

"That was my father's name for you. I haven't been chieftain long enough to grant you a new name. You'll have to earn it on your own."

For the first time since the attack, I let out a hearty laugh. "I suppose I will," I said, nodding.

"Go on. Honor us, and stay safe," Agdak told me.

"And may Anhur watch over your battles, friend."

"The God of Storms protects us all," I gave the parting response.

I began walking west toward a place I had never been, wondering if I was prepared for the trials I would face. Thoughts of my family weighed heavily on my mind.

Anhur watches over all who are lost in war, I said to myself in remembrance of the teachings.

I knew my path. Decided for me from birth, I could walk that path of understanding or I could deny it and choose my own way.

I caught a glimpse of my own jagged birthmarks running the length of my bare arm. Whether prophecy or reminder, I couldn't escape the swift mercy of the sky. All I could do was ride the lightning to its striking point.



GOLIATH BARBARIAN
[ARTIST UNKNOWN]

ALIGNMENT AND ROLE-PLAYING

Goliath society tends toward lawful neutral, but being so influenced by Anhur's teachings which embody chaotic good, Gazzariel takes his ethics from his clan and his morals from his deity.

Lawful good for him means that he follows a code for his martial and mental training and refuses to budge on his ethics when it comes to things like honor and tradition. Interestingly, he cares little for the laws of man, as he grew up in a society where no one would dream of breaking any laws. This may lead to complications when it comes to acting with the freedom he's used to in a civilization he's unfamiliar with.

At heart, Gazzariel is a good person. He wouldn't bring harm to others without just cause, and he'll happily use his cleric powers to aid those in need. He's always prepared for a fight and is usually willing to jump into the fray when it comes to saving others, though he'll likely use his wisdom and experience to think through the ramifications of doing so before acting recklessly.

One of the keys to role-playing Gazzariel will be his "fish out of water" personality. As a monk who grew up in an isolated village completely foreign to the rest of Faerûn, he'll probably feel a little out of place when it comes to customs and societal expectations in areas of the Sword Coast or other populated regions. Whether he embraces that or fights against it is your call.

Gazzariel could develop in plenty of ways as his career goes on. If he leans more toward the cleric side of his multiclass, it might be fun to tend him more ethically neutral or even all the way into chaos as he embraces the unpredictable nature of storms and becomes one with the fury of the sky. If he remains mostly a monk, though, he might stay more lawful and meditative on the teachings of war and how war itself fits into his own ideology.

As for loose ends from his story, he may return to his village at some point. It doesn't have a solid location, so you're free to discuss that with your DM. As well, Zepphadres is still out there somewhere grieving over what he did. He might turn into a powerful ally at some point or a more powerful foe, depending on how your DM decides to go about integrating him into the story. The unnamed priest of Talos also managed to teleport away. He could make for a great villain with the knowledge of controlling dragons.

Ask your DM if this magic item has a place in your campaign.

WAR THUNDER AMULET

Wondrous Item, Uncommon (Requires attunement by a cleric)

This amulet is engraved with the symbol of Anhur, a blade entwined in lightning. It counts as a cleric's holy symbol while worn or held.

While a cleric is attuned to this item, cleric cantrips that deal damage can be changed to deal thunder damage.



ZEPPHADRES, BLUE DRAGON
TUAN DUONG CHU (ARTSTATION)