

GALADIRA FERNSONG

CHARACTER BIO

- Wood Elf
- 4th Level Cleric (Nature Domain)
- Alignment: True Neutral with moral tendencies
- Motivations: Stargazing, retribution for the fallen, alchemical research

THE FALL

I'd cast the spell twice before. A simple incantation, really, and one that most clerics understand. It evokes pure starlight in my hand, and with the God of Creation guiding my aim, I could send it piercing through the air. An effective means of destroying.

But creation is anathema to destruction. I couldn't bring myself to strike him down. He was a living soul, even if he'd been warped and twisted by Wraith's pure malice. He had a past and a future. I couldn't take those from him.

It cost Quilla her future.

The Unholy Knight gloated over her dying body as I cried starlight, the excess mana from my spell leaving my body in waves of sorrow. Sorrow that echoed in his cruel laughter. He looked me in the eye, and through radiant tears I saw him turn and walk away, leaving me to wallow in my shame.

I saw the bodies of our friends on the ground, their spirits already gone. I was alone, except for Quilla's dying shell.

"Gal, my friend," she said to me, the breath leaving her in gasps. "I don't blame you."

"I'm so sorry," I managed to get out. "I'm sorry this happened to you."

"To us," she said. "I'm going to see them now."

I nodded, my hand in hers. I leaned forward to kiss her forehead and my teardrop landed on her cheek. I rubbed it away with my thumb.

"Don't lose yourself," Quilla said, heaving for breath. "Don't —"

I howled in pain, shattering my voice and screaming blood from my throat. I curled over. I couldn't accept it. I refused. They were all gone.

And all that remained was bitter fury.



NATURE
CLERIC SYMBOL

CREATION

"Repent."

My command word's magic forced the corrupted monstrosity to kneel and feel the guilt of every life he'd taken. He lurched in mourning for his own depravity.

I channeled my killing spell. A bolt of starlight guided by my god's retribution pierced his stomach, rupturing his spine. He fell prostrate in solemn atonement, screaming from the pain.

A grin crossed my lips, perking my ears.

"You know how I found out all of you were mortal?" I asked coldly. "Your death throes. It wasn't just that you can be killed. No, some immortal beings can be killed, but they come back eventually. But the eleven – sorry, the twelve of you I've killed won't be coming back."

He writhed on the ground, his legs and arms useless. Spit pooled around his chin as his helmet slid off.

I walked over and searched him for the last ingredient I needed.

"Your fear gave it away," I continued as I rifled through his armor. "You fear what comes after, because you know there's nothing waiting for you. You, in particular. You see, when I die, I know I'll go to my God of Creation. But for you..." I trailed off. "Well, you'll get nothing but the void for company."

I pulled the locket from his pocket and opened it. Inside, a black ooze held safe in a small vial.

"There's a rule in nature. Never let your prey suffer," I said, calling down holy flame to deliver the final blow.

Pulling the journal from my pack, I hastily scribbled a name.

I left that horrifying crypt as quickly as I came, testing the substance I won on my own skin. A small drop on my wrist. If it turned green and burned, I knew it would be the last component for the ritual.

A day's walk later, I arrived at my grove where the scroll was held. It was my prize from another of the Unholy Knights I'd slain a year ago, and it held the secret to finding their leader.

My wrist burned and glowed a sickly green like a diseased tick bite. Giddy anxiety overtook me.

Finally, this will all be over, I thought. I'll finally be free.

An afternoon's rest and I set out at midnight for the old tomb where I'd find the catalyst for the spell. It required the bones of one whose soul was shorn from the same cloth as the spell's target, so I hoped the first knight I took down would suffice. His lair was only an hour's hike from my grove, his stench right under my nose.

The stars beckoned me as I moved closer to retribution. I recalled the promise I made to them, binding heaven and earth to suffer no more loss. I

wouldn't allow these unheavenly creatures another second of solace under my stars.

Descending into the mausoleum, I unsealed the burial chamber where the first knight's bones decayed. The stench of rot struck me, but I knew far worse in my long life. Death had changed me over these thirteen years.

Poetic. One year for each vendetta exacted, I thought as I unearthed the remains and drew a planar key on the ground.

I pounded the bones to dust within a mortar and sprinkled a bit of pixie dust on them, then poured the small amount of black ichor over the mixture. Igniting the slurry with sacred flame as I spoke the incantation would do the rest.

There, in the circle I'd drawn, he appeared. Ferociously strong, his power dwarfed the twelve others. He held a vicious mace, wicked and spiked. The same mace that tore at Quilla and the others and shattered their bodies before me.

"How is it you've done this?" the Unholy Knight questioned as he turned opaque.

"Hello again," I said calmly.

"You. I recognize this face," he said slowly, his throaty rasp scraping my ears as his words meshed into a thin laugh. "Have you enjoyed the years of suffering you've been granted?"

"More than you know," I replied, journal in hand.

He looked quizzically at me before trying to move, hurling his maul upon his shoulder to gain momentum for a swing. His eyes bulged beneath his helmet, dark and red as they were, when he realized he was powerless.

"I could never manage to uncover your name. My years of research led me to the origins of all the others, but not you," I explained. "A mystery. Even my God of Creation doesn't know what you are."

He let out a guttural growl like a cornered beast. "I am Dread, Hope's Despair."

I wrote the name in my journal.

"Granted by your father Wraith, no doubt," I surmised. "I suppose creativity was never his strong suit. It certainly didn't save him from losing his head to a paladin's blade."

"My father is the least of your worries, little elf," Dread said with a flash in his eyes.

He broke the confines of the scroll and charged toward me.

I reacted instantly, summoning a field of spikes between him and me. They drilled into his legs, stifling his movement as I fell back to the wall of the crypt.

"I didn't think it would hold you indefinitely," I said with a smirk as I readied another spell.

He swung at me full force, but I was too quick. I ducked under his mace and launched my own assault at his eyes, transmuting his eyelids with spectral starlight that choked his vision.

"Gah! You willful elf!" he shouted, swinging at nothing as I escaped his sight. He demolished the wall where I

was standing.

"Burn!" I said in righteous retribution as I set flame to him. "For the murders of those I loved, burn!"

I chanted the word over and over again as I set flame to him, charring his body with holy starfire again. Nature's light consumed him just as my own tears consumed me.

I fell to my knees and watched him smolder. As he burned, my fire faded.

It's done, I said to myself. *You can all rest now*.

The thought was hollow. Instead of the clear night sky I expected to see at this monster's death, only clouded darkness filled my mind.

An hour passed before I had the strength to move, the last thirteen years catching up to me all at once.

"I thought the pain would go away when it was over," I muttered to no one as I watched the body smoke. "Please, make it go away. Please."

I tried to stand, but a strange breeze enveloped the room just then. A small cinder from the corpse swayed through the air and landed on my journal, on the page that was open to Dread's name. The page burned.

I tore it from the journal to save the rest of the book. That single page burned in my hand, its own ashes rising through the crypt. A sudden feeling of solace fell over me, and a thought entered my mind.

To create, one must be willing to destroy, the thought said.

"Is that what you were trying to teach me?" I asked.

I sealed the crypt and returned to my grove. Dawn rose on the horizon, and with it, a new determination filled me.

I knew that vengeance for the fallen wouldn't bring them back. But I could use their memory to create something new.



GALADIRA
FERNSONG

ALIGNMENT AND ROLEPLAY

Galadira is a strong, determined woman with fierce loyalty to her comrades. She devoted a huge portion of her life (by human standards) to tracking down and exacting justice for the fallen. Doing so may have sent her down a path that wasn't necessarily in her best interest, though.

Because of this, Galadira is True Neutral. Her deity pulls her toward morality and social tendencies, but her quest for revenge took a toll on her soul. She had to go through this ordeal to gain a deeper understanding of what creation truly entails. Creating often requires destroying what came before.

Galadira has it within her to be either a hero or a villain. If she lets herself be tainted by malice and vengeance again, she could easily dip toward Neutral Evil by going one step too far. However, if her friends are able to keep her grounded and let her support them, I can see her becoming one of the God of Creation's most prized champions – a true force of good. That determination is up to you.

Her nature magic comes from the stars, as they're just as much a part of nature as plants and animals. Leverage this in her roleplay to form a bond with nocturnal animals with your cleric domain spells, and become that "beacon in the night" that others can look to like the constellations.

Ask your DM if Galadira's journal would make a good magic item in your campaign. Since it's a big part of her backstory and seems to have been through a lot with her, it would make sense if it's picked up some minor magical traits along the way.

STAR JOURNAL

Wondrous item, common

This bound tome shines gently in darkness, radiating magical starlight in a 5 foot radius.

This book, along with anything written in its pages, can't be damaged by anyone except the owner and won't deteriorate with age. If a page is torn out, the page returns blank at dawn the next day.