

GIDEON

CHARACTER BIO

- High Elf
- Wizard Bladesinger
- Alignment: Neutral Good
- Motivations: Knowledge, study, spellcraft, adventure

“Curious,” I said aloud, leafing through the old, leather-bound tome. It was withered from age, and inside were magnificent teachings of ancient techniques and spellcraft.

I had always been intrigued by the magical arts, but until now, my sagacity was limited to history and lore. My dabbling in the arcane arts was limited to only the natural magic present in my bloodline. In a moment of desperation, I’d been known to breach fire from my fingertips. Nothing any highborne elf couldn’t muster with similar study.

Even more interesting was the nature of the book’s hidden whereabouts, within a hole inside of a false log. It had been purposely hidden, and on a well-travelled road of all places. Likely to allow for easy retrieval.

Inside was a trove of data. The detailings within held not just individual spells, including their somatic and verbal components, but techniques for melding blade and sword. Dangerous, deadly practices. I was enthralled.

“You, there,” a gruff voice said, pulling me from my focus. “You put that book down, now.”

Another elf. A man, lowborne of the wood with a scar across his lip. His eyes had the look of one who’d seen bloodshed and inflicted his share. He leveled a sword the length of a full arm at me.

“Is it yours?” I asked innocently. “If so, I’ll be happy to hand it over.”

A toothy sneer crossed the man’s mouth. “It is now,” he said.

“I see.” I closed the tome and placed it back on the wooden stump. “Perhaps you’re the one responsible for the rash of thefts lately in this town.”

“Back away before I slice that pretty face of yours.” His stance was guarded, leary of some unseen attack.

“You’re clearly no wizard. More a brigand, I’d say. What interest might you have in such a tome?”

“Who you callin’ a brigand?”

“Not the brightest star in the night sky, either,” I goaded.

He took the bait, growling and opening his guard to strike at me.

Evoking flame from my fingers, I sent a bolt of fire into his chest, igniting his clothing and sending him sprawling back. He dropped his sword in the hard dirt of the road.

“Careless, as well. I’m no wizard, but one who shares our heritage should know the highborne must never be



WIZARD
CLASS SYMBOL

BLADESINGER SYMBOL



considered unarmed.” I traipsed calmly toward him and picked up his blade. It was heavy in my hand. Unwieldy.

I gave it a small flourish, pleased with the motion.

The bandit scrambled to his feet, as harmless as a toothless wolf.

“You keep that book, there’s no saving you,” the wood elf threatened. “It’s meant for someone well above your station.”

“And yours,” I countered, palming another bolt of fire. The thief turned and ran.

“You forgot your blade!” I called to him, my shout falling on deaf ears.

I shook my head, perplexed, and retrieved the tome. It would take some time to fully ingest its contents.

Back in the village, I spent the next two weeks studying the spellbook. Mastering the incantations within took concentrated effort and late evenings, but through dedication, I found myself channeling the magical weave in ways that I’d never before imagined.

A bevy of spells were opened to me. Not just simple magical fire already known to me, but elemental frost and lightning as well. I could conjure illusions of image and sound and create light from air. Greatest of all, I discovered how to infuse basic magic into a powerful sword swing; a thing I could not yet make great use of, but only a fool would doubt the future.

Of curious detail inside the tome was also the original owner’s mark. It belonged to an elven mage with the name Thranielas. Not a wizard known to me, but surely to some if the contents of his spellbook were any indication.

A pair of silver pieces to the village’s leatherworker found me a sheath of hardened hide for my blade. It was late upon returning to my inn room for further study that the call came.

A woman's scream caught the attention of everyone in the small town. Onlookers crowded the only road to see a man accosting a young girl, her wrapped loaves of bread in the dirt.

I recognized the scoundrel immediately, of course.

"So you turn from attacking travelers to defenseless maids, hmm?" I asked in front of everyone.

The wood elf held a fist around a simple wooden pendant still laced at the woman's neck. It was carved from tree bark and utterly unremarkable. His aggression wasn't what caught my eye, however.

I blinked rapidly, my eyes beset by a new sensation. Something in the necklace triggered my senses in a way that I scarcely understood. I peered forth and felt, more than saw, an aura about the wooden trinket that tingled excitement within my inquisitive mind.

The wood elf growled, ripping the amulet from the girl's neck before sneering at me.

My response changed his demeanor entirely. His face contorted with fear as a ray of frost lanced his arm and drew blood.

"Gah!" he yowled before sprinting away toward the road we met on previously. Despite the ray's slowing effects, he was still too fast for me to give chase.

"Are you alright?" I asked the girl, offering a hand. "Did he harm you?"

She touched a tender spot on her neck where the pendant had been forced away from her. "Nothing a night of rest won't fix," she said bravely, her expression more angry than scared.

"What's your name?" I asked, helping her to her feet.

She declined my hand and went to work retrieving her bread. "Lisene."

"Lisene, I must ask if you knew that your trinket was magically enchanted."

Her human face glanced at me, then down to the ground. "It's an heirloom from my grandmother. She always said it would protect me, but clearly she was mistaken," the girl said cynically.

The crowd dispersed. I put a hand on the leather-bound book laced around my shoulder. Such a treasure, it hadn't left my sight since I first found it.

"I'll see what I can do about getting your necklace back," I said to the girl.

She looked at me quizzically before relenting. "I'd be grateful. It's the only memory I have of her. I've nothing to repay your kindness, though."

"No need to worry. I have my own reasons," I said with a shake of my head before turning to follow the thief's tracks.

I had an irking feeling that this wasn't the first magical trinket this particular rogue had stolen.

Night fell as I followed the likely course over the road. I was never an excellent tracker, but the trail of blood and bandages leading to a small cottage just off the main route was difficult to ignore.

The lightless exterior gave me brief pause until I cast my own light upon the ground and saw the faintest drop of fresh blood leading up the wooden steps. Beyond that, the cabin seemed entirely devoid of detail. A shed on the left held a chopping block and a well, and on the right, a lonely outhouse sat seemingly unused. Strange, considering the foul smell in the air at its presence.

I opened the front door with a creak and sauntered inside, reflexes sharp with caution. The room was bare of activity and plain, with pieces of furniture collecting dust. A cellar door on the right, propped open at an odd angle, caught my eye.

Descending the stairs, the smell nearly overwhelmed me. It was the scent of a graveyard or morgue. The foulness of death, decay, or both.

"If you were followed, the deal is off," a commanding yet raspy voice spoke.

"Don't be like that. You know I've done good work."

"Sloppy work. You lost my tome. These baubles do little to sustain me, but with my spellbook, I could regain my strength more quickly."

"I know who's got it," the wood elf said to his strange master.

I crept forward and peered around the corner, dousing my light spell. Torchlight showed me enough of the scene.

The wood elf knelt next to a table, atop which sat a small pile of gold coins and an intricate elven blade. Its golden hilt gleamed. Two objects caught my eye next to it – a silvered ring and the stolen wooden pendant.

But in the flickering, I saw a terrifying sight. There was a creature I'd seen only in lore books of the past. Cheeks sunken in and decaying, yellowed teeth exposed with blood leaking from them, and eyes dark and bulging. He wore traditional elven robes. His ear cartilage, decrepit, helped betray his lineage as one of the highborne, like me. Next to him on the ground lay a fresh corpse of some traveler who met his fate on the road, blood soaking into the wooden planks from an awful wound.

There was no doubt this monster was one of the undead.

"That knowledge won't save your life," the being said. "You've betrayed me."

"What? I never!" the elf began to say before the blade on the table pierced his spine through his stomach. He gurgled his death throes and slipped to the ground, slain.

"Come," the undead creature said. "Approach, that I might see you."

I narrowed my eyes and stepped out, keeping my distance.

"What sort of lich are you?" I asked, keeping my fear at bay.

A low chuckle escaped his throat. "Were I a lich, I'd have no need for magical trifles."

"No, you're something else entirely," I mused. "I sense little magic about you, though my sight tells a different story."

The creature took the ring in his hand and placed it on, then grabbed his sword. He stood on rickety legs, stumbling a bit.

"Even in my weakened state, you are no match for me," it said. "I can sense your lack of control. Your frailty in the arts. Your fear."

"I may surprise you. I'm a quick study."

"We'll see," he said with an evil grin.

He charged forward with elven grace that belied his form.

My eyes flashed with alarm, and I somehow recalled the incantation of my spell of shielding, deflecting a blow at the last second that would've skewered my chest. He followed it up with another swing at my throat, but my shield held.

I touched his shoulder as he passed, my hand charged with magical lightning, and the shock took him off guard. I smelled burned flesh and moved past him deeper into the room, placing the corpses between us.

He faltered long enough to allow me another spell. Evoking ancient energies, I conjured three missiles of pure force and aimed them at his body. They rushed forth like lightning.

He wasted his effort trying to deflect them with his sword. Each maneuvered around his blade as if sentient, striking him in fragile spots where his flesh was knit delicately. There was a hole in his stomach now, its contents spilling. His breath heaved.

"You..." he started. "You are marked, now. You have stolen what's mine, and now I will take what's dearest to you."

"It appears," I replied, "that you will be unsuccessful on this night, at the very least."

A rasping laugh echoed in his chest followed by coughing. He raised his fist and the silver ring glowed. Light shined so brightly that I covered my eyes.

"I concede the tactical victory," the undead monstrosity said. "We'll meet again."

The air fluttered with magical energy, and Thranielas' body disappeared into the aether, safely teleporting away to some unknown destination.

I grabbed the pendant from the table and took the dead thief's reward for my own. Opening the spellbook at my side and riffling through it briefly, a realization settled over me.

Only my dedication to the magical arts would keep me alive the next time I met with this dangerous foe.



ELVEN SWORD DESIGNS
ARBITER376 (DEVIANTART)