

Her name is Julietta Everlune.

She's a wulfkind girl from a forest village called Alverna, full of all sorts of beastfolk. It's not an isolated village; they still did trade along the road that passed through it, but it was in a very deep part of Grand Sylvana, the continent's largest forest, so they didn't often get visitors. One of the key aspects of the forest that allowed them to sustain themselves were the mystic trees that grew in various spots around the forest, whose magic supported the life around them.

She was born as the youngest among 4 other brothers, and even for a runt, she was very notably weaker than her brothers, struggled to keep much food down, and grew up to be very thin and lanky as opposed to her strong, muscular brothers. This certainly didn't help seeing as she was born into one of the village's families of hunters, who would fight and protect the village from the monsters that also grew in the forest as a result of the mystic trees. She had to become a hunter too, naturally, but her frailness often made her a liability during hunts.

Growing up, she took an early interest in toys and woodworking, often playing with little wooden dolls and watching the craftsfolk work in her spare time outside of training. Once, when a group of merchants was stopping by the village, one of them brought a little puppet to show off to the children, and she was fascinated by it and how it moved. She spent a lot of time afterwards learning to woodwork and craft when she could, and eventually was able to make her own wooden puppets. They were neat trinkets, but certainly didn't help much with her duties of fighting.

As she got older, and could hardly wield a weapon worth a damn, she had the idea of trying to make a larger puppet that could move quickly and strike and slash with lots of force as she pulled its strings. And eventually, she did. It stood just a bit taller than her, but WAS able to deal the damage to monsters that her regular body never could. The other hunters thought it strange at first, not using traditional weapons, but she WAS pulling her weight more when assigned to hunts, so they eventually got used to her unorthodox way of fighting. It wasn't a perfect solution; she still wasn't THAT great at fighting on her own since she had always struggled in her training, and for how strong the puppets were offensively, they frequently broke and left her needing the aid of the other hunters when they did. But still, being able to keep up with the hunts at all began to gain her a bit more respect.

Whenever Julietta needed some time to herself, she'd often scamper out of the village to a far off secluded spot in the forest where she rested under a mystic tree, much smaller than the usual mystic trees, and even some normal trees. She'd often do some reflection or crafting there without having to stress about her family or her duties. One day after a particularly rough hunt in which her puppet broke at a critical moment, she just sat under her favorite tree and cried for a bit. The puppets just weren't good enough. And so she thought, if she could have a stronger puppet that DIDN'T break, she'd finally be able to hold her own. She looked at the mystic tree she spent so much time with and thought, maybe, mystic tree wood could be what she needed. So she felled the tree, and in seclusion, she built Vernus, her strongest puppet yet. It was much sturdier than all of her others like she expected, yet somehow it moved more nimbly and struck

harder too. It was exactly the kind of puppet that allowed her to keep up with her peers as a respectable hunter.

One thing about this forest is that as mystic trees directly support all of the life that flourishes around them, a mystic tree dying would also spell the death of the surrounding flora and fauna around it. As such, harming mystic trees in any way was STRICTLY forbidden. Julietta figured that since nobody ever really came out to the tree she visited, and since said tree was a small one, it shouldn't affect enough area around it that anyone would notice it. As well, Vernus was covered completely in fur and cloth, so nobody ever saw the kind of wood it was made from. And for a while, she was right. Nobody noticed the tree was gone, nor that Vernus was made from mystic tree wood, until one day a scout reported seeing a MASSIVE dead patch not far from the village. After finding the mystic tree that had fallen, they noticed at the base of it that it had been hacked apart with what looked like claw marks. But not those of any monster they'd seen. They seemed more like the gashes left by the puppets Julietta made. After hearing this report, her father inspected Vernus and found that it had been mystic tree wood. The penalty for harming a mystic tree would normally be temporary confinement, but felling one, and turning it into her "monstrosity" meant permanent exile.

On the day she left, her father handed her a jar and said with a stern, angry tone:

"Romero, should you ever feel the need to return to this village, open this jar and swallow its contents. May we meet again in the next life, my son."

In the jar was a wolfsbane flower.

And so, Julietta and Vernus went off, wandering from town to town, taking odd jobs here and there until she eventually found work for a kindhearted toymaker who appreciated her crafting prowess and allowed her to stay with him.

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