

Ceija Anjeza

Ceija was born somewhere along the Kaspakari trade route between Magnamar and Galduria, used for generations by Varisian travelers. The women in her family have a long history of foretelling auspicious and inauspicious events, usually via dreams or Harrow card readings. For coin, they also use tea leaves, augury, or scrying, especially when dealing with gullible outsiders.

Her family of tinkers and traders primarily made their living reselling unwanted items and used goods acquired from other Varisians. No one cared too much about provenance, and no one asked too many questions when offered expensive items for very low costs. Ceija herself had a knack for spotting magic, even among large piles of shabby goods. Good deals are easily had if the owner doesn't recognize the value of what they're selling.

Theirs was a fairly small caravan of only 6 or 7 wagons, mostly her parents, aunts, uncles and her mother's mother. But at any given time, there was likely to be a cousin traveling with them, "cousin", like "aunt" and "uncle" being a generously expansive word to cover many degrees of family relationship. For Ceija, anyone named Bitti, Callinova, Magravis, Roiat, or Zimantiu, was likely to be related in some fashion. One of her great aunts, Bevaluu Zimantiu, is the chief cleric of Desna at the Cynosure Tower in Magnimar.

They traveled a circuit from Sandpoint to Galduria on Ember Lake. Skirting the west edge of the lake they reached the Yondabakar River at Wartle, then followed the river to Magnimar, then back up along the Lost Coast to Sandpoint.

While life was not generally dangerous, bandits could sometimes be a nuisance. One fall morning, when most of the adults were out hunting, or gathering ripe berries and nuts, a small group rode up to the camp. A tub of laundry was soaking by the fire. Ceija's mom overturned the tub and shoved her young daughters into the pile of wet laundry under a wagon, quickly topping the heap with the washtub.

Fortunately, this inept group was quickly roused by a few flying daggers, and the return of the bow hunters. But learning to deal with the injured was a necessary skill, and Ceija excelled at it.

During the winter, the caravan stayed with their cousin Janessa, who ran a small tavern in Stoneford, just outside Sandpoint near the Lost Coast Road. A retired Pathfinder, Halsted, had relocated his immense library there to be free of distractions, and Danine Raened, the local halfling cleric of Milani, ran a school for children of travellers, migrants, and others in need of a more individualized education.

There Ceija's music talent was discovered, when she quickly mastered Danine's entire hymnal of "Songs Of Freedom". At least a few of her cousins are active Milanites, and she has plans to meet up with one of them at the Radiant Festival in Absalom in a few months.

Ceija's grandmother was well-known for her knowledge of the harrow, and she often consulted with the scholars at Guldarian's Twilight Academy. She has seen some of the variant harrow cards that have been lost as the deck became more standardised. There is some reason to believe that The Owl from the suit of Stars in her deck was originally The Awakening, since that particular card has a distinctly different artistic style than the rest.

Ceija was gifted her great-grandmother's deck as a young girl, and during her travels often seeks out shops that might have small paintings or painted cards that the shopkeepers don't recognize as old Harrow images. Her reliance on Harrow readings to guide her personal decisions is sometimes faulty. "I thought that's what the cards meant" is commonly heard when she realizes that a process isn't unfolding the way she expected.

Most of the time Ceija is dressed in flowing skirts, scarves, and shawls, often bearing a rose motif. But the hem at the center back of her skirts has a small grommet that hooks over the tongue of her belt buckle, allowing her to quickly pull the skirt through her legs and attach it at her waist to form bloomers that give her unexpected freedom of movement in spite of her traditionally feminine clothing.

Ceija has traveled from Magnimar to Absalom in anticipation of meeting up with her cousin at the Radiant Festival. But with more than a month before the event opens, she decided that joining the Celestial Menagerie would give her a chance to earn some coin, and perhaps intercept her cousin who is said to be traveling with a caravan called The Sanguine Thorn.

However, drawing "The Carnival" should have been read as a warning, not encouragement. Ceija heard about a group who had left to form their own circus from some of the remaining roundabouts. She has recently tracked down and joined the Circus Of Wayward Wonders.