



# LUCY HOUNSOM

# WORLDMAKER

## CHARACTER SPOTLIGHTS

These informal character bios appeared in my early newsletters, now collected together for the first time in one PDF exclusively for subscribers. Apart from some major (and obvious) character stuff, they are spoiler-free so if you haven't read the series, you're probably safe to continue. Maybe they'll convince you to give it a try!

# BRÉGENNE

## Quick Facts

- **Full Name:** Brégenne Garafel (very rarely *Genne* for short)
- **Originally From:** The Feenfold Mountain Region
- **Affiliation:** Naris, Lunar Order
- **Age:** 59
- **Random Fact:** She's the same height as me: 5:2

## Background

Rescued from an abusive family by her mentor, Master Guiliel, Brégenne was brought to Naris at the age of 13. Severely inhibited by her loss of sight, at first life in the citadel was difficult. Unable to trust, she grew aloof and made few friends, preferring to spend time alone in the archives. Her only passion was studying the Lunar and her abilities developed rapidly. She learned how to use her power to imitate sight, enabling her to see (in monochrome) during the hours of darkness. She progressed faster through the ranks than any other Wielder and was awarded Master status by age 30.

## Personality

Brégenne has cultivated a reputation for being an exemplary Wielder: studious, dedicated and obedient to the ruling Council's will. She is highly respected and seems to have a talent for finding 'potentials' - people who possess the hidden ability to become Wielders. She mentored Nediah for over a decade, a role she never intended to assume.\* While some of her restraint undoubtedly rubbed off on Nediah, Brégenne didn't come away unchanged. Her former pupil's rebellious streak appears to have awoken her own, and she becomes increasingly frustrated by laws she once upheld. She possesses a strong sense of justice and independence, which results in a tendency to take matters into her own hands.

### Likes

- Rare red meat / decent wine
- Sleeping under the stars
- Writing in her journal
- Tidiness
- The freedom to travel
- Nediah. More than she feels she ought to

### Dislikes

- Inns, especially disreputable ones
- Cheese
- Alandred (he is *way* too forward)
- Rules for their own sake
- Lunar and Solar energy being referred to as 'magic'
- The Nerian (a fanatical sect beneath Naris)

### Trivia

Brégenne is as old as this story. She was the first character who walked into my head and is closest to my heart. Perhaps because she's most like me. (Both fair, short, can be ice queens. For the record I, however, love cheese and do accept cheese presents). It took me a while to realise she was inspired by Moiraine Damodred from Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series, which had a big influence on this trilogy.

\*The short story 'Moonrise' appears in the new (black) edition of *Starborn* and chronicles how Brégenne and Nediah first met.

# NEDIAH

## Quick Facts

- **Full Name:** Nediah Andahal (Ned for short)
- **Originally From:** The Eversea Isles
- **Affiliation:** Naris, Solar Order
- **Age:** 42
- **Random Fact:** His favourite animal is a wolf

## Background

Nediah's parents were fishermen; he grew up in the rocky inlets of Mariar's southern coast. Brought to Naris aged 9, he was a pensive, but easy-humoured child who made a lot of friends. Nediah had a laid-back attitude to learning which, coupled with a tendency to misbehave, kept him at Initiate level until his mid-teens. Several years later, he fell in with Kaitren Tregar and also discovered a talent for healing. He and Kait became close friends, the centre of a popular group which devoted itself to causing mischief. However, as their pranks became more dangerous, the other novices distanced themselves, frightened of the way Kait spoke out against the Council and its rule. When Kait left to join the Nerian in the Deep, Nediah stayed behind, though it broke his heart to do so. On the verge of being exiled anyway for his past behaviour and proximity to Kait, he was offered a reprieve by Brégenne who agreed to mentor him.

## Personality

Nediah is the nicest of my characters. He's gentle, hates violence, but isn't afraid of confronting it, and he's dedicated to healing. He has a general disregard for authority, tempered a little by Brégenne over the years, and is a highly intuitive person. He's allowed himself to be shaped by the two most important women in his life, Kait and Brégenne, who seem to call to different parts of him.

### Likes

- Discovering new methods of healing
- Riding. He has a horse named Uncle
- Making things with his hands, esp. glasswork
- Brégenne (obvs)

### Dislikes

- Afflictions he doesn't understand
- Alandred. (Poor Alandred, everyone hates him)
- Rigid structures of authority like Naris' Council
- Any form of violence

### Trivia

Nediah has lived in my mind almost as long as Brégenne - they are the only two characters whose names never changed from their originals. Even though I like the idea of a male character who isn't a fighter, making Nediah a healer was never a conscious decision. He simply strolled onto the page that way.

# KAIT

## Quick Facts

- **Full Name:** Kaitren Tregar (Kait for short)
- **Originally From:** Talarun
- **Affiliation:** The Nerian
- **Age:** 43
- **Random Fact:** Her weapon of choice is a scimitar x 2

## Background

Coming to Naris aged 10, Kait quickly drew a devoted coterie around her. She was always outspoken, which elicited disapproval from her teachers, but respect from her friends. Even as a child, she leaned towards using the Solar in combat and insisted on training with normal weapons too. Despite being a capable Wielder, she never settled in Naris and, unlike her friends, continued to openly question the Council's authority. Along with Nediah, she earned a reputation for mayhem, until one day she was caught and beaten savagely for her conduct. Although Nediah healed her wounds in secret, he couldn't heal the damage done to her pride. Kait found a way to contact the Nerian, the fanatical sect that lived in the Deep, and left to join them.

## Personality

Kait is a rebel. She hates authoritarian strictures, rules, regulations - anything that imposes an undemocratic hierarchy. Fiercely loyal to her friends, she's a master swordswoman who enjoys slicing her enemies apart, preferably with flaming blades. 15 years with the Nerian has taken its toll on her - she's a bit wild in the eyes now and quick to anger. She fell in love with Nediah when they were young and though she left him for the Nerian (and her principles) she can't fully let go of what they had.

### Likes

- A good fight
- Dual wielding
- Spirits (though she doesn't get many chances to drink them. Too much staying alive to do)
- Pranking people who take themselves too seriously
- Being inflammatory

### Dislikes

- Autocracy
- Brégenne - Kait perceives her as embodying everything she hates
- People talking about her behind her back
- Any criticism of Kierik the Starborn
- Naris' Council

### Trivia

Kait is like my rebellious alter ego. I was generally a goody-goody at school and only answered back a few times, but secretly dreamed of stalking out of exams / doing exactly as I pleased / saying exactly what I wanted. Kait is on the surface pretty robust, but underneath it all, she's insecure and doesn't have a very strong sense of personal identity. Which is why she so often takes the offensive.

# THE YADIN

## Quick Facts

- **Full Names:** Yadin only have one name
- **Originally From:** Solinaris
- **Affiliation:** The Yadin, or the Servants
- **Ages:** In the region of 600 (Yadin do not die unless killed)
- **Random Fact:** Anohin used to be called 'Yanohini', god knows why

## Background

The Yadin were created by the High Wielders in the golden age of Solinaris to be their servants. Formed of Solar and Lunar energy, they have the ability to wield both, but it must be drawn from their own bodies, making them weaker than Wielders. They were bred to be loyal and each attached themselves to one Wielder in particular, to whom they were wholly devoted. Kierik the Starborn detested them, calling their creation, 'the result of the Wielders playing at being gods.' He sacrificed them to his own ends during the Deliverance, leaving only Anohin and Medavle alive.

## Personality

Both Anohin and Medavle are anomalies amongst their kind. Instead of a Wielder, Anohin attached himself to Kierik during one of the Starborn's rare visits to Solinaris. The reasons why Kierik adopted him as servant and companion - despite his aversion to the Yadin - will never be known, but Anohin would gladly lay down his life for the Starborn, whom he loves and has looked after for 500 years. That's dedication.

Medavle found himself drawn to another Yadin called Isla - something strictly prohibited in Solinaris. He became increasingly angry at the injustice his people suffered and tried to raise a rebellion against the Wielders, but the other Yadin were content with their situation. When he learned that Kierik planned to slaughter his people, Medavle dedicated himself to stopping him. He brought

Kierik down, but not before the Starborn killed the rest of the Yadin including Isla. Medavle does not forgive and he does not forget.

### Trivia

Anohin's original character was very different. I was watching tons of Bleach at the time and became a bit obsessed with Kisuke Urahara. I \*could\* share an early snippet with you, but it's simply too embarrassing, even for this document. Medavle's character is a little bit Allanon from the Shannara books and a little bit like a sorcerer I created for my first ever novel, which is still on my hard drive and no, you will never see it. But I loved that character (his name was Rigan) and it's nice to think a bit of him lives on in my angry, dark-eyed Yadin.

# KYNDRA

## Quick Facts

- **Full Name:** Kyndra Vale (Kyn for short)
- **Originally From:** Brenwym, The Far Valleys
- **Affiliation:** Starborn
- **Age:** 18 (in Heartland)
- **Random Fact:** In the first draft of the book, she was a boy...

## Background

Kyndra was born in Brenwym, a tiny town in the rural Valleys, and raised alone by her mother, Reena, until she married Kyn's stepfather, Jarand. Although she grew up in her mother's inn and learned the essentials of innkeeping at her side, Kyndra generally preferred to read old books and spend time dreaming of faraway places in her comfy window seat. That part sounds rather familiar...

## Personality

As you'd perhaps expect from someone raised in a sheltered backwater town, Kyndra is pretty naive. She has a tendency to be diffident and stubborn when pressured, but is loyal to people she trusts. She generally prefers to be on her own instead of in company. In *Heartland*, the stars she uses most are *Sigel* and *Tyr*. *Sigel* is the star of fire and force; *Tyr* is the warrior, which clothes her in impenetrable armour. At the start of *Heartland*, she still hasn't accepted what she is, which leads her to make several devastating mistakes.

### Likes

- *Really* good wine (notice a trend here)?
- Reading in her nook
- The idea of adventure
- Black
- Roasting her enemies (see *Heartland*)

### Dislikes

- Being told what to do
- Dresses
- Systems of social control
- Valuing emotions over rational thought
- Being stuck on horseback

### Trivia

Kyndra has always been one of the hardest characters to write, primarily because Starborn aren't supposed to display strong feelings. Even before she came into her power, I wanted to portray Kyndra as an emotionally awkward individual in a kind of fore-shadowing. And now that she's a full Starborn, it's ever harder to keep her sympathetic. I wanted to avoid the 'have your cake and eat it too' trend among fantasy heroes where they inherit great power without the usual cost, subsequently turning out to be the exception to the rule. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.

# CHAR

I commissioned this image from the talented Philip Harris.



## Quick Facts

- **Full Name:** Char Lesko
- **Originally From:** SPOILER so let's say The Beaches, Acre
- **Affiliation:** Slaver
- **Age:** 20

### Background

Char's background is a mystery even to him. If you've read *Heartland*, you'll know why. Supposedly found and rescued from the roadside by a mercenary, Ma, Char has spent most of his life in Genge's slaving caravan, turning a profit from the illegal trade. While not as adept as Ma, he is fairly proficient at wielding kali sticks, his weapon of choice, and uses them in his primary role as a guard. His relationship with Ma is the only positive thing in his life - she's been like a mother to him. But lately her secrets have come between them. Char knows she's hiding something and won't rest easy until he discovers what.

### Personality

Char has developed a keen cynicism, chiefly as a mechanism to cope with his situation. While he abhors the slave trade, it's his livelihood and the only thing he knows. He has a rough humour and often a sharp tongue and is happy to speak his mind. Fiercely loyal to Ma, he goes where she goes, putting his own feelings aside. For the last three years, he's struggled with something he calls the rage, a force that boils up inside him at a moment's notice. Its power frightens Char, as does Ma's refusal to discuss it.

### Likes

- Sparring with Ma
- The night-time desert
- Working alone
- Stories of the Lleu-yelin, the dragons
- Kyndra (eventually)

### Dislikes

- Drugs or any substance that causes a loss of control
- Genge, the slave master
- Do-gooders
- Being judged
- Being called Char, the slavers' name for his grey skin

### Trivia

I always wanted an Acrean character to stand opposite my protagonist. When Kyndra was Kyndren and Solinaris still existed in the present, it was originally going to be a girl called Pariah.

# MA

## Quick Facts

- **Full Name:** Mariana Leskovian (Ma is her assumed name)
- **Originally From:** Khronosta
- **Affiliation:** Mercenary / slaver
- **Age:** 32
- **Random Fact:** Ma was the first new character I came up with for *Heartland* and the one who surprised me most in the end

## Background

Ma's background is very mysterious. That's how she'd like to keep it. But since the trilogy has been out in the world for a while now, I'll say that she's actually a former assassin from Khronosta, a sect of people who have learned to manipulate time. (Of course that's not all she is). Fleeing that life, she tried to establish a new one as a mercenary in the desert, hiding out with Char among slavers. But Ma knows it won't last forever. Her people will find her eventually.

## Personality

Uncompromising and often brusque, she nevertheless loves Char fiercely and has become as close to a mother as he's ever known. She is a highly accomplished warrior, wielding the kali sticks which are the Khronostian assassins' signature weapons. She's not afraid of using violence to force her way out of a corner despite the fact she once abhorred it.

### Likes

- Being on the move
- Teaching Char to fight
- Once upon a time, she was an advocate for peace

### Dislikes

- The slavers, though she feels they are a necessary shield
- Misuse of power
- Khronosta or at least what it's become
- Flying...

### Trivia

Ma is hiding a pretty huge secret. But in the earliest drafts, she just started out as a mercenary. Her connection to Khronosta came later. And the secret came even later than that. She's always been a difficult character to get to know for reasons that become apparent at the end of *Heartland*. But her role (and it's utterly central to *Firestorm*) became clearer as I spent more time in her company.