

# BLOOM BLIGHT

## The Garden Club Ep 2 - Candace (Belladonna)

00;00;05;28 - 00;00;22;04

**Anna**

Hello and welcome to the Garden Club, where we explore the world and characters of Bloom and Blight a few questions at a time. My name is Anna and I'll be your host today, though you may know me better as your always exhausted oracle Larkspur. Today, I have the magnificent Candace here with me to discuss all things Belladonna.

00;00;22;14 - 00;00;23;16

**Anna**

How are you today, Candace?

00;00;24;13 - 00;00;26;24

**Candace**

I am very well and excited to be here.

00;00;27;08 - 00;00;30;13

**Anna**

Awesome. I'm excited to have you here. It's always so much fun chatting with you.

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00;00;31;15 - 00;00;33;26

**Candace**

Same.

00;00;33;26 - 00;00;54;11

**Anna**

So diving into this. Belladonna. The second most senior member of, the now second most senior member of Team Bloom. Kind of an enigma up until recent episodes. Would you take us through your inspirations for them?

00;00;55;04 - 00;01;28;27

**Candace**

Absolutely. I think when we all got together and we started choosing playbooks, my eye was immediately drawn to the Harmony. I love Steven Universe and the second I read the Harmony, I was like, GARNETT. And Garnett is my favorite character from that show. So, like, seeing something that was a breakdown of a character kind of with that, with that archetype, with that archetype in mind was really just very exciting to see.

00;01;29;11 - 00;01;59;15

**Candace**

It never occurred to me that I could play a character like that in a TTRPG, and I thought it would be really interesting to try and figure out how, like, without just completely pulling from pop culture, how that story could be told in this new scenario, right? With this more kind of almost bio

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punk feel that we have to Bloom and Blight and like how I could think of a way to like fit this literal harmony right?

00;01;59;15 - 00;02;29;26

## **Candace**

This literal kind of symphony of two beings into this larger group. And at first it seemed kind of a no brainer because you're talking about, you know, joining a group of people. Obviously, the more the merrier. But this is like two people who make one person as a relationship joining the greater community. So that dichotomy very much led me to kind of open my mind to how she looks.

00;02;29;26 - 00;02;56;03

## **Candace**

She has kind of a bit of both of the two entities that make up who Belladonna is represented within her look and the way that she interacts with people around her and even in her role in the group like trying to find balance and keep balance between everybody is definitely, I think, one of the things that Belladonna has leaned into even before we lost Lily.

00;02;57;18 - 00;03;14;14

## **Candace**

So I think exploring what that looks like after a loss, when you have a situation where like there's no balance, someone's gone, right? There's like finding the silver lining is next to impossible when you lose someone and like what that would mean for that character was just something that was really compelling to me.

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00;03;15;01 - 00;03;24;29

**Anna**

Yeah, the the Harmony is such an interesting playbook, bringing together two characters at once. It's interesting the moves as well that you see in the playbook.

00;03;25;25 - 00;03;52;10

**Candace**

I really enjoy like the way that it leverages group actions and like team moments, especially like one of the things that I really like doing when I'm joining a table, especially if I'm playing something brand new, is I like to kind of look through what other people are doing, like what other people have in their playbooks, what they might choose to kind of get a feel for what role my character can kind of take within.

00;03;52;24 - 00;04;16;05

**Candace**

And there are a lot of like playbooks that have moves that are very specifically focused on what that character is doing kind of internally. Right? It's not really an external move. It's more like do this so that you can do A or B, right? Or you will go and, you know, do X, Y or Z. It gives you options to improve your own kind of situation there.

00;04;16;08 - 00;04;37;02

**Candace**

There's definitely others that like, you know, give you the option of kind of team moves as well and like defense and things like that. But it seems kind of more self-contained. But I feel like the

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Harmony and the leader, they really kind of push those, use your power to help others kind of trait which like I've never played Blades in the Dark before.

00;04;37;02 - 00;04;56;14

## **Candace**

So I was like, Oh, well, maybe this will be more of like a support character. Like, I can just kind of like be a support character and get in there and like kind of help boost people. But there's, in the absence of having that leader there, I feel like that's become just as like integral as everybody else's little moves, right?

00;04;56;14 - 00;05;17;23

## **Candace**

Like I thought that this would automatically kind of like make this character kind of a little bit more of like a support. Same with Hadley. Like Hadley, who could be a support because of the fact that, you know, she has this ultimate secret. Right? She's an outsider to our group, kind of. But then again, like, so can Vic, right?

00;05;17;23 - 00;05;40;07

## **Candace**

Like all of us just work together so well? And I feel like the playbooks just really sync super nicely, just like better than I expected. A lot of times it's easy to feel like you don't have enough of something in a group. But I feel like we have like a really nice coverage. Surprisingly, even though that wasn't really anyone's design, I don't think anyone like set out to be like, Well, I've got a hole over here, we need more group stuff.

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00;05;40;07 - 00;06;01;15

## **Candace**

Like, you know, like we didn't have that conversation. So I've really enjoyed seeing it kind of like transform into what it is now when before it was kind of just like moves on a page to me. I was like, Sure, yeah, that looks good. I'll be able to be two creatures that that's the cool part. And then I'll like choose my moments wisely.

00;06;01;15 - 00;06;15;13

## **Candace**

And then it's like, Hey, can you break up this fight? Hey, all these people are fighting. Go break it up. Like, Oh, yeah, sorry, Belladonna is the Harmony. Excuse me, please stop fighting. Let's have a conversation.

00;06;16;23 - 00;06;40;20

## **Anna**

It is interesting how well it's come together. So when I initially looked at the playbooks, they're all very obviously from different genres within magical girls. A lot of them different takes on the genre that aren't that compatible. So to see all of our characters come together so well, I think is really a credit to the system, to Girl by Moonlight.

00;06;40;27 - 00;07;05;16

## **Anna**

Speaking of Belladonna kind of being the Harmony and bringing the group together like that. We've recently saw the reveal of Lily's video explaining what she did, what her death was for.

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And we've also now seen the team take some time to kind of unwind and reconnect and recover from learning all of that. So where where is Belladonna in all of this?

00;07;05;16 - 00;07;11;13

**Anna**

How is she handling things in relation to both internally like you're talking about and to the group?

00;07;11;24 - 00;07;32;19

**Candace**

Yeah, I think Belladonna like losing Lily has already kind of pushed them to the breaking point. They feel like they're, they're kind of just going through motions at first, like when, when our show opens and like Belladonna is like by the bay kind of sketching and stuff. Like she's doing what she can to kind of just hang in there.

00;07;32;19 - 00;07;57;08

**Candace**

And I think that these kind of moments leading up to this, this current episode that we're in now, were all kind of an exercise in her trying to wrap her mind around putting her thoughts and feelings aside in order to truly step in as the Harmony, recognizing that there's no safety net, there's no catch-all of Lily being there to be like, Well, you know what I mean?

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00;07;57;08 - 00;08;19;25

## **Candace**

To be that voice of reason that now it's kind of just it's just them and their frustration when they try to kind of take that role on when they, like, step into that. And Lark is like, like hesitant. They're like, I'm doing my job. This is what I'm supposed to be doing. Why do you look so upset? Hello.

00;08;19;25 - 00;08;41;01

## **Candace**

And like, Daffodil being like, no, no, you can talk to me first. Like, this is my job. Can you let me cook please. Like, get out of my way. But just kind of having to recognize like everybody is grieving, everybody is in it, right? Like it's not just Belladonna, that's in the shit. And I think that, like, that's kind of built into who she is because she's two people.

00;08;42;19 - 00;09;00;18

## **Candace**

They have a different understanding of what it means to be alone and a different understanding of what it means to suffer, like in silence, like there's for better or worse, right? We don't always want someone around when we're in our lowest point, right? We want to be alone, like, get away from me. I'm terrible, whatever. But like, Belladonna doesn't have that.

00;09;00;18 - 00;09;24;28

## **Candace**



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There's always someone there to be like, No, let me uplift you for better or worse. So I think she's, like, more ready than she thinks to step into that position because she knows what it's like to be a support already. Like part of her being is support literally for another person. So I think kind of making those connections is like where she's at right now is like, how do I show everyone

00;09;24;28 - 00;09;49;05

## **Candace**

Rather than telling them what my role is, how do I make sure that I am leading by example if I can, especially under the struggle of getting closer to that eclipse, the last time that Belladonna eclipsed and she was separated was, I think, when we lost Lily. So she doesn't she's like in uncharted waters, just like everyone else right now.

00;09;49;15 - 00;10;05;01

## **Candace**

But with this kind of conflict inside of them as to like how they should think, confront it or face it, half of them is like super optimistic and it's like it's all going to work out fine. We're a team, we're family, we love each other. And half of her is like, everything's broken. It all sucks. Lily's not coming back.

00;10;05;01 - 00;10;15;13

## **Candace**

What are you going to do? And trying to kind of handle that while also kind of keeping and in some cases mending the relationships with everybody else in the team.

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00;10;15;22 - 00;10;36;13

**Anna**

Yeah, we've seen some listeners talk online about Lily having been built up to be this kind of perfect hero, this paragon of the team, and then now we're seeing that she's not, especially with kind of her video explanation and what she hid from the team and all of that. How does Belladonna view that?

00;10;37;15 - 00;11;01;10

**Candace**

I think there's a certain amount of disappointment that Belladonna has, like knowing that they have a very specific role in the team. And that part of that is to uplift and inspire. And part of that is to support and understand and like the fact that they were one of two people, not trusted with that secret, I think is something that is sitting with them in a very big way.

00;11;02;05 - 00;11;29;19

**Candace**

And I think that there's like a little bit of a hiccup there and cognitive dissonance between who they know themselves to be and who they want to be and who others maybe think they are. So I think that like, I mean, I Belladonna is angry. Like, they're definitely angry. The la, the Donni side is livid and feels completely taken advantage of and untrusted.

00;11;30;09 - 00;11;51;23

**Candace**

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And then the Bella side is like, but she had her reasons and we all made it out alive and we're all much closer now, right? Like, yeah, it's a very double edged sword. And I think we're going to be seeing a lot of kind of leaning into that in future to try to like kind of keep that as a guide almost in the absence of having Lily.

00;11;51;23 - 00;12;20;24

## Anna

Yeah, we saw that a lot in the, the cafe scene between Sybelle and Lonnie, the, the two halves that are there. I think that's the first time we've seen kind of Donnie talk, I think. So the different voice work that you're doing and all of that, it has been a really slow growth. I think it's kind of just now that people listening are really understanding who Belladonna is, who Lonnie is as a character.

00;12;21;04 - 00;12;46;06

## Candace

Yeah, I think making up this character and trying to decide how to kind of personify it, like the playbook doesn't really give you specifics. It doesn't tell you like you are Garnet from Steven Universe. That doesn't tell you. Like you have to split apart. Like it leaves everything kind of up to your imagination. Like there are certain moves when you're transformed that allow you to do different, you know, kind of group actions and things like that.

00;12;46;06 - 00;13;23;09

## Candace

And you can skin them however you want and make them look however you want, which is lovely because you get that variety in there. Even if the even if the magical girl that you are making isn't necessarily from the setting that you've chosen. Right? Even if she's kind of from

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outside of that and I made a very kind of conscious decision to make them separate people because I wanted to very much kind of personify, I guess, the concept of harmony and what it means to have to balance two sides of of of oneself, let alone do that within a group.

00;13;23;09 - 00;13;49;29

## **Candace**

And having her talk to herself and like having like the eyes kind of change to indicate, like who's speaking, even though it's really not that difficult to figure out, considering how bad tempered Donnie is as a person, I think is it's one of the most fun parts of being this character is just trying to find ways of that duality because characters who are just one character, there's multiple ways that you can feel, right?

00;13;49;29 - 00;14;15;29

## **Candace**

Like conflict is absolutely an essential trait to TTRPG playing in general, right? Like it's all about conflict. And I think having that conflict within yourself is just great character work. But being able to like separate that conflict into personalities has been awesome. And it's one of my favorite parts I think about playing Belladonna. She is changeable and that's okay because she's more than one.

00;14;16;15 - 00;14;39;24

## **Candace**

And people are like, Yeah, well, you know, it's kind of like, like when she's talking to herself, people just accept that. They're like, Yeah, well, tell Donnie I said hi and I guess I'll see you later. So it's been really, really cute to have that multiple. Eventually when there's an eclipse, I'm kind of nervous about that, but I think it'll be really cool.

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00;14;39;24 - 00;14;41;29

**Candace**

I think it'll be a challenge that I am absolutely up for it.

00;14;42;07 - 00;15;10;17

**Anna**

Yeah. As a player, I'm very appreciative of the eye cues because it helps you. It helps me visualize you know, which side of Belladonna that I'm talking to, whether it's both or one or the other. And so it's been really helpful. I absolutely love those cues that you've been able to give us. So we like to kind of wrap this up with a few lighter questions that are kind of fun, just dealing kind of with the broader genre and things that we're playing with here.

00;15;10;27 - 00;15;21;04

**Anna**

So the first question, and I have been asking everybody, who are your favorite magical girls or do you are you familiar with the genre? How did you come into this? With only a few references?

00;15;21;21 - 00;15;48;24

**Candace**

I'm not as deeply steeped as my Sailor Moon and Card Captor Sakura fans out there. I just never got into them like I didn't care. I cared more about Tuxedo Man, I think, and the cat than

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the girls. And like, it wasn't even that Tuxedo Man was like, handsome. I remember looking and being like, This guy's a chump. But like, I was like, I would look so stunning in a tuxedo with a little mask on my face.

00;15;48;24 - 00;16;06;05

## **Candace**

That is the ideal Halloween costume. I would wear it all the time. So I just I missed the boat on Sailor Moon big time. There's a lot of like old school, I think anime that I kind of missed the boat on and I kind of went in a different direction as a kid with my anime watching. Like I was super into Pokémon instead of that and I know it's possible to be into both.

00;16;06;05 - 00;16;32;03

## **Candace**

I just was also into like Downtown MTV and stuff like that. So I never really got into like that original like that OG magical girl stuff. But I watched Madoka Magica and that changed everything for me. That anime is so frickin good. I watched it and it like punched me in my guts and I was like, Oh, beautiful.

00;16;32;27 - 00;16;53;22

## **Candace**

And then I had to show it to my partner because my partner is, is an artist. And I was like, Listen, you're going to love how there's like a flow about this and a difference between, like, the magical girls' world and reality and like the witches', right, reality and like the the interplay between them, like the plot twist is really great.

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00;16;53;22 - 00;17;17;14

## **Candace**

Like everything about it, like the art. It's so good. I definitely think that the, the, the, the magical girl I'm the most fervent about is Steven Universe. Hands down. He is adorable and sweet and precious. And he jumps in like little beautiful roses pop out from behind him and vines and such. And he's elegant. So yeah, definitely Steven Universe up there in the list.

00;17;17;19 - 00;17;45;05

## **Candace**

And then like, I don't know if this is technically like a magical girl situation. I'm going to say it's a magical girl situation because there's like a whole like going to this other world kind of ethereal thing that happens, but Revolutionary Girl Utena which like, had Utena not walked Steven Universe could not run. So Utena I think is also another one where like this like handsome, like androgynous, like schoolgirl turns into this beautiful prince.

00;17;45;05 - 00;17;50;22

## **Candace**

I'm like, yes, give me more. So good. I think those are my top three.

00;17;51;00 - 00;17;59;17

## **Anna**

Awesome, very solid choices. Going forward, without giving any spoilers, what might listeners expect for Belladonna?

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00;18;00;04 - 00;18;24;07

## **Candace**

Oh, definitely more juggling of leadership versus like balancing the group rather than balancing what's going on inside. She's really afraid she's going to drop the ball and either let the group down or let herself down and split under the stress. I think that mom vibes are like already happening. Like mom friend vibes are already happening, especially with Zeke.

00;18;24;07 - 00;18;56;10

## **Candace**

I think she's going to start feeling a little bit more comfortable with that, much to Donnie's chagrin. And I also think that she's she's steady trying to understand why Lily did what she did like for her it's like inside of Belladonna's mind, there is a cork board that has a bunch of, like, red string and then push pins and pictures of, like, Lily and the group and like little index cards that say different reasons why she did what she did.

00;18;56;10 - 00;19;23;27

## **Candace**

And like, like, there's definitely one of those, like those conspiracy murder boards in Belladonna's brain and she is trying so hard to unravel this puzzle so that it can just be put to bed like they want so much more for their team. They want so much more for themselves. Like there's been really no time to rest. We have like what, a couple of months max to like get from Lily's passing to the kick-up that we experience at the beginning of the show.



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00;19;23;27 - 00;19;41;18

**Candace**

Like, people are tired, like we're tired. We're doing our best TM. And I think that, you know, I don't know how Belladonna is going to handle that. I don't know if she'll rise to the occasion or if she is going to struggle. I guess we'll have to find out.

00;19;41;27 - 00;19;44;04

**Anna**

Especially with everything starting again so soon.

00;19;44;09 - 00;19;47;07

**Candace**

Yes, these poor kids.

00;19;47;23 - 00;19;50;24

**Anna**

Yeah, they're going through a lot.

00;19;51;08 - 00;19;51;29

**Candace**

Yes.

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00;19;53;05 - 00;20;01;04

**Anna**

Well, unfortunately, that is all of the time we have today. It has been absolutely wonderful getting to sit and chat with you and always.

00;20;01;04 - 00;20;02;11

**Candace**

Yes, wonderful.

00;20;10;03 - 00;20;39;04

**Anna**

Thank you so much for listening to Bloom&Blight. Our cast includes Taylor as the director, Candace as Belladonna, Logan as Wolfsbane, Kit as Daffodil, and Anna as Larkspur. Cast details can be found in the show description.

All production is handled by Anna and Kit. All sounds and music courtesy Epidemic Sounds. Girl by Moonlight is a Forged in the Dark system from Evil Hat Productions. To stay up to date with all things Bloom&Blight, be sure to give us a follow on social media @BloomandBlight. Bloom&Blight is a Dareful Archives production.

See you next time!