

What follows is a very small (and not yet finished) part of the story that deals with poor Flora. I only include it in case you want to get an idea of her character.

Flora lost her husband twelve years earlier. She lost her child about 30 years earlier when an army unit passed through the village taking the people's children. This event is later called, The Nightmare Called Krossak. Flora is perhaps in her mid-to-late 50s. This fragile widow has been slowly wasting away because of her lifelong abuses by the soldiers' bullying, killing, and impoverishing.

And now the soldiers have just burned down the entire town, including Flora's house. At this point, she is broken completely. She sits on her knees as the ashes of what was one her home smolders and glow hot. It is here that she begins singing a very beautiful song - beautiful, but terribly sad, and hauntingly so. She cries out to the wind and pleads with it to take her away... or she will die.

## Flora's Lament

BEGIN FIRST DRAFT OF THE FLORA SCENE

Where the South Path splits off the Pond Circle walkway the girls and Echet were puzzled to hear singing among the flames and smoke. It was Flora Lallwright's voice. Her voice was quite beautiful, but the song she was singing was a very depressing one. Some would say it was a song of utter and absolute despair.

Flora belonged to the Kreff race, the members of which had declined in numbers over the years. She had been a widow for twelve years, and eighteen years before that she lost her child to Krossak's raid. Each blow took its toll on her health, and as the years passed she became more and more depressed and withdrawn. She occasionally made it to a Story Night event when her concerned neighbors begged her to get out and socialize, but from the way she now sang her song it seemed she would now be broken completely, with no hope of repair.

She was sitting on her knees, staring blankly into the glowing embers of what was once her home. Her hands were blackened by the ash - tears traced sadly down her soot-stained face.

The song was an all-too-familiar one, as she and others had sung it from time to time – usually after a particularly cruel raid by the Fessal soldiers. It was moving, and hauntingly sad, and yet it was oddly sweet. The acoustics of the trees and rocks were such that her voice sent chills down the girls' spines.

Behind these walls once grew, Joy, love and life  
But the storms of hatred blew, and like a two edged sharp knife  
cut off the joy and love, and took the life away  
leaving the memories to haunt me night and day  
O won't you come and lift me up, won't you bear me far away  
O won't you come and lift me up, won't you bear me far away

Behind these walls once, I hid my most precious ones  
Now misfortune is my wealth, pain the scent of my breath  
And my soul despairs, withers, and decays  
My heart grows worse night and day  
O won't you come and lift me up, won't you bear me far away  
O won't you come and lift me up, won't you bear me far away

O wind you fly far, and you fly high  
Your wings could carry me, through far distant skies  
Ignore my desperate pleas, and here I will die  
So come lift me up, and bear me far away  
O won't you come and lift me up, won't you bear me far away  
O won't you come and lift me up, won't you bear me far away

Several neighbor ladies had been standing nearby, and when Flora finished they came over and wrapped a blanket around her rain-soaked shoulders, before slowly leading her off to Lana's makeshift hospital.

Annabelle shuddered. "Oh, Kaylie, how I've always hated that song! It's way, way too sad. I hope I never have to hear it again."

Kayla glanced at Echet. He looked worried. Her young face had become dark and hard again. When she spoke, her voice was low and grim. "I completely agree, Bel. That will be my goal. I want to make that song disappear from everyone's memory! I don't know what I'll do to make it happen, but this cruelty must end!"

END OF FIRST DRAFT SCENE