

Cozy Grove Speculative Quest

By Leigh Graner

Belinda Ayowale, the Bearista Champion

(She's single-minded, determined, self-centered, confused, but always believes in herself.)

Biography

Since she was just a cub sitting on the counter of her parents' coffee shop, Belinda had a dream: to be the youngest ever champion of the *Bearista Internazionale*. Other kids would play together after school, play games and pursue hobbies, but Belinda's parents helped her lay out a plan to stay focused on her goal. Those were great days, training with her mom, but Belinda's bearista skills soon surpassed her mother's teaching, and she joined her first local tournament. Her signature Grizzly Cubbuccino shocked the judges, and she took the blue ribbon of her hometown, which her parents hung above the bar, staying open late for a party with all the regulars that night in her honor. Soon enough, Belinda won state, then nationals, and then she finally had her ticket to the *Bearista Internazionale*. Belinda's parents and their cafe regulars watched the competition on an old TV on the counter. As only she could, she steamed the milk with a mighty roar, forming perfect crystals of tiny bubbles. And so at the age of 16, she was crowned the best bearista in the world. It was a literal dream come true. Defending her crown became a full time job, flying from place to place, defeating upstart bearistas around the globe. But the years blended together, and she started to feel tired.

For the first time in her life, Belinda had to ask herself... what now? What was the next big achievement? She tried becoming an elite competition judge, but her coffee passion had gone cold. She never quite found her second act.

Story Brief

When the player meets Belinda, she's very focused, making a drink at a ghostly espresso bar. Perhaps her ethereal form has a milk-foamy consistency. She thinks she's competing at the *Bearista Internazionale*, trying to make the perfect drink, but she's lost her milk-steaming roar. She asks the player to help her find it again inside herself. The player completes quests to help her remember bits of her past: sitting on the counter at her parents' cafe; training with and surpassing her mom; her dad putting her first blue ribbon up above the bar at a party with all the shop's regulars; winning the Bearista Internazionale; reading a postcard from her mom about how all the regulars watched her compete on TV, and her dad made room for her new blue ribbon next to her first ever blue ribbon; and how she stepped into the limo right after winning, and, although she intended to, never came home again.

The player's quests bring back these memories, and she comes to realize that the "regulars" in her life, the people who cared about her and celebrated with her, were the ones who sustained

her. And without them, she lost her steam and her roar. She sets off to find her parents' coffee shop, because maybe it's not too late to bring her blue ribbon back home. Before she leaves, she makes the player her signature Grizzly Cubbuccino—she's rusty, so it's not perfect, but she decides it's the best drink she's made in a long time.

Introduction

BELINDA: Temperature, humidity, air pressure, the ideal grind, and there it is, the perfect shot! Now, to steam the milk—

BELINDA: Wait, is this demitasse regulation size?

PLAYER OPTION 1: Demi-what?

BELINDA: This little espresso cup! It seems a bit oblong.

PLAYER OPTION 2: Whatcha up to?

BELINDA: Please don't distract me, I'm crafting the perfect espresso drink to win the *Bearista Internazionale*. This was my big moment!

BELINDA: Wait... Oh my goodness, sorry judge, I didn't recognize you!

BELINDA: Prepare your taste buds for my signature Grizzly Cubbuccino!

BELINDA: Now where was I? Ah yes, to steam the milk with my signature growl!

BELINDA: ...grr.

BELINDA: Oh no! What's happened to my growl? I can't finish my Cubbuccino without it!

BELINDA: I simply can't lose the competition! This was my big break!

BELINDA: I mean, this is my big break. Not 'was'. Was it? Wait, where am I...

BELINDA: Wait, you aren't the judge... This isn't the *Bearista Internazionale*.

BELINDA: I'm a bit confused. Time to focus up! First things first, would you help me find my roar?

PLAYER OPTION 1: How did you lose it?

BELINDA: I... I don't know.

BELINDA: It's hard to remember...

PLAYER OPTION 2: Where did you last see it?

BELINDA: That's not what I mean! I think I lost it... inside myself?

BELINDA: So that's where I'll have to find it!

BELINDA: What do you say? Power team-up? Ultimate brew crew?

PLAYER OPTION 1: Let's do it!

PLAYER OPTION 2: Heck yeah

PLAYER OPTION 3: Um, sure.

BELINDA: Wonderful! I know I can do it! And by extension, that means we can do it! Together!

Quest A:

BELINDA: If I'm going to get my feet on the grounds and get back on my grind, I need to figure out where I lost the coffee plot.

BELINDA: I bet my past has clues to re-steaming my roar!

BELINDA: But the past is made of memories, and my memory is a bit hazelnutty right now.

BELINDA: But wait! Smells are a great way to froth up some memories! And we bears certainly know how to sniff.

BELINDA: Let's wake up some recollections with the aroma of some fresh roasted coffee beans!

BELINDA: *Please bring me 7 fresh roasted coffee beans!*

#Note: the player makes these by collecting green coffee beans and having Flamey burn them

When player completes the quest:

BELINDA: Ah, the notes of caramel, cacao, and just a hint of smokiness! The toasty smell of success!

BELINDA: It's just like the house blend at Where You Bean! My parents were so proud of their little cafe, but my mom said the best thing they ever brewed up was me, just a cub on the counter, reaching out to hug each and every regular.

BELINDA: I suppose she was my first coach. My original power team-up pal. She taught me all she knew!

BELINDA: Until I surpassed her, of course.

BELINDA: The day I made my first Grizzly Cubbuccino, we both knew I was headed for the big time!

Quest B:

BELINDA: Hmm, it feels like something's missing around here.

BELINDA: It's a funny feeling, like I've lost my luggage.

BELINDA: That's it! My suitcase of blue ribbons! It was my one and only companion as a worldwide champ flying around the bearista competition circuit.

BELINDA: For now even just one blue ribbon would help me feel more grounded.

BELINDA: Would you please make me a blue ribbon?

BELINDA: You'll need something round and blue, a bit of ribbon, and a big number 1!

Note: The player can craft the blue ribbon out of:

- *a blueberry, a blue plate, or something similar*
- *a piece of ribbon*
- *a number 1 from a broken clock, or something else with a "1" on it.*

When player completes the quest:

BELINDA: Now that's more like it! I'm a decorated champion once more!

BELINDA: It brings me back to my first competition. I was just 10, and I brought home the blue ribbon for best bearista in town.

BELINDA: My dad hung it over the bar. And my parents kept their little cafe open late that night for the party, and all the regulars showed up to celebrate me!

BELINDA: My mom had to cut off Old Grimsy after his fourth macchiato!

BELINDA: Ooh, that night made me feel as tingly as a milk foam mustache!

BELINDA: I decided then and there to become the youngest ever champion of the *Bearista Internazionale!*

Quest C:

BELINDA: It's dim out here, but the *Bearista Internazionale* was bright.

BELINDA: Bright with TV lights!

BELINDA: And they were all shining right on me, at the top of my game, for all to see!

BELINDA: Let's recapture some of the magic, shall we?

BELINDA: I bet this island doesn't get much signal, but we can use our Super Team-up imagination.

BELINDA: Could we sit down and pretend to watch me that day? If you bring the TV, I'll bring the popcorn.

BELINDA: Please bring a television set so we can pretend to watch me together!

When player completes the quest:

BELINDA: Ooh! Ahh! Can you see it? I just put on the finishing touches, and the judge takes a sip, and—Yes, I've won by a mile!

PLAYER OPTION 1: Amazing!

BELINDA: Thank you so much for watching my big day together, team-up pal.

PLAYER OPTION 2: Are you sure this is helping?

BELINDA: I... I think it is. It reminds me of something...

BELINDA: Say, this looks just like Old Grimsy's little TV set.

BELINDA: I read about it in mom's airmail letter. Everybody had gathered at Where You Bean again to watch me win!

BELINDA: She said they put the old TV right on the bar where I used to sit as a cub.

BELINDA: My dad made room above the bar for my new blue ribbon, right next to my first one.

BELINDA: I always meant to bring it home and put it up one day.

Moment of Realization

BELINDA: I suppose I missed my own party, didn't I?

BELINDA: But I was already on my way! Being the top bearista meant defending the title, and that meant flying around the world, and that meant getting in the limo right away!

BELINDA: As the world champion, I had to! Even dad understood that.

BELINDA: But now that all the rush of life is done, of all the memories you've coached me through, the ones I'd really like to steep in are back at Where You Bean.

BELINDA: You see, the old shop had regulars. The folks who kept showing up, whose drinks we knew by heart.

BELINDA: And once I won the *Bearista Internazionale*, I left them all behind.

BELINDA: And all along, they were the heat in my kettle, the boiler at the heart of my espresso machine.

BELINDA: I guess I didn't realize it until I was all out of steam.

BELINDA: I wonder if the old cafe is still out there somewhere.

BELINDA: Do you suppose coffee shops have souls?

BELINDA: Maybe it's not too late to bring my blue ribbon home.

BELINDA: But before I go, I've got a hunch...

BELINDA: Stand back! It's time to steam some milk!

BELINDA: ROAARRRR!!!

BELINDA: I was right! You perked up my roar while I wasn't even looking, just by showing up.

BELINDA: Thanks for being my first regular in ages.

BELINDA: And there you have it, a Grizzly Cubbuccino. I'm pretty rusty, so it's not perfect.

PLAYER OPTION 1: Don't worry, I'm not a judge, remember?

PLAYER OPTION 2: The best coffee is gift coffee!

PLAYER OPTION 3: I'm sure I'll love it.

BELINDA: Well, if it warms you up, maybe it's the best drink I've made in a good long while.

BELINDA: It's time for me to find my parents' old coffee shop, wherever it is. Something tells me I'll be just in time for the party.