

MARIEL

ÆJINN PRINCESS OF OBLIVION

The World is bright, shrieking pain, and must be expunged. Stop it! Stop it!

Some notes in the Symphony are bold and dramatic. Others are in a minor key. So it was when the Lord created Mariel, a bright, yet delicate Cherub. To her was entrusted Memory – not simply records, for that was Knowledge, and the domain of Raphael, who Mariel worked with. But Memory itself. The cherished moments preserved within the thoughts of man and Angel alike.

Mariel was happy in Heaven. Hers was a role meant for joy, in a world of sensation. The sights, the sounds, the smells all around her. Eli taught her the art of storytelling, and she grew more well known and precious in Heaven. And Mariel's voice, recounting the memories of scenes she saw, made her beloved of the Angels as much as her beauty did. If one looks through the abandoned mosque of Eli, they might find one glistening painting of translucent paints on a cream canvas, forever backlit by a silver fire. The painting is of what appears to be an angelfish, but translucent silver and gold, with wings arcing around it – not the eagles' wings of most Cherubim, but gossamer wings, cradling the air gently. Below it is the simple legend: In Memory.

Mariel was never approached by Lucifer or his followers. Perhaps Lucifer saw no advantage in such an ephemeral Angel's support. Perhaps he saw no threat in her. Or perhaps Lucifer, still the Archangel of Light and still beautiful himself, had no desire to shake the Cherub of Memory from the tree. He let her collect her memories among Heaven and Earth undisturbed as he prepared. Memories that were held within Mariel like living things – eternal and indelible, but precious.

The War came as a surprise to Mariel, as a result. In shock and horror, the Angel of Memory watched the battle, never participating. Her tremulous voice, so well suited to the retelling of stories, turned shrill as she begged the warriors to stop, to just *stop*. Scene after scene of horror tore at her beautiful eyes and branded themselves into a memory she could never have surcease from. Turning every way, tearing at herself like a madman, Mariel tried to force the scenes to disappear, to not happen... to not see the destruction of the mountain, to not see the Beautiful Morning Star hurled into Hell. To not see his followers hurl themselves after him, unable to remain or stand the Light of Heaven as their Celestial forms twist and turn horrible. The last scene that branded itself into her Memory was watching the most beautiful Angel of all – Andrealphus – hurling himself after the Fallen.

Mariel walked the grounds, looking at the bodies of the dead. With each ashen face, regardless of side, her perfect memory summoned the Angel in life, his laughter, his smile, his own beauties. Her Memory refused to let her forget –

refused to forget the perfection of Heaven before the battle, the horror of Heaven during the battle, or the desolate misery of Heaven following the battle. She found herself living in all three at once, her beautiful, delicate minor key shriller and louder, the Memory that she embodied tormenting her without relief. She beat at her own head, falling to the ground, to try and blot the memory out.

Mariel was the Cherub of Memory, and to her, the memories of the past were her attuned. To try and purge those memories was to plunge herself into the pain of Dissonance, to the horror of the Angels near her. Eli and Raphael reached for her, to sooth and comfort her – but too slow. Too slow. With a shriek born of her *need* to forget, to purge, to eliminate the memories that she was charged to protect, to love and cherish, she *hurled* herself over the edge, following the Fallen. And she remembered every instant of that fall, the pyre collecting around her, the fire tearing at her beauty, twisting her form, making her body reflect the horror of her thoughts, until she struck home in Hell forevermore.

She was found, clawing at her straggly flesh and eyes, by the still traumatized hoardes of Hell. They barely recognized the beloved Angel of Memory – but they knew this *thing* wasn't one of them in the Fall, and they tore at her cruelly. Tore at her until Lucifer himself plucked her up, and saw the horror on her face. She begged him to kill her, to eliminate the memories, to destroy all trace of them.

Lucifer made her a Princess without comment. The Princess of Oblivion. And told her to purge herself, if anyone was going to. And he left the new Princess to express her pain and rage on the demons who had abused her before his arrival. What remained of them formed her first Servitors.

Mariel was a Djinn, purely and simply. She hungered for the love and affection of the universe before the Fall, but hated all other creatures around herself – and hated herself most of all. She embraced Oblivion, the consigning of the past to pure entropy. The destruction of all. Her Servitors came from the most traumatized – the ones who survived the Fall but wish they hadn't. And she bitterly created more, tearing her own Forces out to do so, trying to diminish herself. And yet, the more she tore at herself, the deeper Oblivion seemed to open and the stronger she became. The new Princes grew horrified at the unstable Djinn and her strength, while Lucifer smiled, and suggested how useful Mariel would be against Raphael – for the War wasn't over, now was it?

Raphael was one of the most powerful Archangels, her Word one of the mightiest. Lucifer suggested Mariel join with Gebbeleth, the mysterious and handsome Balsraph Prince of Secrets. Gebbeleth agreed, and began to weave a web around the Djinn, recognizing both her potential and her driving,

obsessive need to be loved and purged both. And Mariel, while unstable and dangerous at first, responded to the Balsraph's charm and words, and let him slowly dominate her completely.

As twisted as their relationship was, it formed a core of stability in Mariel. Gebbeleth helped her purge the past from herself, learning multitudes upon multitudes of Heavenly Secrets as he saw her Memories and helped her to destroy them. She grew obsessed with Gebbeleth, attuned to him on all levels, and Gebbeleth helped her build her organization of nihilists into a powerful, horrible force – the destroyers of the eternal, the vanguard of the Armageddon she grew to believe would purge all memory and all substance from the Universe, hurling all into the Oblivion that God had emerged from before. And she would be the one to drive the knife into God's heart. His little minor key, grown into a discordant shrillness that would shatter the Symphony once and for all.

For tens of thousands of years, Mariel and Gebbeleth worked together brilliantly. Gebbeleth's disappearances – sometimes for decades or longer – gnawed at Mariel at first, until she found his very absence an affirmation of Oblivion, only to have her Djinn hungers refilled by his returns. So, when he disappeared in 1600 BC, she wasn't any more concerned than normal. Besides, there was so much work to do – fighting and destroying the works of Man and God. Her driving need remained the same – the purging and destroying of any signs – any *reminders* of the World before the Fall. She didn't merely crave victory, but pure destruction. When Gebbeleth didn't return after several hundred years, she quietly began supporting his Servitors "until he got back." She remained convinced the Demon Prince of Secrets *would* return, no matter how long it took, with psychotic obsession. Even as other Superiors suspected Gebbeleth was dead, Mariel's obsession continued – and as a result, the Word of Secrets remained empty. It seemed... prudent not to court Oblivion's wraith. She and Saminga worked well throughout (some say Saminga loved Mariel, and secretly approved of Gebbeleth's disappearance), and ever since the destruction of the Library in Alexandria by fire, Belial and Mariel got along well. When Gebbeleth was nearby to channel her, Baal could appreciate the destructive power Mariel's forces brought to bear, but without him Baal resented her lack of focus and control. Lilith avoided Mariel whenever possible – the Needs in Mariel's eyes were too naked and horrible. But Lilith *did* do some business with her. Andrealphus hated Mariel with the same passion he hated Saminga. Genubath and Mariel got along well enough, though Mariel was not too fond of his replacement, Valefor. Kobal only used her as the butt of jokes, and not very many of those.

Mariel remained stable, if nihilistic and insane, through the early Middle Ages. Nothing changed until the rise of Legion. Part of her loved to see the horror of Legion spread over Earth, especially given the involvement of her old friend Saminga. But as Legion grew, it became clear that he wasn't consigning humanity to Oblivion, he was making them a

single entity – which would preserve their thoughts within Legion's corrupt mind. In the end, she fought powerfully and hard, her Servitors flying against Legion's multiple bodies. When the Renegade Prince was finally flushed into Celestial form, she formed the barrier that kept him in place, holding him with all the strength of the void within her. Holding her for Raphael to strike.

Mariel was there, and part of the strike, and felt the very essence of the Archangel of Knowledge swim all around her as Raphael destroyed Legion. To Mariel's horror, the Symphony sang through her as Legion died, the utter Knowledge of Raphael tearing through to the heart of her pain, awakening what memories persisted, awakening the horror that had driven her to the Fall. In horror, she reached into the mass of Forces and twisted, pulling the last Celestial Force from Raphael even as Legion's destruction was completed. With a shriek heard through the Symphony all around the World, throughout Heaven and deep into Hell, Raphael was destroyed, and Mariel was fleeing to her pit. To this day, no one knows that Raphael might have survived the battle, but for Mariel.

Traumatized, still without Gebbeleth, Mariel felt her illusions shattering, her old instabilities rising. Deep in the pit, she discovered that Haagenti had slaughtered and consumed Meserach. Mariel cared nothing for Meserach, but in her shock and trauma railed against this newcomer even as Lucifer was lifting the Demon of Gluttony to Prince. Haagenti, praised for his part in the battle of Legion and under Kobal's guidance, attacked the Princess of Oblivion, cutting a swath through her Servitors and finally reaching her.

And then only Haagenti remained. It was 1009 AD, and Mariel was gone.

Her Servitors dispersed. Some stayed with the remaining Servitors of Gebbeleth, including many of Mariel's Word-Bound. When Alaemon came, several joined his ranks. Others took service with Belial or Saminga. Still others threw themselves at Haagenti and his forces, joining their Princess in the final Oblivion of soul-death.

And some, they say, wait at the fringes of Hell's society. They believe that Mariel was not destroyed, but swallowed whole. They believe she waits at the pit of Haagenti's stomach – that Oblivion is responsible for his insatiable, growing hunger. That Haagenti *must* keep eating, more and more, lest the void within him grow and consume him from the inside. And that sooner or later he will falter, and then Oblivion will consume Haagenti and Mariel will return. And who is to say they are wrong? Mariel never gave Rites to her Servitors, so there is no *proof* she has been destroyed, after all.

One thing is sure. If Mariel emerged, to discover proof of Gebbeleth's death, a pretender to the Princedom of Secrets, a higher population on Earth than ever before, and technology (and the Media) making information more widespread than ever before... well, Mariel would not be happy.

And very soon afterward, neither would anyone else.

Dissonance

To Mariel, the world is falling into entropy. Any actions to fight against this are not only futile, but blasphemous. It is dissonant for a Servitor of Oblivion to build, create or preserve *anything*, from writing down notes to building a shelter to the night to helping work with wood. Dissonance incurred by failing this can be resolved if the creation is completely destroyed (including any copies of works of art or writing.) Note that Servitors of Gebbeleth were always very adept at finding out the secrets Oblivion was about to destroy, in ways that didn't make the Marielites dissonant.

Band Attunements

As Mariel gave out no Rites (such a thing flew in the face of the nature of Oblivion), she instead would give her Servitors reliquaries created in the wake of one of her destructive rages. These are reliquary/1's, granted in addition to her Attunements.

Mariel's Servitors in general were pale and looked thin and sickly, even if they possessed a Vessel/6 and 6 Corporeal Forces. A disproportionate number of them had the Aura Discord as well. It was as if Entropy and Oblivion clung to them, disturbing all around them. Were any alive today, they would likely be infesting the Goth subculture and making it bleaker and more suicidal by the day.

Balseraphs (restricted)

Balseraphs of Oblivion spread entropy through society, making the certain uncertain and the known unknown. When they look into the eyes of a victim who knows a fact and use their resonance, they can alter that person's memories to reflect the Balseraph's version of the past. The victim gets their normal Will roll to resist the lie, in which case the attunement doesn't work. If they fail the will roll, they get to make a perception roll at a penalty equal to the Balseraph's CD to avoid having their memories changed. If they fail the perception roll, nothing can restore their original memories. Their Reliquaries usually take the forms of rings of cold stone or metal.

Djinn

Mariel's Djinn, like Mariel herself, are obsessed with destruction. If left in a kitchen, they'll systematically break all the plates, for example. This isn't the Calabim's love of entropy, but an angry obsession against wholeness. Djinn, when confronted with inanimate objects, may make a perception roll, looking for the best places to strike and destroy them. They may add the CD to the power of the attack. Their reliquaries are generally scraps of leather, for the neck or arm.

Calabim (restricted)

Mariel created more Calabim than any other Band – while there was no place for true affection in her unstable Djinn's Heart, their sheer destructiveness and entropic fields

reflected her view of the perfect Servitor of Oblivion. She granted her Calabim the power of completion when using their Resonance. If they successfully destroy an object or kill a being with their Resonance, the entropic forces they control literally reduce it to nothingness, leaving no trace it had ever existed. Their reliquaries are often bands of metal, bent from a metal shard into a bracelet.

Habbalah

Mariel conditioned (brainwashed through torture would be more accurate) her punishers extensively after their creation, to orient their delusions correctly. While each believed itself an Angel of the Lord, they are convinced that God was, in fact, the Oblivion that existed before Yves first appeared and named God, and that all that has come since separates creation more and more from the Divine. The only solution would be to destroy all of creation to return it to its true, divine state. To that end, Mariel's Habbalah were granted the ability to be free of Trauma when they suffered Corporeal Death – if anything, Corporeal Death gave them a taste of their beliefs. (It is worth noting that Uriel used to offer a Rite – +2 Essence to any Angel who soul-killed a Habbalite of Oblivion, seeing them as an impure Mockery of a Malakite's purity). Their Reliquaries are generally ragged pieces of clothing, often hidden under other clothes.

Lilim (restricted)

Few Free Lilim or created Lilim given a choice served Mariel – she was both insane and cold, no fun at all. But Lilith *did* do business with Mariel – business that often left Lilith in a foul mood for days after. Mariel's Lilim were experts at destroying the lives of others, reducing them to despair and turning them to Oblivion. Instead of using their Resonance to see unfilled Needs, a Lilim of Oblivion may choose to see what her victim Needs to maintain their happiness and sense of wellbeing. She has no way to get Geases for these Needs, but they give her targets to destroy, catapulting the victim into the pit and making them ripe for new, powerful Needs that can be made into Geases that drag them down. Their Reliquaries are often bits of broken glass or jewelry, set into earrings or other rough jewelry.

Shedim (restricted)

The Shedim of Oblivion truly loved their work, possessing targets and being charged with the destruction of personal or community records or antiquities. To that end, Mariel's Shedim could add their Celestial Forces to any attempt to make their hosts destroy a permanent record completely – be it writings, historical artifacts, or any other part of a community's cultural heritage. If successful, that day wouldn't be counted in the cumulative bonus to the host's perception rolls to see the Shedite for what it was. The Shedite's Reliquary was usually something innocuous, like a broken cup or frayed belt.

Impudites

Devoted to the art of ingratiating themselves with others, then ruining them from within, the Takers of Oblivion may add their Celestial Forces to any conversational skill (including Seduction, Intimidation, Fast Talk, or any debate skill or artistry involving the spoken word). Using their skills at weaving words, the Impudites can turn their victims towards dark emotions and despair with skill. An Impudite that convinces a victim to commit suicide takes no Dissonance from the victim's death. Their reliquaries are usually broken coins they can wear as pendants or hollow out for rings.

Servitor Attunements

Weathering

This attunement lets a Servitor age objects, causing them to weather and gradually fail. They can only use this Attunement on one object (which can be as large as a single room dwelling) at a time. While using the Attunement, they must touch the object for at least thirty seconds once a day. During that time, the object will age not one day but five years, with all the attendant effects. (Wood will darken, warp and rot, stones will settle and gap, colors will fade, and so forth.) With sufficient time, they can cause almost anything to collapse into ruin. Note that normal maintenance will have normal effect, so a workman can replace blurred and flowed glass with fresh panes, repaint and the like. It doesn't change the aging effect, but can lengthen the time the object can last.

Sacrifice

Even as Marielites have no Rites, they have other ways to garner Essence. Specifically, they can draw Essence out of the destruction of beloved creations, buildings or artifacts. The older (and more revered) the place, the more Essence they can garner. They can also garner greater Essence if more people revere the place or object. The destruction must take place as a result of a single action. Note that if they destroy creative work, it must be completely destroyed (including all copies). The least Essence that can be garnered is 1 Essence, and that only if the sacrificed object is truly beloved by one or more people. The maximum Essence is 6, assuming an ancient and revered object loved by an entire Nation. (It is thought that a Marielite successfully destroyed the Colossus, garnering 6 Essence from the Sacrifice). The Sacrifice creates a note of Disturbance for every point of Essence garnered in this matter.

Distinctions

Knight of the Poisoned Well

Mariel's Knights could, with a Will Roll, be led to the primary sources of life for that community (the fields, water sources and the like), ready to destroy them if needed.

Captain of the Desolate Life

Marielite Captains could look in the eyes of their victims and see the one event that caused their victim the most pain in their past, as well as the most painful way to bring it up.

Baron of the Endless Night

The Barons of Oblivion were given the terrifying power to plunge their victims into oblivion itself. With a contest of Will Rolls and the cost of 1 Essence, the Baron could, if successful, force the victim into complete sensory deprivation for CD days. During this time, no force or Song could rouse them. There is no way short of intravenous feeding (which didn't exist in Mariel's time) to feed or hydrate them, so at the end of the period, they suffered appropriate dehydration and malnutrition, as well as the effects of the complete lack of sensation.

Relations

Allied: Gebbeleth (*Gebbeleth and Saminga consider themselves Allied to Mariel*)

Associated: Baal, Belial, Genubath, Saminga (*Belial and Gebubath consider themselves associated with Mariel*)

Neutral: Lilith (*Beleth is neutral towards Mariel*)

Hostile: All others except as below (*Andrealphus, Asmodeus and Valefor are Hostile towards Mariel*)

Enemy: Haagenti (*Haagenti was an Enemy of Mariel's. Very very briefly.*)

Basic Rites

As stated above, Mariel gave out no Rites. To do so violated her sense of the nothingness of the universe. To each Servitor she gave one Reliquary/1, and to her preferred Servitors she gave the Sacrifice attunement, to compensate for the lack. She also didn't encourage her Servitors to learn Songs (learning was a perpetuation of knowledge, after all) where Essence was needed, though of course it happened.

Chance of Invocation: 3

- +1 A burning book.
- +2 An oubliette.
- +3 The severed head of the only eyewitness to a significant event.
- +4 50 or more followers of a suicide pact, after the fact.
- +5 Ash from the Library of Alexandria.
- +6 The charred remains of the Golden Fleece.