

MARIEL

HABBALITE PRINCESS OF OBLIVION

The world is a horrible mistake. It should not be, or, better yet, it should never have been.

History

The EloHITE Mariel was once the Angel of Memory. Heaven's record-keeper, she was the brightest servant of bright Raphael, Archangel of Knowledge. Mariel was the first angel to venture timidly inside the Library, back when Heaven was new; Yves, it is said, opened the door for her and then showed her through endless corridors of empty shelves, waiting to be filled.

Mariel served for many centuries as Heaven's reference librarian. In those innocent days, the concept of "security" barely existed; Central Records was still part of the Library, and information was free to all. So when Lucifer began requesting curiously detailed files on Heaven's most powerful servants, Mariel was happy to be of service to the great Archangel of Light. She worked closely with his assistant (a young Cherub of Judgement named Asmodeus) to give Lucifer all the information he asked for, humbly trusting that it would be put to some great and good use.

And when Lucifer had all the files that he needed, he paused for a moment to contemplate the naively smiling EloHITE. And then he took her aside, and spoke with her for a little while...

Mariel came to dwell more and more upon certain unhappy truths: how memories shift and lie so that nothing is certain, how no two souls can ever agree on perfect Truth, and how all records are ultimately subjective distortions. These thoughts were a nagging worry to her at first, then a secret shame, and finally a torment and a horror.

She did not Fall, though, until near the end of the Rebellion, when she realized that she had given Lucifer the tools to mar the universe and perhaps unseat God himself.

In hate and grief and vast despair, Mariel tried to destroy the Library. She failed, but her last act before departing Heaven was to burn Central Records... which does much to explain the confusion of the early years of the War.

And then she went to Hell.

As a Habbalite, Mariel still believed that she was serving God. Her world-view was bizarre even by the liberal standards of that Band, though. She hadn't been wrong to help Lucifer! She had been following God's will! It was the *other* angels who had been naive and deluded... and by allowing the First Balsraph to deceive them, they had proven their lack of worth.

The world was hopelessly tainted and flawed at its creation. God had allowed it to be infected with falsehood and subjectivity. Then his "angels" had failed to defend it against a rebellion based on subjective truth. God's will, therefore, must be that his crippled creation should

recognize its own imperfection and destroy itself. Mere physical destruction, while laudable, was not nearly enough; the world ought to be obliterated *as if it had never been*.

Lucifer, in what may have been a rare moment of humor, granted Mariel the Word of Oblivion, and the new Princess set to work with a will.

Many of the missing pieces in human history are Mariel's work. Great works of art were destroyed and forgotten, libraries burned and crumbled to dust, tribes and cities and even whole empires disappeared and were forgotten forever... and Mariel smiled.

Outlook

The Princess of Oblivion was always one of Hell's looser cannons. Driven by guilt and hatred, Mariel was unpredictable, irrational, and violently nihilistic. Though aggressive in pursuing the War (Mariel thought that Armageddon would be a good thing no matter who won), she rarely cooperated with other Princes, and paid little attention to Hell's politics.

In some ways, Mariel might be considered the Infernal equivalent of Uriel. Both were radical, hard-core, and uncompromising; both demanded incredibly high standards of their Servitors. Mariel actually admired Uriel... from a distance, as the feeling was certainly not mutual. It's rumored that she occasionally worked with some of his Servitors, if not with the Angel of Purity himself, to eliminate certain... imperfections in the Symphony.

In person, Mariel presented as quiet, intense, and utterly mad in a coldly rational sort of way... Saminga without the high-camp ranting, perhaps, or Vapula without the smile.

Nobody remembers just what Mariel looked like, though Haagenti claims to remember how she tasted.

Alliance with Gebbeleth

The Gebbeleth-Mariel alliance was the closest and most enduring that Hell ever knew. What they had was not love, but it satisfied some deep need in each of them. Gebbeleth needed an audience, a confidante and a victim; Mariel needed... to be punished, perhaps.

The alliance was not altogether reliable; occasionally Gebbeleth would push his lover just a little too far, provoking terrifying outbursts of rage. Wise Servitors learned to be somewhere else at these times. Still, the relationship gave both Princes much more power than they would have wielded otherwise; for this, if for no other reason, they kept returning to each other.

In the end, of course, both the members of Hell's longest and strongest alliance ended up dead. This may have been an accident, of course... but other Princes have drawn a different lesson, and there has not been another such since.

Mariel's Fate

As time passed, Mariel's isolation and frustration grew; for all her good work, humans kept learning things and remembering them. The world grew older and more complicated, but showed no signs of self-destructing.

The disappearance of Gebbeleth was a deadly blow. It not only weakened her position in Hell, but it left her more psychologically isolated and unstable than ever.

In her final years, Mariel became steadily more erratic and dangerous. The advent of Legion seems to have been her last hope for universal oblivion, and his destruction left her in despair. It is said that at the end, when Haagenti broke through her inner defenses, she spread her arms wide to him and laughed.

Mariel's servants scattered quickly after her destruction; most went to either Saminga or Haagenti, with a handful serving other Princes. A few still hold her attunements, but (except for her former Servitors) for the most part Hell has already forgotten Mariel.

Still, one occasionally encounters the rumor that Mariel's Fate was not quite complete... that there was something more to it. Whatever it may have been, though, remains shrouded in oblivion.

Mariel's Principality has also been lost to history, though all agree that it was somewhere in Stygia, and legend says that her palace stood above the springs of the river Lethe. At least one expedition has tried to go up the river, hoping to find Oblivion's lost citadel and whatever treasures it might yet contain. Unsurprisingly, the expedition never returned, and its fate remains unknown.

Former Servitors

Ex-servants of Oblivion are not common, but there are more than one might suppose; because Mariel was a very demanding Superior who relentlessly weeded out the weak, they tend to be tough survivors. Most have at least 11-12 Forces, and many have Words. And, of course, they're quite good at going unnoticed.

Mariel's former servants are most commonly found serving Death, Nightmares, Secrets, Fate or the Game. At least one of her Barons has regained that rank (the Demon of Coverups, who now works for Asmodeus). All of her attunements and distinctions may still occasionally be encountered, and there are probably at least a couple more that are not recorded here (or anywhere else).

There is still a certain lingering camaraderie among former servants of Oblivion. Like Uriel's Tsayadim, they still consider themselves a *corps d'elite*, and can occasionally wax nostalgic about the bad old days. It would be very unwise to rely on this sentiment affecting their behavior, of course, and

the rumors about secret reunions must be considered unlikely at best.

Other Rumors and Whispers

Hardly anyone mentions Mariel any more, but a few old legends still occasionally pop up.

There's a persistent rumor in Heaven that she was on the verge of Redeeming when Haagenti took her out. It's true that she was one of the few Fallen who seemed to feel some flicker of guilt over her actions (and to be tormented by it accordingly). On the other hand, given that Mariel was one of the more brutal and vicious Princes, probably this was just wishful thinking on Heaven's part.

It's fact -- not rumor -- that Mariel cleaned out her desk before she left Heaven. That is, she departed the Library with every relic and artifact that she could grab, including some that were unique and very powerful. But exactly *what* she brought to Hell remains unclear. One of her servants babbled wildly of something called "the signature of God..."

No Superior examined the Symphony as obsessively and closely as Mariel (though Vapula has come close). She hoped to find a source code... a way to crash the entire system from within.

One rumor is that she was on the verge of success. According to this, it was Mariel, not Saminga, who was responsible for the creation of Legion. She had found a cheat code, a way to override the Symphony's normal restrictions on the Shedite resonance. Saminga was just a convenient dupe, which explains why he has never been able to replicate the Legion experiment.

Legion having almost succeeded (this rumor goes), Mariel was ready to try again with an even deadlier resonance hack... something that would let a Balseph lie on a global scale, perhaps, or allow a Habbalite to actually channel the divine. But Lucifer used a dupe of his own to remove her from the game, and took her work for himself, for use at some future crisis of the War.

Dissonance

Demons of Oblivion were charged with destroying records, subverting memories, and in general trying to break up the continuity of consciousness. It was dissonant for these demons to make or keep a record of any sort, or to help anyone else record or recall anything.

Band Attunements

Balseraphs (restricted)

Balseraphs of Oblivion add their Ethereal Forces to their resonance roll when trying to make someone either forget or ignore something. Those who survived Mariel's destruction have found work as Hell's "Men in Black," helping to keep the great secret of the War.

Djinn (restricted)

These Djinn know the location of all records pertaining to their attuned, and are aware whenever new records are

made. If they attune to a record, they become aware of all copies of it.

Calabim (restricted)

These Calabim can use their resonance to destroy information. On a successful reference roll, they can wipe words out of books or figures from a painting... without otherwise disturbing or damaging the rest of the item, if they so choose. Also, Calabim of Oblivion *triple* the check digit of a successful resonance roll to simply destroy anything that carries information (books, scrolls, sculpture, paintings, etc.).

Habbalah (restricted)

Mariel's Habbalah can, with a successful resonance roll, inflict Mariel's world-view upon their victims -- that is, convince them that the entire world is a disgusting, horrible abortion that should never have been. The effects of this will vary depending on the victim; some will become suicidal, others violently destructive, while some may merely become deeply cynical. In any event, Habbalah using this attunement get no backlash except on an Intervention.

Lilim (restricted)

Lilim of Oblivion can Geas their victims to forget things. Furthermore, they always know at once if there is something that the victim *needs* to forget.

Shedim (restricted)

By expending Essence and winning a contest of Wills, Mariel's Shedim can wipe memories from their hosts. The Essence cost depends on the importance of the memory to the host, from 1 for relatively minor memories to 6 for things like the ability to read or the host's own name. The Shedite can do this once per victim per day. When the Shedite leaves, the host gets a Will roll for each memory, with a bonus equal to the Shedite's Essence cost; if he fails, the memory is permanently wiped and gone forever.

Impudites (restricted)

An Impudite of Oblivion can convince his Charmed victims not to pay attention to something that they otherwise would. If the victim is being forced to ignore something *very* important (skipping a crucial meeting, letting a small child wander off unattended), he gets a Will roll to resist, but making the roll does not break the charm -- it just means the victim won't ignore this particular situation.

Servitor Attunements

Lucifer's Palimpsest

This is an earlier version of Alaemon's *Lucifer's Document Shredder* attunement (and nobody knows how he got it, either). It allows the demon to make information-storage media blank itself utterly. 1 Essence destroys about 400 written pages.

Fade

Once per day, for a period of 10 minutes, this attunement allows the demon to become forgettable. People

will tend not to notice him (-3 on all Perception rolls); he will leave no clues or traces, and any record made of him will be lost or otherwise disappear.

Focus

The demon can cause someone to focus obsessively on something, to the point of becoming dangerously oblivious to everything else. The demon must touch and speak to the victim, and spend 3 Essence; a Will roll can be made to resist. If it fails, the Focused person will ignore everything around him or her to concentrate absolutely on a single task (which he will perform at +1 to his skill level, for what that's worth) for hours equal to the check digit. Direct attacks on the victim will give him another Will roll to snap out of it.

Distinctions

Knight of Oblivion

A Knight can, with a touch and the expenditure of 1 Essence, cause a victim to forget the last thing that the Knight said or did. Victims get a Will roll to resist; if they succeed, the Essence is not spent.

Captain of Expunction

With a few minutes of conversation, Mariel's Captains can cause a victim to forget or ignore any one thing or person that is not immediately present. The memories are not erased, but the victim will not think of that person or thing until it is forced upon their attention again.

Baron of the Silence of the Symphony

When a Baron disturbs the Symphony, he makes the normal amount of noise, but anyone who perceives it must make a successful Will roll and then react to the disturbance immediately. Otherwise, they get distracted and forget about the disturbance, no matter how large it may have been.

Relations

Mariel's rampant nihilism made her unpopular with her fellow Princes; she had no allies at all after Gebbeleth disappeared (which made her that much more attractive a target, of course).

Malphas admired the starkness of her world-view, while Asmodeus seems to have felt a certain chilly respect for her dating back to their work together before the Fall. The more destructive Princes found her tolerable. Otherwise, most of Hell's Superiors disliked her, and the more "worldly" ones (and her former Servitors) hated her outright. In retrospect, it's surprising that she lasted as long as she did.

Allied: Gebbeleth (*Gebbeleth was allied to Mariel*)

Associated: Asmodeus (*Asmodeus and Malphas were Associated with Mariel*)

Neutral: Saminga, Belial, Meserach

Hostile: Everyone else, except for

Enemy: Andrealphus, Kobal, Haagenti (briefly)

Basic Rites

- Destroy the last existing copy of a book (up to +3 if the book was widely read) [*remember that Mariel's time was before the spread of printing*]
- Thoroughly destroy a work of art that took at least 100 hours to create
- Distract someone from something important that s/he really should be attending to

Chance of Invocation: 0

- +1 Destroying a book or other written record
- +2 Someone in a deep, dreamless sleep
- +3 Someone in a coma, or destroying the last record of a human's existence
- +4 A true and complete amnesiac
- +5 The ruins of a library, destroyed within the last hour
- +6 The ruins of a city that has been completely lost to history