

Collegia Magia

THE

FESTUNG



THE FOLLOWING IS THE FOURTH PART OF *Collegia Magia*, a series focusing on magical academies that can be dropped into a campaign with minimal preparation. Each article in the series presents several detailed NPCs, points of interest, and loose plot hooks that can be developed during play. Also included are lore and options for enrolled PCs! This installment of the series details the Festung, a castle refuge for all that is nightmarish and vile!

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INTRODUCTION

On a frozen, razor-edged crag looms the dread castle known only as the Festung. From its chimneys bellow a putrid pillar of smoke that defiles the virgin snow. Inside, lavish interiors suitable for a king lay dusty and cobwebbed, or utterly re-purposed into laboratories of devilry, necromancy, and torture. Seekers of darkness flock here to deprave and spawn. Indeed, the Festung is less a school for magic and more a sanctuary for the profane.

Posted outside the Festung gates are two guards, tirelessly loyal in undeath, who ask entrants, "What do ye here seek?" Regardless of the answer, the guards respond based on the darkness of the entrant's heart. If one answers with a heart stained with mortal sin, the guards reply, "Ye might find such, here in the darkness." If the heart is innocent, the guards issue a low and menacing chuckle, for in this place purity never survives.

CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

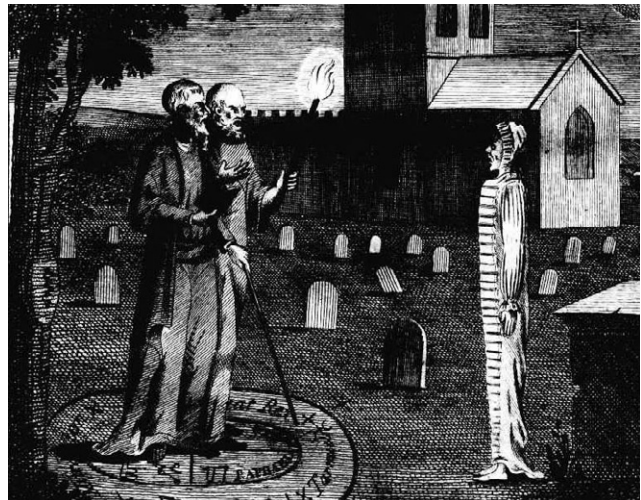
Members of any spellcasting class can be affected by their association with the Festung.

Bard. Rare but blessed is the bard who sings the sad ballad of the Festung's dark guardian. Few would dare visit the place, except to experience a tale of terror.

Cleric. The library contains many tomes on the theology of dark beings, including the worship of demonkind, shadow, and death.

Diabolist.* Few places are so appropriate to meditate on the cosmic truths of Evil as the Festung. Those who in visions witness a bleeding eclipse will learn to command fiends.

Druid. If a druid dared to visit the Festung, it would be in dedication to winter, rot, and entities that trespass upon this plane.



Occultist.* Vile arcane experiments are a mainstay at the Festung. Abominable creatures frequent here, and a would-be occultist can easily collect their essences.

Sorcerer. Prisoners with the ill fortune to be born in the Festung dungeons are blessed with the dark angel's mercy. Almost all grow to be gifted dread sorcerers.†

Warlock. Eldritch entities of all kinds send their envoys to the Festung to acquire new pawns. Established warlocks curry their favor by offering Festung novices into their patron's servitude. What's more, one who would brave the castle's tallest tower may be able to traffic with the Festung's dark guardian...

Wizard. The Festung is the place for inquirers to ask questions the rest of the world is too afraid to utter. Shadowcalling† and necromancy are common, and no spell is too vicious for frank conversation.

* "A Touch of Class," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/touch-of-class-11594111>

† Ari Marmell, "Volumes of Forgotten Lore: Arcane," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/volumes-of-lore-2716738>

Open Game Content

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BACKGROUND EXPANSION

If you are affiliated with the Festung, you can take the following trait options, replacing the normal trait from your background. You can also replace one your background's proficiencies with an optional proficiencies or language below.

Optional Proficiencies: Arcana

Optional Languages: Abyssal, Infernal

OPTIONAL IDEALS AND FLAWS

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Cruelty.** Suffering is the only truth. (Evil)
- 2 **Death.** All must return to the void. (Evil)
- 3 **Discovery.** All knowledge has its price, and I'm willing to pay. (Any)
- 4 **Impunity.** I can do anything. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Indifference.** Shadows are shadows. There is nothing to fear. (Neutral)
- 6 **Resolve.** My ends justify my means. (Lawful)

d6 Flaw

- 1 I compulsively cackle as my schemes come to fruition.
- 2 At the smallest slight, I surge with bitterness and hateful memories.
- 3 My eyes bulge, and I stare unblinking at objects of my desire.
- 4 It makes me smile to think of all the ways I can slaughter the folks before me.
- 5 Pain is an illusion. The suffering of others is as meaningless to me as the breeze.
- 6 There is one thing I fear terribly, and I will sacrifice even those most dear to me to avoid it.



NEW SPELL

Characters affiliated with the Festung can learn the following cantrip.

Void Maw

Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

By reaching out to the perilous void, you create an orb of hungry shadows. Make a ranged spell attack against a creature or object within range. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 necrotic damage. Inanimate corpses and Tiny or smaller non-magical objects hit by this spell disintegrate into nothing. If this spell kills a creature, the corpse disintegrates into nothing. Creatures who fall unconscious as a result of this spell's damage are not consumed. Only creatures who fail their third death saving throw by taking damage from this spell are destroyed.

The spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).



NEW ARTIFACT

Fountain of Innocent Blood

Wondrous item, artifact

In the Festung's basement is a mystical fountain running with the blood of innocents. Supplying the fountain is an army of nearly invisible imps, who travel the world in spiritual form collecting the blood wherever it may fall. Drinking from this fountain increases the drinker's capabilities.

If you drink from this fountain, you must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, you vomit the blood and are poisoned until you complete a long rest. Evil-aligned creatures automatically succeed on this saving throw.

If you successfully imbibe the blood, one ability score of your choice increases an ability score of your choice increases by 2 (maximum 22). Each ability score can only be enhanced with the blood fountain once. Additionally, your alignment shifts one step towards Evil, if you are not Evil already.

Once you attempt to drink from the fountain, you cannot do so again until the dawn of the next day.

NEW WARLOCK PATRON

THE FALLEN ANGEL

Your patron's heavenly crusade could end all existence, and for its sins, the higher powers cast down the Fallen Angel from the heavens. Nonetheless, your patron remains assured of its righteousness. Some Fallen Angels acquire disciples and pawns to advance a grand extraplanar war; others envision a radical new cosmic order, and see mortals—including you—as little more than dust.

Fallen Angel patrons carry epithets like the Soul Reaper, the Voice of the Apocalypse, or the Dread Star. They include disgraced solars and mighty rogue planetars like Zalakiel—the Fallen Angel of the Festung.

Expanded Spell List

The Fallen Angel lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. You gain the *celestial burst** cantrip, and the following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

FALLEN ANGEL EXPANDED SPELLS

Spell Level	Spells
1st	<i>detect evil and good, guiding bolt</i>
2nd	<i>lesser restoration, zone of truth</i>
3rd	<i>daylight, lightning bolt</i>
4th	<i>death ward, locate creature</i>
5th	<i>flame strike, greater restoration</i>

Radiant Onslaught

Once per turn when you reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points, you may choose a hostile creature you can see within 30 feet. This creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failure, it takes radiant damage equal to your Charisma modifier + your warlock level (minimum of 1).

Indignation

Starting at 6th level, your fury echoes your patron's blade of judgement. You can use this feature to cast either *spiritual weapon* or *spirit guardians* without expending a spell slot. At 7th level, add *guardian of faith* to this list.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you complete a long rest.

Darkling Radiance

Starting at 10th level, you wield both the viciousness of light and the hidden glory of darkness. Whenever you deal necrotic or radiant damage, the creature's resistances and immunities apply to the damage only if they affect both necrotic and radiant damage.

* Josh Gentry, "Collegia Magia: Granspire Seminary," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/collegia-magia-7901247>

Wings of Disgrace

At 14th level, you gain the ability to sprout a pair of feathery wings from your back (black, gray, or white and bloodstained), gaining a flying speed equal to your walking speed. You can create these wings as a bonus action on your turn. They last until you dismiss them as a bonus action on your turn.

You can't manifest your wings while wearing armor unless the armor is made to accommodate them, and clothing not made to accommodate your wings might be destroyed when you manifest them. You cannot use your wings to fly while carrying more than maximum carrying capacity; if you do not track carrying capacity, you cannot fly while carrying a creature who weighs more than 15 times your Strength score.

SIGNIFICANT NPCs

Zalakiel, Rogue Planetar (Lawful Neutral)

This female-appearing angel with emerald skin wears dark flowing robes, and boasts mighty black and bloodstained wings. She resides in the highest tower in muted contemplation, only showing her face to gaze at the stars.

Trait: Even her softest whisper resounds like a blaring trumpet.

Ideal: Pity. "Go in peace, and seek thy next generation."

Bond: She never overcame the guilt of slaying a vampire that loved its children. She left the heavens' service afterward.

Flaw: She has resigned herself to isolation, and little can rouse her to action.

Kagerus, Fleshstitcher and Information Broker (Neutral Evil)

This dark elf of opaline complexion and black-green hair collects slaves and corpses for unspeakable surgical experiments.

Rumors and Plot Hooks

1. Blessings of the Hells be upon you. (False; the Festung's blessing is angelic.)
2. The Festung blesses all seekers of darkness. No lone hero dare strike here, for we shall consume him. (True)
3. If you brand your slaves properly, they'll be safe in the dungeon. We respect property. (False)
4. This castle's queen is a vampire! She lives in the tallest tower, and few dare provoke her. (False; mistaken identity.)
5. The prison is in the basement, just by the furnace. It makes stocking the fires convenient. (True)
6. Beware Kagerus. He keeps a ledger of every favor owed to him. (True)
7. I've seen the Festung's guest book before, but it keeps disappearing! (True)
8. I love that rooms are quiet and dark here ... but you are never truly alone. (True)

Trait: He always finds a way to profit from directing newcomers to what they seek.

Ideal: Brokership. "There are favors abound here at the Festung, all for a price. Or a cost."

Bond: He grants his "projects" female names, like the daughters he will never have.

Flaw: His breath reeks from snacking on unusable trimmings of humanoid flesh.

Raymund, Captive (Chaotic Neutral)

This twelve-year-old human boy hides in the basement dungeon. His fate shall soon be decided—either in liberation, death, or corruption.

Trait: He hides from everyone, because he has seen the Festung's terrible truths.

Ideal: Survival. "Don't! Eat! Me!"

Bond: In a hidden alcove, he fingerpaints a mural of his lost family.

Flaw: He is almost feral, and scarcely remembers reason.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Before the lands froze over, a kind princess ruled a small mountain kingdom. She grew into a lonely queen, and in her isolated discernment her mind turned to darker matters. Her kingdom slowly but surely fell into a state of vile decadence, and its people suffered for the queen's transgressions. The queen, ridden by guilt and fear of death, fell further into darkness—until the day a mysterious suitor visited. The vampire offered the queen his dark gift, and the queen grew an army of vampire spawn to replace her fallen kingdom.

When the gods sent Zalakiel to intervene, the vampire queen pleaded for her life. When facing the angel's sword, the sanguine queen pleaded, "I love my dark children. Please, let us find our place in this world." The planetar found no duplicity within her words, yet nonetheless she struck her down. Though Zalakiel's duty was complete, the queen's pity infected her heart with guilt. Zalakiel began to see the so-called forces of darkness not as abominations but as a different form of life, and swore no prejudice against them. She immediately fell from grace, and was flung from the heavens with bloodstained wings. Zalakiel returned to the castle and embraced it in a protective blessing, such that evil might spare itself long enough to propagate.



NEW BLESSING

Dark Angel's Mercy

Upon entering the Festung castle grounds, this blessing instantly surrounds all Evil-aligned creatures and all non-Evil humanoids who have committed a mortal sin, such as slaying an innocent, defiling love, or abusing the weak. The castle guards indicate those unbound by this blessing with their predatory laughter.

When a blessed creature attempts to attack or cast a damage-dealing spell against another creature likewise bound by this blessing, the attack roll automatically misses, or the creature automatically succeeds on its saving throw.

This blessing is permanent, even outside Festung grounds. However, a *wish* spell can remove the blessing from one creature. This blessing is bound to Zalakiel's life force, and some Festung scholars speculate that should Zalakiel die, the blessing would disappear.

SHADOW'S DENIZENS

The Festung's "student" population is broad and grotesque. The castle's numerous shadowy and surreal halls obscure a deceptively large number of inhabitants. When the GM wants to introduce a new "classmate," roll on the following table.

FESTUNG INHABITANTS

d12	Result
1	released slave (commoner)
2	1d4 cultists
3	cult fanatic
4	wererat
5	vampire spawn
6	imp
7	werewolf
8	mage
9	oni
10	green hag
11	spellcaster vampire
12	succubus or incubus

