

Collegia Magia MAHALA ACADEMY



THE FOLLOWING IS THE THIRD 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 Mahala Imperial Academy, which trains officers in the arts of war magic.

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INTRODUCTION

In the capital city, within sight of the imperial palace, is the regal Mahala Imperial Academy. Above flies the Academy's coat of arms, which bears the images of a blade and arcane flame. Inside its grand halls operates an institution with a strict military hierarchy. Its purpose: to transform officer candidates into elite imperial agents.

The Academy teaches its students the poise and powers fitting of their station. Core training includes exercise, combat arts, military history and tactics, and war magic. Some hand-selected students become researchers, whose technological and magical advances to keep the kingdom strong. All other graduates become specialists and serve as ordered across the empire.

CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

Members of any spellcasting class can gain something from associating with Mahala Imperial Academy.

Bard. Bards are exceedingly rare at the Academy, but some become commissioned officers for their capacity at leadership and special tactics.

Cleric. As natural mystic warriors suitable for myriad combat roles, recruiters welcome any cleric whose theology supports the empire. Their most common domains are Protection*, Light, and War.

Druid. Druids are practically unheard of at the Academy. However, rosters of previous classes show that certain urban druids* have excelled, and found careers in protecting cities, territories, and infrastructure.

Sorcerer. The Academy actively recruits these talented mages—to win them as loyal imperial pyromancers. Sorcerers with dedication go far, but others are eliminated from the program or go rogue.

What Empire?

The kingdom the Academy serves remains ambiguous. This is so the GM can drag and drop this school into any setting. Perhaps the Academy serves the continent-spanning elvish theocracy of Mahala. Or was the Academy founded by the elf Mahala, in service to a human kingdom?

Whatever the "empire," it is easy to adjust the specifics of its relationship with the Academy.



Warlock. Known to few, the Academy trains an off-the-books occult task force known as Edict. As part of initiation, recruits can use Edict's secret library to select and traffic with a pact patron.

Wizard. Bookish wizards can find careers as military researchers. Those suited for combat might become artillery, troop support, or special operatives, or may join the fray as battlemages†.

Warrior. Exceptional fighters, rangers, rogues, and paladins are often permitted to the Academy just to attend the arts-of-war classes. Here, many reveal their latent magical talents.

"Pyromancer." The Academy prides itself on training elite brigades of fire-manipulating arcane warriors. Most pyromancers are NPCs, but PCs with this designation might fire dragon sorcerers, or Oath of the Purge paladins‡.

* Ari Marmell, "Volumes of Forgotten Lore: Divine,"

EN World ENsider, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/volumes-of-lore-3140034>

† John Lynch, "Heroes of the Blade," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/heroes-of-blade-3786635>

‡ Josh Gentry, "A Paladin's Dark Vows," *EN World ENsider*, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/paladins-dark-2845846>

Open Game Content

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BACKGROUND EXPANSION

If you are affiliated with Mahala Imperial Academy, you can take the following trait options, replacing the normal trait from your background. Graduates from the Academy can replace their background feature with the optional Imperial Officer feature at right. You can also replace one your background's proficiencies with the optional proficiencies below.

Optional Proficiencies: Arcana, History, longsword

OPTIONAL BONDS AND FLAWS

d6 Bond

- 1 I'll take any dare from my drinking buddies at the officer's club.
- 2 I send a little bit of everything I make back to my family.
- 3 My father's impressive military record precedes me—and overshadows me.
- 4 I never drink, except when toasting our fallen brothers and sisters.
- 5 My first magic teacher warned me not to join the empire. I'm beginning to see why.
- 6 I know my CO likes me because she always calls me "idiot."

d6 Flaw

- 1 My education and rank help me avoid danger and dirty work.
- 2 I will not stay my wrath against one who insults my honor.
- 3 I'll sacrifice anything and anyone to accomplish a mission... except myself.
- 4 My inferiors perceive me as weak, and I cannot command their respect.
- 5 I have no respect for one whose vocation does not clearly benefit the warfront.
- 6 My service has been miserable. Forget the military, and bugger the empire!

Optional Feature: Imperial Officer

Upon graduation, you receive an officer's uniform, which includes both gloves and blade hilt emblazoned with the officer's insignia.

So long as you wear an officer's uniform or present an officer's insignia, anybody familiar with your nation recognizes you as a member of its military hierarchy. You can gain entry to or basic assistance from imperial institutions, though significant cooperation may require a favor in return.

NEW FEATS

Characters affiliated with the pyromancers or Edict can take the following feats, respectively.

Imperial Pyromancy

Prerequisite: Charisma 13 or higher

You have trained to wield fire like a weapon, gaining the following benefits:

- ▶ You learn the *fire bolt* cantrip.
- ▶ Once per day as a bonus action, you can use this feat to ignite your weapon. For the next 10 minutes or until you extinguish it as an action, that weapon emits light like a torch, attacks with it become magical, and it deals extra fire damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Occult Informant

Prerequisite: Intelligence 13 or higher

You have trained to combat the forces of darkness, gaining the following benefits:

- ▶ You learn the Abyssal and Infernal languages.
- ▶ You have advantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks related to fiends and undead.
- ▶ You gain a +5 bonus to your passive Wisdom (Insight) and Wisdom (Perception) to discern the intentions of fiends and undead or detect the presence of fiends and undead.

SIGNIFICANT NPCs

Ser Anullia Kingsteel, Headmaster & Royal Guard Captain (lawful neutral)

At over four hundred years of age, this blond elf wears her armor at almost every hour and keeps her hair pulled into a tight, utilitarian bun. She is a spell-blade master who both manages the Academy and directly serves the Crown as a personal bodyguard.

Trait: Ser Kingsteel never smiles. She grimaces equally in rest, joy, and frustration.

Ideal: Duty. "Do not tire me with sentiment. Do as is required."

Bond: Her childhood home is naught but ashen ruins, forgotten by all but other elves.

Flaw: She will execute a suspect on the mere rumor of treachery.

Sgt. Aneayrn Drakefeller, Recruiter (lawful good)

An androgynous elf with olive skin and crew-cut hair. They assess recruits drawn from all over the empire, including enlisted soldiers and village mages. Aneayrn is also secretly the first point of contact for prospective Edict agents.

Trait: Perpetually enthusiastic. They lean forward constantly, smiling with sparkling white teeth and shining green eyes.

Ideal: Community. "What's good for the empire is good for you!"

Bond: They owe their life to an unknown Edict agent. Aneayrn dreads the day Edict will call the debt. It is perhaps the only thought that disturbs their perpetual cheer.

Flaw: The sergeant gets hay fever from tieflings, ghosts, demons, and their like.

Lt. Dirk von Känengeiser, Renegade Pyromancer (true neutral)

A human with dark shoulder-length hair, von Känengeiser wears a ragged black duster over his uniform. His misbehavior leaves him "at

liberty" to pursue odd-jobs for the right pay, or the right favor. If recruited, he uses the imperial pyromancer stat-block (see below).

Trait: He is loud and braggadocious, but becomes eerily quiet in deep thought.

Ideal: Career. "Let's just say, I'm looking for my next big break."

Bond: "The next time I see that kobold who demoted me, I'll smash 'em—then, drinks on me!"

Flaw: His empty hands twitch and ache to grasp either his flask or the blade which hang from his belt.

RUMORS AND PLOT HOOKS

1. They say the headmaster's got a serious case of resting kobold-face. (True)
2. You know, if you wanna get nice with the headmaster, you should take her some elvish wine! (False)
3. See that officer's insignia? Show that to someone in the know, and they'll let you in almost anywhere! (True)
4. We've all had to run laps for something stupid, but I bet if you're really daring, they might "volunteer" you for special tactics training. (True)
5. There is no Edict. You try a stunt to get their attention, and they'll kick you right out. (Mostly true; the Edict is real, and they watch carefully.)
6. Pyromancer work can get nasty, so they get great imperial pardons in case something goes wrong. (True)
7. They'll let highly recommended students into officer's club—with member accompaniment! (True)
8. I've never met a faculty member I really trust. I think they know more than they let on. (True; any given faculty member may be aware of some state secret, clandestine group, or conspiracy.)

A BRIEF HISTORY

The earliest history of the Academy is shrouded in mystery (and specifics vary on the GM's setting). What is certain is that a group of like-minded elves, versed in blade and spell, determined that they could not effectively serve their kingdom alone. To incorporate the shorter-lived races, like humans, the elves founded a school to teach their ways. This school cooperated closely with the Crown and the royal military, and eventually became the Academy known today.



CLANDESTINE FACTIONS

Many students receive specialized training under the purview of clandestine groups operating within the Academy. For example, the special operations and tactics classes are an open secret; even though enrollment, lessons, training all occur in secret, most students are well aware that such functions exist within the Academy. Likewise, students and faculty involved with arcane research for the military must keep their activities discreet.

More elusive, but none-the-less prone to rumor, is the occult task force known as Edict, which pursues supernatural threats against the empire. Under Edict's imperial charter, they are permitted to claim or repurpose even the vilest spells and artifacts in service to the nation. Though this capacity may prevent some calamities, some consider it only a matter of time until Edict or its empire grow corrupt in turn.

The Academy's culture of military secrecy creates an environment where conspirators can operate unnoticed. Using the charts below, the GM can randomly generate a conspiracy within the military ranks.

RANDOM CONSPIRACY CELL

d6 Conspirators

- 1 A special operations instructor and 1d6 loyal students
- 2 A military researcher and 1d6-1 assistants
- 3 1d4 + 1 Edict recruits and 1d4-1 Edict agents
- 4 1d4 sleeper agents from an enemy nation, disguised as students
- 5 A creature with a transformation ability, disguised as a student
- 6 Roll twice on this table, ignoring additional results of 6. These two groups work together.

RANDOM CONSPIRACY GOAL

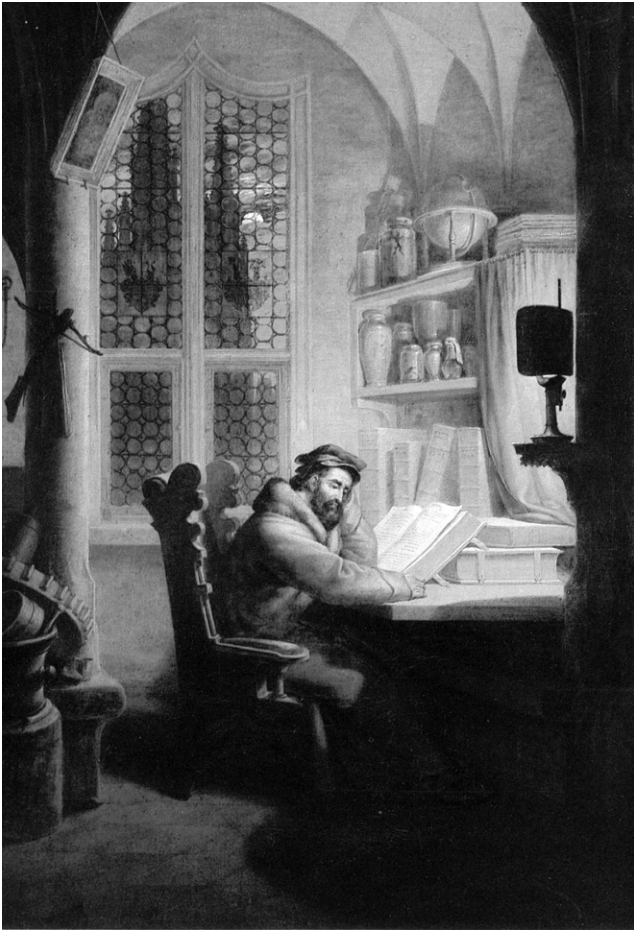
d6 Goal

- 1 Indoctrinate key figures to join the revolution
- 2 Foil a military figure to prevent greater catastrophe
- 3 Test or fuel a magical device or ritual, at the public's risk
- 4 Deliver to the enemy secret data that can cripple the empire
- 5 Assassinate an important military or royal figure
- 6 Uncover and unleash an unspeakable evil



IMPERIAL PYROMANCERS

Imperial pyromancers are among the Academy’s most distinguished products. The career of a proud and stalwart pyromancer features deployment across the empire, either within an entire brigade of pyromancers or as an arcane specialist among warriors. Their assignments are dangerous and critical, and require all their ruthless efficiency. For service on the frontlines—and rumored participation in atrocities—pyromancers inspire universal admiration and dread.



Imperial Pyromancer

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Cha +6

Damage Resistances fire

Skills Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +6

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages any two languages (usually Common and Elvish)

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Imperial Resilience. The imperial pyromancer gains 1 extra hit point per hit die (included above).

Fiery Wellspring. The imperial pyromancer has 2 additional 1st-level spell slots (included below).

Burning Blade. The imperial pyromancer deals an additional 3 fire damage on each of its melee attacks (included below).

Spellcasting. The imperial pyromancer is an 8th-level spellcaster. The pyromancer’s spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The pyromancer knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, fire bolt, mage hand*

1st level (6 slots): *burning hands, comprehend languages, detect magic, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball*

4th level (2 slots): *confusion, wall of fire*

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage and 3 fire damage.