

Maragresh (Eberron NPC)

Lord Aidan fidgetted nervously in the cane chair. His manservant had been instructed to extinguish the lantern and leave, leaving the nobleman alone in the middle of a darkened room. He heard a tread on the carpet, light - an elf or a woman - and then jumped as something brushed his face. 'Hold still,' she said, 'I need to learn your features.' The fingers touched him again, working around his jaw, nose, the shape of his head. There was a cool dryness to their skin, as if they themselves were stone. His neck tingled, as she stroked the nape and the throat. Finally, after going over areas repeatedly, he felt her withdraw from him. He heard the tools being picked up and the tapping of a chisel on marble could then be heard. But every now and then, the tapping would stop and then those invisible, delicate hands would explore his face again.

In the aftermath of the Last War, Brellish society has gone through many changes, not the least being the fortunes made by clever speculators and successful industrialists. Having money, but lacking pedigree, there are many who seek ways to gain respectability and express their wealth. The surge in demand for works of art and architecture is part of this and has made Breland a gold-mine for people of talent. And also sometimes, those who are not exactly people.

The mysterious sculptress known as Margarite, is one of the most demanded artists in Breland. Not only is her work greatly prized (and valued), but she is a source of pride to the Brellish who see her adding a respectable degree of sophistication to a nation that remains largely agro-industrial. If her true nature (and her origin in Droaam) were to become public, then it would be scandal that would rock Breland's upper classes considerably.

The sculptress, who works by touch and only in a lightless environment, accepts commissions from Breland's wealthy and has in fact produced busts of two of King Boranel's children. This lavish patronage enables her to maintain chambers in the upper levels of Sharn, near the skyway. The most popular rumours are that she remains hidden because she is herself a noblewoman, who wishes to preserve her anonymity, or that she is blind and will not allow others an advantage over her.

Despite her eccentricity as the Brellish see it, Margarite does have an active social calendar. She often entertains guests, usually individually, in her chambers - they seated on one side of a painted screen, she on the other. She is a skilled conversationalist and an even more gifted listener. Her social circle includes many of Breland's wealthiest and most powerful citizens and they have often let slip more than they realized to someone who they see as 'merely an artist.'

Surprisingly, or not, Margarite is not short of suitors. Her current companion is a minor (but handsome) member of house Cannith who has been subjected to endless curiosity as to her appearance, but has revealed nothing. This latter is unsurprising as, although he knows her true nature, to reveal it would be the ruin of them both.

Maragresh *Female medusa, Expert 4: CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 6d6 plus 4d6; hp 36; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13 Base Atk +6/+6; Atk Melee(1d4/X2, Dagger); SA Petrification, Poison; SQ Darkvision 60'; AL NE; Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 9 Dex 15 Con 9 Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 16. Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +9, Craft (sculpture) +14, Craft (Painting) +8, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +13 (+12 acting), Forgery +5, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Local) +4, Knowledge (Nobility) +4, Knowledge (Dungeoneering), Move Silently +8, Ride +2, Sense Motive +9, Spot +8, Survival +4 Languages: Speak Language Common, Daelkyr, Giant, Gnoll, Undercommon*

Adventure Ideas:

- A work of art commissioned from Margarite, is stolen from a nobleman's house the night of its unveiling. The PCs are hired to recover it. This can be a good basic way to introduce Margarite.

- Another young man has gone missing. Alain d'Cannith disappeared three weeks ago, and his relatives are now extremely worried. He had recently been paying many calls on Margarite. Did she just tire of another beau, or does she hire the PCs themselves to investigate, for fear that her secret is no longer safe? Margarite would make an interesting patron for the party.
- A prominent Brelish nobleman, hitherto vehemently opposed to recognizing Droaam as a nation, has suddenly become more moderate. Has someone gained a hold over him, and if so what?