Safiria Storyline no.2  
  
Notable Characters:

PLANESWALKERS

Nicol Bolas

Tamiyo

ANGELS

Aviru — A male angel who is responsible for maintaining balance among the psionic races, and head of the psistone religious order.

SAFIR

Astràl — A female safir who researches psionic powers.

Kisara — The leader of the safir.

SPIDERS

The Empress — Head of the spiders.

DRAGONS

Barago — The strongest dragon in all of Safiria.

Marakai, Mother of Dragons — The second-strongest dragon in all of Safiria, and the smartest and most psionically adept among her kind.

NAGAS

Selestir — A female marilith, the spiritual and psionic leader of her kind.

Ssàli the Infinite — A male marilith, the political and military leader of his kind.

Bosev — A male naga assisting Astràl in her research.

Part 1

The annual Festival of Unity, to symbolise the connectedness of the five races and their power over psionics has begun. A psionic elite from each race is chosen to psionically construct 5 garments out of Mesmer silk, one for the leader of each race.   
  
As the ceremony begins, political talk also commences. Aviru asks each leader to assess the state of their race and how they can work together this year to help each other. Marakai expresses her interest in sharing more sky and land with the Angels, to help raise new dragon pups. Aviru agrees, but on the provision that Angels and Dragons combine their workers to increase trade over Safiria. Kisara believes that more combined research into psionics is needed and could benefit them all. Selestir asks for the forests, taken by the Mesmer years ago. The spider sent by the Mesmer makes a simple sign that says “We need nothing. We give nothing”  
  
Upon completion of the ceremony, all deals but the ones involving the Mesmer are finalised and all the races, but the Naga find it fruitful. Astral goes to Kisara and learns that the other races (Mesmer aside) will be helping with their psistone research.   
  
Marakai goes home to her den to find Barago there. He asks of the progress of the Festival, and Marakai informs him of the trade agreements. Barago makes insulting remarks about the Angels and goes on to say how Dragons should rule all the skies. Marakai angrily silences him for the stupid remarks and explains the 5 races working together are better than one nation fighting for supremacy. Barago laughs at this and points out “You can hardly call it 5 races working together when the Spiders only ever do nothing.” Barago adds that Dragons, being the strongest race should have the right to rule over all others. Marakai reminds Barago that while she is alive and rules over Dragons, the dragons will follow her into peace with the other races.  
  
Barago acknowledges this and states, with a smirk, “They will follow you to go where you tell them” and out from behind him walks Nicol Bolas. Marakai calmly asks Barago who the new, strange looking Dragon is and Barago says.  
“This is Nicol Bolas. He is here to change your mind”

Part 2  
  
Astral and Bosev conclude their fourth expedition into potential psistone mining areas. Upon return Astral talks to Kisara about her findings in regards to the properties of Aqua psitone when in large quantities. Kisara is happy the hear about the findings and says she will be rewarded for her work. Astral asks if she can study Coal psistone, as there is no documentation on it and she is bored of adding to the mountains of knowledge known about the Aqua psistones. Kisara refuses to permit Astral to research Coal psistone as that is the job of the Mesmer, not of the Safir. Astral, determined to study Coal psistone argues that the Spiders never communicate aside from the Festival of Unity and that no-one will even know the properties of Coal psistone if no-one can research it, nor talk about it. Kisara replies simply “Laws are made to protect people. I will not allow you to disrupt the diplomacy of the world for scientific or spiritual means, nor do dangerous things that might hurt you. Why not consider asking to study the Ember psistones or the Chloro psitiones?”

Astral, frustrated that Kisara is so rigid, continues to argue. Astral explains that without any research on Coal psistones, the Safir will not know about the total military potential of the Mesmer, which could cause problems if they wanted to attack. Kisara touches a psistone he has embedded in his clothes and overpowers Astral’s mind in an instant. Kisara leaves Astral with the thought “If this is how powerful I am, imagine how powerful the Safir are as a whole. Do we really have to worry about them?”

Astral heads back to her home with Bosev and they talk telepathically about the conversations Astral had with Kisara. Bosev senses Astral’s loss of heart and passion when it comes to studying Coal psistones. Curious himself, Bosev suggests that he and Astral might have more luck convincing the Naga leaders to allow and fund the expedition, particularly if it is beneficial to both races. Astral questions if the expedition were to continue would she’d be Bosev’s assistant, rather than he be hers? Bosev smiles in response and replies “at least you’d get to study Coal psistones.” Astral frowns and thinks to herself “The things I do for my work.”  
  
Selestir, when confronted by Bosev and Astral has mixed feelings about the expedition. He is interested to know the psionic potential of the Mesmer, but not into starting feuds with the Mesmer. Ssali agrees, but is also intrigued to know the military potential of the Mesmer. Bosev adds, the Safir already denied them support for the project. Selestir and Ssali, talk telepathically for a minute and say: “We will allow you to do your research on the condition that you don’t enter Mesmer land, you don’t take a Coal psistone away from your research sight and you don’t get caught by a spider whilst doing research.”  
Astral and Bosev believe this isn’t too difficult and happily agree.  
“One more thing” Selestir adds, “Don’t let the Safir know about this. It will be good to know something those damn know-it-all Safir don’t. No offence Astral.”  
Astral rolls her eyes and Bosev giggles to himself, which sounds more like hissing.

Aviru floated in the front of his cathedral. His congregation attempted to use their psionic powers alone to keep them afloat. Despite this, the sound of flapping wings filled the chamber. Aviru pondered the future on his people. The strength of the Sun Psistones had diminished recently. Aviru wasn’t sure why, but concern showed upon his face. It was a minor inconvenience right now, but if relations between the Mesmer, Safir, Dragons and any other race grew hostile, Aviru was not certain if Angels would be able to stop it. He wasn’t certain of what the Mesmer was doing either.   
  
Worried, Aviru left the cathedral. The cathedral floated within the floating city of Sundaire, the stronghold of the angel population. He flew to his office, which was just short fly up and northwest. He summoned up a four of his guards. He cut straight to the point.  
“I want you to scout the Mesmer. We need to know what they’re doing. Their lack of communication is troubling.”

Without a word they flew off and within a minute they were back.  
“Aviru, look east, towards the Red sky.” They all chimed at once.  
  
Confused at their insubordination, Aviru looked up. Marakai, Barago and a swarm of other dragons approached. Aviru went a ghostly shade of white.  
“You two, tell the city watch to join me in the sky. Then continue to the scout the Mesmer. The rest of you, join me in the sky. I feel we’re going to need to have some deep talks with these Dragons.”  
  
The guards did as they were told Aviru and his two guards flew up with him towards the dragons. From afar, the angels looked like miniscule insects compared flock of dragons.   
  
“What brings so many honoured guests to our humble city?” Aviru said to Marakai, trying to appear jovial.   
Marakai’s expression didn’t move a millimeter.   
Marakai spoke flatly. “You will give us your city and free reign over the skies. You will do this or die.”   
“Why do you need the skies or our city? We should settle this through trade, like we usually do.” Aviru responded.  
“That is not for you to concern yourself with. You will give us the skies and your city, or you will die. Now choose.”  
“Can I have some time to consult my council?”  
Barago let out a jet of flame. “Why of course! Take your time.” Barago laughed. “Who knows, we might even change our minds about giving you a choice.”

“So that’s how it is, eh?” said Aviru. Suddenly, Aviru dived in the direction of his cathedral. The dragons followed, driven by their instinct to hunt. Marakai remained where she was. She had all the prey she needed right here. Aviru’s guards readied themselves. Marakai psionically blasted her thoughts the minds of one guard. Before he could gasp, she ignited her thoughts. The guard’s head exploded with a small bang. The smoldering body fell out of the sky.

The other guard charged at Marakai, sword drawn. His body and mind attacked in unison. Marakai felt the pressure of another mind on hers as she dodged the blow. The mind was weak in comparison to hers. How boring. She took a swipe at the guard. It landed on his shield. Marakai thought, he doesn’t need that shield. Dodging the next slice of guard’s blade, she let out a hot jet of fire. The guard hid behind his shield. It was fireproof. She dropped off her stream of fire. The guard charged again, but his sword and thoughts honing into Marakai’s neck. They stopped an inch from their target. Marakai’s tail tightened and twisted. *Crack*. The guard’s body went limp and his mind fell out of existence. Marakai withdrew her tail from around the guard’s neck. From within Marakai’s mind Nicol Bolas laughed. He loved killing ironically.  
  
Barago had almost caught Aviru when he had to stop his charge before the cathedral. It was too small for him to enter. It didn’t matter. He’d cook them all inside it.   
“Brothers! Lend me your flame!” Barago cried.  
With the strength of fifty dragons, the cathedral bathed in fire from all directions.  
After a few seconds, Aviru burst out the front door of the cathedral. Power burst forth from Aviru and a white light blew out all the dragon flame. Hundreds of psistones floated around Aviru and fed his fully formed lightning lance in his right hand. Aviru stood in a threatening stance, ready to throw. No one moved.

“Barago, please let us stop this nonsense and talk about this. I don’t want to hurt you.” Aviru said.  
“Aviru, I don’t want to have to kill you either, but unless you surrender the skies to us and declare Dragons as your rulers we simply cannot let you live. You are with us and below us, or you are against us.” Barago responded.  
  
Aviru looked upon the army of dragons, each preparing to strike him down. Reality struck. *I cannot defeat this number of dragons, even with all my power.*“Very well. I will submit to your unreasonable demands, Barago. Good luck convincing the council to agree with you. ” Aviru spat.  
“Great! Dragons, tear off his wings. Destroy that cathedral. We need to show the council we’re serious” said Barago.   
  
Four dragons clamped down on Aviru’s wings. He struggled against them, horrified of Barago’s commands. Before Aviru could speak up the dragons swiftly ripped his wings right off his body. Aviru screamed and fell. The remaining dragons bathed the cathedral in fire once more. Using the last of his strength, Aviru concentrated on making a sign. A small lightning bolt flew out of his hand, passed Barago and his horde of dragons and deep into the sky above.   
  
It burst and words lit the sky. It read:  
  
DRAGONS ATTACKING. SAVE YOURSELVES. I HAVE FALLEN. – AVIRU

Barago smiled. Nothing felt as satisfying as watching the sky burn to dragon fire. He flew down to the defeated Aviru. Barago wouldn’t let him die from falling. The council needed to see him. They’d submit to save his life. He caught the unconscious angel in a claw and held him up. *He looks pathetic. How can these people ever think they can rule as equals to us dragons?*Barago turned Aviru around and singed the wounds on his back shut. Barago clamped his claws around the angel’s body and began to fly up to his scaley army.   
  
*Thud!*   
  
Barago’s head rung with pain. *What the hell was that?*He turned his head to see what had hit him. *Thud!*  
The other side of his head ached like he’d been hit by stack of books. He turned his head again and received another painful blow.   
*I’m not falling for that again.*   
He prepared to dive by lowering his head and felt and ever harder thump on the top of his skull, so powerful it reverberated through him.  
*Screw this!* He thought.  
Barago moved with the blow and place both his massive front claws over his face. He blocked the oncoming attack and let out a jet of flame. Barago lowered his claws to look ahead. He saw a human-like figure surrounded by hundreds of glowing books.   
*No wonder it hurt like a stack of books. It was a stack of books!* Barago thought.  
This person must be who was attacking him. Barago charged forward, front two claw drawn and ready. The figure gracefully moved to the side. Barago’s head followed the figure. He prepared a burst of dragon flame.

*Whoosh!*  
Barago dodged a bulk of books that he’d just noticed in the corner of his eye. His twisted his body back in the direction of the figure. Flames exploded from his giant maw. They enveloped every book in front of him. He knew he’d hit the figure. As the flames dissipated Barago saw all the book shining with blue light again and he knew something was terribly wrong. He felt a cold chill over him and he suddenly felt very tired. He tired to muster up the effort to fly upward in a desperate attempt to stay awake.   
  
*Thud!*

Then, all Barago could see or feel was blackness. Aviru and Barago fell out of the sky. Aviru slipped out of the unconscious dragon’s claws and began to float. The figure levitated over to the angel and wrapped his body in a long paper scroll.   
The figure and the barely conscious Aviru, surrounded in hundreds of flying books, floated off into the distance, Aviru wasn’t sure if he’d just been saved or kidnapped.  
Bosev slithered proudly. This was his mission, not Astral’s. He liked feeling in charge. He moved quickly, deliberately making it hard for her to keep up. Bosev knew Astral could handle it. To some extent, it was a political manoeuver. After all, Naga were known for their speed and endurance, which was almost all they had over the Safir. Bosev thought of the Safir as an audacious group. The Safir leaders always gave off an oppressive air of self-importance just because they deemed their genetic psychic powers are greater than any other races. They thought their powers to read the thoughts of others and their telekinesis were unmatched in strength.   
  
Well, Bosev was a practical Naga, and he couldn’t deny that their powers of telekinesis were the strongest. Occasionally, a dragon or an Angel might come close to that of a Safir warrior, but the elite Safir would always overcome them. But just because Naga couldn’t psionically wrestle a Safir to the ground, didn’t make them inferior. A trained Naga tracker could combine their sensitive tongue and their psychic powers to feel the vibrations from the subtlest heartbeat of any life within a radius of 10 miles. It made them the best explorers and hunters. So much about someone could be felt through their body’s vibrations. If Safir defined one’s worth on their ability to hunt, or find worms wriggling in good soil, the Naga would rein supreme above all races. Which is exactly why Bosev flaunted himself in front of Astral now. He was in his element.

Bosev worked his way to the edge of the forest. A marsh covered the land ahead, which signaled the end of Naga territory and the beginning of the Mesmer. It was here that they’d dig for the Coal Psicrystals. Bosev concentrated and touched his nose to the ground. He put his sensitive tongue to roof of mouth and felt out for his connection to the Earth. He closed his eyes and extended his mind underground. The familiar sensation of connecting with the world washed over Bosev. He could feel the connectedness of everything. He felt Astral, walking hurriedly over to him. He could feel the insects hungrily eating the leaves of the trees and could feel the trees complain in response. Bosev drew his thoughts deeper into the land below the marsh. He felt a strange sense of distance here. There were fewer worms here than he thought there would be. Weird. He veered off to the left and felt a dark area of earth, where he couldn’t detect the life with his psico-location. Bosev tried to hone in on that area, but as soon as he did he lost his concentration.  
  
Strange.  
  
Bosev tried again, annoyed he wasn’t able to track that area, but couldn’t concentrate enough to get a hold. He pulled himself out of the ground. Astral finally caught up to him.  
  
“I found something. It’s probably a Coal Psicrystal,” Bosev said.  
“What do you mean probably? You’ve never said probably before.” Astral replied.  
  
“Psicrystals help us manipulate our thoughts, right? Well, I couldn’t search an area down there with my mind. I think that’s where the crystal is.”  
  
It took about an hour of digging using a shovel and Astral’s telekinesis to get close to the area. Their pace slowed, as they both struggled to focus. Astral documented the effect of this place on their minds. After another hour of digging, they reached the area.  
  
Bosev pulled out the touch from his pack and lit it. Despite lots of fuel, the fire burnt weakly. Neither Bosev nor Astral could understand… Until they saw the psicrystal. It was about the size of a hand, angular with smooth faces, a deep black with an almost invisible purple glow. Astral couldn’t contain her excitement. Ideas exploded in her mind at what she might be able to discover with a real sample of this unique and rare psicrystal. She grabbed the crystal and prepped like she was going to pull it from the cave face. She tried to pull the crystal out, but found her body was frozen. Frantically, she thought about moving as hard as she could, but her body wouldn’t respond. She couldn’t move.   
  
*Crap! The crystal has caught me.* Astral realized.  
  
“Not so fast” spoke Bosev. Astral thought she sensed an air of confidence in his tone.  
  
Bosev moved in front of her, holding his Emerald Psicrystal. She wasn’t caught by the Coal psicrystal, but by Bosev.   
  
This wasn’t so bad.   
  
Astral concentrated and forced her will into Bosev’s mind. Astral knew this mission was Bosev’s, but he needed to know who was in charge. She would not stand for this insubordination.  
  
“You shouldn’t pull a crystal from a cave wall without knowing whether or not it will affect the cave’s structure. If you pull that out, we could both die,” said Bosev. “Let me check the earth first.”  
  
Astral calmed her mind and felt her movement come back to her. Astral cursed herself. Bosev was right. She was brash in her pursuit of knowledge. She looked as Bosev, using his psico-location to feel the earth and felt ashamed of herself.   
*My audacity...*“I can barely sense a thing” Bosev hissed, obviously furious. “Screw it. You hold up the cave. I’ll get the crystal.”  
  
“Wait, give me some time to prepa-”  
  
Bosev, using his Emerald Psistone to strengthen his body, latched his tail onto the Coal Psicrystal. His muscled rippled as his claws cleaved the earth around the crystal like butter. In half a second, the Psicrystal popped out the wall into Bosev’s grasp.  
  
Astral grabbed her Aqua Psicrystal and projected her telekinesis to press against the roof. There was a few seconds of tense silence. Nothing appeared to fall. Bosev slithered in the direction of their cave’s entrance. Astral lowered her telekinesis in relief and followed Bosev. Astral hadn’t taken two steps before they both heard a loud crack on the wall where the crystal had been.  
  
Bosev and Astral looked back and saw the wall fall away to reveal a vast cavern of darkness. They looked at the cavern and then back at each other.  
  
“We’re getting out of here. We’ll take this Psistone to the forest, where we can study it and return it as soon as we can” Bosev ordered.  
  
Astral stared through Bosev, obviously making calculations of risk. She looked down the hole in the wall.   
  
Bosev raised his tone. “We’re going now, Astral!”  
  
Astral slowly walked towards the hole and peered into the darkness. Suddenly, she couldn’t move again. *Not this again.*  
  
Astral still held her Aqua Psistone and easily overpowered Bosev’s telekinesis. She focused her thoughts into the crystal to make it shine.  
  
A bright blue light exposed the cave. Like the night sky, Astral saw lots of small of light all around the cavern. It was beautiful.   
  
“Bosev, come and see this. It’s so beautiful.” Astral spoke warmly.  
  
Bosev grumbled as he slithered over and peered into the cavern. It was true. It was beautiful, but Bosev couldn’t get rid of his sense of unease.  
  
“It’s very pretty. Let’s go.” Bosev hissed flatly.   
  
The lights began to dance around the cavern. Astral was captivated. It did not ease Bosev’s anxiety at all.   
  
“Please, Astral. Can we get out of this place? It gives me the creeps” Bosev pleaded.  
  
“I don’t see what you find so creepy, you chicken.” Astral laughed.  
  
The lights suddenly shifted and began moving towards Astral. They did not get bigger. Astral was puzzled, but realized what they were.  
  
 They were eyes. Crap.  
  
Astral and Bosev ran for the entrance of their cave. Hundreds of spiders swarmed around them. They were meters from the entrance when they were stopped in their tracks. Without realizing it, they’d run into a massive web.   
  
*But how could- We only just dug this.* Astral thought.  
  
“Welcome to the Mesmer.” A deep voice appeared to say. A large spider moved in front of them and stood up, revealing a humanoid figure on its underside. It stood proudly on two legs.   
“The Mother has many questions for you. You will come with us.”  
  
With a sudden mental lurch, Astral felt her mind being invaded. She brought up her defenses and tried to draw power from her Aqua psicrystal. She looked at the spider-man’s hands and saw both the Emerald and Aqua psicrystals in his palm. Astral panicked, relentlessly attacking the invader in your consciousness, but it was too strong. Before too long, she had blacked out and her mind and her body were both paralyzed, cocooned.  
  
  
Part 3 -

*Notes*

*Psibeast is awakened by Nicol Bolas, who aims to defeat it in a mind battle and control it. Using the Dragons of Safiria, Nicol wants to control many planes at once and use their might to gather resources to make himself immortal and ultimately the ruler of all the multiverse.   
  
The Psibeast is affected by the thoughts of everyone who surrounds it, shifting its mood. When races fight against each other, the Psibeast picks up on this becomes more aggressive and destructive.*

*The power of the psistones is dependant on mental factors.*

*I'm going to make it that the power of the Psistones depends on how the Psibeast feels. When dormant, it's powers are based upon its dreams and the thoughts of others*

*which means, until Nicol Bolas comes along and turns the Mother of Dragons into his slave and consequently the dragons against the other races, Sun Psistones are powerful, as they are based upon charity and harmony*

Ivory Psicrystal *are powered by justice, community and faith*

*Flame Psicrystrals are powered by passion and rage*

*So dragons get stronger psionically as the war goes on*

*But so do the Spiders*

*Coal Psicrystals are based on fear, sorrow and hate*

Emerald Psicrystals *are based upon happiness, focus and pride*

*Aqua* Psicrystals, *are based upon curiosity, diligence and analysis*