

At first, Opius was a rather average mage. He graduated from the Academy of Magic - commonly referred to as The Magisterium - was a diligent student and passed with good, if not stellar marks. Marks that wouldn't attract any especially powerful Masters, marks that ensured he would not have to struggle with mediocrity.

Opius was not satisfied with merely being good enough, however. He studied every day, even after he graduated. He sought to explore and master the forbidden, dark and unknown side of magic. The more chaotic and uncertain in nature, the more powerful the magic. And Opius craved that Power.

But Opius was simply not talented enough. Although practising magic rewards those who study intensively, talent is required as well, and Opius was lacking in just that skill.

After years of trying to gain his place among the world's best mages using mundane methods, Opius finally decided to change course towards something more sinister.

In his years in the academy, Opius had read a few studies of how feelings could be used to fuel magic. It was a largely unproven theory, but it had stuck with him. Now, he returned to it. There were many feelings to choose, but Opius almost immediately chose suffering. After all, he had been snubbed by the rest of the world, his skills gone unrecognised: Why should the world not suffer for it?

It took Opius decades, but he managed to not only prove the theory about feelings right, but also find a way to actually make it a reality. To do that, Opius had to commit many atrocities, and by the end of those years he was wanted for mass murder and countless horrors besides. Even so, Opius could move to the final stage of his plan. Using his now considerable magical powers and resources, he set about creating his ultimate project: The Eternal Labyrinth.

The Eternal Labyrinth was Opius' plan to gain even more power, to the point where he would be unquestionably the most powerful Magus. To do that, he had to create suffering on an industrial level.

The Labyrinth would not be part of the world. If it was, it would eventually be found, and people would try to destroy it. That would derail his efforts and years of preparation, and so Opius decided to create a demiplane within which the Labyrinth would function.

The aim of the Labyrinth was simple: Humans would be trapped inside it, and be forced to suffer in their futile attempts to escape. This suffering, through the Labyrinth's construction, would be funnelled back to Opius, making him stronger.

A part of the suffering would be retained by the Labyrinth, to keep everything inside running as it should. This excess suffering manifested itself in strange ways within the demiplane. As for how people would be transported to the Labyrinth, Opius had an insidious plan.

The moment the Labyrinth was created, Opius began a rumour campaign on a worldwide scale. Soon enough, the same rumour was on everyone's mouth throughout the world: There was a labyrinth somewhere, where untold riches had been stored. Everything a man could ever desire and dream for, enough to grant everlasting wealth, good fortune and happiness!

Soon enough, Opius' plan paid off, and adventurers began looking for the foretold riches, as did other, less prepared folk. As for how they actually got teleported to the Labyrinth, Opius planted various traps and means of teleportation in ruins and libraries around the world, where people might go looking for clues about the Labyrinth. This whole plan ensured a steady stream of victims for Opius' Labyrinth, from which there was no escape.

As for the Labyrinth itself, its construction was a bit more complicated than a simple labyrinth. It needed housing. A vessel worthy of containing a project of such scope. Somewhere so remote, so vast and desolate that there would be zero chance of escape. So what was created was a mountain greater in size and scope than any other seen on Mortal Worlds, thrusting upwards into a skyline that appeared to stretch on forever in all directions. Impossibly imposing and gigantic but hollowed out near entirely to house the structure of nightmares.

The centre of the Mountain was its largest part, and was constructed to be a blend of civilisation, desolation and chaos. The structure was made of earth, clay and stone, but enchanted to exhibit many strange properties. Within the structure was a landscape of hellish proportions. Ramparts stretched across kilometres of land and ancient ruins decorated the internal chambers of this mountain. Collapsed spires, great towering staircases and obelisks of stone wind their way through countless levels of granite. Jagged chasms lay open and bare, cliffs and crevasses stretching down for as far as the eye can see.

The Labyrinth was located at the top of the mountain, hidden in a Volcanic caldera at the peak itself. The make of the Labyrinth was simple in itself, but so thoroughly enchanted as to be impervious to damage or the effects of time. Featuring all matters of deception, the rooms were incredibly difficult to navigate. There were many hidden buttons and switches in the labyrinth: Some activated shortcuts, while others released traps – of which there were many. The Labyrinth also had some quiet spots. Small havens, where no traps existed, and in their place were instead a fountain with pure drinking water, and perhaps some food. After all, there was no sense in simply killing someone the moment they entered the Labyrinth. Opius wanted his entire creation to be seen and used, and he wanted to prolong people's suffering by giving them hope. Hope that they may escape with the riches that lay within. But no one can ever escape. Sooner or later the successful ones realise that, and realise the true nature of the Labyrinth because of it.

Beyond the Labyrinth, nestled in a small valley at the base of the Mountain, a small pre-built village was maintained. After all, he meant to house people who just arrived before they set out on their journey. Opius was also fine with some people remaining behind. After all, if people chose to remain in the village: Whether it be to raise a family and reproduce, to encourage new adventurers to proceed and help manage the other wise human affairs, there would be more people to suffer, at no extra cost to himself.

The village was equipped with homes, as well as a small field of crops that could grow with light and with little water. There was also a small lake nearby, containing fresh water which never seemed to empty nor did the lake's bounty ever diminish.

For a few months, things went great for Opius, as humans ended up in his Eternal Labyrinth, fueling up his magic. However after a while, Opius found that there was room for

improvement. And so, Opius set about creating the Gargoyles. These would be the Eternal Labyrinth's permanent denizens, and they would also add their suffering to his powers, but in a different way.

To create the Gargoyles, Opius used a resource he already had available: Humans, particularly those already trapped in his Eternal Labyrinth.

Opius began to experiment on those humans, using his magic to fundamentally change their make-up.

This was territory Opius – and, for that matter, every other mage in the world – scarcely understood. What he did understand was that once created, they would transform in time due to their nature and the environment they lived in. As such, Opius fully expected the Gargoyles to evolve over time, changing past his initial plans for them. To accommodate for this, he changed the Labyrinth accordingly.

His first step was to enlarge the Labyrinth significantly, making it truly enormous in size, almost as big as a small continent. Moreover, he also added various dwellings inside and above the Labyrinth, which the Gargoyles would be able to occupy.

Opius' first creations were the appropriately named The Spawned. Few, if any of them, even remembered being human. Opius planned to create both more Spawned Gargoyles and also other kinds of Gargoyles. However, he had ran out of material, as there were no more humans inside the Labyrinth to experiment on. And so, Opius left the Labyrinth, in order to procure more people and get more resources. He would never return.

History does not tell us why Opius did not return. Some claim he was simply caught, after travelling between worlds, in an ambush by the world's mages, who feared his power and detested his experimentations. In that ambush, it is said, Opius was slain.

Others think something went wrong with Opius' spell to return to the main world. They say that he still floats through the void, hoping in his broken mind that he will find a way home. Others still claim Opius is still out there, and he will one day return to the world and to his Eternal Labyrinth.

In any case, the Eternal Labyrinth was left leaderless, with only the Spawned Gargoyles as inhabitants. Still, it continued working as intended, with people being teleported inside reasonably often for the whole thing to maintain itself.

Most humans that arrived were either slain by the Labyrinth and the Gargoyles, or turned into Gargoyles as well.

As the years turned into centuries and the centuries into millennia, what Opius had thought might happen did. The Spawned started evolving without his input. In the span of hundreds of years, new kinds of Gargoyles had been created.

Over that time, some of the Spawned started finding purpose, and finding strength, power and influence. They began developing an aura of influence around them, an aura of command and gravitas, which they discovered how to use to get other Gargoyles to do their bidding.

As the power of this subset of Spawned increased, this evolution began to show on their skins. Their skin began to crack and glow, unable to contain the growing power within. This

state, the state of being just on the cusp of reaching one's true potential as a Gargoyle, would come to be referred to as a Corrupted Gargoyle state.

Finally, after centuries, the first Undead Gargoyles emerged. Those Gargoyles were absolutely full of power, and their auras of command were truly enormous. Soon enough, the Gargoyles began adopting customs from Opius' world.

Most of the humans that had come to the Eternal Labyrinth in search of treasure were adventurers, but nobles and other high-ranking people had also been swayed. Hundreds of treasures littered the Labyrinth, and the Undead Gargoyles sought out the most important among them and put them on. Thus, they gained the appearance of kings and royalty, becoming Lords of Gargoyle society.

Soon enough, the Undead Gargoyles found that they could use their power on the lesser of their kind and quickly set about instilling a new Hierarchy serving the powerful. Through command of their aura they can monitor all within their area of influence, communicate mentally with any gargoyles under their power and mentally dominate the will of resistant Gargoyles. The remaining Spawned Gargoyles – still the majority – had seen the changes others among them had undergone, and the power they now possessed, and sought to gain some, whatever the cost. Thus did they become sycophants and lackeys. Jockeying for favour and begging for scraps of power.

The newly minted Undead Lords were only too happy to oblige. They took tiny pieces of their growing power and gave them to their subordinate Human Gargoyles, binding their souls to pieces of legendary armor left behind by dead adventurers.

Thus did the Armored Gargoyles come into being. The Armored Gargoyles were exceedingly powerful, and, thanks to their armor, very resistant to blows. They were the muscle of the Undead Lords, operating as a Lords personal guard and private army. As expected the Spawned scrambled to be inducted into their ranks, no matter the cost.

After some centuries of this, another kind of Gargoyle emerged: The Demon Gargoyles. These gargoyles are full of pride, believing themselves to be the most powerful because they are immune to the effects of any other Gargoyles aura. Uncontrollable, dangerous and unquestionably ambitious. The Demon faction, had a different kind of birth. A desperate handful of Corrupted came together to work out and discuss any potential hideaways or methods to ascend away from the keen eyes of The Lords. A single corrupted being, separated from the small handful of corrupted and hunted by a pack of Armoured Enforcers, happened upon the entrance to a long forgotten hall in the Labyrinth. After hiding away inside to stay safe and out of sight, it explored and found the entrance to a relic long thought to be lost to time. Opius' workshop and forge. It was in this workshop where our small handful of corrupted beings forged themselves anew into the Demons. The result of the reforging of a corrupted being resulted in a few key changes. The negative after effect of the newly forged self is instability further damaging the Gargoyle's physical form. But the positive effect was that due to the instability of power coming from the Demon, they cannot be controlled or directly overwhelmed by the Undead Lords Power.

Because of this uncontrollable state, the Undead Lords and Demons became fast enemies. The Undead Lords hate the Demons for numerous reasons but mainly 2 in particular. Firstly the Demons are an unnatural progression that goes against tradition, to be reforged is looked upon as a twisted abomination that defies the order of things. Secondly the Demons

cannot be affected by the power of the Undead Lord so they're effectively unrestrained and free to do whatever they may want. The Lords cannot abide not being in control and deny and destroy any attempt by a Demon to gain power and influence. The Demons physical instability means they cannot move on the Undead Lords and exert themselves too highly otherwise their core may be destroyed. Subterfuge and deceit are their speciality. Thus they remain a thorn in the Lords side, always present, always painful and always an uncomfortable reality to be dealt with

Nowadays, the Gargoyle society of the Labyrinth still continues. The Undead Gargoyles have carved out domains of their own, with entire Courts of lesser Gargoyles under them. The Corrupted Gargoyles seek to finally ascend and join the ranks of the Undead. The Undead, in turn, dislike any new additions to their ranks, and try to stop them as often as possible. By either sending Armored legions to hunt down any corrupted and forcibly bind them to another set of Armor or worse, destroying them entirely.

The Demon Gargoyles, believing themselves to be the best, are bored but content with playing the part of nobility within the Undead courts, while the Armored Gargoyles relish their Lord granted power and are fanatically loyal to their lords.

And below all those Gargoyles, the Spawned Gargoyles still strive for the smallest taste of power. With enough time, with enough success and reputation or by the Grace of a Lord's favour they can in turn ascend the social ranking system within the Gargoyle society. They kill who they must, steal anything possible and lie to all in hopes that one day they may fulfill the dream they all share. Transcendence.

Sometimes, humans come to the Eternal Labyrinth. The Gargoyles even let them live for some time, occasionally. And thus, the suffering continues, and the Labyrinth is sustained in perpetuity.