

# Adventures & Academia

FIRST CLASS



FIRST DAY, FIRST TRIALS



# FIRST DAY, FIRST TRIALS

An adventure for three to six characters of 1st or 2nd level.

On their first day at the Grand Academy the characters are selected to take on the mythical trials of one of the school's founders.



## Background

The Grand Academy is one of the multiverse's premier venues for the training of heroes. Many heroes of legend started their adventures within its ancient walls. A shared experience of many students is encountering the legendary sentient sword, Tizon the founder of House Might. Tizon regularly appears at the academy, issuing challenges to gauge the quality of students. Having arrived at the Grand Academy, the characters have settled into the room in their respective common rooms, completed their initial induction and sat down for their first lesson.

## Adventure Overview

During a lesson with Professor Wrinkle, the characters are selected to undertake the famed trials of Tizon. The four trials relate to the lessons of the four houses making up the Academy.

The first is to catch a wild Baby Kraken. The lesson relates to House Cunning and tests the characters' ability to work as a team and share knowledge to overcome obstacles.

The second trial has the players confront a circle of training dummies. The lesson relates to House Might. Finding your inner strength, finding your voice to overcome and change the nature of the test.

The third trial takes place outside of the Tower of House Arcane. A section of the tower's library books have been set free and are fighting among themselves. The lesson of house Arcane in this instance being that even among



a collection of great wisdom and knowledge there is still uncertainty and danger. Once the books have been ordered and returned to the tower, Tizon teleports characters to their final challenge.

The final challenge of the day sees students returned to their class room to find everyone petrified. The characters need to talk about, and accept, their own fears. This teaches the lesson of House Divine: to remain humble and acknowledge how, in the seeming endless possibilities of the multiverse, they can still make a difference.

Having completed the first four trials of Tizon, the magical sword welcomes them to the Academy and leaves them with the reassurance that he'll get the rest of the class later. Tizon vanishes before Professor Winkleton can confirm that the challenges are not part of the curriculum.



# Roleplaying Tizon

The founder of House Might, **Tizon** is famous for being the only founder who still, on occasion, turns up at The Grand Academy - usually to issue their challenges to groups of students.

The sentient sword is at his core an old cranky soul who wants to challenge students to leave their comfort zone but has largely forgotten the finer points of how to teach. Instead, relying on the ingenuity of his students to fill in the gaps. Once a student has stood up to him, he often reveals the lesson of the encounter. Without fail there is always a wider lesson to an encounter. Tizon respects students that stand up to him but will also argue back, to the point of with a straight blade saying 'well my words have anti-arcane shield powers and go right through. So there.'

**Personality Trait:** 'I'm not just an old fool with a sharp edge. There is wisdom in my handles.'

**Ideals:** 'Excellence is to be maintained and pushed beyond.'

**Bond:** 'I was there at the beginning; I hope to be surprised. I rarely am.'

**Flaw:** 'I've been doing this for three thousand years, forgive me if I'm a bit sparse with the details. It builds character.'

## A note on creativity:

The GM is encouraged in this adventure to reward creative thinking and more unorthodox use of class features and spells. Tizon will quietly assist the characters by empowering spells to give their solutions a reasonable chance of success. Tizon is testing the characters' quality as much as their abilities.

To begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following text:



*It's already been a long day of inductions, new friends, and new places. Your brains are whirling with impossible directions (how exactly do you go sideways behind a staircase widdershins?) and exciting new names (the High Tutor of Detonation sounds especially intriguing), and you're already about to begin your first lesson!*

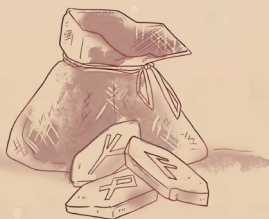
*Just as the venerable Professor Winkleton opens his mouth, there's an ostentatious yawn from the sword lying beside him on the podium at the front of the class.*

*'Oh, so this is the new group is it, indeed? They all look a bit soft to me! Bit too pampered! Not like in my day. Well, let's give 'em some real lessons, shall we? You, you four at the front..'*

This is the perfect opportunity for your characters to introduce themselves, giving some elements of their background, and maybe even hinting at their long- and short-term goals. Let the players express themselves a little, and get to know each other's characters. Such things might prove useful in the upcoming challenges!

The talking sword, rudely interrupting this first class, is Tizon. He's the founder of House Might, and a cantankerous, belligerent thing—appropriately enough, given he's a sword, really. The characters might recall this fact, with a DC10 Intelligence (History) check. A success also reminds them of rumours they've heard. Rumours about Tizon's fondness for setting students a series of trials to test their aptitudes...

It looks like he's just found a few more participants for his games!







Once each of the characters introduces themselves, read or paraphrase the following:



'Well,' the sword says, 'I'm dubious. But that's what the Grand Academy is for. To whip pupils like yourself into proper, tip-top, adventuring-readiness. Now, you don't want to go sitting around listening to old bores like Winkleton here... I've got some real hands-on learning for you to do!'

With a sudden flash of blinding light, you feel yourselves lifted from the chairs you so recently settled in, and transported somewhere new... except when you tumble onto the cold stone floor, you realise you're in the middle of the Great Hall. Last time you were in here, it was filled with new students like yourselves. Now, it's virtually empty. Except for a small creature, at the centre of the hall. It's got extremely large eyes, green skin, and about a dozen tentacles.

'Right' roars Tizon, 'Let's see you show some cunning! Catch that baby Kraken!'



## Catch a Baby Kraken

**The Great Hall** is large, but surprisingly comfortable. There's a library, in one corner; large grimoires line the walls, and tomes of history, martial arts, liturgy and exegesis can be found with a good search. Opposite this, is the surprisingly well-equipped armoury, and the potions laboratory, where a series of unguents oils, tinctures, and other strange and fabulous ingredients can be found. At the front of the room is the stage—the elevated area on which the Academy's teachers and staff congregate during whole school meetings. There's even a series of tables spread throughout the hall today, as while the characters are just starting their careers here, others are taking their final exams.

**The Kraken** is extremely slippery and difficult to catch. Simply grabbing it by hand is virtually impossible. Trapping it by hand requires a DC20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, made at disadvantage. Upon being captured, the Kraken immediately starts wriggling and struggling to break free. Holding onto it requires a DC18 Strength or Dexterity saving throw, again made at disadvantage to account for the extremely slippery nature of the cute creature's skin, and its remarkable strength (the thing does grow into a Kraken after all)!

What the characters do possess is a hall full of things they can use to aid them. They might be able to find a 'hold person' spell in one of the books on the shelves, with a DC14 Intelligence (Investigate) check. The weapons in the armoury can be used to construct some sort of trap; there are suits of armour there, and coaxing the baby Kraken into a knight's helmet would be a great way of keeping it in place. To construct such a trap requires the character to either explain the construction to the GM and if deemed feasible make a DC 16 dexterity, wisdom or intelligence check (depending on the nature of the device).



The unguents and tinctures from the laboratory can also be investigated. A player should make a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A success reveals the identity of the potion or substance in the bottle. Ask the character to roll a d6 and consult the following table:

D6 Result	Bottle Contents
1	A grey ooze... it feels very sticky! This can be applied to any surface. For one hour afterwards, any creature passing over the substance is held in place, and cannot move, as though subject to the paralysed condition.
2	A dry powder...there's a spicy note to it! This can be applied to any surface. For one hour afterwards, when any moisture touches it, a small explosion occurs! All creatures within 5 ft of the place the powder was applied must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 1d4 fire damage, and be knocked prone.
3	Bouncing...oil? Yep. A thin, greasy substance that slips through the fingers, but then proceeds to bounce around at high speed. It's pretty useless, but the baby Kraken laughs uproariously at it as it goes flying by!
4	Never-ending paper. A folded piece of paper, which if unfolded, simply reveals another fold as the paper expands each time it is unfolded. A creature who is wrapped in the paper is grappled by it, escape DC 14.
5	Bottled Lights. The bottle contains firefly like lights which when released pulsate in different colours. A creature that looks at the pattern must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be stunned for 6 seconds as it admires the lights. The baby Kraken is utterly enthralled by the lights.
6	Singing beans. These strange brown beans smell bitter, if consumed cause a creature to be only able to speak in song. Granting them advantage on Performance checks, but disadvantage on all other charisma checks.

The characters can work out any method they like of capturing the Kraken—though the baby Kraken has a wonderful time scampering around the room, emitting shrill giggles of delight. It draws closer to the characters to try and get them to chase it, before slither-running away and hiding. It can climb and hide on the bookshelves, slither through the tightest gaps, and generally make finding it extremely difficult.

### Catching the Little Rascal

The baby Kraken has a +1 to all ability checks and saving throws. Attempts to lure the Kraken then trap it require a successful DC 14 check by the character luring the Kraken and a successful DC 15 Dexterity (stealth) or Charisma (Deception). For the purposes of spells such as sleep, the baby Kraken has a HP of 14.

It is, however, extremely adorable and enjoying itself very much. It's decidedly non-violent, and never attempts to hurt the player characters. If the characters attempt to hurt the baby Kraken, Tizon immediately hurtles towards the characters, knocking them away and teleports them back to their classroom where he denounces their actions in front of their classmates. The adventure ends there—and it's only the fact it's their first day saving them from being summarily expelled. Tizon never speaks to them again.

Whatever the characters do to capture the baby kraken, Tizon criticizes hinting that he'd do it far more intelligently, and "a dashed sight more quickly too!" but he's secretly very impressed. Without letting the characters regain their breath for a moment, it's onto the next challenge.

The characters are once again surrounded by blinding light and...

They're outside. In the House Might sparring yard!





# Training for Dummies

The House Might training yard is a fenced off enclosure in the courtyard, at the far end of which stand, squat, and lean a collection of old training dummies. The training dummies have wooden bodies, arms with weighted sacks on them which can swing. Rather than feet there is a steak at their bottom to secure them into the ground, a sack with a painted smiling face forms their face.

Upon scrambling to their feet from the disordered pile they find themselves in, the characters are confronted by the strange sight of the training dummies awkwardly hopping and jumping to form a tight circle around them. Tizon's voice can be heard above the shuffling sounds of the dishevelled dummies.

'You must escape the circle' he shouts. 'Good luck! Oh. And no cheating by flying out or anything, okay?' Tizon isn't naïve enough to assume students won't try and cheat—he's been around much too long for that—and if any character does attempt to break free from the circle without engaging with the dummies, there's something prepared for that.

## Fly, Shring, Run, Or Otherwise Opt Out

The student in question finds themselves polymorphed into a training dummy. The training dummies routinely switch position, disguising which dummy is the student. The dummy has a speed of 0 and 24 hp resistance bludgeoning, slashing and piercing damage.

Alternatively, Tizon teleports the student so that they land head-first on the ground. With a tap of the flat of their blade, Tizon audibly sighs: 'The first step in learning is realising the limits of your ability. And sense.' At the end of the adventure, the students find their name has been entered in Professor Winkelton's ledger, with noticeably different handwriting, with the note 'volunteered for Arcane and Might clean-up for two weeks.'

There are 10 dummies. The Dummies have an AC 12, 10 hp (when reduced to 0hp the dummy sways back before leaning back restored to full hp), they are vulnerable to fire damage (leading to muffled screams). They are immune to psychic damage and automatically fail all dexterity saving throws. The dummies have a speed of 0.

Beating them up doesn't work, the Dummies weather every strike. characters with a passive perception of 12 or higher notice that the dummies creak as they get hit. A closer inspection reveals a muffled voice; the words unclear. Attempts to cut open the mouth of a dummy reveal they are soft spoken constructs and enjoy their work. They are steadfast in their conviction that as training dummies they are going to stand their ground. Despite this, when struck with a weapon, they giggle as if being tickled. The dummies are talkative and make reference to going years between sew ups depending on 'how annoying they are'.

The characters can overcome the training dummies by:

- Empathising with the role the dummies have to play. Being struck repeatedly everyday so that others can improve isn't exactly a career with a lot of room for progression. Asking the dummies about their hopes, or aspirations immediately wins the dummies over, and impresses Tizon.
- Finding a way to change the nature of the test. This could be by lulling the dummies to sleep by playing and singing a lullaby. Or even getting them to dance around, perhaps, and move out of the characters way. Whatever approach the characters try, something unusual and creative should be rewarded.
- Stubbornly refusing to give in. Reducing each training dummy to 0hp three times. Despite the obvious flaw in this attempt, the willpower to keep on trying impresses Tizon. Though he keeps an eye on whether this is matched with the wisdom of knowing when to apply it to other challenges.

The dummies slowly begin hopping back to the far end of the enclosure and stack themselves in much the same way as they were before the arrival of the characters.

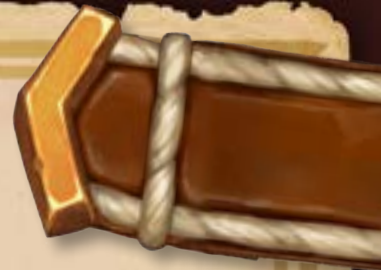
Tizon is quick to raise the issue of damaging 'my training dummies.' via fire or any attempt to deform the training dummies.

Now to the tower of House Arcane!

The characters can walk the few hundred yards to the stone tower. Alternatively, any of them comment on the sudden lack of teleportation. The characters are once again surrounded by blinding light and...



# Tower Arcane



Whether through walking the few hundred yards or Tizon teleporting them, the characters arrive at the great tower of **House Arcane**. The stone circular tower stands nearly a hundred feet tall, with a secondary turret forming out of the midpoint of the main tower. The edifice sits atop a small hill, the summit of which forms the tower's dark stone foundations.

To the horror of any fan of order, tidiness or the smell of books, dozens of the ancient tomes are flying around outside the tower. From the leather-bound 'Artefacts of The Otherworldly', 'Encyclopaedia of Elemental Magic', 'Evocation Savant's Guide to the World', and 'Compendium of Arcane Energy' to the stone tablets of 'The Origins of The Planes' and the hulking leathery-scaled skin of the 'Shadow of Demonology', the books fly around like a pack of wild birds. Some of the larger tomes seem to be deliberately flying into smaller books, jostling them in the air and sending them careering off in different directions. Tizon hovers above the characters.

'You need to, uh, order those' he says, gesturing at the books in the sky before vanishing. Any mention of fire causes Tizon to reappear to rapidly add 'Noooo! These are irreplaceable. Definitely no fire,' before vanishing again.

Running up to the top of the tower is possible. If the characters include any members of House Arcane they can access the two sets of steps or the ramp that leads to the top of the hundred-foot tower. Thanks to the magic of the tower, it takes a creature about thirty seconds to reach the top if they are running.

At the top of the tower are several book trolleys which seem to be large enough to hold all the books currently flying about. Equally students who arrange the books on the ground then send them inside find the books stay in order.

The characters can order the books by doing any of the following:

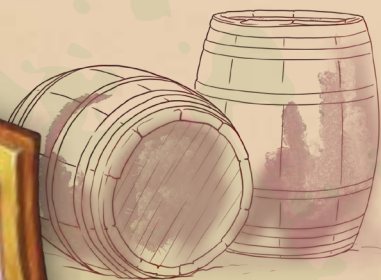
- Persuading some of the larger books to act as sheep dogs, rounding up the smaller volumes. This requires a DC12 Charisma (Persuasion) check to achieve.
- Luring the books down, using illusions such as rain or the presence of other books already on the ground in order.
- Alternatively, if the players are able to come up with fitting names for Arcane books, they will find them flying down in response to their summons. Attempting to order the book into order by sheer force of will, or by wielding house badges as warrants of authority, will work on up to two groups of books.

The most troublesome volume is the 'Grand Grimoire of the Arch-Demon'. This imposing grimoire has a large group of books that it has bent to its will. To complete the challenge the characters need to get this notorious grimoire in line. Luring or forcing the book down to ground level requires some clever thinking. A sure-fire way is to lure it into a fight, whether by threatening it loudly, or by insulting it (claiming its a fake or filled with nonsense does this trick). Being a book, it can't actually fight but does snap at the characters with its pages. Capturing it, and holding it in place, requires a DC14 Strength (Athletics) check. The book can't harm the characters--it's not strong enough to knock them over, and while it can open and shut like a mouth, its teeth are made of paper. As soon as the grimoire feels itself outmatched, it surrenders limply.

With the troublesome tome tamed, any additional books slowly fly towards the characters, ready to be shelved.

Tizon appears. 'That was, actually, rather well done.' 'Onwards!'

The characters are once again surrounded by blinding light and...





# Back To Class

The blinding white light of Tizon's teleportation reveals the original classroom where the characters were sat before the adventure started. There is one noticeable difference, everyone is deathly still - the classroom is totally silent. On closer inspection, the Professor and all of the students are made of stone. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Nature) check confirms that they're all PETRIFIED.

No magical cures work - but a passive Perception of 12, or a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals they're all very, very, slowly writing something down. Across several students' desks the characters are able to pick out the words they are writing so slowly: 'What makes you stone?'

On the reverse side of the black board at the front of the class room is a list of bizarre things: clowns, darkness, spiders, failure. A list of fears.

Attempts to write anything other than fears on the board lead to the writing turning to dust, leaving only the list of fears.

It is only by the characters confessing their fears and doubts that the curse will be lifted. For each character that confesses their genuine fear, part of the stone confining their fellow students begins to crack and fall away. Once each character has admitted their fear Tizon appears once more. The class shake off the remnants of the stone dust. They are still moving very slowly.



## What fear?

The fear required to remove the curse is something that explains at least part of the reasoning for the characters' action thus far. This could be a fear of failure for a studious student, not mattering for a student who believes in the cyclical nature of life and death, or never being perfect for a student trying to emulate an older sibling or a house founder.

A fear of dark spaces is a good start but the wider fear of powerlessness would need to be spoken of.

For those who say their character has no fear: the characters are all students at a magical school and mortal. They have a fear, even if they haven't admitted it to themselves yet.

There is a flash of white light as Tizon appears.



'I am pleased to see that the future of our Academy is in safe hands. Take a moment to tell you of the lesson I hope you have learned. The houses that we originally founded are in themselves as much questions as they are answers. When you worked together to catch the baby Kraken, using your wits and what was in the room, you learned the lesson of House Cunning. When you confronted the training dummies you found your inner voice, your inner will to overcome and learned one of the many lessons of House Might. When you confronted the many dangers of the flying books, you saw and learned that even in places of knowledge and wisdom, there is danger. Finally, when you faced your fears against a seemingly indifferent curse. You proved the lesson of House Divine. To remain humble in the face of the infinite possibilities and indifferent threats of the world. And to know you can make a difference. I would like to welcome you to this Academy and wish you a pleasant stay. Now take your chairs. I am sure Professor Winkelton has a lesson to be getting on with.'



Tizon seems jovial, as if he has warmed up to the characters or is pleased to have been proven wrong for a change. If any characters comment about the rest of the class, Tizon promises that 'I'll get them next. Everyone gets a chance.' If questioned on how Tizon seems to enjoy the challenges or the point of them, Tizon loudly proclaims 'This is how one keeps a school such as this growing. You are all a credit to this academy.'

Tizon then vanishes with a chuckle before Professor Winkelton can interject and clarify that none of this counted towards any mark for the semester.



## Epilogue

The characters, having bonded over their adventures during their first batch of Tizon's Trials, now face their first full day of studies. The lessons are engaging and the other students have no memory of being petrified but stranger things have happened, right?

They may hear the confident voice of Tizon echo down a hallway but are unable to catch a glance of the flying sword. For now, at least. The characters can fill their time with study, the many extra curricular activities on offer and on occasion another adventure or two.

If any of the characters were volunteered for clean-up duty, they find House Arcane leaves its laboratory covered in failed alchemy supplies and occasional scorch marks. They also learn that House Might is very strict on the correct way to store the various apparatus they use in the training ring. Including stacking several dozen training dummies, while they appear to giggle.

If any of the characters were returned to the classroom after harming the baby Kraken, they are plagued with fuzzy memories of being made of stone, while a classmate said something about fear and stone.

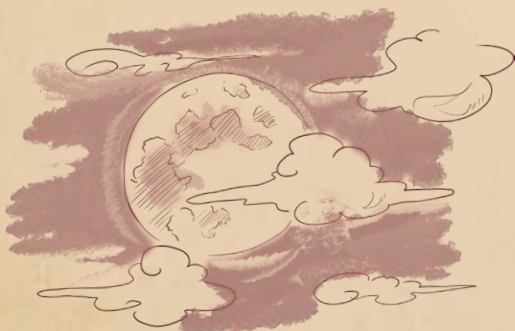
The characters that have completed the adventure and have completed the first trial of Tizon, only thirty-two left to go!

Read out or paraphrase the following to end the adventure:



The lesson begins. Introduction: The History of the Grand Academy starting with the four founders of the Great Houses.

'Professor Winkelton leans on their lectern and, stifling a sneeze, looks out across the classroom. 'Can anyone name the generous founders who formed the house you now reside within?'





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