



HEROIC

1-10

# DANGER AT THE WHITE LOTUS ACADEMY

By Peter Schaefer

An adventure for 7th-level characters

A school that teaches all things arcane is never quiet. But when the school's students begin to disappear and the headmaster seems unwilling to investigate, someone must look into the matter.

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## BACKGROUND

The White Lotus Academy has stood for centuries as a repository of arcane learning. It has weighty traditions and holds itself apart from politics, and members of the faculty do not ask for outside help with their problems for reasons of privacy, pride, and public relations.

All is not as it seems within the academy, however. For several years, a spell weaver has concealed itself within the academy grounds. Spell weavers, who are part of a race of entities about which little is known, excel at arcane magic and covet it. This particular spell weaver plans to continue the masquerade for several more years while it acquires control over more and more of the school's faculty and magic.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

When the PCs come to the academy, the spell weaver is in the middle of an invisible conflict with the school's headmaster and endeavors to eliminate the PCs quickly. In its disguise as Instructor Tevors, it triggers several preset traps, such as maliciously enchanted practice mannequins, the dangers of the Lost Secrets Library, and finally an ambush by plant monsters in Stelson Arboretum. In the latter area, the PCs discover the spell weaver trying to complete its domination over the headmaster, and they can choose to fight it directly.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

Use one or more of the following adventure hooks to bring the PCs into the adventure.

**Invitation to Lecture:** Headmaster Marovic invites one of the party's arcane characters to be a

guest lecturer at the White Lotus Academy. The invitation includes an honorarium and, if necessary, the magical resources to bring the party to the academy.

**Family Obligations:** A character's relative asks the character to escort a child safely to the academy, where he or she is to begin initiation into the arcane arts.

**Brought by Need:** The PCs need to use the academy's considerable resources in the pursuit of another goal—probably to learn an obscure arcane fact. Only Headmaster Marovic has the authority to grant them what they need.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

**Once the PCs have a reason for visiting White Lotus Academy, you can read aloud or paraphrase the following.**

*You reach the bronze, east-facing Sunrise Gate of the White Lotus Academy at mid-morning after a brief stroll through the streets of Whitton. When you reach the guard house, a short man with receding brown hair and a ready smile walks up the path to greet you. "Welcome to the White Lotus Academy," he says, "I am Instructor Tevors. Once you're settled, I'll give you a tour of the campus and introduce you to the headmaster."*

Instructor Tevors is a teacher of sorcery at the White Lotus Academy and aide to Headmaster Kovaric. He sees to the PCs' immediate needs and shows them rooms in Uمبرلین Dormitory that they can use while on campus. Once he has accomplished this part of his agenda, he shows them around the White Lotus Academy.

Instructor Tevors seems practiced at showing visitors the comfortable dorms; he points out the many-windowed library; the stained-glass conservatory; the squat, impregnable-seeming laboratory and classroom building; the varied vegetation of the arboretum; and the arcane-shape of the academy's original building. After describing a large circle on the inside of the school's multi-colored wall, Tevors stops outside the wrought-iron gate of a large house.

**Read the following aloud:**

*"The Headmaster's Residence," he states as he looks at the building. He leads you inside.*

*The interior's wood paneling has an old, worn look that bespeaks age. Tevors leads you up a broad stairway to a landing and through the door at the top into a study that feels cramped due to the numerous bookshelves. In the center of the study, an aged man with gray hair sits with his head on his desk, snoring softly.*

*Your guide gives you a small smile that wavers after a couple seconds, then he clears his throat. A few moments later, he steps forward and shakes the headmaster, who sits up with a start and looks at Tevors, then you, with bloodshot eyes and sticky drool on his cheek. Before Tevors can speak, the headmaster sways to his feet and yells, "Tevors!" leaning forward as though to counter the force of his voice. "Leave me! My work is urgent and my time is valuable. Begone, and take these petitioners with you!"*

*With a small shrug and a warning glance at you, Instructor Tevors ushers you out of the office and closes the door behind him. "I'm, uh, well. There's a student duel due to begin any time now. I was hoping you would enjoy the demonstration and perhaps share wisdom from your practical experiences. I have some administrative duties to attend to, but I'll have a student show you the way."*

The PCs are led by the wizard-in-training Margo Greenwood to the dueling field at Harrid Yard.



## 1. HARRID YARD

At Harrid Yard, two combatants square off against each other. Each wears the White Lotus uniform—one in the form of heavy practice armor with a dulled blade, and the other in light practice armor with a wand. Neither is older than 16. The warlock is just getting the upper hand when the practice mannequins go nuts and attack the PCs.

**Tactical Encounter:** W1. Practice Field (page 56).

When that encounter finishes, Instructor Obrak (a dwarf, see “White Lotus Academy”) runs up, saying that a passing student saw the event and fetched him. Instructor Tevors arrives a moment later.

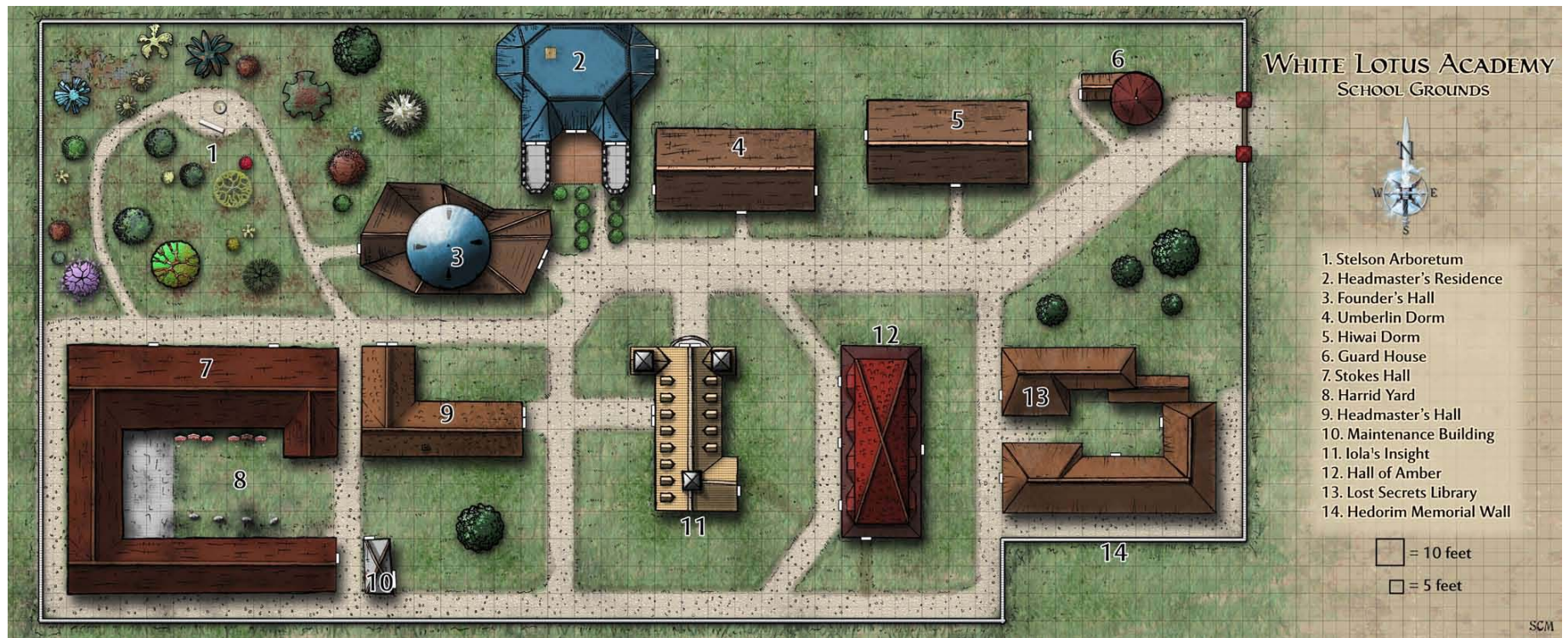
*Tevors is nearly breathless after his run to the practice field. “I’m . . .” he gasps, “. . . so incredibly sorry. Nothing like this has ever happened before. The enchantments on those practice dummies have been unchanged for at least 50 years.” Then he doubles over and breathes heavily for a minute while the dwarf that ran up just before him talks with the students.*

*“I’m going to be examining the records of their maintenance and then I’ll ask Instructor Westbrook to examine the mannequins directly.” Tevors looks at you. “If you’d like to help me figure out what happened here, you could find me the book in the library that details how they were created originally. I’d send a student, but it’s likely to be in one of the more dangerous parts of the stacks.”*

**If the PCs ask to help in another way, Tevors says:**

*“If I could use your experience and knowledge any other way, I would. But both the maintenance records and the creation instructions are confidential and proprietary, and we can’t allow you to see either without permission from the headmaster who . . . who might not be forthcoming, as you saw. This is something you can do now.”*

Tevors gives the PCs a crystal the size of a finger that, through warmth and chill, will guide them to the correct room in the Lost Secrets Library. If Tevors must to engage their services, he offers them a reward amounting to one treasure parcel for their assistance in clearing up this issue.





## 2. LOST SECRETS LIBRARY

The guiding crystal leads you quickly through the first floor, which is a well-lit warren of book-filled nooks and crannies thoroughly seeded with comfortable chairs and desks. Once you reach the back stairwell, the journey becomes more surreal. The crystal guides you down several flights, then leads you out onto a floor that appears identical to the first floor but has no windows or students. It glides up a flight of stairs, into a small corridor that opens into another flight of stairs, and then down another two levels to a door.

When the PCs go through the door, start the encounter.

**Tactical Encounter:** W2. Library Poltergeists (page 57).

### 2A. LEAVING THE LIBRARY

After the PCs defeat the poltergeists, they must find the book Tevors needs and leave with it. This requires that they best a skill challenge.

**Skill Challenge:** SC1. Leaving the Library (page 58).

With the skill challenge complete and successful, the PCs leave the Lost Secrets Library with the book. Instructor Obrak is waiting for them outside the library.

## 3. STELSON ARBORETUM

When the PCs near the sundial in Stelson Arboretum, begin the tactical encounter.

**Tactical Encounter:** W3: Arboretum Ambush (page 60).

After the encounter, any student the PCs encounter tells them to seek Instructor Tevors at Headmaster's Hall.

**Read the following aloud when the PCs reach the building.**

*In the cramped administration building, a narrow hall leads back and around a corner, and a narrow flight of stairs leads up. Directly to the left is a reception desk, and the student sitting there smiles as you approach. "You must be [PC name here] and company," she says. "How can I help you?"*

**When the PCs ask after Tevors, she says:**

*"Instructor Tevors is meeting with Headmaster Marovic at the Headmaster's Residence. You could probably meet him there if you want to talk to him."*

## 4. HEADMASTER'S RESIDENCE

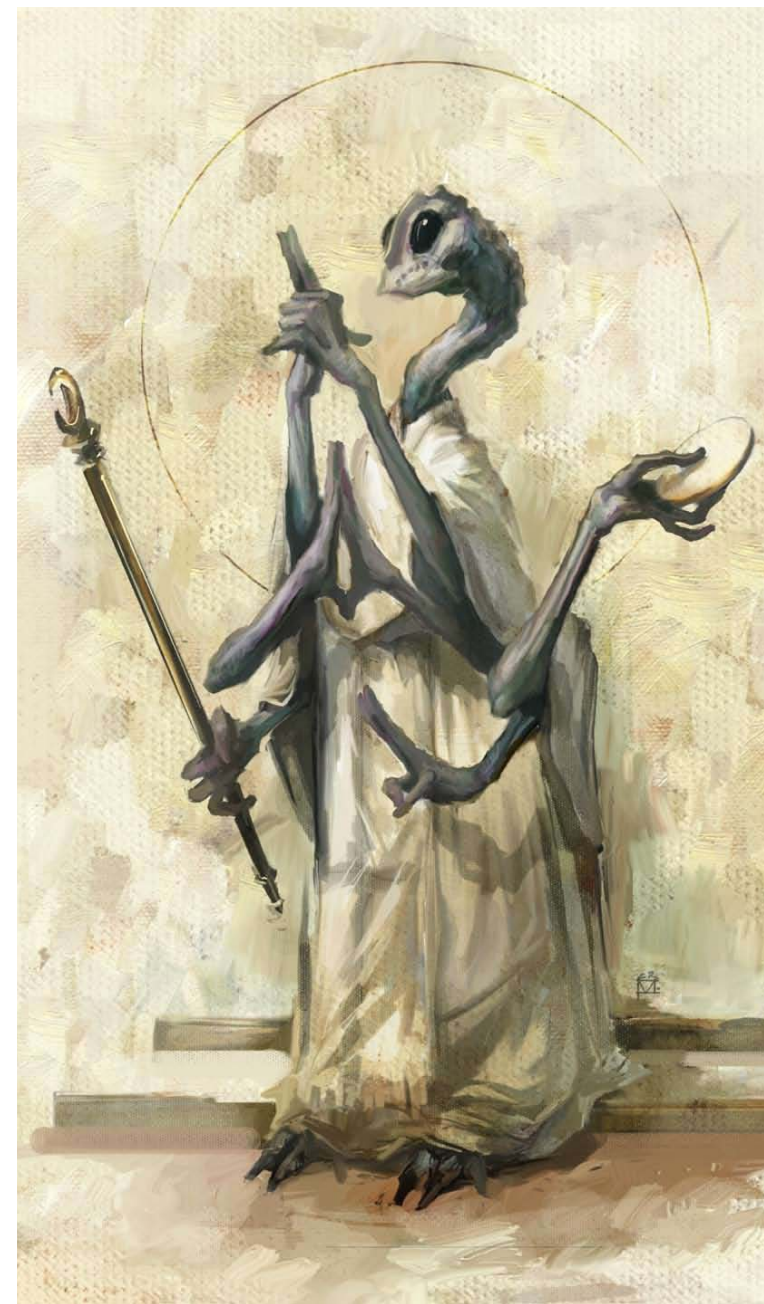
When the PCs reach the gate to the Headmaster's Residence, they discover that something is wrong.

**Tactical Encounter:** W4. Spell Weaver (page 62).

## CONCLUSION

After defeating the spell weaver, Headmaster Marovic stands under his own power, if barely. He is more cogent than he was when they first met him, an event Marovic barely remembers, because he was using most of his energy to protect the academy and its students from the spell weaver's hidden efforts to steal their arcane power.

The headmaster is suitably grateful. He honors whatever deal the PCs had with Tevors or the academy for their services and throws in a treasure parcel if the PCs were not promised one by Tevors. They can also receive a tuition-free semester of learning for the relative (if that hook brought them here) or training in the White Lotus Academy's signature feats and spells. The PCs are forevermore regarded as friends of the academy.



## WI: PRACTICE FIELD

Encounter Level 5 (1,200 XP)

### SETUP

4 practice mannequins (M)  
4 White Lotus students

Before they attack, the practice mannequins are inanimate and nonthreatening. They look like little more than suits of armor on frames supported by a rod stuck in the practice field's hard ground. Unless the PCs are particularly suspicious of the practice mannequins, the mannequins have a surprise round when they attack. Place the students at random intervals around the field.

**When the practice mannequins attack, read:**

*The sound of metal grinding on metal grates in your ears, and you turn to see the practice mannequins tearing themselves free of their support and advancing with weapons held at the ready.*

### TACTICS

The practice mannequins team up on the PCs, using *adjustment pattern* to slide the PCs into spaces where they are flanked, allowing another mannequin to attack and knock the PC prone with *overbearing flank*. *Adjustment pattern* is also good for keeping the party's ranged attackers from escaping behind the frontline warriors. A mannequin attacks a White Lotus student if it can't avoid or move past the student to reach a PC.

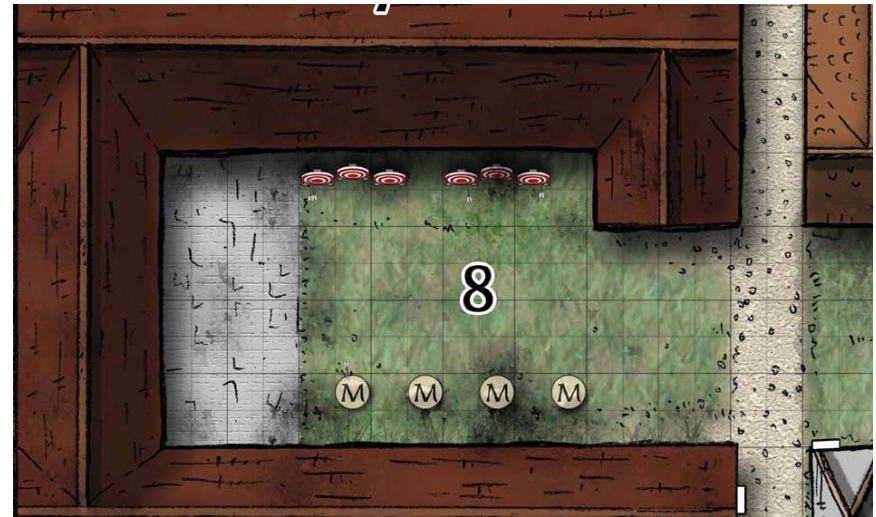
## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Daylight affords this encounter area bright light.

**Arcane Targets:** Scarred from countless years of target practice, each arcane target exudes an aura of enduring magic. A creature in the space of or adjacent to an arcane target takes half damage from arcane ranged and area attacks. It costs 1 extra square to enter an arcane target's space, and a creature there has cover.

**Stone Dueling Area:** These ancient flagstones are imbued with protective magic to prevent students from being wounded during a duel. A creature in this area gains a +5 bonus to death saving throws.

**White Lotus Students:** The students are not trained for live battle but do not shy from it. Describe the bolts of fire and eldritch energy they throw from range, though they are not strong enough to impact the fight. The swordmage stands between the mannequins and the other students. A White Lotus student is knocked unconscious when hit once.



4 Practice Mannequins (M)		Level 7 Controller
Medium natural animate (construct)		XP 300 each
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +5	
HP 80; Bloodied 40		
AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 6		
⬇️ Longsword (standard; at-will) ⬆️ Weapon		
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.		
⬇️ Adjustment Pattern (standard; at-will) ⬆️ Weapon		
One or two creatures; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d8 damage, and slide the target 1 square.		
⬇️ Training Ripost (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the mannequin; at-will) ⬆️ Weapon		
The triggering creature; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the mannequin's next turn.		
Overbearing Flank (when the mannequin hits a creature it flanks with an attack)		
The creature is knocked prone.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 2 (-1)	Cha 2 (-1)
Equipment longsword		



## W2: LIBRARY POLTERGEISTS

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

### SETUP

#### 3 poltergeists

The Lost Secrets Library is a dangerous place, and the chamber that contains Holman's *Treatise on the Imbuement and Maintenance of Armed Conflict Training Mannequins* is no exception. It contains the vengeful ghosts of three White Lotus students who died there in a tragedy now forgotten.

The ghosts' memories are not so forgiving.

#### When the PCs enter the room, read:

*A large sphere set in the ceiling gives off a flameless glow as you enter the room. The dry smells of cracked leather and ancient paper assault you from the shelving in the wall and the freestanding wooden shelves.*

#### When the last PC enters the room, read:

*The door slams shut behind you, and the room falls into complete darkness before the sphere in the ceiling flickers back to life, though it does not shine as brightly as before. A pair of luminescent eyes watches you through the gaps in the freestanding bookcases, and a chorus of whispered voices sounds in your ears, "I was never allowed to leave. Neither shall you be."*

Do not place the poltergeists on the map until after the initiative is determined. The poltergeists lurk in the walls, and can attack on the first round from any direction.

### TACTICS

The three poltergeists work together to slay the PCs. They use the walls and freestanding bookcases to their advantage, phasing through them to avoid attacks between their turns, and using *hurl away* and *kinetic claw* to keep their opponents at bay.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The sphere in the ceiling fills the room with bright illumination, but the study chambers do not have separate lighting. As a result, they have dim illumination with the doors open, or darkness with the doors closed.

**Flame Retardant:** The Lost Secrets Library is enchanted to protect its contents from fire. Fire attacks deal -2 damage per die, and creatures gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against ongoing fire damage.

**Freestanding Bookcases:** The bookcases in the center of the room hold many books. Gaps between them are wide enough for a creature to fire ranged attacks through the bookcases, but a creature on the other side has cover and concealment. A creature adjacent to a bookcase can use the following terrain power.

#### Bookcase Single-Use Terrain

*A firm shove sends the bookcase toppling over onto the surprised victims.*

**Standard Action** Area terrain

**Check:** Athletics check, DC 17, to shove the bookcase.

**Success:** The bookcase falls to one direction, which is chosen by the attacking creature. Each square within 2 squares of the bookcase in that direction, and not north or south of the bookcase, becomes difficult terrain, and each creature in that space is knocked prone.

**Target:** Each creature in the affected space

**Attack:** +9 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 1d10 + 3 damage.

A bookcase used in this fashion no longer grants cover or concealment to ranged attacks.

**Treasure:** When the last poltergeist is defeated, its insubstantial body collapses inward and manifests a thin book, which drops to the floor. At its simplest, this is a rare tome valued at one monetary treasure parcel. This might also be a collection of rituals or a book of secrets that leads to future plot hooks and greater treasure.

After defeating the poltergeists, the PCs must still locate the book they seek and find their way out of the library.

3 Poltergeists		Level 6 Artillery
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 250 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 42; Bloodied 21	AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 18	
Immune disease, poison; Resist insubstantial		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing; see also <i>flinging rebuke</i>		
⊕ Spirit Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 necrotic damage.		
✂ Hurl Away (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.		
✂ Kinetic Claw (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target slides 5 squares and is restrained (save ends).		
Flinging Rebuke (immediate interrupt, when an enemy moves adjacent to the poltergeist; encounter) ♦ Necrotic		
The poltergeist shifts 1 square and uses <i>hurl away</i> on the triggering enemy. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +15		
Str 15 (+5)	Dex 20 (+8)	Wis 16 (+6)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 13 (+4)	Cha 20 (+8)

## SCI: THE LIBRARY

### Encounter Level 7 (300 XP)

#### SETUP

To find the tome that Instructor Tevors requires, the PCs must visit the Lost Secrets Library, which is an edifice of arcane and contrary design. Once there, they must locate the book and find their way out again. The following skill challenge has a series of steps within it, and the PCs should move from one to the next as they succeed (or, if they fail, they don't find the book and end up reporting back to Tevors thanks to Obrak's assistance).

#### The Library Skill Challenge

**Level 7**  
XP 300

*Before you can leave the stacks, you must locate Holman's book on the mannequins.*

The PCs must find the book, unseal the door, figure out the library, and leave it during this skill challenge.

#### Complexity

1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

#### Primary Skills

See each step in the skill challenge.

#### Victory

The PCs successfully find the book and leave with it. Instructor Obrak greets them at the door—he had just been looking for them. The party steps out of the library into the broader campus of the White Lotus Academy.

#### Defeat

The PCs have taken hours at the task and Instructor Obrak finds them as they try to succeed at one of the skill challenge's steps. He finds them rooting through the library, trying to unseal the door, or attempting to escape the library, and he shows them the way out.

#### Step One: Finding the Book

Before you can leave the stacks, you must locate Holman's book on the mannequins.

#### Primary Skills History, Perception

#### History

DC 14 (1 success, maximum 1 success) At least 1 success in this step is necessary to access the Step Two entry below. *The PC recognizes the antiquated method of sorting and shelving books used in the library—or at least in this room—and locates the book among others of its kind.*

#### Perception

DC 19 (1 success, maximum 1 success) At least 1 success in this step is necessary to access the Step Two entry below. *The character skims book titles and spines, disqualifying any with titles too short or not correct, which allows the PC to find the book in good time.*

#### Step Two: Unsealing the Door

After 1 success, it becomes clear that the poltergeists not only shut the door behind the PCs, but that they also sealed it.

#### Primary Skills Arcana, Religion

#### Arcana

DC 19 (1 success, maximum 1 success) At least 1 success in this step is necessary to access the Step Three entry below. *The character skillfully unweaves the minor spell of binding that was used to seal the group inside the chamber—presumably until they starved and joined the poltergeists in death.*

#### Religion

DC 14 (1 success, maximum 1 success) At least 1 success in this step is necessary to access the Step Three entry below. *The character performs a short rite to appease the spirits of the students who were here. Afterward, the last of the poltergeists' wills fade from the world, and the ward on the door vanishes.*

#### Step Three: Learning the Library

After 2 successes in this skill challenge, the PCs discover that the Lost Secrets Library prefers its secrets to remain lost. The stairs and doors open to chambers, stairwells, and hallways that the PCs have not seen before. No windows are around to show them where they are (or through which they can escape), so they must unravel this mystery.

#### Primary Skills Dungeoneering, Insight

#### Dungeoneering

DC 14 (1 success, maximum 1 success) At least 1 success in this step is necessary to access the Step Four entry below. *The character knows that dungeons enchanted in this manner have a guiding mind—one that perhaps can be fooled or dealt with. In addition to accruing a success, the party gains a +2 bonus to Bluff checks in the final stage of the challenge.*

#### Insight

DC 14 (1 success, maximum 1 success) At least 1 success in this step is necessary to access the Step Four entry below. In addition to accruing a success, the party gains a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks in the final stage of the challenge.

*After a number of twists and turns, the character realizes that the library is reacting to what the party says and does, such as putting them in a room with comfortable chairs when they complain of weariness. It also misdirects the character carrying the book most—it must not want to relinquish the volume.*

#### Step Four: Leaving the Library

After 3 successes, the PCs are in a position to convince the Lost Secrets Library that they should be allowed to leave with the book.

#### Primary Skills Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate

#### Bluff

DC 14 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

*The character misleads the library, moving to open one door and then dashing to another. After a few such tricks, the party finds a window through which they can climb to escape.*

#### Diplomacy

DC 14 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

*The character explains to the library that they are removing the book on the authority of Instructor Tevors or the PC swears an oath to return the book, and it is convincing enough that the next door the party opens leads directly outside.*

#### Intimidate

DC 14 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

*The character convinces the library that preventing them from leaving with one book can cause the library to lose more books—if it catches the character's drift—and the library stops playing games with the party.*



## DEVELOPMENT

When Instructor Obrak finds them, read the following aloud.

*As you step out of the library, a rolling baritone greets you: "Ah, just in time! Tevors needs to speak with you." You find the dwarf, Instructor Obrak, approaching. "He asked you to meet him at the arboretum, by the sundial."*

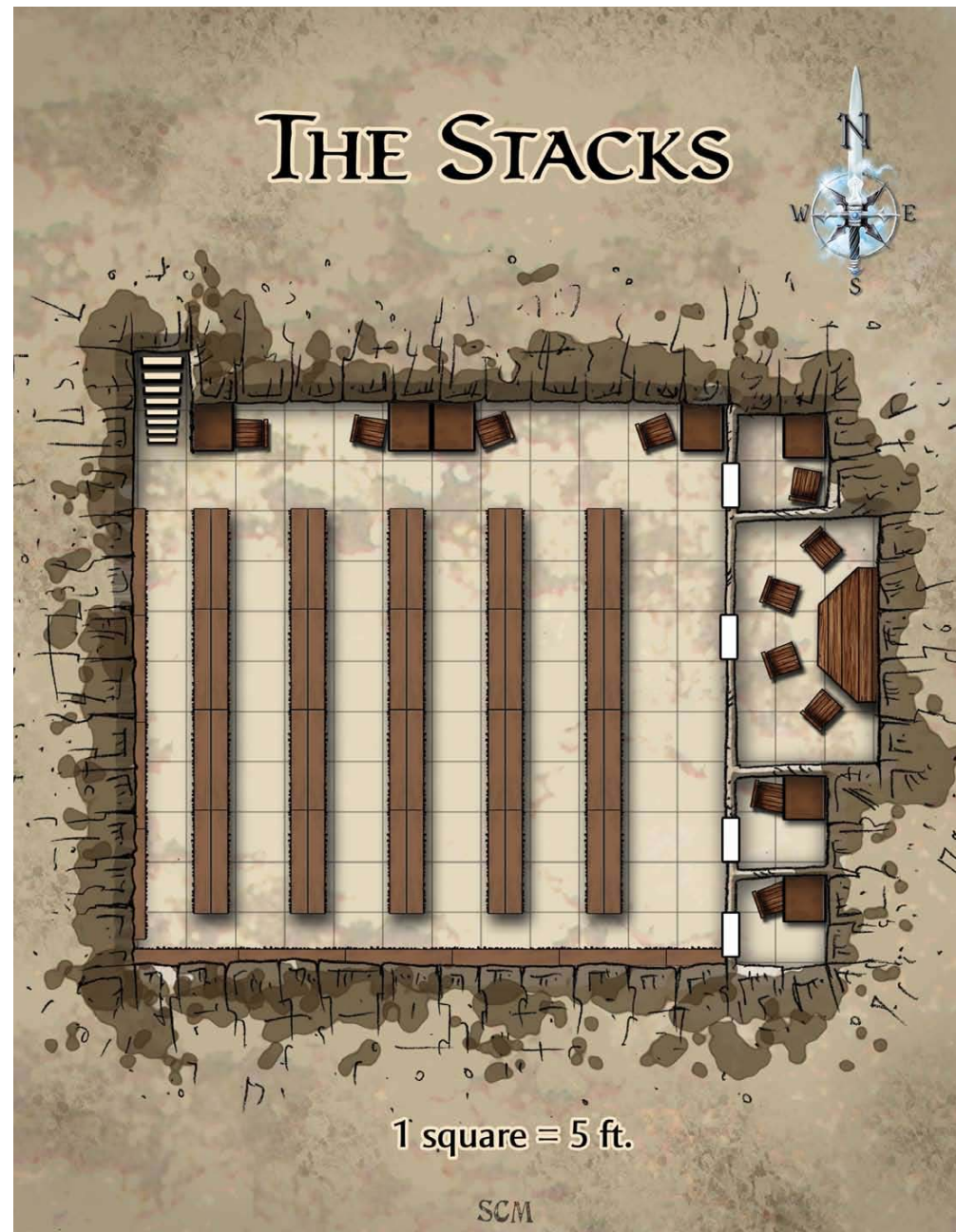
Obrak gives them simple directions at this point.

If the PCs failed the skill challenge, Instructor Obrak finds them and hauls them out of their predicament.

*In the middle of your frustration, a rolling baritone surprises you: "I'm glad I've found you! Tevors needs to speak with you."*

*A dwarf approaches. "I'm Instructor Obrak, by the way. Let me lead you out of here. Tevors asked you to meet him at the arboretum, by the sundial. Oh, and he said this might be of help to you." He hands you a ring of jade with a petal inscribed upon it.*

Obrak gives them simple directions at this point, and then leads them out. He waves at that point and says, "Well, off with you!"





## W3: ARBORETUM AMBUSH

Encounter Level 6 (1,300 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 arboreal reaper (R)
- 1 arboreal watcher (W)
- 1 shambling mound (M)
- 2 vine horror spellfiends (S)

The PCs are going to be disappointed. No instructor waits for them. Instead they must deal with savage plant monsters released from the magic that kept them from harming visitors to the arboretum.

When the PCs near the sundial, read:

*The exotic foreign trees and bushes exude several scents, some sharp and some soothing, and they are engaging to the eye. Even the small landscaped fen is pleasant to walk past. A short stone-and-brass sundial stands at a widening of the path ahead, and a bench stands near it, but you do not see Instructor Tevors.*

### Perception Check

**DC 14:** *Despite the riot of sensation, you notice that you hear no sound of birdsong or of animal life of any kind.*

**DC 19:** *You notice bark-skinned humanoids camouflaged against the bark of nearby trees, and you see writhing masses of vines rise from the nearby swampy ground.*

**DC 23:** *Blades of grass shift, and you see the faintest ripple in the air. Something invisible is here!*

Arboreal Reaper (R)	Level 7 Soldier	
Medium natural humanoid (plant)	XP 300	
<b>Initiative</b> +6 <b>Senses</b> Perception +5		
<b>HP</b> 81; <b>Bloodied</b> 40		
<b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 20, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 19		
<b>Vulnerable</b> 5 fire (pushed 1 square when it takes fire damage)		
<b>Speed</b> 6		
⊕ <b>Scythe</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
+14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the arboreal reaper's next turn.		
↖ <b>Needle Volley</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Poison</b>		
Close blast 3; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Nature +10		
<b>Str</b> 15 (+5)	<b>Dex</b> 13 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 17 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 9 (+2)	<b>Cha</b> 11 (+3)
<b>Equipment</b> blood-stained robes, scythe		

Arboreal Watcher (W)	Level 7 Lurker	
Medium natural humanoid (plant)	XP 300	
<b>Initiative</b> +10 <b>Senses</b> Perception +10		
<b>HP</b> 65; <b>Bloodied</b> 32		
<b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 19, <b>Reflex</b> 20, <b>Will</b> 18		
<b>Vulnerable</b> 5 fire (pushed 1 square when it takes fire damage)		
<b>Speed</b> 7		
⊕ <b>Short Sword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.		
↖ <b>Vine Plague</b> (standard; encounter)		
Close burst 2; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
<b>Combat Advantage</b>		
When the arboreal watcher has combat advantage, its melee attacks deal 2d6 extra damage on a hit.		
<b>Arboreal Veil</b> (minor; at-will) ♦ <b>Illusion</b>		
If no enemy is within 3 squares of it, the arboreal watcher gains invisibility until the end of its next turn.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +10, Stealth +11		
<b>Str</b> 14 (+5)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 15 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 17 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+3)	<b>Cha</b> 12 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> robes, short sword		

Shambling Mound (M)	Level 9 Brute	
Large natural animate (plant)	XP 400	
<b>Initiative</b> +5 <b>Senses</b> Perception +4; darkvision		
<b>HP</b> 120; <b>Bloodied</b> 60		
<b>Regeneration</b> 5		
<b>AC</b> 21; <b>Fortitude</b> 23, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 17		
<b>Immune</b> lightning; see also <i>lightning affinity</i>		
<b>Speed</b> 4 (swamp walk)		
⊕ <b>Tendrils</b> (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.		
⊕ <b>Enveloping Double Attack</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Healing</b>		
The shambling mound makes two basic attacks. If both attacks hit the same Medium or smaller target, the shambling mound makes a secondary attack against the target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +12 vs. Fortitude; the target is pulled into the shambling mound's space and restrained (save ends). While the target is restrained, no creature has line of sight or line of effect to it. At the start of the shambling mound's turn each round, the enveloped target takes 10 damage and the shambling mound regains 10 hit points. The shambling mound can envelop 2 creatures at a time. When the target saves, it reappears in a square of its choice adjacent to the shambling mound.		
<b>Lightning Affinity</b> (immediate reaction, when hit by a lightning attack; at-will) ♦ <b>Healing</b>		
The shambling mound regains 10 hit points.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +10		
<b>Str</b> 22 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 12 (+5)	<b>Wis</b> 10 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+9)	<b>Int</b> 5 (+1)	<b>Cha</b> 10 (+4)

<b>2 Vine Horror Spellfiends (S)</b>		<b>Level 7 Artillery</b>	
Medium natural humanoid (plant)		XP 300 each	
<b>Initiative</b> +7	<b>Senses</b> Perception +10; blindsight 10		
<b>HP</b> 65; <b>Bloodied</b> 32			
<b>AC</b> 19; <b>Fortitude</b> 18, <b>Reflex</b> 17, <b>Will</b> 15			
<b>Speed</b> 6 (forest walk, swamp walk), swim 6			
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)			
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.			
⊕ <b>Shock Orb</b> (standard; at-will) ⬠ <b>Lightning</b>			
Ranged 10; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 lightning damage.			
⚔ <b>Lashing Vine of Dread</b> (standard; at-will) ⬠ <b>Fear</b>			
Ranged 5; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 5 squares.			
✱ <b>Caustic Cloud</b> (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ⬠ <b>Acid</b>			
Area burst 1 within 10; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage and is blinded (save ends both).			
<b>Malleability</b>			
The vine horror can compress its body enough to squeeze through a 1-inch-wide crack. Cracks and other openings that are more than 1 inch wide do not slow the vine horror at all.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven		
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +12			
<b>Str</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+5)	
<b>Con</b> 17 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+3)	<b>Cha</b> 10 (+3)	

## TACTICS

All the monsters hunger to indulge their vicious natures after feeling bound to be peaceful within the academy's exotic arboretum for so long. The reaper targets a dangerous single foe, such as a defender or striker, and keeps that creature marked so that the shambling mound can rampage freely. The mound attempts to pull enemies into the fen, where it is more mobile than they are. The vine horrors keep the reaper and the shambling mound between them and the melee PCs while pelting artillery or anyone they can reach with their spells, and they are happy to use *lashing vine of dread* to push enemies into the grip of their allies. The arboreal watcher begins the fight invisible and remains invisible with *arboreal veil* until

it can catch as many victims in its *vine plague* as possible—a tactic it repeats. When the shambling mound becomes bloodied, the spellfiends take turns targeting it with *shock orb* in an attempt to keep their meat shield alive.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Daylight affords this encounter area bright light.

**Fen:** The swamp squares are difficult terrain for creatures without swamp walk.

**Meditative Sundial:** This sundial causes time to pass just a touch more slowly around it. A creature within 3 squares of the sundial can take an additional minor action on its turn.

**Tevors's Jade Ring:** The plant monsters prefer to attack the character carrying the jade ring. They gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls against that character, or a +1 bonus to attack rolls if it is carried but not worn.

**Exotic Trees:** Some of these trees have unripe exotic fruit hanging from their branches. A creature in melee range with such a tree can use the following terrain power.



Exotic Fruit Trees	Single-Use Terrain
A quick leap and a swipe knocks a bulbous fruit off a nearby tree.	
<b>Standard Action</b>	<b>Close burst</b> 1
<b>Check:</b> Athletics check or melee attack roll, DC 17, to knock the fruit down.	
<b>Target:</b> Each creature in burst	
<b>Attack:</b> +11 vs. Reflex	
<b>Hit:</b> 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.	
<b>Special:</b> If a creature trying to knock the fruit down is also a target of the attack, the creature gains a +5 bonus to Reflex against the attack.	



## W4: SPELL WEAVER

Encounter Level 7 (1,500 XP)

### SETUP

1 spell weaver collector (S)

When the PCs dash to the headmaster's residence, they find that Instructor Tevors is a spell weaver collector with designs on the school's great arcane resources. To preserve its deception, the spell weaver attacks them.

When the PCs reach the courtyard gate, read:

*Through the wrought-iron fence, you see a person in a heavy sky-blue robe standing over Headmaster Marovic, where a moment and a few steps ago you saw nothing. Though you can't make out the details, something about the person looks askew.*

### Arcana

**DC 14:** You have stepped across the threshold of a magical veil. Now that you are within it, you can see and hear those within it.

When the PCs enter the courtyard, read:

*Now that you are closer, you can see what bothered you about the person standing over the headmaster. Six thin, blue-skinned arms emerge from beneath the robe, two of which are tracing patterns in the air toward Marovic, and the creature's head looks completely alien. It turns toward you, and you know it means you harm.*

**Spell Weaver Collector (S) Level 7 Solo Controller**  
Medium immortal humanoid XP 1,500

**Initiative** +5      **Senses Perception** +11

**Arcane Bolster** aura 2; at the start of the spell weaver's turn, it gains temporary hit points equal to the level of the highest-level magic item within the aura.

**HP** 312; **Bloodied** 156

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21

**Saving Throws** +5

**Speed** 6, teleport 6

**Action Points** 2

⊕ **Esoteric Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Force**

+11 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 force damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 force damage (save ends).

⊗ **Esoteric Bolt** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Lightning, Thunder**

Ranged 10; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 lightning damage, and the target is blinded (save ends), and each creature adjacent to the target takes 1d6 + 3 thunder damage.

‡ **Banishing Sign** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Teleportation**

+11 vs. Reflex; the target disappears to a place where it can see reflections of itself in every direction (save ends). While there, the target cannot target any creature or be targeted by any creature. When the target saves, he returns to his previous space, or the nearest unoccupied space.

‡ **Repulsing Touch** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Force**

+11 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 force damage, and push the target 5 squares.

↗ **Extract Arcane Soul** (minor; requires *chromatic disk*; recharge

⊕ ⊖) ♦ **Healing, Psychic**

Ranged 5; bloodied arcane targets only; +13 vs. Will; 1d8 + 9 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* The spell weaver regains 24 hit points.

↗ **Flametrapp Invocation** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Ranged 10; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 fire damage, and the target is immobilized and each creature adjacent to the target at the start of the target's turn takes 1d8 + 4 fire damage (save ends).

↗ **Sharing of Minds** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Charm, Psychic**

Ranged 10; +11 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed and attacks the nearest creature with its standard action on its turn (save ends both).

↖ **Arctic Rune** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Cold**

Close blast 3; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 cold damage, and slide the target 1 square.

**Battle Arcana** (immediate reaction, when the spell weaver takes damage; recharge ⊕ ⊖, or at-will while bloodied)

The spell weaver takes a minor action or a move action.

**Multitasking Brain**

When dazed, a spell weaver takes a standard action and a minor action on its turn, instead of just a standard action, and can still take immediate actions.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** telepathy (sight)

**Skills** Arcana +18, Insight +16

**Str** 10 (+3)

**Dex** 14 (+5)

**Wis** 16 (+6)

**Con** 14 (+5)

**Int** 20 (+8)

**Cha** 16 (+6)

**Equipment** robes, *chromatic disk*

## TACTICS

The spell weaver collector spreads its attacks across the PCs, avoiding useless overlap with the attack's effect. It teleports to and from the balconies to keep away from melee attackers. It also uses *battle arcana* early after its turn to cover more of the party with conditions or partway through the round to reapply effects that might have lapsed. It uses *extract arcane soul* at every opportunity.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Since evening has fallen, the courtyard is in dim light.

**Balconies:** The balconies are 10 feet above the courtyard. The doors into the residence are glass; they are locked but are easily breakable. Moving from the balcony doors to the inside of the courtyard doors requires a move action.

**Courtyard Doors:** The courtyard doors are heavy oak and are sealed with magic. They require a DC 19 Athletics check to break through. To move from the courtyard doors to the balcony doors is a move action that requires a DC 14 Athletics check.

**Treasure:** The spell weaver carries a pouch with *residuum* equivalent to one monetary treasure parcel, and its *chromatic disk* can be reduced to the same or used to upgrade an existing magic item as part of an item treasure parcel.

### About the Author

Wherever there is danger, Peter Schaefer is probably watching on CCTV. His plots are widespread and manipulate the future of this planet. Plans for being a mastermind aside, Peter shapes the present as a Wizards of the Coast developer. When the apocalypse comes, his private island will take to the skies and disappear into probability space, where he, his wife, and his cats will be safe. Probably.

