

## Steal This Hook! The Trials of Academia

By Doug Beyer



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Welcome again to Steal This Hook! Anyone attempting to learn a skill or earn a degree in Eberron faces special challenges. In Breland, the student is just as likely as the teacher to spend part of her time as a whip-wielding relic hunter. In Aundair, a professor might demand the recovery of barely known reagents as part of a graduate exam. In Valenar, an apprentice may have to unearth ancestral treasures to move up to the next rank of journeyman. In short, students in Eberron are often *heroes* -- and therefore your PC heroes may be students. If you're ready for some academic adventure, steal these hooks that involve the *trials of academia* for your campaign!

### City of the Doomsayers

One of the PCs' patrons sponsors a sociological study of the culture of doomsayers in Karrlakton, Karrn. Karrlakton is an historic city overhung with the gloom of the Mournland across the river -- cultists espousing a global apocalypse may seem more credible here. As the heroes interview cult leaders, someone seems to take offense at the attention; three assassins make an attempt on the PCs' lives. Hillern, an emissary from House Deneith, shows up to defend the heroes just in time, but urges them to leave the city. The secret is that a captain of House Deneith was the one who sent the assassins to scare the heroes; Hillern knows of a dark plot that may make the doomsayers' cries ring true.

### A Royal Murder

What do a PC's graduate thesis, a small Eberron dragonshard, and a sharp masterwork rapier all have in common? They're all found in or near the body of Rubino, nephew of the King Boranel of Breland. Is the PC being framed? Did Rubino take an interest in the thesis topic? Whose rapier is it? King Boranel is grief-stricken and furious; with his resources, the case will bring the top inquisitives from all over Breland and beyond. The PC will probably have to work out what happened from a jail cell, while the rest of the party -- and a friendly gnome, who represents a citizens' rights group -- gathers evidence to prove his or her innocence. It's the crime of the century, and the heroes are right in the thick of it. . . .

### Course's End

It has been a tough semester of Intermediate Spellcasting (or Infusions if you like) at the floating towers of wizardry in Arcanix, but it's just about over. Only one task remains: Complete the quest that serves as the final exam for the class. The School keeps a stocked dungeon called Course's End deep in the bowels of a floating tower, and its denizens are controlled by magic. Illusions and traps can be reset according to the strength and number of students who enter it, and monsters can be magically strengthened or weakened as appropriate. The exam-taker may brave Course's End by herself or with her party of friends, but either way the goal is the same: Use each one of her known spells (or infusions) in new and innovative ways to defeat the dangers of the dungeon. The professors will be watching.

### The Teacher's Pet

The PC, a recognized student at Morgrave University, has been entrusted with the care of the professor's imp for the day. But once the professor is out of sight, the imp mutters, "I'm outta here," and vanishes. The hunt is on -- where would an imp go at the University? What's that commotion coming from the cafeteria? Has the imp taken off, or was it actually kidnapped by the Blood of Vol in an attempt to learn the professor's secrets? There *is* a now-suspicious Order of the Emerald Claw rally parading through on campus today. . . . Will the party catch the imp before the professor returns from his day of classes? Will the imp keep evading the PCs until an agent of the Order snatches it?

### The Livewood Ship

The heroes are apprentices aboard a merchant ship sailing trade routes between Sharn and the coast of Xen'drik. The captain, a lusty half-orc named Shakorra, is known for making her routes days before other ships, but her last crew gave up on her -- hence the party's presence there. When Shakorra takes a sharp detour in her route, the party finds that Shakorra has been *charmed* by some presence on the ship. In fact, a dryad bound to the livewood (*Eberron Campaign Setting*, page 127) composing part of the ship has decided to change the ship's route . . . toward a dangerous forested coastline of Xen'drik.

## Mini-Hooks

- The student PC's tuition, normally paid by his noble patron, was paid this semester with forged letters of credit with false arcane marks.
  - Math is hard: The heroes' project is to count the number of free fastieths in the Southern Talenta Herd, so that their professor can finish his publication on their migratory patterns.
  - Another student at the monastery challenges a PC to a duel, claiming dishonor due to a PC's comment about her.
  - An important exam is tomorrow, and the student PC must prepare for it, but the party is summoned by a duke to join him at a formal ball in his daughter's honor -- decisions, decisions.
  - The party accompanies their adventuring master on a "field trip" into the heart of Q'barra's jungle, whereupon the master is promptly stung by a native's poison dart.
  - During a routine plant recognition session in the King's Forest during their botany class, seven of the party's fellow students are kidnapped by the Jungle Boys.
  - The dean of Morgrave University selects twelve students to join him on a special expedition to the north coast of Argonnessen.
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## About the Author

Doug Beyer spent a lot of time getting philosophy degrees until he figured out that he should just move to Seattle and become a web developer for Wizards of the Coast. Now he spends his days working on games and his evenings playing them. Doug uses the time normally allotted for sleeping to lurk on the Wizards.com message boards as his alter ego, WotC\_Doog.

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