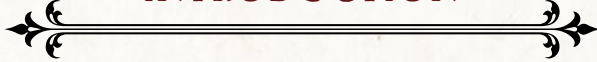


FREE CONTENT FRIDAY, APRIL 2021

KIDS ON BROOMS

By Doug Levandowski

INTRODUCTION

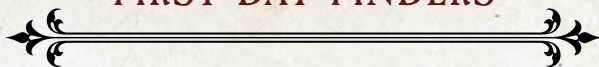


WHOA!! ***ARE YOU A PLAYER OR A GM?***

If you're a player, stop reading!
This has major spoilers about the entire year!!

If you're a GM, though, dive on in!

FIRST DAY FINDERS



An adventure for *Kids on Brooms* written by Doug Levandowski

Content Warnings: In this adventure, bullies steal an object from one of the players, then lie about it if confronted. There is also an optional scene with a student temporarily losing a hand (that's then magically reattached)—but omitting this scene would have no bearing on the narrative.

OVERVIEW

In “*First Day Finders*,” players experience the first day of school, either as new students to Delacorte or as older students and teachers chaperoning so that nothing goes too wrong. They’ll also be sharing some of the objects that they collected as part of their homework from the last adventure, so make sure that you remind your players to bring those items, especially the mundane objects that non-casters value. One of the new students’ items will be key to the adventure.

A note about adventures: This is meant to be a framework for the GM and the players. The big brushstrokes are important, but the details are yours to fill in. Throughout the adventure, there will be chances to add in your own characters and take things in whatever direction is best for your group! Lean into what they want to lean into, and encourage them to share in the creation of the world, especially when it comes to the bullies and some of the animals that populate Central Forest.

OPENING

Go around the table and ask players to give you a quick synopsis of what they did that morning, up to the point that they boarded The Nis. What is their life like outside of the magical world of Delacorte? How do they exist in non-casting New York City?

Then, read them the following. In all scripts, omit anything irrelevant to your group and replace anything to which your group has created an alternative, such as an established NPC or a different location:

Everything is a bit of a blur as you get to Delacorte for the first day of school. For those of you just starting your journey here, you've been given your byzantine class schedule, assigned your chaperone for the day (either an older student or a teacher), and shuffled off to your first class. As chance would have it, all of you who are new students are together throughout the morning. Older students and teachers, you've been assigned to one of them to make sure that they don't destroy themselves or the school while learning magic...at least not today.

Pause here to match them up. This can be a great way to have younger and older characters interact with each other. And if you'd like, you can assign Carter to one of the older PCs, even if that means that some of your younger PCs are matched up with NPC chaperones. (Either way, Carter will be with the students in the morning.) In those cases, let the player in charge of a PC create their chaperone, giving them a name, personality, and role in the school, whether that's an older student or a teacher. Alternatively, you could use an NPC from last month's list, though neither Augustine Williams (too important at the school) nor Rada Sindelic (teaching classes) will be chaperones.

Once they've interacted a bit there, read the following to them:

Jump cut to ten minutes into your first class, Professor Fulton's droning lecture on the nature of "mundane magical items." All of you have tuned out despite your best efforts, almost as though his words were casting a spell on all of you to make you hear only snippets of what he's saying. "And thus blah blah items, we find blah blah blah of yore blah blah blah enchant blah blah blah powerful blah blah blah, blah blah blah non-magical. Indeed, blah blah, blah blah blah these objects, which has the effect blah blah blah that they blah blah blah blah blah. It has led some to argue that blah blah blah blah blah blah blah, as blah blah could non-magic users blah blah blah, but blah blah blah blah false positives blah blah hypothesis blah." With that, he claps his hands, startling all of you, even his fellow teachers. "Now then! Let's have a look at what you brought in!!"

Professor Fulton is an old professor who, through and through, is boring. His tweed jacket and oxford shirt have certainly graced many first days of school before, and he gives off the air of a man so interested in what he's teaching that he has, himself, become profoundly uninteresting. His familiar, an old brindled grey cat named Tabitha, sleeps on his desk at the front, snoring quietly for the entire class. The lighter parts of her fur match Professor Fulton's unkempt light grey hair.

Feel free to let the characters be a bit confused about what they're supposed to be doing and look around to see. A Brains, Charm, or Grit check of 6 should let them notice that Carter is enthusiastically taking out what looks like a mundane object. He'll volunteer to go first, and Fulton will call on him unless players want to try to out-Charmed him. A quick roll-off will do the trick if they want.

Read the following (altering details if a PC goes first):

Fulton says, "Yes, Young Mr...Reilly. Come up and tell us about this object. It's small, so describe it for the people in the back."

Carter walks to the front of the room and says, "This silly little thing has been in my family for...I don't know how long. We found it in my grandfather's house when he passed. It's a cartoon rabbit, kinda leaning back on an arm and, like, giving that come hither look? It should be something we just tossed, but my parents and I laughed about it for at least five minutes and decided we couldn't throw it away. So, that's what I brought in."

At this point, two students will start mocking Carter for his object. If there were new students on The Nis who were cruel to Carter in your last adventure, this is a good time to bring them back—and establish them as the bullies for the year. If not, this is a good time to co-create some year-long antagonists. (Throughout the day, have them mock Carter when he doesn't immediately know what's going on.)

If none of the players put a stop to it, read the following:

Professor Fulton clears his throat. "Yes, well, that's just about enough, (name) and (name). Already acting churlish on the first day of school. A good first impression. What Young Mr. Reilly describes here is precisely the kind of thing that a secretly magical item could do to those around it, though it would only likely do that to non-magic users, which the Reillys and their son here certainly are not. I taught both of his parents, in point of fact. Young Mr. Reilly, please give my regards to them. Anyhow, we see a strong emotional response, a desire to keep and safeguard the object, a lack of surety about when the object came into the family's possession, and, er, something so profoundly, well, pointless about the object that you can't help but wonder why you still have it. Now then, let's give this a test and see. If it's a powerful object, we might need to safeguard it!" Professor Fulton waves his wand and mutters some words under his breath. The class, for the first time, is still and attentive. But nothing comes of it. "Young Mr. Reilly, you're holding a porcelain rabbit who's giving bedroom eyes. Nothing more. But, thank you for going first!"

After this, have all of the players share their objects with the class, including the older students and teachers, if you're so inclined. One of these objects will be special. If one of the new students is a First-Born Caster trope, have this be their object. Otherwise, have it be the last object shared from a new student PC.

As Professor Fulton waves his wand to check the object, someone yawns loudly, and for a moment, you worry it might have been you. But no...it's one of the teachers. But the whole class leans forward when the object starts to glow with a bright blue light. "Ah! Every few years we have one of these!" Professor Fulton exclaims excitedly. "You see, it's..." and he's cut off by the tolling of a bell from across campus: the end of the period has, mercifully, arrived. "Well, that's our class for the day, but I'll see you tomorrow, I think. I can never quite keep track of the schedule, but...I think, yes... Third block tomorrow. Unless there's a full moon. Is there a full moon?" One of the other teachers shakes her head. "No, no. Then third block tomorrow! And (name of person whose object glowed), a moment please!"

As the other students and chaperones file out, Fulton will talk to the PC about needing to find him in the next few days to get the object tested to find out what it can do. Sometimes, he'll say, these objects can be too powerful to be left in the wide world, but he says that a few quick tests can usually tell that. The object, he'll say, didn't give off too much energy, so he thinks it's unlikely...but "one can never be too safe, can one?" If the player tries to give it to him then, he'll say that he'll find them at lunch and get it then. He won't have time to run the tests now.

The next class is Introduction to Potions with Professor Zhao. Other than their ages, she and Fulton couldn't be more different. She welcomes students warmly into the class, and, as she starts the class, nearly immediately engages everyone with her enthusiasm for potions and sense of humor. She has short dark hair and speaks with a resonant voice that commands the room's attention. Her familiar, a hedgehog named Quinn, sits near her, alternating between looking at her and peering out at the class. She is well, but not flashily, dressed. (Note: If players have already established a professor for this class, swap as needed.)

The lesson for the day is about creating salves to heal burns quickly, which she demonstrates by applying an anesthetic to her hand, holding it in a fire for ten seconds, then applying a salve she created earlier. Rather than a script, here are some bullet points for what happens during the class:

- ① Professor Zhao has set out ingredients for everyone: aloe leaf, honey, butter, mandrake root, and ginger root. Each student has a small cauldron in front of them and a bunsen burner. The goal is to make a salve that will have a one-week shelf life.
- ① Carter makes the following two mistakes, publicly enough for the other students to see:

- He doesn't know the spell to create a spark to ignite the Bunsen burner, which he blames on being nervous about his first day of school. As soon as his chaperone shows it to him, though, he's able to repeat it flawlessly.
 - The confuses the mandrake root and the ginger root, only stopped at the last moment by his chaperone from putting them into the salve in the wrong order.
- ④ Not surprisingly, the bullies from the previous class will poke fun at him for these mistakes.
- ④ It's up to the players to determine what kind of magic they're going to use to create the salve. The more outlandish the explanation is, the higher the difficulty of the check should be. If PCs are creating a potion for the first time, it would need to be a Snap Decision. Below are some suggestions if players are struggling with coming up with their plan and an associated difficulty. If players come up with a more convincing explanation, you can lower the difficulty by a couple points.
- Brains magic would involve following the recipe and understanding the magical essence of the ingredients. (Difficulty 10 if never cast, as low as 5 if they've cast it many times before)
 - Brawn magic is a stretch, but it would involve breaking down the components and pushing them together in a new form. (Difficulty 14 if never cast, as low as 9 if they've cast it many times before)
 - Fight magic would involve understanding the essence of how these ingredients help to fight the kinds of injuries that the burns would cause. (Difficulty 12 if never cast, as low as 7 if they've cast it many times before)
 - Flight magic is also a stretch, but it could involve getting the essence of the ingredients to fight the effects of the burn. (Difficulty 16 if never cast, as low as 11 if they've cast it many times before)
 - Charm magic would involve coaxing the magic out of these mundane ingredients and getting them to work together. (Difficulty 12 if never cast, as low as 7 if they've cast it many times before)
 - Grit magic would involve seeing what elements in these ingredients would make someone who used the salve tough enough to repair themselves. (Difficulty 10 if never cast, as low as 5 if they've cast it many times before)
- ④ The more that a PC beats the Difficulty by, the better the salve is, which Professor Zhao will recognize immediately.

- After his missteps, Carter will produce the best potion in the class. One of the bullies will produce a great potion as well, but they'll be frustrated that Carter made a better one than they did. (If a PC beats the difficulty by 6 or more, they'll produce the second best potion instead, likely drawing the ire of the bully. However, no one will make a better potion than Carter.)
 - Professor Zhao will sincerely encourage anyone who missed their check to make the salve by 5 or less. It's good for a first try!
 - Anyone who does worse than that will still get encouragement, but Professor Zhao's encouragement will seem more like telling them that it's okay than telling them that they made a good effort.
 - Professor Zhao will praise anyone who produces a successful potion and will offer them the chance to burn their hand (after applying the anesthetic) to try it out. A few of the teacher chaperones will raise an eyebrow at this, but this isn't the first time they've seen this demonstration, and it's never gone poorly before.
- ⓓ While students are burning their hands, one of the bullies will take the chance to steal the apparently mundane magical object from the PC.

The final class for the morning is Beasts of the Central Forest with Professor Rada Sindelic. Whereas the danger in Professor Zhao's class was well controlled, here the danger is very real. As the PCs come in, read the following:

As the chaperones lead you to the outdoor area where Professor Sindelic's class will be today, you hear her saying in a soothing, calm voice, "Yes, yes, but you shouldn't have pulled her tail. You scared her, and she reacted the way animals do when they're scared. She bit you. But Professor Oliveira and I will get it reattached. It's not our first rodeo, kiddo." She glances over at you. "Be with you in just a minute."

As with the Potions class, here are some beats to include:

- ⓓ Professors Sindelic and Oliveira get things patched up quickly with the other student and get them on to their next class. Neither will be distracted while they're working on that.
- ⓓ After the healing, if players ask, a cougar wolf named Vesna is the culprit of the near loss of a hand. Professor Sindelic won't be bringing her back for later demonstrations, not because of the students but because "Vesna is upset"

- ④ Professor Sindelic has gathered some creatures from Central Forest to show the students. You could have each player give an animal for the demonstration, generate your own, or use any or all from the list below:
 - A wood mouse, which has all of the features of a normal mouse but is entirely wood
 - A squiregeon, a hybrid animal of a squirrel and a pigeon
 - A flash cat, a normal looking cat capable of teleporting up to six inches
 - A jackalope, the mythical antlered rabbit
 - A trout, which is a completely normal fish (but feel free to play with expectations and let players try to figure out what's special about it)
- ④ As the PCs interact with the creatures, have them make checks to see how they handle them.
 - Brawn, Fight, or Flight checks could allow players to overpower the animals, but Professor Sindelic won't take especially kindly to such treatment of them.
 - Grit checks could allow players to remain brave in the face of more fearsome or predatory creatures. Professor Sindelic will have a neutral response to players interacting with the animals this way.
 - Brains and Charm checks could allow players to understand or empathize with the creatures, which is what Professor Sindelic will be looking for.
- ④ PCs who interact well with the creatures might find themselves gaining Professor Sindelic's attention long term, as she's always looking for adept naturalists. Dejan, her red fox familiar, will take a particular shine to such players.
- ④ During this class, if the PC notices that their item has been swiped, they can look for opportunities to get it back.
 - To figure out who took it, have the character who lost the object make a Brains check of 8. It's discouraged to let more than one character make the same check, but, ultimately, it's your table! (Ultimately, it's not a big deal if they don't get the object back right now.)
 - Once they've figured that out, it's up to them how they get it back!
 - * Directly confronting the bully is one option. (A Grit or Fight check of 9 to threaten them won't be looked kindly upon by the chaperones, though.)

- * Telling a chaperone is possible without any check, and the chaperone will recognize the item as the PC's. The bully will plead ignorance about how the object got there, perhaps even blaming the PC for planting it on them. Ultimately, the teachers will leave it to the kids to sort it out among themselves once the object is returned. No punishment will be doled out for this, since no one can prove anything, and no real harm has been done.
- * Stealing the object back is possible with a Flight check of 4 or higher, though unless the PC gets a 9 or higher, someone will see them rooting through the bully's things as they recover their object.

Finally, students will head to Cratherford Hall (or "Crath") for lunch. If they haven't already discovered that the object has gone missing, Professor Fulton will bring that to their attention when he seeks the PC out to test to see how magical the object is. When he finds out it's missing, he'll ask the PC to step outside of Crath with him (since magic is strictly forbidden for both students and faculty inside the dining hall). Once outside, he'll teleport the object into his hand with a quick flick of his wand. While this won't reveal the thief, it will return the object, which is all he really cares about. He'll let the student join him back in his classroom to watch the tests if they want; otherwise, he'll assure them that he'll bring it back when he's finished with his tests. (If anyone does go to observe, they'll find that the tests are even more boring than the class...and they'll likely miss most of lunch.) There's nothing nefarious about his plans; Professor Fulton is boring through and through. He'll return the object to the PC and inform them that the object is indeed magical but not dangerous in any real way. It should have a small magical ability, something that's not powerful enough for the PC to want to carry it around with them. What exactly that power is is up to your discretion as a GM!

After lunch, PCs will go their (possibly) separate ways to have the rest of their classes for the day. For new students, this means going to any additional classes that they have on their schedule. For older students and faculty chaperones, this means staying with their buddies. GMs, ask all of your players the following questions:

- ❶ What are two odd, amusing, or upsetting things that happen during the last of your classes? (This can be a good way to get a sense of the tone that players want to have going forward in the year.)
- ❷ What happens during the afternoon that makes you hopeful about the rest of the year? (This can be a good way to get some ideas for upcoming adventures.)

After the last class ends, Head of School Williams addresses everyone before they board

The Nis to return home. Read the following to the players:

For your final meeting of the day, the Head of School, Augustine Williams, has gathered everyone near the Educationem Arbor. With the massive, gnarled tree where you had your first class of the day towering behind them, Williams addresses the group in a firm yet kind voice.

“Students, both new and old, and faculty, we’ve had a tremendously successful first day here at Delacorte. New students, I hope you felt the wonder I felt when I first beheld the Educationem Arbor, the joy I felt during my first day of classes here, and the excitement I felt at the prospect of spending four years here. Indeed, I loved it so much that I never really left. It is an honor and a privilege to attend the greatest magical school in the world, and I welcome you to the start of what will, I am certain, change all of your lives for the better. Returning students, I hope you saw afresh that wonder, joy, and excitement you felt on your first day through the eyes of your younger peers. And faculty, I hope you have felt those emotions and the mighty weight of responsibility for the care and well-being of our students. Even if the mystic energy that courses through this part of the city were lacking, Delacorte Academy of the Arcane would still be one of the most magical places on the planet thanks to all of you, all of us, who make Delacorte truly wondrous. Anyone born fortunate enough to wield magic can be a caster, but only a few such people get to walk these hallowed grounds as students or professors. Savor every moment! But for now, go home and get some rest. Classes start in earnest tomorrow. I have every confidence that you are more than up to the challenge.”

With that, they give a wave to the crowd and go back into the Tree, presumably to return to their office. A few of the older students start to direct their buddies to the entrance to The Nis. It won’t be the last train for the day, as The Nis always seems to show up at Delacorte when you need it. But, you’re all tired and a good night’s sleep before another day of classes seems wise.

At this point, let PCs wrap up however they feel the need to and then ask them about the end of their day. The end of this adventure could be a good place, time permitting, to let them have a small coda about their life out in the less-magical world.

The next two Free Content Fridays will feature adventures you can play at any time if not all members of your group can make it, one-off adventures with substitute teachers. In the meantime, though, feel free to create your own adventures for your players, exploring the parts of Delacorte that most interest your players!