

# PATHFINDER<sup>®</sup>

## ROLEPLAYING GAME™



# THE GAUNTLET

By Jason Bulmahn, Erik Mona, Jessica Price, and Stephen Radney-MacFarland

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## ROLEPLAYING GAME<sup>™</sup>

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# THE GAUNTLET

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## BACKGROUND

Sooner or later, successful and increasingly influential agents of the Pathfinder Society come to the attention of the leadership of Absalom's Grand Lodge. This results in a written summons, bearing the seal of the Society's Decemvirate masters, directing them to a specific Siege Castle in the foothills north of the city of Absalom for an important test known as the Gauntlet. Not all Pathfinder agents are called to run the Gauntlet, and it is whispered within the Society that those who successfully complete the test are more likely to receive prestigious assignments from the Decemvirate moving forward. Nearly all of the organization's venture-captains passed the Gauntlet before receiving their promotions, a pattern well noticed by the Society's most ambitious agents.

When the Pathfinder Society cleared out the ruins of this single-floor structure hundreds of years ago, the Decemvirate flooded the site with resources to transform it into a ready-made training dungeon for use by new recruits. Wizards affiliated with Absalom's House of Secrets wove powerful illusions to add to the challenge, and bound elementals, complex mechanical traps, and clever puzzles combined to create a truly deadly environment. Too deadly. The Gauntlet ravaged almost a whole generation of would-be Pathfinders before the Decemvirate shifted it to a test of mid-career agents, whom they reasoned ought to be more prepared after a steady career of dungeoneering.

Today, the Gauntlet still claims the lives of even experienced adventurers. Although positioned as a test and "re-set" for each group of adventurers that attempts it, there are no do-overs or easy escapes once the heroes have opened the dungeon's imposing red metal double doors. Those who enter the Gauntlet accept the lethal consequences of failure. Only by presenting deadly threats can the Society be sure that special agents are approaching the challenges seriously and can endure the hardships that accompany the Decemvirates' most dangerous missions.

Before you begin, tell your players that each of their characters recently received a written letter delivered by messenger ordering them to report together to the Gauntlet Siege Castle in the hills north of Absalom on the current date. The letter states that once they open the red metal

doors, they have entered the Gauntlet, and that honor demands that they not leave until they have successfully navigated its many dangers. When you are ready to begin, read or summarize the following:

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From atop the high bluff, the sprawling city of Absalom at your back, your destination looks like nothing so much as an errant pile of rocks and loose boulders. A Siege Castle, they call it, one of an endless number of ruins surrounding the City at the Center of the World, time-lost fortresses of would-be conquerors. In thousands of years, Absalom has never fallen, leaving a scattering of forgotten towers, castles, and keeps strewn at odd intervals like corpses on a battlefield. As you near, the structure's irregular contours take form. Huge monoliths of old stone form a squat platform about a hundred feet square. Centuries of rubble and debris litter the top of the platform, which levels out twenty feet from the ground. A fallen tower or crumbling rampart rises from the rubble here and there, but the ruin looks beyond hope of restoration, its run-down architecture more a part of the natural landscape than an edifice crafted by the hands of men. But there, at the center of the southern wall, lies the landmark spoken of in your summons—sturdy double doors of bright red metal. The time to test your adventuring skills is at hand. It's your turn to face the Gauntlet!

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Until the heroes open the unlocked red metal doors, their test has not yet begun, and they are free to conduct themselves as they wish. A successful DC 15 Perception check in the vicinity of the structure's single entrance reveals the remnants of burnt incense cones; a character who succeeds at a DC 15 Spellcraft check identifies these as the material components for several divination spells. A tour of the surrounding area confirms the dimensions above, and reveals no additional means of entrance or exit from the Siege Castle beyond the red metal doors. Any connections from the top of the platform to the spaces below collapsed generations ago, sealing the structure tight.

## 1. ENTRANCE CHAMBER

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The red metal doors open to reveal a richly appointed room lit by lanterns along all four walls. A wide carpet of regal blue hue stretches thirty-five feet across the floor to a pair of deep green

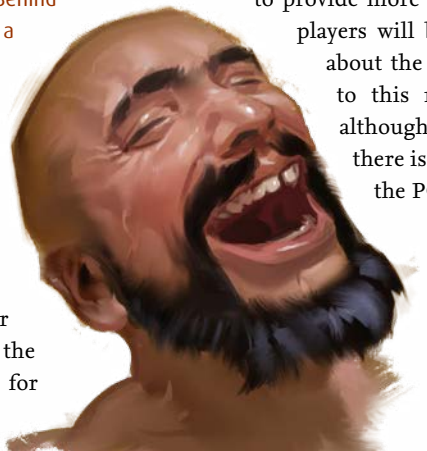


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metal doors set into the north wall opposite you. Halfway across the room, the carpet branches to the west, where it ends at the foot of a golden door with bright silver hinges. Two man-sized statues of sumptuously armored figures in elaborate masks flank the golden door, the glass lenses of their helmets glimmering in the lantern-light as they stand silent vigil. Along the eastern wall, four broad stairs lead to a wide dais on which rests a long banquet table overlooking the room. Behind the table sit three well-composed figures: a long-haired elf in robes wearing a wistful look, a middle-aged human seated before an open book, and a gregarious bald human with a clipped dark beard and a glint in his eye.

The player characters immediately recognize the seated figures as the three powerful deans of the Pathfinder Society's academy in Absalom, the honored instructors responsible for training young Pathfinders prior to their Confirmation as formal field agents. From north to south, they are the elf Kreighton Shaine (CG male elf diviner 7/lore master 3), the Society's Master of Scrolls; Sorrina Westyr (N female orad<sup>B2</sup> cleric of Nethys), its Master of Spells; and Marcos Farabellus (CG male human fighter 6/rogue 4), its Master of Swords. All of these characters likely played a role in the PCs' training, but it has been a long time since the heroes have had reason to spend time with their former mentors. Once all of the player characters have entered the Entrance Chamber, proceed with the following.

The red metal doors clang shut behind you, echoing against the sturdy stone walls of the lantern-lit chamber. The woman at the center of the table turns to the massive book before her and reads each of your names, pausing for a moment to look straight into the eyes of each hero as his or her name is called. "Able agents," she says, "the Decemvirate itself has taken notice of your exploits and adventures, and believes that you are called to further greatness on behalf of the Pathfinder Society. To prove that their trust in your abilities is well founded, they have called upon we three deans of the Pathfinder Society, your former trainers, to administer one final test to you. Your task is to venture north, through the green metal doors, and face the Gauntlet's challenges and eventually emerge through the gold door to the west. Before you proceed, you may each ask each of your old instructors a single yes-or-no question about the dangers to come, which we are obliged to answer as honestly as possible."



**Marcos Farabellus**

Shaine, Westyr, and Farabellus attempt to honestly answer any questions the PCs put to them. In a way, the Decemvirate's test of the player characters is also a test of their abilities as trainers, and the three deans would prefer that all of their students make it through the Gauntlet alive. Use your own foreknowledge as Game Master to answer the PCs' questions truthfully, but do not go out of the way to provide more information than a "yes" or "no." Canny players will be able to learn important information about the Gauntlet. They might even double-back to this room and ask their questions later—although the deans do not offer this information, there is no time limit on when they must answer the PCs' questions, meaning they may be used to resolve puzzles and questions the PCs do not yet know.

The gold door along the west wall is magically locked and cannot be opened from this side.

**Development:** A successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals that the two statues flanking the gold door are meant to represent members of the Decemvirate, the 10 secretive masked figures who lead the Pathfinder Society. Close examination reveals that the figures are not sculptures at

all, and that the costumes can be carefully removed from the plain stone mannequins on which they rest. Wearing one of these costumes reduces a character's speed by 10 and conveys a -4 penalty on Perception checks, but otherwise renders the wearer immune to the poisonous gas in area 2 (as well as all other inhaled poisons), provided the suit remains sealed. Each time a wearer is struck by a critical hit, he must attempt a Reflex saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + the damage dealt to avoid harming the suit. Once damaged, the suit confers no benefit against inhaled poisons, but continues to limit movement and Perception. At the conclusion of the adventure, the Society demands the return of the suits, which are then repaired and returned to their place on the mannequins.

## 2. THE CHAMBER OF FACES

The green metal doors open to reveal a short hallway extending five feet to the north before ending in a billowing curtain of opaque, multi-colored gas. Every few seconds, the gas glows with an inner, largely obscured radiance—first red, then blue, and finally white before the cycle begins anew. The swirling gas makes distance difficult to determine, but perhaps eighty feet away, a wide column of dull green light casts a lugubrious radiance over the chamber.

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An unseen magical barrier keeps the multi-colored gas from leaking into area 1. Player characters may freely pass through this invisible plane, but the gas cannot. Beyond the barrier, the floor drops 30 feet to another stone floor upon which a ragged, mustard-colored carpet spreads north past a series of six alcoves—three on either side—leading toward the pillar of green energy that extends from the room’s floor to its ceiling.

At the end of each alcove, 30 feet below the floor (on the same level as area 1), is a large, stylized bas-relief face, complete with staring eyes and a howling mouth large enough to fit a human. From the southwest alcove moving counter-clockwise, the large stone faces are red, orange, yellow, blue, indigo, and violet. Each face’s mouth spews billowing gas of the same color, contributing to the room’s multi-colored gas trap.

**Traps:** The gas in this chamber is highly flammable. If exposed to any fire effect other than that of the room’s eye blast trap, the entire room goes up in a massive explosion, dealing 5d6 points of fire damage to everyone in the room. This burns off the gas, and is the only way to get a clear view of the room. Otherwise, the cloying gas impairs vision within the room, granting concealment to all within it. Once burned off, it takes 10 rounds for the gas to re-fill the room.



**Sorrina Westyr**

serve as a teleporter to the next chamber of the challenge.

**EYE BEAMS** **CR 4**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 15

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity (within 10 feet of eye beams); **Reset** automatic (immediate)

**Effect** energy blast (4d6 fire, electricity, or cold damage; Reflex DC 20 half); multiple targets (all targets in proximity)

30 feet below the faces, the mustard-colored, moldering magical carpet upon the floor poses a challenge of its own. Those who step upon it risk its corrosive, acidic touch. This caustic substance is easily capable of damaging sealed environment suits, thus rendering their wearers susceptible to the room’s multi-colored gas trap.

**THE SHABBY CARPET** **CR 4**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** automatic (immediate)

**Effect** acidic burn (4d6 acid damage, Reflex DC 20 half); multiple targets (all targets on carpet)

**MULTI-COLORED GAS** **CR 10**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic (10 rounds)

**Effect** poison gas (burnt other fumes); never miss; multiple targets (all targets in room)

The three ranks of carven faces glare across the central hall toward one another. Bright beams of colorful energy shoot from one set of eyes to the other; progressing from south to north, the beams are red (fire), blue (electricity), and white (cold). Any character who approaches within 10 feet of these beams (which are themselves 30 feet from the floor) risks triggering a trap.

The eyelids of each face close with a successful DC 15 Disable Device check. Closing the eyelids of any face immediately disrupts the eye beams in the associated alcoves, ending the threat of that eye beam trap. Once a face’s eyelids are closed, its mouth no longer serves as a potential teleportation target of the room’s pillar of light trap. Closing all of the eyelids changes the pillar of light to

**Pillar of Light:** At the far northern

end of the chamber, a 5-foot-wide pillar of green energy extends from floor to ceiling. Those who step within the pillar are teleported into the mouth of one of the room’s stone faces (determined randomly), and risk a deadly fall to the stone floor below. Those who are teleported can attempt a DC 16 Reflex save to grab onto the lip of the mouth and avoid the 30-foot fall (although they must still find a way down). The walls can be climbed with a successful DC 25 Climb skill check.

**Creatures:** Four adamantine cobras (variant iron cobras) lurk on the floor of the chamber, slithering toward interlopers and attacking with their poisonous bites. The creatures are immune to the acidic damage of the shabby carpet, and their glowing red eyes easily see through the concealment effect of the burnt other fumes clouding the room.

**ADAMANTINE COBRAS (4)** **CR 7**

**XP 800 each**

**hp** 20 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 182)

**Development:** Closing the eyelids of all six faces disarms

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the eye beams and multi-colored gas traps. Thereafter, player characters who step within the green pillar of light are teleported to area 3.

## 3. DEADLY SWIM (CR 8)

The light fades away and you find yourself standing in a different room. The curved walls of this chamber are covered in a wavy pattern made up of tiny blue stones. Opposite you is a large, oblong pool of liquid from which emanates an acrid stench.

The pillar of light in area 2 deposits the characters here once they have completed the challenge in that chamber (although they can use the pillar of light to return to area 2 at any time). Here the difficulty is a bit more obvious. The only apparent way out of the chamber is through a large pool opposite the entrance. The pool sits inside a 1-foot-tall stone wall, but its liquid goes right up to the rim. There is a small gutter around the edge of the pool that catches any liquid that overflows the short wall.

The pool itself is 10 feet deep, but characters standing at the edge of the pool can attempt a DC 20 Perception skill check to notice that on the far side of the calm pool, there appears to be a passageway at the bottom, leading down into darkness. This passageway drops down 50 feet before turning to head to area 4. The liquid in the pool is quite calm and can be navigated with a successful DC 10 Swim skill check.

**Pool Hazard:** The top of the pool is covered in a layer of powerful acid that happens to be lighter than water, causing it to float. Anyone looking at the pool notices that it seems to have an oily sheen. Touching the acid deals 1d6 points of acid damage, but becoming submerged in it deals 4d6 points of acid damage per round the creature remains at the surface. The acid layer is only 2 inches deep, but it does cover the entire surface of the pool. Casting *create water* into the pool does cause the acid to flow up over the wall and into the drain. Due to the large surface area, there are approximately 165 cubic feet of acid that need to be displaced in this way, although after about 100 the acid becomes so sparse that it is no longer a threat. For a 7th level caster, this would require approximately 50 castings of *create water*.

**Creature:** Down at the bottom of the passageway, between this chamber and the next, resides a trio of hungry tojanida that swim up to attack anyone that gets halfway down the

shaft. They avoid going up the surface in this room because of the acid, but will lurk just below and attack anyone swimming in the pool.

### TOJANIDA (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 51 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 270)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Desperate for a meal, the tojanida attack anyone swimming down the shaft.

They do not strike with any particular coordination other than to swarm the first creature down the shaft.

**Morale** The tojanida are starving and fight to the death, but they do not leave the water under any circumstances.

## 4. SPINNING GAUNTLET (CR 8)

Rising to the surface of the pool, you find yourself in a chamber bathed in red and blue flickering light. Above you, on a pedestal well above the water, is a enormous statue of an armor-clad knight cast in stone. Each of its outstretched arms ends in a massive stone gauntlet. The gauntlet on the right hand radiates a flickering red flame, while a nimbus of blue frost surrounds the gauntlet on the left hand.

The pool in this chamber is 10 feet deep, and can be navigated with a successful DC 10 Swim check. Unlike the pool in area 3, this one contains entirely fresh, clean water. The tojanida from the tunnel below will pursue characters into this chamber, but they will retreat to the tunnel if the characters climb out of the pool. The tunnel in the center of the room goes down 50 feet before turning to head to area 3.

The door leading to area 5 is made of iron and is locked. There is no keyhole in the door and it cannot be opened using Disable Device. The door opens automatically if the trap in this room is disarmed or destroyed.

The statue in this chamber is actually a dangerous trap. It is 10 feet tall and made entirely out of stone. Those inspecting the statue can attempt a DC 20 Perception skill check to notice that there is a seam around the waist of the statue and the arms look like they might pivot. Anyone who beats this check by 10 or more can notice that on the back of each gauntlet, shrouded by energy is a matching gemstone that looks almost like a button. The trap is triggered by anyone who climbs to the top of the stairs.

**Trap:** When triggered, the giant statue begins to spin in place while its arms rise up and down. On the first round,



**Kreighton Shaine**

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it strikes anyone adjacent to the statue (although those down in the pool are safe from its deadly gauntlets). On the following round, the gauntlets detach on 5-foot-long chains and the statue strikes characters 10 feet away (ignoring those adjacent to the statue). This pattern repeats itself for 1 minute after which time the trap resets (and might immediately retrigger if a character is still in the room).

Whenever a character is struck by a fist, they can attempt a DC 15 Perception skill check to notice the gemstone button on the back of the gauntlet that hit them. Characters aware of the buttons can attempt a DC 15 Acrobatics skill check to hit the button when they are struck by it. Making this check causes the gauntlet to lose its energy aura for 1 round. If both gauntlets are deactivated at the same time, the trap is disarmed and the door to area 5 silently swings open.

## SPINNING STATUE TRAP

**CR 7**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Duration** 1 minute; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** Spinning gauntlets hit all creatures adjacent to the statue on the first round, then 10 feet away on the second round, repeating the pattern in subsequent rounds; Atk +15 melee (3d6+10), hits also deal 2d6 points of cold or fire damage (determined randomly)

## 5. WIND AND STONE (CR 5)

Opening the door, you are assaulted by the sound of howling wind. This chamber is cut in half by a gigantic pit, with only a thin ledge making up the far side. There are two exits from this chamber: one on your side and one on the other. Although you can feel a stiff breeze, the loud sound of rushing air seems to be coming from the gap.

The center of this chamber contains a 10-foot-wide pit that drops down 100 feet. While it would normally be relatively easy to cross this span, the gulf is also home to a howling wall of wind. Anyone attempting to jump or fly over the pit is thrown back against the west wall, taking 2d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex save negates). This wall also deflects any physical object thrown or fired across the pit. Energy and rays can cross normally, as can any spell effect that does not have a physical manifestation or can originate from the other side.

The wind wall can only be disabled by lighting up all of the chambers in area 6.

**Creature:** On the far side of the pit is a basilisk. While it cannot attack characters on the far side with its bite, its gaze attack is perfectly capable of crossing the pit and turning characters to stone.

## BASILISK

**CR 5**

**XP 1,600 each**

**hp** 52 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 29)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Each round a character is on the far side of the pit, the basilisk uses its gaze to try and turn one of them to stone at random.

**During Combat** The basilisk uses its gaze to petrify foes and block their advance on the narrow ledge, turning to its bite only when foes close to melee.

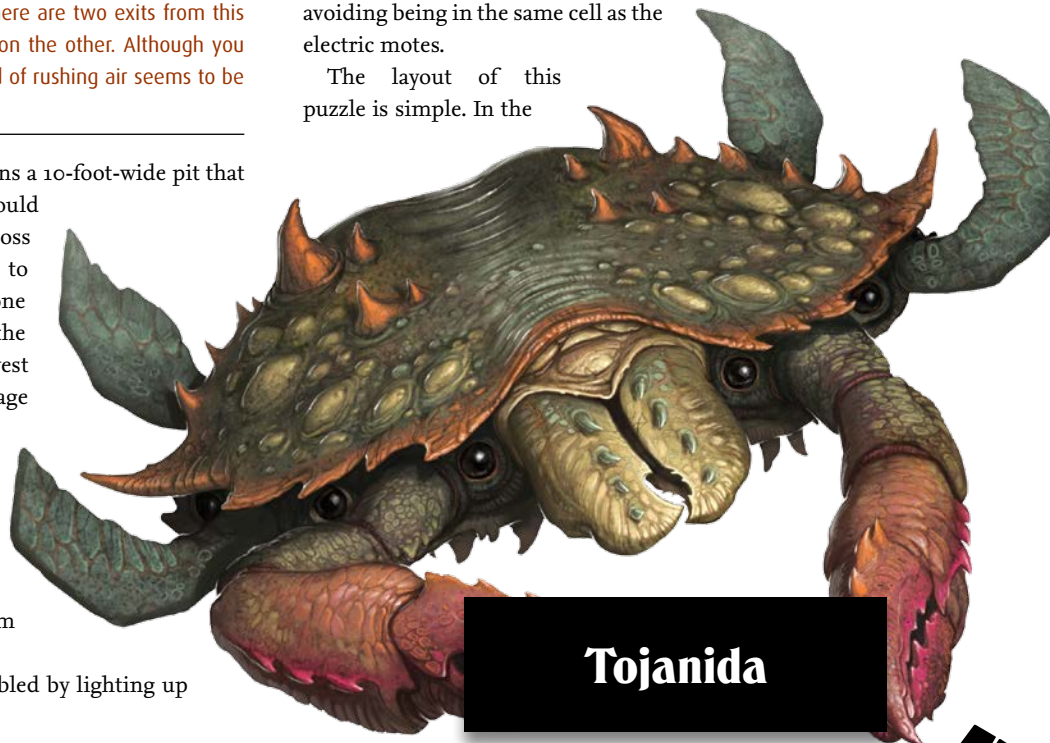
**Morale** The basilisk has nowhere to flee and fights to the death.

## 6. SHIFTING CELLS (CR 6)

This rectangular chamber is divided up into three smaller cells. The cell containing the entrance and the far cell both hold a short wall of steel bars in the center on the outside. The walls dividing the cells are solid at the center, but are also made of similar steel bars close to the outer walls. An electrical buzzing can be heard coming from the far cell.

This chamber contains a puzzle that the PCs must solve if they want to bring down the wind wall in area 5 and progress deeper into the dungeon. To solve the puzzle, the PCs must light up every cell in the room while avoiding being in the same cell as the electric motes.

The layout of this puzzle is simple. In the



**Tojanida**



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center of the room are two walls, set on a pivot. There are levers that cause these walls to turn. The levers in B, D, and F cause the walls to rotate 90 degrees (on their central pivot), so that they touch at the center in a horizontal orientation (as viewed by looking down at the map), creating two cells, a north and a south cell. The levers in A, C, and E cause the walls to rotate back to their starting position (referred to as their vertical orientation). Pulling a lever that corresponds to the position the walls are already in has no effect (so when the PCs enter the chamber, pulling the lever in C has no effect since the walls start in the vertical orientation).

When the PCs enter the room, there are dancing motes of electricity in the 10-foot square area marked A on the map. Whenever a lever is pulled that causes the walls to rotate, the motes vanish, leaving behind a nimbus of light and appear in the 10-foot-square area closest to the lever that was pulled without traveling through any of the walls (they stay in the cell that they started in). For example, when the PCs first enter the chamber, the only lever they can pull is lever F, which causes the walls to rotate to the horizontal orientation and the motes to vanish, reappearing in C.

The motes move only once the walls have rotated. The walls rotate too quickly for anyone to jump between cells. If anyone is caught in a cell where they motes appear, they take 10d6 points of electricity damage and are teleported back to area 5. A successful DC 20 Reflex save halves this damage, but it does not negate the teleportation.

When the motes leave an area they create a nimbus of light. While this is harmless, the nimbus serves a valuable purpose. Once there is a nimbus of light in all six areas on the map, the wind wall in area 5 is dispelled for 1 hour, allowing the PCs to easily traverse the pit. If the PCs leave this area and remain outside the room for 1 minute or more, the room resets to its initial configuration.

## 7. THE LAIR OF THE TWINS

The center of this large chamber contains a large pit that drops down into darkness. Around the outside, the walkway is concave and curved, almost like a giant track. Two huge stone spheres are set into this track, in opposite corners of the room.

The giant stone spheres are 10 feet in diameter and they block the way, making it very difficult to get around them. Although they are stationary when the PCs enter the chamber, they can be commanded to move by the inhabitants of the room. Once called to move, the giant stone spheres roll at a pace of 15 feet per round (meaning it takes them 2 rounds to move from one corner to the next). If this occurs during combat, the stones move at the end of each round. Anyone struck by a stone must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save or take 10d6 points of damage as the stone rolls over them. A character who succeeds is pushed to the next open space in

front of the stone's implacable advance. The stones begin in the northwest and southeast corners of the room. The only exit from this chamber is a door set into the west wall.

**Creatures:** If anyone enters the room, a deep, growling voice of indeterminate gender cries out, "Halt! You trespass upon the domain..." and a second voice, slightly higher, continues, "of the Ruby Sphinxes. There is a price for passage."

A few seconds later, the twins Aryel and Aryeth fly up from the bottom of the pit and perch atop the stone spheres. The two are polite but implacable, and complete one another's sentences. The twins believe they are sphinxes, and will be satisfied by only a specific gift as tribute: a magic item worth at least 5,000 gp.

If the PCs offer them an item, they seize it and return to their nest at the bottom of the pit, leaving the PCs to clamber over the spheres. If they are refused, they alight from the spheres, willing them into motion and attack using their breath weapons whenever the PCs are in a convenient formation.

### ARYEL AND ARYETH

**CR 7**

#### XP 3,200 each

Male and female brass half-dragon dire lions (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 102, 170, 193)

N Large Dragon

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent;

Perception +11

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 84 each (8d8+48)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

**Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep

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#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., **fly** 80 ft. (average)

**Melee** bite +16 (1d8+11 plus grab), 2 claws +17 (1d6+11)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (1/day, 60 ft. line, 8d6 fire, Reflex DC 20), pounce, rake (2 claws +17, 1d6+11)

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 33, **Dex** 15, **Con** 23, **Int** 4, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 30 (34 vs. trip)

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (claw)

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Perception +11, Stealth +9 (+13 in undergrowth); Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+8 in undergrowth)

## 8. MARZA AND THE PUGWAMPIS

The narrow passageway opens up into a hallway that ends in a pair of doors. Narrow slits line the walls on both sides of the hall.





# THE GAUNTLET

This room at first appears to be a long, 10-foot-wide corridor with double doors at the northern end, though observers with a sufficient light source may notice 2-foot-wide arrow slits in the walls. The 10-foot by 10-foot area at the southern end is a pressure plate. Any weight over 5 lbs. causes it to depress, releasing grease from containers at the bottom of the arrow slits, coating the entire floor. The wooden doors are locked, and require a successful DC 25 Disable Device check to open them.

Behind the walls is a corridor, which is 5 feet wide on the east and west sides, and 10 feet wide behind the northern doors. Lurking beyond the doors is Marza, a gnoll bound by a *geas* not to let anyone through. She wants nothing more than to leave this place, but unless the PCs can find a way to release her from the *geas*, she is forced to bar their passage and kill them if they press the issue. Marza is accompanied by a gaggle of pugwampis, who worship her as their warrior queen, though she despises the creatures and continually attempts to get them to leave her alone. The pugwampis attempt to pick off anyone who enters the rooms, firing with their shortbows through the arrow slits and giggling as their unluck aura makes it more difficult for intruders to remain upright atop the grease-coated floor. The long-suffering Marza does nothing unless the PCs manage to reach the doors, at which point she moves to a nearby arrow slit and engages with her longbow.

MARZA	CR 8
<b>XP 3,200</b>	
Gnoll ranger 7 ( <i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 155)	
CN female humanoid (gnoll)	
<b>Init</b> +6; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12	
DEFENSE	
<b>AC</b> 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)	
<b>hp</b> 74 (9 HD; 2d8+7d10+27)	
<b>Fort</b> +11, <b>Ref</b> +7, <b>Will</b> +5	
OFFENSE	
<b>Speed</b> 20 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> scimitar +12/+7 (1d6+4/18-20)	
<b>Ranged</b> +1 composite longbow +10/+10/+5 (1d8+5/×3)	
<b>Special Attacks</b> combat style (archery), favored enemy (humans +4, elves +2)	
<b>Ranger Spells Prepared</b> (CL 4th, concentration +5)	



1st-longstrider, resist energy

## STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

**Skills** Climb +14, Handle Animal +5, Heal +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +12, Stealth +11, Survival +12

**SQ** favored terrain (desert +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +3, wild empathy +5, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** potion of barkskin, potion of cure moderate wounds, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** scale mail, +1 composite longbow (+4 Str) with 30 arrows, 127 gp

## PUGWAMPIS (4)

CR 1/2

**XP 200 each**

**hp** 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 144)

## 9. RESPITE AND A WARNING

The doors open to reveal a small chamber, ruined by the passage of time. Four crumbling pillars support a domed ceiling high above. The western wall has all but collapsed, revealing a narrow passage that winds off into an unsettling darkness. Directly across from you, there seems to be something scrawled on the wall in chalk.

This chamber is one of the few safe places in the Gauntlet. The Pathfinders placed it here so that explorers might get a moment of respite before facing even greater challenges in the rooms beyond. No monsters will enter this room or attack anyone resting inside.

On the opposite wall is a simple message. Written in common, it reads: "Rest and fortify yourself against the horrors that await you in the foul caverns that lie beyond. Temptation is the ruin of many Pathfinders."

Any PCs who investigate the passageway upon leaving this room smell a foul vapor and feels a clammy, moist breeze, almost like a dead breath, wash over them. However, they hear and see nothing that would give them a clue as to what lies in the next chamber.

# PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME

## 10. EBON MONASTERY (CR 8)

Deeper into the cavern, its walls fade to the color of pitch black night. The darkness drips down the walls, like an oily resin coating the place from some unknown source. The air is oppressive and pungent. Whatever lines the cavern emits a strong alchemical smell.

The following chambers were created to tempt the Pathfinders who traverse the Gauntlet into acts of evil, while giving them the possibility to serve the greater good if they are willing to pay the price. To that end, they placed a powerful evil relic here (the *Wraithsoul Stone*), in hopes that the teams might find a way to destroy it. Although none have succeeded, as long as they avoid corruption, they are not considered to have failed their trial.

The surface of this chamber, as well as those of the Void's Relic (area 12) are lined with a viscous, unholy alchemical substance, dulling light and thwarting some forms of divination. While this ebon resin is harmful to living creatures, its corruption takes days rather than minutes to take hold and manifest.

Any flame—whether open, contained in a lantern, and even continuous flame—sputters in this room, causing it to emit only dim light within its normal bright light radius. The ebon goo also automatically counters any light spell or supernatural effect cast or used within this chamber, causing that light to sputter and end if it is already in effect. Lastly, the goo radiates strong evil and is so pervasive that it

tends to mask auras of equal or less strength than itself. If *detect evil* is cast, on the 2nd round, the caster can attempt a DC 15 Spellcraft check to determine there are three distinct evil auras in this place. Failing the check detects only the strong evil aura of the ebon goo. Even on a successful check, the pervasive nature of the goo bars the caster from determining the location of the pair of creatures lurking in this cavern.

**Creatures:** Clinging to the sticking walls of this chamber is a pair of kurobozu, undead monks starving for life force. While their hunger is wracking, their remembered discipline keeps them from striking until the time is right. They'll wait to attack until they are spotted (the strange properties of this chamber grant them ideal circumstances for Stealth, unless the PCs cast *daylight* or some other high-level light effect illuminating the darkness) or until the PCs approach the *Chamber of Blasphemies* (area 11) or Void's Relic (area 12). If the PCs head toward the *Chamber of Blasphemies*, the kurobozu allow them to slip through. They know the dangers of the chamber and hope that it will weaken the interlopers, making them easier prey upon their return. Any approach toward the Void's Relic provokes an immediate attack, as the monks are sworn to protect the unholy relic.

### KUROBOZU (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 76 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5* 153)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The kurobozu fight in concert, focusing on spellcasters, especially those who tout a holy symbol first. One attempts to stun their foe, while the other uses his steal breath ability, further weakening the target and robbing them of some spellcasting power.

**Morale** The monks are bound to this chamber, the Chamber of Blasphemies, and the Void's Relic, and do not follow the PCs if they leave those areas. They will also tend to avoid the Chamber of Blasphemies, as they find that chamber's strange properties to be unpleasant.

## 11. CHAMBER OF BLASPHEMIES (CR 6)

A small side passage opens out to a worked room covered with sandstone tiles. The tiles are scrawled with writing, diagrams, and pictograms. The writing and pictures are a scrambled mess. While chunks of writing seem to detail some complex messages or ideas, the chaos of the room's decor disorients the senses. And then some of the writing moves.

Where the *Wraithsoul Stone* goes, so goes the *Chamber of Blasphemies*. These two occult objects are linked essentially,



**Kurobozu**

# THE GAUNTLET

like night and day, or good and evil. While the stone possesses the power of destruction, this chamber thrums with creative intellectual energy. Some believe it harbors the souls of thousands of mad geniuses attempting to solve the riddles of the multiverse. Others believe it was created to sequester the worst blasphemies of the multiverse.

Whatever the case, exposure to the chamber is dangerous. As long as any creature purposely does not read the walls, they can stay in the room for 1 minute without suffering any adverse. Someone who keeps their eyes close and can last for 10 minutes, before the voices start, somewhere in the depths of their minds, reading bits and pieces, forcing them to hear forbidden knowledge. Those who start reading the walls, are afflicted with the room's effect immediately, but also have a 20% chance of gaining a forbidden knowledge boon (see Table 1: Forbidden Knowledge). Those who do not read the walls cannot gain these boons.

**Chamber's Effects:** Any creature staying in the room, must first decide how they are interacting with the text and then must make Will saving throws based on that interaction. A creature must make the saving throw once per round if reading the text, once per minute if not reading but still have its eyes opened, and once every 10 minutes if the creature is in the room with its eyes closed. The Will saving throw DC is 15 + how many saving throws that creature has made against the Chamber of Blasphemies within the past 24 hours. The room's strange magic effect occurs on a failed save, and is based on how many saving throws the creature has failed against the room in the past 24 hours. While the Chamber's effects are mind-affecting, they also affect vermin and undead (and even if those creatures are immune to conditions or effects of the text). The effects are not language dependent.

o *Failed Saving Throws:* The creature's senses start to swim. It becomes sickened.

1 *Failed Saving Throw:* The ground frequently seems to lurch and move in waves. The creature's base land speed is reduced by 5 feet, and it takes a -4 penalty to Acrobatics checks made to move across the ground. It continues to be sickened.

2 *Failed Saving Throws:* The shifting insane words dull any sense of distance and proportion. The creature takes a -2 penalty to melee attack rolls and a -6 penalty to ranged attack rolls.

3 *Failed Saving Throws:* The strange blasphemies have devoured all ideas of sense and reason. The creature suffers the effects of *feblemind* and all the other effects of the other failed saving throws.

Saving throws are made at the start of interaction with the room but don't take effect until after the interaction. For instance, if the creature that is not reading the words, but still has its eyes open, fails the saving throw, it would become sickened 1 minute later, and this occurs whether or not the

## Table 1: Forbidden Knowledge

Those who read the words scrawled on the wall have a 20% chance of gaining one of the following forbidden knowledge boons. Pick or roll from the following chart to determine the boon gained. Characters gain a +1 circumstance bonus to their roll for each failed saving throw they have made.

1d8	Effect
1	You gain 1d10 temporary hit points that last until they are lost or 24 hours, whichever occurs first.
2	You regain the casting of a 2nd- or 1st-level spell. (If you're not a spellcaster, the GM picks another effect or rolls again.)
3	You gain DR 5/— for the next 24 hours. If you already have DR/—, it increases by 5.
4	Your senses become preternatural. You gain a +6 bonus on Perception and initiative checks for the next 24 hours.
5	You gain the ability to dodge some touch attacks. For the next 24 hours, when someone attempts to attack your touch AC, they must roll twice and take the worst of the results.
6	You gain a +4 insight bonus to a single ability score of your choice for the next 24 hours.
7	You are affected as if by the haste spell for the next 24 hours.
8+	If you are a good-aligned creature, you gain the power to destroy the <i>Wraithsoul Stone</i> . You can do so by staying in physical contact for 3 rounds, while reciting words of power. If contact is lost, or the words cannot be heard, you must start this ritual again. (If you're not a good-aligned creature, the GM picks another effect or rolls again.)

creature is still in the chamber. The chamber's effects last for 24 hours or until removed by way of *break enchantment* or a more powerful effect. Dispelling the negative effects of the chambers also dispel any boons gained.

## 12. VOID'S RELIC (CR 9)

According to the occult scholars, the *Wraithsoul Stone* was plucked from the endless void by the mad sage Lynothrix, to seed the Material Plane with more negative energy. Others believe that the vessel is timeless, a blight of the void created with the multiverse. Whatever the truth, it is now somewhat contained here, watched over by Enthrauthus, a leukodaemon. Enthrauthus follows the stone wherever it goes and has been meditating over it for centuries. The daemon is waiting for the relic to relay its secrets. The leukodaemon believes that the *Wraithsoul Stone* will grant the secrets of a great plague that, with Enthrauthus's coaxing, can reveal the secrets of a disease that will tatter if not fully unwind the forces binding the multiverse together. Enthrauthus is eager to see this done and suffers no interruption lightly.

# PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME

Black goo oozes down the walls of this cavern and congeals in pools upon the floor. Much of the stuff lies as a pond in the center of the room. An island toward the center of that pond holds a small plinth, atop which rests an oval stone. Somewhat transparent, an inky blackness roils just under the stone's surface, darker than the blackest thunderhead.

This cavernous chamber reaches up some 50 feet from the floor. The black goo in this room acts the same as the stuff in the Ebon Monastery (area 10). The pool in the center of the room is 4 feet deep, and acts as difficult terrain, but it takes two extra 5-foot squares of movement to enter a square rather than just 1. Furthermore, when a creature first enters the pool, and at any point that it ends its turn in the goo, it must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw or be slowed (as per *slow*) until the end of its next turn. A creature that is currently slowed by the goo and fails this saving throw takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage as the concentration of the evil substance drains the creature's being. The Constitution damage is a death effect, and thus, Enthrauthus is immune from this part of the goo's effect.

**Creature:** Covered in the inky goo in the southeast corner of the room, Enthrauthus meditates. The leukodaemon has meditated in one place for so long he appears as nothing more than a large lump of black goo. This goo has no effect on his *deathwatch* or *detect good* spell-like abilities, allowing him to detect good and dying creatures in the chamber. As soon as he does, or hears some creature's approach, he bursts into action.

## ENTHRAUTHUS

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 115 each (see leukodaemon, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 268)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Enthrauthus uses his bow from a distance for as long as possible. When his enemies are close enough, he lets loose his breath of flies. If anyone attempts to take or destroy the *Wraithsoul Stone*, he concentrates attacks on that creature, engaging in melee if necessary.

**Development:** The *Wraithsoul Stone* is a powerful relic with a mind and purpose of its own. It doesn't wish to grant Enthrauthus the secret it desire, and has been successfully keeping the daemon a bay with promises for a long time. The relic would rather

be carried away from this place by a deserving champion of evil, or a creature that can be turned toward that purpose. If any nongood PC approaches within 10 feet of the stone, it calls out psychically with a *dominate person* (CL 7; DC 18) and commands the creature to take it out of the dungeon. While a nongood creature has the *Wraithsoul Stone* in its possession it gains SR 18 and DR 5/—. If a good creature touches the stone, it must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw or take 1d6 points of constriction damage, unless it has learned the ritual for destroying the relic from the *Chamber of Blasphemies*. If it has, the stone has no negative effect on the good creature for as long as that effect lasts.

## 13. SHADOW TOMB (CR 7)

While puddles of strange black goo run down the walls and pool on the floor of the unworked sections of this chamber, the worked areas stay free from such corruption. Yet shadows play strangely upon the roughly carved granite walls; as if there are unseen objects and light sources elsewhere in the chamber.

Except for the effects of the strange goo in the northern reaches of the chamber (see area 10), the room's only danger is its inhabitants.

**Creatures:** The strange effects of light in the chamber are actually four shadows dwelling here. The shadows were created by the strange ebon goo and the *Wraithsoul Stone*. The shadows are last dwindling fragments of those who fell to the area's corruption. The shadows attack those who attack them, attempt to enter Void's Relic, or attempt to leave that chamber with the stone. The shadows do not need to see the relic; they can sense it, even if it attempts to pass through the chamber while within an extradimensional space, such as a *bag of holding* or *portable hole*. In all other cases, the shadows allow other creatures to pass unmolested.

## SHADOWS (4)

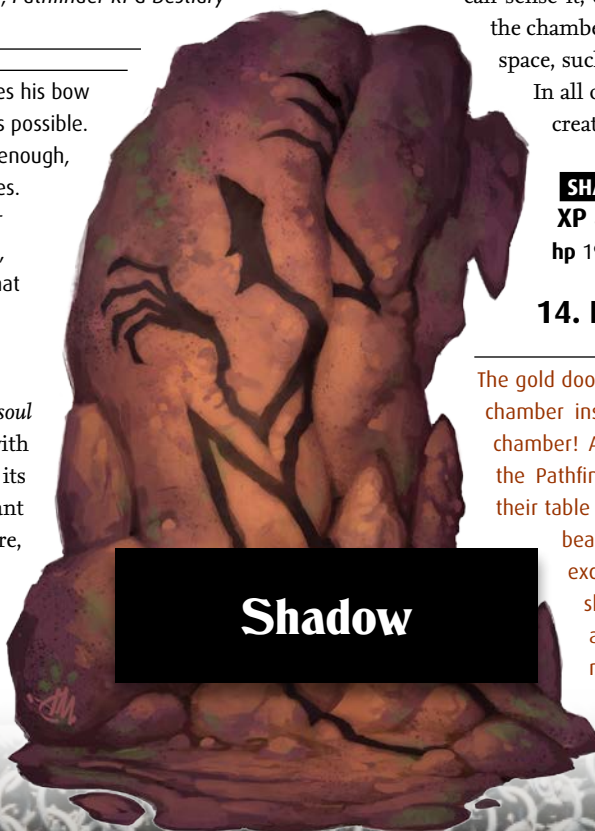
CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

## 14. FALSE EXIT CHAMBER

The gold door opens inward to reveal a long stone chamber instantly recognizable as the entrance chamber! Across the room, the three deans of the Pathfinder Society look down at you from their table at the top of a raised dais, their faces beaming with pride. "You've made it!" exclaims Master of Spells Sorrina Westyr, slamming shut her massive book with a smile. She gestures toward the red metal doors that lead outside. "Once



Shadow

# THE GAUNTLET

you step beyond these doors," she says, "you leave with the approval of the Society's leaders. Congratulations!"

Although the room looks nearly identical to area 1, it is in fact a clever decoy. Assuming the PCs tampered with the Decemvirate statues, they immediately notice that the statues in this room look completely undisturbed. A successful Sense Motive check against any of the deans (Bluff +o) reveals that something is amiss, as do divinations such as *true sight*. Attempting to open the false red double doors along the south wall triggers the room's door trap. The green double doors to the north lead to area 15.

## DOOR TRAP CR 10

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Effect** spell effect (energy drain, Atk +10 ranged touch, 2d4 temporary negative levels, Fortitude DC 23 negates after 24 hours; multiple targets within 30 feet)

**Creatures:** The three deans are imposters, enslaved chaos beasts given the temporary appearance and mannerisms of normal men. Once the PCs become aware of the room's (or the deans') false nature, the "Pathfinder" leaders revert to their true forms, taking a full round before the transformation is complete. They are immune to the room's door trap.

## CHAOS BEASTS (3) CR 7

**XP 3,200 each**

**hp** 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 54)

## 15. CHAMBER OF PAIN

The green metal doors open to reveal an irregular chamber dominated by a massive statue of a leering demon. The figure sits cross-legged upon a small dais along the north wall, its clawed hands holding a wide silver plate covered with burning coals. The statue looms nearly twenty feet tall from its seat to the crown of its head, giving the impression of a giant stooping over to fit in a confined space. Four five-foot-wide columns of glowing energy run from the floor to the ceiling, two to either side of the demonic colossus. From left to right, the columns are bright red and orange, brown, white, and blue. Along the southern wall, twenty-five feet from the double doors you entered, another pair of closed green metal double doors seem to present a potential exit from the room.

As soon as three living creatures enter the room, the looming statue opens its mouth to reveal a *symbol of pain*. This effect is also a clue as to how to disarm the room's trap and unlock the green double doors along the room's southeast wall, for pain is both the chamber's chief threat and the solution to escaping it.

## SYMBOL OF PAIN STATUE CR 12

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity (three living creatures enter area 15); **Reset** none

**Effect** spell effect (symbol of pain, -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for 1 hour after target moves more than 60 feet from symbol, Fortitude DC 17 negates; multiple targets within 30 feet)

From left to right, the four columns are red and orange, representing fire; brown, representing earth; white, representing air; and blue, representing water. A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals licking flames and subdued heat coming from the red and orange column, chunks of small, sharp rocks flying around within the brown column, and swirling vapor and the smell of ozone coming from the white column. The blue column appears to be composed of fast-flowing water, and gives off an acrid smell. Stepping into one of these columns results in taking damage of the associated type (fire, bludgeoning, electricity, and acid, respectively).

## ENERGY COLUMN TRAP CR 6

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location (stepping within the column); **Reset** none

**Effect** energy blast (6d6 points of associated damage [fire, bludgeoning, electricity, and acid])

When a living creature takes even a single point of damage from a column, everyone looking at the statue notices the image of an elaborately decorated jeweled key begin to fade into existence above the demon statue's burning silver platter. The key hovers about 6 inches above the surface of the smoldering coals, and is completely illusory. For each character standing within one of the columns on the same round, the key appears to gain a quarter of its substance. Finally, when all four columns are doing damage to living creatures standing within them, the key becomes solid and real, and can be grasped and removed from its place above the silver plate—it is thereafter a "real" key, and may be used to unlock the green doors along the southeast wall.

Disarming all four energy columns and the *symbol of pain* trap also opens the southeast doors leading to area 16. The doors are otherwise completely impassable.

## 16. THE FINAL BATTLE

The green metal doors open to reveal a long platform running north to south along the western edge of a large, rectangular room stretching off to the east. Fifteen feet from the west wall, the floor falls away into a dark pit nearly thirty feet across that ends in an equal-sized ledge along the chamber's east wall. At

# PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME

the center of that wall is a sturdy golden door with silver hinges—perhaps leading to the entrance chamber and your final escape from the Gauntlet dungeon! A thin stone bridge, wide enough to cross in single-file, leads from the east ledge to the west.

Exiting this room to successfully complete the Gauntlet means more than simply crossing the stone bridge over the chasm. Two young copper dragons, Kevexit and Zhivassh, guard the crossing from their lair at the bottom of the dark pit 60 feet below the bridge. An illusion of a false floor 30 feet below the bridge masks their lair, making the room appear empty upon first glance. When the second PC has crossed the plane demarcated by the edge of the western platform, the dragons swoop out of their hidden lair to attack them. Kevexit positions herself at the eastern end of the bridge, targeting crossers with her acid breath attack, while Zhivassh takes to the air and attacks anyone flying across the gap. If there are no fliers, Zhivassh uses her *grease* spell to vex PCs attempting to cross the bridge. The two dragons use a combination of their spells and their slow breath

weapon to harry would-be crossers, increasing the risk of the bridge's mechanical trap, which rotates its triangular expanse every 2 rounds once triggered. The dragons are good-aligned, but fight to the death, having been promised great rewards and free resurrections by their allies in the Decemvirate. Once the PCs have crossed the bridge, they can freely enter area 1 through the unlocked golden door.

## COPPER DRAGONS (2)

**CR 10**
**XP 4,800 each**
**hp 85** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 106*)

## ROTATING BRIDGE TRAP

**CR 7**
**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location (stepping on either of the middle two squares of the bridge); **Reset** automatic (every 2 rounds)

**Effect** Rotating bridge (6d6 points falling damage; Reflex DC 23 allows PC to grab onto the edge and avoid falling)

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Upon returning to the initial chamber, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

The gold door opens to reveal a long stone chamber, identical in appearance to the entry chamber! The deans of the Pathfinder Society stand up as you walk into the room, and applaud. "You've made it!" exclaims Master of Spells Sorrina Westyr, beaming with pride. "Rest assured, this is truly the end and you have finally succeeded. Step through the doors and to your destiny!"

This is indeed the exit and if the players have made it here, they are greeted as champions. Any who have fallen along the way can be recovered and raised as normal. The Pathfinders even offer the spellcasting for free, but the heroes must pay for the material components. Each of the champions of the Gauntlet is awarded a small pin made from platinum in the shape of the gauntlet, a symbol of their victory worth 500 gp. In addition, each character is gifted a suitable magic item worth up to 10,000 gp. These should be specifically chosen to suit the needs and abilities of each character.

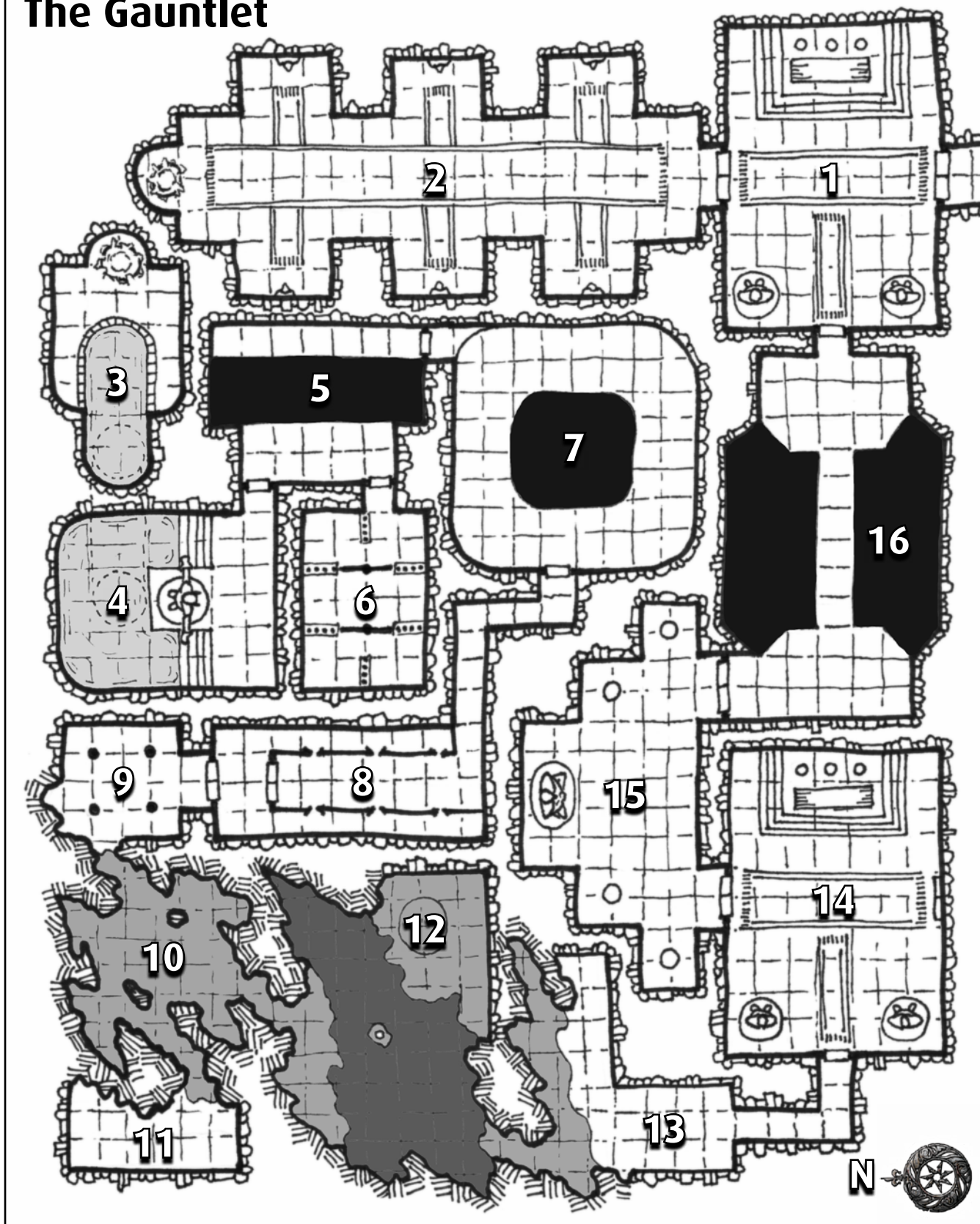
Finally, if the heroes have brought the *Wraithsoul Stone* with them to the exit, the character bearing the foul object is sequestered, his soul in danger from the object's foul powers. The Pathfinders hold this character until such time as a way is found to destroy the stone. They invite the characters to take part in the search, but such adventures are left for the GM to decide.



## Copper Dragon

# THE GAUNTLET

## The Gauntlet



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