

A Pathfinder Society Introductory Scenario



First Steps, Part I: IN SERVICE TO LORE

By Adam Daigle



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A PATHFINDER SOCIETY INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO

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Pathfinder Society Introductory Scenario: First Steps, Part I: In Service to Lore is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st-level characters (Tier 1). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. This scenario is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

The OGL can be found on page 22 of this product.

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BY ADAM DAIGLE

Pathfinders explore Golarion in service to lore. This widespread group of treasure hunters, thrill-seekers, sages, and voyagers make it their lives' work to uncover lost artifacts, map neglected ruins, and learn forgotten knowledge. They do these things for the sake of lore, as well as for fame. The Pathfinder Society publishes the *Pathfinder Chronicles*, a multi-volume series of chapbooks highlighting some of the most amazing finds by field agents.

Pathfinders are part archaeologist, part historian, and all adventurer. Many established Pathfinders make their own way in the world, following their interests or tracking down leads to greater mysteries. These established few are still subject to orders from their superiors, but the least prestigious tasks are usually reserved for those new to the organization. The Society is governed by the Decemvirate, 10 anonymous leaders who pull strings and guide the organization from Skyreach in the Grand Lodge of Absalom. They hand down orders from their secret posts to venture-captains, who in turn pass the orders to field agents.

The Society has few rules, but all Pathfinders are expected to perform the Three Duties: explore, report, and cooperate. Idle Pathfinders are useless to the organization, and agents must seek out secrets or further their work in exploration of some kind, always growing and gathering knowledge. This exploration would be worthless if not for frequent reports. Pathfinders must send back accounts of their adventures, many of which end up published by the Decemvirate. Finally, Pathfinders are great heroes from dozens of countries and backgrounds with thousands of different motivations and allegiances, and the Decemvirate expects that individual Pathfinders will not interfere with one another, and absolutely never let a conflict between themselves come to blows.

Despite the mandate to cooperate, Pathfinders have myriad motivations and often fall in with similarly minded factions within the organization, or external groups with close ties to the Society. As fresh new recruits, most Pathfinders know only the venture-captains who give them their training, especially Ambrus Valsin, the man in charge of daily operations in the Grand Lodge.

WHERE ON GOLARION?

In Service to Lore takes place in the teeming metropolis of Absalom—the City at the Center of the World. Here the Pathfinder Society makes its home, and Pathfinders from all over the world consider Absalom a second home, as many of their missions take place within the city's walls. A settlement of over 300,000 souls, Absalom boasts many districts that are virtually cities unto themselves, and PCs in this adventure will visit several of them in the course of their mission. For more information on Absalom and its various districts, check out *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Guide to Absalom*, available in hobby stores and bookstores everywhere and online at paizo.com.



A gruff, no-nonsense man, Ambrus has little tolerance for laziness and often gives young Pathfinders their first taste of what being a field agent entails as a way of keeping them from staying idle too long.

Among the various factions allied with the Pathfinder Society are five powerful nations locked in a shadow war for control of Absalom—Andoran, Cheliax, Osirion, Qadira, and Taldor. While the Pathfinder Society has no direct interest in this political standstill, they nevertheless have much to gain from allying with these powerful nations. Though they aren't a recognized political body, the Varisian swindlers and smugglers known as the Sczarni provide their own support for the Society, acting as fences, contacts, or mules when the organization

THE FIRST STEPS SERIES

The three-part First Steps series is intended to introduce new players and new characters from experienced players to the Pathfinder Society, the city of Absalom, and the ten factions to which all members of the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign belong. While each adventure in the series is a self-contained story, they are intended to be played in order by brand-new PCs without any experience or Prestige Points. At the end of the third scenario, *A Vision of Betrayal*, after the PCs have met and done a favor for all 10 faction heads, they will be able to choose their PCs' allegiance and gain retroactive prestige for the completion of the previous two scenarios.

This series may only be played at the normal advancement rate of 3 XP per level, meaning a PC completing the series will advance to 2nd level, making the character a bit more sturdy for tiered adventuring in normal Pathfinder Society play.

needs to get relics or agents in and out of hostile territory unseen. Within the Society itself, fractured groups such as the Shadow Lodge, Silver Crusade, and the Lantern Lodge each work to ensure the organization's resources are applied where they feel they're most needed, be that for the betterment of the active field agent, in distant Tian Xia, or spreading good deeds throughout the Inner Sea.

A new batch of Pathfinder agents has completed their training and now stand fresh and wide-eyed before the towering structure of Skyreach awaiting their first assignment for the Pathfinder Society. Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin has just the task for them, both to keep them relatively safe in the dangerous world beyond, and to familiarize them with Absalom, their new home, and some of the most influential allies of the Society in the City at the Center of the World.

SUMMARY

Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin charges the beginner Pathfinders to complete a list of tasks for the Pathfinder Society. These small tasks are too simple and menial for established agents to deal with, but perfect to test the capabilities of new recruits. After a short speech about what it takes to be a Pathfinder, Valsin hands the PCs an envelope containing the tasks and directions to where they are supposed to find their contacts.

The first task on the list requires the PCs visit a creepy curio shop owned by Guaril Karela, a Varisian fence who heads the Sczarni crime syndicate in Absalom. He asks the group to retrieve a case of books from an "abandoned" warehouse. While trying to figure out how to safely

retrieve the crate, balanced above a hole in the floor of the warehouse, dire rats nesting in the building attack the PCs.

The second task sends the PCs to deliver a parcel of medicine for the Silver Crusade—a faction of Pathfinders dedicated to using the Society's resources to do good and help the downtrodden wherever their journeys take them. Their leader, the Sarenite paladin Ollysta Zadrian, asks the PCs to vet the headmistress of the orphanage where the medicine is to be sent. In fact, Auntie Baltwin is a cruel old alcoholic, who sells medicinal donations on the black market, and puts the children to work for additional profit. The canny old woman doesn't make proving her wrongdoings easy, and the PCs need keen skills to spot illicit behavior.

The third task introduces the PCs to Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage of Osirion, under the premise of visiting his liege to obtain permission to delve the ancestral vaults of a prominent family in Sothis. The sage speaks in place of the absent noble to whom he serves as advisor, granting this privilege only after the PCs solve a puzzle in the estate's vault to prove their mettle.

The fourth task places the PCs in Paracountess Zarta Dralneen's uncomfortable embrace. The Chelish envoy borrowed an item from the Grand Lodge, and the PCs need to retrieve it. The twist: A servant imp snatched the magical box and the paracountess trapped the enraged creature in her precious bedroom where the creature wreaks havoc. The PCs must either defeat or calm the imp and get the box back to the Grand Lodge.

While the Pathfinders move through the city in pursuit of their assignments, a group of ruthless adventurers hoping to earn some easy gear and start making a name for themselves follows the PCs' every move. Although the new Pathfinders have a chance to spot these adventurers throughout the day, the thugs keep a low profile and ambush the PCs as they head back to the Grand Lodge after finishing their assignments for the day.

GETTING STARTED

Fresh off their induction into the Society and the completion of their basic training within the organization, the PCs find themselves in the office of Ambrus Valsin, the venture-captain in charge of daily operations in and around the Grand Lodge. The efficient and straightforward chamberlain greets the PCs curtly and motions for them to sit before jumping straight into their assignment. Read the following to get the adventure underway.

"All right, Pathfinders! Listen up. I know you are new recruits eager to make names for yourselves in the organization, but

first we need to make sure you are up to snuff and won't get yourself killed out there. I have a number of small assignments for you and your team, and it would be best if you could finish them before the day's end.

"Every day we get some doe-eyed hopeful or some sniveling bootlicker willing to do anything to join up with the Pathfinders. Most of them are good kids, but not all of them have the salt to make it in a world like this. It's rough out there and I'm not just talking about the ruins, tombs, and wilderness Pathfinders find themselves in on missions. We've got people who look down their noses at us, folks who think we squander our resources, and agents who want to take everything we have collected. This wealth of knowledge and these items of lore make us the most powerful organization on the planet. That said, since we are fractured and widespread, it's difficult for that power to light on anything for too long. For every friend of the Society, there are two enemies.

"Your first mission, to test your mettle and loyalties, sends you to meet a few people important to the Society living here in Absalom. These are other venture-captains or close allies of our organization, so follow their orders as you would mine. I've prepared a list of things I want you to do. They're not arranged in any particular order of importance, but I want them all completed as quickly as possible. Only report to me once you complete them all. Included in the envelope you hold in your hands is the list, complete with the name of your contact, and directions to the meeting location."

Allow the PCs to look over the handout outlining their tasks (see page 21). The group may have questions about where certain locations are in the city. Since the PCs have directions to each meeting site, allow the group to use the layout of the city to prioritize their course for the day.

Since the PCs begin in Absalom, allow them to purchase any items they may need before the adventure if they showed up ill equipped. Venture-Captain Valsin briskly deflects any questions, instructing the Pathfinders to see their contacts for more information, reminding the PCs those contacts are to be treated as authority figures and be both respected and obeyed.

Out and About in Absalom

The PCs have free reign of Absalom during this scenario, and can go to the four appointed locations in any order. The PCs may move about Absalom however they wish, and should feel free to explore the city as they go from district to district performing their assigned duties.

The cheapest method of getting around is walking, but PCs may wish to rent transportation if they would rather relax. Each leg of a journey in a hired coach costs 1 cp, but a coach can only carry four people comfortably.

Keep in mind the limited time available to complete the scenario, but feel free to add flavorful tidbits about the city as the PCs travel through it. Absalom is the largest city in the Inner Sea region, and possibly all of Golarion, and Pathfinders should get the sense that they can find anything and everything within its limits.

As the Pathfinders move about the city, they're shadowed by a band of thugs, upstart criminals looking to get a leg up on their own adventures by mugging a team of weak Pathfinders who they suspect have prime equipment and sizable wealth. During the course of

the adventure, allow the PCs to get a glimpse of one of these miscreants. Permit each PC a Perception check as the group moves between encounters. Anyone making a DC 15 or higher notices one of the thugs watching them intently from across a crowded street; as a throng of people moves between the PCs and their observer, the thug disappears into the crowd. Later in the adventure, allow each PC a Sense Motive check. Those that make a DC of 15 or higher get the sense that they're being watched, but can't pinpoint who or where the sensation comes from. Make a note of which PCs succeed at either of these checks, as it will come into play in the final encounter of the adventure.

ACT 1: A FAVOR FOR THIEVES

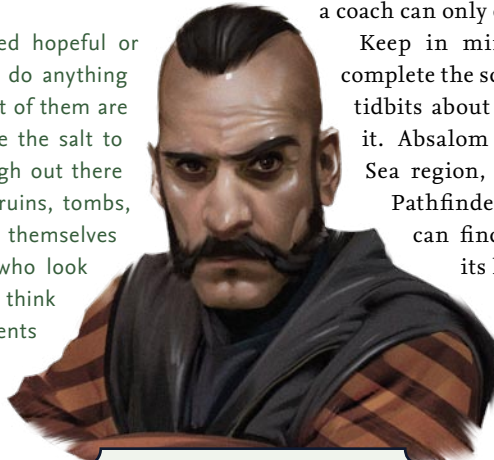
The first task on the PCs' list is to visit Guaril Karela, head of the Absalom-based Sczarni, at his curio shop—The Pickled Imp—in the seedy, harborside Docks district.

1a. The Pickled Imp

This creepy shop contains myriad odds and ends, most bereft of any discernible use. A number of malformed creatures and creature parts bob in jars on a long, prominent shelf, a tiny fetal devil centered in this macabre lineup. The shopkeeper, a greasy-haired Varisian with a thin mustache, shouts from behind the cluttered counter:

"Ah yes, I see the Pathfinders have arrived. I'm glad Ambrus was able to lend a few of his new recruits to help me. Please come in and let me tell you what I need."

Looking around as if to be absolutely certain no customers are browsing the aisles of knock-off Thuvian burial urns or



Ambrus Valsin



supposed Azlanti porcelain, he begins again.

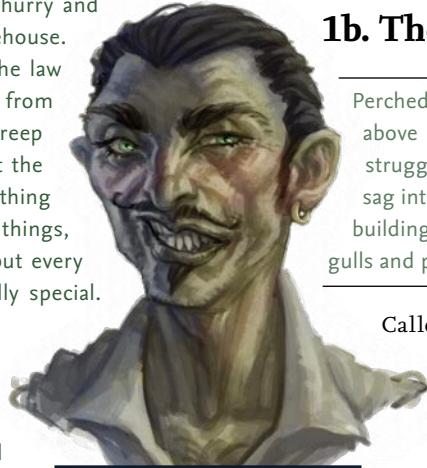
"Well met. I am Guaril Karela. A friend of mine has a warehouse near here and he received a parcel on behalf of me and some of my associates, but there's a problem. See, Master Gelbane had to leave town in a hurry and our shipment is still waiting at his warehouse. Rumor is he ended up in trouble with the law and the place was seized. I heard tell from someone down at the docks that some creep was snooping around his warehouse just the other night, so I want to make sure nothing of mine was taken. He keeps all kinds of things, from beer to nails, in that old pelican, but every now and then he stores something really special. This is one of those cases.

"There's a big crate marked with three crows arranged in a triangle. Inside that crate is a smaller container with a few books and papers in it. That's the only parcel I'm interested in, and as far as I'm concerned, you can help yourself to the rest of the crate. Honestly, anything else you want in the place too. I'm sure the once things get sorted out, the city will seize most everything else anyway.

"My associates and I often work with the Pathfinders when it comes to special relics and documents, getting them in and out of ports and across borders where the authorities ask too many questions. Most people don't realize what they have and frankly many don't deserve to have it, so sometimes we help take the goods off their hands. If things work out well and you get this done, I'd be glad to talk with you more and help you out with any future endeavors, as long as you help me out too. I'm good at returning favors, trust me."

Guaril Karela (CN male human rogue 11) is a well-connected Sczarni who has his hands in as many pots as Absalom can provide. Based out of such a bustling city, Karela keeps his eyes on the harbor and what valuable items cross its docks. While friendly enough if you're on his good side, this thin Varisian man has a face that always seems to be sneering, often tilting his mustache like the animated hands of a clock.

Karela answers any questions the PCs ask with varying levels of clarity. Regarding the site of the warehouse, he responds with details of the rickety building and its entrances. In these answers, feel free to describe the warehouse to the PCs before they arrive, as Karela is familiar with the place. If any PCs ask personal questions, try to identify if his associates, or infer that their task may not be entirely legal, he responds only with vague answers. If they press him on these points, he tries to steer the conversation to other topics or simply ushers them out the door, encouraging them to get to their task.



Guaril Karela

If anyone gets too aggressive, he reminds them they are doing this for Ambrus Valsin and the Pathfinder Society, speaking strongly about their duty through clenched teeth with narrowed eyes.

1b. The Pier

Perched on the end of a long pier fifteen feet above the water, the warehouse appears to struggle against its own roof, threatening to sag into the bay below. No light shines from the building's windows and only the movement of gulls and pelicans stirs the scene.

Called pelican warehouses, these buildings perch at the end of piers, allowing a ship to load and unload farther out from the busier docks. Many of them either accommodate smaller vessels that are in a hurry or larger ships unable to find an open dock. Rare these days, most pelican

warehouses lie in disrepair, withered from storms and salt, and every year it seems another one falls into the harbor. An increased tax on this type of property keeps many of the owners from rebuilding and some have even relinquished the titles to their small warehouses, allowing them to fall into the hands of squatters and smugglers—or into the bay itself.

Smugglers sometimes use small boats to slip under the warehouse, sawing a hole in the floor or prying boards in the night, and sneaking in to loot the place or just drop a crate into their boat from above and paddle away in the night.

The pier this pelican warehouse sits on stretches 100 feet from the boardwalk and the docks proper, and stands 15 feet above the water. The planks on the pier are sturdy but weathered. A few local fishermen and some kids sit scattered along the pier casting nets or bobbing lines into the waters below.

The building looks abandoned and in disrepair. The windows are dark and dirty and provide no view into the structure's interior. A small boat bobs in the water below, tethered to the pier by a stout, salt-crustured rope. The warehouse's heavy wooden front door is locked (Disable Device DC 15) and the loading door is barred from the inside, requiring a DC 22 Strength check to force open. If they can get in the right position on the small ledge that runs along the sliding doors, multiple PCs can aid the Strength check, each adding a +2 to the effort. A hidden key sits sandwiched between two rickety slats on the building near the doorframe, discoverable with a DC 25 Perception check.

Saltspray Pelican Warehouse

1 square = 5 feet



1c. Saltspray Pelican Warehouse (CR 1)

Darkness fills the warehouse, the ambient light from outside blocked by a filthy, oily film on the structure's few windows. Darting illumination comes from light reflecting off the water through a splintered hole in the floor. Throughout the warehouse, crates, boxes, and barrels lean against each other in vaguely sorted stacks. A lingering smell indicates some of the contents are certainly spoiled.

Perched in the middle of the hole, teetering on split planks, sits a large crate stamped with three crows arranged in a triangle—the very crate the PCs have come to find. Handholds cut into the stout wooden crate ring the rim. Other barrels, boxes, and crates sit stacked along the walls of the warehouse. Just inside the door sits a handful of crates and kegs of beer. Most of these smaller crates and barrels contain foodstuffs in various states of freshness. Some crates reek of rot. Stacks of simple coffins sit against the east wall. The rest of the crates stacked along the north and south walls contain simple sundries including, but not limited to beer, blocks of clay, coffee, coils of rope, dried fish, lead ingots,

nails, nets, raw cotton, rough wool, spare sails, timber planks, various pulleys and tools, and cheap weapons. Some of these materials, while certainly valuable, are more important to the PCs as tools to help them get their real prize.

A crane, used for loading and unloading boats, clings to a rail running the length of the warehouse, hanging 5 feet below the high ceiling, and can slide out to extend past the loading doors along the west wall. PCs can use ropes and nets from the warehouse's crates to rig the crane and snatch up the crate, but a character must venture out onto the teetering beams to tie the knots and secure the crate to the harness. In addition to the risks posed by the squares surrounding the hole (see Hazard, below), walking out on one of the two beams imposes a –4 penalty on all related Acrobatics checks and any Reflex saves resulting from failure.

Creatures: Though the warehouse is supposedly abandoned, a trio of dire rats has moved in and now nests along the north wall. While the PCs search the warehouse and formulate a plan to safely get the crate from above the hole, the dire rats lie sleeping. Irritated at the intrusion, they squeeze through the crates and attack the PCs surrounding the hole.

DIRE RATS (3)**CR 1/3****hp 5** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)**TACTICS**

During Combat Hardly tacticians, the dire rats always attack the nearest PC.

Morale Protective of their den and food, the dire rats fight to the death.

Hazard: The edges of the hole are dangerous and anyone stepping into one of the squares around the hole must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check or risk collapsing the floor further—and spilling the crate into the water. In addition, these squares count as difficult terrain due to their precarious nature. PCs succeeding at a DC 15 Acrobatics check can ignore the difficult terrain and move through the squares normally. Any result of this check that fails by 10 or more forces the character to succeed at a DC 12 Reflex saving throw or fall into the bay below. Small characters receive an additional +1 bonus on the Acrobatics check and any resulting Reflex save due to their lighter weight. The drop into the water along with the falling debris deals 1d6 points of nonlethal bludgeoning damage. If the crate falls into the water, the books and papers are damaged unless the PCs can pull the crate from the water within 3 rounds. The water here is 15 feet deep.

Development: While simply walking out and dragging the crate from its precarious position is next to impossible for these new adventurers, the group can successfully achieve their task with materials at hand and a little creativity. Four likely solutions are listed below, but allow the players to come up with their own clever solutions to the problem.

- A PC strong enough to lift the 200-pound crate could be suspended by the crane and positioned over the crate.
- The PCs can throw a rope with a hook at the handholds to secure the crate from afar. Treat this as a thrown weapon with a range increment of 10 feet targeting AC 10.
- The PCs could also borrow the boat docked outside and simply collapse the floor, dropping the crate safely onto the deck of the boat.
- The PCs can use the timber and tools to brace the floor and slide the crate to firm ground.

If the group cannot seem to come up with a plan, urge them forward by asking for skill checks. A DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check gives them a hint to one of the solutions mentioned above. A general DC 15 Intelligence check reveals the same hint. Searching through the other crates for tools to help them should be simple, and once the group has spent a few minutes looking through the pile of wares, allow them to find any reasonable item that might help them with their task. A

DC 10 Perception check finds anything mentioned above in the warehouse description, while anything more rare or valuable than the items listed requires a DC 15 Perception check and 5 minutes of searching. The warehouse doesn't contain anything magical or any single item worth more than 150 gp.

Treasure: The rescued crate holds a smaller mahogany box inside, which contains five books and a few loose sheets of paper in a leather folder. The titles and subjects seem completely unrelated to each other: *Practical Thaumaturgy In Accordance with Creation*, *Geographic Anomalies of the Inner Sea*, *Under Kaer Maga: A Trial and Travel*, *Physiology of Dragons: An Illustrated Reference*, *Lost Sarusan*. The leather folder contains cargo manifestos, warehouse inventories, and other financial logs from a dozen different merchant houses and trade guilds.

The crate also contains 10 sets of masterwork thieves' tools, three flasks of alchemist's fire, a flask of acid, a dozen jars of various inks, a footprint book*, adamantine weapon blanch*, three bags of powder*, a deck of marked cards*, and two sets of average loaded dice*. (Items marked with an asterisk may be found in the *Advanced Player's Guide*.)

Rewards: If the PCs bring the books in good condition to Guaril Karela, give each PC 111 gp.

ACT 2: A CRUSADE OF LIGHT

The second task on the PCs' list is to head to the Temple of the Shining Star, the Ascendant Court's massive temple to Sarenrae, to meet with Ollysta Zadrian, a retired Pathfinder now operating the Silver Crusade, an effort to use the Society's resources to help those in need and spread good deeds throughout the world.

2a. Temple of the Shining Star

Arriving at the Temple of the Shining Star, the PCs are immediately directed to Ollysta Zadrian. This paladin of Sarenrae is young in her years, but holds herself with the poise of a queen and warrior simultaneously. As she notices the PCs' arrival, she strides forward, addressing the group in a strong voice.

"Thank the light of Sarenrae you have arrived! I knew Ambrus would come through for us in the Silver Crusade. I desperately need you to bring medicine to an orphanage and let me know if the headmistress, Gilga Baltwin, is deserving of our charity. Since our quest began, the needy have clamored for our aid, and I suspect some are abusing our generosity. It may sound cruel, but there are plenty of dishonest people out in the world eager for easy gold.

"Do you know of the Silver Crusade? After discovering so many factions splintered the Society, a number of us banded together to proliferate the cause of charity and kindness using

the Society's resources. As it is said, 'The Dawn brings new light' and I've made it my life's work to use our recent darkness to bring a new light to the world and to the Pathfinder Society.

I apologize for straying off point. Will you bring this parcel of medicine to Auntie Baltwin's Home for Recovery in the Eastgate district?"

Zadrian is eager to answer any questions the PCs may have about the Silver Crusade, but urges the PCs along if they linger too long. While talking to them, she says she isn't sure if Gilga Baltwin is honest or not, but hopes this delivery by Pathfinder agents will confirm whether the orphanage is operating on the up and up. She asks the PCs to be observant and report back to her any evidence that Baltwin isn't worthy of the Silver Crusade's aid.

Diplomacy (Gather Information) or Knowledge (Local)

Before the PCs head to Auntie Baltwin's Home for Recovery, they may wish to ask around about the orphanage and the headmistress's quality of character. While most witnesses admit she is a mean old bag, they also all reply they think it is great what she's doing for the children.

DC 10: Miltivis, who runs a nearby market, claims he's served Auntie Baltwin for over 30 years, and while a good customer, she is quite demanding and often rude to the other customers. He says she's kept his supplier of fine whiskeys in business for decades.

DC 15: Gilga Baltwin's neighbors Travost and Tirelle Anthos are frankly tired of the noises the children make and the retinue of cats—though they do appreciate the latter's mousing skills. They admit to being happy when Auntie Baltwin sends the children "off into the town" during the day, as it gives them a few hours of peace and quiet before they return in the evening.

DC 20: At the estate across the street, Master Trebb Bonto, a retired builder, says nothing but nice things of Lady Baltwin, as he calls her. He recounts tales of tea and games on the sitting porch, though if pressed, he lets slip that she often cheats at games and sometimes had some shady characters coming to whisper in her ear and palm her small bags of what might have been money before slinking away. "Otherwise a fine lady, indeed," he quickly adds.

2b. Auntie Baltwin's Home for Recovery (CR 1)

Nearly swarming with cats and children, this fine upper-class home appears to be clean and in good condition considering the number and ages of its inhabitants. Three young boys

shoot marbles in the dirt near the side porch, and inside strewn toys and more cats lie about on the floors. A few children take care of chores, while coughs and sneezes softly erupt from the children's dormitories upstairs.

Auntie Baltwin's Home for Recovery is known for being a place where sick kids go to get better, and the results seem amazing. Some people claim the place looks odd because people are always coming and going, sometimes taking kids with them. Auntie Baltwin has always played that off as their parents taking them home. A few of the kids come and go throughout the day, especially children that are now well, but have nowhere else to go.

Zadrian wants the PCs to find out if his donation is going to be a genuine benefit to the community, and frankly, it is not. Auntie Gilga Baltwin is a corrupt old crone. In addition to her abrasive attitude, the woman has three significant negative qualities the PCs can discover and report to Ollysta Zadrian (see Development below).

Creatures: A keen old hag of a woman, Auntie Baltwin is neither caring nor compassionate. She keeps the kids in her orphanage and treats them for their illnesses, but she only does so for ancillary reasons. She hopes to earn a good chunk of coin by keeping the donated medicines and selling them on the black market, using her personal talents in healing to treat the children. Some of kids aren't even orphans and are sent to recover under her care by wealthy merchants in the district. She sets a price according to what the family can pay, often inflating the price by 300% between favored and disliked families.

The oldest of nine siblings, Gilga Baltwin grew up taking care of children, first her brothers and sisters, then her own. Once her children grew up and moved out of the house, she began taking in orphans—and donations from local churches and charities. Her talents for care became well known, and parents throughout the city sent their sick children to Gilga for healing. She uses skills and magical talents taught by her own grandmother, and her spells center around controlling and healing her charges.

Auntie Baltwin uses Sense Motive to determine the PCs intentions when they arrive at her house. Once she understands the situation, she begins making outright lies in an effort to send the PCs away with a positive view of her operation. If she finds she's failing in this and knows what they want to hear, she tries and steer them in that direction. If the PCs begin putting the pieces together or become overly aggressive, she admits to the transgression she thinks will be least penalized by the group—likely her drinking habit. She turns herself in for the smallest crime the PCs will accept, even if it means she has to change up her operation. Anything is better than being arrested at her age. If she notices a PC is wounded when

they first arrive, she offers to heal him, hoping her feigned benevolence will throw the PCs off course.

The old woman acts differently toward PCs of different races and occupations. She acts snide toward elves, disapproving toward dwarves, suspicious toward half-orcs, and treats gnomes and halflings as if they were children, talking to them simply and even scolding them for dumb questions or other minor mishaps. Auntie Baltwin shows the most respect to obvious casters, perhaps even with a hint of fear. She stands up to bully fighters, as if daring them to hit an old lady. The more roguish members of a party she treats suspiciously, but otherwise seems to get on with them, leading their questions and testing their allegiances. Auntie Baltwin treats her nature-oriented classes as if they were hobos, constantly chiding them for “touching things with their dirty hands” or asking, “Did you wipe your feet before coming in?”



Auntie Baltwin

AUNTIE GILGA BALTWIN

CR 1

Female old human adept 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init –3; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 7, touch 7, flat-footed 7 (–3 Dex)

hp 8 (3d6–5)

Fort –1, **Ref** –2, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee cane –1 (1d4–2)

Ranged shoe –6 (1d3–2)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1st—*command* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *sleep* (DC 14)

o—*guidance*, *mending*, *touch of fatigue*

TACTICS

Before Combat Not expecting a visitor, Auntie Baltwin casts *guidance* before answering the door. More likely than not, she expends the spell on her first Diplomacy or Bluff check. Not looking for a fight, Auntie Baltwin uses her social skills to negotiate this encounter, hoping to avoid detection, arrest, or violence.

During Combat If pushed to fight, Auntie Baltwin uses her spells to incapacitate the PCs, starting with *sleep*. She uses *command* on any PC trying to attack or grab her. Otherwise, she screams for help while whacking the aggressive PCs with her cane or throwing a shoe at them, in hopes of stalling long enough for the district guard to come investigate. She can also have Pickles, her cat familiar, deliver *touch of fatigue* by brushing up against the PCs, then

blending in with the dozen other cats in the room.

Morale Auntie Gilga has no interest in dying and tries to escape using her *potion of invisibility* if the PCs become too violent. She immediately surrenders if reduced to fewer than half her hit points. Even after giving up, she still claims the PCs “started the whole thing.”

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 5, **Con** 6, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +1; **CMB** –1; **CMD** 6

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Cosmopolitan*, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +5, Heal +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +5, Sense Motive +8

Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani, Varisian

SQ summon familiar (Pickles, cat)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *scroll of cure light wounds*, *scroll of remove disease*;

Other Gear 30 gp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

PICKLES

CR —

Cat familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 131)

hp 4

Development: As the PCs interact with Auntie Baltwin, they may uncover several bits of evidence that implicate her in illegal or immoral activity—just the sort of evidence Ollysta Zadrian asked them to discover. Below are Gilga Baltwin's secrets and the methods by which the PCs can uncover them.

Alcoholism: Auntie Baltwin is a lifelong alcoholic, and is frequently drunk or drinking while taking care of the children. She seems mostly sober when the PCs visit, but as with all longtime addicts, she exhibits cues to her condition that are obvious to a keen observer. Any PC making a DC 12 Heal check can spot broken blood vessels in the eyes and nose, shaky hands, glassy eyes, and a fine sheen of sweat on the woman. Also, in her sitting room is a nearly empty bottle of whiskey, as well as a half bottle in the kitchen. If the woman invites the PCs in for tea, she tips a few splashes of alcohol in her cup before asking the group if they would like a taste. If questioned about drinking and taking care of children, she shoots the PCs an incredulous look and laughs. “Ha! Seems most days you need it if you want to make it through the day in this house. These children are killing me!” Knowing this is the least of her sins, Auntie Baltwin fesses up to drinking excessively and offers herself up to guidance and recovery just to get the PCs off her back.

Black Market: Gilga Baltwin also sells expensive donations from charities on the black market. She has a fair skill at healing and uses her daily spells to heal injuries and illnesses in her charges. Sometimes she

actually uses the medicines and potions sent from places like the Silver Crusade, especially when it comes to fast and fatal diseases. Otherwise, she relies on home remedies, long bed rest, and careful watch over time. Most of the donations given to her for the children end up sold throughout the city to individuals who, for whatever reason, can't go to legitimate sources of healing when injured or ill. Auntie Baltwin uses a fence for this side business, and doesn't sell anything directly out of her home. A thorough search of her house (Perception DC 20) reveals stashed curatives from three different charities. Auntie Baltwin does not consent to the search and becomes increasingly irritated if the PCs snoop around without her permission.

Child Labor: As her house filled with children left by their parents, Auntie Baltwin put them to work as servants and maids in other houses in the city, especially in the middle-class Eastgate district where she makes her home. She tells the children their work pays for their room and board, but the rates she charges for her pint-sized laborers easily pays for their lodging while she pockets the rest. The only way to determine this is to interview the children. Most reports claim she is mean, but that the children love her cooking and she tells fun stories at bedtime. Even the children who work don't call it that, and seem happy to keep busy and help out. A PC must make a DC 20 Diplomacy check with two different children out of earshot of Auntie Baltwin—who interrupts and shoos the children away if she overhears the PCs asking pointed questions—to discover the forced labor.

Rewards: If the PCs deliver the medicine and report any information about Auntie Gilga Baltwin to Ollysta Zadrian, give each PC 68 gp.

ACT 3: TREASURES OF OSIRION

Among the tasks on the PCs' list is visiting an Osirian nobleman named Dremdhet Salhar in the Wise Quarter to get permission for the Pathfinder Society to explore the Salhar ancestral vaults below Sothis. Salhar serves as a member of Absalom's Grand Council and is often out of the house on matters of business, but his aged advisor, Amenopheus, operates the Osirion faction of Pathfinder agents from his master's home when not putting suggestions in the malleable nobleman's ear.

3a. The Salhar Estate

The PCs make their way to the rich estate of Grand Councilmember Dremdhet Salhar, and are greeted by a guard who is expecting them as they reach the tall, wrought-iron gate. Once the PCs are inside, a servant tells the group Salhar is not present, called away on important Council business, but his most trusted advisor is available to negotiate any business they may require. The servant explains this while leading the group down well-decorated hallways, past expansive rooms.

After a few minutes, the group arrives at a simple study near the end of a long hallway.

Inside **Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage** (N old male wizard 13), a tan-skinned old man sits behind a desk flipping through pages in a large tome. Scraps of paper jut from the book marking over two dozen different places. As the group

approaches the open door, the wise sage silently gestures the PCs into the study with one thin hand, while closing the tome with the other after finishing what he was reading. Once the PCs are all inside the study, he addresses the group.

"Good day to you, Pathfinders. I am Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage, advisor to Master Salhar. I understand you were sent here to discuss archaeological permissions. Knowing this was coming, I spoke with Master Salhar at length on the subject and have this to say.

"Since Osirion was reopened to exploration a decade ago, adventurers, historians, and treasure-seekers flock to my country by the hundreds, perhaps thousands. While most families with ancestral burial vaults maintain guards and keep their sites out of the hands of casual thieves, not all families have the wealth or power to restrict everyone, and as we all know, not every defense is perfectly secure. Unscrupulous tomb robbers and maligned merchant organizations cause Osirion to bleed relics into the Inner Sea—something the descendants of Ancient Osirion cannot afford. We Osiriani have thousands of years of rich history coursing through our veins, and while that power has been out of focus in recent years, we are content to wait, knowing our enemies will wear themselves down. As they fall into arrogance, folly, or greed, we wait for our return to power, knowing we bear the riches of our ancestors at our feet.

"Master Salhar remains impressed by the Pathfinder Society, orating in their favor a handful of times in front of Absalom's Grand Council, in fact. Due to previous relationships between him and the Society, Master Salhar has agreed to grant permission to the Pathfinder Society to explore his family's vaults below Sothis. The only thing he



**Amenopheus,
The Sapphire Sage**

requires is that you retrieve the map of the vaults from his own vault here. The servant will lead you to the basement and show you the room.”

The Sapphire Sage’s eyes twinkle as he smirks knowingly, then he turns back to reading his book as though he had never been disturbed.

After leaving Amenopheus’ study, the servant brings the group back through the spacious estate, leading them down sturdy stone steps into the cool basement. Down a hallway, after a couple turns, the party ends up at a plain wooden door. The servant opens the door, gesturing to the room with a bow, and waits silently for the PCs to enter. He doesn’t know anything beyond that he is supposed to escort the PCs to this room and lock the door behind them; if questioned, he remains silent and stoic, simply waiting for them to go into the vault.

3b. Salhar’s Vault (CR 2)

A plain stone room contains three chests: a copper-banded chest of smooth, dark wood; a red lacquered chest; and what looks to be a cube of solid steel. Behind the chests sits a low table holding a clear glass jar half full of liquid and a covered wicker basket.

Once all of the PCs enter the room, the servant shuts the door and locks it behind them. Written on the back of the door is the message: “Within these cases lies your quest and your way out.” These five containers hold clues to solving the puzzle of this room and one holds the prize the Pathfinders seek—the map to the Salhar ancestral vaults beneath Sothis. Amenopheus, ever in search of new agents within the Pathfinder Society to help forward Osirion’s goals, set this elaborate puzzle to test the PCs’ mettle and cunning. The novice Pathfinders must find the map and the way out of the room within a half-hour, at which point the servant returns and opens the door to release them from their prison, assuming they have failed the task set before them.

Container	Key	Contents
Wicker basket	no key needed	blue stone key
Glass jar	no key needed	jeweled brass key
Copper-banded chest	illusory	nothing
Red lacquered chest	blue stone key	scepter key
Steel chest	bright golden key	map & treasure

The Wicker Basket (CR 1/2)

This 2-foot-round wicker basket requires no key to open, its lid resting gently atop its wide rim. Inside, a blue stone key rests atop a pile of crumpled linens.

PUZZLING PROPS

While you don’t need a map for this encounter, it might help the players’ visualize the puzzle better if you draw out three squares representing the chests, a smaller square representing the silk box, and a circle representing the wicker basket. To represent the four keys in the various containers, you could use coins, dice, or even real keys. Some sets of *GameMastery Item Cards* contain cards for boxes, chests, and keys, and may assist in visualization of this puzzle. Simply select three chests, one box, a jar, and four keys from the deck. Feel free to change the descriptions of the keys and containers to match the item cards used.

Trap: A writhing, angry green viper rests at the bottom of the basket hidden among the wadded cloth on which the rune-etched key sits. Any creature reaching into the basket provokes it to attack. While the PCs can’t disable the viper, they can bypass the trap by using a tool, *mage hand*, or gravity to get the key out of the basket. If they tip the basket’s contents onto the ground, the viper attacks the nearest creature (use the viper familiar stats on page 133 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*).

SNAKE BITE TRAP

CR 1/2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** —

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect Atk +5 melee, 1d2–2 plus tiny viper poison (*save* Fort DC 9; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con; *cure* 1 save)

Treasure: The runes on this key match those surrounding the keyhole of the red lacquered chest. The key radiates a faint aura of transmutation. When this key is placed within the keyhole of the red lacquered chest, the chest opens without the key needing to be turned.

The Glass Jar (CR 1/2)

This gallon-sized clear glass jar is about half full with clear liquid. At the bottom of the vessel sits a jeweled brass key.

Trap: While the liquid in this jar appears to be water, it’s actually a mildly corrosive cleaning agent. Any creature reaching into the jar to retrieve the key takes acid damage as outlined below. If the PCs pour out the jar’s contents or break the jar to free the key from the bottom of the acid, everyone within 5 feet of the jar takes 1 point of acid damage.

ACID JAR TRAP

CR 1/2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** —

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect 1d6 acid damage (DC 16 Reflex save for half damage)

Treasure: The jeweled key at the bottom of the jar seems to fit each box's lock. When the key is placed in the copper-banded chest's keyhole, the PC using it receives a Will save for interacting with the illusory chest as normal. When it is placed in the red lacquered chest's keyhole, nothing happens and the key keeps spinning without making any manner of contact with the mechanism. Placed in the steel chest's keyhole, the key breaks, falling into dust as it's twisted in the lock.

The Copper-Banded Chest

This chest is an illusion. When a PC touches the chest—such as by placing a key within its keyhole—she gains a free Will save. Those who make a DC of 12 see the chest fade into a faint outline as they realize it to be an illusion. Others must interact with it to beat the illusion themselves, though they receive a +4 bonus if they are informed of the figment's true nature before interacting with it.

The Red Lacquered Chest

This smooth, red lacquered chest looks devious. The solid metal plate surrounding the gaping keyhole pulses with glowing amber runes. When this chest is opened, a complex pulley system rigged from its lid, through the floor, and up to the ceiling releases a small, golden key from a slit in the ceiling, dropping it 6 inches down from the 15-foot-high ceiling. A PC making a DC 16 Perception check hears a slight click as the mechanism activates. Allow the PCs to use creative solutions to retrieve the key; if they get it down, it can be used to open the steel chest.

Treasure: The red lacquered chest holds a key forged into the end of a jeweled scepter. Though the jewels and the scepter appear to be quite exquisite, a DC 15 Appraise check reveals them to be mere costume gems. Despite this deception, the key at the end of the scepter opens the door to the vault, allowing the PCs to exit the room at their leisure.

The Steel Chest (CR 1/2)

This steel cube has only the faintest crack where its lid meets the base, and would be completely featureless save for its narrow keyhole. The gold key hanging from the ceiling opens this chest.

Trap: The clasp mechanism of this chest is trapped such that, unless it's disarmed, any creature opening the chest (even with the gold key) activates it. It is, however,

a harmless trap meant only to mark those PCs unable to avoid it for Amenopheus's review.

PRANK TRAP

CR 1/2

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

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*prestidigitation*, turns skin blue for 3d20 minutes, Will DC 11 resists); multiple targets (all creatures within 10 feet)

Treasure: This chest holds the map of the Salhar burial vaults beneath Sothis and a *wand of knock* (CL 3rd, 11 charges).

Development: If the PCs open the chests and exit the chamber on their own within a half-hour, the servant waiting on the other side tells them they can keep the map and wand, but asks them to give back any keys they may have. If, however, the PCs

are stumped by Amenopheus's puzzle, the servant opens the door to release them regardless of their success or failure. He expresses his disappointment and notes that perhaps other Pathfinders will be better equipped to prove their worth to his master. In either case, the servant makes a point of noting which PCs (if any) have had their skin turned blue.

If the PCs try to find Amenopheus after their ordeal, they are told he has left for the day. Perhaps they should try back tomorrow.

Rewards: If the PCs retrieve the map of the Salhar family vaults, give each PC 82 gp.

ACT 4: A PROMISE OF DOMINANCE

The fourth task on the PCs' list is to retrieve an item on loan from the Pathfinder Vault. Paracountess Zarta Dralneen, an influential diplomat from the devil-worshipping nation of Chelias, spent some time studying the box she borrowed, but she has been unsuccessful in delving its contents. To make matters worse, today an imp servant struck with mania is in the process of trashing her bedroom, making retrieval of the box a difficult task.

4a. Zarta's Study

Arriving at Paracountess Zarta Dralneen's townhouse in the Ivy District—one of several homes the noblewoman keeps around Absalom—the PCs come upon a magnificent gothic structure three stories in



Paracountess
Zarta Dralneen



height. The ebon lacquered double doors wrought with gleaming silver fixtures greet the characters, a prickly brass cone hanging from a chain serving as the door chime. Moments after ringing it, a servant in loose casual attire opens the door, greeting the Pathfinders as if expected. If questioned, the servant remains quiet, only responding when pressed, and then with only a few simple words: “My mistress will answer any questions you have once we reach her quarters.”

Led through well-appointed sitting rooms, ballrooms, and a grand stairway granting a view of an elaborate study, the PCs finally arrive on the third floor of the house, at the door of Zarta’s personal study, which lies beyond her bedroom. Knocking upon the door and announcing his presence, the servant opens the darkly stained wooden door.

A large intricate carpet dominates the marble floor in this sitting room. A chaise sits along the north wall and a desk spans the southeast corner, its chair positioned with its back to the southwest corner of the room. Three comfortable chairs are positioned around a small, low circular table. Hidden in the angled northwest wall is a secret door, discoverable with a DC 25 Perception check, which leads to Zarta’s secret

library, from which she operates many of her most delicate operations.

Sitting in the chair behind the desk, **Paracountess Zarta Dralneen** (LE female human aristocrat 4 / bard 8) regards the PCs with a wry smile, putting away a few papers before standing to address the hopeful Pathfinders.

“Aldor, you are dismissed. Close the door behind you and attend to your other tasks.” She then turns her attention to the group. “It’s always so incredibly adorable when I see a fresh-faced batch of Pathfinders. I mean, look at you scrumptious little teacakes. I could eat each and every one of you up. Well, maybe not you.” Zarta points. “I assume this isn’t a pleasure visit since most of you are terribly overdressed for that manner of occasion, so that must mean you are here for that trinket Valsin has been nagging me about. Seems I can’t get that man around these parts anymore,” she gestures, sliding her hand down her body and widening the gesture to sweep out and across the room as if her home were a secondary thought. “On the good side, he always sends me all the precious new recruits.

“Many think we in Cheliax serve and worship devils, but that couldn’t be further from the truth. In fact, we use the creatures for their power. They serve us and we sculpt their

power in our own interests. The world must come to terms with the order of things. People need to know their place and operate accordingly. It is the only way to make order from this world. Too many people stretch too far beyond their station, making waves and eroding the true order.”

The “trinket” Ambrus Valsin sent the PCs to retrieve is a seven-lock iron case. Zarta tells the PCs about the box and its locks and seals, explaining she was trying to bypass the protections. She advises not trying to tamper with the case when bringing it back to the Grand Lodge, but never admits to what the case contains. She can tell them the box is magically warded with abjuration magic intermingled with strong evocation magic, in addition to the seven masterwork locks. For PCs delving into the box, a creature must succeed at a DC 40 Disable Device check for each lock. Every failed attempt to pick one of the seven locks results in 1 hit point of damage to the creature attempting the check as pain shoots through its body. It is unlikely the PCs can manage this skill check, and since they were advised not to tamper with the case, hopefully the damage—combined with these other reasons to leave the case alone and simply do their duty and return it—will keep the group from being too curious. Zarta claims to know nothing about the box aside from it having a connection with devils and Hell.

As the paracountess talks, a cacophony of booms and crashes sounds from beyond the room’s west door. She sometimes pauses at an extended eruption of these noises before continuing with the conversation. If asked about the neighboring ruckus, Zarta explains, “A servant is greatly misbehaving. You’re going to have to deal with it in order to get the trinket.” She goes over to the desk in her study, opening a drawer and drawing out an exquisite silver letter opener shaped like a dagger (treat as a masterwork silver dagger). “You might need this to get it to submit,” she offers with a sly grin.

4b. The Bedroom (CR 2)

Zarta’s bedroom is decorated in the colors of Chelixa—ebon black and crimson red. Silk, rare woods, and carefully carved marble compose every bit of furniture in the room. Goose down now litters the room, covering almost every surface and the silken shreds of the cushions that contained it lie about like flayed skin. A post on the massive screened bed is snapped in half, collapsed on the bed and drawing the screened curtains into a ripped slope of formerly fine cloth. Vials of perfume and crystal jars of other cosmetics sit smashed on the marble floor around the dresser. A prominent fixture in the room, a large “X” made of stout wood sits along the west wall, complete with leather shackles and chains. A table sits to its left strewn

with various items intended for pleasure, but outwardly resembling implements of pain.

This formerly lavish boudoir provides the deviant Chelish diplomat a place to relax away from the never-ending intrigue of Absalom’s political scene, and the decorations indicate she does a fair amount of entertaining here as well. The northeast wall, next to the bed, hides a secret door (Perception DC 25) that leads to the paracountess’s secret library.

Creature: The imp Kreuvus is enraged and totally out of control. The creature desperately wants inside the box and throws it around the room hoping to smash the thing open. Though dented, the case doesn’t look like it will be opening anytime soon.

Kreuvus does as much as it can to wreck things while annoying the PCs. Only after the imp is damaged to half its hit points does it start actively fighting the PCs. In addition to the silvered cat-o’-nine-tails Zarta gave the group, a silver-tipped riding crop lies on the table in the southwest corner, just inside the door. If the PCs already completed the task for Guaril Karela (see Act 1), they could use the powder found in the crate to help locate the imp when it’s invisible.

If the group asks the imp why he wants in the box so badly, Kreuvus claims it holds a dark leather bag and a silver hook that allows the user to draw imps—subservient to the user—directly from Hell. He wants to hide the bag from mortals to protect devils of his kind.

KREUVUS

CR 2

Imp (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 78)

hp 16

TACTICS

Before Combat Rapt with his reckless destruction, Kreuvus barely notices, or pays attention to, the PCs until they either attack or address him. Kreuvus already used his daily use of *augury* and *suggestion*, and just 3 days ago used his weekly use of *commune*.

During Combat Kreuvus chooses tactics that annoy or frustrate his enemies more than those that directly harm them. He tries to keep his distance and relies on his *invisibility* spell-like ability. If any PCs get close to him, he lashes out with his poison sting.

Morale When reduced to 5 or fewer hit points, Kreuvus flees if any doors are open. Otherwise, the addled imp surrenders the case, saying, “Yes, you’ve bested me, but I don’t wish to leave so soon. Take the blasted box, and tell Mistress Dralneen I deserve what comes my way.”

Treasure: If the PCs ask nicely, Zarta allows one of them to keep the silver letter opener, but only if they agree to come back and visit her when they have more free time.



Rewards: If the PCs safely retrieve the seven-lock box from Kreuvus, give each PC 27 gp.

ACT 5: JUMPED! (CR 3)

As the PCs complete the fourth and final task on their agenda and head back to the Grand Lodge, they must pass through the Foreign Quarter back to the Society's headquarters. Along the way, they are funneled into an ambush set up by the gang of criminals who have been tracking them throughout the day. To begin this encounter, read the following aloud.

A throng of people blocks the street ahead. A performance art group commandeers the street, drawing graffiti to create a jolly hellscape complete with illusory devils comically dancing around in circles. A few citizens avoiding the crowd slip off-street through a nearby alley, the only egress past the gathering.

Since leaving the Grand Lodge this morning, four unscrupulous, fledgling adventurers followed the new Pathfinders throughout the day, shadowing them on their tasks. The adventurers are simply looking for an easy payout, knowing Pathfinders often have excellent gear, good coin, and frequently carry important items and documents from place to place in town. Weaving through back allies and busy streets, the gang members place themselves in front of the PCs, hoping to herd them into an advantageous position.

Deandre Dulay used a contact in the rebellious art group known as the Jocund Pranksters to stage an event in the adventurers' most likely path. While the Jocund Pranksters create their chalk and illusion spectacle and jam traffic flow to side alleys, Deandre's gang surrounds

the PCs in the crowd that makes its way around the obstruction, planning to jump the PCs when they get out of sight from the crowd. Other people take this shortcut as well, and the group of thug adventurers blends into the crowd until throwing the alleyway into a hazy fog by casting of *obscuring mist*. Once that happens, the common citizens flee, leaving the alley clear for both groups to deal with each other.

Creatures: Deandre Dulay, an ambitious cleric of Norgorber, has assembled a band of outcasts as her first fledgling thieving group, hoping to lead a cell of criminals in the near future. To achieve her aim, her band needs income, and that's where robbing Pathfinders comes in.

Young and lithe, with red hair hanging in ringlets that just brush her shoulders, Deandre doesn't immediately appear as dire a threat as she actually is. She wears a long skirt, embroidered with silver and black thread and a high-necked woolen blouse, its stout fabric concealing her chain shirt.

The team's not-quite-insane arcanist Halli Fosta does not interpret the world like other people. She approaches everything with curiosity, passion, and a cruel streak a fiend would appreciate. Deandre is uncertain how having a sociopath in her fledgling group will work out, but isn't afraid to kill the girl if she gets too crazy. Full golden blonde hair frames Halli's healthy, smiling face, punctuated with steely blue eyes and thick red lips. Halli wears a well-made, green silk dress in the most current fashion with a shimmering black scarf draped across her shoulders, and fidgets as she moves, a nervous habit she picked up as a child trying to hide the extra digit on each of her hands from casual acquaintances.

The anarchist comedian Larkin Waever, a Galtan refugee, has a scathing wit he focuses on authority figures. He began working with Deandre for extra money and the

chance to sow a bit of chaos when his political humor failed to support his lifestyle. With a face you could easily forget or miss in a crowd—short-cropped light brown hair, light complexion, and forgettable brown eyes—Larkin wears rumpled worker's clothing with a heavy coat over his chain shirt.

Rounding out the team, the halfling brawler Ledford more than makes up for his short stature with his uncontrollable energy and rampaging anger. A former circus performer and underground fighting champion, Ledford hopes he can make enough money through an alliance with Deandre to retire to his homeland of Cheliah with a manor and slaves of his own, while Deandre simply hopes she can redirect his rage to take out her enemies instead of causing any collateral damage on the rest of her team. With his comical handlebar moustache, Ledford is an easy face to remember, but when madness fills his eyes, he's a sight one soon wants to put as far from memory as possible.

This is the first time this criminal group has pulled a hit like this, but Deandre and her thugs have planned their tactics. If any PCs made their Perception or Sense Motive checks to notice the thugs watching them as they traveled about the city, they recognize one of their attackers just before the ambush, realizing that they've seen the thug's face before. These PCs may act in the surprise round.

DEANDRE DULAY

CR 1/2

Female human cleric of Norgorber 1
NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 12 (1d8+4)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +2 (1d6+2/19–20)

Ranged dagger +1 (1d4+2/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 4/day (DC 11, 1d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +4)

6/day—touch of evil (1 round)

6/day—copycat (1 round)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st—*cure light wounds*, *protection from good*^P, *shield of faith*

o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *stabilize*

D Domain spell; Domains Evil, Trickery

TACTICS

Before Combat Putting on her mask, Deandre Dulay casts

protection from good before whistling to her companions to attack.

During Combat On her first turn, Deandre casts *shield of faith*, then rushes into battle to provide flanking opportunities for Larkin. In following rounds, she fights in melee range with Ledford, allowing Larkin to take advantage of the Gang Up feat. She heals herself or companions as needed and uses her copycat ability for added protection.

Morale Determined to make a name for herself, pride forces Deandre Dulay to fight to the death. She goes down spitting curses and hurling insults.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 8, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Dodge, Toughness

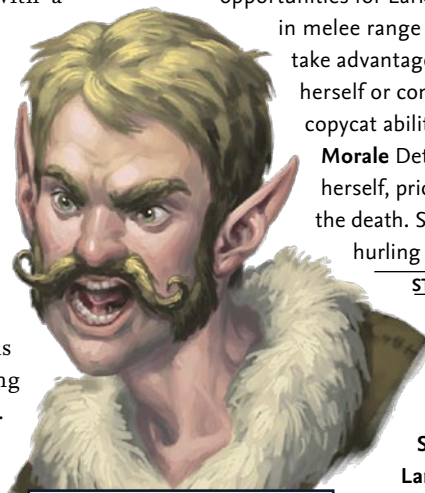
Skills Heal +7, Spellcraft +3

Languages Common

SQ aura

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of shield of faith*; **Other Gear**

masterwork chain shirt, short sword, dagger, gray mask, unholy symbol, 28 gp



Ledford

HALLI FOSTA

CR 1/2

Female human sorcerer 1

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception –1

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 8 (1d6+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +0 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +4)

6/day—acidic ray (1d6+1 acid)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st (4/day)—*color spray* (DC 14), *magic missile*

o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*, *message*

Bloodline Aberrant

TACTICS

Before Combat Halli casts *mage armor* from her scroll before drawing the PCs into the alley. She triggers combat on Deandre's signal by casting her *scroll of obscuring mist*.

During Combat Halli keeps her distance from the fight, preferring to use acidic ray from range. If she is threatened in melee, she uses *color spray* or her *scroll of burning hands* to eliminate any foes in range. If somehow depleted of spells or spell-like abilities, Halli resorts to her crossbow.

Morale Distracted by her delight in the battle, Halli doesn't think to surrender or flee and gleefully laughs during combat, even up to the moment of her death.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Eschew Materials, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Bluff +7, Intimidate +7, Spellcraft +5, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Common, Elven

SQ bloodline arcana

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds (2), scroll of burning hands, scroll of mage armor, scroll of obscuring mist, scroll of shield, scroll of unseen servant, wand of disguise self (5 charges)*; **Other Gear** dagger, light crossbow with 20 bolts, fan of pigeon feathers, small pouch of trimmed fingernails, 53 gp

LARKIN WAEVER

CR 1/2

Male human rogue 1

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 10 (1d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +2 (1d6+2/18–20), dagger +2 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+2/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Larkin waits for the signal before rushing in to strike the first available PC with his rapier.

During Combat Unless Deandre and Ledford both threaten his target, Larkin shifts his position to flank, allowing him to make use of the Gang Up feat.

Morale Larkin does not think this is a good day to die, and breaks and runs when reduced to 3 hit points. Given the chance, Deandre strikes at the turncoat.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Expertise, Gang Up*

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +3, Climb +4, Disable Device +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +4, Perform (comedy) +3, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +5

Languages Common, Osiriani

SQ trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *elixir of hiding*; **Other Gear** chain shirt, rapier, dagger, notebook of jokes, ink, quill, small hand puppet representing Lord Gyr, 8 gp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

LEDFORD

CR 1/2

Male halfling barbarian 1

CE Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, –2 rage, +1 size)

hp 17 (1d12+5)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4; +2 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee greataxe +5 (1d10+4/×3)

Special Attacks rage (6 rounds/day)

TACTICS

Before Combat Eager to brawl, only Deandre's intimidation keeps Ledford from rushing in before her signal.

During Combat On his first turn, Ledford begins his rage ability, moves to the first PC he can reach, and attacks using power attack. He maintains his rage for the following 6 rounds, but stops using Power Attack if his first two attacks miss a particular PC. If given a choice of targets, Ledford always chooses the biggest, strongest PC. Gleeful at finally being paid to fight people, Ledford shouts out taunts with each blow, followed with a short laugh. He clearly enjoys combat.

Morale While raging, Ledford fights to the death. If fatigued at the end of his 6 rounds of rage and reduced to 4 or fewer hit points, Ledford offers to call the fight a draw. Disgusted with his performance, Deandre may strike the failed barbarian.

Base Statistics When not raging, Ledford's statistics are

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; **hp** 15; **Melee** greataxe +3 (1d10+1/×3); **Str** 13, **Con** 14; **CMB** +1, **CMD** 13; Climb +6

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13

Feats Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +8, Intimidate +4, Perception +7

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear**

masterwork chain shirt, greataxe, block of wax in a metal tin, fine comb with a long handle, bottle of whiskey and four silver cups, 25 gp

Rewards: If the PCs survive the ambush, give each player 129 gp.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the day, Venture-Captain Ambrus Valsin thanks the PCs for carrying out his tasks, and assures them that not every mission for the Pathfinder Society involves

running errands about Absalom. If the PCs successfully completed three of the four tasks, he congratulates them on proving their skill and responsibility, and promises them a new assignment in the near future to take them beyond Absalom's unassailable walls.

The Pathfinders likely have a good idea what life will be like as an agent in the organization and have become at least familiar with Absalom, as well as half the total faction heads who will ply for their allegiance in two adventures' time. If you are running the First Steps series consecutively, feel free to give the PCs a hint of their next adventure in this scenario's conclusion, insinuating that Ambrus Valsin knows at least one venture-captain (the Lantern Lodge's Amara Li) who has a task she'd like the PCs to perform.

If any of the players at your table are new to the Pathfinder Society, make sure to help them complete their Chronicle sheet.

Success Conditions

In order for the PCs to earn their Prestige Point for completing the adventure, they must have completed at least three of the four tasks on Ambrus Valsin's list.

Faction Missions

There are no faction-specific missions in this scenario, as PCs playing through the First Steps series have not yet chosen factions, so any PC who meets the scenario's success conditions earns a second Prestige Point for completing the scenario. When a PC earns her third Chronicle (after completing *A Vision of Betrayal*), all previously earned prestige will be reported to her chosen faction.

PLAYER HANDOUT

Assignment #17:

- ☐ A man named Guaril Karela runs a curio shop in the Docks called the Pickled Imp. Go to him and fill his request as a favor to the Society. I believe it has something to do with a set of rare books.
- ☐ Ollysta Zadrian requested aid and is expecting you at the Temple of the Shining Star in the Ascendant Court. She needs someone to deliver a parcel of medicine and curatives to a needy orphanage and verify the character of the recipient.
- ☐ Visit the offices of Osirian nobleman Dremdhet Salhar in the Wise Quarter. The Pathfinder Society needs to obtain permission to delve the Salhar ancestral vaults beneath Sothis. He has made a verbal agreement, and your visit makes it official. You will receive an official charter and detailed maps. Do not embarrass the Society in this matter.
- ☐ Chelish Paracountess Zarta Dralneen possesses an item loaned from the Vaults. Meet with her in her estate in the Ivy District and retrieve the item in her possession.

FIRST STEPS PART I: IN SERVICE TO LORE

PATHFINDER SOCIETY INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO: FIRST STEPS, PART I: IN SERVICE TO LORE

Event _____

Date _____

GM # _____

GM Character # _____

GM Name
☐ Andoran ☐ Cheliah ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Lantern Lodge ☐ Osirion
☐ Qadira ☐ Sczarni ☐ Shadow Lodge ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Taldor

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name
☐ Andoran ☐ Cheliah ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Lantern Lodge ☐ Osirion
☐ Qadira ☐ Sczarni ☐ Shadow Lodge ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Taldor

Character # _____

Prestige Points

Character Name
☐ Andoran ☐ Cheliah ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Lantern Lodge ☐ Osirion
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PATHFINDER SOCIETY INTRODUCTORY SCENARIO

FIRST STEPS, PART I: IN SERVICE TO LORE

Scenario Chronicle #

☐ Slow ☐ Normal

SUBTIER	—	417	MAX GOLD
1			
SUBTIER			

This Chronicle Certifies That

Player Name	A.K.A.	Character Name	Pathfinder Society #
Has Completed This Scenario.			

EXPERIENCE

Starting XP

+	GM's Initial
---	--------------

XP Gained (GM ONLY)

Final XP Total

FAME

Initial Fame	Initial Prestige

+	GM's Initial
Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)	

Prestige Spent

Final Fame	Current Prestige

GOLD

Start GP

+	GM's Initial
---	--------------

GP Gained (GM ONLY)

+	GM's Initial
---	--------------

Day Job (GM ONLY)

+	
---	--

Items Sold

=	
---	--

Subtotal

-	
---	--

Items Bought

=	
---	--

Total

Items Found During This Scenario

SUBTIER
1*Elixir of hiding* (250 gp)*Potion of invisibility* (300 gp)*Scroll of remove disease* (375 gp)*Wand of disguise self* (5 charges, 75 gp)*Wand of knock* (11 charges; 990 gp)

Items Sold / Conditions Gained

TOTAL VALUE OF ITEMS SOLD
Add 1/2 this value to the "Items Sold" Box

Items Bought / Conditions Cleared

TOTAL COST OF ITEMS BOUGHT

For GM Only

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Pathfinder Society #