



# Gorgoldand's Gauntlet

## Adventurers Welcome!

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*"Gorgoldand's Gauntlet" is a D&D adventure suitable for four 1st-level PCs. It takes place in a cave network in the side of a cliff overlooking a lake and can be inserted easily into any campaign. The adventure can be adapted for characters of up to 4th level, as described in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.*

👉 Monsters    🗡️ Non-Player Characters (NPCs)    📖 Objects    🏰 Settlements    🕸️ Traps

### Adventure Background

A gold dragon calling himself "Gorgoldand" (an anagram of "gold dragon") converted a cave network into a testing ground to surreptitiously test the abilities of local adventuring bands. He did this by posing (in human form) as a book collector and hiring each band to unearth a small cache of important tomes said to be stored in the deep recesses of a cave network known as the "Gauntlet." As the adventurers struggled through the various traps and obstacles Gorgoldand had put in their way, the dragon observed their progress with the help of his pseudodragon companion, Snooky. If the adventurers were ultimately successful, Gorgoldand retrieved the tomes and allowed the heroes to keep the other treasure he'd stocked in the Gauntlet from his hoard. Always included in the treasure was a magic sword of his own design, through which he could keep tabs on the band. Details on this magic sword are provided in the "Hoardmaster" sidebar. Once the adventurers were gone, Gorgoldand would restock the treasure room in preparation for the next adventuring band.

Recently, however, Gorgoldand vanished. Lacking further guidance in the months since his master's disappearance, Snooky has done his best to keep the testing facility running: feeding the rust monsters and distributing copies of the maps that lead adventurers to the Gauntlet. When a band of jermlaine moved into the cave network a few months ago, Snooky grudgingly approved of the modifications they made to the Gauntlet, his love of practical jokes winning out over his sense of fair play. All in all, Snooky sees the jermlaine as a self-sustaining "upgrade" to his absent master's Gauntlet.

### Adventure Synopsis

"Gorgoldand's Gauntlet" is a site-based adventure with a predominance of puzzles and traps. The PCs discover a map leading to the Gauntlet and explore it looking for treasure. They test their strength and wits against various traps and puzzles created by the gold dragon, as well as some slightly more devious and dangerous ones added by the scheming jermlaine. If they make it all the way to the end of the Gauntlet, they'll have

gained access to a magic item that can have a significant impact on their adventuring careers.

### For the Players

The PCs are brought into the adventure by following a map that leads to the Gauntlet. They could have found the map in a treasure hoard during a previous adventure, or Snooky might have simply left a copy at the PCs' campsite as they slept. In either case, the map directs the PCs to the entrance of the Gauntlet but provides no information on the interior of the cave network (and thus it is not provided as a player handout). The map specifically mentions hidden treasure at the end of the Gauntlet but does not indicate what that treasure is.

### The Gauntlet

Unless otherwise mentioned, the interior of the Gauntlet is dominated by rough floors and is unlit. PCs without darkvision need to provide their own light sources.

**1. Cliff Ledge.** The PCs' map leads them to the top of a cliff overlooking a large lake.

A metal piton hammered into the stone near the edge of the cliff gives silent testimony that others have been this way before, although the rope that would normally be attached to the piton is missing. The narrow cave entrance to the Gauntlet is some 60 feet below the top of the cliff.

The jermlaine band removed the rope that the last adventuring band used to climb down to the cave entrance. The PCs can attach their own rope to climb down or do so without rope. Climb checks (DC 20 without rope or DC 10 with rope) are required from each character. Anyone falling from the cliff face plummets to the lake surface below. The cave entrance is 20 feet above the surface of the water. (The lake is 40 feet deep in that area.) PCs plunging from the top of the cliff fall a total of 80 feet before hitting water. Use the "Falling into Water" rules on page 112-113 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* to calculate falling damage, as appropriate.

**2. Cave Opening.** The cave opening is a narrow, upright slit in the side of the cliff wall. There is no illumination within.

PCs must walk single file until reaching area 3. Make sure you determine the party's marching order to see who gets to experience the trap just ahead.

**3. Spider Trap.** The jermlaine have added some refinements to the Gauntlet in the few short months since moving in. Along the 20-foot-high cavern ceiling they've anchored a "spider web" of crisscrossing rope lines. Two jermlaine stand on watch here, ready to drop the husk of a large spider onto the first PC who enters the cavern. Read or paraphrase the following to the player of the lead character:

The narrow passageway widens into a cavern. A hairy, multi-legged form drops down on you from the shadows above!

Along the north wall of the cavern is a secret door. The secret door opens to a passageway that leads to a set of four holding pits in area 16 and the jermlaine central lair in area 17. If the *dust of sneezing and choking* trap is triggered (see below), elves do not get their normal chance of detecting this secret door merely by passing within 5 feet of it. This restriction remains in effect until the magical dust cloud settles to the ground 5d4 rounds after being triggered. If the **Trap** is not triggered, or once the dust has settled, elves have their normal chances of noticing the secret door.

**Trap (EL 2):** You might want to allow PCs in the front half of the group a Spot check (DC 20) to see the ropes attached to the spider. If the characters fail this check, the PCs automatically strike first, as the spider is just a hollow husk shed by its previous owner and thus does not actually attack. However, the jermlaine have filled the husk with a packet of *dust of sneezing and choking* taken from a slain adventurer. Anyone inflicting damage on the dessicated spider husk with a piercing or slashing weapon rips it open and flings the magical dust in a 10-foot radius that fills the room.

↗ **Dust of Sneezing and Choking Trap:** CR 2; Fortitude save negates (DC 15; initial 2d6 temporary Constitution, secondary 1d6 temporary Constitution); Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 15).

**Creature (EL 1/2):** After loosing the spider husk on the PCs, the two jermlaine hide in crevices in the ceiling. PCs trying to spot the jermlaine must make a successful Spot skill check opposed by the creatures' Hide skill checks. If the PCs' Listen skill checks are higher than the jermlaine's Move Silently skill checks, they hear ratlike chitterings reminiscent of laughter. If discovered, these jermlaine skitter off into secret passageways carved into the cavern wall. The tunnels are much too small for the PCs to follow. These passageways are near ceiling level and wind back and forth before spilling out into area 16.

↗ **Jermlaine (2):** CR 1/4; Diminutive Monstrous Humanoid (1 ft. tall); HD 1/2d8; hp 2 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 size); Atk +0 melee (1d3-2, tiny club) or +2 ranged (1d4-2, small halfspear); SQ darkvision 60 ft., +15 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks, +5 racial bonus to Listen checks; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 6, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Animal Empathy +2, Handle Animal +2, Hide +22, Listen +10, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +5, Spot +4. **Feats:** Skill Focus (Hide).

**Possessions:** Tiny club, small halfspear.

**4. Trapped Room.** Once again, the passageway narrows, forcing travel in single file. Dangling from the cavern ceiling is a thin rope, ending in a loose lasso made from hair along the ground. The words "PUT FUT HEER" has been scrawled in chalk in the middle of the open lasso—obviously, this is someone's childish idea of a snare.

The area immediately beyond the rope lasso snare is a pit trap (see **Trap** below). The jermlaine added the simplistic and blatantly obvious snare trap to draw attention away from the real danger. The rope lasso is only weakly attached to the cavern ceiling and can be pulled down easily. (A PC cannot use it to prevent falling into the pit.)

**Trap (EL 1):** Gorgoldand created a simple pit trap here to test the adventurers. Two hinged trap doors open inward to a 10-foot pit if more than 50 pounds is placed on them. The jermlaine have since modified the pit, wedging the snapped-off blades of a few daggers into cracks in the stone pit floor. Furthermore, the devious little pests have lined the pit with a rare underground moss with effects similar to poison ivy.

## Scaling the Adventure

Although this adventure is designed for 1st-level PCs, it can be run for 2nd- to 4th-level PCs by changing the strength and number of opponents and traps. Use the "Encounter Level Table" at the end of the adventure as a baseline for modifying the adventure in the manner suggested below:

**2nd-level PCs:** The adventure, as written, is a bit too easy for 2nd-level PCs. Add one jermlaine to each of the three jermlaine encounters, and deepen the pit trap in area 4 to 20 feet. Give the merrow a single level of warrior, have the paralysis minefield deal 1d3 points of damage on a misstep, and add one more animated statue to area 14. If you use the optional encounter at the end of the adventure, give Breagar the dwarf another level of rogue.

**3rd-level PCs:** Run the adventure with the changes discussed above, plus the following additional changes: Give the merrow a

single level of fighter (instead of a level of warrior), have the paralysis minefield in area 11 deal 1d4 points of damage on a misstep, and add another animated skeleton statue to area 14 (four statues total). Also, make the statues stone, which gives them a Hardness of 8. Additionally, coat the fishhooks in area 6 with a mild venom (DC 14; initial and secondary damage 1d4 temporary Strength). Finally, add another 1st-level rogue (with statistics identical to Rashanda's) to the final encounter.

**4th-level PCs:** Run the adventure with the changes discussed above, but make the following additional modifications: Deepen the pit trap in area 4 to 30 feet deep, give the merrow two levels of fighter, have the paralysis minefield in area 11 deal 1d6 points of damage on a misstep, and add another stone statue to area 14 (five statues total). Coat the fishhooks in area 6 with poison (DC 18; initial and secondary damage of 1d6 temporary Strength). Finally, make Rotvil a 3rd-level barbarian if you use the final encounter.



Jumping over the pit trap, whether it's been activated or not, requires a successful Jump check. (The pit is 10 feet across.) A running jump is possible as long as the dust has cleared in area 3; otherwise, entering the dust cloud again forces another Fortitude check to avoid its hazards.

➤ **Pit Trap:** CR 1/2; no attack roll necessary (1d6); +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 20).

➤ **Moss Trap:** CR 1/2; no attack roll necessary; 1d2 points of temporary Dexterity damage; Fortitude save (DC 16) negates.

**Creatures (EL 1):** To add insult to injury, when the PCs crawl back out of the pit (or while jumping over it) four jermlaine approach from the east. Each throws a spear at the PCs and then retreats, giggling all the way. PCs who make a successful Spot skill check (DC 15) see that each jermlaine also carries what appears to be a small shepherd's crook.

➤ **Jermlaine (4):** hp 3 each; see area 3 for full statistics.

**5. Chasm Entrance.** The boxed text below assumes the PCs are in hot pursuit of the spear-throwing jermlaine. If this is not the case, modify the text accordingly:

As you pursue the tiny tormentors, you see a chasm ahead. The little humanoids dive over the ledge feet-first, one at a time, with their crooks held out above them. Suddenly, you brush up against several slim strings and feel the tug of sharp metal on your face and arms!

**Trap (EL 1):** Across this area of the Gauntlet the jermlaine have hung hundreds of fishhooks on slim lines woven from hair. The fishhooks are staggered at various heights ranging from 2-6 feet from the cavern floor; the foot-tall jermlaine rush by at full speed confident that they'll avoid entanglement. You might want to allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 20) to see the trap as they chase the jermlaine. (The DC is 15 if the PCs proceed with caution.)

A successful Dexterity check (DC 20) is needed to get free of the fishhooks; each unsuccessful attempt deals 1 point of damage. Optionally, any PC not entangled can cut an entangled companion free with a slashing weapon. The trap can be disabled with a successful Disable Device check.

➤ **Fishhook Trap:** CR 1; +8 melee (1d4+1) and *entangle* as the spell; Reflex save negates *entangle* effect (DC 20); Search (DC 14); Disable Device (DC 10).

**6. Chasm.** A 20-foot wide chasm cuts across the dungeon corridor. The sounds of splashing water emanate from the chasm bottom. On the stone floor across the expanse, a visored helmet sits upon the ground.

Closer examination of the chasm reveals some recent jermlaine modifications. A tiny piton hammered into the stone on the southwest side supports a thin thread woven from hair (most of it human); this thread acts as a zip-line for the jermlaine, who "ride" the line using their crooks down to a small hole in the ledge on the southeast side of the chasm. A similar setup exists for sliding down from the northeast surface to the northwest ledge. The threads do not support more than 25 pounds.

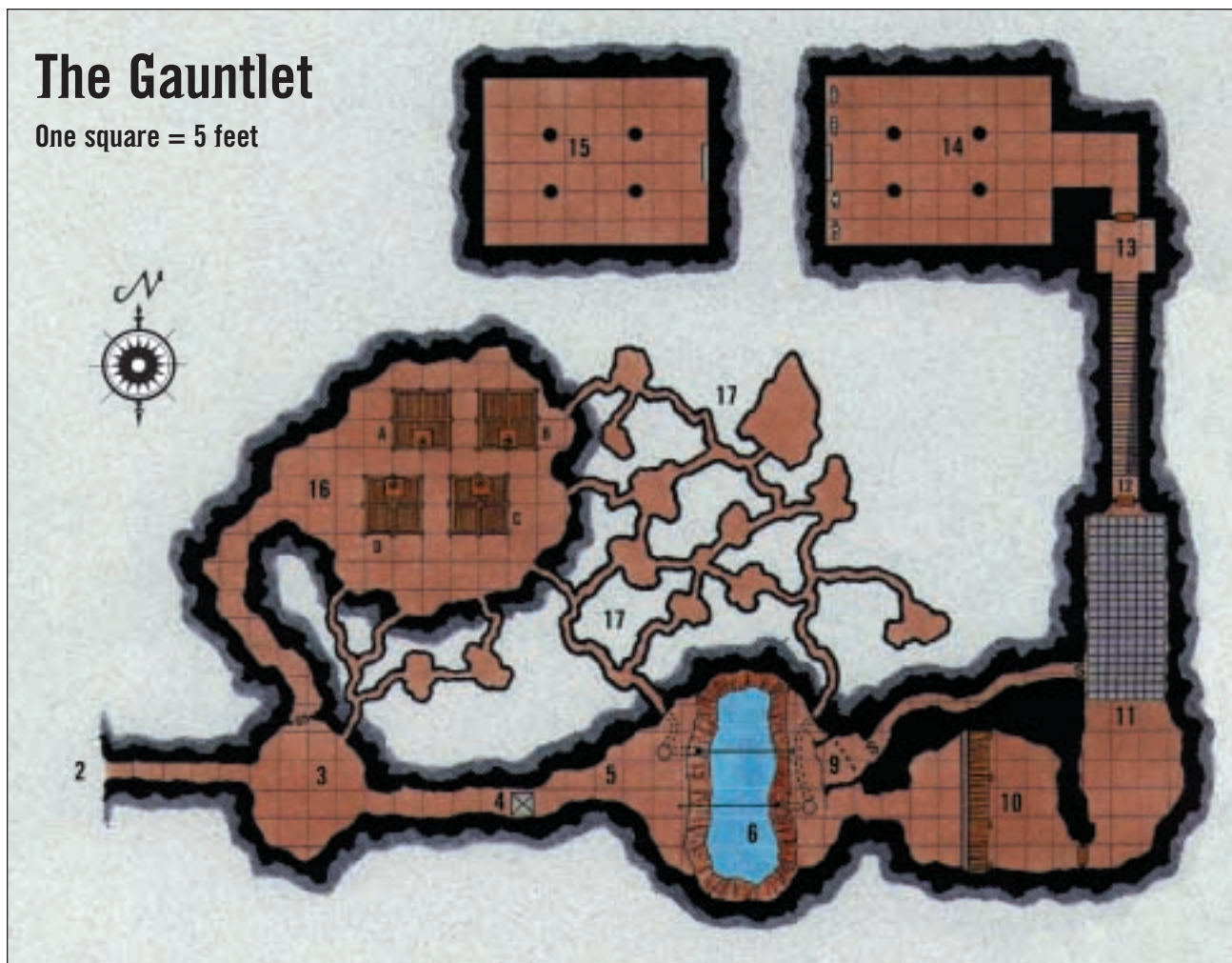
The jermlaine slide down the zip-lines to a hidey-hole in the southeast ledge; this connects to a set of jermlaine-sized stairs leading up to a small hole in the cavern floor covered by a visored helmet. From inside the helmet, a single jermlaine can use a tiny blowgun against the PCs under the benefit of 90% cover, providing a +10 bonus to AC. The blowgun darts deal 1 point of damage each; there are two dozen darts stored inside the helmet. Once the PCs make it across the chasm, they can simply lift the visored helmet up off the ground, exposing the narrow jermlaine tunnel and stairway below. At this point, the jermlaine retreat, using a tiny passageway that leads to their main lair in area 17. The PCs are unable to navigate the tiny jermlaine passageways.

A similar setup exists along the north side of the chasm. The jermlaine-sized stairs lead up to a hole in the floor at the northwest side of the chasm; this hole is covered by a small rock. At the bottom of the stairs is a side-shaft that leads back to the jermlaine den in area 17.

The chasm is 20 feet wide and angles down to the lake below. The chasm is only 15 feet wide at the level of the jermlaine ledges, some 10 feet below the dungeon floor and an equal distance above the surface of the water. PCs can elect to climb the north or south walls of the chasm; jump the chasm (a running jump is not possible unless the fishhooks in area 5 are cut down); or climb down the chasm, swim across, and climb back up the east side of the chasm. See the *Player's Handbook* for rules governing Climb and Swim skill checks. PCs falling into the water take no damage from the fall but might drown if they are wearing heavy armor; they might also find a nasty surprise waiting for them in the dark waters of the lake (see area 7).

# The Gauntlet

One square = 5 feet



**7. Underwater Cave.** This large cavern is completely submerged and pitch black. The PCs need darkvision or some type of magical illumination to see the cavern's contents: a 16-foot wooden plank (originally positioned by Gorgoldand at the west end of the chasm, later pitched into the water by the jermlaine) and a few scattered bones (human and jermlaine). Hidden under a large rock is a canvas sack filled with 750 sp and 250 gp. A successful Strength check (DC 18) is required to move the rock.

**Creature (EL 2):** Since Gorgoldand first set up his Gauntlet, a merrow, outcast from his own tribe, has moved into the underwater cavern. Depending on the relative strength of the party, the merrow might be present during the adventure or out hunting fish in the lake. If present, he hears anyone splashing into his cavern from above and approaches to investigate. He attacks immediately upon discovering intruders. The jermlaine are aware of the merrow's lair and avoid the water at all costs.

➤ **Merrow (Aquatic Ogre):** CR 2; Large Giant (9 ft. tall); HD 4d8+8; hp 22; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 natural, +3 hide); Atk +8 melee (1d8+7, long-spear); AL CE; SV Fort +6; Ref +0; Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

**Skills:** Climb +4, Listen +2, Spot +2. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (longspear).

**8. Underwater Entrance.** This passage is about 10 feet wide and leads from area 7 to the lake. The entrance is 10 feet below the water's surface and cannot be seen from above the waterline. PCs investigating the cliff wall from below the waterline can find this passageway with a successful Spot check (DC 12).

**9. Pseudodragon Lair.** Snooky the pseudodragon lairs atop a high ledge along the cavern overlooking the eastern side of the chasm. The lair is engulfed in shadows and can't be seen by the PCs unless they can levitate, fly, or otherwise gain access to the cavern ceiling.

A secret passage at the back of Snooky's lair leads to a shadowy overhang in area 11.

**Creature (EL 1):** Snooky stays out of sight, not wishing to reveal his presence. Once the PCs pass by area 6, he surreptitiously follows them, keeping track of their progress without aiding them or revealing himself.

➤ **Snooky, Pseudodragon:** CR 1; Tiny Dragon (3 ft. long); HD 2d12+2; hp 17; Init +0; Spd 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 18 (+2 size, +6 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d3 and poison, sting), -1 melee (1, bite); SA poison; SQ see invisibility, telepathy, immunities, SR 19; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Hide +8 (+16 in forests and overgrown areas), Intuit Direction +3, Listen +5, Search +2, Spot +5. **Feat:** Alertness.

**Treasure:** Snooky's treasure consists of two small wooden boxes of nails, three metal gauntlets, two tin spoons, a belt pouch containing 38 gp (which Snooky doles out to the rust monsters in area 10), a single leather glove (a left-handed *glove of storing*), a jar of *Keoghtom's ointment*, and a dozen copies of the map the PCs used to locate the Gauntlet.

**10. Rust Monster Lair.** This room is blocked from side to side by a low wall of mortared bricks. The wall stands 8 feet tall, while the ceiling of the cavern is 15 feet high.

PCs should have little difficulty climbing over the wall; it's low enough that a boost up by a friend should get even the shortest PC to the top. Once the PCs have reached the top of the wall, read or paraphrase the following:

The wall is 1 foot thick. Behind and built into the wall is a 5-foot-high shelf that runs parallel to the floor. An odd wooden door is set into the far end of the cavern. Words have been carved into the door, but at this distance it's impossible to make out what they say.

The door inscription is a riddle, which reads:

SPELLED FRONT TO BACK, IT'S A PERSON'S NAME  
OR A PROTECTIVE GUARD, FOR CERTAIN.  
SPELLED BACK TO FRONT, IT'S WHAT YOU DO  
WITH A BOW, BLANK PAGE, OR CURTAIN.

Below the door are four wooden dials, each with four different letters carved on its surface. The answer to the riddle is therefore a four-letter word, which must be spelled out with the four dials. The diagram above shows which letters appear on each dial. The answer to the riddle is "WARD."

**Creatures (EL 5):** Even if the players solve the riddle immediately, the PCs are attacked by the two rust monsters hiding under the brick shelf jutting out from the wall. The rust monsters attack before the PCs can turn the four dials into the correct configuration. The rust monsters are hungry, but they have been trained to wait until the PCs step on the floor of the cavern before attacking. If the PCs peek over the edge of the overhang and discover the rust monsters, the creatures attack immediately.

➔ **Rust Monsters (2):** CR 3; Medium-size Aberration (5 ft. long); HD 5d8+5; hp 25, 21; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural); Atk +3 melee (rust, 2 antennae), -2 melee (1d3, bite); SA rust; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8.

**Skills:** Listen +9, Spot +9. **Feat:** Alertness.

**Tactics:** The rust monsters head for the largest concentration of metal (such as a well-armored PC). Being rather ungainly, they cannot climb onto the shelf sticking out of the wall, although their antennae can reach PCs perched there. PCs not wishing to lose most of their metallic armor and

equipment can climb back onto the wall, out of the rust monsters' reach, while they puzzle out the solution to the riddle.

Once the four dials are in the correct configuration, the door swings outward into the next room, supported on hinges at the top instead of at the side. The fact that the entire door is made of wood prevents the rust monsters from corroding it and gaining access to other parts of the Gauntlet.

If the players cannot figure out the riddle, the door must be opened through other means. It can easily be opened from the other side, where the locking mechanisms are visible.

➤ **Locked Wooden Door:** 1.5 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break (DC 18); Open Lock (DC 25).

**11. Paralysis Minefield.** The floor of the cavern is smooth, although the walls remain jagged stone. Twenty feet ahead, the floor is divided into 160 squares, each a 2-foot by 2-foot metal plate, forming an 8 square by 20 square grid.

By the time the PCs arrive in this part of the Gauntlet, Snooky the pseudodragon has crawled through the secret passageway in the back of his lair to perch on a shadowy overhang looking into this room. Using his telepathic powers, he contacts the PCs:

Suddenly, a voice speaks in your head. "Many of the squares ahead are trapped," it says. "I will not tell you where the traps are located, but as you stand upon a square, I will tell you how many trapped squares are adjacent to that one. The rest is up to you."

**Trap (EL 2):** Each time a PC steps onto a square, Snooky (true to his word) informs her of how many trapped squares are adjacent to that one. The diagram on the next page shows the locations of the traps and the number of traps adjacent to each square, so you can relay the information, square by



square, to the players. A copy of The Minefield diagram (without the solution) can be given to the players so they can track their characters' progress, filling in the information on the squares as the PCs move down the corridor.

Anyone stepping on a trapped square takes 1 point of electrical damage and must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) or be paralyzed. Triggering a trapped square does not make that square "safe," as anyone else subsequently stepping onto that square also runs the risk of paralysis. A paralyzed PC that remains standing on a trapped square is not automatically paralyzed again when the initial paralyzation wears off; she can step freely from that square. If the PC steps back onto the trapped square at a later time, however, she must make another Fortitude save to avoid paralysis.

The easiest way for the PCs to get through the minefield is to write down how many traps each square is adjacent to. Any time the PCs stand on a square that is adjacent to no traps, they know that it is safe to stand on each of the (up to) eight squares touching that one. The way the traps have been positioned, it is possible for the PCs to make it through the gridwork without losing a member of the party to paralysis.

Climbing along the natural stone walls requires a Climb check (DC 20). If a climbing PC falls, determine which square she lands on, as the PC might need to make a Fortitude save to avoid paralysis.

Once the PCs have made it past the trap they come to a standard wooden door. The door is unlocked, and opens outward into the next room.

➤ **Electrified, Paralyzing Floor:** CR 2; 1 point of damage and paralysis for 3d10+30 minutes per square contacted; Fortitude save negates paralysis (DC 20).

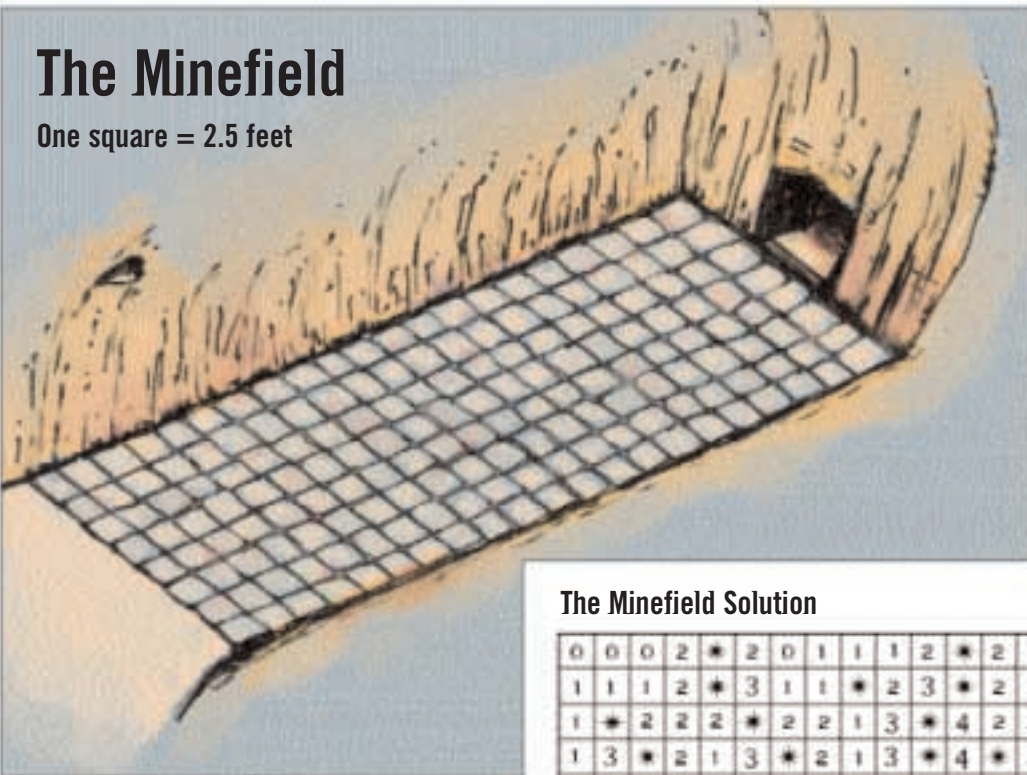
➤ **Creatures (EL 1):** If the PCs take longer than 5 minutes to cross the room, four jermlaine come to investigate. The four jermlaine descend the stairs on the other side of the door (they have discovered the secret of the stairs through trial and error, though they can't read the message written on them—see area 12 for details) and push it open enough for two of them at a time to hurl javelins at paralyzed PCs. (Treat the jermlaine as having three-quarters cover from the door.) The jermlaine hoot and taunt the PCs as they struggle through the room, but they leave if any of the PCs get close enough to jump into the doorway or if they run out of javelins, whichever happens first.

➤ **Jermlaine (4):** hp 3 each; see area 3 for full statistics.

12. **Stairway.** Beyond the door is a narrow corridor. Unlike the rest of the natural cave network seen so far, this passageway is carved into the rock; the floor, ceiling, and walls are smooth.

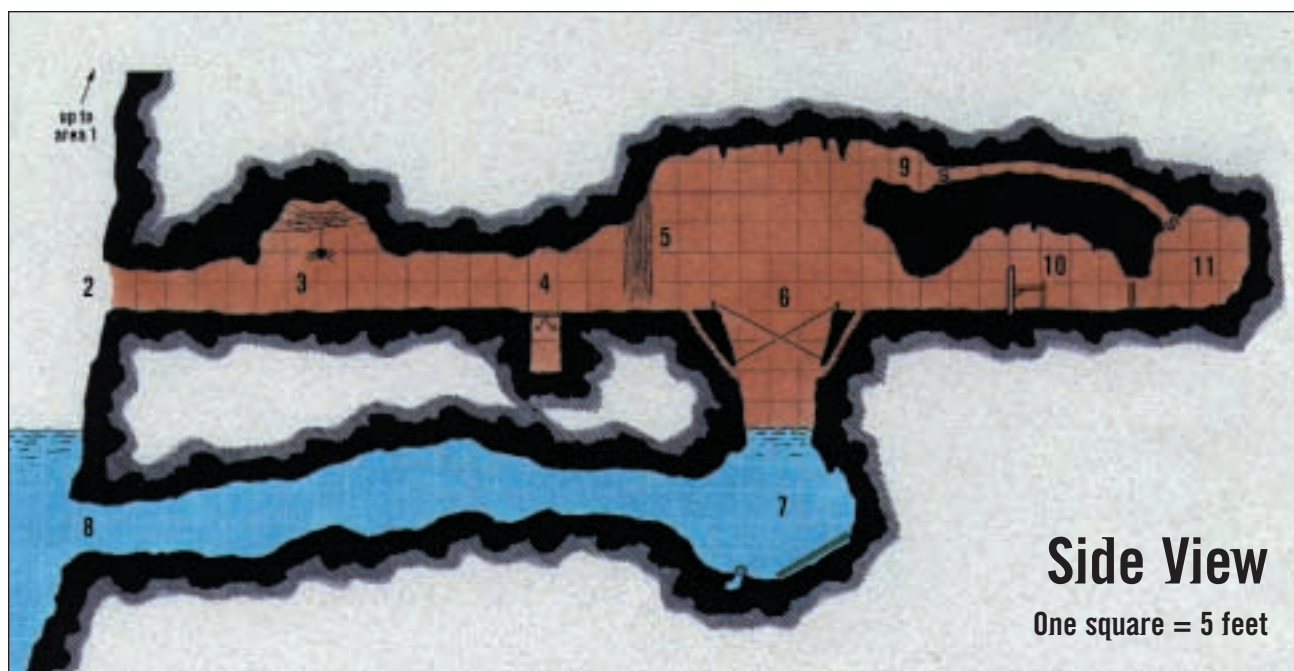
Each of the ascending steps has a single word engraved on its front face; the words all glow slightly, making them easy to read even in the gloom of the corridor. Beginning at the bottom step and reading up, the words say:

IT SEEMS EVERY SECOND OR THIRD TIME I STEP AWAY,  
FATE IS THERE, WITHOUT A DOUBT, TO TRAP MY COURSE.



The Minefield Solution

0	0	0	2	*	2	0	1	1	1	2	*	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	2	*	3	1	1	*	2	3	*	2	1	*	1	0	1	2	2
1	*	2	2	2	*	2	2	1	3	*	4	2	2	1	1	1	2	*	*
1	3	*	2	1	3	*	2	1	3	*	4	*	2	1	1	3	*	5	3
0	3	*	3	0	3	*	3	1	*	2	3	*	3	2	*	4	*	4	*
0	2	*	4	2	3	*	3	3	3	2	1	2	*	3	2	3	*	3	1
1	2	3	*	*	2	1	2	*	*	2	1	1	2	*	2	2	1	1	0
1	*	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	3	*	1	0	1	2	*	1	0	0	0



The solution to this stairway is found by reading every third word; doing so reveals the message “EVERY THIRD STEP IS A TRAP.” If the PCs avoid every third step, they can ascend to the upper level without incident.

**Trap (EL 2):** Anyone stepping on one of the third steps triggers a magic trap. Instantly, an illusionary sheet of flames whooshes up from the step, obscuring anyone or anything on that step from view. At the same time, the person or object on the step is *teleported* to a holding pit in area 16. The next round the flames automatically extinguish, leaving nothing behind. Gorgoldand’s intention was to make it seem as if the person or object triggering the trap was instantly incinerated, taking him or her out of the picture without actually causing the individual any real harm.

Each trapped step can be activated more than once, but only a total of four victims (or objects) can be claimed by this trap. See area 16 for details.

➤ **Teleportation Trap:** CR 2; *teleport* to area 16; Reflex save avoids (DC 27); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 32).

**13. Gorgoldand’s Den.** At the top of the stairs is a small room with a metal door set into the far wall. Hanging on the walls are various weapons mounted on wooden plaques.

The weapons might be unfamiliar to some PCs, as they’re not weapons chosen by most adventurers. Mounted on a plaque of dark wood is a pair of siangham; the plaque is engraved: “PA’S HAND WEAPONS, GUTSTICKERS.”

On the second wooden plaque is a metal gauntlet (right hand) with spikes protruding from the knuckles. The legend “PA’S GAUNTLET, FIST OF PAIN” is carved into the plaque.

On the wall across from the other two plaques is a longer one, upon which is hung a falchion. The inscription below it reads: “PA’S SWORD, ISLET’S LAUGHTER.”

Anyone touching the doorknob of the metal door activates a *permanent magic mouth* that says: “Not without the password, you don’t. What’s the password?” This recurs any time the door is touched without first saying the password. The password, of

course, is in plain sight of the PCs, written on the falchion’s plaque inscription. By rearranging the spaces between the letters to form new words, “PA’S SWORD, ISLET’S LAUGHTER” becomes “PASSWORD IS LET SLAUGHTER.”

The door is locked. The PCs need only speak the words “let slaughter” in Common before opening the door. Optionally, they can try picking the lock or bashing their way through the door, but this is a difficult process.

➤ **Iron Door:** 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break (DC 28); Open Lock (DC 24).

**Treasure:** Any of the weapons can be taken from the plaques and used by the PCs. The two siangham, spiked metal gauntlet, and falchion are all +1 weapons. The sound of ocean waves breaking upon a beach emanates from the falchion whenever its hilt is grasped.

If the weapons are examined using a *detect magic* spell, each one emanates Transmutation magic. While the PCs are free to use any of these weapons while inside the Gauntlet, once the weapons are brought outside the cave complex they automatically *teleport* back to the plaques in this room. If the plaques are removed or destroyed, the weapons reappear on the floor of the chamber.

#### 14. Skeleton Trap.

Beyond the door is a short passageway leading to an open archway 20 feet high. The 30-foot by 40-foot room beyond sports a 25-foot-high ceiling and is lit by golden-hued *continual flame* spells. Four columns stretch from floor to ceiling. The entire chamber has been carved from stone and painstakingly smoothed and polished, giving the room the appearance of a fancy hall in a lord’s manor rather than part of a dungeon. Flanking a mirror mounted to the far wall are four skeletons, each grasping a short sword. Letters are carved into the wall above the mirror, but at this distance you can’t make them out.



When the PCs enter the room, they can make a Spot skill check (DC 20) to notice a set of narrow grooves rising vertically from the floor along each side of the doorway leading into the room. As they approach the center of the room, they can tell that the skeletons and their swords seem to be carved from white stone. (The statues are actually carved from wood and painted white, but their swords are made of stone.) Their skulls are smooth where the eye sockets should be. The letters carved above the mirror read "TIRIANISPORITIUS." Further, anyone gazing into the mirror sees an exact reflection of the room, except that the room in the mirror shows a pile of loose coins, gems, and several weapons scattered upon the floor, with a set of six large tomes stacked in the corner.

The mirror is a magic transport device, activated by speaking the proper command word. The command word can be gleaned by noting the eyeless skeletal statues and applying that to the word carved above the mirror. Removing the "I's" from the word "Tirianisporitius" gives the true command word: "transportus."

If the command word is spoken within 15 feet of the mirror, the mirror's image darkens to an inky black and acts as a *dimension door* that leads straight to the treasure room in area 15. A similar mirror graces the interior of the treasure room, which works in the same manner. The treasure room is otherwise shielded against teleportation magic.

**Trap (EL 1):** Touching the mirror or statues without first uttering the command word causes a portcullis to crash down in the doorway (along the grooves), blocking escape from the room. Anyone standing directly under the portcullis when it falls must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) or be struck for 2d6 points of damage and pinned. A PC pinned under the portcullis must make a Strength check or an Escape Artist check (DC 20) to extricate himself. A maximum of three (pinned or unpinned) PCs can help lift the portcullis high enough to allow others to crawl underneath it. (Use the "Aid Another" rule in the *Player's Handbook*.)

➤ **Portcullis Trap:** CR 2; +10 melee (2d6 points of damage to PC underneath, blocks passage); Search (DC 16); Disable Device (DC 20).

**Creatures (EL 3):** As the portcullis falls, the two skeletal statues farthest from the mirror animate and attack everyone in the room. (The two statues adjacent to the mirror are inanimate.) The statues fight until they are destroyed, the intruders are slain, the intruders leave the room, or the correct command word is spoken aloud. (In all but the former case, they immediately cease battle and resume their original positions.) The statues do not leave this room of their own accord under any conditions. Despite having no eyes or eye sockets, the statues act as if they have 60-foot darkvision. Despite their skeletal appearance, the statues are not undead and thus cannot be turned.

➤ **Animated Statues (2):** CR 2; Medium-Size Construct; HD 2d10; hp 12 each; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+5 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, stone shortsword); SQ construct, hardness 5; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**15. Treasure Room.** The interior of this 30-foot by 40-foot room is lit with *continual flame* spells. The ceiling is 25 feet high and supported by four pillars, and the entire room is carved from stone. Scattered about the floor are loose heaps of coins and gems, with the occasional weapon poking out of a pile. Six large tomes are stacked in one corner.

One round after the PCs enter the room, the scattered treasure starts to move, telekinetically dragging across the floor of the room counterclockwise, as if drawn by an invisible whirlpool. The objects move faster and faster around a central point in the middle of the room, forming an upward-thrusting pillar of treasure. Gradually, this pillar takes on a vaguely draconic shape with a head, tail, four legs, and a pair of short wings.

**Creature (EL 4):** The "coin dragon" attacks everyone in the room, slapping opponents with its tail or wings. In addition, the coin dragon can shoot a barrage of coins and gems from its mouth like a breath weapon. After firing a barrage, the coin dragon must telekinetically reabsorb the coins and gems back into its body the following round, so it is restricted to a tail- or wing-slap attack the round after using its breath weapon.

## Hoardmaster

Gorgoldand stocks the treasure room of his Gauntlet with various treasures, but one thing he's sure to include each time is a Hoardmaster sword. Each Hoardmaster is a +1 *longsword* with a hilt carved to resemble a dragon's head. Two rubies take the place of the dragon's eyes. These ruby "eyes" are actually scrying devices, allowing Gorgoldand to see through them as if they were his own. This allows the gold dragon to keep tabs on the adventuring bands wise and powerful enough to make it to the end of his Gauntlet, for they might prove useful to him some day.

Hoardmaster gets its name from its ability to create a coin dragon if placed within a loose pile of coins and gems. This allows a treasure hoard to more or less guard itself; details on the coin dragon are provided in the description of area 15. Whoever places the sword with some treasure can later retrieve it without activating the coin dragon. Others are not so lucky. Of course, this means the PCs must choose between

bringing Hoardmaster with them as a weapon or leaving it behind to guard their other treasures. Gorgoldand doesn't mind at all when adventurers leave their Hoardmasters behind, as it allows him to scry their treasure for any interesting magical items. If he sees anything interesting, he's not against using a *teleport without error* spell to show up and study the item of interest. Gorgoldand created the Hoardmasters so that he would not trigger any coin dragon attacks himself. Of course, the gold dragon would never steal anything from the adventurers' hoard.

Hoardmaster can detect coins once/day, upon command. The sword points to the largest collection of coins within a 60-foot radius, regardless of intervening walls, hidden passages, or the like. The ability functions for 10 rounds each time it is used.

**Caster Level:** 12th; **Prerequisites:** Enchant Arms and Armor, *scry*, *telekinesis*, *unseen servant*; **Market Price:** 18,312 gp; **Weight:** 4 lbs.



Most ordinary weapons do little or no damage to the coin dragon. Piercing and slashing weapons slide right through the loose objects in its “body,” doing no damage. A blunt weapon like a mace or club might dislodge a handful of coins, but these are easily returned to the coin dragon the following round. (They are sucked back into the creature’s body telekinetically.)

A *dispel magic* cast upon the creature causes the disparate objects forming the dragon’s body to crash to the floor, leaving the dragon “bodiless.” The creature reforms its “body” the following round, but this allows PCs time to escape (possibly with an item or two from the hoard). The coin dragon is not permanently destroyed until it loses all of its hit points.

The coin dragon never leaves its treasure room and naturally heals 3 hit points per day. PCs in combat with a coin dragon might find it necessary to do some damage, leave the treasure room to heal up and prepare new spells, then continue the assault later (possibly over the course of several days, depending on the strength of the party).

➔ **Coin Dragon** (i): CR 4; Medium-Size Construct (7 ft. long); HD 3d10; hp 18; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+4 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, tail slap or wing slap); SA breath weapon; SQ construct, damage reduction 10/+1, resistances; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5; Str 14, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

**SA—Breath Weapon** (Su): The coin dragon can breathe a 20-foot cone of coins and gems that deals 1d8+2 points of damage to anyone in the area of effect; a successful Reflex save (DC 14) halves the damage. The breath weapon is usable only once every other round.

**SQ—Construct:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**SQ—Resistances** (Ex): The coin dragon has acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 5.

**Treasure:** Once the coin dragon is slain, the PCs are free to recover the treasure that made up its body, as well as the six tomes that Gorgoldand often used as an excuse to send heroes into the Gauntlet in the first place. The tomes are all completely blank. (Gorgoldand, in his role as a human sage, would claim that the writing was invisible, requiring a special set of magic spectacles to read.) The PCs are free to use the blank tomes as diaries, journals, for mapping, or as future spellbooks. Besides the tomes, the accumulated treasure breaks down to 2,000 cp; 550 sp; 300 gp; 16 gemstones worth 250 gp, 100 gp

(×3), 50 gp (×7), and 10 gp (×5) respectively; two masterwork daggers; a light mace; a scimitar; and Hoardmaster, a longsword detailed in the sidebar (see adjacent page).

**16. Holding Pits.** These holding pits are accessed by a secret passage in area 3. Anyone or anything activating the trap in area 12 is *teleported without error* into one of the four pits (pits A, B, C, and D, in that order). Once each pit has a victim or object within, it no longer functions as a *teleport* destination until such time as the pit is no longer occupied. The pits are 10 feet on all sides, carved into the stone floor of the cavern, and topped with a 3-foot by 3-foot door of iron bars that opens out from the cage top.

Gorgoldand originally intended these pits as holding areas for adventurers who had fallen victim to his *teleport* trap in area 12. Gorgoldand would escort these victims back to the cavern entrance and cast a *lesser geas* spell on them, compelling the adventurers to refrain from telling anyone else about the secrets of the Gauntlet and Gorgoldand’s involvement.

Unfortunately, the jermlaine soon discovered the secret door in area 3 and made their lair in a series of twisting passages connected to the holding pits. The pits were put to good use as jermlaine middens, and the vicious little creatures see no reason to stop the practice just because an occasional adventurer pops into existence inside their latrine pits!

The jermlaine slew the first adventurer that *teleported* into their latrine pit, shaved him bald, used his hair to weave their ropes and nets, and feasted on him for a week. Snooky was outraged at this betrayal; up until then, he thought the jermlaine were just playing elaborate, if somewhat dangerous, practical jokes on those adventurers willing to try their hand at the Gauntlet. Eventually, they agreed to a compromise: Snooky would use his tail venom to put any victims who *teleported* into the holding pits to sleep; the jermlaine would strip the victim of all possessions (except for some metal bits Snooky keeps), shave him bald, and bind the victim’s ankles and wrists. Then Snooky and the jermlaine would drag the helpless and unconscious captive back to the cavern entrance at area 2 to be discovered by the rest of the adventuring band upon their return to the surface.

This agreement keeps everyone happy (with the possible exception of the victim). The jermlaine get to humiliate a member of “the giant races” and acquire more hair for their ropes, while Snooky gets to play a practical joke on an adventurer

(who, in all fairness, would have been slain if the *teleport* trap was as lethal as Gorgoldand made it appear). The pseudodragon ensures that the jermlaine don't kill their victim and uses metal objects from the victim to feed the rust monsters.

**17. Jermlaine Den.** The jermlaine have tiny passageways carved throughout this area, leading to their diminutive living alcoves and scattered treasure troves. Because of the size of their tunnels, only those as small as a jermlaine can traverse the passageways.

**Creatures (EL varies):** A combined total of 30 jermlaine live in the clan: 2 from area 3, 4 from area 4, 4 from area 11, and 23 others. Of these, twelve are noncombatant children. The other eleven have 3 hit points each; see area 3 for complete statistics.

**Treasure:** In the event the PCs somehow manage to force the jermlaine to hand over their treasure, it consists of 14 gp, 103 sp, seven gems valued at 10 gp each, two *potions of cure light wounds*, and a *scroll of levitate*. The jermlaine are illiterate and unaware of the scroll's value: After the chieftain's children fingerpainted crude images on the back of it in mud, he hung it in his den. The jermlaine band also has the equivalent of 150 feet of rope cut into various lengths, all woven from humanoid hair.

### Exiting the Gauntlet

The PCs should have no trouble exiting the Gauntlet, as they will have already encountered all of the traps on their way in, and the jermlaine won't be looking for them anymore. PCs who were "incinerated" by the stair trap at area 12 are found naked, bound, and probably fast asleep (under the effects of pseudodragon venom) in area 2 when the PCs return. All of their gear is gone: Metallic items have been taken to Snooky's lair in area 9; everything else has been claimed by the jermlaine.

Any of the magic weapons taken from area 13 (the two siangham, the spiked gauntlet, and the falchion) automatically *teleport* back to that room when taken outside the confines of the Gauntlet. Any weapons taken from the treasure room in area 15 remain with the PCs as they exit the Gauntlet.

As "Gorgoldand's Gauntlet" is primarily a puzzle-based adventure, players who prefer "more action, less thinking" might feel short-changed. If your players are of that bent, the following scenario can be inserted at the very end of the adventure when the PCs climb back up to the clifftop after exiting the Gauntlet. Remember that by the time the PCs have finished the Gauntlet, they should be 2nd level. (They won't gain a level until they have rested, however.) PCs weakened by their ordeal in the dungeon will find this encounter challenging. As the DM, you must take a careful measure of the party before throwing this encounter their way.

**Creatures (EL 4):** The PCs aren't the only ones with a copy of the map leading to the Gauntlet. Several other adventuring bands have already experienced the Gauntlet for themselves and moved on in either triumph or disappointment. One particular band, Rotvil's Rogues, entered the Gauntlet and were quickly rebuffed. Not willing to be driven away from possible treasure by a bunch of stinking jermlaine, but also not particularly eager to return to the Gauntlet's interior, the Rogues have been camping out in the area, licking their wounds and keeping an eye out for other adventuring bands. When the PCs approached and entered the cavern network, Rotvil and his

gang saw their chance for some quick riches: All they had to do was hang around until the PCs returned from the Gauntlet and take their accumulated loot from them.

By the time the second PC climbs up to the top of the cliff, she finds a party of four humanoids racing on foot toward the cliff from 300 feet away, hollering like banshees. (The Rogues had intended on getting here earlier and setting up an ambush, but as usual, poor planning and a sleepy sentry got in the way of their ambitions.) Rotvil, the leader, is a half-orc barbarian; despite their name, only one gang member is a rogue. The others are a dwarven ranger and a human monk. All four have weapons drawn as they race toward the PCs. Rotvil wields a greatsword, the monk has a javelin, and the other two wield loaded crossbows. Their plan was simple: take the first PC hostage if possible, disarm him, and repeat the process with each PC as he reached the top of the cliff. Unfortunately for them, their tardiness means the PCs have a better chance of holding on to their well-earned treasure.

**Tactics:** Rotvil rages and races headlong into melee combat. Montego the monk hurls his javelin and then closes for hand-to-hand combat as well. The other two hold their distance and use their crossbows, switching to melee weapons only when they run out of bolts or the PCs close in on them.

**Rotvil, Male Half-orc Bbn2:** CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 2d12+2; hp 20; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 armor); Atk +4 melee (2d6+2/crit 19-20, greatsword) or +4 melee (1d4+2/crit 19-20, dagger); SA rage 1/day; SQ half-orc, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL NE; SV Fort +4; Ref +1; Will -1; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +6, Jump +6, Listen +3, Wilderness Lore +2.  
**Feat:** Weapon Focus (greatsword).

**Possessions:** Studded leather armor, greatsword, dagger, waterskin, backpack.

**Breagar, Male Dwarf Rgr1:** CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (4 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 1d10+2; hp 12; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 armor); Atk +2 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow) or +3 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger); SA favored enemy (goblinoids); SQ dwarf, track; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 8.

**Skills:** Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Intuit Direction +2, Wilderness Lore +2. **Feat:** Improved Initiative.

**Possessions:** Studded leather armor, dagger, light crossbow with 20 bolts, waterskin, backpack, *potions of cure light wounds*.

**Montego, Male Human Mnk1:** CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 9 in. tall); HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +0 melee (1d6, unarmed strike) or +2 ranged (1d6, javelin); SA stunning attack; SD evasion; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +3, Jump +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Swim +3. **Feats:** Dodge, Mobility.

**Possessions:** Javelin, waterskin, backpack, monk's outfit.

**Rashanda, Female Human Rog1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 1d6-1; hp 5; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 armor); Atk -1 melee (1d6-1/crit 19-20, short sword) or +0 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; AL CE; SV Fort -1, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Bluff +5, Climb +3, Disable Device +5, Hide +5, Jump +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Locks +5, Search +4. **Feats:** Lightning Reflexes, Run.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow with 20 bolts, waterskin, backpack.

### Concluding the Adventure

So where's Gorgoldand? That's a question that's been deliberately left for you to answer, as best fits your campaign. It's possible that the gold dragon is off visiting the outer planes or engaged in a tricky bit of spell research; he might even have been captured by a powerful enemy. Rescuing the gold dragon might be a task for the PCs once they reach higher levels and learn of his existence.

At your discretion, Gorgoldand can keep a watchful eye over the PCs' actions through the scrying ability of their newly-acquired Hoardmaster sword. If the dragon deems them worthy, he might approach them in the future to hire them for a specific task, or possibly even help the PCs get out of a hard spot. (Don't make this a common occurrence, lest the players come to expect their powerful gold dragon buddy to show up every time they get into a jam.) Of course, Gorgoldand need not present himself in dragon form, but merely as a human sage, wizard, or sorcerer. In any case, if the PCs gain Hoardmaster, you have a possible link to future adventures. Any of the following ideas could be developed into a further adventure:

- A Hoardmaster sword is stolen from another adventuring band who survived a previous excursion into the Gauntlet. These NPCs learn of the PCs' Hoardmaster, jump to the erroneous conclusion that the PCs stole the sword from them, and make appropriate plans for payback.

- It turns out that Gorgoldand put a few extra abilities in his Hoardmaster swords. After succumbing to a magic trap leaving him petrified but still conscious, the dragon sends his will out to the nearest Hoardmaster (the one owned by the PCs, naturally) and uses the sword to point the way to his location. The PCs must follow the sword to Gorgoldand's location, braving whatever dangers face them on the way.

- A sorcerer holding Hoardmaster finds that, perhaps due to the legendary claim that dragon blood courses through a sorcerer's veins, she can actually scry through Gorgoldand's eyes! This might be a good way for the PCs to learn of the sword's link to the gold dragon that created it and could easily lead to adventures based on knowledge obtained through Gorgoldand's vision.

*Johnathan is the author of several DUNGEON Magazine modules, including the popular "Challenge of Champions" series. He has also written several Ecology articles for DRAGON Magazine, including "The Ecology of the Jermlaine" and "The Ecology of the Pseudodragon."*

## Encounter Level Chart

Area	Encounter Description	EL
3	Dust of Sneezing and Choking Trap	2
3	2 Jermlaine	1/2
4	Pit Trap and Moss Trap	1
4	4 Jermlaine	1
5	Fishhook Trap	1
7	Merrow	2
9	Snooky, Pseudodragon	1
10	2 Rust Monsters	5
11	Paralysis Minefield	2
11	4 Jermlaine	1
12	Teleportation Trap	2
14	Portcullis Trap	1
14	2 Animated Statues	3
15	Coin Dragon	4
17	Jermlaine Tribe	varies
Exit	Rotvil's Rogues	4

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