

WIDOW'S GAMBIT

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 4TH TO 6TH LEVEL

PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE



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WIDOW'S GAMBIT IS A PATHFINDER second edition adventure for three to five characters of 4th to 6th level, optimized for a party of four 5th-level characters. A widow who was taken advantage of by an unscrupulous jeweller knows that she has no further recourse than hiring the party to steal back what should rightfully belong to her. Can the party infiltrate the jeweller's shop and locate her prized heirloom in time before being discovered? This adventure takes place in Cartosia, but the names of people and places can be changed to place this adventure in any urban environment across a variety of campaign settings.

BACKGROUND

In the bustling city of Dorran, Lorian's Jewels stands as a testament to refined craftsmanship. For decades, the store has offered fine jewelry, drawing the attention of those who appreciate the exquisite. Lorian, its owner and seasoned jeweler, has built his reputation on creating and trading pieces of unmatched beauty that attract Dorran's elite.

The widowed Lady Solvayne, one of Dorran's lesser nobles, recently faced a string of misfortunes. After a failed business venture and a series of poor harvests on her family's lands, she found herself in dire straits. It was during this time of vulnerability that Lorian, a past acquaintance, extended an offer to help by purchasing her treasured family heirloom, a necklace steeped in history and sentiment. Believing it to be a temporary solution, Lady Solvayne agreed, with hopes of reclaiming it in better times. These hopes were reinforced by Lorian, who assured her that he was happy to collect only a small interest rate on the loan once Solvayne was ready to repay.

As luck would have it, an old financial obligation to the Solvayne family was unexpectedly honored, granting Lady Solvayne the means to repurchase her cherished necklace. However, upon approaching Lorian, she was met with a refusal. Lorian, having recognized the immense value of the heirloom beyond its material worth, planned to auction it for a staggering profit.

Unbeknownst to Lorian, Joran, his young apprentice, had been privy to their dealings. Empathetic to Lady Solvayne's situation and disheartened by Lorian's change of heart and egregious avarice, Joran discreetly reached out to her. Sharing insider details, he hinted at the possibility of taking matters into more covert hands. Realizing the gravity of the situation and the limited time before the necklace is sold, Lady Solvayne has decided to seek out professionals — those skilled in stealth and strategy — to retrieve her family's

legacy. Will the party be able to step in and carry out a heist that holds the promise of justice just as well as reward?

GETTING THE QUEST

Whispers and rumors carry throughout Dorran about Lady Miranda Solvayne (NG she/her human [noble](#), *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*) seeking skilled professionals for a discreet operation. Whether the party stumbles upon this information through a well-connected informant or if one of them is somehow acquainted with Lady Solvayne herself or one of her servants, their journey into this tangled web begins when they are summoned to a meeting at Lady Solvayne's townhouse—a once grand estate showing visible signs of recent financial hardship.

Upon arrival, the party encounters Lady Solvayne, a middle-aged woman with distinguished silver streaks running through her raven-black hair. Her regal posture is sometimes broken by a wistful glance, hinting at her burdens. Beside her stands Joran (NG he/him human [apprentice](#), *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*), a lanky young man with freckled skin, curly red hair, and an ever-present habit of fidgeting with his sleeves when nervous. Together, they unfold the tale:

- Lady Solvayne, with an air of sorrow, narrates her plight – the painful decision to pawn her family's treasured necklace to Lorian during a period of unexpected debts and household misfortunes, and Lorian's assurances that she would be able to buy it back if and when the time came.
- Recently, having scrounged and saved enough to redeem the necklace, she was turned away by Lorian, who denied making such a commitment and now ostensibly intends to auction it to the highest bidder.
- Joran, swallowing hard and pulling at his sleeve, reveals his apprenticeship at Lorian's shop. He's grown disillusioned watching Lorian's dubious dealings. Though he knows the shop inside out – its layout, security, and the necklace's approximate location – his current position and fear of reprisal prevent him from acting on this knowledge.
- Lady Solvayne emphasizes her wish for a non-violent approach. Lorian's actions might be reprehensible, but she does not desire harm to come to him or anyone else.
- As a token of gratitude, Lady Solvayne offers a handsome reward for the necklace's safe return, implying a sum that promises to be quite generous. If pressed, she offers 100 gp up front, and another 200 gp upon completion of the heirloom's recovery. Furthermore, the party is encouraged to expand the scope of the heist and take whatever they can carry for themselves. Though Lady Solvayne seeks nothing more than her heirloom and believes stealing is wrong, too much suspicion may be drawn to her if only the heirloom goes missing.

During this conversation, a perceptive character might sense Lady Solvayne's unease. With a successful DC 19 Perception check to Sense Motive, they discern her embarrassment and shame over the situation she's found herself in. Pressing her on this with a DC 17 Request might get her to admit more about her past misfortunes and how she feels responsible for losing such a vital piece of her family's history.

GETTING INTEL

Assuming that the parties have come to consensus following initial discussion of the nature of the task, Joran can fill the party in on everything he knows about Loran's shop as well as the heirloom's location. He can provide all of the following information:

- The shop is divided into four areas: the sales floor, the back corridor, the safe room, and the workshop.
- Lorian closes up shop for the night at 6pm and heads to his home, a prominent gated town-house staffed by his faithful servants.
- After hours, the shop is protected by several powerful and automatically enabled alarm enchantments that ward all of the entrances. Joran suspects there are some inside the shop as well, but can't be sure. Lorian worked extensively with one of the most capable wizards in Dorran to establish this security protocol.
- If any enchantments are triggered, a security company named Blackthorn Sentinel Services contracted by Joran will be contacted and immediately make its way toward the shop.
- Lorian has boasted previously that it takes no longer than ten minutes from the time at which an alarm is triggered to the point at which the security team arrives at the scene.
- Agents of Blackthorn Sentinel Services are rumoured to be quite capable. Joran estimates that the party might be able to handle them, but he can't be sure, and ideally, the party will be in and out before any security team is able to arrive.
- There are suits of armor on the sales floor that are enchanted to animate and attack anyone who tampers with, or even touches inappropriately, the display cases. The number of suits match the number of PCs.
- Joran knows that the heirloom is kept in one of the many deposit boxes in the safe room.
- The deposit boxes can be opened with a keyring that is found in the workshop. Each key on the keyring has a number on it matching its corresponding deposit box. Each box has a built-in safety protocol that demands a short waiting period of thirty seconds after a key is inserted before the lock disengages, to prevent quick tampering or forced entry.
- Joran doesn't know exactly where the keyring can be found within the workshop—Loran keeps its exact location known only to himself.

Joran is adamant that he cannot accompany the party on the heist, for obvious reasons. He also explains that he shares Lady Solvayne's wish for a non-violent approach, and further clarifies that he would strongly prefer if the party avoided any contact with Loran directly. Infiltrate the

shop, get the heirloom, and get out before security arrives to complicate things.

Severe Encounter: Blackthorn Security Team. Once an alarm is triggered, it takes exactly ten minutes for a Blackthorn Sentinel Services security team to arrive on the scene. The team initially scouts the perimeter, trying to identify party locations through any open doors or through windows. They then quickly move in and attempt to subdue threats one at a time as efficiently as possible. They may, for example, attempt to converge on isolated party members keeping watch before dealing with the rest of the group. The team consists of a **ruffian**, a **mage for hire**, and a **bounty hunter** led by a captain, a wise-cracking former military man named Habeus Flinter (LE he/him **captain of the guard**; all *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*) who relishes any opportunity to dominate and humiliate others at the slightest perceived justification. While Habeas and his team operate under a no-kill policy that they mostly strive to uphold, "accidents" have been known to happen. Should the party find themselves on the losing end of a confrontation with Blackthorn after having provoked or antagonized Habeas, he may be motivated to facilitate an accident. Conversely, if the security team falls significantly behind in combat, Habeas does not fight to the death. He will surrender and beg for mercy if necessary; immediately crumpling in the shadow of superior might.

Adjusting the Encounter. If the party has five characters in it, add a bounty hunter. If the party has three characters in it, remove a bounty hunter. If the party is 4th level, Habeus Flinter is also a bounty hunter (not a captain of the guard). If the party is 6th level, add two bounty hunters.

TRACKING TIME

Unless the party can avoid triggering any of the alarms throughout the shop, Blackthorn Security Services will soon be arriving, and the GM will have to track time to account for the ten minutes that their journey takes. Here are a few notes to facilitate this process:

- If relevant, the time it takes to perform certain actions like searching a room or opening a deposit box will be noted in the applicable section of the adventure. These times will be reflected in minute or 30-second increments for ease of tracking.
- A single round of combat takes six seconds. If the party engages with the suits of animated armor, GMs can assume that combat and the moments of its immediate aftermath take approximately 30 seconds if 4 or fewer rounds, or 1 minute if longer.
- Any party activities without particular timing specifications in the adventure, such as moving from room to room or otherwise interacting with the environment are left to the discretion of the GM, though GMs are encouraged not to worry too much about individual seconds. If the party stops to discuss something, make a reasonable judgement as to how long that discussion would have taken in-character, perhaps in the same

increments as described above, and remind players of the time pressures.

Remember, tracking to ten minutes with exact precision isn't going to be possible, nor is it necessary. With the guidelines above, use your best judgement to determine the exact moment at which ten minutes have passed and the security team arrives on the scene.

GMs can refer to the following Time Costs table to quickly reference the amount of time various activities take for the purposes of this adventure:

TIME COSTS	
Activity	Time Cost
Resolving Combat	Approximately 30 seconds
Opening a Deposit Box	Approximately 30 seconds
Quick Room Search	Approximately 60 seconds
Other Activities	GM Discretion

LORIAN'S JEWELS

As faithfully described by Joran, Lorian's Jewels is a small, single-story shop with only four rooms. The street on which it sits within the commercial district of the city becomes relatively quiet only shortly after 6pm, and empty completely by as early as 10pm, other than the standard nightly guard patrols which stroll by the shop every half hour. Unless otherwise stated, its features are described as follows:

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The shop has grand, 10-foot-high ceilings adorned with colorful frescos. Its walls are half a foot thick, made of sturdy stone to protect valuable merchandise. Its floors are mostly polished marble, save for in the workshop, which is hardwood.

Doors. The front entrance features an ornate double door made of reinforced mahogany with brass handles, with AC 15, 10 Hardness, and 40 Hit Points (Break Threshold 20). It is unlocked during business hours but is secured at night with a sophisticated padlock requiring the key carried by Lorian or two successful DC 20 Thievery checks to unlock. The west



entrance to the workshop is less grand but equally secure, requiring the same conditions to unlock it. Interior doors are unlocked at all times.

Light. Mounted oil lamps throughout the shop give it a soft, even light during operating hours. After closing time, the shop is unlit.

Windows. Tall, narrow windows allow light into both the workshop and connecting corridor areas of the shop. They have 2 Hardness and 4 Hit Points. The windows can be unlocked from the inside with a simple latch mechanism but are designed not to be opened from the outside.

Alarms. Several enhanced *alarm* spells protect the shop outside of its operating hours. Both of the exterior doors as well as all of the windows are protected by these spells, which trigger when breached. The door to the safe room and the two displays that front onto the street are also protected by alarms. Additional alarm locations are described in the relevant adventure sections. All of these spells are heightened to 4th level and can be bypassed by a character aware of it with a Stealth check (spell DC 23). A failed attempt to dispel an alarm triggers it, sending a mental ping to a member of Blackthorn Sentinel Services.

CASING THE JOINT

Though Lady Solvayne and Joran both strongly prefer that the party not show their faces around the shop during operating hours and perform all aspects of the heist after it has closed for fear of complications, the party may nevertheless choose to do some casing while it's open, especially if they have means to conceal their identities. While this adventure can't account for everything that might occur in such a scenario, the following notes provide some guidance:

- During opening hours, the shop usually only has one or two customers inside of it at any given time at most; it wouldn't be unusual for members of the party to be the only customers for the duration of their visit.
- Lorian ([fence](#); *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*) spends most of the opening hours on the sales floor. He spends a few hours both before opening and after close in the workshop.
- Lorian carries a keyring on his person that unlocks the shop entrances. This keyring can be pickpocketed with a successful DC 21 Thievery check.
- Joran spends roughly half his time on the sales floor and the other half of his time in the workshop. He does not arrive before opening hours and leaves when the shop closes.
- Customers are not allowed in any shop rooms beyond the sales floor. Lorian issues only one warning; if it is not heeded, the suits of armor animate and attempt to haul any trespassers out onto the street. If the suits of armor are insufficient, Lorian can trigger an alarm spell behind the counter to discreetly call the Blackthorn Sentinel Services team.

The following areas are keyed to the provided map of Lorian's Jewels:

LORIAN'S JEWELS



I. SALES FLOOR

Glass display cases, delicately framed in dark wood and gilded accents, form orderly rows within the main showroom of this shop. Each case is a small trove of sparkling gemstones and meticulous metalwork, beckoning to those with a discerning eye and heavy purse. Against the far wall, a large mirror with an ornate golden frame presumably allows patrons to behold themselves adorned with the shop's offerings. Flanking the room's south wall stand four suits of armour, silent and imposing.

There are four groups of display cases throughout the sales floor—the countertop displays, the inner displays in the middle of the floor, the outer displays against the east and west walls of the floor, and the front window displays. Cabinets behind the countertops hold mundane items such as store inventory records and other documents, as well as cleaning supplies. The glass on all displays is reinforced—it has AC 16, Hardness 8, and 36 Hit Points (Broken Threshold 18). A casting of *read aura* reveals an aura of abjuration magic emanating from the inner displays and the front window displays, as well as an aura of transmutation from the suits of armor and an aura of evocation from the countertop displays. The alarms' auras occlude the auras of the items within.

A character who searches the room finds a piece of paper resting on a shelf beneath one of the countertops bearing a neatly-written note. Written on the paper is the following:

*Order more silver filigree and emerald shards for the bespoke brooches. Check the current market prices first.
Draft responses to commission inquiries received this week.
Prioritize the Viscountess and the Guildmaster.
Sharpen the chisels and organize the workbench. Ensure all crafting tools are cleaned and properly stored.
Review Joran's progress on the latest settings. Schedule a lesson on intricate clasps and lockets.
Third row's charm tonight. The M.S keepsake demands a second glance to calm my nerves. No rest for the weary, I suppose.*

The note is Lorian's to-do list from the previous day. Discerning characters may take particular notice of the final item; M.S are Lady Miranda Solvayne's initials, and the "third row" refers to the southern row of deposit boxes, where Lorian has stowed the heirloom. Even if the players don't make the connection, an Investigating character recognizes the initials as belonging to their employer with a successful DC 11 Society check.

Countertop Displays. The left and right countertop displays hold a pair of doubling rings split between them as well as a cumulative 50 gp each worth of mundane gemstones

and jewellery. These displays are not protected with an *alarm* spell.

Inner Displays. The two inner displays hold a cumulative 100 gp each worth of mundane gemstones and jewellery. One also has a *bracelet of dashing*, while the other has a *necklace of fireballs I*. Each of these displays is protected by a separate *alarm* spell that triggers if the displays are touched in any way after opening hours.

Outer Displays. The two outer displays hold a cumulative 90 gp each worth of gemstones and jewellery. These displays are not protected with an *alarm* spell.

Window Displays. The two window displays hold a cumulative 75 gp each worth of gemstones and jewellery. One also has a *ventriloquist's ring*. Each of these displays is protected by a separate *alarm* spell that triggers if the displays are opened after opening hours or if the display glass is breached.

Moderate Encounter: Animated Armors. The four suits of armor in this room are enchanted, and will surge to life and attack any who tamper with the displays. They fight until they are destroyed, or until the premises are vacant. They each use **animated armor** statistics (*Pathfinder Bestiary*) except that they are reinforced: each has the following adjustments:

- 35 Hit Points
- +14 to hit with its glaive
- +12 to hit with its gauntlet.

Hazard: Trapped Mirror. The mirror is a security device meant to keep thieves here and occupied while the security team arrives. Joran is unaware it is trapped.

CAPTIVATING DESIRES **HAZARD 5**
Enchantment, Magical, Mental, Trap, Visual
Stealth DC 22 (trained) to notice fleeting, pleasant figments of imagination in the mirror

Description The mirror waylays creatures by presenting their greatest desires to them.

Disable DC 25 Thievery (trained) to shroud the mirror without activating it, DC 24 Occultism (trained) to erect mental barriers that make you immune, or dispel magic (3rd level; counteract DC 23)

AC 19, **Fort** +15, **Ref** +9

Hardness 11, **HP** 46 (BT 23); **Immunities**
object immunities

Temp  (enchantment, mental, occult, visual) **Trigger**

A creature looks in the mirror; **Requirements** any alarm in the shop has been triggered and/or the animated armor has all been destroyed or incapacitated after activating;

Effect All creatures in the shop that can see the mirror see themselves enjoying their deepest desires in the mirror's reflection and must attempt a DC 25 Will save. Lorian and his security team are immune. If the mirror is broken or covered up, the vision switches to appear in the closest of the

two outer display cases, and then the other, until both are also covered, broken, or dispelled.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is fascinated by the mirror for 1 round and while fascinated can't take actions with the manipulate trait or willingly move out of sight of the mirror.

Failure As success but the duration is 5 rounds (wasting about half a minute unless freed) and the condition isn't automatically ended by a hostile action. At the start of each of the creature's turns, it makes a DC 25 Will save if it noticed any number of hostile actions against itself or an ally since the start of its previous turn and the condition ends on it on a success.

Critical Failure As failure but the creature can't bring itself to willingly target the mirror with an attack or damaging effect while it is fascinated.

Reset automatically every 5 rounds unless both outer display alarms are dispelled

Adjusting the Encounter. The number of suits of armor match the number of player characters. If the party is 4th level, the armor is not reinforced; simply the standard animated armor statistics. If the party is 6th level, there's two additional armors in the corridor that come to join any combat here after 1 round if the opponent doesn't immediately surrender; Joran isn't aware that these armors can animate.

2. CORRIDOR

The north end of this corridor is occupied by a plush lounge with velvet cushions. Along the eastern wall, secure display cases embedded into the very stone of the building present an array of gemstones and finished pieces. Doors exit in multiple directions.

The two displays in this corridor each hold a single gem worth 50 gp. These displays are not protected with an *alarm* spell.

6th-Level Adjustment. As noted in area 1, if the party is 6th level there are two more armors in this room. The armors in this room animate if someone tampers with either display case in here. If the perpetrator doesn't surrender within 1 round, the armors in area 1 animate and join in. (They also animate as described in area 1.)

3. DEPOSIT ROOM

The north, east, and south walls of this room are lined nearly two-dozen deposit boxes arranged in neat rows. A magnifying glass rests next to a tray atop a wooden table; the space is otherwise empty.

The deposit boxes in this room hold collateral, pieces that aren't currently for sale or are awaiting transfer to a buyer, and merchandise too valuable to risk leaving out on the sales floor. Starting with the left-most box in the north wall, the boxes are numbered 1 through 21. Lady Solvayne's

heirloom is stored in deposit box 15 (right-most box on the south wall).

Opening Deposit Boxes. Each deposit box in this room can be opened with three DC 21 Thievery checks or with the corresponding key from the keyring found in the workshop (area 4). An attempt to pick a lock open, which may be repeated upon failure, takes approximately thirty seconds; the same amount of time it would take the box to open if its corresponding key was used due to the delayed lock mechanism. There are twenty-one deposit boxes in total; with each box requiring thirty seconds to open, if the party has tripped an alarm, it will be difficult if not impossible for them to open every box within the ten minute window before the security team arrives. To determine the contents of any deposit boxes that doesn't hold Lady Solvayne's heirloom, GMs can roll on the Deposit Box Contents table or make a ruling at their discretion. There is only one box containing metal bars and no more than two boxes containing precious gemstones; any further time you roll such a result, the box is empty.

DEPOSIT BOX CONTENTS

d6	Box Contents
1	Empty
2	A piece of jewellery worth 10 gp
3	A piece of jewellery worth 30 gp
4	A pouch of semiprecious gemstones worth 20gp
5	A pouch of precious gemstones worth 150 gp (empty on third or subsequent 5's)
6	150 gp worth of gold and silver bars (empty on subsequent 6's)

#4. WORKSHOP

The rich scent of polished wood and resin fills the air. This room is a meticulous display of artisanship, the walls lined with racks and shelves that cradle the tools of a jeweller: files, hammers, and tiny pliers among them. The heart of the workshop is dominated by a robust workbench, its surface etched with the marks of labour and laden with an array of unfinished projects.

Though a portion of Lorian's inventory has been purchased from third parties, the bulk of it has been crafted by the jeweller himself in this workshop. Unfinished projects here are limited to settings, clasps, and fasteners; Lorian stores any more valuable components in the deposit boxes while he isn't working on them.

Hidden Compartment. Lorian keeps the keyring for the deposit boxes in a hidden compartment in his workbench. A character who Searches the room for one minute and who makes a successful DC 20 Perception check finds this hidden compartment. This check can be repeated upon failure with the same time requirement. The keyring is a robust loop of

iron, each key permanently affixed to the ring at its non-cut end by a small, solid rivet, preventing keys from being removed from the ring by any convenient means (destroying the rivet ruins the key).

AFTERMATH

The aftermath of this adventure varies depending on the actions of the party, particularly if they had an encounter with the security team. If the security team produces any living witnesses of the party's theft, the party will be the targets of a well-financed investigation that may or may not be successful depending on the evidence, if any, that the party left behind. This investigation will be more thorough if members of the security team were killed or "disappeared," or if the party stole a cumulative sum greater than 900 gp from the shop. Selling any of the stolen jewelry anywhere within two days' travel is likely to put the mercenaries or law enforcement on the party's trail unless they sell to criminal fences who pay them only two-thirds what the jewelry is worth rather than the usual full price (or one-third instead of the usual half for magic items). Without witnesses or significant evidence left by the party, however, they are likely to get away with the crime and without any suspicion tracing back to Lady Solvayne. If applicable, Lady Solvayne is disappointed to hear about any casualties and is subsequently unlikely to offer the party any future work as a result. As long as the party didn't do anything to implicate Joran, he is able to maintain his position at the shop without being suspected by Lorian.

Accomplishment XP Award. As this adventure has few adversaries, remember to give the PCs XP for their accomplishments. Returning the heirloom is a moderate achievement (30 XP). As long as they do that, they are also eligible for the following additional accomplishments that reduce the risk of consequences for them and their allies:

- The first three lockboxes looted (making the theft of the heirloom less distinctive) are each worth 10 XP.
- Avoiding being spotted (they can still earn this accomplishment if all spotted characters were successfully disguised; being seen by Lorian during the day only spoils this accomplishment if they behaved memorably or he saw them doing something suspicious) is a moderate accomplishment (30 XP).
- Leaving no distinctive physical evidence behind is worth 10 XP.
- Also stealing the contents of at least six display cases is worth 10 XP.

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