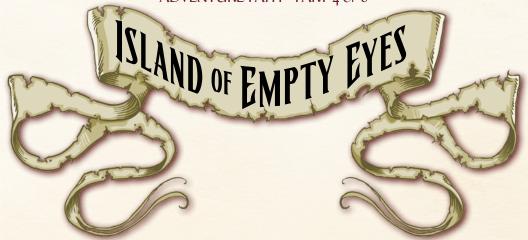
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ADVENTURE PATH • PART 4 OF 6









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Cartographer

Robert Lazzaretti

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Contributing Authors

Jack Graham, Alex Greenshields, Gareth Hanrahan, Michael Kenway, Robin D. Laws, Mark Moreland, Tork Shaw, and Neil Spicer

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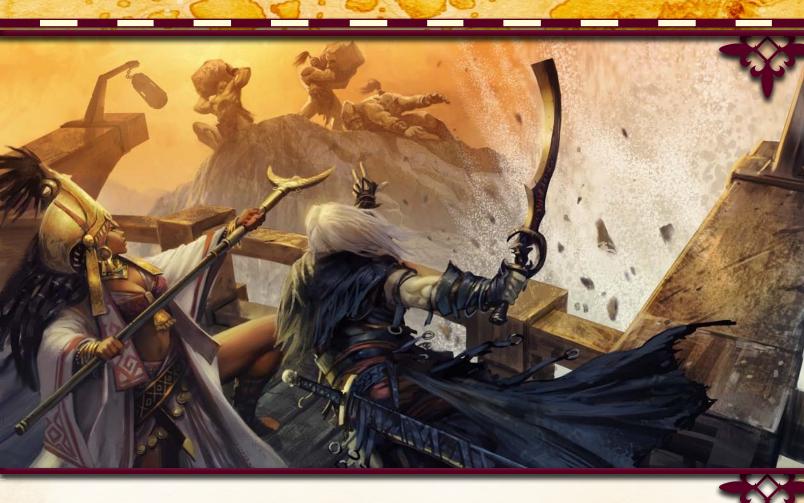
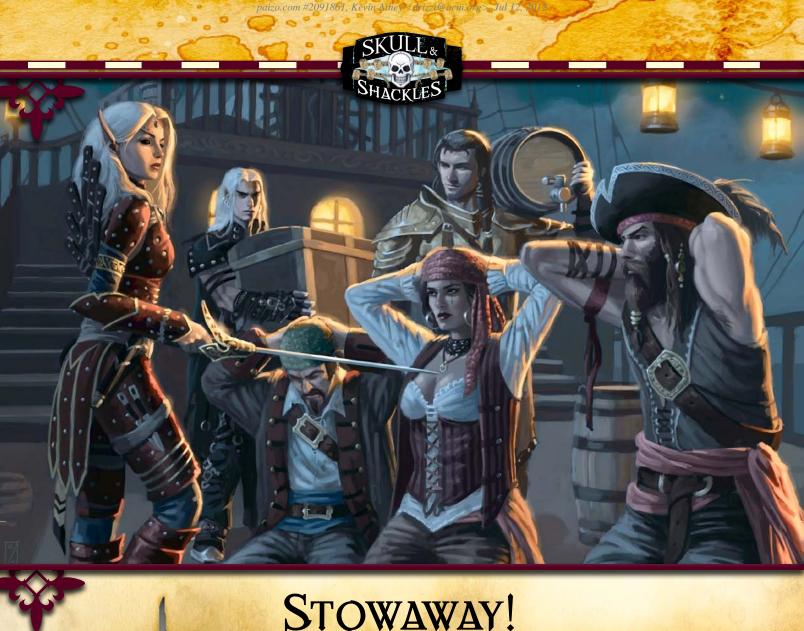


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ith it being as busy as it is around here (we are in the midst of the legendary Gen Con Crunch TimeTM), I don't think anyone noticed I slipped in, commandeered a desk, and started working on Pathfinder. Or maybe no one cares because I'm helping more than hindering.

On my first day here I did an edit pass of the adventure for Pathfinder Adventure Path #57. The next day I developed some of the monsters. Then I did a pass on a couple of the back matter articles, but at that time, everyone was in "all hands on deck" status trying to get the Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition out the door and on its way to the printer. I admit, I was geeked at the chance to do an edit pass on a couple of chapters. Trust me, this is something all Pathfinder fans are going to want to get their hands on. It really brought back memories of running that Adventure Path for my home group when it first came out.

It's especially cool to be joining the team as a full-on developer this year. It's a year of anniversaries for Paizo—the tenth for the company and the fifth for the game. Like many fans back before Pathfinder, I was devastated when I heard Paizo would no longer be making Dragon and Dungeon magazines. I loved what Paizo had done with them, so when the offer to transfer my subscriptions to this new Pathfinder Adventure Path thing came up, I gave it a shot. Of course, I was an instant addict. I've enjoyed the messageboard community and the ability to really communicate with the people who make it all happen, and now, after a few short years, the fact that I'm actually on that crew is pretty astounding. Not only is this a great opportunity for me, but it also feels like I have a better chance to give back to the Pathfinder community beyond just freelancing.

Since I'm coming on board in the middle of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, I took the time to catch

up on all of the goings-on with this campaign. I read through Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Isles of the Shackles and Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea, looked through the outline for the whole Adventure Path, and caught up on the volumes prior to the one I started working on. At this point I'm pretty saturated with piratey goodness... or is that badness? Whichever.

This month's adventure lets the PCs stretch their sea legs a bit on the island they were awarded at the end of the last adventure. They get to explore the island—but it's far from uninhabited. So the hardy adventurers get to do a little clearing out just to make things relatively safe. They also have some housecleaning to do, because all respectable pirates need a place to call home. Then, since the PCs are the big, fancy new kids on the block, the Pirate Council comes a-calling (just being neighborly, I'm sure), and the PCs must do what they can to impress these folks, hoping for a spot on the council themselves in order to gain more notoriety—and, of course, more plunder.

Aside from the 2,400-mile drive and unpacking my life into an apartment, transitioning into this new job was fairly easy. Before coming to work here, I always had freelance contracts from Paizo (and other fine companies like Open Design and Øone Games), often more than one at a time. I'd come home from my day job and plop down at my keyboard and crank out my assignments. It helps that I wrote a couple of articles for this Adventure Path before I even knew I was going to get press-ganged into this merry band of miscreants. It further helps that I've been freelancing for Paizo for a long time, especially working on the Adventure Path Bestiary monsters and other articles that make up the back matter—exactly the stuff that I'm going to be wrestling with every day now that I'm here.

PLOTTING THE COURSE

These last few weeks I've been Wes's minion, and as I shift more into my own little place here in the company, I'll be taking over some of his duties when it comes to all the parts of the Adventure Paths that aren't the adventure. Things like writing this foreword, or the introduction to the Bestiary in the back, or the "Next Month" text, or the back cover text. Turns out, someone has to write all that stuff, and it doesn't just spontaneously generate itself! I'll also be wrangling monsters and articles (and freelancers) in some capacity. (Wes gave me a copy of the keys to the menagerie.) I'll be making assignments, deciding which articles go with which adventures, and selecting the best monsters we can find. The back matter is, after all, half of each volume.

It's interesting seeing how all of this ends up being a beautiful and entertaining book on the shelf of a game store (or on your doorstep, for you subscribers). Unlike seeing sausage get made, the process is truly interesting and doesn't take away from the final product at all. There are so many

ON THE COVER

This month's cover features another power player in the Shackles, the Master of the Gales. The PCs met him in the last volume when he served as the judge for the Free Captains' Regatta. This storm druid won the regatta the last 5 years in a row and now uses his talents to keep the race challenging and fair. He also sits on the Pirate Council and sent one of his companions, whom the PCs meet in "Island of Empty Eyes," to evaluate their worthiness in earning a seat. The PCs could learn a lot from this guy, as long as they don't anger him.

steps and procedures—like edit passes, layout, copyfitting, as well as other things I'm sure I'll be acquainted with in the near future, such as ordering art, assigning articles, and all that fun stuff. I knew these kind of things had to get done one way or another, but didn't know the exact process behind them. All that art wizardry Sarah, Andrew, and Crystal do in their department is still mysterious to me.

Chris, Judy, Patrick, and Sutter are amazing editors with keen eyes and even keener minds. A few times over the last couple of weeks, they've brought some marked-up article over to ask me a question about something I'd developed, and I felt dumb for making such a silly mistake. But I'm learning tons from them, and after all, fixing things and turning them into fun for all of your games is what we do.

When I accepted the job offer and learned which part of the product line I would be working on, I started a sneaky little thread on the paizo.com messageboards asking people what they liked and didn't like when it came to back matter in the Adventure Paths. That was my sly way of getting the jump on my soon-to-be job. While I was packing my entire life into brown cardboard rectangles, I'd take breaks to peruse the messageboards and check in on that thread. I've enjoyed much of what you've had to say in response, and I hope to continue the habit of providing excellent articles and cagey beasts to supplement the adventures in the Adventure Path. So pop over to the paizo.com messageboards and let us know what kind of articles you love and what sort of thing you want to see in the future. As you know, we're always paying attention. Now flip the page and get ready for some high-seas adventuring!

> Adam Daigle Developer adam.daigle@paizo.com