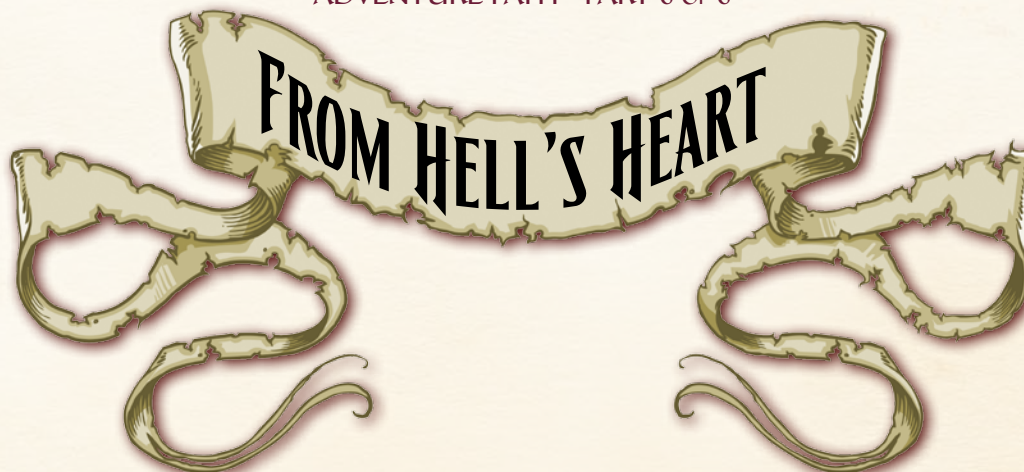


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## LOCK AND LOAD

This month's adventure, "From Hell's Heart," brings the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path to a close, but it also marks something of a first for us, in that firearms make their first significant appearance on Golarion in this volume (and our iconic gunslinger, Lirianne, seems pretty happy about that!). Guns have always been part of Golarion, first mentioned in the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*, and updated to the Pathfinder RPG rules with statistics in *The Inner Sea World Guide*, which also gave us two regions where firearms had already gained a foothold: the Grand Duchy of Alkenstar in the Mana Wastes, whose Gunworks actually produces the firearms, and the Shackles, where Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist was an early adopter of the technology, both in his personal weaponry and aboard his flagship.

It will probably come as no surprise to you when I say that guns in Pathfinder can be a divisive topic. When we

announced the new gunslinger class and complete firearms rules that would be published in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*, we got a lot of feedback from both sides. Some people liked the idea of adding guns to the Pathfinder RPG rules, but others did not want firearms in their fantasy at all. Guns are one of those things that people are passionate about, especially so in their favorite fantasy roleplaying game. Keeping firearms mainly in the hardback rulebook line left them available for those who wanted guns in their Pathfinder, but also enabled those who didn't want them to just not use those rules.

Most of us at Paizo actually like the idea of firearms on Golarion, at least to a limited extent. I'm even playing a gunslinger character in James Jacobs's "Sands of the Scorpion God" office campaign. A lot of Golarion is based on the old "sword and planet" pulps, where guns freely mixed with fantasy, and Gary Gygax mentioned adding firearms

to AD&D in the 1st edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Golarion even has robots and spaceships, so it's not too big of a stretch of the imagination to imagine primitive firearms might exist there as well. But we do recognize that guns are not for everyone, which is why Golarion is restricted to "emerging firearms," as described in *Ultimate Combat*, in official canon. Around the Inner Sea, firearms come from only one place, Alkenstar, and they are exceedingly rare elsewhere.

Throughout the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, we've tried to walk a fine line regarding guns. Using the base assumption of emerging firearms on Golarion, the multitude of pirates encountered in Skull & Shackles are not equipped with firearms, but for those who want more guns in their Golarion, we've also provided sidebars with tips on how to add them into the adventures.

We could hardly avoid incorporating firearms in Skull & Shackles at all, however. The campaign is all about pirates, and when most people think of pirates, they think of flintlock pistols and cannons, and the blue haze of gunsmoke in the air as ships fire broadsides at one another. Even more to the point, the PCs face Kerdak Bonefist at the conclusion of this adventure, and as mentioned earlier, his love affair with black powder is well established.

If you've been using firearms in Skull & Shackles from the beginning, "From Hell's Heart" has already done a lot of the work for you. Both Kerdak Bonefist and his first mate, Tsadok Goldtooth, are equipped with guns, and the *Filthy Lucre* bristles with cannons. The sidebar in this adventure even provides some advice on giving those two advanced firearms, to keep their level of technology just ahead of the players.

So what to do if you've decided that you don't want guns in your Pathfinder? It'll take a little bit of work, but you should be able to remove them as easily as other GMs have added them to their campaigns. Neither Kerdak Bonefist nor Tsadok Goldtooth are gunslingers, so it's easy enough to replace their guns with more traditional ranged weapons, and the cannons in the sea caves and on board the *Filthy Lucre* can be exchanged for ballistae. The Alkenstar gunslinger Omara Culverin can be replaced with a couple of pirate snipers armed with crossbows instead.

That being said, even if you dislike the idea of firearms in fantasy, I'd recommend giving them a try by running this adventure as written. If the PCs have yet to encounter any firearms during the Adventure Path, seeing such powerful new weapons in the hands of their enemies can be an interesting and exciting way to end the campaign. You might discover that, in carefully measured doses, firearms can be just as natural a part of a fantasy game as wizards or magic swords. As always, the messageboards on [paizo.com](http://paizo.com) are always available for your feedback. Let us know what you liked, what you didn't, and whether you'd like to see more (or fewer) firearms in future Pathfinder products.

## ON THE COVER

This month's cover brings us Kerdak Bonefist, Hurricane King of the Shackles and captain of the *Filthy Lucre*. Bonefist's obsession with firearms is well known, as evidenced by the pistol he's brandishing and the fact that the *Filthy Lucre* is the only ship in the Shackles to be outfitted with cannons. Bonefist has ruled the Shackles for 38 years, but his reign might soon come to an end in this month's conclusion to the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, "From Hell's Heart."

## RETURN TO VARISIA

The Skull & Shackles Adventure Path might be drawing to a close, but be sure to come back next month for the opening chapter of the Shattered Star Adventure Path. In celebration of Paizo Publishing's 10th anniversary and the 5th anniversary of Pathfinder Adventure Path, the Shattered Star Adventure Path takes us back to where it all began: the frontier region of Varisia and the ruins of ancient Thassilon.

In addition to returning to the setting of the first Pathfinder Adventure Path, Shattered Star also serves as the first true sequel Adventure Path we've done, following the events of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path (and, to a lesser extent, the Curse of the Crimson Throne and Second Darkness Adventure Paths). Those who have played through those Adventure Paths will likely recognize a lot of names and places, though of course, playing those campaigns is not a requirement to play Shattered Star, and players unfamiliar with those Adventure Paths will still find challenges galore as they explore Varisia for the first time.

Shattered Star also marks the first time that the PCs are assumed to be members of the Pathfinder Society, and the first adventure has them working out of the Magnimar Pathfinder Lodge under the direction of Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch. As the campaign progresses, the PCs will travel the length and breadth of Varisia, exploring a series of large dungeons in search of the scattered pieces of an ancient artifact known as the *Shattered Star*. It all happens here next month, when the Shattered Star Adventure Path kicks off!

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