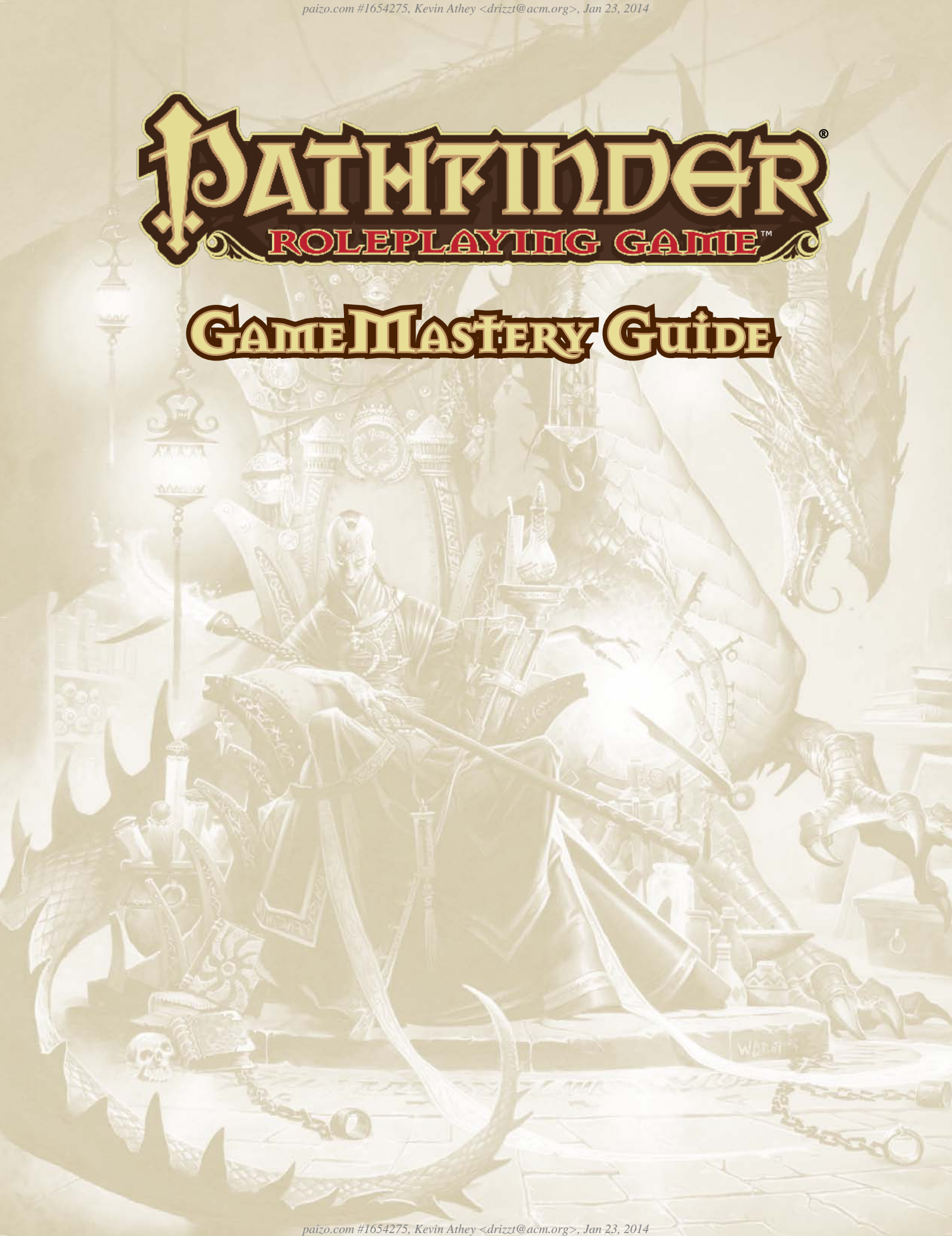


PATHFINDER[®] **ROLEPLAYING GAME**[™]

GAME MASTERY GUIDE



PATHFINDER[®] ROLEPLAYING GAME[™] GameMastery Guide

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This game is dedicated to Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Based on the original roleplaying game rules designed by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and inspired by the third edition of the game designed by Monte Cook, Jonathan Tweet, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

This game would not be possible without the passion and dedication of the thousands of gamers who helped playtest and develop it. Thank you for all of your time and effort.



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome, Game Masters, to a collection of advice and inspiration, tools and rules, designed for a game like none other: your own. Within the pages of this book, the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*, awaits guidance and mechanics to help you use the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game to tell the tales you've always imagined. Whether you're a new player excited to take your first steps into the limitless world of fantasy roleplaying or a veteran Game Master with decades of experience, the following pages offer far more than just advice on using funny voices and inventing quirky characters—they contain a vast arsenal of tools and techniques designed to improve the gaming experience for both you and your players, from the moment inspiration strikes to the finale of any campaign.

For the novice Game Master, this book provides suggestions on how to begin a game and make it as fantastical as you can imagine, recommendations on how to find players and keep them coming back, tips on dealing with player- and adventure-related problems, and details

on creating everything your game needs, from characters, to settings, to entire campaigns.

For adept Game Masters, this guide aims to save you time, fuel your creativity, and help every game you play run more smoothly. Within wait not only pages of suggestions and advice from some of the most talented Game Masters in the world, but also dozens of random idea generators, treasure charts, wandering monster tables, new rules subsystems, and stat blocks for the types of NPCs that appear most often in Pathfinder Roleplaying Game campaigns. Also expect aids to help you keep track of your characters, world, and campaign, tools to help you introduce new players to your game, and suggestions for books, music, and movies to help inform and inspire ever greater adventures.

All of this lies within, organized and cross-referenced with the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* and *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* to keep your attention on your stories and players, not on hunting through books. So turn the page—your next great story awaits.

Defining the Game Master

You might already know what a Game Master is. The likely definition, if you're holding this book, is "you." But if you don't know, a Game Master (or GM) is the Pathfinder RPG player who arbitrates the rules of the game and controls the actions of every game element that isn't explicitly controlled by the other players. But as any experienced Game Master knows, being a GM is also much, much more.

Host: Game Masters are the unifying force behind most of the game, not just organizing a social event but providing excitement and entertainment for those who participate. **Chapter 1: Getting Started** focuses on the GM's role as a host, presenting considerations on how to start a game, how to prepare for a session, and how to select a tone and rules that players will be eager to explore.

Mastermind: GMs work to keep a game's momentum moving in directions that entertain all the players while exploring the stories and settings they desire. To such ends, a GM manipulates dozens of elements, from how narrative components unfold to what rules are used and how they function in every situation. **Chapter 2: Running a Game** addresses a variety of topics that help GMs handle some of the most complicated aspects of their duties, from the details of how a GM actually performs in-game and frames a story to ways to create adventures and juggle the myriad aspects of a campaign.

Mediator: Just as GMs make sure all of a game's plots and rules work together to entertain, they must also ensure that the players themselves mesh and cooperate. From tips on handling unusual characters and common PC problems to the delicate tasks of introducing new players and addressing the needs of several gamer archetypes, **Chapter 3: Player Characters** offers GMs a host of suggestions to help them avoid, ease, and handle the wide variety of challenges that arise from both in-game characters and their real-world players.

Actor: Through the GM, the cast of entire fantasy worlds takes the stage. In a given session, a Game Master might play a generous peasant or a conniving king, a rampaging dragon or an enigmatic deity. Whatever the persona, the GM's characters are only as convincing, endearing, despicable, or memorable as the person who portrays them. **Chapter 4: Nonplayer Characters** deals with designing and depicting nonplayer characters, encouraging players to take a vested interest in NPCs, creating sinister villains, and many more suggestions to bring even the smallest role to life.

Patron: While GMs constantly confront their players with all sorts of dangers, they also serve as the source of every reward the PCs ever gain, from each experience point to treasures of legend. **Chapter 5: Rewards** aids GMs in creating and managing a wide variety of rewards, and includes ways to handle common challenges presented by character wealth and bring new life and adventure to old treasures.

World Builder: Whether running games on Golarion, home of the official Pathfinder campaign setting, or on a world of their own creation, GMs control nearly every aspect of an entire fantasy reality. With not just one world, but perhaps even multiple planets, planes, or even stranger settings under the GM's direction, the more insight and forethought invested into the ways and workings of locations, the more believable these become. Details on these elements, along with considerations on societies, time, technology, and more fill **Chapter 6: Creating a World**.

Storyteller: Among a GM's most important tasks is imagining and telling engaging stories. To aid in this task, **Chapter 7: Adventures** presents expansive discussions on several of the settings most common in the Pathfinder RPG, focusing on considerations and helpful rules GMs can employ wherever their tales might take them. In addition, numerous idea-generating charts and random encounter tables assure that GMs never lack for details or excitement once their stories reach their destinations.

Game Designer: Even with the vast range of options presented in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, only GMs know what threats their players might face or powers they might come to control. Just as GMs arbitrate the rules within their games, so can they manipulate, repurpose, and wholly invent new rules to improve their games. **Chapter 8: Advanced Topics** not only offers GMs a variety of new rule subsystems and considerations for running challenging types of adventures, but also expands upon several existing rules elements and demonstrates how GMs can customize the rules they already know to perfectly fit the types of adventures they want to run.

Director: Over the course of a campaign, Game Masters have need of dozens of characters and hundreds of encounters, choosing and customizing each and presenting them however best aids the overarching plot. Yet creating these elements can prove a repetitive and time-consuming task. To aid in this process, **Chapter 9: NPC Gallery** unveils a gallery of dozens of stat blocks for the types of NPCs most commonly encountered in the Pathfinder RPG. These characters can be used however the GM wishes, allowing him to focus on other, more exciting aspects of his campaigns.

Regardless of skill or experience as a Game Master, it's likely that every GM can identify one of these roles as an area in which she lacks experience or confidence. This *GameMastery Guide* seeks to address such needs, counseling on challenging aspects of campaigns, contributing new options and inspirations, and refreshing the game's classic elements. Most importantly, the countless tools herein are designed not to change games or tell GMs how they should play, but rather to inspire new stories and save effort, leaving GMs with more time to run exactly the adventures they and their groups want to play—or have been playing for years.