

what is pathfinder society

****What Is Pathfinder Society? Exploring the World's Largest Organized Roleplaying Campaign****

what is pathfinder society is a question that often arises among tabletop roleplaying game enthusiasts and newcomers alike. Simply put, Pathfinder Society (PFS) is a globally recognized organized play campaign for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, providing a structured yet flexible way for players to dive into exciting adventures, meet new friends, and explore the rich universe of Pathfinder. But there's so much more beneath the surface that makes Pathfinder Society a unique and thriving community. Whether you're a seasoned gamer or curious about joining your first campaign, understanding what Pathfinder Society entails will open the door to countless storytelling possibilities and memorable gaming experiences.

The Origins and Purpose of Pathfinder Society

Pathfinder Society was created by Paizo Publishing as part of their efforts to support and expand the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game—a fantasy tabletop RPG that itself evolved from the foundations of Dungeons & Dragons 3.5 edition. Since its launch in 2007, Pathfinder Society has grown into one of the largest organized play networks worldwide, with tens of thousands of players participating in various settings, from local game stores to international conventions.

At its core, Pathfinder Society is designed to bring players together under a shared narrative umbrella. Participants take on the roles of "Pathfinders," members of an elite guild of explorers, researchers, and adventurers who investigate ancient ruins, confront nefarious villains, and uncover lost treasures across the vast world of Golarion. This shared setting allows for a cohesive story experience, even when players meet for the first time or come from diverse gaming backgrounds.

How Pathfinder Society Organized Play Works

Unlike traditional homebrew campaigns where a single Game Master (GM) might craft a unique story for their group, Pathfinder Society organizes adventures into "scenarios"—pre-written modules that follow standardized rules and guidelines. This system ensures that players can drop in and out of games at different tables, cities, or even countries without losing continuity or character progression.

Joining the Pathfinders: Creating Your Character

One of the first steps to joining Pathfinder Society is creating a character that fits within the campaign's guidelines. Characters are built using the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game rules, but with specific restrictions and allowances tailored to maintain balance and fairness across the global play network.

Some key points about character creation in PFS include:

- Use of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook and selected supplements approved by Paizo.
- Characters are “legal” only if they adhere to the current PFS Organized Play Guide, which outlines permitted ancestries, classes, feats, and spells.
- Players create a “Pathfinder Society” identity, complete with a character background that ties into the overarching campaign narrative.

This structured character creation process helps foster a level playing field, allowing players to test their skills against the challenges presented in each scenario without unfair advantages.

The Role of the Game Master in Pathfinder Society

Game Masters, or GMs, play a crucial role in Pathfinder Society by running the scenarios and facilitating gameplay. PFS GMs are often volunteers who receive the scenario scripts and guidelines from Paizo to ensure consistency across sessions.

GMs must balance storytelling with adherence to the rules, providing an immersive experience while also ensuring that player actions translate fairly into experience points, rewards, and character development. The organized nature of PFS means that GMs focus more on managing gameplay and less on creating content from scratch, making it easier to run games regularly and consistently.

Unique Features that Set Pathfinder Society Apart

Several aspects make Pathfinder Society stand out in the world of organized tabletop RPGs:

1. Global Community and Accessibility

Whether you live in a bustling city or a small town, Pathfinder Society offers opportunities to engage with the campaign. Local game stores often host weekly or monthly PFS sessions, and major gaming conventions feature extensive PFS programming. Additionally, online platforms now allow players to join games remotely, broadening accessibility.

2. Character Advancement and Rewards

Pathfinder Society uses an experience point (XP) system that rewards players for completing scenarios, overcoming challenges, and roleplaying effectively. Characters gain new abilities, equipment, and prestige over time, reflecting their growing reputation within the Pathfinder Society.

Furthermore, PFS tracks character progress through a shared database, allowing players to maintain continuity regardless of where they play. This makes it easy to participate in different games while preserving your character's history and achievements.

3. Dynamic Storytelling and Campaign Updates

Paizo continuously develops new scenarios and story arcs for Pathfinder Society, often tying them to major Pathfinder product releases or special events. This ongoing evolution keeps the campaign fresh and engaging, providing players with new mysteries to unravel and foes to face.

Why Join Pathfinder Society? Benefits Beyond the Game

For many players, Pathfinder Society offers more than just an entertaining pastime. Here are some compelling reasons why people choose to join:

- **Community Building:** PFS connects gamers from diverse backgrounds, fostering friendships and networking opportunities within the tabletop RPG community.
- **Skill Development:** Playing regularly hones strategic thinking, teamwork, storytelling, and improvisation skills.
- **Flexibility:** The organized play format allows players to join games with ease, whether they have a full group or want to try a one-shot adventure.

- **Access to Exclusive Content:** Some PFS scenarios and rewards are unique to the organized play campaign, providing experiences not found in standalone games.

Tips for Newcomers to Pathfinder Society

If you're interested in trying out Pathfinder Society, here are some helpful pointers to get started smoothly:

1. **Find a Local Game Store or Online Group:** Check Paizo's official website or community forums to locate nearby PFS events or online sessions.
2. **Read the Organized Play Guide:** Familiarize yourself with the rules and character creation requirements to avoid surprises.
3. **Start Small:** Begin with introductory scenarios that are designed for new players to learn the system and pace of play.
4. **Communicate with Your GM:** Don't hesitate to ask questions or seek guidance during sessions; GMs are there to help.
5. **Embrace Roleplaying:** While combat and strategy are important, immersing yourself in your character's personality and story enhances the experience.

The Future of Pathfinder Society and Organized Play

Pathfinder Society continues to evolve alongside the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game itself. With the release of Pathfinder Second Edition and ongoing expansions, the organized play campaign adapts to incorporate new rules, settings, and adventure opportunities. Paizo's commitment to supporting a vibrant, inclusive, and engaging community ensures that Pathfinder Society remains a cornerstone of the tabletop RPG landscape.

Moreover, the rise of digital tools, virtual tabletops, and streaming platforms has expanded how and where players can participate. This adaptability means that whether you prefer face-to-face sessions or connecting via the internet, Pathfinder Society offers a welcoming platform to explore epic fantasy stories with fellow adventurers worldwide.

For anyone curious about stepping into a world of fantasy, adventure, and camaraderie, understanding what Pathfinder Society is offers a gateway to an enriching tabletop roleplaying experience. With its blend of structured play, rich storytelling, and a supportive community, Pathfinder Society invites players to become heroes in a shared tale that spans the globe.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Pathfinder Society?

Pathfinder Society is an organized play campaign for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, where players create characters and participate in sanctioned adventures worldwide.

Who runs Pathfinder Society events?

Pathfinder Society events are organized and run by Paizo Inc., the publisher of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, along with local Game Masters at participating stores and conventions.

How do I join Pathfinder Society?

To join Pathfinder Society, you need to create a character using the Pathfinder Society character creation guidelines and find a local group or online event to participate in.

What makes Pathfinder Society different from regular Pathfinder games?

Pathfinder Society features a shared campaign world and standardized rules for character creation, allowing players to participate in a global storyline and earn rewards across multiple sessions.

Can beginners play in Pathfinder Society?

Yes, Pathfinder Society welcomes players of all experience levels, including beginners, and often offers introductory scenarios to help new players learn the game.

Are there restrictions on character creation in Pathfinder Society?

Yes, Pathfinder Society has specific character creation rules and restrictions to maintain balance and consistency across the campaign.

What kind of stories are told in Pathfinder Society adventures?

Pathfinder Society adventures cover a wide range of genres including exploration, mystery, combat, and intrigue, all set within the world of Golarion.

Is Pathfinder Society only played in person?

No, Pathfinder Society can be played both in person at local game stores or conventions, and online through various virtual tabletop platforms.

How does progression work in Pathfinder Society?

Characters earn experience points, gold, and other rewards through adventures, allowing them to level up and improve their abilities within the campaign's guidelines.

Where can I find Pathfinder Society scenarios and resources?

Official Pathfinder Society scenarios and resources are available for purchase or download from the Paizo website and through authorized retailers.

Additional Resources

****Understanding Pathfinder Society: A Deep Dive into the World's Largest Organized Roleplaying Campaign****

what is pathfinder society is a question often posed by tabletop RPG enthusiasts and newcomers alike who encounter references to this expansive gaming network. At its core, Pathfinder Society (PFS) is a global organized play campaign centered around the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, developed by Paizo Publishing. Since its inception, PFS has grown into the world's largest and most structured campaign, bringing together thousands of players who collaborate, compete, and explore an evolving fantasy world through regular, interconnected adventures.

A Comprehensive Overview of Pathfinder Society

Pathfinder Society is more than just a series of roleplaying sessions; it represents a structured, persistent campaign designed to provide an immersive and consistent experience for participants worldwide. Unlike standalone tabletop games, which may vary widely in setting and rules interpretation, PFS offers a unified framework that ensures fairness, continuity, and global accessibility.

The core concept revolves around players assuming the roles of Pathfinder agents—members of the fictional Pathfinder Society—tasked with exploring the world of Golarion, uncovering ancient mysteries, and collecting valuable knowledge and treasures. These agents undertake sanctioned scenarios created by Paizo, which are designed to be played in multiple sessions or single events, ranging from beginner-friendly quests to complex, high-level challenges.

Organized Play Structure and Its Significance

Pathfinder Society operates under a rigorous set of rules and guidelines that govern character creation, advancement, and gameplay. This structure facilitates a balanced experience across thousands of simultaneous games held at conventions, local game stores, and online platforms. Key features include:

- **Standardized Character Creation:** Players create characters using the official Pathfinder rules, with specific restrictions tailored to maintain balance within the campaign.
- **Adventure Paths and Scenarios:** The campaign is composed of modular scenarios, each contributing to a larger narrative arc within the Pathfinder universe.
- **Global Player Database:** Characters and their progression are tracked centrally, allowing players to participate in events worldwide without losing continuity.
- **Seasonal Campaigns:** Each year introduces new seasons with fresh storylines, encouraging ongoing engagement and narrative development.

This level of organization ensures that PFS remains accessible and equitable, whether a player joins a local gaming group or participates in an international tournament.

Pathfinder Society Compared to Other Organized Play Campaigns

When examining what is pathfinder society, it is instructive to compare it to other prominent organized play systems, such as the Dungeons & Dragons Adventurers League (AL). Both campaigns aim to create a shared, persistent experience for players, but there are notable differences:

- **Game System:** PFS utilizes the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, known for its detailed character customization options and complex ruleset, whereas AL runs on D&D 5th Edition, which is generally considered more streamlined.
- **Character Progression:** Pathfinder Society features a more granular advancement system with intricate feats, traits, and skills, appealing to players who enjoy deep character optimization.
- **Scenario Design:** PFS scenarios often emphasize tactical combat and narrative elements intertwined with Golarion's lore, while AL scenarios vary widely in style and complexity.
- **Community Scale:** Both boast large player bases, but PFS prides itself on its global reach and detailed campaign tracking tools, fostering a tightly knit community.

These distinctions influence player preferences, with some gravitating toward Pathfinder Society for its rich customization and lore-driven play.

Key Features That Define Pathfinder Society

Understanding what is pathfinder society involves recognizing several defining features that contribute to its enduring popularity:

- **Consistency Across Sessions:** Characters maintain their progress, equipment, and story elements, providing a continuous experience over time.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** The campaign welcomes players of all skill levels, supported by beginner-friendly scenarios and a wealth of online resources.
- **Collaborative Storytelling:** Players collectively contribute to the evolving narrative of Golarion, with outcomes of scenarios influencing future content.
- **Organized Events and Tournaments:** Regular conventions and local game store events offer structured play opportunities and competitive elements.
- **Community Engagement:** Forums, social media, and official channels foster a vibrant community where players share strategies, stories, and feedback.

These elements form the backbone of the Pathfinder Society experience,

ensuring it remains dynamic and engaging.

Benefits and Challenges of Participating in Pathfinder Society

Engaging with Pathfinder Society offers numerous advantages, particularly for players seeking a structured yet flexible roleplaying environment. However, it also presents certain challenges that merit consideration.

Advantages

- **Structured Gameplay:** The campaign's strict rules and standardized scenarios provide a clear framework, reducing ambiguity and disputes during play.
- **Character Portability:** Players can take their characters to different venues worldwide, ensuring continuity and a sense of investment.
- **Rich Lore and Worldbuilding:** The detailed setting of Golarion adds depth and immersion, appealing to narrative-driven players.
- **Community and Social Interaction:** PFS facilitates meeting like-minded individuals, fostering friendships and collaborative storytelling.
- **Opportunities for Growth:** Regular updates and evolving storylines keep the campaign fresh and challenging, encouraging player development.

Potential Drawbacks

- **Complexity:** The Pathfinder ruleset is known for its depth, which may overwhelm newcomers or casual players.
- **Time Commitment:** Maintaining character progression and participating in ongoing scenarios requires sustained involvement.
- **Restrictions on Character Choices:** To preserve balance, PFS imposes limitations on certain classes, races, or abilities, which might constrain player creativity.
- **Accessibility Issues:** While online play has expanded access, some regions may have limited local events or communities.

Balancing these factors is essential for prospective participants to determine if Pathfinder Society aligns with their gaming preferences.

The Evolution and Future of Pathfinder Society

Since its launch in 2009, Pathfinder Society has undergone significant evolution, adapting to changes within the tabletop RPG landscape and player expectations. The transition from the first edition of Pathfinder to Pathfinder Second Edition introduced new mechanics and streamlined gameplay, which PFS integrated thoughtfully to maintain continuity.

Moreover, the rise of digital tools has transformed how players engage with the campaign. Platforms like Roll20, Fantasy Grounds, and Paizo's official forums have enabled virtual play, making the campaign accessible beyond traditional physical gatherings.

Looking ahead, Pathfinder Society continues to expand its narrative scope, exploring new regions of Golarion and incorporating player feedback to refine scenarios and rules. This adaptability suggests that PFS will remain a cornerstone of organized tabletop roleplaying for years to come.

Pathfinder Society stands as a testament to the enduring appeal of organized, narrative-rich roleplaying campaigns. By blending structured gameplay with expansive lore and a vibrant community, it offers a unique platform for players seeking both challenge and camaraderie in the world of tabletop RPGs. For those wondering what is pathfinder society, it represents not just a game but a global movement fostering creativity, strategy, and shared adventure.

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what is pathfinder society: *Pathfinder Society* Barrett Williams, ChatGPT, 2025-01-28

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what is pathfinder society: Pathfinder Society Field Guide Paizo Publishing, 2011 Optimally used with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook, this guide can be used in any fantasy game setting and particularly a Pathfinder world. Breaks down what it means to be a Pathfinder, and gives players and GMs the tools they need to build characters and campaigns. Find an overview of game geography, political factions, Pathfinder archetypes, a guide to threats and building PCs prepared to fight them, rules for character customization, dozens of new spells, magic items and tools, and more.

what is pathfinder society: Lord of Runes Dave Gross, 2025-03-28 Some Secrets Should Stay Buried Count Varian Jeggare and his hellspawn bodyguard Radovan are no strangers to the occult.

Yet when Varian is bequeathed a dangerous magical book by an old colleague, the infamous investigators find themselves on the trail of a necromancer bent on becoming the new avatar of an ancient and sinister demigod—one of the legendary runelords. Along with a team of mercenaries and adventurers, the crime-solving duo will need to delve into a secret world of dark magic and the legacy of a lost empire. But in saving the world, will Varian and Radovan lose their souls? From best-selling author Dave Gross comes a fantastical tale of mystery, monsters, and mayhem set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

what is pathfinder society: Pathfinder: Wake The Dead Fred Van Lente, 2025-03-19 Lured by the tantalizing prospect of new lands of Golarion to explore, a rendezvous with a Geb defector in possession of priceless secrets from that undead nation brings a diverse group of adventurers to the Nexian metropolis of Ecanus. But when they find themselves cornered by the city's remorseless Deathsealers, can this new group of Iconics band together for survival — and escape a city full of hostile wizards alive? Written by FRED VAN LENTE and illustrated by EMAN CASALLOS, this archival 8.5 x 11 hardcover collects the original five-issue series in its entirety, and features playable character stats for Seelah, the iconic paladin, as well as new character options for inhabitants of the magical military city of Ecanus — all officially sanctioned by the Pathfinder Society!

what is pathfinder society: *Pathfinder Tales: King of Chaos* Dave Gross, 2015-08-18 After a century of imprisonment, demons have broken free of the wardstones surrounding the Worldwound. As fiends flood south into civilized lands, Count Varian Jeggare and his hellspawn bodyguard Radovan must search through the ruins of a fallen nation for the blasphemous text that opened the gate to the Abyss in the first place—and which might hold the key to closing it. In order to succeed, however, the heroes will need to join forces with pious crusaders, barbaric local warriors, and even one of the legendary god callers. It's a race against time as the companions fight their way across a broken land, facing off against fiends, monsters, and a vampire intent on becoming the god of blood—but will unearthing the dangerous book save the world, or destroy it completely? From best-selling author Dave Gross comes a new adventure set against the backdrop of the Wrath of the Righteous Adventure Path in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

what is pathfinder society: Pathfinder: Origins #1 Erik Mona, 2015-02-18 The Origin of many of the Pathfinder's in this special series, and for the elite collector, we have Stjepan Sejic's Art without any trade dress as part of Dynamite's Premium and Signature Program. An exciting new Pathfinder adventure begins! To prove themselves to the Pathfinder Society, Valeros the fighter and his companions must recount tales of their early exploits in a world beset by magic and evil. In this issue, Valeros crosses swords with the brazen barbarian Amiri when both serve as hired guards escorting a doomed caravan through the treacherous Bloodsworn Vale. Sword and sorcery thrills from Pathfinder publisher Erik Mona (Pathfinder: Goblins!) and art from rising star Tom Garcia (Mercy Thompson)! Contains pull-out poster map and official Pathfinder RPG bonus encounter! This issue features bonus content exclusively on comiXology!

what is pathfinder society: Pathfinder Tales: Blood of the City Robin D. Laws, 2015-08-18 Luma is a cobblestone druid, a canny fighter and spellcaster who can read the chaos of Magnimar's city streets like a scholar reads books. Together, she and her siblings in the powerful Derexhi family form one of the most infamous and effective mercenary companies in the city, solving problems for the city's wealthy elite. Yet despite being the oldest child, Luma gets little respect - perhaps due to her half-elven heritage. When a job gone wrong lands Luma in the fearsome prison called the Hells, it's only the start of Luma's problems. For a new web of bloody power politics is growing in Magnimar, and it may be that those Luma trusts most have become her deadliest enemies! From visionary game designer and author Robin D. Laws comes a new urban fantasy adventure of murder, betrayal, and political intrigue set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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what is pathfinder society: **Reign of Stars** Tim Pratt, 2014-08-14 It Came From the Sky When the leader of the ruthless Technic League calls in a favor, the mild-mannered alchemist Alaeron has no choice but to face a life he thought he'd left behind long ago. Accompanied by his only friend, a street-savvy thief named Skiver, Alaeron must head north into Numeria, a land where brilliant and evil arcanists rule over the local barbarian tribes with technology looted from a crashed spaceship. Can Alaeron and Skiver survive long enough to unlock the secrets of the stars? Or will the backstabbing scientists of the Technic League make Alaeron's curiosity his undoing? From Hugo Award-winner Tim Pratt comes a fantastical adventure of science, savagery, and the vagaries of the human heart, set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and tied into the Iron Gods Adventure Path.

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own? From critically acclaimed author Chris A. Jackson comes a fantastical tale of love, espionage, and high-seas adventure, set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

what is pathfinder society: *Pathfinder: Wake the Dead #2* Fred Van Lente, 2023-07-26

Trudging through the Mana Wastes, our team takes the opportunity to get to know each other a little better. As each of them explains their motives for the quest, all seems quiet and safe. But wait, what's this? A KNIFE STORM!?!? Masterfully crafted by writer FRED VAN LENTE with incredible art from EMAN CASALLOS and covers by Casallo, Steve Ellis, and BIAGIO D'ALESSANDRO, this timeless tale also features playable character stats and new character options, and is officially sanctioned by the Pathfinder Society! This series features: • Cardstock covers on all issues! • Connecting artwork across all covers by Biagio d'Alessandro!

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Gideon Gull leads a double life: one as a talented young bard at the Rhapsodic College, and the other as a student of the Shadow School, where Taldor's infamous Lion Blades are trained to be master spies. When a magical fog starts turning ordinary people into murderous mobs along the border between Taldor and Andoran, it's up to Gideon and a crew of his fellow performers to solve the mystery. But can a handful of entertainers really stop a brewing war? From author Chris Willrich comes a new adventure of intrigue, espionage, and arcane mystery, set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

what is pathfinder society: Pathfinder Tales: Skinwalkers Wendy N. Wagner, 2015-08-18

As a young woman, Jendara left the cold northern isles of the Ironbound Archipelago to find her fortune. Now, many years later, she's forsaken her buccaneer ways and returned home in search of a simpler life, where she can raise her young son, Kran, in peace. When a strange clan of shapeshifting raiders pillages her home, however, there's no choice for Jendara but to take up her axes once again to help the islanders defend all that they hold dear. - From author Wendy N. Wagner comes a new adventure of vikings, lycanthropes, and the ties of motherhood, set in the world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

what is pathfinder society: The Redemption Engine James L. Sutter, 2014-04-30 Get Out of

Hell Free When murdered sinners fail to show up in Hell, it's up to Salim Ghadafar, an atheist warrior forced to solve problems for the goddess of death, to track down the missing souls. In order to do so, Salim will need to descend into the anarchic city of Kaer Maga, following a trail that ranges from Hell's iron cities to the gates of Heaven itself. Along the way, he'll be aided by a host of otherworldly creatures, a streetwise teenager, and two warriors of the mysterious Iridian Fold. But when the missing souls are the scum of the earth, and the victims devils themselves, can anyone really be trusted? From acclaimed author James L. Sutter comes a sequel to Death's Heretic, ranked #3 on Barnes & Noble's Best Fantasy Releases of 2011!

what is pathfinder society: Pathfinder Tales: City of the Fallen Sky Tim Pratt, 2015-08-18

Once a student of alchemy with the dark scholars of the Technic League, Alaeron fled their arcane order when his conscience got the better of him, taking with him a few strange devices of unknown function. Now in hiding in a distant city, he's happy to use his skills creating minor potions and wonders - at least until the back-alley rescue of an adventurer named Jaya lands him in trouble with a powerful crime lord. In order to keep their heads, Alaeron and Jaya must travel across wide seas and steaming jungles in search of a wrecked flying city and the magical artifacts that can buy their freedom. Yet the Technic League hasn't forgotten Alaeron's betrayal, and an assassin armed with alien weaponry is hot on their trail... - From Hugo Award-winner Tim Pratt comes a new fantastical adventure set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Role playing Game. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

what is pathfinder society: Bloodbound F. Wesley Schneider, 2025-03-28 Hunters of the Dead!

Larsa is a dhampir—half vampire, half human. In the gritty streets and haunted peaks of Ustalav, she's an agent for the royal spymaster, keeping peace between the capital's secret vampire population and its huddled human masses. Meanwhile, in the cathedral of Maiden's Choir, Jadain is a

young priestess of the death goddess, in trouble with her superiors for being too soft on the living. When a noblewoman's entire house is massacred by vampiric invaders, the unlikely pair is drawn into a deadly mystery that will reveal far more about both of them than they ever wanted to know. From Pathfinder co-creator and veteran game designer F. Wesley Schneider comes a new adventure of revenge, faith, and gothic horror, set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

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