

# THE LEGO® ADVENTURE BOOK



**CARS, CASTLES, DINOSAURS & MORE!**  
NEARLY 200 MODELS + 25 BRICK-BY-BRICK BREAKDOWNS  
**MEGAN ROTHROCK**



# Megan's LEGO® Book Adventure

By Katie Walker

Pictures by Megan Rothrock



Longtime AFOL and former LEGO® Product Designer Megan Rothrock (megs/megzter) is the author of *The LEGO Adventure Book*. Perhaps you have seen this exciting hardcover book at your local book store, or met her and some of the book's featured builders at fan events. So just how did it all happen? We tracked down Megan to find out. The Adventure begins!

## How did *The LEGO Adventure Book* come to be?

Well it's a crazy world. I never planned to write a book. I was approached by No Starch Press in Fall 2011. They are book publishers who had seen my work for *Brick Journal* and wanted to know if I would be interested in writing a LEGO book. The first meeting went very well. They wanted to work with me, with only one catch: they wanted to have a book out for the following Christmas Season. This gave me only a little over half a year to write a 200-page book I hadn't even thought of yet! I decided to put all of my other projects on hold and come up with a concept for them.

Pretty much from the moment they approached me, I knew what I wanted to do. As a kid I was one of the many current AFOLs inspired by the great LEGO 6000 Idea Book from the early 80's. I wanted to bring the excitement and energy of that book to a whole new generation! My mission was that no matter where you come from, whether you are an AFOL, TFOL, or haven't picked up a LEGO brick since you were a kid, or maybe ever, after flipping through my book you would be inspired to try and build something with LEGO bricks!

The LEGO 6000 Idea Book followed two LEGO minifigures as they journey to different LEGO themes, though just town, space and castle existed at the time. I wanted to echo this travelogue element in my book. Being a bit of a Sci-Fi geek, including a little time travel in the book was a given. I also knew the original book was a collaboration of the entire LEGO design team of the time, so I thought it was important that the focus of this new book should not be just me. With so many talented AFOLs around the world (who inspire us all on a daily basis) I felt that some of them should also be able to share their great work with the readers.

In order to have the book produced for the following Christmas Season, the publishers needed the completed manuscript at the latest by the beginning of July! No Starch was impressed

by the rough layouts in my proposal and they hired me to do the final layout. I was happy with that since there were so many building breakdowns to tackle and I knew how I wanted them presented. By the time I created the proposal it was into the new year, and I had less than six months to finish writing, designing and laying out the book. At this point I only had about half the builders I needed!

Since it was such a short deadline, I had actually started working on the book before the agreement was finalized and signed. This was a risk as I might have been carrying out a lot of work for no reward, but I knew that anyone I wanted to be in it needed as much time as they could get to create models. On paper the concept seemed fairly straightforward, but like any design project there were a lot of twists, turns and lessons learned along the way.

The first block to fit into place was 'Megs'. I've been using my sig-fig 'Megs' for years at events and online. The hair piece was actually sculpted from my real hair by the talented LEGO Master Sculptor Gitte Thorsen when I was working for LEGO Creator; it's a very special element to me. Megs would be the traveler around whom the rest of the book's narrative would be built.

Then I had to find the featured builders. This was its own adventure. I did have a few of them in mind from the start, but for the most part it was quite challenging finding the right themes to go in the book, and then finding builders in those themes with excellent model-building and photography skills. The models needed to be iconic, stable, buildable and most importantly, everyone had hardly any time and had to build fast! It took weeks of trawling Flickr, MOCPages, Brickshelf and everything in between to find them.

I sent out some queries to the people I had found, some of the best builders in the fan community, and to my surprise everyone I approached said they were honored and would love to contribute! I was incredibly humbled by their enthusiastic reactions. So now that I had my awesome builders I had to ask them to take their models apart and try to clearly communicate to me how they had built them. Their first reactions were, "You want me to do what? Really?" If you have not done this before it can be quite challenging to share how you have built a model. I explained the importance of the breakdowns and they

**Megan H. Rothrock**



**1**

**Internet nickname:** meg/megzter  
**Profession:** Toy Designer and Author  
**Nationality:** American  
**Website:** [www.flickr.com/photos/megzter/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/megzter/)

**7**



**Peter Morris**

**8**



**Mark Stafford**

**9**



**Aaron Andrews**

**10**



**Mike Psiaki**

**2**



**Craig Mandeville**

**3**



**Are J. Heiseldal**

**11**



**Katie Walker**

**4**



**Moritz Nolting**

**12**



**Carl Greatrix**

**5**



**Jon Hall**

**13**



**Sylvain Amacher**

**6**



**Pete Reid**

**14**



**Daniel August Krentz**

**Thank you to all the wonderful and creative featured builders:**

all did a brilliant job. After they sent me their breakdown photos I would then use them to build the models and maybe refine things further and create the final building breakdowns.

Coordinating thirteen people in three continents and at least six completely different time zones got a bit tricky. I was basically on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Everyone was fantastic and understood that even with short deadlines, sometimes it might take a while for me to get back to them with answers to questions. They were also excellent in keeping the book top secret and not spoiling the surprise! Like a lot of the LEGO Community I only knew a few of them in real life, having met at LEGO events, and some I only knew by online nicknames. As they began to send in their profile information it was exciting

to learn not only what they did for a profession, but their real names too. Working with all of these bright and talented builders was a wonderful experience and I have made some great friends along the way!

I'm no stranger to design processes and had carried out a lot of editorial work with Brick Journal, so I felt optimistic and confident about jumping into the world of book publishing. I worked very closely with my editor to create a template for press and style guide. We had a lot of back and forth, adjusting layouts and making changes. Since the deadlines were so short, I became a layout artist machine. Almost every image in the book had to be processed, cleaned up, and sharpened. Adobe Photoshop became my best friend.



Timing was crucial with each phase. I needed to have not just the other builders' models but my own designed in time to write the narrative. This juggling of models and editorial production was both good and bad. It was good because it kept things moving along briskly, but bad because at the point where I had designed and laid out 140 pages, a decision was made by the publishers to shift the book's margins to create more room for the pictures. It was a huge challenge to keep moving forward and rework the old pages. There were a lot of sixteen-hour days to rework all of the spreads. It was challenging, but I think in the end it was a good decision!

When the book went on sale, the reviews from the AFOL community were absolutely brilliant. I am over the moon with the reaction! I was hoping that people would like it and it seems to have been embraced all around the globe. I am honored and humbled by this.

Now that the book is out, I find myself going to even more LEGO® Events than before. I have been teaming up with

featured builders like Are J. Heiseldal and Moritz Nolting. We have brought our models from the book and have enjoyed meeting people and signing copies of the book. Since last November we have brought the book to the 50 Year Celebration of LEGO Norway in Oslo, Norway; LEGO Fan Welt in Cologne, Germany; and LEGOWorld Copenhagen in Copenhagen, Denmark. And there are many more events to come, like Art in Pieces in Portugal in June, Skaerbaek in Denmark in September, and LEGO World Netherlands in October!

A few years ago if you had told me I would write a published LEGO Book, I would have told you that you're nuts. It's been a wild ride. I just want to thank everyone out there who has supported The LEGO Adventure Book! This whole LEGO Adventure has been a great experience. I have had the opportunity to team up and collaborate with some really awesome and talented AFOLs and am looking forward to more exciting LEGO Adventures to come! Watch for news soon!

The LEGO Adventure Book Flickr group: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/2021445@N23/>

The LEGO Adventure Book Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/LegoAdventureBook>

Where to find it:

<http://nostarch.com/legoadventure>

[http://www.amazon.com/The-LEGO-Adventure-Book-Vol/dp/1593274424/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1348564187&sr=8-1&keywords=lego+adventure+book](http://www.amazon.com/The-LEGO-Adventure-Book-Vol/dp/1593274424/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1348564187&sr=8-1&keywords=lego+adventure+book)

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