

ROAD OF THE DEAD

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game adventure for four 3rd-level PCs by Creighton Broadhurst

Centuries ago, the Tuath were a mighty folk who strove against the goblins of the Tangled Wood for dominion over that ancient place. Defeated by treachery and their feral, warlike enemies the Tuath's civilisation was thrown down, their settlements were sacked, their places of strength broken open and their holy places despoiled. The few survivors melted away into the trackless gloom of the deep forest leaving behind nothing but remnants of their once-great culture. The Road of the Dead, a ceremonial pathway representing a soul's journey to the underworld, is one such fragment that yet lingers in the Tangled Wood awaiting the brave or the foolhardy. A cunningly designed death-trap, it hides the forgotten treasures and legends of a fallen people.



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To my wife

ABOUT THIS PREVIEW

This preview presents one of the encounters in *Road of the Dead* along with its attendant Players’ Handout. The two-page encounter presents three areas of interest in the cave complex while the Players’ Handout depicts exactly what the PCs see when they encounter the area’s guardians – a pair of ancient skeletal champions!

The two-page spread presents everything a GM needs to know when running the encounter enabling the GM to stop hunting for information scattered throughout the module and concentrate on running a cracking game.

The illustration shows the players exactly what their PCs see.

Each major encounter area in *Road of the Dead* is served by the combination of encounter spread and Players’ Handout. If an encounter includes a new magic item for the PCs to find (as two do) an additional illustrated Players’ Handout presents the item so a player can start using it straight away with minimum disruption to the game.

Additional notes about encounter format appear on the opposite page.

CONTACT US

Email borderland@ragingswan.com with questions, comments and suggestions about this adventure.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

The notes below describe how to use *Road of the Dead*. This adventure assumes the PCs use the Medium advancement track for experience points and treasure.

ANATOMY OF AN ENCOUNTER

Each encounter in this adventure has several distinct parts:

Title: This section includes the encounter's number, title, EL and total XP value. The second paragraph provides an at-a-glance overview of the encounter.

Initial Set-Up and Read Aloud: The next few paragraphs provide basic information about the encounter and a read aloud section describing what the PCs most likely see (dependant on PCs' actions, the GM may have to modify this text).

Players' Handouts: Many of the encounters in this adventure have an attendant Players' Handout. The encounter text notes when this should be displayed to the players.

Tactics: Details of how the encountered creatures work together to defeat the PCs.

Area Features: This section describes any noteworthy features in the area. Details of items found in the area (but not those carried by the PCs' opponents) appear here.

Stat Blocks: The encounter includes full stat blocks for all creatures present.

Treasure: This section presents information on any noteworthy items carried by the creatures present in the encounter (as well as detailing the various checks the PCs can make to identify the items).

Scaling the Encounter: This section provides brief details of how to increase or decrease the encounter's EL by 1.

Aftermath: This final section describes the PCs' likely next actions.

Sidebars: Occasionally, encounters include sidebars. Such inclusions could detail relevant (but little-used rules) like fighting in water or provide tips for running the encounter.

IDENTIFYING TREASURE

During the course of their adventure, the PCs will find treasure that they'll want to identify. Use the notes below to facilitate their efforts.

IDENTIFYING MAGICAL TREASURE

Magic items can be identified with a variety of skills and spells:

Identify a magic item: When the PCs find a magic item it is presented in the following format: *boots of speed* (moderate transmutation [DC 18], DC 25). The first part of the item's listing indicates the strength and type of magic emanating from the item and the Knowledge (arcana) check made in conjunction with *detect magic* needed to identify the magic type; the second part notes the DC required to identify the magic item using *detect magic* and Spellcraft Using *detect magic* and Spellcraft to identify a magic item takes three rounds. A character can attempt to identify a magic item

once per day. A PC failing to identify a magic item still determines the strength of the item's aura.

Appraising an Item: A DC 25 Appraise check made on a common item (a ring, piece of jewellery etc.) determines its value and whether it is magical or not (but does not identify the item's magical properties.) This check takes one round. Subsequent checks reveal the same result.

Decipher a Scroll: It takes three rounds to decipher each spell. Success requires a DC 20 + spell level Spellcraft check. A character can only attempt to decipher each spell once per day.

Identify a Potion: Potions can be identified using the method for identifying any normal magic item. Alternatively, a PC sampling the potion and making a DC 15 + spell level Perception check identifies the potion.

IDENTIFYING MUNDANE TREASURE

PCs can use Appraise to identify mundane treasures:

Appraise: A PC making a DC 20 Appraise check determines the value of a common item. If the PC fails the check by five or more, the price is wildly inaccurate. Particularly rare or exotic items require an Appraise check of 25 or more. It takes one standard action to appraise an item.

READING TRAP BLOCKS

These notes explain how to use the various traps appearing in the adventure. The following sections make up a trap block:

BASIC

Name, CR and XP: The trap's name, followed by its CR and XP value appear first.

Read Aloud: Text to read when the trap activates.

DETECT, DISARM, BYPASS

Search: The required DC to discover the trap.

Type: The trap's type.

Disarm: The Disable Device check required to disarm the trap.

This section also includes how long it takes to make the check and the DC for accidentally activating the trap.

Bypass: If there is a special way to bypass the trap, it is noted here.

ATTACK

Trigger: How and when the trap activates.

Reset: How long it takes for the trap to reset.

Effect: The effect of the trap. If the trap has multiple effects, they are presented separately for clarity.

5: LABYRINTH OF WANDERING SOULS (EL 4; XP 1,200)

A labyrinth of narrow passages interspaced with meandering blood-red streams connects the Blood Mist Falls (Encounter 4) to the remainder of the complex. Two skeletal champions – the remains of once-mighty Tuath warriors – stalk the passages.

When the PCs enter the labyrinth, read:

Several low, narrow passageways continue onwards into the oppressive darkness of this strange place.

In this encounter, it may be some time before the PCs encounter the guardian skeletal champions. Spring the encounter on the PCs the first time they reach an area marked “SC.” Determine randomly from what direction the guardians approach the PCs. When the PCs encounter the skeletal champions, reveal Player Handout 5 and read:

Two skeletal humans approach. Each is dressed in an archaic breastplate and carries a strange double-pointed spear.

The skeletal champions wander the labyrinth until they encounter intruders.

TACTICS

The skeletal champions use double spears (Appendix 1) with Two-Weapon Fighting, unless their foes prove difficult to hit.

LABYRINTH FEATURES

The labyrinth has the following features of note:

Ceiling: The ceiling is 8 ft. high.

Walls: The walls in the labyrinth have clearly been worked. In many places, the Tuath created carvings showing a doomed soul’s journey to the Abyss. Such carvings could show Maughuxin cooking captive souls, Lhamskarr symbolically consuming the flesh of the screaming damned or Felclugh drowning souls in the Blood Lake.

STRANGE ACOUSTICS

The labyrinth’s acoustics create strange affects. Determine what the PCs hear as appropriate to maintain the mood of the adventure and the disorientation of being in a labyrinth.

D20	SOUND HEARD
1-3	The rhythmic clanking of one or two armoured individuals receding into the distance*
4-6	The rhythmic clanking of one or two armoured individuals coming closer*
7-15	Running water
16-18	The crackle of flames (Area 6)
20	The roar of the Blood Mist Falls (Area 4)

*The sound of the guard’s patrol lingers after they are slain.

Blood Streams: A slow flowing, 5-foot deep stream cuts through the labyrinth. Moving through the stream requires a DC 10 Swim check if the character is too short to wade. Wading characters must spend 3 squares of movement to enter a square containing the Blood Stream.

Strange Acoustics: Odd sounds plague the labyrinth. The cave system’s layout combined with the streams and the patrolling skeletal champions create a number of strange sounds. Refer to the “Strange Acoustics” sidebar.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 3 (XP 800): Apply the young creature template to the skeletal champions (+2 on all Dex-based rolls, -2 on all other rolls, hp 11).

EL 5 (XP 1,600): Apply the advanced creature template to the skeletal champions (+2 on all rolls [including damage rolls]; +4 to AC and CMD; hp 23).

AFTERMATH

Wandering the labyrinth, the PCs can discover Areas 5, 6 or 7.

SKELETAL CHAMPION (2)

CR 2 (XP 600)

Dressed in an archaic breastplate this skeleton carries a double-pointed spear.

Human skeletal champion warrior 1

NE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6, Sense Motive +0

Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.

ACP -4; **Acrobatics** -3 (-7 jumping), **Stealth** -1

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; **CMD** 16

(+1 Dex, +6 armour [breastplate], +1 shield [Two-Weapon Defence], +2 natural)

Immune mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless), cold

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3; channel resistance +4

hp 17 (3 HD); **DR** bludgeoning/5

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +6

Melee mwk double spear (reach 10 ft.) +7 (1d8+4/x3) or

Melee mwk double spear (reach 10 ft.) +5 (1d8+3/x3) and mwk double spear (reach 10 ft.) +5 (1d8+3/x3)

Abilities Str 17, Dex 13, Con –, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ undead traits

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (double spear), Improved Initiative^B, Two-Weapon Defence, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (double spear)

Skills as above plus Intimidate +7

Gear as above

5A: SUNKEN ALTAR

This small area contains a sunken altar dedicated to the three demons guarding the Road of the Dead. Although no dangers lurk in the area, perceptive PCs may uncover some forgotten treasures. Read:

A large pool of blood-red water fed by two small streams dominates this chamber. Within the pool, the flat top of a large stone (perhaps an altar or similar object) barely pokes above the water's surface.

To properly search either the pool or the altar, a PC must enter the water.

5B: BURIAL CHAMBERS

The Tuath interred several priests in the complex so their spirits could watch over the Road of the Dead and ensure that the bound guardians did not escape. Their role was purely ceremonial and their remains do not animate.

A large capstone fills the entranceway to a man-high opening in the wall.

To investigate, the PCs must move the capstone aside.

CHAMBER FEATURES

Each niche has the following features of note:

Capstone: A large, heavy capstone (hardness 8, hp 180, DC 50 Break check) wards each chamber. PCs succeeding on a DC 25 Strength check roll the capstone aside. Those failing the check by less than 5 roll the capstone aside, but as it moves the stone shifts unpredictably and attacks an adjacent PC (+4 melee, 1d8+5 damage).

Sarcophagus: The mouldering remains of a priest lie in a plain stone sarcophagus (hardness 8, hp 60, DC 28 Break check). Among the bones, PCs find fragments of cloth (the obvious remains of ceremonial gear) and so on.

Chamber I: Strange runes graven into the rock decorate the walls. Refer to the Spell Fragment sidebar for further information.

Chamber II: A *circlet of demonic defence* (Players' Handout 9; faint evocation [DC 16]; DC 18; Appendix 1) lies amid the mouldering bones and cloth of the priest interred here.

Chamber III: The fetid air in this chamber is heavy with disease. Any character entering the chamber or standing in a

CAVERN FEATURES

The cavern has the following features of note:

Sunken Altar: The sunken altar is 5 ft. high and 10 ft. long. Its surface is pitted, scarred and scorched.

Blood Pool: The pool is 5 ft. deep. PCs can either wade through the water or make a DC 10 Swim check. Bones from innumerable skeletons litter the pool's bottom. A PC searching the pool may also discover some treasure.

Treasure: A PC in the pool who makes a DC 15 Perception check finds a *+1 heavy steel shield* (faint abjuration [DC 16]; DC 18). A PC exceeding this check by 5 also finds a slime-coated plain gold ring (DC 20 Appraise, worth 200 gp).

AFTERMATH

Wandering the labyrinth, the PCs can discover Areas 5B, 6 or 7.

square adjacent to the chamber may be infected with tomb blight (a new disease; DC 14 Fortitude resists; see Appendix 1).

SPELL FRAGMENTS

The carven runes are fragments of many different low-level divine spells. A *detect magic* reveals they radiate faint magic; a DC 18 Knowledge (arcana) identifies this as an indeterminable type. Exceeding this check by 5 or more reveals that a character able to cast spells can use the runes to cast a number of minor divine spells. *Read magic* also ascertains these facts.

A character must make a Knowledge (religion) or (arcana) check to activate the rune's magic. A character using Knowledge (arcana) takes a -2 penalty to this check. A character may only attempt this check once. Refer to the table below.

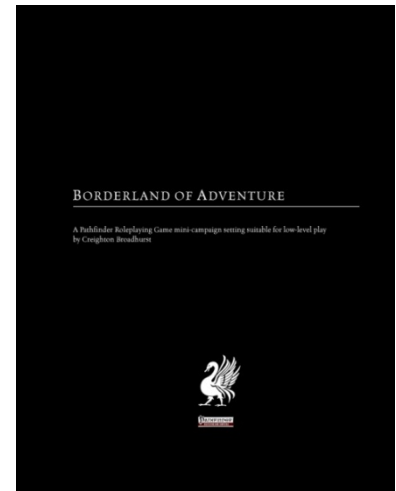
DC	SPELL EFFECT
1-5	Shadows gather around the runes and arc outwards (+2 ranged touch, <i>inflict moderate wounds</i> ; CL 5; 2d8+5, DC 13 Will halves) at the character.
5-10	Feeling of woe and impending doom afflicts the PC (<i>doom</i> , CL 5th; DC 11 Will negates; lasts until end of the PC's next fight).
11-16	No effect.
17-19	Feeling of security settles upon the character (<i>sanctuary</i> ; DC as PC; lasts until the PC leaves the caverns or makes an attacks).
20	Feeling of strength and wellbeing flows through the character (<i>aid</i> , CL 5 but lasts while the PC remains in the caverns).



BORDERLAND OF ADVENTURE

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game mini-campaign setting suitable for low-level play by Creighton Broadhurst

The furthest flung outpost of a mighty kingdom, turbulent waters and forbidding, trackless forests separate the folk of the Lonely Coast from the gaudy lights of civilisation. Pirates and slavers ply the southern storm-tossed waters while goblins and other foul things creep through the gloom of the Tangled Wood that seemingly chokes the forgotten holds and sacred places of the Old People. Deep within the forest, a narrow, rock-choked defile piled deep with shadow cuts through a nameless range of rugged, tree-shrouded hills birthing dark, fearsome legends of terrifying monsters and glittering, doom-laden treasures. The perils of the Lonely Coast are legion and thus there is always a need for those with stout hearts and skill with blade and spell or for those merely hungry for glory to defend humanity's most tenuous enclave.

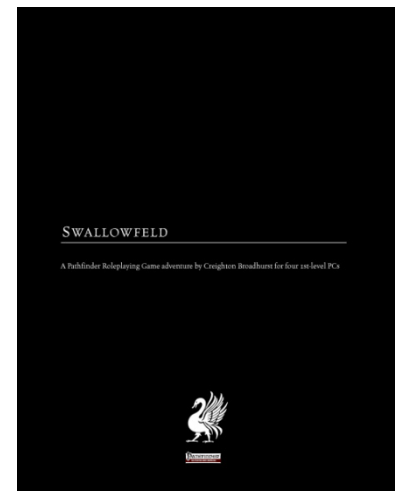


SWALLOWFELD

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game supplement suitable for low-level play by Creighton Broadhurst

The village of Swallowfeld stands hard against the turbulent waters of the Lonely Coast and the forbidding depths of a trackless, primeval forest. A hard, frontier place hemmed in by danger without and threatened by a lurking darkness within, the village is in dire need of doughty protectors.

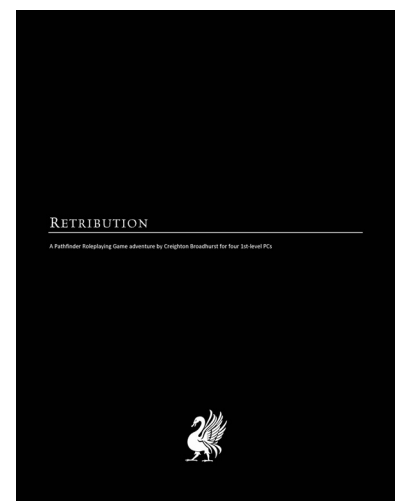
Swallowfeld presents detailed information on village life as well as ten locations and twelve NPCs of note. A GM can use the village as the perfect base from which neophyte adventurers can explore the surrounding area or as a waystop on the road to adventure. Although Swallowfeld's default location is *The Lonely Coast* (a free 30-page, extensively bookmarked PDF available from ragingswan.com) it is easy to include in any GM's campaign.



RETRIBUTION

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game adventure by Creighton Broadhurst for four 1st-level PCs

In the frozen depths of winter, murderous winds mercilessly batter the crumbling Priory of Cymer. Within, trapped by their duty and the heaped snowdrifts that render travel near impossible, the few remaining faithful huddle together and tend the sacred places of their forbearers. With the weather worsening, nerves fray and tempers snap as the wind howls its mournful dirge for the forgotten dead of a fallen time. But the worst is yet to come. One of those trapped within holds a murderous grudge that only blood can expunge, and as the storm reaches its savage height terrible revenge is wrought amid the frigid halls and faded glories of a bygone age.



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