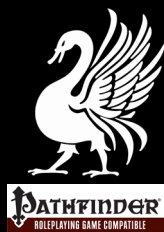


ROAD OF THE DEAD

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



Sample file

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

BONUS MATERIAL

Thank you for purchasing *Road of the Dead*; we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products. We at Raging Swan are committed to providing first class web enhancements for our products. Visit ragingswan.com to download bonus materials including maps, reorganised stat block listings, additional encounters and more!

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ERRATA

We would like to think *Road of the Dead* is completely error free and that absolutely no mistakes have crept in during design or editing. However, we are realists. So in that spirit, we shall post errata for this adventure three months after first release on ragingswan.com. We aren't going to be correcting typos and spelling errors, but we will correct any game mechanic or balance issues that come to light.

CONTACT US

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

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ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Creighton lives in Torquay, England where, apparently, the palm trees are plastic and the weather is warm. He shares a ramshackle old mansion with his two children ("Genghis" and "Khan") and his very patient wife. Famed locally for his unending love affair with booze and pizza he is an enduring GREYHAWK fan.

His freelance credits include work with Wizards of the Coast, Paizo and Expeditious Retreat Press. You can check out his blog at <http://raging-swan.livejournal.com>.



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 Knowledge {arcana}], DC 25 Spellcraft). 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 the trap to reset.

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

READING STAT BLOCKS

Road of the Dead includes all necessary stat blocks; these notes explain how to read them. Unless otherwise noted, listed scores include all the creature's normal modifiers. Stat blocks appear in four sections: basic, defensive, offensive and supplemental.

BASIC

Name, CR and XP: The monster's name appears first followed by its CR and how many experience points it is worth. If more than one creature is encountered, a bracketed number lists how many appear.

Appearance: The GM can read aloud or paraphrase this section. If a picture depicts the creature, this section may be omitted.

Sex, Race, Class and Level: If the monster has class levels these appear here along with its race and sex. The first noted class is the creature's favoured class.

Alignment and Type: The creature's abbreviated alignment and its type (including applicable subtypes).

Init and Senses: This creature's initiative modifier appears before any special senses (such as scent or darkvision) and the creature's Perception and Sense Motive scores. If the creature has special Perception-based abilities, such as trapfinding or stonecunning, these appear here.

Speed: The creature's modified land speed appears first along with any other relevant speeds (such as climb or fly). If the creature's base land speed is different to its modified speed this is also listed.

ACP and Movement Skills: ACP presents the creature's normal armour check penalty modifier. If the creature's Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Stealth or Swim modifier differs from the relevant ability modifier minus its armour check penalty, these skills appear here.

DEFENSIVE

AC: The creature's normal, touch and flat-footed AC along with its CMD; additionally this section lists any defensive powers or abilities that affects the creature's AC.

Immune, Resist and Weaknesses: If the creature has immunity, resistance or a vulnerability to an effect or condition it appears here.

Fort, Ref and Will: The creature's saving throw modifiers along with any conditional modifiers and defensive powers (such as evasion) and spell resistance appear here.

HP: The creature's full, normal hit points along with the number of hit dice it possesses. A bracketed hit point total indicates

that the creature is injured. If the creature has damage reduction or hardness it appears here.

OFFENSIVE

Space, Base Atk and CMB: The creature's space, base attack bonus and CMB.

Melee: This section lists a creature's melee attacks. If the attack has a reach that is not 5 ft. it is listed here. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.

Ranged: This section lists the creature's ranged attacks. It always includes the attack's range. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.

Atk Options: This section lists any abilities or feats that can affect the creature's attacks. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in more depth.

Special Actions: This section lists any useful abilities that a creature could use in battle. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in more depth.

Spells and Spell-Like Abilities: The creature's caster level, along with its concentration modifier and domains appears in brackets before the main spell listing. If one or more of the creature's spells require a touch attack, the relevant attack bonus is included. Spells available appear in reverse order from highest to lowest level. Spells denoted ^D are domain spells. If applicable, a spell's DC is also provided.

Combat Gear: This section lists any combat-related equipment the creature possesses.

SUPPLEMENTAL

Abilities and Special Qualities: These sections list the creature's ability scores and any special qualities that do not appear anywhere else in its stat block.

Feats: An alphabetical listing of all the creature's feats.

Skills and Languages: These sections list any skills the creature possesses that have not already appeared in the stat block and all languages spoken or understood. Any language-based special abilities also appear here.

Gear: This section lists any gear not already listed in the creature's stat block. This section hardly ever contains weapons or armour as they usually appear in the relevant sections above.

Spellbook: The contents of the creature's spellbook and its barred schools.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities appear in the section to which they are best suited. Thus, offensive abilities appear with a creature's attacks while defensive ones appear with its other defences. Full write-ups of irrelevant powers (such as those that could not affect combat) are omitted. The effects of abilities that factor into a creature's normal attacks or defences have already been included in the relevant calculations.

THE LONELY COAST

Ruler: Lord Kenver Locher (LN male human aristocrat 2/fighter 6)

Government: feudal fief

Population: 6,200

Alignments: LN, N, CN, NG, NE

Languages: Common, Goblin

Towns: Wolverton (pop. 1,826)

Villages: Bossin (pop. 648), Hosford (pop. 678), Oakhurst (pop. 413), Swallowfeld (pop. 526)

Fortifications: Caer Syllan

Resources: lumber, tin and slate

Sites of Interest: Arius' Watchtower, Deepwater Lake, the Priory of Cymer, the Orestone, Talan's Bluff and the Twisted Gorge.

FEATURES OF THE LONELY COAST

The Lonely Coast has the following major features:

Dense Woodland: The Tangled Wood shrouds much of the coast. Much of it is unexplored.

Trails and Tracks: Meandering tracks link the main settlements with a patchwork of farms and the isolated farmsteads of hunters and charcoal burners.

Cliffs: Lofty cliffs dominate the approaches to the Lonely Coast. In a few places, shingle beaches stand at their base, but most are inaccessible from the cliff's above.

Hills: A nameless range of rugged, tree-cloaked hills rises to the north. Beyond the range lies the deep Tangled Wood and, hundreds of miles away, the glittering northern kingdoms.

LOCATIONS OF NOTE

The Lonely Coast has several locations of interest to adventurers:

Talan's Bluff: The remains of an ancient hill fortress, sprawl across the summit of a high hill giving impressive views over the Tangled Wood.

Arius' Watchtower: A ruined tower hidden deep in the Tangled Wood, the watchtower is famous for the powerful conjurer who once dwelled within (and for the eldritch manner of his disappearance).

The Twisted Gorge: Many caves and passageways honeycomb the steep, overhanging cliffs of this foul place. Ferocious monsters dwell here in profusion.

Road of the Dead's default location is a dozen miles north of the village of Swallowfeld deep in the Tangled Wood. For more information on Swallowfeld, and to download *The Lonely Coast* (an extensively bookmarked 30-page PDF) free, visit ragingswan.com. Alternatively, the information presented on these two pages provides a brief overview of the area.

Deepwater Lake: This lake's cold and deep waters are rumoured to hide much treasure (and a ferocious beast).

Priory of Cymer: An isolated, rundown church dedicated to Darlen (Appendix 1) and the defeat of a slumbering evil said to lurk beneath the priory.

The Orestone: A wind-swept and wave-lashed shard of rock upon which many ships have come to grief, the Orestone is clearly visible from Wolverton.

DISTANCES & JOURNEY TIMES

These tables show the distance and travel times between settlements. To calculate the distance or travel time between two places, find the intersecting table entry. Table entries list distances to the nearest mile and journey times to the nearest hour.

DISTANCES

	Wolverton			
		Bossin	Hosford	Oakhurst
Bossin	4 miles			
Hosford	8 miles	12 miles		
Swallowfeld	14 miles	18 miles	6 miles	
Oakhurst	22 miles	26 miles	14 miles	8 miles

TRAVEL TIMES (20 FT. BASE SPEED)

	Wolverton			
		Bossin	Hosford	Oakhurst
Bossin	2 hours			
Hosford	4 hours	6 hours		
Swallowfeld	7 hours	9 hours	3 hours	
Oakhurst	11 hours	13 hours	7 hours	4 hours

TRAVEL TIMES (30 FT. BASE SPEED)

	Wolverton			
		Bossin	Hosford	Oakhurst
Bossin	1 hour			
Hosford	3 hours	4 hours		
Swallowfeld	5 hours	6 hours	2 hours	
Oakhurst	7 hours	9 hours	5 hours	3 hours

TRAVEL TIMES (40 FT. BASE SPEED)

	Wolverton			
		Bossin	Hosford	Oakhurst
Bossin	1 hour			
Hosford	2 hours	3 hours		
Swallowfeld	4 hours	5 hours	2 hours	
Oakhurst	6 hours	7 hours	4 hours	2 hours

TRAVEL TIMES (50 FT. BASE SPEED)

	Wolverton			
		Bossin	Hosford	Oakhurst
Bossin	1 hour			
Hosford	2 hours	2 hours		
Swallowfeld	3 hours	4 hours	1 hour	
Oakhurst	4 hours	5 hours	3 hours	2 hours



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ten centuries ago, the Tuath were a mighty folk who strove against the fecund goblin tribes of the deep woods for dominion of the region that would become the Lonely Coast. Creatures of the woodlands and hills, they created lofty hill forts and places of worship hidden deep in the woodlands. The changing seasons and a pantheon of benevolent nature gods and terrible demons ruled their lives.

The goblins of the region, however, violently resisted the Tuath's advance. The conflict was long and ferocious, but eventually the terrible strength of the goblins and their demonic patrons proved too much for the Tuath's puissant warriors. A tide of blood and fire overwhelmed the Tuath's civilisation. The few survivors slipped away into the trackless expanse of the forest, abandoning their holy sites and hill forts. The triumphant goblins meanwhile sacked and despoiled the Tuath's places of strength or religious significance looting and pillaging anything of value. Over the next millennia, the remorseless growth of the forest concealed the few fragments of the Tuath's civilisation to survive the goblins' depredations. When humans settled the Lonely Coast a few hardy and daring bands of adventurers ventured further inland and discovered several of the Tuath's ruined sites, but little of worth has yet been discovered.

The Road of the Dead was one of the Tuath's most sacred places. There they created a physical representation of what they believed the souls of the dead endured when they entered the Abyss. Until now, the site has remained undiscovered...

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Road of the Dead's design enables a GM to easily insert the adventure into a home campaign. The adventure's setting – a ceremonial subterranean complex representing a soul's journey through the Abyss – is a small, self-contained site suitable for placement in almost any remote, relatively unexplored area.

Facets of the back-story (particularly the identity of the Road's makers) may require some minor work, but such elements are relatively interchangeable. The builders of the Road of the Dead don't even have to be human. Any warlike race dwelling in woodlands could have built the complex. Such a change requires minor flavour change to some areas – particularly the provenance of the vast amount of bones interred in the site and the description of the skeletal champions encountered in the Labyrinth of Wandering Souls (Encounter 5).

Keep in mind, also, that the Road of the Dead is a fell place, and in no way a typical dungeon for the PCs to wander through. Thus, the GM should work to create a tense atmosphere using the acoustics, sights and temperatures of the place to best effect.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

For one of a variety of reasons, the PCs discover the barrow concealing the entrance to the Road of the Dead (Encounter 1) and decide to investigate. After climbing down the sinkhole, they discover the Lake of Blood (Encounter 2) and its guardians. Dispatching them, they find the Portal of the Dead (Encounter 3) and may trip a terrifying trap that sends one or more of them back into the lake (with potentially fatal consequences if the lake's guardians have not yet been slain).

Beyond the portal, a steep passageway leads down to the perilous Blood Mist Falls (Encounter 4) which the PCs must descend before discovering the Labyrinth of Wandering Souls (Encounter 5). Two ancient champions of the Tuath (now skeletal warriors) patrol the labyrinth and strange sounds echo through its cramped corridors.

The labyrinth hides several other areas of note including a sunken altar, the burial niches of priests ceremonially interred here to protect the complex and the Fires of Damnation (Encounter 6), a chamber guarded by a deranged mephit and terrible fire-spitting demon heads carved from the living rock.

Eventually, the PCs discover the Lair of Demons Three (Encounter 7) in which they fight minor demonic servants of the three demons thought by the Tuath to guard the Road of the Dead. At the centre of the chamber, surrounded by another Blood Lake, lies a deep pit packed with bones that may provide scope for further encounters and adventures (refer to "Further Adventures" for more details).

GO PLAY ADVENTURES

This is a GO PLAY adventure. So what does that mean? GO PLAY adventures are designed to be quick and easy to run. A GM should be able to prepare the adventure in around one hour; running the adventure itself should take four – six hours. The adventure contains pretty much everything you need to start play. Along with a clear and simple layout, the adventure contains Player Handouts for each major encounter area and six pre-generated PCs (although the adventure is designed for four PCs, it's always good to give the players some choices!)

GO PLAY adventures are designed for GMs with little time to prepare. They are perfect for dropping into an existing campaign or for a quick one-shot game. If you are using this adventure at short notice, you only really need to read pages 8 – 24, 28 – 30 and 32. Essentially pages 31 – 47 are for the players (containing as they do handouts and pre-generated PCs), and although reviewing the balance of the adventure is desirable, it is not a necessity.

ROAD OF THE DEAD

Long lost beneath ten centuries of remorseless growth, the Road of the Dead lurks ready to consign those daring its course to the Abyss

Sample file

ROAD OF THE DEAD SUMMARY

The Road of the Dead was an important religious site for the Tuath. Designed as both a warning and a punishment for those walking the Dark Path (as the Old People named demon worship) the site represented the Tuath's belief of the torments a soul consigned to the Abyss endured. The caves also served as a place to placate the various demons of the Tuath's religion by consigning within prisoners captured during the Tuath's endless battles with the fecund tribes of the Tangled Wood.

DEMONS OF THE ROAD

The Tuath believed that three demons guarded the Road of the Dead. The demons were:

- **Felclugh (Guardian of the Blood Lake):** Felclugh lurked in the Blood Lake and protected the entrance to the underworld.
- **Lhamskarr (The Hungry One):** Tormented by his endless hunger, Lhamskarr's atavistic desire for the fears of those falling into his clutches was insatiable.
- **Maughuxin (Keeper of the Abyssal Flame):** Maughuxin tormented those displeasing him by immersing them in the Abyssal Flame.

Each distinct part of the complex was designed to represent one of the demon's lair, and to physically recreate the conditions therein to torment wrongdoers.

FEATURES OF THE ROAD

The Road of the Dead has the following features of note:

Illumination: Darkness cloaks the Road of the Dead.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 15 ft. high.

Bats: Vast numbers of bats roost within the caves issuing forth at night to hunt in the surrounding woodlands. Lights do not normally disturb the bats, but explorers can accidentally create bat swarms. Refer to "Random Encounters" for more information.

Cavern Walls: The walls are rough and unworked (DC 15 Climb check to scale).

Fungus and Lichen: Lichen and fungus covers the walls of many of the caves and passages of the Road. Such growths are particularly prevalent in areas containing moving water. Where present, the lichen and fungus make the walls slippery (DC 20 Climb check to scale).

Flagstone Floor: Still in remarkably good condition, few of the flags have moved. Movement on the road is unimpeded.

Natural Floor: Loose stones and gravel cover the roughly hewn floor. Characters running or charging across the floor must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check; failure means the character can still act but can't run or charge that round. Failure by 5 or more indicates the character slips and falls prone.

Scattered Bones: The remains of unfortunates (mainly goblins and humans) made to walk the Road of the Dead litter the complex. Most such folk entered the complex naked (or nearly so) and none of the remains contain any treasure. The condition of the bones is contingent on the location in which they lie. For example, bones found in Encounter 6 (Fire of Damnation) are scorched and burnt while those in Area 5 (Labyrinth of Wandering Souls) are scarred and cut.

Squares filled with scattered bones are difficult terrain (each such square counts as 2 squares of movement). These features are not marked on the map. The GM should place them as necessary for dramatic effect.

RANDOM ENCOUNTER

If the party use bright lights such as torches or lanterns to explore the caves, they have a 10% chance every hour of disturbing a significant number of bats. If they do so, the bats form a swarm and attack.

BAT SWARM	CR 2 (XP 600)
<i>A multitude of small, black, furry bats hurtle from the darkness.</i>	
N Diminutive animal (swarm)	
Init +2; Senses blindsense 20 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15, Sense Motive +2	
Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)	
ACP 0; Fly +12	
AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14; CMD – (+4 size, +2 Dex)	
Immune weapon damage, critical hits, flanking, any spell that targets a specific number of creatures (except mind-affecting effects); Weakness area of affect attacks or spells deal an extra 50% damage.	
Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3	
hp 13 (3 HD)	
Space 10 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB –	
Melee swarm (reach 0 ft.) (1d6 plus distraction)	
Atk Options distraction (DC 11), wounding	
Distraction (Ex) Any living creature damaged by a swarm must make a DC 11 Fortitude saving throw or be nauseated (affected creatures are unable to take any action requiring attention; they may only take a single move action per round) for 1 round.	
Wounding (Ex) Any living creature damaged by a bat swarm continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped with a DC 10 Heal check or the application of any cure spells or some other healing magic.	
Abilities Str 3, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4	
SQ swarm traits	
Feats Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)	
Skills as above	