

Past the Soaring Serpent

A One-Shot Adventure for 4–6 Level 3 Characters



From the Creator

Pathalis is a long-running creative world-building and tabletop role-playing project developed for personal and private play. This site exists as a living archive—setting material, lore, tools, and systems connected to a world that has been shaped at the table, not built in isolation.

My name is Ben. I've been playing and running tabletop role-playing games for over thirty years, starting with AD&D 2nd Edition. Pathalis is the result of decades of homebrewing—mechanics, cultures, places, and stories—refined through continuous play. For the past ten years, it has been developed collaboratively with my gaming group. Many of the ideas you'll encounter here emerged directly from active campaigns, shaped by player decisions, long-term consequences, and moments that surprised all of us.

Pathalis is not a commercial product. It exists to support storytelling, curiosity, and shared creativity at the table. It continues to change as stories are told.

A Note to the Players

If you're reading this, you're stepping into a world that rewards attention and courage.

Pathalis works best when you treat it as a place, not a puzzle. The obvious solution is not always the best one. Sometimes the right move is risky. Sometimes it's quiet. Sometimes it's the idea that doesn't quite fit on the character sheet.

Pay attention to what's happening around you. Talk to each other. Use the environment. Ask questions. If you see a path forward that feels uncertain but interesting, take it.

You don't need to play perfectly here. You don't need to win every moment. What matters is engagement—being present, making choices, and trusting that the world will respond honestly to what you do.

This adventure isn't about proving how strong you are. It's about seeing what happens when you try.

A Note to the Dungeon Master

Pathalis behaves like a living place.

The rules and structures you'll find here describe how the world has tended to function so far. They are patterns observed over time, not guarantees. Things hold—until they don't. When they break, the world adjusts and keeps moving.

As a DM, your role isn't to protect the setting or enforce its edges. It's to pay attention. Let choices land. Let consequences follow naturally. Give the world enough space to respond, even when that response is unexpected.

If something shifts at your table, that isn't a failure of the material. It's the material doing what it was meant to do. Pathalis has always grown through play, through tables finding their own rhythms, priorities, and truths.

Run it with care. Run it with curiosity. Let it become yours.

You can find more of the world and its life by visting www.Pathalis.com

Or you can email me at dmben@pathalis.com.

Enjoy Yourselves and please let me know what you think, Thank you

Ben.

Pregenerated Characters & Ship Reference (Preferred)

The following pregenerated characters are the **preferred characters** for running *Past the Soaring Serpent*.

The adventure is written assuming this specific crew, ship, and set of professional roles. While groups may substitute their own characters, doing so may soften the intended Pathalis tone and alter how certain scenes land.

These pregens are not generic examples—they are the crew the job was written for.

The Luminhound (Crew Ship)

A small independent skyship used for short-haul transport, light cargo, and specialist contracts.

- Crew: 4–6 (ideal)
- Passengers: 6 comfortably (up to ~10 short-term)
- Cargo: Light to moderate

The Luminhound is licensed, tolerated, useful—and replaceable. This is exactly the kind of ship that takes dangerous jobs because it must.

The ship's layout reinforces teamwork: no single role can solve every problem alone.

Pregenerated Crew

Captain / Helmsperson

Human Paladin (Oath of the Sky) — Level 3

Role: Command, piloting, morale, final decisions under pressure.

A disciplined leader sworn not to a god, but to crew, ship, and sky. Calm saves lives. Panic kills.

Key Features: • Heavy armor, shield, frontline control

- Lay on Hands as practical triage
- Channel Divinity reframed as discipline and authority

Teaches: leadership without destiny; responsibility without divine backing.

Enforcer / Ship's Muscle

Warforged Barbarian (Totem Warrior — Bear) — Level 3

Role: Damage sponge, boarding defense, line holder.

A former service asset who chose not to return. Rage is not anger—it is an escalation protocol.

Key Features: • Extreme durability while raging
• Resistance to nearly all damage
• Holds chokepoints during chaos

Teaches: endurance, restraint, and choosing when to engage.

Lookout / Face

Tabaxi Ranger (Fey Wanderer) — Level 3

Role: Early warning, first contact, movement control.

Reads the sky and people with equal precision. Danger announces itself if you know how to listen.

Key Features: • Exceptional Perception and mobility
• Social credibility without bravado
• Ranged pressure and battlefield control

Teaches: awareness, positioning, and when silence matters.

Machinic / Aether Engineer

Rock Gnome Wizard (School of Transmutation) — Level 3

Role: Ship systems, emergency repairs, magical load management.

Magic is not mystery—it is stress, tolerance, and failure points.

Key Features: • Transmutation for jury-rigging and reinforcement
• Utility-focused spell list
• Diagnoses what breaks next

Teaches: preparation, triage, and informed sacrifice.

Doctor / Ship's Medic

Lightfoot Halfling Bard (College of Medicine) — Level 3

Role: Triage, stabilization, morale under fire.

A trained professional healer—no gods, no miracles, just fast decisions.

Key Features: • Bardic Inspiration as field triage

- Spare the Dying as trained response
- Keeps the crew functional, not heroic

Teaches: prioritization, restraint, and the cost of mistakes.

Quartermaster / Fixer

Goblin Rogue (Mastermind) — Level 3

Role: Negotiation, logistics, tactical coordination.

Keeps the ship supplied, the books balanced, and problems from escalating.

Key Features: • Bonus-action Help for team tactics

- Expertise in reading people and deals
- Guild-connected without explanations

Teaches: leverage, coordination, and quiet influence.

Using the Pregens

These characters are intentionally complementary. Each one shines in different phases of the adventure:

- Exploration and travel reward the Lookout and Captain
- The nest rewards restraint and judgment
- The airship attack demands coordination across all roles
- The aftermath highlights consequences and professionalism

Together, they model how Pathalis works.

Character Write ups and stats can be downloaded on the website www.pathalis.com/one

Introduction: Welcome to Pathalis

Read-Aloud (Player-Facing)

Hello, mate.

I can tell by the way you're looking around that this is your first time out past wherever you grew up.

Don't worry. Most of us started the same way. Small place. Familiar roads. Trouble you could usually see coming.

That changes out here.

In Pathalis, everything moves. People, goods, news, problems—nothing stays put for long. Airships cross distances that used to take seasons to walk, and portals can carry you halfway across the world in the time it takes to finish a drink, if you've got the coin for it. The world feels closer than it used to. That makes life easier in some ways.

It also means mistakes catch up to you fast.

Out here, you're responsible for your own choices long before anyone in authority even hears your name.

You'll hear that the Council of Nine is in charge. Most days, you won't feel them at all. Some days, you might run into their warforged peacekeepers.

Keep your head down. Keep moving. If you're not causing trouble, they won't take much notice of you.

They notice the loud ones.

As for travel—portals are the easy way. Clean, orderly, predictable. You pay your silver, step through, and arrive where you meant to be. Most folk use them when they can and don't think twice about it. They work. That's all most people care about.

Airships are different.

The sky isn't empty, no matter how it looks from the ground. It has its own ways—currents, layers, paths that hold if you treat them right and turn on you if you don't. Things live up there. Not monsters. Not

villains. Just creatures that learned how to survive where the rest of us barely manage.

You learn to respect the sky, or you don't last long in it.

That means watching above as much as below. Leaving yourself room to turn back. Paying attention when something feels wrong and not pushing your luck just because you're in a hurry. The sky doesn't hold grudges, but it doesn't forgive carelessness either.

One more thing, before you get any ideas.

Don't expect help from the gods. They went the same way as the elves and dwarves, far as anyone can tell. Some folks say they're still out there somewhere. Maybe they are. Nobody I know has ever seen one.

If you get through a hard moment in Pathalis, it's because you were prepared—or because someone beside you knew when to pull away.

That's how people survive here.

We take work we think we can live through. We pay attention. We respect the ground beneath us and the sky above us. We know when to press forward, and when getting past something is better than trying to conquer it.

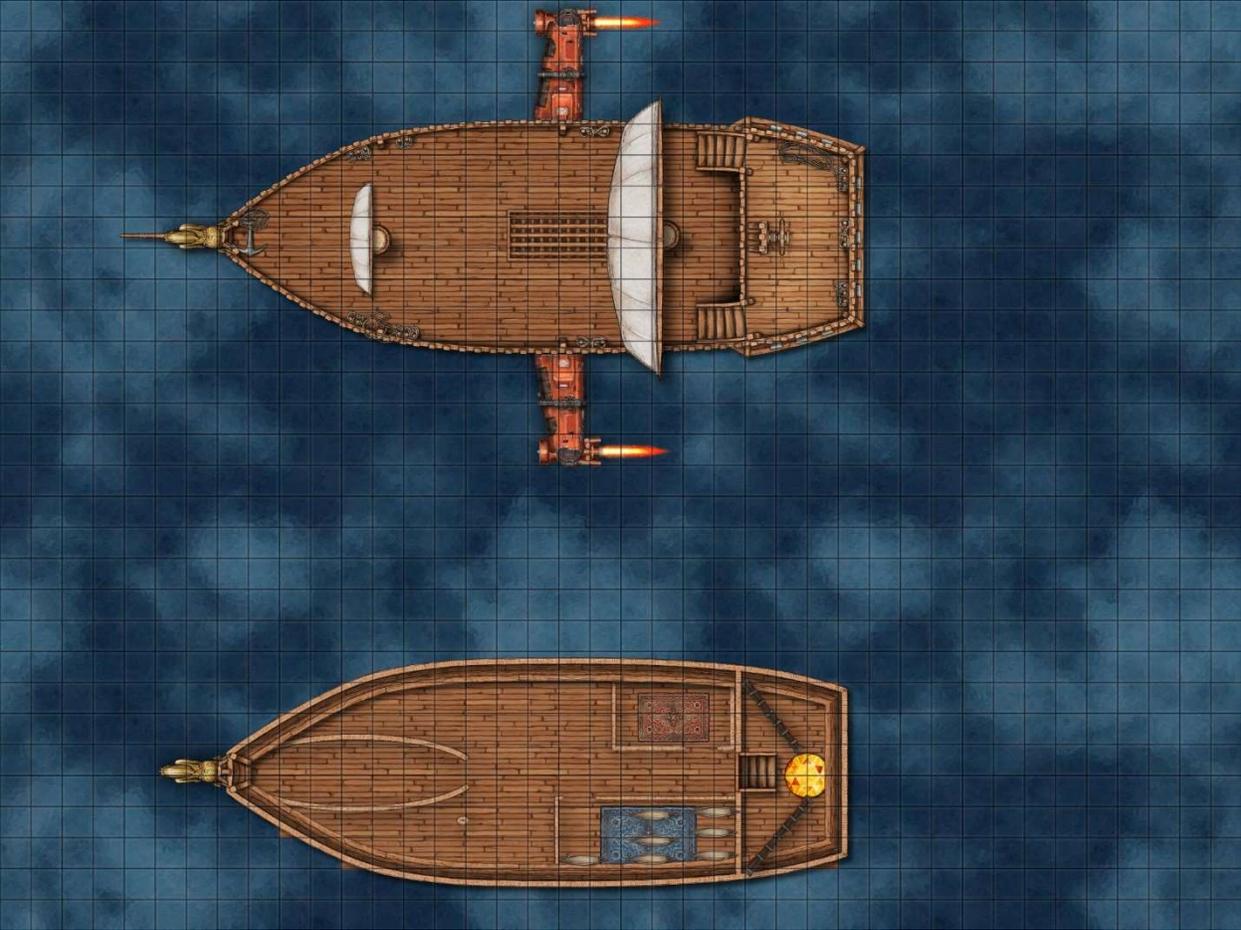
Do with that what you will.

Just remember—this world keeps moving, whether you're ready for it or not.

What Your Character Already Knows

- **Player-Facing Guidance**
- Your character is not new to the world, even if you are.
- Long-distance travel is common via airship or portal. People, news, and trouble move faster than they used to.
- The Council of Nine exists and sets laws and tolls, but most people experience that authority only indirectly.
- Portals work. If you can afford one, you can use it. If not, you find another way. • The sky is not empty. Flying is routine, but never casual.
- Elves and dwarves are gone. Stories disagree on why.
- The gods do not intervene openly. Faith exists, but miracles are not expected.
- **Most importantly:** Survival in Pathalis comes from preparation, awareness, and the people beside you—not destiny or divine favor.





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