

THE COLD DEATH

An one-shot adventure for 4th to 5th level characters in collaboration with Tom Cartos



This material is meant for you, the Game Master, and we recommend you read it in its entirety. To run this adventure, you should also have access to the 5th edition System Reference Document (SRD), as well as possibly sourcebooks for the 5th edition of the world's most popular Role-Playing Game system.

When reading through the adventure, you will find different-looking boxes that each contain a different type of information.

Text in these boxes is player information. You can either read it outright or paraphrase it to better fit your style of storytelling.

Creatures appearing in the location are marked with **bold** text, while the name of spells and items are written in *italics*. If the

monster, spell, or item does not appear in SRD, you will find a statblock near its first appearance (statblocks for 3.5 edition are included in the appendix).

As this adventure is designed to be run in multiple systems, skill checks, damage rolls, and saving throws are described in the following way:  DC 5th edition entry /  DC 3.5 edition entry.

UNDEAD AT BURIAL MOUNDS

The burial mounds near the village of Dakhata, a resting place of the heroes of the north, were a place of pilgrimage for the people from around the towns in the Valley of the Winds.

Several weeks ago, a group of pilgrims from a remote village went to the burial grounds but never returned. After a group of guards led by a local captain found frozen dead bodies in

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one of the mounds but could not find a cause of death, they closed the mounds and told everyone to stay away—waiting for someone powerful enough to arrive. Without the ability to offer the heroes of old tribute, the villagers grow restless and fear about their future—a fear that is only amplified by a rumor of figures wearing dark robes being sighted near the burial mounds.

How the characters learned about the problems of the citizens depends on if they went to the local temple of the Lord of the Dawn or not. If they do, Tarien (neutral good human **priest**), the local priest, asks the heroes if they could aid him and the city. If they do not venture there, one of the villagers that the characters meet in the tavern will ask heroes if they are good people who would like to help the city. Heroes can also find a plea of help—and a promise of the reward—on the notice board near the tavern.

GETTING THE QUEST

When adventurers get to the temple and talk to the priest, he tells them about unsettling events that occurred near the burial mounds—the death of the pilgrims and the rumors of the shadowy figures. He will also tell them that he closed off the grounds for pilgrims and locals alike and will ask heroes if they would be willing to help the village. In return, Tarien will offer the party one of the treasures from his days as an adventurer—either a *greataxe +1* or a set of *plate armor +1*. He points characters in the direction of the Burial Mounds.

THE BURIAL MOUNDS

The following locations correspond to labels on the map of The Burial Mounds. If adventurers arrive at night, the area outside is lit by magical lanterns.





A1. MAIN MOUND

This large mound feels different than the rest. Skulls are laid neatly on the shelves, and ancient weapons are hung up above them, near several burned-out torches.



A secret entrance in the back of the main mound can be found but can only be opened using the *crypt ward stone*.

A2. SOUTH MOUND

The skulls of long-dead warriors fill the mound. A small altar in the center of the room contains remains of the offering brought here by the villagers and pilgrims.

On the altar in this mound, an old inscription reading “Light the hall of the dead heres and they will show you the way” can be found with a successful  **Wisdom (Perception) DC 13** /  **Search DC 15** check. This is a clue to the puzzle opening a hidden passageway to room B1. To open it, adventurers must light up all torches in mound B1. After that is done, a ghostly figure of an ancient warrior will appear and bring the adventurers to the altar, then touches it—the altar will rise and open the stairs below.

A3. NORTH MOUND

This mound looks the same as crypt A2, except for the lack of the altar exposing the partially broken planks in the middle. Looking down can reveal that there is a cave below, and  **Wisdom (Perception) DC 13** /  **Listen DC 15** check allows heroes to hear some kind of blasphemous prayers from the area below them.

The remaining planks have AC 10 and 30 hp. Breaking them will alert cultists in the cave below.

A4. EMPTY MOUND

This mound looks the same as crypt A2. This mound is empty, except for two **cold wights** hidden behind the central pillar.

A5. SECRET CHAMBER

The secret chamber can be accessed from area B5 by stairs and area A1 by a secret door. Inside the room chests, traveler robes can be found as well as 300 gp, 150 sp, and gems worth 50 gp.

COLD WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700XP)

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the cold wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Cold Body. While in cold temperatures (below 32 degrees Fahrenheit) cold wight will rise after being killed in 1d10 minutes with full health. To stop this from happening, body must be burned or moved to warmer location.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wight makes two claw attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one claw attack.

Life Drain. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the cold wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The cold wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.





Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

UNDERGROUND CRYPTS

The following locations correspond to labels on the map of Underground Crypt.

B1. CULT WORKSHOP

This small room stinks of decay, and a faint smell of old burned-out incense comes from two small censers located in the center of the area. Three braziers and a workbench full of alchemical ingredients and tools stand against the walls.

Searching the chamber requires a successful  **Wisdom (Perception) DC 10** /  **Search DC 12** check. Adventurers will find a hidden drawer in the desk, full of research papers with mystical texts and drawings of corpse-like creatures with ice shards sticking from their bodies. A successful  **Intelligence (Investigation) DC 15** or **Intelligence (Arcana) DC 15** /  **Decipher Script DC 15**

or **Knowledge (Arcana) DC 15** check allows heroes to decipher papers and learn that the undead monsters, called cold wights, are a creation of the necromancer and give clues how to properly kill cold wights.

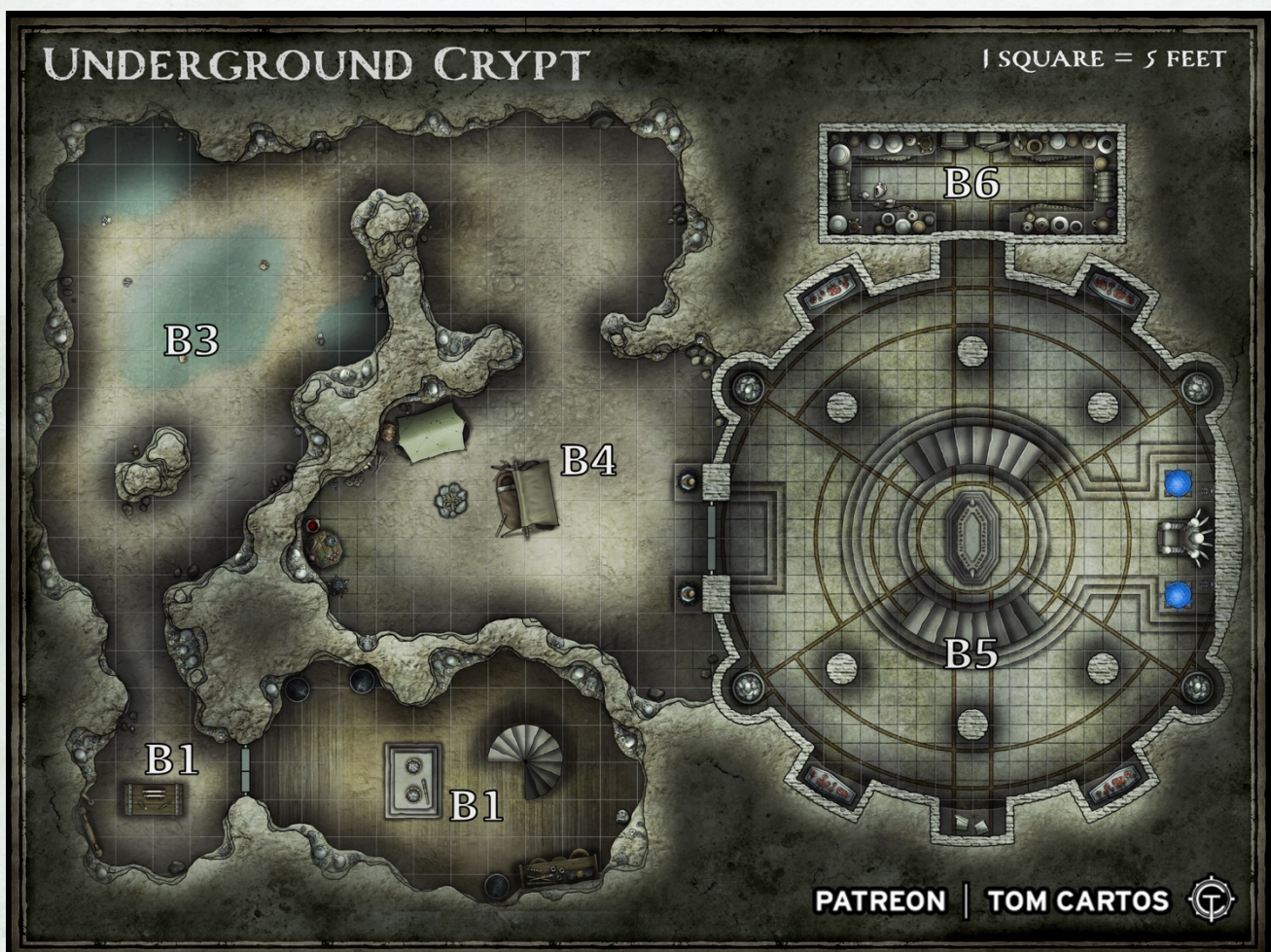
Lighting three braziers in this area make the area hot enough that the cold wights do not rise again after being slain.

If adventurers make noise, cult fanatic and cold wight from area B2 investigate.

B2. WORKBENCH

A small workbench is located in the center of this small room. A masked man is leaning over a blue-skinned body, full of ice spikes, and mumbles to himself.

A masked man is a **cult fanatic** that is examining a **cold wight**. Both the fanatic and the wight attack adventurers on sight. Cult



fanatic is in possession of *ritual chamber ward stone*.

B3. LARGE CAVERN

This large cavern is empty, except for several planks that fell from a hole in the cave vault. If adventurers make noise in this chamber, both **cult fanatic** and **cold wight** from area B2, as well as 4 **cultists** from area B4, investigate.

B4. RITUAL CHAMBER ENTRANCE

Two tents and a fireplace are in the middle of this chamber. Six masked men sit around the fireplace, with amulets in their hands, and their wicked prayers fill the chamber. In the far end of the chamber, a large stone door can be seen.

Four **cultists** and two **cult fanatics** are praying in the chamber. They will attack heroes on sight.

To open the door to the ritual chamber, a *ritual chamber ward stone* or *crypt ward stone* is needed and must be placed in the small recess on the door.

B5. RITUAL CHAMBER

The large altar is located in the center of this round room, and a body can be seen on top of it. Above the body stands a masked figure, wearing a robe covered in runes. Two other masked figures are kneeling before the altar. A large brazier burning with a dark blue fire can be seen in the back of the chamber.

The necromancer, cult leader, is a **priest**. The cult leader is casting the final spells of the ritual and will command two **cult fanatics** to attack adventurers. He joins the fight himself in the second round, along with the freshly created **cold wight**.

B6. STORAGE CHAMBER

This storage chamber does not contain anything of interest.

CONCLUDING THE QUEST

After adventurers clear the burial mounds and tell that to the priest, Tarien gives them the reward he promised. If heroes bring the bodies of the cultists to the village, both Tarien and the guard captain will recognize that most of them belonged to the pilgrim group that went missing a few weeks ago.

If the heroes return the research papers, Tarien will thank them and destroy them, saying that this knowledge must not fall into anyone's hands. If adventurers take it with them, they may find someone interested in them in their future adventures.

APPENDIX: 3.5 EDITION
MONSTERS AND NPC

COLD WIGHT

Size/Type: Medium Undead

Hit Dice: 4d12 (26 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+3

Attack: Slam +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain)

Full Attack: Slam +3 melee (1d4+1 plus energy drain)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Create spawn, energy drain

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, cold resistance, fire vulnerability

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 12, Con Ø, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +16, Spot +10

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, gang (3-5), or pack (6-11)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

A cold wight's appearance is a weird and twisted reflection of the form it had in life—similarly to a normal wight—but with a large ice spikes piercing its body. A cold wight is about the height and weight of a human.

Wights speak Common.

Combat

Wights attack by hammering with their fists.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the wight gains 5 temporary hit points.



Cold Body (Su): While in cold temperatures (below 32 degrees Fahrenheit) cold wight will rise after being killed in 1d10 minutes with full health. To stop this from happening, body must be burned or moved to warmer location.

Skills

Wights have a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

NPC

Cultist: Male Human Expert²; CR 1 Medium Humanoid (Human); HD (2d6); hp 7; Init +1; Spd Walk 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12, Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk: +1 Melee (1d4/19-20/x2, Dagger) or +2 Ranged (1d4/19-20/x2, Dagger, 10 ft.); SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

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Cult Fanatic: Male Human Expert⁵; CR 3 Medium Humanoid (Human); HD (5d6); hp 23; Init +1; Spd Walk 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13, Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk: +6 Melee (1d4/19-20/x2, Dagger) or +6 Ranged (1d4/19-20/x2, Dagger, 10 ft.); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Priest: Male Human Adept⁵; CR 2; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD (5d6)+5; hp 23; Init +0; Spd Walk 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14, Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk: +2 Melee (1d6/20/x2, *Mace, Light); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 11 .

Prepared Spells Prepared Spells: Adept (CL 5): 0th - *ghost sound* (DC 12), *light*, read magic; 1st - *bless*, *cause fear* (DC 13), *endure elements* (DC 13); 2nd - aid, darkness

Adept: Spells per Day: (3/3/2, DC:12+spell level)

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