

THE FROZEN TOMB

an Adventure for 5th Edition Dungeons and Dragons by Brian Reeves

The Frozen Tomb is a challenging adventure for a party of 4 - 6 characters of at least 3rd level, though characters of 4th or 5th level are strongly recommended. This scenario can take place in any mountain pass.

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Introduction

This adventure takes place in a cold, snowy mountain pass. The reason the characters are making this trip is not specified; this adventure can take place while journeying from one location to another during or between adventures. While making the difficult journey, the characters are caught in a terrible storm and must take shelter in a cave in the mountainside, only to discover the cave hides even greater dangers than those posed by the weather.

If the characters are reluctant to enter, or wish to exit the dungeon during the adventure, impress upon them the extreme and perilous conditions. Characters exposed to the cold must make DC 10 Constitution saves at the end of each hour. Characters without cold weather gear, such as thick coats, gloves, and so on, automatically fail this save. On a failed saving throw, a character gains a level of exhaustion (see Basic Rules). Visibility is reduced to 50 feet, and creatures suffer disadvantage on saves to avoid becoming surprised.

Read the following to the players:

The locals warned you about this pass, but when you first headed up the mountain the weather was quite cooperative. About a day ago you left the timber line, sticking to the marked trail as it threaded between peaks, always leading you up and up, toward the saddleback between two mighty mountains. Near the center of the pass the weather took an unexpected turn, and soon you were caught in a terrible blizzard. Heavy winds and driving snow created whiteout conditions. Now, with the temperature dropping dangerously, you must find shelter before night falls. Fortunately, you spot a dark hollow in the side of the cliffs, and as you grow closer you see a cave mouth that will be perfect for staying dry in the storm.

The Tomb Locations

1. The Overhang

As the characters get close, ask for a DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check. Success reveals a set of strange, large tracks leading up through the snow toward the overhang. Anyone can attempt to recognize the tracks, a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) attempt. If successful, they will be

able to recognize owlbear tracks.

Now that you are closer, you can make out more of the depression under the overhang. Two old-looking pillars prop up a cracked stone ceiling. Poking out from under mounds of snow are the shattered pieces of a huge stone door. Beyond the gaping doorway, a hallway of cut flagstones leads down a short flight of stairs. The air coming out is cold and humid.

Careful inspection of the area around the door (Perception 5) will reveal carvings in an unfamiliar language. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check will reveal the script belong to a people who used to dwell in the lowlands near here but were driven out long ago by invaders.

Optional: If you wish to add an extra wrinkle to the adventure, while the characters are still at the overhang, a they will notice three figures approaching through the heavy snow. One seems to be staggering, assisted by another. These are Agdi, Skuli, and Cynric, three bandits who also seek refuge. Cynric is the clear leader and the one who does the most talking. He claims they are heading for the other side of the pass but were ambushed by a goblin scouting party. Skuli was hurt badly and is in need of healing, but otherwise they were able to escape the goblins by dropping all their supplies and abandoning their horses. The wound is fake, though, so they won't let anyone take a close inspection, though they'll let a Cleric expend a healing resource on them, using Charisma (Deception) to make it appear as though the wound was healed. On the part of his two allies, Cynric begs the characters to let them camp under the overhang for the night. If the characters refuse, Cynric will lay a curse on them and the three will leave, though in actuality they only slink out of sight and return a while later for revenge. All three are 3rd-level Fighters with the Criminal background. Cynric has 35 gold pieces, a battleaxe, one healing potion, and a scroll of Protection from Undead. His friends have 20 gold pieces each and one healing potion apiece, and are armed with short swords and shortbows. The three bandits can provide crucial assistance to a party that might be lower level or fewer in number, always waiting for the right time to betray the heroes.

2. Hall of Heroes

At the base of the stairs, the hallway turns to the left and continues down another flight. All along the wall you can

see old bas-relief images of warriors on horseback battling armies of orcs and the undead.

A closer look at the floor (Perception 5) reveals the snowy tracks continuing through here. The scent of wet fur is in the air (Perception 10), which comes from the owlbear in room 3.

3. False Crypt

At the end of the hallway is a heavy stone door which has been shoved open to reveal a large chamber with a vaulted ceiling. Four intricately-carved pillars stand in each corner. On the opposite wall is a stone sarcophagus at the top of a low dais, its lid pried off. On the wall above it is carved the words, "HEREIN LIES YURVAN, SQUIRE OF MELSOR. 1344 - 1357." In the northeast corner is a huge mound of grasses, fur, spoor and bones. The place reeks.

An owlbear has taken up residence in this room. If it heard the characters approaching, it will attack them as soon as they enter the room.

Closer inspection of the sarcophagus will reveal a skeleton in tattered old clothing. There is nothing of value on its body. It appears as though this crypt has already been looted, though a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) will alert characters to a potential subterfuge: The bones in the crypt were of a child no older than ten who suffered from club foot, and this barrow has been sealed until recently.

There is a secret door in the center of the floor, which can be found with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception). An examination of the pillars will reveal nothing useful, other than an image of the same woman is on each pillar, gazing at the floor in the center of the room. Anyone who discovers this fact gains advantage when searching for the secret door.

Treasure: The owlbear has only 8 gold pieces worth of treasure, but hidden among its offal is a healing potion and a dagger.

4. Secret Stairwell

A circular staircase of stone vanishes into the darkness. The air is musty and old, and from somewhere below comes the sound of dripping water.

The stairs descend 40 feet into the earth. There is a false step trap halfway down the stairs, which can be spotted with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception). Stepping on it triggers a scything blade at neck level. DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, for 2d6+2 damage. The trap is heavily corroded and will not respond to a halfling's weight, and will pass over the head of a dwarf or halfling to hit whoever is behind them.

5. Catacombs

The stairs descend into and end in standing water, waist deep and very cold. Just beyond an archway is a wide hall that extends into the darkness. Lining the walls are niches carved into the bare rock. Each niche holds a moldering old skeleton in rusted armor. On either wall is carved the words, "EVEN IN DEATH I SERVE THEE."

This room is 35 feet long and 15 feet wide. When the

characters have nearly reached midpoint in this room, the skeletons will start to twitch and move. Until that point they are inert and do not respond to any stimulus. The skeletons slide out of their narrow burial holes and attack. Their weapons are slightly rusty but still serviceable. The water causes this room to be difficult terrain, and it also makes it harder to notice the pit trap in the center of the room, requiring a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Anyone who falls steps on the pit must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall in, taking 2d6 damage and ending up in a 15 x 15 chamber at the bottom, where they will be chest-deep in water. There is another skeleton armed with a sword in this pit. Water from the upper room begins to pour down into the pit, giving disadvantage to anyone trying to fight down there. The stone trap door is cantilevered and closes up 3 rounds later, leaving only knee-deep water in this room.

Treasure: Each skeleton has a circlet on its head worth 5 gp.

6. Archer's Repose

This broad chamber has a tall ceiling decorated with more mica. Propped up in niches high on either side are skeletons holding bows. A staircase leads up to a closed stone door, over which are carved the words, "MY ARROWS SHALL STRIKE DOWN THINE ENEMIES." The floor dips down a little, and now the water is waist-deep, slowing you down quite a bit. The water seems to be coming from under the door at the top of the stairs, forming a cascade down the steps.

One round after the characters enter, the skeletons animate and attack. They carry old but decent bows with ten arrows each. The water is considered rough terrain. The water makes the stairs very slippery, so moving on them requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) to avoid falling prone.

Optional: For an additional challenge, an ochre jelly is floating in the water, and it will move in to attack any living enemies.

Treasure: Each archer has a gem on its helmet that can be popped off and sold for 10 gp.

7. Trapped Door

The hallway ends at a heavy stone door covered in intricate knot patterns. In the center of the door is the image of a horrific leering skull with gaping eye sockets. Under its grinning jaw is carved the words, "THE BOATMAN SHALL HAVE HIS FARE." A thin trickle of water comes from under the door.

The door is locked and trapped. The lock can be bypassed with a DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) attempt, but failing will trigger the trap, a heavy stone block that drops from the ceiling 10 feet back, totally sealing the hallway and doing 6d6 damage to anyone who fails a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. The block is too heavy to lift. Anyone on the other side is effectively trapped in the crypt forever. This trap can be avoided by slipping one gold coin into each eye socket. The coins drop down into the depths

of the door and are lost, landing on a pressure plate which will cause the door to open. It is weighted to slowly close once more, however, locking once again in 10 rounds, though the door can be easily propped open. If the door closes, there is no way to open it from the inside.

If the block trap falls, the area will begin to slowly fill with water coming from area 8, though it will take days to completely fill, and by then the storm will likely have abated.

8. Crypt of the Battle Maiden

This chamber mirrors the one at the beginning of this barrow complex -- it features a high ceiling, four pillars, and a raised dais upon which rests a sarcophagus. The decorations are much more lavish, however, and along the east and west walls are piles of riches: cups, tapestries, boxes, furniture, weapons and armor. At some point in the past a cave-in shattered the far wall, exposing a natural cavern beyond. A stream of water pours into the room through the hole, covering the floor with a thin layer of water. Above the sarcophagus is carved the words, "HERE RESTS TAENYA KELSAMUTH, BATTLE MAIDEN OF CAER DUNKIRK, DAUGHTER OF RIRAN KELSAMUTH, ARGENT LORD OF DUNKIRK. DISTURB NOT HER ETERNAL REST OR SUFFER THE MIGHT OF THE ARGENT FLAME." The air in here seems much colder than in the rest of the barrow, and you begin to grow aware of a dark presence in the room with you.

The body of Taenya is guarded by a wight, the cursed remains of a wizard named Kaloc who served her father, the king, during his reign. When Taenya was killed in battle, the king believed it was Kaloc's negligence that allowed her to fall and he consulted with dark forces to bring the former advisor back into unlife to guard his daughter for eternity. Kaloc uses the stats for the Wight located in the Lost Mine of Phandelver adventure. He is assisted by four zombies.

Treasure: Hidden inside Taenya's sarcophagus is a +1 longsword, a scroll of *Bless*, and a bejeweled silver dagger (50 gp). The wealth in the room easily numbers in the thousands, though a lot of the fine tapestries and furniture were ruined by the water. The DM should set the value of the treasure in this room to something reasonable for the campaign.

9. The Cave-In

A mound of rubble fills the small cavernous chamber, spreading out from the hole that leads from the old crypt. It's hard to find safe purchase on the shifting rocks. The air is musty and old, and frigid water pours in from a hole in the ceiling. Not far away you can see a natural cave twisting away through the stone.

The rubble is considered difficult terrain. A grick has made its lair in this room. When at least two of the characters are climbing the rubble, it will attack from behind a pile of stones.

10. The Cliff

The rocky walls give way to ice, and at a bend in the

hallway you can hear the sound of howling wind. The sound seems to come through the wall to the right. It is much colder here, your breath frosting in the air.

As soon as the first character passes the middle of the hallway, the vibrations of their footsteps cause the ice wall to break away, suddenly exposing them to frigid winds and a precipitous drop (200 feet). The wall is actually part of a frozen waterfall cascading from high above. Near the bottom it passes the entrance to Barioth's lair (area 12).

11. Goblin Warrens

The cave descends farther, and the air here feels noticeably warmer. Perhaps there is a natural geothermal vent down here somewhere. You begin to notice crude carvings on the walls, central to which is a stylized wolf head. The tunnels stink, littered with animal bones, cast-off bits of metal and wood, and half-eaten rotting food. Up ahead you hear guttural chatter, and can see the flickering light from some sort of fire.

Living in a cramped network of tunnels are a clan of goblins, former members of the Dead Wolf tribe who broke away from the rest of their tribe when they stole their former tribe leader's magic wolf armor. It is now worn by Wolfclaw, their self-elected leader. The wolf pelt gives those who wear it advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that involve hearing. The number of goblins living here depends on the size and level of the party, from a dozen to thirty.

A side tunnel leads steeply up toward the surface, emerging at a hidden overlook farther down the pass. The storm is still raging. Another tunnel leading off the warrens has been blocked with broken crates and piled with logs, with the goblin symbol for "DANGER" carved into it. This tunnel leads down a narrow, winding tunnel into area 12.

12. Lair of Barioth the White Death

Not far from the goblin warrens, the cave drops steeply into darkness. The air is extremely cold but also humid. At the bottom you find yourself in a natural grotto with sword-like icicles dangling above. Covering the floor is a frozen lake of indeterminate depth, and buried under the surface, barely visible, are bodies entombed forever in the ice.

This huge cavern is home to a young white dragon who calls herself Barioth the White Death, perhaps an ambitious title given her age, but she has the verocity and cruelty to match. She uses the stats for the Young Green Dragon given in the D&D Starter Set, but with the following changes: Her *Poison Breath* ability is a *Cone of Frost*, doing the same damage, but the damage type is changed to cold. Her condition and damage immunities change to *cold*. Barioth's treasure is a little lower than normal, but she still has a decent haul — unfortunately it's all buried in the ice!

Barioth's lair has another exit at the base of the same frozen waterfall as area 10. The characters will find themselves on the shore of a half-frozen lake. The blizzard has ended, and they are most of the way through the mountain pass.

