

– Warrior’s Barrow –

This 5e adventure location is for 3–5 characters of 2nd–3rd level. The GP values for treasure are indicated in <brackets>.

Overview

A man-made hillock covers a crude tomb in which an ancient warrior is interred. The hill is approximately 100 ft. in diameter and 40 ft. high.

The entrance to the tomb is sealed with a thick stone. Prying the seal open requires at least two laborers with proper tools (pick, sledgehammer, crowbar, rope) and takes 30 min + (1d6 x 10) mins. Opening the seal makes noise (+5 to any encounter check rolls during the excavation).

Dungeon Key

1) Entry Chamber

Beyond the tomb’s seal, a 10-ft. cracked stone staircase leads down into a dry passage lined with wide alcoves. Four 6-ft. tall stone statues of maidens—attendants by their dress and pose—stand in the east/west alcoves. They have **lapis lazuli** for eyes. In the north alcove stands an 8-ft. high **statue** of a matronly queen with **onyx** for eyes. Her arms are held out with palms up, as if beckoning the viewer to embrace her.

–**Secret Doors.** Multiple 3x6-ft. wall panels may be discovered (**DC 18 (WIS) Perception** check to notice thin seams, slight discoloration of stone), but no method of opening them can be found. The heavy stone panels are 1-ft. thick and cannot be opened without major excavation.

–**Treasure.** It takes one minute and a **DC 10 (DEX) Sleight-of-Hand** check to pry one of the lapis lazuli eyes loose (8x <10> ea.) without damaging it (*fail* = gp value is halved).

–**Statue.** Each arm of the queen’s statue is articulated to pivot downward (thin seams at the shoulders). If one or both arms are pulled down (req. a **DC 10 (STR) Athletics** check for one arm or **DC 15** for both at the same time), then the secret doors to area 2 (right arm) and/or area 3 (left arm) behind the attendant statues in the east/west alcoves slide open.

- A secret door only stays open so long as someone applies 30+ lbs. of downward force to the arm. When an arm is released, the door slides shut and the arm returns to its original position.
- If the statuettes from area 3 are placed in the statue’s upturned hands, both arms lower and the secret door to area 4 slides open behind her.

–**Trap! (DC 15 (WIS) Perception check to detect)** If an onyx eye (2x <100> ea.) is removed from the statue, her mouth drops open and releases a cloud of **poison gas** (15-ft. radius; **DC 11 CON save**: *fail* = HP reduced to 0; *success* = take 2d6 poison).

2) Crypt

An open chamber with three **burial alcoves** on the south wall, each stuffed with bones. A huge **pile of debris** heaped in the center of the room reeks of sour urine.

–**Burial Alcoves.** These niches are filled with hundreds of bones and the rotten fragments of linen burial wrappings. Searching an alcove takes 10 minutes. A complete search of all three alcoves turns up the following treasure: 1,035 cp, 512 sp, 108 gp, a large amethyst <150>, a gold ring <100>, a gold and garnet medallion <200>, a clay runic tablet (as *Spell Scroll of Web*), and a sealed clay jar (*Potion of Healing*).

-Debris Pile. The heap of dead leaves, rotten burial wrappings, and other refuse is the filthy, urine-soaked nest for (7) **giant rats** that burrowed into this chamber (the exit hole is beneath the trash pile). One rat with black fur is much bigger than the rest (11 HP, +1 damage).

- **Giant rat** (AC 12; 7 HP; AT 1 bite (+4/1d4+2 piercing); SA *Pack Tactics*; SD *Keen Smell*).

3) Altar Chamber

An open hall with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, 15-ft. high at its peak. The north and south walls are angled. A black altar stone (3x4x3-ft.) stands at each end, and upon each altar rests a **gold statuette** of a coyote-headed humanoid.

-Secret Doors. Four 3x6-ft. wall panels—two each on the east and west walls—may be discovered (DC 18 (WIS) **Perception** check to notice thin seams, slight discoloration of stone), but no method of opening them can be found. The heavy stone panels are 1-ft. thick and cannot be opened without major excavation.

-Trap! Two sets of concealed **pit doors** in the floor may be discovered (DC 15 (WIS) **Perception** check to notice thin seams, hollow sounds beneath feet). Walking across these sections of floor does not automatically trigger the trap.

When the statuette on the north altar is removed, however, the following occurs:

- The pit trap doors open and dump anyone on them into a **10-ft. deep pit** (1d6 bludgeoning).
- Simultaneously, the secret panels on the east and west walls—along with the four secret panels in the central part of area 1—all slide open, revealing hidden alcoves. A total of (8) **brittle skeletons** emerge from the alcoves in area 1/the west wall, while

the alcoves on the east wall release (2) **desiccated zombies**.

- **Brittle skeleton** (AC 12; 1 HP; AT 1 claw (+2/1d4+2 slashing); SD *vulnerable* to bludgeoning; *resists* piercing; *immune* to poison; *Loosely-Assembled*; *Push-through*) – see New Monsters.
- **Desiccated zombie** (AC 9; SPD 20; 16 HP (3d8+3); AT 2 grasping claws (+3/1d6+1 slashing); SA If both claws hit, target is *grappled* (escape DC 11); *Breath of the Crypt* (bonus action) vs. *grappled* target; *Zombie Plague*; SD *vulnerable* to fire; *immune* to poison; has *advantage* to resist turning) – see New Monsters.

-Treasure. Each statuette is solid gold <150> and weighs 35 lbs.

3) Main Crypt

Four **skeletons** lay on straw mats near the east and west walls, forming a **central aisle** to a **stone sarcophagus** against the north wall. Each skeleton has a colorfully-painted, **sealed clay jar** at its head. The sarcophagus is surrounded by **funeral offerings**.

-Skeletons. Each skeleton is laid out with their skulls pointing either east or west in an alternating pattern. If the bones or the sarcophagus lid are disturbed, the skeletons rise as (4) **brittle skeletons**.

- **Brittle skeleton** (AC 12; 1 HP; AT 1 claw (+2/1d4+2 slashing); SD *vulnerable* to bludgeoning; *resists* piercing; *immune* to poison; *Loosely-Assembled*; *Push-through*) – see New Monsters.
- The skeletons' initial attack is to pick up an available jar and hurl it (as standard attack) at the nearest target. If the throw misses, the jar lands in a random adjacent square.

A jar shatters when it lands, exploding in a 5-ft. cloud of **toxic powder** (DC 14 CON save; fail = the target takes 3d6 poison and is *blinded* for 1 minute; success = half damage and no blindness). The cloud disperses immediately and poses no further hazard.

A *blinded* target can make a **DC 14 CON save** to end the effect at the end of each of their turns. Using an action to douse the target's eyes with a full waterskin also ends the effect.

–**Trap!** A false floor (DC 15 (WIS) Perception check to notice slight sag) dumps anyone crossing the central aisle into a 10-ft. deep spiked pit (1d6b + 3d4p). In addition, unless the skeletons have already thrown them, the two clay jars along the pit's edge (from the skeletons facing the aisle) fall in and break, releasing the toxic powder and affecting every creature in the confined space.

–**Sarcophagus.** The heavy stone lid requires two characters with a combined STR of 18 to lift off.

The round after the brittle skeletons make their first attacks, however, the sarcophagus lid slides aside effortlessly and a **skeletal warrior** emerges wearing armor made of lacquered wood strips, leather, and bone, and hefting a wicker shield. It also wields a **magic khopesh**, has (6) javelins, and wears a **magic bracelet**. When the ancient warrior is defeated, its armor and shield crumble to ruin, but the khopesh and bracelet remain.

- **Skeletal warrior** (AC 17; 34 HP (4d8+8 plus temp HP); AT 1 khopesh (+5/1d6+3 slashing) or 1 javelin (30/60, +4/1d6+2 piercing); SA can use bonus action to raise 1d3 “dead” brittle skeletons within 30 ft.; SD has *advantage* to resist turning; *immune* to poison; *Second Wind* (as fighter); use reaction to *Parry*; +2 AC vs. a single attack) – see New Monsters.

- **Bronze Khopesh.** This +1 weapon does 1d6 slashing damage and has the *Versatile* property (1d8 damage used two-handed). In addition to the attack and damage bonus, the wielder gains +1 to Initiative.

- **Iron Bracelet.** (Req. Attunement) The wearer's maximum HP score increases by +1 per level/HD, and they gain 1 temporary HP per level/HD after completing a Short Rest.

–**Funeral Offerings.** Straw baskets filled with rotting offerings of food and grains. Among the worthless offerings are three **sealed clay jars**, and a **bronze coffer**.

- **Clay Jars.** Two of the wax-sealed jars are filled with the dried remains of beer; the third contains: 320 cp, 68 sp, 81 gp, 2x banded agates <10> ea. and a citrine <50>.
- **Bronze Coffers.** The lidded box contains: 8,733 cp, 721 sp, 240 gp, 3x moonstones <50> ea., a black pearl <150>, a large amethyst <150>, 2x huge garnets <200> ea., a pair of copper earrings <10>, a silver braided necklace <100>, a silver bracelet embossed with running coyotes <200>, a pair of gold coyote-head epaulets <400> ea., a belt made of linked gold oval plates, each with a central garnet <600>, a *Potion of Hill Giant Strength*, 2x *Potions of Greater Healing*, a *Cockleshell of Comprehending Languages* (as helm, but requires an Action to put to ear and listen), and a *Bone Cloak Clasp* (in the shape of a leaping gazelle; the wearer can cast *Longstrider* once per Short Rest).

New Monsters

Brittle Skeleton

Medium undead, neutral

AC 12 (no armor)

HP 1

Speed 30

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Vulnerabilities. Bludgeoning

Damage Resistances. Piercing

Damage Immunities. Poison

Condition Immunities. Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses. Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

CR 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency. +0

-Loosely-Assembled. Because they are a collection of barely-held together bones, a brittle skeleton can pass through a Small opening or an ally's space without penalty. Two brittle skeletons can occupy and fight in the same space without being considered *prone*.

Actions

-Bony Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2, Reach 5 ft., one target, *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) slashing.

-Push-through. When faced with a line of enemies, a brittle skeleton can use its Action to throw itself against an opponent's space, breaking apart into its constituent bones and then reforming on the other side. The skeleton can only move up to 10 ft. in this manner, but can do so through spaces controlled by another creature.

Desiccated Zombie

Medium undead, neutral

AC 9 (no armor)

HP 16 (3d8+3)

Speed 20

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Vulnerabilities. Fire

Damage Immunities. Poison

Condition Immunities. Poisoned

Senses. Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 8

CR 1/4 (50 XP)

Proficiency. +2

-Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a **CON save with a DC of 5 + the damage taken**, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

-Turn Resistance. Because it is an undead animated by vengeance and is within its consecrated burial ground, the desiccated zombie has *advantage* on saves to avoid being turned.

-Zombie Plague. Any creature who takes necrotic damage from the desiccated zombie's *Breath of the Crypt* is potentially infected by a deadly disease: 1d6 hours after failing the initial save, the victim must make another **DC 11 CON save** or lose 1 point of CON, and additional saves at the end of each hour thereafter to avoid losing more CON.

If the victim's CON is reduced to 0 by this effect, the victim dies and is reanimated as a (regular) zombie within 1d6 x 10 minutes of death. A *Lesser Restoration* spell OR rolling a nat-20 on one of the CON saves to resist the plague will end the effect.

A recovering victim gains 1 point of CON each day unless they fail a **DC 11 CON save** (in which case, they gain no CON points back for that day).

Actions

-Multiattack. The desiccated zombie makes two Grasping Claw attacks on its turn.

-Grasping Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3, Reach 5 ft., one target, *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) slashing. If both Grasping Claw attacks hit on the same turn, the target is *grappled* until they break free by using an action to make a **(STR) Athletics** check (**escape**

DC 11). The zombie can use *Breath of the Crypt* on a *grappled* target with a bonus action.

Bonus Actions

-Breath of the Crypt. The desiccated zombie retches forth a cloud of miasma on a *grappled* target. The target must make a **DC 11 CON save** or suffer the *poisoned* condition for one minute. While *poisoned*, the target takes 1d6 necrotic damage at the start of each of their turns. At the end of each of their turns, the target can make a **DC 11 CON save** to end the effect.

Skeletal Warrior

Medium undead, neutral

AC 17 (lacquered armor and wicker shield)

HP 34 (4d8+8) plus temporary HP (magic bracelet)

Speed 30

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities. Poison

Condition Immunities. Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses. Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 8

CR 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency. +2

-Magic Items. The skeletal warrior uses a magic khopesh that gives it +1 to attack and damage rolls, as well as to Initiative rolls. It also wears a magic iron bracelet that increases its max HP by 4 and gives it 4 temporary HP with a Short Rest.

-Turn Resistance. Because it is an undead animated by vengeance and is within its consecrated burial ground, the skeletal warrior has *advantage* on saves to avoid being turned.

Actions

-Multiattack. The skeletal warrior makes two +1 *Khopesh* attacks or throws two javelins on its turn.

-+1 Khopesh. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5, Reach 5 ft., one target, Hit: 6 (1d6+3) slashing.

-Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4, range 30/60, one target, Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing.

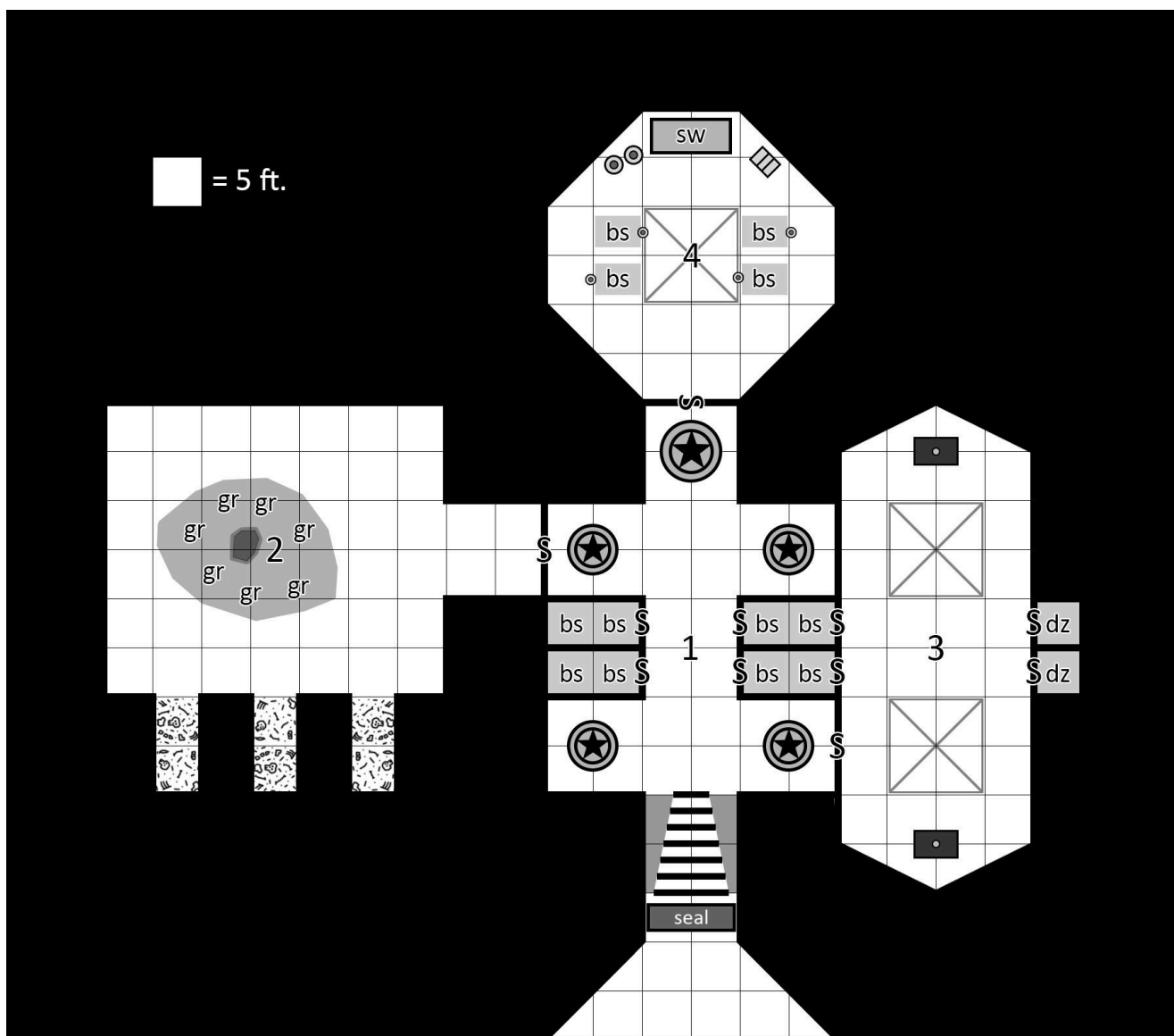
Bonus Actions

-Raise Minions. The skeletal warrior can use its bonus action to reanimate 1d3 “dead” brittle skeletons within 30 ft. of it.

-Second Wind. The skeletal warrior can use its bonus action to recover 1d8+4 HP.

Reaction

-Parry. The skeletal warrior can use its reaction to increase its AC by 2 against a single attack.



Original writeup and more content is available at:

<https://thegloomyforest.blogspot.com/2024/01/the-dead-pines-sample-barrow-mound.html>.