

in darkest day



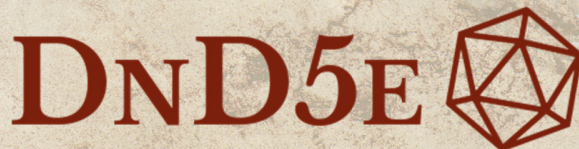


# in darkest day

**Author** Dave McAlister  
**Editor** Jude McAlister  
**Art** Dave Zajac (Swordfin Games),  
Lord Zsezse Works,  
Peter Szabo Gabor,  
The Forge Studios  
**Cartography** Dave McAlister



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## introduction

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*In Darkest Day* is a 5th Edition adventure for a group of 1st-level characters. It is intended as a short side trek in an ongoing campaign and should provide for a session's worth of play.

Statistics for the adversaries described in the keyed encounters are listed at the back.

## background

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Ralf Ragnarsson, a cleric of a death deity, has been studying an ancient text that describes a powerful ritual in which a maiden must be sacrificed while the “sun is black” on the day after her betrothal. After months of waiting for the right time, he has been able to set his plan in motion. He intends on marrying the daughter of an impoverished farmer, having paid an impressive dowry, and carrying her off in the night to an area he has previously prepared to carry out the sacrifice.

## setup

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While travelling along the road, the heroes rest for the night in a nearby village. The village they have stopped at is coming to the end of a wedding feast and the heroes are treated as guests and offered all the hospitalities available.

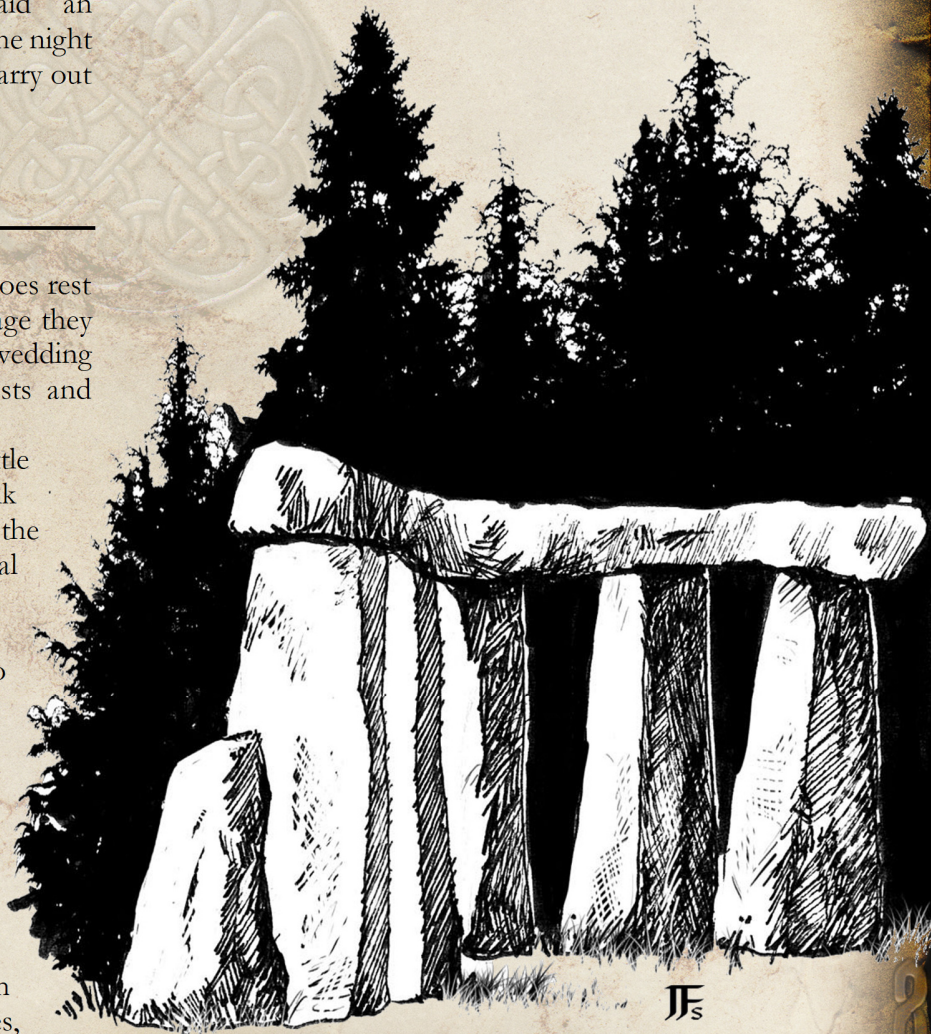
It is obvious to all that this village is a little run-down. However, this doesn't stop folk enjoying themselves and celebrating the wedding of Enid, eldest daughter of a local farmer Gildas, to Ralf Ragnarsson.

The revelry continues long into the night and the heroes are encouraged to partake in many feats and games on offer (which include, but are not limited to, drinking games, feats of strength, songs and poetry, and minor “magic” tricks (sleight-of-hand rather than true magic)).

The heroes are also introduced to both Enid and Ralf. Enid is a plain looking girl of 18 bursting with happiness. She never takes her eyes from her beloved and scarcely looks at the heroes,

except to offer the slightest hint of hospitality (for which her father profusely apologises). Ralf, on the other hand, is a young man in his mid-20s. He would be considered handsome were it not for his pasty white skin—it is obvious that he is not a man used to working under the sun in the fields. A jovial young man, Ralf happily talks with the heroes for a short while, asking about their journey and past exploits before making his excuses and returning to his new bride as they are escorted to their bridal “chamber.”

The next morning sees everyone awoken, some with slightly heavier heads than others but otherwise none the worse for wear. As the heroes shake the cobwebs from their minds a scream pierces the air—it is coming from Gildas' home. Upon investigation the heroes find Gildas frantic with worry and obvious tracks through the morning dew into a nearby wood. Gildas asks that the heroes follow the tracks and try to find out



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what has happened to his daughter and her husband.

## into the woods

Ralf has a head start on the heroes but tracking him isn't difficult as he is carrying Enid. His tracks take a direct route into the wood and as the heroes enter, they start to notice that the sky is darker than usual for this time of year. Looking up they can see that something is moving across the sun. A DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) or Wisdom (Survival) roll (clerics of moon deities can have advantage on the former roll) determines that this is a solar eclipse and it will reach its zenith in a couple of hours.

## the stones

After a couple of hours trekking through the wood, and with the sky almost black, the heroes come across a series of standing stones. As they arrive they see Ralf who is now bedecked in the robes and holy symbol of his deity and surrounded by zombies (1 per hero). Before him, in the middle of a stone circle, is Enid, staked out into the ground. Ralf laughs as the heroes approach, chiding them for taking so long: "At last, I couldn't finish until you were here!"

It was part of Ralf's plan for the heroes to be here as well. This is because the ritual requires the blood of those who have killed in addition to the blood of a maiden.

Ralf will command the zombies to attack while he continues the ritual. Should the heroes defeat the zombies, or attempt disrupt the ritual, Ralf will defend himself at the expense of completing the ritual immediately.

The exact nature of the ritual's effect should the heroes fail is left to individual DMs to decide as best suits their campaign.

### Ralf Ragnarsson, acolyte

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*  
**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)  
**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10	10	10	10	14	11
(+0)	(+0)	(+0)	(+0)	(+2)	(+0)

**Skills** Medicine +4, Religion +2

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The acolyte is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The acolyte has following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*  
 1st-level (3 slots): *bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*

#### actions

**Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

#### treasure

Wand of Animate Dead (see below), chain shirt, club, 3d8gp

### Zombies

*Medium undead, neutral evil*  
**Armor Class** 8  
**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)  
**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13	6	16	3	6	5
(+1)	(-2)	(+3)	(-4)	(-2)	(-3)

**Saving Throws** Wis +0

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands all languages it spoke in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw 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.

#### actions

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

### wand of animate dead

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast the *animate dead* spell from it.



