

THE GAELWCH

A gamebook adventure in two pages.
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Introduction

In the years following the Great Insurrection the Mutan of the Clavern'sigh set about the task of demolishing everything left by their Fallen Masters. Great temples and vast cities were systematically destroyed, their broken stones scattered until nothing remained. It was in the prosecution of this mission that the Sigh discovered records of a Beast, one created by the Trell'sara and subsequently locked away and forgotten. Such was the elemental malice of this spectral creature that it had proved uncontrollable and had been separated into eleven parts, each part exiled to the ends of the world and secured within a *grel'nimir*, a Lock Room, bound by eleven locks. With this discovery warriors were sent to find these *grel'nimir*, though none were ever found. Except one. This is the story of the Hresh who uncovered the prison of the Gaelwch (pronounced gael-wek) and came face to face with the power of EarthMagic.

Game Objective:

Your mission will be complete when you stand in the chamber known as the *grel'nimir* and look upon the countenance of the Gaelwch.

Character Generation:

The following character attributes are yours to determine. Spread 30 character points between the three Strength, Agility and Endurance attributes listed below, but keep those points within the ranges given in brackets. Strength plus Agility equals your Combat Value. Record this value below for reference later.

Strength (5 – 11): _____ Combat Value = _____
 Agility (3 – 5): _____ Weapon: Hresh Scimitar
 Endurance (10 – 20): _____

(These character attributes should be recorded on a separate sheet, along with any items found and any record you might keep regarding combat resolution.)

In this adventure you are a Hresh of the Oera'dim, a creature created for warfare. It is a truth of your existence that you breathe only to serve the needs of your masters, the Mutan of the Clavern'sigh, and in that service carry out any order ruthlessly. Roughly humanoid in form you stand only slightly taller than Men, and possess both keen night-vision and a camouflaged skin that changes to match any environment you may venture within. In your life your only concerns lay with the Orders you have been given and what you must kill to achieve their objectives.

Combat Resolution:

When you are required to fight the following rules apply:

- Record the name, combat value and endurance of your opponent on a separate sheet of paper.
- Roll 2d6 and add your combat value recorded above to the number you have thrown. This is your combat strength for the round.
- Throw 2d6 and add the number rolled to your opponent's combat value. This is your adversary's combat strength for the round.
- Compare both combat strengths. The higher combat strength wins the round and an amount of endurance points must then be taken from the loser's total endurance points. If the winner of the round has a combat strength four or more points higher than his opponent then he has struck a heavy blow and four endurance points must be taken. If the winner of the round wins by three points or less, he has struck a minor blow and only one endurance point need be deducted from the loser's endurance points.
- Repeat this combat process until either yourself or your opponent's endurance points fall to zero. At that time the combat has been resolved and one of you will be dead.

Restoring Endurance:

In this gamebook your character can restore endurance only with the use of a regenerative liquid known as *ulaa/nahla*. On this mission you take 6 vials of the liquid with you, each vial capable of restoring 4 endurance points. Record on a sheet of paper this initial supply and its use.

Regarding the Dreya'dim:

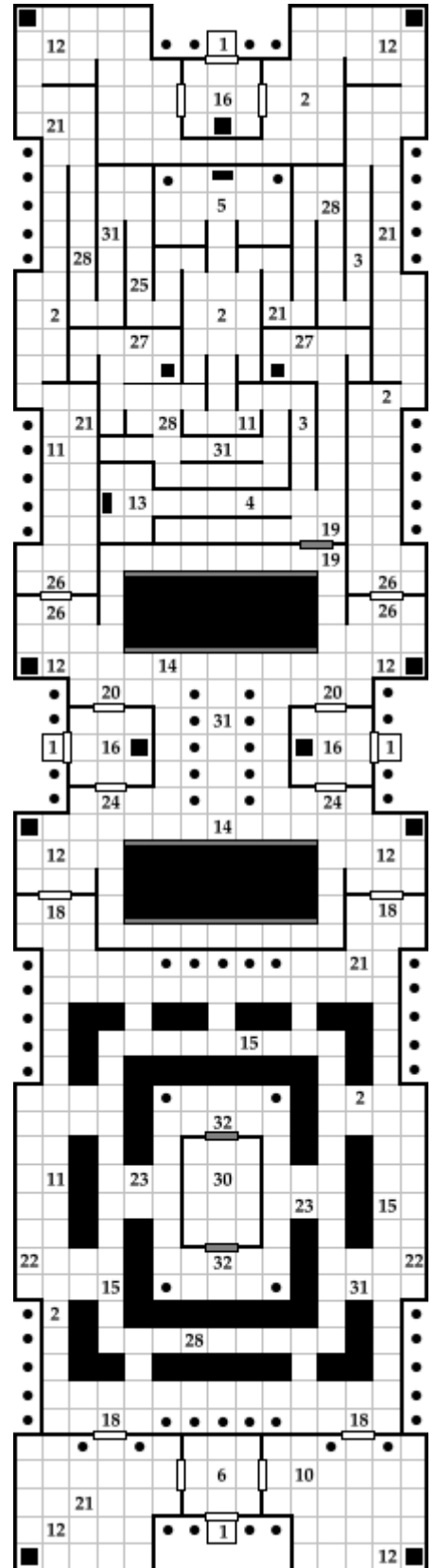
Throughout this adventure you shall encounter spectral creatures known as Dreya'dim. These wraiths are the remains of Oera'dim denied access to the Underworld upon death and enslaved instead to the needs of the Dreya Tree, Third Power of the World and Lord of Hallen'draal. Left to roam the world until called upon to serve, most Dreya'dim are drawn to strong sources of EarthMagic where they return to a corporeal form, though grotesquely malformed. These creatures are manifestations of the worst aspects of the Oera'dim and will kill without thought or mercy.

Playing The Gaelwch:

This gamebook utilises a straightforward game process, one that uses the map shown on this page in conjunction with the section references provided on the second page. You begin your mission upon any grid numbered 1, and your mission progresses from that point forward. The game is divided into turns, each turn allowing you to move a maximum of 10 grid spaces per turn in any direction, including diagonally, but you must end each turn on another numbered grid. Each numbered grid is a reference to a section given on the second page of this adventure and you must then act upon whatever that section requires. It may describe something you find, an encounter with a Dreya'dim or possibly nothing at all. You will not know however, until you end your movement on that grid and read the associated section reference. Your adventure will end when you have gained access to the *grel'nimir*.

PRISON OF THE GAELWCH

A Player can start upon any of the grids numbered 1 at the entrances to the prison



□ Open Doors
 ■ Locked Doors

Sections

Using these Section References:

These section references correspond to numbered grid squares found upon the map provided on the first page of this adventure, and in most cases need only be read once. The exception are section numbers enclosed within brackets (). These sections must be actioned no matter how many times they are landed upon. All of the numbered grids can however, be used as end of turn way-points as many times as is necessary. It should be noted that if a numbered grid blocks the way forward the player must land on that grid before continuing.

1: In the shadows of a cold night you stand at the entrance to the old ruin and know that something is very wrong. Before its crumbling arches you can sense a brooding, restless energy prickling at your skin, infecting the air with a tangible impression of fear and death. It is a sensation you do not recognise. There are Dreyadim within these cold walls, of that you are sure, but there is something else here, a malicious presence unlike anything you have felt before. It is a feeling that begs investigation and without hesitation you walk through the entrance and into the dark.

2: In the shadows you pause for a moment and listen. There is something ahead.

(3): In the stone at your feet is a large, perfectly inscribed circle and you recognise it for what it is. Within the floor is an Iron Claw and if you step upon the circle it will activate, a pair of curved blades slicing like scissors through whoever stands upon it. You can either attempt to jump the trap, or find another way. If you wish to jump the Iron Claw test your Agility attribute by throwing 1d6 and comparing the number thrown to your Agility value. If you throw equal to or below that value you have jumped the trap. If you throw over your Agility value however, turn to section 17.

4: From the shadows ahead there comes the shuffling bulk of a **Jotun Dreyadim** (CV-15, EP-10). The grotesque wraith towers over you, and in its long arms you see a broken warhammer poised for violence. If you defeat this giant you can continue with your search. If it is you who falls then your quest here is over.

5: Before you is a large slab of black crystal. Upon its smooth surface is a number of shallow inserts designed to hold a series of hexagonal-shaped keys. There is nothing here however, the keys having been removed long ago.

6: You find yourself in a small chamber that possess two opposing doors in its east and west walls. Above each door have been inscribed the words, *:shada duel'eth ophad:* It is written in the Elder Tongue and translates as "Death resides here." Apart from this the room is bare and the doors are open. Without hesitation you move on.

7: Carefully you walk the edges of the *grel'nimir* and come to a standstill. Before you is a door and standing at its threshold is a **Thrall Dreyadim** (CV-16, EP-10). This creature is one of the Fallen Masters, its spirit taken by the Dreyra Tree, its mindless form left to wander the prison of the Gaelwch. You cannot enter without killing the wraith first and it is a task you will be happy to complete. If you have a *sharyah'ka* add +2 to your combat value for the duration of the combat. If you defeat this abomination turn to section 9.

8: Tentatively you pass your hand over the dark liquid then push your finger into its black form. Instantly you feel a rush of power, an overwhelming surge of energy that quickly envelops your body. Before you can pull your hand from its surface the power grows, building until it becomes a blinding light that digs into your chest searching out the spark of existence that gives you life. In that instant you realise your mistake and before the thought is fully formed you disappear, your body engulfed in EarthMagic and destroyed. In this life your mission is over.

9: The Dreyadim falls, its body evaporating in a smoking fume that quickly dissipates within the stale atmosphere around you. Quickly you move to the door and find it locked. Standing back you consider its form, the door a slab of blue metal set within a black crystal frame, upon which is emblazoned a series of glyphs and symbols. There is no handle but at its left you see a single hexagonal impression and you know that this is the lock that will open the door. If you have a hexagonal key turn to section 30. If you do not have this key you will have to go and look for it.

10: Quietly you move into a large chamber that must have once served as a reception area or clerk's office. It is bare except for a thick covering of dust and a large statue standing in its south-eastern corner.

11: At your feet you find the carcass of a rotting animal. About it there scurry a number of over-fed rats and you kick one of the vermin aside as you move forward.

12: In the corner you see a tall statue. It is a representation of a warrior-priest of the *Trell'sara* and although you cannot see its face you know who it is. A smirk creases your visage as you remember the blow that had struck down Aggeron and started the Great Insurrection. You had been there when Qirion had taken the life of the Darkness and this statue was no more than a reminder of his demise. You consider destroying the black statue but instead are content to spit upon it.

13: Before you there stands a dark slab of free-standing crystal. In its surface has been etched a number of inserts, each hexagonal in profile and designed to hold small crystals of the same shape. The crystals serve as keys, each individual to the locks they secure. In this slab you can see one key remaining and you take it.

14: Beside you is a Dark Water pool and it remains active. These pools are sources of power, conduits of EarthMagic used by the Fallen Masters to feed energy to their unnatural devices. Carefully you run your hand above the surface of the thick liquid and feel the static charge it generates. If you are curious and would place your hand on the water turn to section 8. If you see no purpose in doing so continue on.

15: Standing next to one of the vast crystalline slabs you can feel both heat and power, the ground itself resonating to the energy coursing through them. You decide it best not to touch the huge crystal slab and instead move on.

16: You find yourself in a small chamber that possesses two opposing doors to your left and right and a large black statue before you. The statue is a representation of a robed warrior-priest, its arms crossed as a warning that only authorised personnel may enter. You ignore this and look to the exits. Above each door has been inscribed the words, *:shada duel'eth ophad:* They are words of the Elder Tongue and translate as "Death Resides Here." Apart from this the room is bare and the doors are open.

17: Even as you jump you know you have misjudged your leap. A simple misstep on the dusty floor takes all the strength from your jump and you land within the circle. Roll 1d6. If you throw a 4 or higher the trap malfunctions and you jump again to safety on the other side. If this is your fate you can continue with your mission. If you throw a 3 or less turn instead to section 29.

18: Carefully you make your way through the open doorway and find yourself in a vast chamber. At all sides the walls are cut with massive stone murals depicting a great battle, one fought between the Fallen Masters and a creature of mist. You think that this must be the Gaelwch of legend, and your pulse races at the thought that this might indeed be the location of the *grel'nimir*. What is of greater interest however, is the series of massive black crystalline slabs that form a barrier surrounding the centre of the chamber. At only a few points is the barrier cut by a few narrow openings, and the slabs burn deep blue with a power that rushes through them. No matter what else you do within this ruin you must investigate what lies hidden within these dark monoliths.

19: Before you is a locked door. If you have a hexagonal key the door will open and you may walk through. If you don't have this key find another way.

20: Before you is a large chamber, a series of pillars at its centre and a huge pool of Dark Water to the north. More of the chamber extends unseen to the south and there is an open door to the north. Into the darkness you move forward.

(21): You recognise the small shape even as it coalesces before you. It is a **Morg Dreyadim** (CV-12, EP-6) armed with a rusting sword. In a rush it attacks. If you kill this creature continue with your search, otherwise your mission here is over.

22: For a moment you pause and consider the vast mural that covers this section of the chamber. It depicts the tearing of the Gaelwch into eleven parts and the fury of the beast as it is being dismembered. As you look at the carvings you wonder if it could have survived such a cruel end. Then you realise you don't care.

23: Between the slabs you find a space that leads to a wide platform and a vault that stands at its centre. The vault is made of solid blue Azuril, its entire surface covered in Seals of Warding inset in black crystal and silver metal. This must be the *grel'nimir*, the Lock Room of the Gaelwch.

24: Before you is a large chamber, a series of pillars at its centre and a huge pool of Dark Water to the south. More of the chamber extends northwards and you can see a door to the south. In the darkness you consider where you should now go.

25: Moving along the corridor you discover a pile of bones and clothing. Carefully you move the clothes apart with your scimitar and find it is the remains of a fellow *Hresh*. A glimmer of metal catches your eye and you bend down, your fingers closing around a *Sharyah'ka*, a Lightstone of the Fallen Masters. This you will keep in your possession for such a talisman weakens any Dreyadim that ventures too close. (Whilst within this ruin this *Sharyah* will add +1 to your combat value).

26: Here you find an open doorway. For a moment you pause. In the shadows ahead you can sense movement although there is no sign of danger yet.

27: Even as you turn the corner you know you have walked into a trap. In the shadows there stands a Dark Obelisk and its need to sap the life energy from any who venture too close works upon you immediately. Turning on your heel you struggle away from the rune-covered stone but not before it attempts to do its lethal work. Roll 1d6. This is the endurance points the Obelisk will take from you before you can escape its grasp. If you survive the encounter move on quickly.

28: From the shadows ahead you hear movement. With greater care you move on.

29: Before you can jump again the Iron Claw triggers, curving arcs of razor-sharp iron severing your body cleanly in two. In this life your quest is over.

30: Carefully you take the key and place it into the lock. Instantly the door opens, the quiet of the ruin shattered as you are engulfed in an overwhelming detonation of light and sound. Buffeted by the assault you fall, the door a piercing outlet for a torrent of unrestrained energy. Squinting into the light you can see nothing but vague shadows within the brilliance, though you cannot doubt what lies within. Inside this metal vault the Gaelwch rages against its bindings, the immense power built into this ruin focused only on restraining the beast. Against this maelstrom you struggle to the lock and pull the key from its escutcheon. In that moment the door closes and the roiling turmoil of the vault is once again secure. For a moment you stand silent. You have found the Gaelwch, your mission is done.

(31): In a rush you are attacked by a **Hresh Dreyadim** (CV-14, EP-8). Horribly deformed, the wraith moves with surprising speed and before you can react it is upon you. If you destroy this *Hresh* you may continue your journey.

(32) If this is your first time here turn to section 7. If you have been here before and have a hexagonal key in your possession turn to section 30.