

CHRONICLES OF ARBORELL

THE WATCH TOWER



A GAMEBOOK ADVENTURE FROM THE
CHRONICLES OF ARBORELL

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The Watchtower



A Gamebook Adventure from the Chronicles of Arborell
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The Windhammer Core Gamebook (PDF and HTML editions)
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 Shards of Moonlight Gamebook (PDF and HTML editions)
 A Murder of Crows online Gamebook
 Torchlight - Quest for the Orncryst
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This Adventure contains:
Strong Fantasy Violence
Mature Themes

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THE WATCHTOWER



Introduction

When first constructed the Watchtower at Millerain guarded the edges of human settlement in the new world of Arborell, and for two centuries it served its purpose well. In these modern times it lies abandoned and desolate, the frontiers of the realms of Men found hundreds of leagues further to the north and west. It is however, no longer empty. Something has found a home within its crumbling battlements, spreading malice and malcontent upon the surrounding rural communities. Citizens have gone missing, and with their loss a pall has settled upon once peaceful settlements. Whatever lurks within the high tower wishes itself to remain hidden and undisturbed. It is your intention that this will not remain so.

Game Objective:

You are a Ranger of the Watch, one of an elite regiment of soldiers charged with maintaining the security of the Kalborean Union. Given orders to investigate the cause of the disappearances you believe it is the Watchtower that harbours the cause of such misery. Your orders are clear, your duty to search the tower and destroy all that hides within.

Character Generation:

As a Ranger of the Watch you are a soldier of considerable skill and efficiency. Trained in the use of all weapons, and expert in close-quarter combat you stand resolute before any attacker. You are as ruthless as you are efficient, and you have absolutely no sense of humour. For this adventure your weapon of choice is a short sword.

The following character attributes are yours to determine. Spread 35 character points between the four Strength, Agility, Luck and Endurance attributes listed below, but keep those points within the ranges given in brackets. Strength plus Agility equals your Combat Value. Record these values for later reference.

Strength (5 – 11): _____ Combat Value (CV) = _____
 Agility (3 – 5): _____ Weapon: Short sword
 Luck (3 – 5): _____
 Endurance (10 – 20): _____

Combat Resolution:

If you are required to fight the following rules apply:

- Record the name, combat value (CV) and endurance points (EP) of your opponent on a sheet of paper.
- Roll 2d6 and add your combat value (CV) 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 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.

Please note that this adventure is compatible with the Windhammer Enhanced Combat System and the rules for combat given in that system can be used in place of the standard combat process described above. If you do not already have a copy of this advanced combat system the WECS can be obtained as a download from the Chronicles homepage at arborell.com.

Equipment Taken

Your mission into the Watchtower at Millerain requires only minimal equipment. Due to the confined environment within the tower you have equipped yourself with a short sword and knife as your weapons of choice and will be carrying a small satchel to hold any items of interest you may find as you progress. These items should be recorded for future reference as well as any other food or equipment found.

Restoring Endurance:

During this adventure your character's endurance will fall as injury and misadventure take their toll. You will find as you search the Watchtower a range of foodstuffs, liquids and a powerful regenerative bread known as Nahla. Consuming these foods will increase your character's endurance, and you have the choice of eating them when found, or keeping them for when the need arises. Remember though, that the Endurance you have at the beginning of the adventure is the maximum available and cannot be exceeded.

Playing The Watchtower Text Edition

This text edition of The Watchtower micro-gamebook is provided in a traditional gamebook format utilising section references to supply the framework for an interactive fantasy adventure. Each section reference provides the player with a set of options that can be used to negotiate a unique path through the story, one that leads ultimately to the objective of the game. In this gamebook adventure it will be the choices you make that will see you successfully to its end.

Unlike the original map-based adventure this text edition does not rely on graphical cues to provide the environment within which the story is set. Because of this the text edition includes additional narrative and has some minor changes to accommodate the new format. It is however, the same adventure with the same challenges and objectives.

You will need two six-sided dice, a sheet of blank paper and a pen or pencil to play the Watchtower. A sheet of paper will provide space to record your character's changing attributes, any clues uncovered on your mission, any items or equipment found, and to record the progress of any combat undertaken in the course of your mission to clear the Watchtower. To begin your adventure start at section 1.



Sections



1

It is a truth of every Ranger's life that theirs' must be a solitary existence. For the long years of their duty they hunt the creatures that would do harm in the realms of Men, and in that service have proven both ruthless and determined. You are a Ranger of the Watch, a warrior and protector, and one that has learned the value of patience. For two nights you have waited in the undergrowth surrounding the tower, watching as shadowed figures moved purposefully to and from the abandoned structure. You could have taken any one of them alone, but to have them all within the confines of the Tower will ensure that none can escape your sword. In the twilight of the third evening you believe you have them all accounted for, and decide that it is time to begin.

Looking out towards the watchtower you consider the battleground you have chosen and know, without any doubt, that the Hordim within are Hresh. Those shadowed figures stood roughly the same height as men and moved with a predatory confidence that underlined their status as warriors of the Horde. Such creatures did not fill you with either fear or doubt however. They were enemies of the Realms of Men and as such all had to die. It would be them or it would be you, and it was as simple as that.

With the suns of Arborell setting against the horizon you move forward, taking to the tower's broken entranceway and silently moving into an open area on the ground floor. In the half-shadows of evening you can see well enough to make out that you have entered a large open space, one that would have served as a common area for the soldiers that once manned the tower. To the west there is an archway leading to a Kitchen, to the east a chamber that would have served as an Armoury, and to the north a Laundry annexe. In the north-west corner is a stairway rising to the First Level above, and upon the floor in the north-east quarter you see what appears to be a trapdoor. The floor itself is covered in a thick layer of dust upon which you can discern a host of bootprints and drag marks. This tower is indeed the centre of an enterprise its inhabitants have taken considerable trouble to keep secret.

Outside the remains of the day flee westwards and with their passing a chill wind grows, blustering from the north and whistling around the old tower. In the distance you can hear the low rumble of thunder and there is no doubt in your mind that a storm is on the march. It is cold, it is dark, and without hesitation you begin your mission.

Will you:

Investigate the armoury first? If so turn to section 28.

Search the kitchen? Turn to section 18.

Head north and search the laundry? Turn to section 21.

Take a closer look at the bootprints? Turn to section 9.

Move over to the trapdoor in the north-east? Turn to section 14.

Leave this level and instead take to the stairs? Turn to section 59.

2

Surveying the First Floor from the stairs you see evidence of a long occupation here. The Hordim have used the tower as a base of operations for some as yet undiscovered purpose, and it is an incursion that must be brought to an end. Outside a peal of thunder crashes against the stone walls about you and in its rolling aftermath you see a form rise from one of the alcoves. Immediately the Hresh sees you and cries out, but its attempt at raising an alarm is smothered by another shuddering roll of thunder. Before the creature can fill its lungs again you charge it down, crashing into its side and splaying it bodily upon the floor. The warrior does not remain still however. Without hesitation the Hresh regains its feet and attacks.

You must kill this **Hresh Warrior (CV-12, EP-8)** quickly. If you defeat this Hresh turn to section 51. If you are yourself defeated then it must be a latter life that you will have to look for better luck and greater success.

3

With the key in hand you test the lock and hear its mechanism turn. A muffled click heralds your success as the trapdoor unlatches and you heave it sideways, uncovering a long flight of stairs and the sounds of movement below. For a moment you listen, the muffled clink of chains and the low murmur of voices all you can discern against the rumble of the storm. Carefully you descend into the darkness and find more than a dozen villagers chained within a large

cellar. Placing your finger to your lips you quell their pleas and break the lock that holds them captive. Motioning them to silence you ask if they know the purpose of their captivity. All say that they do not, however you learn that four of their fellow villagers have previously been taken from the cellar to an unknown fate. With sword in hand you lead them back to the Ground Floor and then gesture for all to make for the exit and the safety beyond. Only when the last of their number has disappeared into the night do you turn and consider your next move.

Will you:

Investigate the Armoury to the east? If you wish to do this and have previously searched the laundry, turn to section 28. If not turn to section 16.

Search the Kitchen? Turn to section 18.

Head north and search the Laundry? Turn to section 21.

Take a closer look at the bootprints? Turn to section 9.

Leave this floor and take to the stairs in the north-west corner? Turn to section 59.

4

The laundry is a dank and odorous chamber and as you move to search its confines you smell something dangerously familiar. From a large clay jar in the corner there comes a steady fume that quickly corrupts the air about you. Somehow you have triggered a gas trap and have only a few moments to live. Immediately you grab up one of the old shirts that has been discarded upon the floor and hold it tightly against your mouth and nose. This will afford you some protection but the gas can be just as deadly upon the skin. Turning on your heel you run for the exit, a billowing fume chasing you from the laundry and out into the common area. Falling to the ground you wait, fully expecting the deadly toxin to take hold. To your great relief they do not. In the larger area the gas dissipates swiftly, and with the wind blowing through the main entrance you watch as the greenish haze is swept upwards, its vague tendrils carried up the nearby stairwell.

Carefully you move towards the stairs and listen for any sign of alarm from above. You can hear the wind moving through the tower, its confined spaces funnelling the gale upwards, but there is no clamour

or alarm. In the shadows you thank the Fates that you escaped the gas, and for the moment at least you remain undetected.

Will you;

Investigate the Armoury to the east? If you wish to do this and have previously searched the laundry, turn to section 28. If not turn to section 16.

Search the Kitchen? Turn to section 18.

Take a closer look at the bootprints? Turn to section 9.

Have a closer look at the trapdoor? Turn to section 14.

Leave this floor and take to the stairs Turn to section 59.

5

Quietly you enter the largest of the sleeping alcoves. In the dark you can see little, only the frequent blasts of lightning outside illuminating your way as you move further into the room. Here you find an equipment store, a collection of boxes and sacks and all of human origin. Within some you find food but in others there is glassware, and strangely enough, packages containing chemicals and powders. Leaving everything as you found it you turn to leave the room but a faint tug at your pant leg brings you to a halt. Against your leg there is a tripwire, threaded across the doorway and anchored to a detonator. You have not yet triggered the explosive charge but any further movement will set it off.

Will you;

Cut the wire and run? Turn to section 32.

Reach for another nearby crate and place it carefully against the tripwire? Turn to section 33.

Try and slowly back up? Turn to section 34.

6

The common area remains dark and quiet, the growing storm a rumbling backdrop that masks your footfalls upon the cold flagstones. In the shadows you consider what you should do next.

If you have not already done so, will you;

Investigate the Armoury to the east? Turn to section 28.

Search the Kitchen? Turn to section 18.

Move north and search the Laundry? Turn to section 21.

Take a closer look at the bootprints? Turn to section 9.

Have a look at the trapdoor? Turn to section 14.

If you have an Iron Key in your possession and wish to use it on the trapdoor turn to section 3.

Leave this floor and take to the stairs in the north-west corner? Turn to section 59.

7

You stand at the top of a stairwell that connects the First and Second Levels of the Watchtower. As with the First Level this Second level once served as a barracks, a similar series of sleeping alcoves lining the eastern wall. Looking into the shadows you can see more evidence that the Hresh have spent some time here. The floor is a debris field of broken furniture and rubbish, littered with empty food packets and piles of discarded tins. In one corner there has been placed a makeshift set of table and chairs, old crates serving as seating and a large metal bench providing a flat surface covered in plates and drinking cups. There can be little question that the Hordim have made this tower their home, although you cannot yet fathom their purpose. Carefully you move forward.

Turn to section 52.

8

Quickly you climb the central stairway and find yourself standing upon the watchtower's battlements. Overhead the night is a ragged patchwork of rushing cloud riding upon a blustering wind, and as you look along the old stone crenellations you can see the remains of weapon mounts in each corner, and a jumble of broken packing crates to the south-east. In the uneven light you can sense there is something else here as well.

Will you now;

Conduct a search of each of the ballista mounts? Turn to section 42.

Search the crates instead? Turn to section 50.



9

For a moment you pause and look with greater interest at a bootprint clearly outlined in the dust at your feet. It is as long as a man's but thicker in form. You recognise immediately that it has been made by a Hresh warrior, and by the number of prints that litter the floor there is definitely more than one of them. In the semi-darkness you stand and wonder at the Hordims' purpose here. It is not the usual practise for an Insurgency Crue to remain in the one place for so long and you consider that your initial assumptions may have been inaccurate. There is something else afoot here, and as you stand quietly you hear other noises close at hand. It is time to move on.

If you have not already done so will you;
 Investigate the Armoury to the east? Turn to section 28.
 Search the Kitchen? Turn to section 18.
 Move north and search the Laundry? Turn to section 21.
 Have a look at the trapdoor? Turn to section 14.
 Leave this floor and take to the stairs in the north-west corner? Turn to section 59.

10

You have found a stairway that rises towards an Observation deck above. Here the winds blow freely down the stairwell, the smell of rain evident as you consider your next move.

Will you;
 Use these stairs and ascend to the Observation Level? Turn to section 26.
 Continue your mission by searching the alcove in the northern corner? Turn to section 43.
 Search instead the other apparently empty alcoves? Turn to section 46.
 Look at a pile of old wooden boxes stacked within the middle alcove? Turn to section 49.
 Search the larger alcove at the south-eastern corner of this level? Turn to section 5.

11

The Hordim is agile and strong, its scimitar an arcing reflection of the storm as you hold your ground. There can be no lengthy combat here and you know it, any alert to the remaining crue will mean your death

so you resolve to end the battle quickly. To do so however, may be easier said than done. Within the turmoil of the storm you fight with the Hresh, trading blows as the warrior attempts to wear you down. Parrying one thrust from the Hresh you kick out with your booted foot and slam it into his abdomen, throwing him backwards, but not off his feet. Regaining his balance the Hordim slices down with his scimitar, smashing against the flat of your sword as you block the blow. Deliberately you let the force of the blow bring your sword low and thinking he has the upper hand the Hresh raises his scimitar for a final downward blow. In that moment you jump forward, your sword driving deep into the Hordim's lower torso. Mortally wounded the Hresh staggers backwards then falls, his life spent.

For only a moment you stand and ponder the warrior's prone form. There is still no alarm raised and you can only assume it is still the ferocity of the storm that masks your presence here. You thank the Fates for it and move on.

Outside the storm builds, flashes of lightning illuminating the debris-strewn floor in momentary flickers of brilliant light. Thunder rumbles against the tower's old stone and from within the gloom you can hear rain spattering upon a series of wooden shutters that block each of the floor's small windows. Against this backdrop you carefully move into the centre of the common area, the line of alcoves no more than dark cells upon the eastern wall. Each provides only enough space for a bed and small cupboard but most appear to be empty. Only the northern alcove, and one at the centre of the line of sleeping cells appears to hold anything.

Will you now;

Continue your mission by searching the alcove in the northern corner? Turn to section 43.

Search instead the other apparently empty alcoves? Turn to section 46.

Look at a pile of old wooden boxes stacked within the middle alcove? Turn to section 49.

Search the larger alcove at the south-eastern corner of the level? Turn to section 5.

Make for the stairwell in the north-western corner? Turn to section 10.



12

You have found a stairway that rises to the Second Level of the Watchtower. For a moment you pause, listening for any sign of movement upon the floor above. You can hear nothing except the growing tumult of the storm.

Will you;

Take this stairway? Turn to section 7.

Remain on this floor and continue searching for more of the Hordim?

Turn to section 24.

13

Quickly you move towards what, in the gloom, appears to be an empty bed covered by a worn cotton sheet. What you find beneath the linen cover is a woman, tightly restrained but still alive. Without a word you remove the makeshift leather straps that bind her and motion for her to make for the stairway. If she is to survive she will have to find her own way out. When you see her taking the stairs you turn your attention to what remains on this level. Unfortunately there is more here than just empty shadows.

From behind the central stairway there arises a furtive shadow, one that rushes towards you, a glint of metal in the darkness the only hint of its intent. The shadow is another **Hresh Warrior (CV-13, EP-13)** and as it closes you prepare yourself for the violence to come.

Taking your weapon firmly in hand you stand your ground. If you win this combat turn to section 40. If it is you who falls in this ruined chamber turn to section 44.

14

In the floor you see the outline of a large trapdoor, of a type that should uncover a stairway to a lower level or cellar. Quickly you move to it and grab at a large iron ring, your intention to pull it open. The door proves however, to be both sturdily built and securely locked. For a moment you test your strength against it but find it unmovable. It will not be opened without the iron key that fits its brass escutcheon. Standing, you brush dust from your uniform and consider your next move.

Will you;

Investigate the Armoury to the east? Turn to section 28.

Search the Kitchen? Turn to section 18.

Head north and search the Laundry? Turn to section 21.

Take a closer look at the bootprints? Turn to section 9.

Leave this floor and take to the stairs in the north-west corner? Turn to section 59.

15

Moving towards the table you find a collection of scrolls, journals and small paper packets filled with a grey powder. The scrolls are written in a northern dialect of the Hordim and you recognise them quickly for what they are. What you have found are research notes, and you understand now what the Hordim have been doing here. The grey powder is a poison and from the notes you can see that it is being altered so that it is specific to Humans alone. Luckily the Hordim have not yet perfected its chemistry and you cannot let them succeed. This is no simple raiding party. They are experimenting on human subjects and for you that presents a greater problem. Research is not a function of the Hresh for they serve as warriors alone. There is a Mutan Overseer here and if he is anything like his brethren he will not be far from his experiments.

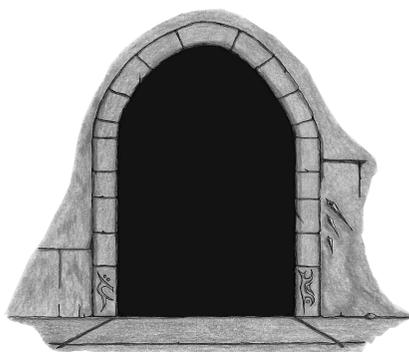
Will you now;

Begin a general search of this level? Turn to section 22.

Make for the row of beds against the north wall? Turn to section 20.

Move quickly to the lone bed in the south-eastern corner? Turn to section 13.

Take the stairway to the battlements above? Turn to section 17.



16

Quickly you search the contents of the Armoury. Not surprisingly everything of value has been stripped from the chamber. Where there should have been lines of wooden racks and neatly arranged iron shelves you find instead only the holes in the floors and walls that would have fixed them securely. In the last two centuries all had been taken and in its neglect the Armoury should have been no more than an abandoned shell.

What you find however, is a ramshackle assortment of wooden boxes and crates, all pulled into pieces and no doubt destined for firewood. Whether this is a collection the Hresh have put together, or the product of a local villager's efforts you cannot tell, but as you pick around the edges of the pile you do notice something far more interesting.

Against the far wall there stretches a low stone bench, usually fitted to rest heavy items but just as functional as a seat. Most of its surface is covered in dust, however one small part of the bench remains clean of grime. Curious, you move closer and discover on the floor a small scatter of metal filings, newly deposited and resting upon the surface of the underlying dust. Carefully you pick up one of the thin shards and rub it lightly between your fingers. It is iron and of a quality that tells you it is from a weapon. You can only assume that one of the Hresh has sat here, probably filing the edges of a blade in need of repair.

For a moment you imagine the Hordim working away at his scimitar, no doubt in the company of others of his kind, and talking on the numbers of villagers they had taken, or the quality of supplies pilfered. Whilst their presence had remained undiscovered they had been free to create misery here but such a circumstance cannot be tolerated any longer. If you do your duty all the Hordim resident within this tower will be dead within the next twenty minutes.

Turning about, you move back towards the common area.

Turn to section 6.

17

You have found a stairway that leads upwards to the Watchtower's battlements above. Through the open stairwell the rushing clouds are illuminated by lightning, and silhouetted against the tempest a shadowed figure moves furtively. There are more of the Hresh above.

Will you;

Leave this level and go after the Hordim on the battlements above? Turn to section 8.

Disregard the Hordim for the moment and instead make directly for the row of beds against the northern wall turn? Turn to section 20.

Make for the lone bed in the south-eastern corner? Turn to section 13.

Search through the articles resting upon the table? Turn to section 15.

18

Quietly you make your way to the Kitchen and find a ramshackle collection of sinks, benches, old cupboards, and piles of discarded food packets and containers. With only a few moments to spare for the task you search the chamber for anything that might prove of use to your mission.

Test your Luck Attribute. If you are successful turn to section 54. If you are unlucky turn to section 37.

19

A Mutan! Crouching against the northern battlement the creature is whispering urgently into a small iron device. You shout a challenge to the Hordim Overseer and it answers. From the shadows the creature rises to its full height, its hand reaching for a large, ornately decorated battle-axe. Without a further word the Mutan advances towards you.

The **Mutan Overseer** (CV-16, EP-12) is the source of all the woe that emanates from this tower and you will derive no small amount of pleasure from killing it. If you win this combat and have killed more than eight other warriors on this mission go to section 41. If you win this combat but have dispatched eight or less turn to section 38. If it is instead your fate to die upon this battlement then it must be to a latter life that you will need to look for better luck and greater success.

20

Carefully you move towards the line of beds and find in one a man, restrained and unmoving. You check if he is alive but you can find no sign. He is covered only with a sheet and has a grey powder about his lips. Quickly you inspect the man's remains and find no obvious cause of death. You do notice however, that a number of other discarded sheets have also been stained with the same grey residue. Unfortunately this man is now beyond help so you turn and consider what you should do next.

Will you;

Begin a general search of the Observation Level? Turn to section 22.

Make for the lone bed in the south-eastern corner? Turn to section 13.

Make for the stairway to the battlements above? Turn to section 17.

Have a closer look at the articles resting upon the table in the south-western corner? Turn to section 15.

21

In the Laundry you find a pile of clothing, consisting of a mix of human fieldwear and Hordim camouflage uniforms. It is an odd accumulation of bits and pieces that has been taken from a large number of individuals, and for a moment you pause and consider what it could mean. The uniforms belong to Hresh and are dyed in a mottled green common with Insurgency Crues. This would explain who has been taking the local villagers, but the question of why the Hordim are here is still one to be answered.

Will you;

Return to the main living area? Turn to section 6.

Search this Laundry further? Turn to section 55.

22

As you look about the Observation Level you hear a noise. From the battlements above a Hresh walks down the central stairs cradling a bundle of cut wood and struggling to maintain his balance under the weight of it. He is unarmed and with the wood in hand unable to defend himself. Before the Hordim can raise an alarm you drive your sword through the side of his chest, toppling him forwards onto the hard stone floor. From his arms the wood crashes down around him, pieces of it skittering about the chamber. The noise of the falling wood

is met by the muffled sounds of laughter from above, the Hresh's compatriots no doubt assuming the bearer of the wood has taken a fall. In the clamour of the storm you can hear no more but you wait in the shadows, ready for more of the Hordim to venture down the stairs. They do not and without a further sound you move forward.

Will you;

Make directly for the beds against the northern wall? Turn to section 20.

Have a better look at the lone bed in the south-eastern corner? Turn to section 13.

Take the stairway to the battlements above? Turn to section 17.

Search the articles upon the table in the south-western corner? Turn to section 15.

23

Quickly you search the alcove and find nothing but the accoutrements of a warrior, his clothing and equipment neatly arranged upon a series of makeshift shelves. In the shadows you look through these possessions and find nothing of value to your mission, nor for that matter any further clues to the Hordims' purpose here. You are about to turn about when you see a leather purse hanging from a wooden peg hammered into the wall. Curious, you take the purse and loosen its drawstring then carefully pull a dust covered metal object from its interior. You have found an Iron Key. (Record this find on your character sheet.) For a moment you inspect the key then place it in your pocket. Leaving the alcove you consider your next move.

Will you now;

Return to the ground floor and use the Iron Key to open the cellars? Turn to section 36.

Conduct a general search of the level? Turn to section 24.

Choose one of the other sleeping alcoves and search it for evidence of the Hordims' purpose here? Turn to section 25.

Use the stairway in the south-western corner to ascend to the Second Level of this watchtower? Turn to section 12.

24

As you search the First Level you find upon the dust covered floor a set of bootprints different from those left behind by the Hresh.

Kneeling, you outline one of the prints with your finger and consider what you have discovered. They are longer than any you have seen before, and judging by the gait, left by a creature of unusual height. Standing, you survey the floor and ponder your next move for indeed your mission here has evolved. These are the prints left behind by a Mutan, one of the Hordim elite caste, and not something you would have expected so far from their homelands. There is something afoot here, and this discovery only makes you more determined to uncover what it might be.

In the dark you survey your surroundings and notice that one of the sleeping alcoves is filled with boxes and old crates.

Will you;

Search this alcove? Turn to section 45.

Have a look at a larger alcove you have noticed in the south-east corner of the level? If so turn to section 56.

Choose one of the other sleeping alcoves and search it for evidence of the Hordims' purpose here? Turn to section 25.

Leave this floor and use the stairway in the south-western corner? Turn to section 12.

If you have the Iron Key in your possession and would rather return to the Ground Floor and use it to open the cellar? Turn to section 36.

25

Quietly you enter the alcove and find a Hresh warrior asleep upon an old mattress. You make no sound as you move closer and stand over the slumbering warrior. Truly you have never had the chance to study such a creature at close quarters without violence and you pause for a moment. The Hresh is roughly the same size as yourself though more muscular and singularly ordinary of features, but as you watch the creature's skin changes, the flicker cast by lightning outside playing across its bare flesh and variegating its colour as it adapts to the changing light. The remarkable sensitivity of the Hordim's natural camouflage intrigues you but only for a moment. There is a duty to be done here.

Before the Hordim can awaken you drive your sword through his chest and search his quarters. What you find is curious indeed. Amongst a pile of sacks lining the eastern wall of the alcove you

discover boxes containing a multitude of small, finely made paper envelopes. They hold nothing within, but appear to be stored for use elsewhere. You take one of the envelopes and put it into your pocket. A further search shows that the Hordim has nothing that can aid your mission so you move on.

Quickly you find that two more of the alcoves have sleeping warriors within and with equal determination you drive your sword through both of the them. It is not a task you find honourable but it is a necessity of survival. If you are to clear this tower and remove the threat you cannot afford to leave any of the Hresh behind. (Record on your record sheet that you have killed three additional Hresh.)

Within the play of the storm you search their quarters but find nothing of value to your task. Carefully you move on.

If you have not already done so will you now;

Search the remaining box-filled alcove? Turn to section 45.

Search the larger alcove you noticed in the south-east corner of the level? Turn to section 56.

Leave this floor and use the stairway in the south-western corner turn to section 12.

If you have the Iron Key in your possession and would rather return to the Ground Floor and use it to open the cellar? Turn to section 36.



26

You reach the top of the stairs and come to a halt. Within this Observation Level you can see a row of beds across the northern wall, a further bed standing against the south-eastern corner and a central stairway that leads to the battlements above. Curiously all the large viewing windows here have been boarded up, the storm's fury flashing in bursts of light between the ill-fitting slats. In the lower south-west corner you see also a table covered in papers and a collection of unidentifiable devices and medical instruments. Against the western wall however, there resides a most unusual device.

Converted from an old stove you see a large boiler, fed from piles of wood that surround it and connected at its right by a series of pipes to an evaporation tank. At the boiler's left is a series of drying racks and a number of boxes, all filled with a coarse grey powder and set upon a small metal table. Within this observation level there hangs a thick haze and the smell of concentrated cedar oil is almost overpowering. There is much you do not understand here but a chance that answers can be found. Carefully you move on.

Will you;

Begin a general search of the Observation Level? Turn to section 22.

Make directly for the row of beds against the northern wall? Turn to section 20.

Have a closer look at the lone bed in the south-eastern corner? Turn to section 13.

Use the stairway and make your way to the battlements above? Turn to section 17.

Have a look at the articles resting upon the table in the south-western corner? Turn to section 15.

27

Agile and powerfully built the Hresh presses its assault, yelling loudly to raise the alarm as it attempts to force its way out of the confines of the alcove. The storm however, is a cacophony of rolling thunder and shattering rain, above which the alarm raised by the Hresh is smothered completely. You counter its attempt at escape and swing your blade at its throat. The Hresh does not parry the blow, instead it withdraws from your sword's deadly arc and raises up its own weapon in a defensive stance. Immediately you see the Hordim's intent. It cannot raise the alarm in the thundering tear of the storm but it can keep you busy long enough that others might notice your presence and assist. The way the Hresh keeps looking through the alcove's exit tells you it is indeed expecting company.

With a need to kill the creature quickly you take the initiative, swinging twice at the Hordim, then stabbing forward at the warrior's torso. The Hresh blocks the first two blows but is not quick enough to parry the third. In the dark you see your blade run along the Hresh's side, drawing blood but not cutting deep enough to do damage. Enraged the Hordim counter-attacks, swinging down but then feinting

the blow, instead kicking forward with its foot and impacting solidly upon your chest. Hit hard you are thrown backwards, the Hresh jumping a part of the smashed bedding and pressing its boot down upon your sword arm. As a counter you kick out with your own leg, connecting with his exposed knee and toppling him sideways. It is all the opportunity you need. With sword still in hand you ram it upwards, driving the blade through the warrior's neck as it falls. In a wash of blood the Hresh grabs at its throat but the damage has been done. It is dead before it hits the floor.

Struggling to your feet you wipe a spray of liquid from your arms and wait, prepared for any more of the Hresh to burst through the doorway. None come, only the storm in its fury remaining as your companion. You have been lucky but you know that the Fates are not always so kind. With a need to resolve this deadly business quickly you consider your next move.

Will you now;

Search this alcove? Turn to section 23.

Conduct a general search of the level? Turn to section 24.

Choose one of the other sleeping alcoves and search it for evidence of the Hordims' purpose here? Turn to section 25.

Leave this floor and use the stairway in the south-western corner to ascend to the Second Level? Turn to section 12.

If you have found an Iron Key and would rather return to the Ground Floor and use it to open the trapdoor turn to section 36.

28

Carefully you move towards the the Armoury and find within an enormous pile of wood. For a moment it takes you aback, the amount of broken crates and general rubbish something unexpected. For a moment you consider whether you should search this area thoroughly, your intention to find some clue that might determine what the Hordim are doing here, but your interest is short-lived. Outside a crash of lightning brightens the sky, and as you move further into the chamber you see the furtive silhouette of something waiting for you in the darkness. It is from the shadows that a Hresh Warrior rushes you, its charge no more than a blur within the gloom. Determined not to let this Hordim call an alarm you run straight at it, your sword lunging for its chest.

This Hresh (CV-11, EP-12) must be killed quickly. If you are successful turn to section 57. If however, you find the warrior too powerful and it is you who succumbs then your mission ends here. In this case it must be to another life that you will have to look for better luck.

29

In the gloom you stand at the top of a stairway that descends to the Ground Floor below. All about you is darkness, the First Floor veiled in shadows. On this level the windows are shuttered with thick wooden panels, and held loosely with iron latches that strain against the power of the winds. To the north lightning crashes against the night and momentarily the level is brightly illuminated, its interior laid bare. In that fleeting moment you can see that this area of the tower once served as a barracks, the eastern wall lined with a series of sleeping alcoves, the floor littered with broken furniture and discarded food. In the south-western corner you can also see the dark shadow of a stairway leading to the levels above.

Will you;

Explore this First Level? Turn to section 2.

Use these stairs to return to the Ground Floor? Turn to section 59.

30

Upon the open battlements you have nowhere to run and no intention of doing so. With lightning crashing down upon the surrounding woodlands you do not wait for the Hresh. Running forward you meet him in a clash of iron, the first strike sending sparks flying across the rooftop. Immediately the warrior swings again, his intent to cut across your exposed right arm. You deflect the blow and hit the creature with your shoulder, knocking him backwards but the warrior is strong and determined. Regaining his balance quickly the Hordim strikes again, a sweeping blow deflecting your next attack and sending your sword crashing into the wooden floor. Taking the advantage the Hresh swings again, hitting your sword upon its flat edge and pulling it from your hand. In that moment you instinctively look around you for another weapon but it is too late. In one merciless thrust the Hresh drives home its scimitar, plunging the blade deep into your chest. In this life your mission is over. In another you may find better luck.

THE END

31

The laundry is a dank and odorous chamber and as you move to search its confines you smell something dangerously familiar. From a large clay jar in the corner there comes a steady fume that quickly corrupts the air about you. Somehow you have triggered a gas trap and have only a few moments to live. Immediately you grab up one of the old shirts that has been discarded upon the floor and hold it tightly against your mouth and nose. This will afford some protection but the gas can be just as deadly upon the skin. Caught within the confines of the Laundry you turn on your heel and run for the exit, the gas enveloping itself about your person as you run. It takes only a few moments to get out but it is long enough for you to begin feeling the toxic effects of exposure.

Staggering from the Laundry you drop to your knees, your expectation that the gas will indeed claim its next victim. Struggling for breath you wait for the suffocation that inevitably follows exposure but surprisingly it does not come. Instead you feel the effects of the gas lessening, your breathing returning to normal as a strong wind blows through the common area about you. In the face of the coming storm you have found salvation in the hands of the wind. In this larger space the fumes dissipate and with the wind blowing as a gale through the main entrance you watch as the remains of the greenish haze are swept upwards, their vague tendrils swirling up the nearby stairwell. (Lose 2 endurance points to the lingering effects of the gas.)

Carefully you move towards the stairs and listen for any sign of alarm from above. You can hear the wind moving through the tower, its confined spaces funnelling the gale upwards, but there is no clamour or alarm. In the shadows you thank Providence that you escaped the gas, and that for the moment at least you remain undetected.

Will you;

Investigate the Armoury to the east? Turn to section 28.

Search the Kitchen? Turn to section 18.

Take a closer look at the bootprints? Turn to section 9.

Have a closer look at the trapdoor to the north-east? Turn to section 14.

Leave this floor and take to the stairs Turn to section 59.

32

Sweating in the cool air you look out beyond the doorway and check that the Hordim have not been alerted to your presence. Against your leg the tripwire is taut but you are still breathing so it should be safe to cut the wire and move on. From your pack you pull a small set of pliers and carefully place the tripwire between its open jaws. One snip you think, and you will be on your way. It is the last thing you ever do. In a detonation of explosive gases and shredded wood the charge erupts, throwing you backwards against the room's farthest wall. Caught within the explosion you do not stand a chance, your smoking remains slumping to the floor as a deluge of falling stone and brick collapses upon you. In this life your mission is over. In the next you will have to find better luck.

THE END

33

You know that any further movement upon the tripwire will trigger the device and you cannot risk cutting the wire. Carefully you search the area about you and see a solid looking box within arm's reach. With little time to spare you drag the box towards you then place one of its corners against your leg, moving the hard edge of the box so that it touches the tripwire. Sweating in the cool air you take your knife and jam it into the ground behind the box, anchoring it in place. You have no idea what is going to happen but with nothing to lose you slowly pull your leg away. To your satisfaction the box does not move, the tripwire remaining taut against the edge of the box. It is not the best of solutions but it will do for the moment.

Will you now;

Search the other empty alcoves on this floor? Turn to section 46.

Continue your mission by searching the alcove in the northern corner? Turn to section 43.

Look specifically at a pile of old boxes stacked within the middle alcove? Turn to section 49.

Make for the stairwell in the north-western corner and leave this level? Turn to section 10.



34

You do not want to touch the tripwire but you cannot remain here indefinitely. You decide to try slowly pulling your leg away. Sweating in the cool night air you throw your pack out beyond the doorway and carefully move your leg back from the wire. It is the last thing you ever do. Next to you the explosive charge detonates, a ball of viciously expanding gases and shredded wood throwing you against the solid stone wall of the tower. Caught within the explosion you do not stand a chance, your smoking remains slumping to the floor as a deluge of falling stone and brick collapses upon you. In this life your mission is over. In the next you will have to find better luck.

THE END

35

There can be no lengthy combat here and you know it, any alert to the remaining clue a death sentence so you resolve to end the battle quickly. To do so however, may be easier said than done. Within the turmoil of the storm you fight with the Hresh, trading blows as the warrior attempts to wear you down. Parrying one thrust from the Hresh you kick out with your booted foot and slam it into his abdomen, throwing him backwards, but not off his feet. Regaining his balance the Hordim slices down with his scimitar, smashing against the flat of your sword as you block the blow. The strength of the attack is such that it forces your sword low and in that moment you lose your grip upon it. It is all the Hresh needs. Without hesitation the Hordim slams its boot upon your sword then drives its scimitar forward, tearing deep into your chest and pushing you backwards onto the cold floor. With blood welling from your mouth you shudder then lie still. In this life your mission is over.

THE END

36

Quietly you make for the stairway, your intention to use the key and determine what might be hidden within the cellars. All around you the tower is a frantic play of light and shadow, the storm pounding the structure with actinic blasts of lightning and rolling drumbeats of thunder and rain. Within this maelstrom of light and sound you cross the floor and make for the stairs. It is only a short distance down the

steps, then across the common to the trapdoor itself. There you kneel and have a closer look at the door. The door has only the one lock but you spend a moment making sure there are no other surprises left for the unwary. When you are satisfied you take the key from your pocket.

Turn to section 3.

37

You do not need food at this time, nor for that matter anything the Hresh might find appetising, but within an untidy pile of baskets you discover something that at first glance may be useful.

Pressed between two large cane baskets there reside a number of packets of Nahla cake, each wrapped in waxed paper. Nahla cakes are only small but amongst the travellers of Arborell are renowned for their regenerative properties, the aromatic fruit of the Nahla tree highly prized by both Hordim and Men alike. If these cakes are indeed edible you will take them. Lifting the packets from between the baskets you inspect them but are disappointed by what you find. A quick inspection of the tightly wrapped cakes shows that all have been spoiled, their protective wrappers broken. At some point each has been crushed and there are none you can salvage. With nothing else of value to be found here you return to the main common area and consider your next move.

Turn to section 6.



38

In a flurry of dark, mottled robes the Mutan Overseer attacks. About you the storm is a blustering roil of wind and scudding cloud, the rain that has deluged the tower leaving the stone slick and your footing unsure. In one sweeping arc the Mutan swings his axe, its curving blade cutting through the air near your neck. Against this assault you step back, then thrust forward with your sword towards the Mutan's now exposed right shoulder. Your lunge misses but it causes the Hordim to fall backwards to avoid injury. It is an opportunity you do

not let pass. In one fluid movement you rush forward and attempt to drive your sword into the creature as it struggles to regain its feet. In desperation the Mutan kicks out with its leg, sweeping your foot sideways and knocking you off balance.

Backing away you steady your footing and attack again. The Mutan is on its feet but it has injured itself on the hard stone and you take full advantage of its discomfort. This time you swing your sword in a wide arc, feinting the Mutan to try and block the stroke. The Hordim obliges, throwing its axe out to foil your attack and it is exactly what you need. As the creature focuses on the blow you rush forward, crashing into the Hordim with all the strength you can muster. The Overseer is caught by surprise and falls back again onto the stone with a jarring crack. Before your foe can react you are upon him, your sword thrusting down into his undefended chest. In a gurgling cry the Mutan dies and you are left alone upon the battlements, only the storm rumbling in the dark.

Standing exhausted you take a moment to regain your breath but there is no time for rest. Your mission here is not yet over. From the stairway you can hear a commotion and then a projection of many furtive shadows as a number of Hresh take to the stairs. Swearing under your breath you take a position next to the stairway's threshold and wait for the first of the Hordim to emerge from below. It takes only the length of a heartbeat for the first to appear. This Hresh you take down with a single stab to the upper torso. The Hordim falls and brings down the one immediately behind. With one swing you dispatch the second Hresh but the third is not so easy. Wearing an iron breastplate the crue commander makes the top of the stairs, your sword glancing off his armour as he falls upon you. At his back another two Hordim arise from the stairway and as their commander presses his attack they spread out upon the open ground.

Your battle here is not yet over. The **Hresh Commander (CV-17, EP-12)** and his two remaining **Hresh Warriors (CV-13, EP-9 each)** must be brought down if you are to complete your mission here. Fight each in turn. If you survive turn to section 58. If you are defeated it will be here in the heart of the storm that you will die. Turn instead to section 60.

39

Agile and powerfully built the Hresh presses its assault, yelling loudly to raise the alarm as it attempts to force its way out of the confines of the alcove. The storm however, is a cacophony of rolling thunder and shattering rain, above which the alarm raised by the Hresh is smothered completely. You counter its attempt at escape and swing your blade at its throat. The Hresh does not parry the blow, instead it withdraws from your sword's deadly arc and raises up its own weapon in a defensive stance. Immediately you see the Hordim's intent. It cannot raise the alarm in the thundering tear of the storm but it can keep you busy long enough that others might notice your presence and assist. The way the Hresh keeps looking through the alcove's exit tells you it is indeed expecting someone.

With a need to kill the creature quickly you take the initiative, swinging twice at the Hordim, then stabbing forward at the warrior's torso. The Hresh blocks the first two blows but is not quick enough to parry the third. In the dark you see your blade run along the Hresh's side, drawing blood but not cutting deep enough to do damage. Enraged the Hordim counter-attacks, swinging down but then feinting the blow, instead kicking forward with its foot and impacting solidly upon your chest. Hit hard you are thrown backwards, the Hresh jumping a part of the smashed bedding and pressing its boot down upon your sword arm. As a counter you attempt to kick out with your own leg, but the Hresh fends the blow with its free arm. With only seconds to live you punch upwards, hitting the Hordim in the abdomen, but it has no effect. With one brutal stab the warrior drives its scimitar downwards, cutting through your chest and piercing the floor beneath you. In a welling pool of blood you die, your mission to clear the watchtower over.

THE END

40

In an instant the Hordim is upon you, the storm a ferocious backdrop to the warrior's attack. In these shadows you stand your ground as the Hresh lunges forward, its scimitar cutting through the air towards you. Parrying the thrust you push the blade to your left and force the hilt of your sword forwards, slamming your gloved fist into the warrior's face. The impact topples the Hordim backwards, but it is

not yet done. Regaining its feet it sweeps its blade in a wide arc, cutting low as it attempts to slice into your leg. You see the Hresh's intent and again block the blow, your own sword sweeping downwards in an arc that slams the flat of the Hresh's weapon into the floor. For just a moment the Hordim is unprotected but it recovers quickly, leaping forward and punching out with its own fist. The blow barely misses your head but the Hordim's body slams into your own, sending both of you sliding backwards across the floor. You are the first to act, your sword thrusting into the warrior's side, the blade tearing through its body. In a spasm of pain and blood the combat ends, the Hresh lifeless. For a moment you stand in the darkness and consider your good luck but there is no time to waste here.

If you have not yet done so will you:

Begin a general search of the Observation Level? Turn to section 22.

Make directly for the row of beds against the northern wall? Turn to section 20.

Move towards the stairway that leads to the battlements above? Turn to section 17.

Have a closer look at the articles resting upon the table? Turn to section 15.



41

In a flurry of dark, mottled robes the Mutan Overseer attacks. About you the storm is a blustering roil of wind and scudding cloud, the rain that has deluged the tower leaving the stone slick and your footing unsure. In one sweeping arc the Mutan swings his axe, its curving blade cutting through the air near your neck. Against this assault you step back, then thrust forward with your sword towards the Mutan's now exposed right shoulder. Your lunge misses but it causes the Hordim to fall backwards to avoid injury. It is an opportunity you do not let pass. In one fluid movement you rush forward and attempt to drive your sword into the creature as it struggles to regain its feet. In desperation the Mutan kicks out with its leg, sweeping your foot sideways and knocking you off balance.

Backing away you steady your footing and attack again. The Mutan is on its feet but it has injured itself on the hard stone and you take full advantage of its discomfort. This time you swing your sword in a wide arc, feinting the Mutan to try and block the stroke. The Hordim obliges, throwing its axe out to foil your attack and it is exactly what you need. As the creature focuses on the blow you rush forward, crashing into the Hordim with all the strength you can muster. The Overseer is caught by surprise and falls back again onto the stone with a jarring crack. Before your foe can react you are upon him, your sword thrusting down into his undefended chest. In a gurgling cry the Mutan dies and you are left alone upon the battlements, only the storm rumbling in the dark.

Standing straight you consider the Mutan's prone form and look about the battlement. The pile of boxes seems innocuous but a closer inspection uncovers a large supply of the grey powder secreted within. There is enough here you think, to kill half the population of the frontier, and you determine that your mission will not be complete until you return all the research notes and samples of the powder to Army Intelligence for proper analysis. As far as the Watchtower is concerned however, your task is done, your mission over.

THE END

42

The battlements are old and neglected, and in the dark you can see little except the dark forms of ballista mountings in each corner. These old stone mounts are each enclosed within a protective stone wall and you know that anything could be hidden within them. Carefully you move towards the first of the emplacements but are brought to a halt by the sounds of someone running up the central staircase. As a dark shadow a warrior rushes onto the battlement and calls out to someone else you have not yet seen. Only for a moment does the Hordim remain still before turning towards you. The shadow is a **Hresh Warrior (CV-14, EP-7)** and as it closes you prepare yourself for the violence to come.

You cannot avoid this combat. If you win turn to section 53. If you lose turn to section 48.

43

Rubbish lies strewn about the floor and within the debris you can see the remnants of discarded clothing and a number of personal items. Stooping you pick up a small comb, its decoration that of a young woman's liking. Looking around you wonder what has become of its owner and without really thinking you place the item in your pocket. Without any further delay you move forward, making for the alcove in the northern corner of the level. In the shadows you find an unmade bed and the equipment of a Hresh warrior. Nothing is of use so you turn about and consider your next move.

Will you;

Search the other empty alcoves on this floor? Turn to section 46.

Look at a pile of old boxes stacked within the middle alcove? Turn to section 49.

Search the larger alcove in the south-eastern corner of the level? Turn to section 5.

Making for the stairwell in the north-western corner? Turn to section 10.

44

In an instant the Hordim is upon you, the storm a brutal backdrop to its attack. In these shadows you stand your ground as the warrior lunges forward, its scimitar cutting through the air towards you. Parrying the thrust you push the blade to your left and force the hilt of your sword forwards, slamming your gloved fist into the warrior's face. The impact topples the Hordim backwards, but it is not yet done. Regaining its balance it sweeps its blade in a wide arc, cutting low as it attempts to slice into your leg. You see the Hresh's intent and again block the blow, your own sword sweeping downwards in an arc that slams the flat of the Hresh's weapon into the floor. For just a moment the Hordim is unprotected but it recovers quickly, leaping forward and punching out with its own fist. The blow crashes into the side of your head, knocking you off your feet and sending you spinning sideways. Before you can regain your balance the Hresh gathers its blade and stabs forward, the point of its scimitar disappearing a hand's length into your chest. Toppling backwards you grasp at the wound but it is too late. Before you hit the ground you are dead. In this life your mission is over.

THE END

45

As you search the alcove you find a large quantity of wooden boxes, all thrown haphazardly into its dark corners. You discover quickly that all are broken and most have been pulled apart, possibly in preparation for their use as firewood. Amongst the resultant debris you find you must tread warily, the boxes loosely held together with rusting iron nails and in some cases razor-sharp metal strapping. The storm rages outside but within this alcove you move carefully and with purpose. There is something going on within this tower, and it is more than just the base of operations for an insurgency crue making mischief. You can see no reason for the quantities of wood the Hordim have collected, nor why it is they have lingered within this particular watchtower for so long. Everything you have seen contradicts the usual tactical practice of the Hordim and you do not like the unknown. You resolve to uncover this mystery then kill them all.

There is little to be found within the alcove, and in the confined space you carefully turn about and retrace your steps to the entrance. At the entrance however, you discover a small wooden chest upon the floor. It has been pushed to one side but is still intact and secured at its latch with a padlock. Intrigued you squat next to the chest and pull a thin metal pick from a leather pouch hidden within your vest. The lock is rudimentary and it takes only a few moments to work its mechanism and open it. Inside you find some letters written in the Common English and a number of packets of Nahla cake, each tightly wrapped in waxed paper. Most of the cakes are spoiled but three are still edible. (Record this find on your character sheet. Each will restore 2 points of endurance when eaten.)

The cakes you will take with you but the letters require a quick perusal. It is your understanding that the Hordim do not use the common tongue, though you have heard that some have mastered the languages of Men. The letters prove quickly to be stolen, probably the property of the kidnapped villagers and held by the owner of the chest as a curiosity. There is nothing about them that is remarkable but you place them in your pack anyway. If you pass them on to the Administrators Guild they can be returned to their owners in due course. The remainder of your search uncovers nothing of use and when you are done you look out upon the First level and consider your next move.

Will you;

Search the larger alcove in the south-east corner of the level? Turn to section 56.

Choose one of the other sleeping alcoves against the eastern wall and search it for further evidence of the Hordims' purpose here? Turn to section 25.

Leave this floor and use the stairway in the north-western corner to return to the Ground Level of this watchtower? Turn to section 29.

Use the stairway in the south-western corner to ascend to the Second Level of this watchtower? Turn to section 12.

46

You search the alcoves and find little but dust and the wind-blown debris of a structure neglected for far too long. In the last of the smaller alcoves you find something however, that gives you reason to pause. Upon the ground is a small packet, wrapped in paper but opened at one end as if something has been pulled from it. You pick up the wrapper and smell its interior. The odour is very familiar, being a type of sweet loaf popular at fairs and country markets. Opening the packet fully you find only the remnants of its contents, but it is fresh enough to indicate that it had been opened only within the last day or two. Discarding the wrapper upon the floor you continue on.

If you have not already done so will you now;

Search the alcove in the northern corner? Turn to section 43.

Look at a pile of old boxes stacked within the middle alcove? Turn to section 49.

Have a closer look at the larger alcove in the south-eastern corner? Turn to section 5.

Make for the stairwell in the north-western corner? Turn to section 10.

47

With thunder rumbling against the tower's old stone you take the stairs back to the First Level and continue your mission.

Will you;

Search the box filled alcove? Turn to section 45.

Choose one of the other sleeping alcoves against the eastern wall and search it for further evidence of the Hordims' purpose here? Turn to

section 25.

Use the stairway in the south-western corner to make for the Second Floor? Turn to section 12.

48

Upon the open battlements you have nowhere to run and no intention of doing so. With lightning crashing down upon the surrounding woodlands you do not wait for the Hresh. Running forward you meet him in a clash of iron, the first strike sending sparks flying across the rooftop. Immediately the warrior swings again, his intent to cut across your exposed right arm. You deflect the blow and hit the creature with your shoulder, knocking him backwards but the warrior is strong and determined. Regaining his balance quickly the Hordim strikes again, a sweeping blow deflecting your next attack and sending your sword crashing into the wooden floor. Taking the advantage the Hresh swings again, hitting your sword upon its flat edge and pulling it from your hand. In that moment you instinctively look around you for another weapon but it is too late. In one merciless thrust the Hresh drives home its scimitar, plunging the blade deep into your chest. In this life your mission is over. In another you may find better luck.

THE END

49

The alcove is filled with the remnants of old wooden boxes and broken furniture. At first glance it looks like someone has attempted to clean up the living area but a closer look shows that the alcove is being used to store wood alone. Again you find here more wood than the Hordim should ever need and it is a curious thing indeed. On a whim you pick up a small piece of the broken furniture and look at it with greater care. It seems nondescript in type, only the strong odour of cedar telling you what type of tree it has been originally sourced from. It is only then that you recognise a stunning similarity between all the piles of boxes and smashed furniture you have found within these walls. It is all of the same type.

To test your theory you dig through the nearest stack of broken wood and smell each piece as you take it up. Sure enough all the wood proves to be the same, the strong odour of cedar unmistakable in the cool night air. Placing the last piece of wood carefully upon the floor

you wipe your hands and wonder at its significance. The Hordim have gone to some trouble to find this timber but it tells you nothing of their purpose here. You can only surmise that the answers to this must be found elsewhere within the tower. Quickly you continue your search of the alcove but find no further clues. With time pressing you move on.

Will you;

Continue your mission by searching the alcove in the northern corner? Turn to section 43.

Search some of the other alcoves? Turn to section 46.

Have a closer look at the larger alcove in the south-eastern corner of the level? Turn to section 5.

Make for the stairwell in the north-western corner? Turn to section 10.

50

Upon the battlements you make for the pile of crates but come to a standstill when you see a shadowed form crouching against the far wall. For a moment you wait, hoping to gain a better view of the Hordim. The long arms and elongated head give you reason to take a firmer grip upon your sword.

Turn to section 19.

51

Clothed in a loose-fitting uniform and wielding a scimitar the Hordim closes upon you. In one swift movement the warrior leaps, its scimitar slicing downwards, its razor sharp blade aimed squarely upon your left shoulder. Seeing its intent you sidestep and feel the blow cleaving through the air, the hard iron missing you by only a hair's breadth. With no intention of giving the Hordim a further opportunity you thrust your own sword forward, its edge cutting across the Hresh's arm, drawing blood and forcing the creature to take a step backwards. It is only a heartbeat before your opponent retaliates. Raising its scimitar again it rushes at you but this time only parries your defensive blow before slamming into you bodily, throwing you back upon the wooden floor. Before you can regain your feet the Hresh is upon you, its blade poised to stab down into your unprotected chest. This will not be your day to die however.

In that lethal moment you thrust your own sword upwards, forcing it deep into the warrior's own chest. Caught by surprise the Hresh stiffens then slumps sideways, a gout of blood ushering from the wound. For a moment it tremors then lies still. Taking the time only to thank Providence you quickly stand and survey the chamber. No alarm has yet been raised, the storm masking the bloody confrontation. On this occasion you have been lucky.

Will you;

Conduct a general search of this level? Turn to section 24.

Search a large alcove you have noticed in the south-east corner of the level? If this is your choice turn to section 56.

Choose one of the sleeping alcoves and search it for further evidence of the Hordims' purpose here? Turn to section 25.

Leave this floor and use the stairway in the south-western corner to ascend to the Second Level? Turn to section 12.

52

Outside the storm builds, flashes of lightning illuminating the debris-strewn floor in momentary flickers of brilliant light. Thunder rumbles against the tower's old stone and from within the gloom you can hear rain spattering upon a series of wooden shutters that block each of the floor's small windows. Against this backdrop you carefully move into the centre of the level's common area, the line of alcoves no more than dark cells upon the eastern wall. Each provides only enough space for a bed and small cupboard but most appear to be empty. Only the northern alcove, and one at the centre of the line of sleeping cells appear to hold anything. In a blast of lightning you see movement from one of the alcoves and in that moment realise that something has seen you also. Almost before you can defend yourself a Hresh Warrior charges from the shadows. In a clash of metal you block its first strike then press forward.

This Hresh (CV-14, EP-10) must be put down quickly. Conduct this battle according to the conflict resolution rules. If it is the warrior that falls turn to section 11. If it is you who succumbs turn to section 35.



53

Upon the open battlements you have nowhere to run and no intention of doing so. With lightning crashing down upon the surrounding woodlands you do not wait for the Hresh. Running forward you meet him in a clash of iron, the first strike sending sparks flying across the rooftop. Immediately the warrior swings again, his intent to cut across your exposed right arm. You deflect the blow and hit the creature with your shoulder, knocking him backwards. Without waiting you stab forward with your sword and then withdraw before drawing your blade across his chest. You do not cut flesh but the manoeuvre forces the warrior to step back. It is then that the Hresh stumbles, his ankle twisting upon the edges of a broken crate. Caught off-guard your opponent tries to regain his balance but it is all you need. One blow from your sword sends the Hresh's scimitar skittering across the battlement, the next embeds your sword to its hilt in his chest. For the Hresh there is no fight left and the Hordim falls to the floor, its life spent. For just a moment you feel relief that the Hordim is dead but there is another somewhere close.

The Hresh had called out to another of its ilk on the battlement but you cannot yet see him. The Hordim must be on the other side of the level, your view obscured by the crates and the all encompassing gloom of night. Quickly you move to find him.

Turn to section 50.

54

You do not need food at this time, nor would you consume anything the Hresh might find appetising, but within an untidy pile of baskets you find something you can definitely use. Pressed between two large cane baskets you discover a number of packets of Nahla cake, each wrapped in waxed paper. Most are spoiled but you do find two that are still edible, their protective papers still intact. These you will take with you. Nahla cakes are only small but are renowned for their regenerative properties, the aromatic fruit of the Nahla tree highly prized by both Hordim and Men alike. (+2 to endurance for each consumed.) It is a lucky find, and one you will not discard lightly. When you are done with the remainder of your search you return to the common area and consider your next move.

Turn to section 6.

55

Test your Luck attribute. If you are Lucky turn to section 4. If you find that your Luck has deserted you turn instead to section 31.

56

Carefully you approach the alcove and find within a warrior asleep, its shadowed form prone upon a makeshift bed of wood crates covered with an old mattress. In the ferocity of the storm the Hordim lies quiet, the rise and fall of its chest a regular rhythm as you watch from the shadows. Even in sleep the creature is an intimidating prospect and duty requires it cannot be allowed to live. Carefully you move closer, using the thunder to veil your approach. You believe you have before you an easy kill but the Fates have decided otherwise. With one powerful stroke you bring your sword down upon the Hresh but the warrior is ready for you. Rolling away from the blow your sword cuts instead through the mattress, embedding itself in one of the crates beneath it. In that moment the Hordim grabs for a weapon close upon the ground and moves to defend itself. It takes but a heartbeat for the Hresh to upend its bedding and in a flurry of blankets and mattress straw you find yourself under attack.

The **Hresh (CV-14, EP-8)** is a formidable opponent but the Hordim must be overwhelmed. If you defeat this warrior turn to section 27. If you find the Hordim to be too powerful turn to section 39.

57

The Hresh is quick, its scimitar deflecting the attack and driving your sword downwards. Withdrawing a few steps you watch as the warrior takes up a defensive posture. In the scattered illumination of the storm you push forward, swinging at the Hordim to force it backwards, your hope to restrict its movement within one of the near corners. The Hresh however, stands its ground and blocks the blows, exchanging each attack with one of its own, then thrusts forward, the point of its scimitar cutting the air only a finger's length from your chest.

That is enough for you. Parrying the Hresh's next blow you step forward, then stab at the Hordim's head. It is only a feint however, for as the warrior attempts to block the attack you draw back your sword and instead swing it upwards, hitting the Hordim upon its lower jaw

and cutting upwards across its face. Stung by the blow the Hresh takes a step back, trying desperately to wipe a welling tide of blood from its eyes. Rushing forward you slam bodily into the Hordim, lifting him off his feet and sending him crashing into the accumulated piles of rubbish and broken wood. Before the warrior can recover its feet you are upon it, your sword driving downwards through its chest. Within seconds it is dead and with the Hresh prone at your feet you take a step backwards and recover your breath. Thanking the Fates you turn about and head back to the common area.

Will you now;

Search the Kitchen if you have not already done so? Turn to section 18.

Move north and search the Laundry? Turn to section 21.

Take a closer look at the bootprints? Turn to section 9.

Have a look at the trapdoor? Turn to section 14.

Use an Iron Key, if you possess one, to open the Trapdoor? If this is your choice turn to section 3.

Leave this floor and take to the stairs in the north-west corner? Turn to section 59.

58

Standing straight you consider the prone forms of the Hresh and look about the battlement. The Hordim are now all dead and somehow you have survived it. Looking around you and spy the boxes. The pile seems innocuous enough but a closer inspection uncovers a large supply of the grey powder secreted within. There is enough here you think, to kill half the population of the frontier, and you determine that your mission will not be complete until you return all the research notes and samples of the powder to Army Intelligence for proper analysis. As far as the Watchtower is concerned however, your task is done, your mission over.

THE END

59

Before you is a stone stairway that ascends steeply to the First Level above. You listen intently for any sign of movement but hear only the howl of the wind and the harsh clatter of wooden shutters loose upon their mountings.

If you would take these stairs and make for the First Level turn to section 29.

If however, this is the second time you have used these stairs to make for the First Level turn to section 47.

If you have used these stairs to return to the Ground Floor, turn instead to section 6.

60

One more you bring down but you are outnumbered and the outcome of the battle is inevitable. With too many warriors to contend with it is only a matter of time before you are overwhelmed, razor-sharp blades cutting you down in a melee of tearing metal. As you fall upon the cold stone your last thought is one of regret. In your next life, you resolve, you will be more thorough in your search and make damn sure you kill everything. In this life however, your mission is over.

THE END



THE WATCHTOWER



YOU ARE A RANGER OF THE WATCH, ONE OF AN ELITE REGIMENT OF SOLDIERS CHARGED WITH MAINTAINING THE SECURITY OF THE KALBOREAN UNION. GIVEN ORDERS TO INVESTIGATE DISAPPEARANCES WITHIN A REMOTE RURAL COMMUNITY YOU BELIEVE IT IS THE WATCHTOWER THAT HARBOURS THE CAUSE OF SUCH MISERY. YOUR ORDERS ARE CLEAR, YOUR DUTY TO SEARCH THE TOWER AND DESTROY ALL THAT HIDES WITHIN.

THIS IS YOUR MISSION. ARE YOU READY TO FACE THE DANGERS TO BE FOUND WITHIN THE WATCHTOWER..

