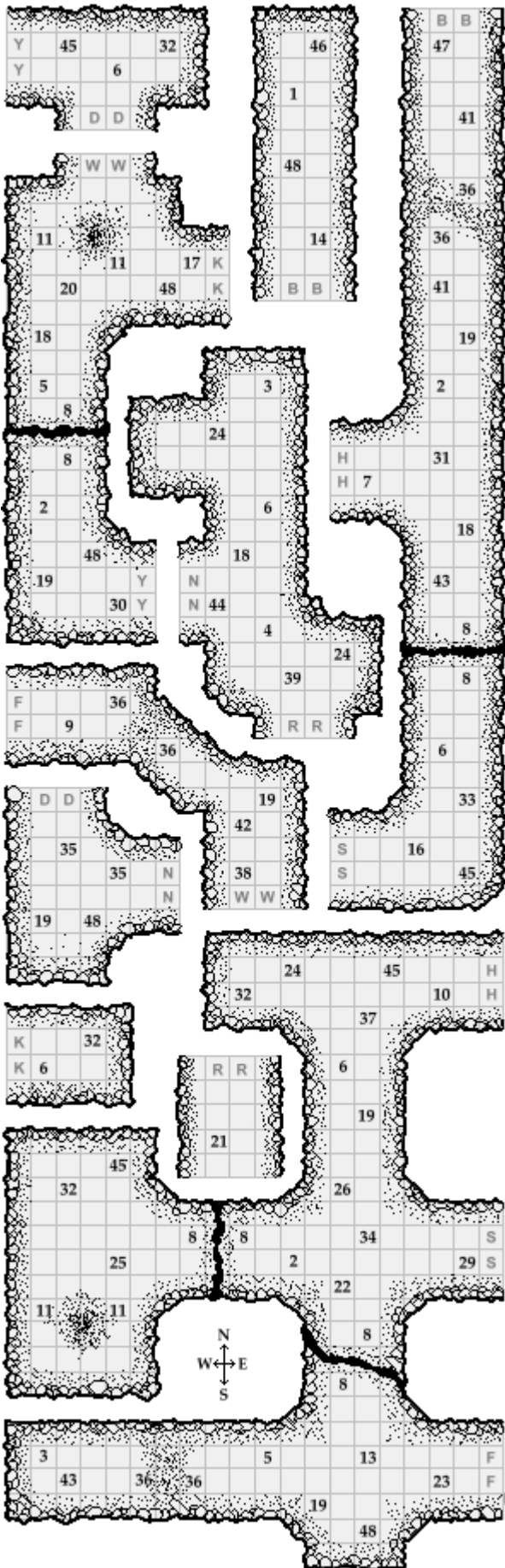


THE ALDENSLOT



Note: Each grid square is equivalent to an area 10 x 10 metres.

GRIEVOUS

A gamebook adventure in two pages.
Written and Illustrated by Wayne Densley 2014

Introduction

It is recorded that in the Year of Settlement 241 a Grievous of the Oera'dim was first encountered by Humankind. Up until that time such a creature had been unknown to Men and it fell to the fate of a Cartographer of the Deep Guild named Iirdor Halbek to be the first to witness such a Being. Little is known of how a Grievous might be brought into the world but it is rumoured that the Hordim torture and defile one of their own to the point of madness, reducing it to a primal state of aggression and ruthless malice. Such creatures are used to guard the Hordes' most valued treasures and it proved only by chance that the transportation of one such Grievous led to the meeting that is the subject of this adventure. It is known that Halbek had mounted a mapping expedition into the borders of the Lower Coldarai, and in the foothills of those mountains came into contact with a Hresh scouting party. Pursued into the hills with only a weapon and satchel of food in hand he tried in vain to escape his pursuers, but found instead the edge of a deep ravine and a deadly plunge into its dark interior. Your adventure begins as you fall, your pursuers hot upon your trail. To survive you must find your way out of the ravine before you are caught by the Hordim. That is your mission.

Special Rules

This micro-gamebook uses the Legends of the Deep Guild standard rule set but has three special rules that are specific to this adventure. The first relates to torches. This adventure is set in a labyrinth of deep ravines known as the Aldenshot and is conducted under moonlight. Due to circumstances outlined in the introduction you have no torches available to you at the start of this adventure and must progress by moonlight alone. Any torches must be discarded. They will not be needed. For this adventure the torch rules found in the standard rule set do not apply. The second special rule regards movement through the Aldenshot. You will notice that the map opposite is broken up into a number of parts, and each exit from each of those parts is notated with letters of the alphabet. Each of these letters corresponds to similar letters somewhere else upon the map, and to move to the connecting part of the labyrinth you need only find the corresponding letters and continue your adventure from that point. The third special rule pertains to the use of Pursuit Points. On your character sheet record that you start your adventure with 7 Pursuit Points. As you are pursued by the beast some of the circumstances you encounter will cause those points to reduce. If you can make it out of the ravines before your Pursuit Points fall to zero you will have escaped onto the grasslands. If you are still within the Aldenshot when your points run out the Hordim have caught you and you must turn to section 27 to ascertain your fate. Apart from the rules mentioned above all other rules from the standard rule set apply.

Using these Section References:

The section references that follow correspond to numbered grid squares found upon the map provided opposite 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. To start you need only create a character using the Standard Rule Set and then begin your mission at grid reference 1.

Sections

1: In the cool of the night you fall, your body hitting the sloping edges of the ravine repeatedly in jarring impacts as gravity takes command of your fate. About you the ravine gives way, an avalanche of loose earth and dry roots following you on your descent. When you hit ground it is not so much an impact as a slew of earth falling upon the sides of the canyon. Caught within its leaden grasp you are pumelled in a cascade of desiccated earth that throws you out into the centre of the ravine. There you come to a halt, your body battered by the violent descent but still alive. Cautiously you pull yourself from under the edges of the collapsed earth and look up to the lip of the ravine above. There you see more than a dozen shapes, all indistinct in the moonlight. One of their number immediately catches your attention, its size twice that of its compatriots and held in check by a thick metal chain. Against this tether it strains and howls, the Hresh laughing and pointing down towards your position. Quickly you gather your weapon and food. Behind you there comes the sounds of collapsing earth and you know the creature has been released and that you are its prey. If you are to survive this night you must find a way out of the Aldenshot before the beast can run you down. (You have lost all equipment except your sword and 3 rations. Adjust your character sheet to reflect these losses then continue.) It is time to go.

2: Down this narrow ravine the winds blow hard, a cold gale rising before you. In its icy grasp showers of grit bite at your exposed skin and for a moment you must turn away from its stinging touch. Against this bluster you draw your cloak about your face and move forward.

(3:) Ahead the entire ravine has collapsed in upon itself, the way forward blocked by huge banks of loose boulders and earth. There is no way forward here. Turn about and deduct 1 Pursuit Point from your total. If you have none remaining turn to section 27. Otherwise move on.

4: In the dark you sense something overhead and run for the nearest wall. From the shadows you look upwards and see overhead a number of dark forms moving across the sky. They are Krel and until they pass you remain hidden. Only when they have retreated to the west do you move on. Deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you have none turn to section 27. Otherwise move on.

5: From overhead there comes a heavy crash as a large shadow settles upon the edge of the ravine above. Lunging sideways you take refuge against the cliff face, your blood running cold when you realise the shadow is a Kreel, an enormous flying lizard. In the dark you wait but it is not searching the floor of the ravine. Instead it scans the plateau above before lifting back into the air, its wings pushing it out into the cold night. You wait for a moment to ensure it has gone then continue. (Deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you now have none turn to section 27.)

(6:) In the half-light of the ravine you run straight into a waiting **Hresh Scout** (CV-15, EP-10). In the shadows the Hordim runs at you, its scimitar glimmering in the moonlight. You must kill this Hresh or die in the attempt. (If you win a quick search of the body reveals three rations and a flashcharge. Take these if you wish.)

7: Ahead you see lights in the darkness but they disappear as you move forward.

(8:) Ahead there spreads a rift in the ground. It is deep but not so wide that you cannot jump it. Test your Agility and Strength attributes. If you pass either of these tests you make it across and can continue. If you fail both turn to section 28.

9: Here the smell of death pervades the air, and upon the ground ahead there lies the remains of a large Kreel, its bones broken and whitened by long exposure to the suns. Carefully you pick your way around the carcass and move on.

10: Through the shadows you run, only the light of the moons overhead providing any illumination in the deep ravine. Ahead the wind builds, flurries of dirt spiralling down the ravine. Within this bluster you cover your face and push onwards.

(11:) Ahead you see a shallow, circular depression in the soft ground. Before you can back away a **Sandlurker** (CV-16, EP-9) lunges from its lair, its huge leech-like body throwing a mass of grasping tentacles towards you. This monster will not let you escape and you must kill it or it will kill you. If you win this contest move on. (Deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you have none remaining turn to section 27.) If it is the Sandlurker that prevails it is here that you die.

12: Without warning the ground beneath you collapses and instinctively you leap forward. Test your Agility and Luck. If you pass either of these tests move on. Otherwise turn to section 28.

13: For a moment you pause and catch your breath as the clouds part and the ravine is illuminated in moonlight. With no sign of your pursuers you move on.

14: You can hear the beast crashing to the floor of the ravine behind you but you do not turn around. At a run you race southwards, your eyes scanning the ground for any sign of the Hresh Scouts. You cannot see them but you can hear shouting from the edges of the plateau above. It is not only the beast that hunts you.

15: Grasping the flashcharge you throw it at the Kreel. In a blinding detonation the charge explodes, the lizard reeling backwards, its body flung against the opposite wall of the ravine. Immediately the Kreel recovers its feet though it now favours its right leg. The lizard is not dissuaded however, and attacks. (For the first five combat rounds the Kreel will have its CV reduced to 15 to account for this injury.) If you survive this battle turn to section 50. If you do not then it is here that you will die.

16: Behind you there arise heavy footsteps that echo along the ravine, and in the dark you can hear clearly the laboured breath of the beast. Now you must run faster.

17: In the dark there lies a shield covered in dust. If you take this add +1 to your CV.

18: Running down the ravine you must come to a halt when the ground changes underfoot, each step you take sinking into soft earth. Carefully you test the other side of the ravine and find firmer ground. Without further pause you move on.

(19:) Overhead there comes a resounding crack as rock breaks away from the walls of the ravine. Instinctively you run forward as huge chunks of stone slam into the dirt about you. Test your Agility and Luck. If you are successful with either test you avoid the falling stone. If you fail both your fate will be sealed as tonnes of debris collapse down upon you. If this is your fate it is here that you die.

20: In the distance you hear screams and the growling of wild dogs. You cannot tell where the sounds are coming from but they stop abruptly after a heavy impact and a strangled cry from one of the dogs. Forewarned you move on.

21: Ahead you see the end to the ravine and an opening into the grasslands beyond. Heartened you race for the grasses but must stop as a huge shape falls from the sky and slams into the ground ahead of you. It is a **Kreel** (CV-18 EP-18) and the huge flying lizard has no intention of letting you pass. (If you have a flashcharge go to section 15 now.) If you win this combat go to section 50.

22: For a moment you stop and listen. You can hear nothing except the wind rushing down the ravine but as you wait you see a number of shadows move from the near wall. Stepping into a patch of moonlight you see a swarm of fist-sized spiders emerge from cracks in the rock and make straight for you. Turning on your heel you run, leaving the diminutive danger far behind.

23: With a loud clatter a rock hits the wall ahead of you. Quickly you scan the edges of the ravine above and see a furtive shape moving eastwards. It is one of the Hresh.

(24:) Out of the dark a **Reaver** (CV-15, EP-8) lunges forward. At a rush the scorpion-like creature runs into you, toppling you sideways onto the dry earth. Rolling back to your feet you stand your ground. To survive you must kill this monster. (If you win deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you have none turn to section 27.)

25: In the dark you can see a depression in the ground and an exit to the east.

26: On the ground you find the body of a large wild dog, its remains torn and bloodied. Shaking your head you wonder what it truly is that hunts you.

27: The **Grievous** (CV-18, EP-16) has found you! From the shadows ahead the monster leaps forward, its enormous bulk encased in armour, its oversized hand

grasping a huge scimitar. You recognise that this beast must have once been a Hresh but it has been terribly ill-used, its eyes piercing slits of reckless malice. Before this creature you stand alone. If you survive this combat turn to section 40.

28: With a sickening thud you hit the edge of the rift, showering earth into the abyss beneath. With one hand you take a firm hold upon an embedded stone and attempt to pull yourself out. Test your Strength attribute. If you are successful you haul yourself out. (Deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you now have none remaining turn to section 27.) If you fail you fall backwards into the abyss, your escape over.

29: Turning a corner in the ravine you come face to face with a single wild dog. The animal bares its teeth and in response you throw a rock, hitting the dog in its flank. As it runs off into the shadows you know you will see it again.

30: In the soft ground you find a line of bootprints, too large to be human. The tracks head eastwards and you wonder if it is wise to follow them.

31: A fork in the ravine provides another way forward. To the west and north you can hear movement, but the south seems clear. Quickly you move on.

32: There is no way forward here and only one way out. Turning around you run. (Deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you have none remaining turn to section 27.)

33: In the dark you stop for a moment and listen. The sound of clanking metal gives you reason to look back up the ravine and you see the beast, its huge bulk a dark form wrapped in shadows. It sees you and breaks into a run. It is time to go.

34: Instinctively you crouch in the shadows as a large Kreel glides overhead. The lizard is searching the ravine for prey and you must wait quietly until it moves on. (Deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you now have none remaining turn to section 27.)

35: From the east a pack of **Wild Dogs** (CV-16, EP-22) runs out of the shadows. Thin from hunger they yelp at each other, mean, dark eyes settling upon you as they attack. These dogs must be fought as a single opponent. If you have a flashcharge in your possession and wish to use it, turn to section 49. If you are victorious deduct 1 from your Pursuit Points then move on. Otherwise it is here that you die.

(36:) Before you can stop you run into a dust-mire, a cloud of debris erupting as you disappear beneath its surface. The mire is however, only waist-deep and before the fine grit can suffocate you, you push upwards and out of its hold. Standing in the dust filled depression you recover your breath and force your way forward, making for its far side and firmer ground beyond. Climbing out you clear your lungs and continue. (Deduct 1 Pursuit Point. If you now have none left turn to section 27.)

37: Through a break in the clouds you see a falling star streak across the sky. You think to yourself that this may not be a good omen.

38: About you the wind builds in strength. It funnels down the ravine as a growing gale and within its grasp you can hear nothing but its whistling bluster. If the beast is close you will be unable to hear it.

39: Ahead you think you see a way out of the ravine. Clouds scud across the moons but in their wavering light it is difficult to tell. Carefully you move forward.

40: Exhausted you try and regain your breath. The Grievous is dead but your victory has taken its toll. Behind you there comes sounds of shouting, and you know that Hresh are still at large within the Aldenshot. You will only be safe when you have made it out of these ravines and have lost yourself in the vastness of the Durn plains beyond. (From this point disregard any mention of Pursuit Points. You have met the Grievous and defeated him. Now you must survive to tell your tale.)

41: The ground here is very soft and you leave a clear set of footprints in your wake. Hunting you should prove easy.

42: Upon the ground you see a clear impression of a dog's paw. It is recent and follows the ravine ahead. Shaking your head you run into the gloom.

43: For a moment you pause and listen. Ahead the ravine is cloaked in shadow but you can sense nothing and move forward.

44: Here the wind is blowing even stronger but upon its bluster you can smell the scent of dew covered grasses. There must be a way out of this ravine ahead.

(45:) Catching your breath you lean against the rock wall and quickly realise your mistake. Above the rock wall begins to move, its foundation crumbling in front of you as the entire face starts to collapse. In a slump of stone and dirt the wall gives way. Test your Agility and Luck. If you are successful with either you run out of danger. If you fail both the avalanche of broken stone will crush you beneath it.

46: Quickly you move north but must come to a halt when you are confronted by a rock wall that you cannot climb. There is no way forward here.

47: Ahead there extends a long ravine, its southerly reach lost in shadows.

48: Without warning a stone flies from the lip of the ravine above, slamming into the ground at your feet. You cannot see who threw the rock and you do not wait to find out. Quickly you move on.

49: You pull the flashcharge from your belt and throw it at the lead dogs. In a blinding detonation the charge explodes, a deafening blast throwing the pack into disarray. Four of their number lay dead and more run yelping into the shadows. Five however, stand their ground and as one continue their attack. (Reduce their CV to 14 to account for the effects of the flashcharge.) If you are victorious deduct 1 from your Pursuit Points then move on.

50: The Kreel lies motionless before you and quite frankly you are amazed that you are still alive. Looking to the south you can see the open grasslands of the Durn and you run for them, the sounds of the pursuing Hresh now very close. On the wide plains you will need only daylight and a measure of luck to leave the warriors behind. The beast that hunted you is something the Guild must know about and with the first glimmers of dawn against the eastern horizon you run out onto the Durn. Your escape from the Aldenshot is now over.