

THE WATCHTOWER

A gamebook adventure in two pages.
Written and Illustrated by Wayne Densley 2016

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 the 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 continue.

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 no sense of humour. For this adventure your weapon of choice is a long sword.

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

Strength (5 – 11): _____ Combat Value = _____

Agility (3 – 5): _____ Weapon: Long sword

Endurance (10 – 20): _____

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

Combat Resolution:

If you are required to fight the following rules apply;

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

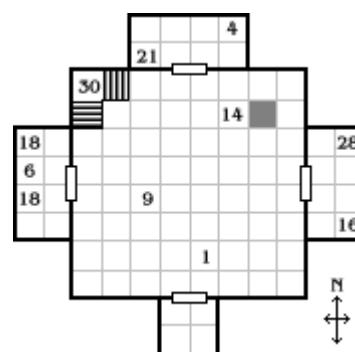
Restoring Endurance:

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.

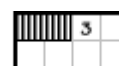
Playing The Watchtower:

This gamebook has a straightforward game process, one that uses the maps shown on this page in conjunction with the section references provided on the second page. You begin your mission with the first map labelled - Ground Floor. You start upon the grid numbered 1, and your mission progresses from that point forward. The game is divided into turns, each turn allowing you to move a maximum of 10 grid spaces per turn in any direction, but you must end each turn on another numbered grid. Each numbered grid is a reference to a section given on the second page of this adventure and you must act upon whatever the section requires. It may describe something you find, an encounter with an opponent, a clue or possibly nothing at all. You will not know however, until you end your movement on that grid and read the associated section reference. Each level of the tower has at least one stairway exit and these can be used to travel up and down the different levels. Your adventure will end when the danger that resides within the Watchtower no longer poses a threat. Good Luck.

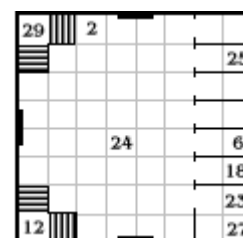
MAPS



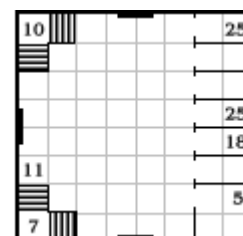
Ground Floor



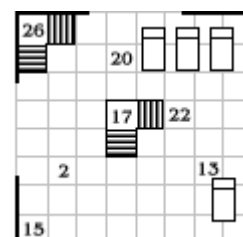
Basement



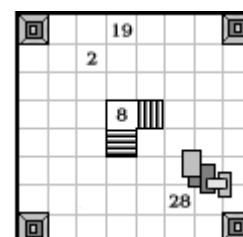
First Level



Second Level



Observation Level



Battlements

Sections

Using these Section References:

These section references correspond to numbered grid squares found upon the maps provided on the first page of this adventure and in most cases need only be read once. All of the numbered grids can however, be used as end of turn waypoints as many times as is necessary. Each stairwell has its own section, either informing you whether it allows passage up or down, or providing a description of the level you have just entered. Read these sections as they arise and you shall gain a better appreciation of what lies before you.

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 however, are also very patient. 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. 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 section 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. There can be no doubt that the 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. It is cold, it is dark, and without hesitation you begin your search.

2: In a determined rush a Hresh Warrior (CV-14, E-10) attacks. Clothed in a loose-fitting uniform and wielding a scimitar the Hordim closes upon you. If you win this combat continue with your mission. If not, it will be here that your adventure will end.

3: Carefully you descend the stairs and find more than a dozen villagers chained in the darkness below. Placing your finger to your lips you quell their pleas and break the lock that holds them captive. With sword in hand you lead them back to the Ground Floor and then motion 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.

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. You have triggered a gas trap and you have only a few moments to live. Test your Agility by throwing one dice. If you throw a number equal to, or less than your Agility value you are able to escape the spreading fume and can continue with your mission. If you throw a greater number then the gas will overwhelm you and your quest will be over.

5: Quietly you enter the largest of the sleeping alcoves. In the dark you can see little but a faint tug at your pant leg tells you that you should have been more careful. In a crushing explosion a booby-trap detonates, throwing your lifeless remains across the cold stone floor and against the opposite wall. In this life your quest is over.

6: As you search you find a number of packets of Nahla bread, each wrapped in waxed paper. Most are spoiled but you find two that are still edible. These you take with you. Each will restore 2 points to your endurance level when eaten.

7: You stand at the top of a stairwell that leads down to the First Level below. 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 have no doubt that Hresh have spent some time here, although you cannot yet fathom their purpose.

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

9: For a moment you pause and look closer at a footprint clearly outlined in the dust at your feet. It is as long as a man's but thicker in form. 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.

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

11: Almost before you can defend yourself a Hresh Warrior (CV-14, E-6) charges at you. In a clash of arms you block its first strike and then press forward. If you win this combat continue with your mission. If you do not, it will be here that your adventure ends.

12: You have found a stairway that rises to the Second Level of the Watchtower.

13: Quickly you move towards what looks like a bed. What you find is a woman tightly restrained but still alive. Without a word you remove the makeshift leather straps 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 return your attention to what remains on this level.

14: You have found a trapdoor. It is locked and cannot be opened without the necessary iron key. If you have an iron key you have the option to go down into the basement below. If you do not, then you will have to find the key first.

15: Moving towards a table in the south-west corner you find a collection of scrolls, journals and small paper packets filled with a grey powder. The scrolls are written in a 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. 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. There is a Mutan Overseer here and he will not be far from his experiments.

16: You have found a small shield. Increase your combat value by 1 point.

17: You have found a stairway that leads upwards to the Watchtower's battlements above.

18: Within a collection of baskets you find food that may be edible. Roll 1d6. If you roll an even number the food is edible and can restore 4 endurance points when eaten. Otherwise leave the food and continue.

19: A Mutan! Crouching against the northern battlement the creature is whispering urgently into a small iron talisman. 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 (CV-17, E-9) attacks. (If you have killed more than five Hresh on this mission increase your combat value by +1 for the duration of this combat.) If you kill this Overseer your task here will be complete, the threat extinguished. If not it will be to a latter life that you will have to strive for 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. You cannot help this man so you turn and consider what you should do next.

21: In the Laundry you find a pile of clothing, of which most seem to be camouflaged uniforms. For a moment you consider what this means. They belong to Hordim and most likely an insurgency crew. This would explain the disappearances but the question of why they are here must yet be discovered.

22: As you look about the Observation deck you hear a noise. From the level above a Hresh walks down the stairs cradling a bundle of cut wood. He is unarmed and cannot be allowed to live. Before the Hordim can raise an alarm you drive your sword through his chest, toppling him sideways onto the hard stone floor. Without a further sound you move forward.

23: You have found a large iron key.

24: As you search the second level you find upon the dust covered floor a set of bootprints you cannot identify. They are longer than any you have seen before, and judging by the gait, left by a creature of unusual height.

25: Quietly you enter the annexe and find a Hresh warrior asleep upon an old mattress. Before the Hordim can awaken you kill him and search his equipment. The Hordim has nothing that can aid your mission here so you move on.

26: You find the top of the stairs and come to a halt. Within this Observation level you see a row of beds and a central stairway that leads to the battlement above. Curiously all the large windows here have been boarded up and sealed. In the lower south-west corner there is a table covered in papers. Carefully you move forward.

27: Before you is a Hresh (CV-16, E-9) sleeping upon a makeshift bed. Before you can kill the creature the warrior wakes and jumps to his feet. With scimitar in hand the Hordim attacks. If you win this combat continue with your mission. If not, then it will be here that your adventure will end.

28: Out of the shadows a Hresh (CV-15, E-10) rushes you. Determined not to let this warrior live you stand your ground. If you win this combat continue with your mission. If not, it will be here that your adventure will end.

29: You are standing at the top of a stairway that leads down to the Ground Floor below. All about you is darkness, the First Floor veiled in shadows. It appears that this second level served as a barracks, the eastern wall lined with a series of sleeping alcoves, the floor littered with broken furniture and discarded food. Someone is definitely living here.

30: You have found a stairway that leads to the First Level above. You listen intently but can hear nothing above the howl of the winds.

