

# CASTLES & CRUSADES

## A DARK BURDEN



BRIAN YOUNG



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## THE TALE OF THE DOOM CHILD

*She ran until her feet were blistered and sore. She ran until her legs were numb, and all movement was just a mental effort and little more. Her once soft and unblemished perfect skin was now slathered in grime, sweat, and caked blood. The long beautiful white-blond hair that was one of her recognizable traits is now a mess. It is tangled with leaves, twigs, and anything else she accumulated in her daring escape from Din Marw, the lair of the King of Ravens in the Land of the Dead.*

*Eiranwen never understood what happened to her so long ago. The land was dark around her family's cottage near the edge of the forest, and before the first light of the star of Dôn shone above in the Cauldron of Night, ghastly beings gathered. Their eyes glimmered red, like angry flames kept in black coals. Snickering and growling, these minions of the King of Ravens crept into her home and snatched her from her bed while she kicked and screamed.*

*Strangely no one heard her cries for help in the home.*

*The following minutes to hours swam by Eiranwen's senses, as though she was submerged under lightless water. She only knew that she was bound and being taken by these 'goblins' to a place that only her nightmares will seem mild.*

*The first thing she saw upon waking was a monstrous being so horrible that her mind almost snapped in that moment. He was as tall as a giant, but dark and with a raven beaked helm from which cold blue eyes glared, and a strange lightless cloak where ravens squawked for freedom from its cloth. A massive demonic raven perched on his left shoulder and spoke into his helm. When the towering giant spoke, the room trembled.*

*Eiranwen only remembers that they copulated on an altar and nothing more after that...now she flees for her life away from this dark king and realm.*

The adventure module you hold in your hands is the polished and updated version of one of my official play-test campaigns for what became the *Codex Celtarum*, and eventually the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, two decades ago. I ran this about 3-4 times in twenty years, albeit as a six-month campaign, and this module is a condensed version of that saga. My many groups of play-testers all have had good fun, and sometimes shameful memories of this story, each unique and personal. I hope this is the case with future generations of gamers who take part in this adventure. It is in the final moments, exhausted, bloodied and barely alive, that the Adventuring Party's true mettle is tested on how they will handle it all. The most shocking decision they make can decide the Fate of many worlds.

Because it is increasingly difficult as it goes, and deals with some heavyweights in Faery, it is not for the meek, nor low in experience. Role-playing is essential to get through this deceptive plot and its many enemies, not just combat, but this story satisfies both needs well. It would be smart to have a player group of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level, at least 4 or more in size and ability to take part in this since it is full of magic, monsters, and powerful beings. The CK should use the Luck/Fate Points in the CKG

and the other more detailed combat and general rules found in that brilliant book to really make this adventure soar.

This is a complex adventure. Once the players become immersed in its many layers, they may soon forget the initial impetus! A devious CK may enjoy watching the players writhe and struggle while attempting to act nobly only to see their efforts reward no one but the *King of Ravens* himself. Unless they are completely gullible, a few savvy players may sense something is wrong in this along the way and set things right...a few may do this, but not likely. By choosing to do this, they will also upset the *geis* placed on them, and that alone will be an awful experience.

This module takes place in the setting of the *Codex Celtarum* and follows a Celtic idiom and style throughout. It can be adapted to the regular *Castles & Crusades* setting of Aihrde or the CK's own home-brewed world with ease. Unlike the other modules, this story takes place *only* in Faery. The world of Faery is a tricky place to run a campaign since it is so contrary to all other basic fantasy settings, this is explored more in depth in the *Codex*. This means there is no looting or typical 'Murder Hobo' stuff to do, but actual story and matters of merit going on.

An extra aspect of this module that was realized during the writing was the structure and how it could be used for a tournament style campaign. Each task can be assigned points for the players achieving certain acts or doing the correct thing, aside from the allocation of experience points. The CK can formulate their own homegrown point system as they run this if they choose and hand out the points as each task section and each act is completed along the way.

Even though the captives (to be rescued by the adventuring party) are needed later in the plot, several of the tasks are just MacGuffins ('plot coupons' as some call it). These involve the gathering of items and objects, and have no crucial play in the story or final goal, they are only placed there to send the *geisbound* adventurers on their way, to suffer, and to hopefully survive and overcome in the end. The mystery will be, for a time, centered on them, but really, they are meaningless, and a part of the Hag *Trefina's* nefarious plan to get the player characters busy and distracted – and they will!

## INTRODUCTION

Since the birth of the dreaded *Raven King* by the Goddess of Nightmares *Morrigan*, his story in Faery has been one of pure violence and warmongering. Outside of those activities, the *Raven King* seems uninterested in any other aspect of immortal existence, such as making offspring. Until now...

By the wisdom of his cursed father *Cynwal*, the *Raven King* sent his Unseelie minions to abduct a worthy mortal woman to be his child bearer. Who she was didn't matter to him, only that she can bear his child when the time comes. But the Unseelie were more discriminating, and on one stormy dark night, they entered the mortal world and swept up a beautiful girl named *Eiranwen*. Pleased with the Unseelie's choice, the *Raven King* later had his way with her.

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Due to his near-divine blood and faery nature, Eiranwen was quickly swelling with his offspring in mere weeks when held prisoner in Din Marw. His soothsayers told the Raven King that such a child would grow to become almost a god unto its own, a prodigy...but Eiranwen had other plans.

*Eiranwen* made a daring escape from the hellish *Din Marw*, and fled into Faery, seeking help wherever possible. It was not an easy escape, unfamiliar as she was with the denizens of this strange world. She hoped to locate a secure place, some fortress in which she may rest and remain safe from the inevitable pursuit of the Raven King.

The *Raven King* sent out his many minions to catch her in his trap, though he trusted the Hag *Trefina* would be the most cunning in pursuit.. Never one to disappoint, Trefina intercepted the fleeing *Eiranwen*., befriended her, and gained her trust with eldritch glamour. Frightened still and traumatized, the mortal is dismissed from *Trefina's* company, returning to the wilderness until arriving before a mighty feast-hall, whereupon the first scene unfolds, in which a chief and his warriors are celebrating recent victories.

Arriving inside the hall *Eiranwen* causes quite a surprise. The druids and healers check her condition, and knowing she is pregnant (with the Raven King's child no less), they only say that this woman must be championed by the best (the player characters) against the Raven King who hunts her. The druids and the chief offer *Eiranwen* safety and protection in the fort while they send the champions off to stop her pursuers.

*Trefina* is mentioned here as the closest thing to a 'friend' as *Eiranwen* has in Faery, but is unaware of *Trefina's* plan, which is ultimately to lure her champions off to do six dire tasks, presumably to ensure *Eiranwen's* safety, but it is all part of devising where she is kept in the elfin kingdoms of *Tír na nÓg*.

These six tasks are meant to put the champions in dangerous situations believing they are doing heroic and lawful acts when, in fact, they are all the while empowering the King of Ravens and his allies. *Trefina's* occasional appearance throughout the story to 'help' them is no coincidence. It is hoped that on the one hand the champions perish in their quest, but on the other hand, their successes enable certain dire events to transpire, which would also benefit the King of Ravens should they accomplish them all. Therefore, the King of Ravens feels he wins either way, regardless of how it goes. Unless, of course, the champions (hopefully) get wise to the fool's errands before it is too late.

Worse than this however is the matter of the child *Eiranwen* is to birth, one the druids prophesied will bring doom to Faery if permitted to breathe air. Morally, from a modern standpoint, this is a dilemma, but in antiquity, killing a newborn or aborting it is no issue at all if something is considered wrong. The players will need to contend with this dilemma by the end of the scenario (and hope they make the right decision).

Wherever *Eiranwen* ends up, either back in *Din Marw* (hopefully not), or in a safe place among the Faeries of Light, the birth



will be the culmination of the whole epic story and make the efforts almost pointless. Will she give birth to a monster? Or to some divine blooded prodigy like its father?

### FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

However the CK gets the adventuring party to take part in an elfin chief's feast in Faery is up to them and their own campaign, but this adventure must start there (like the Arthurian tales *Culhwch ac Olwen*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and the Irish tales of *Mac Dathó's Pig*, *Fled Bricrem* and others). Adventures starting in feast-halls are an ancient Celtic story-telling tradition, and this is due to the most celebrated members of society (the warriors and lords) centering their lives on feasts. Below are four hooks that can give the CK ideas to explain the

reason why the adventurers are in the hall of the Morwyn elf chief *Gwres ap Cynon*:

**HOOK 1:** Due to the fame of the player characters' previous adventures and their deeds, they were invited as guests into Chief *Gwres*' hall to celebrate this fame. *The druids may have orchestrated it to arrange this situation.*

**HOOK 2:** In the off-time between adventures, the adventurers have taken up residence in the hall as the chief's retinue or *teulu* ('family'). He will pay for their food, drinks, entertainments, and of course, lodging in exchange for their skills in combat and magic.

**HOOK 3:** One of the characters is a relative to the chief and was given a spot at the feasting table among his warriors. The chief is determined to give his relative (and friends) any tasks that fall into his lap, if only to look 'better' in the company of such famous people.

**HOOK 4:** The adventurers were traveling through Chief *Gwres*' region when they stopped before dusk to socialize with the lord and his gathering. This was out of randomness and not intentional, but the characters ended up at the right place at the right time.

## THE CHALLENGE

### CHIEF GWRES' HALL

The grand hall is a large stone, timber, and thatch structure typical in Celtic regions. It is located inside earthen walls within a modest fort on the southernmost edge of the Three Kingdoms of *Tír na nÓg* close to the large Perpetual Forest. Stables, servant quarters and other important buildings are located within *Gwres*' fort of *Dinas Rhyd*.

Normally it is a peaceful night in this part of the Faery isle, no storms or strange disturbances, but on this odd night, such is not the case. Thunderous and dramatic storms sweep across the Perpetual Forests south from *Dinas Rhyd* filling the skies with lightning and raging noise.

In the hall of Chief *Gwres* the hearth fire blazes; warriors sit at tables chatting, laughing, and gorging themselves on their lord's food and drink. Bards stand in the shadows and watch the champions of the hall, while druids stand around *Gwres* and his seat at the head of the tables, their hoods drawn low. Musicians play their instruments, and Brownie servants run about for their elfin masters.

Chief *Gwres* looks among his gathering with a grin, and he says to them all:

*"From within the well-crafted columns and rafters of my glorious hall I have many of the finest warriors, spell users, and the bravest in the Three Kingdoms. For this, I am proud and could not ask for more. I know that if the Witch Queen or one of the other Lords of Darkness were to threaten my fort that you all would come to my aid without question."*

*Storms are raging over our heads, the grinding wheel of Taran is crushing the heads and bones of those who bring darkness, and that means that I sense something is in the air. What it is I cannot say or know, but I am sure our wise and profound druids are aware.*

*My question is...you who are esteemed in your valor and deeds against the dark foes, whose fame and legacy will be grand and never forgotten among the bards...who here tonight in my hall is my bravest? Who is willing to do what is called upon them in the hour of need? I ask you brave dragons this."*

The warriors mumble between each other about this question. Many are heated in their talk and personal boasts to each other about this in a brief time. Chief *Gwres* sits and grins, watching the fierce slayers and adventurers go at it. *Chief Gwres is aware that tonight something unexpected and completely terrible will fall into their laps at any time, and he is rousing his gathering up for it beforehand. The druids alerted him to this fortuitous night of adventure even though they did not tell him by what nature it would be.*

Within a few minutes, many warriors begin shouting and becoming aggressive about whom is Chief *Gwres*' most worthy. Angry looks, glaring, people are pushed, harsh words spoken by several, and before long, two are standing up in defiance, ready to fight about it.

Chief *Gwres* nods for them to sort it out by first blood if necessary, or even death at the most extreme. The warriors will begin fighting, first in brawling for a time and then by knives. Their struggle erupts before the Chief's seat and table and in plain sight of all. Before long, they draw swords and continue fiercely, each jumping and performing stunts to better the other, often falling on tables of food and drink.

Upon first blood between the two, the Chief will raise a hand for it to stop, then while smiling at the rest, he will say:

*"It seems we have a champion in our midst tonight, the battle bull Cynfelyn ap Llog. The slayer of the giant lord Fiacal the Firebrand in the Battle of the Golden Shores! He who cast out the goblin forces of the King of Ravens, single-handedly thwarting their night assault on our borders, and not so long ago! Does anyone here challenge him and his fame or deeds to be my best tonight? Worthy of the Hero's Portion of the feast yet to be served?"*

**NOTE:** This is the part of the adventure when the player characters, who have hopefully had a lengthy series of games behind them and deeds, can stand up and be counted for it. This is their cue to take a chance and try to be Chief *Gwres*' hero for the night – in addition to setting them up for the unexpected arrival of *Eiranwen*. The CK can make the Morwyn elf champion Cynfelyn as tough as needed to match the chosen character(s) in this contest.

The conflict between the NPCs and the player character(s) must be epic, truly larger than life, else the effort will hardly seem worth the prize. The CK can really take the opportunity to show off story-telling skills and the craft of it in this opening situation of the module. *Make it come to life as never before!*

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## EIRANWEN'S ARRIVAL

In the heat of the struggle to prove their worthiness of becoming the champion of Chief Gwres, the storms rage outside of Dinas Rhyd. Suddenly, before any can earn the Hero's Portion of the feast, the two large double doors of the entrance rumble as if disturbed by the wind. But such a wind is unnatural; the doors tremble and rattle ever more violently, and before anyone reacts, they burst open loudly with a great crash, nearly falling off their hinges. The onlookers witness this in the hall:

*"Lightning strobos and pierces the sky with a growling monstrous thunder in the night around the chief's hall. The guards quickly move to get to the doors and close them, but as they do, a single dark silhouette staggers forward from outside in a cloud of wind, leaves and dust."*

*This figure is fair sized, slender, and curvy and shrouded in a rain soaked grey cloak, tattered, and stained. Wild breathing and a single grasping hand reach out from the cloak in the hall.*

*All of the warriors at the tables look on in a mix of curiosity and horror at this mysterious visitor. This stranger stumbles and lands on her knees, holding herself upright with one hand with her head low, out of breath.*

*A silence fills the hall, even the storms outside seem to fade.*

*Guards close the doors and put down the beam while all eyes are on the cloaked form. Not a word is muttered from the druids, bards, or servants in the shadows.*

*The visitor slowly pulls off the hood, revealing a beautiful green-eyed, red-haired mortal woman, barely twenty winters of age. Terror defines her face; her eyes dart around in surprise and horror, but she gathers herself together and slows her crazed breathing for a moment.*

*She glances at everyone, confused, and mumbles at first but eventually coherently says, 'I must.... must find help... he is after me! His monsters, they are hunting me down for what I possess of his... I need help or he will get me...'*

*No one in the hall understands the meaning of her words, they are cryptic and fragmented. The silence continues in the hall, breath held by all; even the chief's proclaimed champion Cynfelyn seems stunned.*

*The stranger stands but is weak, and she wavers a little, about to collapse. Her eyes dart about the hall still in fright, and she says, 'The dark king and his... his people are on my trail, and you must protect me! They will come, and when they do, they will not be stopped by anything or anyone. They are monsters and want me back... back in his fortress of shadows to take what I have back...'*

*She falls to one knee and gasps in pain and continues to speak, 'My name is Eiranwen, and I come from the kingdom of Rheged, not from this world, wherever I am... please help me.' In a second, she falls face down on the stone tiled floor and seems unconscious.*

*Chief Gwres looks to his gathering with an eager smile and says, 'Now who amongst you will be my champion with this problem before us? Who will be her hero in their time of need? Step forward and tell us all your name.'*

This is the chance for the player characters to make their true entrance into the adventure and shine above all others in the chief's hall who choose not to (and none will, fearing the mortal's words about a 'dark king').

Druidic healers come forward to lift up *Eiranwen* and place her on a cleared feasting table. *Eiranwen* is mumbling in her unconscious state, twitching and scared even still.

Once again, *Eiranwen* opens her eyes and will hold close the nearest adventurer, speaking to him with tortured words:

*'Seek out the recluse Trefina, she knows more about who seeks me and why... She is the only one I know as a friend here in your world. I trust her...'*

*Eiranwen* then falls back, unconscious on the table. The feast-hall is now a scene of much activity about the strange, ragged, weather-beaten, and soaked mortal girl before them.

**NOTE:** Of course, at this early point in the story the players have no clue as to what *Eiranwen* 'has' of this Dark King, or the backstory so far. If she is looked over, they will only find her dressed in an odd black silk gown that is clearly not made by the Faeries of Light, or Mortals for that matter. She has scratches, bruises, and evidence of her rough time running in the dark and storm-filled night. Otherwise, she is beautiful and fragile with no clear sign that she is pregnant.

Chief Gwres looks on the adventuring party with pride while he does so with scorn at his own gathering and says:

*'We have our champions and their quest on this auspicious night! Now go and seek out this Trefina and do what must be done to protect this wearied and worn mortal from her plight. Your Hero's Portions, for you all, will be waiting here for you, uncut and un-tasted, until you return, however long it takes!'*

The warriors in the hall begrudgingly raise their drinking horns and cups and cheer at the adventuring party on these words. The resentment is strong in places, and there is no hiding the jealousy of some warriors.

Whenever the adventuring party wishes to depart for *Trefina* is up to them. The storms will last for the rest of the night and fade by dawn.

## SEEKING TREFINA THE RECLUSE

If trackers or rangers are in the group and they are trying to find *Eiranwen*'s trail going out from the Perpetual Forest, it will require a CL 4 to do so. Her wild and wavering path in the grassy hills and into the thick forest shows that she was running without direction.

Once the adventuring party reaches the Perpetual Forest, they find *Eiranwen*'s tracks in the leafy wilds, but they are broken at points (from her tripping on roots and jumping as she sprinted, etc.).

*Eiranwen*'s trail goes for many miles south (about ten) before the adventurers notice that her running pace had first been a jog or quick walking pace for a time.

*Unless the CK wants to have them, there are no encounters in the forest for a time, building anticipation on meeting this recluse Trefina.*

Using tracking (CL: 5), Trefina's whereabouts can be uncovered in the forest. A slightly worn path is found that leads to an earthy cave covered by a thick and heavy mass of undergrowth.

This cave is dark and smells of rotten herbs, stale and burned, and underfoot on the dirt floor are scattered dry bones of birds and other small animals; smoke can be smelled within.

Inside the heart of the cave, the adventurers find a chamber made of earth and stone, transformed into living quarters. Debris and refuse are on the floor in a mess around the central fire-pit where a bubbling cauldron hangs on chains. The smoke drifts out into the forest through small holes in the ceiling above. A plaid bedroll is against the wall in one part of the chamber and two caves go elsewhere into the earth.

Within seconds of the adventurers arriving they see a very sensational looking elfin lady enter (Trefina is using Faery Glamour to change her appearance; it would take Second Sight level 3 at least to see through her guise).

The adventurers see:

*Her hair is long, black, and braided to her knees. She wears a nice drab green dress covered in tarnished golden Celtic design work; it has been through some tough times over the years. Many pendants and charms hang from her slender neck, and rings sparkle on her long fingers.*

*Many complex tattoos cover her skin in places and she looks delicate in a way. She enters the chamber with a surprised smile and says to all, 'My vision is correct, you have come after all. I welcome you! I am Trefina, a solitary healer and woodwife. My vision told me that you would seek word of a strange girl, a mortal girl.'*

If any of the adventuring party can see through her glamour disguise, they will see a wretched, bent, grey-skinned hag, repulsive and covered in a cloud of flies. This is her true form. Trefina is trying to delay the adventurers in her upcoming 'tasks' to buy enough time to take Eiranwen and secure her for what is to come. By the end of the tasks the adventurers will have unknowingly aided the forces of Darkness in many ways.

If Trefina is confronted about her hideousness under her enchantment:

*'I am cursed by the gods for my beauty and pure heart. It was the jealousy of Rhiannon that put me in thence form, so I have had to mask that wretchedness from strangers, or no one would ever see me. Her magic is so strong and terrible that I cannot hide my cursed appearance for too long, so be warned.'*

**NOTE:** If the adventurers inform her of the situation, she will then tell them the following:

*'Yes, she fell into my cave here during one of the strongest storms I have ever seen in this part of the forest, seeking dry shelter. She kept looking behind her and panicking with every noise and flash of*

*lightning. Something was hunting her. She kept saying that a dark king was chasing her and that he took her from her bed one night and had his way with her.*

*She was held in a caged room in darkness afterward. To this day she experiences nightmares from it all. The dark king haunts her now, she said, the memory chipping away at her sanity. She does not know how many days passed in captivity, but she took a chance to break free and flee his fortress blindly.*

*Eiranwen sat by my fire here and babbled it all to me, I had to sort it out and make sense of it all. In her escape from his fortress, she said that she took something of his and won't give it back. Now this king is sending all of his people after her to get it back, but what it is she won't say. I have read the portents and signs and have come to deduce that there is a way to set events into motion that will keep her from ever being in the same situation again with this cruel king.*

*You are the heroes needed to do this, these tasks are important and will affect the world around her like a waterfall does the rocks and earth under it. Once these many tasks are completed, her safety is assured, and the trouble that follows her on swift dark wings will not continue. To not complete these would bring Eiranwen to ruin.*

**(The players may want to write these down to keep them.)**

The first of these tasks is to rescue someone from the clutches of the Fir Collach, for he alone can administer the aid needed to speak better to Eiranwen in her state of madness. His name is Bairrfhionn, he is an elf with the greatest skill for this task.

Next you must gather the potions required for hiding Eiranwen from the King of Ravens. These special potions are being held by a Dark Druid named Scannal, who inhabits a fortress near the Land of the Dead. Take these, and the Raven King is powerless to stop you. Of these potions, I will tell you so that you know which to take.

Secretly, in the high peaks of Mynyddoedd Eufydd are three Hags that want Eiranwen and her coveted possession of the Raven King for their own. They have already sent out their minions to find her and will be a thorn in your side.

Then you must liberate Sorcha. She is being held captive by a tribe of impatient Pigsies and will soon be tried and executed. They do not trust her and her ways, deeming her a Child of Darkness. Sorcha's place in Eiranwen's life is important as a close friend and cannot be ignored, her skills are essential in ridding the mortal of her burden and calming her.

After freeing her, you must then journey to the Land of the Giants to the palace of Tanwg Gawr and slay him and take his personal possessions only, but not for your own sake. The items he owns will help in getting Eiranwen back to her world when all is said and done.

Your final task is to do all of this before the next New Moon falls over the worlds. There is a grove deep in the Perpetual Forest, not used for some time by the druids, where everything must be taken, or all is lost. Along the way I will be able to take the people from you, so they do not burden you on your labors, but not the items.

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*As you draw nearer to completing these tasks, I will send my messenger to aid you with the information you need. He is a small bird, a chough, that serves me. He will fly to you and even guide you at times. Heed his assistance and do not ignore it, for through him I speak to you, young heroes.*

*I place this tynghed (fate) on you all to complete these tasks or your lives will quickly become impossible to live. If Eiranwen is not aided, your world will spiral into chaos and nothing you know will be the same, and if you survive, you will never be able to forget that you chose to fail or step away from this important deed.'*

Trefina casts a Geis spell (*Codex Celtarum*) on the adventuring party to set everything in motion. The CK must secretly roll a Wisdom check for each character so cast under this geis. If the adventuring party refuses to do these six tasks as given by the Hag, they will suffer the terrible consequences until they perish from it, return to the job, or find a way to be freed from it.

**NOTE:** Trefina will not tell the adventuring party the gravity of their tasks in relation to the plans of the Raven King and the birthing of Eiranwen's child. The very mention of her being pregnant is not even discussed as it is kept a secret. The adventurers are to only understand that Eiranwen possesses something of the King of Ravens, possibly hid it, and she must be brought to safety back in her world. Once set into motion, each task will start a chain reaction that will create true chaos in the land long enough for the Hag Trefina to find Eiranwen and take her to a special birthing chamber, keeping the heroes busy in the meantime.

Trefina continues:

*'Now you have your important tasks to save the mortal girl Eiranwen and you must go before the days run bare and the New Moon is upon us. I will warn you that the King of Ravens and the Witches of Mynyddoedd Eufydd will not stop in their pursuit of you or the mortal girl. Follow my guide, Dufach, he will lead you to where you must first go... among the Fír Collach and to Bairrfhion, the first of your tasks.'*

On cue, a small chough bird alights on Trefina's right shoulder and cackles a small noise, and then flies out of the cave into the surrounding woods. Urgency is in the air as the small red and black bird leaves.

## THE SIX TASKS OF TREFINA

Each of these tasks are integral for the entire story to progress, and for the diabolical schemes of the King of Ravens in regaining the refugee Eiranwen back into his clutches again before the child is born. Although they can be done in almost any order if the adventurers choose, it wouldn't be advisable since the groupings of each task lie on each island close together and would not require so much travel time.

The potential of each task to be an entirely separate adventure that could last sessions is great in this module. The CK can explore each task, its presented parameters and take advantage of the extra depths to make this become the original campaign it was in the beginning.

Trefina's little bird (a cursed faery wizard that crossed her path one night in the past) Dufach will fly ahead, perching on branches and stones in the woods, always many feet before them in the Perpetual Forest during this first part of their tasks.

## TASK #1: THE BOAR MEN OF TÍR MESSA

Dufach flitters in the faery woods for a time throughout the night hours. Shimmering plants, insects, and beings dot the dark venerable woodlands as the little bird makes its way. Some time passes in the wake of Dufach before the nature of the woods becomes noticeably worse around them with uprooted trees, mounds of dug up earth, and general destruction.

This destruction is everywhere around them, and there is even a crude earthen, stony, and timber covered wall (6 ft. high) that starts on the other side of the last standing rows of trees. This is a simplistic attempt by the Fír Collach tribe to protect their territory, and it encircles their land for a radius of ten miles.

Dufach will glide in the tree-tops and soar downward to a hanging cage made of wood, bone, and sinew where a huddled form sits inside. Once the adventurers spot the cage and its location Dufach flies away.

Many Fír Collach watch and guard the perimeter of the territory from the bushes and trees at any one time (d8+1). Being of low intelligence, the Fír Collach do not plan ahead for their own protection, knowing their might is greatly feared.

Hanging by vine ropes in the center of the tribe's territory, before the crudely fashioned wooden throne of the chief, are seven cages. Each holds several faery captives, frightened and shaken, their fingers clasping the bars tightly, hoping to be freed someday. In the middle of this is Bairrfhion, a blonde haired elf man, once well-dressed in rich clothes, now dirtied and half feral.

## SAVING BAIRRFHION

The elf sits in a well-guarded area in the heart of this primitive tribe's domain. He was given to the Boar Men by Trefina recently as a gift of peace between them, now, regretfully, she needs him back to help perform the duties of a physician for Eiranwen at the moment of birthing. An average of d12 Fír Collach, and D6 Collach Mór roam this part of the 'courtyard' before the chief and his retinue. To sneak there will be difficult, requiring five stealth checks at CL:6 to reach the dangling cages.

If alerted, the Fír Collach and their attendant giant boars will quickly attack the outsiders from all sides and the courtyard will become flooded with them, wielding torches, grunting, and snorting in their half-intelligible manner. This will not be easy for a first task. There are cleverer ways to save the elf without resorting to combat if spells, stealth, and spell-like abilities are used instead, since the onslaught will be non-stop if it begins.

If the adventurers are captured in the struggle they will be dragged in nets, unarmed, at spears' length to see the old white-haired chief Boar Man on his wooden throne. They will be interrogated about their purpose until the short patience of the Fír Collach has reached its end, and then they will begin



drawing and quartering them between many *Collach Mór* one by one for the entertainment of the chief.

*If the adventuring party stalls for too long in their rescue attempt, they will draw the unwanted attention of d100 Fír Collach and 2d20 Collach Mór in this tribe, who will gather to investigate the events transpiring in their midst.*

**NOTE:** Once *Bairrfhion* is rescued, however events occur, the tribe will notice and begin to send out search parties (d20 Boar Men and d6 Giant Boars) in this part of the Perpetual Forest until dawn, making travel extremely difficult. In turn, this will spur the tribe's aggression and make them start raiding and attacking all nearby peoples in consequence, eventually reaching Chief *Gwres'* region to the north of the forest where this adventure begins.

**FÍR COLLACH WARRIORS** (These chaotic evil beasts' vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 12, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by spear (2d6), Gore (d12), and Bite (2d8). Their abilities are Control Wild Boar and Wild Hunt)

**COLLACH MÓR** (These chaotic neutral animals' vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 14, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by Tusk (3d8) and Hoof (3d10). Their ability is venomous hide.)

*Bairrfhion* is uncomfortably held in the hanging cage, each rope tied on a high tree branch overhead (30 ft. or more) in the woods. To free the elf, the adventurers would need to find some means (cutting the rope, bending the wood frame, breaking the bones of the cage, etc), as they do this, the other faery captives

(numbering 12) in the other five cages will begin seeking freedom too, making noise and causing a scene. *The moment he is freed Trefina's enchantment holding him is broken.*

Once freed, if the elf is being informed about the nature of what is transpiring, he will be shocked at this request of Trefina wishing him saved. He will say little, his dark motives not revealed at all.

*Bairrfhion is a Chaotic Evil Dark Wizard once employed by Trefina to serve her but over the timeless years in Faery she was tired of him and sent him off to be a hostage with the Fír Collach of Tír Messa. He will not reveal his true nature and remains silent and 'frightened' of the Boar Men, and all other threats, while in the company of the adventuring party. Unless forced by some means, he will not show his strength or power to strangers and will seem meek, it was only the might of Trefina's enchantment that contained him in the cage, and could only be shattered by another under her orders (the adventuring party).*

**BAIRRFHION THE PHYSICIAN** (This 6<sup>th</sup> level elf wizard is chaotic evil, and his vital statistics are HD 6d4, AC 13, and HD 24. His primary attributes are magical. He has no weapons to attack on hand, but will use a poisoned dagger (3<sup>rd</sup> level poison) if given a chance. His spells are: 0 level: Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Ghost Sounds, Mage Hand, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Charm Person, Hold Portal, Jump, Magic Missile, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Protection from Arrows, Mirror Image, See Invisibility, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Magic Circle, and Lightning Bolt. His faery spell-like abilities are: Mist Form (inherited), Cernae's Call, Second Fate (2<sup>nd</sup> level), Elf-Shot, and Shadow Meld.)

The flight from Tír Messa will not be easy. The Boar Men and their giant counterparts will be brutal and relentless unless they



are awed by great spectacles of power and magic. This will only delay them for a time (d4 hours) before they continue their angry chase in reaction to this deed by the adventuring party. *It might become clear to the players early on that these 'tasks' will eventually escalate out of control, becoming more than they can deal with.*

## TASK #2: DARK DRUID OF DÚN STOIRM

After fleeing farther into the Perpetual Forest with *Bairrfhionn*, the bird *Dufach* will squawk and seek the adventuring party's attention. It will lead them southwards into the forest, likely arriving before the light of dawn. Somewhere along the way the elf they just rescued is taken into the hollow of a tree (by *Trefina's* magic), shockingly and suddenly. This will happen as they follow the bird, and undoubtedly seem more terrible than it is, but it is the doing of the Hag in reality.

Miles ahead in the Perpetual Forest, south, before the dark mountains and rugged lands of the Land of the Dead, sits a strange stone fortress. Surrounded by large earthen, stone, and timber walls (20 ft.), a single tall tower looms over all from the fort. The forest sits around it on one side, and barren, rocky lands on the other. To get to where they have to go the adventurers will have to gain entrance past the gates inside to find the Dark Druid and his belongings.

The fortress appears desolate and in ruin, with little use in an untold time since the King of Ravens first put it here to monitor the Perpetual Forest and the Kingdoms of Light to the north. Now it sits strangely silent with none of the guards or active warriors it had in times past. The gates can be pried open by strong adventurers (Strength check X 2 to do so).

*Dún Stoirm* is shared by its two powerful inhabitants, the Dark Druid *Scannal* and the *Stormgazer* (See module 'The Giant's Wrath'). Both enchanters used this place as their own and swore to divide it between them, with *Scannal* claiming the lower levels and the *Stormgazer* the tower. Random minor minions of them both roam the place to serve their masters (See 'Random Encounters of the Storm Fort').

*The Stormgazer* retreated from his isle in the Shrouded Isles after the previous adventure module ('The Giant's Wrath') and fled here to regain his strength. Begrudgingly he is serving under the King of Ravens for his failure, and shares the fortress with *Scannal*, each ordered to use their dark powers to repel the forces of Light in their own way. Using his magical lens (or another if the first was destroyed or taken) the *Stormgazer* sends terrible storms down onto the Lands of Light and the Mortal Otherworld. *Scannal* uses his twisted druidic magic to turn the forests and its denizens against those brave enough to travel this far south when he must.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTERS OF THE STORM FORT

#### D10 ENCOUNTER

- GOBLINS 1-6** *Fuath* (Goblins) are wandering the ruins bored and seeking something to do or trouble to make. (These chaotic evil goblins' vital statistics are HD d6, AC 15, and HP 6. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by sword (d6+1), spear (d4+2) and bite (d4). Their abilities are *Darkvision* (30 ft.) and d4 Dark Faery Spell-like Abilities.)

- BAOBHAN SITH** A solitary *Baobhan Sith* lingers in the shadows of *Dún Stoirm* and will find a weak party member to prey on. (This chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD 2d10, AC 13, and HP 20. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by bite (3d12). Their abilities are *Vampiric Hunger*, *Wild Hunt* and *Faery Lure*.)
- RED CAP GOBLIN 1-12** There are traveling in a group through these lands from the Land of the Dead. (These chaotic evil goblins' vital statistics are HD 3d8, AC 14 and HP 24. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by sword (2d8), spear (2d6), bite (d6) and claw (d4). Their abilities are *Wild Hunt* and a d4 Dark Faery Spell-like Abilities.)
- SPRYJYONS 1-12** From the shadows are *Spryjyons* picking through the ruins to find anything of worth; seeing the adventuring party, they will close in to plunder them instead. (These chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD d8+3/4d8+3, AC 15, and HP 11/35. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by club (d10/3d10) and bite (d6/2d8). Their abilities are *Giant Growth* and *Wild Hunt*.)
- SERVANTS OF THE DARK DRUID, 2D8** *Fear Dearg* are carrying out his orders. They will try to stop trespassers, immobilize them, and tell their master the news. (These chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 13, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by spear (2d8) and sword (3d10). Their abilities are *Shuagh Flight*, *Wild Hunt*, and d4 Dark Faery Spell-like Abilities.)
- BOTHIK 1-4** Minions of the *Stormgazer*, are searching the fort for anything to do or anything unusual. They will alert the others in the fort about strangers with an alarm. (These chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD 3d12/6d12, AC 8/16, and HP 36/72. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. Their attack by bite (2d6/5d6), and claw (d4/3d4). Their abilities are *Shapeshifting*, *Giant Growth* and d4 Dark Faery Spell-like Abilities.)
- DARK PIGSIES** Allies to the two evil enchanters, d20 Dark *Pigsies* of *Bucca Dhu*, are stationed here in the bleak ruins to aid their friends. These *Pigsies* will be more than terrible once unleashed. (These chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 12, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by sword (d6+1), spear (d4), and bow (d6+1). Their abilities are *Blend with Nature*, *Lowlight Vision* (50 ft.), *Camouflage*, and d3 Faery Spell-like Abilities.)
- LABH-ALLAN** A nest of *Lábh-Allan* monstrous pests (d12+2) have been disturbed by the two enchanters and they are now out on the prowl to devour anything living in their path. (These chaotic evil rats' vital statistics are HD 3d10, AC 14, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by bite (3d8) and claw (2d6). Their abilities are *Poisonous*.)
- GIANT** A lonely *Ciuthuch* giant has claimed the outer ruins as his own but leaves the two dark enchanters alone. He protects the grounds for them in exchange for a place to sleep in the ruins. (This neutral evil giant's vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 14, and HP 60. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by sword (4d12) and axe (5d20). His abilities are d2 Faery Spell-like Abilities.)
- ROLL AGAIN** Roll on this table twice and combine the results for a unique encounter.

*Trefina's* bird, *Dufach*, will flitter among the stones and ruins to lead the adventuring party into the courtyard area before an encounter occurs, this will greatly disrupt where they must go, and by the end of the situation they must decide where to go on their own – the lower levels or the tower.

*Dufach* will hide during the battle and makes an effort to stay hidden and silent, not come out, and forgets to help the adventuring party for a while.

## THE LAYOUT OF STORM FORT

Once a stone Broch with a surrounding wall of sharpened stones scattered about it, this abandoned fort is now mostly in ruins on the ground floor. Only its walls, a single tower, and the lower levels remain intact. This was a defensive post for the minions of the Raven King in earlier times. Built to keep an eye out toward the Perpetual Forest and the northern Kingdoms of Light, it now sits forgotten.

### GROUND LEVEL

**GATE:** A single rickety wooden door, wrapped in peeling iron bands, is the only way to gain entrance to the Storm Fort without climbing walls. Around it are thick stone walls and a frame with kill-holes for archers to use against invaders.

**WALLS:** Stones stacked, un-mortered, form high walls (for the world of Faery) at 20 ft. It is a CL: 4 to climb them with shaky hand and footholds. Walkways line the top where guards can go if needed.

**COURTYARD:** This large space is filled with the rubble from the collapsed ground floor of the former fort and has little else in it except for the hastily made homes of the minions of the Dark Druid and *Stormgazer*. This is where the first encounters will occur in *Dún Stoirm*.

**GROUND FLOOR FORT:** Only the outlines to the original foundations remain, revealing that roughly six rooms once stood here. Now piles of stones and debris are everywhere and the entrance to the lower levels, where the Dark Druid lives, is here but hard to find (CL: 6). A single door, made from *Findruine*, leads to the lower levels; it usually has a couple of guards (d4 *Fear Deargs*).

### TOWER OF THE STORMGAZER

This tower is less custom made or glamorous than the *Stormgazer*'s original in the Shrouded Isles, but it serves the same purpose. Occasionally (2 in 6 chance) a powerful dark cyclone of lightning-wrapped storms will emit from the top of the tower into the skies (the *Stormgazer* sending his dreadful storms to bother the Children of Light or mortals in the Otherworld). If the adventuring party has not played in *The Giant's Wrath* then they do not know who the *Stormgazer* is, and this will be beneficial for the surprise when they finally meet him.

**SURFACE ENTRYWAY:** A locked metallic door (CL: 7) bars entrance into the tower, once opened the visitor finds a simple stone chamber where Dark Faery guards stand (d6 *Bothiaks*) in a torch-lit space before the stairs that lead upward.

**STAIRS:** These small steps climb over five stories in a spiral, winding upward to the first door. There is a 3 in 6 chance of an encounter along the way, and if so, it will either be d6 *Fear Deargs*, Goblins, *Bothiaks* or other smaller Dark Faery working

for the *Stormgazer*, caught between jobs for him. They will alert him if possible.

**MINIONS' CHAMBERS:** These sections of four small cramped rooms crowd the stairs and are where the *Stormgazer*'s many minions stay. They are filthy and repulsive rooms, with a 5 in 8 chance of finding 2d12 minions present at any time. These loyal Dark Faeries will serve their wizard to the end if he demands it.

**STORMGAZER'S STUDY:** This massive room fills this floor and is full of many tomes, scrolls, and other documents of magical and Otherworldly research. There are many useful sources of magical knowledge here that can be used if enough time is spent here. The CK can add whatever scrolls or books of magic are needed for their campaign.

**THE STORM CHAMBER:** This large spacious chamber has large windows that open to the sky around it where the *Stormgazer* and his sorcerous lens can cast terrible storms down on targeted locations and peoples. More than likely he is here summoning storms down upon lands and peoples, as the Raven King commands, through the glass lens (4 in 6 chance he is present). This room is also his rest chamber with a large bed and furniture, but his possessions are few since the loss of his isle and tower; now he is a desperate and maddened wizard seeking revenge for his innocent family.

**To use the Stormgazer's Lens:** The user must concentrate while gazing into the lens, and in seconds it will pass through the veil between worlds and focus in close to wherever the user wishes. The storms called will give all in a 10 miles radius a -3 to rolls and actions, makes magic users unable to concentrate on their spellcasting due to the fierce biting winds and rain, and sends random lightning strikes against those inside of it (2 in 6 chance/round, and does 3d20 damage). Its duration is an average of thirty minutes with each use. The view is from above in the skies and can give some details. To summon storms out of the lens the user must repeat these words to the glass lens while aiming it:

*I call upon you,*

*Winds that stir, rains that fall, and lightning that strikes,*

*To come forth from where I dwell to where my eyes now gaze,*

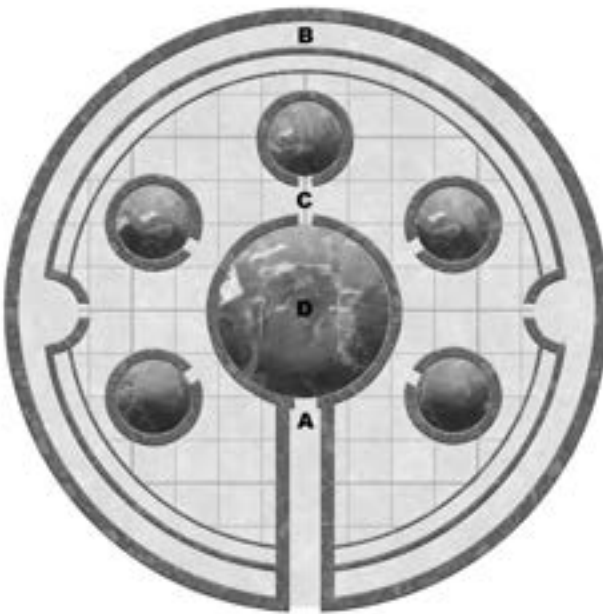
*And do not relent until I command!*

**Lens of the Eye:** This enchanted glass lens, if looked through from a great height, can view in detail both the Mortal and Faery worlds. The lens is six inches in radius and thickness. If the lens is flicked around, a different world can be viewed. Storms can be summoned from within its glassy interior if the correct magical phrases are spoken.

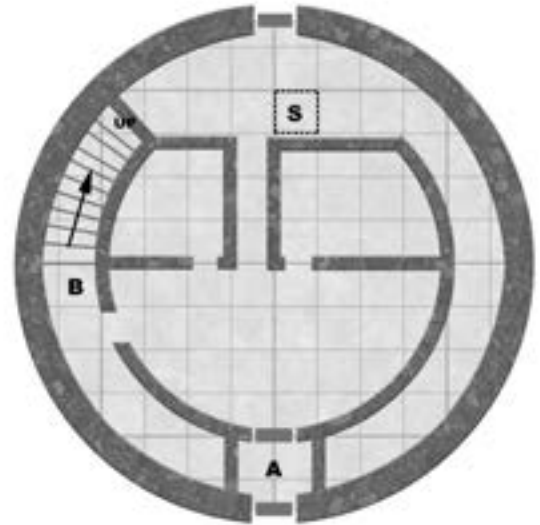
**NOTE:** If some of the adventuring party were involved in *The Giant's Wrath* and have a history with the *Stormgazer*, the human wizard will be crazed in his revenge on them in this second opportunity.

*After losing his private island and followers in the Shrouded Isles to adventurers in the near past, he retreated to Faery to find his missing wife and children. Using his thin resources he combed over the*

## 10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

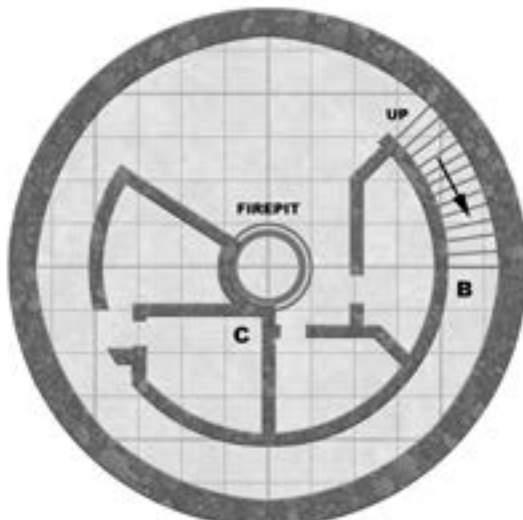


**STORMFORT LAYOUT**

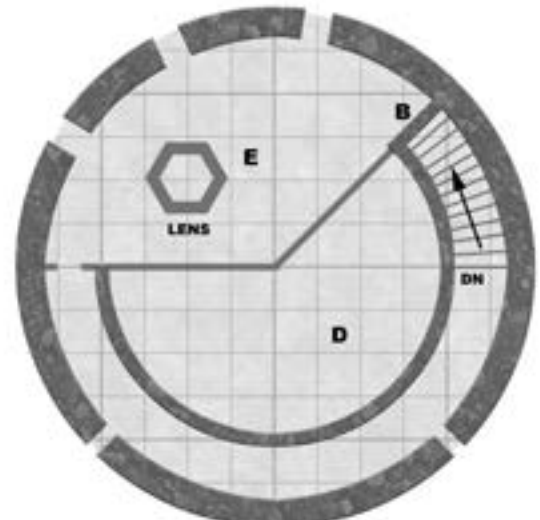


**GROUND FLOOR**  
15Q = 5"

## TOWER OF THE STORMGAZER



**2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR**



**3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR**



Immortal Isles never getting any closer to discovering their whereabouts and, needing more resources he allied himself with the dreadful King of Ravens. This pact was made with the condition that he use his storm summoning abilities to attack the Dark King's enemies in both worlds as needed. In exchange for this, minions and other beings that serve the king will aid the human wizard in finding his hidden family.

**STORMGAZER** (He is a 6TH LEVEL ILLUSIONIST WITH VITAL STATISTICS of HD 6d8, AC 18, and HP 45. His primary attributes are magical, wisdom 17, intelligence 16 and charisma 18. He attacks with sword 3d6 (+3) and dagger 2d4 (+5). He can cast spells appropriate to his level and class in the Illusionist list: 0 level: Dancing Lights, Detect Illusion, Ghost



*Sound, Influence, Magical Aura, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Change Self, Charm Person, Daze, Hypnotism, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Eyes of Fire, Mirror Image, Pyrotechnics, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Hold Person, Scare.)*

The *Stormgazer* has his two *Adar Lluch Gwin* beasts present as well, as he did in the past. These griffin-like monsters serve him to the final word in his commands.

**ADAR LLUCH GWIN** (*These neutral beasts' vital statistics are HD 5d8, AC 14, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by beak (3d8) and claw (4d10). They have spell resistance and regeneration 1.*)

## THE LOWER LEVELS OF THE FORT

Once the nearly hidden door is found and unlocked, stone steps go downwards into a dark, musty level that once held cells and torture chambers, but now desolate and covered in dust. The Dark Druid *Scannal* has turned this into his lair to work his diabolical machinations and plots against the Children of Light. His minions can be found here at times running about doing his bidding or carrying messages up to the *Stormgazer* in the tower. There is a 3 in 6 chance that they will be found in the gloom of the old level.

To do this task on stealth alone will be tough but possible. The fewer conflicts the better since each one will risk alerting the druid or wizard, which would bring about a myriad of problems. Depending on how tense the CK wishes to make this task, the CL can range from 3-6 or higher. It is plausible that no battle occurs here or on the surface if this quest is handled smartly and carefully.

**Holding Cells:** Long since fallen out of use since the fort's heyday, these nine small stone chambers are now covered in debris and dust with no doors to seal them.

**GUARD ROOMS:** These three small rooms give the sentries a clear view of the cells and the distant torture room down the long corridor beyond. There are usually 6-9 *Fuaths* stationed here for *Scannal*.

**MAIN CORRIDOR:** This long corridor stretches the length of this level and joins it all together. There are many spots where sconces for torches sit but empty of the light sources themselves.

**TORTURE ROOM:** Once used in earlier ages by the minions of the Raven King, now the room is sealed, for good reason. *Scannal* is master over a monstrous **Tarb Tened** ('Fire Bull'), and he keeps the bound beast in this chamber as his pet. If he or others were to release it, or if he perishes (freeing it from his magical hold), it will rampage through not only the fort but beyond. The monster is related to the **Each Tened** (See 'Codex Celtarum'). This room is blazing hot and is covered in piles of steaming feces and the shattered remains of ancient torture gear. (*This chaotic evil animal's vital statistics are HD 8d10, AC 19, and HP 80. Its primary attributes are physical and magical. It attacks by gore (5d10), slam, hoof (2d20), and fire attack (3d10). Its ability is Fire Soul.*) *Scannal* has named the bull 'Aed' (Fiery One) for obvious reasons.

**SCANNAL'S CHAMBER:** The Dark Druid resides here in what used to be the fort chief's chambers. It has many smaller rooms filled with the druid's mundane belongings and some debris clustered around the main room where he lives, studies, and plots his schemes. On shelves against the grey stone walls are nearly one hundred bottles of potions, among other ingredients and elixirs he owns. It would be impossible to locate the proper ones needed as *Trefina* requested, at least without some competent aid. *Dufach*, the accursed chough, will make his way here into the room to help them by landing on the six bottles. *They will not be close together on the shelves.* There is a 6 in 8 chance that *Scannal* is present when the adventuring party arrives, and if so, he will be short on words and quick to action using his terrifying magic to rid of them all.

*Scannal the Dark Druid, an evil Morwyn elf, masterminds many plans to either convert or destroy the Forest Folk in the Perpetual Forest for his master the Raven King's causes, and exploit the weaknesses of the Kingdoms of Light. He is a rival to Trefina and they both vie for the King of Ravens' attention. The potions that Trefina is having the characters obtain are practically meaningless in the whole of the plan but give her good reason to see that her rival and/or the adventuring party is slain. Scannal is one of her many rivals plotted out to be slain in these tasks using the noble good-will of the adventurers as a tool.*

**SCANNAL** (*This is a 7<sup>th</sup> level chaotic evil elf druid. His vital statistics are HD 7d8, AC 18, and HP 56. His primary attributes are magical. He attacks with +2 sword (2d4) and +2 dagger (d4). His faery spell-like abilities are Nature's Army (inherited), Shadow Meld, Fey Flight, Hateful Shriek, and Faery Flame. His spells are: 0-level: First Aid, Light, Detect Poison, Know Direction, Create Water, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Calm Animals, Entangle, Magic Stones, Obscuring Mist, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Heat Metal, Summon Swarm, Warp Wood, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Call Lightning, Wall of Wind, 4<sup>th</sup> level: Dispel Magic.*)

*Scannal's possessions of wealth and worth in his chambers range from a collection of 2,500 gps, 200 gems, and whatever magical and enchanted items the CK deems best. It is best to not let the adventurers accumulate too much wealth and items from these tasks along the way since there are many, and it would be impossible to normally carry them all in the course of the adventure. Although the experience rewarded in these tasks is great, each being a mini-adventure on its own, the items and wealth aspect in Faery is not so great (in general).*

The results of the aftermath of this task on Faery and the Otherworld are given below:

If the druid and wizard and all minions are somehow left alive and the potions are taken, they will merely continue their mischief for the Raven King, but *Scannal* may appear later in the adventure (during Act 3) to take *Eiranwen* from the adventurers unexpectedly. Of the variables, this one is the least dangerous.

If *Scannal* is slain — but not his bull — then the *Tarb Tened* will be let free by the minions or the druid and destroy everything in its path, seeking the adventurers in vengeance. Chief *Gwres'* realm will be threatened later in the adventure during the (hopefully) celebratory feast at the end.

If the wizard is slain but the druid is not, *Scannal* will send his bull (if it is not slain) after the adventurers to destroy them. When it finds and attacks them is up to the CK, such a matter could be at a poignant moment later in the story or when they are vulnerable (sleeping, etc).

Finally, if no one is left alive in the Storm Fort, it will attract the attention of the Raven King, who will then send many of his Unseelie and other Dark Faeries to hunt them down, further complicating the adventure. A mix of more insidious beings and monsters can be inserted into the following events as the players make their way through the unfolding narrative.

### TASK #3: THE WITCHES OF COLD FANG

This third task requires some traveling, by boat or by flight, across the Sea of Faery between the isles to the lofty, jagged mountains that border *Tir Tyluanod* – the land of the *Gwiddonod*. The journey across the crystalline glassy seas of Faery can be as eventful as the CK desires or calm, to bring some peace and balance to the earlier madness.

How the adventurers obtain boats is up to them. The waves, waters, and climate are idyllic and peaceful as one travels from the isle of *Airthech* to *Illdathach*, but as one nears the dark lands of the *Gwiddonod* things become gradually worse. If they left the last task without survivors, the Raven King may send a boatload of Fomorians to explore the coastal-lanes to look for them inland; this is up to the CK, but it would be logical. The Dark King may also send Unseelie minions, or even his own father, the accursed giant raven *Cynwal*, to spy for him.

Among the many sights on the journey (which will likely take only a day) they will see are:

Under the clear waves they will see sunken lands and kingdoms appearing as though they are on the surface. Fish and other aquatic life move through the forests, villages, and other places that would ‘normally’ be above the water. Other faery beings, similar to elves (the People of Llyr) live in these submerged lands as one would on dry land.

The Life Tree, though a little distant, towers impossibly high into the skies or Cauldron of Day. Its leafy crown is above the clouds, and the many golden acorns shimmer dazzlingly across the Faery Isles from the sun’s glow. The dark brown trunk is stark against the blue sky and seas, and looms high.

Scintillating glassy and crystal-like exotic faery birds fly the skies, often diving or emerging from the sea. They sing in odd songs, almost sentient but very distinctive. These magical birds are harmless and cannot threaten or wound others, they serve the King of Faery *Angus Óg*.

When waves manifest in the wide sea, they are topped by foamy horses galloping as though running somewhere only to merge back into the waters. These herds of wild foamy horses appear and vanish at random times, only to seem somehow logical in their existence to observers over time.

As the gloomy, mist-shrouded land of *Tir Tyluanod* draws nearer, the atmosphere grows intense and heavy. The haunting echo of owls hooting, and the squawking of ravens fill the coasts around the dark land. One-oared boats roam the foggy coasts bearing dark sails, patrolling the seas, each with d10 *Gwiddon* aboard.

This task requires a tedious and dangerous journey into the near borders of the land of the *Gwiddonod* and their kindred to reach the towering *Mynyddoedd Eufydd* range, and then to locate the mountain peak known as ‘Cold Fang’ where the three hags live.

### GETTING TO THE MOUNTAINS

Landing ashore, the thickly forested wild-lands near *Tir Tyluanod* are menacing enough, with an ominous air hovering over the surrounding lands. Dark cloudy skies and rolling fog cap the witch haunted lands and pour forth.

Sneaking to the massive tooth-like mountains will not be easy. With an average CL:5-7 difficulty, the trek to find Cold Fang Peak is not so simple. Wooded, with high grass and thick undergrowth, the way to *Mynyddoedd Eufydd* should be tense and with the constant potential of everything going wrong.

Encounters in this part of the Isle of *Illdathach* are nearly always going to be threatening and lethal, which is *Trefina*’s secret plan. This is another opportunity to slay more of the heroes sent to ‘help’ *Eiranwen* by the Hag while she makes sure that the pregnant refugee of her evil master is found. This encounter table is a good place to begin setting the stage for the horrors to come once the adventuring party makes their way up to Cold Fang Peak.

The CK can use these encounters as often as they need to keep the tense travel to the storm shrouded peaks intense.

#### RANDOM ENCOUNTERS OF THE COLD FANG

##### D12 ENCOUNTER

- 1 **WARBAND OF GWIDDONOD** This is one of the worst possible encounters to have so near their native land. 3d20 War Witches of the *Mórrígná* are scouting the countryside on horse and in chariot, searching for fleeing slaves, and will happily incorporate any others they find along the way as well. (These lawful evil witches’ vital statistics are HD 2d8, AC 11, and HP 16. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by sword (2d6), spear (d8), and long-bow (d8). Their magic is generally equal to 5<sup>th</sup> level wizards with spells: 0 level: *Dancing Lights*, *Endure Elements*, *Ghost Sounds*, *Mage Hand*, *Message*, 1<sup>st</sup> level: *Burning Hands*, *Charm Person*, *Jump*, *Protection from Good*, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: *Acid Arrow*, *Invisibility*, *Scare*, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: *Fireball*, *Lightning Bolt*, 4<sup>th</sup> level: *Wall of Fire*. Their faery spell-like abilities are *Faery Lure*, *Faery Flame*, *Profound Stare* and *Ravensister*.)
- 2 **PACK OF CŴN ANNWN:** A large pack (d10+3) of these supernatural hounds are running wild in the countryside, perhaps tracking down prey for their masters in the Land of the Owls or the Underworld. (These lawful evil hounds’ vital statistics are HD 4d8, AC 16, and HP 32. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by bite (2d6). Their abilities are *breath weapon* (2d10), *fiery bite* (2d12), *Darkvision* (60 ft.), *immunity to fire and tracking*.)

- 3 **BAOBHAN SÍTH** d6 of these evil vampire faery women have smelled the scent of the adventuring party and are prowling for them to entice and attack at the first opportunity. Since they are the children of the goddess *Baobh Catha*, they lust for blood and gore and will not stop until they are fed. (These chaotic evil faeries' vital statistics are HD 2d10, AC 13, and HP 20. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by bite (3d12). Their faery spell-like abilities are vampiric hunger, wild hunt, and faery lure.)
- 4 **ALDER WITCH** Hidden in the forest are many of these 'Clethrad' witches. Their glowing green eyes and grim faces cover the surface of the bark as out of a nightmare. It is up to the CK to decide how many since these witches can number in the hundreds or more, usually d6 is enough to terrorize the players. These tree shaped witches will pluck the victims from the ground or air and engulf them with their acidic bellies to ingest alive. (These chaotic evil tree witches' vital statistics are HD 8d8+40, AC 16, and HP 104. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by slam and branches (d10+6) in three attacks/round. Their abilities are Lowlight Vision (50 ft.) and Plant Traits.)
- 5 **GWYLLION** Blending into the land itself, these evil-minded and cruel faeries will victimize and terrify any unlucky passersby in their 'territory.' Feminine in form, and a hint of shape, they blur the line between rock, tree, and shadow, and flit among the branches of trees like ghosts in the peripheral vision. They are common in the Land of the Owls and make a traveler's life hell. (These chaotic evil faeries' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 13, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by claws (2d4) and bite (d8). Their faery spell-like abilities are Frightful Appearance, Winged Ways and Wild Hunt.)
- 6 **BISCLAVERET** Howling and feral, the accursed werewolf will resume its normal faery form in disguise and wish to join the adventuring party for 'protection' against a monster that hunts it. In reality, it is hiding from itself and will transform at night and attack the weakest character in their sleep, ripping them apart in a bloodbath. This might take some time, a few days, to gain the trust of the adventurers before such a deed can be done. (This chaotic evil monster's vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 14, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by bite (2d8) and claw (2d6). Their abilities are Lycanthrope and d4 faery spell-like abilities.)
- 7 **BIASD BHEULACH** Mysterious in appearance, this wailing monster sits in wait in mountainous areas for prey to pass. This being never looks the same twice when glanced at, but its horror is unique. It will ambush the adventurers when the chance comes. (This chaotic evil being's vital statistics are HD 3d8, AC 13, and HP 24. The primary attributes are magical and physical. It attacks by bite (4d6) and claw (3d6). Its abilities are Shapeshifting and a d2 faery spell-like abilities.)
- 8 **GWIDDON SCOUTS** A small party (d10+1) of War-Witches roams the wilderness around *Tir Tylluanod* on horses. They will fall upon the adventuring party with nets and ropes to capture them if possible. (These lawful evil witches' vital statistics are HD 2d8, AC 11, and HP 16. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by sword (2d6), spear (d8), and long-bow (d8). Their magic is generally equal to 5<sup>th</sup> level wizards with spells: 0 level: Dancing Lights, Endure Elements, Ghost Sounds, Mage Hand, Message, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Burning Hands, Charm Person, Jump, Protection from Good, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Acid Arrow, Invisibility, Scare, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Fireball, Lightning Bolt, 4<sup>th</sup> level: Wall of Fire. Their faery spell-like abilities are Faery Lure, Faery Flame, Profound Stare and Ravensister.)
- 9 **DEARG DU** This deceptive faery vampire woman will lure the noble and eager to her aid, seek to discover their purpose, and then signal the *Gwiddonod* to stop them. She will attack the weakest party member and take their life by vampirism in a gory display. (This chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 15, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by bite (2d8). Their faery spell-like abilities are Vampirism and Faery Lure.)
- 10 **FOMORIANS** d10 Sea Giants are raiding and marauding, as they usually do, from their land to the south, and they happen to cross paths with the adventurers. The giants would rather capture and disarm the adventurers than kill them, so they can drag them back to their long-ship, go out to sea, and take them home to the Land of the Giants to be slaves, and eventually to the Land of the Dead for the King of Ravens (if he knows of them and what their quest is). (These chaotic evil giants' vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 14, and HP 48. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by sword (d12), spear (2d10), and bite (2d8). Their faery spell-like abilities are Water Soul, and a d2 other Dark Faery spell-like abilities.)
- 11 **GLASTIG** This wild faery forest lady will watch and stalk the adventurers as they travel and make their way across the wilderness, always staying out of sight. She will wait until one strays or is left alone before she lures him into her trap. First to seduce and then to kill in a savage bloodlust. (This neutral evil faery's vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 10 and HP 12. Her primary attributes are magical. She attacks by kick (2d4) and bite (3d6). Her faery spell-like abilities are Faery Lure and Wild Hunt.)
- 12 **GLASTYN** Hidden in the foliage of the wilderness in Faery is this shape-changing beast. Disguised as something that will easily fool the adventuring party, the *Glastyn* will then rob them of their possessions and leave them vulnerable for the *Gwiddonod* or other natives of the region to take advantage of them. (This chaotic neutral faery's vital statistics are HD 3d8, AC 13, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by bite (3d6) and hoof (3d8). Their faery spell-like abilities are Shapeshifting and a d4 extra.)

*Dufach* will fly around the adventuring party as their impromptu 'guide' as before, and make his presence known as they draw nearer the mountains. He will help them locate the proper mountain, of the six that make the *Mynyddoedd Eufydd*, by landing at its base near the old path that leads upwards.

## COLD FANG

'*Ysgithr Oer*' as it is known to the natives in *Tir Tylluanod*, is in the middle of the row of twisted, misty, and perilous mountains of *Mynyddoedd Eufydd*, formed in ancient times by the thunderous hammer of *Taran Ymhaer*. At its very top, covered in the thick clouds and gloom, is the lair of the three *Gwrachod* (hags).

A thin rocky path winds its way up the side of the high mountain in the mists. The grey rock blends in with the fog that rolls and oozes about its surface. Strange beasts call and echo with no clear point of origin, and far off, the Land of the Owls is a dark, brooding forested country, ominous and threatening in its silence.

The trek up the side of Cold Fang will take some time and will always feel on the edge of terrible danger. To increase the odds of this being difficult, a chance of rockslide or avalanche can be rolled often, this can be determined by making each player roll a d10. If they roll under a 2, they are caught in a rockslide underfoot



that will force them to make a Dexterity check or plunge to their death below (taking d100 damage). The fall will be quick and unexpected, leaving few chances to save the victim.

As the ascent gets higher over Faery, the startling geography and exotic nature of this world comes into finer detail. Although the thick mists and clouds cover most of it, a clear view, when it happens, is breath-taking for mortals.

## 16 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Spotting the cave of the Hags is not difficult. Smoke billows out of it on the wind-blown peak. Jagged rocks are everywhere with no trace of plant life, only bleached bones scattered about everywhere one looks. A wretched smell emits from the cave brought on by the dire and insidious actions of the three within.

**NOTE:** Because the Hags possess Second Sight they already saw, in visions, the arrival of the adventuring party and plan to lure them into a false sense of security to capture them. They will do this with great skill.

## OGOF WRACHOD

The cave of the three Hags, *Aerona*, *Aeronwen*, and *Aeronwy*, the three sisters of slaughter, steams with repulsive odors and has piles of rotting debris, flies, and waste strewn underfoot. The *Aeroniaid* (as they are collectively called by many in Faery) spoil and poison everything they touch by association and contact. On this occasion they are prepared to deal with the foolish adventurers.

*The plan is this: One hag, Aeronwy, will be 'sleeping' on the floor by the central cauldron and appear vulnerable. A spell will be placed around her ('Hypnotism') to mesmerize those who step too close (within 10 ft.). Those failing will be temporarily stuck in fascination of the wretched hag while the other two, Aerona and Aeronwen, each in her room in the shadows armed with magic, will ambush them from the side chambers.*

## CAVE LAYOUT

The *Aeroniaid* have several caverns to themselves atop Cold Fang, and they have hoarded their wasteful and ugly lifestyle in each. They have accumulated a fair share of wealth and enchanted goods as well.

**MAIN CAVERN:** Coming in from the entrance, this large oblong-shaped grey granite cavern is the largest in the *Ogof Wrachod*. Sitting in the middle is a massive black ornate cauldron on a stand, over a blazing fire with steam and bubbles from its strange and possibly dangerous contents. The floor is strewn with the debris of old herbs and other ingredients used in potions and elixirs, with plentiful bones from animals and other beings. Only the firelight under the cauldron lights the chamber. Hanging from the rocky ceiling are deadly cutlery and various odd esoteric objects and ingredients. Bats hang overhead and squeak at times, about to erupt into wild flying clouds at the slightest noise. Lying on the floor near the fire and cauldron is the giant hag *Aeronwy* snoring. Standing within 10 ft. of her will set off the spell that all must resist or be hypnotized by, and then be attacked by all three hags.

**AERONWEN'S CHAMBER:** This cavern has her lice ridden bedding on the rocky floor, bones scattered in messes everywhere, and shelves of scrolls, potions, and other assorted items. In one corner are two sturdy wooden cages holding six malnourished, frightened, and desperate faery captives. Each cage has one door and there is an iron-shackle holding them closed. *Aeronwen* feeds on them as her own personal stock separate and jealously guarded from her two sisters.

**Aerona's Chamber:** The eldest and head hag has the finest and largest personal room in Cold Fang to herself. Though big, it is filled with the disgusting and questionable clutter of her magical machinations, gluttonous eating, and terrible lifestyle. Unlike her sisters, her bed is raised from the floor and constructed out of hardwood. Being that, it is still lice ridden and foul smelling. Hidden under a stone (CL: 7 to spot), she has her own personal stash of wealth and magical items.

**AERONWY'S CHAMBER:** The youngest of the three *Aeroniaid*, her chamber is lacking any real items of worth, but she keeps it the cleanest. Her filth and debris are organized in places and one can walk through it easier than the rest of the chambers. Like her middle sister, she has her disgusting bedding on the floor in the unpleasant cavern.

**TUNNEL TO ANNWN:** This cramped and lightless cave is formed from the thousands of fissures and rips in Cold Fang, which eventually lead deep into the underworld where the ghostly and dreadful world of Annwn lies. Bats fly to and fro here, some who serve the Queen of the bats, and spy on the hags and peoples beyond. *The CK can add extra encounters from Annwn to spice up this task further by having the Ghost Elves ('Plant Annwfyfyn' in the Codex Celtarum) make an appearance. One story driven angle would be that the Pen Annwn Arawn also seeks Eiranwen to take and raise the Doom Child for his own.*

**LAIR FOR MINIONS:** A nest of Brags (15) live here and serve the Hags, running their errands, spying and other jobs, active at all times of the day and night. These devious little shapeshifters are loyal if rather dumb. *(These chaotic evil faeries' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 11, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by dagger (d8), bite (d10), and claw (d4). Their faery spell-like abilities are Shapeshifting, Wild Hunt and d4 more.)*

**NEST FOR CORPSE BIRDS:** *Aerona* keeps many pet *Aderyn Y Corph* (30) in the caves for her own private purposes, not trusting the sneaky and dull-minded Brags. Because these are near dead and repulsive birds, they do not leave a mess of waste, only the fleshy scraps of the victims that they are fed to keep them happy. These doom bringing birds obey *Aerona's* every word of command and are more loyal to her than her sisters by far. If it were ever to be an option, she would turn them on *Aeronwen* and *Aeronwy* in an instant to remain alone in power. *(These chaotic evil birds' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 17, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by beak (d6) and claw (d4). Their ability is Vampiric Drain.)*

**LARDER:** The *Aeroniaid* store their foodstuffs here, but not very carefully. Rotting, moldy, and repulsive foods are piled in here without care. Old breads, cheeses, meats, and all other acquired sustenance taken from their victims in some way or another, or by their Brags to appease them.

## THE AERONIAID

These three Hags were never given a chance to be goddesses in the Shining Realms, they were cursed by the jealous *Arianrhod* while in the womb because of the ire their mother caused among the gods. Once, in earlier ages *Anwen* was so beautiful that she



enticed the attention of the other gods and champions in the Family of Dôn, drawing away such affection from Arianrhod. Rather than risk having *Anwen's* three unborn triplets causing more undue attention, the spiteful goddess cursed her womb, and these three vile and evil hearted daughters were born into the World of Men. They were left to fend for themselves by the age of six after creating animosity and discord in their native land and, eventually, they found their way to Faery to hide and gain strength for revenge someday. Over time they grew in magic, hate, and hideousness, plotting to also cause trouble with her unborn children in the same way they were dealt. *If they are slain, as Trefina desires, it only really serves her purposes and not for the sake of Eiranwen in the end.*

**AERONA:** She is tall, 10 ft, and the most cunning of the three, thus her being the leader; she is only the eldest by emerging from the womb first. *Aerona* despises her siblings, selfishly wanting all of the power and opportunities for herself, and has no problem with putting her competition in danger's way. *Aerona* is also the most magically capable of the three, acquiring her skill rapidly and by devious means, always at the expense of the other two. *(This chaotic evil hag's vital statistics are HD 4d20, AC 16, and HP 80. Her primary attributes are magical. She attacks by spear +3 (3d8) and knife (2d8). Her abilities are Second Sight (level 2), Wild Hunt, and Destiny (she can only be slain by sword wielder or not at all, it is her fate). Her magic is equal to a 5<sup>th</sup> level wizard, casting these spells: 0 level: Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Message, Open/Close, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Burning Hands, Charm Person, Magic Missile, Shield, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Darkness, Mirror Image, Scare, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Dispel Magic, Fly, 4<sup>th</sup> level: Wall of Fire.)*

**AERONWEN:** This accursed second born sibling is more mentally astute than the other two — as she must be to survive. However, she is not capable of much more than the youngest in terms of battle or magic. She hordes captives for her own sick needs, taken by the Brags for her, and does not share. Unlike *Aerona*, she stands 7 ft. tall but is just as terrifying in appearance.

**AERONWY:** The youngest of the *Aeroniaid*, she is fearful of the other two and obeys their sometimes foolish demands (for example, her role in this plan to trap the adventurers). Smaller than both in height, at 6 ft, she is not fond of being the smallest or youngest and will do anything to undermine and kill her siblings.

**AERONWEN/AERONWY:** *(These chaotic evil hags' vital statistics are HD 4d20, AC 15, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by sword (2d8), dagger (2d8), and spear (3d8). Their abilities are Wild Hunt, and Destinies (both sisters cannot be slain until the eldest is first, an irony granted by Arianrhod). Their magic is equal to 3<sup>rd</sup> level Illusionist: 0 level: Dancing Lights, Detect Illusion, Influence, Magic Aura, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Change Self, Dragon Image, Head Fog, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Pyrotechnics).*

#### TASK #4: THE RESCUE OF SORCHA

Held in the enchanted forest of *Breithell* by the *Pigsie* tribes of King *Bucca Wyn*, *Sorcha*, a mortal girl from Ireland is about to be dealt with savagely by the Twilight faeries. Although this would seem like a flippant task to 'save' *Eiranwen*, *Trefina* has stressed that this Gaelic girl is a friend of *Eiranwen* to give the

adventurers just reason in saving her. Sadly, like the other tasks, this is not true, but a ruse to fulfill her own diabolical plans in the long run.

*Breithell* lies flush on the border of the *Mynyddoedd Eufydd* and *Mág Môn* (The Plain of Sports) and is filled with sylvan folk, some good and others not so pleasant. The chief race that rules these magical glades are the *Pigsie*-folk. *Sorcha* is a dark witch, a conspirator with the *Gwiddonod*, and overall, completely evil by nature, she will join *Trefina* at the end and help to destroy the adventurers by the final task when signaled.

After finishing with their task with the *Aeroniaid*, they must follow *Dufach* down the mountainside to the large wondrous forest. It will be a large, wild place filled with unusual encounters and sights. Finding the *Pigsies* will be difficult, not even *Trefina's* bird can do so once in the woods.

**NOTE:** The faery spell-like ability 'Wisdom of the Woods' at Level 3 is the *only* way to find the *Pigsies* in the thick of the dense enchanted forest. Hopefully this encounter will involve convincing them to be led back to their settlements.

This encounter table is a modified version as first used in the module 'The Crimson Pact' to better suit this campaign.

#### d8 ENCOUNTER

- GOD(DESS)** One of the many Celtic deities could either appear before the character(s), be encountered doing something significant, or whatever the CK decides. This can be a major plot turning point in that character's life in some way. They could be given a magical item, side quest, etc. *Another story angle is that one of the deities concerned, Rhiannon or Arianrhod, wants to complicate things further in this saga by adding a new twist of some sort.*
- DARK PIGSIES 2-6** They will purposefully confuse and deceive the character(s) and try to sabotage their quest. They will be working with the King of Ravens to have the adventurers slain before they cause any trouble further in his plans on re-acquiring *Eiranwen* and his unborn child.
- GWIDDONOD RAIDING PARTY 2-16** Along with *Cwn Annwn* (d6) and *Fey Owls* (d8), the party has gone far in its nightly raid into the forest, causing havoc and terror wherever it treads. The War Witches often descend into the woods here to cause havoc among the sylvan folk to gather new slaves.
- WANDERING FEY** The character(s) find a quirky little Faery that wants to speak to them. Its intention is not clear at first, but it wants to play a Game of Riddles, with the price being the sword's shard if the character loses. This will require the CK to be clever enough to win the challenge. If the Faery stranger loses or wins, it will wander off into the forest and vanish.
- BEING LED ASTRAY** Usually it is the mischief of the *Pigsies* to cause this, but in this case it could have been a stray enchanted piece of sod, etc., that was underfoot and caused it. The character(s) will have to make a Magic Save (vs. CL:6) or be completely lost. Even if the campsite is less than 50 feet away or more, they will not be able to break the spell. Even aided by the others in the party, they will not be able to find their directions.

6. **GALLYTROTS 1-6** These shambling, diseased beings are wandering *Breithell* looking for victims to mob and take down to devour with their rotten teeth. They have strayed from their traditional home of Annwn and are now lost to wander in Faery.
7. **ENCHANTED POOL** A clear pool sits in an idyllic spot in the foliage, its waters shimmering on the leaves and surrounding woods. Inside the waters, however, sit d4 Undines seeking to lure victims into the waters and then drown and devour them.
8. **GOBLIN RAIDING PARTY 2-12** A group of common goblins, led by two *Fuaths*, is roaming the shadowy woods, seeking victims and slaves. They will show no mercy and will be terrible if encountered.

## THE EXECUTION OF SORCHA

By the time the adventuring party finds the well-hidden forest village of the *Pigsies*, they will see a beautiful red-haired, half-wild girl, covered in tattoos and garbed in a dark crimson dress and black cloak, held within a *Findruine* metal cage, dangling by chains from an oak tree. *Unknown to the adventurers (unless they are forest folk and can spot them) there are 12 Pigsie warriors watching her from the ground, trees, and above.*

Sorcha will tell the adventurers:

*“Thank you for saving me, by the gods above and below! These vile Pigsies were going to burn me alive as a witch during their feast tomorrow. They used their trickery to capture me and drag me from my world one night. Before I could fight back, I was placed into slumber and awoke here being told my fate by their druids, for crimes I did not do! Their magical metal keeps me from getting free. Please help and get me out of here before the entire tribe returns.”*

To break the cage, it will take a combined damage of 35 Hit Points dealt in one single attack, or the door’s lock picked (CL: 7). The longer it takes to free her, the greater the chance more *Pigsies* arrive (3 in 6 chance, +3d6 more *Pigsies*).

*Dufach* will land on her shoulder and squawk in her ear once she is freed (the two were lovers before *Trefina* separated them by her magic). Once the two are united, *Trefina*’s magic will take effect, and Sorcha will be transported by a spell to join her on the other isle in the Perpetual Forest, this will leave the adventurers to contend with a furious tribe of *Pigsies* in the aftermath.

**PIGSIE WARRIORS, 100** (These chaotic neutral faeries’ vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 12, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by spear (d4+1), bow (d6+1) and sword (d6). Their faery spell-like abilities are Blend with Nature (inherited), Lowlight Vision (40 ft.), Camouflage, and d4 more faery abilities).

**PIGSIE DRUIDS, 20** (These 4<sup>th</sup> level chaotic neutral faery druids’ vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 12, HP 48. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by spear (d4+1). Their faery spell-like abilities are Blend with Nature (inherited), Lowlight Vision (40 ft.), Camouflage, and d4 more faery abilities). Their spells are: 0 level: Endure Elements, Light, First Aid, Purify Food & Drink, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Entangle, Faerie Fire, Obscuring Mist, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Lightning.)

The adventuring party must escape *Breithell* with their lives once the *Pigsies* are angered and it will not be easy to do since other sylvan forest peoples will aid the tribe. *Dufach* will guide them southwards across the *Mág Fíndargat* (The Plain of Fair Silver), an area of wild open silvery plains populated by all manner of faery-folk, towards the next to final task. This journey can take a short time, or be lengthy, depending on the previous actions of the party and other factors.

## TASK #5: TO STEAL FROM GIANTS

Of the tasks, this is perhaps the worst, and by this time, the adventuring party *must* be weakened and almost insane from their hair-raising work. They must travel into the rocky, shattered *Tír bhFómorach* (Land of the Giants) where scores of terrible and destructive giants roam. Cold rain falls, mud is underfoot everywhere, and the skies are perpetually overcast in this awful land.



The bird will guide them over hill, through bleak and desolate valleys, past traces of the powerful natives (giant foot-steps, destroyed bridges, wagons, etc.) and stone forts where they dwell. *There is a 3 in 8 chance that a giant will be encountered along the way.* The many different races of giant in Faery are here, sharing this savage land precariously day to day. To be stealthy in this awful land for the long miles of travel required (100 miles) will be tough, with an average difficulty of CL: 6. If an encounter occurs, this table of giants can be used to know where to start:

#### D4 ENCOUNTER OF GIANTS

- 1 **ATHACH** Grim, low-brow, hairy and brutal giants (15 ft. tall), these beings are too crude to use forged weapons, resorting to adapting trees as clubs and boulders as missiles. Luckily, they rarely travel in groups. (*These chaotic evil giants' vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 17, and HP 48. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by tree club (3d10), fist (2d10) and thrown boulder (3d12). Their abilities are none.*)
- 2 **CAWR** Like the Athach but more intelligent, these giants (12-15 ft. tall) are capable of having societies and using technology to their advantage, but not as well as the other faery races or humanity. There is a 2 in 6 chance of several traveling together (d4). (*These chaotic neutral giants' vital statistics are HD 9d8, AC 17, and HP 72. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by 2 fist (d8), club (2d8) and boulder (3d6). Their abilities are Rock Throwing, Twilight Vision and Wild Hunt.*)
- 3 **CIUTHUCH** Once great rulers and champions, these giants (15-20 ft. tall) appear more like larger versions of human or elf-kind. Now in decline since the rise of the Raven King, Witch Queen, and other great kingdoms in both worlds, they linger and dwell in isolated places seeking a chance for glory again. Since they are solitary, there is only one of these fallen champions to deal with at a time. (*These neutral evil giants' vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 14, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by sword (4d12) and axe (5d20). Their faery spell-like abilities are d4+1.*)
- 4 **FÓMORACH** The blue skinned demonic children (8-12 ft. tall) of the Sea Hag Goddess *Domnu* that serve the King of Ravens as his explorers and navy. They rule this land with forts everywhere and many unstable kingdoms along the coasts. Where there are Sea Giants there are always scores of minions (usually d12 Goblins). They are fond of eating or enslaving their victims. These giants usually never travel alone and can be encountered in groups of d12 or d20 individuals. (*These chaotic evil giants' vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 14, and HP 48. Their primary attributes are magical and physical. They attack by sword (d12), spear (2d10) and bite (2d8). Their faery spell-like abilities roll d4 in 'Codex Celtarum' on pg. 87.*)

#### TANWG GAWR'S FORT

*Dufach* flies and guides the weary adventurers through this bleak, grey land to eventually find a drab stone fortress sitting on a high cliff overlooking the seas of Faery. High walls surround the dreadful place and many guards (d6 goblins and a few Fomorians – d4) patrol the walls.

The gates are closed, locked, and massive. To pick the lock is a CL 7. *Tanwg* and his followers do not anticipate trouble unless the adventuring party has made it a point throughout this module to anger and loudly mock the King of Ravens.

#### 20 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Sneaking into *Din Tanwg* through one of the many windows or entrances takes a CL: 4. To climb the wet stone structure is a CL 5, three times, to reach all three levels of this massive fort. *Tanwg's* fort's layout is simplified, but this gives the CK room to embellish as needed beyond the basics given.

### DIN TANWG'S LAYOUT

#### GROUND FLOOR LEVEL

**ENTRYWAY:** Two massive wooden doors and steps take the visitor into the main hall where Lord *Tanwg* rules. This entryway usually has two Sea Giants guarding it, or a handful of goblins. A second set of doors led to *Tanwg's* hall.

**TANWG'S HALL:** Built to giant scale, this cold, dark hall has several long tables within and a few guards (d6) around the giant lord on his throne. It is the central place in his fort, to emphasize his ego and importance. There is a high chance that *Tanwg* is present (4 in 8 chance), and if so, he is seated before the roaring hearth eating massive platters of food with his company of warriors (9).

**SERVANTS' QUARTERS/KITCHENS:** *Tanwg's* many enslaved peoples (from all races and worlds alike) live and prepare food here in cramped conditions (five large rooms). There are always 2d20 of them at any time.

**HOLDING CELLS:** This section of the fortress is devoted to temporarily keeping prisoners before they are interrogated and eaten, or more rarely sent to be slaves or to the King of Ravens. There are eight stone cells with iron bars (from the mortal world) to keep the faeries. At the moment, there are two prisoners present: one a frazzled old grey-haired human man, and the other an unfortunate *Pigsie* scout. It is a CL:6 to pick the locks.

**WASTE PIT:** *Tanwg* and his giants toss their scraps and other waste here in this sink-hole that swallowed a room in the fort. Over time it has gained a terrible odor, pests, and carries sickness about it. Anyone within it must make a Constitution check or become awfully sick for days.

#### SECOND FLOOR LEVEL

This level of the fortress is the lodging for *Tanwg*, his family and guests as well as his elite warriors. It is here that his personal belongings will be found.

**WARRIOR RETINUE:** His nine giants that loyally serve him have their quarters here. They are Spartan but messy as well, with some wealth hidden under bedding and filth (d100 gold x d20, d10 gems, and 2d6 magic items). It is unlikely they will be present as they are always in the company of *Tanwg*.

**TANWG'S CHILDREN'S QUARTERS:** This double room is a mess, filled with the many 'toys' gathered for the young Sea Giant children. Both the boy, *Crabhanc*, and girl, *Áine*, are here most of the time with their nursemaids (3), unless they are eating with their father and mother in the main hall below. The CK can decide if anything of worth is in this room.

**TANWG'S ARMORY:** Guarded always by two giants, and locked (CL: 7 to pick), this windowless stone room is packed with the giant's weapons, armor, and other accouterments of battle. They are placed on the walls on pegs, and in racks against the corners in a sloppy display, but for quick access. Dozens of every necessary weapon imaginable are in here for his use, and all have seen use in the past. Among his armaments are: +2 *Armor of Fire Resistance*, *Animated Shield* (will defend its user on its own), +3 *Sword of Elf Bane*, *Javelin of Lightning* (5d6 damage), and +2 *Mace of Terror*.

**TANWG & INDEG'S CHAMBER:** This is the room that the adventurers are seeking for this task. Inside it are *Tanwg's* possessions, as vague as the description is by *Trefina*, they all lie in a chest. Unfortunately, the door is usually locked (CL: 8 to pick), and the halls are patrolled by his warriors (2) every ten minutes. Once inside, one will find a large rich chamber, decorated and prepared with the finest of fabrics, wood, and stones from all worlds. A massive bed sits in one corner and a walk-in wardrobe holding the couples' extravagant clothing. Slave chains sit by the bed, empty now. One window is here, and its shutters are closed. At the foot of the bed sits *Tanwg's* special chest full of items, it is ornate and richly made and cannot be opened by a lock-pick as it is heavily enchanted. (*Trefina* can cast a powerful *Unlock* spell to do so, until then no spell or vision can penetrate it to reveal its secrets to the adventurers. What is in this chest are many artifacts of high magic that are intended as gifts to the *Pen Annwn* for his kind generosity of allowing the birthing to commence in his realm, a *MacGuffin* in some measure for the story).

The only way this mysterious chest can be taken is by carrying it, or finding another way, to get it out of the fortress. It weighs over 500 lbs, and its contents shift, making it unwieldy.

## THE ESCAPE

Getting the chest full of *Tanwg's* possessions out of the fort will be as difficult as getting to it. Any number of things can go wrong here and set off a chain reaction making escape impossible.

The most straightforward method of taking the chest is by stealing a sailing craft from the giants from their docks below the cliffs of the fort and making a quick escape across the Sea of Faery to the shores of the Perpetual Forest for the final task (See 'Task #6: The Grove of Deception' in Act 3'). It will mean the adventuring party must then sneak their way out of the fort, down the stone steps to the docks amidst the other long-ships, and commandeer a vessel of their own to flee.

The waves are foamy, with crashing waves and grey waters around the *Land of the Giants*, a stark sun shines when it manages to appear through the overcast skies. If the giants remain unaware of the theft somehow, there will be logically no pursuit, but more plausibly this task will not be so easy, and they will be in an uproar. If this is so, *Tanwg* (if still alive) will send shiploads of giants and minions to chase the adventurers across the open seas.

He has six long-ships (each holds 15 giants, 20 goblins/minions, and 45 slaves at the oars).

*Tanwg's* forces will not stop until they catch the trespassing thieves, or they are misled, or lost along the way. This will be hard to do because they are masters of the seas and the deep seas, but it is possible.

It will be a race to the shores of the Perpetual Forest on the isle of *Airthech*, against time (the New Moon is tonight!), and because of the many dark forces against them since undertaking this terrible set of tasks.

**LORD TANWG** (This 7<sup>th</sup> level warrior giant's vital statistics are HD 7d12, AC 18, and HD 118. His primary attributes are magical and physical. He attacks with a +3 Good Alignment *Bane Sword* (4d10), +1 *Spear of Accuracy* (3d6) and *Shield of Fire* (fires a flame blast every other round at a foe, range 50 ft. and 3d10 damage). His abilities are specialized in sword combat, combat dominance (2 attacks/round), *Howl of Doom*, and *Fey Frenzy*.)

The statistics for his warriors are given earlier in this section. If *Tanwg* is slain, his land and holdings will fall into chaos quickly as other rival giants will try to usurp his legacy, this alone will keep his forces from chasing the adventurers if they leave with the chest.

## THE BIRTHING

### TASK #6: THE GROVE OF DECEPTION

*Dufach* will appear again before the adventurers once the forested coastline of the Perpetual Forest comes in view. The bird will wait on the rocks until they come ashore and then guide them into the woods before dusk settles and the New Moon is at hand.

There will be a strange silence for a time as they carry the chest into the faery forest, only the noise from wildlife will be heard and little more. No ambushes or anything else will occur during the long journey. A strange tension hovers in the air that should be gone since the tasks of *Trefina* are over.

Just before dusk *Dufach* leads to them to the edge of a shadowy old grove where *Sorcha* and *Bairrfhionn* await them to take the chest. *Sorcha* will tell them:

"*Trefina* is grateful that you have done this hard work, your geis is now lifted, and you are free to go. Your reward will be waiting for you soon, it will be obvious when the time comes."

*Bairrfhionn* will take the chest into the dark grove away from the adventurers and descend earthen steps in the middle, to a special chamber. *Sorcha* will bar the way from letting the adventurers take part in what is to come. *Eiranwen's* birthing ceremony will be taking place in a chamber deep in *Annwn*, where she has been taken. The King of Ravens is being deceived by his own minions in the end because they were given a better reward by the *Pen Annwn Arawn* (the Raven King will send his most powerful minions to kill everyone and take the pregnant girl back to his fortress at *Din Marw* soon).

**NOTE:** At this point in the adventure, the players are left with a few options to redeem things. They can:



Slay Sorcha and *Bairrfhionn* and make their way into Annwn to snatch *Eiranwen*, while she is in labor, and take her to freedom somewhere (a fort or City of Light) before she gives birth and the furious King of Ravens arrives. They will not have another chance before the final events occur.

Accept their job is done, geis lifted, and can go their way now, not worried about *Eiranwen* or what is about to happen. (See 'The Doom Child'). This will lead to the awful situation that Faery and the Mortal world will suffer for and not be able to resist once it occurs.

### BIRTHING IN ANNWN

*Eiranwen* is placed deep, six stories, into the underworld in a large chamber on an altar slab with many (6) Shadow Elf priests and warriors (12) as well as *Trefina* herself standing over the mortal about to give birth. This is a dark, terribly gloomy chamber and goes further into Annwn. Seated in many rows are Dark Faery dignitaries

To sneak into this chamber will require the best skills possible, as the danger is everywhere, even more so than elsewhere in this epic adventure. It will take a CL: 6 x 3 to make the many floors, shadowed corridors, and *Eiranwen*'s chamber itself. Time is running out for two reasons, 1.) the arrival of the King of Ravens' forces, and 2.) the birthing. If the characters are caught, the Shadow Elves

will quickly descend on them from all sides and use brute force to deny them a chance to alter events any further.

**GWYLL WARRIORS** (These lawful evil 6<sup>th</sup> level fighters' vital statistics are HD 3d6/6d10, AC 18, and HP 78. Their primary attributes are physical and magical. They attack by broadsword (3d10) and spear (2d8). Their abilities are Bat Form, Wild Hunt, and d2 Plant Annwfyn spell-like abilities.)

**GWYLL WIZARD-PRIESTS** (These 5<sup>th</sup> level priests' vital statistics are HD 3d6/5d8, AC 13, and HP 73. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by dagger (d4) and spear (2d6). Their spells are: 0 level: Endure Elements, First Aid, Light, and Purify Water/Food, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Command, Protection from Good, Sanctuary, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Darkness, Spiritual Weapon, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Dispel Magic). Their spell-like abilities are Bat Form, Wild Hunt and d4 Plant Annwfyn spell-like abilities.)

*Eiranwen*'s labors will be painful, causing her to scream in agony often, her voice echoing in the dark chambers eerily. The Shadow Elf priests will be around her, all the while performing rituals, chanting, and preparing for what is to come.

### RAVEN KING'S PRESENCE

**NOTE:** The King of Ravens will send his mightiest minions to disrupt this birthing and take *Eiranwen* and his child. It is up to the CK when this terrible event occurs during this last Act as it will quickly spiral everything out of control more than it already is. He will send:



30 Red-Cap Goblins, with 20 regular goblins, plus d20 assorted Dark Faeries.

25 giants (of all races).

His cursed father 'Cynwal' to do the dirty work of snatching Eiranwen and the child (if born already).

15 5<sup>th</sup> level wizards from various races.

**CYNWAL** (This 18<sup>th</sup> level wizard aderyn corph's vital statistics are HD 10d20, AC 20, and HP 200. His primary attributes are magical. He attacks by claw (8d20) and beak (10d12). His magic is 0 level: Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Endure Elements, Ghost Sound, Mage Hand, Message, 1<sup>st</sup> level: Alter Size, Burning Hands, Change Self, Charm Person, Hold Portal, Magic Missile, Shield, 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Detect Thoughts, Darkness, Invisibility, Locate Object, Scare, Shatter, 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Dispel Magic, Fireball, Lightning Bolt, Gust of Wind, Summon Lesser Monster, 4<sup>th</sup> level: Arcane Eye, Charm Monster, Fear, Minor Globe of Invulnerability, Shout, 5<sup>th</sup> level: Feeblemind, Passwall, Summon Monster, Teleport, 6<sup>th</sup> level: Antimagic Shell, Chain Lightning, Disintegrate, Globe of Invulnerability, 7<sup>th</sup> level: Delayed Fireball, Powerword, Vanish, 8<sup>th</sup> level: Mass Charm, Trap the Soul, 9<sup>th</sup> level: Disjunction, Power Word Kill. His faery spell-like abilities are d12 +5 from the lists in the Codex Celtarum plus his destiny is bound to his son the Raven King's.)

Cynwal stands 15 ft. tall with a wing-span of almost 60 ft. He is covered in pitch-black feathers, as a raven normally is, and wears intricate Celtic tattoos from the beak down to his wings and feet. His eyes blaze red like fires set deep within the cursed head, and he is capable of speaking. His squawking, crackling voice is almost deafening.

No player character wants to be present when this force arrives to take the girl and her newborn: it will be a slaughter among the Dark Faery, with everyone else stuck in the middle. *The best course of action during this is to hide, take Eiranwen and her child (if it is born yet) and flee.*

## THE DOOM CHILD

This accursed spawn of the King of Ravens and the unwilling mortal Eiranwen, will embody the darkness and destruction in the Goddess Matriarch Mórrígan. The gestation period was supernaturally shorter than mortal beings and beasts due to its blood and origins.

As Eiranwen is within the throes of labor upon the stone slab in the care of the Shadow Elf wizard-priests, a heavy gloom and despair will fall over the gathering. The stars, moon and/or sun on the surface world will begin to grow dark, being shrouded in the pall of the arrival of the Doom Child.

*The adventuring party won't know how dire this child's coming will be until these evil portents appear, and the chants by the gathering that say aloud in eerie repetition, "Come Child of Doom, Drag the worlds in Gloom, Appear Child of Doom, Your Existence Looms, oh Child of Doom..."*

This birthing ceremony will take on a darker and noticeably more evil tone than before. It is no longer just a simple ritual to bring the King of Ravens' first born into the universe, but to herald the arrival of a monstrous faery prodigy that will rend all worlds alike.

Each scream from Eiranwen brings the dreaded child closer to being born and taken from her womb, each time the earth trembles and an overwhelming wave of gloom sweeps over all, increasingly becoming worse each time. *There will be six quakes/pangs from Eiranwen, giving the adventurers time to assess their options in this soon-to-be nightmare situation:*

Allow the Doom Child its birth and the consequences to follow (see below). Either accept the awful events to follow or snatch the child (if the players have a plan that involves hiding the child somewhere 'safe' from the Dark Faeries.)

Take matters into their own hands and do the necessary act of aborting the newborn before it comes to the world. This can *only* be done by a magical weapon, and *only* at the moment **before** it is out of the womb.

The moment the Doom Child is born and breathes air, this irreversible chain of events will occur in the chamber in Annwn:

A powerful wind will blow through the chamber, throwing all to the ground (if they fail their Strength check) from the fury of the event.

All fires, magical or not, will be extinguished instantly, casting the chamber into darkness. Only the glowing cold blue-white eyes of the Doom Child will be a source of terrible light.

The child, of no specific gender outright, will command all the Dark Faeries and seek out the enemy (all alignments of Light/Good) that is present. His will is to have the enemy slain and their souls taken.

Strangely, *only* Cynwal or the King of Ravens can calm the Doom Child. They will take the child back to Din Marw unless the child is slain or stopped somehow.

If Cynwal is not present to take the Doom Child for some reason, the mighty child will quickly assume control over all lesser Twilight and Dark beings (Spell Resistance).

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# CASTLES & CRUSADES

## A DARK BURDEN

Eiranwen, the bride of the evil Raven-King Lord of Unseelie, has fled, taking his unborn child to Faerie, to rear the demi-god as she would. But she was snared by the Raven-King's Hag and suffered beneath the sorcery of the old woman. When at last she called upon the druids they knew that champions must be gathered, champions willing to fight the Raven-King's hold upon her.

But things are not always as they seem when dealing with the fey and the Unseelie in particular.

This module is designed for four to five players of 5th to 6th level.



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