

Iridia

role-playing games and miniatures, old and new
by Christian Walker

On Point

Hello, friends. It's been quite a while since I've written anything related to role-playing games. I really miss the hobby. It's been so long since I've heard dice clatter and too long since I've sat around the table with good friends, laughing and swapping lies. I've also been itching to get back into the routine of zine publishing, so I hope Iridia fills that need. I hope to publish this little single sheet every week. It's going to be tough, but I really think I can do it. I plan on writing about things in the hobby that catch my eye and then share them. Iridia will cover a variety of systems, including my out of print favorites, such as Basic D&D and Star Frontiers. Long live the 96 page, saddle stitched format! I certainly hope you enjoy the read. Do be sure to e-mail me with any comments at Christian@IridiaZine.net.

Until next time, Christian

Faces on the Battlefield

a continuing chronicle of the winter war

"I want to be free, both in the flesh and in spirit."

Bondsman Keller

Bondsman Keller wants to be free. He dreams of owning a farm, marrying, fathering children and being assured of a peaceful slumber after death. Until then, he has quite a bit of work to do.

Throughout the Fallen South, where Keller grew up, common citizens are bound to a particular Necromancer Lord. In turn, these Necromancer Lords serve Veoden, a dark god of death and decay. When a commoner reaches adulthood, he or she is usually cursed by the regional Necromancer Lord. This curse ensures that after death the body can be animated to do that wizard's bidding. No other wizard can animate the corpse. It's not so different from being branded like cattle.

The thought of his corpse being turned into a zombie, teeming with worms and maggots, turns Keller's stomach. To avoid such a fate he must seek out and pay a wizard to dispel the curse. Perhaps a wizard can even weave a spell to ensure that *no* wizard is able to animate his body after death. Sadly, Keller has never heard of a wizard who *wasn't* a necromancer, so there are doubts he will ever be successful. Nevertheless, Keller is hopeful. Perhaps his fate lays with the Northern Kingdom, a free land where brave soldiers battle the Necromancer Lords in the name of their gods, Iridia and Elyswen.

As Keller advances, he will most likely transition into the fighter class. Keller will try to improve his Strength and Constitution, as well as invest in feats to improve his ability as a swordsman. Heavier shield and armor are a must!

Bondsman Keller, male human War1; Medium humanoid (5' 9", 165lbs); CR ½; HD d8+1; hp 9; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AL N;

Armor: AC 13 (+2 leather, +1 light wooden shield), touch 10, flat-footed 13.

Attacks: Base Atk +1, Grp +2;

Melee: Longsword +3 (+1 BAB, +1 str, +1 weapon focus) (d8+1, 19-20/x2).

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +3.

Abilities: Str 13 (+1), Dex 11, Con 13 (+1), Int 10, Wis 12 (+1), Cha 11.

Languages: Common.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim +3; Iron Will, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Leather armor, small wooden shield, long sword, backpack, blanket, water skin, three torches, 50' rope, 2 sp, 5 cp.

I dream in 25mm.

miniatures and terrain

The Necromancer Lords used their undead legions expertly during the Winter War. Impervious to the cold, skeletons marched into enemy villages, setting fire to the dry, thatched roofs. When the inhabitants fled the conflagration, they faced snow, ice and being chased by skeletal wolves. The wolves hunted without mercy, nor fatigue.

In the spring the humans rallied, driving south and smashing the skeleton forces with their heavy cavalry. Not all the skeletons were trampled, however. Some Necromancer Lords withdrew their forces into the ruined villages, forcing their enemy to dismount and fight house to house.

Accompanying this article is a rough map typical of the ruined cottages littering the border between the Necromancer Lords' territory and the Northern Kingdom. The cottage is a simple structure, some 25' long by 15' wide. It features two rooms, a main room for cooking and socializing and a small bed chamber. Any undead lurking in the cottage will usually be in the bedchamber and will attack anyone who enters the building.

I'm going to use this floor plan as the template for a piece of terrain I want to build. I've been thinking about ways to quickly construct inexpensive, but good-looking, ruins. I think I've finally perfected a method I will share with you next week. In the meantime, scribble this map down onto a piece of paper, stock it with a human skeleton, then allow Bondsman Keller to charge in and earn some much needed experience points!

On My Bookshelf

reviews of things you need

A few weeks ago, I received "Idylls of the Rat King" from Goodman Games. (goodmangames.com) Written for D&D 3.5 by Jeffrey Quinn for character levels 1-3, Idylls is a great read and I'm sure it'd be fun to play. The scenario features a wererat

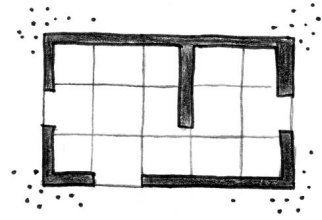


bard, Lawrence Gannu, who is seeking vengeance against the village of Silverton. Personally, I think the wererat has a great motive. Lawrence's grandfather was murdered by the villagers and his progeny cursed, resulting in the lycanthropy that ruined Lawrence's life.

Sadly, Lawrence opts for violence in an attempt to reclaim family honor. He links up with a group of goblins and a filthy gnome, then begins raiding caravans transporting silver from Silverton. Slain caravan guards are then brought back to the mine where the gnome, Narzy Hilspek, animates them as zombies to dig for silver. It's a rather efficient, if depraved, operation. It's up to the PCs to bring it to an end!

There are some battles that will be extremely tough, however. I would not be surprised if there were a few fatalities within a party. In one battle, the PCs will catch a lightning bolt from a 5th level Goblin Wizard! Furthermore, the party may face a vampire if they stumble across its extremely-hard-to-find resting place. If the PCs find

the vampire's lair, there will certainly be a PC death. All in all, I really enjoyed reading this scenario and look forward to buying other titles in the "Dungeon Crawl Classics" line. For \$10.99, you cannot lose!



Ruined Cottage

one square = 5'

Human Warrior Skeleton: Medium undead; CR 1/3; HD d12; hp 6; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AL NE;

Armor: AC 15 (+1 dex, +2 natural, +2 heavy steel shield), touch 11, flat-footed 14.

Attacks: Base Atk +0, Grp +1; *Melee:* Longsword +1 (+1 str) (d8+1, 19-20/x2) or claw +1 (d4+1);

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2.

Abilities: Str 13 (+1), Dex 13 (+1), Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1 (-5).

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits.

Feats: Improved Initiative.



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