

# Iridia

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

## On Point

On the back page of each issue of Iridia is a mailing address. One fellow in Germany took note of it and mailed me several copies of his print zine, Mond Buchstaben. Even though I am unable to read German, the zine is very cool. It's full of industry news and there seems to be a homebrew fantasy setting that is discussed every few issues or so. The author, Dirk Remmecke, indicated in his letter that publication of Mond Buchstaben has ceased, but he is thinking about a new zine project. I certainly hope so! In other news, I resurrected the terrain portion of the webpage at IridiaZine.net. I'm not sure why I ever deleted it, but it's nice to have it back.

Until next time, Christian



Mond  
Buchstaben

## Faces in the Crowd

exploring the freelands of mirrym

*"The master bow maker's favorite form of punishment was push-ups. He said that either I'd be very good at making bows or very strong. Either way, he'd be happy. Fortunately for me, I turned out to be a little bit of both."*

Fletcher

Fletcher grew up in the quiet village of Camber Mill. At an early age he demonstrated remarkable proficiency with the bow. He had hoped to become a master bow maker, but his apprenticeship ended prematurely and this causes him a great deal of anxiety.

The master bow maker's son resented Fletcher's skill and delighted in making his father's apprentice suffer. Eventually, Fletcher lost his temper and clobbered his master's son. While the master bow maker realized his son was a spoiled lay about, he had no choice but to eject Fletcher from his tutelage.

Fletcher is truly between a rock and a hard place. He must either find a new master and resume his training or be unable to ply his trade in any major town or city due to the exclusivity of the trade guilds. Barring that, he will have to work as a common laborer or enlist in a mercenary force as an archer. For the time being, he lives with his sister, Marilyn, and their ailing mother. (Please see Iridia 32 for a description of Marilyn.)

Fletcher would make an excellent hireling for a group of adventurers looking for additional missile support. Perhaps a ranger in the party could take Fletcher under his wing and provide the young man with valuable training. PCs who befriend Fletcher will find that he is modest, loyal and rather intolerant of bullies.

**Fletcher, male human War1;** Medium humanoid (5' 9", 155 lbs); CR 1/2; HD 1d8+1; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; AL LG;

**Armor:** AC 15 (+3 dex, +2 leather), touch 13, flat-footed 12.

**Attacks:** Base Atk +1, Grp +3;

**Melee:** Dagger +3 (+1 BAB, +2 str) (d4+2, 19 -20/x2);

**Ranged:** Short bow +5 (+1 BAB, +1 weapon focus, +3 dex) (d6, x3) [Add +1 to hit and damage on all attacks within 30 ft. due to Point Blank Shot].

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -1.

**Abilities:** Str 14 (+2), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1), Int 13 (+1), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 13 (+1).

**Languages:** Common.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +2, Craft (bow making) +3, Hide +4, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +2; Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (short bow).

**Possessions:** Leather armor, dagger, short bow, 24 arrows, 7 sp.

## This, That and the Other Thing: Hiring Quirks

random tables for your game

In my campaigns I've always tried to provide the party with useful NPC companions. I guess it's one of the reasons why Iridia features so many low-level NPCs. Hirelings add an extra dimension to play, I think. It's fun to watch the PCs train, protect and deal with the hired help. Sometimes, though, it's hard to come up with distinct personalities for the NPCs. I know I am guilty of playing them without much distinction. To remedy this, I'd like to present a random table of personalities you can use to add some life to the henchmen and hirelings of your campaign.

- 1) This fellow incessantly critiques the party's battle-field performance. He offers all sorts of constructive criticism, such as "Perhaps you should try to get hit less." "You should be more accurate with your bow." is another one of his gems. If a character actually listens to the NPC's coaching, allow an occasional bonus to an attack roll.
- 2) Quite the zealot, this henchman is always proselytizing to the party. The NPC hopes to convert the characters to his faith and will preach about the virtues of his deity morning, noon and night. He will point out that all of the party's good fortune is due to his deity blessing the group. Conversely, any bad luck that befalls the party is because they have failed to embrace the "one true faith."
- 3) The henchman seems to have an aversion to crowds, in addition to a secret he's reluctant to share with the group. When the party enters any sort of settlement he will pull the hood of his cloak over his head and skulk in the shadows. Once indoors he will insist upon sitting with his back to a wall and will nervously watch anyone who walks through the door.
- 4) This hired hand is always drunk. The characters are never able to catch him in the act of drinking, nor are they able to find where he hides his hooch. A descriptive GM should play up the inebriation, having the NPC snooze through watches, or make lewd comments to high born ladies.
- 5) Always eager to renegotiate his salary, this hireling brings up his rate of pay at inappropriate moments. In the henchman's mind, tense parlay or the death of a PC are perfect opportunities to haggle for a few more silvers. Even if the party rewards his service with the occasional boon, he will still mope and whine about the party "holding out on him."
- 6) The henchman claims to have the ability to commune with the mystical spirit world. He frequently offers to read the PCs' fortunes and even pretends to speak with the dead. When a foe is killed in battle, the hireling looks skyward as if he can see their spirit departing for the afterlife. Also, he claims to sense spirit activity in certain areas and will warn the party about "hostile energies."
- 7) When combat breaks out, the hireling is nowhere to be found. No amount of calling the coward's name will bring him out of hiding. Not until the battle is over will the fellow emerge from cover. The vanishing act is rather impressive and sudden, almost like an innate magical ability...
- 8) Pain means nothing to this character. He has an amazing ability to withstand damage. No matter how serious his wounds, he will shrug off the injury and will insist upon fulfilling his duties. He expects others to have a high pain threshold and will often tease those who succumb to their wounds.



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