

Return of the Lichemaster!

An adventure for Savage Words, designed to follow on from the events of “The Red Swamp”, available from Pinnacle’s Savage Worlds Website.

In the quiet hamlet of Orwell, things are stirring beneath the graves of a long forgotten battlefield. A long time ago, a band of brave adventurer’s defeated the evil necromancer Rorsach, destroying his undead army, and killing the mage before he could release his plans for conquest.

Or so they thought... In fact, Rorsach had made preparations in case of his death, pacts with unholy powers, rituals of the blackest kind. When he was slain, his spirit was contained in his body by his dark sorceries, and slowly, over time, he has rebuilt his strength. Now, with his powers returning, he has used them to reanimate the dead around the battlefield he was slain in, and sent them out to find more troops, and to kill anyone they find. With each death, the Lichemaster’s powers will grow, until he can raise an army of the dead and resume his plans for conquest. For now, though, he has only a few zombies he has managed to reanimate, and he needs more corpses to build his army. Fortunately his powers are not back to full strength, and he has only managed to animate a few undead. That will change over time, though, unless he is stopped.

The party is returning from the Red Swamp, where they were sent by Lord Redstone to recover his sword. I’ve assumed that Janus is accompanying the heroes (whether to ensure the return of the sword, or because she is smitten with one of them is up to you), but it doesn’t affect the adventure one way or the other, apart from having another sword in the battle! New characters can be introduced at this point, resting at the inn.

Read the following to the players;

“You have stopped for the night in the sleepy hamlet of Orwell, at its only inn, the Chequers. Its good food, the inn is warm and clean, and you are relaxing in front of the fire, when suddenly the door bursts open and a wild eyed man bursts in screaming “They’re coming! Bar the doors!”, slamming the door behind him, and leaning against it. Before anyone can ask who “they” are, the door is bashed heavily, knocking the man backwards and onto the floor. Another blow, and the hastily fastened door bursts open, and strange figures loom over the terrified man.”

The unfortunate villager, Peter, encountered the zombies as he was returning to his hovel, and ran for help. Unfortunately, while he can easily outpace them, there are several zombies, all directed by the Lichemaster, who worked to cut him off. He only just made it to the Inn ahead of the undead, and they have followed him in to prevent him from warning the hamlet. The players may not get a good glimpse of the zombies when they originally arrive, as it is dark outside, and only fitfully lit in the bar. When they do get a good look, get them to make a guts test at –2. These undead have only recently clawed their way out of the ground, after all. There should be as many zombies as players in this encounter.

When the players have defeated the zombies, they will probably want to find out what’s going on. Peter will only be able to tell them that he first saw them at the entrance to the Glebe Field, which backs on to the Church, and graveyard. An aged gaffer called Toby will remember that the field was the place of a battle. A little more investigation and questioning of the patrons of the pub will get them the tale of the Necromancer Rorsach, and how his plans were foiled by brave adventurers (most of the patrons, including Janus, will look at the heroes expectantly at this point).

Before the heroes can do any more, people start running into the inn, shouting about the figures in the mist. The Chequers is the only vaguely fortifiable building in the hamlet, and provides a decent place to defend against the 20 or so zombies heading through the village, and concentrating on the largest group of people – the Inn.

At this point the adventure can go several ways. The players may want to help defend the inn, or head out to rescue villagers from the undead, and bring them back, where the greater numbers have a better chance of defeating the zombies. They may also want to head straight out and confront the Lichemaster. Of course, they may want to flee and leave the villagers to their fate. Have Janus, if she is there, or the town headsman, let them know how dimly Lord Redspar would view this abandonment, or if that isn't working, mention how likely he is to reward them (which is true – when he hears of this he will pay the adventurers 20 silvers each for helping the village, and be inclined to hire the adventurers for any further work he might have) for their help.

If the adventurers help defend the Inn;

12 zombies will attack the inn from all sides. Make it a pitched battle, with zombies bashing in windows, adventurers firing from upper story windows at the milling horde of undead below. Just like “The Red Swamp”, give adventurer's 5 semi-capable fighters (D6 in all stats, Parry 5, Toughness 6 armed with a short sword or club equivalent weapons (Str+2)) to aid in the defense.

If the adventurers go out in search of stragglers;

It's dark, and a mist is descending on the area. Let them make hurried checks of the hamlet, dodging wandering zombies and persuading terrified villagers to come with them to the Inn. Once they've had a few encounters with some zombies (say, d4 a group), let them have found all the villagers (alive, anyway) they can, and head back to the inn to help defend it, as, above.

If the adventures want to go straight after the Lichemaster

Stress how undefended the people of the town are. Most have clubs, and some farm weaponry such as scythes, but most can't really defend themselves properly. For the village to survive, the adventures need to help in their desperate last stand!

Once they've beaten the zombies, they will need to take the fight to the Lichemaster himself, in the remains of a tomb at the graveyard.

The Reckoning with the Lichemaster

Eventually, the characters are going to have to go after the source of the problems. If one of the characters is a Ranger, or has the Woodsman edge, they can easily follow the zombies shuffling trail all the way back to the churchyard, where the Lichemaster has setup temporary command in the crumbling mausoleum of a once proud dignitary (in fact, if the characters check up, they will find it is the tomb of the hero that led the original party to destroy Rorsach in the first place. He knows this, and rather enjoys the irony.

The mausoleum is fitfully lit by flickering torches, and seated at the back is the Lichemaster, who has been monitoring the battle via his Clairvoyance spell (see below), and is ready for the characters. In between him and the heroes stand two skeleton guards he has resurrected from the crypt. Faster than zombies, and armed with the old hero's weapons, they are there to delay the characters while Rorsach finishes them off with his magic. The Liche isn't at full power fortunately, his efforts to raise the zombies and skeletons, plus his recent return from the grave, has depleted his power somewhat.

Have the players make a guts check when they first see him. Zombies are one thing, but this is a man who is not only self aware, but has done this to himself. Being able to see his organs through tears in his robes don't help much, either!

Once defeated, the villager's will thanks the heroes profusely, and refuse to let them pay for their room and board. Mitch, the innkeeper of The Chequers, will provide them with free beer all evening. The next morning, Peter, the villager that burst into the inn originally (unless he died, in which case, pick another villager), will offer to drive them to Lord Redstone's Mansion in his wagon, allowing them to arrive a day early and much rested. If the heroes expect some kind of reward for their actions above and beyond this (as above, Lord Redstone will reward them, but they don't know that yet), remind them that they were just caught up in events, and these people have done the best they can by them in paying for their accommodation and food bills.

Cast of characters

Skeletons

Attributes: *Agility* d8, *Smarts* d4, *Spirit* d4, *Strength* d6, *Vigor* d6

Skills: *Fighting* d6, *Intimidation* d6, *Notice* d4, *Shooting* d6

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 6 (8) **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Longsword (Str+2) Small Shield (Parry +2)

Special Abilities: Fearless, Undead

Rorsach the Lichemaster

Attributes: *Agility* d4, *Smarts* d10, *Spirit* d8, *Strength* d4, *Vigor* d4

Skills: *Fighting* d4, *Knowledge (Arcane)* d10, *Spellcasting* d12

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 4 **Toughness:** 4 **Power points:** 25 (currently 15)

Special Abilities: Arcane background (Necromancy), Extra Power Points x3, Spell Mastery, Undead, Fearless, Hard to Kill, Rapid Recharge, Delusional (megalomania)

Gear: tattered, once resplendent robes, staff (Str +2)

Spells: Animate Dead, Armour, Bolt, Blast, Clairvoyance

Arcane Background – Necromancer

Allows a character to cast spells, as a normal arcane background. Also allows the character to gain 1 power point for every death he causes through his magic, or through any undead he animates. Not recommended for Players..

New Spells

Animate Dead – create zombies or skeletons. 2 power point for each to create, and then 1 point per day per zombie to maintain them.

Clairvoyance – trappings, see through the eyes of anything dead, whether animated or not. 1 point to cast, 1/round to maintain.