FULL METAL FRIDAYS

We at Privateer Press are very excited that Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Kings, Nations, and Gods releases later this year. To celebrate, we’re counting down to launch day with free new RPG content every Friday! From now until launch, you’ll be able to download new careers, equipment, monsters, and more on Full Metal Fridays. Each month will showcase a different theme and will culminate in an event Game Masters can drop right into games. For the third month of Full Metal Fridays we’re taking a look at the intrepid scholars and other adventurers who delve into the remains of history.

Check back every Friday for new Iron Kingdoms RPG content!

INSTALLMENT 3, WEEK 4:
THE LOST CHAMBER
BY WILLIAM “OZ” SCHOO NOVER

Hero-Level Combat Encounter

Adversaries: Dread (1–4)

Description: This series of encounters follows a group of characters as they search for a previously unexplored section of an Orgoth tomb.

SCENE 1:
THE COLLECTOR

The characters have been contacted by a man named Matthias Bartlesby. He has a reputation for being a wealthy eccentric and for financing expeditions to various areas of western Immoren.

When the characters arrive for the meeting at Bartlesby’s home, they are ushered into a large library. The room contains thousands of books, but more notable are the glass cases evenly spaced around the room. Each of these cases holds various old artifacts, some definitely Orgoth in origin.

Bartlesby sits behind a large stone desk absentmindedly playing with a black dagger embellished with strange runes. As the characters take the seats offered to them, he places the dagger on top of a pile of unopened envelopes.

Bartlesby presents the characters with a non-disclosure/non-compete agreement and explains that he would like them to undertake an expedition on his behalf into the nearby mountains. Until the characters sign the
agreement, he will say only that he is hoping to expand his collection and is worried that any more information could be sold to his rivals.

After the party members have each signed their names, their potential employer giggles with glee and walks to a nearby bookshelf. He produces a key on a chain that he wears under his shirt. He inserts the key into a gap between two books and unlocks a mechanism. A section of the adjacent bookshelf slides into the floor to reveal a safe. Shielding the dial with his body, Bartlesby inputs the combination. He then opens the safe and withdraws a silk-wrapped object from inside.

He returns to his desk and motions the characters to gather around it. He reverently unwraps the object to reveal a weathered book. He then explains that this is the diary of a prominent member of the local resistance from the final years of the Orgoth Occupation. It recounts the author’s rescue from an Orgoth torturer named Riksasivus. Bartlesby opens the book and reads a passage:

I was chained to a wall awaiting my fate when I heard the sound of fighting coming from down the hallway. Moments later my friends rushed into the room. When they had unchained me we ran away from the fighting, going deeper into the catacombs, where we came to the intersection of two tunnels. We heard the sound of wind coming down the middle of the three tunnels we faced and followed it to a natural cave, which led to our freedom. I can never repay my comrades from saving me from Riksasivus and the tortures I would have endured without their actions.

After reading the passage, Bartlesby goes to the wall and takes down a large hand-drawn map in a frame. He places the map on the desk, explaining that it is from the expedition that discovered and explored an Orgoth tomb fifty years ago. He is sure the diary is referring to the same tomb and uses the map to point out the path he believes the diary refers to. The described intersection is not along the path. Bartlesby is convinced the tomb has a hidden door to an untouched section that may hold valuable artifacts. To his knowledge no other expedition has been made to the area, since nothing of importance was found by those who discovered the tomb.

The man offers the characters a large sum of money to journey to the area and bring him any relics that they find. The characters can stay in the library for as long as they need to research. The following table indicates what a character learns with a research skill roll.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
<th>INFORMATION DISCOVERED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Orgoth torturers wore iron masks, many of which were imbued with dark magic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Often, Orgoth masks were cursed to harm anyone wearing them except the owner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Riksasivus was a noted Orgoth torturer who worked in the area where the tomb was found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Riksasivus was known to turn some of his victims into powerful undead creations.</td>
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SCENE 2: A TRIP TO THE MOUNTAINS

The characters can find and investigate the tomb without major setbacks. They are likely to encounter creatures that have made the abandoned chambers their homes, like burrow-mawgs and dregg. Crypt spiders (NQ issue #43), razorbats, or devil rats (NQ issue #45) are also good monsters for these encounters.

When the characters reach the intersection described in the diary they find it just as drawn on the map. Where the diary indicates a fourth tunnel opening there is only a wall carved with the leering faces commonly found in Orgoth reliefs. A character with Lore (Orgoth) or Mechanikal Engineering can make a roll against a target number of 14 to examine the wall. If successful the character discovers that the wall is actually a sealing trap. He will also know that these traps involve enormous stones that can barely be budged once triggered. This side of the trap is seamless, but there may be enough of a gap on the other side to lift the stone with the proper tools.

The sealing trap indicates that there is in fact more to this tomb than the last expedition found. Orgoth black stone is nearly indestructible, and using enough explosives to clear the trap will bring down all the surrounding tunnels.

DUSKENVALE

The small mountain village of Duskenvale is home to hunters, trappers, and independent miners. It has a small tavern and a blacksmith’s shop. The village is a few hours by horse from the general area of the tomb. The characters can stop in this village tavern on their initial trip to the tomb, or they can return here to rest after their first investigations come up fruitless.

The characters can ask the villagers about the tomb, but most locals will not speak of it. The best chance of gathering information is to wait until the hunters, trappers, and miners return to town after sundown to gather in the tavern. The characters will need to tread carefully when making inquiries of these folk, since few of them will be very personable.
If the characters are patient enough or generous enough with drinks, they will overhear a conversation mentioning the Rotten Maw.

A hunter named Alberd is comparing stories with a few others about the conditions of a nearby valley. Sometime in the last few decades a large sinkhole the locals have nicknamed “the Rotten Maw” opened in the valley. A terrible smell emanated from the hole, and animals became scarce in the valley. One of the hunters tells a secondhand story of a man who attempted to investigate the hole shortly after it was found. The man climbed down into the hole but became sick and had to be pulled back out by his partners. Another hunter in the group says he has recently been to the valley and the smell seems to have mostly gone away.

A character with the Navigation skill will be able to make the connection between the location of the valley and the Orgoth site to realize that the Rotten Maw is likely above the tomb. A character with the Alchemy skill will know that the description of what happened in the valley when the hole appeared indicates there was sulfur gas coming from it, which makes it likely that the hole connects to a network of caves.

Alberd is leaving in the morning and offers to lead the characters to the Rotten Maw valley for a fee of 20 gc. If the characters ask around the tavern to try and find another guide they will be rejected; Alberd is the most respected hunter in the region, and no one is willing to get on his bad side. Alberd is trying to take advantage of the characters, seeing them as incapable of negotiating the wilderness without him. If there is a character in the group with obvious wilderness experience, such as a ranger or an explorer, or if a character with the Negotiation skill makes a successful roll against a target number of 13, Alberd will lower the price to 12 gc.

**SCENE 3: THE UNMAPPED CHAMBERS**

Alberd leads the characters up into the mountains using foot trails that are otherwise impassable. The characters can bring a pack animal along, but nothing larger can make the journey.

When they arrive at the Rotten Maw the smell is still noticeable. A Preservation of Corben pendant lowered into the hole will faintly glow. The sides of the pit are unstable, and a character can climb down only with the use of a rope.

The glow from the pendant grows stronger as a character makes his way down the hole, but it does not reach candle brightness, which would indicate a lethal amount of toxins in the air. Seventy-five feet down the hole, there is a ledge wide enough to stand on. The ledge widens to the north to form the floor of a chamber. A crack in the north wall of this chamber opens into a room.

**ROOM 1**

The first room the characters enter is approximately 30 feet by 30 feet. It is empty except for four niches in the corners, which each hold a mummified body. Each body is contorted in a different way, seemingly locked in a state of pain. A character trained in Mechanikal Engineering that examines these niches can make a roll against a target number of 20 to determine that the wall at the back of each of these niches is false. There is no visible opening mechanism for the false wall.

Along the west wall of the room is an indentation. The characters recognize this as the sealing trap they discovered earlier and find part of a leg sticking out from under the stone. The skeletal leg is wearing a boot and is covered in deteriorating cloth. With the proper tools and strength (such as an ogrun with a lever) a character can make a Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 12 to pry up the sealing stone enough to drag the body out from under it. There is almost nothing of value on the corpse since all of its possessions were crushed with it, but the characters find a notebook. The final dates in the notebook are from nearly 100 years earlier. Parts of the book are written in code, but from what the characters can read it is clear that the owner was an explorer who discovered many interesting things he didn’t survive to tell the world about.

When the characters leave this room the niches will open to reveal dread tomb guards (see below).

**GAME MASTER NOTES**

The number of dread that are released is determined by the Game Master. For a group that is not very combat oriented, one dread is enough of a challenge. For a much more combat-focused party with some experience, using all four is recommended.

**ROOM 2**

The second room is approximately 35 feet by 35 feet. There is a door opposite from the one the characters enter through. A little over halfway across the room is an open spike pit that runs from one side wall to the other and is 18 feet across.
The dread that entered the previous room quietly makes its way to the doorway and then attacks the characters, attempting to drive them into the pit.

**ROOM 3**

After the characters have crossed the spiked pit they are able to enter the last room, which is the final resting place of Riksasivus. There is a large stone sarcophagus in the center of the room with an image of an Orgoth man carved into the lid. Resting on the face of the carving is an iron mask.

**THE MASK OF RIKSASIVUS**

The Mask of Riksasivus is a dangerous Orgoth object. If the players failed to discover that Orgoth masks are sometimes cursed, a character with Lore (Orgoth) can make a roll against a target number of 16 to remember that touching the mask is probably dangerous.

If a character touches the mask, he is compelled to put it on. To resist this compulsion a character must make a successful Willpower roll against a target number of 16. If the character succeeds he can either immediately drop the mask or hold onto it. For every minute that he holds the mask he must make another Willpower roll as above, with a cumulative –1 to his Willpower. If the character fails this roll he dons the mask.

A character who places the mask of Riksasivus on his face immediately feels an evil presence trying to take over his body. To try to remove the mask he must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 18. If he succeeds he can immediately take off the mask, at which point he is holding it again and must roll to resist putting it back on as above. For every minute that he wears the mask he must succeed at a Willpower roll against a target number of 20 with a cumulative –1 to his Willpower. If the character fails this roll while wearing the mask he is immediately possessed by the spirit of Riksasivus, and becomes an NPC under the Game Master’s control.

Once in possession of a new body Riksasivus attempts to hide the change long enough to escape the tomb. If he is discovered, he makes every effort to escape, killing anyone who stands in his way.

The dread will not attack someone wearing the mask of Riksasivus.

**DREAD TOMB GUARD**

The Orgoth were masters of necromancy and made many undead creations. Dread are just one of the horrific things they created.

The Dread Tomb Guard is a specialized necromantic creation. It does not rely on sheer strength to destroy intruders but instead works with pit traps or other hazards to defeat trespassers within its domain.

Dread retain much of the intelligence they had in life, but it is twisted to create a cunning that makes them dangerous opponents. Dread Tomb Guards attempt to remain hidden and stalk an intruder until the best time to attack. Often a Tomb Guard remains unseen until a party has discovered a pit trap blocking their path, revealing itself at the only exit and attempting to force its victims into the pit.

**Special Rules/Tactics:** The dread will attempt to remain unseen while following the characters. The characters may attempt to detect it (or them) with a Detection roll against a target number of 16. If the dread remains undiscovered it will reveal itself as the characters move into the room with the pit traps.

A dread fights with no regard for its own safety and will not break off an attack until its target is destroyed.
**LORE**

A character can make a Lore (Orgoth) skill roll to determine what he knows about this creature. The higher the character’s total, the more he learns. The character learns all the information up to his total.

12: Dread are a specific type of undead and are sometimes found in Orgoth ruins.

14: Dread were created by the Orgoth to guard important sites. The presence and number of dread can indicate the ruin’s importance to the Orgoth.

16: Dread were created with a long-lost dark ritual that make the creatures resistant to damage and immune to magic.

**WRAP UP**

The characters are free to do what they wish with the mask once they have it, but they should be aware that there are repercussions to any decision they make.

If the characters decide to destroy the mask, they will make an enemy of Bartlesby. Destroying the mask is also much more difficult than it may seem. The mask resists melting and most other kinds of damage that would destroy a mundane item made of iron. The Mask of Riksasivus has ARM 20 and 20 damage points. Damage rolls made against the Mask of Riksasivus roll an additional die and drop the highest result. The Mask of Riksasivus cannot be targeted by magical attacks.

If the characters decide to return the mask to Bartlesby it is likely from his handling of other objects that he will not treat it as dangerous and will likely fall victim to the spirit of Riksasivus. It is also possible that gaining the mask to use its power was his goal all along, and he may have in his possession knowledge to allow him to use the mask without losing his will.

Lastly, the party may decide that they can make more money finding another buyer for the mask, which will also make an enemy of Bartlesby. It is also likely that knowledge of their possession of the mask will spread once they begin looking for buyers, and they could draw all manner of unwanted attention.

**THE NOTEBOOK**

The notebook’s code is based on Cygnaran. Deciphering the code in the notebook requires a Cryptography skill roll against a target number of 14. Once deciphered the dead explorer’s notebook becomes a valuable source of information. Most notable is his plan to return to his base camp in a nearby cave and retrieve a case in order to safely transport the mask. Additionally, the explorer’s notebook contains references to several other Orgoth sites he has explored across western Immoren. If the characters desire, they can utilize the explorers’ notes as a roadmap of potential sites to investigate.

**GAME MASTER NOTES**

What powers the mask possesses, beyond making dread created by Riksasivus not attack its wearer, can be determined by the Game Master. The mask could easily be a major plot hook in an ongoing series of adventures.