

Bard Shifter/The Cursed Minstrel

Story

The battle was over, it had been more of a massacre than a battle, in truth. Prince Gilliam's army had been quite literally crushed beneath the heel of the Lord Valot's own forces. The surviving men wiped the blood from their weapons, preparing to set up camp and drag off their dead or wounded. They had destroyed the largest of Gilliam's forces, and there was but one more, much smaller, contingent of men a few hours ride to the south. They had time to rest, eat, and interrogate the dying enemy before that force would arrive to be massacred. The sun was beginning to set, the orb slowly dipping down below the horizon. The men joked jovially about ghosts in the darkness as they went about their business.

A call rang out through the forming encampment, men looking up and around, eyes gradually finding the source of the alarm. A figure, riding out from the setting sun, heading towards them. The figure couldn't be made out, men putting their hands to their faces to shield their eyes for a better look. This failed, and they waited. One man, after all, wasn't a threat to their army. The figure rode closer, at a fast gallop, until it reached the killing fields. It slowed, then, to little more than a trot, almost in reverence as it passed the corpses of the fallen. The sharper eyes could make out the figure now, a gruesome sight, and certainly otherworldly. It was a female, or what was left of one, her skin long since rotted from her face, leaving only the bone beneath. She wore a tiara upon her head, small and out of place. Rising up over her shoulder was a Scythe's blade, massive and looking well-used. She sat astride a pure black mare, the steed's face as emotionless as the skeletal figure atop it.

A man, a Captain in the army, stepped forward as the figure drew near, raising his hand to signal a stop. The woman did so, her mare stomping the ground once before coming to a rest. "What is your business with this army, dead one?" The skeletal woman didn't move, her socket-less eyes staring down the captain a moment before she spoke, the voice seeming otherworldly, dark and forbidden. "You will abandon these fields, let loose the prisoners you have taken, and never step foot in Prince Gilliam's lands again."

This drew laughter from the onlooking crowd, though uneasy laughter, faced with the fearsome visage of the Risen. The Captain spoke once more, "And who are you to give such an order? Why should the royal King Valot's army make way before you?" The skeletal figure stayed still once more, and then slowly swung her leg over her mount, her feet hitting the ground beneath her, the mare trotting a few yards away, waiting. She raised her arm, unclasping the scythe from her back and gripping it in one hand to her side. She strode swiftly towards the Captain, not speaking, no emotion upon her skeletal face. She raised her scythe, gripping it now with both hands, and drew back, feet now from the man. He seemed about to speak, and then abandoned that idea to fumble with his swordbelt, the metal ringing clearly as it left the scabbard.

A moment later, the man fell to the ground, his head rolling a few feet away, a look of horror etched upon his face. The Cursed Minstrel, she was called, named such for an affair and a murder in the royal courts. Bound, now, to the Prince Gilliam. She was the Minstrel, and she sang her tune that day to each man who opposed her.

Build

The Cursed Minstrel

Playable from 1-40, Designed for PvP

Human

Chaotic Neutral

Starting Stats

Str- 8, Dex- 14, Con- 10, Wis- 14, Int- 14, Cha- 16,

Leveling [The spacing is to prevent]

- 1) Druid(1) - Alertness, Knockdown
- 2) Druid(2)
- 3) Bard(1) - Exotic Weapon Proficiency - Note: Max Skills
- 4) Druid(3) - Dexterity
- 5) Druid(4)
- 6) Druid(5) - Weapon Focus: Scythe
- 7) Shifter(1)
- 8) Shifter(2) - Dexterity
- 9) Shifter(3) - Empower Spell
- 10) Shifter(4)
- 11) Shifter(5)
- 12) Shifter(6) - Improved Knockdown
- 13) Shifter(7)
- 14) Shifter(8)
- 15) Shifter(9) - Improved Critical: Scythe
- 16) Bard(2) - Dexterity - Note: Max Skills
- 17) Bard(3)
- 18) Bard(4) - Toughness
- 19) Bard(5)
- 20) Bard(6) - Dexterity
- 21) Shifter(10) - Undead Shape
- 22) Bard(7)
- 23) Bard(8)
- 24) Bard(9) - Dexterity - Epic Weapon Focus: Scythe
- 25) Bard(10)
- 26) Druid(6)
- 27) Druid(7) - Armour Skin
- 28) Druid(8) - Dexterity
- 29) Bard(11) - Note: Max Skills
- 30) Bard(12) - Epic Prowess
- 31) Bard(13)
- 32) Bard(14) - Dexterity
- 33) Bard(15) - Epic Skill Focus: Discipline
- 34) Bard(16)
- 35) Bard(17)
- 36) Bard(18) - Curse Song - Dexterity
- 37) Bard(19)
- 38) Bard(20)
- 39) Bard(21) - Lasting Inspiration
- 40) Druid(9) - Dexterity

Ending Stats

Str- 8, Dex- 24, Con- 10, Wis- 14, Int- 14, Cha- 16

Skills (The totals are calculated while shifted)

Discipline: $42+10+5=57$ Total
Hide: $42+7=49$ Total
Move Silently: $42+7=49$ Total
Perform: $42+3=45$ Total
Taunt: $42+3=45$ Total
Use Magic Device: $42+3=45$ Total

HP

278/278 Unshifted (Max Rolls)
497/411 Newly Shifted (Max Rolls)

AC [Effective AC in Brackets]

40 Naked, Shifted, Unbuffered
+5 Bard Song
+4 Barkskin
+4 Haste
+3 Mage Armour
+2 Cat's Grace
[+2 Curse Song]
=
55 Total (I know the math is wrong, I hit the cap, I believe)
[=57 Total]

AB [Effective AB in Brackets]

37/32/27 (Critical: 19-20/x4) Non-Magical Scythe, Shifted, Unbuffered
+5 Greater Magic Weapon
+4 Empowered Bull's Strength
+2 War Cry
+2 Bard Song
+1 Blood Frenzy
+Haste
+Keen Edge
[+5 Curse Song]
[+6 Taunt]
=
46/41/36/46 (Once again, I know the math is wrong. I have no idea why...shifting is confusing)
[=57/52/47/57]

Damage (Fully Shifted and Buffed)

2-8 crit: 19-20/x4
+14 Slashing
+2 Slashing
+5 Physical
+3 Bludgeoning
=
26-32 Crit: 18-20/x4

Saves (Shifted and Buffed in Brackets)

Fort - 22[29]
Reflex - 29[31]
Will - 24[28]

A few notes from the author:

I adore Shifters and trying to find inventive ways to make them effective. I've tried everything from a Pally/Kobold to a Barbarian/Risen, but for some reason I had never thought of doing a Bard/Risen. Bard seems like the -perfect- companion. Some of the best buffing spells in the game, Bard/Curse Song, Taunt, Tumble...it's just -made- to be.

So, I tried it. And, to be honest, it's probably one of the best Shifters I've ever made. I'm not sure how it would rate against another Risen Lord, but it's quite appealing to me. It has an excellent buffing arsenal (though the druid buffs would be easily dispelled, and the bard buffs only a bit less easily) with Keen Edge, GMW, Empowered Bull's Strength, Barkskin, Improved Invisibility, and a ton of others. If required, I suppose I could list the essential spells for the build.

It's my first build contribution to these forums, so I'm sorry if I did something wrong, I tried my best, promise. Also, I know there are a few problems with it. First being that Curse Song is achieved so late. The only way to fit it in earlier would be to put off something like Toughness, which might be a better choice, as the Risen has excellent staying power with it's immunities.

Anyway...

Pros:

All those juicy Risen Immunities
A great (or at least in my opinion) AB/AC for a Risen Lord
Excellent buffing arsenal

Cons:

It's damage is a little lower than I would like
It suffers from Heal Vulnerability
Has pretty low saves, and no evasion. Not a problem for mind spells, though.

As I said, this is my first real official build. I've made builds before, naturally, but never really thought they

were good enough to be posted here. This one's a more unique look on Risens, and I liked the outcome, so here it is.

If anyone has -any- suggestions at all (That means you, Mithradates, you professional, you!) feel free to post them. Questions are fine too, and I'll try to answer them as quickly as I can.

Edited By Acothea on 05/20/06 14:14