

THE CANTERBURY ISLES

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Canterbury Isles, the first supplement for the World of Ariakus, the old-school fantasy setting for the OS-RICTM system. The Canterbury Isles are a frontier region, removed in many ways from the troubles of the rest of the known world but these idyllic isles have become a hotbed of racism and intolerance thanks to the influence of priests of Therran the White.

Once, over a century ago, the humans were welcomed to the isles by gracious elves. Now those same elves look at the descendants of the men and women they welcomed and sharpen their arrows and spears, believing war will eventually come.

Meanwhile the dwarves have almost completely vanished, in a move interpreted by both the humans and the elves as getting out of the middle of the coming war. Both sides have sent urgent calls for alliance into the mountains but their messengers have not returned.

Now is the time for heroes. But will they decide the conflict in favor of one side or the other or find a way to prevent a senseless war before it can begin?

OVERVIEW OF THE CANTERBURY ISLES

ACCORD

Accord was the site of the first human landing in the Canterbury Isles in the year 2419 (almost 200 years ago). This was not an intentional landing but an exploration ship smashed on the nearby "shrimp" island (presently home to the Tiger Moon Monastery) during a driving storm. The captain of this vessel managed a heroic effort to create rafts from the wreckage of his doomed ship and get most of his crew to shore, despite repeated attacks by Batrachians and Lizard Men.

Once ashore, things were not much better for the crew until they made contact with a group of hardy elves from the forests to the north. Still keeping to his original mission, the captain eventually met with Kohia, the Lady of the Wood and not only secured the lumber he would need to rebuild his ship but also purchased the entire island "south and west of the Bulwark Range", the extent of human habitation on the island to this day.

BANDIT WOOD

The Bandit Wood is home to a belligerent group of "wild" elves that are hostile to everyone, even their own kind. These rebels have left the company of their fellows in the Stormwood and the Quietwood to seek solitude.

The elves in this wood will attack any humans on sight and inflict +2 additional points of damage on any successful attack against humans.

BITTER PEAKS

The Bitter Peaks are the northernmost area of the islands and are subject to the full force of the frequent storms that sweep down from the Hold of the Snow Queen. This actually affects the few other creatures that reside in the mountains more than the dwarves, who enjoy the solitude brought to them by the storms. Unfortunately, in the solitude, something terrible has happened to these dwarves. They have fallen under the influence of a particularly large and dangerous White Dragon named Powder. For generations the dwarves of the bitter peaks were locked in a brutal war against a clan of ogres who also resided in this range. Last year, these ogres slew the Mountain Lord in a raid. His wife approached Powder "woman to woman" and offered her anything in return for revenge.

With the dragon's help, the dwarves exterminated every ogre in the Bitter Peaks, down to the smallest child. In return for her revenge, the Lady Joasia paid a terrible price. Her clan would serve the dragon until the end of her life and the lives of her progeny. While many of her subjects believe this is a terrible turn for their clan, Joasia finds the arrangement satisfactory. She got her revenge and is happy to do whatever the dragon asks in return.

Recently, a bull White Dragon has been seen in the Bitter Peaks and many of the dwarves believe Powder is ready to mate and bear a clutch of eggs. The prospect of serving one nearly immortal creature of pure evil was bad enough but faced with the prospect of being indebted to an entire clan of the foul creatures has driven some of the younger dwarves to contemplate drastic measures.

What those measures will be they have yet to decide but desperate schemes to hire someone to assassinate Lady Joasia and plans to hire a band of stout adventurers to slay Powder before she can mate are the most popular.

BULWARK RANGE

The Bulwark Range absorbs the brunt of the many storms that hit the eastern isle, protecting the fertile farmland that lies to the west of the range. Lord Bratumil, a wise, ancient dwarf that has the universal respect of everyone living in the Canterbury Isles, even the humans, rules these mountains. Indeed, Bratumil would stand the greatest chance of mediating a peace between the elves of the Stormwood and the humans of Bondaea, if he could be convinced to intervene.

Unfortunately, Bratumil has other things on his mind and is unable to intervene at the present time. Something has driven the ogres in the Bulwark Range mad and at almost the same time, Bratumil lost contact with his sister and brother-in-law, who rule the nearby Bitter Peaks.

If someone were to solve Bratumil's "ogre problem" and find out what is wrong with his sister, he would be willing to intervene and forestall the coming war. Given that the ogres are in a



murderous frenzy, the task of anyone seeking Lord Bratumul's aid will not be an easy one.

DALUNA ABBEY

Daluna Abbey is a jointly consecrated temple to the sisters of Arkara's twin moons: Dannos and Lunos. This remote monastery consists of approximately 50 monks (cloistered clerics) who work on copying holy texts of the twins while living an extremely ascetic lifestyle.

They are protected by a contingent of holy warriors dedicated to the twins, mostly Fighters but also many Crusaders and a small number of Paladins. The Paladins train the Crusaders and Fighters and the entire body of warriors protects the abbey from the marauding monsters common to the isles.

MILLER'S BEND

While the Lady of the Wood and the Duke of Bondaea edge closer to a war neither really want, the residents of the small hamlet of Miller's Bend might tell you the war has already begun. This community makes its living off the lumber they cut from the Millwood, which is drawn up the wide calm river on barges pulled by mules on the shore. The wood is then cut and treated in Miller's Bend, before being shipped overland to Bondaea, where it is sold to merchants who transport the valuable wood throughout the known world.

Recently, a group of renegade elves have moved into the wood, which was ceded to the humans as part of the original accord and begun attacking the loggers, killing them for the "murder" of the wood. The lumberjacks, rather than ask for aid have responded in kind, trading passing ships for weapons and even hiring mercenaries. In short, there is a private little war going on here.

Unknown to either side, both humans and elves are being manipulated by sinister, outside forces. A pair of successful scribes has been manipulating the leaders of both the humans of Miller's Bend and the renegade elves of the Millwood. Posing as beautiful new consorts for their respective leaders, they whisper promises of glory for ending this "threat" and label any thought of calling for outside aid cowardice.

Whether they are simply enjoying the violence, chaos and bloodshed they are causing or have an even darker purpose for their actions is unknown at the present time.

MILLWOOD

This forest was originally ceded to the humans almost 200 years ago as part of the original agreement between Lady Kohia and the humans who crashed on the island. Most of the elves had never had contact with humans and were shocked at the way they began to cull the wood, cutting down trees in their prime. The elves always took trees near the end or were fire hazards and only the word of Lady Kohia that the Millwood (as the humans named it) was off limits stopped an attack then.

Recently, an ambitious elven noble and his consort left with a force of elves and took up residence in the forest where they immediately began attacking the human loggers. At first they only conducted acts of sabotage, ruining saws or poisoning the mules needed to carry the wood upriver but have been getting more and more aggressive of late.

Of course, the reason for this behavior is the same as that of the humans in Miller's Bend (see above for more details).

NORTH SHORE

North Shore is an isolated farming community and is known for its large crops of Rye, which flourishes despite the generally cold climate. They mill this rye into flour and sell it in Bondaea. North Shore is also known for the excellent whiskies they make from their staple Rye. Those who visit this tiny hamlet (which is not a great many people) also find their pumpnickel bread magnificent.

Several months ago a group of adventurers passed through North Shore with a treasure map to a mysterious cave north of town. This cave was well known locally for weird noises and smells and was avoided by the inhabitants of the area. While the adventurers were never seen again, since they ventured into the cave, livestock and even the occasional citizen of North Shore have gone missing.

Any hardy souls willing to investigate the cave will be promised 200 gp by the town council if they are successful in ending the attacks.

Grimlocks and numerous traps inhabit the cave complex. The Grimlocks were once men who were cursed by some greater evil deeper in the cave complex and forced to help that greater evil guard an item. What this greater evil is and what it guards are up to the game master.

RAIRIETON

Prairieton is another of the agrarian hamlets that support the population of the Canterbury Isles, as well as producing a surplus of food that is sold in Bondaea. Sheltered by the Bulwark Range, Prairieton produces large quantities of corn, oats and potatoes. It also supports large populations of cows and sheep.

Unfortunately the herd animals have drawn some unwanted guests to the hamlet's vicinity. A large pack of dire wolves has arrived in the area and has been feasting on the local populations for some time. A bounty has been offered by the town in the amount of 50 gp per dire wolf pelt delivered to the town elders.

There are a few little complications to this bounty offer, neither of which the town council is aware. First, the creatures preying on the local flocks are not dire wolves but worgs. Second their arrival in the area is not a random hunting pattern. They have been pursued into the area by a group of goblins that seek to capture the young of the pack and train them as mounts.

There is also a small wood far to the east of Prairieton, which served as a source of lumber in times past. The locals no longer go there, preferring to trade excess crops for lumber in Bondaea. If asked why, they will relate tales of the forest being haunted. When a local farmer was found mutilated in the wood, these stories were widely believed and the locals have not gone there since, with one exception.

That one exception happens to be the daughter of the Mayor of Prairieton, a plucky young lass who has studied the ways of magic at the Jadakan University and believed these tales of haunting were old wives' tales; the mutilated man was caught by a bear she argued. After heading into the wood she has not been seen since.

In fact, this small wood has become home to a clan of Quicklings. They have captured the poor girl and driven her near to madness but have not yet harmed her. For the moment, she is entertaining to them. Eventually they will grow bored and slowly torture her to death like the hapless farmer she thought mauled by a bear.

If someone should bring his daughter back for burial, the Mayor of Prairieton would reward him or her with 200 gp. If someone should actually bring her back alive, the Mayor would reward him or her with every scrap of gold he has on hand, amounting to 500 gp. Alas, the girl's mind is shattered, barring magical healing.

QUIETWOOD

Prior to the departure of a group of renegade elves for the Bandit Wood, this realm seemed to live up to its title. For millennia Kaimana, the royal consort of Lady Kohia, has ruled these lands. The rising tide of racism among the humans has caused a rift in this once peaceful community, something unheard of in the entire history of the elves on these islands. Kaimana has allowed the elves to leave for the Bandit Wood in peace but has sworn to them that if they attack humans outside the Bandit Wood, he and his fellow elves will attack them.

Primarily because of the rift they have caused in the elven nation, humans will be quite unwelcome in the Quietwood but they will not be attacked.

SHELTERED SEA

These quiet, peaceful waters teem with fish. It is said that they are so calm, quiet and warm that a man could swim from the eastern isle to the western isle, floating on the surface when he got tired. While this has never been proven, these waters are breathtaking in their beauty and in calmer times pleasure ships from the Kingdom of Damask were not an uncommon sight in these waters.

SKIFFTON

A group of independent fishermen built this village and over time, it has grown to a rather large size thanks to the abundant fish stocks of the Sheltered Sea. These taciturn, hard-working folk make quite a good living on the sea and have grown wealthy.

Attributing this success to Ostalorch, the god of the sea, they have built an elaborate temple to him, one of the most breathtaking temples to this god in the entire world. So ardent is the worship of Ostalorch here that a cult of whale riding has sprung up among the local population. Young men and women under the age of 18 go out on the sheltered sea at night and try to entice the mighty leviathans to the surface with prayers to Ostalorch. If one comes to the surface, they lash themselves to the great creature, letting it take them wherever they will.

While many of these intrepid youth are never seen again, those who return have a great insight into the sea. Some become great fishermen while others become some of the greatest priests of Ostalorch the world has ever seen.

The truth of this ritual is stranger than even the villagers of Skiffon suspect. At the bottom of the Sheltered Sea is a vast underwater city of the sea elves. Like the humans of Skiffon above them, these sea elves hunt the abundant fish and worship the god of the sea.

When they encounter the whale riders from the surface, they are usually drowned. Occasionally, one has reached the sea elves

alive and they use magic to allow him or her to breathe water and survive the icy depths. There they induct the intrepid youth into deeper mysteries of Ostalorch than any surface dweller will ever know.

After erasing any memory of the sea elves and their hidden city, they call a whale and have him or her returned to his people on the surface.

These sea elves are under attack by the foul batrachians and lizard men. These creatures are dedicated to the service of Icarra and are determined to exterminate the sea elves. They have also begun attacking the surface of late, especially the elves of the Stormwood.

STORMWOOD

This turbulent pine forest seems cold and unforgiving to outsiders, wracked constantly by storms that sweep down from the Hold of the Snow Queen. But the elves of the Stormwood have lived here for millennia and those who have been invited to their cities deep in the heart of the wood tell a different tale.

In the heart of the wood lies one of the greatest elven cities in the known world, sheltered by a wall of pines from the cold and rain, this city exists in almost perfect weather year round. Only light rains and snows make their way through its protective forest boundaries and even in the dead of winter the temperature rises only a little.

Unfortunately, there is trouble in paradise. First, there is the growing tension between the humans and the elves. Elves have defected from both the Stormwood and the Quietwood in defiance of the Lady's wishes. Secondly,

from the great lake in the south, where the elves have frolicked happily in the summer months for millennia, has come a large force of batrachians and lizard men. They have found a way into the lake from the sea and use this underwater passage to attack the elves when they least expect it, melting back into the ocean once they have mounted a defense.

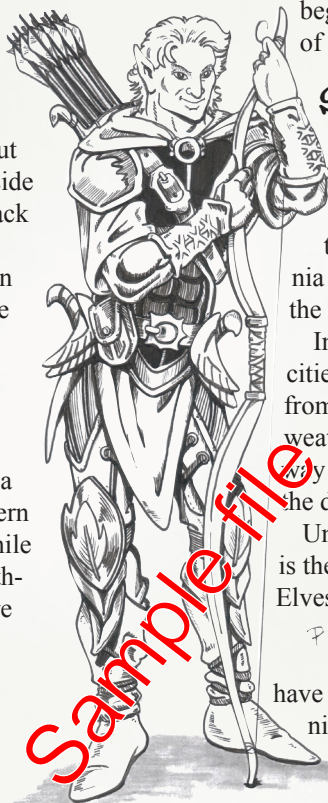
Because of this, what was once an idyllic spa for the elves has turned into a fortified boundary, with towers manned day and night by elven archers, watching the waters for the next attack.

TIGER MOON MONASTERY

This island used to be known as "shrimp rock". While the shrimp stocks off the island are tremendous (and ships from Skiffon still travel here routinely to take advantage of this), the island itself was rocky, cold, wet and inhospitable. Still, a group of the refugees from the Droplet Isles moved out to this island almost immediately and began importing wood for what they have named the "Monastery of the Tiger Moon".

While no one visits the island except for the occasional supply ship, sailors fishing the shrimp stocks report amazing sights of ascetics practicing bizarre and complex maneuvers that are part fighting style and part dance, at least to their untrained eye. While many of the refugees know bizarre but devastatingly effective open-hand combat techniques, even those pale in comparison to the stories of the techniques taught by these monks.

Occasionally a young man or woman will make the dangerous trip to the island. Some of these are descendants of the Droplet Isle refugees while others are native inhabitants from all over



the Canterbury Isles. Even a few elves have come here. Most are turned away but a few are accepted into the monastery, where they are never seen again, unless a fisherman glimpses them as they practice.

Note to the game master: If OSRIC™ *Unearthed* is being used in the campaign this is where any Yamabushi will receive his or her training. It is far enough away to be remote and explain why the class (and martial arts techniques in general) are relatively rare, but close enough that the player does not need an elaborate story of how he came to wander the lands.

In general the “Drop Town” refugees of the city of Bondaea serve the same purpose, giving a ready explanation of how a Samurai or Ninja came to the west.

Of course, if the game master does not wish to use OSRIC™ *Unearthed*, then the monks here provide a bit of local color while steadfastly ignoring any characters’ attempts to learn their secrets.

CITY OF BONDAEA

The City of Bondaea is designed to be a source for urban adventures in your campaigns. Below you will find a general description of the city and its four quarters, along with detailed descriptions of many buildings. Many of the city’s buildings have been purposely left vacant, to allow the game master to place establishments appropriate to his campaign and his adventures there.

Permanent Residents: Approximately 1,000 (city proper); approximately 5,000 (city environs)

Standing Militia: 250 plus the Duke’s personal guard, which numbers 50.

Bondaea (pronounced Bond-ā-uh) is the capital of the human presence on the Canterbury Isles and is the home of Duke Anchien Zelan. His ancestors hired a large number of dwarven stonemasons from the nearby Bulwark Range to construct the city and it is a fortress many military leaders have proclaimed could only be breached by siege or subterfuge.

The city’s four quarters are independently walled, with interior walls possessing the same battlements and fortifications as exterior walls. Thus, if someone penetrates one of the outer walls, he faces another gate, which allows fire from three interior walls.

Sadly, these fortifications are used as much to control the city’s residents, as they are to defend it from outside attack. A city dedicated to Zelos, the God of Justice and containing temples to half a dozen other Lawful gods, Bondaea has become a city obsessed with Law above all else. Driven primarily by the priesthoods of Zelos and Therran the White, the city has become a police state that severely restricts the rights of its citizens, especially demi-humans.

Upon entering the city, a visitor is given a day pass to the city. Upon renting a room at an inn, the inn will provide a guest with a visitor pass listing the name of the inn and the length of stay the visitor has paid for. The only inns that will sell a visitor pass to a non-human are those in the demi-human quarter.

At night all external and internal gates are locked. Characters with a guest pass for an inn will be allowed to enter the city from outside to return to their lodgings. No movement between internal gates is permitted under any circumstances.

Guards patrol the city in groups of 7-12 (6+1d6) both day and

night. By day, there is a 50% chance of encountering a patrol every 10 minutes and a 50% chance of being asked for identification. Those without a day pass are asked to leave.

By night, there is a 75% chance of encountering a patrol every 5 minutes and a 100% chance of being asked for identification. Those without a guest pass will be escorted out of the city. Those who have a guest pass will be escorted back to their lodgings.

If a group of guards is attacked, every member of the party will begin blowing a whistle they carry around their necks, while falling back to the nearest guard post. This will attract attention both from nearby guard posts but also the off-duty guards who are sleeping/relaxing at each guard post (which also contain barracks). 2d6 guards will arrive every round until the maximum number of guards (250) is reached.

At this point, if a battle is still ongoing, the Duke and his personal guard will arrive.

Noble Quarter: Duke Zelan’s Manor (#13) is at the heart of this richest quarter of the city. This is where the blue bloods make their home, the nobles and “new men” who grew rich on trade. This district is also home to many of the city’s temples, especially those to the Lawful gods the residents of the city have become obsessed by.

Arena Quarter: The Arena (#61) is the heart of this boisterous, middle-class neighborhood. Many inns and shops are here, as well as a large number of middle class apartment buildings that rise high above the city, rivaled in height only by the tenements of the demi-human quarter. These buildings are much nicer construction than the tenements however, being made of mortared brick by dwarven craftsmen. They rise straight and tall, allowing light to reach the clean streets below.

This city contains most of the city’s residents and the large, sturdy, utilitarian temples of its most popular gods: Kazatha, Lorenon and Zelos. The city’s nobles look down on this area of the city, and its temples and have even tried to convince Duke Zelan to force the temples of Lorenon and Kazatha to move outside the city, which has nearly caused riots.

This area also breaks with the rising “humans only” sentiment being pushed by the followers of Therran the White. Anyone who is a member of a craftsman guild can live here and a number of dwarves and halflings do, though not without occasional harassment by the Order of White.

Demi-human Quarter: Once a vibrant trading center between the humans and demi-humans, this area of the city has been transformed by the racist hatred of the Order of White into a slum where almost all demi-humans in the city are crowded after dark. The guard never comes here after dark, having decided to allow the Order of White to serve as an “auxiliary militia”. They do not prevent crime so much as act as the source, terrorizing, beating and occasionally killing any demi-human unfortunate enough to be caught outdoors after dark.

The safest part of the demi-human quarter, especially after dark, is the tenement district, ruthlessly controlled and protected by Jagged Ear’s Crew.

Tenement District: The Jagged Ear’s Inn (#35) is the cornerstone of this unofficial district of the city, in more ways than one. A number of pitiful demi-humans, mostly dwarves but also more than a few elves have fallen into poverty in the city and stayed there, rather than return home in disgrace. Most of these pitiful souls now live in this squalid tenement district, in wood frame