



The Green Isles for D&D 5th Edition

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The Green Isles: Players? Summary

The moment her spell clicked the latch open Vel the pixie played a shrill note on her flute. On that signal the furred form of Borm the bear burst into the room and slammed into the ogre. Just behind him Tam the child slipped in to help the prince from the cage ...

This is a setting for the D&D 5e game but one quite unlike typical settings like WOTC?s The Forgotten Realms or Greyhawk. Don?t worry though, this setting draws on British fairy tales which in turn have influenced a lot of fantasy novels, TV, and film. This world will seem very familiar.

Spirit of Adventure

D&D 5e is great for telling fun adventure stories; this setting plays to that strength. Adventure stories can be about daring-do or they can be nasty and unpleasant but they are never about shades of grey, horror, or moral ambiguity. This is a deliberately lighter setting than many RPG settings but there are limits, light is not silly.

Where are you?

This is a high fantasy setting but ones that draws more on British folklore than most D&D settings. The Green Isles somewhat resemble the British Isles in the 13 th century but only somewhat, this is not a historical setting. Part of the reason for his is that most fairy tales were first recorded much later than the Middle Ages and the setting mimics these in preference to history. It certainly does not reflect a Medieval Christian?s pre-occupation with sin and obedience to the Church nor the cultural schisms between Celt, Saxon and Norman. Why? Because these facets of 13 th century Britain are entirely absent in fairy tales. There is magic here but not so much that nothing is familiar. There are magically gifted 7 th sons, healing wells, and pixies but magic has not provided ubiquitous labor saving devices or doomsday bombs.

Adventures

Rather than delving dungeons most adventures occur under the open sky in the wilds and on the road. You wont battle any beholders or centaurs, but you will encounter plenty of giants, dragons, talking animals, devils, and hags. The other commonality of fairy tales is that the adventures are personal. You will not be hired to do a dangerous job in exchange for money, nor will you save the world from a demon invasion. Instead you quest to defeat the enemy has hurt you or your loved ones, or because you want to prove yourself to your parents, or undo the curse that has turned you into a frog. Rather than an external series of events driving the story, the drive to achieve your goals defines the story and when all the party?s bonds are resolved the campaign comes naturally to a close and everyone lives happily ever after.

Finally, you can die. In fact I'd expect about one death every tier of play.

Visual & Style References

A lot of players won't be familiar with British fairy tales. The following list of materials that might be more familiar to most players represents items inspired by fairy tales, these are not a perfect match to the setting but will give you a rough idea of what to expect: Snow White and the Huntsman (film 2012), The Storyteller (TV series 1987), Merlin (TV 1998), Dragonheart (film 1996), Legend (film 1985), The Hither Kingdoms in Legends of Anglerre (RPG Sarah Newton & Chris Birch 2010), Sunchaser setting in the Fantasy Craft Adventure Companion (RPG Alex Flagg 2010).

Who are you?

Forget the usual D&D archetypes.

? You are a character, you don't have to be a dashing hero unless you want to.

? You are a good person with a "can do" attitude. You need not be law abiding.

? You are probably a human, giant, faerie, elf, half-elf, or talking animal.

? You might be a youth, a child, or even elderly.

? For a name mix-up the syllables of traditional names from the British Isles and/or use phonetic spelling.

? Typical occupations include knights, peasants, clan warriors, mysterious pipers, priests, shape-shifters, fishers, soldiers, woodcutters, likeable-rogues, faerie-touched magicians (sorcerers), and wealthy wizards.

If you are human you probably worship Jhoeda, the one true god, while quietly following some old rituals dedicated to the Faerie Nobles of the non-humans. Villains are often worshipers of The Devil.

You will have a "bond" that strongly motivates you on a particular quest. Did an ogre kidnap your beloved? Has your father disinherited you as a good-for-nothing? Do you seek to break a curse? Every player's bond will be the corner stone of several adventures, you should discuss your bond with the DM.

You might just as easily play a plain honest farmer, or a bear, as a valiant handsome knight. That does not mean you should play any personality though, villains and broody anti-heroes need not apply. While the mix of races is very different to those presented in the Player's Handbook (PHB).

Most classes will work. However, there are no native monks nor draconic bloodline sorcerers. You could play a concept, race, or class not native to the Green Isles but there are special rules for foreigners. No more than one in four PCs should be a foreigner or much of the uniqueness of the setting will be lost.

Equipment

The technology of the setting is based on England in the 13th century. The following items are not available: plate armour, breastplates, halberds, hand crossbows, rapiers, scimitars, tridents, blowguns, mauls, warhammers, and war picks. Natives of the Green Isles never begin play proficient in these weapons even if their race or class normally is (this restriction does not apply to armours listed). Magic items are so rare that you are unlikely to ever have more than a few. The exception is healing potions; there are a number of magical wells providing healing waters scattered around the Isles. These are usually claimed by powerful individuals, but vials do find their way into town markets where they command a high price (typically 50gp as shown in the PHB).

What Everyone Knows about the Green Isles

The Isles are isolated from the rest of the world by vast oceans. There are three larger islands and tens of tiny ones. Additionally, there are ways to get from the Isles to Elfland, another dimension populated with elves, faeries, and other fey. Most of the land has been tamed and farmed, there are few wild places for monsters to live. Instead monsters cross over from Elfland, are summoned from the Nine Hells, descend from the clouds, or crawl out of the waters.

North Island

A land less tamed than the other two large islands, half covered in moors, heaths, and rugged forested mountains. This far north the winters are times of snow and frozen lakes. Hidden in this harsh land are hostile giants and fey of all kinds, refugees from The Devil's ancient defeat who harbor an undying hatred of humanity.

South Island

This is an island divided.

The river plains and gentle coastal plains of the eastern portion are fertile lands. The isles fertile lands sustain herds of sheep and cattle as well as rich wildlife this abundance of prey and the Isle's many magical wells draws winged dragons hatched in the wild northern isles like moths to a flame.

Fortunately, the rich lands support a good size population of heroes and knights limiting the extent and duration of any dragon occurrence.

The Western portion is chalky hills good for raising sheep but not as fertile as the east. However a wealth of metals is mined from the hills. Without the bountiful harvests of the east this area lacked sufficient heroes to drive out the dragons. Instead an uneasy 'understanding' has evolved. The fire dragons of the Western hills stake out large territories, keep their predations at a somewhat tolerable level, and defend their territories against other dragons, monsters, and even invading armies; anything powerful enough to threaten the dragon or the steady supply of mutton provided by the people on its land is met with wrathful flame from above. The humans in turn have come to regard the dragons still as terrible monsters, but monsters that protect them from worse threats. Few fey and elves live on the South Island but there are many gates to fair Elfland through which there passes much trade and many travelers. Elves are frequently seen visiting human towns and there are more human families with elven blood here than elsewhere.

West Island

The West Island is one of green rolling hills, gentle valleys, and green pastures. The Church is strong here, no humans openly worship Faerie Lords or the Moon. The 'walls' between fair Elfland and the Mortal world are especially thin on the Western Isle, elves and fey are commonly seen travelling and trading in the Isles meadows and wild places. However, elves and fey avoid the villages and towns places where the influence of the Church makes them unwelcome.

Elfland

Elfland is a parallel world where the land is even more bountiful and beautiful. As one would expect Elfland is inhabited by elves, faeries and fey of all kinds. There are many kingdoms in Elfland some ruled over by Faerie Kings and Queens, unique Fey almost godlike in power. One must be careful for there are some kingdoms in Elfland that once sided with The Devil, these places seem fair but are beguiling deathtraps of illusion and devilry.

Cloudlands & Undersea

The Cloudlands are situated on solid clouds they range from small cloud island homes for cloud giants to the extensive Kingdom of the Sky. These drift with the winds over the Isles and the vast oceans.

Beneath the waves live merfolk, sea elves, and asrai. Deeper still are huge bubbles of air containing elf kingdoms.

History

During the Age of Myths giants built huge stone monuments and battled dragons. Then Elves invaded the Isles from Elfland. In the Age of Heroes human heroes drove the Elves back into Elfland only to see the Isles invaded by the forces of The Devil. The mortals won the war but the bulk of heroes were killed. In the Age of Mortals the Isles have seen waves in invasion by humans: the Empire bringing The Faith, seafaring Hrangs, and finally centuries ago the

Imperials, diverse peoples of the now fallen Empire. The Faith of Jhoeda the true god came to humanity during this current Age.

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