From "Travelon" by Tim Kirksey

The Wonderful World of Intrepid

Intrepid: No world in the Empire, save verdant Loft Verbis herself, is as majestic as beauteous Intrepid. From isolated beaches at Isolde's southern islands to the fortresses on the cold peaks of Ironwatch, the varied natural beauty of the world of Intrepid knows no peer. Visitors are always agog at the White Forest, and a visit is not complete without a tour of Cappie Lake.

Natural beauty is not the only attraction Intrepid has to offer: she also has a long and storied history, beginning as the "Second Valiant World." Intrepid, like all other human worlds, fought against the elves in that period, and was first to join the Alliance when Valiant issued the call. After the war, Valiant settled in as a major agricultural contributor to the rapid growth of the human population of the Iustium. Later, during the Second War of Unification, Rubedo was discovered under the sleepy city of Siwmae. Nestled into lush valleys in the shadow of some of the highest mountains on Intrepid, Siwmae was an ancestral home for several ancient shepherd Houses. When the Empire bought their mining rights, most of the population moved away to enjoy the life of easy purchased by their newfound wealth.

In the wake of the Second War, with tensions running high among the diverse cultures of the Empire, the Elves instituted a multi-generational program called the Diaspora to put dissident populations on foreign worlds among foreign peoples. After initial spates of violence, the worst offenders were dealt with by the legal systems of their hosts and the rest of the community learned to get along. Once the peoples of the Empire learned the strength they had together, the Diaspora was ended and everyone was allowed to return to their ancestral homeworlds.

Intrepid had few dissidents, but many Houses that were not interested in complying with Guild laws. As a result, nearly half the population of Intrepid was displaced, many to the minor world of Greenshire. The Intrepid diaspora integrated with the halflings of Greenshire almost instantaneously, and though many diaspora settled on Greenshire permanently, those who returned often brought back halfling friends and associates when they did.

These days, visitors to the capitol at Blue Sky City should visit the new Five Hundredth Arch and the Old Garden nearby. IRON Bureau 12 is just up the street, and is worth seeing for enthusiasts of exploration or for those who remember that the building originally was the Francis Shenker School for Baking before the inception of IRON.

Those who wish to blend in on Intrepid may be rewarded a more natural picture of what everyday life looks like on world, as the locals may tend to gawk back at outlandish fashion. Among Siwmaetes, wear the local flat cappie with a buttoned shirt and plain trousers. In Blue Sky City, proper attire dominates, including pipe hat or bowler, dark suit, vest, and slacks, tied bow, and shoes shined black. Tradesmen tend to wear the standard flat cappie, but usually also wear rough jacket and tied bow when not on the job. In Ironwatch, the heavy wools of the locals are necessary just for survival. Make certain not to take off your hood, even for a moment. The cold can claim you in seconds. In the southern islands dress is more relaxed, with cotton beach slacks and tunics, with a loose-tied kerchief unique to the region that hangs almost to the waist in front. Jackets here are made of open-weave cotton and are categorically light in color. Wide straw or cloth hats keep the sun off the face and shoulders. By contrast, near Cappie lake and particularly on the stone islands where the fishing industry has such a strong presence, all outer garments are made of oilcloth. The constant high water and wind gives these rugged people little hope for staying dry for any length of time, but visitors will want to wear the provided coats when taking a skiff to see the lake. Above all, remember that, as elsewhere in the Valiant Alliance, the people of Intrepid associate dress with an individual's station and profession, It is highly recommended that visitors bear this in mind when selecting a wardrobe.

Of all the wonders of Intrepid, though, nothing compares to the people themselves. All Valiant are hardy and Individualistic peoples, holding fast to the ideal that a person has the right to believe, think, or say what they please. Moreso, they admire the virtue so much that those who do not find their own way are seen as weak and uninteresting. To be a 'nobody' is a grave insult. Visitors should strive to be assertive and frank. Disagreement is often the hallmark of friendship and respect for the people of Intrepid.

An even greater virtue is integrity. "You are what you are in the dark," is a phrase deeply ingrained on the mind of the Valiant. The choice of what to do is theirs and ultimately up to them to choose what to be, regardless of what others think or say. Whatever they are, be they the noblest gentleman or the most dastardly rogue, the Valiant are obliged to be what they are as well as they can. This has lead to a strong emphasis on personal success. The Valiant often take several trades in order to succeed in any situation. Failure is most likely a deficiency of preparation.

A final word for visitors: in spite of centuries of effort since the end of the Second Unification, the Valiant still strongly prefer the company of other humans or their close dwarven or halfling counterparts. Though they would never be impolite to visitors of other races, those who intend to stay should be aware that they will be unable to compete for work when qualified humans are available, though some are more accepting than others. At any rate, visitors should not take too seriously the variety of slang words used for other races on Intrepid.