

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CANDELA OBSCURA SETTING

3,500 YEARS IN ONE PAGE!

The year is 1907, and the world your character was born into is over.

The fiery cataclysm of war, the radical upheaval of industrialization, and ravages of ecological disaster have all conspired to upend the social order of your day-to-day life. In the shadows, the influence of magick moves in secret.

THE LAST GREAT WAR

Ending just recently in 1904, The Last Great War was characterized by trench combat, aerial bombardments, and widespread devastation for the civilian populace.

The war was fought to a stalemate with all of the modern implements of war, like poison gas, machine guns, and airships. It was won by the introduction of an electrical superweapon, the deployment of which is known to history as The Electric Event.

INDUSTRIALIZATION

The advent of electricity, which played a part in ending The Last Great War, has also rapidly accelerated industrialization. Changing economic patterns have led to massive inequality, with “haves” achieving unimaginable levels of luxury and “have-nots” struggling to survive.

ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

For the last decade or so, the world has been impacted by a miniature ice age known as The Shiver. While your region of the world is located in a temperate zone and thus able to thrive, the world at large has been thrown into disarray. This was a primary motivation for The Last Great War, as nations impacted by The Shiver attempted to conquer those with food.

THE CITY

Newfaire is the capital city of the nation Hale. Cosmopolitan and modern, Newfaire is a city of staggering social inequality. Elites live in the cloudbottom district known as The Eaves, with lush gardens and rolling parks. Directly below, the underclasses and war refugees live in cave-like South Soffit, seeing the sun only where the district opens up to the sky.

The war has left the city devastated - in some areas, the impact is physical, like in Westwreck, where the Electric Event saw lightning weapons deployed on the defenders' home soil.

Everywhere, the impact of the war is felt mentally. Newfairians cut loose, indulging in turn-of-the-century crazes like spiritualism, patronizing speakeasies and dancehalls, and embracing a radical new future made possible with the latest technology.

ANCIENT HISTORY

Newfaire is a city like Edinburgh, Paris, or Istanbul - it has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years, with the new built upon the old.

The ancient empire is known today as Oldfaire. Ruled by an imperial dynasty, including a curiously long matriarchal line of Empresses named Iomene, Oldfaire used magick like modern Newfaire uses electricity - to amass wealth and destroy its enemies.

The empire flourished for roughly 1,600 years before being suddenly extinguished in 0 CE - the date that marks the great flood, when the Vastchasm was torn in the Glass Sea, destroying Oldfaire.

The ruins of Oldfaire are situated deep underneath the modern city, where all but the heartiest expeditioners struggle to reach. Briarbank College, a local nexus of higher learning, has a prestigious antiquities department devoted to the study of this ancient empire, sponsoring frequent expeditions.

Less savory sorts, including criminal organizations like The Red Hand, conduct a brisk trade in Oldfairen artefacts. These artefacts are all the rage in high society, sought after by the fashionable, as well as by occultists who know their true potential.

MAGICK

Widely regarded to be a myth, with its existence denied by the government and the press, magick is a corruptive force in this world.

There is a barrier between this world and the realm beyond known as the Flare. In places where the Flare is weakened - known as thinnings - magick seeps through.

Creatures, places, and objects can be suffused with magick. Bleed is the corruptive residue of magick, often coming from artefacts or creatures from beyond the Flare.

Exposed to bleed, a person may become corrupted, die, or be entirely taken over by supernatural forces.

CANDELA OBSCURA, THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in the wake of the fall of the Oldfairen empire, Candela Obscura is a secret society tasked with protecting the world from supernatural phenomena.

Organized in small cells known as Circles, each of which is led by a Lightkeeper, Candela Obscura investigators brave supernatural threats to solve mysteries and protect the innocent.

Oftentimes, Circles are headquartered out of a chapter house, a secret safehouse used as a base of operations.

Other Candela Obscura facilities include lighthouses, which are frequently located near thinnings in the Flare, and home to magickal astrolabes that keep rifts to beyond the Flare closed.

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