

After the End: Setting Overview

Once upon a time, the world ended. It was a nasty affair, and just about everything that was was broken. It was The End of the world. And yet, there were those who survived the apocalypse. The world After the End is not quite like anything that came before it. Civilization is a paltry candle flame compared to the mighty globe-spanning empires that once were. A great deal of technology has been lost. People band together for survival in a mostly lawless wilderness long gone to seed. Some folk are civil and even neighborly, but many have turned to unsavory practices to keep their bellies full.

Survival in the world is a precarious thing, taking no small amount of skill, luck, and determination. That's what you're trying to do - survive. You've banded together with other outcasts in an attempt to live another day. Some folk are idealists, others opportunists.

The year is 2321, almost 100 years After the End, and the world is not a pretty place. But it is a place where damn near anything can happen. Keep your powder dry, and you just might live to see the sunrise.

Envisioning After the End

After the End is a game inspired by many genres, with the primary influences being western and post-apocalyptic. We have a high level of science fiction in our game, but prefer a specific aesthetic that harkens to an old west frontier style with just a little bit of technological enhancement. Characters are living in a world where civilization's infrastructure has collapsed, leaving them to scramble to survive. Most people own very little, and what resources remain are highly guarded and precious. Everything from food to bullets is worth its weight in gold.

Because we're shooting for a western aesthetic, guns play a large role in After the End, and many people carry at least a sidearm. The melee weapons used in our game tend to be more toward the sort commonly found in western settings. Swords, if present, are cavalry sabres, not broadswords. Most people carry machetes or hunting knives if they're going to scrap with a blade. Most people also dress in a western or Neo-Victorian style - before the End, that was the height of fashion, so most Nanowoven clothing that remains is rendered in that style.

Before The End

Four centuries ago, in the 21st century, humanity continued its slow, steady progress towards enlightenment. Or its decay into utter decadence. Take your pick. A solid 2 centuries of progress followed the second millennium's passing, bringing with it technological wonders and horrors the likes of which may never be seen again. Human lifespan was greatly extended, and the worlds of our solar system explored and settled.

People lived and worked in a globally connected society that had just begun to approach unification. Things like borders and division were melting away with every decade as old grudges were settled. Or perhaps there were a series of ever-escalating wars that tore the very continents apart. Take your pick.

All that's truly known is that one day, about a century ago, all the bees died. And that was the beginning of The End.

The End

Famine. War. Pestilence. Plague. The four horsemen are aptly named, and all four saw fit to visit each corner of the world. No sector was spared, no human untouched. From the richest magnates to the poorest dirt-farmer, global suffering peaked in an orgy of destruction. It is unclear who launched first, but a semi-limited nuclear exchange by the remaining world powers certainly happened. Large pockets of the world today are uninhabitable due to severe radioactive contamination.

Governments and corporations alike fought against The End, and one another. Experimental treatments to change the climate, re-engineer plants and animals, or even escape the planet were implemented. These solutions were haphazard and largely untested, resulting in interference and unexpected consequences, ultimately making the situation worse.

Eventually, enough infrastructure was lost to prevent any further attempts at salvation or conquest. The last breaths of the old world gasped out across a broken, brown world ravaged beyond measure. And yet, in caves and bunkers and basements, there were yet a handful of people who survived.

After The End

It's taken a century, but mankind has recovered enough to push beyond the meagre boundaries of survival. The world is wild and new, filled with irradiated plants, animals, and other far stranger things. Pockets of civilization dot the land, thriving or wilting according to the whim of fate and the gumption of their members.

Wonders of lost technology litter the landscape like so many broken toys. Some have weathered the passage of time and the cruelties of nature better than others, but the touch of entropy is always present. The ruins of the old world are dangerous, lucrative tombs to be raided. Most folk live in walled settlements, keeping a watchful eye out for bandits or Jackalopes.

More than a few folk have taken to banditry and raiding, taking rather than growing. Those who join such a gang, or who are pressed into service, lead short, brutish lives. Those settlements who can drive away bandits do so often, lest they succumb to the rule of a bandit-king.

Location

After the End takes place in what used to be the state of Georgia, and the states that immediately surround it. Much of the world has been reclaimed by nature; roads are broken and choked with

rusted vehicles, rivers have burst their dams and flow where they please. Trees and vines, especially kudzu, are everywhere. And in the shadows of their boughs lurk all sorts of animals, both predator and prey.

Atlanta, that jewel of the old South, is a walled fortress-city. It was claimed long ago by a mutant - a Resurrectionist who is simply called The Queen. By her decree the dead walk alongside the living, but little else is known about her necropolis. Few leave, and those who do seldom talk about their lives there. To the north is Chattanooga, southernmost bastion of what remains of the United States, known simply as The Federals. To the east is Savannah, a pirate haven. To the south is Macon, a sad shadow of its former glory, and a vast grassland beyond. To the west is Birmingham, a fiery heart of industry and toil.

Trade

There is no such thing as money or currency in the world After the End. The Feds have dollars and Birmingham use company tokens, but they're only good within their respective territories. Trade has regressed to a much more practical barter system, where goods and services are exchanged directly, rather than for fiat currency. The only thing that comes close are Absorber Packs, a nigh-ubiquitous bit of old-world technology that is essential to modern day living.

Guns

Before we get into the gun rules, we here at AtE staff want to pull back the curtain and explain why we've written them the way we have. Firearms are an iconic part of the Western genre, and AtE - above all other things - is a Western game. Guns are the primary mechanism for resolving conflicts, their use a romantic component of the meta-fiction.

We want guns to be important. We want guns to be deadly. But we didn't want them to be overpowered or make combat too easy and therefore not fun. If there's no challenge - if the PCs can just mow down wave after wave of bad guys - then that's not going to be fun for most people. Maybe a few, but not most. And our philosophy is maximizing fun for the most amount of people.

We also don't want to completely negate non-firearm weapons as combat solutions. Melee and even Archery aren't as powerful as Firearms, but we still want them to be viable means to conflict resolution (in the same way that there are unique, esoteric characters in Westerns that use weapons other than guns to be weird, niche, and otherwise cool). Overall, we want combat to be gritty, hard, and high-stakes. It *means* something when someone draws their gun in a Western.

The Lattice and Nanotech

One of the greatest technological achievements Before the End was the creation of the Lattice, and the ubiquitous nanobots it employs. Every last thing on Earth is saturated with a cloud of nanites, each one keyed into the Lattice. All of 'em together, we call the Nanosphere; the ones around a given place, the Nanotide; and the ones flitting around little old you and me are Nanoclouds. Most folk never

consciously utilize the Nanosphere, but each person's Nanocloud is responsible for several every-day miracles that enable survival in this world.

First, thanks to its effects, most people are rather difficult to kill. Even the most grievous wound can regenerate given enough time - usually little more than an hour. With the assistance of a physician of even meager skill, this time can be significantly reduced.

Second, even the most uneducated, backwards individual is capable of learning and comprehending new skills, or significantly deepening existing knowledge and ability, very quickly. The Nanocloud aids in the construction of neural pathways, enabling new or advanced aptitude to be acquired in a fraction of the time it once took.

Finally, the Nanosphere and the Lattice work together to ensure that death is not as final as it once was. The specifics are quite murky, but simply put there are ways to resurrect the dead after they've bled out. One's Nanocloud digitally consumes their corpse, storing it within the local Lattice of the Nanotide. A skilled Hacker can tweak the Lattice's protocols to reconstruct the body and download the saved personality into it, restoring the person to life. True immortality, however, is beyond reach; the miracle of resurrection can only happen a handful of times before the person is lost forever to the digital afterlife of the Lattice.

Technology

After the End is a game set in a post-apocalyptic future, which means that there's a significantly higher level of technology than one would run into in most LARPs. The Lattice is a ubiquitous wireless nano-network and everyone has a personal Valet -- a culmination of the cell phone into a fully interactable personal digital assistant. Some people have kept an 'old school' physical copy, but most have fully integrated it into their personal nanocloud. Valets are responsible for managing your personal nanocloud: monitoring heat waste from your sidearm, tracking your vitals (or lack thereof) to trigger Digital Immortality uploads, and connecting you with the Lattice in general. People without Valets could probably shoot their sidearm as much as they liked, but they'd be destroyed (or worse) by their unregulated Nanocloud, so... well, people have Valets.

Your Valet is such a common and essential object (if it even has a physical manifestation) that it does not need to be tagged. Due to their simplicity, they are almost never broken, nor are they hacked - it would be the height of Black Hat mischief to tinker with someone else's Valet, the fact that there's no known exploit for such a thing set aside.

Other common additions or manifestations of your Valet package may include basic flashlights (but not UV), watches, cameras, music players, note-taking devices, or anything else your basic smartphone can do now. None of these items need be tagged. Some areas of the world may prevent the use of some or all of these Valet features, but that's the exception, not the rule.

Mutation

One of the many consequences of The End, and the valiant and/or insane attempts to halt the apocalypse, is a significant alteration to the natural evolution of all lifeforms. Perhaps due to the Lattice's unprecedented ability to tinker with the human genome, humanity has collectively been blessed with the ability to radically undergo zeroeth-generation evolution. The change is irreversible, but when donor DNA is introduced into a willing human's body, their entire genetic structure reconfigures, resulting in a person with natural abilities far and above what normal, baseline humans. These individuals are no longer truly human - they cannot develop a third calling. In exchange, they can cultivate their mutation's abilities, achieving powers no man or woman outside of the strain can hope to achieve.

The Drifter War

There have been plenty of conflicts since the End, but the most recent (and the one most likely to impact you) is known as the Drifter War. Without getting into too much detail, a band of Drifter pirates attacked and sacked New York City. In retaliation, the Feds waged a long and bloody conflict with Drifters, as well as the forces of the Atlanta Queendom. It went on long enough to make all sides war-weary, and a treaty was recently signed bringing the conflict to an end. The Feds are of the opinion that all the "bad" Drifters are now dead, leaving only "good" wanderers. Fed forces have pulled back to Chattanooga - southernmost bastion of their territory, and the force of Atlanta have withdrawn back to a sturdy bulwark built atop the ruins of Old 285.