

"The Roots of the Rot" The Founders of Elmwood Park The DelaRosa Family

The DelaRosas and their followers didn't immigrate. They arrived in silence. No ship manifest. No census trail. No Ellis Island. Just one hundred twenty-five lost souls who appeared one October evening in 1868, dragging not trunks of clothes or household belongings, but bottles of dark fluid, and a long, thin iron key that didn't match any known lock. They were a group of pallid, almost sickly looking men, women, and children, on a quest to find where they belonged.

At the helm was Salvatore DelaRosa, tall and silent, a man who claimed no religion but led multiple rituals. His wife, Inez, was the mouthpiece, vision-prone, sleep-obsessed, and capable of reciting entire languages she'd never studied, or even heard of. It was Inez who claimed they had been "chosen by the land", that the trees had whispered their names before she was born. The others followed without question because she seemed 'touched' by something divine, always humming—strange, tuneless melodies that made dogs cry and walls peel.

People believed that she could see things. Many witnesses stated she'd go stiff for days and wake up crying or laughing in Latin. They claimed she told them they had been "called to Quillville." That Inez saw it in a dream thick with moss and black sunflowers.

When they arrived the land was filled with homes, crops, and necessities. The men found animals roaming the land and corralled them. Within a week of their arrival, the trees twisted inward, the air thickened, and the land... complied. They didn't purchase the soil. They performed rituals in it. Whatever they needed, the land provided. They wanted a manor house large enough to serve as an inn for those who fell through the veil and were lost and afraid, the land birthed it. There were no blueprints, they divined what they wanted, and it suddenly seemed to sprout forth from the ground.

Some in the group believed them spiritual seekers. Some thought them mad and crazed fanatics.

But all outside of the DelaRosa 23 agreed on one thing: Their children didn't blink enough, and the parents were caught under the spell of a charismatic leader, and his touched 'prophetess.'

The layout of the town is based on a spiral ritual map that matches no known occult systems but mirrors crop-circle patterns discovered in the U.K. decades later. No original plans exist. Others in the cult began to see the DelaRosas fanatical behavior, and the primary cell splintered. Of the 125 followers, only twenty-three remained behind. The twenty homes, the manor inn, fertile grounds-the six other families fled to other parts of Quillville to make their own ways and furnish a new lifestyle free from Salvatore's tyranny and Inez's crazy prophecies. The Elmwood Manor House, in particular, appears in photographs before it was ever officially recorded as built. The entire area behind the house stretched off in directions that appeared hazy and almost mirage like to those passing through, but to the ones living there-everything was perfectly mapped out and ready for occupancy.

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These original settlers and their descendants didn't stay because they were welcome. They stayed because something in that land wouldn't let them leave.