

# DARK FALL

Series Bible and Pilot Treatment  
by  
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# DARKFALL

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# DARKFALL

## DARKFALL LOGLINE

A catastrophic solar storm charges the Earth's atmosphere, enabling a small group of humans known as *Summoners* to practice magic while obliterating electricity and chemical combustion. Mankind is thrust back into a new Dark Age.

## SERIES PREMISE

What if science *stopped* working?

What if magic *started* working?

What if scientifically developed, sophisticated society is, in the blink of an eye, thrust back into what is effectively a new Dark Age?

## THE EVENT

*DarkFall's* main premise is that there are individuals who, due to a rare genetic mutation, are capable of channeling power from a negative magnetic atmospheric charge, breaching the fabric of our dimensional plane and calling forth creatures from alternate dimensions.

These individuals are known as Summoners.

Earth is intermittently subjected to *coronal mass ejections* (CMEs) that charge our atmosphere like a battery. However, the strength of these events is rarely higher in magnitude than -300 *nano-Teslas* (nT).

Within the *DarkFall* mythos, our planet has been subjected to CMEs in excess of -2,500 nT on only five occasions.<sup>1</sup> Depending on the magnitude of the initial event, residual charges persist anywhere from 100 to 600 years. The most recent occurrence of this phenomenon was recorded by a Benedictine monk, Gregor Mortier, in 923 C.E. After the dissipation of its residual charges in 1387 C.E., the Summoners' powers once again fell dormant.<sup>2</sup>

Our story begins with the *DarkFall Event*. Earth is bombarded by a massive CME measuring -3,850 nT, activating hundreds of dormant Summoners worldwide and effectively obliterating modern technology—destroying electrical grids, wreaking havoc with delicate electronics and magnetic media, and rendering chemical combustibles inert, precipitating a new Dark Age.

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding the *Fere Vicis Event*—a CME with a magnitude estimated between -2,100 and -2,300 nT that occurred in May of 318 C.E. A handful of Summoners

<sup>2</sup> Known alternatively as *The Great Wane*.

## THE EVENT (CONT'D)

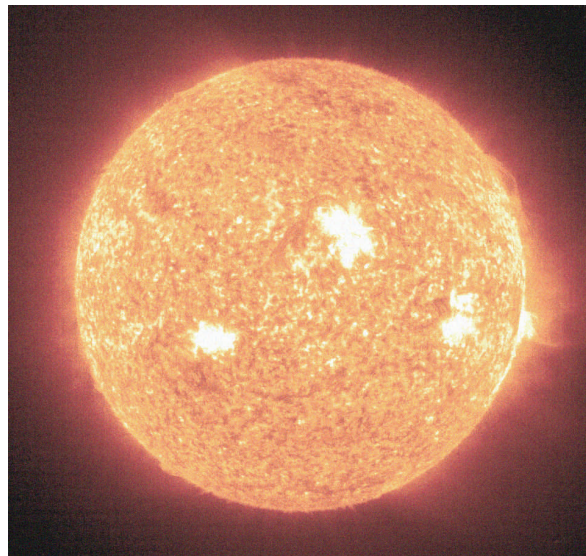
By stripping our characters of technology, we are left with their humanity. Power in the world of *DarkFall* is no longer measured by who has the largest bank-account, but who has the strength to survive, the ingenuity to thrive, the charisma to lead, and mastery of the Summoners craft.

We will follow the adventures of two brothers, PHILLIP and DOUGLAS WOLFE, as they transform the Los Angeles suburb of Silverlake into a village and, eventually, a kingdom. They will not only struggle with the limits of their ingenuity in the face of catastrophe, but against all manners of human and non-human antagonists.

Unlike traditional Sword & Sorcery, which is traditionally set in a pre-industrial environment, placing it's characters within nature, *DarkFall* is unprecedented in that it is set in a post-industrial urban world—21<sup>st</sup> Century Los Angeles. Likewise, its characters are not simply thinly veiled archetypes, but thoroughly developed, nuanced and—most importantly—*relatable* contemporary individuals.

Thus, as our story unfolds, so too will a new, unprecedented type of heroic mythology.

A mythology that is both timely and timeless.



# DARKFALL

## THE WORLD OF DARKFALL:

900 years ago, mankind lived in a great age of magic.

To the common man, the spirit of God was as real as the ground under his feet. Curses were manifest in the blotting out of the sun, inexplicable plagues and famines, and the darkness that fell nightly, beaten back only by fires, torches and candlelight. We gathered, told stories of monsters that ruled the forests and barren lands beyond our village, the demons who galloped across our rooftops on every winter solstice, and dark, soiled creatures that lived within mountains that belched smoke.

Today, mankind still lives in a great age of magic.

Our world is encompassed by a matrix of filaments as fragile as a spider's web. Digitized messages pulse along the threads, some as banal as a telephone call, some as critical as instructions to deploy cooling rods in a nuclear power plant.

We predict weather, the paths of celestial bodies and the lives and deaths of stars. We have harnessed the power of the sun and wield it at our whim, whether to destroy our enemies or brew our coffee. Travel is measured in miles-per-minute; knowledge in gigabytes. We have pressed foot-steps into the dust on the moon. We eradicated smallpox and polio. Doors open at our very approach. We have mastered flight.

We no longer worship in churches or mutter spells. Instead, our daily life—indeed, our very reality—is completely dependent on networks, grids and chemical reactions.

We slide behind the wheel of a car assembled by robots from parts manufactured in three dozen countries, its sheet-metal stamped and shaped by vast machines, its engine forged by heat, plastic and rubber and glass fabricated from a chemical stew.

We turn the key, and the spark plugs ignite vaporized gasoline, an on-board computer dictating the firing order. We accelerate and are smoothly propelled to a speed in excess of a mile-per-minute in mere seconds. We turn on the radio and listen to Eminem or Mozart, NPR or Dr. Laura.

Yet most of us have no idea how our cars work. Or our cell-phones, our iPods, our computers, our Blackberries. We don't have to. The end-user has been carefully shielded from the chips and their coded operating systems. Our only concern is



## THE WORLD OF *DARKFALL* (CONT'D)

that they work as designed. And yet we hardly notice.

Until something breaks.

Most of the time, it's an inconvenience—telephone call is missed, resulting in a reprimand from the boss. Sometimes, it's lethal—a two-dollar plastic pneumatic tube fails, plunging an airliner into a mountain.

But what if everything broke at once?

Imagine if the globe fell dark. Planes plunge from the skies. Cars stall on the freeway, clog our city streets. Radios, televisions, iPods and cell-phones fall mute. The great pumping stations that bring potable water to our cities wheeze to a stop. The entire infrastructure that makes modern life possible fails.

This is the world of *DarkFall*.

### GOVERNMENT AND LAW:

With the breakdown of municipal infrastructure, the areas of Los Angeles that are still inhabitable due to with a reliable source of potable water slowly define themselves as separate governmental entities. Adjoining neighborhoods establish contact and trade, banding together for the common good. Protection of limited resources is of paramount concern.

Barricades mark borders, jealously guarded by volunteer patrols and civilian militias against encroachment by the thousands of refugees from the uninhabitable areas that soon become commonly known as the Wastelands.



Cooperation and group effort is critical to the survival of the community. Vacant land is dedicated to food crops—including front and rear yards. Fruit trees, once a quaint landscaping detail, become invaluable to homeowners, who barter their produce at local markets.

Practical skills are highly prized. Avocations such as furniture-making, sewing, gardening and

home-repairs become primary vocations. Health care workers, particularly doctors and practical nurses, are critical to a community's welfare.

Conversely, those without marketable, practical skills—ironically, many in the white-collar service industries so prevalent in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century—find themselves with little more to offer than manual labor.

## THE WORLD OF *DARKFALL* (CONT'D)

Those unable to work—the elderly, the sick and mentally ill—would be dependent on the charity of their neighbors and churches.

Most communities live at sustenance level. The priority is making sure everyone has enough food and water, shelter, clothing, shoes and access to basic health care. Though a few prosper, flaunting wealth is frowned upon due to the meager circumstances of the majority.



Criminal activity is not tolerated. With the scarcity of food and resources, theft is taken very seriously—a crime against the community. Suspects are judged in a public forum. While some communities maintain jails or employ forced labor, banishment is reserved as the penalty of choice for most large crimes.

Neighbors pull together or perish. In conjunction with the cessation of mass entertainment and media, this interdependence gives rise to deepening relationships, the value of companionship and conversation. More and more, the individual's identity becomes inexorably tied to his or her community. Status is no longer a function of material wealth, but one's value to others—as a friend, as a worker, as a part of a whole.

## SCIENCE:

In a few remaining enclaves, scientists from all disciplines work feverishly to determine what caused the breakdown and what, if anything, can be done to restore civilization. These men and women refuse to believe in a supernatural explanation, and are compelled to seek the truth through scientific method.



They know that *DarkFall* has a rational explanation. The loss of electrical power was clearly the result of a Coronal Mass Ejection—an explosive burst of very hot, electrified solar plasma.

Less easily explained, however, is the complete neutralization of common chemical reactions. Combustible substances such as coal, petroleum and gunpowder have been rendered inert, while others like propane, natural

## THE WORLD OF *DARKFALL* (CONT'D)

gas, wood, brush and peat remain unaffected.

With the coming of *DarkFall* many in the community regard science and its practitioners with suspicion and outright hostility.

There are the zealots believe that their current circumstances are a result of an over-reliance on science and technology at the expense of religious faith. To them, *DarkFall* was the inevitable divine retribution for soaring too close to the sun on waxen wings.

And then there are those have attained power, wealth and prestige under *DarkFall's* new order, who see the restoration of technology as a threat.

But the most dangerous of all are those that seek to restore the old technology and turn its formidable array of weapons to their own ends.

### TECHNOLOGY:

The world has lost all technologies based upon electricity and most chemical combustion, including (but not limited to):

- Internal combustion engines
- Electric light and heat
- Air conditioning
- Gunpowder
- Pressurized water systems
- Consumer appliances and electronics
- Telephone service (land-lines and cellular)
- Radio, television and mass communications;
- Refrigeration
- Automated manufacturing
- Indoor plumbing

Stored propane, acetylene and natural gas still function due to the fact that these resources were isolated in a pressurized state without exposure to the outside atmosphere

Man's ingenuity is formidable, and it will be reflected in the series. Vast networks of canals and aqueducts may deliver water. Windmills and waterwheels may drive factories. The ongoing efforts of scientists may once again unlock internal combustion.

For there is always the secret hope harbored in every heart that somewhere, somehow, someone is working to fix their broken world.

### TRANSPORTATION:

Practical transportation is limited to walking, bicycles and conveyances drawn by animals. Typically, a vehicle will consist of a small car—stripped of its drive-train and all excess weight—drawn by horses, mules or cattle. Also popular are simple U-Haul-type trailers, either salvaged or hand-fabricated.



## THE WORLD OF *DARKFALL* (CONT'D)

Theoretically, steam-driven vehicles such as antique locomotives may also be utilized. However, the massive task of restoration and transportation to a railroad track is virtually insurmountable. But this may play in future episodes.

Weapons are limited to clubs, crossbows, spears, crude maces, bow and arrow, slingshots and blades. Pressurized air-guns still function, but are only useful to deter an attacker, although in skilled hands, a pump pellet-gun may be lethal. Also, in later episodes, we may see the deployment of siege-weapons such as trebuchets and catapults.



Flight is still possible via hot-air balloons, hang-gliders and base-jumping.

We may also see exotic or less practical conveyances such as dog-sleds, scooters, skateboards and spring operated cars. Although it may be possible to convert a car to drive on propane, efforts are hampered by the lack of working spark-plugs, batteries and electrical systems.

### TRADE AND COMMERCE:

Most villages are self-sustaining. Given the reduction in population, pre-existing stocks of consumer merchandise such as clothing, building materials and sundries, replenished through systemized foraging, could be available for decades.

Many managers of retail chain stores assume proprietorship. Supermarkets, pharmacies, hardware centers and sporting-good stores barter their products in exchange for goods, labor and services.

Limited trade is established between communities through a growing network of secured routes through the Wastelands. A proprietor may dispatch salvage parties to scrounge items from the abandoned cities and warehouse districts. More aggressive merchants may commission armed raids on the stocks of an adjoining community.

Livestock is transported on the hoof by ranchers in the rural outskirts. A community may acquire herds of sheep, goats and cattle, grazing them in open areas such as parks. Chicken coops spring up in back yards; pig-pens in vacant lots.

### ENTERTAINMENT:

With the absence of television, DVDs, CDs, radios and iPods, there is a resurgence of the virtually lost art of conversation. Individuals who might have remained strangers before *DarkFall* are bonded by their common experience and shared tribulations.

Many gather in taverns and pubs, at backyard barbeques, trashcan fires in the commercial districts, fire-pits in the parks. People talk, laugh, share their dreams, fears, problems and plans for tomorrow. With the loss of recorded music, the survivors are forced to entertain themselves; the darkness carries the strum of the guitar, the soulful growl of a harmonica or the weeping of a violin.

Occasionally, animal acts, circuses, acting troupes and musicians willing to brave travel through the Wastelands stop in the towns. Some of the faces are familiar. Stars from the long ago days when there were stars now perform for food and water.

Some acting companies, such as the “Brady Bunch Bunch” and the “I Love Lucy Players” have specialized staging shows from television series scripts. A few perform staged readings of films such as *Casablanca*, *Reservoir Dogs* and the now wildly popular *Gone with the Wind*.

Communities will celebrate holidays with communal picnics, pancake breakfasts and talent shows. They compete in sports, martial arts and on horseback. Men’s football and baseball leagues battle teams from neighboring villages. Trophies, titles and wagers are won and lost.



## COMMUNICATION:

The absence of mass media, telephone and radio communication is unexpectedly crippling to modern society. There is no way of knowing whether DarkFall is a local or global phenomenon. Rumor and speculation rule the day.

Most of the news comes by word-of-mouth and is, by its very nature, unreliable. Travel through the uninhabitable lands between villages is perilous, even by convoy along guarded trade-routes. Nevertheless, messages are conveyed by merchants and runners, by horseback, cart and bicycle.

Some villages distribute daily or weekly flyers printed on manual presses. These ersatz newspapers often travel hundreds of miles, carried from city to city, treasured for the scant information they provide—no lights in Chicago, Denver or Houston, lists of the living and the dead, the lost and found, personal ads from distant loved ones, announcements offering safe harbor to dispossessed relatives.

Carrier pigeons wing news over long distances. Cryptic in their brevity, these messages read like headlines: New Orleans under water; Cincinnati is burning, send help; all is well in Ottawa; Nazis run Wyoming; the lights are on in Mexico City. There is, however, no way to confirm most of these messages without risking life and limb.

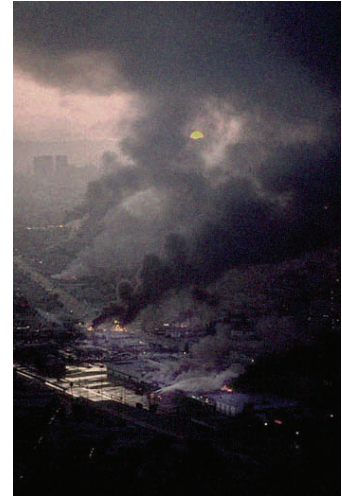
## THE WASTELANDS:

With no reliable source of water, the suburban sprawl between established communities rapidly goes to seed, reclaimed by nature into a vast ghost town of empty stucco houses, dead lawns and looted strip-malls.

The Wastelands are plagued by rampant disease, famine, lunatics and roving gangs of thugs. Sparsely populated, most of the inhabitants have emigrated or died off in the spasm of looting and riots that followed DarkFall.

The few who remain in the Wastelands live by scavenging food and water where they can find it and preying upon unwary travelers.

The gangs have familiar names—the Crips, MS-13, la Eme. Most of their strongholds hug the L.A. River, from the Sepulveda Basin to Long Beach. Fiercely territorial, they are subject to brawling not only with competing gangs, but within their own ranks. Their cash-crop is marijuana, which thrives in the concrete basin of the Watershed.



Other areas have become uninhabitable due to a wide variety of strange creatures that have taken up residence—undoubtedly due to accidental dimensional breaches by un-schooled Summoners.<sup>3</sup>

For instance, a *Drakken* rules the skies over the East San Gabriel Valley, routinely igniting brushfires that have consumed most of the foothill communities, from Monrovia to San Bernardino. A large *Ghrealloch* now resides in the tunnels of the Highland Park section of the Pasadena Freeway. Strangest of all are the tiny winged *Phey* that have taken over the lake in Echo Park, aggressively defending their territory against all interlopers, human and otherwise.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>3</sup> See section headed “Summoners.”

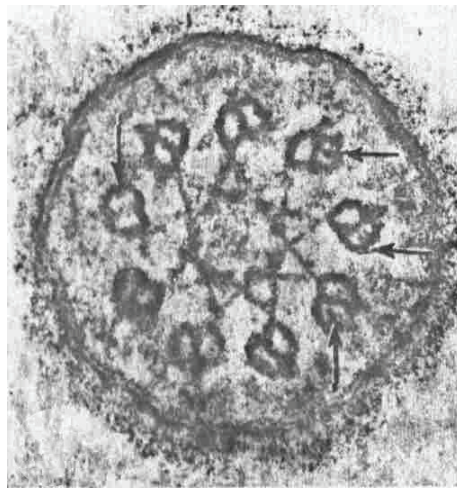
<sup>4</sup> See section headed “The Creatures of DarkFall.”

# DARKFALL

## THE ATRUM TERRA <sup>5</sup>

In *DarkFall*, Earth is but one of nine known alternate dimensions, all existing on the same plane, each exclusive of the other. They are known as the *atrum terra*, and are populated by thousands of different species, many of which possess abilities we would perceive as supernatural.

The ancient symbol for the *atrum terra* is the nine-pointed star, its iconography found in a number of religions, <sup>6</sup> cultures, and even (as seen below) in nature.



Cross-section view of the flagella of the algae chlamydomonas, magnified by an electron microscope 120,000 times, displays a remarkable similarity to the 9-pointed star. The tip of each point appears like the Arabic letter *há*.

The nine *atrum terra* coexist with earth, each sharing the same physical space while retaining its own individual reality. An apt metaphor would be the lenticular image, in which two wholly separate illustrations appear in the same frame depending on the angle of view.

On rare occasions, the barriers between the other *atrum terra* and Earth may be arbitrarily breached, the consequential displacement of creatures resulting in so-called “alien” or “cryptozoological” sightings.

With an adequate negative magnetic atmospheric charge, Summoners are capable of breaching these dimensional barriers at will.

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<sup>5</sup> Translation: *Dark Lands*

<sup>6</sup> From Islam to Wicca to Johannes Freemasonry and the modern Bahá'í faith.

# DARKFALL

## THE CREATURES OF *DARKFALL*

Every civilization and culture in the world has its own mythology, populated by fabulous creatures and monsters.

Though each seems unique, the more one studies these myths, the more one is struck by their similarities. Dragon legends, for example, are pandemic, from China to Europe, Africa to pre-Columbian Central and South America. So too are legends of little-folk and giants, bizarre human-animal hybrids and leviathans. Just as ubiquitous is the concept of the sorcerer, the rare human who can call forth and command these creatures.

How do we explain the universal nature of human mythology? Were these stories carried along ancient trade routes? Are they remnants of a collective dream? Do we carry them in our genes, like strands of DNA?

Or is the explanation more prosaic—that at some point in human history, we lived in a world where magic was real, and man lived side-by-side with creatures now relegated to fantasy.

Our main goal in *DarkFall* is to convey the impression that, long ago, creatures now considered the stuff of legend actually existed. Descriptions of these creatures and beings were elaborated upon and corrupted over centuries of oral tradition until they became marginalized as fantasy.

Consequently, the denizens of mythic tradition—fairies, elves, trolls and dragons—are mere echoes of much older archetypes.

For example, in the *DarkFall* mythos, the *Gollum* of the Hebrews, the *Grendel* of the Norseman, the *Xing Tian* of ancient China are, in fact, all members a single species—the *Ghrealloch*.<sup>7</sup>

As there are similarities between Smaug as depicted in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *tyrannosaurus rex*, there are profound differences as well. The former inhabited the imagination of a middle-aged British college professor; the latter was a biological reality—the living, breathing peak of the Jurassic food-chain.

The creature designers at Henson, working from a blank page and drawing from root biology informed by various aspects of common features among various mythological creatures, will create a wholly original menagerie, each species unique to our mythos, yet vaguely familiar.



<sup>7</sup> A Hulking Humanoid that inhabits the 6<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra* known as *Laiä Nocht*.

## THE CREATURES OF DARKFALL (CONT'D)

The following list, though extensive, is my no means complete. As the series moves forward, we will create additional creatures depending on story necessities or inspiration. These, however, represent the most common of the creatures inhabiting the eight dimensions that share their planes with Earth.

### META-HUMANOIDS:

Meta-Humanoids are sentient creatures that resemble humans, but possess supernatural abilities. Angels, demons, valkyries and muses, for example, are names for what is, in effect, the same creature—the *Etheorum*, a winged, semi-corporeal being from the 3<sup>rd</sup> *atrum terra*. *Etheorum* feed on residual emotion and are capable of reading human consciousness, limited mind-control and brief spiritual possession.



World Vampire and Changeling mythology (as well as the Central American chupacabra) and is almost universally drawn from the *Voormus* of the 5<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*, grotesque shape-shifters who manipulate and feed on the life-force of their prey. Likewise, their close cousins, the noble *Vorhahl*, are what humans have often represented as elves.

### ELEMENTALS:



These are nano-creatures, sometimes as large as four inches, more often smaller than the head of a pin, sometimes referred to as pixies, imps or faeries.

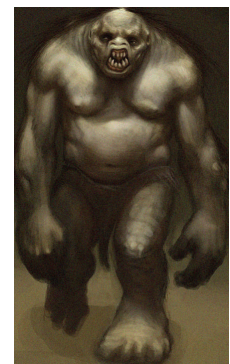
The most common of these are the *Luminiénte* of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *atrum terra*, swarms of tiny airborne humanoids that generate visible auras of light, the color of which changes with the overall health and vitality of the swarm.

Another common elemental is the *Phey*, of the 4<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*. Small, winged creatures that resemble vaguely insectile human females, they are sentient, highly territorial and prefer wetland environments. Armed with barbed stingers sheathed in their palms, the *Phey* carry a powerful bio-toxin that instantly calcifies living tissue.

### GIANTS:

Trolls and Ogres, as well as the aforementioned Gollum, Grendel and Xing Tian, generally fall into the same genus of *Ghrealloch* of the 6<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*. Standing between three and five meters tall, the *Ghrealloch* are brute predators, preferring solitude, rarely interacting with one another except to mate (or fight for mating privileges).

A second, unrelated group, the *Nog* of the 9<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*, is typically referred to in mythology as goblins, ghouls and yamabushi-tengu. Though the *Nog* are smaller than the *Grealloch*, they are still formidable, standing



## THE CREATURES OF DARKFALL (CONT'D)

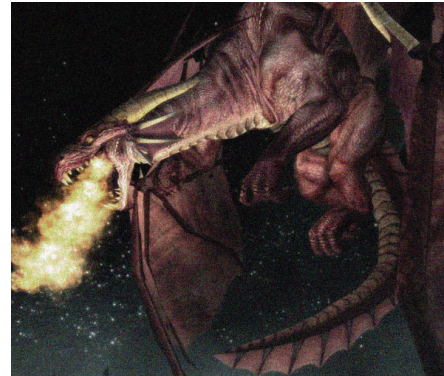
at a height between two-and-a-half to three meters. Adverse to light, severely sensitive to solar radiation, they are strictly nocturnal, sheltering themselves in caves or tunnels by day. Like bats, they augment their night-vision with radar squeaks and whistles.

The *Nog* are highly social, usually hunting or conducting raids in small packs. Occasionally, however, they will attack in hordes of hundreds—or even thousands—of individuals.

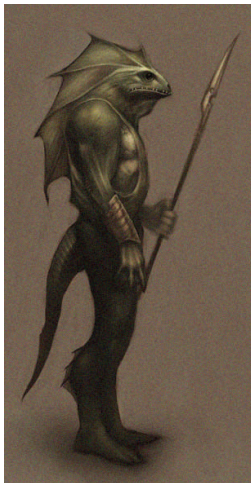
### BEASTS:

There are several broad classifications for these species. Most of the scaled species, from hydra to dragons, are based on the *Drakken* of the 8<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*. Differences in gross anatomy are due to several distinct developmental stages in the creature's life, from pupa to flying worm to adult quadruped.

The basis for mythological creatures such as the Bunyip, Catoblepas and Cerberus is the vicious *Fuerma* of the 7<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*.



### HYBRIDS:



Every culture has believed in human-animal hybrids such as the sphinx, the centaur, satyrs and ipotanes. These, however, are almost universally based on the bipedal and quadrupedal ungulates of the 6<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra* known, respectively, as the *Bernyxx* and the *Quaxxen*

Animal-like humanoids, such as werewolves, the Yeti and Bigfoot, are fanciful incarnations of single species, the *Baalogs* of the 5<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*.

Hulking, covered head to toe in thick, glossy fur, *Baalogs* are highly intelligent and gifted healers and telepaths, though biologically incapable of articulate speech. Most are peaceful, but vulnerable to a form of violent psychosis predicated by gravitational forces (such as the earth's tidal phases).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of the *Accersitus Sceptrum* contains a bestiary, describing and illustration the creatures of the various *atrum terra* in detail.<sup>8</sup> However, these represent but a fraction of the extant species, as each dimensional plane supports a complete ecosystem as complex and diverse as that of Earth.

While most of these exotic visitors fail to survive or bear live young on this plane due to environmental factors,<sup>9</sup> a few, such as the platypus, the hammerhead shark and the electric eel, have thrived, passing from the mythic to the prosaic as they carved a niche in our ecosystem. Still others, such as *Ethearum* and *Voormus*, are immortal, living hidden among mankind for centuries, dismissed by science and comprising the stuff of local legends and ghost-stories.

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<sup>8</sup> Translation: *The Summoner's Rules*.

<sup>9</sup> Elementals, for instance, are particularly vulnerable, some having literally the life span of a fruit-fly on Earth's plane.

# DARKFALL

## SUMMONERS

The information that follows will be slowly revealed as the series progresses, but most of it should be pretty much out of the bag by the conclusion of the first season. The sources will be characters—human and non-human—as well as written texts discovered during the course of the series.

- Since mankind's beginning, there has existed a bloodline of humans called Summoners who are capable of calling forth specific creatures.
- Summoners are neither inherently good nor evil. They are fully human, subject to the same strengths and weaknesses as other men. Their most common failing is that of hubris as their powers grow and develop.
- Control over the summoning craft requires mastery of

*The Call* - The ability to summon specific creatures through the breach while repelling others; and

*The Binding* - The ability to subjugate the creature under the Summoner's exclusive control.

- The craft of *The Call and The Binding* was developed and refined during the last two great *Epocha Veneficus*,<sup>10</sup> (620 through 146 BCE and 923 C.E. through 1387 C.E.) and compiled into a set of fourteen volumes entitled the *Accersitus Sceptrum*.
- A creature called but not properly bound is free to do as it will, trapped on our plane until it is either destroyed or dies of natural causes. This is often the case when a natural Summoner, ignorant of or untrained in the disciplines of *Calling* and *Binding*,<sup>11</sup> inadvertently triggers an interdimensional breach.
- For the last 600 years, a number of devotees exists who still practice the arcane disciplines of *Calling* and *Binding* outlined in the *Accersitus Sceptrum*. Absent the necessary atmospheric charge, however, the Summoners' Art is a purely academic endeavor with no practical purpose.
- Summoners differ from humans in that they possess sheets of lateral mesoderm in each of the hyoid and the first four bronchial arches.<sup>12</sup> The purpose of this structure is to generate a neutral magnetic field, thereby generating an interdimensional breach.
- Each Summoner's potential strength and stamina varies.

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<sup>10</sup> Translation: *Ages of Sorcery*

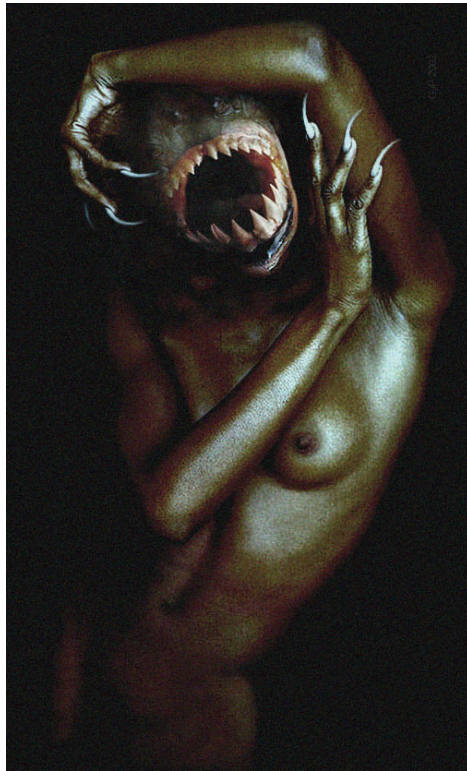
<sup>11</sup> Collectively referred to in the *Accersitus Sceptrum* as "The Ignarus." It is said that these are "the most dangerous of men."

<sup>12</sup> The physiognomy of Summoners is analogous to that of electric eels. These organs are vestigial unless the atmospheric medium is adequately charged



## SUMMONERS (CONT'D)

- In order for a Summoner to utilize his/her ability, the atmosphere must contain a negative magnetic charge of  $-2,500$  *nano-Teslas* (nT) or less (the lower the figure, the more powerful the charge).<sup>13</sup>
- The mutation that enables Summoning is extremely rare, occurring in only .0003% of the population.
- Upon the day of the DarkFall Event, there were 26 Summoners in Los Angeles County. Many of these were killed in the subsequent chaos. A few, ignorant of their own power and untrained in the essential craft of The Binding, were destroyed by the very creatures they had inadvertently called into this plane.



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<sup>13</sup> See sections headed “*The Event*” and “*The Science of Darkfall*”

# DARKFALL

## THE CHARACTERS

The world of *DarkFall* is familiar but alien, inhabited by strange and sometimes monstrous creatures. Our protagonists, however, are not bigger-than-life heroes, but flesh and blood characters the audience can easily identify with—the slacker college student, the frustrated middle manager, the neighborhood pharmacist, the kid who bags groceries at Trader Joes.

**PHILLIP WOLFE**, 26, charismatic, handsome, a natural athlete, is a walking, breathing anachronism, the only living male native-Californian without a driver's license. Phillip distrusts computers, and refuses to carry a cell-phone for fear of brain tumors. He sees the modern world as a toxic minefield.

A college drop-out and confirmed slacker, his head seems firmly rooted in the past. Phillip is a self-taught expert on military strategy—from the ancients to the middle-ages. As he would say, "War totally sucked after gunpowder." He collects antique swords and armor, has been studying fencing since he was a teenager, and lives for the annual Renaissance Pleasure Faire.

Phillip works days as a gardener with his best friend, ERIC BOWDEN. He lives in a large, run down craftsman in the hills above Silverlake with his girlfriend, JENNY BENNETT. His uncle, GRANT WOLFE, a legendary Hollywood special effects supervisor, left Phillip and his brother, DOUGLAS WOLFE, his house, a small inheritance and all his possessions when he mysteriously disappeared in Costa Rica while on a shoot.

Among the flotsam and jetsam of four decades of miniatures, matte paintings, latex creatures and cheesy movie memorabilia are items that are an utter mystery to Phillip—books written in runic code and a number of strange artifacts.

With the coming of DarkFall, Phillip's mastery of medieval martial arts and ancient military strategy cease to be "impractical," uniquely qualifying him to thrive and rise to leadership in the New World Order.

**DOUGLAS WOLFE**, 24, is his brother's polar opposite. Though fit, Douglas lacks Phillip's coordination and natural athletic abilities. He regards himself as a bit of a coward, assiduously avoiding physical risk whenever possible. In fact, Douglas was deeply traumatized by his mother's death after a long battle with ALS. He doesn't fear death as much as being seriously maimed, sentenced to life in a wheelchair or worse.

However, despite his low opinion of himself, Douglas is capable of surprisingly reckless acts of self-sacrifice to protect those he loves.

An academic prodigy, he graduated high-school a full year before Phillip, attending Cal-Tech, where he earned his doctorate in Physics. His thesis was on the determination of shapes and sizes of deformed nuclei using high resolution spectroscopy techniques with muonic X-rays. He works at JPL, designing the bolometric detectors for the High Frequency Instrument on the Planck Surveyor.

## THE CHARACTERS (CONT'D)

Of course, all this is just another way of saying that Douglas Wolfe has no life.

Though he adores Phillip, he's often frustrated by his older brother's lack of ambition—a frustration shared by Phillip's girlfriend, JENNY BENNETT. Consequently, Douglas often finds himself in the awkward role of mediator, brokering truces and repairing rifts in the relationship.

This is particularly problematic in that Phillip harbors a secret crush on Jenny, though he would sooner die than tell her how he feels.

But Douglas harbors an even darker secret:

Though aggressively practical, exasperatingly logical, all his life, Douglas has been plagued by intense dreams of worlds inhabited by strange creatures, some benign, others deadly. Chains of words run through his head, mantras and chants in a language he doesn't understand. Worse, Douglas suffers from a chronic sense of physical loss as acute as a phantom limb.

Douglas' ordered, logical life comes to a shattering end when it becomes apparent that he is a *Summoner*, one of the rare individuals capable of drawing on the charged particles of Earth's radically transformed, post-DarkFall atmosphere, and calling forth mythical creatures and beings from alternate dimensional planes.

Talent, however, can take Douglas only so far. Without training in the craft of *Calling* and *Binding*, his abilities will be inconsistent and stunted. Unfortunately, his natural mentor, Uncle Grant, is long-gone. In his place, however, is Grant Wolfe's former assistant, HERSHEL BLAKE.

**EMILY PELLIGRINO**, 34, was a librarian at the Hollywood Regional Branch with what, up until the DarkFall Event, were mere delusions of grandeur. Since then, she has used her powers as a Summoner to build an empire.

Discontented, sociopathic, ever since she was a child, Emily has felt cheated—first by her parents' modest circumstances, then as the target of derision through second-rate schools. She knew in her heart that fate had destined her for greatness and, as a young woman, assumed it would manifest by its own accord.

But by her thirtieth birthday, still a nonentity, still unexceptional, bitterness set in. Emily never excelled, never stood out, and is consumed by murderous jealousy and contempt for those who do. An obsessive genealogist and committed occultist, Emily has traced her bloodline back to Cardinal Pius Solario, a notorious and powerful Summoner of 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

She's spent virtually every penny of her meager income in amassing an impressive collection of rare books relating to the subject of Summoners, including Volumes I, IV-VII, IX and XIV of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*, a comprehensive text outlining the Summoner's crafts of *Calling* and *Binding*.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See section headed "*Summoners*."

## THE CHARACTERS (CONT'D)

Emily knew that DarkFall was inevitable, and prayed that it would occur during her lifetime. In preparation, she has long practiced the complex vocal mantras that define the Summoner's Art.

Since the DarkFall Event, using the penthouse of The Standard hotel as her base of operations, Emily has successfully called and bound a private army of *Nog* to serve her whims, running murderous nighttime raids on adjoining communities, expanding her dominion and guarding her borders. By cruelly enslaving millions of *Luminiénte*, she has restored light to The Standard and adjoining neighborhood, gathering hundreds of desperate refugees under her "protectorate."

Emily's most audacious exploit to date, however, is her successful binding of a powerful *Etheara*, RAPHAEAL, as her personal bodyguard and familiar.

Emily Pelligrino rules her fiefdom like a Borgia. The hotel is guarded by a private army of gangbangers, bikers, *Nog* and Voormus. The human denizens within live a decadent lifestyle of excess and corruption, all of them willing to do anything to please their queen or risk banishment.

**HERSCHEL BLAKE**, 47, is a surly little man. A hard drinker, womanizer and inveterate cad, he's been saddled with the world's worst babysitting job. Due to a drunken blood oath he took with his former boss, Grant Wolfe, during a shoot down in Belize, it's his responsibility to help Douglas develop his Summoning abilities.

The first step in this long road is the delivery of a key to a storage unit in Whittier, where Grant had tucked away most of his arcane library and summoning artifacts. The library itself is priceless, and there are those who would (and will) kill to obtain it.

Herschel resents the fact that he's often mistaken for a "magical" creature simply due to his diminutive size. Life was hard enough before DarkFall, but now he's confused for, by turns, an elf, a dwarf or (worst of all) a leprechaun. "Yeah, right," he'll snarl, "a freakin Jewish leprechaun." Grabbing his crotch, he might add, "I gotchyer pot of gold, *right here!*"

Herschel's not magic. He's just a guy from Queens who happens to be three-and-a-half feet tall.

He's a man of his word, intensely loyal and extraordinarily brave—often to the point of recklessness. He believes Grant Wolfe is still alive. In the meantime, he'll look out for the old man's nephews, whether they want him to or not. Together, they'll unlock the secrets of Phillip's skills as a Summoner.

**JENNY BENNETT**, 24, Phillip Wolfe's long-suffering girlfriend, Douglas Wolfe's closest confidante, she's been the third point of a triangle with the brothers since they were teenagers. A college graduate with a degree in finance, Jenny works as a credit analyst at City National Bank.

Though Philip draws the line at as much as a color television in the house, he's yielded to her insistence on an answering machine and a computer (as long as she keeps it in the garage). She has to keep her cell-phone hidden under the passenger seat in her car, though

## THE CHARACTERS (CONT'D)

(every time she gives him a ride, she secretly hopes he gets “butt-cancer”).

Jenny loves Phillip dearly—he’s kind, romantic, gentle and surprisingly brave at times. But he lacks ambition. He seems perfectly content with his current circumstances. Jenny is always urging Phillip to start being realistic. Jenny just can’t see herself twenty years from now, married to a balding, middle-aged gardener and “living history reenactor.”

On the morning of DarkFall, Jenny had finally decided to leave Phillip. But after she was abducted by a horde of Nog and he rescued her, she realized that a.) He’s the bravest man she’s ever known, or will ever likely know; b.) After DarkFall, all those silly, geeky hobbies that he obsessed over are coming in very handy; c.) She could do much, *much* worse; and d.) He needs her.

**ERIC “THE RED” BOWDEN, 27.** Phillip Wolfe’s best friend. The most apt description of Eric can be found in the lyrics of War’s song, *Spill the Wine*: “an overfed, long-haired leaping gnome.” A former high-school fullback, Eric is hard partier who fancies himself a latter day Viking,

Though Eric finds Phillip’s interest in ancient military strategy dull, he shares his friend’s enthusiasm for medieval reenactment and battle with edged weapons. Eric is brutally proficient with the sword, dagger, petard and—his specialty—the short battle-axe. He doesn’t, however, have much use for Phillip’s brother, Doug, who he considers a “pencil-neck.” His relationship with Jenny is likewise troubled, both of them often competing for Phillip’s loyalty.

After DarkFall, Eric becomes Phillip’s lieutenant, helping him forge a latter-day roundtable of friends and fellow re-enactors, men and women who are skilled with blade and bow. Each is sworn to rules of behavior reminiscent of the ancient Code of Chivalry. Together, they train a citizen-army of foot-soldiers and cavalry to protect the borders of Silverlake.

**MILTON JEFFERTS, 38,** an MTA Driver who joined Phillip and his group of reenactors on the first day of DarkFall to save Jenny Bennett. Milton is one of Phillip’s most trusted officers. Milton lost everything with the coming of DarkFall—his home, his wife, his kids. His old neighborhood in Inglewood was destroyed by fire during the conflagration that destroyed most of the LAX corridor in those first days.

As a boy, Milton worked at Hollywood Park, mucking stalls and, later, exercising the horses. He has a way with animals, and is an excellent rider. Since DarkFall, he has also deadly accurate with bow and arrow from horseback. He trains others in horsemanship, and is the *de facto* head of the Silverlake Mounted Militia.

**WIN CARLYLE, 43.** Formerly a colorless, frustrated store manager of the Silverlake Ready-Rite Pharmacy, Carlyle has suddenly found himself with control over a vital community resource, transforming him into power-hungry warlord.

Employing a private militia of “employees,” he routinely orders raids on pharmacies in neighboring communities in order to replenish his stock and bolster his fortune. This allows him to extend his control over a number of other market segments in Silverlake, including food and hardware.

## THE CHARACTERS (CONT'D)

Phillip tolerates Carlyle's machinations as long as he continues to provide a needed service to the community at a reasonable price. But when Carlyle's ruthless practices create tension between Silverlake and its adjacent communities, the two find themselves at odds, and a power-struggle ensues that may threaten the stability of the entire community.

**FRANK REPOVICH**, 41, ex LAPD, Rampart Division CRASH Unit, Repovich was one of half a dozen resident cops to join Phillip's roundtable, but was voted off due to his tendency for unnecessary violence and, quite simply, the fact that everyone (including his brothers in law enforcement) considered him a "flaming asshole." Since then, he went on to become Carlyle's head of security and personal bodyguard.

**COLONEL LES TRUAX**, 43, attended USC where he participated in ROTC while pursuing his DDS. After he graduated, he joined the National Guard, rising to the rank of Colonel after deployment in Operation Desert Storm, where he spent most of his four month tour drilling, filling and performing root-canals.

Stationed in the Glendale Armory, the morning after DarkFall, he led his men on a long march northeast to secure JPL. Per his orders, he has maintained a perimeter and overseen operations.

Truax is, in essence, a good man—noble and courageous, loyal to a fault, committed to the greater good of his fellow citizens. He draws his strength from an unshakeable belief that the government of the United States must still exist in some form, and that it is only a matter of time until civilization is restored by the powers in Washington.

Until then, he will follow his orders and stay the course until the inevitable day the cavalry finally arrives.

He resents the fact that the scientists don't appreciate what he's gone through to protect them. They behave like spoiled children. But Truax has orders and he aims to follow them until things get back on line, even though his men are now armed with bayonets, supplemented by crossbows, sling-shots and baseball bats the commandeered from the Sport Chalet in La Canada.

As far as Truax is concerned, the first order of business is the reformulation of some kind of working gunpowder so he can "arm his men like soldiers instead of street-punks." To that end, he'll work those lab-jockeys until they drop.

**MIKE "JELLYROLL" JELICO**, 38, a gifted physicist and aeronautics engineer at JPL who agrees to work with Truax, marshaling his team of scientists to conduct research and, if possible, restore the technology destroyed by the DarkFall Event. Though his motives are benevolent, he finds each breakthrough made by his team subverted at every turn by Truax, who seems intent on weaponizing their discoveries.

Jelico's team works feverishly under Truax's command, managing to restore electrical power to JPL—an astonishing technological feat that requires the hand fabrication of capacitors, spark-plugs and a number of complex components.

## THE CHARACTERS (CONT'D)

The lights blazing all night in JPL are a wonder to the surrounding communities. They also draw the covetous eye of Emily Pelligrino, who wishes to usurp the technology to power her growing empire of West Hollywood.

**ISOLDE** is a *Phey*, of the 4<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*. She and her sisters have taken over the lake at Echo Park, defending its waters from all interlopers. Isolde considers herself a cold, ruthless warrior, but is occasionally plagued by bouts of empathy that are unseemly for those of her kind.

In a moment of such weakness, Isolde allowed a lost, thirsty human child to drink from the lake unmolested. In doing so, she defied her *Kendall*,<sup>15</sup> Brenna, and was banished to serve the child in the Outlands.<sup>16</sup>

Isolde has accompanied the child, who she calls *BREAC*,<sup>17</sup> on the long trek over the hills to the Silver Lake, where it is rumored a great Summoner lives—a man called Douglas Wolfe. Through his skills, Isolde hopes to summon her kin from the 4<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra*, and with them return to Echo Park to take her revenge on Brenna.

But she is disappointed to find that Douglas is useless—or nearly so. Though of the blood, he knows almost nothing of the craft. Worse, Doug's brother, Phillip, loathes her and the nasty old windbag, Her-Shell, shows her nothing but disdain and distrust in equal measure.

But Isolde knows how to trick men, and Phillip is only a man. She will help him, but only insofar as she can help herself unseat Brenna and usurp her throne.

**BREAC**, 14, is a mute, autistic Latino girl who harbors a profound secret.

**RAPHAEL**, an *Ethearus* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *atrum terra*, serves his mistress, the Summoner EMILY PELLIGRINO. Bound to her by the craft of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*, he loathes Emily only slightly less than humankind in general.

Sullen, vain and, like most of his kind, quite mad, if Raphael was a human, he'd be diagnosed as a pathological narcissist with borderline personality syndrome, subject to violence and a danger to society at large. In short, unscientific terms, the dude is very scary.

Given his powers of flight, near invulnerability, physical prowess and the fact that he's armed with a sword that spits arcs of lightning, Raphael is very fucking scary.

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<sup>15</sup> Translation: *Queen or Leader*

<sup>16</sup> A term used among the *Phey* designating the world outside their realm of influence

<sup>17</sup> Translation: *Trout*

# DARK FALL

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT

### ACT 1

We open with a brief, narrated introduction that sets up the role of Summoners in the past, how their powers are activated by a solar anomaly. We then cut to the sun as it kicks out a massive CORONAL MASS EJECTION (CME). The event is picked up at various Earth-based observatories, but its potential impact is unknown.

We then meet PHILIP WOLFE, engaged in a brutal sword-fight. For a moment, we're sure we've been thrust back in time, but we soon realize that the fight is just one of a number of rough but friendly duels being staged at the employee wrap-party of the annual Renaissance Pleasure Faire.

The beer is cold and the women are hot. Phillip's best friend, ERIC (THE RED) BOWDEN, is too wasted to drive him home. Phillip is annoyed—he promised his girlfriend, JENNY BENNETT, that he would be back at a reasonable time. Eric offers his cell-phone, but Phillip refuses to touch it. Eric dials but all he manages to reach is the answering machine.

The next morning, at the Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena, Phillip's younger brother, physicist DOUGLAS WOLFE, is concerned about the CME data coming out of Marshall Space Center. He presents the data to his boss, MIKE "JELLYROLL" JELICO, and the rest of the team, suggesting they delay the launch of a planetary surveyor. We get the low-down on the disastrous effects of a solar storm, and how rare the phenomenon is. Jellico opts for a wait-and-see.

At the Hollywood Regional Branch Library, we meet EMILY PELLIGRINO as she's given the third degree by her boss, head librarian DONALD FORRESTER. It seems that books have been regularly disappearing from the Regina Kahl Collection, a compilation of rare manuscripts dealing with the occult. Emily denies the theft, but Forrester places her on probation and reassigns her to the Children's Reading Room, a particularly galling duty for Emily—she's a scholar, not a babysitter.

In his Glendale dental office, Les Truax fills cavities, his patient watching the Discovery Channel on a small monitor mounted over the chair. A news bulletin reports that the Marshall Space Center has reported a solar flare that may interfere with satellite transmissions in the next few days. Nothing to worry about.

Eric drops Phillip off at his rambling house in Silverlake. Phillip enters an empty house—Jenny, has finally left him. A hand-scrawled note on the mantle spells it out for him in two words: "GROW UP!"

Douglas is processing data on the solar flare when he receives a call from Phillip, who asks him for a lift downtown. He needs to meet with Jenny at her office to talk her out of dumping him. Douglas sides with Jenny, tells Phillip it was only a matter of time before she put her foot down. Besides, he's busy. "I can't help it if you're the only guy in California without a drivers license!"

There's a knock at the door. As the brothers continue arguing, Phillip looks out the peephole, doesn't see anyone. He hangs up and there's another knock. Angry, Phillip yanks the door open to re



## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

veal HERSCHEL BLAKE, three feet tall, standing on his doorstep, a thick manila envelope tucked under his arm, a cab waiting at the curbside.

Blake asks if he's Douglas Wolfe. Phillip hurriedly tells him his brother's at work and, hey, could he borrow that cab? Blake blurts out he's an old friend of their Uncle Grant, he's come a long way and it's absolutely critical he see Douglas.

Before he can finish, however, Phillip cuts him off: "Great. Tell you what; Doug'll be home around five, six o'clock. You go on, wait inside, make yourself comfortable." Blake just stares as Phillip gets in the taxi, shouting back, "There's beer in the fridge!" before giving the driver directions and roaring away.

At JPL, the CME has been estimated at well in excess of the 1859 "perfect storm," estimated to have been -1,760 nano-Teslas. It's clear that the Event will wreak havoc with power grids on the Western Hemisphere—maybe worldwide. The CME is due to reach earth in 45 minutes.

Emily is rude to a child, reprimanded by a younger coworker. Angry, she steps outside for a smoke. She notices the sun, which appears to be brighter, imbued with a subtle pulse. She gazes at it, eyes widening with realization of what she's seeing, then suddenly runs to her car, tears out of the lot.

## ACT 2

Downtown Los Angeles. Phillip arrives at the City National Bank Tower. He walks into the lobby, notes the elevators with distrust, and then enters the stairwell. By the time he gets up to Jenny's office on the 36<sup>th</sup> floor, he's a sweating wreck. People look at him askance as he hurries down the hallway. He's told that Jenny went out to lunch with some coworkers—they took the Red Line up to Hollywood and Highland. Exhausted, Phillip decides to wait for her.

At JPL, the scene is frantic. Authorities have been caught totally unprepared. They're hesitant to take countermeasures such as shutting down electrical grids, grounding airlines, etc. The costs would be enormous, would invite civil unrest and potentially threaten lives. In any case, there's simply no protocol. Furthermore, many government authorities see the threat as overblown, equating it with the Y2K bug and global warming—just a bunch of grant-hungry overeducated boobs screaming that the sky is falling.

Emily Pelligrino enters a bank and runs downstairs. She hurriedly signs in to access her safety deposit box. She withdraws seven ancient volumes entitled *Accersitus Sceptrum*. She seems excited. This is the most important day of her life. She exits out onto Sunset Boulevard, looks around, her attention drawn to the tower of the nearby Standard Hotel.

Les Truax is just finishing a crown when he receives an emergency call. His National Guard Unit has been activated.

Jenny is boarding the Red Line with her friends when she gets a call on her cell. A coworker warns her that Phillip is waiting for her, noting that he "looks crazy." Jenny tells her that's because he *is* crazy, then clarifies that, no, he's not dangerous or anything, but to try to get rid of him. Phillip, however, isn't going anywhere. He wants to talk.

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

Emily checks into a \$500.00 suite at The Standard overlooking the rooftop pool and lounge. Her mousy appearance and Nordstrom Rack wardrobe doesn't measure up to the hotel's usual demographic—even the half-naked Model in the aquarium behind the counter seems to be eyeing her suspiciously. When the snooty DESK CLERK asks if she wants to keep the charge open, Emily seems amused. This is one bill she knows she'll never have to pay.

At the Glendale Armory, Truax, now in his uniform, tells his unit of thirty or so men that they've been ordered to secure JPL in the event of a possible power outage. The men fire up their humvees and support vehicles and drive out as a convoy.

Word comes through at JPL that they've lost the all satellite transmissions. The 10 second count-down begins for the CME to impact Earth. A brief montage of all our principals in the seconds before life changes forever, landing at last on Phillip seated in the waiting area of Jenny's office, leafing through an old People Magazine. Zero. The lights fail, computer screens blinking off.

The Red Line suddenly goes dark, the train rolling to a stop in the pitch darkness. Jenny and her friends wonder what's happening.

On Verdugo Road, the engines in every vehicle simultaneously fail. Truax's convoy stalls. The men are confused. People exit shops, curious. The power outage they understand, but the cars? Truax checks his watch. It's stopped. Suddenly, a shrieking sound from above. Someone screams "*incoming*" and the soldiers dive for cover. A flaming object the size of a minivan hurtles down and smashes into the Glendale Civic Auditorium.

In the City National Bank tower, Phillip joins employees pressed up against the windows. Down below, cars are stalled on the street. Oddly, no one is honking. One of the onlookers shouts, points. A jumbo jet falls out of the sky, erupting in a huge fireball on the Harbor Freeway. Someone points in mute terror toward the east. Other airliners on their approach to LAX are crashing to earth, black smoke rising.

On the rooftop of The Standard, panicked hipsters crowd the railing, fighting for turns at the nickel-binoculars. A downed news-chopper burns on sunset, igniting the dry palm-trees like explosive tiki-torches. On the street, people wander around their stalled vehicles in a daze. Strangest of all is the silence—no motors, no sirens, no loudspeakers—only the buzz of frantic human voices, occasionally disrupted by a sob or scream.

Emily sits cross-legged on the deck, Volume IX of the *Accersitus Sceptrum* open on her lap. Eyes closed, she concentrates, calling out strange ululations punctuated with guttural grunts and clicks. Suddenly, her face is bathed in light. The others on the roof turn and look up, staggered by what they see. Some fall on their knees, uttering silent prayers.

Hovering ten feet above the rooftop, reflected in the placid water of the pool, is an exquisitely beautiful winged human figure radiating a nimbus of golden light. It slowly descends, standing before Emily, then dropping to one knee, bowing before her. "I am Raphael. You have called me to serve thee." Astonished by the first manifestation of the powers she's so long trained for and anticipated, Emily points at the onlookers, "They think you're an angel."

Raphael shrugs, responds that "they always do." Then, he adds quite calmly, "Shall I kill them?" We close on Emily, slowly realizing the query for what it is: A test of moral courage. Is his new mis

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

tress strong enough, ruthless enough to command him? After a long moment, she looks at Raphael. We know what her answer will be, but we cut before she voices it.

### ACT 3

From her balcony, Emily gazes down at the bodies littering the rooftop, a few floating in the pool, leaking red. Inside, Raphael lounges on the sofa, eating an apple from her complimentary fruit-basket as he idly leafs through the *Accersitus Sceptrum*. He asks Emily who she is, we get a little of her backstory, her illustrious Summoner heritage.

When Raphael points out that she only has seven of the fourteen volumes, Emily replies that they'll be hers "in time." She comments aloud that she will need an army. Raphael suggests she Call some Nog—"they're ugly brutes, but they make fine warriors and they eat what they kill." He tosses her Volume VII. "Page 119."

Phillip is among hundreds of workers making their way down the stairwells of the City National Bank tower. He comes across a man in a wheelchair calling for help, others pretending not to hear. He pulls the Receptionist and a few others from the crowd to assist him, and they continue moving down. They exit the stairwell at street-level.

The streets are still choked with cars. Shopkeepers stand guard in their doorways, a few openly brandishing weapons. People crowd the sidewalks, zigzag between stalled vehicles. Some think it's just a black-out. A few believe the city has been attacked, some kind of EMP bomb, whether by terrorists, by the Chinese, by aliens. There are no answers, only an unspoken urgency to get out of the city before nightfall, before the rioting and looting begins. Phillip tells the Receptionist he needs to find Jenny. She directs him toward the Pershing Square Red Line station.

In the pitch dark of the subway, the only light in Jenny's car is a single butane lighter. The MTA driver, MILTON JEFFERTS, startles them as he moves through their car, telling the passengers that it's just a power outage, and for now the best thing they can do is remain calm, stay on the train and wait it out.

Truax and his men, armed with M-16s, marshal help from civilians and pull the injured out of the shattered ruins of the Glendale Civic. In the downstairs ballroom, they come across the object that destroyed the building. Though battered beyond recognition, scorched from reentry, a brass plaque identifies it as the Hubble Telescope.

At JPL, Douglas, Jellico and the rest of the team is trying to ascertain the intensity of the Event. The old-timers break out their slide-rules. When the calculations are complete, the magnitude is beyond belief: After some debate, they agree on an estimate of -3,850 nano-Teslas, realizing to their horror that this is a global event.

Jellico tries to light his pipe with his Zippo, but it doesn't work. Odd—he just filled it that morning. One of the others tosses him a butane lighter, which fires right up. When one of the younger engineers states that it's just a matter of replacing capacitors to bring the grid back on line, the others point out that, given worldwide manufacturing capacity, it would take more than two decades to restore the grid and—hello—*without the grid there is no more manufacturing capacity!*

Phillip stands in Pershing Square, peering down into the pitch blackness of the subway station be

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

low. He looks around helplessly, sees a small liquor store on the corner.

After some frantic knocking, he's finally admitted into the store by an elderly Asian STOREKEEPER brandishing a shotgun. The guy gouges him \$5.00 for a \$1.99 disposable penlight. After paying, Phillip finds it's dead. He asks for another one, and the guy tells him it'll be another \$5.00. Things get heated. The storekeeper points the shotgun at Phillip's face and tells him to get out. Phillip refuses, demands a flashlight that works. Trembling with equal parts rage and fear, the storekeeper pulls the trigger. Click.

"Are you out of your goddamn mind?" Phillip rages, quickly disarming the man, who immediately breaks into tears. Phillip cracks the shotgun. It's loaded. He shoves the man aside, starts checking flashlights. None of them work.

Frustrated, Phillip finally settles for a pocketful of butane lighters. On his way out, he notices gangs of toughs gathering in the streets. A plate-glass window is shattered. Someone screams. Things are getting sketchy already. He turns and sees a daisho high on a dusty shelf. He pulls down the katana, examines it. Chinese crap, but better than nothing. He asks the old man how much he wants for it. The storekeeper tells him to just take it and go. Phillip slaps two twenties on the counter and leaves.

## ACT 4

At JPL, a check of the generator reveals the expected—the spark-plugs and electrical components are shot. Shielding didn't work due to the magnitude of the CME. Replacing the plugs doesn't work. One of the maintenance crew comments that the gasoline "smells wrong." The truth is, it doesn't smell at all.

On a hunch, Jellico pours some gasoline on the floor, tries lighting it but it fails to ignite. But why does the lighter work? Douglas concentrates, then hypothesizes that the CME must've neutralized combustibles, but only those exposed to the atmosphere. Flammable gas still works because it was shielded, stored under pressure.

One of the scientists lets out a startled shout. A small creature scuttles across the floor. Looks like a rat. A janitor traps it under a pail. The animal slams itself violently against the galvanized steel. Then, suddenly, silence.

The small creature is dead. It looks like nothing anyone has seen before, rodent-like, covered with black fur, but where the head should be is a large round mouth, ringed with overlapping rows of curved, grey-black teeth that resemble canary-beaks. No eyes, ears or nostrils.

Jellico probes the center of the mouth with his pencil. The teeth spin shut like a camera iris, splintering the pencil. Just a reflex. The creature is, indeed, dead. Shaken, the scientists look at each other—what the hell is going on?

Sweating, thirsty, Truax and his men hump their way down Foothill Blvd. They hear plate-glass shatter and investigate. Two armed men are looting La Canada Camera store. The soldiers train their M-16s at the looters. Truax tells them to drop their weapons. One of them raises his gun at them, and the soldiers pull their triggers.

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

Nothing.

The looters, stunned, point their guns at the soldiers, pull the triggers. Click.

For a moment, looters and soldiers alike examine their weapons. What the hell? The looters run away. One of Truax's men moves to pursue, but Truax orders him to halt. There is something very wrong here. Truax realizes that whatever took out the electricity has neutralized their firearms. And they are in deep shit without weapons. Frustrated, Truax looks across Foothill Boulevard, sees a sporting-goods store.

At The Standard, Emily sits on the floor reading the section in Volume VII about the *Nog* of the 9<sup>th</sup> *atrum terra* while Raphael rifles through the mini-bar. She tells him to stop—she needs to focus. Then, again, she begins vocalizing The Call and The Bind. In this case, it's a strange, growling language that sounds vaguely oriental interspersed with high pitched squeaks and whistles.

Raphael is impressed with her pronunciation. For a moment, Emily thinks she screwed up. Her Call seems to have had no effect. Chuckling, Raphael points out that the *Nog* cannot abide by the sun. "So where are they?" Emily asks.

Raphael smiles and replies, "In the dark."

Holding a lighter in front of him, Phillip peers into the pitch blackness of the subway tunnel. He calls out, and is answered only by a breeze that flutters the naked flame of the lighter. Nervous, he begins walking down the tracks. He hears an odd, squeaking noise behind him. Again, he calls out. Silence. He unsheathes the katana and moves forward. The lighter heats up, burns his thumb. He yelps, drops it.

Swearing, he pulls another one from his pocket, fires it up and finds himself standing toe-to-toe with a hulking, jet-black humanoid wearing ragged clothes and chain-mail. Its face is similar to an oversized bat, black eyes wide-set, mouth filled with rows of needle-like teeth. It raises a crudely forged scimitar. Phillip parries with his katana, turns to find two more *Nog* flanking him. Using the lighter to keep the monsters at bay, he continues to parry their attacks. On the third strike, however, the katana blade breaks in half.

Phillip drives the broken blade into one of his adversaries' bellies, ignites its frayed clothing with the lighter. He grabs its sword and runs. Leaving their companion to burn, the two other *Nogs* give chase, emitting high-pitched shrieks of rage.

Phillip bursts out of the tunnel into the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Metro Center station, leaps up onto the platform and manages to hold off his two pursuers with the scimitar he captured from the third, fighting furiously, exhilarated and terrified at the same time. He slashes one across its bull neck. Spurting black blood, it collapses. The last *Nig* charges him. Phillip ducks under its sweeping blade and runs it through.

He stands over their bodies, exhausted, exultant. "Yeah, that's right! That's right, bitches!" he shouts. He looks up, only to see dozens of *Nog* silently creeping up onto the platform from the tracks. Phillip backs toward the weak pool of sunlight filtering down the escalators from above. The *Nog* keep to the shadows, unable to pursue him into the light.

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

Phillip backs up the steps until he finds himself on the street. He looks around, wild-eyed, scimitar in hand, clothes spattered with black ichor, a man who's just literally crawled out of a nightmare. He asks a stunned onlooker, "Is this Figueroa?" The guy nods and Phillip smiles, relieved.

### ACT 5

TONY NEUFIELD, a dark-haired young man we recognize as Phillip's opponent in the previous night's swordfight, pours himself a bowl of Cap'n Crunch. Other young men and women are crashed out on the sofa, the floor, a few in sleeping bags, some of them still wearing their costumes from the Faire. The place is littered with empty take-out and beer-bottles.

There's a loud knock at the door. Tony winces, opens it to find Phillip, still disheveled and blood-spattered from his fight with the Nog. Sleeping off the night's depravity, Tony and his friends are unaware that anything odd has happened. Phillip tells him that shit has broken loose. One look out the window at the growing chaos in the streets confirms it. Fires to the South—uncontrolled blazes from the downed airliners—throw up huge plumes of black smoke. Store-windows are shattered—looters going for the early-bird specials.

At the Standard, the guests have been assembled in the lobby by the staff. Raphael is curled up on one of the hanging chairs reading a copy of Elle. Emily appears, clears her throat. Raphael smiles, steps up in front of the guests, bows his head solemnly. Then he quickly unfurls his wings to their full, majestic thirty-foot span and draws his flaming sword. A collective gasp from the crowd. Some faint, fall to their knees. "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the end of the world as you know it."

Raphael introduces Emily as their exalted, most high leader. The staff and guests are free to remain as long as they wish, but only at the pleasure and in service of her excellence, Emily Pelligrino. Dubious, the Model in the display window sneers. Raphael points his sword at her, discharging a blinding blue arc that strikes the display.

The crowd stares as smoke seeps out from behind the glass, scorched opaque, clouded by a greasy residue. Raphael scans the crowd, and in a chipper voice asks, "There, then. Are there any questions?" He then leads them in a rousing (if awkward) cheer of "Hail Emily!"

Douglas sits in his workspace as one of his associates, ROY CHANG, gives him the details of a half-assed vivisection they performed to the "rat-thing." Nobody's a biologist, but you don't have to be one to figure out the cause of the thing's death: It had no lungs.

After Roy leaves, Douglas tries to work out what could be going on. He closes his eyes, concentrates. When he opens them, a small lizard is crouching motionless on his desk. About six inches long, finely pebbled skin, most of it neon-yellow with a scarlet gradation to the tail and webbed feet. Douglas tentatively reaches out, and it clambers up onto his hand, calmly regards him through bright green eyes. "What the hell are you?" Douglas mutters.

Back at Tony's apartment, Phillip finishes his story. His friends have trouble believing him. Phillip tells them, fine, don't. But believe this: His girlfriend, Jenny, is stuck down there in the dark, and there are a lot of crazy people out there. He needs their help finding her, and it would probably be a good idea to arm themselves when they go out.

Tony tells him he has swords, but most of them are wall-hangers—merely decorative, not battle-

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

ready. Phillip wishes aloud that he could find Eric. Tony brightens up. Eric's sleeping it off in the bedroom. They find Eric passed out on a futon with two girls.

Phillip, Eric, Tony and two other reenactors, DANA LAUNER and MIKE TRUMBULL, retrieve Philip's collection of weapons and armor from the back of Eric's pickup. As they suit up—armor and chain-mail pulled over their street-clothes, armed with swords, daggers and, in Eric's case, a battle-axe—Phillip goes over their plan. Done, they stare at each other, realize how crazy they look.

"Any other day," says Tony, "I'd get my ass kicked going out like this." Phillip observes, "This isn't any other day," to which Eric adds, "Huzzah, baby." They all raise their swords and shout, "*Huzzah!*"

In the subway, Jenny and her friends are hot and miserable. One of them, an older coworker named HOLLY FELLOWS, starts complaining that she can't breathe. Is there any way to open the windows? Jenny says she'll check and asks for the lighter. She flicks the flame, revealing the hideous face of a hulking Nog pressed up against the glass. Everyone screams and the light goes out, throwing us into darkness.

## ACT 6

Phillip and company gather on Figueroa at the subway entrance. Someone comments on the stench rising up from the darkness.

Eric studies the subway map, comments that Jenny's train could be anywhere in the ten miles of tunnel between them and the Hollywood/Highland station. All they have to light their way is a handful of Bic lighters. It's nearly dusk. They definitely need flashlights.

Phillip points out that flashlights don't work. Nothing works. Not even guns. "Dude," says Eric, "I got it covered." He nods across the street at a Sharper Image store on the corner.

Eric shatters the front door of the shop with his axe. The others hesitate. "What're you waiting for," asks Eric, "an alarm?" Cackling, he kicks away the glass and leads the way inside. They stroll over to the flashlights. Phillip impatiently picks a couple of penlights at random, demonstrates to the others that they're dead. They're wasting their time. Eric just shakes his head, finds one of the models that operate with self charging cranks. He gives it a few turns, switches it on. It works!

At JPL, Douglas and his team look at the odd gecko-like creature, now residing in a lab-beaker. Roy Chang flips through a zoology text he cadged from the library, trying to identify the species. They notice a pouch on its belly. Douglas prods it, and a tiny yellow head peers out of the flap. They all react, astonished.

Chang doesn't comment, just quietly closes his book. "That's not from here," he says quietly.

Suddenly, Truax enters the lab with his men. He tells the scientists that the facility has been secured. They just stare at him like he's from Mars. The soldiers are armed with an assortment of decidedly non-general-issue weapons—compound bows, baseball bats and a speargun. Several have slingshots tucked into their webbed belts. Price-tags still hang off some of the weapons. "I guess," Douglas observes wryly, "guns don't work either."

"By direct order of the President of the United States," says Truax, "I am hereby authorized to take

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

command of this facility.” Everyone is too stunned to reply. Truax finally notices the odd creature in the beaker, asks slowly, “What in Sam Hill is *that*?”

“Other Summoners?” asks Emily, incredulous, back in her suite at the Standard. Raphael points out that Summoners are rare, but there are many people here. When she tells him the population of L.A., he calculates that there may be as many as twenty or thirty. Of course, they’re likely to be ignorant of the craft, or even their own true nature. He reassures Emily that they’re hardly threats—without the ability to Bind, they’ll most likely be killed off by the very creatures they accidentally Call.

Disquieted, Emily asks if there’s any way to find them. Raphael smiles, tells her that the veil that separates her world from the other nine *atrum terra* is thin—thinner, perhaps than it has ever been. In the coming days, there will be many wondrous events, and she’ll find the Summoners at the center of them. Then he’ll happily destroy them for her. In the meantime, Emily must fortify her power, organize and gather followers. After all, he says, “an empress is not an empress without an empire.”

In the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center station, holding their noses, Phillip and His company stare at the two dead Nogs still sprawled on the tile floor,. Erick gives one a poke with the toe of his boot. Half-sick, someone describes them as “gnarly.” They look toward the dark tunnel at the head of the station. Phillip asks if they’re still with him. Everyone nods.

Several hundred staff and employees are gathered in JPL’s cafeteria. Truax informs them that the facility is locked down, and that they will remain inside until civic order is established. In the meantime, their nation is depending on each of them to help restore the status quo. They will be working in round-the-clock shifts to ascertain the extent of the damage and develop and remedy the current technological disruption. He distributes a schedule, informs them that cots have been set up in Main Assembly Facility

In the tunnel, everyone is nervous, weapons drawn, flashlights occasionally dimming, then cranked back to brightness as they move up the tracks. There’s a sound of footsteps ahead. Phillip tells them to extinguish the lights.

They take positions on both sides of the track. For a long, tense moment, they wait in the darkness, the uneven footsteps approaching, drawing even. On Phillip’s shout, they switch on the lights and attack, only to find that the frightened, bedraggled interloper is Milton Jefferts, the MTA driver from Jenny’s train. He tells them that they’ve got to get out of there—there’s things down here that ain’t human.

They calm Jefferts down. He tells them that a horde of “uglies” attacked his train. While he hid on the floor of the driver’s compartment, he heard the screams, the slaughter. He waited until it was quiet, then snuck out and headed down-track.

Phillip asks how far. Milton tells him maybe half-a-mile or so, but there’s no way he’s going back—he’s got a wife and kid he needs to see to. Phillip tells him he can head out in the dark by himself, or come with them. They start away. One glance at the stygian blackness down-track, and Jefferts follows them.



## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

### ACT 7

In the subway, Phillip's light catches a reflective glint up-track. The train. He and the others cautiously approach. The silence is oppressive, menacing. Most of the windows have been shattered. They board the train. The cars are abattoirs, blood spattered on the walls, the ceilings, bodies sprawled among the seats. None of them are Jenny.

Grim-faced, Phillip tells Jefferts they counted twenty-seven dead. How many people were on the train when he left the last station. Jefferts estimates at least a couple hundred. Eric calls Phillip. Phillip and the others go to the rear of the train, gaze in mute bewilderment. Eric's flashlight illuminates dozens of shoes and socks strewn across the tracks.

Close on bare feet, some bleeding. Echoing sobs and moans. Tilt up to reveal a long line of prisoners—the passengers on the subway—trudging up the tracks. We find Jenny and her friends, spattered with gore, clothes torn. The prisoners are lashed together in groups of six to ten by ropes around their necks. Nog guards strike them with fists, sword-pommels.

As darkness falls, Emily surveys the skyline from the rooftop of The Standard. Dozens of fires burn out of control in parts of the city—the arsonists have gotten busy. Glass shatters in the darkness, the air filled with shouts and screams. But Emily's attention is on the sky, the riot of stars that had been long eclipsed by the lights of the city and, most spectacular, the shimmering skirts of the Aurora Borealis flickering on the northern horizon.

She and Raphael discuss her people's dread fear of the dark, how they would flock to her if she could give them light. She asks Raphael if there is something he could do to restore lights to the hotel. After pondering a long time, he says, "There are the *Luminiénte* of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *atrum terra*, swarms of tiny creatures, too small to see, that radiate light. But it would take a great many of them to light a place such as this. Perhaps millions."

Down in the subway, Jenny's coworker, Holly Fellows, has totally lost it, asking how things could get this bad so fast, this must be a nightmare, then the occasional *non sequitur* about how it's time to pick up her twins from day-care. Others tell her to shut up. A Nog strikes Holly with a club. She goes down on her knees.

Before he can hit her again, Jenny instinctively shields her, shouts at the thing to "back off" and bats the club out of its hand. The Nog unsheathes its scimitar, but before it can use it, a second Nog grabs its wrist.

As Jenny helps Holly to her feet, the two Nog grunt and squeak a brief exchange in their odd language, followed by something that resembles dry, whistling laughter. The second Nog walks off and the first, meeting Jenny's brazen stare. It thrusts its hideous bat-like face toward her and shrieks in a wheezy approximation of English, "Baaack Awwwff."

Jenny trembles, pale with terror, but holds her ground. The thing notes her fear and, snickering, swaggers away. She's pushed forward with the rest, herded up an escalator, the exit framing the sky. Dusk is becoming night. A sign says: HOLLYWOOD/HIGHLAND.

In the Main Assembly Facility at JPL, cots are neatly set up. Douglas, exhausted, is deep asleep. He stirs, mumbling, in the grip of a dream. Suddenly, there are startled, disgusted shouts all

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

around him, an odd, moist staccato on the floor. A soldier enters, carrying a propane lamp, stares at the chaos.

A number of the scientists and staff are drenched with dark-brown, viscous fluid. Dozens of trout-sized creatures flip and squirm on the floor. Though they vaguely resemble sharks, their bodies are covered with dozens of blinking, obsidian eyes. Bewildered, sitting in the center of the repulsive deluge, bone dry and unaffected, is Douglas Wolfe.

Surrounded by candles, Emily sits in her suite, Volume V open on her lap. Head bowed, she takes deep breaths, gathering her strength. After a long moment, she raises her head, opens her eyes.  
CUT TO:

The streets outside the hotel. A strange, inhuman cry rises into the night, its rhythm and cadence reminiscent of an ancient chanted song of praise to some dead god. Looters, refugees, the lost and frightened multitudes, turn toward the chilling cry. Suddenly, the lights inside The Standard hotel blaze on.

In the lobby, guests gaze in wonder at the quality of light the fills the space. Onmidirectional, seemingly sourceless, it plays over them with a warm shimmer, as if reflected from the bottom of a deep pool. Suddenly, there is a resounding, whistling roar. All eyes turn to the entrance, where a massive Nog stands in full armor, flanked by two others armed with wickedly wrought petards.

“Where is the mistress, Emily Pelligrino?” The Nog asks in its odd, whistling growl. Dumbstruck, the Desk Clerk points one trembling finger toward the ceiling.

## ACT 8

Still sweating, exhausted from her recent effort, Emily is sprawled on the bed, back resting against a stack of pillows. Raphael leads the Nog, BAAKIS RICHIK, and his escort into the suite. All three Nog kneel deeply before her. Baakis greets her and tells her that his clan is marching to her palace with a gift of many slaves.

A little disconcerted, Emily turns to Raphael, and he quietly explains that it's common for Nog to greet their superiors with a gift of slaves, “It's similar to a cat leaving a dead rat on its master's doorstep.” Emily decides that this turn of events may present a good opportunity for an object lesson for the masses.

Phillip and his company climb the steps from the Hollywood Highland station. They look around, disquieted. Hollywood Boulevard is deserted, the roadway still blocked with stalled cars, a few of them on fire. They notice more shoes and socks discarded on the sidewalk, along with slashed corpses and pools of blood. Eric finds a woman curled up in the gutter, still hiding under a bus, frantically trying to dial 911 on her dead cell-phone.

They ask what happened. More than half crazy, she tells them that a bunch of big hairy freaks came out of the station and just started hacking people to death. Then they rounded them up and made them take their shoes off, tied them together with some others and left. How many? Twenty or thirty. Phillip asks which way. The woman just points toward a distinctly glowing aura on the horizon to the west. They stare, puzzled. Are those lights?

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

Jefferts calls them. “Look what I found,” he says, a smile on his face. He leads them toward a long livestock trailer stalled in the middle of the boulevard. Inside are six horses. “There’s tack in the cab. Enough for all of us.” Us? Jefferts explains that he’s ashamed. He was responsible for the safety of all those people on his train, and he let them down. It looks like the MTA driver is with them for the long haul.

At JPL, Douglas is in his workspace poring through a number of periodicals and texts on Quantum Physics. Roy enters and tells him the others are meeting in the cafeteria. Douglas seems excited, tell him he thinks he may be on to something, but he needs a little more time. Roy tells him, “No, now.” Douglas looks up from his notes and sees that Roy has been accompanied by two soldiers.

In the cafeteria, Truax, some of his men and a number of the scientists have gathered, some still wet, wrapped in blankets. Jellico informs Douglas that they’ve been discussing the phenomena. Douglas excitedly cuts in, excitedly telling them that what’s happening is a physical manifestation of Schrödinger’ Cat. Some of the scientists look at each other, confused. Douglas presses on: “We’ve known for a long time that general relativity and quantum mechanics *cannot both be right*, unless you posit the possibility of alternative dimensions with different physical laws.

Phillip lets them chew on that for a moment, then forges ahead, “In 1935 Schrödinger proposed a thought experiment in which a cat inside a box could be both dead and alive at the same time. In 1996 researchers at NIST managed to do it—not with a cat, of course, but with a beryllium ion. By placing the ion in a quantum superposition of two internal electronic states, then coupling those to separate vibrational states, the wave packet associated with one internal state started moving to the left, while the other started moving to right. At a certain point, *the same atom existed in two places simultaneously!*”

By now, the others in the room are getting visibly ill at ease—it’s clear they’re sidetracked off their planned agenda. Jellico, however, is intrigued, asks Douglas what he’s getting at. Douglas proposes that maybe it’s possible that two, three, or even an infinite number of dimensional planes can coexist in the same place simultaneously, and that the solar flare somehow altered their vibrational states. “That explains these weird animals that keep popping up.”

Truax cuts him off. He doesn’t give a rat’s ass about anybody’s cat, but freaks of nature with teeth and claws and God know what else are a real problem. And so far, every time these freaks have shown up, there’s one common denominator. Douglas asks what. Jellico replies, “You.”

Douglas objects. Jellico recounts how he’s been at the center of every anomaly, and he was the only one unaffected by the last. Douglas is outraged. What is this, the middle-ages? A witch-hunt? He pleads with the others to be rational. Jellico, distraught, tells him they’ve taken a vote, and he has to go. “What?” asks Douglas, “You gonna burn me at the stake?” Jellico tells him not to be ridiculous. They just want him to go. It’s clear that if he doesn’t leave voluntarily, they’ll force him out.

Phillip’s company heads down Hollywood Boulevard on horseback, keeping to the sidewalk as the streets are clogged with dead cars. Phillip calls them to a halt. Ahead, they can hear the whistling shrieks of the Nogs, human screams and the clash of swords.

Phillip tells them that Hollywood ends at Laurel Canyon. Those things are probably headed toward the light, which looks like it’s down on Sunset. He proposes that Eric and Tony continue following

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

them. He, Dana, Mike and Milton will riding south down Fairfax, then West on Sunset and cut them off at the intersection. As soon as they initiate the surprise frontal assault, Eric and Tony can attack their flank. The company splits up.

On the street in front of The Standard, a huge, unruly crowd has gathered, all of them pressing forward, begging to be let inside, attracted by the comfort and safety of the light. A line of hulking, armed Nogs hold them back. A gang of Hell's Angels begin brawling with some of the Nogs. Suddenly, an arc of blue lightning blasts into the crowd, striking Hell's Angels leader dead. The others back away, stunned into silence.

An the roof of the portico that spans the driveway, Emily Pelligrino sits in a plastic lawn-chair, Raphael on one side, Baakis the Nog clan-leader on the other. Raphael demands the crowd's attention. Emily stands and gives an impassioned speech, saying that the darkness is a result of divine retribution. Mankind has become weak and corrupt, and if there's a future for us, it'll be the strong that survive to see it. She has brought them light, but this is nothing. Soon, they will have all they had before and more, but only if they follow her.

"In the meantime, my agents have captured hundreds of the inferiors and subversives responsible for the darkness. Some will have the privilege of serving you, the citizens of West Hollywood, as slaves. The rest will be executed." Emily then invites the mob to stay to witness this retribution, "the beginning of a new era in which you are the Chosen People!"

## ACT 9

In the parking lot at JPL, Douglas is escorted out of the building. Some of the soldiers train their weapons on him as Jellico and the rest of the scientists look on. Douglas shouts that this is absurd. They *need* him—they need all the help they can get. The group is unmoved. "Forget it, Doug. I'm sorry but we can't take any chances."

Enraged, Douglas glares at them. He closes his eyes, clamping down on his anger. "I'm not *RESPONSIBLE!*" he roars. Suddenly, the earth trembles. The scientists and soldiers stare at him in shocked horror. For a moment, Douglas is confused. Then he realizes they're staring at something *behind* him. He slowly turns and sees a dragon.

Its huge scales are differentially colored, like a diamondback rattler, its body about the size of a Winnebago. Powerful limbs, wide, webbed feet armed with razor claws. Its flat, alligator-like head is set on a serpentine neck. Behind each side of its jaws is a row of flaps that vaguely resemble the cooling ducts on a racecar.

The dragon seems confused, testing the asphalt surface with its feet. It turns, its long tail smashing into a line of parked cars. Startled, it unfurls a pair of huge wings and majestically lifts off, belching a jet of blue flame.

Douglas and the others watch in mute awe as the dragon banks off toward the east, breathing huge gouts of flame that ignite the tops of trees.

Douglas turns to his colleagues, meeting their accusatory looks. Dumbstruck, he tries to frame an excuse, an explanation. Roy Chang picks up a small rock, throws it at him. The others begin following suit. Douglas backs away, shielding himself. "Screw you people," he says, then turns and

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

stalks off into the darkness.

The Nog march their burgeoning ranks of slaves down Laurel Canyon toward Sunset, people in their path fleeing. Hundreds of miserable, barefoot humans trudge down the street, shocked into submission by the sheer insanity of the situation, roped together by their necks in small groups.

Phillip, Tony, Dana and Milton turn on Sunset, bring their horses to a stop when they see, to their amazement, The Standard hotel, blazing with shimmering light in every window. Who turned the lights back on? Milton observes that it's not electric light. Not candles, either. Whatever it is, it doesn't look wholesome. They urge their horses forward into a gallop, more intent than ever in intercepting the Nog before they reach their destination.

Jenny tries directing her group toward the left side of the grim parade, keeping an eye on the Nog guards. She whispers that they can make a break for it at Selma Avenue, run up into the neighborhood and hide. The others are too scared. She urges them to try—there's not enough of "those things" to keep an eye on everybody.

Phillip and his group reach the intersection. They look up Laurel Canyon at the approaching throngs. "Hit them with your lights," says Phillip, "blind them then just kill the hell out of them. Try not to hurt any of the prisoners. Ready?" Everyone nods.

They attack, fighting from horseback with swords, taking out a large number of Nog by sheer virtue of surprise. Soon, the battle is in earnest, the four of them fighting furiously from horseback, wheeling around, prisoners fleeing, screaming, adding to the chaos. Phillip is pulled from his horse. He manages to take out half-a-dozen before he's knocked down. Just as a Nog is about to cleave him, Eric and Tony nail their flanks, cutting down Nog as they scatter and flee in confusion.

They look around, Phillip calling Jenny's name with growing anxiety. Finally, she answers. He dismounts, cuts her loose and they kiss. After a moment, they break. She looks at his get-up—the chain-mail and steel shin-guards over street-clothes. "Yeah," he says, self-conscious, "pretty nerdy, huh?" She just shakes her head and kisses him again.

## ACT 10

At The Standard, a Nog LIEUTENANT approaches Baakis, tells him something. When he finishes, Baakis holds out his hand. The Lieutenant pulls a dagger from his belt, hands it to Baakis, who drives it into the Lieutenant's belly, slicing upward and gutting him like a fish.

As the poor dead bastard leaks black blood onto the roof of the portico, Baakis turns to Emily and informs her that his clansmen were attacked by knights on horseback and the slaves have escaped. Emily turns to Raphael, "*Knights?* Is his English just rusty or are we losing something in translation?"

Raphael informs her that, semantics aside, she has been defied by an organized group of warriors on horseback. Emily orders him to seek them out and destroy them.

Raphael replies that they've likely scattered and fled by now, and though he'd gladly track them down to a man, it could take days—maybe weeks. And she *has* promised the mob a spectacle, and it wouldn't do to disappoint them, "especially at this early, quite critical juncture in your reign."

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

Emily sees he's right, asks what he suggests.

After a brief moment of consideration, Raphael says, "We could start with the staff."

CRASH CUT TO the snooty Desk Clerk being slammed over the hood of an Escalade by two Nog. He screams as they hold him down, the mob roaring. A hooded Nog approaches with a wicked-looking battle-axe, raises it high and, as he brings it down we SLAM TO:

Silverlake, dawn. Dazed, utterly exhausted from the twelve mile walk from JPL, Douglas Wolfe trudges down his street and comes within sight of his house—the old familiar place bequeathed to him and his brother by his Uncle Grant.

He zombie-walks inside, straight to the kitchen. Opens the refrigerator and listlessly pulls out a beer. He closes the refrigerator door, revealing Herschel Blake. Douglas freaks, thinking Blake's yet another creature he's somehow blinked into existence. He stumbles back, trips over a coffee table and goes down. Blake reassures him that he's 100% human. "Short, but human. I'm from Queens, fer chrissake."

When Douglas finally calms down, Blake seems to know something about the odd events that have been happening around him. He tells Douglas that, yeah, it *is* his fault. Douglas comes from a long line of people called Summoners. That usually doesn't mean a thing—just a weird little genetic blip like webbed toes or a third nipple. But when the sun goes haywire, they're able to, well, *summon* things.

"Things," repeats Douglas. He takes a moment to process, then asks, "How do I stop it?"

Blake tells him that there's no stopping it, but they can control it. He hands Douglas a small plastic bottle of what looks like nasal mist and urges him to squirt some "up his schnoz." Douglas hesitates, then complies. The stuff burns like hell.

Blake tells him it's witch hazel, and that if used regularly, it will suppress his Summoning ability "until we get a handle on it." Douglas asks exactly how "we" are going to do that. The little man presents him with the thick manila envelope we saw earlier. Inside is Volume I of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*.

When Douglas asks him what it is, Blake replies, "That, kid, is the medieval version of 'Summoning for Dummies.'" Douglas gives him a puzzled look, then opens the book, begins reading as do a SLOW PULL and DISSOLVE TO:

Sunrise over Los Angeles, the first day after DarkFall. Black smoke still rising from fires raging to the south along the corridor to LAX. On Beverly Boulevard, Phillip's small company pauses, their horses quietly chomping grass in the Pan Pacific Regional Park.

Casting an anxious glance toward the distant fires, Milton tells them he needs to see to his family. The others understand, bid him good luck. Jenny gives him a kiss on the cheek, tells him to look them up in Silverlake. Milton rides off.

## THE PILOT – TREATMENT (CONT'D)

As he gives Jenny a hand up to ride double, Phillip remarks that, “Doug’s not gonna believe one word of this.” Jenny points out that Phillip’s brother “has a pretty open mind.” He snorts and reins his horse east, digging in his heels , and as they begin galloping down Beverly toward Silverlake, we

FADE TO BLACK



# DARK FALL

## THE PILOT – OPENING SEQUENCE

CLOSE ON series of pages drawn from the *Accersitus Sceptrum*, hand printed on parchment, illustrated by a DaVinci-esque diagram of a naked man surrounded by nine spheres, complex lines connecting them in a nine-pointed star.

HERSCHEL BLAKE narrates in a sonorous tone:

BLAKE (V.O.)

Since the dawn of mankind, there have existed *Summoners*, men and women of an ancient bloodline who are capable of calling forth great and terrible creatures from the Nine Dark Lands known as the *atrum terra*.

We flip past--then *back* to a sketch of a laterally bisected human head. There are odd structures lining the sinus walls, some actually removed and enlarged in detail.

BLAKE (V.O.)

Summoners differ little from other men, their power dormant until the sun rages bright in its sphere, unleashing great columns of fire--

He turns a page, revealing a section headed:

### Ch. 6 - *Tutela quod Nutritior of Drakken:*

BLAKE (V.O.)

(falters)

The Care and Feeding of... ahh Criminy, this isn't right...

SFX - We flip backward in the book, glimpsing a number of intriguing diagrams and illustrations of various creatures, some of them vivisected for anatomical details until we find...

THE TITLE PATE, which reads:

## *Accersitus Sceptrum* *The Summoners Craft*

Vol. 3 of 14

In which we present *Various Anatomes and a Bestiare of the Atrum Terra*



BLAKE (V.O.)

Damnit...

The book is closed, and a second, (Volume 1 of 14) is pulled into frame. We flip through pages containing complex mathematical formulae and diagrams of impossible complexity, finally landing on a series of drawings of the sun, highlighting rotating spots and solar flares.

BLAKE (V.O.)

The heavens are charged with unseen power upon which the Summoner may draw and gather and pierce the veil between our world and the *atrum terra*. Then he may call forth the terrible creatures that live therein, that they may serve him, yadda yadda yadda, so forth and so on and...

(turns a few pages)

... here we are.

We stop on a page that features a woodcut of a monk cringing under an oddly broiling sun. As Blake reads the following, a SLOW PUSH on the crude illustration of the sun.

BLAKE (V.O.)

But five times in recorded history has the sun raged such, the most recent witnessed in 923 C.E., ushering in the Last Great Age of  
(cont'd)

BLAKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Sorcery. Since that time, the power of the Summoners diminished and fell dormant. And thus they remained for eleven long centuries, until the inevitable day when the sun once again awoke as if from a nightmare, and vented his wrath upon the Earth.

SLAM TO:

A FULL-FRAME, boiling image of THE SUN, set like a living cauldron of fire in the vacuum of black space.

SUPER: THURSDAY 11:07 P.M. PST

Suddenly, a MASSIVE SOLAR FLARE jets across the Sun's equator, discharging a rapidly approaching CORONAL MASS EJECTION (CME) shockwave that distorts the image, then disrupts the feed, reducing it to STATIC SNOW.

# DARKFALL

## FIRST SEASON ARCS

DarkFall presents a rich vein of storytelling opportunities, injecting modern characters into the heroics and adventure inherent in classic legend and mythology. Rather than approaching the material as a pure serial, which presents a number of production drawbacks as well as putting off new viewers, we will structure the first season following a serial/closed episodic hybrid format.

Under this paradigm, as an arc concludes, any one of several sub-arcs would be promoted to “A Story” position, serving as the main plot, which is concluded in the following episode. This delivers the satisfaction of a sense of closure every week, while providing a steady stream of ongoing plots that will be resolved in future episodes.

We begin the regular series ten months after the DarkFall Event dramatized in the pilot.

Los Angeles has undergone a profound change, with small communities located next to reliable sources of water and reservoirs emerging as city-states. Trade and communication is difficult, as the suburban Wastelands between surviving communities is rife with disease, roaming predatory gangs and free-ranging creatures and beings unbound to any Summoner.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, each community is isolated and by-and-large-xenophobic, setting up borders to protect their limited resources from outsiders.

Silverlake, now a relatively stable, prosperous community, is approaching its first anniversary since the coming of DarkFall.

Plans are afoot to mark the date with a celebration. The people have endured a period of unprecedented hardship. It's time to give thanks and take pride in their accomplishments. Working together, they have overcome the triple-threat of famine, disease and civil strife that has consumed much of what used to be Los Angeles.

## MAIN ARCS

- **PHILLIP THE KING** - Phillip's natural charisma and martial skills become apparent to an ever widening circle of friends and neighbors in Silverlake, and he slowly begins to assume the mantle of leadership, reestablishing the rule of law and stability to his community while defending its borders from outside threats.
- **PELLIGRINO THE EMPRESS** - Emily Pelligrino's corrupt influence steadily expands due to her acumen as a Summoner, her quest for empire presenting an ever-growing threat to Silverlake.
- **TRUAX THE COMMANDER** - Maintaining his base of operations at JPL, Colonel Les Truax continues to attract recruits to his cause of restoring the technological status quo, transforming his band of National Guard troops into a hardened army. He establishes martial law in neighboring communities, collecting “taxes” to maintain a steady supply line for his troops

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<sup>18</sup> See section headed “Summoners.”

## FIRST SEASON ARCS (CONT'D)

- **DOUGLAS THE SUMMONER** – Douglas learns to control his Summoning powers, practicing basic techniques found in Volume 1 of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*. He soon realizes, however, that to fulfill his fate and protect Silverlake against Pelligrino, he must recover the other 13 volumes and master the Summoner's craft.

## PHILLIP THE KING

In the pilot, Phillip Wolfe seeks out and gathers his circle of friends and local volunteers to assist him in rescuing his girlfriend, JENNY BENNETT. As our regular series opens, this latter-day roundtable has trained a sizeable citizen army in the skills of medieval warfare.

The borders of Silverlake are now protected by a series of hastily-built walls, berms, fences and barbed-wire, manned by shifts of guards armed with crossbows. The main entrance is a tall iron gate at the base of Silverlake Boulevard.

With his knowledge of pre-industrial history, Phillip has been instrumental in organizing the community as a self-sufficient village. Crops have been planted in open spaces, tended by volunteers for communal distribution, while individuals harvest fruit from back yard trees and barter them in an open market on Silverlake Boulevard below the Dog Park.

A medical corps of doctors and nurses have opened a community hospital, serving the sick and aged with regular home visits. Water is moved up the hillsides by a variety of methods, from water-screws horse-powered pumps. Flocks of sheep and goats nibble grass in the green near the lake.

Blades are forged in former auto-repair shops from leaf-springs by scores of smiths. The temporary (and often slipshod) barriers protecting the border are steadily being replaced by teams of masons building a twelve-foot wall with ramparts and parapets.

Individuals in the community seek out Phillip's advice and approval for how to best improve their lot. They look to him and his friends for protection. For his part, Phillip takes to his new role with surprising aplomb, overseeing community defense, resolving conflicts between neighbors and organizing volunteer programs, and dealing with the thorny issue of immigration—determining just how many people can be supported by Silverlake's resources.

Furthermore, there's the surprising asset of his brother, Douglas, and his burgeoning skills as a Summoner.

So far, Douglas has managed to Call and Bind a number of useful creatures, among them, a swarm of *Luminiénte* to assist the border guards at night and a variety of what he calls *Crustea*, small spider-like crustaceans similar to crayfish that not only filter and improve the water quality of the reservoir, but have become a vital (and delicious) source of protein to the community.

More importantly, Douglas has gained a measure of control over his power, so far avoiding any disastrous accidents like the dimensional breaches he unknowingly manifested soon after the DarkFall Event.

## FIRST SEASON ARCS (CONT'D)

Phillip has made inroads in establishing secured trade-routes between Silverlake and the neighboring communities of Echo Park and Toluca Lake. Traveling merchants and entertainers are beginning to ply their trade between these communities, bringing with them news and rumors of the outside world.

However, he's also made a number of enemies within the community. Some are merely annoyed that a slacker who was mowing their lawns less than a year ago has become a big shot. Others, like Win Carlyle, have been forced by Phillip to curb their avarice for the broader good of the community.

As outside threats become more pressing, Phillip is forced to make unpopular decisions, the first of which is a concession to pay a "tax" of limited water rights to Truax and his now-formidable military machine. Though Phillip sees this compromise as a stop-gap until they have built up adequate defenses to repel an invasion, many feel it is a blatant demonstration of weakness.

Phillip then institutes a mandatory program which requires backyard gardeners to turn 20% of their yield of consumables to the community for canning and storage. He begins work on a fortified inner wall and compound to facilitate a mass retreat in the event the outside walls are breached—a fortress that Carlyle caustically refers to as "Wolfe Castle." These basic dictates of defensive strategy are seen as oppressive by a growing number within the community.

The conflict culminates when Carlyle calls for an open election in which Phillip is deposed as leader, replaced by FRANK REPOVICH, a former LAPD cop who now works as Carlyle's security chief. Under his brief tenure, Repovich severs pacts with neighboring communities in order to expand Carlyle's range of influence and trade, threatening valuable alliances which had been carefully negotiated by Phillip.

Repovich uses his men to begin surreptitiously conducting raids on Truax's supply lines. Though they attack wearing the colors of a notorious Wasteland gang, Truax soon uncovers the truth. Enraged, he leads his army to take control of Silverlake.

Phillip is restored to his leadership role by popular demand. He immediately marshals the community to repel the invaders, leading to a bloody stalemate and siege, which takes its toll on both sides.

Meanwhile, Emily Pelligrino orders a strike against the now unguarded JPL, taking Jellico and his team captive and appropriating their budding technology. She then directs her massive army of grotesque creatures, Nog and human soldiers to engage and destroy Truax and Phillip's forces and seize Silverlake by force.

In the face of a common enemy, Phillip and Truax combine their forces and engage Pelligrino's army. Even then, their efforts are futile against the supernatural horde arrayed against them.

Just as all seems lost, however, Phillip and his company return from their quest, accompanied by an armed cavalry of Crips and elf-like *Vorhahl* archers. Together, they turn the tide of the battle, successfully repelling Pelligrino's army. With daybreak, their victory is com

## FIRST SEASON ARCS (CONT'D)

plete, the surviving Nog beating a shrieking retreat, flesh burned by the purifying light of the sun. Astonished by Phillip's courage and military acumen, Truax places himself and his troops under Phillip's command.

By season's end, Phillip Wolfe, the reluctant king, now has an army, and though the battle is won, the war is far from over.

## PELLIGRINO THE EMPRESS

In the race for power after DarkFall, Emily Pelligrino has the advantage of an almost insurmountable head-start. An ardent student of the mythology of the Summoner's Arts with seven of the thirteen volumes of the *Accersitus Sceptrum* in her possession, Emily immediately recognizes the DarkFall Event for what it is, putting her newfound powers to work in her home community of West Hollywood.

Her first move is to Call and Bind a powerful *Etheara*, Raphael, to serve as her personal bodyguard and consigliere. As immortal creatures, the *Etheorum* are not only known for their physical strength, but their profound knowledge of the nine *atrum terra* and the Summoner's Arts.

Raphael assists Emily in Calling and Binding a horde of *Nog* to serve her as queen. These vicious, subterranean creatures wreak havoc on West Hollywood, following Emily's orders and enforcing her rule as queen.

The Standard Hotel serves as her palace. Using millions of enslaved *Luminiénte* to restore light to the hotel and surrounding environs, she draws vast numbers of human refugees from the devastation of what used to be Los Angeles, each required to pledge fealty in return for sanctuary.

She then consolidates her power by ordering raids on adjoining communities, her growing horde of *Nog* instilling terror in all who would defy her, slowly but surely expanding the range of her growing empire of West Hollywood, which now includes chunks of Beverly Hills, The San Fernando Valley and Hollywood proper.

Her eyes soon turn to Silverlake and its gem of a reservoir. However, its terrain, surrounded by hills with but two easily defended access points to the north and south, have proved overwhelming to her shock-troops.

Even more worrying is Douglas Wolfe, a Summoner who, though untutored, is rapidly developing his skills in the craft. Through a spy she's placed in his inner-circle, she learns that Phillip has located a full set of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*. If he obtains them, he will threaten her dreams of empire.

Raphael recommends she order Douglas' assassination and be done with it. Emily, however, sees an opportunity to obtain the rest of the lost texts. Eventually, Phillip will make his move to acquire the books. Once he has located them, she'll crush him and the *Accersitus Sceptrum* will finally be hers.

In the meantime, there are other fish to fry. The scientists at JPL, for instance, have man

## FIRST SEASON ARCS (CONT'D)

aged to fabricate small but functional capacitors and, using propane powered generators, restored limited electrical power to the facility.

Over the past year, Emily has Called and Bound *Luminiénte* to the point of virtual extinction in 2<sup>nd</sup> *atrum terra*. The lights are dimming at The Standard due to the tiny creatures' short life spans on the plane. Soon she will no longer have their illumination to draw and comfort her followers.

Emily knows that re-establishing the electrical grid to her domain would represent a major coup. She imagines the neon on Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards serving as a blazing beacon. Drawn like insects to the light, many would gladly sacrifice their freedom for a small measure of the modern conveniences they took for granted before DarkFall.

But the facility is jealously guarded by General Les Truax and his growing army. Truax, a minaret who serves a government that no longer exists, sees himself as the guardian of the last bastion of pre-DarkFall America.

Emily is not interested in seizing the facility as much as the scientists inside it. So far, the distance between West Hollywood and JPL in conjunction with the brawn of Truax's army has presented an effective deterrent. However, she stands ready to martial her forces to attack JPL at the first opportunity.

That opportunity arrives when Truax marches his forces to Silverlake in an attempt to occupy the community and capture the reservoir. Emily's Nog easily overwhelm the small complement of guards Truax leaves behind at JPL, and abduct Jellico and his team.

Meanwhile, Phillip's community militia succeeded in fending off Truax's first onslaught. The conflict has steadily worn down the resources and morale of both sides. The time is right for Emily to marshal her dark forces and destroy the armies of both her enemies in one bold flanking maneuver. Silverlake will then be hers.

## TRUAX THE COMMANDER

National Guard Colonel Les Truax, formerly a dentist from Glendale, has found himself in the unlikely position as head of the largest uniformed fighting force on the West Coast.

Truax is convinced that it is only a matter of time until the U.S. government reasserts authority. Therefore, he's determined to follow his orders and guard the last outpost of technology in the Los Angeles basin, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory on the outskirts of Pasadena.

His firearms inexplicably neutralized by the DarkFall Event, Truax has wisely prioritized training his forces in hand-to-hand combat and the use of alternative weapons—from knives and clubs to bow and arrow. He has further diminished his disadvantage by pursuing an aggressive recruitment program, building his forces to 4,000 men, divided roughly into three battalions. Though they are as crudely armed as their potential opponents, they have the advantage of martial discipline and strategy via an effective military command structure.

Their primary mission is to protect the facilities and personnel at JPL. However, in that necessitates a number of important secondary missions, including securing the surrounding communities and establishing dependable supply-lines. Though the former has been

## FIRST SEASON ARCS (CONT'D)

achieved by military occupation and the strict enforcement of martial law, the latter is an ongoing challenge.

To that end, Truax has organized companies dedicated to foraging foodstuffs from abandoned stores and warehouses, as well as levying a mandatory tax on the few surrounding communities that have restored a modicum of order.

Though the Devil's Gate reservoir provides an ample water source for troops bivouacked in and around J.P.L., Truax has found it necessary to order allotments of water from the community of Silverlake for field units who have secured a safe, toll-based route for trade and emigration. The route cuts southwest through the Wastelands, occupying a corridor that follows the Verdugo Wash from La Canada to its terminus at the Los Angeles River.

Though most of the communities in the area have properly acknowledged his legal authority, the town of Silverlake—specifically their tin-pot leader, Phillip Wolfe—treats Truax with open disrespect. Wolfe barred Truax's field units from access to the reservoir until Truax threatened to take it by force and establish permanent military occupation.

Even then, Wolfe only grudgingly pays his agreed-upon allotment of three tankers a week, the large, salvaged water containers drawn slowly up Glendale Boulevard under heavy guard, hitched to teams of twenty to thirty head of cattle.

Truax hopes to secure the L.A. River all the way down to Long Beach Harbor and establish civil order to the areas now plagued by self-styled warlords and street-gangs. To that end, he has relentlessly pushed Jellico and his team to pursue a program that will restore his firepower, giving him the strategic edge he needs to route out his opponents.

So far, they have managed to fabricate a small number of capacitors and jerry-rigged components to restore electrical power to the facility. Their next project is to synthesize some type of chemical combustible—an effort that, so far, has failed.

But Truax realizes that these small steps are only the beginning. Given enough time, ingenuity and hard work, he's fully confident that, someday, reconstruction is possible. In the meantime, Colonel Truax will play his role, establishing and maintaining stability to the area through enforcement of the rule of law.

But when the community of Silverlake begins to rebel, Truax is forced to drop the hammer. He marches his army south to take the reservoir. But the conflict is not the one-sided rout he expected. Phillip Wolfe's volunteer militia and his fortified battlements hold off the invaders, forcing an extended siege.

By the time Pelligrino's army attacks his flank, his units are battle-weary, already weakened due to a lack of adequate food and potable water. Truax must turn to Phillip to engage a common enemy.

## DOUGLAS THE SUMMONER

In the pilot, Douglas Wolfe discovers to his astonishment that he is a Summoner. With the help of his father's one-time assistant, HERSCHEL BLAKE, he manages to gain a small

## FIRST SEASON ARCS (CONT'D)

measure of control over his gift, learning simple principles from the first volume of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*—a primer which covers only the most rudimentary of the Summoner's Arts.

His pursuit of the craft has been furthered (and a number of disasters have been averted) by a strange benefactor. Occasionally, he will awaken to find, tucked in his right shoe, a document, object or other bit of detritus relating to the Summoner's craft. Long ago, his Uncle Grant used to do the same thing with candy and small gifts, leading Douglas to wonder if the old man is somehow present, at least in spirit.

The disciplines Douglas developed as a scientist are useful in the rigorous memorization of the complex *lingua accersitis* used to call and bind creatures.<sup>19</sup> Douglas he has proven to be extraordinarily adept at mastering the odd vocalizations that often seem to be designed for something other than the human tongue.

So far, the meager skills gleaned from Volume 1 have greatly improved the quality of life in Silverlake. But to move on and develop his craft, Douglas must acquire the rest of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*.

When a receipt signed by his uncle for a storage unit in Long Beach mysteriously appears (again, tucked in his right shoe), Douglas becomes convinced it must be the location of the books.

Douglas has repeatedly urged Phillip to allow him to recover the books, a request Phillip has denied for a variety of reasons, from "I can't spare the men" to the old standby, "it's too dangerous." Prior to DarkFall, travel to Long Beach was simply a fifty-minute freeway jaunt. It now represents an almost suicidal quest through some of the most treacherous quarters of The Wastelands.

But Douglas knows the true reason: Phillip doesn't trust him.

The whole "summoning thing" makes Phillip nervous, and he's concerned that Douglas may unleash an uncontrollable monster on the community.

However, if the rumors are true, there's a woman in West Hollywood named Pelligrino who has vastly surpassed Douglas in the Summoner's craft, and will undoubtedly prove to be a more formidable threat to the community than any creature Douglas may inadvertently conjure up. This alone is reason enough for him to risk the passage to Long Beach.

And then there's Jenny.

As the rigors of leadership consume ever more of Phillip's time and attention, she increasingly turns to Douglas for company. In the months following DarkFall, they've become close confidantes, bound at first by a common love for Phillip. But Douglas is finding it harder to

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<sup>19</sup> Translation: *The Summoner's Tongue* or "language"



## FIRST SEASON ARCS (CONT'D)

conceal his feelings for her—feelings that are far beyond “platonic.” More alarming, Jenny seems to be growing attracted to him as well.

Both know that if they acted on their unspoken emotions, the result would be disastrous. Phillip would never forgive their betrayal. Worse, they would never forgive themselves. Nevertheless, both know that it's only a matter of time before they're swept away by the current. The conflict culminates midseason when a few drinks and an unguarded moment lead to a kiss.

That very night, Douglas realizes that he can no longer remain in Silverlake. He gathers his circle of trusted friends, including Blake, Isolde, Breac, and Eric the Red's younger brother, David. Without permission from Phillip or the roundtable, they clandestinely ride out to seek the remaining volumes of the *Accersitus Sceptrum*.

Following the L.A. River south, their quest is fraught with danger—including a fatal confrontation with the dragon Douglas accidentally Summoned in the pilot.

When it becomes apparent that there is a traitor among them, suspicion immediately falls on Isolde. Blake urges the others to destroy her, but Douglas spares her, dismissing her from their company under threat of death.

But when they finally locate the *Accersitus Sceptrum*, the traitor proves to be Herschel Blake himself—or, rather, a *Voormus* changling, Called into this plane in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century by the notorious Cardinal Pius Solario, blood-Bound to his descendant, Emily Pelligrino.

As Herschel takes his true form and prepares to destroy Douglas, he's killed by Isolde. Upon his death, a spell is broken over Breac. We learn that she harbors the spirit and living consciousness of Douglas and Phillip's uncle, Grant Wolfe. Trapped inside an autistic child, weakened and spellbound by Herschel's dark arts, he sought out his nephews after Dark-Fall. Though unable to communicate, he could occasionally take over Breac's diminished functions while the child slept, leaving Douglas clues such as the receipt for the storage unit.

Using the knowledge from the *Accersitus Sceptrum* and working under the capable tutelage of his Uncle Grant, Douglas returns to Silverlake in command of an army to help repel the dark forces of Emily Pelligrino.

# DARKFALL

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND DARKFALL

Occasionally, an unpredictable event occurs on the surface of the Sun that releases a tremendous amount of energy in the form of a *solar flare* or a *coronal mass ejection*—an explosive burst of very hot, electrified gases with a mass that can surpass that of Mount Everest.

Such an event occurred during the period of January 6 through 11, 1997, damaging a Telstar 401 communications satellite, and leaving television networks ABC, FOX and PBS scrambling to find other ways to distribute their broadcasts.

While a compelling argument could be made that the event briefly *benefited* mankind, it is nevertheless a mild harbinger of what could result in a complete and catastrophic destruction of modern technology worldwide, triggering what would, in effect, be a new “Dark Age.”

In September of 1859, such an event—a perfect *space storm*—did occur, a coronal mass ejection estimated at three times the magnitude of the strongest in modern memory (cutting all power to an entire Canadian province in 1989).

Not all coronal mass ejections head toward Earth. Those that do usually take three to four days to traverse the 93 million mile journey.

This one took only 17 hours and 40 minutes.

Telegraph wires suddenly shorted out in the United States and Europe, igniting widespread fires. Colorful aurora, normally visible only in polar regions, were seen as far south as Rome and Hawaii.

Space storms are created when the Sun erupts, sending charged particles racing outward, an expanding bubble of hot gas called plasma.

In 1859, four crucial events occurred:

- The sun generated an exceptionally intense coronal mass ejection;
- The magnetically charged plasma that was ejected from the Sun hit the Earth
- The plasma traveled at an exceptionally high velocity;
- The magnetic fields in the plasma were oriented in the opposite in direction from that of the Earth's fields.

Earth's magnetic field normally protects the surface of the planet from a continual flow of charged particles, called the solar wind, as well as defending against most solar storms. However, given the for conditions outlined above, in 1859, the planet's defenses were overwhelmed.

Of course, in 1859, mankind was not dependent on electricity: The telegraph was only 15 years old; there were no satellites or power grids. Therefore, its effects were regarded as a mildly troublesome curiosity.

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND *DARKFALL* (CONT'D)

Today, however, such an event would be catastrophic, destroying not only global communications, but obliterating earth-based electrical transformers.

That's what happened in the early morning hours of March 13, 1989, when Canada's Hydro-Quebec electric utility suddenly suffered a massive breakdown. Some 6 million Canadians awoke to discover their electric power gone. Home heat and light failed on a day when temperatures were well below freezing. Over much of Canada, electric subways and elevators stopped dead, streetlights went out, gas pumps refused to function.

It took several hours for frantic utility engineers to figure out what had happened. They eventually determined that a huge blast of solar energy—a coronal mass ejection—had slammed squarely into planet Earth, ripping through the protective magnetosphere that shields us from most unwanted solar radiation, and sending giant surges of direct current through hundreds of miles of electric lines.

These *Geomagnetically Induced Currents* (GICs) followed the transmission lines to power transformers that were never designed to withstand such an unexpected blast. Dozens of transformers were disabled in moments. The effects cascaded from one substation to another, blowing out a huge section of Canada's grid.

A space storm's impact is measured in *nano-Teslas* (nT). The lower the figure, the more powerful the storm. A moderate storm can be around -100 nT; extreme and damaging storms have been logged at around -300 nT. The 1989 coronal mass ejection that knocked out power in Canada measured -589 nT.

The 1859 “perfect storm” was estimated to have been -1,760 nT.

A storm of such intensity would result in the worldwide destruction of large power transformers. Given the current global manufacturing capacity, it would take ten to twelve years to replace all the transformers lost on the electrical grid. However, the manufacturing process of these critical units is dependent on electricity, creating a Catch-22.

Meanwhile, the long-term societal upheavals resulting from a global blackout would be devastating. Looting, crime, food shortages and disruption of medical services would be pandemic. The likelihood of mankind recovering from this new “Dark Age” would be unlikely, if not impossible.