

PROLOGUE - GATHERING CLOUDS¹

JUNE 20th, 2021 - A CERTAIN WARD IN TOKYO

John Constantine (no, not *that* John Constantine), sniffed the slightly stale night air. There had been a strange prickling in the back of his mind for the last few hours- a dread premonition that something was amiss with the fabric of the world.

For a man who himself was "wrong"-- whose very existence was out of alignment with the structure of the universe around him, this was an especially discomfoting sensation. On the one hand it was unsettling, like the sound of nails slowly scratching down the side of a chalkboard-- but on the other it was also strangely alluring, like the pull of one magnet towards another.

The prickling at the back of his mind was slowly evolving into a deepening dread. He buttoned up his blazer, slipping through the night-time crowds in the city. It wasn't an especially chilly night, and people were out in throngs, laughing, talking, and enjoying the night, even as Constantine himself felt colder and colder the more he walked.

The streetlamps and brightly lit storefronts around him seemed to be getting slightly brighter, sounds sharper and more intense.

Constantine felt himself almost overwhelmed by the crush of sensations, his own breathing suddenly sounding louder and louder in his ears as if his whole body was becoming a sharpened instrument attuned to everything around him.

Danger was coming. He was sure of it. But from *where*?

His instincts told him to look up. As he did so, Constantine's unconscious registered something amiss with the sky - but it took him a few minutes to process what he was seeing.

The stars. They were disappearing.

¹ This story supersedes https://whatis.suburbansenshi.com/index.php/Extinction_Arc



Not all of them - some in the west... but the void was getting larger and larger, as if they were being eaten.

No. That wasn't it. Something was blocking the starlight. Something massive. Something coming in incredibly fast from up high. *Very high. From space?*

It was deadly silent. Before Constantine could consciously analyze what he was seeing, he began to feel a strange weakness throughout his body.

He wasn't alone. All around him, the laughing, happy people had gone silent and grown weak, dropping to their knees, their skin becoming a pallid grey as the darkness in the sky grew absolute, blotting out all the stars, and the weight of a crushing silence devoured all sound.

Except for the screams. The anguished screams of the dying, whose very souls were ripped from their bodies. Everyone and everything in the ward was drained. Plants, animals, people, electrical devices.

Darkness swallowed everything.

Then, just like that, it was gone. The lights came back on, the stars returned, and whatever music had been playing in the shops resumed. Everything was back to normal-- except for the sea of ashen corpses that were now strewn everywhere.

