

NIGHTFALL

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International

Re-Imagined Radio
Season 12, Episode 07, July 15, 2024

Final draft

NIGHTFALL

Two stories of psychological terror and darkness

Re-Imagined Radio
Season 12, Episode 7
Final Draft

Premier broadcast: July 15, 2024

Written, produced, hosted by John F. Barber

Sound design, Music composition, Post-Production by Marc Rose

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Synopsis

Re-Imagined Radio presents two stories connected by the same name. "Nightfall" is the last episode of *Dimension X*, the precursor of *X Minus One*, the famous science fiction series. "The Porch Light" is an episode of *Nightfall*, a radio anthology series produced and broadcast in Canada. Episodes were primarily supernatural and/or horror. With "Nightfall" and "The Porch Light" Re-Imagined Radio presents two stories of psychological terror and darkness.

Credits

Samples from "Nightfall," the final episode of *Dimension X* (1950-1951), broadcast September 29, 1951.

Samples from "The Porch Light," broadcast February 26, 1982, as part of the *Nightfall* radio series, produced and broadcast by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, (1980-1983).

Color Code

Yellow highlighted text = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or created for episode. Pre-recorded audio is used as content in this episode.

~~**Magenta highlighted text with strike through**~~ = text deleted for episode timing

MUSIC = pre-recorded

MUSIC = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: DRUM ROLL, CONTINUES UNDER

ANNOUNCER

Adventures in time and space . . .
transcribed in future tense.

SFX: PLATE ECHO AS ANNOUNCER SAYS,

"DIMENSION X-X-X-X-X"

SFX: DRUM BEAT

SFX: OPENING FROM NIGHTFALL, THE
RADIO SERIES

ANNOUNCER

In the dream, you are falling . . . lost
in the listening distance as dark . . .
locks in . . .

SFX: A LONG SCREAM OF MAN FALLING
FAR BELOW.

ANNOUNCER

Nightfall!

SFX: DISCORDANT PIANO CHORDS

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: RIR THEME

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program
about radio storytelling. With each
episode we explore how dialogue, sound
effects, and music can combine to
promote storytelling and engage your
listening imagination. We also like to
include the stories behind the story.
The history. The connections. Trivia.
And we always strive to answer the

questions "So what?" and "Why is this important?" This episode is no different, and here to tell you about it is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN

HOST

Hello everyone. With this episode we highlight two radio stories connected by the same name. NIGHTFALL.

"Nightfall," is the title of the final episode of *Dimension X*, the precursor of *X Minus One*, the famous science fiction series.

Nightfall is also the name of a radio anthology series produced and broadcast in Canada. Episodes were primarily supernatural and/or horror. We feature an episode called "The Porch Light."

So, two stories this episode. Two stories connected by the same name. Nightfall. Two stories of psychological terror and darkness.

Visit the episode page at our website for more information, and to follow along with the episode script. reimagedradio dot FM.

Thanks for joining us as Re-Imagined Radio presents "Nightfall."

SFX: SAMPLE, MUSIC FROM "NIGHTFALL"

HOST INTRODUCTION ("NIGHTFALL")

HOST

Let's listen first to the final episode of *Dimension X*, "Nightfall," broadcast September 29, 1951.

Adapted by Ernest Kinoy from a short story by science fiction writer Isaac Asimov, "Nightfall" takes place on Lagash, a world with six suns that provide perpetual daylight. Every 2,049 years a total lunar eclipse of the suns brings extended darkness to Lagash, and the opportunity to see stars.

Evidence from previous civilizations suggests each was destroyed during a lunar eclipse. Now, the eclipse is approaching and scientists are worried what might happen . . . let's listen to . . . "Nightfall."

SFX: SAMPLES FROM "NIGHTFALL"

~~SFX: DIMENSION X (ECHOES OUT),
THEREMIN UP, THEN UNDER THE
FOLLOWING~~

~~MUSIC: DRUM BEATS~~

NARRATOR

~~The National Broadcasting Corporation,
in cooperation with Street and Smith,
publishers of Astounding Science Fiction
bring you Dimension X.~~

~~MUSIC: THEREMIN FOR AN INTRODUCTION
. . . THEN UNDER~~

~~NARRATOR~~ ~~Ralph Waldo Emerson speculated, "If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would man believe and adore and perceive for many generations the remembrance of the city of God?" This was philosophically interesting. But on the edge of the galaxy, there is a planet which swings on its orbit, in a cluster of six suns. These suns hang in the sky above. Nevertheless than two shine down through the entire twenty-three point-eight hours of the planet's day. The yellow light has burned down on the planet continuously, into the past, till the mind of man runneth not to the contrary.~~

MUSIC: WISTFUL...THEN BEHIND

NARRATOR

~~NARRATOR~~ ~~Theremon was a reporter for the Saro City Chronicle. He'd covered them all, from the night police beat to politics to the sports pages -- and the City Editor wanted him to cover the biggest story of the year -- perhaps of all time. It was an interview -- a particularly difficult interview. But then, since his first days as a cub, Theremon had specialized in difficult interviews. He didn't expect violence, though, from an astronomer.~~

~~ATON~~ ~~You're from THAT newspaper? Well, you've got a lot of gall coming here!~~

~~THEREMON~~ ~~Now wait a minute, Dr. Aton, it's only a job--~~

ATON I've read your paper. You've been riding this observatory for two months now. You've attacked me personally. I have nothing to say to you.

THEREMON All right, look, this is your chance to get your side in the paper. I'll give it to you straight. Two months ago, the observatory issued a press statement that the world was coming to an end. Now, that's the same story that the Cult of Revelations has been preaching. Now, when a scientist backs that up, it's news.

ATON Our conclusions have nothing to do with the cult. The Cult of Revelations is full of superstition and mysticism. We are scientists.

THEREMON Yeah, and you've got the people pretty angry.

ATON That does not matter.

THEREMON If I can't get the story from you, I'll have to go somewhere else.

~~ATON Go ahead!~~

~~THEREMON All right. You know, Dr. Aton, the paper can be pretty rough on someone who doesn't cooperate, Dr. Aton--~~

ATON Young man, if you're not out of the observatory within five minutes, I shall call the police! Now get out!

MUSIC: ACCENT . . . THEN BEHIND

NARRATOR--

NARRATOR

The reporter walks down the long hall from the observatory. The light filters through the high windows -- the yellow light of Gamma, the brightest of the six suns in the planet's sky. Beta is almost at zenith; its red light floods the landscape to an unusual orange. The planet's sun, Alpha, is at the antipodes, and now as Gamma sinks below the horizon, the red dwarf sun, Beta, is alone . . . grimly alone. It's a short drive from the observatory to Saro City, and the red light glares from the highway. The temple of the Cult stands hewn from the solid rock of the Dormite mountains outside the city, and, in the inner courtyards, stands Sor, the priest of the Cult.

MUSIC: TRIBAL DRUMMING UP AND UNDER

SFX: CULTISTS CHANT EERILY IN BACKGROUND

SOR

Woe to the unbelievers! Their souls will rot with the absence of light!

THEREMON

Sor! Sor. Wait, your reverence, please. Please. Tell me, your reverence, what will happen? What are you waiting for here?

SOR

The day! The day of the coming. It is written in our Doctrine of Revelations, "It came to pass that the sun Beta was alone in the sky . . . the world was

shrunk and cold. Men did assemble in the public squares and highways. Their minds were troubled, and their speech confused, for the souls of men awaited the coming of the Stars. The lip of the Cave of Darkness passed the edge of Beta. And loud were the cries of men. There was no light on the surface of the world. In this blackness, there appeared the Stars in countless numbers. In that moment, the souls of men departed from them, and abandoned bodies became even as beasts. And the Stars then reached down the heavens' flame, and where it touched, the cities of the world flamed to destruction, so that of man, and all the works of man, nought remained." So it is written!

MUSIC: ACCENT ... THEN OUT

THEREMON Dr. Sheerin, you're the only scientist I could find in the city. Where is everybody?

SHEERIN In the Hideout.

THEREMON In the Hideout?

SHEERIN The place bored me. I wanted to be out here where things are getting hot. I want to see the "Stars" the Cultists are talking about. Besides, they don't want me at the Hideout . . . I'm too scrawny to survive.

THEREMON Now wait a minute. What is the Hideout?

SHEERIN Well, we professors have managed to convince a few people that our prophecy of doom is valid. We've got about three thousand people. They're supposed to hide where the darkness and the "Stars" can't get at them. We hope they'll survive and leave records.

THEREMON Survive? Survive what?

SHEERIN Oh, there are lots of names for it; the Cultists have their myths. . .

THEREMON Oh yes, yes. What about that? What is there to these myths? As a matter of fact what is there to this, this Doctrine of Revelations?

SHEERIN I'm a psychologist, not an archeologist. How true it is I don't know, but the Cultists say that every two thousand and fifty years, all the suns disappear and there is a total darkness, and then they say things appear called "Stars." Of course, men go mad. They mix all this up with a lot religio-mystic notions, but that is the central idea.

THEREMON Yeah. Well that's impossible, isn't it? I mean, there there there are always at least two suns in the sky; most of the time four or five.

SHEERIN There aren't now. Only Beta.

THEREMON Dr. Sheerin you mean that there is going to be worldwide darkness tomorrow, that all mankind will go violently insane? What . . . what's behind that?

SHEERIN Well, for one thing, the history of civilization of the world. We have located a series of cycles of civilizations comparable to our own, all of which, without exception, were destroyed by fire at the very height of their culture.

THEREMON Alright. Alright. But is there any scientific theory behind this that would explain it?

SHEERIN The university observatory finished their calculations two months ago. Tomorrow there will be an eclipse of Beta so that ~~the planet will become dark.~~ darkness comes. That eclipse comes every two thousand and forty-nine years. Darkness comes, maybe those mysterious "Stars" that no man has ever seen, and then madness . . . and the end of civilization.

~~THEREMON I see. And the scientists expect to live through this at the Hideout?~~

~~SHEERIN They plan to photograph the eclipse and leave the records. And then the rest of mankind will know what to expect.~~

THEREMON Uh huh. Dr. Sheerin, what is there in darkness to drive men mad?

SHEERIN Have you ever experienced darkness, young man?

THEREMON No, no, but I know what it is. It's just, well, no light.

SHEERIN Draw the curtain.

THEREMON Well what for? If we had four or five
suns out there, we might want to cut the
light down for comfort. But with only
Beta . . .

SHEERIN That is the point. Just draw the curtain
and then come here and sit down.

THEREMON All right.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS . . . CURTAIN DRAWN
. . . A STEP OR TWO BACK

THEREMON Dr. Sheerin, I can't see you.

SHEERIN Feel your way.

THEREMON But I can't see you . . . I can't see
anything.

SHEERIN (BEAT) Do you like it?

THEREMON Well . . . No, it's awful. The walls . .
. They seem to be closing in on me.
(STAMMERS) I keep wanting to push them
away . . .

SHEERIN All right. Draw the curtain back again.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS TO CURTAIN WHICH IS
DRAWN

THEREMON (RELIEVED, SHAKEN) The light, the light.
Dr. Sheerin . . . (BEAT, SIGHS) have you
got a drink?

SHEERIN Right here.

SFX: CLINK OF BOTTLE ON GLASS ...

LIQUID POURS

SHEERIN That was just a dark room.

THEREMON Yeah, yeah, it wasn't really so bad.

SHEERIN You're afraid.

THEREMON Yes I am. Just darkness can do that?

SHEERIN This isn't just a metaphysical theory, young man; it's promulgated from observed data. Come with me.

THEREMON Where?

SHEERIN The locked ward, down the corridor.

THEREMON All right.

SFX: THEIR FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR WHICH

OPENS ... FOOTSTEPS IN BG

SHEERIN Were you at the Saro City Centennial Exposition two years ago?

THEREMON No, I was overseas on assignment.

SHEERIN Do you remember hearing about the "Tunnel of Mystery" that broke all records in the amusement area?

THEREMON Yeah. Wasn't there some fuss about that? The Anti-Vice Society had it shut down?

SHEERIN It was shut down all right, but the bluenoses had nothing to do with it.

THEREMON

Oh?

SHEERIN

That tunnel was nothing but a mile-long passage through darkness. You rode in a little "car" and it took fifteen minutes to get through. (CHUCKLES) Very popular . . . while it lasted.

THEREMON

Popular?

SHEERIN

There's a fascination to being frightened when it's part of a game. Absence of light is one of the instinctive human fears. People came out of that fifteen minutes of darkness shaking and half-dead with fear.

THEREMON

Half-dead? I thought there were some deaths?

SHEERIN

Bad hearts, but that wasn't the big danger.

~~SFX: FOOTSTEPS STOP . . . KEYS JINGLE
ON RING~~

~~SHEERIN~~

~~(TO HIMSELF) Now, uh, which key is this?
Ah!~~

~~SFX: KEY INSERTED IN LOCK . . . DOOR
UNLOCKS AND SQUEAKS OPEN . . .
FOOTSTEPS IN BG~~

~~THEREMON~~

~~Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Dr.
Sheerin. Where are we going?~~

SHEERIN

~~You'll see.~~ No, the heart attacks were actually good for business, but there was something else. ~~Here. I'll show you.~~

~~SFX: FOOTSTEPS TO ANOTHER DOOR
WHICH OPENS~~

SHEERIN I want you to see somebody.

~~SFX: A DOOR CLOSES. A FEW MORE
FOOTSTEPS ... THEN OUT~~

SHEERIN (CALLS, GENTLY) Latimer? (NO ANSWER)
Latimer?

LATIMER Go away!

SHEERIN Latimer . . . I want you to meet
somebody. This is Mr. Theremon.

LATIMER No! No, go away!

THEREMON Hello.

LATIMER He's pushing me! Make him stop pushing
me! Go away!

THEREMON (LOW, TO SHEERIN) I'm not touching him.
What's wrong?

SHEERIN Latimer is afraid.

LATIMER The walls . . . they're falling in on
me. The walls! I've got to get out. Let
me out!

SHEERIN (SOOTHING) You can't go out, Latimer.
It's all right.

LATIMER I've got to get out! Let me out! Let me
out! (WEEPS)

SHEERIN At sleeping period, we have to give him a shot of morphine. Otherwise, he'd bat his brains out against the wall.

THEREMON What's wrong with him?

SHEERIN Nothing. Nothing but fifteen minutes in the darkness of the Tunnel of Mystery.

THEREMON Well Doctor, that's impossible!

SHEERIN One person out of ten came out of the tunnel that way. That's why we had it shut down.

THEREMON Why? Why should darkness do that?

SHEERIN It's obvious man cannot exist without light. Longer periods of darkness would obviously be fatal. The scientific theory is that the consciousness of light is necessary for mental activity.

LATIMER Please. Please, doctor, let me outside! Let me outside, please! I can't breathe! They're pushing me! They're always pushing me! I can't stand it! (WEEPS)

SFX: FOOTSTEPS AWAY . . . DOOR OPEN
AND CLOSE

SHEERIN There you are, Theremon. That's what fifteen minutes of darkness will do. Man just wasn't built to operate without light. There are always at least two suns in the sky . . . most of the time more.

THEREMON (SOBERLY) Yeah. Just fifteen minutes of darkness.

SHEERIN Now then . . . look out of that window. Imagine darkness everywhere. No light as far as you can see. Black. Everything black. And, the "Stars" . . . whatever they are. Well, can you conceive it? Your mind wasn't built for that conception. When the real thing comes, you will go mad. Completely and permanently. There is no question of it. Tomorrow, there won't be a city left standing in the world.

THEREMON Well, why? Why should the cities be destroyed?

SHEERIN If you were in darkness, what would you want more than anything else? What would it be that every instinct would call for? Light. And how would you get light?

THEREMON I don't know.

SHEERIN You'd burn something! And every city in the world will go up in flames.
(SARDONIC) Shall we go back to my office, Mr. Theremon, and have another drink?

MUSIC: MILD ACCENT . . . THEN BEHIND
NARRATOR

NARRATOR Through the skies, the red sun Beta shines alone. The wind howls across the city. It's cold . . . colder than man can remember. As the hour approaches,

the reporter goes out and speaks to the man in the street.

SFX: OTHERWORLDLY TRAFFIC

BACKGROUND

THEREMON Excuse me sir . . . Excuse me. I'm from the Chronicle. I'd like to talk to you.

PALLET Oh, a reporter, huh? Well, my name is Pallet, with two Ls; remember the two Ls, huh?

THEREMON: All right. Mr. Pallet, what's your occupation?

PALLET Power technician at the north division plant.

THEREMON Uh huh.

PALLET You're making some kind of a survey, huh?

THEREMON Yeah. Yeah, in a way. Where are you going now?

PALLET Home for supper.

THEREMON How about, uh . . .? Well, I mean, what are you going to do tonight?

PALLET You mean about this "Star" stuff? Well, I'll tell ya, mister. It don't stand to reason that the end of the world is going to come -- boom! -- like that. It just don't stand to reason!

THEREMON In other words, you don't believe it.

PALLET I didn't say that, but it just don't stand to reason.

THEREMON Uh huh. Have you read what the scientists say?

PALLET Nah, I don't read stuff like that . . . only the headlines.

THEREMON Yeah. How about the Cult?

PALLET Well, now, like I say, I've got nothing against religion.

THEREMON You don't believe them either.

PALLET Well, they've always been shouting about doom and sin. Listen, bud, when you've been around as long as I have, you get to know the score. It's all right to preach that Judgment Day is coming and all, but just the same, I'm putting money in the bank.

THEREMON Un huh. Well tell me . . . How about darkness?

PALLET About what?

THEREMON How would you feel if there were no light?

PALLET You crazy? How could there be no light?

THEREMON Well, suppose all the suns went down at once. Suppose everything was black.

PALLET Well, that's crazy. What's the use of supposing something like that? It couldn't happen, it's crazy!

THEREMON Yeah. (BEAT) Well, that's all. Thank you.

PALLET Sure. Oh, look, mister . . . remember Pallet with two Ls!

MUSIC: ACCENT . . . THEN OUT

THEREMON Excuse me, sir, but--

CULTIST Huh?

THEREMON I represent the Chronicle and we're conducting a poll to determine public opinion with regard to the predicted end of the world. How do you feel about it?

CULTIST All this talk of scientific explanation . . . it's sinful, that's what it is!

THEREMON Oh, Oh, I see. Well then you're a member of the Cult, sir?

CULTIST I sure I am! Been a member since I was a boy! My daddy was a member, too! I've seen the books. It's all writ down in the books.

THEREMON Don't you believe the scientists' explanation?

CULTIST Don't need it! Gonna save my immortal soul. Gonna stay on the mountaintop in a white robe, while the Stars carry me

away to glory. Blessed be the Stars,
amen!

THEREMON Well tell me. What are the "Stars"?

CULTIST The glory! The breath of the heaven! The
spirit of the ultimate! That's what they
are.

THEREMON Uh huh. The observatory has announced
that it intends to take pictures of the
"Stars."

CULTIST Blasphemy! I sold my house . . . gave
all my money to the poor . . . won't
need it any more! Goin' to heaven with
Stars! Glory! Glory! Goin' with the
Stars!

MUSIC: SOMBER TRANSITION . . . THEN
BEHIND NARRATOR

NARRATOR The reporter checks the stock exchange,
the stores . . . business at a
standstill. Doesn't pay to buy anything
today . . . not if the world is going to
end tomorrow. There are predictions of
economic collapse in the financial
section, layoffs at the factories on the
edge of the city. And through the
streets, the people mill and turn,
unsure, crying in fear or shouting with
bravado. The story isn't here in the
city, and so, as the hour approaches,
the reporter goes again to the
observatory, high in the hills.

THEREMON Now, look, Dr. Aton, if you are right .
. . if the world is going to be
destroyed . . . what is the difference
if I stay here and observe and take
notes?

ATON Nothing, I suppose. But, you'll be in
the way; we have work to do.

THEREMON All right, if I stay out of the way?

ANTOON I can't be bothered with you. Now you'll
have to leave Mr. Theremon.

SHEERIN (APPROACHES, ALMOST MERRY) Hello! Hello!

THEREMON Oh, hello Dr. Sheerin.

SHEERIN Oooh, this place is like a morgue. It's
freezing outside. The wind is enough to
hang icicles on your nose. Beta doesn't
seem to give any heat at all, it's so
far away.

ATON Why aren't you in the Hideout, Sheerin?

SHEERIN Me? I'm part of the race that isn't
worth perpetuating. Who's got a bottle?

ATON There will be no alcohol today. It'd be
too easy to get my men drunk; I can't
afford to tempt them. Well, all right,
Theremon, you can stay. But, keep out of
the way.

THEREMON Well, thank you, doctor.

ATON (TO TECHNICIANS) Well, gentlemen, I think it's time we took our positions. The observatory dome is up these stairs.

THEREMON Yes sir. After you, doctor . . .

SFX: FOOTSTEPS ON STAIRS, THEN
CRASH! OF GLASS SHATTERING

SOR (BLOODCURDLING SCREAM) Ahhhhhhhh!

THEREMON What is that?!

ATON Open the dome, quick!

SFX: CLANKING! OF DOME OPENED

THEREMON What is it?

ATON The photographic plates! They're all smashed!

SOR (LAUGHS MANIACALLY)

SHEERIN There he is! A Cultist!

ATON He's going for the telescope! After him!

SFX: QUICK FOOTSTEPS ... BRIEF
SCUFFLE DURING FOLLOWING

THEREMON (WITH EFFORT) All right, I've got him!

SOR Let go!

ATON No!

SOR (WILDLY) Let go! Must be destroyed! It must be! Destroyed.

SFX: SOR PUSHED TO FLOOR... SCUFFLE
ENDS

ATON It's all right. It's all right. He didn't harm anything. Let him up.

THEREMON That's the high priest . . . Sor is his name. I was talking to him yesterday.

ATON (TO SOR) What do you want, Sor?

SOR Nothing that you would give me of your own free will.

ATON I made a bargain with the Cult . . . to give me certain data you had. In return, I promised to prove the essential truth of the creed.

SOR There was no need to prove that! It stands proved by the Book of Revelations!

ATON I offered scientific backing for you believers.

SOR You made of the darkness and the Stars a natural phenomenon . . . removed all its real significance. That was blasphemy!

ATON The facts exist.

SOR Your facts are a fraud and a delusion!

ATON How do you know?

SOR I know!

ATON I suppose you think in trying to warn the world against the menace of madness, we are placing souls in jeopardy? Well, we have not succeeded, if that makes you feel better.

SOR Your devilish instruments must be destroyed! We obey the will of the Stars!

ATON Someone call the police in Saro City.

SHEERIN There's no time for that . . . let me handle this. The eclipse is only a few minutes away. (TO SOR) Look, Sor! Will you give your word of honor to cause no trouble?

SOR I will not!

SHEERIN Listen! Just as soon as the eclipse starts, we're going to take you and put you in a closet with the door closed and you will stay there! Then you won't see the darkness . . . and you won't see the Stars! And that means the loss of your immortal soul, according to the Cult. All right, now. Will you give your word of honor?

SOR (RELUCTANTLY) You have it. You will all be damned for your deeds of today!

THEREMON Look!

ATON Cameras.

TECHNICIAN Yes sir!

ATON Check the exposures carefully.

TECHNICIAN We will sir.

SHEERIN You're shaking, Mr. Theremon.

THEREMON Well, I don't feel very well. That's all.

SHEERIN You're not losing your nerve?

THEREMON No, no . . . I'm just not used to this.

SHEERIN You could probably make the Hideout.

THEREMON Now look, I have been assigned to cover a story; I intend to cover it!

SHEERIN Professional honor?

THEREMON Yeah! And I'd give my right arm for a bottle right now. I need a drink

SOR (CHANTS INCOMPREHENSIBLY, OMINOUSLY) A-LA SO-FAN-IT RAD-ROCK! A-LA SO-FAN-IT-- (CONTINUES BRIEFLY IN BG, FADES OUT under)

THEREMON What's that?

SHEERIN The Cultist. That's the Book of Revelations.

THEREMON Well, I don't understand it.

SHEERIN He is chanting some old-cycle language. The Doctrine of Revelations was originally written in it. There are probably two million people in Saro City

who are trying to join the Cult. One gigantic revival!

THEREMON Dr. Sheerin, HOW do the Cultists manage to keep the Doctrine of Revelations going from cycle to cycle if everyone goes mad? Who wrote this doctrine?

SHEERIN There are some people who don't see the Stars . . . the blind. They would have memories . . . and that, combined with the confused, incoherent babbling of the mad, form the basis for the Doctrine of Revelations. The Cult will be riding high down there in the city! I hope they make the most of it.

ATON (APPROACHES, SHAKEN) Dr. Sheerin, Dr. Sheerin. I've just heard from Hideout on the private line . . .

SHEERIN Oh? They're in trouble?

ATON They are safe, but the city is a shambles.

SHEERIN What are you shaking about, Doctor? How do you feel?

ATON I don't understand. The Cultists are rousing the people to storm the observatory . . . promising them salvation . . . promising them anything.

SHEERIN How long till the total eclipse?

ATON An hour. (MOVING OFF) I'm going to check those cameras.

SHEERIN (MUSES) It's a gamble. It'll take time to get a mob out here. If the darkness comes first, we're all right. (LOW) Look at Beta.

THEREMON Yeah . . . It's cut in half.

SHEERIN Getting darker. An interesting phenomenon.

THEREMON (UNCOMFORTABLE) My collar is suddenly tight.

SHEERIN Are you having any difficulty in breathing?

THEREMON No. No, why?

SHEERIN Difficulty in breathing is one of the first symptoms. We have experimented.

THEREMON (STAMMERS) I'm cold. It seems to be getting colder.

SHEERIN We'd better keep our minds on something else.

THEREMON Yeah . . .

SHEERIN (CHANGES THE SUBJECT) One of the astronomers has a theory about the Stars. He thinks they may be suns that are too far away to see in the light. He developed a fantasy about a planet revolving around one sun. (CHUCKLES) It's a mathematical possibility. Of course, there couldn't be any life. Part of the planet would always be dark and

without light. Well, it's obvious . . .
without light, there can't be any life.

ATON (APPROACHES) It's time for the
artificial light. We can't read the
instruments.

THEREMON Artificial light?

SHEERIN One of the researchers at the university
worked it out. It's animal grease,
packed around a wick. Here, I'll light
it with this spark.

SFX: TORCH IS LIT

THEREMON (BEAT) Why, it's beautiful! . . . Yellow
light. . . . After four hours of red. .
. . It's beautiful! . . . Light! . . .
Light!

MUSIC: SHIMMERING . . . THEN BEHIND

NARRATOR

NARRATOR The dome is quiet. The priest, in his
yellow robe, sways slowly as his lips
move in the ancient tongue. Over and
over, he whispers the invocation to the
Stars. The technicians hunch over the
instruments, and the sky gradually turns
a horrible deep-purple red, and the air
grows denser. Dusk, like a palpable
entity, enters the room, and the dancing
circle of yellow light about the torches
etches itself into ever-sharper
distinction against the ever-gathering
grayness beyond. Outside, Beta is a mere
smoldering splendor, taking a last look

at the world. The western horizon, in the direction of the city, is lost in darkness and, along the highway to the observatory, surges a menacing, shadowy mass.

SFX: BUZZ OF DISTANT CROWD GROWING CLOSER

ATON The mob from the city . . . they're coming.

SHEERIN How long till total eclipse?

ATON Fifteen minutes. But that mob will be here in five.

SHEERIN We'll hold them off. Come on, Theremon! Downstairs!

THEREMON (STAMMERS) Now wait a minute, wait a minute, there's no light down there!

SHEERIN We have to block the door! Come on!

THEREMON I can't! I can't breathe! I can't go down there!

SHEERIN Take a torch. We take light with us. Come on!

MUSIC: ACCENT, FOR A TRANSITION . . . THEN OUT

SHEERIN Aton?! Aton?!

ATON I'm here. Did you bar the door?

SHEERIN They won't get in.

ATON (TO TECHNICIANS) All right now, everybody! One minute till totality! One minute! Just before totality, I'm changing the plate. That will leave one of you for each camera. Now, remember, if you feel yourself going, get away from the camera.

TECHNICIAN (NERVOUS) It's dark. It's getting dark!

THEREMON Sheerin? Sheerin, where are you? I can't see you, Sheerin.

SHEERIN I'm right here.

ATON Thirty seconds.

SOR (A SAVAGE CRY) Aaaaah!

SHEERIN Look out! The priest!

SFX: CRASH! AS GLASS SHATTERS

THEREMON I can't see him!

SOR And the wicked shall perish and the souls of the true believers shall be transported in glory to the Stars!

SHEERIN You can see him against the torch.

ATON Don't let him get to the telescope!

SOR (LOUD) From the Stars there reached down a Heavenly Flame, and where it touched, the cities of the world flamed to utter destruction!

ATON Grab him! Grab him!

SFX: SCUFFLE DURING FOLLOWING

SHEERIN I'll take care of him!

SOR The world must be destroyed by the Stars!

SHEERIN I got him . . . I got him.

SFX: DULL THUMPS! AS SOR IS HIT ON THE HEAD . . . HIS BODY FALLS TO THE FLOOR . . . BUZZ OF CROWD OUTSIDE FILLS A PAUSE

ATON (QUIETLY) Five seconds till totality. Four . . . three . . . two . . . one.

MUSIC: BIG ACCENT . . . THEN BEHIND NARRATOR

NARRATOR The sky is black, and through it shine the stars. Thirty thousand minute suns shine down in a soul-searing splendor. It is more frightening in its awful indifference than the bitter wind that shivers across the horrible, cold, bleak world.

SFX: QUIET MURMUR OF MOB GROWING LOUDER AND MORE CHAOTIC DURING FOLLOWING DIALOGUE WHICH STARTS SLOW AND GROWS FASTER

THEREMON (IN AWE) The stars. The stars. The stars.

SOR (INSANE SCREAM) Aaaaahh!

SHEERIN It's dark . . . dark . . . dark.

THEREMON The walls . . . the walls are coming in on me. They're coming in. Light. Light. Light!

ATON Darkness . . . forever . . . and ever.

THEREMON Light!

ATON And ever.

THEREMON Light!

ATON And the walls . . .

THEREMON Light!

ATON They're breaking in. We did not know.

THEREMON Light!

ATON We did not know!

THEREMON Light!

ATON We did not know!

THEREMON Light!

SFX: FRENZIED CROWD HITS A PEAK

MUSIC: TOPS THE CROWD...THEN BEHIND

NARRATOR

NARRATOR On the horizon in the direction of the city, a crimson glow begins growing. A thousand fires strengthen in brightness that is not the glow of the sun. A

million fires, as a world, mad in the darkness, screams in terror for the light.

MUSIC: UP, THEN UNDER

NARRATOR The night has come again.

MUSIC: UP...FOR A FINISH

HOST CONCLUSION ("NIGHTFALL")

HOST We just listened to "Nightfall," the final episode of *Dimension X*, a weekly science fiction series heard on NBC radio 1950 to 1951. "Nightfall" closed the short-lived *Dimension X* series when it was broadcast September 29, 1951.

Visit the episode page and learn more at our website, reimagedradio dot FM.

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE FUSEBOX BREAK

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber, producer and host. We'll return to our episode in just a moment. But first, I'd like to tell you about *The Fusebox Show*. Produced by Marc Rose, each episode is a carnival of quick witted and quirky conversation and commentary about current day events and news. Here's a sample.

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER

HOST *The Fusebox Show* bills itself as quote, "a show for everyone, but not everyone will like it" unquote. I encourage you to listen, and decide for yourself. Learn more, and subscribe to *The Fusebox Show* podcast at their website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, FADE UNDER AND
OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING**

HOST INTRODUCTION (NIGHTFALL)

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is called "Nightfall" and presents two stories connected by the same name. We just listened to "Nightfall" from the radio series *Dimension X*.

Let's listen now to an episode from *Nightfall*, a radio anthology series produced and broadcast in Canada, 1980 to 1983. Episodes were primarily supernatural and/or horror.

**SFX: MUSIC, BEGIN FADING IN SAMPLE
FROM "PORCH LIGHT"**

HOST We sample "The Porch Light," broadcast February 26, 1982.

Written by Randy Brown, this is an excellent, tense, and scary radio story. Let's listen now to "The Porch Light," an episode from *Nightfall*, the Canadian radio series.

SFX: MUSIC, FINISH FADING UP TO FULL, SAMPLE FROM "PORCH LIGHT" BEGUN EARLIER

SFX: SAMPLES FROM NIGHTFALL

HOST CONCLUSION (NIGHTFALL)

HOST We just listened to "The Porch Light," an episode from *Nightfall*, the Canadian radio series, 1980 to 1983, and an excellent example of the ghost story genre.

More information at the episode page of our website, reimagedradio dot FM.

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE RIR BREAK

MUSIC: RIR THEME. ESTABLISH, THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber, producer and host. Thanks for joining us. With each episode we explore radio storytelling using voice, sound effects, and music. I hope you'll consider listening to other episodes. Here are some examples . . .

SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO AUDIO TRAILER

HOST More information and listening opportunities are available at our website -- reimagedradio dot FM.

Re-Imagined Radio is also available as podcasts. Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts, or, our website, reimagedradio dot FM.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN
DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

HOST CREDITS/CLOSE

HOST

Our episode is called "Nightfall" and presents two stories connected by the same name. One is an episode called "Nightfall" from the radio series *Dimension X*. The other is an episode called "The Porch Light" from the Canadian radio series *Nightfall*.

This combination features two very interesting radio stories. Two stories of psychological terror and darkness. Thank you for listening.

This episode was written by John Barber.

Sound Design, music composition, and post-production by Marc Rose.

Graphics by Holly Slocum Design with Sydney Nguyen.

We produce Re-Imagined Radio with support from KXRW-FM (Vancouver, Washington) and KXRY-FM (Portland, Oregon).

This is John Barber, producer and host. Thank you for listening.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK
UNDER THE FOLLOWING

ANNOUNCER CLOSE

ANNOUNCER

This is a production of Re-Imagined Radio. To learn more, visit our website, reimagedradio (all one word, no punctuation) dot FM.

Please join us again for another episode of Re-Imagined Radio where we will continue our exploration of radio storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END.



NIGHTFALL EXTRA

MUSIC: RIR THEME. UP FOR
INTRODUCTION.

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio Extra. I'm John Barber, producer and host.

We offer here information that we didn't, or couldn't, include in our July 2024 "Nightfall" episode, which focused on two radio stories connected by the same name. NIGHTFALL.

"Nightfall," is the title of the final episode of Dimension X. The precursor of *X Minus One*. The famous science fiction series.

From April 1950 to September 1951, *Dimension X* pioneered radio science fiction storytelling. 50 episodes were broadcast on NBC Radio.

According to James Widner and Meade Frierson, authors of *Science Fiction on Radio*, the stories of *Dimension X* were presented quote "using imagination to experience whatever is being talked about, read or acted out" end quote (8).

The story in our episode, "Nightfall," was adapted by series writer Ernest Kinoy from an original story by Isaac Asimov, first published in *Astounding Science Fiction*, September 1941.

John Campbell, editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, asked Asimov to write a story for publication after discussing with him this quote from the opening paragraph of Chapter 1 of *Nature*, a book-length essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson, published in 1836 . . .

SFX: A READING OF THIS QUOTE

"IF THE STARS SHOULD APPEAR ONE
NIGHT IN A THOUSAND YEARS, HOW
WOULD MEN BELIEVE AND ADORE, AND
PRESERVE FOR MANY GENERATIONS THE
REMEMBRANCE OF THE CITY OF GOD!"

HOST

Asimov imagined a world bathed by almost perpetual sunlight from six suns. I say "almost" because every 2,049 years a rare astronomical event brought darkness. The six suns appeared to line up one behind the other, and a moon, never seen because of the constant daylight, eclipsed them all. The ensuing darkness allowed inhabitants of this world to see, for the first time, what John McGovern as Dr. Sheerin, the psychologist, described as "things called stars."

In Asimov's story, an eclipse is approaching. and scientists are worried what might happen during "nightfall."

"Nightfall" was the last episode of *Dimension X*. Only 50 episodes were heard on NBC radio, but several of those episodes were rebroadcast as the early episodes of *X Minus One*, perhaps the most acclaimed science fiction anthology radio series ever broadcast.

Re-Imagined Radio offered tributes to both *Dimension X* and *X Minus One*. Our tribute to *Dimension X* was broadcast in November 2023. Our tribute to *X Minus One* was broadcast in June 2021. You can listen to both these episodes and learn

more at our website, reimagined radio dot FM.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST

Nightfall is also the name of a radio anthology series produced and broadcast in Canada, from July 1980 to June 1983.

Episodes offered a mix of both classic and obscure short stories, original and adaptations. Episodes were primarily supernatural and/or horror, but some featured stories in the science fiction, mystery, fantasy, and human drama genres. The *Nightfall* series was heard across the country on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and was very popular.

Our featured episode was "The Porch Light" (broadcast February 26, 1982, second season). Written by Randy Brown, it's a solid example of the ghost story genre. A couple rent a remote country house not knowing its history. One night, during a snow storm, a stranger arrives. Then weird events begin. While the poltergeist conceit is not new, the writing, acting, and production make "The Porch Light" an excellent, tense, and scary radio story.

Well, "So what? Why is this important?" Both *Nightfall* and *Dimension X* demonstrate that high-quality radio storytelling can be produced and enjoyed

even after the so-called Golden Age of Radio has passed.

I hope you enjoyed listening to our Re-Imagined Radio episode, "Nightfall" and this Re-Imagined Radio Extra.