

# Welcome to Apocalypse

Nocturnum Season Four Episode 16

## SYNOPSIS

### The Beginning

The Cast stands in the street with William H. Bonney (who has not yet been dubbed "Billy the Kid" by the press). The amulet is now again thrumming with power, but giving John confused readings as to where the Key is. One moment it pulls to the center of town, the next it pulls North. A few minutes later it pulls East. It seems as though some detective work is going to be required on this one.

As Billy leads them through the town, towards the El Dorado Bar and Hotel, they notice the townsfolk pointing and whispering, seeming outright frightened of the Cast, specifically John and Anita. Billy remarks that they must have a reputation in these parts, though he doesn't know them. He takes them to the El Dorado hotel and bar, where they meet the owner, Jacob Weaver. Weaver offers to get them anything they want in this town, but Billy intercedes before they ask for Weaver's help, later explaining that folks who accept favors from Weaver tend to get them...but at high costs. Anita explains that they understand the concept of wishes very acutely and thanks Billy for his help.

It occurs to John that they very much need to stow their weapons somewhere safe, because a .50 Desert Eagle and Glock pistols in this era would alter history irrevocably. Technology is high enough to reverse engineer these guns and potentially destroy the future. John decides to keep his weaponry on his person, but concealed, as he trusts himself to keep the weapons safe more than, well...a safe. Fortunately, it's not hard to pick up a couple of Peacemakers for \$10 each at the local General Store, as well as outfits befitting the era (Matthew, who already wears a basic suit, just grabs a bowler. John and Klaus go the stetson route, and Anita insists on a dress from a local dressmaker.)

Klaus and Anita spot a gnarled tree sitting on a high hill outside of town, and decide to take a closer look, as the tree gives them unpleasant feelings. Klaus attempts to use his ability to see into the true nature of things on the tree, and has rapid-fire images of torture, death, and black rituals, as well as an alien intelligence so dark and evil it overcomes him. He begins walking towards the tree in a trance. Thinking quickly, Anita gives Klaus "a Taste of Death," sending his soul out of his body and breaking the demon's hold on him. Together they return to the bar, where Klaus buys a bottle of top-shelf whiskey and retires to his room.

### Trouble Begins

Trouble begins that night while they're at the bar, when a contingent of U.S. Marshalls enter and place Anita and John under arrest, calling them "William Forsythe, a.k.a. Beaumont Bill", and "Rebecca Blacke, a.k.a. Black Widow Blake". When they question the arrest based on mistaken identification, they are shown legitimate warrants as well as wanted posters on the wall with *their faces on them*. Seems they're each worth five hundred dollars for stage robbery and murder. John and Anita assume that somehow Nectanebus has located them in the past and concocted this scheme, but the existence of those wanted posters makes them a little concerned.

### Klaus, Matthew, and Billy

Billy urges the two to go peaceably, promising they won't be in jail long and assuring them he'll spring them all nice and "legal-like." Matthew, being the "Angel of Sneak" follows the Marshalls and camps outside the jail to make sure Anita is safe.

After they're taken away, Billy goes to get Klaus, saying he's got to go "raise some dinero" and get hold of an acquaintance with "more'n a little clout 'round these parts." He asks Klaus to meet him with Matthew at the sheriff's office tomorrow, but once Klaus ejects the liquor from his system and immediately sobers up, is more than happy to have him along for the ride. They pick

up Matthew en route...and rustle some of John Chisum's cattle, or as Billy puts it, "Found a few cows." Billy takes the cattle to a ranch outside of town to sell, and promises to meet Klaus and Matthew at the Sheriff's office at dawn.

The next day, they meet up with Billy's friend, who says with a thick Georgia accent, "Young Mr. William tells me there has been a case of mistaken identity here. I feel obliged to be of some service, considering I drained Billy here of his finances at the gaming tables a few days hence. So let us into the erstwhile law offices of this fine town, and see what we can do about removing your friends from custody, shall we?"

### **Anita and John**

They spend all of one night in jail. The next morning they're awakened by voices outside, and a deputy comes in to let them free, muttering, "You been sprung." With the deputy is Billy, with a wide grin on his face.

Exiting the jail, they see a dapper, handsome man with a big handlebar moustache, dressed in silk and fine linens, the very picture of a southern gentleman gambler from stories of the Old West. The man has a huge diamond tie pin holding his red silk cravat and is *very* Gifted. The town sheriff looks unconvinced, but intimidated. The man is saying, "Sheriff Barlow, do you doubt my word? I would hate to think you may be accusing me of dishonesty, after all the money I have sunk into this town's economy." He fingers the peacemaker at his hip and says, "I would like to think, after our long acquaintance, that we are square. Are we square, Sheriff?"

The Cast senses Essence use from him as he talks.

The sheriff hangs his head, and mutters, "Yeah. We're square. If you say they ain't who the marshals think, they ain't who the marshals think."

"Good boy, Norman." Then he turns towards Anita and John and says, "Ah, these must be our unfortunate victims. You see, Norman and I would like it if you could make this clear to the folk of this burgh this man does not have the telltale criss-cross scar over his left eye that Beaumont Bill has, and this woman, while certainly a gorgeous example of a fine southern belle, has less ample attributes than does the Black Widow. Trust me; I know."

As the Cast leaves, Billy introduces his friend as John "Doc" Holliday, a gambler passing through to meet up with some friends in Tombstone. He says he is happy to be of service, and immediately sets to wooing Anita. He does remark on the unbelievable resemblance between Beaumont Bill and Black Widow Blake, and John and Anita. He'll accept the "distant relatives" explanation if offered, otherwise he'll just warn them to watch themselves, but say he doesn't believe they'll have any trouble in Apocalypse. In apology for potentially injuring Anita's pride with his "ample attributes" remark, Doc asks her to dinner, which she excitedly accepts.

Doc and Billy both say they got the Cast out in the nick of time, because word had it the lynch mob was coming to take them up to the hanging tree on the hill. "One problem with this town," Billy says, "People seem to die on that tree a lot, sometimes for the smallest things. I don't want to go into big examples, but let's say if you accept a favor from Jacob Weaver, you best pay up, whatever it is he asks. And if I was you, I'd steer clear of gettin' on Dale Cunningham's bad side. Yessir, you'd think people in this town worship that tree, they way they feed the ground with blood. Sure as hell they ain't no church-goers, what with the old church sittin' vacant since the founders of the town vanished last year. Word has it some British firm bought it up, though no one knows what for. Ain't no one livin' there or using it as now."

### **At Dinner**

Matthew camps himself out at the bar while Anita meets Doc for dinner. Everything seems to be going quite well until he senses a flow of Essence from Doc, and suddenly Anita is headed for Doc's bedroom. Considering this the mystical equivalent

of slipping roofies in her drink, Matthew gets in the way and nearly ends up having a showdown with Doc Holliday, though he finds himself in a difficult spot because kill Doc Holliday in 1880, and seriously change history. Eventually his efforts pay off, however, and he manages to make Anita aware she's been enchanted. She's angry, of course, but not because he magicked her...because he did it when he didn't *need to!*

Then the sounds of battle erupt from outside. The town is under attack by a small army of apache vengeance spirits and *deadites*. During this battle, several things happen, all of which the Cast notice:

1. Lizard Men spirit something out of the general store and disappear behind it. Matthew, Anita, and Doc follow them and when Anita goes Astral, she discovers a vast alien city about three days' walk under the desert, that these primitive creatures seem to have adopted for their own.
2. Dale Cunningham grabs a young girl and rides for the Prayer Tree to sacrifice her. Klaus takes off after him.
3. John sees Carix, one of William's lieutenants, in town, giving orders to Deadites, but before he can take her down, she vanishes into the flames of a burning building. Carix is following Dale to ensure he sacrifices the girl. Klaus ends up facing down against Carix at the tree, as Dale Cunningham vanishes. Just as the battle goes bad for Carix, however, she beats a mystical escape via a walkgate bracelet she wears, saying, "Now we know it works...and the key shall be ours!" John manages to shoot her in the head at extreme range before she vanishes. The implications of this (if any) have yet to be discovered.
4. Madame de Rais, the proprietor of the local red light establishment, is seen with game face on, a vampire fighting alongside the townsfolk *against the deadites*.

When the battle is over, they ride back into Apocalypse during the aftermath, aware that there's a lot more to this town than meets the eye. Perhaps strangest of all is that these people simply go back to their normal business after the fires are quenched, as though nothing unusual happened. For her part, Anita spends the night with Doc, and now has to worry about whether or not she's contracted tuberculosis.

## QUOTES AND GREAT MOMENTS

"John knows exactly what happens when you shoot someone in the head with a .50 caliber bullet." -Jason

"They go the way of the little fat kid?" -Robert

"...Julius..." -Eric

"I know we recently had the whole Lord of the Rings thing going on, but trees don't really walk, Klaus. I promise." -John

Klaus attempts to use his Pariah abilities to look more closely at a knarled, evilish tree just outside of town. A blank look spreads across his face and he begins walking towards the tree. Anita attempts to stop him and ends up using her necromancy to knock his soul from his body. He refuses to discuss it, but Anita can sense he's not quite right. (Klaus gained a Madness point)

"What happened?" -Anita

"Nothing..." -Klaus

"Who the hell do you think you're lying to? What's up with that tree?" -Anita

"I don't want to talk about it." -Klaus

"Talking about it helps. That's why I'm so miserable all of the time." -Anita.

Anita and John are arrested by ten US Marshals and accused of murder and robbing a stagecoach. The Marshals identify them as "Beaumont Bill" William Forsythe and "Black Widow" Rebecca Blake.

"Don't worry; we can get them out legal-like."-Billy the Kid

Billy tells John and Matthew he will enlist the help of an influential acquaintance of his to assist in springing John and Anita from prison. The next day, he shows up at the jail with none other than John Henry "Doc" Holliday.

"You see, gentlemen, while they do bear a striking resemblance, this man does not have the telltale scars Beaumont Bill possesses. And this woman, although she is quite gorgeous, is not as...amply endowed as the Black Widow. Trust me, I should know."-Doc Holliday

(To Anita) "He just said you have small boobs."-Klaus

Doc asks Anita to join him for dinner. Matthew watches them from the bar and hits on the barmaid in an attempt to make Anita jealous. The barmaid encourages him to visit the local brothel.

"Of course if she was about to be raped by a mad lunatic and I lopped his head off from the shadows, she'd be on me like "that".-Matthew

Doc is Gifted and makes it known to Anita that he knows she and the rest of the cast are Gifted as well. He and Anita talk about the town, and Doc tells her that the previous occupants of Apocalypse "disappeared" mysteriously about a year ago, and that the town has been full of strange supernatural happenings and creatures since then.

Later in the evening, Doc invites Anita to adjourn with him to somewhere "more private." Matthew senses him using Essence and intervenes as they make their way upstairs to protest, as he sees that Anita is being manipulated against her will. Anita is irate and accuses Matthew of just being insanely jealous, then later realizes what Doc has done and calls him on it. As they are discussing this, however, they are interrupted by the sounds of screaming, and run outside to discover an army of Deadites and Apache warrior spirits.

(Taking Anita by the arm) "Pick a friend."-Doc

"Uh...Matthew?"-Anita

"See? She does love me."-Matthew

During the battle, Matthew follows some lizard men and discovers a hidden stairway beneath a water trough. Anita and Doc follow him down into the darkness. Anita astral projects and discovers a massive, high-tech city of lizard men several days walk beneath the town.

"Darlin'? Darlin', are you alright?"-Doc

"She's fine. She does that all the time."-Matthew

"That is...quite disturbing."-Doc

Klaus follows a rider who takes an unconscious little girl and pays her body at the base of the evil, old tree. Carrix, one of Nectanebus' lieutenants, steps out from behind the tree and taunts Klaus that they will find the key before the Cast, and slashes the little girl's throat before disappearing. Klaus saves the little girl's life by salvaging her, but not before he notices that the tree seems to absorb the little girl's blood like a sponge.

Anita thanks Matthew for looking out for her when they are alone, and then ends up going to bed with Doc of her own volition.

"Don't ever use magic on me again."-Anita.