

LARRY NIVEN AND JERRY POURNELLE

Authors of the
bestseller **FOOTFALL**

WOLFGANG'S HAMMER

The million-copy bestseller
about the end of the world.

Synopsis:

The gigantic comet had slammed into Earth, forging earthquakes a thousand times too powerful to measure on the Richter scale, tidal waves thousands of feet high. Cities were turned into oceans; oceans turned into steam. It was the beginning of a new Ice Age and the end of civilization. But for the terrified men and women chance had saved, it was also the dawn of a new struggle for survival—a struggle more dangerous and challenging than any they had ever known...

LUCIFER'S HAMMER

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle

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Dramatis Personae

TIMOTHY HAMNER, amateur astronomer

ARTHUR CLAY JELLISON, United States Senator from California

MAUREEN JELLISON, his daughter

HARVEY RANDALL, Producer-Director for NBS Television

MRS. LORETTA STEWART RANDALL

BARRY PRICE, Supervising Engineer, San Joaquin Nuclear Project

DOLORES MUNSON, Executive Secretary to Barry Price

EILEEN SUSAN HANCOCK, Assistant Manager for Corrigan's
Plumbing Supplies of Burbank

LEONILLA ALEXANDROVNA MALIK, M.D., physician and
kosmonaut

MARK CZESCU, biker

GORDON VANCE, Bank President and neighbor to Harvey Randall

ANDY RANDALL, Harvey Randall's son

CHARLIE BASCOMB, cameraman

MANUEL ARGUILEZ, sound technician

DR. CHARLES SHARPS, Planetary Scientist and Project Director,
California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratories

PENELOPE JOYCE WILSON, fashion designer

FRED LAUREN, convicted sex offender

COL. JOHN BAKER, USAF, astronaut

HARRY NEWCOMBE, letter carrier, US Postal Service

THE REVEREND HENRY ARMITAGE

DR. DAN FORRESTER, Member of technical staff, JPL

LT. COL. RICK DELANTY, USAF, astronaut

MRS. GLORIA DELANTY

BRIGADIER PIETER JAKOV, kosmonaut

FRANK STONER, biker

JOANNA MACPHERSON, Mark Czescu's roommate

COLLEEN DARCY, bank teller

GENERAL THOMAS BAMBRIDGE, USAF, Commander in Chief,
Strategic Air Command

JOHN KIM, Press Secretary to the Mayor Of Los Angeles

THE HONORABLE BENTLEY ALLEN, Mayor of Los Angeles

ERIC LARSEN, Patrolman, Burbank PD
JOE HARRIS, Investigator, Burbank PD
COMET WARDENS, a Southern California religious group
MAJOR BENNET ROSTEN, USAF, Minuteman Squadron Commander
MRS. MARIE VANCE, wife of Gordon Vance
HARRY STIMMS, automobile dealer in Tujunga, California
CORPORAL ROGER GILLINGS, Army
SERGEANT THOMAS HOOKER, Army
MARTY ROBBINS, Tim Hamner's assistant and caretaker
JASON GILLCUDDY, writer
HUGO BECK, owner of a commune in the foothills of the High Sierra

Prologue

Before the sun burned, before the planets formed, there were chaos and the comets.

Chaos was a local thickening in the interstellar medium. Its mass was great enough to attract itself, to hold itself, and it thickened further. Eddies formed. Particles of dust and frozen gas drifted together, and touched, and clung. Flakes formed, and then loose snowballs of frozen gases. Over the ages a whirlpool pattern developed, a fifth of a light-year across. The center contracted further. Local eddies, whirling frantically near the center of the storm, collapsed to form planets.

It formed as a cloud of snow, far from the whirlpool's axis. Ices joined the swarm, but slowly, slowly, a few molecules at a time. Methane, ammonia, carbon dioxide; and sometimes denser objects struck it and embedded themselves, so that it held rocks, and iron. Now it was a single stable mass. Other ices formed, chemicals that could only be stable in the interstellar cold.

It was four miles across when the disaster came.

The end was sudden. In no more than fifty years, the wink of an eye in its lifetime, the whirlpool's center collapsed. A new sun burned fearfully bright.

Myriads of comets flashed to vapor in that hellish flame. Planets lost their atmospheres. A great wind of light pressure stripped all the loose gas and dust from the inner system and hurled it at the stars.

It hardly noticed. It was two hundred times as far from the sun as the newly formed planet Neptune. The new sun was no more than an uncommonly bright star, gradually dimming now.

Down in the maelstrom there was frantic activity. Gases boiled out of the rocks of the inner system. Complex chemicals developed in the seas of the third planet. Endless hurricanes rolled across and within the gas-giant worlds. The inner worlds would never know calm.

The only real calm was at the edge of interstellar space, in the halo, where millions of thinly spread comets, each as far from its nearest brother as Earth is from Mars, cruise forever through the cold black vacuum. Here

*its endless quiet sleep could last for billions of years ... but not forever.
Nothing lasts forever.*

1: THE ANVIL

Against boredom, even the gods themselves struggle in vain.

—Nietzsche

January: The Portent

*The bay trees in our country are all wither'd
And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;
The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth
And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change.
These signs forerun the death or fall of kings.*

—William Shakespeare, Richard II

The blue Mercedes turned into the big circular drive of the Beverly Hills mansion at precisely five after six. Julia Sutter was understandably startled. "Good God, George, it's Tim! And dead on time."

George Sutter joined her at the window. That was Tim's car, yup. He grunted and turned back to the bar. His wife's parties were always important events, so why, after weeks of careful engineering and orchestration, was she terrified that no one would show up? The psychosis was so common there ought to be a name for it.

Tim Hamner, though, and on time. That was strange. Tim's money was third-generation. Old money, by Los Angeles standards, and Tim had a lot of it. He only came to parties when he wanted to.

The Sutters' architect had been in love with concrete. There were square walls and square angles for the house, and softly curving free-form pools in the gardens outside; not unusual for Beverly Hills, but startling to easterners. To their right was a traditional Monterey villa of white stucco and red tile roofs, to the left a Norman chateau magically transplanted to California. The Sutter place was set well back from the street so that it seemed divorced from the tall palms the city fathers had decreed for this part of Beverly Hills. A great loop of drive ran up to the house itself. On the porch stood eight parking attendants, agile young men in red jackets.

Hamner left the motor running and got out of the car. The "key left" reminder screamed at him. Ordinarily Tim would have snarled a powerful curse upon Ralph Nader's hemorrhoids, but tonight he never noticed. His eyes were dreamy; his hand patted at his coat pocket, then stole inside. The parking attendant hesitated. People didn't usually tip until they were leaving. Hamner kept walking, dreamy-eyed, and the attendant drove away.