[Given by Connor to Peter on 9/25/2006, before Peter started his first draft.]

CHARACTER NOTES — I'M AFRAID YOU'VE GOT DRAGONS

Our principal cast of characters:

ELPIDIUS THRAX, deceased dragon exterminator. Stern and unimaginative in life, and definitely no better in memory. Elpidius died the way a good dragon exterminator should — in his sleep.

HERMINIA THRAX, his wife. Much younger than Elpidius. Their marriage was arranged. They'd never met before their marriage day. Herminia has some knowledge of herbs, but was never a witch woman or anything. From the first moment of pregnancy she knew that she would have a son who was destined for greatness. She wasn't chary with this conviction in the local village, either, which set her son up for a very rough adolescence (even rougher than it would normally have been, given the family's absolutely rock-bottom social status). Because she loved dragons (a little-shared opinion), loved all the creatures her husband killed, and wanted her son to someday set them free — throughout her pregnancy Herminia prayed that he would be born with a certain specific gift. Which he was...though no one (including Herminia) knows this as the story opens. The gift is a simple one. Every now and then, a dragon's soul lands in a human body. And that's what has happened with Herminia' son. Even more amazing, he has a *King Dragon* soul — the best, the biggest, the brightest line of dragons, assumed to have been killed off centuries before. One more thing about Mother H: she worships royalty, in much the same way Princess Di was worshipped from afar. Although she'd never for a minute imagine herself worthy of being in their company, she passionately follows the royal comings and goings in a dozen different local kingdoms, and she spends too much of the family budget on commemorative portrait miniatures and plates and the like.

GAIUS AURELIUS CONSTANTINE HELIOGABALUS THRAX (or "ROBERT," as he insists on being called). Son of Elpidius

and Herminia. Only fifteen when his father died, now just turning eighteen. He has inherited his dad's dragon-exterminating business. He has extremely mixed feelings about this. In fact, he has extremely mixed feelings about nearly everything. Regarding the business, he appreciates the income and knows that somebody's got to do it. But at the same time he really dislikes having to actually kill dragons, even the bigger, nastier ones who are actual threats to people. This soft streak shows itself in lots of ways, but one in particular: he's actually got dragons living secretly with him and Herminia in their house: none larger than a small dog, and some quite small. Robert has achieved the theoretically impossible — he has *trained* these dragons to do things, even so far as participating in the housekeeping. Robert has a couple of friends in the village, but mostly he is looked down on. Dragon exterminating really is the lowest of the low, as jobs go, and it isn't like he's actually that good at it...not like his father, anyway, who casts a shadow Robert has trouble living up to in every possible way. The overblown name his mother gave him doesn't help. He keeps asking people to call him "Robert" instead — but the villagers ignore that and make jokes on his birth name, and the upper class don't remember to call him by a name at all. He's just a dragon exterminator to them. Physically he's a moderately handsome normal-looking guy with dreamer's eyes and a slouch. Nothing that special. His secret dream is to leave the family business behind, move out of the village, go someplace where no one would have ever heard of his home kingdom, and somehow manage the impossible glory of becoming some prince's valet or groom. (Any prince would do; even a minor one would be amazing.) There is no blazingly overt evidence of his King Dragon soul as the story opens. But it does explain a lot of things about him, including his getting along easily with small dragons and mostly with bigger ones, despite a few "alpha-dominance" problems; his laziness; his tendency to sleep whenever possible; his slow-to-anger, bright-to-burn personality; and some of the inherent problems between him and his father. It also helps explain why his heart isn't in his game, and some of why he is dreaming weird things and trying NOT paying attention to them. He has an unawakened Dragon Soul and it makes him a little absentminded and unperceptive. ROBERT'S CHARACTER ARC is

that he is insecure and rather unaware of people at the beginning; secure and sure and *content* at the end.

THE PRINCESS _____ of _____. Only daughter of the local King and Queen, and rather smug for all the usual reasons, plus one: she actually is intelligent and competent. What little organization the castle actually has is mostly her doing. She is reasonable, as princesses go, until Prince Reginald appears on the horizon. Then she turns tyrant, embarrassed by her parents and her kingdom. (You can add a lot to her. I keep seeing a kind of medieval mix of Buffy and Cordelia.) THE PRINCESS'S CHARACTER ARC is that she full of herself until she sees Reginald, full of herself but with good reason at the end.

KING _____ and QUEEN _____. Her parents. Not fleshed out at all. Have fun.

PRINCE REGINALD _____ of _____. This guy is the prince of princes. The Big Cheese from he Big Kingdom. He's Fabio. And he's also an idiot with a lot of polish. As his royal father once put it, "I don't understand how someone so tall can't fill my shoes." Physically, the prince is everything the king wanted him to be. He's incredibly imposing. Mr. Prince to the max. But something happened...the King frankly wonders if his own son isn't actually part of a curse made by the evil wizard he defeated years and years ago. This is a rationalization: if he IS a hollow fool because of a curse, then there is some hope that the curse might someday be lifted and the king's true son made real. For his part Reginald dislikes his father, and is sick of hearing the story about how King _____ bested the Evil Wizard _____, which is kind of how he made his bones in the king racket.

_____, Reginald's valet and groom. A conniver, sent off with Reginald by Reginald's on the road with Reginald ostensibly to be his manservant, but really on orders from Reginald's father

KING _____ of _____. Reginald's dad. (Reginald's mom is deceased.) Very, very, very, VERY

imposing. A great king, feared and respected. But he rules his kingdom pretty dictatorially. Not much freedom there for the serfs and common folk.

ROBERT'S FRIEND #1. A young woman from the village who has talked herself into believing she loves him (though she really doesn't). So far she hasn't spoken out because of his social status, and her certainty that her parents would kill her. But she's getting close.

FRIEND #2. A young man from the village. He actually loves friend #1, and knows she really loved him, and is waiting for her to wake up and realize that instead of deliberately ignoring it. They were betrothed a kids and he thinks she's blocking out her obvious attraction to him out of rebellion against her folks. Meanwhile, he keeps himself busy with two jobs — part-time hod carrier, and Robert's exterminating assistant. On the latter job, think golf caddy. The exterminating business calls for all kinds of tools, and they have to be carried: strange implements and devices hauled on a badly-rolling cart, all with their own funny names and histories and reputations.

THE VERY, VERY, VERY EVIL WIZARD. This guy is just evil. He has his reasons, sure, but they are evil ones and he knows it. His agenda is domination, rule, and revenge on Reginald's father, whom he HATESHATESHETES and has been at war with forever. Though he once worked for King _____, his coup attempt failed. He was rather soundly and painfully defeated, leading many to think him long-dead, rather than just in self-imposed distant exile. He has been hiding out in this backwater kingdom for some time, gaining new powers (at a price) and breeding his own army of dragons from local stock. His main reason for being here, though, is that the sleeping king dragon is here.

THE WIZARD'S THUGGISH HELPERS & ASSOCIATES

THE BIGGEST DRAGON. The last of the King Dragons, asleep all these many years, his waking purpose subverted/perverted by the evil wizard. The wings on this one are for attack and mating display only. He's not a flyer.

DRAGONS IN GENERAL. Many species and subspecies. Only the little ones fly. Beyond horse-sized they can't. The bigger ones haul ass, but only on the ground.