

# Auburnimp Fallen Angels 7



## Conflict

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## **Fallen Angels 7: Conflict**

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# Fallen Angels 7

## Conflict

By Auburnimp

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Satan watched from the shadows as Arioch returned to the Pit looking extremely pleased with himself. It was like looking in a mirror as Arioch was still wearing his disguise. Satan shrugged and turned away. If Nathaniel couldn't see the truth who was he to interfere.

He hadn't taken more than three steps when Metatron's wave of satisfaction hit him like a physical blow. He heard Arioch's evil laugh from inside his chamber and Asmodeus appeared suddenly at his side. "Metatron is gathering the Heavenly Host for war. I never wanted this!"

Satan shook his head. "Nor did I, my friend, nor did I."

Asmodeus raised red eyes to stare at him. "Is there anything we can do to stop it?"

Satan made a sudden decision. "Follow me, I'm going to follow Arioch's trail and find Nathaniel."

Asmodeus didn't argue and the two former Archangels left the Pit for the first time in eons.

Arioch had made no attempt to cover his tracks. *His arrogance is going to get him killed,*

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Satan thought as they flew. *I'll try to be there when it happens.*

They came to rest on a new planet to find Nathaniel kneeling by a small pool and weeping as if his heart was finally broken. He raised a tear-stained face as they approached and Satan was horrified by just how dark the Legend had become.

*Arioch's work, no doubt. Are we in any fit state to help him?*

"What do you want this time?" Nathaniel's voice, hoarse from crying, broke into Satan's thoughts and he shook himself.

"We came to talk to you," he said, indicating Asmodeus, "and to try to find a way to stop this madness."

"Weren't you the one who wanted it all along?" Nathaniel asked bitterly. "All your 'news' was leading to this wasn't it? Well you've got what you wanted so leave me alone."

How was he to make Nathaniel believe? "Nathaniel, this is the first time I've set eyes on you since we left Heaven."

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Nathaniel's golden eyes widened and he spat out one word. "Liar!"

Satan shook his head. "No, I'm not lying. Every time you thought you were talking to me, you were actually talking to a demon prince called Arioch. I only found out a day or two ago."

He had to marvel at the power of the Legends. They didn't often show their true authority but when they did, Lucifer, Samael and Nathaniel were terrifying to the lesser angels.

He was seeing Nathaniel's power at first hand now. The Creator Angel straightened up, his wings unfurled from his back and he pulled the tie from his hair. He took a step towards Satan who instinctively backed away. "Please, My Lord, I'm not lying to you."

Nathaniel took another step, his hair flying around him as if full of electricity, then he collapsed to the ground.

Satan rushed to his side and lifted him, appalled at how thin he had become. "Asmodeus, I don't care where you need to go to get it, but Nathaniel needs food. Now!"

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

The red-eyed angel disappeared and Satan cradled the exhausted Legend in his arms. “What were you thinking, Nathaniel? What made you do this to yourself?”

Nathaniel clutched at his sleeve and hauled himself into a sitting position. “There’s no time for me to tell you all that. Tell me the truth, Satan. I have grown tired of listening to and living on lies.”

Satan nodded and let the Legend cling to him as he told him of Ariocho’s plan to get the angels fighting each other so he could weaken them before attacking both sides. “He’s very good at using what matters most to twist the truth to his own ends.”

Nathaniel raised haunted eyes to stare at Satan. “Now tell me the truth about Lucifer’s little bitch.”

Satan was horrified to hear such words from Nathaniel’s mouth. The Creator Angel had always looked for the good in others. “As far as I know, Lucifer had no idea who Troilus really was.”

Nathaniel’s eyes narrowed. “Your demon

friend told me that Andriel now lives in Hell with *him*.”

Satan sighed, wishing he knew more. “If he does he’s only just arrived there.”

Nathaniel frowned. “And what about Raphael? Lucifer came to Heaven to rescue him!”

Satan nodded. “Did you honestly think Samael would have let you kill his lover? Lucifer simply went to help him. Raphael is now living with Samael and the mortal they both seem to have adopted.”

“But Raphael had slept with Lucifer. He still stank of him at his trial.”

Satan shrugged. “I imagine, in their loneliness they both wanted to remember what another angel felt like.”

Nathaniel seemed to be thinking that over. When Asmodeus came back with some fruit, the Creator Angel stopped gripping Satan’s sleeve and took the food. “You really believe that? That it was loneliness?”

Satan nodded. “Yes. You had refused to see

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

The Son of the Morning and Raphael hadn't laid eyes on Samael since he left Heaven."

Nathaniel took a bite out of a plum and chewed, his expression thoughtful. There were flashes of pain, some intense concentration and finally Nathaniel jumped to his feet. He absently munched on another plum as he paced.

Satan let him think in peace. He had a lot to work out, after all. Finally he whirled round. "Are the two of you prepared to help me?"

Asmodeus nodded but Satan was less certain. "Help you do what, Nathaniel?"

Nathaniel glowered at him. "Thanks to your demon friend, I've precipitated a disaster. I'm concerned about many things but I can't deal with them all myself."

Satan winced at the reference to his 'demon friend' but he knew he had fallen too far to deserve more than the Pit. "You want to stop the war?"

But Nathaniel wouldn't answer that question. "We'll see," was all he would say on the subject.



Andriel approached Metatron when the ‘Voice of God’ took a break from organising the host. The cherubim still felt guilty about his deception of Lucifer. The Morningstar could easily have killed him yet he had sent him back unscathed. And the hurt behind his fury still made Andriel feel like the biggest worm in the whole multiverse.

Metatron glanced up from the papers he was perusing to frown at him. “What are you doing here? I thought you were keeping Lucifer out of mischief.”

Andriel saw the cold contempt for him in the Archangel and wondered how he had been blind to it for so long. *It’s as if I’d been wearing blinkers all this time.*

His unrequited love turned to anger, scalding in its intensity. When he spoke, however, it was coldly. “Lucifer knows the truth. He threw me out.”

Metatron shrugged, a sure sign of his indifference to Andriel’s fate. “Not a problem, you’ve served your purpose and Nathaniel has

finally given permission for war.” He sneered on the word permission.

Andriel’s hands clenched into fists at his sides but he kept his cool demeanour. “I was asked to give you a message. Lucifer said to tell you that you will never rule in Heaven or anywhere else. He also said that both Samael and Raphael want to kill you personally and that your twin considers you a fool.

“I loved you, admired what I thought you stood for, but all you ever wanted was power; power over Heaven and power over Raphael.”

He watched with some satisfaction as Metatron’s impassive countenance took on a mask of pure fury. “And you believe all that nonsense do you?”

Andriel turned to walk away only pausing long enough to say, “Why are you so angry if it’s nonsense, Metatron?”

“Stop right there, Andriel!”

Andriel glanced back over his shoulder. “Go to Hell,” he said succinctly. “In fact, better yet, drop yourself in the Pit!”

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Metatron spluttered in his rage. “How dare you! Who do you think you’re talking to?”

Andriel snorted his disdain. “I’ve just *finished* talking to an Archangel who’s gotten way too big for his sandals!”

“Lucifer has corrupted you! You’re no better than he is now!” Metatron yelled after him.

Andriel kept going. *No, you’re wrong, Metatron. Lucifer is worth a thousand of you or me but I was too much of a fool to see it. All I can do now is keep my promise to him.*

As he walked he rubbed impatiently at the tears that wouldn’t stop falling.

He found Sandalphon deep in conversation with Gabriel, a conversation that was broken off abruptly as he approached.

“Metatron is gathering the host if you’re looking for him,” Gabriel said.

Andriel knew the tiny Archangel was being snide but he couldn’t really blame him. “Actually I came to ask advice of Sandalphon if he has time to listen.”

Sandalphon gave him a quizzical look but sat

down on a nearby bench. “I have time. What’s wrong, Andriel?”

*Where should I start? I guess with the facts.* “I was told a few home truths earlier today, truths that made me realise what a fool I’ve been. I’ve stopped supporting Metatron and I promised someone I would not fight with the Host and that I’d come to you for instructions.”

Sandalphon raised a brow. “That’s quite a turn around, especially for you.”

Andriel bowed his head. If he was honest, he should only expect their contempt. He’d spent too long lying and cheating for Metatron for any of the others to trust him or even want to know him now.

A soft touch to his head drew him out of his self-disgust and he was startled to find himself looking into Gabriel’s sea green eyes. “He’s not telling lies for once, Sandalphon,” the Water Archangel said. “He truly regrets all he’s done.” He addressed Andriel directly. “You were Troilus, weren’t you?”

Andriel nodded and decided if he’d come this far he needed to tell them everything. “It gets

worse,” he whispered. “Metatron sent me back to Lucifer just so Nathaniel would agree to war with the Fallen.”

Gabriel nodded. “Lucifer told you those home truths you mentioned, didn’t he?”

“Yes,” Andriel whispered. “He told me Metatron has never wanted me. Everything I ever did was to earn Metatron’s love.”

Sandalphon made a disgusted noise and rose to his feet. “My brother doesn’t know the meaning of the word love.”

“I . . . I made a promise to Lucifer,” Andriel said hesitantly. “I told him I would not fight against the Fallen.”

Suddenly he had both Archangels’ undivided attention. “Can you persuade any of the other cherubim to follow your example?” Gabriel asked.

Andriel frowned. “I can try. Why?”

Sandalphon answered him. “Because we need to hold as many in reserve as we can for when the demons attack.”

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Andriel stared at the Archangel in consternation. “Demons? What demons?”

Sandalphon shook his head slowly as he crossed his arms across his chest. “Of course, Metatron is so caught up in his fight with Lucifer and Samael that he hasn’t even stopped to consider the denizens of the Pit attacking when we’re all at each others’ throats.”

Andriel gasped and covered his face with his hands. “What have I done?”

Gabriel’s soothing touch came again. “What you were told to do, Andriel. Your emotions were twisted and used against you. I’m so sorry.”

Andriel swallowed on the large lump that had somehow lodged itself in his throat. *I should have returned Lucifer’s regard for me. He was far more worthy of it than Metatron ever was.*

His train of thought was broken when Sandalphon’s hand descended on his shoulder. He looked up into understanding blue eyes. “If it hadn’t been you, Andriel, it would have been one of the other cherubim. Don’t punish yourself too much.”

Andriel nodded, not sure he could manage

more than that. He found his voice at last. “I’ll go and convince all those that will listen not to fight the Fallen.”

*I just hope I find enough.*



Samael came to rest in his roof garden and immediately looked around for Raphael. He didn’t have to look far as the Air Archangel landed beside him. They exchanged a grim look before entering the apartment, Raphael closing the glass doors behind them.

The delicious aroma of freshly made coffee permeated the air and Daniel emerged from the kitchen carrying a large bowl of salad in one hand and a platter of cold cuts and cheeses in the other. He smiled when he saw them, the expression dying quickly when he noticed the grim looks on their faces. “It’s happened, hasn’t it?”

Samael nodded. “Yes, we felt Metatron’s satisfaction just before we arrived.”

The mortal’s green eyes widened but he

showed no other signs of fear. “Do you have time to eat?”

Raphael smiled. “Yes. It’ll take Metatron a few hours to get organised.” He crossed the room to the kitchen.

Daniel set the food on the table and sat down. It was only then that Samael noticed that their places were already set with plates and silverware.

Raphael emerged from the kitchen with three mugs of coffee and Samael joined them both at the table.

“So, what happens now?” Daniel asked.

“We wait,” Samael told him. “We’ve set everything up on our way here and we’re as ready as we’ll ever be.”

Daniel helped himself to some cheese and ham and proceeded to make a sandwich. “Is there anything I can do to help?”

Raphael looked up from the contemplation of his coffee. “No,” he said, in the sharpest tone he’d ever used with Daniel. “You’re to stay here, where it’s safe.”

Daniel looked ready to argue but subsided when he saw the determined look on Raphael's face. Samael imagined it must be reflected on his own. "Okay, but I am going to insist on one thing."

Samael glared at the mortal but Raphael shook his head. "As long as it doesn't include you leaving here, we can listen at least."

"You spoil him," Samael muttered.

Daniel chuckled for a second or two before becoming serious again. "I want you to spend the time you have left together, without me being there."

Of all the demands Daniel could have made, that was the one request that Samael had least expected. "Why?"

Daniel smiled, put down his sandwich and reached out a hand to both he and Raphael. "I want you to have this time because you're both going to be facing dangers that I can't even imagine and because you both deserve it for putting up with me and my questions."

Samael glanced at Raphael to find he had that soft smile and look in his eyes that had always

been reserved for him alone. Now it was directed at Daniel and Samael understood why. *We both love him and when he comes out with ideas like this we love him even more.*

“Are you sure, Daniel?” Raphael was asking.

“Yeah, I think you both need to, I dunno, reaffirm your feelings for each other or something like that.” The mortal boy flushed as if embarrassed by what he’d just said.

Samael thought about that for a moment before nodding his agreement. “You could just be right. What will you do in the meantime?”

“Clear up our lunch then go and play on the computer,” Daniel said without hesitation.

Raphael laughed. “You’d thought this all out, hadn’t you?”

Daniel nodded, a big, shit-eating grin on his face. “Yep.”

Samael snorted and stood up. “Come on then, Raph, you’ve got the boy so spoiled that we can’t refuse him.”

“No, I guess not,” Raphael said as he rose to his feet.

Samael reached out to touch Daniel's cheek in a gentle caress. "Thank you." He grabbed Raphael by the hand and headed for their bedroom.

Raphael half turned while they were on their way and blew Daniel a kiss.

Samael pounced on Raphael the second the Air Archangel closed the bedroom door. "Daniel was right, I do need you to myself for once."

He threw Raphael onto the bed and landed on top of him, straddling his hips. His lover smiled up at him. "Hungry Sam?"

Samael leaned down to capture those full, luscious lips in a passionate and heartfelt kiss. He broke it only to say, "Always for you, Raph."

Raphael chuckled softly before becoming serious again. He opened his mouth but Samael laid his fingers across it to silence him. "Before you say it, I only managed all those eons by avoiding you and even then I constantly wanted you here by my side."

He lifted his fingers to let Raphael speak but all the Air Archangel said was, "Stubborn."

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Samael rolled off his lover and nodded. “Yes, I know. But I was hurting and angry too.”

Raphael turned to face him. “I know. I should never have stayed. I was sick enough of all the scheming and lies.”

Samael stroked Raphael’s face. He was curious about something and asked a question he’d never asked his lover before. “Can you lie?”

He half expected Raphael to be angry but instead his lover actually thought about an answer. “I don’t know. I’ve never actually tried to lie though I imagine I could if I felt the remotest desire to be anything but honest. I know my brethren can as Metatron and Satan have made all too obvious.”

Samael frowned. “I wonder why that was possible. Until Metatron and Satan came into being, I didn’t even know what an untruth was. I saw the truth of the worlds around me and that was enough.”

Raphael leaned forward and kissed him. “It was enough for most of us, Sam. We were awed by your powers and the life Nathaniel brought

into being, the souls Lucifer created and you guided to new lives. It was a golden age.”

Samael pulled Raphael into his arms. “Do you blame the cherubim for the disasters that befell us?”

Raphael shook his head. “Not really, I think they were used as tools and learned from us. You’re getting as bad as Daniel!”

Samael chuckled. “I am, aren’t I? And that wasn’t what we came in here for either.”

Raphael gave him an amused look. “Maybe I need to remind you.” He wriggled free of Samael’s embrace and sat up, pulling his shirt over his head as he did so.

Samael was quick to remove his own clothing before lying back on the bed and watching Raphael remove the last of his. “You’re so perfect.”

Raphael smiled and pressed against him. “Says my dark, beautiful Sam.”

Samael growled softly, his lust almost overwhelming him at the feel of Raphael’s silken skin against his own. He captured the blood-

haired angel's lips again and was thrilled when they parted in welcome.

He thrust his tongue into Raphael's mouth tasting his angelic lover's unique and delightful flavour. Raphael accepted the onslaught with his usual grace, his tongue accepting and playful in return. Samael broke the kiss and gasped. He'd missed all this so much and it wasn't quite the same when Daniel was with them, both of them holding back for the sake of their mortal lover.

Raphael unfurled his rainbow coloured wings and Samael's hands went to their ridges automatically, stoking and caressing. Raphael moaned softly as he reached up. Samael understood exactly what he wanted and unfurled his own black wings. Raphael's hands came to rest on the ridges and, if he were a cat, Samael would be purring in pleasure.

They caressed each other's wing ridges for several ecstatic moments, enjoying the sensations Samael had denied them both for so long.

*I was such a proud, stubborn fool.*

“You’re thinking too much.”

Raphael’s quiet words brought Samael back to a sense of place and he smiled at his lover. “I’ll probably spend a few centuries kicking myself, yes.”

Raphael smiled at him. “I’d rather you found the lube.”

Samael laughed out loud. Raphael could always do that, change his natural melancholy into warmth and laughter. “Your wish is my command,” he said as he placed a hand over his heart in a courtly flourish.

Raphael grinned in response but one hand left Samael’s wing ridge to creep towards the nightstand.

Samael guided it back to his wing ridge before opening the nightstand drawer and extracting a tube of lube. Raphael snatched it out of his hands and twisted off the cap. He smeared a hefty dollop onto one of his palms and put the still open tube and the cap on top of the nightstand.

Samael watched his impatient lover’s antics in amusement tinged with a spike of lust. The lust

took over when Raphael warmed the lube in his hands before smearing it over Samael's throbbing erection.

"So," he said when he'd liberally coated Samael's cock, "how do you want me?"

Samael chuckled low in his throat. "*Now* you ask!"

Raphael grinned. "It's only polite to ask."

Samael growled and flipped Raphael over onto his belly. "You really are *asking* for trouble, Raph."

"Am I?" The question was asked in the most innocent and seductive of tones and it made Samael growl even louder before grabbing Raphael's slender hips. He wanted to be buried in that delectable ass, wanted the tight, clenching heat of Raphael's body all around him. With a groan he thrust into his lover in one, long controlled movement, not stopping until he was buried up to his balls in Raphael's warmth.

Raphael gasped and pushed his hips back as if in welcome. "Sam, oh please, don't just stop there."

*As if.*

“You’d better find something to hang on to, beloved.” That said he pulled back before thrusting in again.

“SAM!” Raphael screamed out his name as he took up a slow rhythm, wanting to make this last as long as possible.

Samael stretched across his lover’s back, nipping at the juncture between neck and shoulder that was such a sensitive spot on Raphael.

Raphael grabbed the headboard and arched his body, pushing back to impale himself even further on Samael’s cock.

Samael knew they didn’t have the time for him to draw this out any further and with some regret straightened up and thrust into Raphael harder and faster.

Raphael cried out again and moved his hips in counterpoint to Samael’s thrusts as if he realised the same thing.

Samael felt his balls tighten in prelude to his release so he reached round Raphael’s body to take the archangel’s cock in his hand. He

pumped it in time to his thrusts and Raphael groaned and came over his hand and the bed. Samael gasped as his own orgasm shot through him like a lightning strike and he collapsed against Raphael's back for a moment before gently pulling out of his lover.

He pulled them both onto their sides and held Raphael close for a few minutes until he had the strength to get a towel to clean them both with. "I hate quickies," he murmured into Raphael's ear.

A weak chuckle greeted his words. "Me too but we really didn't have time for more, sad to say."

Samael moved from the bed and found a towel. He cleaned them both off, dropped the towel on the floor and took Raphael in his arms again.

Raphael turned to face him and snuggled against his chest. "I love you so much, Sam."

"I love you too, Raph. I always have and I always will."

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict



Daniel smiled as the door to their bedroom closed behind the two angels. He finished his lunch, smoked a cigarette and pondered doing the dishes first or playing on the computer.

He hadn't quite decided on his course of action when Beliel appeared in the roof garden looking extremely agitated. Daniel frowned. Had the green Archangel brought a message from Lucifer? *I guess I'd better let him in and find out.*

He stubbed his cigarette out in the ashtray and stood up to slide open the patio door.

No sooner was the door opened than Beliel had grabbed him round the waist. *No, this isn't Beliel! Beliel would never do this!* As Daniel struggled 'Beliel' turned into something else: a large, red-skinned demon with black, leathery wings.

He fought hard to free himself but the demon was incredibly strong and merely laughed at his efforts. Desperate, Daniel leant back in the demon's grasp until he could reach one of the ornamental rocks scattered around the roof

garden. He grabbed it and bashed the demon across the side of the face, opening up a gash that bled profusely but didn't stop the demon from snarling and disarming him.

*Black, his blood is black. But what does he want with me?*

Leathery wings beat powerfully and Daniel was being carried away from his home, away from Samael and Raphael. "Let go of me, you prick!"

The demon laughed at his struggles. "I don't think so. You are too useful a tool." He snarled at Daniel, causing the mortal to almost wet himself in his fear. "You really think I want one of the Three battling my armies? No, stupid human, I want your lovers to be too upset to fight."

Even now Daniel couldn't resist asking a question. "Who are you?"

The demon chuckled, an evil sound that made every hair on Daniel's body stand on end. "I am Arioch, Lord over all demons and Master of the Pit."

They flew away from the nebulous safety of Samael's apartment, Daniel still struggling hard

until they entered a realm that Daniel observed with interest despite his fear. It consisted of a seemingly endless flat plain and in the far distance there was an opening that reminded Daniel of the entry to a pothole.

The demon headed towards the entrance and landed on the ground just outside it. He strode down a seemingly endless passage, lit at various intervals by flaring torches. Daniel could hear and see demons in every opening they passed and knew there was no way for him to get out or anyone to get in. Finally they came to a halt outside a heavy steel door which the demon unlocked and shoved Daniel through.

Daniel stared around him in horror. The torch lit cavern was obviously a mix of prison and medieval torture chamber. In one dark corner there was a cage while the rest of the place was filled with an assortment of chains, manacles, hooks and various large implements of torture that Daniel had no name for.

Arioch gave him a grin and one of his chilling, evil laughs. "Welcome little mortal. I doubt you'll survive my hospitality for long but that doesn't really matter."

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Daniel struggled as he was grabbed and his wrists placed in manacles above his head. His ankles were then secured and Arioch began cutting the clothing away from his body.

*Nobody can save me this time, even Samael can't get past all those demons and besides, he has no idea where I've been taken. I really am going to die this time. Samael, Raphael, I'm so sorry. I love you both.*

Daniel's world shattered into agony.



Raphael was content to simply lie in Samael's arms but knew they would have to move very soon. Now Nathaniel had given the word Metatron would not wait for too long. He just hoped that Sandalphon, Michael and Gabriel could hold enough of the Heavenly host back to give them all a chance of beating Satan's demons.

Beside him Samael moved slightly and stroked his cheek. "You're deep in thought, beloved."

Something inside Raphael blossomed at the

use of Samael's old term of endearment for him and he pressed his face against Samael's hand. "I was just thinking about how we'll have to move soon."

Samael groaned. "Trust you to be thinking ahead."

Raphael smiled at his impetuous love. "One of us has to."

Samael cocked his head, listening for things that were just beyond Raphael's power. "Everything's in place," he said. "The only thing holding Metatron from attacking immediately is the number of thrones and cherubim who are refusing to go with him." He grinned, the expression vicious. "Michael seeing sense has cost him a lot of the host and his General."

Raphael smiled at that news. He wouldn't have to fight his brothers after all.

Samael was still listening. He frowned. "One of Metatron's most trusted, a throne has changed sides. He's trying to persuade some of the other hotheads."

Raphael gave a last stroke to Samael's shoulder

before sitting up. “We’d better get dressed then.”

Samael nodded but pulled him in for a last desperate kiss. “Be careful, you hear me?”

“I will, I promise.”

Samael finally pulled away and they both dressed, not in mortal clothes but in their angelic armour. Samael was in black from head to toe while Raphael donned the blue and silver armour of Air. “Let’s go,” Samael said and they left the bedroom ready to say their farewells to Daniel.

Raphael stopped short as they reached the living room. The door to the roof garden was wide open, their plates from lunch were still on the table and of Daniel there was no sign. “Daniel?”

Samael brushed past him and headed for the study. He threw open the door onto an empty room. “He’s not here. Nathaniel!”

But Raphael had spotted something else. A splash of blood stained the tiled area just outside the door to the roof garden. Black blood. “No, it wasn’t Nathaniel. Daniel fought hard enough

to draw blood, demon blood.” He was surprised how steady his voice was considering the rage and fear bubbling up inside of him.

Samael crouched down to inspect the blood and his black eyes widened. “Not just any old demon. This one is incredibly powerful.” He rose to his feet, eyes bleak. “But then he’d have to be strong enough to disguise himself. Daniel wouldn’t have opened the door to a demon.”

Raphael stared at his lover as the implications of that sank into his head. “If that’s the case, it could mean that Nathaniel was never talking to Satan at all but instead to this demon, whoever he or she is.”

Samael snorted. “Makes you wonder exactly *who* is in charge of the Pit, doesn’t it.” His eyes narrowed. “But I don’t care who it is, I’m going to destroy him!”

Raphael nodded. His own fury was insisting on action, on destroying whatever had taken Daniel. “I’m coming with you.”

Samael opened his mouth but whatever he’d been about to say was lost in the sound of battle horns blowing. “It’s begun, let’s go.”

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict



Beliel's heart sank as the trumpets blared and the Heavenly Host marched between the layers separating the plains of existence to meet Lucifer's Fallen on the Plains of Armageddon, the designated spot for the Final Battle.

They came forward in their millions, armour shining in the light of several suns and moons. But Beliel wasn't quite a demon and he wasn't blinded by the light. Instead he stood ready, glad that Samael was such an able general and had gathered the Fallen under his command with speed so they were all here and ready.

But where was Samael? He could see Lucifer in the distance with his own ranks and further along both Lillith and Azazel with theirs but Samael wasn't here although his forces were.

*What is happening? Samael would never betray us so there must be some good reason for his not being here.*

Then it occurred to him that Raphael wasn't present either. His eyes widened.

*Daniel! Something must have happened to the*

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

*mortal. Would Nathaniel go that far? Or is it something else?*

The Host approached and there was no more time for speculation. Thankfully, Samael had gone over the plans with him again and again and he knew what had to be done. He waited for the Host, watching for any sign of Nathaniel being with them but he couldn't see the Legend, only Metatron, resplendent in gleaming silver and white. Of Michael, Gabriel and Sandalphon there was no sign and Beliel felt the first faint stirring of hope.

Metatron knew he looked the part of an avenging angel and was outwardly calm. Inside, however, he seethed with fury and resentment. How dared Andriel say what he'd said to him? And how dared his brother, Michael and Gabriel say they had no reason to fight the Fallen? This time Lucifer would pay for all the slights and taunts he'd given him over the eons. He would be cast into the Pit, where he belonged, for once and for all.

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

As he led the Host to battle he took stock of his enemy. Lucifer was there like a bright golden sun in his gold armour and with his wings outspread. Lillith and Azazel were also there, acting as officers to the lesser Fallen. Lillith was a swath of lustful red while her lover was almost dull in his dark blue armour. A splash of green marked Beliel's position but where were Samael and Raphael?

Their absence from the field bothered him on a fundamental level. Hadn't Andriel said they both wanted to kill him? He glanced nervously about, looking for the flash of black or cerulean and silver that would mark their coming but there was nothing.

It didn't seem likely that Lucifer would go to war without Samael, at least, but the Angel of Death was nowhere to be seen and Lucifer seemed relatively unperturbed about his absence. *What is going on here?* Doubt crept in and Metatron didn't feel so confident about winning anymore.

Lucifer stood, still and silent, watching Metatron and the Host march towards him. He knew he had to hold his own forces to the last

moment to conserve their strength for when the demons attacked but it would not be easy. They were ready and eager to fight.

He studied the oncoming Host, looking for Michael's red and gold, Sandalphon's white and silver or Gabriel's sea green but there was no sign of them. He smiled, seemingly they had kept their promises. The Host was only about half the size it could be and he was amazed they'd managed to keep that many from joining the attack.

He searched for the gleaming silver armour that would mark Nathaniel's position but the Creator Angel didn't seem to be there. It surprised and bothered him as he knew Nathaniel had agreed to this war in order to destroy him.

*Why aren't you here to do the job yourself, my beloved? What holds you back now? Well, with you absent and Samael heading for the Pit, that leaves me as the only Legend on the field which might give some of those idiots pause.*

He chuckled soft and low enough that none heard him. *Though when Samael and Raphael come through here to rescue their mortal some of*

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

*you will die because you'll be too stupid to get out of their way.*

*You've grown complacent in Heaven and you've forgotten the damage a Legend can do. Well I'm here to remind you.*

He spread his wings and took to the sky, raising a cheer from his own ranks and gasps from the Heavenly Host. He drew his sword and swooped down on Metatron.

Sandalphon watched Lucifer take flight and head straight for his twin. He couldn't repress a shudder as the Morningstar's sword whistled through the air but, at the last minute he slashed to the left, cutting off one or two of Metatron's wing feathers. His twin was trying to bring his sword up to block but he had no chance against a Legend in full battle mode.

*Is he going to kill Metatron a piece at a time and end this by doing so?*

Lucifer's move distracted him until he heard Michael gasp. "That was the signal to the Fallen. Look!"

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

The Fallen ranks were moving forward to meet the Host but slowly. “He’s trying to reserve their strength for when the demons attack.”

Gabriel was staring towards the East where the entrance to the Pit could be seen in the distance. “They’re on their way, I think.”

Sandalphon gazed eastward to see a dark mass spewing out of the Pit and heading towards the two angelic armies. It was like watching a black tide washing across the land and there seemed to be no end to it. Still the demons crowded out of the Pit.

*If any higher power can hear me, please don't let too many angels die trying to kill each other.*

Uriel arrived at Armageddon in time to see the demons flowing towards the embattled angelic armies. He sighed knowing that Beliel would be in the thick of the fight.

*Don't get yourself killed, you lovable idiot.*

He made his way to where the rest of the Heavenly Host waited with Michael, Gabriel and Sandalphon, pleased to see just how many

they'd been able to persuade to wait. Gabriel ran up to hug him quickly. "Have you seen Raph at all?"

Uriel frowned. "No, should I have done so?"

Gabriel hung his curly head. "Probably not, it's just that neither Michael nor I spotted him amongst the Fallen. Samael wasn't there either."

Uriel closed his eyes as his worst fears were realised. "Then something has happened to Daniel."

Gabriel gazed sadly at him. "Oh, that poor boy."

Uriel nodded but his gaze was still on the demons who were drawing ever closer to the battle. "Put your trust in Samael and Raphael. Meanwhile we need to prepare ourselves for the demons."

He strode across to join the rest of the held back Host and took his place in front of the thrones and cherubim of Earth. "Get ready. We go on Michael's word."

The demons slammed into the battle and the Fallen turned on them at once while Metatron

and the Host recovered from their shock. Michael drew his sword and it flamed into fiery life. "Let's go!"



Samael stared at the battle in disgust. Why did it have to be directly between him and the Pit? There was no help for it, he would have to plough straight through the middle of it. "It seems the demons want to see the Angel of Death. So be it."

Raphael stirred beside him. "What about a small whirlwind to clear the path a little?"

Samael gave his love a vicious grin. "Knock Metatron on his arse for me in passing, will you?"

Raphael's answering smirk was just as chilling. "My pleasure." His eyes became focused on a point about twenty yards ahead and Samael could feel the concentration emanating from him.

A small tornado appeared on the spot Raphael had been gazing at and began to move towards

the battle. "Stay well behind the wind, Sam. The last thing we need is to be knocked senseless by any angels, demons or weapons it might deposit on us."

Samael snorted. *As if I needed to be told that.* "Come on then, let's move!"

He flew across the plain, powerful wings beating steadily until he reached the battleground where he descended to earth. The air was as full of embattled angels and demons as the ground, although Raphael's tornado did seem to be clearing a path of sorts. They only had to worry about tripping over dazed combatants or being attacked from the side. He drew his sword and ploughed into the thick of it, Raphael close behind.

The angels had the sense to get out of his way. The demons weren't so bright and he had to hack his way through scores of them. It all served to slow him down and he became more and more infuriated the deeper into the battle he went.

He kept going, chopping down demons like trees in a never ending forest. He trusted Raphael to both keep up and look after himself as he couldn't spare any time to look behind

him. The tornado ahead reassured him that his lover was still in one piece.

After what seemed like hours they were through and the entrance to the Pit was straight ahead of him. He snarled and took to the sky in order to reach it even quicker. Raphael's tornado disappeared and Samael spared a quick look over his shoulder to see the Air Archangel flying behind him. He sighed, relieved that he hadn't lost a second lover.

They reached the entrance to the Pit and Samael stared into its murky depths. How could Satan and Asmodeus bear to live in such a dismal place? Samael took a deep breath and entered the Pit. He stopped just inside and listened with all his senses. The place was quiet but he expected that with most of the demons involved in the battle.

Then he heard it. An evil laugh followed by a weak whimper. He followed the sound towards its source. *Hold out just a few more moments, Daniel, we're coming.*

Raphael followed Samael through dim, torch lit passages, hoping his lover knew where he was going. They were going deeper and deeper, always downwards but the only openings in the passages led to heavy doors or open caverns. They couldn't afford to get lost on the way back out.

Finally they came to a heavy, iron door and Raphael could hear soft whimpers and moans from beyond it. Samael held out a hand and the lock didn't stand a chance against the bolt of energy he sent through it. He kicked the door open and they both came to a halt, horrified by the sight that greeted them.

Daniel's arms were stretched above his head and secured by a chain and manacles to an iron loop in the ceiling. He was naked and from his neck to his ankles his back, buttocks and legs were a mass of torn blood soaked flesh, the bones showing in several places. His leg muscles were hanging in strings of tattered meat, the hamstrings and other torn ligaments showing clearly. Behind him stood Ariocho, a bloody cat of nine tails tipped with wicked looking hooks in his hand.

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Samael snarled and drew his black sword. It immediately turned to a scythe in his hand. He swept it at Arioch. The demon just managed to scramble out of the way. The scythe would cut him off at the knees if it connected.

Raphael went straight to Daniel and freed his arms from the manacles. The mortal boy collapsed against him as he finally gave way to unconsciousness. “Oh, Daniel, why did you fight to stay conscious in all this pain?”

Arioch laughed evilly as he reached for a curved sword. “I gave him no choice, angel, although I admit I’m surprised that two of you came for what’s left of him. I only expected the Death God.”

Samael snarled once more and lunged for the demon who evaded him yet again.

Raphael frowned. “Don’t let him get to you, Sam. Just kill the bastard.”

Samael chuckled without humour. “You’re right as always, beloved. Leave this offal to me while you concentrate on healing Daniel.”

Checking over the mortal's terrible wounds, Raphael wondered if that was possible. He could heal the skin, close the wounds, mend any broken bones but he couldn't replace the lost muscles and tendons. Daniel's hamstrings especially worried him. It was unlikely that Daniel would ever walk again.

He concentrated hard, closing the gaping wounds and mending the flesh as best he could while Samael and Arioch fought on. Once he was done he slumped down and leaned against one of the walls, exhausted, cradling Daniel in his lap.

Samael and Arioch were still fighting and the demon was getting the worst of it as the Angel of Death refused to change his scythe into a sword. "Oh, come on, Samael, this is hardly sporting," Arioch protested. He was already bleeding from several minor wounds, unable to get in close with his sword.

Samael grinned at him, the expression chilling. "Whoever said I had to be sporting? You laid your filthy paws on what belongs to me so I'm going to make sure you suffer at least as much as he did."

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

Raphael sighed in resignation. They were likely to be here for a very long time judging by the sheer fury coming off Samael in waves.

Samael slashed with the scythe and took part of one of Arioch's leathery wings. The demon howled in pain and rushed forward only to lose part of his left hand. "I'm going to kill you, demon, even if I have to take a piece of you at a time."

Arioch had run out of smart remarks by now but there was a light in his eyes that Raphael didn't like the look of. "If I'm to die I'm taking everyone in this room with me."

Arioch edged away from Samael towards a button on a bench in the corner.

"Sam, look out! Don't let him get to that button!"

Raphael's shout caused Daniel to stir. A movement in a nearby cage caught the Air Archangel's eye. Calming Daniel into sleep, Raphael peered at the cage. There were several crouching demons in there all looking out at the fight.

Their appearance surprised Raphael. Far from

ugly or misshapen, the demons were as attractive as angels apart from the leathery, bat like wings. One glanced at him fearfully. "Are you going to kill us all?"

Raphael shook his head. "If you promise to behave we might even free you."

The demon's yellow eyes widened as if he couldn't quite believe Raphael's words. "We'll behave."

Raphael nodded his acknowledgement and resumed watching Samael cut bits off Arioch.

Tired of the game, Samael swung his scythe in a wide arc, almost too fast for Raphael to see, and removed Arioch's head from his body.

Several things happened simultaneously. A dark, malignant force left Arioch's corpse and headed out of the door at speed, the demons in the cage cheered and Samael headed towards them, his murderous intent clear in his expression.

Raphael picked Daniel up in his arms and rose to his feet, getting between Samael and the cage. "Don't Sam, they're prisoners here too."

Samael lowered the scythe and it changed

back into his sword. He sheathed the weapon and opened the cage. Four demons crawled out of it, all of them hurt and bleeding, and bowed low to Samael and Raphael. “Thank you,” the one who had spoken to Raphael said.

Samael grunted. “You’d better stay in the Pit until the fighting is over. Any angel is going to want to kill you right now.”

The demon nodded. “We understand.”

Samael turned his back on the torture chamber and headed towards the passageway out of the Pit. Raphael nodded to the demons and followed him, still cradling the unconscious Daniel in his arms.



Lucifer could only be glad that Michael, Gabriel and Sandalphon had held such a large portion of the Host in reserve. When the demons had attacked the fresh Angels had joined the battle to fight the demons.

He was pleased to see Uriel amongst their

number, just as he had promised, fighting with Beliel by his side.

Metatron, after his first moments of shock, had turned his Angels on the demons. So now the battle was playing out as it should if they were going to have any chance of winning.

The Son of the Morning gasped as something dark and malevolent slammed into his body. He howled in fury as another force slammed into him, this one filled with light, and the two forces sank into his being infusing it with arcane powers beyond any measure.

Lucifer felt as if he would be split asunder. His vision darkened before he could see *everything*. His powers strengthened, more were added and he realised he was now a godlike being. Voices spoke in his mind although they weren't his.

*Finally the Balance is achieved and we become one once again.*

Your choice turned out to be the worthy one after all.

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

*He will be the perfect Balance between us.*

From here, brother, we work as one.

*Through him, the only one who could experience both good and evil.*

His brothers also experienced, why not one of them?

*Nathaniel couldn't experience your malevolence could only be swayed by it. Samael, whilst darker, was never touched by you, never swayed.*

That makes sense. So Lucifer now rules all?

*Only if he uses us wisely as a Balance should.*

The thoughts weren't Lucifer's and didn't make any sense to him but he knew something profound had been changed in him. *Am I even an angel anymore? If not, what am I?*

A demon charged towards him. He grinned in glee as he destroyed it and several others but the expression died as he saw Samael climb out of the Pit, followed by Raphael carrying Daniel. Both the Archangel and the boy covered in the

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

mortal's blood. He would have to do something about that later but right now he had to win this war.

The demons backed away from him and gibbered at each other in their foul language. From what they were saying, the mightiest of them had fallen and he wondered if Samael had killed Satan. If so that just left Metatron to deal with.

He made his way towards the Archangel, intending to finish him off, only to glance around as the battlefield surrounding him went silent. What he saw almost froze the blood in his veins.

Nathaniel strode onto the battlefield in full armour, causing both angel and demon to stop and gape. But it wasn't the sight of the Creator Angel that made the Morningstar stare, it was the fact that he was flanked by Satan on his right and Asmodeus on his left. *Satan isn't dead then. So who did Samael kill?*

*These truths will be revealed to you in due time.*

## Fallen Angels 7: Conflict

You will learn the origins of angels and demons and what needs to be done.

The strange voices were back and he wanted to listen but Nathaniel was here with the enemy and he had to deal with that first.

Lucifer saw Samael move as if to face his brother, but Raphael grabbed his arm and said something that he couldn't hear.

*That's right, Raph, this is my task.*

He strode forward to meet Nathaniel, wondering just what the appearance of Satan and Asmodeus might mean.

# Auburnimp

The pen name of Tracy Boyall. She is the author of two successful series *Fallen Angels* and *Sweepers* and the co-author of the *Dragonhope* books.

She has been writing since she was fifteen but it is only in recent years that she decided to see what publishers thought of her work. Her characters are always strong, feisty and often impetuous enough to get into dangerous situations rather like their creator.

She has recently become a partner in a e-publishing house, *Shadowfire Press*, where she is responsible for finances and customer service.

She has been a knife-thrower's target, an exotic dancer, a drummer, a homeless wanderer and many other things due to a desire to go wherever life takes her.

She now lives in a small house in a large English city with four resident cats and one frequent visitor.

She is female and has blue eyes; anything else is often subject to change without notice.

# Links

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## Book Excerpts

Following are some excerpts of other hot m/m erotic romance titles from Shadowfire Press.

If you enjoyed *Fallen Angels 7: Lucifer Rising* by Auburnimp

You might also like *Plague Dance* by Michael Barnette.

*A plague ravaged the world. Cory and Deshawn survived. But can they survive Roderik, the man who would be King?*

After a mutated strain of Ebola ended the world as we know it, Staff Sergeant Deshawn Roberts finds himself alone and longing for companionship.

Cory Wilson, one time office worker, finds himself a captive of Roderick, King of the Lone Star Empire. It's a life of slavery worse than death, and Cory escapes to find himself on the run.

Brought together by chance, can these two men survive in the harsh reality of post Collapse

## Book Excerpts

America, and will they find the love they both crave?

Here is a short excerpt from *Plague Dance* by Michael Barnette

A torrent poured forth from the darkened sky, the pounding drops intermingled with the chattering sounds of hail against the windows. Bursts of lightning shattered the night, bright as explosions in an embattled city.

Deshawn Roberts stared out at the fury of nature, wondering who else might be out there witnessing the storm. Wondering if he might be the only one left after the outbreak of Ebola tore through the country leaving millions dead.

Millions that included almost everyone else on the base where he'd been stationed.

Other than himself he didn't know who else might have survived the pandemic that had swept the US— the entire world— and left more people dead than living.

The barracks where he'd lived with the rest of

## Book Excerpts

his platoon was empty, the rest of the men he'd liked, and those he'd tolerated were dead. Their mortal remains lay in the mass grave he'd managed to dig with a backhoe from a construction site, a subdivision that would never be finished.

There was no one left to do the work, and no one alive to buy the half finished houses anyway.

Of the hundreds of people who'd lived at the base, he was the only one left.

Him alone with the echoing silence. He'd never understood that term, 'echoing silence' until he experienced the utter quiet of a place so devoid of life that seeing a bird made his heart fill with joy.

He braced his forearms against the window sill, stared out at the raging storm.

Lonely.

He craved the sound of a human voice. The camaraderie of other soldiers, of men he knew, missed, wished he could talk to one last time. Share a beer and off color jokes, stare at the TV and hear laughter and angry words exchanged.

To hear any voice break the plague of silence

## Book Excerpts

that ate at him day after day the way the plague of the body had eaten away at the people he knew until all that remained was the dust of the grave.

*Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.* The words mocked him. Taunted him with the promise of a release from loneliness he was unable to take.

A few others *had* survived, a couple men from a different platoon, one of the officers from his own command group. But they'd gone to find their families and no one had tried to prevent it. Not after captain Ferrel had killed himself in the bedroom of his home, surrounded by his Ebola murdered family. There wasn't much point in saying anything to them about duty or remaining to guard the base. Not after the government collapsed.

That's what the media had begun to call it in the last few struggling days of the United States. The Collapse. The end of civilization as everyone knew it. Even then the reports of warlords rising to power were coming in. Men— women too— carving out a niche in the plague shattered land.

He wondered if any of the men he'd known reached their homes. Wondered if they'd found anyone alive if they had.

## Book Excerpts

Deshawn sighed, gaze riveted on the wild night, the storm torn riot beyond the glass and came to a decision.

At first light he would load up a Humvee with supplies and head out. There wasn't any reason to remain at the base, no one left to care what he did or whether he remained loyal to his oath as a soldier.

With no government he had no one left to be loyal *to*, so his oath meant less than the rain hammering the base.

Sooner or later other survivors would show up. Survivors he might not want to meet. People like the warlord types the last few newscasts he'd seen reported about. He'd heard a few radio broadcasts after that, the station running on a generator for a few days. The last disc-jockey left for hundreds of miles talking himself hoarse, passing on any information he received, broadcasting rumors about the self-proclaimed King of the Lone Star Empire. A king who the rumors said was some former military guy named Roderik who'd raised an army and sent them rampaging around the countryside capturing the few people alive. People he forced to work

## Book Excerpts

for him, women he turned into servants fit only to cook and clean, the prettiest ones forced into lives of slave prostitution.

Then the station went silent. Either out of fuel for the generator or silenced by one of the warlords. Deshawn didn't know and he'd probably never find out.

In the long run it hardly mattered.

The world had gone from a thriving global economy, from civilized high-tech and instant communication across the globe to a barbaric age of savagery in the span of less than a month.

There *were* some really bad customers out there, prowling the post-Collapse landscape. People he had no desire to meet. Nor any desire to join in their egomaniacal quest for power.

"Rain, rain go away," he murmured to himself before turning from the hammering of hail and rain to try and get some sleep.

Deshawn climbed out of his bunk the next morning, loaded up the Humvee and rolled out into the new world created by the Hand of Fate at a wink from Old Man Death.

## Book Excerpts

Or you might enjoy *Dragon & Fenyx 1: Called by Power* by Auburnimp & Michael Barnette

Two powerful mages—one of wind, one of fire—are drawn together by their powers into passion neither of them expected to find.

Flamespirit, a firemage and healer, is a virtual outcast living with a clan he will never be part of, a clan that refuses to accept him as one of their own. While most men have swordbrothers to love them and wives to give them children, Flamespirit has neither lover nor wife.

Stormdragon, a powerful windmage and sunstone wielder, has lost any reason to live. His swordbrother, Sandrunner is dead, and his elder brother has ruined his reputation among their clan. Stripped of being Heir to the Chief for an act of cowardice he didn't commit, he leaves his people rather than become a kinslayer.

A chance meeting between the two men changes their lives in ways neither of them expected when they are called by power.

## Book Excerpts

Here is a short excerpt from *Dragon & Fenyx 1: Called by Power* by Auburnimp & Michael Barnette

Storm lips touched the nape of Flame's neck, warm breath tickling his skin. "Do you want the full reason no one ever became your swordbrother in your former clan?"

Flame sighed and moved into that soft caress of lips. "Although I'm beginning to think it was fear of me, it would help destroy a few internal demons if I knew the truth."

"None of them had the power to hold a bond with you. Power like ours can kill lesser men without us meaning to do it. We can so overwhelm their own magic that they die, or become little more than a dim reflection of the power we ourselves have." Storm nuzzled the back of Flame's neck, and whispered, "And yes, many times yes, I want you."

The hardness pressing Flame's bottom was unmistakably the man's erect cock.

"I wish I wasn't so tired," Storm murmured, his tone full of regret.

## Book Excerpts

So it *had* been fear of him coupled with the instinctive need to survive at all costs. He snuggled back against Storm, much more relaxed and sure of himself now, feeling a lot less foolish. “I think I’ve wanted you since I first saw you,” he admitted. “Seemingly like draws like somehow.”

“They say that power calls to power. I believe that. I’d felt the pull from Sandrunner long before we were swordbrothers. Even as a child I watched Sandrunner and he’d watched me almost as if we had unspoken knowledge of what we were to one another. Sandrunner was older than I, but he’d never taken a swordbrother. Not until the day I became a warrior. He came to me and held out his hand without saying a word. I took it and we went off into the wasteland to be alone and make our bond.”

“You know, now even more than before, I really want to see this cave,” Flame said with a low chuckle. He surprised himself with how huskily it came out and was glad Storm couldn’t see his heated face in the dark.

He’d waited so long for someone to claim him,

## Book Excerpts

had been so lonely, and now the waiting was over and he'd never be alone again.

You can buy *Plague Dance* by Michael Barnette or *Dragon & Fenyx 1: Called by Power* by Auburnimp & Michael Barnette along with other fine m/m erotic romance and yaoi titles from:

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