

Fallen Angels 3:



Auburnimp

Unholy Trinities

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Fallen Angels 3: Unholy Trinities

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Fallen Angels 3:

Unholy Trinities

By Auburnimp

Author's note and disclaimer: This series is a work of fantasy. I have no desire to shake up any belief systems and what is written here should not be taken either too seriously or as my personal beliefs.

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Samael threw on his clothes as if there were a fire in the apartment, surprised at just how furious he was with both Metatron and Nathaniel. He didn't have time to question why that might be. Now was the time to act.

Daniel sat up in bed and stared at him in shock. "What's going on?" he asked in the sort of tone that demanded an answer.

Samael studied him for a moment, wondering how much he should say to the boy and what his reaction was likely to be. He opted for the blunt truth as he didn't have time to waste. "I have to rescue Raphael," he said, "and right now I don't have time for your insecurities, Daniel."

Daniel glared up at him. "I wasn't aware I *had* insecurities, but doubtless you know best. Bring Raphael back here, he can use my room."

Samael stared at the mortal, wondering, not for the first time, what he'd done so well as to deserve him. He smiled and leaned down to give the boy a quick kiss. "I'll do that," he said, "but now I have to go."

Samael headed for the glass doors to the roof garden, being in no mood to wait for the elevator,

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go through the lobby and then across the avenue to the park. Once in the small garden he spread his wings and flew. Seconds of mortal time later he was in the sky above the city and heading upwards. When he'd cleared what clouds there were, he was joined by Lucifer.

Although unhappy with the Morningstar's behaviour, Samael knew that this was neither the time nor the place to settle their differences. The sun would rise over Heaven very soon and then it would be too late.

So instead of fighting he merely nodded and continued on towards the Heavenly plane, Lucifer at his side.

They came to rest in a quiet corner of Heaven where row upon row of colonnaded cloisters stood and Samael glanced at Lucifer. "He'll be in one of the contemplation cells probably," he said quietly.

"Yes," the Morningstar agreed, "but there are hundreds of them and we don't have time to search them all."

Lucifer seemed agitated and Samael wondered if Nathaniel was in the vicinity. Well too bad if

he was. He would *not* be leaving here without Raphael.

“Look for guards,” he suggested before he realised what was causing Lucifer’s agitation. The first rosy glow of dawn was appearing in the eastern sky. “Damn! Now what do we do?”

And suddenly Lucifer was as calm and cool as a deep pool on a windless day. “We fight,” he said. “I want them to know beyond shadow of a doubt that Raphael made his own choice.”

Samael frowned. “Will he fight them do you think?”

Lucifer nodded. “He will now, now they’ve judged him and gone to such extreme lengths in the matter of a punishment. He just needed an excuse to fight and they handed him one on a silver platter.”

Samael didn’t know whether to be appreciative of or disgusted by Lucifer’s words. He settled for growling out, “You’re a manipulative bastard.”

“Why thank you, Sam, I do try,” Lucifer said with a slight smile.

They headed towards the contemplation cells

just in time to see a little procession consisting of Metatron, Michael, Nathaniel and four angels in full armour, enter one of them.

“Son of a bitch,” Samael muttered. “They didn’t waste a second did they?” But Lucifer remained silent as he headed after the small procession.

Samael was weighing the odds as he strode after the Morningstar, if Raphael fought his accusers it would be three against seven. Not easy but manageable. The only thing that really bothered him was whether Lucifer would be able to fight his ex-lover.

But Lucifer advanced on the small crowd as if he belonged and had every right to be there. There was a startled moment of complete silence then Nathaniel hissed and flew at the Morningstar, hands curled like claws to scratch at him.

Cursing softly, Samael went to Lucifer’s side and pulled his brother off. “Stop it, Nathaniel, unless you want me to hurt you!”

Then Nathaniel went still as Lucifer spoke. “I am here only to collect one of my own.”

“Your lover, you mean,” Nathaniel snarled before glowering at Samael. “Poor, impetuous Samael, it must be hard to lose the one who turned his back on you to the Evil One.”

Samael glared at his brother in turn. “You’ve developed a poisonous tongue, Nathaniel. Why don’t you go and create something and stop wasting your time here?”

“Enough, Sam,” Lucifer said calmly. “Where is Raphael?”

“I’m here,” Raphael said as he stepped out of the cell flanked by the four angelic guards.

Samael felt some of the tension seep out of his body at the sight of the intact Air Archangel. He attempted to move closer to his ex-lover, only to be thwarted by Metatron who stepped in front of him. “You have no jurisdiction here,” the Angel of Purity snarled.

Samael rolled his eyes. “You’re about to commit murder so of course I have jurisdiction. And I’m not going to let you do it, Metatron. So, unless you want to face *my* wrath, stand aside.”

One of the armoured angels poked Raphael in the side with his sword hilt as if to move him

along and Samael called forth his own black sword. "Don't touch him," he warned softly.

Michael chose that moment to surprise everyone by handing Raphael the Sword of Air and drawing his own flaming blade. "I went along with the trial because Raphael wanted to be banished," he said gruffly, "but I have no intention of standing by while you destroy him. He's my brother and the only reason he's here at all is because of me."

And suddenly the odds changed to six against four. Samael heard Lucifer chuckle behind him before the Son of the Morning asked, "Have you had an epiphany, Michael?"

The tall Fire Archangel nodded. "I was given to understand that you'd all been changed into demons, but it's very obvious that you haven't. If anyone would become a demon it's Samael and he hasn't."

The Archangel of Fire seemed surprised by that and Samael laughed. Not a demon, perhaps, but not an angel either, somewhere between the two, he supposed. "I haven't fallen into the abyss quite yet, Michael, though I've come close a few times."

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He smiled his coldest smile at the four armoured angels. "So, are you going to fight or see sense?" he asked them. As one being they turned to Metatron for an answer.

"Justice must be served!" The Angel of Purity snapped out his answer and the four angels advanced on Raphael like automatons.

Samael wondered briefly if the Archangel of Air would actually fight but was reassured when the Sword of Air blazed into life, cold white flames surrounding it.

Lucifer had drawn his own sword, the light from it as bright as any sun, and kept a snarling Nathaniel at bay so Samael grinned and took Metatron on while Michael and Raphael dealt with the four guards.

It was a short but vicious little fight. Michael and Raphael took on the four guards who fought like furies. Unfortunately for them the two Archangels were much stronger and left the four wounded. Nathaniel flew at Lucifer as he drew his seldom used sword only to end up seething on the ground where Lucifer dumped him on his ass with almost contemptuous ease. Samael and Metatron were angry enough with each other

to make a real fight of it, one which ended with Metatron trying hard to dodge out of the way of Samael's sword.

The lightest of touches on his shoulder made Samael desist from trying to hurt Metatron and gaze into Raphael's clear blue eyes instead. A swipe from Metatron's sword caught him on the arm and he turned snarling and more than ready to kill the bastard.

"Enough, Samael, let's go," Lucifer said and Raphael nodded his agreement.

Michael actually smiled at them before he urged. "Yes and hurry as I'm not sure how long I can keep Nathaniel and Metatron from trying again."

Still glowering at Metatron, Samael reluctantly moved away from the Angel of Purity and spread his wings. Lucifer and Raphael followed suit and it wasn't long before the three of them were heading back to earth.

"You're coming to stay with Daniel and me for a while," Samael told the Air Archangel. Raphael looked a little surprised but didn't actually argue, whilst Lucifer chuckled.

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It was at that moment that Samael finally realised that Lucifer had fought with Nathaniel and he shot him a concerned look. “Are you okay?” he asked.

Lucifer grinned back at him. “Never better,” he said, “that little skirmish was quite exhilarating.”

The Morningstar veered off soon after that, heading for his own domain while Samael led the way back to his New York apartment. “Daniel’s probably still asleep,” he said when they landed in the roof garden, “so I’ll ask you to be quiet till he wakes up.”

“Of course,” Raphael said. “I could use some sleep myself after the events of the night. I’ll fix your arm first though. Is there a couch or something I can use?”

Samael shrugged as Raphael healed his slashed arm. The archangel would have to put up with how things were after all. “Daniel said for you to use his room. He rarely uses it after all.”

He waited for some sort of reaction from Raphael but he was disappointed. All the Air Archangel did was nod, smile, murmur, “Of

course, please thank him for me,” and head towards Daniel’s room.

Frowning, Samael followed him into the apartment and went to his own room. Some sleep, curled around Daniel, seemed good to him.



Beliel approached Hades with a nonchalance he was far from feeling. This time he couldn’t tease and torment Uriel for taking the middle path rather than leave Heaven behind altogether; this time he had to persuade his lover to climb off his damned fence and make a choice. It should have been Ariel’s task but the pink-haired messenger had chickened out and begged him to come in his place. Beliel could happily throttle the little bastard.

He strolled into the gloomy area, done out in dark greens and browns, which Uriel insisted on calling the Great Hall, and found it empty which meant that Uriel was still in his private quarters. Beliel headed towards them reflecting on the fact that it was late for Uriel to still be

abed. Normally the Earth Archangel was awake long before the sun came up.

He entered Uriel's private sitting room and came to an abrupt halt. Uriel was sat in a comfortable armchair, his dark glory as always making Beliel stop and admire. The long black hair, rich loam coloured skin and deep brown eyes were beautiful to him and when you added granite grey wings shot through with the jewel colours of precious stones the effect was simply stunning.

However, Uriel's beauty didn't hold his attention for as long as it normally did as Gabriel was seated on a couch to the Earth Archangel's left. The tiny Water Archangel was as lovely as ever with his blonde curls and sea green eyes. His wings reflected the myriad blues and greens of water and like that element seemed to be constantly changing according to the light. Right now they were bright blue like the ocean reflected under blue sky.

The two were deep in conversation and Beliel's heart sank. He'd forgotten that Heaven would be just as eager to recruit Uriel as Lucifer was. Resisting the urge to back out before being

noticed, Beliel continued to stroll forwards until he reached the armchair to Uriel's right, where he always sat when here. Both Archangel's broke off their discussion to stare at him and he grinned back, playing the demon for all he was worth.

"Beliel! It's so good to see you," Gabriel said and sounded both as if he meant it and that he was surprised by it. "I had thought to see you changed but I can see that is not the case."

He studied his nails, almost imagining them as the talons that Gabriel had so obviously expected to see, before saying anything. Then it was a terse, "Why?"

Gabriel seemed a little flustered by the question but Uriel answered it for him. "He's been told that you and the others have become demons. In your case it's almost true."

He stuck his tongue out at his lover for that comment. "It's so nice to hear your good opinion of me, beloved!"

Uriel turned to look at Gabriel. "I rest my case," he said with a long-suffering sigh and roll of his eyes.

Gabriel chuckled, the sound nervous. “Some things never change, it seems.”

Beliel studied him for a moment. “While other things do, like one of you heavenly types actually being here, for example. For brothers who argued so hard for Uriel to stay with you, neither you nor Michael has been frequent in your visits.”

Gabriel looked somewhat ashamed at Beliel’s words while Uriel snorted in derision. “I was the one who moved my home to Hades,” he said. “Besides, Gabriel came to warn me about Raphael’s plight. Does Lucifer know?”

“Yes, Ariel came to him with the news.” Beliel stared directly at Gabriel. “He refuses to return to Heaven with any messages as he was so upset by the actions taken there.”

“I can hardly blame him,” Gabriel said with incredible sadness. “Even Michael was taken aback by events and has promised to do all he can to save Raphael. I think he expected him to be banished rather than condemned to death.”

“Lucifer will act, I believe.” Beliel said quietly before turning his attention to Uriel again. “He

sees it as an act of war. So now there will be three factions instead of two due to Metatron's pride and stupidity."

Gabriel frowned. "Excuse me, did you say *three* factions? As I understand it Metatron is trying to force the issue with Lucifer but whose is the third faction?"

Beliel wondered if Gabriel was fishing for information or if the denizens of Heaven really didn't know what was going on beneath their pure and stuck up noses. "You tell him," he said to Uriel, "I really don't have the patience."

Uriel shot him a glare before saying, "Heaven should be mobilising against Satan, not the Morningstar. He and several others really have fallen into the Abyss and become, if not actual demons, certainly demonic. They are behind many of the problems on Earth and other planets and need to be stopped before they do irreparable damage."

Beliel studied Gabriel's face as Uriel dropped that particular bombshell in his lap and was pleasantly surprised to find it had come as a complete shock to the Water Archangel. It encouraged him enough to add, "While Heaven

gets ready to fight us due to Metatron's envy the real enemy is massing. Satan has tamed or befriended most of the demons and their numbers are legion. The Pit seethes with preparations for war."

Gabriel's brow furrowed in a frown. "You've left me with quite a quandary, Beliel. Do I believe that Metatron knows nothing of all this or do I assume we've been lied to?"

"Whichever it is, you'd better find out pretty damned quick or the multiverse will be swarming with Satan's minions doing his foul bidding." Beliel couldn't quite keep the hostility out of his tone. While Gabriel and his Heavenly brethren did nothing but snipe at Lucifer, the worlds around them were truly going to Hell.

"I'll speak to Michael," Gabriel promised. "He might be stubborn but he's the only one I can trust right now." He rose to his feet and nodded his head to both of them before spreading his now viridian wings and disappearing into the ether.

Beliel took a deep breath but before he could speak Uriel held up a hand for his silence. "Let

me guess, you're here because Lucifer wants me to pick a side."

Beliel grinned at his lover in a very sheepish fashion. "Um, yes, he says it's about time you climbed off the proverbial fence."

Uriel frowned. "I won't fight Michael or Gabriel, but I *will* fight against Satan and anything else that crawls out of the Pit."

Beliel wasn't sure if Michael and Gabriel would even fight for Metatron after the events of the night. Raphael did *not* deserve death for spending most of his time on earth and even they could see that. Which begged the question, what did Metatron hope to achieve by passing such a sentence? "I don't think you'll have to fight them. Not after what happened to Raphael. I know how close the four of you are."

Uriel stood up abruptly and began to pace. "Metatron's actions throw everything into confusion and disarray. Does he really believe Lucifer and Satan to be cohorts or is he playing a different game entirely?"

"I have no idea, beloved and the only ray of hope I can offer is that he has shown some of

his hand by his actions towards Raphael. He's stepped out of the shadows." Beliel paused not sure how Uriel would take the next bit of news. "Nathaniel seems to be backing him."

His earth-skinned lover surprised him by merely quirking a brow. "So Nathaniel has finally decided to punish his lover, has he?"

"You believe that's all it is?"

"Beliel, I might choose to live away from the politics of Heaven but that doesn't mean I don't follow what's happening there. Nathaniel has spent very little time with the other angels since he and Lucifer stopped seeing each other. But from what Gabriel said, he's infuriated that the Morningstar took Raphael as a lover."

That struck just a little too close to home for Beliel's comfort. He knew if Uriel was ever unfaithful with another angel he would find it very hard to forgive him yet he still remained loyal to Lucifer. "I hope you're right and that's all it is."

Uriel was silent for long minutes in, what Beliel thought of as, his brooding mode. "So

do I,” he finally said. “Now you can go and tell Lucifer my decision.”



Raphael awoke to the delicious aroma of cooking bacon and stretched. He didn't think he'd been asleep for more than a few hours as the sun still hadn't yet reached its zenith. Late morning and with somebody preparing breakfast; it was quite enough to get him out of bed. He dressed quickly and went to investigate what was happening in the kitchen.

The mortal, Daniel, was at the stove, stirring scrambled eggs and watching over a skillet full of bacon. The coffee pot was burping merrily to itself and the toaster chose that very moment to eject two bagels.

“Can you get the bagels, please?” Daniel asked. “The rest will be ready in just a moment.”

Raphael was a little taken aback by Daniel's matter-of-fact tone but crossed the room to the toaster and fished out the bagels, putting them on the plate that was obviously placed there for

their collection. “Would you like me to pour the coffee?”

The machine had finished doing its thing and the scent of fresh coffee was enticing.

“Sure,” Daniel said as he piled eggs and bacon onto two plates.

Moments later Raphael was seated at the breakfast bar facing an apparently unconcerned mortal rival and eating the food said rival had cooked. The situation was bizarre, he knew, but it had to be better than the two of them fighting. It said a lot for the mortal’s strength of character.

Daniel glanced across at him as he picked up his silverware. “Samael’s gone out so you don’t need to worry about him till later. He said something about your needing some half way decent clothes, so I’m guessing he’s gone shopping which means he’ll be gone for hours.”

It was almost amusing listening to this boy tell him the habits of someone he’d known intimately for years without number. Almost, but not quite, part of him wanting to cry for

what he'd lost. "Thank you," he said quietly and continued to eat.

Daniel was studying him minutely and he raised a brow in query. "Is something wrong?" he asked.

The boy coloured up and treated his plate to a harsh glower. "I'm sorry. I guess I was staring. I was just trying to figure something out."

Raphael glanced across the breakfast bar, a forkful of eggs halfway to his mouth. "Oh? What were you trying to understand?"

Daniel became even redder if that were possible and put his cutlery down. He shrugged. "I guess I was trying to figure out the opposition."

The boy was honest, painfully so, but then again, Samael would not tolerate lies and had probably schooled him from the start to tell the truth. "Ah. I don't think I'm any threat to you, Daniel."

Daniel glared at him for a moment before snapping, "Then I suggest you take a look at yourself in the mirror when you're next in the bathroom!"

Raphael shook his head. “Surely you realise by now that Samael values constancy above beauty, Daniel. I’ve betrayed him twice now so I think you’re quite safe.”

Daniel frowned. “Twice? What do you mean by twice?”

Raphael took a sip of his coffee before replying with a question in order to give him a little more time to collect his thoughts. “Why do you think he was in such a fury, last night?”

A look of concentration descended on Daniel’s features. “I think Lucifer pissed him off somehow.”

Raphael sighed and nodded. “Yes, he did, by having sex with me. In Samael’s view of things, that’s a second betrayal.”

Daniel slammed his coffee cup back onto the breakfast bar. “Why did you have to come back into his life now? Couldn’t you have waited a century or two?”

Raphael smiled wryly at the boy. He didn’t like pointing out the obvious but felt he had to. “Apparently I’m here by *your* invitation. And Samael told me, in no uncertain terms, earlier

this morning, that you would *not* be requiring your bedroom so I don't think you need worry about me. But, if it makes you feel more secure, I can leave."

Daniel bit his lip. "No, don't do that. That would just make things worse and Samael pissed at me." He raised pretty eyes, green as any grass, to gaze at Raphael. "Are you with Lucifer now?"

Raphael chewed on some bacon before answering. "I wish I could tell you that I was, but I believe it was just a thing of comfort for us both."

Daniel's gaze was still fixed on his face. "Do you still love Samael?"

Raphael sighed and nodded. The boy was too damned astute for a mortal. "Yes," he said.

Daniel stood up abruptly and started clearing their plates. "What a fucking mess."

Raphael placed an elbow on the breakfast bar and rested his chin in his hand. "It shouldn't be. Nothing has really changed except my place of residence. And as that is not here, you have nothing to worry about."

Daniel turned to stare at him. “Are you *really* that selfless? You love Samael, he loves you. Aren’t I the one in the way?”

Raphael frowned inwardly. He was an archangel, a seraph, he was supposed to be selfless, but he knew he wasn’t. Yet he could not hurt this earnest young mortal who so obviously cared very deeply for Samael.

“Until last night,” he said, “I hadn’t even seen Samael in ten thousand years. He’s stronger than I am and well able to hide himself from me. So you see, Daniel, it’s not something that can be resolved by your leaving Samael.”

Daniel resumed his cleaning up. “I see. You know, I thought I would hate you if I ever met you, but I don’t. You’re not a bit how I imagined.”

Raphael grimaced. He could well imagine how Daniel would have viewed him, especially with some of Samael’s bitterness rubbing off on him. “Let me guess, you saw me as a cross between the Whore of Babylon and a two-faced wimp who didn’t even have the courage to leave the comfort of Heaven.”

“Yeah, something like that,” Daniel admitted.

“I should have left, I wanted to but my brothers Michael and Gabriel begged me to stay. They told me they needed me more than Samael did and that I could help the world more from Heaven.” And they’d been so very wrong.

Raphael stood up and poured both of them a second cup of coffee, while Daniel fished a packet of cigarettes from his pocket. “Do you mind?” he asked before lighting one.

Raphael smiled at him. “No, not at all, I’ll even ask if you have a spare.”

Daniel smiled and passed the packet and a lighter across the breakfast bar. “Do all angels smoke?” he asked.

Raphael shook his head before fishing one out of the packet and lighting it. “I thought I was the only one that had acquired the habit until I saw Sam smoke one last night.”

Daniel looked somewhat taken aback by his answer. “So you weren’t in Lucifer’s company for long enough to know that he does too?”

It was Raphael’s turn to be surprised.

“Obviously not,” he said. “Then, as far as I know, three of us smoke.”

“The three unhappy ones,” Daniel said with a nod.

Raphael grimaced. The boy had a good point. “So what’s *your* excuse?”

Daniel studied the tip of his cigarette for a moment before replying. “I was a prostitute and heroin addict when Samael saved my life. Although I’m clean now, I still need an addiction.”

Raphael decided he’d better change the subject. “So, what were the questions that Samael didn’t want to answer?”

There was a mischievous gleam in Daniel’s eyes as he asked, “Do you have any idea what you’re getting into?”

Raphael nodded. “I think so. I’m guessing Sam didn’t want to talk about Heaven.”

Daniel shook his head. “No, he told me it was like ancient Greece with angels.”

Raphael chuckled and took a puff on his

cigarette. "I couldn't have put it better myself," he said. "So I take it you ask a lot of questions?"

Daniel grimaced. "Yeah, I guess I do. One thing he won't let me say is God. Why is that?"

Raphael grimaced. "No he wouldn't. The angel that encouraged life on many planets is called Nathaniel and is Samael's brother legend. He's not the Creator as humans envisage Him though."

Daniel frowned. "Does God exist?"

Raphael shook his head. "I don't think so unless it was to bring us into existence. Lucifer was first born. As far as I know he came into being with the Big Bang which is why one of his titles is Son of the Morning, he brought light into the multiverse."

"Whoa!" Daniel said. "Hold on a minute! Multiverse?"

Raphael nodded. "Yes. In a sense Heaven, Hades and what you call Hell are all around us. I don't mean the fact that Samael or I are here. I mean that they are in separate dimensions and exist everywhere."

Daniel leaned forward to stub out his cigarette. "Go on," he said, "I'll keep us going with coffee and smokes if you'll keep talking."

Raphael smiled. "Sounds fair to me," he said.

"So Lucifer was the Creator of the other Angels?" Daniel asked as he got up to refill the coffee maker.

"He says not. The way he tells it, Samael and Nathaniel came into being on their own, forming themselves from some of the material from the Big Bang. That's why the three of them are called legends by the rest of us." He stubbed out his cigarette and looked around. "If you want me to talk all day, can we find somewhere more comfortable to sit? This stool is fine for eating but not for conversing."

"Sure," Daniel said, "go on into the sitting room. I'll bring our coffee through."

"Thank you," Raphael said with a smile and stood up. Daniel glanced up and frowned slightly, "Are all angels so tall?"

Raphael laughed as he thought about Gabriel. "No."

Daniel hit his brow with the heel of his hand. "Of course not, Beliel is shorter than me."

"I should think he would be," Raphael said as he considered their relative heights, "and Gabriel is even tinier than Beliel."

"Wow. Okay coffee's ready. Grab the smokes and go on through."

Raphael picked up the cigarettes and lighter and headed into the sitting room. Daniel followed him with two mugs of coffee which he set down on the coffee table. He sprawled over one of the armchairs so Raphael sat down on the couch.

Daniel grinned as he asked, "So Lucifer was the first, followed by Samael and his brother, what about the rest of you?"

The mortal was relentless in his search for answers and Raphael wondered if there was a deeper reason for it apart from mere curiosity. "The seraphs were next. They're what humanity refers to as Archangels."

"Do you remember how you were born?" Daniel asked his green eyes intent.

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“Do you?” Raphael countered. “My first memory is of Samael smiling at me. I’m told we were formed very similarly to the way he and Nathaniel were, from the material of the multiverse.”

Daniel took a sip of his coffee. “And are you different to the legends?”

Raphael nodded. “Yes. We’re a little less powerful and have four wings instead of six.” He did a quick mental count. “There are twelve of us, all with different powers. We were put in charge of the two winged angels that came later and are known as thrones or cherubim. They were formed from the stuff of the planets where they would have jurisdiction and there are millions of them. They’re the guardian angels and look after ecosystems and weather and individuals in some cases.”

Daniel thought about that for a moment. “So what’s Beliel?”

Raphael smiled. “He’s a seraph like me.”

Daniel chuckled. “Samael always calls him a demon.”

Raphael thought about some of Beliel’s

less endearing qualities. “He was at all times malicious,” he said eventually, “but I always preferred him to either Metatron or Satan. Beliel is always open in his malice, whereas the other two are sly and either scheme or brood.”

Daniel leaned back in his chair, his eyes alight with his interest. “So Samael was right, you really *are* the gods.”

Raphael shrugged. “I imagine we must look that way to mortals.”

Daniel opened his mouth ready to ask another question, no doubt, when the door opened to admit Samael and at least a dozen shopping bags. The boy’s face lit up at sight of the Death Angel while Raphael wondered, not for the first time, just how Samael always managed to sneak up on him.

Samael came to a halt just inside the door. He wasn’t quite sure how he felt to see Daniel so comfortable with Raphael. He kicked the door shut behind him and held out the shopping bags. “Here, these are for you, Raphael. That hooded thing you’re wearing is horrible.”

“I do have other clothes,” Raphael said mildly, “but they’re in London.”

Samael grimaced. “Well if they’re anything like the rags you’re wearing now, they should stay in London!”

“As should I,” Raphael remarked. “There is really no need for me to be here, Samael. I wasn’t actually harmed in Heaven, unlike you.”

Samael stiffened at the reminder. “Oh, yes, thank you again for healing my arm.”

Daniel jumped up. “What’s wrong with your arm?” he demanded.

Casting a glare in Raphael’s direction, Samael said, “Nothing now.” He shook the shopping bags at Raphael impatiently. “Are you going to take these?”

Raphael rolled his eyes, put down his coffee mug and rose to his feet with his usual incomparable grace. “If you insist, Samael, may I use your shower?”

“Help yourself,” Samael said. He had to swallow hard as Raphael approached him for the bags. The Air Archangel had been right and

Samael couldn't hate him when he was so near; when his unique scent was in Samael's nostrils. So many eons of love had left an indelible mark on his soul, if he still possessed such a thing.

Raphael took the bags and, with a quick smile for Daniel, disappeared into the bathroom.

"Is there any coffee left?" Samael asked.

"I'll make some fresh," Daniel said and headed for the kitchen.

Samael followed him and shut the door on the rest of the apartment. "Come here," he said once the machine had started its cycle.

Daniel smiled and walked straight into his arms, hugging him close.

Samael returned the embrace, and kissed Daniel passionately. When they broke apart he asked, "What did you and Raphael find to talk about?"

He half listened as Daniel listed the topics he and the Air Angel had covered. The other half of his mind was busy with the idea of loving both redheads at the same time. No, that had to be impossible. Raphael had betrayed him twice

now. But a small voice was asking if that were really the case.

He stayed in Heaven!

But I think he thought he would still see you, he looked often enough.

And then to sleep with Lucifer!

Weren't you lonely too until you found Daniel?

Yes, but Daniel's a mortal not another angel.

But you killed all the mortals that Raphael might have loved.

“Samael?”

Daniel's voice brought him back to the here and now to find the boy holding out a mug of coffee. He took it with a slight smile and perched on one of the stools by the breakfast bar. “So he explained the angelic hierarchy to you, did he?”

One of Daniel's brows rose. “You *were* listening then. I wasn't sure as you seemed so far away.”

Samael took a sip of his coffee. “I was listening. It must be hard to find out that your ‘God’ is really the Devil incarnate.”

Daniel frowned at him. “You really *are* in a foul mood. And Lucifer isn’t the devil.”

Samael chuckled. “A lot of you seem to think he is.”

Daniel’s frown deepened. “Raphael mentioned Satan. He was the one I grew up thinking of as the devil.”

Samael grimaced as if his coffee tasted bad. “Satan is a supposed angel that I’d rather not talk about. I doubt if Raph will talk much about him either.”

Daniel kept worrying at it though. “So he really *is* the devil?”

Growling his displeasure at the boy, Samael put down his empty coffee cup and stood up. “You ask far too many questions.”

“At least Raphael answers them,” Daniel muttered. His face brightened. “He should be out of the shower soon.”

Samael grabbed his mortal lover and glared at him. “Don’t pester him!”

Daniel gazed back at him, apparently unafraid. “He doesn’t seem to mind.”

Samael kept a hold on his temper with an effort. "There are some subjects that he might well find painful."

Daniel shot him a look of disdain. "Like you, for instance? You know, I thought you were so wise but when it comes to Raphael, I think you're a fool."

Samael shut his eyes as pain surged through his chest. In many ways Daniel was right and seeing Raphael close up, speaking to him again, brought it home to him just how much of a fool he had been.

Resisting the urge to throw Daniel across the kitchen, Samael let the mortal go and opened the door to the sitting room so violently he almost took it off its hinges.

Raphael glanced up from his contemplation of the roof garden and raised a brow. "Do I need to mend the door?" he asked.

Samael stopped dead on sight of him. Dressed in soft black leather pants and a satin poet shirt of a blue that matched his eyes, his feet bare, Raphael looked stunning.

"No," Samael growled in answer to the

question, before stalking across the room and throwing himself onto the couch.

Raphael simply nodded and returned his attention to the garden.

Daniel ventured out of the kitchen to place three mugs of steaming coffee on the coffee table before draping himself over his favourite armchair. "You look good in those clothes," he remarked to Raphael.

Raphael turned and smiled at the boy before asking, "Are you going to tell me exactly what is happening, Sam, or do I have to ask Lucifer?"

Samael sat up immediately, his mind in turmoil. "What do you mean?" he asked to buy some time.

Raphael crossed the room and picked up his coffee. "From what I saw, Metatron has reorganised Heaven so he's effectively giving the orders. Nathaniel seems to be backing him though that might have been because he hates me. Anyone who asks questions is being thrown out. Is this in answer to something that the Fallen have done?"

Samael shot a look at Daniel, wondering how much he should say in front of the mortal.

Raphael followed his line of sight and smiled. “Oh I think both you and Lucifer regard Daniel as one of the family. I know *I* do. Besides he’ll need to know sooner or later if he’s staying.”

Samael let his irritation show with a long-suffering sigh. “Your ‘trial’ and the harsh punishment you received was a means to a larger end in Lucifer’s opinion. He believes Metatron is attempting to vilify those of us that left as demons and by killing, or rather attempting to kill, you, it would start a war between Heaven and Hell.”

Daniel jumped in his chair but Raphael was unmoved. “That explains Nathaniel’s involvement even more,” he remarked.

Samael had forgotten just how quick and intelligent his former lover was. He had got to the crux of the matter in just a few moments. Unfortunately, due to his behaviour, Lucifer was keeping his distance both mentally and physically so Samael would be unable to give Raphael any further information.

Daniel lit a cigarette with shaking fingers after offering one to Raphael, which he accepted with a smile.

“How did you and Lucifer know to come and rescue me so quickly,” Raphael asked as he seated himself in the other armchair.

Samael frowned as he reached for the cigarettes and lit one. “Lucifer didn’t say. Why do you ask?”

Raphael studied his cigarette thoughtfully for a moment before answering. “Because Ariel was at my trial but disappeared as soon as sentence was passed. He may well be another that has walked away.”

“It’s very likely,” Samael agreed. They needed Lucifer here to tell them what was going on because the way things were they were trying to catch at straws in the dark. It didn’t help his mood that Lucifer was staying quiet due to his betrayal with Raphael rather than reticence about his plans.

As always Raphael picked up on his emotions and shook his head. “Whatever happened

between Lucifer and I should be forgotten. This is more important.”

“I agree with you for once, but the bastard still isn’t contacting me,” Samael growled out.

“Maybe he’s waiting for something,” Daniel suggested and both Samael and Raphael stared at him.

“You know he could just be right,” Raphael said.

Samael frowned as he tried to work out what Lucifer might be waiting for. Nothing came to mind and he sighed in irritation as he extinguished his cigarette, half smoked, and stood up to start pacing. The whole situation had gotten beyond him. Lucifer was preparing for war without him, Raphael was here looking like a wet fucking dream come to life and Daniel was happily sharing smokes and coffee with the Air Archangel. Could his life get any *more* complicated?

Samael wanted some answers and he wanted them now. He stopped pacing to lean over Daniel. “Why did you want me to bring Raph here?”

A frown of concentration appeared on the mortal's face as he thought about the question. "I'm really not sure, other than it seemed the right thing to say at the time."

Samael turned his head to stare at Raphael. "Why didn't you go to wherever home currently is or with Lucifer?"

"You told me I was coming here and for some strange reason it didn't occur to me to argue," Raphael said, appearing confused over that fact.

"Right, normally under such circumstances, you would have argued for going anywhere *but* here," Samael said.

Raphael nodded, deep in thought.

Samael tried it another way, a sneaking suspicion forming in his mind. "If I told Raph to leave right now, what would you do, say, or feel, Daniel."

Daniel had no hesitation in saying, "I'd argue for him to stay. I like him and I'd feel, I don't know, empty maybe, if he left."

Raphael leaned forward, frowning. "Those are strong emotions for someone you've only

just met.” He sighed in resignation. “No doubt about it, Sam, we’re being manipulated to get along together.”

Samael glanced from one redhead to the other, wondering how he’d gotten into this particular mess. “I could happily throttle Lucifer,” he remarked.

“It makes sense for all of us to get on if there’s likely to be a war,” Raphael said.

“Yes, that’s as maybe, but why does Daniel have to be involved in this mess?” Any one of the angels, Fallen or Heavenly, could hurt the mortal badly, kill him even, and he wasn’t sure if some of the Heavenly Angels would stop short of doing just that.

“The obvious answer is because he lives with you.” Raphael was calm, unemotional and it bothered Samael on levels that he’d rather not investigate. Manipulation accounted for some of what was happening but not all of it.

Damn it! Raphael should show some jealousy!

Daniel spoke up. “That’s just it. I live with Samael but I’m drawn to Raphael too. That can’t be to do with any war.”

Samael shook his head and grimaced. “It’s not. That’s Lucifer making sure that Raphael and I don’t fight with each other. The easiest way for him to do that is to make you like Raphael.”

“And vice versa,” Raphael added before chuckling. “And poor Sam is sitting there wondering what he should do about it.”

Samael glowered at the Air Angel. “Very funny!”

Daniel drummed his fingers on the arm of the chair. “For such powerful beings you two can be so obtuse.”

Samael turned his glower on Daniel instead. “What’s that supposed to mean?” he demanded. His temper wasn’t helped by the fact that Raphael had chuckled at Daniel’s remark.

Daniel merely shrugged. “I don’t think anyone is manipulating any of us,” he said. “There is nothing about Raphael that’s not to like. He’s beautiful, intelligent, sexy, need I go on?”

Samael knew all that about Raphael, and more, but the fact that it was *his* lover saying it made him narrow his eyes at Daniel.

“And I have to admit you have excellent taste when it comes to mortals, Sam,” Raphael added which made Daniel blush.

Samael’s glare deepened and he lit a cigarette. “So maybe I’m the one who should leave.”

Both redheads turned to stare at him. “Why should you leave?” Daniel asked.

“Oh I don’t know, maybe so you two can get to know each other more intimately!” Samael jumped to his feet and started to pace as he smoked and tried to calm down. He wasn’t sure which was worse his anger or the idea of a threesome.

Raphael sighed and stood up. “I think it’s time I left, Daniel. Thank you for the bed and the breakfast, and thank you, Sam, for the clothes.”

Samael spun round. “Sit down, Raph! Strange as it may seem that wasn’t intended as an insult.” He ran a hand through his hair not sure how to go on.

Raphael sat down again and stared at him, eyes wide. “Sam?”

“You honestly think I’m going to let you walk

out again after ten millennia? Think again, Raph!” A choking sound from Daniel made him spin round to find the mortal trying hard not to laugh and failing. “Is something amusing you, Daniel?”

Daniel pulled himself together with an obvious effort. “I was just wondering if the bed would be big enough for the three of us.”

All the anger seeped out of Samael like air out of a balloon. He found he needed to sit down again rather hurriedly as he thought about being with the angel he’d found again and the mortal he loved.

“I think we can manage,” Raphael was saying. “Samael is known for liking large beds.”

Samael found that he needed to be sure. “You both want this?”

Daniel answered by jumping out of his chair and wrapping his arms round Samael’s neck. “I do if you’re both sure I should stick around.”

Samael wrapped his arms round Daniel but his gaze was on Raphael. Something wound tight in him seemed to relax as Raphael met his gaze and

nodded a small and hesitant smile playing round his lips. “Yes, Sam, I do.”

Daniel was never able to remember with any clarity just exactly how they’d got from skirting round the issue in the living room to collapsing, naked, onto Samael’s bed. There were blurred images of clothing hitting the floor and hands stroking limbs but nothing concrete enough for his analytical mind to grab hold of with any real success.

It was only when they finally lay sprawled across the bed in a tangle of limbs and Raphael’s long hair that his brain caught up. He really shouldn’t be here not when this was the first time in ten thousand years that the two angels with him had been together like this. He attempted to get off the bed, to leave them alone, but Samael’s strong arms held him in place while Raphael won the argument by kissing him even more tenderly than Samael ever had.

“How do you want to do this?” Samael’s deep voice asked from close to Daniel’s left ear.

Raphael pulled away from Daniel’s lips for just long enough to say, “I want you both so I don’t mind.”

Samael gave a small chuckle of satisfaction and whispered in Daniel's ear, "Will you let him take you while I'm taking him?"

"As long as you're both sure about this, I'm happy to do whatever you want. I just don't think I should be involved when it's your first time together after so very long." It had been so incredibly long that Daniel's mind had trouble coming to terms with so huge a span of years.

Humans were still hunter gatherers when Samael left Heaven. Even the earliest civilisations had yet to emerge.

"We both want you here, Daniel," Raphael said in his quiet way, "don't we Sam?"

The arms holding Daniel tightened. "Very much," Samael agreed, his voice husky enough to send a jolt of pure lust to Daniel's groin.

Raphael was smiling at him and Samael was nibbling on his ear so Daniel had to admit to himself that the two beautiful angels really *did* want him here. It didn't stop him from struggling out of their grasp to scurry off the bed.

Do they still hate each other? Is that why they want me here, to stop them from fighting? I haven't

seen them even touch each other yet. How can they be so cool and aloof if they really want this?

“You could at least share a kiss,” Daniel said aloud.

The two angels shared a look of such burning intensity that Daniel felt scorched by its heat.

“Do you actually still *want* me to kiss you, Raph?” Samael asked, an odd tone to his deep voice. “After all I’ve done. . .”

Raphael leaned forward and placed two fingers to Samael’s lips effectively silencing him. “We’ve both done things that shame us,” he said quietly, “so yes, I still want to kiss you.” He leaned even further forward and replaced his fingers with his lips in what appeared to be a soft and tender kiss.

Daniel stood mesmerised as Samael groaned and pulled Raphael closer until the Air Angel was in his tight embrace. The kiss had ceased to be soft and tender and had become passionate and demanding on both sides. It was the hottest thing Daniel thought he had ever seen, even with all his experience on the streets. He felt his body react to that heat and by the time Samael

and Raphael broke away from each other he was as hard as iron. Luckily for his peace of mind, so were the angels.

“Come here, Daniel,” Samael said and patted the bed beside them.

Daniel needed no further urging and joined the two angels on the bed only to be wrapped up in a tangle of arms and legs while kisses were rained down on every patch of his skin that they could possibly reach. He felt as if he could die from the sheer bliss.

“So pretty,” Raphael murmured in his ear while Samael’s hand reached down to enclose his engorged and aching cock.

There was the sound of Samael’s low and sensual chuckle before the Death Angel said, “I don’t think any of us need too much foreplay today.”

“That’s as maybe, Sam, but I’ve waited too long to have you again to rush things now,” Raphael said, his breath tickling Daniel’s ear.

Samael chuckled again and moved his hand away from Daniel’s cock to play with his nipples instead. “I’m not sure that Daniel has that kind

of stamina, Raph. He seems pretty damned needy to me.”

The words irked Daniel. “I can wait just as long as you can.”

Samael gave him an appraising look although his black eyes were full of humour. “Can you? I doubt it but you’re welcome to try if you like.”

Raphael gave an exasperated sigh and shook his head. “Stop teasing him and he might have a chance.”

Daniel nodded his agreement to that comment and grinned. “If you think I’m so lacking in stamina why don’t you two play with each other while I watch for a while. It won’t cool me down any.”

Raphael made a spluttering sound that was obviously choked off laughter while Samael looked dumbstruck by the suggestion.

The more he got to know Raphael the more Daniel liked him. He possessed the sense of humour and fun that Samael seemed to lack at times and Daniel wondered how Samael had ever managed to keep his distance from Raphael for so many centuries. It defied belief, and yet he

knew Samael had a stubborn streak at least a mile wide, and was of the sort who would hurt those who hurt him. Raphael's decision to stay behind when Samael left Heaven must have pained his lover very badly indeed for him to punish them both for so long.

Daniel felt Raphael move away from his side and watched him as he sat up. Like Samael, there was no hint of his wings showing but Daniel knew better than to question their reality. Hadn't he seen Samael in all his awful glory? He shuddered at the memory of a shrill scream but was soon drawn back to the present by Raphael saying, "That sounds like a very promising idea to me."

That intense and burning look passed between the two angels once again and Daniel watched in fascination as they slowly reached for each other. He scooted out of their way and sat with his back against the padded leather headboard. Entranced he sat there unnoticed as the two beautiful beings stroked and caressed each other's bodies, only stopping from time to time to exchange fevered kisses. Time passed and still they touched each other. Daniel felt he

was observing something rare and precious and he was still stunned by the fact that they wanted him to share in this special love between them. And he was so damned hard it hurt.

Daniel didn't know how long he sat there, it could have been minutes or years as time seemed to have either stopped or no longer have any meaning for him. He was like one transfixed by the erotic sights and sounds he was witnessing.

As one the two angels turned their gazes upon him and he shivered in anticipation. It was Samael who brought him back from wherever he had been by saying with a smirk, "I think we're both ready now, how about you, Daniel?"

Daniel took a deep breath. "I'm more than ready, as long as you're both sure about this."

Samael rolled his eyes impatiently but Raphael smiled and held out his hand in obvious invitation. "We're both absolutely sure," the Air Archangel said.

Almost reluctantly Daniel shifted closer; still concerned that he would ruin their reunion for them. Impatient arms reached out for him and he soon found himself sandwiched between

the two loveliest beings he'd ever seen. Well, the loveliest apart from Lucifer but he was not even remotely interesting to Daniel in any sexual sense. He was too untouchable, too much above the likes of a mere mortal like him.

Daniel stopped thinking around then as he was turned onto his stomach across Samael's knees and one of his lover's hands, applied cool and soothing lube to his hole before a liberally coated finger pressed inward. Another finger, slightly shorter joined it and added more lube. That *had* to be Raphael's finger, Daniel realised with a jolt and flushed at the thought. But, oh, didn't it feel good? Such an erotic, sensual feeling to have *both* of them preparing him so well. He moaned out his appreciation.

Just when he thought he couldn't take any more he was deposited on the bed to be replaced over Samael's lap by Raphael. Wanting to let the Air Archangel feel as good as he had, Daniel covered a finger with a generous amount of lube.

Samael grinned at him and nodded an unspoken agreement as Daniel moved the glistening digit towards Raphael's small pucker.

He eased his finger gently into tight, clenching heat and Raphael gasped in pleasure.

Daniel could feel Samael's finger next to his and it produced a strange sort of intimacy that they'd never been able to share before. Shaking his head at such a strange thought, Daniel removed his finger at the same time as Samael withdrew his.

Raphael moved from Samael's lap to drape himself over Daniel's back and the angel urged him onto his knees by tugging gently on his hips.

"No," Samael said, "that's not going to work with three of us involved. Let Daniel bend over the bed so he has some support."

Daniel felt Raphael's weight shift off him with a sense of loss but he was soon bent over the bed, his feet braced on the floor and Raphael was behind him again. The head of Raphael's cock nudged his entrance. Mentally he compared it to Samael's, deciding it wasn't quite as thick. Then Raphael entered him fully and Daniel found what the Air Angel might lack in girth he more than made up for in length.

He stopped thinking at all as Raphael began to move, pushed further into him by Samael's added impetus from behind. A slow and steady rhythm like a heartbeat grew up between the three of them and Daniel sensed Raphael being thrust into by Samael on the counterstroke to his thrusts into Daniel. The whole erotic cycle was overlaid with soft moans and grunts from them all.

Raphael's hand slid round Daniel to cradle his cock and yet another counterpoint rhythm was added to the mix when he began to pump it.

Daniel once again lost all track of time as everything coalesced into pure bliss. He couldn't figure out where he ended and Raphael began and wondered briefly if it were even more intense for Raphael as the meat in the sandwich.

Time and everything else stopped as Daniel climaxed with a sobbing cry of release. Behind him Raphael moaned and he was flooded with warmth. A final gasp from Samael brought Daniel slowly back to a sense of his surroundings. None of them moved for some while as they recovered their breath.

Samael stepped away with an audible groan

before Raphael finally withdrew from Daniel with a slight hiss from both of them.

Daniel wasn't at all sure if he could move and it came as no surprise when Samael's strong arms lifted him and placed him on the bed while Raphael cleaned him off with a towel.

"Go to sleep, little one," Raphael murmured and Daniel nodded and obeyed.



Once Daniel had fallen asleep in their entwined arms, Raphael glanced across at Samael. "I hadn't realised just how much I'd missed this till now."

The dark Angel of Death smiled, a very slight upturn of his lips, but a whole world of meaning in his black eyes. "If it wasn't this that you missed, why did you spend so much of your time searching for me?"

Raphael glowered at him then. Hadn't it occurred to the damned idiot that he missed his company, his occasional laughter, his

impetuosity? “So I could give you a piece of my mind!”

Samael’s smile widened into a grin. “So you spent ten thousand years looking for yet another fight.”

Raphael would have been tempted to throw a pillow at the idiot if he hadn’t realised that doing so would wake Daniel. “I missed *you*, you fool!”

Samael’s smile died and he shook his head. “Yes, I was a fool, wasn’t I? Did you really miss my pride so much?”

Raphael rolled his eyes at the question. “I missed your pride, your mulishness, your pig-headedness... Need I go on?”

Samael chuckled and leaned over Daniel so he could kiss Raphael before saying, “No, I think you’ve made your point.” He was silent for a while, staring out into the bedroom. “Thank you for letting Daniel be involved,” he said finally.

Raphael raised himself on an elbow so he could glance down at the sleeping mortal. “I meant what I said. You really do have good taste in mortals. Added to which he’s intelligent and

curious about things. I can see why you love him.”

A guilty expression crossed Samael’s face. “Not the way I love you. That’s not very fair to him, is it?”

Raphael thought about that for a moment. “Strangely enough, I think he knows that. It doesn’t seem to bother him so why should it bother you?”

Samael frowned at him. “Don’t you think I’ve used him for the past three years? I only took him off the streets because he reminded me of you.”

Raphael chuckled quietly enough not to wake Daniel. That was another of Samael’s endearing qualities, his apparently bottomless talent for self-delusion. “No. You never kept the others for this long, any more than I did. And please, Sam, don’t ever believe that *any* of them meant anything more than an hour or two of forgetfulness.”

“Not even Lucifer?”

Although he’d expected the question, Raphael still took a few minutes before he answered it.

His time with Lucifer *had* been different. It had reminded him of what he'd been missing so much. He tried to explain as best he could. "We were both lonely and needing a reminder of what sex with one of our own kind was like. And although it was more intense than with a mortal, it only served to remind me of what I was missing. That was why I agreed to come here and talk to you."

Samael's gaze became intent. "Was that the only reason?"

"You *know* it wasn't. All Lucifer succeeded in doing was making me realise just how much I still love you, will always love you." Raphael gave a mirthless little snort of laughter. "Which was probably the manipulative bastard's plan all along."

Raphael reached across with his free hand and stroked Samael's silken hair, wanting to make him aware of exactly what the difference had been but finding it hard to put into words. Then it dawned on him and he smiled. "Lucifer was a good lover but there was no real emotion there, on either side. I have more feelings for Daniel

than I do for Lucifer. The difference between you is love, pure and simple.”

Samael sighed as if a heavy weight had finally been removed from his shoulders. “I thought... Well he’s handsome and powerful... I thought you might have fallen in love with him. That was why I was so furious with you both.”

Raphael smiled wryly at his lover. “You can be such a child at times.”

Samael scowled at him. “Thank you so much!”

“Don’t worry about it. It’s one of the qualities in you that I love so much.”

The scowl was replaced by a concerned look. “Will you stay, Raph?”

“If you want me to, I’ll stay forever, Sam.”

Samael placed a finger across Raphael’s lips to silence him. “Don’t say forever, Raph, not when there’s war brewing with both the Heavenly angels *and* Satan’s minions. I really don’t want to tempt fate on that.”

Raphael nodded his agreement. For the first time in their very long history none of the angels,

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Fallen, Heavenly or the completely corrupt could say forever and mean it as eternity. Instead he murmured, "I love you," against Samael's finger.



Lucifer had been intrigued to hear of Gabriel's visit to Uriel and pleased that the Earth Archangel's only condition to fighting was that he would not make war on Michael or Gabriel. Lucifer didn't think that would be a problem, judging by Michael's actions after Raphael's trial. Although not prepared to actually leave Heaven, the last two elemental Archangels did not appear to bear him or his any real animosity. And now Raphael had joined the ranks of the Fallen, they would have even less desire to fight against them. That just left the other angle of this Unholy Trinity to deal with.

Not for the first time, Lucifer found himself wishing he could speak to Nathaniel without the two of them getting into a shouting match. The demons, recognising the leadership of Satan and the other Fallen that had descended into the Pit, had imbued them with arcane and evil powers so they would not be easy foes. And with

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Metatron stirring Heaven up against the wrong damned enemy, they would need Nathaniel's power to stop the Multiverse from becoming Satan's plaything.

The one bright spot in a rather gloomy picture was the reconciliation between Samael and Raphael and their inclusion of the mortal, Daniel. Lucifer didn't know exactly what it would be, but he did know that Daniel had a very important part to play in future events; a part that would change the future for every living creature in the whole of the Multiverse.

END

About the Author

Auburnimp is 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 3: Unholy Trinities*
by Auburnimp

You might also like *Swordbrothers 1: Outlaw
and the Brat* by Auburnimp and Michael
Barnette.

*Sometimes kidnappings don't turn out the
way the kidnapper expects.*

Darksky Stonetamerson is an outlaw who makes his living kidnapping watermages and selling them to the people of the City to make his living.

Lakesinger Rockmanson is a very talented watermage and the biggest brat of his clan.

When Lakesinger falls prey to the notorious outlaw, Darksky, the older man's intention is to sell the spoiled young warrior to the City dwellers. But an out of season storm keeps the pair stuck in Darksky's cave with unexpected results.

Book Excerpts

Here is a short excerpt from *Swordbrothers 1:
Outlaw and the Brat*

by Auburnimp and Michael Barnette

He blinked as he recalled the firm flesh of Lakesinger's butt. A fine, very fuckable butt. One he had no intention of keeping, despite the lure of the man's youthful beauty.

A very find ass indeed. He'll bring a good price on the open market in the City. A better price than I'd get from any clan.

Grinning, he headed for the pool. If he was going to sell him, he should get a good look at what was under those leathers and furs besides a perfect butt.

You'll be able to drive a harder bargain that way, he told himself. Clan or City, beauty is worth more than an ugly darbear of a man like me.

When he reached the cave he found Lakesinger sitting in the bathing pool which was giving off steam. The boy blushed when he saw him and ducked his head.

Book Excerpts

“I hope you don’t mind me heating the water, but I really hate cold baths. They never get you really clean the way hot water does.”

He stared at the slender body, the lean lines of the young mage from the sweep of his shoulders to the expanse of his nicely defined chest down to the rippling abs. His eyes swept along the sleek thighs, but soon lifted, coming to rest on the smooth shape of the cock nestled in the spun sunlight of his pubic hair.

He swallowed, forced himself to stop staring, to focus on the bright blush coloring Lakesinger’s cheeks. But it was no good. His blood hammered in his veins, pulsed in the hardening flesh between his thighs.

Thought deserted him and he crossed the room, mind focused on one thing and one thing only: the beauty of that sleek body. Dark virtually pounced on Lakesinger as he dropped to his knees by the pool and captured the perfect slim body in his arms. Dark set his mouth to the younger mage’s in a demanding kiss.

The boy went completely still beneath him for a moment or two then, to his surprise, wet arms snaked round his neck and the kiss was returned

Book Excerpts

with an equal amount of demand and even more passion.

Part of him commanded that he stop, but the louder part wanted to pick the young mage up, carry him to bed and show him why being a swordbrother was a desirable state of being.

Instead he shoved the watermage into the bath he'd made for himself and stood there gazing at him, taking in the young masculine body and the upthrust cock that proved what he'd done hadn't gone unnoticed by Lakesinger.

He wanted, needed. Instead of taking Dark turned away. "That's something else for you to think on, boy," he growled and stalked for the exit.

There was a soft groan behind him and a murmured, "Oh gods."

Darksky smirked, but the satisfied expression quickly faded. He'd kissed the brat. What had he been thinking? He had no intention of keeping the boy, none. And yet... the feel of the watermage's lips on his lingered, as did the throbbing ache of his arousal.

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Apparently they both had a few things to think about.

Or you might 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 America, and will they find the love they both crave?

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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 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

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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 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.

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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.

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

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

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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.

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You can buy *Swordbrothers 1: Outlaw & The Brat* by Auburnimp and Michael Barnette and *Plague Dance* by Michael Barnette along with other fine m/m erotic romance and yaoi titles from:

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