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Fallen Angels 4:



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Son of the Morning

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Fallen Angels 4: Son of the Morning

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Fallen Angels 4

Son of the Morning

By Auburnimp

Fallen Angels 4: Son of the Morning

Publisher's Note: The author of this book is from England, the editor is from Australia. British/Australian spelling, rather than standard American English spelling is used throughout this book. This has been the case with all Fallen Angels books.

Lucifer strode through his light and airy domain muttering curses under his breath. If Satan and his demonic minions weren't enough to worry about he now had Metatron and Nathaniel acting like prize idiots.

The news wasn't totally bad, though. Ariel, tired of Metatron's machinations had left Heaven for good. Raphael, an even better ally, had been thrown out of Heaven, almost literally, and had now made his peace with Samael. Also, if Beliel was to be believed, neither Gabriel nor Michael was too happy with the idea that Metatron had lied to them. It would be interesting to see what they did.

Right now, however, Lucifer was *not* impressed with the damned officious note that Metatron had sent him regarding his 'interference' in the matter of Raphael. The fool didn't seem to realise that most of the Fallen were not the enemy. And now he had to reply to the damned thing.

A smile twisted his lips as he thought about the very uncomfortable Heavenly messenger who was waiting in his private sitting room to take Lucifer's reply back. Maybe he should play his given role and seduce the poor bastard.

He shook his head.

No, you idiot, that's exactly what they expect you to do. That's why they sent such a cute angel. Why give them even more propaganda?

Lucifer reached his study, a sunny room, lined with books and overlooking his private garden, sat down at the large, mahogany desk and pulled a sheet of vellum towards him. He picked up a quill, still his favourite writing implement, and dipped it in the ink well. He paused for a moment as he thought about how to answer Metatron's complaint then he smiled as inspiration hit him and started to write:

My dear Metatron,

Whilst I can understand your concerns over the jurisdiction of our separate domains, I have to point out that Raphael had already made the choice to come under my authority.

By that criterion, your putting him on trial was a violation of my jurisdiction, and a contravention of Raphael's right to choose where he should live.

I trust there will be no further infringements of jurisdiction on either side.

Yours with the deepest respect,

Lucifer

He signed his name with a flourish and put it aside for the ink to dry while he composed another letter, this one to Satan. Unlike the flowery sarcasm he'd used to address Metatron, this missive was short, concise and to the point.

Satan,

If I see anymore of your minions on earth, I will not hesitate to destroy them.

Lucifer

His correspondence written and folded into envelopes, Lucifer rose from his desk, picked up the letters and headed back to the waiting angel. While on his way down the corridor between the two rooms, he sent out a mental message to Beliel. *Are you willing to leave a note on Satan's doorstep?*

I can go and hand it to the prick personally if you like.

Fallen Angels 4: Son of the Morning

Lucifer grinned at Beliel's reply but he didn't want the seraph entering the Pit. *No, I don't want him getting any ideas about hostages or torture. Just leave it at the entrance. One of his creatures will find it soon enough.*

I never knew you cared!

Lucifer chuckled at the snide come back but couldn't let it pass. *I don't. And if you're not in my sitting room when I arrive there, I'll feed you to Cerberus!*

You're so mean to me!

Lucifer entered his sitting room, where a fire always blazed in the hearth, to find the messenger angel looking rather alarmed at what had likely been a very hurried manifestation by Beliel. Of course, the little green seraph couldn't keep his mouth shut as he jerked a finger towards the messenger. "What's with the stiff?"

Lucifer shot Beliel a glare and he subsided, pouting. He then handed his letter to Metatron to the Heavenly angel. "Be sure your lord gets this immediately, please."

The angel nodded and left very hurriedly. Lucifer smiled at Beliel as he handed him the

letter for Satan. “I don’t believe Metatron is going to be pleased with my reply.”

Sure enough there was a scream of pure rage that reverberated through all the immortal dimensions. Beliel grimaced and shook his head. “That must have deafened those in Heaven.”

Lucifer chuckled before becoming serious again. “I mean it, Beliel. Do not even *attempt* to get into the Pit.”

Beliel became serious in his turn and nodded. “I promise, My Lord.” With a cheery wave he was gone, leaving Lucifer alone again.

Sam? Are you ready to speak to me without attempting to kill me just yet?

*The three of us are *waiting* to speak to you, you miserable bastard!*

Very well. I’ll come to you. Give me half an hour to get changed.



In Samael’s New York City apartment, Raphael was preparing dinner with Daniel’s help

when Samael entered the spacious kitchen. “Is there enough for four?”

Raphael turned in surprise. “With a few extra vegetables and a larger salad, plenty, I would think. Why?”

Samael crossed the kitchen to the coffee maker and started a pot. “Lucifer will be joining us.”

Raphael added another two potatoes to the pile that Daniel was peeling and smiled. “That’s better than I’d expected. You’ve only taken a day to cool down enough to speak to him.”

Samael glowered at him but then the expression changed into a wry smile. He perched on one of the breakfast bar stools while he waited for the coffee to brew. “I can’t stay angry with him when he helped to rescue you and brought us together again.”

Raphael nodded as a way of hiding his smile as he rinsed the peeled potatoes and put them in a pan of water. “When is he arriving? Dinner should be ready in about an hour.”

Samael nodded. “That’s fine. He said half an hour so we can have a coffee before we eat.”

Raphael turned the heat on under the potatoes and glanced at the vegetable rack. “Do you want string beans or cauliflower?”

Daniel made a face. “If you serve cauliflower, the only bit of colour will be the salad! String beans of course!”

Duly abashed, Raphael dug out the string beans. “Why does the colour of food matter so much to everyone?”

Daniel stared, blinked and shook his head. “Don’t angels have a sense of aesthetics? You’re serving baked chicken and roast potatoes both of which are pale. What colour is cauliflower? White! You need some colour!”

Samael leaned against the counter and grinned. “He’s getting very bossy, but he does have a point. You want to explain to him?”

Raphael chuckled. “It’s not all angels, Daniel, it’s just me. I have very little sense of colour. I think it has something to do with my element of air being colourless. You and Samael are the artistic ones I’m afraid. Thank you for putting me right and averting a culinary disaster.”

Daniel bit his lip. "I'm sorry, Raphael, I didn't realise."

Raphael smiled at him, trying to put him back at ease after his unintentional faux pas. "That's okay. You can prepare the beans as a penance while Sam and I drink our coffee in comfort."

Daniel took the beans and headed for the sink. "It's best if I finish cooking while you two talk to Lucifer. I can't add very much to the conversation."

Samael stood up, collected four mugs and poured coffee into them. He left one by Daniel's elbow, gave the mortal a kiss on the temple and ushered Raphael through to the sitting room. "He's right. Unless Lucifer says otherwise, the less he knows about what's going on the better."

Raphael took his mug and settled on the couch. "I suppose you're right. But I have a feeling that he's going to be involved in this mess whether we like it or not."

Samael set the other two mugs on the coffee table, crossed the large room to the glass doors leading onto the roof garden and slid them open. "Lucifer always arrives this way. As for Daniel,

I wish I could argue with you, or say you're paranoid, but I think you're right."

Raphael grimaced into his coffee. The outlook was grim, no matter how he looked at it. If Metatron continued to be a pompous ass, Satan stood a very good chance of winning any possible conflicts. The only ray of light was that Michael had actually seen the truth of Metatron's vilification of the Fallen for himself which might just make him stop and think before following the idiot into a three way war. "Sam, you are one of the three most powerful beings in the multiverse and sooner or later one of your enemies is going to realise how you feel about Daniel. As they can't touch you, they'll try to hold him against you. I'll do my utmost to save him but I'm only a seraph. If Nathaniel comes for him I won't be able to prevent his taking Daniel."

A pained sigh from the roof garden made Raphael glance up. Lucifer was stood just outside the open doors looking resplendent in a white leather coat that reached his ankles. "What a morbid pair you are!"

Samael glowered at the Morningstar. "Come in, shut the door behind you and drink your

coffee!" The glower relaxed into a rueful smile. "Dinner will be ready soon."

Lucifer smiled at Raphael before widening the expression into a grin for Samael. "You're such an excellent host, Sam!" he said dryly. He slid the glass door shut and crossed the room to the nearest armchair after picking up his coffee. "Where's Daniel?"

Raphael took a sip of his own coffee before replying. "He's finishing off in the kitchen so we have the chance to talk without him being present."

Lucifer's smile died. "You're both trying to protect him, aren't you?"

Raphael felt Samael tense beside him. "What did you expect us to do? Throw him to the wolves?"

Lucifer shook his head. "No, I expected what I'm seeing. But I do admire Daniel's intelligence and he might see things that we miss. He has a totally different perspective on things after all."

Raphael thought back to his first conversation with Daniel. "He does seem to have an overwhelming need to learn as much as he can

in as little time as possible. I keep thinking there must be a reason for that.”

Lucifer frowned into his coffee for a moment before looking across at both Raphael and Samael. “It wouldn’t surprise me at all, but before either of you suggests it, no, I am not responsible for the insatiable curiosity. I wish I could find out who or what was.”

Samael was quiet and Raphael imagined that, like him, he was wondering about the ‘who or what’ that Lucifer had mentioned. He was proved right when Samael started to speak. “You always said that some sort of intelligence must have created the Big Bang and meant for us to be created from it, Luke.”

Lucifer nodded. “I can’t remember, of course, but I’m pretty damned certain we didn’t simply will ourselves into existence. As powerful, and immortal, as we are, I still believe that something even more powerful guides us.”

Raphael leaned forward. “And you think this ‘something’ might be pushing Daniel to learn all he can about us?”

Lucifer nodded. “I’m not doing so, I’m

damned sure Sam isn't as he hates answering endless questions and I doubt very much if Nathaniel even knows of Daniel's existence. One of the seraphs might encourage it, I suppose, but which one? It's not any of the elemental four, Beliel *might* consider it to annoy Sam but I think his self preservation instinct is too strong for that. Satan and Asmodeus wouldn't want Daniel to know anything. Metatron, Sandalphon and Sophia would feel the same for different reasons. Lillith and Azazel, forget it. They're too wrapped up in each other to even notice his existence."

A thoughtful expression covered Samael's face when Lucifer finished speaking. "You're going to have to get them unwrapped pretty soon."

Lucifer chuckled at that. "Yes, I will. But do you see my point? All those who have the power to place such a suggestion in Daniel's mind either didn't or were unlikely to have done. So that leaves us with my original theory."

Raphael frowned in confusion. "Okay, let's say for the sake of argument that such a being really does exist, why would it want to divide us?"

Lucifer shook his head, his expression grave.

“I don’t think it does. I think the clash of personalities is responsible for that.”

Daniel poked his head round the kitchen door. “Dinner’s ready. I didn’t want to bring it through in case you were talking important stuff.”

Samael grimaced. “He might be bright but I wish he’d learn to talk properly!”

Raphael stood up, smiling. Samael had the oddest quirks. “I’ll come and help you, Daniel. Sam, could you set the table please?”

Daniel spent dinner listening to the witty and often amusing conversation going on between the three angels. It was both surprising and a relief that there appeared to be no lingering vestiges of anger, guilt or shame over the night Raphael had spent with Lucifer. Instead the three of them discussed everything from literature to the latest movies. They were conversations that Daniel could have easily joined, had he wished.

Instead he ate quietly and listened to some very refreshing views and opinions, soaking up the information like a sponge. It was only after

they'd all lit up cigarettes and sat nursing fine red wine that talk turned to more important subjects.

Daniel stood up, ready to take out the dishes and make them coffee while they talked. After he'd done that he would retire to his room and read.

"Sit down, Daniel, the dishes can wait."

He stared at Raphael in surprise. "But I thought. . ."

Lucifer chuckled. "Don't worry about it, Daniel. I think you should hear what we have to say. Think of it as part of your ongoing education."

"Yeah," Samael added, "the part where you learn that angels can be just as petty, stupid and downright nasty as mortals."

Daniel had an overwhelming desire to know what was going on in his lovers' lives so he sat back down, prepared to listen.

Samael leaned forward to flick ash into his ashtray. "So, is it certain that Satan and his vile crew are preparing for war?"

Lucifer took a deep drag on his cigarette before replying. "I'm not prepared to say that he's going that far, but there have been a lot more demons about recently. Two of them have got themselves into positions of power, one in the USSR, and the other here. I think that Satan might be trying to get humanity to go to war."

Raphael shuddered. "With the sheer number of deadly toys each side now has, that would mean the end of life on this planet for several millennia."

Samael grimaced. "And with the political climate between the superpowers, someone might just be tempted to push the damned button. I'm not prepared for that much death and destruction."

Much to Daniel's surprise, both Lucifer and Raphael actually laughed. "That's a bit of a change of heart, Sam," Raphael teased.

Samael looked distinctly uncomfortable. "You're never going to let me live that down, are you?"

Daniel frowned, completely mystified as

to what they were talking about. “Er, could someone explain please?”

Samael glared at the others. “Don’t you dare,” he growled.

Raphael chuckled again. “Oh come on, Sam, it’s far too good a story not to share it! Daniel, what do you know about the extinction of the dinosaurs?”

Daniel thought about it. “There are two distinct schools of thought due to the geological evidence and how it’s been interpreted. The most popular opinion is that a giant meteor or comet collided with Earth and destroyed most of the life on the planet, although the other faction is going with the original theory of rapid climate change. Why?”

Lucifer was still laughing at Samael’s glowering face as Raphael answered Daniel. “In a sense, both are correct. There was rapid climate change brought about by the meteor hitting the planet. What neither side realise is that the meteor was *aimed* at the planet. Samael threw it.”

Daniel stared at Raphael as he digested that

bit of information. When he felt he could speak again he uttered just one word. “Why?”

Lucifer stopped laughing for long enough to answer him. “As you know, Nathaniel was the angel who populated all the viable planets with life. Earth was the first planet he encouraged to bear life and his first attempts at anything much larger than amoeba turned into the dinosaurs. As a range of species, they were incredibly successful and were the dominant life form on the planet for millions of years, evolving as time went on.

“Nathaniel had turned his attention to other planets and it took him a while to notice. When he saw what had evolved on Earth, he wasn’t very impressed. He’d wanted to create an intelligent life form but the reptiles were never going to develop the power of reason. So he asked Samael to destroy the dinosaurs.”

“The meteor worked,” Samael muttered.

“Luckily for humanity, the mammals of that time were small, burrowing creatures, not unlike today’s rodents, and survived the ensuing holocaust,” Lucifer continued, “so Nathaniel was left with something to work with. However, the

first sight of a burning planet made him so angry he boxed Samael's ears!"

"As I said, it worked!" Samael still looked distinctly unhappy.

"It was certainly an excellent shot!" Raphael said.

A smile twitched the corners of Samael's mouth. "Yeah, it was." He became serious once again. "It's one thing for *me* to wipe out most life on a planet, but I'm not prepared to let humanity destroy itself."

Lucifer's purple eyes went distant. "They'll come close but common sense will prevail in the end. Satan's minions will not succeed in starting a war and I've sent a message telling him that if anymore of them should appear I will destroy them."

Daniel blinked. "Wait a minute, are you saying the politicians are demons in disguise?"

Lucifer smiled reassuringly at him. "There's only one here and one in the USSR. I'm afraid humanity only has itself to blame for the rest."

Daniel chuckled at that remark. Lucifer's sarcasm was always amusing if somewhat cruel.

Samael glanced at Lucifer suspiciously. "When you gave Satan your ultimatum, did you also happen to send a message to Metatron?"

Lucifer smiled sweetly back. "Ah, you heard his little tantrum did you?"

"Tantrum?" Samael was incredulous. "He was screaming like a little girl whose favourite doll has been broken!"

Lucifer's smile grew into a grin. "Beliel seems to think that our Heavenly brethren must have been deafened. I'm inclined to agree." His expression hardened. "But I am not prepared to have him dictate to me where my jurisdiction ends."

Samael nodded as if he'd just worked something out. "Pissed off over us rescuing Raph was he?"

Daniel jumped in with a question before Lucifer could answer. "Why did he want to kill Raphael?"

Raphael shrugged gracefully. "Maybe he

believes his own propaganda and would rather see me dead than a demon.”

Samael scoffed loudly. “As if! That’s bullshit, Raph and we all know it.”

Lucifer sighed sadly and shook his head. “I agree. My guess is Nathaniel’s the one who wants you dead.”

Raphael blinked. “You really believe he’s that vindictive? He was always so shy and gentle.”

Lucifer grimaced. “*Was* being the operative word. Was he shy and gentle at your trial or when Sam and I arrived to rescue you? I’m the one to blame for his change in personality. He’ll never forgive me for being unfaithful to him in Troy and it’s eating him away. He had Troilus murdered by the Greeks and he wants you dead even more, Raph, because you’re an angel.”

Samael lit another cigarette. “He’s certainly developed a vicious tongue. But none of this is getting us anywhere. Are he and Metatron determined to send the Heavenly host after us instead of the demons of the Pit? That’s the question that needs to be answered.”

Raphael shook his head. “Michael won’t fight

us now and where he leads, Gabriel follows. Just don't ask me where that leaves them in the scheme of things, though."

Lucifer took a sip of his wine. "Gabriel visited Uriel this morning. Beliel found him there so Gabriel has seen for himself that we haven't all fallen into the Pit. Uriel says he'll happily fight Satan's minions but he won't fight with his brothers. I think a lot rests on any actions that Michael and Gabriel might take."

Daniel was fascinated by the conversation but still wondered what he was doing here. When all three angels fell silent he did what he was best at. He asked a question. "Are there as many demons as angels?"

Three pairs of eyes turned in his direction and he coloured up. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry," Lucifer said. "I knew you'd make us look at this from a different perspective. And in answer to your question, no, I'm pretty certain that there are more angels than demons. That is if you count us as angels rather than demons."

"Don't get too comfortable though," Samael

warned. “The numbers on both sides run into the millions; enough, in fact, for there to be a lot of bloodshed.”

Raphael nodded his expression serious. “And with Satan and Asmodeus in charge, the demons will fight dirty.”

Lucifer shot Raphael a look. “You consider us incapable of doing the same, Raph?”

“After my experiences in Heaven, no I don’t, as long as Heaven understands who the real enemy is and gets over the petty jealousies.” A look of intense suffering crossed his fine features. “I used to admire Nathaniel so much.”

Samael placed a comforting arm round Raphael’s shoulders. “We all did, Raph. Damnit all, he’s my brother. It hurts to see how much he’s changed.”

Lucifer grimaced. “That’s my fault, of course.”

Daniel thought about that as he slowly shook his head. “I doubt that,” he said then coloured up as he realised he had their undivided attention again.

“Why do you say that?” Raphael asked.

Daniel bit his bottom lip. “People don’t change suddenly. It’s a slow process. Now, I may be wrong, but I imagine the process would be even slower for immortals.” He waited for one of them to tell him he was a fool and only knew as much as they’d told him but nobody spoke for a while.

“He’s right,” Samael said after a long silence. “Look how long it took for Satan to go from a brooding sulk with a chip on his shoulder to consorting with demons or for Asmodeus’s jealousy over Lillith to push him the same way. And Nathaniel is stronger than either of them.”

Lucifer twirled his wine glass, intent on the red liquid for a moment before glancing up. “So if it wasn’t my indiscretions with Troilus and Raph, what was it?”

All eyes turned to Raphael for an answer. “He’s hardly ever seen anymore, that’s why it was such a shock to see him at my trial. We always thought he was busy encouraging life on other planets but, without going to check, I don’t know if that’s the case.”

Samael frowned. “So what you’re saying is he could have been doing just about anything from creating to consorting with the Pit.”

Raphael’s eyes widened. “That would explain a great deal. He’s let Metatron virtually rule Heaven for the last four or five thousand years even though he’s the natural choice to take Lucifer’s place as leader.”

Lucifer became intent, leaning forward to stare at Raphael. “Wait a minute, you said four or five thousand. Not three thousand?”

Raphael shut his eyes and Daniel wondered how much memory angels must have to go back so many millions of years. “No, he’d definitely pulled back from all decision making well before the bloodbath at Troy.”

“Yet he engineered the city’s downfall in his guise as Zeus.” Lucifer’s expression was as bitter as his words.

Raphael shrugged. “That part probably was down to you, although. . .”

Lucifer stared at the Air Archangel. “Although?” he prompted.

Raphael shook his head, a frown on his face. “He already knew that you took the occasional mortal lover. None of them seemed to bother him before. It was almost as if the Trojan prince was just an excuse.”

“So you’re saying he’d already decided to stop seeing Lucifer?” Samael asked.

Raphael shook his head again. “I don’t know, Sam, but it does seem strange that one mortal seemed to matter when the others hadn’t.”

Lucifer rose to his feet. “Between you and Daniel, you’ve given me a lot to think about. So much that I need to be alone to try to work it all out. Thank you for an excellent dinner and a mostly pleasant evening. We will need to make plans but I don’t think they’re as urgent as finding out what Nathaniel is playing at.” He headed for the patio doors onto the roof garden.

Daniel watched him leave with the sinking feeling in his belly that he’d stirred up one hell of a hornet’s nest.



Lucifer didn't return straight to Hell. Instead he wandered the New York City streets, hands dug deep into his pockets as he thought about the evening's conversation and the possible motivations behind Nathaniel's actions. He was so deep in his musings that he didn't notice the beat of immortal wings until the cherubim Andriel was standing in front of him and he bumped into the Heavenly angel. "I'm sorry," he said automatically before realising that he hadn't collided with a mortal.

Lucifer's consternation quickly became suspicion until he noticed something about the other angel. He reminded Lucifer of someone. Memories flooded the Son of the Morning's mind.

A warm, willing body pressed to his in an ancient temple to Apollo, huge, doe-like brown eyes whose expression promised him everything if their owner could only be allowed to live a little longer.

Lucifer moaned.

Troilus. The prince I couldn't save.

But why think about it now? Was it the talk

after dinner at Samael's apartment or was it something to do with the cherubim staring at him so worriedly?

"Lucifer? Are you all right?"

Lucifer almost snarled at Andriel. "What do you want with me?"

Andriel stared down at the sidewalk, obviously uncomfortable about something. "I... I wanted to see for myself. Metatron said you were demons but Michael actually argued with him for once. So I came to see who was right."

He looked up then and Lucifer gasped at the sight of huge, doe-like brown eyes. "Get away from me!"

"I'm sorry. It was not my intention to offend."

Lucifer grabbed Andriel by the front of his dark blue velvet jacket. "What game are you playing, Andriel?"

Why do I look at you and see Troilus?

Andriel stood still under the onslaught, head bowed. "I don't understand, My Lord. I told you why I came here."

Lucifer calmed enough to let go of the other angel although he still eyed him suspiciously. “What do you know about Troy, Andriel?”

Lucifer gave the cherubim his due; he didn’t even attempt to misunderstand. “From your point of view, My Lord, it was when you lost Nathaniel because he caught you with one of the Trojan princes. It shocked many of the angels because up till then he hadn’t cared about your mortal lovers.”

Lucifer just knew the angel was privy to information he wasn’t sharing. “So why was Troilus so different, Andriel?”

To Lucifer’s intense surprise the angel flushed. “Rumour has it that he wasn’t a simple mortal, My Lord. That he was one of the Angelic Host in disguise.”

“You’re telling me I was unfaithful with another angel?”

That would make sense. No other mortal ever felt like Troilus did. No other apart from Raphael was ever so satisfying. No other incurred Nathaniel’s

wrath other than Raphael whom he tried to kill the same as he'd ensured Troilus' death.

"That's the rumour, My Lord," Andriel was saying.

Lucifer's eyes narrowed as he stared at the other angel. "Why would a Heavenly Angel agree to disguise himself as a mortal and then be killed as a mortal?"

Andriel bit his lip. "I shouldn't have come here."

Decision made, Lucifer grabbed the cherubim round the waist and left the New York street with a powerful beat of his golden wings. He didn't stop until he was in his own domain, his sitting room, where he came to rest and let Andriel go. "I'll ask again, Andriel, and if I don't get the truth this time, I'll beat it out of you. Do I make myself clear?"

Andriel shuddered and nodded. "Perfectly, My Lord."

Lucifer paced his sitting room before he came to a halt by the blazing fire and leaned on the mantle to gaze down into the flames. "Let's cut to

the chase, shall we? You were the one disguised as Troilus.”

Andriel sank to the floor, hands covering his face. “I should have stayed away, but I had to see. I wanted to see you again, My Lord. I... I was... I wanted, no needed... I’m sorry.”

Lucifer felt the urge to go to the stricken angel to pick him off the floor, to hold him in his arms and tell him everything was all right. But it wasn’t all right. He had to know why he’d been so deceived and whose idea it had been. When he spoke it was harshly. “Get up and stop grovelling. I want answers and one way or another I intend to get them. Whose idea was it for you to be born as a mortal?”

Those huge, soft eyes peered over Andriel’s hands and Lucifer had to shut his own so as not to be drawn in by them again. “It was Metatron who suggested it, My Lord.”

Lucifer’s eyes snapped open. *Metatron?* “Did he say why you should do this?”

Andriel climbed to his feet but still shook as he stood with head bowed. “He said that Nathaniel

was spending too much time away from his duties to be with you and that he wanted to put a stop to that.”

Lucifer frowned. Nathaniel hadn’t visited him on Earth more often than once or twice a month, citing how busy he was.

And like a fool I bought his excuses. So what was he doing when Metatron thought he was with me?

“So he came up with Troilus and his fate to drive a wedge between Nathaniel and myself. Is that right?”

Andriel nodded. “Yes, My Lord. He knew a mortal wouldn’t bother Nathaniel but that another angel would.”

Lucifer left the mantle and crossed the room to sit in his chair, indicating that Andriel should also take a seat. The cherubim sank onto the couch and sat with his head still lowered. “How often was Nathaniel away from Heaven to cause Metatron such concern?”

Andriel’s head came up and he stared as if surprised by the question. “He spent more time on Earth with you than he did in Heaven.”

What have you been doing Nathaniel?

“And now?”

Andriel frowned. “He spends a lot of time creating life on distant planets, My Lord. He did come back to Heaven recently however. About two weeks before Raphael was tried.”

Lucifer mulled that over. “So he still spends very little time in Heaven. Makes your ‘sacrifice’ somewhat irrelevant doesn’t it?”

Andriel flinched as if he’d been struck but remained silent.

Lucifer leaned forward, studying the cherubim intently. “So why did you come to New York this evening and bump into me so conveniently?”

Andriel shook his head and remained silent.

“If you want to do this the hard way, we can. I warn you now; I want answers and don’t much care how I get them.”

Lucifer *wanted* to hurt Andriel. Wanted him to feel the pain and hurt he was feeling over being betrayed, over losing someone he’d come to care for to death at Nathaniel’s command.

A shiver ran through Andriel's slender body. "Please, My Lord, I just wanted to see you for myself."

Lucifer remained unmoved. "And, having seen me, who were you to report back to?"

Andriel sank to the floor again, this time at Lucifer's knees and gazed up, his soft eyes full of tears. "I had no instructions. I simply wanted to see you once more. I never intended to hurt you or to..." He stopped speaking, biting his lip.

Lucifer frowned at him. "Or to..." he prompted.

Andriel mumbled something that Lucifer couldn't hear so he grabbed a handful of dark brown hair and hauled his head up. "Say again."

"Fall in love with you!"

This time the words had been shouted but Lucifer didn't want to hear them and flung Andriel away from him so hard that he ended up half way across the room. "Stop lying to me!"

Andriel hunched over on himself. "I never lied to you, My Lord. As Troilus I had no recollection of myself as an angel or of you as

anyone but Apollo and Apollo was good to the prince so Troilus fell in love with him. It was only after Troilus was killed and I returned to this form that I realised what I'd done, who you really were and that I still loved you."

Lucifer desperately wanted to believe him but the hurt of the last three millennia together with the keen sense of betrayal was too strong. It was like a caustic burn running through his body and mind until all that was left was pain and fury. "Metatron chose his tool wisely it would seem. Why did he send you to me now?"

Andriel looked up at that, the shock in his dark eyes real. "He didn't. I told you, he believes you to be a demon, or says he does. I needed to see for myself if you were still...Apollo."

Lucifer wavered but he still needed to be sure. "So why did it take you over three thousand years to check?"

Andriel bowed his head again so his long, dark hair covered his face. "I was afraid to," he admitted with a sigh. "It's as you said. I betrayed

you, drove Nathaniel away. I knew you could never forgive that.”

Lucifer leaned back, took a packet of cigarettes from his pocket and lit one. Andriel’s words were making sense at last and he needed time to think through all the implications they had thrown up. It would seem that Nathaniel was playing some game of his own, unknown to any of them. He could even understand Metatron’s concerns though not the tactics the sneaky bastard had used to deal with them. He would have to get to the bottom of Nathaniel’s long absences from Heaven but right now he had other considerations like what he was supposed to do with the angel huddled on his floor.

“I’m tempted to ask you to spy for me, Andriel, but somehow I think you’re far too loyal to Heaven to do that.”

Andriel glanced up, his beautiful face marred by tears. “What do you want to know, My Lord?”

What do I want to know? Whether Michael and Gabriel will turn on us? I can’t ask a mere cherubim to keep tabs on Nathaniel. And yet his movements are what concern me most.

“Who started the rumour that we had all fallen into the Pit?”

Andriel flinched and shook his head, his tears flowing faster. “Please, My Lord, you really don’t want to know the answer to that.”

Lucifer shut his eyes as he faced the truth. The angel he had loved for millions of years had named him demon. Hadn’t he said something like that to Samael, that his lover had slept with the Evil One? “It was Nathaniel, wasn’t it?”

Andriel hunched over again. “I’m sorry. I never should have come.”

Lucifer extinguished his cigarette, rose to his feet and then crouched down by the stricken angel. He ran a hand through the night dark hair before lifting Andriel’s chin and wiping the tears from his cheeks. “I’m glad you did. It has explained many things to me.”

Andriel swallowed and gulped on the last of his tears as he leaned into the caresses like a dog seeking reassurance from his master. “You don’t hate me for what I did?”

Lucifer’s hand tightened in Andriel’s hair as the fury threatened to swamp him again. “I

doubt you were given a lot of choice in the matter. What upsets me is you didn't come to me sooner than this; though even that I can understand. The question is, what do you intend to do now you've seen the truth?"

Andriel went perfectly still under Lucifer's fingers. "I can't continue to live a lie," he whispered. "Would you allow me to stay? I ask no favours, My Lord, just that I be allowed to live where I can see you occasionally."

Lucifer's hurt anger dissipated under Andriel's words. For the first time in three millennia he allowed himself the tiniest ray of hope. But still he had to test the other angel. "And that would be enough for you?"

Andriel attempted to bow his head again but the hold Lucifer had on his hair wouldn't allow him to do that. Instead he raised his tear-streaked face and whispered, "I can't deny it would hurt to see you so close and yet know you were so far away from me."

The small ray of hope in Lucifer's heart grew until it threatened to overwhelm him. "What if I said that wasn't enough?"

Andriel closed his eyes. “You have every right to punish me as you see fit, My Lord.”

“Is that what you think you deserve?”

Andriel’s eyes opened and he gazed at Lucifer in obvious confusion. “I betrayed you, pretended to be someone I wasn’t in order to part you from Nathaniel.”

Lucifer stared unseeingly as it dawned on him that he no longer cared about that. No, it was the pretence from the angel in front of him that hurt. He had to know, had to be sure. “Did Troilus love me, Andriel?”

The tears flowed down Andriel’s cheeks once more. “At first he was very afraid of you, but you were gentle and kind to him and, even at the last when Achilles found him, he knew you’d tried hard to protect him. Yes, he loved you.”

“And you, Andriel, how do you feel?”

“Ashamed of myself, yet so glad to have had that short time with you, I still feel as Troilus did. The feelings never went away.”

Lucifer let him go and rose gracefully to his

feet. "I've not exactly been either gentle or kind tonight, have I?"

Andriel let his head fall forward again. "Your attitude towards me is understandable, My Lord. I interfered in your affairs, hurt you."

"And yourself, if I'm any judge of the matter," Lucifer said. He had to know just one more thing. "Did Metatron give you a choice?"

Andriel stared up at him, looking him straight in the eye as he said, "No, My Lord. He said that as a mortal I would be 'just your type' and that he wasn't prepared to discuss the matter, that it was an order."

Lucifer shut his eyes and clenched his fists. *Damned interfering bastard!* But that tiny ray of hope had expanded even further and he opened his eyes to gaze down at Andriel. "You can stay if you wish," he said gruffly.

Andriel's head lifted and he stared up at Lucifer, his large eyes misty with tears yet glowing with happiness. "Thank you, My Lord."

The look of joy on Andriel's tear-streaked face was enough to finally convince Lucifer that he'd made the right decision. He shook his head as he

thought about how they'd all hurt themselves so badly; Samael, Raphael and now Andriel. *We're such colossal fools.*

He crouched down by Andriel again holding his gaze with his own. "And having found you again, you think I'm going to let you go?"

Andriel's head bowed again. "I deserve only your contempt, My Lord."

Lucifer forced Andriel's head up by the chin. "No, you had no choice. My contempt is all for Metatron and Nathaniel."

There it was in Andriel's eyes, that same spark of hope after eons of despair. He opened his mouth but no words were forthcoming. Smiling Lucifer kissed that open and inviting mouth. The taste and feel was the same and Lucifer groaned deep in his throat.

I've found you again, my Troilus.

Andriel clung to him like a burr and returned the kiss, at first hesitantly then more confidently as he relaxed in Lucifer's arms.

Lucifer pulled away after some while and

smiled at his long lost love. “How much do you remember, Andriel?”

“Everything, My Lord.”

“Then you remember what pleased me?”

Much to Lucifer’s delight, Andriel flushed bright red. “Oh yes, My Lord.”

Lucifer rose to his feet and sat in his favourite armchair. He pulled aside the skirts of his coat and unzipped his pants. “Prove it.”

Still blushing Andriel crawled across the floor until he was kneeling between Lucifer’s outspread legs. Without any hesitation at all he reached into Lucifer’s pants and freed his cock.

Lucifer closed his eyes in pleasure as Andriel’s hand gripped the root of his cock and gasped out loud as a warm, wet mouth engulfed the head of it. Andriel began to suck in earnest and Lucifer groaned. It had been so long but they both remembered.

He sighed out his enjoyment before pulling away from Andriel’s clever mouth. “I want all of you so I think we should take this to the

bedroom.” Without waiting for a reply he stood up, hauled Andriel to his feet and kissed him as he translocated them both to his bedroom, a flamboyant and hedonistic place of silks and velvets in purple and a very large bed.

Once there Lucifer removed Andriel’s clothing slowly, as though unwrapping a longed for present.

Andriel shuddered under his touch and raised huge brown eyes to gaze at Lucifer. There was a look of wonder in them. “Is this really happening or am I dreaming again?”

Lucifer smiled as he stroked silken soft skin that he remembered so well. “You’re not dreaming.” Reluctantly he pulled away so he could remove his own clothing his gaze on the dark-haired angel the whole time.

Once naked he beckoned Andriel forward. “Come here.”

Andriel obeyed without question and Lucifer pulled him into his arms, his mouth latching onto the cherubim’s for a hungry kiss.

It was all just as Lucifer recalled, soft, yielding lips under his, a mouth parted to offer entry if

he wished. He found he did wish and plundered Andriel's mouth, tasting that divine sweetness that had eluded him for three millennia. Even Raphael hadn't tasted this sweet to him. His arms tightened as he backed Andriel towards the bed. "Oh, my Troilus," he murmured.

Andriel's arms tightened around his neck at the name and he whispered, "My Lord, Apollo," before they collapsed onto the bed, still in a tangle of limbs.

Lucifer pulled away from Andriel's mouth for long enough to spread the cherubim's pale violet wings. His hands reached for the ridges and he stroked them lovingly as Andriel shuddered. "I'm guessing nobody's ever done this before."

"No, My Lord," Andriel said between shudders. "It...it feels...wonderful."

Lucifer laughed softly. "Oh, I know it does."

Andriel gazed up at him, eyes heavy-lidded with pleasure. "May...can I...return the favour?"

Lucifer smiled and unfurled his six golden wings causing Andriel to gasp aloud and his eyes to get even bigger if that were possible. "What?" Lucifer asked him, amused by his reaction.

“I...I’d forgotten just how glorious the Son of the Morning is.” Andriel stretched out his hands, his movements uncertain until he touched Lucifer’s wing ridges. Lucifer arched in pleasure and Andriel’s touch became more assured, heightening the bliss even more.

Keeping his hands on the cherubim’s wing ridges, Lucifer leaned in for another kiss, this one slower, less frenzied but no less deep.

Andriel returned his kiss, his hesitancy diminishing with every touch.

When Lucifer pulled away this time it was because he could wait no longer. He had to make Andriel his in every sense of the word. “I’m going to claim all of you, Andriel,” he told the cherubim causing him to shudder once again.

Lucifer gazed down into surprised dark eyes and smirked at the confusion in them. “There’s no escape, my cherub. You were born for me to love.”

Andriel whimpered softly, his hands tightening until he was clutching Lucifer’s wing ridges as if they were the only things that prevented him from drowning in some dark, abysmal sea.

“Don’t let me go, My Lord. I don’t want to go back. I want to stay with you.”

Lucifer had to wonder what was happening in Heaven to make Andriel’s plea so heartfelt. Ariel had been in much the same state when he had begged to stay on earth rather than return and although his message running had been useful, Lucifer would never have forced him to go back to Heaven.

Lucifer held the cherubim tight, murmuring soothing, meaningless words to him until Andriel stopped shaking. He would need to have a long talk to both him and Ariel but now was not the time. Now was the time for pleasure.

He reached across the bed with one hand to grab the lube that was in the nightstand drawer. He was determined that after tonight Andriel would be his, and only his, for all time. “Lift your legs.”

Andriel did as he was told and Lucifer spread a good dollop of lube on his fingers. The cherubim gasped as one of those slick fingers entered him and his whole body quivered.

Lucifer smiled down at him as he gently

manipulated the finger in and out of his body. He added a second digit to the first slowly stretching tight muscles before he added a third to the mix. By this time Andriel's quivers had turned to shudders and his gasps to moans. Lucifer leaned over to whisper in his ear. "You see, I haven't forgotten either."

But Andriel appeared beyond coherent speech and merely clung to him as he continued to shudder and moan. Lucifer judged him to be ready and slid his fingers out of his body and coated his cock with more lube. He bent over Andriel once again, resting the cherubim's legs on his shoulders as he slowly and gently pushed into him.

Tight, clenching heat welcomed him, pulling him in and holding him in its grip. Lucifer didn't move for several heartbeats, afraid of losing control too soon, yet it felt so right. He murmured Andriel's name and leaned closer to kiss the other angel. Then he began to move in long, slow strokes, setting a rhythm that he hoped would last.

Andriel's hips came up to meet him and the cherubim arched into his thrusts, offering up his

throat to be ravished by Lucifer's hungry mouth. He was happy to oblige and marked him right across his jugular, as he listened to his sweet cries of love and passion.

He picked up the pace, changing position slightly.

"Lucifer!" Andriel screamed making him smile. He'd obviously found the spot inside that gave such intense pleasure.

Lucifer took hold of Andriel's weeping erection and pumped it in time to his thrusts. Andriel thrashed and writhed under him and screamed out again. "Oh, my Lord Apollo." That name on his lover's lips after so many centuries stirred something deep inside Lucifer, something he'd never thought to feel again.

Overwhelming sensation, mixed with the joy of finding what he'd thought lost forever, made Lucifer lose the last of his control and he climaxed. "Troilus, oh Troilus!"

The smaller angel clung to Lucifer and shuddered as his own orgasm overtook them both. They collapsed against each other before Lucifer rolled onto his side, bringing Andriel

with him. They both hissed in loss as he slowly withdrew from Andriel's body but still held the cherubim close. "That settles it. You're here for all time, Andriel."

Huge dark brown eyes gazed back at him, their expression changing from surprise to joy. "I'm not going to argue with that."

Lucifer chuckled. "Good! I hate arguing."



Samael sat bolt upright in bed, his eyes wide. Daniel grunted and went back to sleep but Raphael was staring at him, a frown marring his beautiful features. Samael glanced at the Air Archangel once he'd regained control of his emotions. "Did you hear that?"

Raphael's frown intensified. "I heard something but couldn't make out exactly what it was."

Samael swung his legs out of bed and started to dress. "It was Nathaniel. He wants to talk to me alone."

Raphael reached across Daniel and put a

restraining hand on Samael's arm. "Think with your mind, Sam, not your heart. Why now? As far as I know Nathaniel's spoken to you just the once in ten millennia and that was when you rescued me."

Samael stopped pulling on his pants to stare over his shoulder at Raphael. "You're right. I'm going to contact Lucifer."

Raphael nodded. "Good idea if you can do so without Nathaniel knowing."

Samael smiled. "I can do that. For all he creates while I destroy, Nathaniel's no stronger than I am and Luke is stronger than both of us." He concentrated and called out with his mind.
Lucifer?

What is it, Sam?

The Son of the Morning sounded sated and well-pleased with himself but Samael didn't have time to wonder why. *Nathaniel has requested I meet him and talk to him alone. Should I go?*

Yes, but I'm going to be there somewhere. Where is the meeting to be held?

Central Park. Seemingly he knows where I live.

Very well. Take your time. I'll be there in about ten minutes.

Samael returned to a sense of his surroundings and smiled reassuringly at Raphael. "Luke's going to hide out and listen in."

The tension seeped out of Raphael although his eyes still showed his concern. "Be careful, both of you. I've got a really bad feeling about this."

Samael nodded as he resumed dressing. "You and me both, Raph. Take care of Daniel while I'm gone."

Raphael nodded. "Of course."

Samael finished dressing and strode over to the closet to dig out his dark red velvet coat. "I'll go down through the lobby. That should give Luke enough time."

He went round the bed so he could kiss Raphael without disturbing Daniel then left the room, shutting the door behind him.

As he waited for the elevator to reach the

lobby, Samael had time to reflect on just how quickly things were happening after so many eons of relative peace. First Daniel had come into his life, then Raphael's trial, Nathaniel's change of personality, demons on earth and Michael and Gabriel's status. It was almost as if it had all been planned.

The others considered him impetuous and he knew he could be at times but he still had the power of reasoning and something about Nathaniel wanting to speak to him alone had him distinctly worried.

He strode through the lobby, lifting a hand to Jackson in greeting as he passed, and stepped out into the night. He crossed the avenue and entered the dark park. At least he didn't need to worry about muggers.

Nathaniel was standing under a large oak tree, his hands dug into the pockets of a fawn-coloured duster coat, his long black hair tied back severely and a frown on his handsome face. He looked up and the frown cleared when he saw Samael. "You came then?"

Samael shrugged. "As you can see. What's so urgent, Nathaniel, that you drag me out of bed

in the middle of the night after ten millennia of silence?”

Nathaniel glanced around and indicated the bridal path leading to the Greyshtot Arch with his head. “Let’s walk.”

Samael moved forward knowing that Lucifer could keep with them wherever they went. They walked in silence until they came to the ornate tunnel and Nathaniel sat on one of the benches along the side while Samael paced impatiently. “I asked why, Nathaniel.”

Nathaniel smiled, but it wasn’t anything like his old, shy expression. This smile held a hint of malevolence. “How is that little mortal of yours?”

Samael stopped pacing and stiffened but, instead of following the instinct to demand how Nathaniel knew, he waited. “He’s fine, and I’d like to get back to him if it’s all the same to you.”

Nathaniel sniggered. “Yes, keep him close, Samael. These are dangerous times.” His expression darkened. “But enough of pleasantries, brother, I’m here for one reason

only. One of the cherubim called Andriel has left Heaven. Three thousand years ago he was born as a mortal prince in a place called Troy. I tell you this so you know exactly why I refused to continue seeing the Morningstar. He betrayed me with another angel then he betrayed you with Raphael. Do not trust him, brother, and hold your mortal close. I see danger in his future.”

Samael’s eyes narrowed. “So you think I should turn on Lucifer the way you did? I almost did until I realised how much of what happened was my own damned fault. How much of the Trojan prince was yours, Nathaniel? You weren’t exactly generous with your visits, after all.”

Nathaniel looked almost as Samael remembered him for an instant, his expression sad, before his face hardened again. “One of us had to do his duty.”

Samael sighed in irritation. “That won’t wash, Nathaniel. I’ve been doing my job whilst I’ve been here. So have all the others who left. You never needed to stay behind.”

Nathaniel shifted position on the bench and stared off into the distance. “Recriminations,

brother? You really believe I'll accept that from one of the fallen?"

Samael felt his temper rising but Raphael's warning to be careful rang in his mind, grounding him. "Better to be fallen than a hypocrite, don't you think?"

Nathaniel turned his gaze back to Samael's face. A spark of anger burned in his golden eyes. "Is that what you believe me to be?"

Samael was tired of the verbal sparring. He'd never been very good at it in the first place. "I doubt either one of us knows the other anymore. Why did you want this meeting?"

The anger seemed to die out of Nathaniel's eyes to be replaced by weariness. "To warn you of Lucifer's betrayals but doubtless I'm wasting my time. You are too much under the sway of the Evil One after all."

Samael actually laughed at that. It was just too absurd. "You seem to be confusing Lucifer with Satan, Nathaniel."

Nathaniel's eyes widened and his whole body tensed up. "I don't think so. If we are to talk of hypocrisy, brother, at least Satan admits

what he is instead of hiding behind a veneer of goodness.”

Samael’s patience had run out. “Nathaniel, when you start talking sense, I’ll be prepared to listen. Now I’m going home.”

Nathaniel shrugged. “I had hoped you’d listen to reason, but you followed Lucifer blindly ten millennia ago and nothing’s changed. Goodbye, brother, and remember to take care of that young mortal.”

Nathaniel stood up and walked to the tunnel entrance. Six snowy white wings appeared at his back and with one powerful beat of them he vanished into the night sky.

Samael turned towards his apartment building, knowing that Lucifer would meet him there rather than risk Nathaniel seeing him. As he walked he thought about his brother’s words and realised the real reason for his visit. He was threatening Daniel, although Samael couldn’t understand why. But he would find out what Nathaniel had planned for his mortal lover and do his damndest to stop it.

END

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 4: Son of the Morning* 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.

Book Excerpts

Apparently they both had a few things to think about.

Or you might also enjoy *Dragon & Fenyx 1: Called by Power*

by Auburnimp and 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

Book Excerpts

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.

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

by Auburnimp and 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

Book Excerpts

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.

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

Book Excerpts

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

He found himself wishing they had been able to get to the cave already as there was an uncomfortable hardness between his legs and his balls were tight as drums.

I’m not going to be able to sleep like this. I want. . . But exactly what it was that he wanted he wasn’t sure. He had no reference points apart from his own hand and what Storm had already shown him.

A hand slid around Flame to grip his cock, stroking the hardened flesh with firm gentleness. “I’ll give you relief with my hand. I don’t want you to suffer.”

Book Excerpts

Flame swallowed hard, his already heated face becoming even hotter. “Storm...I...”

But the feeling was too good for words and he snuggled back against Storm’s warm, hard body.

“Pleasure is something I can give you as thanks for all the things you have done for me, Flame,” Storm murmured, his lips brushing over the skin of Flame’s neck in light kisses as Storm’s long fingered hand worked his sensitive flesh.

Flame sighed quietly and contentedly and gave in to the pleasure, his balls tightening even more at the feeling of another’s hand on his cock. He was not used to such sensations and knew he wasn’t going to last very long. It was all too new and intense for that.

You can buy *Swordbrothers 1: Outlaw & The Brat* by Auburnimp and Michael Barnette, or *Dragon & Fenyx 1: Called by Power* by Auburnimp and Michael Barnette along with the rest of the *Fallen Angels* series and other fine m/m erotic romance and yaoi titles from:

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