

The background of the cover features a man and a woman in a close embrace. The man, on the left, has long blonde hair and is wearing a dark, long-sleeved turtleneck sweater and dark pants. The woman, on the right, has long dark hair and is topless, wearing dark pants. Both characters have large, feathered wings. The man's wings are golden-yellow, and the woman's wings are white. They are set against a background of soft, glowing light rays.

FALLEN ANGELS 8

*Lucifer
Rising*
Auburnimp

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Fallen Angels 8: Lucifer Rising

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Fallen Angels 8

Lucifer Rising

By Auburnimp

Lucifer met Nathaniel in the middle of the battlefield, his new senses telling him there was no immediate danger from the Creator Angel. He gazed into golden eyes for the first time in three thousand years yet all he felt was bitterness. The same bitterness showed in Nathaniel's expression though whether it was for him or for what had happened, Lucifer didn't know. Even with his new powers he still couldn't read the other Legends.

"Whatever has happened between us, I know you won't lie to me," Nathaniel said. "Who started this nonsense?"

Lucifer snorted mirthlessly. "I was under the impression that you started it."

Nathaniel drooped and the Morningstar realised just how thin and frail he looked under his armour. "I see. So Metatron *was* the antagonist. That makes my part in it even harder to bear."

He shrugged. "Come now, Nathaniel, don't be shy. *You* wanted me dead too."

Nathaniel nodded. "Yes, but not enough to consort with demons to kill you." He drew

himself upright with an obvious effort and Lucifer was hard put not to help him. “I came here because I wanted you to know that Satan was not your enemy. I only found out myself today.”

Lucifer turned his attention to the Fallen Archangels at Nathaniel's side. “If not you and Asmodeus, then who is my enemy?”

Satan stared at the ground for several moments before looking up. “A demon called Arioeh rules in the Pit. He's been disguising himself as me and whispering lies to Nathaniel for the last five millennia.”

Lucifer frowned. “So where is he now?” He remembered with shock the malevolence that had slammed into him and beckoned to Samael.

The Angel of Death lost no time in joining them, his hand on the hilt of his sword. Lucifer reached out a hand to stop him drawing it. “There are no enemies here, Sam. Who did you kill to free Daniel?”

Samael frowned but moved his hand away from his sword. “A demon called Arioeh.”

If the malevolent force was freed by his death,

whose death freed the other force? Why did they both slam into me?

“Lucifer?” Asmodeus’ worried voice brought him back to a sense of his surroundings. There was so much he had to do, so much he had to think about.

“Did this Arioeh have anything to do with Metatron?” he asked Satan.

Satan shook his head. “As far as I’m aware, Arioeh only acted through Nathaniel.”

Lucifer frowned. He would need to have a long talk with Nathaniel at some point but for now he needed to sort out the mess he had all around him. “How badly is Daniel hurt, Sam?”

Samael glowered at his brother, his gaze accusing Nathaniel of assisting in the mortal’s condition. “Raph was able to close the wounds but says he can’t mend the lost muscles and tendons. He says Daniel will never be able to walk again.” His bottled up anger and pain burst forth in a surge of vitriol which he turned on Nathaniel. “How could you bear to even be near that . . . that demon, Nathaniel?”

Lucifer put a hand out to calm Samael. “He was seeing Satan, not the demon.”

Nathaniel’s eyes widened though whether it was because of Samael’s attack or his defence Lucifer couldn’t tell.

Metatron headed towards them and Samael tensed and growled. Lucifer smirked. If Samael wanted to kill the archangel he wouldn’t lift a finger to stop him. When the other archangels also started moving towards their little group, Lucifer sighed. He shot a glance at Satan. “Find somewhere clean so we can be seated for this.”

Satan nodded and headed off to find a clean patch of ground. Lucifer turned his attention to Samael. “Take me to Daniel, Sam. The rest of you go with Satan, we’ll join you later.”

Lucifer didn’t bother to check if the others were following his instructions, he had a courageous and likeable mortal to reward. *Can I still do this, I wonder? With that evil inside me I may have lost this gift.*

You have lost nothing, Morningstar. Instead you have gained.

Great! Now the voices were back in his head.

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Although as the Balance between good and evil you might want to consider your actions carefully. Not all will be benevolent in future.

Some less than benevolent actions are called for at times.

I just wish you'd both shut up unless I ask for your advice. I have always acted as I saw fit and that will not change.

He heard laughter in his head but ignored it as he approached Raphael and Daniel. The demons still on the battlefield parted for him and even bowed as he went past them. That was another riddle for later.

Samael was right, Raphael had only been able to heal the superficial damage and keep Daniel asleep so he wasn't in pain. Lucifer crouched down and studied the mortal boy. "Raph, put Daniel down and step away please."

Raphael did as he was asked very reluctantly. He raised a tear-streaked face. "What do you intend, Luke?"

Lucifer smiled at the Air Archangel. "Dry your tears, Raph it's time for Daniel to receive

his reward for all the help he's given us and the pain he's gone through."

Raphael's lovely blue eyes widened and he retreated to Samael's arms.

Lucifer concentrated and a soft white light wrapped itself around the sleeping mortal. The light grew brighter and brighter until it was enough to blind then it was gone leaving Daniel whole and changed. Four wings of the darkest indigo were spread on the ground behind him and his skin had taken on the lustre that only high level angels possessed.

Raphael gasped. "You've made him an archangel?"

Lucifer nodded as he rose slowly to his feet. Exhaustion was beginning to catch up with him but there was still so much to do. "No more than he deserved, Raph. You can wake him up now but he will probably be disoriented for a short while."

He turned, almost bumping into Samael who put out a hand to steady him. "Thank you, Luke."

Lucifer smiled at his brother Legend. "You

might not thank me when you know what else I have planned. Your young archangel will always be one of the Fallen.”

Samael smirked. “I wouldn’t have it any other way, you know that.”

Daniel stirred and opened his eyes. “What happened?” He attempted to sit up and found it hard. “Why does my back feel heavy?”

Raphael knelt beside him weeping once more. “It’s the weight of your wings, Daniel. You’re one of us now.”

Daniel struggled and finally sat upright. He flexed his back and the wings disappeared. One of Samael’s brows shot up. “It’s as if he was born to it.”

Lucifer shrugged. “I imagine he’s seen you or Raph do that often enough. Can you stand, Daniel? We need to go and negotiate.”

“I can try,” Daniel said. He reached out an arm and Raphael hauled him to his feet. He was wobbly but well able to walk when Raphael put an arm round his shoulders and guided him forward.

Lucifer smiled. “Okay, let’s go and see what the demands are.”



Nathaniel followed Satan, his head lowered in shame. Metatron reached out a hand to him but he ignored it, finally able to see just how he’d been used by both Arioch and Metatron.

Satan found some clean, smooth boulders and they seated themselves to wait. Across the battlefield, near the entrance to the Pit a bright light glowed and all but Nathaniel turned their eyes away from its brilliance. *So you make the mortal an archangel? He must be more important than I ever realised. No wonder that foul creature spoke of him. But so much damage was done by then that Samael could only see my warning to him as a threat. Had I become so dark by then that he thought I would harm a mortal who had never harmed me?*

Metatron cleared his throat but glares from both Sandalphon and Michael shut him up, for now. *I wonder what he expects to happen. He and*

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I got many angels killed today. Does he think to be rewarded?

Nathaniel watched with dull eyes as four angels approached the group. One, the brother who must now hate him, another he had stood in judgement on due to his petty jealousy, the third was an unknown quantity and the fourth was the love he'd spurned.

He looked away as they drew near, his eyes fixed on the ground. He felt, rather than saw, Metatron jump to his feet. "Why was I not informed of the imminent attack of your demons, Lucifer?"

Nathaniel looked up to stare at the self-proclaimed Voice of God. Metatron's anger became confusion. "Why did you turn on your own?"

Lucifer said nothing until he'd seated himself on a rock and his companions had found seats also. When he did speak it was to Sandalphon, Michael and Gabriel. "I want to thank you for holding so many angels in reserve. Your actions saved the day for all of us.

"As for you, Metatron, give me one good

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reason why I shouldn't let either Samael or Raphael kill you. I know they would be happy to oblige."

Nathaniel watched silently as the bluster left Metatron like a deflating balloon. *I was fool enough to back him in this stupidity.*

Metatron muttered something and Lucifer commanded him to speak up: strangely enough he did. "I said I see no point in the Heavenly Angels negotiating with the Fallen."

To Nathaniel's intense surprise Lucifer laughed out loud. "You just don't get it, do you Metatron? There *are* no Fallen. We left of our own free will. We left because we could no longer live with *your* lies and manipulations. We've learned a great deal about the mortal planes in the ten thousand years since. Earth and many thousands of other beautiful planets have thrived in that time because we were actually there to look after them. All you ever did was lord it over Heaven.

"I do not intend to let our knowledge and work go to waste so from now on *all* angels will reside on the mortal planes."

There were several gasps at that, not just from Metatron.

“Are you saying we haven’t been doing our jobs properly?” Michael demanded.

Lucifer shook his head. “No, Michael. You’ve spread your living flame throughout the multiverse, Gabriel has built seas, lakes and rivers, Raphael, even when drunk, still provided many viable planets with atmosphere. Nathaniel has continued to create life. Need I go on?”

Michael shook his head. “Then what are you saying to us?”

“Simply that you’ve left it to the cherubim and thrones to look after those planets. You’ve all become lazy and sloppy. So we’re going to do things differently now.”

Metatron jumped to his feet. “What gives you the right to say these things to us? You are not God.”

Lucifer actually smirked at him. “I’m the nearest thing to God that *you’ll* ever find, Metatron. Since the leader of the demons was killed by Samael, I became the Balance between Good and Evil. I’m the Balance between Life

and Death in your case so I would shut up if I were you.”

Nathaniel winced as Metatron glanced around the assembled Archangels and Legends as if looking for back up. Sandalphon had his arms folded across his chest and gave no sign. Metatron’s gaze fell on him and he shrugged. “You only needed my agreement to a war. You neither needed nor wanted anything else from me.”

He glanced around this time, not quite able to look Lucifer in the eye. “I’m sure most of you want to know where I’ve been and what I’ve been doing for the past five millennia. I’ve been doing my job, that never changed, but I’ve also been listening to a skilful liar and going along with his suggestions in the mistaken belief I was talking to Satan.” He turned his gaze on Metatron. “He was aided by your actions at the Battle of Troy. It had to be you who sent a disguised angel to Lucifer because you knew his mortal lovers never mattered to me.”

Metatron shifted uncomfortably. “I mistakenly believed you were spending all your

time with Lucifer. We needed your presence in Heaven, Nathaniel.”

“What the fuck for? You never listened to me when I *was* there!”

Several of the angels gasped at his language, while Raphael and Gabriel appeared to be hiding smiles behind their hands. Nathaniel didn't much care. He was tired and hurting from Lucifer's continued association with the Cherubim Throne.

Metatron opened his mouth but a particularly dark scowl from Samael made him shut it again in a hurry.

“Enough,” Lucifer held up his hand. “I've told you how it's going to be. You'll all be making your homes outside of Heaven from now on. You'll be available to your Cherubim and Thrones at all times for advice.”

Sandalphon raised a hand. “While I agree in principal to what you're saying, Lucifer, how are the lesser angels supposed to find us if we're flung to the far corners of the multiverse?”

Lucifer nodded. “It's a fair question. You use the same system that those of us who left

Heaven use. There are millions of Thrones and Cherubim so messages can be passed swiftly and efficiently.”

Beliel shrugged. “Some of them will sneak back to Heaven first chance they get.”

Lucifer chuckled. “No they won’t. There won’t *be* a Heaven. I’m going to destroy it.”

A stunned silence greeted Lucifer’s words. Samael broke it by laughing. “Now I understand what you meant about Daniel.”

Lucifer gave him a smile. “Did you honestly think I was going to leave Heaven in Metatron’s hands, Sam?”

Samael thought about that. If he’d considered it at all, he’d supposed that Heaven would be passed to Michael or Sandalphon to rule but, now he actually did think about it he could see why that wouldn’t work either. Nathaniel, although obviously upset about the way he’d been used, was still a loose cannon and if Metatron survived

what remained of the day intact, he would soon find ways to cause new trouble. Then there were all the demons to consider. “No,” he said. “This way is probably best for all of us.”

“Good,” Lucifer said, “Because I’m not prepared to move on this issue. Those of you accustomed to living in Heaven will just have to get used to the idea and help those under you to come to terms with a new lifestyle also. The next problem is what to do with millions of demons. I now have some insights into their creation and purpose and I believe they’ll obey me but it’s a task that needs more than one of us to oversee.”

Satan spoke up. “Asmodeus and I are used to living in the Pit, although I can’t promise the demons will obey us.”

“They will,” Lucifer said grimly, “unless they want to incur *my* wrath. Do you honestly believe that’s all you’re worth, Satan?”

Satan nodded. “I was once the judge of mortal souls in Heaven. I sent many to Arioeh for punishment for relatively minor sins. I was told I was too harsh by everyone except Metatron who wanted me to send them all to the Pit. Well now I’ve experienced life in the Pit at first hand

and I wouldn't send a cockroach there if I could help it."

Lucifer smiled. "I have news for you, Satan. Nathaniel spent too many eons persuading me to grant souls to mortal life for me to leave those souls to *your* mercies. All souls are reborn."

Satan stared. "Then who do we have in the Pit?"

Samael snickered. He knew the answer to that question, had helped Lucifer come up with it. "Playthings," he said. "Simulacrum made to keep the demons happy and out of too much mischief. Lucifer and I had already discussed the recycling of souls but we also knew both you and the demons needed a purpose."

He expected Satan to be angry but instead the Archangel breathed a sigh. "I'm relieved, having seen how rough the demons play."

Metatron jumped to his feet. "Now wait a minute!"

Lucifer turned to stare at him. "Sit down, Metatron. You're next on my 'to do' list."

Satan raised a hand. "Will you and Samael

continue sending the fake souls to the Pit? If so then I'm still prepared to oversee it."

Asmodeus spoke up. "I'll help Satan. We're not demons but we are more used to their way of life than we are to doing good deeds."

Lucifer frowned. "As long as you're both sure, I have no objections. Just keep the demons from meddling in mortal concerns unless it's on my instructions."

Satan nodded. "That shouldn't be difficult. Anything pertaining to demons in the mortal world was done under Arioch's orders and the demons weren't always too happy about those orders. Are they prisoners in the Pit?"

Lucifer shook his head. "By no means, the mortal races need conflict in order to grow. The demons' temptations and mischief help to provide that conflict." He turned to gaze at Metatron, purple eyes as cold as chips of amethyst. "Now it's your turn."

Samael folded his arms and waited to see what Lucifer had decided. If he had his way, Metatron would not leave Armageddon alive.

Metatron stared around at the assembled

Archangels and Legends before huddling in upon himself.

Lucifer was relentless. “You saw fit to put an Elemental Archangel on trial, to meddle in the affairs of Legends, to start a civil war amongst the Angels and to speak for ‘God.’ It makes Raphael’s ‘crimes’ seem rather paltry by comparison. However, I am prepared to let any Angel that might wish to do so speak on your behalf.”

“That’s more than he offered Raphael,” Michael muttered.

Samael snorted in derision. “Of course,” he said. “He and Nathaniel wanted Raph dead for different reasons. Nathaniel’s I can understand as I was furious too. But Metatron wanted to destroy Raph simply because he couldn’t have him.” He leaned towards Metatron. “Even with me gone he wouldn’t even look at you, would he?”

Metatron snarled but said nothing.

Nathaniel stared down at his hands. “I was jealous,” he whispered.

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Samael glanced at his brother. “You and me both, Nathaniel, but I didn’t attempt murder.”

“Of anything animate that is,” Raphael whispered to Daniel who grinned.

Samael glowered at his lovers, not wanting to be reminded of the destruction he had wrought on their living room at the news of Raphael’s night with Lucifer.

Lucifer smiled, a singularly unpleasant expression. “I believe it’s time for Metatron’s trial. Is anyone prepared to speak for him?”

Metatron cast a desperate look at Sandalphon. “Brother?”

Sandalphon shook his head. “You brought this upon yourself, Metatron. You can’t expect me to condone your stupidity and many assumptions.”

Samael wondered just how badly Metatron would react to his twin’s condemnation. The Archangel didn’t keep him waiting long for an answer as he jumped to his feet and pointed a finger at Lucifer. “You have no jurisdiction over me. You are a Fallen Angel, a Prince of Demons.”

Lucifer chuckled darkly. “The Prince of Demons part might well be true now, but I still outrank you. Perhaps you would prefer Nathaniel to judge you but, then again, I have yet to decide what I’m going to do about *his* part in all this nonsense.

“You simply don’t understand what you’ve achieved here, do you? You’ve caused me to change from being an Angel into the Balance between Good and Evil, Light and Dark. This wasn’t a responsibility I either asked for or wanted but now we’re all stuck with it whatever it might mean.”

All the fight went out of Metatron and he backed away from Lucifer. “You intend to kill me, don’t you?”

Lucifer shrugged. “Let’s just say I need a good reason to keep you alive, Metatron. Can you give me one?”

Samael watched in amusement as Metatron struggled to find a legitimate answer to Lucifer’s question. He could feel the confused chagrin coming off the Archangel in waves and he couldn’t help but point it out. “You’re wondering where you went wrong, Metatron, how things turned

out so badly for you. I think almost anyone here can answer those questions for you.”

Metatron shot him a glare. “It seems to me that all I got wrong was the name of the enemy and I wasn’t the only one, was I?”

Samael shook his head in disbelief. “You think the deaths of several hundred angels and demons are your major crime? Think again!”

Lucifer chuckled. “Do you wish to speak for the prosecution, Sam?”

Samael gave him a wry grin. “I’d rather be the executioner to be honest.”

Lucifer nodded. “I thought you might, so let’s turn the tables, shall we? Raphael will speak for the prosecution. Do any of you wish to speak in defence?”

“Some of the thrones or cherubim might,” Gabriel said after a moment’s thought.”

Lucifer frowned. “I’d rather keep this amongst those of us already here.”

Gabriel’s normally warm eyes hardened. “Then let Metatron do what Raphael had to do and speak for himself.”

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All of the Archangel's present nodded their agreement to that so Lucifer named the charges. "Metatron, you are charged with speaking for God, attempting to rule in Heaven, attempting to destroy what you could not have and turning Angel against Angel. How do you plead?"

Metatron looked around, his eyes wild. "This isn't a fair trial!"

"Nor was the one you gave Raphael for far lesser crimes," Michael spat out.

"Not guilty. I plead not guilty."

Raphael sighed. "You were the self-proclaimed 'Voice of God' for eons, you made Heaven so damned uncomfortable that a third of the Angels left and you started a war against those you termed the Fallen. How can you possibly plead not guilty?"

There was a stir as Nathaniel rose unsteadily to his feet. "I should be on trial here too. Raphael hasn't even mentioned Metatron's attempt to destroy him, in which I took an equal part. My long absences from Heaven allowed Metatron to step into the other crimes with which he's been charged. Doesn't that make me equally guilty?"

Samael was stunned by Metatron's reaction. Instead of being grateful for Nathaniel's intercession the 'Voice of God' jumped to his feet and turned on the Legend. "Sit down and shut up, you imbecile! It was your weakness that brought me to this!"

Around them, several of the angels gasped.

Samael had his own problems with his brother but he wasn't prepared to let Metatron treat him that way. "No, Metatron, it was your ambition. You were angling for power before Lucifer and I even left Heaven. You can't blame Nathaniel for that. Nor can you blame him for your desires towards Raphael. I'll be honest with you, Metatron. Your treatment of an Archangel who is a thousand times your superior is the main reason I want to kill you."

"Nathaniel agreed to his trial!" Metatron yelled.

"Of course he did," Raphael said, his voice soft in stark contrast to Metatron's hysteria, "I betrayed both him and Samael. You simply used his pain and jealousy. You even added to it with your use of Andriel."

Metatron tried again. “Someone had to look after Heaven!”

Raphael shook his head. “No, they didn’t. We all knew our responsibilities and carried on with them despite your interference. You were the Archangel who introduced us to lies and deceit in your quest for ultimate power over Heaven, the multiverse and me. From my point of view, your lies and deceptions are your worst crimes.

“Just like Ariocho did with Nathaniel, you bent and twisted the truth to achieve your own ends. You told Asmodeus that Lillith was laughing at him, you convinced Satan that he was doing God’s work when you convinced him to lie at the trials of the souls. You did that to keep mortal souls from ‘tainting’ Heaven. And all of this was done before the so-called Fallen left Heaven in disgust at your antics.

“You didn’t care whose lives you destroyed with your lies as long as it got you what you wanted. If your Cherubim and Thrones loved you, you used their love to further your own ends. This final act of stupidity nearly handed the multiverse over to the demons under Ariocho to rule.”

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Metatron sank back onto his rock and buried his head in his hands. “You’re all against me, every last one of you.”

Samael glanced at Nathaniel who had his head down also. *What will happen to you, my brother? I believe you were used just as others were, but why couldn’t you see it? Ah well, I guess you’re Lucifer’s problem now.*

Lucifer’s quiet yet implacable voice brought him back from his thoughts and he waited to hear Metatron’s fate.

“You are no longer fit to live amongst us, Metatron,” the Son of the Morning was saying, “and there is nowhere I can send you where you won’t come into contact with Cherubim or Thrones. I’m not prepared to have you corrupt them with your lies so I only have one option left.”

Lucifer glanced around at those assembled as if waiting for one or other of them to argue Metatron’s case. “Are we all agreed?”

Samael shrugged. He was quite happy to see the end of Metatron, happy enough to do

the deed, but he wondered what the other Archangels might have to say on the subject.

He was almost surprised when everyone present, apart from Nathaniel, nodded. His brother simply sat, still and silent.

“Nathaniel?” Lucifer urged and the Creator Angel finally looked up, his eyes dull and listless.

“Whatever I might say would make me a hypocrite. I can’t condemn him for crimes which I am equally guilty of without condemning myself and I can’t speak for him because everything that has been said here is absolutely right, therefore I abstain. Do whatever you wish with both him and me.”

Lucifer glanced up at Samael. He nodded in response and grabbed one of Metatron’s arms. Surprisingly, the Archangel didn’t fight or struggle but walked out onto the plain with Samael, back straight and with some dignity to meet his fate.

Lucifer shut his eyes, trying desperately to remain awake and aware while he tied up the loose ends. “Those of you who want to retrieve anything from Heaven have until morning to do so. Please pass that message on to all the others.

“We will need to gather again in the near future to finalise details and decide on Daniel’s role. My idea would be as a protector of the abused and innocent, but any firm decisions can wait till we meet. I’d suggest Hades as our meeting place, if Uriel agrees, as I realise that some of you would be uncomfortable if I asked you to enter Hell.

“For now I suggest you recover everything of value to you and get some rest.”

Sandalphon nodded but asked. “When do you want us to have this meeting?”

Lucifer smiled at him. If any of them might argue to keep Heaven it would be Sandalphon, but he’d accepted Lucifer’s decision to destroy it with remarkably good grace. “Tomorrow, I will want to know where everyone is going to be living in future and what plans you have for tending the multiverse. After that you can send

your Cherubim or Thrones with any messages if you'd rather not see me."

Sandalphon surprised Lucifer by chuckling. "I think we should all get together periodically to prevent any further stupidity, don't you?"

Lucifer grinned. "You're probably thinking straighter than I am right now, Sandalphon. I agree wholeheartedly."

Asmodeus raised a hand. "Will these meetings include Satan and me?"

Lucifer nodded. "Of course, you are my representatives in the Pit after all."

Samael returned alone. "Um, I hope you don't mind, Luke, but the demons wanted to tear Metatron's remains to pieces for unwittingly aiding Arioeh. It seems they didn't like him either. I gave them his soul also."

Lucifer nodded but made no comment. It was a fitting end to Metatron after all. "Very well, I'll meet you all in Hades tomorrow afternoon. Just have Heaven cleared before morning." With that he rose to his feet, ready to return to his domain and bed.

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Around him the Archangels and Samael dispersed to either rest or pack their belongings. Only Nathaniel remained perched on his rock as if he intended to stay there for eternity.

Damn! I forgot the need to deal with him. Somehow I don't think we're going to be doing much sleeping after all.

He reached out his hand. "Come Nathaniel, we need to talk and I don't intend to do so here."

Nathaniel glanced up. "Where then?"

Lucifer couldn't resist smirking. "Why in Hell of course!"

Nathaniel jumped to his feet, his face working in fury. "Don't mock me, Luke. I know you have Andriel there!"

Lucifer sighed knowing his behaviour with another angel had been wrong but his loneliness had led to actions he would never otherwise have taken. "I admit I did have him there until I discovered he was as big a liar as his master. I sent him back to Metatron and where he is now, I neither know nor care. Now come with

me or stay here and rot. I'm almost past caring which."

He turned away and spread his wings. It came as quite a shock when he realised that Nathaniel was flying at his side.

How long has it been since we flew together? It must be over four thousand years. I've missed him so much but we need to talk long and hard. Even then there's no guarantee he'll want to return to my side.

Nathaniel flew in silence until they reached Lucifer's domain. He knew why the Morningstar had named it Hell. It was an example of his distorted sense of humour. But Nathaniel had been living in his own version of Hell for too long to appreciate the joke.

He wasn't at all surprised to find how comfortable the place was. Lucifer had never seen any reason to live frugally even when he'd resided in Heaven. "You were ever the hedonist, Luke."

Lucifer folded his wings and led the way to a lavish sitting room with a roaring fire and chairs that looked as if one could sink endlessly into their upholstered depths. The walls were a pale gold and reflected the flames from the fire throughout the room. The Son of the Morning sat in a chair by the fire and indicated the one opposite to Nathaniel. "I'm not the one who changed, until today that is."

Nathaniel perched on the edge of the chair, still undecided whether he should stay or go. "That was an unexpected development," he admitted.

Lucifer shrugged. "I'm hoping it works out better than Metatron and Arioch tearing the multiverse apart between them."

Nathaniel shuddered at mention of Arioch. "I seem to have played into everyone's hands; first by considering my work more important than seeing you, next by agreeing to talk to 'Satan' and then, by my continued absence, letting Metatron scheme."

Lucifer gave him the coldest look he'd ever received from the Morningstar. "You always did

have a stubborn, blind side, Nathan. It kept you in Heaven when the rest of us left.”

Nathaniel had no answer for that so he stared into the flames and remained silent. After a moment he looked up. “So what do you intend to do with me?”

Lucifer shook his head. “At this moment, I have no idea. I’m prepared to overlook the mistakes of listening to Arioeh without knowing his true identity and staying behind in Heaven but the other hurts you’ve caused me over the eons are harder to forgive.”

Nathaniel jumped to his feet. “If we are to talk of hurts, what do you think your nights with Andriel and Raphael did to me?” he shouted.

Lucifer rose to his feet looking as deadly as a striking cobra and grabbed Nathaniel’s arms in a vice-like grip. “Were those few nights enough reason for you to dub me ‘The Evil One’? Wasn’t that intended to hurt?”

Nathaniel cried out in pain at the bruising grip on his arms but still managed to look Lucifer in the eye as he answered. “I was lied to by Metatron as well as everyone else. It was *your* betrayals that

did the most damage, made me more receptive to the lies, more ready to believe them!”

He staggered and almost fell as Lucifer thrust him away. “Those ‘betrayals’ would never have happened if you’d simply *been* here!”

There was nothing Nathaniel could say in answer and he knew it so he perched on the edge of the chair once more and resumed staring into the fire. The flames gave him no answers either.

“Why didn’t you come with us? You could have done your work just as well from here.”

Lucifer’s voice made him glance up again. “I thought that, if I stayed, the angels could come to me with their concerns. I wanted to be there for them. Of course, once you and Sam left, Metatron had no constraints on his behaviour and bypassed me by naming himself ‘the Voice of God’. Gabriel, Michael and Sandalphon took very good care of their Thrones and Cherubim so I had less and less to do. That’s when I started working on viable planets, spreading life throughout the multiverse.” He shrugged. “The less time I spent in Heaven, the more Metatron came to see himself as the one in charge.”

Lucifer scowled at him. “So why didn’t you leave then?”

Nathaniel returned his gaze to the fire. It was so nice to be warm for once. It made him realise just how cold he’d been, how thin he’d become. “It was around then that I started talking to Arioch disguised as Satan,” he whispered. “I spent even more time away from Heaven, not wanting to deal with anyone really. I came to you, less and less because. . . I felt somehow unworthy. You were always full of plans for the sentient species spread across the multiverse and I was becoming apathetic about their very existence. Arioch had to be more than simply a demon to affect me that way. Then Troy happened.”

Lucifer leaned forward. “I had no idea that Troilus was Andriel as a mortal. I should have realised when he came to mean more than the others, but I thought it was due to you not visiting me so often.”

Nathaniel flinched. Lucifer might as well have slapped him as tell him Troilus was important and meant something. *If I’d been here it would never have happened.* That thought didn’t help and he began to realise just how petty he’d been.

Then he remembered recent events. “You knew *exactly* who he was when you brought him here!”

He wondered for a second if Lucifer really was going to hit him before the fury left the Morningstar’s face. “Again, Nathaniel, I have to ask where the fuck you were when I did that. For three thousand years you wanted nothing to do with me, wouldn’t see me at all. Don’t you think you should take some of the blame for both my night with Raph and Andriel’s return here?”

Nathaniel’s temper subsided, partly because he simply didn’t have the energy to sustain it and partly because he knew Lucifer’s words were the truth. “You truly didn’t know that Troilus was an angel?” he whispered.

Lucifer frowned. “I *did* wonder why I felt so protective towards him apart from the city being mine in my guise as Apollo. I put it down to his youth and apparent innocence. It came as quite a shock when you became so jealous. How did you see through him when I couldn’t?”

Nathaniel bowed his head in shame. “Metatron told me. He said Raphael was playing a trick on you.”

Lucifer sighed irritably. “And it didn’t cross your mind that Raph would never play such a stupid trick and that Metatron of *all* the Archangels was the one he’d confided in?”

Nathaniel shook his head. “I was already talking to Arioch by then and I never knew until today what Metatron’s true feelings for Raphael were. I should have known as I only ever saw Raph with his brothers after you and Sam left.”

Lucifer stood and crossed to the chair Nathaniel was sitting in. “How long is it since you’ve eaten properly or looked after yourself, Nathan?”

A gentle hand descended and touched his cheek. Light as the touch was it hurt him. “I’m not really sure. A long time, I think, but my mind’s been so hazy somehow.”

Lucifer nodded. “Arioch’s doing, no doubt. He might actually have won if he hadn’t crossed Sam.”

Nathaniel glanced up. “The mortal, Daniel, you mean? I tried to warn Sam but I think he saw it as a threat. I’d become so dark by then.”

Lucifer nodded. “Yes, Daniel. You should get

to know him, Nathan. He's surprisingly wise for all his youth."

Nathaniel scoffed. "You honestly think Sam will let me anywhere near either him or Raph after all I've done?"

Lucifer shrugged, his hand continuing to brush Nathaniel's cheek. "He was ready to kill me himself, so I think, once he realises you're not his enemy, he'll come round."

Nathaniel felt as if a great weight had been lifted off his shoulders. He'd missed his beloved, impetuous and moody brother almost as much as he'd missed the Morningstar. Without them the light had gone out in his world. "I always was the weakest," he murmured.

Lucifer smiled. "Except when you let that stubborn streak of yours take over. Then you're immovable."

Nathaniel glanced up. "I know we have a lot still to say, but I'm so tired, Luke."

Without saying another word, Lucifer scooped him out of the chair and carried him down a long, brightly lit hallway. He was taken

into a bedroom and deposited on the bed. “Let’s get that armour off you.”

Nathaniel reached tiredly for the straps to his breastplate but Lucifer batted his hands away. “Relax. I’m not going to molest you.”

Nathaniel wasn’t sure if he was happy or sad about that. If he was honest he supposed he didn’t have the energy to do any physical expression of his feelings justice. He wasn’t even certain what his feelings were anymore. All he knew was he felt safe here.

Lucifer removed Nathaniel’s breastplate and he heaved a sigh of relief. *Since when did it feel so heavy? Since you stopped eating properly idiot!*

A gasp from Lucifer made Nathaniel open his eyes. “What is it?”

Lucifer looked to be in acute pain for some reason. “Why did you do this to yourself? I can see every rib.”

Nathaniel shrugged, an easier feat now he was rid of the heavy armour. “I simply didn’t have much appetite.”

“I’m almost scared to let you sleep without feeding you first,” Lucifer said.

“I won’t die in the night, Luke. Let me rest and I promise I’ll eat in the morning. I must admit I have an interest in seeing the destruction of Heaven so I’ll need my strength.”

Lucifer frowned but said, “Very well. I’ll see you in the morning. Good night, Nathan.”

Nathaniel stared. “You’re not staying here?”

Lucifer blinked. “Would you want me to?”

Nathaniel bit his lip. So much lay between them yet he felt comfortable when Lucifer was with him, more like his old self. Yet he didn’t know the answer to Lucifer’s question.

Do I want him to stay? We’re both exhausted so nothing will happen but then again. . .

“I don’t know,” he said.

Lucifer sighed. “It’s probably best if I go. We’ll talk more tomorrow.” He walked towards the door before turning his head to say, “It’s strange. So much time has passed yet I find myself with very little to say to you.”

Nathaniel felt like crying. He’d tossed away his

only love like a broken toy out of petty jealousy over something Lucifer was not even aware of. “Hardly surprising,” he whispered forlornly.

Lucifer sighed again and turned back towards the bed. “Move over,” he said gruffly and Nathaniel complied, glad to have the decision taken out of his hands.

Lucifer undressed quickly and climbed in beside him. “You’re freezing,” he remarked.

Nathaniel managed a shrug. “I’m nearly always cold these days.”

“Get some rest.” Lucifer’s tone was not unkind and his body was warming the bed up nicely so Nathaniel relaxed and drifted into sleep.



Gabriel took a last look around the quarters he’d shared with Michael for so many eons. He couldn’t see anything left that either of them might want but he knew his fiery lover all too well. “Have you packed everything you need and moved it to Hades?”

Michael walked around, obviously checking

one last time. “Yes, beloved.” He came back to where Gabriel waited by the door. “Will you miss this place?”

Gabriel took a final look round before smiling at his tall lover. “Not really. I’m sure we can find somewhere just as nice on one of the mortal realms. As long as there is water nearby I’ll be happy.”

Michael chuckled and wrapped his arms round Gabriel. “I’ll be fine as long as the climate is warm.”

Gabriel smiled but the expression didn’t last very long. “How are the Cherubim and Thrones responding?”

Michael grimaced. “As you might have guessed, those who answered to Metatron have dug their heels in. Neither Sandalphon nor I could sway them but Samael and Raphael have just arrived so they’re finally realising they have to leave.”

Gabriel’s smile reappeared. “It always was amusing to see angels change their minds at sight of Samael’s scowls. They’re going to have to hurry if they have a lot to move.”

Michael shrugged. “These are Metatron’s Cherubim and Thrones. You know the poor fools ended up living in almost empty cells. To be honest, I can’t see why they even want to stay.”

Gabriel sniggered. “Sheer bloody-mindedness probably, several of them are still convinced that he’ll be back.”

Michael chuckled again. “They’re going to get a real surprise when Lucifer arrives then.”

Gabriel shifted in his lover’s arms so he could take a final look at the home they’d shared for so long. He had no real problem with it vanishing for all time especially as the last ten thousand years had not been particularly happy ones for any of them. “So much suffering was endured by so many,” he murmured, “and all of it directly attributable to one Archangel’s ambition and greed.”

Michael rested his chin on golden curls. “Yes,” he agreed, “and we were the luckier ones.”

Gabriel remained in his lover’s embrace for a few moments before moving away and taking

Michael's hand. "Come, beloved. I want to see how Lucifer is going to accomplish this."

They made their way out of the living quarters and towards the main gathering place. Judging by the sudden hush, Lucifer had arrived. Gabriel cursed his short stature and nudged Michael. "Either get us closer or tell me what is happening."

Michael chuckled but began to force a path for them through the assembled hosts. "I think the hush has to do with all three Legends being in one place at the same time. It's been a while, after all."

Gabriel kept hold of Michael's belt as he followed him through the crowd. "Nathaniel's here too?" He was surprised by that as he didn't think the Creator Angel had any more interest in Heaven than Lucifer or Samael had.

Finally they were through all the bodies and Gabriel could see the raised area in the centre of the meeting place. Not only were all three Legends present but also all the surviving Archangels and their new brother, Daniel. Lucifer beckoned for him and Michael to join them.

Fallen Angels 8: Lucifer Rising

Once they reached the others, Lucifer's melodious voice rang out. "I am here to destroy Heaven as I'm sure you all know by now. If you've left anything behind I'm afraid it's too late."

As he spoke the ether began to shimmer like rising heat in the distance. As Gabriel watched, it vibrated madly, sending shockwaves out in all directions. Around them the columns and cloisters began to fall, the destruction spreading outwards until all that was left was the meeting place itself.

Gabriel expected to hear cries of anguish and loss but there was total silence until some of the Cherubim near the front bent the knee to the Legends and Archangels. The gesture spread throughout the host, even Metatron's adherents bending their knees to the inevitable.

Lucifer spoke out once more. "While we are all together in one place, I want to introduce Daniel to you. I am putting him in charge of protecting the innocent and oppressed and I expect you to heed his instructions just as you would any of the other Archangels. Now go and find yourselves new homes and await our instructions."

The gathered host slowly rose and dispersed

to various points in the multiverse leaving just the Legends and Archangels behind. Lucifer glanced round at them all, a wry smile on his handsome face. “Shall we assemble in Hades then?”

Gabriel nodded as did all the others present. They beat powerful wings and flew, the ground they’d been standing on disappearing as they left. Gabriel wondered why he felt nothing but numbness.



The meeting in Hades went surprisingly well, all of the Archangels having the intelligence to realise that they needed to work together as a team from now on and prevent anyone else trying to take on a ‘Voice of God’ role.

Lucifer introduced Daniel to those who didn’t already know him and was pleased to note that nobody objected to his role as a protector. Sandalphon even went so far as to say, “I think Daniel will be very good in that role.”

Uriel offered the use of his domain for regular meetings and that also made Lucifer happy. He

glanced around the Great Hall that they were gathered in. “I know where to find any of you who were living outside of Heaven and I realise that Sandalphon, Michael and Gabriel have yet to find permanent homes. However, when you do find those homes I’d like to be informed of where they are so you can all be contacted if need arises.”

“I think Michael and I are looking at the Mediterranean area for a home. A remote villa would probably suit us. But we will let either Uriel or Raphael know when we’ve found the right place.”

Lucifer smirked. “Very well, shrimp,” he said and watched in amusement as Gabriel scowled.

Sandalphon spoke up again. “I’m looking to make my home somewhere in the Far East. Either Thailand or Japan are appealing.”

Lucifer raised a surprised brow at the information and mentally kicked himself for not getting to know Sandalphon better than he had in the past. Well hopefully all that would change from now on.

Daniel, of course, had to ask a question. “So where is Nathaniel going to live?”

Nathaniel shifted uncomfortably and whispered, “I don’t know. Perhaps I should just keep working on viable planets.”

Lucifer was shocked by the wave of possessive, protective emotion that overtook him at Nathaniel’s quiet words. “You’ll do no such thing! It’ll take long enough to get meat back on your bones without you wandering off and forgetting to take care of yourself again.”

Nathaniel wasn’t the only one staring at him in amazement. “Where am I supposed to live then?” the Creator Angel asked.

“Where you belong, at my side!”

Lucifer didn’t care that Gabriel was trying not to laugh, Uriel was looking amused and Raphael had turned his head away in order to hide the smirk on his face. He was not prepared to lose Nathaniel ever again. All the pain of the past and Nathaniel’s damned silly and costly mistakes no longer mattered. He was Lucifer’s and the sooner he realised that the better.

The half expected argument didn’t

come. Instead Nathaniel bowed his head in acquiescence. "Very well."

Lucifer nodded in satisfaction. He was certain that they had some more bitter remarks to throw at each other but at least Nathaniel would be safe, would be there at his side.

"So is that all for today?" Samael asked.

Lucifer smiled at him. "I think so, Sam. Let's meet back here in about a month so we can keep up to date with what is happening. Oh and Uriel, could you make the place a little less gloomy?"

The Earth Archangel chuckled. "Now we're all together again and working towards the same goals, I could probably be persuaded to redecorate."

"You'd better," Beliel muttered, "or I'm moving straight back out!"

Lucifer grinned. "That's right, Beliel, you tell him. All right everyone, I'll see you back here in a month. If you need me before then you know where to find me."

Raphael cleared his throat. "Before you all go, Daniel and I thought it might be nice to invite

you all for dinner one evening, New York Time of course.”

Michael grinned at his brother. “That sounds like a great idea!”

Lucifer caught Samael’s eye and the long-suffering expression on the Angel of Death’s face was priceless. “Yes it does,” he agreed, “but I’ll provide the drinks. When do you want to do this, Raph?”

“Next weekend? If everyone is settled by then, of course.”

Everyone agreed to the following Saturday and Raphael and Daniel looked extremely pleased. Samael muttered, “I hope everyone is prepared to be barraged with questions.”

Sandalphon smiled. “Well, Daniel does have a lot to learn after all.”

Samael shot the Archangel a Look but said nothing more.

Slowly they dispersed and Lucifer took Nathaniel back to his domain. “We missed lunch so you’ll eat now.”

Nathaniel looked positively mulish. “I’m not

hungry. I don't even know why you should want me here."

Lucifer sighed in exasperation. His mood wasn't helped by not knowing why he wanted Nathaniel here either. He needed to come up with something though. "Someone needs to stop you from wandering off and talking to strange demons."

Nathaniel, obediently following Lucifer through his halls, stopped in his tracks. Lucifer's flippant words had cut him to the quick, so much so that he just wanted to get away from *all* angels forever. He turned round, intending to make his way back to the entrance and simply leave.

"Nathan?"

Lucifer's voice brought him to a halt and he spun round to face the Morningstar, snarling like an animal. "You don't give a damn how you hurt others, do you?"

Lucifer sighed. "How many more times do I have to tell you Andriel isn't here?"

Nathaniel took several quick paces forward

until he was in his one time lover's face. "I'm not talking about Andriel, you asshole! I'm talking about what you just said."

Lucifer appeared taken aback for a few seconds until his face cleared. He placed a hand on his hip and the other snaked round Nathaniel's shoulders just above his still spread white wings. "It was meant as a joke, Nathan, nothing more. I don't want to hurt you."

Nathaniel gazed into Lucifer's eyes, trying to gauge the Morningstar's mood. What he saw in their vivid purple depths gave his temper pause. "You've never *stopped* loving me, have you?"

The purple eyes closed and Lucifer swallowed so hard Nathaniel could see his Adam's apple bob up and down. "No."

Nathaniel raised a hand and caressed Lucifer's cheek. "I've been such a stupid fool."

He was crushed to Lucifer's body and received the first kiss he'd experienced in over three millennia. It was passionate yet tender, hard yet soft, lustful yet controlled and it made him cling to Lucifer with all his might.

His energy levels were pitiful, however and he soon drooped in Lucifer's hold.

"Lunch, now!" Lucifer's command was tinged with concern and Nathaniel was pleased to note that he was still wrapped in the Morningstar's arms.

He followed Lucifer to a sunny dining room where a light but sustaining lunch was laid out, ready for them. "Who does the work?" he asked.

Lucifer guided him to a seat and sat down next to him before answering. "A couple of the Thrones that left with us," he said. "They look after the place in return for free board and lodging and the chance to be together. One of them was one of Sophia Pistis' Thrones and she wasn't too happy for her to be having 'relations' with one of mine." He piled a large helping of cold cuts and cheese onto Nathaniel's plate before passing him fresh baked bread and the butter dish.

Nathaniel frowned at the female Archangel's name. "Come to think of it, I didn't see her either after the battle or at the destruction of Heaven."

Lucifer shrugged as he buttered a slice of bread for himself. “She wasn’t involved in the battle, although her Cherubim and Thrones fought with Metatron’s army. I imagine Sandalphon let her know about this morning.” He chuckled softly. “I doubt if she’s very pleased with me right now.”

Nathaniel nibbled on some cheese before realising just how hungry he was and buttering some bread which he made into a sandwich with some of the cold cuts. “She was very close to Metatron. His loss must have come as a shock.”

Lucifer sighed. “You’re telling me I have another enemy amongst the Archangels, aren’t you?”

Nathaniel thought about it as he chewed his food. “Not an enemy,” he decided, “but not a friend either. I imagine she will do much as I have and stay well away from everyone. I think she believed Metatron implicitly and it must hurt to find that he was lying to her the whole time.”

Lucifer made a sour face. “Another fool in love with him?” he asked tiredly.

Nathaniel shook his head then wondered if it really were the case. “Perhaps,” he said slowly, “but it was a pure and platonic love if it existed. You know how she is.”

Lucifer nodded. “It makes sense. He always acted as if he were pure even when his thoughts were clouded with an unholy lust towards Raph.”

Nathaniel shuddered. “Sophia Pistis must be lacking in any empathy not to have felt those twisted emotions.” He thought back to his own treatment of Raphael and shuddered. “I nearly got him killed,” he whispered. “Sam would never have forgiven me for that.”

Lucifer exhaled noisily. “I think he would have killed you, Nathan. He’s very protective and *did* kill Arioch over Daniel. At least he understands why you wanted Raph dead. Apparently he destroyed his living room when he heard what we’d done.”

Nathaniel grimaced, only too aware of the destruction his brother could wreak when angry. “At least he came to rescue him, although I’m still not certain that loneliness was your only motive for spending a night with Raphael.”

Lucifer turned his head and grinned at him. “You know me so well, Nathan. You’re right, there was more to it than loneliness. Raphael would exist on the same plane as Sam, and as I live there too, I wanted to be certain they could coexist.”

Nathaniel snorted. “By making Sam as mad as fire? I don’t follow your reasoning, Luke.”

“By having an excuse to send Raphael to see Sam, silly. It was only Sam’s stubborn insistence on avoiding Raph that had kept them apart for so long.”

Nathaniel laughed. “You really do like playing with fire, don’t you? I’m glad they overcame their long separation and accepted the inclusion of the mortal.” He put a hand to his mouth as he remembered that Daniel was no longer a mortal. “Oops! My mistake, the inclusion of another Archangel. Will their feelings last eternally do you suppose?”

“Why not? Ours have as have those of many others. When you get to know Daniel, you’ll find he’s very special. So unique that I’m certain the three way feelings were somehow meant from the start. As for my playing with fire...” A

shadow passed across Lucifer's features. "I think that mischievous side of my nature will only grow stronger since what happened to me."

Nathaniel frowned at his almost empty plate. "You mean this Balance thing, don't you?"

Lucifer nodded. "I neither wanted it nor asked for it but with Arioch's death something malevolent was released and entered into me. Then something else entered and I'm still trying to puzzle out where it came from. Then both forces started talking in my head as if they had some age old pact."

Nathaniel finished the last of his lunch as he thought about Lucifer's words. He felt he might have an answer. "We came about through the birth of the Multiverse, what humans call the Big Bang. It is possible that it was some form of sentient spirit that exploded and the two halves have been apart ever since until now. The 'good' half created us and we set about creating everything else while the 'evil' half created the demons and all the strife we couldn't control.

"It stands to reason if they were two halves of a whole being they would want to be rejoined. So, supposing they each found a suitable 'vessel'

for their reunion. ‘Good’ chose you, although it didn’t reside in you as such, while ‘evil’ chose Arioeh. In effect they’ve made you the Supreme Being.”

Lucifer frowned. “They’ve *what?*”

Nathaniel couldn’t help smiling at the look on Lucifer’s face. “Who’s better suited to the task. You pretty much ruled in Heaven until you left. And nobody interfered when you told them how things were going to be and destroyed Heaven. Could you have even accomplished that feat before?”

Lucifer’s face took on an arrested look. “I don’t honestly know, Nathan. What I do know is it wouldn’t have even occurred to me to try.”

Nathaniel nodded. “I rest my case.”

Lucifer chuckled. “Smartass!”

Nathaniel squirmed in a mixture of pleasure and irritation at this use of one of the nicknames Lucifer had for him. *I wasn’t so smart without him, was I?* “Well, after all that eating and deep thinking, I need to lie down.”

He placed his napkin on the table and rose to his feet. “Do I use the same room as last night?”

Lucifer jumped out of his chair and stepped in front of him. “My room,” he said huskily.

Glad that his wayward lover was so quick on the uptake, Nathaniel rewarded him with the sexiest come hither look he could muster. It had the desired effect as Lucifer growled and scooped him up into his arms before carrying him down one of the halls and into an opulent bedroom.

The silks and velvets were pure Lucifer and Nathaniel smiled as he was placed in the middle of the bed as if he were a rare and priceless treasure. He let Lucifer strip off his vest and pants and watched as the Morningstar literally ripped off his own clothes. The body revealed was as beautiful and muscular as he remembered and his body responded immediately.

Lucifer joined him on the bed and reached up a hand to stroke one of Nathaniel’s wing ridges. The almost forgotten sensation elicited a gasp of pleasure from him as well as tears of mingled joy, frustration and the outlet of pain. “Luke,” he whispered, “I’m so sorry.”

“Don’t cry, Nathan. It was all as much my fault as yours. Please, don’t cry.”

Nathaniel sniffed in a forlorn effort to stop the tears. “I can’t help it. I denied us both for so long.”

Lucifer laughed softly. “At least you weren’t quite as stubborn as your brother.”

“No, not quite,” Nathaniel agreed with a wry smile. “We’re quite the pair, aren’t we?”

Lucifer nodded before nuzzling at Nathaniel’s neck and whispering in his ear so he could feel the warm breath and shivered in delight. “You can both be trying at times, sweetness, but ultimately you’re both worth the effort.”

The Morningstar’s words made the tears flow again. “At least you could always trust Sam.”

Nathaniel was hugged tightly to Lucifer’s chest. “I trusted you, right up to the past few days, Nathan, and even then I knew my own stupidity had caused your final decision.”

Nathaniel stopped crying and stared at Lucifer in amazement. “But, but, what about Raph’s

trial and my talk with Sam. He must have told you about that.”

Lucifer chuckled softly. “Sam didn’t need to tell me. I was there. Your warning came across as a threat because you had become so dark due to Ariocho’s manipulations. But even then, I knew you wouldn’t do anything to hurt Sam like that.

“As for Raph, we all know why you behaved that way towards him so stop worrying.”

Lucifer stopped chuckling and became very serious. “I wonder if I’ll become as dark with this – whatever it is – inside me.”

Nathaniel shook his head, knowing that for all his arrogance and sarcasm, there was a core of pure light in Lucifer. “I don’t think so. You have the light in you to balance the darkness. Ariocho didn’t have that and you’re the one of us who can handle that side of yourself the best. Sam or I would become dark and even moodier than we already are and I think such power would destroy any of the Archangels.”

Lucifer shrugged as he ran a hand down Nathaniel’s side, making him shiver in delight.

“It did destroy one and almost two others,” he said.

Nathaniel sighed and kissed his lover to keep him quiet for a moment or two. When they broke apart he smiled. “Satan and Asmodeus were stronger than you gave them credit for. To spend all that time with Arioch and still see the truth in the end takes strength. As for Metatron, nothing changed him. He always was more demon than angel.”

Lucifer smiled once more, much to Nathaniel’s joy. “I’ve missed your wisdom and insights, Nathan. Please don’t leave me on my own to cope with what’s happened.”

Nathaniel hugged the Morningstar close, still surprised by them wanting each other even after all that had come between them. “I won’t,” he whispered. Being back with his love was making him realise he would never be able to find the strength to leave him again.

Lucifer stared at him. “You promise?”

Nathaniel actually laughed for the first time in centuries. “I promise not to leave you ever again

as long as you promise not to touch another angel.”

Lucifer smiled wryly. “When you’re here, I don’t need any other angels.”

Nathaniel reached out a hand and grabbed one of Lucifer’s, placing it on his throbbing erection. “Then stop talking and do something about that.”

Lucifer didn’t seem to need any further encouragement. He bent over Nathaniel and took a nipple into his mouth, laving it with his tongue, while his hand gently encircled Nathaniel’s cock.

Nathaniel arched into the sensations, moaning out his pleasure yet wanting more. “Luke please, we can play later, right now I want you inside me again. It’s been so long.”

Lucifer glanced up from where he was tormenting Nathaniel’s other nipple. “Are you sure you’re ready to go that far?”

Nathaniel scowled at him. “Idiot! Of course I’m ready.”

Lucifer drew away from him and gave him

one of the loveliest smiles Nathaniel had ever seen while he reached for the lube. “Well I’m still going to prepare you. After three thousand years I’m willing to bet you’re as tight as you were when you were a young, virginal angel.”

Nathaniel blushed as he remembered their first time together. After several years of spending all their time together they had emulated the very first animal species he had created and the experience had been intense in the extreme. Strangely, that intensity had never worn off over the millions of years that followed.

He was returned to the here and now by Lucifer’s lube slicked finger teasing round his anal muscles, loosening them and eliciting strong waves of pleasure from all over Nathaniel’s body. The pleasure increased tenfold when the finger was eased inside of him and he gasped out. “Luke, oh yes!”

Lucifer added another finger and both digits stretched his inner passage until he was quivering with anticipation. A third was added to the mix and touched that little bundle of nerve endings inside that made him see whole constellations of

stars while fighting the urge to climax there and then.

Nathaniel sighed softly as the fingers were removed, leaving him feeling hollow and empty, but almost immediately Lucifer's impressive erection was pressing against him and he pushed against it, trying to impale himself on its length.

"Gently, Nathan," Lucifer chided, "We have plenty of time."

Nathaniel frowned at his blond lover. "I know, but I want you so much it hurts."

Thankfully Lucifer stopped trying to be gentle and with one long thrust he seated himself in Nathaniel's body.

"Yes! Oh, yes!" Nathaniel cried out and clung to Lucifer's shoulders. Finally his lover began to move, slowly at first, but gradually picking up speed until all Nathaniel could do was cling to him and moan in delirious pleasure as that sweet spot was brushed over and over again.

Both of them had waited too long for this for it to last for very long and with a cry of mingled pleasure and heartbreak Nathaniel came over their bellies. Lucifer gasped out his name and

he was filled with the warm, thick cream of the Morningstar's climax.

They gazed into each others' eyes for long moments and the same emotion was echoed in both purple and gold, disbelief, disbelief that they were together again and disbelief that they'd been apart for so long. They collapsed against each other and Nathaniel fell into deep and dreamless sleep.

Lucifer gazed at his comatose lover before withdrawing from him with a soft hiss of loss. He cleaned them both and then settled back against Nathaniel's slender body. The Creator Angel's snowy wings were still spread out so Lucifer folded his own and settled into the white feathers.

He considered contacting Samael before he remembered that the Angel of Death would be just as exhausted as he was and wondered what he had to say anyway. He knew he still had work to do and problems to solve but now he would have the support of both his fellow Legends, not just one.

Fallen Angels 8: Lucifer Rising

He thought about being the Balance, the Supreme Being, and found it no longer bothered him quite as much as perhaps it should. He was arrogant enough in his own powers, without the additional ones, to know that he could handle whatever Angel or Demon might throw at him in future.

He learns.

No, he always knew. It was what he was created for, after all.

Lucifer sighed. "Could you two talk about me when I'm asleep please? It's very disconcerting to have you talk about me in my head."

We'll wait until you sleep, then.

"Thank you!"

Lucifer made himself comfortable, scooped Nathaniel into his arms and fell asleep, a contented smile on his face.

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

author site

www.auburnimp.net

myspace site

www.myspace.com/auburnimp

fanfiction site

www.geocities.com/maddelena2000

livejournal/blog

www.livejournal.com/auburnimp

newsletter/chat group

www.groups.yahoo.com/group/auburnimp

Book Excerpts

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

If you enjoyed *Fallen Angels 8: Lucifer Rising* by Auburnimp you might also like *Pirate of Purgatory Island* by Carol McKenzie

Captain Drake has to save Thomas from an evil pirate, but will he be in time?

Captain William Drake of the Sea Mistress decides he must save medical student Thomas Black from the evil Captain Talon of the Sea Dragon, who wants to keep the attractive young man as a sex slave. Can Captain Drake and Thomas find love and lust aboard the Sea Mistress and later at Purgatory Island?

Here is a short excerpt from *Pirate of Purgatory Island* by Carol McKenzie

“Thomas.” William spoke his name, his

Book Excerpts

voice, deep yet soft as down, seemed full of understanding. It caused Thomas' heart to leap into his throat. "I didn't mean to frighten ye, me man." A warm smile curved William's lips.

The memory of dreaming about William's erection brought a rush of heat to his face. "I-uh-it's all right." *The pirate. He's returned!* Thomas riveted his attention to him and, for a fraction of a second. Disconcerted, he studied the black patch that covered the man's eye. "Uh, it's all right. But what are ye...?"

"I guess ye were dreaming, Thomas. Right?"

He shrugged. "Uh, I dunno. I guess so."

William flashed a perfect smile and chuckled. "Have patience, me man."

He scooted closer and put his hand on Thomas' bare leg. Things turned stranger and spicier by the second.

"That is not one of me virtues... patience isn't."
Has this pirate lost his mind too?

The pirate raised a ring-laden hand. As though William wielded magic, Thomas realized that he suddenly smelled clean and was bathed. William

Book Excerpts

had washed and brushed his hair neatly back into a ponytail. A clean shift now clothed his body, much to his delight and surprise.

“This feels better now, doesn’t it?”

“Yes.” Baffled, Thomas peered his way, giving him a look of incredulity, then redirected his line of vision toward a hulking ship, unable to answer such a personal question.

He ran a finger over the shift’s fabric. The tip of his index finger approached and ran first over one of Thomas’ nipples and then across the other. The blatancy of his sexual tastes caused his erection to grow. William’s lips hovered inches from his own. His gaze traveled over Thomas’ clothed body in a provocative way, unbefitting a man. When William’s finger ran across Thomas’ bulge at the apex of his thighs, his turmoil increased threefold.

The shackles had vanished into thin air and Thomas saw that they now lay, face to face, on a lavishly-decorated four-poster bed, in the bedchamber of a castle. The bed rose high above the shiny wooden floor. A soft, red velvet spread covered the feather mattress and pillows. Stars shone outside the window. Thomas, bewildered,

Book Excerpts

gasped, enjoying the fantasy and, in fact, wanting it to continue. He peered down at his own thin, night shift. The fabric outlined his erection, obviously enticing William, wreaking havoc, causing his desire and need for release to build.

William pulled Thomas to his strong body, then gently pressed a kiss to the doctor's cheek. He enticingly ran his tongue over Thomas's lower lip.

"I need ye as well," he whispered. "Manlove feels good. When ye come aboard me ship, ye can forget most of society's stringent, ridiculous rules about men coupling with men. Ye've been taught wrong. I'm the boss aboard me ship and we can openly show our feelings."

You might also enjoy *The Kabbid-Dai* by Sabrina Hunt

Master and slave, demon and human, their love must survive the Kabbid-Dai.

In a single day the human race fell. A spell

Book Excerpts

wiped out the sun, sending the world into darkness, and from that darkness rose a race of people forgotten since before the beginning of recorded history. Secretive, despising human beings, this new race is known to the humans only as “demons.” These demons enslaved the former rules of the world, turning the Sun into a myth believed in only by the oldest of the old.

Once a year--on the day known to humans as the Burning Day, and hailed by the demons as the *Kahbid-Dai*--humans are burned in sacrifice to the god Kahbid.

This is the world in which Joshua is born. Young, beautiful, Joshua is slave to the demon known as Feyahn, and they have fallen in love. Yet, as one of the healthier examples of his race, Joshua is in danger, for the healthy go to Lord Kahbid. It is blasphemy for Feyahn to love him, and worse to think of saving him from the *Kahbid-Dai*....

Here is a short excerpt from *The Kahbid-Dai*
by Sabina Hunt

Book Excerpts

Finally, in a tinkle of jewels and ornaments, Feyahn turned from the window, pale blue eyes coming to rest on his slave. Joshua sometimes wondered if his master might be part human, for most demon's eyes were stark white, a mark of living so long in darkness. Feyahn was so different in so many ways. The demon smiled, a soft but not entirely genuine smile.

"You don't realize, do you?" The question fell in musical notes from well-formed black lips. Feyahn closed the space between them with a few chiming steps, then sat beside Joshua on the low bed. A clawed hand came up to caress Joshua's cheek, a cheek he gratefully pressed further into Feyahn's touch. "You don't know how perfect you are."

"You're the perfect one," Joshua murmured in return. He still feared, still wondered at the things his master asked of him, but nothing else mattered when compared to the bliss of Feyahn's fingers. As always, given a little, Joshua craved more. The desire gave him courage, courage made him bold, and before any part of him could protest the action, Joshua shifted to his knees and moved to capture Feyahn's lips.

Book Excerpts

The demon's touch was hypnotizing; his kiss sent spears of hot electricity through Joshua's blood as warm as anything the mythical Sun could provide and more. Joshua moaned in joyous need when Feyahn's head tilted back, yielding to the kiss and embrace. Elsewhere, Feyahn was master and Joshua slave. In the bedroom, Feyahn became as water, flowing and pliable to Joshua's wishes. The human laced his fingers in Feyahn's well-kept hair, satisfaction flaring as he thought of how mussed it would be afterward, and how adorable Feyahn would be as he pouted over it. For now, the demon cared as much about his hair as he did for the dirt on the ground outside.

Feyahn flowed out of his robe easily, like a river flowing in twists around a bend. The two of them moved in such practiced motions they barely noticed the shedding of clothes to the floor. As Feyahn lay back, Joshua leaned forward, his lips coming down on the ebony expanse of his master's chest, teasing and pleasing in just the right way to have Feyahn writhe beneath him.

Book Excerpts

Or you might 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 act of cowardice he didn't commit, he leaves his people rather than become a kinslayer.

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

Book Excerpts

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

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

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

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

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

Book Excerpts

"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 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.

Book Excerpts

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.

You can buy *Pirate of Purgatory Island* by Carol McKenzie, *The Kabbid-Dai* by Sabrina Hunt, or *Dragon & Fenyx 1: Called by Power* by Auburnimp & Michael Barnette along with other fine m/m erotic romance and yaoi titles from:

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