

HELL'S RETRIBUTION

LUCIFER UNBOUND

BOOK 1 OF 3

BRANDY MARKS

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PART ONE

PROLOGUE

Imagine the dark a complete absence of light and sound, a stillness so absolute the mortal mind cannot conceive. Then, out of nothingness, a power appears and says, “let there be light” and there is light. As the voice spoke, a universe came into being; a hundred billion galaxies are born, and in His breath millions of planets form, while trillions or more stars glorify His eternal radiance.

Such glorious majesty was not to enjoy alone but to be shared by all. So, Adonai created a creature of beauty to cover His throne, and the whole universe embrace. This creature walks upon the Holy mountain among the stones of fire. The first of its kind, called Son of the Morning, the cherub is glorious to behold as he lit the heavens. So, Adonai made more creatures of light and beauty to guard the heavens.

~ ~ ~

Wings folded in against a well-muscled back, he turns around to face the archangel. Michael notes a chiseled chest, his skin glows with health, and sculpted abdominal muscles give off the impression of raw power. The image of perfection is dampened, however, when he opens his mouth to speak. “Damn, one more day and I’d had the pretty little miss, well, you know.” His eyebrows waggle with a smirk upon his face. “Her mate does not give her any attention, not until she did the unthinkable. Then he stood there like an idiot and didn’t say a word.” Lucifer chuckles.

“What are you going to do Lucifer, talk all day?” said the Archangel, an eyebrow raised. “If you’re fearful, I understand.”

“Nonsense. I’ll see what He wants.” *Like I have a choice*, he mutters to himself. “Likely He’s going to complain about what I’ve done. But is it my fault she ate the fruit simply because I suggested it?”

“Well she is an innocent with no worldly experience,” Michael said, forehead creased in disapproval. “It’s not like you didn’t entice her. After all you did say she wouldn’t die by eating it.”

Lucifer laughs in delight. “I know it’s so humorous. Of course she’s not going to die. How could eating an apple cause someone to die; it was a joke she was stupid enough to believe. Neither of them knows the difference between physical and spiritual death.”

Michael shook his head as he listens to Lucifer prattle on, and looks heavenward as though pleading *Why me?*

“If she had a brain,” Lucifer said. “She’d have known better. This is the reason human destruction is inevitable.”

“Lucifer why do you have to provoke him? Do you hate the humans that much, or are you jealous of the One to come?” He slowly shakes his head and sighs deeply.

“Jealous? Just look at the man. I’m supposed to bow down to him, the supposed caretaker of the earth who can’t manage his own wife and home? Spare me please.” Muscles tense, he glares at Michael, his stare both challenging and full of judgment.

“It’s time Lucifer. You’d best get going, find out what he wants.” Unable to look Lucifer in the eye, Michael turns away.

“What do you know?” A tremor of fear hurtles across his mind like a tsunami, and he steps back, fearful for the first time. Swallowing, his heart hammers painfully. Still, Lucifer pretends unconcern. “Well, I do want to get back to a certain little sweetheart.”

Lucifer cannot begin to imagine the questions Adonai might ask, the answers he would need to give. He knew it could not be the bravado he’d shown Michael. His throat dry, fear slid over him like a black silk sheet, smothering, then, in a blink, he stands before Adonai. Lucifer looks up and swallows, face pale with a film of sweat on his upper lip.

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## 1. IN ETERNITY

Long before the Garden, the Cherub, known as Son of the Dawn chose a name for himself. "I shall be called, Lucifer, Bringer of Light." Walking about on the stones of fire at his feet, gazing over Adonai's holy mountain, he mutters, *This pitiful space is all I have when the whole universe should be mine. Am I not the bringer of light, beautiful to behold?* Eyes gleam, a warm blanket of pleasure covers him. Stars light the darkness and the colorful nebulae, a cloud of gas and dust in the vast space, an indistinct silhouette against the luminous matter.

The universe now filled with stars, galaxies, planets and more are a veritable buffet of beauty. "Those fools truly believe He created all this in six days," he said to those who follow him about. "He couldn't have done it without me. Is it not made up of light, my light?" His gaze lands upon the angels who quickly nod in agreement.

"It's my light that warms the universe." His chest expands as he takes a deep breath, and gazes at the nebula and star clusters, like the one the humans one day would name the Milky Way. *They cannot even imagine what took place as it came into being.* Lucifer smiles. "You weren't here then," he said to the angels standing about. "Even I was astonished." His arms spread wide to indicate the expansion as it took place. Faces brighten, mouths hang open, and their eyes glow with excitement as they imagine what he's seen. Yet he knew no one could; you had to have been there.

"All of space in chaos looked like an enormous explosion of fireworks all at once, stretching away to infinity, powered by an invisible irresistible force. Was it His? Perhaps." He shrugs. "You could see the clouds of gases come together, striking with such force in a thundering crash of light." Smiling he looks off into the vastness of space.

“Why did he create it as he did?” He asks, knowing the angels have no idea, and each shook its head. “Likely, He didn’t want me to know,” he said, snarling. “My light came first! But did He notice? No.”

Lucifer ignores the fact, the heat from the universe's creation made it too hot for light to shine. He’d had to wait eons before he could add his light. Still, delighted at another memory, he said. “It was amazing at the creation.” His hands then came together in a clap of power of such force the angels had to cover their ears, as the sound rang across the galaxy, and a star exploded. “Did you see it?” He laughed.

Mouths hanging open, most had not, but they heard the explosion. “Then, it broke into a dense fog made up of particles.” Gazing at them with scorn. “You cannot begin to imagine as the light like a cloud spread throughout space.” He leans in close to the celestials, his own eyes wide and glowing with the telling of his story. Lucifer breathes deeply, throws back his head imagining it all taking place once again.

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“Is he for real?” one of the angels whispers to another.

“Hush. Don’t question. Who knows what he’d do with his power? To stay in his good graces. . .”

The other interrupts. “Why do you care if you’re in his good graces? He is not the creator and ruler of all.”

Eyes widening, the other backs away, and whispered, “He may be the next ruler of the universe. What do you imagine Lucifer would do were he to hear what you’re saying?”

“Like I care,” he said, now aware of a dark shadow falling over him, he looks into eyes that gleam cruelly. Mouth suddenly dry, he is silent a heartbeat. “Lord, we are discussing. . .” he stops speaking, and wonders *Had he heard? What would he do?*

“What is it you don’t care about?” Arms crossed, his eyes narrow, cold and calculating. “Would you care to elucidate?”

“No, my lord. I believe it’s time for me to leave.” He licks his lips, and swallows. “I’ve work to do.” He hurries away.

Lucifer turns to the other angel and glances at him from head to toe, then asks, “Do you care to hear the story?”

“Why yes, my Lord. I surely would.”

“Do you wonder about the darkness before my stars formed?” The other angels are gathered about, watching.

“Yes, my Lord. Yes indeed,” stammers the angel, eager to please.

Shaking his head side to side, Lucifer continues. “I’ve considered it a very long time. The first stars formed from the gases collapsing in on themselves.” A smile spreads his lips. “It was almost magical.” Realizing a truth, he ceases to speak and turns away. *Magical. Humm. What if there were magical creatures upon the earth? Interesting idea.*

The angels, faces downcast at the story’s end, for they’d hoped to hear more, but Lucifer’s lost in his own thoughts. *I should’ve destroyed the worthless glob of water back then*, he grumbles to himself.

Yet, time and again he returns to the blue planet, covered in water, watching as it changes. Then one day he knows its purpose, and his fury mounts. Recalling the dark matter and its attraction to ordinary matter, he has a plan for using it. *There’s not enough of any consequence, so He won’t notice what I’ve done.*

Lucifer’s imagination takes over; heart pounding, chest thrust out, he envisions it all. *My time to rule has come!* Pleasure blooms within, in an almost orgasmic rush. *First, I must see if Adonai will concede His rule of the universe to me.* Lucifer knows he himself will not yield a thing, *yet one must appear willing*, he snickers to himself as malevolent thoughts swirl in his active brain.

It takes but a thought to be in Adonai’s presence and in a blink, he stands before heaven’s ruler but his courage flees. Before he can ask for an audience, Adonai’s new project grabs his attention. Turning towards it he wonders but remains silent until Adonai acknowledges him.

“Lucifer, Son of the Dawn! You’re doing well in all your efforts. So much brightness in those dark corners. Isn’t it amazing what a little light shining in the dark will do?”

“Thank you, Lord. What I came to ask was. . .” He stops speaking, seeing Adonai is not listening.

Involved with his project, Adonai doesn’t seem to hear Lucifer until he looks and says, “Do you see this world forming, and taking forever, but so

worth it! See the deserts and seascapes, and those mountains rising! Splendid, are they not?"

Not waiting for an answer, Adonai says, "Come, look at the garden. What do you think of it?"

"Yes Lord. But what's its purpose?" Lucifer sees something odd. "What are those?" He points to some peculiar creatures he sees in varied shapes and sizes they roam about the landscape.

"I haven't named them yet. I'll make a human out of the earth's dust. He can name them; he and his mate will care for the earth and its garden." Adonai smiles at all He has in mind, with a far-off look.

Lucifer scorns Adonai. *I suppose He can see it before Him like it's a miracle or something.* Yet he feels the fear begin and says, "Lord, I came to ask about creating in another universe perhaps, a place beyond here. I've some wonderful ideas."

"All your projects are terrific, Son of the Dawn. You've placed so much light into the darkness the heavens are glorious. Those will be for the One to come and build upon." He pauses seeing Lucifer's expression and says, "You seem disappointed. You know of my Son to be born and his purpose upon the earth, do you not?"

Flushing, Lucifer's lips flatten. *Why am I not The One?* he snarls to himself. *He'd be better off without them.* Eyes narrow, his lips turn down, marring his perfect features. Arms crossed over chest, he starts to speak then stops, and finally asks, "What can he do I cannot?"

"You need to ask? You of all the celestials know His purpose. One you'd not undertake were you willing and you're not."

Opening his mouth to speak again, he's silent a heartbeat. His cheeks flare with spots of color, teeth clench, a tightness in his chest, his jaw muscles twitch, and unable hear Adonai's thoughts (*Lucifer's distorted angel powers, vile imaginings, and petty jealousies*), he heard His words. "I'm asking you to have faith. Will you trust me, Lucifer?"

Not answering, stalking off, he returns to Andromeda Nine muttering to himself. *Why should I trust Him? He created me before those creatures.* Pacing about, head in his hands he ruminates. *He loves those mortals more. I am nothing, no longer His beloved.*

Lucifer rubs his chest, a sharp pain sears and he wipes away tears, angry at himself for having them. "I'll show him. I was willing to work it out, but not now," he says aloud to himself, scowling.

"I will rise to the highest heavens and sit on the throne. All His power will be mine." Lucifer's elation swells. "My throne will be far above His, and I will rule the universe." Once bright, his light now has dimmed as dark clouds of hatred shadow Lucifer. Pain like a dull knife tears through him with absolute brutality.

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Adonai watches Lucifer stalk away, knowing an evil has grown in him and considers, *Perhaps one day*. . . The thought left unspoken for Adonai knows it is not to be, not yet. He also knows what must be and calls to his archangel, "Michael, the rebellion is soon to begin.

"I know your friend Andras follows Lucifer so warn him and the others too. Lucifer will make his move soon. The cherubs and seraphs must know what is coming." Adonai watches as Michael leaves on his way to carry out heaven's defense and warn the heavenly hosts.

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Meanwhile, Lucifer seethes. *The brightest galaxy thanks to me. He humiliated, ignored me.* He paces the heavens seeing the nebulae burn and stars flare with his ruminating as his hands weave starlight to form the first black hole, pulling in the surrounding light of many stars. I'll see to it my light no longer shines in His heaven.

I was the light of the heaven's but no, he must have another. I'm not good enough. Envy of the One rises within. *He doesn't seem to see all I've done.* Lucifer's eyes look upon the light he's set in the heavens. *Now I must work to have what should be mine. Still, it will be worth it, once the heavens are within my power.*

Gnashing his teeth, Lucifer abandons the holy mountain to pursue other interests. *If Adonai can create a universe, I can also.* Envisioning the worlds he will create, he dives into the black hole and is unseen for a very long time. Upon his return, he pursues once again heaven's takeover.

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Adonai heard rumors and knows, *I must deal with this directly.* “Lucifer, come my adored one.” *I want to hear him speak it.*

Hearing the voice of the Lord, Lucifer rolls his eyes yet answers. While all celestials have freewill, angel, seraph, or cherub, they all obey Adonai’s voice, and Lucifer comes before the Lord of heaven.

“What is it You desire?” He inquires, raising an eyebrow, sarcasm laces his words. “Have I offended you, Lord?” The corner of Lucifer’s mouth rises, eyes of cool detachment, and he savors the moment.

Adonai smiles. “Lucifer, you are so precious to me, set above in the heavens to cover my very throne. You had all of heaven to enjoy.” His hands move out to indicate the universe. “Now it is I who ask, what is it you desire, my lovely cherub?”

*I had all of heaven. So that’s the way it is.* “What I desire is to rule and must insist before I take it by force you abdicate your throne!”

Not surprised to hear Lucifer make the demand, yet Adonai it taken aback and roars with laughter, and gasps to catch his breath.

“You think to take my throne to rule a universe! Lucifer, oh foolish one, you have much to learn.” Adonai walks away chuckling. *And learn you will my lovely cherub. All in good time.*

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Lucifer and the powers of darkness, angels and cherubs tainted by evil come together against the powers of heaven, angels and cherubs and seraphs in an epic battle, wherein hate and indifference war against love and compassion. While the conflict and chaos reigns for some time, Lucifer’s angels, created in love, yet distorted by evil, not strong enough find they are easily defeated by heavens army of love and peace.

Adonai watches the conflict in what seemed mere seconds to some but took place over eons in the heavens. In time, wearied of the conflict, He calls Michael to him. “This war serves no purpose.”

“No, Lord,” said the archangel.

“You know what to do. In pride he made his poor choice, as did the others. It won’t be the last time they choose so poorly and must endure the consequences. Bring Lucifer to me,” he commands.

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Lucifer's torment with doubt began long before the war in heaven, and now he trembles as he awaits the Lord of Heaven. His pulse races as Adonai approaches, a thoughtful look upon his face yet, firm resolve.

Trying to hide his trembling hands, while avoiding eye contact, he turns slightly away as if to shield himself from Adonai.

"Lucifer," Adonai rumbles, his voice like a thunderstorm. "How you have fallen Son of the Dawn! In seeking power, you became my enemy, and in wanting to replace Me and be more significant, higher among the stars you have become less. You desire to rule and you shall. Only now you will be lower and can rule." He pauses. "On the earth."

Hearing Adonai's judgement, quite unexpected, a strangled cry escapes his throat, "No," Lucifer said. "Not the earth." His voice breaks and eyes grow wide in disbelief. "You wouldn't."

"I made the decision Lucifer." *How my heart sorrows for him for he does not realize what is yet to come, and the part he must play.*

Gulping air, breath shallow, Lucifer looks all about. Unable to stand, he collapses to the floor, with fist to trembling lips, he frantically thinks. *No this cannot be.* Bounding to his feet, Lucifer looks around again, as if seeking another solution. His heart pounds painfully as if it could burst from his chest. *What am I to do?*

Taking a deep breath to control himself, Lucifer knows the decision cannot be altered, yet pleads, "You are destroying me, Father in heaven. How can you do this to your beloved?" *Perhaps He'll change his mind.* "Is this not what you called me, your first born?"

Adonai's eyes widen at his misbelief. "Lucifer, you're first created. Even those in the garden were created. The One to come is first born of My Spirit. This you could not accept nor comprehend."

*Damn. Of course, how could I forget. His son yet to be born.* Lucifer pleads again, "I'll do whatever you ask to make things right."

"I've made it right. Your purpose Lucifer, you shall fulfill, like it or not and you do not like it." Adonai's word are now deliberate, though Lucifer does not hear His thoughts, *Oh, Lucifer, how I love you.*

Lucifer stumbles at the truth, looks at Adonai, away, and back again in disbelief. He knows the worst-case scenario has come upon him, and in his

arrogance, anger rises. Obstinate to the end, Lucifer stands up tall and says, snarling, "I would rather rule in hell, than serve in heaven."

"And so you shall, for a time." Adonai spoke. Nodding to Michael, who casts Lucifer to earth with the mortals he despises. A fiery chasm awaits his fallen ones and their evil powers with stones of fire for Lucifer to walk upon, only of a much different nature. His throne now is below the heavens and all the earth encompass.

Adonai declares, "Now he can seek another to devour." Knowing this is merely the beginning of troubles within the universe.

~ ~ ~

## 2. INTO THE GARDEN

Considering ways to create more havoc, Lucifer commands his fallen, “You can manage for a time without me. I’ve other matters to attend.” *And attend to them I shall*, knowing full well Adonai will not be pleased.

Vanishing from hell, Lucifer enters The Garden, a place of ripe beauty. He savagely pushes aside the leaves, tearing limbs from trees, all the while muttering to himself. “I should’ve destroyed it long ago.” His face tightening, anger surges as he stalks along, for all around is a symphony of pure delight, one enchantment after another. All sorts of life are sheltered by the tree boughs suspended above, from the busy ant to the enchanting birds of every color. Leaves dance to an unheard melody, the whisper of songs in the wind. Tilting his head up, the warm sunlight caresses his face, a brilliant golden shaft of light illumines the path before him, the leaves shadows flutter amid the sunlight on the forest floor. Its beauty permeates his soul as he swallows the anger that swells.

Prowling farther on, suddenly he spies a creation. *Oh my. And what is this lovely creature of rounded form and beauty?* Her hair flows in waves of rich dark brown reflecting the golden light of the sun; each strand moves in the breeze, in contrast to her stillness. Eyes of deep river waters, sapphire blue in quiet serenity, her fragrance permeates the air. And in that moment, the smile on her lips warms even his cold heart.

A pace off, stands another not so softly formed, yet its own splendor is evident. His eyes the blue-green of fresh dew glinting in the sunlight off leaves, thin lips, nose slender, and a prominent jaw curve gracefully. The strength of his neck is seen in the sinewy cords of muscle that shape his strong arms, bold thighs and calves, a firm chest and abdomen. *These are his special ones. Are there no others?* Lucifer notes two unusual trees as he passes by and wanders on deeper into the greenery.

In the trees, small furred creatures leap briskly branch-to-branch, then, startled by a sudden noise above, Lucifer looks up to see dozens of small feathered creatures take flight, their wings lifting them into the air where they soar about. Moving swiftly through the cerulean sky in hues of brilliant color, full of dazzling sunlight sparkling like the wind-dappled sea-water. Caught in the moment, Lucifer almost laughs with joy, then remembers his purpose and anger again surges.

Returning to the two mortals near the center with the odd trees, each gives off a warm glowing light. *What is this peculiar light emanating forth?* He considers this while observing the mortals, and sees another creature walk by, smooth and quiet, its colored scales of olive green and cream. *Hmm. It's not one of the fiery winged seraphs though it's scaled, long and lean,* he muses, watching as its arms reach to pluck the fruit; yet it seems to avoid the two trees. *What is their purpose?* he wonders coming closer.

Seeing Lucifer, the creature asks, "Who are you? I've not seen you in the garden before, and would've for I've noted your splendor."

While in the heavens and a cherub, Lucifer bore multiple wings of light which spread to cover the universe with glory, and varied faces with which to survey all within space and time. Now no longer within heaven, he cannot appear as a cherub so assumes a human form, to his disgust, though it's infinitely more practical. Not handsome, in a sense yet he is attractive with eyes of deep green, strong firm jaw and sinewy muscles shape his broad chest, powerful arms and flat abdomen with well-defined thighs.

"Tell me of yourself," Lucifer said, to distract but also curious as to whether the creature knows of him. *Did Adonai warn him of me?*

"My dear fellow, I am a serpent. Lovely am I not?"

*Certainly full of himself,* Lucifer muses. "Indeed. Tell me lovely one, why avoid those trees? You eat from all the others."

"Those two were told not to eat from them, so I too avoid the trees. I'm not stupid you know, not wanting to die, as they were warned."

Lucifer smiles to himself. *Not too bright either.* "I'm a celestial spirit, formerly of the heavens who now resides on the earth."

The serpent also curious asks, "What is a celestial spirit?"

"I could show you, if you were willing to entertain me as a guest."

“What do you mean, as a guest?”

“Come closer, if you’re brave enough.”

Insulted at the slight, the serpent comes close to Lucifer. Instantly, assuming his spirit form he slips inside the serpent’s body.

“What have you done?” the serpent cries, wriggling frantically to try and cast him out. “This is most uncomfortable.” Voice filled with panic.

Lucifer finds it odd and says, “Yes, I too find it most peculiar to be within you.” His intent, to calm the creature.

“How long will you stay for I’m not sure I like it.”

“I’ll stay for a short space, if you agree. I cannot remain without your consent, my friend.”

*I’ve not had a friend before, whatever that may be.* Excited, yet still he hesitates and asks, “What if the creator disapproves?”

“Why would he disapprove of our sharing with one another?”

*Adonai says we should give of what we have,* the serpent considers. *Surely, He would not disapprove.* And he nods in agreement.

“Excellent. Now, if you would be so kind as to sleep for a bit, so I can do what a spirit does. You won’t get into any trouble, I promise.”

“Well, if you’re certain.”

“If you imagine I would deceive you, you’re no friend of mine, and I should be on my way,” Lucifer said, in pretense of hurt feelings, and makes as if to abandon the serpent.

“My apologies. Do as you will,” the serpent said, his feelings hurt at the implied accusation. Lucifer uses his subtle skills to coax the serpent then into a slumber for a spell.

Within the serpent, who’s far shrewder than any Adonai’s made, Lucifer carefully considers. *Angels are gullible when complimented, and perhaps humans are as well.* He approaches the woman. “What a lovely creature you are, well-formed and delightful, so pleasing to the eye.” His words caress, tongue darts out to lick his lips, and he smiles.

Looking up to see who spoke, her cheeks pinked, a warmth spreads throughout her, and she smiles upon seeing its smooth scaled body and thin-lipped mouth. *It’s the serpent. Yet he’s never spoken to me before.* “How kind of you to remark so.” Her voice soft and gentle.

“How can I not take heed of such loveliness? While a mere serpent of the forest and far different, I still know beauty when I see it.”

Her face flushes with pleasure again for its been a long time since her mate has said such. *Ah, when Adonai first brought me to the man, he recognized me as part of him.* She glows with happiness, remembering, then sighs. *He’s not noticed me much since.*

Lucifer interrupts her thoughts, for they’ll not achieve his end. “What does a lovely woman do all day in this lush garden?” Coming closer, he glances at the forbidden tree not far away. Then, his eyes travel over her slender form. He reaches, trailing a finger upon her arm, his power sends ripples of pleasure throughout her body.

Nearby, her mate glances over at them, then seeing nothing amiss, seemingly, he turns away, his attention again on his own interests.

Hand reaching, she takes a piece of fruit from a nearby tree and puts it slowly to her lips, watching the serpent. She bites into its tender flesh, and flicks her tongue out to capture the juices from her full lips.

Moving close, his arm brushes lightly against her and he glances at one of the trees. “Did Adonai say not to eat from the trees?” he asked.

A smile spreads her soft lips. “We may eat from any tree, except that one.” Pointing to the tree Lucifer eyes. “Adonai told my mate, ‘You must not touch or eat of it, or you will die.’”

Chuckling he said, “He must have misheard; you won’t die! Adonai knows when you eat of it, you will be able to see clearly, like the gods; then, you will know both good and evil.”

Her eyes bright with intrigue. “I see you find the idea as tempting as are you.” And a sly grin spreads his lips, eyes gleam with mischief.

Licking her lips, the woman looks at the tree, leans in close, her eyes lustrous. “Yes,” he whispers in her ear and strokes her arm. “It is desirable for wisdom too. How grand for an intelligent woman such as yourself.” He moves pours out upon the fruit the poison of his wickedness, lust.

His hand continues to stroke, moving around her waist, increasing the sense of pleasure. “Imagine how it would feel to be all-knowing,” he whispers again, and feels the warmth of her breath. Before she knows it, the woman finds herself standing close to him, by the tree.

Her mate notices the serpent and the woman together near the forbidden tree, and came to inquire. Quickly he moves between her and the serpent, to stand at her side, yet is silent.

Seeing his concern she said, "I haven't eaten of it." Then reaches to touch the tree, and glances at her husband who says nothing, yet she can almost hear his heart thud painfully in his chest as his eyes grow dark and wide, and asks, "Why so frightened husband?"

Smiling at him, she said, "Nothing has happened." Her hand reaches for the fruit, and places it between her lips. Eyes sparkling, her teeth sink into its flesh. Fragrant juices flood her mouth and seep from her lips. She chews and swallows, then sighs in satisfaction.

"It was forbidden, woman." He stammers, eyes grown wider, and glances about, expecting any moment to feel death, though he has no idea what death means to them.

"So you said, but I've eaten and am alive." She plucks another fruit from the tree. "Come," she said, placing the fruit in his hand, laughter in her eyes. "If I'm to die, should we not do so together?" Leaning her body close to him excites his passion, and he dares not deny her.

Yearning for this pleasure she instills, yet fearful, he lifts the fruit to his lips, takes a bite. His eyes widen as the juice flows over his tongue. He chews and swallows. "It's amazing," he said, gazing intently at his wife to pulls her close, feeling her naked flesh, then looking up he again sees the serpent, a gleam of delight, a smirk upon its thin lips.

Realizing she is naked and another's eyes are upon her, the man moves to cover the woman from the serpents sight.

"What are you doing?" she asks, eyes widening.

"You are naked, and he was gazing upon your flesh."

"You are also naked my husband, your flesh exposed."

"I'll find something to conceal our bodies. Cover yourself. Perhaps hide within the trees."

The woman glances at the serpent who continues to watch, and discerns his lust. Having this knowledge now her face flushes red, and she turns to enter the trees and finds a place to hide herself.

Soon her husband returns with leaves to weave together and make for themselves loin-coverings. "Here, wrap these woven leaves about you so you are covered," he said, his voice urgent.

Wrapping the woven covering about her slight frame, a frown upon her brow. "It's strange, these coverings, for we cannot feel the air move upon our skin," she said. "I don't believe I like it."

The man looks away, not knowing what to say and thinks. *Indeed, the freedom we enjoyed, even this the new knowledge has taken from us.* Not wanting to cause discord, he remains silent for a space, until he hears Adonai Elohim moving through the garden in the wind of the day.

Suddenly, ashen faced, he breaks into a cold sweat, wipes his hands tearing the leaves slightly. Grasping his mate's hand, with trembling lips, he said, "We must hide." A pulse throb in his neck as he shuts his eyes to blink away hot tears that threaten.

"Husband, why are you so fearful? What is wrong?" Dropping the fruit she'd been eating all sense of pleasure evaporates.

"It is the Lord Adonai. We must hide or he will know what we've done, and our punishment will be the death he promised."

Moving quickly the two hide in the trees of The Garden. "What is this death He speaks of, is it painful?" she whispers.

"Hush now," her husband warns and she grows silent.

Adonai Elohim calls out, "Man, where are you, and your wife?"

Slowly The man comes forth. "As you walked, I heard the sound in the garden," he said, heart pounding as never before with lips trembling. "I was afraid for being naked, I hid myself."

Sighing, with a small nod, knowing what they had done Adonai pauses a moment. Then, with a head shake, he approaches the man, the woman still crouched in the shrubs. "Who told you of your nakedness? Have you eaten from the Tree of which I warned you not to eat?"

*What is it to die, and how will it feel?* The man wonders within, as he looks at the woman. *It's not my fault; it's hers.* The man said, "The woman You gave me, she gave me of the Tree, and I ate."

Adonai Elohim knew what the man would say, shakes His head again, and with a heavy sigh turns to the woman. "What did you do?"

Nodding toward the serpent who's in the shadows of the trees, a slight smile on his lips, eyes alight, she said, "The serpent deceived me." *Surely Adonai would not make me to die, if the serpent's guilty?* Hope blossoms in her heart as she waits and is disappointed.

To the woman, "Now you will birth children and suffer much pain. Also, your desire will be for your husband, who will rule over you."

Nostrils flare and she says, "He'll rule over me?" But Adonai ignores her and turns to her mate. With a blink of annoyance, huffing, the woman quiets her thoughts and is silent to listen.

"You listened to your wife, and ate of the tree when you should have guided her to do what was right. But in silence you did nothing. Cursed will be your life and the ground you walk upon. Because you were made of dust, on the day you die, to dust will you return."

*Got what he deserves*, she muses with a nod and satisfied smirk, then turns her head away, refusing to look at him.

Turning to the serpent, wherein Lucifer is housed, He said, "Because you did this, I curse you as well. On your belly you will eat dust all the days of your life. The humans and all those to come will despise and fear you."

The serpent is astonished to find its arms and legs, hands and feet have vanished; it now lies coiled upon the ground. Its tongue flicks out not to taste the sweet fruit of the trees, but dry dust. "Now see what you have done?" it rages at Lucifer, who quickly exits its body. "I'm punished for your deed."

No longer lovely to behold, its flat black eye now deadly are like staring into the abyss. The snake crosses the ground on its smooth scaled belly, powerful muscles propel it along until it disappears into the undergrowth of the surrounding garden forest.

Lucifer chuckles, then himself slinks away into the shadows. *Not perfect now are his pet humans. Wonder what he'll do?* A smirk upon his face, casting an enquiring eye heavenward and waits to see.

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After slaying an animal and taking its skin He makes tunics for the man and woman with which to clothe them. *These humans cannot be trusted. If they disobeyed once, they'll do it again. To eat from the Tree of Life they'll live forever. They can no longer remain here.*

“Adrian, you and your wife must leave the Garden.” Adonai said, voice firm yet resolute, his eyes filled with sadness.

Lucifer sees the man and woman exit, heads downcast, both weeping, brokenhearted and terrified. He draws a breath and throws back his head with eyes closed, and savors the moment. Lips trembling Lucifer almost feels like weeping. *Now I'm not the only one rejected and abandoned.* He feels a wave of peace and contentment wash over him, then he hears Adonai speak, “Lucifer, I see what you have done, and how pleased you are with yourself. However, you may not remain in the garden either.”

Exiting the garden, his spirits no less dampened, East of the Garden, he watches as Adonai directs one of the other cherubs. “Here you will remain. Guard the way to the Tree of Life, so the humans do not return.” Giving the cherub a sword, it flashes fiercely around and about. Lucifer cannot look upon the sword of heaven, for it hurts his eyes, so he turns away.

He does not want the humans either. I am satisfied with their misery. Grinning he notices the man and his woman have not gone far; they lie near the gate, weeping for many days. Bored with the man's self-recrimination, Lucifer turns toward the rising sun, leaving them to their misery. Traveling onward he sees only water; it seems to reach the borders of heaven.

Turning away, he travels north of the Garden to a sea of clear water. Never allowed near it before, he now gazes in. *Perhaps, I could lead the man and the woman to these waters,* he muses. *Then we'll see what He does to remedy that situation.* But his plans are short-lived.

Michael appears, countenance stern, “Lucifer. What mischief do you devise this time, to vex Adonai?” Not waiting for an answer he says, “You know what happens if either one enters these waters?”

“I suppose you know.” Lucifer snarls. “He knew what the man would do. So, He doesn't want them near the sea either. Why does He always take the fun out of everything?”

“Adrian and Eva cannot go near the sea else they would be cleansed of their sins. It is not yet time.”

“Where then, to the southern side of the Garden? Or has He forbidden them to go there, as well? *Damn His constraints. I can't do anything fun.*”

“Yes, for the sweet scent of the trees would come on the wind and the man’s sorrow would intensify. He can only live where Adonai’s has sent him, to the Cave of Treasures below the garden.”

“The Cave of Treasures, heaven’s treasure!” A grin splits his face as his green eyes sparkle in delight. “You say it’s below the Garden?” Not waiting, Lucifer leaves, Michaels answer unheard, his mind on the stones Adonai had placed upon him: the ruby, topaz shining bright, diamonds and all the others in a workmanship of gold. Heart beating rapidly, he plunges ahead to claim what is his. Nodding his head as he hums to himself, a lightness in his chest as he rushes forward, eager now. Reality, however is quite different from what Lucifer imagines.

~*~

Adrian and Eva, having left the garden, stand at the opening gate, to see the broad earth spread before them, covered with stones and sand, it’s a bleak landscape. Mountains rise in the distance, the ground before them is barren. The couple tremble and fall to the ground, their hearts thud painfully in their chest, too overwhelmed to move. Finally, Eva lifts her eyes toward the Garden and sees a cherub at the gate with a flaming sword flashing brightly, so she could not see past into the Garden.

Adrian cried and said, "Look at this world, a place of punishment! It can never compare to the garden. See the ground, strewn with stones, and no delicious fruit trees, nothing to eat."

“I’m sorry. Never did I imagine such a fate would come to us.”

“Still, we must remain, for we have no other choice.”

“Yes, husband. But where do we go?” The man answered not and lay beyond the garden and the cherub with its flaming sword, bemoaning his fate. “Why did I listen to her and eat the forbidden fruit?” he mutters and continues to weep, turning his face away from the woman.

As the days pass. Eva hungers and is frustrated with her husband and his useless mourning. Eyebrows drawn together, she demands. “How long will you lie in the dust of the earth? The serpent was placed down on the ground, not you. Adonai did not say you should spend your days weeping and wailing, but providing for your family.”

Glaring at him, she turns her eyes away, muttering under her breath, "First he stands silent while the serpent tempts me, and blames me when he ate the fruit. 'The woman you gave me,' he said to Adonai. You could have said no," she shrieked. "But did you try to stop me? No. Now it's all my fault our being left out in the cold."

Unable to sleep and in a fury, Eva, storms about. "I'm hungry and tired. When will you find us some food? Lazy miserable man. Get up." Angry and frustrated she would like to beat on him but stays her hand.

But Adrian weeps silently, ignoring her. Staring at the ground, unable to look at Eva, he flinches away whenever she tries to touch him to get his attention. Clenching his teeth to keep from yelling, he refuses to speak.

Falling down tears flow until her eyes are red and swollen. "I wish we were still in the garden, too, but we're not, and He's not going to let us in. You saw the cherub with the flaming sword. No doubt it would cut us to ribbons were we to try and return." Lying beside her husband, Eva wraps an arm around him. "Adrian, I'm sorry. Yes, it was my fault. But I cannot change what was done. Please." Finally, she rises in search food.

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Adonai shook his head as he gazed upon the man, so despondent. "Michael, go to the man and woman and say, "Strengthen your heart, go to the Cave of Treasures, and there remain."

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The archangel approached the man and said, "Man, you must cease this weeping. Arise and go to the Cave of Treasures. There you will remain. It is to be your dwelling place until Adonai determines else wise."

Sitting, Adrian's face brightens. "Where is this Cave of Treasures?"

"Come, I will show you, if you and your wife will follow me."

Adrian imagines the Cave of Treasures to be bright and beautiful and eagerly looks forward to it. "Let us go, immediately," he said.

"No," the archangel said. "We will await Eva's return."

Upon her return, Eva said, "What is this new calamity the Lord has brought upon us? Has the archangel at last come to take our lives?"

"Nay. The Lord has given us a place wherein to live, so we do not have to wander the earth, lost and alone. He will show us the way to a place he

called the Cave of Treasures upon the mountainside.” Eagerly, the two follow the archangel.

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Pushing from the forest of tall cedar trees, after walking what seems forever, Lucifer’s gaze meets a tall mountain, its granite sides rise upward and he’s greeted by stones and boulders dotting the landscape. Stumbling over the cracks, he slips on the pebbled-covered ground, the few trees on the mountain are covered with bits of moss. Above, he sees low-hanging clouds that cover the mountain tops and he imagine the mist drenching him were he to spend the night. Nearby, a waterfall pours nearly hiding the opening to the cave of treasures.

Coming closer, a rock shelf overhangs its opening. *Ah yes, the cave wherein lies my treasure.* Eagerly Lucifer strides forward and enters. His eyes, however, see not glittering jewels and gold but a dank narrow place, lined with dull grey stone walls with tree roots growing through, dirt and dead leaves tracked in by animals no doubt, or blown in by the wind. He steps gingerly past animal scat, and clumps of fur. The floor merely sand and rock. “What is this?” He utters. “Where is my treasure?”

“No, It can’t be. He would not trick me so.” Mouth trembling, he collapses to the ground, disbelieving. Then, rising to his feet, he dusts himself off, and stumbles from the cave. “He’d never be this cruel.”

A heaviness settles in his chest, yet is reminded of the words Michael spoke before he left. *I wouldn’t listen. No. It’s he who knew I’d come and be disappointed. How he must hate me.*

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Sadness overshadows Adonai for he knows Lucifer went ahead, and he knew what he’d found. At Michael’s look, he said, “Yes, you tried to warn him. Be not dismayed, for he chose not to listen, again.” Adonai’s features soften and he chuckles. “Yet, the man and woman were the ones given the Cave of Treasures, not Lucifer. Leave it up to them to make it into a place of beauty, a home away from the garden.”

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Lucifer saw the humans following Michael toward the cave. Quietly he slid into the shadows of the forest, slaps at a spider, swiping the web from

his face. *I'd love to see their look of despair at the cave He's handed them for a home.* Lucifer chuckles and disappears.

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The smell of cedar in the crisp air was refreshing, though neither one knew what type of tree it was then. Still, the waterfall near the opening brought fresh water to drink, and earthy moss clung to the cold wet rock, which she found strange. A few wild plants could be seen with green fruit upon them. Tasting the round berries, chewing, she spit it out; they were bitter. Michael said, "soon the sun will ripen the berries. It will not be the same as in the garden, but edible nonetheless."

Upon entering the cave, both are as appalled as Lucifer. Forgetting about the lovely outdoors of the mountain, again Eva bemoans her fate. No lovely garden, no treasure, nothing but hard stone for a bed and dirt. Adrian took her in his arms to comfort. "Before long, together we'll make it into a home, and find a way to make it beautiful."

~\*~

## 2. EARTHBOUND

Lucifer leaves the couple to their pitiful cave, devoid of treasure. “He’s given me all the earth and hell, of which I said, I’d rather rule, and so I shall. He’ll regret doing this to me.”

Upon falling from heaven, after Michael cast him out, Lucifer landed in a sea of salt water at the edge of a great desert. The salt and sand scour his perfect skin, lips dry and cracked after days wandering in the desert, he’s ready for hell. The desert winds carry debris, as well, which leave his eyes gritty, the air nowhere as pristine as heavens.’

No longer lashing out at those who come near, he compensates in other ways. *I’m not the only one in this dreary place. How could Adonai have created such a world? It’s nothing like his lovely garden. Were it up to me, He grumbles bitterly. I’d have made it a place of beauty with lovely warm balmy waters and lush plant life, a sea nearby with white sand, not this wretched dry desert.*

Roaming the earth with Andras, a mighty warrior and fallen angel, Lucifer has finally ceased to blame Andras for his own failure. Untiring in his effort to rule on earth if not in heaven, he creates chaos wherever he goes. Lucifer no longer a cherub, is six feet of humanity disguised as the mortals he despises yet so much more. Chest muscles strain against the fabric of his tunic, forearms and biceps taut and well-defined, and his abdomen ripples like snakes in water.

*At least I’m taller than these desert men, he scorns. And seen as a human makes things easier living on this miserable earth.* Yet, he chafes at the shame of his lowered place, though being so tall means others must look up to him, which he finds pleasing.

Lucifer’s mind, pricked by the memory of the lush garden, recalls the first man and woman who’d dwelt therein, until he tempted the woman into

disobeying and giving into lust. He sniggers remembering. *It was almost worth this misery I now endure. Still, I will make Him pay for doing this to me and he calls to his fallen ones.*

“See to the earth women, tempt them into a life of disobedience. They’ll fall easily into sin, as did one in the garden.”

Lucifer encourages all kinds of depravity. “Tempt them to indulge in idol worship. See to it the men bring their women into the temples to gratify the sexual excesses of others. They’ll enjoy the life, and then you can bring in the sacrifices, which Adonai desires, just not the kind I have in mind.” He chuckles to himself.

Eager to obey, his fallen, no longer constrained by heaven’s rules, easily captivate the earth women and copulate with them, and, in time produce giants in the land, known as the Nephilim.

Soon idols spring up with statues of gods, and goddesses made of clay for the people to worship. *See how Adonai likes those rivals, though they’re not real gods.* Lucifer sniggers at Adonai’s imagined displeasure. “Let him criticize me now.”

Lucifer wipes his eyes to dislodge the grit and looks upon the women of the desert. Beauties with luxuriant dark hair and black eyes, he tempts them into sin also. *No wonder they so easily tempt the fallen as much as the fallen tempt them. Tasty treats,* he muses, fornicating with many. “Why have you not partaken of these delights?” He asks his commander. “Do you not find them delightful?”

Andras shrugs. “You have enjoyed them enough for both,” he said then asks, “When do you return to hell?” *So I can get on with my life, and not have to take care of your ego.*

“Don’t worry, Andras,” Lucifer reassures. “I’ll be gone soon, then you can see to the one who admires you. I hear she is pleasing to the eye, but many of them are demanding; they make life miserable for the fallen, perhaps even the one who desires you.”

Lucifer sniggers. *Andras sees me as taxing, no doubt.* I know of the one who watches him, and he says, “I’ve seen the one who desires you. Have you not noticed her? She’s quite attractive.” Andras’ face flushes.

*What is this, embarrassment?* Lucifer ponders this odd event.

“No, for they can be worse than the war in heaven.”

Looking up just then, Lucifer forgets Andras. His eyes land upon the silhouette of a beauty, one he'd not seen before. Walking toward her, he pretends not to notice, yet is aware of every curve of her lush body, creamy golden skin, and red-gold luxuriant hair cascades over smooth shoulders to lie upon her voluptuous breasts.

His breath hitches as the fabric of her gown, light enough to reveal rose-tipped nipples, which protrude slightly. Lucifer turns his eyes up to gaze into her violet orbs, gleaming with lust; he's no longer pretending disinterest.

Heart beating rapidly, his breath now short, he finds himself drawn irresistibly towards her. *Surely, she is no earth woman, for none have ever affected me so*, he muses. “Who are you and whence did you come to this earth? Surely not from heaven,” he said smirking for he knew no such thing is true. And Lucifer moves even closer.

“No my Lord. I am created from your passions and desires for you and anyone else you'd like me to entice. I am specifically Hells succubus, made for your intense delight, and that of mortals.”

Lucifer's gaze explores every curve of her body and parts he can only imagine. “What is your name, succubus?” His nostrils flare as he continues to look her over, saliva pools in his mouth.

“Clio, my Lord,” she says with a coy smile. “Clíodhna, if you prefer, named for the Goddess of love and beauty. In my case, beauty and lust for my work is to tempt mortals and take their souls to hell upon their death.” She flicks her tongue out running it over her lips.

Approaching the woman to press himself against her as his hands glide over her flesh. The back of his hand he slides softly over her cheek and she flushes with pleasure at his touch. Lucifer puts his lips gently to her mouth, to bite her lower lip, sucking on it.

She deepens the kiss as her tongue quickly penetrates his mouth. Lucifer's arms wrap firmly about to pull her closer, and she feels him harden in desire. Not a word is spoken for there is no need to express their mutual passion in such a way.

Lucifer's on fire, his breath rapid and shallow as she runs her hands through his hair and down his back, then slips between, under the fabric at his waistline her fingers stroke his maleness. He nearly orgasms.

Lucifer pulls the woman into the shadows with a grip possessive and demanding. He pushes her legs apart, fingers penetrate wetness as he focuses on the intense sensations in his body. "A succubus, you say," he murmurs, then bends, his tongue teases her nipples.

Pleasure intensifies in anticipating the joining. Heart pounding, he feels a shiver of pleasure and her wetness increases. Unable to contain himself, he pulls aside her gown, enters her welcoming heat, and with shudders of pleasure he releases his passion into her.

"Tell me woman of lust and beauty, what is it you desire?"

"Why, my Lord, I desire only to serve you." *For now.*

"Then I desire you in hell to await my good pleasure, which won't be long in coming," he said and snickers. Now his consort in hell she pleasures him as he desires, and many others over the centuries. Yet, she also plans for the time when her role changes. After all, change is a given in hell, and even a succubus made for hell cannot be trusted completely.

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"Andras, why so glum? There's not enough here on earth to satisfy you and make life interesting?"

"My Lord, the dragon hunters are interesting as is hunting dragons. Though I've not seen any such as the one you seek."

"If you're bored, Clio could help pass the time. She is quite a treat, and hungers for you. As I said, those earth women are a bother. But we've had this talk many times for many centuries."

"I'll give it some thought," Andras says.

That's as likely as his returning to heaven, Lucifer muses to himself.

Within days, Lucifer returns to hell and his charges. Lucifer's fallen one's created more havoc on earth and Lucifer keeps them busy tempting mortals. *What to do with Andras,* he wonders? *I have an idea for he is not using the mortals for my agenda. This must cease.* And he considers what to do.

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“Clio,” he calls. “Come my lovely temptress. I have work for you.”

Clio slinks in like a cat on the prowl, cups his chin in her hand and asks, “What do you desire, Lord.” Fingertips trails across his cheek and down his chest, a coy smile lifts her lips. She almost seems genuine, yet her smile never reaches her eyes, violet with thick long dark lashes, they gleam with lust from a face perfect but devoid of emotion.

Red-gold hair falls in spiraling curls over her creamy white shoulders, smooth as the rest of her. A gown of silk falls about her lush body, moving with every step and each one is with purpose. Voluptuous breasts whose rose-tipped nipples harden as he gazes upon her. Seeing his lust, she imagines, *Oh yes. He’d love to fornicate but not today.*

A Succubus and potent female Fae, Clio can bind a person and steal their soul. She’s a demon in female form who tempts men and women to engage in sex with her using any technique. And she’s especially creative. Yet Lucifer is mostly immune to her lust, after so long.

“I missed you. Your obedience is most desirable,” Lucifer says. “Had you been willing to serve me this well in the before we could still have what was so enjoyable, was it not?”

“Not being the key word.” She says, mocking. “What do you want? Isn’t it enough I’m here to serve you as well as demons and mortals?”

She heaves a sigh, folds her arms across her lovely chest, raises an eyebrow and rolls her eyes, waving a hand in dismissal, letting the corner of her lip curl up on one side.

“How much fun would you have with those impotent angels?” He says, lip curls in a sneer. “You know you enjoy it here! All those people to seduce and demons to practice upon. Tell me. Are they worth the trouble when they become obsessed with you?”

Clio recalls the powerful archangels; they spurned her attempts to seduce them, shaming her for the behavior. She shrugs off the memory. *The demons? Those were a lot of fun.*

She turns to cross the room, red-gold hair tumbles about across her shoulders, clothes cling to her body in a seductive manner and the warm air seems to whisper over her skin, as if caressing.

Clio enjoys the moment and Lucifer's attention, as she arches her back, breasts strain against the fabric, she turns to see his lust and the corners of her lips curve up slightly.

Slipping over to lie on the couch, she pouts shifting her legs, baring herself slightly to enjoy his noticing the dark between her legs. Lucifer's consort at one time, she's no longer, but is pleased to merely work for and occasionally fornicate with him. Still, Lucifer cannot keep his eyes off her and the provocative allure she brings.

"What is it you want?" she coos, moving to allow her gown to reveal more of what entices him, moving her hips slightly, suggestively.

Sighing, Lucifer says, "I know it's difficult you being a succubus, but let's stay on track? You know, Andras. Well, you don't 'know' him - if you get my meaning? But you know who I mean."

She nods in agreement, leaning forward to listen and eager to hear more of the tall handsome angel. *I've had my eye on that one but he won't let me fornicate with him.* "You want me to seduce him?" she asks, eyes brightening, eager to hear 'yes.'

"No, not ever. He's not adapting, not enjoying earth's pleasures, its women. He's interfering with my plans for the earth. I need him to engage more, be compliant inciting the mortals into sin."

"So, you want me to what?" Clio smiles knowingly, slender fingers drift between her legs. "He'll find me a fun playmate."

"Ah, no. While difficult, do control yourself. Hmm."

"Okay." She snarls. "What in hell do you want?" She tosses her hair impatiently, crossing her legs.

Lucifer moves to strike her and stops himself, "I admire you being so wicked." He sits beside Clio, runs a finger up her thigh. "While I know you desire him, I want you to incite Andras' desire, but for another."

Lucifer shares his ideas with Clio, who smiles, though disappointed to not get the angel herself. Lucifer moves close to her afterward, intent on his own pleasure but is disappointed himself.

Clio quickly rises, "I have work to do, love."

No sex today. She leaves him wanting, *I imagine the woman will be an easy target for we've met before, long ago.*

Meira had been an unwilling temple whore when Clio first met her and knew she was special. Having survived multiple rapes by priests as a child, she's resilient. Now, after escaping the temple life of a prostitute, Clio had provided her with a different more creative profession.

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Clio watches Meira. *It's been a long time but she's as lovely as ever. Lucky her, having Andras to herself.* She eyes Meira's size and hair color, which differ, but otherwise they're alike. *I remember her well; it will be a delight.* Clio watches Meira walk. *Beautiful but she doesn't know how to make the most of her walk and other assets.*

Clio walks to the café where she saw Meira. "Mind if I have a seat?" She sits without waiting for an answer.

"If I said no," Meira asks, irritated at first, then looks closely at her. *She looks familiar.* "Do I know you?"

Clio shakes her head. "No, I'm not from here, so it's not likely we've met before. I'm only here for a short time."

"Really?" Meira persists, "I'm sure we've met."

*Lucifer doesn't know I helped her. If she remembers, it'll ruin his plans and mine.* Clio said, "I have a friend. Maybe you know him, Andras? He asked about you and seems to think you might like him."

Meira's eyes widen but she says, "I don't know him, and he sounds full of himself anyway." *He noticed. How embarrassing.*

"Andras wants to meet you." A smile builds as Clio slides closer, and puts a hand on Meira's shoulder. "Perhaps it's not a man you desire?" her eyebrows raised.

Meira shrugs her off and frowns. "Not interested, if you're offering," she said and backs farther away. *She has a lot of nerve.*

"Andras seems to like you. Maybe you'd like to get to know him. He's hard to miss: tall, dark hair, and handsome. Did I mention he's well-built and a man of means, if you know what I mean?" She winks.

Meira stands up and scowls. "This is crazy. I don't know you or this Andras, so leave me alone." Striding to the door with firm steps, Meira opens it and walks outside. Searching the street in both directions, she sees the street's empty and hurries off.

*He must have seen me and thinks I'm interested!* Meira mutters, her anxiety rising. *I've heard he's one of the fallen, but he looks no different from other men.* Recalling when she first saw Andras, her heart skips a beat thinking about him. *Why am I so attracted to him?*

At home, Meira's thoughts linger on Andras. *I heard the fallen mate with earth women.* Shaking her head she puts it out of her mind, briefly though she's very aware of her body's response thinking of him. Her hand drifts down her belly where she feels her own lust.

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Clio watched Meira leave and thought, *She must know he's a fallen. It's easy to see she's attracted to him, though she denies it. But why does Lucifer want Andras with her?* Clio leaves the shop and walks away.

Andras watches and wonders, *Why is she here?* Thoughts swirl like dust mites and he's unable to focus as he ponders the situation.

An archangel until he joined Lucifer and was cast out of heaven. *Now, I'm stuck here, bored for eternity. Though the earth woman could spice things up, if she's interested. It doesn't have to be permanent.*

After arriving on earth, Andras found work with the dragon slayers; it paid well and kept him away from Lucifer. *Now Lucifer has me looking for that damn dragon, a cherub.* He puts the woman out of his mind to focus on the one he seeks for Lucifer. *Too bad this one didn't stay out of the rebellion, it wouldn't have ended up as a dragon on earth.*

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To help find the dragon, Andras puts the word out with a warning, "It is more dangerous than most dragons. When you see it, you'll know. Be cautious or likely you will be slain."

"Sure Andras, but really, it's only a dragon." They laughed at his concerns. "Look, we promise to let you know if we find it, as long as you make up for lost monies."

"I know. Some of the men have families and others are saving to buy land so they can raise a family. I understand," Andras said, and agrees to pay for any financial losses while they hunt the dragon.

Several weeks pass before news is brought. "It was breathing fire and flashing lightning. I've ever seen anything so terrifying; it killed my companions. What the hell. It's not an ordinary dragon."

"I warned you guys, if you recall."

"I don't know why the dragon let me live," he said, trembling as he recalled the creature. "I begged it for mercy. Said we were searching, not hunting it. It chose not to eat me. I want nothing more to do with those things." Hurrying off, he soon quit dragon hunting.

Andras laughs. *I did warn them. Ordinary dragons have a long tail, four legs, horns, barbs, and scaled bodies.* Shaking his head, *I couldn't tell them it's a cherub; they're very different.* While dragons are fire breathing lizard-like with wings and a long tail, Cherubs have more lethal attributes. Andras wasn't sure what to expect. He'd seen Lucifer as a cherub, but all things heavenly, on earth they differ.

Though winged, dragons often can be found underground in caves. So, Andras went to find a cave and found himself a dragon. *This for sure is nothing like those I've seen before.* He watches the dragon translate into its cherub self. An icy shiver courses through Andras up his spine, his heart races, and he steps quickly back. *No wonder he was terrified,* he gasps, stepping back even farther.

This dragon had three sets of wings, four inexplicable faces, and legs unlike ordinary dragons who had curved legs. It gleamed like brass, finely polished. *He's luminous, like heaven's angels.* Andras unable to mount a defense in his own terror, stood frozen, then the dragon spoke.

"Ah fallen one." Breath touched by a scent of brimstone. "Fear not. What is it you desire? Did you come to slay me like the hunters you sent to vex me a time ago." *What does this one want?*

Its snout curves into a bit of a smile. "In desiring to devour the one, he told me a mighty dragon hunter searched for me. And so, I let him live. Generous no?" Andras is speechless then finds his tongue.

"Indeed. I am a dragon hunter, in search of Lucifer's friend Azrael, a sort of dragon, a cherub." Head tilts to the side, eyes narrow he watches the dragon cautiously. "Don't suppose you've seen it?" Taking a breath to calm his fear, Andras smiles, yet remains wary.

“I like your sense of humor, so will not eat you.” Chuckling deep in its throat, its inner flames stir, sending grey tendrils of smoke into the air. “You say you’re Lucifer’s friend.” The dragon grumbles, and Andras feels a whisper of heated air flow past. “It took him long enough to seek me. It’s not as if I’m hard to find.”

“Why it took so long, I know not. Still I’ve found you, and will let him know you’re here.” Andras walks to a nearby hillside and calls to demons who rise from the earth. “Let Lucifer, know his dragon is found, it is safe,” he said. “It awaits his pleasure.” The demons vanish back into the earth, likely on their way to report to Lucifer in hell.

“Awaits his pleasure,” the dragon rumbles with its eyes narrowed. “I’d eat him too, leaving me here, if I were not a faithful friend,” he said as the angel returns, and this time Andras feels a rush of heated fire blow past as the dragon breathes out. *This one is most pleasing.*

Andras waits for Lucifer with the dragon, whom he found curious, and interesting as they shared stories of the heavens.

“Had we fought as they do here, we might not have lost. You think those archangels knew how to wield a sword with a shield? Pardon me, for I know you too were such.”

Andras shrugs it off. *He meant no insult to me and it was the truth.* “Those powers were tricky to fight,” he said. “Which may be why we lost. It’s easier to battle against flesh and blood with a sword and shield than nebulous powers of good against evil.” His head nods agreeably.

“Ha. Speaking of flesh and blood. What about those earth women? Men often speak of the troubles with them. I’m glad to be a dragon with no female among us. Adonai created us cherubs and did not see a need. Why did he think they’d be useful here on earth?” Laughing together, for they knew what use most made of women, even the fallen.

“Indeed, more than one fallen planted seed in a woman who birthed offspring, giants in the land, I’ve heard.” Andras shakes his head slightly. *Though there’s an earth woman I’d enjoy planting my seed in, only not to have children but pleasure instead.*

The dragon hears Andras' thoughts and smirks. "Yes, I've heard." He shook his head as if to lose an intrusive thought; its green-gold scales vibrate, some falling to the ground.

"Having not seen one, I don't care to," Andras said. "The Nephilim surely do not care for children."

The dragon asks, "Do you desire children?" His great head tilts as he leans in, amber eyes calm without fire burning, and eyelids blink as he watches and wonders about Andras and the earth woman.

"I've seen no woman worthy. Nor could I imagine one as a mate." He pauses, thinking of the earth woman who watches him named Meira. He'd seen her recently. Long auburn hair moving in the breeze, clothes clinging to her body seductively, arms casually at her sides. The warm air seemed to whisper as if caressing her. A smile in the corners of his lips. "There's one who does intrigue me. Though her interests lie elsewhere." Taking a deep breath, Andras smiles as he toys with the hilt of his sword and his mind conjures an image: *full lips to plunder; when she walks, her hips sway nicely.* He licks his lips. *Hmm.*

The dragon ponders his words, and the inconsistency in his actions and thoughts. "Do you imagine you fool yourself, for it seems you have thoughts of her. If I may speak to you as a friend."

"Anything is possible." Andras lips spread in a grin. *The dragon is most insightful and agreeable.* Yet, he changes the topic.

"Be cautious, I do not wish to see you someone's meal, as there are others like me who hunt dragon."

Both laugh at the absurd notion. "Yet we're all vulnerable, regard Lord Lucifer." As both consider his ignominious fall. *Ah, yes. Lucifer.*

~~~

As the two are chatting, Lucifer appears. He looks from one to the other, not liking what he sees. Jealousy grows in his heart. *Not this time.* he scowls at Andras. *How dare he steal my friend and dragon?*

Lucifer curses within and says, "Andras slayer of dragons, I'm glad to see my friend lives." Slyly glancing toward the dragon, he embraces its long-scaled neck. "Cautiously I sent my commander to find you, knowing he's a slayer of your kind. I'm glad he did not steal your life."

The dragon muses, *One of Lucifer's one greatest faults is jealousy, but not the only one.* "My friend long in coming. Resilient friends are rare. These you hold to not by whim or envious will." He smirks.

Lucifer decides not to alienate the cherub for its brashness, yet his nostrils flare, lips pull back, and he bares his teeth, snarling. Cracking the neck from side to side, he takes a deep breath. "I see you have become friends." *A day will come and revenge will be mine.*

"Life on earth has required my time in such ways as you cannot imagine, friend. Else I'd have sought you earlier."

The dragon, a flat look to its narrowed eyes, scowls at the words, knowing them for the lie they be. Breathing slowly out, a tremor of rage burns deep within, and Lucifer feels the heat of his anger.

He considers, "You've outdone yourself, Andras. Is he not glorious!" His words cascade into the air as he tries to dispel the dragon's righteous fury. "Earth should never forget their splendor so he remains safe from hunters such as yourself. Long should he live."

Andras replies, "This dragon is your friend, a fine companion for you, my lord. It is a privilege to protect what is yours."

Lucifer notices the dragon snicker. At the imagined slight, he turns his own rage on Andras. "Begone, before I reduce you to ash!"

~~~

“I will not fail to speak of Leviathan  
its strength and its graceful form.  
Who can strip off its outer coat?  
Who can penetrate its coats of armor?  
Who dares open the doors of its mouth?  
ringed about with fearsome teeth?...

Its snorting throws out flashes of light;  
its eyes are like the rays of dawn.  
Flames stream from its mouth;  
lightning bolts shoot out.  
Smoke pours from its nostrils...  
a boiling pot over burning reeds.

Its breath sets coals ablaze and  
flames dart from its mouth...  
When it rises, the mighty terrified.  
Retreat before its thrashing.  
The sword has no effect  
nor does the spear or javelin.

Iron it treats like straw  
and bronze like rotten wood...  
Nothing on earth equals it—  
T’was a creature without fear.  
It looks down on all who are haughty;  
it is king over all who are proud.”

(Job 41:1-26)

### 3. HIS DESIRE

Andras returns to Eridu, in the land of Sumer at the edge of a river plain. It sits close to a marsh between sea and land with shifting waters and deep reed thickets. As he heads for home, Andras sees the woman, her hair pulled back to reveal a face other women doubtless envy.

*Though she watches, the earth woman pretends else wise. Perhaps the direct approach is best.* He strides toward her, heart thundering in his chest, he chews his lips. Drawing near, her almond-shaped eyes of violet-color flicker with silver fire. Her skin flawless, creamy yet a light golden brown, very appealing. *How I'd love to trail my fingers over her soft skin from face to just about everywhere.*

As he nears, her face flushes in surprise, yet she does not flee, and watches as he approaches. Breath catching in her throat, noticing his size, very tall and well-muscled. The tunic he wore fit his sculpted form perfectly. It was easy to see he was likely a warrior. You don't look like he did without some serious workouts. She'd seen men at training on the field and had always admired the way their corded muscles rippled when wielding a sword or lifting a shield, sweat glinting in the sunlight, and her heart sped up.

"Why is it, when I see you," he said, watching her lips curl at the corners into a smile, parting to moisten them with the tip of her tongue. Andras' heart speeds up and his breath shortens. His abdominal muscles tighten. *Were we alone in private, I'd drag her to my bed.* "Though you pretend otherwise," he said, nostrils flaring, "you seem to pursue me like a hungry wolf?" Her face flushes.

"What... such arrogance." She clears her throat. The woman, who is Clio, swallows, takes a step back, as if unsure of him.

"It's not my intent to make you uncomfortable." Seeing her flush from full breasts to her face, the tips of her ears turn a bright red, yet his gaze

lingers on the full lips as he licks his own. *All I want is to kiss her until she says yes to whatever I demand of her.* Instead, he apologizes. "I'm sorry. I meant nothing by it." Yet she turns to leave.

Andras reaches for her, their fingers briefly touch, and Clio uses the opportunity to set a spell of entrapment binding him to Meira.

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I should have asked her to stay. His eyes follow as she walks away: *stride calculated, a lioness stalking her prey, except she's moving away from me. What fun in bed she would be!* His mouth is suddenly dry and Andras realizes he's almost panting. *Get a grip,* he chastises himself.

Recalling his talk with the dragon, he wonders. *Why does she have this effect on me?* He recalls the dragon. *Although, why would I speak to a dragon when I've friends to consult?* And speak to them he does, the dragon hunters. "You have no idea what happened, when meeting this woman and how it turned out," he said.

Andras describes the one he believes is Meira.

"You've been bested by an enchantress." They all chuckle. "There's plenty of them about, swaying their hips, enticing us men to make fools of ourselves. It's amazing one's not captured you yet."

Sniggering, one of the men says, "Aye, I've heard them talk and many women find you intriguing."

Andras face flushes. *What would they think knowing my thoughts about her and how I remained silent when she made me an offer?*

Seeing Andras' embarrassment, one man mistakes it for confusion. "You're a good provider, bring home fish from the sea and dragon flesh. Women like it. While they want looks, mind you, providing for a family is most important. I'm not talking about the lovely young ones without good sense who only tease."

All the men nod and another says, "We like to look." He winks at Andras. "Easy on the eye." He glances around. "Don't tell my wife you hear!" *If she knew about Clio and our intimate exploring she'd kills me.* He smiles as the others laugh and consider female's qualities.

~~~

Since meeting Meira, and taking her place, Clio said: “Meira’s away with friends and so, I’ve assumed her image. When Andras touched me, I set an enchantment so he desires Meira.” *It’ll be interesting when she returns to find herself pursued.*

“I want you to tempt him with those desires he’s long denied in being a good soldier.” He chuckles. “Reminds me of Uriah, how his wife cheated on him with David who got her pregnant. Remember?”

“Oh indeed. He refused to bed his wife while on leave so David could pretend the child was Uriah’s. Being a good soldier, Uriah refused. What a fool.

“All it did was get him killed. Which reminds me. Who have you made a fool for you, cheating on his wife?”

“One of the dragon hunters agreed to spy, in exchange for favors of which you’re familiar. I’ve been able to keep an eye on Andras, knowing you’d be pleased.”

“I’m assuming he’s pleased, not knowing he’s lost his soul.” Lucifer takes Clio to show her how pleased he is, pulls her in his arms, and says, “You’re not leaving so soon. Not this time.”

Slowly removing the gown, none too gently, his powerful arms hold her so she cannot leave as he suckles her breasts while his fingers inside tease her to orgasm. Flowing richly, he then takes his time plundering her until he satisfies his own cravings, then slowly pulls on his trousers and walks away.

Rising from the floor where he’d thrown her, Clio rages, *To think there was a time when I found him desirable*, she hears Lucifer behind her chuckling as she pulls on her clothes. He reaches for her again.

“Lucifer, I have other things to do,” she said, pulling away.

“The only thing you have to do is pleasure me. Is that not what you said to me once?” His voice a snarl. “You were made for hell and me or what I desire. I desire you.” He rips her gown and throws the pieces to the floor, followed by Clio. Standing above her, powerful chest and arms ripple as he removes his pants. Clio tries to scramble away on her hands and knees, but he grabs her hair, twining it around his fist, he pulls her face to him. “Pleasure me, as you’d like to do Andras.”

Finishing, Lucifer shoves her to one side and said, “Now get out and don’t return until your work is done. Clio rises, a sour tang in her mouth. She feels a burning in her throat, head bowed, but holds back the tears, visibly trembling as nausea rises, and she wants to vomit.

Taking a deep breath, she stands and goes to her wardrobe, and picks out a new gown all the while keeping a safe distance from Lucifer. Anger burns within until Lucifer speaks.

“Were you not pleased to copulate with me, your Lord and master you once called me? Eager to please then, were you not?” He said, eyes narrow, he waits for her response.

Hesitating, she recalls the first day and her words of passion. Then turning, she looks at him, forces herself to walk over, and said, in a voice soft and low. “Yes, of course, I’m always pleased to serve you my Lord, in whatever way you desire.” Leaning in, she kisses Lucifer tenderly, then turns and leaves, determined to begin anew for Clio is no idiot, and her own plans must one day be fulfilled.

Eyebrows raised in surprise, with an incredulous stare, Lucifer’s fingers touch his lips as he watches her walk away. He stands silent for a very long time, not knowing what to think.

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“Andras, how nice to see you,” Clio said, running into him the next day. A flirtatious smile on her lips, as her dark lashes shadow violet eyes. *Whenever I see him, he captivates me so. Wouldn’t I love to be Meira? Damn Lucifer.*

Andras’ face flushes, yet he remains silent. She knows her curves scream female and Clio can see evidence of his lust. *He imagines being with me.* Flashing a smile, she turns away, then glances back. “Don’t be such a stranger.” And smirks seeing a glimmer of lust in his eyes.

~~~

Taking a deep breath, Andras hadn’t realized he’d been holding, he stares after the woman, the movement of her hips entice him. Suddenly short of breath, his mouth dry. Speechless, he blinks several times, his mouth open, and wants to follow her, but remains where he is.

When he sees her several days later Clio's wears an outfit clinging snugly. However, it's like she doesn't see him, as she walks by. Andras' desire then conflicts with self-doubts to spring up like weeds. *Maybe I've misread her. Why do I care?* He argues. *She's an earth woman.* Yet he can't forget her. Each time he imagines her his breath grows short and he forces himself to push away disturbing thoughts of her.

Expecting to see her at every turn, Clio vanishes for a few days which adds to the mystery. When she reappears it's as a shameless flirt, and Andras feels a warm flush of desire until she ignores him again.

*What is she doing?* Angry and hurt by her games, he thinks, *I'll not have her play with me.* Andras puts her out of his mind, except Clio has decided to 'up the game,' as she says.

Clio again disappears then reappears to deliberately bump into him and said, "What a surprise to see you." She looks at him under lowered lashes, eyes twinkling merrily.

Andras wants to ignore her but cannot with the enchantment at work. "I haven't seen you in a while," he says and desires to walk away and ignore her, yet almost against his will, without realizing it, he finds he's moved closer; they're almost touching, and Clio's so tempting.

"I've been around," she said, her hand lightly brushes his arm and again she turns to leave. "I look forward to seeing you again."

He's in a daze: *The woman mounts him and with her hand slips him inside her. Once he's deep inside, she began a slow rotation of her hips. It felt so real, and Andras couldn't shake the feeling. She felt so warm as she drew him in. His erection grew harder and he felt about to burst, as he feels a powerful orgasm overtake him.*

Andras' startles out of his daydream or whatever it had been, his breath catches in his throat. Unable to speak, he watches as her tongue moistens full red lips. She leans close. "What fun, eh?" Then she winks at him and walks away.

Andras' desire flames, his breath grows short, heart thunders in his chest, and he thinks, *This woman I must have.* His long-time refusal to have anything to do with earth women vanishes.

Lucifer follows Clio's antics. Pleased with the results, and he says, "It's time to return home before Meira shows up."

*I had him in the palm of my hand, in my bed.* She scowls, unable to hear Lucifer's thoughts who thinks: *If Clio were to bed him before Meira, it'd spoil my plans. What is she thinking? Revenge on me, doubtless.*

~~~

Andras, enticed by the woman, eagerly seeks after her. It doesn't take long before he sees Meira. Heart racing in delight, he approaches the woman he believes is Meira. Only it's the real Meira.

"Hello. It's nice to see you." He looks her up and down cheekily, as Clio had him. *Maybe I'll invite her home with me.*

Meira scowls at him. "Who are you?"

"It's Andras," he said. A frown crosses his face, and he swallows. Scratching at his bearded cheek. "We've met several times."

He moves closer, hears a sharp intake of breath. Her eyes widen in fear, and Meira backs away, eyes flickering back and forth.

"Andras. I don't know you." Her hand out as if to ward him away. "Get away from me, or I'll scream."

"Have I offended you in some way? You seemed interested in me last time we met." *The other day, she almost took me to her bed.*

"The other day," Scraping a hand through her thick hair, Meira tucks a strand behind an ear, her cheeks pink. "We've never met. And the other day, I was nowhere near here."

"My apologies," Andras stammers. "I swear you look like a woman I met a couple of weeks ago. I'm so sorry." His face flushes red.

Meira recalls meeting a woman before going out of town. "She looks just like me? That's odd because I met a strange woman a while back who resembled me." Meira considers and thinks, *This might be a way to get to know him*, and smiling to herself, she asks, "Would you like to join me for some tea, to make sense of this situation?"

She's inviting me to tea? What a strange woman. Andras briefly reflects. "If you're sure." He says.

"There's a café down the street." Together they walk to the café where Meira had first met Clio. "She walked up and sat at my table." She nods

toward the table and Andras follows her over and together they sit at the same table and order tea.

Andras sees the life flowing in her and realizes. *There's so much life in this one. How did I miss an obvious clue? Her eyes are green, not violet. The other must have been a demon.*

"I may know what happened," he said. "My guess is, the other is a demon, one I've met before."

"A demon! You're not serious?" she says. *He's making a joke about it.* "Are you kidding me, or what?"

"You know about fallen angels, so why not demons?" he challenges. Why would she think I'm joking?

"I've heard of fallen angels, but demons. Sure, people talk about demons but, come on."

What can I say to convince her? "You believe angels are real, demons are powers Lucifer gave the angels when he turned them from love and compassion, only he distorted them into something evil."

"Don't tell me you believe this foolishness?" Yet Meira's intrigued by the idea as she says, "You do believe, don't you?"

"How else do you explain the woman who spoke to you, who came to me looking exactly like you? She is a demon who plays with humans. I'm familiar with Clio, and while your eyes are green. Hers are violet. Didn't you notice?"

"Now you mention it. At the time, I thought her violet eyes were unusual. But a demon?" Meira frowns. "I want nothing to do with this sort of thing." She gets up to leave and Andras thinks, *She can't leave. I may never see her again.* He reflects on his daydream.

"I'm one of the fallen." He quickly says, "You may not believe me, but I can prove it." He waits to see if her curiosity wins out. Still under Clio's allure Andras wants this woman. *Say yes.*

Meira sits back down but farther away. *I want to know him, but is he even safe to be around? Sounds a lot of crazy to me.*

Green eyes darken into slits of doubt, and Andras again recalls the other woman's violet eyes. *Clio used her power to attract me to Meira. What's Lucifer up to now?*

“How can you prove it? Do you have wings?” Meira asked.

“Angels don’t have wings,” Andras said. “Cherubs do, like Lucifer who was once a cherub. Adonai sent him to earth and to rule in hell. His angels he locked up in hell for the most part.”

“If you’re one of the fallen, how did you get out of lockup? It’s not as if your god Adonai would make a mistake.”

“That’s a good question. Many of the fallen on the earth, mated with earth women, had children, the Nephilim. Lucifer commanded them to engage with the earth women, tempt them into having sex.”

“Enough nonsense. What can you prove?” She says, sits back, arms crossed. “Some accept gods and angels, fallen ones even, but it doesn’t make them real.” *Like those in the temple who use their so-called gods to turn children into prostitutes.*

Meira’s scowl deepens as she considers the evil she’s been a part of. *Those foul temple priests raping mere children.* She continues to think on it while Andras stands silent, watching and wondering.

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*How much should I reveal? “Let’s get out of here and I’ll show you.” Will she follow?* Standing, Andras walks to the door, then looks back. *You’ll see I’m crazy for you, enough to want you to believe me.*

Meira looks away, lips tight, she clears her throat. “I don’t know,” she said, then raises a hand to rub the back of her neck, fluffing her hair. Finally, she draws a deep breath. Meira gets up and walks to the door, as if to follow him. “I don’t know you well enough to go anywhere with you,” she said with a frown. “How do I know you can be trusted? Everything you’ve said sounds crazy to me.”

“If you want proof, I know where we can go; it’s one of the safest places around. Then you’ll see how crazy I am.”

Meira hesitates, then follows Andras out of the café. He tries to take her hand, but she pulls away yet still follows.

~~~

Andras has seen the outer temple, but knew: *it’s a place of worship so, if I take her to the top, she should feel safe.* Pleased with the idea he walks on, Meira at his side now.

Shaped like a pyramid, the temple's four walls terraced in receding levels slope up toward a flat top. However, seeing where Andras' is going, crossing her arms over her chest, Meira moves away from him, her eyes stare at the building, and she hangs back. "No, I don't think so." She turns away from Andras, her face sweaty and pale.

"Are you okay?" Andras reaches for her but she cringes away from his touch and cries, "Oh, no. I'm not going there!" Breath short, she drops to her knees gasping for air.

"What's wrong?" He sees Meira's eyes wide in terror. *Now what? Does she know about the temple practices?*

A couple walking by inquire, "Is she alright?"

"She had a scare." Andras reassures them. "She'll be okay." Looking around to see if anyone else noticed as the couple walks away, though, the woman looks back, a time or two.

Andras reassures Meira, "It's okay. We won't go inside. I was taking you to the top where you can see the view."

Her breathing slows as her color returns. *Thank the stars. I don't know if I could go back in there.* She takes a deep breath to calm herself. "If we have to go inside, I'm not going with you."

"No. We can get to the top another way. I've been there before and can take you, but only if you're okay with it." He hesitates, unsure now. *Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.*

"If we're going, we'd better go before I lose my nerve," Meira says. As the words leave her mouth, without another thought, he grasps her about the waist, transforming at the same time.

Meira shrieks as he lifts her but she doesn't see him change for he's moving rapidly. In a blink, they're at the top in the warm fresh air, blue skies above. Gasping to catch her breath as Andras sets her down, Meira gazes at him in wonder.

"What are you?" Her words tumble over like leaves in the wind as she turns her eyes upon him: his skin smooth bronze, and white-gold hair spills over broad shoulders to curl slightly at the ends. *Lord, he's tall, at least nine feet. His eyes gold and lustrous. He's radiant and impossible.* Her mind goes

blank. Not believing in angels, Meira's unable to grasp what stands before her.

"You're wrong about angels," Andras says and reaches to catch her as she collapses in a faint at his feet.

Angels like other celestials are spirits who can assume human form, as needed. When cast to the earth, the fallen, disguised as humans move about between earth and hell.

For centuries some angels moved among the mortals. Meira had just met her first angel, and a fallen one it seems.

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Appendix

“New Jerusalem” and “Three Heavens” are from articles on the web I’m not convinced are totally accurate. However, they’re included to simply offer a bit of insight into Scripture and how it’s interpreted by some. It’s up to each of us to allow Adonai to speak to our heart then, decide where we stand.

“Dragons in the Bible” some may dispute. Still, I fancy it, for it made my ‘dragons’ or seraphs more real to the story, at least in my imagination. So, take what you will from it.

Regardless, I hope you enjoyed the read. If so, leave a review on Amazon then, visit my website for your FREE e-book.

www.brandymarks.com/angels&demons/

God bless, Brandy Marks

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lucifer: 'Light-bringer' the first Cherub starts a war in heaven. In losing, Adonai cast him to earth. He seduces Miriam [for revenge on Anak], falls in love with her and she with him. His enemy Anak connives to have him bound to hell as a dragon.

Miriam: An angel, Lucifer kidnaps and seduces her. They fall in love. She was Anak's friend until his arrogance and being too protective ruins her relationship with Lucifer.

Andras: archangel followed Lucifer in the war in heaven and Adonai casts him to the earth with Lucifer and his angels. Andras stays on earth for a while and meets Meira.

Meira: A human fell in love with Andras a fallen angel. They marry. Anak, their child is born after Andras returns to hell at Lucifer's command. Meira raises Anak alone.

Anak, a Nephilim, after the death of his mother, leaves the land of his birth and travels to Ireland. Slaying a dragon who was once a cherub, he learns it was Lucifer's friend. Now Lucifer's out for revenge and causes Anak all kinds of problems.

Clio: a demon succubus and temptress, once mortals engage in sex with her, she steals their soul. Celestials fall for her, and they must find their way back to Adonai.

Kai: a Fae and Anak's friend travels through hell, the chasm, and beyond to rescue Anak's love, a Fae queen who denies him. Kai married Ériu of the Tuatha after they rescue her.

Laila: An angel and helper of angels has a special role in the story, which continues to evolve.

Oisín and Niamh of Tuatha de' Danann remain in the chasm and return to the stars after Anak and Kai save their daughter.

Tam-Lin: rescues his bride-to-be, leaves after they wed now ancient. He bargains Lucifer for their firstborn so for youth then bargain with the Tuatha to save their daughter from him.

Isobel: A mortal falls in love with Tam-Lin a faerie.

Tuatha de' Danann: "Tribe of the gods," are a race of supernatural beings from the stars who live in the chasm and help Anak and Kai to rescue their daughter Ériu; they return to the stars and become immortal as they had been in the past.

Archangels:

Michael

Amandine:

Ariel, Lioness:

Tannin aka Dragon:

Yeshua: Son of Adonai

Seraphs: they once served Adonai lost their way in Lucifer's rebellion, now worshipped as fire-dragons, they repent.

Darius: Seraph or fire-dragon strives for good

Mi'reu: Darius' mate and a seraph also.

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# The Chasm

## Between Heaven & Hell

October 1, 2018, Sim Chen Ning

When the only Person, Jesus, who came from heaven (John 6:38), tells you about heaven and hell, you've got to pay close attention... Even if it is only a parable he tells.

Now, in the parable about a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) communication between heaven and hell is permitted. The only restriction is the freedom to cross over to the other side.

*"...between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."* – Luke 16:26b, NIV

It's unclear what Luke meant when he wrote this. It is uncertain if the word used fully captures the meaning Christ intended. Nonetheless, given the limitation with our languages, we'll try to understand what his intent was regarding the complex border separating the two extremes of eternal life with the word Luke used, chasm.

**Great Chasm.** Original: χάσμα μέγα — (read as: chásma méga)

Literal Google Translation: Mega Gap.

Some of the modern usage of the word χάσμα:

χάσμα can be used to refer to a gap that affects understanding.

*"This gap can turn out to be very confusing for interested parties and the public at large."* – Official Journal of the EU.

χάσμα can be used to refer to a gap in digital stratification / digital divide; *"...bridging the digital divide."*

χάσμα can refer to a gap in opinions (of the political nature)

“A significant divergence remains between EU legislation on the one hand and national legislation and practices on the other.” – Official Journal of the EU.

χάσμα can be used to refer to a gap between people in the form of socio-economic status; “...national poverty risk gap...”

I am not a linguist, so I can only assume the χάσμα (or chasm/gap) Jesus spoke is something of a similar nature.

Assuming χάσμα is an accurate description of the “gap” between heaven and hell, we can deduce the differences separating heaven and hell isn’t on a superficial level. Rather, the “chasm” between heaven and hell appears to encompass one’s beliefs, opinions, choices, and one’s worldview.

To understand the this “chasm”, we must understand what brings people to hell in the first of all. place. This took me to Jesus’ teaching about the unpardonable sin.

“Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.” – Mark 3:28-29.

There are many explanations about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. The best description is the hardening of heart while recognizing the Truth in Jesus but still turning away from Him. Such a hardness of heart will render a person incapable of repentance (Mathis, 2018).

While we know the hardening of the heart can shape one’s worldview. We know some Jewish leaders were constantly at odds with Christ during His ministry on earth. Their hearts were so hardened everything they did was simply to disprove Christ or to bring Him harm.

This was what Jesus said to them:

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the start, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” – John 8:44.

The hardening of hearts will shape one’s innate desire. These desires will then shape the way a person will live one’s life. With their minds fixed on following “the prince of this world” (another name for Satan in John 12:31, NIV), their entire person will be socialized into the being of Satan to

do what he desires. This constant denial of Christ solidified their hearts to the point of no return that even in hell, they would find that there's no purpose of repentance. *I can only infer this might be the reason for the rich man's lack of repentance in hell in Luke's narrative.*

Despite the door between heaven and hell being open (Revelations 21:25, NIV), no one will cross over to one side or another even if they "want" to (Luke 16:26).

Indeed, the very nature of sin is the "chasm" that separates heaven and hell as Paul taught:

"Do you not know wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, [homosexuals], nor thieves, the greedy ones, drunkards, slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." – 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

While these sins can be forgiven, one who has seen the richness of Christ and still turns away towards the temporal pleasures of such acts, these acts will be the chasm that separates them from God, forever.

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Phil Wickham wrote a song that comes to mind. It's the theme of a church I attend, Living Hope Church, Vancouver Washington.

*How great the chasm that lay between us  
How high the mountain I could not climb  
In desperation, I turned to heaven  
And spoke your name into the night  
Then through the darkness  
Your loving kindness  
Tore through the shadows of my soul  
The work is finished, the end is written  
Jesus Christ, my living hope. . .*

# 'DRAGONS IN THE BIBLE!'

By Rabbi Harvey | August 4, 2018 (paraphrased)

In the final speeches from Moses to the Israelites he says, 'Let not your heart grow proud and you forget Adonai—who freed you from your bondage in Egypt; who led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its seraph serpents . . .'

Ah, the word: seraph. The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain with varied meanings.

Moses speaks of seraph serpents in the wilderness, he refers to Numbers chapter 21; a "complaint" scene. In similar scenes the Israelites complain to Moses, asking why he made them leave Egypt only to die in the wilderness.

Verse 6. To punish the Israelites for this behavior, Adonai sent seraph serpents against the people. The serpents bit them and many died. The people came to Moses, "We sinned speaking against Adonai and you. Intercede to take the serpents away!" Moses interceded.

Adonai's solution, "Make a seraph figure and mount it on a standard. If anyone bitten looks at it, he will recover."

Moses obeys; when bitten by a serpent anyone who looks at the copper serpent recovers.

Now, this scene is problematic because God tells Moses to be a serpent charmer, it appears, which is an abhorrent practice of the neighboring nations.

Also this passage doesn't help to understand what a seraph is; we know they bite and those bitten die. Adonai solved the problem by having Moses make a copper serpent staff for people to see, which healed them.

In commentaries and exegesis, a common explanation is the word seraph... which means "it burned." Most therefore infer the word seraph means "burning one."

Well, Seraphim, defined as fiery serpents apparently are serpents whose bite causes a burning sensation.

Jewish Study Bible commentators and Gunther Plaut on the Torah, said 'the word seraph can be defined as "fiery" - a reference to snake bites which cause a skin inflammation.' So, seraph is a snake.

The word Seraph appears elsewhere, Isaiah, Ch. 6, wherein he has a vision of God sitting on a throne described as:

'The year King Uzziah died, I saw God seated on a high and lofty throne; the skirt of God's robe filled the Temple. Seraphs stood in attendance upon God. Each had six wings: with two it covered God's face, with two it covered God's legs, and with two it would fly.'

And one would call to the other:

'Holy, holy, holy!

The Lord of Hosts!

His presence fills all the earth!

The door posts would shake at the sound of the one who called, and the House kept filling with smoke.

Forget seraph can talk, and consider the image you conjure when you hear this scene.

This is not like Numbers or Deuteronomy where the word seraph precedes the word "serpent." No, an image of a seraph with wings, comes it mind, enough to cover God's face. See the seraph "burning one" or "fiery," and it's a fiery creature with wings who appears to be a flying fiery serpent!

This is what you might call a dragon. It's no wonder the room Isaiah saw was full of smoke! Dragons breathe fire. So when you have fire breathing dragons you have smoke.

Thus, God used this fire-dragon to punish the Israelites, and it's why the bite caused the Israelites to die. Not because of a burning sensation, but because dragon bites probably did some serious damage. And the threat of a dragon did intimidate.

The source of the word seraph, is angelic being, one of the alleged hierarchies. [the bible never says celestials are angels and describes them different from seraph and cherubs]. Even so, for our purpose, the answer is simple: dragons in the Bible!

Dragons appear in prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah who say the attack by Nebuchadnezzar is “swallowed like a dragon,” Ezekiel compares Pharaohs of Egypt as “dragon in the seas” and Job asks, “Am I the sea or Dragon You set to watch over me?”

Now, when you read Moses telling the dangers the Israelites faced in the wilderness the plague of seraph serpents, you now think bigger than snake bites. Your imagination can run wild at the possibility the Israelites knew Adonai sat on a throne guarded by dragons, and when they sinned, God sent those dragons. This story merely reminds us how fun Torah can be.

[1] Jeremiah 51:34

[2] Ezekiel 32:2

[3] Job 7:12

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A delicious commentary on seraphs. And in paraphrasing, my intent is to simplify while keeping the intent of the author in mind. And, it fit with my story and dragons in the bible.

Here’s the reference where I gleaned the idea for my novel.

<https://rabbiharvey.wordpress.com/2018/08/03/dragons-in-the-bible/>

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While dragon may or may not be in the Bible, sex certainly is as we read in the Song of Songs or Song of Solomon. This book is from where I derive my ‘sex’ scenes.

## HELL IN THE BIBLE

*The following was obtained from an article on the internet some time before I wrote the book, Lucifer Unbound, and so, I no longer have the reference whence I obtained it. But the author did a lot of in-depth work in defining hell in the Bible, in the Scriptures.*

“... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ... (2Th 1:7b-9)

So many people today don't believe in a literal place called Hell that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8), where all who die in their sins without Jesus Christ go to be punished for all eternity. Sadly, there are countless people who twist the Scriptures to try and teach that Hell is other than what the Bible says... a place of flaming torment.

The Bible contains an overwhelming amount of irrefutable evidence that Hell is indeed a literal place of torment, where those who die in their sins without Jesus Christ are punished in flaming fire ... (2Thessalonians 1:8,9).

Here are many Scriptures to consider...

“The wicked will be turned into hell, and all the nations who forget God.” — Psalm 9:17

Notice here, "hell" cannot mean "the grave" as some teach. If "hell" means the grave, then where do the righteous go? The Bible plainly teaches the righteous and the wicked do not go to the same place. The wicked are turned into Hell; but the righteous unto life eternal.

“If I ascend up into heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.” — Psalm 139:8

These hypothetical examples are of where David might try to escape. He first asserts the Lord is present in the heavens above and in sheol (hell) below. These opposites signify all areas in between (a third merism in this psalm; cf. Psalm 139:2-3) are in the Lord's presence.

These are hypothetical because as 2Thessalonians 1:9 says, in being punished in hell they are "forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power." (NLT)

The contrast here is between Heaven and Hell; not between Heaven and the grave. Also, notice this phrase... "If I make my bed in hell." Everyone who goes to Hell chooses to go there by rejecting Jesus as their Christ. It is the sinful person who makes their bed in Hell. No sinner must go to Hell. The gift of eternal life is freely offered to all mankind through faith in Christ Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 10:43; Revelation 22:17).

"Therefore hell has enlarged itself, and opened its mouth without measure: and their glory and multitude, and pomp, and he who rejoices will descend into it." — Isaiah 5:14

Therefore hell has enlarged itself to receive the dead is not as God intended for He made hell for the devil and his dark angels. Clearly, Hell is for those who die in their sins, and for the devil and his angels. The righteous go to heaven to be with the Lord (2Corinthians 5:8).

This Scripture defines "hell" as being more than the grave. The Bible speaks about "descending into the pit" and speaks of being "cast into Hell," implying there is judgment of a holy God. Only the wicked will be thrown into Hell, a bottomless pit, where Satan is "the angel of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:11).

"But I say to you, whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye offends you, pluck it out, and cast it from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not your whole body should be cast into hell." — Matthew 5:28, 29

The Bible teaches all [without Christ] are condemned to Hell. If "hell" simply means grave, then what harm or worry is there in fornicating, getting drunk, raping, murdering, partying with illegal drugs and committing all other sins?

If there is no place of punishment in eternity, there is no justice for all the crime victims in this earthly life. So why bother being righteous? To believe the Bible is God's Word, you must believe Hell is a literal place of torment and anguish, burns with flames of fire and brimstone, where sinners are punished for their sins against a holy God.

There are no second chances once a soul leaves this earthly life. There is no such place as Purgatory or limbo, and no amount of prayer or contributions to a church can lessen God's vengeance upon those who die in their sins without Jesus Christ.

Scripture plainly teaches the Church's arch enemy is Satan and the forces of Hell. We also see this in Ephesians 6:12. Our battle is not against flesh and blood (humanity); but against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places (satan and his demon angels).

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." — Matthew 23:15

The Bible speaks of being "a child of Hell." Matthew 5:9 speaks of the "children of God." Galatians 3:26 clearly says, "You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

"You serpents, generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you will kill and crucify; and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city." — Matthew 23:33,34...

Jesus warned about the "damnation of Hell," and He spoke about "escaping" the damnation of Hell. What is the damnation for the Pharisees and scribes? Common sense tells the honest student of the Bible that Hell must be a literal place of torment and fire, i.e., damnation.

"If your foot offends you, cut it off: it is better to enter life crippled, than to have two feet and be cast into hell, into the fire that never is quenched: Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." — Mark 9:45,46

The same Scriptures says hell's fire will never be quenched. The "worm that dies not" may refer to our conscience which will eat away at us for eternity. The worst part about Hell won't be the flames of torment, it will be

knowing in your heart Jesus paid your way to Heaven, and you could have gone to Heaven; but you loved your sins more and refused to come to the Savior to be saved.

To clarify, a person does not have to forsake committing sins to be saved; but one's love for sin prevents them from coming to Jesus... "lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20). Jesus said in John 5:40, "You will not come to me, so you might have life." To be saved, one must admit they are guilty before God of violating His holy Word (Romans 3:19). Most people are not willing to repent; but instead choose to continue denying and making excuses for their sins. God only requires us to admit our guilt and to seek forgiveness through His Son, Jesus Christ.

"And you, Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, will be thrust down to hell." — Luke 10:15

Jesus prophesied imminent judgment and doom upon the wicked citizens of Capernaum. Notice the Bible continually speaks of being "cast down to hell", "thrust down to hell," which clearly indicate hell is below while heaven is above. Psalm 7:11 says "God is angry with the wicked every day."

Oprah Winfrey has publicly denied that Jesus is the only Way to Heaven. Do you think God is angry with her? The world is filled with billions of Christ-rejecters, God must be One angry God. John 3:36 tells us the "wrath of God" abides upon all who reject Christ. Again we see that "hell" is more than just a symbolic term. Although one's life may seem like hell on earth, it cannot be compared to burning in the torments of fire and brimstone for all eternity.

"I will forewarn you whom you will fear: Fear him, who after he has killed has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, Fear him." — Luke 12:5

"In hell he lifts up his eyes... in torment..." — Luke 16:23

In view of all the Scriptures I've shared concerning the reality of Hell, who could honestly say Luke 16:19-31 is merely a parable? Jesus never used specific names in His parable; but he speaks of a specific man, and Lazarus and Abraham in this Scripture. It is clearly not a parable.

Yet, if it was a parable, what was Jesus trying to describe? It would be misleading for Jesus to speak of Hell as a literal place of "torment" and "flames" if it weren't so. Consider Jesus' Words in John 14:2... "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you..." Jesus

was a Man of His Word—He meant what he said, and Hell is a place of torment and fire.

“The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.” — James 3:6

Again we find a Biblical reference to "fire of Hell."

“If God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment...”  
— 2nd Peter 2:4

If "hell" is merely the grave, then how could God cast the fallen angels into hell (Greek: Tartarus)? Angels do not die in the human sense. You don't bury them six-feet under. We read these fallen angels (i.e. demons) are reserved in chains of darkness awaiting judgment.

There are three different Greek words for our English word "hell" today: Hades, Gehenna and Tartarus. Gehenna is the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:11-15). Tartarus is a special jail for demons reserved unto judgment.

Hades is where lost sinners go when they die (a terrible place of fire, torment and suffering). For a comprehensive examination on the subject of Hell, please read: [A Biblical Examination of Hell](#).

“I am he that lives and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forever, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” — Revelation 1:18

Here we see that death and Hell are two separate things. I always capitalize Heaven and Hell because they are literal places and these are their proper names. If "hell" meant grave, there would be no distinction between the two.

“The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged everyone according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” — Revelation 20:13-15

How can you argue with the Biblical term "second death"? Clearly there is a punishment that goes beyond the grave. The Bible teaches sinners will stand trial and be sentenced to the Lake of Fire based upon their works. Also, the Bible teaches that death and Hell (Hades) were cast into the Lake of Fire.

This plainly shows hell means much more than the grave. The Hebrew word "Sheol" in the Old Testament is equivalent to "Hades" in the New Testament meaning "hell." Sheol doesn't strictly mean the grave. It can mean a lot more, and often does. Psalm 9:17 is an example:

"The wicked shall be turned into Hell." Obviously this means more than the grave alone, because that's also where the righteous go. It would make no sense. The clear interpretation is that the wicked and all those who forget God will be punished in eternity.

### **Verses Specific to Hell**

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." — Revelation 21:8

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' — Matthew 25:41

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." — Matthew 25:46

He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. — Romans 2:6-8 45

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. — Revelation 20:15 29

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 6:23 29

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. — Mark 9:43 25

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ... — 2Thessalonians 1:9

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. — Matthew 10:28

Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. — Revelation 20:14

Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you. — Deuteronomy 28:4-48

Come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. — John 5:29

‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ — Mark 9:48

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. — Jude 1:10

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. — Rev. 20:6

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. — 1John 5:12

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ...

And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ — — Luke 16:19-31

For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise? — Psalm 6:5



More people believe in heaven than in hell, yet hell is an actual place. There can be no heaven without hell. Jesus spoke more about hell than

heaven and He described it as a real place. He used vivid descriptive language when He spoke about it. Hell was not intended for humans but a place of eternal punishment prepared for the Devil and his followers, the demons (Matt. 25:41). The Bible clearly describes hell.

### **Words that Describe Hell**

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Fire and brimstone | Furnace of fire    |
| Judgment by fire   | Fiery oven         |
| Lake of fire       | Eternal punishment |
| Pits of darkness   | Flames of fire     |
| Burning wind       | Unquenchable fire  |
| Judgment by fire   |                    |

### **Physical Nature of Hell**

“The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” — Revelation 14:11

“And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” — 2Thessalonians 1:9

“The cowardly, unbelieving, vile, murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” — Revelation 21:8

“He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.’” — Matthew 25:41

““And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” — Mark 9:47-48

“The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” — Rev. 20:10

“The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and

will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” — Matthew 13:41-42

### **Who Goes to Hell?**

Revelation 21:8 says: “the cowardly, the unbelieving, murderers, the sexually immoral, and those who practice magic arts, idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.”

The "cowards" are those who abandon Christ, fearing persecution so badly they choose safety over eternal life. These cowards are the same as the unbelieving, the corrupt, the murderers, the immoral, the idolaters, the liars, and those practicing magic arts.

By contrast, people who are victorious "endure to the end" (Mark 13:13). These true believers do not give into pressure to conform to the world, so they will receive the blessings God promised: To follow Christ requires boldness to stand in courage with oppression. Pray for courage to do what is right no matter what pressure you face. Those who can endure the testing of evil and remain faithful will be rewarded by God.

A critically important word in this list is “the unbelieving.” Who are the unbelievers? John 3:18b says those who do not believe in Jesus Christ suffer eternal punishment; “whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they do not believe in the name of God’s one and only Son.” Anyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ, who does not repent of their sin, and who does not ask for forgiveness is doomed to eternal separation from God and His holy angels.

Every human who has ever lived, anyone who is alive today, and anybody who will yet live in the future who does not believe in Jesus are destined for hell fire.

The way to avoid this torment is to choose to trust in Christ, place your faith in Christ, and ask for forgiveness from our Lord. Everyone has a choice to make in this life, either eternal life or eternal damnation. No one is saved by being a good person or doing good things. Many people who say they are a good person will end up in hell because they placed their faith in their own good works.

Many who believe being good will get them into heaven. This is not what the Bible says. And so, many say they are a “nice person”, but even so, there will be a lot of “nice people” in hell someday because they rejected the only One Who had God’s wrath placed on Him (Jesus). Either take God’s wrath on yourself someday or ask Jesus to forgive you and believe in Him because He has taken upon Himself our sins and God’s wrath. Good works are like filthy rags to God – but belief in Jesus sends you to heaven. Let Him impart His righteousness on your behalf.

### **What Sends a Person to Hell?**

God has never sent anyone to hell, and will never send anyone to hell. People choose hell by their unbelief. The good news is God desires no one perish and suffer eternal torment (2Peter 3:9).

People choose hell by choosing not to believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Jesus can save you today (John 3:16). You have to believe in Him and place your trust in Him (Rom 10:9-13). There is no way to escape hell except through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). You may be reading this because this is your day of salvation (2Cor 6:2). That is my hope and prayer for anyone that reads this. Just believe in Him and you will be saved (Act 16:31).

### **Conclusion**

The Bible contains an overwhelming amount of evidence showing that Hell is a literal place that burns with fire and is eternal. Those people today who scoff and deny the existence of a literal Hell that burns with fire are calling God a liar. You believe the Bible is God's Word or you don't. There is NO middle ground.

“Beloved, remember the words spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus; how they told you there would be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These are those who separate themselves, having not the Spirit" (Jude 1:1-19).

# SONG OF SONGS:

## a Sensual Journey and a love song of redemption

**Introduction:** Song of Solomon (Song of Songs) . . . is very graphic. Solomon concealed his sensuality in figurative language . . . [like we haven't figured out what he was talking about.] And it helps to have a modern Bible to better identify the speakers.

Regardless, Song of Songs is the Bible's book on sex with sexually colorful if not erotic images; it is sexually tempting and stimulating. Yes, Song of Songs is highly sensual in a biblical way.

The story involves Solomon, who owned vineyards (8:11), and a peasant girl from Shulam (6:13), who works among the vines (1:6). When Solomon came into the area to check on his flocks (1:7), he saw the girl in the vines and it was love at first sight.

The Couple Falls in Love: 1:1 – 2:7

The book opens with the Shulamite longing for the handsome king to kiss her (1:2); he is smitten with her and declares her beautiful . . . (1:9). Cautioned not to be physically intimate until they are married (2:7).

The Couple is Engaged: 2:8 – 3:5

“Come with me . . . Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me” (2:10, 13).

She accepts, “My beloved is mine, I am his” (2:16). Again, the two are cautioned not to yield to sexual temptations (3:5).

The Wedding: 3:6-10

Solomon arrives (3:7) on “his wedding day” (3:10).

The Honeymoon: 4:1 – 5:1

He describes her body in exquisite detail (4:1-7), and calls her his “bride” five times (4:9-15). The bride invites him to “come into his garden

and taste its choice fruits.” He does. “I have come into my garden, *my bride* . . .” Imagine the choice fruits of which he tastes.

The Falling Out: 5:2 – 6:3

One night, they have a falling out. Solomon wants to enjoy his wife, but she is tired (5:2-3). He leaves and she goes after him (5:6-7) fearing he has “gone down to his garden [his harem], to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens among the lilies . . .” (6:3).

Humm. Naughty boy. But they Make Up! 6:4–8:4

He returns, “my dove, my perfect one. . . unique.” Another graphic description of her body (7:1-5). He longs to enjoy her pleasures (7:8-9). She reciprocates (7:9-10); they resume a passionate relationship (8:1-3).

*Paraphrased from an article by Robert J. Morgan © 2020*

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Song of Songs is about Love, Marriage and Sex. The sexual elements used in my novel are suggestive but biblical, suggesting sexual temptation and not obscene. Many novels erotic scenes are vulgar and unappealing, pornographic, at least to me. I’ve tried to use discretion in writing these scenes. However, every person will view the temptation and sex scenes differently.

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### **Song of Songs \_ Redemption**

This is another way of beholding the most amazing song of all, by King Solomon, the Passion Translation.

1:1 Let him smother me with kisses—his Spirit-kiss divine. So kind are your caresses, I drink them in like the sweetest wine! Your presence releases a fragrance so pleasing—over and over poured out. Your lovely name is “Flowing Oil.” No wonder the brides-to-be adore you.

Draw me into your heart. We will run away together into the king’s cloud-filled chamber. We will remember your love, rejoicing and delighting in you, celebrating your every kiss as better than wine. No wonder righteousness adores you!

Jerusalem maidens, in this twilight darkness I know I am so unworthy—so in need. Yet you are so lovely! I feel as dark and dry as the desert tents of

the wandering nomads. Yet you are so lovely—like the fine linen tapestry hanging in the Holy Place.

Please don't stare in scorn because of my dark and sinful ways. My angry brothers quarreled with me and appointed me guardian of their ministry vineyards, yet I've not tended my vineyard within. Won't you tell me, lover of my soul, where do you feed your flock? Where do you lead your beloved ones to rest in the heat of the day? For I wish to be wrapped all around you as I wander among the flocks of your shepherds. It is you I long for, with no veil between us!

Listen, my radiant one—if you ever lose sight of me, just follow in my footsteps where I lead my lovers. Come with your burdens and cares. Come to the place near the sanctuary of my shepherds.

My dearest one, let me tell you how I see you—you are so thrilling to me. To gaze upon you is like looking at one of Pharaoh's finest horses—a strong, regal steed pulling his royal chariot. Your tender cheeks are aglow—your earrings and gem-laden necklaces set them ablaze. We will enhance your beauty, encircling you with our golden reins of love. You will be marked with our redeeming grace.

As the king surrounded me at his table, the sweet fragrance of my praise perfume awakened the night. A sachet of myrrh is my lover, like a tied-up bundle of myrrh resting over my heart. He is like a bouquet of henna blossoms—henna plucked near the vines at the fountain of the Lamb. I will hold him and never let him part.

Look at you, my dearest darling, you are so lovely! You are beauty itself to me. Your passionate eyes are like gentle doves. My beloved one, both handsome and winsome, you are pleasing beyond words. Our resting place is anointed and flourishing, like a green forest meadow bathed in light. Rafters of cedar branches are over our heads and balconies of pleasant-smelling pines.

(2:1) I am truly his rose, the very theme of his song. I'm overshadowed by his love, growing in the valley! Yes, you are my darling companion. You stand out from all the rest. For though the curse of sin surrounds you, still you remain as pure as a lily, even more than all others. My beloved is to me the most fragrant apple tree—he stands above the sons of men. Sitting

under his grace-shadow, I blossom in his shade, enjoying the sweet taste of his pleasant, delicious fruit, resting with delight where his glory never fades.

Suddenly, he transported me into his house of wine—he looked upon me with his unrelenting love divine. Revive me with your raisin cakes. Refresh me again with your apples. Help me and hold me, for I am lovesick! I am longing for more—*yet how could I take more?* His left hand cradles my head while his right hand holds me close. I am at rest in this love.

Promise me, brides-to-be, by the gentle gazelles and delicate deer, you'll not disturb my love until she is ready to arise.

Listen! I hear my lover's voice. I know it's him coming to me—leaping with joy over mountains, skipping in love over the hills *that separate us*, to come to me. Let me describe him: he is graceful as a gazelle, swift as a wild stag. Now he comes closer, even to the places where I hide. He gazes into my soul, peering through the portal as he blossoms within my heart.

The one I love calls to me: Arise, my dearest. Hurry, my darling. Come away with me! I have come as you have asked to draw you to my heart and lead you out. For now is the time, my beautiful one.

The season has changed, the bondage of your barren winter has ended, and the season of hiding is over and gone. The rains have soaked the earth and left it bright with blossoming flowers. The season for singing and pruning the vines has arrived. I hear the cooing of doves in our land, filling the air with songs to awaken you and guide you forth.

Can you not discern this new day of destiny breaking forth around you? The early signs of my purposes and plans are bursting forth. The budding vines of new life are now blooming everywhere. The fragrance of their flowers whispers, "There is change in the air." Arise, my love, my beautiful companion, and run with me to the higher place. For now is the time to arise and come away with me. For you are my dove, hidden in the split-open rock. It was I who took you and hid you up high in the secret stairway of the sky. Let me see your radiant face and hear your sweet voice. How beautiful your eyes of worship and lovely your voice in prayer.

You must catch the troubling foxes, those sly little foxes that hinder our relationship. For they raid our budding vineyard of love to ruin what I've planted within you. Will you catch them and remove them for me? We will

do it together. I know my lover is mine and I am his; I have everything in you, for we delight ourselves in each other.

But until the day springs to life and the shifting shadows of fear disappear, turn around, my lover, and ascend to the holy mountains of separation without me. Until the new day fully dawns, run on ahead like the graceful gazelle and skip like the young stag over the mountains of separation. Go on ahead to the mountain of spices—*I'll come away another time.*

(3:1) Night after night I'm tossing and turning on my bed of travail. Why did I let him go from me? How my heart now aches for him, but he is nowhere to be found! So I must rise in search of him, throughout the city, seeking until I find him. Even if I must roam through every street, nothing will keep me from my search. Where is he—my soul's true love? He is nowhere to be found.

Then I encountered the overseers as they encircled the city. I asked them, "Have you found him—my heart's true love?" As I moved past them, I encountered him. I found the one I adore! I caught him and fastened myself to him, refusing to be feeble in my heart again. Now I'll bring him back to the temple within where I was given new birth—into my innermost parts, the place of my conceiving.

Promise me, O Jerusalem maidens, by the gentle gazelles and delicate deer, that you'll not disturb my love until she is ready to arise. Who is this one ascending from the wilds in the pillar of the glory cloud? He is fragrant with the anointing oils of myrrh and frankincense—more fragrant than all the spices of the merchant.

Look! It is the king's marriage carriage. The love seat surrounded by sixty champions, the mightiest of Israel's host, like pillars of protection. They are angelic warriors standing ready with swords to defend the king and his fiancée from every terror of the night.

The king made this mercy seat for himself out of the finest wood that will not decay. Pillars of smoke, like silver mist—a canopy of golden glory dwells above it. The place where they sit together is sprinkled with crimson. Love and mercy cover this carriage, blanketing his tabernacle throne. The king has made it for those who will become his bride.

Rise up, Zion maidens, brides-to-be! Come and feast your eyes on this king as he passes in procession on his way to his wedding. This is the day filled with overwhelming joy—the day of his great gladness.

(4:1) Listen, my dearest darling, you are so beautiful—you are beauty itself to me! Your eyes glisten with love, like gentle doves behind your veil. What devotion I see each time I gaze upon you. You are like a sacrifice ready to be offered. When I look at you, I see how you have taken my fruit and tasted my word. Your life has become clean and pure, like a lamb washed and newly shorn. You now show grace and balance with truth on display.

Your lips are as lovely as Rahab's scarlet ribbon, speaking mercy, speaking grace. The words of your mouth are as refreshing as an oasis. What pleasure you bring to me! I see your blushing cheeks opened like the halves of a pomegranate, showing through your veil tender meek.

When I look at you, I see your inner strength, so stately and strong. You are as secure as David's fortress. Your virtues and grace cause a thousand famous soldiers to surrender to your beauty. Your pure faith and love rest over your heart as you nurture those who are infants.

I've made up my mind. Until the darkness disappears and the dawn has fully come, even in shadows and fears, I will go to the mountaintop with you—the mountain of suffering love, the hill of burning incense. *Yes, I will be your bride.*

Every part of you is so beautiful, my darling. Perfect is your beauty, without flaw within. Now you are ready, my bride, to come with me as we climb the highest peaks together. Come with me through the arch of trust. We will look down from the crest of the glistening mounts and from the summit of our sublime sanctuary.

Together we will wage war in the lion's den and the leopard's lair as they watch nightly for their prey. For you reach into my heart. With one flash of your eyes I am undone by your love, my beloved, my equal, my bride. You leave me breathless—I am overcome by a glance from your worshiping eyes, for you have stolen my heart. I am held hostage by your love and by the graces of righteousness shining upon you.

How satisfying to me, my equal, my bride. Your love is finest wine — intoxicating and thrilling. Your sweet, perfumed praises—so exotic, so

pleasing. Your loving words are like honeycomb to me; your tongue releases milk and honey, *the Promised Land flows within you*.

The fragrance of your worshiping love surrounds you with scented robes of white. My darling bride, my private paradise, fastened to my heart. A secret spring are you no one else can have—my bubbling fountain hidden from public view. What a perfect partner to me now that I have you.

Your inward life is sprouting, bringing forth fruit. What a beautiful paradise unfolds within you. When I'm near you, I smell the finest spice, for many clusters of my exquisite fruit grow within your inner garden. Here are the nine: pomegranates of passion, henna from heaven, spikenard so sweet, saffron shining, fragrant calamus from the cross, sacred cinnamon, branches of scented woods, myrrh, like tears from a tree, and aloe as eagles ascending.

Your life flows into mine, pure as a garden spring. A well of living water springs up from within you, like a mountain brook flowing into my heart! Then may your awakening breath blow upon my life until I am fully yours. Breathe upon me with your Spirit wind. Stir up the sweet spice of your life within me. Spare nothing as you make me your fruitful garden. Hold nothing back until I release your fragrance. Come walk with me as you walked with Adam in your paradise garden. Come taste the fruits of your life in me. I have come to you, my darling bride, for you are my paradise garden! Come walk with me until I am fully yours. Come taste the fruits of life in me.

(5:1) I have gathered from your heart, my equal, my bride, I have gathered from my garden all my sacred spices—even my myrrh. I have tasted and enjoyed my wine within you. I have tasted with pleasure my pure milk, my honeycomb, which you yield to me. I delight in gathering my sacred spice, all the fruits of my life I have gathered from within you, my paradise garden.

Come, all my friends—feast upon my bride, all you revelers of my palace. Feast on her, my lovers! Drink and drink, and drink again, until you can take no more. Drink the wine of her love. Take all you desire, you priests. My life within her will become your feast.

After this I let my devotion slumber, but my heart for him stayed awake. ... I dreamed. I dreamed of my beloved—he was coming to me in the darkness of night. The melody of the man I love awakened me. I heard his knock at my heart's door as he pleaded with me: Arise, my love.

Open your heart, my darling, deeper still to me. Will you receive me this dark night? There is no one else but you, my friend, my equal. I need you this night to arise and come be with me. You are my pure, loyal dove, a perfect partner. My flawless one, will you arise? For my heaviness and tears are more than I can bear. I have spent myself for you throughout the dark night.

I have laid aside my own garments for you. How could I take them up again since I've yielded my righteousness to yours? You have cleansed my life and taken me so far. Isn't that enough?

My beloved reached into me to unlock my heart. The core of my very being trembled at his touch. How my soul melted when he spoke to me! My spirit arose to open for more of his touch. As I surrendered to him, I began to sense his fragrance—the fragrance of his suffering love! It was the sense of myrrh flowing all through me!

I opened my soul to my beloved, but suddenly he was gone! And my heart was torn out in longing for him. I sought his presence, his fragrance, but could not find him anywhere. I called out for him, yet he did not answer. I will arise and search for him until I find him. As I walked throughout the city in search of him, the overseers stopped me as they made their rounds. They beat and bruised me until I could take no more. They wounded me deeply and removed the covering from me.

Nevertheless, make me this promise, you brides-to-be: if you find my beloved, please tell him I endured all travails for him. I've been pierced through by love, and I will not be turned aside!

What love is this? How could you continue to care so deeply for him? Isn't there another who could steal away your heart? We see your beauty, more beautiful than all the others. What makes your beloved better than any other? What is it about him that makes you ask us to promise you this? He alone is my beloved. He shines in dazzling splendor yet so approachable—without equal as he stands above all others, outstanding among ten thousand!

The way he leads me is divine... so pure and dignified as he wears his crown of gold. Upon this crown are letters of black written on a background of glory. He sees everything with pure understanding. How beautiful his

insights—without distortion. His eyes upon the fullness of the river of revelation, flowing so clean and pure.

Looking at his gentle face, such fullness of emotion. Like a lovely garden where fragrant spices grow—what a man! No one speaks words so anointed as this one—words that both pierce and heal, words like lilies dripping with myrrh. See how his hands hold unlimited power! But he never uses it in anger, for he is always holy, displaying his glory. His innermost place is a work of art—so beautiful and bright. How magnificent and noble is this one—covered in majesty!

He's steadfast in all he does. His ways are the ways of righteousness, based on truth and holiness. None can rival him, but all are amazed by him. So sweet are his kisses, even his whispers of love. He is delightful in every way and perfect from every view. If you ask me why I love him so, O brides-to-be, it's because there is none like him to me. Everything about him fills me with holy desire! And now he is my beloved—my friend forever.

(6:1) O rarest of beauty, where then has your lover gone? We long to see him too. Where may we find him? We will follow you as you seek after him. My lover has gone down into his garden of delight, the place where his spices grow, to feast with those pure in heart. I know we shall find him there.

He is within me—I am his garden of delight. I have him fully and now he fully has me! O my beloved, you are lovely. When I see you in your beauty, I see a radiant city where we will dwell as one. More pleasing than any pleasure, more delightful than any delight, you have ravished my heart, stealing away my strength to resist you. Even hosts of angels stand in awe of you.

Turn your eyes from me; I can't take it anymore! I can't resist the passion of these eyes that I adore. Overpowered by a glance, my ravished heart—undone. Held captive by your love, I am truly overcome! For your undying devotion to me is the most yielded sacrifice. The shining of your spirit shows how you have taken my truth to become balanced and complete. Your beautiful blushing cheeks reveal how real your passion is for me, even hidden behind your veil of humility.

I could have chosen any from among the vast multitude of royal ones who follow me. But one is my beloved dove—unrivaled in beauty, without

equal, beyond compare, the perfect one, the favorite one. Others see your beauty and sing of your joy. Brides and queens chant your praise: “How blessed is she!”

Look at you now—arising as the dayspring of the dawn, fair as the shining moon. Brilliant as the sun in all its strength. Astonishing to behold as a majestic army waving banners of victory.

I decided to go down to the valley streams where the orchards of the king grow and mature. I longed to know if hearts were opening. Are the budding vines blooming with new growth? Has their springtime of passionate love arrived? Suddenly my longings transported me. My divine desire brought me next to my beloved prince, sitting with him in his royal chariot. We were lifted together!

Come back! Return to us, O maiden of his majesty. Dance for us as we gaze upon your beauty. Why would you seek a mere Shulamite like me? Why would you want to see my dance of love? Because you dance so gracefully, as though you danced with angels!

**(7:1)** How beautiful on the mountains are the sandaled feet of this one bringing such good news. You are truly royalty! The way you walk so gracefully in my ways displays such dignity. You are truly the poetry of God—his very handiwork.

Out of your innermost being is flowing the fullness of my Spirit—never failing to satisfy. Within your womb there is a birthing of harvest wheat; they are the sons and daughters nurtured by the purity you impart. How gracious you have become! Your life stands tall as a tower, like a shining light on a hill. Your revelation eyes are pure, like pools of refreshing—sparkling light for a multitude. Such discernment surrounds you, protecting you from the enemy’s advance.

Redeeming love crowns you as royalty. Your thoughts are full of life, wisdom, and virtue. Even a king is held captive by your beauty. How delicious is your fair beauty; it cannot be described as I count the delights you bring to me. Love has become the greatest. You stand in victory above the rest, stately and secure as you share with me your vineyard of love. Now I decree, I will ascend and arise. I will take hold of you with my power, possessing every part of my fruitful bride. Your love I will drink as wine, and your words

will be mine. For your kisses of love are exhilarating, more than any delight I've known. Your kisses of love awaken the lips of sleeping ones. Now I know I am filled with my beloved and all his desires are fulfilled in me.

Come away, my lover. Come with me to the faraway fields. We will run away together to the forgotten places and show them redeeming love. Let us arise and run to the vineyards of your people and see if the budding vines of love are now in full bloom. We will discover if their passion is awakened. There I will display my love for you.

The love apples are in bloom, sending forth their fragrance of spring. The rarest of fruits are found at our doors—the new as well as the old. I have stored them for you, my lover-friend!

(8:1) If only I could show everyone this passionate desire I have for you. If only I could express it fully, no matter who was watching me, without shame or embarrassment.

I long to bring you to my innermost chamber—this holy sanctuary you have formed within me. O that I might carry you within me. I would give you the spiced wine of my love, this full cup of bliss that we share. We would drink our fill until . . . His left hand cradles my head while his right hand holds me close. We are at rest in this love.

Promise me, brides-to-be, by the gentle gazelles and delicate deer, you'll not disturb my love until he is ready to arise. Who is this one? Look at her now! She arises out of her desert, clinging to her beloved. When I awakened you under the apple tree, as you were feasting upon me, I awakened your innermost being with the travail of birth as you longed for more of me.

Fasten me upon your heart as a seal of fire forevermore. This living, consuming flame will seal you as my prisoner of love. My passion is stronger than the chains of death and the grave, all-consuming as the very flashes of fire from the burning heart of God. Place this fierce, unrelenting fire over your entire being.

Rivers of pain and persecution will never extinguish this flame. Endless floods will be unable to quench this raging fire burning within you. Everything will be consumed. It will stop at nothing as you yield everything to this furious fire until it won't even seem to you like a sacrifice anymore.

My brothers said to me when I was young, *“Our sister is so immature. What will we do to guard her for her wedding day?”* We will build a tower of redemption to protect her. Since she is vulnerable, we will enclose her with a wall of cedar. But I have grown and become a bride, and my love for him has made me a tower of passion and contentment for my beloved. I am now a firm wall of protection for others, guarding them from harm. This is how he sees me—I am the one who brings him bliss, finding favor in his eyes.

My bridegroom-king has a vineyard of love made from a multitude of followers. His caretakers of this vineyard have given my beloved their best. But as for my own vineyard of love, I give it all to you forever. I will give double honor to those who serve my beloved and have watched over my soul. My beloved, one with me in my garden, how marvelous that my friends, the brides-to-be, now hear your voice and song. Let me now hear it again. Arise, my darling! Come quickly, my beloved. Come and be the graceful gazelle with me. Come be like a dancing deer with me. We will dance in the high place of the sky, yes, on the mountains of fragrant spice. Forever we shall be as one!

~\*~

## The New Jerusalem

Within the walled city, the Lord did as he promised; he made everything new. A new way of life arrived, one available to all who enter the city. Yet, murderers, liars, thieves, and those who live in sexual freedom, as they see it, as well as worshipers of power and greed, they do not allow inside the City.

How is this even possible?

The new Jerusalem may not be a real city, as many imagine, so says one writer; it does not descend onto earth literally. If it did, it would stretch miles beyond earth's atmosphere into outer space. People there could not breathe! Thus, it's likely spiritual.

One author says, what John describes in the Book of Revelation is a *spiritual* world, not a material world. To interpret the Revelation of Jesus to John does help us to understand "heaven" and "earth" as "sky" and "land" possibly. What John saw visually was not a new heaven and new earth, but perhaps a new sky and a new land: *the sky and land of the spiritual world*. Still, the angel is the one who measured the city, not John so, possibly the city is more than spiritual. If literal, then how *big* is the New Jerusalem according to Revelation 21:15-16?

The angel who was talking had a gold measuring rod with which to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city laid as a square its length equaled its width. He measured the city with a rod 12,000 stadia. Its length, width, and height equal.

Convert the ancient "stadia" into modern units, the city is about 1,400 miles in length, width, *and height!*

In the US, the New Jerusalem would stretch from Boston to Kansas City - halfway across the country.

Still, the best way to think about it and understand the 12,000 stadia, is to think of it as John and others in Bible times may have thought. These people lived in the ancient Near East, not North America. The horizons of their world were much smaller than ours.

Yet there was an awareness of more distant lands. John's world stretched from the Persian Gulf and Red Sea in the south to the Black Sea in the north. To measure its distance, the world John lived in was about *1,400 miles across* from east to west and 1,000 miles from south to north, give or take a few feet.

John saw the new Jerusalem as 12,000 stadia (1,400 miles) long and wide and tall; it filled his entire world!

Is the New Jerusalem a spiritual era for everyone on earth with no religion, sect, no exclusion? That answer depends on what you believe from the Bible. It's more like John Lennon than apostle John: *No hell below us, above us only sky; no religion . . . living life in peace.*

Even if this means no man-made religion, we still need Yeshua as Lord and Savior. Scripture says every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord. Those who confess this are the only ones allowed to enter the City of Light wherein Adonai dwells.

So, let the Spirit speak into each heart. Do not allow pride to rule, as did Lucifer. Ultimately, Lucifer ends up in the lake of fire, because it seems he never repents. Or, in my novel this seemingly impossible scenario, with God it is possible. Lucifer Morningstar Son of the Dawn does repent and return to heaven!

## Three heavens

The first heaven is our atmosphere wherein we live and serve the Lord one day. The Psalmist says, “therein fowls of the heaven lodge and sing among its [tree] branches” (Psa. 104:12).

The second heaven is the solar system: the sun, the moon, the stars, and planets (Gen. 1:14-18). The Psalmist says, “The heavens keep telling the wonders of God, the skies declare what he has done. Each day informs the following; each night declares the next.” (Psalm 19:1,2).

Some believe Satan dwells in the second heaven, yet there is no clear revelation as to when Satan fell, but here are possible time which can help us deduce from biblical evidence.

Based upon information of Ezekiel 28:12-19 compared with Isaiah 14, Jude 6, and 2 Peter 2:4, and others, two occasions occur where the Lord cast Satan out of Heaven; once with his angels, and once in the future. Since the ultimate fall of Satan is yet in the future (Revelation 9:1) Lucifer, himself, will one day fall under God’s judgment and be taken to Hell in the final judgment [Rev. 20:10].

A study of the passage of Revelation 12:7, 8, reveals the beginning of the ultimate doom of Satan. In pre-time (before creation of time), Satan’s early fall was from the immediate presence of God to the second heaven (cf. Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-15; Eph. 6:10-12. Neither was there a place found in Heaven where he will never again have access to Heaven.

Regardless, in eternity, the Body of Christ occupies the second heaven and its seats of authority (Eph. 2:6).

The third heaven is God’s home. In the Scriptures it’s the heaven of heavens where angels worship and serve the Lord. As Nehemiah said, “You alone are the Lord, Creator of the heavens and all the stars... of the earth

and those who live on it... of the ocean and its creatures... the source of life, praised by the stars.” (Neh. 9:6).

Caught up to the “third heaven” Paul received a revelation from the Lord of ‘the Mystery’ (2Cor. 12:1-4; Eph. 3:2,3). This realm he calls Paradise where we look to be absent from the body and to be with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6-9), in the heaven of heavens.



## Who is he?

Who is he really: Angel or Cherub, fallen or . . . ?

In writing *Lucifer Unbound*, many ideas came after I'd written one of my first nonfiction books, "Angels and Demons, Principalities and Powers on earth as in heaven." Curious about Lucifer, the bad-boy, I wondered what would happen if he were to repent and return to heaven, become a not-so-bad boy?

Well, that led me to seek out other opinions, many were people who refuse to give any credence to the idea of how hell's ruler and first created cherub, could ever possibly find redemption. But I believe in the impossible for Yeshua once said, "With Adonai, all things are possible."

If you'd like to know more about angels and demons and the real Lucifer, I'd like to offer my e-book to read for Free.

To get the Free e-book "Angels and Demons" send the request to my email: [brandyamarks@gmail.com](mailto:brandyamarks@gmail.com)