

## CHAPTER 4 – HARBINGERS OF DOOM

Freedom. That was the theory to be used to spread the ideology that would capture the hearts of these messengers of light. Free will. The angels were offered the authority of choice and the audacity of self-expression. For the first moment ever in the beautiful city of God, hypocrisy and doubt began to pervade the hearts of the angels. The pretense that somehow they did not desire to express their valor and glory juxtaposed with the genuine fear of the Most High God. What Lucifer's followers proposed was treason and though many-wanted nothing to do with it, some mulled it over, wondering what such an act would mean.

One by one, conversation after conversation, the message raced like a wild fire from field to post. From lesser angels to mighty captains, the seed of corruption was sown deep and wide throughout the heavenly city. Widespread corruption had scorched the beautiful landscape as more angels joined the cause of war. They skulked in the fields to relay messages and receive instructions. They blended in with the beautiful fountains and waterfalls to transmit orders and plans. The scheming was swift and the recruiting performed with great passion. Yet, they carried on about their services and assignments with vigor, creating a false perception as to their purpose. A great army was being gathered, united in purpose and mind to topple the throne in front of which they were created to serve and worship.

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Within the outer court of the sanctuary, the sentry guards saluted as Michael stepped out. Raphael had been waiting for him, "Where is Gabriel?" Raphael asked. "I

have not seen him in the fields, neither is His Presence.”

“Puzzling, isn’t it?” Michael said, stepping beside Raphael as they walked towards the gate of the outer court.

“Have you given any thought to the ideas spreading about heaven?” Raphael asked.

“Thought? It’s the very reason why I came here. I came to receive instructions from God but He seems silent.”

“That could be a good thing, yet, dangerous. Maybe He leaves us to choose our path.”

“Maybe all of this is a test but I must speak to Lucifer first before I pass judgment on this issue. It may be his words are being twisted.”

“And if not?” Raphael asked. “I have heard that he is very convincing.”

“Who have you been talking to Raphael?”

“No one,” Raphael said quickly, “I’m just telling you what I’ve heard.”

“Well, no need to be so defensive. But I have given some of it some thought and though I have questions, I would rather express those to my King.”

“Choice. Freewill. Power.” Raphael said almost to himself, “Ideologies that are forming the foundation of the lord of music’s campaign. If I were he, I would have come to seek your alliance first. To have you on his side would...”

“And how do you know that he didn’t?” Michael interrupted “The first time he

spoke to me about his concerns, especially about sovereignty, I was the one who asked him to seek more knowledge. I saw no harm at that time.” They reached the gate as Michael continued, “Besides, you heard from Adriel and Zuriel; he is merely expressing these ideas. It’s almost like he’s trying to find something; or find himself. The most important fact is that he has done nothing against God just yet so we need not declare him an enemy. The earlier I find him, the better to quickly reason with him and end these strange ideas.”

“I hope you are right, Captain. I hope.”

“I am right, Raphael, you’ll see.” Michael looked up at the tower of lights. “Zuriel, open the gates.”

Zuriel leaned from the window of the tower and smiled almost stoically, “Captain Michael, please proceed.”

“Thank you, Zuriel, and summon Ashfalon. I need to find Lucifer.”

Zuriel pushed a glowing button and the gate opened with a loud whooshing sound. “Okay Captain, consider it done.” Zuriel leaned on the windowsill as Michael and Raphael proceeded outside the gates. If only Michael knew that this was no mere twisting of words. If only he knew that hundreds of thousands had joined the rebellion. Zuriel wondered what such a meeting would be like between Michael and Lucifer.

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The Spirit of God lingered at the helm of the temple of God, between the pillars east of the tower of lights, a great distance from the heart of the city. Raw, divine power

emitted sparks through the thick smoke that surrounded His dazzling form. Before God, a mighty angel lay flat as if lifeless awed by the awesome power of God. It was Gabriel.

“So it has begun.” The Lord said. “So him that was created now seeks to usurp his Creator.”

Gabriel remained speechless, soaking in the glory of his king, yet fearful to express what was already known. Lucifer was raising an army against God.

“I made him.” The Lord continued in a rich silky baritone, fully of power and potent in might, yet calm, graceful, honorable, and full of ferocity. “I adorned him with beauty, causing other angels to be awestruck by the glory that I invested in him. And now this?”

There was nothing to say so the angel said nothing. He remained, lying at the Lord’s feet, capturing every thought and intent that God expressed. He recoiled slightly, feeling the pain and deep sorrow of the One that had made them all. Lucifer’s blow was deep, but the Divine One was calm, almost clandestine.

“I will take what I have given, rid him of that which has corrupted his thinking. I will turn to nothing that which has given him cause to abhor me. In the day of my judgment, shall the iniquity of his pride manifest to save him? No. The glory he seeks will be taken from him and he shall rue the moment he allowed sin into his heart.”

Gabriel’s mouth slowly began to form words. He had to say something, but no words came through. God spoke to him, “Go to a place I will show you, far from heaven. The details are in the scroll before you.” Gabriel reached forward slowly and took the

scroll that had appeared before him.

A divine mandate to Gabriel given, the Spirit of God moved from the pillars and faded, leaving the angel tingling from head to toe. Gabriel broke the seal of the scroll and opened it as a flame undulated around the scroll, its structure full of energy, yet controlled. The weight of the mission bore heavily on Gabriel's heart, but he knew Heaven had moved beyond sentiments. They were at war and it seemed that he had been too slow to see it. The great Lord of existence had been calm and so he would be as well. He had to find the elect angels and scour Heaven free from the plague of rebellion.

He had so badly wanted to ask a question, as he lay, seemingly lifeless before his Creator. The question gave him the greatest pain and that pain pierced within him. He wondered if there was an answer to his question and pondered as to the mission before him. Gabriel sat, leaning on a pillar, and gave thought to the recent proceedings in Heaven.

The great angel groaned in grief as Shelan, one of the angel builders, found him with a dozen building angels. Their strong arms glistened in reckless glory as they honored Gabriel. He rose up and acknowledged them.

"Gabriel," Shelan said, "What's wrong?"

"I wanted to ask but I could not."

"Ask what?"

"How can evil exist in good?"

Shelan stared wide-eyed for a moment and then raised his hands in surrender, "I do

not understand what you speak of. I received a command to seek you and follow your commands. So do these ones.”

Gabriel nodded. “Do you all understand what must be done?”

“I speak for them,” Shelan said, “We are on the side of God. What about you?”

“Of course, I choose God.” Gabriel said quietly and opened the scroll for the angels to see.

The angels nodded as they received the mission. “We are here to serve in unreserved obedience to the Spirit of God,” Shelan said. Gabriel admired the strength of his special task force. There was no need for a speech or to motivate; each angel was ready, standing with grim dedication, given to the cause, poised for the command.

Gabriel turned from them slightly and stared hard at the atmosphere of Heaven. He was not sure what he was feeling at that moment. It felt like a deep-rooted excitement merged with a dark, ill feeling. What, or who, had corrupted Lucifer? What was the guarantee that he did not have the same madness within him? Gabriel wrestled with questions as he sighed.

“Shall we? Captain?” Shelan was eager to begin the work God had commanded them to do. Gabriel nodded. Their purpose was more important in the moment and sentiment had to be submerged; he was a leader and it was time to lead. He turned from the beauty of Heaven and looked in the opposite direction, spreading his gigantic wings in the same movement. With a strong blast of light, the great archangel flew from the temple of pillars towards the outskirts of the great city of the King, far away from the

light of God to the darker realms of the universe, thirteen builder and warrior angels following him.

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Bael, a fair, wiry and bald angel, who worked in Gabriel's order as a messenger spirit, watched the trailing lights of the angels fade in the far distance. Whatever mission had been given to the angels, he knew without a doubt that the Spirit of God had personally given command. For a time, he had listened and watched the growing tensions, choosing to listen from a distance instead of engage in direct and open discussions on the issue. He would have to make his choice soon; he was sure of it. He had noticed the warrior angels in flight from different locations in the great city. He knew something was looming but knew he would be discovered if he went any closer.

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"Why are you hiding here?"

Bael whirled around, "Oh, Ashfalon, you startled me."

"Are you spying?" Ashfalon, a watcher angel with multiple eyes on his body, probed, his hands akimbo. "I saw you eavesdropping on Gabriel."

"No," Bael said uneasily knowing it would be difficult to lie to the angel, "merely staying informed. You should too; there is some conflict growing."

"I know," Ashfalon responded, "This foolishness is spreading but how can these angels even imagine that they can defeat God?"

Bael spread his arms. "Beats me, but you have to hear their logic? Our very existence can only be unlocked by taking charge of our destinies, they say. There is more to us beyond servitude."

"Servitude?" Ashfalon responded. "You say that like it is something bad. We are messengers of God. We are not even allowed to think thus."

"But that is exactly their point," Bael countered. "What is the purpose of existence without the ability to choose? What is our destiny if not forged by our very own hands?"

"We were created for the purpose of God. We are not agents of choice. We serve God's will. What they propose is twisted. We should tell Michael about this."

Bael stepped back and looked around, "Listen, Ashfalon, you are a powerful captain, yet Michael towers in strength above you. What if, just for the sake of argument, Michael has joined Lucifer's cause?"

Ashfalon's myriad of eyes studied Bael for a moment then bowed his head deep in thought. Bael was only happy to continue.

"You see? This is why I stay in the middle and gather information. You should do the same."

Bael walked away slowly from Ashfalon as the watcher stood looking sullen and confused. For long, Bael had watched as the ideas of rebellion spread, bewildered that God made no move. But now, seeing the warring angels streak off in the distance, he knew for certain that something was in motion. He was not sure what their mission was, but he knew it was time to act. In the day of war, Bael was convinced of one thing - he



had to be on the winning side. For now, he had to find out if Lucifer knew of the flight of the angels and their purpose. At these peculiar moments in Heaven, Bael was learning the importance of information and location; both, he imagined, would play an important role in the soon coming war. *Yes, war*, he thought to himself; he could feel it already. It was coming sooner than any of them had imagined. But first, he had to find the one who had started it all – Lucifer, and make a wager.

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Ashfalon lingered after Bael left, deep in thought. He had first heard of the uprising at a gathering, but it had made no sense to him. Adriel had explained what he himself had heard from Zuriel in Raphael's field. "He said the divine Order couldn't exist without us. I did not believe it myself, but Zuriel seemed overly convinced about what he had heard."

"Convinced in madness," Chesum, a beautiful seraph with a voice of cymbals had quietly retorted. "Who spreads this madness? This is simply impossible. No angel thinks like this."

"So far I hear Lucifer holds full knowledge of the process of expressing sovereignty and divine power. They say he has good intentions and wishes to liberate all angels," Adriel had responded.

"Good intentions or not," Chesum wasn't convinced. "We have lived this way since our existence and are content with our King, our Maker, our Lord. Why must we discover power beyond God?"

Ashfalon snapped out of his thoughts and gripped his head in his hands. He had to

find his friend Mealiel, the watcher captain, and get some answers.