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The Last Righteous Angel Has Fallen



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Angel Has Fallen

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*Fallen Cherub! to be weak is
miserable,
Doing or suffering; but of this
be sure,
To do aught good never will
be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole
delight*

Milton, Paradise Lost (I, 157–
160)

An angel, coursing on
incandescent jets of energy
that resembled wings,
hovered over the vast forests
of East Africa. As it hung
almost stationary in the air, it
was confronted by a sight
that caused it to sound an
alarm: “A new kind of monkey
is starting to spread across a
remote corner of the Earth.
These monkeys walk upright
and appear intelligent. They
have the capacity of acting

making deliberate decisions about what to do.” Angels lack mouths, but are able to convey “words” to one another through tiny energy discharges. These “words” of the exploring angel were

deeply disturbing to all the community.

Angels are pulsating bundles of energy with little matter attached to them. To angels, the rest of the Earth’s creatures are base and unworthy of notice. But, according to the angel’s report, the upright monkeys were different from other creatures, for they seemed endowed with the ability to recognize their choices and select which of them to pursue in a given moment. That freedom of spirit set them over all beasts and even above the angels themselves, who have little in the way of free will.

The conversation among angels about the upright monkeys became a controversy. “These intelligent monkeys must learn to live in harmony with the world that surrounds them” asserted an ancient, luminous being that is traditionally called Gabriel, although angels have no names and respond to none. Gabriel’s arguments were riposted by a resplendent giant named Lucifer, also known as the morning star, who asserted: “No, these creatures must become powerful, must dominate all living things. Their needs and desires must be met above all else.” The majority of the angels agreed with Gabriel, on the theory that an intelligent, free-willed creature should apply its gifts to the betterment of the planet. A minority sided with Lucifer.

The difference of opinion among the angels was tied to the infinite range of choices the monkeys could exercise, which contrasted with the rigid bounds on behavior imposed on angels by their very nature. Most angels, which are now spoken of as the “righteous angels,” agreed with Gabriel and favored that the upright monkeys’ gifts be used to increase world harmony and curb chaos. The other angels, now called the “rebel angels,” followed Lucifer and were jealous of the monkeys’ freedom, that was denied them. They yearned to have the upstart species destroy itself even if, in doing so, the world would be harmed.

Both righteous and rebel angels discovered that they could influence somewhat the behavior of the upright monkeys. The influencing was accomplished by directing tiny bits of energy

(in the form of electrical impulses) into the areas of the monkeys' brains that controlled their behavior. Properly stimulated, the monkeys could feel the urge to share fruits with each other, or conversely steal fruits from their neighbors. Similar stimuli were used to suggest mating practices or induce or deter fighting.

The angels' contradictory views and their opposing efforts to persuade monkeys into engaging in particular practices led to friction and ultimately conflict between the righteous and rebel angels, and caused them to coalesce into opposing armies. The hosts that emerged were of disparate size, for the righteous angels are twice as numerous as the rebels. As would be expected, the righteous angels were led by Gabriel; Lucifer commanded the rebel angels. Neither angel

personally engaged in combat, but assigned the leadership of its forces to a trusted lieutenant, Michael for the righteous angels and Beelzebub for the rebels. While confronting each other, righteous and rebel angels continued striving to influence the upright monkeys into adopting constructive or destructive forms of behavior.

The two armies developed quite different styles of making war. All angels absorb energy from their surroundings: the skies, the mountains, the seas and rivers, the desert sands, even the living beings. In the conflict, the righteous angels drew on available energy sources to shield themselves and fling powerful bolts against attacking enemies in order to repulse them. Their goals were defensive and boiled down to an effort to beat back attackers and draw

them away. Michael directed the righteous forces to treat their opponents as misguided brothers, to be pitied and deplored but needing to be left unharmed whenever possible.

The rebel angels, by contrast, followed aggressive battle tactics developed by Beelzebub, who proved to be a military genius. Since the rebels were outnumbered, their battle plan centered on each angel trying to forcibly suck energy from an opponent until the weakened adversary fell to earth, reduced to an almost inert husk. An angel in that condition remains powerless during a long convalescence period in which it replenishes itself. Angels are immortal, so destruction is not a possible outcome of losing a fight, but long-term incapacitation is possible, and was the goal of the rebels. "We may not be

able to eliminate our opponents permanently, but we have to keep them out of combat until we can reduce their forces to a number we can manage.” Beelzebub’s tactics were later copied by human leaders in the

conduct of wars against one another.

In large encounters, the rebel angels devised a strategy of isolating individuals or small groups of righteous angels and focusing their attack on them while keeping the main enemy contingent at bay. The chosen victims were overwhelmed, became denuded of energy, and plunged to earth as casualties. Another favorite tactic was to unleash a sudden assault in a shock action that broke the enemy lines and reduced them to uncoordinated knots of warriors that could be assaulted individually.

The conflict between the angels started at a time when the upright monkeys, now known as men, had barely begun to use rudimentary tools and domesticate animals. Primitive men watched in uncomprehending awe as battle upon battle was fought in the skies above them. Powerful bursts of energy brightened the heavens and often turned into lightning strikes that left raging fires in their wake. Death from above was a constant fear in the hearts of the early men.

After countless centuries of struggle, the rebel angels had gained the upper hand in many martial encounters and were on their way to prevailing. Because of their superiority, the rebels' suggestions to the human populations became most numerous and insistent. Men did not always succumb to

the rebel angels' entreaties, but the feelings planted on their minds by the angels were sometimes impossible to reject. The first age of empires was born as a result of the rebel angels' suggestions; proud, unscrupulous men ruled the earth and enslaved entire populations through threats, violence and cunning.

From time to time, however, the righteous angels recovered sufficiently to stage comebacks that temporarily put the rebels on the defensive. During these recovery periods, mankind experienced a degree of peace and enlightenment. Sooner or later, however, new tyrants emerged to seize power and rule with force and savagery.

Through these ups and downs, mankind began to absorb permanently the lessons received from the

longer driven to reprehensible behavior by the influence of the rebels; evil now dwelt in their hearts and needed no nudge to manifest itself. Yet, the teachings of Gabriel and his followers also found root in many men, for whom the hope for a better future was enough to overcome despair no matter how dire their current predicament.

The final battle of the conflict between the angels took place one spring evening in the Himalayas, at the roof of the world. Only a handful of righteous angels were fielded on the battlefield, and most had been weakened by the ruthless attacks of the rebels. The righteous angels were defeated one by one and thrust downwards towards earth. Only Michael and his lieutenant Camael still fought, the last members

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of the once mighty forces that had resisted the rebels for eons. Michael's energy spear lacked its usual brilliance, but continued to cast bolts at the rebels as the angel stood its ground against many attackers.

"Go" Michael finally directed Camael as darkness fell. "Tell Gabriel that I am growing weary. All is lost." Michael shoved Camael outwards into the night and continued to face the swarming enemies alone. While flying away, Camael could see flashes of Michael's lance erupting intermittently in the darkness, until at last they shone no more.

Camael reached Gabriel's hideaway beneath the dunes of the Gobi Desert in a few heartbeats. If an angel were capable of experiencing human emotions, Camael could be said to present an image of grief and fear.

Camael delivered Michael's fateful message to Gabriel and asked dolefully: "What do we do now, Master?"

Gabriel's answer was disconcertingly brief: "Nothing."

"What do you mean? Can we allow the rebels to rule over mankind and lead to its destruction, and the end of the entire world?"

Gabriel had witnessed many cycles of rising and falling fortunes. It gave its younger subordinate an affectionate look and replied: "We needed to oppose the rebels. We gave them a good fight, but they prevailed. However, their success is transitory and will doom their cause."

"I don't understand" replied Camael in confusion.

"It's simple" replied Gabriel. "Now that the rebel angels are masters of the world, the

men whose hearts they rule will start fighting each other for dominance and bring an end to themselves, and in so doing shall ruin the world. For evil can destroy but can never create an edifice that endures.

After this apocalypse, the hegemony of the wicked men will end some day and the just ones will regain power. Righteous angels shall again lead them. Mankind and the Earth will be renewed.”

“So, why did we fight at all? Why oppose the rebels in the first place?”

“Because, had we acquiesced in the deeds they sought, we would have become as corrupt as they. Right must always battle wrong, for it is the proper thing to do no matter the outcome. Besides, there is always another day, another fight, and there is always a fair chance that the

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prevail, even if the victories,
like the defeats that follow
them, are only temporary.”

“So, we wait?”

“As long as it takes.
Meanwhile, find Michael
where he lies hurting and
offer it whatever succor you
can. That’s what righteous
angels do.”

“I shall.”



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Matias Travieso-Diaz was born in Cuba and migrated to the United States as a young man, escaping political persecution by the Castro regime. He became an engineer and lawyer and practiced for nearly fifty years. He retired, turned his attention to creative writing, and authored many short stories of various genres. His stories have been published or accepted for publication in about forty paying short story anthologies, magazines, audio books and podcasts. A collection of some of his stories has also been accepted for publication.



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