

FREE SAMPLE



Prequel to The Last Archangel Series

INTRODUCTION

This book is a compilation of nine seasons of audio serials I wrote as a prequel to my novel "The Last Archangel". Each of the nine sections is set in a different historical time period, bringing the main character, Xandir, closer to the present day in which "The Last Archangel" is set. Many of the characters and settings that appear in these episodes appear again later in the series, and so this is a great place to start.

PART ONE: GIANT PROBLEMS

CHAPTER ONE

Xandir shot across the lunar surface, grinning to himself at the amount of lunar dust he whipped up in his wake. He picked up speed, figuring that he could make it around the planetoid at least once more before he was needed.

He was a long way from his home in the Heavenly Realms and that's how he liked it. One could only hear so many hymns and walk so many gold-paved streets before longing for a little change of scenery. The assignment had come just in time to stave off his boredom and that was probably for the best. He had started contemplating how hard he could swing the Pearly Gates.

He had already tried to give a whoop of triumph when he realized there was no atmosphere to carry his sound.

Xandir halted in mid flight as another figure appeared in front of him with remarkable speed—an imposing specimen of an angel with sharp features and hair to match the void of space around them.

"Xandir," Azazel said, "you're late. They'll be starting the meeting without you."

Rolling his eyes, Xandir changed his trajectory, heading towards the lunar base where he was actually scheduled to

be. "You obviously aren't familiar with how fast I can fly. I'm quite the talk of clouds one through nine."

Azazel easily kept pace, his face remaining unamused. "You are certainly cavalier with the schedule on your first remote assignment. You would be wise to maintain a certain amount of decorum, at least until after you are finished meeting with the Archangel."

Xandir shrugged. "He's a peer, right?"

"No," Azazel said, "he is still your superior, no matter what your own title. You will treat him with the proper deference and respect at all times."

They remained silent for the remainder of their flight to the lunar base, a sprawling transparent complex that shimmered in the borrowed light of the sun. A large group of angels had already landed on the roof, leaving two spaces in the circle for him and Azazel.

As soon as they had taken their places, a brilliant column of light descended into the center of the circle, leaving a gleaming angelic warrior in its wake. He stood a full head taller than anyone else in the circle and wore such gleaming armor that it rivaled the pearliness of the gates to Heaven.

Xandir had seen the Archangel Michael a few times before, but only from a distance. Suddenly, keeping his mouth shut and staying in line didn't seem like it was going to be such a difficult task after all. The Archangel raised his hands, his face glowing with beatific light.

"Welcome, my brothers. We stand here in the light of an infant planet, home of an infant race. Humankind has only just been thriving for a short time, though we anticipate they will continue to do so for many revolutions of their planet."

The Archangel lowered his arms, indicating the assembled angels. "I task you now with a sacred duty. You are to become Watchers—observers of humankind. You are to watch and

record all that you see, and report through the chain of command."

The Archangel's finger found Azazel. "Your link to the Heavenly Realms will be Lord Azazel. He is henceforth designated as the Head Watcher. You are to take all commands from him as though from my own mouth. Is that understood?"

Xandir nodded mutely. This trip had already taken a turn for the worse. He had experienced Azazel's temperament firsthand, but up to this point, the surly angel had had no actual authority over him.

The Archangel moved towards Azazel and placed a thin crown of crimson and gold around his head. The new Head Watcher bowed his head and then turned. Xandir cringed at the new look in Azazel's eyes that spoke of all the creative punishments he could think up now, given the chance.

"You will all be assigned to a specific region of the planet." Michael continued. "You are not to leave your region and, most importantly, in no case are you to interact with humans, or influence their affairs in any way."

The Archangel lifted his hands and a stack of stone discs appeared. "I will now distribute your assignments. The disc contains both the area in which you will be serving and the partner with whom you will work. These assignments are not negotiable, but I do not anticipate there being any complaints."

Xandir tensed as Michael turned towards him first and extended the topmost disc. Xandir accepted it and it glowed slightly where his fingers touched it. The plain stone surface of the disc changed instantly, revealing a map of the earth's surface and a small area set off by a crimson border. As he stared at the map, the image zoomed in closer to the outlined area and a name appeared in the same crimson lines.

"Absalom," he read.

He hadn't spoken loudly, but from across the circle, an angel with a waterfall of intensely red hair looked up at the mention of his name. The angel met Xandir's gaze and nodded. Xandir relaxed as he compared the stare to Azazel's and found it a hundred times more sympathetic. Perhaps this job wouldn't be so bad after all.

Once all of the discs had been distributed, Michael turned and surveyed them all a final time. "I must impress upon you all the sacred nature of this calling. You were all selected for your great potential, and I do not wish for us to be proven wrong. Should you choose to neglect the rules of this mandate, the consequences would be dire indeed. I have discussed these consequences at length with your leader, and he will gladly relay them to you if you so desire."

Azazel grunted. "I do not foresee that I will need to dwell on that subject."

The Archangel nodded and then bowed his head. Another flash of intense light flooded Xandir's vision and, when it departed, the Archangel had gone.

They all fell silent as they stared at the space where creation's mightiest angel had stood only moments before.

Azazel broke the silence with a loud grunt. "What are you waiting for, a pat on the back? Get down there. I will not be able to be with each of you at all times, but rest assured, I will be watching. Foul this up and there will be dire repercussions."

Xandir lifted an eyebrow, unable to keep his mouth shut. "What kind of repercussions?"

The grim angel whirled on Xandir, fixing him again with that gaze that Xandir was sure had been responsible for some of the moon's craters. "Step out of line and you'll find out. Just let me say this—the powers that be are nothing if not creative."

Trying to mask his apprehension with a shrug, Xandir gestured towards the planet to his new partner and took to the skies. Though the blue-green planet loomed like a rare-colored pearl in front of them, he found the wonder he had felt when first seeing it ebb away. Something deep inside of him told him that he wasn't going to enjoy his stay nearly as much as he had anticipated.

"Yes," said that little voice inside him. "This planet is trouble."

THE STORY CONTINUES

Four books. Centuries of celestial choices. One approaching End.



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| 3 | The Last Kingdom | Book II |
| 4 | The Last Dawn | Book III |

Age of Archangels follows Xandir across nine historical ages, revealing the choices, punishments, alliances, and ancient powers that shape the apocalyptic conflict of The Last Archangel.

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