

Strength of a Giant

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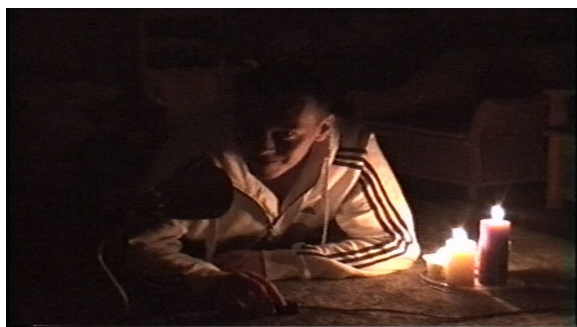
Strength of a Giant

Novelette: Word count: 12,679

Its connection to The Book of Biden:

This segment occurs at the time the Giant (Uriel the Archangel) is talking to Biden and whilst watching the skies an unusual occurrence catches his attention. Although in 'The Book of Biden' this distraction for the Giant is never elaborated upon, it is also an important event for the Giant and the story of Biden. This part of the tale remains unknown to either Biden or the Giant, but being of relevance to the greater story and a novelette in its own right, I feel it should be documented, so here is the missing piece.

About the Author



Tony Passarelli lives in Nottingham, England.

He spent many years working as an independent film-maker. In the process he wrote a number of film scripts which kindled his interest in becoming a novelist.

'Strength of a Giant' is his first completed work.

Tony is currently working on his fantasy series 'The Book of Biden'

Strength of a Giant

'I wonder what it's all about,' Emanuel said with a look of intense concentration spread across his face.

'Let us go and find out,' was the deep sounding reply of Raphael.

'No! He will like it not.' Compared to the powerful speech of the Archangel, Emanuel's voice sounded like a child's. This fitted perfectly with his physical construction, which when compared to the size and density of Raphael, could also be akin to a young boy standing next to a very large and well built man, although neither were boy or man! Humankind had been made in their image, or rather God had made the Son and the Angels in his own image and humanity had come along later. 'Besides if we come into play, that will alter his course and you know Uriel, he likes to do his do.' Emanuel blew a raspberry at the end of the sentence.

The response from Raphael was not as forth-coming as the Son of God would have liked, this meant that there were some conflicting views being played out within the Archangel's mind. Raphael rotated his head letting his eyes register the viewpoints of the constant fluctuations taking place within the heavens, while he used his remaining clarity of thought to decide upon a course of action. Within his spirit were emotions that needed to be contained, this was Uriel who was in danger. Within Raphael was a primal desire of protection induced by the feelings of affection and love for his fellow Archangel. Uriel was his brother and friend. Those emotions had to be reigned in to accommodate his current situation, he was with Emanuel and that made a huge difference to what he could and could not do. Being partnered with the Son was not unusual for Raphael but as much as being a pleasure it was also a great responsibility. Uriel was most likely in danger, although he was unlikely to know of it yet, his movements were being traced and he was also being followed, yet here was Raph as Emanuel liked to call

him, unable to act. 'This hanging around is wearing out ground,' Raphael said finally.

The Son of God broke out into a fit of giggles, shaking his head from side to side and causing his hair to quiver. Emanuel loved Raphs' dry sense of humour and the dual meaning of his jest had been quickly digested and understood. It was true the ground on which they both currently stood was starting to gain an impression just by the two of them being there. Emanuel considered how mighty Raphael really was, it was hard for the Archangel to be anywhere without leaving his mark. This was true for all seven of the Archangels, but it had its draw-backs, almost as good as leaving footprints to the knowing eyes. Presently Uriel was the victim of this hard fact; the other meaning was an old proverb, "If you're not moving you're losing." Emanuel had heard that wisdom from Uriel long ago. In heaven keeping ground was losing ground, the fight was to be fought everywhere and it was an ever changing battle. There are no constants to fight for within creation and holding onto ground meant you could be losing a brother. 'What is needed above all else is stealth,' Emanuel said turning to Raph, 'not might.'

Raphael groaned his response, 'I like that not.'

Emanuel's expression turned from a look of humour to one that said he couldn't care less. 'It's true Raph, we need to know if Uri is aware that he is being followed and I am the smallest.' Raphael remained transfixed upon hearing his words but gave no reply. 'I'm also the fastest,' Emanuel added in a cock sure fashion. The Archangel wasn't impressed and if he was, he wasn't showing any signs of it. 'Won't take me long,' Emanuel said, adding an innocent grin, 'won't hurt a bit.' The grin got larger.

Raphael drew his lips in tightly together before commenting. 'I'm not eating your shit. If there is any hurt incurred then you will be the one who regrets it.'

'Don't Raph, I'm only small and you're frightening me. We need some action and I'm done with this talk.' The Son turned towards the direction of Uriel.

Raphael placed a hand upon Emanuel's shoulder and said, 'Don't look back and don't be seen.'

'Of course,' Emanuel said, and patted the large hand. 'Stop fussing and don't move from here.'

With that said he flew through the heavens faster than any other being could travel, he was far inferior to the Archangels in many respects, but he had always been the fastest mover. Raphael stood as still as a stone, eyes focused upon the location where Emanuel would shortly arrive, any signs of trouble and he would immediately fly into action himself. Baby-sitting Emanuel was always hard work, but keeping him far from any serious bother was a task that tested Raphael's will to its core. The Archangel was agitated but his outward appearance showed no signs of his mounting worries.

Emanuel came to a stop at the ideal location. He was far enough from Uriel for the Archangel not to be able to recognise him, but also close enough to ascertain what was happening on the world below. It would be impossible to know why the Archangel was upon the world, but Emanuel would be able to see if Uriel was aware of his present danger. Of all the seven Archangels, Uriel was the easiest for Emanuel to read. He had personality, and where as his brothers could mask their true feelings with ease, Uriel liked to be true to himself. He was honest to his core and that honesty meant Uriel would behave like only Uriel could behave, and Emanuel knew the Archangel better than most.

He took in the scenery within seconds; the Angel stood talking to a human who was nothing more than a boy. There was a black stallion nearby; the horse was just coming into maturity. Besides these two and the indigenous wildlife of the world, Uriel was far from any other beings. Whatever the Archangel was doing on this world, he was doing it discreetly.

Emanuel watched for a while, never taking his eyes from the Angel. Uriel was talking amiably to the child, but never keeping his eyes far away from scanning the skies. Emanuel pondered at this behaviour. 'You'll gaze so long into that great aching sky that you will forget who you are Uri.' He

wished that he could go down there and say those words to the Angels face; he wanted to be the one having the chit-chat. Emanuel loved Uriel very much. Now it was the child's turn to do the talking and Uriel was quiet listening to his words. Emanuel used this opportunity to take his focus away from the pair of them and scan the world that his friend was interacting with. This world was full of sin and it had fallen, a world that had been made for man and now was full of humankind. Suddenly Emanuel spotted it, not a human being and not of this world! His form was altered from its true state, but Emanuel could see him clearly and closing his eyes and recollecting name after name after name, Emanuel eventually knew who he was, Alralsaen! One of the fallen Angels.

'Crippled and unable to get back into heaven,' Emanuel said to himself. 'Properly fucked aren't you.' He was filled with contempt as he eyed the other surroundings, Alralsaen was here alone and he dwelt within a large structure which was in a huge City. Looking around the world, Emanuel saw that this City was the largest and must be the Capital. It appeared that Alralsaen had control and dominion over this planet, if not full control, then partial control of it. Uriel obviously had his reasons for being here, but Emanuel didn't have the time to work out how this world corresponded with other dominions and planets. Emanuel looked upon Alralsaen in his seat of power.

'Control the world and you control the man. Isn't that your logic Alralsaen?' Emanuel studied the fallen Angel for a little while and then added, 'but here you are, all alone under a separate sky.' A flicker of sadness appeared within Emanuel's eyes, but was gone just as quickly as it had appeared; he turned his attention back to Uriel and the child.

Uri was speaking simply to the boy, instructing him in a basic truth that would be to the little human's advantage should he be able to grasp the obvious. Uriel was gifted in being able to change the complexities of life into a simple problem which could then be easily solved. Emanuel smiled and said, 'When you know what the problem is, then you can work out how to fix it.' The truth was always simple, only a lie needed to be complicated. Emanuel gazed admiringly at the mighty Angel and momentarily his thoughts strayed

back to a time when he was with his Father and Uriel, the two of them were debating some of the most hideous problems that existed within creation. Emanuel had remembered that occasion, because laying there listening to the Archangel and his Lord God discussing the actions of living beings and their faults and flaws had been a moment of contentment. The conversation would never have occurred had Emanuel been alone with his Dad, but staying quiet and listening to the two of them talk he had learned that out of all the beings within creation, Uriel was his Dads buddy; a giant amongst Angels. Emanuel had come to love the Archangel in a way that he loved no other. Of all the Angels that existed Uriel was the most God like, and Emanuel thought that that was a good thing for the real God. Pulling himself from the reverie he felt a sudden urge to go down to Uriel, he wanted to be with him right now so that he could wrap his arms around Uri's great neck and tell him how much he missed him. Emanuel eventually fought back the urge, remembering that Raph would be watching his every move.

He cleared his thoughts and brought his attention back to Uriel; the Archangel was still engaged in conversation and surveying the stellar as he listened to the child and spoke himself. Emanuel muttered out loud, 'you can look at some of the heavens all of the time and all of the heavens for some of the time, but it is impossible to view all of the heavens all of the time, lest you become irrelevant yourself.'

Once he had said the words, Emanuel knew instinctively that Uri did not know that he was being followed by the pack of Angels. His demeanour would show concern and his eyes would not just be scanning the span of the heavens but would also have focused on the position of his pursuers. 'Me and Raphael will sort it out Uri,' Emanuel said, directly to the Archangel, as if it could be possible for Uriel to hear him, then suddenly in that same instant Emanuel saw that Uri's eyes had locked onto the exact spot that Emanuel stood upon. Without thinking or blinking, Emanuel flew faster than the speed of light and within a twinkle of an eye he was gone, and he didn't look back!

Emanuel spoke quickly, 'He doesn't know that he is being followed by those Angels, of that I am sure, but I think he may have seen me. He looked in my direction before I left.' His words had carried a tone of disappointment.

'Then we wait,' Raphael replied. 'If Uriel thinks that what he saw could be connected to you, he will travel to that place to glean more information.' Raphael scanned the heavens.

'It will do him no good,' Emanuel said uncertainly. 'I left no tracks.'

'Still, if he goes there he will try to find your scent and if he cannot find it then he will view the heavens from that location to see if he can find you.' Raphael could see the look of disappointment upon the Sons' face and added, 'He may not do it, and it will depend upon what he thinks he saw and how likely he thinks it is to have been you. In truth his curiosity may be kindled, but as you say, Uri likes to do his do.' Emanuel conceded a smile and Raphael finished by saying, 'He is always busy.'

'Then we should relocate from this position in case he should see us,' Emanuel said, looking around for a new lookout spot.

'No we stay,' Raphael replied. 'You have left only one track. That is how you arrived there and how you exited. It is but one route. If he senses you then he will be led to us here, that is simpler and will cost him less time to discover us should he be so taken by his curiosity.' Raph inclined his head sideways and added, 'Curiosity or a simple desire to see you.'

Emanuel smiled, feeling a little better, he placed his hand upon Raphael's shoulder. 'Sorry I fucked it up.'

'You know best,' Raph snorted. Emanuel pulled back his hand and then landed a blow instead; the Archangel seemed not to notice. 'Events have yet to unfold,' Raph said. 'It is likely that your actions will bear no consequence.'

Emanuel pondered upon that and placed his hand back upon Raphael's shoulder. 'Please be gentle,' he said. 'I'm still learning.' Shifting his body weight he leaned against the Archangel's mighty frame.

Silently they both waited.

Emanuel found his thoughts wondering, he did not have the same concentration span as Raphael. His mind was playing through the events that had led to them both being there. If it hadn't been for his own insistence on following up on a clue about Lukavel he and Raphael would not have stumbled upon the pack of Angels that were now tailing Uriel. Lukavel, lukavel, Luk-a-vel! Emanuel had been searching him out for a long time now. He had to do this in small bouts whenever he got the chance. Unlike Raphael the other Archangels refused to help the Son pursue the being that he had created, this meant that Emanuel could be searching out Lukavel for a long time to come. Emanuel's own movements were not so free and easy, when alone his father would be aware of where he was and what he was doing, when not alone he would be paired with one of the Archs. It hadn't always been like this, but that was the way of it now.

Emanuel would have words with himself; deal with real. He wished he could roam the heavens freely but it wasn't going to happen and the whole Lukavel business had made his position weaker. Son of God he may be, but he always seemed to play the part of the Son more than he would have liked. Son to all, or so it would seem, and that meant he was the smallest, weakest and least trusted. There had been a time before he remembered; a time when nothing could be better and nothing ever was. Deal with real, the problem for Emanuel was that he didn't like what was real.

'He moves,' Raphael said, pointing a finger to a far off cluster of stars. They were in a position north westerly to the world that Uriel had been upon. 'He's gone out of my field of sight.'

Both Raph and Emanuel waited for a few moments, not taking their focus away from the last place that Uriel had been seen. 'He's gone,' Emanuel finally said in agreement. He turned to look Raphael full in the face. 'Those that follow him will have learned much about his business,' Emanuel said, waiting to see if there was any response forth coming from the Archangel before he continued. 'They will know too much Raph.'

'It is a truth and a complex one,' the Archangel said in agreement.

‘Some of the places that Uriel has been to, he will return to again. What if his work has been interfered with?’ Emanuel’s thoughts were racing. ‘Where will he be led to? How big a trap could be sprung? This could be a very big web being woven Raph.’ The Son’s eyes seemed to appear almost pleading as he finished his words. He was anxious even with Raphael by his side.

‘What do you surmise?’ Raphael asked in a rumbling voice.

Emanuel knew the Archangel in an almost intimate fashion and Raph’s spirit was being conjoined with other aspects of his being. To one who knew less about Archangels the audio change could have been mistaken for a form of noise disturbance, or the listeners own hearing being impaired. The deep speech was accompanied by a chorus or an echo as if two voices spoke at once, but Emanuel knew the truth of it, the voice change was because of a disturbance that was being conducted by Raphael himself. The Arch was harnessing parts of his spirit that would usually be left to function for other duties. Raphael was wielding his spirit like a warrior would wield a sword; the sound of the power within his speech was just that, it was power!

‘You have to stop them,’ Emanuel said, and for a moment Raphael’s eyes glowed, casting a luminous beam of light that shrouded the Son of God, changing his appearance into a form of brilliant white, then it was gone leaving the Son breathing rapidly. ‘Permanently,’ Emanuel added, taking in a deep breath to recover from the surge of energy that he had just experienced.

‘As you say so shall it be,’ Raphael replied.

Raph’s head moved mechanically but smoothly in an arcing motion. The Angels’ workings were now more prominent to Emanuel’s knowing eyes, he found himself silently wishing he had such control over his own being, how he wished he could control so many faculties and ordinances at will, but he could not, for all his relative similarities to the Archangels, Emanuel was a spirit of the moment and self control had not been a prominent design placed within him. God liked his Son innocent and naked. Emanuel was truth, and control by the power of self will could be used to conceal what was being felt

from the inside. Emanuel had difficulties masking his true feelings because he lacked the tools necessary for deceit. There had been a time when that innocence was complete and without any shame, then came a time when his nakedness was an embarrassment, now was the time when he hated being seen by those that he considered to be unworthy of sight. Deal with real; he was the most real being in creation. The catastrophe was that others were liars and deceivers!

‘Raph, I’m afraid,’ he inadvertently bit his lower lip after saying the words.

‘Yes but I’m not.’

The Angel turned his back on the Son; head rotating in a rolling fashion, taking in the viewpoints of the cosmos and what lay ahead and which route Raphael would decide to embark upon. Emanuel himself had turned to gaze downwards past his feet, to find himself staring into a black vast nothingness. He knew this empty feeling all too well, fighting, destruction and containment were a negative and Emanuel had no positive response to answer that with, he and Raph were about to do a dirty deed. Emanuel was no Archangel and he couldn’t just discard the feeling of wrongness. The Son of God was a perfectionist quite simply because he was perfection, he just happened to live within the realms of imperfection. Heaven, Emanuel often considered, was just as good as hell!

‘Moderate your speed and keep in step with me.’ Raphael groaned with powerful words so that Emanuel would obey.

‘You’ve got longer legs than me,’ Emanuel replied with a twinkle in his eye. Raphael gave a thunderous laugh and set off at an awkward pace. Emanuel did his best to toe the line, but it was hard, as the movements that they made were not fluid or natural, each step being slightly different to the one before or the one that would follow. Emanuel found himself either falling behind or stepping ahead at various times. ‘Archangels,’ he said to himself in bemusement. Raph came to a stop for a few seconds and Emanuel spent the time checking out Raphael’s frame.

‘Looks like Michael,’ the Son thought to himself, and the feelings he had for Michael the Archangel kindled within him. When it came to combat and war, Michael knew how to release the beast. Raph was now physically changed; his body tone was far more muscular than it had been just moments before, shoulders rounded and neck muscles visible. ‘Good, if they think it is Michael then that will throw them for a while and scare the shit out of them too!’ Emanuel found those thoughts comforting and straightened his own posture for good measure.

The two beings continued to move on. Raphael walked like a soldier would walk for battle, defined legs, being thrown out before him, unbending and seemingly unstoppable. Upper torso straight and powerfully built. His arms were moving as if to a beat and shoulders rolling in a masculine tempo. The Archangel did look magnificent and his physical form was now morphing into a body more suitable for combat. ‘Good,’ again thought Emanuel silently.

The Son of God had been naive in the past thinking falsely that an Archangel was incapable of being matched or beaten in combat, but then had come the heartache of reality. Ephanuel, one of the seven, had endured one battle too many and Emanuel had seen how injury could be incurred by those that he once considered to be beyond such mortal harm. Ephanuel had not been the same since his battle, and it had been a battle! One Archangel against an army of rebel Angels, the Angels had achieved a victory of sorts, as many of them had managed to flee from the fight and survived. Ephanuel had become so disorientated from the melee that he did not dispose of the enemy as he should have done and his primal constitution had yet to return to its original state. Still Ephanuel was different from how he should be...Still. Thinking such thoughts suddenly brought Panic upon Emanuel and he turned to have another look at Raphael for assurance. ‘Are you confident?’ he asked.

The Archangel paused at the question, Emanuel had a look of worry about him, the Son was frightened, Raphael would apply the right words in the right quantity, it would not be a lie just another form of truth, one that should help the Son cope with his feelings. ‘I was made for war,’ Raphael said. Emanuel did not seem convinced; Raphael knew that the Son thought

him in error. 'If you don't believe me, ask Michael,' the Archangel added. Doubt flashed across Emanuel's face and was replaced just as quickly with a look of confidence. The words had worked; the Son should be prepared for whatever they were about to face, but Raphael knew that Emanuel would never hold an emotional state for long, the sooner they encountered the Angels the better.

Both beings restarted their movement. Emanuel took in the strategy that they were set upon; Raph was leading them north east or upwards and to the right of Uriel's pursuers. Blocking the line of site were a number of different suns and more importantly worlds. Worlds were always good for blocking a view and Raph was making a route that was being hidden by myriads of living beings, flesh and blood and camouflage, heaven was a strange place to live, but you've got to live. When the two foes would finally meet the element of surprise would be with the Archangel and his companion, at present they were both moving where the sun didn't shine, Emanuel chuckled at that thought, his playful humour could not be diminished. The rebellious Angels were up ahead, those haters, and loathers, greedy, thieving, selfish and disgusting bastards. Soon he and Raph would be face to face with all that Emanuel considered to be evil!

'Time for Emanuel to become a soldier,' he said, taking in a worthless breath as if to emphasise his own resolve. 'Be a thinker not a stinker. There is no use in shitting myself.' Mumbling his encouraging quips he walked along whilst his mind was at work ticking off different options for Raphael, he threw a side glance at Raph and decided that all he could give to the Archangel was his support. What was needed was some emotional fortification. He didn't want Raph to be worried about him when the battle started because that would be a weakness to him and strength to the enemy. Emanuel needed to remove some of Raphs' protective line of thoughts. He knew the drill; Emanuel was the Angels' little brother, the Son, the play mate and innocent. The one to be protected at all cost and those were the thoughts that needed to be restricted and contained. The best way to go about that was easy enough; he only had to piss Raph off! Emanuel knew how it could be done, one subject which was fresh and nerve tingling, Lukavel!

Emanuel spent some time waiting for the moment. It wasn't as easy as he might have wished. Moderating his own speed and keeping in step with Raphael while stealing side long glances. This was something that Emanuel hated doing, if you needed to look at somebody then you should look at them, not peek with your eyes so they do not know that they are being watched! Emanuel thought that rude, sly, devious and wrong. He was doing it himself, head straight and eyes darting as far left as they would go so he could take in the sight of Raphael. None of the negatives applied to the Son, because he was using stealth not guile, attempting to pick his moment of engagement for the better good, not evil.

Raphael was an Archangel and the Archs can see things coming, their minds worked at an incredible rate and they would know the end of a sentence before a person had finished saying it. So Emanuel needed the right word at the right interval. Words were power and Emanuel himself had been nicknamed *The Word* in ages gone by, not because he was a wordsmith, but because he was the Son of God and words were amply available to him from their primal source, his father. Also Emanuel did talk a lot.

A right word here could make an Angel soar or the wrong word there could make him despair. Words certainly were powerful, but the one who used them most efficiently was the one who had the most self control, and Archangels had plenty of control. Despite this disadvantage, Emanuel would proceed with his strategy; this was his own way of fighting in the war, making the warrior mightier before the battle. Most of the oncoming battle with the Angels would be fought with words so Emanuel had the opportunity to get in there first.

Emanuel was thankful that he was going to do this with Raphael. Raising a touchy subject did not always have clear cut results with Archangels. For example Michael would get so angry with you that the words would simply fail against him, that didn't make him much of a strategist, but it did make him terrifying to behold in his moments of rage! Gabriel the Archangel was unique to almost everyone else when it came to the use of words, he could answer, question, correct and alter an entire concept within

one sentence. No word play or forging of words was needed by Gabe, and a wordsmith wouldn't get a look in! Gabrael also had the ability to drive a healthy being into the realms of insanity within a very short space of time, just by talking to them. Emanuel didn't chat to Gabrael very often as the Angel gave him a headache!

They paused again, Raphael absorbing many different facts and details that were around them, once more his eyes glowed with a brilliant light which then started to pulsate as he re-arranged his spirit in correspondence to the information that he had gathered. Emanuel would wait for those beams to fade and before they had the chance to go out completely he would instigate his conversation. It really annoyed him when he was interrupted whilst doing something important and he thought that Raphael would feel the same. He watched as the lamps of Raphs' soul continued to cast out a luminous ray of light. Emanuel drew in another worthless breath, at this rate, he thought, it would be him that would have to cope with the feelings of annoyance and irritation. He waited a little longer as Raph altered some more of his physical aspects, fourteen foot tall and two stars for eyes. 'Get on with it,' the Son thought impatiently.

Emanuel saw an opening and said, 'This is happening because of Lukavel.' He had to squint as Raphael turned to look upon him. 'If we hadn't been looking for Lukavel then we would never have tumbled these Angels.'

'So?' Raphael replied. The volume of his voice was loud.

'So? That is a positive thing, a good thing. Because of Lukavel we found Uriel and now we are helping him and that means that Lukavel brings good results,' Emanuel said, keeping a neutral expression set upon his face, which was now aglow with Raphael's rays.

'It matters not,' the Archangel replied, his voice sounding like the flow of many waters.

Emanuel leaned forward for emphasis and said, 'It completely matters.' Hands went to hips. 'What is about to happen is a direct link from Lukavel and that means he is a productive being and that should be documented for further reference. I think it is something that shouldn't be

overlooked or minimised,' he said, and paused before casting out the bait, 'don't you agree?' It was always good to finish with a question when talking to an Arch. Raphael scanned the heavens before falling for the bait.

'We are here because of you and your will which is at work. It is your actions that have led to this situation. It was you who created the abomination and it is your desire to fix the problem that has led to the revelation of Uriel's pursuers. Lukavel is of no importance. Do not mask the abomination by your own worth,' Raphael said. It sounded as if Emanuel were being reprimanded by an ocean such was the power and energy of the Archangels' voice.

That's a bit strong, Emanuel thought to himself, but he resisted the urge to answer back, control was paramount to what he was trying to do. 'Not an abomination!' he said, wanting to shout but keeping his voice as calm as he could manage and the audio volume low. 'He is a new creation, a new person, one that isn't being given a chance by your lot!' Emanuel bit his lip after saying the last part and quickly pulled down his raised finger, he had been disrespectful and a little aggressive, but it was true, none of the Archs gave Lukavel a chance. They were prejudice. Emanuel wanted to do this calmly, but he was aware that his control wasn't as good as he would have liked it to be and he felt himself blushing.

'Not anew! Two people fused as one, which is an abomination,' Raphael said, looking truly menacing. 'It is a perversion which you conducted in error because of the existence of imperfection and its results within you.' The sound which issued forth was like a roaring of the sea.

'I turned the imperfect into perfect!' Emanuel shot back, but it was no good, he found that his fore-finger was pointing again, this time straight at Raphs' face. 'The perfect mates, an ideal couple, a next step, a bonding and binding that will last, too good for some but less good for all.' Raph froze for a second; he seemed to be having trouble understanding the final meaning of Emanuel's words. That wasn't surprising because Emanuel wasn't too sure either, but he had an idea and he would elaborate on it before Raphael could decipher a meaning for himself. 'Lukavel is now a force for good and he is a new being,' Emanuel said quickly. 'He will not be a help to the wicked but he

is of no threat to the good and he is better than the majority of people in heaven, and more capable!’

The Archangel’s face began to shake in pure rage. Emanuel was not affected, he was used to his Dad’s temper and there wasn’t a being that existed that could match anger like that!

‘Mates, who had been created to be compatible, you manipulated two individual beings, one masculine the other a feminine, with fusion you destroyed them both and created an abomination,’ Raphael boomed. Emanuel had placed his fingers inside his ears, not because he didn’t want to hear what Raph was saying, but because the words now sounded like a very angry storm. Emanuel was impressed and the Archangel was not yet done. ‘Creation had been responsible for the male and the female and YOU are responsible for defiling that order and fusing together two individual spirits to suit your own purpose!’

‘Lukavel is a good person!’ Emanuel yelled back, still keeping his fingers lodged within his two ears.

‘It is an abomination!’ Raphael roared, causing Emanuel to shake from head to foot. The Archangel remained still with eyes fixed upon the Son of God, rage flushed across his face. Emanuel’s plan had worked better than he had expected. Raphael was furious! It was the Son who broke off eye contact first, turning his attention from Raph to finding the location of the rebel Angels. Raphael soon followed suit and found them quicker than Emanuel.

After restarting their pursuit Raphael spoke, ‘They are amalgamated.’

Emanuel almost came to a stop upon hearing the words; he regained his composure and quickly caught back up with Raphael. ‘How many of them are there?’

‘Twenty three make up the union, but there is another,’ Raphael said and firmly gripped Emanuel’s shoulder blade, leading the Son on in altering directions, and making it difficult for Emanuel to keep his bearings.

‘What’s the other?’ Emanuel asked, regaining some clarity.

‘A Seraph,’ Raphael replied. He was keeping his set course but his head was cocking aside and moving frequently. The Archangel was assessing data at an incredible rate and his mind was working to full capacity. God had made the Archangels to be more than a sum of their parts. The workings that were now at play within Raphael were being used to add, subtract and accumulate information. He would be trying to work out the vital statistics of this new amalgamation. Emanuel gave a shudder thinking of such a union, one that would combine twenty three living spirits into one entity was beyond his understanding. It made him feel dirty just thinking about it, and he was glad that Raph was too busy to notice the effect it had had on him. Not like Lukavel, he told himself, and again felt glad that he didn’t have to try to explain the exact difference between Lukavel and the Union to Raphael.

‘They have full control of the Seraphim?’ Emanuel asked.

‘It is Incoherent and suffering from lethargy due to the removal from its abode. There is a delusion being worked which gives this Union a balance of power within the Seraph, most probably the same delusion that led it away from its dwelling place.’ Raphael paused and turned to look at Emanuel. ‘Do not commune with it, for you will know it not.’

Emanuel tried to protest. ‘It’s just a Seraph.’

‘It knows itself not,’ Raph said and his grip increased on Emanuel’s shoulder. ‘Its mind is living in a lie. The delusion is powerful and it knows us not.’

‘Ah, alright,’ Emanuel groaned. ‘Have it your way.’ The Son was now trying to relieve some of the pressure from his aching shoulder blade, using his small hand which he had clasped around Raphael’s right wrist, but each tug he made was useless. ‘I said alright! I won’t talk to it! Now let go!’

Raphael pulled Emanuel around to face him before releasing his hold. The Son rubbed his shoulder in an irritated manner. ‘Where we arrive there is ten conducted by zero.’ Emanuel gave a single nod of understanding; the zero was a Sun with ten worlds in its orbit. ‘We will first be spotted when we pass by zero and we make our interception at five, it is the direction of five

that we move to from zero.’ Emanuel gave another flick of the head; he and Raph would pass the Sun and then move for the direction of the fifth world. ‘The fifth is the largest so a good place to start. Be aware that after the eighth the darkness is deep, that is why the ninth moves unlike the others.’

This time the Archangel held his gaze, he wanted more than a nod of affirmation. ‘I’ll stay away from the deep,’ Emanuel replied. If he fell into that void it would take a while for him to get back out and if Raph were fighting, a slip like that could prove costly.

‘You will detach yourself from the combat and keep behind me,’ Raphael said. ‘If you are attacked you will keep your defence limited and leave it to me to vanquish the enemy.’

‘Okay,’ Emanuel replied. ‘I’m not very good in a fight.’ A grin was the only rebuke the Son could think to do, so he stood there smiling in a self satisfied way.

‘You are excellent at starting them though.’ Emanuel’s smug expression instantly changed into one of shock and Raphael gave a mighty laugh. ‘Come,’ he said, before grabbing Emanuel’s shoulder once more and leading the way to the destination he had just described.

They passed by the Sun showing little regard for the soaring heat that bathed them both. Emanuel used his free hand as a Sun block for his eyes so that he would be able to see the pack of Angels. A Union they were, but their spiritual bodies would still remain separate. ‘Twenty-three Angels coming in a row one too many and one too slow,’ Emanuel rhymed to himself and then his eyes saw them. ‘There,’ he said, pointing directly to them so that Raphael would see. ‘I can’t see the Seraph though?’

‘It is further behind.’ Raph said, his voice was still powerful, but the burning Sun helped to mask his thunderous speech.

‘Is it alright to be scared?’ Emanuel said.

‘No,’ Raph replied. ‘For I am not.’

‘Why?’

‘Why?’ Raphael looked down at the Son and said simply, ‘I have Emanuel with me. Now we need to make haste because we have been seen.’ Raphael then picked up his pace, pulling Emanuel alongside him. The Son was now jogging to keep up with the Archangel’s new burst of speed. They were both moving swiftly to the bulging fifth world and their oncoming encounter.

The Union with the self designated name of Jovian first saw the pair of beings shimmering in the flames of the nearest star. Jovian came to an abrupt stop, from those bright orange flames being emitted from that ordinary burning sun came a sudden feeling of dread. The larger of the two beings could not be hidden even by the power of a burning star. It was the most feared sight in all of God’s creation, an Arch! Jovian was completely confused, how could this have been the Archangel that he had so diligently tracked? How was it possible? In these moments of uncertainty Jovian did not pay regard to the smaller being that was accompanying the Archangel. It would take a few more moments before the Union would take this smaller presence into account. Jovian was petrified and had remained at a stop. He watched in silent terror until he could move his thoughts out of the emotional straight jacket that had just clamped around him. He took in the other information that was available.

Not one but two? The Arch that he was tracking was named Uriel and he had no companion. So this was not the same Archangel. But then whom? Jovian realised that his time had been cut short and he would have to make an evasive manoeuvre. He registered the galaxy and saw that the best place to take cover was a giant gas world that dwarfed the other planets considerably. It was halfway within the solar system but it might be his only chance before being discovered. He moved as fast as he was able to with panic still coursing through his spirit. The Seraph named Quaoar, who he held captive, was slowing him down. He considered leaving it behind, but no he could not do that as it was too great a prize and of high value. He needed the Seraphim for his plan against Uriel to work and it was an important weapon.

Proceeding to the fifth world he willed the Seraph along behind him. As he approached the giant gas planet he gambled another look at the Archangel and again he almost froze at what he saw, it was Michael! Jovian immediately released Quaoar from the hold of his will, leaving the Seraph isolated in space and impotent of any rational thoughts. Then he sped to the far side of the great gas planet whilst cursing his luck for running into the most dangerous Angel in the Universe. Jovian would now have to do or be done by; there was no other option but to fight!

Emanuel walked behind Raph, but slightly at an angle, so he got a clear view. The Union of Angelic Spirits did not see them coming. Raphael had a clear advantage from the start as he had planned, immediate vocabulary poured from his mouth with a force that was too powerful to be ignored, his words would penetrate the mind of the Union with ease. The goal would be to find out the individual components that made up this Union, those that the Angel's had been before the amalgamation. Raph had to know this being so that he could conquer it.

Emanuel stayed at a distance with a composed look upon his face. He was waiting and studying as the encounter got underway. Doing what Raph had commanded him to do, not taking any part, but anticipating his coming into the battle. Still he waited and watched. Raphael was working fast, almost deaf and blind to the attacks from the Union. 'No surprise because all your words are dead on arrival,' the son thought with satisfaction. Every attack the Union could think to do was aimed at a target that wasn't there. 'All that you have ever learned about Michael, every devious work you and your comrades have ever succeeded in doing against my brother, can't help you now,' Emanuel thought to himself, an ironic smile flashed across his face. 'You attack Michael but your fight is with Raphael.' Emanuel thought the words silently to himself, being conscious of the fact that if the words were spoken out loud (as was his habit of doing) the Union might hear and then the balance of this battle would change.

‘I’m wearing out a good face here,’ Emanuel finally concluded. The Union hadn’t so much as looked at him throughout the entire battle. There had been movement from the individual bodies of the Angels but they were all to do with Raphael. The manoeuvring was aimed against Raph and Emanuel was being completely ignored. The whole scene of the battle was taking place next to the giant gas world and Emanuel had spotted the Seraph stopped idle at the outer limit of the solar system, not seeming to be any part in the proceedings. ‘I might as well not be here, either,’ he thought absently.

It was such thoughts as these that made the Son of God so dangerous at times. Emanuel’s perception of danger wasn’t like an Angel’s perception of danger and that was why the Son would spend most of his time in the heavens being partnered with one of the Arch’s; for the good of all.

‘Time for some brilliance,’ Emanuel decided, and eyed the distance from the very last line of the Union’s bodies to an adequate space just to the rear of Raphael. Emanuel would move to that location just behind Raph and then he would do what almost all the other beings in heaven were not capable of doing; move space.

Only Michael had learned the rudimentary skill required for such an act that Emanuel was about to undertake; and that was because Emanuel had taught him while they had played together. He had learned to keep speed with Emanuel in races across the heavens by using the technique that Emanuel was about to perform. Of course, Michael had to do this by using only his limited capacities, which boiled down to brute strength, where as Emanuel could travel at impossible speeds because God had made him able to do so, nothing being impossible for God. Emanuel had taught Michael another way to travel, so that when they played together it would not be a trial of patience for the Son, having to wait for Michael to catch him up. Emanuel had shown the Angel how to grab hold of the smallest and primal part of space from the location that Michael intended to get to, and then when he had a firm grip of that space, Michael could use his strength to pull it towards himself; the result was that a portion of where Michael wanted to be was now held in his own hands, without him having to actually get there.

All that was needed from Michael was for him to jump onto the space that he had captured, like hopping onto a step. The clever part was that when the Archangel made the jump, he would have no choice but to stop holding the space because he had now hopped onto it. The Universe did the rest; the power of creation restored the natural balance and the part of space that Michael was now standing upon would be flung back to its normal position along with the Archangel upon it! The whole operation occurred so fast that the rest of the universe was unaffected, but the result for Michael was that he had got to his intended location by the forces of the Universe. A quantum pull and then a leap; or a hop step and a jump as he and Emanuel liked to call it. The operation was crude and it was tampering with creation, but it could be done and it was fun. The only harm would be a weakening of the Archangel's strength, but that would only be temporal and the pain was worth the gain. Now with a new means of travel at Michaels' disposal it had become a competition and a doorway for new and more exciting games to be played.

"There are no limitations that we cannot undo," Michael had said, and this was how he had learned to travel through the heavens by the hop step and a jump. Emanuel had taught him with some amazing thinking, the limitations of an Archangel were not a barrier to the Son of God; on the contrary he considered it a challenge to his creativity. He had embraced tackling the impossible so that he could have more fun and games. Of course it had to be Michael, out of the seven Archangels he was the most youthful in his disposition and some of the more juvenile pleasures that Emanuel liked to enjoy were quickly discarded by the other Archs for games that were more to their tastes. They were aware of what Michael could now do, but did not try to learn it themselves. Emanuel thought that he knew the answer for this; being that it took a lot of effort to learn and they were already fast enough for doing the things that were needed.

'Boring,' had been the Son's verdict. So Michael alone had learned the hop step and the jump and this made him the second fastest mover in heaven. The process had also added some new traits to the Angels' character, traits that were not so evident in the other Archangels. Emanuel had pondered about these; flashes of temper, frustration and volatile

eruptions of emotions. 'He's young just like me,' Emanuel had concluded. This new disposition had now turned Michael into one of the most feared foes in all of creation, and it had come about by him only wanting to play with his little brother, Emanuel.

Emanuel had now got into position just behind Raphael. What he had planned was something that only he alone could do; not even Michael could replicate it. Emanuel roughly calculated the measure from where he stood just behind Raph and the distance of Raphael and the Union of Angels. Then he spread his legs and in one deft move landed a blow with his right fist directly in the space between his two feet. Emanuel, the Son of God, had stunned the space where his blow had landed and this would be his marker. Everything else in creation was moving and alive, but not the bit between his legs, it had been stopped by the blow and now all movement and time had ceased within it. It wasn't permanent, just a shock and shortly it would dissipate; the frozen space would return to its normal constitution. But before that could happen Emanuel had flew past Raph and the Union of Angels and slid to a point just behind the Union itself, there he repeated the move, but instead of landing a blow, this time he scooped up the space and then firmly held it in his grip as he turned around and flew back to his original marker behind Raph. Now standing upon the one constant footing in the Universe Emanuel pulled the space that he held in his hand tightly to his belly and then using his other hand for leverage he then heaved and pulled the space that he held upwards until it was raised above his own head and then he let it go! The space sprang back to its proper location in a cascading fashion and as it travelled it sent a shockwave so powerful that each individual body of the Union was sent crashing over.

'Yes!' The Son yelled out in triumph, He'd also fallen to one knee and had his right fist balled in front of his face. When he lowered his arm he caught glimpse of Raph, the Archangel was also on one knee but not like Emanuel. Raphael had been knocked down by the force of the blow as well and was quickly re-arranging himself as the Union's bodies stumbled around in confusion.

‘The trick ain’t worth the time it buys,’ Emanuel said bitterly. It seemed he didn’t have much to show for his efforts and Emanuel was both disappointed and puzzled. Raph hadn’t expected it to happen, but Emanuel had presumed that the Archangel would be aware of what he was doing, he was sure that some part of Raph would be watching him, even whilst in combat, but Emanuel had been mistaken. Raph had told him to keep back and not to join in the battle and the Archangel had taken it as a given that he would do just that. ‘I thought I was never trusted,’ Emanuel thought and then didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

Raph was back up and pressing the attack once more, but Emanuel saw that as the Union got back up, one body after the other, glances were being thrown in his direction. Even when all twenty-three were up and fighting, Emanuel would notice a pair of eyes darting in his direction, he was no longer being ignored. Crouching down and folding his arms around his knees, he rested his chin upon his hands and watched. Emanuel would learn if nothing else. The war of words were still raging but he didn’t have to pay attention to what was said; Raphael was still probing the Union to see what Angels it had once been and the Union must have now realised that Raph was not Michael. Union was moving its bodies in a synchronised manner and each time some of the bodies edged closer to Raph, the Archangel would respond with speed and drive them back. The battle seemed to be going well enough but the more Emanuel watched the more he began to doubt.

It was all too convenient, just like he would imagine it to be. Raph was wearing the Union down and he would finally break it. ‘All too predictable,’ he thought, and watching the individual bodies being worked in synchronisation he became more aware that he was watching a mechanism at work, a mechanism that was conducted by one consciousness. ‘This one must have been taught by the master of manipulation!’

Emanuel stood up, alert. He was being driven to distraction and that was all part of the plan! The Son began to pay attention to his surroundings, not just where the battle was being fought, as he had been doing; but a much larger area. He then realised that the great gas planet where the fight was taking place also blinded his view of anything else that might be happening.

He started scanning the solar system, taking his time, and registering as many details as possible. It took him a few moments until his gaze reached the ninth world; the ninth moves different to the others. Across its orbit and moving slowly was the Seraph. Soon it would reach the eighth world and then Emanuel guessed it would veer towards the concealed space on the other side of the giant fifth world where the battle was being fought and then attack Raphael. 'Or me,' he chewed his bottom lip. 'What to do?' After thinking the words, Emanuel knew he had to do something. So he set off towards the Seraph, hoping that this time he wouldn't be a hindrance but a help.

Emanuel strode like Raphael had before meeting with the Union. Although, the Son being much smaller and not an Archangel, looked far less intimidating, but he had his mind set on battle and his mannerism echoed Raphael's battle walk. As he approached the eighth world he noticed its composition; rings orbiting top to bottom, moons which circled from right to left, multi layered cloud system with mostly gas on the top, cold surface with no features and the globe was tilted making it unique to the rest of the worlds in this solar system.

Emanuel passed by and adjusted his course in accordance with the oncoming Seraph. He could feel the heat as it got closer; this wasn't going to be easy! Emanuel was relieved to find no noise to accompany the eternal flames which burned in exaltation of God. Raphael had been right; this Seraph knew itself not. He didn't have to reason with it, he just had to stop it. 'How do you stop an unstoppable force?' he said aloud and pondered on this dilemma as the Seraph got nearer and he got hotter. 'Seraph's guard Dad's dwelling place; they're not supposed to move.'

Emanuel turned his back to it and bent down, he couldn't look at it any longer as the fire was too much. Instead he squirmed at the fiery celestial being. It seemed to have slowed down a little at least. 'You've never seen this before.'

The Son was bent over, head between his legs and grinning at the Seraph.

'If Dad could see me now,' he said and then pulled his head back and spent a few moments in a fit of giggles. His bum was burning so he took a few little steps forward being as slow as was possible. 'It doesn't know what it is looking at,' he thought to himself. 'Maybe I've got its attention?'

Emanuel decided to test out his theory. He shuffled forward but slightly to his left as he did so and waited, then another shuffle as he felt his bum burn and then another. He dipped his head back down and peered at the Seraph; it had re-aligned its course directly behind him. The Son looked to the eighth world and wondered... 'If you never try then you'll never know. I sound just like Uri.'

A huge grin momentarily appeared on his face. Very slowly and moving like a crab, the Son of God steered himself and the Seraph who was still following behind, to the eighth planet. He didn't want to take the Seraph to that world, which would be disastrous; he wanted something from the world itself. He had a plan, and for it to work he needed some natural resources.

'Remember, after the eighth and before the ninth the darkness is deep,' he told himself, and gazed at the large blue world directly before him. He shut his eyes and began to concentrate on his physical body, he needed to become more organic for this little plan to work, human constitution with flesh and blood. He felt funny as his body started to change its form and then he opened his new blue eyes and held his breath, protecting the fragile organic lungs within his chest. Within seconds he was up and running, he had made a dash for the planet stopping just short of falling into the atmosphere. He leaned back, fighting against the pull of gravity and then stuck his head inside the cloudy dome, breathing in and out as he did so. It wasn't very long before he started to feel unwell. He resisted the urge to vomit and forced himself out of the cloud of ammonia and methane.

Now he needed to get back into position in front of the Seraph.

It was only seconds before Emanuel had returned to his mooning position in front of the Seraphim, but the Son had endured stomach cramps unlike anything he had ever felt before! He spent some considerable time and

effort forcing the gases in his bloated body down to his rear opening and when they came out it was devastating!

The explosion had knocked Emanuel down. He was thankful that he had been bent forward when the blast had hit him, so he hadn't been blown in any direction. When he was back up he looked all around. No sign of the Seraph. He ran quickly to the edge of the deep and came skimming to a stop before he could fall from the precipice. Peering down, he couldn't see anything, it was too dark. So he scanned the heavens once more before finally concluding that the Seraph was trapped. 'You won't get out of there any time soon,' he said and began to rub his hot behind. 'Beware your anus.'

Cocking his head back towards the blue planet, he gave a self satisfied smirk, and then he started to make his way back to Raphael, feeling proud, but a little sore from his achievement.

Emanuel came to an abrupt stop at the sixth world, the battle had moved on while he had dealt with the Seraphim. Now the bodies of the Union were taking physical blows from Raph and being thrown, one after the other, into the direction of the sixth planet. The Son supposed that his dealings with the Seraph had had some bearing on the way the fight had gone. The Union had been using some of its powers in controlling the Seraphim, its secret weapon, but Emanuel had destroyed all hopes of further manipulation. The Celestial Being was temporally indisposed inside the deep breach of the solar system, and it looked as if Raphael was about to bring the same fate to the Union imminently. Raph was in the process of casting the Union down onto the sixth World and captivity.

Emanuel gasped and then shouted, 'Raph no, the ground sucks!' It was too late. The Archangel was casting the last remaining bodies into the southern hemisphere; he hadn't seen what Emanuel had. As the bodies crashed into the ground they were being swallowed into the world rather than being crippled upon impact, not the outcome that Raphael had intended. The ground quite literally sucked. Emanuel ran to Raph as the last body was thrown below. 'They're under the surface and trying to break free!' he screamed.

The Archangel snapped his head back to the planet after Emanuel had said the words. 'A miscalculation,' he rumbled.

'Lack of information, you were a bit too busy to notice all the details,' Emanuel rasped, the last remnant of his organic lungs at work.

Raphael stood frozen whilst he worked through the calculations and deciphered the meaning. Emanuel was gazing up at him with a look of desperation. 'We're in the blast zone,' Raphael said.

This wasn't what the Son wanted to hear.

Raphael's eyes locked onto Emanuel's and then his head turned slowly to face him. Before Emanuel could protest Raphael had lifted him off his feet and swung him around, the Angel's upper half was bent over the Son of God like a covering shield. Emanuel couldn't move or see very much but he felt the force of the blast as he and Raph were sent hurtling; the sixth world had blown apart!

Raphael had brought them to a stop when they had reached a level with the giant gas planet. He continued to shield the Son as they both moved behind the fifth world and found cover from the meteor storm which had only moments before been a planet. Emanuel was disorientated and in a state of disbelief so it took him some time before he registered the peculiarity he was staring at. A bright red swirl was before him. It was within the atmosphere of the gas giant that they were using for cover. He rubbed his eyes, surely it hadn't been there before or he would have memory of it? And it seemed to be increasing in size. He turned to Raph to make comment about it and then staggered back unable to speak. Raphael was stooped with his jaw slack and red fluid flowing out of his open mouth and the gas giant was supping up the substance. The Archangel raised his brow, saw the Son looking at him and then pulled up slightly, resting his hands just above his knees for support.

It was a hard thing to watch but Emanuel didn't turn away. Raphael seemed passive to the experience and Emanuel didn't know what to say. The Arch's blood was like a rushing river and the growing red spot on the world was a testimony to his damage. Emanuel rubbed Raphael's shoulder. 'Red,' he said at last.

Raph patted his hand and then held it firmly. 'You mean more to me than any colour I could see.'

The words had taken the Angel some effort and the Son had splashes of red running down his face where the blood had splattered him. His lips felt wet so he cleaned them with his tongue and then swallowed what it had collected. He could feel it go down and it left a bitter sweet taste in his mouth.

'Will you be alright?' Emanuel asked.

Raphael did not reply, instead he straightened up to his full height, tilted his head back and gulped down a mouthful of blood. Emanuel took a look at the debris shooting past them both and the huge moving rocks that were all that remained of the sixth world.

'Where did it all go wrong?' He hadn't meant to speak aloud.

'When does it ever go right?' Raph replied and spat some of his blood in the direction of the spill, swallowing a few more times. Emanuel felt a little better but could barely raise a smile. He and Raph had destroyed a world.

Raph spat again and said, 'Jovian is coming.'

'Jovian?'

'That is its name. Stay behind me.'

'But there are rocks all around...'

'Then I shall be rock hard.'

The Son didn't have the heart to stop him, he was certain that Raph would be alright but how could he go on fighting in such a mess? Archangels were just too fearless or just too brave, it didn't matter which, as they both amounted to the same thing. An Arch didn't stop until the job was done. Emanuel wanted to stop, close his eyes and hope it would all go away; or just run away himself, so fast and so far that no one would ever be able to catch him; deal with real. He took a deep breath and stepped out behind Raphael.

Jovian pressed the attack almost immediately. The sight of the Archangel's blood had induced a frenzied response from the being. Emanuel kept behind Raph, but so low was his spirit that he rarely paid any attention to

what was happening. He was vaguely aware that he and Raph were moving backwards. Raph must be in terrible pain why was it happening? Why all the badness and suffering? What was the point in fighting? He knew the answer; he had always known the answer...

‘Dad,’ he said softly.

He could hear the shouts and could see the blows, but he no longer cared anymore. His Dad would make everything all right, he always did. He would touch Emanuel and nothing would come between them. There was no reassurance like his Dad’s. Not Raph, not Michael, not even Uri, not all of them combined could bring comfort like that. His Dad could transform him with one stroke. ‘When I’m with Dad I will all be alright,’ he told himself. ‘I won’t even worry about any of this.’

‘Love to do you!’

The words brought Emanuel out of his reverie. It was Jovian, or one of Jovian’s members which had broken away from the fighting and was now set upon the Son of God. Emanuel shot a glance at Raph, who was fighting in the shadow of the fourth world. How had they got there? Emanuel couldn’t recall.

‘See the Arch. See how it bleeds!’

Doubt spread through the Son, Raph was fighting hard but his blood was flying in all directions.

‘Look upon his glory and know the truth. That is what awaits all of the seven. They’ll choke on their own blood, your family in ruins! Woe to Emanuel!’

‘Listen to it not for it is a pack of lies!’ Raphael shouted out and blood burst out of his mouth like a torrent, a river of red floating in the vacuum of space. Would the fourth world drink of Raphs cup as well? Emanuel felt a tug on his shoulder.

‘Believe your own eyes!’ The member said.

Emanuel knew better than to be blinded by sight. ‘I don’t believe my eyes.’

The member grimaced and hissed, 'I wish I was special, so fucking special!' Its head snapped back abruptly and then became still. Emanuel's fist shot back just as quickly as it had appeared.

'Well you're not,' the Son replied. The sound of a deep rumble entered into Emanuel's mind; laughter? He supposed it was Raph or maybe Uri, or could it have been someone else... The Son wasn't certain, his focus was slipping. 'Traumatic,' he said aloud.

Emanuel nodded in agreement to the words as if they had been spoken by someone else. He remained still and quiet not paying attention, the remainder of the battle raged on with no further part played by Emanuel. Raphael had kept a constant check on him while he finished off the last resistance of Jovian and now the Union was under his control. The Archangel didn't rush to see if the Son of God was in need, he didn't have to. Raphael was in no rush either. He used the time after the victory to recover, diminishing the flow of blood and fixing some of the internal damage that he had taken during the destruction of the sixth world. Whilst bringing order to his physical form the Archangel also restored order and calm to his own spirit. Slowly he brought down the level of rage and mastered the hatred until he felt calm. Jovian's soul had been like poison to him. But Raph was now in control.

He knelt down and took Emanuel gently by the shoulders. 'It is accomplished.'

The Son took a look at the Angelic body which stood next to him. It was motionless beside a slight wobble to its head and its features were indiscernible. The other twenty-two bodies were in the same state of flux; although some had their heads flopped to one side, but they too had a slight wobble. 'You're certain?' he asked.

Raph raised a forefinger and made a circular motion. Jovian's bodies began to turn on the spot. The Archangel increased the speed and width of the movement of his finger and the Angelic bodies sped up in accordance. It looked like some mad dance being performed, Emanuel let out an uncertain laugh. 'That is so wrong,' he said.

The bodies started to rock backwards and forwards, their arms and legs jerked about. Slowly they came together forming a cluster and then separated slightly to partner one another in a strange spasmodic dance. 'The possibilities are limitless,' Raph said, and noticing the stunned look on Emanuel's face he let out a roar of laughter.

Emanuel could see that Jovian had started to perform some very crude moves. 'Archangels,' he muttered disapprovingly, and then added, 'Let us be rid of it Raph.'

'As you say,' Raphael replied.

Neither of them spoke as Jovian passed by. They followed the dancing Union all the way to the centre of the solar system and Emanuel watched as Jovian danced his way into the burning Sun. Raph had used the time to repair some more of his damage which had been extensive. Emanuel lowered his gaze as the Union disappeared into the burning Star.

'Under the surface and unable to break free,' Raph said in a tone of finality.

As long as the Sun would burn the Union of Angels would be in its fiery torment. Jovian would be there for a long time to come.

'Why?' Emanuel asked.

'For Uriel,' Raph answered.

'Yeah, for Uri,' he took a steadying breath, 'our big Brother.'

'Your big Brother,' argued the Archangel.

Emanuel shook his head but his hair failed to quiver, it had too much blood in it.

'The Seraph...'

'It is named Quaoar.'

'Quaoar is in the deep.'

‘Then we shall go to his aid and return him to his dwelling.’ They turned from the burning Star and started their journey back through the solar system. ‘How did you get the Seraph into the deep?’ Raphael asked.

‘The eighth world,’ Emanuel paused and then corrected himself. ‘The seventh world, lots of hydrogen, helium, water, ammonia and methane.’ Raphael had an inquisitive look about him. The Son did a half turn and gave a little wiggle; his grin was complimented by slightly rosy cheeks. It took a moment, but then Raph began to roar. He was still laughing as they came in line with the fourth World. The World was marred, engulfed in a swirling red mist. ‘It will become a red planet in time,’ Emanuel said and pulled Raphael to a standstill. ‘I love you, Raph.’

The Archangel did not respond quickly. ‘Love is strength,’ he said, and pulled some of the dry blood out of the Son’s hair.

Emanuel started to wave his elbows from side to side whilst flexing his nonexistent muscles. ‘Then I’ve got the strength of a giant,’ he said in a playful tone.

‘Remind me never to engage you in battle,’ laughed the Archangel.

Emanuel blew a raspberry and chuckled, he felt much better now. He deliberately ignored the fifth, not wanting to see the giant gas planet with its huge red spot. But Raph brought him to a stop shortly after, the Son spent some time admiring Raphael’s work. The Archangel was skilled in what he did. All the debris of the old planet was being accounted for and now the Archangel was sorting and aligning all manner of rocks, great and small in size, and creating a perfect line. Then Raphael set off with the line moving before him and he didn’t stop until they had reached the next World. Then he made the line curve in perfect symmetry around that planet.

Emanuel looked in wonder at the sixth world with its beautiful ring system going around it. ‘That is stunning,’ he said.

‘Tidy,’ agreed Raph,

‘More than tidying, Raph.’ The words were said in a stern manner. The Archangel nodded in quick agreement; he knew the Son had a different

perspective on such things. Raphael waited for what he considered to be the appropriate duration; he tapped his fingers on Emanuel's head, indicating that it was time to move on. Passing the seventh without comment they approached the deep.

'You can wait here,' Raph had turned and was about to descend into the darkness. 'Quaoar may be in need of reassurance.'

Emanuel saw the sense in Raphael's reasoning but he still felt a bit stung by the words. 'Whatever,' he bit his lip immediately after speaking.

Raph raised an eyebrow before disappearing out of sight. The Son moved to the edge of the deep. He soon heard Raph's voice, he was telling Quaoar that he was one of the seven who stood before the throne of God, and that he had come to take the Seraph back to its rightful dwelling place. He also said that Emanuel was waiting above and all was well.

As Quaoar ascended, the breach in space was pushed outwards, by the time the Seraphim came out there was no trace left of the darkness. No sign that it had ever been there at all, except that now the eighth World moved in a natural accordance to the rest of the planets in the solar system, unlike it had before.

Emanuel looked at Raph.

'How did he do that?'

'Seraphim,' the Archangel shrugged.

Emanuel scanned the solar system and noted how it had changed, and not necessarily for the worse. 'It's almost as if it were meant to be,' he exclaimed.

Raph snorted, 'Cause and effect, nothing more.'

The Archangel placed a hand deep within Quaoar and when he brought it out the hand was ablaze with blue and gold flames. He ruffled Emanuel's hair with it and when he was done there was no trace of any blood left. Raph then placed his hand back into the Seraph and when he pulled it back out the fire was gone. Emanuel shook his head from side to side, his hair vibrant again.

'Let's go.' Emanuel was beaming.

With Quaoar lighting the way they were homeward bound.

The End

Note from the author

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Tony Passarelli, June 2011