



THEY
BECAME
FLESH

They Became Flesh
By Elizabeth Shoemaker Sampat

For the 2011 Ronnies, using ingredients Wings and Murder

Game Influences:

Annalise, by Nathan Paoletta

RADIANT, by Shreyas Sampat

How We Came To Live Here, by Brennan Taylor

S/lay w/me, by Ron Edwards

Media Influences:

The Prophecy Trilogy, written by Gregory Widen

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Prophecy)

The Holy Bible, King James Version (Pilgrim's Study Bible)


My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy, by Kanye West

Author's Notes:

I accepted The Lord Jesus Christ as my personal savior when I was 14, and preached my first sermon by the time I was 16. I was the youngest person, second white person, and first woman to ever preach from the pulpit at the non-denominational church (that was heavily flavored by Baptist and Pentecostal traditions) my family attended.

These days I'm married to a culturally Hindu agnostic, my seven year old daughter leaves snacks for her idol of Ganesh and I'm not sure what the hell I am any more. Not atheist, not agnostic, not Christian, not Hindu. But I dunno what.

Here's what I do know: most of the world thinks being good for goodness' sake isn't good enough. People you help will turn on you. People you love will manipulate you. And sometimes it seems everyone in the world is more sure of their beliefs than you. That's this game, in a nutshell.

 Before the creation of mankind, God created the angels. The angels served God faithfully as he created Adam and Eve, and the Garden of Eden. One angel watched as God forbade Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: “Why do you give your children tests?” the angel asked.

TO PROVE THEIR LOVE, was God’s response.

Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and God cast them from the Garden to live in pain and darkness for the rest of their lives. The angel came to God again: “Why create your children with curiosity and then cast them down for being curious?”

YOURS IS NOT TO QUESTION, BUT TO SERVE, was God’s response.

“But your children were made to question, and you punished them for it,” said the angel, whose name was Lucifer.

And God turned his face from Lucifer, and Lucifer wept.

Lucifer and one third of the host have been cast from Heaven for questioning God. God has appeared to the fledgling species, mankind, and told them to beware demons and false prophets with wings as black as tar. The fallen angels, who loved humanity best, dig in to help a world they love, who hates them.

Many of the third have been killed. This is the story of those that are left.

ON SETTING

Every faction— God, Humanity, and the Fallen— gets to establish something important about the setting. The only solid conceit: this is when the world is fresh, the Fall is recent, and God still works through his people. It is up to your group to decide what “recent” means to these divine creatures.

At the beginning of each session, God may denote the passing of an age by choosing a new description for the world. If God does so, Humanity may also choose a new description. The Fallen are timeless, and so never change— except through endgame.

God, choose one of the following as the world you created, as it is now:

- ∴ A sprawling desert, with paradise always waiting just beyond the horizon for the pure of heart.
- ∴ The land of milk and honey, fertile, yet surrounded by enemies on all sides.
- ∴ A land of riches, lapis and chalcedony, with looming statues of pagan gods.
- ∴ A dry and thirsty land, subject to plagues and curses for three generations.
- ∴ A land of cedar trees and gray beaches, home to exiled holy men.
- ∴ An olive grove on a forgotten mountain, newly risen from the waters.

Humanity, choose one of the following to describe the heathens, as they are now:

∴ Feral and connected, they fear what they do not understand.

∴ Welcoming and fickle, they embrace the newest exoticisms.

∴ Wealthy and warlike, they constantly seek new sources of power.

∴ Superstitious and idle, they have their own solutions for everything.

∴ Legalistic and mercantile, they want nothing different than what they have.

∴ Philosophical and self-possessed, they feel they've outgrown God.

Angels, collectively choose one of the following to forever signify you as Fallen:

∴ Wings of ash and embers, rising from the spine.

∴ Discordant halos that soak up the light.

∴ Voices that sound like screaming animals.

∴ Eyes the color of blood, weeping tar.

∴ The cloven hooves of an unclean beast for feet.

∴ The forked tongues of a lying serpent.



CHARACTERS



This game requires four players at minimum: one of you must be God, and control God and his host. One of you must be Humanity, and control God's chosen people and heathens alike. The rest of you are angels.

GOD

You take the traditional role of a GM, and control the supernatural and divine elements of the setting. Your job is to exert pressure on to the angels; turn them against each other, dangle the promise of returning to Heaven and of forgiveness, send the rest of your host to stop the angels from interfering with humanity and your plan for the world.

HUMANITY

You also take the traditional role of a GM, and control the human, natural elements of the setting. You exert pressure on the angels by begging them for help, turning against them, demonizing them, squandering their help and threatening their lives. Where God can dangle the promise of Heaven, you can dangle the hope for a normal life and a family.

FOR GOD AND HUMANITY

In the first session, put the angels in situations which give them opportunities to flesh out their characters, without worrying about the tactics for pushing endgame play. Give the angels a chance to showcase who they think they are before you start challenging those perceptions with really difficult situations.

Your setting descriptors in particular are a rich source of situation; mine them appropriately.

ANGELS

Every angel has a name; something like Gabrael or Michael or Shekinah. Write yours down on your character sheet.

There are three Draws on the character sheet, because angels have three things drawing them in different directions: Compassion, Fraternity, and Remembrance. Compassion is their love for humans, Fraternity is their love of each other, and Remembrance is their knowledge of their divine nature.

In the Compassion Draw, write down why you love humans.

In the Fraternity Draw, write down why you love your fellow angels.

In the Remembrance Draw, write down the one thing you miss the most from Heaven.

You have ten powers to distribute between the three Draws; the more powers you create on a Draw, the more important that thing is to you. Choose a circle for each power connected to a Draw, and connect the circle to the Draw. You do not have to name the powers now: you name them in play, as you create them.



PLAYING THE GAME

The host of the Fallen is still very much connected to each other, living together and creating their own society, as much as they can. Decide whether the angels live in a community of humans that has accepted them (for any definition of “accepted”), or whether they wander without a home. The angels should face temptations, trials, and struggles; life among the humans they sacrificed Paradise for is hard. Whether they are reviled or beloved, the angels still have a bit of the divinity of God inside of them.

When an angel wishes to do something with significant consequences, the angel uses a power derived from his Compassion, Fraternity, or Remembrance. In order to do this, you must create a power on your character sheet; fill in a circle connected to either your Compassion, Fraternity, or Remembrance by writing the source of your power in that circle.

If your power is based on Compassion, it is something or someone that ties you to the mortal world; name the person and the feeling. Example Compassion powers: *I cannot watch a child cry, I love Sarai, I promised his mother she would see her son again.*

If your power is based on Fraternity, it is something or someone that ties you to the other angels that fell with you; name the person or ideal. Example Fraternity powers: *If one falls we all fall, I will not hold arms against another angel, I love Azrael.*

If your power is based on Remembrance, it is a miracle you can only perform thanks to your divinity. Name the miracle. Example Remembrance powers: *I can bring sight to the blind, I can fly, I can walk on water.*

You can create a new power any time that you feel you need to use one, provided that you have an empty power attached to its Draw. If you do not have empty powers remaining in that Draw, you may sacrifice a power you already have in order to create a new power in a different Draw. You can never have more than a total of ten powers.

For example, if Samael wants to heal a boy who cannot walk, he needs to create a power called Heals The Lamé. Unfortunately, he only chose Remembrance 1 and is already using it for the power Speak Truth To Lies. He chooses to sacrifice one of his Compassion powers— his love for the boy's mother—in order to make a new Remembrance power.

When a power is sacrificed, it has real narrative consequences. In the case of the example, the sacrifice of Compassion is clearly in the realm of Humanity, and so Humanity pushes the angel into situations where his lack of love for the boy's mother is spotlighted; perhaps the woman notices a change in Samael's demeanor, or asks him outright for something Samael would normally only do out of love.

When a power is sacrificed, it cannot be regained. Samael is never again capable of loving the boy's mother— though he is still capable of love. Whether a proposed new power is so similar to a sacrificed power is up for debate, though final decision rests in the hands of God and Humanity.

USING POWERS

When you have a useful power attached to one of your spheres, you may use it to roll a die in the hopes of achieving a goal. If God or Humanity choose, they may each tempt you by offering you an additional die to roll, if you make a promise or agreement with them.

It takes a single roll of 3 or higher in order to get your power to work at all, and a roll of 5 or higher to get your power to work exactly the way you want it to.

God and Humanity may offer you their dice after a failed roll, if you did not use their dice in the failed roll. If you rejected an offer from them before the failed roll, the new offered price does not have to be the same as it was before.

For every 5-6 you roll, your power is used to do exactly what you want.

For every 3-4 you roll, your power does what you want at a price. The price is determined by God for Remembrance or Fraternity, or Humanity for Compassion.

For every 1-2 you roll, your power awakes an issue with God or Humanity.

A roll of 6 cancels out any price on all 3-4 dice in that roll.



For example: when Samael rolls Heals The Lamé, God offers him an additional die if he directs some of God's chosen people towards his community of fallen angels. Since he had to sacrifice his love for the boy's mother in order to make the roll, he doesn't take the additional die—he doesn't want to bargain further. Samael rolls a 4, and the boy is healed.

God sets the price, and narrates that the boy is weeping tears of blood. When the boy's mother sees her son weeping blood, she begs Samael to remove the curse he set on her son. Without his love for the woman, he dismisses her lack of gratitude and leaves her broken.

ENDGAME

God and Humanity should create situations that tempt the angels to sacrifice powers from their Draws, in order to draw the angels toward one of three outcomes.

When an angel sacrifices his final Compassion power, he is welcomed back into Heaven with forgiveness.

When an angel sacrifices his final Fraternity power, he is shunned by the other angels and, as a wandering demon, is denied a home wherever he goes—by heaven, earth, and other fallen angels alike.

When an angel sacrifices his final Remembrance power, he transubstantiates and becomes human.