

Lucifer's Best Lover

A public relations expert's new client requests a corporate image makeover, but things take an unusual turn when he claims he's the Epitome of Evil.

Intrigued by a vague business offer that sounds too good to be true, public relations expert Randi Kavandar agrees to meet mysterious mogul Lucas Satani to discuss his corporate makeover. Mr. Satani is an unusual man: handsome, powerful, charismatic – and apparently delusional when he claims to be Lucifer. Against her better judgment, Randi engages in a night of heavenly sex with Lucas and soon gets caught up in a supernatural whirlwind of romance, intrigue, and betrayal. Trying to sort out the bizarre events, she finds her notions of love and religion, and good and evil, shaken to the core. How can she fall for this powerful man who claims he's really good despite being the legendary epitome of evil? How can she not?

Jaded by centuries of overindulgence and disappointment, Lucifer silently suffers the decline of his enterprise network. When his longtime assistant finds him a new redheaded distraction named Randi Kavandar, he assumes his romp will last only long enough to get him to the next distraction. He never expects to fall in love – for real. Fighting an endless battle to preserve his private version of the truth, the last thing he sees coming is betrayal from the one closest to him. In his darkest hour he faces losing everything, including the only mortal woman he's allowed himself to truly want and need. But will love be enough to save Randi, redeem Lucas from self-destruction, and rescue the world from the impending final battle between the forces of Good and Evil?

Lucifer's Last Lover



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~Author Preface/Acknowledgement~

The idea for this story came to me in a dream and just wouldn't let go. It was one of those stories that had to be told, because I felt compelled to write it. I wouldn't call this story inspired; it was just something I had to get out of my head and write down so that I could move on to other stories. Coincidentally, it was the first book I ever had published. While this story is typical romance fare, the subject matter is not so typical. Writing about The Devil is not new by any means. The subject has been fodder for many literary treatments, past and present, and probably will be in the future.

Some readers might wonder why any author would write a book about The Devil, Satan, Lucifer, or whatever name is used to refer to the fantastic and infamous character of the Bible, who nowadays is conveniently blamed for all bad things that happen or are perpetrated in this world. As an author, when asked why write about Satan, I have to answer "Why not?" It is the author's job to raise questions, to take the - excuse the term - 'Devil's Advocate' position in crafting stories that will not only entertain but put before readers new ideas to ponder. My interpretation is not meant to disparage any religion or belief system, but is merely an attempt to answer the simple question, "What if...?"

Thanks to all the friends, family, and acquaintances who have supported or encouraged my writing endeavors in any way.

Dana Warryck

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Supernatural Romance

by

Dana Warryck



CHAPTER 1

Propping his feet on his teak desk, he clasped his hands behind his head and leaned back in his Moroccan leather executive chair. His charcoal silk Armani suit caressed him in sinfully expensive luxury. With a delicious sigh, he basked like a cat in the pale morning light and gazed at the hazy Manhattan skyline.

Of all the names he'd been called throughout the ages, his favorite, and least derogatory, was *Light-bearer*. The other disparaging names didn't matter. Once he corrected the latest annoying setbacks, he'd turn things around and end this hellish escalation forever.

Light-bearer, Bringer of Light, Enlightener. He liked that image. He *was* that image. And when he finally completed his work, the entire world would know him as he truly was, as he should always have been known. He would break the stranglehold of his enemy and bring enlightenment to the masses enslaved by the darkness of ignorance and deceit. With truth, he would eliminate the downtrodden wretchedness of mankind and no longer suffer the daggers and arrows of aspersion that had pained him for so long. At last he would enjoy the praise and glory he so richly deserved. The very idea heated him deep inside, where the pitiful light of the sun could never reach.

He scanned the view before him, instinctively feeling the pulse of the city teeming with millions of people swarming like an army of ants, each individual intent on his own errands – late for work, asking the boss for a raise, taking the kids to school, grabbing a donut and coffee, cramming into a subway car. If he concentrated, he could catch snatches of specific conversations and thoughts—lovers moaning, whispers of office intrigue, words being transformed into the electrical impulses of understanding through the magical process of reading. The lusciousness of life intoxicated him as its frenetic activity threaded endlessly outward and beyond, encompassing almost the entire planet's surface, coating it like a sugary glaze glistening on a gigantic smorgasbord of sickening-sweet, gooey desserts spread before him. His to plunder, ravage, and devour – if he were so inclined.

He frowned, admitting to himself that once, long ago, when the world – and he – had been much younger, he had entertained such fancies. Ruling the planet as guide and caretaker of its inhabitants had seemed like a task for which he was well suited. But infighting among his peers was at its worst then, and infantile mankind had much less to offer. The tumultuous, horrific events that had subsequently occurred helped alter his priorities. He'd changed, matured, and his goals followed another path now. He liked to think it was a nobler path, more altruistic than that of his egomaniacal competitor, whose unquenchable greed for power and adulation made this,

his own minor wallowing in private fantasy, seem harmless in comparison.

Scowling, he deepened the furrow of his brow. Mankind had been so easily duped and controlled, distracted by the need to survive, that no one stopped to recognize how dire and pervasive their slavery had become. They needed to be rescued, to be *redeemed* from—

The click of the office door latch snapped him from his dark reverie. He made no move to face the intruder. He knew exactly who it was, and her reason for disturbing his privacy. He would not voluntarily indulge his assistant with his attention. They hadn't shared a civil exchange in weeks, and he was in no mood to grant Lilith audience now.

* * * * *

Lilith opened the inner door and stepped into the thirty-seventh floor corner office to find him in his usual position - manicured hands clasped behind jet-black hair, leaning back in his cocoon-like leather chair, resting his feet on his monstrous desk as he gazed out the windows. His custom-tailored suit fit his lithe body to perfection, down to handmade Italian loafers. Achingly beautiful, he exuded cosmopolitan sexuality as he stretched in the midmorning light. The glow about him attested to his name, *Light-bearer*, and his glory was without mortal compare - yet he squandered his power foolishly.

She cleared her throat to get his attention. "The quarterly status report." Her heels clicked with military precision as she crossed the black marble floor to place the leather portfolio on his desk.

Over the years she'd had many lovers, but none could surpass him, and no one, not even she, could resist him. Together since the beginning, they'd weathered hard times and shared experiences common humans couldn't imagine. But she would never again have him to herself. He had lost interest in her long ago. Now she was a mere confidante, an assistant. *A servant.*

Removing his feet from the desktop, he spun around slowly and faced his desk. Without looking up, he took the portfolio and murmured in his eternally sexy voice, "Thank you, Lilith."

She waited for something more from him, but he had eyes only for the portfolio. With a rush of anger at the summary dismissal, she turned and headed for the door. Grabbing the brass handle, she stopped and looked back to find him still staring at the closed portfolio in his hands. "The numbers aren't good," she said, confirming his unspoken fear.

He looked up and met her gaze. Even from across the room, his searing blue eyes melted her inside-out. She sucked in a breath and clenched her hands, trying to maintain composure. It was a losing battle. "I came up with an idea you might like," she blurted, hoping to mask the volcano of emotion about to erupt within her.

He extended a hand to indicate one of two cream

leather armchairs facing his desk. Releasing the door handle, she moved forward. Once seated, she watched him open the portfolio with seeming disinterest. She settled in and prepared to wait. It was always the same.

He would not be rushed, but would get around to the unpleasant subject in his own good time. First he'd give the entire contents a cursory once-over, then return to each section for a line-by-line examination. With almost flawless scrutiny, he'd ask a few questions about this expenditure or that, but in the end he'd be unable to challenge the bottom line. He faced his impending failure each time they repeated this interlude, yet he refused to alter his strategy. His fastidious stubbornness enraged her, but she knew better than to question it. He had his own reasons for doing things his way, and no force on Earth - or in Heaven - could change that.

"We're down twenty-seven people since last quarter," he said. "I knew there'd been a slight increase in defections, but twenty-seven..." Without looking up, he turned the page.

Lilith glared at him. "Didn't you notice that Joseph, your youngest son, was among those who left you?"

He flashed her a bland frown, then returned his gaze to the report. "At eighteen years of age, Joseph is barely a man. He has little real-world experience, a predisposition to faulty reasoning, and weak loyalty. I'm not surprised he was so easily swayed by a seemingly better offer. I blame his mother. She

disappointed me by proving unworthy of rearing a child of mine. I should never have favored that dalliance with offspring." He turned another page.

Lilith clenched her fists in her lap. How many times had she heard that? It was difficult to keep track of all the children he had fathered over time. On his orders she was forced to maintain an accurate accounting and make sure they were all well provided for. If he took no part in their upbringing, at least he was responsible enough to ensure they didn't lack creature comforts.

Long ago she had begged to share parenthood with him, but he had denied her, warning their offspring could be unfit because she had been *changed*. Their mix of power genes would be unpredictable, and their union would likely produce a monster. She knew it was possible, but not certain. She consoled herself by bearing children from unions with lessers, and had long since outlived them all.

She stared coldly at him. Many powers he possessed, she would never experience, but she would forever be there to witness how he nonchalantly abused them. "You have to do something. We can't afford to lose personnel at this rate. Soon there will be no one left."

"No one but you and me," he corrected with a fleeting smile.

For that one dazzling second, his perfect white teeth flashed brilliance, and his golden face blazed like the sun. After all this time, the simple gesture of his

smile still had a shocking effect on her. She swallowed hard and sat up straight, trying to keep her wits about her. "How do you expect to carry on, with no one to do the work for you?"

"We've been in worse situations, you and I."

That smile again. She wanted to look away but couldn't. She had rehearsed every possible objection to his pat responses, but now, as she gazed into his hypnotizing eyes, she couldn't remember a thing. His effect on her was always the same - delicious and inescapable. He was a charmer, a magician, a Svengali of the highest degree. He-

"You said you had an idea."

She breathed a sigh of relief as he looked down at the portfolio. At last her mind began to function again. "Yes. I was thinking we should change our recruiting tactics."

He eyed her and arched his black, razor brows. He could make even that simple gesture seem incredibly sexy. Suddenly she found herself brain-dead again.

"You know I won't adopt the methods of our competitor," he warned, breaking the entrancement she seemed determined to succumb to. "I refuse to trick my people with hollow promises and outright lies."

"I wasn't suggesting that. I simply meant we should target people with specific skills and mindsets that match our needs, rather than taking anyone off the street we can get."

His expression flattened as he eyed her

strangely. She couldn't imagine what he was thinking. After all the time she'd spent with him, after all the adventures and dangers she'd faced at his side, she still found him inscrutable on occasion. She had to keep reminding herself he was an entity quite different from the average human male.

"I screen all our recruits personally," he said. "I do not simply take anyone off the street."

She was amazed she'd offended him. "My apologies. That was ill-phrased. I meant we should bring onboard someone with unique talents who can improve our corporate reputation. We definitely have an image problem, in case you hadn't noticed."

He smirked, seeming amused.

The possibility that she had been the cause of his temporary good humor emboldened her. "We should change our marketing strategy, try some new advertising angles, hire a professional consultant. Someone who can work miracles. Because that's what we're going to need to pull ourselves out of this black hole of bad PR that's nearly swallowed us whole. A *miracle*."

"A trite choice of words, Lilith," he admonished, leaning back in his chair. "You of all people should know miracles are not all they're cracked up to be – mostly sleight of hand and double talk dependent on predictable coincidence. And the religious connotation of that term vexes me."

"Forgive me." She bowed her head ever so slightly, then dared to stare into his arctic blue eyes,

determined to keep her wits about her. "But you can't deny we need help - quickly. We need a professional who can do the job right and ensure satisfaction."

His icy glare warmed with interest. "I assume you have someone in mind."

Of course she had someone in mind. He knew damned well she did. This wasn't the first time she'd baited him with a pretty distraction to ease his discomfort. If he wouldn't have her, he would accept the substitutes she offered. And she would monitor their activities dutifully. That was as close as he would let her come to savoring him herself.

"Take a look," she said, standing up and grabbing the remote lying on his desktop. She aimed it at the flat, wide-screen TV mounted on the far wall, and activated a muted year-old news video of then recently elected Senator from California, Elliott Taylor, and his entourage. "Due to his rumored extracurricular activities, Taylor's run for senator was one of the most controversial and hotly publicized election races in the last few years."

She looked back in time to catch him nodding his head almost imperceptibly as he said, "I recall. Our competitor got to him first. I count myself lucky in that respect."

"No question," she agreed. "Taylor's a hot potato - hard to handle and still up to his old tricks." Pointing the remote, she directed his attention back to the screen. "See the saucy little redhead fourth from the left? Taylor's former campaign manager and press secretary,

Miranda Kavandar. If she can make that very bad boy look good, she just might be able to help *you*."

She watched his eyes zero in on the tart in the beige miniskirt and jacket, prancing near the politico. She knew she had him hooked. Now to reel him in. "She's intelligent, resourceful, headstrong, and very good at what she does. And she's a real beauty in person. This news clip doesn't do her justice." She scowled at the girl's amazing head of glistening, fire-red curls cascading past her shoulders. No dye-job, no perm, no breast enhancement. She was the real thing.

"When can you arrange a meeting?"

Lilith killed the screen and turned on him. She saw the afterglow of anticipation still on his face - he made no attempt to conceal it. Steeling herself, she forced a smile. "How about this afternoon?"