

Paradox – The Angels Are Here

(Book 1 - Part 1)

A Fantasy Fiction novel by Patti Roberts

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For Audrey Dunn

Who Is Walking With The Angels – without her walking stick.

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Really, you had me from the first chapter.

S McGuinness.

Patti, You have the knack of making your characters come alive right from the start.

Leigh Russell - author of bestselling psychological thriller 'Cut Short'.

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The Definition Of Paradox:

A seemingly illogical or self-contradictory statement
or suggestion, that may in fact, be very true.

The Sacred Celtic Tree of Life

The Celts believe that the Ancients knew the entrance to the worlds of the gods.

They believed that the tree symbolized the Heavens - the infinite Life Force.

Trees were a connection to the supernatural world of the spirits,

living entities and doorways to other worlds.

Magical places – as above so below.

Ancient Folklore, it is written, says the Celtic tree of life grew 26 miles high and

provided sustenance to all the four corners of the Earth,

and that the branches of the tree reached out to the heavens and touched every
single star.

Synopsis:

900 years ago, my world was a different place... But one thing, regardless of the passing time and imaginable distances that separates remains unchanged. And that is – Love.

My name is Juliette, and I would like to tell you a story that stretches over a vast passage of time. I was created long before spoken language was used for communication.

A time when magic existed and myths, legends and the gods roamed the planets and walked freely among us.

Long before the great floods consumed the Earth. Long before the Tower of Babel was built, the stairway to the Gates of Heaven.

When a passage of time on earth was determined by observing the sun, moon, stars. The rise and fall of the great oceans.

Human age was not determined by numbers, but rather by ones wisdom and knowledge. The lines drawn in the palm of the hand prophesised the soul's age, not the lines etched on the human face.

And when the immortal soul had come to the end of its human experience, that passage of time – age being irrelevant – was determined by a force of pure energy.

Some, have called this energy force – God. This is when the “Angel Of Death” would reveal herself and save your soul.

Every living thing, life, death, the universe – resonated as One.

Then everything changed. Life, death, mortality, immortality as I knew it

changed. War does that, it changes everything. And by the end of the first Great War eon's past, ancient texts, along with immeasurable knowledge, was destroyed, leaving the human race damaged and adrift.

But, I can tell you this, without any doubt, that you are not alone in this ultimate struggle for survival... I see you still.

And this is something else you should know; with great knowledge comes great responsibility.

Prologue:

On a cold windswept night, standing in the bleak shadow cast by an old stone castle in Ireland a young woman listens to an incredible story told by a stranger. It is revealed to her during this chronicle that the answers she had searched for her entire life were hidden within a missing girl. Some were sent to protect her, some were sent to destroy her. She was sent to take her home. The survival of mankind, which was teetering precariously on the edge of extinction, depended on her success.

She was told that she was not alone in this quest. That the missing girl may have already been hunted down and slain by a vindictive enemy who killed their prey for sport and the intoxicating gratification found in the suffering that ultimately leads to the exquisite death of their victims.

That there were others who were oblivious to the danger that lay in wait, not only from their inexorable enemy, but from a threat much closer, themselves.

She is in love with an Angel, a love that would never be sanctioned. However, her heart told her, that she has loved him since the beginning of time.

Another sits hidden in the shadows of a small darkened room, waiting, watching, as the horizon drinks in the last of the golden glow from the sun, which is approximately one hundred and fifty million kilometres away from earth. You learn these things after a prolonged period of existence.

Soon, all the remnants of sunlight would be gone, concealed by the cover of nightfall. The conclusion of yet another day shoves mankind a little closer toward the inevitable end. Time is quickly running out now on this spinning merry-go-round of a planet we call earth. Tick, tick, tick.

But wait, let's go back - for just a moment. Back to Empyrean – to the Imperial City of Altair, the beautiful blue planet in the Aquila Constellation. The year was 1080 A.D; and we were fighting a war – that we were not winning...

Chapter 1 – The Fall

Empyrean – The Imperial City.

Altair, Aquila Constellation.

1080 AD

The sickly stench of death curled silently through majestic arched windows and coagulated, forming a thick grey cloud of wretchedness.

Burning torches hung randomly along high stone walls, illuminating the deserted Royal Palace. Stray swirls of smoke danced gracefully around elaborate marble columns that lined a black aisle. At the end of the aisle was an elevated dais that had formerly held four golden thrones.

Behind the one remaining throne hung a massive shield revealing a serpent entwined on a gem-encrusted dagger. A masterpiece extolled in bronze depicting the Grigorian Coat Of Arms.

The remainder of the chamber void now from the lavish furnishings that had once seated Royalty, in the Imperial City of Altair.

A lone male figure, eclipsed by the overwhelming size of the chamber, glared at the deserted throne as he paced. He waited - something he did not like to do, for the imminent arrival of the others.

His impatience was evident in every knotted muscle on his chiselled face. Raised black veins pulsated on his muscular throat; hands formed clenched fists by his sides. His eyes were yellowy, like the colour of cat's eyes, with a minuscule black speck for a pupil. They transcended pure evil.

The long dark cape that he wore swept the floor behind him, as he glided ghostlike, across the marble surface. He walked over to a tall arched window and stopped, folding his arms across his broad chest.

His white open necked shirt displayed a segment of a black inked serpent. It quivered across his chest, as though it were alive. The remainder of the serpent, hidden by clothing, encircled his torso before continuing its rippling passage down his arm. The fanged head revealed itself from beneath the ruffled shirt cuff on his left wrist. Crimson blood dripped of one of the razor-sharp fangs. Human blood.

He looked out into the dark night and watched as the city below continued to

burn out of control. High on The Mountain Of Seven the illuminated dome, the centrepiece of the Pinnacle Sanctuary, was slowly starting to fade. Only flames from the fire cast light on the towering stone enclosure that safeguarded the crystal domed structure.

Soon the dome would be in complete darkness, he thought confidently, smiling to himself. He stood ridged and conceited in his indulgent arrogance. His body, the immortal body of a perfect 28 year old man, flexed with desire.

He felt indestructible and drunk on his own self-image.

The Imperial City, all but deserted after another day of fighting lay broken, burnt and twisted below. The city that he looked down on had once been lined with the most exquisite architecture in the Aquila Constellation.

Now, it stood darkened and scarred by the fires that continued to burn into the night. Ornate fountains and statues in the Gardens Of Tranquillity, were now piles of rubble on the scorched ground.

Nothing had been spared, only rubble and ashy remains lay littered and smouldering across the ground. Ambers floated in the smoky air, carried by random gusts of wind. Beauty no longer represented in the burnt remains of the Imperial City.

A small hooded figure darted vigilantly over the rubble, searching for signs of life among the torn and bloodied bodies. Her sorrowful pursuit was swiftly becoming a fruitless one.

Soaring flames roared into the night sky, lighting her way, as they licked, teased and devoured the remainder of the Imperial City, the home of the Seven Pinnacles. The keepers of mortal souls.

Thousands of souls had already perished during the past 99 days of war.

Thousands more would perish during this battle fought between good and evil. The war would rage on between the two most powerful houses of the Imperial City until only one remained. The House of the Bulguardians, the Royal guard of The Imperial City or the rebellious fallen house of the Grigorians.

The Grigorians, following the expulsion of their elders from the City by the Royal Imperial Guardians, were forced to flee Empyrean. Now, after centuries spent underground, the Grigorians were bloodthirsty for revenge - and at any cost.

During the March equinox, under the dark cover of night, the Grigorians rose silently from the depths of their underworld lair, attacking the Royal Palace as it slept.

About time, Abaddon thought angrily to himself, as he turned swiftly toward the

towering arched entrance.

Seconds later a female stood regally in the stone entry. "Abaddon..." The exquisite woman queried as she entered the great chamber, hands clasped at her waist.

His expression was unsettling; she advanced toward him cautiously, her tight deep purple gown almost hidden by the long velvet black cape that trailed behind. Her fair hair, adorned beautifully with gemstones, was entwined in a long continuous braid crowning her head. Her eyes, a mirror image of his, catlike, were the mark of the Grigorian bloodline.

His arms remained folded across his inflated chest. "Cousin, where are the others, your sister, your brother?" He demanded.

"They are...they have other things on their mind, they will be ready when the time comes, I can assure you," she replied, pausing at a safe distance from him. Avoiding his penetrating glare, she knew he could read her mind, all of their minds if he chose to with direct eye contact. Without direct eye contact however, he could only sense one's presence, but not their thoughts. His violent temper was also no secret. She had been a victim of it herself on many occasions.

"Oh I am sure I can imagine what they have had on their minds," he said circling her like prey, "your attendance here however, is a testament to your commitment to the cause Siena. A sly smile crossed his lips. He liked knowing that she feared him. He revelled in being feared. It made him feel more powerful.

His slit eyes flashed to the entrance, he sensed another's immanent arrival. "Ah, little sister, how divine you look my child." He turned in greeting as a girl, his younger sibling, no more than thirteen, entered the smoky room and ran toward him. He swung her up into his arms, as a groom would a new bride, and kissed her hard on the mouth. She did not resist, but welcomed it.

"Abaddon," she chirped through smiling rose coloured lips, running her fingers through his dark shoulder length hair, "always an absolute pleasure of course...now, please put me down...AND...I am NOT a child!"

He laughed and released her to the marbled floor, running his hand down her flowing red hair. "You will always be a beautiful voracious child to me Theria..."

She slapped his hand away, infuriated by his comment. A snarl broke free of her lips, "don't mock me Abaddon, if I recall correctly it wasn't that long ago that..." Her thoughts were abruptly interrupted.

Abaddon and Siena followed Theria's line of vision toward the massive stone

archway as another prepared to enter the torch lit chamber. The dainty red head darted forward in a blur to prevent the immanent intrusion. Her black cloak sliced through the rancid air, parting the obnoxious smoke with the sheer ferocity of her swift movement. Rage evident in her penetrating, catlike eyes. Eyes that had the ability to paralyse her victims instantly if she desired, rendering them useless. She glared directly into the crystal blue eyes of the unwelcome impostor.

The newcomer was stunning. Her unflinching blue eyes held those of the child's. "Well, well, what do we have here, a family meeting, how sweet..." She walked around the child, and turned her back on the others as she walked graciously along the black marble floor toward the single golden throne.

Their piercing gazes watched as they followed her, stalking her. Pandora could feel their stabbing eyes on the back of her neck as she walked up the seven steps leading to the Royal throne. She rested gently against the velvet armrest, implying possession.

"Why wasn't I invited to this family meeting... I am heartbroken, how will I ever recover from the pain of rejection?" She chuckled, glancing now toward Abaddon who had paused at the bottom of the steps, pleased that he was unable to read her thoughts. That must infuriate him, she thought. None of their powers had any effect on her, except Theria's.

"Why Pandora," Theria hissed through clenched teeth, "I'm sure you will recuperate in bed by wrapping your thighs around Cerberus's neck. You may have a ring on your finger and whore your body to my brother at every opportunity you get, but don't you ever dare to have the audacity to think for one second that you are family, that you belong, YOU are nothing! You were dragged off the streets because of Cerberus's moment of weakness for your beauty... and your obvious willingness to please him. He is infatuated by your kind, nothing more!" The child's hatred evident on her pristine face. If Theria could not have the love and devotion from her elder brother Lord Cerberus, then no one would.

Pandora's crystal laughter bounced off the cold stone walls that surrounded them. She stood, raised her hands, palms up, and slowly turned, displaying herself. Her golden ringlets fell effortlessly to her slender waist. Her exquisite beauty undeniable to all who saw her. She was clothed in a blood red floor length gown. The low cut strapless bodice, that displayed her perfect breasts, was embedded with countless diamonds, pearls and rubies. A diamond encrusted necklace resembling a spider's

web sat effortlessly around her throat and cascaded down her slender shoulders.

She was perfection, the quintessence of beauty. Cerberus did indeed have a motive to worship her. Many envied him his position as Lord of the house; his title enabled him his freedom to bring a foreigner into the Grigorian clan. No one would dare question his decisions.

Theria had objected angrily to her brother...once. However, she quickly realised that Cerberus only found humour in her objections. He threw back his head in laughter, humiliating her, calling her childish. She had sulked from the room, angry; he had never denied her anything before. Theria had left Cerberus sitting on his newly acquired throne, one of his leather clad legs thrown up over the velvety armrest, his laughter ringing in her ears. He had never put a human's needs before hers. She would devise of a plan to dispose of the human Pandora. She was not welcome in Theria's world.

"Jealous, little one," Pandora whispered now in condescending tones, taunting her, "It is no secret that you would like Cerberus all for yourself. The fact that he is your brother means nothing to you does it, poor delusional Theria. You will only ever be a child in his eyes, never a real woman..." Pandora froze mid sentence, unable to move, breathe. Her eye's opened wide with absolute terror as Theria appeared swiftly by her side. Pandora remained frozen as the child circled her fearful prey. Theria laughed and glanced at Abaddon still standing at the bottom of the stairs, as if seeking permission.

Abaddon, abruptly aware of his little sister's thoughts, leapt forward in one bound and grabbed her tiny wrist concealed beneath her cloak. A small silver dagger with an emerald and diamond encrusted handle slipped from Theria's grasp. The sound of the blade echoed around the room as it clattered to the cold marble floor by her feet.

"Release her," he hissed at the girl.

Theria's piercing eyes reluctantly released Pandora. She dropped to her knees and painfully sucked in a heaving breath, filling her burning lungs. Pandora slowly rose to her feet, took a step back and wrapped herself in her arms.

She knew the girl had enormous powers, that she could paralyse her victims on a single whim. She had been foolish to taunt the girl. She knew Theria had despised her the moment they had met. Theria was jealous of her, but would she actually kill her? She would have to make sure that that would never happen. Pandora regained

her composure. “Don’t you EVER do that again you little BITCH or I swear that Cerberus will...”

“Get out of here Pandora,” Abaddon roared, “leave us. And please,” he implored, “do not bother my brother Cerberus with this tiff, he already has much to concern himself with.”

Pandora glared at him and shrugged, “for you Abaddon, you have my word, this will be our secret. But I warn you both,” her eyes turning from Abaddon to Siena, “keep that incestuous little beast away from me, otherwise she will have Cerberus to contend with, and not in the manner her loins long for.” She swept quickly down the stairs, along the black marble aisle, past Siena, and out of the chamber, smoke swirling around her gown as she departed. Theria was most certainly proving to be a threat to the future she had planned for herself. She would have to come up with an arrangement to have the girl disposed of, and as soon as possible.

“What were you thinking?” Abaddon shouted at Theria, glaring at her, reading her. “Is it not enough that we fight the Bulguardians, that the city burns below us, that you feel the need to fight, kill, within our own family?”

Theria struggled and broke free from his grip. “She is not family, one of us, and I will kill her, drag the lecherous bitch back to the gutter where she belongs. Have you forgotten how this war started?” she hissed at her brother.

Abaddon turned sharply and walked down the black stairs. He had not forgotten.

Siena moved forward and looked up toward the child sitting in the throne.

“Cousin, there is a time and a place. This is not that time, nor the place.” Theria materialized beside her, listening.

Siena gently caressed Theria’s face in her hands. “When that time does come, and it will little one, I shall stand by you, you have my word. I will happily cut the whore’s throat for you while you watch the blood, she is not worthy of, drain from her veins, watch her face and body decay into nothing more than dusty remains.

Although...I do think it more fitting letting her live out her lifetime trapped eternally in the body of a shrivelled up old woman. That would be far more painful for her to endure than death. Imagine little one. When her reflection in the mirror is no longer immortalized in the eternal beauty that Cerberus has bestowed upon her, but instead, the face of a sagging old hag.”

Theria was euphoric with the images Siena conjured up in her mind. “Thank you cousin Siena, you are correct of course, your thoughts are...”

“Ladies, enough of this,” Abaddon roared. “We fight a war with an enemy far more threatening than my brother’s whore. You must leave now Siena. Track down and destroy our enemy. They have all but left the city now. Many have fallen to earth, they are scattered far.”

“Hunt and destroy the Royal Guard first, their beloved Pinnacles will be no match for us without their protection. They will blend in very well; the mortals will be unaware of their existence among them. I sense only a handful of Guards in the city now, and those I will contend with myself. Empyrean City will then be ours, once and for all. Our forefathers’ demise will eventually be revenged.”

“Who will join me in the fall Cousin?” Siena asked Abaddon anxiously. Thoughts of the hunt began to quicken her steady pulse. Adrenalin raced through her veins, distracting her elegant poise. Her slender fingernails grew quickly into long yellowy talons. Her attuned hunter instincts awakened within. She restrained herself against the sensations that pulsed through her veins. Closing her eyes for a moment, she relaxed. Her yellowy talons slowly recoiled back into perfectly manicured fingernails.

“Take as many as you need Siena,” Abaddon answered, pleased at her hunger for revenge. “Your sister, Raven, and your brother Tyler, take him. He has become lazy, weak, he needs the hunt to become stronger, you will teach him.”

“I will go with you Siena.” Theria announced. “I look forward to entertaining myself with the mortals, I have missed that. They make for an entertaining sport, not to mention an excellent source of sustenance while I hunt and destroy our enemy on foreign lands.”

Abaddon was jubilant with her announcement. He would not have to contend himself with the ongoing self-indulgent battle between Pandora and his sister. His life would be less stressful. “Good girl Theria, Cerberus will be pleased with your enthusiasm, and commitment.”

Theria was not pleased with his ‘good girl’ remark, but disregarded it. She was still swept up in the ecstasy of Siena’s plan for Pandora.

“Let it go!” Abaddon implored Theria as he willed the silver dagger up off the floor and into his outstretched hand. He grabbed it and sliced the cold blade effortlessly across his palm. A pool of black dense blood oozed from the wound in his hand before it healed. He extended his bloodied palm to Theria, she kissed it. Siena did the same. “To family,” they chanted in unison.

Abaddon placed the bloodied dagger into Theria's small hand and wrapped her fingers around it. All traces of Abaddon's blood vaporising into the silver razor-sharp blade.

The dagger, a bequest to Theria, from her grandfather. "You will be needing this on your journey little one." He had said, handing the dagger to her moments before he died years ago in their dark underground lair.

Abaddon kissed them both; he could taste his blood on their dampened lips. At another time, he would have found the sensation arousing and acted upon his urges. However, he knew they must go, time was of the essence. Abaddon would seek out Cerberus's wife, Pandora. She was always happy to please him, and in so many ways that delighted him.

Those thoughts he kept locked away from all prying minds. Should Cerberus discover the tryst he had with Pandora in his absence...he could not bring himself to imagine the wrath his brother would bestow upon him. He pushed those thoughts far from his mind. He would plant them in someone else's mind if the need arose. Let someone else be the bearer of Cerberus's deathly wrath.

Abaddon accompanied Siena and Theria out of the smoky chamber down a long wide black marble hallway toward solid floor to ceiling wooden doors. The stone walls were adorned with masterpieces depicting the beauty that was once bestowed upon the Imperial City. Abaddon spoke in hushed tones as they floated effortlessly across the cold marble floor.

"When the House of Bulguardi has been completely overthrown, and Empyrean City has been rebuilt to its former glory and ruled by our own, you will both be well rewarded. I will see to that personally. One House, The House of Grigori will reign supreme. The Bulguardians and their precious Pinnacles will cease to exist, extinguished. Without their guidance mankind will turn on each other and eventually obliterate themselves from existence."

At the end of the long hall, two Guards, dressed completely in black stood at either side of the massive double doorway. Their unmoving faces portrayed their Mongol heritage. Black inked symbols adorned their smooth foreheads, a testament of their eternal pledge to guard Lord Cerberus and the House of Grigori. The guards turned, bowed their heads and pulled open the massive timber doors. A squall of grey smoke from the burning buildings and souls below billowed through the doors and swirled around them.

Abaddon, flanked by the two silent guards, halted in the massive doorway as he watched Theria and Siena continued down the torch lit stone hallway hand in hand. Onward toward an illuminated grand staircase carved entirely from white polished marble. An exquisite diamond encrusted candelabra hung above them. They stood at the top of the staircase and looked down toward a crowded foyer. A large assembly of Grigorians, of various ages and nationalities all dressed in black had gathered silently below in the dimly lit foyer. Their glowing catlike eyes turned upward in unison toward the two women. The assembly had been patiently awaiting the arrival of the two women that now prepared to descend the elaborate marble staircase. Soon, they would be given their destructive orders.

Abaddon called to them. "One more thing before you leave..." The two women halted on the staircase and turned to face him. "I want the girl, alive!" He demanded. They nodded and continued down the curving staircase, grey smoke cascading around them.

Abaddon turned and made his way quickly back down the long hallway. The huge doors were closed silently behind him. He knew where to find her. She would be waiting for him, as usual.

Pandora was bored frequently now that her husband Cerberus was constantly distracted fighting this tedious war. She was often eager to find ways to meet her needs, alleviate her boredom. Abaddon met those needs perfectly. Should her husband Cerberus become a fatality to this tedious war, Abaddon would become the next Lord of the House. Her title 'Lady of the House' would remain intact. She had no intention of becoming a mere mortal again, standing by hopelessly as she watched her youthful beauty fade with old age. The thought sickened her. She shivered at the appalling thought.

As for Abaddon's needs, he would make do with his brother's wife, for now, until the girl he desired to please him was found and brought to him. The fact that the girl he desired despised him meant nothing to Abaddon. He did not love her; he did not understand the meaning of real love. His kind was not capable of that emotion any longer. He was mad with the desire to possess her, to taste the pure blue blood that pumped graciously through her silky youthful veins on his hungry lips. Then, none could rival his strength, not even his brother Lord Cerberus. He, Abaddon, truly would, Reign Supreme. He would no longer be bound by the Principle Laws of the Seven Pinnacles. All would fear him, bow at his feet. Empyrean, the Imperial City of

Altair, would be his.