



Angel of Death: A Love Story

Anna Erishkigal

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Azrael Thanatos wants nothing more than to follow in the footsteps of his scientist mother. Sent to study humans on a wager between the Eternal Emperor and Shay'tan, he has no idea Earth is gateway to a fiery prison. Far from home, he is befriended by Elissar, a precocious child with silver eyes. When Moloch instigates an invasion of Carthage to escape, Azrael sacrifices his life to snatch Elissar from the Devourer of Children's maw.

Saved by a mysterious mother-goddess, Azrael is given a new mission. Watchman. Roaming the Earth without shape or form, he searches for those who would help Moloch escape and drags them back to Gehenna, a prison which only Lucifer, debauch son of the Emperor, holds the key. It's a hellish immortality, for who wants to serve alongside the Fallen or exist when no living creature can survive your touch? Ki promised he would see Elissar again, but as time grinds civilizations into dust, Azrael begins to lose hope.

Then one day a child takes his hand and lives...

Life for Elizabeth is not easy. The Angel of Death took her family the night a drunk driver plowed through a stop sign and left her in a wheel chair. Azrael is forbidden to interfere as she bounces through foster homes, hardship, and grueling rehabilitation. Then one day he is forced to reveal he is not a figment of her imagination. Oh, how she hates this angel who has taken everyone she ever loved! She will defeat him! Even if she has to squeeze the life force from her own body! The invasion of Iraq inspires her to join the Army and become a trauma nurse, unaware Death has fallen in love with the woman who can defeat him.

Will she take his hand a second time?

Angel of Death: A Love Story Details

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From Reader Review Angel of Death: A Love Story for online ebook

Anna Erishkigal says

Goodreads encourages authors to rate and leave a review of their own books. What am I supposed to say? Hi! I hope you like my book? Perhaps instead I will answer some questions readers have written to me and asked me since I published it and put this space to a more *practical* use than blatant self-promotion? Okay ... here goes:

Where did you get the inspiration for Azrael and Elisabeth? Azrael and Elisabeth were two minor original characters who came out of an unrelated story I wrote many years ago who resonated with my readers. People kept writing to me, begging for me to give them their own story., so I did. I transplanted them into my Sword of the Gods universe, only carried it forward (along with the age-old struggle against evil) into the present day.

Why does Elisabeth join the Army? My daughter was in the Army. I am exceptionally proud of her and her fellow soldiers. Anybody who disses the Army will end up a villain who dies a horrible, fictitious death in my next book. GO ARMY!!!

Why do you portray the descendants of 'demons' as 'men with tails?' When I originally wrote the series, I intended the Sata'an descendants to be more like the troglodytes in HG Wells Time Machine, beings who had become twisted over time and lived below the ground, but as I kept writing scenes, my Sata'an descendants wouldn't behave, and they kept doing very people-like things. There are two deleted chapters from the book and in one of them, a Sata'an descendant encounters a full-blooded Sata'anic Empire soldier and backs up right into Azrael. He's more afraid of his own lizard-soldier ancestor than the Angel of Death (kinda what would happen of you or me suddenly came face-to-face with a Silverback mountain gorilla). After that ... I gave up. My characters kept telling me they wanted to be free, so I renamed them after civil rights activists.

Are you dissing Christ in the crucifixion chapter? So much misunderstanding out of an eight-page scene! I adore Jesus Christ. Having extensively researched ancient pre-Christian history and religious beliefs, however, I am only too well aware of the correlations between the brutal way Christ was murdered and ancient methods of torturing and sacrificing political prisoners to the ancient, evil gods. It was widespread. It was rampant. And it was a way to cow the native population into complete obedience. In other words ... crucifixion was a form of state-sponsored terrorism. I felt that before I had the right to point a finger at radical Islam and say, 'suicide bombing is NOT martyrdom,' I needed to take a look at my own beliefs and say, 'Jesus didn't need to die on a cross to still be the awesomest person ever.'" This scene is my answer to Sister Mary Carlson in 3rd-grade CCD class, who banished me after I had the audacity to ask, 'If god had to sacrifice his son to take evil out of the world, than who did *god* worship? And why was he so mean? [*In my defense, I was only eight years old at the time, but I have yet to find some priest to ever answer that question to my satisfaction, so I will keep asking the question because 'he died to take away our sins' just doesn't cut it for me ... I want my savior back!*]

Tell us about Lucifer? Lucifer ... oh ... Lucifer. He gripes to me all the time, grumbling about the unfairness of it all and wishing, secretly, that his father would forgive him. I picture him as that nasty brother-in-law with the MBA, the one who is always frustratingly right about the dark side of human nature and mocks you when you have been optimistic and trusted somebody you shouldn't have trusted. He likes to show up late at your parties, drink all the good liquor, insult your guests, and then he vomits in your plant pot. Just when you want to kill him off, however, he (drunkenly) throws his arms around you and (while reeking of alcohol and

vomit) tells you that he loves you. And worse of all ... he never shuts up!!! I get even with him by doing terrible things to him in my books 3:-) Oooh! If he really *does* hold the keys to Hell, I am *soo...* in trouble when I die! Interestingly, 'Lucifer' as a concept of evil does not date back to the original myths of 'Fallen' angels (which dates back to around 2,700 BC), but originates with a 'curse' made by Isaiah (14:12-15) in after the sacking of Jerusalem around 500 BC by Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II.

Who is the Regent? [*Author gives enigmatic smile*] Angel of Death is actually the 9th book in the 'Sword' universe, released out-of-order because it takes place 5,500 years later and contains so few elements from the first two series. To reveal the Regent's identity would be a spoiler for unreleased books. Kinda like unmasking Batman. I will say that she is a Kali-like figure, and you'd do best not to tick her off...

Why is the pantheon of gods so complex in the story? Have you ever *read* our religious histories? Of all the gods and goddesses and saints and angels and devas and demons floating around the planet? It's not *supposed* to make sense ... that's the whole point ... Angel of Death reflects how all these conflicting religious dogmas royally mess up our ability to get along down here on Earth.

Why Moloch? Our mythology of fiery devils who burn people alive originates with the Akkadian/Uruk/Canaanite/Phoenecian god Moloch. The sacrifice of 200-300 children in Carthage is, unfortunately, a REAL event. It was also a sick practice which was rampant in the ancient world, one which people would pretend never existed or forget, which is probably why we've reinvented the fiery god of torture into a homogenous 'devil' and pretend why all those passages in the bible about 'burnt offerings' don't mean what they *really* mean. Interestingly, our prophet Abraham originally came from Uruk/Ur, and 'was passed through the fire' by his parents (i.e., they attempted to sacrifice him), 'but the gods cooled the fires and he survived.' Perhaps this is why, when ordered to sacrifice his only son, he said 'later dude' and sacrificed a ram instead? The concept of an Abraham who questioned a false god and in that questioning, found the *real* god, and then told the false god of his parents to take a hike inspires a lot more faith in me than an unquestioning plebe who would slit his son's throat and burn him just because he starts hearing voices??? Yeah ... I know ... blasphemy ... I'm going to hell (perhaps I better start being nicer to Lucifer, since he holds the 'get out of jail' key?)

You cameo Shay'tan here as a dragon of mixed moral nature. Why? I get grief for Shay'tan's cameo appearance, but this character is an echo from the original Sword series, where the chess game between the 'god' character (Hashem) and the 'devil' character (Shay'tan) was really a metaphor for our modern-day vitriolic paralysis between liberals and conservatives. The message of that 5-book series ... **Yo! Politicians! We don't care about your stupid ideology! You were hired to run our COUNTRY!** Anyways, think of my version of Shay'tan as William H. Buckley with scales. However, note the way his name is spelled ... Shaytan with a 'y', not Shaitan with an 'i'. In ancient mythology, shaytan was merely a word for a force of nature which opposed you (versus shaitan, which quite clearly translates into 'devil'). The Yazidi tribe in northern Iraq bears remnants of the legends of fallen angels in their myth of their peacock god, who they also call Shaytan, who defied an overbearing emperor/god and is viewed as a hero. Shaytan is not the same as shaitan, whose name they don't speak the same way Harry Potter characters only refer to 'he who must not be named.' What's interesting is that if you travel back in time to the origin myths to the original legends of dragons, they were not viewed as evil creatures, merely creatures which needed to be appeased (most dragons were volcano gods such as the Hawaiian Pele). As the myth of dragons moved EAST in the world, they became the benevolent, protective creatures we see today in Asia, such as the Chinese Dragon. As the myth moved WEST, however, they somehow became affiliated with evil, and the names 'shaytan' and 'shaitan' became all lumped together into our modern Christian mythos of Satan. Are they the same? Who knows? Shay'tan is merely a morally ambiguous character in my books, not Shaitan or Satan.

Who will be the next character you write about in this series? Jeremiel, an angel we meet only briefly at the Emperor's palace, has his own little Christmas novella, but for the next full-length book I shall feature either Samuel Adams (our Star-Trek loving lizard-man) or write that darned Merman story that's been swimming around inside my head. I'll write both of them eventually. It's just a matter of which characters jump up and down and shout 'Me Me Meeeee!!!' the loudest when I sit down with my plot cards.

Carmen says

Don't let the length of time it took me to get through this fool you – I really enjoyed it! It wasn't at all tedious, my schedule just didn't allow me to read much faster.

I was hooked right from the first chapter. Very very deeply hooked. “Must-put-it-down-though-it-is-so-very-very-hard-but-I-need-sleep-for-work” levels of hooked. The characters got my attention instantly, and I slipped easily into their world, wishing I could be a part of it instead of my own life.

I will say this for it, though: the longer I read, the more it started to drag. It was still interesting and enjoyable, but there were times I wasn't quite so immersed in it all as I had been once. Interestingly (to myself, anyway), this seemed to mostly happen during the Azrael-oriented chapters. Which is weird, because I think he's my favourite character, and to find myself growing slightly disinterested in his chapters made me almost annoyed with myself.

Elizabeth is definitely a close second character. You can't help but feel sorry for her, though there were times I didn't care for her. She's a strong character, don't get me wrong, but there are times I feel like things are handed to her rather than having her earn them. Though I get the feeling she's worked harder for things (off screen) than my mind gives her credit for, so I'm not sure I should really consider it much of a complaint.

Overall, I look forward to reading more by this author, and hope there will be more in this series soon!

Rochelle Green says

I am obsessed with death. Ever since I was a little girl, I've voraciously read through people's interpretations of the ANTHROPOMORPHIC PERSONIFICATION (in Terry Pratchett's Death's own words I think, capslocked in kind XD) that is the reaper. I'd watch *Touched by an Angel* just to see the death angel wander about %10 of the time...I turned up to my primary school halloween parade as the reaper...and repeated the exercise in high school.

Yes, I am very strange, but I like to think well versed in Azrael strange. It was no surprise that when I discovered this book, I salivated for it and had to romp right through it. I've never seen Death characterised as a scientist before, and rather enjoyed his sweet temperament. The poor, serious young angel had so much right to be bitter towards the universe, but yet was not, and the love that developed between himself and Elizabeth was somehow purer than that of most steamy supernatural romances - which I enjoyed. Usually, you know, you get the vampy broody dark guy and the bright damsel in distress and CHEMISTRY, but here we had a heroine who could hold her own and seemed intrigued and consumed by the beautiful dark man, but NOT head over heels. There was a point where she seemed to make the conscious decision to love him, when she was hanging out rescuing him from ooze - sorry for the spoiler, but it wont make sense anyway unless you read it - ooze?

Jael says

I received a free ebook copy of this book from the author, Anna Erishkigal in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

Edit: Okay, I've shortened the review a little to cut down on my rants and potential spoilers. My apologies to anyone who had to suffer through my previous lengthy ramblings.

Edit 2 (12 July 2013): I've just finished reading the book a second time, and edited my review again. I've thought for a long time if I should bump the book up to five stars but decided not to. It's more like 4 1/2 stars. The full version of my review can be read on my blog: <http://tnwstory.blogspot.com/2013/07/...>

Plot

Rating: ★★★★★?

Angel of Death: A Love Story by Anna Erishkigal is essentially a fantasy, science fiction and historical novel merged into one. Okay, maybe not so much on the historical bit. The story begins by introducing us to two gods, Shay'tan and Hashem playing a game of chess. Out of boredom, the two of them decided have a bet by pitching a mortal pawn into an adverse situation to see how it would react. Next, we are introduced to the aforementioned "pawn", Azrael Thanatos, a young, inexperienced Private fresh out of the Angelic Air Force Academy sent to earth on a reconnaissance mission. By a stroke of misfortune (or fortune, depending on how you looked at it), his cover was blown by Elissar, the 8-year-old daughter of the general he was supposed to be keeping tabs on. Through time, their friendship grew. When a rioting mob decided to sacrifice the child to the Moloch (aka the bull-god aka the Devourer of Children aka the Evil One), Azrael flew in after her into the fire of Gehenna (aka hell) to protect her life spark (aka soul). However, doing so caused him to lose his physical body. With the help of the Song of Creation by the goddess Ki, he was reform as a void creature whose touch was death to all mortal flesh. Here begins Azrael's journey as the Angel of Death, the messenger of Ki whose mission was to capture the agents of Moloch and send them back into the pits of Gehenna. Throughout the story, we have a brief glimpse into the events of the fall of ancient Carthage, the rise of Rome, (view spoiler)

I found the beginning of the story instantaneously engaging. The author had set up a grand stage with this one and I eagerly awaited some epic saga to unfold. The pace of the story was slow enough that I do not feel as if we were having a major information dumping session but not so much that I got bored. There was never an instance when I was so frustrated with the pace that I wanted to skip to the end. The first few chapters of the book were especially enjoyable and it was a smooth ride. I'm reading it for a second time now and I still find the beginning captivating, unlike many other books where I'll feel bored reading the first few chapters.

I love how the book addresses the struggles of Elisabeth as a crippled orphan getting sent from foster family to foster family, how none of them really adopted her because they cared about her but for the financial aid that came from the state. A recurrent theme in the book was discrimination and I really liked how it was written.

On top of all that, I really appreciated the amount of accolade that was given to the nurses. The book also managed to capture many of the horrors that a medical team may face in a trauma situation. Unfortunately, a huge portion of the messy situations were merely mentioned as a passing during a conversation instead of

having us see Elisabeth actually going through it and coming out alive, so I can't help but feel like a lot of development potential was lost here. However, the various surgical procedures mentioned throughout the story were captured really nicely, even if I did feel that the some of the information was divulged a little too "in your face".

There were A LOT of unresolved issues towards the end of the book and I'm just dying to find out what's going to happen next. Unfortunately for us, there's at least SIX upcoming titles by the author, none of which is a sequel to this series, so take this into consideration if you can't take waiting too long between books.

Overall, I enjoyed the plot a lot, even if it did brush a little too much on the religious side for me to be entirely comfortable. I mean, when you pick up a paranormal fantasy novel about angels, you expect to get some degree of blasphemy. I can pretend that the story is set in a fictional universe with fictional gods but when you drag Jesus Christ into the picture, it feels like some invisible line has been crossed. However, if you are able to focus on the fact that this is really only fiction, you'll be able to appreciate the quirks the author wove into the book. My advice is that you should read the preview at Amazon and decide for yourself. If you find the prologue to be okay, you should be fine with the rest of the book.

Another point I think I should point out is that people from Iraq and Afghanistan might feel a little bit uncomfortable reading the middle portion of the book, so do take note.

World Building

Rating: ★★★★★?

I kid you not. The whole universe outside earth is a confusing mess if you've not read the Sword of the Gods series (which I have not on my first read). Who is who, who does what. To give the author credit, the pacing of the book is slow enough that I actually have time to digest it and there is a very nice summary later in the story concerning the very confusing list of gods and it really helped. It was like finally having the "Aha!" moment my lecturer always talked about.

That said, it was actually pretty okay, explaining just enough for you be too confused while not overburdening you with information that is really unnecessary.

Character

Rating: ★★★★★

For me, character development is one of the largest determining factors for whether I liked a book or not and the characters of this book is nothing if not amazing. All of them have their own strengths and weaknesses, making all of them unique in their own ways and the emotion in their interactions was very strong and real. I also enjoyed was the interactions between the characters, which was written so well that I actually feel the emotion of the characters as I read. Plus, there was a father-son relationship towards the end of the book that I found especially heart-warming.

The romance between Azrael and Elisabeth was very well delivered. Instead of the lovey-dovey love-at-first-sight approach many YA novels take these days, the author took a more subtle approach, developing the relation a little at a time. We first start off with the sweet, innocent friendship between two species from two very different worlds. Then, we have Azrael who took a deep interest in Elisabeth, who was the first mortal in 2300 years to touch him and survive. The two of them developed feelings for each other slowly over years, even if they did spend the first 10 observing each other silently without conversing.

I can go on forever about how much I like the characters but I'll just keep everything short here. On a side

note, I would like to point out that I hope we didn't have to have confusing names like Lisa and Elisabeth going on at the same time. I kept mixing them up and got myself all confused!

All in all, I found this book to be an interesting read. The pacing of the book was quite good. My biggest complaint on this would be that there were several details that were repeated so many times over the course of the book that I felt as if someone was trying to hammer that information into my head with a wedge hammer. Will I read more books from Erishkigal? Yes, definitely... If I can somehow get hold of a means of purchasing her book lol. And while I'm at it, I would like to point out that you can read a her debut novel (at least I think it is her debut novel) for free at Smashwords: <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/...>

SonyaA. says

This book was provided by the author for exchange an honest review.

What can I say except that I loved the book soon as I saw the cover, but when I start reading it I was really surprised how good was the book. Great story, well written and loved the characters. I can't wait for the second book. Highly recommend to read it as soon as possible.

Melissa says

I was given this book in exchange for an honest review.

I enjoyed this world of fantasy and was swept up into by the end of the first chapter. I never read anything by this author before but am looking forward to reading more now. This book did have a few parts that some religious people may take offense at but it is all part of the stage of this book. All in all it was a masterfully written fantasy tale.

Amber Ray says

Timeless

A love story so epic the passage of time cannot dim it. Or keep them apart! True soulmates transcending lifetimes of pain. Ingenious!!

Riley says

4.5 Stars for Angel of Death: A Love Story!

Fascinating is the first word that comes to mind. Epic, breathtaking, captivating, and compelling are a few more.

A love story at its core, Angel of Death is a fantasy based on earthly history and heavenly myth. Earth is a hellmouth that must be guarded by creatures of and from Heaven against incursions of the evil Moloch and

his minions. Middle East conflicts through the millennia are background for the battles fought between Moloch's operatives and Heaven's agents. I found the Earthly and Heavenly politics to be a bit cumbersome, but ultimately, did not hinder the love story.

Azrael, the Angel of Death, is a solitary being that cannot touch anyone without killing them. Elisabeth bears the scars of a childhood accident which left her lame, orphaned, and lonely too. While the battles rage, Azrael and Elisabeth are two souls finding each other after 2,300 years apart. The romance between Azrael and Elisabeth was touching in so many ways!

This is not a light-hearted fantasy. It is serious, complex, transcendental, and at times, heartbreaking. But Angel of Death does have it's lighter moments. Several wonderful secondary characters add as much humor as they do drama, Lucifer being one of my favorites. Yes, I said 'Lucifer'!

Read this book if you like fantasy, angels (not guardian), romance, and history. Or if you just want to read a good story!

Dina Roberts says

This book provides a sympathetic portrayal of the angel of death and Lucifer. It does for the Bible what *Wicked* does for *The Wizard of Oz*.

The main plot of the book concerns Azrael, the angel who helps people let go of their bodies, and his long-term relationship with a female human from Chicago.

There's a lot of Abrahamic mythology. I loved reading all that; though sometimes I was confused. I often had to consult Wikipedia. I don't think this is a negative though. It's great to read a book that makes me want to learn more!

The book is extremely romantic. Soulmate type of stuff.

The mythology in the book is woven around recent events in the Middle East. I liked how the author gave a new twist to things we have all seen in the news....or experienced ourselves.

Bianca says

Highly recommend

This book was awesome. It pulls you into a world that could be. everything you have ever read you will wonder hmm could this really be the way. That is what makes this fantasy a great read. The characters are well developed and it keeps you wanting more. The ending is perfect and finishes without the thought of what in the world. You have got to try this you won't regret it
