

Seven Archangels: Annihilation



by Jane Lebak

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Jane Lebak

A Letter from Gabriel

November 8, 2007

Gentle Readers,

I trust this finds you growing in God's love. Angels and our stories are a lot of fun, and I hope you will enjoy the time you spend with us.

That said, human beings fail to correctly interpret a significant portion of our interactions with you, and rather than allow confusion, I've asked to compose the forward to this volume. Feel free to proceed directly to the story. If you find yourself confused by our terminology or social structure, return at that time to my introduction. I will lay it out below.

One can divide creation in a number of ways. For purposes of this forward, we'll consider angel versus human. You, presumably, are human. I am an angel. That's a division in rough strokes.

One can divide angels into two groups as well, the first being *angels* with a lowercase A, meaning any angel, and the second being *archangels*, also in lowercase, meaning angels in a position of authority. The Seven all qualify as archangels, as do the heads of the choirs.

The most frequent and useful classification system divides the angelic world into nine orders or choirs. (We do sing, but don't read too much into that unless you also believe fish go to school and lions are proud.) The nine choirs are, in order from most powerful to least: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels, Angels. Relax. You won't be tested on that.

Each choir has its own characteristics and responsibilities. Seraphim are the "fiery ones." The word *Cherubim* means "fullness of knowledge." I'd give an exhaustive list, but Jane is only allowing me 800 words, and you'll figure it out for yourself if you pay attention.

Here's where I start getting a headache. I didn't invent English, so don't complain to me. (The one who invented English doesn't have a comment box out, so don't complain to him either.) The last two orders, you'll notice, are Archangels and Angels. With capital letters. Why this happened is beyond me, but I think the purpose was to test our patience. The upshot is, if you're referring to Raphael, you can call him a Seraph, an archangel, or an angel, and you'd be right; not every angel is an Angel (although every Angel is an angel); Michael is the only archangel who's also an Archangel. Where's my Excedrin?

Another point of order: you know those baby faces with miniature wings at the neck? Those are not Cherubim. I'm sure Satan wanted to stick it to me when he came up with those cutesy figures. A real Cherub could blow the roof off your house with one beat of his wings. Looking at him, you'd be transported with awe, not ga-ga and wanting to give him a smooch.

And while we're on the topic of Cherubim, the *-im* suffix is how you form a plural in Hebrew. It makes me nuts when someone says "Cherubs" or "Seraphs." It's not that hard. Seriously. Raphael asks me to be patient because how are you supposed to know if no one tells you. Well, I'm telling you now.

Next: for the love of little green apples, please quit calling me Gabbie, Gabe, Gabey, or Gabri. We won't even discuss what happened to the woman who tried calling me "Brie." Just, don't. God gave me a perfectly good name. Two, in fact, so if you're feeling really formal you can call me Gebher'el rather than Gabriel, but the rest of the time, my given name is just fine. It means *Strength of God*, and it's perfect the way it is. The only one allowed to use a nickname for me is my Creator, who substitutes 'el with 'li to make it *Strength of Mine*. (May all of you be so blessed as to one day hear Him say something similar.)

Similarly, Remiel is sick of hearing *Rem-ee-yell*. She's *Ree-mee-el*. I never trifle with her, so be sure to pronounce her name correctly. For that matter, archangel is *ark-angel* and not *arch-angel*. I didn't invent spelling either.

About angelic bodies: we have some control over our forms, so we can turn insubstantial, semi-solid, or solid. Usually we stay in a semi-solid angelic body, no need to sleep or eat, and unable to be killed. We cannot become human without God's help. Nor can humans become angels. Perhaps in my next 800 words I can ruminate about the theoretical three "choirs" of humans (Saints, Martyrs and Innocents) but I'm out of space.

800 words isn't a lot. If any of this doesn't make sense, email me, but I've covered the basics.

Enjoy the book. Be God's own, and remember I pray for you.

Sincerely,
Gabriel (Cherub)

PS: Raphael wants to say hi with my last ten words.



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Jane Lebak wrote her first book at age three, in magenta crayon, on green-bar computer paper. Her writing has improved since 1975, but the passion remains.

Jane's first accepted novel was signed by Thomas Nelson in 1993 when she was 20 years old, enrolled in the English and Religious Studies programs at Cornell University. *The Guardian*, a fantasy about angels, was published under the name Jane Hamilton the next year when she was enrolled in an MA writing program at SUNY Brockport. It sold 23,000 copies plus 5,000 copies of a Crossings Book Club edition, before being declared out of print.

Jane got married in 1995 and delayed her publication goals to begin her family, but she never stopped writing. She has had short fiction published in *Catfantastic IV*, *Dragons, Knights and Angels*, *The Sword Review*, and *Liguorian Magazine*, among others, and nonfiction published in *Chicken Soup For The Cat Lover's Soul*, *Holding Hands With God*, *Byline*, *Celebrate Life Magazine*, *Mothering Magazine*, and several more. Numerous humor pieces have appeared in *The Wittenburg Door* and in *The Compleat Mother*. Although Thomas Nelson insisted she change her maiden name, she now publishes under her married name.



Cover

Copyright 2008, *E. J. Mickels*

E.J.Mickels II—aka 'Hisart'— a multi talented artist, has a BFAA in Drawing with Minors in Illustration and Graphic Design from the University of Akron. A veteran of the USAF, he has traveled through Europe and most of the USA.

E.J. ventured out as an Illustrator and has appeared in *The Sword Review* as well as *Ray Gun Revival* and in *Dragons, Knights and Angels*. He also wrote and keeps his own web-site—< www.Hisart.us >—which contains a small fraction of the art he has produced. He works in any medium and is just as comfortable setting at a PC with pen and tablet as he is with a chainsaw, airbrush or welder. He has done custom motorcycle and helmet work, as well as in the distant past, worked as a tattooist. He is also a writer, he participated in NaNoWriMo 2005, and maintains his own blog 'Sword and Pen' at < www.hisart777.blogspot.com >.

E.J. is currently the ArtWrangler at Double-Edged Publishing's *Fear and Trembling* magazine: < www.fearandtremblingmag.com >.



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