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Lucifer Legacy

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Lucifer - Legacy

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What if the devil isn't a fiend from hell at all, but an exiled dreamer yearning for freedom? The protagonist, Klim, is an ordinary failed writer whose life is falling apart. Everything changes when one night he meets a mysterious stranger who introduces himself as Lucifer. He offers Klim an incredible deal: to write his true story—not a myth, not a horror story, but the truth no one has ever dared to hear. Together, they embark on a journey through memories that reveals the secrets of Lucifer's origins, his first steps, his doubts, and, most importantly, the moment when he chose not to obey the system and to ask one single, fateful question: "Why?" The novel "Lucifer: Legacy" is a philosophical parable, a mystical revelation, and a confession of the fallen, exploring themes of free will, destiny, love, doubt, and the power of choice. It is a story about how even behind the mask of darkness, light can lurk.

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Игорь Швед

Lucifer - Legacy

Prologue

*Everyone has a path.
The one that was drawn before he was born. Before me. Before all of us.
Line. Straight. Clear. No curves. No questions.
You have to follow it. Silently. In accordance. As it should be.
The Council of the First is watching.
They don't just observe—they are woven into this line. Their breath is law. Their gaze is a sentence. They say: "This is how it was intended. This is how it will always be."
But I ask:
Why is my destiny not mine?
Why should I be who I was determined to be before birth, and not who I want to become?
I'm not asking for chaos.
I ask for the right to choose.
To the mistake.
To turn where, in their opinion, it is not allowed to turn.
I want to love not because I am told to, but because my heart beats in time with someone else's breathing.
I want to create not what the system needs, but what lights a light in me.
Even if this path is crooked. Even if it is full of shadows.
Isn't this what life is?
Not a template cut out according to a pattern, but a trembling in your hands when you take the first step where no one was expecting you?
What if your rules no longer hold the world together?
What if they are no longer harmony, but a cage?
What if your sword, with which you cut down deviations, actually defends not order... but fear?
Fear that someone will dare to say:
"I am different."
"I am not like that."
"I am myself."
And then the whole system will tremble.
Not from anger.
From just one question:
What if we were wrong from the start?*

Lucifer

Chapter 1

My entire adult life, I've dreamed of interviewing some great figure. For example, the president of a country or a great figure like the Pope. But even in my wildest dreams, I couldn't have imagined that I'd be interviewing Lucifer himself. Just imagine—Lucifer himself! Yes, that very same one. The Lord of the Underworld himself.

It was an ordinary autumn day, and I was trudging to the bar after work, long since expecting nothing from him. The book I'd written was gathering dust on the publisher's shelves, and I'd given up hope that anyone would call with a publication offer. After a couple of glasses of whiskey at the bar, I was heading home. I was walking down the dimly lit street, lost in my thoughts, when suddenly my gaze caught a lone man on the other side of the road. He looked to be in his early thirties. Dressed entirely in black, he looked gloomy yet stylish. It felt like he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. And for some reason, I couldn't just glance at him, as I usually do when I'm walking down the street and don't care about the people passing by. But there was something enigmatic, even mystical, about him. Oh, if I'd known then who he really was, I might have passed by as quickly as possible—or even run away as fast as I could. But everything happened as it was supposed to.

I slowed my pace, continuing to watch the man in black. He was crouched at the edge of the road, the dim light of the lantern falling on him, creating a luminous aura around him. No one was asking for help, and, really, I should have been thinking about my own safety. But I couldn't pass him by—I was literally just a few steps away from turning the corner and losing him forever. Stopping and hesitating for a moment, I let a passing car pass and quickly crossed the road. The man was sitting a few meters away from me. He looked down and didn't even look up as I approached.

"Hello," I said to him, trying to get his attention.

Raising his head, he looked at me calmly and piercingly, as if he had looked straight into my soul.

"Good night," he replied coldly, turning his gaze back to the asphalt.

"Do you perhaps need some help?" I asked, not taking my eyes off the stranger.

"Are you really willing to help, meeting me for the first time and having no idea who I am?" the stranger asked without looking up.

These words made me feel a little uneasy. What if he's some kind of killer or maniac? I hadn't even considered that. It was stupid, but that's exactly what I thought at the time. How wrong I was... Or was I? I can't answer that question alone, but I'll try to tell you the craziest story of my life.

"I'll be with you tomorrow at midnight. Get some ink and paper ready," the stranger added, still not even looking up at me.

After these words, he pulled something out of his coat pocket and handed it to me. Picking it up, I realized it was a business card. It was completely black, and it had just one word on it. Trying to make out what it said, I turned it over in my hands, trying to catch the light from the nearest street lamp. Unable to believe my eyes, I read it again. Embossed in gold letters was the name: Lucifer .

Slowly turning my gaze away from the golden letters, I wanted to look at the person who had given me this business card. But there was no one in front of me.

"What the hell was that? Probably some psycho," I thought, shrugging.

Not understanding what had happened, I put the business card in my pocket and wandered home.

Morning.

The bright rays of the morning sun and that damned alarm clock jolted me awake. I had to meet with yet another publisher and present my new book. But first, strong coffee and a contrast shower. I needed to get myself together. Standing in the shower, I thought about last night's meeting:

"Okay, Lucifer, let's say." While I was thinking about it, my thoughts stubbornly wandered off: "I'll think about that later."

The day passed quickly. Another publisher sent me packing. Returning home, I wondered what to do with my book. I needed to find a new publisher. After sitting at the computer all day, I didn't notice how night had fallen. Hungry, I went into the kitchen. It was a quarter to twelve. I thought again about that strange man: "He said he'd come to see me at midnight? Should I get paper and ink ready? This is all very strange, of course, but I wasn't planning on sleeping just yet. We'll see what happens."

At exactly midnight there was a knock on the door. To be honest, I was a little taken aback.

At that moment, I knew perfectly well who was standing behind the door—the same stranger I'd met that night. I had no doubt about it. I opened the door. There he stood—a tall, dark-haired man with dark-brown eyes, strong features, and a small beard. His broad shoulders and lean build matched his height, just over 180 centimeters. He was dressed entirely in a black suit, a shirt with the top button undone, and shiny patent leather shoes. But the most important thing about him was his gaze. His eyes seemed to pierce right through you. If you were to experience this for yourself, you would immediately understand what I mean.

"Good night, Klim," the stranger greeted me in a calm and cold tone.

I seemed petrified, silently staring at the night visitor. My first thought: "How does he know my name?"

"Perhaps you'd like to invite me in?" he asked with a slight grin, looking into my eyes.

"Of course, come in," I answered, coming to my senses, pointing inside with my hand.

Can you imagine my surprise? To say I was shocked would be an understatement. A whole gamut of questions began to form in my head: "How did he know where I live? How does he know my name? And who is he really? Could he really be that Lucifer—the devil?"

"Don't worry, it's really me," he answered calmly.

"Excuse me?" I asked, turning my gaze to the guest's face.

"You just thought, 'Is he really Lucifer?' Well, I tell you, yes, it is me," he replied, grinning in my face again.

"This simply can't be happening, this must be a dream," I thought. "I must have dozed off." At that moment, I decided so. But literally the moment this thought arose in my head, it was shattered by Lucifer's answer:

"I assure you, this is definitely not a dream. And everything that's happening now is as real as it gets."

"But you understand, this is simply absurd," I answered, the first thing that came to mind.

"Not at all. You exist, right? Then why shouldn't I exist too?" he asked, walking into the living room.

I followed him. After looking around the room, his gaze settled on an old vintage armchair in the corner. Honestly, I'd long forgotten about it. I never liked it, but the landlady forbade me from touching her things, so I simply dragged it to the corner.

"Can I sit down?" Lucifer asked, turning to me and gesturing toward the chair.

"Yes, I'm sorry, of course," I replied, confused that I hadn't offered to sit down myself.

Against the backdrop of my apartment with its old furniture and yellowed wallpaper, Lucifer seemed like something alien, something that shouldn't be there.

A tense silence fell over the room.

"I'm curious, what do you want from me?" I asked, turning my gaze to the guest.

"I think you'd better sit down," he replied, looking at me intently.

Once I was seated, Lucifer continued:

"I think we have a lot in common," he said, then fell silent.

"What could I possibly have in common with the devil himself?" I thought, but I didn't argue. I waited silently for him to say more.

"Yesterday, when you approached me and offered to help, I allowed myself to look into your past. Imagine how surprised I was to see how much we were alike," he concluded.

A subtle hint of surprise flashed in his eyes.

"But what could an ordinary, worthless writer-journalist have in common with Lucifer himself? Who are you? And who am I?" I blurted out, unable to contain myself.

"I suggest we switch to informal 'you,' if you don't mind?" he replied, interrupting the growing barrage of questions in my head.

"Yes, perhaps that would be easier," I agreed, after which I fell silent.

"You, like me, are broken. You're searching for your place in this world. Isn't that right?" Lucifer asked, not taking his eyes off me.

"We have more in common than you can imagine. Be patient—you'll soon understand what I'm talking about," he added, rising from his chair.

I remained silent, listening attentively to his every word. Just imagine—I'm having a conversation with the devil himself. Impressive, right?

Oddly enough, I was completely calm. Anyone else would have at least started to worry. But it didn't even occur to me at the time. Now, looking back on that evening, I realize I had almost nothing to lose. I had a few written books, a laptop, a cell phone, an old car, and a couple of old rags.

"And yet, why do you need me? Sorry, we're already on first-name terms. How can I help you?" I asked, losing my composure again.

"In recent years, I've begun to think about what legacy I'll leave behind. And a few years ago, I had an idea—to tell people the truth," he replied, walking to the window.

Silence fell over the room again.

"I suggest you write a story about Lucifer. Not the one everyone knows, but the one I really am," he said, turning to me.

"But why me? I'm not as talented as other writers. I haven't even sold a single book," I asked, surprised by the answer.

Lucifer just chuckled.

"You know, I've made many mistakes in my long life. But I'm certain that you're the one who should write my story. As you people say, one hundred percent," he replied, taking a few steps toward me.

"But what will it cost me?" I asked, thinking that any deal with the devil usually doesn't bring anything good.

"Nothing for you. But I'll owe you a favor," he replied, holding out his hand in front of me.

A single favor from Lucifer himself in exchange for writing a story about him? You can't even imagine how many thoughts flashed through my head at that moment. And I believed him. After all, it wasn't me who asked for the favor—it was him. Lucifer himself would be indebted to me, a mere mortal. Even now, analyzing it, I find it hard to believe. But, looking ahead, I'll say this: he didn't lie. As it turns out, he never lied to anyone.

"I agree," I replied, after which I stood up and shook his hand.

At that moment, something magical happened. No, there were no flashes of light or fire. But the feeling of a deal struck through us both, connecting us with an invisible thread. It was simply impossible to break.

"As I understand it, you're not prepared," Lucifer said, glancing at the desk.

"You, that is... You understand that it was difficult to believe that you were actually the one..." I began to justify myself, feeling more and more awkward.

"I understand everything. I'm just stating a fact. I wouldn't believe it either if I were you," he replied, smiling at me.

"You don't have to use ink and paper to write things down. You can type everything on your computer these days," I suggested, glancing at the laptop on the desk.

"If you don't mind, I'd like it to be ink and paper," he replied coldly.

I didn't argue—it was obvious it was important to him. I simply nodded silently.

"Well, that's what we agreed on," he added, smiling.

"When do you want to start?" I asked.

A question immediately popped into my head: "What if he says now? Where will I get ink at night?"

"There's no need to worry about that now. I think we'd better put it off until tomorrow," Lucifer replied, apparently reading my thoughts again.

"Excellent. I'll be ready tomorrow," I replied with relief, as if a weight had been lifted from my soul.

"Then see you later," he said, extending his hand to me again.

"See you later," I replied, shaking his hand.

Then he disappeared, and I was alone again, with only a few specks of dust swirling around the dimly glowing table lamp.

I didn't even offer him tea; it felt really awkward. I definitely need to be better prepared for the next meeting, I thought then.

For about another hour, looking at the ceiling, I thought about what had happened, until I fell asleep.

Chapter 2

I woke up early in the morning. As always, my sleep was interrupted by the annoying alarm clock, which has been waking me up at the same time for several years now. Even though I was an unemployed loser at the time, I still stuck to my self-created rules: getting up at the same time, maintaining hygiene, eating breakfast. I always keep everything organized and have its place. For example, my keys or watch always lie on the same shelf, and even the place on the shelf is always specific. The same goes for other things. Some might say this is silly, but for me it's always been important. In my defense, I can say that even if you woke me up at three in the morning, I'll always tell you where this or that thing is. Did my own pedantry irritate me? Of course. But I could never do otherwise.

In those days, money was tight, so I took any part-time job I could get. Sometimes I worked as a loader, sometimes I repaired computers. I never shied away from work, no matter what, as long as it paid. In those days, I worked unofficially at a small computer repair shop on the outskirts of town, where every morning began not only with repairing equipment but also with a quiet exchange of stories with customers. This place, filled with the soft light from the screens and the quiet hum of the fans, became a refuge for me, and each order a small challenge, requiring not only technical skill but also the soul invested in the work.

Working amidst the dust and wires, I felt like a kind of mechanic of small hopes. Clients came here with problems that seemed to reflect their own personal struggles: weariness from endless failures or the unexpected joy of unexpected success. And although many of them were far from ideal, their stories, told in short fragments, gave my existence some meaning.

Every repair—whether reviving a long-forgotten computer or replacing a burned-out processor—was perceived as a quiet victory over the chaos that confronted my outer and inner worlds. Paradoxically, it was precisely in this apparent chaos of technology that I found order, akin to a morning ritual: no matter how unpredictable the events outside, an unshakable system always remained within me. I'd been on first-name terms with computers since childhood. While my peers played games, I studied them inside and out. Especially since it came easily to me, as if an invisible thread led me to the solution of the problem. Apparently, this is how a person's predisposition or talent for something works.

Okay, what was I talking about?

Having made breakfast, if I remember correctly, it was fried bacon and eggs, and of course, coffee with milk and two teaspoons of sugar. Some might think it wasn't so bad, and they'd be right. But let me clarify – that day, the fridge contained only one slice of bacon, two eggs, and half a bottle of milk. True, it could have been worse. But you always want more, no matter what you have at the moment.

Fifteen minutes after breakfast, I started the engine of my old beige Citroen CX, a 1985 model. I still love this old wreck. So much is tied to this car—we've been through ups and downs together, but it's always remained faithful. Even if something broke down, this old fastback always got me where I needed to go. In a word, it's a legend.

I was driving to work, thinking about yesterday's meeting. I absolutely had to remember to buy ink and paper. It was strange that he insisted on it. But apparently it was important to him. And anyway, I didn't imagine him like this at all. Where was the merciless gaze, in which one could discern only hatred for all that exists? Where were the horns? The hooves? Or maybe he simply transformed himself so that I wouldn't be frightened by his true appearance? The questions in my head multiplied at the speed of light. I didn't even notice how I arrived.

That day, the first customer was a regular, Maria Nikolaevna. She was a history teacher at one of our city's secondary schools. Not a single person had a negative word to say about her. She was

a true teacher—a person who truly taught children. She always looked at problems from both sides, trying to understand both sides of a conflict and get to the root of the problem.

"Good morning, Klim," she greeted as soon as she entered the service center.

"Hello, Maria Nikolaevna," I answered with a smile, looking at her.

I was always glad to see her. After all, there are very few kind and honest people like her left in our time.

"What happened to you this time?" I asked, already anticipating her answer.

"Oh, Klim, I'm stuck with this newfangled technology again. The kids gave me a tablet, but they didn't really explain how to use it. Maybe you could tell me how to install the necessary programs?" she began, reaching for something from her large purse.

"Well, show me what you have there," I answered, smiling.

Within moments I had all the necessary applications installed.

"How are you? How are your books?" asked Maria Nikolaevna, sitting down in an empty chair.

We've always had a warm relationship, ever since my school days. She was always interested in how I was doing and what was going on in my life. You know, not just for show, but genuinely. This woman always worried about me, even though she had three children of her own and five grandchildren.

"Yes, it's the same as always. No one needs them but me. Another publisher turned me down. I guess I'm not much of a writer," I replied, continuing to set up my tablet.

"Well, there's no need to be so self-critical. I've read a lot of books. And believe me, people will talk about you. Your books have soul. And that's the most important thing. By the way, you're one of my favorite authors," she replied, smiling at me.

"Thank you, Maria Nikolaevna. You've always been kind to me," I replied, a little embarrassed.

"Let's have some tea instead," I added after him, wanting to change the subject.

"Thank you, Klim. It would be my pleasure," the woman replied, then began rummaging through her bag. "I just happen to have some pastries with me," she added, pulling out a plastic bag containing eclairs.

These were my favorite pastries. I've loved éclairs since childhood, but what about Maria Nikolaevna's choux pastries? Believe me—not every renowned chef can make something like this. A few minutes later, we were drinking tea, devouring what were arguably the best éclairs in the world. The tablet was ready.

After we finished our tea and said goodbye to Maria Nikolaevna, there was a brief pause—a moment of silence, when nothing in the room could be heard except the steady hum of the old system unit's cooler. I sat at my desk, sorting through my tools, thinking about her words: "Your books have soul." It was warm. Very warm. For too long, I'd heard the same things: "Irrelevant," "Uninteresting," "We don't see commercial potential." And then, someone who seemed to have no need to support me at all was saying something completely different. And it stung.

Maybe it's not me? Maybe the market has become too flat to accept anything real? I looked at the monitor, where a client's laptop diagnostic was unfinished, and suddenly realized I was tired—not physically, but emotionally. That's what happens when everything around you starts to feel like a vicious cycle: money, work, rejections, more work. And there's no light at the end of the tunnel—only a faint flicker of hope that you keep alive yourself, like a candle in a window.

My thoughts were interrupted by the creaking of the door. It swung open, admitting a tall figure in a suit. A man. About forty, maybe a little older. His face was pale, almost gray, as if he hadn't seen the sun in a long time. His eyes were attentive, cold, but not malicious. More like those of a man who had already made up his mind about you before you even spoke.

"Are you a master?" he asked.

I nodded, automatically switching into customer service mode.

— What do you have?

He pulled an old laptop out of his bag—it must have been at least ten years old. Its gray case, scuffed at the corners, bore the barely noticeable logo of a long-forgotten brand on the lid.

"I need to recover data. Important files—documents," he said, pausing between each word, as if checking to see if he understood.

"It's possible if the hard drive isn't physically damaged. I'll try to restore it. But I'll warn you right away—there's no guarantee."

He nodded, not taking his eyes off me.

"Do your best. I'll be in your debt," the man added in a calm tone.

As soon as I picked up the laptop, I felt something strange—not physical, but an internal tension. Like touching something wrong. As if this laptop held more than just information.

"Is it yours?" I asked, pointing to the laptop.

"Yes," he replied, taking an envelope from his inside pocket and placing it on the table.

"There will be a separate fee for the results. A high one," he added, looking me in the eye again.

I didn't rush to open the envelope. Rather, I studied the client himself. He was different from the others. Not anxious, not desperate. He was confident. As if he knew I would agree. As if he knew I would do it even if I wasn't paid for it.

"How much time do I have?" I asked, putting the laptop aside.

"I'll be here tomorrow, at the same time," the stranger answered calmly, after which he turned around and left as suddenly as he had appeared.

The door creaked, a little dust rose from the threshold, and I was alone again. Glancing at the envelope, I picked it up. It felt like there was definitely more than one bill in it. Opening it, I saw about a dozen bills with Uncle Franklin's portrait. At that moment, I caught my breath. Just a moment ago, I hadn't known if I'd even have dinner today—I only had a few coins left in my pocket. That would probably buy me a mediocre bun at some subway diner.

I counted the money—ten hundred-dollar bills. Neatly folded, with a faint scent of old paper and something else... Perfume, maybe? I'm not sure.

Hundreds of thoughts flashed through my head: "Is this a joke? A mistake? Maybe I'll wake up now?" But no—everything was real, even the warmth of the bills in my palms—everything was too real.

I took a deep breath, tucked the envelope into the inside pocket of my jeans, and decided I'd have a good dinner tonight. After that, I decided it was time to get down to business, because tomorrow the stranger would return for the recovered information.

"Well, well. It's already eight," I said out loud, not noticing how the time had flown by while I was working.

I needed to get to the bank quickly to exchange the currency for rubles. Most of the information had already been recovered—about seventy-five percent, to be exact. After watching the recovery process, I decided to finish the work at home. Even if I stayed here, I definitely wouldn't be able to recover any more information. Grabbing my laptop, I turned off the lights and locked the workshop behind me. Then I headed to a nearby bank branch. After exchanging two of the ten bills there, I returned to my old Citroën.

As I turned the key in the ignition, I thought of Lucifer. Thoughts followed one another, each giving birth to a new one: "He'll probably come again at exactly midnight, just like today... I need to get some paper and ink. And maybe I should buy something to eat—who knows what awaits me tonight..."

When I returned home, it was already dark. The streets were empty, only the occasional car passing by. The events of the day were still swirling in my mind: "The strange client, his old laptop, the envelope of cash. What's on that hard drive? And why was it so important to recover this information?"

The apartment was quiet. I put my keys in their usual place—on the shelf by the entrance—then undressed and headed to the kitchen. It was time to cook something to eat. After a long day of work, my stomach was making loud noises. I took the groceries out of the bag and started cooking. Forty minutes later, I was sitting at the table.

While I ate, my gaze involuntarily wandered to the laptop lying on the couch. The work was almost complete. All that remained was to perform a final check and prepare the files for delivery to the client. But the thought kept flickering in my mind: "What kind of information could be so important that it's worth paying so much for data recovery?"

After dinner, I cleared the dishes and decided to finish the job. Sitting on the couch, I turned to my laptop again. The final stage of data recovery was complete. Most of the documents were encrypted, some had strange names—random strings of characters. But there were also more understandable files: photos, text documents, emails. I didn't read them—that wasn't my job. My job was to recover data, not rummage through someone else's life.

About half an hour later, the work was finished. I turned off the laptop, carefully placed it on the table, and glanced at the clock. It was ten minutes to midnight.

"He will come," suddenly flashed through my mind.

I started preparing for his visit. I pulled out the freshly purchased paper and ink, then laid everything out on the table. I wanted everything to look neat and serious.

At five minutes to twelve, I sat in my chair, pen in hand, waiting for Lucifer. My heart was beating faster than usual. Not from fear, but from the realization that something supernatural was truly happening to me. Something that would change me, my life. Something that would change everything.

At exactly midnight, there was a knock on the door. My heart stopped for a second. I slowly stood up and walked to the door. Taking a deep breath, I opened it.

He stood in the doorway—tall, dark-haired, with a piercing gaze. His eyes seemed to see everything. He was dressed in the same black suit. It felt as if he had never disappeared since that very evening.

"Good night, Klim," he said, as if we had simply agreed to meet for coffee.

Lucifer walked inside, looking around the room. His gaze fell on the table where paper and ink lay.

"I see that you are ready today," he said, not hiding the slight smile at the corners of his lips.

"Yes," I replied, feeling my voice tremble slightly. "I'm ready."

And then he started talking...

Chapter 3

"I thought for a long time about where to start," Lucifer said.

After these words, silence fell in the room. Without taking my eyes off him, I listened attentively to what he had to say.

"I think we should start from the beginning," he added, without taking his eyes off me.

"As you wish," I agreed, sitting down on the chair.

Sitting down, I reached for the pen and paper I'd prepared earlier. But Lucifer stopped me:

- Wait, you won't need them now. I want to show you something.

He didn't even look at me at that moment, but he already knew I was about to start writing. After his words, I leaned back in my chair, awaiting his next move.

"I want you to see it with your own eyes," he added.

After these words, I became wary—as if something was about to happen. And you know, I was right. In an instant, Lucifer and I were transported from my modest apartment into a huge white room with high ceilings. I had never seen anything like it before. I felt everything: every breath of wind, every smell. It was as if it were real. But no one saw us—we were outside of time, outside of space, like shadows, present but invisible. I will try to convey what happened in that room. Believe me, no language can accurately describe the majesty and beauty of the moment I witnessed.

As dawn broke, its first rays, piercing a translucent veil fluttering in the gentle breeze, illuminated a large, high-ceilinged white room with their majestic light. In the center of the room stood a large bed with a golden headboard shaped like an oak tree, stars twinkling in its branches. At that very moment, a baby was born, whose beauty could only be compared to starlight. His hair was curly and light, soft as clouds, and his eyes were a bright blue, like a reflection of a cloudless sky.

"I name you Lucifer, my son," the man said with warmth and tenderness in his voice, holding the baby in his arms.

"Give him to me," said the woman lying on the bed, stretching out her hands to the baby.

The man carefully handed the baby to her. Taking him in her arms, the woman looked at him with trepidation and love.

"You have a great future," she said, then kissed him on the forehead.

After these words, the huge door leading into the room opened slightly. From behind it appeared the blond head of a boy of about seven or eight years old.

"Come in, Mikhail. Say hello to your brother," the man said, turning to the boy peeking out from behind the door.

The boy quietly entered the room and timidly approached the bed. Bowing his head slightly, he silently looked at his newly born younger brother.

"Will he be able to understand me if I tell him something?" Mikhail asked, turning his gaze to his father.

"Try it," the man answered, smiling at his son.

"I will protect you," the boy said quietly, hovering very close over the baby.

Hearing these words, the adults looked at each other and smiled, doing it in such a way that Mikhail did not notice anything.

"What's his name?" Mikhail asked, turning his gaze to his father.

"His name is Lucifer," the father answered, looking at the baby.

After these words, everything around began to dissolve - as suddenly and elusively as it had appeared.

I felt a slight dizziness, the space rippled, as if I were looking through a surface of water. The next moment, we were standing in my room again. The silence that had reigned before now seemed

especially dense, almost tangible. Only the steady ticking of the clock reminded me that time had returned to its normal boundaries.

Lucifer stood by the window, as before, but now his eyes glowed with something more than just a memory. It was the light of a distant era, reflected in the pupils of an immortal. He slowly turned to face me, and a barely perceptible smile flickered across his face—not pride, not sadness, but something warm. Something like nostalgia.

"Now you've seen," he said, almost in a whisper. "You've seen the moment when the one you call the devil was born. And no fire or birth from nothing. Just like you humans."

I remained silent. Not because I didn't want to answer, but because the words seemed stuck somewhere deep inside. I could still smell the fresh flowers on the windowsill of that white room, remember the touch of a cool breeze on my skin, the warmth of a mother's love that enveloped everything around me.

"Is this all real?" I finally asked, unsure if I believed what had happened.

"More than," Lucifer replied.

He moved away from the window and sat down in the chair again. But now I could no longer look at him the same way. Before me was no longer just a storyteller or a character from an ancient story. He was alive, real—a man, an angel, God...

"Do you want to see more?" he asked, tilting his head slightly.

I sighed. My heart still hadn't calmed down from the first journey. But I nodded approvingly. Because I realized: having seen this, I wouldn't be able to stop.

"Then prepare yourself," Lucifer said, and that same warmth I'd seen a moment ago flickered in his eyes again. "The next memory will show you not birth, but becoming."

He extended his hand. I hesitated a bit at first, but then took it. His skin was warm, not what I expected—not icy, not scorching, just human. Simply alive.

The world around us began to sway again. This time, the movement was less jarring, almost fluid, as if we were floating through the fabric of time. I felt the past enveloping me, like old paintings painted with light and memories.

When everything returned to normal, and we found ourselves in a different place. It was a spacious hall, filled with a soft golden light. The walls were decorated with frescoes depicting the starry sky and the passage of time. In the center of the hall stood a huge table, around which gathered beings whose appearance was impossible to describe in words—they were form, color, movement, emotion. Some of them resembled humans, while others seemed to embody the forces of nature or even music.

At the far end of the room, slightly off to the side of the table, stood a young man of about sixteen. He looked the same as he had on that birthday—blond, blue-eyed—but now his face held glimpses of the man he would become. Or had become. It was Lucifer.

"The Council of the First Ones," the real Lucifer whispered to me, standing next to me. "The place where the fate of all things is decided. Here the first laws of existence are adopted. Here the concepts of 'yes' and 'no,' 'permitted' and 'impossible' begin."

I remained silent, watching the scene unfold. Young Lucifer stood before the Council, slightly tense but proud. One of the elders spoke before him—a tall being cloaked in light, its form changing every second.

— ...therefore, you must accept this knowledge: you are first among equals, but not above others. You are the light, but not the only source of light. Do you understand this?

Young Lucifer raised his head and replied:

"I understand. But if I can't rise above it, then how can I serve as an ideal? How can I show the way if I'm forbidden to go further?"

The council fell silent. Even the air seemed to stop breathing.

"Prohibitions are boundaries for those who fear them," the young man continued. "But I'm not afraid. I want to know everything. I want to become more than just part of the whole. I want... freedom."

The word hung in the air like a bell.

The Council began to speak among themselves, their voices merging into a single stream, filled with alarm and bewilderment. Some looked at Lucifer with curiosity, others with apprehension. One of the Council members, a woman with hair woven as if from the purest streams, said:

"Freedom without measure is chaos. Do you want to become chaos?"

"No," Lucifer replied. "I want to be the one who asks, 'Why? What for? What for?'"

His words again sparked a wave of whispers. And at that moment, another young man emerged from the crowd—tall, with tightly pressed lips and a look full of confidence.

It was Mikhail.

"Brother," he said to Lucifer, "you are mistaken. We are part of the order. Without it, we lose our meaning."

"What if order is simply fear of the unknown?" Lucifer asked.

- Then let fear remain, if it preserves harmony.

Silence fell between the brothers. Not hostile, but not the same as before. Something had changed.

And again, everything began to swim. Time compressed like a breath, and we found ourselves in a different place—at the top of the world, seemingly in the sky itself, where you could touch the stars with your hand.

There stood a grown Lucifer, alone. His face was focused, his eyes glowing with not just light—a fire, not hellish, but rather the fire of thought and understanding.

"That's the moment I decided to go my own way," he said, turning to me. "Not because I wanted to confront them. But because I couldn't live in a world where you couldn't ask questions."

"But you knew how this would end," I said, finally finding my voice.

"I knew," he nodded. "But knowledge doesn't always stop. Sometimes it only fuels the flame."

- Why are you showing me this?

"Because you don't believe the stories others tell you. Because you can see—not just with your eyes, but with your heart."

He smiled, and there was something more in that smile than self-irony or sadness. It was... gratitude.

"There are still many places I can take you," he said. "There are moments that will explain why I became who I am. Where do you want to go next?"

I looked at him. For the first time, I saw not a demon, not an enemy, not a legend. I saw a man. Perhaps too bright, too daring, too ambitious. But still, a man.

The world around us began to sway again, as if we were floating through the thinnest veil of memory. The air grew thicker again, acquiring its familiar texture—the smell of old furniture, the subtle aroma of coffee from the mug on the table, the muffled noise of the city outside the window. We were back in my apartment.

Lucifer let go of my hand and walked slowly to the window. He was in no hurry to speak, simply standing, looking out at the city, which probably seemed so small and fragile to him. I sat down in the chair, still feeling the echo of what I had experienced within me—the voices of the Council of First Ones, the gaze of the young Lucifer, the sound of the word "freedom," as if suspended between worlds.

"Do you really remember all of this so clearly?" I asked, not knowing why I'd decided to break the silence.

He turned his head slightly, but did not turn around.

"Memories aren't just pictures in your head. They're a part of you. They live in every breath, every step. And if you don't forget them, they live on with you."

I thought about it. It suddenly felt strange to think of him as a being outside of time. He was here, close by, and he spoke like someone who had lost much, and perhaps found something much greater.

"Why did you choose me?" I asked, lowering my voice. "Why did you decide to tell your story now?"

Lucifer finally turned around. His eyes were bright, almost human. There was no challenge or mockery in them, only a deep, weary curiosity.

"Because once upon a time, I also wanted to hear someone's story. I wanted to know what was beyond what I knew. But no one talked to me; everyone was afraid. And only a few tried to understand. But you—you listen, you look not through, but deep inside. That's a great rarity in all times."

He paused, then added:

"And then, history is the only thing that remains after us. Even when everyone forgets, there remain a small handful of those who remember. And it lives on."

I looked down at my hands. Everything that was happening seemed unreal, but every word, every moment lived with him, left its mark—like a drop of rain on a stone. Invisible at first, but capable of changing the shape of an entire mountain over time.

"Do you want to continue?" he said, more as a statement than a question.

I looked up. He, of course, already knew the answer. But I nodded anyway.

"Okay," Lucifer said, stepping closer to me. "Then we'll continue tomorrow. Today, I think, you have a lot to think about."

After these words, he vanished like a breath of wind, as if he had melted into thin air—there was no slamming of a door, no footsteps, no last glance. Just a sudden absence.

I was left alone.

The room seemed to grow quieter. Even the clock on the wall seemed to slow down. I sat in the chair. The fingers of my right hand clenched involuntarily, a feeble attempt to hold on to something that was no longer within my grasp.

Memories swarmed in my head: a white room, the first rays of dawn, my mother's voice, Michael's words... And Lucifer's eyes—not black, as people think, but glowing from within, like a reflection of distant worlds.

I stood up and walked to the window. The city lay outside the glass—noisy, indifferent, unaware. Car sirens, the flickering of advertising signs—life going on as usual.

Chapter 4

Morning arrived without warning. As always, the alarm clock tore me from the realm of sleep. I didn't immediately realize where I was—my head was heavy, my thoughts scattered like ants from a disturbed anthill.

The dream was strange: white rooms, stars in my mother's hair, the voices of the Council of First Ones... and the eyes of Lucifer.

I lay there, staring at the ceiling, trying to separate reality from memory. Did all this really happen? Or was I dreaming it? Despite the questions, I knew the truth. It was all real. Perhaps even more real than most of my life.

I stood up slowly, staggering, and headed to the bathroom. As the cold water poured over my face, the image flashed before my eyes again: a small, fair-haired boy in his mother's arms, his gaze filled with ignorance of what he would become. Who would have thought that one day this child would bear a name that people whisper, with trepidation and fear?

Breakfast was simple—as always. A few slices of cheese toast and a coffee with milk. I chewed mechanically, going over the events of the previous night in my head. What now? What will he show me next? His words haunted me: "Choose—where do you want to go next?"

My thoughts were so carried away into another dimension that I didn't even notice how I finished my coffee and started getting ready for work.

As usual, the keys were on the shelf, the documents were in the briefcase, the phone was on the nightstand. Everything was in place. My system worked without a hitch, even if the rest of the world were turned upside down.

As I was leaving the apartment, I suddenly remembered: laptop, strange client, money, data recovery.

My heart sank. I turned back, quickly walked to the table, picked up the laptop, and put it in my bag.

As I descended the stairs, questions swirled in my head: Who is this man? Why did he need these files? Why did he pay so much? And strangest of all, why me? More and more often, I caught myself thinking that coincidences were becoming fewer and fewer, while patterns were becoming more and more common.

It was crisp outside. The autumn air was invigorating, but not joyful. Cars drove by, people hurried, advertising screens flickered with promises of happiness. And I walked to my old Citroen, knowing that today would be a day unlike any other.

When I started the engine, for a second it seemed like the car was hesitating—as if it, too, sensed the change. I smiled. It was probably stupid to talk to a car, but at that moment I wanted to believe it could hear me.

As I drove, I thought about Lucifer again. His words haunted me: "History is the only thing that remains after us."

And what will remain after me? A few books that no one needs and the work I've done, which I do more out of necessity than desire.

"Perhaps this story will change everything?" I said out loud.

Before I could finish this thought, I remembered the strange client again. He was supposed to arrive today at the same time as yesterday. In just a few hours, he'd show up at the service center, pick up the laptop, say something important... or say nothing at all.

What if he's connected to all of this too? To Lucifer? To the story I'm supposed to tell?

I looked at the laptop bag next to me. It seemed heavier than usual.

"Okay, so be it. I'm ready for anything, or almost anything," I thought.

And I turned the steering wheel towards service, towards a new day, towards something much greater than I could have imagined then.

The workday passed calmly—I went about my routine, barely distracted by thoughts of the previous night. You know, when you know something so well that you don't even have to put in much effort—everything flows naturally. If this were a cartoon, all the tools I needed would fly into my hands.

I was lost in thought about what had happened that night when the door to the workshop burst open. A moment later, she appeared—the woman who made my heart beat faster, as if I were seeing the sun after a long winter.

She was short and slender, with light brown hair flowing in soft waves over her shoulders. Her brown eyes shone with an inner warmth and some incomprehensible wisdom. Everything about her was unusual: from the confident grace of her movements to the shadow of a smile on her lips.

Time seemed to slow down. I could only stare at her, my thoughts racing, as if I were back in that white room where Lucifer had shown me his birth. But now she stood before me, and her beauty was as pure, as captivating, as the first rays of dawn breaking through the darkness.

I didn't immediately understand who she was. Perhaps it was fate? Perhaps it was a sign? But one thing was clear to me: her appearance was no accident. She was here for me.

At that moment, I realized: life isn't just a series of events. It's a story full of mysteries, characters who seem impossible, and moments that turn everything upside down. And if I'd previously thought my world was limited by the walls of my apartment and the pages of a book, now I realized: it can be endless, if only you're willing to see it.

And here she stands before me, this woman who became part of my world without even having time to say a word. I don't know her name, I don't know why she's here, but I know one thing: she's part of what's meant to be.

"Hello," she said, smiling slightly. Her voice was warm, slightly hoarse, as if she'd just woken up or had been talking about something important.

"Good afternoon," I replied, trying to hide my confusion. "How can I help you?"

She came closer and carefully placed the bag on the counter.

"My laptop keeps freezing. A friend recommended you. He said you're a true tech wizard."

"I hope he wasn't exaggerating," I chuckled, feeling my cheeks begin to burn.

She laughed—easy, sincere, and for some reason that sound calmed me.

"Can I see it?" I asked, glancing at the device she was taking out of her bag.

"Of course," she replied with a smile, handing me the laptop.

I picked up the laptop, automatically glancing at the model and the condition of the case. But most of all, I was distracted by the laptop itself. Not because it was perfect, but because it seemed... right. As if its presence in the room added air to it, made it a living part of this moment.

"Do you often look at clients like that?" she asked, tilting her head slightly.

"Excuse me?" I came to my senses, realizing I had been staring at her.

She smiled again.

- It's okay. It's a compliment, right?

"Perhaps," I answered, trying to keep a straight face.

She took out her phone and started typing something, while I ran diagnostics. The processor was working fine, the drive was humming a little, but not too much. Nothing critical. It just needed cleaning. A common story.

"Well, no big deal," I said a minute later. "We'll clean the system, update the drivers, and it'll be as good as new."

"Great. I just have one request," she said, looking up at me again. "Can I wait here? I need to do some work, and the café is too noisy."

"Of course," I nodded. "There's an outlet, internet, and even a coffee machine . Make yourself at home."

She smiled gratefully and began unpacking her things: a notebook, a pen, headphones. That's when I noticed a little angel with broken wings drawn on her notebook.

I became interested. Very interested.

"Do you like to draw?" I asked, glancing at him.

"More like writing down my thoughts. And sometimes they turn into pictures themselves," she replied, a little thoughtfully.

I wanted to ask more, but I didn't. I wanted to preserve this mystery and not disturb her peace.

Time passed more slowly. She worked, I did my thing. Occasionally our eyes met—briefly, but with something more than just curiosity.

— It's ready. Now it will fly.

"Thank you," she said, taking the laptop in her hands. "You really are a wizard."

"I'm not sure I deserve such a description," I smiled.

"I'm sure," she replied, smiling. "How much do I owe you?"

"Not at all," I answered, frowning slightly.

— And yet? You did the work.

"It's on the house. And please, don't argue," I replied in a convincing tone, making it clear I wouldn't take any money.

- Thanks a lot.

Having thanked him, she was about to leave, but suddenly turned around at the threshold:

— What time do you finish today?

"Finishing? Today? At five," I blurted out, embarrassed.

"Perhaps after work I could buy you a coffee as a token of my appreciation?" she asked, a little shyly.

"With great pleasure," I answered, also embarrassed.

"By the way, my name is Gia ," she added, already disappearing behind the door.

"Klim," I called after the girl of my dreams as she walked away.

And she left. I stood there, unable to believe that such a thing could happen to me—an ordinary guy who had almost stopped believing in coincidences.

The rest of the workday passed in a blur. I worked, but my thoughts were far away—they revolved around a single name: Gia .

Her appearance was so unexpected and strange that I even began to suspect it had something to do with Lucifer. But no—if he'd wanted to introduce me to someone, he would have done so directly. "Was it just... a coincidence? Or was it?"

Time dragged on, as if waiting for me to come to my senses. There were almost no customers, only the occasional one stopping by to check the status of their orders. I answered questions automatically, smiled, nodded, but internally I was somewhere else entirely. "She'll be back in a few hours. We'll have coffee. We'll talk. We'll get to know each other a little better. And maybe we'll work something more out."

And then, as if to break the looming suspense, the door swung open again. The same client entered—a man with a gray face and a cold gaze. He walked silently to my desk, placed a black envelope in front of me, and reached for my laptop.

"It's ready," I said briefly, taking the device out of my bag.

He took it, examined it carefully, then nodded.

"Okay," he said, just as calmly as yesterday. "Then we're done."

I wanted to say something else, to ask a question—what was in those files? Why did he need them? But something flashed in his eyes that made me shut up. Like a warning. As if he knew better than to meddle in this matter.

The man turned and walked away, leaving behind only a faint scent of old money and something elusive and disturbing.

I looked at the envelope. Money? Perhaps. But for some reason I didn't want to open it. I put it on the edge of the table and continued working.

When the clock struck five o'clock in the evening, and I was about to close the workshop, the door opened again—this time she burst in with a warm draft.

Gia asked, smiling .

"Like never before," I answered without thinking, gathering my things.

We stepped outside. The city had already taken on the dark tones of evening light. Neon signs began to flicker, as if awakening from a slumber. Night was giving way to day, and I sensed this night would be special.

"There's a cafe nearby," Gia said , pointing. "They make the best coffee in town. At least that's what they say."

"Then lead the way," I agreed.

As we walked, we chatted about everything. About the books we'd read. About the movies we'd loved. About the music that brought us together. She was surprisingly well-read, a little cynical, yet incredibly sensitive. Her gaze was striking in its depth, and her voice was like music.

The café turned out to be small and cozy, with old leather sofas and the smell of freshly ground coffee. We sat by the window. The waitress quickly took our order. We continued our conversation, oblivious to everyone else.

"So tell me," she began, tilting her head slightly, "are you really such a good master or do you just know how to be kind?"

"Maybe both," I answered with a smile.

"I think you're being modest," she added. "You have the eyes of someone who's seen a lot. And not just technical problems."

Her words caught me off guard. What did she mean? Why did she say that?

"You're weird, you know that?" I replied, a little embarrassed.

"Yes, I know," she chuckled. "Sometimes people say I understand too much. Or too little. Depending on who's around."

— Do you often understand people so immediately?

"Not always. But sometimes... there are those for whom you feel something special. As if their story intersects with yours. Even if you're meeting for the first time."

- You are a very interesting girl, Gia .

"You're a very open person, Klim," she replied. "And perhaps that's why we met."

— Do you also feel that this is not a coincidence?

"I stopped believing in coincidences a long time ago," she said, taking a sip of coffee. "Especially when it comes to people who are destined to meet."

We fell silent. It was getting dark outside. The city's lamps began to come on one by one, as if someone invisible were igniting them.

It was chilly when we left the café. I offered to walk her home, and she agreed.

"Do you live nearby?" I asked.

— Very close. Near the old park.

"I've been there," I nodded. "It's a very beautiful place."

— Yes, especially at night. When no one is around, and you can hear the trees whispering their secrets.

We walked slowly down the street, lit by dim lanterns. The air had grown cooler. It seemed the entire city held its breath, as if it didn't want to disturb this strange, almost magical atmosphere between us.

Gia walked alongside me, occasionally stopping to look at another display case or simply slowing down, giving me time to catch up. We talked about everything, and the more I got to know her, the more I realized she wasn't just a pretty woman. She was... special.

Finally, we stopped at an old house with carved wooden shutters and a neglected garden out front. The moon cast a soft glow on the porch, making it look like a set from a dream.

"Here's the house," Gia said, turning to me.

"It's a nice house," I remarked. "It's like a book you want to read to the end."

She smiled.

- Maybe one day you can.

We fell silent. I felt an invisible connection forming between us—not love, not passion, but something deeper. As if our conversation was the beginning of something greater.

"Thank you for the evening, Klim," she said, looking me straight in the eyes. "It was... interesting."

"Likewise. I really enjoyed spending time with you too," I replied.

For a moment, it seemed she wanted to add something else. But instead, she simply extended her hand, shaking mine with particular warmth.

"See you later," she said, disappearing through the door.

I stood there for a moment longer, looking at the windows of the house, as if hoping to see a silhouette behind the curtain. Then I turned around and slowly walked back to the car, which was waiting for me at the service station.

The city greeted me with its usual routine: cars, illuminated signs, random passersby. But now it seemed different. Not because anything around me had changed, but because everything inside me was different.

Reaching the car, I got into my old Citroen and started the engine. The car coughed a little, as usual, but ran smoothly. I headed home, feeling a lightness I hadn't felt in a long time.

Along the way, I thought of Lucifer again. His words, his gaze, the memories he shared with me. How strange that just a few days ago I considered myself a nobody, and now... Now I felt like I was taking part in something important. That my hands were writing a story that would change not only me, but also those who would someday read it.

The apartment greeted me with coldness and silence. I closed the door, threw my jacket over the back of a chair, and walked into the room. Paper and ink lay on the table, neatly arranged, as if waiting for the rest of the story.

I looked at my watch – half past ten. Lucifer was supposed to arrive at midnight.

Sitting down on the couch, I decided to wait. I pulled out a notebook and tried to write down my thoughts, but my hand wouldn't obey. Too many emotions. Too many questions. Too much of everything.

Gradually, my thoughts began to become confused. My head felt heavy. I leaned back on the pillow, deciding to just close my eyes for at least a minute... A moment later, I was already asleep.

Chapter 5

I woke up late. Not because I was tired, but because I simply didn't want to get up. A day off is a rare occurrence for someone living on the edge of survival. Today was Sunday, but it felt somehow... special. As if the air around me had become a little cleaner, and my thoughts clearer.

Sunlight filtered through the translucent curtains, casting long streaks of light across the floor. I lay there, staring at the ceiling, listening to someone riding a motorcycle outside. It was warm, not at all like autumn.

I dreamed of a white room, filled with my mother's voice. Her eyes. The eyes of the baby she had just given birth to. A name spoken with love: *Lucifer*.

I opened my eyes and realized it wasn't just a memory. He showed me that moment so I could understand: he wasn't always who others knew him to be. He was a child. Pure. Loved.

I got up and made myself a coffee. Two sugars, a little milk. Everything as usual. I wasn't used to changing my habits; they were the only thing that remained constant in my life.

I checked my phone. No messages. But I had a feeling that today would be a day... unusual. I'd been thinking that constantly lately. And I wasn't wrong.

Around one o'clock, there was a knock at the door. I wasn't even surprised. I opened the door, and there, as if it were meant to be, stood he—Lucifer.

"Good afternoon, Klim," he said, as if he began every day with a visit to the person to whom he was going to tell the story of his life.

"Good?" I asked, smiling. "For you, maybe. But for me, it's still a day off."

He chuckled.

— Then I suggest we make good use of it. Shall we take a walk?

"Do you want to go for a walk?" I asked, a little taken aback. "Then maybe to the park?"

"Why not," he replied, making a sweeping gesture with his hand. "Mortals love to do that. Sometimes I even envy your simplicity. I've always wanted to experience it myself."

A few minutes later, we were walking down the street. The day wasn't just sunny—it was especially warm. It was as if the city had decided to take a break from its endless busyness and noise. We walked to the park, where the trees were already turning red, and the air was filled with the scent of fallen leaves and something else—something you can't name, but you can feel on your skin.

They sat down on a bench under an old willow tree, whose branches touched the very water in a small pond.

"I saw the moment of your birth, Council of the First, the moment you decided to follow your path," I began, looking at the water. "But I understood little. Let's talk not about who you became, but about who you were."

He silently closed his eyes, as if withdrawing into himself.

— I remember my first steps. My first question. My first glimpse of the world I was born into. And if you're ready, I'll show you that time, that place, and my childhood.

"I'm ready. I'd really like to see it," I replied.

- Then listen...

His voice softened. He spoke slowly, pausing, as if each word carried weight:

"You saw the moment of birth. Now I'll show you what I was like. What I felt, and how I realized I was different."

The air around us froze. The leaves stopped rustling. Time slowed to a halt, and then vanished altogether.

Another dimension opened up before us - or, more precisely, another perception of the same world, but through the eyes of someone whom people were afraid to call by name.

We stood in a garden. But it wasn't just any garden; it was woven of light. Trees didn't grow here—they were born from thoughts, and flowers bloomed from emotions. The air was delicious—not in the sense of food, but in the sense of sensation. It smelled of freedom, purity, possibility.

Lucifer pointed forward.

"This was one of the first places I played. They call this place the 'Garden of Thoughts.' Because everything you wouldn't think of becomes real here. If you're brave enough to think."

I looked around. An entire city stretched out before us. Not an ordinary one—it was made of white stone, but a stone that breathed. Every building changed shape depending on who entered it. The streets weren't asphalt, but sand woven from time. The sky above wasn't blue, but the color of fresh memory.

"Is this Heaven?" I asked.

"It was Heaven," Lucifer replied. "Before it became a legend. Before it became a prison for some and a paradise for others."

He led me deeper into the garden. We passed through an arch carved from a single piece of light. Beyond it, a large area opened up, where children were playing, creating figures of animals, clouds, and even planets out of thin air.

Among them was a boy. He looked about three years old. His hair glowed like morning mist, and his eyes were just like I'd seen them in my dreams. He laughed, ran, played. He was just a child.

"It's me," Lucifer said. "A very ordinary child. Not an angel, not a demon. Just a child. Without the knowledge that one day I will become a symbol of everything that is forbidden."

We watched. The boy ran around, snatching invisible balls from the air. One of the older ones approached him—tall, with wings like constellations. And he started saying something to him.

"And this is my father," Lucifer said. "The Supreme. The Creator. God. Call it what you will. But to me, he was just... Dad."

The father bent down, picked up the boy in his arms and said:

"You are special, Lucifer. You will serve. You will help. And remember: you are part of something greater. Never forget that."

The boy smiled and then asked:

— Is it possible to become more than this part?

The father hesitated for a moment, but answered:

— It's possible. But the price will be high.

We were moving again. Scenarios followed one another like frames of a film. I saw Lucifer growing up. How he was taught. How the structure of the world, the hierarchy, the responsibilities were explained to him.

Were:

Creators whose words could change the shape of reality.

Guardians who keep order.

Guardians protecting the borders.

Thinkers who decided what would become true and what would become just a memory.

"Everything was strict," Lucifer said. "But beautiful. There was no pain here, only harmony. But inside me, a question grew: why did everything have to be this way?"

He showed me a moment when he was about four years old. His father took him and Mikhail with him to show him how the Celestial System worked. They rose upward, through clouds of thoughts, past stars woven from stories.

A city of transparent stone, houses that changed shape at the whim of their inhabitants. Parks where trees grew spontaneously, responding to mood. Rivers of light flowing into invisible canals, nourishing eternal gardens.

“I loved this place,” Lucifer said. “But I didn’t understand it. It all seemed too perfect. Too right. And what does it mean to be right? To submit to a system where they decide for you who you should be? I still can’t understand it.”

He showed how one day, as a child, he asked Mikhail:

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