

BOOK ONE: THE REALM OF SHADOWS

# LUCIFER'S GAME

You're playing it, whether you know it or not

Will Schneider



# Lucifer's Game

*You're playing it,  
whether you know it or not*

BOOK ONE: THE REALM OF SHADOWS

Will Schneider

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Publication Month: September 2015  
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## **New Novel Takes Readers on a Provocative, Witty Journey with “Lucifer”**

**(Los Angeles, CA) — September 2, 2015**—Millions of people throughout the world have chosen to go on the ‘spiritual path’ – seeking to better understand themselves. The intention is to improve their psychological well-being; surmount their fears, self-doubts, and limiting beliefs and seek deeper meaning that flows below the surface waves of life. In the past decade, bestsellers like James Redfield’s *The Celestine Prophecy*, Eckhart Tolle’s *The Power of Now*, Don Miguel Ruiz’s *The Four Agreements* and Debbie Ford’s *The Dark Side of the Light Chasers*—all have attracted a diverse following of “regular” people eager to dive in and explore their deeper nature and shine some fresh light on the inner landscape within oneself.

Following in what has become a very “mainstream” movement today, Over and Above Press announces the publication of a tour de force first book from an insightful new voice in spiritual thinking, Will Schneider. Written in the form of a novel-like parable, *Lucifer’s Game* takes us on an incredible journey of the imagination to depict the experience of spending a day debating the nature of humanity with Lucifer—the Prince of Darkness, himself.

*Lucifer’s Game* is not about the traditional religious notion that it is the “devil” who creates evil in the world, an archaic concept in the modern realm of psychology. Rather, the novel is about the ebb and flow of two potent inner forces every human has within the psyche – the ‘Light’ and the ‘Shadow’—that do battle to define who we take ourselves to be, how we behave, and how we can ultimately connect to the ‘wholeness’ of the Universe.

In the novel, we meet Jackson Trent, the writer of the popular blog on consciousness raising: “*Snap out of it!*” He has come to Hawaii to heal a shattered heart when a mysterious stranger intrudes on his trip. It’s Lucifer, guised as a bombastic, chatty tourist, who convinces Jackson to spend a day, updating him on how the modern human perceives the world. In turn, Lucifer will allow Jackson to probe him with any questions he has about Lucifer’s strategies when it comes to us. Just what’s he up to?

The two experience a series of extraordinary events, all the while debating the virtues of the ‘Light’ side of human nature versus Lucifer’s role, caretaker of the ‘Dark’ side—the Shadow realm of our psyche that we try to deny and turn a blind eye to. Lucifer goads Jackson into a grand power struggle, which leads to uncovering the ultimate secret to spiritual breakthrough and wholeness . . . till Jackson realizes he’s been manipulated, like all of us, into playing *Lucifer’s Game*.

Full of witty repartee, insight into the human condition, and spiced with completely unexpected plot twists, *Lucifer’s Game* guides readers into a deeper understanding of how we might recognize and come to terms with our Shadow side if we are to ‘wake up’ and develop a clearer sense of how we can find spiritual balance.

“In writing *Lucifer’s Game*,” says Schneider, “I sought to create a realistic, but entertaining staging of what a day-long conversation with the real Lucifer might be like. Who would Lucifer be? What role does he really play in the world? Is he who we think he is? What’s his game and how can we play it skillfully instead of being played by him? My goal was to stimulate thought and self-inquiry in the reader, especially giving those inclined towards inner growth a reminder that the path to wholeness must include developing awareness of our Shadow side. I think readers will find the conversations between Jackson and Lucifer to be fascinating and highly insightful—a dialog they might even wish they could have themselves someday.”

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## Praise for *Lucifer's Game*

*Lucifer's Game* is enjoyable and insightful. It entertains with wit, sophistication and great characters. I couldn't put it down.

—**Sylva Dvorak, PhD, Co-Author of NY Times Bestseller *Your Hidden Riches: Unleashing the Power of Ritual to Create a Life of Meaning and Purpose***

A fascinating novel that leaves no reader untouched, *Lucifer's Game* is a spellbinding tale that delves into the human struggle between our often hidden shadow and our capacity to live in the light. A must read for everybody inquiring about the True Self, spiritual Wholeness and wanting to develop a life of Self-Realization.

—**Siegmar Gerken, Ph.D., The Core Evolution Institute**

*Lucifer's Game* is so visual it feels like a movie. The story is powerful, intriguing and entertaining. It's loaded with life-changing insights, leaving us with a banquet of food for thought.

—**Dea Shandera-Hunter, former Executive Vice President, MGM Worldwide Television**

Will Schneider invites us on an exciting journey that takes us to the cliff's edge of temptation and darkness in the ultimate game of good and evil and the triumphant human spirit.

—**Brent N. Hunter, Social Media Pioneer, Author of *The Rainbow Bridge***

Our world is in trouble. Everywhere we look we see conflict. But what's really going on. Will Schneider's masterpiece peels back the layers to reveal the inside story. *Lucifer's Game* is a timeless classic and a riveting read that will change your world forever!

—**Brian Weller, Spiritual teacher and international business consultant**

*Lucifer's Game* is a devilishly insightful glimpse into our deepest human nature, a compelling story that will surprise you at every turn, and will awaken you to a richer and more complex inner life.

—**Steve Bhaerman (a.k.a. Swami Beyondananda),  
Co-author (with Bruce Lipton) of *Spontaneous Evolution***

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The contrast between the light in the main character, Jackson Trent, and the dark in the very colorful Lucifer results in a story that is truly unforgettable. This book has major motion picture all over it.

**—Michael Berlin, Ph.D, Executive Producer/Writer, Bass Clef Bliss**

Through a most beguiling story, *Lucifer's Game* invites you to take a peek under the covers, as it were, to acknowledge, and perhaps embrace, your disowned and rejected selves that are calling out for attention and healing, opening your soul to the possibility of true transcendence and spiritual balance.

**—Dannion Brinkley, NY Times best-selling author of  
*Saved by the Light and Secrets of the Light***

*Lucifer's Game* is a brilliantly woven metaphysical 'guide book' to higher conscious awareness. It is cleverly crafted to illuminate the Light and show the Shadow within us, revealing a path to true spiritual growth.

**—Jeff Harman, Spiritual Counselor, Astrologer and Filmmaker**

*Lucifer's Game* is a fun, fast-paced read that takes us into the depths of the shadow side and the heights of the light. Truly a must-read.

**—Temple Hayes, Unity of St. Petersburg, Florida,  
Spiritual Leader, Author, Radio Host, Difference Maker**

An engaging, thought provoking page turner with an intuitive sense of humanity's innate need to constantly transcend itself. The utter originality of this book is that no other fiction writer managed to figure out that Lucifer also has to evolve with the times and cannot do it without our help. This book validates the old adage that the Devil can't do much damage without individuals inviting him into their thoughts or experiences either wittingly or unwittingly. In other words, we have to engage the Devil in some form or fashion via a battle of wits or simply giving his ideas too much consideration.

**—Parthenia Grant, PhD, Host of Divine Love Talk on [crntalk.com](http://crntalk.com)**

A touching companion to the psyche, *Lucifer's Game* poetically taps into the spiritual and the humane, the light and the dark, offering a deep, smart, and playful dialogue of paradox. A deep seeker myself and a lover of new perspectives, this book landed in my lap at just the right time. Bravo! So grateful I embarked onto the pages of this Lucifer's game. A wonderful, endearing, and playful read.

**—Andi Starr, Musician, Singer Songwriter**



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## About the Author



WILL SCHNEIDER is a full-time writer living in the wine country of Sonoma County, north of San Francisco. Formerly working in business development, Schneider spent years as the Licensing Director for the world-renown artist, Laurel Burch, as well as a National Sales Manager in the wine industry and high-tech arena.

An adventurer at heart, and naturally drawn to the 'edge' of things, his current passion is kayaking along the wild Pacific coast. Will has equally experienced a calling to explore and push the boundaries of his inner world, and has spent decades deeply immersed in the study of various metaphysical tradi-

tions. Thirty-five years of deep training from a variety of exceptional spiritual teachings has allowed him to develop a wide-ranging platform of knowledge and understanding regarding the human inner landscape and our potential range of consciousness.

*Lucifer's Game* is his first novel. Will is currently writing a sequel to this novel focused on the Shadow world of relationships. He is also preparing workshops and events focused on understanding the Shadow and 'waking up' to our Presence.

Learn more about Will Schneider at the book's website, [www.LucifersGame.com](http://www.LucifersGame.com). You can also read the main character, Jackson Trent's blog at [www.SnapOutOfItBlog.com](http://www.SnapOutOfItBlog.com) and while you are at it, why not connect with Lucifer himself at [www.LettersToLucifer.com](http://www.LettersToLucifer.com)—a sort of Dear Abby of the Dark world where Lucifer provides highly-suspect advice you'd be wise not to follow!

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## Author's Statement

My decades of exploration into mindfulness clarified for me a powerful realization. Our human awareness has the potential to move vertically, up or down. In any given moment, I can be more awake, more present, or conversely, more in a kind of 'waking sleep.'

That realization rocked my world. If nature left us off in a foggy kind of 'waking sleep', how can I *snap out of it*? So the proverbial 'moth' in me began fluttering its wings towards the flame of learning to be more awake. Over time, this quest brought me into various metaphysical schools of consciousness development, which revealed greater knowledge of myself and provided powerful trainings for me in how I could get in touch with, and open to, my true Essential Nature that's buried under layers of egoic structures.

Having spent much time and energy on my quest towards Spirit, I recognized a pattern in myself and in many others. I had been irresistibly drawn towards the 'Light of awakening' but I began to wonder about my darkness—the Shadow side buried within my unconscious. The Shadow; all the unsavory aspects of my nature that I have unknowingly rejected in favor of my overall positive self-image. Like everyone, I had pushed away these unwanted characteristics, pretending that they were not a part of me. They were out of sight and out of mind.

Gradually, I came to understand that this is a pretty weak strategy that we all employ. Our Shadow side may be buried out of sight but it's not out of our psyche. It may be off the radar but it remains alive and well, , until one day it can emerge from below. The Shadow is filled with our noxious characteristics like Pride, Greed, Anger, Gluttony, Dishonesty, Envy, Lying, Hatred, Manipulation and the list goes on.

I began to see that we ignore our Shadow side at our peril. The character aspects that have been renounced and banished can, and will, rear up and sabotage one's life. Just look at the various spiritual paths that abound. How many teachers, gurus and so-called 'masters' have been co-opted and subverted by having ignored their Shadow? Quite a few. An honest appraisal of society, in general, reveals how riddled our culture is with these 'Shadowlings' infiltrating people's reality and wrecking havoc. Just read a newspaper on any given day.

It was this realization about the Shadow world was my motivation behind writing *Lucifer's Game*. I realized it could be intriguing, insightful and fun to imagine a character who actually agrees to spend a day with Lucifer, who in my tale, is simply the Master of the Shadowland. What would they discuss? What would Lucifer's role be when it comes to the dark side? Just what's his game with us? Just what's he up to that would behoove us to get a handle on? I envisioned Lucifer 'holding the torch for all those rejected Selves' who live at the bottom of the spiral staircase of our psyche, shown on the cover of *Lucifer's Game*.

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## Q&A with Will Schneider

**Debbie Ford released two books about the Shadow concept in 2010. How does your book differ from hers?**

Debbie Ford was one of the leading voices in bringing awareness to our unconscious Shadow. This precise arena was her life's work and she held that ground so beautifully. Her excellent books, *The Dark Side of the Light Chasers* and *The Shadow Effect* (where she collaborated with Deepak Chopra and Marianne Williamson) are written in the formula of a self-help layout; clear, powerful, straight-forward information drawing upon personal experience and existing knowledge regarding our darkness. Although Debbie's work helped motivate me to create a tale about the Shadow, *Lucifer's Game* is completely different. My book is a metaphysical novel, written as a kind of parable. The tale, itself, is an engaging, entertaining, and fun ride. At the same time, insightful readers can come away with powerful insights and a fresh curiosity about their own Shadow self, so they can dial into a more balanced awareness of spiritual development. But note! *Lucifer's Game* is very much about the Light side of our nature, too. It explores the dynamics of how our human consciousness can lift up, can wake us up to our more authentic Self, our Presence, in any given moment.

**How does your concept of Lucifer in your book differ from the traditional depictions of Lucifer as the "cause of all evil?"**

This is a really important distinction to make. We all know the way Lucifer has been depicted as the personification of evil by organized religion. I created an entirely different character. The Lucifer I invented is simply the champion of our unconscious, the Master of the Shadow World, defender of all the rejected, disowned parts of ourselves that we've buried away. Yes, he's wily, devious and prone to whispering dubious temptations in our ear, but that's what makes him so skilled at his role and such a formidable antagonist. This Lucifer isn't concentrating on making us 'sin', as in the religious perspective. Where his focus lies is in keeping the human race in a state of 'waking sleep'; that foggy state of awareness that our egoic experience takes as perfectly 'normal'. Then we become his 'Sheeple' and he can lead us down his path of keeping us as unconscious as possible, and our Shadow self kept in the dark, just the way he likes it! In this sense, my book is not about "good and evil" as external forces in the world, but about the Light and Dark forces within each of us.

**Your main character, Jackson, writes a blog called Snap Out of It! What is that about? Is that for real? Where can I find it?**

Jackson is at a point in his life and personal growth where he feels compelled to 'give something back' to the world. *Snap Out Of It!* is a blog he's created where he offers a kind of self-help 'guide-book' to others. Jackson explores and articulates certain key nuggets of spiritual knowledge that he's absorbed through his own Work and that he considers to be of prime value and importance. So, in



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the spirit of simply sharing, he offers these insightful blog posts to anyone who's on a path of their own who might find them useful. His attitude is not "This is the way things are" but more "Here's something I've learned and is so true for me. Try it on. See if it fits you, too." Jackson's blog is definitely for real and has seriously taken off! *Snap Out Of It!* can be found on the *Lucifer's Game* website [www.lucifersgame.com](http://www.lucifersgame.com) or [www.snapoutofitblog.com](http://www.snapoutofitblog.com) Check it out!

And while you are doing that, don't miss out on the blog that Lucifer writes! It's called [www.LettersToLucifer.com](http://www.LettersToLucifer.com), a kind of Dear Abby from the darkside where you will find him dispensing highly dubious advice to those writing in to get his 'take' on their issues. Read his suggestions . . . and do the opposite, and you'll be fine!

### **In *Lucifer's Game*, what are Shadowlings?**

The 'Shadow,' as defined by Carl Jung, is the unconscious part of the personality that I refuse to identify as myself. In *Lucifer's Game*, I was being playful and invented the name *Shadowlings* to represent the specific rejected and unwanted characteristics of one's nature that get pushed down into the Shadow. So, for example, each one of these is a Shadowling: Greed, Pride, Envy, Lying, Manipulation, Jealousy, Belligerence, Hatred, and so on. In my rosy, conscious 'self-image' that I show to the world, I may proudly hold up my Honesty as part of me, but I push down and away its dark flip side, the Shadowling of my Deceitful streak. My 'Forgiveness' gets admitted into my sweet, generous nature, but the Shadowling of my mean-spirited vengeance is disowned and buried. That separation process between our 'Light' and our 'Dark' goes on and on throughout our lives.

In my novel, I then began to imagine a sort of "cavern" way down in the bowels of the Earth where Lucifer might live, and where our Shadowlings get banished. Lucifer thus became the Keeper of the Shadowlings, making sure that they stay intact. As Lucifer points out, this suppressing of what we refuse to accept about ourselves is a pretty lame strategy, as we seem to believe that by pushing these Shadowlings 'off the stage' of our conscious awareness, they don't exist. Oh, but they do! And he takes excellent care of them . . . and allows them free reign to erupt back up into our lives, often at a high cost and with major consequences.

### **In your story, who is Lucifer and what's the nature of his game?**

This is a tale about the potential range and depth of human consciousness, in general, and how it's manifesting in one man's spiritual journey, in particular. The story unfolds in Hawaii. Lucifer, appearing in the humorous form of a corpulent, bombastic, rude, disheveled tourist, pays a visit to a man, Jackson Trent, who has spent decades 'working on himself' via various metaphysical teachings, seeking to expand and 'wake up' his consciousness and eventually break out of his 'ego shell'. What ensues between the two is a deep dive into the nature of our psyche and how our awareness, our sense of self, is split between our 'light' and our 'dark side'. Lucifer reveals that he is the Master of the Shadow world; that realm buried deep into our unconscious where we systematically push down and away all of our rejected, unsavory characteristics that we have disowned.

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As the story unfolds, we see that the Game Lucifer plays with us takes place on multiple levels. As the caretaker of our Shadow side, he nurtures all our rejected selves and, from time to time, 'encourages' these buried traits to erupt up from the dark and infiltrate our lives. In his view, the havoc that's wrecked is the price we pay for pushing away what we don't want to acknowledge within our own nature. Secondly, as the 'torchbearer' for the unconscious, another key role that Lucifer plays is to keep the human race in a constant state of 'waking sleep', which makes it much easier for him to manipulate us. He derisively refers to humanity as Sheeple, easily herded down a particular path of his choosing. But Jackson, who has spent years developing 'mindful Presence,' has learned to snap out of that sleepy state and start 'waking up'. Thus, another aspect of *Lucifer's Game* is played out with Jackson, as Lucifer attempts to seduce him into his Shadow world by offering Jackson incredible Power. Jackson finally recognizes that Lucifer has manipulated him, and this realization ignites the climax of the story, which I don't want to give away here!

### **How do we learn to acknowledge our Shadow?**

For many spiritual seekers, their work has been focused on 'going to the Light,' learning how to get past hurts and troubles of their childhood, to stop listening to negative thoughts and their inner critic, and to recognize that they can rebalance their spirit towards the positive and in the 'light-filled' direction of being more 'awake.' That's all very true and beautiful, but, from a certain perspective, that's only half of the journey. What is too often missing is also the turning of attention and awareness to what we've made unconscious; the parts of ourselves that we reject and push into our dark Shadowland. The conflict in *Lucifer's Game* is in getting to the realization that we must recognize and 'own' our Shadow. Only then can we truly own our Light.

As Lucifer articulates to Jackson, we must descend down into our Shadow and individually recognize our Shadowlings, eventually acknowledging each one. "I see you, I feel you, I own you as a legitimate part of the whole of me. You're not free to run roughshod over my life, but I no longer reject and disown you, nor do you need to blindside and subvert me."

### **What benefit does someone get when they acknowledge their shadow?**

From this powerful stance of bringing conscious awareness to our dark side, Shadowlings can be gradually eased out of their hiding and integrated into one's conscious self, turning alienated, angry adversaries into potential allies. The untapped creativity of Shadowlings can be released. By holding the Light and the Shadow in balance, one can bring about a state of inner equanimity, which can lead one through the Shadowland and on to true spiritual Wholeness. We must pass through the Shadow world, not avoid it, to truly arrive at a more expanded, integrated consciousness.

### **Why is it so much easier to see other people's shadows than my own?**

It's just the way we're designed. We're beings that tend to *project*; typically, we look outward, not inward. It's somewhat fascinating to realize that, for most of us, the only way we can recognize what

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traits we've pushed down and away and turned into Shadowlings inside ourselves is to see what really annoys us, what seriously 'pushes our buttons' in others. The very thing I can't stand about someone else in my life, is the very characteristic I'm harboring deep in my own Shadow. What I can't tolerate to face about my own nature I project onto others, where I then judge them for their abhorrent behavior. I clearly see 'in them' what I refuse to acknowledge within my own psyche. It takes real courage and a wish to truly get to a deeper truth to see, and acknowledge, how such projection operates. It's very humbling to begin to recognize that tendency, but it's also the portal to getting an inkling of what Shadowlings we have buried. Pay attention to what's triggering you 'out there'.

**If everyone were honest, forthright, and owned their Shadow, would the world be different? How?**

If that were the case, of course the planet would be transformed. Just imagine a world where we all stopped projecting our own unconscious rejected selves onto everyone else. So much hatred would simply evaporate. Judgment of others and even serious issues like discrimination would be replaced with a deep-seated, empathic understanding for others. Forgiveness would flow like a mountain stream, flooding its banks in all directions, washing the slate clean of so many unsettled scores. Fear of each other would be supplanted by a sense of collaborative 'meeting in the middle'. As Jackson experiences for himself, by owning one's darkness, one's inner landscape comes into balance. Balance! What a beautiful concept, as so much opens up when that quality of equilibrium spreads its wings. Although a global 'owning of one's Shadow' is never going to happen, what is entirely plausible is that it can unfold within each of us, individually. That's within our control and possibilities.

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## Talking Points to Ask Will Schneider

- Your novel, *Lucifer's Game*... what's it about?
- How did you come up with the idea, the basic concept of the story?
- What does the 'game' in *Lucifer's Game* refer to?
- In your tale, what is Lucifer's role on Earth?
- In that context, does the world need to have a "Lucifer?"
- Your main character, Jackson, writes a blog called *Snap Out of It*. Snap out of what?
- You describe three 'dimensions', or levels of consciousness that we humans are capable of experiencing. Can you walk me through them?
- What is meant by the Shadow side of our psyche?
- What do we learn by acknowledging our Shadow? How does that help us?
- How do you think that humans achieve greater understanding of their meaning in life through acknowledging their Shadow side?
- What is meant by this idea of "wholeness" or "oneness" that you refer to in the book?
- What are some techniques people can develop to achieve this wholeness?
- If I want to get involved in improving myself, what should I do?
- What is your next book about?

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## Book Excerpt from *Lucifer's Game*

(Note: Jackson has just been approached by an oddly-beguiling stranger who seems insistent on wanting to develop a conversation with him.)

“Okay, I’ll give you two minutes to fill me in on who you are and why I should be spending this glorious day . . . with you.” I glanced at my watch for effect.

“Okay Jack, I’m gonna get to the point, but you may not be ready for what I’m about to say.”

“Try me.”

“Alright, so you’re a writer and you must have an affinity for metaphors, true? Well, here’s my card.”

It was black with small white type. I held it up close to my eyes:

*I was named after the Morning Star  
Yet I am one with the darkest of night.  
A Guide into the subterranean.  
The Keeper of your hidden Inner Cavern.  
Master of the Shadow World.  
Holding the torch for the Rejected Ones.  
The voice of the forbidden fruits, ripe for the plucking.  
I am the Prince of Living Large.*

“What the hell is this supposed to mean?”

“Read it again, this time more slowly.”

I did and then pulled out my cell phone and Googled: named after the Morning Star. It made me laugh. “This is weird. It says: *Lucifer*.”

I looked up and my drink mate was stock-still, clearly not laughing with me. Then he slowly reached up and, for the first time, took off his sunglasses, revealing his eyes. Whoa! Very strange. His left eye was sky blue and his right, a deep green. But the primary thing that jumped out at me was the powerful intensity behind the eyes, as if they were burning with red hot coals. Holy shit! My jaw dropped stupidly as the realization was rolling in.

“Are you telling me . . . *Lucifer, as in the Devil?!?*”

He made a slight bow of the head. “That’s right, the one and only. I’ve noticed mothers don’t name their children after me. No little snot-nosed *Lucifer’s* running around, last time I checked. But don’t jump to conclusions, Jack. Sure, I’ve been technically labeled, uh, let’s make that libeled, ‘the Devil’ but that’s a long story. It’s a sad fact that the people who know the least about me always have the strongest opinions.”



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“Lucifer?” I felt a shudder shoot up my spine. “Prove it!”

“Like how?”

“I don’t care, but make it convincing.”

The big man scanned the bar patio. In the far corner was some fellow reading a newspaper, hidden behind the sports page he was holding up. Glancing my way, Lucifer folded his chubby hands on his immense belly and focused his attention back to the man. Within a few seconds, a wisp of smoke began to rise from the very center of the newspaper. Moments later, it burst into flames, the guy screeching in terror and dumping a pitcher of margaritas on the blaze to put it out. I was stunned. Goosebumps broke out all over my body and I leapt to my feet, heart pounding.

“Alright, pretty damn convincing! So what do you want with me? What did I do?”

“Sit down, Jack. Nothing is wrong, if that’s what you mean. Take my visit as a compliment. Sit, sit. Let’s chat.”

A compliment? That was a bit much. Terrific. Now I’ve attracted Lucifer into my life. Still standing, I asked him: “If you’re who you say you are, why don’t you go drop in on someone who’s more interested in your line of work.”

“Which is?”

“I don’t know and I don’t really care to know. Nothing personal but you’re on the same par as the Grim Reaper as someone I’d least want to meet.”

“Aw, Jack, you say the sweetest things. You warm the cockles of my cold, black heart! Fortunately, I’ve got a hide as thick as a buffalo, although you’d probably never guess that. Why do I want to talk with you? The answer to that will reveal itself in time. For now, just understand that there’s something about you that interests me.”

“Well there’s something about you that alarms me.”

“Oh, relax. Come on, sit down. I can appreciate how my dropping in like this would scare the bejesus out of anyone. But, here I am and, well, frankly, you’re still listening. And let’s be honest. You’re getting a chance to talk to me, Lucifer, Prince of the Darkside himself. You’re a writer who craves intrigue, not one to miss an opportunity, right? Underneath your shock, you’re actually kind of curious, aren’t cha? And thanks for not freaking out any more than you have.”

“Other people you’ve dropped in on have panicked?”

He bent forward, his whole body jiggling with mirth.

“That’s putting it mildly. You’d think I’d lit their hair on fire!”

With wary trepidation, I let myself sink slowly back into my chair. Lucifer leaned towards me, a little too close for comfort and continued:

“Let’s start by agreeing to this. I’m not going to twist your arm to converse with me. It’s entirely up to you. One thing that’s overlooked about me is that I never force an issue on someone. Suggest? Yeah. Cajole? Sure. Manipulate? Guilty as charged. Tempt? Oh boy! Definitely known to persuade, but I never force. It’s true that humans have free will to make their own choices. That’s ‘The Law’ and

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whether I like it or not, I've gotta follow it. This conversation is entirely up to you. So, Jack, it's your call . . . are you in or out?"

As I sat there, staring across at him, I felt the clammy grip of fear creep under my skin, starting to wrap itself around my heart. I let my gaze settle on the great banyan tree to calm me down and draw from its strength. What to do? Was I flattered by his visit? Possibly, but what, exactly, was he after? It hadn't escaped me that I'd yet to get a straight answer from him. Still, it was a daunting decision, continuing a conversation with Lucifer, for chrissake! My solar plexus was quivering.

On the other hand, I do have confidence in my sense of the world. I'm clear on what I value, what I've verified to be true, and I can defend the positions I believe in. But could I hold my own against the likes of *him*? There was also the fact that I was feeling so shaky and vulnerable in my life right now. I swallowed hard. As I was gathering my thoughts, I could see a scale within my mind, balancing my options. I felt the measured weight on both sides of this strange offer presenting themselves, making their case. Finally . . . the scale tipped:

"Okay, I'm in."

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## For More Information

Published by Over And Above Press

Over And Above Creative Group, Los Angeles, CA

[www.overandabovecreative.com](http://www.overandabovecreative.com)



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Printed in the United States of America

Distributed by SCB Distributors

15608 South New Century Drive, Gardena, CA 90248

(800) 729-6423

*Lucifer's Game*

\$19.95 ISBN: 978-0-9907924-5-1 (Print)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015911459

\$14.95 ISBN: 978-0-9907924-6-8 (eBook)

Available on Amazon and at your local bookstores

Look for upcoming events and workshops at [www.LucifersGame.com](http://www.LucifersGame.com)