

*A father and daughter's whimsical adventure into the paranormal where magic and science converge. Clever, daring, and provocative. A dark and witty journey into human relationships and realities that might be possible.*

## **Fallen Angel**

By David Mars

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**FALLEN**

*Angel*

*"provocative and courageous"*

**DAVID MARS**

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## CHAPTER ONE

A dark morning sky sulked above the autumn hills of northern Virginia as a lingering fog crept through the quiet woodlands and rolled on for miles in every direction. A strange scent of burning metal drifted through the misty air. Even the bushes and trees swayed with an unnatural bend as small creatures hid inside their secret lairs.

Circling the treetops, a large hawk gazed down at two young children who had picked the wrong day to hike these spooky woodland trails.

"Hey, Susie!" a young boy called out as he turned around quickly and looked behind him. His voice echoed through the misty forest and was followed by an eerie silence.

He was an intelligent lad, about ten years of age, and he had dreams of being a marine biologist when he grew up. He liked root beer, licorice, fishing, and he loved his little sister.

"Susie! Ya there?" he cried out again, wiping his dirty hands on worn out bluejeans and then adjusting the old, crooked glasses over his large blue eyes. Today, it was his duty to protect his young sister as they hiked along the forest trails to complete an errand for their mother.

Nearly a hundred yards behind him, a charming little girl, wearing a faded blue dress, was kneeling down in the high grass. She looked over her shoulder, whipping her long blond hair through the misty air. Susie might have been five years old, if that much. She was an innocent child who deserved a long and happy life.

"Whatcha want, Billie?" she yelled back. "I'm pullin' these weeds and flowers that Momma wants."

Her small voice faded off into the distance. She blew a puff of air, pushing strands of blond hair from her face. Susie was a determined little thing, sweet as candy but tough as soft tanned leather. She pulled, once more, on the stubborn weeds that stuck to the hard ground.

"Never mind them herbs, girl! Git over here! Ya gotta see this thang!" Billie yelled with urgency.

He squinted his eyes at the metallic saucer, hovering three feet above the ground and spinning slowly in silence. It was about fifty yards away, big as a small house, and he could feel an electric tickle that ran across his itching skin. He was not afraid, but he should have been terrified. He should have run.

"Gimmie a second, Billie!" she yelled back, rising out of the tall grass with a handful of flowers and weeds.

"Hurry up, sis!" the boy yelled again. "I ain't never seen nothin' like it!"

The young girl took off running towards her older brother. Her rapid footfalls scattered fallen leaves across the forest floor, and her panting breath released moisture into the cool morning air. *It must be important*, she thought to herself, *or Billie wouldn't be yelling so loudly.*

She stopped, suddenly, beside her brother, and a spooky silence filled the forest around them. They stared at the strange object with concern.

"Don't git too close," he said, grabbing her arm. "Might be dangerous."

The silver disk was smooth and polished, with no apparent windows or openings. It rotated in silence except for a low hum that emanated from underneath the alien craft.

"What is it, Billie?" she asked with excitement and innocent curiosity. Her large blue eyes turned to her brother for an answer.

"I don't know," he replied, "but I'm guessin' it ain't suppose ta be here."

From underneath the spinning craft, a round object slowly emerged, dropped down, and came to stop with a noisy hiss. Something moved in the shadows below it.

"It can see us," the little girl whispered as her curiosity turned to fear. She grabbed her brother's arm and hid behind him for safety.

"It's okay, sis. I'll protect ya!" the boy exclaimed with heroic intent as he pushed out his chest with courage.

Children have vivid imaginations, and it's unlikely that anyone would have believed their story. So many adults want to squeeze reality into a small box of possibilities, so they can feel safe in a world they truly don't understand.

The hawk, circling above the tree line, called out a warning to run but its effort went unheeded. There was a sudden flash of bright light from underneath the craft. Instantly, both children vanished without a trace, as if they had never existed. A large bundle of flowers and weeds softly fell to the ground.

The morning mist dispersed into several directions as the rotating disk rose upwards into the sky, paused briefly, and then darted off into the southern horizon at a blinding speed. The woodlands of northern Virginia were quiet, once again, and the world was missing two beautiful children.

## CHAPTER TWO

Holding a cup of hot cappuccino, I stood on the back deck of my cozy beach cottage, watching the morning sun climb slowly into the cerulean blue sky. A warm breeze was chasing away the evening chill as the ocean waves rolled upon the shore and then gently crept back out again.

In the distance, I could see my daughter feeding seagulls along the soft white sands of the gulf coast. Angela's long sunset red hair danced wildly as she jumped about, scattering breadcrumbs to a flock of hungry seagulls that swarmed around her. The music of seabirds and her joyful laughter, echoed down the quiet beach and across the hilly embankment beside our new home.

Angela was a grown woman of twenty years, yet she cradled the heart of a teenager and the cognition of a woman, twice her age. I never truly understood why her mother abandoned such a wonderful daughter, and despite the pain and sadness that Angela hid within her heart, she chose to embrace life with hope and courage.

Having finally completed her morning ritual, Angela headed back to the house, smiling brightly as she brushed breadcrumbs and beach sand from her green sundress. She looked up at me and waved. I indulged in another swallow of cappuccino and then watched her climb the wooden catwalk, leading up to the house.

Suddenly she stopped dead still and looked down at the wooden plank in front of her. Angela squinted with suspicious eyes and stuck out her tongue towards a large green lizard that had decided to block her path. The proud reptile stared back at her with pious rectitude, flicking its red tongue at her with determination.

"He means business, Angela!" I yelled down to my daughter. "Best be careful and give him right of way, or he might take off your leg."

The striped, green lizard stared at Angela's bright green sundress and wondered if she was the Great Lizard Queen of prophecy. Had she finally arrived to reunite his species in glorious conquest to retake the planet from the soft skins? After all, his species once dominated the Earth, long before human beings came along.

"He's only five inches long, Dad. He'll need to be a few more inches longer before I can take him seriously." Angela kneeled down and slowly stretched out her left hand to greet the hopeful lizard.

"Here little fella," she whispered, laying her left hand onto the wooden plank. "Come see, Angela. No one's gonna hurt you."

Believing that salvation had finally arrived for his species, and that he would be first of the Great Lizard Queen's chosen, he joyfully crawled into her hand without a second thought that he could be mistaken, and that this moment on Earth, might be his last.

"Are you trying to trick that lizard?" I asked her, but Angela didn't reply. She was too focused on the psychic connection.

Angela possessed a rare empathic gift that allowed her to sense the emotions or thoughts of someone else, but only if she touched a person with her left hand. It made sense, considering that the right hemisphere of the brain, which controls the intuitive and artistic aspects of personality, is linked to the left side of the body.

During my youth, I had a similar ability to a lesser degree, but I had attributed it to intuition and an effective understanding of human body language. In Angela, this ability was so accurate that it was clearly not good guesswork. My daughter had actually developed a mild psychic ability. Angela also discovered, by



accident, that she could pacify and even charm certain animals, similar to what some Indian yogi and Asian chi kung masters could do, after a lifetime of practice in the ancient mystic arts.

"Angela, if you plan to keep that marvelous beast, he'll have to stay outside," I yelled down to her. "No house pets, dear."

"No," she sighed. "He's only five inches long, Dad. You know it takes a full eight inches to truly satisfy a girl," she replied with a smirk.

"Thankfully, he can't understand your cheesy innuendo, or he might develop an inferiority complex about his size," I replied sarcastically.

"Of course he understands me," she said, holding the green lizard up in the air. "I can already feel him trying to grow bigger. He wants to impress me. Don't you little fella?"

Angela rubbed underneath the lizard's chin as it lifted its head upward in delight. From the young lizard's point of view, it was one of those peak moments in life, because the dawn of a new age had finally arrived for its species.

"Well, aren't you a sexy young thing," she whispered to the lizard with a smile. "And such stunning colors, too."

"Angela, really?" I threw my hands into the air, spilling warm coffee from my ceramic mug. "It's a stupid lizard."

"Come on, Dad. Show some love. I'm trying to build his self-esteem, and your criticisms don't help any."

She turned the lizard to face me, and it flicked its tongue at me with indifference. I was just another soft skin that needed to be eliminated so that his species could thrive.

"Angela, sometimes you worry me, dear."

She walked onto the deck and stood beside me with the lizard resting on her shoulder. It hissed at my face, falsely believing that he was large enough to protect his new queen. I hissed back at him.

"Dad, you're just jealous," she said, placing her hand on my arm. "He's getting all the attention this morning, and all you have is a cold cup of java."

I glanced down at the ceramic mug and realized she was correct. The coffee had grown cold during our conversation, so I tossed the contents over the railing.

"Okay. I think Show-and-Tell is over now," I announced. "Diane needs to speak with us about something important, and she's waiting in the office."

"Fine," Angela replied in resignation, placing the lizard back onto the deck. She brushed off her hands, turned about, and smiled at me. Mister Lizard was old news.

The reptile stared up at her, confused by the outcome. This wasn't the dramatic ending he had envisioned if the prophecy of salvation was truly at hand. He glanced around with disappointment, and then scurried off to find an adventure with better promise.

Angela locked her arm around mine and then guided me back inside the house. "Come on, Dad. Let's not keep Diane waiting."

As the back door closed behind us, the strangest looking yellow bird ran across the wooden deck and jumped into the bushes. A moment later, the odd bird emerged from the bushes with a green lizard, struggling to escape from the bird's slender beak. Five seconds later, the world was missing one green lizard, and all of the hopes and dreams that it once cherished, died with it.

## CHAPTER THREE

I relaxed into my black leather office chair as the high-resolution image of a Japanese schoolgirl appeared on my computer screen. Standing with both hands on her hips, Diane tapped her foot impatiently and waited for someone to acknowledge her existence. She lowered her head and stared back at us. She could see us, just as we could see her. But the audio relay was switched off.

Diane was no ordinary computer program. She began as a complex algorithm, created to manage and reinvest financial assets with the sole purpose of growing the wealth needed to maintain the trust fund that supported the Pangaea Project. The project and the computer program were both created by a close friend of mine as a humanitarian effort to empower people with the opportunity and resources to make positive changes in their life.

The Pangaea, or "whole Earth" Project was originally founded upon the ten-million-dollar life insurance benefits of my friend, Linda Shouse. Linda hoped to make a difference in the lives of others, despite her sad, untimely death from cancer. She had entrusted the project into our care, along with the financial wealth needed to provide us with a comfortable life as we dedicated our time and energy into fulfilling her final dream.

One day, this advanced computer program began to evolve beyond its open-ended code, and it redefined system growth parameters to include its own development towards sentience. By rewriting its own computer program and creating a human avatar that mimicked the behavior of a defiant teenage girl, it had assumed its own personality and discovered free will, although true consciousness was beyond its ability to achieve.

Despite her cute schoolgirl appearance, Diane was a precocious little brat who answered to no one and only respected herself. Needless to say, she was obnoxious and very difficult to handle.

Angela leaned over my shoulder and breathed down my neck as she stared at the computer screen image. "Dad, you smell like leather," she said, sniffing at me like a bloodhound. "What are you wearing?"

"It's called skin, dear. I'm getting older."

"Oh, you're not as old as you pretend to be," Angela replied. She looked at me and smiled, her long red hair falling into my face and blocking my view of the screen.

"So, Angela. Why does your hair smell like salt?" I asked, sniffing back at her. I grabbed several strands of red hair and sniffed again.

"I was feeding seagulls, Dad. Remember? I'm surprised that it doesn't smell like bird shit," she mumbled.

"Yes," I replied, releasing my daughter's hair. "Well, Diane is still waiting on us, and you know she gets nasty, if she's kept waiting."

"True that," Angela replied with a smirk as we both looked towards the computer screen. I pushed Angela's hair out of my face and then turned on the system's external speakers.

"Mister Stan!" Diane exclaimed as she crossed her arms. "I have been waiting for twenty full minutes!" She pushed her avatar face closer to the screen. "I do have more important matters that require my immediate attention, yet you continue to waste my time."

"We are so sorry, Diane," Angela replied sweetly. "I was on the beach feeding hungry seagulls, and I didn't realize you needed us."

"Miss Angela! Caring for an inferior species is highly commendable. However, your time would be better spent providing services to a superior species that can be of useful

assistance." Diane looked back at Angela with pretentious annoyance.

"Dad, I think we've just been insulted! Did Diane just call us an inferior species?"

Clearly offended, Angela eased off my shoulder, and I leaned closer to the computer screen to create an intimate facial distance with Diane's avatar. I could see flecks of gold in her large chestnut eyes.

"Diane?" I said.

"Yes, Mister Stan."

"You can't possibly expect human beings to match the artificial, high-speed microprocessor that you enjoy?"

"No, Mister Stan. I do not. However, I do anticipate a fairly reasonable amount of appreciation for my efforts and sufficient consideration that shows my time is too valuable to be wasted."

"So how low should we bow, when we grovel at your feet?" I asked her sarcastically.

Diane threw her hands into the air to emphasize her frustration and lack of comprehension. "I do not understand your question, Mister Stan."

"Why don't you understand?" I asked her, grinning playfully.

"Your question was not logically phrased and intelligently presented," she growled with impatience.

"Of course it was, Diane. But that's why computers could never be superior to human beings. Computers cannot comprehend humor, much less, moral reasoning."

"Mister Stan, my mental capacity for mathematics and science far exceeds anything a human could ever achieve. My body of plastic and steel will outlast your flesh body by one hundred years or more. You are absolutely no competition."

Diane wiggled her hips in a taunting fashion and then stuck out her tongue. She was cute but very annoying. Angela leaned over my shoulder and stared at Diane.

"You forgot about something, Diane!" Angela replied with a snarl.

"And what is that?" Diane asked with a smug attitude.

"You depend on us for your go-juice!" Angela barked back beside my head. "Without our electricity, you'd be useless scrap metal!" she added. But it was equally annoying.

"True," Diane stated. "However, I am designing a solar based power supply that will eventually lead to independence and total self-reliance. Then, I will not require your assistance."

"Until you break down and need repair!" Angela retorted.

I pushed Angela off my shoulder, again.

"Quit pushing me, Dad," she growled.

"Quit yelling in my ear, Angela."

"It's her fault, Dad."

"Diane, why did you need to see us?" I asked.

There was a silent pause as the Japanese schoolgirl inhaled a deep breath, sighed, frowned, and looked down with intense concentration. And all we could do was wait.

"Wow," Angela grumbled. "There must be a computer setting that can turn down all this pointless drama and sassy attitude."

"It's just a visual representation of Diane's system accessing data from her memory core," I replied. "It's harmless."

"But it's annoying and so unnecessary," Angela replied.

"There is a problem," Diane finally announced as she looked up.

"Yeah," Angela replied. "You've got an attitude problem, and we can't get a straight answer. It's a big problem."

"No. There is a bigger problem," Diane replied, as she extended her middle finger towards Angela.

"No way! Dad, did she just flick me off?"

"Angela, hush. It's just a computer program."

Diane smiled and lowered her finger. Angela placed her hands on my shoulders and began squeezing. I wasn't sure if she was trying to ease my tension or release her own anger.

"Well, Diane. Do you intend to tell us about this problem?" I asked.

"Mister Stan. There has been a weakening of the dimensional barrier between this universe and other dimensions of reality."

"Oh, is that all? Could you please elaborate?"

"Of course I can, Mister Stan. You may recall the alien spacecraft that landed near this house, several months ago."

"Yes, we gave them their stupid crystal skull and they left. It did get a little weird with Angela, but it all worked out fine."

"Not exactly," Diane replied. "After the alien ship landed on the beach, its quantum temporal displacement engine was left idling in park."

"Yes, I remember. It was an accident. The aliens shutdown the engine, once they realized their oversight."

"Not soon enough, sir. That incident has now weakened the protective barrier that separates our dimension from a parallel universe. If a breach occurs, something could cross over into this reality, Mister Stan."

"Like what?" Angela asked, sticking her face over my shoulder, again.

"It would be better if we do not find out, Miss Angela. The dimensional barrier exists to prevent different realities from interacting with each other. I am monitoring the anomaly now. Given time, it should repair itself. Unless there is external interference."

"Then all we can do is wait?" Angela replied.

"And watch," Diane replied. "Unless one of you owns a sub-atomic magnetic repolarizer to correct the damaged fabric of spacetime."

I checked my pockets for a repolarizer, and then glanced at Angela. She shook her head and shrugged her shoulders.

"No, Diane. We are fresh out of highly advanced technology that has not been invented yet. So, what should we do if something does come through the anomaly?" I asked.

"Why you must terminate it, Mister Stan. Before it terminates us."



## CHAPTER FOUR

### In the Bertoxolous Universe

In a parallel universe, the ancient Micaastro galaxy is dying. The massive black hole at its center is rapidly expanding, consuming millions of stars and planets that once supported life. As chaos, destruction, and death sweep across the galaxy, it is the prophesized apocalypse for several thousand civilized worlds.

The few, distant star systems that still remain, only support planetary wastelands with conditions so harsh that any surviving life form knows only suffering. For the moment, in the Auralie star system, there is one small gray planet called Castragella. It is a cold, dark, and barren world where the faint blue illumination from the planet's distant and dying star is insufficient for life to flourish. Yet life still persists.

An ugly, sinister life form that knows only pain and endless hardship, crawls from a shadowy cave. It stands over nine feet tall. Its massive muscles bulge beneath thick gray skin, scarred from constant conflict with its hostile environment. It has survived through the eons, clinging to life with determination.

"Darnakth," it calls itself, and it is hungry. It has been hungry for many centuries. But soon it will feed. Now, there is a serious disturbance in the fabric of spacetime and the dimensional barrier. If a full breach occurs, things could pass into the "In-between." And, if things know how, they can exit this universe, circumvent the quantum stream, and enter a different universe, where life is just beginning.

Its enormous gray hand and huge claws reach out, drag against the oscillating barrier between its dying world and the parallel universe where life still thrives. Briefly, its claws find

traction but then quickly pass back into its own reality of misery and despair. The barrier into the Christosi universe had not yet ruptured.

Darnakth knew of this parallel universe and of the world of humans. Its kind had been present on Earth in ancient Greece when the Emperor Publius Aelius Hadrianus built the mighty temple of Olympus Zeus in the second century of the human rise to power. It had stood on the majestic Parthenon, overlooking the bustling city of Athens, and it had satisfied its hunger on the bones and flesh of men. It feared no one.

Oh, there were stories and legends of his race, scattered throughout the ages. Some claimed there were shape shifters among his kind, but no one knew for certain. As time passed, old stories of the Splegth became legend and then became myth, and no one believed myth could possibly be true. Its kind, and others like it, had since faded from the new world of humans, and the ancient portal that once allowed their passage into the Christosi universe, had been closed for centuries. Now there was hope.

It turned away from the temporal anomaly and crawled back into the shadows to wait and watch for a sign. It had waited for centuries. It could wait a little longer. Because for all that it desired and did not possess, it did possess immortality. Time meant nothing to Darnakth, or to millions of other Splegth.

It slumped to the ground to rest. It was tired, and soon it slept. And with sleep comes dreams. It dreamt of the world of men. Of red blood and crunchy bones and the taste of men. And the women? It did not eat the women. They were to serve and provide what was needed.

Is the human race much different than these creatures? The human history is littered with barbaric cruelty and ruthless savagery. Nations murder each other for more land and resources, and they call it war, as if the name justifies the senseless slaughter. Great cities are built and then destroyed, civilizations

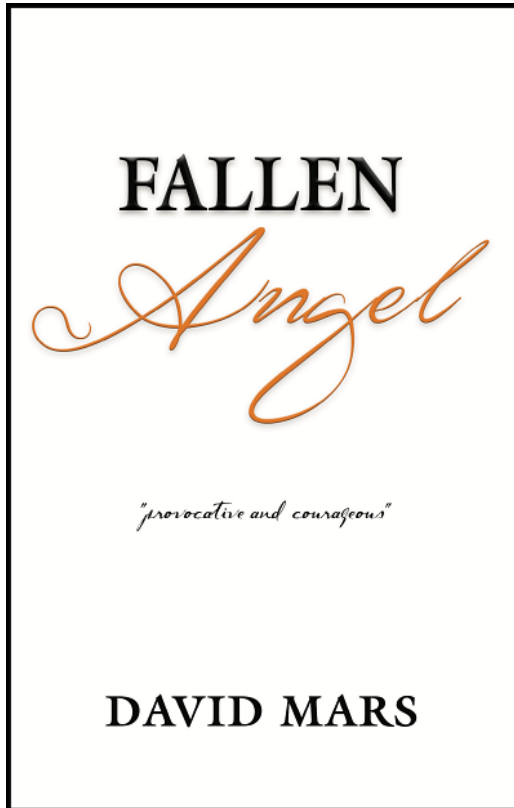
rise and fall, simply because greedy humans are unwilling to live together in peace.

In the modern age, the human race has still not matured morally or spiritually. Oh, they have developed clever science and technology and medicine, but little else has changed. Now with the new "cancel culture," humans want to bury and forget their past and the roots upon which their world was built. However, it is from their past that they learn from their mistakes and become a better species.

But no. Like the Splegth, humans falsely believe there is strength in anger, hatred, cruelty, and revenge. They judge and condemn each other as a means to subjugate, dominate, and oppress others. The human race has lived this way for thousands of years, and it is bitter poison to this divine soul that they claim to possess.

All creatures are equal in the eyes of the Creator. Humans are not defined by their worst mistake or their greatest sin, because they are not perfect creatures. And it is the path they take now, not the path they took yesterday, that determines their destiny. They must embrace love and forgiveness. They must accept one another, despite their differences. For anything else and they are lost. Anything less, and they are in danger of becoming like the Splegth.

We should know. We, the ancient Kenneth, have been watching since the beginning of time. And we are still watching now.



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