

## Lucifer's Son

**Sergey Mavrodi**

**Yuriy Chetverzhuk, Translator**

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*This imaginative, dark fantasy explores the innate depravity in the hearts of men.*

Sergey Mavrodi's dark fantasy, *Lucifer's Son: The Temptation Chronicles, Book One*, lays bare the depravity of the human heart as everyday men make bargains with the devil to obtain their desires.

Composed of a series of vignettes, the book is united both by theme and by the presence of a prescient, mysterious man in his thirties who offers to fulfill each protagonist's deepest wish—an "opportunity" that comes with conditions that would be totally unacceptable were it not for the lust, greed, and desire for power already lurking in each man's heart.

Mavrodi has a good grasp of the workings of the human mind and the weakness of the human will. He adeptly reveals the mental gymnastics that the protagonists go through as they plumb the depths of their own inner worlds in an attempt to justify the betrayal of all they hold sacred for some short-term, ego-based gain. With his knowledge of each man's weakness, the evil one is able to craft a scenario that, in most cases, his victim is unable to refuse. Thus, the book reveals how thin the veneer of morality, honor, and love can be, even when the man being tempted is an apparently upright citizen, husband, father, and employee.

The picture the book gives of the human condition is almost uniformly bleak, with sadomasochistic sex and pornography high on the list of men's hidden desires. Unfortunately, it soon becomes easy to foretell the response of each protagonist, and after a while, even the most lustful and imaginative orgy can become boring and repulsive—a fact to which some of the characters attest. Some of the stories include more lengthy rumination and rationalization than seems necessary, and in these places, the pacing drags. Furthermore, the employment of "King James English" whenever Lucifer is addressing his son's questions makes comprehension of these passages difficult due to errors in word usage and the inclusion of infrequently used, archaic, and unfamiliar words.

The translation from Russian, done by Yuriy Chetverzhuk, generally flows well, but the book would benefit from further proofreading and editing to remedy errors that include missing or extra words (as in the use of "the" where unnecessary), incorrect use of the apostrophe, incomplete sentences, occasional misspellings, and a certain awkwardness in the use of idiomatic expressions.

The cover art, with its requisite flames, is appropriate and attractive. The book's design and layout are pleasing and easy on the eye, and the table of contents helpfully indicates the theme of each story. Of special interest is the chapter "Satanist. Day 11," in which a Satanist makes a rather convincing argument that the world is actually ruled by Satan, and is the better for it.

With this imaginative, dark book in which Lucifer's work is made easy by the innate depravity of man, Mavrodi easily defends his thesis that "a grain of evil seed was sown in Adam's heart from the beginning."

KRISTINE MORRIS (November 19, 2015)

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