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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ FANTASY

## The Angelic Wars

**Jesse Centeno**
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The horror/urban fantasy genre has increased in popularity, especially in the young adult markets. Novels about vampires and werewolves—as well as ghosts, angels, and demons—are devoured by young and adult readers alike, especially when they are written by best-selling authors such as Stephanie Myers and Lauren Kate. Tales of the supernatural and modern twists on Judeo-Christian mythology are also trendy. Award-winning poet Jesse Centeno tries to capitalize on that market with *The Angelic Wars*.

Centeno begins his story with God's creation of the universe. The author writes, "while the Almighty was absent, the archangels are in charge of the heavens. One of them stood guard over the throne of the Almighty. His name is Satan, and archangel with many curious thoughts, who could no longer endure it. Satan stood in front of the throne, walked around it, and wondered what it would be like to sit on it, so he did."

Satan's actions cause a war in heaven, and he and his followers are cast down into hell. The war continues on Earth to this day. Each faction—the angels and fallen angels (demons)—manipulates mankind, the pawn in their battle.

Human soldiers of God, like Centeno's character Lorenzo Alexander, not only are taught magic by the angels, but they also learn the location of certain magical items on Earth that will aid in the fight against the demons and their minions. Those who choose not to fight, and instead submit to evil, are given a mark on their palms and then live under the rule of a satanic, tyrannical government.

The concept behind *The Angelic Wars* is provoking, so it is unfortunate that the text is riddled with grammatical mistakes and inappropriate terminology. For example, the word "angle" is often substituted for "angel" and the word "occult" is continually misused in place of "cult." The author calls a Jewish prayer service a "mass" and a synagogue a "church." Readers deserve better. Editing is not a step that should be skipped, and neither is research.

Looking beyond that, however, *The Angelic Wars* will have a certain appeal to readers interested in novels about the supernatural and religious mythology.

LEE GOODEN (February 17, 2012)

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