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# The Fallen and the Muse of the Street

By Tim Pratt

18 December 2000

"Pretty wild place," Madisen said, stepping aside to avoid a drunk retching his way out of a strip club. Madisen splashed through a puddle of rainwater and beer, breaking up the reflection of neon signs and streetlights. The air smelled of liquor, smoke, and sweating bodies.

Samaelle snorted. "Gomorrah was a wild place. This is a playground. Why couldn't we go to Bangkok?"

Madisen took her arm. At six-foot-two, Samaelle topped him by four or five inches. They strode down the middle of the street, and the crowd of drunken pedestrians parted before them, unaware of the angels in their midst.

"Eight-year-old prostitutes make me uncomfortable, and Beelzebub is there, testing plagues. You know how he feels about me. I like New Orleans."

"Bangkok's better," she said stubbornly. Samaelle had relinquished her armor and black wings in favor of a tank top and ragged denim shorts. She kept her sword, strapped firmly to her back, but no mortal would see it. They never did, until the last moment.

A red-bearded man with a dozen strands of beads hanging around his neck lurched toward them. "Aren't you hot in that?" he asked, pointing at Madisen's red velvet tuxedo.

"I've been hotter," Madisen said, stepping past him.

They passed under a wrought-iron balcony packed with leering, shouting people. Dance music thundered out of the bar below. "Hey!" someone called. "Hey, Red! Show me your tits!"

## [Before Paphos](#)

by Loretta Casteen

8 January 2007

It starts again. The baby begins to cough and choke.

## [Locked Doors](#)

by Stephanie Burgis

1 January 2007

*You can never let anyone suspect,* his mother told him. That was the first rule she taught him, and the last, before she left him here alone with It.

## [Heroic Measures](#)

by Matthew Johnson

18 December 2006

Pale as he was, it was hard to believe he would never rise from this bed. Even in the darkest times, she had never really feared for him; he had always been strong, so strong.

## [Love Among the Talus](#)

by Elizabeth Bear

11 December 2006

Nilufer raised her eyes to his. It was not what women did to men, but she was a princess, and he was only a bandit. "I want to be a Witch," she said. "A Witch and not a Queen. I wish to be not loved, but wise. Tell your bandit lord, if he can give me that, I might accept his gift."

## [Archived Fiction Dating back to 9/1/00](#)

