

BNA 04 – Heavenly Heist (Part 1)

Description

[output_post_excerpt]

ENOCH: Be not afraid. The voice you are hearing is real, and I am not trying to harm you. You are not insane. This transmission is brought to you by an angel of the Lord. Hello! Enoch speaking. Voice of God. Metatron. Hi. Hope I'm not disturbing you. My message to you is completely harmless. Nobody has ever died from any of my broadcasts ever since I started speaking through a meat suit, and I count that as a huge success. Well, there was one, but I can assure you my voice had nothing to do with it. The prophet in question had a piece of shellfish go down the wrong way. Even though I specifically said BE NOT AFRAID. What are you gonna do? But you're here! Isn't that wonderful, that we share this moment across millennia?

Speaking of moments. This is why I've contacted you again. The time has come for me to record and transmit a random but crucial event. It's important that you know what I am about to tell you. The reason why, well... that depends on what the Vortex of Events will reveal.

I am reaching out and inviting the Vortex into my mind, as I've done and will do many times more. It's a sentient power older than creation, speaking a language I'm only just beginning to understand. The vision is falling into place...

It's night time. It smells like kohl, palm trees and hot winds. It smells like Egypt. A queen and her four guards are taking a walk through the deserted streets. The vortex tells me that the queen's name is Hatshepsut, and she is the pharaoh.

Out of nowhere, a hooded figure steps into her field of vision. The figure has gotten past the formation of the four guards that are supposed to protect her! Quick as a viper, the thief undoes her golden arm cuff with clever fingers and disappears into thin air. It's a skillful magician! Those are rare.

GUARD: Protect the queen!

ENOCH: A guard shouts, and they tighten their circle around her.

HATSHEPSUT: What are you doing, stop him!

ENOCH: Hatshepsut commands.

ENOCH: The thief is nowhere to be seen. The guards all look around, confused. A man runs up to them, pointing toward the rooftops.

MAMRE: Up there, on the roof! Stop there, thief!

ENOCH: The man scales the wall unnaturally fast – aha, another magician – and he makes short work of tackling the thief.

Hatshepsut and her party have lost sight of them. The sound of a struggle, and then someone running away. Soon, the thief-catching hero returns to them, out of breath.

MAMRE: I'm sorry, my queen, he slipped away. But I managed to snatch the bracelet.

ENOCH: The hero pulls out the bracelet from his pocket and holds it out to her.

HATSHEPSUT: Your courage is admirable. Thank you.

ENOCH: The queen says as she accepts the bracelet.

MAMRE: Thank you, your majesty! It would be nice to have something to show for it though.

ENOCH: He suggests. She raises her eyebrows and seems to think something over.

HATSHEPSUT: The gods tell me that this belongs to you now.

ENOCH: She closes his hand around the bracelet.

GUARD: Your majesty, you can't, he's a commoner.

ENOCH: A bodyguard hisses. This only encourages her to speak even more firmly.

HATSHEPSUT: Perhaps it will inspire my guards to be a bit more alert in the future. Good night.

ENOCH: As the party turns around a corner and out of sight, the hero skips down an alley, vaults over a wall, and dives into an abandoned barn. There, the thief is waiting for him.

It all went a little bit fast back there, dear prophets, so I had no time to introduce them. We never know who we're going to be following – I was sure it was going to be the queen, but it seems it's going to be these two. The vortex tells me that their names are Mamre and Yohana, brother and sister. Well known magicians and lesser-known con artists. This is the seventeenth time that they've managed to get through the high level security of the Egyptian palace grounds, something that no one else has been able to accomplish through all of history.

MAMRE: Would you believe it, we did it again! My pulse didn't even quicken this time. We could do this with our hands tied at this point. I think this proves that we've reached the height of our power. We're like Gods. Do you think He will grant us immortality now?

YOHANA: I think you didn't need to tackle me that hard back there, we were out of sight.

ENOCH: Yohana pulls down her hood and grabs the bracelet. Mamre rolls his eyes as she slips it on her arm.

YOHANA: I'm keeping this one. Today I'm an invisible robber, tomorrow a well-decorated priestess. Things work out well when you follow the one true God.

MAMRE: Speaking of, we have an appointment with him tomorrow.

YOHANA: Better get some sleep then, it's going to be a long day. I'm looking forward to what he'll teach us next.

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ENOCH: A dry, hot day, not a cloud in sight. The two siblings are sitting at the mouth of a cave that goes deep into a mountain. A light from within the cave is casting long shadows behind Yohana and Mamre, despite the midday sun.

MAMRE: You have truly made us wealthy in the arts of sorcery, Lord, just as you promised.

ENOCH: Says Mamre.

LIGHT: Indeed I have.

ENOCH: Says the light.

Mamre nudges Yohana, who carefully says,

YOHANA: What we mean to say is... there's no challenge anymore. You know about our exploits. Well, yesterday we stole from the pharaoh herself, and she ended up rewarding us. There's nobody we can't fool.

LIGHT: I am the Lord your God, and I have plans for everyone, including you. Do you want a proper challenge? I'll give you the challenge of a lifetime.

MAMRE: Sounds like it's gonna hurt.

ENOCH: Says Mamre.

LIGHT: Not necessarily. You will ascend as high as possible into the heavens. I wish to test my angels.

YOHANA: Angels? Are they like... gods? I thought there was only you.

LIGHT: I am the lord your God, yes. They are my helpers. But they are not to be underestimated. They are very old, very dangerous, and not easily fooled. Don't use any magic up there. You are very skilled despite your short lives, but the angels will see right through you if you try anything. Your mission will be full of perils.

YOHANA: What is the mission, exactly?

LIGHT: If you reach God's- my throne room, I'll be most pleased. If you get that far, bring back a piece of the throne to me. I miss it. If you bring it to me, you are finally worthy of immortality. Here is a simplified map, and a blueprint of the throne.

ENOCH: A patch of sand in front of them begins to glow. It solidifies into a glass tablet, with a map etched into it.

LIGHT: The piece you're looking for is the infinitube, and to detach it you'll first need to get access to the Forge. You won't get access without running into the one called Michael. If he so much as suspects foul play, you're dead. If you do manage to make your way into the forge, get a tool called a (SCREECHING).

YOHANA: Wait, you got something in your throat there. What did you say the tool was called?

LIGHT: I HAVE NO THROAT, HOW DARE YOU IMPLY I AM FLESHY LIKE YOU—Oh, hm. I see. The word doesn't exist in your language. Fine, THE CLOSEST WORD WOULD BE... A HOLY SCREWDRIVER, THEN. SURELY YOU KNOW WHAT A SCREWDRIVER IS?

ENOCH: Mamre glances at Yohana, who nods confidently, even though screwdrivers haven't yet been invented in their time. Mamre tries to sound like he also knows things.

MAMRE: Yeah screwdriver, who doesn't? We weren't born yesterday.

YOHANA: Could you tell us more about the... heavens and the angels? How will we find our way, what should we say to them?

LIGHT: I'm glad you asked. Wear these.

ENOCH: Two blue amulets fly out of the light and land in front of the siblings. A chain attached to a stone with a sigil carved into them. The sigils have a unique circular design, with swirly lines overlapping into a complicated shape.

LIGHT: These will provide some disguise and protection – you will seem like members of the heavenly host. Never take them off as long as you are in Heaven. If you lose them, you're dead in minutes. Don't stay too long, and don't touch anything unless the mission requires you to. While you wear the amulets, the angels will know you as Fos and Foros.

MAMRE: And what if we fail?

LIGHT: Then you'll have felt more alive than any one of your kind. And isn't that the point?

ENOCH: The Light provides them with a portal that will take them straight to the gates of Heaven. The gate is humming at a frequency that fills them with complete calm.

LIGHT: Hold your breath as you cross. Have fun, beware of the angels, and stay afraid.

ENOCH: The magicians gingerly hang the amulets around their necks, and step through.

They arrive outside the gates of heaven. They try to not let their fear or amazement show at the otherworldly nature of this realm. Above their heads, the vastness of space is stretching out into infinity, overlooking galaxies and the forces that keep the Universe moving. The gut wrenching vertigo makes them feel like they're going to be sucked into the void. Best to look away.

MAMRE: Is this it?

YOHANA: A better question is 'Did God just order a heist on his own kingdom?'

MAMRE: Obviously. So, this is heaven. Didn't know what I expected really.

YOHANA: I sort of expected peaceful clouds. Not like this, with the... whatever that is.

ENOCH: She scoffs as she waves her hand in the direction of the outer wall burning in multicolored smokeless flames.

MAMRE: It does seem a bit too flamey. And I feel sick.

YOHANA: Come on, that looks like an entrance.

ENOCH: As they walk, the crystal floor seems to move like a lake, their footsteps sending ripples across the surface, but it's harder than diamond.

Just as they are about to step through, a roaring voice calls out right next to them.

FLAMING SWORD 1: Wakey wakey! Forgetting something?

ENOCH: It's coming from a flaming sword. It blended in so well next to the flaming walls, they hadn't noticed it. Yohana can't get any words out. Are they busted already?

FLAMING SWORD 2: You know the drill.

ENOCH: Says another flaming sword, from the right side of the entrance. Both of these entities are dancing constantly, as flaming swords are inclined to do at all times.

Mamre confidently turns to the flaming sword to the left. He's not sure where to look. Where are its eyes? Is he looking at something improper?

MAMRE: Yes, good evening. I am Fos, this is Foros. God is glorious.

FLAMING SWORD 2: "Uh-huh. And... ?"

ENOCH: The magicians glance at each other.

FLAMING SWORD 1: Your sigils, dumbasses.

ENOCH: Says the right sword, spins around, and finishes with a fierce hair flip. It has manifested some

sort of blank tablet in front of them.

They draw their assigned sigils from memory best they can.

FLAMING SWORD 2: Well your handwriting is terrible, but it checks out. Go on.

ENOCH: The left sword makes what looks like a threatening move, so they hurry inside. The right sword loudly proclaims,

FLAMING SWORD 1: I swear, these angels. Heads full of feathers and righteousness.

FLAMING SWORD 2: Did you see how they drew? Look at this mess!

FLAMING SWORD 1: Wait a minute... put the sigils together.

FLAMING SWORD 2: Why? Oh Ffff... Feathers. We should report this, right?

ENOCH: The intruders are well gone by the time the swords realize their terrible mistake. Dancing a bit more miserably now, they pull out a list of important names that they are now obliged to call upon. The swords know this routine. But there's a strong urge to resist the guarantee of being yelled at by a very intimidating boss. So they do what any scared employee would do. Procrastinate and leave the problem to the next shift.

And then they forget. Because there's only so much information a flaming sword can retain.

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Meanwhile, Yohana and Mamre are just about to give up on finding their way through the heavens. The great halls and corridors are ever-changing, and without the proper set of eyes, you don't stand a chance perceiving the layout correctly. But that's the least of their worries. They are becoming painfully aware of the dangers that God spoke of. The fierce spirits, the monsters, the incomprehensible terrors walking, floating, or rotating through the hallways.

MAMRE: Very old, very dangerous, and not easily fooled, was it?

YOHANA: Relax, as long as we radiate confidence we'll be fine. Follow my lead, look straight ahead.

ENOCH: A, to them, horrifying entity floats by, its eyes detaching to keep squinting at them long after they have passed. Its gaze makes their blood run cold and their hairs stand on end. Between us, prophets, it's just Gabriel.

MAMRE: Perhaps it is best if we avoid eye contact as well.

ENOCH: Mamre says under his breath.

YOHANA: No kidding.

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ENOCH: Their God given map shows them a comprehensive enough layout of the corridors. They

eventually manage to locate the armory. Weapons with radiating colors not quite perceivable by the human eye are showcased in meticulously ordered rows. An imperceivable distance down the corridor, they see what can only be the vicious angel God had told them about: Michael. He is currently busying himself polishing two swords that could cut through mountains like butter. He carries himself like someone who would have no problem wiping out a whole species as long as it was justified by God and could then go out for drinks without missing a beat. He is righteous, he is mighty, and he is better than you.

YOHANA: Alright, let's do this. You talk to him and I will put a crack in one of the weapons. It will be just like the time when we broke into Moses' metal workshop. Look, I know he said don't touch anything unless you have to, but how else are we getting access to the forge? Chin up!

MAMRE: I don't know if I have it in me. What if he realizes I'm not an angel? My head will roll before I even have time to blink, God said.

YOHANA: Confidence! It'll be fine. We wanted this, the ultimate challenge. Just pretend he's Moses.

MAMRE: Okay... normal guy, angry, beardy guy...

ENOCH: Mamre heads down the corridor.

MAMRE: Good sir! Mo- Michael is it?

MICHAEL: What do you need, colleague?

ENOCH: Mamre is once again not sure where to look. This is even worse than the flaming swords. Instead of no eyes, this guy has eyes everywhere – and they are moving around. He decides to nonchalantly let his eyes drift across the shelves instead. He settles for one of the most obnoxious customer schemes in the book.

MAMRE: I was wondering, see, I know these are very beautiful... weaponry things. And I need a present for my friend. Like I really need it. You would do me such a big favor if you'd just give one to me. It would be a great opportunity for you to show off your craft!

ENOCH: Elsewhere in the armory, Yohana has set out looking for a steady mace or hammer. Each aisle is like a tunnel, covered with crystalline shelves rotating around the walkway, each section moving at a different speed. It's quite nauseating and disorienting, and she briefly worries about finding her way back. Pushing that thought down in the overstuffed "future worries" box inside her brain, she tries to decipher what each item is for. The glyphs above the weapon stands have complicated symbols and don't reveal anything about the usage to her. But Yohana doesn't need instructions to wreak havoc. The rotating shelf kindly slows down for her when she reaches out for the sturdiest blunt-looking weapon she can find. A rush of energy bolts through her body as she grabs it. Yohana has never felt more powerful in her life and she suspects that her body would not be able to withstand the energy without the protective amulet. If she got out of heaven even with only this weapon, she would be the most powerful woman on earth. But she decides that immortality is more valuable. Right. Time to cause trouble. Weapon in hand, she stalks through the armory looking for something valuable, but most of all breakable. As if on cue, a shelf moves aside right in front of her. She looks up at the most beautiful armor she has ever laid her eyes on, her jaw dropping.

YOHANA: I'm so sorry for what I'm about to do to you.

ENOCH: She whispers before taking a few steps back. And with all the force she can muster, she smashes the weapon into the armor. The whole armor stand cracks and there is a huge dent in the armor.

In an instant, Michael is standing before her, his energy thundering and thrashing about aggressively. He was already at the end of his tether because of Mamre's bartering.

MICHAEL: You come into my armory, you touch my wares and you even have the audacity to target practice on one of them! Tell me why I shouldn't chain you up and sever your limbs from your body over and over again.

ENOCH: As Michael speaks, sparks fly out of his mouth, and Yohana involuntarily starts to cry. Her head feels like it's going to explode any second.

YOHANA: I'm so sorry, Michael sir! It was an accident, I didn't mean to.

MICHAEL: No! This was intentional!

ENOCH: Mamre comes running to defuse the situation.

MAMRE: Michael! Michael, please. My friend is not right in the head since the last great battle. Every time she sees a weapon, she gets possessed by memories. She can't help it. I told her to stay outside, I did! But I guess the smell of WARFARE called out to her.

Michael calms down when he hears this.

MICHAEL: I'm sorry, you must have been on the forefront.

He says reluctantly between his teeth.

YOHANA: I was. I don't remember much but as my friend says, the memories come back with full force

when I do remember, so I try not to. How can I ever repay this mess?

MICHAEL: My wares will have to be repaired in the forge, of course.

ENOCH: Michael says flatly.

Yohana holds back a victorious shout. This was going exactly according to plan. And she was about to see the heavenly forge.

MICHAEL: You will of course not be allowed in the forge, because of your... weak sensibilities. We take trauma recovery very seriously. Surprised you haven't gotten any information about that.

ENOCH: Michael says.

MICHAEL: So you...

ENOCH: He points at Mamre.

MICHAEL: ...will work your friends' debt off. Come along.

ENOCH: Mamre looks at Yohana, perplexed. He had assumed Yohana would know what a screwdriver was, and they were not supposed to get separated. This was not going according to plan. He will have to improvise.

Time in heaven does not work like the restricted linear time of humans. Mamre spends a considerable amount of time in the forge. Michael, seeing that Mamre has managed to make things even worse than the initial damage, decides to let him off.

MICHAEL: The debt is repaid, just leave already.

ENOCH: Before leaving, Mamre sneaks a tool from the table and hides it in his sleeve. Later, when he meets up with Yohana again, he proudly shows it to her.

MAMRE: I got it!

YOHANA: Great! I'm so glad you knew what a screwdriver was, I was worried.

MAMRE: Right. Okay. As a matter of fact, I don't know what this is. But let's hope it works.

ENOCH: Michael watches the airheaded angels disappear down the corridor, talking enthusiastically, about some nonsense most likely. Ever since he first met the incompetent angels, he has had a strange tingling feeling at the back of his head. He can't quite place it. He thought it was the usual irritation, but it feels different. It's only when he picks up the useless armor to chuck it in the scrap container, that he puts the pieces together. How could he be so stupid? This has the Morningstar's pretty little signature all over it.

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