

BNA 05 – Heavenly Heist (Part 2)

Description

[output_post_excerpt]

ENOCH: Yohana and Mamre have made it further than they ever thought they would. They made it through the gates of Heaven, past the suspicious eyes of several angels, and as of just now, out of Michael's grasp. Now all they had left was to find God's throne room, and the rest would be smooth sailing. Or so they thought. All of a sudden, Michael's disembodied voice is thundering across heaven's intercom.

MICHAEL: Intruder alert! All angels, report to your stations. Code: broken wing.

YOHANA: Did you hear? We're toast!

ENOCH: Says Yohana.

MAMRE: Yep, the jig is up, we're toast, this is it. I never thought it would end like this. We should have just stopped when Michael let us off the hook!

ENOCH: They stand in silence for a bit, pondering their fate and wondering what went wrong.

YOHANA: Hey, Mamre... God said he has a plan for everyone, right? He wouldn't have sent us here if he knew we were going to be caught.

MAMRE: What? But he said there would be difficulties... I don't think he meant for us to get this far.

YOHANA: No, that doesn't sound right to me. This is an opportunity, a part of his plan. Remember he wanted to test them? Maybe this is a test of how organized and well-disciplined they are. They will probably experience a lot of confusion right about now, perhaps even more than we are. Let's use that!

—

ENOCH: Rushing toward his post, Michael is growing increasingly irritated. He reaches out and calls another angel.

MICHAEL: Where are you? Didn't you hear that there's a situation here?

ENOCH: He listens for a while. I can't hear who it is. Michael lowers his voice and hisses,

MICHAEL: Code broken wing is just that, a code. Nobody is hurt, but they will be.

ENOCH: More silence as the angel on the other end evidently says something stupid, because Michael starts fuming. It takes the last of his self-control not to scream when he answers,

MICHAEL: It means you-know-who has weaseled his way in here and there's a strong possibility we

have another war on our hands. Would you be a dear and try to reach the Almighty? She only talks to you for some reason.

ENOCH: To say that the heavens are chaotic right now, is a complete understatement. As angels are rushing to their posts, preparing for battle, Yohana and Mamre have figured out that if they move in the opposite direction, they should eventually reach their final objective – God's throne room. This strategy is what eventually brings them to the edges of the highest heaven. They can make out an impossibly large, blindingly bright portal. And it is guarded by an even larger entity – a seraph.

The Seraphim are among the closest attendants to God. Only they are strong enough to withstand the glory and brilliance for extended periods of time. Well, I say glory, but you know it as gamma radiation.

The seraph is moving like smokeless fire, if fire twisted and flared into a couple of extra dimensions that humans are unable to perceive. All seraphim are almost completely covered in shifting and turning wings, and a slithering shape can be glimpsed in between all the movement. And then there are the multitude of eyes.

Um. Quick break. Ben? My serpentine friend of the seraphim, dearest colleague. I've been meaning to ask. How many eyes does a seraph have? I've tried and tried to count but I don't want to stare...

BEN: (STATIC)

ENOCH: Hey now, language. So according to Ben, the seraphim's number of eyes amount to, quote, "not enough to see all your bullsh-"

BEN: (STATIC!!!)

ENOCH: I think it's 365. Universal numerology is very predictable. So! Back to our intruders. Magicians. Siblings. Yohana and Mamre.

The great magicians are hiding behind a pillar, trembling and questioning their life choices. They are hoping against all hope that the seraph didn't see them. Yohana takes a deep breath, and begins to move toward the portal, but Mamre stops her.

MAMRE: Are you insane!?! We need a plan! That thing will smite you right back to the stone age.

YOHANA: Oh, shit, you're right. Guess I'm a bit stressed out. We need to act like angels. High ranking angels with access to high places.

MAMRE: I had a good talk with Michael. He's high ranking enough to command other angels, and God had a lot of respect for him. I think I can make a pretty decent impersonation of him.

YOHANA: It's a far cry from your smooth talking self though. Glaring and talking like you're super annoyed is not really your forte.

MAMRE: Yes, I guess you're right. We need more than that. Look at it.

ENOCH: Yohana peeks out to sneak another look at the seraph, and shivers.

YOHANA: Alright, we don't know much about this place, but we do know that they are looking for intruders. Let's pretend to be from a secret task force, sent by God. Remember, confidence is key. We can sell this.

MAMRE: So we pretend to be agents looking for ourselves? Actually that's pretty good.

YOHANA: Right? Our options are limited to say the least, I can't think of another way.

MAMRE: Yeah. Let's do this.

ENOCH: Mamre hesitantly moves toward the seraph, followed by Yohana. It was further away than they thought, and effectively, more massive.

The seraph is doing a very good job of being a cosmic horror. Mamre has gotten the hang of many eyed entities, and settles for looking at one of the seraph's eyes.

MAMRE (Mimicking Michael): Looking sharp, colleague. As you heard, we have intruders in our midst. We're here from secret throne operations and protection.

YOHANA: It's a covert operation. God's orders.

ENOCH: The seraph sparks and hisses at them. Yohana swallows and steadies her voice.

YOHANA: Be a good boy and keep your eyes out as we check the premises.

ENOCH: The seraph is saying something back that the siblings don't understand. You see, the seraphim have very strong accents even to us angels, so to a human, it's complete guesswork. So Mamre improvises.

MAMRE: Here are our badges. You better let us in quickly or risk God's wrath. These intruders seem to have some new technology that eludes even Michael's eyes. I would be surprised if they could sneak past one such as yourself, but it is our job to entertain even the most ludicrous ideas.

ENOCH: The many eyes of the seraph are doing the equivalent of darting from side to side. It's a confusing display that looks like a hundred simultaneous ping pong games. They might not have anywhere near the same body language as humans, but the silence is telling enough.

YOHANA: Great. Thank you.

ENOCH: Mamre nods for the seraph to move aside. It reluctantly does.

They each hold their breath and walk through the portal, uncertain, but determined.

Arriving in God's throne room, Yohana says,

YOHANA: Ow, my eyes. This is way too bright. Mamre, where are you? I can't see anything.

MAMRE: I can't see anything either, it's too bright. Wow, Yohana, can you believe that? I was this close to breaking character!

YOHANA: Well it worked! Acting like you know things is always a safe bet with people, but angels? Nice job. Okay, my eyes are adjusting. How about you?

MAMRE: Yeah mine too, I can sort of see you now.

ENOCH: After a moment of careful consideration, Mamre says,

MAMRE: I think it was the amulets, though.

ENOCH: Yohana, who is not sure whether she is falling or floating, says,

YOHANA: What?

ENOCH: And Mamre, who has given up all faith in the laws of nature, replies,

MAMRE: I mean it was the amulets that got us in. That dragon, guardian or whatever, it didn't care until we showed those.

ENOCH: Yohana bumps into something solid.

YOHANA: Hold that thought.

ENOCH: Even through the brightness, she can barely make out enough contours to recognize that it's the throne of God. She recognizes it from the glass tablet God gave them, and suddenly understands what God meant when he said it was a simplified image. She had imagined it smaller. And simpler.

YOHANA: Mamre, it's here.

ENOCH: They quickly locate an infinitube at the back, and Yohana brings out the stolen tool. And... she has no clue what to do with it.

YOHANA: This is impossible, it doesn't fit anywhere!

MAMRE: You shouldn't have looked so confident when God told us about it!

YOHANA: So we both lied because he scared the shit out of us, fine, it doesn't really help us now, does it?

MAMRE: Here, let me try!

Mamre takes the tool and starts to hack at the base of the infinitube. But Yohana swiftly stops his hand mid-air.

YOHANA: Shh! What the hell is that!?

ENOCH: There is a sound of... something not right. Something not right, entering the throne room. They stop moving, hoping to stay unseen.

Oh um. It's me. In my real angel form. I'm the "something not right". Apologies for the confusion. I think I'll call him Metatron just for the sake of clarity. Have I told you about my actual form before? Must have. Well, it's not very different from the other funky looking angels. I just have great difficulties controlling my size, frequency, and color spectrum when I'm like... that. So. Right now, what's entering the throne room is just a very large, very bright, very loud, cosmic... mess. I could go into great detail, like "yeah hi I'm Metatron I've got so and so many wings and oooo the heavens tremble when I speak". But we don't have time from that right now. Because...

Metatron is floating up to stop in front of the throne and starts to speak.

METATRON: Are you there, Lord? We really need you. There are intruders in our sacred space and the heavenly host is preparing for battle.

ENOCH: He is met with silence.

METATRON: It might be in your interest to join us in defending the heavens.

ENOCH: Behind the throne, Mamre and Yohana are trying to keep very still and very quiet.

Suddenly, Mamre gets an idea, and he speaks out with a deep voice:

MAMRE: Yes this is God. It's fine, I invited them. You may call off the war.

METATRON: Who's that?!

YOHANA: Fuck this, just hack away the piece and get out of here,

ENOCH: Says Yohana. She begins to pry away at another infinitube on the throne. She has no idea how to actually use the stolen tool, or that it's not even a screwdriver. It is in fact a tuning fork.

Metatron is now oscillating nervously back and forth before the throne.

METATRON: If you are the enemy, make yourself known at once and I will have mercy on you!

The only answer he gets is a loud CLANG. Yohana has just succeeded in using the tuning fork as a crowbar, catapulting the infinitube halfway across the throne room, sending an echo that never seems to end. Impressive!

In a moment, Metatron is hovering over them.

METATRON: Who are you?

ENOCH: Yohana is overwhelmed with fear and faints instantly. With adrenaline practically coming out of his ears, Mamre shouts

MAMRE: Nononono, don't kill us! God sent us, look!

ENOCH: Eyes full of panic, he points to both of their amulets.

Metatron leans down and takes both of the amulets to have a closer look.

METATRON: These hold great power, but they are not from God. The amulets fit perfectly together... forming ancient writing. Greek? My Greek is rusty. Let's see. Uh.. Fff... Fos – okay, that's light, Foros... carry, bring, bring- Lightbringer! Oh. He's always enjoyed playing with words. He might as well have asked them to graffiti "Satan was here" on the crystal floor.

ENOCH: The intruders suddenly cry out in pain as radiation burns spread across their skin.

METATRON: No no! What's happening? What are you doing!? And when did you put on meat suits?

ENOCH: Metatron flutters nervously, knowing he needs to do something fast, but not what.

METATRON: Talk to me, I want to help!

ENOCH: Mamre struggles to point at the amulets and wheezes:

MAMRE: Protection...

ENOCH: Metatron hurriedly hangs the amulets back around their necks again, but they are already mortally wounded. He concentrates, reaches out... and an archangel is standing above the humans.

METATRON: Raphael, please, can you heal them?

RAPHAEL: Radiation burns? Are these... humans in disguise?

METATRON: Humans in the skies,

ENOCH: Metatron chuckles. Raphael ignores him.

RAPHAEL: I can heal them, yes. But they can't stay here.

METATRON: I know, but I don't want to just throw them out when they're hurt this badly! And somehow Satan is behind this but he's not here and the almighty won't talk to us and-

What are we going to do!? All the angels are waiting for my order, I'm, it's too much all at once.

(Metatron keeps panicking in the background as Raphael speaks)

RAPHAEL: Calm down. Metatron. Enoch. Enoch. Listen to me. I'll take care of them. You will release a heaven-wide statement saying it was just a practice drill. Thank everyone for their excellent work. We'll talk more later. Okay?

METATRON: Yeah. Yep. Thanks.

—

ENOCH: Raphael binds the siblings in a deep sleep and brings them back to Earth. There, he heals all the damage they retained during those unprotected seconds in heaven. Radiation burns, ice burns, and metastatic tumors. It's a long and difficult process, but Raphael is the greatest healer among us.

They eventually wake up on a riverbank an hour's walk from the town center. They immediately notice a man sitting on a rock next to them. It's Raphael. He's wearing the appropriate Earth costume, the standard angelic meat suit. His clothing is centuries out of fashion, made out of a fabric not invented yet, and his hair is in glossy curls like liquid copper. As usual, the meat suit does very little to disguise his supernatural identity.

RAPHAEL: Be not afraid. We need to talk.

ENOCH: Yohana bounces to her feet,

YOHANA: Who are you!?

RAPHAEL: A messenger. How much do you remember?

YOHANA: God sent us to bring back an ihuhhh...

MAMRE: She means yhhnnnnn,

ENOCH: Mamre supplies.

YOHANA: Why can't I say inheaurrghh? What's going on!?

RAPHAEL: Good, it's working. I had to put a harmless curse on both of you. Try to speak, write or relay in any way classified information, and your bodies won't cooperate. Your tongues will tie and pens will fly out of your hands. Some of the things you've seen put all of us in danger.

YOHANA: Danger from who?

RAPHAEL: The one you call your God. He is not who he says he is. I'm sorry. He was excommunicated long ago because of... creative differences. He is not welcome in Heaven.

YOHANA: No, that can't be right. He had such knowledge and power, and when he spoke I felt deep in my heart that what he said was true. How can that be anything but the true God?

MAMRE: And he gave us access to heaven, that was real! We were sent to test you guys and well, congratulations, you passed. If you don't believe us, call him and he can explain!

ENOCH: Raphael's eyes widen and he stands up,

RAPHAEL: No! I'm not going to call the enemy, it's too dangerous. And I can't force you, that never ends well, but my advice is to stay away from him. He is... seductive and charming, it's difficult to resist his influence. He has fooled many, you're not the only ones. It's best to steer clear of him completely. He always comes up with intricate schemes that only he can fully comprehend, and usually, they end up killing vast numbers of your kind.

MAMRE: I hear what you're saying, but it sounds just as true as what God told us. I suppose we may have been in the wrong all these years...

YOHANA: Mamre, no...

MAMRE: Yohana, yes. The more I think about what we've done, not to mention what HE has done, the less sense it makes. Come on, stealing, lying, sorcery?

YOHANA: But everything is alright if God commands it. I think he established that pretty firmly.

ENOCH: Raphael waits patiently and pretends to look out over the water. They'll get there. He's got time.

MAMRE: Perhaps, but how can you be so sure that this angel is wrong?

YOHANA: It was a secret, of course God wouldn't tell them about us. I'm sure it will all become clear once he explains everything.

ENOCH: Raphael leaves it unanswered, and his lack of reply passes in the form of an awkward silence. The reeds rustle softly in the wind, and a frog hops into the water. Yohana makes a face at it, and says,

YOHANA: Now that I think about it, hey... also, if he just wanted to test the defenses in Heaven, why would he need us to steal the eeeeergh... (sigh) the thing? It doesn't make sense.

MAMRE: We're in deep shit then. Seventeen years of servitude to some villain. You know, the mass murders should have been the first hint. Oh no. Angel, sir, is there any way we can... not undo it exactly, but—

RAPHAEL: Evade punishment and eternal damnation?

ENOCH: Raphael smiles.

RAPHAEL: Don't worry, it's your intention that matters. But if you really want to feel better, and work to atone for what you've done, I do have a job for you.

YOHANA: Yes, anything.

RAPHAEL: You could become prophets. Our human agents on earth. This means that you will receive messages from the voice of God, Metatron. You met briefly. You can, of course, do with that as you like, but since you are both literate I suggest you write down as much of it as possible. Your writings

could be useful for thousands of generations to come.

—

ENOCH: The night is quiet and the city is asleep. Nearly all is laid in darkness. All except for a single window, where a faint light is flickering. It's been ten years since Raphael gave Yohana and Mamre their new job offer, and the siblings are hard at work at their writing desks. Mamre's pen freezes on his paper as he sees something in the corner of his eye, and a full body shiver runs through him. He chances a look out the window, but to his relief and a little bit of disappointment, he sees nothing.

MAMRE: Uh-oh.

ENOCH: Yohana, who had the exact same thought, whispers,

YOHANA: I know, keep writing.

ENOCH: Mamre squirms in his seat.

MAMRE: How can you be so chill about it? She can see us right now. Voice of God.

YOHANA: Yes she can. Still not the strangest event we've had the pleasure to write down.

ENOCH: Mamre snickers.

MAMRE: Too true.

ENOCH: And he dips his pen in the inkwell for the last time before finishing.

—

This was the story of two skilled magicians who ascended to heaven, made it past the archangels, and were ruthlessly kicked out by Metatron. According to most remaining human records, they were a pair of brothers named Jannes and Jambres. No mentions still remain of the help they had from Satan as God's impersonator. It is an unfortunate truth that over time, texts go through many editors and stray from the original.

But here's what we know. The siblings mentioned Moses, so we can infer that this was around his time on Earth. We also know that Satan did pretend to be God, at least when speaking to Yohana and Mamre. That brings some dangerous implications to light, but... oh nevermind.

—

ENOCH: And now for current affairs. Well, all affairs are current. Time is a current. ...Ahem.

I got a note in my feedback box this morning. It says:

"You proclaimed, out loud, for everyone to hear, 'ask Asmodeus who grooms his wings.' That is: one, indecent speculation, and two, none of your business. Meet me in the recreation room, I'll give you something to gossip about. And don't you dare read this out on your stupid show."

Ha. Heh. I don't remember this, uh. Ben?

BEN: (Static)

ENOCH: There seems to be some slang I'm missing here. I literally meant wing grooming–

BEN: (Agitated static)

ENOCH: Oh, oh, it's a delicate topic, okay.

(Knock on the door)

ENOCH: Yes, who is it?

BODIEL: It is I!

ENOCH: Hello... Bodiel. How can I help you?

BODIEL: Me and a handful of others, we were thinking we'd invite you to hang out sometime or whatever. Is that something you'd want to do?

ENOCH: Really. That sounds... lovely! I just need a few minutes to finish up here, and we can talk–

BODIEL: Oh shit, I thought you were done. See ya!

ENOCH: No, it's okay, you don't have to- ok. He left.

An invite! Oh, I'm getting jittery just thinking about it! I could get to know some of them. Maybe even make some friends if I'm lucky. Are they friends with each other? Oh, I barely know anything. But I know it's important to make a good impression. Worst case scenario, I'll be unwelcome, just like I am with... well. I have to prepare!

In a way, I can relate to our clever intruders. I too am a stranger here, even if I... Huh. A stranger in a strange land, that's all of us, when you get down to it. Every time you think "is it just me?", a million other souls are asking the same question. That's existence in a nutshell really. You may be strange, but so is everyone else in their own way.

Be not afraid.

Category

1. Transcripts

Tags

1. amulets
2. archangels
3. asmodeus
4. ben
5. bodiel

6. egyptian magicians
7. enoch
8. heaven
9. infinitube
10. lightbringer
11. mamre
12. metatron
13. michael
14. mores
15. portal
16. prophets
17. raphael
18. satan
19. scribes
20. seraphim
21. seventh heaven
22. sigils
23. the dimensions are all wrong
24. the fall
25. throne of god
26. vortex of events
27. wing grooming
28. yohana

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