

Shadows of the Past

ein englisches Intime, editiert von Kim Schneider;

*gespielt von Kim Schneider, Eric Schuler, Tobias Kirchgessner, Uwe L.,
Florian Wagner und Charles K. Foster III*

Teil 4

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Shadows of the Past
Consecration of the Engel
March 21.st 2639

The great doors of the dome are opened. Dim, gold-coloured light streams into the great hall, as the michaelitic monks enter.

Quietly the hosts return to the here and now, heads turn into the direction of the opened portal.
It begins!

The first hosts near the entrance rise to slowly walk out into the early morning. From here, everyone can see the silent mass of spectators framing the huge place before the ancient dome.

The people the Engel will protect. Them and hundreds, thousands of other mortal souls.

Outside, the Sarielites start the first choir of the young day, Ashviel silently chiming in. She slowly rises, hands extended to her sides, her eyes locked on the open portal.

Calahel gazes at the opening enormous doors and at the sight that is revealing itself to him. He catches his breath and then with a happy smile mixed with pride he comes to his feet and looks in the round of his host, completely speechless.

Ronariel slowly stands up with his face toward the opening gate. His heartbeat rises and he breathes deeply the cold morning air streaming in through the opened gate. Now the moment is near, he thinks. Now I'm going to really be called Engel and the others of my order no longer could tease me for being this old and only an novice. Than he stands upright with pride in his eyes and waits for the others and the moment when it is time for them to stride through the gate.

As the doors opens, Thommariel stands up with a smile and a starry-eyed. He had waited long for that day and now he looks happy. He takes a look to the other Engel of his host, waits until all are ready to walking out.

Egriel rises slowly, shifting his wings as he balances himself in doing so. He is solemn about the whole ceremony, but after noting the eager looks on the faces of his comrades, the edges of his mouth raise slightly in a barely-noticeable grin.

He, too, awaits for the other Engel before proceeding.

Phinael rises, struggling for her balance and extending her wings in doing so. Inadvertently, she slaps her primary feathers against the backs of two of her hostbrothers and mumbles an excuse. She doesn't look really awake and welcomes Ashviel's outstretched arm to steady her.

"Uh, something happening?" She blinks to the open portal where the Engel start to walk out of the ancient dome. "Uh, I see," she answers herself. "Show's proceeding. Let's got, then." Stifling a huge yawn, she trots out between the other members of her host, gently shaking off Ashviel's helping hand. "I'm well, and I'm awake," she says, grinning over her shoulder. "But thanks, Ashviel."

Shadows of the Past

The Sarielite nods, grinning with excitement as the others.

Outside, the crowd forms a multi-bodied tunnel through which you have to walk. Some daring individuals bend close, trying to touch your wingtips, even wanting to snatch up a loose feather for a lucky charm for their homes and families. Phinael's half extended right wing nearly gets caught in the grasping hands of an infant, and she carefully loosens it while a small, downy feather, not bigger than the palm of a grown man, stays in the hands of the child. The mother gives a small, startled exclamation while retrieving her little daughter who holds up her trophy, squealing and beaming with delight.

Phinael smiles at mother and child while proceeding with the rest towards the huge place before the dome. There, they all wait. The Pontifex, soon to come, on a simple pedestal, adorned with banners of all angelic orders. The cardinals and bishops, and the singing choir of Sarielites. Ashviel cranes her neck, waving at familiar faces in the mass, singing along with the rest of the heavenly choir.

Ronariel follows the others through the gate in to the morning light. Now suddenly he realizes the amount of souls that waits outside for the Engel to come through the gate. Ronariel's heartbeat rises again, his heart seems to explode in his chest and his feathers rustle. For a moment he seems to be frightened of all the hands that will touch him before they are reaching the place in front of the cathedral. Now Ronariel looks at the ground and remembers what he was told: "Engel never have fear" with that thought in mind he looks up with a proud and serious face and walks towards the place where they've been told to kneel down and wait until their names are called.

*

Egriel follows the others in silent contemplation. As he notices the line of mortal spectators reaching out, he slowly shifts his location so that he walks next to Carniel, positioning him so that Carniel is between him and the nearest group of on-lookers. He nods to the black-garbed Gabrielite, his eyes glimmering with faint amusement.

People know better than to pluck feathers from a Gabrielite. he thinks, smiling to himself.

Like the others Carniel walks on the side of his host out of the place where they had meditated. He moves a bit to the side to make room for Egriel. *Does Egriel fear something? Mhm.. whatever, it is my task.. no, it is the task of my order to protect him from whatever it is.. even if it are these people..*, Carniel thinks as Egriel nods to him.

Then Carniel watches the people around them... the whole masses of new hosts and the humans.. and he realized that he is about to see the Pontifex Maximus.. the personification of God himself on the earth. Suddenly Carniel becomes nervous...

Thommariel stands outside with the other members of his host. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath, then he whispers another prayer.

Then, ordered by hosts, the Engel all kneel down in front of the podium, leaving a broad alley in the middle to the free space in front of the podium.

The ceremony begins with a procession towards the simple throne. The Pontifex walks,

Shadows of the Past

barefooted and clad in a simple white, gold-trimmed tunic, towards the podium, mounts the steps and takes a seat. They can all see him now, as the first rays of the sun seem to guild his figure. Not taller than most of you, not older than most of you. He smiles, his face nearly indiscernible in the bright, golden light.

And then, the choir falls silent. Not even the daring parrots along the big alley are heard, even as they themselves feel that this is a very special moment.

A monk steps forward, a simple votiv ribbon in his hands.
The Pontifex calls out the first Engel's name.

"Maduriel!"

A dainty Michaelite rises and nearly stumbles over her long skirts. She is tiny, almost too small. You can see her hurrying toward the monk, red-faced with excitement, then straightening herself to walk gravely for the last few meters.

Then, the monk winds the ribbon around her left arm, deftly securing the fabric with practiced motions around her wrist. He also places a blessing hand on her shock of reddish, blonde hair.

The Pontifex raises a hand in blessing, as she draws back to an empty place where she waits, standing upright, eyes gleaming.

*

So this is the Pontifex Maximus Himself! Egriel observes as he awaits among his other host-mates for his name to be called. He glances to his side, noticing the eagerness amongst his bretheren. In contrast, he is calm, but curious about the procedures to come.

*

One by one, the names of the Engel are called. And there are so many names that your head starts to swim.

Host by host, member by member, they are blessed, consecrated and given their very first ribbon.

Then, starting with Thommariel around midday, the monk turns to your host and calls out: "The michaelite Thommariel!"

Ashviel grins broadly. "Now, there we go," she says softly, nearly unheard in the singing choir of Sarielites.

She looks over to the growing group of already conscrated Engel and readies herself to rise.

The monk waits, the ribbon in his hands. Behind him, novices prepare the ribbons for the rest of the host.

Thommariel nods slowly to the members of its host, then he walks toward the waiting monk. He smiles a bit.

Now the time has come. The Monach calls his name, and in his ears the voice of the

Shadows of the Past

monach sounds like thunder. Ronariel's eyes get wide and round with a little bit of panic in it. He stands up as if he were pulled by strings; again he has to fight against his fear and it takes all of his courage to stand upright and walk towards the monach who awaits with the ribbon . After the Pontifex spoke the blessing over Ronariel he feels even prouder, and he thinks he couldn't be more prepared for the missions that he and the others of his host have to solve for the good and sake af the Angelic Church.

As his name is called, Egriel walks up to the monach and solemnly receives his ribbon. After the ribbon is secured on his tattooed left arm, a genuine smile spreads across his face as he joins the ribboned ranks of his host. Once there, he succumbs to the urge of examining the ribbon, glancing over the etched symbols.

*

One by one, the Engel step towards the monach and are adorned with the Engels' first ribbon, wound around the left arm.

After the final blessing, you are guided towards the growing group of excited Engel at the other side of the place.

A lot of smiling faces are to be seen there.

The sense of joy is nearly substantial here.

They barely notive the passage of time, only note the arrival of more Engel.

At sunset, you all rise as one, flying up to the sky. Even the weakest flyer suddenly finds the strength to take off the ground with one big leap.

Below you, the dizzying, cheering crowd raises hands and arms. Lucky souls may catch a drifting feather from a wing, securing him and his family the benevolence of the Lord for one full year.

You rise as a giant swarm of wings and bodies, over the Eternal City, towards the Himmel of the Michaelites where the last stage of the ceremony awaits you: the big and more private celebration amongst the Engel themselves. One last night for you all to celebrate, and enjoy the comfort and luxuruy of this Himmel.

Great, lighted halls await the Engel, fragrant food and, finally, after a few more hours, the well-earned rest for this day...

Shadows of the Past

A fan of feathers

Calahel laughs heartfully cause of a joke the nice Ramielit of another host made. He holds his stomach giggling and glances at his hostmembers who enjoy the 'party of Engel', too. Eating, chatting, celebrating like in heaven, what more could you want?

Of course Calahel remembers his duties that would come, but for tonight, he thinks, there is no Engel in this hall that doesn't feel good. Smiling and with spread arms he walks over to the Raphaelite of his host, and although she is perhaps a bit shy, she enjoys the evening as well, at least Calahel hoped so. "Greetings sister, how do you feel?" He asks in a happy voice and cuddles her briefly.

*

Thommariel talks to some other Michaelites for a while, then he walks to the members of his host. "I am anxious to what will be our first mission... but for now we should enjoy all of this", he smiles then he eats an apple.

*

Phinael sits beside another female Raphaelite, talks a little and then starts to saunter through the great hall.

At the approach of Calahel, she smiles up at the taller Engel, lets herself be cuddled but slaps his arm playfully. "You'd crush me, brother. You're stronger than I am, and besides, I tend to settle on a bit more of a distance." She wiggles a broken feather in front of him. "See? I broke it in that crowd and the massed takeoff down there." Sighing, she tugs at her newly acquired first ribbon and takes a few steps back, retrieving a small saucer with pineapple slices. "And there comes Ashviel," she notes, grinning. "I bet she's a bit out of breath with all that stairs to climb!"

She waves over to the Sarielite who approaches the two other Engel.

"I'm late, I know," the Engel gasps. "But you ever counted all those stairs?" She looks at Phinael's broken feather. "Oh, what a pity! Where did you get that?" She reaches out, and Phinael plucks the damaged feather from her wing, smothering the broken shaft back into form.

Smiling, the tiny Raphaelite lays the soft feather into Ashviel's outstretched palm.

"For me?" she breathes, gazing happily at the golden shimmering feather. Phinael shrugs, smiling and nodding towards Thommariel. She proceeds to a loose knot of Raphaelites in a corner.

Ashviel looks up to Calahel and Thommariel. "Now, would it be disrespectful to ask you for a feather as well, brothers? I've got this strange feeling I'd want to keep them from all of you near me. We'll be seperated long enough." Her face is crossed by a shadow before she straightens herself. She looks towards Thommariel as if trying to excuse herself but then says nothing.

*

Shadows of the Past

"I understand sister, and I'd be glad to offer you one." He spreads his wings a bit above his head and smiles: "Which one you'd like? Got long ones, shorter ones, fluffier ones, lighter and darker ones." He twinkles in her direction.

Ashviel thinks for a few seconds. "Well..." She props her tongue between her teeth. "How 'bout that one?" She points toward a shorter, fluffier feather at the inside of Calahel's wings and grins. "I don't want you to pluck one that wouldn't mold soon..."

*

Phinael observes the two Engel and grins towards Thommariel. "So, and that makes it your turn to donate one of yours." She lets one hand sink into her right wing and draws it out, a similar feather like the broken one between her fingers. "Ashviel will get this one from me," she whispers conspiratively towards the Michaelite. "Won't do to settle on a broken one, eh?" Looking around, she frowns slightly. "And where would our Gabrielite and Urielite be?"

*

Thommariel looks to Ashviel with a smile, spreads his wings a bit "Sister, your choice".

*

The experience for Egriel was quite exhilarating, witnessing many Engel, including himself, launch into the air like a huge flock of birds. Although brief in comparison to the long journey, it took quite a bit of effort and power to transport himself up alongside the verticle shaft of the Himmel.

Currently, he stands close-by the other Engel of his host, enjoying the food as well as the occasional dialogue with the other passing Engel. Noticing the activities of his host-mates, he approaches.

"What are you doing?" Egriel asks, pointing to the plucked feathers, "Is this a new custom?"

*

Carniel frees himself from another Gabrielite he talked to and walks directly up to Thommariel. "Greetings, Thommariel.. you wanted to talk to me, you said.."

He turns to Carniel and whispers so only the Gabrielite will understand the words. "Brother, please use your holy weapon only if it is really useful. It is not right to use this sword as a toy. You will have enough chances to use it against the enemies of the Church, the enemies of the ONE! That's all I want to say". He smiles again "and for now we should enjoy all of this".

*

Ashviel, fanning out the already collected feathers in a nice arrangement, gazes at them, happy as a child between o so many toys.

Shadows of the Past

Phinael, adding her undamaged feather to the fan carefully, grins up to her ears, as the Sarielite starts to laugh with pure joy. A simple, purple silk ribbon is found somewhere to tie the feathers together.

The two female Engel chatter along happily while approaching the Gabrielite for Ashviel's "collection".

Shily, the Sarielite looks up to the Gabrielite. "Carniel, would you like to... to donate one as well?"

Phinael, beside the right shoulder of the wingless Engel, extends one of hers that it almost looks like as if Ashviel suddenly grew a pair of wings.

After Ashviel asks for a feather Ronariel nods and spreads his left wing to take a feather out and gives it to Ashviel with the words: "These feathers of our Host should bring you luck for your next missions and as a reminder of this day, I hope that we see us again eventually in the future." Then he also walks through the great hall and speaks with other Engel, but shortly he returned to the others and enjoys the meal and began to speak with the others of the great missions they are going to be sent.

*

Realization dawns upon Egriel. Carefully spreading a wing, he plucks a mid-sized feather. This one was chaffing anyways.

Walking over to the Sarielite, he offers her the feather. "As is proper," he states with a small smile, "If you have need for more, feel free to ask." His smile broadens, "They make excellent writing tools in a pinch."

Ashviel, sighing, takes Egriel's offered feather and winks at him. "No writing for me, brother. I'd rather draw something." She smiles and carefully adds the feather into the loose bundle of feathers. "Anyone seen our Gabrielite?" she adds, craning her neck to get a better look over the gathered Engel.

*

Phinael behind her looks around as well. "Either I'm blind, or I won't notice him," she grumbles. "I'll go and look."

With this, she dives between two taller Michaelites and disappears in the crowd.

*

Carniel nods to Thommariel. "I never would use it as a toy. I was absent minded." Then he turns to the Sarielite "Yes of course you may have one.. I.. have enough of them" he said with a smile. "But erh.. you.." it seemed as the following words unplease him "please don't forget, that it was the will of the One, that Sariel had no wings.. even if you want wings like us, too" With these words he takes some of his feathers and hands them to her.

"You draw?", Egriel asks Ashviel eagerly, "We share similar interests then. I would be interested in viewing your drawings."

Shadows of the Past

"And where is Phinael going?" he continues, "If she's looking for the Gabrielite, he's right over there." Egriel points to where both Thommariel and Carniel are quietly talking.

*

Ashviel gravely nods towards the Gabrielite, adding his two feathers to her collection and then carefully wrapping them in a silk cloth.

"Yes, Sariel had his wings taken away, I'm aware of that. Wouldn't I be, there'd always be Engel and monks to remind me of it." She looks a bit testy and quickly turns away from the black-clad Engel, her face all too clearly betraying her feelings in this subject.

Smoothly, she switches topics and looks over to Egriel. "And yes, I draw. At least I used to..." She gazes down at her hands, then quickly slips the wrapped feathers into a bag hanging at her belt.

"Now, I think, I'll get Phinael back and get more of that pineapple stuff she was talking about." With a swift motion, she slips past two approaching Engel and ducks into the commotion around the buffet.

*

No one of the host sees Ashviel again before you all gather in your cella to rest.

The Sarielite wears a moody expression on her face, as you all settle down to meditate. She evades conversation, assisted by Phinael who almost violently shakes her head if someone should try to approach the wingless Engel.

As he sits perched upon his stool, Egriel contemplates the situation. An idea occurs to him, and he silently pulls out a piece of parchment and a writing stick. Propping the parchment against a slate, he commences to draw in quick strokes, pausing once or twice.

Satisfied, he folds the parchment, quietly drops off the stool, and softly pads over to Ashviel. Disregarding Phinael's head-shaking, he hands Ashviel the folded parchment. "Here." he whispers with a gentle smile. Winking to Phinael, he returns to his stool.

Thommariel sits down and take a deep breath. "This was a beautiful day. What do all of you think what will be our first mission?" He looks to the members of his host.

Ashviel unfolds the parchment, views the sketch and, sighing deeply, carefully winds it around her feather collection. With a brave smile, she nods to Egriel. "That's really very nice, Egriel." She stops, as if she wanted to say more, but then shakes her head gently.

After Thommariel's question, she shrugs indifferently. "Maybe something far away from here? Don't know, I was too tired to ask the other Michaelites what they'll have for us." She grins.

Phinael regards her with raised eyebrows, barely interrupting her task to preen one wing.

Shadows of the Past

"I'd say, we'll see." She is smiling. "And tomorrow, after we've rested." Folding her wing back, she adds, "But It cannot be a misstake to have our things packed and ready." She sets her small satchel beside her stool and then resumes meditating position.

Thommariel nods to Ashviel. "I was to tired too, but we will see it tomorrow, after we rest", he smiles.

"Phinael is right. We should have packed our things and then let us take some rest".

Egriel nods before putting away his drawing tools, then lifting up his neatly-packed satchel to display his readiness.

*

Ronariel finally gets his satchel ready for the next day. He looks over the past day and comes to the result that this day was the best in his live to date, but it has a bitter sweet taste anyway. With a moody expression on his face he thinks about the Sarielit; that Engel who is blessed with a beautiful voice: *For Ashviel it seems to be pretty hard to deal with her being as an Engel without wings. I wished I might be able to take the sorrow from her. After a short time: Oh I have an idea! Tomorrow I'll have to speak with the Michaelite of our host.* Now Ronariel looks around the tired Engel with an grin in his face and than he quickly falls into meditation.

*

Also as well Calahel takes a last look around his host and with a satisfied smile he drifts off in tranquil meditation releasing his tensed muscles and thoughts of the day. There would be more to come, that was sure.

"I don't know, what our first mission will be. How could I?" Carniel says while packing his things. *Was it right from me to have said this to the Sarielite??* He thaught with sadness *I didn't want to hurt her.. but.. it was right! Surly it was right.. I hope so...* He turns around and sinks down in meditation pose.