



The Priest and the Handii

Faith, obedience, burden, and sacred companionship.



*“Two are better than one ... for if they fall,
the one will lift up his fellow.”*

— Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

The bond between a priest and his Handii is one of the most misunderstood relationships in The Chronicles of the Archangels. From a distance it looks like the bond of a knight and his lady, or a lord and his sworn protector. It is neither. It is older, stranger, and far more dangerous than that. It is the deepest covenant the order knows — a marriage in everything but the word the world uses for it.



What the Old Church Knew

The modern reader inherits a half-truth: that priests were always celibate, that the altar and the marriage-bed were always set against one another, that a man called to holy orders had to renounce the covenant of marriage as the price of his calling. This is not what the old Church believed for the first thousand years of her life. Her bishops married. Her priests married. Her deacons married. A wife was not a scandal to a vocation. She was, in the soundest of the old understandings, part of it — a sacrament beside a sacrament, two covenants reinforcing one another at

the same altar.

Sacred Grimdark stands inside that older memory. In the world of *The Chronicles*, the priesthood was never built to be carried alone. The Most High does not ask a man to bear what He has already declared, from the first garden, no man should bear in solitude. The priest is given a Handii not as concession to weakness, but as the right shape of the calling — the wife at the altar, the sword at the side, the soul that will not let him fall unattended.



What the Handii Is

The Handii are women. Every one. Each is bound to a single priest by a covenant the order treats as sacramental — a vow of total fidelity sealed not in ink but in soul. She is not his bodyguard. She is not his servant. She is the priest's sword-hand made flesh, the silent half of his vocation, the one who will stand between him and the dark for as long as breath remains in her body.

Her blade is not her own. It belongs to the altar her priest serves. Her life is not her own either. She has surrendered it the way a bride surrenders the world at the altar — totally, irrevocably, and with full understanding of the cost. The bond, once made, cannot be undone by either party. Only death parts them.



A Marriage of Vocation

This is the part the modern reader most often misses. The bond is not romance. It is not friendship. It is marriage in the deepest sense the old languages meant by the word — two lives fused into one calling, each sworn to die for the other, each refusing to outlive the betrayal of the other's vow. The priest does not take a wife of the world because he has already taken a wife of the altar. The Handii does not give herself to another because she has already given herself, soul and body, to the work her priest was anointed for.

They share a bed, as those joined in covenant are given to share. What passes between them in that privacy is not spoken of in the Chronicles, nor pried into by the order. They share a vocation, which is more binding still. They share silences no spouse outside the order will ever fully understand. They share the weight of the same war.



What the Priest Owes

And the priest owes her everything in return. Not pay. Not protection. He owes her the truth — of the war, of the burden, of the doubts, of the silences in heaven. A Handii is not lied to. A Handii is not spared the weight of what her priest carries. She has earned, by the offering of her own life, the right to know what that life is being spent for.

This is why the bond is dangerous. A priest who loses his way will pull his Handii into the fall with him. A Handii whose faith fractures will leave her priest defenceless before powers no soul should face alone. The two stand or fall together. The order has no language for surviving one without the other — only requiems.



Sacred Companionship

There is a tenderness inside this bond that the world rarely sees. The priest blesses his Handii at dusk. She kneels at the foot of his prayer-cell when the night is bad. They eat in silence. They walk in silence. They pray in silence. And when the dark comes, they meet it side by side — one with words, one with steel, both with the same vow on their lips.

When one dies, the other does not long outlive the parting. The bond was never built to be carried alone. The closest the modern world comes to naming what passes between them is to call it marriage, and even that word is too small. It is covenant — and covenant, when it is real, is one of the few things in this world that the dark cannot break, and that even death cannot unmake.



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