

Arcana Magi - c.19:

Opportunity Arising

by H-M Brown

At Avalon Tech, with the book on the Sentinels on her lap, Karyn read the Theory of Fate and Destiny. She read about how mathematical equations connected with the philosophy and ideology of fate and destiny. That it was possible to cast spells through mathematical equations that would determine the course of objects and living beings. Where they went, how they live, how long will they exist. Oryn believed that anyone who mastered these equation spells would control everything. Yet, many of the equations were complex. Some did not make sense or seemed illogical. Oryn stated that in one of her experiments, she let a mouse run freely around her lab. She placed a small block of cheese on one end of the room and large block of cheese on the other end. The scent of both cheeses would make it difficult for the mouse to know which way to go. With the equation written out on half the page, it used x for the mouse, y for the small cheese and z for the large cheese. The calculations led to the mouse getting the large cheese. Oryn said it was a success.

"This is ridiculous." Karyn said as she closed the book.

"Oh..." Oryn stopped writing and folded her hands to listen.

"You really believe it was the mouse's fate to go for the big cheese and therefore you manipulated it to go there?"

"I don't expect you to understand, but I do expect you to think with an open mind."

"I'm sorry to break it to you,' Karyn closed her eyes. 'but there is no such thing as fate and destiny..."

"...People who believe in fate and destiny are just making an excuse for their actions.' Oryn smiled as Karyn half-opened her eyes, upset at the executive finishing her quote. 'It's because of your

comments to the magi community that it has been so hard to convince scholars that I have figured it out."

"But you still don't get that all you have is a theory, it doesn't mean you proved it to be a fact."

Oryn took a deep breath. She wanted more than anything to prove she was right. Convincing Karyn of all people was a difficult effort. She knew it was a matter of time. The phone rang, and Oryn answered it.

"Hello."

"Oryn.' Vyndor said on the other line. 'What's the meaning of having Madam Karyn Mayweather in your office? She should be at Mystic Intelligence."

"You'll have to excuse me Vyndor, but I felt that her reputation there may convince the agents to let her go."

"I see."

"Besides, with her here, she won't interfere. After all I have her shackled so she can't channel mana."

"Hmmm..." Vyndor became silent as Oryn leaned back and stared at her nails. 'Very well. I want to meet her later. Understand?"

"Yes sir."

"Now, I want you to get the girls to go to Mystic Intelligence."

"I thought you wanted me to draw them here."

"No. If you send them to Mystic Intelligence, it will be hard for them to fight. From what you reported, they don't have the will to kill the agents."

"I understand."

"Oh and Oryn, don't worry if you only do not get all of the Sentinels over there. One is more than enough."

"Vyndor?" Oryn said as the phone hung up on her. She pulled the phone back tilting her head in confusion. She turned to Karyn and saw the smug look on the old mage's face. The executive placed the phone on the hook, and folded her hands. 'I guess it's time for me to demonstrate my theory."

Oryn took her notepad and walked around her desk. She sat in front of Karyn and held up the notepad showing equations.

"Each page has an equation for each Sentinel.' Oryn flipped through the pages showing similar calculations for each girl. 'Now I have to make adjustments by replacing Avalon Tech as the destination with Mystic Intelligence, like so."

Oryn used her pencil to erase a couple of equations and made the necessary adjustments. She showed Karyn the changed numbers and the solution. She flipped onto the next page. It had Reya's name on it and equations much different from the ones made for the Sentinels. The executive channeled her mana and placed her hand on the first page.

"Fate to Destination." A veil of light enveloped the page. Oryn and Karyn stared at each other. Their eyes unmoving, like in a chess match, awaiting each other's next move. When the light disappeared, Karyn leaned back shaking her head in disbelief.

"You know that Reya is in a coma. She won't be coming to Mystic Intelligence anytime soon."

"Actually this equation ensures that Mystic Intelligence finds her while she is vulnerable. Such lovely bait."

"Hmm..." Karyn felt she underestimated Oryn. Despite the denial of the executive's theory, the idea that she would try to capture Reya to use as bait was a cause for concern. She remained quiet but her silence gave Oryn a sense of satisfaction.

"Soon Mayweather, you will be a believer in fate and destiny."

Karl opened the glove compartment of his minivan. He was on the cell phone with Fynir. The elf removed his personal effects as the rain pounded the roof of the vehicle.

"I don't like your plan Karl.' Fynir said with a raspy voice over the phone.

"Well I don't like the idea of the girls waiting in Newark for three days.' Karl stepped out of the van and closed the door. He hurried to the motel room where Suzie waited by the open door. 'It's better if I go there and get them. I know how to get around Newark. They don't."

"It's too dangerous. They will stop you once they see you're van."

"I know.' Karl entered the motel room and placed his effects on the table. "That's why I'm going to this used car dealer the next town over to get change minivans. Then I'll head straight from there to Newark to get the girls. Sorry Fynir, but..."

"It's alright. You get the girls out of the city. Don't worry about me, Lori and Karyn."

"Fynir,' Lori said, her voice sounded far away from the phone. 'you need to rest. Let Karl try to get the girls out. We'll manage on our own. Captain's orders."

"You heard the lady." Karl said.

"Heh... you watch yourself out there."

"I will. Good luck Fynir."

"Good Luck."

Karl turned off the connection, the time read eleven in the morning, July 25th and slipped the phone in his pocket. He sat next to Suzie and took off his wet skullcap. The elf watched Suzie sift through his stuff. Brochures of places the two have traveled together on vacation. There was sadness in her eyes.

"So many places we've been to. I wonder if we will ever have the chance to do this again together."

"We will. Once we get the evidence to Mystic Intelligence in Merydia."

"Karl.' Suzie turned to him. 'Look around you. Mystic Intelligence cannot help these girls. We'll have to disappear with them and hide for a very long time."

Karl lowered his head. He wanted to put an end to all of this so he may be able to continue life with Suzie normally. The elf does not like the idea of having to travel all over the place with five teenage girls just to hide from a corporation. He felt there was no place to hide. No place was safe.

"We can't run Suzie. Mystic Intelligence probably froze our accounts so we have no way of being able to get money."

"Then we start a new account. Danica says she knows people who can set up fake IDs."

"We'll never make it far. We have a better chance to get to Merydia than hiding."

"And what about Reya?" Suzie stood to her feet and looked at Reya resting on the bed. "We can't fight with her in this condition."

Karl stood to his feet and placed his hands on Suzie's shoulders. He wrapped them over her chest and leaned into her face.

"Let me first get the girls. Then we'll all talk about this again. Okay?"

Suzie turned around and wrapped her arms around Karl's waist. She stared into his elven eyes and nodded. They kissed each other as Reya slowly opened her eyes and closed them. Suzie took Karl's skullcap and slipped it on his head covering his pointed ears. She followed him to the door and saw the rain eased up into a drizzle.

"Maybe luck is on our side." Karl said.

"Just be careful, honey."

"I will." Karl walked to his minivan and climbed inside. As he pulled out of the parking space, they waved to each other one more time. Once Karl was out of her sight, Suzie closed the door and went into the bathroom.

Reya opened her eyes again. The sound of the shower caught the catgirl's attention. She instinctively moved her legs over the side of the bed. She rocked them back and forth. Reya planted them on the floor. She squished her toes on the rug.

"mew." Reya smiled as she felt the warmth of the rug. Reya pulled on her pajamas and smelled the sleeves. When she stood up to her feet, her legs felt loose and she dropped her knees on the ground. She perched her body up, with hands pressing on the rug. Her tail wagged side to side, and she walked on all fours for a little while. Reya's ears rose up and she heard the cars outside. She scurried over to the window and jumped on top of the table. Her hand reached out to the curtain. She played with it and she noticed the world outside. A car drove by on the road and she jumped off the table to the door. Reya rubbed her nails on the door. When her hand touched the doorknob above her, she felt it move. Without thought, she stood to her feet and clasped the door. She turned the knob not

knowing how or why she could do that. Reya threw the door open and was startled when it slammed into the wall. She screeched like a cat. Reya watched the door close slowly and feeling the brush of wind rushing into the room. She crawled outside just as the door closed.

Crouching outside, she watched another car drive by. Reya stood upright and balanced her footing. She walked in the same direction the car drove. The drizzling rain bounced off her face. She looked up at the sky and raised her hands up. Each drop of water dripped off her fingertips. The tingling feeling made her giggle like a child. Her eyes lit open by that act. Her mind was in conflict, between human and feline. Unaware of what she was, she could not process why she was acting in this manner. Instead, she watched a bird land near a forest. Reya followed it inside, until the motel was no longer behind her.

The rain stopped falling and Reya leaned close to a blue and yellow butterfly on a flower. The catgirl sniffed and pollen entered her nose. She sneezed a couple of times and the butterfly flew away. She chased after it, her tail wagging. She tried to pounce on it but it was out of her reach.

"REYA!" Suzie said in the distance as the cat ears twitched.

The word felt familiar, but she cannot recognize it. Her body felt compelled to go to that sound as she heard it one more time. Reya walked through the bushes, and there Suzie called out with her hands over the mouth. The catgirl stared at the woman. There was a feeling that she saw her somewhere, but could not remember at all. Reya stepped out of the bushes and crouched like a cat.

"mew."

"REYA!" Suzie saw the catgirl crawling to her on hands and feet. The woman jerked her head and realized something was wrong. 'Reya.'

Suzie knelt down with arms open. She felt the catgirl rest on her chest and rubbed her small body around the woman, her tail lifted up. The woman watched Reya lay on her knees and purred.

"I'm so sorry.' Suzie hugged Reya and shed tears for the teen. She placed her hands on the catgirls cheeks and stared deep into her yellow eyes. 'Do you remember who you are?"

"mew."

Suzie placed her hand on Reya's grey and white hair and stroked it gently. She heard the catgirl giggle and purr at the same time. The innocent smile eased Suzie's heart, but that painful feeling of seeing Reya like this lingered for now.

The sound of a twig snapped in the distance. Reya was alert. The sound of footsteps drawing closer ignited an instinct. She hissed and screeched as Suzie tried to figure out what was wrong. The catgirl looked out at the trees and stood on all fours with her tail raised ready to strike. She felt Suzie's arms wrapped around her waist.

Suzie pulled Reya away from the bushes and carried her back into the room. They saw Mystic Intelligence agents with rifles, guns, and wands charging at them. They surrounded the building. She closed the door and channeled her mana.

"LOCK!" The door made the sound of a key locking the door. When the sound of a bang struck the barrier, there was a small pulse of light. Suzie took Reya to the bathroom. She went back out and grabbed the box of evidence. The woman feared they would find the evidence and destroy it.

"Go through the window!" A man said behind the door.

Suzie saw the silhouette of the agents raising their hands on the window. She hurried with the box into the bathroom and closed the door repeating the same Lock spell. Inside, she opened the small window. There was not enough room for her or Reya to fit through, but just enough to force the box of evidence outside. Once she got the box through she wrapped Reya in her arms and she turned her around. With Suzie's back to the door, she acted as shield to protect the teen as the pulse of light reflect with strike on the enchanted door. She lifted her hand up and channeled her mana, waiting for the agents to break through.

"Get the barrier breaker!" The sound of the agents screaming outside frightened Reya in the end.

Suzie stroke Reya's hair to calm her as they heard the sound of the bathroom door banging. It was then, that Reya cried like a human girl, and Suzie hugged her tightly as they door broke open.

"PULSE!" A small ball of light shot out of Suzie's hand. It struck the first agent knocking him out of the bathroom. It was not enough to stop them all, when the back end of the rifle struck Suzie in the head.

At Kyo's house, Alysia rested on the couch with a blanket over her body. She drained all her energy from the release of her emotional pain and the overwhelming physical pain inflicted by the enchantment. Kyo held her hand gently and stared at the bracelet as Brie explained everything that happened. It was painful to hear. Erasing her emotions. Using her concussion to control her. Experimented on her with their inventions. Twisting her memories through torture. He has no means of truly grasping her experience. He does not know how he could comfort her. To ease that pain. All these months, believing she had died, and it was all a lie. He wondered what memories remained in Alysia. Her family, her friends, himself. It was a lot to sink into thought.

"Alysia.' Kyo said with a whisper. 'What is Avalon Techs plan? What is so important that they would do this to her?"

"We don't know Kyo.' Brie said sitting beside him in front of Alysia. 'What we do know is that she's not the first nor the last."

"All those people.' Kyo said closing his eyes. 'Her friend Reya. They're cruel people."

Chisame picked up a picture of Alysia, Kyo, and their friend Natasha at one of their hockey games. She slid her hand on the glass, looking at Alysia. A smile on her face and life like no other. Her light brown hair and green eyes made the winged girl look like a completely different person. A tear dropped on the glass as Brie and Kyo watched on.

"I never... I never truly understand.' Chisame said wiping away her tears. 'I owe Alysia an apology."

"Why?' Danica said leaning on the wall looking out the window. 'You did nothing to her."

"I treated what she went through with ignorance. I didn't think about how she truly felt. All that pain she held back.' Chisame approached Danica with the picture. She raised it closer to Danica's eyes as the thief looked away with apprehension. 'Look at her. She is so different from what we see her right now. The life she could have been living if they had not kidnapped her. The horrifying things they did to her. Now she found her home and everything she knew and love is gone."

"She found Kyo."

"Danica, you don't get it do you. They destroyed her. And for what?"

"Money.' Brie said. 'A new invention. It could be anything."

"We should leave.' Danica said purposefully changing the subject. Danica pulled a little of the curtain back to look outside. She did not say another word about this. It was something she did not want to talk about and Chisame left her alone. 'It's only a matter of time before Avalon Tech comes here."

Brie took the picture and held it beside Alysia's face. It was hard for her to believe the difference.

"That picture...' Kyo said. '... was taken before our championship game five months ago. February. She chased after a puck and our opponent slammed her head first into the wall. It happened so fast because Alysia got up so easily. After the game, that's when she felt the concussion. That was when I saw her mana. Doctor Marcel Jones can't see mana, how?"

Kyo's eyes lit up and he remembered the staff in Alysia's hands in her hospital room. He lowered his head and grasped his hair.

"He saw the staff.' Kyo gritted his teeth and curled his hands into a fist. 'We told her he could not see her mana, but he still saw the staff. How could we...?"

"It's not your fault.' Brie said. 'You didn't know. Alysia's parents didn't know. It was just a coincidence."

"There is no such thing as a coincidence Brie.' Chisame placed her hand on Alysia's forehead and found it a little warm. 'Madam Karyn said that the world is unpredictable. No two minds think identical, even if they share the same ideology. When two individuals throw the same exact object at exactly the same time, the paths are completely different, but they inevitably will come to a stop. To intertwine so easily in a state of coincidence is an improbability. That's why she said people here in America would say the expression, 'Small World'."

"I agree.' Danica said with a smirk as everyone turned to her. 'Oryn Zentharis knows who we are, she knew where we live, and she knew how to get us all here together. It's too convenient to call it a coincidence. Oryn knows something we don't. We are at a disadvantage, because we don't know her."

Everyone became silent. It was true what Danica said. They did not know anything about Oryn beyond being the executive of Avalon Tech and her actions so far. They do not even know her overall plans. Of course, they focused on escaping and getting as far away from Avalon Tech's reach as possible. Most of what they had done at this point has been a reaction of Oryn's moves.

"If Reya was awake,' Bried said. 'we would have learned more about their plans."

"We have to hang on until she wakes up." Chisame said.

"The light...' Alysia said in her sleep. Her eyes shifted and winced. '...it hurts..."

"Kyo.' Chisame said. 'I need a cold wet towel to put over head. We need to keep her cool."

"Or course.' Kyo got up out of his seat. 'We can get one in the kitchen. Would you all like some tea while we wait for Alysia to wake up?"

"Oh boy tea." Brie said with sudden excitement as Kyo led her and Chisame to the kitchen.

"Chisame,' Kyo said as he left living room. 'I really would like to call my parents at their excavation dig in South America and tell them the news about Alysia."

"We can't risk it Kyo." Chisame said.

"Without a scrambler program on your phone,' Brie said. 'Mystic Intelligence may do a wireless tap and know where we are."

Danica was alone with Alysia. She walked around the couch and stared at the winged girl, as she lay restless. The sound of her scream early this morning, still resonated in her mind. It would not stop. She tried to focus on her own plans as she lifted up Alysia's hand and stared at the bracelet. The teal gem reflecting off her eyes. The chance to take Saga, now within her grasp. She slid the bracelet off Alysia's and slipped onto her wrist. The thief held it over her head and stared at it with her ring. She felt empowered. Having two of the Four Elements magical items made her feel that she could take on anyone, even Oryn.

"Please..." Alysia said startling Danica, but she was still asleep. '...stop hurting me..."

Danica took a deep breath. She placed her hand on the Alysia's forehead and felt the heat. It was unusual though. There was a layer of mana on Alysia's forehead. It was not heat from exhaustion, but Alysia fighting back her nightmare. Danica stepped back as she heard the others returning. The thief opened the door.

"Danica.' Chisame appeared in the living room and saw Danica halfway out the door. 'Where are you going?"

"The bracelet." Brie said as she saw Alysia's bare hand and Danica ran out of the house.

"Stay here Brie and protect Alysia." Chisame chased after the thief, leaving Brie and Kyo behind. She followed Danica down the street and saw the playground up ahead. When the thief entered the playground, she was ready to use the wind to jump away until she noticed Chisame was alone.

"Chance." Danica turned around, curled her hand into a fist, and pulled it back.

"ARISE... EPIC!!"

Danica threw a punch downward and the ring burst into droplets of light creating a puddle on the floor. The lights rose up and gathered around the red gem. Four arrows emerged around the

jewel like a compass, and rested at the bottom of the hilt that stretched outward. A sky blue hilt formed, with its emblem of two pink petals, crossing each other like wings. Danica uncurled her hand and guided the hilt up where a blade of light emerged from the puddle. When Danica gripped the hilt, the light disappeared and the green crystal blade appeared. She pulled the sword out of the ground, swung it with one hand, and held it over her head ready to strike.

Chisame took her brooch off her shirt and clenched it into her fist. "ADVANCE... FABLE!!"

She flicked her arm outward opening her hand, pushing the brooch into the air beyond the palm of her hand. It burst into droplets of light and the lavender gem rebounded back to her hand as she turned her hand around, fingers curling. Four arrows emerged around the jewel like a compass, and rested on the back Chisame's hand. The light spread across her hand and a glove with a disk formed over her arm. When Chisame curled her hand into a fist, the light disappeared and a lavender glove with green and black flat disk appeared. She spread her gloved fingers open before her face, twisted her body back elbowing with her gloved arm, then twisted her body to the other side punching in that direction, with her left arm crossing under her right arm.

"Give back the bracelet Danica." Chisame said pointing with her gauntlet.

"That little disk won't stand a chance against two weapons." Danica raised her arm up with the bracelet in hand.

"Wait Danica!" Chisame reached out to the thief.

"AWAKEN... SAGA!" Danica saw the teal gem glow. She smiled as the bright light reflected from her green eyes. That was all it did, was glow and smoldered. Danica screamed in pain as she felt the burn from the light. She ripped the bracelet off her wrist and threw it into the ground. The wound was red and blistered. She turned to the side and saw Chisame approaching her. She channeled her mana and swung her sword. 'AEROBURST!'"

The blast caught Chisame off guard and the impact threw her across the playground. Chisame lifted her head and saw Danica in the air with Epic over her head. She moved her arm over her body and channeled her mana.

"IRON SHELL!" The sword landed on top of the magical shield. It bounced Danica back as the thief spun back onto her feet. Chisame stretched her arm out and spread her fingers open. The disk slid over the back of her hand as Danica tilted her head with a smirk.

"Really Boss?"

Chisame took one-step forward and flung her arm forward. The disk detached from her hand and flew fast at Danica. The metal edged disk flew past Danica and sliced a small lock of her blonde hair. Chisame directed it back and Danica turned around using Epic to deflect Fable. The impact created a small spark between the weapons. The disk returned to Chisame's glove and Danica looked back with her eyes twitching.

"Don't take me lightly Danica."

"I won't repeat that." The thief spun her sword like a clock's hand. Wind followed the motion as Chisame planted the palm of her hands together in front of her chest gathering water. The wind picked up speed and turned into ball as the water turned into a ball.

'PRESSURE BALL!'

"WATER BOMB!"

Danica swung Epic throwing her spell at Chisame as she pushed her hands forward throwing her spell. Both spheres collided with each other. The impact of the mana created an explosion of water and wind that knocked both Sentinels back. The shockwave pushed the trees, grass, and bushes around them. They landed on the ground taking short breath from the shock of what happened. The girls lifted their bodies up cringing in pain and saw the bracelet on the ground between them.

"Why Danica?" Chisame's chest shifted up and down with each breath.

"I'm not going to end up like that." The Sentinel pointed into the direction of where Alysia was. 'I'm not going to end up like her. I'm not going to become weak. I will kill Oryn."

Chisame saw Danica's burnt wrist shiver and vibrate. The Sentinel got up to her feet and approached the bracelet.

"So that's it.' Chisame picked up the bracelet. 'Easy as that."

"All you want to do is run away Chisame. We attack them now and we'll end all this.' Danica stared at the bracelet. Everything happened so fast the past couple of days she completely forgotten why she really wanted that bracelet. The obsession for power took a backseat in her thoughts as she acknowledged a far greater issue. 'My parents gave me away to Avalon Tech. They want me to be obedient and mindless like Alysia."

"She's not mindless!' Chisame said silencing Danica for a moment. 'She's suffered. She feels pain. She tried her best not to whine about it. We're wrong for making her shut that out. If it was me I would be in the corner crying every night saying 'Why me? No one understands my pain'. Five days she has been freed from Avalon Tech and Brie said that Alysia only smiled once since. That was the day after they escaped. They played roller hockey. That's the only time she had to do something like that. Since then, those two had to clean up your mess when you flew out here after they said not to. Fight a weird monster and chased by Mystic Intelligence. Now Alysia knows the truth about her past. It's a miracle she hasn't become an empty shell."

Chisame remembered what that felt like the day after she was attacked by that awful monster. Going blind left her mind shattered. She felt it paled in comparison to Alysia's pain, but given the series of stressful episodes Alysia experienced, Chisame felt admiration for the winged girl.

"I wish I had her strength.' Chisame returned the gauntlet back to a brooch. 'I want that strength."

Danica turned away from her. She returned the sword back to a ring and walked away. She never looked back as Chisame clenched her fist.

"Who's the one running away?" Chisame looked at Alysia's bracelet as Danica used the wind to jump away. Chisame watched the thief drift further away until she could not see her anymore. The Sentinel ran back to Kyo's house. When she arrived, Brie sat on the porch while resting her head on her hands.

"Is everything okay?" Brie said. "We heard an explosion and it woke Alysia up."

"Alysia." Chisame hurried up the steps. She saw through the window, Alysia talking to Kyo. She could see the winged girl looking at Kyo's wrist and caressing it.

"When I told her what happened she tried to move but she didn't have the energy. Then Alysia asked to be alone, so they can catch up." Brie looked around and noticed someone was missing. "So where's Danica?"

"Running away."

"Typical criminal."

"She's scared."

"What?" Brie turned around and looked at Chisame tightening her grip on the bracelet. "She sure doesn't act like it."

"Well we're going to have to cut their reunion short. Danica may be going to Avalon Tech to fight Oryn and our little fight may have caught everyone's attention."

"Great." Brie got up and they entered Kyo's house together.

Alysia stood to her feet and received her bracelet. She listened to Chisame explaining everything that happened. The winged Sentinel slipped on her bracelet, clenched her fist, and was ready to move.

To Be Continued...

