

# Arcana Magi - c.23: Peaceful Time, Obsessive Motives

*by* H-M Brown

At a hotel in Newark, the calendar marked Sunday as the clock beside it, struck four. The Sentinels and Reya followed Suzie with Fynir as their bodyguard. The girls carried their own bag of clothing they bought from a nearby department store. They all wore fresh clean clothes and looked refresh after everything that happened this past week. Despite the looks they received from the people in the lobby, the girls maintained their smiles, except for Alysia who stayed positive under that emotionless exterior. They rode the elevator up to their rooms on the fourteenth floor. The girls went into their own room planting their bags on the beds.

"That was fun." Brie said hopping on the bed.

"Fun?" Danica said as she took out her clothes from her own bag. "With all those people staring at us?"

"Hey," Chisame turned to Danica. "It was your idea to put us on television."

"And then you backed out." Brie pulled out a blouse and laid it over her chest to analyze it.

"Well I have reasons." Danica took out a bikini from her pile and marched into the bathroom. "I'm getting ready for the pool."

"No let us go first." Brie said as the door closed. "She'll take forever in front of the mirror."

Alysia went to the corner where there were five suitcases lined along the wall. She took one with her nametag on it and opened it up.

"Alysia you could do that tonight." Chisame said. "You should get ready for the pool so you could relax."

"I was thinking about waiting for Kyo when he returns from his

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home.”

“I’m surprised you didn’t go with him.” Brie said as she removed her shirt. “You sure you didn’t want to see your home one more time.”

“Brie.” Chisame said catching the hacker’s attention. She shook her head side to side and they both looked at Alysia staring at the suitcase.

“I’m sorry Lys.”

“It’s okay Brie. I’ll miss home, but I have to do this. I should do this.” Alysia felt Reya’s arms over her shoulders and little purr. The winged girl rubbed Reya’s ear and heard a little giggle.

“I could bring books to pool?”

“You say,” Alysia leaned her head back. “Could I bring books to the pool?”

“Could I bring books to…”

“The.”

“The pool?”

“Yes you can bring your books to the pool.”

“Yay!” Reya gathered her children’s books into a pile.

Alysia sat there watching the teen knowing Reya is older than her and the Sentinels. It made her heart ache despite how well the catgirl is speaking and learning to read so easily. She knew it would be a long road for Reya to recover, but she had no intentions of leaving Reya’s side.

“Hey.” Chisame said sitting next to Alysia pulling a T-shirt over her bikini, then fixed her glasses. “Are you okay?”

“I feel sad for Reya.” Alysia watched Brie help the catgirl change into a one-piece swimsuit. “Am I supposed to feel that way?”

“Of course you are. Do you still need help learning emotions?”

Alysia opened her mouth to say yes, but she paused. There was a slight headache and deep breath as she thought about that question. The sound of Brie and Reya playing around distracted Alysia. It was a feeling she did not like and wanted to stop. She did not know what to say about this feeling as Brie and Reya got loud.

“Would you two shut up?!” Alysia stood on her feet, her chest

shifted up and down with each breath she took. She stared at Brie and Reya as they looked up at her with frozen eyes, and Danica stepped out of the bathroom in her bikini. Chisame's hands startled Alysia when they touched her hand. The winged girl sat down with her hands over her face. Her hands shook on her cheeks as she moved her hand on her forehead. 'My hands won't stop shaking. I keep thinking about everything that has happened. I can't stop thinking about it all. I want it to stop so I can enjoy the fun we're having but my memories won't stop running for a moment. What is that feeling called when you body feels tight?'

"You're tense." Chisame said. 'Probably stress. It's perfectly fine. This is the first time you're actually not focused on things like fighting monsters and escaping Oryn."

"Yeah." Brie said. 'Maybe you should just lay back here on the bed and let your mind clear up. I say we leave Alysia by herself and go to the pool and when you're ready Alysia, you come on down so we can all play."

"You know." Danica said leaning on the wall. 'relaxing in water is better for the mind. To just float around. I think that would be better than staying here alone."

Everyone but Reya looked at Danica. They could not believe what they heard from the thief. It was different from usual. Alysia thought it over and nodded. There was a mutual understanding she had with Danica, despite their differences. The winged girl sifted through her pile of clothes and took out her bikini. She went to the bathroom and closed the door as the girls looked at Danica.

"What?" Danica said as she slipped on her shorts and shirt.

"That was," Chisame really thought about what she was about to say and had no choice but to say it. 'a nice thing you said."

"Yeah, well, you know, Alysia needs this." Danica turned around and crossed her arms. 'I don't care."

"Of course you don't." Chisame said as she removed her shirt.

The Sentinels and Reya came out of their room and saw Suzie, dressed for the pool, was on the phone. She stood before Alysia and lowered the phone.

"I have Kyo on. He said there are some mementos of yours that your parents gave him and would like to know if you want him to bring them?"

Alysia stood there with no reaction to her face. She looked away for a moment as the girls held on to the moment.

"I..." Alysia turned her head to Suzie. She took the phone from Suzie and faced away from everyone. "I think I left Qubie there."

"Qubie?" Danica said as Chisame shushed her.

"She is there?" Alysia's cheeks blushed and her voice sounded childlike. "Bring her please. Thank you. We'll be at the swimming pool. I'll see you in little while. Be careful out there."

Alysia handed Suzie the phone and when she turned around, she saw the Sentinels smirking at her.

"What?"

"Bring Qubie for me Kyo. Please." Brie said with her hands clasped, waving it side to side.

"Please be careful Kyo." Chisame followed Brie's act.

"Cut it out." Alysia waved at them as they gathered around to tease and play with her. The winged girl could not help but let out a giggle. She covered her mouth as everyone heard the sweetness of the laugh. It felt embarrassing at first, but she saw nothing but smiles as the elevator arrived. She felt Danica's hand rubbing her hair adding to the pain she felt in her head and stepped inside the elevator with the thief.

As Chisame held the elevator, Suzie knocked on Fynir's door and he stepped out with a file and phone, struggling to hold it in one hand while his other arm was in a sling. They were disappointed at the elf detective not dressed in swim shorts or even carrying a towel.

"Come on Fynir." The girls said together. "No work at the pool."

"Sorry," Fynir said as he stepped into the elevator and Alysia saw reya's name on the file. "but one, my arm is injured and two, Lori is still overseeing the editing of Daniel's interview right now. We have to make sure he doesn't screw us and turn it into a propaganda spin for Avalon Tech or the government."

"No no no." Brie said waving her finger in his face. "You're touching water whether you like it or not."

At the pool, Brie jumped in the air and tucked her knees. When splashed into the water, the wave struck Reya, and made her screech like the cat that she was. Brie emerged onto the surface and saw the catgirl hiding behind Chisame. She laughed at Reya as she swam past Fynir sitting on the edge of the pool, with his pants rolled up above his knees and reading the file.

"No skullcaps." Brie removed the hat as she ran past him, exposing his elfen ears.

"Kids." Fynir said as Danica walked past him. "We need to talk."

"Later." Danica said without looking at the elf detective. Though she does not know what he wants, she grappled with the idea that she owes him for saving her life. A fact refused to face. Danica stood by Chisame and Brie and watched Alysia remove her clothes. They looked at Alysia's athletic body and could not believe with their own eyes how well developed she was for her age.

"What?" Alysia said standing straight in a perfect posture, her wings flapped.

"I am jealous." Chisame said crossing her arms over her chest as Danica smirked.

"Five American dollars says that Kyo is going to discover manhood when he sees Alysia."

"You're on Danica." Brie gave a high five.

"You two are so immature." Chisame said fixing her glasses. "I'm in."

"That's not going to happen." Alysia said as she watched Brie and Danica jump into the pool laughing, and Chisame climb down so she would not lose her glasses. She jumped in as her friends emerged from the water and surfaced closer to them. "Seriously, that is not going to happen."

"Shorty, we'll bring him close to that ladder over there," Danica pointed to the one near the diving board. "and you climb out from there, and we'll see what happens."

"No way." Alysia said as she saw Chisame brush water drops off her lens. "Chisame, is it safe to wear glasses in the water?"

"I don't know but I need them even when I take a bath. If I had prescription water goggles it would make things easier for me to swim."

"Maybe you can have them made." Alysia saw Chisame holding the glasses away from her face, her eyes frozen in place. The winged girl leaned close, waved her hand at the leader.

"What is that in front of me?" Chisame put her glasses on again and saw Alysia's hand.

"You couldn't see my hand that close?"

"No."

"Sorry. You just stood there."

"It's okay. I was just thinking about Madam Karyn. The fact that Avalon Tech has her, thanks to Vyndor controlling Mystic Intelligence here, really angers me."

"We'll get her back. You'll see."

"That's just it. We can't get her back because we're leaving for Merydia tomorrow. And I hate the idea that we have to leave her behind."

"Fynir said that she would not want us there to rescue her if it means we get captured."

"I know. It was one of the things she told me during training. But still..." Chisame felt Alysia's arms around her shoulder and she smiled.

"Hey check this out." Brie waved Chisame and Danica behind Alysia. They gathered around and saw the mist floating on the surface. The hacker planted her hand on Alysia's head and pushed her underwater with her. Brie opened her eyes and saw a wave within the water. She glided her fingers across it and felt the warmth. She and Alysia surfaced and the winged girl splashed water at Brie.

"Don't do that."

"Sorry. It's just that your wings became a part of the water."

"Still Brie." Chisame said. "You shouldn't have done that."

"It's okay.' Alysia said. 'Actually, I can feel the water going through my wings, like the wind and fire. I can even feel vibration. Have any of you felt something like that?"

"No.' Chisame as Brie and Danica shook their head no as well. 'Maybe because your mana is different. You do share a spiritual heart with Suzaku. That's probably why you can channel mana from the other elements."

"Why don't we give it a try?" Brie said.

"I don't know.' Alysia said. 'I just want to relax and not think about this right now."

"You're right.' Chisame said with a nod. 'We have plenty of time to do that. So what shall we do?"

Alysia swam away and went to the other side to the touch the edge. She then returned to the other and touched the edge. As she swam past them to go back to the other side, the Sentinels understood what Alysia wanted and they continued without her. Alysia made it to the other end and saw Suzie at the shallow end with Reya, playing with her and reading a book to her. She swam back and watched her friends inflate a beach ball up, then bounce it back and forth to each other. Alysia tagged the edge near Fynir as he wrote a text message on his touch phone.

She flipped underwater and kicked out from the wall of the pool. As her body waved underwater, her wings stretched out with her relaxed mind, and felt the flow of heat under the surface. She slowed down and faced the surface. With body gliding under the water, her eyes opened, and saw the lights above bouncing off the surface. The lights reflected off her face as the sound of the water deafened the outside. She could hear the sound in her memories that she hated, a humming that would not stop no matter how much she cried for it to stop. She had no control of her movements underwater. Alysia could not tell what direction she was facing. She struggled to breathe as she felt a pair of arms scoop her out.

"Alysia,' Brie said unaware of what happened. 'that was cool what you did."

"What did I do?" Alysia's eyes trembled.

"You were floating so beautifully underwater, like a mermaid."

"I did?" Alysia tried to remember the last few seconds but Danica splashed her face.

"Hey wake up Shorty. You look like you saw something dead."

Alysia looked around at her friends as Chisame approached her. Before the leader could say anything, Alysia grabbed the beach ball and threw it at Brie. Alysia followed Brie as the hacker chased after it, leaving Chisame behind.

"Alysia." Chisame said under breath as Danica swam underwater.

Alysia bounced the ball back to Brie as the hacker jumped up and missed. The winged girl swam to Brie and saw her friend staring at the ball.

"Are you sure your okay Lys?"

"Yes. I am."

"I know you're smiling from time to time, so I have been focusing on helping Reya read, but I haven't forgotten about you. I won't give up finding a way to free you from Oryn's spell."

Alysia splashed a little water in Brie's face. The little giggle brought relief to the winged girl. She took the ball and threw it out to the middle of pool.

"Thank you, Brie. But I don't want you to spend your entire life for me."

"But..."

"I'll be fine. I promise. Besides, I think it would be better if we focus our attention in helping Reya recover."

Alysia and Brie saw Reya at the shallow end of the pool all by herself reading a children's book.

"She needs us Alysia."

"Just long enough to stand on her own." Alysia turned to Brie and they nodded. They swam across the pool pushing the ball with them. They took Reya's hands and led her into the water to the ball.

The Sentinels all played for a while. They helped Reya swim in the deeper side of the pool. They even had a diving competition to see who could make a bigger splash. They sat around the shallow



talking about music, school, and clothes.

As Alysia dived underwater to challenge Chisame, Kyo and Karl arrived dressed in swim shorts and shirt. The winged girl and the leader emerged from the water as Danica took her arm and led her to the ladder. Alysia saw Brie climb out of the pool and distract Kyo as he took his shirt off. For a moment, the girls stood silent as he turned to them and saw their fixation of him.

"What?"

"That's what." Danica pushed Alysia to the ladder and waved her to climb up.

Blushing, Alysia climbed up the ladder and Kyo just stood there with his mouth open. The winged girl stood there looking at him in the same manner. As Chisame and Danica climbed out of the pool, Brie stood wondering what was to happen next.

"Wow." Alysia and Kyo said at the same time. They never realized how much they changed after nearly six months apart. The moment came to an end when Danica was examined Kyo to see who would win the bet.

"What are you doing?" Kyo said pulling his shorts back.

"Just checking." Danica stepped back with a smile as Alysia stood in front of Kyo with her arms crossed. 'Hey he's yours Shorty. I just want my money."

"What money?" Kyo said as Alysia took his hand and led him away.

"Ignore her." Alysia said walking past Fynir.

"Kids." The elf detective shook his head side to side.

One hour passed, and Alysia floated at the edge of the pool beside Kyo. She kicked her feet on the surface of the water. Each little splash bounced up to her leg. She leaned her head back as Kyo yawned.

"Tired?" Alysia said.

"Yeah." Kyo rested his elbows on the edge of the pool, his back leaning on the wall. 'I'm going to miss the old neighborhood."

Alysia did not know what to say. For her, losing home the first time was painful. Losing it again added more. She flipped her body

over and rested her arms on the edge, and leaned her head over her arms.

"I don't know how to feel about this." She shifted her head so she could look at Kyo. "We're moving to a new country. To a new neighborhood. I don't have my parents to live with. Will I be living in an orphanage like Brie? Or with complete strangers?"

"It's a lot to think about. Once we see my parents we could figure it all out together. I don't know what they would want to do, but I really don't want you to be alone in Merydia."

"Kyo I..." Alysia thought about her statement but she chose to keep it to herself. Instead, she kicked her legs to keep her body floating and changed the subject. "Is Qubie okay?"

"Heh. Qubie was little muddy from the storm the other day, but I gave her a cleaning. She's in my room."

"Thank you. Bring her to my room when we go up."

"Sure." Kyo saw everyone getting out of the pool. He hoisted his body up and climbed out. The mage knelt down and reached out to Alysia. He tightened his grip and pulled her up.

"You were peeking." Alysia said with a blush as she crossed her arms.

"Peeking?" Kyo said as Alysia lifted up his head and they made eye contact. He let out a big smile and rubbed the back of his head. "Sorry."

Alysia walked away, looking back at him with the corner of her eyes. She looked ahead with a little smile, resisting the enchantment.

As everyone headed for the elevators, they saw Lori in the lobby waving at them. She hurried to them as the doors opened. She had a DVD case in hand marked Sentinel Interview/Documentary and handed it to Fynir. The elf detective gave a nod as the elevator door closed and climbed up to the fourteenth floor.

After the Sentinels and Reya changed, there was a knock on the door. Danica opened the door and saw Kyo holding the stuffed red bird.

"Is that Qubie?" Danica whispered and Kyo nodded. With a smile,

she leaned back looking at Alysia sitting on the bed, slipping on her sports gloves. 'Alysia. Qubie is here.'

Alysia got up off the bed and hurried to the door. She pushed Danica to side as the thief laughed. The winged girl stepped outside and closed the door a little. She took her stuffed doll and held it to her chest. She saw how nervous Kyo was and could only return it with an emotionless expression.

"Thank you."

"Yeah, uh... you know, maybe, when we arrive at Merydia and Mystic Intelligence settles everything. Maybe, you and I, could..."

"Kyo, how long have we known each other?"

"Since first grade."

Alysia's eyes shifted to the door. She kicked it with the back of her heel and she heard a loud thump. The sound of laughter inside brought a light smirk in Alysia.

"Why are you nervous, Kyo? Didn't we have a date before?"

"Yes, but it's a little different."

"How? It's me."

"I just wasn't sure if you were... ready."

Alysia closed the door completely and she looked up to Kyo, keeping her voice low.

"Whenever Oryn put me through Therapy, the only person I could think about was you. Heh... funny. I was told my life was a lie but you felt like the truth. I never believed I would see you again."

Alysia's words made Kyo feel different somehow. It was as though he felt important to her in more ways than he imagined. Having spent so much time believing she was dead, he wondered if she knew how important she was to him.

"Kyo, we don't know what love is,' Alysia took his scarred left hand and removed the glove from her scarred right hand. 'but if love means we are here for each other even when separated, then maybe... I don't know."

"I don't know either. But what I do know is if I had known you were still alive, I would have come rescue you."

"Maybe, or maybe I would have killed you under her control."

"Huh?" Kyo stepped back as Alysia lowered her with a sigh.

"No, Kyo," Alysia leaned her back on the door. "I do want you to be there for me, but not as some knight saving a princess. You know I hate that."

"How could I forget? You beat me up after I beat up your bully."

"She was a girl!"

"She was really big for a girl."

Alysia smiled and together they laughed. It attracted the adult's attention as they opened their doors to see what was going on. Without interrupting the teens, they closed the door quietly. Alysia though placed her hand on her forehead and lost her balance. She felt Kyo's arm around her back just short of touching her wings. Their eyes locked to each other. The hallway was quiet as Alysia's wings stretched and she stood on her toes to be close to Kyo.

Alysia entered the room quieting Brie, Chisame, and Reya while Danica lay on the bed by the window with a damp rag on her head. The girls could see the glow in her eyes as she hugged her doll tight to her chest. She walked on her toes to the bed, her sight blurred from raw emotion. Alysia fell on her face on the bed moaning in pain. Her wings stretched out as the Sentinels gathered around and Reya tilted her head while perched like a cat on her chair.

"Tell!" Brie said hopping up and down in excitement.

All Alysia did was lift her head up with a smile.

Outside in the hallway as Kyo leaned on the wall with the door to his room slightly opened, the sounds of the girls screaming rumbled through the entire floor. The noise made Kyo collapse into his room as everyone peeked outside to see what was going on.

The clock read seven on Oryn's desk. The executive was on the phone with Vyndor. Her hand laid on the file with Alysia's name on it. She tapped her fingers on it as she shifted her seat a little. The executive looked out the window. The sun was setting and the clouds were scarce in the sky.

"Oryn, I want you to make our guests from Greece comfortable when they arrive tomorrow."

"I will."

"Assign Lyn to them as their liaison, and to keep an eye on them. Once they bring back Danica, she will undergo Therapy as requested and she will return home."

"What would the Leandros want done to their daughter?"

"Just erase her mind and leave her an empty shell, forever. They don't want her to have the ability to speak or act freely."

"Understood.' Oryn wrote down her instructions on a notepad. She turned her attention to Alysia's file and opened it. There were medical notes, a photo of Alysia, some queries about her Therapy and the experiments done to her. 'Vyndor, about Alysia."

"What about her?"

"I want her back."

"She served her purpose. And we've diverted all our manpower to other projects. Relax, you did a good job and many companies and countries are inquiring about our Magi Tech."

Oryn pounded her desk and took a deep breath.

"What is Madam Karyn's condition Oryn?"

"We can't put her through Therapy, Vyndor. She's too old and has too much physical complications. She barely cast a spell."

"We need her alive. Her death would attract too much attention.' There was a moment of silence on the phone. As Oryn placed the pen on the desk, Vyndor gave his decision. 'Keep her under guard until I consult the Board of Directors. Letting her go would be a big mistake."

"Understood." Oryn heard the phone click and she hangs up hers. She stared at Alysia's photo from when she was twelve. Her eyes would not turn away from it. Thinking about what Alysia said in the interview, she could not get the teen out of her mind. Oryn heard the door open and she closed the file. Entering inside was Lyn and Jonas. She moved the file to the side as her colleagues approached her desk.

"Marcel is out of surgery.' Jonas said. 'He's in recovery right now with Anna."

"Does he know the plan succeeded?"

"Yes Oryn. He's glad that his sacrifice was not for nothing."

"Good to hear Marcel is back to normal. Let's go see him." Oryn got out of her seat as Jonas saw the file. She walked past him, not paying attention to his glaring eyes. She led Jonas and Lyn to the elevator and upon pressing the down button, she gave Lyn Vyndor's orders.

"Understood." Lyn said with a weak soft voice. Her fingers twitched as though it tried to clutch something.

"After we see Marcel, I want you to go to R&D to try on the latest tech we've built. You will use that tomorrow when you go out into the field."

"Yes Madam Oryn."

The elevator reached Level B4. They made their way to one of the curtains. When Oryn shifted it to the side there was Marcel laying on the bed with his right arm in a cast. She stood beside Anna and gave Marcel a light kiss on his forehead.

"How's your new arm?"

"I can't feel it Oryn." Marcel said as he lifted up the cast. 'It will take some getting use to. Besides I heard the Sentinels cast spells on television."

"Yes. The world knows everything now. Plus I heard you are going to get a nice bonus and a promotion in the medical department."

"Vyndor told me. I'll have a chance to finally present my medical research at University Hospital in Los Angeles. I'm glad it all worked out in the end."

"We all are." Jonas said. 'I'll be heading back to Merydia with a grant at Durell University."

"I can't wait to get started as the Senior Director of Computer Programming here."

Everyone was satisfied with their rewards with the Sentinel Project, but they all became silent when Lyn stood there quiet. Their sense of celebration fell apart as Lyn stood there with dead eyes and no emotion.

"Lyn," Marcel said. 'will you be alright moving forward?"

"I do not know what that means."

"She will continue working as my personal assistant." Oryn said as Lyn's eyes twitched. "At least this way she'll be with a friend and not be alone. Lyn you can go on ahead without me. I'll catch up with you later."

"Yes Madam Oryn." Lyn pulled the curtain to the side and left.

"Madam Oryn?" Marcel said as the victory now tasted bitter in his mouth.

"Don't worry Marcel." Oryn said with a smile. "Lyn will be okay."

Oryn sat on the edge of the bed, her hand on Marcel's arm cast. She looked him in the eye, and he nodded. The executive crossed her arms as everyone listened to her.

"I would like your help one more time."

"What is it?" Anna said.

"I want to retrieve Alysia."

"Why?" Jonas said. "We don't need her anymore."

"I have some experiments that I want to test. I need her for that."

"Look Oryn," Jonas said as he placed his hand on the executive's shoulder. "You don't need her for that. Besides, she's already in the public eye. Kidnapping her again will draw unnecessary attention."

"Vyndor got law enforcement focused on Quillian and no one is buying the Sentinel's story."

"Exactly, so why risk everything?" Jonas crossed his arm waiting for an answer. All he got was Oryn facing away.

"Oryn," Anna said. "Why do you want Alysia?"

"She thinks... she thinks she's beaten me and..."

"No, that doesn't make sense." Anna walked knelt in front of Oryn and looked her in the eyes. "You have feelings for her?"

Oryn remained silent as Marcel shook his head side to side.

"No Oryn, I gave up my arm for a chance at having recognition. I'm not throwing it away."

"Marcel is right," Jonas said. "Too much was sacrificed for this. We don't need the girl anymore. And neither do you."

"Also," Anna said. "do you know the risk you are going to take if

you cross that line with Alysia? She's still a child. Let it go."

"Damn it Oryn," Jonas leaned closed to the executive. "you have an opportunity now to prove your theory as fact to the entire science community. Don't throw it away for a mere child."

Oryn stood to her feet. Her cold eyes stared everyone down but she turned away from them. Alysia's words repeated through her mind. Oryn refused to believe a child beat her. All her efforts to brainwash Alysia and the desire to have her by her side, wasted. She would not let go and pulled the curtain to the side looking out to the floor.

"Oryn," Jonas said without looking at the executive. "You go after Alysia, you're on your own."

Oryn left them in a quiet moment and returned to her office. She opened the file on Alysia and took a notepad with her calculations written on each page. The executive started a new calculation to lure Alysia to her. She knew it would take some time and would not be ready until tomorrow, but she was not going to give up on Alysia.

"I always get what I desire."

To Be Continued...

