

Arcana Magi - c.25: Satisfaction

by H-M Brown

Alysia landed on the sidewalk, picked up her manaboard, and she opened the door to the lobby. Employees made their way to the security desk and swiped their cards to enter through the gate. It was a typical office day. Everyone went about their business as though the events of last week never happened. The winged girl stood before the gate without her security pass. She wondered how she was going to get through. Whatever this aura she felt that compelled her to come here, did not prepare her for this situation. She looked over at the desk and saw one of the security guards talking on the phone. She heard Oryn's name spoken by the guard as he looked at her. With a nod, the guard hung up the phone and pressed the release button to the gate.

"Oryn will be coming down shortly to see you." The guard said as Alysia returned a sneering look. "You may proceed to Level B4."

The sound of the lock release signaled Alysia to crossover. When she arrived at the elevator and waited, she saw Reya entering the lobby and Kyo crossing the street outside.

"Alysia!" Reya waved as the winged girl tried to say something before an empty elevator arrived. The catgirl jumped over the gate and the guards ran after her. She slipped into the elevator, falling on top of Alysia, and the door closed. Reya pulled herself up and smiled at Alysia. "Why here?"

"I don't know." The elevator automatically went down. "I just had this sudden feeling to come here. It's like Oryn wanted me to be here."

Alysia and Reya got up to their feet. The winged girl stood in front of Reya, shielding her, ready for a fight. The door opened, and Alysia felt the urge to step out. She felt Reya's arms around her waist trying to hold back, but Alysia's athletic strength pulled the catgirl

along. The security door opened on its own, as though it was inviting the girls inside. They stepped through the door as it closed behind them and they found the facility completely empty.

Reya whimpered as she sensed a familiarity with the area. She covered Alysia's scarred right hand with both of her own hands and held tight. She felt like she was here before, but she does not recognize anything on this floor. The catgirl struggled to move forward as Alysia kept going.

"Let's go back Alysia." Reya saw one of the curtains across the floor swaying back and forth. "I'm scared."

Alysia tried, but her body would not listen. She could not explain it and really wanted to as Reya said. But instead, they walked past the computers and gurneys. She felt the catgirl pulling her arm and heard a whimper. Alysia turned to the table Reya was looking and saw a syringe set on a small table next to the bed.

"Don't stick in me."

"Reya." Alysia wondered if her friend's memories were coming back. It pained her to see it happening at this moment. If she could only break free from this compulsive feeling, then she would get Reya out of here. At this point, she does not care if Oryn returned her into a mindless servant. She just does not want Reya to suffer anymore. Alysia looked in the direction this aura led her to and she was not surprised. They stood before the opened door marked Therapy Room and there was a table beside the entrance. Laid ready for Alysia was a new Mage Suit and a curtain for her to change. Seeing the hairclips resting next to the teal and pink outfit, led Alysia to hate them now. She saw Reya pick up the outfit and looked up to Alysia.

"Is this for you?"

"Yes Reya." Alysia looked at the open entrance, taking the Mage Suit from Reya's hands, and felt compelled to change into her Mage Suit before undergo Therapy again. "This is all for me."

"Why?"

"I don't know anymore.' Alysia curled her fingers and tried to rip the Mage Suit. It would not tear, the outfit was too strong. 'WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME ORYN?!"

Alysia looked down and took a deep breath to stop the head pain. With some critical thinking, she realized she will have fight Oryn to get out. Which means she may need to the suit prevent losing her own clothes.

"Reya stay right here and don't go nowhere." Alysia stepped behind the curtain.

Reya looked at the facility. Her ears twitched. She could hear something in the area but she could not see what it was. The catgirl heard the curtain pull back, saw Alysia step out in her Mage Suit fixing her hairclips. She stepped aside as Alysia walked toward the Therapy Room.

But before Alysia went inside, she was thrown into the wall by Marcel. The attack startled Reya as the doctor pinned Alysia with his elbow. They could see the coldness in his eyes as his left hand gripped Alysia's shoulder and slammed her to the wall. Reya pounded her hands on Marcel to get him off, but something heavy from Marcel pushed her right into the door. The catgirl stumbled over the stairs and fell into the Therapy Room. When she got up the door closed automatically.

"ALYSIA!"

"REYA!" Alysia reached out to the catgirl but she saw Marcel's hand.

A metallic arm. Grey and silver, from shoulder to fingers. A result of the spell Ashes to Dust she used to fight him back. The robotic hand curled into a fist, it looked ready to punch her. Instead, Marcel opened the hand up revealing flat light bulb embedded in the palm. Without words or hesitation, he shoved his hand right to her eyes and the light flashed on and off.

Alysia screams drowned out the sound of Reya pounding on the door. Her eyes blurred, her head pounding, an overwhelming pain that she could not bear. She pushed her hands on Marcel's face to get him off, but she could barely get her body to move. That

compelling feeling that forced her to come here vanished from her thoughts. The want to break free from this horrific light was all she had in mind. Her body slid down the wall as her back felt the vibration of the wall. The Therapy Room was on and Reya was inside. She knew this was all Oryn's doing and it was meant for her. But she felt helpless to save Reya because the light was hurting her.

The light. All her life, she was afraid of the light. Lightning flashes turned her darkened room into a moment of fright when she lied in her bed. She would run to her parents so she could feel safe. When her father brought a strobe light to hold a party for his co-workers, she thought the pulse would destroy her mind. Her parents would tell her it was not true. The days following her head injury worsened those fears as she laid on the chair for an MRI. After spending five months undergoing Therapy, each moment fresh and raw, was all true. A nightmare she will never forget. An event in her life that will always trigger her fear. Her fear. That helped Oryn control her. The machine used the light to affect her mind, but it also exploited her fear of the light.

"No... more..." Alysia clasped the metal arm, drawing the warmth generated by the light into her, and added it to her athletic strength to push it up. The light out of her face, everything she saw was twisted and distorted. Marcel looked like putty as she stumbled to the floor knocking over a metal tray. Her fingers felt the flat tray as the world spun around. Alysia felt her body turned over by Marcel and without hesitation, she swung the tray as high up as she hard as she could. She heard a clang. She no longer felt Marcel's arm on her shoulder. The winged girl stared up at the ceiling, unable to move as her mind fought both the pain of the light and enchantment.

Inside the Therapy Room, Reya walked around the slope and looked up at the glass room above her. The machine was warming up and the lights built up Reya's tension.

"Hello." She said as the humming sound hurt her sensitive ears. She covered them and looked around at the spherical chamber. It was white and bare. It looked sterile and devoid of all sound except for the humming. The noise made her heart skip. Her mind played

tricks on her. It built up at steady pace as her tears streak down her face. She lost her footing and slid to the bottom of slope. She looked up and saw lights flashing from the ceiling. She gripped her head with her hands as she felt something in her mind. The feeling dug deep but found nothing. Just feelings of a forgotten past. Shadows that could not give a clear picture. She felt her body levitate as her arms stretched outward and legs tilted downward. She wanted it all to stop.

Reya tried to close her eyes, but muscles would not let her. She felt as though she has been here before and that she could not close her eyes. The catgirl screamed out loud as a voice echoed in her mind. It called out for Alysia and tried to give commands, but the program cancelled when it did not recognize the winged girl. Reya watched the lights change into an array of colors and turned her body into light itself. A slit in the ceiling split open and a glass dome emerged. Her eyes grew wide as she saw a person inside. It was a woman.

"Mommy?" A sudden memory burst into Reya's thoughts. A still picture of her looking at her mother's green eyes.

"Reya." Sydney's eyes opened. They were pitch black, staring at Reya like watching a television screen. Her unclothed body dangled inside the glass dome, held by wires attached throughout her exposed back. The veins pulsed from her exposed flesh. The data surged through the wires connected to her exposed brain, trapped in a container that was once her skull. She could hear Reya's thoughts, her cries, and her fears echoing from the mind. Her daughter begging all of this pain to stop.

Reya blinked once, and found herself in an endless world of grass and clear blue sky. She stood before Sydney. Both wore white dresses. Reya saw the flowing brown hair of the woman, she looked like an older version of herself, only without the cat ears or the cat tail. They stared at each other as the wind blew gently around them.

"Who are you?" Reya said.

"I am your mother." Sydney covered her mouth in shock. She was talking to her daughter for the first time in so many years. It was overwhelming. "You've grown so much."

"I did?" Reya could not understand Sydney's reaction. She does not even recognize the woman at all. She does not even know her. Yet, she could feel it in her heart that this woman meant something to her. That still picture flashed again in her mind and she connected the two. Reya took small steps toward Sydney as the woman knelt down to one knee waiting with open arms. The catgirl stood before Sydney, hesitant to hug her. Instead, she felt the woman's hands caressing her cheeks, stroking her grey hair, rubbed her ears and tail.

"I am so sorry Reya." Sydney's tears fell down. "I can never make this up to you. I was never there to protect you. And we lost so much time to be together. I don't know if you'll ever forgive me."

Reya placed her hands on Sydney's cheeks and wiped away the tears. Without saying a word, she just slid between her mother's arms and nestled onto her chest. She closed her eyes and wrapped her arms around Sydney's waist. Reya tried to smell Sydney, to catch any familiar scent. She does not realize that she was in dream like world. Reya opened her eyes and looked at Sydney. She just looked at her. Her heart made it clear that this was her mother and she trusted this feeling as she tried to record Sydney's face into her mind.

"Mommy."

They hugged each other tightly and cried. The pain they have gone through all these years, and Sydney knew this was their last time together. She helped Reya regain whatever fragment of memories laid hidden in her child's mind. Each of Reya's memories was like a still photo. No movements like a movie, or a feeling of the moment, despite the expressions on the faces of Reya, her mother, and her brother. They used most of their time for as long as the Therapy Room was active for. To have one last conversation together. To come to terms for everything that has happened. For Sydney, to make sure her daughter understood the truth. Then their

time was up and the grassy world faded into nothing. Reya and Sydney found themselves pulled away. Their hands struggled to hold on.

"I love you Reya."

"I love you mommy."

An uncontrollable force ripped them apart. The pain of separation returned for Sydney, for Reya it felt like it was her first time, despite the truth told to her. The world turned black and Reya felt like she was falling. She lay at the bottom of the sphere, her body laid to the side with her legs curled, hands clasped, and eyes closed.

The machine finished its job, but failed to accomplish what Oryn programmed. As Sydney watched the ceiling close before her eyes, a tear dropped onto the glass as she watched her daughter rest on the floor and no longer in her sight.

Moments earlier, in the lobby, Kyo screamed as four guards carried him outside. They threw him out onto the street as a few employees stood by. He sat up as he watched the doors close on him. Kyo stood to his feet as he heard a whistle around the corner of the building. He looked in the direction of the sound and saw Chisame and Brie waving him over.

"Are you okay Kyo?" Chisame said as the mage approached them.

"Yeah. I saw Alysia and Reya go inside. I tried to bust through but the guards caught me."

Brie peeked through the window and saw a lot of guards standing by the elevators.

"There's too many of them.' Brie pulled back and turned around. She saw Danica landing on the sidewalk across the street. Her eyes grew wide as she the thief nursing her blood soaked left shoulder while carrying Epic in her hand. 'Danica!'"

The thief looked up as she crossed the street. She smirked as Brie helped her across the street and joined the Sentinels. Danica felt Chisame's hand trying to move it aside so they could see the wound. She hesitated at first because she did not want their sympathy or help. But, Chisame's insistence made Danica remove her hand. The

sound of gasps irritated the thief as they stared at the open wound. Her flesh split apart.

"Oh Danica." Chisame said as she tore her sleeve.

"This is nothing." Danica said as Chisame placed hand over the wound and channeled her mana.

"Cleanse.' The vapor from heat gathered into water and spread over the wound. It was not a strong spell, nor designed for healing. It did help minimize infection and allowed Chisame to push the wound closed so she could wrap it with her sleeve. 'Sorry but I don't know the type of healing spells that would seal this wound like stitches. You'll have to avoid fighting for now."

"I wish I could agree with you."

"Why?" Kyo said as Brie pointed down the street Danica came from.

"Look!" Everyone but Danica saw a limo speeding down the street. They watched Danica stand to her feet and lifted Epic up over shoulder.

"Emilia had a friend." Danica felt lightheaded and stumbled a bit. She saw Brie's arms hold her up and she shrugged off the disorientation. The limo screeched to a halt and the door opened. Jusef stepped out of the car as Danica saw Emilia moaning, lying in the seat covered in blood and bruises, unable to move. Danica laughed out loud as Jusef stepped aside and waved to Lyn to step out of the limo.

Brie's hands shivered and her eyes welled up in tears as the Sentinels stood there in shock. The hacker shook her head side to side, in total denial of what Lyn was wearing.

"No.' Brie said as she looked at Lyn standing with lifeless eyes. 'What did they do to my invention?"

"Brie.' Chisame said. 'What is that?"

"It's my de-paralyzer.' Brie wiped the tears from her face. 'It's a medical device for people who can't walk. It's not meant for this."

"So we just remove the armor and its over." Danica said.

"It's not that easy.' Kyo said looking at Lyn's mage suit. 'She's covered in magic lines, which means we have to negate the enchantment."

"Also,' Brie looked up to Danica. 'the de-paralyzer is connected to the spine and brain. We rip that off her while it's active and we'll kill her."

"Awesome." Danica smiled until she felt an elbow in the ribs by Brie."

"That's a nice science lesson.' Jusef said. 'But I am only interested in your injured friend. Surrender her over and we will leave in peace."

Before Danica could say that they were not her friends, Brie and Chisame stood in front of her like a shield.

"Sorry,' Chisame said. 'but we don't hand members of the Sentinels over to anybody."

"Yeah.' Brie said. 'We don't give up our friends."

"Friends?" Danica said and shrugged her shoulder. 'Eh. Okay."

"Very well.' Jusef turned to Lyn. 'Since Oryn went out of her way to let me use you, go play with them."

Chisame took her brooch off her shirt and clenched it into her fist as Lyn walked forward.

"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.

Chisame turned to Brie and made a hand gesture to take out the pendant. But she noticed Brie was hesitant to do so.

"We have to stop her Brie."

"My blueprints." Brie thought about the failsafe in her invention and knew what she had to do.

"I know it's painful that they are using your invention against us, but..."

"That's just it. If they followed my blueprints then they are using it by remote.' Brie stood before Kyo as Chisame and Danica listened. 'Help me get inside, Kyo. The terminal should be in Level B2 with all the other inventions. After I shut down the de-paralyzer, we'll head down to the Therapy Room and get Alysia and Reya. Then we'll all go find Madam Karyn and get her out."

Kyo looked at Chisame and received a nod. The mage led Brie to the front entrance and the hacker pointed to the elevators.

"See that wall Kyo?"

"Yes."

"That's a secret entrance to the lower levels. That's how we'll get down there."

"Okay. I'll give you cover. KURAIKEN!" A sword ejected out of the magic circle. As the wind blew outward, he reached his hand through the full moon image, and grasped the hilt. The circle disappeared as he held his ancestral sword with two hand and the agents took out their wands.

Kyo ran inside the lobby swinging his sword around at the employees and led the guards in a chase. He stood at the corner and raised his sword over his head. The sword glowed purple as a magical circle expanded under his feet and spread outward. Unable to see Kyo's circle, the guards stood there wondering what he was doing.

"SHADOW BLIND!" A dome of darkness enveloped everyone standing in the circle. Kyo could see all of the guards in the darkness and saw Brie outside the dome jumping over the gate. He crawled under the guards and left them feeling their way out of the dome. As

he ran toward the elevators, he saw Chisame and Danica outside fighting Lyn and Jusef.

"KYO!" Brie said reinforcing the secret door with a potted plant to keep it open.

"Coming!" Kyo hopped over the gate and ran for the door.

Outside, Danica struggled to swing her sword with one arm. Each attack she made, Jusef just stepped aside. She could feel the hunter toying with her as he chuckled with each move he made. Her right arm felt tired, as she struggled to ignore the pain on her left shoulder. It made her lose focus for a moment as Jusef stood in front of her face with his palm over her left shoulder.

"CRUSHING PRESSURE!!" The mana created a force that pressed into her wound.

Danica screamed aloud as she stumbled back and dropped Epic. She dropped to one knee and looked up with her hand over her wound. The thief watched Chisame use her Iron Shield Spell to block Lyn's attacks. Her eyes shifted over to Jusef as he took a pair of knives. The reflection of the sun off the metal blades blinded her. She closed her eyes and reached for Epic, but Jusef rammed his knee into her face. Danica fell onto her back and looked up to the sky.

"Damn." Danica struggled to breathe for a moment. The intense summer heat overwhelmed her. The sweat trickling down her face soaked her hair. No blowing wind to cool her. She concentrated on the hot stale air and closed her eyes as Jusef stood over her.

"Giving up, young lady?" Jusef aimed the tip of the blades at her chest ready to strike. "Good. It is time to go home."

"No." Danica saw the evil in her parents' eyes in her thoughts and her eyes opened wide suddenly. "NO!"

Danica channeled the air above her and turned her arm over so her palm faced up. The thief curled her fingers partially and drew the air to her hand. She thought of a new spell in her mind and thrust her hand up to Jusef.

"HEAT WAVE!!" A blast of hot air burned into Jusef's body. It jolted him off the ground and landed on the trunk of the limo. Danica stared at her hand as she felt the warmth of the wind. She remembered Alysia saying that she felt the wind through the heat. The thief felt lucky it worked. Danica lifted her body up and saw Chisame pushing Lyn back with her Spiral Pressure spell. She saw the guards behind the glass standing around, not even one veiled in mana. The thief found them to be useless. Danica turned to Jusef, his shirt and tie burned off and exposed his blistered belly. He used the limo as leverage to stand up. She crawled over to Epic and pulled it close to her.

"No you don't." Jusef threw a knife at Danica, but she swung Epic deflecting the blade.

"Alysia.' Danica took a deep breath resting the flat side of Epic's jeweled blade on her forehead. 'We can share the same spells."

This epiphany brought joy to her heart. While she may never use Saga, the fact that she can access wind related fire spells from Alysia's alignment was close enough to satisfy her wish. Danica wondered what else she could combined the wind with from Brie and Chisame. But there was no time to experiment now. She looked at Chisame and watched the leader hold her own against Lyn. Danica noticed that Chisame's attacks only pushing Lyn back, and felt she would need to hurry with the assassin so she could aide her leader. The thief jabbed Epic's blade to the ground and used it get to her feet. She did not have time to block Jusef's swinging kick, so she spun around like the ballerina she was, and struck the assassins back with the hilt of the sword.

Danica lifted the sword up conserving her energy. She saw Emilia looking out from the limo, lifting her hand up. The thief wondered if she was trying to cast a spell against her. To be safe, she channeled her mana and raised her sword up.

"AEROBURST!!" She swung Epic downward and sent a straight burst of air to the limo. The blast pushed the limo off the ground, making Emilia stumble off the seat. Danica heard the girl scream from the pain and it made her smile. But the corner of her eyes

caught Jusef's sight as he rolled over and retrieved his missing knife. She turned to him as he knelt down with both of his blades in hand, channeling his mana. The thief was careless and took a defensive posture with Epic.

"OPTION!" Released the knives from hands and they floated around his body. Jusef stood to his feet as he watched Emilia struggle to come out of the limo. 'Stay back. This won't take long."

"You have no idea who you're up against." Danica channeled her mana, but she did not have enough time to cast a spell as Jusef lunged at her. She blocked the first knife with Epic, but the second knife slipped across the leg. Distracted by the pain, she felt a fist to her face by Jusef. The multiple strikes overwhelmed Danica. Each time she blocked one knife, the other struck her and Jusef followed it with punch or a kick. Her back bumped the limo and she stumbled onto the open the door. She watched Emilia slide back to avoid the flying knives.

"You appeared tired young lady.' Jusef said as Emilia waved goodbye. 'Once I finish carving you up, and drain your blood, you shall be weak enough for Therapy."

Danica watched the knives rotating around Jusef. She noticed how they moved around. She could see the wind pushing the blades, an easy flow that was basic. The first thing she learned when she called out for Epic.

"Any last words, before your mind is erased?" Jusef said as Danica sat there thinking how stupid he was for asking that question.

"Sure, why not? I have a message you can send to my parents. But first, a demonstration to tell my parents.' Danica raised her hand and channeled the wind pushing the knives. 'AIR CURRENT!'"

"What?" Jusef stepped back as he lost control over his knives. He watched them swing around his body once and from opposite sides they jabbed just under his ribs. His head jerked back, screaming in pain, until his body jumped lurched. He looked down and saw Danica in his face. A giggle from her throat, and a satisfactory glow, was the last visual thing he remembered as his blood streamed

down the jeweled blade of Epic. Danica's finger lifted his head up to face her as he heard the final words in his life.

"I nurture the weak... and I kill the strong." Danica said it loud enough for Emilia to hear her voice. She turned to her deranged nemesis as the teen trembled in fear. The thief kicked Jusef's dead body off her sword while keeping her cold-blooded eyes Emilia. She watched the girl's body jumped at the sound of the thud and crawl back on her knees. 'Don't forget to give my folks my message, before they send you to Hell."

Danica saw liquid trickle off the seat behind Emilia, the thief found her enemies sudden cowardice pathetic. The thief slammed the door in the girl's face out of disgust and turned her attention to Chisame. With a sigh, she noticed her leader had not finished her battle. She channeled her mana and raised her sword up.

"Danica no!"

"AEROBURST!" Danica swung her sword down and small burst of wind, rushed up to Lyn. The spell struck the sorceress and made her fall to the ground. Danica took short breaths and felt the mana waning. With one deep breath, she summoned enough energy for another battle and approached Chisame. 'You're sure taking your time beating her."

"I'm trying not to kill her. We have to give Brie a chance to disable that device."

"Still you could have knocked her out."

"I'm trying to be careful here. In case you haven't notice, this woman is a victim of Oryn's act."

"But for now she is our enemy."

The girls looked at Lyn lying on the floor. She was not moving at all. Danica took the pause to regain her strength. Chisame saw Jusef lying on a pool of his blood and tilted her head at Danica.

"Yeah, I killed him Boss."

"You feel better now?" Chisame looked over at Lyn concerned as to whether she was alive.

"My spell was too weak to kill her." Danica crossed her arms with a shrug.

"You don't know that.' Chisame turned to Danica and leaned her face close to the thief. 'Seriously you need to stop with the killing."

"I'm just trying to enjoy my last days tasting blood."

"You are so sick Danica.' Chisame said as a red mist covered Lyn. 'And what do you mean last days? Are you saying that you're going to stop killing?"

"Yeah.' Danica said as Lyn's body twitched. 'Once we're in Merydia, I'm going to reform."

"Reform?!" Chisame placed her hands on her hips as Lyn stood up to feet. 'I'll spend a week at wearing only..."

Chisame and Danica took defensive positions as they watched Lyn lifted her head up. They saw tears trickled down her cheeks as her eyes twitched. Chisame lowered her gauntlet as she could almost hear the screaming from within Lyn's closed mouth.

"She's crying?" Danica said.

"She's in pain.' Chisame covered her mouth as a burst of energy knocked her and Danica through the walls. All of the glass shattered in the surrounding area. The Sentinels stood to their feet as the guards stepped away from the combat zone. 'I hope you got enough energy to fight."

"I hope Kiddo turns that device off before I kill the lady."

To Be Continued...

