

Arcana Magi - c.26:

Science versus Magic

by H-M Brown

The Orb of Vyndor perched on a pillow before Jonas in the conference room. It was a momentous occasion. Champagne popped open and poured into a glass. With the Board of Directors watching on from the video phone, Jonas gladly accepted his grant from Avalon Tech. The directors toasted to his success and Vyndor gave a resounding congratulatory speech. With the sound of applause from the directors, the conference phone rang. It was the security desk and Jonas answered it.

"Yes what is it?" Jonas heard loud noises on the other end and his eyes lit up. 'WHAT?!'

Vyndor and the Board of Directors went silent. Everyone waited as Jonas rubbed his eyes in frustration.

"Vyndor."

"What is it?"

"Lyn is out of control."

"Bring up the security camera Jonas."

The mage took the remote and activated a split screen on the monitor. He and Vyndor saw the Sentinels in the lobby fighting Lyn. There was an eerie silence as they watched Chisame and Danica cast spells at the sorceress. Jonas turned to the orb.

"It seems like Mr. Kinkaid succeeded in capturing Danica, and her friends came to rescue her."

"Something's not right.' Vyndor said as Jonas put the phone to his ear. 'Where is Mr. Kinkaid?'

"What happened to our guest Lyn was accompanying?" Jonas brought up another screen of the outside and there they saw Jusef lying dead next to the limo. Jonas stepped back in shock. He could hear the growling coming from Vyndor. The mage watched the orb

glow red and could feel the heat as it boiled the champagne in the glass, until it shattered.

"Where's Oryn?!"

The security guard heard the question and gave the answer to Jonas.

"She's going to the Therapy Room. He said Suzaku returned."

Vyndor did not say another word. He just sat on the pillow keeping quiet. The orb never realized how much a fool Oryn was. He never thought that she would put everything in jeopardy. The orb understood all too well what will happen. The authorities would arrive. After all the effort to deflect the investigations to Quillian and keeping Mystic Intelligence busy investigating the moles he planted in the branch offices, if they find the Sentinels here, it will support the girls story from their television interview last week. Avalon Tech would fall. Vyndor would never enjoy the success and profits after exposing magic to the world.

"Jonas, get Madam Karyn from Level B1, arrange for a helicopter to come pick us up at the roof. We're leaving."

"Yes Vyndor." Jonas left the conference room.

Once the door closed, the Board of Directors waited for Vyndor's next instructions.

"When I get back to Merydia, we will issue a press conference, and let our Newark offices fall. Provide Mystic Intelligence Headquarters with the standard statement. Provide them evidence implicating Oryn relating to the Sentinels, the stolen inventions, and Sydney Everheart."

"Yes Vyndor." The female elf said. "We'll see you when you come back."

Brie and Kyo stood before the main door to Level B2. Although she did have Alysia's passcode, without the winged girl's handprint, they had no way of getting inside. Brie stepped aside as Kyo stood before the door hinges. She watched the mage wedge the blade through the slim crack and slid Kuraiken downward severing the

bolts. As Kyo worked his way down, Brie exposed her pendant, crossed her arms over her over it and tilted her head down.

“ASCEND... LEGACY!”

Brie spread her arms back and tilted her head up as the pendant burst into droplets of light, pushing the yellow gem into the air, and gather around it. As her right hand stretched out with a gentle reached, four triangles stretched out from the gem. The hilt shaped outward beside her hand, and when Brie's hand gently wrapped around it, the metal neck stretched outward and the hammerhead formed at the end. She pulled Legacy close to her chest and swung it in a pounding motion, left to right, creating twp ripple of sound and spun the hammer over her right shoulder to rest it while curling her left hand into a fist stretched outward.

“There.’ Kyo tried to push the door down but was too heavy. ‘You want give it try?’”

“Sure.’ Brie channeled her mana and held the hammer back like a baseball bat. She swung it forward as though she was going to hit a ball. “VIBRANT SHOCKAVE!!”

Just before the hammer connected with the door, a ripple of sound spread out across the door and created a force of energy that knocked it over. When the door slammed onto the ground, they startled the scientists inside, and everyone went silent. There was only the sound of functioning machines.

As Kyo followed Brie inside, he saw all kinds of inventions tested by scientists. From prosthetic arms and legs to guns and lances. What shocked Kyo even more was that there were elves, dwarves, and fairies alongside humans working on these prototypes. He never knew these races lived here in America. The mage wondered if they were breaking the law being here. Each scientist stepped aside as he walked alongside Brie. Kyo could sense the fear in the air, as he and Brie were the only ones armed with weapons. Despite their heritage, it would appear that the dwarves and elves would not know how to fight if he and Brie provoked them.

“Is this where that Therapy Room thing is?” Kyo said as he walked past a computer analyzing what appeared to be a giant robot. He

looked closely at the screen, but it seemed as though it was only in the blueprint stages.

"No. It's on Level B4 below us.' Brie stood before the dwarf that activated the de-paralyzer. She noticed her blueprints spread across the table beside the computer the dwarf stood in front of it. The hacker sifted through each one, as Kyo watched her back, until she found the de-paralyzer. Brie found her blueprints and turned to the dwarf. 'Did you build my de-paralyzer?"

"Yours?" The dwarf said.

"Yes, mine. Is this computer operating my invention by remote?"

"Now wait a minute.' The dwarf scientist stepped back as Kyo pointed the tip of his sword at the neck. 'Yes, it is operating the de-paralyzer."

"We're shutting it down and I am taking back all of my inventions you stole from me.' Brie rolled up her blueprints and stood before the computer looking at the monitor. The screen showed Lyn's name and her physical condition. There were red warning labels throughout the screen pointing to the spinal graft. 'Great. It's malfunctioning. What is this graph about?"

"It's her mind.' The dwarf said. 'It's taking damage."

"Navigate me through this program." Brie typed on the computer and moved the mouse to open c prompt box.

"I thought you were the inventor of this device."

"I was in blueprint stages before you guys stole it. This device was going to take years because of the programming alone. Never mind the physical toll the body would have to take. Who was the genius to go ahead and start my project up?"

"I did." Anna said entering through the collapsed door. She was not surprised seeing Brie here. The programmer figured with Lyn out to search for Danica the rest of Sentinels would eventually show up. With a smile, she now has a chance to get back at the little hacker for shocking her with a tazer.

"Anna."

"Brie. What are you doing?"

"The de-paralyzer is malfunctioning and Lyn is going to die if I don't shut this down."

"Then she dies."

"Your cold."

"I lost my friend when Oryn put her through Therapy. She's now an empty shell wandering like a lost ghost. Believe me. Her death would put her at ease. As would your death put me at ease."

"Brie." Kyo said standing in front of her. "I'll deal with this Anna while you disable the de-paralyzer."

Brie placed her hands on Kyo's wrist. Her head lowered until her face shrouded in a shadow. She lifted up Legacy, walked past Kyo, and stood before Anna.

"You, scientist." Brie said to the gulping sound of the dwarf. "Since you knew how to build my machine, you're going to undo the malfunction and turn it off. Kyo, make sure he's doing his job."

Brie approached Anna as Kyo turned to the dwarf and pushed him into the seat to get to work. The hacker approached the programmer knowing the fight was lopsided. The machines here could only operate through mana. All she had to do was knock Anna off her feet. Brie channeled her mana and raised Legacy over her head. Just as she held it high, Anna took out a tazer and fired two prongs at the hacker. It struck her chest and sent Brie into shock. The hacker collapsed and her body jumped all over the floor.

"NO!" Kyo swung his sword and cut the chords. He knelt before Brie as she took short breaths. "Are you alright?"

"Y...yeah." Brie moaned as she lifted her body up. She and Kyo looked at Anna and saw pink mist surrounding her body. "How did she get mana?"

"I don't understand Brie." Kyo said. "Is that really mana?"

"Anna never had the ability to channel mana." Brie said as Anna threw a syringe before her feet.

"That serum grants us Regs the ability to channel mana. Now I can use these inventions to end you."

As Brie and Kyo prepared to fight, everyone in the facility ran for the elevators. Even the dwarf ran off.

"That jerk.' Kyo stood Brie up to her feet as Anna picked up a gun like device. The mouth of the machine aimed directly at them. 'I'll take care of Anna. You go and fix that machine."

"It'll have to wait Kyo. Look at what she's carrying."

Kyo noticed Anna charging up the device, but sparks were jumping out from the covering. There was no telling how unstable the invention was. The mage understood. Everything here was dangerous, as he saw with the de-paralyzer. With Anna using mana-fueled weapons, he assumed she would not know how to control the weapons let alone mana itself. And if anything goes wrong, like an explosion, Brie and Kyo would not have time to escape.

"Anna,' Brie said. 'you don't want use that. It looks unstable."

"We'll see." Anna pulled the trigger and droplets of light gathered at the mouth of the weapon. A rainbow beam burst out of the cannon, but it was so slow that Brie and Kyo jumped to the side, apart from each other. When the beam struck the wall, it left a dent. Anna felt the device shaking and she threw it toward the door where it exploded on impact.

The shrapnel flew at everyone and Brie felt the vibration of the shockwave. She focused her mind and threw her hand forward. The hacker controlled the wave and moved it toward Anna.

"SONIC RUSH!!" The sound wave struck Anna, and sent her flying over the table, knocking a couple of computers to the ground and pair of goggles.

"I'll cover you Brie. Go to the computer now.' Kyo channeled his mana as Brie hurried to the computer and navigated the windows through trial and error. The mage raised his sword up as Anna's hand slapped the table. Kuraiken glowed purple as a magic circle expanded under his feet and spread outward. Anna saw the circle and grabbed the goggles next to her. "SHADOW BLIND!"

A dome of darkness enveloped Kyo and Anna standing in the circle. Kyo saw Anna crawl under the table. He walked toward the table, when the sound of a blade sliding on a surface caught his attention. Kyo stepped back to make sure Anna did not stab him. He saw Anna wearing a pair of goggles, holding a sword, and crawling.

The goggles confused him at first, but when he saw how easily Anna was heading for Brie, he realized what they were.

"Brie, look out! Anna has night vision goggles on."

The hacker jumped off the seat as Anna's sword lunged forward and pierced the plastic side of the monitor. Brie swung Legacy onto Anna's back. The impact made the woman scream and squirm in the pain. With the sword on the floor, Brie kicked it under the table and pushed Anna away from the computer. The hacker turned to Kyo as he pulled back his sword creating a purple glow with his magic circle underneath his feet.

"NIGHT SLASH!" Kyo swung his and a wave of purple light flew at Anna as she grabbed a satellite dish and activated it. The wave pushed her back as the dish deflected Kyo's spell to the side.

Anna picked up an axe, but it did nothing. She looked at Kyo and Brie approaching her, channeling mana. The programmer held up the dish and saw the mist around her body disappearing. She struggled to focus her mind as her back bumped the wall. She took out another syringe and a vial of pink liquid, but she the syringe broken. She threw it to the ground, removed the cap from the vial, and held it to her lips.

"Anna wait." Brie said with her hand up pleading. "You used a syringe to get that into your body. I don't think you can drink it."

"SHUT UP! I'm not going to down."

"NIGHT SLASH!"

"VIBRANT SHOCKWAVE!!"

Both attacks flew at Anna as the satellite dish reactivated and deflected the spells. Anna smiled as the pink mist covered her body and the axe generated electricity. She raised the weapon over head and watched a large ball of light cover the blade.

"It's over you little runt." The light from the axe started bubbling and twisting. Anna pulled it down as her stomach grumbled. The mist around her body burned her skin. She lost control of everything. Her throat forcefully gulped down the serum as tried to come out of her stomach. Her mind could not control the mana. Anna's body inflated like a balloon.

Kyo grabbed Brie and they both ducked under the table. Together they pushed it over to its side to create a barrier. They heard Anna scream and Kyo covered Brie as the light from the axe exploded. The table pushed them back along the floor and stopped. When they both looked up, there was the tip of the axe blade, wedged through the table between them. Brie and Kyo came out from behind the table.

Anna lied on the floor with the pink serum dripping out of her mouth. She breathed heavy out of her mouth, pink smoke ejected with each exhale. Burns throughout her body blistered from the mana. The programmer could not move her body in any way. The side effect for drinking the serum was paralysis. As an additional side effect, her pupils turned pink.

"Is that how Alysia's eyes turned teal?" Kyo said as he picked up the empty vial.

"She said they did all kinds of experiments on her." Brie picked up a prosthetic arm and wondered if Avalon Tech was going to use this on her friend. It was even more upsetting because they used her inventions to hurt people. She felt sorry for the other inventors that had their work stolen. People, whether human or elf or troll, to act as guinea pigs against their will to test these things, she felt it was wrong. Brie vowed in her heart never to do that when she gets her chance to truly test her inventions.

"Brie." Kyo placed his hand on her shoulder startling her. "Let's shut your program down. We'll gather your things afterwards."

"Okay."

At the lobby, Chisame flung her disk at Lyn, but the sorceress deflected it with her armored glove. When the disk came back to the leader, she saw Lyn aim her hand at her.

"burst." Lyn said with a hollow voice, so dead and lifeless. Her mind tried to tell her body to stop but it would not listen. She prayed that she did not hurt the teen when it struck Chisame in the stomach.

"Boss.' Danica said as she stood in front of Chisame holding her sword in a defensive posture with one hand. 'Let me kill her. It's the only way to end this fight."

Chisame looked up at Danica, surprised that the thief asked to kill her. Looking at Danica's injury, she wondered if she lost enough blood to lose her own sense of bloodlust. But she remembered what Danica said.

"I nurture the weak... and I kill the strong."

Chisame understood why Danica is hesitating. If Lyn had control over the de-paralyzer, the sorceress would have attacked them ruthlessly, and Danica would have killed her a long time ago. But because of what Avalon Tech did to Lyn as they see the pain in her eyes, she was weak, a victim of cruelty.

"Chisame, we can't wait for them. I'd rather take her life and free her from a lifetime of pain in that device, then to wait for Brie to succeed."

Lyn heard what Danica said and wished it so. To end her life so she would not go through this anymore. All Lyn could say in her mind was how sorry she was for all she done. Even as she lifted her arms over her head and formed a ball of flames. She cried for her body to stop.

"fire barrage." Each flame shot out one after the other, in different directions. There was no control over the spell because of the malfunctioning device. Some of flames struck the guards and lit them on fire. One flame came toward the Sentinels as Chisame dropped to one knee and channeled her mana.

"IRON SHELL!" The flames bounced off the turtle shell light. The sprinkler system activated and rained down on the lobby. Once Lyn's spell ended, Chisame turned to Danica and nodded. It was as though they understood each other and channeled mana. Chisame drew the rain toward her body and Danica gathered air. With Fable and Epic aimed at Lyn, they combined the water and wind into a bigger spell. For a moment, they read each other's minds and they told each other the name of their spell.

"TORRENTIAL TYPOON!!" The lobby turned dark as clouds formed before the ceiling. A burst of wind and rain blew right into Lyn, pushing her into the wall, forming a crater. As the sorceress fell on her face, the spell ended and created a rainbow. The Sentinels stood there catching their breaths as the sound of water dripping on the floor snapped them out of their trance like state. They saw that they held hands and pulled away, with backs turned to each other.

"This doesn't mean anything, Boss."

"Yeah, you're still on notice."

"Still.' Danica looked back with the corner of her eyes. 'Is this part of the power of the Four Elements that we just did?"

"I think so.' Chisame said. 'Even reading our minds. Although it seems that only happens when we cast our spells."

"Good. I don't need you in my head, Boss."

"I don't think Alysia would like this power either."

Lyn stood up to her feet. Despite the power unleashed on her, Chisame and Danica rolled their eyes and prepared for another round. Lyn charged at them as Danica swung her sword. The sorceress used the armored gloves to deflect the crystal blade and punched the thief in the face, causing her to slip on the watery surface. As Danica fell to the ground, Lyn spun her leg around, and struck Chisame just below the ribs. The impact sent the Sentinel sliding on the wet surface toward the windows. Lyn aimed her hands downward. Electricity sparked out of the gloves.

"electric ray." Lines of electricity at first missed the Sentinels as they lifted their bodies up. But Lyn adjusted her aim and brought the spell right on them. The water amplified the electricity and struck the wet girls. The spell x-rayed their bodies. The screams never came out of their mouths. The pain too unbearable to handle. When the spell stopped, the Sentinels fell on their backs smoldering, with hearts racing, wanting to jump out of their chests. They could barely move their bodies as Lyn stood over them, trying to stop the madness she was going through.

"Stop.' Chisame said struggling to lift Fable up so she could cast Iron Shell. 'I know you don't want to do this. Our friend is trying to

shut the down the machine. If you can hear me, please try to resist casting your spells so she could disable it for you."

As much as Lyn felt reassured about that, she could not control her arm from aiming at Chisame. The sorceress pushed her mind hard. Her mana channeling against her will. She was fighting hard as light gathered around her hand.

"shine burst." A blast of light fired from her hand. The blast missed Chisame as the water splashed up and hit the teen's face. Lyn's hand shivered. She used whatever ounce of strength she had to fight the programming. It was painful for her mind. Her heart pounded restlessly. She watched Chisame slid away from her and helped to her feet by Danica.

"She's not moving." Danica said as she felt Chisame's hand gripping her wrist and shaking it. The thief saw a tear fall down her friend's face.

"Do it Danica." Chisame turned around. She knew it had to be done. The sorceress was suffering.

For some reason, as Danica raised her sword up, it felt wrong. She stood there watching Lyn shake and quiver. It was like watching Alysia. Lyn's eyes shifted toward Danica, the soft look in the sorceress' eyes told the thief it was okay. The Sentinel could hear herself say over and over that it was alright, it was mercy. She repeated her mantra, she was not strong enough to kill the weak. 'I... I...'

Danica felt Chisame's hand lower the sword.

"Its okay, Dani."

The thief clutched Chisame's shoulder as Lyn's hand turned toward them. Danica pushed Chisame away, forcefully into the desk. She swung her sword deflecting Lyn's armored hand to the side and watched the Shine Burst spell shatter the glass. Danica swung the sword right at Lyn's neck, only she turned it to the side. She struck the woman's face with the flat side of the blade rather than the sharp edge. A clang sounded from the impact, striking Lyn on the side of the helmet, and it knocked her to the ground. The thief

dropped her sword and grabbed her injured shoulder as the blood trickled out of the covering.

"Dani, eh?" The thief said as she watched Chisame used the desk to stand up. "Sure whatever."

Danica picked up her sword and leaned the sword on her good shoulder. She stood before Lyn with Chisame beside her. They watched the red lights on the armor disappear and the red lines vanish from her body.

"Brie did it." Chisame said as she knelt down and carefully removed the helmet from Lyn.

"Took her long." Danica helped Chisame remove all of the armor. With the armor snapped in place, it was a struggle to remove it. But the thief used her sword to cut the hinges, and slid the boots and gloves off. When they finished, they sat Lyn up and leaned her back on the desk. The guards gathered around with a first aid kit.

Lyn just sat there, her eyes glazed over, her head tilted slightly. The guards tried to get her to respond, but there was nothing in there. Her mind exhausted from the ordeal, she could feel her body again, and her ability to move, but she was too tired to do anything. Her thoughts drifted into darkness as she stared at the Sentinels stepping back and ran off with a packet of disinfectant, gauze, and tape.

Chisame helped Danica over the gate. They entered the hidden stairwell left open by Brie. Chisame checked on Danica's injury and saw it was worse than it was. The leader applied the disinfectant and taped the gauze in place. Chisame wanted to try to cast a spell to ease the pain but Danica walked away.

"We have to find the others." Danica led Chisame downstairs. They arrived at a door marked Level B1. The thief leaned on the wall and slid to the floor. She caught her breath and tried to gather her energy. She felt Chisame's hands hold her up. "I can keep going."

"No." Chisame said with tears in her eyes. "You did enough."

"Gotta keep moving, Boss." Danica pulled herself to her feet. She heard voices below.

"Kyo go upstairs with my things and get Chisame and Danica down here. Then go get Fynir and the others."

"Will you be okay?"

"If Alysia is down there everything will be fine."

"Brie! Kyo!" Chisame said looking down the stairwell. "Up here!"

"Hey!" Brie said looking up the stairs as Kyo climbed up. "Did my invention shut down?!"

"Yeah!" Chisame said as Kyo arrived with a duffle bag over his shoulder. "What's this?"

"Brie's stolen inventions." Kyo said pulling the bag up to keep it from slipping off his shoulders. He looked at Danica leaning on the wall, breathing heavy, and covering her wound. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine."

"She'll alright." Chisame said as Brie ran up and gasped at Danica's condition. "Take her back upstairs Kyo, and get her medical attention."

"No way." Danica said cringing in pain. "I got energy."

"Come on." Kyo took the thief's arm but she pushed him back.

"We don't have time for this." Danica said approaching the staircase. "We have to get Alysia and Reya back. I won't abandon them."

"Danica." Brie and Chisame said as they heard noise from behind the door.

"GET UP!"

"Jonas?" Brie recognized his voice.

"We have to get to the roof now!"

Chisame opened the door a little and saw Madam Karyn pushed into the wall. She saw the bruises on her teacher's face and the shackles binding her wrists. The leader curled Fable into a fist and threw the door open.

"Leave her alone!"

"What the...?" Jonas looked at Chisame and saw Brie standing next to her. He smiled as the Sentinel's and Kyo came out into the open. "I see. I take it you want to fight me."

"Just let Madam Karyn go and you can leave.' Chisame said as she waved the old mage over only for Jonas to block her path. 'We have important things to worry about. Kyo, Danica get Madam Karyn out of here."

"I told you, Boss. I'm not going."

"Nor is your old friend here.' The elevator door opened and Jonas led Madam Karyn to the door. 'You see, she's our insurance to get out of here. I'm sure by now the authorities are at the lobby. Besides I think you have someone more important to rescue."

Chisame stepped back. She forgot about Alysia and Reya. Seeing her teacher in this condition was unforgivable. It was hard decision, but she felt that rescuing Karyn right now, while she was present, was important too. Chisame figured out an idea as her eyes shifted to Brie.

"We could end this in the speed of sound." Chisame said.

"What?" Jonas said.

"I said we could you beat you faster than sound itself."

Brie's eyes lit up as she opened her hand and aimed it at the floor. She channeled her mana as Jonas pushed Madam Karyn into the elevator. Just as he placed on foot inside, Brie cast her spell.

"SHATTER!!" She knelt down pushing her hand on the floor. The ground broke up into pieces and caused Jonas to lose his balance. Karyn pushed Jonas away and pressed the close button to escape. She waved goodbye as the Mageologist reached out to stop the door.

"Let's go!" Chisame led everyone back into the stairwell and closed the door. But a force of energy pushed it open and everyone fell to the ground. Chisame saw Danica rolled downstairs stopping halfway, Brie lifted herself to her knees and Kyo lied on the stairs leading up. She saw Jonas marched toward the door with hands glowing bright. The leader signaled Kyo to keep going and he did. The Sentinels lifted their weapons up, much to Chisame's frustration of Danica's stubbornness.

"Very well.' Jonas said. 'I will kill you three, myself."

To Be Continued...

