

Arcana Magi - c.30: Farewell, My Home

by H-M Brown

Alysia approached her friends and the Four Elements. They were celebrating Danica's awakening from unconsciousness. The thief had surgery and was still unconscious in the real world, but in the Temple Plain she woke up. Alysia heard Brie and Chisame talking to Danica, updating her on everything that happened during Alysia's fight, and that everyone spent the past twenty-four hours in a hospital recovering. Everyone became silent as the winged Sentinel stood before her friends. Alysia looked at Danica with great relief.

"You're finally awake Danica." Alysia said with a monotone voice. "We thought you would never wake up. Did you like the flowers?"

"Flowers?" Danica said.

"Alysia, she only woke up here." Chisme said. "She's still unconscious in the real world."

"Oh." Alysia said smiling with her arm vibrating.

"You're smiling?" Danica stood there watching Alysia struggle.

"Yeah." Alysia continued her monotone voice as she held her right arm to control the shaking caused by the smile. "When I was imprisoned in that Erase spell, it somehow altered the enchantment. Instead of hurting my head, it just makes my arm shake."

"Alysia," Chisame said. "you should take it easy. We don't know if the enchantment still affects your mind."

"I know." Alysia took a deep breath and calmed herself. The shaking stopped. "Still. I am happy that I can feel again."

"So why do you talk like a robot?" Brie said.

"I feel comfortable talking like this. I won't feel like myself if I talk differently."

"Alysia." Brie said, feeling sad for her friend.

"Don't worry. I'll be fine."

"Now that you're here," Chisame said. "we have to discuss about

what to do with these jewelry."

"What happened?' Danica said as Alysia and Brie covered their jewelry. There was silence in the air. Even the Four Elements kept quiet. The thief could sense that they had to make a decision that could not be interfered. She looked at her ring and had an idea of the situation. 'We can't keep these Chisame?"

"Fynir said..."

"Fynir and I had a deal! I give up my parents and do whatever they want, as long as I can keep the ring."

"It's not that simple anymore.' Chisame turned to Danica. 'The whole world spent the week watching us use these weapons on television. It has attracted too much attention from social groups to the government."

"If we disconnect them Boss, what are they going to do with them?"

"Put them in storage."

"And what if someone tries to steal them? Like you said the whole world saw us use these and Mystic Intelligence is so corrupt, how can we trust them? I went through a lot for this. No way I'm giving this up."

"I know Dani. But the public doesn't like the idea of us possessing such power, especially..." Chisame looked at Alysia as the winged Sentinel looked at her right hand, flexing it.

"It doesn't matter if I have Saga or not. Those spells came from me and not Suzaku."

"There is one idea I have.' Brie said. 'But, I don't know."

"It's okay Brie, tell us." Chisame said as the Sentinels and the Four Elements gave the hacker their attention.

"What if we act as protectors of these weapons?"

"Protectors?" Chisame said as Danica crossed her arms.

"Yeah. You know, we don't have to run around and fight crime or commit crimes. We don't even have to use them. We just hold onto these and if anyone tries to steal them, we fight in self-defense."

"What do you mean commit crimes?" Danica said.

"Dani, please?" Chisame said as the thief looked away.

"I get it.' Alysia said. 'To act like guardians. No one is allowed to possess these at all and we protect the jewelry to keep them out of evil hands."

"But for how long?" Chisame said.

"Until I die.' Danica said. 'Or someone kills me.

"Is death all you care about Dani?"

"But the point is,' Brie said. 'is that we can protect these items, and at least Mystic Intelligence knows we have these and can keep track of them. Rather than give them up and they get lost."

"We made an agreement.' Alysia said. 'That we would not pass this problem on to someone else. I won't back out of it. I'm for Brie's plan. We don't have to fight unless someone tries to steal our jewelry."

The Sentinels nodded in agreement. The Four Elements howled into the air as recognition of the girl's decisions. The Sentinels looked up into the air and listened to their songs. A rain of light showered the girls. An array of colors, like the rainbow, warmed their hearts, much to Danica's discontent. It was a blessing. Their hearts opened up to them. It felt peaceful.

Each of the girls went to their Element. Brie scratched the ear of Byakko. Chisame caressed the face of Genbu. Danica stared down Seiryuu. Alysia hugged Suzaku, nestling her head on the red feathers. Their hearts had a place for the Elements. The Sentinels did not want to abandon them, their friends. Nor did they want to abandon each other.

The calendar on the desk read Thursday, August 1, 2013. Alysia stared at it for a long time as the office clerk typed on her computer. Her information in state records, reinstated by court order. It felt so long ago now, the last time she saw her parents in February. Her memories so clear now. Every little detail of what had happened to her was more painful after the next. Doctors warned that she would suffer posttraumatic stress once her mind settled down and relaxed. Proof was in her right hand, shivering over her skirt as she waited for the typing to stop.

"Okay Ms. Morales,' The clerk as she finished typing. 'you are now officially alive again."

"Alive?"

"Yes indeed. I'll get you a print out for your personal records."

As the clerk left her desk, Alysia took her letter from the judge. The court order acknowledged her identity and ordered her records corrected and updated. She leaned over the desk and read the screen. There was her name, her birth, her parent's names, even her brothers name, everything. It felt like she was herself again, even though she could not shake off the lies told to her. But she nodded and said to herself that she was Alysia and this was her family. She would never doubt that again.

"Here you are." The clerk sat down startling Alysia.

"I'm sorry."

"No.' The clerk turned the monitor around. "These are your records. You have the right to see them."

"Thank you." Alysia stared at the screen as the clerk placed all the documents in a folder. The winged girl took the folder with her name on it and read the paperwork. Her hand shook as she smiled. She was happy that she could finally move forward with her life as she rubbed her bracelet.

"Are you okay?" The clerk said.

"Yes.' Alysia placed the judge's letter in the folder, closed and hugged it. 'I am fine. Thank you."

"I'm glad to have helped.' The clerk said as Alysia stood up. 'You take care."

"Have a good day." Alysia walked away from the desk and exited the department. She saw Lori sitting on bench in the hallway. The winged girl approached her as she calmed herself to stop shaking. She looked up to the agent and handed her the documents. As Lori looked over them, Alysia watched the people passing by, staring at her. It made her feel uncomfortable, as though they were judging her. A security guard had his eyes on her. He was showing off his nightstick, it felt like a warning not to do anything suspicious. She felt frightened and gripped Lori's shirt. As Alysia slid around the

agent's back to hide, Lori saw the people around them. Without saying a word, Lori escorted Alysia out of the building.

"Don't worry about them." Lori said as she led the Sentinel outside, past the security checkpoint at the main entrance. "You'll be far away from all this."

Lori stood before an unmarked car and opened the door for Alysia. After situating themselves, Lori drove out of the parking lot, and took out a cell phone. She called Fynir and spoke to him as Alysia saw the people going about their business. Women shopped in a clothing store. A man picked up a newspaper at a newsstand. A couple stepped out of the light rail train. Teens ran into a fast food restaurant. Newark felt so different now. Alysia did not feel like this was her home anymore.

"You got it out?" Lori said as Alysia turned to the agent and listened. "Alright. I'll be there after I drop Alysia off at Kyo's home."

"I want to come?" Alysia said as Lori put away her phone and stopped at a signal light.

"We've discussed this before. It's best that you don't see this yet."

"I want to see it."

"Alysia," Lori rubbed her eyes in frustration. "this is not the time."

"I won't tamper with the evidence when we get to the cemetery. I promise."

"It's more than that Alysia." Lori drove on when the light turned green. "We don't want you to get hurt seeing this."

Alysia crossed her arms and turned away. She never said a single word afterwards. She just watched the city pass by, street by street, building by building, until she saw her neighborhood. The car stopped and Alysia stepped out. Kyo came outside of his home as Lori drove off and Alysia stood by the curb. The neighborhood children, playing across the street, waved hello to Alysia and she waved back. She handed Kyo her file before he had a chance to say anything. Once Lori was out of sight, she ran to the cemetery.

"Alysia!"

"I'll be back." Alysia turned the corner, heading for the cemetery. Moments later, she arrived at the entrance, passing by parked unmarked cars. The winged girl made her way to her brother's grave and there she saw the county sheriffs talking to Fynir and Lori. Behind them was a coffin. She approached it quietly as one of the sheriffs approached her. Alysia pushed the officer aside and struggled to break free.

"Alysia!" Fynir said as Lori looked at her.

"I have to see it!" Alysia stopped struggling. "Please. I won't touch it."

Alysia's arm shivered. Her emotions ran high as she stared at the agents. She took a deep breath as Lori took her hand and guided her to coffin. Alysia walked past her brother's untouched grave and saw the hole that was her grave run deep. It was frightening to see. As Fynir slipped on a pair of gloves, Alysia tightened her grip on Lori. The coffin opened, the stale air plumed out making Fynir cough, and Alysia approached it.

There it was, with a peaceful face, a glossy plastic look to it. It wore a pretty white dress. It was what Alysia wore back in January for a birthday party. She loved that dress, the memory was clear and fresh. There were stains of tears on the dress. Alysia wondered if that was her mother's as she reached to touch it, but she stopped, when Fynir's hand appeared before her eyes. The brown hair made Alysia stroke her white and light blue hair. So different a person before her that Alysia wondered if she truly was someone else. Then Fynir, with his gloved hand, tapped the forehead. It sounded like a knock on the door. It was not flesh. It was not her.

Alysia stepped back and faced her brother's grave. She did not want to see that coffin anymore. To see herself lying on there, she felt like she truly died and returned as something else. It felt wrong. Alysia would have preferred to have died and be with her brother. Instead, she has to live a life of changes and pain. No matter how many times she said she could move forward, she knew she would always live with this pain. She closed her eyes as Fynir closed the coffin to prevent any evidence contamination. As they carted the

coffin past her, tears fell down her cheeks. She felt Lori's hands on her shoulders and she looked up.

"You were right. I'm sorry."

"No." Lori looked at Alysia's empty grave. "It's okay. You're safe now. You have a future to make for yourself."

"It feels hard." Alysia said wiping away her tears. "I'm scared."

"I know." Lori said escorting Alysia back to Kyo's house.

When they arrived, Kyo sat on the porch waiting for them. Alysia stepped out of the car and crossed the street. She stood before Kyo and hugged him. She held him tight as Lori waved her hands for them to go inside. They entered the living room where boxes and wrapping lied across the floor, addressed to Memorial Academy in Merydia. Alysia agreed to help Kyo pack his belongings, but she actually wanted to be with Kyo. She took the wrapped plates that the mage handed her and placed them inside a box with fragile stamped.

"Kyo" Alysia said. "Do you think I'm dangerous?"

"What?" Kyo said as he almost dropped a plate. "Where did you get that idea?"

"The people stare at me, but it was last night when I talked to Natasha. Her parents said I was too dangerous for her to be around and they don't want me her around. That I could get her hurt."

"So that explains why she called late last night."

Alysia tightened her grip on her skirt, staring at the bandage over her wounded thigh. She finally heard from her Natasha, only to learn that her parents saw her as dangerous. That stung Alysia, after everything she went through, but she smiled and looked up to Kyo.

"So Natasha said not to worry about it. She was happy that I am alive and safe now. She was happy that I made new friends already and I would not be alone. She was happy that I found you." Alysia blushed as Kyo jerked his head back and knew what on over the phone.

"Did you tell her?"

"Tell her what?" Alysia looked away.

"Our first kiss." Kyo said as Alysia grabbed a wrapping and a cup.

"Why are you worried? It was just a kiss."

"Just a kiss. You and the Sentinel's woke up the entire hotel with your screams."

"And we found you on the floor the next day with a big fat smile."

Alysia and Kyo looked into each other's eyes and laughed. Her arm vibrated again as her natural voice came out. Sweet and gentle. But it all came to a stop when clutched her arm.

"It'll never stop." Alysia's monotone voice returned. There was sadness in her eyes. She felt Kyo's hand over hers. The scar on his wrist frightened her. 'Never forget your promise Kyo.'

Alysia slid her thumb over his scar. His fingers curled around her scarred right hand. She brought their hands to her face and kissed his hand.

"'You're stronger than this.' Alysia took a deep breath. 'I'll never forgive you if you do that again.'"

"I know." Kyo leaned closer to Alysia and they closed their eyes and kissed as Lori entered the living room.

"Hey kids." Lori said breaking their concentration. She leaned over them and fixed the way they held their hands to look more proper as they smiled in embarrassment. 'Not on my watch.'

The clock struck noon and the date under the time read August 2nd. Alysia, Brie, and Chisame arrived with Karyn and Lori. They all signed in, and entered the visitor's waiting room, the television airing the latest news. There were other people waiting for their love ones. The people looked at Alysia but she ignored them. The room was a somber. As excited as they were to see Danica, Alysia also had one more person to see, Sydney. But Alysia had to wait for either Suzie or Karl to arrive since she did not know where the ward was. For now, everyone looked up at the television, with latest news telecast about Merydia.

"About an hour ago," The anchorman said on the television, in front of a map of Merydia in the Atlantic Ocean. 'officials have

released satellite images of the country of Merydia in the middle of what was supposed to be the mysterious Bermuda Triangle. There is now growing outrage on the internet from families of victims, whose love ones in planes and ships were lost in that region for so many generations."

"And so it begins.' Karyn said watching the television with Brie and Chisame. 'What will the world become now that magic is revealed to the world?"

"Will everything be alright Madam Karyn?" Chisame said.

"Humankind hasn't destroyed themselves with the Atom Bomb. Humankind won't destroy themselves with magic."

Karl arrived in the visitor's room. He greeted everyone, but there was sadness. The elf stood before Alysia as the winged girl looked up.

"It's time." Karl said as everyone became silent.

"We got your message.' Lori said. 'Is Reya okay?"

"She's bracing herself. But it's not going to be easy. Are you ready, Alysia?"

"Yes." Alysia said as Karl led her to see Sydney. Walking through the halls, with people in each room watching over their loved ones in bed, made her nervous. She had not seen Sydney since Monday in the Therapy Room, but everyone told her what was going to happen. Alysia walked through the doors with Karl and they entered Sydney's room. There was Reya holding her mother's hand. The silence was overwhelming.

Sydney lay on bed that held her upside down. Her wounds exposed, covered only in gauze, there was no way to seal them up. Sydney just stared at the ground. No movement at all.

"Alysia.' Sydney said through her thoughts. Reya was able to hear what she said. 'I'm sorry again, for what happened to you."

"I don't blame you." Alysia said aloud.

"Still, I want to bear the responsibility. Had I not invented the Therapy Room, you, Reya, and everyone else, would not have suffered."

"You didn't know Sydney. Avalon Tech just took advantage of

everything and everybody.”

“Thank you. I know history will not look kindly at me.”

“I won't let them lie about you.”

“Alysia... Reya... look after for each other. You're sisters now.”

Alysia and Reya looked at each other as Sydney's breathing became erratic. There was a pain-induced seizure. Sydney's eyes grew wide as she saw Reya look up at her. She could not hear what her daughter said, but she knew what was on her mind. Sadness of being alone. And with her strength, Sydney spoke.

“I... love you...” One last release of air, passed by Reya's sensitive nose. Eye to eye, there was no movement. No voice in her mind. It was all gone.

As Karl left the room to get a doctor, Reya just sat on her knees, looking up to her mother. Quiet. No will to move. No will to say anything. It sunk in. Her heart raced like no other. Her mouth quivered as Suzie took her shoulders and lifted her up. When Karl returned with the doctor, Reya stared at the plug by the socket. She reached for it but Suzie held her back. Tears rained from eyes as she watched the doctor nod, and make notes on his clipboard. When the doctor closed Sydney's eyes, Reya cried with a catlike scream. It was unlike anything anybody heard. It caught the attention of other families going through the same scenario. Suzie and Alysia rushed her out of the area as the people watched on.

Moments later, Alysia wiped her tears as she arrived at Danica's room. Two agents sat beside the door to protect the thief. She looked up to Karyn and the mage understood what happened. Alysia stepped aside as Karyn went to tend to Reya. The Sentinels and Lori gathered around Alysia to calm her down.

“Dani is waiting.” Chisame said as Alysia took a deep breath and entered the room.

Alysia saw the room filled with flowers and stuff bears. It reminded her of her room when she stayed over night. She cracked a smile as she noticed coldness in Danica's face. The thief was not happy having all this cute stuff surround, nor did the praises of well-wishers change her evil like face. In fact, Brie and Chisame shared a

similar look. At first Alysia thought they were joking but then she saw what happened to Danica in her bed. Alysia saw Danica's wrist handcuff to the metal bar of the bed she was in.

"Hey Shorty." Danica said waving with her cuffed hand.

Alysia turned to her friends as Chisame showed Danica's ring.

"Madam Karyn got it out of her finger before the agents did."

"I don't understand." Alysia said touching the handcuffs.

"Technically, I'm still under arrest for my crimes. This is just a formality Shorty. Fynir and Lori assured me that as long as I cooperate with them, I could get off with probation."

"But that's not the only problem." Brie said as she handed Alysia a get-well card. That piece of paper drew a growl in Danica's throat.

"WE nurture the weak, and WE destroy the strong." Alysia said reading on. 'Get well soon baby. Love your mom and dad.'

"They're mocking me." Danica's stared at the smiling stuffed bear they sent her. It felt insulting. A reminder that they are watching. She tightened her teeth down at each other, and resisted shedding a single tear. 'I dreamt last night, that I ended up like you, Alysia. Mage Suit and all. I was serving my parents. I tried to stop doing what they want, but I...'

Alysia placed her hand on Danica's shoulder and the thief winced in pain. The winged Sentinel pulled back, forgetting about Danica's injury. She felt Danica's hand and saw that confident smile in her friend.

"It'll scar," Danica said. 'but at least I didn't give up. I'm lucky though, I'm going to be carted in a bed on the plane tomorrow when we leave for Merydia.'

"Waited hand and foot right?" Chisame said.

"Just like back home."

"Still, everything will be alright once our wounds heal." Chisame said as she nursed the bandages under her clothes.

"We can beat anybody!" Brie said with her fist pumped in the air and she squealed. Her arms wrapped around her ribs and lips quivered from the pain. 'It still hurts.'

"At least you're breathing well." Chisame said.

"You don't know how painful that was snapping my nose back in place. Jonas really hit me hard."

"Well what did you expect Kiddo.' Danica said. 'This is what happens when we fight people. The enemy won't hold back and neither should we."

The Sentinels nodded and Fynir entered the room. The girls stepped aside as the elf detective looked over them, closing the door. They sat down on his direction and his eyes alone scolded them.

"Lori told me that you four won't give up the jewelry?"

"It makes sense." Chisame said.

"Sense? You girls almost got killed because of those."

"Do you think that if we disconnect, these items are going to stay at Mystic Intelligence. Think about it. These things traveled all around the world. They came to us by chance. How will you keep track of their whereabouts if they get stolen or disappear. At least with us, you know where it's at."

"That may be. But you're still children."

"We gave all that up the minute we became Sentinels."

Fynir stepped back. The look in the girl's eyes frightened him, and yet felt sorrow. The elf felt it was not right. They should be enjoying their lives free from such a responsibility. It was sad.

"Fynir.' Alysia said. 'All we're going to do is protect the jewelry. We have no intentions of running off to fight bad guys or look for trouble. We just want to act as guardians to these."

"Yeah.' Brie said. 'We don't want to pass such a responsibility off to another person. That's why we feel the way we do about our choice."

"The only way they can get these,' Danica said. 'is to kill us."

"Only then,' Chisame said. 'would you know that the jewelry is loose on the world."

Without saying a word, Fynir stepped back. His fingers felt the door until it touched the knob and he opened the door. The elf left the room and stood outside shaken. He saw Karyn approach him as he covered his mouth from shock.

"They told you their decision, Fynir."

"I don't know how we're going to explain this." Fynir walked away from away from the room as Karyn watched on.

"There are ways to explain everything,' Karyn said as Fynir stopped. 'no matter how improbable."

"They may be forced to become fugitives and run from the law. Criminals may chase them down and kill them."

"Somehow,' Karyn raised her hand simulating Alysia's Overkill spell. 'I doubt that."

When Karyn closed her hand into a fist, Fynir sighed in understanding and prayed that the Sentinel never have to fight again.

As Lori read the Saturday newspaper in front of the car by the cemetery entrance, Alysia stood before her brother's grave. Her tombstone now removed and an empty plot, she felt like she was abandoning her brother. With a bouquet of flowers in hand, Alysia took a deep breath. The morning sun made the purple petals shine bright, the scent was calm. She placed them on the grave and placed her hands together in prayer. Alysia's wings stretched out with her eyes closed. The birds sang in the tree branches above. It was peaceful. It was as though her brother was saying everything is okay, even if she never saw him once.

Alysia left the cemetery and approached Lori. They returned to Kyo's home. Kyo was on the phone with his parents as shippers carried boxes into a van marked Merydia Express Currier Service. As Fynir watched from the porch, Lori parked the car, and Alysia walked away from them.

Alysia walked up the steps of her home and took out the key from behind the brick. She toured the house. There were images of her father in the living room enjoying television with her. In the kitchen, she smiled as she ate her meal made by her mother. She walked upstairs and saw her younger self running up to her room. Alysia stood by the door of her bedroom and saw her mother fix her dress. The winged girl heard her parents calming her in their bedroom as she cried about a nightmare she had. She looked

downstairs and saw herself in hockey gear, led outside by her parents. She tightened her grip on the banister as she heard the footsteps outside. Alysia prayed that would be her parents, but nobody came. She closed her eyes for a moment and heard nothing but silence. A tear fell down her cheek. She opened her eyes and walked downstairs. Each step she knew would be her last. Her left hand with the bracelet curled into a fist, her face matured, and she closed the door behind her.

Alysia turned to the brick ready to place the key. Instead, she pocketed it. It was her only memento of her home, and her past. After walking downstairs, she stopped and paused for a moment. With the corner of her eyes, she looked back at her home.

“Good bye.”

Alysia approached Kyo as the couriers drove off and Fynir and Lori waited. She and Kyo held hands looking back at the neighborhood. A couple of neighbors waved goodbye to the teens. Their time together there was a happy one. For Alysia, she knew it was the end of a chapter in her life. As Kyo opened the car door for Alysia, she kept her eyes on the neighborhood. Sitting inside and Lori drove off, home disappeared in the distance.

They arrived at Teterboro Airport, as an ambulance left the runway. A private unmarked plane waited for their arrival. Brie and Chisame waved to Alysia as the car stopped. As Lori handed off the car keys to an agent, Fynir and Kyo made their way up the stairs carrying suitcases. Alysia stood at the bottom of the stairs. The wind brushing her hair as she tried her best to look at New Jersey one last time. There were nothing but highways and marshlands all around. Alysia became startled as Lori took her hand. With a nod, Alysia walked up the stairs and entered inside.

While everyone prepared to take their seats, Alysia greeted Danica as the thief laid in her reinforced bed. Brie answered her cell phone and learned it was Catherine McClean. She hopped up and down in excitement and nursed her injured ribs again, while

Chisame finished talking with her parents on her own cell phone. Alysia was ready to sit next to Kyo but she saw Reya all alone. Kyo nudged Alysia to go to her and she did. Alysia sat next to the window and held Reya's hand. They looked at each other as Karyn stood before them. She handed Alysia Oryn's book, the Theory of Fate and Destiny, and pointed out that she got it from Fynir when the agents searched Oryn's office. Alysia opened the book and Reya saw in the table of contents a chapter on time. They looked at each other as Alysia smiled. A chance to find a way to free her parents from Time Displacement. Reya tightened her grip on Alysia's hand, assuring her support.

The plane lined up on the runway and it took off. Alysia looked out the window and saw Newark below. Cars driving in and out of the city. People as tiny as ants. Buildings everywhere. It was gone in a flash. Alysia looked up and saw the birds flying alongside the plane, against the rising sun. Their wings spread wide open, gliding above the clouds. Feeling the wonderful warmth of her wings...

...she smiled.

The End.

