

Arcana Magi - c.27: Hard Battle

by H-M Brown

Chisame helped Brie stand up. They leaned their backs to the wall as Jonas approached them. They saw the mana gathered around his glowing hands and could barely move their feet. They felt the bloodlust in his eyes, his wish to hold a hostage for an easy escape, stripped away. Danica struggled up to her feet as she held her sword up and channeled mana.

“AEROBURST!” She swung the sword down. The wind blew past Jonas but did nothing. It flowed right past him. Her spell weakened by her injuries. Danica grabbed the railing and pulled herself up as Jonas swung his arm toward the thief.

“ENERGUS!” The small ball of energy struck Danica and sent her flying down to Level B3. The thief slid on her back into the wall and lied there.

“NO!” Chisame said as Brie swung her hammer like a baseball bat.

“VIBRANT SHOCKWAVE!” A pulse of sound struck Jonas while he was distracted. A ripple in the air sent him back through the door and past the elevators.

Brie and Chisame hurried downstairs and knelt before Danica. The Sentinels sat her body up and shook her shoulders. When the thief opened her eyes, she grabbed her injured shoulder. She saw Jonas at the top of the stairs pushing his arm forward. She never had chance to warn her friends.

“AERIAL THRUST!” The wind pushed Brie and Chisame into the wall. They both screamed in pain. With the Sentinels sitting on the ground, Jonas stayed at the top step.

“Why is he standing there?” Brie said.

"Damn.' Danica said. 'He has the high ground and we're on the floor."

"The high ground?" Chisame said.

"It's a strategic position where he can see everything and act accordingly. We may be able to see him, but if we try to rush up the stairs, we'll be too slow to react."

The Sentinels watched him gather mana around his body, using the down time to prepare his next move. Brie shifted her body to the side and a blast of energy burst beside her. She moved her body closer to Danica as he lowered his hand.

"Hey you.' Danica said. 'Are you stupid or something?"

"What?" Jonas said raising his hand up.

"Danica." Brie said covering the thief's mouth.

"Don't provoke him." Chisame said as Danica removed Brie's hand.

"Shut up. I know what I'm saying.' The thief turned her attention to Jonas and smiled. 'What kind of villain are you? You not only have the high ground, but you're surrounded by exits. Why don't you just go?"

"Danica,' Chisame said. 'we want him arrested."

"Alysia and I fought him before.' Brie said. 'He's too powerful. We were able to get away because we made a combo attack. Plus, Danica is injured. I think we should let him go."

"Brie,' Chisame turned to the hacker. 'I thought you believed in justice."

"I do.' Brie looked up at Jonas. 'But we also have to think about the health of others. We also have to think about Alysia and Reya."

"Believe me Chisame.' Danica cringed from her pain. 'I want him dead, but there are times to run away or let your enemy run off to fight another day."

"Are you three finished talking?' Jonas said as Danica tapped Brie's hand as a message to channel mana. 'It's true that I have all the exits around me. I could leave at anytime. The problem is that you three know what I did to your friends. Oh yes, I saw your live interview on television. Vyndor already made sure that I would not

be implicated because of my loyalty to this company. But I don't feel comfortable enough with you kids running around talking. So I decided that it's time to shut you all up and have a little insurance when I leave."

"Okay." Danica smiled. "Brie."

"SHATTER!"

"What?!" Jonas watched the wall crack and crumble up the stairs. It burst out and fell on top of the mage creating a pile over the stairs. He crawled out of the dirt as the Sentinels got up to their feet. He looked down and saw Chisame take Brie's hand.

"What are you doing?"

"Look at the wall." Chisame said. "I can feel the moisture of water mixed with the dirt. Just focus your thoughts and aim Legacy at him. Danica cover us."

"Sure." Danica channeled a little mana and without chanting, she made the air push the dirt into Jonas' eyes.

Brie felt Chisame's mana flow around her. She held her hammer up aiming it at Jonas. She felt the flow of water, the moisture within the earth as Chisame felt the earth absorb the water. They drew the elements together with their mana and made the wall tremble. Brie and Chisame heard each other name the spell and called out its name.

"ROLLING MUDSLIDE!!" A burst of mud spilled out over Jonas and scooped his body up like a raging river. It spun his body over in a rebound rather than pushing him through the door. The mud flowed downstairs as the girls gasped. The spell knocked them into the wall as Jonas rolled past them. The girls emerged out of the mud and wiped their faces clean.

"My glasses." Chisame felt her face as Brie and Danica crawled to her. They felt the mud looking for her glasses as Jonas moaned. Hearing his voice put her in a panic. "Brie, Danica."

"We're here." Brie said grabbing Chisame's hand. "Your glasses are buried in the mud."

"We to get rid of this mess." Danica said.

Chisame felt Brie and Danica beside her. She channeled the mana from the mud gathering water above them. She turned all the mud, even on their bodies into dry dirt.

Danica saw Jonas planted one foot on the ground ready to stand up. She raised her sword up and cast her spell.

"AEROBURST!!" The weak impact was enough to blow the dirt at Jonas. He covered his face with his hands. The spell exposed Chisame's glasses in front of the mage feet.

"There it is." Brie said and crawled toward the glasses. Once she clutched Chisame's glasses, Jonas kicked the hacker in the face. Brie stumbled back and bumped into Chisame. Blood trickled out of her nose and the pain was intense. She held back her tears. She wiped the blood with her sleeve and turned to Chisame. Brie planted the glasses of her friends face.

"Thank you." The leader said while blinking her eyes, she looked up and saw she still had the water gathered above her head. Danica flew past her, pushed by a force of energy, and rolled into the door of Level B3. Chisame stood up and separated the water into two strands of rope. She made the watery ropes twisted around each other and coiled in the air like a pair of snakes. Chisame spun her body in a circle to increase the speed of the spell.

"SPIRAL PRESSURE!"

"SHIELDUS!" Jonas raised his hands up and but did not notice Brie sliding under the spell swinging her hammer. He forgot about that one spell.

"SONIC BREAKER!" Brie slammed the hammer into shield and shattered it, just as Spiral Pressure struck Jonas. The spell pushed the mage into the dirt wall, burying him inside. Once the spell finished, Brie saw the mud slid off his face, the rest of his body held up by the mud. He was neither moving nor channeling mana. 'We did it!"

Brie jumped up and down in celebration but she saw Danica take a defensive position. The hacker heard a growl and turned around. Jonas' muddy hand reached out for Brie's neck, but Chisame pushed the Sentinel aside and the mud grabbed her neck instead.

Chisame felt her head tilt back as his body emerged from the mud like a monster of clay. His hand closed tightly and her hands dropped. She whimpered as Brie and Danica channeled mana.

"I'll snap her neck."

Brie and Danica stopped. Their eyes trembled as Chisame summoned strength in her hands to pull Jonas' fingers back, but he tightened his grip. They did not know what to do. They suddenly felt helpless as they watched their friend's feet dangle above the floor.

"he...lp..."

"SHUT UP!" Jonas shook Chisame making her yelp. 'You're weapons now.'

Danica tightened her grip on Epic. She knew she could make a move, but the problem was that she lost all of her speed due to her injuries. Even now she felt her legs wobbling, she could barely breathe right. With a roar, she slammed the sword to the ground and Brie dropped Legacy. They heard Jonas laugh as he curled his free hand into a fist.

'Never... fight... an... adults... fight...' Jonas punched Chisame in the back with each word spoken. Each strike made her gasp in pain.

Chisame felt each blow, pushing into her body. It felt like he was going to rip her insides and pull them out. Tears fell down her eyes as she watched her friends helplessly stand there. Danica in particular. She could have made a move and finished off Jonas. It was strange, though, Chisame felt okay with Danica killing Jonas. It was because her life was in danger that she wanted him dead. To kill. All that talk about not taking a life and here she was wishing it so. She felt like a hypocrite.

"Danica... please..."

"You're too late." Jonas slammed Chisame into the wall, without losing sight of the girls. 'You're friends dropped their weapons. If she picks it up, I will snap you. Now back to my fun.'

Chisame's slammed head into the solid wall. Her glasses dropped to the ground and she saw nothing but blur. It brought back memories of the monster that assaulted her. Her mind could not handle the flashback and the current beating she took at once. She

gave up again. She did not make any noise or any movement. The world turned black and she no longer felt herself breathing.

Brie and Danica stepped back as they watched Chisame collapsed on the ground. Her eyes glazed and unmoving. Brie stood there with tears in her eyes as Danica scooped up Epic and charged at Jonas. She saw death before, but not like this. Chisame was her friend, and her mind could not focus. All Brie could do was whisper for the Sentinel to get up. Brie dragged her feet to Chisame, completely forgetting about Danica. She sat on her knees and stroked her friend's long black hair.

"Brie!" Danica swung her sword deflecting the muddy arm. 'Snap out of it! I need your help.'

Jonas never used a single spell against Danica. He knew she was low on mana. He just grabbed the sword and slapped the thief aside. The mage laughed as she stumbled to the floor. He threw Epic to the stairs keeping it away from the thief. With the corner of his eyes, Jonas saw Brie pushing her hands on Chisame's chest. He was not thrilled with the Sentinel trying to save her friend's life. Jonas marched up to Brie and kicked her in the ribs. The scream of the hacker, made him smile.

Brie curled her body, hugging her stomach. The pain was too much to handle. She felt her hair pulled by the mages hand. It forced her to her feet. She saw mana gathered around his hand and aimed at her neck. Brie's heart felt like it wanted to jump out. She could see her parents for a split second in her mind, ready to take her in their arms. At first, she felt happy that she would be with them again, but when she saw the sadness in their eyes, she realized they did not want her to die. Brie curled her hand into a fist and gathered mana as well. Just as Jonas swung his hand, Brie's left arm lifted up and took the hit. The pain ignored, Brie punched the mage in the chest.

"ROCK PUNCH!" The impact broke his chest bones as Jonas stumbled back. He coughed up blood as Brie fell on the ground at the corner. Her left arm looked like it was ready to fall off her shoulder. The hacker saw Jonas drop to one knee and channeled

mana as Chisame lifted her body up in shock. Brie had nowhere to go and Legacy was out of reach as Jonas aimed his hand. She saw the light take the shape of a blade and she placed her good arm on the wall channeling mana.

"PIERCING LIGHT!" Jonas sent the blade at Brie, as a single line of light flashed through his neck. The blade struck the hacker in the chest, but it burst into droplets of light. Not a single scratch on her from that attack.

Brie saw a disk fly back to a glove and there was Chisame, with the frame of glasses bent, breathing heavily.

As Danica lifted her body and leaned on the wall, the Sentinels watched a red line appeared on Jonas' neck. Danica limped over to Jonas and stood behind him. She kicked his head off and watched it roll down the stairs.

"Learn to roll with the punches fool." Danica said.

Chisame watching the body fall on the ground. Her eyes welled with tears. She took his life, a human life, and it felt dirty.

"I... I..."

"It was a clean kill." Danica said as she sat next to Chisame. 'He was going to kill us all.'

"Still..." Chisame felt Brie's arm wrap around her waist. Tears just fell. She could not control it. 'I told you not to kill. And I did it anyway.'

"Welcome to the real world Boss."

"Danica!" Brie said.

"I wouldn't say anything Brie. You're parents, as heroic as they are, probably faced these types of situations."

"Don't bring my parents into this!"

"ENOUGH!" Chisame said, her hands shaking, Jonas blood dripping off the blade of her disk. 'It's still not right. It's not right Danica.'

Brie moved Chisame closer to her but Danica took the leaders arm and stood her up.

"Fine. But if you're going to be our leader, you better stand tall, no matter the situation. After all, we still have one more business to take care of."

Chisame wiped away her tears. It was true they had more thing to take of. She took a deep breath as Brie and Danica picked up their weapons. Her friend's turned to her and waited. Chisame walked down the stairs and led them to Level B4.

"Let's get our friends back."

The Sentinels reached Level B4 and Chisame opened the door slowly. The leader saw Oryn typing a passcode. She waved the girls over and they saw the executive open the door. As the door closed, Chisame hurried to grab the door. She saw Oryn look back with the corner of her eyes smiling. When her hands grabbed the knob to pull it, the security lock activated, and shut the door on its own.

"NO!"

"You're so slow." Danica said standing next to Chisame. "I guess that's why you're the turtle."

"I don't see you making any effort."

"No effort eh?"

"Danica." Brie said. "You can use the sword to slice the hinges off."

"Really?" Chisame said.

"I saw Kyo do it back at Level B2."

"Okay then. Stand back." Danica raised Epic over her head, no longer feeling the pain of the wound on her shoulder. A determination to end this conflict for the last time. She lined the blade at the side of the door where hinges were at. She swung it downward and her sword bounced off a wall of light. The thief stumbled back and shook her head in shock. "What was that?"

"It's some kind of barrier." Chisame said as she touched the door and felt her hand bounce off the spell.

"So we can't get in?" Brie said.

"It appears so." Danica said as she sat down on the floor and rested Epic on her good shoulder.

"How can you sit down at a time like this?" Chisame said.

"Unless you have an idea right now, there is nothing we can do at the moment."

"But Alysia and Reya could be in there." Brie said.

"Danica is right Brie. We need to figure this out."

Alysia stared at Reya. Despite how blurry the catgirl looked, the Sentinel knew it was her. She heard her friend but sounded slow and distant. Alysia focused mind as the pain overwhelmed her head. She calmed herself and heard Reya's voice clearly.

"...to me. Alysia, can you say something?" Reya's voice sounded different. It was mature.

"Reya.' Alysia said with her monotone voice as she saw Reya clearly and noticed the pink mana around her body. The winged girl thought she was seeing things but she placed her hands on the mist and felt it. Her white mana mixed in and they intertwined gently. 'You have mana.'

"Are you alright?"

"Yeah.' Alysia sat up. 'What happened to your voice? Wait... the Therapy Room.'

"It's alright. Sort of."

"Why? What did it do to you?"

"My mother helped me sort out my thoughts and memories."

"Your mother?" Alysia could not believe what she heard. She smiled at the thought of Sydney surviving Oryn's attack, but she wondered if the Therapy Room messed with her mind.

"Yeah.' Reya nodded and turned to the Therapy Room. 'But they made her part of the machine. Wires are connected to her body. She only wakes up when the machine is on.'

"Are you sure?"

"It's true.' Oryn said approaching the girls, her body glowed with the main door to the elevators. She smiled as she saw Alysia in her mage suit. Though seeing the winged girl outside the Therapy Room concerned her. Alysia should be in undergoing Therapy right now. She knew something went wrong. Her Fate to Destination spell was perfect. The executive turned to Reya and saw her awake. She was

glad to see the catgirl, and loved the idea of including her with Alysia as part of her little collection. 'Since the Therapy Room was damaged due to a little mishap, Vyndor was able to provide a new replacement part for the machine.'

"New part? You mean Sydney."

"You mean the Synchro Intelligence Device. S.I.D."

"She's not a machine." Reya said as she picked up Alysia and moved the winged girl behind her back. Using her arm as a shield, Reya guided Alysia around the table so they could have a barrier between them and Oryn.

Alysia followed Reya's movements. She saw in the catgirl's eyes, a focused look, watching the executive's moves carefully. The winged girl could sense an urge of protection from Reya. She felt as though the catgirl could stop Oryn despite the disadvantage of power and strength. Alysia looked back and saw Marcel on the floor. They tried to step around him but he moved and they tripped over his body.

"My head." Marcel said as he sat on his knees and rubbed the wound. He turned to the side and saw Oryn gritting her teeth as Reya and Alysia crawled under the table. 'Oryn.'

"What are you doing down here?"

"When the doctors were evacuated by your orders, I overheard what they said about presetting the Therapy Room. I figured you drew the kid down here. So I decided to stick around so I could pay her back for taking my arm."

"You fool!" Oryn raised her arm up at him. 'She's running around freely because of you instead undergoing Therapy. My plans are ruined. Now I'll try to reactivate the spell.'

Oryn glanced at the door and saw Alysia and Reya bounce off the wall of light. Her Sealed Wall spell kept them from escaping with their friends on the other side. It prevented their scream from going through the door. So they do not know their friends are on the other side. She had nothing to worry about with them. She turned her attention back at Marcel as he threw a punch with her metallic fist. She stumbled back and fell to the ground knocking over a chair.

Alysia and Reya turned around and saw Marcel running towards them. The catgirl stood in front of Alysia ready to fight, but Alysia stepped aside.

“Awaken... Saga.”

Alysia punched her fist into the air as the bracelet burst into droplets of light, pushing the teal jewel into the air, and gathered around it. As her fist uncurled with a gentle reach, four triangles stretched out from the jewel and connected the tips with a circular band. The red staff stretched outward over her hand, and when Alysia's hand gently wrapped around it, a pair of white metallic wings stretched out from the neck base of Saga. She pulled Saga down across her body, spun it over her head like a baton, until the headpiece pointed to the ground, and the body of the staff rested on her back with her right fist leaning on her hip.

Alysia stood in front of Reya and aimed her staff at Marcel. She stretched her wings out as Reya stepped back in awe of them. The winged Sentinel channeled her mana, and watched him drop to the ground to avoid her attack. With that opening made, Alysia ran up to the doctor, and kicked him in the face. She spun Saga over her head and rammed the blunt end into his stomach. The winged girl felt his metal hand grip her leg and tightened it. The pressure made her scream. When Alysia raised her staff up to strike him again, Reya tackled her to the ground and a purple ball flew right over them.

Everyone looked up and saw Oryn covered in mana gathering it around the palm of her hands. Alysia aimed Saga at the executive and channeled her mana. Before Alysia went any further, Marcel pulled her down, and dragged her under the table.

“MARCEL!” Oryn said.

“Alysia!” Reya knelt down and saw the winged girl turned around and punched in the stomach. The catgirl stepped back as Marcel twisted Alysia's hand back and pulled her head up with his metal arm.

“She's mind Oryn.”

"Marcel,' The executive said as she placed her right hand around her back and held a piece of paper with equations written on it. 'you don't want to do this."

"I don't care.' Marcel pulled Alysia toward the door. 'You're going to open this door and let us out. Once we're outside, I'm going to kill her and leave."

"No one cares about your arm doctor."

"And no one cares about how much you love Alysia."

"What?!" Alysia and Reya said as Marcel stood next to the door.

"Oh Marcel.' Oryn said as she walked toward everyone channeling mana. 'That really is none of your business."

"Yes kid.' Marcel said to Alysia and turned head to face him. 'Oryn loves you. That's why she wants you in Therapy Room, so your mind could be re-written to love her, unconditionally."

"You're joking right? That's why I'm here?" Alysia looked at Oryn as the executive passed by Reya.

"You're so disgusting." The catgirl said as Oryn stopped and the corner of her eyes turned to her, followed by a smile.

"Reya run!"

Oryn stretched her left arm out at Reya and a mana formed at the palm of her hand. It turned green as the mist moved around it like clouds in the sky. The executive winked her eyes and made the catgirl tilt her head.

"NO!" Alysia rammed her elbow into Marcel, breaking free. She rushed Oryn, but the executive instead turned her hand, and aimed at the winged girl. Alysia saw the change and tried shift her body to the side to dodge it.

"RADION BURST!" The green sphere shot out of Oryn's hand and flew past Alysia, missing her completely. It struck Marcel instead, exploding on his chest. Everyone watched him slam into the wall and drop to his knees.

Alysia ran past Oryn as the executive walked to Marcel, moving the piece of paper in front of her chest. The winged girl grabbed Reya and raised her hand up. Saga flew up into the air and returned to Alysia's hand, just as she did with her Razor Flame spell. They

watched Oryn deal with Marcel as the executive raised her left hand up in the air.

"You should have listened to me Marcel.' Oryn said as the equations on her paper glowed purple. 'Now I'll have to dismiss you."

"After all that we did for you.' Marcel said as he coughed up blood. 'This is how you repay your friends."

"I'm sorry, I was too busy listening to the violins... old friend."

Marcel could not move his body. He could not see the large circle under his feet since he could not channel mana. It formed into a clock and the hands moved forward. Faster and faster it went as a pillar of light rose up the ceiling. Marcel reached out to Oryn with his metallic arm and that stopped in place. He stared at Alysia and Reya, not knowing what was happening. The last thing he thought of was not regret, but that everything he went through was in vain.

"TIME DISPLACEMENT!!" Oryn curled her left hand and the clock hands turned to midnight. Marcel disappeared with the pillar, not one sound made from him. The executive stuffed the paper in her pocket and turned to the girls as they stepped back with eyes trembling in terror.

"Where did he go?" Reya said.

"When he went is not your concern.' Oryn said as she wiped one tear from her eye. She felt a deep sadness she sent Marcel away. But the executive got over it as she saw the girls keep their distance from her. 'What's the matter? You never acted like this before."

"You're crazy and sick." Reya said as Alysia held Saga up.

"What did we ever do to you?" Alysia said 'Why did you hurt us?"

"It was unfortunate that you two were hurt. But the thing is, that when you are touched by gods, there will be those who want to be with you. Think about it Suzaku, you can have anything you want from me. I can give you what you desire."

"My name is Alysia and I will never love you."

"Love?!" Oryn slammed her hand on the table, startling the girls. She stopped and shook her head side to side. The executive crossed her arms and looked them in the eyes. 'I admit that I have feelings

for you. But this is more than just love. I want the power of Suzaku. No, I don't want to take it from you, I want us to merge together. To become a chimera."

"Chimera?" Alysia said.

"No.' Reya said. 'You can't do that to Alysia. I won't let you do to her what you did to me."

"I see.' Oryn said. 'Your mother told you about that."

"Reya?' Alysia looked up to the catgirl and saw the ears and tail wiggle around. 'What did you do to her Oryn?"

"I had a cat named Koi when I was little.' Reya said. 'I was the Sentinel of Byakko before Brie and Oryn knew it. She wanted me to draw out Byakko into the real world, so she placed my cat and me in a machine and fused our bodies together. I became this and lost my ability to channel mana."

"So you want to do the same with me?"

"Yes. I want to merge with your body so I can have Suzaku as well."

Alysia did not understand what Oryn was talking about. Her thoughts ran fast as she tried to put the pieces together regarding what Oryn knew. She heeded Danica's words from that day in Kyo's house.

"Oryn Zentharis knows who we are,' Danica's voice said in Alysia's mind. 'she knew where we live, and she knew how to get us all here together. It's too convenient to call it a coincidence. Oryn knows something we don't. We are at a disadvantage, because we don't know her."

Aside from having hurt her and lied about her past, there was only one other she knew about Oryn. A book the executive wrote. She does not remember the title, but there was nothing else she knew about the woman. Yet having heard what Oryn wanted to her body, Alysia thought of Suzaku's words.

"Because we share the same essence within our hearts, I felt it all, and could not save you." Suzaku's words repeated in Alysia's thoughts. She looked at the Therapy Room and understood what Oryn learned from her. Because Oryn altered her memories, she had

forgotten that she was a part of Suzaku. That was why Oryn called her Suzaku. Oryn knew that their hearts were one.

"She knew Reya." Alysia said with a whisper.

"What does she know?"

"She saw it in my mind." Alysia clutched her shoulders as Reya placed her hands on the winged girl's shoulders. "That I am a part of Suzaku. Where they failed to get Byakko to become a part of you, they instead got me."

"Well," Oryn said watching Alysia shed tears. "it seems the truth hurts Suzaku."

FONT-FAMI

