

Brynna:
Okay, Karia, recitation time. Tell us the plan.

Karia:
Why me? Who is this for?

Brynna:
You're the one executing the plan and I want to make sure you know this mission inside and out.
Just repeat it back to us.

Karia:
(sighs) Fine. (Karia clears her throat) So I teleport and trade places with my dad inside Anti-Arcanist HQ. I leave James' crystal behind that will create a bounded field thingy around the HQ so that when they try to make their little black hole it will only affect the area around them. I'll then teleport myself back here and we run like hell.

James:
And if you discover they're using an ethereal jammer to try to prevent you from teleporting out?

Karia:
I break the other crystal you gave me and it jams the jammer or something so I can get out.

James:
It's a bit more complicated than that, but you get the jist. The crystal that will generate the bounded field has a limited radius, so make sure it's placed inside the compound.

Brynna:
How are you feeling, Karia? This is a big solo mission, and if you don't want to do it then you don't have to. You can still back out now.

James:
We'll just find some other way to save the entire world from collapsing in on itself.

Karia:
No pressure. But I'll be fine. I got the looking glass to your mom, and this is way easier than that.

Brynna:
You don't know that. We have no idea what's waiting for you there. Just get in and out as quickly as you can.

Karia:
Are we being serious right now or should I point out the spectacular innuendo you just made.

James:
I think it's time we started the plan.

(Theme music)

Karia:
Okay, wish me luck.

Brynna:
I love you, Kari.

Karia:
I love you, too, Brynna. Don't look so sad. I'll be right back.

James:
Good luck, my dear.

Karia:
If I'm using your crystals I'm sure the plan will work out fine, James. *(Karia sighs)* Okay, here I go.

(Magic sound)

Karia:
(whispering) That never gets easier. But I'm in. More specifically, in prison. Guess dad got in big trouble for helping us escape.

(Karia shakes her head.)

Karia:
(still whispering) Okay, plant the crystal and get back. I doubt anybody will look here. Perfect. Time to go.

Mason:
Leaving so soon, Miss Ezra?

Karia:
(gasps) Fuck, we gotta get you a bell or something.

Mason:
A sentiment I feel about you, too, young lady. It seems you've been quite busy. How is the Mage Tower?

Karia:

How did you--

Mason:

I have my ways. Now, if you need to be going then I will certainly not get in your way.

Karia:

I'm having trouble believing that.

Mason:

It doesn't matter where you go, Miss Ezra. It will all be over very soon.

Karia:

Is this your supervillain monologue where you spill about your plan?

Mason:

No need to. You already know it.

Karia:

Then why? Why are you trying to kill everyone? How is that protecting humanity from mages?

Mason:

Who said we were protecting humanity? We're protecting the universe from the meddling of magic users. Think of us as environmentalists.

Karia:

Without mana, doesn't the universe itself cease to exist too?

Mason:

I know what I'm doing, Miss Ezra. I have work to do. Please go back to where you came from. Oh, and say hi to Miss Ito for me. You make such a cute couple.

Karia:

Bye, Mason, whatever you are.

(Magic sound)

Mason:

Whatever I am indeed.

(Magic sound again)

Karia:

(winces and groans) I did it.

Brynna:
Kari!

Karia:
(unconvincingly) I'm fine. Just tired.

Brynna:
Looks like you switched out an ear this time. Cute as ever, though.

James:
Come here, Karia.

Karia:
Okay.

James:
Mm. You've damaged the nerves in your hands and arms. Badly.

Karia:
That would explain the searing pain.

James:
I imagine so. Let me see what I can do.

(magic sound)

James:
That should help with the pain for now, but that's not going to fix itself.

Karia:
Thank you.

James:
One thing at a time, though. Did you leave the crystal?

Karia:
Yes, but there is one small wrinkle.

Brynna:
Wrinkle?

Karia:
Mason saw me.

Brynna:
What???

Karia:
I don't think he saw me hide the crystal, but he did see me as I was about to leave.

Brynna:
Agggghhhhhhhh! How does he always know?

James:
He's been at this for quite some time, Bryn.

Brynna:
Do you think he knows about our plan? Are we fucked now?

Karia:
He did know that we went to the Mage Tower.

James:
That's impossible. I cloaked us perfectly.

Brynna:
He's been at this for quite some time, James.

James:
(groans) I have no choice then. Time to activate the crystal.

Karia:
Activate?

Brynna:
Yeah, what are you talking about? I thought the crystal just set up a bounded field around the headquarters so that their mana experiment is contained to just their area.

James:
I built in a safety measure.

Brynna:
A safety measure?

James:
I can't tell you. Or else Mason may hear. He's known everything else we've spoken of so far.

Karia:
Then how are we supposed to--

Brynna:
I trust you, James. Use it if you need to. Right now I'm more worried about what your dad said,
Karia.

Karia:
My dad?

Brynna:
While you were switched, he said that they're going to use him today. They're going through
with their plan as we speak.

Karia:
They're moving quickly.

Brynna:
So we need to as well. C'mon, let's get out of here.

Karia:
How do we know if our plan worked, though?

James:
If it looks like it hasn't, then I will take care of the rest.

Karia:
Okay...

Brynna:
Let's run.

Brynna:
(out of breath) Okay, I think we're far enough away.

Karia:
(out of breath) Good. I can't run anymore.

James:
(normally) This should be a sufficient watchplace.

Karia:

(still breathing hard) Hey, why are you not tired?

James:

I'm a healer. I healed my muscles and lungs as they fatigued.

Karia:

How come you didn't do that to us, too???

James:

Oh hush, you have the magic of youth. I needed to be able to keep up.

Karia:

Whatever.

Brynna:

I'm still scared that Mason might have removed our crystal. We don't have another chance to make a bounded field before they punch a hole in the mana field.

James:

Everything is as it needs to be.

Brynna:

How do you know that?

James:

Mason isn't the only one who can see things.

Brynna:

James--

James:

Watch closely.

(Loud explosion, sound of wildfire)

Karia:

What was that???

Brynna:

Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit. Everything's disintegrating except for the headquarters. It's coming right for us.

Karia:

Brynna? What's happening?

Brynna:

They must have found the bounded field and used it to their advantage. Karia, they punched the mana hole just outside their headquarters, so they'll be safe inside their bounded field that we made for them while the rest of the world falls apart.

Karia:

Oh fuck. Oh no oh no oh no, did we just make it worse?

Brynna:

We need to run.

James:

Go on, you two.

Brynna:

James, come on.

James:

Afraid not, my dear. It's time for my safety measure to start. Just give me a bit of space to work.

Brynna:

What are you going to do?

Karia:

Brynna, we have to go.

James:

She's right, Bryn. I'm ready for this.

Brynna:

(groaning) Fine.

James:

Karia.

Karia:

Yes?

Brynna:

Protect her for me.

Karia:

I always do.

James:
Now go.

(Brynna and Karia run up the mountain. The sound of wildfire intensifies as music swells.)

Brynna:
What? No. No!

Karia:
Brynna, there's no time to look back.

Brynna:
James!

Karia:
What the-- Did...did the disintegration just...stop?

(Brynna drops to her knees)

Karia:
Brynna! What's wrong?

Brynna:
It's over.

Karia:
What?

Brynna:
That fucker.

Karia:
What did he do?

Brynna:
He made another bounded field with himself as the anchor. The disintegration from the mana hole stopped when it got to him.

Karia:
Why didn't he use a crystal?

Brynna:

He shaped the bounded field around the forest to contain the disintegration. It would be too large an area for a crystal.

Karia:
So he sacrificed himself so the rest of the world would stay safe.

Brynnna:
Yeah.

Karia:
(concerned) Brynnna.

Brynnna:
(Sobbing) James.

(Karia hugs Brynnna tightly as she cries)

Karia:
He was a good man.

Brynnna:
I'm the overseer. I'm supposed to keep my people in the present tense.

Karia:
He made his choice. To protect you.

Brynnna:
I don't need protecting!

Karia:
Sure you do. We all do.

(Brynnna sobs)

Karia:
We all do.

(Sobbing fades into soft music)

Karia:
Some tea, my dear.

Brynna:
Thank you, darling.

Karia:
Heard anything about the Anti-Arcanists?

Brynna:
They moved their headquarters. I haven't been able to find Mason, but I'm sure he's coming up with a new plan.

Karia:
Then we'll figure out what it is and stop it. Just like last time. And save all those mages in the tanks.

Brynna:
As long as you don't take the wrong lesson from last week.

Karia:
What do you mean?

Brynna:
I've been trying to get through to you that you need to stop sacrificing yourself for others, and now I'm terrified you're going to pull a James the next time something happens.

Karia:
That's not gonna happen.

Brynna:
What do you mean?

Karia:
I watched an entire forest turn to dust when its mana was removed. It was devastating. I don't want that to happen ever again. But I'm part of the world, too. So I have to protect myself as a piece of it.

Brynna:
Damn.

Karia:
What?

Brynna:
When did you get so smart?

Karia:
I've always been smart. You just haven't been able to see it before now.

Brynna:
Alright, reign it in, Einstein. Hold on.

Karia:
What?

Brynna:
Let me hold your hand.

Karia:
Gay.

Brynna:
Hand, Kari.

Karia:
Okay okay.

Brynna:
Qi.

(Magic sound)

Brynna:
Holy shit.

Karia:
Was that the spell you used on me that got super hot because my circuits are funky?

Brynna:
Yeah. Did it hurt that time?

Karia:
Um. No. It just felt warm as it spread up through my arm. A little warning next time would be good, by the way.

Brynna:
Sorry. Anyway, I wish we had James to check this out.

Karia:

Check what out?

Brynna:
Your new bidirectional circuits.

Karia:
Wait, are you serious?

Brynna:
The inward ones seem weak right now, but they do appear to exist.

Karia:
Does that mean we can reverse some of my nerve damage?

Brynna:
Possibly. And you might be able to heal or teleport without damaging them more.

Karia:
Brynna!

(Karia jumps into Brynna's arms for an embrace)

Brynna:
Whoa, attack hug.

Karia:
(Tearing up) This is amazing. How did it happen?

Brynna:
I don't know. Maybe you switched circuits with your dad when you teleported. Maybe dormant circuits opened up after using magic more. Maybe you built them yourself. All I know is that you are in much less danger from your own magic.

Karia:
Thank you, Brynna.

Brynna:
For what?

Karia:
For protecting me.

Brynna:
I should thank you for the same.

Karia:
(Chuckles) So what's next?

Brynna:
Same as before. Work on your circuits and save the world from Mason.

Karia:
Just as long as you don't use anymore knockout spells on me.

Brynna:
Sleep spells!

(Conversation fades out while ending theme begins)

Karia:
What is the difference?

Brynna:
The difference is that sleeping spells cause no damage!

Karia:
They both end in me being unconscious.

Brynna:
Yes, but a sleep spell leads to restful slumber, while a knockout spell just...knocks someone out.
How are you not getting this?

Karia:
I don't want either of them!

Brynna:
Then quit doing dumb shit to make me knock you out!

Karia:
Ha! You said it! You did knock me out!

Brynna:
Agggghhhh, it's a good thing you're cute.

Karia:
You got that right.