

Karia:
You helped him get away with murder?

Brynna:
Oh relax, it wasn't anything serious.

Karia:
He killed a man!

Brynna:
In self-defense. C'mon, that's the universally best Okay-To-Murder time.

Karia:
What happened?

Brynna:
A mage wanted an artifact from his collection, so when he said no the mage tried to kill him.

Karia:
You're being pretty casual about all this.

Brynna:
It's kind of what mages do. Mother was the Overseer, so she sent me in to intervene but I got there a smidge too late.

Karia:
What does that mean?

Brynna:
It means James killed the guy dead when he broke into the house. He barely survived the wave of golems thrown at him and then took him out in hand-to-hand combat. Every mage is trained in self-defense these days because of the potential of this sort of thing happening.

Karia:
This is out of control.

Brynna:
Oh it gets worse. We couldn't just let the police find out what happened, so we had to dispose of the body. That's where I came in.

Karia:
What? How?

Brynna:
You don't want to know.

Karia:
Somehow I believe you. So this guy's innocent?

Brynna:
I don't know about that, but he didn't murder the guy for funsies.

Karia:
(sighs) Can he help us?

Brynna:
Yes. He specializes in magic circuits and I think he can tell us what yours are doing.

Karia:
Then I guess we don't have a choice. Take me to him.

Brynna:
He replied to my summons last night saying we could come over any time. Let's go.

(Theme Music)

(Brynna knocks on a front door. Several locks unlatch.)

James:
(muffled through door) The phrase?

Brynna:
Ever and ever I verily swear to protect the good and all that's fair.

(Two more locks unlatch.)

James:
You sound just like your mother.

Brynna:
It's good to see you, James.

(James and Brynna hug)

Brynna:
James, this is Karia.

James:
Nice to meet you, young lady.

Karia:
The pleasure is all mine.

James:
Come. I'll make some tea.

Karia:
(whispering) You sure you trust this guy?

Brynna:
Relax. He's an old family friend, and like I said, he owes me.

Karia:
Okay...

(the two walk into the house, close the door, and sit down in the living room next to a grandfather clock)

James:
So I hear you're figuring out how your magic circuits work.

Karia:
Um, yeah, I only recently learned what magic circuits are.

James:
Well, when it comes down to it, they're pretty simple. They're like the wiring of a house, made of your brain, spinal cord, and all the nerves in your body. Most people are the most dextrous with their hands, so naturally the easiest place to control the input and output of mana is through their fingers and palm. May I see yours?

Karia:
Sure.

(Sustained magic sound)

James:
Mhm. It's just as you suspected, Bryn. Unidirectional outer flow circuits.

Brynna:
Do you sense damage to the channels?

James:
Nothing threatening yet, but yes. How long have you been doing this, young lady?

Karia:
Since I was a kid, I guess. I didn't know it would hurt me.

James:
Well, I'm afraid it has. Most of it is reversible, but you're going to have to be careful when you choose to use this power.

Karia:
I've gathered so far.

Brynna:
Can you sense what sort of magic the circuits are designed for?

James:
Conjuration.

Brynna:
Wait, what? Not abjuration?

James:
Nope. Nothing of the sort.

Brynna:
I don't understand. Then how does she heal people?

James:
Let me show you. See this tattoo on my arm? Karia, would you be a dear and hand me that knife?

Karia:
Uh, sure.

(James takes the knife and cuts across his upper arm over a tattoo.)

Karia:
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

James:
Would you do me a favor and heal me, young miss? This sort of hurts.

Brynna:
You don't have to--

Karia:
Shut up.

(Karia rushes over, places a hand on James's arm, and a magic sound rings as she heals him.
Karia winces as she begins bleeding.)

James:
Here, let me clean that up.

(James touches Karia's arm. Magic sound. The cut on her arm goes away.)

Karia:
Did you just?

Brynna:
Yes yes, he just healed you, but Karia, look what's on your arm.

Karia:
Is that...tattoo ink?

James:
Karia, you don't heal people. You trade body parts with them. You're not a mender; you're a teleporter.

Brynna:
If Karia's teleporting her healthy structures into other people's bodies, how has she not caused tissue rejection?

James:
It appears that she is a universal donor of some kind. And her own magic circuits must adjust the incoming tissues to her own body.

Brynna:

But how? Karia's worked on people of all sorts of different sizes. How are her outgoing tissues matching someone bigger or smaller than her?

James:

It seems they map and stretch as needed. Karia may also produce more compounds in her body that stimulate recovery and cellular growth. That would mean both her outgoing and incoming components attach and grow quickly.

Brynna:

But how is she able to do all that? Her circuits only flow outward, so how do materials flow back into her body?

James:

When Karia's body dislodges parts of her own body, it leaves an ethereal vacuum and when it teleports to the other person's body the matter that's already there is transported to the ethereal plane to avoid collision. The ethereal vacuum then absorbs the extra matter from the plane. It's pretty standard practice for conjurists transporting across short distances to only transport one object and let the other one switch places on its own.

Brynna:

But that still requires an incredible knowledge of quantum mechanics, ethereal physics, and--

James:

Some people are just gifted that way, Bryn. Not everyone has to study as hard as us.

Karia:

Brynna, what's wrong.

Brynna:

(angrily) Nothing. (clears her throat) Well, knowing that puts a lot of things in perspective.

Karia:

So what's next?

James:

Well, you still have the nerve damage problem. I healed some of it, but Karia, you should keep your healing to a minimum. Only for emergencies.

Karia:

Okay.

Brynna:

And by emergencies he means personal emergencies, not emergencies for anyone anywhere.

James:
Correct.

Karia:
(sighs) What do you think I'm going to do?

James: and Brynna:
(simultaneously) Get yourself killed.

Karia:
(muttering) Well look at you two getting along so swimmingly.

Brynna:
If her power isn't healing that would mean rerouting her mana towards her injured parts wouldn't fix them.

James:
Not unless she has a healthy body part lying around she can switch with.

Brynna:
I see.

(A beat of silence.)

Brynna:
Well, thank you, James. You've been very helpful.

James:
Happy to oblige, Miss Overseer.

Brynna:
Oh you cut that out.

James:
I will most certainly not. It was nice to meet you Karia. Please be careful and listen to Brynna.
She'll take good care of you.

Karia:
I know she will. Thank you, James.

James:
You're welcome.

(Karia walks out the door and Brynna begins to the close the door when James stops her.)

James:

You know the only way to get her bidirectional circuits before she hurts herself again, right?

Brynna:

(sighs) I do. It's just a matter of where.

Karia:

Thank you for the tea.

Brynna:

Sure thing. You still like Earl Gray, two sugars?

Karia:

Yep! (blows on tea) So what next? James says I'm a teleporter, but how does that help us?

Brynna:

Well, I'm not sure yet.

Karia:

You're lying.

Brynna:

What?

Karia:

You're grabbing your elbow. That's your tell. Always has been.

Brynna:

(sighs) Okay, so I have some ideas, but few that are actionable.

Karia:

Like what?

Brynna:

Well, if you switch tissues with others, maybe we could get you new bidirectional circuits by having you switch with another mage.

Karia:

Wait, would that work?

Brynna:
Possibly.

Karia:
But what mage would ever give up their circuits for mine? And how would I know I could still do the same magic afterward?

Brynna:
There's a lot of problems with it. The first question is probably the easier one, though. We could just force someone against their will or kill them first.

Karia:
I'm putting a moratorium on suggestions that include murder, so just jot that down.

Brynna:
You're no fun.

Karia:
I don't want to force anyone against their will either.

Brynna:
What if he's a bad guy? There are plenty of baddies in the mage world and as overseer I can decide the punishment for them.

Karia:
Nope. Still not doing it.

Brynna:
Karia, we're going to have to do something. Your life's on the line here.

Karia:
There's gotta be another way.

Brynna:
Okay, you may be right. I can think of one other option of where to get magic circuits.

Karia:
Where?

Brynna:

Me.