Ultimatum
A World of Magic Story
Part 17, Chase

Chapter 36, Dash

Artemis

They'd already burst out through the back door of the restaurant and turned the corner into the back streets of Stoneburg when their pursuers came. There was no way they could have dealt with those drunken Magic Council goons that fast, right?

"After them! Dacien'll reward us greatly for their capture!" she heard the fire wizard yell out. She and Arsen kept running, both eager to skedaddle out of there. The group of Society members were close behind, shooting blasts of assorted magics to try and slow them down. She had just enough time to whisper in Arsen's ear, "We need to split up. I go left, you go right!" Arsen nodded vaguely as they neared another intersection. The two of them split up, Arsen running left, where the main plaza and shops were. Artemis looked in front of her and saw a messy, incomplete street. Building equipment was lined up on the sides, and in-progress houses and facilities lined the street's sides.

"Burning Embers!" the fire wizard roared. In front of her, a pile of scaffolding was hit by a barrage of white-hot fire, sending it toppling down and right in front of her. She pointed back at the wizards, and a magic circle appeared at the tip of her fingers. "Umbral Barrier!" she yelled. A black and purple wall of pure darkness erected from the ground in front of the wizards. It wouldn't hold for long, but she had enough time to avoid the broken, toppled scaffolding in front of her, turning the corner into a long alleyway with trash and old equipment littering its nooks and crannies.

1 wizard was close behind her as she sprinted through the alleyway. She sensed the other wizards above her, having jumped onto the rooftops of the incomplete buildings

using magic. She leaped over a broken garbage can as a beam of magma exploded in front of her, creating a puddle of orange magma. Artemis cursed under her breath. She was running out of space to run, so she leaped up, summoning a magic circle under her feet to propel her upwards. "Thrust!" she yelled, and a stream of darkness erupted under her feet, sending her flying up and out of the alleyway.

   She landed on a rooftop, the other wizards close behind her as she hopped from roof to roof. The wood under her feet creaked and cracked under pressure. Her pursuers kept running after her nonetheless, shooting blasts of their magic to hinder her escape. A boulder of earth, likely fired from one of the wizards behind her, smashed into the rooftop she was about to jump onto, revealing its 2nd story. She hopped down into the building and ran down the stairs 2 by 2. Her parents back in Ironport probably wouldn't have agreed with her recklessness, but she kept running either way. When she got out the front door of the building, she turned back and held out a hand. A magic circle appeared where the front door was, and she yelled, "Umbral Globe!"

   A purple globe appeared, enveloping the entire house. Artemis used the time to get as far away as she could. She clenched her fists, and the globe exploded, sending the group of wizards flying out of the building. Immediately, they got up, their robes ripped and torn, and kept chasing after her. Seriously, they wouldn't quit! She thought back to the tavern, trying to figure out a plan.

   A plan... She got an idea, but it was an extremely stupid idea at that. There was another intersection coming up. If she could regroup with Arsen and get close to those Magic Council goons, maybe they'd have a fighting chance. She ran into the middle of the intersection, spotting Arsen running from his own group of Society goons. Artemis turned and ran towards Arsen to try and meet up with him and lead the Society members towards the main plaza.

   Only later would she regret this decision.

Chapter 37, War

Arsen

"Lovely day for a walk in the city, huh?" Artemis yelled as she ran up to Arsen.

"How could you be joking at a time like this?!"

"Well, I have my ways." Artemis responded vaguely. They were nearing the main plaza. He spotted a group of Magic Council members searching the area for the Society members. Their previously drunk captain had apparently recovered from his hangover and was searching along with them. A Council scout looked towards them, his expression filled with disbelief and awe as they ran. Arsen grit his teeth and subconsciously knew what to do. He yelled out towards the group of Magic Council members, "HEY!" and shot a blast of Inferno into the air, alerting them. The Society members shot waves of magic at the Council members. The Vistarian citizens screamed in terror, some even shooting new guns they had bought from the merchants.

"Arrest those Society fuckers! I want them on the ground and on their way to the Silent Tower immediately!" the captain yelled. Hopefully they didn't think he and Artemis were members of the Dark Arts Society. He turned back and faced the group of Society wizards.

"You've got some nerve, making us chase you lot all the way across Stoneburg..." the leader of the group said. "It doesn't have to be like this! Dacien is a *very* generous person. He'll have his way with you two if you come quietly. But try and put up a fight, I'm fine with starting a war right here, right now. We've got plentiful allies."

The Magic Council members, save the formerly drunken captain, shifted around in awe, possibly at him and Artemis, possibly at the fact that they were also being chased by sadistic criminals. Artemis looked at Arsen, asking him a silent question. *You sure about this?* Her expression seemed to say. He took a deep breath and summoned a magic circle in his hand.

"A war? Fine, you can have your war. But you're going to have to kill me if you want Dacien to reward you!" he responded.