



**A TALE OF
GLASS AND
ROSES**

**THE STORY OF
ARIELLE LAMINA**

A short story by Danny_Zou
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game World of Magic, soon to
become Arcane Odyssey.

“What is it, child?” the old man asked. He smiled at her, peering down from over his book.

“I want to hear a story,” the little girl asked.

“A story? Hmm... perhaps the story about Mary the Mayor?”

“No!” the girl protested. “That’s for little kids! I want to hear a *real* story.”

“A real story?” He smiled again. “Perhaps the one about Averill the Captain?”

“Not that either! I want to hear a sad story,” she explained.

His smile faded. “A sad story? Why, may I ask? Sad stories are not fun to tell.”

“I want to hear one!” she maintained.

“Very well then.” He sighed. “I’ll tell you a story you haven’t heard before. About a young girl I knew, many, many years ago...”

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PART ONE

BEGINNINGS

The Lamina family has always been wealthy. Legend has it their ancestor won a wish from a goddess, and he wished for his lineage to be ever wealthy. It seems she granted his wish, for there is not one time in living memory that a Lamina has lacked crowns.

The family was blessed, too, by the gods with power. Magic came easily to them, and it was one of the many reasons they became so wealthy. Their power and determination led to great success, bringing the House of Lamina riches of all sorts. By the time that Hector Lamina wed the dark-eyed Lady Summer of Greyhaven, the House was at its peak, one of the most powerful and wealthiest families in all of Magius. The marriage of the two was a love marriage, as Lady Summer was of an honorable lineage if not a wealth one—though, as many pointed out, Hector was rich enough for both of them—and blessed by the merchants' council, even if some of them were miffed that Hector had not chosen one of *their* daughters for marriage.

The fortune tellers promised great wealth and power from the wedding, and for the young couple's descendants, all of them

praising Hector's choice and the Lady Summer's beauty... all but one. He foretold that their House would, as if it were made of glass, shatter, and that all those caught in its collapse would be forever washed with blood.

No one believed him, of course. He was, after all, the same fool that once, while drunk, told everyone he could reach that gods had walked the earth like mortal men once. Furthermore, neither Hector nor the Lady held much stock in fortune tellers, and his words were ignored.

Within a year of the marriage, the couple announced that a child had been born, a healthy baby girl. They named her Arielle, after Hector's grandmother.

The girl was a prodigy from the outset. At the precocious young age of five, she gained the power of Glass Magic, opening her first mind. What's more, she was blessed with the ability to see magical auras, something only mastered by extremely powerful wizards. Two years later, she opened her second mind, acquiring Crystal Magic, yet this was the beginning of the end.

The circumstances surrounding her opening of her second mind are still unclear. What is known is that it was violent, terribly so. Three members of her extended family were slain, and the coroners unanimously declared their deaths to be from magically boosted slashes and stabs. Some twenty servants died as well, and the interior of the Lamina manse was, as one witness put it, “burnt and destroyed, as if it had garnered the wrath of an avenging angel”.

Ever after, Arielle Lamina was seen in public no more. Her very name seemed to have vanished, and her parents and the family servants—those that had not left—evaded all questioning.

What had happened to her? Her parents, terrified of her destructive magic, kept her secreted away in the manse. For a time, all was fine. But magic cannot be so easily hidden away. Every moment of her life, Arielle Lamina’s magic became ever more powerful. Such is the nature of magic.

Ten years passed in that manner. Until that day. Arielle had, secretly, been working on her magic. She had trained in perfect stealth, even going so far as to hire a mute

tutor who would never reveal the secret. Her strength grew, and her confidence with it. Long forgotten were the devastating events of her second mind, and now all she could see was the beauty and the power of her magic.

That day was her seventeenth birthday. She had planned to reveal what she could do. Everything was perfect. Her tutor had gone on vacation, so her parents would never guess. The servants agreed to let her handle the day's festivities. Her parents did not, *could* not suspect a thing.

It worked. She created a beautiful, single glass rose. But it was not received with applause, nor with delight, nor with congratulations. The response she found in her parents' eyes was fear, horror, and dismay. Her heart trembled, and her soul with it. Blazing with emotion, wracked with heartbreak, she released the magic that had been forced below for so long.

Her parents would be grievously wounded that day. Another five servants would die. As for Arielle Lamina, she vanished. The cursed child, doomed from the start—as the fortune teller had promised—to cause the ruin of her House, fled.

A year would pass with no sign of the girl. But time heals all wounds. Eventually, letters would be seen going to and from the Lamina home, now much smaller and less expansive. Their wealth was still legendary, but they disappeared from the public scene. It was considered a tragedy by some. Others ignored it, for all have tragedies of their own to deal with.

As for Arielle Lamina? She joined the Magic Council.



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PART TWO

MIRRORS

Happiness had not come easily to Arielle Lamina. But surprisingly, she found it among the green cloaks.

“Arielle, we’re heading off now,” her superior, Captain Vance Salore said exasperatedly. “You still with us?”

She tore her eyes from the book. “I’m coming.”

“Good. We’ll need every wizard we can get for this one.” Vance looked down at the message the Silent Tower had sent them. “A smuggling ring has gotten another shipment to the Ashen Volcano.”

“Smugglers?” Cayden Percy asked disdainfully. “Isn’t this a job for the scouts?”

“This group is known for taking dark wizards along with them for defense,” Vance explained. “That’s why we’re being sent. If the report is correct, this is a huge shipment of... well, *something*. We need to intercept it before it gets to wherever it’s going.”

Arielle nodded. “When are we leaving?”

“Now,” Vance replied.



The group arrived at the base of the Ashen Volcano just before sunset. Even then, they could make out a ship on the horizon, its hull made of the dark wood preferred by smugglers. It silently slid in between the rocks, sails struck and fabric-covered oars slipping into the water without a sound.

“Attack on my signal. Make sure they see us and hopefully they’ll surrender,” Vance ordered.

A dozen heads nodded in agreement.

Arielle shivered, despite the warm cloak. *Excitement*, she decided. Not fear.

“Now!” Vance yelled. The captain had dismounted. The ship would not escape.

The dozen Council soldiers ran down the slopes, magic circles blazing. Arielle found herself in the thick of it.

“PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS!” Vance bellowed. The only response was an arrow whizzing by his head.

Grimly, Arielle summoned a blast of glass. It soared across the battlefield and smacked, hard, into an enemy archer.

A dark wizard's circle blazed to life, and a splash of acid fell down towards the ground. Cayden thrust up his hand, but the paper that curled into the air melted away at the acid's touch.

Arielle stomped hard on the ground. "Rose!" A shining shield formed, clear glass that could not be damaged by the weak acid.

"Thanks," Cayden said, before knocking the dark wizard off her feet.

Fighting had broken out all over the black sand. Arielle fended off a knife-wielding smuggler, knocked out a dark wizard, and found herself back-to-back with Vance. Glass and crystal blasts blocked the enemy attacks, while his fast-moving shadow beams crashed into the casters.

"Duck!" he yelled. She did so immediately, an action born of hundreds of repetitions of this exact scenario. "*Shadow Moon!*" he called out. A flat disk of shadow magic crashed into their attackers, soaring over her head.

It seemed to be over. The dark wizards and smugglers had been handcuffed. Arielle sighed, and dropped to the sand.

“Cheer up,” Vance said. “No one died.”

“That’s hardly cheerful,” Cayden pointed out.

“Ok. No one was going to die.”

“That’s what you think,” Arielle replied. “You’re a crazy powerful captain and we’re just soldiers.”

“I’m not that strong,” Vance replied self-consciously.

Arielle cocked an eyebrow. “I can see your aura and it doesn’t exactly say ‘I’m not strong’ on it.”

“Captain!” Melissa called out. “We’ve got the cargo!”

The soldiers carried over a few heavy chests. They were made of ornate wood and had shining iron bands wrapped around them. Heavy padlocks bound them closed.

“Is that it?” Vance asked.

“They’re really heavy, I think this is as much as the ship could carry,” Melissa explained.

“Where’s the key?”

“Their captain swears he threw it overboard when he saw they were about to lose.”

“I’ll deal with it then,” Arielle said. She took out a slender skeleton key. With a little bit of fiddling, the first padlock fell off. She moved on to the next. Working quickly, it still took some ten minutes to remove them all.

Vance opened the first chest cautiously. Inside were large chunks of... white crystal. He glanced at them curiously, and reached to pick one up.

“Stop!” Cayden yelled, knocking Vance’s hand aside.

“Whatever’s the matter?” Vance asked.

“These are irradiated salt crystals,” Cayden replied.

Arielle looked at them, her interest piqued. “Then there’s only one place they could’ve come from...”

“The Old Sea.” Cayden looked a little uncomfortable. “My cousin is a merchant dealing in irradiated salts. He told me that

they weren't allowed to talk about it since the stuff was very dangerous..."

"I've read up on them," Arielle said. "Chunks these large must've been farmed." She unwrapped her scarf. "They're safe to handle as long as you don't touch the crystals directly."

Wrapping her scarf around her hand, she picked up a large chunk to demonstrate.

Vance, curious as well, picked one up too. It was a crystalline white, yet iridescent colors played over its surface. He stared at them, mesmerized.

"Arielle... what are you doing?" he heard Melissa's voice ask. He turned, but wasn't fast enough. A sharp pain rushed through his body, and everything turned black.



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PART THREE

BLOSSOMS

Cayden had been the only one to make it back.

They had questioned him for hours. His mind was exhausted, his body ached, and he felt completely drained of magic. It had been like a nightmare...

He had waited patiently to be able to take a look at a crystal himself, which was why he had noticed Arielle's actions in time. She had lifted the crystal up, then transferred it to her other hand, uncovered by the scarf. He had been about to cry out... but nothing happened. She didn't die. In fact, she seemed ever more entranced by the stone, until he saw it.

Her eyes turned red.

Arielle's silver eyes had been the first thing anyone noticed about her. Large and bright, they caught one's attention instantly. But this didn't feel that way. Her eyes glowed blood red, and it was as if they were magnetic, drawing his gaze into her crimson irises.

Then, the crystal exploded. He had reacted barely in time. A paper shield absorbed what sounded like a thousand knives crashing into it. A wild keen rose in the wind, the

sound of an incredible amount of magic being moved all at once.

The salt was being drained of all its power, the colors vanishing, the crystals turning a normal smooth white. Arielle's aura had become visible, so powerful that it intruded onto reality itself. Red and silver, looking at it made him feel sick.

He ran. He had to. At that moment she was a thousand times more powerful than he was, and everyone else was dead. The powerful ones, like Vance, had been the lucky ones. They had vaporized the moment the salt hit their bodies. Those with less power screamed as the radiation ripped through them, and died screaming. He alone had survived. And he alone ran away.

He fled. A storm of crystal and glass chased him, each blending into the other until there was no difference between the two. Arielle didn't say a word, her eyes remaining that terrifying red color as she raced after him, magic ripping the world around her despite her not having created a magic circle.

He ran and ran and ran. Spears of crystal and glass chased after him. He

summoned every ounce of magic he could to shield himself while he fled.

But it wasn't enough. She was gaining, fast. He had to do something.

With every last ounce of magic in his body, he used a single magic jump. “*ULTIMATE ART: PAPER JET!*” he screamed. The magic was torn out of him. He soared, uncontrollably, into the sky. He would've died then had he not crashed into a bush, mere meters away from the Silent Tower.

Yet even then she had followed him. Six shining wings, red and silver, blazed out of her back, as if she were some bizarre insect, dripping with blood. Terrified, he tried to stand up. But his leg was broken. He crawled, crawling, crying, towards the tower. Someone had to be there, someone had to notice...

And then she was gone. Glancing down the road he saw her chasing a merchant, who was speared down like a deer fleeing a wolf. The few travelers on the road at night were slaughtered mercilessly as the girl—the nightmare—rampaged towards Summer Hold.

He cried then, but with relief. Green-cloaked figures were running out of the tower, drawn by his screams and the unstable magic blazing around him. That was all he remembered of that night.



The Council captured her in the end. It had been a brutal battle, he was told. Dozens were killed, hundreds were injured. King David Silver himself nearly died when a house-sized blade of fused glass and crystal slashed him apart in the fight.

It had taken the might of all the Council members and the king to stop her, and she had only been truly stopped when, having run entirely out of magic power, she collapsed on the ground.

As for himself, he had been promoted. It was an empty honor. He knew he could not be a captain, was not a captain. Vance had been a captain. But Vance had died.

They told him he had done the right thing by fleeing, that had he stayed she would've done far more damage. Empty words. There was no one but bandits and dark wizards in the forest at that time, and he had lured her towards the main road by fleeing.

And now this.

Arielle was sitting in her cell, eyes silver as ever, magic restrained by the handcuffs around her wrists. She was silent. He could tell she had been crying. But he felt no pity.

“I hear they’ve decided to release you,” he said at last.

“I hear you’ve been made a captain.”

“I’m no captain,” Cayden responded. “Vance was, but—”

“But I killed him,” she finished. Not a tear fell. She had run out of tears.

Cayden grimaced. “The Council decided that since you weren’t in your right mind at the time of the attack, they won’t kill you. But you’ll probably be here for a year or two.”

“I know,” she said.

And she was right. She knew. She knew everything. What was he here for?

Then he remembered.

“I’m sorry,” he said.

“For what?”

“For everything. For letting you get so close to the salt, for—”

“You couldn’t have known. I... I didn’t tell anyone.”

He’d read the report already. She knew that too. Arielle Lamina. No one had

suspected, she'd told them she was an orphan without a surname. Not her only lie either. He, despite being from Bell Village, had heard of the Lamina deaths. The cursed child, the girl had been called.

“I understand why you didn't.” He sighed. “I'm just here to say... I forgive you.”

“You what?” she asked with disbelief. “I killed all your friends!”

It was a strange emotion, he thought. She was angry at him. For forgiving her. Yet the anger felt normal. Good. It was not the dead-eyed cruelty he had seen that night. Arielle was back.

“You, too, are one of my friends.”

“Are?”

He didn't smile. Vance would've smiled. But Vance was dead. “For now. Just so you know, you'll never be able to wear the green cloak again.”

She knew that, of course.

“However. There are many heroes who choose not to join the Council. Personal reasons, most of the time. You can redeem yourself in the Council's eyes.”

“I’m not sure I’m ready to,” she said,
her voice hardly a whisper.

“None of us are ever ready to.”

“I’m sorry.”

“I forgive you.”

Cayden Percy walked out of the prison.
A soldier saluted him as he passed. He
returned it halfheartedly.

Something splashed onto his head. He
looked up. It was raining. The skies were
silver, silver, not red.



The old man finished speaking with a sigh. He looked down. The little girl was asleep at his feet. With a smile, he put the book aside, picked her up, and carried her to bed.

Arielle Lamina, he thought, glancing out the window. The rain splashed heavily on the glass, which shimmered silver in the light. *Where are you now?*

It had been many a year ago when he had met the girl. She had been passing through. Many of the people, she had said, had treated her like a monster at first. *Many still did* were the words she did not say. He was, even then, getting on in his years, and he could read the lines between her words, a gift of experience.

Every now and then, he heard some news about her. A villain defeated, shards of glass and crystal lying around the handcuffed—to perfect Council standards—criminal, or a bandit camp raided, or a town saved. At least there was that. The fortune teller had been wrong in the end. *Arielle Lamina* had achieved her happy ending.



