

STASIS



DUDLEY MUTATINA

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“Look alive,” Ana shouted from the back of the ambulance. “Another emergency just came through.”

Red reached up and turned on the sirens. “Where to?”

“Near the stadium.” From the passenger seat, Verona pulled up a map on the dashboard. “Rush hour traffic on the highway.”

Red smirked and veered towards the on-ramp. “That’s what I’m here for.”

Ana braced herself. “Make sure we get there in one piece, please.”

Up ahead, traffic had come to a complete halt. Red gripped the steering wheel tighter and sped up, his eyes beginning to glow. In an instant, the entire ambulance became translucent. They continued through traffic, barely visible to the cars around them as they passed through each of them. Red took deep, measured breaths to maintain focus.

It was an odd sensation, and had taken Ana a while to get used to. Red’s ability let him manipulate the particles in his body to phase through objects. After years of intense training in med school, he extended his range to the size of an ambulance, letting them bypass traffic in an emergency. Ana enjoyed catching a glimpse of people’s lives as they passed through the different cars; kids coming home from school, friends on a vacation, businessmen after a long workday. To the other cars, they were just a brief flash of light in their peripherals.

“Two minutes.” Verona glanced back at Ana.

Ana nodded and re-read the details on her tablet. “Multiple reports of injuries from a building fire. One in critical condition with third-degree burns. A mage in his thirties.”

“Here!” Red brought the ambulance to a screeching halt behind a line of firetrucks and squad cars. He loosened his grip on the steering wheel and worked to catch his breath.

“Good work, champ. We’ll take it from here.” Ana grabbed the medical bag and leapt from the back of the doors, Verona close at her heels. Firefighters and water mages had put out most of the fire by now. Others tended to people with minor injuries. One mage spotted them and gestured towards one of the side streets.

The victim’s clothes were singed and his body covered in burns. A few people were already tending to him, but looked relieved to see Ana. Ana dropped down next to them. “Hello sir, I’m an EMT. Can you tell me your name?”

“Felix...” He shivered nonstop and struggled to keep his eyes open.

Ana nodded to the others. “We’ll take it from here.”

Verona joined Ana on the ground. “Ok, Felix, stay with me now,” she said in her soothing voice. She glanced at Ana, who placed her left pointer finger against his chest. Verona continued, “You’re gonna feel a sharp sting for just a second.”

Golden light emerged from the watch tattooed on Ana’s wrist. The hour hand spun around until it pointed directly down her hand towards Felix’s heart. “One hour.” The arrow extended in a sudden flash, striking Felix through the chest before disappearing. He flinched then went still. In reality, his movements had been reduced to 1/3600 of an hour. What would normally take one second now took the equivalent of one hour. Ana immediately started dressing his wounds.

Verona’s hands glowed a red color as she traced her fingers over his body with slow, deliberate movements. The burns began healing and the pain on Felix’s face slowly subsided.

“Cell reconstruction is amazing,” Ana breathed. It never ceased to impress her every time she saw it in action.

“He’s stable for now. Let’s get him into the ambulance.”

Red had already pulled the gurney from the ambulance and rushed over to them.

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