

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: The aftermath of Chemo's attack~

-x-X-x-

Stepping out of the boom tube that's taken her from the Justice League's Watchtower in orbit down to the streets of New York in just a second, Zatanna Zatara breathes in through her nose, expecting the familiar stench of her hometown mixed with the mess that one can usually anticipate after dealing with something like Chemo.

Which is why she's so surprised when she gets what might just be the cleanest lungful of air that she's ever taken in. It's so damn pure that she chokes on it a little, doubling over for a second before getting her breathing back under control.

"Zatanna! You okay?"

Aaand of course she'd managed to have that embarrassing moment in front of Superman of all people, a founder of the Justice League and one of the greatest heroes on Earth. Holding up a white gloved hand, Zatanna quickly nods.

"Y-Yes, I'm fine... ahem, sorry. I'm fine."

The Man of Steel gives her a worried look for a moment longer but when she straightens up and flashes him a smile, he lets it go. Nodding, he gestures for her to follow him.

"Thank you for coming on such short notice. This is a bit of a strange situation."

Zatanna shakes her head.

"No need to thank me? Frankly, it should be the other way around. New York is my home... so thanks for rushing from Metropolis as soon as you heard about

Chemo. Who knows how much damage he could have done if you hadn't showed up."

Chemo was... a disaster with legs. He was pollution given a body and a malicious sentience that wanted to spread and corrupt and destroy everything it could. You couldn't ever fully destroy him either as far as they could tell. He'd shown up around half a dozen times since his original creation, and every time they managed to disperse him, he just showed up again somewhere else.

Someone like Superman was pretty much a necessity for dealing with Chemo, though even then he had to be careful in case the malicious entity ever figured out how to give off the same radiation as Kryptonite.

That said... Zatanna is caught a little off guard when Superman shakes his head.

"Actually, I didn't have anything to do with Chemo's defeat this time. I arrived late."

What... late? Superman? Zatanna blinks slowly and takes in their surroundings a bit more, registering for the first time the lack of destruction that this attack had left behind. There was only half a street destroyed by Chemo's rampage... and more than that, she didn't see a single ounce of toxic sludge or radioactive mess anywhere. It was all melted cars and destroyed road and pockmarked buildings, but no actual sign of the gross shit that had caused the damage.

"... I don't understand. If you didn't need me to help clean up after Chemo, why call me out here? And how in the world was he dealt with before even *you* could arrive, Superman?"

Superman gestures off to the side, where some shellshocked civilians are wrapped in silvery blankets and being tended to by the paramedics on the scene.

"That last part ties into the first part. Eyewitness reports say that Chemo was dealt with by two individuals, both of them young in appearance. One of those

individuals summoned black shadows that defended her and her companion while also attacking Chemo and getting its attention. The other one though... he apparently cleaned up all of this with a sweep of his hand. And then cut Chemo down to size with even more sweeps of his hands.”

Zatanna’s mouth opens and closes wordlessly at that... before she turns her full attention to the street in front of her and raises her hands.

“Laevery Ila cigam desu ereh ot em!”

Her magic washes over the street, her eyes glowing as she sees the residue of what was done here today. Zatanna’s jaw drops, going slack from what she finds while Superman waits patiently at her side. Or at least tries to. He gives her about ten seconds of prolonged silence before carefully clearing his throat.

“... Zatanna?”

Pulling herself out of her stupor, Zatanna looks over at the Man of Steel and grimaces.

“My apologies... I was caught off guard. This is... well, it explains some things, I suppose.”

Like for instance, her embarrassing entrance. Going from the sterile environment of the Watchtower to New York City should have been a lot rougher than it was, but instead the air here on this street had felt *cleaner* than the air on the Watchtower.

Now she knows why...

“You were right to call for me. Those two who dealt with Chemo... they were indeed magic practitioners.”

Superman straightens up a bit at that, nodding seriously.

“What can you tell me about them?”

Zatanna hesitates for a moment, going over what her senses are telling her one more time before just running her mouth to one of the world's greatest heroes. Still, the results of her magic don't lie... and her own experience tells her that they need to take this seriously.

"The woman wasn't entirely human. I sense a hint of demonic taint in her magic, which would explain the shadows that the eyewitnesses saw. That said, she definitely isn't a full demon... unless the man was her keeper and had her on a firm leash, perhaps."

Damn it, she hadn't thought of that last bit until just now. Which meant she was engaging in speculation in front of Superman, rather than sounding confident in her findings! Fortunately, Superman just frowns slightly, crossing his arms over his chest.

"Can you elaborate on that last part?"

Nodding, Zatanna swallows and licks her lips.

"Yes... it is common for magicians to have familiars. It is not common for those familiars to be full blown sentient beings in their own right... but it is not exactly rare or unheard of either. If this woman was a full demon, then she could have been contracted or bound by the man, which would explain her efforts to fight Chemo and defend him."

Especially since...

"The man is no small fish either, Superman. The power on display here is like almost nothing I've ever seen. The good news is... it's also some of the strongest Order Magic I've ever seen as well."

That gets Superman's attention.

"Order Magic. Like that of Doctor Fate?"

Zatanna manages to avoid wincing too hard as she nods at that. Doctor Fate was an... interesting existence. Technically he was two beings in one. The man the body belonged to was named Kent Nelson, a powerful sorcerer in his own right and a longtime agent of the Lords of Order.

However, it was the equipment he wore, aka the Helm of Fate, the Amulet of Anubis, and the Cloak of Destiny, that really made him 'Doctor Fate'. They granted him far more power than he would otherwise have... on top of the Helm containing the spirit of Nabu, the Lord of Order that created the three artifacts in the first place.

The tradeoff for the power came with the fact that Nabu often possessed whoever wore his helm, taking over their body for long periods of time and using them to fight his battles and complete his objectives against the forces of chaos.

... The Justice League didn't know that last part. Both Dr. Nelson and Nabu had decided together that it wasn't something that needed to be spread around to the non-magicals outside of their tight knit community. Zatanna had been asked by her father on Doctor Fate's behalf to keep that secret to herself when she joined the League.

In this case though, as much as she was conscious of them getting dangerously close to the sensitive topic, it was extremely relevant to the situation at hand.

"Yes, precisely like Doctor Fate. This power, this surety of purpose and focus... it didn't come from a novice, Superman."

Superman hums.

"... The eyewitnesses said he looked young... that both of them did."

Shaking her head, Zatanna lets a wry smirk spread across her face.

"You should know just how easy it is for us practitioners to keep ourselves looking young... and how deceptive appearances can be. What I feel here is the magic of two powerful individuals... the demon alone is powerful enough that to

bind her against her will would be no small task. And the man... the man might just be on the same level as Doctor Fate himself. Extremely powerful and potentially hundreds of years old.”

Zatanna doesn't say what else she thinks of the man... that he might just be another Lord of Order coming out of the woodworks for some reason. But that's certainly what she's thinking. The purity in the air, the feeling of the magical residue left behind, the swiftness with which Chemo was dealt... all of it paints a certain picture.

“... What do you suggest we do then, Zatanna?”

Superman's question pulls her out of her thoughts and she bites her lip for a bit before giving her honest answer.

“Nothing. If I'm right about this, we don't want anyone trying to hunt these two down. So far they haven't done anything wrong... all they've done is help. We should treat them as potential allies and do our best not to antagonize them. That would be my recommendation.”

Superman's frown doesn't abate... he clearly isn't so sure about the idea of letting this go. He probably still will of course, but that's not the problem, is it? The problem... would be Batman. Even if Zatanna convinces Superman to back off and avoid making an enemy of this mysterious Lord of Order, his concern will still get back to the rest of the Justice League, including Batman.

And Batman's paranoia is legendary... the man never knows when to leave well enough alone. He would certainly start investigating...

“Look. Let me put out some feelers and ask around, alright? Before anything else, let me see what I can figure out from my neck of the woods. We don't want to spook people this powerful... right?”

Finally, Superman nods, looking relieved now that Zatanna has said she'll investigate on her end.

“... Alright, that does seem prudent. Thank you, Zatanna. Your help is appreciated, as always.”

Zatanna is relieved too. She *really* didn't want to know what would happen if a Lord of Order focused on Purifying Magic this strong decided Batman was being a nuisance. Whatever happened next, they did NOT need to poke this particular sleeping dragon.

-x-X-x-

Flopping back on his bed, Cole groans as he stares up at his apartment ceiling. Thanks to Raven, they'd gotten away clean at least, her ability letting them travel through shadow and arrive back here in no time. He could only imagine what was going on back at the scene they'd left behind... mostly because Cole didn't own a television and so they couldn't exactly watch the special news report likely happening or anything like that.

Still, he's definitely beating himself up over the events of the day. What had he been thinking? Oh right, he really hadn't been thinking... if anything, it was like something had been pulling him along, keeping him from doing the smart thing and running with the damn money!

“Cole? Are you well?”

Covering his face with his hands, Cole rubs for a moment before sitting up on the bed and looking over at Raven. She looks concerned at him, prompting a sigh as he shakes his head.

“I'm fine... just pissed off.”

Raven furrows her brow in confusion.

“... You acquitted yourself well today. You were in complete command of the battlefield from start to finish, dealing with that creature like it was nothing despite everyone else having to flee from it. Should you not be proud of your actions?”

On the one hand, she had a point. Together, they'd dealt with Chemo like it was nothing and thanks to his cleaning magic, Cole had been able to leave the scene destroyed but also entirely cleaned up. No toxic sludge, no radioactive waste, no mess of chemicals.

Normally, cleaning up after a Chemo fight took the do-gooders months if not longer. And Cole had handled it with a literal wave of his fingers.

On the other hand...

"I'm glad I was able to save those people today... but I still feel like an idiot for abandoning all of that money. We could have been rich, Raven. We could have been in such a better position right now. But instead I let myself get drawn into fighting Chemo and the money got destroyed and... and..."

Cole trails off because as he's been talking, Raven's hands have started to swirl with black shadows. Then, right before his eyes, she pulls... and the plastic bag full of cash appears in her hands out of seemingly nowhere.

His jaw drops open and his eyes bulge as he stares at the windfall he thought had been destroyed with the rest of the park in Chemo's last attack. Raven looks between the bag and Cole for a long moment before tilting her head to the side.

"Apologies... when I saw you drop the money back into the hole like that, I thought you might have intended for me to pick it up for you. So I did so and tucked it away in my shadow pocket. Was I... not supposed to?"

His mouth opens and closes wordlessly and Cole knows he's doing an excellent impression of a goldfish in that moment. He just... doesn't care. Slowly rising from the bed and walking forward, he places his hands on the plastic bag full of likely stolen cash that Raven is holding. Staring down at it, he can't help but grin as he moves those same hands up to Raven's face and proceeds to pull her in for a deep, passionate, tongue-filled kiss.

Raven moans into his mouth and the bag of cash thumps on the floor of his apartment as it falls from her hands. Neither of them pay it any mind at the moment though, not as Cole begins to remove Raven's clothes and she eagerly does the same to him. Then, he starts to pull her back towards the bed... a place she's more than happy to let him take her as he lavishes praise and adulation upon his half-demon familiar.

She is SO getting rewarded for this...

-x-X-x-

A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!