

Gale-Force #3 - "No Stone Unturned"

Written by Steven Bland

Nine days ago, in Norway, a group of seven explorers named Malcolm Masterson, Blake Bentley, Eric Wallace, Henry Norvell, Jane Owens, Andrea Barnett, and Carter Jones entered an underground cave where they looked around. Soon, they found a mother lode of precious metals.

"Wow," Bentley said. "There must be a lot of gold and silver here."

"This is *truly* an incredible find," Owens said.

"NO!" A gravelly voice said from behind them.

The explorers turned around and saw a group of humanoid stone-like men.

"THIS IS *OUR* TREASURE," one of the stone men exclaimed. "YOU *CANNOT* HAVE IT!"

"And now that you have seen it," another of the stone men said. "We cannot allow you to leave, lest you reveal our existence - - or treasure - - to the outside world!"

Seven of the stone men each brought out an ornament and brandished it at the explorers.

The cave was filled with a bright flash of light.

Today, in the present, a crew of four astronauts named Jake Grissom, Lee Glenn, John Lowell, and Kelly Ride were stranded on another planet due to their ship having engine failure.

Grissom had just contacted NASA on their ship's radio for assistance.

"Hey, Grissom," one of the astronauts said to one of the other three. "Did NASA say when they would get the tools over to us?"

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"They said it would take them a while, Glenn," Grissom said. "But they said that a volunteer claimed that she could get those tools to us in five seconds flat."

"Did they say *who* that volunteer will be?" Lowell asked.

Suddenly, the astronauts were approached by hyena-like extraterrestrial creatures moving at five hundred miles per hour. These creatures had wheels on their paws.

"What are those creatures?" Ride asked.

"I don't know, Kelly," Grissom replied. "But they're definitely *not* friendly."

Instantly, Gale-Force magically appeared on the scene with the tools that the astronauts needed to repair their ship.

The superheroine saw the hyena-like creatures attacking the astronauts.

Uh oh. The astronauts are in danger, she thought, before clicking the heels of her magic silver boot twice, summoning a cyclone which she directed toward the alien creatures, who were soon sucked into it and incapacitated.

My cyclone ought to keep those alien creatures busy for a while, Gale-Force thought as she brought the tools over to the astronauts, who soon took them.

"Many thanks, Gale-Force," Grissom told the superheroine before the former and his crew got to work repairing their ship.

Sometime later, the repairs to the ship were finished.

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"Thanks again, Gale-Force," Grissom said.

"You're welcome, sir," the superheroine said with a warm smile. "Glad I could help."

Grissom and his crew got back inside their ship.

With everyone on board, the ship took off. Gale-Force waved after them.

And now, it's time *I* got home, too, the superheroine thought.

Visualizing the outside of her home in Kansas City, Missouri and clicking the heels of her magic silver boots three times, she teleported from the planet and arrived at her desired destination in an instant.

In a secluded spot, Gale-Force focused on her desire to assume her civilian identity and clicked the heels of her magic silver boots once.

"WHOOSH!" A magic cyclone rose up around the superheroine, transforming her into 15-year-old Dorothy Donaldson.

Dorothy entered her house where she was greeted by her mother.

"How was the library, honey?" Mrs. Donaldson asked.

"It was fine, Mom," Dorothy answered.

"Did you read more of the Land of Oz books?" Mrs. Donaldson asked.

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"Actually, Mom, I basically read mostly about astronomy and aeronautics, which were equally fascinating," Dorothy answered.

No sense telling Mom that I was literally on another planet - - as Gale-Force - - to bring tools to a crew of stranded astronauts and to keep a bunch of wheeled alien hyenas at bay while the crew fixed their ship, the fifteen-year-old thought.

"Make sure you get a good night's sleep, sweetie," Mrs. Donaldson said. "It's a school night."

"Sure thing, Mom," Dorothy said as she headed for her room.

The next morning, Dorothy heard her alarm go off. In minutes, she was dressed and wearing her magic white shoes in case her superheroine alter ego would be needed.

She went to the kitchen where her mother had prepared bacon and eggs with orange juice.

While she was eating breakfast, Dorothy heard the television news that came from the living room nearby.

"There is still no word on the whereabouts of the team of explorers who mysteriously disappeared while exploring an underground cave in Norway, ten days ago," the anchorman said.

As soon as school lets out today, I'll see if I can find those missing explorers, Dorothy thought.

Throughout the school day, Dorothy did her best to focus on her classes, but her subconscious was filled with thoughts of the missing explorers.

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Later that afternoon, the bell rang, signaling the end of the school day. Dorothy Donaldson emerged from the school doors.

At last! Now I can begin my search for those missing explorers, she thought as she headed for a secluded spot. Once there, she clicked the heels of her shoes once while focusing on her benefactors, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, the Lion, and Locasta Tattypoo.

"WHOOSH!" A magic cyclone rose up around Dorothy and transformed her into Gale-Force. With the transformation completed, the superheroine clicked the heels of her magic silver boots three times while focusing on the inside of the underground cave in Norway where the missing explorers were last seen.

In an instant, Gale-Force appeared at her desired destination.

The superheroine investigated the cave, looking for the missing explorers. Suddenly, she heard their voices in her mind.

Help us, the voices called out. *Somebody* help us.

Gale-Force followed the voices until she found where the mother lode of precious metals was. On a shelf above the metals, sat seven ornaments in a row. Each ornament glowed ever brighter as the superheroine neared the shelf.

The voices I'm hearing in my mind are coming from those seven ornaments, Gale-Force deduced. I think I've just found the missing explorers. I'll see if I can mentally communicate with them.

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I am Gale-Force, the superheroine communicated telepathically. What happened to you?

A group of stone-like men trapped our souls individually in each of these ornaments,

Masterson's voice answered. Please free us.

Don't worry. I will, Gale-Force mentally assured them.

Suddenly, Gale-Force was attacked by a group of guards who were organic stone. Using the powers of Tin Mimicry and Axe Proficiency, which were granted to her by the Tin Woodsman, the superheroine soon overpowered them.

"HALT," a gravelly voice exclaimed from behind Gale-Force, attracting her attention.

"WHO ARE YOU?" The owner of the voice asked. He was tall, strapping regal, had a long beard, and was organic stone.

"I am Gale-Force," the superheroine answered. "And who might *you* be?"

"I am Rockquar, King of the Geosapiens," the regal stone-like man answered. "And I don't take kindly to outsiders attempting to steal my treasure."

"I'm not after your treasure, Your Majesty," Gale-Force assured him. "I'm here to free the seven explorers you captured ten days ago."

"And *that's* what I'm going to do *right now*," Gale-Force said as she headed for the ornaments.

"You can *try*, Gale-Force," Rockquar said.

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"But you will *not* succeed," he said as he cast a spell which summoned multiple golems that suddenly blocked the superheroine's path.

He actually summoned *golems* to try to stop me, she thought. Well, Rockquar, I've got a few powers of *my own*!

Converting her body to organic tin and summoning her axe, Gale-Force took on the golems. Swinging her axe at her hardest, the superheroine unleashed a wide, powerful slashing wave which destroyed the golems all at once.

More golems were soon, and quickly, conjured up.

Rockquar *doesn't quit*, does he? Gale-Force wondered as she resumed her normal form. They surrounded the superheroine, ready to attack her.

Maybe I can trick these golems into attacking each other, instead of me, she thought.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" Gale-Force asked. "Come and *get me*!"

Have to *time* this, just right, she thought.

The surrounding golems all lunged at the superheroine.

NOW, Gale-Force thought as she used Locasta Tattypoo's Teleport Dash to move at the last second, causing the unliving rock creatures to crash into each other and crumble.

That takes care of the golems, Gale-Force thought.

Gale-Force turned her attention back to the green ornaments.

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Now I can see about freeing those trapped explorers from their small prisons, she thought.

Before the superheroine could advance toward her goal, Rockquar conjured up a giant mole composed of earth. The mole swiftly dug underground and ambushed Gale-Force from behind, seizing her in a strong grip.

I - - can't - - breathe, the superheroine thought. It's - - *crushing* - - me!

Desperately, Gale-Force clicked her heels twice, summoning a powerful cyclone that destroyed the stone mole.

Whew! *That* was close, the superheroine thought as she was catching her breath.

Rockquar magically gathered up a large mass of dirt and levitated it toward and over Gale-Force's head.

He's going to drop that huge clod of dirt and rocks on top of me, burying me, the superheroine thought as she looked up at the huge mass.

Unless, she thought as she focused on Glinda's realm over the rainbow and quickly clicked her heels three times. Soon, the superheroine was gone before the mass fell.

In the blink of an eye, Gale-Force reappeared in Glinda's realm and in front of Glinda's presence.

"Glinda," the superheroine said. "I need your help."

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"Of course, my champion," Glinda said. "What's the problem?"

"Rockquar, King of the Geosapiens, kidnapped a group of explorers one week ago and imprisoned each of their souls inside a green ornament," Gale-Force answered. "Every time I attempted to come near the ornaments with the intention of freeing them, Rockquar thwarted me at every turn with his magic. So, obviously, before I can free the trapped explorers, I have to defeat Rockquar first, but he's too powerful and I don't know what can stop him."

"The Egg of Evoldus can," Glinda told her champion.

"What is it?" Gale-Force asked.

"It is an egg whose jewels emit a special energy which can neutralize stone magic," Glinda replied.

"The kind of magic Rockquar uses?" Gale-Force asked.

"Precisely," Glinda answered.

"Where can I find it?" Gale-Force asked.

"You can find it at an aerie on Mount Evoldus - -," Glinda told the superheroine.

Glinda directed Gale-Force to a crystal screen which showed the aerie on Mount Evoldus in another realm.

"- - In the realm of Langwideria," Glinda said.

Then, the crystal screen showed the image of a huge roc-like creature.

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"This creature is a guardian of the egg," Glinda warned. "To obtain the egg, you have to face the guardian first."

"Got it," Gale-Force said before visualizing the image she saw on the crystal screen of the aerie on Mount Evoldus and clicking the heels of her magic silver boots three times.

In an instant, Gale-Force was at her desired destination and found what she was looking for. The Egg of Evoldus, the superheroine thought. I've *found* it.

Soon, she was facing the huge roc-like creature that is the egg's guardian.

"RROOOAAAARRRRR," Gale-Force shouted. The vibrations from her roar, a power from the Lion, one of her benefactors, blew the roc-like creature away, long enough for the superheroine to quickly grab the Egg of Evoldus.

I *did* it! I *got* the Egg of Evoldus, she thought.

The roc-like creature soon recovered.

"Don't worry, big fella," Gale-Force assured the guardian. "I'll bring the egg back. I *promise*."

Now to take care of Rockquar, the superheroine thought as she focused on Geosapien king's lair and quickly clicked the heels of her magic silver boots three times. Soon, she was transported to her desired destination in an instant.

Upon seeing Rockquar, Gale-Force quickly brought out the Egg of Evoldus and thrust it toward the King of the Geosapiens, who flinched before it.

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"NO," the fearful Rockquar exclaimed. "THE EGG OF EVOLDUS!"

"YES, ROCKQUAR" Gale-Force told the Geosapien King, who cowered before its glowing radiation. "THE *ONE OBJECT* WHICH CAN NEUTRALIZE YOUR POWERS OF STONE MAGIC!"

"NOOOO!!" Rockquar screamed.

"And now, if you'll excuse me," the superheroine told Rockquar. "I'm going to free your victims!"

Gale-Force headed for the glowing ornaments, but she stopped midway and looked back.

"And if you try to stop me again," the superheroine warned. "I will expose you to the Egg again!"

Gale-Force continued her advancement toward the glowing ornaments. Briefly setting down the Egg of Evoldus, the superheroine quickly grabbed one of the ornaments and, using the Scarecrow's intelligence, figured out how to release the explorers' trapped souls and released the first one: Malcolm Masterson.

"I - I'M FREE," the overjoyed Masterson exclaimed. "FREE!"

Gale-Force quickly grabbed the Egg of Evoldus from where she had briefly placed it and handed it to the explorer she had just freed.

"Take this, Mr. Masterson," the superheroine told Masterson. "Go over to the one who captured you and hold it in front of him while I free the rest of your colleagues."

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With the Egg of Evoldus in his hand, the freed explorer walked toward the Geosapien King and exposed him to the Egg.

At the same time, Gale-Force quickly freed the rest of the explorers' souls from their ornament prisons. Blake Bentley, Eric Wallace, Henry Norvell, Jane Owens, Andrea Barnett, and Carter Jones reunited with Masterson.

The superheroine walked toward Masterson, who was still holding the Egg of Evoldus.

"Thanks, Mr. Masterson. I'll take it from here," she told him as she held out her hand.

Masterson gave the Egg back to her.

Gale-Force looked up.

"Glinda," she called out.

Soon, the explorers found themselves encased in magic bubbles.

"What in the world?" Bentley asked.

"What's happening?" Owens asked.

"It's okay, folks," Gale-Force assured them. "Those bubbles are *completely harmless*. They'll take you out of this cave - - and to safety."

True to the superheroine's word, the bubbles were soon transporting the explorers out of the cave.

With the explorers gone and safe, Gale-Force visualized the aerie on Mount Evoldus in the realm of Langwideria and clicked the heels of her magic silver boots three times.

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In an instant, the superheroine was at her desired destination facing the roc-like creature.

"See?" Gale-Force said as she showed the Egg to the guardian. "I'm back with your Egg."

"And I'm returning it to you," the superheroine said as she gently placed the Egg back in the nest.

"I have kept my word," Gale-Force assured the guardian, who smiled at her.

Visualizing Glinda's realm, the superheroine clicked the heels of her magic silver boots three times. In an instant, she was at her destination.

"Well done, Gale-Force," Glinda told her champion.

"Thank you, Glinda," the superheroine said before visualizing the outside of her home in Kansas City, Missouri and clicking her heels three times.

Upon arriving at her destination in an instant, Gale-Force went to a secluded spot where she focused on her desire to assume her civilian identity and clicked the heels of her magic silver boots once.

"WHOOSH!" A magic cyclone rose up around her, transforming her into Dorothy.

With the transformation complete, the 15-year-old girl entered her house where she was greeted by her mother, who was watching the news.

"Dorothy, how was school today?" Mrs. Donaldson asked.

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"This just in," the TV anchorman announced. "Malcolm Masterson, Blake Bentley, Eric Wallace, Henry Norvell, Jane Owens, Andrea Barnett, and Carter Jones, who had been missing for ten days, have just been found and rescued. They say that the superheroine, Gale-Force rescued them."

"One of our reporters is on the scene talking to the freed explorers," the TV anchorman added.

"It's true," Malcolm Masterson told the reporter who was interviewing him. "My fellow explorers and I owe her our lives."

"God bless you, Gale-Force," Jane Owens added.

A smile formed on Dorothy's face, which was noticed by her mother.

"My, you seem happy," Mrs. Donaldson told her daughter.

"Well, I just had a pretty good day, today," a smiling Dorothy responded.

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