

Gale-Force #7 - "The Rage and the Fury"

Written by Steven Bland

"What do you mean, you have a plan?" Melinda asked Singra.

"I will put Glinda into a 100-year sleep while you go to the Ruby Caverns to get the rubies you will use to create new vambraces for your disciple Ruby Rage," Singra answered.

"But, what about Gale-Force?" Melinda asked.

Singra got out a glowing crystal.

"This crystal can confer upon a possible candidate the powers of some of the meanest villains and creatures of Oz," Singra replied. "That candidate will receive Ugu, the Shoemaker's Tactical Analysis and Teleportation Abilities, Crunch's Organic Stone Mimicry, Superhuman Strength, and Size Enhancement, a Kalidah's Enhanced Strength, Speed, Endurance, Durability, and Senses, and the Weather Manipulation of the Wicked Witch of the East."

"Have you found that candidate yet?" Melinda asked.

"No," Singra replied. "But, she *is* out there *somewhere*."

"I will look for her after I put Glinda in her century-long slumber," she added before teleporting to Glinda's realm.

In an instant, Singra materialized there and was soon face-to-face with Glinda.

"SINGRA," Glinda exclaimed. "WHAT IS THE *MEANING* OF THIS?!"

Singra quickly put Glinda under the sleep-inducing spell. With Glinda asleep, Singra returned to Melinda's realm and to Melinda herself.

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"It is done," Singra told Melinda. "Glinda has been put into her 100-year sleep."

"Excellent! Now I will assume her guise," Melinda said as she did so.

"I will head for the Ruby Caverns," the disguised Melinda said.

"And I will look for my candidate," Singra said as she started peering into her crystal ball. As she did so, the disguised Melinda teleported away. Singra's crystal ball showed her Kansas City, Missouri.

"All Available Units! Robbery in progress at the Diamond and Gold Exchange at 6443 North Cosby Avenue," the police band radio for the Kansas City police department reported.

Police cars arrived at the Diamond and Gold Exchange where three female criminals fled the building with stolen jewels and gold. The cops got out of their cars immediately. Unbeknownst to everyone, a small group of rats were spying on them.

"There they are! The Dark Orchid Gang! We've got 'em this time," one cop told another.

Soon, the cops got in the gang's way.

"STOP IN THE NAME OF THE LAW," one of the cops shouted.

"Not tonight, pigs," Hadley Dillinger, the dark-haired leader of the Dark Orchid gang said as she and her fellow Orchids knocked the cops unconscious with their cases of stolen jewels and gold.

"C'mon, Lindsay and Britney! Move it!"

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"We're right behind you, Hadley," Lindsay Lucas, the red-haired member of the gang said.

All three members of the Dark Orchid Gang ran to their getaway car as fast as they could.

The three ladies got to their car and hopped in with Hadley sitting in the driver's seat, Lindsay in the seat next to Hadley, and Britney Simone, the blond member of the gang in the backseat.

"YES," Hadley, Lindsay, and Britney exclaimed jubilantly in unison as they high-fived each other.

"We did it," Lindsay crowed. "Now let's get *outta* here!"

As Hadley was about to step on the accelerator, Gale-Force materialized in the path of the gang leader's car.

"Not so fast, ladies," the superheroine said.

"GALE-FORCE," Britney and Lindsay screamed in unison.

"AND I'M GONNA RUN HER DOWN," Hadley exclaimed as she floored the accelerator.

Gale-Force quickly converted her body to organic tin at the last second. The gang's car ran into her, but the front of the vehicle was damaged, while the superheroine was not.

The Dark Orchids got out of their car and immediately drew their guns to fire at Gale-Force.

"LET HER *HAVE* IT, GIRLS," Hadley told her associates. All three of the Dark Orchids fired their guns at the superheroine's tin body, but the bullet bounced off.

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Gale-Force quickly seized their guns and crushed them in her hands. The Dark Orchids panicked.

"LET'S *CHEESE* IT," Hadley told her associates before they all ran off.

They won't get far, Gale-Force thought as she resumed her normal form. Clicking the heels of her Magic Silver Boots twice, the superheroine summoned a cyclone, which she directed to go after the Dark Orchid Gang.

The cyclone caught up to the Dark Orchids, sucked up all three of them, and carried them back to the scene of the crime.

"GET US *OUT OF HERE*," Hadley screamed.

"You got it," Gale-Force said as she clicked her heels twice, causing the cyclone to disappear and release the Dark Orchids.

"Hadley Dillinger, Lindsay Lucas, and Britney Simone, the Dark Orchid Gang," one of the officers said.

"And they're ready for pruning," Gale-Force told the officers.

"I'LL *GET YOU*, GALE-FORCE," Hadley shouted at the superheroine. "I'LL GET YOU IF IT'S THE *LAST THING* I DO!"

"YEAH, YOU *TELL 'ER*, HADLEY," Lindsay and Britney added in unison.

"You have the right to remain silent," one officer said as he handcuffed Hadley.

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"Anything you say *can*, and *will* be used against you in a court of law," a second officer said as he handcuffed Lindsay.

"You have a right to a lawyer and have that lawyer present during any questioning," a third officer said as he handcuffed Britney. "If you can't afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you if you so desire."

After each member of the Dark Orchid Gang was escorted into a separate police car. The cars drove off, while, in another part of the city, the small group of spy rats stealthily left the scene in response to cybernetic commands.

Unbeknownst to everyone, the Dark Orchids were secretly watched by Singra via her crystal ball.

Yes, Singra said. This woman, Hadley Dillinger, the leader of this gang of female wrongdoers, is the perfect candidate.

Meanwhile, the disguised Melinda arrived at the Ruby Caverns, which were guarded by two sentries.

"Hello," she told the guards. "May I enter?"

"Of course, Glinda," one of the sentries answered. The doors to the caverns opened and the disguised Melinda entered through them.

"Thank you," she said to them.

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Once the doors closed behind her, the disguised Melinda smiled an evil smile.

She wasted no time picking out the six different rubies she sought. Soon, she collected them all: the brownish-red ruby, the pink-red ruby, the pink ruby, the bright red ruby, the purplish-red ruby, and the dark red ruby.

Once I enchant and improve each of these rubies and place them in new vambraces, the disguised Melinda thought. Ruby Rage will live again, and this time she shall triumph over Gale-Force

Later that night, Gale-Force reappeared at the outside of her house.

Being able to teleport instantly to anywhere I wish to go is a *great* help, the superheroine thought. Since it's a school night, I'd better change back before I go inside.

Focusing on her desire to return to her alter ego, Gale-Force clicked her heels once.

"WHOOSH!" A magic cyclone rose up around her and transformed her back into Dorothy Donaldson, who quickly went inside her house.

Meanwhile, at the Jackson County Detention Center, a guard escorted the Dark Orchids through the prison. Unbeknownst to them, another group of small rats, from a hidden area, stealthily followed the criminals in order to spy on them.

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"Well, *well!* After all these months, we've *finally* caught you, ladies! Especially *you*, Hadley! You're wanted for murder in three states," the guard told the Dark Orchids as they arrived at a cell reserved for the three criminals.

"*You* didn't catch us, bozo! *Gale-Force* did," Hadley snarled.

"Yeah, yeah. *Whatever*," the guard said as he uncuffed the Dark Orchids one at a time. "Get used to this cell, ladies. You'll be here for a very long time! Twenty years to be exact!"

"Now, get inside," the guard said as he ushered Hadley, Britney, and Lindsay inside their cell. "All of you."

Once the Dark Orchids were inside, the guard closed the gate behind them and locked it.

"And, please, make yourselves comfortable," the guard said before leaving them.

One of the rats quickly and stealthily followed the female criminals into their cell. Once inside, the rat quickly headed for the underside of the bed and hid there.

Elsewhere, Melinda reappeared in her own realm where Singra waited for her. Melinda discarded her disguise.

"Did you get the rubies you sought?" Singra asked.

"Yes," Melinda answered. "And I enchanted them to make them *more powerful* than ever. All I have to do is put them in the new vambraces which I have crafted for Ruby Rage."

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Melinda took the rubies with her into a room which had the new vambraces. She quickly placed each ruby inside its housing on each of the vambraces. Soon, she was done.

Shortly, Melinda cast a spell seeking out Elmyra Hamel.

In an instant, Elmyra Hamel magically appeared in front of Melinda.

"Hello, Elmyra," Melinda said.

"I have a couple of presents for you," Melinda said as she presented the new ruby vambraces to Elmyra, who soon smiled an evil smile.

Elmyra donned the new vambraces and she was once again transformed into Ruby Rage, who was now garbed in a dark red leather ensemble with vest, pants, and boots..

"YEESSSS," exclaimed Ruby Rage as she smiled an evil smile. "I HAVE ALL OF MY POWERS BACK!"

"And *all* of your powers are now *far greater*," Melinda said. "For example, the dark-red ruby not only clears and improves your mind, it also allows you to clear and improve the minds of *other people* as well!"

"Sweet," Ruby Rage said with an evil smile.

"Now, follow me," Melinda told Ruby Rage. They soon rejoined Singra.

"I see you've found your disciple," Singra said.

"Yes," Melinda said. "Have you found *your* candidate, yet?"

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"Yes," Singra replied. "Her name is Hadley Dillinger. She is a gang member who was most recently captured by Gale-Force, earlier. She is currently held at a place called the Jackson County Detention Center."

"I will have her brought to you," Melinda said as she cast a seeking spell for Hadley Dillinger.

Soon, Melinda's magic bubble headed for the Jackson County Detention Center and homed in on the cell occupied by Hadley, Britney, and Lindsay.

The Dark Orchids were stunned by what they saw.

"I-It's a giant floating bubble," Britney said.

"What's it doing here?" Lindsay asked as the magic bubble moved closer to Hadley.

"I don't know, but it looks like it's after me," Hadley replied. Engulfing Hadley, the magic bubble flew off with her, leaving Lindsay and Britney behind and bewildered. Under the bed, the rat, which had been watching the whole thing stealthily, relayed the information to its mistress via cybernetic communication.

The bubble transported Hadley to Melinda's realm, where the female criminal was greeted by Singra, Ruby Rage, and Melinda herself.

"Who's she? What's she doing here?" Ruby Rage asked Melinda.

"She's our ally," Melinda answered. "Now, be quiet and listen."

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"Greetings, Hadley Dillinger," Singra said. "I am Singra."

"I am Ruby Rage," Ruby Rage said.

"And I am Melinda," Melinda said. "I am the one who brought you here for Singra to see."

"You wanted to see me?" Hadley asked. "About what?"

"I heard about your interaction with Gale-Force earlier," Singra said. "And that she sent you to prison."

"I'd really like to get even with that bimbo," Hadley replied. "If it wasn't for those blasted *powers* of hers, I'd take her out in a *heartbeat!*"

"I can give you the power to take on Gale-Force," Singra said with an evil smile.

"Really? *How?*" A disbelieving Hadley asked.

Singra presented her glowing crystal to Hadley.

"All you have to do is touch this crystal," Singra informed the female criminal. "And you will gain the power to destroy Gale-Force."

"Sounds good to me," a smirking Hadley said as she reached for the crystal and touched it.

Hadley felt the power from the crystal coarsing through her entire body, transforming her. She soon found herself taller and wearing black leather pants and boots, a dark red bustier, a black leather jacket with rolled up sleeves, a choker with the Oz insignia on the front, and spiked wrist bands.

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"You now possess Ugu the Shoemaker's Tactical Analysis and Teleportation Abilities, Crunch's Organic Stone Mimicry, Superhuman Strength, and Size Enhancement, the Kalidah's Enhanced Strength, Speed, Endurance, Durability, and Senses, and the Weather Manipulation of the Wicked Witch of the East," Singra told the transformed Hadley.

"How do you feel, Hadley?" Singra asked.

"Great," the transformed Hadley replied. "But I'm gonna need a *new name* to go with my *new look and powers*! You can call me - - *DARK FURY!*"

"Dark Fury, huh?" Ruby Rage asked. "What say we take on Gale-Force, together?"

"All in good time," Singra told her.

"Yes, we need a plan," Dark Fury said. "And with the Tactical Analysis of Ugu, the Shoemaker, I just came up with one."

"And the first part of my plan is for us to go to the Pentagon," she told Ruby Rage.

Focusing on their intended destination, Dark Fury, using Ugu's Teleportation Abilities, and Ruby Rage, slamming her vambraces together, disappear from Melinda's realm.

Later, at her home in Kansas City, Dorothy Donaldson received a call on her cell phone and answered it. The call was from her new friend and ally, Piper Hamlin.

"Hello, Piper," Dorothy said.

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"Hi, Dorothy," Piper said over the phone. "Great job in stopping the Dark Orchid Gang earlier. I had all the rats in the city keep an eye on them so that I could keep tabs on them and stop them."

"So, you basically had *all* those rats serving as your spies and your own personal network?"

Dorothy asked.

"Yeah," Piper responded over the phone. "It was an idea I had just come up with to help me in my career as the Mouse Queen."

"Very ingenious," an impressed Dorothy said.

"I thought so," Piper responded with a smile. "The Dark Orchids have a way of breaking out of every jail they've been in, so I had one of the rats that were at the Jackson County Detention Center go inside their new cell to spy on them and notify me if, or most likely, *when* they would break out."

"The rat that was inside the cell saw Hadley Dillinger, the gang's leader, being engulfed in a weird magic bubble and spirited off, leaving behind her two accomplices, Lindsay and Britney," Piper added.

Hadley Dillinger - - carried off by a magic bubble? Dorothy thought.

"I'll look into this, Piper," Dorothy said. "And thanks."

Dorothy hung up and set the phone down.

Focusing on her benefactors, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, the Lion, and Locasta Tattypoo, she clicked her heels once.

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

Wishing to be near the Jackson County Detention Center building, the superheroine clicked the heels of her magic silver boots three times and she was transported there in an instant.

Upon entering the detention center, Gale-Force used the Lion's enhanced senses to find Hadley's accomplices, Britney and Lindsay. And find them, she did.

"GALE-FORCE," Britney and Lindsay exclaimed.

"Yes," the superheroine said. "And I heard about what had happened."

"About a giant magic bubble coming to our cell and taking only Hadley?" Lindsay asked.

"And leaving me and Lindsay behind?" Britney asked.

"Yes," Gale-Force answered.

"Where do you think that magic bubble came from?" Lindsay asked.

A giant magic bubble coming for someone and whisking them away from where they are seems to be something that Glinda, or her evil twin Melinda, would be capable of, Gale-Force thought.

Wishing to be in Glinda's realm, Gale-Force clicked the heels of her magic silver boots three times. She was transported to her desired destination in an instant.

Once she arrived, Gale-Force found Glinda in a coma and went to her.

"Glinda! Glinda," the superheroine called out as she attempted to rouse her mentor. Glinda was still asleep.

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"She can't hear you, Gale-Force," Singra's voice said from behind the superheroine.

Gale-Force turned around and saw Singra and Melinda.

"SINGRA," the superheroine exclaimed. "SO *YOU'RE* BEHIND THIS!"

Gale-Force then turned her attention to Melinda.

"AND *YOU* MUST BE BEHIND HADLEY DILLINGER'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON," the superheroine exclaimed. "BUT I'LL CAPTURE HER AGAIN! AND *THIS TIME*, I WILL MAKE SURE SHE *STAYS* IN PRISON - - *FOR KEEPS!*"

"Would you like to know where Hadley is right now?" Singra slyly asked.

"What are you talking about?" Gale-Force asked.

Singra presented her crystal ball which showed Dark Fury and Ruby Rage at the Pentagon, facing soldiers.

Hadley's been transformed, Gale-Force thought. And Elmyra Hamel's back as Ruby Rage. *Both* of them are at the Pentagon and up to no good! I've got to get there and stop them!

Wishing to be at the Pentagon and clicking the heels of her magic silver boots three times, Gale-Force teleported to her desired destination and soon found Dark Fury and Ruby Rage, who was bathing the armed soldiers with a ray from her dark-red ruby.

"RUBY RAGE," Gale-Force exclaimed.

"GALE-FORCE," Ruby Rage exclaimed as she stopped the ray from her dark-red ruby. "I *KNEW* WE WOULD CROSS PATHS AGAIN, EVENTUALLY! BUT, NOT *RIGHT NOW!*"

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"ALL RIGHT, BOYS," Ruby Rage commanded the entranced soldiers. "*SHOOT HER!*"

Gale-Force immediately converted her body to organic tin at the last second and the fired bullets bounced harmlessly off her.

"HEY, GALE-FORCE," Dark Fury exclaimed, attracting the superheroine's attention.

"Hadley, right?" Gale-Force asked.

"You're not dealing with Hadley Dillinger anymore," Dark Fury said.

"YOU'RE DEALING WITH *DARK FURY*," she said as she summoned a lightning bolt to strike the superheroine. Gale-Force was unfazed by the electrical blast.

"Hate to break it to you, DF," the superheroine said. "But, tin conducts electricity!"

Gale-Force sent the electrical energy right back at Dark Fury, staggering and shocking her.

"GYAAAHHHH!" Dark Fury screamed.

"See what I mean?" The superheroine asked

Dark Fury soon recovered.

"I HAVE *OTHER POWERS*, GALE-FORCE," she exclaimed as she converted her body to stone and then increased her size. "LIKE THE ORGANIC STONE MIMICRY, SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, AND SIZE ENHANCEMENT OF CRUNCH!"

Shocked, Gale-Force reverted back to human form.

Dark Fury threw pounding punches at Gale-Force who managed to use the Lion's speed and agility to barely avoid them.

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However, Ruby Rage, ambushed the superheroine and struck her from behind.

"UNNGGHH!" Gale-Force cried out. Unconscious, she fell to the floor.

"Gale-Force no longer stands in our way," Ruby Rage said. "She is unconscious!"

"BAH," Dark Fury said. "IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN *ME* WHO LANDED THE FINAL BLOW! AND I WOULD HAVE *KILLED* HER!"

"But, I can rectify that now," she added.

"Later," Ruby Rage said. "We have an entire Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps to corrupt and control!"

"By the time Gale-Force regains consciousness, it will be *too late* for her to do *anything* about it," she added. "She will despair and feel that there is *nothing* to live for! She will soon wish for her *death!*"

"And I will grant you, Dark Fury, the honor of granting her that wish," Ruby Rage concluded.

Dark Fury smiled an evil smile as she and Ruby Rage left behind an unconscious Gale-Force.

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