

Arcana Magi Fifth World - Part 1

by H-M Brown

“Our world needs your help, representatives of the Five Pillars.” A young soft voice said to the four bright lights that fell through the darkness with the silhouette of curled individuals inside each. As the four flew beside each other, they shared their stories and got to know one another. Soon they learned from the voice what was happening.

“All of our worlds are connected. Each one linked with a World Pillar whom each of you represent, Genbu, Seiryu, Byakko, and Suzaku. The one who stands center to them all named Kōryū, has been captured by the Magi, Desire. She controls the Nightmare Dragon who defeated Kōryū. Do not worry, you will all be with your weapons when you arrive, and you will not fight alone. Miranda Anyres, the Pillar of Kōryū, will be arriving at your location to join you on your quest. I thank you all for your help.”

The descent lasted awhile when the darkness formed into clouds. A large hole parted the dark clouds with land far below. All four lights emerged out of the sky like shooting stars, heading straight for the grassy plains. On top of a hill there stood Miranda, carrying a map and compass in hand. She wore a one piece black skirt, a pair of long black gloves, black knee high boots, and black hooded cape. She pulled the hood back revealing her long jet black hair and sunflower yellow pupils. There was a smile on her face, the excitement gripped her heart. She slid down the hill ready to greet the arrivals when the air shook. Miranda watched with her mouth gaped open as a beam of black light struck the four.

“NO!” She dropped to her knees, sadness overtook her. Miranda looked up to the dark clouds and noticed a strange barrier. It unleashed a positive energy that she felt resonate in the air. “Is it her?”

Miranda watched the black light turn to four crystal spheres encasing the four visitors and a sonic boom dispersed them in four directions across the land. One of them flew low over Miranda heading off in the distance. Miranda climbed the hill but lost sight off the crystal sphere.

"That felt like Madam Mayweather's mana in the sky." Miranda heart raced. "Did she save them?"

Miranda looked at the map and compass glowing bright. She unfolded the map showing the four locations of the visitors. Her eyes grew wide,

"They're... they're okay." Miranda hugged the map for a moment, and looked at it. The closet one was a nearby town. "She's outside Renfield, it's a day away. The Pillar of Suzaku. Please wait for me."

* * *

The sun rose over the town of Renfield, Miranda walked through the market. It was very quiet, very few people out, but the stores and stands were open for the day. However there was heavy guard activity. It made her nervous. One of the guards operated a two legged machine as tall as the second floor of the building. She noticed a dome made of magic covering the pilot and the cockpit. It kept walking by ignoring her.

"Desire's soldiers. They're looking for her." Miranda read the map, and with the swipe of her fingers, it zoomed in on the town showing a more detailed look of the area. The light located the Pillar of Suzaku the other side of town, stationary. "They haven't found her yet. I hope."

Miranda arrived at the farm and found soldiers everywhere. They were guarding the area, making people passing by to move along. She walked acting like a passerby watching the soldiers analyze a large crystal sphere. Miranda tried to focus her eyes to see who was inside, but she was pulled to the side.

"Keep moving kid." The guard said with a frightening look.

"Yes sir." Miranda kept moving with her face forward but her eyes trained at the activity on the farm. Miranda watched the soldiers prepare to transport the crystal sphere and she noticed a

canvas covering coach carriage moving backwards toward them. Miranda crouch walked her way towards the coach carriage. Her small frame hid her well behind the two legged machines. She crawled underneath the coach carriage as the guard faced the crystal, and she pulled herself between the beams of the vehicle. Unfortunately, she had to tolerate the stench of the. After she felt the guards loading up the crystal, she saw the two legged machines line up along the side and horses running to the front. It was time.

Miranda rode with the caravan for a very long time. She looked at the map. She took out the map to check on the others and found none have moved yet. Looking at her current location, she realized she was moving further away from the other crystals, she feared it may take weeks if not days if she stays riding with them.

"I have to think of something." Miranda looked left and right but only saw grassy fields. There was no opening to make a move when she looked straight up at the floor board of the coach carriage. She smiled. "I hope this works."

While maintaining her balance, Miranda placed her right on the coach carriages floor board. Her magic circle appeared, with the shapes of four small rune inscribed circles connected by lines toward a fifth rune inscribed circle in the center. She grew it just a little large to fit her body and a white mist covered her body.

"Pierce." Miranda said, casting the spell. The circle sawed the wood separating it from the floor boards. She fumbled the wood at first, but she was able to push up inside the coach carriage to keep it from falling out. Miranda slid her way inside, using the crystal as hiding spot. She saw there was no one inside and the opening was covered. Miranda stood in front of the crystal and saw a girl floating inside curled like a ball but it was too foggy to tell who it was. She placed her hand on the surface sensing the mana. "Madam Mayweather, it was you."

Miranda felt compelled to close her eyes. Her mana seeped out of the palm of her hands, spreading across the surface. The sound of cracking pierced her ears. Suddenly, the crystal collapsed into dust and the girl floated gently onto the floor board. She was dressed in a

t-shirt, track shorts, knee length socks with sneakers, goggles, and gloves with a bracelet on her left wrist.

"Alysia Morales?" Miranda said crawling up to the moaning girl. She noticed the teal and white misty wings on Alysia's back glowing bright. Alysia lifted up her head moving her white and light blue hair away from her teal eyes and focused her vision.

"You're Miranda." Alysia said with a monotone voice that made Miranda shiver.

"Y... yes." Miranda shook her head and helped Alysia up. "Can you move? We have to go."

"Just give me a second, my head hurts." Alysia said pressing her hand on her forehead.

"Okay." Miranda walked over to the hole she made and peeked outside. Upside down she could see that the machines are still walking beside them. She pulled herself up as Alysia knelt next to her.

"Is this the way out?"

"This is how I got in, but we're still moving. They'll spot us once we drop down."

"I'll make this easier." Alysia raised her left hand up. "Awaken... Saga!"

The bracelet burst into droplets of light gathering around the teal jewel. Saga formed into the winged staff and Alysia grabbed it. The carriage stopped as the sound of startled horses got everyone's attention. Alysia raised Saga up and white mist surrounded the staff. A spark of fire lit and it grew larger. Miranda crouched as the flames burned the carriage's canopy exposing them to the soldiers.

"SHE'S FREE!" A soldier said as the horses ran off making the riders fall. The soldiers riding the machines faced Alysia with a generic magic circle of triangles and runes aimed at the girls. The pilots looked up as they watched the fire grow even large, creating intense levels of heat inside the machines.

Miranda looked at herself and realized she was not affected by flames. Looking up at Alysia's cold face, she was scared, but immediately she felt warmth in her heart; warmth from the feathers

of a bird assuring her that she is safe with Alysia. Miranda watched the soldiers jump out of the machines and all of them ran away.

Alysia leaned the giant fireball on all but two machines, melting them into liquid. She made the ball burst into the air letting the oxygen eat it up. She helped Miranda to her feet.

"Are you okay?" Alysia said.

"Yes." Miranda said. "That was amazing. You didn't even call out the spell."

"If I did it would be flying in the air and hurt someone."

"Oh." Miranda stepped aside and Alysia jumped off the carriage. Miranda followed and they both stood before the machines. "I don't know what they are."

"In my world we call mana powered machines Magi Tech. But we don't have machines that walk."

"I see." Miranda pressed her hands on the metal leg. "I assume we are going to ride these then."

"Yes." Alysia stood before Miranda. "We're going to need to find the others."

"Here." Miranda took out the map.

"We'll go get her next." Alysia stared at it and pointed to one of the lights further away.

"The Pillar of Byakko? But she's three days away. The Pillar of Seiryu is closer." Miranda faced Alysia as the Sentinel looked up at the machines

"True, but we're going to need extra fire power now that we're fighting machines." Alysia and Miranda looked up at the two machines together. "I hope you have a license to drive."

"Drive?"

"WOOW!" Miranda smiled as the wind blew her hair driving the machine across the land. She looked over at Alysia and noticed a light smile on her face. Together, they ran across the plains toward the forest. Within the forest they walked in a straight line where sloths with wings flew and long neck lizards ate bugs. Alysia told Miranda about her life and what Avalon Tech had done to her. Miranda was at a loss for words at how cruel the people in Alysia's

world can be. They followed the river along the forest and crossed a bridge. They exited the forest as night fell and they both stopped for the night.

"I don't believe it." Miranda said looking at the map. "We'll make it there tomorrow."

"Ember." Alysia said casting her spell to start a campfire. "Any unusual movements?"

"No. Everyone is still in place, but I'm worried they'll be found by the time we get there."

Gathered at the campfire, Miranda placed dried meat over the fire and handed Alysia a cup of water.

"I lived in Thyria Village. Desire sent her soldiers and captured everyone including my parents and little sister. I was one of a few who escaped. We traveled like nomads until we met Madam Mayweather. She took me in and trained me in the magical arts. I chose to become the Pillar of Kōryū in the hope of fighting Desire and rescue my family, but then..."

Miranda took a deep breath.

"...I found out that she turned my family into crystal statues, along with the rest of village and three others. One hundred and twelve total. Men women, and children. Even babies."

Alysia's eyes grew wide. "Why?"

"Energy. She's using them draw in the energy for the sun and moon to use as mana to cast her spells. That's why she was able to attack you when you entered. Very few magi on Merydia have to power to make their spell reach far. Madam Mayweather is one of the others."

"And nobody tried to stop her?"

"All of the villages are within her borders, she can do as she wished with her subjects so long as she doesn't attack the other kingdoms. Now, she is making her move on them."

Alysia looked at the machines and it sunk in how they are powered.

"I'm sorry Miranda."

"About what?"

"The machines we're using. I think..." Alysia lowered her head.
"I think they are powered by the people Desire captured."

"You mean like my family." Miranda looked up at the machines, the thought sunk in. "It... it does make sense."

Miranda cried out loud and Alysia hugged her.

* * *

The next day, Miranda and Alysia rode the machines to the mountains where the map pointed to the next Pillar. Alysia looked at Miranda and sense a determination from her. Together they walked toward a path leading up through a pass. A loud roar echoed through the pass, rattling the girl's ears.

"What is that?"

"Nightmare Dragon." Miranda read the map and led Alysia forward. "This way."

They arrived at the mouth of very large cave. Alysia inspected the walls and saw how smooth they are. It was as though a rock rammed through it. Alysia took the point and used Saga as a lantern shining ahead. It was a long walk. The roar of the Nightmare Dragon reached inside. They found the crystal, it was really big. Alysia aimed Saga's light and there was a girl inside with something big behind her.

"We'll do this together." Alysia said.

"Okay." Miranda said.

The girls got off the machines and placed their hands on the crystal. They closed their eyes as it shattered in pieces. The freed girl floated to the ground with Saga's light aimed at her. She wore jeans shorts and tank top shirt with sneakers. She had hair clips on that reminded Alysia of the ones Avalon Tech made her wear.

"Akane wake up." Miranda said shaking the girl.

"Uh..." Akane opened her eyes and looked up at the girls.

"A...Alysia? You're Miranda I hear about."

"Right." Miranda smiled.

"So this is Suzaku." Alysia said shining the light at the giant Golem.

"Yes." Akane said as the sound of a loud thump outside the cave

got all of their attention.

"It's the Nightmare Dragon." Miranda said.

"Okay girls," Akane said walking toward a large metal leg. "step aside so I can take care of this."

Outside, a group of soldiers piloting their machines watched a large black dragon crawl its way into the cave. The pilots laughed as they watched when suddenly, the dragon stopped. It bounced out of the tunnel holding its snout whimpering in pain. A large metal hand grabbed the edge of the cave. A large teal and white robot stepped out standing three floors tall. It made the soldiers machines look like kids standing before an adult.

Miranda and Alysia stepped out and cast spells at the soldiers as Akane's Golem charged the dragon. The entire area exploded with fire spells and light spells cast by girls. The soldiers fired beams of light from their magic circles and deflected the girls attack.

Akane cast her Spears of Light on the Nightmare Dragon. The spell shocked the soldiers. They never saw anything like it before. The girls remained relentless with their assault as Akane unsheathed Sabre from Suzaku's arm. The Nightmare Dragon hissed moving to the side unsure of what Akane was going to do. It noticed Miranda and Alysia created an opening through the pass and they started to escape. Its throat glowed green but Akane stabbed the creature in the side. The Nightmare Dragon lurched back, breathing its green flame in a sweep toward all the soldiers around them. The soldiers screamed as the green flames x-rayed their bodies and they collapsed into dust with the machines melting.

Akane watched in horror at the attack but was pushed back by the Nightmare Dragon. She swung the Sabre at the creature but it dodged and flew away. Akane made her magic circle appear before the Golem but the dragon was out of range. Inside the cockpit, Akane kicked in frustration and saw the monitor read "High Level Radiation".

Outside of the mountain, Miranda and Alysia watched the Nightmare Dragon fly away. They cheered in excitement as Suzaku walked up to them. The girls looked up at the Golem.

"Who's next Miranda?"

"Let's see." Miranda read the map. "The Pillar of Genbu-"

"Oh no, not her." Alysia and Akane said together.

"What's wrong? She's in the jungle east. Just four days on foot from here."

"Two days riding the Golems?" Alysia said to Akane.

"Golems?" Miranda said.

"Sounds about right." Akane said leading the girls. "Let's go."

"Seriously, what's wrong with her?"

* * *

The girls arrived at the jungle. Miranda looked at the map and noticed something odd about. The light inside is moving around.

"I think she's free."

"Really?" Akane said in the cockpit adjusting the monitor.

"She's moving around in a zig zag."

"You think they found her." Alysia said.

"No, there are no readings of any Golems or humanoid life."

"Then let's go get her."

Deep inside, everyone passed by plants the looked up and followed their movements. Trees swatted away a long neck bird. Car sized cats that trailed them but attacked an antlered creature. As some of the vines moved aside creating a path for the pilots, Akane continued her story about fighting the baby dragon in Avalon City to Miranda. Miranda's eyes were wide in gaze as she listened. The jungle was so alive that it made Alysia wondered something.

"Do you think this is why the soldiers' haven't explored this area yet?"

"Most likely." Miranda said. "I really haven't traveled much. I spent most of time hidden away from Desire."

"Just keep your magic shields up." Akane said. "and you'll both be fine."

"Okay." Miranda and Alysia said.

The sun was at its peak and the jungle created heavy moisture that made everyone sweat. The oxygen was very strong and pure. It was almost as though it was cleansing the lungs. Miranda looked at

the map and found themselves in the spot they're would find the Pillar, but she is nowhere to be found.

"She's here somewhere." Miranda said.

Alysia looked up and saw winged creatures fly out of the jungle. The land animals ran and snakes slithered away. Suddenly, a body flew right in front them and slapped on the trunk of the tree.

"Azure?" Alysia said watching the girl landed on hands and feet hissing out at the dense jungle.

Azure's wings stretched out, her cattail raised, the shackles on her wrists, ankles and neck held her in place. The large car sized cats step out into the open growling at Azure. She looked at the tears of her blouse and skirt and roared girlish scream mixed with a dying cat and singing bird. It made the girls tremble in fear. The large cat whimpered walking back into the bushes and Azure calmed down. The shackles allowed her to move again.

"That thing ruined my best outfit." Azure said looking at the tears on her clothes. "They act like they never seen a chimera before."

Azure noticed Miranda and Alysia in the machines and Suzaku standing behind them. With a big smile she waved.

"HIIII! You finally found me!" Azure jumped up and landed on Miranda's Golem. "You must be Miranda."

Azure sat down and examined Miranda's outfit.

"Oh my go I love your outfit. It is so awesome. Just look how you capture that Goth look."

"Goth?"

"Yeah, though you don't look very moody. Unlike her." Azure pointed at Alysia's stoic face. "You guys look like you seen war."

"Well." Alysia said. "We just fought a dragon two days ago."

"Was it the Nightmare Dragon I heard about while I was falling to my impending death through the mysterious and very trigger traumatizing dark vortex the pulled me out of my world and into this?"

Miranda and Alysia nodded very quietly while Akane inside the cockpit winced in annoyance.

"So if the three of us are here with Miranda, that means the last person we have to get..." Azure smiles at Alysia. "...is your twin."

"She is not my twin!" Aysia said with a soft but angry voice as Miranda looked at the map in shock.

"Your voice is so cu-"

"We have to go!" Miranda showed Azure the map. "The Pillar of Seiryu is being moved. I think we can intercept them by the evening if we go through the jungle."

"Let's go." Akane said.

"RESCUE MISSION!" Azure pointed forward and the machines marched on.

"Azure?" Miranda said getting her attention. "How did you get out the Madam Mayweather's crystal spell?"

"Like this." Azure made the shackles glow, forcing her body to strike the Golem. "The Circle of Four are not big fans of imprisonment."

"Amazing."

"Awww, I wish Sora was here, she would flip out on all of these Golems, though I doubt Ciel would like it here. You know we have to this more often."

* * *

Night fell as Azure arrived on foot to a caravan of soldiers and Golems. They both saw the crystal inside a locked cage. She slinked back into the pitch dark jungle while using her night-vision to return to her friends. Azure stood before them and told them what she saw.

"Good work Azure." Akane said. "Here's the plan. I'll be in Suzaku on standby. Alysia you'll take your Golem and stand at point. Miranda, Azure-"

"Why can't we just rush them with our Golems?" Azure said.

"Because we need the key."

"I have to agree with Azure here." Alysia said. "We have Golems that can break the cage."

"I understand that, but we have the jungle as our advantage and if we can rescue her and get back inside here before they know it, we can escape with cover quietly. If we make our presence known,

they will follow us or cut off our escape.”

“Except...” Miranda said. “...we have to get her out of the crystal because it's too big for us to move.”

“I'll take care of that.” Azure said.

“Okay everyone knows what to do?” Akane said and the girls nodded. “Go.”

Miranda and Azure are at the caravan. Miranda's black cloak hid her in the dark patches the light of the campfire never reached while Azure's night vision guided her. Azure crouched walk over to the cage and she sniffed the lock getting it scent. Miranda watched the chimera sniff her way deeper into the camp. Miranda hurried over to the cage watching the area. She placed her hands on the crystal causing it to break into pieces.

“Alysia Perez, wake up.” Miranda said as the Guardian opened her eyes, found herself in her costume and her version of Saga in hand. “I'm Miranda. We're here to get you out.”

“Everyone is here?”

“Yes Alysia.”

“Call me Lys, I don't want to confuse you.”

“Okay.” Miranda said with a smile. “Azure is getting the keys now.”

“Why not just use a spell?”

“Too much noise.”

Azure spotted the keys dangling off the buckle of the guard sitting in front of a campfire and she pointed it at Miranda and Lys. On Miranda's signal, Azure crept to the guard; he moved a little giving pause. Azure's eyes grew wide waiting patiently. The guard relaxed and Azure snatched the keys off the belt. The guard looked at his belt, finding himself alone, he showed panic looking around for the keys.

He entered the tent and Azure hurried to Miranda and Lys waiting for her at the cage. They unlock the door and helped Lys out. The trio ran for the jungle as the guard exited the tent and saw the cage open.

“SHE'S ESCAPED!”

The girls heard the scream and sound of bells ringing. Azure held Miranda and Lys hands guiding them through the darkness. They met up with the other Alysia and all three cling onto the small Golem. They rendezvous with Akane, and Miranda hurried to her Golem taking Azure with her. Together, everyone rode off deeper into the jungle, never looking back into the night.

* * *

"Miranda where are we?" Azure said riding on Miranda's Golem, but she received no answer. Just Miranda's eyes glazed over. "Something is wrong with Miranda."

As Azure tried to snap Miranda out of her shock, the girls arrived at an empty town. There were no people in the homes or stores. Nothing but absolute darkness, not even the moon could give the town life. Miranda's eyes shivered as she led everyone to a house on the hill. She climbed off her Golem and approached the front door. She opened it and turned to everyone.

"Welcome to my home."

Inside Miranda finished giving them a tour of where the bedrooms and bathrooms are. The girls sat around a table keeping the candles' light low as they served each other water and food. They all had been quiet due to the overwhelming need to satisfy their hunger. Their long travel to find each other yielded exhaustion and the want to go home now has become their train of thought. They understood why they were here, but doubt lingers as to whether they can succeed.

"So what are we going to do?" Lys said.

"I think..." Akane said. "...we should survey the castle Desire lives in. We need to understand the area, who's there, where the people who were crystallized are."

"That's a lot to do." Azure said.

"But she is threatening all of our worlds." Lys said. "Not just this one. Our homes, our friends, and our families. I don't want my family to die."

"Well neither do I." Azure said lowering her head. "But it's just five of us with no army. It's not fair."

"Well there's not much we can do." Akane said. "Miranda said it herself; the kingdoms are not going to fight Desire because everything she is doing is internal."

"I don't know if I can fight." Alysia said to Akane with her monotone voice. "I don't want to kill anyone."

"I know it's difficult but we may have no-."

"I'M NOT A KILLER AKANE!" Alysia got out of her seat and walked away.

Everyone looked at each other knowing full well they do not kill. Lys got up but Azure stopped her with a wink and smile and followed Alysia upstairs. Azure arrived at the bedroom hearing Alysia crying inside the room.

"What do you want?" Alysia said with a soft voice.

"I just..." Azure stopped and dropped her childish voice. "I just want to make sure you're okay."

"You're voice." Alysia faced her in shock at Azure's mature voice.

"Puberty, but it came with what happened to me hear." Azure made her shackles appear and shrugged. "Look I understand how it feels to have a brain fried."

"That's a nice way to put it."

"Sorry." Azure rubbed her forehead. "The problem is you don't want to kill. Okay I get it. That happened to me too."

"It did?"

"Yes." Azure said with a nod. "I didn't mean to stab her. I didn't even know she was human. But I did kill her and it really... is hard."

"I prayed for forgiveness."

"You did huh?" Azure received a nod as a response. "Heh, maybe I give it a try when I get home. You know we can fight without killing people, it looks like Akane and Lys are used to it so why don't leave it to them?"

"That's not fair." Akane said entering the room with Lys and Miranda. "I don't enjoy killing. I only kill dragons because they kill people and are out of control."

"Nor me." Lys said. "I don't enjoy killing either so that's not fair."

"I'm sorry." Azure said.

"We're not just here for us." Lys said. "We're here for Miranda. Right now she lost everything and she has a chance to get it all back. I intend to help her."

"You're right." Azure said.

"We must have looked selfish huh?" Alysia said.

"No." Miranda said behind them all holding a candle. They all turned to her and stood up. "Thank you for helping me."

"Come on," Akane said. "let's go clean up and get some sleep. We'll need all the rest we can get."

"Yeah!" Azure said with a cheerful voice walking out the door. "I could use some of that nice warm bed."

* * *

While the girls were cleaning, Miranda stood outside looking up at the stars. Akane approached her drying her hands.

"Are you okay Miranda?"

"Sort of." She turned around. "I never thought this day would come. People coming to help."

"Well apparently Desire got more than she could handle capturing Kōryū."

"Yeah." Miranda looked at her hands. "I'm actually going to fight Desire. I'm so nervous."

"You're not alone."

"I couldn't help overhearing." Azure said leaning out the window. "Why did she capture Kōryū if she has everything she ever wanted?"

"Careful Azure." Akane said with hands on her hips.

"Wait I want to hear this." Miranda said and listened.

"Okay, so she managed to capture over one hundred people and turned them into crystals, without any resistance from the other kingdoms."

"It's because we're all part of her kingdom."

"But if I was the ruling kingdoms I would be very worried."

"How come?"

"Wouldn't they know that entire villages are imprisoned, just that alone and not what became of them would raise red flags?"

"True, but it's an internal matter, they would not interfere"

without going to... war." Akane said as Lys and Alysia arrived.

"Where are you going with this?"

"So how is it that the kingdoms not know she has these Golems running on sun and moon energy from the citizens she crystallized unless..."

"She took over the kingdoms?" Lys said to Azures' smile. "No way, the kingdoms would have fought her right at this moment. There would be war."

"That is..." Alysia said. "...if she captured something bigger that would give her an advantage over them and stop the war from happening."

"Kōryū!" The girls said together.

"That's right ladies." Azure pointed up to the sky. "She already conquered the world without firing a single shot, and all it took were over one hundred crystallized people and a captured god."

"Once Kōryū was captured," Miranda said. "it automatically made the other Four Pillars respond by sending their champions of their world to here."

"And that..." Akane said. "...is why she attacked us on our descent."

"We are in over our heads." Azure said.

"What are we going to do?" Alysia said and the girls looked down, defeated and in despair as the sound of footprints grew closer.

"We are going win." A young soft voice said that got everyone attention. It was familiar; the girls recognize it as the one who talk them upon their entry. Miranda's eyes welled up in joy as the lantern rose up high exposing a young woman with long white hair and cloak and said her name.

"Madam Mayweather!"

TO BE CONCLUDED...

