

Arcana Magi Fifth World - Part 2

by H-M Brown

Miranda hugged Madam Mayweather as the girls, except Akane, gathered around them. Mayweather found herself overwhelmed by the bombardment of questions that she raised her hand up to quiet them down.

“Okay, one question at a time.”

“How did you find us?” Akane said with arms crossed making the girls turn around.

“With this map I made.” Mayweather reached under her cloak and pulled out a parchment. She unfolded it revealing the map of the world and the four lights all gathered in one spot. She looked at Miranda. “You would think I would let you go on this task without knowing where you would be.”

“You really were watching over us.” Miranda said with a smile.

“Yes.” Mayweather nodded. “I brought some food. You all must be hungry.”

Mayweather led the girls past Akane and Lys looked at her concerned. Akane followed them inside where Mayweather lit up the fireplace providing light to the room. The girls sat around as Akane leaned on the wall watching over them.

“Where were you all this time?” Miranda said.

“I was sending messengers to the kingdoms and gathering the Magi from the lands to fight Desire.”

“Have they replied?”

“No. I don't know what they are planning to do. That is if they haven't locked themselves up in their politics.”

“Politics?” Azure said. “Why don't they just build the armies and rush right in.”

“It's not that easy.” Alysia said with her monotone voice. “When my world learned that magic existed, the countries were making all

kinds of statements. Talking about Magi in the armies, weapons of mass destruction, the U.N. creating resolutions to avoid war, it's a mess right now. All because of me."

"No." Lys said. "It's because of Avalon Tech and what they did to you."

Both girls stared at each other for a moment, almost like a mirror. Mayweather barely could tell who was who, if it were not for the differences in their hair color. She placed her hand on the girl's shoulders to give them comfort.

"Don't worry about the politics." She looked up at the girls. "All of you. Okay?"

The girls nodded and Akane approached them.

"Fine, so how are we going to fight an army?"

"You're not." Mayweather said standing up to Akane. "All you are going to do is free Kōryū."

"That's it?" Akane looked Mayweather right in the eyes.

"Yes." Mayweather walked the room. "Right now, Desire is trying to use Kōryū to succeed. If I overheard you girls correctly, it's to have an advantage over the kingdom. That may be true and could prove disastrous if the kingdoms attack. So all we have to do is free her from Desire. The armies can take care of the rest. For now let's get some rest. It will be a long tomorrow."

"Rest?" Azure said. "No way! I say we have a slumber party."

"Slumber... Party?" Miranda said.

"Yeah, you don't have parties here in Merydia."

"No."

"Really?" Lys said. "This is not the time to have fun."

"Are you kidding me?" Azure crawled to Lys, planting her hands on her shoulders. "We may never get a chance at this. I mean what if after we succeed, we're just sent back to our worlds. No goodbyes, no happy times."

"Well... I don't know."

"I want to try it." Miranda said. "Please Ma'am."

Miranda looked at Mayweather who was confused at the whole thing. She watched Alysia crawl to the girls lightly smiling at Azure

and with smirk she nodded.

"All right!" Azure threw her fist in the air holding up a smart phone. "MUSIC TIME!"

"Wait," Lys said. "let me at least change out of my costume."

"Too late!"

As Azure started up the music on the phone, Akane left the house getting Mayweathers' attention.

"You're not going to... party?"

"I have to get Suzaku charged and ready for tomorrow." Akane looks at the girls messing with Miranda's hair giggling. "Besides, that's not me any more."

"Oh." Mayweather followed Akane outside and they both walked towards Suzaku sitting on the side of the hill. "You're very young."

"I'll be nineteen in two months. I'm long past the kids stuff."

"Such a shame, Azure may be right about you girls having fun right now. It will not be an easy battle."

"Why?"

"Huh." Mayweather saw Akane's eyes burning right her. "Why children?"

"I don't understand."

"I have thinking about this ever since we got here and I want to know why these kids are sent here to fight an adult battle."

"What about you Akane?" Mayweather said crossing her arms. "Didn't you fight dragons since you were a child?"

"That's different. My sister and I were chased by dragons."

Akane resumed walking leading Mayweather toward the Golem. "We were trying to survive."

"So was Alysia." Mayweather and Akane stopped before Suzaku. Taken from her home and tortured. Chased everywhere."

"That is still no the point I am trying to make." Akane opened the chest and the cockpit slid out to Mayweather's amazement. "Each of our worlds has well over a billion adults to choose from, and these 'Pillars' picked children to fight their battles. I'm the only adult in this group, well, other than you."

Mayweather nodded in agreement on that.

“Look, Mayweather...”

“Please call me Karyn, we are adults after all Akane.”

“Karyn, in my world, I keep my sister away from being a dragon because I don't want her to get hurt or worse. She's only fifteen and I want the of her kid years to be happy. I feel dirty expecting these girls to go out fighting and risk their lives.”

“Then why don't you speak up and say something.”

“I don't know. I just... don't know.” Akane leans on the side of Suzaku's steel thigh. “I don't feel young anymore. Partying with kids feels immature. I've... I've never been a kid.”

Akane looked up at the house as her hands shook. She felt Mayweather's hands gently holding them and pulling up. They stared eye to eye as though an understanding is reached.

“Akane,” Mayweather said. “I don't know why the Pillars chose you four specifically. You are absolutely right that should have chosen adults for this. For all we know, perhaps they choose you four not just to only fight Desire and free K?ry?, but to take something back with you this experience of being with each other and Miranda. I have never seen Miranda so happy before. Maybe, the Pillars wanted the five of you to be with each other and find the comfort that none of you could find in your own worlds. Amongst your own family and friends. Maybe we should look at it from that perspective.”

“Maybe.”

“You're the oldest in the group after all, and you care deeply about your sister. Think about what these girls mean to you in that perspective, since you care so much about them fighting Desire.”

Akane watched Mayweather walk back to the house. She turned to Suzaku, sliding her hand on the steel. Thinking about Marisol, she understood that maybe she is what Miranda, Alysia, Azure, and Lys needed. She closed the cockpit and walked back to the house, where the girls peeked out the window giggling. Akane opened the door and the girls jumped out screaming a there. Akane slammed her back to the wall pressing her hand to her chest. The girls laughed at her and Akane stepped outside slamming the door closed.

"Aww." Azure said. "We hurt robot girl's feelings."

"Don't tease her and let her back in." Alysia said and Akane smiled turning the knob of the door open.

* * *

The morning sun pierces the windows of the house, over the girls sleeping in the living room. Mayweather found Akane awake with Alysia in her arms under a blanket. Akane turned to Mayweather with her finger to lip.

"What happened?" Mayweather said with a whisper.

"Alysia woke up in the middle of the night having a panic attack."

"Poor child." Mayweather caressed Alysia's white and light blue hair. "Such monsters in her world."

"It took her an hour to fall back asleep." Akane said unaware of Lys cracking her eyes open to the conversation. "She kept rambling about what they did to her and something about lights. She hasn't let go of me since."

"She looks exhausted." Mayweather walked over to Azure, who is sprawled on the couch. "This one on the other hand, is exhausting."

"Heh. She's a handful."

"I heard that." Azure opened her eye to Mayweather with a disdainful look. "You're just as terrifying as Dean Mayweather. At least I'll be happy knowing what you will look like when you get old."

Mayweather tapped Azure's forehead in anger. Azure got up rubbing her forehead as Miranda and Lys sat up.

"What time is it?" Lys said and Azure looked at her smartphone.

"It reads six." Azure turned to Mayweather. "I still can't believe your world has time."

"Why shouldn't we have time in our world? We are not so primitive that we live like cavemen. If anything, that phone is an amazing thing."

Alysia moaned opening her eyes. She found herself in a blanket with Akane. She turned with a blush.

“Sorry.”

“Are you feeling alright?” Akane said.

“No, but... I will be.” Alysia got up and walked away quietly as Azure scratched her head.

“Bad dream huh?”

“You would too,” Lys said walking past Azure. “if you were in her shoes.”

“Probably more than you would imagine.”

“Azure.” Akane said getting her attention and shook her head negatively to drop it. She stood to her feet and patted Azure's shoulder. “Let's get ready, we have a long travel.”

“Fine.”

As everyone cleaned up the house and gathered their stuff, Azure sat outside drawing on paper. Miranda came out supplied and ready to go. She noticed that Azure is drawing her house on the hill with Suzaku sitting on the slope.

“Wow that is a nice drawing of my house.”

“Yeah, I wanted something to remember this place, and unfortunately my phone is running low on batteries because of the music, so I can't risk taking pictures.”

“Those songs are so interesting your world. I wish I can have them.”

“I'm sure when technology progress, considering the Golem Desire made, you'll get a chance at this stuff.”

“Maybe you're right.”

“It's same though. I wish I had enough time to draw everyone. I would rather remember all of you.”

“It's not too late.” Miranda pulled out a blank sheet from under Azure's drawing with a smile. “Draw us while we travel.”

Mayweather opened the front door, stepping outside.

“Ma'am.” Azure said to Mayweather. “Thank you for the paper and pencil.”

“You're welcome.” Mayweather took the drawing. “This is lovely. You are very talented.”

“Thank you.”

"Come girls," Mayweather said toward the inside. "Akane is waiting for us."

"We'll be there in a second." Lys said from the living room.

"Well, let's get moving Miranda. I call shotgun."

"Shotgun?" Miranda followed Azure to the Golems.

Inside the house, Lys and Alysia stood face to face. Like a mirror image they stayed quiet for a moment just examining each other.

"Lys, we should get going."

"Please, I just... I just want to ask you something." Lys clasped her hands together, her eyes showed sincerity. "Would you like to come back to my world with me?"

"Your world?"

"Yes." Lys looked her straight in the eyes. "Come home with me. I know my parents will welcome you and Meg is a great sister."

"Lys."

"You'll have a family again. You won't be alone and you can put all that happened to you behind."

"Thank you." Alysia said and Lys smiled. "But I have to go back to my world."

"Why?"

"I can't abandon my parents." Alysia said and Lys lowered her head. "They're still trapped in Oryn's time freeze spell. I can save them."

"I... I forgot. I'm sorry." Lys looked to the side in shame. "It's that... it's hard for me to know that there is a me out there who suffered like you did. I don't know what I would have done if that happened to me. I..."

"It's okay." Alysia with a soft voice and pulled Lys into her arms. "I am happy to know that there is a me out there who did not end up like me. That she still has her parents and sister. Heh, a sister. I would like to have one."

"I can be your sister." Lys stepped back and Alysia stared blankly. She nodded.

"I'll be okay." Alysia took Lys' hand. "I have Madam Mayweather and my friends. I know I won't be alone when I get back."

Lys tightened her grip with a smile despite her welled up tears. Without saying a word they hurried out of the house hand in hand to catch up with everyone. They arrived before Akane as she opened the canopy. She noticed the twins holding hands reminding her of Marisol doing to the same when they were together.

“Everything okay?” Akane said.

“Yes.” They said together. They looked at each other and giggled.

“Go get your Golem .”

“Come on, Lys.” Alysia said and they both ran to the Golem.

Mayweather watched the twins run past her and she turned to Akane opening up the canopy.

“I'm sorry, but the cockpit is a single seat.”

“It's okay. There is a stable nearby here if we can stop there for a moment.”

“Sure.” Akane looked up to Suzaku. “I really should have charged this instead of playing around last night.”

“We'll have to camp out for one night first so we can get an idea of Desire's castle, that's when you'll recharge Suzaku.”

“Okay.” Akane said as Mayweather placed her hand on the cold steel.

“Impressive. To have a machine of this size.”

Akane looked at the smaller Golems Desire had made.

“It's a shame that Desire chose to make weapons rather than tools to help people.”

“Well, once that kingdoms win the war and get their hands on this, hopefully, I can help out with development progress of technology.” Mayweather saw Akane's hand reach out to her.

“I can pilot this with the cockpit open. At least until we can get to the stables.”

“Thank you.” Mayweather took Akane's hands and the winch elevated them up.

All of the Golems activated, and together they walked forward. When they reached the stables, the girls pet the horses and Mayweather presented Lys and Azure with saddles. Lys and Azure

smiled. Together, they rode their own horses with Mayweather as the Golems followed them from behind.

It was a long day's travel. They stopped at a creek, where the horse drank and the girls relaxed. Azure continued drawing while Miranda and Lys laughed. Akane leaned on a tree as Alysia rested on her shoulder talking to her. The travel resumed as they made their way through a forest. The exotic animals and plants brought awe to the girls as Mayweather taught them what they are. As they emerged out of the forest, there were rolling hills ahead. Akane scanned ahead at a castle at the top of the hill. She noticed the Nightmare Dragon perched to the left to the castle walls like a gargoyle.

"Karyn." Akane said stopping Suzaku. "I see a castle ahead."

Mayweather surveyed their area and saw a large set of hills nearby.

"We'll camp there tonight. That should be large enough to hide Suzaku while we rest up and make a plan."

Everyone arrived at the largest hills. They made camp and gathered around the campfire to set up a plan. After they made their plan, they spent the night quiet, relaxing over the fire, hardly a word spoken. They were all focus on the fight ahead, but in the end they just wanted to enjoy each others presence for what could be one last time.

* * *

The morning sun rose and everyone was getting ready for the battle. Each were testing out their magic circles and Mana. Azure made her shackles appear and did not feel the weight pushing her down. She smiled. Suzaku stood tall giving Akane a view of the castle ahead. Alysia and Lys giggled as they looked at their bracelets attracting Miranda's attention. They stood side by side and threw their arms into their air.

"AWAKEN... SAGA!" They chanted together and everyone watch Alysia's staff form over her head while Lys transformed into her costume. They both grabbed Saga twirling into a pose. Azure laughed.

"You two are so childish!" Azure walked her horse by laughing louder leaving the twins blushing in embarrassment. Akane, Alysia and Miranda activated their Golems while Lys, Azure and Mayweather mount their horses. They stood at the top of the hill and together they rode off.

Akane kept the Nightmare Dragon on her sights with Mayweather riding ahead. The girls below broke off into two groups, one riding a horse and a Golem each. Alysia paired with Azure and Lys paired with Miranda. In three pairs, they used the hills to their advantage. Mayweather and Akane kept themselves out in the open, looking to attract the castle guards and the dragon. The rest stayed below the hills keeping out of sight. However, something was unusual about the area as they all got closer. The Nightmare Dragon looked up at the sky but did not move.

"Karyn." Akane said over a magic circle.

"I see it. I don't like it."

Suddenly, the hills came to an end. They emerged out into an open field that caught everyone off.

"The hills are gone!" Mayweather said.

"They know we're here!" Akane said, but it was too late.

Darkness enveloped everyone and they fell inside. A long drop that left them screaming into silence.

Miranda opened her eyes. She was shackles on a crystal bed in mid air. She saw Lys, Azure, Alysia, and Akane on the same beds in the form of a circle. Each of them woke up confused looking around. There was nothing but an endless world of crystal.

"Where are we?" Alysia said.

"It doesn't matter." Azure said as her shackles glowed bright.

"We'll be out of here in no time."

Azure focused her thoughts and her shackles, but a surge of electricity made her scream into submission.

"Okay..." Azure winced. "...best two out of three."

"Stop." Miranda said. "You'll just get yourself hurt more."

"Indeed." A woman's voice said above the girls. "I need you to finish my conquest."

"Desire?" Miranda said.

"Yes child. I am Desire. And I thank you for gathering the Pillars for me. I had a hard time finding them and capturing them because of you and your teacher. It took me a while to figure that you would come here next with them. A lesson I have now learned."

"What have you done to Madam Mayweather?" Miranda said looking up to the sky, where a pair of teal eyes appeared before the girls.

"Serving me with all the villagers below."

"You crystallized her."

"Yes as have you."

"That can't be." Akane said.

"You five don't remember because the pain was too great to handle. Though I was very impressed at how much resistance you all displayed."

The girls struggled to break free when Desire walked before them dressed in armor with a crown on her head.

"The world is now mine thanks to you. It's been a lovely year ruling over my subjects."

"No." Miranda said as she felt Desire's hand caressing her cheek.

"You five provided me with enough energy to power all of my, as you call them, your Golems. In fact," Desire stood before Akane. "I am very thankful that your Golem allowed my people to build a nice large army."

Akane lowered her head with tears streaking down her eyes.

"Thanks to all of you, I have rewarded you by releasing you."

"You're stupid." Azure said. "We'll just take you down."

"Yes, but then my daughter will be queen." Desire patted Azure's cheek. "One year was all I need to have a baby after all."

Desire stood before Alysia moving her hair aside, smiling.

"I could... bend you minds."

"GET YOUR HAND OFF OF HER!" Lys said struggling as Alysia spat at the queen's face.

"I've faced worse." Alysia said.

"Yes you have." Desire wiped her face as Alysia's eyes grew wide

from the implication of the comment. "That's why I won't do it."

Desire walked away from the girls.

"What I want is for you to live in absolute knowledge of failure. Walk amongst my slaves knowing you five are the only ones free." Desire disappears. "Free to move, free to live, and free to grow up without ever being harmed, for you will live the rest of your lives in my world, my lovely Pillars."

The castle gates open as the guards watched over the girls laughing and pointing. The guards threw their belongings at their feet making the girls pick them up. They walked past a line of men, women and children, shackled together escorted by horsemen. The people whispered in wonder of how these five girls are walking freely. The girls could feel the shame that they did not save the world. Once the gates closed, the girls were alone in the world, struggling to express their feelings.

Akane saw Suzaku nearby, battered and broken. She rested her forehead on the steel as Lys placed her hand on Akane's back. Alysia clutched her shoulders maintaining her composure as Azure threw rocks at the castle.

"I won't let it end like this!" Azure said. "I am not a loser!"

Miranda stood beside Alysia heaving in shock. She placed her hands on Alysia's cheeks trying to get her attention.

"Look at me. You're okay."

Alysia's tears fell and Miranda hugged her as Azure roared out loud.

"No." Alysia said. "No."

Miranda pulled herself back. Saga formed into a staff without a chant. Her body glowed red as everyone watched her.

"NOOOO!" Alysia fired off a large fireball that blast the castle walls into pieces. The guards above watched in shock as the girls looked at Alysia.

"That's the spirit!" Azure said as she glowed green and made her magic circle appear. "RISING SPIKE!"

A large wave of ground grew in a straight line and a large spike pierced the castle gate knocking over the iron bars. Alysia stood

beside Azure and they both stared down the frightened guards. Lys glow blue as Akane watched her transform into her costume. Understanding their feelings Akane glowed orange. She placed her hand on Suzaku making it glow orange as.

Miranda watch the girls gather around her. Her heart beaten rapidly. She felt them all connected to her and she shared that connection with them. Miranda glowed yellow taking a deep breath. Hand in hand, the girls formed a circle. Miranda's spirit shot out of her body and girl's spirits did the same. They could all hear a heartbeat. It got louder and louder until they reached the Nightmare Dragon. They saw it. Inside its body. Connected to the heart. A crystal. Miranda reached out to it but she and girls were pushed away by horror. Their spirits returned to their bodies, they now know the truth.

“Kōryū!”

As the guards rushed out of the walls toward the girls, the Nightmare Dragon roared in the sky. The beast flew over the entire castle spewing its green fire, consuming the guards. The dragon pushed it towards the girls, but together they formed a large magic circle the protected them. The impact pushed them away and it flew back into the air.

Akane got up and ran for Suzaku as Lys stood up looking at the dragon.

“MANA GLIDER!” Lys said clicking her feet together and she flew into the sky.

Marina channeled her mana and aimed her magic circle at Lys. “PROTECTION!”

A coating of mist covered Lys as she aimed Saga at the monster.

“AIR BURST!” A large ball of air struck the dragon in the face creating an explosion. Miranda's spell protected Lys from the air blast as the dragon pulled away. Alysia turned to more guards heading towards and a flame appears at the tip of the staff.

“FLAMETHROWER!” Like a fire hose, Alysia swept the flames across the ground blocking the guards without killing them.

“TOWER DEFENSE!” Azure said and a large block of earth

jutted up next to Alysia and Miranda shielding them from the dragons green flames.

The girls looked up and saw Suzaku jump up grabbing the Nightmare Dragon by the tail. The robot slammed its feet on the ground pulling the large beast.

“Let's take it down!” Azure said and all the girls ran towards it screaming. The Nightmare Dragon forced itself onto the ground, creating an earthquake that knocked Azure, Alysia, and Miranda off their feet. Lys flew past Suzaku aiming her spell at the dragon, but its wings flapped hard causing the burst of wind to knock her aside. The Nightmare Dragon kicked Suzaku off and flew back into the air.

“Fighting a dragon is hard.” Azure said.

“But it is not unbeatable.” Akane said over a loudspeaker as Alysia turned to the girls.

“Akane, I could use my Ashes to Dust spell, I'll need you to hold it down.”

“Will this spell affect the crystal?”

“Yeah, I'll need you to protect it.”

“What about me?” Azure said and Alysia looked at her wrist.

“Assist Akane. Can you unlock the shackles?”

“I get what you're saying, but that's not a good idea.”

Lys limped over to the girls taking deep breathes.

“It's okay...” Lys said. “...I can Purify before it gets worse.”

“Okay.”

Alysia held up Saga focusing her mana. Miranda stood next to her and felt the crystal containing Kōryū.

“PROTECTION!” Miranda said as the fireball of Alysia's spell grew larger. In the air Lys held Azure in piggy back and they both flew towards the dragon. It roared breathing green flames but Akane's magic circle deflected it. Azure closed her eyes and made the shackles unlock. Lys flew over the dragon as the impure mana rained down on it. Lys immediately focused her mana.

“PURIFY!” Lys' spell slid over her and Azure separating some of the impure mana from their bodies. The shackles locked into place as the impure mana became clean. Azure felt the cleansed mana

return to her body and hugged Lys tighter.

“Thank you.”

As the dragon coughed and struggled to stay in the air, Suzaku pieced its skin with Sabre and pulled it back down to the earth. As Lys and Azure landed behind Alysia, they watched Suzaku slice the dragon's wings off as large Golems as tall as Suzaku arrived. Their appearance shocked the girls as Alysia and Akane remained focused.

“ASHES TO DUST!” The large fireball headed towards the dragon but Suzaku held on due to its struggles from the pain. As the spell reached the beast Suzaku jumped out with a Deflection for protection. The impact sent the Golem flying over the girls and Akane ejected out of the cockpit. Akane was scooped in the air by Lys and brought back to the group.

They all watched the spell turn the dragon to ashes, but something went wrong. Miranda felt it too. It was as though the crystal turned into a vacuum. All of the dust that was the dragon was sucked inside. Miranda felt weak holding to her spell.

“I... it must be some kind of counterspell!” Miranda said as knees buckled under. One by one, each hand planted on Miranda. All five girls channeling their mana into Miranda's one spell as they watched the vacuum suck in the earth forming a large crater. It was a battle of attrition as the force of the crystal started to crack. The girl felt weaker but pushed themselves to the limits. Then, the crystal shattered. The shockwave knocked the girls to the ground.

They sat up and saw that nothing happened, at least physically. Desire approached them clapping her hand with a smile on her face.

“Congratulations on freeing Kōryū, though it changed nothing.”

The girls stood up to their feet and Miranda pressed her hand to her chest.

“Yes it did.” Miranda glowed yellow as golden dragon wings stretched out. “I am in tuned with Kōryū now. The worlds are safe from you.”

“But I still rule the world.”

“Yes, you still do.” Miranda surrounded the girls and Suzaku in yellow aura. “and I will stop you.”

Miranda and the girls disappeared before Desire, leaving her with an army confused.

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As Miranda led the girls away, the portal opened up. She looked back Alyisa, Azure, Lys and Akane as they slowly faded. Their eyes were wide with joy as she felt them in her heart, confidence knowing that she will be alright and safe. Miranda not wanting them to leave reached out, but they left leaving only a somber goodbye deep in her heart and a wonderful memory of her time with them. When Miranda landed at her home, she cried.

As the girls launched upward, they each said their farewell, knowing they will never see each other again. However, Azure and Lys shared a simple little gift for them to take back, one that made Alyisa and Akane smile. Wishing each other luck, they parted ways back to their own worlds.

Miranda entered her house, quiet as it was now. She could see Lys, Azure, Akane, and Alyisa all together having fun with her. Her time with them was amazing. Learning about the worlds they come, both the good and the bad. She wished she could go see them all, but unfortunately, her journey with them is over.

“Azure was right. We wouldn't have a chance to say goodbye. I don't want to forget them.”

She felt something warm in her pocket and pulled out a piece of paper. Her eyes opened wide, her smile soft and gentle. She hugged the paper close to her heart as four lights glowed warm on her chest. When she pulled it back, it was Azure's drawing of all of them together in front of her home, happy.

“It's so wonderful.”

THE END.

