

Arcana Magi Memorial

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by H-M Brown

Madam Mayweather entered the security office where Jean-Pierre was detained. The head of security was on the phone while the boy sat quiet. She noticed the tall plants on the corners, and vines gangling off the potted hanging from the ceiling. His desk had a small sunflower, oddly enough leaning toward Jean-Pierre with shimmering leaves as though it was guard dog. The plant looked up at the dean, stopped, and lowered its body like scolded dog. Her eyes shifted in Jean-Pierre's direction with a glare that was intimidating but he showed no fear.

"Is that Mr. LeBleu on the phone Daniel?"

"Yes ma'am." He said and Madam Mayweather extended her hand out to him. Daniel handed the phone to her as she kept her eyes on Jean-Pierre.

"Mr. LeBleu, I cannot have this continue on."

"I apologize. I don't understand my son's obsession with that girl."

"I don't care. I don't want him in my school anymore."

"I understand."

Madam Mayweather turned her back on Jean-Pierre. "I will have him arrested if he trespasses school grounds."

"Please, there is no need for that."

"You told me once that he will turn eighteen soon right?" Madam Mayweather saw the Jean-Pierre's eyes widen, and the sunflower tilted its head.

"Y...yes."

"Need I remind you that the girl he is peeping on is fourteen? Understand?"

The sunflower crossed its leaves like a pair of arms and Jean-Pierre turned away not wanting to think of what she just said. Yet he

cannot stop thinking about Azure.

“Yes, I know. I understand. I will have a long talk with him. I assure you he will not go there again.”

“See to it. You will find him in the security office at the main building. “Again I apologize for my son's behavior. And my daughter?”

“She has done no wrong.”

“Thank you. I'll be there in one hour.”

“Very well.” Madam Mayweather hangs up the phone and faced Jean-Pierre. “I was told that you saw a human shadow. Is this true?”

“Yes.” Jean-Pierre said surprised by the question. “It was a girl. With pitch black hair and red eyes. She was covered in shadow but I was able to see her clearly when I used my Flashpoint spell on her. Apparently it hurt her eyes, because she ran off.”

“That's it?” She said and the sunflower placed its leaves on the stem as though it were human hands on hips. “Stop that.”

The plant leaned back scared and Daniel pulled the potted plant away. “Sorry ma'am. Sunny just wanted to help. She meant no harm.”

“Look,” Jean Pierre said. “I'm telling the truth Ma'am—”

“Ma'am.”

“M...ma'am. Why would I jump out of the bushes to get caught on purpose?”

The dean nodded, approached Jean-Pierre and leaned close to his face. He leaned back a bit to keep his distance from her.

“If I see you in my school and it's not to visit your sister, and only your sister, I will have you arrested. I will make sure you go to prison. Do I make myself clear?”

“yes.”

Madam Mayweather waved Daniel outside and they let in a security guard to watch Jean Pierre. She closed the door, with arms crossed, but shocked to see Sunny in his hands.

“Oh, sorry.” Daniel placed the sunflower on the secretary's desk and gave Madam Mayweather his attention.

“You're not taking him seriously are you?” Daniel said. “It could

have been bird or a squirrel.”

“True.” Madam Mayweather said taking a few steps forward.
“But I rather be safe than sorry.”

“What would like to do?” Daniel leaned on the wall and Madam Mayweather turn around.

“Increase security, notify faculty, have all students returned to their dorms and have dorm reps check attendance. If any student is outside the campus, call them immediately, and if they can't be reached, notify their parents.”

“I hope he is wrong.”

“So am I, but we won't make the same mistake five months ago.”

Madam Mayweather left the office as Daniel talked to the secretary. The dean had Azure on her mind and talking to her was her next task.

* * *

Madam Mayweather arrived at her office and waiting by the secretary's desk was Azure, Sora, and Ciel. She focused on Azure ready to speak when Ciel stood up.

“I am so sorry about my brother.”

“Do not concern yourself. I have notified your father and he will be by to pick him up soon.”

“May I see him?”

“Unfortunately, I cannot let you see him. I have ordered all students to return to their dormitories.”

“Why?” Sora said.

Madam Mayweather turned her attention to Azure and opened the door to her office.

“There may be another intruder Ms. LeBleu. For everyone's safety I have increased security to all dorms. Please return to your rooms.” She looked at Sora. “Both of you. Ms. Martinez, I would like to have a word with you.”

“Y...yes ma'am.” Azure entered the office looking back at her friends and the door closed behind her. She followed Madam Mayweather to the desk where the dean's hand directed her to take a seat. Azure sat down and pair of red eyes appeared in the shadow

of the filing cabinet near the desk.

The eyes analyzed the area noticing the bookshelf across the room, Azure sitting quietly, and Madam Mayweather sitting behind the desk, pulling the seat closer. It tried to find a spot closer but there was nothing but light and the nearest shadow, underneath Azure's seat, was too far away.

"Is everything okay ma'am?" Azure said and the shadow listened on.

"I was told by Mr. LeBleu that there was a person who looked liked a shadow in the campus." Madam Mayweather said causing the red eyes to widen. "He said it had red eyes."

"You mean like that girl that lost control of her summoned monster? I thought she was the only one."

"It was never confirmed if she was the only one or not. However, if there are more of these... shadow people, and they are spying on you, then your life could be in danger."

"But why me?" Azure looked at her dragon scaled hands.

"I don't know, but I can assure you that we are taking measures to make sure nothing happens to you. There is one other thing I want to talk to you about before I send you back to your room." Madam Mayweather got up off her seat and approached the filing cabinet. The red eyes closed just as the dean pulled the top draw. She took out a file and closed it, pushing the cabinet against the wall. The red eyes opened up struggling to not scream in pain. Madam Mayweather stood in front of her desk, leaning on the edge. She opened the file, took out a sheet, and read it. "The Circle of Four is a geometric circle drawn in the Far East, location unknown, about 1200 years ago. It is said that the mana imbuing the circle came from a now extinct species called Wisps. Similar to a Will O' Wisp, except that they are more directly in tuned with the elements of mana derived from nature itself. The Circle of Four is said to choose its user and will remain loyal to the user until the user rejects it or dies. That is all that is written and this source may not even be reliable."

Azure took the paper and read it herself. She wondered about

those four mysterious beings that communicated with her. Are they spirits, or are they flesh and blood? It added more questions but at least she has some clues to work with.

“Thank you.”

“How did you come across the Circle of Four?”

Azure looked up and the dean's arms crossed. She turned her eyes away, but Madam Mayweather stood up straight with cold eyes.

“Ever since you arrived at my school four years ago, I looked the other way regarding this circle against my better judgment. In light of what happened to you when the school was attacked, I chose not say anything because I feared I would make things worse for you while you recovered from your ordeal. Now I am feeling regret over this decision. You are carrying poison that can kill everyone here, and I want to know what I am dealing with.”

“I have it under control, so don't worry about.” Azure crossed her arms with an apprehensive look on her face.

“I swear that if you are threat to this school,” Madam Mayweather planted her hands on the arms of the chair and squeezed them. “I will not hesitate to kill you.”

“What?” Azure leaned back and did not know how to move away from her.

“There are five hundred and thirty-five students, faculty and security on this campus, and I'll be damned if I let them all die of poison because I spared one of you.”

“I'll tell my parents on you.”

“I don't care!” Madam Mayweather towered over Azure and the girl cowed before her, using her arms as a shield. The dean took a deep breath, and stepped back to the sound of Azure's whimper. She saw the fear in Azure's and covered her mouth. “Sorry. I'm sorry.”

Madam Mayweather clasped her hands together held them her chest.

“Please, for the safety of everyone, and your friends, tell me how you got the Circle of Four? I beg you.”

Azure lowered her arms and saw Madam Mayweather face. It was not cold or stern or scary. It was fear. She never saw fear on the

dean's face ever. Azure could sense the genuine concern. She sat up with hands on her knees, and spoke.

"I..." Azure closed her eyes and squeezed her knees. "I was arrested once for shoplifting."

Madam Mayweather's head lifted up. "Why?"

"I wanted things. My parents tell me to earn them, but I didn't want to. I can't explain these feelings. They feel weird. I just wanted things right away. So I stole things like candy bars, or change from tip jars. I decided to steal a purse once, and that was when I got caught and arrested. So now I'm ten—"

"Wait what? You've been doing this before you were ten?"

"I was eight when I stole my first candy." Azure's eyes wandered a bit and fingers started twitching. There was a look of shame that caught madam Mayweather's attention, but not the shame of stealing, but shame of being caught. "I went to this magic shop looking to steal some supplies. This Asian man showed up with a metal box. He showed the guy who ran the store and they took out this piece of paper, with a circle drawn on it."

"The Circle of Four?"

"Yes." Azure nodded. "The circle looked beautiful and I saw strange colors reflected off ink. I wanted it. I wanted it so bad. So I stole it, escaped, and tried to use it. Only, I didn't realize what it was doing. I tried to use my mana to make it work, but instead, it already had mana and I started to absorb it. It felt amazing at first, but then the mana became impure, and then these happened."

Azure made the purple shackles appear over her wrists, ankles and neck.

"So you're actually a prisoner?" Madam Mayweather and Azure nodded.

"My parents were so angry because I stole again and now ended up with these shackles. We went back to the store to return it. The circle's owner unlocked the shackles but the man spilled out. Every one in the store got sick and both men died. My parents were sick but they pulled through and I was sent to the Purification Clinic to learn to control the Circle of Four, while my body is purifying."

Azure lifted her arms up showing her claws. She closed her eyes, holding back her tears, but she lifted her head up showing no sign of weakness.

“Ever since this happened to me, I know I'm being punished for everything I did. What that dome monster did to me, turning me into this. I read about karma and this is it. This is who I truly am for stealing. A monster. I deserve it, and I'm okay if I never become human again. I'll continue to move forward. It's all I can do right?”

“Yes.” Madam Mayweather placing her hand on Azure's shoulder. “But you don't have to do it alone.”

Just as Azure looked up at the now welcoming face of Madam Mayweather, she saw a pair of red eyes outside the window. The dean turned around and the glass shattered. The shadow climbed onto the desk with light growl, its feminine shape was obvious. The creature had its sights on Azure and on all fours it crawled closer to the teen. Just as it was ready to tackle Azure, the creature turned to the file cabinet and growled. Azure and Madam Mayweather looked at the wall and saw nothing happened. As they were distracted, the creature jumped out of the window blending in with the veil of night. As Azure stared at the window to the sound of security outside calling for backup, Madam Mayweather stood in front of Azure and approached the cabinet. She cast a spell that made the cabinet move to the side and nothing was there.

“Ms. Martinez.” Madam Mayweather said approaching the teen, staring out in a daze at the broken window. “Azure.”

Azure snapped out of her daze, she looked up at Madam Mayweather with trembling eyes. The fact that there were more of those shadow creatures triggered memories of the dome monster. She struggled to speak and breathe. Azure's knees buckled under, and Madam Mayweather grabbed her, but Azure pushed her away. She stumbled out of the office just as security guards arrived. Sitting on the chair, face flushed white, and her breathing sporadic, Azure rocked back and forth, clutching her shoulders tightly.

TO BE CONTINUED...

