

Arcana Magi Memorial

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Azure, Jean-Pierre, and Jane turned left at an intersection. A couple of guards were in the distance with flashlights searching around the bushes. At least for now, Azure felt safe knowing that nobody has gotten hurt. However, she cannot shake the feeling of the shadows coming after her. Her hands shook like leaves in the wind. She was unaware of it happening. For an instant, she had a flash of memory of her changing into a shadow creature and the feeling of pain.

"Azure?" Jean-Pierre's voice snapped her out of her memory. He became startled at her sudden panic and watched her take two steps back.

"Are you okay?" Jane said placing her hand on Azure's shoulder.

"Y... yes." Azure kept walking. A little faster ahead of them, but Jean-Pierre caught up with her. At first Azure did not want to talk him, she just wanted to get to her dorm, but she wanted to stop thinking about the shadows and decided to ask a question. "So what kind of music you like?"

"Oh... well... I like listening to classical music."

"Really?" Azure's looked at him skeptically, waiting for the truth. Yet there was a look on his face that said he was not lying. "I... don't believe you."

"Seriously. Well, my mother did make Ciel and I learn classical music, but I did grow to like it."

"So you really don't like it? It was all your mother."

"She meant well." Jean-Pierre looked down with eyes wide opened.

"Did she mean well when you and that girl attacked Ciel a couple of months back?"

"You mean Hitomi? Uh, well, I was just doing as I was told."

"Some mom."

"Hey! Don't talk bad about my mom."

"You are such a mama's boy."

"Mama's... boy?" Jean-Pierre tried to understand what that means, and Azure laughs.

"She's saying," Jane said while Azure controlled her laughter. "that you cling to your mother too much. You apparently don't seem to be your own person when it comes to your mother."

"Really?" Jean-Pierre's eyes wandered a bit at the thought of the meaning and Azure pats his back, almost knocking him over.

"Don't worry, it happens to most boys. Being away from you mom will be helpful."

"I see." Jean-Pierre lifted his up and saw the stars in the sky.

Azure did the same but her memories returned and she saw the eye of the dome creature pulling her inside. She heard voices from Jean-Pierre and Jane, but they were so distant they barely reached her. The instant the dome creatures shadow hands grabbed her shoulder, she snapped out of it and wrapped her arms around a body. Her breathing became spastic and she found herself in Jean-Pierre's arms. Azure pushed off sending him to the floor. She tried to find a bench to sit on, but all she could find was the curb. Upon sitting down, she struggled to not hug her knees, for it was a sign of weakness. When Jane tried to sit next to her, Azure got up to her feet. With a deep breath, she turned to Jean-Pierre unaware of the tears welled in her eyes.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to push you." Azure reached out to the young man and he took her hand to lift himself up.

Jean-Pierre felt Azure's hand for the first time. It was a strange feeling. It was scaly, but human like to the touch. Unlike many reptiles he had handled when he was a kid, this was unusual to him. Azure walked past him and he looked back. Taking a second look at her, he now realizes how wrong he was in how he looked at Azure. From her wings, to her legs, to her cat tail and ears, she was fighting a great pain within.

"Wait." Jean-Pierre said and Azure stopped. "What happened to

you? How did you end up like that?"

"Leave her alone." Jane said.

"No." Azure said looking back. "It's okay."

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The dorm was in the distance where security is more prominent. There were no incidents during the rest of their walk and Azure felt relaxed now. Jean-Pierre, however, stayed quiet after hearing Azure's story. There was a look of shame in his face. Azure noticed this. Knowing they were going to part ways, she wanted to at least have him leave a little better.

"Listen, uh, you know, you're not a bad person." Azure saw Jean-Pierre lift his head up. "I just think you're a pervert."

And he frowned.

"If you just stop peeping at me and talk to me, like we just did, we can become good friends."

"Friends eh?"

"You have to earn my trust if you want to be my friend." Azure led everyone to the dorm and Jane got her radio informing the Command Center of their status. "By the way, the spell you used on the shadow earlier tonight. What was that?"

"Flashpoint. It creates a sudden flash of light that blinds anything."

"Can you teach me that?" Azure and Jean-Pierre looked at each other.

"Yeah."

"Okay." He said and Azure smiled. It was a nice smile that made her look cute. He returned the smile though it looked awkward, and he wish he could do better than that. Just as he was about to instruct her, there was a ruckus going on at the entrance of the dorm. Jean-Pierre and Azure watched the security guards running around the building yelling, and Jane grabbed Azure's arm while holding the radio.

"Understood." Jane said to the radio and turned her attention to Azure. "The dorm is under attack, we have to retreat."

"Wait what about my friends?" Azure said as she followed Jane.

"Don't worry the doors are locked, everyone will be safe."

Jean-Pierre looked back at the dorm and saw a shadow slid into a patch of darkness. He felt suspicious by this because he knew the best chance to get Azure was when she would be alone in her room. The young man wondered something and he grabbed Azure's hand right away.

"Stop." He pulled her arm hard. "I said stop!"

Azure pulled her arm off Jean-Pierre and everyone stopped like he said.

"We can't stay here." Jane said.

"No we should."

"Why?" Azure said.

"Because it's what they want." Jean-Pierre looked around the area and ahead in the direction they were going. "Everyone is back there, but no one is around where we are headed."

Jane thought about it and realized he spoke the truth. She turned the teens around to head back but her leg became stuck. The darkness became a pool of black muck and the guard screamed. Jean-Pierre immediately channeled his mana and aimed the palm of his hand.

"FLASHPOINT!" A burst of light made the girl appear.

Azure saw her jump out screaming. She heard Jane moaning as well and saw the guard's foot was jelly, bubbling and sizzling. She knelt beside Jane, who passed out from the shock. Looking up, Jean-Pierre stood before the shadow, acting as a shield. For a moment he looked heroic, but Azure noticed his knees slightly shimmering standing before the shadow.

"We need to get Jane to safety." Azure saw the radio making noise and she grabbed it. "Security! We need help!"

"Who is this?" The operator said.

"This is Azure Martinez and Jane is injured! The shadow is attacking us!"

"What's your location?"

"Near my dorm!" Azure heard Jean-Pierre scream and saw him fly in the air, bouncing along the grass. She got up to her feet,

watching the shadow growl, taking a crouched posture like a cat hissing at another. Without hesitation, Azure took a similar stance, raising her tail up. Her teal eyes turned red. They walked in circle waiting for the first move. Azure channeled her mana, her purple shackles glowed, and held her down. She wanted to cast an offensive spell, but had to endure the weight slowing her down.

Her opponent also channeled mana. At first Azure felt off guard by that, but she remembered a piece of memory planted in her by the dome monster of the girl she killed. A spellcaster who fell victim to her own summoned creatures, and lost control over her own spells. Azure wondered if the same happened to this girl.

"Is this what happens when you lose control over your spells?" The only response was louder growl. "If you can control your mana and spells, you might turn back to normal."

The girl lunged at Azure and they both wrestled over the grass. They continued over a slope, rolling downhill. The girls broke apart and Azure felt a rock under her belly. She nursed the bruise, getting up to her feet. She channeled her mana, this time they glowed teal. The shadow ran on her hands and feet like an animal. Azure made her teal magic circle appear in front of her and raised the palm of her hand up into the air.

"RISING PILLAR!" The ground underneath rose up into the air creating a wall, but it shattered like glass when the shadow burst through. Azure saw mana in the girl's hand and realized she cast a spell to counter her own. Before she had a chance to do anything, Azure's mind wandered for a second until she felt a punch to her face. She stumbled back and landed on her butt. She lifted her head and suddenly grabbed the shadow's wrists. The girl's long fingers stretched out claws and her roar rattled Azure's cat ears.

Azure used her foot and kicked the girl in the stomach. Freed from her clutches, Azure channeled mana but her shackles turned purple again. She growled under breath wishing this was not happening, but she ignored the pain. She positioned her body to create a fulcrum while the shadow rubbed her belly. Lifting her arm with a scream, she gathered all her mana at the palm of her hand.

Wind form in a circle like spinning top and just as the shadow was one step in front of Azure, she cast the spell.

"SPIRAL..." Azure threw her hand just making the wind slide past her body. "...BURST!"

The force of wind pushed the shadow back, spinning over the grass. The girl bounced then rolled to a complete stop. The shadow struggled to stand up, only able to move her head in Azure's directions. She chuckled at Azure, her laughter the sound of a girl mixed with fighting animals. She lifted herself to her knees pointing at the glowing shackles. She understood what was going on.

"You have no control." The shadow said with her voice missed with the sound of two animals, standing on her feet. "You cannot defeat me."

Azure felt the tension of her muscles. With the weight of her shackles trying to keep her on her knees, she felt another second of her mind wandering off. It was a memory of her sprouting the winged eyes from her back when she rescued Sora one month ago. It was a tingling sensation in the edge of her mind trying to fight its way out. She shook her head and looked at her hands, the scales of a dragon, barely human. The physical sensation of her chimera parts became more noticeable. Azure felt her heart racing, her body vibrating and her breathing getting spastic again. She soon realized she's not panicking like before, she's transforming. And the pain is overwhelming.

The shadow grabbed Azure by the neck. They looked at each other eye to eye. The girl felt Azure's body vibrating, but ignored it and started squeezing. Azure's eyes rolled back as her hands struggled to free her. The shadow had a smile on her face and let out a whisper.

"For mother and legacy."

Just as Azure dropped her arms, a force of energy struck the shadow, freeing her. Azure gasped for air, collapsing on the ground. She opened her eyes and saw another shadow arriving. There was confusion, it attacked the girl. Azure did not understand what was going on. But that was the least of her worries. Her body acted up

again and her mind trailed off. She tried to fight it, while struggling to keep her distance from the shadow approaching her. Fear gripped her, she knew what she was transforming into, and she wanted it to stop.

“No... don't do this Azure... don't let yourself change.” Azure looked up one last time and saw the male shadow stepping back from her. She turned in that direction and there was Jean-Pierre approaching them. He limped very slowly with his left arm leaning on the side of his body. Azure's eyes grew wide and her body burned. She cradled her stomach, scrunching like a ball. It caught the attention of both Jean-Pierre and male shadow. “I'm losing... myself!”

The girl shadow laughed out loud, standing on bended knee. Jean-Pierre and the male shadow looked at her. They took a fighting stance then looked at each other in shock. The shadow girl tried to channel mana herself but the attack she took from Spiral Burst weakened her. The girl felt the defeat, but accepted it.

“I guess mother will have another daughter after all.”

And Azure lurch her body back screaming with her voice combined with the sound of a dying cat and a singing bird.

TO BE CONTINUED...

