

# Arcana Magi Memorial

## Vol.5 - c.2

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Sora and Ciel sat at a bench near their dormitory building. They were reading notes regarding any sightings of Azure. With a deep breath, Ciel reached into her bookbag and took out a folder. Sora looked at the file as Ciel opened it revealing missing person flyers. There were two picture of Azure, in her normal body and her chimera form. Sora turned her body around facing away, not wanting to acknowledge the fact that her friend is missing.

"I know, Sora."

"We can't give up."

"She has to be in one of her favorite spots."

"We need to try something. Anything." Ciel raised the flyer up reading the information very carefully. "I just don't understand."

"I'm telling you. Those shadow creatures got her. My family is still looking into it."

"We don't know that. She wouldn't have fallen so easily into their hands. She could have just run away from all of this."

"No, she's not like that."

"Come on Sora." Ciel got out of her seat, walked around the table, and sat next to Sora. "We know Azure. If those creatures attacked her, she would have fought back and came to us. She would never put herself in danger."

"Then why would she run away. We're her friends." Sora felt Ciel's arm over her shoulders. As Sora took a deep breath, the rustling sound from the bushes nearby caught the girl's attention.

Emerging from the shrubs is a rabbit. Ciel's head tilted as the rabbit hopped toward them. It looked around a bit. It glowed bright. It grew taking the form of a girl with rabbit ears and tail. The light disappeared leaving Hitomi behind. She fixed her red tie and brushed her black one piece dress to clean herself.

"What does mother want, Hitomi?"

"Your mother did send me Lady Ciel. Master Jean Pierre did."

"Why?"

"He wants me to help you find his friend Azure."

"His friend?" Sora said standing up. "She is not his friend, and we don't need his help. Or yours."

Hitomi walked past Sora and she hopped onto table, her feet planted on the seat. Her hands resting on her thighs, sitting like lady-like. She sat silently, staring out at nothing. Sora looked at Ciel, signaling her to do something about this. Ciel responded with a shrug. Sora's arms drooped and she nudged her friend forward.

"Hitomi, we appreciate your help, but you can go home."

"I wish to help you." Hitomi said without moving.

"Why?"

"We are friends, are we not?"

"Well..." Ciel stepped back as Hitomi crossed her arms. She noticed Sora with hands on her hips directed at her. "Sora, you don't know what's going on?"

"Exactly. This is not the time for your family drama. This is about Azure. I'm going on ahead without you." Sora grabbed her bookbag and walked away.

"We can help Ms. Narutaki." Hitomi said making Sora stop.

"What?" Sora shifted her body slightly, her head facing the rabbit girl.

"We can share information on Azure with the Technomancers." Hitomi hopped off the table, approaching Sora. "Yes, we did attack your friend on Ciel's first day, but I have not returned to cause any trouble since."

Hitomi turned to Ciel, looking her in the eyes. "In fact, I miss you Lady Ciel... Ciel since you left for the Academy. It was quiet in the house. I admit, I came for you not just for your mother, but for myself. I felt... alone. Ever since your friend beat and I was sent back, I felt ashamed."

Hitomi bowed to Ciel. "I am sorry for my actions."

Ciel approached Hitomi and stood her up. She took a deep

breath, tightening her grip lightly on the rabbit girl's shoulders.

"I will talk to my father about transferring you to his home. It may take awhile to get my mother to agree, but I can speak on your behalf."

"Thank you."

Sora walked up to the girls, she took the flyers, handing some to Hitomi. She smirked a bit at Hitomi, a welcome feel to it.

"All right Hitomi. I am Sora Narutaki, you may call me Sora. You said you want to share information with the Technomancers. Tell me."

After Ciel grabbed her bookbag, Sora led the girls, listening to Hitomi.

"I talked with Magi from the dark arts. The group of shadows call themselves the Nocturne. An organization that feeds on Mana. They are led by a person called Mother. That's all the information I could get."

"Feed on Mana?" Sora stopped for a moment, remember the attack on the Academy. "That giant creature. Was that one of them? Wait what am I saying? Of course it has to be them."

"Sora," Ciel placed her hand on Sora's back. "calm down."

"That's why they came back. For Azure. They were eating my Mana."

"Sora, focus!" Ciel saw Sora's eyes grow wide. "Sora, don't lose me."

Sora's hands shivered. The memories of being cocooned by the monsters got her to clutch her chest. She approached a tree, feeling Ciel rubbing her back. Though her voice was faint, she could hear her friend telling her breath. Sora turned around, her knees bent ready to sit on the ground. She closed her eyes gathering her thoughts, but the images became clear. Sora screamed punching the air and dropped to her knees.

"Sora!" Ciel pulled her friend close but Sora's placed her hand on Ciel's chest to stop her.

"How does Azure do it?" Sora looked up as Hitomi reached out to her. Sora took Hitomi's hand and stood to her feet. She felt

dizziness, but she maintained her balance. "Thank you."

"Will you be all right?" Hitomi said. "Would you like me to take you to your room?"

"I'll be fine. We should get these flyers up."

"Oh no." Ciel said redirecting Sora's body. "You are getting some rest. Hitomi help us."

"Yes Ciel."

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Azure walked with Miri and Polo through the hallways. They entered the cafeteria, empty and silent. The walls, tables, and seat were white save for some black and silver trimming along the edges. Miri led Azure to the kitchen, directing her on where the supplies were at, what food was available.

"Are you hungry?" Miri said.

"No. Not really." Azure rubbed her stomach, realizing she had not eaten in quite awhile, yet not felt hungry. "Strange. Why don't I feel hungry?"

"You probably are." Miri opened the refrigerator and reached inside. "Are you allergic to peanut butter?"

"No." Azure received a peanut butter and jelly sandwich wrapped in a white deli paper. "But I..."

"You should eat it anyway. Sometimes, I get that feeling too."

"O...okay."

"Miri," Polo said. "let's show her the offices."

While unwrapping the sandwich, Azure followed Miri and Polo. The scent waft into her nose. It was not like any other sandwich she had before. It was hard to describe it, but it had the scent of ammonia. She secretly placed the sandwich on the table without Miri and Polo watching. As she followed them quietly, her sinuses cleared up. That was when realized she only smelt Miri and Polo and nothing else.

"I don't smell anything in the halls." Azure said as Miri turned her head slightly walking forward.

"We keep this place very clean and sterile, even the food."

Azure looked at her hands without the sandwich.

"Sorry, I... threw away the food."

"No that's on me. Sorry, I should have warned you about the sterility of the food."

"It's how we can detect Mother." Polo said. "She has a sharp scent as well as the Nocturne."

"Remember the room exited the portal from?" Miri said and Azure nodded. "It's the only room to have a scent. It creates a trail throughout the area so we know if its one of us, but should that scent originate elsewhere in the complex, that is how we know we are infiltrated."

"I don't think that would work."

"It's worked so far." Polo said. "They will have to enter through the room to get inside."

"And that doesn't worry you?" Azure hurried in front of Polo to stop him.

"Of course it does, but we found a way to separate our scent from the Nocturne."

"We'll show you later." Miri said, walking away. She continued the tour leading Azure to a workout area. There is a set of mirror along the white wall, and the mat is white with silver and black edging. Even the wooden bar attached to the wall is white.

After leaving the workout area, Azure walked past green potted plants, the vase was white like the walls. The offices she saw were white. The showers were white. Everywhere she went was white. Azure was overwhelmed by white everywhere. Her eyes lost focus when she looked at the colors of Miri's outfit, even her clothes. She pressed her hands on her eyes trying to regain her sense. Azure forehead leaned on the wall. For some weird reason, her mind could not handle it. There was pain.

"Azure?" Polo said placing his hand on her shoulder.

"There is white everywhere." Azure turned around keeping her eyes closed. "I think its too much for eyes. I guess it's the night vision."

"Sorry about that." Miri said placing her hand on Azure face. "Open your eyes slowly."

Azure opened them slowly. They adjusted to Miri's face. Her vision cleared and she winced from pressing her wings on the wall too hard.

"Why do you have so much white here?"

"It's because of what we went through with Mother." Polo said while Miri held Azure's hand gently.

"We..." Miri said walking Azure. "We don't sleep in the darkness like regular people. It reminds us of Mother."

"I'm sorry." Azure said looking at Miri.

"There is nothing to be sorry about. We just have a hard time coping with what had been done to us."

"Believe me Azure." Polo walked beside her. "I woke up screaming in my first days of freedom. It isn't easy."

"I woke up screaming once. Seeing the of that Oculus thing."

"Ocular." Polo said.

"Who cares what it's called." Azure stepped ahead of Miri and Polo. "It's dead, but I have to live with what it done to me."

Azure curled her hands into a fist. She saw Miri's hand plant onto her fist and held it up. Azure saw comfort in Miri's eyes. She relaxed herself, with a nod of understanding. A connection she felt. The feeling of loneliness because of an experience she had and no one would understand. There was Miri and Polo, a shared story, until Azure realized something.

"I didn't go through what you experienced with Mother." Azure pulled her hand away. "I'm sorry. I don't want to hurt you."

"It's okay." Polo said. "It's close enough. You don't need suffer alone."

Azure felt a pat on her back and Miri gave a wink and smile.

"How about we show you the rec, and watch some TV?" Miri said.

"TV?"

"You know just because we're fighting Mother and Nocturne, doesn't mean we have no sense of fun. Give you a chance to get your mind off all this. We'll talk about what our plans are to deal with Mother and do all the training stuff tomorrow. Okay?"

Azure was thrown off by the sudden change of attitude. Then again, she felt she was dragging everyone down with a negative attitude. Azure summoned up a smile and nodded in agreement to join them.

"I guess, I can go get the sandwich I left behind."

"We'll go get some snacks together." Miri said with a smile.

"I'll go get the TV ready."

Azure followed Miri leaving Polo behind. She looked back and saw he was no longer in their sights. At first, she thought it was strange how fast he left, but then realized that she and Miri were moving fast.

TO BE CONTINUED...

