

Arcana Magi Memorial

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Madam Mayweather and Dean Morden stood in a single room with Polo. They watched three members of Salamander, all adults, hold three portals open. One by one, a student landed on the floor, and a teacher immediately guided outside of the room to meeting area. Polo observed Madam Mayweather's demeanor. The concern in her eyes for the students and faculty under attack by the Nocturne. She looked as though she wanted to go in there and save everyone.

The consistency of arrivals dwindled. It took what took seconds for each person to land now became minutes, like slow drop of water. Three girls dressed in identical costumes — each with a different color - landed before Madam Mayweather. She raised her eyebrows at them, analyzing their outfits. The beads embedded onto their chests, sleeveless outfits that stretched from the neck down to the thighs forming shorts, pairs of gloves and boots over their arms and legs, and color highlights on their hair alongside a pair of hairclips.

“I am Ai Hino.” The girl in red said to Madam Mayweather. “We are the Avatars. We helped combat the Nocturne.”

“Are you girls okay?” Madam Mayweather said.

“A few bruises, but, we're okay.”

“Anybody else?” Morden said.

“Just security now.” Ai said as one security guard landed. As everyone looked at the portal, another followed. Some injured.

“Follow the teachers the designated area with the rest of the school.” Madam Mayweahter watched Ai and the Avatars walk by, and she placed her hand on Ai's shoulder. “Thank you. You girls did a good job.”

The Avatars nodded in acknowledgement though their eyes showed Madam Mayweather that they've seen a lot, and been

through enough. As they turned the corner, Mayweather clenched her fist.

“Kids should not be fighting something like this.”

“I agree Karyn.” Morden said as second group of guards arrived.

“We did one final sweep. That's everyone on our side.” The guard said to the one of the adult members, and the portal closed. Another group arrived in both portals and only one group signaled to close.

“Are there more?” Morden said to the security guard in the last portal.

“Just Daniel. There were two more students running toward us.”

“I see someone.” Polo said.

A boy and a girl landed before the guards, and potted sunflower was in the girls hands. Madam Mayweather turned to the portal and heard a loud scream. Daniel emerged with a boy in his arms. The boy's Nocturne skin disappeared and he scrambled around growling at everyone. As Daniel signaled the portal to close, Polo pounce the boy, and got him under control.

“Daniel.” Madam Mayweather said. “What happened?”

“This Nocturne caught my leg as a big one arrived, so I snatched him inside, so I can escape.” Daniel looked at the kid and recognized him. “That Jonathan Jones. He always says hi to me when he goes bike riding when I am watching the main gate.”

Madam Mayweather watched the boy growling and swiping at Salamander as they tried to communicate with him. Dean Morden waved security over.

“Take him to a triage. Don't let any students see him.” Morden looked at the student calming down in the arms of the adult Salamander members. “Daniel, have security watch the students and gather the faculty for a meet. I want numbers, who made, who got left behind.”

“Yes sir.” Daniel approached Madam Mayweather. “It's good to see you again Karyn.”

“Like wise Daniel.” Madam Mayweather let out a smile and turned her attention to the walls. As Daniel led security to escort the last students with Salamander, Dean Morden stood beside Madam

Mayweather, looking at the wall that led to Memorial Academy.

"It's all gone." Madam Mayweather said. "How many children and staff did we lose?"

"I'm sure the others found ways to get out." Dean Morden closed his eyes. "I believe our loses is not significant."

Madam Mayweather and Dean Morden stared at the walls quietly.

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In the outskirts of Central Heights, a portal appeared on the side of gas station. A team of five SWAT officers emerged with weapons aimed. Polo was with them. The place was empty, the lights inside the shop still on and the garage door opened with a card on a lift. As the SWAT team searched the area.

"All clear." Polo heard from one of the officers and he headed back for the portal, but one of them held their hand up to stop him.

"I have to go back." Polo said as he saw another officer speak into the radio.

"We're evacuating now." The officer said. "You will be with your family and friends soon enough."

The SWAT Leader finished speaking into the radio. Looking out at the city he changed frequencies. "I received word from the Military that their operation is underway. They cannot guarantee security for all extraction points; you are now in a hot zone. Repeat you are now hot. All extraction points report and commence immediately."

"Extraction A secured and underway."

"Extraction B secured and underway."

"Extraction D is under attack! We are being overrun with Nocturne! The portal is cut off! I repeat the portal is —."

"My god." SWAT Leader said.

"This is Extraction C."

SWAT Leader's hand shook but he responded. "Report."

"Extraction C secured and underway."

Polo watched more SWAT teams emerge and forming a perimeter in the area. As soon as they were in position, the leader

called into the radio and a doctor emerged from the portal with a patient on a gurney. More injured people with doctors and nurses stepped out of the portal directed by the SWAT teams to a safe area where they began to create a triage. Another portal formed farther down the wall, and Polo hurried over. He helped his teammate out of the portal followed by more SWAT teams and police officers. Polo led his friend to another portal, and soon the entire building was surrounded with people from the city exiting out.

“Polo!” Swift said waving to him. She ran on her hands and legs like a cat, and pounced on him. She nuzzled him with a purr. “You’re okay.”

“Of course I am Swift. What make you think that?”

“I thought Mother got you.”

“No, she won’t get us.” Polo stood Swift up and she held his hand tight. They looked out at Central Heights, watching the large cloud despite the clear skies above it, descend on to the city.

“Mother is going to turn all the people into Nocturne, isn’t she?”

“Yes.”

“It’s not fair.” Swift hugged Polo as the first responders led out men, women, children, the elderly, and the injured out of the portals, and into safety. Swift covered her ears, squealing in pain. A loud pitch in the distance rattled her.

A loud bang got everyone’s attention and in the sky were jets heading for the Central Heights. Missile’s fired at the cloud, at first the entered inside. There was an explosion, followed by the sound reaching the gas station. The SWAT leader gathered up a team giving them directions. Polo and Swift watched the group lead the people down the road further away from the city as more jets with helicopters flew to the city.

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On the opposite side of the gas station, students filed out one by one with the security guards and faculty guiding them. They created lines and counted each kid. Those who were injured were separated, taken by two teachers to a separate triage where the school nurses tended to them with doctors by their side. The sound of a jet flying

in the distance frightened the students. They looked up and watched one fly by. The children were visibly shaken, some crying, even calling their touch phones for their mother or father or a relative.

Sora and Ciel exited out with Jean-Pierre and Hitomi. Sora's grandfather followed behind them with Patricia. The teacher led the girls to the line, but Sora hesitated.

"I need to be with my grandfather."

"It's all right Sora, go with your school and let them count you. I have to contact your mother."

"You too Ciel, I'll come get you when I get a transport to the hospital ready."

"Okay." Ciel said, and Jean-Pierre and Hitomi followed her. As she checked on Azure, her brother took out a phone and dialed.

"Calling dad?"

"Yes."

"I hope he made it out."

"I'm sure he did."

Ciel stood in line with Sora. Sora's armor drew the attention of the students. Ciel made her Blood Circle appear, and it made a couple of students step back.

"Azure." Ciel said and her circle glowed bright. Everyone watched Azure emerge from the circle, the tips of her sneakers touched the ground and planted her feet.

As Azure stretched, a teacher tapped on her shoulder.

"Get in line please."

"Oh, yes." Azure said with a mature voice making everyone whispered. She noticed they were outside. "Where are we?"

"Outside Central Heights." Sora said as Azure stood in front of her. She noticed Jean-Pierre grew a big smile as talked on the phone. "What's he happy about Ciel?"

"I think its good news." Ciel said stepping off the line drawing a teacher's attention.

"Back in line!"

"Sorry." Ciel stepped back in and leaned over to Azure. "How are you feeling?"

"Weird." Azure said rubbing her neck. "I can't stop talking like this."

"It suits you."

"But I like sounding cheerful."

"Sound cheerful with that voice." Sora said and Jean—Pierre approached the girls.

"Ciel, dad is okay." He presented the phone to Ciel and she took it.

"Daddy?"

"He sweetie." His voice brought Ciel to tears. "Are you okay?"

"No." Ciel looked at Azure. "Azure is connected to my magic circle."

"What? How?"

"It's a long story, but her doctor will have to take us to emergency to separate us." Ciel shook her head. "Where are you?"

"In New London. Listen, as you and your brother find out where they're going to take, I'll be there right away. Okay?"

"Okay." Ciel wiped her tears. "I glad you're safe. I'm happy to hear your voice."

"I'm happy you and your brother are safe. I'll see you both soon. Put your Jean-Pierre on."

Ciel handed the phone to Jean-Pierre and hugged him immediately, burying her face.

"Yes father?"

As Jean-Pierre spoke on the phone, Azure placed her hand over her heart. Watching them talk to their father started to affect her. Memories of her parents giving her their smiles flash before her and it sunk in. She stepped away from the line, ignoring the teachers calling her back. Her eyes glazed over as Sora and Ciel waved the teachers that they would get Azure back. Azure looked around the corner and saw the cloud engulf the rooftops of Central Heights. She felt her legs buckle and she dropped to her knees with tears.

"MOM! DAD!" Azure cried out loud and Sora and Ciel embraced her. Two teachers approached the girls, helping Azure stand up. Sora lifted Azure's face, the distraught look Azure's eyes made it hard to

calm her. The teacher noticed Azure was having an effect on the students and they guided her away from the lines. Sora's hand slipped away from Azure and Ciel keep up with them to the triage. As Patricia walked past Sora to tend to Azure, the Technomancer looked back at the city, her hand curled into a fist.

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A portal to a forest in the night opened. Ragnorak stepped through leaving behind Darius and Myriana on the other side. He stood in the middle of the field with Memorial Academy before him. He looked up and saw the large cloud, near the tip of the buildings. Ragnorak stood still, hearing the sound of hissing and growling. Footsteps scurried across the grass, and slowed into soft steps. Ragnorak listened to the movements in the darkness, and pair of eyes appeared to the left and to the right of him.

The eyes on the left lunged at Ragnorak, and he grabbed the Nocturne by the neck. The eyes on the right crawled towards him on all fours, and he stomp on the creature's back, pinning it down. Both Nocturne struggled to break free. Their skin began to crawl up his leg and down his arm, but it stopped. The grey mana seeping from Ragnorak sent the Nocturne into a frenzy. With force, Ragnorak subdued them. He knelt down and scooped the Nocturne on the floor under his arms.

Once he stood up, he made another portal, and carried them inside. He emerged on the other side where scientists were preparing to put on lab coats, all turned in shock at his presence. The Nocturne's skin slid away revealing a boy and a girl. He stood quietly looking ahead, surrounded by research and inventions.

"Call security." One of the scientists said.

"That won't be necessary." A woman said behind the scientists, catching Ragnorak's attention. "He's my three o'clock appointment."

As Ragnorak approached the woman carrying the children on his arms, the scientists stepped aside revealing her, slipping on a lab coat with a patch that read Avalon Tech. "My name is Oryn Zentharis... please to meet you, Ragnorak."

She smiled.

TO BE CONTINUED...

