Arcana Magi Pure - c.4

by H-M Brown

Shining Star gathered all her Mana at the tip of her staff, aimed directly at Emi. The mist transformed into a ball of light with flames build up inside. She saw Emi's locket glow bright. With her spell not yet complete, Shining Star had no choice.

“FIRE BOMB!” The spell shot out like a cannon, incomplete as it was, and swerved toward Emi. Shining Star hoped it would not miss. The fireball straightened out and was about to strike Emi.

“DARKLIGHT BIND!” A purple light shot out of the jewel like a water fountain, raining over Emi creating a dome. The Fire Bomb spell exploded, making everyone shield their eyes. When the smoke cleared, there was no damage.

Mayumi looked at the spell and saw her sister in silhouette floating above the ground. She was not sure what was happening but she saw what looked like a star floating toward her sister's chest. When it connected, the dome disappeared and Emi was in her battle costume. She heard Nina growling in her arms. Mayumi felt the fox shiver as though she was cold. They both saw the corrupt Mana around Emi's body barely spotted the clean Mana mixed within.

“What's wrong with the Mana, Nina?”

“It's acting like oil and vinegar. It's trying to mix itself. This is bad.”

“EMI!” Mayumi stepped forward but her sister's arm stretched out.

“Stay back.” Emi said and Mayumi stopped. “I told you. This is my fight.”

“You don't have to do this.” Mayumi reached out but Emi leaned forward taking a sprinters position. Mayumi remembered what Sayako said about Emi's speed and noticed the metal bars floating behind her sister's back. They were positioning themselves, straightening outward.

“Orichalcham.” Nina said.

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“What's that?”

“A mixture of iron, steel, onyx, and obsidian, smelted together to become a magical tool.”

“Really?” Mayumi saw Shining Star waiting on Emi. She realized the young Magi was in a bad position. “Get out of the way, Shining Star!”

“Why?! I have the high ground!”

“My sister…”

Emi burst with a boom and ran. She leaned her body forward with her arms stretched behind her back. Emi left behind deep footprints in the grass when she climbed up the hill. She saw the shocked look in Shining Star's eyes when she curled her hand into a fist and threw it at her. Emi slid past Shining Star with a cold smile, looking back at her opponent falling to the ground. Without hesitation, she gathered Mana at the tip of her fingers making purple electricity spark. When Shining Star got to her knees, Emi dashed over and slapped hands on the Magi's head.

“DARKNESS SHOCKWAVE!”

Shining Star screamed struggling to break free. She saw Mayumi come at her letting Nina go. In that moment, she thought she was done for. Both sisters ready to finish her off, but it never happened. Shining Star fell to the ground, gasping for air. She saw Mayumi pinning Emi on the ground, the two of them staring at each other in a stalemate. Shining Star felt a nudge on her arm and saw Nina leaned close to her.

“Are you alright Shining Star?”

“Y…yeah.” The Magi sat up rubbing her head, and trying to focus her eyes. “I don't understand.”

“It's what we've been trying to tell you. Mayumi and I are not the enemy. We're trying to find out who is training Emi so we can stop them and get her out. They've only been Magi for a couple of days.”

“What?” Shining Star saw the intensity of the twins grappling each other's arms. She was not sure who would win. The fact that they've only been Magi for a couple of days, now gave her an idea of what may be happening.

“Fox, were they… scared when they found out about the Mana?”

“Yes. Mayumi feared that Emi's teacher too advantage of her sister. However, I fear Emi may have been willing to accept that locket.”

“I see.” Shining Star picked up her staff and approached the twins.

“Stay back.” Mayumi saw the Magi with the corner of her eyes while focusing on her sister. “This is a family problem.”

“That's right.” Emi said with a smirk. “If you don't want to die you'll stay…”

“SHUT UP EMI!” Mayumi shook her sister by the shoulders. “This isn't you! You're not a killer!”

“She came to attack me.” Emi noticed a bruise on Mayumi's neck hidden under the collar. It was fresh. “She did this to your neck?”

“What?” Mayumi slid her hands off Emi's shoulders and felt the sting. Her eyes lit open when her sister pushed her off. She got to her knees and saw Emi on her feet.

“You hurt my sister.” Emi spread her fingers open. “You will suffer.”

Mayumi saw Emi raise her arms up Shining Star aiming her staff. It was madness. Two Magi ready to kill each other. Mana channeled with two forces of wind clashing at each other. Mayumi looked up at the building and realized people were starting to watch. Everything was spiraling out of control. Mayumi had enough of it and ran toward the girls.

“FIRE BEAM!” A blast of fire and light shot out of Shining Star's staff.

“SHADOW BLAST!” A blast of purple and black shadow shot out of Emi's fingers.

“REFLECT!” Mayumi stood between the attacks with her arms pointing at them. Both spells landed on the palm of her hands. She felt like she caught them and held them back from striking each other. There was a tingling sensation and her arms became numb. Mayumi roared and redirected the spells up into the air. Both collided causing an explosion. The shockwave rattled the glass and

knocked all the Magi to the ground.

Mayumi stared at the explosion dissipating in the sky. The sun shined out and Emi knelt over her, calling out to her, but there was no sound. She saw Emi shed tears, and felt hope in her heart for her sister. The world moved around for a moment and there was Shining Star on the ground trembling in shock with Nina standing next to her. Soon they both looked distant, as did the school and the ground itself. Everything around Mayumi became a blur and went dark.

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The stone floor was cold and the sky above had a purple haze. The setting sun hid beyond the trees outside the crumbled walls. Vines reached over the well as if it grabbed it like hand. The wood that made up the shrine was grey and splintered. Before her was Emi on her knees praying. Mayumi sat up and felt the numbness in her arms. Bandages covered her wounds. She remembered. The shockwave from the explosion still lingered when she tried to stand up. Her sight blurred again and her body struggled to respond.

Mayumi closed her eyes and focused. Once she opened them, she could not move. For when she looked around her, there were centipedes watching her. A swarm that moved aside creating a path to Emi and the shrine. Only thing was that when she got closer to her sister, the centipedes got bigger. Big enough to tower over Mayumi if they stood. All of them shifted their heads keeping Mayumi in their sights. When one of the big ones hissed, a loud clap frightened it. Emi lifted her head up and looked back with the corner of her red eyes.

“Do not touch her.” She said and the big centipede bowed slinking back into the crowd. “Please sit.”

Mayumi's hands trembled. She was not sure if she wanted to take the request or run. Unfortunately, the centipedes behind her closed the gap and unless she wants to trample them and fight the big ones, she had no choice. She approached her sister and saw the little centipedes place a worn pillow before her to sit on. She waited for them to leave and even then, she did not want to sit on it.

“Let's talk Mayumi. Please.”

Mayumi took a deep breath and sat beside her sister.

“I'm scared.” Emi said with a calm voice. “I thought I knew what I was doing as a Magi, but I really don't. That's why I want to learn how to cast spells. Get stronger and better.”

“This Mana is no good. It's corrupted you and hurting you.”

“It is difficult to channel this Mana, and painful, but I'm getting use to it. This shrine has been helpful.”

“These creatures lied to you about getting rid of your spell and you got in trouble for it.”

“And I punished them for that.” Emi released her hands from the prayer position and looked at the broken home of the spirit that lives there. “That is Hikari. Goddess of Light. She's the reason I have this beautiful outfit that protects me from getting hurt. She also is going to make me her priestess and I'll be finishing the final rites tonight. Soon we will bring good light to everyone and guide them to a positive world.”

“Emi!” Mayumi grabbed her sister's shoulders. “This goddess is not about bringing people to a positive world. Look around you. Everything is…”

Mayumi jerked her head back from seeing her reflection in her sister's red pupil-less eyes. She realized what happened.

“Do you see this light?”

“Of course. Don't you. It's wonderful. It's like I'm swimming in it.” Emi watched Mayumi lowered her head and lifted it back up. “It's okay. Hikari told me not to expect everyone, even my family to understand what is going on.”

“Emi.” Mayumi released her sister and turned to the shrine. “How could you do this to her?! If you're so positive, why is your shrine overrun by monsters and look dead?!”

“Mayumi,” Emi took her sisters hands and held them up. “this is what I want.”

“No.”

“Really it is. Or… I would not have accepted this locket or this role as the priestess of Hikari. It's what I want. Do you understand? I can do this. I'm not scared anymore. I am a Magi.”

“But you're going to hurt people. These things will too.”

“No. I made it very clear that I won't hurt anybody. Not even you or mother or father or my friends.”

“You're still going to do bad things.”

“People may think what I'll do is bad, but it's for the good.”

“I may end up fighting you.”

“I understand.”

Tears fell down Mayumi's face and Emi wiped them away. She could not believe what her sister said. When Mayumi laid her head on Emi's shoulder, she knew purification appeared useless now.

“Mayumi, you could still become a priestess and join me. We can make the world a better place.”

“No.” Mayumi said pulled herself up shaking her head. “You're going down a path I won't follow. How about you join me? The kitsune will train you properly in casting spells. They won't hurt you or make you hurt anyone, or do anything bad.”

“I appreciate it, but I have made decision and that's it.” Emi looked to the side and a tiny centipede approached her walking in a circle. “It's time for the final rites. You can't be here. The exit is over by the well and the stairs will lead to a path down the hill. Just follow the houses to the main street and you should find our usual route home from school.”

Mayumi sat there looking at her sister. Without thought or reason, she grabbed her sister's arm and pulled her to her feet. Mayumi dragged her struggling sister looking at the entrance ahead. The centipedes hissed and one of the big ones tackled Mayumi to the ground. It opened its mouth and drool dripped toward her face. She shielded herself and felt her arm burn.

Emi kicked it off Mayumi and she aimed her hand at the creature with channeled Mana.

“GRAVITY VOID.” The air ripped apart into a vortex of black and purple. It sucked in the big centipede with its squeal echoing into nothingness. The spell was so quick that Mayumi never had a chance to comprehend its power. She looked back and so the coldness in her sister's eyes. The centipedes however, did not like

that and turned on Emi, who struggled to regain her focus. “The spell was too powerful. You have to go.”

“NO!”

“Do you know any offensive spells?!” Emi looked at Mayumi who could not answer. She grabbed her sister and pushed her forward. “RUN! And don't come back!”

As Mayumi ran, she looked back at Emi pushing the bugs back, keeping them from chasing her. Mayumi grappling with whether to stay or go, a big centipede lunged at her. She stepped aside and ran forward with a few centiedes following. Mayumi ran down the stairs, which crumbled under her feet. She tripped over and tumbled down the stairs, landing on her back. Wincing in pain, she struggled to her feet at the sight of the swarm cascading down the stairs like a waterfall. Mayumi took a deep breath pushed as hard as she could down the path along the sloping hill. A small street was ahead and cars passing by, she knew she would make it. Once outside a car drove by before she could stop it and found herself in the middle of the street alone. Looking back at the forest covered hill, she saw the centipedes making their way down and she followed the row of houses.

Mayumi stumbled at the foot of the main street and a handful of speedy centipedes behind her. She raised her arms up channeling Mana, but the sound of a caw stopped everyone. The grey crow she saw earlier today dove down and caught one of the centipedes. When she watched it fly up, there was another bird, or at least what she thought was a bird, reaching out to the crow. The crow circled around and made another pass chasing off the remaining centipedes. Mayumi did not waste time trying to figure out who that was and she turned the corner onto the main street. After crossing a few intersections, she leaned on the wall exhausted, nursing her wounds.

“Emi…”

Mayumi collapsed on the ground with a frozen stare, covered in a shadow with wings unfurled, until the sun rested for the night and the moon began its ascent.

TO BE CONTINUED...