

Arcana Magi Pure Vol.2 - c.3

by H-M Brown

"Time for me to get to work." Natsume led Mayumi and Keiko out of her room. She smiled at them holding a portfolio with Mayumi's name on it. "Normally I would ask you to come back in a week to try on your outfit for final adjustments before completing it, but given your situation, I'm going to make an exception."

"Natsume?" Keiko said. "You're going to use your Clock Speed spell?"

"Yes."

"What is Clock Speed?" Mayumi said.

"Basically I just make myself move faster. Speed spells are my secondary spells behind Boost Enchantments."

"Hasn't your teacher taught you anything?"

"Mayumi is still learning." Keiko said. "It's going to time for her to know everything."

"Sorry Akamatsu-san." Natsume stepped back holding the door. "I should get started. In three hours I'm going to need you try on your outfit for adjustments."

"Can't I stay? There's so much I want to know."

"I need to be alone to cast this spell to sew. Both of your presence in here would interfere and I could get hurt."

"It's okay Mayumi." Keiko said. "Let's back to the Shrine of Four Mythic Beasts and make a plan while we wait. Natsume would you like me to bring your anything?"

"No. Thank you for your offer."

"Okay. Come on Mayumi."

"Oh." Mayumi took a step and turned around bowing. "Thank you very much."

"I am glad to help."

Mayumi followed Keiko to the entrance where Mrs. Saito stood

by opening the door for them. As soon as they stepped out, Mayumi looked back at Natsume's mother and saw a different expression. It was as if Mrs. Saito wanted to say something. To offer some kind of comfort, but no one spoke.

After Mrs. Saito closed the door, she looked over at her daughter's room. The door veiled in Mana, cascading like a waterfall, she had to wait for Natsume to finish. The phone rang in the living room and she picked it up. She approached the window pulling the curtain to the side.

"Hello."

"Did you talk to her?" A man's voice said over the phone.

"No." Mrs. Saito watched Mayumi and Keiko walk away from the building.

"Why?"

"I overheard their conversation. Something's not right." Mrs. Saito walked back to the phone receiver and sat on the sofa. "The Kitsune and Inu clans allied themselves to deal with the Mukado. It should not have taken them a month to get the girl out and defeat the Mukado."

"Perhaps they're playing it safe."

"Or something bigger is happening that these girls don't know about and the Society is unaware of."

"Are they coming back?"

"Yes, but I rather we keep our distance and let the clans make the first move. The less Mayumi Akamatsu knows about us, the less the clans know we're involved in this case."

"I don't like that idea, those girls could get hurt or worse, but it's your call."

"Just have the Society on standby and ready to get the girls out if things go bad."

"Understood Captain."

Mrs. Saito hanged the phone up and she folded her hand leaning her head on them.



At the Shrine of Four Mythic Beasts, Nina and Goro relaxed on

grass near a bench. The sun covered partially by clouds, and the wind bristled the leaves above them. Feeling the air's soft touch, reminded Nina of Mayumi's progress as a Wind Magi, but it also brought to mind a strange saying from Ompa when they left the theater.

"Do you feel that little one?" Ompa said in Nina's thoughts. Her memory showed them looking out of a small opening of the canopy like trees. "The winds of time are shifting, and it will not care if many of us stay behind."

Nina blinked her eyes and saw a shadow move. The irritating sound came from above them. There was a giant night cicada continuing onward, leaving behind the little one. Nina and Goro stood up, waiting by the bench and the little cicada the size of an adult hand landed before them.

"Hello." Her soft voice was welcoming to the fox and the dog. "I am Yuri of the Higurashi Clan."

"I am Nina of the Kitsune Clan. Welcome to the Shrine of Four Mythic Beasts."

"And I am Goro of the Inu Clan. How can we help?"

"The Old One is here to have a meeting with the Grand Elder."

"Ompa?" Nina said and received Yuri's nod in response

"Master is here for a meeting as well." Goro said.

"Oh?" Yuri said standing on two feet and crossing her arms.

"This must be big then."

"It has to do with Mayumi and her sister." Nina said planting her front feet on the bench to stand up.

"Mayumi? The girl who is learning Purify?"

"Yes." Nina nodded.

"Is she here? I would like to meet her."

"She should be coming by later." Goro said. "She is with my student, getting a combat outfit made."

"So she has chosen to be a Combat Magi, Goro?"

"Yes. She wants to save her sister from the Mukado."

"I can't wait to see this." Yuri flew over Nina's head and fluttered around the grounds a bit. She noticed the shrine building housing

the Four Mythic Beasts and she hovered in front of it. "Nina is it true your guardian is a foreigner?"

"Yes."

"How did you control her? She must have been reckless. You know how dangerous foreigners are. Especially with a sacred power such as the Four Mythic Beasts."

"Alysia is not dangerous. She's a good girl and has a kind heart. She is one of us. She is part of the Miyazaki Family."

"Oooh. Interesting. Especially since foreigners find humor in our traditions." Yuri landed before the shrine and placed her front legs together to pray. "I wish all the best for your guardian."

"How dare you?" Goro said. "You should get to know her first."

"Foreigners are all the same Goro. You of all the clans know better. Right?"

"You're wrong." Nina said. "And Alysia will prove it."

"Hmph." Yuri crawled past them without looking back. "Back to the situation at hand. We of the Higurashi Clan, has dispatched one of our Kunoichi to assist your girls in this case. Both of your clans spent an entire month and failed to stop the Mukado from forming a clan. Now they gained followers. And after what the clans have voted for this morning and the Karasu Clan showing up, we felt the need to step in and do a little clean up."

"Why you...?" Goro said growling under his teeth, but Nina stepped in front of him.

"You think this situation is straight forward. In case you haven't noticed we have only one Magi here to help fight and the Mukado suddenly got stronger."

"Huh?" Yuri turned around tilting her head. "So you underestimated them."

Nina and Goro looked down without a single word to counterpoint.

"No worries, our Kunoichi will help your girl get her sister out with no problem."



Mayumi and Keiko crossed the street approaching the café.

Mayumi stopped halfway across and looked up at a lamppost. She noticed a crow perched on it watching down on her. She stepped back when the signal light turned green forcing her onto the sidewalk. When she looked back up, the crow was gone.

"Mayumi, hurry."

Just as Mayumi turned around the crow flew over her head, making her scream. She saw it circle around in the air and flew down the street. A flash of memory when she first saw the crows at the Shrine of Hikari, and the mysterious person floating in the air with them, peak her curiosity. She ran after it ignoring Keiko's voice and remembered seeing a crow at her afterschool Cooking Club.

"Why are they around?"

The crow led her to a park and into the open field. She stopped atop a hill and found herself alone. The air picked up and she felt the wind through her fingertips. She brushed her hair back to keep it from covering her eyes. The howl of the wind made her skin crawl. A voice spoke in the air as though it was the wind itself talking.

"The winds flow like time itself. Never stopping, always pacing. Even when it feels like it is not moving, it is still with us. Even if locked in a box, it still moves on. It is unwavering."

"I don't understand." Mayumi spun around trying to see who was talking. She stopped and there was Keiko grabbing her. Mayumi placed her hand on her head, her vision blurred from the voice in her mind. Once she regained her focus. Keiko led her away from the crowd that suddenly appeared.

"Where were these people?"

"What happened, Mayumi?"

"I don't know. I was following a crow and then someone was talking to me."

"Who?"

"I don't know."

"We better go back to the shrine and let everyone know about this."



Mayumi and Keiko returned to the shrine. No one was around.

The girls wandered around the premises looking for someone, and they both went in different directions. Mayumi all alone, made her way down a path, where the forest was dense. It looked like it was getting dark, but she was able to see the sunlight through the leaves above. Ahead, she heard voices. She approached very slowly, as quiet as possible. She knelt behind a pair of shrubs and peeked through a small opening.

Beyond the shrubbery, she saw a giant fox, cicada and dog sitting around a square wooden block. On the surface of the block were black and white smooth stones, lying on dots with line forming squares. The fox and dog lied casually opposite each other with two bowls filled with black and white smooth stones.

"They're playing Go?" Mayumi thought.

Floating over their heads were ghostly looking hands. The fox's ghost hand reached for a black stone and placed it on top of the block. All three sat quietly never saying a word. Their eyes focused on the board waiting for the next move. It felt like forever, Mayumi unsure how long they have been sitting there waiting for the dog to make a move. More time has passed and Mayumi struggled to keep her eyes open. Then she heard a clack. The dog made his move and it was the fox's turn.

"I'm surprised the crows left the meeting prematurely without hearing the debate." The dog said catching Mayumi's attention.

"They know something." The cicada said with male voice.

"Even if they did, it doesn't change our situation."

"Indeed." The cicada looked up at the sky. "It's unfortunate that both your clans didn't put a stop to the Mukado. It is unfortunate that your resources were that diminished."

"I know." The dog let out a deep breath. "Now the clans are desperate."

"The fools. They have no idea what they are about to cause."

"Well we appreciate you coming to us and provide assistance. We have to get the child out of the Mukado's hands before the clans get her."

"Emi." Mayumi said under her breath.

"The Karasu Clan is right." The fox said watching the dog place a white stone on the board. "We could be on the cusp of another Children's War."

Mayumi lifted her head hearing those words. She wondered what that was.

"Something doesn't add up." The cicada said. "Why are the Mukado this organized? They are just rampant marauders that'll attack anybody. They never had a need for a shrine, a priestess, and followers."

"They want to be a clan." The fox said placing a stone on the board. "That is obvious."

"So they have a leader now?" The dog said.

"I don't believe it." The cicada said.

"Times change." The fox said. "They may have chosen to adapt and decided on an Elder like the rest of us. It's only a matter of motive for doing all of this. They are spreading impure Mana fast."

"It's all too convenient." The dog said. "I don't like it."

All three elders exhaled from their frustration and focused on the board.

"The priestess." The fox said and the others looked at him. "Our focus will be to get her out before the clans get her. Fighting the Mukado will be the least priority for this moment."

"Agreed." The dog said and the cicada nodded.

"We shall have the priestess' sister, and each of your Magi you have assigned this case to, to assist us in the next mission. We will get the priestess out before the Clans capture her and cast the Purge spell on the child. The last thing we want is for the Society to carry off with an emotionless doll."

"What?" Mayumi covered her mouth and the dog's ears rose up. She immediately ran off with the sound of thunder catching up behind her. She tripped over tree roots tumbling down a slope. It was long way down with dirt kicking up and leaves sticking to her. Mayumi landed at the bottom. The world spun around her. She laid there without a single thought. The sun struggled to break through the branches and leaves. The leaves rained down on her gently,

perched on a branch was a crow. Mayumi chuckled while her hands shook.

TO BE CONTINUED...

