

Arcana Magi Pure Vol.5 - c.2

by H-M Brown

Emi paced back and forth, fixing her jacket out of nervousness. The cool breeze crawled around her skin and she shivered. So much was on her mind at this moment; it felt like her life was changing in another direction. Although, her life did change when she learned about her Mana and being a Magi, this however was different. She was about to tell her friend Sayako the truth about everything that has happened to her. Fear filled Emi's heart because she does not know what Sayako's reaction will be.

The sound of footsteps climbing the stairs made Emi pause. She turned around and saw Sayako, in dress and sweater, looking around. Her eyes were in awe of the shrine. She soaked in the grounds, a sense of enjoyment being in such an otherworldly place. Emi smiled approaching her friend.

"Welcome to the Shrine of Four Mythic Beasts, Sayako."

"Emi-chan." Sayako said facing her friend. "This is a beautiful place."

"I know. There is so much to see here."

"Let's look around see what's here."

"I'll give you the tour in a minute, but first I want to talk to you."

Sayako stood quiet as she saw Emi's nervous expression. She followed Emi to the nearby bench and they sat down unaware of Mayumi leaning around the corner.

Mayumi carefully listened to Emi explain everything to Sayako. Her hands shivered for her sister, worried that Sayako may end her friendship. She was ready to console Emi, hearing her voice crack up and stutter to Sayako. There was silence from Sayako as Mayumi watched Emi demonstrate a small spell. Mayumi noticed little reaction from Sayako. Perhaps it was shock. When Sayako stood to her feet, the moment has come.

"Oh Emi," Sayako said taking her friends hands. "that explains everything about the way you have been acting."

"Eh?"

"I know about the Magi." Sayako raised their hands up with a smile as Mayumi walked away quietly. "My little brother is a Magi. We have been keeping it a secret from our parents. We don't know what to do."

Emi's eyes grew wide and tears welled. Her head dropped and Sayako led her to the bench. They sat down, tightening each other grip.

"How?" Emi said. "I don't get it. Are you a Magi too?"

"No. I can't cast spells. I can't see this Mana my brother talks about. Honestly, I heard rumors of people called Magi, so I began research, but found nothing. I didn't think they existed until weird things started happening on TV. Hearing what you have been doing, what has happened in town, it makes sense... Emi-chan?"

Sayako saw Emi's face covered in tears. She struggled to wipe them away but they would not stop. Sayako placed her arms around Emi's shoulders, rubbing them gently to calm her friend.

"I messed up." Emi said.

"How?" Sayako pulled Emi up to sit her straight. She handed Emi a cloth to wipe away the tears.

"All this time I believed I was alone." Emi fixed herself to sit comfortably and looked Sayako in the eyes. "But I was stupid. I was so scared of my Mana and having these abilities, that I let Hikari convince me to be her priestess. I hurt so many people, and cause many to die."

"You did not do that."

"I did. I had the power, she gave me the power, because I was too weak. Too weak to say no. Too weak to reach out to you when you came to me. Came to Mayumi. She told me you were concerned, but I didn't care. I just wanted to... I don't know what I wanted. Now, that I am full of impure Mana, I could die. I'm going to die."

"You're not going to die." Sayako grabbed Emi's shoulder and looked her in the eyes. "Not if I can help it."

"How?"

"I don't know, but something is better than sitting here crying scared."

Emi's eyes trailed off, looking in different directions as her mind wrapped around Sayako's words. Calmed, Emi took a deep breath and smiled.

"We can do this Emi. You are not alone. You never were."

"Yes."

"So how about that tour?" Sayako received a nod and they stood up to their feet.

"We'll meet up with my sister and the Cooking Club and take the tour."

"Cooking Club?" Sayako said with a sudden pause. Her mind clicked and her eyes grew wide. "Our Cooking Club."

"Yes." Emi nodded.

"Ayane's here." Sayako said her eyes lowering.

"Yes." Emi nodded with her hands raised to calm Sayako.

"They're helping Mayumi and Kitsune rebuild Miyazaki-san's home."

"But Ayane is such a flake." Sayako followed Emi down the path. "Always demanding for increase funds at the Student Council Meetings."

"I know, I know, but they're our on side and they're helping us out."

"I guess it can't be helped."

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At the end of the day, the sun setting in the distance, everyone was set to go home. There was a positive feel in the air. With Sayako in the circle now, everyone felt confident about their growing group. Nina approached Sayako after she slung her book bag over her shoulder and sat before her.

"Sayako."

"Yes Nina." Sayako crouched down to look the fox in the eyes.

"Your brother is welcome here to the Shrine. We are a safe haven. We can also help him with being a Magi. He is among friends and we will protect him."

"Hmph." Hideki said looking away drawing Sayako's attention.

"Pay him no mind."

"Still. Thank you for your offer. I will bring Kenji over and see what he thinks. I don't want to pressure him into doing something he doesn't want."

"I understand, but he still welcome always."

"Thank you." Sayako stood up and bowed to Nina.

"Ready, Captain." Ayane said with grin.

"Of course Chef." Sayako turned around with a grimace holding back any negative emotion trying to break out.

Mayumi, Emi, Keiko, and Rumiko waved goodbye to Sayako and the Cooking Club. Each group parted ways in different directions and left Sayako confused as she walked beside Tomiko.

"So there is a Magi who designs and sews magical costumes for the Magi."

"Yes." Tomiko said.

"That sounds cool. Running all over the place fighting monsters, just like in the Manga."

Sayako was met with silence. There was a sense that something was wrong with everyone, as though they experience no one should have. She wanted to say something else, but now it felt awkward.

"Mizuguchi-san." Takashi said.

"Please call me Sayako."

"Call me Sempai."

"No I will not." Sayako said turning her head to the side.

"Look," Takashi said looking at her. "the Magi deal with things that are very dangerous. People get hurt or die."

"I know, Emi-chan." Sayako looked at Takashi and was met with eyes consumed with reality. Concern grew slowly in her mind. "Will my brother be okay?"

"I don't know." Takashi said. "But it will not be easy for him to grow up a Magi. There is something to them that is complicated, it's beyond my own understanding. Honestly, I am not jealous of them casting spells."

Takashi's words made Hideki let out a puff of air.

"Hideki." Ayane said as the group turned the corner at the intersection. "You've been very irritated since this afternoon. Is something wrong?"

The caw of a crow caught the groups' attention. Sayako stared at it feeling its stare. Hideki saw a crow perched on a tree branch took a deep breath and smiled. "No, no. Everything has been fun so far. Soon we'll have that command center you wanted and we can help the twins out."

"Good." Ayane said leaning close to Hideki letting out an aura of terror. "Because if you do anything to ruin the Cooking Club, I'll put in a headlock and twisted your head."

Hideki flinched to the side with hands raised and an awkward smile. Not saying a word he nodded in agreement and Ayane kept walking. Hideki quickly walked beside Tomiko.

"I'm not shielding you."

"Come on please?"

Sayako laughed and Ayane looked back with the corner of her eyes with a grin.

"You do like us." Ayane received Sayako's glare. "Oooh, you're going to cut our funding in the next meeting?"

"Can't you take the meetings seriously?"

"Hey." Takashi said quieting everyone. The night sky consumed the light, and Takashi looked around.

"What is it?" Ayane said but he raised his hand to quiet her.

"You don't hear that?" Suddenly there was light hiss and Sayako and Tomiko turned around.

Behind them was black skinned creature like the night sky above. Short in length and stature, its red eyes glared at the group with its long jagged claws. Two tails whipped back and forth independently until they stopped, and one thorn from each tail popped out, a drop of liquid seeped out of its tips. It growled a strange whistling sound that forced everyone to crouch to near state of submission. Its body stretched out in length and its head curved upwards like a bendable straw.

Hideki immediately stepped in front of the group. No words

spoken by anyone, no actions or reactions made, the moment Hideki removed a small pocket knife from his back pocket. Like a switch blade he jerked his hand to flip the blade out. Then clasped it between both his hands and the crow flew down glowing, bright merging with the knife, and grew into a sword.

Ayane raised her arms across, and led everyone back to a wall giving Hideki room. It was such a natural reaction by the group, they gave it no thought. Silence was the key. No one made any sudden movements or noise. It was in Hideki's eyes. Focus. It was as though he had done this before; as though he knew what he routinely does. Not a single member of the Cooking Club knew what to think of Hideki. He was now a complete stranger.

Everything was in slow motion now. The creature lunged at Hideki. Their friend jumped aside to avoid the sharp claws. He rolled onto one knee, with the sword held over his. The creature walked around hissing and snapping its teeth, five rows across, outstretched like fingers looking to grab an object. Hideki grunted, pushing the sword forward, hoping to scare it off. It instead swiped at the blade. The sound of the clang against the claw created a piercing sound causing everyone to cover their ears screaming in pain. Hideki however clenched his teeth, absorbing not only the sound, but the vibration of the impact.

The sound of the crows screams from pain made the creature jump back into a defensive posture. It hissed and scraped the ground, clawing out the pavement like dirt. It took a single step forward, tails aimed at Hideki, ready to strike when the sound of a loud horn made it look up and to the right. Everyone had a hard time discerning where this horn was coming from. Before they knew it, the creature ran off, into the shadow itself. It left as fast as it arrived. The creature left everyone little time to grasp or comprehend what just happened.

What they do know, as the sword turned back into a crow, that Hideki had a little secret. As the crow collapsed in Hideki's hand, the air of silence caught his attention. Looking back at his friends, he was ready for a scolding.

"I want one." Tomiko said and broke everyone's state of shock.

"I can explain everything." Hideki said. "But not here, that thing could return any minute."

"I agree." Tomiko said and Sayako nodded.

"All right then." Ayane said walking past Hideki with her head turned away and everyone followed her. "We'll go to my family's restaurant and talk."

TO BE CONTINUED...

