

Arcana Magi Pure Vol.6 - c.2

by H-M Brown

"Somebody pick up." Mrs. Saito said as Rumiko knelt close to the stoned guard.

Rumiko saw his name tag in stone, Tomoe, and tried to wrest the radio out of his stone hands. It took a moment when she pulled with all her strength, but once she removed it, his fingers broke off freaking out the girls. Rumiko landed on her butt from the force of the release, and her eyes grew wide at his hands.

"Is everyone okay?" Mrs. Saito said over the radio.

"Ah..." Rumiko reacted and pressed the button to talk. "They're turned to stone."

"Stone? What are talking about?"

Rumiko shook her head and regained her focus. She stood up taking a deep breath. "The guards you sent us turned to stone. We're surrounded by white mist, but everything is turned to stone."

Rumiko leaned closed to the stone grass as step snapped them into pieces. She noticed Tomoe's entire body including clothes was transformed into stone, but not the radio in hand.

"Where are you girls at?"

Rumiko turned to the girls. Mayumi, Emi and Keiko shrugged their shoulders looking around. Rumiko can only see the sky above them.

"I don't know Mrs. Saito. We can't see anything beyond the mist. I think we lost the road we were on."

"Okay, don't move. Stay in one place. We're coming to get you."

"NO!" Rumiko said and the girls gathered around her. "You'll turn to stone to if walk here. Use a helicopter or stay in the air. Just don't come on the ground."

"What happened to the Tracker Spell I cast on your brooches?"

"Sorry you're breaking up." Rumiko turned off the radio and

faced the girls. "How did we lose the road? We weren't that far away."

"I'm not sure." Mayumi said. "Everything happened so fast."

Keiko crossed her arms. "I think maybe we shouldn't have let Natsume block out that Tracker Spell Mrs. Saito wanted to place on our brooches."

"We'll regret that choice later." Rumiko said. "What we need to do is figure out what is going on and what we're going to do next, because I really do not want to stay here surrounded by stone turning mist."

"So many questions." Keiko said standing before the white mist, but kept her distance. "Is this connected to the valley in your dreams Mayumi? How long has this mist been moving toward the city?"

"I don't know." Mayumi turned to Keiko as Emi took a step forward. "I never saw this in my dreams."

"Don't move Emi." Rumiko said with her hand raised up. "The mist is reacting to you and Mayumi."

Emi turned to the white mist as Keiko and Rumiko slowly approached the twins. She gripped her sister's hand, tightening her grip. Shivering like leaf in the wind. Emi felt Mayumi's arm around her shoulder and her head turned slightly towards her sister.

"Emi, this is not your fault."

"I... what do you mean?"

"I think I know what this looks like to you, but—"

"No, I'm not feeling like it's my fault." Emi took a deep breath and took one step away from Mayumi. "I was thinking of the Mukado. What if they were caught in the mist? Did they also turn to stone like the guards here? What if other people as well. Are they dead?"

"I don't know. I don't know why the mist is moving with us. This is getting to be too much to handle. Wait..." Mayumi clenched her hands into fist and channeled her grey Mana. She approached the white mist with her arm outstretched. Keiko and Eumiko stood between the twins and watched. The white mist created a short

alley; repelled by Mayumi's arm. She pulled back and mist merged, sealing that small opening. Mayumi looked at her hand and turned to the girls, where Keiko covered her mouth in shock. "I don't understand."

"Maybe because our Mana is grey now. It can't touch us." Emi said with her brows lowered. "I say we move forward."

"I say we retreat." Rumiko said lifting up the radio. "There something weird about this. For some reason the radio is not stone but the clothes are. We should get this analyzed."

"We can split up." Keiko said. "I think we need to get to that valley and find out why all of this happening and stop it."

"That's a bad idea." Rumiko said. "Two of us might not handle what's out there, plus it also means splitting the twins, it might put us at a disadvantage."

"I don't think so." Emi said. "I can go ahead and find the valley, keep Mayumi away at least so she won't get influenced by Kurai."

"But you might get influenced by the goddess over there instead of Hikari."

"I'm not that weak anymore Rumi-chan." Emi took a step forward and Rumiko glared back.

"Hey hey..." Keiko stepped in between the girls. "Let's take our time and think this through. We have a lot of choices here and we have time."

"No," Mayumi said. "we don't."

The girls turned to Mayumi, looking at the white mist. Her eyes focused in on the floating substance. The brooch in her hand, she clenched it tight and looked up.

"SHINE SPARK!" A bright light enveloped Mayumi and it disappeared. She was wearing red bike shorts with a single piece red and white skirt draped over it, sneaker heeled mini-boots, and fingerless gloves, and red hairclips. She looked at her outfit stretching her body to make sure it fits fine, and turned to the girls. "This mist is moving and we need to stop it at the source. If this is connected to the valley in my dream, I want to stop it, before it reaches the city."

The girls looked at each other with Mayumi staring out at the mist. There was this look in their eyes when heard 'the city' from Mayumi. Looking at the Tomoe's stoned body, they understood now what was at stake. Rumiko took out her brooch, and Emi and Keiko followed suit.

"Okay," Rumiko said. "we go forward to the valley and save the city."

With their brooches raised over their heads, the girls chanted.

"SHINE SPARK!"

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As Takashi and Tomiko sat on a pair of benches breathing heavily in their gym clothes, Ayane stood behind Hideki and Sayako catching her breath. Ayane fixed her gym shorts, her left eyebrow twitching at how Hideki and Sayako are breathing normally after a long run. She planted her arm on Hideki, tightening her grip until she saw the city below the hill. It was an amazing view. She never saw her home like this before. Just high enough to see the buildings over the trees and the mountains in the distance. The mountains, where the valley that Mayumi saw in her dreams were at. Ayane thought about the twins as her grip loosened from Hideki's shoulder.

"How did you like the jog?" Ayane said with a smirk on her face. "Lost a few pounds from all your cooking you ate?"

"What's that?" Ayane said with a smile. "You're going to increase the Cooking Club's budget this month for the upcoming festival? I really like that."

"Come on." Hideki said. "Can you both do this without me in the middle?"

"He's right." Sayako said and Ayane nodded. They both pushed Hideki to the side and stared each other eye locked on target.

"Here we go again." Tomiko said as the girls argued about the upcoming student council meeting.

"Hideki." Takashi said with a wave. "Come over here and get out of the way."

Hideki was not coming to them. Tomiko got up and approached Hideki. The closer she got to him, the more she saw his arms shook.

Looking at the club captains, she slapped her hands at them into silence.

"Hey. Something's wrong with Hideki." Tomiko led the girls around Hideki and saw his eyes trembling.

"What is it?" Tomiko said and she looked down the hill. The birds were flying in the numbers. Like a large black smoke billowing into the air. The trees below were shaking violently as though torrential winds were pushing them aside. "Where are they going?"

The captains looked up in the air and watched all forms of flying creatures fly far away from the city. They suddenly heard the sound of crashing in the city below. Takashi joined them as a plume of flames shot into the sky. It was faint to see, but Takashi could almost see a large animal down in the street, avoiding cars.

"I think those are forest animals." Takashi's words caught everyone's attention and Gon arrived from behind.

"Hideki!" Gon landed in Hideki's arms shivering.

"What's happening?"

"We have to go back to Ren. Something is happening in the forest and its not safe."

"Come on." Takashi said and led everyone down the hill.

Everyone hurried as fast as they could with whatever remained of their energy and breath. Everyone collapsed from exhaustion before Ren as he smoked his pipe. They saw the karasu and the crows flying low through the forest toward the city.

"We're taking you back into the city." Ren said pointing to their bags. "You're belonging are over there."

"What happened?" Ayane and Sayako said together and they're eyes turned to each other, but Ren cleared his throat to get their attention.

"One of my scouts flew in the direction Mayumi and her group went. They found Nina, Goro and Yuri returning to the city in a panic."

"Mayumi and her group?" Ayane said.

"They weren't with them."

"Emi-chan..." Sayako said.

"So my scouts went ahead and saw a white mist heading towards the city. They said something is happening to the trees in the forest but they went into a panic and flew back here. Right now the forest and animals and the clans are stampeding through the city escaping whatever that is coming here. I'm sorry, but I am postponing your training with your Wisps. They will take you home safely."

"We can still do something." Tomiko said. "Right?"

Takashi nodded. "I agree, but first, how about we go home and check on our families. Make sure they are all right. Then we meet up at Megumi's home at the shrine with our Wisps. This way if Mayumi and the girls come back, we'll be here for them."

Ayane and Sayako looked at each other and nodded. Ren waved his wing calling the Wisps over. After gathering their bags and the Wisps floated beside the teens, Ren waved them goodbye.

"The Clan leaders will be gathering at the theater where we will hold an emergency meeting. You children be safe. Let us know when the twins, Keiko and Rumiko return."

"We will." Ayane said.

"Let's go." Sayako said and everyone left Ren's sight.

Ren took a puff of his pipe as a karasu stuck his out of the bushes. He pounded his wing on the ground and turned to the mystical creature.

"Bring a representative to the theater. And tell Oompa of the Kitsune Clan that I am sending some crows to monitor the shrine of Hikari and see if he and the other lend some of their soldiers. Whatever is coming, I want to know if its connected to this shrine."

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At a helipad on top of a building in the city, Mrs. Saito approached the helicopter waiting to takeoff. The pilot and co-pilot were checking the instruments when she opened the door and sat inside. Before closing the door, she looked up at the sky, and saw another wave of birds in their direction. She slid the door closed, giving the signal to liftoff. As Mrs. Saito put on the helmet, the copter got off the ground. She focused her Mana and placed her hand on the window, bracing for the birds arrival. The helicopter

pilot moved the copter forward and away from the animals in the sky, safely heading towards the direction of the girls outside the city.

Below, there were all kinds of forest animals stampeding throughout the city. People below running away from the terrified nature, a few tripped over themselves and swallowed whole by the rampage. A car slammed into a deer, the windshield cracked as more deer leapt over the vehicle. People on the rooftops and at their windows watched the street below in horror of what was happening in their neighborhoods.

Once they left the city, Mrs. Saito saw the trees sway back and forth. It looked as though they were going to fall over like dominoes. She could see more animals spilling into the city like a flood, until she heard the gasp of her pilot.

"Captain, you have to see this."

Mrs. Saito leaned forward. Her eyes could not make out what was going on below. She slipped on a strap and slid the door open. She leaned out as the helicopter got closer. There was an endless sea of white mist below the trees. She watched the treetops slowly turn to stone. Her eye grew wide, as she lost a second of breath. She looked back and saw how far away they were from the city.

"It looks like its two miles away."

"There is something weird going on." The pilot said and pulled up higher.

Mrs. Saito noticed that the white mist was stretching outward while moving forward. Like a hand reaching out for a cup to grasp. The white mist was far reaching and growing larger, however, she noticed that it slowed down even more despite its approach.

"Oh my..." Mrs. Saito leaned back on her seat with her heart beating fast. "It's like its trying to surround us. Is it aware?"

"Captain?"

"We go forward. We're going to retrieve some girls lost in the forest."

"The trees are turning to stone, how could anyone be down there?"

"Because they said they were surrounded by the mist." Mrs.

Saito eyes opened wide and she looked back at the city and the mist below. Her mind worked like a video, replaying everything she said and saw. It was long shot, but she only had speculation. "The grey Mana? Could it be? Begin circling this area towards the valley. Look for any openings within the white mist below."

TO BE CONTINUED...

