

# Arcana Magi Pure Vol.6 - c.5

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At the entrance of city hall, people were led out by security in single file. Each person directed to the parking and guided out of the area. There was confusion and concern in the faces of the public, but the stoic look on the security made them stay silent as they entered the cars and drove off in a designated street. Looking out the window was a man, with hands resting behind his back. He watched as the last person exited the building the security began to round up and secured the area.

“Mr. Saotome.” A young woman said before his desk, with the seal of the mayor, surrounded by his staff. “The Clans and Society are ready to enter the chamber.”

“Let's go.”

Inside the council chambers, there sat the city's council. They stood up as the mayor walked to the center podium where the head councilwoman stood behind the desk. The mayor turned around and saw only essential personnel and the sergeant at arms stood before the door.

“Let them in.”

The doors opened and entering are three members of the Society dressed in suits with medal on the breast jacket and the last names Fukushima, Hamazaki, and Watanabe. They were accompanied by Nemo, Kiba, and Ren. Their size overwhelmed the council chamber, they barely fit through the doors but succeeded. The Elders stood tall before them, but the mayor showed no fear.

“Welcome to the people's chamber.” The mayor said.

“Thank you.” Nemo said.

“Thank you.” Watanabe said.

“I read up on my predecessor's notes regarding the Society and Clan.” The mayor slapped his hand on the podium. “I never believed

that both of you would be this incompetent. My city is under siege! I have reports of white mist surrounding the city and turning people to stone, a shadow monster attacking people, and a cult led by a little girl kidnapping people.”

“Cult?” Watanabe said looking at Nemo.

“If you mean Emi Akamatsu Mr. Saotome, we have that under control.”

“Really, Mr. Nemo?” The mayor said. “So you detained her?”

“Not really...” Watanabe said and mayor took a deep breath pressing his hand on his forehead. The chamber murmured as Mr. Saotome looked up. “This morning I listened to the new on the radio and I heard the New York disappeared. I was shocked at first, but then I was later told it was a city called Newark. I never of that city before. I learned it was outside New York City. Interesting isn't it?”

The Society and the Clans remained silent. Nemo and Watanabe turned to each other as the mayor continued.

“So, when this whole crisis occurred, I read up on my predecessor's notes to understand how to deal with your groups and I find out that a couple of years ago, two girls from a city called Newark came here and got into a fight that nearly destroyed the city. There's that word again, Newark. Explain to me what the odds are that the city called Newark, home to two girls that nearly destroyed our city, disappeared?”

No one could answer. There was nothing but silence. Until Ren inhaled his pipe and blew the smoke out slowly, drawing everyone's attention.

“We've been set up.”

“How?” Mr. Saotome said.

“I don't know, but like you asked, what are the odds?”

“Then get out there and find out, all of you!” Mr. Saotome stepped down from the podium and approached Watanabe and Nemo. “From this point on, your groups are no longer hidden. I will hold a press conference and you will be present before the cameras.”

Watanabe stared down the mayor. “You cannot—”

“You are in no position to talk. People are dying in my city because of all of you and you will all bear responsibility for this, publicly!”

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The sun was at the edge of the earth. The shadows around Ayane and her friends brought the creature closer. Its twin tails whipped the street, each snapped shook everyone. Its red eyes stared deep into Hideki, and he remained unfazed. The Wisps gathered around the teens, each crow merging with the cooking items in their hands.

Ayane with a large mallet, Tomiko with an axe from a cleaver, Takashi with the wooden staff from a single chopstick, and Sayako with a dual blade spear from a carving fork. Takashi stood in front of them with his sword in hand sizing up to the situation. The creature lowered its head growling, it was the sound of gurgling. No one was sure what it was going to do as it walked to the side observing them.

Ayane breathed heavy as she tried to control her fear. The creature sniffed at her and lunged at her. Takashi and Tomiko swung at the creature. The blade pierced its back as the staff smashed its head. It backed off as Ayane sat on the ground trembling from what just happened. She watched Sayako jab the spear into its leg and Hideki slice its ear off.

All of her friends, with anger in their faces, ganging up on the creature. It was helpless at this point, but that was not what gripped her heart. It was her friends reduced to primal creatures. Each of them roaring one strike after another. There was no plan or rationale. It was like they had been taken over by something. She felt the trembling in her hands, but it was actually her Wisp.

“No.” Ayane said realizing what has happened. “Stop.”

The continued stabbing and bashing the creature. “STOP!”

Ayane ran to them and that was when she felt it. The shadow they were standing on. There was a feeling of evil climbing her skin. All of the Wisp broke away from the teens, Gon floated above in front of them. Sayako, Takashi, Hideki, and Tomiko, beating on the creature with just kitchen utensils.

“ENOUGH!” Ayane tackled Takashi. She pushed him hard on the

ground and his eyes shook. He took a deep breath and the shock gripped. He looked at his hands as Ayane got off of him and ran to the others. Takashi followed Ayane's lead and pulled everyone out of the shadow and under the streetlight turning on.

Hideki placed his hand on head wincing while Tomiko rubbed her eyes. Sayako broke down into tears and hugged herself. The Wisps gathered around to comfort the teens when the horn blared again. This time the sound shook them to their hearts and fear gripped them. Without hesitation, they ran.

"To the shrine." Ayane said, and she led them away from the corpse. Unaware of the red eyes appearing everyone in the shadows.

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Satoshi sat inside the transport focusing his thoughts. Ideas ran through his mind about humanity, the Clans, and history. Each memory ended the same way, anger. Anger at the fact that he had no pencil and paper to write these down. The former elder refused to think of the idea that he would go unspoken at least.

"My voice." He said. "I want to be heard. I want to address everyone."

His body struck the side of the container. The truck came to a stop. He lifted his head up and his ears responded to the sound of dogs yelping. He smiled.

"That is a beautiful song the dogs made."

The door opened, the sun had just completed its day, and the night began its shift. He stepped out with caution. A trail of blood was on the floor with the scent of a dog wafting in the air. Unsure if he was safe. He looked outside and only saw one person, Rumiko's mother, in her ninja outfit.

"Johnson-san." Satoshi said.

"That's Kinomoto-san to you, Elder Satoshi."

"I see." Satoshi approached her, with a light growl, but stopped after a few paces and stared at her. "You're not alone, yet..."

Satoshi looked around at the trees in the dark and sees through nightvision, the ninjas waiting in the dark. "They're not attacking."

"I freed you because my daughter is on a mission."

“I care not for your child or for charity in freeing me.”

“There is a mist surrounding the city and it will pass through here soon.”

“I overheard there was something like that happening.”

“We will turn to stone soon, if my daughter fails.”

“Hmm...” Satoshi growled a moment then smiled. “You aligned yourself with someone else? The Higurashi bored you?”

“They have served their purpose. Our phony alliance with them is over. Now we want a true alliance. The Neko Clan.”

Satoshi lunged closer with a roar and Kinomoto never budged. “I refuse.”

“The offer is the city. You want your land back right?” Kinomoto saw Satoshi's face give away that answer. “My family wants a secured base of operations out of the eyes of law.”

“What good is my Clans land with all these buildings in the way? Sato was right to leave the city.”

“All will be pure again if you align with us... and Kurai.”

“Kurai?” Suddenly there was the scream of two people deep in the forest. Satoshi's nightvision saw the ninja writhe in pain and freeze in place. He shook his head in disbelief. “Your employees are weak to scream like that.”

“Then my daughter has failed and death is upon us.”

“Well, at least you gave this alliance a shot.”

The mist consumed three more ninja, when it stopped moving. Satoshi tilted his as the cloud pulled back, leaving three more statues. He faced Rumiko's mother and nodded.

“Very well, help me gather my Clan... and a pen and paper.”

“Pen... and paper?” Kinomoto said trying to figure out why he would want that. She saw a large hand made of mist jut out of Satoshi head. It reached out to her for a handshake.

“To our new alliance, the Neko Clan and the Kinomoto Family.”

They shook hands, and left together into the night.

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The helicopter lights flashed across the night sky. The moon reflected off the metal door. Mrs. Saito was at the corner talking

through the radio hearing the news about the mayor's plans. Her face said it all; she threw the headphones to the ground, frightening the girls. Mrs. Saito turned to the pilot pressing the gauze on his wound, the first aid kit resting on his lap. He signaled that he was fine and pointed to the girls.

There was Keiko and Emi, staring out the window in silence. Their eyes withdrawn and barely any emotion expressed. Emi resisted shedding tears. All she wanted was to scream in anger. Her hands tried to curl into a fist, but she could not. She looked to Keiko who just leaned on the side with her arms wrapped around her waist. It looked like Keiko wanted to hurry back to do something. It was hard for Emi to tell. Keiko looked to Emi, their eyes locked to each other, they knew they wanted to say something, but had no words to speak of. It was like one wrong statement will set the other off. Emi spoke.

"I don't know what to do."

"Me too." Keiko said.

"The choice is mine. This is too much." Emi struggled to express this feeling. Her body moved restlessly. She lifted her head, her body slumped lifelessly. She took long deep breaths while comprehending the ultimatum Mayumi delivered. "Everything my sister did for me will all be for nothing if I do what Kurai says."

"Do it." Keiko said as Mrs. Saito pulled her arm.

"Don't push her!"

"What choice do we have?" Keiko said. "The city is still in danger."

"And what do you think will happen if gods fight each other?"

"I..." Keiko kept silent as the helicopter flew over the city. She turned to Emi still slumped over her seat. "I give up."

Emi lifted her head and watched Keiko cry.

"We lost. They beat us. The city is going to die."

Emi sat up as the helicopter landed. Soldiers from the Society opened the door and helped the girls off while paramedics carefully moved the pilot onto a gurney. Emi followed Keiko as she dropped to the ground crying out loud.

"I always had an answer. I always tried when things were tough." Keiko looked up to Emi and Mrs. Saito. "I can't do this."

Mrs. Saito lifted Keiko to her feet and hugged her.

"I just wanted to be a hero." Keiko buried her face and she felt a knock on her head. She turned to Emi who reached out with her hand.

"You are a hero. You never gave up on me, despite what I had done. You gave me a chance to do right."

Keiko moved away from Mrs. Saito wiping away her tears.

"Now, Mayumi is going to be forced to do bad things and no one is going to understand. She needs you just as much as she needs me. We have to be for her."

"And Rumiko?"

"And Rumiko." Emi placed her hands on Keiko's shoulders with a smile. "Our friends."

Keiko took a deep breath and nodded. Suddenly they heard a buzz. It was Emi's phone. She swiped the screen on and saw the text message.

[We're on our way. We should be at the Shrine in a few hours.]

"Alysia and Megumi." Emi said showing Keiko.

"Did they escape Newark?" Keiko looked up to Mrs. Saito.

"I'll check." Mrs. Saito took a radio to call in and Emi turned to Keiko.

"I know how much power Kurai gave Mayumi. We don't stand a chance as we are now."

"Emi?" Keiko's eyes grew wide fearing what she was going to hear next.

"I'm sorry, but I'm going to put on the orichalcum and fight my sister."

"Are you sure? You'll fall into Hikari's hands."

"Mayumi and I are just two people." Emi looked out to the buildings. "The goddesses are threatening the city. Our family, friends... everyone is in danger. It doesn't matter what happens to me."

"Girls, I just got confirmation that Newark returned to its place."

Mrs. Saito said, but before she could continue, Keiko took Emi's hand and ran.

“Thanks for the info Mrs. Saito!”

“Wait where are you going?”

“To save the city and our friends!” Keiko she and Emi jumped the roof with their mana and ran fast toward the shrine.

THE END.

