

Arcana Magi Pure Vol.7 - c.1

by H-M Brown

Mayumi opened her eyes, and found herself staring at field. She was in her vermillion costume, with clean mana seeping down the metal armor. Mayumi looked around her and noticed the wind distant from her body. She reached out to it but her metal gloved fingers bounced off a barrier. Soon grey mana formed outside. The mist slowly hindered her view of the lush green plain. She could almost here the wind calling out to her. It began to affect her heart as her memory of the Kappa's festival crept up. Her conversation with Kameto about being a priestess of the wind. That thought, in the back of her mind, was what motivated her to rescue Emi from the Shrine of Hikari. Now she felt she needed to be rescued from the Shrine of Kurai. Yet, she remembered the threat that Kurai gave. The city with thousands of people, her family and friends, all in danger. She focused on that. Mayumi knew as long as she holds that thought, Kurai cannot win.

Looking up at the grey mist, Mayumi could almost feel something important about it. That night when she and Emi pushed back against the shrines in their dreams together. This specific mana became a part of them. All she could think of was 'Where did this come from?' as the mist spread further around the barrier and wind blowing with it. She could almost hear both calling out to her but it was faint. Then a palm within the grey mist pressed on the barrier like glass window. Mayumi stepped back and watched the hand slowly slide along, guiding her to follow it. Her head turned until she saw Emi across from her. Her sister in her orichalcham armor, staring at another hand in the grey mist.

The twins stared at each other. They could see their chest heaving from their racing hearts. Their eyes locked in place, with their identical hairstyles; it was like looking at a mirror. It was the

first time in so long that they looked at each in such a way. A deep reflection, they could see from each other, truth within themselves. They pounded on the barrier calling each other's names. The twins stopped, with hand over heart, tears now covering their faces; a sense of reality now gripped them. The choices they made now in hindsight.

Emi wished she never found the Shrine of Hikari. Mayumi wished she had never convinced her sister and friend to investigate the Shrine of Kurai. Those thoughts made its way to each twin. They looked up at each other, and saw shame, but the grey mana moved around, getting their attention. The hand's pressed on the barrier; there was gentleness in its movement. It was as though it was trying to say something to them. Mayumi and Emi regained their composure and focus.

They closed their eyes, focusing both their hearing and their thoughts. The twins could hear the faint sound of the wind, but the barrier muffled its words. For Mayumi, she could hear the kami of the wind trying to reach out to her. For Emi however, it was a complete stranger, yet a comforting voice. She was hesitant to reach out due to her experience with Hikari taking advantage of her. Emi watched her sister and saw her trying to talk to the wind. She wished she could hear Mayumi's voice. She wished to know if the wind is safe, some kind of assurance. Emi did not know what to do, except for what she had planned with Keiko.

* * *

Emi opened her eyes. They were on the rooftop with the Shrine of Four Mythic Elements. Keiko leaned close to her, checking to see if she was all right. Emi was about to tell her what she saw in her visions when a shadow hand clutched the rooftop. She channeled her grey mana and pushed Keiko to the side. The hand pushed Emi to the ground pinning to the roof. Keiko immediately made her staff appear and aimed it at the red eyes rising from below.

"FIRE BEAM!" A blast of fire and light shot out of Keiko's staff. It struck the shadow in the face making it roar in pain. As the hand released Emi, Keiko cast the same spell again, pushing it further

down.

"What is that?" Emi said approaching Keiko.

"I don't know." Keiko took Emi's hand. "Let's go!"

The girls jumped over the shadow creature to the next roof, and when they landed, they heard a loud horn right behind them. They looked back at the giant monster rising up again. Without hesitation they ran for the next rooftop. The creature slammed its hand on the building causing it to break apart. Emi grabbed Keiko's hand, her face felt the brush of the wind. Flash of memories struck Emi. From the first time she flew in the orichalcham to her recent vision of the wind trying to call to her. The loud horn from the creature blared again, but Emi felt the brush of wind enter in her, connecting with her mana.

"FLIGHT!" Emi launched up into the sky pulling Keiko with her. Keiko screamed as the building collapsed to the ground, and she gripped Emi's wrist with both hands.

"Emi?!" She saw the grey mana form band around her wrists. The wind carrying the girls high into the sky. Keiko saw the look in Emi's eyes. It was the look of a hero. Emi looked back at her and smiled. "You're doing it Emi! Woooo!"

However, Emi felt the wind slipping through her fingers. The barrier in her visions, she felt it trying to interfere. She saw the street below near the edge of the forest. The lights from the shrine guiding her in that direction. Emi began to descend, but the wind was rapidly fading. "Hang on Keiko!"

Keiko braced herself, as Emi's toes touched the ground but she lost control and the girls fell over. Emi lifted herself up, her heart racing looking up at the night sky. She laughed out loud unaware of Keiko's comforting smile.

"I never felt so free." Emi said and Keiko stood up to her feet. Emi saw Keiko's hand reach out to her and she grabbed. Standing up, Keiko led Emi in a run to the shrine down the street.

"I just want to say," Keiko said while running. "I truly understand how you felt when you first saw mana. When I first saw mana, I was scared and I had nobody to talk to. I felt alone. If I had met you

sooner, I would have helped you.”

“I don't know what to say.” Emi said. “This is so sudden.”

“What I'm saying is, I am mad at you for everything you did, but I don't feel that anymore. Every since you made the effort to do everything right.”

The girls saw the entrance barricaded by the Society. Emi stopped looking up at the forest above the wall. Keiko returned to her pointing at the guards.

“We're right there. Come on.”

Emi jumped up on top of the wall and reached out to Keiko.

“If they see we're here, they'll stop me from getting the orichalcum.”

Keiko looked at the guards hesitating.

“Keiko, there are a lot of things I want to say to you, about what I've done. I truly am sorry for attacking you, even hurting you. I know it's asking a lot if I get the orichalcum, but the city is in danger. People will die if I don't face my sister with the armor on.”

Keiko took a deep breath and jumped up grabbing Emi's arm. They both disappear into the forest, climbing up the hill.

* * *

At the Shrine of Kurai, Mayumi in her vermilion armor knelt before the goddess, focusing her mind. She opened her sky blues eyes staring at the structure beyond the fence. Thoughts of destroying conflicted with the goddess' words that echoed in her ears. Mayumi could see with the corner of her eyes, the ninja of the Kinomoto Family, stood at attention near the trees. Mayumi let out a deep breath, focusing her thoughts to resist Kurai's whispers. She struggled to hear the wind, calling out to her.

“Mayumi.” Rumiko said approaching Mayumi from behind. She sat on her knees far behind her friend, aware of the ninja guards focusing their sights on the teen.

“Rumi-chan.” Mayumi said raising her armored hand up reaching out at the wind. “I had a vision of the wind, trying to reach out to me. Emi was there, trapped in a barrier like me.”

“I'm sorry.”

“Don't be.” Mayumi took a deep breath fighting the pain in mind. She opened her eyes looking back at Rumiko. “What your family did to you was horrible. I wish I can help free you.”

Rumiko held back her tears. “Don't worry about me. Focus on saving the city. I believe Emi will come through.”

“It's strange.” Mayumi said analyzing her leotard and armor. “When I first saw Emi dressed like this, I tried to get her to put on some shorts. Heh, I understand now what she meant by feeling free. This armor and outfit has so much power flowing through me.”

“Mayumi... no. Stay focus!”

A shuriken pierced the floor beside Rumiko. She turned around on one knee, with a kunai knife in hand. She channeled her mana but the shackles on her wrists appeared, glowing bright. She screamed in pain and snapped Mayumi out of her near trance. Mayumi hurried over to Rumiko, wrapping her arms around her friend's waist.

“I got you Rumiko.”

“How touching?” Satoshi said stepping out of the path before the girls. He let out a growl as his large paw slammed the ground. “I see Kurai has yet to break you.”

“I won't be a pawn to your plan.” Mayumi said as the shackled on Rumiko faded away. As Rumiko leaned on Mayumi nursing her pain, Satoshi approached the girls.

“The experiment is almost complete.” Satoshi sat tall before the girls. “Did you really think you were in control of this situation? I admit, I messed up when I called for the Purge Spell of your sister, but that was a minor setback. Everything still fell into place nicely. Once your sister retrieves the orichalcum like a good priestess, we will conclude the experiment before our partners arrive for the result.”

“Please,” Rumiko said. “tell us more of your plan.”

“Heh, no. Though, It wouldn't matter if you knew anyway.” Saotshi slapped Rumiko off of Mayumi and lunged at the priestess with a growl, chasing her back to her spot. “Face Kurai and honor her.”

Mayumi leaned forward at Satahi, but his mana shaped hand gripped Rumiko by the neck. "So you think I care is I kill Kinomoto-san's daughter. All I care about is you finishing your rituals."

"Mayumi... don't worry about me... just run. You can... do it."

Mayumi looked at Rumiko struggling, but she let out a smile and nod.

"I'm sorry." Mayumi got to feet but Satoshi slapped her to the ground and slammed his foot on her belly to pin her. Suddenly, a burst of mist shot out of the shrine cascading towards Satoshi. He released the girls and hopped back as the mist stopped short of the fence. He roared out loud walking away. Satoshi noticed the ninja with their weapons drawn. He grabbed on of the ninja and tossed him over the fence. The girls watched the man scream in pain as he turned to stone. Satoshi walked away laughing

* * *

Ayane and Sayako leaned on the wall watching the cooking club resting on the bench, all of them in shock. Gon and the crows flew in place talking with each other. None of the teens could hear what the group was saying, but after what happened they fought that shadow creature, they did not know how to start a conversation.

"I'm hungry." Tomiko said.

"I don't have any food." Ayane said.

"What happened to us Hideki?" Takashi looking at his friend.

"I don't know." Takashi crossed his arms, looking down at the ground. "I... knew I was there, but... it wasn't me moving."

Sayako hugged herself. "Is that what the creature does? Mess with our minds?"

"Emotions." Takashi said, looking back at the track team captain. "I felt angry all of a sudden. Like I was mad at the world."

"I didn't want to be mad." Tomiko said. "I didn't feel like me."

"It's okay." Hideki said. "We'll regroup and then..."

"Then what?" Ayane said. Her stare sent shivers through everyone. "We're can't cast spells. We're not like Mayumi and Emi or the Society. What are we doing here?"

"Hey!" Takashi said getting up. "You choose this Ayane. All of

us.”

“I know!” Ayane rubbed her forehead gathering her thoughts. “I’m sorry. I... I did not expect this. I didn’t... I didn’t know this was how fighting against magic was to be like.”

Hideki approached Ayane. “We don’t even know if this is magic we’re dealing with. Look at Gon and the Wisps.”

Ayane looked up at the sky watching the crows talking.

“They’ve been talking for a long time now and these things could show up any minute.”

“Hideki,” Ayane said. “is this what your sister went through?”

He nodded. “Yeah. It’s not easy. I’ve watched her cry sometimes, but she went out there to protect people. I learned a lot from her even though I’ll never cast a spell.”

“Ayane.” Sayako said pushing herself off from leaning on the wall. “I think we should to the shrine and regroup like Hideki said. We can’t stay out here any longer. Those things are going to find us, and... we should decide if we want to continue doing this.”

“I agree.” Tomiko said. “I want to think this over. Maybe talk to someone.”

Ayane looked at her classmates; she could see it in their eyes. With a nod she agreed unaware of Gon and the crows watching them nearby, having heard the conversation.

“Listen everyone.” Gon said. “When we return to the shrine, we completely understand if you want to stop being Wisps. Ren understands as well, he will not be offended. He only offers choices.”

“Thank you.” Ayane said and everyone shared the same sentiment. The Cooking Club and Sayako all headed toward the shrine together.

TO BE CONTINUED...

