

Arcana Magi Pure Vol.7 - c.2

by H-M Brown

Emi stood before the small opened case. Her locket, with the purple gem embedded, rested inside. Her hand reached inside, but stopped short. All the effort Mayumi went through to try and purify her would be for nothing. She gripped the trinket and closed her eyes, taking a deep breath.

"Emi?" Keiko said from behind her, watching outside for anyone coming by.

"I never thought I would hold this again." Emi turned around. "I'm not going to put it on. I think if Mayumi sees the locket, maybe... maybe it will be enough to slow Kurai and Hikari."

As Emi and Keiko peeked outside, they spotted Nina and Goro together. The fox and the dog sniffed in the air, and they saw the girl's waving them over. Once inside, Emi and Keiko updated them on what happened. Nina leaned on the cavern wall, sullen at what she heard. Goro growled lightly processing what he heard.

"Where's Yuri?" Keiko said and Goro answered.

"The Higurashi Clan called her over without saying anything. Nina and I overheard that the Neko Clan that were here left the shrine."

"The Neko Clan?" Emi said and Goro turned to the girls.

"Rumor has it that Satoshi escaped and received help from the Kinomoto Clan."

"Wait." Keiko said. "Why would Rumiko's family help Satoshi?"

Keiko, Nina, and Goro heard a slap on the wall. They turned to Emi as her body glowed in a purple hue from the orichalcum. There was anger building up in Emi and Nina immediately bit her in the ankle. Emi's leg jerked and she shook her head. She looked at the locket and stepped back.

"Put the locket back Emi." Nina said as Goro stood before the

entrance.

"No." Emi tightened her grip. "I have to go back and protect the city and save my sister and Rumiko."

"We understand." Goro said. "But you're getting angry an-"

"Of course I'm angry!" Emi's body glowed. "Rumiko's family is the reason why Rumiko betrayed us and trapped the city."

"Rumiko didn't betray us." Keiko said as Emi's body stopped glowing. "The orichalcum right now is making you say that."

"But the city..." Emi watched Goro step outside the cave.

"We're going to tell the Elders."

"No time." Emi walked past the dog. "Also, I don't want the Society to stop us."

"Emi." Nina hurried in front of Emi to block her path. "If you put that outfit on-"

"I don't care what happens to me so long as the city, Mayumi, and Rumiko are safe."

"You're not thinking."

"I am." Emi turned to Keiko looking for agreement.

"I'm sorry, but I agree with Nina and Goro. If it's true that the Neko Clan and Kinomoto family united, and are behind what Rumiko did to get Mayumi in the vermillion armor at the shrine of Kurai, we can't do this alone. Not only that, but that giant shadow monster is out there. We can't fight that thing on our own."

"So go and tell the Elder, I'm not going to stop any of you, but I have to get out there. At least be there so they don't destroy the city. Please. Let me do something right."

Emi stepped back away from everyone, just as the sounds of voices were heard nearby.

"What's so important about this cave that we have to guard it?"

"Who knows? Saito said to be on the lookout for two girls."

As everyone was distracted, Emi ran into the forest. Keiko turned around watching Emi run off, and she followed without hesitation.

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Ayane and the Club arrived at the entrance. They watched a caravan of limos arrive where guards in business suits emerged from the parked vehicles. The guards opened the doors and the mayor exited out with his staff and councilmen. The teens saw Nemo and the Elders, with members of the Society, greet the mayor. Together they walked up the stairs to the shrine.

Ren stood at the base of the stairs smoking his pipe. He watched the newly formed allies discuss plans on getting the city under control. The teens approached him and his eyes turned to their direction. He saw it in their eyes that they have been through a lot.

"You made it out of the forest safe." Ren said. "Are any of you hurt?"

"Just shock." Ayane said. "Everything was crazy when we got back into the city."

Sayako stepped forward. "We found ourselves fighting strange shadow creatures on our way here."

"Shadow creatures?" Ren stood straight and the teens nod.

Takashi walked past Ren and up the stairs. "We wanted to go home to check on our families, but we ran off because of the fighting."

"Then we must not waste time." Ren flew over Takashi up the stairs. "We must tell everyone."

Moments later, the teens sat around a bench watching all the adults and elders discuss what they heard. A couple of doctors approached them, placing the kit on the ground.

"Is anybody hurt?" The female doctor said and shook their heads no. "Well I'll take a quick look and let you kids be on your way."

"We're teens." Tomiko said.

"Yeah well," The female doctor flashed a light in Tomiko's eyes. "I see a kid who survived and attack. Just because you feel fine doesn't mean you're okay."

"How would you know?" Tomiko leaned back while Hideki was taken care of by the male medic.

"Oh I've seen people who got hit with something, and walk. Then days later, they're in the hospital because that injury caught up with

them."

"I have to agree." Sayako said. "I remember Fumiko landed in the long jump. It looked like her leg dislocated, but she was walking fine. We found out later in the week that her knee had a crack and got worse because she walked on it all week."

"Oh..." Tomiko said as the female doctor smiled. "I do feel fine."

"Okay." The doctor said. "But if you feel anything strange be sure to get your parents to take you to the hospital."

"Of course." Tomiko watched the doctor check on Takashi. Thought of her family hit her, and tears suddenly fell. She felt Ayane's hug. "I don't know if my family is safe. They're still out there."

"I know." Ayane said looking at the adults and elders. "I wish they would end all of this."

The doctors finished checking up on everyone and left, passing by Ren. The elder approached the teens.

"There is confirmation from the police and the Society that there are shadow creatures running around the city."

The look on the teens faces told Ren everything he needed to know.

"You don't have to worry. The Kitsune will allow you to stay in the Miyazaki house where you'll be safe. This shrine is serving as a hospice and the sick and injured are being brought here."

"You think our families will come here?" Tomiko said.

"I'm sorry." Ren said. "This is one of many hospices created throughout the town. I don't believe any of your families will be sent here. But, have confidence that they may be in others."

"Yeah." Sayako said walking away from everyone.

"I can't imagine how hard it is for all of you. Your encounter with those creatures had to have been frightening, especially since this is only your first day working with the Wisps."

"It's not that." Ayane said. "It's what they did to us that scares me."

"Yes." Ren said lighting up his pipe. "Being around them made all you enraged."

The teens shifted their bodies uncomfortably, a sense of shame projected from their faces. Ren took a puff.

"This is the real world. People are going to get hurt when times of crisis happen. Even death. I truly am sorry that you faced this so quickly and unexpectedly, but you were to face this eventually."

"Is it ever easy?" Tomiko said.

"No." Hideki said crossing his arms. "I heard a lot from my sister, how difficult this is. How she loses sleep sometimes. Somehow, she used to find a way to move forward."

"I'm not giving up." Takashi said. "Every since that weird black mist attacked the Kame's Matsuri, I knew if I was going to help Mayumi and her sister, this was going to happen. It will take getting used, but the twins need our help."

Ayane stood to her feet with a nod. "Neither am I. Mayumi is a member of our club and as club leader, I can't let her face this thing alone. We can find something to do help, maybe find a way to send a message out to the girls so they know about the creature."

Sayako returned. "Yeah, I'm in too."

Everyone gathered in a huddle as Ren took another puff of his pipe, looking relaxed.

* * *

Mayumi and Rumiko stood at the top of a hill into stone forest, with the town in view from a distance. The mist made a single path, safe for everyone to travel through. In the town, there were lights flickering everywhere, some areas in total darkness. Rumiko barely blinked her eyes watching what was happening below. As the girls watched on, Satoshi approached Rumiko's mother, reading a map with her subordinates.

"It seems the experiment is on schedule." The large cat said. "My clan is taking positions to prevent any outside interference while the twins fight."

"Newark is freed."

Satoshi tilted his head and leaned close.

"You said that the Perez sisters were trapped. You said it was under control."

"Well it's not and they will find a way to get here soon."

"We have no confirmation if the Akamatsu sister got orichalcum armor."

"I've already sent scouts to find her."

Satoshi snarled at her. "Human, I've spent too many years to watch everything fall apart."

"I watch what you say Satoshi. After all, you are betraying us humans."

Satoshi roared and Kinomoto unsheathed her kunai knife, but the sound of footsteps got their attention. They turned to the side and saw a young man dressed like an equestrian, with a rapier sword at his side. Satoshi and Kinomoto back away from each other as the young man stood between them.

"How is the experiment coming along?" The young never turned to face them, and Satoshi spoke low.

"On schedule Darius."

"Excellent." Darius approached the girls and noticed Rumiko standing in front of Mayumi, trembling, but in a defensive posture. He walked past the teen as though she was not in the same area and stood before Mayumi. "The vermillion armor is stable."

Darius walked around Mayumi examining her. She turned around keeping him in front of her. Her reaction was ignored as he lifted her armored gloves. "Near identical to the Orichalcum armor. You even look like the priestess of Hikari."

"They are twin sisters." Kinomoto said.

"Very interesting. I did not expect that." Darius kissed Mayumi's hand. "My name is Darius Rose, please to meet you, priestess."

Mayumi pulled her hand away and stepped away from him, keeping distance. He turned to the town, standing upright at the chaos below. "I overheard that the Perez Newark returned from its little trip."

"Yes." Kinomoto said.

"The plan could fail." Satoshi said.

"Success and fail are irrelevant." Darius turned around. "Only the knowledge from the results matter."

"What?" Rumiko said getting Darius' attention. "People are getting hurt, even dying in the town."

"Quiet!" Kinomoto raised her hand up and Rumiko dropped to her knees in pain. Mayumi knelt beside her staring down at Rumiko's mother, channeling her mana.

"Interesting." Darius said looking at the magical shackles around Rumiko's wrists. "Just like another girl I read about in reports from another universe."

"What girl?" Mayumi said, but Darius walked past her, without acknowledging her question.

"Tell me Kinomoto-san." Darius turned to everyone as Rumiko was released and collapsed into Mayumi's arms. "Are those shackles a common spell here, or were they created by kami."

"They are a common spell. Why?"

"Interesting." Darius observed Rumiko, analyzing her, when suddenly he lifted his head up. He turned to the city and tilted his head.

Everyone felt a surge of mana in the center of town. Satoshi, growled under breath drawing the girls attention.

"Karin." Satoshi stepped forward, but he felt a strong energy from Darius.

No one spoke a word as the young man held his rapier tight and walked to town. As he marched down the hill, a large ball of light shot up in the sky. It became a tiny sun, illuminating the night, turning it into day.

Mayumi and Rumiko watched in awe as Satoshi ran off into the city.

"You fool!" Kinomoto said. "Stay with the plan!"

"Forget about me and start the experiment!" Satoshi disappeared in the forest.

Kinomoto signaled everyone to move forward and pushed her daughter along. Mayumi flew into the air, leading everyone into the city.

TO BE CONTINUED...

