

Arcana Magi Pure Vol.7 - c.3

by H-M Brown

Near the entrance to the shrine, Ren and Hideki stood before Ayane, Sayako, Tomiko, and Takashi, each with their crow in hand. They were discussing ideas on what they could do to help Mayumi and Emi. Where they might be able to find them? Tomiko noticed people climbing up the stairs, many of them assisted by police officers and medics. Everyone stopped talking, and watched the injured led in one direction while those who were walking were guided to another section of the shrine. For one brief second, Ayane noticed white mist appeared over the arm of screaming women as she writhed in pain of it turning to stone. She covered mouth in shock.

“Her hand.” Ayane took a step back. “What happened?”

Ren took a puff of his pipe. “That is caused by the pure mana outside the city.”

“How?” Takashi said as the last medic climbed the stairs, and followed the injured.

“We don't know.”

“I don't get it.” Tomiko said. “First those shadow creatures, now people's hands turning to stone?”

“Hello.” A girl's voice from behind caught everyone's attention and they turned around to face her, only, there were two girls.

“My name Megumi Miyazaki-Perez.” She bowed before them.

“My name is Alysia Perez.” She bowed as well. “Please to meet you.”

The Perez sisters stood straight up and received nothing but stares from the teens, while Ren took another puff of his pipe.

“It's them.” Tomiko said and looked at Sayako. “Is it them?”

Sayako shrugged her shoulders, and Ayane approached the girls.

“My name is Ayane Nakamura. Please to meet you.”

“Where are Mayumi and Emi?” Alysia said in Japanese. Her voice shocked the teens. “What?”

Ayane cracked a smile as the girls giggled behind her. “You sound like you're from Osaka.”

Alysia turned to Megumi with a scowling. “I told you so.”

“Well, I warn you that your Jersey accent is thick.”

“I don't have an accent.” Alysia leaned close to Megumi's face.

“You don't realize it because you don't get out of the city very much to hear the difference.”

“Uh, excuse me.” Ayane said interrupting the sisters, while waving Sayako and Tomiko to stop giggling. “Your accent is fine. We just didn't expect a foreigner to sound like that.”

“Oh,” Alysia lifted her head and caught Megumi's attention. “well you should have said something. Here I am arguing with my sister over the Jersey accent, you're all standing there watching us go it.”

“Lys.”

“But all this time my accent was just fine.”

“Lys.” Megumi placed her hand on Alysia's shoulder.

“I could have avoided an argument all this time.”

“FOCUS!”

Alysia stopped talking and looked back at Megumi. She opened her mouth but her sister covered it, keeping her from talking. Alysia kept quiet and Megumi freed her. Everyone else stayed quiet.

“So,” Megumi said and startled everyone.

After the Cooking Club and Sayako formerly introduced themselves, they all stood before the sisters, listening to their story. Ren took a puff of his pipe as Ayane pressed her hand over her chest and Sayako took short breaths as her heart raced. They learned about how Alysia and Megumi overchanneled their mana and sent to the Manasphere, the Nocturne, and the story connecting Alysia and Megumi with the Shrine of Hikari and the Shrine of Kurai to the Mayumi and Emi. It was an overwhelming story to hear for everyone.

Megumi continued. “So now our souls are inside both shrines,

executing Valdeguard's plans."

"We don't know what it is; only our souls do." Alysia wrapped her arms around her waist, gripping her shoulders. She felt Megumi's hands on her shoulders.

"Easy Lys."

"I'm okay, I just... I just want this end. Eh?"

Ayane approached Alysia, there was anger in her eyes. Her hand curled into a fist. Sayako and Tomiko hurried to her side to hold her back, but she pushed them off. She stood right before Alysia.

"Ayane..." Alysia looked away. "I'm sor—"

Alysia received a hug. She felt Ayane tightening her grip. "It was you screaming and crying. It carried over the shrine."

"Y...yeah." Alysia found herself and Megumi surrounded by Sayako and Tomiko. "But we caused all of this."

"No." Sayako said hugging the sisters. "You didn't. I know because Emi told me what happened to her soul. She told me everything."

"We're in this together." Tomiko said joining the hug. "I know we all just introduced ourselves, but I feel like we've known each other long enough."

Ayane separated herself from Alysia, wiping her new friend's tears, and she waved Takashi and Hideki over.

"We're in this together." Ayane said taking the boys by the hand and bringing them into the circle. "We have a lot of work to do. Mayumi and Emi must know the truth."

"They're both in the valley," Sayako said. "heading for the Shrine of Kurai. There's no way of knowing when they will be back."

A couple of crows landed before Ren, getting everyone's attention.

"Emi Akamatsu returned with Keiko Urashima."

Ayane approached. "What about Mayumi and Rumiko? Are they back?"

"No." The crow turned to the teens. "Akamatsu-san told Nina that her sister has been turned into the priestess by the Shrine of Hikari."

Alysia immediately walked away from everyone, but Megumi grabbed her sister by the arm. "Focus."

"I can't stand by and let this continue. Mayumi and Emi had nothing to do with us."

"I know, but we have to come up with a plan."

"Excuse me." The crow said getting the girl's attention. "I heard Akamatsu-san said she has to fight her sister in the city, or the shrines will destroy everything. She the orichalchum armor."

"Where is this fight at?" Alysia said, but the crow shrugged his shoulders.

"Lys. We have to go to the shrines and get out souls back. It's the only way."

"But Meg..." Alysia stared at her sister's eyes.

"Your sister is right." Ren said. "By freeing your souls from the shrines, we have a chance to free the twins."

Ayane approached Alysia. "We'll take care of Mayumi and Emi, you both can end all this by getting to the shrines right away."

"So..." Takashi said. "what do we do about the Nocturne? They're all over the city."

Megumi answered. "Madam Mayweather's Sunshine spell is keeping them away."

"Still," Ren said turning to Takashi. "I'll have a transport ready for all of you. Keep to the skies and avoid the monsters and other dangers. Plus you will be able to scout for the twins and head there."

Ren whispered the crow and it nodded flying away. "We shall go outside the shrine, your escorts will be ready. We cannot wait."

"Before you go." Megumi said stopping the friends. "I just want to thank you for fixing my family's house."

Ayane, the Cooking Club, and Sayako looked at each other, then had an awkward look on their faces.

"This is sudden." Ayane said.

"Yeah, I kind of hoped we all hang out more now, but..."

"When this is all over, I'll take you both to my family's diner and celebrate with Mayumi and Emi."

Alysia and Megumi nodded with a smile and Ayane led everyone

down the stairs with Ren flying behind them.

"Thanks again for fixing my house." Megumi said as she and Alysia were no longer in Ayane's sight down the stairs.

They exited the shrine where police officers were assisting more people out of trucks and vans. Takashi noticed white and black mist on the injured and he paused.

"That's strange."

"What?" Hideki said.

"I saw mist."

"You saw it too." Tomiko said and Takashi nodded. "I thought only people who cast spells can see mana."

Ayane looked at Tomiko. "Well we did see mana at Kappa festival."

"You're right, but I don't sense mana, or channel it."

"Ren," Takashi said. "How is this possible..."

The teens saw Ren's eyes trembling, Sayako approached the elder, placing her hand on his shoulder. "Ren?"

"Pure mana, black mana." Ren said under breath. "The Manasphere..."

"What about the Manasphere?" Sayako said and Ren looked up.

"Mayumi and Emi was covered in grey mana, but they never overchanneled, yet Alysia and Megumi said they overchanneled, entered the Manasphere and saw grey mana. The pure mana, and the impure mana from the shrines. Is it possible? Is that what they're planning to do?"

"What is?"

"All of you had been exposed to Mayumi and Emi's grey mana, like being in ultraviolet rays, that could explain why you are seeing mana from time to time but your not channeling... oh no."

Ayane approached Ren. "You're not making sense."

"I think Valdeguard wants to bring the Manasphere into the real world, by making the twins fight until they overchannel."

"Then we have to hurry."

"Your transports will arrive; I must go and tell the Elders and the Society." Ren flew off leaving the teens behind.

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As Emi and Keiko jumped from rooftop to rooftop, they looked at the large sun in the sky. The spell that was generating it was so strong, they felt overwhelmed. The brightness made it easy for them to see far, and they noticed a group of people standing on the roof, waiting.

“Is that them?” Emi said.

“Yes.” Keiko said as her clothes began to transform into her Shining Star costume.

Mayumi stood still as Rumiko breathed heavily. The priestess watched her friend sweat, looking flushed. “Are you okay?”

“I don't feel good.”

“Quiet.” Kinomoto said to her daughter.

Emi and Shining Star landed on the roof. Emi stared at her sister in the vermilion costume. It was like looking at a mirror, how she once looked in the Orichalcham armor. She took a step forward, but a kunai knife landed before her. Emi looked up at Kinomoto holding another knife. They found themselves surrounded by ninja, almost forming an arena.

“Let Mayumi and Rumi-chan go.” Emi said.

“No.” Kinomoto said. “You will change into your armor and fight your sister or the city will be destroyed.”

“Let Rumi-chan go and I will fight.”

“Emi.” Mayumi said with eyes wide open, she turned to Rumiko. Her friend weak exhausted from her mother's torture. “Release her.”

“Wait?” Kinomoto approached Mayumi.

“I said let Rumiko go. I no longer need her.”

Rumiko stared at Mayumi. The look on the priestesses face showed no emotion, but her eyes, she saw the pain Mayumi was hiding as she said that. Rumiko lifted her head up as her mother thought it over and came to a decision.

“Very well.” Kinomoto lifted her hand and Rumiko screamed as the shackles twisted over her skin.

Emi and Shining Star stepped forward ready to attack, but Rumiko raised her hand up to stop them. They watched helplessly

listening to their friend scream as the shackles vanished. Rumiko collapsed, in tears, struggling back to her feet.

"Take this brat of a daughter out of my sight."

"Rumi-chan!" Shining Star hurried to Rumiko as Emi turned her head to Mayumi.

"Is this what you wanted Mayumi!?"

"Don't judge." Mayumi said. "You ran to the shrine first."

"This isn't you!" These words repeated in Emi's mind in Mayumi's voice. She soon realized Mayumi's view, what her sister went through to get her away from the Shrine of Hikari. "No, I was wrong Mayumi. You gave me many chances to come home and threw it away, but you... you don't deserve my fate."

Emi turned to Shining Star. "How's Rumi-chan?"

"She's sick and exhausted."

"Get her out of here. Take her back to the Kitsune."

"What about you and Mayumi?"

"We'll be right behind you."

"Emi." Mayumi said. "The city is going to be destroyed if you don't put on the armor and fight me."

"How do you know they are not lying?"

"I saw the vision from Kurai."

"Hikari gave me visions too." Emi raised her hands up. "They've been nothing but pain."

Shining Star lifted Rumiko onto her back, ready to go, but before she left, she turned to Mayumi. "I'll be back for you Mayumi. Just don't give into to Kurai. Remember what you've told Emi when you reached out to her."

Shining Star jumped high into the air to the next rooftop. The ninja were ready to follow, but Kinomoto waved them to stop.

"Leave them. The time has come." Kinomoto led all the ninja out of the area, leaving the twins alone. "Make sure the Neko Clan down in the street don't betray us and keep any outsiders away from the combat zone."

"SHINE SPARK!" Emi said as her clothes changed into the costume Natsume tailored for her.

“Change into your armor.”

“No.” Emi dropped the pendant on the ground and channeled her mana. “Shadow Blast!”

A blast of purple and black shadow shot out of Emi's fingers, but they flew in multiple directions. She stopped the spell and channeled her mana again. “SHADOW BLAST!”

A blast of purple and black shadow shot once again flew in different directions instead striking her sister. “How?”

“I see.” Mayumi said as her magic circle appeared over her hand. “Unless you have a magic circle as you are, your spells have cannot target. You never learned to create a magic circle like me.”

“I only cast through the orichalcham.” Emi looked at the pendant laying on the ground. Her heart raced knowing that wearing it again will undo the progress Mayumi made in purifying her. She ran fast toward her sister, with her fist raised ready to punch, but Mayumi channeled her mana through the circle.

“Light pulse.”

A burst of light pushed Emi back. She landed next to the pendant. Staring deep at the gem she felt something push down on her back. It was painful and she screamed.

“Light pulse!” The spell once more pushed down on Emi. One strike after another, until she could barely move.

Emi coughed as Mayumi picked up the pendant and put in her sister's hands.

“Transform!” Mayumi said lifting her sister up. “The city is in danger!”

Emi threw her punch at Mayumi, but she struck the vermillion armor, inflicting pain on herself. As Emi nursed her pain, Mayumi grabbed her sister by the hair and slapped her back to the ground. Emi turned her body around, in total shock of how defenseless she was. A flash of memory appeared, of herself looking down on a terrified Mayumi when she attacked her.

“I'm sorry.” Emi said under breath. “I'm sorry I hurt you Mayumi.”

Emi lifted her hand up, hearing the pendant calling out to her. At

first she thought it was Hikari, but it was actually her soul. She looked up at Mayumi's pendant embedded in the chestplate armor.

"Emi..." Mayumi's voice echoed out of the pendant. It was weak and faint. "...it hurts."

Emi reached out for Mayumi's pendant. She could almost feel her sister's soul.

"Light pulse!" Mayumi's spell pushed Emi away from her. She took a step forward and paused.

Emi stood to her feet as the sun above them vanished. As darkness enveloped Emi, her hand lifted the orichalcham pendant over her head. It was the only light in the darkness.

TO BE CONTINUED...

