

Arcana Magi Wisp

by H-M Brown

Gon flew in the air, conserving each breath he took. The bushes behind him shook violently, and the trees above him made it difficult to navigate up. His wings had the colors of fire, red, yellow, and blue. He stood out from the green trees and bushes all around. Many animal ran or flew around him. All in a panic from what was behind them. Those who fell behind disappeared from Gon's sight. It as hard to see what they were, the shadows of the forest allowed the chasers to blend in, despite the shining sun beyond the treetops.

Gon found himself slowing behind everyone. His wings slowly tired. The bird took a chance and pulled up. He could feel it behind him. The sound of snapping, nipping at his feathers. He dodged each tree, bumping into branches that whipped him. Gon felt a strange warm gust of air pushing into him. His vision blurred, and his ears rang to a sound that was like a shrieking hum. With no sense of balance gripping him, Gon took a deep breath and hooked left around a tree, freefalling to the forest floor. He felt the speed of gravity pulling him to the earth. The impact made his childish voice scream from the pain.

Gon lied still with eyes closed as the ground around him vibrated. He felt a strange oily substance slide over his belly, sniffing his scent. He held his breath so as to not tip off that he was alive. He heard the sound of footsteps around him and faded away into silence. Gon slowly opened his eyes. He was now alone. Wincing in pain, he stayed on the ground hopping into the bushes. The bird dared not take flight to avoid being spotted. He emerged from the bushes and found a deer lie dead. Its carcass sprawled everywhere. Limbs hanging from tree limbs, its head resting on the floor, its innards unfurled like rope. Gon covered his beak to block the putrid scent.

Gon continued his trek through the forest arriving at a dirt path. The area was open and had the soot of a campfire in the center. The were torn tents and clothes. Old food molded, crawling with

maggots. Gon quickly ate a few of them. With his beam full of maggots he saw a human hand, pale white. It looked cracked and dusty like chalk. He turned to the dirt path and saw there was direction to go. He flew low in the hopes of not being spotted. Gon prayed he would find some help.

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A young girl was reading a book, her name Ayane Nakamura etched on the back cover. She was lying on the couch in the living room, with plants in the corner, and the sun shining through the windows. She has a bottle of orange juice resting on the table. Across the table was the television with the volume on mute. She flipped through the next page and leaned closer to the book. Her eyes grew wide, her mouth slowly opened, suddenly she dropped back letting out her breath.

“Wow.” Ayane said, and she placed a bookmark between the pages closing the book. As she took a sip of her orange juice, the talk show's end credits appeared on the television screen. Ayane grabbed the television remote as the news started with the graphic image ‘Scandal in America’ and the newscaster spoke.

“Mystic Intelligence and America's Federal Bureau of Investigations will be releasing new information in the kidnapping of Alysia—”

“Change.” Ayane pressed the button and an animated show appeared on the next channel. “Yes, Rising Golem Daigenza is on.”

Ayane lied back on the couch, burying her face in her book, multitasking between both show and novel.

“Ayane.” A woman called from the kitchen. “It's almost time for dinner. Get washed up.”

“Ugh.” Ayane dropped her book with her eyes rolling. “Fine, mom.”

“Watch that tone.”

Ayane left the living room climbing up the stairs, when suddenly she heard a strange thump on the roof. She looked around just make sure it was not coming inside. She opened her mouth ready to ask her mother, but she shook her head and went to her room.

Upon opening the door to her room, there were clothes on the floor. She kicked aside her bra and shorts, when approaching the curtains flapping by the open window. She found her school books and comics knocked over. Ayane moved her desk a little to stick her head outside, unaware of her bra hopping on the ground. She turned around watching it hop in random directions. There was a sound of a human grunt underneath. She grabbed a baseball bat leaning on the wall underneath a poster of a male batter swinging.

"Food is ready Ayane." Mom said, but Ayane focused on the hopping bra.

Ayane leaned before the clothing, and flipped it up. Suddenly, the flapping of wings startled her and with a swing she knocked over her chair, which landed on her foot. She yelped in pain drawing the attention of her mother.

"Hey what's going up there?"

Ayane jumped out of her room, bat in hand, shivering from what was inside.

"Something is under my bed."

"You left your window open again didn't you?"

"No. Well... yes."

"Probably left your clothes lying around looking like a nest too. Just wait till your father gets home to care of it. He'll be here soon."

"No way, what if it gives birth."

"Then don't mess with it. Mother's can be very overprotective of its young. Now come down and eat."

"Ugh." Ayane walked away from her room with bat in hand, unaware of the sound of whimper underneath her desk.

Gon looked around the room, there was nothing but silence. He hopped out from under the desk and approached a girl's school uniform, white blouse and blue skirt with beige sweater. He saw the emblem for Memorial Academy High School, and flew on top of a dresser with a mirror. The bird looked at himself, with bruises and tattered wings. His eyes were weak and the pain overwhelmed him. He rested his belly, closing his eyes.

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A pair of red eyes opened up before, the sound of the creature chasing him echoed in his ears. The feeling of the warm air around him shook his feathers to the core. He woke up startled, shaking like a leaf. Once his vision cleared, he found himself surrounded by bars.

It was a bird cage. Gon immediately clasped the bars with his claws trying to escape. He dropped onto the floor and noticed that he was covered in small bandages. There was fresh food and water spilled over from his shaking. Without hesitation he ate and drank until he collapsed from a filled belly. The door opened and entered Ayane, in her school uniform, dragging her feet. She dropped her bookbag and threw herself on her bed. Gon took another bite, slowly, listening to her moan.

"Why did I fall for that trick? It was so obvious. Now everyone is going to call me Plushie." Ayane pulled the sheets over her body. "I want to die."

"You shouldn't die." Gon said with a kid's voice, and Ayane lifted herself up. She looked around, trying to discern who said that. "My name is Gon."

Ayane looked directly at Gon. She breathed a sigh of relief and approached him.

"I see you're awake." Ayane pulled her seat over and sat before him. "My name is Ayane Nakamura. You're looking well."

"I feel a little better." Gon looked at his bandages. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." Ayane smiled. "You are very lucky. My dad is a veterinarian, the odds of you landing here is amazing. You could have died if it was someone else. My dad specializes in magical creatures."

"So your dad can channel Mana?"

"No." Ayane said shaking her head. "None of us can, but my dad has an obsession with magical creatures like you. He told me once that he met a magical creature who helped him out as a kid so, he wanted to help all creatures since."

"Can you cast spells?"

"No. I wish I could though, it would be awesome. The types of spells I can come up with, but... it's all a dream." Ayane opened the

door and reached inside. At first Gon stepped back without hesitation, a muscular reaction. Ayane stopped, watching his wings shiver even though he looked perfectly normal. Her eyes saddened as she pulled her hand out. Gon though did approach the opened door. "It's okay. I won't hurt you."

"I'm sorry." Gon looked at his bandages again. "I don't know why that happened."

"Did something happen to you?" Ayane held out her hands like a cup, resting them on her lap inviting the bird to land on.

"Yes." Gon floated onto Ayane's hands. He felt her hand slide down his back and his heart jolted. He relaxed. "There is something the forest that chased all of us. Many of us die, but we don't know what it is. All we know is that it hides in the shadows and has red eyes."

"That's awful." Ayane leaning her head to the side. "Maybe my dad knows what it is."

"You think so." Gon received a nod.

"It could be a predator that doesn't belong in the forest. My dad said it's usual due to changing environment or human interference."

"Humans?" Gon remembered seeing a human hand laying the bushes. "It killed humans too."

Ayane gently lifted Gon in her hands and looked him in the eyes.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes." Gon's eyes trailed off a bit and he nodded. "I think it was chasing me because I am a Wisp."

"No way." Ayane said with a smile. "You're a Wisp?"

"Yes." Gon nodded. "You've heard of us?"

"The legend goes that you can turn yourselves into weapons."

"Close, we merge with objects and turn them into enchanted items that reflect the user, but there are limitations." Gon flew to the desk and focused his mind. A ghostly hand made out of his Mana appeared. He grabbed a pencil and Ayane jerked her head back. "eh?"

"Sorry it's just that you are making them float with your mind. You have telepathy don't you."

“Oh, uh... no. Oh riiiiight. You can't see Mana.” Gon thought it over. “Okay, so we Wisps can use Mana to form hands that we can use objects like you humans. It takes a lot of training and a lot of Mana to be a Wisp, but it gets the job done.”

“Amazing.”

“We have a lot of rules to make the merger work, but I can put it simply as this. The user, you, do not have to do anything, we do all the work, however if you were to have the ability to channel Mana, you would not get to us. We would just eject out of the spell.”

“I see.” Ayane picked up Gon. “I think I got it. Can we try when you heal up?”

“I don't know. You're too young to wield me like weapon and you could get hurt.”

“Can't you turn objects into other things?”

“Well yes, but—”

“Good, tomorrow I want to see how it works.”

“Come on.” Gon said as Ayane carried him out of her room.

“Besides, you'll have to stay here anyway until that monster chasing you is captured. I need you tell my dad everything you told me okay?”

“Yeah.” Gon remembered why he was in this situation. He looked up at Ayane's glowing smile excited for being with a Wisp. Gon nodded in agreement that he could at least show her what he could out of gratitude before leaving her forever. “Thank you.”

* * *

The morning sun woke Gon up. He heard the birds chirping outside, hearing them talk about taking care of the babies. He saw Ayane in shorts and shirt, doing stretches. Her back was to him, never noticing he was awake. Gon thought about her kindness. Her home was nice and so were her parents, even though he saw Ayane tend to give them grief. He felt safe being with them, and wondered if he should return to his friends. He rubbed the top of his head with his feathers groaning outloud.

“Hey.” Ayane said, stopping her exercise. “Are you okay?”

“Yes. I was just thinking about my friends.”

"You miss them?"

"Yes. "Gon nodded. "I am anxious to get better so I can return to them."

"Well don't worry. My dad called animal control and the police. They should be out there right now searching for this creature. I can take you back home if you want."

"Thank you, but where I have to go, you can't follow."

"Oh? Is it far?"

"Yes." He saw Ayane's expression deflate before his eyes.

"Perhaps, someday."

"No, it's okay." Ayane looked up with a smile. "You guys can't be legends if I find you all. I don't want the magic to disappear."

Ayane opened the cage and Gon flew out. He landed on her dresser. He hopped and skipped around. He stretched his wings and he smiled.

"I feel better now." Gon looked up to her as she leaned close to him. "Thank you."

"I'm glad you feel better." Ayane saw Gon's wings tense. She did not point it out since he was putting a brave face.

"So how long do I have to wait until we find out if they caught the creature or not?"

"I don't know." Ayane stood straight; her eyes aimed upwards thinking hard. "Maybe tomorrow, I'll ask my dad to take us outside of the city far enough that this creature won't find you. For now, let's go on a jog, you can use the exercise to recover."

* * *

At the joggers path along an open grassy field, Ayane flew alongside Gon, flying just above and ahead. She stared at his wings; there was a brilliant luster to the feathers. Almost alive on its own. She raised her hand up reaching for it. It was hypnotic. Her memories recalled holding Gon in hand, but it never truly comprehended what she held. Her heart realized she missed a moment. Ayane slowed to a stop, near some bushes, watching Gon fly further away. She felt she was taking him for granted, she did not want him to leave forever.

“Hey.” Gon flew back and landed onto her arms. “Are you okay?”

Without a word Ayane felt his feathers. Just sensing the softness. Her eyes clothes, savory each strand. Gon did not understood what she was doing or why. He just perched quietly in her hand.

“One day.” Ayane said. “I’m going to be a historian and an archeologist, so I can learn more about the Wisp and Merydian History. Travel around the world and find artifacts of when people channeled Mana.”

Ayane opened her eyes. “Meeting you is the greatest day of my life.”

Gon's ears heard something nearby. It was from the bushes just past a garden. Gon quivered in Ayane's arms. They saw a dog whimpering out of the bushes.

“That poor dog.” Ayane took a step to help it.

“Don't.” Gon said and Ayane stop. The dog pulled itself out, it's back half missing, leaving a trail of blood. It collapsed, and Ayane's hands shook making Gon vibrate. “RUN!”

“I can't.”

Gon heard a strange low pitch sound. He tried to shake Ayane to move, but she stood still, paralyzed by the noise. The bird saw a piece of a stick on the ground next to a tree. He swooped down and scooped it up with losing momentum. He flew in front of Ayane, dropping to her knees, her eyes wandered off.

“Focus.” Goin said. “Listen to my voice.”

Ayane lifted her eyes up at Gon, and she saw him and the stick glow. A round ball of light surrounded them. It happened so slow, she felt like she was in another world. Swept away to a place she had never been to. To see a Wisp transform, that very few ever get to witness. She felt special. The stick grew into a baseball bat. She gasped in wonder as the weapon floated in front of her. Ayane took the bat in hand and large black paw jutted out of the bushes. Without hesitation she ran. She looked back and saw the bushes peel off revealing a four legged headless monster. Her mind struggled to comprehend its appearance the moment a mouth opened at the base of the body between both legs. Its red eyes

blinking along the side of the thighs. Ayane cried as she looked around for a place to hide, the there was nothing but an empty sky and a long grassy field.

“Help!”

“Ayane, swing me!”

“Help!”

“Listen to me!” Gon took a deep breath and pushed his fear aside. “Swing me at the monster! Trust me!”

Ayane closed her eyes. She skid to a stop. Without thought, but out of reflex, she stood like a batter and swung Gon right onto the side of the monster. She felt a burst of wind pushing the bat. She felt the impact vibrate in her arms. The sound of a yelp opened her eyes, and she saw the creature tumble further away to her left. Her hands trembled. She could feel the jelly in her legs. Yet, seeing the creature go as far as it did blank her mind.

“Ayane.” Gon said. “What are you doing?”

“I trust you.”

“We don't have to this.”

“We can win.”

“No, this is not a fight we should do.”

Ayane ran towards the creature and it ran towards her. She swung the bat overhead and bashed the monster. The impact created a crater. With a roar, she bashed it again and again. The creature screamed with each strike. Its' limb twisted in different directions.

“Ayane stop! You're hurting me!” Gon could not take it anymore. He broke free from his spell; the stick flew out of Ayane's hands. Gon flew into the air circling around. He saw Ayane shook her head and crawled out of the hole as fast as she could. The creature was not moving. It's leg twitched one last time. The sound of vehicles arriving in the distance caught Ayane's and Gon's attention.

“Come Gon.” Ayane said, but he stayed in the air. She saw sadness in his eye. She did not understand why. She reached out to him one more, but he flew away as a police car pulled up. Ayane stood there quietly, covered in dirt, watching Gon fly further away.

Tears fell as she looked back at the creature. The police officer is looking at her.

“Are you hurt?”

Ayane's eyes opened up and realized what she did to Gon. His last words ingrained in her memory. She cried out loud as an officer placed a blanket around her, leading her away.

In the distance, Gon never looked back. His eyes welled with tears for her, but he knew better. His powers were not meant for her, or anybody else. Gon's wish to be with her and her family, could not come true.

The End.

