

Arcana Magi Zero Arc 2 - c.3

by H-M Brown

Marissa's eyes opened slowly. Her muscles felt tense all throughout. She saw the bats lay nearby, but not Arturo. Her fingers trembled, struggling to sense the street she rest on. The sound of footsteps drew near, and she saw the boots stop before her. Lifting her head, she watched Karin, crouch down fixing her skirt into a proper position. Marissa raised her arm up, but it fell down due to lack of energy.

"You smell like Alysia and Megumi." Karin said.

"Smell?"

"Your Mana. You have their scent." Karin sat on her knees, observing Marissa rolling over onto her back. She tilted her head. "That's cool. You can move in my Paralysis Spell."

Marissa laid on her back, her heart beating from the rolling over. She never felt intense pain before. Her eyes shifted to Karin. Analyzing her young face, it was so familiar to her.

"Is your last name... Mayweather?" Marissa watched Karin nodded. "How?"

Karin at first hesitated. She placed her hand on her forehead and it shivered as she spoke. "I am from another universe. My counterpart in this universe was supposed to be trapped in your America."

"When Newark disappeared?"

"Yes." Karin covered her shivering hand as it caught Marissa's eyes. "I... feel weird."

"Are you hurt?" Marissa slid her hand toward Karin hoping to reach out to her. "Did something happen to you just like my daughters?"

"Alysia... and Megumi... they—" Karin went silent and stood to her feet. "They failed to contain this world's Mayweather. Hm..."

they're your daughters. That explains the scent."

"Karin please, let me help you." Marissa lifted her body up in pain. "I'm trying to understand what happened to Alysia and Megumi. If it is the same pain, I can help you too. We will all help you."

Karin walked away.

"You are like an amoeba to us." Karin's voice deepened and sounded like a teenage version of adult Mayweather. "We are beyond your comprehension."

"What?"

Karin aimed her staff at Marissa, channeling her Mana. Her eyes locked on to Marissa, the thought of death crossed her mind. She started breathing heavily. Her hands tightened its grip. "Sleep... SLUMBER!"

A blast of mist covered Marissa, pushing her back to the ground. The scent of anesthesia overwhelmed her and her eyes closed.

Karin dropped her staff, screaming into the air, and her body relaxed. Her mind drifted into emptiness for a second and she picked up her staff. Her thoughts gathered and she made a window of light appear before her. It was connected to the Myriana's pendant, and she saw Megumi's face on the screen.

"You?"

"I'm waiting for you and Alysia. The pendant will guide you to me. Be ready, or you parents will suffer."

"No she did not just threaten—"

"Quiet Lys! She has our parents."

Karin turned off the screen. Looking at Marissa, her words of offering help echoed again. She walked further away from them, keeping her distance.

* * *

Mayweather was climbing on to Ren's back when they both looked up to the sky. They sensed a strange spell wafting in the air, dissipating like evaporated water. Ren turn his head to Mayweather and saw in her unflinching eyes. Despite the lack of emotions, he could tell she wanted to express what she just felt. She saw one of

the crows above dive towards the Elder, and he floated before.

"Ren-sama, we saw two girls flying in the air heading west. They were on magic circles."

"The Perez sisters." Mayweather said and the young crow just stared as though fear gripped him.

"Shiro." Ren said to the crow. "Go the Guardians Shrine and tell them the Perez sisters are here along with Madam Mayweather. Tell them that there is an imposter in the town posing as Mayweather and that is why they sense her."

"Yes Ren-sama." Shiro flew up to the other crows and pointed at a few to come with him.

Mayweather mounted Ren and his wings opened wide. He flew up in the air as a group of crows dove down to get the luggage. Ren and Mayweather turned to floating birds waiting for his orders. He waved them to follow and headed west.

"How fast can we get to the girls Ren?" Mayweather said.

"I'm not as fast as I used to be. I'm afraid the girls will be fighting when we get there."

"If this imposter is anything like me, they may not survive."

* * *

Alysia and Megumi floated around in the air just below the rooftops. Their legs slid back and forth on the Mana circle like a pair of roller skates. They saw Karin below. Their parents lay on the ground. They were not sure what to do first. All they could do was float in the air. It took a moment, but Alysia noticed that Karin is distant from their parents. She floated directly over Karin. All Karin did was watch from the street. No movement. No reaction. She just watched. Alysia descended and Megumi followed, keeping her eyes on their opponent. Fable floated before Megumi, its pages flipped to a drawing of a sword. She planted her hand on artwork while Alysia sat on her knees before her mother. Alysia channeled her Mana and rested her hands on Marissa's chest.

"She is fine." Karin said getting the girls attention. "I used a sleep spell. The man though is still injured."

Alysia crouched over to Arturo while Megumi kept her emotions

in check.

"Heal." Alysia's magic circle grew under her and Arturo. A light glow surrounded them, and hi face winced. She stopped, fearing she might be making it worse. She stood up with Saga in hand and aimed it at Karin. "Who are you?"

"You know who I am." Karin said. She lifted her head and her eyes grew wide. "Do you?"

Alysia and Megumi shook their heads as 'no' and Karin nodded.

"I see." Karin lowered her staff. "You must have fallen into madness and suppressed your memories of the Manasphere. That would explain why you failed to keep my counterpart in Newark."

"Counterpart?" Megumi said.

"Karin Mayweather."

"Oh wow." Alysia said. "You're another version of Madam Mayweather. Which universe are you from?"

"Byakko's Universe."

"That is awesome! You guys have giant robots there."

"Lys!" Megumi said keeping her sister's excitement in check and Karin let out a light smile.

"You were very excited to meet me the first time." Karin approached them, but Alysia raised Saga up in a defensive posture. "Right... your memories."

"You hurt our parents."

"I apologize. I could not be seen." Karin paused for a moment. She rubbed her chin, thinking about Alysia and Megumi, and she put on a straight face. "I'm afraid I can't give you anymore information. Not in your current state."

Just as Karin turned around, Megumi raised her hand. "You have no idea what we've been through all year."

"I do. I too experienced the madness. It wasn't easy." Karin slid her right arm over her left arm, tightening her grip. "But over time, I accepted it, as will you."

"No." Alysia said approaching Karin. "You're in pain too."

Karin immediately turned around to walk away, but Alysia was not going to let her. She noticed Alysia was pacing right behind her,

and caught a glimpse of Myrianna's pendant in her hand. Karin spun her staff and swung it at Alysia's hand.

"Ow." Alysia dropped the pendant. "You little-"

"So, Myrianna sent you." Karin swung the staff again and broke the pendant. "They are coming to take me back, but I'm not done here."

"Done with what?"

Karin swung the staff striking Alysia in the shoulder and Megumi slapped her hand on the page. "Sword!"

The sword emerged from her magic circle and she grabbed the hilt. She ran towards Karin, who blocked Saga. "You're going to tell us everything!"

"It's pointless!" Karin said pushing Alysia back into Megumi. She slammed the staff onto the ground, and burst of energy struck the girls, knocking apart from each other.

Alysia rolled back to her feet, looking at Megumi struggling to stand up. She channeled her Mana and aimed Saga at Karin. "AIR BURST!"

A ball of air flew at Karin, but she swat it aside like a regular ball. Alysia and Megumi stared with mouths gapped open, for Karin surrounded herself in Mana that was building up heat and pressure. "Disruptive Wave!"

Ripples in the air split in two directions. When it struck the girls, their bodies also rippled in the air. The spell passed through like water through sponge. They could not scream, and they dropped to their knees. When the spell dissipated, Alysia and Megumi collapsed on the ground. They breathed heavily, gripping their chests to handle the pain each heartbeat made.

"I will see you both again in the Mansphere." Karin turned around, but stopped at the sound of a blade scraping the ground. She looked back, her eyes tracking up. There was Alysia using Saga as a crutch to stand on her feet. She turned to Megumi and saw her using the sword to get up. "Pride. Always a weakness."

"Shut up!" Alysia said and noticed Megumi lost a contact exposing her right grey eye.

"Go to your parents. This battle is lost."

"Never." Alysia's eye became red. Her contacts slowly falling off as she channeled her Mana and hopped. "Mana Glider."

"Don't do this." Karin said and watched Alysia fly up to the air.

"Forget Karin!" Megumi said. She took a step and her knee buckled under her. "We need to take care of mom and dad!"

"No Meg!" Alysia raised Saga up channeling her Mana. "She has all our answers!"

"Stop being stubborn!"

"Just like in the Manasphere." Karin said.

"Shut it Karin!" Megumi tried to cast Mana Glider but her legs would not move.

"If your sister attacks, I will defend myself."

Megumi immediately flipped the page to shield. She pressed her hands on the sheet as Alysia began her decent. "Barrier!"

"PYRO..."

With the Barrier between Karin and Alysia, Megumi watched Karin stab the staff into the ground freeing both her hands. She strengthened the Barrier with all the Mana she could channel, but Karin crossed her arms over her head.

"CANCEL!" Karin separated her arm with downward wave and erased all the spells currently active. She watched Alysia instantly free-fall head first through the back windshield of a parked car.

"LYYYYS!" Megumi unaware of Marissa looking up at them as her hands slowly rubbed Arturo's chest. Megumi hurried over to the car, and saw Marissa meet her there. They both pulled Alysia out, her face covered in blood, and her eyes closed. Megumi wiped away her tears, and when she looked at her mother, Marissa's hand reached out to Megumi's right eye.

"They're grey." Marissa said and Megumi broke down in tears over Alysia's body. Marissa immediately covered her daughters in a hug.

Karin raised her hand, making her staff fly to her. Once she grabbed it, she saw Arturo lifting his body. They locked eyes for a brief moment, but the cries drew Arturo's attention away from the

teen. She ran off, while Arturo forced himself to his feet, struggling to hold her tears back.

Arturo looked back for a brief moment to where Karin ran off, but the calls for Alysia to wake up kept him focus on what is important. He limped towards his family as his lifted up and spotted Mayweather riding a giant crow, descending towards them.

TO BE CONTINUED...

