

Arcana Magi Zero Arc 3 - c.1

by H-M Brown

Alysia and Megumi stood outside tent entrance peeking in and watched the doctors looked over Madam Mayweather. They attached a heart monitor and IV to her as she laid in the bed. Alysia noticed Madam Mayweather moved her arm slightly before flopping back onto the blanket. Her eyes opened and closed periodically. The doctors tried to keep her from moving around and calm. Everyone waited. There was no more movement, just breathing. The doctors and nurses exited the tent, walking past Alysia and Megumi.

“Excuse me.” Megumi said in Japanese. “May we see Madam Mayweather.”

“Yes.” The doctor said. “But don't disturb her. She needs a lot of rest.”

“I understand.” Megumi took Alysia's hand and led her inside.

The girls walked slowly. A flash of memory struck Alysia. It was Madam Mayweather relaxing on her beanbag smoking her pipe. Looking cool in her eyes. Alysia tightened her grip on Megumi's hand.

“I remember the first time we met her.” Alysia placed her hand on Mayweather's forehead. “It was on our birthday.”

Megumi took Madama Mayweather's hand. “I can't believe how much time passed. She looks so frail.”

“She's going to do fine.” Alysia smiled. “This is nothing. She'll be back in her home on her beanbag looking at the universe. Freaking us out.”

“Heh.” Megumi closed her eyes. “Please get better.”

“Yeah Oldie...” Alysia wiped a tear from her eye. “When we get our souls back, we're gonna party at you place.”

“She'll just make us clean.”

Alysia looked up with that thought in mind. “You're right. I

change my mind.”

“We have to go Lys. Everyone is waiting for us.”

“We’ll be back.” Alysia touch her lips and planted her fingers on Madam Mayweather’s forehead, while Megumi leaned her forehead on Mayweather’s hand. The girls exited the tent unaware of Madam Mayweather’s eyes opening slightly, with a grimaced face.

“Hmmm...” Madam Mayweather took a long deep breath, her eyes shifted to her hand. The sensations of Megumi’s hand and Alysia’s finger kiss made her long to feel the emotion, to return it to the girls. To her own children. All she could do was nod in acknowledgment. “The future.”

And Madam Mayweather closed her eyes, taking long slow breaths.

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Nemo the Elder fox, Kiba the elder dog, and Kameto the elder turtle stood with members of the Society, waiting patiently. They saw Alysia and Megumi approach Marissa and Arturo. Climbing up the stairs was the mayor, and behind him was the police force in SWAT gear, many of them with eyes wide open at the sight of the elders.

“Thank you for coming mayor.” Nemo said.

“Anything to get our city back.”

Nemo nodded as Ren landed on top of the hill with Daimon the cicada. Ren took a puff of his pipe as Daimon looked down.

“Well Ren, it looks like Kenichi convinced the other Clans to stay out of this.”

“I doubt it.” Ren blew smoke into he air. “They have too much at stake.”

Kenichi the boar arrived from the forest with the other elders. The police officers stepped back, awed by these large nature creatures. The elder boar stood before Nemo with snort. “My sources told me that Satoshi and the Neko Clan joined the Kinomoto Family.”

“What?” Daimon said from above, but Ren calmed him.

“Do you know anything about this?” Kenichi looked up at Daimon.

“No.” Daimon slumped down in shock. “No wonder we could reach them.”

“They are now in the city together with those people these two girls worked for.”

“They're with those Arcadians. How will you answer for this Daimon.”

“Me!? We have nothing to do with this!”

“ENOUGH!” Nemo stomped his foot. Everyone went silent and turned to him while Ren calmly puffed his pipe. Nemo leaned right into Kenichi's face. “Suck up your pride and look at the big picture. Everyone is suffering, losing love ones and dying! Our culture is not what is to be.”

Nemo looked around at everyone, pacing. “We don't have samurai or daimyo or vassals anymore. Spellcasting has evolved with the modern age. Human society has grown and adapted to what they built.”

Nemo lowered his head and let out short breath. “Hmph... our children, whether clans, society, or mundane or learning to coexist with each other, for the better.”

Nemo's mana hand emerged and he rubbed his eyes. “We have children out there and in here, fighting a battle that should be done by adults. They are fighting an adult battle and getting hurt. Probably killed.”

“We know that.” Kenichi said.

“Do you?” Nemo locked eyes with the boar. “Do you?”

Nemo turned to the crowd. “I still remember the Children's War back in the 1960s.”

The police, the mayor, and all mundane looked to each other wondering what he was talking about.

“How many children were hurt, killed, or worse...” He looks up at Ren. “had the Purge spell cast on them?”

“Our solution to the child problem. Purge. As an Elder, I feel ashamed for that, because one of those children is in that tent fighting for her life once again! And here we are at each other throats while a new generation of children are fighting another war

they should not be participating in.”

Every adult looked down or at each other while Alysia and Megumi found themselves in their parents arms. Ren looked to Daimon, in his eyes, and nodded.

“I should have looked to my own wisdom before I offered those kids Gon and the Wisp.”

“Rumiko...” Daimon said. “...I just wanted to give and others a place.”

“We all tried.” Ren looked down at Nemo. “Why are we wasting time here? If we're doing to redeem ourselves, then let's out there and retrieve every damn kid and their families and fight our own damn battle.”

“It's as easy as you think Ren.” Kiba the dog said. “We have to escort Guardians to the Shrine of Hikari and Shrine of Kurai while we battle to retrieve their souls. It's the only path to victory.”

“We send them their after we drive out the enemy.”

“No.” Daimon said. “He's right. If they find out that we are saving the girls trip for last, they could potentially regroup or fortify the defenses. We also don't know how their souls will react to our presence unless they are with us.”

Nemo turned to Perez family.

“Forgive us. But we have to ask that your daughters join the front line. They will not fight.”

“Come on.” Alysia said.

“NO!” Marissa said and Alysia and Megumi turned to her. “There is no debate. You two will not fight.”

“We want to help.”

“You heard your mother.” Arturo said with stern eyes. “We both will be with you at the shrines and you will get your souls back.”

“We're have to save our daughter's souls.” Marissa said. “Please, help us.”

“We will.” Nemo said with a nod.

“Then it is settled” Ren said. “Let's hurry with those plans, time is not our side.”

Kenichi turned to the other elders and with a nod, he led them to Nemo gathering with the humans to lay out their plans.

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The police, the Society, and the Clans all formed groups. Alysia and Megumi walked with their parents as they stood between a helicopter and a van. Waiting for them was the pilot and driver, and two small squads of Society, Police and Clans.

"I hate the idea of splitting up Arturo." Marissa said.

"I know, but we have no choice. At least we have help."

Marissa nodded. "I'll take Alysia and you Megumi."

"All right." Arturo and Marissa turned to the girls as they talked with Nemo.

"We're sorry about all of this Nemo-sama." Megumi said.

"Yeah." Alysia looked down.

"This is not your fault. The fight you had that destroyed our Sacred Trunk, you did what believed is right. I never held that against you both. You protected the world and saved lives. What happened afterwards was an accident. None of us saw this coming."

"Still," Megumi said. "we could... should have fought back against the Arcadians in the Manasphere. We were weak."

"No." Nemo said and the girls lifted their up. "Being weak would mean you continued to serve the Arcadians and make excuses. Despite our insistence that you are innocent of all this, you still carry the responsibilities of your actions. You reached out to us for help and did the right thing. You are standing here before all of us doing to overcome what you had experienced. You picked yourselves up in the face of adversity. That is inner strength."

"But—"

"Ojou-sama." Nemo bowed before Magumi. "You and your sister must find outer strength. Please allow us to give you our strength. Even your parents want to give that to you."

Megumi hesitated to answer and Alysia pat Nemo casually on the shoulder.

"Okay okay. I get it." Alysia leaned on Nemo's leg.

"Lys." Megumi gestured Alysia to show respect.

“We came this far Meg. Nemo is right, what good is it to cry about this.” Alysia crossed her arms and planted her foot on Nemo leg like a wall. She felt herself nudged off by the elder. “Look, we messed up, and everybody here is teaming up to fight. Our fight. Well... more like cleaning up our mess. Which really we should be doing, like sweeping this up and scooping it—”

“Alysia!” Megumi got her sister's attention. “Focus.”

Alysia looked at her hand and nodded.

“Is she okay?” Nemo said leaning to Megumi, and she took a deep breath.

“It's her way of coping with what happened.”

“I see.” Nemo noticed Alysia struggling to focus.

“Ojou-sama! Gaurdian!” Nemo said making the girls stand before him. “May the Four Elements shine over you. And come home safe.”

“Thank you.” Megumi and Alysia said and Nemo bowed to them.

After Megumi and Alysia bowed, they looked up at the Nemo joining the other elders. They turned to their parents approaching them, where Ren was talking to them. A pair of crows floated beside Marissa and Arturo as the elder nodded to the girls.

“I wish you both luck.” Ren said and he flew away.

“What was that about?” Alysia said.

Marissa reached out to the crow. “Ren assigned these two crows to us. He calls them Wisps. They supposed to turn into weapons that we can use to fight.”

“Amazing.” Megumi said.

“It's time.” Arturo said. “Meg you're with me. Alysia, your mother will be with you.”

“I'm nervous.” Alysia said as she stood by her mother. “What will happen to us we our souls return?”

Alysia felt Marissa's hands rest on her shoulders. “I don't know, and it scares me. But we are going to get through this together as a family.”

“Your mother is right.” Arturo said and Megumi took his hand. “You girls are not alone. We're going to be fine.”

Alysia and Megumi stepped away from their parents. Alysia raised her bracelet and Megumi raised her locket into the air and they glowed bright.

“Awaken... Saga!”

“Advance... Fable!”

The jewelry turned into staff and artbook respectively, and their clothes changed into their costumes. Alysia and Marissa walked towards the helicopter and Megumi and Arturo headed to the van, on their way to the shrines.

TO BE CONTINUED...

