

Arcana Magi Zero - c.2

by H-M Brown

After Alysia and Megumi transformed into their costumes, they rode their Mana Gliders over Newark with the aide of hand sized fireflies creature spells made from Megumi's Fable artbook. It was so dark below, there was only flashlights weaving about and headlights pointing in one direction. There were police cars with sirens flashing chasing down looters around a corner. Ahead of the girls was another explosion with sound of fire-trucks in the distance. Looking out at the city from the sky, the situation looked overwhelming. Alysia and Megumi just stood their balancing on their gliders, their faces unsure of where to begin. That was until Alysia's heard the sound of man yelling below.

Alysia and Megumi dove to the street below and saw three looters trying to break into a house. One of them threw a brick at the window shattering it. A woman screamed inside and a man inside the house looked out the window.

"Get out of here you punks."

Alysia channeled her Mana and raised Saga. Megumi placed her right on Fable's cover and closed her eyes. The fireflies focused their light and shined it on the looters blinding them. Alysia gathered wind at the tip of Saga and flicked it at the criminals.

"AIR BLAST!" The burst of wind pushed the looters to the ground. Its gusts picked up speed and pushed along the ground. They rolled off the porch onto the sidewalk until the wind stopped. Unsure of what just happened, the looters ran down the street only to find a police car pull up from around the corner to stop them. As the couple in the house looked out the window, they saw Alysia and Megumi fly off in the air. The darkness hid their identities.

"Lys, we can't do this all night."

"I know. I feel helpless."

"Then we need to find the person who did this."

"I have a feeling they are not in the city. They're not the stupid to trap themselves here."

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"You're probably right." Mrgumi looked up to the sky. "How about we find out where the city is?"

"Okay." Alysia and Megumi flew high into the sky. They kept going further where there is nothing but darkness. Looking down, they could see Newark is like island, but something was off. The girls stopped and noticed flames along the edge of the city. Alysia aimed Saga in the sky, but Megumi pulled her sister's arm down. Alysia floated behind Magumi and watched her send the fireflies up to the sky. It took awhile until Megumi felt her hand sting on the book. They watched two little sparks flash into the nothingness. Megumi's hand trembled.

"That force field killed the fireflies."

"Meg, let me see your hand." Alysia floated in front of Megumi and caressed her hand. Her sister pulled her hand away from the pain.

"I'll be fine Lys." Megumi looked at the flames by the edge of the city. "Let's check the edge."

* * *

Back at home, neighbors gathered around the street with their flashlights, trying to figure out what happened. At the girl's house, Mrs. Perez stepped out of the house with a flashlight and a bat. Her husband pulled her arm to stop but she distanced herself from him. She aimed the flashlight at her face, exposing her angered look. It made him pause as she spoke.

"I have to find the girls."

"Then let me go find them. It's not safe out there."

"It's not safe here either. So what difference does it make?" Mrs. Perez planted her hand on her hip. "You stay here incase they do come back. Okay?"

"Fine." Mr. Perez kissed his wife. "You and the girls come back safe okay."

"Knowing the girls, I doubt it."

"Go."

Mrs. Perez runs down the street past the neighbors as they watched her hop in the car and drive off. She turned the corner and

saw more people gathered in herds with flashlights trying to figure out what is going on. The neighborhoods for the most have peaceful and quiet, that was until she reached the edge of a shopping district. She could hear screaming. There was flashing lights from a police car around the corner. A Molotov bottle flew onto the intersection lighting the street in flames. She switched gears to reverse and faced the rear window. Her eyes grew wide for there was a mob behind her. Her heart raced, not for her own safety, but the fact that her daughters are here with this madness. She faced forward as a glass bottle struck parked car. With focus, she changed gears and slammed her foot on the gas. With screech tires she flew past the now flaming intersection and built distance between herself and riot.

Mrs. Perez took deep breathes. Her eyes welled up with the thought of Alysia and Megumi. She wanted them back, in her arms safe. Memories of how Alysia behaved early in the evening clouded her judgment behind the wheel. She never knew she scraped the side of a parked car. The side of impact startled her and she struck the brakes. The car spun out, stopping by a corner. The area was pitch black. Only the headlights shined on a brick wall of an apartment building. She double-checked the doors to make sure they were locked. She pulled the bat onto her lap. She leaned her forehead on the steering wheel.

"Oh please... Alysia... Megumi... please returned home, now. Go home. Go home." Mrs. Perez whimpered in her arms. When she leaned back, she saw a small light shined off the rear view mirror. Without hesitation, she moved forward only to feel the car struggling. Something caught it from the back. Mrs. Perez screamed in anger pushing the gas pedal down. Just as she saw a pair of red eyes rise up from behind the car, that light flashed bright. It blinded Mrs. Perez and whatever that was behind her car. Upon release the car speed into the wall crashing the right headlight. There was a roar and the sound of thundering footsteps running away. Mrs. Perez, out of shock, stumbled out of the car swinging her bat wildly. She felt a pair of hands grab her shoulders. The right hand covered Mrs. Perez' eyes and a soft hue calmed her down and eased the pain.

"Healing Sight." A woman said with a monotone voice. The spell ended and Mrs. Perez' eyes saw a white haired woman through the indoor car lights before it went out. "My name is Karyn Mayweather."

"I am Marissa Perez."

"Perez eh?" Mayweather leaned closer at Marissa's face. "You wouldn't happen to be related to Alysia and Megumi?"

"They're my daughters."

"I see where they get their recklessness from." Mayweather lifted Marissa's bat with her hand still holding it.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"The last time I saw them, they came back from Japan bruised and beaten."

"You know what happened to them?"

"No." Mayweather stepped back waiting for Marissa to follow her. They both looked at the car and saw steam rising out of the hood. She waited for Marissa to shut down the car and close the door. Mayweather already had a feeling there was more to this situation than she thought. When Marissa stood before her, Mayweather walked beside her. "As much I would like to discuss about your children, we have a much bigger problem on hands."

Mayweather stretched her arms and whispered under her breath. A small ball of light appeared, floating in the air. It was so bright that the area lit up. It drew the attention of people in the nearby buildings, all of whom looked out to see what was going on.

"I need to get to a high ground." Mayweather said walking alongside Marissa. "I'm going to cast a spell to light the whole city so everyone can see. Draw back the Nocturne."

"Nocturne?" Marissa said looking to Mayweather."

"Summoned creatures that are corrupted Mana. They live in darkness and feed on people's clean Mana. They don't kill when they drain Mana but the body does weaken to a point of trauma."

"But at least they don't kill."

"It's not so much the Nocturne themselves I am concerned about, it's us. When we're traumatized, we do things; we become

reactive, and end up hurting people and ourselves.”

Marissa stopped. She looked at her bat. Thinking what she could with this if she were drained of Mana made her decide to let go, but Mayweather grabbed her wrist. Marissa lifted her head up. She could see it in the old woman's eyes that it was not a good idea. Mayweather coated the bat in Mana and touched Marissa's hand.

“Binding strength.”

The bat became light in Marissa's hands. The lack of weight startled her. She swung the bat with no problem and smiled. Marissa lifts the bat up.

“I don't understand.”

“You want protect yourself from the Nocturne, right?”

Mayweather walked away with the light following. “After I light the city up, we'll for your daughters.”

“Thank you.”

* * *

Alysia and Megumi landed on the sidewalk. They stood before a car in flames. The back half with its seats and trunk are gone. The driver's body reduced to a skeleton. The passenger side was open. Alysia floated over to the side. On the seat was a half burnt bear with a tiny hand attached. She turned to the edge of the city, realizing the spell made this happen. Alysia landed on her feet as Megumi floated behind her. Alysia approached the edge slowly, making sure she does not touch the barrier.

“Be careful.” Megumi said while she slowly floated up to see outside.

Alysia leaned her body back as though she was nearing a flame. Her eyes focused on the outside, where there is nothing but darkness ahead. However, there was something strange below. It looked pink and purple, swirling like a whirlpool.

From above Megumi could see a float like substance mixing with this pink and purple pool. She saw Mana cascading below. It was coming from underneath the surface. The ground itself. Megumi landed next to Alysia and they both walked along the edge until they reached a tree. Megumi cast her fireflies spells and made them float

next to the tree. The leaves were brown and bark was grey. Looking down at the whirlpool they could speculate one thing.

"We're dead." Alysia said.

"No we're not." Megumi said placing her hand on the tree.

"We're losing Mana, but it seems plant life react differently than we do when losing Mana."

"So where are we?" Alysia stepped back from the edge.

"I'm not sure if this is dimensional or worse."

"I say worse. Can we leave at worse?"

"Relax." Megumi placed her hand on Alysia's shoulder. She felt her sister's shiver and understood her fear. "Let's get back into the city and regroup."

"Wait." Alysia said as Megumi turned around. "People need to know not to come here. We need to leave a danger beacon that warn them."

"Newark is way too big for us to cover."

"Then let's find the police and at least tell them. Maybe they can spread the word."

Megumi nodded. "Okay. Let's go."

As the girls were ready to hop back onto their Mana Gliders, they heard a strange grumble. Beyond the darkness, they saw a pair of eyes watching them. It was near the edge of the light made by the flames. Its eye struggled to look at them, but it knew the girls were there.

Alysia and Megumi shifted their eyes toward each other. They were not sure what it was or what it looked like. Without hesitation they jumped up on their gliders and flew to the left. As the red eyes slid over to the right, the girls stopped in the air. They floated backwards to build some distance. When they turned around, there were another set of eyes on the other side of the light barrier.

"Oh come on!" Alysia said.

"This is ridiculous." Megumi waved her arm forward and her fireflies flew right up to the eyes. At quick glance they saw grey skin before the creature pulled itself away into the darkness.

"I got this." Alysia raised Saga over her hand, her Magic Circle

appeared channeling her Mana. A ball of fire grew large, aimed at the red eyes forcing it to slink down to the street. "PYRO MAELSTROM!"

"Wait!"

The ball fired down at the street striking the creature. It roared revealing that it has two heads attached to a long neck, a scorpion like head, and what should be its scorpion tail is in fact another head. It lit aflame and rumbled forward into through edge instantly transforming into dust with only its Mana raining down to the whirlpool below.

"You idiot!" Megumi said. "People could have gotten hurt!"

"You're hand." Alysia said look at her sister's hand trembling. "That thing turned into Mana."

"So that's what happened to the other fireflies. My Mana." Megumi clutched her shoulders and felt Alysia's hug.

"It's okay." Alysia placed her hands on Megumi's cheek. "Let's find the police and warn them about the edge and then we find who did this."

Megumi regained her composure. With a nod, they flew back into the city.

TO BE CONTINUED...

