

Arcana Magi Zero + Pure - c.1

by H-M Brown

Ayane, Hideki, Takashi, Tomiko, Sayako with their Wisps in their arms, and Keiko, Emi, and Mayumi. Each stood on the rooftop, watching with eyes wide open, while Rumiko lifted herself up nursing her injures. Their faces unable to express what they saw rising above buildings. A Nocturne, whose grey mana seeped out of its mouth, grabbed the roof of the building with its large claws. Using it as leverage, it stood itself up, hunched over, its long whale like head roared like a loud horn. This time, it was louder and everyone covered their ears. When it stopped, Keiko saw the grey mana enter the glowing purple lines. Takashi noticed the grey mana around the buildings drawn to the creature. Tomiko helped Rumiko to her feet, and its mouth opened, gathering particles of light, shaping into a purple ball.

The Nocturne stretched out its legs, lifting its upper body. Its head evened with its shoulders, and tightened its grip on the rooftop, cracking it. Shifting its head slightly to the right, a purple beam fired above the city, the rooftops and some top floors of the buildings erased, leaving behind decay and rot. The force of the blast pushed its body back ripping the streets and collapsing the building it gripped. People inside the building screamed. Its reach went beyond the town and into the stoned forest. The Nocturne moved its head to the left, sweeping across, until it ran out of breath. It vacuums the oxygen above, birds that were nearby swallowed whole.

The street below was cleared of the grey mana, but there was still some trickling down the buildings like water evening itself out when pushed aside. When the Nocturne finished inhaling, it took its first step, and the earth shook. Everyone on the roof fell over, and could only crawl on their knees as they watched the monster march

towards another thick pool of grey mana.

Tomiko shed tears. "How is anybody going to stop that?"

"I don't know." Keiko hands shivered as Emi grabbed Mayumi's hands.

"What have we done?"

Mayumi turned to Emi. "Nothing. This is all the Arcadians doing. This is what they used us for."

"Hey!" Takashi pointed out to the sky. "I see someone."

Flying by in the distance was Megumi with the Tome of the Artisan following her. Her eyes were focused on the Nocturne. Her magic circle appeared before as the book flew in front of her. She planted her hands on the pages and glowed. One by one, large golems emerged from the circle landing on the rooftop. They ran towards the Nocturne.

"Its Miyazaki-san." Ayane said.

Mayumi and Emi looked at each other shocked. They turned to Megumi and tried to get a clear look of her. Their hearts racing, they had one thought in mind.

"We have to help." They said.

Everyone turned to the twins nervous. Keiko shook her head and refocused herself. She approached Mayumi with nod. Keiko took out her Shining Star locket and brooch. She turned to Ayane and tossed the brooch to her.

"What's this?"

"Protective outfit. It should fit you. Change into that."

"Are you crazy?" Rumiko said. "She just started seeing mana now."

"She's not coming with us." Keiko looked at Ayane. "You take everyone back to the shrine and tell everyone there what's happening here. Mayumi, Emi and I are going to slow this thing down with Miyazaki-san until backup arrives."

"Wait, you need me." Rumiko took a step but wince in pain.

"They need you... especially Ayane."

Rumiko looked back at everyone and she nodded.

"Okay." She curled her hand into a fist. "I'm sorry I can't be

there to help.”

“It's okay.” Mayumi said. “You've been through enough. You need to rest and heal. And get those shackles removed.”

Rumiko looked at her wrists and closed her eyes. “Let's go. I have enough strength to change.”

Rumiko took out her brooch and stepped aside from Ayane. Mayumi and Emi did the same as well. They raised their hands up into the air.

“SHINE SPARK!” Each girl was surrounded in a sphere of light and their clothes changed into their costumes. She was wearing bike shorts with a single piece skirt draped over it, sneaker heeled mini-boots, and fingerless gloves, and hairclips. Mayumi in red, Rumiko in Purple, and Emi blue. Rumiko turned to Ayane to teach her how transform as Keiko raised her blue stone pin into the air.

“SHINE ILLUMINATE!” A bolt of lightning shot down from the sky, and enveloped her in a sphere. She emerged with her blue and white staff in hand, its blue jewel on the end glowed briefly. Her hair was pink with white dog-ears, and she wore a one-piece white and blue skirt with armor throughout her body and a tiara across her forehead. She posed her body in front of everyone. “SHINING STAR!”

“That's nice...” Rumiko said with a sigh as she stepped aside revealing Ayane in costume.

“Ayane?” Takashi said as she blushed at wearing the green colored outfit.

“It feels weird.” Ayane said to Rumiko.

“You'll get used to it.” Rumiko said. “This will protect from most damage like armor, but not heavy attacks. So be careful. Since you don't have a magic circle or a magical item or weapon to act as a guide to casting spells this outfit will have to do. I'll teach you how to cast a basic shield on the way to the shrine.”

“Thank you.”

“Okay then.” Mayumi said. “We know what to do. Let's go.”

“Good luck everyone.” Sayako said.

The girls jumped to the next roof and headed towards Megumi.

The giant crows hopped next to everyone ready to fly them back to the shrines. As Sayako watched Emi continue on, Hideki stood behind her.

“They’ll be fine. Once we get to the shrine and tell everyone, they’ll head out to fight.”

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Megumi flew around to the back, directing her team of golems to jump onto the Nocturnes back. As soon as they landed, large whips shot out of the back and sliced the artwork into pieces. They broke into light particles and returned to the tome. The whips shot towards Megumi like spears. She flew to dodge them, but they changed directions. Megumi flew around in a circle avoiding the creature's tendrils, using her magic circle to deflect one away. She turned around a saw two spears heading towards her, she was caught off guard.

“FIRE BEAM!” The night lit briefly as a blast of fire and engulfed the whips, vaporizing them.

As the Nocturne screamed, Megumi looked at the direction of the shot and saw a girl she did not recognize with her staff in hand. She squinted her eyes at the twins next to her eyes grew wide. Megumi flew down and landed next them. Megumi's heart raced, she recognized the twins from their photos she received on her cell phone.

“Mayumi Akamatsu?” Megumi stood before Emi and watched the twin shake her head no. She turned to the other twin and received a nod and smile.

“Please to meet you.” Mayumi bowed and Megumi returned the bow. “This is my sister Emi.”

“Please to meet you.” She bowed as well and Keiko got their attention, she bowed quickly.

“I’m Keiko Urashima... Shining Star.” She presented her costume. “I’m sorry I have to rush this meeting, but we have a giant monster to stop.”

“Of course.” Megumi turned around and the girls see the Nocturne marching towards the large patch of grey mana, its purple

lines absorbing the mist once more. "What a mess Lys and I made."

"Where's Alysia-chan?" Mayumi said catching Emi's and Keiko's attention.

"At the Shrine of Kurai getting her soul back." Megumi channeled her mana and leapt in the air. "MANA GLIDER!"

Two magic circle's appeared under feet and she floated in place. "Can any of you fly?"

"We can." Emi said and Mayumi nodded. They channeled mana and felt the wind around them. Their wrists and ankles were covered by air bands and they flew up beside Megumi. They turned to Shining Star and she shook her head no.

"Keep your distance." Megumi said. "I have a feeling whatever that beam did to those buildings killed people as well."

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Ayane sat on the giant crow in the air with Rumiko sitting behind her. Everyone watched as she struggled to cast a spell.

"This is hard."

"I know Nakamura-san, but you can do it. Now think of a window of light."

Ayane closed her eyes, and focused her thoughts. As she imagined a window, a flash of thought shot her mind. It was five random images of history and grey mana. She clutched her head screaming. Ayane started to slip off, and Rumiko wrapped her arms around Ayane's waist.

"What happened?"

Ayane's eyes trembled. "Images... so many images... I can't think straight. I saw grey mana. The Manasphere."

"What happened?" Takashi said from the other crow and Rumiko answered.

"I think the Manasphere has some kind of side effect. It might be what Perez sisters went through when they first entered the Manasphere." Rumiko leaned closer to Ayane. "Take a deep breath, relax, and we'll wait until we get to the shrine to figure this out."

"Okay."

"Look!" Tomiko said point to the street below. "The people."

Everyone noticed people stepping out of the buildings clutching their heads and collapsing. Some of the nature spirits and members of the Society were struggling to stand up. The grey mana everyone was surrounded in, was changing everyone. Tomiko shook her head.

“What did those Arcadians do?”

“The Manasphere.” Ayane said rubbing her forehead. “They brought the Manasphere to our world.”

“She's right.” Rumiko said. “I can see the visions. Everyone is becoming a Magi, and their mana is changing to grey. The Noct—”

A small purple beam fire between the crows, separating them. They looked below and saw smaller Nocturne attacking the people below. The beam instantly erasing people and animals, leaving behind pools of rotted flesh. The giant crows picked up speed as they saw small beams shoot everywhere in the city.

“Look!” Hideki pointed towards the Shrine of Four Mythic Elements is at and saw helicopters rise into the air.

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Megumi fired a volley of icicles at the giant Nocturne. It roars again and whip spears chased her. She led them to Shining Star where she blasted them with her Fire Beam. The twins flew at the monster's face and they cast their spells.

“AERIAL BLADE!” Mayumi threw an air shaped javelin at the Nocturne's face. It roared.

“GRAVITY VOID!” Emi's aimed the spell at its right eye and pulled it out of the socket. The Nocturne immediately thrashed around, knocking the building's over. The people who were inside screamed as the building collapsed on them inside. Mayumi flew to Emi in anger. “I thought the building the was evacuated. The lights were off.”

“Watch what you're doing!” Keiko said jumping to another roof.

“Sorry!” Emi said flying over to Keiko. “I thought I could kill it in one spell.”

“Well now we know it's too big for our strongest spells.”

The sound of screams as in other buildings poured out. Suddenly small purple beams fired from out of nowhere, erasing the people.

The girls looked around and saw Nocturne with purple lines rushing down the street.

"This is too much." Mayumi said to Megumi.

"We got the giant one on its side right now. Let's concentrate on the little ones to give the people a chance to escape. Be careful not to let them touch you or the people, these creatures will absorb use and turn us into Nocturne."

"Really?" Emi said. "Have we been killing people?"

"Probably." Megumi turned to Emi and saw her friend's eyes tremble.

"Don't think about Emi-chan!" Keiko said. "We have to assume their dead inside."

"I hate to agree." Mayumi said. "But we have no choice, their killing people who are alive right now. We'll have to worry about it later."

Emi nodded in agreement and focused her thoughts. As Emi and Mayumi flew down, Keiko aimed her staff from the roof and used her Fire Beam in precision, picking on off after another. Mayumi and Emi together used the wind to scoop the people up and flew to the roof. Megumi summoned her team of golems and sent them to fight the bigger Nocturne one on one. Each girl pushed themselves to their limit as the number of Nocturne increased.

Suddenly, the giant Nocturne got back to its feet, absorbing whatever grey mana it can. It turned to the girls with the shrine behind them in the distance. They immediately fired whatever they can to try to stop it, but ignored the pain. Emi flew to its left eyes ready to use another Gravity Void spell, despite what would happen. She no one telling her to stop. When formed the ball of black energy in her hands she heard a girl's voice in the distance.

"PYRO MEALSTROM!" A large ball of fire struck the back of the Nocturne's head forcing it to face at the street. The flame went through it but only exposed its flesh and the Nocturne fired its beam into the street creating a large hole.

Emi covered her mouth as she saw human and animal limbs, covered in black oily skin, flail about inside. Their screams of pain

echoed in her ears. She looked up and saw a girl carrying a winged staff, flying past her on magic circles. Emi felt herself pulled away by Mayumi as she looked above and heard Megumi call the girls' name.

“ALYSIA!!”

“MEG!” She hugged her sister, and tightened her grip. She took a deep breath, and herself pulled back.

“Lys. What happened? Are you okay?”

“It's Mom. I got my soul back, but I... I hurt mom.”

Megumi clasped her hands on Alysia's face and looked her in the eyes. “Focus right now. We'll talk about this later. We have to stop this monster while we have the chance.”

“Okay.”

Megumi release Alysia and they both watched the monster lift its head.

“Not even your Pyro Maelstrom stopped it.”

“It was a direct hit.”

“Then let's go for it.” Alysia looked to the roof and saw the twins with their friend. “Is that the Akamatsu Twins?”

“Focus! You'll say hi to them in a moment.”

“Right.” Alysia faced the Nocturne. “Sorry.”

Alysia and Megumi channeled their mana. They dove toward the Nocturne in a spiral. They grabbed each other's hands and held on tight as they spun around. They broke away with increased speed. They each touched both ends of their Mana Gliders with the tips of their fingers. They both spun quickly creating a tail of mana, forming the symbol of the hurricane, and Alysia and Megumi cast their spell.

“HURRICANE... TWIST!!” They shouted as the lavender and teal mana emerged from the grey mana. It flashed a brilliant light that created a rainbow ribbon trail that lit up the darkness into daylight. The sisters separated, creating a burst of rainbow energy that rained down from the sky, suppressing the Nocturne below. Mayumi, Emi, and Keiko felt the warmth of the spell as they watched the rainbow trail follow Alysia and Megumi. At opposite sides of the

Nocturne, with Saga and Fable in hand, they dove straight at the monster, covered in a rainbow glow. They flew through the creature's body. When they past each other, they created a spark of energy and flashed. The Nocturne's body exploded in a rainbow that shot out into the sky like a pillar, parting the clouds above.

Mayumi, Emi, and Keiko shielded their eyes from the bright blast. When they opened their eyes they saw Alysia and Megumi flew up with the pillar spinning around it like a pair of ribbons. They were keeping the spell from pushing outward and hitting everything around them. As the girls watched in awe, the smaller Nocturne below were attracted to the light and entered inside, vanishing without a trace. Emi watched on with eyes trembling knowing there were people in Nocturne form going inside. All she could do was watch as the spell died down and ended. She looked up and saw Alysia and Megumi heading towards them, ignoring the sound of screams from further away in the town, of the Nocturne's continued attacks.

TO BE CONTINUED...

