

Arcana Magi Zero + Pure - c.13

by H-M Brown

The Nocturne hissed. The Nocturne howled. The Nocturne clicked. And they fired a beam of purple light on the humans. Civilian, the Society, law enforcement... erased from existence. Whatever limbs they left behind dripped with melted purple colored Mana. Magical barriers deflected the beams, but they split apart striking buildings, cars, and anyone in the wrong place. Street by street, non-combatants ran away. Each one passed by the Society and law enforcement screaming. Every combatant started tiring out, running low on Mana, and the officers conserved their ammo, making each shot count.

People screamed from behind the lines. The Society and officers turned around. Rushing in at high speed were the Clans. Dogs, boars, cicadas, crows, and foxes. Other animals have joined in on the fight and the lead elder, Kiba stood beside a young cat. The young cat nodded and with a roar, led all the cats into battle.

The Nocturne were pushed back. Each spell from the Clans were more stronger than the next. The creatures were unaware of the direction they were led to. One Nocturne became isolated. Before it could attack a net fell on top of it. The net paralyzed the creature and a fox and human surrounded it. The fox cast a fire spell on the lone Nocturne. Once its skin hardened, the human froze it with his spell and the skin fell apart. The net was removed and revealed a woman and girl in her arms. As the freed Nocturne were tended to, each city block had a Nocturne isolated and a person or animal were freed from corruption.

At the top of the building in the center of the town, Neural observed what was happening. A four-legged Nocturne the size of a wolf growled, but she pats it to calm down. She waved her hand forward and large thump shook the earth. All of the windows

cracked. Another thump, and the windows shattered. Walking past Neural was a pair of Nocturne that were as tall as the building she stood on. She watch them fire a beam straight down the street and left behind melted buildings. The helicopters and flying animals above responded with spells and bullets.

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Mrs. Saito watched from a hill. “The leader sent out her big guns. Company A, Company B, Company C, and Company D... commence Operation King of the Hill. First team with a clear on the Leader, take her down.”

Mrs. Saito led her Company D down the street. I consisted of five Society Members, three officers, two foxes and three dogs. Along the way, they found injured people with missing limbs crying for help. They found members of the Neko Clan laying dead alongside ninja. “The Kinomoto Family. Look at what they've done.”

Mrs. Saito kept moving forward until they heard a scream. Company D took cover and watched the intersection. They saw civilians running away. As most of them turned the corner in the Company's direction, a purple fired and vaporized those who ran forward. When a pair of Nocturne appeared in the intersection, Mrs. Saito gave the signal, and everyone fired and cast spells. They were able to separate the two and overwhelmed them. The Nocturne died.

The Company looked over the Nocturne and Mrs. Saito's hear raced. She saw a human hand lay on the ground, unmoving. She took deep breath and stayed focus. Mrs. Saito turned to her troops. “Don't waver. We can end this faster if we take out the leader. We will sort the casualties later. Forward!”

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At the Shrine of the Mythic Beasts, the mayor watched the entire war unfold. He watched purple beams shoot out into the sky. Birds vanished and a helicopter exploded. Their limbs and parts rained down below. He turned to Ren who took a puff of his pipe and hopped away. Nemo was standing before a table with generals of the Society, and police chief. They had tokens resting on a map as they over hear the radio of where everyone was positioned. Nemo used

his Mana like hand to move the black tokens along the outer streets. Ren recognized the areas.

“It's the shrines.”

Nemo nodded. “Yes. The leader is targeting them.”

“Interesting?”

The mayor approached. “What's interesting?”

Ren spoke. “When the grey Mana dispersed across the city, the shrines created a barrier blocking the impact. Especially here in the more central area. While the outer areas of the shrines grounds were covered in grey Mana, the inner areas, particularly near the shrines structure themselves were protected.”

Nemo slid a blue token towards Neural. “Mayweather said that Nocturne are attracted to Mana to feast on. Since the Nocturne suck out the grey Mana that rested in the city, they are now looking for a new resource.”

The Mayor looked over the map and saw blue tokens at the base of the shrines. “What happens if they eat the Mana?”

Ren took a puff of his pipe. “We don't know. These creatures, at least as they are now, we have no knowledge, or that girl who's controlling.”

“This madness... my city. My citizens.”

Nemo overheard Company B on the radio, then static. He removed a token that was close to Neural. “Have faith.”

The Mayor watched Nemo plant the tokens back into a bowl. “How?”

He overheard Mrs. Saito on the radio. “We're pinned down, we don't have a clear shot. The leader is well fortified. All Companies fall back to—”

Everyone listened to the static, then the radio reactivated. “Point B! Point B now!”

Nemo closed his eyes and moved all the tokens back five city blocks, then the black tokens closer to the shrines, including his.

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Inside the cave, Marissa stared at the ceiling. The light from the cave made the minerals glow. They looked like stars, and two of

them shined bright. She thought of her daughters. So much thought repeated itself like a broken record. Over and over again she could hear their cries of pain, their anger, the chant of their spells. Images of them fighting, images of them getting injured. Then she saw Alysia in the Vermillion armor. She looked liked a cyborg under someone's control. It angered Marissa as she watched her daughter struggle to fight from within. It angered her that Valdegaurd turned Alysia into that and brought her to injure her. Her eyes shifted to Arturo as he stared at the paintings of the walls alongside the parents. "Honey?"

Arturo turned to her. "Yes?"

"I... I told Alysia that she was an adult now, and that her being a Guardian is a job. Was I right to say that after all she's been through... Meg's been through?"

"I don't know." Arturo kissed her hand. "We can only do so much. They have to work this out themselves sometimes. We're not going to around forever."

"But why now? They're so young and have so much childhood left in them. Is there anyway we can make them kids again?"

Arturo's eyes welled up and he took a deep breath. "No."

Marissa cried and Arturo leaned over to her.

They caught Mrs. Akamatsu's attention. As he spoke to Marissa in English, Mrs. Akamatsu reflected on what little she knew about what happened to her daughters. Learning that the Perez family had been helping them, she lowered her head. She approached them, but she struggled to understand what they were saying. She had no way of communicating with them. "I wish I could speak English."

Mrs. Nakamura approached her. "I understand English. My husband and I travel to America a lot for our cooking research."

Mrs. Nakamura stood before Marissa and nodded to Mrs. Akamatsu. "Thank you, for supporting my daughters. I didn't know what was happening to them, I should have been vigilant... but your daughters were there for them. My children were not alone. I have no way to repay you."

All the parents gathered around. Takashi, Hideki, Keiko and

Sayako, stood in front them.

"I should have been there for Emi and Mayumi, and now they are fighting people... and... I feel helpless."

Sayako felt her father hands on the shoulders, and she held it. "I'm sorry father. I did not consider your feelings."

"It's okay. You just wanted to support your friend."

Mrs. Akamatsu took Marissa's hand. "How did you do it? How can you be a parent knowing that your children are going to come home hurt or worse?"

Marissa tightened her grip, and tears welled up. "Trust them..."

Mrs. Akamatsu lifted her head up and listened.

"When they come home, we listen and observe what they do... and pray."

"Pray?"

Marissa nodded, and winced. She closed her eyes, releasing Arturo. She whispered and Arturo caught on. Arturo folded his hands together and closed his eyes. He began praying. As they whispered, Mrs. Nakamura turned to Mrs. Akamatsu. "They're praying... for all our girls to come home safe and everyone in the city to be safe."

Mrs. Akamatsu clapped her hands and prayed. All the adults followed and the cave glowed bright. The teens watched on and Keiko joined in. With everyone praying, the kami of the wind listened to Akamatsu as she shed tear. It flew across the air passing by the shrine of the Four Mythic Beasts. A bell hanging on the shrine shook on its own and the wind vanished.

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The wind entered the Manasphere, and approached the school. It found Mayumi and Emi and flew around their bodies. They looked to each other, getting the girls attention.

Emi spoke. "You felt that Mayumi?"

"Yes."

Alysia spoke. "Hey focus. We have to get hurry, the Mana Spirits can't hold the Arcadians any longer."

Emi approached Alysia. "We just sensed the kami of the wind. It

carried our mother's prayers."

Mayumi nodded. "Your mom as well... all of our parents."

Ayane approached them. "No way."

Tomiko and Rumiko stood quiet and Ayane turned around covering her mouth. "I'm so sorry."

Tomiko smiled. "It's okay. I'm glad they are thinking of us."

Rumiko crossed her arms. "I don't really care for my mom anymore."

Everyone became quiet and Rumiko walked away.

"Wait Rumi-chan." Mayumi hurried over to her. "The kami of the wind said the city is danger. If we pray for the shrines to help out, maybe they will have a chance to stop the Nocturne."

Karin watched on with the Mana Spirits. "We don't have time."

Eryn Hall stood beside her. "We'll make time. Go on, pray for them."

"I don't how. We don't have religion in my universe."

Eryn Hall watched the girls pray. "Let them guide you. They're your friend after all."

Karin observed and saw that they pressed their hands together or clasped to their chest. She did so. She watched them whisper. She did so. It felt weird talking to herself. Her thoughts cleared, the Infinite Knowledge opened her eyes to what the Seiryu Universe was capable of. She looked up at the girls and saw where the power of the Magical Girl lied at. She saw her friends back home, now long gone. Karin found herself alone. She prayed for their souls hoping they were not lost by Valdegaurd's hands. A pair of ghostly hands slid over Karin's shoulders. They rest over her heart, and she felt comfort nuzzling her face. She heard a women's soft voice whisper in her ear. Karin placed her hands over those hands, and they rested on the locket attached to her school uniform. Karin envisioned her friends smile over her as they moved on to the next world. Tears fell down her face. "My friends."

Eryn Hall moved his head to the sky as though he watched someone fly away. "Irydia."

The Mana Spirits watched a veil of warm light cover Karin. They

overheard her whisper for the safety of the Seiryu Universe, and that light connected with the other girl's prayers in the sky.

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As Nemo moved the black tokens on top of three shrines and one closer to his shrine, all the shrines throughout the city glowed bright. They shot out into the sky, barely touching the domed barrier above. They dispersed into a cascading wave. Upon impact they spread all across their shrine grounds. The wave consumed the Nocturne, removing the skin from the people and anima's bodies. The wave entered the city from every direction but it did not go far. There were still Nocturne around, all running back to Neural.

She watched on as the largest of her minions fell over at the Shrine of Mythic Beasts. Neural's purple lines glowed, and it made all of the remaining Nocturne glow. They all retreated, but some of them were isolated and captured by the troops.

Mrs. Saito waved her Company to advance forward and called on the other to do the same. With Neural now in her sight she cast her spell. "Shining Spear!"

A spear of light struck Neural in her arm. She looked down and saw Mrs. Saito and her Company heading towards her. She saw others coming as well as from the sky. The Nocturne fired back, but the numbers had dwindled. Neural and Nocturne were surrounded. And she heard Mrs. Saito speak below.

"Surrender now, and release everyone from their Nocturne shells!" Mrs. Saito saw Neural's hands shiver and close to clutching her shoulders. "If someone did this to you, we can help. We can break you free from whatever control you are under and you can tell us how this happened. I assume you were turned into a Nocturne as well. You look like my daughter's age!"

"I..." hearing that offer, Neural raised her hand up, but she stepped back and bumped into a body behind her. She turned around and saw Ragnorak.

He stepped forward, looking down at the soldiers below. He threw his hand up in the air and turned the sky into darkness. Once the darkness left, the Nocturne did to.

Mrs. Saito looked around. "It was a shadow. The Nocturne are gone."

The police officers, the Clans and the Society consoled each other and assisted the injured. Mrs. Saito watched the dome barrier above disappear. The sun and the sky now shined over the city and the shrines stopped glowing.

TO BE CONTINUED...

