

Arcana Magi Zero + Pure - c.3

by H-M Brown

As the propellers on the helicopter spun fast, Alysia circled around the rooftop, lighting a flame on the tip of Saga. She waved getting the attention of police officers and Society troops. Alysia waved her hand at Megumi and the girls and they all landed at the edge of the roof away from the helicopter. After Keiko disembarked the construct bird, it returned to Fable and Megumi closed the art book. The girls approached the authorities as another blast of purple energy shot up into the night sky. It got everyone's attention and the police officer immediately led the girls to the helicopter.

"Wait." Alysia said. "We have to tell you guys how to fight the Nocturne."

The officer replied. "This isn't time for games, we have to clear you out of the combat zone."

Mayumi turned to the Society. "You don't understand, we fought the giant monster. We know it's weak to fire."

"Stop playing around and get in the helicopter. We'll fly you all back to the Shrine where it's safe."

Another blast from the Nocturne melted a building nearby, and the sound of crumbling debris echoed over the helicopter. A large hand clutched the edge of the building, before everyone, and a large head rose up over the rooftops. It was like a frog's head, dripping of clear oil, and large disk shaped eyes looking in different directions.

"Meg?" Alysia said looking at the head lean towards them. "We're never gonna get a break are we?"

"It's part of our job." Megumi flipped the pages and channeled her Mana. "Titanus!"

A large stone monster appeared before Megumi and charged at the Nocturne. The construct grabbed the Nocturne by the chin and

lifted it up. It caught the attention of the soldiers and they reached out to the girls. Mayumi and Emi slipped underneath the adults arms and ran towards the Nocturne. Alysia raised Saga over her head and sparked a flame along with Keiko.

"I'll take the left." Keiko said and Alysia ran right.

Angered, the Society ran with the girls wands in hand as the officer pulled out his gun and fired a few shots. The bullets struck the Nocturnes left eye causing it to close. This gave Alysia the chance to cast her spell.

"FLAMETHROWER!"

"FIRE BEAM!" Keiko's staff shot out a blast of red energy and both spells struck the Nocturne. "Alysia-san focus on the heat."

Alysia nodded and concentrated on not burning the creature. It roared in pain as the twins stood side by side and channeled their Mana.

"Mayumi, I've never tried this spell before."

"You'll do fine. Just followed my lead." Mayumi gathered the wind around her body, and Emi did the same. They watched the oily skin dry up from the heat as the twins cooled the air around them. Once the fire spells ended, Mayumi and Emi cast their spells together. "COLDSNAP!"

They threw the arms forward and burst of cold air flew right into the Nocturne. The dry skin cracked from sudden change in temperature and the head broke apart. Five people spilled out from the head of the Nocturne, breathing heavily. The Society and police officer watched in shock as they heard the pained moans of the victims. The rest of the Nocturne's body fell down to the street below. Its feet twitching, and melting away, separating all the people inside it.

"I don't believe it." The Society soldier said checking the pulse of one of the victims. "He's alive. They all are."

As the soldier got on the radio to contact headquarters, the police officer approached the girls and directed them to the helicopter.

"You made your point. Get in now."

Megumi stood before the officer and nodded. She led the girls back to the helicopter. As they took off, everyone watched spells and purple beams light up the sky. Buildings belting down or exploding debris. Mayumi, Emi and Keiko watched on with eyes trembling as their hometown falls into destruction.

Alysia clenches her hands onto her knees, struggling to hold back her tears. Megumi pulled her sister into her arms. Alysia opened her mouth but went silent. She had no words to say as she and Megumi watched the girls look helpless.

"Should I say something?" Alysia whispered to Megumi.

"Let them be." Megumi said feeling her sister heart beating fast. "We'll talk to them privately okay?"

"Okay." Alysia nodded and closed her eyes. With tears welling up, she told Megumi what happened to their mother. She winced ready for Megumi to yell, but instead, she felt Megumi's hands crushing her shoulder. The pain raced across her body and the anger from her sister was made clear. "I'm sorry."

Megumi's hand relaxed, then trembled. Alysia looked up and saw Megumi's face buried in her other hand. Anger was in her eyes. Visible only through the moon lit sky outside the window. Alysia took short breaths because never seen her sister's face like that. Megumi was like a different person. A monster awakening.

Alysia's eyes look side to side as she leaned her head down. She felt Megumi hand slide away from her shoulder. As Alysia sat up, she watched Megumi tighten her grip on Fable.

"Meg—"

"Don't... just... let me think."

Alysia lowered her head. She shifted her body to the side creating a little distance from Megumi.

Megumi's eyes shifted to Alysia and saw her sister look meek and child-like. She saw the pain her eyes. Alysia looked like a different person. A mouse in a corner trembling in fear. Megumi looked away to clear her thoughts.

As the helicopter landed on the rooftop near the shrine, there was a group of Society soldiers, waiting and armed. The girls

stepped out, and Keiko was separated from the group.

"Hey!" Keiko said fighting to break free. "They're my friends!"

"They are under arrest." The leader of the troop said as the girls were handcuffed

"What?!" Megumi said looking out at the shrine entrance.

"You're in my home. We're helping all of you."

As a police officer read their rights, Keiko was asked questions while she was escorted away from girls.

* * *

At Megumi's house, Takashi and Sayako watched from the windows and saw heavy activity in the distance. Large foxes and dogs pacing back and forth. Boars, the size of cars, talking with police officers. Medics carrying the injured people. Members of the Society walking with city officials having a conversation. For Takashi he remembered the festival the Kappa clan held months ago, and the chaos that came with that mysterious attack. It seemed so small in scale compared to now.

Sayako walked away from the window with her arms crossed. She lowered her head trying to make sense of everything that is going.

"I feel like I'm in a dream."

"This is real." Takashi said leaning his arm on the side of the window. "People are injured. Suffering."

"And dying." Sayako closed her eyes.

"If you are second thoughts about being in this meeting..."

"No. I... I have to see this through. I just wish I could tell my father honestly about this, but he's too overwhelmed. I hope I made the right choice coming here."

The door opened getting Sayako and Takashi's attention. Hideki entered, loss of breath. His eyes were in a terrified state. Hideki noticed someone was missing. "Where's Tomiko-san?"

"With my parents." Takashi said. "She lost... her family."

"What? No." Hideki looked down but Sayako got his attention.

"She'll be all right." Sayako approached Hideki. "You look like you saw a ghost."

"Right... I overheard the Society detained Ayane and Rumiko."

"What?!"

"Ren sent some scouts to find out what is going on. The Society and the city officials are acting weird."

"Do you know where they are at?"

"Somewhere at the far end of the grounds."

Takashi marched by Hideki. "Let's go."

Hideki and Sayako followed Takashi through the shrine grounds. They noticed the Clans were restless. Some watched the teens with distrust in their eyes. Takashi noticed but ignored them. Takashi turned to Hideki, who was looking up the sky.

"I see Gon." Hideki saw the crow fly in circle above them.

"Why does the sky look strange?" Sayako said.

"Hurry Sayako, Gon is leading us to Ayane and Rumiko."

They followed the crow up a hill, where lights were at its brightest below. The teens stood frozen in time. Before them was a large magical barrier forming like a fence. Inside were people, standing around, some laying on the ground in pain. Others banged on the shield screaming for someone to listen. Outside the fence were people calling out for someone they knew, family, friends, anyone.

"Gon?" Hideki said and the crow flew off fast. Hideki ran down the hill and walked along the magical barrier. "AYANE NAKAMURA!"

"NAKAMURA-SAN!" Sayako said.

"AYANE!" Takashi said looking over the crowd.

"Takashi!" A woman's voice called out from the far end of the fence.

Takashi saw Ayane on the other side pressing against the barrier. Everyone hurried over to the woman and Ayane in tears stood before her friend.

"Nakamura-san..." Takashi said to the woman. "Is everyone okay?"

"Yes." She said with a nod. "Why are they doing this to my daughter?"

"I don't know." Hideki said. "I sent a friend to get help."

"Where's Rumiko-san?" Sayako said.

"The Society took her for questioning." Ayane looked at Sayako. "They said that her family was involved with the Arcadians."

"I don't understand?" Nakamura-san said. "What have you kids gotten into?"

"Mom." Ayane said. "I don't where to begin. I want to get out of here."

"They have grey eyes." Hideki said looking at the people inside. "The Arcadians have grey eyes as well."

Takashi looked out at everyone and turned to Ayane. "The Society thinks you and everyone here are Arcadians."

Hideki kept his eyes out on the guards observing everything. "It's only a matter of time they chase us out of this area."

"Keep your voices down." Ayane said.

"Ayane?" Nakamura-san said.

"Stay with me mom. I'll explain everything. Right now, we have to set up a plan."

"I'm listening." Takashi said.

"No!" Nakamura-san said. "Returned to your families and don't do anything stupid."

"We can't leave Rumiko-san behind." Ayane said. "She helped us out when we needed her. Listen, leave me here."

"No." Takashi said pressing against the barrier. He his eyes looked around slightly embarrassed and took a deep breath.

"Senpai... please..."

"I understand Takashi, but if I'm here, they won't look for you and can search for Rumiko-san without more guards on you."

"I can go back and get Ren and Karasu."

"No time Hideki. Stay together. I'm with my mom so I know I'm safe." Ayane's eyes locked onto Takashi and he nodded. "Last I saw them they headed toward the hot springs area, but I don't if that is where they went."

"Okay."

Takashi, Hideki, and Sayako looked at Nakamura-san shaking her head 'no' to them, but they turned around and ran off. They

climbed up the hill and Takashi looked back. Followed Hideki and Sayako across the open field and saw the hot springs in the distance. There were a lot of guards and police officers nearby, and the trio ducked in the bushes. They followed the bushes past the tents where people with grey eyes were being examined by doctors. One tent had lights flickering inside. They spent a while, looking into the tents when the guards cleared out.

They arrived at a large tent. Hiding behind crates, they saw a cicada the size of a horse stepped outside. It flew past the guards with anger towards them, but they forced the nature spirit to leave.

"I will return for Rumiko-chan."

"Get moving!"

As the guards were dealing with the cicada, Takashi carefully lifted the side of the tent and Hideki slipped inside. Sayako slipped inside after and she looked back.

"Come on."

"I'm keeping this up so you can get. Don't waste time."

Sayako nodded and got up to her feet. Her head jerked back as they saw Rumiko's head tilted back — her nose dripped with blood — staring at a wand aimed at her face.

"What... is this?" Sayako approached Hideki as carefully looked at the wand.

"I don't know."

"Help... me... it hurts" Rumiko said and drool spilled out of her mouth.

"Get her out of there Hideki-san."

"I'm trying."

"Is someone in there?" A guard outside said.

"Rumiko?" Hideki said and her eyes turned to him. "They're about to come inside. I'm going to rip this off, so you will feel pain."

"Probably not." The other guard said.

Rumiko nodded and her hand stretched out to Sayako. She grabbed Sayako's hand and braced herself. Rumiko clenched her teeth suppressing her roar from the pain. Wand snapped off and Rumiko collapsed onto the floor.

The guards entered inside and watched Rumiko stand to her feet. Her Mana channeled. The anger in her face catching the guards flatfooted.

Outside, Takashi saw a flash of light and the screams of the guards followed. Rumiko slid out from under the tent and Takashi helped her to her feet. She stood disoriented as Sayako emerged out. As Takashi helped Hideki out, the screams of the guards continued and Sayako guided Rumiko to the nearby bushes. Everyone ducked as more guards arrived.

Rumiko collapsed onto the side of the tree, struggling to get her bearings. She saw Sayako snapping her fingers to grabbed her hand.

"I can hear." Rumiko said wiping the blood off her nose. "Heh? My night keeps getting worse. Unh..."

"Just relax and rest." Takashi said while Hideki stood watch.

"No time..." Rumiko said. "The interrogator said they got the twins and Perez sisters in custody. They're bringing them hear."

Takashi and Hideki looked at each other and Sayako helped Rumiko up.

"Find them." She said. "Rumiko and I will head back to the house."

TO BE CONTINUED....

