

# Arcana Magi Zero + Pure - c.7

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Mayumi's screams echoed across the sky. As her friends cast spells at Victoria — each attack deflected by a sphere of energy around the Arcadian — Mayumi's mind and body were numbing. She pushed her head downward and sensed Victoria through the wind. The pain increased as her soul's scream added to her body's scream. It was as though there were two different people present. It was so overwhelming, it made Victoria smile.

“Valdegaurd will be pleased at this result.” Victoria stretched out her hand and a pair of metallic hairclips appeared over her palm. “This is Iridium. I can reinsert your soul back if you put this on, Arcadian.”

“Don't you touch her!” Emi said running towards Victoria channeling Mana.

“EMI GET BACK!” Her mother said as a soldier from the Society pulled her away.

“Get out the combat area lady.”

“Those are my children!”

“GRAVITY—”

“SOULBREAKER!” Victoria's arm swung out at Emi and blast of energy enveloped her. She watched Emi roll onto the ground screaming and writhing in pain. “You had so much potential to be Arcadian Emi. You are our prodigy.”

A large fist punched the Victoria's barrier. She looked around and saw Megumi on her Mana Glider with her hand over Fable, her art book.

“Hm... my greatest experiments.” She cast Soulbreaker. It was too fast for Megumi to dodge and the spell struck her. She fell down in agony as Mrs. Akamatsu ran to Emi's side.

“Emi...” Mrs. Akamatsu held her daughter she struggled to keep

her still. "What have you done?!"

Victoria looked around ignoring Mrs. Akamatsu. "Alysia's around here."

Mayumi's scream got Victoria's attention and when she turned around, Alysia's fist struck her face. She stumbled back as the butt of Saga's staff struck her stomach. Victoria lurch over cradling her injury. Just as she looked up, the staff whacked her on the head. Victoria did not flinch.

"Impressive." Victoria stood up straight stunning Alysia. "You were always the aggressive one. That's why I love you the most. A shame you rejected Arcadia... all of you. It would have been glorious for you, your sister, the Akamatsu twins, and other just like you to be our legacy, and lead our world to a prosperous future."

As Alysia channeled her Mana, Victoria walked by her without fear. The Guardian struggled to react, as Victoria's presence was too great overcome.

"I don't understand." Alysia said. "Why all of this? Is Arcadia worth it?"

Victoria stood before Mayumi and presented her with the Iridium hairclips. "I see... you saw it in the Infinite Knowledge. The possibilities..."

"I don't understand Valdegaurd." Alysia channeled her Mana. "She has access to everything. You all basically won since we broke out of the Manasphere. Why something so small as us? Why are we important?"

"You specifically, personally, are not important. It is what you provide us that matters... test subjects." Victoria raised the hairclips to Mayumi as the Society fired another round of spells that were easily deflected. Victoria turned her attention back to Mayumi but felt a warm wind around her. She turned back and saw Alysia hold Saga over her head. It was surrounded by flames and wind.

"Alysia..." Megumi said trapped in the Soulbreaker spell. "...don't over... overdo it."

Alysia's eyes were cold and Victoria smiled. Alysia's Mana built up to an extreme level, that wind itself picked up and deflected all

spells fire by the Society.

"That blasted kid is in the way." The soldiers said as the heated wind intensified.

"Your won't break my barrier."

Alysia threw Saga up in the air distracting Victoria. She ran at her head on, but Victoria was not falling for it. She placed herself in a defensive posture ready for the punch.

"FIRE WIND!" Alysia cast her spell and struck the barrier. It surrounded the sphere in a whirlwind.

"Blinding me won't work!" Victoria pushed the barrier outward and converted it into her Soulbreaker spell. It struck Alysia, pushing her across the ground, next Emi. Victoria looked at Alysia, Megumi and Emi and she increased the strength of the Soulbreaker spell.

As Mayumi sensed the wind around her friends jostling from the pain of the spell, a tear fell down her face. "I... I will wear them..."

Victoria turned around and saw Mayumi take a long deep breath.

"Stop... hurting them... I'll put them on."

"No..." Emi said wincing in pain. "Don't let her... mom."

"Mayumi listen to me!" Mrs. Akamastu said. "I am your mother, do not put them on!"

"Mom...?" Mayumi struggled to sense her mother, but she had weakened to the point that she cannot sense any through the wind anymore.

"Here you are..." Victoria levitated the Iridium hairclips over Mayumi's head. "...Arcadian."

The hairclips latched onto Mayumi, and the wild wind stop. Mayumi's screams stopped instantly, her soul however, did not return to her body or the gem. Instead, it entered the Iridium and it glowed teal. Mayumi's eyes rolled back, there were no pupils, and changed from grey to teal. Her body lowered itself to the ground. She stood there unmoved. No emotions.

"Test subject 006, Mayumi Akamatsu." Victoria walked behind Mayumi. She lifted the girl's arm up and observed. "No reflexive reaction."

Victoria lowered Mayumi's head and observed the hairclips. "The

soul is acting like a pilot in control of the body. It's now a matter of how free the soul is with—"

Victoria stepped back as she saw tears rolling down Mayumi's cheeks. She sensed a strange force around Mayumi. The wind made her hairclips glow and the grey Mana enveloped the Iridium.

"It can't be..." Victoria jumped back as more spells from the Society were deflected off her sphere. "Mana Spirits?"

Mayumi's body disappeared.

"Mayumi!" Mrs. Akamatsu said.

"Emi..." Alysia said struggling to sit up. "...Mayumi is..."

"I see... She's in the Manasphere."

"Girls..." Megumi said as she felt the spell weakening.

"...Victoria is distracted."

"Chance..." Alysia said and she channeled her Mana through the pain. As the girls followed her lead, Victoria walked through the portal, and her spell ended. Alysia lifted herself to her knees, nursing her body. "She's gone."

Emi turned to Alysia as her mother pulled her into her arms. "After Mayumi."

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Keiko, in her Shining Star costume, knelt before the bushes at the top of a hill, and watched two Society Guards and two police officers gather. She held her staff close to her chest as she overheard their conversation.

"These kids are out of control." One guard said.

"They're probably scared with everything going on." The other guard said.

"I don't really care what they're worried about." The police officer said. "What's matter is that we gather them and reunite them with their families."

Keiko raised her head up hearing that. She had forgotten about her parents and brothers.

"So many people are injured or dead, a lot of these kids are going to have a hard time finding their homes."

"I still haven't found my son." The police officer said. "This is

nothing but a war zone now.”

“All right let's focus and find that girl. She's in costume, it shouldn't be too hard to spot her.”

Keiko looked at her outfit and realized she is noticeable. However, hearing that conversation she felt herself had been reminded of her duty. She only wanted to get away from them and rescue her friends. “I don't what to do now.”

As the adults were about to leave, show stood up ready to turn herself in. But the ground broke up under her and she fell screaming. It got the adults attention as she tumbled down to the bottom of the slope. She came to a stop, and her arm was cut.

Keiko covered her arm while holding the staff. She looked up and saw morning breaking through the sky, but something was unusual about it. The trees still kept the area in darkness and Keiko looked around to see if the police officers or the Society were nearby. She walk on for a moment, trying to get her bearings. The path was nothing but tree branches and bushes. The silence from nature was jarring. Keiko heard voices ahead.

“It must be the Society, or the police.” Keiko hurried over to the sounds and suddenly felt a high level of channeled Mana nearby. She crouched, frozen in place. Her legs shook, as each step became a crawl. She staff vibrated, it was fear shivering down her hands. She reached the voices and saw to adults talking to each other. “Such power.”

In the small opening was Myriana and Darius. There was alarm in their eyes, and frustration in their voices. Keiko was ready to leave them when they continued their conversation.

“Darius, what Valdegaurd said is true?”

“Yes, Arcadia is falling.” Darius looked up to the sky. “An Arcadian has betrayed us and physically altered time.”

“That can't be. Is this an experiment?”

“Valdegaurd did not sanction it.” Darius continued looking up. “We only have new recruits at this point. They are all just started orientation. No. This may be someone in the future.”

“How do we undo this and save Arcadia?”

"We find out who that person is." Darius turned Myriana. "Valdegaurd said the Infinite Knowledge is muddled regarding this particular history. It fascinated her knowing that it has limits with what information it collects. Whoever the time traveler is, knew how this works as well. What she does know is that the person originated here, among the first Arcadians."

"But we have no identity. We can't kill off our own people."

"We can't do that at all." Darius walked by the bushes Keiko is hiding behind.

Keiko immediately covered her mouth, and kept herself from making any noises.

"Killing this person will make the timeline worse; no... we can undo this by ripping the soul out of the body and control this person. The timeline should correct itself. Give or take a few alterations in history to keep certain events intact."

Myriana crossed her arms looking out at the forest. "Is it the same person that contained Newark in the dome?"

"Yes. For some reason this person altered the original dome he or she made the first time. Casualties became minimized. The dome was such a unique design."

"How so?" Myriana walked Darius away from the bushes.

"It was modeled after the Nocturne, the domed Ocular one that turned Azuré Martinez into one of them. Apparently the spell was designed to destroy them and everything else, but that time shift altered its effect, and in turn affect Arcadia."

"Let's begin our search." Myriana said as their voices faded from the distance.

Keiko crawled away deeper into the forest, looking for a way back to the shrine grounds. She bumped her head into something, and she looked up at the sky. The sunlight of the morning sky has now made everything visible. Her eyes trembled as she saw the distortion of the clouds.

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The sun rose above the horizon over the city. On the rooftops, the Society stopped attacking and watched the Nocturne react to

the sunlight.

"The general said the sunlight will turn them back to people or chase some away."

"The sun could not have happened any... time...?"

One of the Nocturne rose up to their feet and looked out in the direction of the sun. All the creatures began to walk toward that person. One of the Soociety Soldiers took her binoculars and zoomed in. It was a young girl, a Nocturne, with armored gloves, boots, chest plate, attached to head piece. She had purple lines over her Nocturne body like a suit.

"It's a girl. A kid." The soldier said as everyone watched the Nocturne approach like loyal animals. One of the large Nocturne, towering over the building leaned forward to her. She placed her hands on its face, and caressed it with love.

"My brothers..." She turned to a small nocturne crawling towards her. "My sisters..."

Armored Nocturne looked around at the city and at the distorted sky.

"I am Neural..." She said as more Nocturne emerged from multiple portals. "...and this town shall be our Lunar Sanctuary.

TO BE CONTINUED...

