

Arcana Magi Memorial

Vol.2 - c.1

by H-M Brown

Dean Karyn Mayweather, or Madam Mayweather as the students called her, sat behind her desk reviewing Azure's school file. She saw that her student's grades rose in a month and wondered if the incident a month ago affected Azure. The dean reflected on her decision to allow Azure to stay at Memorial Academy. The risk was high and endangered everyone, but she felt that letting Azure go would also be dangerous. Having spent the past month dealing with Mystic Intelligence to keep them away from Azure was a daunting task, but with the pull of a few strings, she protected her student from any scrutiny. Dean Mayweather's phone rang, and she answered it. It was her secretary on the other line.

"Doctor Patricia Anderson is here to see you."

"Send her in." Dean Mayweather said and placed Azure's file into her desk, then folded her hands. Her lack of emotion greeted a young woman dressed entirely in a white business suit with mid-length red hair. "Hello."

"You're scary as usual Karyn." Patricia sat down and crossed her legs. She leaned back on the seat without a care, ignoring the displeasure of her friend.

"So how is Ms. Martinez's purification coming along at the clinic?"

"You know I still can't get over the pronunciation of her name, ah-shur-rey, instead of ah-shur."

"Patricia, I am being serious here. Purification should not take this long."

"Okay." Patricia said sitting up. "The problem is that those shackles block me from purifying the unstable Mana."

"Explain."

"It's like trying to unlock a vault. The reason she's not dead is

because the shackles somehow separate the unstable Mana from her body, even though it is a part of her. It's made worse because she also has unstable Mana from the dome creature she absorbed. Believe it or not, she still has her own natural Mana."

"What? Are you sure?"

"Yes. Her natural Mana is clean though and half of the Mana from the four creatures she talked about is also stable. Let's just say one-half of the Mana in her system is stable and the other half is unstable. All three of them are like oil and vinegar at this moment."

Madam Mayweather remained silent. She processed everything Patricia said and leaned back on her chair. She turned to the window looking outside at the campus. The thought of Azure possessing all this Mana was not possible. The dean knew this was not possible and faced even more questions regarding the matter. However, she felt more concerned about Azure's well being.

"Patricia, have you thought about extracting the Mana from Ms. Martinez' body?"

The doctor hesitated to answer. The sudden silence got Madam Mayweather's attention. Patricia shook her head negatively.

"Even if we do get the shackles off of her, we still wouldn't be able to extract the Mana from her body. Not unless we want to inflict untold damage to her."

"I see." Madam Mayweather pressed her fingers together with a sigh.

"There is one more problem." Patricia said and the dean's eyes shifted toward the doctor.

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Azure sat on her desk, cradling her stomach. Sweat dropped off her face with each breath she struggled to take. Her heart beat violently, wanting to jump out. Her head pounded hard, and her eyes burned. With one long exhale, purple mist poured out of her mouth, and fell onto her lap. Her eyes grew wide as the unstable Mana returned to her body.

Azure's eyes turned to the teal shackles on her wrists. They glowed bright, crushing her wrist, but the pain felt more like a

tingle. The heaviness of the shackles grew stronger as she focused her mind to channel the stable Mana within her.

“Beast Mode... Chimera.”

Cat ears sprout out of her hair and her cat tail stretched out from the back. Her hands turned into dragon claws stretching the nails just a little. Her skin tightened with the scales of a turtle and the webbing connected her toes together. Small wings sprout out of her back and her hair did not turn white and teal, an alteration to the spell she made. Her shackles then changed colors from teal to purple. With one stretch, all the pain went away and she breathed easily.

Azure approached her closet and saw the calendar on her wall. She clutched her shoulders and closed her eyes. So clear in her memory was the battle inside the dome creature. She wished she could forget it all. No matter how much praise she received from everyone for her bravery, there was a sense of emptiness in her. As though the creature took a piece of her away and made her into something else. Staring at the mirror did not help.

Looking at her chimera form, she thought about how cool it was to transform like this when wearing costumes. They were supposed to be fun to wear, but now they were just an escape. An excuse she made to hide from the horror of this spell. No matter the guidance and support she received from her parents, her psychiatrist, and her friend; no matter how hard they tried to remind her of her humanity, Azure believes this chimera form is her true body now. She hated that thought now more than ever.

Azure went into her closet and took out a basic skirt and a long sleeve blouse, ripping the back to allow her wings to slip through with ease. Azure stood before the mirror in her casual attire, modeling herself and feeling human for a moment until a knock on the door startled her.

“Azure, are you home?” Sora said behind the door.

“Come in. The door's open.”

Sora stepped inside and jerked her head back. She saw Azure sit on the bed carefully slipping on stockings over her webbed feet and

turned to the closet. The shock went away and with a smile, Sora sat on the chair by the desk.

"Well you finally took the first step to dressing like the rest of us." Sora said and pointed to the cat ears. "Now what are we going to do about that spell. Detention is at the end of the day."

"This is the only way the pain will go away."

"Your chest still hurts?"

"It's my stomach now." Azure lied on her bed spreading her wings flat on the mattress. "I could barely feel the shackles crushing me anymore."

"When is your next appointment?"

"My next visit was this Friday, but my doctor moved it to tomorrow since this was an emergency. Until then, I got permission to use this spell for the day."

"You know you're going to be draining your Mana keeping that spell active. You'll be worn out by the afternoon."

"I know, but so long as I am a chimera, the pain goes away. Hand me my sneaker please?" Azure received the pair from Sora and slipped them on. "Thanks. So yeah, I'm going to tough it out today. It's only one day after all."

"One day you could afford to take off."

"I already have tomorrow off and I don't to fall behind on my studies. I know I'm getting close to controlling this Mana and maybe even stabilizing it."

"Azure you don't have to push yourself."

"Relax. I'm too good to get taken down by something like this." Azure stood up, grabbed her bookbag from the floor, and led Sora out the door.

"I can't believe you ruined your blouse."

"Please don't remind me." Azure flapped her wings. "This was my favorite."

"Don't worry I'll sew it for you so you can wear it as a chimera."

"Thanks Sora."

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Azure and Sora arrived at Daimon Hall, making their way to homeroom Class 4-C. The students stared at Azure walking by them, whispering to each other at her appearance. The attention made her smile, much to Sora's annoyance. Still, Azure ignored everyone with head held high marching by. The teachers, of course, shared a sigh of relief to see her out of costume.

"Everybody is acting like me wearing regular clothes is unusual."

"It is unusual." Sora said looking at everyone. "They got used to you looking weird."

"Well this is just for today." Azure turned around and walked backwards to face Sora. "Give myself a chance to unwind and take a vacation from wearing those outfits."

"A vacation from wearing costumes?"

"Well, yeah." Azure turned around at an intersection in the hallway and bumped into someone who yelped. She looked down and saw a girl surrounded by books. She had long blonde hair made into a ponytail, and blue eyes like sapphire. Azure shook her head for a moment. "I'm sorry. Here, let me help you."

As Azure reached out with her dragon hand, the girl slapped it away. Azure growled and Sora stepped forward to back her up, but when the girl stood up, they both lifted their heads and froze. Azure and Sora looked down at the girl's feet and saw her shoes were flat. The crowd behind them gasped from her height, whispering questions of who she was, and where she came from. Azure took one-step back watching the girl pick up her books. Azure's nerves shook a bit when the girl's cold gaze targeted her, and her towering body overshadowed Azure once again. The girl walked away and Azure shook her head again to break the shock.

"What's wrong with you?" Azure said, making the girl stop. "I apologized for bumping into you."

For a moment, Azure thought the girl was going to say something, but she never looked back. The girl walked away snubbing her. The Magi stepped forward ready to take on this mysterious girl, but Sora clutched Azure's arm and held her back.

Azure looked back at her friend, who shook her head disapproving the decision. With a light growl, Azure punched the wall and calmed down.

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At homeroom, Azure sat behind her desk by the window and noticed an empty desk next to her. She turned around to Sora's desk to talk to her about it, but class started. All the students took their seats once their teacher, Mrs. Jones, arrived. She placed her briefcase on her desk and waved at the door.

"Class we have a new student today." Mrs. Jones said and the girl Azure bumped into entered.

"It's her." Azure said looking back at Sora.

"Please introduce yourself."

"My name is Ciel LeBleu." She said with a soft accent. "I came from France... and... and I look forward to getting to know all of you."

"Thank you Ciel. You may take your seat next to Azure."

Ciel saw the empty desk next to Azure and lowered her eyes. It was the last thing she wanted after what happened earlier. Still Ciel pretended Azure was not there when she approached her assigned seat. Her temperament towards Azure created a sense of tension amongst her new classmates. Ciel did not understand why. Through the corner of her eyes, she had Azure's attention, and wondered what she was about. As Sora tapped Azure's head to get her to focus on class, Ciel took out her book on Spell Physics and listened to Mrs. Jones.

"Okay class. Yesterday we talked about the three disciplines of channeling Mana, the mind, the body, and the spirit. By accessing one of these disciplines, you are then able to cast spells. Each Magi has the basic ability to use one discipline for channeling Mana, while more experienced Magi could use two or three. However, channeling from the three disciplines without proper training could result in physical, mental, and spiritual damage."

"So Mrs. Jones," A boy said with his hand raised. "does this mean we don't have to actually learn all three disciplines then?"

“Unless you want to join the military or Mystic Intelligence, you can just learn one discipline. The majority of the Magi study the Body Discipline, which that alone can help you get common jobs requiring spellcasting skills. Mind and Spirit Discipline are a little more technical in nature and usually require college or apprenticeship to learn them.”

As Mrs. Jones wrote on the chalkboard, Azure leaned back on her seat and looked out the window. Her dragon sight kicked in and she saw something moving in the shadows of the trees across the field. Her eyes glowed red and she saw a boy looking back at her, or at least she thought he was looking at her. His lips moved even though no one was around. Azure pressed her cat ears on the window to listen when she felt an object strike the back of her head. Rubbing the pain, she turned around and saw Mrs. Jones with her arms crossed.

“Sorry. I saw a boy outside in the trees looking inside.”

Mrs. Jones looked out the window, but with the trees far away, she could not see what Azure saw. With a sigh, she lifted up Azure's dragon hand.

“Azure, what I have told you about casting your Chimera Spell.”

“Actually, I have the nurse's permission to use this spell.” Azure went into her bookbag and pulled out the note.

“Hmm...” Mrs. Jones read the letter and saw the nurse's hand signature on it. “Okay, but don't push yourself. Remember, you are draining your Mana with this spell on, and given your stubbornness, I will drag you to the nurse's office myself if you exhaust yourself. Now keep your eyes forward and forget about outside.”

“Yes Mrs. Jones.” Azure faced Sora, gave the victory sign with a smile, and received a tap on the forehead from her friend. As she turned back around, she noticed Ciel staring at her. The new student shook her head side to side and faced the front of the classroom. Azure growled under breath, wanting to smack Ciel, but Sora cleared her throat making Azure focus on their teacher. As Azure wrote on her notes, the trees outside rustled with a glow, and two shadows jumped away from the area.

TO BE CONTINUED...

