

# Arcana Magi Memorial

## Vol.2 - c.5

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The next day, within an operating room of the Purification Clinic, Patricia and her nurses stood before a pillar of light. Within the light Azure, in a hospital gown, floated in the air asleep. A band of blue hue slid over her body and her shackles glowed. The doctor monitored her heart rate. It fluctuated each time the hue passed through Azure. Patricia wondered why the four creatures would not let her help Azure. She did not want to lose her patient, and get some progress in the purification process. The doctor noticed Azure struggled to breathe. She waved over one of the nurses with a respirator and took the device. Before the doctor prepared to administer the oxygen, Azure's heart rate increased. It went out of control.

"No." Patricia turned to one of the nurses. "Quick, lower the barrier and prepare the defibrillator, just in case. I'm going in."

A clicking sound inside the barrier made everyone stop. Patricia and the nurses watched each shackle unlock. One by one they disappeared to the tune of a faster heartbeat. Patricia realized what was happening the moment the purple mist emerged from Azure's skin. The nurses took step back, shivering from what they saw, a cascading waterfall of poison seeping from the teen's body. Patricia regained her composure and clapped her hands to get the nurses focused.

"Increase the field. Start the filter." Patricia held her hand out. "Mask now."

A nurse handed Patricia a mask and covered her face with it. She stood before the pillar, watching the blue hue slide over the unstable Mana. The mist moved up, its edges slowly changed from purple to white. Patricia stepped into pillar and placed the oxygen mask over Azure. Her presence did not interrupt the process and the

procedure kept pace. Soon the sound of the heartbeat returned to normal, relaxing Patricia's fears.

Although the Mana finally began to stabilize faster, Patricia found the pacing taking a longer then it should. She left the oxygen mask on Azure to look at another monitor tracking the Mana in Azure's body. It showed that both the four creatures and the dome creatures Mana are disrupting the operation. Like two animals fighting each other for the same prey. Even worse, Azure is physically taking in poison. Patricia was unsure what to do. She feared that if she tried to alter the plans the shackles might return.

Azure's body shook even though the Mana purified one-quarter of a way. Patricia had no choice. She altered the procedure to compensate the unstable Mana and prevent it from damaging Azure's body. The doctor prepared to extract the Mana out of Azure. She typed in the instructions on the computer and the pillar of light changed to yellow. Patricia turned around.

There were four lights hovering Azure. Its brightness shocked the nurses, all stepping back unsure of they were looking at. The lights increased the strength of the purification system and returned most of their Mana to normal. However, they struggled to stabilize their Mana due to the dome creature's own Mana. Before Patricia could do anything, the four creatures returned the unstable Mana into Azure's body and re-shackled her wrists, ankles, and neck.

"We were so close." Patricia said and approached the pillar, her eyes locked onto the four lights. She did not who or what they are, yet she felt the beauty within them. The doctor reached out wanting to touch them, but they slid through Azure's chest, right into her heart. Patricia stood there without saying a word, wishing she could have felt their warmth.

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Sora arrived at the clinic carrying a bouquet of flowers, which was wet from the rain outside. She approached the reception desk when she saw Ciel waiting for the nurse. Sora walked up to Ciel and saw her also carrying a bouquet of flowers with a card signed to Azure. She smiled at the fact that Azure succeeded in reaching out

to Ciel and wanted to make this friendship work.

"Hi Ciel." Sora said startling her.

"Oh... Sora. Hi." Ciel hid the flowers behind her back and looked away. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to see Azure. What about you?"

"I just came... to see a friend. That's all."

"Well we can go together."

"No. It's okay." Ciel said and the nurse approached the girls. "I think my friend won't be able to see me right now."

"Here is your pass. Your friend is in Room 3C. Down the hall and to the right."

Sora and Ciel stared at each other for a moment. They stood silent while people passed by them, going about their business. Despite everything that happened yesterday, Sora and Ciel did not feel tension toward each other. They just did not know who would break the ice first.

"Nurse, I'm here to see Azure Martinez." Sora said. "Room 3C."

"Okay just sign on this visitor sheet while I get the pass."

As Sora signed her name Ciel presented her the pass, but the summoner ignored her. Once she finished signing her name, she received her own pass from the nurse and took Ciel by the hand pulling her along.

"Come on. We can't keep Azure waiting."

"But... I wanted to talk to her alone."

"Then I'll wait outside. So stop being stubborn. Seriously, you acted all tough around us yesterday and now your acting weak."

"Maybe I am weak."

"If you were, you wouldn't be here to face Azure."

Ciel eyes opened and understood what Sora said. She wanted to see Azure. She wanted to settle everything and move forward. Ciel just did not know what to say to Azure. After seeing what Azure coughed up after beating her brother, she wanted to know if she was not alone in this world. If what Azure was going through was a curse just like her. Ciel stopped stumbling behind Sora and kept pace until they arrived at end of the hall.

"Your magic circle Sora, I never knew it was possible to summon golems. Usually golems are just standing around like statues until they receive commands."

"Well my mother is a mechanic and my father works at a golem construction factory. One day, I got to see one of the golems my father worked on and I became obsessed with robots, machines, and golems ever since. So I started small, building little golems and eventually I built bigger ones. Now my grandfather, he was summoner, so once my Mana woke up, he helped me create a summon circle. Eventually I drew my own personal summon circle and used it on my golems."

"So that's why your circle looks like a computer."

"Yeah, it was tricky at first modeling it after microchips. Each line had to be accurate and connected to the circuitry of my golems in order to work. It took seven months alone just to get Flaros to act as a summon. After a few repetitions, I got the rest of my golems to work from one circle. Oh, here we are." Sora stood before the directory and saw the sign to Room 3C pointing to the right. She turned to Ciel with a smile and together they turned the corner heading for Azure's room.

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Azure lied on her hospital bed. She barely moved, recovering from her purification. The television was on, airing a talk show. It bored her. In fact, every channel she changed to gave her zero interest to watch. She turned off the television shifting her eyes outside. It was even drearier with rain pouring and lightning flashing from the clouds. She wished she were back at school to hang out with Sora. Although returning to school would not happen until Monday, the latter half of her wish did when the door opened.

"Sora." Azure said with a voice weak. She watched her friend enter inside and looked back outside. Azure saw Ciel peeking inside and smiled with a nervous wave. "Hi Ciel. Come in."

"Hi Azure." Sora said leading Ciel inside, who hid the flowers behind her back. Sora handed her bouquet to Azure and sat on the chair. "How are you holding up?"

"I feel tired. I could barely move and going to the bathroom is painful."

"Well look on the bright side. At least you get a four day weekend."

"Of lying down and doing nothing."

"You can always draw."

"If my arms moved then yeah."

"Oh. Right." Sora's eyes wandered a bit and she smiled. "But you'll be moving again this weekend. I guarantee it."

"I know." Azure turned her attention to Ciel and saw the flowers in her hands. She received the bouquet and returned the gesture with a smile. The scent of the flowers gave the stale room an improved touch. Its aroma made Azure forget about the pain in her body.

"Thank you." Azure said tilting her head down. She felt Ciel's hand on her shoulder being gentle and comforting, but Azure was not interested in cheering up.

"Are you okay?" Ciel said.

"No." Azure looked up to her friend. "I was this close to purifying all that Mana, but it wasn't enough. I felt it. I was touching it, but the four creatures said I was too weak for them finish it. So it's going to be some time before the purification is complete."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be Ciel. I've lasted this long, everything will turn out all right."

Ciel saw Azure resting her hand over her stomach. Azure's fingers massaged the sides. Ciel wondered if there was more than she let on. From what she learned of Azure, she knew the magi held back the deepest of pain.

"What happened to you?"

"Nothing." Azure really did not want to talk about what happened in the operating room. She just wanted the time to hurry so she could go home for the weekend and go back to school. That was all that repeated in her mind.

Before Ciel could ask further, Sora pulled her arm. Ciel turned to

the golem summoner and saw the look on her eyes, a silent warning not to push Azure. Ciel did not like the idea of Azure not saying anything, or expressing her true feelings. Yet when she heard a long deep breath from Azure, she could almost hear a whimper. Thinking it over, she kind of got the idea that Azure did not want to appear weak. She just wished Azure would let that feeling out. Rather than force the issue, Ciel chose a different subject.

"My father is keeping my brother here on Merydia." Her statement turned the girl's heads. "He doesn't want my mother to put Jean-Pierre in this position again. So he enrolled my brother to San Carlos Prep on the other side of Central Heights."

"And that girl?" Sora said.

"She was released on bail and sent back to France to serve my mother. We shouldn't hear from her ever again. I hope."

"What was all that about?" Sora reached for a chair, presented it to Ciel, and she sat down.

"Well it's because of my mother's family tradition. See my parents are diplomats and part of that tradition on my mother's side is arranged marriages. My mother wanted me to marry this wealthy she knew since they were in college. He isn't cruel, but he doesn't care about me, he just wants to use me to get inside the diplomatic circle. Have that diplomatic immunity we enjoy. My father did not approve. Daddy's little girl I guess is how Americans say it. He fought over this tradition for years until he decided to divorce. I was upset at my father because I was little and didn't know the whole story. When I found out the truth, I fled here to Merydia to be with him."

"Wait." Azure said. "Isn't that illegal to have you married this young?"

"Not if you have diplomatic immunity, which was what that man would have had if he married me. Well it doesn't matter anymore, my father has custody over me and that man can not come near me unless he wants to fight my father. I don't have to worry about him trying to manipulate my magic circle."

"You're magic circle." Azure slid her body to sit upright. "Why

doesn't it have a drawing on it, and red?"

"It's a blood circle. I was born with this. There is no drawing on it because I haven't received any symbol or crest to align myself with."

"I've never heard of this before." Azure looked Sora and she nodded in agreement.

"That's because it's as rare as your Circle of Four Elements."

"My... what? I heard your brother mention that but then you started talking French."

"Our mother told us about the legendary Circle of Four Elements or Circle of Four to some. But the legend says that this circle is used only by the most powerful Magi and only those who are worthy would be granted permission by the four spirits to use it. My brother and I didn't believe it existed it was just a fairy tale our mother said in our sleep. But now, after seeing the circle yesterday, I have to say that you are very lucky to have been blessed by their choice to of giving you their circle and at your age too. You'll be a very powerful Magi someday."

"Yeah... about that whole blessing and receiving thing." Azure let out a smile raising her right hand showing the teal shackle. Its appearance raised more questions for Ciel and she listened to Azure's story.

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On Monday, Azure, stepped out of her dorm dressed in one of her tacky skirted costumes with her chimera spell activated. She saw Sora approaching her and greeted her friend. Sora shook her head side to side when asked for homework and she lifted her hand up looking for a bribe. Together they walked down the hall and arrived at a dorm room. With a knock on the door, Ciel emerged and greeted them. However, Ciel jerked her head back looking at Azure's costume and in chimera form for the first time. Ciel received a pat on the shoulder from Sora assuring her this was normal and together they went to homeroom.

Along the way, Azure ran ahead and looked back at her friends. No longer a duo now a trio, she was overwhelmed with joy. She

shared that feeling with her friends and they returned that sentiment. Cheerful as Azure could ever be, Ciel found herself in strange company but liked it even more. As Azure spun around and hopped past the trees, Jean-Pierre watched from the shadows dressed in a school uniform.

He just stared at Azure, his eyes recording every aspect of her in that costume and in her chimera form. He pressed his stomach and winced from the pain he received from Azure's spell. Jean-Pierre found her strength worthy, but did not know how he could talk to her. He leaned on the trunk of the tree for a while not realizing Azure and the girls were long gone.

With Daimon Hall in sight and the sound of the school bell ringing, Azure and Ciel had a little argument. They both teased and taunted each other about who was going to get the better grades. Azure accepted the challenge and vowed to beat Ciel by whatever means.

As the students of Memorial Academy entered through the doors, they all passed by Dean Mayweather who stepped outside to return to her office. She looked up and saw Azure in the distance. Sean Mayweather was glad to see her student was on her feet and her cheerful self once again. However, she could ignore what she saw. With her cold eyes locked onto the Azure's chimera spell, she crossed her arms and waited for her student to arrive.

...And in her hand was a pinkslip pad with Azure's name on it.

The End.

