

# Arcana Magi Pure - c.3

*by* H-M Brown

"I'm going to be late." Mayumi said running down the school hallway. Classes had ended and Emi went on ahead to track practice. Had her teacher not stopped her, she would have followed her sister to make sure was not lying last night. It was such an unusual day. Emi was cheerful and nice towards her classmates. It was like she saw a different person last night. Emi's pupil-less red eyes frightened her, and the spell that she cast on her, that bump on the head still lingered. Emi did not say anything to her all day. It was as though she wanted to avoid her. Mayumi wished she knew what Emi was thinking. Was Emi sorry about last night? Or scared about something else? It just did not seem clear. The distance between each other now was staggering. Mayumi refused to let this go. Her next move was to follow Emi whether her spells were strong or not, and find out about this shrine.

Mayumi lowered her head when she turned the corner and picked up speed, unaware of a door opening. When she raised her head, she saw a boy stepping out carrying pots and pans. Mayumi tried to stop but was too late. She crashed into him. Mayumi opened her eyes ready to apologize but she became distracted. The boy fixed his glasses. He had a frail look in his face as though he could collapse at any moment. There was a sense of fear that he was about to be scolded, but Mayumi did not want him to feel that way.

"I'm sorry." Mayumi bowed and gathered the pots and pans. "Are you all right?"

"You should watch where you're going? You were like the bulls in Spain."

"What?"

"Oh... I meant you were a wild horse with no sense of control." The boy took the pots and pans, and got up to his feet. He took a step forward and heard the sound of stomping inside the room he came out of.

"TA...KA...SHI!" A girl's voice froze the boy in place. A hand

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appeared out of the door grabbing his collar and yanked him into the wall, making him drop the pots and pans. She emerged with her arms crossed, her light brown pigtails bouncing up and down over her black hair. She had on an apron covered in flour. Her fiery eyes turned to Mayumi and became calm. "I'm sorry about Takashi. He can be rude when something bad happens to him. Please kick him in the shin if it'll make you feel better."

"No. It's not necessary." Mayumi stood to her feet and saw the girl kick Takashi in the shin for her. She looked inside and realized it was the Home Economics room. There was a bag filled with food and nothing was cooked. "What's going on here?"

"Oh." The girl said and led Mayumi inside. "This is our Cooking Club. My name is Ayane Nakamura, and this one over here is Takashi Sakuraba. Takashi, introduce yourself."

Takashi stood to his feet and bowed.

"I am Takashi Sakuraba." His eyes looked away and he clearly showed no interest in Mayumi, just to go about his business.

"My name is Mayumi Akamatsu. Please to meet you." Mayumi saw all the cooking supplies placed in boxes and nothing on the stove. "You were all done today. But classes just finished."

"Actually Akamatsu-san, we were closing our club for good. One of our members transferred and most of the students are already in clubs, sports, or boys. No one really cares to roll up the sleeves and cook a nice home cooked meal."

"So what are you all going to do Nakamura-san?"

"Move on." Takashi said. "As should you."

"Takashi." Ayane placed her hands on her hip. "Be nice to her."

"I think I'll leave you two alone now." Mayumi said.

"Why?" Ayane said.

"Well I don't want to interfere."

"Huh?" Ayane looked at Takashi and she laughed. "Oh no. We're not lovers."

"What?" Takashi stepped back. "Ayane."

"We've known each other since elementary school. I like you, Akamatsu-san you're funny."

"I wasn't trying to be..."

"Hey." Ayane's eyes lit up. "Are you in any clubs or sports team?"

"No."

"You like cooking?"

"No."

"Good. Then you're in our club."

"She doesn't listen very well does she Sakuraba-san?"

"Not when she sees an opportunity."

"Please." Ayane clapped her hands together and looked down.

"We really don't want to shut down the club and we need one more person to make it five. You don't have to do much. We'll take care of everything. All I'm asking is for you to be just our fifth member. Please?"

Mayumi looked at the kitchen and at Ayane. It was the first time anybody offered her to join a club, or to be part of anything. It was not exactly something she was interested in, but she thought about what her mother said about joining clubs. Plus, she still had training at the shrine. However the idea of a club folding because it was one member short was a terrible thing to see happen. Mayumi was not sure if she could manage it all, but she made her decision.

"Okay. I'll join."

"Really?" Ayane said receiving a nod and she wrapped her arms around Mayumi with a smile. "Thank you thank you thank you."

"Don't make me regret this."

"We're a team now. So no more formalities. Understand? You call me Ayane."

"Oh... okay. You can call me Mayumi." She turned to Takashi but his expression said otherwise.

"Sempai."

"Don't push it Sakuraba." Mayumi felt a snap in her mind. She forgotten about Emi and tiptoed to the door with a smile. "I have to hurry to the track field. I have to check on my sister."

"It's okay. I have to add you to our membership before we could do anything. Meet us here tomorrow and meet the others. Okay?"

"Okay." Mayumi turned around and stepped out the door. Upon

exiting, she saw a grey crow perched outside the window watching. It stared at her or at least it appeared like it stared at her, giving off a chilling vibe. Mayumi stepped aside and looked back one more time. It flew away, but she noticed something odd in its claws. A centipede. Snapped in two. She shudder at how creepy that was. Without further hesitation, Mayumi ran off before she missed her chance to follow her sister.

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When she made her way outside she her heard her name called out in the distance. It was Nina hurrying over. Mayumi knelt down and scooped the fox up into her arms. Before they could say anything, they heard the sound of whizzing growing louder toward them. Mayumi saw a ball of light heading toward them and she raised her arms up. The barrier blocked the attack but it exploded knocking them back.

"Mayumi." Nina said nudging her student. Nina bit her shoulder and forced her eyes open.

"Ow. I'm okay."

"You know you're supposed to chant to activate your spell. Activating it silently will cause a backfire."

"Sorry, but I had no time." Mayumi rubbed her head and remembered her mistake last night. She looked up and saw a pink haired girl Magi, with white dog-ears, dressed in a one-piece white and blue skirt with armor throughout her body and a tiara across her forehead. She held a blue and white staff with a blue jewel on the end aimed directly at Mayumi. Mayumi slapped the palm of her head trying to comprehend what she was looking at. "First my sister and now you. Are these tacky outfits a trend?"

"Yes." Nina said. "Sadly."

"Don't act like you don't know who I am." The girl said. "That little stunt you pulled last night nearly killed the forest campers."

"What?"

"Mayumi did you do anything bad?"

"No I did not Nina!"

"Enough!" The girl said gathering Mana at the end of her staff.

"I'll finish you before you transform."

Nina stood between Mayumi and the magi channeling her Mana. Her presence made the girl hesitate.

"You're... a kitsune."

"And Mayumi is my student. Stand down now."

The girl lowered her weapon and Mayumi stood to her feet.

"Sorry I knocked you down."

"I've been getting that a lot lately. My name is Mayumi Akamatsu."

"So you're not her. You exactly like her though."

Mayumi was about to tell her about Emi but Nina tugged her socks. She looked down at the fox shaking her head negatively to keep quiet.

"Who are you?" Mayumi said.

"I am Shining Star. Be safe, fellow Magi." She jumped onto a lamppost and hopped her way up to the roof of the building. She was no longer in sight and left Mayumi confused.

"Shining... Star? That is so tacky."

"Focus Mayumi." Nina said. "It seems I got here too late."

"What happened?"

"Rumors spread around that a new girl dressed in purple with orichalcham wings summoned a monster and sent it off into the woods on a rampage."

"Ori... what?"

"From the way the witnesses described her, it sounded like you."

"Emi." Mayumi looked at the roof and understood why Shining Star attacked.

"Mayumi! We have to find your sister before it's too late."

"I know where."

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Mayumi arrived at the track and field. There she saw Emi preparing to run the one hundred meter dash. A female coach waited at the end with a watch and clipboard. She saw her sister take the runners position and at the whistle, Emi ran. Mayumi saw a smile in her sister's face. She wished she could feel relief for her

sister but she cannot. She hoped she would see her sister smile all the time. Now with the threat of a Magi out to get Emi, Mayumi no longer could wait.

"Nina. We're going to Emi's shrine tonight."

"Mayumi..."

"No. As soon as she finishes we follow her. I'm putting an end to this right now."

"Let me talk to her. This is as good a time before she leaves."

"Okay."

The sound of the whistle ended practice today. All of the girls went ahead making plans for the afternoon and Mayumi rushed down the grass with Nina following. She stopped before her sister and Emi gave her a cold look.

"Let's go Akamatsu." The coach said.

"Please." Mayumi said. "I just want to talk to my sister."

"Don't take too long." As the coach left, Mayumi picked up Nina and presented her to Emi.

"This is Nina. She's training me to be a Magi."

"So?"

"She just wants to talk to you."

"There's nothing to talk about."

"First, I just want to know." Nina said. "Did you summon a monster and sent it out to the woods last night?"

"What are you talking about?"

"There's a Magi who fits your description attacking people."

"That can't be." Emi turned around looking away. "I did summon a monster but I never sent it out to attack anyone."

"Did you turn off the spell then?" Nina said and Emi turned around with her eyes trembling.

"They said they would de-spell it."

"Who's they?"

Emi looked down and kept silent.

"We have to know. Let us help you."

"Emi?" Mayumi said placing her hand on her sister's cold shoulder. "Please come with us. The Shrine of Four Elements will

teach you how to cast spells properly.”

“No. It... It has to be a mistake. They wouldn't lie to me.”

“Listen to me.” Mayumi grabbed her sister's hand. “That monster you summoned got the attention of an angry Magi. Right now she is here to kill you.”

“What?”

“Thank you for leading her to me.”

“That voice.” Emi's eyes lowered halfway and she turned around. “Shining Star.”

The Magi stood at the top off the hill, with her hand on her hip, and her staff set on the ground straight like a lamppost. Her eyes shifted side to side trying to comprehend the fact that there are two of them. She concluded that they were both working together.

“That name?” Mayumi said to the Magi. “You're really going with that name aren't you?”

“Shut up.” Shining Star looked at Nina. “It's a shame that a kitsune would betray her people and side with the mukado.”

“Mukado?!” Nina turned to Emi and saw her pull out a locket with the shape of centipede gripping its feet around a purple gem in the middle. “no...”

“Emi, don't do this.” Mayumi said and face Shining Star. “This is all a misunderstanding.”

“No.” Shining Star said. “It's not. She's the one.”

“Mayumi...” Emi said raising her locket over her head. “This is my fight.”

TO BE CONTINUED...

