

Arcana Magi Memorial

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by H-M Brown

At lunchtime, Azure and Sora were at their usual table outside under the trees. They finished studying for their upcoming literature test and started eating their meals. Azure barely ate her sandwich and stared at her wrists. She thought about turning off her chimera spell since it was draining her Mana, but was afraid of feeling the pain. She took short breaths as though she was running a marathon to help conserve her energy. Afterwards, she took a bite of her sandwich. There was strange taste she never thought of, so she analyzed it.

“What's wrong Azure?”

“I never noticed how different it tastes when I'm a chimera.”

“Really? What does it taste like?”

“It tastes grainy.”

“That's because the bread is five grain.” Sora said and Azure looked at the bread again.

“You're right.” Azure took another bite making Sora rub her forehead with two fingers. Azure took out her sketchbook from her bookbag and flipped to the middle. Her latest drawing caught Sora's attention. It was a sketch of Sora's Golems combined form, Globos. Azure turned it around and slid it over the table so Sora could see it.

“The drawing is amazing. It really looks like Globos.”

“Thanks. Once I finish, I'll frame it for you so you could put it on the wall.”

“You don't have to do that.”

“It's okay. It's my way of saying thanks for everything you've done for me.”

“Azure.” Sora watched her friend take back the sketchbook and continued drawing Globos. She did not know what else to say. She wondered where they both would be if they never met. Then a

thought lit like a light bulb. Sora wondered if there was more to this than Azure led on. "Is everything okay?"

"Yeah." Azure said with a weak voice. She looked up and smiled. "I feel fine."

Sweat covered Azure's face. Her chest shifted up and down with the sound of heavy breathing. Tears welled up as her heart beat faster. She closed her eyes and focused her thoughts, fighting the pain. Then it stopped and she shivered.

"You're not fine."

"I am too." Azure got up and stumbled a little. Everything blurred for a second. She felt Sora's hands grip her shoulders and pushed Sora to the ground. As Sora piced herself up, Azure stepped back with shivering eyes. "Sora... I'm... I'm sorry."

"Wait it's..." Sora watch Azure run away. She knew Azure did not mean it and wished her friend would not be so stubborn. Sora wanted to follow her, but decided to give Azure some space and talk to her next class. Maybe convince her to go see the nurse. For now, she gathered all of their things to take to class. Once she slung both bookbags over her shoulder, she heard a rustle in the trees. There was a sound of coughing beyond the bushes. Sora looked into the small wooded area and saw the leaves moving in a different direction than where the wind blew them. She remembered what Azure said in class during first period and did not want to take any chances. Sora raised her hands out expanding her blue magic circle. She looked around to make sure there were no teachers nearby and her fingers tapped on the surface like a computer. One of the gears on the magic circle glowed and Sora cast her spell. "FLAROS!"

The robot wolf jumped out of the circle and howled. Sora hissed at Flaros to quiet it and the canine whimpered, walking to her. She patted her golem to calm it down and gave her commands. Flaros lowered itself to allow Sora to climb on its back, and rode off in the direction Azure went.

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Azure leaned on the wall outside the gymnasium. She pulled back the sleeve of her blouse and saw the shackle glow. Azure

realized that her feet dragged across the ground, leaving behind straight-line grooves on the grass beside the sidewalk. Her vision blurred for a moment and she thought about her bed. How soft and comfortable it was.

“Sora... I'm going back to my room.” Azure struggled to walk around the corner, moving like a shackled prisoner dragging a ball and chain. She felt something bump her, and she struggled to lift her neck up. Before her was Ciel, who tried to get around her. Azure moved her hands over Ciel's body, pushing her to the wall.

“What's wrong with you?” Ciel said and never received a response. She marched up behind Azure, pulling her shoulder to turn her around. “Who do you think you are bumping into people? You should watch where you're going.”

“I said...” Azure thought about the first she apologized for bumping into Ciel how she was treated. ‘But all you did was...’

Azure slapped Ciel's arm. Her dragon hand left a mark on Ciel's wrist. She walked away, but she felt her hair pulled back. With a scream, she found herself on the ground and pulled Ciel with her. Together they rolled on the floor slapping, pulling, and yelling at each other. Before they knew it, the wall shattered and they stopped. Azure and Ciel looked around and found themselves alone. The brick and dust rained onto the grass, smoldering, but no fire ignited. Azure examined the damaged and turned to the trees.

“Someone must be in the trees.”

“Who?” Ciel said brushing off the dirt on her clothes.

The sound of screaming in the trees made the girls take a step back. A boy fell out of the bushes as Flaros stepped out growling at him. He tried to wave the golem away but it barked at him and he shielded his face with his hands.

“Flaros! Azure said sloshing toward the wolf. It wagged its tail and sat down waiting for her to pet it. She used her Mana on her hand to pet the golem and its ear twitched. Azure heard the bushes rustle and Sora emerged.

“Are you okay? Did you get hurt?”

“I'm alright.” Azure smiled and received her bookbag. “Thanks.

I'm sorry about earlier."

"Don't worry about it Azure. I'm taking you to the nurse. Okay?"

"Okay."

"Jean-Pierre." Ciel said approaching everyone. "What are you doing here?"

The boy crawled away from the growling Flaros and sat on his knees.

"Hello Ciel."

"You know him?" Azure said.

"This is my brother Jean-Pierre."

"So that's who he is?" Sora said with a cold stare targeting Ciel. "Why is your brother here sneaking around?"

"I'll worry about my brother. You just move along now."

"Your brother just attacked us." Azure said standing over Jean-Pierre with her arms crossed to hide the sudden pain in her sides. She never noticed the boy staring at her. "I'm really interested in what he has to say."

"Fine." Ciel said as her brother focused on Azure, until she pulled his ear. "Start talking."

"Sorry." Jean-Pierre said. "I'm just here to take my sister home."

Azure and Sora turned to the hole in the wall, and looked back at him.

"Violence was supposed to be a last resort, but this girl and her golem attacked me. That thing was quick."

Ciel let out a growl and grabbed his collar. She pulled him to his feet, towering over him in height.

"Go home, and tell mother that I'm staying here with dad. I'm sure she won't be happy you flew all the way from France on your own."

"Mother sent me here to get you."

Ciel's eyes shifted towards Azure and Sora. Her teeth pressed against each other at the fact they heard what he said. She tightened her grip on her brother's collar, nearly choking him.

"I'm not going home." Ciel released her brother. "That's final."

"Sorry but..."

Flaros stood in front Jean-Pierre, growling. He backed away as the sound of people nearby grew louder. Jean-Pierre jumped back into the trees and Azure saw him with her dragon sight, hop over the wall exiting the academy.

"He's gone."

"Are you sure Azure?" Sora said examining her friend's bruises, and received a nod and smile as an answer. She raised her arm up revealing her magic circle and Flaros stood ready. "Recall... Flaros."

Flaros shattered into particles of light and merged with the circle.

"How can you tell he's gone?" Ciel said looking into the heavily shadowed trees and bushes. Before she got her answer from Azure, a dwarven teacher arrived with two security guards.

"HEY!"

"Oh no." Azure said. "Not Mr. Morden."

"Mr. Morden?" Ciel looked back at the girls.

"He's my teacher in Golem Mechanics." Sora said.

"What did you three do to this wall?" Mr. Morden said looking up at the girls.

"Nothing." Azure said, but the teacher saw the bruises on her and Ciel's faces.

"You two were fighting. Which one of you cast the spell?"

"It was Ciel's brother Jean-Pierre." Azure said.

"I don't see this Jean-Pierre here." Mr. Morden noticed Azure and Ciel were not looking at each other. He could see the bitterness in their expressions. "Forget it. You three come with me. We'll settle this with the dean."

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"What is going on here?" Madam Mayweather said with her monotone voice, and Azure suddenly stood upright in a ladylike stance. The dean crossed her arms waiting for an answer and Mr. Morden spoke.

"I caught these girls fighting over by the gymnasium. One of them cast a spell damaging the wall."

"Damaging school property? Which one of you cast the spell?"

Madam Mayweather cold expression struck fear into the girls, and Mr. Morden. She opened the draw to her desk and took out pink slips. "All three of you have detention. I will be notifying your parents about this. However, Ms. Martinez you will take detention next week, and you will report to the nurse's office right now."

"But Madam Mayweather..." Azure said and yelped as the dean's piercing eyes locked on. "Ciel's brother was the one who cast that spell. He's been roaming around campus following her all morning."

"She's telling the truth." Sora said.

"Ciel LeBleu, this is your first day right?" Madam Mayweather said and Ciel nodded. "Is your brother here on my campus?"

"Y...yes." Ciel said. Her hands shivered and her teeth pressed against each other. Her first day has been nothing but a nightmare. She got into a fight and sent to the dean's office. Her brother is chasing her by her own mother's orders. She wished she could die.

"Why?" Madam Mayweather's voice startled Ciel.

"He's come to take me home to mother, but I wanted to be here with my father."

"What's your brother's name?"

"Jean-Pierre. He's seventeen."

Azure and Sora looked up at Ciel with eyes wide open. They could not believe Jean-Pierre was older than she was, and yet shorter than her. This new information made them giggle and Ciel lowered her head. It all came to end when Mr. Morden stomped toward them.

"I'd hold that tongue if I were you." He said with a frightening voice.

"Enough." Madam Mayweather said. "Ms. LeBleu, I will tell your father about this once I get a hold of him. You will report back here after detention. Regardless of the situation, I cannot ignore that fact that you three got into a fight."

"I didn't..." Sora stopped talking once the dean's eyes turned to her. She did not make any further attempts to get out of detention. She felt Azure tugging her sleeve and they both stepped backwards toward the door, following Ciel.

“Ms. Martinez, I better find you in the nurse's office and not roaming the halls.”

“Yes Madam Mayweather.” Azure closed the door behind her, slowly enough to allow the grating sound of the hinges to irritate the dean.

“Young and stupid.” Madam Mayweather said and picked up the phone. As she dialed, Mr. Morden tilted his head.

“Security, I want a full sweep of the entire campus. I want you to run a check on all visitors and make sure they signed in at the entrances. I am looking for a young man named Jean-Pierre LeBleu. If you find him, I want him apprehended and brought to my office immediately.”

“I see you're not taking any chances Madam.”

“I didn't get my title changed to Dean for nothing. If this little fool is running around my campus and harassing my students, I'll have his head. The last thing I need is another lunatic attacking my school. I don't think I could shake off Mystic Intelligence a second time, nor handle another wave of students leaving the school.”

“True. I'll hold an emergency meeting with the teachers before class ends.”

“Very well, Gared. I will meet you all in five minutes.”

As Mr. Morden left the office, Madam Mayweather turned to the window and watched the wind brush the trees. It was as though she felt someone was there. Her instinct sensed it, even though the trees were far away. She got up with hands behind her back, curled into fists, and the knuckles cracking on their own.

TO BE CONTINUED...

