

Arcana Magi Memorial

Vol.3 - c.2

by H-M Brown

In a restroom nearby the hill, Azure splashed water on her face. She stared at her hands, nails curved, and the scales a light red with near pinkish color toward the elbows. She felt the grooves on her fingertips and saw a paper towel rest over them. Azure turned to Sora, smiled, and dried her face.

"The doctors said that my human DNA was altered by those creatures. The DNA is larger and a few extra strands added. My blood type is incompatible to humans so if I need a blood transfusion, there won't be any for me. Physically my muscle mass and strength increased to compensate the weight of these limbs. My heart beats faster and my bones are difficult to break. My senses heightened."

"I don't understand. You have been casting your Chimera Mode spell since the incident. You have a human body. I saw it."

"The doctors said I had misunderstood the spell." Azure made her magic circle. "I wasn't changing from human to a chimera form. I was changing back from human to my original chimera form. Which explains why my shackles were heavy when I was... Anyway, my parents heard this and they lost it. I never saw them this angry ever."

"It wasn't your fault. We were trying to escape when you got hurt your arm."

"It didn't matter to them." Azure's magic circle became purple shackles and she rubbed her wrists. "My mother couldn't look at me. Between these shackles and now this, they can't take it anymore. They can't keep up with all the bills and tuition. She said it be better to send me away."

"I don't think she means that."

"Yes she does." Azure looked up to Sora. "I'm nothing but a

monster to her now."

"Azure, hasn't it to you occurred that they are overwhelmed by all of this?" Sora placed her hands on Azure's shoulders, but her friend looked away. "Think about it. Everything is happening fast. Maybe seeing you go through all of this is hurting them. They are your parents after all. I know my mother may annoy me, but when I see her by my bed when I'm sick, I see her pain. It has to be hard on them."

"If that's the case, then why say those things?"

"I don't know." Sora crossed her arms and looked at the mirror. "I'm just trying to understand their point of view."

"What should I do Sora?"

"Talk to them."

Azure closed her eyes and for brief moment thought it over. She nodded to Sora's advice, looking up to her. Azure slipped on her gloves smiling at Sora.

"Thank you." Azure said. "I'm sorry. I know you wanted to tell me something, and here we are dealing with my problems."

"It's okay." Sora led Azure outside. "I just wanted to help."

"Why don't we go to our usual spot and tell me there? Lunchtime is an hour away so we can go back to the academy then."

"Really?" Sora said as the girls walked down a set of stairs.

"Better to get it out of the way now while we got the chance."

"Okay." Sora smiled looking at her friend.

"By the way, I left my purse behind." Azure looked up with big smile turning Sora's smile off.



Azure and Sora arrived Lucy's Café, with its rustic wooden suburban theme, setting it apart from the brick and stone buildings surrounding the establishment. They sat in a booth where they saw people and cars passing by. A young woman with an apron over her shirt and dress, arrived with menus and two glasses of water, and took a second look at the girls.

"Hi Lucy." They said.

"Shouldn't you two be in school?"

"Emergency." Azure said. "Please don't call, we won't take long. Lucy took a moment looking at their smiles and she nodded.

"Thanks." Azure said. "I'll have tea and cheesecake."

"Tea and strawberry cake please."

"Very well." Lucy wrote on the order on a notepad. "Once you're finished, you get back to school, you hear?"

"Okay." They said and watched her leave.

Sora rubbed her neck as Azure gave her attention. She did not know where to begin, thinking about what to say first. After Lucy arrived with their order and left, Sora could tell Azure is slowly losing patience. So without hesitation she made her magic circle appear and placed it on the table. With Azure watching, Sora slid her fingers on the circuit lines and tapped on two dots. A screen appeared above it and a picture of Sora popped up. It was an identification card.

"What's this?" Azure said reading Sora's information.

"Technomancer Number 3497? Magi Class Golem Summoner. I don't understand."

"I'm part of an organization called Technomancer. Clients come to us, and pay us to do certain tasks for them. With the exception of three of my cousins, my whole family are Technomancers."

"So basically everyone in this organization casts spells through technology?" Azure stared at Sora's picture and saw her friend nod.

"Why didn't you tell me? This sounds cool."

"Azure, listen to me." Sora recalled her magic circle and pressed the palm of her hands together. "When we first met, I bragged to my parents about making friends with you. I told them about your circle and they were interested to know more. They felt the circle sounded familiar, so they assigned me to report everything you did."

There was a pause. Sora watched Azure's smile slowly disappeared. Her eyes grew wide and Azure shook her head. Her body slid toward the edge of the booth. Sora lowered her head crossing her fingers together, her face hid underneath the fingers.

"You said clients hire you. Is someone after me?"

"No This is an internal matter. Nobody but us knows about you."

"Why?" Azure clasped the table, denting the with her finger tips.

"After what happened to you that night, knowing you saved me from those monsters, I told my mother that I was not going to spy on you anymore. I stopped the reports. I never told them what happened to you. My mother won't let me abort the mission. She kept demanding each day to report. But I refuse. No more. I've been hurting you all this time and I feel ashamed. I can show you the reports. Whatever you want, I'll give it to you. Please"

Azure looked at the exit, and planted her foot out of the booth. Her hands twitched, and the want to leave met with hesitation. She had no words to respond to this revelation, nor any way to express her feelings about this. She already felt worn out from crying over her problems and her mother's reaction.

"I give up." Azure said and Sora raised her head. "I give up."

"Azure?"

"Okay, so I activated the Circle of Four selfishly wanting its power and I got shackled for it. I deserved that. I saved a school and became this... this thing. Okay, I'm sure many heroes ended up like this. But you? All these years? All this time? Why didn't you tell me?"

"It was covert." Sora reached out to Azure but pushed back by her friend's hand.

"I trusted you." Azure gripped her shoulders. "You could have told me. You know I have been trying to find a way to unlock this circle all these years. If you and these Technomancers knew anything about this, that could have fix this mess, I would have told you anything you needed."

"I... I never thought of that. Technomancer is very strict about letting information gathering and archiving."

"Yeah. It's not about me that you're doing this. It's all about Technomancer, or else you would have found the solution to my problems already."

Sora looked down and her eyes trailed off to the side. There was no answer.

"I feel alone now." Azure got up to her feet and walked past Sora.

"Azure, you're not alone." Sora's words stopped Azure. "I won't let you be alone again."

"Damn it Sora. I'm already messed up as it is. I'm tired of everything."

"I swear I will earn your trust. I promise to do everything right and earn your trust."

Azure's head turned slightly and her cold eyes locked on. She could see the fear on Sora's face.

"Are planning to tell Ciel this?"

Sora's eyes grew wide at the question. She forgot about Ciel, and after what she went through with Jean-Pierre, Sora realized what would happen. With a nod in agreement, Azure walked away.

"Let's go." Azure passed by Lucy. "We're taking the cakes home. Sora is paying."

"Oh... okay."



Azure and Sora arrived at the entrance where the students hung around sitting on benches, some eating lunch. They walked past the security guard preparing his lunch. Without the girls noticing, he saw them passing by and reached for the phone. Azure and Sora stayed quiet, neither looking at each other. They both arrived at their favorite table and there was Ciel with her and Azure's bookbag on the seats.

"Hey where were you two?" Ciel sense the negative aura in the air, as she passed Azure her bookbag. "What happened?"

"Azure Martinez." A voice spoke over the loud speaker. "Please report to Madam Mayweather's office now."

Azure slung her bookbag over her shoulder giving Sora a look that told her to talk. She walked ahead of the girls with a ladylike swagger that Ciel and Sora never saw before, and she overheard Sora tell her everything about the mission.

"You're a Technomancer!" Ciel grabbed Sora by the collar.

"Yes." Her heart raced like no other and her toes barely touched the ground. Her eyes trembled begging for Ciel to let go. She felt the impact of the floor and her feet twinge.

"Did my mother hire you?"

"No." Sora looked directly into Ciel's eyes. "I stopped giving reports before I met you, so Technomancer knows nothing about you. This was all an internal order. My mission was to monitor Azure and report her activity. They wanted to know more about the Circle of Four."

"So Azure didn't know." Ciel looked at Azure's shoulder jolt at the comment. She raised her hand at Sora ready to strike but she heard the sound of a throat clearing. Ciel turned and saw Madam Mayweather watching on. She faced away from Sora with her arms crossed, raising the dean's eyebrow.

"Is there a problem ladies?"

The girls remained quiet, not a single one answering. Madam Mayweather took a deep breath and turned to Ciel.

"Why are you here?"

"I was meeting them for lunch."

"Go back to lunch." Madam Mayweather watched Ciel hesitate, then walked away. She then turned her attention to Sora. "You ran out of Mister Morden's class. You have detention for the rest of the week. Report to him right now."

"Yes." Sora walked away and looked back at Mayweather placing her hand gently on Azure's Shoulder. The dean led Azure quietly inside the building; her face had the look of concern. It was a side to the dean Sora never saw before. Sora wished she could have done more for Azure. She hoped her and Ciel will continue to be friends.



Sora stood at the door and saw Mister Morden looking down at her from his podium. She approached his desk as he climbed down the stairs and her head looked down to face him.

"I'm sorry I ran out of class like that."

"I understand that you wanted to help your friend, and given the circumstances, it still does not excuse what you did."

"Yes Mister Morden." Sora received a list. She looked at it and they were page numbers.

"This is the work you missed today. You will be given a quiz to

make up for it. Also listed are the pages for today's homework. Since you have detention this week, you will report here after that to take the test. If you don't show up, you will receive an F. Understand?"

"Yes."

Sora and Mister Morden saw smoke rising in the room. The putrid smell of burnt rubber forced Sora to cover her nose. The alarm sounded off and Mister Morden grabbed a fire extinguisher near the equipment. She followed the trail of smoke and saw it came from her golems.

"Get out of the room Sora!" Mister Morden said he aiming extinguisher.

Sora watched Flaros stumble to its feet, right off the table, while the other golems lay still with smoke spilling out of their mouths, and their metal skin glowing red. All she could do was stand there helpless as the flames licked out of cracked, listening to sound of the extinguisher putting out the fire. Sora heard Terros moan, its bear like head lifting up to face her. Unexpectedly, a video player appeared on the computer monitor. Without paying attention to the smoke she inhaled, Sora took the mouse and hit play to start the video.

"Hi there. You're my first golem." Sora held a mirror to Terros and it saw itself in the reflection. "Don't you look cute? You're name is Ter—"

The video stopped and Sora turned to Terros watching its glowing blue eyes fade into darkness. Her lips moved saying 'I'm sorry' but it never projected out of her voice, and instead, replaced with coughing. Terros' head just flopped over the table and she felt Flaros' snout pushing her hand. All she could do was stand there.

"Damn it child!" Mister Morden grabbed Sora's arm, pulling her away. "Why are you still here? Come on!"

As Mister Morden stood at the door leading the other students outside and security arrived, Sora walked quietly with Flaros at her side. With soot on her face and on her clothes, her lips quivered and she covered her mouth. She took deep breathes, coughing out the smoke, and holding back her tears.

TO BE CONTINUED...

