

Arcana Magi Memorial

Vol.3 - c.3

by H-M Brown

Azure stepped out of Madam Mayweather's office facing the floor. She was exhausted from everything that has happened so far. Her thoughts struggled to focus. She did not know where to go from there.

"Hey." Ciel said startling Azure. "Is everything okay?"

"I..." Azure closed her eyes taking a deep breath.

"Come." Ciel led Azure to a couple of chairs and they sat down. "Tell me."

"Madam Mayweather is sending me home today and she hopes I'll use the time to talk to my parents and settle everything. But..."

"Yes." Ciel tilted her head, leaning closer to Azure.

"It's Sora."

"Some friend she turned out to be. I can't believe she did that to you after all these years." Ciel saw anger in Azure's face. She placed her hand on her friend's back, but did not get reaction from it.

"It doesn't make sense."

"What?"

"Sora has done so many nice things for me." Azure's memories flashed to when Sora shed tears at the café. "She's been there for me. She never truly hurt me. I'm so confused."

"It's hard to feel betrayed. You put so much trust into a person that..."

"That's just it." Azure looked at Ciel eye to eye. "Everything was fine without me knowing, why did she tell me now?"

"You're not serious." Ciel shifted Azure's body and with hands on her shoulders. "She told people, who are complete strangers to you, about everything you did. She put your life in danger."

"Then why haven't they hurt me. Why haven't anything they did hurt me?"

"They're biding their time." Ciel released Azure's shoulders.
"Why are you trying to defend Sora?"

"I'm not. I'm angry about this, but..." Azure raised her arms and her purple shackles appeared. "If it wasn't for Sora, I would still be struggling with these shackles. I wouldn't walk correctly now."

Ciel stared at the shackles as Azure continued.

"When I first arrived here, I really couldn't walk. The shackles were too heavy. I would spend time lying down just so I could get my energy back. Everyone thought something was wrong with me because I kept the shackles out of sight. I didn't care and I was happy to be alone. I didn't want anyone near me. Then one day I just lay on the grass staring at the rain. I struggled to my feet. Then Sora appeared standing over me. She asked me 'What was wrong?' and I told her the truth about my shackles. She said 'You're doing it all wrong.' She lifted me to my feet and positioned my body where the pain went away. The shackles were not as heavy as before. She told me as long as I held this position when walking, my body will adjust and I'll walk right."

"I'm sorry." Ciel said leaning back. "I shouldn't involve myself in this further."

"Why? You're our friend."

"I can't trust her Azure. I can't be her friend. That's my choice. If you want to be friends with her, that's fine. I just hope that you be careful and not get yourself hurt. That's all."

"I have to give her a second chance. A chance to earn my trust again. Abandoning her is too easy." Azure and Ciel turned their heads to each other. Only their eyes spoke to each other on how they feel about Sora.

The door slammed opened shocking the girls. They watched Madam Mayweather hurry past them and overheard the secretary calling the fire department directing them to Mister Morden's class.

"Sora." Azure and Ciel turned to each other, and followed the dean.

* * *

Sora was on the grass coughing with Flaros lying beside her. Her

head spun a bit as she watched firefighters enter the building. An ambulance pulled up and campus security led the remaining students away from the building. She looked up and there was Mister Morden with a medic carrying an oxygen tank talking to her. The medic placed the mask on her face and she felt the gas fill her lungs. Her vision straightened out and there was Madam Mayweather in the distance approaching one of the firemen. Mister Morden left Sora and the medic gently laid her down waving for a gurney.

“Where are you taking me?”

“Just relax. We're going to take you to the hospital to have you checked out.”

As the medic turned around waiting for the gurney to arrive, Sora felt her body warm up. She struggled to move and it caught Flaros' attention. Sora's eyes shifted and she saw a fireman standing before Madam Mayweather holding a part. It was from Aeros. Melted and deformed, but it wasn't any ordinary part, she read the lips of the firefighter, and Madam Mayweather's reaction made Sora's heart skip and her body tremble.

“Flaros.” Her golem got up attracting the medic's attention. Sora grabbed Flaros and lifted herself up. The medic tried to stop her, but Flaros growled and snapped its teeth at him. Sora climbed the golem's back and rode off as Mayweather watched. She never looked back, keeping her eyes forward. Sora struggled to keep her eyes focused passing by the crowd of onlookers. With the glance of her eyes, she saw Azure and Ciel watching her run. She stayed focused and hurried to the dorms.

Upon their arrival, Flaros stopped short of breaking down the door. Sora made it return to her circle and she dragged herself inside. She was close to her room, but her body could not move forward. Waves of heat surrounded her; the smoke in her lungs exacerbated her condition. Sora reached out to her room but the distance was too great. She looked up and saw the sign reading shower room. Sora had no choice and entered inside.

“Sora!”

Azure's voice reached her ears. Sora leaned on the wall of the showers and turned it on. Set to cold, steam gushed out and filled the room. Sora removed her shirt to the sound of footsteps. She coughed again, clutching her head from the pain, and she heard a gasp. Sora turned her head. The steam cleared revealing Azure with her mouth covered, and Ciel's eyes wide open.

"What happened to you?" Azure said, looking at the blistered body of Sora. Red around the wrists, elbows, back, and neck. She watched Sora lift her pants up and revealed her ankles and knees. Before Azure knew it, Sora stood to her feet using the stance Azure learned from her to overcome the weight of her shackles. Azure put the pieces together. "Are you like me?"

"No..." Sora said. "I'm half golem."

"What?" Azure approached Sora slowly

Sora collapsed on the wall to Azure's squeals. She felt her arm lifted up and placed around Azure's shoulder. Sora found herself held up to her feet. Unexpectedly, her other arm was also lifted and there was Ciel helping her up as well, though Ciel's eyes showed discontent.

"I need to contact my mother." Sora said. "The emergency phone is in my room."

"Okay." Azure said. "Madam Mayweather is going to be here any minute."

"I just have to press the beacon, that's it. Hurry."

Azure and Ciel used all of their strength and dragged Sora by the feet. They reached Sora's room and found the door opened. With a push, the found place ransacked. Draws on the floor, clothing everywhere, and boxes destroyed. Sora limped on her own power and approached the closet. She found a box opened. It was empty inside. Her head lowered, and she felt the Azure's hand stinging her blistered shoulder.

"It's gone. I can't reach my mother. She won't know I've been targeted."

"Do you have a backup?" Ciel said.

"This is the backup. The primary is my cellphone in Mister

Morden's classroom."

"Who's targeting you?!" Azure said.

"I don't know." Sora heard voices in the hallway and Ciel looked outside.

"Someone is coming." Ciel said looking down the hallway hearing voices. "It sounds like Mayweather.

"I can't get caught by her. She saw the self-destruct devices on my golems."

"Self destruct?" Azure said tilting her head.

"A failsafe if anybody tried to steal my golems from an agent." Sora coughed. "Someone tried to take them and they destroyed themselves, causing a fire. It's what caused the commotion in Morden's classroom."

"Then that place is crawling with security." Ciel said with hands twitching in anxiety.

"We could talk to Madam Mayweather." Azure said. "I'm sure she'll understand what is happening. Especially when she sees your room."

"No way. She doesn't know my family are Technomancers and she's angry. I saw it when she talked to the firefighter. Besides, even if I am with her, whoever is after me won't stop until he gets me. So we have to get to my cellphone and activate the beacon. Once we do, then we'll head to Mayweather's office."

"I don't know." Azure said. "Mayweather could have called your mother already."

"If this guy takes me before I activate the beacon, no will ever find me. It's faster than a phone call."

Azure turned to Ciel looking for advice, but she did not have any of her own. Azure took Sora's hand, feeling her shivers, and together the girls left the building.



Outside, Azure guided Sora up the hill with Ciel watching behind. They saw the sign to the school building Sora's class was, and followed the road up the hill. Looking at the blisters on Sora's hand, Azure thought about the pain she experienced with her

shackles.

"So," Azure 's eyes turned to Sora. "you're a golem."

"Half golem." Sora looked away. She really did not want to talk about it.

"I'm listening." Ciel said getting Sora's attention.

"When I decided to become a Technomancer, I had to follow my family's tradition of golem summoning. Part of that was becoming a golem."

"How?" Azure lifted up Sora's hand looking at her wrist closely.

"With golem parts of course. My family magically implanted golem parts on all of my joints and connected them together. Since I am young, the parts have to be two sizes bigger so I could grow into them. Once my body grows beyond the size, that is when I get heated up and start burning. I grew a few inches so I am due for another retrofit."

"Okay," Ciel said. "so go home and get fixed."

"I can't." Sora coughed and felt Azure rubbing her back. "Not until I give them another report."

"Sora." Azure sat her friend on a nearby bench and heard her cough worsen.

"I'm okay. My chest is burning from the smoke I inhaled."

"I'm taking you to the infirmary and I'm going to get Mayweather. Ciel will go get your phone and turn on the beacon, right?"

Azure looked Ciel in the eyes, knowing her feelings toward Sora now. Ciel closed her and clenched her teeth. With a nod.

"I'll do it." Ciel walked away and Sora got to her feet and approached her.

"Thank you." Sora said

"I'm not doing this for you." Ciel said with a low voice. "I'm doing this for Azure. It's against my better judgment, but if Azure ends up hurt from this, I will make you pay."

Sora kept quiet and nodded, but before Ciel left, she got her attention.

"Listen, when you get the phone, go into the text and type

Operator Emergency, then press send. Wait for the red circle to blink three times, it will say Activated. I'll know when you turned it on, and you'll know where I am. Got it."

"Yeah... just... just don't waste time here. Get to the infirmary right now."

Ciel ran down the hill and Sora felt Azure guiding her back to the bench. Her vision blurred and she lurched over. She wiped the sweat off her forehead and heard Azure giggled.

"What's so funny?" Sora leaned back on the bench and saw Azure's amile.

"It makes sense. It all makes sense. You asking me for money when I need homework, the way you pet you golems like real animals, and... the day we first met."

Sora cracked a smile, and she winced from the pain as Azure continued.

"Part of me says I shouldn't be your friend anymore, but another part of me doesn't want to lose you. It's not fair because everything we did, the good and the bad, I can't erase or undo. This is beyond our arguments Sora, you really betrayed me."

Sora's eyes trembled. She could not say a single word. All she could was look at the ground. Her tears ready to fall. Then she felt Azure's hand on her shoulder and she turned to her. Azure's eyes were nothing she ever saw before. It was as though Azure was a completely different person. Her judge. Sora was ready.

"You're going to earn my trust back." Azure tightened her grip. "It's going to take a long time, but you will earn it back."

"Anything."

"I want to see the reports."

"Okay." Sora made her magic circle appear but Azure grabbed her hand and pulled it away from the circle.

"Later. I also want to see Technomancer and your mother." Azure leaned her face closer to Sora. "So I can punch her in the face for all of this and tell them how stupid they are for not coming to me."

Sora did not know how to react to that. Hearing Azure threatening her mother and wanting to scold Technomancer was

unheard of. She was not even sure if she could pull that off. Sora chuckled, but Azure did not share that sentiment. Sora saw the shackles glow bright and her friend's eyes turn red. Sora shook her head negatively but received a positive nod from Azure.

"Yes you are."

"I can't." Sora saw Azure's ears twitch and the sound metal slapping each other rang from behind the tree. Sora and Azure turned their heads and before them was person covered entirely in metal. The metal face was just red eyes and lips. It was like looking at a robot, but it had the feel of a knight's armor. On the shoulder was an emblem of an arrow piercing the crescent moon. Sora's eyes trembled.

TO BE CONTINUED...

