

Arcana Magi Memorial

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by H-M Brown

Sora opened her eyes and everything looked normal. No words scrolled before eyes or any meters showing how a program downloaded. She was on an inclined table. She recognized the area. It was the factory where she built Terros. She turned to her right and saw it right there with Aeros, Hydros and Flaros. Sora did not understand what was going on. She last remembered seeing her mother over her before she passed out, but she knew she opened her eyes a couple of times.

Sora felt her body and realized that most of the armor was gone. She found herself stripped down to only a lavender and pink form-fitting suit like a deep-sea diver. She lifted her arms and saw they covered in purple metallic gloves from hand to elbow. Only fabric covered her fingertips. Sora felt her legs inside a pair purple metal boots from foot to knees. She wiggled her toes and flexed her fingers. Sora gathered Mana around her hand and pressed them on body. She felt the fabric of her suit. She slid the fingers up and down pressing down for any pain. She touched her face, the coldness made her body shiver. Sora planted her hand on top of her, and all she felt was skin, no hair. She took a deep breath and never coughed.

Sora's thoughts jumped around from moment to moment of her experience. She tried to focus her mind, but the pain was too much. She climbed off the table, her feet made the sound of clanging metal. Sora stood before her golems, only Flaros reacted to her presence while plugged to a computer terminal. The sound of its whimpers never caught her attention. She just stood there wishing to undo everything.

Sora noticed a pair of purple armor on the table. They were a turtleneck vest and helmet. She stared at them for a moment and

remembered what they felt like on her. It was difficult to comprehend. Not being human and more machine. Next to the armor was a mirror. She saw her face drained of emotion. Sora picked it up and pulled down her eyelid. The iris of her eyes was silver, with lines like a circuit spread throughout. Strange lights slid along the lines as though they were cars moving throughout the city. She slammed the mirror on the table breaking. The pieces spread out and her reflection was in each one.

Sora clutched her arms. She leaned on the table with her hips and slid down to the floor. Her head faced down at her body, her eyes never moved, and her arms dropped onto the floor. She looked like a doll left on a chair. Sora had no will to cry. Everything was silent for a while until the sound of motor filled the room.

"So sad." An old man's voice said. "You have become a broken golem. Humans can become broken too, but unlike golems, humans can stand on their own to repair themselves."

The old man moved on an automatic wheelchair. He stopped just short of Sora. He waited for her to move, but all she did was shed one tear. He let a light breath, shaking his head side to side. He took his cane, pressing it onto the floor, and used it as leverage to stand up. It was a hard struggle and he groaned from the pain. His actions made Sora lift her head. She watched the old man overcome his disadvantage. He stood with both hands on the cane and waited. His eyes locked onto hers saying 'Get up'.

Sora slid her legs up to her chest and ready to wrap them with her arms. Staring at the old man, she instead pressed her hands on the floor and pushed herself up. Standing, she looked away from him gripping her right arm, but the sound of his footsteps drawing near made her want to walk away.

"Why am I here, grandfather?"

"We needed to use the equipment here to monitor your golem parts after the initial surgery."

"I see. I'm not human anymore. I'm a true golem."

"Actually, you're half golem now."

"Half?" Sora looked up to her grandfather and received a nod in

response.

"We were able to get you to the ER in time. Your heart stopped while you were in the armor. Thankfully, the doctors pulled you out. Then they were able to remove eighty percent of the parts implanted into you. However, your arms and legs are true golem, as you can see from the armor still attached. My team and I are preparing to modify the armor to our standards and free you from any directive implanted in your mind. As of now, that armor is a part of you and is part of your spell list. In a sense, you are like your own golems and changing into the armor is technically you summoning yourself as a golem."

"I don't understand." Sora placed her hand on her head sorting out what she heard.

"Let me put it simply, if I wanted to I can make you one of my own golems, imprison you inside my magic circle and summon you anytime I want against your will."

"I think I'm going to throw up." Sora lurched over the table and made her way to a nearby seat. She sat down pressing her hands on her head taking in deep breaths. "When will I get to go back to school?"

"There is no school. You've been unconscious for two weeks, and the dean found the self-destruct devices inside the golems. Lucky for you I was able to pull strings to get the golems and every part back from the authorities. Your mother is right now, still cleaning up your mess. Hooking up your golems to an unsecured public terminal and exposed them."

Sora looked up to her grandfather with eyes wide open in tears and she was ready to speak. But his expression told her to keep quiet.

"Oh yes, it is going to take some time to get you through surgery, modify Mechro's parts to our operating system, put you through rehab to adjust to this new armor. You young lady are going to be ready to miss Memorial Academy for a very long time. I went through a lot to get you in there against your mother's wishes. If you want me to get you back there, you owe it to yourself to get through

this ordeal and toughen up.”

Sora wiped her tears and felt the liquid through fabric. She curled her hand into a fist and nodded. She stood to her feet finding herself in her grandfather's arms. Sora felt his hands tightening and could hear his heartbeat flutter. She gripped onto his shirt and whimpered for a second. Sora pulled away, her tears wiped by her grandfather. She stepped back watching him walk past his wheelchair never sitting on it. He stopped and spoke without looking back.

“Oh yes, you're friend.” Grandfather turned around.

“Azure? Is... is she okay?”

“She's fine though she really let us hear it regarding your mission. But I understand now why you chose not to write more reports about her. It was really sad to learn what she sacrificed to save you and the entire school.”

“I would have lost all of my Mana if it wasn't for her.”

“And for that you are indebted to her. I assured her that you would be fine. She insisted on seeing you but you were in surgery.”

“Oh.”

“She left you a message though.”

“She did?” Sora received a nod as a response.

“She said, you looked awesome in the armor and she will be buying an outfit to match yours. She is such a strange girl.”

Sora watched her grandfather leave her sight. Thinking about Azure's message Sora cracked smile. A chuckle spilled out followed by a laugh. She stood before Terros and saw the silver gear. It was cleaned and polished. She looked back at her grandfather's wheelchair and wondered if he had been watching over her all this time. Holding the gear in hand it she knew what she wanted to do.

Sora made her magic circle appear and saw that the color was lavender instead of blue. The change startled her. After she got her composure back, she looked at two of the four summon gears. She knew one was a Flaros and the second was herself. But she only had two more spaces left and three golems. She stood before Terros and Hydros, picking up the connection join that combined all her golems

into Globos. With a nod, she turned to Flaros.

"It looks like I'll be upgrading you to my new armor Flaros. You and Aeros won't join to become Globos anymore." Sora placed her hand on Flaros and it nuzzled her fingertips with grumble. She picked up the armored vest and saw the back was opened. There was a circular indentation inside, shaped as though an item could be placed in there. Looking at the silver gear, she placed it inside. It started spinning like wheel. Her head lifted up and her eye flickered like a light. She felt power of the gear flowing throughout her body. It made her smile and she closed the latch.



Azure placed a glove from one of her outfits into a box and closed it. She carried it out of her room. Ciel approached her and helped her close the door. Azure stood before Ciel wearing regular clothing, tailor made for her chimera body. The sudden change surprised Ciel and together they smiled.

"You look different Azure."

"I feel different." She led Ciel down the hallway. "It's been a month since I wore the last outfit. It is time. So I am throwing out all of the costumes. I came to realize that I was just wearing them because I didn't want to believe I am chimera now."

"Oh?"

"If I wore regular clothes as a chimera than I would admit that I am not human. The costume made me feel comfortable, but now..." Azure smiled. "Patricia said that if I could get freed from these shackles, then she should be able to undo the misspell and return me to human form. Then I'll transform into a chimera instead rather than transform into a human."

"That's great." Ciel and Azure walked down the stairs.

"It's not. There's no guarantee it would work, so I'm ready for the worse. It's best that I accept that I am a chimera now and for the rest of my life than to get my hopes up."

Azure and Ciel stepped outside the dormitory and walked down the street drawing attention from the other students walking by. They heard a couple of girls whispering about Azure dressed in

regular clothes. She ignored their giggles. They reached a garbage dumpster behind the building veiled in shadow.

"Those shadow wings. I tried to sprout them but I haven't been successful."

"Are you sure you want to do that? There's no telling if you would lose control and turn into those creature again."

"I guess you're right." Azure threw the box into the dumpster and smiled. "It's not worth it. Say how about we go catch a movie in town?"

"Okay." Ciel said leading Azure away from the dumpster.

Azure stopped for a moment. She shifted her head back to the dumpster, staring at the shadow. She shook her head and hurried to Ciel.

A pair of red eyes popped up from the shadows and a pair of hands reached into the dumpster. It took out the box Azure threw inside, swallowing it into the shadows. The eyes slid around the corner, watching Azure laughing with Ciel, and closed them to disappear.



A car pulled up in front of the dormitory. The door opened and Sora stepped out with a suitcase. Looking at the entrance, she fixed her wig. Just as she took one-step, the window opened slightly. She looked back and nodded. Sora made her way up the steps when she heard a squeal.

"Sora!" Azure rushed her friend and tackled her to the ground. She hugged her tightly and nuzzled her chest. She felt Sora's hand rubbing her hair, looking up to her friend.

"Hey Azure." Sora said fixing her wig, catching Azure's attention.

"Your hair?"

"It'll grow back. So don't worry." Sora smiled and noticed Ciel's cold stare. Before she could say hi, Ciel walked away.

"Don't mind her Sora. She'll get over it."

"No Azure, I think she'll never be my friend ever, and I won't force her. Neither should you. Okay? Let it be between us."

"But..." Azure saw it in Sora's expression that she wanted to let Ciel be. Azure nodded in agreement. She leaned close to Sora's face.

"Azure this is weird." Sora said leaning away.

"Your eyes? Their silver."

"It's all part of the new me."

"Just like how my eyes changed to teal." Azure smiled.

"Say Azure?"

"Yes?"

"I would like to get to my room and settle down." Sora looked down getting Azure to realize she is lying on top of her.

"Oh, sorry."



"My room." Sora found the place cleaned up. It never looked like it was ransacked. She turned to Azure who smiled with a wave. "You did this?"

"Yeah. I figured it would give me something to do while you recovered."

"Thank you." Sora sat down on her bed and Azure sat on the chair across from her. "So, is everything okay with your parents?"

"If by okay you mean talking to them, it's not. At least they didn't throw me out. My mom still cooks for me, we're just... not talking. That's all. She did take me to get these new clothes tailored made for my body, but it wasn't fun."

"Oh. I hope everything will work out."

"It will. I just have to give it time."

"Well my mom agreed to end the mission with spying on you."

"Good. I knew they would see it my way."

"Yeah, about your way." Sora held her hand out. "How about returning my mother's teeth?"

Azure smiled scratching her hair and Sora rolled her eyes.

"So that Nathan guy, Sora? What happened to him?"

"He's still babbling about those wings you sprouted up. So my father has yet to get any info from him. My grandfather ordered all Technomancers to kill any Mechro agent the instant they see them. We're at war with them."

"I'm sorry Sora."

"Don't be. They deserve it, and I don't feel sorry for them." Sora made her magic circle appear and Azure leaned close looking at the lavender color. Sora watched Azure place her hand on the gear with her armor on it. "The armor is now a part of me and is added to my spell list. My golems were rebuilt to work with my armor Mechro gave me. I rebuilt Terros and Hyrdos combining them together to become a new Globos. Aeros was rebuilt into a hovercraft. Flaros was upgraded to match my armor and act as a ride. This silver gear my grandfather gave me when I built Terros was placed into my armor optimizing my abilities. However my body still has room to grow, so they made sure my parts would give me space to prevent over heating."

"That's good. I'm glad to hear that you were able to rebuild your golems."

Sora folded her fingers together. She looked at Azure. There was so much she wanted to ask. She did not know where to begin. She tried to speak as Azure approached her, but could not put the words together.

"What is it?" Azure said.

Sora placed her hands on Azure's forehead and rubbed them slowly. She pulled them away.

"How Azure? Living with that pain?"

"That's all I can do. Live with it." Azure held Sora's hands.

"I don't feel like myself. I can't focus."

"I know. It feels like we're not who we are. I look at myself in the mirror and I see a different person. And I am different person now. The only thing that keeps me from losing myself is look into the mirror and say 'I am Azure'. It's the only thing that keeps me from saying my name is something else."

"Really? You think you're not Azure?"

Azure nodded.

Sora stood up approached her mirror. She removed her wig exposing her head covered in stubbles. She looked deep into her reflection tossing the wig aside. Sora placed her hand on the mirror

as Azure stood behind her.

“I am Sora Narutaki.” She felt Azure's hand on her shoulder and she grabbed it tightening her grip on it.

“Do you want to come to the movies with me and Ciel?”

Sora looked at Azure through the reflection, at first she wanted to stay and be alone. She thought of crawling into the corner to cry her heart out. But she remembered her grandfather standing up before. She remembered his words. Thinking it through, she figured that maybe she could try to make up with Ciel and rebuild her trust with her friends. With a smile she agreed to go to the movies.

“Thank you Azure. Let's go.”

THE END.

