
Taking Shape

As Sloane followed Stefan into the Guildmaster's office, she was immediately taken aback by the stark contrast in decor. In contrast to the utilitarian and drab hall that hosted the Blades Guild outside the door, the room was spacious and brimming with an eclectic collection of artifacts and curiosities that immediately piqued Sloane's interest.

Her gaze naturally gravitated towards the shelves that adorned the walls, their surfaces adorned with an array of books and scrolls, interspersed with enigmatic objects whose purpose she could only guess at. Taking it all in, she could only smile as the room gave off a sense of organized chaos, each item seemingly placed with a purpose, yet creating a fascinating tableau of the Guildmaster's interests and pursuits.

The desk at the center of the room was a work of art in itself—large and imposing, it was adorned with intricate carvings that added a touch of elegance to its sturdy structure. The chairs surrounding it were plush and inviting, their upholstery boasting elaborate embroidery and gold trimmings that spoke of a refined taste.

Behind the desk sat Guildmaster Cross, a telv of commanding presence. His stern features were softened by the warm glow of the desk lamp, his piercing blue eyes observing her with a cool, measured gaze. Despite the initial stern impression, there was an air of approachability about him, a sense of quiet authority that commanded respect.

As her gaze swept the room, Sloane's attention was drawn to two other individuals present. One was a sun elf, his dark skin and short hair along with his neatly lined beard added an air of sophistication to his features, and his fine clothes marked him as a noble. His posture was relaxed yet dignified, his sharp fiery eyes observing her with a cool, detached interest.

Beside him stood a telv man, his attire less ostentatious but still of high quality. His demeanor was more reserved, his gaze focused on a sheaf of papers in his hand, which gave him a less imposing presence compared to the noble. But there was something about him, something that you only noticed in the subtle body language of the noble and the Guildmaster. It spoke of mutual respect and recognition, that he was seen as a peer.

That in itself spoke volumes to Sloane.

Stefan took the lead, stepping forward to greet the telv whose office it was. “Guildmaster Cross,” he began, extending a hand in greeting. “It’s good to see you again.” The Guildmaster’s stern features softened slightly as he returned the handshake, a nod of acknowledgment.

Turning to Sloane, Stefan introduced her. “This is Sloane, the Baroness of House Reinhart.” Sloane extended her hand, meeting the Guildmaster’s gaze with a polite smile. Cross’s handshake was firm, his cool gaze appraising as he welcomed her. “A pleasure to meet you, Baroness,” he said, his voice carrying a hint of curiosity.

The introductions continued, with the sun elf noble being introduced as Lord Ilian Estos of the Kingdom of Rosale, and the telv as Master Toren, a representative of the Banking Guild.

Guildmaster Cross leaned back in his chair, his expression turning grave as he addressed the attack on the third safe house. “The loss of one of our Blades is a heavy blow,” he said, his voice carrying a note of regret. “We’ve been stretched thin with both the war and the activities of the cultists, and I’m afraid we’ve run out of safe houses for you to stay in. If we continue to move you around, we risk exposing all of them.”

Shit. He’s kicking us out. This is okay, we’ll get an inn, we’ll just need to pay a bit extra. No big deal.

His gaze shifted to the two men standing across from his desk. “Which brings us to the reason why Lord Estos and Master Toren are here,” he continued, gesturing toward the sun elf and the telv respectively. “Please, all of you, have a seat.”

Lord Estos, the sun elf noble nodded in acknowledgment. As everyone took a seat, the man focused on Sloane. “In my desire to contract with the guild,” he said, his voice smooth and cultured. “The Guildmaster informed me that someone else wished to travel to Rosale and suggested we meet, Baroness. I must say, I’m looking forward to returning home myself. This year’s autumn is already particularly cold, and it’s just begun. I find myself longing for the warmer climes of my homeland. Being stuck in this city for nearly a year has been... vexing, to say the least.” His words carried a note of wistfulness, a longing for home that Sloane could understand all too well.

Sloane glanced at the telv representative of the banking guild, and he too realized it was his cue to speak.

“The Banking Guild values the relationship it has built with House Reinhart,” Master Toren stated with surety before taking a moment to glance down at his papers. “However, it appears that the situation within Swanbrook has become untenable.”

He paused, letting the weight of his words sink in before proceeding. “I have ensured that the Banking Guild is actively engaged in securing our assets within the city, a task that proves to be no small feat,” he explained, his tone laced with a hint of concern. “Originally, our plan was to have

the Guildmaster introduce the Runecard system here, and he received materials that we had hoped to collaborate with House Reinhart if time permitted. In fact, I arrived here just after your... trial to prepare things for the eventual shipment that would come.

“Unfortunately, given the current circumstances, I have not received any reports from Marketbol in two seasons since the shipment arrived. We cannot risk allowing these items to be destroyed by external forces should the city fall, or worse. Marketbol would, of course, send replacements, but I see a better use for those assets. Now, the Grandmaster believes expanding the system to be a boon for the region. Therefore, I have requested Lord Estos to transport the materials to Rosale.”

A warm smile graced Lord Estos’ lips as he smoothly turned toward Sloane and took over from there. “Being a terran, I am unsure if you are aware, but Rosale itself is a neutral nation,” he said, pausing to make sure his point was emphasized. “As such, we have been attempting to negotiate an end to this war. Unfortunately, that has not borne fruit. Further, there are no Rosale-flagged vessels within the port that the Vlaredians would allow through their blockade. In addition to the assistance I am providing the Banking Guild, I have other more sensitive matters that beg my hasty return to my House and my uncle, Viscount Estos.”

Sloane took a moment to glance around the room, her gaze meeting each person's in turn. The room fell silent, all eyes on her as they appeared to all be waiting for her to respond.

“What exactly are you expecting from me?” she asked, her voice resonating in the quiet room.

The two guests of the Guildmaster shared a glance before Lord Estos took the lead. “I have heard of your magical items. I myself have purchased one,” he said as he lifted a hand showing a ring. “Further, your Reinhart Center has been the talk of many curious people in the know. Rosale styles itself as a nation of progress. Of innovation.

He rotated the ring that Reanny likely made before continuing, “My House owns an estate here in the city. Unfortunately, the guards do me no good for returning home. In return for providing a safe haven for you until I can locate a ship to help... smuggle us out of the city, I wish for you to use your craft to ensure that we are capable of defending ourselves in case the blockade wishes to prevent our departure.”

Sloane’s eyes widened, he wanted to leave the city, and he was going to the same nation she needed to take Mariel. She glanced over at her guard and saw a grin growing on Stefan’s face as he turned to face her. She knew exactly what he was thinking because she was as well.

It will give me a place to finish the next golem, which would be beneficial in protecting the boat.

Sloane nodded, trying to temper her expectations. “Where within Rosale are you traveling? Our destination is within the capital.”

Lord Estos leaned back in his chair, his gaze steady on Sloane. “I am heading to Nornport. It's an important port city on the coast, and it's where my family's estate is located,” he explained. “As for the Reinhart Center, I propose that we establish another one in Nornport. The Banking Guild is willing to invest in it, and in return, we would like permission to fabricate your Runecards for use within Rosale.”

She glanced at Stefan, not having heard of that city. The rai the drew his hands together as he addressed the noble. “Lord Estos, we have... urgent business to attend to in Calling. Due to the sensitive nature of our journey, I am unsure how much time the Baroness would be able to spare.”

“That is understandable,” Lord Estos replied. “In fact, my House will supply assistance in getting you to the capital. Also, we are willing to provide House Reinhart with an estate in Nornport. It will serve as a safe haven for you, away from the war that currently plagues the region. A place to settle down once your business in Calling is complete.”

Man, this guy is persistent.

Sloane considered his words, her mind quickly weighing the pros and cons of the proposal. “I appreciate your offer, Lord Estos, and I am tentatively amenable to parts of it. Although, I must make it clear that Rosale is not my final destination. I am heading to the Kingdom of Avira. While I am potentially open to establishing a presence in Rosale, my ultimate goal lies elsewhere.” she began, her tone measured. “However, I would prefer to negotiate any agreements regarding Rosale when I am actually in Rosale. For now, our priority should be getting out of Swanbrook and past the blockade.”

The two men shared a glance before nodding in agreement. “That is a fair point, Baroness Reinhart,” the Banking Guild representative conceded. “We will focus on ensuring our safe departure from Swanbrook. Once we are in Rosale, we can discuss the details of our arrangement further.”

We? He's coming as well?

Before she could question if the man would be joining them, the sun elf squinted his eyes and raised a hand. “You mentioned the Kingdom of Avira?” Lord Estos clarified. “If that is where you are going, that means arriving in the port within the Duchy of Tiloral. While there is no active war going on, the nobility within the kingdom has what they call the Polite War, and it is becoming increasingly dangerous within the kingdom. It may be unsafe when you arrive.”

She shrugged. “I still need to go there.”

The man nodded, his face screwed up as if he was trying to think of something else. After a moment he appeared to give up as he continued, “There have been scattered reports from admittedly unreliable sources that their ‘game’ was currently a bit less than polite and that our merchants should be wary. It appears that various factions within the duchy are up in arms and open conflict is happening, with at least one instance of a pitched battle. Vague snippets from second or even third-hand sources mention that it all centers on the arrival and rise of a terran princess who, according to confusing accounts, has swept through the political scene like wildfire.”

Sloane’s heart clenched at the mention of a terran princess, her thoughts immediately going to her own daughter’s wellbeing and even the struggles Mariel was having to overcome. She could only imagine the trials and tribulations that the young woman must be going through since arriving after the Flash, especially as a princess with no parents around. The world of Eona was a far cry from Earth. The politics, from what the knights had told her, and the power struggles of the nobility could be a treacherous landscape to navigate. And Sloane had been lucky to only have to deal with the Guilds. She hoped that the princess was faring well, and that she had found allies to support her in her endeavors.

The room fell into a thoughtful silence, each person lost in their own thoughts. Sloane’s mind was a whirlwind of plans and possibilities, her thoughts already turning to the tasks that lay ahead.

Finally, the silence was broken by Guildmaster Cross. “Then if it’s settled,” he declared, his voice firm. “We will assist in relocating your belongings to the House Estos estate within the city in the morning. In the meantime, your party may rest here tonight. We will also provide any necessary support until you, Lord Estos, can secure your journey to Rosale.”

With a nod of agreement from everyone present, the meeting was adjourned, and Sloane’s thoughts returned to Gwyn as she left the office. I wonder what would have happened if she could have pretended to be a noble like me.

She could only continue on her journey, hoping against odds that she’d find her daughter. Something that was proving to take longer than she ever could have imagined.

I just have to keep the fire alive.



“And we’ll be safe here?” Mariel asked quietly as the carriage they rode in approached the gate to House Estos’s estate.

“Potentially,” Yemina replied, her eyes fixed out the window. “Although, I am unsure why this noble is so willing to paint a target on his back. Surely, he’s been informed about the attacks we’ve had to weather.”

“Money is a powerful motivation,” Sloane added sagely. “I won’t look a gift horse in the mouth. It gives us somewhere for me to work on the next golem, and I need to work on my magic. Having somewhere hopefully more secure will be beneficial.”

The paladin nodded, her attention still on their surroundings, while Nemura was focused out of the opposite window. Stefan slept quietly next to Mariel, the man trying to get a bit of sleep before taking over on watch.

Tiberius squawked and chirped as he hopped closer to Mariel, the golem moving closer to snuggle in an attempt to comfort the girl. The act forced a light laugh from Mariel as she wrapped an arm around the steel falcon and pulled him close.

“Thanks, Tib,” the priestess-in-training whispered.

The carriage continued its journey, trundling along the cobblestone path, the rhythmic clatter of the horses’ hooves echoing in the crisp morning air. Passing through the gate that hosted a heavy guard presence, the cityscape gave way to the grandeur of the House Estos estate, a sprawling compound that exuded an air of quiet elegance. The estate was nestled amidst lush greenery, its well-manicured gardens, and imposing architecture reflecting the opulence and prestige of the noble house. Approaching the main entrance, Sloane’s gaze landed on Lord Estos, the sun elf standing outside with his hands held behind his back as he patiently awaited their arrival.

When the carriage came to a halt, Nemura turned to Sloane, her expression serious. “Wait here for a moment,” she instructed, her tone leaving no room for argument. With a nod from Sloane, Nemura and Yemina stepped out of the carriage, the two armored women moving to greet the guards with Yemina acting as Sloane’s knight.

After a brief exchange, Nemura returned to the carriage, her expression unreadable. She gave a curt nod and pushed the door open a bit more. “You can come out now,” she said, her voice carrying a hint of relief.

Stefan was the first to follow, stepping out of the carriage with a measured grace. He moved to the side, making way for Sloane and Mariel. As Sloane prepared to step out, Tiberius, her mechanical falcon, hopped onto her arm, his metallic feathers glinting in the sunlight. With Tiberius perched securely on her arm, Sloane stepped out of the carriage, her gaze focused on the smiling sun elf in front of her.

“Welcome, Baroness!” Lord Ilian Estos greeted them, his voice brimming with genuine warmth.

Sloane smiled as she approached the man, extending her hand in greeting. “Thank you for your hospitality, Lord Estos,” she said, her voice steady and confident. “Your generosity in allowing us to stay on your estate is greatly appreciated.”

Yemina, who had been standing silently by her side, stepped forward. “I must warn you, Lord Estos,” she began, her tone serious. “The cultists we are dealing with are extremely dangerous. Your guards should be prepared at all times.”

Lord Estos nodded, taking her words seriously. “Of course, Ser Yemina. I invite you to work with my head guard to ensure the grounds are secure to your satisfaction.” He paused, glancing at the guards standing nearby. “I have also been informed that the Blades Guild has assigned two teams that will work under your guard, Stefan's direction.”

At this, Nemura shared a look with Sloane, an eyebrow raised. Sloane merely shrugged subtly in return. Her actual head guard would work with the paladin and Stefan to make sure things were done correctly.

With the formalities out of the way, Lord Estos led them to their own wing of the building. They were shown to three rooms, one for Sloane, one for Yemina and Mariel, and one for Nemura and Stefan to share. Each room was spacious and well-appointed, with a small bed set up for the teenager and two separate beds set up for the two guards. Sloane's also included two servants that would assist her while on the grounds, a kind gesture, but not one she was used to.

In addition to the bedrooms, and a bath, they were also shown to one last room that had been converted to host benches and tables and was already set up with all of Sloane's supplies. There were even additional tools and other items that weren't hers neatly arranged on a large workbench to which Lord Estos explained that he had thought these items would be beneficial for her to utilize.

Sloane couldn't help but feel a sense of gratitude as she surveyed the room. It was clear that Lord Estos had gone to great lengths to ensure that they would be comfortable and well-equipped during their stay. Despite the uncertainty of their situation, she felt a glimmer of hope. They had a safe place to stay, and she had the tools she needed to continue her work. For now, that was enough.



Nemura leaned against the wall of the room where she and the others had gathered after a meeting with the Blades and House Estos guards, her arms crossed over her chest as she listened to Yemina and Stefan discuss the cultists. The paladin was in the middle of a theory about how the cultists

kept finding them, no matter where they went or how discreet they were. It was a problem that had been plaguing them for a while now, and one that they had yet to find a solution for.

“The cultists always seem to be one step ahead of us,” Yemina was saying, her brow furrowed in thought. “It’s as if they know exactly where we’re going to be, even before we do. They killed Vicori Flynn, who hadn’t told anyone where he was going. And before that, they murdered Praetor Moren and his men. Good men, all of them, who were just doing their duty.”

Nemura frowned, her mind racing as she thought back to all the times they had been found. From the moment they had arrived in Swanbrook, they had been hounded by the cultists. Even before that, they had been attacked on the road with the knights, their every move seemingly anticipated. If Nemura didn’t know better, she would have suspected one of her own group, but Stefan was loyal, and Sloane would have never done anything to hinder her search for her daughter. And, of course, she could vouch for herself.

“I don’t think it’s a traitor within the Church,” Yemina continued as if she’d listened to Nemura’s thoughts. “I’m the last member of the Church in the city, and I know I haven’t betrayed us. It may have been someone with the temple in Marketbol, but that doesn’t account for all of the time here. I know everywhere you have been, Stefan, since we moved into the safe houses and it wasn’t you. Nemura you’ve been at Sloane’s side, unless you were with me. I just... I don’t understand.”

Nemura nodded, her gaze distant as she considered the paladin’s words. She thought back to the magic used by some of the cultists, none of it seeming stranger than what she’d seen already. She recalled the magic used by Gisele, the shields that she and the woman had run on through the sky, the Empire’s Fist, Ressa Ka’ai, who had been a constant thorn in their side in Marketbol with her illusion and conjuration magic.

Mana... the strange, otherworldly power that seemed to defy all conventional understanding, a magic that had turned a piece of metal shaped like a bird into an almost living thing.

“Could they be tracking us with magic?” Nemura suggested, her voice quiet. “Stefan, we’ve seen some crazy shit being with Sloane...”

Stefan frowned, his brow furrowing as he considered her words. “I’m not sure,” he admitted, his tone thoughtful. “But I agree. Magic is... well, it’s insane. I wouldn’t put it past them. Do you know if Sloane’s even considered that? Could she see it, if it happened? With her [Mana Sight] I mean?”

Nemura shrugged. “I don’t know,” she conceded, not having spoken to their liege about it. “Yemina, you are capable of using magic, correct?”

Yemina nodded, her expression serious. “Yes, but my own magic is more... simple, for lack of a better term. I have set my focus mainly on my martial prowess. But if they’re using magic to track us, that would explain a lot.”

Nemura thought back to Gisele, the knight was like Yemina in how she could use mana for both physical enhancements, like she and Stefan could, and actual magic with her shields. “There is a way to use mana for both,” she said, trying to keep her tone light instead of her usual way that made people think she was ordering them around. “Perhaps we could spar later? I could relate some of the uses that Stefan and I can do, and explain how a former member of our group was able to combine it with her magic.”

Yemina’s eyes lit up at the suggestion, a grin spreading across her face. “I’d like that,” she said, her tone eager. “I’m always up for learning something new.”

Nemura chuckled, her eyes twinkling with amusement. “I look forward to it,” Nemura said, her tone warm, making Stefan groan next to her.

That man still isn’t used to how much we train.

The paladins were known for their skill and intense training from a young age which turned into a lifelong devotion to their craft. The Empire’s Fist had modeled their training after the holy order, but it still fell short. Still, she was confident she could keep up with the woman, if only because of her attributes enhanced by mana.

That, and she was nearly a head taller.

“But for now, we need to figure out how to deal with these cultists,” Nemura added. “If they’re using magic to somehow track us, we need to find a way to counter it—or for Sloane to do so.”

Stefan nodded his agreement, but any further discussion was interrupted by a soft knock on the door. A servant, a tely woman with a neat bun of silver hair, entered the room. “Miss Nemura,” she began, her voice respectful. “Baroness Reinhart has requested your presence. She is about to conduct an experiment while working on her project and wishes for you to watch over her.”

Nemura raised an eyebrow, her interest piqued. “What kind of experiment?” she asked, her gaze shifting to the servant.

The woman hesitated for a moment before replying, “She mentioned something about a tea called Tè Luminoso.”

Stefan’s eyes widened. He turned to Nemura, a look of concern etched on his face. “I’m not sure this is a good idea, Nemura,” he said, his voice filled with worry. “You weren’t there for the previous time, but she did not react well to it.”

Nemura sighed, her gaze shifting between Stefan and the servant. "I'll watch out for her," she assured him, her tone firm. She pushed off of the wall, giving Stefan a reassuring nod before following the servant out of the room.

As Nemura entered the workroom, she found Sloane hard at work, the terran's attention focused on the various supplies laid out before her. It was clear that she was preparing for her next metal golem project. Sloane looked up as Nemura entered, a small smile playing on her lips. "Hey. I just need you to watch over me while I work," she said, her voice steady. "Make sure I don't hurt myself or something."

Nemura nodded, moving to stand at a safe distance from Sloane.

As she watched, Tiberius, Sloane's mechanical falcon, flew over and landed on her shoulder. "Wryyaatt!" he squawked, his head tilting in a clear display of concern for Sloane. Nemura reached up to gently stroke the falcon's metallic feathers, her gaze never leaving Sloane. She knew that this project was important to Sloane, and that the woman was under a lot of pressure, not really knowing how to contribute more to their safety, despite the fact that her magic had constantly been instrumental.

With a sense of resolve, Sloane moved toward a table where a pot of freshly brewed tea sat. The steam wafted up, carrying the soothing aroma of the blend across the room, making Nemura wrinkle her nose. The noblewoman picked up the delicate porcelain cup, pouring the warm liquid until it reached the brim. Turning to Nemura, she offered a small, determined smile. "Bottoms up!" she declared, raising the cup in a mock toast. She took a sip as if testing taste. After a moment, she shrugged nonchalantly. "Here goes nothing," she murmured, her gaze steady and resolute before draining the rest of the tea in one long gulp setting the cup down with a soft clink.

Sloane shook her head once in a jerky movement. "Woo! That was hot. Shit, oh that was a bad idea. Okay, let's do this."

Nemura chuckled lightly at the woman's antics but continued her silent observation. As Sloane began her work, Nemura watched her with a keen eye. She could see the concentration etched on Sloane's face, the way her hands moved with practiced precision as she manipulated the various tools and materials.

The woman paused, which made Nemura take half a step forward, but then Sloane turned her head and faced her. "Sit down or something, gosh."

Nemura just sighed and moved over to the closest chair, shifting it so she could observe the Enchantress work.

As she sat there, she noticed the woman fall into a focused state. There was a sense of calmness about Sloane, a quiet confidence that was both reassuring and inspiring. She was in her

element, whereas Nemura craved a challenging fight, her liege longed for those that stimulated her mind.

Nemura watched with a mixture of fascination and concern as Sloane continued to work. The effects of the tea were subtle at first, but as time passed, they became more pronounced. Sloane would shake her head occasionally, as if trying to clear it, and her body would sway slightly. But each time, she would straighten up, her focus sharpening, her movements becoming more precise and efficient.

Under Sloane's skilled hands, pieces of the golem began to take shape and set into specific spots for assembly. It was larger than Tiberius, the falcon golem, and its form was distinctly different. At one point, she stood up and walked over to the woman, who didn't even acknowledge her presence, and looked down at the drawings the woman had done of the metal creature, her eyes widening at the familiar sight. One that brought back memories of Thirdghyll's Fall.

Hours passed, the room filled with the soft glow of magic and the steady hum of Sloane's concentration. Nemura found herself growing increasingly worried about the duration of the process, but Sloane seemed undeterred. Her eyes glowed a vibrant blue, a clear indication of the mana she was drawing upon for her magic. At one point, her voice broke the silence, her tone flat and devoid of emotion. "I need a stamina and mana potion," she requested. Despite their limited stock, Nemura hurried to provide the requested items, her concern for Sloane outweighing her reservations.

As the night wore on, Stefan and Yemina came by to check on them. After Nemura assured them that she was fine, they left, leaving her alone with Sloane once more.

The golem had taken on a recognizable form, a large feline predator similar to the ones that had attacked the city where she had met the lady, the only difference between the golem and the... displacer beast as Sloane had called them was that it sported four instead of six legs.

Images of the monsters cutting through the Count's forces flitted through her mind, the screams of guardsmen and women dying as she protected Sloane and her people...

She shook her head, clearing her thoughts as she returned to watching the baroness etch runes into the metal surfaces. Blue mana pulsed and flowed over the woman's hands, her magic bending and shaping the materials to her will. The head, the first to be fully completed, was actually quite terrifying to behold, with six onyx eyes and a small blue core set just above its muzzle between its lower eyes. The canines were roughly eight centimeters in length and made from solid steel that had been etched with runes, that Nemura recognized as ones that strengthen and increase piercing ability.

With the head completed, Sloane turned her attention to the rest of the golem. Hands moving with a steady rhythm, her magic flowed seamlessly into the metal. The frame of the golem began to take on a more defined shape, its sleek lines and powerful build becoming more pronounced with each passing moment. The room was filled with the soft hum of magic and the steady clink of metal, as the tea-drugged woman used tools and magic to perform her craft.

As Sloane continued to work, Nemura found herself watching in silent awe. The transformation of the raw materials into a formidable golem was a sight to behold, a testament to Sloane's skill and mastery over her craft.

The hours wore on and Nemura could feel a wave of exhaustion start to hit her, her eyes felt heavy, and she had to fight to keep them open. Nemura glanced at Sloane's face, who was still engrossed in her work, seemingly oblivious to the passage of time, and saw how the woman seemed to be reaching her limit.

Nemura stifled a yawn as she moved a bit closer, ready to intervene.

Tenera's pale tits, I should have told Stefan to come and replace me at some point.

As she suspected, just as Sloane was putting the finishing touches on the segmented tail, her body began to sway dangerously. Not taking any chances, Nemura was at her side in an instant, catching her before she could fall, the woman's eyes already closed.

As Nemura turned to leave, she cast one last look at the golem, or at least the skeleton of one. The sight of the golem was awe-inspiring. Its formidable frame, stretching three and a half meters in length, exuded a predatory aura that was both fierce and intimidating.

With gentle hands, she guided Sloane to bed, ensuring she was comfortable before leaving her to rest. Before she even finished tucking the woman in, Sloane was gently snoring.

Tiberius settled himself onto the table next to his master, content to watch over her for the night. After blowing out the lamps, Nemura took a deep breath and shut the door gently behind her as she stepped out of the room—the image of the nearly complete golem and the two appendages that protruded from its shoulders etched into her memory like the glowing blue runes that adorned it.