



He winced, as the golem, created from the floorboards and foundation underneath his parents’ bedroom, carried him across the house. Each step of the wood-and-stone creature sent a quake through his body, reactivating the needles he felt in his useless legs.

“Be more careful,” he scolded his new servant.

It grumbled, but then replied, “**I serve.**”

Langer had created smaller golems of dirt when he practiced his new powers in the garden outside, and he had commanded them to take the bodies and bury them in graves. The flowerbeds and hedgerows had been upturned to make room for all the dead servants and his parents, and he had even said a few words when the last of them were laid to rest.

Part of him was disturbed with the ease by which he welcomed this new power into his life, as well as how easily he dealt with the loss of everyone he had ever known, but another part of him believed in the voice he had heard. He was deserving of this power gifted to him by the Seeker, after all, he was now the scion of his family. The future of the Tingleif house and legacy rested on his shoulders.

Behind the golem that carried him walked a shorter and spindlier facsimile of a human, which had been created when he touched his wheeled chair. The wheels had split in two and become part of its legs, while the back and armrest made up its upper arms, with the rest of the chair becoming its torso. It had no head, but then it also did not need one.

As Langer was carried to the front door, the chair-born golem carried his luggage in a large trunk, somehow hefting the weight of all his possessions with ease belying its rickety frame.

Outside, five golems of dirt and tufts of grass regarded him, matching his height when he stood upright.

“Set me down,” he told the one carrying him.

As he was carefully placed on the stone path to his estate, he regarded the seven golems.

“The five of you born from the earth will remain here and take care of the house and tend to the garden. Make sure the animals are well-fed and do not allow intruders to ransack the place.”

Then he turned to the largest one and said, “*You* will take me to Hesslik, and *you*,” he pointed to the one carrying the trunk, “will accompany us as well.”

As one, the seven golems spoke. “**We serve,**” they said with one voice.

Some hours later, when they were on the road to the large city, the golem carrying him running as fast as it could without making his ride too uncomfortable, Langer addressed them, “What do I call you? Do you even have names?”

“**We are Wothram.**”

“Who named you?”

The one carrying him looked down at where he sat in its embrace, its eyeless and featureless face seeming to lock eyes with him somehow. “**Our Creator named us.**”

“Is he the one who gave me *this* power?” Langer asked, holding his right hand up while admiring the strange scar on the back of it.

“**The Seeker,**” said the golem carrying the trunk.

“**The Keeper of the Tome,**” added the first.

“**The Traveller of Realms,**” replied the second one.

“He has a lot of names,” Langer said, stopping them from listing them all. “But why has he chosen me?”

“**To aid the Sovereign.**”

“How? Look at me!”

Both Golems stopped and looked at him, accepting his words as command.

“**We see you,**” they replied as one. It was unnerving that they spoke with the same voice and tone, but he pushed away the discomfort.

“*You* do not even possess a head, let alone eyes, how can you observe me??” he shot back at the trunk-carrying chair-born golem.

“**We do not need physical eyes to see, for our eyes reside in the immaterial part of our being.**”

“That makes no sense! And if your Creator is powerful enough to gift me this magic of creation, then why does he need me??”

“**A tool must be created with a function in mind, else it will be meaningless and without application,**” said the golem carrying him, as though quoting someone.

“So you are saying I am a ‘tool’?”

“**A Great One has many tools, finest amongst them are mortals.**”

“What’s a Great One?” he wondered, to which both of the golems looked towards the sky.

Their strange behaviour was aggravating and made his head hurt.

“Alright, enough of this! Take me to Hesslik, Charles will know what to do!”

“**We serve.**”

Langer was excited when the city came into view on the horizon. The day’s light was waning and he was surprised by the expedience of their journey. According to Charles, it took close to two days by carriage from his estate to the stone city, but it had only taken them half a day at most.

“Set me down,” he ordered and the first of his golems placed him on the grass on the side of the road. There was a large dead tree not so far away.

“There is no way I will be allowed to enter with the two of you accompanying me. We must do something about it.”

“**We serve,**” said Wothram, its voice emerging from the two golems at once.

“I only need one of you to answer me,” he said. “Do you have any plans for how I might enter the city? I have never been here before, but I recall that Charles said they require some manner of identification.”

“**We have been to the city of Hesslik,**” answered the largest of the golems.

“And?”

“**It was simple to enter.**”

“I do not believe you. Look at you! No one will allow something *like you* inside their walls!”

The trunk-carrying golem turned to face the larger stone-and-wood golem. “**We see. Perhaps you might sculpt us and make us human in appearance.**”

Langer grumbled, “Sculpt you? How? I am no artisan.”

“**You wield the power of the Seeker,**” it answered.

He lifted his hand up, turning it so the palm was facing him. “You mean to say that this hand does more than awaken golems what it touches?”

“**You may seed our sentience by your very touch, but you may also use it to sculpt to your desire.**”

Langer thought about this for a moment, then placed his hand on his own legs, willing them to function.

Nothing happened.

He gritted his teeth with a frown. Despite all the power it contained within it now, his hand could not affect his own body. If the Seeker was so mighty, then why did he remain a cripple?

“If I aid your Creator with this ‘Sovereign’, will he repair my body?”

“**It is not for us to say. We serve.**”

Letting out a frustrated sigh, Langer placed his hand on the large golem, invoking the Seeker’s name in his mind and demanding that he be gifted a functioning body.

As his sigil-scarred hand made contact with the construct, its body shifted and contorted, taking on the shape in his mind’s eye. He thought of a story that Charles had once read to him, where a gallant and faceless knight roamed the countryside, aiding all those in need.

Before Langer’s eyes, the golem of wood and stone had transformed into the very image of a knight. It was still a towering figure, taller than Charles and with much wider shoulders. But now the stone of its body was also sculpted into the shape of armour, resembling the pictures he had once seen, and the grill of its helmet showed only darkness behind it. Upon the knightly golem’s back was a longsword that was fused directly with its body, but helped sell the illusion.

“This will suffice,” he told it.

“**You possess the Seeker’s own imagination,**” it replied as a way of praise.

“We are still missing something,” he added, then turned and looked at the large dead tree nearby. “Take me *there*,” he said, not wanting to crawl through the grass. After all, it was beneath him to crawl upon the ground, when he now possessed such a mighty power.

His knight lifted him up and stopped before the tree, while the trunk-carrying golem followed close behind.

Langer placed his right hand on the crisp dry bark and imagined the thing he needed. Immediately the dead tree began creaking and shifting, as it took on the shape in his mind, sending the thousands of beetles and worms and ants fleeing from the husk.

At first he had assumed there was a limit to his power, but as he saw the finished transformation of the dead tree before him, he knew that the only limitation was his mind.

The tree had taken on the shape of a carriage, just like the one Charles always travelled in, and it even had two brown horses at the front, though anyone looking too closely would see that they were made of cracked dry wood.

Before allowing himself to be lifted into the vehicle, he placed a hand on the golem carrying the trunk, and its body fused with the object in its hands, as well as the clothes it contained, becoming a well-clad coachman with a patchwork suit and hat.

Langer nodded to himself.

At the gate to Hesslik, his carriage was halted by the guards of the city. They seemed to not notice the peculiar manner of the ‘horses’ that dragged the carriage, but instead addressed the coachman golem at the front.

“What purpose have you for travelling to Hesslik.”

“**We are pursuing an urgent matter,**” it replied.

“Urgent or not, we will require the identities of your passengers, as well as a toll for entering our fair city.”

“**We can force our way inside,**” said the knight that sat within the carriage opposite of Langer.

“That would be unwise,” he replied. Then he put his hand out the window in the door to get the attention of the guards.

One of them came over while the rest watched the front of the carriage and the coachman. A few of them held arbalests that were trained at the horses. It seemed they were not taking any chances.

As the guard came up to the door, he said, “Your name please.”

“I am Langer, scion of the Tingleif Family. I am visiting my mansion within the city and looking for a servant of mine by name of Charles.”

The attitude of the guard quickly changed and he blurted out, “My apologies Master Tingleif! We were unaware that this carriage belonged to your family!”

He quickly ran back to the other guards, waving them off and relaying his identity to them.

Langer nodded to himself. This was as it was meant to be, for was he not deserving of such respect and reverence?

“Let them through!” he heard someone shout and the sound of chains and metal emerged from the portcullis of the large gate. Moments later, the carriage started rolling through, the golem residing in the wooden vehicle-and-horse amalgam perfectly in sync with the coachman at the front.

He put his head out through the window in the door and took in the city as he rolled along the main thoroughfare.

Once he located Charles, he would figure out who the Sovereign was and how he might be able to aid him.