

When You're Having Fun

Another six weeks had passed by so quickly that Gwyn hadn't even noticed until the days grew longer and warmer, and spring finally settled in, fully transforming the landscape. The once frost-covered trees now flourished with vibrant green leaves, and the grounds of the Academy were adorned with a dazzling array of blossoming flowers. The air was filled with the sweet scent of nectar and the cheerful songs of birds returning from their winter retreats. Students and professors alike seemed to awaken from their winter slumber, their spirits lifted by the renewed energy that spring brought with it. Life buzzed all around, as the season of growth and renewal embraced the world in a symphony of color and warmth.

She stood before her easel in the art studio, her hands deftly guiding the brush across the canvas as she painted a scene from her home on Earth. The colors blended together harmoniously, capturing the warm hues of a yellow setting sun as it dipped below the horizon. With each stroke, Gwyn found herself lost in the memories of her old life, the familiar sights and sounds playing in her mind like a cherished song.

Adrienne, who was working on her own painting beside Gwyn, glanced over and admired her friend's work. "Gwyn, that's beautiful," she said, her voice filled with genuine admiration. "I've never seen anything like it. The colors are so vibrant, and the way you've captured the light is truly breathtaking. Was your sun really that color?"

"Thank you, and yes. Our sun wasn't red like it is here," Gwyn replied, her cheeks flushing with a hint of pink at the praise. "It's a scene from my home back on Earth. I guess I just miss it sometimes."

"It's very beautiful. The buildings are gorgeous," Adrienne said with a smile.

As they continued to paint, the sound of footsteps approached. Princess Elora strolled over, her eyes sweeping over the array of paintings before landing on Gwyn's. A brief, almost imperceptible sneer crossed her face before she composed herself.

"Well, well," Elora drawled, her tone dripping with feigned sweetness. "Aren't you the talented little artist, Miss Gwyn? Though, I must admit, the subject matter is rather... pedestrian."

Gwyn clenched her jaw, trying to maintain her composure. She knew Elora was just trying to get under her skin, as she often did, but she refused to let the other girl's barbed words affect her.

"It's just something that's close to my heart," Gwyn replied, doing her best to keep her voice steady. "Art is about expressing oneself, after all."

Elora gave Gwyn's painting another dismissive glance before moving on to Adrienne's work. "Yes, I suppose that's true," she conceded. "But then again, some of us have grander visions than others."

With that, Elora continued her leisurely stroll through the art studio, leaving Gwyn and Adrienne to exchange frustrated glances.

“Don't let her get to you,” Adrienne whispered, offering Gwyn a reassuring smile. “Your painting is truly amazing, and she's just jealous that she can't create something as beautiful.”

Gwyn took a deep breath, letting the tension in her shoulders ease. “You're right,” she agreed, her resolve strengthening. “I'm proud of this painting, and I won't let Elora's pettiness ruin that for me.”

With renewed determination, Gwyn picked up her brush. She continued to work on her painting, letting the colors and memories carry her away from the negativity that Elora had tried to sow.

Toward the end of class, Professor Pohl made her way around the class as she reviewed the work everyone had accomplished. As she passed by Gwyn, she hesitated. “Miss Reinhart, is this your home?” she asked quietly.

Gwyn nodded hesitantly, hopeful the woman wouldn't think her painting was too bad. “Yes, professor.”

The woman smiled and placed a hand on Gwyn's shoulder. “It's beautiful. In just a few short weeks you've improved drastically. I will ensure your ranking reflects that this week. Well done, dear,” Professor Pohl said.

Gwyn smiled and Adrienne gave her a hug as the professor walked away.

“Just in time too!” the orkun girl said excitedly.



As Gwyn neared her homeroom, Professor Valmaer stepped forward, a small smile on her lips. “Miss Reinhart, I must congratulate you. It is not often that two students leave my class back-to-back like this. I wish you success in Class Thirteen,” she said, her voice smooth and calm. Gwyn stood a little straighter, feeling pride swell in her chest.

“Thank you, Professor,” Gwyn replied with a smile. “I'm looking forward to continuing my studies and learning more.”

“I have no doubt that you will excel,” Valmaer said, her brown eyes scanning over Gwyn's features. “Keep pushing. It will be difficult as you get further along, but I'm sure you're up for the challenge.”

Gwyn nodded, feeling a sense of determination wash over her. She was ready to take on whatever challenges came her way. “I'll do my best, Professor,” she said. “Thank you for your encouragement.”

Valmaer nodded, her smile widening slightly. “Of course, Miss Reinhart. I wish you success in all your endeavors. Please do check in once in a while.” With that, she turned and walked away, leaving Gwyn feeling confused at what the woman had requested and yet confident and ready to take on the next step in her education.



Gwyn entered Class Thirteen, her eyes scanning the room as she looked around at her new class. Just as she expected, her rank had improved during the two weeks she had been assigned to a new homeroom class, and she was eager to find a seat next to Adrienne. The classroom was filled with wooden tables and chairs, neatly arranged in rows.

A high elf man, appearing to be middle-aged, stood at the front of the room. His silver hair was pulled back into a loose ponytail, and his eyes sparkled with intelligence and kindness. He smiled warmly as Gwyn approached.

“Ah, you must be Miss Reinhart,” he greeted, extending a hand. “I have heard so much about you. I hope to be a bit more engaging than Professor Valmaer so that we don’t have any happy accidents of the magical variety during instruction. It’s a pleasure to have you in my class.”

“Thank you, Professor,” Gwyn replied, shaking his hand and blushing at him already knowing about her magic. She glanced around the class. “I was wondering if there might be a seat next to Adrienne... I mean, Miss Clermont available?”

The professor glanced around the room, his eyes quickly settling on a table near the front. “Of course, Miss Reinhart,” he said, gesturing toward the table. “I understand exactly what pressures you must be under at school because of your status, regardless of how much we would like them to be checked at the door. Here, please make yourself comfortable.”

Gwyn thanked him and moved to claim her seat, setting her bag on the table and arranging her supplies. The high elf professor gave her a nod before stepping outside to wait for the rest of the class to arrive.

Soon, Adrienne entered the classroom, her eyes lighting up when she saw Gwyn. “Hey!” she called, hurrying to join her at the table. “I’m so glad you were able to make it! You’re going to love the Professor.”

Gwyn gasped playfully. “You doubted my amazingness?” she asked, smiling as Adrienne settled into the seat next to her. “Of course, I’d advance the next chance I got.”

As they chatted, the rest of the students filed into the classroom, filling the seats around them. Their professor re-entered the room, his robes swishing behind him as he

moved to stand in front of the class. His eyes swept over the gathered students, and he clapped his hands together.

“Welcome back, everyone. As I am sure you all are aware, since your eyes haven’t left the back of her head since you sat down, we have the pleasure of a new student in our class. Like Miss Clermont two weeks ago, we have Miss Reinhart moving up from Class Fourteen!” He turned to Gwyn and gave her a respectful dip of her head. “I welcome you to the class, my dear. While you should be able to ease a bit of that tension from your shoulders, you should not rest on your laurels. Continue to strive toward excellence and push for greater heights. I look forward to seeing what you may accomplish.”

Gwyn blushed, not used to a stranger praising her so openly with such genuineness. She nodded in response, her voice confident yet humble as she addressed the professor. “Thank you, Professor. I appreciate the warm welcome, and I promise to continue striving for improvement and success.”

The other students in the class, who had been watching Gwyn with curiosity and interest, began to whisper amongst themselves. Gwyn could tell that she would need to prove herself to her new classmates, but she was more than ready to face that challenge head-on.

As the class got underway, Gwyn found herself thoroughly enjoying the lessons and discussions that the professor led. His teaching style was engaging, and he had a knack for fostering lively debates and encouraging students to think critically.

A big difference from the environment Professor Valmaer created.



In the weeks since Gwyn had joined Class Thirteen, she and her friends had settled in a flurry of classes, training, and navigating the complex relationships and politics within the academy. They continued to make progress in their studies, pushing themselves to excel and improve. Gwyn had pulled ahead of Adrienne and was now ranked third in the class to Adrienne’s fourth.

Gwyn’s relationship with the royal twins remained tense, their constant bullying a dark cloud that hung over her time at the academy for both her and Roslyn. Her relationship with Calanis had deteriorated and arguments between the increasingly confident Lorrena and the girl had kept them up all hours of the night. Surprisingly, this had the side effect of pushing Daria and Gwyn closer together, with the girl desperately trying to remain neutral in all of the confrontations.

Despite this, Gwyn remained focused on her goals and determined to overcome the challenges that lay ahead.

One day, as Gwyn, Roslyn, and their paladins walked toward their Responsibilities and Duties of the High Noble class, they found themselves unexpectedly drawn into a situation that would test the delicate balance of power within the academy.

Gwyn and Roslyn walked side by side, heading to their class. Their two paladins, Amari and Khalan, followed closely behind, accompanied by two lower-ranking paladins that were newly assigned to them. Adrienne walked alongside Amari, engaged in quiet conversation.

Whenever the two best friends walked together, it was like a parting of the red sea for Gwyn. Or more accurately, all of the students quickly rushed out of the way of the two girls and their four red-armored paladins.

According to Amari, the twins had complained to their father, who had complained to the Headmaster. That allowed them to each bring an additional knight who was supposed to be lower ranking, but everyone knew the two new royal knights were anything but.

As they rounded a corner, they spotted Prince Aran locked in a heated argument with the same boy who had attempted to use his mind powers against Gwyn in the past. Mister Racine, as Gwyn had learned his name, now wore a large amulet around his neck, and Prince Aran was speaking to his knight, his voice tense and urgent.

“If that amulet lights up, he is to be executed immediately,” the prince commanded.

Mister Racine's face flushed with anger, and he glared at Prince Aran. “You're overstepping your bounds, Your Highness. The nobility will not take kindly to your actions.”

“I am merely ensuring the safety of everyone at this academy,” the prince said haughtily. “Your powers have proven to be a threat in the past, and I will not allow you to use them against anyone again.”

Has he used them against anyone else? Or is Aran just worried that his mind magic will be used on him?

Gwyn and her companions slowed their pace, watching the confrontation with a mix of curiosity and concern. Roslyn glanced at Gwyn, her brow furrowed. “Should we intervene?” she whispered.

Gwyn hesitated, her eyes locked on the scene unfolding before them. She knew firsthand how dangerous Mister Racine's powers could be, and she understood Prince Aran's desire to protect those around him, even if his assertion of the fact was more self-serving. However, she also knew that Prince Aran was not her ally, and openly challenging the nobility could have serious consequences.

She'd heard about Taenya's meeting with the noble and knew that she had to be careful. Luckily, her open friendship with Roslyn had helped deter many of the various factions within the Academy.

Khalan spoke quietly from behind. "No. The amulet was something that Amari demanded with coordination from the royal knights."

"I agree with Khalan," Gwyn finally replied, her voice low. "This is between Aran and Mister Racine. We should just keep our distance and let them handle it."

Roslyn nodded, her gaze still fixed on the argument. "You're right. Let's just hope it doesn't escalate any further."

Gwyn shrugged. "I am more apt to burn the mind magic boy where he stands if he tries anything on me again..."

Khalan chuckled. "I don't doubt that. Amari told me that she acted as quickly as she did to prevent just that..."

"What was that?" Amari said, breaking away from her conversation about magic and healing with Adrienne. "Oh, that boy. Yes. I suggest avoiding him like the plague."

Gwyn smirked. "No arguments there," she said before refocusing on the fight.

As they continued to watch, the argument between Prince Aran and Mister Racine seemed to reach a boiling point. The two young men stood face to face, their voices raised and their words cutting like daggers. The tension in the air was palpable, and Gwyn couldn't help but feel a sense of foreboding.

Just as it seemed like the situation might escalate into a physical altercation, one of the royal knights stepped forward, placing himself between his prince and Mister Racine. "Enough," he barked, his voice commanding and authoritative. "This is neither the time nor the place for such a confrontation. Step away from His Highness immediately."

Both the prince and Mister Racine hesitated, their anger momentarily tempered by the knight's intervention. After a tense moment, Prince Aran sneered at Racine before turning on his heel and stalking away. Racine glared after him before walking away in the opposite direction, his fists clenched at his sides.

As the confrontation dissipated, Gwyn and her friends exchanged uneasy glances. The undercurrent of animosity within the academy was difficult to ignore, and it seemed as though the balance of power was growing increasingly unstable. They knew they would need to remain vigilant and cautious in the days to come, especially since it seemed that they had become a de facto third faction, lest they find themselves caught in the crossfire of the brewing storm.

After the incident, Gwyn and her friends continued on their way to Professor Zal's class, their minds preoccupied with the recent confrontation. As they entered the

classroom, they found that Prince Aran had already taken his seat, his eyes fixed on Gwyn with a malevolent glare.

As they passed by the prince, he sneered at Gwyn, his voice dripping with disdain. “You may have some people fooled, Reinhart, but I know the truth. You don't deserve to be here, and one day, everyone will see it.”

Gwyn, feeling a surge of defiance, met his gaze unflinchingly and retorted with a snide smile. “Oh, I don't care about your so-called ‘truths’. I'm already aware that you're all bark and no bite. Couldn't win an argument against the boy outside class, and now you're looking to score some points against me? You really are pathetic.”

Her words seemed to catch Prince Aran off guard, and he bristled at her boldness. However, before he could respond, Gwyn and her friends moved away from him and took their seats, ready to focus on the lesson at hand.

She could feel his eyes on the back of her head, and the thought made her smile.

I really wonder what his plan is.



Sabina steeled herself as she looked around as she walked through the market. She had finally caught Amanda Levings alone and without the seemingly ever-present knight leading her around.

She slowly walked through the market, keeping her distance, pretending that she was looking at various stalls of goods brought by merchants from all over the kingdom. The whole time, she used her **[Detect Emotions]** to keep track of the woman. It was difficult because even without the knight present, there was still some sort of lingering spell that tried to protect the woman from any intrusions.

There was something about the terran and House Racine, and Sabina was determined to figure it out. She couldn't help but think that the boy had erred when he had used his magic against Gwyn, and not just the fact that she would happily kill them all if they harmed her princess.

Sabina's focus remained sharp as she trailed Amanda through the bustling market. She deftly navigated the crowd, ensuring she wasn't too close, but never losing sight of her quarry. She couldn't shake the feeling that there was more to Amanda's connection with House Racine than met the eye. It seemed unlikely that the incident with the boy was an isolated event.

Despite the magical protection surrounding Amanda, Sabina persevered, her determination unwavering. Her **[Detect Emotions]** spell allowed her to maintain an awareness of Amanda's emotional state, providing her with valuable insight. She noted

that Amanda's emotions seemed to fluctuate, hinting at some inner turmoil or perhaps a hidden agenda.

As the afternoon sun dipped lower in the sky, casting elongated shadows across the market, Sabina continued to observe Amanda, patiently waiting for any clue that might lead her to uncover some sort of truth about what was going on.

Every interaction, every whispered conversation, and every transaction that Amanda engaged in were carefully scrutinized by Sabina, then a distraction occurred that seemed to break through whatever careful conditioning the terran had undergone.

A vicious fight broke out between a customer and a vendor, and as the terran watched, it was like the wall that had surrounded her mind cracked.

Sabina took advantage of the distraction, quickly casting [**Hear Thoughts**] and delving into Amanda's mind, hoping to gain some insight. The sudden break in Amanda's mental defenses provided her with a small window of opportunity, and she was determined not to let it go to waste.

As she listened in, Sabina heard a jumble of thoughts and emotions, a cacophony of inner turmoil. She sifted through the noise, searching for anything relevant to House Racine or their intentions. Then, she caught a quick string of thoughts, almost as if she were conversing with herself, just as Amanda's mental defenses started to reassemble.

'It would be so easy.'

'No, I don't want that.'

'Just walk over there like we've been trained and stab them and disappear into the crowd. Just a drop of poison and a quick blade...'

'No! I want to go home. I hate this world. I hate it, I hate it.'

'Ugh, damn it all, Amanda. This is our home now. We've been trained, and you need to be ready. Things are in motion.'

'I don't want to do it anymore! I DON'T!'

'Get ahold of yourself. We are no longer that weak bitch that had coffee every day. This isn't eight-four anymore.'

A mental whimper dissipated as the two personalities fought before the dominant one settled in and the mental defenses reasserted themselves.

Sabina reeled back from Amanda's mind as the mental defenses snapped back into place, cutting off her access. She was left with a lingering feeling of unease after witnessing the inner turmoil and struggle between the two sides of Amanda's psyche. It was clear that whatever Amanda had gone through had left her fractured and at odds with herself.

Sabina found herself torn between sympathy for the terran woman and the urgency to protect Gwyn and her House from any potential danger. It was apparent that

Amanda was a tool for House Racine, trained and conditioned to serve their interests. The mention of poison and a blade raised alarm bells in Sabina's mind, making her even more determined to uncover House Racine's plans.

While Amanda moved away from the scene of the fight, Sabina continued to tail her, now even more intrigued and cautious. She needed to know more about this mysterious plan that had Amanda so conflicted and whether it posed a threat to Gwyn and her House. With renewed focus and determination, Sabina followed Amanda's every move, hoping to find the answers she sought and perhaps a way to save Amanda from the darkness that seemed to have consumed her.

It wasn't until much later that Sabina had to end her spying. The terran had returned to the House Racine mansion and disappeared through the gate and behind its walls.

Disappointed but undeterred, Sabina retreated to a safe distance, her mind racing with the information she had gathered. She knew she couldn't confront Amanda or House Racine without solid evidence or a plan, but she also couldn't ignore the potential threat they posed to Gwyn and her House.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, casting the city in twilight hues, Sabina resolved to continue her investigation. She would need to be more discreet in her actions, but she couldn't let this matter rest. She decided to involve the paladins in her quest for the truth. They trusted her, and Amari already knew a bit about what was going on. The paladins would be better positioned to do something about the situation than House Reinhart.

As she made her way back, Sabina's thoughts kept returning to Amanda's fractured psyche, wondering if there was a way to help the terran woman. Perhaps, if they could expose House Racine's machinations—whatever they were—and bring them to light, there would be a chance to save Amanda from the darkness that had ensnared her.

With determination burning in her eyes, Sabina swore to herself that she would do everything in her power to uncover the truth, protect her princess, and, if possible, save Amanda from the clutches of House Racine. Involving the paladins was the first step in her plan, and she knew that their combined efforts would be instrumental in exposing the nefarious schemes brewing beneath the surface.



Gwyn fidgeted, her heart racing in anticipation, as the carriage rolled to a stop in front of the Umbral Monastery. She nervously clasped her hands in her lap, taking in the imposing architecture of the ancient building that reminded her of the old cathedrals throughout Europe. Taenya patted her leg, giving her a small nod as they came to a complete stop.

Outside, standing at attention, were a large group of paladins and other, hooded figures who wore armor that was as dark as night. The two groups alternated in their formation, creating a checkerboard of glimmering red and black.

Sabina offered her a reassuring smile as she reached for the door. “Don’t worry, We’re with you.”

Gwyn gave her a small smile and nodded. She wanted to use her **[Frozen Heart]** spell to calm her nerves but knew it wasn’t wise.

Sabina stepped out of the carriage first and adjusted her armor, standing tall and proud as she waited for the princess to emerge. Gwyn felt a sense of comfort in Sabina’s unwavering devotion, knowing she would face any challenge that came their way.

As she exited the carriage, Gwyn’s eyes fell on Amari and the young paladin that stood with her. The young paladin, a Vicori named Rollo, stood confidently by Amari’s side. His dark brown skin was a rich contrast to the scarlet armor that adorned his athletic frame, reflecting the sunlight in a dazzling display. His short hair, expertly groomed, framed his angular face, and his eyes—a striking amber color—seemed to hold a fire within them, a feeling she knew all too well. The Vicori carried himself with a sense of duty and honor that belied his youth, and it was clear that he had been well-trained under Amari’s watchful eye these past few weeks and his order beforehand. As he met Gwyn’s gaze, he offered a respectful nod, his expression a mix of awe and determination.

It was a look she still hadn’t gotten used to.

Taenya stepped out right behind her and moved to stand to her right, while at the same time, Sabina moved to her left.

It was appropriate, and it seemed they had coordinated the movement precisely.

A black-hooded man stepped forward and bowed his head to her. “Welcome, Honored One, to the Umbral Monastery. We have heard much about you, and we are proud to assist you in viewing the Excerpt of your Path. Please, right this way,” the man, a moon elf if she saw correctly, said before gesturing toward the front door. Two monks fell into step behind Gwyn’s small entourage, following Amari and Rollo closely.

As the group walked closer to the Umbral Monastery, Gwyn couldn’t help but reminisce about that weekend she had spent with her mom near the *Duomo di Milano*. They had taken the train into the city early on a Saturday morning, leaving behind their quiet home in a nearby *comune* for the bustling streets and vibrant energy that Milano offered. Gwyn recalled her excitement as they explored the cobblestone alleys and indulged in the rich flavors of gelato from a quaint little shop they had stumbled upon, where she had tricked her mom and attacked her nose with the whipped cream. The weekend had been filled with laughter and warmth, creating memories that Gwyn would cherish forever.

The imposing cathedral had been the highlight of their weekend. Gwyn remembered her awe as she gazed upon the intricate Gothic architecture, the spires reaching for the heavens, and the captivating artwork within. She and her mom had spent so long wandering through the sacred space, marveling at the craftsmanship and history that surrounded them. The atmosphere inside the cathedral had been both serene and awe-inspiring, filling Gwyn with a sense of wonder. As she approached the Umbral Monastery, she couldn't help but feel a similar sensation, even though the circumstances were vastly different. The memory of her weekend in Milano, so close to her heart, brought a small, nostalgic smile to her face as she steeled herself to go inside.

I miss you, mom. I can't wait until you can see what all I've accomplished. I hope you're proud of me.

'You alright? You're leaking,' Sabina sent.

Gwyn snorted. **'You really need to come up with a new way to say that. 'Leaking' doesn't sound right.'**

A mental equivalent of an eye roll was the knight's response.

'But yes, I'm fine. This place reminds me of somewhere close to my home,' Gwyn replied mentally.

Taenya gave her a concerned look, but then her eyes darted to Sabina, indicating her mind-mage knight was reassuring Taenya.

The doors to the Monastery creaked open, revealing a dimly lit interior that was both breathtaking and slightly intimidating. The halls were marked by pointed arches, flying buttresses, and chaos, which seemed to be a manifestation of the Monastic Order of the Umbra's dark and gothic nature. The tall windows, adorned with elaborate tracery and stained glass, cast a muted, ethereal light upon the monastery's stone floors.

The silent, black-cloaked guards continued to watch her intently, their masked faces betraying no emotion, but their gazes unsettling nonetheless.

As they walked down the nave, Gwyn couldn't help but marvel at the rib vaulting overhead, the craftsmanship and attention to detail evident in every curve and angle. It reminded her so much of home, but it was thoughts of Roslyn that settled foremost into her mind. *I bet she would love this, she loves architecture.*

She smiled as she thought about her best friend. *She'd be talking my ear off right now.*

Gwyn would make sure to tell her friend all about this little outing. Despite the heavy atmosphere, Gwyn couldn't help but feel a sense of awe as they were led by the monk through the monastery. The two monks accompanying them split off to stand on either side of a door that appeared between two pillars, opening up a new space for them to enter. The monk nodded to Sabina, gesturing for everyone to step inside.

She stepped into a small chapel that was sparsely furnished, its centerpiece being a pedestal with a large, glowing yellow orb—a core—resting upon it. Two monks stood at the sides of the room, while another waited patiently for their arrival.

The monk in the center bowed respectfully as they entered. “Princess Gwyn, Evocati Amari, and Knights of House Reinhart, welcome. We are prepared for the Ceremony of Paths. Would you like me to explain the process to you, Your Highness?”

Gwyn exchanged glances with Amari before her gaze passed between Taenya and Sabina—pausing on each. Her nerves tingled with a mix of anxiety and anticipation. She took a deep breath, her heart pounding in her chest.

“Please, I think I have an idea of what you’re about to show me. This is similar to my Vision of Potential, yes?” she said, her voice steady despite the uncertainty she felt.

The monk smiled gently. “I was informed briefly about what that was. Perhaps after you can explain the differences and we can go over everything? An exchange of information between us.”

Gwyn smiled. “I would like that, thank you.”

“Please step up to the pedestal, and I will guide you through the process,” he said.

Gwyn approached the pedestal, her eyes drawn to the large core that seemed to pulse as soon as she neared.

As she stood before the pedestal, the monk began to explain the ceremony, detailing the steps she would need to follow, what information they would gain, and the significance of the ritual to the Church. Gwyn listened intently, committing every word to memory, determined to give the ceremony the respect it was due. Clearly, the Church had placed a lot of weight upon the sanctity and private nature of it. She could at least respect *that* sentiment. If it was the only way most people ever saw their status, then it would become something important. If the Church maintained the privacy of each person’s status, it would become something necessary and sacred.

“Before we begin, we’d like to ask everyone not of the Seers to step out,” he said while looking at the paladins and Sabina.

Gwyn shook her head. “No, I wish for them to remain. This will likely not give much information other than what I already know,” she explained before turning her focus to Amari. “Did you tell Taenya and Sabina?”

The Evocati tilted her head. “About your *notifications*? No, it is not my place.”

Taenya’s eyes darted between the two before they settled on Gwyn, narrowing. “Gwyn... Your Highness, did you forget to tell us something?” she asked sweetly, but Gwyn knew that there was an underlying tone of slight disappointment that meant she would get a *Talk* later when they weren’t in public.

She winced.

“Maybe?” she said hesitantly.

The knights shared a look, and Sabina was *definitely* calming Taenya down mentally. A heartbeat later, Taenya sighed. “Let’s get through this. I have been interested in seeing what your level...” she glanced at the monks. “Your *steps* were.”

Gwyn smiled. “Thanks, Taenya.” She narrowed her eyes at Amari. “No spoilers.”

The woman arched a brow. “I will do no such thing. They deserve to be just as surprised as I was.”

‘This occurred at school?’ Sabina asked.

‘Yeah... Sorry. Tell Taenya sorry for me. Love you, guys! I just...’ She sighed mentally. ***‘I have so much going on that I get forgetful. Even with important things it seems.’***

‘I’ll tell her,’ she sent, but then a mischievous smirk settled on her face. ***‘Want to tell me what it is, first?’***

Gwyn huffed a laugh as she felt the tension in her body melt away. ***‘Taenya would kill us both! Heck no. I’m Switzerland.’***

The mind mage sent her a mental image of her rolling her eyes.

Gwyn turned back toward the monk. “I’m ready. Let’s do this.”

The monk began the ceremony as he channeled mana into himself and shoved it into the core. She felt the mana surge from the core through her hands and then spread everywhere, pulsing lightly. The man's irises were ringed in yellow as he focused on the core. Gwyn gasped as she felt the mana pervade her core and channels.

She delved inward, **[Focusing]** with her **[Mana Sense]** to get a feel for what it was doing.

The spell *connected* with her core and seemed to... *what’s the word that mom would say? Oh...* It *queried* her core, asking it for data that was a *part* of her. There was a slight resistance, one that felt as if it wouldn’t be there if she wasn’t aware of it. With a mental nudge, she allowed it to continue.

She watched as the spell connected back with the man and he spoke, but it wasn’t him speaking. It was the same voice that spoke to her in her notifications. *Mana* was speaking through the monk.

It was a bit scary to think about. But then he started to read out her status, and it was what she expected, but oh so different than the one in Vision-her’s **[Spell Tome]** she saw in the Vision of Potential.

Gwyneth Reinhart*“The First Mage”***Terran****Path:** Elementalist (Mage)**Steps:** 55**Core Quality:** Renowned**Affinity:** Evocation, Alteration, Abjuration, (Unknown)**Attunement:** Red, Blue, Black, Yellow**Alignment:** Magical**Capability:** (Unknown)**Control:** (Unknown)**Constitution:** (Unknown)**Traits:** Focus, Draco-pyromancy, Mana Sense, Cryomancy, Telekinesis, Self Awareness, Mana Adept**Passive Spells:** Mana Sight, Frozen Heart, Aura of Winter, Flame Shield**Active Spells:** Fireball, Blast Wave, Pillar of Flame, Ice Wall, Wave of Frost, Inferno Wave, Blink

It was all pretty standard, the lack of numbers after her attributes was something she wasn't prepared for, but that wasn't a big deal to her. However, it was the title that made her the most nervous. 'The First Mage' felt like it would have a lot more political and social repercussions that she would get a headache from in the near future than 'Archmage of Discovery'.

She glanced around the room, seeing the telltale signs of surprise on her adopted aunts—which made her happy. What she didn't like, was the look of almost reverential awe of everyone else except Amari as they stared at her.

Gwyn felt the headache already starting to form.