
In Another World with Household Spells
1
Author Rika
Illustrator HIROKAZU


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Patience Granger
Main Character
Age: 10 Height: 140cm
The eldest child of Viscount Granger.
A smart girl who cares deeply for her younger brothers and is currently using her household magic to lead a full life at the Royal Academy!
Henry Granger
Patience's Younger Brother
Age: 6 Height: 123cm
A young boy who is full of energy and loves his big sister Patience!
Nassius Granger
Patience's Younger Brother
Age: 8 Height: 132cm
A boy who loves to read and admires Patience.



Keith Lawrence

Second Prince of the Kingdom of Lawrence
Age: 10 **Height:** 154cm
A first-year at the Royal Academy and classmate of Patience's who has joined the knight club. While he doesn't like his classical literature class very much, he might just feel the opposite way about Patience!

Margaret Lawrence

First Princess of the Kingdom of Lawrence
Age: 12 **Height:** 158cm
A third-year at the Royal Academy who is in the music club and eventually takes Patience as her lady's maid. She struggles with math and sewing.

Table of Contents

1. Cover
2. Color Illustrations
3. Jnovels
4. Chapter 1: You Mustn’t Become Content with Honorable Poverty
5. Chapter 2: Proficiency Evaluation at the Church
6. Chapter 3: I’m Moving into the Dorms at the Royal Academy!
7. Chapter 4: The Lady’s Maid to Princess Margaret
8. Chapter 5: Off to the Palace to Meet Her Majesty
9. Chapter 6: Spring Is Here!
10. Chapter 7: A Small Recital
11. Chapter 8: Final Exams
12. Extra Story: Princess Margaret’s First Impressions of Her New Lady’s Maid
13. Bonus Story: A Day Off with the Angels
14. About J-Novel Club
15. Copyright



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Part 1: The Primary School Division of the Royal Academy

Chapter 1: You Mustn't Become Content with Honorable Poverty

The north winds rattled the windows and filled the room with frigid air.

"S-So c-cold..." I woke up in the middle of the night, shivering. "If I sleep the way P-Patience thinks proper, I'm g-going to freeze."

Until a few days ago, I'd been an office worker in Japan. For some reason, I'd awoken to find that I had become Patience Granger. Patience appeared to be some sort of noble, but she was quite poor—as poor as a church mouse, I should say—to the point that she might face some life-threatening consequences if her circumstances didn't improve soon.

The first time I woke up as Patience, I was so emaciated that I immediately thought about crying out, "I'm going to die! Help me!" I wanted to call an ambulance, but upon scanning my surroundings, I found that not only was this not my room, but there was no phone in sight.

"Are you awake, Lady Patience?" a redheaded maid asked excitedly. For some reason, I knew that the maid's name was Mary, and that I was Patience Granger.

"I feel really tired," I admitted. "Can you call for the doctor?"

Mary seemed troubled by my request, and I could hear the Patience within me protest: *She can't call a doctor for my sake! That's absurd!*

"The doctor was here yesterday, and your fever seems to have

gone down, so...” Mary explained. She then gave me some water using a feeding cup, and I felt a bit relieved.

Through Patience’s memories, I learned that a visit from the doctor was an incredible luxury only possible if I was suffering from a life-threatening illness. In other words, yesterday I, Patience, had been on the verge of death. It was unclear if I had just now possessed this body or if I had reincarnated into this world and been part of Patience her whole life, but either way, I was now Patience Granger.

Am I dead? It seems like Patience died, but then what about these memories? That was indeed the problem at hand.

I was Kaoru Aoyama, a twenty-five-year-old single college graduate with an office job. I had no issues with my health and led a normal life. I had no memory of getting run over by a truck like many protagonists reincarnated into other worlds did, nor did I wake up in a bright white room where a goddess gifted me with overpowered skills.

I’d come home from work, eaten a simple meal, taken a bath, and spent some time surfing the web before going to bed...so how did I end up here? I figured something fatal must have happened, like a fire or an earthquake in the middle of the night.

The strangest thing about this whole situation was that I could clearly recall not only “my” memories, but Patience’s as well. Thanks to her memories, I could speak and understand the language of this world. Though I was grateful for that, it was troublesome how Patience’s common sense kept influencing my actions.

Patience was an incredibly proud and self-sacrificing noble. Her mother had been similarly self-sacrificing before dying from pneumonia. The other members of the Granger family were Patience’s father Lord William, who was a viscount; the eight-year-old heir, Nassius; and the six-year-old Henry. According to Patience’s memories, her younger brothers were absolute angels, and Patience would give them the thin slivers of meat from her already sparse meals. Because of that, she had been incredibly thin and weak. In the cold of winter she had come down with pneumonia, which had eventually killed her. At least, that was my theory.

While I appreciated the clear memories, being forced to act with proper manners was a drawback. A noble lady sleeps in a classy manner by placing her hands atop her covers and clasping her hands together...or so Patience believed. I exasperatedly suspected she had died precisely because she had been following her late mother's teachings and sleeping with such thin covers in a room with no heating, but my new body still reflexively followed Patience's routine when I slept. Going to bed properly posed, like Sleeping Beauty in the tales from my childhood, should only have been done in a room with proper heating.

"It's so cold! Maybe mother passed from pneumonia because she was sleeping like this? Once it's morning, I must find out if these flimsy covers are all we have." Until then, I would have to disobey the teachings of Patience's mother and sleep buried under the covers, curled up like a cat. "It's a little warmer... I wonder if those little angels are all right," I mused aloud, thinking of my younger brothers.

I confess I was a bit of a shotacon—by which I mean I had a soft spot for younger boys. I wish I had deleted the shotacon manga I'd left on my computer back in Japan, but it was too late for that. From Patience's memories, I knew that my two younger brothers slept together in the same room, so they were hopefully a little warmer.

Regardless, I needed to sleep as much as I could to recover, paired with eating something with a little more sustenance than the "porridge" I'd been having, which was mostly just hot water. Otherwise, though it was still uncertain whether I was just possessing this body or had reincarnated as Patience, I was going to die. Also, I needed to do something about the Granger family's living conditions, for the sake of my poor brothers. Patience, who loved her brothers, and I, the shotacon, agreed about that.

The faint light of the winter sun shone through the old, thin curtains onto my face. It seemed that Patience's habits had won, because I woke up with my head out of the covers and my hands out, clasped together gracefully.

"I'm cold..." I groaned. I wanted to dive back under the covers,

but my stomach was growling. “I won’t be able to do anything if I don’t eat.”

What I’d thought about saying was “I’m starving,” but when I tried to voice it, the words came out converted into Patience’s style of speech. Even “mom” turned into “mother.” I wasn’t sure if this was convenient or annoying.

Judging from my memories, the redheaded Mary seemed to be the only maid here. There were three other members of the staff: Eva, the cook; George, the servant; and Wyatt, the butler who managed everything.

“Is this what being a noble is like?” I’d expected nobles would have a plethora of maids, but it seemed the Granger family’s issues meant we had a staffing shortage.

This impoverished life was all that Patience knew, even though her father, Viscount Granger, was a noble, albeit a landless one. He should have been working in the royal palace and receiving a stipend, but he had been dismissed from his position. This seemed incredibly important, but Patience’s memories didn’t offer much information on the matter. Apparently the little lady wasn’t really interested in topics like the family finances. However, I could see in her memories that the number of maids began decreasing several years ago, even before her mother had died.

“In other words, he has no income! This all seems to have started four years ago.”

Patience’s youngest brother, Henry, was six years old. Patience’s mother had passed away two years ago, when her son was four years old, the height of cuteness. Also, Nassius had been six at the time, and Patience eight.

“Well, I guess maybe it’s to be expected that a ten-year-old wouldn’t know much about her father losing his job several years ago.” Yes, I was ten years old! In becoming Patience, I had gone from being an adult to being a child. Well, at least it was better than suddenly turning into an old lady.

It was clear that the maid wasn’t going to come and dress me, so I got out of bed.

“So this is what I wash my face with.” On the wash stand was a

pitcher and a ceramic wash basin, the latter of which had the faint remnants of what had likely been a cute flower pattern. "My toothbrush...isn't this bit of coarse fabric, is it?" Indeed, Patience just used this coarse fabric to scrub her teeth. I longingly recalled the proper toothbrushes of my past life. This needed to change immediately!

I washed my face with the basin water that had now become lukewarm, then looked through my wardrobe and found two pieces of clothing. The dress with lace was probably for warmer seasons, so I chose the other—a light blue dress with long sleeves.

"This may not be made for cold weather..."

Though the dress had long sleeves, it was incredibly thin. Even Mary's clothing looked warmer; of course, hers had seemed to be made of cotton while Patience's dress was silk. *Is this an attempt at trying to keep up appearances as a noble? I guess it could also have been a gift. I think we have relatives.*

"Let's see... For undergarments, we have drawers and a chemise. These socks are made out of cotton." I used garters to hold up my socks and put on the paper-thin silk dress. "I'm so cold!"

I looked around for something to drape over my shoulders, but all I could find in the wardrobe was a coat.

"Can I not wear this coat?" I reached for the coat, but reflexively pulled away when Patience's memories responded: *No!*

"Well, there should be a fireplace in the dining room." I wasn't going to get full just standing around in a cold room.

I wanted to hurry to the dining room, but Patience got in my way. *You must make the bed! You must also fold your pajamas and put them away in the wardrobe*, she demanded. I wanted to complain about how that should be the maid's job, but Mary was the only maid we had. She was probably busy caring for the little angels. Since Patience was a poor noble, she was used to making her bed. On top of that, all she had were thin covers, so it was an easy task.

I'd finally gotten permission from her—or myself?—to leave, so I quickly headed to the dining room. Thanks to Patience's memories, I was able to find my way around. Despite being poor, our family still had a large mansion, and I went down the stairs, which were gently

curved into a spiral, toward the dining room.

"Good morning," I greeted my father, William. He was reading a newspaper at the dining table. The fireplace flickered with a small flame, making the dining room warmer than my bedroom.

"Good morning, Patience. Are you feeling better?" William had brown hair with some gray mixed in, and light gray eyes. As he looked up from the newspaper, I saw worry in his eyes.

"Yes, father. I'm sorry to have worried you." Though I felt fondness toward this classy man, I didn't have any hopes for him when it came to life skills. He was skinny, although not as skinny as Patience, and the sleeves of his sweater seemed quite tattered. I found that I wanted to get him something warmer to wear, though I wasn't sure if those feelings were Patience's or my own.

"Good morning, father, sister." My brothers arrived at the dining room, led by Mary. *Aaahhh, such angels!*

"Nassius! Henry! Good morning!" I exclaimed.

"Are you feeling better, sister?" Nassius, the older of the two, asked. He had brown hair and gray eyes, and was basically the spitting image of our father. *I hope he didn't inherit our father's lack of life skills*.

"Yes, I am. Thank you for asking, Nassius."



I kissed Nassius on the cheek. *Ah, I'm so happy!* Patience didn't stop me, so this was probably a normal part of their mornings.

"Does that mean we can play together?" Henry, my younger brother, asked. He had the same blond hair and blue eyes as I did; we both took after our mother. *I need to make sure he doesn't die young.*

"Yes, let's play," I said, picking Henry up and kissing him on the cheek. *This is bliss!*

My happiness didn't last for long. *This is gross!* I thought as I ate some bland soup with some minuscule vegetable bits floating around, along with some thinly sliced yet hard bread. *Patience is so skinny! She does* not *need to be dieting. Also, I can't believe this is the best breakfast we can afford for my brothers! Growing children need to eat! How horrible!*

Patience's ingrained elegance forced me to slowly sip my soup, but it didn't have enough flavor to be savored. I had to find out whether Eva, our cook, was just unskilled, or if our family's finances were so tight that this was the only kind of meal we could afford.

I finished my unsatisfying breakfast and wanted to stay in the slightly warmer dining room, but that didn't seem possible. As soon as breakfast was over, my father retired to his study and my brothers were taken to their room. Not only was I alone, but George, the servant, began scraping out the logs that hadn't burned from the fireplace. Staring at an unlit fireplace wasn't going to make me any warmer.

According to Patience's memories, the morning was time for studying. Of course, we didn't have something as fancy as a tutor. Oh, Patience's memory corrected me—she appeared to have had a tutor for a short while when she was younger. The Granger family had probably lived as nobles usually did before our father had lost his job. Following his dismissal, my mother had taught me my letters and numbers, and then... *That's right! I'm responsible for teaching my brothers!*

I rushed over to my brothers' room. *Teaching my little brothers sounds fun!* Their room was spacious and had a desk with three

chairs in front of a fireplace. *Yeah, they don't need a room this big.* A poor excuse of a fire was lit in the fireplace. *This is too cold for them!*

"I'd like you to continue where we left off, Nassius," I instructed. "And can you write all the letters in the alphabet, Henry?" According to Patience's memories, Nassius was quite gifted, and Henry had just begun his studies.

"I memorized them," Henry said, his small hands earnestly writing out letters onto a slate board with chalk. *So cute.*

I wondered how Patience felt about studying. She seemed to like it quite a bit, and I had many memories of reading books. The Granger family seemed to enjoy learning, and though we were poor, our library was impressive. Our father was a bookworm, and these days all he did was read books or newspapers.

Are there any schools here? I began searching through Patience's memories. It seemed there was a school here in the Kingdom of Lawrence—specifically, the Royal Academy located in the capital city, Romano. Apparently it was mandatory for nobles to attend from the ages of ten to sixteen.

"Wait, ten? Does that mean I'm to attend the academy?" I muttered to myself.

I didn't mind studying, but dealing with other nobles sounded like a pain. I wasn't even sure if I could interact with other nobles in the first place. I could rely on Patience's memories for behavior, but my shabby clothes would probably make me stand out even if I could act the part of a noble.

Just as I'd promised him, I played with Henry after he practiced his writing and completed some simple math problems. We called it playing, but I was just reading to him. *There's no way I'm going outside when it's this cold and a flurry's coming down.*

Lunch...just made me sad. It was the same soup and thinly sliced bread from breakfast, with one slice of ham so thin you could nearly see through it. *You know, it isn't easy to slice something this thinly. Maybe Eva is actually really skilled*, I thought to myself in an attempt to escape from reality. *Patience gave this ham to her brothers, right? Yeah, there's no way I can keep doing that! I'm going to die at this*

rate.

"I'm still recovering, so you two should eat this," I said. *Gah, I can't help it! They're growing boys. Of course I want to feed them!*

Lunch—such as it was—had gotten me pumped about improving this family's living situation, but after eating I was called to my father's study. *I wonder what he wants*. Looking through Patience's memories, it was rare for her to be summoned like this. *Did he find out that I've taken over this body?* I had Patience's memories, and her common sense and habits dictated my actions, but I couldn't shake the feeling that she had died. Perhaps her father had noticed discrepancies in my behavior. *What do I do if I'm kicked out?* I grew nervous as I knocked on the door to my father's study.

"Come in, Patience," he responded.

The study had a calm atmosphere, and I could see why he would stay cooped up in here. It was like a hideaway—the perfect place to escape reality.

"Did you need something, father?" My words were automatically converted into Patience's manner of speech, and my question came out more formally than I intended.

"Sit down. I think it's time we have you evaluated at the church."

Oh no. Did he figure out I've possessed this body? Am I going to be exorcised? My face must have paled with anxiety.

"There's no need to be so nervous. Finding out your magic proficiency is a simple process. I think you'll be able to use household magic. Julianne was good at it. And it's best that we have you evaluated before you enroll in school." My father smiled, which put me at ease.

Household magic? What's that? Tell me, Patience!

"What is household magic?" I'd meant to search through Patience's memories, but I'd ended up asking my question out loud.

"Well, household magic is magic used for everyday life. Many people can use household magic, but Julianne was exceptional at it."

Patience's memories were more helpful than my father's vague response. Household magic seemed quite useful and encompassed spells for things such as lighting fires and lamps, producing water, cleaning, and practicing good hygiene.

It's magic time! Reincarnating into a world of swords and magic sounds like an exciting adventure...but that was undercut by the fact that I was poor, despite being a noble. On top of that, it seemed many commoners were able to use household magic. It feels like something that would be more useful for a maid than a dashing adventurer.

"We'll have the church evaluate you tomorrow. Let Mary know." It seemed my father would be telling the butler.

Why does he want me to tell Mary? I searched through my memories and got multiple answers. First, clothes for going out had to be prepared. Also, Mary had to come with us as my attendant, so she had to prepare not just me but also herself. Finally, Mary was the only maid we had, so she had to take care of some tasks ahead of time if she wasn't going to be home.

"Mary," I called out to the maid, "father and I will be visiting the church tomorrow. It seems they're going to evaluate my magic proficiency."

Mary, who had been cleaning, began to bustle about.

"Your coat, my lady, it's... Well, let's try it on." I tried on the coat that had been hanging in my wardrobe. It was quite tight, but it somehow managed to fit. "I'll have to make you a new coat before school starts," Mary said with a deep sigh. *I don't think we have the money for that. What's she going to do?*

Mary then brought out an outfit for going out. The fabric was much thicker than the dress I was currently wearing, and it looked warm.

"Please try this on," she asked. "It may be a little big, but I think it will be fine if we use the sash to tighten it..." These clothes appeared to be hand-me-downs from a relative, but they were warmer than anything I'd worn thus far, so I had no complaints about that. "We should take in the shoulders slightly," Mary said, placing several pins before carefully undressing me. She was probably going to adjust it by tomorrow.

Though it seemed a bit late to do so, I decided not to rely solely on Patience's knowledge and instead research household magic

myself. I also wanted to find out about the church, which there wasn't much information on within Patience's memories. All I found was the sad memory of holding her mother Julianne's funeral there.

The Granger family didn't seem very religious, but I wasn't sure how we compared to the citizens of Lawrence as a whole. I couldn't handle strict rules and being deeply religious, so I was glad for our family's attitude. But, even though we weren't very religious, we would still be going to the church for my proficiency evaluation.

In light novels, ability checks were usually followed by a huge commotion because the reincarnated character would be broken—overpowered—in some way, like being able to use all types of magic. Stuff in those stories, like being forced to marry a prince because of my abilities, sounded like a pain that I wanted to avoid...but if I *did* have some kind of broken ability, at least I could maybe improve this family's financial situation. Otherwise, we were going to starve to death. *Well, that might be an exaggeration...*

Either way, I wanted my brothers to eat proper meals. Of course, my skinny father and I both needed to eat better as well. Such thoughts ran through my mind as I arrived at our library, which was especially impressive considering our poverty.

"Maybe if we sold these books..." I mumbled to myself, only to be met with a sharp pain in my head as Patience yelled: *No!* I reassured her—or her memories—that I was just kidding. *This is such a pain*, I thought to myself. *Is she going to stop me every time I do something unladylike for the sake of the Granger family? I guess I'll just convince her by saying it's for those little angels.*

Patience seemed to be a bit obsessed with her brothers—a brocon, basically. Well, I shouldn't say that was "obsessed," but rather that she had been lovingly looking after her brothers since her mother's passing. *Gosh, and she's only ten years old herself.* I had some complaints about our father and his lack of life skills, but Patience had made a promise to her mother before she'd passed.

"I'll take care of Nassius and Henry."

My chest tightened as I recalled the painful memory. Even without that promise, I was determined to look after my adorable brothers.

"Household magic... The church..." I mumbled. Aside from the wall with a window, the room was filled with books from floor to ceiling. I glanced over the spines of the books and pulled out those that looked like they would have information about household magic or the church.

I returned to my room and shivered from the cold as I read two relatively thin books from our library: *Beginner Spells in Household Magic* and *On the Church of Estena*. There seemed to be books that were more technical on the upper shelves, but I'd been born in Japan and had no experience with magic, so I wanted to start with something simpler. And as for religion...I guess I'd attended Christmas parties, listened to the ringing of a Buddhist bell on New Year's Eve, and visited a Shinto shrine at the start of a new year. That was it. All I really knew about religion was the tidbits I'd heard during an ethics course. All this to say, the library's more technical books seemed like they would be difficult to understand, so I'd avoided them.

"It's so cold that I can't even turn the pages of these books," I muttered. I would've been slightly warmer if I'd gotten in bed and read under the covers, but that didn't meet Patience's standards for ladylike behavior, so I'd given up.

"The beginner book on household magic pretty much only tells me what I already know from Patience's knowledge. I guess it can't be helped; after all, it *is* a book geared toward children. I'll pursue this further once I find out whether I can use household magic tomorrow."

I did learn that household magic seemed quite useful. It was possible I'd be able to slightly improve our living situation if I could use these spells—*especially* the restroom situation. Yes, right now I had to use a chamber pot. Mary frequently cleaned it, but it was still unbelievable.

I'd searched through my memories and found out that there was technically a restroom in the Granger house, but we needed a magic stone to use it. How had I come to seek that tidbit of information?

Well, it was my first day getting up and walking around the mansion since I'd become Patience several days ago, but even if I was only eating porridge, my body still had functions to perform. *It's so embarrassing!*

There was a time I had thought that I only had to use the chamber pot in my room because I was sick and weak. I'd truly felt like I was dying and had needed Mary's help to even get out of bed. I had to toss aside things like shame and embarrassment. Luckily, that time was just a number one, so I had managed to survive the interaction. But yesterday, I finally had to deal with number two. I didn't feel great about using the chamber pot, so I used the bell at my bedside and called over Mary, who was surely busy.

"I apologize for bothering you, Mary, but could you take me to the restroom?" That was when she'd told me that we couldn't use the toilet in the house.

"We don't have a magic stone, so..." she trailed off, sounding apologetic, but I was the one who wanted to apologize. She was our only maid, and she had to not only take care of this sick person, but also help me with my bodily functions. *I'm sorry you have to serve us.*

Anyways, household magic included spells for cleaning, and it seemed I would be able to use those to clean the bathroom. *I'm coming for you, civilized life!*

But first, I couldn't handle constantly needing help to use the restroom. I wanted to be able to go on my own. After all, I was ten years old—a charming young girl, if you will.

"On the topic of improving our quality of life, I've just remembered that I must do something about those thin covers." I looked up and realized the room had dimmed. I was perhaps in a region located at a high latitude, because the sun set quite early during the winter. Of course, even our poor family had candles, but the Patience of my memories made a fuss about using them sparingly.

I didn't want to wake up from how cold it was again, so I went to find Mary and ask if we had anything other than those thin covers.

"If I recall correctly, the kitchen and the workrooms for the

servants are on the lower floor, in the semibasement."

Perhaps it was an area that a lady shouldn't have been visiting, as Patience's memories on the lower floor were hazy, though it did appear that she'd been there several times. I recalled a memory of baking with my mother once when she was still alive, which made my stomach growl.

"It seems we've stopped having teatime to save money," I remarked. *Nobles are supposed to always be getting dressed up and having tea parties*, I whined internally, but there was no use complaining. Right now, the Granger family had no teatime—we probably didn't have the money to even buy tea leaves.

On a side note, the actual bedrooms for those working in the house were located on the third floor. The butler's office, the housekeeper's room (currently going unused since we had no housekeeper), the kitchen, and the female staff's room were located on the lower floor, which was a semibasement. The female staff's room was quite spacious, especially with only Mary using it.

"Do we have any blankets, Mary?" I asked as she worked on my outing attire.

"You mustn't be in such a place, my lady... Blankets? Well..." I hadn't meant to trouble Mary. We'd probably sold off any extra bedding. "Let's see, I believe we have some servant's blankets, but those wouldn't be suitable for you, my lady."

What?! We have some?!

"It would be better than being cold," I said. "I nearly died from pneumonia."

Mary took out a large metal ring with multiple keys on it and headed for the linen closet, and I followed behind.

"You shouldn't be using something so unrefined," Mary said reluctantly.

Well, it might not have been "becoming" of a viscount's daughter, but I was ecstatic about getting my hands on this gray blanket.

"My brothers should get them too," I suggested, but it turned out they had already been using them. Mary had figured that it wasn't good for the young children to be cold, and boys wouldn't mind using something unrefined.

I also had one pulled out for my father, who seemed to be lacking in general life skills. Apparently, we'd been able to survive despite being so poor because my father's relatives had been helping us. *It would be sad if those little angels had to become orphans.*

"For the viscount? That would be good. He seems to be having trouble sleeping because of the cold."

Yeah, that's right! We can't keep worrying about appearances! Looks like I'll be getting some restful sleep tonight.

There were still many improvements to be made around here, but my stomach let me know that it was time for dinner. I was about to head to the dining room, but Patience had other priorities.

You must change for dinner, she demanded. I recalled watching TV shows in which English nobles would change their attire for dinner, but those were extravagant feasts. I very much doubted this was going to be a meal worth changing for. Even so, I returned to my room, which was tinted gold by the evening twilight, and took out the other dress hanging in my wardrobe.

"It feels too cold for this..." The dress had long sleeves, but they were made out of lace. *Wearing lace when it's this cold is ridiculous. I want to cry.* "Could I just wear this *over* the dress I'm wearing right now?"

Patience violently objected: *Absolutely not!* I shivered in my cold room as I changed into the dress with the lace sleeves.

"Urgh, I'm so cold... I must get to the dining room right away..." Patience was still making a fuss, demanding I brush my hair and style it properly. *Is Patience really dead? I feel like she's complaining a lot for a dead person.*

Though she was demanding, I'd been an office worker in Japan, so I had some tricks up my sleeve. Even when I'd overslept, I'd still been able to get dressed and do my makeup in ten minutes flat. I sat at the dingy vanity and looked into the cloudy mirror as I brushed my hair, scooping some of it into my hand to style into a half-up ponytail. I pinned it in place with the single hair accessory in the drawer.

With my blonde hair and blue eyes, I should have been pretty

cute, but unfortunately I'd lost too much weight. My eyes looked like they were bulging from my skull. This was the first time I'd ever thought that I needed to *gain* weight, but there was no time for me to revel in that thought.

"My apologies, my lady. I'm here to help you get dressed," Mary said as she hurried into my room.

Oh, yeah. According to Patience's memories, Mary always gets me dressed for dinner.

"That's all right," I said. It was indeed all right, since Mary was already handling everything else for us, but she seemed truly disappointed that she hadn't helped me.

"I'll be taking care of your hair for you tomorrow, before you go to the church," she said.

Ah, of course. Mary probably wants to do attendant-like tasks. She was now taking on the tasks of a regular maid, but Mary was originally a lady's attendant, so it made sense that she'd want to focus on that kind of work when she could.

I told her I'd leave my hair to her tomorrow and hurried to the dining room. I'd given my younger brothers my slice of ham this morning in an attempt to show off, and now my stomach was growling loudly. And even if it was too soon for dinner, the dining room had a fireplace.

My father was seated at the dining table, and it seemed there was indeed a dress code for dinner. He was dressed in a tuxedo jacket and a white tie. There were visible scuff marks all over the tuxedo jacket as well.

"You're here, Patience. Let dinner begin," he announced. Though he'd remained seated at breakfast and lunch, for some reason he suddenly got up at dinner and greeted me.

I'd rather you do something that generates income than try to be proper and polite.

"Nassius and Henry haven't arrived yet," I pointed out as the butler served the same bland soup from this morning. This was also different from the other meals—usually Mary was the one serving us. Not only that, but the table was only set for two people.

"Are you all right, Lady Patience?" Wyatt, the butler, asked me

quietly. “The young masters don’t join for the evening meal,” he explained.

I quickly scanned Patience’s memories and found out that children were to eat dinner in their room until they were ten. Among wealthy nobles, a caretaker would feed the children all three meals in their room. In other words, I only got to enjoy breakfast and lunch with the little angels because the Grangers were poor.

In addition to the soup, the rest of the menu was mostly the same as lunch: a thin slice of ham, and hard bread. Though, to my surprise, dinner included dessert.

“We have apple for dessert,” Wyatt said as he served us. There were thin slices of apple with some pieces of cheese. My father also had some wine, while I got a cup of tea.

This tea is so watery! Everything Eva made tasted watery and bland. *This needs to change!*

“You don’t have to worry about the evaluation at the church tomorrow,” my father said.

The conversation wasn’t really flowing between us. I wanted to ask him about why we were so poor, but Patience wouldn’t allow it. According to her, it was rude for a daughter to ask her father something like that.

Unlike breakfast and lunch, the fire in the fireplace wasn’t immediately put out once the meal was over, but I was worried about my brothers and left the dining room early. They didn’t have a caretaker, so I was worried whether they’d eaten dinner.

“You came to see us, sister?” Nassius asked. The candle to the side of their bed was still lit. It seemed they’d just gotten in bed.

“Of course, I must say goodnight to you two,” I said. “Did you have dinner?”

“We did. The apples were tasty,” Nassius replied.

“I love cheese!” Henry chimed in.

It seemed they had been properly fed, and I let out a sigh of relief. Perhaps the servants that stuck around to help such a poor family like us could be trusted. Though, I did want to talk to Eva, whom I hadn’t met yet, about her bland food.

Under their covers was the gray blanket. This would probably

keep them warm, since they were sleeping together.

"Good night," I said as I pulled the covers up and gave them each a kiss on the forehead. *This is bliss!*

"Leave the candle lit," begged Henry, the younger of the two.

"It's going to be winter. It'll get dark during the day, so we need to save the candle," Nassius replied. His smart explanation nearly made me cry.

"I'll be back later to put it out. You can sleep with it until then."

I truly must *do something about this situation. Oh my, even my own thoughts are beginning to sound like Patience.*

Chapter 2: Proficiency Evaluation at the Church

Thanks to the blanket, I was able to sleep through the night even while in Patience's sleeping posture. *I would really like to know if there's anything that can be done about this unfortunate habit.* My thoughts were sounding even more proper. Was I perhaps being invaded by Patience?

"I must do something about this."

I was relieved to find that my burning desire to improve the Granger family's quality of life remained unshaken. *Have I reincarnated into this other world? This situation feels too strange for it to be a simple case of possessing someone else's body. Also, I think Patience is dead. In that case, I probably reincarnated into this body.*

As usual, I ate some bland soup and hard bread for breakfast, then returned to my room and waited for Mary. It seemed that taking care of me in situations like this was especially important to her. *I guess she doesn't want to be stuck only handling menial servants' tasks.*

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting, my lady," Mary said as she entered my room. In her hands was the blue dress, which she had probably tailored. "You look lovely."

Despite Mary's compliments, I felt like the dress was wearing me. She'd brought in the shoulders for me, but the dress was still too big.

"I shall style your hair to coordinate with your dress," Mary said, placing a ribbon made of the same blue fabric as the dress onto the vanity. She then began brushing my hair. Since I was still a child, I didn't have to put up all of my hair like an adult.

The style Mary settled on was close to the half-up ponytail I'd

done for myself yesterday, but she braided part of the hair that was in the ponytail. She was quite a skilled attendant.

"I would've loved for Lady Julianne to have seen you dressed up," Mary said, tearing up as she added the blue ribbon to my hair. It seemed that Mary had been serving my mother even before she'd married into the Granger family. Anyways, there wasn't much to be complimenting about my looks. Patience had some good bones, but she was much too skinny.

"Come, we shouldn't keep the viscount waiting."

I put on my tight-fitting coat. Mary seemed frustrated that it was rumpling my lovely dress, but I was relieved to finally be warm. *I just realized that this is going to be my first time going out.* I hadn't left the house since I'd become Patience. The entryway to the house was impressive, and didn't look to be that of a poor family's home.

Wyatt opened the doors, and I took several steps down to find a carriage! *We have a carriage, even though we're so poor?* Just then, I recalled memories of my father traveling by carriage every day when he was working in the royal palace. The carriage was decorated with the Granger family crest: a pen and a book. The crest felt fitting for this family.

"Come, Patience," my father beckoned. "Get in."

My father escorted me onto the carriage, and I began my first ride. My father was truly well-mannered, which was great, though I couldn't help but wish he also had some life skills to go along with his politeness. Mary also got in the carriage, coming along as my attendant. Apparently a noble lady was supposed to have an attendant with her.

The barely staffed Granger family had no coachman to drive the carriage. George, our servant, had dressed up differently than usual —in a stable hand's uniform today—and drove the carriage.

I knew through Patience's memories that we lived in the capital, Romano. Judging from the townscape, this was probably the nobles' quarter; the street was lined with grand mansions. I considered that we might have been able to live a better life if we sold our estate and lived in a small house in a lower-class area, but I didn't feel that I could suggest such a thing as the young daughter of the family. I

needed to improve our lives by doing things that were within my capabilities. I was starting to understand these sorts of things intuitively, without Patience constantly interrupting me.

The church was a dignified gray building decorated all over with detailed carvings. I'd only skimmed through *On the Church of Estena* yesterday, but I could guess that the two figures out front were famous saints.

Mary removed my coat for me, because it was too tight to take off on my own. Mary then fixed my crinkled dress. While she did that, my father also removed his coat and handed it to Mary. It seemed she was to wait near the entrance for us.

"Let's head inside," my father said, leading me into the church.

"My, how beautiful!" I exclaimed. The morning sun shone through the stained glass, filling the room with blue, green, and yellow light. The colorful interior contrasted sharply the reserved and dignified exterior.

"If you're proficient in light magic, you could become a nun," my father remarked.

A nun? I don't really know what that would be like, and I don't think I particularly care to go that route. Is he worried about paying my dowry? I simply must *teach my brothers about the importance of money. I don't mind having to forgo enrolling in school.* Various thoughts ran through my mind as we continued into the church.

"Welcome, Viscount Granger." It appeared that our butler had let them know we'd be coming, and a man who looked like a monk was waiting in front of the altar.

"Hello, Father Johan. This is my eldest daughter, Patience. Could you please give her a proficiency evaluation?"

The priest's long, white garment had details on the collar and sleeves embroidered with golden thread. To put it bluntly, he seemed wealthier than our family. Another monk in a garment without any embroidery approached from the side, pushing a cart. Covering the cart was a black sheet of velour, on top of which a disk had been carefully placed.

"Come, rest your hand on the disk," Father Johan directed.

"Just relax, Patience," my father assured me.

I set my hand on the disk. I felt a prick, like I'd been gently shocked by electricity, traveling up my hand and throughout my body. Upon a closer look, I realized that the disk had several gems, perhaps magic stones, set in it. Only one lit up.

"Lady Patience has been blessed with household magic," Father Johan announced.

It wasn't a proficiency I'd consider some great gift, but according to the Church of Estena, magic was something God bestowed upon you. I was a bit disappointed that I didn't have some broken ability.

"Thank you very much." My father didn't just thank the priest, but he also pulled out...a gold piece?! It was the first gold coin I'd ever seen, and my father donated it to the monk.

In the end, visiting the church seemed kind of pointless to me, but I was glad to be officially proclaimed able to use household magic. *Now I can use the toilet!*

I was surprised by today's lunch—it wasn't the usual bland soup.

"We're celebrating you today, Lady Patience," Mary said, sounding happy as she served us.

"It's pottage!" Henry exclaimed, immediately digging in.

"What abilities were you granted, sister?" Nassius asked. His eyes were filled with blindingly bright anticipation.

"Household magic," I said, feeling a little embarrassed. It was a type of magic even many commoners had. I didn't want to become a nun, but something like light magic would've been cooler. *Light magic could have also led to becoming a saint... Nah, I'm not cut out for that.*

"Household magic can be used to impressive effect. It just depends on the wielder," my father noted reassuringly. "I'm sure Julianne would've taught you how to use it if she were alive, but you can still learn about it at the academy." A sad look washed over my father's face, and my chest tightened painfully.

"Yes, at the academy... Well, father, I wouldn't mind forgoing my enrollment. Nassius and Henry must attend, but as for me..."

Everyone who'd been enjoying their soup suddenly froze.

"That's quite impossible. It's mandatory for nobles to attend the

academy." My father's stern tone made it clear that my enrollment was inevitable.

"You *must* attend the academy, sister," Nassius pleaded, his gray eyes filled with shock. The look on his face made me give in.

"You're right. I must attend the academy and learn about household magic," I conceded. Along with the potato-based pottage, lunch was served with bread that was softer than usual, and a slice of ham that was thicker than usual. "Here, Nassius, Henry!" I said, trying to give my brothers my ham, but they turned me down.

"Today is a celebration for you," Nassius insisted.

There's no way they aren't hungry. What kind angels they are! Elementary schoolers were way more arrogant in Japan. These two are so good, and Patience was a classy little girl too. Kids sure are different here.

After finishing lunch, it was time to try using my household magic—or rather, that's what I'd excitedly been anticipating, but instead I had to go over my brothers' studies, since I'd been out of the house this morning. I first taught Nassius some math and gave him some problems to solve, then I read *Beginner Spells in Household Magic* while giving Henry some simple words to practice writing.

First is the toilet. I also want to learn how to clean, so I can help lessen Mary's workload. Actually, those are both just different forms of cleaning, aren't they?

"Cleaning... Here it is." I looked through the table of contents to find the section on cleaning and turned to it to begin reading. "First, focus your mind and cleanse a small area." Cleansing made me think of fire, but this wasn't fire magic, so it probably wasn't anything dangerous.

Mary usually cleaned the boys' room, but it was quite spacious, and we'd been out all morning, so she hadn't gotten to it yet. The curtains and rug were old and dingy.

"Become clean!" I commanded the furnishings. I'd never used magic before, and I had no idea how to focus my mind. As I cast the magic, I tried to remember the prickly, electric sensation from when I touched that disk, while also recalling Patience's memories of how the boys' room had looked back when it was truly clean.

I sense energy leaving my body. I felt dizzy, so I closed my eyes. I'd been lucky to have already been sitting. It would've distressed my brothers if I'd suddenly fainted in front of them.

"Sister, what is this?!" Nassius's voice made me open my eyes.

"Would you look at that!" I exclaimed in the same tone as the host on a home improvement show. *Not only can household magic clean things, but it can make curtains and rugs as good as new!*



"Household magic is surprisingly useful," Nassius said, seemingly ruminating on something.

"That was amazing!" Henry said, jumping up and down.

It wasn't just the rug and curtains. All the stains on the ceiling had disappeared, and the sun-bleached wallpaper now had a vivid, playful pattern befitting a child's room.

"You might be able to become a court lady at the royal palace," Nassius remarked.

"A court lady?" I repeated.

Nassius seemed puzzled by the confusion on my face and in my voice.

"That *was* what you wanted, wasn't it?"

"Oh, er, yes. But I'll decide whether I want to become a court lady after studying at the academy."

Nassius thought about this for a moment.

"That seems fair," he said with a smile.

I don't know why, but something feels wrong*. I can't believe I'm getting a bad feeling from this little angel. I'm not fit to be an older sister.*

I'd gotten tired, so I decided to test out whether the toilet would work, then end my practice for that day. *We're inching closer to a modern way of life!*

I began using my household magic to slowly clean and repair our home. Doing too much at once had exhausted me—I probably needed to be careful about using too much mana. I could have cracked open a book and learned a little bit more about my magic first, but for now I prioritized actually improving our quality of life. Besides, I'd probably learn all about magic once I began attending the Royal Academy.

"You'll be attending the academy starting in January. While I'm happy for you, I'm also going to be sad when you're gone," Nassius said, dropping a bomb in the middle of our morning study session. It was currently December—in other words, I only had one month left with them.

"The Royal Academy is in Romano. I should be able to commute,

no? There's no need to be sad."

Nassius's eyes widened with surprise. His gray eyes looked adorable when they got so round.

"You said you'd be living in the dorms, since we can't rent a horse for the carriage every day."

Huh? I began googling for answers within Patience's memories. The Royal Academy was near the royal palace, which was on the other side of the royal capital from the Granger estate. Naturally, it was possible to commute by carriage, but... *We used our own carriage on the day we went to the church, but we had to rent the horse for half the day. Being poor is so sad.*

"That's right, b-but I'll be back on the days I have off." It wasn't so far that it was impossible to walk back. *I'll definitely walk if it's to see my brothers. Or I could ride a hackney. I know they exist, but Patience hasn't ridden in one before. That'll cost money, though, so walking it is.*

"You wouldn't be able to go alone," Nassius pointed out.

Oh, right. I guess a noble lady can't go walking around on her own without an attendant.

"I'll figure it out, Nassius. Please trust me." *Where there's a will, there's a way—and that goes for anything!* I had the drive, but I still didn't have the means to do what I wanted, which was painful. *Also, who's going to help my brothers with their studies when I'm gone? Oh, right, we have a dad. Well, setting studies aside, I still want to improve our living situation!*

Just then, Mary called out to me.

"My lady! What happened to the curtains?! And the rug?!" Cleaning the boys' room was Mary's job. She immediately noticed the décor that had become as good as new.

"I used household magic," I responded.

Mary immediately took off, only to return with a mountain of clothes.

"These are uniforms for the Royal Academy. Can you tidy them with household magic?" There were various sizes of uniforms, all hand-me-downs from a female relative.

"I'll get too tired if I do it all at once, so let me first try with the

uniform that's my current size." I reached out for the smallest uniform and chanted, "Become clean!" Since uniforms were worn every day at school, they got quite worn out. The collar and elbow areas had been covered in shine marks, but they were now good as new. *Oh, I feel a bit tired.*

"Oh my, these won't be embarrassing for you to wear at all. I was thinking I would have to disassemble one of the larger uniforms to get cloth to fix the tattered areas on the ones that are your size, or just give up on the smaller sizes and try to tailor the larger uniforms to fit you."

The uniform consisted of a gray dress and a jacket, which had the emblem of the Royal Academy on them. *It's surprisingly normal*, I thought, taking a closer look, but I hadn't had much time to dwell on it. Mary kept bringing in more clothes.

Just then, a thought popped into my mind: *How many socks does one person need?* That led me to come up with the idea for a business—repairing nobles' silk socks. *I think I read a novel set in the Taisho period in which a character mended stockings as a side job.*

"You know, Mary, I'm quite good with my hands. I'd like to make use of these skills." This work of repairing clothes felt different from the standard conception of household magic. So while it might not have befitted a noble lady to do menial housekeeping, I pedantically insisted that I was engaged in sewing, a perfectly appropriate art for a noblewoman. There was nothing about mending clothes written in *Beginner Spells in Household Magic*, which I decided to interpret as further evidence that I wasn't doing servant's work unbecoming of my status.

"My lady..." Mary seemed troubled. She was excited about having clothes befitting a viscount's daughter ready for my upcoming move to the academy dorms, but that didn't mean it was all right for a noble lady to have a side job.

"I know that you sometimes take on side jobs as a seamstress," I said. *That's right. Patience knows that Mary takes on side jobs too. Jeez, just how poor is our family?!* Mary's side jobs included mending socks. Silk socks were expensive, and it would have been a

waste to throw them out over a simple loose thread, even if you were a noble. Sure, nobles would wear new pieces to parties and such, but socks were usually hidden in everyday dress, so it was common practice to wear mended items. Anyway, since Mary was already taking sewing jobs, I figured I could just use my magic to help out, while keeping my role our little secret.

"It may attract untoward attention if people notice that their worn clothing becomes good as new," Mary fretted. She also seemed worried that my household magic seemed a little different from the standard spells.

However, apparently my mother, Julianne, had also had slightly unconventional household magic. *Could it be? Is this* actually *a broken power?*

"I've heard that skilled tailors can make the mending look invisible," I countered.

"That is true, but *my* work isn't completely invisible." Despite this latest objection, I could tell that I was slowly beginning to win her over.

Mending clothes will mean more income, and that will mean more spending money! I would love *to get some new underwear. Even if I can magically make them as good as new, I still feel uncomfortable at the thought of wearing old underwear. Repaired socks just barely make it into my comfort zone.*

I could tell Mary was getting close to accepting my plan for me to magically mend clothes while passing it off as her work; she just needed one more push.

"You can just say that your skills have improved. That way we'll be able to get me ready for school. I might even be able to purchase a new coat."

Mary finally gave in, and I successfully got myself a side job mending socks.

Of course, side jobs didn't make that much money—that held true in this world just like in my previous one. Fixing up one pair of socks would earn me five tiems, which meant it would take ten pairs to earn fifty tiems. In other words, I would have to mend twenty pairs

to earn a single rhom. That was a lot of work for a silver coin. A golden ten-rhom coin would require mending two hundred pairs of socks.

"Ugh, I'm getting dizzy." I did my best while fighting against my dizziness. *Household magic is useful, but I need to be careful about overexerting myself.*

Thanks to my hard work, I was soon able to afford new underwear and a new coat.

Currency Denominations

Bronze one-tiem coin
Bronze five-tiem coin (equal to five bronze one-tiem coins)
Bronze ten-tiem coin (equal to ten bronze one-tiem coins)
Silver one-rhom coin (equal to one hundred bronze one-tiem coins)
Silver five-rhom coin (equal to five silver one-rhom coins)
Gold ten-rhom coin (equal to ten silver one-rhom coins)
Gold fifty-rhom Coin (equal to five gold ten-rhom coins)

Over the following days, I mended my brothers' clothes, as well as my father's, of course. I even fixed the curtains in my room. The paper-thin, tattered curtains had made the room colder.

Speaking of paper-thin linens, I also mended the bedcovers, which made them slightly more plush. *Damn, I guess they were pretty thin even before getting worn out.* I searched Patience's knowledge and found that a luxurious duvet had once gone over these covers, but there was no such item in sight.

"If I can't find it, I can just make it."

I grabbed Mary, who'd pretty much become my accomplice, and coaxed her into taking me into the attic, though she protested that it

was no place for a proper lady like myself to be.

"It's quite dusty," I remarked when we arrived. I was just pointing out a fact, but Mary looked apologetic. *I'm the one who feels sorry. You need a side job because we can't even pay you properly. All we're good for is the housing we provide. I think.* "Become clean!" I commanded.

How incredible! The dusty old attic now looked like a Parisian workshop. Well, that was a bit of an exaggeration, but it was clean enough to focus on my search. Instead of cleaning the whole space, I could've just cleaned myself off if and when I'd gotten covered in dust, but I would've been sneezing nonstop while rummaging.

"These curtains are quite beautiful." I found old curtains, tattered rugs, and out-of-style clothes from back when our house had been well-off. I felt as if I'd struck gold. "I'm surprised we kept all these."

I'm sure we could've made some extra money if we sold all this... I wasn't sure whether we'd just decided that these old items wouldn't be worth much, or if there had been some other reason to hang on to them; my memories weren't clear on that point. *Man, my father really has no life skills.* Still, there was no use complaining about that now. I started by mending the curtains.

"I believe we could use these to make duvets," I suggested to Mary. We worked together sewing duvets for my brothers, my father, and me. Household magic could also be used to sew things quickly. *Man, this magic is* really *useful.* "Mary," I called out to her while using magic to assemble the duvets. "Do you think I should become a court lady?" According to Patience's memories, she'd said she'd wanted to work in the royal palace as a court lady, but I felt stepping into a woman-dominated job was scary, so I wanted to avoid that.

"Becoming a court lady of the royal palace is hard work," Mary said. "First, you must have excellent grades. They will ask about your background as well. Naturally, there would be no issues there, with you being Viscount Granger's daughter." Mary sounded confident about our family's standing, but seeing how destitute we were, I couldn't share her certainty. On the topic of understanding my family's status, I was also curious about why exactly my father had been fired.

As I listened to Mary continue to explain, I learned how being a court lady was different from being a maid. A court lady was basically someone who served as an attendant, secretary, and advisor to the queen or to a princess. Though it wasn't exactly like being a maid, there was some overlap in terms of their duties. Some court ladies managed outfits, helped pick out accessories, and styled hair. Mary said she wasn't too familiar with the work of court ladies in the royal palace, but she was a hundred times more knowledgeable than I was.

What did I need to do before I went to school? Improve my brothers' meals, of course. I'd finished fixing up my room—my first priority—and figured I could slowly take care of the rest of the house once summer break rolled around.

"Eva's quite skinny..." I had originally imagined our cook would be chubby, but Eva was surprisingly slim. Not only that, but she was rarely in the kitchen. *I guess her food doesn't seem like it takes that long, but if she's not busy cooking, where could she be?*

This question was best answered by my accomplice, Mary. Wyatt, the butler, seemed stern and hard to approach about this sort of thing. George, the servant, just seemed really busy. He was engaged in a constant cycle of lighting and putting out the fireplaces, sweeping out ashes, adding more wood, and lighting them again soon after. Not only that, but he was also responsible for washing the chamber pots that Mary collected, and for sweeping the floors. He seemed like he had no free time for chitchat about his coworker. Mary was just as busy, but she always came by my room before dinner to get me dressed, and I could easily talk to her while she was doing my hair.

"I was wondering, where does Eva usually spend her time?"

Mary seemed surprised and dropped the hairbrush.

"I-I believe she's in the kitchen. After all, she has to prepare dinner!" *She's flustered! That must mean Eva's doing something she doesn't want us to know about. Mary's been taking on side jobs and handling them in the female staff's room. Eva spends a lot of time outside of the kitchen, so she must be working outside of the house.*

"Is she working somewhere else?" I attempted to seem innocent while trying to get Mary to spill the details.

"No, of c-course not..." *She's super flustered! Let's pry a little bit more.*

"Could it be that the ham we're served with our meals has something to do with Eva's job?" If I recalled correctly, ham was a premium food item around here. It was a common food in modern Japan, but I'd read in books that there had been periods in the past when commoners couldn't afford it.

"Please keep it a secret from your father."

It turned out that Eva went to the market early each morning to work a second job, and instead of getting paid in money, she would get some ham. I felt so bad for her that I became dizzy. *So* that's *why breakfast is always premade soup and hard bread.* As I thought about Eva hurrying to return before lunch, thinly slicing that precious ham she'd earned, and serving it to us, I teared up. I needed to do something about this. It was thanks to the staff of this household that I was alive, but I felt guilty that we placed such a burden on them.

"I want to make money, but a side job isn't enough... And when I start attending school, I won't be able to work aside from on weekends, and even coming home will cost money."

I'd planned on having Mary come to the academy on Saturday mornings to walk me back home, but walking both ways would tire her out. I wanted to pay for her to ride a hackney at least on her way to the school. You might wonder why I wouldn't just ride back with her, but a noble lady wasn't supposed to ride a hackney. Despite this rule of propriety, it was somehow all right for a noble lady to walk halfway across the city, as long as she was with an attendant. When Mary told me that it was a trend for noble ladies who wanted to lose weight to go on walks in the park, I was filled with murderous rage. *They must be enjoying sweet treats like cake!*

Anyway, my plan was to walk back to school on Sunday afternoons, then send Mary back to the estate on a hackney. In other words, each weekend, I would need enough money for a round-trip fare. I'd planned on earning that money through side

jobs, but I couldn't let Eva keep living like this, and I also wanted to improve my family's meals.

So, now that I understood Eva's situation, I realized we needed money to afford the ham that Eva had been working so hard to provide for us.

"I would very much appreciate some money!" Even if my emotions were voiced elegantly through Patience's filter, my tone was emotionless. "We need protein!" It didn't have to be expensive ham. It could come from some other meat or fish. Patience's memories insisted that eggs were a luxury food, so they weren't going to be an option.

The royal capital, Romano, was landlocked. In other words, we only had access to freshwater fish; dried saltwater fish wasn't commonly available. I came to the conclusion that the only way to get my growing younger brothers to eat protein was through beans.

"I think I could grow beans in our yard, but it's winter..." At that moment, something jumped out at me from Patience's memories: a greenhouse!

Mary was taking care of my new coat until my move to the academy, so I squeezed into my tight old coat and walked around the yard. Patience lamented the current state: *Oh my! Back when mother was alive, there were always roses growing in the greenhouse, even in the winter.* Her sentimentality brought up memories of the greenhouse and roses from days past. Now, the glass walls of the greenhouse were broken, leaving only the structure's frame. My chest filled with excitement as I stared at the bones of the greenhouse. *If I fix this up, I might be able to grow some vegetables!*

"We don't need any roses; they're not edible." I could hear Patience whining in my mind: *But roses are lovely!* Despite her protests, right now, food was more important. "I don't want my younger brothers to starve!" I argued back, which got Patience to quiet down. Patience, who was a mild brocon, was easy to win over when it came to helping her brothers.

I asked Mary to buy seedlings and seeds of winter vegetables and

beans, even though they were normally planted in the summer. While she handled that, it was time for me to repair the greenhouse.

"Become clean, but just the glass!" *I don't need the roses*, I thought emphatically as I cast my household magic. "Wow! It seems the greenhouse is repaired. All that's left now is the inside."

It was warm inside the newly repaired greenhouse...which I probably should have expected. While the structure was now intact, the remnants of withered roses still littered the interior. I wouldn't be able to plant vegetables with the greenhouse in this state.

"I don't think I'm strong enough to till this soil with a hoe. I also can't put more on George's plate." I wasn't sure if it was going to work, but I put my hands on the soil and chanted, "Become pulverized, withered roses!" The withered rose bushes disintegrated into a powder that fell onto the soil. "It seems anything is possible with household magic." *Maybe it's actually totally overpowered*, I thought, but I was too poor to have time to seriously ponder that. I had to ridge the soil before Mary returned.

I'd been an office worker who'd grown up in the city—in other words, I had no farming experience. The closest thing to farming I'd done was digging up sweet potatoes in elementary school as a part of our life studies class. Still, just using common sense, I knew that the soil needed to be ridged in order to plant something.

"Become ridged!" I chanted. *Let's just be direct!* My spell worked, and the soil now formed neat little ridges. "I'm glad that worked. It wouldn't be ladylike to have calloused hands from gardening." It seemed that Patience's common sense had again invaded my own. *This is troubling.*

I ended up leaving the planting to Mary. It seemed like there was no way she was going to let me do it, so I gave up on trying. Though, she would permit me to plant things like roses and other flowers. As a part of improving the quality of our lives, I was going to have to take Mary's standards of noble behavior into consideration, in addition to Patience's.

"Grow!" It was the next day, and I was full of hopes that my magic was well and truly busted as I invoked it over the greenhouse

soil. In response, the seedlings grew and the seeds sprouted, almost like a scene from an animated film. *I... I can totally do whatever I want with this "household" magic!* Now that harvesting vegetables seemed possible, I was ready to talk to Eva. "How should I bring this up to her?"

The staff of our household had to take on side jobs because our family was too pathetic to pay them properly. I couldn't fault Eva for her actions, but even if I was grateful, that didn't mean this situation was acceptable. I wanted to convince her to stop working at the market without punishing her for having done so thus far. As if that weren't complicated enough, this was all going to come from a ten-year-old child. It was a daunting puzzle. As I was sitting in my room, racking my brain for a way to handle this, I heard a soft knock on my door.

"It's Wyatt, my lady. Do you have a moment?"

I had no memory of Wyatt, the butler, ever visiting my room before. *What could he want? Did he find out I've been doing weird things with household magic? Yeah, it makes sense that he'd find out. Nassius seemed to notice my magic was strange right away, and so did Mary. I think the only ones who haven't picked up on that fact are Henry and father.*

"Yes, come in." A noble lady had to speak in commands to her staff. *I wonder if Wyatt thinks I'm arrogant, since he's older.*

Wyatt entered my room and respectfully bowed to me. His hair was brown, speckled with even more gray than my father's, and not a single strand was out of place.

"Thank you for giving me the time, my lady." My heart was pounding with anxiety over what he might say, but I managed to keep a graceful smile on my face. *First, I have to see what he's got up his sleeve!* "Recently, the mansion has been tidied up, for which I am incredibly grateful. Not only that, but the greenhouse has been repaired, and I was surprised to see vegetables growing." Notwithstanding his words, he didn't seem surprised in the slightest as he spoke.

"I'd like you to...*do something* about Eva's *situation*," I said meaningfully. His apparent acceptance of my activities was why I'd

made the snap decision to foist the problem on him. *I mean, it's going to sound better coming from the butler than coming from me.*

"I apologize for causing you to worry over such trivial matters. On that note, there is actually something I hoped to discuss with you regarding household affairs..."

Wyatt immediately accepted my request to talk to Eva about her extra job; I knew that with all his experience, he'd resolve things more deftly than I could hope to do. This still left us with the problem of what to serve for meals; it seemed vegetables and beans alone wouldn't be acceptable.

To that end, without directly commenting on my unusual magic, Wyatt delicately observed that our house had a number of broken antiques in need of repair. If they were *somehow* restored, they could then be sold and the money used for meat. Ultimately, those antiques would end up helping improve my brothers' meals, with enough money left over that I could afford to rent a horse for the carriage on the weekends I was returning home.

Wow, what a competent butler! I have no idea why he's still working for this destitute viscount's family.

Chapter 3: I’m Moving into the Dorms at the Royal Academy!

Just how much did Wyatt sell the antiques I’d repaired for? Well, Eva didn’t have to work at the market anymore, and we could now afford meat. We were also able to harvest vegetables and legumes from the greenhouse. Our diet had improved.

I say that, but even after this improvement, our meals were still quite simple. However, the soup was now full of ingredients and actually had flavor. The bread was softer and came in thicker slices. We were served ham and other grilled meats more often. We also had the vegetables we grew here, which were served on the side steamed or sautéed.

“I don’t believe there’s any concern of starving now,” I said to myself. I could now move into the dorms without worry.

We still weren’t doing well enough to own a horse, so I would just be renting one on the weekends. *Don’t worry, my angels! Your big sister will be coming home on the weekends!* My goodbyes to my father had been quick, but I couldn’t bid farewell to my younger brothers without tearing up.

“I wish you well, sister,” Nassius said. *You make it sound like I’m going so far away... I’m going to cry.*

“Will you be coming home on the weekends, sister?” Henry asked. *Of course! I’ll be back, come hell or high water!*

“Take care, both of you,” I said, wiping my tears as I boarded the carriage. Of course, Mary was with me as well. This custom of needing to have an attendant to go anywhere was really inconvenient. *I want to leave the academy and explore downtown, but I don’t think that’ll be possible. Darn. If I could go off on my own, I might be able to find another way to make money besides the side jobs I’m already doing.*

The carriage rattled as it drove through the nobles' quarter. Somewhere among these mansions was the home of our relatives who'd given me the uniform I was wearing at this very moment. *No one wants to associate with the Grangers because of my father's dismissal. I'm really worried about what my life's going to be like at school. I'll keep my head down.* As all those thoughts spun around in my mind, the royal palace came into view.

"Oh my, it's truly grand," I remarked.

I was glad that my thoughts had gone through the Patience filter. Mary probably would've been shocked to hear me say something like, "Dude! It's ginormous!"

This was where my father used to work. *I wonder what kind of blunder he committed to get himself dismissed. Next time Wyatt asks me to repair a broken antique, I'm going to slyly ask him about it. It's not easy to get things past that butler.*

The palace looked ridiculously massive. If the Royal Academy had been on the side of the palace nearer our house, it would've been possible for me to walk to school every day. I couldn't imagine trying to walk through the whole palace complex from one side to the other twice a day though.

"That's the Royal Academy, over there," Mary said, pointing.

Is that a second palace or something?! I was shocked. Well, it was *smaller* than the royal palace, but it was *much* bigger than what came to mind when thinking of a school. *I feel like I'll get lost in there. Will I be okay?*

I could immediately tell why the academy required such large gates and such an expansive front lawn: The front entrance was jam-packed with carriages.

"I thought only the students who are moving into the dorms were going to be here today. Are they taking a while to unload their belongings?"

If I'd been able to commute to school, I could've just come tomorrow for the opening ceremony. *Give me back the extra day I could've had with my brothers! Being poor sucks.*

"Provincial nobles are required to enter the dorms if they do not have a residence in Romano," Mary explained.

I see. So even if they're from the countryside, they don't have to stay in the dorms if they're rich. Does that mean only the poor noble kids are in the dorms? Maybe it won't be so uncomfortable here after all. Though my worries had begun to subside, there was an unsettling commotion as our carriage made its way closer to the entrance.

"Everyone's brought so many things with them," I observed. There was an unbelievable amount of luggage being unloaded from the carriages. *Beds? Tables? Are you guys moving your whole houses in here?* All I had was a single wardrobe and a wooden box for my school supplies. I had kept things quite compact. Well, not really—actually, I just didn't have anything else to bring. *Being poor really sucks!* Still, we were required to wear uniforms on campus, so I couldn't see why anyone would need to bring so much with them.

"Could that be...?" Mary murmured to herself, apparently having noticed something.

Fill me in too, Mary!

"What shall we do?! Oh my, oh my!" she exclaimed with excitement.

There are so many impressive carriages here. If they're rich enough to afford such blinged-out rides, couldn't they just commute to school? I didn't want rich kids invading the dorm life of us poor nobles. *They're already backing up traffic by bringing all this stuff.*

As I sat there frustrated, Mary suddenly grabbed my hands.

"My lady, I implore you to mind your manners here. I can't believe that the princes and princess will be in the dorms! That must be why those from prestigious families are also entering the dorms."

What? That sounds so *annoying. Why are such important people going to live in the dorms? Maybe they'll spend all their time with the other rich kids who are going to live in the dorms, so I won't have to deal with them.*

I began searching through Patience's memories. I found out that the king of Lawrence, King Alfred, had five children: Prince Richard, age fifteen; Princess Margaret, age twelve; Prince Keith, age ten; Princess Jane, age eight; and Prince Marcus, age six. *Gosh, Queen Victoria is a real trooper. From what I can tell, His Majesty doesn't*

have a concubine, so that means she had five whole kids, giving birth nearly every two years. A round of applause for Her Majesty! Cheers for the Big Momma of the large family!

"Why have the princes and princess moved into the dorms? They weren't living here last year, were they?"

"Yes, that's right. This is the first I'm hearing of them entering the dorms."

Is His Majesty just doing this on a whim? Does he want his children to learn how the regular nobles live? Or could it be that the princes and princess are selfish and lazy, so they're here as a punishment? Regardless, it's just a source of pain for me.

"I wonder if students are allowed to have attendants in the dorms." Unfortunately for me, Mary was needed at home, so having her with me in the dorm wasn't an option. *But I don't think the rules said anything one way or the other about having an attendant.*

"I'm not sure," Mary responded. "I also don't know if the same rules apply to members of the royal family as to the other students."

Even if princes and princesses got special treatment, that didn't necessarily mean the same privileges were extended to any other nobles, such as those in the royal family's inner circle. Such thoughts ran through my mind as I waited for the other carriages to finish unloading.

Nothing will come from complaining right now. It's not like I can go against those above me. Still...if it takes too long, we're going to be spending more than we needed to on the horse rental!

The members of the royal family and the upperclass nobles in their inner circle finally finished unloading their belongings, and now it was my turn. It appeared that the carriages could only come to the campus entrance, and we would have to walk from here.

George unloaded my wardrobe, and Mary carried my box of books and school supplies. A maidservant from the dorm came to transport the wardrobe to my room. *If I recall correctly, there's a boys' dorm and a girls' dorm. I think there are rules stating boys can't go into the girls' dorm, and that girls can't go into the boys' dorm*. I'd only skimmed the housing handbook because I'd been so

heartbroken over leaving my brothers.

Because of these rules, George couldn't enter my dorm, and the maidservant would be bringing my wardrobe over. *That must mean there are male servants for the boys' dorm. Well, she has a cart, and she looks pretty strong, so I'm sure she'll be fine.*

The first floor of the dorm was a dining hall, which appeared to be coed. There were two staircases in the dining hall: the right staircase led to the boys' dorm, and the left led to the girls' dorm. *The right side is closer to the royal palace, which means it's closer to my brothers...*

"I believe this is your room, my lady," Mary said, opening the door to room 205 with the key she had received at the front desk. *Maybe it's because I was twenty-five in my past life*, I thought, becoming strangely sentimental about my room number.

"What a small room... My heart breaks for you, my lady."

Contrary to Mary's glum assessment, I thought it was more than enough. Sure, it was only half the size of Patience's room, but it was still bigger than the apartment I'd lived in as an adult during my previous life. It even had a fireplace with a fire that had already been lit, the flames crackling and popping.

"It's warm." It was the first time since reincarnating into this world that I truly felt warmed throughout my entire body. *Small rooms are nice.* I was so moved by the fire that I sat in front of it and started lounging there.

While I was thus occupied, Mary handled various moving-in tasks. She transferred the clothes in the wardrobe to the dresser, made the bed, and unpacked my school supplies.

Huh? Are you wondering if I'm going to help? Look at how Mary is thriving from finally being able to act like a proper noble lady's attendant. Do you really want me to take that from her? I couldn't do such a horrible thing.

Once I warmed up, I began inspecting my room. To put it in Japanese terms, the room was like a furnished studio apartment with an area of roughly ten tatami mats, or about sixteen square meters. The furnishings included a bed, a dresser, a desk and chair, and a simple set of lounge furniture.

I think I saw lounge furniture and beds among those huge piles of stuff that were being moved in. Godspeed to those who have to transport all that.

Though it was nowhere near as excessive as the other nobles, I too had brought something nonessential with me to the dorm: a small, formerly tattered rug that I'd found in the attic and mended.

"Um, my lady... I'm sorry to bother you, but could you help me move the desk?" Mary asked, trying to make room for my rug.

I helped Mary move the furniture around, and we put down the rug. *There we go. Now the room feels cozier.*

Not only was the room furnished, but it also had a private bathroom. *That's the Royal Academy for you! It's already got a magic stone set in it too! They're so generous!*

"Oh, this is a magic lamp," Mary said upon noticing the lamp.

"Wow, that's impressive."

We had magic lamps in the dining and drawing rooms back home, but as you might have already guessed, they weren't working because we didn't have any magic stones on hand. There were ways to produce light using household magic, but keeping the light going was exhausting. *To be honest, the dorms are much more comfortable than the Granger home. The only con is that my brothers aren't here.*

"Nassius will be here in two years, and Henry in four," I mumbled to myself. *I hope I can afford a horse by then. The dorms may be comfortable, but I'm sad that I can't kiss the angels good morning and good night.*

"To leave you all alone like this..." Mary lamented, regretting she couldn't stay. There was a lot to be done at home, so she was returning to the Granger residence.

"I wonder when lunch will be served," I wondered aloud. I hadn't brought much with me in the first place, and Mary had quickly put it all away. Since I was fully unpacked and had some spare time, I decided to read the dorm rules. *Mealtimes are important to know!*
"The noon bell?" I said, reading the unfamiliar phrase out loud. "I don't think it's rung yet."

The well-off students might have brought clocks with them, but I didn't have one with me. That was probably common among the poorer nobles, hence the bell. I continued reading through the schedule.

"There's a morning bell to wake us up, then there's a breakfast bell, warning bell, first period bells, second period bells, lunch bell, third period bells, fourth period bells, dinner bell, and a final bell at lights-out... That's quite a lot of bells." The class bells rang twice: once at the start, and once at the end. I sighed as I thought about spending every day being rushed by one bell after another.

Just then, I heard the clang of the bell. *Oh, it's time for lunch!* I wanted to run out of my room, but the Patience audit didn't allow that to happen. *Darn, I haven't triggered it in so long.* I'd thought it would just disappear over time, which had simultaneously relieved and saddened me. *I might start triggering it even more at the academy.*

I could hear Patience scolding me: *A proper lady is not to rush to the dining hall.* I understood her logic—I might seem gluttonous if I were to run to get lunch. I went to the sink and washed my hands before slowly walking toward the dining hall.

"I'm so hungry," I mumbled to myself. In the middle of my trip down the staircase, a delicious aroma wafted up from the dining hall, making my stomach growl. I picked up my pace.

I arrived at the dining hall a little late, as a proper lady should, and found it was already packed with students. *I guess we're all starving*, I thought, but I quickly noticed that there was a different air to the other students. We were all wearing the same gray uniform, but something was...*different*.

Oh, I see. Everyone else's uniforms fit them perfectly. I was wearing the smallest hand-me-down I had, which had been hemmed. Mary had brought in the shoulders and shortened the skirt and sleeves for me, but she'd left the uniform overall looser because I'd eventually grow into it.

I get it. These guys are rich, so they can get formfitting uniforms and just buy new ones when they grow out of them. Even the fabric

their uniforms are made out of looks more luxurious than mine. Having money is so *important.*

So, why were these "distinguished" students all here? The reason quickly became clear. Furniture that came with the dorms—like the beds, lounging furniture, and desks—was being carried by servants down the stairs to the basement. In other words, these students were having some major redecorating done. *They should've done this earlier*, I complained, though I dared not say it out loud.

The dining hall was a cafeteria, so I grabbed a tray and got in line. I had no problem with waiting in line, but I could easily imagine there being an idiot or two who would complain about this system. I was immediately proven right. *Look, they're already arguing.*

"What? I'm supposed to carry my food myself?" one student whined.

"I have to stand in this line?" another grumbled.

I should stay away from them. They're definitely not new students, since they're over 170 centimeters tall. It would be hilarious if they were somehow still ten years old. I'm sure they're upperclassmen, but they're acting quite childish!

"It's different from the salon," a student remarked.

Oh? There's a salon? I didn't see anything about a salon in the dorm rules. Maybe it's mentioned in the academy rules. This "salon" sounded like it might cost money, so it wasn't anything I had to worry about.

Thankfully, the tuition and dorm fees for the Royal Academy were free. Though, you did need money for uniforms and other miscellaneous expenses. I was fortunately able to get by thanks to my household spells, but attending the academy could be quite the financial burden for poor nobles. There were also deluxe suites within the dorms; you had to pay to stay in one. This was another feature that didn't concern me at all. I didn't have the money for it, and I was happy with room 205.

It was finally my turn for food. Lunch looked delicious. I was about to drool, but that wouldn't have been very ladylike. I did my best to hold my tray out gracefully, but someone cut in front of me. I shot him a glare as if to say, *I'm going to kill you!* but I was

completely ignored.

"Hey, don't cut in line!" a student behind me scolded.

"Excuse you? This is for His Highness, Prince Keith—"

Before the student who'd cut in front of me could finish his sentence, the air suddenly changed. Feeling a forceful presence, everyone immediately turned around. Standing there was an incredibly intimidating student with blond hair and blue eyes.

"Are you planning to spoil Keith, hoping to get into his good graces? Father put us in the dorms because he wants us to learn independence. Do you mean to go against his wishes?"

This student was probably Prince Richard. *He seems so intense. He's fifteen, so he's an upperclassman. I'm going to do my best to stay away from him this year*, I told myself, but I wasn't going to get what I wanted.

"Come here and apologize to this student, Keith," Richard ordered, calling him over to where I was.

No, no. I'm fine. Please leave me out of this. I wanted to flee the scene, but it didn't look like that was going to happen.

"I didn't ask him to do such a thing, Richard," Keith insisted. "That guy just did it all on his own..."

I think that's just going to add fuel to the fire. Prince Richard's intimidating aura grew even stronger. *Is this magic?* Now Prince Keith and the student who'd cut in front of me were both on their knees. *Is there a spell for intimidation? I should look that up later. Anyways, I want to get out of here without them noticing!*

Utilizing my small frame, I sneakily held my tray out, received my plate of food, and swiftly left the line while Prince Richard was still delivering his lecture.

I set my tray down on a table in an isolated corner of the dining hall and took my seat. *Ugh, royalty seems like such a hassle. I definitely don't want to get involved with them.* I felt like I could still hear the Patience within me complaining—something about how it was unbelievable to walk away from a prince without permission—but I *really* hadn't wanted to be a part of that terrifying fight between the siblings, so this was one time I'd managed to ignore her. *Prince Keith is in the same grade as I am... I hope we'll be in*

different classes.

Lunch today was a rich stew, but I couldn't savor this wonderful meal because I was so stressed out by that mess with the royal brothers. I quickly finished my meal and fled to my room.

According to what others said later, after Prince Richard's anger subsided, he'd tried to get Prince Keith to apologize, but there was nobody left to apologize to.

I holed up in my room to avoid interacting with the royals. But I didn't mind staying in my room, because this was the first place in my reincarnated life that I'd been so warm.

I would've loved to lie down on the sofa in front of the fireplace and read a book, but Patience's behavioral rules activated, so I properly sat up to read. I went through both the dorm's and academy's rules and discovered an incredible policy.

"You can skip grades! If you pass your exams, you can accelerate!"

In order to skip a grade, you had to pass exams for every subject. That seemed like it was going to be difficult. But even if I was only able to test out of a couple subjects, that might get me out of attending those classes, which would mean less time in class, less homework, and possibly more frequent opportunities to return home.

"Wait for me, my angels. I'm going to do my best!" I was eager to leave this academy as soon as possible.

I want my class schedule already. If I test out of my classes that are on Mondays and Fridays, I'll get to spend Friday through Monday at home! I was totally putting the cart before the horse. Even so, I went to dinner and quietly ate my meal while fantasizing about my potential four-day weekends.

"I don't have to get dressed up for dinner here," I remarked to myself. "Hooray for uniforms!"

I was used to eating alone. *You must be thinking that's because I was a sad, lonely office worker. Shut up!*

"It's time for a bath! Time for a bath!" I sang enthusiastically.

This was going to be my first bath since reincarnating into this world. *Hey, it's not that I'm dirty. Before I could use household magic, Mary wiped me down with hot water. After that, I started using the Cleanse spell. Taking a bath is still special, though.*

"I have to press the magic stone. Wow, there's hot water coming out!"

There was just something nice about baths. We had a proper bath at the Granger house too. *I should start using it when I'm back home. I ought to be able to use household magic to fill it with hot water.*

The covers on the dorm bed were several times thicker than my covers at home. *I'm so warm.* I felt blessed as I fell asleep.

The morning bell clanged. I was still asleep, but it was time to get up. I didn't want to garner any unwanted attention by showing up late to the opening ceremony. I'd already cut it close with that kerfuffle in the dining hall.

I need to focus on improving my family's quality of life! I can't afford to waste my time dealing with immature students.

"Please, please, please let the subjects I'm good at all be on Mondays or Fridays!" I selfishly prayed to the Estenaian God. I quickly washed my face and brushed my teeth with the toothbrush I'd purchased using the money I'd made mending socks. Mary was of the belief that a noble lady should work to keep her teeth beautiful, so it had been easy to convince her to get me one. Still, the "toothpaste" left something to be desired. *It's pretty much just salt. This must be improved!*

After eating breakfast, I headed to the lecture hall indicated on my program. *I wonder where I can find the class assignments? According to the program, we're supposed to be seated by class... Aha, there it is.* New students, both those living in the dorms and those commuting from home, were gathered in front of a board placed at the entrance to the lecture hall, and were buzzing with excitement. *Please don't have put me in the same class as Prince Keith.*

What do you mean I'm in Class A?! It didn't seem like my prayers

were working. *Maybe I should stop believing in the Estenaian God.* Neither Patience nor I had taken a placement exam prior to our enrollment in the Royal Academy. *Does that mean the class assignments are based on your family's noble rank?* My father was currently unemployed and also extremely poor, but he was still a viscount. *The royal family are at the top, followed by dukes, marquesses, counts, then viscounts... Looks like I must've just* barely *made the cut for Class A. I'm the very last name on the roster.* All I could do was sigh.

If I'd been in Class B, my classmates would've been the children of barons, baronets, and chevaliers. It would've been much more comfortable. *Oh, looks like there's a Class C too.* This third class seemed to be meant for academic geniuses and talented mages who enrolled by passing an exam. They were probably the children of the super wealthy or related to a mage, so they probably weren't struggling financially.

According to the student handbook, class assignments would be based on grades starting in our second year. *Oh, but is there a chance Prince Keith will get poor grades and drop down to Class B? Wait, I'm also trying to accelerate, so maybe I can skip a grade and jump straight into Year 2 Class C.* All these thoughts ran through my head as I sat at the very back at the Class A seating section and listened to the headmaster's long speech.

I guess opening ceremonies are boring even in another world. I thought I was finally done with sitting through these after graduating college... I guess orientation day for my job was pretty boring too.

The speech finally ended, only to be followed by a greeting from the student council president. Just as I'd expected, Prince Richard was the president. *He really has such an intense presence. He seems like an adept prince.*

I didn't even have to wonder who the representative of the new students would be. *Of course it's Prince Keith.* The predictability was hilarious. *Yeah, he's definitely nervous, but he's doing pretty well*, I thought as I listened to Prince Keith's speech. I was impressed, considering he was ten years old. *I guess members of the royal*

family go through rigorous education even before attending the Royal Academy.

I was glad that there was no guest speaker. *I mean, what guest could top two princes?* We all sang Lawrence's national anthem, for which Patience's memories really came in handy, and the opening ceremony came to a close.

After the boring opening ceremony, we were instructed to follow our homeroom teachers. The homeroom teacher for Class A was a tall man who looked pretty strict. *They don't use corporal punishment here, right? Will they overwork us just because they want our young brains to soak up as much knowledge as possible? They say, "Strike while the iron is hot," right?* I followed our teacher, staying toward the back as I became slightly afraid of how much work was potentially waiting for me.

The classroom was completely ordinary. It was normal in this world for desks and chairs to all be made out of wood. Prince Keith sat in the front row by the windows, and the other students took their seats one after the other. I was in the last row on the side of the room closest to the hallway. This was quite a good seat. *Honestly, I would prefer to be by the window, but I'm lucky to not have to sit in front of the teacher's podium.*

"Have you all taken your seats? My name is Donald Hagan, and I'll be your homeroom teacher. I teach math."

Nice. I'm good at math... Well, to be fair, we're ten-year-olds, so it should just be upper-level elementary school math we're looking at. The class is buzzing though. I guess some people aren't as confident in this subject.

"We'll begin with self-introductions," Mr. Hagan said.

I knew it. I hate doing this. I'm in a different world, so I have no idea what to say... I'm glad I'll be going last.

"My name is Keith. I'm the second prince. I'm skilled in fire magic, and I also study swordsmanship. I'm currently looking for a sparring partner. I'm planning to advance into the knight track, so I'm planning on joining the knight club as well."



Wow, that was an impressively arrogant self-introduction. Everyone was clapping, so I joined in.

"My name is Ralph Mackenzie. I am the second son of Marquess Mackenzie. I have been blessed with wind magic. I also plan to join the knight club. Please spar with me, Your Highness."

I was right about it being in rank order. I think it was this Ralph kid who cut in front of me in the cafeteria.

"I'm Hugo Angus. I'm the eldest son of Count Angus. I've been blessed with fire magic. I also aim to join the knight club."

Wait, no! This guy's the cutter! Sorry, Ralph. Also, Hugo, you want to join the knight club even though you're the eldest? I thought only second sons and onward become knights. I guess they really are all Prince Keith's sycophants.

A majority of boys in our class seemed to be interested in advancing into the knight track or joining the knight club. They'd probably been told by their parents to become friends with Prince Keith. *Sounds tough, being turned into a means for your parents to fulfill their desires when you're only ten.* I'd been upset when he cut in front of me, but I was now feeling bad for Hugo. *He's already been intimidated by that terrifying Prince Richard. It's childish of me to hold a grudge.*

The majority of the class were boys, but it wasn't like I was the only girl here. Out of the thirty students in this class, twenty were boys and ten were girls, including me.

"I'm Louise Fendi. I'm the eldest daughter of Count Fendi. I've been blessed with light magic. I love singing, so I'm thinking of joining the choir club." She was a pretty girl with blonde hair, and to top it off, she was proficient in light magic! The boys were all buzzing with excitement. *Louise is probably going to be the leader of the girls in this class, and Keith will be the boss of the boys. I'm going to avoid them both.*

One after another, students finished introducing themselves, and by the time most of the class had stopped listening it was my turn. *They probably won't notice if I slack on my introduction, right?*

"I'm Patience Granger. I'm the eldest child of Viscount Granger. I've been granted household magic."

Including myself, there were three girls in our class who were proficient in household magic. People seemed unimpressed when the first one introduced herself, and she'd even gotten some mocking looks. I'd been ignored, which I was grateful for.

"It looks like we're done with introductions," Mr. Hagan said. "Let's move on. I'm going to pass out your schedules, textbooks, and the events calendar."

Upon receiving my schedule, I immediately checked to see what my chances would be at accelerating. *Yay! Monday is math, language arts, history, and...oh no. Magic practicum. This may be hard to accelerate. Is there even a way to skip grades with household magic?* I decided to put my hopes on Friday. *Let's see... There's classical literature, magic theory, art, and music*. I had Patience's memories of playing an instrument similar to a piano, and I myself had played the piano quite a bit during my previous life. I hadn't been talented enough to go to college for it or anything, but I'd been able to play my favorite songs, so I would probably do fine in my classes here. That left...magic theory. *I don't feel confident about this subject. I mean, I came from a world without magic, so I don't get an edge from my previous education.*

I decided to think about accelerating later and focused on reviewing my entire schedule. Math, language arts, history, classical literature, and magic theory were all classroom lectures. Besides the magic practicum, music, art, dance, and physical education were also all practical lessons. *Oh, it looks like girls can swap physical education for home ec. Looks like music, art, and dance are all mandatory. I guess that's to be expected for highfalutin people like aristocrats.*

I'd always enjoyed exercising, but it seemed Patience hadn't had much experience with it. I also didn't want to deal with taking physical education with a bunch of ten-year-olds. *My sewing skills are already as good as a professional's thanks to my household magic, so I think I'll take home ec instead of PE.*

We also had homeroom every morning. *I haven't had a homeroom class since I was in high school. I hope Mr. Hagan keeps things concise.*

"Lastly, I'll be handing out the club brochures. You're not required to join a club, but it's a way to make your time at the academy more meaningful. I implore you all to give it a proper consideration."

The brochure was thick—perhaps even thicker than our textbooks. I wanted to go home on the weekends to see my brothers, and I also wanted to have a side job, so I had no intentions of joining any clubs.

I was expecting homeroom to wrap up at this point, but Mr. Hagan began discussing some other important matters. *I wonder if he forgot to bring this up earlier. It feels weird to talk about something essential after something optional like clubs.*

"I want you all to look at your schedules. For every subject you'll be taking, there will be a test during the first class of the week." The entire class started buzzing. It was understandable, since no one liked tests. "Quiet down!" Mr. Hagan scolded, then continued. "These tests are to assess your knowledge and skills. There's no point in making you take classes that cover things you already know. In fact, that would be a waste of your time."

Oh, looks like he's talking about accelerating. I should listen properly.

"My brother has accelerated in multiple subjects," Prince Keith boasted. "He's still here this year because he's the student council president."

Prince Keith just wanted to brag about his older brother. *That's fair. He does seem like he turned out well. Though, I'm assuming he wasn't able to just graduate early, even while accelerating, because he has some subjects left to pass.* That was a bit rude of me to think. I prayed for Patience to not be upset with me.

"Can we accelerate into a higher grade level, Mr. Hagan?" Louise asked.

I like ambitious girls, Louise! Also, thanks for asking the very question I had on my mind.

"It's possible to skip an entire grade, but you'll have to pass the exams in every subject, except for dance, art, music, and physical education. Those four are exceptions because they're evaluated

differently based on the instructor, and they're classes you can still take at a higher grade level."

It seemed that aside from the magic practicum, the practical classes were relatively unimportant. Even though we had magic practicum twice a week, each of the other practical classes were only once a week. If you counted both magic theory and magic practicum together, we had magic classes four days a week—that made up one fifth of the twenty schedule blocks we had each week. Just as I'd expected, the Royal Academy gathered nobles to have them study magic. The students in Class C weren't nobles, but they seemed much wealthier than my family, and all seemed to be able to wield magic. *Man, I wish I had money!*

I'd gotten a bit sidetracked, but I returned to reviewing the schedule. *It looks like there aren't any science classes, like a basic elementary science course or physics. Classical literature... Do magic tomes count as classical literature? Or is it more focused on cultural literacy? Combined with language arts, there's humanities classes six days a week. That's a lot!*

We had both math and history three times a week. I'd be relying on Patience's memories to get through classical literature. The Grangers' private library had plenty of classical books, and Patience had read many of them. I was also going to need her help for history. Oh, and for language arts as well.

The days of the week are the same as in my previous life. I'm glad I don't have to memorize new ones. As such frivolous thoughts ran through my mind, homeroom came to an end. It was time to take my books and head to my room.

The boys were all gathered around Prince Keith, and the girls were gathered around Louise. I had my sights set on accelerating, so I needed to go back to my room and study magic theory. It would be so nice if I could go home on Fridays.

I wasn't sure what magic practicum would be like, so for now I memorized the entirety of the magic theory textbook. It was geared toward children, so the content was quite easy to remember—although whether I actually *understood* it was a separate issue. I would probably be able to pass the test, so I decided to think more

about magic theory later. After all, when it came to actually using magic, I didn't recite any spells. I just said things like "Become clean" or "Get bigger!"

"I reverently call upon thee, O Estenaian God. Bestow upon me the spirit of burning flame: Fireball." What is all that? Some kind of punishment? Oh, looks like highly skilled mages can get away with just saying, "Fireball." Though, for bigger spells, asking for the Estenaian God's help increases your chances of success.

From now on, was I supposed to recite an incantation when using household magic in front of others? Was I supposed to say, "I reverently call upon thee, O Estenaian God. I beseech you to grant me a civilized life and deliver me from the embarrassment of a maiden who needs to flush the toilet"? *Well, I wouldn't be using the toilet in front of other people anyway*.

My sacrilegious thoughts made Patience angry. *My head hurts! Did I really reincarnate into this world? Am I just possessing her body? Is Patience actually just in a state of hibernation?* Abruptly, a sense of sadness washed over me, and I instinctively knew that Patience was truly dead.

"It's tragic that you passed away at ten years old, Patience. I promise to take good care of your brothers. So, please, could you try to be a little less upset with me? It really hurts my head."

It was possible that I'd reincarnated here from another world because Patience was worried about her brothers' futures. This world had magic stones, so there were probably monsters too. Household magic was no use against monsters, so I definitely wasn't meant to be a hero for this world, nor a saint who healed people with light magic.

Oh, Patience is nagging me to look after my father as well. I'm definitely going to be looking after my younger brothers, so I'll take care of him, too, while I'm at it. She's only ten, but she cares more about her family than herself. Don't worry, Patience. I was an adult, so you can leave them to me!

SCHEDULE

Homeroom
Every morning following the warning bell.

Monday
Math | Language Arts | History | Magic Practicum

Tuesday
Classical Literature | Math | Magic Theory | Dance

Wednesday
Language Arts | History | Classical Literature | Physical Education/Home Economics

Thursday
Math | Language Arts | History | Magic Practicum

Friday
Classical Literature | Magic Theory | Art | Music

"I don't appreciate the opening ceremony being on a Monday. It's so awful that I can't see my brothers for an entire week."

There was no point in complaining about the calendar. Tuesday was going to be classical literature, math, magic theory, and dance. I was relieved that I didn't have to pass dance to accelerate. After all, the Granger family didn't have a tutor who could've taught me to dance. We also didn't have the money to host any soirees, nor were we invited to any. *Although maybe Patience just hasn't been invited yet because she's a child. Did my relative's daughter not have a birthday party or anything? Wouldn't kids dance with each other at an event like that?*

I actually enjoyed dancing. I'd even gone out to clubs when I was a college student during my previous life. That was different from the kind of dancing nobles did. *I wish I'd joined the ballroom*

dancing club. I was actually pretty interested in it, but I was young and embarrassed about dancing in pairs with a guy. Wait, are us ten-year-olds going to have to pair up and dance? I have a bad *feeling about this.*

Tuesday came, and it was time for our tests. I relied on Patience's memories for classical literature, so it was a piece of cake. I didn't even need her help for math to be a breeze. I ate my lunch quickly and returned to the dorms to spend the rest of my lunch break in my room rereading the magic theory textbook.

The food is so good. I feel bad that I can't take my time to enjoy it. On a sidenote, lunch was served in the school's dining hall. It was a nice place. The royal family and upperclass nobles were served meals in the salon for an extra fee, so only the students who were eating the free meals were in the dining hall. It was a comfortable environment.

After lunch was the magic theory test. Memorizing the textbook felt like it had been enough. The final question, which was weighted more heavily than the others, was a short answer question. I'd written down exactly what the textbook said, but I was still a little nervous about that one.

"Next is dance. I'm not looking forward to it," one of the girls said, despite looking completely happy to be there. The boys actually seemed genuinely unhappy.

Even if we're nobles, we're still ten-year-olds. I can tell by their faces that the boys really don't want to do this.

"All right then. Let's all get into pairs," Ms. Lenard, the dance teacher, instructed. But the boys didn't budge.

"You guys are hopeless," Prince Keith said.

Wow, he can be pretty dauntless. Oh, looks like he's got his eye set on Louise.

"Will you dance with me?" he asked her.

Aw, that's so cute.

"Boys, if you don't find a female partner, you will have to pair up and dance with each other," the teacher pointed out.

It wasn't clear if they were just following Prince Keith's lead or if

Ms. Lenard's threat had worked, but one after another, boys began asking the girls to dance. Even I got an invitation—from Hugo, the boy who'd cut in front of me. *I wonder why he asked me. Maybe this is his way of apologizing.*

"Now then, we're going to follow the diagram and dance."

Ms. Lenard showed us how to do it, but suddenly dancing along to the piano-like instrument seemed difficult. Just then, a diagram appeared on the floor of the dance hall. *I guess this* is *a world with magic after all.*

Will I look like I'm dancing if I just follow the diagram, moving my left leg and right leg in the correct order? The dance was similar to a box step. *I think I can do this.* Surprisingly, Hugo was a skilled dancer. *If I recall correctly, he's the eldest son of Count Angus. He probably had a dance tutor.*

"You two pass," Ms. Lenard announced, and Prince Keith and Louise became the first two to pass.

I was also able to pass, perhaps thanks to Hugo.

"Thank you very much," I said, sincerely expressing my gratitude.

"Now we're even," he huffed.

How cute. I guess I'm still a shotacon, I thought to myself. Though I was definitely *not* a pervert who would make moves on a ten-year-old child.

Wednesday was language arts, history, classical literature, and physical education/home economics. We'd already taken the assessment for classical literature, so we would just be getting our tests back. The language arts exam had been easy, and I felt confident that I'd managed to pass the history exam as well. It was all thanks to Patience.

"I think I'll take my time enjoying lunch today," I said to myself. After lunch, we were going to be getting our classical literature tests back, then I had home ec. Thanks to my household magic and experience living on my own during my previous life, I could handle most domestic tasks.

"Flavorful stew is truly the best," I remarked to myself. There were chunks of what seemed like beef, which were so tender that a

fork went through them with no resistance. *I wish I could give this to my brothers. I need to eat, though. I'm as thin as a rail.*

I excitedly ate lunch on my own. Where were the other girls, you ask? They'd all been invited to the salon by Louise. None of the other girls in Class A lived in the dorms—even the provincial nobles were all commuting from their family residences in Romano. In contrast, it seemed like some of the boys had moved into the dorms, including Ralph and Hugo. They were definitely there because of Prince Keith. They probably wanted to become friends with him in school so they could become his advisors in the future. *Sounds exhausting.*

I'd scored full marks on my classical literature test. Patience was truly exceptional. *Now that I think about it, the Grangers might be a really smart clan.* I'd been the only one in my class to pass classical literature, and so I'd ended up standing out a bit.

"There's no point to studying classics," Prince Keith grumbled. He seemed upset, and Ralph warned him that the classical literature teacher was glaring at him.

Must be exhausting, having to babysit a prince. I started becoming suspicious of the others' failures. *Couldn't Ralph have passed this class? I think he might've failed on purpose, knowing that it's not a subject Prince Keith's good at.* It felt like he found it more important to be the prince's friend than to accelerate. *He even waited to dance until he saw how well Prince Keith was doing. Whatever; it doesn't have anything to do with me.*

In home ec, all we had to do was sew fabric together in a straight line. Of course, I passed, even without using my household magic. Though it probably wasn't enough of a mistake to result in a failure, there were several students who were making a fuss over stabbing themselves in the finger with their needle. *I guess a noble lady doesn't usually do needlework.* Louise appeared to pass and made her way toward me.

"Lady Patience," she greeted me. "You've passed dance, classical literature, and even home economics."

"Your dancing was brilliant as well, Lady Louise," I responded. "I only passed it because of my dance partner's help. Sewing just happens to be my forte." When you received a compliment, you were to give a compliment back—this was the social etiquette among women. That was the case in both my previous world and this one.

"My, and you passed classical literature? It isn't surprising, I suppose, since the Grangers *are* a family of academics."

That may be true, but she should know my father's been dismissed from his position. Is she being sarcastic? If she wants a fight, she'll get one! Even though I was ready to take her on, I could hear Patience screaming inside me: *No!* It seemed that fighting the daughter of a count was not allowed.

"Thank you very much," I said politely while suppressing my frustration.

On Thursday, we got our math and language arts tests back. We also had our history and magic practicum exams. Instead of just relying on Patience's memories, I'd also read through the history textbook, so I felt confident about that test. My concern was with magic practicum. The way I cast spells was nothing like the methods in the magic theory textbook. *Should I really be chanting those embarrassing incantations? I don't know what to do.*

Prince Keith, Ralph, Hugo, and I passed math. I instinctively feared Louise's gaze. *It might be better for me to just skip ahead to the next grade level.* A large number of people passed language arts, including Prince Keith, Ralph, Hugo, and Louise. *I mean, it was pretty easy.* Some of the other girls had passed as well.

Patience and I had had to work together on the history test, and I felt like I'd probably passed. There was just one question where I couldn't remember the time period and had to rely on Patience's memories.

I was now done with all the exams for the lecture-based classes. All that was left were tests for practical courses.

I wanted to avoid being in the same grade as Prince Keith, and I

didn't like that Louise had pegged me as a rival either, so I took the idea of skipping grades seriously.

It was finally time for magic practicum, my main obstacle. I could actually fail the remaining practical classes, art and music, and still skip ahead to the next grade level.

To my surprise, there was a special classroom for magic practicum. *I guess it would be dangerous to send a fireball flying just anywhere in the school.* It looked like a large gymnasium, except the ground was bare earth. It was probably useful for earth mages. *Are there any household magic spells I can use here?* I began to worry.

There were students of other grade levels in the practicum room as well, but all the first-years were huddled together. *Wait, there's a flaming ball headed for that target! It must be a fireball. I've never seen a real one before.* I had seen fireballs depicted in video games and cartoons, but they were much more impressive in real life. *I really don't want to get hit by that. Oh, I see now, an upperclassman just wanted to show off to the lower grades. How cute. Oh, they're being scolded by the teacher. Well, yeah, of course they are.*

"All first-years in Class A, gather over here!" the magic practicum teacher that had scolded the upperclassman instructed. He was Mr. Shepard, and he looked way too athletic to be a mage. He seemed like one of those hot-blooded teachers you saw in anime.

Will he see the value of household magic?

"Everyone, split up into groups based on your area of proficiency."

We split up into seven groups: fire, water, wind, earth, light, physical enhancement, and household magic. There were two other girls in my group. *I think their names are Lucienne and Caitlin.* We were all daughters of viscounts, but unlike me, the other girls were daughters of land-owning nobles. It felt like we were seen as inferior for being proficient in household magic, and we huddled up in one corner of the practicum room. Soon after, teachers began pouring into the hall.

"You'll be performing beginner spells for the teacher assessing your group," Mr. Shepard explained. As expected, he was in charge

of the physical enhancement group, but he was apparently also in charge of teaching fire magic. *I feel bad for Prince Keith.*

Louise was the only student proficient in light magic, but the academy had gone out of their way to invite a nun just for her. It was clear that they had high hopes for her.

"So, you three are proficient in household magic. I'm Angela Jefferson. If you master household magic, there won't be anything you can't do!"

Madam Jefferson was an older noblewoman. Her hair was gray, but she was hale and hearty—she was basically an energetic grandmother. All of us let out a sigh of relief. It seemed like household magic was seen as inferior in comparison to the other areas of magic, so I was happy to hear her speak well of it.

She seems nice enough that she might not make me recite those embarrassing incantations. It was one thing for an actual ten-year-old to recite the incantations, but as someone who was mentally twenty-five, it was much too embarrassing to say those dorky phrases out loud.

We went in seating order, which was based on our family's status, so Lucienne was the first to go. Even if we were all daughters of viscounts, there were differences in status based on the size of a family's estate and one's family history. Patience seemed knowledgeable on the topic, but I didn't really care.

Lucienne cast a cleansing spell. *Whoa, she's reciting the embarrassing incantation. I feel like she didn't get herself that clean, though.* Of course, she hadn't been dirty to start with, so it was hard to tell. Neither she nor Caitlin were able to receive a passing grade from Madam Jefferson, but magic practicum itself seemed to be a fun class, which I was glad to see.

My turn was last.

"Become clean," I commanded as usual. I felt refreshed. I hadn't been dirty to begin with either, so I probably didn't look too different, but the spell also made me feel emotionally refreshed. *It's just so useful!*

"Oh my, Patience Granger! There's no need for me to teach you. Well done. You've completed the household magic practicum."

Huh? Madam Grandma? I passed?

Madam Jefferson called over Mr. Shepard, who was in the middle of some passionate instruction, and handed him a slip of paper.

"Wait, Madam Jefferson. This student is only a first-year."

Something feels off. Does this mean I won't get to skip to the next grade level?

"Yes, well, there's nothing more for me to teach her. I will be issuing her a certificate of completion."

Wait, hold on! I don't want to stand out! That might sound hypocritical, since skipping a grade would also make me stand out, but there were good reasons for me to pursue it despite the unwanted attention. *Please don't do this to me, Madam Grandma. Ugh, I can feel Louise glaring at me again...* All I could do was be glad that I was likely skipping ahead a grade level.

I also passed my magic theory test on Friday. A lot of other students seemed to pass it as well. The textbook was so thin, all you had to do was memorize its contents. Ralph, Hugo, and Louise were among those who passed magic theory, and perhaps not coincidentally, Prince Keith had also passed it. Even if I was able to skip ahead a grade, it seemed like I might still have a lot of classes with Prince Keith and Louise.

Anyway, let's get back to the assessments. Next was art, and I enjoyed drawing. Patience hadn't had the money to buy paint, but she was pretty good at observational drawing. She was probably better at drawing than I was. Ultimately, Louise and I both passed art. *This sucks.*

For music, we had to play an instrument. I found out that the piano-like instrument was called a hanon. They technically had different names based on their size, but the entire category of instruments were called hanons. It had a higher range than a piano, and it sounded closer to a harpsichord. I relied on Patience's skills and successfully passed. Many of the students who passed music were girls—which once again *of course* included Louise. *This really sucks.*

Prince Keith also passed, playing some sort of string instrument.

Is that a lute? Unsurprisingly, after Prince Keith passed, Ralph followed suit, playing a flutelike instrument. Hugo unfortunately didn't pass. He played the same lute that Prince Keith did, but he didn't seem very familiar with it. *I feel like he would've been fine if he'd just picked an instrument he was confident playing.*

"Is that Patience passing *every* subject?" Prince Keith groused to his lackeys as he glared at me.

I guess he doesn't like that I've passed more subjects than he has. That's probably why Ralph is holding back. Is it right to deliberately underperform just to massage the prince's ego, though? I feel like it isn't...but I guess it's not my problem. I don't want to get involved with Prince Keith anyway.

After classes ended on Friday, I was called to the teachers' offices by my homeroom teacher, Mr. Hagan.

"You'll be getting it back on Monday, but I wanted to tell you that you passed your history test. Because of that, you—Patience Granger—will be advancing into the second year. Starting Monday, you'll be in Second Year Class A. Oh, also, Madam Jefferson issued you a certificate of completion for your magic practicum, so you'll be exempt from that class."

Huh. I was trying to accelerate so I could take Mondays and Fridays off, no?

"Mr. Hagan, may I please have the schedule for Year 2 Class A?" He handed me the schedule, which I thoroughly reviewed. "Hmm? Isn't this the same as my current schedule?"

"Of course it is," Mr. Hagan responded. "Class A has the same schedule across all grades in the junior division. Otherwise, it would cause trouble for the students who are accelerating in certain subjects. Once you're in the senior division, classes will be credit-based, so these sorts of considerations don't have to be made. Do you have any idea how hard it is to put together a functional course schedule?"

No, I don't.

"Does that mean that all of us, including Class B and Class C, have the same schedule for three years?"

"Only students in Class A can accelerate," Mr. Hagan explained with a sour look. "Starting in your second year, your class assignment will be based on your grades. We're actually dealing with a lot of pressure from parents about the system." By basing class assignments on grades, the teachers got complaints from parents of upperclass families when their children dropped down to Class B. He followed up this revelation with some shocking news. "Oh, by the way, you can only skip ahead one grade each year, so no jumping into Year 3 courses. Of course, it's a different story if you get a certificate of completion like you did with the magic practicum."

"What...? I worked so hard because I wanted to be at home... Mr. Hagan, I don't need to skip a grade. I don't mind remaining a first-year. Since I've proven I understand the material, I don't really need to be at the academy, right?"

My words unleashed Mr. Hagan's wrath.

"Don't be ridiculous! It's true that it's a waste of time to make students study subjects they already understand, but that's not the only reason for the acceleration system! It also exists to help students grow their skills! If you accelerate through the junior and senior divisions, you'll be able to attend university!"

Girls got married early in life in this world. The appropriate age range to get married was between sixteen and twenty, so most parents didn't allow their daughters to attend university. Mr. Hagan was probably trying to make the point that if I graduated early, thanks to accelerating, I would have the chance to attend university without sacrificing my prime marriage years. Unfortunately, he didn't know that my family didn't have the money to send me to university. And even if we did, I would rather we sent smart little Nassius to university. I wanted the same for Henry as well.

"Right, let me introduce you to Second Year Class A's homeroom teacher," Mr. Hagan said, suddenly changing the subject. I'd fallen silent, which had perhaps reminded him of the Granger family's circumstances and made him feel awkward. "Mr. Kepner, this is Patience Granger, the student who'll be accelerating into the second year starting Monday."

Mr. Kepner was a slightly plump, middle-aged man.

"Oh, you must be the Patience that everyone is talking about," he said. "My name is Junges Kepner. I'm here to help if you ever face any issues because of your acceleration." He seemed like a gentle person, which was a relief.

"I'm Patience Granger. It's lovely to meet you. Um, I don't have the textbooks for my new classes, so I would be grateful for your assistance with that."

I received my second-year textbooks and returned to my room.

"I'm such a fool!!!" I exclaimed, dropping my textbooks onto my desk as I was overcome with sadness. My plan to be at home on Mondays and Fridays had been impossible from the very start. "Next year I'll be a third-year, unless I accelerate again, which would instead make me a first-year in the senior division. Oh bother! I should have asked Mr. Kepner about that!"

If I could accelerate into the senior division next year, I would graduate the junior division two years early. If I could also skip grades in the senior division, I could spend just two years there, and I could graduate from the Royal Academy three years early. In three years, Nassius would be attending the Royal Academy, which meant Henry would be left at home alone, if I were still in school. That worried me, but before I counted any unhatched chickens, I first had to find out whether there was an acceleration system in the senior division. According to Mr. Hagan, the classes were set up differently than in the junior division; he'd mentioned that it was a credit-based system.

"It'd be nice if I could somehow get certificates of completion for math, language arts, and history," I mumbled to myself. I'd relied on Patience to get through the classical literature test, but I could probably get by in those three subjects just by studying on my own. I could memorize the textbook for magic theory, but I wasn't confident if that would get me to a level where I could obtain a certificate of completion. That was one class I knew I had no choice but to take, albeit as a second-year instead of a first-year.

"I'll give classical literature and magic theory my best effort and aim to graduate early! Wait for me, Nassius, Henry!"

Though I wanted to graduate early, I actually quite liked the

Royal Academy. After all, appearance-wise, Prince Keith, Ralph, and Hugo were adorable. Prince Keith was blond with green eyes, and his arrogant expressions were so cute that just looking at him filled me with happiness. Ralph always tried to act mature, which was just precious. He had brown hair and blue eyes, along with a bone structure that suggested he'd grow up to become an incredibly handsome young man. Hugo was a bit of a loose cannon who didn't think much before he acted, which was endearing in its own way. He wasn't as good-looking as Ralph, but he had some good bone structure as well. His red hair and blue eyes were charming.

Though I was enjoying the visuals of this shotacon's heaven, they were the prince and his lackeys, so I wasn't going to get anywhere near them. I also wasn't a pervert—I had *no* intentions of laying my hands on ten-year-old boys! I also didn't need them because I had two adorable angels waiting for me at home.

"I get to see the angels tomorrow," I said to myself, having completely cheered up.

The carriage was supposed to come get me after breakfast on Saturday morning. I wanted to go home first thing in the morning, but we had to first rent the horse.

Things were quiet at the dorm since the members of the royal family and upperclass nobles, who usually wouldn't have been living in the dorms in the first place, had returned to their homes.

"They do serve more food here than I'd get at home, so I should eat up before I go."

I got to keep my first-year textbooks, so I decided to bring them home for my brothers. Nassius could probably skip a grade every year, though he might have a hard time with dance and physical education. *I'd like to save up some money to get Nassius's proficiency evaluation done early; he'll probably need to practice his magic too. It would be nice if we could also hire a tutor.*

The boys' physical education was a little different from what I'd pictured. There was the usual running, but upon sneaking a peek at the upperclassmen's course list, I learned that they also did sword fighting and horse riding. *We don't even have a horse, so they*

obviously can't ride horses.

Noble children took part in expensive activities. *I don't think I've seen any swords around the house, so we might have sold them. Father can teach them academic subjects, but I don't think he can teach them dance, music, or swordsmanship.*

I decided that I would teach my brothers dance, music, and art. We'd sold our hanon, but we had a model of a keyboard. Though, it didn't produce any sound, so it might not be great for practicing. Patience had first learned on an actual hanon, so she'd been able to practice her finger movements even with the flimsy model keyboard. *Even a cheap one is fine. I've got to get my hands on one. Having a hanon will add some cheer to our lives. There's no way to listen to music other than to play it! I miss having CDs.*

My thoughts always came back to one thing: *I wish I had money!*

While I waited for Mary in my room, I thought about ways to make money. Mending socks only made me enough to have some pocket change. Side jobs didn't make a lot of money, but I was definitely going to have one. *My brothers are going to need uniforms when they enroll in the academy.* The more I thought about it, the more it became apparent that I would have no choice but to get Wyatt, the butler, involved if I wanted to buy things like a hanon and a horse.

"I'm sure Wyatt will figure something out." Now that I was at the Royal Academy, I had a better idea of what I needed for my brothers' education. I also wanted a hanon and paints for myself. If I could find a side job painting ceramics, that would kill two birds with one stone. *I should talk to Wyatt about this stuff too.* "I'd also like to get a better grasp of our family's finances. Though I don't think Wyatt is going to share that information so easily."

The Granger family seemed like we had already hit rock bottom, financially speaking, but it didn't seem like we had been subsisting just by selling off our things. Though it wasn't much, we also received some assistance from relatives. *I don't actually have any memories of meeting the relatives who gave me this uniform.*

Patience's early childhood memories weren't always clear, but they showed instances of guests coming over. Perhaps young

children weren't expected to greet visiting relatives in noble society. By the time she'd gotten a little older, her father had already been dismissed from his job, and there weren't any guests coming over. That was why I'd left repairing the drawing room for later—it had been closed up, unused, and hadn't deteriorated as much. *Well, it would be bad if we did have any guests, so I should take care of it soon.*

"Mary's taking so long," I mumbled to myself. I'd wanted to wait at the front entrance, but I wasn't allowed to do so. Apparently it wasn't proper for a noble lady to wait on her own without an attendant.

If I could ever convince Patience to accept this breach of etiquette, I might eventually convince her to let me use the free time I'd earned from not having a magic practicum or joining a club to go explore downtown. It seemed like we were quite far from the area, but Eva had been working at the market every day, and she probably hadn't been taking a hackney. *Is it within walking distance? Oh, maybe I don't have to go all the way downtown. Nobles have daily necessities they buy too, right? I wonder if there's some area between the two, like a residential and commercial area for upperclass commoners—a town for those of mid-level status. I'll have to scope things out before heading downtown. Maybe I'll ask Mary about all this when she's getting me dressed for dinner.* Just then, my ride home finally arrived.

The carriage felt incredibly slow. After all, I hadn't seen my brothers for an entire week. I could hear Patience complaining inside me: *How improper!* Still, I couldn't help myself, and I leaped out of the carriage. There's no way I could have waited for George to bring out the steps.

"Welcome home, my lady," Wyatt greeted me, opening the door.

"Sister!" Nassius and Henry exclaimed as they ran down the stairs.

Don't trip!

"Hello Nassius! Henry! Have you been doing well?" I gave them a big hug and soaked in the bliss. *I don't ever want to leave you two*

ever again! I need to fix the Granger family's finances for their sake!

Lunch was less food than my meals at the academy, but still significantly better than it used to be. *Is this just because I'm home? I need to see what my brothers are eating on a regular basis. I also need to look in on the vegetables in the greenhouse and do my side job.*

But more importantly, I wanted to study and play with my brothers. *Henry's more rambunctious than Nassius, so maybe I can take him to the greenhouse with me.*

There was so much I wanted to do, but my father asked to speak to me after dinner. *Oh, he must've gotten a letter from the Royal Academy.* I knocked on the door to his study, my head hung low out of the belief that my efforts to accelerate (in order to have more time at home) were for nothing.

I entered my father's study, feeling like he was getting in the way of my time with the angels.

"I heard that you're skipping into the next grade. You did well, Patience. I'm proud of you."

I enjoyed the praise, but my brothers were waiting for me.

"Thank you very much. I'll continue to do my best." I quickly stood up to leave the study and head to the boys' room.

"Hold on just a moment. I wasn't done yet."

There were two envelopes sitting on my father's impressive desk. One had been sealed with the emblem of the Royal Academy, so that was probably the notice of my acceleration. The other was— *Oh dear. I know that crest!* Had Prince Keith lodged a complaint about me to someone? Did he think it was rude of me to pass more subjects than he did? The color drained from my face.

"Are you all right, Patience?" my father asked.

I was worried that I'd brought another misfortune upon the already unfortunate Granger family, but my father seemed elated rather than troubled.

"Yes, I apologize for getting so flustered. What is that letter?"

"Oh, this. It's a letter from Her Majesty, Queen Victoria."

I knew it. Keith complained about me to the queen. I want to

pass out, but I've never done it before.

"She requests that you become Princess Margaret's lady's maid. What an honor! It seems that Princess Margaret is living in the dorms, along with Prince Richard and Prince Keith. His Majesty is implementing quite the arduous method to help his children grow."

My father had been fired by the very king he was speaking of, but he spoke of His Majesty with incredibly high regard. *Also, what's a lady's maid? That's different from a court lady, right?*

"Father, what is a lady's maid?" Patience didn't seem to know either, so I decided to ask my father, since he'd worked in the royal palace. He had been fired, though, so I was a little worried about relying on him.

"A lady's maid is someone who serves at the queen's or a princess's side."

I can see why he was fired. That answer didn't explain anything.

"Ah, but how is a lady's maid different from the similarly named jobs of court lady or regular maid?" I asked. My father was busy getting excited about what an honor this apparently was, but I wanted a proper explanation. If I didn't figure out what exactly this entailed, I knew I'd be the one who'd suffer.

"A court lady is a civil servant who works in the royal palace, while a maid is a regular servant. A lady's maid is a noble who personally serves an individual member of the royal family. I can't believe you were selected to be a lady's maid to Princess Margaret!" My father was over the moon, but I was still just completely confused.

"If I recall correctly, Princess Margaret is a third-year student. I might have accelerated, but I'm still only going to be in my second year..."

I didn't want to be like Ralph or Hugo, who followed Prince Keith everywhere like groupies. Also, if we were in different grades, we would have different classes, so wouldn't being her lady's maid be impossible? I prayed for my father to politely decline the offer. It felt like Patience was getting excited as well, but I was going to ignore that!

"Well, she will have her friends with her during classes, so that

won't be a problem. Prince Richard and Prince Keith's friends live in the dorms, but Princess Margaret's friends are all noble ladies who declined to move into the dorms when they're already in their third year."

I wanted to decline this offer as well, but my father seemed to have no intention of doing that.

"May I have some time to think about it?"

My father seemed shocked by my response. *Is this such a great honor that we can't decline? I don't think I can ask my father, but maybe I can ask Wyatt if it's a paid position. I'd go through hell for the right amount of money.*

I looked over my brothers' studies, then I showed them around the greenhouse, where we harvested some turnips together. All of that recharged my energy so I could face Wyatt.

Until it was time to get dressed for dinner, Mary was going to be busy looking after my brothers. I used that opportunity to go to the butler's room in the semibasement. After all, if Mary found out about the offer to be Princess Margaret's lady's maid, there was no way I was going to be able to decline—in other words, I couldn't bear to let Mary down.

"Wyatt, do you have a moment?"

He had apparently gotten a grasp on the entire situation just from seeing the emblems on the envelopes, yet he still asked if I needed something. He was as formidable as always.

"Is there any way I can decline the offer to be Princess Margaret's lady's maid? I fear I would not be suited for it." *That's right. I want to look after my brothers, and I'm busy improving this family's quality of life.*

"I believe refusing a request from Her Majesty would entail a grave lack of consideration."

In other words, I couldn't refuse. Patience was also scolding me: *Refuse? Absolutely not!*

"In that case, are there any benefits to being a lady's maid? I'm very inexperienced, so I'm completely at a loss as to what the role entails." I was indeed clueless when it came to this other world, and

I completely relied on Patience when it came to the noble social conventions.

"My lady, it is an incredible honor to be selected as Princess Margaret's lady's maid. I believe you would be provided clothing and other items befitting Her Highness's lady's maid."

Noblewomen's dresses were quite expensive, and I could probably even snag some gemstones, but I was happy with my current uniform. More importantly, he still hadn't confirmed whether this was a paid position. I would be fine with something small, like the hourly wage of a part-timer. I didn't know how much time I was expected to spend with the princess, but regardless, I was going to be giving up my comfortable dorm life. It was only natural to expect fair compensation. This sort of thing was where Patience and I differed on a core level. She was going crazy in my head, but I was going to continue to shut her down!

"You see, Wyatt, I'd like to get a horse and a hanon for my brothers. I also want to hire a tutor who can instruct them in horse riding, swordsmanship, dancing, and music." I was basically telling him in a roundabout way why I needed money, but Wyatt wasn't going to give in so easily.

"If I may say so, my lady, you have not had the chance to learn the way the world works. If you are truly concerned about Sir Nassius and Sir Henry, I would encourage you to accept Her Majesty's offer. I believe that successfully fulfilling the role of Princess Margaret's lady's maid will brighten the young masters' futures."

In other words, Wyatt was saying that while we were under the disgraceful cloud of my father's dismissal, Nassius and Henry's future was going to stay bleak. *I guess he has a fair point. Being the children of a jobless viscount is just starting life at a disadvantage. That wouldn't be any good!*

Of course, I wasn't sure how much of an advantage they would actually get from being the younger brothers of Princess Margaret's lady's maid, but Wyatt argued that I should play the long game, and that by doing this, I could have Queen Victoria owe me one.

"Understood. We still do need a horse and a hanon, though.

Please make arrangements to have those purchased." I could have George teach the boys sword fighting and horse riding, but that meant he wouldn't have the time to be washing out the chamber pots. We also needed magic stones. "Please get some magic stones as well."

Wyatt accepted my request and bowed his head. He definitely saw through me and knew everything I was thinking. I truly was no match for him.

Chapter 4: The Lady's Maid to Princess Margaret

Time flies when you're having fun. Nassius showered me with congratulations regarding my successful acceleration, which really made me happy. Henry didn't quite understand what it meant to skip a grade, but he still complimented me.

"You're so smart, Patience!" he beamed. Though he'd just parroted what Nassius had said, he was still going to get a thank-you kiss for just how adorable he was.

Before I knew it, it was Sunday evening—in other words, I had to return to the dorms. Though it gave me great pain to do so, I boarded the carriage.

"It's truly incredible that you're going to be a lady's maid to Princess Margaret, my lady!" Mary was over the moon.

"I'm worried I won't be fit for the role," I said, voicing how I truly felt.

"I have faith you'll do well, my lady," Mary reassured me.

Sure, if it were the actual Patience then she might've done well, but she's dead. Though she can be pretty demanding for a dead person...

I didn't want to return to the dorms, but the heartless carriage arrived at the campus.

"You must go and greet Princess Margaret, my lady," Mary admonished me. I already didn't want the job of lady's maid, but being told what to do like this made me hate it even more.

"Yes, I know." I wanted to send Mary home and spend the rest of the night leisurely reading my second-year textbooks, but Mary wouldn't leave.

"Do you know where her room is? I will go check with the dorm manager. While I do that, please write a letter to Her Highness

asking to visit her room." Once I was her lady's maid, I wouldn't need permission to go to her room, but she might not even know what I looked like at this point, so Mary cautioned me on the proper behavior.

Mary had bought me an expensive-looking letter set because she'd thought it was a necessity. *I wonder how many socks I'd have to mend to afford this*, I thought with a sigh. I began writing a letter to request permission to visit the princess, relying on Patience for the wording.

"Her Highness is staying in deluxe room 1 on the third floor," Mary reported upon returning. "I will go deliver the letter to her."

Though Mary was always doing menial labor, she was an attendant who had served my mother, Julianne, since before she was married, and had come with her when she'd married into the Granger family. She seemed to be truly in her element now that she was finally able to do the sort of tasks she'd been meant to do.

"She would like for you to come right away, my lady," Mary said after she'd delivered the letter.

I let out a sigh. There was a Japanese saying about how sighing would chase happiness away, but sometimes you just needed to sigh to get by.

Mary's eyes were sparkling with excitement as she headed back home.

Deluxe room 1 was so beautiful that even the door and the sign with the room number were luxurious. I didn't want to knock on the brilliant door, but I could hear Patience whining that making someone wait was impolite. I did my best to knock in a graceful manner.

I heard the click of a lock, and a maid opened the door.

"Hello, I'm Patience Granger."

"Welcome, we have been expecting you."

Why does she need a lady's maid if she already has a housemaid?

The deluxe rooms were actually two-room suites. I didn't see a bed in the room connected to the entrance, so it was probably in the other room. Princess Margaret was sitting on an extravagant sofa

chair that looked different from the furniture that the dorm rooms were furnished with. She had the same platinum blonde hair as her brothers and the same green eyes as Prince Keith.

"I am Patience Granger, Your Highness." I held up the skirt of my uniform and curtsied.



"So you're the girl that mother chose to be my lady's maid."

Her mother chose me? So she didn't ask for me? Maybe I don't need to be a lady's maid after all, I optimistically thought.

"Come, sit," Princess Margaret instructed. I sat across from her, and the maid served us black tea in expensive-looking teacups with gold rims. "You may be excused, Zofie."

Huh? The maid's leaving? Is it like with Mary and me, where she just came as an escort? I began to worry I wasn't going to get out of this.

"Do you not like tea?" Princess Margaret asked.

No, I do. Especially black tea made from premium leaves.

"I do enjoy it. Thank you for the tea." I was hypnotized by the fragrant aroma of the tea. This was no time to be so carefree, though. I had something I needed to ask her. "I beg your pardon, but I don't really know anything about being a lady's maid, so I was hoping you could enlighten me regarding the nature of the position." We would both end up dissatisfied if I didn't first learn what the terms of my employment were.

"First of all, I want you to call me Lady Margaret. I'd hate being called 'Your Highness' when we're going to be spending so much time together. It's too formal."

I didn't like things that were overly formal either, but if I went around the academy calling the princess "Lady Margaret," Louise would definitely hear about it and become furious.

"In that case, I will refer to you as Lady Margaret when we are in your room," I responded. Princess Margaret seemed to understand the hidden meaning behind my words and accepted my compromise, figuring it couldn't really be helped.

"Since we're in different grades, we'll be in different classes. That said, I would like to have lunch together. I've never seen you in the salon before. Are you trying to lose weight? I don't think that's necessary."

I know *how skinny I am! Leave me alone!*

"No, but I am happy eating lunch in the school's regular dining hall."

"But all the girls in Class A eat lunch in the salon, don't they?"

I couldn’t just outright say I didn’t have the money, but we weren’t going to get anywhere if I didn’t offer some sort of explanation.

“The Granger family...values a life of simplicity and frugality,” I explained evasively.

Princess Margaret fell silent. *I have a bad feeling about this.*

“I see!” the princess exclaimed. “In that case, I will eat at the school dining hall on the lower level as well. Our father ordered us to stay in the dorms because he believes we need to learn how regular people live.”

Please don’t do that! If I have to eat lunch with you in that crowded dining hall, everyone will be staring at us, and I won’t be able to swallow a single bite. I’d rather just eat with the rich nobles in the salon.

“I’m very sorry, Lady Margaret. The truth is, the Granger family doesn’t have the money to spare for me to eat at the salon.” I was so embarrassed that my face felt like it was going to burst into flames.

“Oh my, is that so? I wish you would’ve just been honest with me from the start. You’re going to be my lady’s maid, so I’m of course going to take care of your meals. I just assumed you knew that.”

I was glad she forgave me for not telling her the truth sooner, but I would’ve preferred that she just let me eat at the dining hall.

After that, Princess Margaret requested various other things. She wanted us to eat breakfast and dinner together in the dorm dining hall, which would be easy enough. I didn’t have to clean her dorm room, because the dorm maid would take care of that—it would’ve been easy though, since I was good at household magic.

“I love music. You passed music as well, right, Patience? I would love for you to play the hanon for me.”

I didn’t mind playing the magnificent hanon sitting in her room, but that meant even more of my time would be taken up by her. *I really wish CD players existed.*

“Also, I’m not very good at math. I want you to help me with my homework.”

Hold on, aren’t you a grade ahead of me?!

"You haven't joined a club yet, right?" she continued. "Join the music club. Participating in club activities together is also the job of a lady's maid."

I think Louise is in the choir club. Whew. I just barely avoided being in the same club as her.

"Um, what else...?" the princess mused.

I was going to drown in all the demands Princess Margaret had, but I was eventually saved by the bell. *It's time for dinner!*

Well, I'd thought that the dinner bell had saved me, but I was gravely mistaken.

"Oh my, it's already time for dinner?" Princess Margaret said. "Well then, let's continue this discussion after dinner."

It seemed I was going to have to be her conversation partner during dinner as well. *I'm scared of how many more requests she's going to have. It really sucks that I have to participate in club activities with her after school. We don't have club every day, do we?*

I followed Princess Margaret down from the third floor, standing diagonally behind her. I was copying Mary, who always followed me in the same position. There was a Japanese proverb stating that a student must be three steps behind his master, so as to not step on his shadow, but if I stood that far from her, I wouldn't be able to talk to her.

"Let's eat together, Margaret," Prince Richard said, immediately inviting the princess to sit with him once we'd arrived at the dining hall. *Man, the stakes are already so high for my first day.*

"Thank you, Richard. What perfect timing! This is Patience Granger. She was selected by mother to be my lady's maid." *Hmm? I feel like that's a little different from how she said it earlier.*

"I see. If mother chose her, then I'm sure she'll do well." Prince Richard then turned to me. "I expect you to properly fulfill the role of Margaret's lady's maid."

"Patience Granger, Your Highness. It is a pleasure to meet you," I first greeted him. "I will do my best." It seemed that Prince Richard had no qualms about me being the princess's lady's maid since

Queen Victoria had chosen me. I didn't really understand what the rules were around being selected or if the other family members had any say in the queen's decisions.

I stood behind Prince Richard and Prince Margaret in line with a tray in my hands. *Oh, I think I'm standing out.* The royal family might have been fine with this, since they were constantly at the center of attention, but it was exhausting for me.

Just as I thought we could finally sit down, another royal appeared.

"Richard! Margaret! I'll join you as well," Prince Keith said, deciding to eat with them. He then turned to me. "What are *you* doing here?"

"Mother selected Patience to be my lady's maid," Princess Margaret explained to him.

"You'd better take good care of her," Prince Keith said. Though he was arrogant, he didn't seem to actually oppose my appointment to the role. *I guess he probably doesn't care who his sister's lady's maid is.*

It had been way too stressful to sit with the royal family, and it felt as if I hadn't eaten dinner at all. After dinner, Princess Margaret and I returned to her room, and I asked her about when the music club met.

"We meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On those days, you can come to my classroom. Oh, speaking of music, I would like you to play a little something on the hanon for me."

It seemed she wanted to assess my hanon-playing skills. *If I play badly, will I have more free time?* I couldn't test my theory because Patience took this seriously, and she wasn't going to slack off.

"Oh my, you're really very good. With those skills, you can definitely do well in the music club."

Since it was nighttime, I got away with just playing one song. It was possible that I'd be on background music duty on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays when we didn't have club meetings. *This sucks.*

"You may be excused," Princess Margaret said, finally giving me

permission to leave.

I guess I can't leave until she gives me permission. I'm going to cry.

Upon returning to my room, I sank into my sofa as Patience made a fuss about how it was unladylike.

"I'm exhausted," I groaned. I had no energy to read the textbooks for the grade I'd skipped into. *I'll just take a bath and sleep.*

The morning bell clanged loudly. I usually woke up before the bell, but the mental exhaustion from yesterday had led me to sleep like a log. I couldn't believe how even while being in such deep slumber, Patience's habits would take over while I was asleep.

"I might have to escort Princess Margaret to breakfast."

I heard Patience snap: *Of course you do!* I quickly washed my face and got dressed. I'd already been skilled at getting ready quickly, so it took no time.

I rushed to the third floor and knocked on the lavish door to deluxe room 1. I waited for Princess Margaret to say something, but she didn't respond.

"She couldn't still be sleeping, could she?" I wondered aloud.

Now that I was her lady's maid, Princess Margaret had given me a key to her room last night. *Is this why?* Eating breakfast together was one of the tasks she'd requested of me as her lady's maid.

I cautiously used the key to open the door, and Princess Margaret was nowhere in sight. *She isn't still asleep, right? No, no. She's probably just getting dressed.*

"Good morning," I greeted the empty room, but I got no response. My hopes that she was awake were crushed. I then knocked on her bedroom door. "Good morning, Lady Margaret. It's Patience," I said, waking her up with a louder greeting.

"Good morning..." the princess grumbled. She finally woke up.

Jeez, did she not hear the bell ringing? I hope she can finish getting dressed before the breakfast bell... Wait. It's too quiet. Did she fall back asleep?! No way! I knocked on her door once more, but all I heard was silence. *Is a lady's maid supposed to wake up her*

mistress like this? I guess I can't fulfill my duty of eating breakfast with her if she doesn't get up and get dressed.

"I'm coming in, Lady Margaret," I announced as I opened the door.

No way! She really is *sleeping! I wonder if she can stay asleep while someone's coming into her room because royalty are used to always having an attendant or court lady around.*

Now was not the time to leisurely be thinking about the princess's ability to sleep through seemingly anything. The morning bell had rung. At this rate, I would also miss out on breakfast.

"Please wake up, Lady Margaret!" I exclaimed, trying to wake up the princess with sheer volume.

Princess Margaret lazily hobbled out of bed, and I began urging her to hurry.

"Good morning. The breakfast bell has already rung. Please get ready right away."

"Please take care of my hair, Patience," Princess Margaret said, sitting in front of an extravagant vanity with a dazed look after she'd finished washing her face and finally changed into her uniform.

"Would the same hairstyle as yesterday be all right?" I asked. I used a brush with intricate detailing on the back to quickly smooth out her hair and put half of it up, pinning it in place with a hairclip that was on her vanity. "All right, then. Let's head to the dining hall."

It had been quite some time since the bell had rung. I usually went to the dining hall right away, so I was worried whether we would still be able to eat.

"There's no need to be in such a rush," Princess Margaret said, completely carefree.

We somehow made it in time, but most of the other dorm residents had already finished eating. *Starting tomorrow, I'm going to head to her room earlier. I wish she would've told me yesterday that I need to wake her up.*

Princess Margaret ended up leaving most of her breakfast, while I finished mine quickly.

"It's time to go to class," the princess said, as graceful as she was laid-back.

I'd started the day sweating with nervousness, so I used my household magic while heading up the stairs.

"Become clean." I immediately felt refreshed.

"Wow, you know some useful spells, Patience. I'll be relying on you starting tomorrow."

Huh? So she's not going to try to wake up on her own? And she also wants me to help her get ready? I didn't know being a lady's maid would be so tiring! You're going to regret this, Queen Victoria!

I was grateful that I wasn't in the same class as Princess Margaret. Still, I'd be going to my own class, Year 2 Class A, for the first time today, since I'd just accelerated. I still had homeroom, so I'd wanted to get to class early, but thanks to Princess Margaret sleeping in, I just barely made it on time.

"Oh my. You took a while, Patience," Mr. Kepner said, already in the classroom. "This is Patience Granger. She's skipped ahead a grade level. Please welcome her."

Wait, I have to introduce myself again*? I* hate *self-introductions!*

"It's nice to meet you all," I said, bowing my head. Hopefully that was enough of an introduction. Just then, several students jumped up and hurried out of class.

"All right, let's fill in the empty seats," Mr. Kepner instructed as he clapped, and the students began moving toward the window as if they knew the drill. I stood there stunned, and Mr. Kepner turned to me. "Take a seat in one of the open seats."

My last class's seating arrangements had been based on students' rankings as nobles. I chose a seat furthest behind the other students and sat down.

Right before the bell signaling the start of class rang, several students rushed into the classroom. *Oh, it's Prince Keith and his friends. We have math first period, so I guess we'll be together.*

Perhaps they were still following ranking order, as Prince Keith sat furthest toward the front, followed by Ralph, then Hugo. *I see now. The students in Year 2 Class A who hurried out are also accelerating some of their classes, which left their seats open for others to use during that time.*

I remembered that Louise and some of the other girls from Year

1 Class A had passed their language arts test, which was the subject for second period. *I hope Louise doesn't say anything about me being the princess's lady's maid*, I thought as I listened to the math lecture.

Yeah, this is easy. I'd really like a certificate of completion. I'm so bored. I think the junior division handles the equivalent of upper-elementary and middle school math. We'll probably do high school math in the senior division.

I would have to review high-school-level math, but I could probably pass it. I had three blocks of math a week, so if I could get out of taking the class, I could use the time to mend socks and make some money. Such selfish thoughts filled my mind, and before I knew it, math class was over.

Language arts required many students to move classrooms. I stayed in the same room, but had to move closer toward the window. *This is annoying.* Several other students got to remain in their seats. As I scanned the area for a seat I could take, Louise suddenly closed in on me.

"How do you do, Lady Patience?"

"I'm fine, and you, Lady Louise?" I tried to seem busy putting away my math textbook and preparing my language arts textbook. But I was dealing with Louise, so naturally that wasn't enough to get her to back down.

"I heard that you've become the lady's maid to Princess Margaret. Is this true?"

"Yes, I've been assigned as her lady's maid."

Louise boldly leaned over my desk and whispered in my ear.

"How did you become her lady's maid? Tell me!" She seemed genuinely desperate.

If you want the job that badly, I'd love *to give it to you. After last night and this morning, I'm already sick of it.*

"My father received a letter from Her Majesty requesting that I become a lady's maid to Her Highness." I wasn't trying to boast. I was just telling the truth, but Louise seemed to take it the wrong way.

"Oh my! There's no need to gloat so excessively. We're friends, so you could just tell me how you got Her Majesty to make you the princess's lady's maid."

Since when have we been friends? Well, if she's trying to be my friend because she wants my job, I wouldn't be against that. I'd love to give Louise my job and step down. As the optimistic thoughts filled my mind, another girl began to complain.

"That's not fair, Lady Louise. I can't believe you're trying to become a lady's maid to Her Highness all on your own!"

Noble ladies were supposed to be well-mannered, but right now they seemed like the middle-aged ladies I'd seen fighting over items on sale during my past life. *This would be funny if I wasn't the item they were fighting over... Oh, I have an idea!*

"As her lady's maid, I assist Her Highness with living in the dorms, since her friends all decided not to move onto campus," I explained.

The other girls instantly fell silent. They were all commuting from their mansions in Romano. Living in the dorms meant no family or maids around—those would be major inconveniences for most noble ladies.

"Her Majesty must have chosen you to be Her Highness's lady's maid since you were the only other student in the dorms," Louise remarked.

Well, that's a rude thing to say, Louise. I could tell by the terrifying look in her eyes that she hadn't given up on becoming a lady's maid to the princess. *Well...good luck with that! If you have the guts to leave behind your comfortable life in a mansion and move into the dorms, I'm sure you'll be able to become a lady's maid! Have fun waking her up in the morning!*

I had no idea that Prince Keith had been watching all the commotion take place.

The bell clanged, signaling the end of language arts. This class was a breeze for Patience, but I needed to study a bit more if I wanted to get by on my own. *I want to be able to accelerate again next year without relying so much on Patience!*

I'd tried to escape my impending reality by daydreaming about my future self-sufficiency, but it was no help. I dragged myself to the salon with heavy feet. *I've never been up these stairs before*, I thought, my mind buzzing as I could feel the intense stares of the other students headed the same way.

"You're late, Patience," Princess Margaret said as she beckoned me to her seat.

Isn't that where the royal family sits? I thought I would just be eating with the princess and her upper-class noble lady friends. I didn't know it would be like this since I've never been to the salon before!

"My apologies, Your Highness."

"Come, sit down."

Wow, these tables have nice tablecloths. The dorm dining hall and school dining hall don't even have tablecloths. We also put out a tablecloth just for dinner at home. I continued to escape into my own thoughts in an attempt to take my mind off the anxiety I felt sitting with Prince Richard and Prince Keith. Just then, a waiter handed out menus. *There's a menu here?*

"I'm going to have the steak," Prince Richard said, quickly deciding. Prince Keith was not far behind.

"Steak," he also ordered. *Aw, is he trying to copy his brother?*

Princess Margaret was slowly reading through the menu. Though we were handed menus, our only choices were for the main entrée. *What?! They have fish?!* This would be my first time eating fish since reincarnating into this world. I'd already made my decision, but I waited for Princess Margaret to choose first. *I don't think it would be right for the lady's maid to decide first.*

"I'll have the guineafowl poêlé," the princess announced. "What are you going to have, Patience?"

"I'm going to have the fish poêlé," I said as I handed my menu to the waiter. Keith gave me a strange look.

"I can't believe people actually eat fish," he remarked.

Huh? Do people not like fish? I know people don't eat it often here since Romano is landlocked, but I didn't know it was considered gross. I guess I made a bad choice, I thought, feeling down.

"Are you adhering to a religious observance or something, Patience?" Princess Margaret asked, giving me a strange look as well.

"No, I just haven't had fish in quite a while, so I thought it might be nice to have some." I was a little embarrassed. I tried to look through Patience's memories to find instances of having fish, but there was only a faint memory of her mother teaching her how to eat one.

The appetizer was a vegetable aspic. *Wow, so fancy.* Prince Keith seemed to dislike vegetables, and Prince Richard scolded him for not finishing them.

"You have to eat your vegetables too. Mother instructed me to eat with you specifically because she worries you're going to be picky."

Oh, that makes sense. I can't imagine Prince Keith's lackeys keeping him in check. That job is left to Prince Richard and Princess Margaret.

The soup was a consommé. Unlike my meals at home, this soup was served with an appetizer and entrée, so it was fine for the soup course to just be a broth without any other ingredients. I used the mannerisms I'd learned from Patience to gracefully drink the soup.

"You should be more like Patience, Keith," Princess Margaret said, warning Prince Keith because he was clanging his spoon against his bowl, frustrated that he'd been scolded by Prince Richard.

Please leave me out of this. I'm begging you.

Prince Keith just huffed. *Prince Richard is going to go into his intimidating mode if you keep up that attitude. What a nerve-racking lunch.*

The princes both had steak, Princess Margaret had the guineafowl poêlé, and in front of me was the fish poêlé! *Ugh, eating fish with proper etiquette is so annoying.* I relied on Patience as I took a bite.

"It's delicious!" I exclaimed, tearing up. After a month and a half in this new world, I was enjoying my first bite of fish.

"Is it really that good?" Princess Margaret asked.

"Very," I replied before taking a second bite. *Ugh, it's* so *good!*

The saltiness from the butter and brightness from the lemon were just perfect.

"What a weirdo!" Prince Keith exclaimed, but his words weren't reaching my ears.

"Maybe I'll try the fish tomorrow," Princess Margaret said enviously.

"Perhaps I shall try it. I can't help but be curious after seeing someone enjoy it so much," Prince Richard chimed in.

Do I really look like I'm enjoying it that *much? I thought I was eating it according to Patience's standards for etiquette.*

"You mustn't be fooled by her," Prince Keith interjected. "I'm sure Patience would find anything she ate delicious." He was clearly insinuating that I'd be happy with anything because I was poor. That didn't bother me, though, because it was the truth. I was probably much poorer than Prince Keith could even imagine.

That said, at this rate, he's definitely going to incur Prince Richard's wrath.

"Yes, that's true. This is several times more delicious than the last piece of fish I had." When the waiter came by to take our plates, I smiled and said, "Please tell the chef that the fish was incredibly delicious."

"It was truly that good? In that case, I shall order the fish tomorrow," Prince Richard declared.

Phew, I'm glad he chilled out. I don't want him getting all intense when I'm about to have dessert for the first time since coming to this world.

Dessert was supposed to be served with dinner at home, but it was currently out of our budget. *I'd love to plant some strawberries in the greenhouse in the spring. Oh, wait. It's a greenhouse, so I could probably plant them now.*

I was bursting with excitement, but I minded my manners and sat still with my mouth shut. *A lady's maid should be unobtrusive and stay in her lane.*

Our table was served dessert before any of the others. In front of me was a commanding square mass. The menu had said that dessert was a cake. The appetizer, soup, and my fish poêlé had all

been incredibly delicious, but...judging by this *thing*, desserts in this world needed a massive overhaul!

Eugh, it's so sweet! I'd been starved for sugar since reincarnating into this world, but this block of sugar masquerading as a cake was unacceptable. I still gave it my best effort and somehow finished the cake, washing it down with tea. Patience was rail thin, so she could stand to gain some weight.

"How can you eat something so sweet?" Prince Keith said in disbelief.

Oh, so this cake is *too sweet even by this world's standards. I wonder if I could make money opening up a dessert shop. However, I don't even have the money to buy sugar or eggs, let alone the funds to start a business.*

Along with the picky Prince Keith, Prince Richard had also left his dessert untouched. *I know it's cloyingly sweet, but that's such a waste.*

"Do you want this?" Prince Keith asked.

To be honest, I would've loved to have brought it home to my brothers. Considering how much sugar was in this cake, it could probably have lasted until Saturday. I almost answered honestly, but I held my tongue. The Grangers might have been poor, but we still had pride. If I were going to bring something back for my brothers, I'd save my own dessert to do so.

My lunch period when I had to be overly considerate of every little thing was finally over, and I let out a sigh of relief. The first class after lunch was history.

I returned to my classroom and skimmed through the second-year history textbook. Just like language arts, this subject would be a breeze for Patience. I felt that I could pass it myself with a little bit of studying.

Despite my confidence in my academic abilities, I could only skip a grade level once a year. Additionally, skipping a grade only allowed a student to take the same course at a higher grade level. Unless I received more certificates of completion, like I had for magic practicum, I wouldn't be able to find the time to improve the lives of

the Granger family.

It was a setback to have so much more time than I'd expected taken up by my duties as Princess Margaret's lady's maid. *I really wish Louise would just move into the dorms and take over for me.*

There were no first-years besides me who'd accelerated into second-year history, for which I was thankful. I could relax a lot more in class when Prince Keith and Louise weren't there.

I earnestly paid attention in class, then headed to the library when it was over. It was nice to be able to skip magic practicum. I wanted to use this time to research the scope of study for third-year students in the junior division.

"It seems there's no one here. Oh, of course. They're all in class." It was better for me that the library was empty. It would have been troublesome if people thought I was cocky for looking into higher-level courses, especially senior division math.

"I don't think the library would have the textbooks, but if I could find some reference books or study aids, then I could figure out the general scope of content..." I scanned the spines of the books on the shelves in search of something that would help me study, but I had trouble finding anything. *It's time to rely on the librarian.*

"Excuse me, do you have any reference books for senior division third-year math?"

The librarian sitting behind the counter gave me a puzzled look. Patience hadn't been getting the proper nutrition, so she was quite small, even for a first-year student. It was probably strange for a child to be asking about reference books for senior division courses. Even so, the librarian diligently helped me.

"The reference books for senior division third-year math are in this section," the librarian said, leading me to a shelf. The entire shelf was filled with reference books.

I hadn't done any math since I was in high school—in other words, I'd forgotten a lot of the material. I pulled one of the reference books off the shelf and flipped through it. *It looks like it's around the same level as a first-year high school math class in Japan. Things will probably get more difficult if I attend university.* I

felt like I could probably get a certificate of completion in math with some review, but I wasn't sure how to go about obtaining one. *I'll ask Mr. Kepner about it.*

The best thing to do would be to study and be ready before asking about getting an exemption, but I also didn't want to expend any unnecessary effort. I was still dealing with the shock of finding out that accelerating wouldn't get me out of certain classes.

I should ask if I can accelerate in the senior division too. After borrowing a reference book from the library, I headed to the teachers' office. *I wonder why this is always so difficult?* Even in my previous life, I'd always hated going to the teachers' office. *I don't even have anything to be nervous about. It's not like I'm in trouble or anything.*

"Excuse me," I said, announcing my presence as I entered the office. Mr. Kepner was busy correcting homework, but he noticed me and waved me over.

"Hello, Patience. I'd forgotten you received a certificate of completion for magic practicum. So, did you have a question for me?" Just as I'd expected, Mr. Kepner was easy to talk to.

"Um, I was wondering how I would go about obtaining another certificate of completion."

Mr. Kepner's eyes slightly widened with surprise. It was cute when Nassius did it, but I wasn't interested in middle-aged men.

"You *are* quite bright, Patience. What subject were you hoping to test out of? Though, I should warn you—any such test will cover up to third-year material from the senior division, so it's going to be pretty difficult."

"I'd like to get a certificate of completion for math, but I don't know what the procedure might be."

Mr. Kepner suddenly slammed his hand on his desk as if he just remembered something. *Jeez, what is it? Don't scare me like that.*

"Right, you're the daughter of Viscount William Granger. I can see why simple math may be boring to you."

Huh? What? Is my father that famous of a scholar? All I know about him is that he was fired and he reads books and newspapers in his study all day.

"A certificate of completion can be obtained by getting an excellent grade on the final exam for senior division third-year math. That's pretty unusual for a junior division student, so you may stand out for taking it, but I'll speak to the math teacher about it for you."

"Thank you very much. I will do my best studying from now until the end of the year." *I have to wait a whole year? I guess the only exemption I'll be able to take advantage of this year is for the magic practicum*, I thought as I held in a sigh.

"Oh, no, you could take it much sooner, during the final exams for the spring term."

"What? But the senior division classes still have more material to cover, no? I can't imagine they would have finished going over an entire year's worth of material by the end of the spring term." It was unclear to me whether they could issue a certificate of completion for an entire course if the exam I took only covered the material from the spring term.

"Well, there's a heavily weighted question at the end of the exam that's crafted so that only students who understand all of the material covered in the senior division can solve it," Mr. Kepner explained. "That goes for the final exams in every subject, not just math."

I see, that makes sense!

"Also, it's better to spend your time studying other topics rather than sitting in a class for a subject you already understand."

Ugh, I'm getting a bad feeling about this. I was reminded of the traumatic revelation that skipping ahead a grade was pointless in terms of getting out of taking classes.

"Um, if I receive a certificate of completion, I don't have class anymore for those blocks, correct?"

"That's right, because the schedule is the same across the junior division. In the senior division, you would just take a different course you're interested in." *Why did he seem so disappointed while answering that? Anyway, I should take this opportunity to ask more about the senior division.*

"Next year, when I'm in my third year of the junior division, would I be able to accelerate into the first year of the senior division?"

"Theoretically, it's possible. It would certainly be a waste to keep a student in the primary division when they already understand all of the material. However, what you're talking about is quite difficult. I believe you would be allowed to skip ahead to the senior division if you receive certificates of completion in all of your core subjects. Though as far as I'm aware, no student has ever attempted such a thing."

I see. So if I get certificates of completion for all of my core classes, I can start next year in the senior division. I'm still relying heavily on Patience for some subjects, but I'm going to do my best!

"Oh, I should give you the textbooks for junior division third-year students. I'll also grab the senior division math textbooks."

Mr. Kepner is so nice! All those books are going to be really heavy, though.

Mr. Kepner had the textbook for his subject area, classical literature, on hand, and he asked other teachers for copies of the textbooks for the other core subjects. For math, he went to my previous homeroom teacher, Mr. Hagan.

"You're going to try and get a certificate of completion? Good luck!" Mr. Hagan said, enthusiastically cheering me on.

"Thank you so much, Mr. Kepner, Mr. Hagan."

They both chuckled.

"Well, the world of education is indebted to Viscount Granger," Mr. Kepner said. "It's also the job of a teacher to support students who are devoted to their studies."

"Patience, come see me if you ever have any questions about math," Mr. Hagan added with a smile.

What in the world was my father doing before? I've got *to look into that.*

Being a lady's maid to Princess Margaret was exhausting. After school, I headed to her room and was immediately given a task.

"We were assigned a lot of math homework today."

There was a worksheet with several problems on it, but it was just one page. *Is this really "a lot"?* It would be quicker to just tell her the answers, but that wouldn't have been any good. I had

Princess Margaret try to solve the questions herself and gave her hints about what formulas to use when she got stuck. It took a while, but she was able to solve every problem.

"I'm exhausted, Patience. Can you make some tea? You have to make yourself a cup too."

The deluxe room came with a kitchenette. I used the gold-rimmed tea set that her maid, Zofie, had used before and made us some black tea. I'd enjoyed black tea during my previous life as well, and the premium tea leaves made for incredibly fragrant tea.

"You're good at preparing tea," Princess Margaret complimented me. "Do you make tea for yourself at home?"

Back home, all we had to drink was the watery tea that Eva prepared for us. My efforts to improve the Granger family's quality of life hadn't included obtaining better tea leaves—such indulgences were my lowest priority.

"No, we do not, but I learned for my own pleasure." That wasn't a lie. It had just happened during my previous life.

"Oh, by the way, I'd like for you to practice these songs," the princess said, handing me some sheet music. Even Patience was unfamiliar with them.

"Are these new songs?"

"That's right! They're composed by members of the music club. Aren't they lovely? Eventually, I'd like you to compose a song as well."

Some elements of the sheet music differed from the sheet music I was familiar with from my previous life, but I was able to use Patience's knowledge to sight-read as I played.

We then had dinner together, which was followed by reading aloud to the princess. Since it was nighttime, we skipped playing the hanon again out of consideration for others. *I* really *wish this world had CD players and TVs! This sucks!*

The next morning, I woke up before the morning bell. The reason for my early rising? I had to wake Princess Margaret up and make her get ready for the day.

"Lady Margaret, please wake up." No matter how many times I

repeated myself, she wouldn't wake up. *Is there a way to wake her up using household magic?*

Something I'd learned during my previous life popped into my mind: People with low blood pressure had a hard time getting up in the morning because their circulation wasn't great.

"Please wake up!" I chanted with the image of her circulation improving in my mind. It was a shot in the dark, but it apparently worked. At least, she got up. "Good morning, Lady Margaret."

"Good morning. Did you do something, Patience? I feel so refreshed this morning." Despite what she said, she was taking her time sitting in bed.

I thought back to a TV show about British nobles I'd seen during my previous life. In the morning, the maid would serve a cup of tea. *I'll try waking up her body with a warm drink.*

In order to save some time, I used magic to fill the teapot with hot water. "Come forth, hot water!" *Man, good quality tea really smells incredible. Starting tomorrow, I'll prepare the tea before waking her up.*

"Please drink this, Lady Margaret," I said, handing her the tea. "Become clean!" I chanted, using household magic on her as she drank the tea in bed. "Please get dressed when you're done."

"You could just dress me with household magic," the princess complained. Despite her wish to be lazy, once she finished her tea, she got out of bed with a surprising alertness and got dressed.

Good grief. Now all that's left is doing her hair.

I heard the clang of the bell, and I was relieved to realize that Princess Margaret had finished getting ready before the breakfast bell rang.

"I'm actually hungry today," the princess remarked. "I wonder if it's because of the tea. It's strange."

"It's possible that drinking something warm helped your body wake up," I replied.

She'd barely eaten anything yesterday, but today Princess Margaret nearly finished her entire breakfast. I cleaned my plate as usual.

"We have music club today, so come to my classroom at the end

of the day," she instructed.

I wanted to complain about how hard she was working me, but I reminded myself that this was all for the sake of those two angels back home. *I really wonder why my father was dismissed from his job. The teachers hold him in high regard, and the queen made me a lady's maid to her daughter, so there's definitely no ill will there. Well, it's possible the maid gig happened purely because I'm the only girl in the dorm from a noble house of high enough status to do the job.*

On Tuesday, we had classical literature, math, magic theory, and dance. I needed to spend a bit more time studying classical literature. Patience was exceptionally smart, but it felt bad to be constantly relying on her. *I can't wait to get my certificate of completion for math.*

For lunch, the other royals, including Prince Keith for some reason, selected fish for their entrée. *I wonder if he picked fish because he wants to copy his brother.* Of course, I was having the fish as well.

"I guess fish isn't completely inedible," Prince Keith reluctantly admitted. He was as arrogant as usual, but I found it pretty cute.

I'm glad they all like it. It would be awkward if everyone thought I was enjoying something disgusting.

A lot of students, both first-years and second-years, had accelerated in magic theory. *Maybe they should rework the class content if it's this easy for so many students.* I spent class pondering various things, including desserts.

The dessert served at lunch today had once again been too sweet, so much so that even I had given up trying to finish it. It was a waste of premium ingredients like sugar and eggs. *I'd love some cookies or a cake that suits my tastes.* Eva could probably make us desserts if I gave her some recipes, but we'd need money for the ingredients.

Dance was...well, I didn't want to talk about it. Now that I was a second-year student, I had no friends in my grade—not that I particularly had friends among first-year students either. Louise had

also accelerated in dance, and she was just as popular here. *Yeah, I'm just the tiny nerd, I know.* There were fewer girls in the class, so I was able to get a partner, but it wasn't anyone good at dance. It was unfortunate, since things usually worked out if the person taking the lead was skilled. *I said I didn't want to talk about it, but I totally just vented about it.*

I had no time to sulk over dance class. I had to rush to Year 3 Class A.

"There you are, Patience. Let me introduce you to the members of the music club." Princess Margaret was surrounded by several of her friends. I couldn't help but feel resentful that if just one of them had moved into the dorms, I could've avoided being the princess's lady's maid.

"This is Catherine Woodstock. She's the second daughter of Marquess Woodstock. That's Lilina Claridge. I believe she is the eldest daughter of Count Claridge. And that's Hariette Linderman. If I recall correctly, she is the fourth daughter of Count Linderman."

"I'm actually the third daughter, Lady Margaret," Hariette corrected her with a smile.

I was instantly busy, curtsying to each girl as they were introduced and repeatedly saying, "It is a pleasure to meet you." *Wait, only three? There's still a bunch of people in the classroom. Oh, they must not be members of the music club.*

"Well then, let's head to music club," Princess Margaret said.

Catherine, who'd been introduced first, immediately began walking off. She had golden, honey blonde hair that was styled into curls. *That hairstyle would be impossible to do while living in the dorms.* Hariette was linking arms with Princess Margaret. She had light blue eyes and pale blonde hair that was styled into fluffy waves. Lilina followed behind. She looked like a fairy with her purple eyes and straight, sparkling silver hair. *Yeah, I can tell how much work their maids are putting in to get them ready.*

As we walked down the hall, our group—which included the cream of the crop both in status and in appearance—garnered the attention of other students, who stared with envy. *Oh, looks like*

they're not paying attention to the pip-squeak of a lady's maid. Thank God!

I'd never visited the clubhouse because I'd had no reason to, but it wasn't what I pictured when thinking about club activities. This was a salon—the actual social gathering kind. Not only that, but it was an incredibly luxurious salon. Even though we were dressed in our school uniforms, it felt like I'd stepped into a different world. The chairs and couches all had cabriole legs, and a group of students were sitting gracefully as they chatted.

"Hello, Lady Margaret," a senior division student greeted the princess. "Is this the new member you're recommending to join us?" It seemed that both her close friends and club members all referred to her as "Lady Margaret." I was just her lady's maid, so I elected to remain more reserved with her.

"That's right, Melissa. It's actually the perfect time to introduce you all. Everyone, this is my lady's maid, Patience Granger. I'd like to recommend her to be our newest member."

Melissa smiled as she reached her hand out to shake mine. *I think this is my first time shaking hands with anyone.*

"Welcome to the music club. Here at the club we pay no mind to status and freely compete with our music. I'm the club president, Melissa Bermond. This is the vice president, Albert Laforet."

Melissa was a beautiful girl with dark brown hair and sharp features. Albert was a young man who exuded the aura of an artist. His brown hair was notably long, and I could tell that it was well cared for. He probably didn't have any split ends.

"I know we just got here, but I'd like for you to play something," Catherine said, launching the first attack. Perhaps as Princess Margaret's closest friend, she couldn't forgive a second-rate noble like me being her lady's maid.

"Absolutely. I'd like to hear her play," Harriet agreed. She was clingy toward the princess and seemed nasty.

Lilina just silently nodded in agreement.

"That sounds good," Princess Margaret chimed in. "Patience, I'd like for you to play that new song I shared with you yesterday."

What? But I've only played that song once... I played the hanon

as instructed, relying on Patience's skill.

"Oh my! I shouldn't be surprised, given that Her Majesty chose you to be Lady Margaret's lady's maid." Apparently I had passed in Catherine's eyes.

"I wish you played with a little more feeling," Albert interjected. "Just following the sheet music makes for a dull performance."

"Gosh, she's only played it once before, and that was just last night," Princess Margaret said in my defense. "You shouldn't bully her just because it's your song, Albert."

After hearing what the princess said, everyone gave me a contemplative look as if they were trying to assess me.

"She still needs to be able to compose," Harriet noted. Her appearance was fluffy and cute, but she seemed evil at her core.

Letting me see the truth just shows how young you are—well, she's technically two years older than Patience.

"I understand why you'd be excited for a new member to compose a song, but let's give her a chance to settle in first," Melissa said.

You tell her, madam president! She's great at settling things.

After that, I listened to members of the club play various instruments, such as the hanon, lute, and flute. *They're all so talented*, I thought as I applauded.

I was initially worried that Louise would try to switch from the chorus club to the music club, given how ambitious she was, but it seemed like that was easier said than done. *I think I only got in because of Princess Margaret's recommendation.*

I was relieved, since it was easy to just sit in the corner of the clubhouse and enjoy the members' performances. I should've realized that I wouldn't get off that easily.

"I'd like you to play another song, Patience," Princess Margaret said, pulling out an unreasonable request. "You can play anything you'd like."

All of the new songs I'd been handed yesterday had been played, and all of the songs Patience knew had already been performed with incredible skill. *Who cares what they think?! I'm a strong, independent woman!* I decided to play a song I knew from my

previous life: a sonata by Mozart. I picked one that was short, cheerful, and fun to play—it was also one of the songs I knew by heart. The keys of a hanon were a bit different from a piano, so I ended up making a few mistakes.

"I apologize. I hit the wrong note several times," I quickly apologized after the room fell silent. *I probably upset them with all my mistakes.*

"No, no. A few missed notes are nothing," Albert said. "Your name is Patience, right? You're incredibly talented."

Eeek! I was seated in front of the hanon, and Albert was kneeling in front of me, holding my hand and kissing it. *This is so embarrassing! I'm going to turn bright red! I never even experienced anything like this in my previous life. Can you let go of my hand now? Huh? You're rubbing your cheek against it? Seriously, can you just stop?!*

"I won't allow you to do as you please with my lady's maid, Albert," Princess Margaret warned, swatting his hand away. I was relieved to be free of his grasp, but that just meant I was free to worry about Catherine, Hariette, and Lilina giving me intense stares. It seemed I'd upgraded from being the pip-squeak lady's maid to a rival.

"I'm excited to see what you'll compose, but your lack of practice was apparent, Patience. I want you to get ample practice on the hanon in my room."

Shoot! Now she's probably going to take up more of my time. This sucks!

Wednesday started with classes in the morning and lunch in the stuffy salon. After lunch was classical literature, which I paid close attention to. Patience could pass the class, but I still needed to study the subject.

Junior division history was rote memorization of facts about past eras. I was largely unfamiliar with the history of this world. I remembered being taught history in a similar way in my previous life: Elementary schoolers learned the basic timeline of the past, middle schoolers dove a little deeper into historical events, and high

school students dove even deeper, analyzing why certain events happened.

First-year history class in the junior division seemed to be on the same level as a Japanese elementary school class, and the second-year class curriculum was similar to that of a Japanese middle school.

Louise and I were in the same home ec class. *Why doesn't she just move into the dorm if she wants to be the princess's lady's maid that badly? She's asking for the impossible!*

Second-year home economics went beyond just learning to sew in a straight line.

"For your spring-term project, you'll be embroidering a makeup cape," Ms. Cameron, the home ec teacher, explained. "Those who accelerated are a little behind, but don't worry too much. You just have to finish it during the term." She was soft-spoken, and her voice was calming.

Just as she said, the second-year students had begun embroidering makeup capes during the first week of school, but they'd just barely gotten started.

"Are we free to choose our own design?" Louise asked. She was proactive about asking questions, so I could take it easy.

"Yes, but we will be showcasing your capes at the end of the spring term, so it might be embarrassing if your design is too simple."

The teacher's words seemed to light a fire under Louise. She immediately began drawing a complex pattern onto her makeup cape with tailor's chalk.

Maybe I can use this thing when brushing Princess Margaret's hair, I thought. It was a simple idea, but I began drawing marguerite daisies and leaves all around the hem of the cape. I knew I just needed to finish it by the end of the term, but I couldn't help but fully dive into projects like this. Before I knew it, I'd finished my embroidery. It seemed like I'd unconsciously used household magic while sewing. *Oops!*



"Oh my! You must be Patience Granger. I'm friends with Madam Jefferson, the household magic teacher. I've heard about you. I must say, I'm very impressed. I don't think there's anything more for me to teach you." Ms. Cameron quickly handed me a certificate of completion.

I guess she gets along with Madam Grandma.

I could feel Louise glaring at me, her stare burning hot, but I was just glad that I now had more free time.

I was now exempt from class during fourth period on Mondays and Thursdays, when I would've had magic practicum, and Wednesdays, when I would've had home economics. That meant I had enough free time that I could bring socks here from home to continue my side job, or I could review math, or study up on language arts, classical literature, history, or magic theory. *I'm so excited!*

Aside from dance class, I was doing well in all of my classes. And I could probably pass dance with some practice. *I'm going to start seriously thinking about accelerating into the senior division.*

Unlike the junior division with its fixed curriculum, the senior division was credit-based. On top of that, students were separated into different tracks: the knight track, the civil service track, the mage track, and the home economics track (aka the homemaker track). Princess Margaret and her friends would probably enter the home economics track.

My family had no dowry to offer any suitors, and in any case, I wanted to stay at home and look after my brothers until they were old enough to make their own money. In other words, given how things worked in this world, I was probably destined to spinsterhood. However, I didn't want to still be living in the family home when Nassius eventually got married and became the head of the household. *No way will I be the annoying in-law for his future wife. Ugh, just thinking about him getting married is bringing me to tears.*

In light of all that, my best option was to become a working woman! After all, Patience had originally wanted to become a court

lady. Considering the state of the Granger family, if I wanted to get married, my only option was probably going to involve becoming the second wife of a rich, older man. Considering how much pride she had, Patience couldn't stand living like that. I also had no interest in older men, so I wasn't too fond of the idea either.

Oh, but if he would let me spend money however I want, I could open up my own dessert shop, I thought, only to be hit with a sudden pain. *Ouch!* Patience was serious. *I guess this body is hers after all. Sorry, Patience!*

"Maybe I should go for the civil service track," I pondered aloud. Patience seemed to be on board with the idea. *Jeez. I really wish she would stop with the headache attacks.* Though the civil service track seemed like the best option for me, having a bunch of law classes sounded boring. Unfortunately, the student handbook didn't have course lists for the senior division tracks. That information probably wasn't shared until one was actually entering the senior division.

When I needed help, I knew I could rely on Mr. Kepner. *Most practical classes are in the afternoon, so I hope he's in the office.*

"Oh, hello, Patience. Wait, shouldn't you be in home economics?" I handed him my certificate of completion. He was initially taken aback, but then seemed happy for me. "I also heard you joined the music club. I think you'll be able to get a certificate of completion for music as well. Everyone else in the club has received one."

Now that I'd seen the club members' talents, I could believe it.

"I'm not sure, since I've been told I still need practice. More importantly, I was wondering what the course content is like for the civil service track in the senior division."

Mr. Kepner looked a bit surprised by my question, but he gave me an understanding nod.

"Most girls take the home economics track, but as I expected, the members of the Granger family are on a different level. The civil service course is hard work, but it's very worthwhile."

Oh, I'm not doing it for some noble reason. I just know I'm going to be a spinster, and I don't want to be living at home and getting in

the way of my brother's marriage. I feel like I should tell him the truth.

"The course list for the civil service track... Oh, I don't have a list of just those courses, but this booklet includes the courses for every track. Does this work for you?"

I didn't really want to delve into my family circumstances, so I accepted the course list booklet for the senior division and decided to return to my room.

I was sitting on the couch in front of the fireplace, reading through the course catalogue. *I hated course registration*, I thought, reminiscing on my college days during my previous life. I turned my focus back to deciding what track to pursue.

I immediately ruled out the knight track. I couldn't even ride a horse, so there was no way I could become a knight.

"Can I be in the mage track as someone who only wields household magic? Wait, alchemy?" Ever since coming to this world, I'd been able to use magic, and I'd seen others cast spells in magic practicum, but I hadn't seen anything that touched the realm of science.

"I see, so making magical instruments that use magic stones to boil water, clean toilets, and light lamps is all alchemy."

The civil service course included law classes, but it also covered other interesting topics, like economics and foreign languages. Since I'd come to a whole different world, I wanted to eventually explore it. *I'm scared of monsters, so maybe I'll need a bodyguard.*

The Kingdom of Lawrence was incredibly cold during the winter. I wanted to live somewhere warm when I got older. *I think nearly freezing to death was my first experience in this new world. How traumatic.*

"Though, I'm still interested in alchemy as well," I mumbled to myself. "I mean, alchemy is the sort of thing people dream of when thinking about magic."

"What did you say you're interested in?" a voice suddenly said.

Jeez, that scared me!!!

"Lady Margaret?! What are you doing here?"

I was shocked to realize the princess was sitting across from me on the modest dorm-issued furniture, curiously looking around my room.

"I was waiting for you in my room, but you never came. I decided to come here, but then you wouldn't respond, no matter how many times I knocked on your door, so I let myself in. So, what are you so interested in? Oh, that's the course catalogue for the senior division. Are you planning on skipping ahead next year?"

"Well, it's still far in the future, but I was thinking about what track to take in the senior division."

Princess Margaret smiled. *I have a bad feeling about this.*

"I think you'll be able to accelerate into the senior division next year, Patience. Do you agree?"

I felt like a frog being preyed on by a snake. *Does Princess Margaret have the same intense aura that Prince Richard has?*

"I would like to, if I can..." As soon as the words left my mouth, I had an epiphany. *I'm so stupid! That would mean Princess Margaret and I would become classmates! How could I have failed to realize that?!* "But I still have a lot more studying to do, and I'm not very good at dancing, so..." I began sweating nervously as I tried to talk my way out of the situation.

"Oh, your grade in dance won't affect your ability to accelerate, since it's not a core subject. And anyway, if you're not doing well, you just have to practice more. So, what are you interested in studying?"

It seemed like I had no choice but to be honest with her.

"I was thinking about taking the civil service track, but the alchemy courses in the mage track caught my eye."

Princess Margaret smiled once more. *I never knew a smile could be so scary.*

"You can still take alchemy courses even while in the civil service track. Also, I'll be in the home economics track, so you can just take that at the same time." Princess Margaret was beaming, but I wanted to cry.

"Just taking both the home economics and civil service track at the same time sounds like too much for me to handle. I certainly

wouldn't be able to take alchemy on top of all of those classes."

"My, Patience. You've already gotten certificates of completion for magic practicum and home economics. You're as good as exempt from music as well. You're also planning on getting one for math—you must've gotten those upper-grade textbooks from your teacher, right?"

It was a massive failure on my part to have allowed her to enter my room. The princess had seen my senior-level textbooks and figured out all my plans.

"Also, there are people who enroll in two tracks," Princess Margaret continued to explain. "My brother Richard is in both the knight and civil service tracks."

I was beginning to resent Prince Richard for his impressive abilities, while surprisingly starting to empathize a bit with Prince Keith.

"I'm so glad. My mother truly did spectacularly in choosing you. Next year we'll be in the same grade, and since you're good enough at it to try and get a certificate of completion, I'll be expecting you to tutor me in math."

Princess Margaret was in high spirits as she dragged me to her deluxe room, where I was forced to do plenty of hanon practice. My thoughts were jumbled from thinking about how many subjects I would need to be exempt from to have the time for two tracks, which made me miss several notes. Princess Margaret scolded me for my mistakes. *I'm being kicked while I'm already down!*

"If you don't practice properly, you're going to humiliate yourself in front of mother on Friday."

I didn't know it was possible to be so surprised that you stopped breathing. I'd just had my second near-death experience.

"May I ask for further details, Lady Margaret?" Patience's manners made sure my question came out perfectly. I still spoke in a classy manner, even when what I really wanted to say was, "What the *hell* are you talking about?!"

"Oh, have I not told you? Mother sent a letter saying that she wanted to meet my lady's maid. You're going to accompany me home to the palace on Friday." Princess Margaret continued. She

added something about how I should perform a new song, but I was having trouble processing her words.

Seeing Nassius and Henry on the weekends is my only refuge!

"Um, well, I need to return home on the weekends, so..." My wish to not visit the palace was summarily ignored.

"Don't worry, I'll make sure you're taken home."

I wasn't sure how it would work out, but at least it seemed I would still be able to see my brothers. For now, I had to be satisfied with that.

Following that sudden plot twist, I practiced like crazy. Thanks to Patience also cheering me on in my mind, I was able to play the sonata I'd performed before more smoothly, and also got more used to playing the hanon.

When it rains, it pours: At dinner, I was seated with Prince Richard.

"Patience is aiming to advance into the senior division next year," Princess Margaret told her brother. "We'll be in the same grade."

I wish she wouldn't put pressure on me to succeed by telling others before I've even done anything. Since I was her lady's maid, I had to bite my tongue.

"Is that so? You really are exceptional, Patience." Even the prince's praise felt like I was just being further boxed into my fate as the princess's classmate.

"Thank you very much." I still had to be polite.

"Not only that, but Patience is also planning to get a certificate of completion for math! She's planning on taking both the home economics and civil service courses."

Not only did I have no choice but to accelerate, but it was now decided for me that I would indeed be taking two tracks.

"Really? You must have some great aspirations. I wish you luck."

I don't at all! Really! I just wanted to graduate early and have more time to spend with my little brothers!

Course List

Home Economics Track

*Mandatory Courses: 12 Subjects

Language Arts | Home Economics | Math
Classical Literature| Magic Theory | History
Magic Practicum | Music | Art
Dance | Cooking | Sewing

*Elective Courses: Choose 6 of the 10 Subjects

Etiquette | Child-rearing | Foreign Language
Nutrition | Family Medicine | Calligraphy
Embroidery | Weaving | Dyeing | Beauty

Civil Service Track

*Mandatory Courses: 11 Subjects

Language Arts | Math | Classical Literature
Magic Theory | History | Magic Practicum
Music | Art |Dance | Law | Government

*Elective Courses: Choose 6 of the 10 Subjects

Economics | Business | First Foreign Language
Second Foreign Language | Diplomacy
Geography | World History | International Law
Estate Management | Self-Defense

Chapter 5: Off to the Palace to Meet Her Majesty

Just as Mr. Kepner and Princess Margaret had expected, on Friday I received a certificate of completion for music. It was no surprise, since I'd relied on a composition by Mozart, who'd been a genius. The music teacher had showered me with praise, and I felt like I'd cheated a bit.

The art teacher had said I could get a certificate of completion if I learned how to work with paint a little bit more. The Grangers didn't have the money for paint, so Patience wasn't used to painting, and I wasn't particularly familiar with it either. The paints here were similar to oil paints, but they also felt like they were mineral pigments made out of pulverized rock. Perhaps this was just how oil paints had felt in the past.

I'd been focusing so much on school in order to escape from reality. I was currently in a carriage with Princess Margaret and her maid Zofie, headed for the royal palace. The palace was right next door to the Royal Academy, so we arrived right away, yet the carriage hadn't stopped. *I wonder if I'm not allowed to go through the front entrance since I'm the daughter of a fired viscount.*

"You're making a strange face, Patience," Princess Margaret pointed out. "The front of the royal palace is just for official business. The royal family lives in a detached palace behind the main palace."

We traveled halfway around the palace grounds until the detached palace came into view. It was smaller than the main palace, but it was still a magnificent building. My heart was beating loudly. I decided to trust in Patience's knowledge of etiquette as I followed behind Princess Margaret into the detached palace.

I wanted to explore this second palace, but it was apparently ill-

mannered to look around and gawk. We kept going forward, headed for the queen's room.

"I've returned, mother. This is my lady's maid, Patience Granger."

I pinched the sides of my skirt and bowed deeply, curtsying. Patience kept nagging that I wasn't allowed to look up until given permission by Her Majesty, which gave me a headache.

"Lift your head, Patience."

I was finally free from my curtsy. I raised my head and looked at Queen Victoria. "Dignified beauty" was a phrase that was created just for Her Majesty. She looked so young and beautiful that I couldn't believe she'd given birth to five children.

"Patience Granger, Your Majesty," I greeted. I was offered a seat, but I wasn't sure if I needed to wait for permission. I looked over at Princess Margaret, who nodded approvingly, so I gracefully took a seat.

"Your mother, Julianne, and I were friends while we were at the Royal Academy," the queen revealed. It was mandatory for all nobles to attend the Royal Academy, so it wasn't strange for them to have met.

"Is that why you chose her to be my lady's maid, mother?" Princess Margaret asked.

"Margaret, how has it been, having Patience as your lady's maid?" the queen asked back with a smile. It was technically bad manners to respond to one question with another, but these two were mother and daughter, so it wasn't my place to say anything.

"Patience is a good lady's maid, regardless of your connection to her mother."

The queen gave a satisfied nod as if to say, *Very well*. It also seemed to serve as a signal for the servants to bring out tea and cake.

I waited for the queen and Princess Margaret to drink before taking a sip of tea myself. As always, premium tea had an incredible aroma. The cake was less enjoyable. *Even at the royal palace, the cake is gritty from the excessive sugar.* Though, unlike at the salon, this cake was cut into bite-size pieces small enough to finish.

As a lady's maid, I wasn't to speak up during their conversation,

so I kept quiet and just listened.

"Are you properly waking up in the morning?" the queen asked. "You know how important it is to eat breakfast."

"Yes, I'm aware," Princess Margaret replied. "I make sure to have a proper breakfast."

Yeah, because I *wake you up and help you get ready so you can eat.*

"Oh my, you've made wonderful progress," the queen praised her. "I'm sure your father will be delighted to hear this."

In other words, Princess Margaret had been sleeping in even while living here at the palace. She'd likely caused trouble for the court ladies.

"Learning is important as well," the queen continued. "I trust you're giving your studies your best effort."

"Yes, I am giving my studies my best effort," Princess Margaret replied.

I help her a bit with math, but she's solving all the problems on her own.

"More importantly, mother," the princess began, changing the subject. "Patience has a talent for music." She then turned to me. "Go on, play the hanon."

It seemed Princess Margaret didn't want to discuss her life at the academy with the queen any further. I was ordered to play the hanon as a way to move on to another topic.

I obliged and played the same sonata by Mozart.

"How wonderful," the queen praised. "Julianne was a skilled hanon player as well, but you are exceptional."

Her high praise made me feel a little guilty about passing off this song as my own, but I hadn't been given any overpowered skills when I reincarnated into this world, so I decided this was an acceptable level of obfuscation. *Oh, but my weird household magic miiiight be a little OP*.

After that, I played a few more of the new songs composed by the members of the music club, and it seemed my meeting with the queen was going to end without any issues.

"Patience, we must reward you for your lovely hanon playing," the

queen insisted, asking if I wanted anything. Patience was internally pestering me that I dare not ask for money.

"No thank you," I declined at first, following the proper etiquette according to Patience, but of course the queen wasn't going to accept that. Patience kept telling me that I couldn't ask for anything valuable.

"In that case, I would greatly appreciate it if I could have some eggs, butter, sugar, and heavy cream."

Queen Victoria and Princess Margaret both gave me a strange look.

"That would be no trouble at all, but if I may ask, why those items?"

"I would like to make some desserts for my younger brothers."

The queen seemed to take notice that the Grangers were experiencing hardship after my father's dismissal from his position, but she hadn't expected things to be so bad that I, a noble lady, would get in a kitchen myself.

"I didn't realize..." the queen mumbled regretfully.

"Oh no, it's just that I had made desserts with my late mother several times. My younger brothers surely have no memory of that, so I'd like to make the same thing for them." The truth was, we were much poorer than the queen could imagine, but it wasn't something I should bring up. After all, the Grangers still had their pride.

"My, what a lovely memory that must be. It's true, your younger brothers likely do not have a vivid memory of their mother. Please be sure to let them experience the taste of their mother's recipe."

A noble lady getting in the kitchen was usually considered inappropriate, but it seemed that a mother and daughter making desserts together was acceptable. I could now finally enjoy my beloved sweet treats with my younger brothers.

My meeting with the queen finally ended, and I was driven home in the royal palace's magnificent carriage. Zofie was sent home with me, and she carried a basket with my requested eggs, sugar, butter, and heavy cream. Thanks to the ride from the princess, I was also getting to see my brothers a day earlier than expected. *I'm so happy!*

The coachman from the palace properly escorted me home. Even in a situation like this, when I'd arrived home unexpectedly early in a carriage from the royal palace, Wyatt seemed calm.

"Welcome home, my lady," the butler greeted me, opening the door as he usually did.

"Wyatt, please take the basket Zofie is carrying and hand it to Eva," I requested. It wasn't right for a noble lady to carry a basket of groceries into the kitchen herself.

Zofie handed the basket over to Wyatt, and without even confirming she had gotten back on the carriage, I was already wrapping my arms around my brothers. *I never want to leave you again!*

In the short time we had until dinner, I talked with my brothers about the days we'd spent apart.

"We can use the toilet here now!" Nassius excitedly announced. "I had no idea that we even had a toilet at home."

Wyatt had used the funds he'd acquired to purchase a magic stone. It was only natural to prioritize the restroom when trying to improve our quality of life. Not only that, but Nassius was now eight years old—he was probably getting too old to use the chamber pot without being embarrassed. He seemed happy about the new facilities.

"We also started practicing swords with George!" Henry exclaimed.

"You mustn't swing your wooden sword around inside, Henry," Nassius scolded him.

The wooden swords they had were probably handcrafted by George. They would probably need proper practice swords when they were older, but these would work fine for now. George had also been freed from his duties cleaning the chamber pots, so he had the time to practice with the boys.

"All that's left is learning how to ride a horse and play the hanon," I mumbled to myself.

For art, we didn't have paints, but I could at least teach them how to sketch. I also knew enough about dance to teach them some

steps. As for horse-riding, owning a horse would mean we needed to buy its food as well, so we had no choice but to revisit the topic in the future. *I guess I'll ask Wyatt to get us a used hanon in a roundabout way.*

"I can't believe you returned in a carriage from the royal palace," Mary remarked as she brushed my hair. "You must be doing a brilliant job of being Her Highness's lady's maid. I do wonder, though, why you were given eggs and butter."

It was only then that I'd realized I'd completely forgotten about the basket. Everything else had taken a backseat as soon as I'd seen my brothers.

"That was a gift from Her Majesty," I explained. "I wanted to bake the same treats I used to make with mother for my brothers."

Mary's hands froze.

"You met Her Majesty?" she asked.

"I did. I was told she wanted to meet Princess Margaret's lady's maid."

Mary was deeply moved by the honor that was the queen's request, and her hands began to tremble, but she still managed to style my hair.

There was slightly more food at dinner than had been served in the past. Since we could harvest our own vegetables from the greenhouse, there were more sides. If my sudden return home was met with this level of a meal, they were likely eating just as well on a regular basis. *Now that I think about it, those little angels have gotten a little plumper. It's only made them softer to hug, heh heh!*

I spent Saturday morning studying with my brothers, as well as taking care of the vegetables in the greenhouse with them. The exercise from gardening was good for Nassius.

"Now, let's bake some treats!" I exclaimed to myself.

It was after lunch, and I'd waited for the staff to finish their meals as well before heading to the kitchen in the semibasement, only to be caught by Mary. She had been in the female staff's room, which was just before the kitchen.

“You mustn’t be in the kitchen, my lady,” Mary insisted, trying to stop me. She didn’t know yet that I had the queen on my side.

“I promised Her Majesty that I would use her gift to make my brothers the same treats that I got to make with mother. I have a duty to fulfill that promise.”

“Her Majesty...?” Mary repeated, completely stunned by my appeal to authority. I took that opportunity to head into the kitchen.

The kitchen was unnecessarily spacious. It was far larger than a family of four plus four servants needed.

“Eva, I received some eggs, butter, sugar, and heavy cream from Her Majesty. I’m going to make my brothers the treats that my mother taught me how to make.” I spoke with confidence, but Patience had been quite young at the time, so her memories of those cooking sessions were vague. I could see fuzzy memories that they had made some sort of griddle cake, or rather, a pancake. “I’m going to make some pancakes,” I announced. I wasn’t familiar with the cooking utensils from this world, so I decided to go with pancakes, since they were simple and I remembered how to make them from my previous life.

“My lady, what is a pancake?” Eva asked. “How do you make this dish?”

I couldn’t just ignore our cook. She’d gone through so much trouble for us. I also wanted her to eventually be able to recreate the desserts in my memory.

“You beat some eggs, add milk, then add in some sugar and flour. After mixing that together, you cook the batter in a frying pan.” As I was explaining how to make pancakes, I realized I didn’t even know where the cooking utensils were. In the end, I had to give Eva instructions and have her make the pancake. “Do we have any baking powder? If not, we can just beat air into the eggs... Do we have a rotary eggbeater?”

“We used to have one, but...” Eva sadly shook her head. The old one had apparently broken, and they hadn’t been able to replace it.

“That’s all right. I’ll use household magic to beat the eggs,” I reassured her. In an instant, the egg whites had been beaten into soft peaks.

"Oh my, what useful magic that is."

That's right. You need to whisk a lot of stuff for desserts. Household magic really is useful!

"You're going to place a small pat of butter in the frying pan, and once it's melted, you'll put in one ladle of the pancake batter."

Mary wouldn't let me touch the stove, worried that I would burn myself, so Eva did the actual cooking while I gave her instructions.

"Once the surface is covered in bubbles, you're going to flip the pancake," I explained.

A delicious smell filled the kitchen, and soon we had a stack of pancakes.

"We don't have any honey or extra butter, so we'll serve these with a little sprinkle of sugar. Now, they're done!" I exclaimed. "These would also be good with some whipped cream," I mused. "Anyways, let's have tea."

I whipped some heavy cream with household magic, then handed it to Eva to serve. Teatime had been cut from the Grangers' routine to save money, but I wanted to bring it back for today. I went to Wyatt and asked him to let my father know that we would be having tea.

"If you're going to be having tea, the drawing room would be more appropriate than the dining room," Wyatt said. "I'll have the fire lit."

I was glad I'd eventually gotten around to fixing up the drawing room. Now the four of us gathered there and enjoyed the pancakes with some watery tea.

"These are delicious, sister!" Nassius raved.

"Yeah, it's yummy!" Henry chimed in.

"You have some cream on your cheek, Henry," I said, wiping it off for him.

My father also seemed to be enjoying the pancakes. It was some quality family time.

We had finished having tea, but Henry had gotten excited about eating what was basically the first ever sweet treat in his life. The Grangers had lived like normal nobles when Patience and Nassius

were younger, but soon after Henry was born, my father had been dismissed from his position. All Henry knew was this impoverished lifestyle. This was probably the first time he'd ever had sugar.

"You're being too loud, Henry," Nassius warned in the middle of his reading. Henry was running all around their room, and Nassius's words didn't stop him.

"He might be getting a sugar rush," I remarked. It wasn't something I'd heard of happening much in Japan, but I remembered seeing scenes in American TV shows where the kids would have sweets at night and be too rowdy to sleep. Henry's blood sugar had probably spiked, which had gotten him so excited. Perhaps he wouldn't be able to sleep tonight either.

Just then, I remembered something. *I know something that they could use to exercise in their room even when the weather's bad. We could also make it just using stuff we already have here.*

I had George make six handles, and I used those to make three jump ropes. I grabbed Henry, who was still running around, and Nassius, who had been spending all his time reading, and headed out to the yard.

"What is this?" Nassius asked.

"Is it something to play with?" Henry asked.

It was my first time using a jump rope in this new world. Of course, Patience had never used one either.

"You jump with it like this," I said. Even if it was my first time here, I hadn't forgotten how to do it. "First, this is how you jump normally. This is a jogging step. This is a crisscross jump. This is a double jump." I was panting at the end of my demonstration. *Patience needs more exercise too. Maybe she died of pneumonia because she's so weak. Though I'm sure the cold weather was a part of it too.*

"You're doing well, Henry! Keep going, Nassius! If you keep practicing, you'll get the hang of it!"

Judging from how they handled the jump ropes, Henry likely was proficient in physical enhancement magic. Nassius was perhaps proficient in wind magic, similar to our father. *I want to save up money so I can get them their evaluations as soon as possible.*

I wanted to keep watching my brothers do their best to practice using the jump ropes in spite of the cold wind blowing over them, but I had other things to do—specifically, I had to make more desserts. I wrote down recipes for cookies and pound cake and handed them to Eva.

"Please let me know if there's anything that's unclear," I said. Mary still wouldn't allow me to get near fire, so all I could do was hand over the recipes and watch.

The dessert we made was served with dinner: thinly sliced pound cake. Eva was truly talented at slicing things thinly. *Well, Henry might get another sugar rush before bedtime, so maybe this is an appropriate serving.*

"It's already Sunday. I'll have to return to the dorms," I whined. I started the morning feeling gloomy, but I decided to change things up and head to the greenhouse with my brothers. We planted strawberry seedlings that Mary had bought.

"Strawberries are a spring crop, no, sister?" *Nassius is so smart!*

"Yes, that's right," I smiled. "But this is a greenhouse, so I'm sure they'll grow just fine."

"Do strawberries taste good?" Henry asked.

"You've eaten them before, Henry," Nassius pointed out.

That surprised me.

"You've probably just forgotten because you were really young," I said. "We haven't had them in the last few years." *That's right. Fruits weren't a priority.* "Once the strawberries are ready, we'll pick them together."

I was having a wonderful time with my brothers, but Mary came to interrupt.

"My lady, there's a court lady here from the royal palace. Oh, no! You're covered in dirt." Mary began to panic.

"Don't worry," I reassured her before using household magic. "Become clean!"

"That is a relief. Our guest is awaiting you in the drawing room. Please hurry over."

I rushed over, worried that we'd kept our guest waiting in the

cold drawing room, but Wyatt had had George light a fire. Though even with the fire going, it was still cold.

"I apologize for keeping you waiting. Patience Granger; it's a pleasure to meet you." A noble lady wasn't to let her guests know that she was rushing. I greeted the court lady as if I'd done this a million times before.

"My name is Charlotte Evans. I am a court lady working in the royal palace. I'm here today to deliver a gift from Her Majesty," she explained.

A gift? I already got a basket full of eggs and sugar and stuff.

"Please read this," Charlotte said, handing me a letter that read, *Please practice playing the hanon and perform another new song for me in the future.*

Ugh, I have to go to the royal palace again? That's depressing.

"Where shall I put the hanon?" Charlotte asked. Her question shocked me.

"What? Where shall you put the hanon?" I repeated out of surprise.

"Yes. Was it not explained in Her Majesty's letter? Her Majesty took a liking to your hanon playing, Lady Patience. She said she would like you to continue practicing."

I stood there, confused, as Wyatt instructed the servants from the palace to place the hanon by a window in the drawing room. Through Patience's memories, I was able to recall that it was the same spot we'd previously had a hanon.

"I'd like to write a letter to thank Her Majesty. Would you mind waiting a moment?" I asked Charlotte.

I returned to my room and used Patience's knowledge of etiquette to write a thank-you letter, which I then had the court lady take back with her.

"We have a hanon now, but I feel like I'm getting too involved with the royals..." I was getting worried that I wouldn't be able to step down as Princess Margaret's lady's maid. I also had no idea how the queen even knew that we didn't have a hanon; she was terrifyingly well-informed. "I wanted to stay away from the royal family, but now there's all this..." I mumbled to myself.

But it would do no good to worry about the future, as whatever was going to happen would happen regardless of my worries. After all, back when I was living in Japan, I had no idea that I would be coming to a different world.

"All right, then. Nassius, Henry! Let's practice playing the hanon!" I switched gears and taught them how to play musical scales. I needed this time with them, otherwise I wouldn't be able to survive the next week in the dorms.

Chapter 6: Spring Is Here!

Though the winter was cold and harsh, the weather became slightly warmer once we got into March. I was excited to pick the strawberries growing in the greenhouse over the weekend with my younger brothers.

As for my academics, I'd received a certificate of completion for art. That meant that aside from dance on Tuesdays, my fourth period was free for the rest of the week, making my daily workload a bit lighter. I began using that time to review math, language arts, history, classical literature, and magic theory.

I was on track to obtain a certificate of completion in math after taking the final exam in June. By next year, when I would be a third-year, I would probably be able to accelerate into the senior division even without relying on Patience's knowledge.

I was feeling a lot more confident in terms of my schoolwork, but I was just as busy as always when it came to my duties as Princess Margaret's lady's maid. I was especially occupied with preparing for the Festival of Verdure, which would be held in May. The music club would be busy preparing new compositions to perform, which meant that I wouldn't have time to do my side job, and my income would take a hit.

The Granger family still had plenty of room for improvement when it came to our quality of life. It was nice that we'd be able to save money on firewood now, thanks to the weather getting warmer, but I needed to make further improvements so that we would be warmer next winter—in other words, I wanted to stock on up on firewood while it was cheaper during spring and summer, when the demand was low. As I imagined what our wood storage would look like if it were completely full, I felt pressured to earn even more money. Patience had died of pneumonia, so I knew that getting the Granger family safely through the winter was truly a matter of life

and death.

"Have you finished writing out the sheet music for your song, Patience?" Princess Margaret asked.

It took time to convert a song from my previous life into sheet music to be played on a hanon, because I would have to first play the song countless times on the hanon and make adjustments to accommodate the differences in their keys. I had also already submitted three songs to the princess, but she wasn't done with me yet.

"Everyone else is only submitting one song," I pointed out to her. "I believe this is enough." After getting used to being a lady's maid, when it was just the two of us, I'd started talking back to Princess Margaret a bit more.

"No, it isn't. We're going to be performing over and over again during the Festival of Verdure, so the more songs we have, the better. Also, you can't be playing the entire time. I need you to finish the sheet music so the other club members have time to practice the songs."

The princess's response hadn't explained why *I* had to submit several songs. I couldn't help but wonder if Princess Margaret was just doing what she wanted, driven purely by her love of music. *I should ask President Melissa about this at the next club meeting. I think it's best I stay away from Vice President Albert. He's even crazier about music than Princess Margaret.*

Why did I always seem to run into the people I most wanted to avoid? I arrived at the clubhouse along with Princess Margaret and three of her friends, and President Melissa hadn't arrived yet, but Vice President Albert was already there.

"Is the sheet music for your new song ready, Patience?" Albert asked with his hands extended toward me, completely forgoing any sort of proper noble greeting to Princess Margaret.

It's as if I'm being hassled by a loan shark. Snubbing the princess like this feels like it'll bring bad luck, and I don't want to get caught up in it. May the heavens please protect me!

"Calm down, Albert," Princess Margaret scolded, plainly

exasperated. Catherine and the princess's other friends also seemed upset with him, albeit for different reasons.

"I'm not sure if it's right for Lady Patience to always be the one sharing new compositions," Catherine remarked.

I agree, Catherine! You definitely have a point there.

"Lady Margaret, all this work must be so tiring for Lady Patience," Hariette added in a coquettish tone.

I could see right through her superficially considerate words, but I was actually rooting for her to get her way. *Do your best, Hariette!*

"That's absolutely ridiculous. This club is a place to celebrate musical talent. Lady Catherine, Lady Hariette, and Lady Lilina, you're all welcome to submit as many songs as you'd like." When it came to music, Vice President Albert didn't hold back, even if he was dealing with upper-class nobles. In fact, Albert was the second son of Count Laforet, so it was no surprise that he was fearless toward the ladies. I'd heard from someone, perhaps Catherine, that his grandfather was the younger brother of the previous king.

Everyone else was knowledgeable about other nobles' family trees, but I had no interest in that information. It had nothing to do with me. *Though, if anyone knows about firewood prices, I'd be suuuuuper interested in talking about that.*

I'd been escaping reality by thinking such silly things because I didn't want to have any part in Vice President Albert's heated bickering with Catherine and the other girls. I'd just been sitting in a chair off to the side, staring out into space. *I want to go back to my room and do my side job already.*

"You look bored, Patience," Princess Margaret said. "Can you play your new song on the hanon?"

Alas, I'd been caught trying to sit out this argument as if it had nothing to do with me. I did as the princess instructed and played "my" newest composition on the piano. I didn't borrow from Mozart this time—I was playing a minuet composed by J. S. Bach. This piece had been incredibly difficult to transcribe into sheet music.

Once I began playing, the other members of the music club quieted down. *I'm glad it's quiet now. Bach* should *be listened to in quiet environments. Wait... It's too quiet! Shoot!*

"Patience, will you marry me?!" Albert exclaimed, grabbing my hand.

Agh! Vice President Albert! Please let go of my hand! I don't want to get married to you just because you don't have the technology to play music whenever you want!

"Please don't steal my lady's maid from me, Albert," Princess Margaret chided him.

Oh, does that mean I have no choice but to be the princess's human music player instead? I would also like to decline that offer, but I'm grateful she at least got him to let go of my hand.

"Catherine, Hariette, Lilina, I want you three to compose songs that can stand up to Patience's."

The three girls nodded silently, but I wasn't satisfied with this outcome. If I accelerated to the senior division next year, we would all be classmates. Things would be uncomfortable if I didn't patch things up here.

"Um, would it be all right if I asked for a favor?" I asked. "I'm confident in my ability to come up with new phrases, but I'm not so skilled when it comes to polishing those phrases or melodies to turn them into full songs, or transcribing compositions into sheet music."

Princess Margaret knew that I'd had to play pieces countless times to be able to transcribe them into sheet music, so she immediately understood where I was going with my request.

"That's a good idea. We should give everyone the phrases and melodies you come up with, and then they can use those for inspiration to compose new pieces."

Vice President Albert complained that it would be a waste of my ideas, but Princess Margaret fought back, insisting that she wanted to hear more new songs. *Good grief.*

The weekend rolled around, and I picked strawberries in the greenhouse with my brothers. After the seeds had sprouted, we'd used straw to provide support to the plants. Thanks to all of the care we put into growing them, the plants gave us bright red berries that looked like jewels, which I was glad to see. Nassius and Henry both raved about how delicious the strawberries were, which made me

glad. *They're so darn cute!*

I'd learned my lesson from the sugar rush that had followed the pancakes I'd served before, so I wasn't going to let them eat too many strawberries at once. It would also be bad if their stomachs got upset.

"You may each have up to five strawberries, and you mustn't eat them all at once," I cautioned. "Now, now, Henry, you have to put them into the basket. I promise I'll make you something delicious later."

I could tell by the look on his face that he wanted more, but I wouldn't allow it. Not only were some of these strawberries going to be served as dessert following dinner, but I had planned on turning some of them into jam. *Preserved foods are a necessity.*

I'd arrived in this world in the winter, so I'd had a truly difficult time. I wanted to make sure our pantry was full of shelf-stable foods before the next winter.

Since my first performance at the palace, there had been several Fridays when I boarded a carriage with Princess Margaret and went to the palace to play the hanon for Queen Victoria. It was always nerve-racking to perform for Her Majesty, so I wished I didn't have to, but I would always be sent home with a basket full of goodies like eggs, butter, and sugar. Because of the gifts, I didn't mind it too much. Not only that, but on weeks I played for the queen, we didn't have to spend any money to rent a horse to get me home that week. That was an important benefit!

Sometimes the eggs and butter were used to make sweet treats, but they were also turned into regular dishes. I planned on making jam by using up all the extra sugar that I'd been saving. *I want to fill the pantry with a bunch of shelf-stable foods!*

Now that it was spring, I was also going to start farming in the backyard. I could hear Patience yelling about maintaining the roses or something, but I wasn't going to deal with the more ornamental features until later. I never wanted to starve again, so my priorities were food, more food, and also food. *This reminds me of a movie I once saw that was set during the American Civil War. The main character balls her hand into a fist and vows to herself, "I'm going to*

live through this, and when it's all over, I'll never be hungry again. No, nor any of my folk." I feel the same exact way. I'm never going to let the Grangers go hungry again! That includes not only my family members, but the people who work for this destitute family too!

The estate's backyard had been neglected and had transformed into a grassy field. George had at least maintained it enough to look presentable, but it was too much work for one person to do anything more.

"Grass, be gone!" I was worried whether such an incantation would work. I just imagined the grass popping out of the ground and leaving behind brown earth as I cast the spell.

Oh, wow! In front of me was clean, bare soil. The grass was now all neatly bundled up off to the side. The grass could be turned into fertilizer with a composting setup, which I decided to leave to George to handle.

I picked up a branch off the ground and used it to draw a rectangle in the dirt. I was planning to turn about two-thirds of the backyard into farmland. At the far end of the backyard was a fence, and there were several trees already growing in front of it. I wanted to use the remaining available space to plant some fruit trees—things like apple, pear, and cherry. Citrus trees probably wouldn't grow well here because of the cold climate. I'd saved up the money to buy saplings and seeds by doing my side job.

I'm not sure if I'll have the time to do a side job next year. Taking two tracks in the senior division sounds like it's going to be intense.

"Isn't there any other way to earn money?" I wondered aloud.

I feel like all I've thought about is money since coming to this world. Oh, right, I had parents who worked to raise me during my previous life. I never had to worry about money. Despite the good life they gave me, I died before them. Sorry, mom, dad. At least they still have my older brother and older sister. They're both married and have kids. I'm just the youngest kid who was a shotacon that wanted a younger brother.

Wait, maybe I was chosen to come to this world because there isn't any harm in me being gone from my previous world? Not only

that, but maybe whoever sent me here knew I would take care of my younger brothers because I'm a shotacon. Monsters exist in this world, but I can't imagine some being sent me here for the purpose of hunting monsters. After all, I can only use household spells.

Was my sole purpose in this world to help out the impoverished Granger family? I mean, it was my father's fault for being unemployed. *Even though I wasn't very important in my old world, I'm sure my family in Japan was sad about my death. So it's not like my sudden demise was completely harmless to anyone else!* Well, there was no point in getting upset about what had already happened. I had to focus on what I could actually do.

"Become ridged!" I chanted at the soil.

I wanted to use this space to grow some basic vegetables, like beans, potatoes, onions, and carrots. Once we finished harvesting the strawberries, I was going to use the greenhouse to plant summer crops like tomatoes, which I wanted to turn into sauce and jar. Pickled cabbage would also be a good food for our pantry. Things were going to get busy.

Though I had many plans for our garden, I needed money to buy things like jars and vinegar for pickling things. Mending socks just didn't make enough money. *I should ask Wyatt for advice!*

"I've received a certificate of completion in art," I explained to the butler. "But I'd like to continue some artistic endeavors. Doesn't painting intricate details on things like tea sets sound fun?" I was trying to give a veiled explanation of my latest moneymaking proposal without saying anything unbecoming of a noble lady.

Wyatt thought about my words for a moment, connected the dots, then he gave his approval. Even so, I wouldn't be able to paint ceramics at school. I could sneak in socks to mend just by stuffing them in my bag, but a tea set would be much too heavy to smuggle in that way.

I need to find something else that can make us money. I went through the various tattered objects in the attic while racking my brain for an idea.

"We have a lot of curtains. Perhaps I could turn them into bedding and sell them. We also have these old dresses. It might be better to make these good as new and sell them."

That said, I might be able to wear these old dresses if they were mended and tailored when I was a bit older. For now, all I needed was my school uniform, but I would likely need these sorts of dresses upon graduating, and the only hand-me-downs we got from our relatives were children's clothing. That was to be expected, since they were given to us only because their child had outgrown them.

"This doesn't look like it belonged to mother. It's much too old for that."

The dresses I'd found had a different look to them than those I'd seen at the royal palace. They were much more voluminous than was currently trendy, and were definitely from a bygone era, but each gown had been made with plenty of quality fabric. I picked up one of the dresses, which had been made with an abundance of lace, and began coming up with ideas.

"Lace is expensive, isn't it? Perhaps I could make some handkerchiefs out of this fabric and sell them for a decent price."

Princess Margaret and her friends all carried handkerchiefs with lace borders. Mine had no lace, but if I used the lace from this old dress, I could make something nice.

Though I'd come up with the idea, I couldn't directly use the lace from this dress as detailing on handkerchiefs. The patterns were too big, and the fabric wasn't in a long strip. Even so, the thread used in this lace could probably be repurposed for something smaller and more detailed.

"Become thread!" I commanded, turning the lace back into thread. "Become detailed lacework!" I chanted, picturing the delicate lace that decorated the border of Princess Margaret's handkerchief. "Oh my, that was quite exhausting."

I ended up with several dozen meters of lace trim. The whole process was much more tiring than ridging the soil for the garden, likely due to the fact that I was creating an item with intricate details.

I found an empty box, cleaned it out, then neatly rolled up the

lace trim and put it inside the box before returning to my room. All that was left to do was to get my accomplice, Mary, in on the plan and make the lace-decorated handkerchiefs.

The handkerchiefs ended up making more money than sock-mending, and was something I could easily do in the dorms. *It's a success!*

I was earning more money making lace-trimmed handkerchiefs than I had when I'd been mending socks, and a flame of desire had been lit within me.

"I won't know what would make money without understanding how people live in this world," I thought aloud.

Ever since coming to this world, the only places I'd been were my home, the academy, the church (which I'd gone to just once), and the royal palace (which I'd visited several times). At the royal palace, I just followed behind Princess Margaret, and when I left I would just follow a maid and be driven home by carriage. *I understand that meeting with Her Majesty sounds like some grand event that would surely help me become more urbane, but our visits are surprisingly casual, not special high-society shindigs.*

"I want to explore the town!"

The Granger estate and the Royal Academy were both fairly expansive locations, but in my previous life, I used to freely travel wherever I'd wanted to. Now I felt like a caged bird. Being cooped up like this was suffocating. The feeling had grown even worse now that it was spring, since I didn't want to move away from the fireplace during the winter.

"I wonder if there's anything I can do about needing an attendant." Even though our resources were limited, Mary still had to accompany me when I went out. "Mary always buys seeds and plants relatively quickly when I ask for them. Surely there must be some shops within walking distance. She also goes somewhere to sell the handkerchiefs."

I had no money for shopping, but I still wanted to see what the town was like. Patience's memories didn't contain any useful information. *I need to do some field research!*

I was driven to explore the town, but it ended up being quite far-off—not in terms of physical distance, but in terms of how difficult it was to achieve my goal, since a noble lady couldn't simply go out on her own.

Just as I was pondering this, I heard some girls buzzing among themselves in the dorm.

"That ribbon is lovely. The royal capital is just full of wonderful shops."

"It truly is. I couldn't get anything like this out in the countryside."

Very few of the girls in Class A lived in the dorms, so most of the other residents were from Class B or Class C. They were either from lower-ranking noble families or wealthy commoners, but regardless, they were here because they didn't have homes in Romano. In other words, they were likely going out despite not having attendants.

I've been a fool! It was just Patience's rules that had been holding me back. The school gates weren't physically keeping me from leaving—I'd just been under the spell of this a-lady-must-have-an-attendant custom. Even now, I could hear Patience yelling within me: *You mustn't!*

I did my best to persuade her. *I must go out into town and find out what is being sold.* My brothers would eventually need horses, and I wanted them to formally learn sword fighting at some point—especially Henry, who I suspected would enroll in the knight track one day. That would require horse-riding skills. Students in the knight track also appeared to bring their own beloved horses with them, and there would also be armor and other equipment he would need. I would hopefully be graduated and working by then, but I also wanted to send Nassius to college. *We can never have too much money for the little angels*. I finally felt my Patience-induced headache subsiding.

"I'm going to head into town, on either Monday, Wednesday, or Friday."

I began planning my outing while looking at my schedule. Tuesdays and Thursdays wouldn't work because I had music club. If I was late to music, Princess Margaret would scold me. I could only

go out during fourth period on Mondays and Wednesdays, because I would have to spend time after school fulfilling my duties as Princess Margaret's lady's maid in her room, but I could be a little late to that. *If I just apologize and say I was in the library or something, I think I can get away with it.*

"The best day for an outing would be Friday, after Her Highness returns to the royal palace. She has also received a certificate of completion for music, so she returns to the palace after third period."

I'd been hauled off to the royal palace several times, but it wasn't like that happened every Friday. And Princess Margaret always let me know at least a day ahead of time that I would be returning with her, though that courtesy was only to make me practice playing the hanon.

"If I go out on Friday, I just need to be back in the dorm by dinner."

Thursday came, and I wasn't told we'd be going to the royal palace, so I decided that I would definitely be going out on Friday.

I was once again eating with Prince Richard and Prince Keith in the salon. In my opinion, Prince Keith didn't need his siblings' supervision anymore, but they all had to follow Queen Victoria's orders, and she still wanted them to have lunch together. *I wonder if Princess Margaret and Prince Keith will eat on their own once Prince Richard graduates at the end of the year. Oh, but that would mean I'd end up eating with Princess Margaret's friends. I feel like that would be just as nerve-racking.* Such thoughts were running through my mind because, as usual, Prince Keith had made Prince Richard upset.

Prince Keith is so good at getting on Prince Richard's nerves, I thought, but this was no time to be impressed. Princess Margaret gave me a look that said, *Do something about this*. I'd lost count of how many times I'd mediated lunchtime arguments over the last three months. *Right, what nerve did Prince Keith hit this time? It was something about the Festival of Verdure.*

Just as Prince Keith had announced during his self-introduction, he had joined the knight club, but he couldn't participate in any

matches during the Festival of Verdure because he was only a junior division student. Prince Keith had complained about this and tried to convince Prince Richard to do something about it using his authority as student council president.

"How each club is run is up to that club's president. Don't you understand that even as the student council president, I can't make arbitrary demands of them?"

Ooh, he angy. Prince Richard wasn't wrong though; he was doing the right thing. *Still, it wouldn't hurt to acknowledge Prince Keith's frustrations.*

I tried to signal to the princess that I couldn't do anything about this, but she wasn't going to let me off the hook. I was too scared to talk to the first prince himself, so I struck up a conversation with the princess as a diversion.

"What events will take place during the Festival of Verdure?" I asked.

"The music club will be performing our new songs in the auditorium, three times a day. The theater club and choir club will also be giving performances in the auditorium. I'm looking forward to them."

"My friend Louise is in the choir club. I wonder if first-year students will be able to participate."

"I'm not quite sure. I'm not very familiar with the choir club. I would assume that your friend may be able to get onstage if she's talented. You're also only a second-year, but you're going to be performing your four new songs."

Our casual exchange seemed to make Prince Richard's anger subside slightly.

"Louise said she would be performing for the choir club," Prince Keith chimed in, also distracted by our conversation.

"You composed four entire songs, Patience?" Prince Richard asked, clearly impressed.

Ignore me and pay attention to your little brother!

"That's right," Princess Margaret said. "Albert was so enamored by Patience's talent that he proposed to her. Of course, I flatly declined on her behalf."

You really don't have to bring that up, I thought as I felt myself turning bright red.

"That weirdo Albert proposed to her?" Prince Richard burst into laughter, meaning my attempt to divert his wrath had succeeded, but it came at the cost of my embarrassment.

"Hmph, only a weirdo would propose to you," Prince Keith huffed.

Stoooooop, you're going to hit a nerve again!

After that exhausting lunch, Princess Margaret had art. I was exempt, since I'd received a certificate of completion. It was time to head out into town.

Though I was ready to go out, I was still afraid of the security guards at the school gates. This was an academy attended by members of the royal family and high-ranking nobles, so it was only natural that the security was tight. I would probably be fine as long as I appeared confident.

That's right—I've never walked out these gates. I'd always traveled to and from campus by carriage. Our horse was a rental, but our carriage had the Granger family crest, which basically functioned as a pass to grant us free access. *The guards might stop me if I'm on foot.* I'd anxiously simulated the scenario of confidently announcing to the guards that I was just heading out into town, but in the end, I uneventfully made it through without any issues. *I guess students living in the dorms go out often.*

"All right, then. I wonder where all the shops are." The Royal Academy was right beside the royal palace, and the area outside of the school gates was the nobles' quarter. The area was filled with huge mansions, and I'd never gone out to see all these estates.

I figured I'd get closer to the commoners by leaving the vicinity of the royal palace, so I began heading south. Patience wasn't used to traveling on foot. *I need to get stronger*. But no matter how far I walked, I was still just surrounded by large mansions.

"Nobles' homes are much too large," I grumbled. It took several minutes just to walk past a single home. Back at the academy, fourth period had ended, but I still hadn't found any shops. However, after I'd walked for what felt like at least an hour, the homes became

smaller. “My, is that a shop over there?”

I found my first shop in this world! I got closer and saw that it was a bookstore. I had more books than I needed at home and access to plenty more at the academy library, but it was the first shop I’d found, so I decided to go in. *I wonder if I’m allowed to stand here and read a little. I wonder if they have any casual reading, like manga.* I entered the bookstore full of excitement, but there weren’t many books, and they all seemed to be technical manuals. *Unfortunate. Time to move on!*

Perhaps it was because I was wearing the Royal Academy uniform, but I didn’t get in any trouble for walking around and looking at the books. *I bet that means I’ll be fine at other stores too*.

“Is there no shopping district around here? There are barely any pedestrians.”

I should’ve been out of the nobles’ quarter, but there wasn’t anyone around, nor did I find any other shops. Patience wasn’t used to walking around, so I was getting tired. *I haven’t even done anything exhausting yet, like going bargain hunting.*

“Oh gosh, I should have asked someone where to go while I was at that bookstore.” I’d been nervous about being in my first store in this world, and thoughtlessly overlooked the option of asking for directions. Also, the books were too expensive for me to buy, which made me feel even more awkward about asking for help. *Even at convenience stores, you at least buy a pack of gum or something before asking for directions.*

I continued mumbling to myself and walked for what felt like another thirty minutes before I finally found what seemed to be an area with a concentration of stores.

There was a grocer, a liquor store, a butcher, a florist... None of them seemed useful for my market research. Still, I decided to take a look through the grocer’s and the florist’s shops. The butcher had whole animal carcasses hanging on display, which was a no-go for both Patience and me. I also passed on the liquor store, since I couldn’t drink yet.

The grocer had strawberries, but the ones I’d harvested from the greenhouse at home were redder and prettier. The ones here were

also quite expensive. *Maybe I should sell our strawberries. The angels love them though. This is a tough decision.* Eggs and sugar were too expensive for the Grangers to purchase. I was truly grateful to the queen for her gifts.

The yard at home is quite spacious, so maybe I could grow flowers or something to sell, I thought as I perused the flower shop. *They're so expensive! Oh, right, it just became spring. Maybe I can make some money by growing flowers in the greenhouse to sell during the winter, when supply will be low!* As I headed back to school, I considered the possibility of devoting half of the greenhouse to growing roses once I'd gotten the family pantry stocked for the winter.

"I wanted to look at things like clothes, accessories, and knickknacks. Maybe I'll ask that student what shop she went to, if I see her again." Leisurely thoughts filled my mind as I walked back through the school gates, only to be accosted by Prince Keith.



"Hey, where did you come back from?" Prince Keith stuck his head out of a carriage to yell at me. *Is that really necessary? You're just going to call attention to me!*

"I was merely out on a walk," I said before heading inside the dorms.

I hoped he would keep quiet about this, but I knew the odds were poor. Prince Keith wasn't good at reading the room or inferring what other people needed.

"Please let him not say anything to Queen Victoria or Princess Margaret," I prayed to the Estenaian God. Just then, I remembered that my previous prayers never seemed to have helped. "What will be, will be!" I reassured myself. There was no point in being upset, and who knew if Prince Keith would even remember seeing me. "More importantly, I get to see my little angels tomorrow!"

I feared that I would be too worried about having been spotted by the prince to sleep, but my body was exhausted from all the walking, and I fell into a deep slumber, properly poised as always. I'd gotten surprisingly used to sleeping like this.

The next day, while waiting for Mary, I thought about asking whether the horse rental was a flat fee for a set period of time, like from the morning until noon, or if there was an hourly rate, with rental fee varying depending on how long you kept the horse. It was tiring to walk around looking for shops, and it wasn't very efficient either. If we already had the horse rented for the entire morning, I could afford to take a detour on the road home and stop by some clothing stores. Assuming it wouldn't make the horse rental cost extra, I planned to persuade Mary to let me go on this little excursion. The only issue was that getting home later meant I'd have less time with my brothers. *I don't really want that either!*

"Still, it was good to be able to visit the grocer and the florist. I found out the general cost of items, and I've gotten some ideas on how I might be able to use the greenhouse to make more money..."

I'd been wanting a horse, because that would allow me to move out of the dorm and commute to school from home. Of course, even if I succeeded in getting the Grangers a horse, I probably wouldn't

be able to quit being the princess's lady's maid. *If the horse rental is a flat fee for a half day, then maybe we could start teaching Nassius how to ride a horse*, I thought, my mind going off in another direction.

Just then, Mary arrived. For some reason, upon seeing her I felt as if I'd betrayed her. Even if I were free from the curse of the attendant system, I couldn't betray Mary's trust. *I can't just go off into town on my own. I have no choice but to cajole Mary into going with me.*

Also, I need to get more stamina! Now that it was spring, I needed to spend my hard-won free time not just studying, but also getting Patience's body stronger. Fortunately, the academy had an expansive campus. There would be beautiful roses blooming soon, so I optimistically thought about how it would be nice to start going on walks and forgot about running into Prince Keith.

***

I'm Keith, the second prince of the Kingdom of Lawrence. I hold my older brother Richard, the first prince, in high regard. My brother is also the student council president at the Royal Academy.

I'm ten years old, and I had assumed I would be attending the Royal Academy the same way that Richard and Margaret—my older sister—did, only for our father to suddenly demand that we live in the dorms. Both my brother and my sister had been commuting to school until this year. The Royal Academy was right next to the palace, so it was a short, easy trip. Most nobles also commuted from their estates. The only ones who moved into the dorms were lower-ranking nobles from the countryside and commoners who had passed the entrance exams. I had no idea why father suddenly decided such a thing, but we had no choice but to follow his orders.

"Your Highness, I will move into the dorms as well," my friends Ralph and Hugo both said. I'd played with them in the past at the royal palace, and I was glad they would be coming with me. I wouldn't have any of my household staff in the dorms. It would be sad to not have anyone to talk to outside of classes.

Richard only had one year left of school, yet he moved into the dorms as well. I asked him if he was upset about that, and he got mad at me.

"Father wants us to become independent," Richard scolded.

That might have been true, but some of my brother's friends had also moved into the dorms. Were we really gaining independence?

Both my brother's and my own friends had moved into the dorms, but none of Margaret's friends had. Apparently, it required a lot more help and effort for girls to take care of themselves, compared to us boys. I wasn't sure what my sister was going to do without servants or friends, and I felt a little bad for her. On top of that, my sister was not a morning person. I knew that because last year, the court ladies and attendants were in a frenzy every morning trying to make sure she got to school on time. Now she was going to be all alone in the dorms. Would she really be all right?

It was annoying that it took time to move into the dorms.

"We should have just had the furniture moved here in advance," I grumbled to Ralph as I waited in the dormitory dining hall for my room to be set up.

"Most students in the dorms don't have much. See that girl over there? She only has one wardrobe's worth of things. That must be why most on-campus students don't need extra time to move in."

The girl he'd pointed out was a pip-squeak, so she was probably a first-year. Since only lower-ranking nobles lived in the dorms, I figured I'd never run into her in Class A and promptly forgot about her.

Just then, the bell clanged.

"The bell sure rings a lot," I remarked.

"It seems there are some students who do not have watches, so the school uses the bell to let people know what time it is."

I was stunned by Ralph's words. *Are there really nobles who don't carry around a watch?*

Just then, Hugo got up from his seat.

"This bell is to signal that it's time for lunch. It seems we must go get our food ourselves. I'll go get yours, Your Highness."

Several students had grabbed trays and begun lining up in front of the counter. Once school actually started, I would be eating lunch in the salon, but for today I was eating in the dining hall at the dorms, where students ate both breakfast and dinner. *Am I really going to have to eat* here *twice a day?* I was feeling disappointed about the food options, only to suddenly hear my brother shouting angrily.

"Are you planning to spoil Keith, hoping to get into his good graces? Father put us in the dorms because he wants us to learn independence. Do you mean to contravene the king's express wish?" It seemed that Hugo had upset my brother. "Come here and apologize to this student, Keith."

I walked over to my brother, but I didn't think there was any reason for me to get yelled at.

"I didn't ask him to do such a thing, Richard. That guy just did it all on his own..."

My brother's aura was threatening, and he demanded I apologize, but at some point during his lecture, the student I was supposed to be apologizing to up and vanished without my noticing. Eventually Richard realized she was gone as well, and he looked like he felt a bit awkward. *From what I saw...was it the girl with the single wardrobe we talked about earlier?*

My first impression of the weird girl, Patience Granger, wasn't very good. That was because Hugo had cut in front of her and gotten us both in trouble with my brother. Perhaps my bad impression of her was a bit of misplaced anger.

I had to greet the new students at the entrance ceremony as the representative of our grade. Of course, my brother was the student council president, so he gave the welcoming address. I had to follow his brilliant speech, so I was quite nervous, but Ralph and Hugo both praised me afterward, saying I did brilliantly. Perhaps they were just flattering me, but in any case, I was relieved to be done with it.

Naturally, I ended up in Class A, since first-year students were assigned classes based on their noble status. Starting our second year, class assignments would be based on grades. I absolutely *had*

to get into Class A next year. After all, both my brother and sister had remained in Class A throughout their schooling.

My classmates' self-introductions were boring. I stopped paying attention after the first few, though I did take note of the pretty girl, Louise. Then I realized to my surprise that the last girl to introduce herself—Patience Granger—was the student who had run away at lunch. *If she's a viscount's daughter, shouldn't she commute from home?* Anyway, I felt it was fitting for a pip-squeak like her to only be able to use household magic. I was still upset that I'd gotten scolded by my brother because of her.

Despite being a pip-squeak who only had household magic, Patience started accelerating through one subject after another. It was frustrating. On top of that, she even obtained a certificate of completion for her magic practicum. Her teacher was an elderly woman, so she probably just went easy on Patience. *It's so unfair*. *Here I am, having to deal with this hot-blooded maniac of a teacher, while she gets off easy.*

I successfully accelerated in math, language arts, magic theory, dance, and music. I was pretty happy with how I did, but Patience had ended up accelerating in every single subject and skipping straight to second-year courses.

"The Grangers are known as a family of academics," Ralph said, trying to cheer me up.

I thought about leaving the nerdy pip-squeak alone, but for some reason by Sunday she was eating dinner with my brother, my sister, and me.

"What are *you* doing here?" I asked the pip-squeak.

"Mother selected Patience to be my lady's maid," my sister responded for her.

If she'd been selected by mother, then I had no right to say anything more about it. I understood that much.

"You'd better take good care of her," I said, just for good measure. After all, my sister was *not* a morning person.

Patience somehow managed to get her up in the mornings all on

her own, and even got her to eat breakfast. *Mother truly never makes any mistakes*.

In the second-year language arts class we accelerated into, I overheard Louise fervently ask Patience, "How did you become her lady's maid? Tell me!" But I knew it would be impossible for Louise to do the same unless she was determined enough to live in the dorms like the pip-squeak. Even then, I couldn't imagine Louise successfully waking up Margaret. Unlike *her*, Louise was a normal noble lady.

Still, *that girl* was quite helpful. I was under orders to eat lunch with my brother and sister at the salon, but I would get in trouble for not eating my vegetables, and sometimes I would upset Richard. Patience was sitting with us now that she was lady's maid to my sister, and she ended up quelling Richard's anger several times. I didn't really understand how she did it, but after she got him to stop being mad at me a few times, I began to think better of her.

Though my overall opinion of her had improved, it was soon ruined by the way she got all red over being proposed to by that weirdo Albert. My sister declined on her behalf, but perhaps *she* thought of it as her big chance to marry rich.

"Hmph, only a weirdo would propose to you," I huffed. I didn't mean to say that, but for some reason the whole thing irritated me.

I felt bad for being so harsh, but the very next day *that girl* went out all on her own. *Does she not understand that things could be dangerous?! Does she not know how to act like a noble lady because she's a pip-squeak?*

"Hey, where did you come back from?" Before I even realized what I was doing, I'd stuck my head out of my carriage window and yelled at her.

"I was just out on a walk," *that girl* shamelessly responded.

She's so, so weird, but I keep thinking about her for some reason. I decided to not tell anyone about her outing. After all, she'd saved me from my brother's anger more than once. I wasn't the kind of man who forgot what people had done for me.

Chapter 7: A Small Recital

It turned out that the horse was indeed rented by the hour, so I had to abandon my scheme of persuading Mary to go shopping. Even so, I wasn't going to give up! I could just devise another plan. *One way or another, I'm going to make use of the information I gathered during my outing.*

"We're harvesting an impressive number of strawberries, so I'd like to sell half of them."

I couldn't possibly sell all of them, since my brothers so enjoyed them. However, I was going to have George harvest the excess beyond our family's needs, then have Eva sell them. Eva knew grocers through her work. *I hope she can sell them for a good price. Oh, but the money she makes selling the berries might just be used to buy more meat or seasonings. Although that actually wouldn't be bad.*

"Roses will sell for a high price in the winter," I mused.

I gathered a few of the remaining rose branches from the front yard and propagated them in the greenhouse. *I'm going to make sure they grow big and bloom in the winter.*

"We still have much room for improvement when it comes to our meals," I mumbled to myself. I headed to the garden in the backyard and slightly encouraged the plants to grow by chanting, "Grow!" I didn't use as much mana as I had when I'd used this magic for the first time in the greenhouse. Back then, I'd been desperate, since we hadn't had enough food.

Now I also had to conserve mana for my side jobs on the weekends. Painting intricate designs onto tea sets made more money than mending socks, so I prioritized that work whenever I was home. I only mended socks after I'd finished painting.

To make money while in the dorms, I decided to sew lace trim onto handkerchiefs, because if someone (such as Princess Margaret)

were to come into my room, I could just pass it off as a perfectly normal and ladylike hobby.

"You really have no stamina at all, Patience," I complained to myself. "You mustn't be getting exhausted after walking so little. You're only ten years old. You must get stronger."

Patience really is weak. Well, I guess she did die, so that shouldn't be a surprise.

I wanted to get my father, who spent all his time cooped up in his study, to exercise as well, but that was an impossible task. Instead, I focused my attention on my brothers, calling out Nassius in particular since he was a bookworm. Henry would run around all on his own, so I didn't have to worry about him. That didn't mean Henry wasn't smart, though. He just wasn't as fond of reading as Nassius, Patience, or their father were.

I would jump rope on the weekends with my brothers in an attempt to gain strength. Nassius got better at doing a jogging step, and he could even do a crisscross jump. Henry was engrossed in doing double jumps and kept challenging himself to see how many times in a row he could jump the rope.

"Let's race while jumping, sister!" Nassius exclaimed.

"Let's race, let's race!" Henry cheered.

I refused to lose to either an eight-year-old or a six-year-old.

A few moments later, I was wheezing. *But I somehow managed to win...*

I also made sure my brothers practiced playing the hanon. I transcribed children's songs from my previous life into sheet music and used those for the boys' practice, since the only practice songs Patience knew were finger movement exercises. Focusing only on technical skills wouldn't be fun. Not only that, but my brothers were so cute when they were singing the children's songs.

Of course, I was practicing as well, since the Festival of Verdure was nearing. For Catherine, Hariette, and Lilina, I played songs from my previous life for them to transcribe on their own: "Für Elise," the "Minute Waltz," and "Träumerei." Even if they ended up slightly different from the original songs, there was no issue with that.

Though, Albert would probably pester them about how they got those parts wrong. *He'll show his juniors what to do.*

Apparently, parents and guardians were also invited to attend the Festival of Verdure. Attending required obtaining permission ahead of time, so I asked my father whether he'd be coming.

"I'm going to pass," he said simply. It was possible that he was refraining from making public appearances following his dismissal, but it was equally possible that he just didn't like crowded places and preferred to stay home and read.

Unfortunately, children couldn't attend the Festival of Verdure. In this world, it was standard practice among nobles to have a caretaker who looked after children who were younger than ten. They didn't greet guests, nor did they appear in the public. Still, I wanted my brothers to hear me play, so I decided to hold a small recital in our drawing room at noon. My father also sat in and listened.

"You're very good, Patience," my father praised me.

I appreciated his words, but I couldn't help but feel slightly guilty.

"For the next piece, I will be accompanied by Nassius, and Henry will sing," I announced. Nassius played a children's song I'd taught them, and Henry sang the words. Henry had only learned to play scales, so we decided he would sing for our little recital. *He's too cute!*

"You did very well," I praised Henry, giving him a kiss on the cheek.

"You played well, Nassius, and you sang very well, Henry," my father said. "You're also good at teaching, Patience," he added, praising me once more.

Well, that's just because of how much I love them. I wanted to help my brothers study and get stronger as much as I could before they enrolled in the Royal Academy. The job of "big sister" was quite demanding.

It was the day before the Festival of Verdure, and we had no classes. I went to music club in the morning, where we discussed the performance schedule for our new songs. I was only a second-

year student, so I just sat quietly and listened. The students whose parents were coming to see them play were more stressed out about the scheduling, since they wanted to make sure their performances aligned with the times their parents would be here.

"The knight club will be holding matches in the morning, so we could end up competing with them to attract the same audience, which will be tough," someone pointed out.

However, if we began worrying about what all the other clubs were doing, we would never be able to decide on anything. The student council had already told us when we would be able to use the auditorium. The total time was the same as what the theater club and choir club got, but the theater club had use of the auditorium for one large block of time, while the music club and the choir club had their time slots spaced out.

"The theater club gets the auditorium for three whole hours after lunch. It isn't fair," someone complained.

The music club and choir club each received three separate one-hour blocks spread throughout the day. Both clubs used to also reserve their time in three-hour blocks, but it had proven too difficult to continuously play instruments or sing for three hours straight, which had led to the current system.

The knight club held matches during the morning, and two of the music club's blocks were during the morning as well. The chorus club only had one morning block while getting two in the afternoon; this was a source of frustration for some club members.

"We take turns every year deciding who gets what," President Melissa explained, settling the group down. "Next year, the choir club will have two morning blocks, so we just have to sit tight this year." If everyone continued complaining, we wouldn't get anywhere. "Everyone write down what time you want to perform, and we'll do our best to accommodate you, though we'll have to make adjustments for popular slots that get too many requests."

Everyone began writing their name onto the schedule, and as expected, most people wanted the afternoon block.

"Some people's parents want to go see the knight club's matches in the morning, so they'd rather perform in the afternoon," Melissa

said. “Ideally, we want five people scheduled during each block.”

I wrote my name in the same block that Princess Margaret picked: the first morning block. Neither the king nor the queen would be coming to see her perform, and Princess Margaret had no interest in the knight club. Catherine and the other girls usually followed Princess Margaret, but they were interested in some of the members of the knight club, so they used their parents to justify requesting to play in the afternoon block.

“We don’t have to stick exactly to the rule of five people per block,” Albert said. “People can just play multiple songs if fewer than five sign up for any given block.” Albert had initially signed up for the second morning block, while mumbling something about how he wondered what could be so interesting about the knight club. Now he added his name to the first block as well.

“I’ll help too,” President Melissa said, writing her name in both morning blocks. Three male students also decided to switch to a morning slot, and we somehow managed to decide on who would perform when. “We’re going to have eight people performing in the afternoon. Is that all right with everyone? If you have a complaint, you’d better speak up now. I won’t hear you out later.”

You’re so cool, President Melissa! She’s so dauntless.

“Also, you’ll have to discuss with the other performers of your block what songs you’re going to play,” Melissa continued. “Make sure you don’t play the same thing as someone else. It’s standard to play one composition of your own and one by someone else.” She clapped her hands together, signaling that we were free to split into our groups.

There would be four students playing during the first block: Princess Margaret, followed by President Melissa, Vice President Albert, and me. The second block was President Melissa, Vice President Albert, and the three boys who’d switched their times, for a total of five students. The third block, the only afternoon one, was made up of eight girls. *I suspect the third block is going to argue a lot about who gets to play what... Well, I should just focus on my own block.*

“I’m going to play a new composition of my own along with

Patience's 'Minuet,'" Albert announced. That was the song he'd enjoyed so much that he'd been inspired to propose to me.

"Oh, but I also wanted to play 'Minuet,'" Princess Margaret interjected. She'd also taken a liking to the song and had been practicing it.

"Then Albert can play it during the second block," Melissa said. "I'll play my own new composition along with Catherine's song."

"Are you referring to 'Für Elise,' which she got from Patience?" Albert asked pedantically. "Anyways, that's fine. I can play 'Eine kleine Nachtmusik' instead."

Everyone kept snatching up my songs, one after another. *What do I do? I'd like to perform Princess Margaret's composition, but she's going to play it during the same block, so I can't*.

"What are you going to play, Patience?" Princess Margaret asked. "You can't do 'Minuet,' since it's already going to be played twice in the morning. Oh my, it looks like a lot of your songs are going to be played during the second block as well. You'll have to pick something different from them."

For the second block, Albert was going to play "Minuet," Melissa was going to play "Turkish March," Benjamin was going to play "Träumerei," and Helmut was going to play "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

"I'm going to play 'Twelve Variations on Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' and the 'Minute Waltz,'" I announced to the group.

Those of us performing in the morning blocks somehow managed to decide our songs, but just as I'd expected, the students performing in the afternoon block were still arguing. Of the famous songs from my previous life, Catherine and the other two friends of the princess had taken three songs to adapt into their own compositions. That left four of my songs available for the afternoon block, which the eight students were fighting over the privilege of playing.

"This is why I told you to compose more songs," Princess Margaret huffed, inexplicably scolding me. "If only you had listened."

This isn't fair. If you count the songs I gave away, I provided the club seven whole songs! Grrr!

"If they just had one more song, they wouldn't have to argue as much," Princess Margaret continued.

I don't give a hoot! I wanted to scream out my true feelings, but I gritted my teeth and held back.

"President Melissa will help them figure things out," Albert reassured us. "More importantly, we have fewer people during the first block, so two of us will need to play an extra piece. I'll take 'Turkish March.' If Melissa or Lady Margaret can play one more song, we'll be all set."

Princess Margaret seemed exasperated with how Albert couldn't care less about others.

"I'll sit this one out," the princess said. "Why don't *you* just play four songs, Albert?"

"Albert and I are going to perform in both the first and second blocks," Melissa pointed out. "Therefore, we're going to have you and Patience each perform three songs in the first block."

"I'll play 'Turkish March,'" Princess Margaret declared, quickly staking her claim now that Albert had been forced to give it up.

I thought for a while before deciding to play "Träumerei," which I'd given to Lilina. After all, I quite liked that song.

In the end, the students performing in the third block argued to hell and back, which brought upon them the wrath of President Melissa.

"Each of you first decide what song you want to perform as your own piece. After that, everyone will randomly draw for their second song from a pool of short compositions I'll choose. You're not allowed to complain about the results."

The other blocks each had roughly ten songs scheduled, but there were going to be sixteen songs performed during the third block. Many of them were short, but I couldn't help but feel that we were probably going to go over our allotted time and end up fighting with the choir club. *I'm going to avoid the auditorium in the evening.*

It was the morning of the Festival of Verdure, and I was waking up Princess Margaret as usual. I prayed to the Estenaian God that the princess would one day wake up and get dressed on her own.

Yes, I was back to praying, because my prayer asking for Prince Keith to not tell Queen Victoria that I'd gone out on my own had apparently worked. Since then, I'd pray once in a while. It was similar to how Japanese people would pray just on New Year's.

I'd established a morning routine for the princess, which helped me knock out those tasks more quickly.

"Since today is the Festival of Verdure, would you like to do something different with your hair?" I asked.

The princess's friends, who commuted from their homes, came to school with their hair styled in curls or fluffy waves on a regular basis. They would probably be bold with their hairstyles for the festival.

"Well, I am going to be performing a new song, so why don't we accessorize just a little bit?" Princess Margaret pulled out a hair bow that was the same shade of green as her eyes from her vanity and handed it to me.

"What a colorful bow," I commented. I usually just styled her hair half-up, half-down, but today I decided to add some braids, similar to how Mary did for me.

"My, you're very dexterous, Patience. You could become a court lady."

Becoming a court lady was indeed one of the careers I was considering, so I decided to take that as a compliment. *Though I don't want to be in charge of waking the princess up forever.*

The first performance of the day in the auditorium was going to be the music club's first block. That would be followed by the choir club, after which was the music club's second block. There would be a lunch break, then the theater club would perform. After that, the choir club had their second block, the music club had our third block, and then the choir club had their final block. *I actually do want to see the play. This world doesn't have TV or radio.*

"How shall we do things today?" I asked. We usually had meals together and spent time together after classes, but we were on our own during classes. That was because Princess Margaret had separate classes from me with her friends. I wasn't sure how things

were going to work during the festival, so I made sure to ask.

"We're going to perform during the first block, so we'll head to the auditorium together after breakfast. I believe Catherine and the others will probably be watching the knight club's matches. After our performance, we'll listen to the choir club sing. I'd also like to listen to the music club's second round of performances."

In other words, because her friends would be busy at the knight club's sparring until noon, I had to be by her side the entire morning.

"After lunch, you're free to go see the other club's performances," the princess added.

Princess Margaret was a true lover of music, so she was probably going to spend the entire day in the auditorium. I wanted to see the theater club's play, but I also wanted to check out what the other clubs were doing. The informational pamphlet for the festival listed an alchemy club exhibit, and I wanted to see what would be on display. *I mean, alchemy didn't exist in my previous life. I'm super curious what it's like!*

A hanon had been placed on the auditorium stage. Albert was giving various instructions to members of the school staff. There was a sort of oversize clipboard on a stand with large sheets of paper bearing the titles of the various songs being performed; it was similar to a Japanese mekuri, which was used in traditional entertainment like rakugo to show the audience the performer's name. During my performance, President Melissa would flip through the pages to show the audience each song I was performing, but I would be in charge of flipping through the sheets for the others' performances, since I was their underclassman.

"We can leave all that to him," Princess Margaret said, sitting in the back of the auditorium with President Melissa and distancing herself from the noisy Albert. Since I was her lady's maid, I took a seat behind the princess.

"Albert is *really* fired up, isn't he?" President Melissa remarked. "He's always weird, but today he's almost dangerously weird."

The club president's harsh comments nearly made me burst into

laughter. Albert really was firing on all cylinders. Just watching him tired me out.

The bell rang that normally signaled the start of first period—in other words, it was time for the Festival of Verdure to begin. Students and parents streamed into the auditorium and began filling the seats.

We moved backstage, and I began to feel nervous. I was a second-year student, so I was going to perform first. Some club members had complained that we wouldn't have an audience because the morning block overlapped with the knight club's matches, but in my opinion, there were still more than enough people in the audience.

"Patience," President Melissa called out to me. "After I'm done greeting the audience, you'll go out onstage."

Our club president delivered a truly confident greeting before turning the first page of the sign placed stage right.

The audience clapped as I appeared onstage, and I managed to gracefully bow before playing the hanon. Ever since my previous life, I'd enjoyed "Twelve Variations of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." I loved how partway through the song the notes began to jump around as if they were actually twinkling stars. "Minute Waltz" was also a cute piece. And my parents used to play "Träumerei" at naptime for me when I was a young child, so it made me feel nostalgic.

I somehow managed to finish playing my three songs. I stood up and bowed to the audience.

"Wonderful!" a voice echoed throughout the auditorium, even amid the loud applause. It looked like there was an excited parent who'd gotten out of their seat to clap, but I didn't pay them any further attention. I went to the signboard and turned it to the next page before returning backstage.

"Oh my, they won't stop clapping," Melissa said with a smile. "What shall we do?"

I was glad to see my performance had gone over well with the club president. Not only was the audience still clapping, but some were even calling for an encore. There was one voice that stood out

among the crowd, which probably belonged to that same parent from earlier. *They were dressed pretty lavishly, so they must be a high-ranking noble.*

"This is to be expected," Albert said. "All of your new compositions were incredible. Of course, my song is quite amazing as well."

If we were truly performing in order of grade level, Princess Margaret should have been performing next since she was in her third year. But though the music club claimed to not care about status, Albert was going to perform before the princess, despite being in his fourth year. Albert's composition was a technically complex piece. It reminded me of the compositions from *Transcendental Études* in my previous life. *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* felt really profound when played after such an intense song.

I went back out onstage as the audience applauded Albert's performance and turned the sign to the next page. This process was kind of embarrassing.

Once he finished, next up was Princess Margaret. Her new song was a refreshing piece that was fitting for the Festival of Verdure. Her performance of "Turkish March" was full of vigor. Finally, she played "Minuet," which received much applause thanks to all the practicing she'd done.

I came back out and turned the sign to the final page. As expected, the final performer was President Melissa. There was something grand about her composition. My heart felt like it had been set free. "Für Elise," which I'd given to Catherine, surprisingly highlighted President Melissa's femininity as she performed it.

"With this, the music club's first New Composition Recital has come to an end," Melissa announced. "Our second performance will begin in an hour, after the choir club's performance. We will be performing some different pieces, so we would love for you to come see our second performance as well."

There was a large round of applause that made the auditorium feel like it was shaking, and the music club's first performance concluded. I was done for the day, so I felt like a weight had been lifted off my chest. *It's time to enjoy the festival!*

I listened to the choir club's performance with Princess Margaret.

"It seems that the morning performance is only the junior division students," the princess remarked.

Just as the music club did, the choir club probably thought that there wouldn't be much of an audience while the knight club's matches were going on. *Oh, Louise is onstage too.*

"They're just all right," Princess Margaret said.

Her criticism was harsh, but I felt the same way. They weren't untalented, but there also wasn't anything notably *good* about their performance. I could tell that they had practiced their song, and no one was off-key, but the soloist left something to be desired.

"I wonder if Helena was chosen because she's a third-year. Or perhaps it was because she's the daughter of a count. Her voice isn't very resonant."

It appeared that the singer who'd done the solo was one of the princess's classmates. I refrained from commenting on her performance.

The music club's second performance was just as amazing as its first, and received the same roaring applause.

"The New Composition Recital is a great success," Princess Margaret beamed. Though she seemed to be happy, I was still a bit worried about the afternoon show.

The atmosphere in the salon was slightly different from usual, because today students were joined by their parents.

"Over here, Margaret," Prince Richard called out from where he was standing in front of a partition.

There usually isn't a partition here.

"We had a partition put up because otherwise all the parents will try to come greet us," Prince Richard explained without my having to ask.

I see. Prince Keith was also there, already seated.

"Aren't you busy with student council work?" Princess Margaret worriedly asked Prince Richard, who'd immediately decided on steak for his entrée. It was clear that he was on edge compared to his

usual self.

"No, no. All the preparations we have to make before the festival are much more troublesome. As for the day itself... Well, there have been several complaints, but we've managed to handle them."

Prince Keith seemed restless, filled with a desire to help out his older brother, but Prince Richard seemed to not notice his younger brother at all.

"The music club's New Composition Recital was truly wonderful," Princess Margaret reported. "How were the matches for the knight club, Keith?"

"Just as predicted, President Eric won," Prince Keith replied in a slightly sullen manner.

Oh? Prince Richard just raised his eyebrow. Not good.

Of course the student council president would be busy today. Not only that, but things were so hectic that he couldn't even eat lunch without a partition being put up. It was no wonder he had an especially low tolerance for his little brother's sulking right now. Princess Margaret, fully aware that her elder brother was on edge, had deliberately brought up the clubs in an attempt to defuse tensions with a lighthearted subject. But Prince Keith couldn't grasp her intentions.

And there's the signal. Good grief. I could tell from her face that now the princess wanted me to take a shot at changing the subject.

"Is it possible for students in the junior division to help the student council?" I asked.

Prince Richard's hands froze in the middle of slicing his steak and he looked right at me. *Hey, I wasn't asking for myself!*

"That's right. You had your performance in the morning, so you're done with those duties for the day. We actually could use your help!"

Prince Keith was clearly disappointed by this response.

"Keith is also done with his matches for the knight club," Princess Margaret noted helpfully, providing an assist.

"That's true. We'll always accept more help. Would you assist us, Keith?"

I could picture a wagging tail behind Keith, as if he were a dog whose master had just thrown a ball for him to fetch.

"Yes, of course!"

Um, I was supposed to be free in the afternoon. I was planning to go watch the play, then check out what the alchemy club is doing... Jeez, Princess Margaret is so good at communicating through looks. I can tell she's saying, Look after Prince Keith! *And I can't refuse. It's hard being a lady's maid.*

"Well then, let's finish our meals quickly and head to the student council room. There's no need for dessert today!" Prince Richard directed that last part at the waiters without even confirming it was all right with us, and he quickly got up from his seat.

"Is it okay if I go, Lady Margaret?" If I went with the princes now, I would be leaving her all alone.

"Go ahead. I spotted Catherine and the other girls, so I'm going to go watch the play with them. Go on, hurry along."

I followed behind Prince Richard and Prince Keith. They were both fast walkers. *Maybe it's because they know where they're going*.

"Oh, I believe Sir Ralph and Sir Hugo will be free in the afternoon as well," I pointed out upon spotting them on our way out of the salon. "Your Highness, would you like to invite them?" I asked Prince Keith. *I mean, I'm not a lady's maid to Prince Keith. I want someone else to look after him.*

"I see. Let's have them help as well," Prince Richard said, giving his permission right away. *Oh, he must have realized that I was trying to push the role of Prince Keith's caretaker onto them. He truly is a competent prince.*

The student council room was spacious, but it was filled with the hubbub of students filing complaints and the members of the student council who were dealing with them. I wanted to immediately turn around and leave.

"My fellow students, you're all creating a ruckus!" Prince Richard boomed. "You must all talk to each other calmly." His words carried an authoritative weight, and the room fell silent.

That quiet only lasted a moment.

"President Richard!" a student who was both tall and wide

barked.

Dude, he just said to quiet down!

"We, the members of the ryffle club, have properly gotten permission to use the second field for the entire day. Despite that, a horse belonging to the horse-riding club is eating the grass on the field! I spoke to fellow council members and told them to get the horse off our field, but they won't listen!"

"Jeffery, instead of complaining to us, you should be speaking directly to those in the horse-riding club," Prince Richard said, shooing him away.

"Why do *I* have to speak to the horse-riding club? The student council granted us the right to use the field. Don't you have a duty to make sure we can actually use it?" Belying his beefy build, Jeffery didn't just have muscles for brains; he actually made a fair point to the prince.

"Very well. Keith, go to the horse-riding club and have them get their horse off the field. Oh, take Ralph and Hugo with you." Prince Richard stared at them for a moment before turning to me. "You go with them too, Patience." He probably thought that those two wouldn't be able to keep Prince Keith calm in the event he lost his cool.

Good grief.

Prince Keith ecstatically made his way to the horse-riding club. *He probably thinks this is going to be an easy task. I really hope it is.*

"That horse doesn't belong to our club. I told President Jeffery the same thing. Do you really think the horse-riding club would lose one of our own horses?" The member of the horse-riding club was turning his nose up at Prince Keith.

"In that case, where did the horse on the second field come from?" the prince asked. Ralph and Hugo just silently stood behind him.

"How would I know?" the student replied. "We have a lot of guests visiting the campus today. It probably belongs to one of them."

While not impossible, it would certainly be strange for a visitor to

leave their horse to roam free on a school practice field like that. I could tell the giant president of the ryffle club, Jeffery, wasn't all brawn and no brain. So his claim that the horse belonged to the horse-riding club probably had some sort of basis.

"In that case, please come with us to confirm that the horse does not belong to the horse-riding club," I requested. "After that, we won't bother you any further."

The student in the horse-riding club kept grumbling about how it wasn't their horse, but he seemed weary after being yelled at by President Jeffery, so he followed us to the second field.

"This isn't possible! That horse *is* ours. How did this happen?!" The student began to panic and chased after the horse.

It was in a horse's nature to run when being chased. The student was probably used to handling horses under normal circumstances, but this horse wasn't going to let itself be caught like this. Prince Keith, Ralph, and Hugo joined the chase, but the horse had gone wild.

"Calm down!" I ordered, casting some household magic. In this world, horses counted as a daily necessity, so my magic worked. "Please don't let him run away again."

"Of course I won't," the student said. I wasn't sure what to do after the horse had obediently made its way to me, but I should've trusted the member of the horse-riding club. He was able to easily ride the horse even without a saddle. "This horse is a backup that doesn't participate in competitions. There's no way he escaped on his own. We have to split up and find the others!" The student then rode off, claiming he had to catch the other horses.

"Just as I thought, that horse did indeed belong to the horse-riding club," President Jeffery said with a nod of satisfaction. "All right, then! It's time to start our match!" Perhaps it was good for the club that their captain was a naturally loud person, but I didn't want to be standing next to him.

"What did you do just then?" Prince Keith asked as we made our way back to the student council room.

"It was just some household magic," I replied.

"No way," Hugo grumbled. As always, he had a tendency to be

contentious.

"It's bad manners to question someone's spells, Hugo," Ralph pointed out.

Thanks, Ralph. Yeah, I will concede that my household magic is just a little weird.

"I see. I forgot that you got a certificate of completion for magic practicum," Prince Keith said, somehow coming to an understanding on his own, which made Hugo quiet down as well.

"Just as President Jeffery said, the horse did belong to the horse-riding club," Prince Keith reported to his brother. "A member of the club got the horse off the second field, but he indicated there might be other horses that also got loose."

Oh, it looks like the prince can properly report back! I guess I underestimated him.

Prince Richard sighed.

"Indeed, it seems that several of the horse-riding club's backup horses have escaped. We've received complaints from other clubs as well. It was a mistake on the horse-riding club's part to keep their backup horses in the same stables used for visitors. Please help them catch the other horses."

And so I spent the afternoon finding horses with the others, calming them with household magic, and having Prince Keith, Ralph, and Hugo catch them. After all, I couldn't do much with a horse without reins.

"Thank you very much. This is the last of the escaped horses. I will make sure we do not make such a mistake ever again. I will also be submitting a letter of apology to the student council president." The president of the horse-riding club, Daniel, thanked us profusely. We were finally free from our horse-catching duties.

We returned to the student council room, and it wasn't as crowded as it had been before.

"Brother, we've captured all of the escaped horses," Prince Keith announced. "President Daniel will be submitting a letter of apology at a later time."

“Keith, Ralph, Hugo, and Patience. You all were an incredible help. The members of the student council can handle things from here. There isn’t much time left, but please go enjoy the Festival of Verdure.”

We finally got permission to be done with helping out the student council. I felt relieved. I’d been strengthening Patience’s body by jumping rope, but I was exhausted after following the boys around all afternoon.

It was unfortunate that I’d missed the play, but I still had time to see what the alchemy club was doing for the festival.

“Thank you,” I said, about to excuse myself, only to be stopped by Prince Keith.

“It must be lonely to explore the festival on your own. Let’s go together.”



Since I was usually with Princess Margaret, it was possible that he felt bad that I was on my own. To be honest, his concern was unnecessary.

"No, thank you. I'm all right."

"You don't have to be so shy. Come on, where should we start?"

I wasn't being shy. I genuinely didn't want to explore the festival with him, but Prince Keith wasn't reading the room.

"That reminds me, Margaret was raving about how the music club's New Composition Recital was incredible. Why don't we go to the auditorium?"

Prince Keith was probably trying to be considerate...but I had a grim feeling that the third block musicians would wind up getting into a nasty argument with the choir club, so I wanted to avoid the auditorium.

"Please go and enjoy the music club's performance, Your Highness. I've heard everyone's performances countless times during practice, so I will be visiting a different club." I could hear Patience in my mind nagging that I was being rude, but I was determined to distance myself from any trouble. *I don't want to play with fire. Though, fire makes for yummy things, like roasted chestnuts.* I was trying to escape into my mind because Prince Keith was beaming with chivalry as he tried to follow me anyway.

"In that case, I'll go with you," the prince insisted. "What club do you want to visit?"

I didn't want to go around the festival with Prince Keith because that would attract unwanted attention to myself; it was impossible to remain unobtrusive when accompanied by a prince and his whole entourage. Well, if I wasn't going to be able to get out of this, I would at least go where I wanted.

"The alchemy club," I replied.

Prince Keith gave me a bemused look. He had probably expected that I'd want to check out something feminine like the art club or sewing club.

"You really are strange. You want to accelerate to the senior division next year and take both the home economics and civil service tracks, right? Are you going to enroll in the mage track too?"

Ralph and Hugo looked completely shocked. They probably had no idea that it was even possible for students to skip ahead to the senior division or enroll in two tracks at once.

Prince Keith, please stop bringing up things you don't have to.

"Oh, no, I'm just interested in alchemy."

"You really are a weird girl," Prince Keith said.

How rude.

"Can you even enroll in two tracks, Patience?" Hugo asked with a worried look.

"Of course she can," Prince Keith said. "My brother is enrolled in both the knight track and the civil service track! I plan to follow in his footsteps."

"Do you really mean that?" Ralph and Hugo asked, firing questions off at the prince. This meant that they both might have to enroll in two tracks as well. They didn't have any bandwidth left to pay attention to me.

"Oh, it looks like this is the alchemy club." There weren't any other visitors, so I felt awkward about going in.

"Get it over with quickly," Prince Keith said. "After this, we're going to the ballroom."

The ballroom? I was going to pass on dancing...

"Oh, are you here to check out the club?" a member of the alchemy club asked upon spotting me. This should have been a good thing, since that was indeed what I was here for, but I felt like running away. The student wore a lab coat over his school uniform—a *completely filthy lab coat*. I stifled a reflexive urge to use my household magic to cleanse it.

Oh, look. Ralph and Hugo are standing in front of Prince Keith, prepared to protect him from this weirdo.

"Yes, that's right," I replied.

The three intimidated boys looked at me as if to say, *Are you really going to check this club out?* I ignored their dubious gazes. The student talking to me did look like a mad scientist, but I was genuinely interested in the items they had on display.

"Is this a motor-powered fan?" There was a box with three blades that were spinning, creating a bit of wind.

"That's right! I'm impressed. Could it be that you want to join the alchemy club?!" The student then grabbed both of my hands.

"Let go!" Hugo exclaimed, saving me.

"I'm in the music club, and I haven't learned any alchemy yet, so I don't think I could," I explained.

"If you're interested in alchemy, we'll teach you!" the student insisted. "Actual practice is more important than what you learn in class."

Another member of the club, who had been sitting in a corner of the room thus far, came up and began trying to recruit me too.

"That's right!" he exclaimed in agreement. "There isn't any other club that contributes to society as much as the alchemy club. Also, if you invent a new magical device, you can patent your invention."

A patent?! I could make money!

"Can someone inexperienced really do alchemy?" I asked. They were winning me over.

"Hey, are you seriously going to join?" Prince Keith asked. "You should talk to my sister before making a decision. This club is a gathering of weirdos."

The prince's words calmed me down a bit. Being weak to money was a fault of mine. Getting a patent surely wouldn't be easy.

"If you're interested in joining, we're here every day after classes, Monday through Friday, so come by whenever you like. I'm Caesar Burns, the club president."

It turned out that all the alchemy club had on display were different versions of their motor-powered fan, so I ended my tour and stepped out into the hallway.

"If you join a club like that, no one's going to want to marry you," Prince Keith said, exasperated.

"That's perfectly fine," I responded. "I do not plan on getting married."

All three boys looked completely stunned. *Oh, they're so cute. They're at just the right age for a shotacon like me. I would never lay my hands on them, though!*

"You won't get married? Are you going to become a nun?" Prince Keith asked. He seemed worried. "*Can* you become a nun with

household magic?"

"I don't plan on becoming a nun. I'm going to work."

"Well, you are my sister's lady's maid," Prince Keith mused. He seemed satisfied now, but I would have to respectfully decline having that position as my future career.

"Are you going to serve Princess Margaret for the rest of your life?" Ralph asked, sounding genuinely worried for me. "What are you going to do once she gets married?"

When the king abdicated and the first prince succeeded the throne, the rest of the princes would just be the younger brothers of the king. For a princess, her status would change based on who she got married to.

"She might even get married to someone from another kingdom," Hugo added, also concerned.

You guys don't have to worry about me being an indentured servant to the princess. I have no intention of serving her forever.

"Well, I don't plan on being her lady's maid. I'm going to get a job."

The three of them seemed stunned all over again.

"You are *truly* strange," Prince Keith said, reiterating his earlier observation. "But you're going to become even more of a weirdo if you join the alchemy club, so I'd advise against it. Come on, let's head to the ballroom."

The three boys quickly began walking off, and I called out to them from behind.

"No, thank you. I'm going to refrain from dancing."

I'd planned on spending the rest of the evening until dinner decorating handkerchiefs for my side job, but they dragged me with them to the ballroom anyway.

"You'll be fine even if you don't have a partner," Prince Keith assured me.

Huh? Does everyone have a partner? I've been so busy studying and being the princess's lady's maid. I had no idea. Now I really *don't want to go.*

"Margaret is over there," Prince Keith pointed out when we

reached the ballroom.

The spacious ballroom was decorated with flowers, and live music played as over a dozen people performed a graceful dance. There were seats at the edge of the ballroom, where Princess Margaret was seated with her friends. She seemed upset about something, and I didn't want to get near her. Prince Keith seemed to not notice the air around her at all, and he made a beeline for his sister.

"Sister! Patience and I finished helping the student council," he reported.

Once I split up from Prince Keith, I'll get permission from Princess Margaret to return to my dorm room.

"My, Keith. Thank you for your hard work. Well then, go on and dance." The princess then waited for Prince Keith to leave before saying any more.

Just as I'd expected, the music club's third group had fought with the choir club, and that's what had upset her.

"If the members of the choir club truly love music, they should have just sat back and waited for our performance to end, even if it went slightly over our allotted time," the princess huffed. Her love for music ran deep.

I know how you feel, but you have to respect the time limits.

"They really should just shut down the choir club," Catherine grumbled. It was quite the harsh statement.

I won't be on your side if the music club gets shut down for not following the rules.

"Is there any point to a club that just sings songs from the past as a group?" Lilina, who was usually silent, was also upset. It was a rare sight.

"The student singing the solo was also untalented," Hariette complained. She looked like she was the sweetest of the group, but as always, she was actually the meanest.

These girls were busy competing for the title of most scathing review, and I didn't get a chance to speak up. There were also boys who wanted to ask the girls to dance, but they were having a hard time talking to them under these conditions. Prince Keith was the only one so oblivious to the storm cloud hanging above the ladies

that he could just come up and talk to them.

However, when Hariette noticed a boy from the knight club she was interested in, she immediately stopped complaining and began beaming.

"Everyone, look," Hariette pointed out. "It's Sir Percival."

"Oh my, he's as lovely as usual," Catherine said.

Lilina nodded in agreement. I followed their gazes and looked at Percival. He was indeed handsome, but if I recalled correctly, it was the club president, Eric, who had won the match. *Shouldn't the president be the one they're fawning over?*

The three girls all wore graceful smiles, and the storm clouds hanging over them disappeared.

"Your Highness, may I please have this dance?" Percival asked the princess.

The three girls watched as Percival left with Princess Margaret, all of them looking slightly disappointed. Soon after, they were invited to dance by other boys, and they all left to the dance floor.

All right, as soon as the princess is back, I'm going to get her permission to go back to my room!

I'd been waiting for the perfect moment to strike, but I'd missed it.

"Let's dance," Prince Keith said, inviting me to dance after pitying me for being a wallflower.

"I'm not very good at dancing," I said. He thought I was just being shy.

"I know that much, but the lady's maid to my sister needs to be able to dance. You're going to have to accompany her to parties."

Is it already decided that I'm going to be her lady's maid so long that I'll be there when she's attending parties? That thought filled me with dread.

Prince Keith was a skilled dancer. He probably had a dance instructor back at the palace.

"You'll get better if you just practice more," Prince Keith remarked. "You dance with her next, Ralph."

Really? I just want to go back to my room and do my side job...

Though I'd been against participating, it was fun to dance with someone who was skilled. I'd already memorized the steps, so it was easy to dance when my partner did well leading.

After I danced several times with Prince Keith, Ralph, and Hugo, I finally managed to catch Princess Margaret during a break.

"I'm planning on returning to my room soon," the princess said.

Oh, it's already time for dinner. Have I been dancing that long? I'm surprised.

"I was thinking the same thing," I responded.

The princess and I returned to the dorms. The ballroom was still lively and full of excitement, but I was exhausted.

"You say you're not good at dancing, but you were doing well, Patience." I appreciated the compliment, but the princess couldn't leave it at that, instead adding, "I think you'll be able to get a certificate of completion for dance with a little more work. Then, when you have more free time, you'll be able to compose even more songs." Her love for music was indeed boundless.

However, whether I could get a certificate of completion for dance definitely depended on who I partnered with.

Chapter 8: Final Exams

Students of the Royal Academy had been in high spirits because of the Festival of Verdure, but things calmed down once it was announced what we would be tested on during the final exams in June.

I'd been keeping busy, tending to my garden back home on the weekends. The season for strawberries had passed, so we planted things like tomatoes, eggplants, and cucumbers in the greenhouse—well, George was the one who did the actual planting.

"Grow!" I chanted, casting my household magic to speed things up. I hadn't found these vegetables for sale at any grocers yet, so I hoped the low supply would cause them to fetch a high price.

To clarify, though, I wasn't walking around town on my own anymore. Feeling guilty for going out on my own whenever I looked at Mary had become too much to bear. Instead I'd asked Eva about what produce was being sold and for how much, since she did the grocery shopping for our family.

"We shall eat half of these," I said to myself. "The rest will be sold."

The reason British nobles used to serve cucumber sandwiches at teatime was because cucumbers could only be grown in greenhouses, which made them expensive. If the same holds true in this world, then cucumbers can probably be sold for a high price! Yay for us!

I also harvested the beans, cabbages, potatoes, and carrots that I'd planted in the backyard. I had my brothers help out with this portion of the harvesting. Mary didn't like us doing menial labor like gardening, but she seemed to accept activities that the little angels considered fun.

I'm not going to sell these vegetables. We can preserve them! That includes pickling the cabbage.

After harvesting our vegetables, I mixed some compost-based fertilizer into the soil; George had made the compost. *I really am glad that I can use household magic.*

I finished ridging the soil, then I had George plant beans, potatoes, and tomatoes. Considering the time of year, we could probably start growing tomatoes directly in the soil.

"Grow!" I used some magic on the fruit trees as well. They were now flowering, so I was excited for them to start fruiting.

I did some maintenance on the rose bushes out front as well. I wanted them to look good because I was taken to the Royal Palace once or twice a month, and always driven home after that. It would be embarrassing if our home looked too bare. The roses seemed to make Patience happy too.

"After final exams, it'll be summer break!" I cheered. "I'll get to be with the angels all the time!"

I felt fully prepared for every subject except math, which I was trying to get a certificate of completion in. I studied quite a bit for it, but on the weekends I still spent all day gardening and all night doing my side jobs.

"Summer is wonderful! It's even bright during the evening," I mused. Because of the extra daylight, we could save on using candles. I couldn't get too caught up in this moment though—we would eventually face another harsh winter, so I had to stay focused on my preparations. I never wanted to deal with cold and starvation ever again.

"I'll need Wyatt to buy us some more firewood... We have a long way to go before we can afford a horse." I wanted more money.

I'd seen at the Festival of Verdure how noble boys—the members of the horse-riding club, naturally, but also Prince Keith and his friends—were used to being around horses. If we continued to be horseless, Nassius would fall behind his peers in this area. I knew it was hard for boys to not feel ashamed about doing worse than their peers in physical activities. Unfortunately, there was nothing I could do about the horse situation right now—I was determined that we'd prioritize stocking up on food and firewood.

"It would be nice if I could get a patent through alchemy..."

Princess Margaret hadn't looked too happy when I'd told her I wanted to join the alchemy club.

The princess's response boiled down to, *If you have time for that gathering of weirdos, why don't you work toward getting a certificate of completion in dance, or compose some more music*?

Technically, I was putting off the final decision about joining the alchemy club until after I could take an alchemy course at the academy. I'd read in a book at home that only some people could become alchemists, so I planned to use the course to figure out whether I had the necessary aptitude.

"You need fire and earth magic to process metals," I thought aloud, "And I believe having water magic also can make things easier. However, all I have is household magic."

Of course, my household magic does feel a little *overpowered in terms of what it can do, so maybe it'll be enough to let me do alchemy. If I can accelerate into the senior division next year, I'm definitely going to try taking an alchemy course.*

Final exams for the semester proved to be a piece of cake. After all, they were basically tests for the elementary to middle school levels. For math, I'd taken the senior division third-years' exam in a separate room alone. I felt like I'd gotten every question right, and I knew I hadn't made any calculation errors because I'd reviewed my work several times. *I pray to thee, God of Estena! Please let me pass!*

Our exams were returned to us, and I nearly had full marks. I even got a certificate of completion in math! Next, I wanted to get certificates of completion for language arts, history, classical literature, and magic theory. Initially, I'd had to rely on Patience to get through those subjects, but now I could tackle them on my own.

I would be enrolled in two tracks next year, which meant I would be *busy*. Things would get easier as I obtained more exemptions from mandatory courses. I wanted to work harder at my side jobs and buy my family a horse, especially since Nassius was going to turn nine soon. I was going to try baking a cake for his birthday (well, I'd be supervising; Eva would do the actual baking).

Conveniently for me, I'd been invited to the palace by the queen, so I would be able to get eggs and other ingredients.

Perhaps my selfish thoughts resulted in some divine punishment. Everything had been the same as usual until the fatal moment. Like always, Zofie came from the royal palace to the academy in order to escort us, I rode there along with the princess, and I played the hanon.

But after we'd enjoyed some delicious tea, Queen Victoria dropped the bomb.

"Patience, why don't you come with us to our summer palace? Margaret will enjoy having you there too."

"Why, thank you, mother." Princess Margaret smiled. "I did think I would be bored, since Jane is so young."

I immediately wanted to refuse. *I'm supposed to spend my summer break with my darling brothers! I also need the summer to grow vegetables for us to have in the winter.* I gathered my courage and looked up at the queen, ready to decline.

The moment our eyes met, I realized that I *couldn't* refuse. Both the queen and Princess Margaret used their eyes to communicate surprisingly forcefully. If they had at least used words, I could have found some sort of excuse or loophole to fast-talk my way out, but I couldn't say no to a commanding gaze.

"Thank you very much. I will have to speak to my father first before I may respond."

Queen Victoria gave me a satisfied smile. She knew that Viscount Granger couldn't decline the offer.

"We will prepare everything you need for your stay at the summer palace, so there is nothing you have to worry about," the queen assured me. "You can even bring an attendant with you, if you'd like."

The queen probably had no idea that we only had Mary on staff as a maid.

"I will discuss it with my father," I repeated.

Hmm. It'll be summer break, so I won't be wearing my uniform. Oh wait, does that mean I'll be eating dinner together with the royal

family? The king too? I want to just eat in the children's room with Princess Jane and Prince Marcus.

I soon gave up on wishing for things to be a certain way, realizing that everything would depend on what Queen Victoria decided.

As I rode home in the impressive royal carriage, I wished for my father to decline the queen's offer. Though, that was probably never going to happen.

I would usually be escorted home by the princess's attendant, Zofie, but we were also joined by a court lady today since the queen was sending a letter to my father. The court lady was Charlotte Evans, the same woman who had delivered the hanon to our house.

"Lady Charlotte, would it be all right if I asked you a question?"

Charlotte was dressed in a black court lady's uniform, and every last strand of her brown hair was neatly tucked away into a braid. She seemed unapproachable, but I would regret it later if I didn't ask my question now.

"I've heard from Her Majesty that everything I need at the summer palace would be prepared for me," I began. "However, I believe there are some things that I should still bring. I don't have a mother to help me prepare, so I'll have to instruct my attendant on what I'd like to bring. Could you please tell me what I should prepare?"

"I believe Her Majesty will have ready everything you'll need for your stay at the summer palace," Charlotte replied. "That includes a gown, a nightgown, a set of undergarments, and other clothes. However, you may be more comfortable if you bring some of your own clothes—such as sleepwear and undergarments—that you're used to wearing. The summer palace is by the ocean, so you will need some old clothing that you can use as swimwear. It may also be helpful to bring casual clothing that you can wear while playing outdoors."

To sum it up and do a little reading between the lines, I would be provided with things like an expensive gown, a nightgown, and a set of undergarments, but I would need to bring extra changes of clothes for daily wear, along with something I could use as a

swimsuit, and casual outfits for playing outside.

"Thank you very much. Also, is it necessary to bring an attendant with me?"

Lady Charlotte looked surprised.

"If you don't have an attendant, I'm sure Her Majesty will appoint someone to care for you, but I believe it will be more comfortable to be looked after by a familiar attendant from your home."

I definitely would prefer being cared for by Mary over someone I don't know, but she's the only maid we have on staff.

"Um, what must an attendant bring with her?"

"Your attendant will know what to prepare," Charlotte responded.

That's fair. I'll leave it to Mary.

The carriage arrived at my house, and Charlotte handed the queen's letter to Wyatt. Zofie passed on the basket containing the eggs and other goodies.

Please, father! Don't let me go to the summer palace! I knew that it would just be in vain, so I didn't bother praying for things to work out.

Whatever would happen was going to happen, so I decided to not think about it and focused on harvesting the ripened tomatoes, eggplants, and cucumbers from the greenhouse with my brothers. We picked out three small, bright-red tomatoes, and we chilled and cleaned them before biting into them.

"Freshly picked tomatoes are just delicious," I said.

"Yeah! I love tomatoes!" Henry beamed.

Oh, how nice it would be to spend my summer break like this.

At dinner, I knew from the excited look on my father's face that it had been decided that I would be going to the summer palace.

"Patience! You've been working hard as Princess Margaret's lady's maid, so Her Majesty is going to bring you along with the royal family to the summer palace. What a generous offer!"

I knew it. We can't refuse. Womp womp.

"I must say, father, I was planning to spend summer break with my brothers. Also, I may be allowed to bring an attendant with me, but we only have Mary here at home."

My father's gray eyes widened as if he'd just realized that fact.

"Right... She is our only maid. Things have...gotten quite sad in this house."

This isn't the time to be getting emotional. Whatever, I don't need an attendant with me. I live on my own at the dorms anyways.

"You should take an attendant with you," my father insisted, as lacking in life skills as ever. There would surely be trouble at home if Mary went with me.

I should talk to Wyatt about this.

Dinner had improved quite a bit compared to this past winter. The soup was full of vegetables and beans. The bread had gotten, well, slightly softer. For meat, we had thin slices of grilled chicken breast, which even had a tomato-based sauce on it. We also got dessert: crepes with strawberry sauce! I'd given the recipe for crepes to Eva. *She made them so thin. I'm impressed.*

"This is my first time eating anything like this," my father remarked.

That's right. It's the first time we're having crepes in this world.

"I gave Eva a recipe for a thinner version of the pancakes from before and asked her to make it for us. This dessert is known as a crepe."

Did my brothers get to eat them too? I wondered as my father and I enjoyed the crepes. The tea served alongside dessert had gotten a little more flavorful as well, but it was still on the watery side.

After dinner, I spent a little bit of time chatting with my brothers in their room.

"I can now do double jumps," Nassius reported.

"You've worked so hard, Nassius," I said, praising him.

"I can do multiple double jumps in a row!" Henry added proudly.

"You've worked hard too, Henry." I gave them each a kiss and said, "Good night."

I'm so happy! Ugh, I was supposed to get to live like this for all of summer break.

On Saturday, I began working on Nassius's birthday cake in the morning. Eva was the one actually making it, but I used my household magic to help whip the egg whites and the heavy cream.

Eva cut the sponge cake in half, covered the bottom half in whipped cream and strawberry jam, then replaced the top half of the cake.

"We're going to pick out eight strawberries that have kept their shape from the jam and decorate the top of the cake with them," I instructed Eva. "We have enough for everyone, so I hope you'll have some as well."

I still wished we had some piping bags and decorative piping tips, but we were nevertheless able to put together a wonderful birthday cake. It was snow white and topped with bright red strawberries. We didn't have any small birthday candles, so we put in a single, relatively thin candle. I asked for the birthday cake to be served as dessert during lunch.

"Happy birthday!" I exclaimed.

Nassius's gray eyes widened with surprise, as did Henry's blue eyes.

"This is incredible. You have a talent for cooking, Patience," my father praised me. I appreciated the compliment, but today was Nassius's day, so I wished father would focus his attention on him instead.

"Go on, Nassius. Blow out the candle while making a wish," I instructed. Nassius looked confused. It seemed this wasn't a tradition in this world. "It's a trend among the girls at the Royal Academy. Go on, blow it out!"



His cheeks puffed up as he breathed in, then he blew out the candle. I began clapping, and Henry, my father, Mary, Wyatt, Eva, and George joined in.

"I've never had a birthday like this before, sister," Nassius said, giving me a kiss.

I'm so happy! I wish we could spend summer break together.

Our final exam grades were posted for all to see. It seemed that people in this world didn't care about keeping personal information private.

"You nearly got full marks, Patience," the princess mused.

"You did brilliantly as well, Your Highness," I replied. We weren't in her room, so I referred to her with the proper royal title.

"Yes, well, I did satisfactorily aside from math and home economics. I hope I don't get in trouble with mother..."

I'd completely forgotten about home economics. Our projects had been put on display. The first-years had prepared pieces of cloth that looked to be the result of sewing practice. The second-years did the aforementioned makeup capes. It looked like Louise had run out of time to finish her project. We weren't allowed to work on our projects outside of class, because they would be given to the maids to work on if brought home.

The third-years' project was embroidering an apron. Princess Margaret's handiwork was...making me worried whether she would be able to graduate or not. *Though, I'm more scared of the look Queen Victoria will have on her face when she sees this monstrosity.*

I decided I'd use my makeup cape at home. It could seem like I was trying to show the princess up if I used it with her, and the princess already had a lovely cape of her own.

The senior division's projects were a mixed bag in terms of quality. The first-years made casual dresses, the second-years made semiformal dresses, and the third-years made formal gowns. Some were lovely, while others looked unwearable. It probably felt like there was more chaff than wheat because the wheat-level students had received certificates of completion and didn't have to take the class.

Projects from art class were also on display. There was a blue ribbon on my piece, and several other pieces had ribbons on them as well.

"You're very skilled with your hands," Princess Margaret remarked. "In addition to your hanon practice, you should also start learning to play the lute. Then you'll be able to accompany my hanon performances."

I thought the princess had some artistic sensibilities, but I wished she would pour even half of the effort she put into music into art too. *It's so obvious that she didn't even* try *on this piece.*

Prince Keith, Ralph, Hugo, and even Louise had good grades. It still seemed like Ralph was trying to not get better grades than the prince, but that wasn't my problem to deal with. I just hoped that Prince Keith wouldn't notice and scold him for doing so.

I met with Mr. Kepner on my own to discuss getting certificates of completion in language arts, classical literature, history, and magic theory.

"There's no need to work so hard, Patience," Mr. Kepner said, shocked.

"I was planning on taking the civil service track, but Princess Margaret is going to enroll in the home economics track," I began to explain. "If I accelerate, I'm looking at enrolling in both courses. If I'm able to be exempt from some mandatory subjects, I'll have a little more room to breathe."

Mr. Kepner seemed surprised by this. "There's no need for you to take the home economics course just because you're Her Highness's lady's maid, is there?" He looked at my grades. "Hm? It looks like you're exempt from every practical course aside from dance... In that case, you might be able to do it. I'll get you the senior division third-year textbooks for language arts, classical literature, history, and magic theory. You should study over summer break."

I really wish I could *just spend summer break playing with my brothers and studying.* My mind wandered as I lugged the heavy textbooks back to my dorm room. To my annoyance, I was caught by Prince Keith along the way.

"Hey, Patience. It looks like you're going to get a certificate of

completion in math too. Wait, do you have all those textbooks because you're planning on getting a certificate of completion in *every* subject?"

Can't you just leave me alone? This doesn't have anything to do with you.

"I'd like to if I can," I replied.

For some reason, the prince glared at me.

"I'm not losing to you!" Prince Keith proclaimed. "Next year, I'm going to accelerate and become a third-year! After that, I'm going to accelerate into the second year of the senior division. I'm going to catch up to you!"

Good luck overcoming classical literature, I cheered internally. He would probably be upset no matter what I said, so I tried to just bow and leave, only for Prince Keith to insist he would help me.

"I'll carry those for you!" he huffed.

It was unnecessary, but I still appreciated the assistance. Of course, even though Prince Keith was the one who said he'd help, Ralph and Hugo did the actual heavy lifting. They just couldn't let the prince haul around some girl's books.

Our report cards were sent home to our parents. My father was surprised by my grades and gave me praise. I was glad for the compliments, but there was another letter on his desk. *I'm feeling déjà vu...*

"It appears you're going to leave for the summer palace in a week. It says here that they'll be here to pick you up early in the morning."

If I said I wanted to stay at home, I would just cause trouble for my father. *I need to talk to Wyatt about the attendant situation.* I left my father's study and headed to Wyatt's workroom.

"Is something wrong, my lady?" Wyatt asked. He looked as if he had no idea what my visit could be about, despite seemingly always knowing everything.

"I've been informed by my father that I'll be leaving for the summer palace in a week. Her Majesty has said I could bring an attendant with me, but I've been assured by the court lady Charlotte

that a maid will be appointed to me if I don't bring one. Therefore, I believe I'll be fine traveling on my own."

"The master has instructed me to have Mary travel with you," Wyatt responded after a moment's thought, unambiguously rejecting my suggestion. "It isn't proper for a lady to travel without an attendant. Even if there are dozens of court ladies and maids at the summer palace, a lady from the Granger family should travel with an attendant from the Granger family."

"Even so, Mary is our only maid," I pointed out, but my feeble counterpoint stood no chance against Wyatt.

"There will only be your father and brothers left here at home. I already care for the master on a daily basis, and George and Eva can care for your younger brothers."

We now had a working toilet, and unlike in the winter, there were no fireplaces that needed constant tending. Still, I wanted George to have plenty of time for maintaining the garden.

"There is no need to worry about the estate, my lady," Wyatt reassured me with a smile while pulling out three broken antiques for me to *spruce up*. He truly was a magician. "More importantly, you must prepare for your trip with Mary." He sent me off, still smiling.

I found Mary and told her the news.

"A week from now, we'll be going to the summer palace." *Are you okay, Mary? Are you breathing?*

"Why is something so important being— No, never mind. We don't have the time for that. I must mend the clothing I'd been saving for when you grow."

Mary had stopped breathing for a moment, but she was firing on all cylinders after that. I also helped, using my household magic until I was exhausted. I renewed several hand-me-downs from my relatives, which Mary and I worked on together to tailor to fit me.

"Mary, I've been told that Her Majesty will have everything I need prepared. Also, I can just clean things with my household magic, so I won't have to wash anything." I was fatigued, and I'd hoped my words would show her that we'd done enough.

"My lady, you must remember that what Her Majesty will be

preparing are clothes. It is fine to show gratitude and wear those clothes, but you mustn't rely completely on her kindness."

Though the Granger family was poor, we were proud, and that extended to our staff as well. Thankfully, the mornings I spent helping my brothers study served as an oasis for my heart amid the stresses of trying to be a proud and proper noble.

"We've done enough, Mary!"

I finally finished the long process of doing invisible hems on skirts and decided to spend the rest of my time until our departure tomorrow with the little angels. Even Patience agreed with me: *That sounds wonderful!*

I had no idea what the summer palace would be like. Princess Margaret had told me that it was near the ocean, which was all I knew.

At this point, I had no idea what it meant to be invited to the summer palace. I just felt like this invitation had gotten in the way of my summer with my brothers, and I was so busy sewing dresses and undergarments to bring with me that I didn't think about the trip too deeply. It would be a long while before I noticed the helping hand being offered to the impoverished Granger family.

END

Extra Story: Princess Margaret's First Impressions of Her New Lady's Maid

My name is Margaret Aeolia Agape Lawrence. I'm sure you could guess from the final part of my incredibly long name, but I am the first princess of the Kingdom of Lawrence. My father is King Alfred, and my mother is Queen Victoria. Their eldest child is my brother Richard, then me, followed by my brother Keith, my sister Jane, and our youngest sibling, Marcus. I was the secondborn of us five children, and as expected, I was treated completely differently than Richard, the first prince.

Richard had a strict upbringing befitting the heir to the throne, and he had the virtues to live up to such expectations. My younger brother Keith was raised with a similar strictness, but he managed to get by while slacking in subjects like classical literature; perhaps that was in his nature as the second son.

Well, I wasn't in any position to mock my brother. I just hated math! I wasn't literally running from it, but just looking at numbers gave me a headache. On the other hand, I was blessed with a gift for music, and I enjoyed it very much.

In the Kingdom of Lawrence, royals, nobles, and commoners who passed an exam were mandated to attend the Royal Academy starting at the age of ten, where we would all learn together. Before then, I was raised by tutors and caretakers within the detached residence on the palace grounds. Before I ever enrolled in the Royal Academy, several groups of girls my age had been brought by the residential palace to visit me.

"Margaret, pick your friends from among these girls," my mother

instructed.

I had no idea who to choose, considering I'd only met these girls once or twice. *I like music!* I thought to myself. I planned on joining the music club upon enrolling in the Royal Academy, so I decided to pick my friends based on that, since I wanted to enjoy club activities with my friends.

Well, that ended up being the first reason I failed to choose the right friends.

My next thought was that I wanted to be friends with pretty girls. As a princess, from the moment I was born I wasn't allowed to marry for love. It was my duty as a princess to one day marry the person my father chose for me. For that very reason, I wanted to be surrounded by cute girls. If they were pretty, they would surely have fun stories about their romantic endeavors.

That was probably the second reason I ended up choosing the wrong friends.

I had everyone play the hanon, and I took their looks and family backgrounds into consideration, which led me to choose Catherine and the rest of the girls. Looking back, I couldn't help but suspect their parents had probably put them through an intense round of music lessons after finding out that I liked it.

From the very beginning, Catherine, Lilina, and Hariette would go to music club with me, but they never seemed to have fun. They tried to hide it, but I noticed it right away.

In music club, not only did we play music, we also endeavored to compose new pieces. Catherine and the other girls dutifully "composed" songs, but they were basically just copies of existing songs.

"All you did was add a few notes!" Albert, our passionate senior in the music club, shouted angrily.

The three of them just sulked.

"It's only our first year. It can't be helped," I said. The truth was, I'd had a feeling that the three of them weren't fit for the music club, but I'd ignored it because I thought it would be fun to be in the club with my friends.

Catherine was incredibly beautiful and did well academically, but if someone of a lower status than her in Class A got a better grade, a horrifically mean look would appear on her face. It only lasted a moment, but it was real. I'd originally thought that she was prideful as the daughter of a marquess, but the truth was she was just plain mean.

As for Hariette, though she spoke in a sweet way, her words were venomous, and she often spoke ill of people behind their backs. I just laughed and went along with it, but I began to wonder whether she was also speaking ill of me when I wasn't around.

Lilina was just barely able to keep her grades high enough to stay in Class A, and it was completely obvious that she was playing the hanon against her wishes.

The truth was, I'd felt for a while that I couldn't keep being in the music club with these friends.

"Lady Margaret, I think that your friends may not be enjoying the music club," President Melissa said to me once.

"They...just aren't used to composing yet," I protested weakly.

It had been a mistake to choose those three as my friends, but during my first and second years in the junior division, I'd turned a blind eye to the truth. They were the first friends I'd ever had, so I had pretended to not notice their failings, telling myself that everyone had a few flaws.

What finally opened my eyes was my father suddenly ordering my siblings and me to move into the dorms shortly before I entered my third year in the junior division. Even Richard had no idea why our father had issued such an unexpected decree.

"Father, will I be able to bring an attendant with me to the dorms?" I asked. I had plenty of flaws, but the worst was that I was terrible with mornings.

"No, you won't be able to bring an attendant to the Royal Academy dorms. But there will be a maid cleaning the deluxe rooms."

Until then, I'd had court ladies and attendants to wake me up every morning. Then they would get me dressed in my uniform and do my hair while I was still half asleep. *If I end up late to class every day and mother finds out, I'm going to be in so much trouble! I must do my best to get up every day.*

On top of all of that, I was shocked to learn that the friends of both Richard and Keith would be moving into the dorms with them. Keith was enrolling for the first time this year, but he already had friends willing to live in the dorms with him. In stark contrast, not a single one of my friends offered to move into the dorms with me.

"I was told I wouldn't be able to bring an attendant with me to the dorms," Catherine explained. "I couldn't possibly live like that." Catherine had beautiful curls, which were probably styled by attendants every morning.

"I can't possibly move into the dorms and be away from my family," Hariette whined. Her words irritated me a bit, but it couldn't be helped. Despite how sweet she tried to seem, she had a sharp tongue that she'd often used to speak ill of others—including her sisters, from whom she allegedly couldn't bear to part. Still, I couldn't force her to move into the dorm.

"I can't..." Lilina refused with that single sentence. Thinking about it now, her adorable mouth had never uttered anything useful.

That was the moment I truly realized the extent of my failure to choose the right friends.

Upon finding out that none of my friends would be moving into the dorms, Keith argued with our father on my behalf, but father remained firm. My mother had been in agreement with him as well.

My first week in the dorms was hellish! I couldn't wake up on my own at all! On top of that, I didn't have any attendants to do my hair for me. I was nearly late to homeroom every morning, and I never had the time to properly eat breakfast.

As if that weren't bad enough, I'd been ordered by my mother to eat lunch with Keith so I could make sure he was eating his vegetables. Before, I'd chat with my friends while enjoying lunch in the salon! Now I had to watch over Keith with Richard, making sure

he ate his veggies while we scarfed down our own lunches. Keith also seemed to want to eat with his friends and appeared unhappy with this arrangement. On top of that, every time Keith got upset, it soured Richard's mood! I really wanted someone to cut me a break...

That weekend, I returned to the royal palace. During the carriage ride home, I planned how I'd cry to my mother about how I couldn't handle life in the dorms. After all, my friends had all said they couldn't move into the dorms because girls needed attendants to care for them.

However, my mother had seen right through me.

"I've selected a lady's maid for you, Margaret," my mother announced. Before I could even ask to move out of the dorms, a lady's maid had been chosen for me.

"A lady's maid?" I asked. *Mother has a noblewoman as her lady's maid. Is that different from a school friend?*

"Yes. A lady's maid is someone who will be by your side as a conversational partner and have meals with you." I thought about my classmates and excitedly wondered who it might be. "Your lady's maid will be Patience Granger, a second-year student in the junior division."

Someone a year younger than me? I would've preferred someone in my grade! Despite my wishes, I couldn't go against a decision my mother made. All I could do was pray that this Patience was a nice girl.

Though she was the same age as Keith, Patience had apparently passed all her tests in her first week, which had allowed her to skip ahead a grade, so she was definitely smart! *If she's good at math, she may be able to help me with my homework.*

But the biggest hope I had for Patience was that she'd come to music club with me. I was sure my friends would quit once we were all in the senior division.

On Sunday evening, I returned to the dorms. There was a reserved knock on my door. A red-haired attendant delivered a letter

from Patience. Her handwriting was nice. Asking for permission to visit me by letter like this was pretty old-school, or perhaps I should say a display of proper etiquette. *Since mother chose her, she may be a super serious, stick-in-the-mud, model student type. I'm getting a bad feeling about this.*

"Hello, I'm Patience Granger," she greeted me at the door.

I sat in a sofa chair and waited for my soon-to-be lady's maid to enter.

"I am Patience Granger, Your Highness," she greeted me again, holding up her skirt as she curtsied. *She definitely has proper etiquette.*

"So you're the girl that mother chose to be my lady's maid," I replied. *I wonder if mother chose her because she's polite and smart.* "Come, sit," I instructed.

Patience sat across from me, and Zofie bought out tea for two.

"You may be excused, Zofie," I said to my maid. I began drinking my tea, but Patience wouldn't touch hers. "Do you not like tea?"

"I do enjoy it. Thank you for the tea." She picked up her cup and seemed to enjoy the fragrant tea. She then placed her cup back down and asked me a question. "I beg your pardon, but I don't really know anything about being a lady's maid, so I was hoping you could enlighten me regarding the nature of the position."

Perfect! I have things I want to tell her.

"First of all, I want you to call me Lady Margaret. I'd hate being called 'Your Highness' when we're going to be spending so much time together. It's too formal." My friends all called me Lady Margaret, so I wanted Patience to do the same, because she was going to be by my side all the time.

"In that case, I will refer to you as Lady Margaret when we are in your room," Patience replied. In other words, she would call my Lady Margaret when we were alone together, but she would refer to me as "Your Highness" in public. *Well, she* is *younger than me, so I guess that can't be helped.*

"Since we're in different grades, we'll be in different classes," I continued. "That said, I would like to have lunch together. I've never seen you in the salon before. Are you trying to lose weight? I don't

think that's necessary." Patience was incredibly thin.

"No, but I am happy eating lunch in the school's regular dining hall."

What?! Are you refusing my invitation to eat together?

"But all the girls in Class A eat lunch in the salon, don't they?"

Or maybe you're just saying we should eat in the dining hall for some reason? I'd initially misunderstood her words to mean that she preferred to eat in the dining hall because she didn't want to eat with me, but it seemed that wasn't the case.

"The Granger family...values a life of simplicity and frugality," Patience further explained.

Wait, she always *eats in the dining hall? No wonder I haven't seen her in the salon! Oh, maybe I can get out of watching Keith if I eat in the dining hall with her.*

"I see! In that case, I will eat at the school dining hall on the lower level as well. Our father ordered us to stay in the dorms because he believes we need to learn how regular people live."

I thought I'd come up with a pretty good idea, but for some reason Patience started apologizing.

"I'm very sorry, Lady Margaret. The truth is, the Granger family doesn't have the money to spare for me to eat at the salon."

What?! Isn't she the daughter of a viscount? They can't even afford the cost of lunch?

"Oh my, is that so?" I said. "I wish you would've just been honest with me from the start. You're going to be my lady's maid, so I'm of course going to take care of your meals. I just assumed you would know that." I managed to hide my surprise and decided for both of us that we would eat together at the salon.

At this point, I was quite weary of the rollercoaster that was eating lunch with Keith and Richard. *Maybe Richard won't act so obviously irritated if Patience is there. And Keith might realize it's childish to act so picky in front of a classmate. Oh, I should tell her exactly what I expect of her.*

"I want to eat together at the dorms for breakfast and dinner. A dorm maid will clean my room, so you won't have to do that." *Next is the most important thing!* "I love music. You passed music as well,

right, Patience? I would love for you to play the hanon for me." We had a musician playing for us back at the palace, but there was no staff musician in the dorms. "Also, I'm not very good at math. I want you to help me with my homework."

Patience looked a bit stunned, as if she really wanted to say, *You want* my *help with math? Aren't you a grade ahead of me?!*

Look, I just really hate math!

"You haven't joined a club yet, right?" I continued. "Join the music club. Participating in club activities together is also the job of a lady's maid."

Patience made a strange face, suggesting she wasn't happy with my request. *Does she really not want to join? Even though the music club is an exclusive, invite-only club?*

I wanted to enumerate my other demands for her, but the dinner bell rang. *I'll save those for later.*

The only good thing about living in the dorms was that we didn't have to get dressed up formally for dinner. The moment I arrived at the dining hall with Patience, Richard called out to us.

"Let's eat together, Margaret," Richard said. He was probably curious about the girl that had been chosen as my lady's maid.

"Thank you, Richard. What perfect timing!" *I should introduce her, since we'll be eating lunch together.* "This is Patience Granger. She was selected by mother to be my lady's maid."

"I see. If mother chose her, then I'm sure she'll do well. I expect you to properly fulfill the role of Margaret's lady's maid."

Well, Patience seems like a proper girl. I don't think she'll cause any problems.

"Patience Granger, Your Highness. It is a pleasure to meet you. I will do my best."

As I'd already come to expect of her, Patience acted with impeccable etiquette. *I wonder if she's just so formal because she's nervous.*

Keith sat at our table and ate dinner with us.

"You'd better take good care of her," he said condescendingly to Patience.

After dinner, I discussed what the music club would be like. This was important information, so I needed to explain things properly.

"We meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On those days, you can come to my classroom. Oh, speaking of music, I would like you to play a little something on the hanon for me."

I need to see how good she is at playing the hanon! She skipped a grade, so she had to have passed music, right?

"Oh my, you're really very good," I said after she played. "With those skills, you can definitely do well in the music club." *I should also have her play the hanon for me every night!* I felt that she'd passed as my lady's maid, so I handed her a key and let her go for the night. "You may be excused."

I could hear a faint knock on the door, but I was just so sleepy.

"Good morning, Lady Margaret. It's Patience."

"Good morning..." I wanted to escape back into my dreams, but...

"I'm coming in, Lady Margaret," Patience said before barging in.

I know I have to get up, but I'm just so sleepy. I can't...

"Please wake up, Lady Margaret!" she exclaimed. *Ugh, Patience has such a loud voice...* "Good morning. The breakfast bell has already rung. Please get ready right away."

I got out of bed, and Patience began rushing me to get ready.

"Please take care of my hair, Patience," I asked.

After washing my face and finally putting my uniform on, I sat in front of my vanity, still dazed.

"Would the same hairstyle as yesterday be all right?" Patience asked. She quickly brushed my hair and put half of it up, pinning it in place with a hairclip that was on my vanity. *She's quick with her hands.* "All right, then. Let's head to the dining hall."

Patience was saying something about how it had been quite some time since the breakfast bell had rung, but I just wanted to skip breakfast entirely.

"There's no need to be in such a rush," I reassured her. As usual, I left most of my breakfast untouched. "It's time to go to class," I

announced. Since Patience had woken me up today, I would be making it to homeroom on time.

"Become clean," Patience chanted as we headed up the stairs, casting household magic on herself.

"Wow, you know some useful spells, Patience. I'll be relying on you starting tomorrow."

Starting tomorrow, I'll have Patience magically clean me, so I can sleep in a little more! I thought to myself.

What a fool I was back then! I didn't know that Patience was more than just a lady's maid—that she was someone who would completely turn my life around.

I arrived at the homeroom of junior division third-year Class A, and Catherine and the others looked a bit surprised. Ever since I'd moved into the dorms, I'd always barely made it to class on time, and I'd never had my hair properly done before.

"Good morning," they greeted me. It was obvious that they had questions.

After homeroom, they all gathered around my desk.

"You were early to class this morning, Lady Margaret," Catherine remarked pointedly. She was trying to get me to admit to usually sleeping in, but I had no obligation to admit any such thing.

"Oh, was I?" I replied, feigning ignorance. After all, they would find out what was going on at lunch. I just wanted to give a little shock to my friends who hadn't moved into the dorms with me.

I waited for Patience in the salon, seated at the same table as Richard and Keith, and she finally arrived.

"You're late, Patience," I said, beckoning her to our table. She seemed a little confused. *Oh, maybe she's confused because I didn't tell her we'd be eating with Richard and Keith.*

The waiter gave us our menus. *I wonder what I should have today.*

"I'm going to have the steak," Richard said.

"Steak," Keith also ordered.

They really do always get the same thing, I chuckled to myself.

"I'll have the guineafowl poêlé," I said. "What are you going to have, Patience?"

"I'm going to have the fish poêlé," Patience said.

Fish? Patience is so unique!

"I can't believe people actually eat fish," Keith huffed; he disliked both fish and vegetables.

Richard and Keith both ate their steak, and I had my guineafowl poêlé, but Patience was the one who stood out with her fish poêlé. It was annoying to eat fish using proper etiquette, but Patience was actually able to eat it elegantly.

"It's delicious!" she exclaimed.

"Maybe I'll try the fish tomorrow," I said, enticed by her reaction.

"You mustn't be fooled by her," Keith interjected. "I'm sure Patience would find anything she ate delicious."

Ah, this is bad! At this rate, Richard is going to scold Keith!

"Yes, that's true. This is several times more delicious than the last piece of fish I had." Patience managed to smoothly parry Keith's mocking comment. Not only that, but she smiled at the waiter who came by to take our plates and said, "Please tell the chef that the fish was incredibly delicious."

Oh? It seems Richard's anger might have subsided.

"It was truly that good? In that case, I shall order the fish tomorrow," Richard declared.

It looks like lunch is going to be more peaceful from now on.

Then that evening, she helped me with my math homework and easily played Albert's newest song just by sight-reading. *She might just be a good luck charm!* I thought, but she had more surprises awaiting me the next day.

On Tuesday, I had no idea how she did it, but Patience was able to easily wake me up. She even prepared some warm tea to help me shake off my drowsiness. She was a skilled user of household spells, which helped her to get my bedhead under control.

That afternoon, Patience came to junior division third-year Class A to escort me to our club, and I introduced her to my friends.

Catherine had been trying to dig for information ever since she'd found out that mother had chosen a lady's maid for me, but she seemed to be put at ease upon seeing Patience. Patience was short and thin, and it was clear that Catherine was looking down on her.

I recommended Patience as our newest member to the president of the music club, Melissa, and Patience was easily given permission to join. However, that made Catherine's mean side come out.

"I know we just got here, but I'd like for you to play something," Catherine said.

"Absolutely," Hariette agreed in a sweet voice. "I'd like to hear her play." She was going along with Catherine's taunting. Lilina just silently nodded in agreement.

"That sounds good. Patience, I'd like for you to play that new song I shared with you yesterday."

As expected, Patience easily performed Albert's complicated composition.

"Oh my! I shouldn't be surprised, given that Her Majesty chose you to be Lady Margaret's lady's maid." Catherine seemed a bit shocked.

"I wish you had played with a little more feeling," Albert said, ever the harsh critic. "Just following the sheet music makes for a dull performance."

"Gosh, she's only played it once before, and that was just last night," I spoke up in Patience's defense. "You shouldn't bully her just because it's your song, Albert."

My words made everyone stare at Patience as if they were trying to assess her.

"She still needs to be able to compose," Hariette said, her sharp tongue leaping into action.

Thankfully, President Melissa handled her.

"I understand why you'd be excited for a new member to compose a song, but let's give her a chance to settle in first," Melissa said.

After that, various club members took their turns playing the hanon, the lute, and the flute. I also played one of my own compositions.

Patience was sitting in a chair in a corner of the clubhouse, and she seemed to have relaxed now that all she had to do was listen to music. *I should give her a bit of a spook.*

"I'd like you to play another song, Patience," I said. "You can play anything you'd like."

I'd expected her to play a classic hanon piece, but Patience played a bright, fun, lovely song that I'd never heard before.

"I apologize. I hit the wrong note several times," she apologized upon finishing.

Everyone was stunned by how lovely her breezy composition was and had fallen silent, yet she was apologizing for playing the wrong notes.

"No, no. A few missed notes are nothing," Albert said. "Your name is Patience, right? You're incredibly talented."

Patience was still sitting in front of the hanon, and Albert knelt before her, kissing her hand.

"I won't allow you to do as you please with my lady's maid, Albert," I warned him.

Catherine and the girls were giving Patience stern looks. They had been looking down on her because she was a pip-squeak, but it seemed that they had been impressed by her.

"I'm excited to see what you'll compose, but your lack of practice was apparent, Patience," I said. "I want you to get ample practice on the hanon in my room."

Patience nodded with a slightly troubled look.

Back then, I had been obsessed with Patience's musical talent. I would later learn that she wasn't amazing just because of her skilled use of household magic or musical talent.

I was deeply grateful that my mother had chosen Patience to be my lady's maid. Becoming friends with Patience was an important turning point in my life. Meeting her taught me to stop judging people just based on their looks or surface-level qualities, and showed me how important it was to spend time with people you could trust from the bottom of your heart.

Bonus Story: A Day Off with the Angels

My name is Patience Granger. I used to be an office worker in Japan, but one day I awakened as the daughter of a viscount. Not only was I in a new world, but I'd woken up on the brink of death!

I was now ten—younger than I'd been during my previous life. But I couldn't enjoy my renewed youth or the fact that I'd become a noble, because my family was shockingly poor. I'd always thought that nobles lived elegantly, surrounded by countless staff, but my father, Viscount Granger, was a landless noble who had no income due to being dismissed from his position.

I believed that the original owner of this body had reincarnated me into this world because she was so worried about her adorable younger brothers, Nassius and Henry. They were both unbelievably cute, like little angels.

Nassius, who was eight, had brown hair and gray, intelligent eyes. He looked exactly like our father, Viscount Granger. Hopefully he didn't inherit our father's lack of life skills along with his appearance.

Henry, who was six, had blond hair and blue eyes. Just like me, he resembled our late mother, and I hoped he wouldn't meet an early death like she had.

Though the Grangers were poor, I decided to do my best to slowly improve our quality of life! This world had magic, but I could only use a type of magic that even commoners used: household magic. To my surprise, despite the mundane name, I found there were actually many uses for household spells. By chanting, "Become clean," I could make old wallpaper and rugs look as good as new. It was so useful!

To make the Granger family's situation worse, the Kingdom of

Lawrence was experiencing a particularly harsh winter this year. I inferred that firewood was expensive, because we only ever had tiny flames flickering in the fireplaces. The meals we were served were quite meager as well.

"This can't go on, for the sake of those little angels!"

I repaired the estate's greenhouse, planted vegetables, and encouraged their growth with a little household magic. After that, though we were still poor, at the very least we'd managed to not starve. As the eldest child, I was going to work hard! I was never going to let my family or our staff shiver from the cold or go hungry ever again.

Despite my steely resolve to improve the Granger household's lifestyle, I had to enroll in the Royal Academy, as the Kingdom of Lawrence mandated for all nobles at the age of ten. With no choice but to go, I left my brothers and moved into the dorms. Usually, students who lived in the royal capital would commute to the academy from their homes, but...sucks to suck! Our poor family didn't have the means to keep a horse.

We still had a carriage, so we would rent a horse on Saturday morning for me to travel home and see my brothers. Those trips home were the only thing that kept me going each week. Somehow I also ended up becoming Princess Margaret's lady's maid, which meant I now had way less time to do any side jobs!

This Friday, I headed to the royal palace. No matter how many times I'd been there, I still got nervous about visiting. It wasn't all bad, though. I usually returned home on Saturdays, but when I visited the palace, instead I'd get to return on Friday night, which meant spending one extra night with my little angels.

"I thank you for your wonderful work as Margaret's lady's maid, Patience," the queen praised me. "Please let your brothers enjoy Julianne's treats."

After playing some of my new songs on the hanon, I was finally able to return home. Princess Margaret's attendant Zofie was escorting me home, the same basket as usual on her lap. This basket of gifts from the queen included premium ingredients like eggs, sugar, heavy cream, and butter. I would've preferred to just

get paid for my work as a lady's maid, but it seemed this position was such an honor for a noble to receive that it didn't come with additional compensation.

I'd been gifted these ingredients under the pretext of recreating my late mother's recipes for my younger brothers, who had been too young to remember the treats she'd made for us. It might sound as if I was taking advantage of a faint memory that the original Patience had, but if I didn't do this, the penniless Granger family wouldn't have been able to afford eggs.

"What shall I make?" I mumbled to myself. I was *trying* to be ladylike, since I was with Zofie, but I couldn't help talking to myself —I couldn't wait to see those angels smile, so I racked my brain for simple yet delicious treats I could make.

They had to be simple, because my attendant, Mary, would stop me from baking or cooking myself, stating that, "A lady mustn't be in the kitchen herself." So I had to write the recipes out and give them to Eva, our cook.

The strawberries we were growing in the greenhouse were going to be ripe soon. I'd picked some strawberries with my brothers the previous week, but only a few had been red and ripe. *What are some desserts that use strawberries? Strawberry shortcake? Strawberry parfaits? Strawberry crepes?* The memories of sweet treats from my previous life nearly made me drool. *I also loved cookies with strawberry jam in them. Oooh, and jam would last a while too!*

I sat gracefully in the carriage, since Zofie was right there, but my mind was firing on all cylinders as it came up with a plan.

I'll have Eva sell half of the strawberries we pick today. Given the season, I doubt any shops are stocking pretty, bright red strawberries like the ones in our greenhouse yet, so they'll probably sell for a high price. We'll save a few of the remaining strawberries to eat as-is for dessert after dinner. I could even whip some of the cream we got from Her Majesty and serve that with the berries. The remaining strawberries from today's harvest and the ones we'll pick tomorrow can all be turned into jam!

I'd rather have kept *all* the strawberries we grew, but the Granger

family was still doing rough financially. Eva could sell the strawberries to grocers in exchange for things like vegetables we didn't grow, flour, and meat.

I need to stay strong! I won't lose to the temptation of the strawberries or Henry's pleading blue eyes when he says, "I want to eat more!"

"Welcome home, sister!" my brothers greeted me as they ran down the stairs to the entryway. Perhaps they'd seen the carriage arrive from their room.

"Nassius, Henry, I'm home!" Though Zofie was still there, I gave them both a hug. *I'm so happy!* "Wyatt, please take the basket from Zofie," I instructed. *I'm going to use the ingredients in that basket to make strawberry jam and some other delicious treats, so you better be careful with it!*

"Sister! While you were away, father looked over my studies!" Henry beamed. "I can write very well now!" It was clear that he wanted me to praise him. In Henry's mind, as his older sister I likely stood in for our mother. He'd only been four when our mother had passed, and even before that she'd been so weak that she'd spent most of her days in bed.

"That's wonderful, Henry! You must have worked very hard," I praised him. Nassius didn't report his own accomplishments, but I knew that he wouldn't slack off on studying. "What did you learn this week, Nassius?"

Nassius's face lit up as he began telling me about everything he'd learned. Unlike Henry, Nassius was a little reserved, so I had to pay close attention to him.

We only had a little time before dinner, which I used to pick strawberries with my brothers in the greenhouse. *It looks like they're growing well.*

"Remember to only pick the ones that have turned red," I instructed. We'd be picking more tomorrow, so the berries that still had some green left could wait. Plus, I was going to speed things up a little with my magic later.

"Henry! You've already eaten five!" Nassius scolded, catching Henry as he was about to eat his sixth strawberry.

Henry looked up at me, seeking approval. *Ugh! It's Henry's blue-eyed attack from below! It's overwhelmingly cute! I'm nearly about to give in.*

"Henry, if you eat too many strawberries, you might end up with an upset stomach," I pointed out. "So you mustn't overeat them."

As his older sister, it was also my job to look out for his well-being. I did my best to stay strong as I warned him. His young, pudgy hand sadly placed the strawberry back into the basket. *Sooo adorable!!!*

"You did very well," I said as I hugged him. *I'll give him a little kiss too! Aaah, his cheek is so soft! I'm so happy!* "We'll pick the strawberries that are still green tomorrow," I said to the angels before casting some magic so the berries would be ready. "Become red and delicious!" *They should be good now.*

Mary brought the basket of strawberries into the kitchen. Eva knew how I thought, so she wouldn't go and use them recklessly and without permission. I returned to my room and wrote out recipes for strawberry jam cookies and strawberry crepes.

"Jam would be delicious in a crepe as well, but we have fresh strawberries right now, and those would be lovely in a crepe. Whipped cream would be the standard pairing, but I also enjoy custard. I don't know which to choose..." Since we had eggs, custard was a viable option. "No, the best pairing for a strawberry crepe is definitely fresh strawberries and whipped cream." *I also just realized I could use the eggs to make flan.* "If I decorate the flan with strawberries and serve it with whipped cream, it would become a pudding à la mode," I thought aloud, recalling a Japanese dessert I'd had in my previous life.

I'd always imagined nobles would elegantly have tea every day, but the impoverished Granger family couldn't afford to have afternoon tea regularly. Still, we could enjoy it every now and then.

I decided to write out the recipe for flan so it would be steamed. I missed the convenience of my previous life where I'd been able to buy a box mix, combine it with water, then just leave that in the

fridge to make flan.

"My lady, we must get you dressed," Mary said as she came into my room.

Annoyingly, though we were poor, we still had to get dressed up for dinner. My other frustration with dinner was that Nassius and Henry had to eat dinner separately, since they were under ten years old. *I wonder if there's anything I can do about these customs.*

"Please give this recipe to Eva," I said, handing Mary the completed recipe for strawberry jam cookies before resuming work on the other two.

Mary was supposed to be an attendant, but she also did the tasks of a maid and a servant, because she was the only maid on staff at the Granger household. The rest had been laid off or had quit on their own. Patience had been young, so her memories from that time period weren't very clear.

"Of course, but please do not enter the kitchen," Mary insisted.

As a noble lady, I wasn't allowed to enter the kitchen. It was probably because the staff working in the kitchen would have to be conscious of my presence as they worked, but Eva was the only one in our kitchen, so it felt like an unnecessary rule. Still, Mary wanted me to behave the way any proper lady would, so I did as she asked when under her supervision. It was the least I could do, since she even had to work side jobs because her wages were paid so irregularly.

Mary was a loyal member of the staff who'd stayed with this poor family despite everything, perhaps because she'd followed my mother here from my mother's household. I wished we were financially stable enough to take proper care of her as she trusted us to, but we relied on the money made through those side jobs to keep our household running.

Mary and I both took on side jobs mending socks and sewing lace trim onto handkerchiefs, though she really didn't think it was appropriate for the daughter of a viscount to be doing such work.

After Mary did my hair, I headed downstairs to the dining room. Though we were poor, the table was set with a tablecloth for dinner. My father was also dressed formally in a tuxedo jacket. *I'd rather eat*

with my brothers than get dressed up for a formal dinner.

For dessert, we had fresh strawberries with some whipped cream on the side. *I wonder if my brothers got some too.*

My father and I never really had much to talk about, so I quickly finished eating and rushed up to the second floor, where the boys' room was. *I have to kiss them good night!*

"You're here," my brothers said excitedly. It seemed that they'd just gotten into bed.

"Of course. Did you both enjoy some strawberries as well? Aren't they delicious when paired with whipped cream?"

Nassius and Henry both gave me nods of satisfaction, and I gave them each a good night-kiss on the forehead. This would normally be the time to put out the candle by their bed, but Henry was afraid of the dark, so I would come back later to put it out. If we had a magic lamp with an adjustable light, I could have just let them sleep with a faint light on.

This world had both magic and magical devices. Some rooms in the Granger home had magic lamps, but we couldn't afford the magic stones needed to make them run, so we hadn't been using them. We'd only just recently gotten a magic stone for the restroom and gotten it working again. Before that, we'd had to use chamber pots!

I returned to my room and changed into my sleepwear, over which I wore a dressing gown, before returning to the boys' room to put out their bedside candle. I'd made the robe out of fabric from an old curtain I'd found in our attic and repaired.

I looked down at the angels, who were fast asleep, and quietly put out the candle before returning to my room. *It's time for me to sleep too!* Ever since I'd reincarnated into this world, I'd been early to bed and early to rise. I had to save on candle-use somehow.

I get to spend the entirety of Saturday with my brothers! I usually didn't get home from the academy until after breakfast on Saturdays, so spending the whole day with them felt extra special.

"Good morning," I greeted my brothers, giving each of them a kiss. Truth be told, Nassius was at an age when he was starting to

get uncomfortable with kisses when greeting people, but he didn't mind my good morning and good night kisses.

"We're picking strawberries again, right, sister?!"

I'm glad you're excited, Henry, but you have to eat your breakfast first.

"We will, but why don't we practice playing the hanon first?" I suggested.

My father had been overseeing their studies while I was at the academy, but he was of no use when it came to artistic pursuits, so I had to get in some music, art, and dance lessons over the weekends. Boys also needed to practice sword fighting and horseback-riding, but...practicing sword fighting with George was barely more than a play session, and we didn't own a horse to be able to practice riding. I needed to do something about that before it was time for Nassius to enroll in the academy. In other words, I needed money!

My determination to get my brothers what they needed had made me unconsciously ball my hands into a tight fists while listening to Nassius play the hanon.

"You've improved, Nassius," I praised him.

The hanon had been a gift from the queen. It had elegantly carved details and felt like a premium item. I kept feeling sorely tempted to sell it and replace it with a cheaper hanon while using the rest of the money for my family, but the original Patience would scold me for thinking that, yelling, *You absolutely cannot!* I wasn't going to do it anyway, because it would have been incredibly rude of me to pawn off the queen's gift like that.

"You've gotten better at playing scales, Henry." The sight of young Henry tapping the keys with his little fingers was so cute that I wanted to kiss him, but I had to hold back since we were in the middle of practice. "I can tell from hearing you play that you've both been practicing properly, even when I'm not here."

It was time to wrap up the music lesson. After all, Henry's adorable blue eyes were begging me to take him strawberry picking. *I'm sure Henry can't wait any longer, but neither can I!*

"Well then, let's go pick some strawberries!" I exclaimed. Henry

jumped down from the hanon seat, which was too tall for his legs to reach the floor. They always dangled while he was playing. "I'm going to go get a basket, so you two can head on over to the greenhouse."

Mary understood that there wasn't much she could do about me growing vegetables in our greenhouse and garden, but she still didn't think it was appropriate for a lady to engage in such activities. Even if she wanted to get her hands dirty in my place, she was much too busy as the only maid this poor family could afford, so I headed to my room to fetch a basket for us.

"You shouldn't be eating any until our sister gets here, Henry," Nassius scolded.

When I entered the greenhouse, I immediately saw that Henry's mouth was covered in red. *Looks like he ate some strawberries while I wasn't watching.*

"My, Henry!" I exclaimed as I wiped his mouth off with a handkerchief. "How many did you eat?"

"Six..." Henry hesitantly answered.

"Henry!" Nassius exclaimed. "You're only supposed to eat five at most!"

Henry shrank down after his brother scolded him, fidgeting nervously. *You knew you weren't supposed to eat them, didn't you?* I'd repeatedly told them they could only have five because, as delicious as they were, too many strawberries could easily upset a small child's stomach.

"Well, we cannot change what's happened. You aren't allowed to have any more today, Henry." I then turned to Nassius. "You can have up to six strawberries today, Nassius."

Nassius beamed with happiness as he began picking the biggest, reddest strawberries he could find.

"Come on, Henry," I called out to my youngest brother. "Please start putting the strawberries in the basket."

Though Henry seemed envious of Nassius as he watched his brother eat strawberries, he still appeared to have fun picking them. Before I knew it, all the ripe berries were gone.

"What are you going to do with all these strawberries?" Nassius

asked. The basket was full of beautiful strawberries that gleamed red like jewels.

"I'm planning to have Eva turn them into jam. I'm also thinking we could have some tea and strawberry crepes today! Tomorrow we're going to have strawberry flan à la mode."

Nassius tilted his head in confusion upon hearing the names of the unfamiliar desserts, while Henry excitedly chanted them like some sort of spell.

"Strawberry crepes!" Henry repeated. "Strawberry flan à la mode!"

The three of us headed to the kitchen together to give Eva the basket of berries. Mary was out shopping, so it was our chance to actually be in the kitchen.

"Oh, my!" Eva exclaimed, pausing her lunch preparations. "My lady?! Young masters?!"

I guess this is why we're not allowed in the kitchen.

"Eva, could you make some jam with these strawberries?" I asked. "Also, I'd like strawberry crepes to be served with tea today, and strawberry flan à la mode to be served with tea tomorrow." I handed her the basket of berries along with the now completed recipes for strawberry crepes and strawberry flan à la mode.

"My, what beautiful strawberries! And you've got some new dessert recipes as well!"

Eva was another loyal member of our staff who'd stayed by the Granger family and fed us all on her own. Seeing her eyes light up when she saw a new recipe made me want to keep helping Eva do her best to make us delicious things.

After lunch, we had some time until afternoon tea, so I gave my brothers a dance lesson. I played the hanon while they danced, and they were unbearably adorable! *It really sucks that there aren't any cameras in this world! This moment should be preserved forever!*

Just as they'd gotten thirsty from all the dancing, Wyatt appeared to let us know it was time for tea. Even my father, who was usually cooped up in his study, joined us so we could have afternoon tea as a family.

The tea was as watery as usual, but this was perhaps for the best, because it meant Nassius and Henry would ingest less caffeine. Since we were poor, I had to look on the bright side of things to get through the day.

"Strawberry crepes!" Henry cried as if it were a magical incantation, his voice echoing throughout the drawing room. His behavior was technically improper etiquette, but it was probably fine for today.

My father ate his crepe in a refined manner with a knife and fork.

I, on the other hand, just wanted to wrap it in some paper and chomp down on it. Unfortunately, Patience was a proper lady, so I wouldn't be eating with my hands. I used a knife to slice through the thin crepe and saw that it was filled with whipped cream and strawberries. It was difficult to eat the crepe in a classy manner, but Patience's etiquette was impeccable, so I got through it fine.

"Goodness, Henry!" I exclaimed.

Henry's adorable mouth was covered in whipped cream. I tried to use a napkin to wipe his mouth clean, but he began licking the cream off.

"Where are your manners, Henry?" Nassius scolded.

"You mustn't do that," I said as I continued wiping the cream off of Henry's face, finishing with a kiss on the cheek. *I feel like Henry's cheek is sweeter than the crepe. This is bliss!*

On Sunday, I spent the morning studying with the little angels before sneaking behind Mary's back to head into the kitchen.

"Did my recipe make sense, Eva?" I asked. If I were in her position, I would have had a hard time making something I'd never even seen before with only a written recipe to go off.

"Yes, your instructions were very detailed. It's such a beautiful dessert."

I prepared the whipped cream using household magic. I wanted to get Eva an eggbeater already, but it was regrettably a low-priority item.

From outside the kitchen, I could hear Mary returning downstairs to the semibasement, so I rushed back up to the boys' room.

"We're having strawberry flan à la mode today, right, sister?!" Henry said, repeating the name of the magical sounding dessert with a serious look on his face. *He's so cute!*

"Yes, Eva is making it for us," I reassured my excited younger brother, then kissed him.

"You're very knowledgeable about desserts," Nassius remarked. "Which book did you learn about them from? I'd like to read it as well."

Shoot. I've gotten my precious little bookworm interested in a book that...doesn't actually exist. I began to panic.

"I-It was a book in the library at the Royal Academy," I fibbed.

Though I'd dodged a bullet for now, Nassius was going to attend the academy in two years. It would be troublesome if he looked for the book then and couldn't find it. *It's fine! I just have to popularize my recipes before he enrolls so they seem like common knowledge!*

I had to be careful about using too much of my knowledge from my previous life, but at the same time, I wanted to use every resource at hand to improve life for the Granger household.

For lunch, we had a soup that had more vegetables than used to be customary, bread that was softer than before, and even some thin slices of chicken served with steamed vegetables.

"Everything is delicious, sister," the boys gushed, beaming.

The thin slices of chicken probably weren't enough for them. *Unlike them, I get enough to eat on a regular basis thanks to the school cafeteria.*

"Eat these too, Nassius, Henry," I said as I gave them my portion of chicken.

Henry seemed excited, but Nassius looked conflicted.

"You must eat too, sister," Nassius insisted.

Aaah, he's such a good boy!

"We're going to have some dessert today, so I'm going to eat a little less," I explained.

"I forgot!" Henry exclaimed after eating the chicken I'd given him.

"It's all right," I reassured. "After lunch, we'll do some exercise. The hungrier you are, the better the dessert will taste."

Smiles spread across both Henry's and Nassius's faces, and I gave them each a kiss. Nassius had recently been a little more embarrassed about getting kissed on the cheek, but he seemed to be fine this time thanks to his excitement about the strawberry flan à la mode.

After lunch, we jumped rope in the yard for a while, and I couldn't beat Henry or Nassius. *I* really *need to work on getting stronger.*

"My lady, the tea is ready," Mary called out to us.

We were going to have tea two days in a row. That was probably normal for most nobles, but it was a luxury for the Grangers. *I hope that one day we'll be able to enjoy regular afternoon tea.*

My father came to the drawing room as well. It seemed that Wyatt had dragged him out of his study, which he'd been cooped up in ever since our mother had passed. Though, he had recently been helping my younger brothers with their studies.

Wyatt gracefully pushed a cart into the drawing room. The cart carried glasses holding individual servings of flan, which jiggled as the cart moved. Each serving was decorated with whipped cream and strawberries.

"Wow, they look beautiful!" Nassius exclaimed.

"They look yummy!" Henry chimed in.

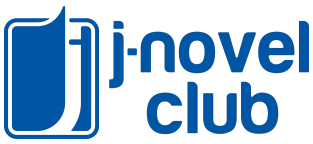
"I've never seen this dessert before," my father said, surprised.

"I had Eva use a recipe that I found in a book at the academy library," I explained. *Lying isn't good, but some white lies are acceptable! I mean, just look how happy Nassius and Henry are!*

The tea was as watery as usual, but the sweet flan made up for it. *Ugh, I want to spend time with my brothers like this forever, but I have to go back to the dorms now.*

"I'll be back next week," I said, kissing Nassius and Henry goodbye before boarding the carriage.

I wonder what recipe I should prepare for them next time, I thought. *Just thinking about the smiles they'll have on their faces fills me with happiness!*



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