'She's going to be late... Again...' thought a worried cleric as she paced outside the temple doors. It was time for her best student to demonstrate their capabilities before the selection committee, but it was the last time Mother Superior was willing to let them do so. They had been absent on two previous appointments, and missing a third would mean waiting another year for examinations to begin again. If the Elders were so kind. Ahna had faith in her student, but they were cutting it extremely close. With hands clasp beneath her gown, the cleric prayed earnestly, “Terah, wherever you are, please hurry!"

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Not far from the temple, a sprightly young priestess was making her way to the town square. The simple act of putting on her gown was made more difficult by the fact that she was running. Explaining herself would be another challenge. Her unkempt, auburn hair was a dead giveaway; though, to be fair, she never liked combing it in the first place. As she thought of possible excuses, she failed to notice the cart of goods moving in front of her. With a shriek, she ran head first into an assortment of fresh herbs.

The merchant dropped the cart with a jarring thud. As Terah struggled to right herself, a surprisingly strong grip found her collar. With a tug, Terah was free, but the old woman didn't let go.

"Now what's all the hurry?" questioned the lady, but her frustration was quickly replaced with surprise.

"Terah dear?! Oh my. Are you all right?" But as soon as the woman let Terah go, the girl was on her way.

"Sorry, gotta go! I'm late for my test! I'll be back later, Mama Dawn, promise!" Terah dashed away, narrowly avoiding another cart. Irritated yelps and screams of surprise followed her path.

With a smile, Mama Dawn waved the child off. "Good luck, dear!" She's all grown up now, the woman thought. It was not too long ago that Terah was barely knee high. With a smile, Mama Dawn returned to her cart.

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Anxiety was slowly taking over Ahna. Terah was going to be late and there was nothing she could do. There was no telling how long the committee would wait past the deadline. The sun had already reached its apex. Mother Superior would have been sure to notice by now. Ahna could only steel herself for a little longer and pray.

"Ahna!" a melodic call came from the temple gates. Terah skidded to a halt and waved exuberantly. The cleric looked up and saw her, tears beginning to form. But Ahna held them back, for at least she was here. Ahna ran from the temple entrance to greet her student.

"Oh Terah!" Ahna breathed a sigh of relief. She ran from the temple entrance to embrace her student. And in doing so was greeted by the smell of herbs. She gently plucked a sprig of thyme out of Terah's hair. A small laugh was shared between the two.

"Where'd you get this?" inquired Ahna, smelling the fresh herb.

"Mama Dawn's cart", explained Terah, “I bumped into her in the way here. Well, her cart to be exact. Anyway, how do I look?"

Ahna took a quick step back. Terah's dress robes were on, fitting her narrow frame. The dark blue fabric had always lit up those curious green eyes. A pendant in the shape of an iris blossom clasped at her collar. Her hair, messy as usual, fell in curls below her shoulders. Her skin had seen quite a bit of sun, and shone with perspiration. Slightly taller than most girls her age, Terah still managed to move with a bit of grace. Ahna could see that Terah was wearing boots under her garb. Not traditionally worn by clerics, but it fit her; she wasn't a girl who played by the books. A charming girl with a lovely smile, it's a wonder she decided to be a cleric after all this time.

After the quick look over, Ahna propped her hands on her waist and scolded Terah with her best angry tone. "You're late, y'know? You've barely anytime to review. It's already noon and..." but Ahna could not maintain her anger.

"Oh Terah, it’s finally happening!" With that, Ahna gave Terah another hug, and whispered, “I could not be any prouder. No matter the outcome, know that." Ahna let her go.

"I know," Terah replied lovingly. Ahna had done everything in her power to teach Terah the healing arts, but it was time to prove herself. She couldn't stay under Ahna's care forever. Besides, there was a world outside of town to explore. For that to happen, though, she would need to pass. She turned and entered the temple, leaving Ahna outside to wait.

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The temple was a simple place for worship, but it was the most elegant structure known to the people of Valencia. Outside, its gleaming white walls and the lush garden failed to compare to its inner craftsmanship. Erected long before Terah was born, this temple housed both the place of worship and the cleric convent. People from all walks of life have traveled far across Erophel to seek healing here. Part of the area's restorative powers can be attributed to the cold mountain air and clean spring waters. But aside from natural sources, it was the wisdom of the healers that brought comfort and relief to the masses.

Upon entering the main chamber, Terah took a deep breath. She gazed intently at the statue of Mother Gaia, steeling herself. Many before Terah have knelt in front of the relic, seeking both wisdom and healing. The light from the sun had almost filled the skylight above the relic, telling Terah that she barely made it on time. With one last exhale, she dipped her hands in a fount before the statue as an act of cleansing, before making her way to a side alcove.