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"It's fine. There are a few left." Selena handed her a slice of bread, but Juniper didn't take it. "I'll have it later."

"Alright." Hence, Selena put the bread back. Realizing Juniper's sour mood, she asked, "Did something happen, Juniper? Can you tell me about it?"

"It's nothing," she answered curtly. Obviously, Juniper didn't want to tell her mother anything. "I see. Tell me when you're ready, okay?"

Juniper said nothing as she wolfed her dinner down in silence. "Slow down, honey. Your stomach can't take it. Take it slow," Selena said.

Juniper went for the bread when it had cooled down. It was then that Selena realized she was holding it with her fingers, as if her palm had something on it. Curious, Selena pulled Juniper's hand over, and she realized it was swollen. "What happened, Juniper?"

Juniper pulled her hand back and went back to her dinner. "Master Werner did it."

"What? Why?"

"Because I slept in class," Juniper answered calmly.

Oh, so that's why she's upset. "Does it hurt?"

Juniper grinned. "Nope."

"Liar. It's all swollen." Selena felt like crying. She's so young, but she already has to travel for hours on end every week for her class. And she's punished because of that. At that thought, Selena sniffled. "It's hard, isn't it? I know it's not good for a young girl like you to learn so many things at once. I'll talk to Dr. Werner and see if it's possible to wait until you're older. If it's not, maybe you should give up."

When Juniper first started learning, Selena told her to never give up if that was what she truly wanted, but then she was on the verge of breaking the creed she set up first.

"No." Juniper refused to give up. "You told me to never give up, remember? You can't break your own creed."

"I—" Selena was heartbroken to see her daughter getting punished like that. Her hand was swollen to abnormal proportions already.

"It's fine. I put my enjoyment first, so this happened. I wasted my master's time and my own time, so I have to catch up, Mommy. I have to study after this." With that, Juniper finished her soup and went to her room upstairs to study.

Selena knew her daughter was a smart one, though she wondered if that was really for the best. She didn't want Juniper to be too hard on herself.

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Joaquin noticed Juniper was reciting something he didn't recognize when he went past her room, so he went up to her. "What are you doing?"

"Just memorizing the list of acupoints," she answered.

"I see you got punished in class today." Joaquin overheard the conversation when Juniper and Selena were having dinner, so he came to see if she was fine.

"Yeah."

"Let me take a look."

Juniper showed him her hand, which was swollen and scarlet.

"Does it hurt?"

Juniper nodded like a hurt puppy. "It does..."