Chapter Six…

Hauling Melva, Jeannie, Luke, and Daphne had been the least stressful part of all of this for poor Aunt Wanda.

And considering just how much of the stagecoach that Melva took up these days, that was really saying something.

But this whole ordeal of an old-school magical duel just to satisfy Melva’s newfound need to prove her superiority (or on the flip side, re-establish a lost sense of superiority on Daphne’s end) just seemed so… *juvenile*. Like something that Wanda would have done when she was a schoolgirl.

“Honestly, can Melva *not* see that Daphne has a glamor charm on to hide her weight?”

“Wait, what?” Jeannie and Luke blinked at the older woman’s unsubtle observation as the broom golem in the center of what was to be their battlefield sounded the start of their match with a magical tone…

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Standing on her own feet for this long was not something that Melva was exactly well-equipped to do anymore. Sitting around on her ass all day getting fat had yielded terrible results for her stamina. She was having to lean on a tall magical cane just to steady herself; and that was before Daphne fired off her first shot.

“Open wide, Porky!”

It was a fire spell—simple, but effective. With a wave of her wobbling forearm Melva was forced to cast a Ward in order to stave off its destructive effects. She might have been slow in instinct, but she was vast enough in magical power now that she didn’t have to think too terribly hard to protect herself from such a simple spell.

“Is that bacon I smell over there?”

“Not likely…”

Melva’s sausage fingertips sizzled with electricity as static jumped between her puffy fingertips. She pointed at her college rival with all of the dexterity of a frosting bag, but she was able to stretch out an arc of purple-white lightning across the battlefield, making Daphne do a quick roll to evade.

“Hey! Too fast!” the thin witch whined as she fell onto her back, looking up, “That’s not fair!”

“How is it not fair, you brat?” Melva puffed haggardly as she leaned on her staff

“Because… huff… I didn’t know you could do anything more complicated… puff… more complicated than grade school magic!”

“Ugh. Stand up and fight me already.” Melva rolled her eyes as she watched Daphne writhe a bit on the ground, “No sense in dragging this out any longer than you already have.”

An *uncomfortable* amount of silence proceeded Melva’s comment. Daphne just sort of froze there, in the dirt. She had instinctively dodged Melva’s lightning strike, tucking into a roll that had ended up with her laying flat on her back, but…

Why wasn’t she getting up?

“Hold… urp… hold on…” Daphne grunted as she writhed around on the ground a bit longer, “I’m… phew… I’m… I’m coming…”

For a moment, Melva couldn’t help but swell with pride. Was her magic so powerful now that even a simple Lightning spell was enough to put an experienced witch like Daphne of Merlinwood flat on her ass like this? Had she really become so prolific? Melva felt her chest swell and her back (attempt) to arch as supporting herself with her staff got just a little bit easier. Placing a hand proudly on her shelf of muffin top, Melva stood akimbo with premature victory as she looked back at her fallen enemy.

“Can you… hff… can you help me up?”

“Why would I help you up? We’re fighting.”

“Y-Yeah, but… I… can’t…”

“Oh for Belladonna’s sake, that’s enough Melva.” Wanda quite literally threw up her arms and entered the dueling arena, “I think you’ve made your point.”

“A-Aunt Wanda?” Melva stammered, feeling the weight of her shoulders (and her belly and her chest and her ass and her arms and her—) fall down upon her as her beloved Aunt interrupted what was supposed to be her victorious moment of triumph, “Wh-What are you—”

“Honestly, for everything that you’ve learned, you’re absolutely dreadful at noticing glamor charms.” Wanda said in a much more stern and to the point tone than she usually used with her niece, “Your little friend is hardly in much better shape to get herself off the ground as you are!”

“My little fri—” Melva blinked from behind softball-sized cheeks, “Daphne?”

Wanda’s thickened form shuffled over to the struggling skinny woman on the dirt and held her hand out to about half her total height. With the wizened expression of someone who had dealt with far too many children over the course of her many adventures, seemingly palming the air above Daphne of Merlinwood, Wanda loosed a surge of powerful magical energies that forced Melva’s eyes open to the reality of what had been hidden from her this entire time.

What Daphne of Merlinwood had been hiding from seemingly *everyone* this entire time.

“Nooooo…” the ebony-haired marshmallow softly mewled with a soft sadness as her illusion was dispelled, “How…’d you knowwww?”

“Your glamor spells can’t hide your heavy breathing, or the fact that the ground shakes whenever you walk, honey.” Wanda put her hands on her motherly hips, “You really should have used more than just a physical glamor charm.”

The Daphne of Merlinwood that was beached on the ground was a far, far cry from the skinny little prodigy that had been picking on Melva for various reasons over the course of their lives together. In fact, she was four… maybe even *five* times the woman that she had been pretending to be! Laying porcine on the ground, with her belly swelling high into the air and her fat sausage legs parted far apart to make room for that doming gut, you would have thought that Wanda had *inflated* the poor woman rather than reveal that she had been hiding her true appearance this whole time!

“Ugh… good to… know…”

Daphne of Merlinwood lay there on the ground, absolutely pinned by the hundreds of pounds of fat that had seemingly materialized out of thin air. She was, noticeably, even larger than Melva was—and by a solid amount at that. With her squishy arms puddling on the ground even as she squirmed weakly, the other two bystanders quickly came to her assistance in helping to stand the super-sized spell-slinger up to her fat little feet. Something that was clearly a three-person job at minimum.

Melva couldn’t help but gawk at the sight. Her own advanced weight, somewhere in the neighborhood of five hundred pounds at her least generous, was something of a sight to behold in a place like Three Crowns. So seeing someone who was so unequivocally *bigger* than her, to the point where simply standing on her own after being hauled to her fat feet was enough to leave her breathless, was something that she could hardly process!

Though, the knowledge that underneath those chins and that huge gut of hers was the woman who had been tormenting her for either not being able to cast simple spells *or* for her advanced weight *was* very satisfying…

“Daphne? Is that *you* underneath all of that blubber?”

“Ugh… yes…” Daphne’s voice was slow and husky, as if she had given up any pretense of being the slim and elegant witch that she had presented herself as for so many years, “D-Don’t get so high and mighty… you’re still… a total loser…”

The urge to throw that noblewoman’s laugh back at Daphne was unignorable. Heck, it was tempting! But the stern look that Melva received from her Aunt Wanda as she helped to heave the wobbling pile of stomach rolls into the tower for some recuperation was enough to help keep her opinions to herself.

“Come along then, Melva.” Wanda said with a sigh that was just present enough that Melva could hear it between the lines, “We’ve got plenty to discuss about your recent… *epiphany…*”

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“So it wasn’t my weight that was affecting my power?”

“Of *course* not.” Aunt Wanda literally didn’t have a nicer way to phrase that, “That is the *dumbest* idea that I’ve ever heard in my life. And I used to adventure with Alma the Fist Headed.”

Melva could only twiddle her fat thumbs as she struggled to make her hands meet along the widest point of her gut’s circumference. Her hulking hugeness made the wooden bench beneath her squeak ominously in a way that hadn’t been possible the last time that she sat on it during her training—something that *would* have filled her with pride literally before this conversation.

“B-But—”

“Melva, honey, the idea was to instill a sense of *confidence* and *power* within yourself!” Wanda explained with a clap of her hands, “*That’s* where magic comes from!”

“…that’s where magic comes from?”

“*YES. OF COURSE IT IS. DID YOU PAY ATTENTION AT ALL TO WHAT I WAS TEACHING YOU?!”*

Hearing Aunt Wanda raise her voice was… surreal to say the least. Even the increasingly haughty (not to mention increasingly heavy) witch was unable to raise any objections.

At the very least, it hadn’t been done in a degrading sort of way. It was simply the exclamation of a master who was at her wits end with what she had thought to be a star pupil—only to find that she had completely misrepresented the teachings of what her Aunt Wanda had taught her. Honestly, gaining weight to grow in magical power? That was absolutely absurd!

“B-But… Daphne…”

“Is just an exceptionally powerful witch—she *likes to be skinny* and her glamor charm fills her with confidence.” Aunt Wanda spelled it out plainly, “*Being better than everyone made her better than everyone.”*

“That… doesn’t make sense.”

“It makes a lot more sense than getting fat to gain magical power.”

“Quiet, witchboy.”

Luke pursed his lips awkwardly as he, Jeannie, and (a snacking) Daphne tried to pretend that they weren’t listening to Wanda’s lecture. All this made Melva feel that much more pathetic—sitting in her chair at more than five hundred pounds, having felt so proud of herself for getting to such a size, made her feel so… so…

“Well… I’d imagine that you feel pretty silly right about now.” Aunt Wanda sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose as she composed herself

“Silly isn’t exactly the word I’d use, but… yeah.” Melva clutched either end of her distended stomach as it lapped onto the table in front of her, “I feel pretty dumb.”

“I think that it’s worth noting that the feeling of being so big and so powerful absolutely helped you to achieve that magical potential that you’d been missing out on.” Aunt Wanda said with a soft little smile as she touched her niece’s squishy shoulder, “You really *have* come a long way from the girl who couldn’t cast a firebolt if her life depended on it.”

“More like a *wide* way…” Melva pursed her lips as she hefted up her gut, “I can’t believe that I thought this was a good idea…”

“I mean… it works for Daphne, right?” Jeannie shrugged, “Maybe the two of you have a lot more in common than you thought?”

There was a moment of silence as that thought hung heavily in the air between them. Melva and Daphne shared a small look, acknowledging the points that had been made quietly amongst themselves without admitting that they had both acted like total tools.

“You know… my family owns a great restaurant that serves excellent steak.” Daphne offered as a subtle way of extending an olive branch, “We could… you know… always eat there once in a while. If you don’t mind.”

“I think we could arrange something like that.” Melva smiled as she pat her stomach, “Though… maybe I should take it easy.”

“Y-Yeah… me too…”

In that moment, Daphne and Melva had reached an understanding of one another that would go on to form one of the most powerful bonds in the magical world. The two of them would go on to become a pair of powerful witches, told in legend and studied in books for years to come. A true Dyad of magic, the likes of which were rare and hard to find in this day and age…

But that, my friends, is a story for another day.