



Once upon a time...

After many days of travelling the Zhus arrived at the Village of Shaolin. They asked around until a child pointed them to Zhu Aziz's dojo. Blaze walked up the step. He paused and sat on the porch facing the door. Ahimsa asked, "What is wrong? You don't want to see him?"

Blaze replied, "I've failed him. He obviously hasn't come to see us, so why would he want to see us unannounced?"

Ahimsa said, "You're his son. He has to be a little proud."

Blaze sighed, stood up and knocked against the wood on the edging of the paper door. A few moments later, someone who looked like the three kids, opened the door. He had a shaved bald head, and a wavy fu manchu mustache that went to the bottom edge of his face-printing.

The former Master of Fire said, "Good day Blaze, Ahimsa, Krispal, Mundia."

Blaze put out his hand and said, "Good day, ah sir, ah dad."

Aziz looked unmoved. He said, "Come in, take off your shoes."

They went inside and took off their shoes. The elf, Krispal said, "Wow. Nice digs."

The dojo was decorated with all sorts of expensive artwork and antiques. They sat on a wooden bench while Aziz brought them some tea. Over the tea Aziz asked, "So have all three of you reached your full potentials?"

Blaze said, "No sir. None of us have."

Aziz stated, "You aren't good enough. I don't want any slacker children. This isn't a cutesie tea party, this is the real world. Be stronger."

Their mother said, "Nonsense. I have very reasonable expectations. The children aren't slackers, they just need to find the inner piece to unlock their true potential."

"Excuses, excuses." Aziz mocked. He then said, "You are welcome to stay here tonight. My girlfriend, Lacertilia, is at the dojo of her brother's house for the Day of the Departed."

Krispal asked, "How soft are the beds?"

Aziz replied, "You aren't here to sleep. You are here to train."

Krispal said, "No, I am here to sleep."

After the tea, Aziz led them to a room that was used for martial art. It had no furniture and only weapons on the wall. Blaze was handed a wooden sword and Aziz took another one. Aziz instructed, "No fire or ice indoors, I happen to like my dojo."

Aziz tossed his sword into the air. Blaze charged at him with his own. Aziz's sword landed in his other hand and he sliced at Blaze, who was quickly defeated. The entire fight happened in two seconds. Blaze tried many times, but he could never land a blow on Aziz. His mother comforted him, "It is Okay. Aziz is just unreasonably pushy."

Aziz looked unmoved and said, "I am not. He should know how to stop me. Do you want me to compliment him on every mistake he doesn't make? He hasn't even earned his true potential yet. He needs to learn to be good at life. He doesn't need protective pity help."

Ahimsa felt sorry for Blaze. When she met Blaze's eyes, she thought quickly. Their souls united and she didn't know what to do, then she remembered what to do. She flushed away feelings of shame and her jaw dropped. Blaze turned away now with wider eyes looking at Aziz. After the session Blaze walked up to a mirror in the hallway. Aziz explained, "This mirror shows you what you will look like in the future."

Blaze saw himself. He was twenty-something in the picture. He wore a dusty but fancy kimono gi. He looked weathered, broken, and beaten. His right eye was slightly closed, due to a slash over it and it being relaxed. For as long as he looked at the reflection his future self didn't smile.

Fremt arrived at his brother's encampment at the Sea of Sand. Fremt was taken to the command tent where he walked in to see Herold pointing at a map and discussing options. Herold was a Tortoistine. He had the headpiece of a green human but the body of a standing tortoise with a shoulder-piece shell. On the face-printing he only had one eye, and an eyepatch over the other. The teenager was the lord of the Metalonia Army, one of the competing factions to gain control of the Sea of Sand. Herold looked at Fremt and thought to himself, another person who is good at being good. Fremt made puppy dog eyes and nervously said, "Hi, Herold."

Herold exclaimed, "Yangban Fremt, my wild widdle brother, stop being so much like irrational alien."

Fremt argued, "Why don't you start being so rational? Yeah, that made sense."

One of the female warriors snickered at Fremt. Herold walked around the map table to Fremt, his hand turned into metal, as he was the master of Metal. He slammed his metal fist into

Fremt's antenna. Fremt screamed with pain, he was worried it was going to break off. Herold ordered, "You will BOW your head to Herold."

Herold asked himself, "Why must I be so violent?"

Fremt did as instructed. He said, "This stinks. Now my antenna doesn't tingle when people are thinking shadow-self thoughts involving me."

Herold felt a slight warmth inside of him that other people, especially women, had dark thoughts toward someone similar him. Fremt loved Herold. Herold's left eye was taken by their father, Apea, an immortal God at birth. Herold could find contempt and happiness by stabbing his right eye but doing so would mean he would no longer be able to look into people's eyes and understand their suffering. Herold may have been a power-hungry warlord, but he still had intentions of being good one day. The alien said, "I am going to fire pit to see if caterpillars explode when burnt."

Over the next few days Blaze, Ahimsa, and Krispal trained harder than ever. Even with their elemental powers they couldn't stop their father. Ahimsa said to Krispal and Blaze, "Mom and I have decided to go back home for the remainder of our break. You are welcome to join us."

The Master of Shadow said, "I would be happy to. Dad is not good for my confidence. If I am to stay a bad boy I need all the confidence I can get."

Blaze said, "I am not going to leave with you now."

"Are you worried he'll punish you if you try and leave?" Ahimsa asked and then argued, "Let's all leave together. He can't be mad at all of us, or at least it is worth the gamble."

Krispal asked, "You got knocked off the gravel hill in all of what, three seconds."

Blaze replied, "Well, at least I didn't have to climb down."

Aziz was listening. He walked to the group and said, "The one the First Spinjitzu Master endowed with the element of fire, the First Master of Fire, had a fire of cheerfulness that could drive him through the greatest tests of energy. He had something positive to say in the darkest of times too."

The Master of Shadow commented, "I joke about and don't believe a positive attitude. I am a bad person."

The Master of Ice said, "Blaze, you can't seriously stay with him."

Blaze replied, "I am the Master of Fire. My goal in life is to make my dad proud and I'll do this so long as I don't have to hurt anyone. I don't give up. I may be arrogant at times, ashamed at other times, but I will never give up on my dream."

Blaze was left alone with Aziz after Mundia, Ahimsa, and Krispal left. Blaze still didn't show any improvement but he kept trying.