



Once upon a time...

The Tortoisetine Herold left behind his army to go with Fremt to be a member of the Elemental Alliance and go from warlord to spiritual healed under the guidance of Sensei Sage. They were the first two to arrive back at the Temple of the White Tiger. Sage came down from the window above the door and said, "Hello, Master of Metal. Glad to see you finally accepted my invitation. I am the infinitely wise and infinitely non-arrogant Sensei Sage."

The teenage turtle replied, "I am Yangban Herold. I didn't mean to take so long. Took time to teach replacement warlord, wouldn't want to leave vacuum."

Sage said, "Ah, I see. The continuity of government is a concern of any good warlord. Please come in."

Herold and Fremt carried in their bags to the atrium. Sage said, "You will find everything here to make yourself content."

Herold asked, "Everything?"

Sage replied, "Yes, everything. Including love for all of figure-kind, losing fear of death, anxiety, ego, and hate."

Herold murmured, "It not feel like home."

Sage said, "Yes, I know you are new here, but does a place need to be home to be where inner piece is?"

Herold snapped, "I came here to find my inner piece, not to be lectured by smart man."

He took out a knife and pointed it at Sage's neck. Sage calmly asked, "May I make you some tea?"

Herold said, "Sorry warlord. Herold don't talk over tea. Herold drink tears of enemy."

Sage explained, "Senseis from the Valley of Peace ask me why in Nihon, Ninja are warriors and not office workers like they are there. I reply because it is better to tell people you were born to be a warrior than tell them you were born to make an honest and pure living. Title doesn't make you a public servant, even if that title is public servant, being a true public servant makes you a public servant."

Fremt said, "Yeah, that officially made no sense."

Herold said, "It OK I didn't completely understand too, but Fremt can be warlord like Herold."

Fremt said, "Great, I'll put a pin in it."

Herold then asked, "Smart man, what is Herold's trick to the inner piece?"

Sage said, "Please. Come to the meditation gazebo."

Sage led Herold to the Meditation Gazebo and he began meditating to Sage's words. Sage began, "Metal is the element of suffering and violence. The Master of Metal has a strong sense of responsibility to work. It is purified earth. Where earth is somewhat thickheaded, metal is extraordinarily mentally dense. I have often found for the Masters of Metal the key is a spiritual awakening."

Herold ordered, "Wake me up."

Sage said, "Think of a jolly springtime meadow; let your heart be green as the meadow. To awaken you, you must discard all the metal you carry. This includes armor, swords, arrows, and all weapons. Let the wind in your heart take you over."

Herold said, "Herold can't let go of all armor because some armor is part of body. Can't let go of metal, because Herold is metal sometimes."

Sage replied, "Huh, good point."

Herold said, "Maybe if we have a big ceremony that tells everyone I don't have ego then ego goes away."

Sage said, "No ceremony can awaken you. Ceremonies only lead to more titles, which only lead to more responsibility. Responsibility leads to more doubt of occasions when rashness was used. Don't be shy and seek status, be bold and seek the valor it takes to love one and another."

Herold argued, "Becoming warlord made Herold feel like he good at life."

Sage said, "Yes, but now that you're a warlord you have a tremendous duty to the people of the Sea of Sand. You are one of their leaders which puts pressure on you every day to do a good job in their eyes. Doing a good job as warlord, which is partly obtained by seeking the advice and aid of others, can make you reach the extremities of virtue. The extremities of spirituality come from within you and you alone, not from the advice of others. Let your own light shine from your chest and engulf your actions with compassion."

Herold ask, "Tell me what smart man choose to be if not title."

Sage said, "I picked to be a Sensei and a spiritual awakener. Metal is purified earth. Earth deals with material things. You must let go of want for unnecessary possessions. Buddhas are great spiritual awakeners. They own only thirty possessions at once. They inspire those of us with metal with their purity."

Herold said, "Make me buddha. Or else."

Sage advised, "Spiritual awakening is a choice you have to make on your own. It can be made even at the worst of times. It is independent of almost everything. No matter what you have been through or who you are, it can happen."

Herold said, "Ok Herold choose to be buddha right now."

Sage said, "It doesn't work like that."

Herold said, "I felt like it just worked a little."

Sage replied, "Oh, maybe it does."

Herold said, "No wait didn't work. Herold feels like conquering whole world again."

Sage said again, "You need to learn the seven forms of the breath exercise."

Herold complained, "You just told me my inner piece was independent of everything. Now it happen with breath. You just want me to get foolish so you feel better about self."

Sage asked, "What can I do to make you trust me?"

Herold said, "Take my suffering away."

Sage argued, "To do that you need to follow my lead."

Herold stated, "No, Herold doesn't."

Sage said, "I apologize you feel that way about me. Breathing technique is often good for working out metal, but not always."

"Are you serious or is this backwards?" Herold yelled. He pulled out a sword and pointed it at Sage. Herold yelled, "Don't make me look like a fool man!"

Sage said, "I don't know who taught you violence was the answer because it isn't. Don't scream and shout because you are in pain and in doubt. Speak softly and kindly, no matter how much pain you are in or who you want to fear you."

Herold put the sword away and said, "I am the worst person ever. Why must I hate? Why Herold so full of suffering?"

Sage advised, "Your father is a terrible god, it will take time for you to become the spiritual legend you are destined to be. You will only unlock this when the key is ready to be found. Please, the session is over for today."

Sage left Herold behind at the gazebo. Inside Fremt was looking apprehensively at the trail leading to the Temple. Sage asked, "You look troubled. Is something bothering you?"

Fremt said, "I have a bad secret that I am afraid will be discovered. Now that I told you are you going to use your Sensei magic to make me tell it?"

Sage advised, "I do not make people tell me the truth. I will tell you, you must ask yourself, what do you want most in life? Once you have a vision, the steps you take should be used to make it come true. So, what do you value most in life?"

Fremt said, "The secret being kept."

Sage calmly argued, "I have slight reasons to doubt a secret being kept is the greatest thing in the world to you. What if your vision comes true but isn't as you planned? Live a life you can be proud of. I encourage you to search for what a successful life looks like to you and you alone, not to a girl."

Fremt said, "What am I supposed to do? Because I don't want the secret to be found out but it isn't central to my dream."

Sage commented, "Sounds like the secret being kept is a wish, not a dream. I have wishes, too. I wish I didn't talk my son into going to war. I wish for the Temple of White Tiger to have a stream going through the middle to make a calming white noise. I wish my old joints wouldn't hurt from all this fighting. I wish that tea was as simple to make as opening electrolyte water. I wish I didn't need to raise my voice to get the ninja to do what I'm asking."

Fremt said, "I should seek the future I want. I guess I have been living day to day a little too much without much seriousness. I guess all secrets are always found out some day so I should break from my demon and live a life I can be proud of."

Sage advised, "Grow from that which scares you. At our lowest point what is most important is clear. Be raw, be green, be rooted."