



## Once upon a time...

The day after Fremt and Herold arrived, the entire Elemental Alliance plus one was at the Temple of the White Tiger. The extra was Wu's brother, Garmadon. Flowious asked, "Extraordinarily wise Sensei. What is our lesson today?"

Sage replied, "It is time for the masters to spread their wings and lift off from the Sensei. Today you will pick a leader."

Flowious remarked, "Good idea letting us pick instead of you."

Herold asked, "What good leader be like?"

Sage answered, "A block who best exemplifies what being a Ninja is about should naturally be the leader. This block will be masterful. This block will have a sense of responsibility strong as metal. This block will be glad to work as fire even through stressful and tiring tasks. This block should be a simple character. A block who is spiritually at inner piece, and a positive influence on the world, is fit to be leader."

Isabelle argued, "A great leader should be advanced, not simple."

Sage replied, "I said the character must be simple, not easy."

Krispal suggested, "I should be the leader. I am a simple but difficult character."

Bamf remarked, "Yes, but your work ethic is lackluster at best."

"So is yours," Krispal replied. Fremt argued, "I don't want to be a leader though."

He just suggested, "Herold is responsible and a simple but not easy character."

Zoro asked, "Who here thinks Herold should leader?"

Herold snapped, "Vote for me or else."

Nobody raised their hands. Herold turned to metal and took out a katana. He pointed it at Bamf and ordered, "Raise your hand."

Bamf stood his ground and said, "No, you maniac."

Herold sliced his katana. Bamf shot earth which collided with the blade. Ahimsa shot ice and froze all but Herold's headpiece. Bamf commented, "I think we must cross Herold off the list."

Sarcea said, "He is hard working but he isn't very nice."

Blaze remarked, "Um, obviously I am meant to be the leader."

"But Sage said you weren't masterful in your ceremony," Flowious argued. He then asked, "Sensei, tell us more on who is to be leader or pick one of us. A word of wisdom please."

Sage reflected, "A sensei never tells. Wisdom comes from the void of wisdom not the fountain, unless that fountain is a kettle. I am going to go make tea."

Sage left. Zoro said, "We can discuss this all day long time, or we nominate some people and vote from that."

Bamf said, "I nominate Isabelle. She is very smart and flexible."

Isabelle didn't want to be the leader. That would mean she would have to make Fremt do his work, which might make him not like her. She said, "I don't want to be."

Bamf argued, "But you have to accept, you were nominated."

Zoro argued, "We don't want someone unwilling. The leader has to be voluntary."

Bamf stood his ground by pointing at Zoro and with a raised voice said, "Superior Fuhrer Vagus is going to invade the Central Shoguntu for no reason. Isabelle is the calmest and collected one of us; she should lead us. Make people be a leader even if they don't want to. I don't want to hear you stopped trying because they told you no."

Blaze said, "See. Bamf should be the leader. He even got Krispal to work once."

Bamf admitted, "I accept the nomination but know I am not as calm and collected as Isabelle."

Isabelle looked at Fremt and said, "Sorry. I don't want to."

She then deflected by exulting, "Make Zoro the leader. She is twice as smart as me."

Bamf fell for it. He agreed, "Zoro is the most mountain-like one of us."

Zoro matter-of-factly, commented, "I accept. Looks like I am the most likely at this point."

Herold, from the block of ice, said, "Ice lady. She care for masters. She crazy for them."

Ahimsa didn't complain about being called crazy. Krispal argued, "What are you talking about?

Sarcea is so the mother of our group."

Sarcea replied, "Stop being so mean."

Krispal commented, "See what I mean."

Ahimsa said, "Sure. I'll nominate myself."

Diptidulla argued, "You can't nominate yourself. That is grabby."

Ahimsa apologized, "Oh. I'm sorry."

Herold said, "I already nominated her."

Bamf spat, "Nobody listens to you anymore."

Diptidulla agreed, "He lacks humanity."

Isabelle thought about nominating Ahimsa, but realized it would look bad after promoting Zoro. Flowious said, "It is OK. I nominate Ahimsa."

Sarcea announced, "It looks like it is down to Zoro and Ahimsa."

Garmadon said, "What about Wu? Our father endowed each of your ancestors with elemental abilities."

Ahimsa argued, "He is just a child. No offense."

Bamf said, "His father created all of Ninjago. Let's give him a chance."

Fremt replied, "We inherit our parent's legacy, not their destiny."

Sarcea directed, "Looks like it is Zoro, Ahimsa, and Wu. Zoro, your speech."

Zoro began, "My plan for growing into the leader we want is to take the best traits of each of us and understand them. I will learn to have the best attributes we all share as a group. I may not be the most flexible, or the bluntest, or the best listener, or the hardest worker, or have the most clever ideas, or the most peaceful; however, I can learn these traits, because I am the

smartest one of us, despite not being simple. I want to use everything I know to help this team reach its full potential so we can be all we can be.”

Sarcea directed the conversation by saying, “Ahimsa.”

She began, “Sage asked us to pick the one of us that best exemplifies the Way of the Ninja. A ninja always does what is right, is always respectful, knows all life is always sacred, and is never a malgarson. I don’t know if I will ever truly live up to these ideals but I like to think I have many of them.”

Ahimsa looked out of it for her speech. Sarcea directed, “Wu.”

Wu began, “This group, the reformed Elemental Alliance, is made to be the greatest group to save all of Ninjago. It is true I am the youngest. I know what you are thinking, nobody as young as I can lead you. Unlike Zoro, I don’t have the faintest idea of what leadership is. I may not have the most skill with leading. Hold tight, if you are breathing heavy, I can assure you there is a ‘but’ coming. Here it is, ‘but I am the sacred protector.’ I cannot get the blisters of experience without getting my feet wet. None of you can understand how big my decision is. This decision will change all your lives. It will even change the course of history. If I am to make the right choice I need all the wisdom I can get. Sure, there will be mistakes along the way, but don’t you agree, in order to truly grow, I need practice making the tough choices?”

The youngest clan member and the two girls all shook hands. Sarcea announced, “I guess now we vote. Who votes for Zoro?”

Zoro, Diptidulla, Herold, Isabelle, and Krispal raised their hands for the smartest. Diptidulla complained, "Zoro can't vote for herself."

After a few seconds, Fremt rhetorically asked, "Why would she accept her nomination if she wasn't going to vote for herself?"

Sarcea then asked, "Who votes for Ahimsa?"

Ahimsa, Sarcea, and Flowious raised their hands. Sarcea asked, "Who votes for Wu?"

Wu, Garmadon, Falco, Fremt, Blaze, and Bamf raised their hands for the youngest candidate.

Sarcea, matter-of-factly announced, "It looks like Wu has been voted to be leader by us."

The Elemental Masters went to the kitchen and told Sage who had won. Sage replied, "I think you made the correct decision."

Flowious asked, "Sensei, did you know Wu would be elected?"

Sage replied, "Naturally, I am near infinitely wise and infinitely non-arrogant, so yeah."

Wu asked, "What should I do as my first act as a leader? What is leadership?"

Sage replied, "A sensei never tells. I told you once."

Flowious asked, "Sensei, what do you mean?"

Sage admitted, "I came up with four clan rules: never say never, never say always, always say never, and always say always. I shouldn't have come up with these rules. I am sorry for telling you something. Even I make mistakes. I wanted to teach you faster, I lost my patience. I will

continue to teach you by following your lead; however, not as aggressively. You will become wise one day, Wu.”

Wu looked up at Sage with joy.