



Once upon a time...

"Wu, someone strange is on the temple steps," the alien, Fremt, informed Wu.

Wu went to the front double doors of the temple and aggressively pulled a katana from the umbrella stand. He ordered, "Open the door."

Fremt opened one of the double doors to reveal the front steps were empty in the dark early spring morning. Terrified, Fremt declared, "He left."

Wu stated, "Look."

He pointed to a piece of paper nailed to the door. Wu ordered, "Bring it into the light."

Fremt reluctantly touched the piece of paper. He shuttered when he did. Then, after pausing, he ripped it from the nail. Wu and Fremt brought it to a desk where they read it in the candle light. Fremt said, "It is like a paper, but for news."

The Masters of Light and Water entered the office. Zoro asked, "What are you doing? It is four in the morning."

Fremt said, "We got a strange paper nailed to the door."

Zoro informed them, "It is called a newspaper. They are very common in the Valley of Peace."

Fremt asked, "What does one do with this newspaper?"

Zoro stated, "You read it to be aware of current events."

Fremt joked, "I knew town crier was a dying business."

Wu stated, "What a waste of a perfectly good piece of paper."

Fremt asked, "But why did we get one?"

Zoro stated, "I enrolled us to get them delivered. We seem very unaware of what is going on in the world and for that matter anything at all."

Fremt remarked, "That is because the town crier only cries news from Daant AP."

Wu replied, "That is because he has laid off most of his other messengers."

Fremt cried, "How are we going to be informed once the town crier goes? How!?"

The Masters of Sound and Wind entered the office. Falco asked, "What is all this noise?"

Zoro stated, "Fremt is worried about losing the town crier."

Isabelle stated, "Don't worry, Fremt. The newspaper will tell us what is going on."

Fremt slyly stated, "U'huh. The times. They're achanging."

Zoro asked, "What does it say?"

Falco sarcastically remarked, "Probably that Tsar Kresovy is mortal and how he shouldn't be Tsar because of that."

Fremt peered over the paper and said, "In big letters it says 'Central Zhoguntu under attack by Gou Community'. Then below that in small letters it says, 'In the zouth province of...'"

Zoro interrupted him, "I think you mean, 'Central Shogunto' and 'south province.'"

Fremt argued, "This printing-press writing is weird. I am too old for this; I can only read cursive. Why are the letters so bold? Use the Arial printing press type-kit blocks, and I'll read this all day. And what is this section below it? Seems biased."

Diptidulla justified the occurrence of bias by saying, "It is supposed to be. That is the editorial. Where readers send in their own opinions."

Fremt stated, "That's stupid. Who would want to read everyone's opinions? This editorial thing will never last."

Wu stated, "I can't believe this. Ninjago is at war."

Fremt replied, "Oh. I thought you were going to say how you couldn't believe we will have to stop paying the town..."

Fremt looked at Zoro, Wu, Diptidulla, Isabelle, and Falco, who didn't look amused. Falco exclaimed, "Shogun Honourous is a Malgarson. We are going to help Tsar Kresovy, oh, wait we can't. He is mortal."

Wu said, "Fremt, Diptidulla, wake everyone in the temple. Zoro, read this newspaper and see what else we can learn. Falco and Isabelle, arrange the courtroom. We are going to hold an Elemental Alliance powwow."

The Elemental Alliance gathered in the courtroom at sunrise. Wu sat at the head of the long table and announced, "Before we begin I want to say there is coffee on the cart over there. The Master of Ice informed me you will always be inferior at leadership if you don't have caffeine for all-morning meetings. Zoro is the most informed so she will begin."

Zoro stood and read from the newspaper, "Yesterday around mid-afternoon, Tsar Kresovy invaded the Central Shoguntu in the south province of Daisyville. This surprised many Central Shoguntu military leaders, even those who considered Gou expansion into the Central Shoguntu likely, as Daisyville is a walled city. Daisyville is also a very poor province, because their former Daimyo unpopularity invested in growing sneeds with tax exemptions instead of recruiting the major league leather-ball team "The Professionals." This was especially questionable, as it seems most everyone, including our agricultural expert, doesn't know what a sneed is. The Gou Community surrounded the walled city. Peasants inside the city welcomed their communist invaders and forced open the city gates allowing them to enter. The Gous continue to march north. Many fleeing Central Shoguntu administrators report Kresovy swayed the peasants' opinions by promising them salvation with the legendary Sources Stone. He has already proclaimed, in a speech on March first, that he will bring the Prophecy of Utopia with the stone of infinity."

Garmadon asked, "What is the Sources Stone? Sounds powerful and deadly."

Zoro said, "It's a myth, a legend. It is the source without a source. It can turn not only lead to gold but also sunlight into food, rock into healing tea. It is vegetarian baloney. It is too good to be true. Centuries ago an alchemist gnome was said to have created one. He promised to make his supporters lives ridiculously better. He just used its promise to rise in power. Nobody's life got magically better and eventually his critics murdered him after years of broken promises. It was fake chi with real problems. A figure named Silch Levi was said to have created another Sources Stone three decades ago."

Diptidulla and Flowious looked at each other. Diptidulla asked, "Did you say Silch Levi?"

Zoro replied, "Yes. You've heard of him?"

Flowious sternly said, "Our parents are old friends of his."

Garmadon stated, "If we find him we can get the real Sources Stone."

Flowious stated, "When our parents told us about him they didn't say anything about the Sources Stone. They can't find him anywhere they look. Tell us more, Zoro."

Zoro sighed and explained, "In a town in the Maa Shoguntu, which I can't remember the name of."

Fremt Interrupted, "But I thought you remembered everything."

"Unfortunately, no," Zoro replied, then continued, "There was an elder leader who was murdered in this town. Two rival groups wanted his company, but the evidence pointed toward both groups possibly being the ones to have committed the murder. The only way to learn who really killed him was to speak to him from the Departed Realm. A stranger shows up, Silch Levi, and brings the detective to speak to the murdered elder. The undead elder says who murdered him and the company went to the other party."

Falco exclaimed, "So the Sources Stone must exist. The elder was brought back to life. Tsar Kresovy wouldn't lie. Lying would give him an unfair advantage. He must have gotten Levi's stone."

Zoro argued, "Levi could have used Rosebriar tea. They are multiple doors to the Departed Realm."

Flowious argued, "Yes, but using Rosebriar tea would have killed him. We all know how deadly those vines are. Our parents spoke to him less than three decades ago."

Wu added, "He has a point."

Zoro said, "There could be another door to the Departed Realm, one we don't know about."

Falco stated, "Come on, not even the Realm Crystal can go there, you would need a rift like Rosebriar tea."

Zoro argued, "The Sources Stone doesn't even exist. If it did, why would its bearer need to hide with it? They would be a god for blessing figure-kind with its unlimited good. The numbers don't add up. The weapon is too powerful TO EVEN BE POSSIBLE! It..."

Flowious interrupted, "We need to find Levi."

Wu ordered, "Flowious, don't interrupt."

Blaze supported Wu by saying, "Being a Ninja means being honorable. Honor your master."

Flowious argued, "Honor is used to justify something you yourself don't know why is right.

Ninja aren't chivalrous knights who woo princesses by devotedly providing for them and always wanting to be with them. They are the embodiment of the Golden Rule. A ninja has cut his hair and is in the nighttime darkness. A black lion is just as noble as a pure white lion. The color society gives you doesn't determine your inner beast. Lions are noble regardless of whatever color they have on the outside. Ninja's don't fight for honor, they fight for ending Malgarsonery."

Flowious looked at Ahimsa. Ahimsa gave an apprehensive smile. The Viking Ninja argued, "No Flowious, Ninja have long hair and superior girlfriends and social stratum. And abs, plenty of abs."

Krispal agreed, "I paint myself white when my inside is black, so people like me. I have grown my hair out, so I can go to more parties. I like honor because it can make me look better than I really am."

Sage stood up and advised, "The meaning of honor shouldn't be condensed to fit into 140 characters, whatever a character is. Reducing politics to its simplest form will always end in ruin."

Blaze argued, "Sage you're so wrong, it isn't even funny. We are ninja, not part of the shadow world. Being a ninja means putting on the gee, not some black disguise to hide in the nighttime darkness. What is right is so clear. You must be the greatest idiots in all of time for not agreeing with what is so obvious. I am right, and you are wrong. Flowious, I will not stop arguing with you until you agree."

Krispal commented, "I disagree. Huh, I am the greatest idiot ever."

Wu clarified, "I am telling you to respect me not because of honor, I am telling you to out of the good of the group. This isn't about honor, it is about nobility. This is about giving me the chance to hold the group together. If we all respect me for just this powwow I assure you I can lead us through these difficult conversations. If you don't respect me our problems will go completely and utterly unsolved. I need to be given a chance if we are to answer the immense

questions we must solve. That is noble and what a ninja would do, regardless of the honor he carries.”

The courtroom erupted in applause for the wise master of the Elemental Alliance. Everyone except Falco was applauding, even Flowious. Isabelle said, “We can discuss this philosophical mumbo-jumbo all morning and all afternoon, but we need to decide what to do next. I don’t know much about politics so ask Zoro, she is really smart and stuff.”

Zoro reiterated, “I don’t think it is the best use of our masters to find Silch Levi.”

Flowious reiterated, “And I disagree.”

Isabelle stated, “So we have differences to resolve.”

Diptidulla suggested, “We should hold a vote. If Flowious wins, he and I will search for Levi, If Zoro wins, we will not.”

Bamf argued, “This is pointless. Wu is the leader, what he says goes. We can’t decide everything with a vote, it delegitimizes the stature that the superior chief has.”

Herold advised Wu, “Give them this vote. Let them pick the small things, they follow you on the big things. Herold knows how to handle troops. It is only two masters to leave.”

Blaze argued, “Two Masters on a valuable mission is better than two masters on a pointless mission. A ninja never quits. Never compromise, never settle.”

Wu racked his brain, but he couldn’t figure out which option was better. Wu asked, “Sage, what do you think? Go by vote or have me decide? If so, what should I decide?”

Sage replied, "A Sensei doesn't tell."

Fremt blurted out, "Oh, snap."

The courtroom fell silent waiting for Wu's answer. Sage commented, "Hard choices."

Fremt suggested, "Wu, I think you know what is best, but you think you are in a block of ice.

You agree with Zoro but aren't certain enough to completely support her. You also don't want to upset Flowious."

Sage advised, "Very wise, Fremt. Lightning is the element of revelation. It is fast and not freezable. It comes from thin air but moves all the other elements. Every time lightning strikes it ascends a figure to greater wisdom and clarity."

Wu agreed, "Flowious, Diptidulla, Fremt is right. We will not go looking for Levi."

Flowious scuffed to Wu, "White snake."

Isabelle asked, "Flowious, how can we amend this bridge between you and the rest of the Alliance?"

Flowious declared, "We are no longer part of the Elemental Alliance."

Diptidulla insisted, "Flowious, don't be a meany-bafeany."

Sage advised, "Flowious, don't leave us. The verbal strife of this group will lead to the martial peace of Ninjago. The force created when all the Elemental Masters collide in the forge going as fast as they can, turns them into ninja. Flowious, do not slow down while approaching the

forge. Full-heartedly commit yourself to your fellow Elemental Masters even if it means you yourself must change.”

Flowious stated, “I am sorry Sage, you are no longer my Sensei. Come, Diptidulla.”

Diptidulla insisted, “Apologize, that was very rash.”

Flowious stood up, took off his orange gee, and walked out of the courtroom. Diptidulla watched him leave and thought of how Levi left their parents. Would the Master of Amber no longer be there anymore? Diptidulla said, “Flowious can be a bit confused at times. But I need to go with him as he looks for Levi, I don’t want my best friend to disappear from my life forever.”

Wu agreed, “Diptidulla, go, pull him back to us in the end.”

Diptidulla kept her gee on, but left after Flowious. Wu commented, “We have all made mistakes. I have other ways to make my team ninja than only to outcast one of us at every case of defiance.”

Sage advised, “Find the greatness within each other, for you cannot find the greatness that is not within each other. Be close minded to impossible solutions.”

Falco commented, “Yeah, yeah, yeah. A ninja never quits, and he just quit. Now he isn’t going to be a ninja and help Tsar Kresovy.”

Krispal commented, “I thought you liked Shogun Honourous, not Tsar Kresovy. Both are hopeless; I just want clarification, so I know who to joke more.”

Fremt remarked, "That was last month's ninja, this month's ninja is Tsar Kresovy. Woops, I said it."

Sage complimented Falco, "The Elemental Master of Sound is a super-ninja. Nothing matters more to him than the following the Way of the Ninja. He is just lost in what that way is."

Wu commented, "Super-Ninja. I like that."

Isabelle asked, "What are we going to do about Tsar Kresovy?"

Bamf added, "And don't forget Superior Dictator Vagus plans to attack from the northern coast soon."

Wu said, "I am not sure we need to do anything."

Sarcea's step-mother liked Shogun Honourous. Sarcea complained, "What do you mean?"

Shogun Honourous needs our support to defend the Holy Shoguntu. Honourous is the supreme embodiment of the Way of the Ninja."

Wu argued, "A generation ago the map of shoguntus was different than today. The Elemental Alliance shouldn't just maintain the status quo of borders at the end of each chapter. We need to decide what conflicts to be active in."

Falco insisted, "We need to go help Tsar Kresovy in fighting for the Fair Community. Honourous likes his monks but ignores his poor. Why do monks deserve more attention? The poor do all the work of growing the food for the blissful monks. Monks are peaceful, but their happiness and confidence make them ignore the needs of the poor."

Isabelle said, "There is a clash of ethos here. The Central Shoguntu Tigers versus the Gou Community Dogs: holiness versus fairness. I don't see why they need to be mutually exclusive. We need to find the fair *and* holy solution."

Sarcea argued, "We are a Sensei's League Certified Ninja Clan. Our duty is to the Central Shoguntu."

Herold argued, "Sensei League, not military branch."

Wu asked, "Sage, what is the duty of a Ninja Clan?"

The sensei replied, "To follow the Golden Rule."

Falco added, "The Golden Rule is that of equality. Its symbol is a circle, each point equal to the next. Each point treats each point the same. A ninja treats all figures the same, a malgarson chooses to treat other figures worse."

Isabelle pragmatically asked, "But is Tsar Kresovy really making things better for the Gou Community and his conquered?"

Falco argued, "His kindness is like the blue sky of a cloudless day. Just as a dog is a figure's best friend, communism is prosperity's best friend."

Isabelle argued, "The Tsar Kresovy quotes are making you appear less open minded. I would like you to not use them."

Sage complimented Isabelle, "I haven't known a Master of Water to be bad at keeping friends."

Zoro advocated, "We don't know enough about the situation to know if we should ally with either or neither side. We should gather more information before deciding."

Sage complimented, "Very wise, Zoro. A sword forged by methods of falsehood is faulty. A figure can ignore the truth, but the truth cannot ignore the figure. We must see figures as the rocks they are, not as the fog they can seem. We must not be zealots; however, we can be mages. The world is filled with solid knowledge to be collected. By following a few grounded, earthy, and raw rules of scientific conduct, all the world is as simple as rocks."

Zoro suggested, "Let's go to the Gou Community and see what is the best course of action from there."

Wu agreed, "That is what we will do then, wise Master of Light."
