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As they made their way to the inner part of the sect, Jeric posed a question to Lucas. "Why were you walking down there, Young Master?" 1

Lucas didn't immediately respond. Instead, he pondered the workings of the sect. He wondered if it was acceptable for a sect master to bow to anyone. Back in his previous world, weaker countries were expected to show respect to the stronger ones. But here, where cultivators and sects had vastly different ideals, Lucas wasn't sure how a sect master should think and act.

Jeric was surprised when Lucas suddenly asked, "Jeric, why are you calling me 'Young Master'?"

Perplexed, Jeric replied, "Because you asked me to."

"But why did you listen to me? Doesn't it hurt your pride?" Lucas asked.

Jeric hesitated, then replied, "It does, but you are strong. It's okay to be humble to you."

Lucas realized that Jeric's compliance might

have been based on fear. "If we are equals, how should you address me?" he asked.

After a moment's thought, Jeric responded, "Fellow Daoist Lucas."

Lucas was chagrined at his mistake. He had thought it was acceptable to be called "Young Master," as it was how he was addressed when he first visited Arthur Lim. But he now realized that he had almost insulted Jeric's pride.

Lucas mused, "For mortals, they say, 'You can't put food on the table with your pride.' For mages, 'Pride doesn't bring intelligence.' But I still don't know what cultivators take pride in."

He turned to Jeric and asked, "Then, if I address you, should I say Fellow Daoist?"

"Indeed, it does give me the feeling of equality, but it ultimately depends on your willingness, Young Master," Jeric responded with a bow.

Lucas simply shook his head, a small smile playing at the corner of his lips.

"For now, call me Fellow Daoist. I should have learned this earlier," Lucas explained. Jeric was



once again dumbfounded, and for the rest of the flight, remained silent.

"So that was it. Cultivators took great pride in being recognized," Lucas thought to himself

The next day, Lucas had finished his time in the Heavenly Demon Sect and was ready to return to the Flower Dark Sect. However, he still felt that he needed to fully understand how a sect operates through experience rather than just words. As an 18-year-old cultivator, he wondered what type of sect he should join if he wanted to start his own sect one day. Lucas thought to himself, "I need to study more and learn things from the bottom up."

After bidding farewell to Jeric, Lucas flew back to the Flower Dark Sect. He landed directly in front of the sect master's pavilion, where he was greeted by a group of cultivators who were at least in the Master Spirit Realm and were supposed to be sect elders. "Welcome back, Senior Expert," they greeted him.

Lucas asked, "Where's Fellow Daoist Thomas?"

"The sect master is in his quarters," they replied.

Lucas nodded and went straight to Thomas's quarters. Upon his arrival, he knocked on the door and said, "I'm back with some news."

In a few seconds, the door opened, and Thomas respectfully greeted him. "Welcome back, Senior Lucas."

Lucas regarded Thomas with an inscrutable expression before finally nodding and sighing.

"From now on, address me as Fellow Daoist. We are equals, not seniors."

Thomas was surprised by Lucas's request to be called "Fellow Daoist" instead of "senior." Though uncommon, he knew that a person like Lucas, who had strength and dominance by his mere presence, could tie down a famous sect like his. He wasn't sure if this was some kind of test or trap.

"Very well, Fellow Daoist Lucas."

As he addressed Lucas as "Fellow Daoist," Thomas couldn't help but feel a slight sense of skepticism. Was Lucas truly treating him as an

equal, or was he just trying to see how Thomas would react? Despite his doubts, Thomas couldn't ignore the concern he felt for this powerful figure in front of him. He had to be cautious but also respectful.

Lucas strode into the room and settled into a chair, crossing his legs.

The sect elders filed out of the room, leaving Thomas and Lucas alone to discuss the matter at hand.

"What news do you bring, Fellow Daoist Lucas?" Thomas inquired.

"I have news regarding the settlement with the Heavenly Demon Sect. We have concluded that someone may have instigated the grudge between your sects, and it has now been resolved," Lucas stated, stunning Thomas.

"Is that true?" Thomas asked incredulously.

Lucas nodded. "Yes. I need you to visit their sect to demonstrate your sincerity in resolving the conflict. Your sect stands to gain nothing from the death of his son."

Thomas bristled at the suggestion. "But they were the ones who attacked us without cause. Why should I go to them?"

Lucas shook his head. "It is necessary. Fellow Daoist Jeric does not trust my words alone. Your visit will show our commitment to peace."

Thomas considered the proposal before voicing his concern. "What if I am attacked while there?"

Lucas let out a sigh, a hint of exasperation in his voice.

"Relax, you were already as good as dead before I even arrived. Just go to the meeting, and don't worry. I'll be there watching the whole time. Fellow Daoist Jeric seems to have taken a liking to me." Lucas spoke with confidence, his body language oozing with assurance.

"He likes you? That's surprising. The Heavenly Demon Sect's sect master is known to be self-centered." Thomas responded, his tone slightly incredulous.

Lucas scoffed at the mention of Jeric's reputation. "That might explain why his disciples are so full of themselves. But, let's focus on our

plan for meeting Jeric."

After three days since his fight with Lucas, Richard finally woke up. He abruptly sat up from his bed, as if he had just woken up from a nightmare. He looked around the room with confusion and inspected his surroundings.

"What happened to me?" he mumbled, attempting to stand, but his strength failed him.

In frustration, he attempted to gather his Qi and channel it into his muscles, but to no avail.

"What happened to me?" he repeated.

"Your dantian was destroyed, so it's futile to circulate your Qi," a voice explained.

Startled, Richard froze in his position and slowly turned toward the source of the voice.

"Patriarch!" he exclaimed, immediately kowtowing.

"You may be confused about what happened to you. The sect master of the Heavenly Demon Sect sent you back after you attacked a guest. He

was offended by your actions, so he asked me to destroy your dantian as punishment," the Patriarch explained.

Richard felt like he had turned into a statue, unable to move due to fear.

"In addition, at this moment, we don't need useless trash like you. Prepare your things, you'll be sent to the military," the Patriarch added coldly.

All the events of the past few days rushed back into Richard's memory. He remembered the warning from his assassin about Lucas and the sinister look on Lucas's face before he punched him.

