

The Rise of a Master: It Starts With Rejection

Seeing that Ivan was about to leave, Sasha hurriedly clung to his arm and cried, "Do you suddenly hate me so?"

Her high-pitched voice drew the attention of the people around them. Ivan decided to just go along with her one last time. He'd yet to get a taste of her, but with Felix around now, none of that mattered anymore. He said, "No, of course not. I've just been busy because of my mother. Don't be mad, okay?"

Sasha knew about Cheryl's condition and immediately settled down at Ivan's words. "When are you going to introduce me to your mother?"

"Let's see how things go. Do you want to stroll around the antiques market?"

Sasha nodded, her good mood restored. "It's my dad's birthday today. He likes antiques, so I decided to try my luck. It's fine if I can't find anything, though. I've already asked someone to prepare something else for me."

Felix stopped before a stall in the antiques market and appraised the things strewn across the stall. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say the stall owner wouldn't need to worry about money for years if he could sell any of the items there. Even experts in appraising antiques would miss out on precious treasures sometimes, let alone ordinary people or those who constantly dreamed of hitting the jackpot.

"Has something caught your eye, kiddo? I have quite the reputation in this antiques market, you know. I guarantee I'll give you a reasonable price," the stall owner, Mike Larson, said cheerily. (1)

He could tell Felix knew nothing about antiques. It'd be a shame not to take advantage of that and make a huge sum off him.

"How much is this porcelain teapot, mister?" Felix asked.

"My, you've got a good eye! You've found the most valuable thing I have here already. This porcelain teapot was crafted by Henry Davies, a famous teapot maker from the Clearwater era. I had to search high and low to find this, you know."

Felix knew nothing about antiques, but he knew Mike was making the teapot seem more important than it was to hike the price. So, he said, "Just tell me how much it is."

Mike held out a hand, looking like he couldn't bear to give such a low price. "Since you're being so straightforward, I'll sell it to you at a loss. 500,000 dollars, no more, no less!"

Seeing that, Felix also held out a hand. "I'll counter-offer you 5,000 dollars, no more, no less. I'll pay you right now if you agree. If you don't, I'm leaving."

The porcelain teapot's energy didn't come from too long ago, but it had been around for a couple of centuries. That was why Felix wanted to buy it. It was more than enough as a gift for Warren.

"5,000 dollars? What are you even thinking? That's not the way to haggle, kiddò," Mike said.

Felix turned to leave without saying anything else, catching Mike off guard.

Damn it, were youngsters nowadays so blunt and dense? Why hadn't he offered any other prices?

Mike had bought the porcelain teapot in a small village for 500 dollars. Being able to sell it for 5,000 dollars was enough of a profit margin. It was too bad it wasn't easy to trick people nowadays. He'd sold many of his items, yet this porcelain teapot remained unsold. "Fine, fine! Since we were brought together by fate, I'll sell it to you for 5,000 dollars. Oh, what a loss I've

suffered," Mike said.

Felix turned around to take the porcelain teapot. He was about to pay for it when a voice rang out, "I'll pay 10,000 dollars for it!"

Mike immediately stopped Felix from paying. It was common for people to make counter-offers at the antiques market, and any seller who was fortunate enough to come across that would make a huge sum. "This pretty lady is offering 10,000 dollars, kiddo. What say you?"

Felix looked at Sasha, who'd appeared out of nowhere. He asked seriously, "Do we really have to do this?"

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Sasha sneered. "Yes, I do! Get lost if you know what's good for you. I'm telling you now that Ivan is here, too. Once he comes back from the restroom and sees you here, I guarantee you'll be dead meat."

Felix didn't want to waste time arguing with Sasha. However, it had been a while since he'd arrived at the antiques market, and the porcelain teapot was the only item that had caught his eye. Secondly, since Sasha had mentioned Ivan, it meant it wouldn't be long until she was out of his hair.

So, he told Mike, "10,100 dollars."

Sasha burst into laughter at that. "Get the hell out of here if you can't afford to buy anything. Stop acting like you're some big shot!"

Mike felt resigned. After some thought, he said, "Kiddo, you can't scare your competitors off with that sort of counteroffer. You need to offer an amount that shows you're serious about it."

He actually wanted to tell Felix off for only increasing the price by a hundred dollars. What if Sasha did the same? He would earn a lot less that way.

Sasha was about to say something when Ivan returned from the restroom. She turned to him and said, "I was in such a good mood, but this pest has ruined it by harassing me. I can't believe he stalked me all the way here! He's so vile, isn't he, Ivan?"

Ivan followed Sasha's line of sight and sucked in a breath. In that instant, he wanted nothing more than to strangle her.

His plan had been to endure her after being tricked to the antiques market by his friend- he figured it would be his last time seeing Sasha, anyway. Who would've expected him to run into Felix?

Sasha crossed her arms and got ready to watch the show when she saw Ivan approach Felix. After all, Ivan had told Hugo yesterday that he would teach Felix a lesson. How could she miss out on that?

"I'm sorry, Felix. I-I was tricked into coming here. I'll leave now, okay?" Ivan said.

Felix waved a hand without saying anything. Feeling relieved, Ivan turned and ran off without any hesitation.

Meanwhile, Sasha was dumbfounded. What the hell had just happened? Why had Ivan been so polite to Felix? Had she misheard the whole thing, or had the world just gone crazy? And why had Ivan fled like he was terrified of Felix?

When she snapped to her senses, she forgot all about fighting Felix for the porcelain teapot. She ran after Ivan, swearing to get to the bottom of this.

Then, Felix turned to Mike, who had an odd look on his phone. He said, "A promise is a promise. I offered to pay you 10,100 dollars, and I'll do just that."

Mike was a little frustrated, but he supposed he was still lucky enough to earn an extra 5,000 dollars.

Felix paid and took the porcelain teapot. Then, another voice rang out, "This porcelain teapot looks quite nice. I'm interested in it."

Mike wanted to rip his hair out in frustration. If the guy had come just a minute earlier, there could've been another price war! It was too bad that he'd already accepted Felix's money and handed the porcelain teapot over. There was nothing else he could do. Felix frowned at the man who'd suddenly appeared. "I'm not selling it. Could you step out of my way, please?"

The man looked ordinary, but the contemptuous look on his face made it seem like none of the people present

were worthy of being in his presence.

Just then, a man with long hair shot out from behind the ordinary man. "Do you still remember me, brat?"

Felix vaguely remembered his name was Hank-Ivan had been looking for him. "What does it matter whether or not I remember you?"

Hank narrowed his eyes. "Looks like you've still got balls, Brat. Did you really think you could get away scot-free after beating me up?"

The ordinary man turned away. As he did so, he said, "Come with me, or you'll become the laughingstock of this market."

Felix followed him without hesitation. Since he'd run into trouble, he had to deal with it immediately. It would only come back to bite him in the ass in the future if he didn't nip it in the bud. Chapter 28

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Meanwhile, Sasha ran after Ivan as quickly as she could, finally managing to stop him in the parking lot. "What did you mean by that, Ivan? Why were you so polite to Felix?"

Ivan looked at her, his face devoid of emotion. "It's none of your fucking business!"

Sasha's jaw dropped. Ivan had always been gentle and tender to her. How dare he speak to her like that! "You have to give me an explanation for this!"

Before today, Ivan would've just slapped Sasha and left. Who did she think she was, acting so obnoxiously before him? But now that he knew about the relationship between Felix and Warren... Sasha was annoying, but if he really were to do anything to her, would Felix come after him?

Left with no choice, he said, "Felix is trained in martial arts and is good in a fight. I've lost the nerve to pick on him now. Are you happy with that?"

He got into his car and left, seeing that Sasha was no longer stopping him.

After a while, Sasha returned to her senses, and her expression became ugly.

"Humph! So Felix is nothing but a brute who only knows how to use his fists. And here I thought he had some secret tricks up his sleeve.

"Ivan's nothing but a coward, too. To hell with him being the son of an affluent family! If I were in his shoes, I'd have plenty of tricks to take Felix out. Ugh, what a loser!" she muttered.

The ordinary-looking man led Felix to a courtyard within the antiques market and sat down. "Felix Zeller, right? Listen up, brat. I'm Ted Glover, and Hank is one of my men. You beat him up, which means you've disrespected

1. me.

"Now, Hank is going to return the favor. If you dare fight back, I guarantee you'll meet a horrible end." Ted picked up a cup of coffee from the table, acting like no one would dare defy him.

Hank immediately charged at Felix, wanting to attack the latter. However, he ended up being sent flying with just a kick.

"Who do you think you are? What makes you think I'll listen to you just because you say I can't fight back?" Felix asked.

Ted frowned. He didn't look too pissed. Instead, he put down his coffee and waved a hand. "Send him to hell."

A middle-aged man burst out of the room behind them, moving so quickly that he brought with him a gust of wind. He was evidently a martial arts master. Hank was nothing compared to him. Unfortunately for him, he was also sent flying with a single kick from Felix. The middle-aged man flew back even quicker than he'd come. Then, he didn't move anymore.

This time, Ted's expression shifted. There still wasn't any fear in his gaze, though. "How interesting. It looks like I've underestimated you. It seems you're a strong martial artist, not just a martial arts practitioner.

"How about you work for me from now on? I'll pay you a hundred thousand dollars a month, Do you have any problem with that?"

Felix shook his head and approached Ted. "Live by the sword, die by the sword. There aren't any grudges between us, yet you had your men attack me with the intention to kill. Does that mean you're ready to pay the price for

that?"

The middle-aged man he'd sent flying hadn't held back when attacking him-it was evident the latter had aimed to kill. If that were the case, how could Felix just sweep this under the rug?

"What? Do you think I'd be scared of you? Are you going to hurt me?" Even at this juncture, when there was no one else in the courtyard to protect Ted, he still sat there, looking calm and composed. He didn't seem to be worried that Felix would dare touch a hair on his head.

"Well, doctors are kind souls, after all. I'll just break one of your arms and give you the chance to start a new leaf," Felix said.

Ted parted his lips to say something, but all that came out was a pained howl. He never would've expected that not only would Felix dare to hurt him, but he would even go so far as to break his arm.

Hank, who'd just managed to stagger to his feet, gulped. Fear filled his eyes. He couldn't help thinking that they were all doomed.

Ted was the son of Perry Glover, the chairman of the Goldwind Chamber of Commerce. Now that Ted's arm had been broken, Avesburgh would descend into chaos!

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It was noon. Xena and Jordan were having lunch in a private room at one of Avesburgh's restaurants.

"I'm sorry, Xena. My mentor is focusing on researching new medical techniques, and it's been years since he's treated anyone. If not for that, I would've asked him to check on your grandfather," Jordan said.

Xena nodded. "I appreciate the sentiment, Dr. Fielding has already verified that Grandpa's been poisoned with the Phantom Poison. I don't mean anything else by inviting you for lunch. Anyway, I doubt your mentor would be able to do anything even if he were around." Phantom Poison? As one of the best traditional medicine practitioners of the younger generation, Jordan had definitely heard of it before.

"Phantom Poison? Xena, you might have to prepare yourself. Only the miracle doctor has ever managed to cure it, and that was for someone who'd been poisoned for a few days. Mr. Summers Senior has already been suffering from it for a whole year." He couldn't bring himself to say anything else after that.

However, Xena wasn't a simple woman. She wouldn't be so easily defeated. "I have faith that there will be a miracle."

After some hesitation, Jordan said, "It's too far-fetched to place your hopes in the miracle doctor-the chances of finding him are too low. It's also hard to get your hands on the Miracle Card. I do think that you can try your luck with something else, though." Xena indicated for him to continue.

- "My mentor told me that the miracle doctor's apprentice has returned to civilization not too long ago, and it seems this apprentice of his has learned everything he has to teach.

"In fact, he might have already surpassed the miracle doctor. If you can find him, I'm sure Mr. Summers Senior will be saved."

Xena sighed. "I doubt it's as easy as you make it sound."

"Well, yeah. Even my mentor has only just seen him. He has no idea what the guy's name is or how to reach him. Still, tracking him down will be much easier than finding the miracle doctor," Jordan said.

Xena sipped her water and asked him to keep an eye out for her. She didn't hold out much hope, though. The miracle doctor had been within her grasp, but she'd missed the opportunity to find him because of the Menacing

Four.

Felix had texted her and told her he no longer had the Miracle Card. That meant she'd lost her chance.

Just then, Belle entered the room. When Xena saw how conflicted the former looked, she waved a hand. "Speak freely. Joe isn't an outsider."

Jordan felt pleased to hear that. It had been two years since they'd last seen each other, but it was evident Xena still had some feelings for him. As long as he put his heart into pursuing her, it probably wouldn't take long for them to make things official. "Mr. Glover's son, Ted, had his arm broken by someone. Dr. Fielding has already checked on him but can't mend the break. He said whoever did it didn't hold back-Ted will be disabled from now on," Belle said.

She knew Perry was Xena's uncle but couldn't just say it aloud. Ted was considered Xena's cousin, so Belle would have to inform Xena of this, no matter what.

"Got it. Don't bother about them." Xena figured that since Perry hadn't told her about it, that meant he could handle it himself. Besides, Ted was indeed obnoxious. Learning his lesson by losing his arm wasn't actually a bad thing.

At the same time, he would realize there would always be people more powerful than him out in the world. It would be too late if he were to only realize that after losing his life.

Around 3:00 pm, Felix and Wendy arrived at a place in Avesburgh.

"Mr. Zeller, the man I'm about to introduce you to, Thomas Camden, is renowned in Avesburgh for knowing everything about antiques. He's also very wealthy.

"If even he can't determine the authenticity of your antique and restore it to its former glory, we'll probably have to head to a bigger city," Wendy said.

"Okay." Felix had come to see Thomas because of the porcelain teapot. It didn't look like it was in good condition, which explained why Mike had failed to sell it after such a long time.

Of course, Felix wasn't doing this because he was afraid of being humiliated. He just felt that gifting such a shabby teapot to Warren was a sign of disrespect.

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Felix was sure the energy in the teapot wouldn't lead him astray. If that were the case, perhaps the porcelain teapot had a hidden side.

A middle-aged man in a suit approached. He looked spirited. "I'm honored and pleasantly surprised by your presence, Ms. Kinsley."

Wendy said helplessly, "Oh, don't tease me, Mr. Camden. We're short on time, so we'll get straight to the point."

Felix pulled out the porcelain teapot and said, "I don't think this porcelain teapot is as it seems. I'd like to ask you to take a look at it and see whether you can restore it, Mr. Camden."

Thomas took the porcelain teapot and started appraising it. Over ten minutes later, his eyes lit up. "You've got a good eye, young man. You've got a treasure here!

"There's a layer of special material enveloping the teapot-only the teapot makers of the era knew how to create this. Ordinary people have no idea this even exists. Even I only learned about it after a recent gathering with a few old friends.

"Once this layer is removed, the real antique underneath it will be revealed."

Felix smiled, pleased that he'd guessed correctly. "Does that mean you can do it, Mr. Camden?"

"Of course! We have to keep up with the times, don't we? I recently purchased a batch of removal liquid that's specifically meant to remove this special material without damaging the antique. I only have a small bottle of the liquid, and that cost me over a million dollars," Thomas said.

He wasn't telling Felix the price to make him pay-Wendy was the one who'd approached him for help, after all He only wanted Felix to believe that no amount of smooth talking would ever beat money. "Thanks for your help, Mr. Camden."

The three went to a secret room. Perhaps it was because Wendy was present-Thomas put on gloves and personally attended to the teapot's restoration. It was clear to see that his actions were careful and cautious.

The teapot was soaked in the removal liquid, which was a purplish color, for about ten minutes before Thomas lifted it. Its appearance hadn't changed, but its colors and details were more apparent.

"You know about antiques, Mr. Zeller?" Wendy was surprised by the teapot's change. She'd never come into contact with antiques, but she'd heard of the things that went on in the industry. Ordinary people would only be tricked when buying antiques unless they were lucky.

"Let me take a look at this porcelain teapot and see what's so special about it. Why would the maker use such a rare material to conceal its true appearance?" Thomas asked.

Felix didn't mind. He wanted to know the value of the porcelain teapot, anyway. It was just out of curiosity, though.

This time, it took about half an hour. From the look on Thomas' face, it was clear there was something special about the teapot.

He put it down so slowly that Wendy couldn't stand it. It was almost as if he were holding a priceless treasure and was deathly afraid of anything happening to him. He was cautious with it to an extreme.

"I won't lie to you, young man. I already know what this object is," he said.

"Please, be frank with me," Felix said.

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Thomas looked at the teapot like he was reluctant to part with it. He said, "This porcelain teapot is the masterpiece of Henry Davies, a renowned teapot maker from the Clearwater era. It's called the Mystic Drake Teapot. "This has truly caught me off guard. Everyone knows Henry created the Mystic Drake Teapot, but no one knows there's another one. The

two are supposed to be a pair-the last one was auctioned for 20 million dollars." 20 million dollars?

Wendy clapped a hand over her mouth. The money wasn't that big a deal to her, but it was so far-fetched to say a teapot cost that much, especially since Felix had bought it from the antiques market for a mere 10,100 dollars. Thomas turned to Felix, suddenly agitated. "Please sell this to me, young man! With Ms. Kinsley here, I guarantee I won't make you lose out. I'll pay you 25 million dollars for this!"