

"Yes. She's been my first choice from the very beginning. And after speaking with her just now, I'm even more certain."

Philip sighed softly.

"But YodaVision is already an excellent platform that allows her to fully realize her potential. And although Mr. Newman hasn't officially taken her on as his student, it's clear from the awards ceremony that he holds her in very high regard.

"With a platform and resources like those, she'll have everything she needs to continue growing. She won't come to me."

Before Thomas could respond, Philip continued, "When I look at her, she reminds me of your senior, Levi Golding. If only I'd discovered her two years earlier..."

Levi was one of the co-founders of the world's most valuable AI company.

"Professor, I think you still have a chance."

Thomas continued to analyze. "Mr. Newman's position limits how much direct support he can offer. But the international platform and network you can provide aren't something Mr. Yoder can match.

"And to be fair, there's still a noticeable gap between the domestic and international AI landscape."

Besides Levi, several of Philip's students had gone on to become internationally renowned leaders at the forefront of the field over the past decade.

Compared with YodaVision, they could offer Celeste a much broader stage.

Philip clearly wasn't ready to give up. "I'll find another opportunity later tonight to speak with her alone."

"...What about Ms. Locket?"

"There's no problem letting her join the team to learn, but..."

Thomas immediately understood the implication. "Mr. Fleming is hoping you'll mentor her personally."

There was a world of difference between personally taking someone on as a protege and simply allowing them to study within the research team. The resources, guidance, and connections they would gain were on entirely different levels.

Philip sighed. "That brat really knows how to put me in a difficult position. For his sake, taking on one more ordinary student wouldn't normally be a big deal.

"But compared to Levi or Celeste, his girlfriend is simply too average. And I haven't seen any meaningful

growth even though she earned her

PhD over two years ago."

Thomas understood exactly what he meant.

Wynn's academic credentials were certainly respectable. But among the researchers working on the

institute's top-tier projects, nearmeto

everyone had graduated from the world's most prestigious

universities.

By comparison, even Celeste's background wasn't especially outstanding there.

Under those standards, Wynn simply wasn't competitive enough to become one of Philip's students that he mentored personally.

Even if she joined the institute, she wouldn't even be placed directly into one of its elite research teams under normal circumstances.

Philip was heading upstairs to change clothes.

So, after finishing the conversation, he and Thomas entered the elevator together, completely unaware that someone had been standing behind a nearby pillar.

Quentin watched silently as the elevator doors slid shut before finally stepping out from behind the column.

He returned to the banquet hall a moment later.

Jorge noticed the grim expression on his face when he rejoined the crowd.
"Feeling unwell? Do you want to head back and rest?"

Quentin shook his head lightly.

His gaze drifted toward Celeste, who remained surrounded by people at the center of the room. "I'm fine."

Following his line of sight, Jorge

also spotted Celeste. His feelings

were much the same as Quentin

He pressed his lips together before quickly looking away.

Quentin also withdrew his gaze and scanned the crowd.

Before long, he found Wynn.

He had noticed earlier when Trevor, Wynn, and Philip left the hall to speak in

private. At that time, he didn't know what they were discussing.

Now, he did.