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JACK DANN HOMESITE

Da Vinci

Jack Da

One

Dressed as if he were on fire—in a doublet of heliotrope and crimson over a blood-red

Verrochio had invited a robust and august company of men to what had become one of the most important salons in the city. Leonardo stood near the walls, discreetly listening and interjecting a word here and there. Normally, Master Andrea cajoled the guests, but tonight he had closed the shop. The aged Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli, who had taught Leonardo mathematics and geometry, stood behind him like a shadow. Leonardo

San Lorenzo. A boy with dark intense eyes and a tight accusing mouth stood behind him like a shadow. Leonardo

I want you to meet a young man with whom you have much in common," Toscanelli said. "His father is also a notary, like my father, a poet and playwright and rhetorician. He is interested in everything, and he seems unable to

"I am perfectly capable of talking,

"What's your name?"

"Ach, forgive me my lack of manners," Toscanelli said. "Master Leonardo, this is Niccolo Machiavelli, son of Bernardo Machiavelli."

Leonardo bowed and said with a touch of sarcasm,

"I would like you to help this young man."

"But I—

"You are too much of a lone wolf, Leonardo. You must learn to give generously of your talents. Teach him to see as you see, the nature of light. Show him your flying machine and your studies."

"But he's only

Niccolo Machiavelli stood before Leonardo, staring at him expectantly, as if concerned. He was a handsome boy, tall and thin, in a strange place. Merely curious.

"What are you called," Leonardo asked.

"Niccolo," the boy replied.

"And you have no other name?"

"I am called Niccolo Machiavelli."

"Well, I shall call you Nicco, young man."

After a pause, he said, "No, Maestro," but the boy insisted.

"So your new name pleases you?"

"I find it amusing that you feel it necessary to make me a name."

Leonardo laughed. "And you are not a name?"

"I am almost a name."

"But you are really four names."

"And you are still but an apprentice to Master Andrea, yet you are truly a master, or so Master Toscanelli has told me. He treated me as an apprentice such as the one there who is in charge of the shop."

Leonardo laughed again, taking a liking to this intelligent boy who acted as if he were on fire.

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