



**2 INT. DOJO - DAY**

**2**

A warm and sunny Southern California day provides the backdrop for a regular training day at the dojo. As the camera slowly pushes into the training floor we see two students preparing for what looks to be a sparring match.

Dillon, age 28, and Rebecca, age 28, are Truong's original students. They've seen the best and worst of the dojo but have been loyal to Truong from day 1. Today they're sparring aggressively to prepare for their first tournament, that is if Truong approves of it first.

**2A INT. DOJO FLOOR - DAY**

**2A**

REBECCA

So, are you gonna ask him?

DILLON

Uhh, I don't know if its the best time to ask him...

REBECCA

Dillon, we only have a month left. You need to ask him.

DILLON

Well, how come I have to ask him?!

REBECCA

*gives a cold stare to Dillon*

**3 INT. BATHROOM - DAY**

**3**

We then cut to a medium dolly shot of a dark haired man standing over a bathroom sink. Truong, age 40, is seen rubbing his hands with various medicine bottles around the sink. He's been having unexplainable heart palpitations which have also given him extreme hand tremors at random. He was diagnosed just a week ago but his physician informed him if he doesn't start treatment within the year there's a good chance that he would absolutely need a heart transplant.

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He contemplates how to tell Liz as he knows he can't keep secrets from her. She has a sixth sense of intuition and can tell when Truong is hiding something from her.

How can a man be a man without letting his pride get in the way? How much of an emotional and mental strain can Truong take to be a good mentor to his students and a caring husband to Liz while battling his own demons? Sometimes he wonders if he should have stayed with the Shura gang, to let the demon grow with a purpose even if that purpose meant destroying the lives of others. Did he make the wrong choice? No...his love for Liz is true and she's helped him grow as a man. That type of love he's never experienced. She's supported him through the hardest phases of his life and continues to. A sense of guilt comes over him which creates a deep suffering within his soul...is his past returning to haunt him?

A moment passes, his heart starts beating faster and faster. He tries to control his breathing as best as he can, holding his chest tight with his hand but as fate has a cruel way of toying with our lives, Truong's hand starts to shake and tremor violently. He reaches for his medication out of desperation, shoves two pills in his mouth and chugs a glass of water. As he leans over the sink emotionally and mentally strained, his heart rate starts to slow down, his breathing starts to normalize. As sweat drips down from his forehead he knows that he can't keep this up for much longer. Something has to change.

**2B-1 INT. DOJO FLOOR - DAY**

**2B-1**

We switch scenes and the camera closes in on the black top floor of the dojo, Dillon and Rebecca kneel down with their backs to each other placing blindfolds over their eyes. The camera starts to push in on an alarm clock with cut aways back to Dillon and Rebecca until the alarm goes "ding!". Both Dillon and Rebecca remove their blindfolds to reveal a weapon in front of them to start the sparring match. Dillon see's a Machete and a smile comes across his face, Rebecca on the other hand finds a broom stick lying in front of her. Her initial reaction is of excitement until she realizes it's actually a broom stick...

**2B-2 INT. DOJO FLOOR - DAY**

**2B-2**

As the sparring session gets heated Dillon overpowers Rebecca with an overhead swing forcing Rebecca to block it with what's left of her broom stick.

DILLON

Had enough?

REBECCA

You haven't won...

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Fight, fight fight...

**2C INT. DOJO FLOOR - DAY**

**2C**

Dillon lies on the floor after a devastating kick to the stomach, motionless, silent...

REBECCA

Dillon? Hey, you okay?

Rebecca walks to Dillon to see if he's hurt. As she bends down next to him she reaches her arm out, then Dillon strikes by tossing her to the ground, Rebecca quickly reacts to get back to standing.

DILLON

Rule #1 Becca, "Always keep your opponent guessing!"

REBECCA

Oh shut up!

**4 INT. BARRIER - DAY**

**4**

Truong exits the bathroom with his Gi Top half tied and belt around his neck. As he closes the door behind him we hear the scuffle of Dillon and Rebecca's sparring action. Truong looks curious and walks out of frame towards the action.

**2D INT. DOJO FLOOR - DAY**

**2D**

Back to our two daring students, a short exchange between the two ends up with Dillon placing Rebecca in a standing RNC. Rebecca does her best to struggle against Dillon's lock but Dillon manages to sweep her feet from underneath her. He has his knees against her back and knows this is an inescapable submission. Dillon keeps the pressure on his choke but reminds himself of the self-control and discipline Truong has taught him.

REBECCA

You cheated! Where's the honor in that?!

DILLON

You let your guard down, there's a difference.

REBECCA

Sensei are you seeing this?

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TRUONG

Hmmm...Yep

REBECCA

Ughhhhh!

TRUONG

You better say it before you take  
a fast nap.

REBECCA

No!

DILLON

Say it so we can get lunch  
already!

Dillon begins to apply more and more pressure to his choke

REBECCA

Ahhh...Matte!

DILLON

Yes! Haha!

**5 INT. FRONT DESK - DAY**

**5**

With excitement Dillon runs to the front of the dojo where Liz, Age 34 and Truong's wife, works diligently on some paper work and bills for the school.

DILLON

Liz did you see that! She thought  
she had me!

LIZ

I saw Dillon. Good job.

DILLON

When she said, "are you okay?",  
then I swept her leg and got her  
in that rear naked choke it was  
like poetry in motion.

As Dillon continues to praise himself, Liz is focused on some recent bills past due. She's worried about the school but more importantly her and Truong's future.

Liz looks over to Truong who is by Rebecca's side consoling her after her loss. The sound of Dillon's chatter grows louder and Liz knows the only way to stop him is...

Cut to a single of Dillon and a muffin being shoved in his mouth.

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Cut to a wide of Liz and Dillon looking at each other. Dillon takes a bite of the muffin. Liz smiles and looks down at the pile of bills.

6

INT. DOJO FLOOR - DAY

6

REBECCA

Ow! It hurts.

Truong sits next to Rebecca tending to her sore neck, applying ointment with a dry cloth.

REBECCA

Sensei you taught us to fight with honor. How is pretending to be hurt honorable?

TRUONG

Do you know how Dillon beat you?

REBECCA

He cheated.

TRUONG

He knew your weakness. You're too nice.

REBECCA

That's not a weakness it's a strength.

TRUONG

In a fight, sometimes you have to be willing to do what's necessary to win. Part of that is knowing your strengths and weaknesses. Dillon knew if he pretended to be hurt you would let your guard down and you did.

REBECCA

I showed mercy, that has to count for something right?

TRUONG

Was it mercy, or were you afraid to finish the fight? Sometimes we're more afraid of winning than losing. Winning means you expect to win the next time, how long can you keep that up?

REBECCA

Not forever. Everyone loses eventually.

TRUONG

Exactly. You can't keep winning forever. Instead, go into every fight as if it were your last. Make every move, every action count. Whether you win or lose it's the effort you put in that matters. Understand?

REBECCA

Yes Sensei...

TRUONG

Good. Now, this part is actually going to hurt.

REBECCA

What? *Crack*

TRUONG

Yoshi...Okay let's line it up.

7

INT. DOJO FLOOR - DAY

7

Dillon and Rebecca stand next to each other with Truong in front of them preparing to end class. Truong's hand starts to shake slightly, he starts rubbing it with his other hand and glances over at Liz whose holding up a flyer for the city fair, almost as a reminder for Truong to not forget again.

TRUONG

Good class you two. Remember next week we have a demo at the city fair, I need you two to bring your best.

*Rebecca nudges Dillon with her elbow*

DILLON

Uhh Sensei, Becca and I were thinking of some other ways to bring in students. There's a tournament next month we'd like to enter.

REBECCA

We would be representing the dojo!  
(MORE)

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REBECCA (CONT'D)

I feel people have forgotten about the school and it would be great to...

TRUONG

To what? Show how better you are at fighting someone in a ring, with rules? What if Dillon wasn't your friend, do you think he would have showed mercy to you?

TRUONG

I'm not saying it's a bad idea, tournaments can be useful but you two aren't ready.

DILLON

Sensei you've taught us so much, how are we to know if any of it actually works? I mean...of course it would work but how can we grow as martial artists if we don't have anything to measure our growth with?

TRUONG

*a beat* I'll think about the tournament.

Dillon and Rebecca both nod with enthusiasm hoping that Truong supports them with their decision to enter the tournament.

CUT TO:

**8A INT. DOJO WALKWAY - DAY**

**8A**

As the class bows out to end the day, Truong takes off his belt and turns to the standing shelf for some tea. He see's an old picture - he and Liz holding up a trophy, a memory almost forgotten.

Truong takes the picture in one hand, tea in the other and walks towards the table nearby. Liz (Lizzy) gathers up a few folders and makes her way to the back office and see's Truong alone. She senses he's in deep thought and walks towards him.

LIZ

I remember that day. There were so many people in the stands, cheering on their fighters. A lot of great competition and great memories, especially for a certain "champion".

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TRUONG

Yeah, we did well. So many people came the following week to sign up for classes. I've never seen the dojo so full in my life.

TRUONG

Liz I...there's something I need to tell you. What if...I had to leave.

LIZ

Then I'd go with you.

A moment between Liz and Truong as if time had stopped. Liz looks at Truong and clearly sees he's not telling her the whole truth. Truong desperately wants to tell her but doesn't know the right words to express himself.

LIZ

What are you not telling me?

TRUONG

I mean, what if I had to go somewhere for a long time. But just me. To not be a burden on you.

LIZ

What are you talking about? Why would you be a burden? And why would you need to leave? You're not, thinking of going back there are you?

TRUONG

Back to Shura? No no...I mean, I've thought about it but it was just a thought.

LIZ

Truong WE left together. There wasn't a future for either of us there. Sooner or later if you stayed you know you would have...it would be hard to tell if any of us would be alive. You know how it is there. The rot, the chaos, the pain. That's all there is for anyone outside of Shura.

TRUONG

I'm not talking about Shura! I'm talking about me!

(MORE)



TRUONG (CONT'D)

God I wish you would just listen  
to what I'm saying.

LIZ

What ARE you saying? Tell me, I'm  
listening.

Truong takes a moment to analyze the situation. Does he tell Liz truthfully what's happening inside him? Perhaps his ego and pride are preventing him from doing the right thing for himself and for Liz.

LIZ

Yeah, just what I thought. You  
can't even say it. Be a fucking  
man Truong! Be a FUCKING MAN!

8B

INT. TABLE - DAY

8B

Liz raises her arm towards Truong out of frustration. Truong grabs Liz's hand and twists it which forces her off her chair, he raises his other hand up rolled into a fist as if someone else was controlling his actions. A darker side of Truong he thought he removed from his life with the help of Liz. Perhaps what we think we've moved on from was only swept under the rug. The dirt and grime clinging to the floor, never fully cleaned just removed from our sight. In this moment he looks at Liz with rage, fist in the air ready to...no, how could he? The one person in his life he would never betray or harm.

LIZ

Do it, I see it in your eyes. Do  
it...yeah, you're no better than  
the rest of them. So either do it,  
or let me go.

Truong loosens his grip on Liz. His heart starting to beat faster and faster, his breath following the cadence of his heart.

8C

INT. WINDOW AND TABLE

8C

Liz stands up and walks over to the window. A moment...Truong holds onto his chest feeling a deep pain in his heart but this time he knows why his heart hurts. The pain and anguish of hurting Liz and losing a bit of his manhood in the process.

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TRUONG

I just need you to trust me.

LIZ

How can I trust you if you won't tell me the truth?

TRUONG

The truth...the truth is...there's still demons deep inside me I've never faced. I thought the fighting, the destruction, the pain was behind me. But there's a fight I haven't been able to finish and it's creating so much suffering for me right now. I'm trying to understand it more. I don't have the right words to explain it, so I'm asking you to please trust me with this.

LIZ

Trust goes both ways Truong. You're asking me to trust you, then trust me as well. Trust that I'll be here for you, no matter what as I always have.

TRUONG

*a beat* Life is at its darkest when we live in the shadow for too long. You've been there for me when all I knew was how to live in the dark...and you're still here. *a beat* it's time...it's time for me to face my past, all of it.

LIZ

And we'll do that, together...

As the camera starts to dolly out on a two shot of Liz and Truong, we see Truong embracing the love he feels from Liz. We can see a moment of true compassion and dedication between the two as Truong begins to open up to Liz. Can Truong finally put the past behind him and be in a place in his life where he can fight his demons together with Liz?

CUT TO:



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