

The Swordsmen

INT. WOODS - DAY

Snow covers the ground and pine trees. The area is desolate and cold.

Silence.

The silence is broken by the faint sound of footsteps on the snow.

A FIGURE enters the clearing. He is TUPHLOS (70).

Tuphlos slowly walks towards the middle of the clearing.

He wears a white robe with red trim. His long white hair reaches his shoulders and he wears a long white blindfold around his eyes.

He kneels in the middle of the clearing and begins to pray.

FILIUS (25), a much younger man who wears the same clothes emerges from the other side of the clearing.

It begins to snow lightly. The snow covers the tracks of Tuphlos's footsteps.

FILIUS

I would suggest making a fire.

TUPHLOS

No fire. You must learn to embrace the cold. Your enemies will be bigger, stronger and wiser. You must use your surroundings to your advantage.

Filius grabs a SAMURAI SWORD that is slung around his shoulder.

The sound of the clean blade that exits the holster brings a smile to Tuphlos's face.

Filius sees that there is no weapon attached to Tuphlos and he charges at him.

As Filius draws near he extends his sword towards Tuphlos.

Tuphlos, without hesitation, flips backwards over Filius and kicks him in the back.

Tuphlos lands on his feet, while Filius falls face first into a small mound of snow.

His sword falls to the ground beside him.

TUPHLOS

Your eagerness is your weakness.

Filius emerges from the snow, with sword in hand. His face is red from the cold and his anger is apparent.

He lets out a warrior cry as he takes the sword and tries to attack Tuphlos.

With each attack, Tuphlos manages to evade quickly.

The strikes get faster, until Tuphlos kicks the sword out of Filius's hand and strikes his windpipe with his elbow.

Filius falls to the ground and grabs his neck in pain. He gasps for air.

Tuphlos walks around him.

TUPHLOS

You make bad judgement calls when you let anger get in the way. You attacked me based on emotions. Leave your emotions at the door.

Filius slowly begins to stand. He still holds his neck in pain. He breathes at a more regular pace now.

Tuphlos continues to walk around him.

TUPHLOS

You've made great strides in getting here. Don't lose sight of why we are here.

Tuphlos walks a few feet away from Filius and has his back towards him.

TUPHLOS

Again.

Filius walks towards his sword and picks it up. He holds it close to his body and enters a combative stance.

He slowly moves towards Tuphlos before he makes a full on charge.

Tuphlos moves his left foot over and kicks up a sword buried in the snow.

He quickly turns around and defends himself against Filius's attack.

The two fight each other with their swords.

Tuphlos moves backwards while he defends himself. The speed of their attacks on one another is beyond their control.

Instinct takes over and they don't even think about their next attack or defense move, it just happens.

The snow is more heavy now and fills the air. It's hard to see.

Filius adds kicks to his attacks, which are immediately blocked by Tuphlos.

The sounds of their swords which clang off one another fills the air.

The edges of the swords grind against each other. Both Filius and Tuphlos try to put pressure on the other.

This is now a strength contest.

TUPHLOS

Mind your surroundings.

Filius looks down. Tuphlos takes this advantage and moves back, away from the stance of Filius.

The absence of the opposed force lets Filius fall to the ground.

Filius turns around to get back up, but Tuphlos has his sword pointed to his throat.

TUPHLOS

Never check your surroundings while in combat. Know them before you enter.

Tuphlos removes his sword and helps Filius up.

They both holster their swords.

TUPHLOS

Find us food. I will start that fire now.

Filius nods his head and runs off into the woods.

Tuphlos stops him.

TUPHLOS  
Leave your sword.

Filius stops and turns to Tuphlos.

FILIUS  
But how will I kill the food?

TUPHLOS  
That's your problem to figure out.

Filius rolls his eyes in disagreement, but swings his sword into the nearby tree.

It's stuck there, until someone removes it.

Filius runs off into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Tuphlos has a fire, he sits near it, legs crossed and waits for Filius to return with food.

He hears a twig break from a few feet away. He clinches his sword.

TUPHLOS  
Come for another fight?

NEMICO (40), a muscular bald man, covered in numerous tattoos stands in the clearing behind Tuphlos.

NEMICO  
What else?

Tuphlos stands, as he grips the sword.

TUPHLOS  
My wife?

NEMICO  
Dead.

Tuphlos turns to Nemico.

TUPHLOS  
My village?

NEMICO  
Scorched.

Nemico responds each time with a hint of a smile on his face.

TUPHLOS

When I kill you, you won't feel pain.

Nemico laughs.

NEMICO

And why is that dear friend?

TUPHLOS

Because for the next ten years of your life, I will drain it all out.

Nemico walks closer.

NEMICO

Do you know how long I've been wanting to kill you.

TUPHLOS

Yes.

NEMICO

Today is the day.

TUPHLOS

Then what are we waiting for?

Nemico charges at Tuphlos with a sword in his hand. His speed is a surprise for such a large man.

He strikes Tuphlos, who is easily able to block the attack.

The two fight aggressive and long. Each get a few stabs at the other.

Nemico is more ruthless and flawed. Tuphlos is more elegant and light on his feet.

The two continue to fight through the trees. Tuphlos gets the upper hand and manages to take Nemico down.

Tuphlos holds the sword to Nemico's throat.

The tip of the blade touches his throat, which pierces the skin and begins to bleed.

NEMICO

Do it. Take my life.

TUPHLOS

No. I told you that you will suffer. I will not grant you the privilege of death so early.

Tuphlos eases up on the sword. Nemico takes advantage of this and is able to break free.

Tuphlos falls backwards a bit and hits a tree.

He still stands on his feet.

Nemico charges at Tuphlos, who holds his blade up in the air to block the attack.

Nemico's blade pierces the stomach of Tuphlos, who cries in agony and pain.

Tuphlos's sword was positioned to block the sword that Filius had left in the tree that stands between them.

Blood drips out of his mouth. Nemico smiles.

NEMICO

Bad judgement call.

Nemico twists the blade, which makes Tuphlos scream even louder.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Filius carries several dead rabbits in his hand.

He hears the yell of Tuphlos and drops the rabbits. He runs towards the screams.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The blood from Tuphlos's stomach drips down Nemico's sword.

NEMICO

Tell me friend. Should I clean this blade? Or let your blood stain it for eternity?

Nemico plunges the blade deeper, until his handle stops the blade from going any further.

FILIUS  
(SCREAMING)  
Tuphlos.

Nemico pulls the blade out of Tuphlos, who then falls to the ground. Nemico paces backwards into the clearing.

Filius runs towards Tuphlos. He holds him in his arms.

Tears drip from Filius's eyes.

Tuphlos reaches for his blindfold and takes it off.

His eyes are sewn shut.

His blood stained hands grip the blindfold

TUPHLOS  
Avenge your family, Filius.

Tuphlos hands Filius the blindfold as he turns to Nemico.

Tuphlos's arm falls to the ground, he's dead.

Nemico turns his attention to Filius.

NEMICO  
Oh you think you can defeat me?

Filius ignores Nemico's remarks and grabs both his and Tuphlos's sword. Nemico grips his.

NEMICO  
Looks like I get two birds -

He looks to his sword.

NEMICO  
-with one stone.

Nemico charges at Filius with his sword raised. Filius uses both of his swords to deflect the attack.

Despite Filius's advantage with an extra weapon, his inexperience is evident and Nemico takes advantage of this.

Nemico lands a few strikes on Filius.

Blood stains seep through his white robe.



NEMICO

Come on now, I thought Tuphlos taught you better than that.

Nemico attacks once more, his strikes get harder with each swing.

His strength outweighs whatever skill Filius has.

Nemico strikes hard enough to make Filius drop one of his swords. This gives Nemico the upper hand as he places the sword to Filius's chest.

Filius doesn't move.

NEMICO

Hmm, right through the heart? You don't mind do you?

Filius begins to breath heavy.

NEMICO

Or would you rather have me slice you through your stomach. Like father like son.

Filius looks over to the dead body of his father, Tuphlos.

He scrunches his face and grinds his teeth in anger.

NEMICO

Angry are we? You weren't here when he died. He begged for his life, like a pathetic dog. He whimpered as I slowly slid the blade deeper into his frail and weak body.

Filius closes his eyes.

NEMICO

Get angry boy, anger is good for the soul.

Nemico laughs.

Filius listens to the silent air. He hears his dead father's words.

TUPHLOS (V.O.)

You make bad judgement calls when you let anger get in the way.

(MORE)

TUPHLOS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You attacked me based on emotions. Leave  
your emotions at the door.

Filius opens his eyes. His face shows a calmness that was  
not present before. Emotionless.

Filius twirls his sword, which strikes Nemico's sword  
away from his chest.

Filius leg sweeps Nemico and flips back up onto his feet.  
He uses his foot to kick up the sword that lies on the  
ground.

Filius now attacks Nemico.

Nemico is taken by surprise and loses his stance.

Filius slices Nemico's hand off. His sword falls to the  
ground with his severed hand attached to it.

Nemico falls to the ground and grips his stump. It bleeds  
endlessly.

Filius holds the sword to Nemico's neck.

FILIUS

I could take your life right now.

Nemico looks up to Filius.

NEMICO

Go ahead. Get it over with.

Filius lets his sword down.

FILIUS

I'll let you die with honour. Something  
you didn't let my father do.

Filius looks towards the sword on the ground. The blood  
stained snow gets bigger.

Filius turns and walks away.

Nemico laughs hysterically.

NEMICO

You have no idea do you. You have no idea  
you bastard.

Nemico yells louder as Filius walks further away.

NEMICO

You have nothing to go home to.

Nemico laughs in between his words.

NEMICO

You're entire family is dead.  
Slaughtered. By my hand no less.

Filius stops.

NEMICO

Your mother. The whore, she was dry. I  
couldn't even get it up.

Filius tries his best to restrain his tears.

Nemico reaches behind him. There is a small dagger tucked  
into the back of his pants.

NEMICO

I made sure she didn't enjoy it.

Filius turns around and runs towards Nemico. His face is  
enraged, tears drop from his eyes.

As he runs, he holds the sword high above his head to  
strike down on Nemico.

Nemico pulls the dagger out from behind and throws it in  
Filius's direction.

The dagger soars through the air with tremendous speed  
and accuracy.

The dagger strikes Filius in the chest. The force and  
surprise takes Filius off his feet and he falls onto his  
back.

His sword falls to the ground beside him.

He coughs up blood, he's in agony.

Nemico stands up and walks towards Filius.

He leaves a blood trail from his missing hand. He kneels  
beside Filius.

He grabs the dagger with his one remaining hand and  
twists it.

Filius cries in pain. His screams echo throughout the  
woods.

Nemico pulls the dagger out from Filius's chest.

Blood pours from his open wound.

NEMICO

Looks like you can't control that anger  
of yours.

Nemico wipes the blade of the dagger clean on his pants.

He stands up and tucks the dagger back into the back of  
his pants.

Nemico walks away, he stops and picks up his sword and  
hand. His figure disappears in the night.

Filius looks to Tuphlos's body next to the trees.

FILIUS

I'm-

Filius coughs up some blood.

FILIUS

I'm sorry.

His head falls to the ground, his eyes go glossy and he  
no longer breathes.

The snow begins to cover his motionless body.

The fire has died down substantially from before.

The last flickers from the flame go out.

Silence.

FADE OUT.