

Loyalty to One

By Qasim Ansari

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9 Magnolia Close
Kingston Upon Thames
Surrey
KT2 7JF

qasim.anis.ansari@gmail.com

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

It is a beautiful day. The sun is shining brightly through the trees, the birds are singing, there isn't much wind in the air. There is a large lake surrounded by trees. The sunlight gives the water a lovely silver shine.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

A closer look at the water reveals a male duck swimming alone. He swims with great confidence and determination. This lake is very much his domain.

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

JUBEI KISARAGI (late 20s) is walking along a manmade footpath. He is wearing a straw hat and traditional white Japanese ninja robes. By his left side he is carrying a KITANA BLADE.

EXT. DENSE WOODLAND - DAY

Jubei veers off the main footpath and approaches the dense woodland. He quickly assesses the quickest way to get through the thick array of trees and then begins to enter.

EXT. INSIDE THE DENSE WOODLAND - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Jubei makes his way through the bushes and short trees. His clothes and hat rarely get caught on the branches indicating that he has done this before.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DENSE WOODLAND - DAY

Just past the dense woodland is a beautiful open grass patch. Jubei can be seen making his way towards it.

EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jubei has made his way to the open grass patch. He inspects the surrounding area and finds a nice spot to sit down. He sits down in cross-legged formation, putting his hat to one side but keeping his sword close. He closes his eyes.

EXT. LAKE - SAME TIME

There are now two ducks, one male and one female swimming closely together.

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EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - SAME TIME

Jubei is now in deep meditation. He lets the sounds of the surrounding woodland take over. In just a few moments everything becomes peaceful.

Beat.

Suddenly the silence is broken by a whisper in the nearby bushes. Jubei's eyes open, he grabs his sword and springs to his feet, turning in the direction of the sound.

EXT. NEARBY BUSHES - A MOMENT LATER

Jubei approaches the bushes, his moments resembling a wolf stalking its prey, his sword at the ready. Suddenly a FEMALE VOICE calls out his name from inside the bushes.

FEMALE VOICE

JUBEI

Jubei instantly eases up and a slight smile comes to his face. Emerging from the bushes is MAGUMI MINO (mid-20s). She is petit, has fair skin and a cute fringe. She is wearing black ninja robes. In her hands is a large bag. She also carries a KITANA SWORD by her left side.

MAGUMI

SURPRISE

Jubei doesn't appear delighted to see her.

JUBEI

Magumi, what are you doing here?

MAGUMI

I followed you silly. Thought you might be hungry. I made you some sushi.

Her innocent smile and kind gesture bring a smile to Jubei's face.

EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - A MINUTE LATER

Magumi leads the way back to where Jubei was meditating. She sits down and makes herself comfortable. She notices that Jubei is still standing.

MAGUMI

Sit down dummy.

Jubei reluctantly sits down next to her.

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EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jubei and Magumi are now eating sushi together. Jubei seems more relaxed but he is not as happy as Magumi whose face glows with happiness. She is almost like a child in front of him.

JUBEI

This is really good.

MAGUMI

Thank you. I think I am getting better.

Jubei smiles in acknowledgement.

EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jubei and Magumi have finished eating and are now lying on the grass. They lie beside each other; their hands close to touching, both of them looking up at the sky. Jubei looks towards Magumi.

JUBEI

It's good to see you.

Magumi continues to look up at the sky.

MAGUMI

Your actions don't seem to suggest you're that pleased to see me.

JUBEI

Come on Magumi. Try to understand the nature of our situation.

MAGUMI

I try not to.

For the first time, the happy glow on her face appears to diminish. Her eyes begin to have a slight watery glaze.

EXT. LAKE - SAME TIME

The two ducks are still swimming together side by side.

EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - SAME TIME

Jubei raises himself from the grass and sits up cross-legged. Magumi remains lying on the grass, still looking at the sky.

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JUBEI

I can't change what TAKASHI has decided. He is the clan chief.

MAGUMI

Declaring war doesn't make sense. Our clans have been allies for decades. Why would he make us enemies now?

JUBEI

Magumi, my clan, the code, they are like my family, my blood.

MAGUMI

What are you saying?

Jubei closes his eyes and looks away.

JUBEI

I must stay loyal to the clan and to the code.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The quiet calm of the forest is suddenly disturbed. Birds fly from the trees and the wind picks up.

EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - AT THE SAME TIME

Jubei unsheathes his sword. Magumi jumps to her feet and also takes out her sword. They face each other in silence.

Jubei launches forward attacking viciously. Magumi defends every strike with superb skill. Jubei's attacks intensify; he varies his strikes and speed. But Magumi matches him, parrying every strike.

She jumps back. Jubei pauses. Now it is Magumi's turn to attack. She springs forward towards Jubei with violent ferocity. Jubei defends but the sheer weight of Magumi's attacks force him onto back foot.

Soon Jubei begins to struggle to defend. A line of sweat drips down his face. Magumi is relentless in her attack. Her eyes are watery with tears. She increases the speed of her strikes. The two Kitana Blades begin to spark.

Suddenly Jubei is disarmed. His sword is flung to the

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ground a few feet away. He gasps with shock, completely defenceless. He tries to move away into some space.

Magumi edges closer to him, her sword ready to deal the killing blow. She pauses and then plants her sword into the ground. She looks down and starts to cry.

MAGUMI

I love you Jubei...

Jubei's eyes begin to flood with tears. He runs towards to Magumi and grabs hold of her in a passionate embrace. They kiss each other with fiery passion.

EXT. FOREST - SAME TIME

The forest has returned to its natural calm.

EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - SAME TIME

Jubei holds Magumi close to his chest. She is still crying.

MAGUMI

I will not kill the man I love for
the sake of a pathetic code.

Magumi frees herself from Jubei's embrace. She takes a few steps back towards her sword. She takes hold of the handle.

MAGUMI

My loyalty is to my heart Jubei, not
to my clan and their politics.

She takes her sword from the ground and puts it back into its sheath.

MAGUMI

You need to decide what is most
important to you.

Jubei is lost for words. Magumi turns and heads towards the dense woodland. She looks back at Jubei.

MAGUMI

Good bye Jubei.

She heads into the dense woodland. Jubei stands motionless.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

A male duck swims alone.

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EXT. OPEN GRASS PATCH - LATER

Jubei is meditating once again. Tears are streaming down his face.