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 beings 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 Tuphos.

With each attack, Tuphos manages to evade quickly.

The strikes get faster, until Tuphos 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.

Tuphos 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.

Tuphos continues to walk around him.

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

Tuphos 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 Tuphos before he makes a full on charge.

Tuphos 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 Tughlos.

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

Tughlos 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 Tughlos.

NEMICO
What else?

Tughlos stands, as he grips the sword.

TUPHLOS
My wife?

NEMICO
Dead.

Tughlos 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 feat 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 the cover his motionless body.

The fire has died down substantially from before.

The last flickers from the flame go out.

Silence.

    FADE OUT.