

SAMURAI TOM

Written by

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INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

The food court has a Japanese art exhibit posters featuring the artist SpiderPop littering it, TOM (45) overweight, in a campus security uniform, black shorts, thick belt, and a wooden katana sword, carries an overloaded tray of food.

DEBBIE (19), a student, pulls out a smartphone from an oversized bag and sets it to record and jots down notes. Tom looks down at Debbie sitting, smiles and bows.

TOM
(speaking bad Japanese)
Hajimemashite!

Debbie confusedly looks back at Tom.

TOM (CONT'D)
Is it ok if I have lunch?

DEBBIE
(questioningly)
Sure?

Tom struggles and attempts to sit. He unbuckles the katana and loudly plops it on the table.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Are you comfortable?

Tom smiles and bows at Debbie.

TOM
So, are you single?

Debbie frowns and pulls her notepad close to cover her chest.

DEBBIE
My professor insisted that I'd
interview you.

Tom nervously starts shoving food into his mouth.

TOM
(full mouth)
Dr. Ross? I had him for a class.

DEBBIE
I didn't know he taught that long.
When did you graduate?

TOM
I haven't.

DEBBIE

Oh? You are taking your MFA?

Tom messily slurps down noodles and shakes his head no.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

What did you do before college?

Tom chuckles and snorts.

TOM

High school, duh!

DEBBIE

Hold on, how long have you been in college?

Bits of rice and food dribbling off his fingers, Tom counts.

TOM

Twenty-seven years.

Debbie slams her pen onto the pad.

TOM (CONT'D)

Twenty-seven years and three months.

DEBBIE

Shut up! Why?

TOM

I've got my dream job.

DEBBIE

Being campus security?

TOM

I am more. I am a steward of the campus. I protect and serve with honor.

DEBBIE

You ride around on an electric scooter wearing uniform shorts and call the cops if you see something.

TOM

I serve as a protector and samurai to my campus.

Debbie stands up, shakes her head, and angrily tosses her belongings into her bag.

DEBBIE
Dr. Ross loves practical jokes.

EXT. CAMPUS COMMONS BUILDING - DAY

Debbie exits, cursing under her breath as Tom follows.

TOM
Hey, I thought you might want to go
out? Maybe, on a date?

DEBBIE
It's all a big joke, isn't it?

Debbie walks away. Tom picks up a cell phone from the ground and clamors with a electric scooter chained to a street sign.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Debbie, a block from the Campus Commons building, stops to look at a man spray painting graffiti on a wall across the street. She digs through her bag.

SPIDERPOP(22), dressed in black, rattles a spray-paint can in front of a 20 foot mural of a man kissing a goat. Tom, on an electric scooter, catches up.

Out of breath, Tom drops the scooter and hands, Debbie, her phone.

TOM
(panting)
You dropped this.

DEBBIE
Thanks. Maybe you should call the
police.

SpiderPop grabs a bag of paints and dashes down an alley. Tom looks around then notices the large graffiti mural.

TOM
Son of a...

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Tom sprints down the alley, and slows at a dead end, panting. SpiderPop waits at the end of the alley.

TOM
You can't outrun the samurai!

SpiderPop kicks at the wall, leaps up and over the fence, turns towards Tom and bows, then leisurely runs away. Tom sinks to his knees out of breath. Debbie and a POLICEMAN(28) walk down the alley.

POLICEMAN

Looks like squatting tiger, hidden dragon let him get away.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A police car's siren SQUACKS and drives away. Tom and Debbie look up to the large mural of a man kissing a goat.

DEBBIE

Why does this remind me of someone?

TOM

It is Dr. Moto, head of the Japanese cultural studies. He is the reason I want to be a samurai.

FLASHBACK - INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

TOM (19), in a student patrol hoodie, sits among students, gazes at a book filled with pictures of samurai. DR. MOTO(mid 30's), dressed in a suit and tie, lectures the class.

DR. MOTO

The samurai were a noble warrior class that would vigilantly police and protect their lands.

Dr. Moto, now dressed as a Shogun in warrior armor, pulls out a sword and performs Bushido, yelling loudly at the end of each maneuver.

Tom's eyes transfix on Dr. Moto as he thrust his sword and yells. Tom looks at the pictures of samurai and caresses the photo with his hand.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY - EXT. STREET - DAY

Tom Stares at the mural and wipes away tears.

TOM

From that day on, I have traveled the path to become a Samurai.

Debbie takes pictures of the mural with her cell phone.

DEBBIE

So what are you going to do?

TOM

I will catch this vandal, bring honor to Dr. Moto, and prove I am a samurai or die trying!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

DR. MOTO (early '60s) dressed in suit and tie, sits behind a desk grading papers. A KNOCK at his door.

DR. MOTO

Come in.

Tom timidly peeks past the door.

TOM

Dr. Moto? I like to...

Debbie pushes through Tom and into Dr. Moto's office.

DEBBIE

Dr. Moto, my name is Debbie Joyner, and a journalism major in Dr. Ross's class.

Dr. Moto looks up and stands to shake Debbie's hand.

DR. MOTO

Dr. Ross is a good friend of mine. How may I help you?

Tom bows deeply to Dr. Moto

TOM

(speaking bad Japanese)
Hajimemashite!

Dr. Moto frowns at Tom.

DEBBIE

I wanted to see if I can get your reaction to the vandalism on the wall at the east end of campus?

Debbie pulls out a photo of graffiti and sets it on the desk.

TOM

How did you get a photo so quickly?

DEBBIE

At the student union photo shop.

Dr. Moto's eye switch between Tom and Debbie looking irritated each time they say something.

TOM

The kiosk by the Taco Hut?

DEBBIE

That place closed. The one in the corner by the Sunglass Hut.

TOM

I always pass that place, that's really fine quality, and sharp. Is that the iPhone eleven...

Dr. Moto quickly stands up and points to Tom.

DR. MOTO

Who are you suppose to be?

TOM

I'm Tom. I am a big...

DR. MOTO

You can't carry that weapon into my office!

Dr. Moto points to the katana strapped to Tom's belt.

TOM

I am a huge admirer of yours, Dr. Moto. I took your Japanese history course several years ago.

Dr. Moto looks closely at Tom, and his eyes widen.

FLASHBACK - INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Dr. Moto lectures in front of a classroom of students.

DR. MOTO

Laws are most sacred. Who enforced laws during the late Heian Period?

Several students' hands raise. Tom's head lays on the desk, closed eyes, SNORES, and drool runs onto drawings of samurai.

Dr. Moto stands in front of Tom, and shakes his head.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY - INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Moto shakes his head and sighs deeply.

DR. MOTO

You were a lazy student. Get out!

Tom's eyes tear up as he stammers.

DR. MOTO (CONT'D)

You insult me! Get out!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Debbie and Tom stand by to a bench outside Dr. Moto's office.

DEBBIE

What the hell, Tom! This story
could have kickstarted my career.

Tom plops down, pulls a king-sized snicker's candy bar out, and gnaws on it. Tears run down his face. Debbie sighs; sits beside Tom and grabs the candy bar from Tom.

TOM

I just wanted to be part of
something larger than myself.

Debbie looks at the candy bar then to Tom, smiles, and takes a small bite. They both look down as their hands touch.

SpiderPop walks down the hallway; Tom's katana drops to the floor and trips SpiderPop. Tom assists him to his feet; they recognize each other.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Moto sits at his desk. SpiderPop and Tom crash through the door. Dr. Moto sits shocked with both men laying on his desk.

TOM

This is the guy that dishonored
you, sir!

DR. MOTO

This is my son! Get off of him!

Tom steps back out of breath. Debbie takes pictures.

TOM

Your son! He painted that horrible
picture of you!

DR. MOTO

He is an artist. You might know him, SpiderPop!

DEBBIE

You are SpiderPop? I thought I recognized your work. If I can get an interview, I would just die!

TOM

He ran from the law, sir. The law!

Dr. Moto smacks SpiderPop on the head and scolds him in Japanese.

SPIDERPOP

But dad!

Dr. Moto GRUNTS; SpiderPop sadly looks to the ground.

SPIDERPOP (CONT'D)

Sorry, I should not have ran from the law.

INT. FOODCOURT - DAY

Sitting together, Tom looks down sadly at a green salad. Debbie reads a newspaper article with a photo of Tom lying on top of SpiderPop, the slug line reads ARTIST ASSAULTED.

DEBBIE

(reading out loud)

Campus security officer apprehends renowned artist SpiderPop. You got your picture nabbing SpiderPop. You're my chubby little samurai.

Debbie pats Tom on the back. Tom looks at photo, DR. MOTO KISSING GOAT.

TOM

Why would Dr. Moto approve a picture of him kissing a goat?

Tom wrestles katana off belt and loudly places it on table and starts to eat the salad. Debbie thumbs through paper.

DEBBIE

Some people are just messed up.

THE END