

**The War Within**

#### Main Characters:

- Matsuzaki, Yoshio- The seventeen year old son of a high ranking samurai during the period of the onin war. Due to his heritage, he has been trained in the ways of both the samurai (influenced by his father) and the ninja. Not on the level of any actual professionals, but is more educated than most of them, so is able to think at a higher level.
- Matsuzaki, Satoru- Yoshio`s Father. A powerful, wise and high ranking samurai. He and his comrades plan to overthrow their overlord soon, and he is the leader of the cause.
- Mystery assassin
- Rage of Yoshio (Roy)
- Fear of Yoshio (Foy)
- Sloth of Yoshio (Soy)
- Pride of Yoshio (Poy)
- Joy of Yoshio (Joy)
- Tears of Yoshio (Toy)

#### Minor Characters:

- Yoshio`s mother
- Yoshio`s younger brother

Scene: *Feudal Japan. 1469. The home of Satoru Matsuzaki, a high ranking samurai residing in Kyoto. The Matsuzaki family (consisting of Satoru, his oldest son Yoshio, his wife and infant child, and his youngest son.), are seated around the table for dinner. Yoshio's mother is cradling the baby in her arms. Satoru is seated at the opposite end of Yoshio, with his wife on his right and two blades on the floor to his left.*

Satoru (Slapping his belly in satisfaction): Ahhh! A wonderful meal yet again! You have truly outdone yourself my love.

Yoshio's mother: Thank you, but we should really be thanking that new girl you got to help me in the kitchen. This particular recipe was one she suggested.

Yoshio (cheekily): I'll be sure to thank her in person.

Yoshio's mother (Shocked): Yoshi!

Yoshio: I'm kidding mother. I wouldn't dream of it. (Whispering to his brother) Telling them about it that is.

*(The two of them share giggle simultaneously, as Yoshio's mother and brother begin to clear the table. Suddenly, a loud noise is heard in the distance, and the whole family turn to look in its direction.)*

Yoshio (Looking at his father): What was that?

Satoru: I do not know, but I will go and investigate for myself. Yoshio, stay vigilant.

Yoshio's mother (calling after her husband): Be careful!

*(Satoru grabs the blade next to him and leaves. Yoshio slides his father's second blade underneath the table. Yoshio's mother and brother leave with the dishes, and return soon after to sit at the table. The family sit around looking worried for a little while, but then a figure dressed in dark blue appears from the corner of the room wielding a 'Nodachi'. The figure attempts to strike at Yoshio, but he draws his blade in time and is able to deflect the blade. He gets up and faces off against his opponent, with his back to his family.)*

Yoshio: Identify yourself assassin!

Mystery assassin: You are in no position to be demanding anything from me boy.

Yoshio (after a pause): Why are you here!? Are you targeting my father?

Mystery assassin: Wouldn't you like to know.

Yoshio: Stop talking and give me answers!

*(He takes a strike at the assassin, who easily deflects the attack. Yoshio then quickly moves back and resumes his stance.)*

Mystery assassin: You are quite the brash one aren't you? You remind me of myself as a child. Sadly, that is all you are. A child. I guess you'll never get to reach adulthood.

*(The assassin thrusts his weapon towards Yoshio's head, but he manages to deflect it, and spins himself behind the assassin, so that the assassin is now between him and his family.)*

Mystery assassin: Not bad, but I guess I should expect that, considering your parentage.

*(Before anyone else can make a move, Yoshio's brother runs to the assassin and clamps his teeth down on his right hand.)*

Mystery assassin (releasing his right hand from his weapon and turning his attention to the child who just bit him): Arrggh! Damn this child!

*(Yoshio sees an opening, and prepares himself to strike. The characters freeze, and a group of six enter, all looking at the scene in front of them intently. They are all dressed similarly, but are of varying dispositions. One of them is grasping his left shoulder, and is reluctant to approach the scene. Another skips in joyously, while three others walk in without a hint of emotion on their faces. The last member of this group, crawls onto the scene, and instantly lies down with his head on a cushion.)*

Roy (growing angry): What is this insult! How dare this man come into the Matsuzaki household and attempt to harm its inhabitants! Would someone please tell me why his head isn't already on the ground?!

Soy: If it means I can go back to sleep, please decapitate him already. Actually, no. Too much energy. *(Waving one arm in the air)* Just kick him or something.

Foy (looking at the assassin cautiously): Erm, can we not do that? He's angry enough from the bite. Imagine what he would do if we actually hit him. We should just run. I'm sure father will return soon, and then he can take care of this.

Poy (Smacking Foy on the head): Are you insane! Run away and let him kill our family?! Why we'd never be able to live it down. We'd have to spend the rest of our lives as a farmer. Or even worse, a merchant.

Toy (close to tears): No! We can't let the m die. I love them so much. Were doomed!

Joy (wrapping his arms around Poy and Foy): Oh come on! Why all this talk of death and dishonour? I'm sure that we can talk to this nice man and he'll see the error of his ways. What do you say guys? Peace?

Roy: You're even worse than the coward.

Poy: Indeed. Anyway, it's time to stop this nonsense. The man's head is coming off. End of story

*(Poy attempts to walk off stage, but is stopped buy Toy)*

Toy: N-N-NO! You can't make the decision by yourself. It's not fair!

Roy: I'm ok with it.

Toy (Falling to his knees): Well too bad! It's not going to happen.

Soy: Could you guys keep it down?

Roy (Folding his arms): Now why should we let any of you wretches have a part in this decision? That one's a snivelling coward, You shed tears like a woman, that one can't even open his mouth for more than a few seconds, and the other one thinks he lives in a rainbow or something. None of you are fit to decide that man's fate.

Soy: May I remind you of what you did last month?

Roy (defensively): Well the fool was asking for it. He should've known better than to trifle with the great Yoshio!

Joy: But the poor boy broke a rib. That couldn't have been pleasant. To be fair, if we had listened to Sloth back there, we may have avoided all the trouble that came afterwards.

Poy: For once, I agree with them. A man with honour does not strike out against an inferior opponent.

Roy: If they are inferior, then I see no reason why we can't crush them. That is how a leader thinks. How will we ever rise to match our father's status if we are held back by weaklings like you?

Toy: Why must we always aspire to be like father? Why can't we just be our own person? Why can't we do what we want to do?

Joy: Yeah! We could be a farmer, or a scholar! Maybe even a Daimyo.

Poy: Only the latter is acceptable. But one must learn to walk before they can run. I understand where you are all coming from, (Gesturing to the assassin) but this man has no right to stand here and attempt to harm our family. And he is very skilled. This may be the only chance we have to defeat him, and I suggest we take it.

Foy: But what if we miss? He'll cut us down in a second. It's too risky. I don't want to die!

Poy (Slapping Foy on the back of the head): I understand that being a coward is your thing, but could you please stop being so pathetic?

Toy: This is all because of this stupid war. Why does everyone have to fight all the time? And why does father want to kill anyone anyway? We were all happy living our lives. Wasn't that enough?

Poy: Man must always seek to climb higher than he stands. Higher status gives higher respect, and those who are respected are not to be trifled with. It's all about pride and status. When his comrades came to him, seeking a leader for their cause, refusing would be a cowardly thing to do. Not to mention, that it might just get him killed. Like it or not, this is the situation we have to deal with. Why must I always explain things like this to you oafs?

Roy (Approaching him threateningly): Who are you calling an oaf? You know they say that pride is the sign of a foolish man, so what does that make one like you who is nothing but pride?

Poy (Pushing him away slowly): And what about you? Anger makes a man sloppy and predictable, so you're very existence is a curse upon us.

Roy (Flaring up even more): You wanna know about curses?! Look at these pathetic goons, and tell me who you think the curse is! How is one ever supposed to prosper when held back by such useless things like fear and laziness!

Soy: Hey, when I'm done with my nap, we are going to have a short talk about how wrong you are.

Joy (Wrapping his hand around Roy): Hey, you didn't mention me. Does that mean you think I'm important?

Roy (Removing Joy's hand): As insufferable as you are, you are a necessary Yin to my Yang. Anger alone cannot rule our mind. I wish I could, but I am willing to accept my position, which is why you should accept that you are not necessary in this situation.

*(The frozen characters begin to show signs of movement, causing the segments of Yoshio's psyche to round up their argument)*

Poy (Rushing the conversation along, pointing to the frozen characters): Look! We don't have time for this! Before long, we will have to come to a decision. What do you all decide?

*(The six of them walk off stage, Toy and Soy having to be guided off due to their incapacitated states of sadness and sleep. As they leave, the frozen scene comes back to life. Quickly changing the course of his strike, Yoshio slices the distracted assassin across the shoulder of his wielding arm, causing him to drop his weapon and fall to the floor in pain. Following this, Yoshio's father returns to the room, and upon noticing the injured man on the floor, rushes to him and pinning him with his sword.)*

Satoru (Turning to his son): Who is this man? Did he harm any of you?

Yoshio: No, we're fine. I was able to subdue him.

Satoru: Really? Well he must not be a very good assassin.

Mystery Assassin: Shut up and kill me already.

Satoru: No, you get far worse than that. Guards!

*(Two guards rush in, and take away the assassin. Two more enter the room, and are instructed to take Yoshio's mother and siblings away)*

Satoru (Taking his sword and hugging his son): I don't know who sent those men...

Yoshio: Those?

Satoru (releasing him): Yes, there was another one outside acting as a distraction. I don't know who sent them, but I will find whoever it is, and I will make sure they suffer. But you, you make me proud. We live in troubling times, and I may not live to see the end of this war. But now I know that I can depend on you to protect your family in my absence.

Yoshio: I don't know. I found myself questioning whether or not I should kill him. I don't have the instinct to fight like you.

Satoru (Siting down): I have to be honest. Killing a man has never, and will never be an easy thing to do, and I don't expect you to do things like that. But you must be ready, because when war comes, you must keep it on the battlefields, and out of your mind. You may have to do things you usually wouldn't, but sometimes these things are necessary. Now come, you deserve a nice long rest.