

Ultimatum

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It was the final showdown. But why should he mourn? After all, the Chase Young he had known was already dead. (Guan/Chase)

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Title: Ultimatum

Rating: PG13-R

Pairings: Guan/Chase, hints of Dashi/Wuya

Warnings: Lots of blood and gore, slight sexual references

Notes: I've been wanting to write this for a very long time now, and I'm extremely proud of the way it came out, particularly since it's only the second Guan/Chase fic on the internet. I know it's unusual, but please give it a chance!

-Narration here- Real time

-Narration here- Flashback

Enjoy!

Ultimatum

Two lone figures stood facing each other amid the swirling, grating clouds of sand in the Land of Nowhere. Above them, the sky was tinted a dull gray, as it always was in that desolate waste, casting the figures into semi-shadow. No words were exchanged between the combatants; none were needed. There was no taunting, no shouted challenges, no signal of any kind to begin.

It was impossible to tell who moved first.

Although the two were adversaries, they moved almost as one single entity. Each technique was flawlessly executed, then mirrored perfectly by the other. Their fighting styles were nearly identical, which lead to a seemingly unbreakable stalemate.

Master Monk Guan nimbly leapt out of his opponent's range, frowning. The match was too even- it could go on indefinitely without a victor. But he refused to let that happen- not this time. Their conflict had lasted fifteen-hundred years unresolved, and both knew that this was the end- the ultimatum, the final encounter of Master Monk Guan and Chase Young. And both had accepted the fact that only one would make it out alive.

“Young Monks, the new students have arrived.”

Looking up from their painfully one-sided game of Go, eleven-year-old Dashi and thirteen-year-old Guan saw their elderly master usher two children about their age into the temple. One was a slender girl, with dark skin, mauve pigtails, and a smug expression. Quirking an eyebrow curiously, Dashi went forward, with a bit of excess swagger in his step, to greet her. Guan’s eyes, however, were immediately drawn to the boy. He was thin in the waist and narrow in the shoulders, but had exceptionally large hands and feet. Deep, rich brown hair that was nearly black framed a handsomely olive-toned face and just barely tickled the blue-clad shoulders. Nervousness was evident on the boy’s face- his rounded cheeks were pink-tinged with a slight blush and his eyes were flitting rapidly around the room. Those eyes were exceedingly large, like the face hadn’t quite yet grown into them, and were an unusual but undeniably beautiful gold color. Guan found himself most fascinated with those eyes.

Following Dashi’s lead, Guan approached the new student, offering a warm smile and a small bow, which were returned after a small hesitation. For a moment there was silence, and then the unfamiliar child spoke. “My name is Chase Young. Master Chang says that I am to become the Xiaolin Dragon of Water.” His voice was smooth and not particularly deep for his age, and it grew louder and stronger as his initial nervousness ebbed away.

Guan, in turn, introduced himself as the apprentice Dragon of Fire, and the girl promptly and somewhat rudely cut in, proclaiming herself to be Wuya, Dragon of Earth. Laughing uproariously, Dashi muttered, “Feisty! I like that!” and hissed something into the pigtailed girl’s ear. Her mouth dropped open and, without warning, she roundhouse-kicked the aspiring Dragon of Wind in the stomach. As he doubled over, coughing, she spun away from him with a pronounced, “Hmph!” and made certain to whap him in the face with the end of her pigtail as she turned. Trying his best to stifle his laughter, Guan turned back to Chase, who looked about ready to stuff his fist into his mouth to hide his own hilarity. The young monk extended an enormous hand and suggested, “Come, my friend- I will show you around.”

At the words “my friend”, the dark-haired boy’s expression morphed into something resembling delighted incredulity; the other monk assumed that this was not a phrase that he had been referred to by often. Grinning widely, Chase Young took the proffered hand and held it tightly for a moment before beginning to walk.

“Okay!”

Snarling viciously, Chase swung his spear in a slow arc before snapping the point forward and rushing in. Quickly raising his own weapon, Guan parried the assault and began his own. As the two spears clashed again and again from every angle, they flashed in the rare rays of sun that peeked out from behind the dark clouds. Block, thrust, parry. Stab, dodge, parry again. Once more, they were evenly matched.

The speed of the attacks accelerated, but still no hits were made. Suddenly, Chase leapt into the air and swung his weapon downward with all the might he possessed, grinning wickedly. Despite bringing his weapon up sideways in front of his face to parry the blow, the sheer force of the evil warrior’s onslaught

forced Guan down on one knee. Charcoal eyes locked with gold as the two combatants stood frozen, each spear immobilized by the pressure being exerted on it by the other. Suddenly struck with an idea, the orange-robed warrior ducked down further, and the sudden lack of resistance to his weapon caused Chase to be thrown off-balance and stumble forward. Seizing his moment of opportunity, Guan spun his spear upwards, relishing the stunned expression on his opponent's face as the blunt end of his spear made contact with the side of the evil warrior's head.

"Come on, stay focused!" Seventeen-year-old Chase Young called to his opponent, leaping forward in a flying side-kick and laughing even when his attack was evaded and he nearly skidded into a tree from the leftover momentum.

Shifting from the awkward pose he'd used to dodge to a fighting stance, Guan shouted back, "Now who needs to focus?" At nineteen, he was rather more physically powerful than his friend, though quite a bit slower. His long, black hair hung in a tight braid down to the small of his back and flew out behind him as he rushed in with an onslaught of punches and palm-strikes. Since the four Dragons-in-training had been promoted to Wudai Warriors, they had tirelessly practiced their elemental techniques and Wudai weapons. However, plain hand-to-hand combat had become increasingly rare, and the two warriors had decided that a friendly sparring match was very much in order.

Crossing his bare arms in front of his face, Chase scuttled backwards, blocking every one of the Fire warrior's strikes. As soon as he sensed an opening, he pivoted on his back foot and loosed a completely blind side-kick in Guan's general direction. Judging from the muffled, "Oof!" and the sudden lack of assaulting fists, Chase deemed his attack to have been successful and used the momentary lull in the action to leap onto a low branch of a nearby tree. Playfully, he called, "You'll have to do better than that!"

Breathing hard, the older warrior aimed a mock-glare up at his friend and snapped his fists back up into fighting position. Chase smirked and leapt, landing several feet behind his friend, and rushed back in for another round. Several more blows were exchanged, and the two were evenly matched, until Guan swung his leg upwards in a powerful crescent kick aimed directly at Chase's head. The Water warrior quickly bent backwards to avoid being struck, but failed to brace his hands on the ground in time and lost his balance. Thrown off by the sheer momentum of his kick, Guan also slipped, and the two fell to the ground together in a tangled, laughing pile of teenager.

As the dust settled, Guan found himself sprawled out on top of his friend, and he decided to take advantage of the rather compromising situation. Pinning Chase's slender wrists beneath his large hands, he grinned hugely and exclaimed, "Looks like I did manage to do better!" The Water warrior pouted at having his earlier taunt thrown back at him, but kept his mouth shut. Wriggling his way out from underneath Guan, he sat up on the moss-covered ground and leaned against his friend's muscular shoulder. Feeling content and a bit worn-out, Chase closed his golden eyes and quietly hummed a tune as the other monk absently played with his dark-mahogany hair. After a few quiet moments, the younger of the two sighed, shifting his gaze to the treetops, and stated a bit wistfully, "It seems almost too good to be true, doesn't it?"

The other frowned deeply and inquired, "What do you mean by that?"

Turning to face Guan with a troubled expression on his olive-skinned face, he elaborated, "The life we all live. We fight the forces of evil, yes, but no matter how powerful we become, we never seem to become tainted by it. We live and fight together as friends, and I certainly won't deny that I enjoy it immensely, but...it's too ideal. How long can it possibly last?" His eyes had widened and glazed over, and his voice became laced with a bit of despair as he continued, "I feel in my heart that it's only a matter of time until something goes wrong."

Moving closer to Chase, Guan held his upset friend's head firmly in both of his sturdy hands and, locking charcoal eyes with beautiful gold, said fiercely, "Then we must make the most of whatever time we have left." Leaning in, he allowed his forehead to rest against the other monk's for a moment as a gesture of comfort, an assurance to his companion that everything would be all right, before pressing their lips together.

If the warrior of Water was at all surprised, he made no sign; wrapping his arms around Guan's shoulders, he pulled the other young man close against himself. Their lips and tongues touched, stroked, and explored as the kiss slowly became more urgent. When they finally broke apart, the Fire warrior found his friend's golden eyes to be darkened, half-hidden by thick eyelashes. With a faint smile, he moved back in for more kisses while his hand began to fiddle with the button-hooks on Chase's tunic.

The two made love then, right there on the forest floor. It was quick, and considering that their sheltered lives as monks resulted in a lack of experience, it wasn't particularly intense. Despite the awkwardness, though, the two honestly tried their hardest to make it good for each other, and that was enough to make it memorable. Afterwards, they lie still together, spent and tangled and happy. As the numbing blanket of sleep began to settle over him, Chase took one final look at his friend- and now lover- and murmured, "...Love you."

"I know. And I, you."

Chase was flung forcefully into a sand dune and did not emerge for several moments. When the sand clouds finally cleared, however, he was revealed to be standing upright, cursing and wiping at the blood that streamed down the left side of his face and into his eyes. With an almost roar-like yell, he rushed in again, but Guan could tell that the evil warrior had been damaged by the blow; his golden eyes were unnaturally wide and unfocused, and his aim was off by nearly a foot. Skirting easily out of the misguided attack's path, the monk warrior leapt up behind his adversary, swinging his spear above his head and bringing it down in an almighty thrust aimed straight for the still-disoriented man's back.

By the time Chase turned, it was too late.

"Guan! Master Guan!" Snapping abruptly into consciousness from a deep sleep, the first thing that the monk warrior registered was that someone was yelling at him. It was a child, a young monk disciple, with flushed skin that gleamed with sweat. The boy was out of breath from running, and his simple robe was

dirty and severely ripped and torn. Attempting to speak through his panting, the boy babbled, "We're under attack! It's some kind of monster- the entire village is in ruins! Please, we need you and Master Chase's help! It-aaagh--" Even as Guan leapt to his feet, the young monk collapsed to his knees, coughing up blood uncontrollably. Something was very wrong, and the Fire warrior wondered why he hadn't noticed it immediately. The boy's skin was too flushed, almost an ashen-gray color, and his eyes were glazed and unfocused. With a sepulchral gasp, he fell forward onto the temple floor, and for the first time since his arrival, the man had a clear view of his back. Blood gushed from numerous, vicious-looking gashes and ran in crimson rivers down the backs of the child's thighs and knees.

After closing his eyes and bowing his head momentarily in silent prayer for the dead child, Guan grabbed his spear from its place on the wall and turned to the mat across the small room where his partner usually slept. "Chase, we must-" He cut off abruptly as he registered the mussed sheets and more importantly, the lack of a person underneath them. "Chase, are you here?" No answer. Feeling an intense sense of foreboding, the monk warrior turned his back on the temple and, spear in hand, dashed out into the chaos.

The village truly was in ruins. The night sky was illuminated in vibrant shades of red-orange and gold from the flames that blazed on the roofs of the huts. Rubble and mutilated bodies littered the streets, and the air was thick with the nauseating stench of burning flesh. As Guan sprinted through the decimated streets and the full extent of the horrors around him sank in, his growing worry began to escalate into near-hysteria about Chase's unknown whereabouts. Knowing his friend's prideful nature, the monk feared that his friend had gone to challenge the monster alone. The fire warrior took small consolation that, wherever his companion was, at least he was armed- his spear had been missing from its place next to Guan's own. Still, he continued to run faster.

The dirt of the unpaved village road was splattered with fresh blood, and Guan struggled not to slip. As he ran, he passed a man lying in the street, obviously alive but unable to move due to a missing leg. A blank-eyed peasant woman crouched in the shadow of a burning building, rocking back and forth as she cradled a bloody, broken little body in her arms. The monk's heart ached to stop and attempt to help, to console these poor, broken people, but he had no time. He had to find the horrendous creature that had done this and destroy it.

And he had to find Chase.

Spotting another shining, bald head, Guan called to the other monk disciple, "Jie-Shen! Have you seen the creature? Where is it?"

A look of relief washed over the younger monk's face and he yelled back, "Master Guan! I am so glad you've arrived!" He pointed around a corner, towards the western edge of the village. "Last I saw, it went that way! But..." He bit his lip nervously and averted his eyes. "I...I believe that...that it has killed Master Chase."

The young monk refused to focus his gaze anywhere but on the ground again, even when a horrified Guan shook his shoulders violently and shouted, "What! How do you know this!"

Still disoriented from being shaken so hard, Jie-Shen managed to stammer out, "H-his weapon! His spear- the creature is wielding it!" Paling considerably, Guan abruptly released the other monk's

abused shoulders and dashed off in the direction that he had been told to go. Head spinning as he accelerated, the Fire warrior hurriedly quashed the possible notion of his companion's death in his mind; he refused to believe anything of the sort until he could see physical proof with his own two eyes. As he skidded around yet another corner, violently coughing to clear the smoke from his lungs, the monk warrior caught his first glance of the beast.

Truly, it was hideous- a horrifying parody of a human and a lizard rolled into one. Its body was grotesquely disproportionate, with a flat-snouted head and brawny shoulders that appeared far too large for the short, oddly-bent legs. Smooth, well-built muscles rippled beneath a coat of fine, metallic green scales that was embellished with black bands and spikes. Lashing violently behind the creature was a powerful reptilian tail.

As Guan approached, the monster was bent over its latest kill, but it turned its fearsome face to him as he grew nearer. One powerful, clawed hand indeed held Chase's beloved weapon, and crimson blood stained the claws and tail, flowing over those wickedly sharp teeth from the severed arm that it still held in its crushing jaws. Spitting out the limb, the beast threw its head back and let loose an earth-shattering roar.

However, as the two opponents stared each other down, the Fire warrior focused on nothing but the monster's eyes. Although they were surrounded by ornate red and black markings and had almost catlike slits in place of pupils, they were excruciatingly familiar. Guan knew that beautiful gold color, yes, but more than that, he knew that expression. He knew those eyes, and for a moment, he was frozen, utterly stunned. Then the word came out in a choked whisper that only the warrior and the creature could hear.

"...Chase?"

A whip of the tail, a splatter of blood, a cloud of dust, and Chase Young was gone.

Shaking uncontrollably, Guan slid down to the bloodstained ground, allowing his spear to fall from his hand as he stared blankly at the spot where the hideous creature- his lover, partner, and best friend- had stood only moments before. He wanted to say something, to call after him, but he found himself too choked to speak. Bowing his head, the Xiaolin Dragon of Fire let out a dry sob.

Both pairs of eyes widened as an audible crack filled the dry air- the sound of shattering armor, shattering bones. Guan stood frozen, horrified, as blood spurted from Chase's back and he staggered, letting out a faint choking noise. He felt as if the entire battle had been surreal- a dream or out-of-body experience- and for a moment, he saw in front of him not a deity of evil, but a young man. A young man with a wide smile, soft dark hair, and beautiful golden eyes. He began to reach out to catch him, but reality snapped back into focus, and he quickly retracted his hand and watched silently as his dying opponent fell face-first into the sand.

He'd sworn to himself that he wouldn't mourn. He had known from the beginning that this was the ultimatum, the final battle- either Chase would die, or he would. And he had prevailed. He had completed his task, his mission- he'd killed Chase Young. But what reason was there to mourn? After all,

the Chase Young that he had known, befriended, and loved- his Chase- was already gone. He had died a long, long time ago.

But telling himself all these things as he prepared for and fought his showdown and being there in the aftermath- seeing that once-powerful and beautiful body lying limply at his feet and watching the light leave those golden eyes as dark blood slowly soaked into the sand, were two different things. It was too much. He dropped to his knees next to Chase's body, almost reaching out to touch him, but instead burying his face in his free hand and letting out a shaky breath. He couldn't bear to look anymore.

And despite everything he had told himself, despite everything that had gone so wrong between them, when Chase's breathing finally ceased, he felt as if a part of himself had also died.

End

So that's that. Please, please let me know what you think- this was extremely experimental, and I'd really like to know how I did.

By the way, I drew some fanart over on DA for this- [www. deviantart .com/ deviation/37068646/](http://www.deviantart.com/deviation/37068646/) (without the spaces, of course). If you liked the fic, then go check it out!