

THE UNJUSTIFIED JADE

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE OLD WEST - DAY (1876)

The sun rises above the horizon of the empty Western plains. It casts morning shades upon alluvial fans and playa deposits.

Across the plains is LIU XIA (30), in her blouse and cotton skirt. Riding on her grey horse, she sees a farm a few miles away.

HOWIE'S FARM - DAY

The farm is small but devoid of farm animals except a horse, withal a quaint house, a barn, a silo and, above all, a blacksmith shed.

INT. HOWIE'S SHED

Blacksmith HOWIE DONNELLS (30), with his leather gloves and apron, SMASHES a heated piece of black metal on an anvil with a hammer. He sweats as he nears his completed forging.

Howie quenches the heated horseshoe into a barrel of water with a pair of tongs. Out comes a horseshoe with star holes. He places it on a shelf with other unique creations, labeled "FOR SALE". He shifts his view to another shelf with metal creations, labeled "FOR HOWIE DONNELLS".

EXT. HOWIE'S FARM

As Howie leaves the shed, he bumps into Liu Xia, much to his startlement. Xia's horse is parked near his house.

HOWIE

Well, I'll be darned. Liu Xia, what are ya doin' here?

XIA

I'm here under my uncle's consent.

HOWIE

Yer uncle?

XIA

He has recommended me to enlist you on some sort of task.

HOWIE
Task? What task?

EXT. THE OLD WEST - DAY

Howie and Liu Xia, on their horses, exit the farm. They wander into the Western plains, seeing nothing but cacti and tumbleweeds.

 XIA (V.O.)
A few days ago, my uncle had a prophecy. An ancient jade from my home in China had found its way into the Old West. In a form of an ancient but evil spirit, it's cursed and very likely to fall into the wrong hands.

Howie and Liu Xia enter a long passage with various rocks and rock formations.

 HOWIE (V.O.)
What happens when that jade falls into the hands of those thugs?

 XIA (V.O.)
I don't know. My uncle didn't tell me the exact consequences. All he told me is to find the jade, bring it to an abandoned gold mine in Colorado at late night, and destroy it.

EXT. SHOSHONE NATIONAL FOREST - DUSK

Howie and Liu Xia reach the Wyoming forest while sneaking past the Native American tribal area. Apparently, the Indians are so caught up with their own ritual.

 HOWIE (V.O.)
How comes yer uncle thought I should go along with ya?

 XIA (V.O.)
According to his prophecy, you are the only clue of finding the jade. That's why you're with me. But at the same time, I need to keep a close eye on you.

HOWIE (V.O.)
 But Xia, ain't it the other way
 'round?

 XIA (V.O.)
 Yes, though there's no telling
 which one of us is more vulnerable
 than the other.

CREEK

Howie and Liu Xia arrive and stop.

 XIA
 Let's rest here for a night.

Xia hops off from her horse first, then Howie.

 XIA (CONT'D)
 I search for some firewoods. You
 gather the fish for dinner.

 HOWIE
 Hold on. That part of the forest is
 filled with Indians. Don't ya need
 a man like me to take care of the
 firewoods?

 XIA
 Don't you remember we used to
 practice kung fu together when we
 were kids - and I always pinned you
 down?

 HOWIE
 Touché.

Xia leaves the campground and enters into the deep areas of
 the forest.

CREEK - NIGHT

Very few hours pass by; Howie finishes his fishing with a
 crate full of fish. Yet, he turns anxious as Liu Xia has not
 returned with the firewoods.

 HOWIE
 Just as I suspect.

Just as Howie is about to leave the campground to find Xia,
 from a distance, he notices something shiny underneath a pile
 of pebbles.

He investigates by digging the pile with his bare hands, withal and unearths an ordinary stone with no vividness and smoothness.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

Is this...a jade?

Suddenly, the jade glows and so do Howie's eyes. He starts to have a nightmarish vision of Western outlaws, taking turns with the jade, while shooting innocent townspeople with cutting-edge firearms.

Then, coming from the forest, a scream rudely awakens Howie. Howie recognizes that scream: it's Xia. He inserts the jade into his pocket and rushes into the forest, commencing a frantic search of her.

THICKET - NIGHT

Liu Xia, with her DOUBLE DERINGER in her hand, struggles to break free from CALLIE HARRY (45), large and unhygienic. He forcefully locks lips with her.

XIA

Hey! Back off, you thug!

HARRY

Look at here, lady. I have been dating many women in my life, except for a gorgeous Chinese fella like ya.

Howie arrives behind the bushes. From his spot, he helplessly sees Xia in harassment.

XIA (V.O.)

I'm not interested in making love with any man! Not even you!

HARRY (V.O.)

When I mean dating, I mean pricking yer front door, then yer back door.

Howie becomes shocked of what Harry is about to do to her.

XIA

Oh, no! Don't even think about it!

Still in his grasp, Xia tries to shoot Harry with her Double Deringer. Harry grabs her gun and tosses it over to the bushes, unaware that Howie is still concealing himself therein. He presses her head against a big rock.

Howie collects the Double Deringer and holds tight to it. He turns his attention to Harry, as the notorious rapist rips Xia's skirt and pulls down her undergarments. Again, Howie's eyes glow, indicating another nightmare. This time, it's Harry having a violent sexual intercourse with Xia, before she perishes in the climax. Fear and then rage start to drown Howie.

Harry pulls down his pants and unbuttons the lower section of his union suit. Trepidation continues to escalate in Xia.

XIA (CONT'D)
Please...don't do it.

Harry shows no mercy on her while laughing manically.

HARRY
Get ready for the big bangin'!

Xia, now breaking down in tears, braces herself, as Harry is about to penetrate her. Then, BANG! A bullet drills from the back of Harry's head. The rapist falls to the ground before blood leaks out from his head.

To her surprise, Xia sees Howie with her Double Deringer. She then covers her pelvic area.

XIA
Oh, thanks goodness you're here!

HOWIE
Where have ya been? That cad is lookin' for a jade. He plans to use it to kill you.

XIA
What are you talking about?
(pauses)
And did you say, "jade"?

Howie draws out a jade from his pocket. Xia inspects the jade closely. She gasps.

XIA (CONT'D)
Hey! That's the exact jade my uncle warns us about! If we leave the forest now, we can reach to the gold mine in Colorado sooner than expected. Say, could you please cover your eyes for a while?

HOWIE
No.

XIA

Howie, I can't let you see me half-naked. I need to be properly dressed.

HOWIE

Xia, the yokels are now out to get the jade.

XIA

What?

HOWIE

I'm sayin' that startin' from sunrise, we should kill those outlaws before they can stop us on destroying the jade.

Xia notices that Howie is starting to go out of character. She stands up, still in partial nudity. She approaches to the jade.

XIA

How about this? Let me have a closer look at the jade. Aside from being cursed, it should tell us whether you are starting to descend into--

Howie yanks the jade away from Xia.

HOWIE

No! The jade ain't gonna be safe with anyone except me!

Howie points the Double Deringer towards Xia. She becomes more concerned of his well-being.

XIA

Be reasonable, Howie. Could you please give me back my gun?

HOWIE

No, Xia. I need this gun to bring down the pursuers. And ya'll gonna cover the shootings for me. Do ya understand?

Xia does not want to be involved in Howie's repulsive doings. Nevertheless, she does not wish to abandon him while on the path to the Colorado gold mine.

CREEK

The campfire BURNS bright. Both Howie and Liu Xia are slumbering in two opposing spots. Xia wakes up - but out of a certain intention than out of any disturbance. She looks at him in his deep sleep, then the pocket in his pants.

She carefully draws the jade out from his pocket. She examines it closely. All of a sudden, the jade, and then her eyes, glows.

CREEK - DUSK (SOME MOMENTS AGO)

Finding herself in Howie's most recent past, Liu Xia sees Howie discovering the jade. The jade glowed and he started to fall into a trance. Suddenly, a powerful force whisks her to the outlaws' hideout.

INT. OUTLAWS' HIDEOUT - THE NEXT NIGHT

Liu Xia sees Howie with her Double Deringer, shooting outlaws with no intention of coveting the jade. She also sees dead outlaws, scattered on the entire bloodied floor. Howie corners the last outlaw and points the gun towards him.

OUTLAW #1

Please, have mercy! I have nothin' to do with that worthless piece of stone! I'm only in a mood for cattle rustlin'!

HOWIE

You're like all the other varmints. You should never be pardoned!

In her horror, Xia realizes that the jade is not waiting to be fallen into the wrong hands. It actually wants Howie to carry out its murders! Howie pulls the trigger. BANG!

EXT. CREEK - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Liu Xia wakes up and notices that Howie is not sleeping next to her. She suspects that something is off.

CLICK. Xia senses someone behind him. She turns and sees a furious Howie, now pointing her Double Deringer towards her.

HOWIE

Drop the jade or get shot.

XIA

Pleas hear me out. The jade is using you for its own intention. You must fight it!

HOWIE

I said, "Drop the jade or get--"

CHA! Howie is subdued by someone behind him. To Xia's surprise, it's her uncle, LIU AN (68), an elderly man with white hair and a long mustache.

XIA

Uncle An, what are you doing here?

AN

Xia, do you have the jade?

XIA

Yes, but it already placed a curse on my friend.

AN

Well, make haste to the gold mine. To save your friend, you must destroy the jade on a pedestal. You must succeed before sunrise at six. Otherwise, the curse becomes permanent. Do you understand?

Xia understands without needing to say anything. With the jade still in her hand, she pours it into a brown pouch and hops onto her horse.

As Xia leaves the campground, Howie recovers from the karate chop and assaults An. An pins him down, so as to not allowing Howie to pursue her instantaneously.

EXT. COLORADO GOLD MINE - NIGHT

The night is still young in Colorado, but not for long. Liu Xia finally arrives at the gold mine. She hops off from her horse and enters the gold mine.

INT. THE GOLD MINE - CONTINUOUS

With a torch, Liu Xia meanders through the long passages. All she sees are empty mine carts and skeletal remains of miners. While she attempts to bottle up her fear of the mine's scary elements, a shadowy figure follows her.

Xia spots an unusual room and investigates.

THE PEDESTAL ROOM

Various diamonds are embedded in the rocky walls of the room. Front and center lies a pedestal, with Chinese carvings all over its stony stand. They hang their torches, illuminating most of the area.

Liu Xia produces her stopwatch. The current time is three minutes to six.

Xia approaches to the pedestal. Out from her pouch, she places the jade on its center. She anon surveys the room for a very heavy rock. She spots one on her right side and collects it.

Xia struggles with the heavy rock, as if she is carrying a 2,000lbs horse. She raises it with all her might, while wobbling like jelly.

Xia is about to drop the rock onto the jade...when Howie SHOVES her into the ground. Simultaneously, the rock drops on the ground instead of the jade. In his burning rage, Howie incessantly punches Xia.

HOWIE

I teach ya how to double-cross me!

While in bruises, Xia deflects his fists with her palms.

XIA

Howie, stop! Don't you see? I'm trying to free you from the jade's curse. You have to let me destroy it first!

Howie pays no attention to Xia and continues to inflict more bruises on her. In the nick of time, Liu An grabs Howie's neck and drags him away, freeing Xia from his hold. Howie continues to struggle beside choking.

HOWIE

Let me go! Me and Xia need to kill the yokels first!

AN

Listen to me, Howie! The jade is the real yokel! It has been twisting your heart and mind the whole time! You must fight it!

Howie punches An's face. He sprints to the pedestal. He is about to reclaim the jade when An quickly drags him away.

Xia recovers in time from the recent attack. She sees Howie and An rolling around and fighting. Xia rushes to the heavy rock. She carries it and approaches to the pedestal under much strains.

Howie delivers some more punches to An before noticing Xia. Xia is lifting the rock and about to drop it on the jade.

Unluckily, Howie tackles her. Again, the rock fails to land on its target. Now it's Xia's turn to fight with him in a roll.

An weakly gets up. He looks at his stopwatch and panics.

AN (CONT'D)
Hurry, my niece!

EXT. COLORADO DESERT - DAWN

The sun slowly creeps up the horizon by a slight inch.

AN (V.O.)
We only have one minute!

INT. THE PEDESTAL - CONTINUOUS

Howie pins Liu Xia to the ground. As Howie throws more punches at her, she struggles to reclaim her Double Deringer from his gun case. With all her might, she rises and knocks him over. Xia points the Double Deringer towards him.

HOWIE
So that's it. Ya just gonna shoot me and then let the varmints use the jade's power to destroy the innocent, huh?

XIA
That's not the jade's power. The jade's real power is to make you kill thugs for no reason.

HOWIE
I don't believe in that. What kind of partner are ya?!

Xia hesitates for a moment. An looks at his stopwatch for the third time. The hour hand is inching closer to six.

EXT. COLORADO DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The sun slowly continues to rise. Its light is about to break the shadows.

INT. THE PEDESTAL - CONTINUOUS

Liu Xia looks at Howie again - and then she points the Double Deringer towards the jade on the pedestal, much to his horror.

HOWIE

Wait! What are ya doing?!

It's almost six in the morning. Xia triggers the Double Deringer. The bullet is blasted out from it and right towards the jade! It SHATTERS the jade into millions of microscopic shards. By then, the hour hand reaches six.

EXT. COLORADO DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The sun emerges out of the horizon line. Its light spreads across the desert.

INT. THE PEDESTAL - CONTINUOUS

Howie turns to Liu Xia and stares at her, still in his petrified expression. The Lius are in great doubt: are they too late to stop the curse?

HOWIE

Xia...

XIA

Yes, Howie?

Howie pauses longly.

HOWIE

Where are we?

XIA

What?

An gasps at Howie's blank reaction.

HOWIE

How did we get out of the creek?

XIA

That you had been refusing to harm a "mere" girl like me in kung fu, try gunslinging and even chase after cattle rustlers.

HOWIE

No, I'm not that mild!

AN

Nevertheless, the jade's main purpose is to make you perform acts of cruel justice.

HOWIE

Thanks goodness I didn't shoot more varmints after the rapist.

XIA

You know...Maybe when we reach to your farm, me and my uncle can teach you how to serve justice with honor.

AN

And perhaps he will succeed. But Howie will have a better chance if both of you get married with each other.

HOWIE AND XIA

Hey!

Howie and the Lius laugh with each other. They approach to a border between Colorado and Wyoming.

FADE OUT.