

TAN

All That and Dimsum

Ep #001

By Robert Hughes

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FADE IN:

EXT. - SMALL VILLAGE PATH ALONG SIDE HOUSE - DAY

Old Tan is strolling along and humming a happy tune when he hears hammering. He stops and turns toward the noise.

OLD TAN
Do do do do do do do, dung,dung dung(Ad
Libs humming -abruptly stops

CUT TO:

EXT. - HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

With his **dog** sitting nearby **Heng**, the frustrated young kid, is trying to build a **doghouse** but it keeps falling apart. He starts to lose his temper and threatens the pile with a **mallet**.

HENG
(frustrated noises)
ERRR!!! Come on, you hunk of junk!
Putting together a doghouse
shouldn't be THIS hard!

Heng gives his doghouse a huge WHACK with a mallet and it instantly collapses into a heap of debris. Old Tan leans into scene.

HENG (CONT'D)
(Taunting the pile with the mallet)
Oh, okay, so you want another piece of
this?!

Heng raises his mallet again to smash at the debris, but Tan grabs the mallet from Heng's hand. Heng flips forward on to the pile of debris. (WHUMP)

OLD TAN
Whoa, whoa, whoa, my angry, young
and mallet wielding friend. You
should know that loosing your
temper never solved anything.
However, if you think smashing your
new doghouse into a million more
pieces will fix it, then, please,
go right ahead.

Tan hands the Mallet back to Heng, who takes the mallet, considers Tan's words, then starts to smash his dog house into a million pieces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD TAN (CONT'D)

I'm quickly sensing that reverse psychology is NOT an option.

HENG'S MOTHER (OS)

(yelling) HENG! What in the name of the Chinese Opera is going on out there?

HENG

It's OK, mom. Old Tan said it was alright to smash this pile of wood that use to be a....

OLD TAN

No I didn't, no I didn't!

HENG'S MOTHER (OS)

Knock off the racket, both of you, or I'm gonna come out there and you're both gonna get it!

OLD TAN

No, no, no need for that. Everything out here is just fine!

Tan angrily grabs Heng by the collar.

OLD TAN (CONT'D)

Listen, kid, maybe you didn't understand what I meant.

HENG

But you said tha...

OLD TAN

I know what I said, you little...
Eh...Ghhh. (realizing he's being a little rough.)

Old Tan instantly cools down, releases the kid and smooths out his collar as he talks.

OLD TAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(calming down) Eh. Heh, Heh, Heh. Eh, listen, Heng, let me tell you a little story that's very similar to the situation you're in... a tale about me when I was young...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - ENTRANCE TO THE LO FAT TEMPLE - STORMY NIGHT

Very Young Tan is crawling in the mud and the rain to the gates of a huge temple.

OLD TAN (V.O.)

I never knew my parents. I'm told that as an infant, I somehow managed to find my way to the Lo fat Martial Arts Academy and Cooking School on my own.

Tan is pulled to his feet by Master Feah, who shoves a floor scrubbing brush into his hands.

OLD TAN

The masters took me in and with their subtle guidance, taught the many arts needed to guide me on my path to enlightenment.

Various shots of Tan (as he slowly grows into a young man) working in the temple scrubbing floors, washing dishes, dusting, cleaning up after the monks who are a bunch of slobs. All the while he holds his Kung Fu study guide book open and ready for reference. Occasionally one of the Masters will stroll by and notice Tan practicing the moves from the book, while taking a break from sweeping and stirring a huge steaming pot. Master Feah and Sha nod approvingly. Tan Smiles. The masters slip out of Tan's sight

MASTER FEAH

He thinks this is a martial arts academy.

MASTHER SHA

Who cares? If he cleans up that well he can think what ever he wants.

OLD TAN

They taught me about love of all things beautiful, personal fulfilment...

Angle on Tan on a mat with an opponent. Masters Feah, Master Fu and Master Shaa, all sit in box seats with popcorn. Tan and his opponent bow to each other and begin to spar.

OLD TAN (V.O.)

...and best of all - how to kick some serious heinie..

The Masters all hoot and yell at the bout. They yell out instructions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASTER FU
Come on Tan, keep that right up!

MASTER SHA
Don't let him get behind you like that!

MASTER FEAH
Watch your dome, boy!

Closer on match and we see Tan take a hit with a folding chair.

Wide on Masters reacting to the hit.

ALL MASTERS
Ohhhhhhhhhh. Yow. Oooooooo. Wow, That's too bad.

Tan recovers and an elaborate Kung Fu fight takes place. He seizes the advantage and his opponent falls to the mat. Tan raises his claw-like hand up over his fallen opponent and gets ready for the final strike.

Angle on the Masters as they react to the off screen hit.

TAN (O.S.)
Whoopah!

SFX: CRACK!

ALL MASTERS
(Whump!) Eeeew. Yuck! Dude!!

Back to Tan who stands over his fallen opponent (Who is still moving) radiating quiet confidence and looking forward toward the future.

INT - DOOR TO MASTER FU'S ROOM - MORNING

The door slowly opens and Tan enters the room. He speaks in a halting manner so it sounds like he has a Chinese accent.

TAN
Master Fu, I have... brought your... breakfast.

Master Fu sits on his bed with a bag of potato chips and a Manga comic book. Tan enters the shot with the tray.

TAN (CONT'D)
Master Fu?

Master Fu looks at his hour glass laying on it's side among the snack-food debris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASTER FU

Woah, is it morning already?

TAN

Master I am... grateful for the education... you and the other... Masters have bestowed... upon me...

MASTER FU

Yeah, don't mention it kid. Hey, listen you wanna grab a broom or something. I think the cat had a little accident over there by the my banjo.

TAN

...I would... like to ask... you a... question.

MASTER FU

Is there any reason you can't ask it while sweeping?

TAN

Master... I have heard that... people in the... outside world... are sometimes... rewarded for their... hard work.

MASTER FU

Hey, kid. I've always been meaning to ask you, what's with the way you talk? Why do you take such long pauses between words?

TAN

I... do... not... under... stand.

MASTER FU

See, right there. "I do... not under... stand". Are you trying to sound more Chinese? Because it doesn't sound more Chinese. It makes you sound like you've taken one chair too many to the old noggin, if you know what I mean.

TAN

I... shall... endeavor to change... master.

MASTER FU

Yeah, whatever. Don't sweat it kid. I was just making an observation. (Fu goes back to comic book) You go ahead talk anyway you want. So long as that kitty stuff gets swept up there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAN

Master, I was wondering if... I too could be compensated for my... efforts here at the temple.

MASTER FU

You are compensated. Look around! You have a bed, food to eat, there's plenty to do, ...good fighting action on Saturday nights.

TAN

I was referring... to... financial compensation.

Fu turns and looks at Tan, seriously.

MASTER FU

Fi-wha?

TAN

Financial compensation. ...Money.

Master Fu lowers his comic book and frowns.

MASTER FU

(serious)

It is time for you to leave.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR - LO FAT TEMPLE - DAY

All the students, dressed in their ornamental finery, are lined up to honor the newly graduated Tan. All the Masters look on. Tan is lead through an elaborate ritual.

OLD TAN (V.O.)

Graduation day! Finally after many years of hard work and study it was time for me to leave. There was only one more test that I needed to pass.

In front of the exit is a huge smoldering pot. A glowing mop on one side and on the other a glowing broom. Tan pulls his sleeves back and approaches the pot. He dramatically grabs the pot with his forearms and lifts it. His arms begin to smoke. He turns and master Fu stands looking at him. He holds up a huge pair of oven mitts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASTER FU

Eighteen years here and no one ever
showed you where we keep the pot holders?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - PALACE OF GOVERNOR WU TIAN - DAY

Large, posh appointed palace. Fanfare music starts to play.

OLD TAN (V.O.)

Little did I know that at that very
moment, far away, in the palace of the
governor, Wu Tian, my own destiny was
becoming intertwined with that of
another's.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. - PALACE OF GOVERNOR WU TIAN - DAY

Great pomp and music fanfare fill the palace as Governor Wu Tian and his wife Wei Rong (Foo Young's parents) sit on their posh thrones. At the end of a long hallway lined by guards, Foo Young walks regally down a red carpet toward her parents. As Foo Young stops in front of them and bows, the music crescendoes and ends. There is a moment of silence.

FOO YOUNG

So, pop, can we make this summons a
snappy one? I've got my traditional
pedicure scheduled for noon.

WOO TIAN

There is very a good reason you have been
brought before your parents.

FOO YOUNG

Before my parents what?

Small pause as the joke bombs.

FOO YOUNG (CONT'D)

Get it? That's a joke. You say, "You've
been brought before you, and I say..."

WEI RONG

Foo Young, it is time to put away the
trappings of youth and move on toward
your new life as an adult woman.

FOO YOUNG

So much for the pedi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOO TIAN

Your mother is right, Foo Young. The time has come for you to meet your betrothed.

FOO YOUNG

My what?

WEI RONG

The young man we've selected to become your future husband.

FOO YOUNG

(dismissing the comment as a joke)

Yeah, that's great. Listen, I was just going to go get something to eat. Can I get you anything?

WOO TIAN

Sure, where are you going?

FOO YOUNG

There's a pretty decent Chinese restaurant at the end of Elm Street.

WOO TIAN

Hey, that sounds good.

(Turning to Foo's mother) What do you say?

WEI RONG

Stay on task, dear.

WOO TIAN

What? Oh, right. Foo Young, this is no joke. You have been betrothed since birth. His name is Tan. He just graduated from the Lo Fat Martial Arts Academy and Cooking School.

Foo's father shows his forearms that bare the marks of the mop and the broom.

WOO TIAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

My Old school! Tan was recommended by my Old master.

FOO YOUNG

Oh, come on dad. I'm too young to get married. I wanna do some stuff first, you know, maybe go to Europe, Bum around...

Foo's father stands and gets officious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOO TIAN

Foo Young! You will either abide by the word of your father, the governor, or suffer banishment.

FOO YOUNG

Banishment?

WOO TIAN

Banishment!

Foo looks at her father then at her mother for a beat.

FOO YOUNG

Okay.

Foo turns and starts to leave.

FOO YOUNG (CONT'D)

See you!

Foo walks down the carpet toward the exit.

WEI RONG

Foo Louise Young! Where are you going?

FOO YOUNG

I'm banishing, engaging in banishment. I'm in a state of banishmicity. Look me up next time you're in Copenhagen.

WOO TIAN

Guards! Stop her!

Two of the governor's guards grab Foo by the arms.

FOO YOUNG

I can't leave? What kind of banishment is this?

WOO TIAN

Bring her to me.

FOO YOUNG

Hey pop, are there any last words you want to say to these jerks before I mop the floor with them?

Foo's father sits down exasperated.

WOO TIAN

I yah. Here we go again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Foo attacks the guards. More rush in and she dispatches them. Even more run in and she is surrounded. They hold her at bay. Defiantly, she runs through a very impressive kata and ends in an attack stance. The guards are stunned. Eventually one of the guards rallies and rushes her. (O.S. Crack) the guard's helmet rolls back into the shot and all the other guards watch it as it settles on the floor at their feet. Then all the guards rally and rush into the fight.

PAN WITH THE GUARDS as they are thrown all over the grand hall, smashing furniture and statues.

On Foo's parents

Foo's father is not amused, but her mother looks slyly impressed. A guard flies through the scene.

GUARD

Aaaaaaaaaaaa!!!

WEI RONG

(leaning close to her husband)
Impressive. Her father has taught her well.

WOO TIAN

I should have taught her to play the trombone.

Angle on two guards, Ping and Pong, who wait to rush into the fight.

PONG

Come on Ping, what are we waiting for?

PING

We can't just all rush her at once.

PONG

Why not?

PING

You obviously don't know how these Kung Fu fights work, we have to wait our turn. Okay, I'm goin' in. Here hold my saxophone.

Ping hands over the saxophone and rushes O.S. There is a huge cracking sound (SFX) and Pong flinches. Pong shrugs, musters his courage and rushes O.S. There is a long off key blast from a saxophone. (SFX)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIDE - ON GRAND HALL

Foo's Mother stands.

WEI RONG
(Yelling)
Enough!

Everything stops.

ON FOO YOUNG

Foo has two of the guards in headlocks while she stands victorious on a pile of others.

DRAMATIC UPSHOT - ON FOO'S MOTHER.

WEI RONG (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
(to Foo) You are banished to your room,
young lady.

Back to Foo, she releases the two guards she has under her arms and they fall down the pile to the ground.

FOO YOUNG
Awwwww, jeez, mom.

Pouting, Foo stomps off to her room.

FOO YOUNG (MUMBLING) (CONT'D)
I don't know why I have to go to my room.
It's not fair... it's really not fair...

Ping and Pong lay at the bottom of the pile of knocked out guards. They look at each other

PING
She is such a B-R-A-T! Brat!

PONG
You know, we really stink at being
guards.

DISSOLVE TO:

WIDE - ON TAN IN FRONT OF THE LO FAT ACADEMY - DAY

Young Tan picks up his belongings and puts them in his pack. He slings the pack across his back.

OLD TAN (V.O.)
Possessing very little knowledge of the
outside world, I confidently reassured
myself that I could face any new
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 OLD TAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 challenge it had to throw at my feet.
 AAAHHH!,

Tan takes one step...and instantly drops O.S.

 TAN
 Ah!

WIDE - ON TAN - PANNING - CONTINUOUS

Tan tumbles down a very steep cliff. He smashes through houses, snaps clotheslines, and decimates animal pens.

 TAN
 AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!
 Oof, ow, ooh ooh, ow! Ah, AH, AH!
 Chicken..... Oww, ohh, ah, ah.... House,
 er ah.... Cow. Unff!

BOTTOM OF STEEP HILL - CONTINUOUS

A dizzy, dirty Young Tan bounces to a stop at the bottom of the hill. As he recovers, he finds he is surrounded by a group of very angry "villagers".

 LANDLADY
 (angrily)
 You klutz! You busted up my chicken coop!
 Now my chickens have to live outside.

 UNCLE BILL
 (angrily)
 Look what you did to my house! Now
 there's a second hole in the roof!

 WOO-PING
 (angrily)
 You knocked over my cow. Now you have to
 marry her!

All the villagers look at Woo-ping. Tan crawls out of the middle of the crowd and stands up.

 TAN
 Please! I'm really sorry for all the
 trouble, but if you'll just stop yelling
 at me, I'm sure I can find a reasonable
 solution to all your problems. Now,
 here's the very first thing I'm going to
 d...

Tan Points.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAN (CONT'D)

Is that a Hun invasion?

All of the villagers TURN AND LOOK. The land lady looks back to Tan.

LANDLADY

(realizing)

Hey! There he goes!

Tan runs away run.

WOO-PING

That's no solution!

All the villagers run after Tan.

LANDLADY / UNCLE BILL / WOO-PING

(ad-lib) EyeAh. Where did he go? Grab him! / Fix my roof or I'll fix you! / Wait! We have to shop for matching wedding rings!, etc.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - PALACE OF GOVERNOR WU TIAN - NIGHT

A rope is thrown from Foo's bedroom window. A dark costumed figure appears and slides down the rope.

OLD TAN (V.O.)

That night, under the cover of darkness, a costumed figure sneaked from the Wu Tian palace. It was the Masked Woman Warrior.

The Masked Warrior Woman lands effortlessly and looks around. She quickly disappears into the forest. And, because it's so dark, bumps into a tree. (O.S.) (SFX: BONK!)

THE MASKED WOMAN WARRIOR (O.S.)

Oh, for Pete sake!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - HENG'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

Old Tan sits next to Heng and Heng's dog. They are both sipping glasses of lemonade.

HENG

The Masked Woman Warrior? Who the heck is that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD TAN

You never heard of the Masked Woman
Warrior? The avenger of the weak the
righter of wrongs?

HENG

What was she looking for?

OLD TAN

I didn't know it then but, she was
looking for me!

Music: Dramatic Sting.

HENG

Oh, it's just Foo Young in a dark outfit.

OLD TAN

No it wasn't. It was the Masked Woman
Wwww...wait a minute...

CUT TO BLACK.

*

END OF ACT ONE