

SCENE 2

A martial arts gym, midday.

JOHN is 23, MARIE is 14.

Gym bags, plastic chairs, and training dummies are situated around the room. A shelf with a few reusable practice boards, some dodgeballs, a speaker.

MARIE, wearing a white martial arts uniform with a purple belt, is sitting next to her own gym bag and removing her arm guards. She has a chest guard on as well, but can't get it off without some assistance. Her belt has a few pieces of colorful tape wrapped around one end.

JOHN, wearing a black martial arts uniform with a black belt, approaches her. He is carrying a small roll of black tape.

JOHN

Ma'am?

MARIE

Yes?

JOHN

Would you like any help with that?

MARIE

Oh, yes. Thank you sir.

MARIE gets up and stands with her back to JOHN. He begins to untie the chest guard.

JOHN

Sorry for asking, but what's your name again? I know I've heard Master Banks say it before.

MARIE
It's Marie. And you're Mr... something...?

JOHN laughs.

JOHN
Mr. Griffin.

MARIE smiles.

MARIE
Mr. Griffin. Hi.

JOHN finishes untying the chest guard and MARIE turns to face him as she pulls it off.

JOHN
So, how long have you been taking classes?

MARIE
Guess.

JOHN
Well, judging by your belt color, I'd say... two years?

MARIE
Yes! And you're second-degree, so that means... forever?

JOHN
Yep. Actually, speaking of belts-

He holds up a small roll of black tape.

JOHN (CON'T)
It's time to get taped.

MARIE
Yes sir.

JOHN kneels down in front of MARIE on one knee, as if he's proposing. She holds the taped end of her belt out to him and he begins to apply the black tape.

JOHN
Any fun weekend plans?

MARIE shakes her head: no.

JOHN
No goin' out on the town with girlfriends, no wild crazy nights?

MARIE laughs hesitantly; she's never been spoken to in this manner before, but finds it funny despite not knowing why.

In an attempt to sound more adult, knowing full well her "job" was a volunteer gig:

MARIE
Um, I guess I'm just looking around for another job since my last one.

JOHN
What did you do?

MARIE
I'm- I was a coxswain for a women's crew team.

JOHN
Oh! That's impressive.

MARIE
Thank you.

JOHN
You know, if you're looking for a job, we are hiring.

MARIE
Really?

JOHN gets up from his kneeling position.

JOHN
Yeah, you should ask Master Banks about it.

MARIE
(flattered)
Okay. I will.

MARIE turns her back to him to bend down and finish packing her things. Awkward pause while JOHN watches her for a moment.

JOHN
Oh, earlier in class today I saw you struggling with your spin back kick, if you don't mind me saying.

MARIE
Oh, yeah. I'm not very good at that one.

JOHN
Here.

He goes to a nearby shelf and pulls out a reusable practice board.

JOHN (CON'T)
Try it.

MARIE
Now?

JOHN
Yeah. Come on, we'll stay here until you get it.
(teasing)
Unless you're afraid.

MARIE
I'm not afraid!

JOHN fake lunges at her and she jumps backwards, giggling.

JOHN
Okay, now focus.

MARIE nods, suddenly all business, afraid to mess up in front of him. She tries to execute the spin back kick but fails, her foot hitting

*the board but not in the center.
It hurts, she grits her teeth in
pain.*

JOHN (CON'T)

Try again.

*MARIE takes a step back, then
approaches the board again. She
does the move, this time breaking
the board cleanly.*

JOHN (CON'T)

Yeah! See, there you go.

MARIE

Yep! There I go.

JOHN

Is your foot okay?

MARIE

It just stings a little.

JOHN

Do you mind if I- ?

*JOHN kneels down again and
gestures for MARIE to put her foot
on his knee. She does so
hesitantly.*

*He holds the foot gently in both
hands, examining it. MARIE glances
around. It is unclear how she
feels about this.*

MARIE

Wh-

JOHN

Looks fine to me.

*JOHN releases the foot and stands
up.*

MARIE

Oh, good.
(jokingly)
I'm afraid of feet.

JOHN
You're afraid of feet.

MARIE
Oh absolutely.

JOHN
So, like this?

He suddenly pretends to side kick her. She jumps out of the way in an exaggerated fashion and lets out a tiny yelp. This is all done in an intentionally cute way, or at least, in a way that she thinks is cute.

MARIE
Yes! Stop, that's scary!

JOHN smiles cheekily.

JOHN
Sorry.

MARIE makes an equally cheeky face at him as she picks up her gym bag and slings it over her shoulder.

JOHN (CON'T)
So, are you a senior in college?

MARIE
(a bit confused)
No.

JOHN
A senior in high school?

MARIE shakes her head.

JOHN (CON'T)
How old are you?

MARIE
I'm fourteen. I'm in 8th grade, why, how old are you?

JOHN
(caught off guard)
I'm twenty-three.

*MARIE blushes and laughs,
embarrassed.*

MARIE
Oh my God. I thought you were seventeen.

JOHN
No.

MARIE
Wow. / Sorry.

JOHN
Sorry.

*They both chuckle awkwardly for a
second.*

JOHN (CON'T)
Well, I'm gonna-

*He gestures vaguely towards a
different part of the gym.*

MARIE
Yeah. Well- see you Wednesday!

JOHN
Mmhmm.

*MARIE does a little jog out of the
gym and off SR. JOHN stands still
for a moment, unblinking. Lights
fade as he exits SL.*