



JASON DEMPSTER'S SWORD REVIEWS

EPISODE I

"THE PURPLE EMPEROR KATANA"

Written by

Alex Schulman

a.reed.schulman@gmail.com
410.963.4023

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Through first-person POV (filmed via CAMERA PHONE), the hands of JASON DEMPSTER slowly pull out a *VERY SPECIAL SWORD* from a satin-lined chest.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jason fills up several PLASTIC JUGS with water. Then, he places a drop of red food coloring in each one.

Stirring vigorously.

DAVID, a roommate in pajama pants, walks into the kitchen and into frame while sipping on a slushie.

DAVID

Oh, hey man.

JASON

(o.s.)

Hey.

Jason returns to stirring.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A printer barks and whirs while Jason's fingers tap along. Out from the printer comes a set of crimson demonic masks with bulbous cheeks.

The top of the paper reads: "oni.jpg"

TITLE UP:

"TRANSLATION: 'ONI' MEANS 'DEMON' IN JAPANESE"

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

The camera phone's view is now a wider one: a quaint, suburban backyard.

Resting center-frame are three identical CINDERBLOCK TOWERS, each adorned with PLASTIC JUGS of red water.

They wear the same DEMONIC MASKS printed out just a moment ago. They also have DEMONIC HORNS glued to their caps.

Standing stoically behind those towers is a man wearing an oversized black tee and khaki cargo shorts.

He bows to the camera.

We are his audience, and he is JASON DEMPSTER.

TITLE UP:

"JASON DEMPSTER'S SWORD REVIEWS: THE PURPLE EMPEROR KATANA"

Jason shows off his special sword, *THE PURPLE EMPEROR*, as he runs his fingers along the pommel.

JASON

(to camera)

Welcome, viewers. As you may know, it was my birthday last month. I purchased this sword at the Durnden Mills Mall with my hard-earned present money. Immediately I was struck by its regal color and frilled pommel. From a visual standpoint, it's stunning. But let's not judge a sword by its sheath.

Jason smiles. He bobs back in an offensive stance and slashes the first target.

Jason leans in. The jug is unaffected.

He repositions for a second attack and swipes. It knocks the second jug over, but again, there's no exterior damage.

Suppressing his anger, Jason wipes his brow with a hand towel.

He goes in for one last strike. This one's a much stronger thrust. And a successful one too; *The Purple Emperor* punctures the jug.

Though it's now stuck inside. Jason manages to pry it out - but not without spilling red water everywhere.

He examines the blade. It's bent. Jason screams.

INT. JASON'S HONDA - SOON AFTER

Jason drives while talking to his phone, which is now fashioned to the dashboard.

JASON

I am now documenting my attempt to get a refund from the Mystic Sword Kiosk.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

I understand this is unorthodox
practice for a review, however this
sword is anything but orthodox.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - FOOD COURT - DUSK

In first-person POV: Jason strolls around with his camera phone strapped to his chest, filming the sights of the DURNDEN MILLS MALL.

It's mostly empty save for a few restaurants -and three MYSTERIOUS CLOAKED FIGURES obscured by fog.

Jason doesn't notice them. But he does notice TERIYAKI EXPRESS III, a stir-fry eatery.

JASON

Yeah I don't really come here much
unless I'm craving teriyaki-

Jason points to the place. Out in front, A bored TERIYAKI-SAMPLE MAN distributes chicken morsels.

JASON (CONT'D)

-I cannot recommend Teriyaki Express Three enough. It's the bright light of the Durnden Mills Mall and also the only place here that offers free samples.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - KIOSK VILLA - EVENING

Jason sets his eyes on the prize. In between THE LOTION OF THE OCEAN (tropical fish and lotion kiosk) and LOS DRONELY BOYS (drone kiosk) is another specialty kiosk:

THE MYSTIC SWORD.

LEV, an old man with a wispy beard, packs up what little stock he has into some boxes. There's only a few remaining swords and blinking cell phone cases on display.

Jason approaches him.

JASON

Hi. The katana you sold me is a dud. I'd like a refund.

LEV

May I see?

Jason ceremonially hands him *The Purple Emperor*, which is then received with a high level of care.

These are two men who treat steel with respect.

LEV (CONT'D)
My sincerest apologies. But I cannot give you a refund. This sword is used.

JASON
(raising voice)
Well of course I used it-

LEV
-I can however offer an exchange.
One that you'll benefit from.

He carefully hands him a katana wrapped in red tissue paper.

LEV (CONT'D)
The Red Empress.

They both bow.

JASON
(honored)
Thank you, sir.

LEV
What's your name, boy?

JASON
Jason.

Lev rifles through a few boxes by the ground. Jason pulls out a business card to hand to him. He holds it out. It reads:

"JASON DEMPSTER'S SWORD REVIEWS! Streaming now on YouTube"

JASON (CONT'D)
-Jason Dempster. And yours?

Lev ignores him on all fronts, still digging through his stock. Jason awkwardly places his card on the counter.

Lev emerges from under the counter and puts something in Jason's hand, palm closed.

LEV
A fine trinket you've found. You will treat it well, yes? I know it will treat you well.

Jason steps back and opens his hand.

It's a gaudy CRYSTAL NECKLACE. There's an engraving:

A fire-breathing DRAGON and the name JASON.

Jason's name. He really takes it in.

JASON
(taking it in)
Thanks.

There is no one to thank. The old man is gone, though he didn't take Jason's business card with him.

JASON (CONT'D)
Huh?

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - FOOD COURT - EVENING

Jason walks and talks to his phone through the front facing camera.

JASON
You know, the closest thing I wear to jewelry is my belt buckle.

He points the camera to his belt buckle, a bronze radioactive symbol. He then shows off his new necklace.

JASON (CONT'D)
Cool, right?

Upon a closer look, the crystal necklace emits a dim red glow.

EXT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - GARAGE ROOF - NIGHT

The camera now has Jason placed in the middle of the mall's barren rooftop parking. He prepares an impromptu slash-sesh by putting some old soda cups on a milk-crate.

But before he can unsheathe *The Red Empress*, a SECURITY GUARD approaches him.

SECURITY GUARD
Hey -You can't do that here.

JASON
Sorry I'm working on a student project.

SECURITY GUARD
(oh yeah)
Where do you go to school?

Beat.

JASON
(can't hear you)
-C-Come again?

Jason knocks over the cups in a race to turn off his camera.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Jason points his camera to the glowing crystal necklace. He fidgets with it.

JASON
I think it runs off a watch
battery.

Jason looks up, gasps, and stumbles back. His phone falls to the floor.

The camera POV switches to an OMNISCIENT HD CAMERA W/ SOAP OPERA GLOSS.

The three CLOAKED FIGURES from earlier appear before Jason, uncloaked. And they are very, very hot. They are:

-JAMES EBERSCORN, leather jacket and snake-fang earrings
-TRAMES EBERSCORN, leather jacket and permanent sunglasses
-KARINA LOCKTHORNE, red cocktail dress for some reason

TRAMES and KARINA recline on the hood of Jason's Honda Accord while JAMES circles a very dazed TERIYAKI-SAMPLE MAN.

JASON stares at the group in disbelief. He slowly reattaches his phone to his dorky looking chest harness.

TRAMES
Must you take so long, James?

JAMES
What can I say, Trames? I play with my food.

TRAMES
Well then just get on with it.

JAMES
 (to the sample-man)
 He said it, not me.

JAMES opens his mouth nice 'n wide to reveal--
 --yep, VAMPIRE FANGS. Jason covers his mouth in shock.

JASON
 (under his breath)
 Oni.

TITLE UP:

"ENGLISH TRANSLATION - DEMONS"

Jason rushes towards the action, brandishing his new sword.
 He unsheathes it and swings it around.

JASON (CONT'D)
 (brave nerves)
 -H-Hey, back off!

James obliges --to a degree.

JAMES
 The sign says free samples. It
 doesn't specify what I could and
 couldn't taste.

JASON
 (still swinging)
 What?

JAMES
 The sign said free samples-

Trames chimes in from the front bumper.

TRAMES
*Dull-tooth. Who exactly do you
 think you are?*

Jason puts his sword down.

JASON
 I'm Jason.

JAMES
*And I'm losing my patience, dull-
 tooth.*

JASON
(huh)
Dull-tooth?

KARINA
(re: the sword)
Careful, this dull-tooth has an
edge.

TRAMES
He was able to detect us, too.

JASON
You're sitting on my car.

KARINA
It would be wise if we left. The
council frowns upon unnecessary-
(she sizes Jason up)
-spills.

TRAMES
I'm with Karina on this one. Let's
move.

They seamlessly hop off of Jason's car into a saunter towards
the exit.

JASON
Hey wait-

TRAMES
Sorry, I've grown tired of this
interaction.
(to James)
Come along, brother.

James growls.

JAMES
I still haven't fed.

TRAMES
And you will. But not here.

They walk nearly out of sight. James hangs back, now hissing.

TRAMES (CONT'D)
(scolding)
Brother...

JAMES
Hmph.

James returns to his posse,

-As we switch POV back to Jason's camera phone.

Jason approaches the Teriyaki-Sample Man, who looks like he just woke up.

JASON

Hey, you okay?

TERIYAKI-SAMPLE MAN

-N-No.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - FOOD COURT - SOON AFTER

Jason walks the Sample Man back to his post.

He also orders some food.

JASON

Hi -Yes I'd like a chicken teriyaki bowl with no veggies.

While he waits for his order, he performs a detailed inspection of *The Red Empress*. He prods the flowery design on the sheath, which is really just a sticker. It easily peels off.

The sword's hilt nearly slides off too. Jason sighs.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - KIOSK VILLA

Jason walks back to the Mystic Sword Kiosk. It's completely bare. The sign's gone too. The business card he left for Lev is gone as well.

His crystal glows.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - OFFICES - EVENING

Jason knocks on the door for mall management. HELENE, an administrator, answers.

HELENE

Office hours are from-

Jason pushes through the door. Helene backs up.

JASON

Do you have the contact information
for the Mystic Sword Kiosk? The one
that sold swords?

Helene's space is warm and seasonally dressed, but it's not prepared for guests. There is only one desk and one chair. She sits down.

HELENE

We have a kiosk that sold swords?
That's not right.

JASON

Please, check the directory.

She does.

HELENE

I don't see anything.

JASON

Are you sure?

HELENE

Yes.

JASON

We have a serious problem on our
hands. I just caught ..several
loiters harassing a mall employee.

HELENE

Okay..

Helene notices something on her computer. Her demeanor changes from cautiously helpful to moderately annoyed.

HELENE (CONT'D)

(sternly)

We actually do have a problem on
our hands. Is this you?

She flips the computer around. The monitor shows Jason frozen in time, wielding a sword.

HELENE (CONT'D)

Sir, is this you with the sword?

Jason is silent as the video begins to play. The security footage shows him swinging his sword adjacent to the dazed Teriyaki-Sample Man.

No one else is present in the footage. Not Karina, not Trames, --and not James.

HELENE (CONT'D)
..Do you have a sword with you
right now?

He does. It's sticking out of the Teriyaki Express III bag.

HELENE (CONT'D)
I'm going to have to ask you to
leave this mall.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Jason films himself eating chicken in his car.

JASON
(chewing)
I don't know how they do it, but
every bite is a tender bite.

His necklace then glows an even brighter red than before. It levitates up out from his shirt. As if it's being drawn to something in the sky.

Jason grabs it for further examination.

JASON (CONT'D)
Huh.

And quickly goes back to his meal.

JASON (CONT'D)
-Yeah, my money's on the sauce.

Then, there's a little knock on his window. He glances outside but there's nothing to see. Again, Jason brings his attention back to the teriyaki bowl.

JASON (CONT'D)
-I'd rate this bowl five-

Another knock.

This inspires Jason to get out of his car and investigate, bowl and sword in hand.

JASON (CONT'D)
Hello?

The POV switches again to the wider, glossier, CW-STYLE
CAMERA.

The switch will happen every time a vampire hottie is on screen.

This particular hottie is James Eberscorn, and he has been slav-squatting on Jason's car the whole time. He jumps off and slaps Jason's chicken bowl to the ground in one swift motion.

JASON (CONT'D)
-H-Hey- Why would you do that??

James holds the business card for Jason Dempster's Sword Reviews. He chuckles and tosses the card.

JAMES
So you know the feeling-

James gets in vampire battle-stance. His claws are out.

JAMES (CONT'D)
-of having your meal *interrupted*.

He dashes towards Jason Dempster who leaps into battle-
-RIGHT ON TIME.

Jason catches the Vampire's slash with his katana, pushing the fiend back by force.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Hmph.

JASON
(screaming)
Huagh!

Jason responds in kind with a slash of his own.

INT. HELENE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Helene watches the security footage in real time. Jason deftly performs a ballet of steel, bobbing back and forth with his blade.

Slashing, striking, panting. Lots of panting.

HELENE
(muttering)
What the fuck did I tell this guy...

Helene picks up a walkie talkie.

HELENE (CONT'D)
(to walkie)
Mike, please go to B2. He's back.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

James catches the katana with his hands. He smiles. The blade starts to crack. Dempster's on the ropes.

The vampire unsheathes his fangs. Time to go in for the kill.

JAMES
You're delaying the inevitable,
dull-too-

JASON
No!

Somehow, Jason powers through. He thrusts his sword forward like he would to a water jug. Though this is no water jug. James Eberscorn is a vampire.

Jason strikes the vampire in the heart-
-who then PROMPTLY EXPLODES.

Jason is violently painted with blood as he struggles to pull his shitty sword out of what remains of James. He succeeds, but not without *The Red Empress* completely breaking apart.

Jason bum-rushes it back to the car.

In the distance, the Security Guard runs towards him.

SECURITY GUARD
Hey! Stop!

INT. JASON'S HONDA - CONTINUOUS

Back to the Dashboard's POV.

Still driving, still blood-soaked, -Jason hyperventilates.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jason busts open his war chest and grabs as many swords as he can hold.

INT. DURNDEN MILLS MALL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Helene and the Security Guard examine the pile of blood and James. Shards of steel and plastic mingle with the mess, like a fucked-up gazpacho.

Enter Karina and Trames.

KARINA

Did you call the police?

SECURITY GUARD

Yes.

KARINA

Call them back. There's been a
misunderstanding.

SECURITY GUARD & HELENE

(near monotone)

A misunderstanding.

KARINA

It seems like someone made a mess
of their spaghetti sauce.

Karina pulls out a tupperware container packed with spaghetti from her purse. She empties its contents on top of the blood puddle.

KARINA (CONT'D)

We'll take it from here.

The mall employees nod and walk away. Trames approaches the mess, sifts through the noodles, and discovers James's snake-fang earrings.

TRAMES

My dear brother...

He pockets them. Then, something else catches Trames's eyes. It's the business card.

He flips it over and we see a photo of Jason posing with a sword in a kimono. Trames finally cracks a smile.

TRAMES (CONT'D)

...We may find vengeance after all.

EXT. JASON'S BACKYARD - MORNING

Camera Phone POV of a familiar training ground. Next to the plastic jugs rest a couple of fresh watermelons: each one adorned with demonic masks and horns.

Jason slowly walks into frame holding several swords.

Although he's freshly showered, there's still a few flecks of blood on his forehead that he missed. He bows while holding the swords.

BEGIN MONTAGE OF:

-Jason slicing the jugs and fruit with different blades

-Red liquid splashing all over him

Dabbing his crimson splashed face, Jason absolutely loses it. He drops his sword. And pukes up chicken teriyaki for an extended period of time.

BACK TO MONTAGE OF:

-Jason dumping out all of the red water

-Throwing out the demonic decorations

-Refilling one big jug with regular water

Jason takes a deep breath. He goes in for a slice.

FREEZE FRAME.

TITLE UP:

"THE PURPLE EMPEROR KATANA: 0 out of 5!"

INT. EBERSCORN COMPUTER ROOM - LATER

In a dimly lit room, Trames and Karina watch the end of Jason's review. They turn to each other gobsmacked.

THE END.