

# THE HEART OF A WARRIOR

Today I got my chance to speak. My name is Victoria Veres, and this is my story.

If you assume we're different in a way, then you're wrong. If you think that people only fight engaged or on a tatami mat, then think again. Our entire lives consist of fighting... Realization of the fact that we're so akin and resemblant is a great discovery. We're all obsessed with fear now and then, each one of us has similar weaknesses. Life will test your stamina, punching you over and over again. You got a choice: either you throw in a towel, or you stand and fight back. The last thing I need is pity. I want respect.

The winner is the one who has less reasons to surrender. What are we fighting for? Why do we wipe the blood off our foreheads and hear bones cracking over and over? And how did it come out that it has become our addiction? I don't like cages, I don't respect such bloodletting. I don't want to be an animal put on display before the audience. But today I've got many reasons to stand in the centre of the octagon. Today I'll tell you how it all began.

I was 14. That year I went to FWS [Family Wushu School]. The main discipline there was Wushu Sanda (sparring). The first few fights turned out to be a real challenge... for my trainer. I just flew and rushed. Unconsciously. Squall of emotions and the complete lack of fear. I simply bumped into my opponents. And kept losing, over and over. "Stay calm, where does all the aggression comes from?" was the question that kept bothering my trainer. I didn't know what to answer. I was just like that in normal life. School fights, scandals – I was extremely short-tempered, and I preferred solitude to company. I had a spite against life. And life kept returning the favour.

In 2012 I became Wushu Sanda Champion of Russian Federation.

It was time to decide what to do next. No matter how hard I tried to quit Wushu, I couldn't help it anyway. I've drown myself in studying, books and my spite against the world. Trainings were the only relief. I tortured myself in the gym, and my anger was coming out through pain. It became my salvation. It's hard to construe, but I began to enjoy the pain, like I was examining myself with it. And it was my first step to the top. I have finally found myself. It became clear to me that this is my path.

I always was an introverted kind of person. Obstinance and personal commitment were, I believe, my main features of character. Features that helped me to a great extent during my trainings. But girl can hardly consider them her merits, because we give life. All women become mothers eventually, I consider it the goal any woman shall reach. But with such kind of activity you have to sacrifice every single moment of your free time. You live in non-stop mode. Trainings – sleep, trainings – sleep, again and again. Your free time is out of question until you achieve the goal.

Of course, my family didn't approve of my choice. But how could they? You won't question that they don't want to see the pain, bruises, disjointed limbs... Of course, not! But I move on. My training career starts, and I decide to fight in a cage. And that circle starts again, everyday trainings. I train entirely with men. And with every successful hit, every throw, I get closer to my dream.

My first professional fight took place at Fight Nights Global 48. It's the reference point when my hatred for the cage emerged. Before the fight I was full of energy, I eagerly wanted to fight, but what happened after it... I won. I raised my head and saw the arena. No, the circus. Cage, cameras, that mob. Those people that came for the blood. And the money-bags in the first row... I could've heard them chanting "Kill her!", from those, who have never fought themselves. Who's that trendy boy with glasses? And that girl beside him with lifebelt-looking lips, gazing at the screen of her phone? We're losing our blood in front of her, breaking our limbs, and she couldn't show just a little respect, posting her photos on Instagram. And now tell me, have I won? No. I've earned money. I've earned money on a fighter just like me. She's closer to me than anyone in here. She's got a nosebleed and they tell her to stand beside me for a photograph. A photograph. What a silly thing. Arrogance reigns everywhere. Fighters behave like they were never in need. We're clowns, and we're being kept in the dark. And we proudly wear our fancy costumes.

But you know what? I don't care. I will fight in a cage once more. Because I got too many reasons to be there. Because it's the reason we get up every day and go to the gym. This is why we endure goddamn pain. I will fight, but not for the sake of audience and broadcasts. No. It's for my family.

I need no audience in order to fight. I don't get undressed to draw attention, it profanes my body and dishonours my house. These are my principles. I'm always ready to admit my defeat, but I won't ever give up. We bear honour in one fist and truth in the other one. If my arm is broken, I will strike with the other. We're all being defeated sometimes. But it's not the reason to stop fighting. If I am to leave this world tomorrow, I'll spent my last day in the training gym.

I see my future in the school, which I'm surely going to open someday. We'll raise champions there. We'll be giving our health to future generation. And the doors will be open for those with the heart of a warrior.