

## SCENE ONE: YOU'VE GOT THE DEMON INSIDE YOU

The cage: a padded ring surrounded by chainlink you'll never climb over even with a running start. Spaced equidistantly around the inside of the ring are five stools. Beside each are gym bags stuffed with towels, hoodies, jackets, handwraps, gloves, mitts, cell phones--everything you'll ever need.

When the light is at full, it is bright and unforgiving. There are no shadows here. There is no hiding here.

At the moment, the lights are dim, streaming in from somewhere high above.

HALO enters the cage.

HALO

You ever hit someone?  
It hurts.  
I mean, it hurts you, too.  
One of the first things they teach you.

Everyone else enters the space, circling, taking their corners.

HALO (CONT'D)

An inch either way is the difference between breaking your fingers and breaking their nose. Because at the end of the day, it's bone and meat ramming into bone and meat. And I know you don't like to think of yourself like that. Like meat. But one good punch...and you remember.

When I was little, I had an aunt who said I was so sweet and innocent I should have a halo. Then I got old enough to act up, act out, and she stopped. Instead she started saying, "You've got the demon. You've got the demon inside you, Halo."

There's no room for mistakes in here.  
No room for regrets.  
No room for apologies  
No room to run.  
No room to think.  
No room to imagine what I could have done, should have done  
There's just bone and meat and blood and sweat, and hit after hit, locked together, waiting for an opening.

(MORE)

HALO (CONT'D)

Or the bell.  
Or to see who breaks first—they...  
Or me.

KYLE and GINA walk to the middle of the stage--GINA in gloves, KYLE wearing kickboxing strike pads HALO watches as they begin to spar--a routine of punches, kicks, and knee strikes that builds in speed, intensity, and sheer violence.

KYLE halts the training when he sees HALO.

The lights snap to full.

KYLE

Hey. Can I help you?

HALO

I um...I saw the flyer. The one on the door?

KYLE

For mixed martial arts lessons?  
You interested?

HALO

Yeah.  
Yeah, I am.  
If there's still room in the class.

KYLE

Totally, totally.

They shake hands.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Kyle.

HALO

Halo.

KYLE

Halo.  
It's not actually a class, though. It's one-on-one training  
with Gina here.

HALO

Hey.