THE LESSON

Scene opens night time, Hospital lawn, storm raging, lightning striking constantly nearby, instant cracks of thunder, high gusts of wind causing the torrential rain to blow sideways....Bishop stands, gun stretched out, her hair whipping across her face.....20 feet away, a man stands, soaked, crying, screaming, holding a gun to his hostage's head....The hostage stares through the storm at Bishop and mouths...)

Gibbs: "Show me you can shoot in a storm"

(scene fades to black and white)

2 DAYS EARLIER

(scene opens in NCIS bullpen, full team sitting at desks, Gibbs trots down the stairs, enters the bullpen, lays a file on McGee's desk....)

McGee: "What's this, boss?"

(Gibbs continues walking to the desk next to his old desk, sits, looks over at Bishop, shakes his head, clicky clacks....stares at the monitor, slaps it, goes back to clicky clack)

Bishop: 'Monitor on the blink again, Gibbs?"

(Gibbs turns to Bishop...stares...)

Gibbs: “No, Bishop...I just like slapping things that don’t work...(voice raises) “LIKE YOU PEOPLE!”

(Everyone looks quickly at their desk, computer, phone....they check calendars, case que, case backlog...nothing...they all look over to Gibbs, blank expression)

Torres: “Work on what? We're caught up, Gibbs!”

McGee: “He’s right, boss...reports, budget, everything...”

(They look to Gibbs....still clicky clacking....He finally looks up at the team...)

Gibbs: “Okay...good”

(Bishop glares at Gibbs...does scrunchy mouth....Gibbs gives small grin...)

Gibbs; “I still got it”

(Team looks at each other, embarrassed...McGee finally picks up the file Gibbs laid down on his desk...pulls documents out...reads them...looks up at Bishop, smiling)

McGee: “You’re finally doing it?”

(Bishop looks over at McGee...)

Bishop: “Yes”

McGee: “Good for you, Bishop...i wish you well...”

Bishop: “Oh yea...The Leroy Jethro Gibbs Shooting Competition....”

(Gibbs looks up....)

Gibbs: “Law Enforcement Shooting Competition....”

Bishop: “Oh...they still call it that? Haven’t you won it the last 6 years in a row?”

McGee: “Every year he entered.....He’s missed 4 of them because he was busy”

Gibbs: “Yea, cases...imagine that”

Torres: “Hey...She’s good...”

Bishop: “Thank you Torres”

(Gibbs gets up...as he walks by Bishop's desk...)

Gibbs: "Are you good enough yet to shoot in a storm, Bishop?"

(She watches him walk out....stares at him....sits back...closes her eyes...)

McGee: "Bishop...what the heck was THAT about?"

(Bishop keeps her eyes closed, leans her head back...and remembers...)

7 YEARS AGO

(scene opens at Law Enforcement Gun Range....Bishop standing at a shooter's table, ear protection on, protective glasses on...She aims at the target, shoots 3 quick rounds...She looks at the target...2 in the center circle, 1 outside...She nods her head in satisfaction...She sees Gibbs standing behind her...He looks at her target, slowly shakes his head, walks away)

Bishop: "What? Not good enough for you, Gibbs?"

(Gibbs stops...He quickly walks to the table next to her, puts on ear protection, eye protection, pulls his sidearm up suddenly, without taking time to aim, fires 6 continuous rounds...Bishop looks at his target...6 holes, all spaced within 1 inch of each other...She looks at Gibbs in disbelief...He takes off his glasses and ear gear, tosses them on the table, without looking at Bishop, he says..)

Gibbs: “That’s the difference in saving someone and killing someone...You’re not good enough, Bishop”

(He walks off without another word...Bishop glares, face turns red...she snaps back around towards her target, fires 6 rounds....1 in the center, 5 off center...She muffles a scream....The shooter to her left comments...)

Shooter: “He’s just trying to make you a better shooter”

Bishop: “He’s got a funny way of showing it!”

(The shooter nods at Gibbs’s target...)

Shooter: “He just showed you everything you need to see, ma’am...”

(Bishop, furious, ejects her clip, loads her weapon in its carrying case, storms off the range)

PRESENT DAY

(Bishop opens her eyes, hears McGee calling her name....She blinks, looks over at him)

Bishop: “Sorry McGee...just thinking...”

McGee: “Bishop...this says you’re entering the All Entry Competition...that’s including the FBI....”

Dawson: “And the Air Marshall’s Service...those guys can shoot!”

Torres: “Yea...they train in close quarters...have to be able to shoot someone without shooting a hole in the airplane...Muy pressure, amiga...”

McGee: “Bishop...you sure you want to....”

Bishop: “What? Want to shoot against men too? Are you saying a woman can’t shoot as well as a man?”

(She leans back....looks away....closes her eyes again....)

4 YEARS AGO

(scene opens at the gun range...Bishop and Gibbs, tables next to each other...Gibbs fires 3 rounds, dead center...Bishop glares at the target, fires 3 shots...all 3 in the center, 1 slightly off the grouping)

Gibbs: “Not bad, Bishop...You can almost shoot as well as a man”

(He fires 6 rapid rounds....all dead center..Bishop slams in a fresh clip, fires 6 rounds...2 are off the center....She is furious....Gibbs shakes his head...)

Gibbs: “Not yet, Bishop”

(He ejects his clip, holsters his weapon, walks away from the table, Bishop glaring at his back, fighting back the tears....)

PRESENT DAY

(scene returns to the bullpen....Bishop looks over to McGee....McGee has hurt expression on his face...)

Bishop: “McGee...I’m sorry...you didn’t deserve that....”

McGee: “You okay, Bishop?”

Bishop: “Yea.....I’m good....”

(Her memory returns.....)

2 YEARS AGO

(scene opens at the D Ranch...Gibbs and Bishop standing at the ranch shooting range...They both finish firing...Bishop looks over at Gibbs, self-satisfied smile on her face....Gibbs looks at her target...9 dead center...Gibbs nods...)

Gibbs: “Not bad, Bishop....If the target you’re shooting at isn’t shooting back’

Bishop: “What do you mean?”

(Gibbs nods at the target...)

Gibbs: “6 more shots...take your time...”

(She looks at him curiously....turns to the target, takes aim, fires off the first round....dead center...She allows herself a smile....she starts to squeeze the trigger....Gibbs begins rapid firing into the ground, 5 feet in front of her...She squeezes off the shot....it misses the target completely...)

Gibbs: “You’re dead, Bishop. If you’re backing me up, I’m dead too”

(Bishop yells at him)

Bishop: “WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?”

(Gibbs chambers a round....points his finger to the ground in front of him....nods to her...)

Gibbs: “5 feet, 2 feet...I don’t care....Go!”

(Gibbs takes the shooting position...and she gladly begins firing rounds at his feet, dangerously close...dirt sprays up on Gibbs as he fires 6 quick rounds...He lowers his weapon...they both look at the target...6 rounds, dead center)

Gibbs: “You’re good, Bishop....but can you do it when all hell’s broken loose around you?”

(He unloads his weapon, zips it into its case....looks at her...)

Gibbs; “Can you shoot in the middle of the storm?”

(He walks back towards the house, leaving her standing, fuming....)

PRESENT DAY

(Her thoughts return to the moment....)

McGee: “Bishop...what did he mean by can you shoot in a storm?”

(Bishop’s eyes follow Gibbs as he walks to the elevator..)

Bishop: “He meant.....(pauses)…"I don’t know Tim...I’m still trying to figure it out”

(She looks over at Torres....their eyes meet, something passes between them...he nods to her...She allows a forced smile...she mouths, “thank you”)

McGee: “The first round of the competition starts today....”

Bishop: “Yea...Snipers go first this year”

McGee: “I hear they brought in two bad boys from Marine Special Ops...they want that trophy bad”

(Bishop continues to stare at the closed elevator doors...Gibbs already gone....)

Bishop: “I won’t matter”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens next morning...Torres driving in NCIS sedan, Bishop in the back seat, checking and rechecking her weapons)

Torres: “That’s the 4th time...”

Bishop: “I know....”

Torres: “You’re going to do good, El...”

(She doesn’t reply....then...)

Bishop: “He can’t be beat, Torres...He’s too good”

(Torres scowls, looks at Bishop in the rear view mirror...she is looking out the side window, thinking....)

18 months ago

(scene opens at the D Ranch...Dil, Nel, Dez, Torres sit at the kitchen table, night time...Bishop stands looking out the French doors...storming outside, lightning crashing, rain pouring down)

Nell: “I hate storms”

Dez: “I don’t hate them, but sure not in love with ‘em”

(A flash of lightning outside...an immediate crack of loud thunder....the lights go out....)

Dil: “Give it a second....”

(A slight hum can be heard over the storm....the lights come back on....)

Torres: “Generators....man, this house is so cool!”

(Torres turns to Bishop.....she is still watching the storm...)

Torres: “Hey Bish.....”

(She turns, does not reply...She quickly walks to the slickers hanging on the wall, takes hers down...Her weapon, resting on the shelf above the raincoats, comes down as she grabs it, clips it on her belt...)

Torres: “Aw Bish...seriously?”

(She puts the raincoat on...NCIS can be seen across the back....She leans to Torres, kisses his cheek....then walks out the French doors onto the patio....She looks outward, rain drenching her....A lightning flash illuminates her for a second, then she can be seen stepping off the patio onto the ground behind the house....)

Dil: “She’s going to go shoot”

Nell: “IN THIS?”

Dil: “Yea....”

(They continue to look out the windows, lightning hitting close, thunder crashing, rain falling in torrents....Then they hear the cracks of gunfire....)

PRESENT DAY

(Bishop turns from the car window...They are pulling up into the Quantico Competition Range...cars fill the huge parking lot...)

Bishop: “Oh god...look at all the people...”

Torres: “It’s a big deal....”

(She is quiet....then...)

Bishop: “Gibbs won the sniper competition yesterday”

Torres: “Yea...I heard”

Bishop: “He’s good”

Torres: “Heard the Special Ops guys didn’t take it well...”

(She thinks....)

Bishop: “They should try to learn instead of getting mad”

(Torres looks in the rear view mirror....)

Torres: “That what you did?”

(Bishop thinks.....)

Bishop: “No...I got mad...(pause) “..but I learned....”

(The car stops...parks....)

Torres: “Hey Bish...you got this....I believe in you...”

(She looks out the window again)

Bishop: “I know you do, Nick....I hope I believe in me, too”

(scene shifts to the shooting area....hundreds of people sitting in bleachers, more standing, watching.....12 contestants line up, all focusing on the targets placed 50 feet away, silhouettes of a man on each target....Bishop looks down the line of contestants, she is the only female...Gibbs is next to her....he looks at the target,…)

Gibbs: “Focus, Bishop...drown everything else out”

(Bishop stares at him....)

Bishop: “I know”

Gibbs; “Good luck”

Bishop: “Yea...you too”

(The announcer comes over the speaker....)

Announcer: “Shooters! Ready your weapons!”

(All shooters take the stance...guns pointed at the targets)

(Gibbs, aiming at his target, speaks to her)

Gibbs: “Bishop”

Bishop: ‘I’m drowning you out, Gibbs”

(Gibbs, his arms steady, smiles....)

Announcer: “3 rounds! 5 steps forward! Kneel! 3 rounds! 5 running steps while firing! On the horn!”

(Bishop focuses on the target.)

Gibbs: “You’re good enough”

(Bishop blinks....then steadies her aim....The horn sounds...12 guns fire instantly)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens, late afternoon...Torres, McGee, Dawson, standing in front of big screen TV...image of young soldier on the screen...Bishop walks in, sits at her desk, puts face in hands....)

Torres: “Bish...still too close to call..?”

(Bishop nods...)

Bishop: “I did my best...I swear...I did my best...”

(McGee looks over at Torres...)

Torres: “Man, it was intense! They shot at targets, then shot at moving targets, then had to climb steps and shoot...then....”

McGee: “Torres! Who won?”

Torres: “They don’t know yet! There was a three person tie! They had the 3 that tied do a shootout at that Hogan’s Alley thing! Dude! It’s badass!”

McGee: “Three...?”

Torres; “Yea....This super soldier badass robot looking guy...Air Marshal’s Service”

Bishop: “Sean Sullivan”

Torres: “Man, he was like RoboCop! He even talked like the dude! (imitates robot voice) “I am now shooting”....”

McGee; “Those guys are good....Who where the other two?”

(Torres nods to Bishop..McGee smiles)

McGee: “Bishop? You made the top three? That’s fantastic!”

Dawson: “Bishop? No way!”

Bishop: “Gibbs”

McGee: “Gibbs?”

Bishop: “Yes...me, Sullivan, and Gibbs....I’m a wreck, Sullivan is a robot, and Gibbs looks at the course and says..”This should be fun”....I don’t understand the man”

McGee: “Been there a lot, Bish....”

Bishop: “He won it...We all know he did....”

McGee: “So...when do you know for sure?”

Bishop: “Any time now...Gibbs stayed behind to wait....I couldn’t stand it....”

(McGee looks over at the elevator...Gibbs is walking off...holding a large trophy)

McGee: “Better learn how to stand it, Bishop”

(Bishop looks up....leans back...folds her arms over her chest....)

Bishop: “It’s his....I knew it...”

(Gibbs walks through the bullpen, says nothing...he walks to the trophy case on a far wall, slides back the glass window, takes both hands and places the large award on the shelf...he closes the glass door, walks back to his desk...He sits...Bishop looks over at him...)

Bishop: “Congratulations”

Gibbs: “It’s the long range trophy, Bishop”

(She stares at him...gets up, walks to the trophy case...Looks at the gold scoped rifle on top of the award..reads the brass plate attached to the bottom)

2021 All Agency Competition

<u>Sniper Division</u>

Leroy Jethro Gibbs – NCIS

Champion

(Bishop turns, walks back to the bullpen, stands in front of Gibbs's desk...)

Bishop: "Congratulations"

Gibbs: "Thanks"

Bishop: "Have they called you yet?"

Gibbs: "Nope"

Bishop: "I know you won it..."

Gibbs: "Maybe...maybe not..."

(McGee sees two men exit the elevator....)

McGee: "I think we're about to find out..."

(The two men enter the bullpen....One is Sean Sullivan, the Air Marshal...They walk up, plunk the huge trophy on Gibbs's desk...Bishop closes her eyes, turns away, walks to her desk)

Bishop: “Congratulations on that too”

(She sits....Gibbs looks up at the two men....)

Sullivan: “Thought you’d like the honor”

(Gibbs looks at the trophy...small smile....)

Gibbs: “Bishop...put the trophy in the case”

(Bishop flares...then settles down....)

Bishop: “It’s an NCIS trophy...I’ll be glad to...”

(She gets up, hefts the trophy with an automatic pistol mounted on top..she walks to the trophy case, opens the window, places the larger trophy next to Gibbs’s sniper award...she closes the door, turns...Gibbs is standing directly next to her)

Bishop: “Come to admire your trophy?”

(Gibbs nods at the award....)

Gibbs; “Read it, Bishop”

(She turns to the trophy...and reads...)

2021 All Agency Competition

<u>Grand Champion</u>

Eleanor Bishop Torres, NCIS

(She stares at the nameplate....she reads it again....)

Bishop: “No....way.....I thought for sure...”

Gibbs: “Shouldn’t think so much....”

(She feels a firm pop on the back of her head)

Gibbs: “Nice job, Bishop....But I’ll wipe the course with you next year”

(Bishop stands, disbelief on her face....then she crosses her arms, does a scrunchy mouth thing...nods....)

Bishop: “I’ll be there, Gibbs”

Gibbs: “I know”

(She goes back to staring at her name on the trophy....)

(scene shifts to bullpen...McGee calling out..)

McGee: “Boss! It escalated!”

(Gibbs looks at the image of a young Marine Corporal on the screen...)

McGee: “He’s got a hostage....They’re calling for us...”

(Gibbs looks outside...a storm has moved in, torrential downpour, skies turning to night...lightning flashes....)

Gibbs; “Gear up Bishop”

(McGee and Torres and Dawson open their drawers, begin pulling out their weapons....Gibbs looks at them...)

Gibbs; “I said Bishop”

(She stares at Gibbs, surprised...He clips his gun on....yells over his shoulder as he exits the bullpen)

Gibbs: “BISHOP! COME ON!. McGee..email his file to Bishop”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the NCIS sedan, Gibbs driving, wipers going full speed...)

Gibbs; “Read his file”

(Bishop looks at her phone, has email from McGee up..)

Bishop: “Lance Corporal Alvin Broussard...21....hospitalized 2 weeks ago, PTSD, Manic Depression”

Gibbs; “Record?”

Bishop: “Several Good Conduct awards, served in South Korea”

Gibbs: “What happened?”

Bishop: “Went AWOL when his wife told him she was leaving him...They found him at a fountain in Seoul, waving a gun....”

Gibbs: “It happens”

Bishop: “Report says he has a nurse held hostage...he has a gun held to her head”

(Gibbs thinks....then...)

Gibbs: “I don’t want him killed”

Bishop: “Gibbs...we may not have a choice....”

(Gibbs thinks...)

Gibbs; “I know”

(They pull up to the VA Mental Hospital, storm has increased...winds howl, rain blowing in sheets...crowd has gathered, MPs line the lawn, rifles pointed at a man, standing in the rain, holding a terrified nurse, his arm wrapped around her throat, a pistol pointed at her eyes)

Gibbs: “Jesus....”

(They exit the car...An MP walks to them....)

MP: “Glad you’re here, Agent Gibbs...it’s a bad one”

Gibbs: “The hostage okay?”

MP: “Other than being scared to death, so far, yea....”

(Gibbs looks at the soldiers aiming rifles at the two.....)

Gibbs; ‘Tell them to lower their weapons”

MP: “Sir! We can’t!”

Gibbs; “Lower your weapons, Sargent....We’ve got this... don’t need that man more scared than he already is”

(Gibbs looks at the MP)

Gibbs: “Where did he get the gun?”

MP: ‘We don’t know...maybe a buddy brought it in”

(Gibbs starts walking toward the scene...The corporal sees him, starts ranting)

Broussard: “DON’T COME ANY CLOSER!”

(Lightning strikes the roof of the hospital...thunder crashes immediately...)

Gibbs: “I’m just coming to talk, soldier....that’s all”

(He turns to Bishop...)

Gibbs: “I don’t want him killed”

(She nods...then stares in disbelief as Gibbs begins walking towards the corporal...)

Gibbs; “Just to talk, Lance Corporal...See?”

(Gibbs pulls his weapon out by his fingertips...holds his arm out straight...drops his gun in the puddled grass)

Bishop: “Oh god, Gibbs...what are you doing?”

(Gibbs turns....He looks at Bishop)

Gibbs; “You’ve got lead”

(The man screams at Gibbs....the nurse cries...Gibbs walks closer....)

Gibbs: “You’re a better man than this, Corporal...You’re a Marine...Marines don’t scare women...”

(The corporal stabs the air above him with the weapon...he screams)

Broussard: “She was the closest one! I didn’t pick her out!”

Gibbs: “Then swap”

(Broussard stares at Gibbs....He lifts his head, the gun, once again, aims towards the storm clouds)

Broussard: “Why did this happen, God! Why!”

(Gibbs takes a step closer...the gun returns, pointed towards the nurse’s eyes....)

Gibbs; “Corporal....look...”

Bishop: “No Gibbs...no....”

(Gibbs lifts his rain jacket...he turns around....)

Gibbs; “No weapons....”

(He turns his back to the man and the nurse...he backs up 2 steps..)

Gibbs: “All you have to do is push her away, Corporal...then you grab me...I won’t fight you...I swear”

Broussard: “You’re lying!”

Gibbs: “Wouldn’t lie to a fellow Marine, Corporal...Now come on...”

Bishop: (to self) “Do it...then take him down, Gibbs”

(Her gun is trained on the man’s head....rain pours down her face)

Broussard: “OKAY!”

(Broussard shoves the nurse to the ground, reaches out and grabs Gibbs from behind by the throat....The nurse frantically scramble to her feet, runs to waiting MPs)

Bishop: “NO!”

(Gibbs stands...his arms still outstretched....)

Gibbs: “Good job, Corporal...Now...let’s talk”

Broussard: “NO! I”M TIRED OF TALKING!”

(Gibbs feels the gun pressing against his temple... storm raging, lightning striking constantly nearby, instant cracks of thunder, high gusts of wind causing the torrential rain to blow sideways....Bishop stands, gun stretched out, her hair whipping across her face.....20 feet away, a man stands, soaked, crying, screaming, holding a gun to his Gibbs’s head....Gibbs stares through the storm at Bishop and mouths...)

Gibbs: “Can you shoot in a storm?”

(Bishop steadies her weapon...The rain pours down her face, the lightning flashes, thunder crashes. She does not blink, she does not waiver. She focuses.....Then the man screams at God again, his gun pointing up at the clouds, threatening the one he holds responsible for his grief....)

Bishop: (to self) “I’m good enough”

(She sees the corporal's hand raise up....her eyes follow it as if in slow motion...her gun follows her eyes...Lightning flashes, thunder bellows again, but she hears nothing...Gibbs nods to her, she nods back....she focuses on the slowly rising weapon, barrel pointed at the sky...in her mind, she hears Gibbs...)

“I don’t want him killed, Bishop”

(The wind whips hair across her face...she doesn’t feel it...the hand holding the threat weapon stops as the arm stretches skyward...the corporal rages....In her mind, the hand is directly in front of her weapon, still, waiting....She gently squeezes the trigger as lightning brightens the scene...)

(Scene shift to Gibbs and the man...A shot is heard...the man screams....Gibbs turns, pulls the man down to the ground, face down, his weapon gone, his hand bleeding....The man begins to cry....)

Broussard: “I didn’t want to hurt anyone...I didn’t want to hurt anyone....”

(Gibbs pats the man on the shoulder...)

Gibbs; “I know, soldier....I know...”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in NCIS bullpen...night, bullpen empty...Bishop stands in front of the trophy case, still soaking wet, staring at the nameplate...)

Bishop: “It doesn’t seem as important as it did earlier today”

Gibbs: “I know”

(She stares down the shelves, rows of Champion trophies, all with Gibbs’s name on them...she nods)

Bishop: “Yea..you would know...”

Gibbs: “You didn’t kill him...That’s what’s important”

(Bishop turns to him....)

Bishop: “You pushed me...all these years, you pushed me to be good enough”

(Gibbs shakes his head)

Gibbs; “You were always good enough, Bishop...You just didn’t know how good”

(He turns...walks away...)

Gibbs: “Go home Bishop...Go home to your family”

Bishop: “What are you going to do?”

Gibbs; “Same thing...”

(He stops..turns....)

Gibbs; “I’m going home to my family because of you, Bishop....Thanks”

(He turns, does not wait for her to answer....walks out of the bullpen....Bishop continues to watch him as he enters the elevator...he gives her a small nod of the head...the doors close....She looks back at the trophy, then reads her name...She looks at the huge collection of awards NCIS agents have garnered over decades...looks down, nods her head...)

Bishop: “I think I will too”

(She exits the bullpen, pulls out her phone...)

Bishop: “Hey baby...on my way...”

(listens)

Bishop: “It’s been a good day...it’s been a real good day...but I want to be with you...”

(scene fades to black and white)

THE END