

## **“Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring”**

A Buddhist monk makes his home on a floating temple on a small lake in Korea which is surrounded by a pristine forest. It is hard to imagine a more beautiful and serene setting for the series of stories which unfold over the seasons of the year and the seasons of life.

In spring we meet the monk and the 11 year boy in his care. Theirs is a life of quiet contemplation. But one day the boy travels to a small pool in the surrounding hills where he spies a fish. Splashing through the water he catches the fish and ties a string around it to which he attaches a small stone. The fish tries to swim away but is trapped and the boy is gleeful. His next victims are a frog and a snake. But unnoticed, standing on a boulder high above him, is the monk. That night the monk says nothing but the next morning he will give the boy an arduous task designed to teach him reverence for all living creatures.

It is now summer and the boy is on the cusp of adulthood. One day a woman leaves her young daughter with the monk, in the hopes that he will be able to heal her. She is a beautiful young woman and the boy is captivated. She initially fends him off but in time they become lovers. Months later when her mother takes her home he is desolate. He follows after them and the monk is left alone.

Fall brings another change. Now in his 30's the boy returns but is followed by two detectives who are there to arrest him for murder. But before they take him to jail the monk asks them to wait while he paints an elaborate panorama of calligraphy on the porch of the temple. When he is finished he gives his former charge instructions on what he has to do next to purge his soul.

It is now winter many years later. His old master has passed on and the boy returns as a middle aged man and takes up the solitary life of a monk. One night a woman leaves a young baby with him and the cycle of life repeats itself anew.

No summary can do justice to the contemplative nature and singular beauty of this film. The temple is a work of art and the landscape around it, whether ablaze in fall colors, illuminated by moonlight or shrouded in mist in winter is an earthly

Eden. "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring" is a quiet and meditative film which will long linger in your mind.

(Amazon Prime)