

Karaite Kid

by

Jamie Sadler

INT. SECONDARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

A banner hangs over the stage - King David High School for Boys Achievers Awards 1984.

The FIVE RECIPIENTS (11-16) pose for the PHOTOGRAPHER (60s).

MR MERRILL (52), a tweed-clad, barrel-chested powerhouse of headmaster towers above them, blocking a portion of the banner.

JACOB (11) the littlest stands in the centre, beaming, a silver crested wooden shield clutched under his chin.

On the back row, NEIL (13) and his MATES have no interest. Scowling, arms folded and long legs stretched out under the chair of the BOY in front, with no concern for his obvious discomfort.

As the winners return to their seats MRS LEATHER (32) touches Jacob's elbow. She presents him with a brightly wrapped gift. She wants to give him a hug, but opts for a big thumbs up. Jacob beams and returns to his seat.

Neil's eyes narrow as they zero in on the present.

Jacob lifts the gift to his ear, giving it a shake.

He excitedly starts to open the paper, but everyone around him stands to leave. Realising there's no time he carefully places the parcel in his bag, tucks the shield under his arm, and files out.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Jacob makes his way along the corridor, with shoulder pats and GOOD WISHES coming from FELLOW STUDENTS.

Neil approaches from behind and kicks him up the arse. Jacob turns round, surprised, but carries on.

Neil kicks him again.

And again.

Jacob stops.

He turns to confront Neil but is met with an outstretched hand. Disappointed, he offers up the shield.

Neil SNORTS and nods to his bag.

Jacob pulls out the wrapped gift.

Neil snatches it and rips the paper open, revealing a VHS Karate Kid cassette.

He winks at Jacob, drops the paper and walks off with the tape.

Jacob remains, stunned.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Neil proudly shows off his acquisition to his CLASSMATES.

The door OPENS and Mrs Leather leads Jacob in, head down.

She whispers to the TEACHER, who nods.

Mrs Leather places a hand on Jacob's shoulder.

He reluctantly raises his gaze and scans the room.

Mrs Leather leans down and Jacob whispers in her ear.

Her eyes dart straight for Neil and raising beckons him forward.

The class let out a collective OOOH.

Neil lumbers to his feet, sneakily dropping the tape into his bag and drags himself upright.

Mrs Leather wrinkles her nose and shakes her head. She raises an eyebrow she nods towards his bag.

Neil puffs out his cheeks and lumbers back round to retrieve the tape.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Moving through the BUSY corridor Jacob happily reads the back cover of the video case.

Passing a door marked "Toilet", a hand grabs him by the hair and drags him backwards through the door.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

A TOILET FLUSHES.

Neil exits with the video, wiping his wet hands on his trousers.

Jacob emerges, his face, hair and shoulders sopping wet.

INT. CHANGING ROOMS - DAY

Neil and friends, changed for PE, jostle each other on the way outside, lead by the PE TEACHER.

The changing room door SQUEAKS open just enough for someone to peep through.

When the room is empty Jacob dashes in straight to Neil's bag, retrieves the tape, and bolts for the door.

He pulls the door open but pauses.

Jacob darts back and dribbles spit into the bully's bag.

EXT. PLAYING FIELD/PLAYGROUND - DAY

A game of football is in full flow.

Wide open on the far side, Neil HOLLERS for the ball.

Neil spots him and CALLS out for the ball, but then stops.

The ball rolls past as Neil is distracted by something across the playground.

Jacob moves at a guiltily pace.

Neil gives chase.

Panicked, Jacob breaks into a run.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Jacob speed-walks out of the Toilets.

Neil enters the corridor, racing up to him.

He shoves Jacob to the floor and snatches up his bag.

Rifling through he comes up short.

Neil flings the bag aside and jerks Jacob up by the tie and SLAMS his back into some lockers.

BREATHING HARD Neil holds him up, heels off the ground.

Neil's eyes bore into Jacob's.

Neil lets go, Jacob lands.

Neil turns to leave, then spinning back he buries his fist in the smaller boy's abdomen.

Jacob crumples, Neil hovers over his victim for a moment, fists clenched, then leaves.

Jacob COUGHS and WHEEZES.

INT. TOILET - DAY

Inside a cubicle, Jacob steps carefully on to the toilet seat. On tiptoes, he reaches his hand up to the top of the high water tank.

His fingers probe around.

Finally, they find the hidden tape.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob and his PARENTS (30s) are at the dining table, laid with their best linens, silverware and crockery.

Jacob's Mother lights two candles to mark the beginning of the Sabbath.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eat their Shabbat meal.

Jacob plays with his food.

INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Sitting in Temple with his Father.

Jacob stares, blank-eyed.

Noticing the lack of concentration his Father nudges him.

EXT. BUS STOP / STREET - DAY

Jacob's family walk home from Temple

Neil and friends are at a bus stop further along on the far side of the road. They take turns giving and taking punches to the stomach.

An OLDER COUPLE (70s) close by look uncomfortable and try not to be noticed.

As Jacob draws closer Neil sees him watching.

He sneers and jabs a clenched fist into his own open palm.

Jacob falters, eyes wide. His father keeps him moving with a gentle hand on the back of the head.

Neil smirks.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is faintly lit by two low burning candles.

Jacob's Father RECITES a prayer over a cup of wine,

Jacob watches the candles impatiently.

Father extinguishes the candles in the wine cup.

In the semidarkness Jacob jumps from his chair, racing from the room.

His Mother and Father look to one another confused. Jacob reappears flicking on the light, briefly blinding everyone.

He holds up the Karate Kid video, eyes pleading.

Mother looks to Father.

Father checks his watch.

Jacob's shoulders slump.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The TV is visible through the half-open doorway with the faint sound of GUNFIRE.

Jacob sits at the top of the stairs.

INT. JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob lies in bed contemplating the videotape.

The bedroom door SQUEAKS open.

He pulls the sheet up over him and fakes sleep.

His mother peeks in and smiles.

INT. JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob, holding the video, peers around his bedroom door.

SNORING drifts in from further along the landing.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jacob closes the door as he can. Crossing to the TV he switches the VCR on and presses Eject.

He nervously SHHHS the WHIRRING before the tape pops up. He removes For A Fist Full Of Dollars and eases Karate Kid in.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Bathed in the television's glow with the sound barely audible, Jacob sits cross-legged, rapt.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jacob imitates Daniel-san's training moves, wax on/wax off, painting the fence, etc.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

Jacob dressed in cricket trousers, his Dad's white shirt, tied closed with a dressing gown belt, all topped with his school tie round his head.

He practices his Karate against a tall wooden bird table.

INT. KITCHEN

Jacob's mother is washing up at the kitchen sink, watching him play happily in the back garden, she smiles.

INT. JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob stirs feverishly in his sleep, still in his fight garb.

The video case pokes out from under his pillow.

INT. JACOB'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jacob, his coat all zipped up and ready for school, stands before a full-length mirror practising his Karate moves.

The Shield stands on a chest of drawers behind him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Jacob comes out of his room heading for the stairs.

Halting, he goes back in his room, coming back out he re-zips his coat and descends.

EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY

A car pulls up and Jacob clambers out carrying his bag.

He passes through the gates, pausing to wave back at his Dad in the car. He passes Neil and cronies laughing and joking.

One of them SNIGGERS, giving Neil an elbow.

They follow, mobhanded.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Neil catches up with Jacob shoving him from behind. Jacob turns and smiles.

Neil pushes Jacob again, into some lockers.

Jacob takes a deep breath, and pats his stomach, opening his hands in invitation.

Neil's eyes widen, then narrow.

Jacob's fingertips twitch.

Neil's friends eye the standoff with excitement.

Neil, redfaced, hurls his fist into Jacob's stomach.

Jacob takes the hit.

Neil YELPS, holding his wrist, tears welling in his eyes.

His friends exhale with low OOHS and AAHS.

Jacob reaches beneath his coat, pulls out the now broken video and throws it to Neil.

Neil instinctively catches the tape but is jerked back by the scruff of his neck, as Mr Merrill marches him away.

Neil looks back through tears.

Jacob bows.



He turns to his locker and opens it.

Unzipping his coat he wrestles the shield out from his trouser waistband and stows it in his locker, PUFFING his cheeks out in relief.

He shuts his locker door.

THE END