

"Nice Sneaks"

By Jonathan Chang

EXT. SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

ALEX, 11 years old, a short fella, stares up at the basketball rim. Donning his white Nike Max Destroyers, shining in the bright light, ALEX, sweating, shoots...

Slow motion... The ball soars through the air, bounces off the rim, it's not going to go in...

Another bounce, no, wait, it's going in! ALEX raises his arms in triumph! A LOUD NOISE echoes... But it's not the sound of cheering. It's the sound of...

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

...ALEX's alarm clock BUZZES loudly in an ANNOYING TONE. ALEX, groggy, wakes up. Disappointed that he was only dreaming, he plops back down.

ALEX

Dung.

The door bursts open.

MOM

Hey! Wake up sleepy head, breakfast in 5. Get dressed!

ALEX pulls himself out of bed like a zombie--he's on auto-pilot. In a routine sort of manner, he grabs some clothes out of his dresser and heads out his bedroom door, his eyes half open.

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MORNING

ALEX walks into the kitchen to get his breakfast, still on auto-pilot. His eyes are still half open. He sits down and starts eating his toast. DAD sits down, coffee and paper in hand.

DAD

Morning Alex.

ALEX

Mmm.

DAD

Nice day out, isn't it?

ALEX

Mmm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAD
Quite the talkative one this morning,
aren't we?

ALEX doesn't answer. DAD turns his attention to the paper.
ALEX finishes his toast and gets up from the table.

MOM
(shouting)
Don't forget we're going to the store
after school to get you some new shoes!

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE, HALLWAY

ALEX, now at the closet by the front door, suddenly opens his eyes. His face lights up. He pulls out his old sneakers, battered, that ugly faded color white sneakers turn when they've been scratched up and dirtied. He smiles broadly.

EXT. STREET CORNER - MORNING

ALEX, brighter, walks to the stop sign at the corner of the street and meets XANDER, 11, waiting for ALEX.

XANDER
(lazily)
Don't you look chipper this morning.

Upon ALEX's arrival, the both of them start walking.

ALEX
(cheerily)
Guess what I'm doing after school today?

XANDER
Watching cartoons?

ALEX
No idiot. Getting new sneakers!

XANDER
Oh.

XANDER looks down at his boots--he's obviously not a sneaker fan.

ALEX
It may mean nothing to you, but I'm just relieved I don't have to wear these old things anymore.

ALEX looks down at his old sneakers as they walk. The two kids continue their trek to school.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

ALEX, XANDER, and other KIDS walk towards the school. ALEX and XANDER almost reach the entrance when KATE, short and also 11, meets up with them.

KATE
(chipper)
Hey guys!

ALEX
(uninterested)
Hey.

XANDER
Morning, Kate.

KATE
(even merrier)
Did you guys do the math homework? Man was it hard, I had to ask my dad for help, he's an engineer so he knows that sort of stuff...

ALEX, XANDER, and KATE enter the school.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

KATE keeps rambling...

KATE (CONT'D)
...Gosh I hate math, I really wish all classes were more like English 'cause I love reading...

ALEX
(interrupting)
Right. See you later, Kate.

ALEX and XANDER dart quickly into their homeroom.

KATE
(pause)
He must have something on his mind.

KATE walks away to her homeroom.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MORNING

KIDS are rather rowdy in the classroom, as homeroom has yet to begin. ALEX and XANDER go to take their seats by the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX (CONT'D)

Man that girl really needs to shut up every now and then...

XANDER chuckles. As ALEX and XANDER approach their desks, they're stopped by STEVIE, the class bully, and his older and taller girlfriend MICHELLE, the kind of girl who's always wearing a smile for no apparent reason.

STEVIE

Well well, it's the idiot twins.

XANDER

Good one, Stevie. You make that insult up by yourself, or did your mom just buy you a book of insults so you don't have to put too much strain on that tiny brain of yours anymore?

STEVIE

(confused)

What the heck did you just say?

ALEX

(interrupting)

Nothing. What do you want.

STEVIE

Oh nothing. Just thought I'd show you guys my new sneakers.

STEVIE is wearing brand new, black Nike Air Saurons, the kind endorsed by some overpaid professional basketball player.

XANDER

Hmm, another pair of sneakers, huh? What's that, your second pair this week?

ALEX looks longingly at STEVIE's sneakers.

STEVIE

(to ALEX)

Bet you wish you could have sneaks as nice as these, huh?

ALEX

(looking up, more confident)

Actually, I'm going to buy new sneakers today after school.

MICHELLE

I hope they're something nicer than the ones you got now!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHELLE points and laughs at ALEX's old sneakers. They're so old the laces are broken. MR. ROBBINS enters the classroom, and everyone suddenly quiets down and takes their seats. STEVIE snickers as ALEX walks around him to his seat.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

ALEX and XANDER, lunch bags in hand, sit down at a table. A second after they sit, KATE joins them.

KATE
(chipper, as usual)
Hey guys!

XANDER
Hello.

ALEX doesn't answer. He doesn't even look at her. He's looking at STEVIE, across the lunchroom, showing off his new sneakers to a mob of KIDS.

KATE
(to ALEX)
What's wrong?

XANDER
Nothing. He just had a little run-in earlier with the village idiot, Stevie.

KATE
Was he showing off his new Reebok's?

ALEX
(still staring at STEVIE)
They're Nike's, and yes, he was showing off, as usual.

KATE
Don't worry about him, he has nothing else to brag about besides being rich.

XANDER
That's agreeable.

ALEX shakes his head and looks down at his lunch.

ALEX
Ugh.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Kids flood out of the school at the sound of the BELL. ALEX and XANDER say goodbye to each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATE says goodbye to ALEX, who gives a lazy sort of wave. ALEX walks away from all the other kids and meets MOM, in her car. He gets in.

MOM

I wasn't sure you'd see where I was parked. How was school?

ALEX

Usual. Let's go.

MOM

Aren't we a little anxious...

MOM pulls the car away from the school.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

The Nike Max Destructors, gleaming, walk down the path. Pulling out is ALEX, positively beaming. KIDS around him turn their heads and stare at his feet. ALEX walks into the school.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

KIDS continue to turn to look at ALEX's new sneakers. XANDER and KATE follow further behind ALEX and finally catch up as ALEX stops outside homeroom. A small group of KIDS crowd around him.

XANDER

(to KATE)

I honestly don't get it. Boots are so much more comfortable.

STEVIE and MICHELLE butt through the crowd, trying to find out what's the commotion. ALEX's smile fades as STEVIE meets him in the middle of the crowd. STEVIE has on the same pair of shoes.

ALEX

(stuttering)

Wha... What? How? You just got...

STEVIE

Early birthday present. Don't you just love how they fit, buddy?

Now that everyone sees that two people have the same shoe, they disband. STEVIE, laughing evilly, walks away too. ALEX stands there in disbelief. XANDER and KATE approach.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

It's okay, Alex. It's not the end of the world.

KATE looks at ALEX. She looks sorry for him.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - DAY

ALEX, with a look of utter disappointment, stares at a blank sheet of paper in front of him quietly. XANDER and KATE, at the same table, look at him sporadically, looking sorry. STEVIE jests from the next table.

STEVIE

Hey Alex, what do you think--do my Nike's looks shinier than yours? I think mine are cleaner, I wiped them off after lunch.

KATE scrunches up her face, picks up her paint palette and walks over to STEVIE. She pretends to trip, spilling paint right onto STEVIE's brand new Nike's...

KATE

(pretending to be apologetic)
Oh, sorry!

STEVIE stares up at her with a look of absolute infuriation. His face makes him look like his head is about to explode... ALEX and XANDER stare at KATE in shock. KATE walks over to the trash can to throw empty out her palette, around STEVIE, who has now directed his attention solely to his paint-covered sneakers,. ALEX and XANDER turn and look at each other in disbelief.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

ALEX, XANDER, and KATE come out of art class laughing.

XANDER

Did you see his face? He was ready to start World War III!!

KATE chuckles.

ALEX

I still can't believe you did that. You really didn't have to...

KATE

Oh, but it was just an accident...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATE smiles at ALEX. ALEX actually smiles back. KATE turns to go into a classroom.

KATE (CONT'D)
(chipper)
I'll see you guys after school!

ALEX
See you later.

ALEX and XANDER walk further down the hall.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(pause)
She's really not that bad, Kate. She can be cool sometimes.

XANDER
(smiling)
I know, Alex. I know.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

ALEX and XANDER part their ways and wave goodbye to each other as they head to their respective homes. ALEX reaches his house and enters.

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

MOM, from the kitchen, hears ALEX come in.

MOM
(shouting)
How was your day?

ALEX is carefully removing his still clean sneakers.

ALEX
(smiling)
It was good. Really good.

BLACK.