

FIRST DAY

by

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INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Laid out upon the bed in a neat little row:

One little Ninja backpack with supplies. Two little shoes.
Two socks. One tiny pair of pants. One tiny striped shirt.

One ninja action figure.

One ninja wristwatch.

CUT TO:

Josh (6) reflects in a tall mirror as he adjusts his shirt.

Scrawny for his age, Josh is timid with bright eyes.

Satisfied his shirt's finally on straight, he sets the timer
on the ninja watch strapped to his wrist to 8 hours. BEEP!

7:59:59... 7:59:58...

Josh turns back to the mirror and carefully combs his hair
with the help of his fingers and A LOT of spit...

when a FLASH of LIGHT in the mirror draws his attention.

With a GASP he turns to the window and spots:

THE BUS! Driving down the road! Josh RUNS from the room!

RUNS back in... grabs his backpack... and RUNS back out!

EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh stands at the bottom of the open bus door

STARING UP at the TALL STEPS and the EVEN TALLER BUS DRIVER.

Hesitant, he turns back to his MOM waving him on... and with
a GULP, he adjusts his backpack, and takes that first step.

INT. THE BUS - DAY

Josh gazes down the long aisle. STRANGE FACES staring back at
him. Older and younger. Boys and girls. So many eyes.

Thumbs tucked safely under his backpack's straps, Josh makes
his way past all the staring faces. All the way to the back.

And in the very last empty spot he takes a seat.

CUT TO:

Josh stares out the window at the passing cars... when

TAP TAP TAP!

Josh snaps from his daydream and turns to find a LITTLE BOY standing in the aisle, pointing at the seat beside him.

But that's where his Ninja Action Figure is...

Josh looks the Little Boy square in the eye...

And shakes his head NO.

The Boy turns away with a sigh and finds a different seat.

EXT. THE SCHOOL - DAY

Josh steps down from the bus and freezes.

DOZENS of other children are lining up to enter the school.

And after a deep resolving breath... he marches forward.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Josh sits at a table painting on construction paper.

A house. Two stick figure parents. Two stick boys. A cat.

He marvels at his completed masterpiece when his chair gets BUMPED!

Josh turns to find a MEAN KID (7) standing over him!

But the Kid waves off the bump apologetically and moves on...

Josh finds his breath is still held... as he watches Mean Kid stomp his way over to a Little Girl who's drawing too. She's:

CINDY (6) and is more timid than Josh, if that's possible.

Josh watches on in silent anguish as Mean Kid picks up a bottle of RED PAINT... takes a long look around the room...

and SQUIRTS a helping onto the ribbon on Cindy's head!!!

Naturally Josh and Mean Kid's eyes meet at that exact moment.

Josh GULPS and instantly looks back down at his painting...

He checks his watch: 5:38:44.

With a sigh, Josh grabs himself a fresh piece of construction paper and starts working on a second painting. Cindy SCREAMS!

EXT. PLAYGROUND - RECESS

Children play tether ball. Kick ball. Climb the monkey bars.

It's a hot day, and the noon sun beats down on people and pavement alike. Juice boxes sit on the hot stone ground.

Boiling.

But Josh sits alone in the shade with his action figure.

With smug grin, he pulls from his backpack a half-frozen juice box replete with icy cold sweat on its package.

He pulls the straw from its plastic sheath, and after a few choice lightsaber moves with its sturdy orange blade

thrusts the straw through the heart of the silver box cap

slaying the thing, and his thirst, in one flawless strike.

In that moment Josh knows he is the master of the playground

until his eyes focus in on Cindy, sitting alone on the hot grass. Wet towel over her damp long hair. Eyes red and puffy.

CUT TO:

Josh plops down into the grass beside her. She does not turn.

He pulls from his backpack A NEON PACKAGE!

With one decisive tear he opens it up, and spills its colorful gummy contents onto the grass in front of her.

Without looking at him... she reaches down and selects one...

and eats it.

He chooses one and eats it too.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Josh CARFULLY TRACES letters on his instructional pamphlet...

His tongue wags from his lips as he retraces an error...

TAP TAP TAP. Josh LOOKS UP to find his TEACHER looming.

She POINTS at the clock.

The children around him are already bustling out the door.

CUT TO:

Josh delicately folds his painting and packs it away...

Then checks his watch. 57:03

A dark shadow overtakes the light of his watch. He gasps.

And turns! Only to find Cindy... staring at him pensively.

She thrusts a piece of construction paper into his arms...

Then RUNS from the room and out the door...

leaving poor Josh absolutely bewildered.

INT. THE BUS - DAY

Josh sits beside his action figure staring at a painting of:

Him and Cindy. Sitting in the grass. With colorful jewels.

Both with red hair. And red ribbons. <3 CINDY

EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh descends the steps of the bus to find Mom waiting.

He runs into her arms and they share a long hug.

When he finally pulls himself to much needed freedom, he points out the ticking time on his watch. 15:44. 15:43.

Mom forces a great big smile onto her face, gives him a kiss on his forehead, and leads him by the hand...

towards the car.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY

Josh cautiously buckles himself into the back seat...

then buckles in his ninja action figure beside him.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Josh races down a cobblestone path. His alarm's beeping!

EXT. GRAVE SITE - DAY

Josh plays with his ninja action figure by a gravestone.

His painting of two parents and two boys leans against it.

FADE OUT.