

CARUSO AND THE SWORD

by

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A young bullied teen discovers the sport of fencing and then must overcome the school bully, low grades, poor self-esteem, and parental objections in order to realize his dream of qualifying to fence in the largest fencing tournament in the world.

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

An average suburb of middle class homes. The leaves on the trees are the reds and oranges of fall.

An empty school bus weaves through the suburban streets visible through the brightly colored leaves.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

In the front of the large high school is a parking lot devoid of students but filled with student vehicles. Shiny new sports cars parked side by side with trucks held together with Bondo and primer.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

CARUSO (looks about 12, short and slender), sleeps soundly with his head on a classroom desk that seems a little too big for him. His arms dangle by his side and his feet barely touch the floor.

Caruso's teacher, CHARLENE (early 20's), stands next to the desk with her arms crossed. She wears her hair in a bun, has very little makeup, and is eighty years old in her dress and demeanor. A modern-day version of an 1800 schoolmarm.

Caruso's mother, ELAINE (30's) stands next to the desk as well as Caruso's dad, JIMMY (30's). Both parents stare sadly at their sleeping son.

CHARLENE

This is why we don't encourage children to skip a grade.

ELAINE

Caruso's doing okay in his other classes.

CHARLENE

No, he's not. We've checked.

Charlene stiff and stern, almost robotic, slaps her hands together after each point.

CHARLENE

We need to give children a set bed time and insist that they do their homework.

Elaine snaps angrily at Charlene.

ELAINE

Maybe it's lack of teaching skills not lack of sleeping.

Charlene stiffens even more.

CHARLENE  
That's offensive.

Jimmy, in the middle of an impending cat fight, tries to smooth ruffled feathers.

JIMMY  
He gets ten hours of sleep.

CHARLENE  
The sleep needs to occur at home not at school.

Charlene raises her voice and smacks her hand on Caruso's desk.

CHARLENE  
We cannot have this!

Caruso snaps to attention. He looks at his teacher and then his parents.

CARUSO  
Crap.

Caruso drops his head back down on the desk.

Charlene walks to her desk like she's balancing a book on her head.

CHARLENE  
We need to discuss the possibility of demotion back to middle school.

Caruso rolls his head on to his chin. His eyes now wide open.

Elaine, Charlene, and Jimmy take seats around Charlene's desk. The desk is well-polished with nothing on it but one folder, filled with papers, and a pen.

Caruso drags behind them and sinks into a chair.

Charlene opens the folder, removes Caruso's report card and slaps it down on the desk.

INSERT a computer printout of a report card. Math, reading, social studies, science, history, three D's and two F's.

Caruso looks at the three adults as Charlene flips through the folder with Caruso's work.

CHARLENE  
We need to do better.

Caruso stares blankly at Charlene.

CARUSO

We are bored.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

The cafeteria is filled with STUDENTS eating, doing homework, chatting or working on laptops.

A JADED CASHIER (70's) collects money and scans lunch cards.

A FOOD WORKER dishes out food behind the counter.

A despondent Caruso grabs a tray. He puts a milk and a small salad on his tray and moves down the line. The food worker hands him a plate with food.

SHAK (15), sandy-haired and big for his age, gets in line in front of Caruso. If the chip on his shoulder were any bigger he'd trip over it.

Caruso picks up a chocolate pudding. Just as Caruso puts the pudding on the tray, Shak flips the tray up, over the railing past Caruso and onto the floor.

Shak snickers.

SHAK

Caruso. You're lucky your mom didn't listen to Britney Spears.

Caruso grimaces at the mess on the floor and slinks back to the beginning of the line.

Shak follows Caruso and picks up a milk.

SHAK

We'd be calling you Britney.

Caruso picks up another tray.

Shak calls after him, as he heads for the register with the milk, and laughs at his own joke.

SHAK

Britney. Oh, Britney.

Shak points back to Caruso as he walks past the cashier.

SHAK

He's paying.

The cashier grabs the milk from Shak's hand.

JADED CASHIER

Don't think so.

SHAK

Shove your milk. They're all expired  
anyway.

BOBBI (14) a happy-go-lucky cherub-faced tomboy with dark hair in a ponytail, gets in line behind Caruso. She takes a tray.

BOBBI

Don't take that from him.

Caruso puts a milk on his tray.

CARUSO

I'll take care of it when I grow two feet and gain a hundred pounds.

Bobbi checks the expiration date of several milks before she picks two. She puts one on her tray and exchanges the milk on Caruso's tray for the other one.

BOBBI

My sister takes Krav Maga. She got attacked outside work and the cops had to pull her off the guy before they took him away in an ambulance.

Caruso takes a salad.

Bobbi puts a salad on her tray. She dumps another salad on top of the salad already on her tray and puts the empty dish back.

CARUSO

Susan with the pink hair and dog collar?

Caruso shudders.

CARUSO

She scares me.

BOBBI

My oldest sister, Karen.

Caruso takes a plate of food from the food worker.

CARUSO

Skinny. Short. Blue hair.

BOBBI

That's the one.

Bobbi takes a plate of food from the worker. She smells it and grimaces.

CARUSO

How come you're so normal?

Caruso and Bobbi step over the mess on the floor.

Caruso takes a pudding.

BOBBI

Normal is relative. I whack people  
with swords.

TABLE

Caruso and Bobbi sit at the table and eat. JUSTIN (14) gawky,  
thin with curly light brown hair. A young, mixed race,  
Napoleon Dynamite.

Across the room Shak tosses the tray of RUSTY, a skinny boy  
with glasses.

Caruso watches the exchange with dismay.

CARUSO

Ever wish you were back in  
kindergarten?

Bobbi shakes her head "no."

BOBBI

The food servings and desks are too  
small.

CARUSO

At least back in middle school I  
wouldn't be the smallest.

BOBBI

You're bigger than Ryan and he's my  
age. And, you're too smart to be  
demoted.

Justin watches SANDY (14), a female version of Justin except  
with braids and a pink shirt. She sits with several TEENAGE  
GIRLS laughing and giggling.

Caruso and Bobbi watch Justin.

BOBBI

Just ask her out, Justin.

JUSTIN

She would never go out with me.  
She's popular and good looking.

Caruso glances at Sandy and then Justin.

CARUSO  
No mirrors in his house.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

A hallway with doors leading to offices.

Bobbi stands behind Caruso with her hands on his shoulders.  
They face a door with "Counselor" printed on the glass.

CARUSO  
I'll get picked on even more.

BOBBI  
The school brags about their no  
bullying policy.

Caruso turns away.

CARUSO  
It won't help unless they have enough  
bodyguards for every geek, nerd, and  
loser in school.

A depressed Caruso shuffles down the hall.

Bobbi shouts after him.

BOBBI  
You're not a loser.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The buses are lined up outside the school.

STUDENTS exit the school. Some get in their PARENTS' cars  
and some get on the buses.

Caruso stands in a doorway pressed against the wall.  
Occasionally, he peaks out the door.

Bobbi jumps from around the corner.

BOBBI  
BOO!

Caruso jumps and clutches his heart.

CARUSO  
Bobbi.

Bobbi laughs.

BOBBI  
If you won't talk to the counselor  
then you need to take some kind of  
self-defense. Boxing.

Bobbi air-boxes.

BOBBI

Kung Fu.

Bobbi attacks an imaginary opponent.

BOBBI

Heeyah!

CARUSO

Maybe I could grow a foot.

BOBBI

Maybe you could grow six more and  
whack him like an octopus.

Bobbi slaps furiously at the air and laughs at her own joke.

Caruso scowls and solemnly heads for the bus.

CARUSO

The bus is here.

Bobbi follows.

INT. SCHOOL BUS -- DAY

Caruso boards a bus full of STUDENTS and walks down the aisle.  
Bobbi is behind him.

Shak sits in the middle of the bus. He sticks his foot out  
to trip Caruso as he walks down the aisle.

Caruso effortlessly hops over Shak's foot.

Caruso takes a seat in the back near Justin.

JUSTIN

Tyler tried to trip me once.

BOBBI

Caruso needs to learn self defense.  
What did you do?

JUSTIN

He was wearing white shorts and I  
fell on him with a cup of orange  
juice. Orange juice is a good defense.  
As good as steaming hot chocolate.

Caruso and Bobbi nod in agreement.

JUSTIN

And you won't get detention even if  
his dad is a lawyer.

Caruso and Bobbi nod in agreement.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS -- DAY

Caruso, Bobbi, and Justin get off the bus.

BOBBI

Take self-defense and you can get  
off at your own bus stop.

CARUSO

You don't like us going to your house?

JUSTIN

It's safer to travel in groups.  
Even in middle class suburbia.

INT. CARUSO HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

An average eat-in kitchen with a table and four chairs.  
There's a built-in desk in the corner.

Caruso sets the table. He puts out silverware and four  
plates.

Elaine makes a salad.

ELAINE

Are you feeling okay?

CARUSO

Yeah. Why?

ELAINE

Falling asleep in class isn't good.

CARUSO

I'm bored.

ELAINE

You need to do what you need to do  
to be able to do what you have to.

Caruso stares at his mom.

ELAINE

That didn't come out right.

CARUSO

You think?

ELAINE

What can I do so you do well in your  
classes?

CARUSO

Find me an interesting teacher?  
She never taught before. And she  
does that "we" thing.

Caruso stiffens and mimics his teacher opening an imaginary  
book and turning imaginary pages.

CARUSO

"We need to open our books." "We  
need to turn to page thirty." "We  
need to step out of the room for a  
minute."

Caruso returns to his own demeanor.

CARUSO

I followed her - right into the ladies  
room.

Elaine stifles a smile.

CARUSO

Not funny mom.

ELAINE

She'll get better.

CARUSO

We're lab rats.

ELAINE

You aren't doing well in any of your  
classes.

CARUSO

Well is relative.

ELAINE

Doing better than D's.

CARUSO

D is passing.

ELAINE

You're smart enough to be getting  
A's.

CARUSO

That's the puzzle. What's it take  
to keep the smart kids entertained?

ELAINE

You aren't supposed to be entertained.  
You're supposed to learn.

CARUSO

Learning should be fun. Why would anyone want to learn anything that isn't fun? I watch the discovery channel and I don't fall asleep! And I learn lots! I watch the cooking channel and I can make a souffle better than my teacher.

ELAINE

Well. Well.

Elaine searches for something to say.

ELAINE

Teachers aren't eligible for Emmy's.

CARUSO

If they were their students wouldn't fall asleep.

Elaine is stuck about what to say and just tosses the salad.

Caruso puts out glasses.

LATER

Caruso, Elaine, and JACK (10) Caruso's younger brother, sit at the table. Elaine fills each plate with salad.

JACK

What's for dinner?

CARUSO

It's Wednesday.

Jack looks at him.

Caruso looks back at Jack like he should know this.

CARUSO

Burgers and dogs.

Jack's head sinks.

JACK

We need to hide the grill.

Jimmy enters with a plate of barbecued burgers and hot dogs. He sets the plate down on the table and sits.

Caruso and Jack stare at the plate like they are going to vomit.

Caruso, Elaine, and Jack look at Jimmy. They all speak at once.

CARUSO  
 (in unison)  
 Potatoes and buns.

JACK  
 (in unison)  
 Potatoes and buns.

ELAINE  
 (in unison)  
 Potatoes and buns.

Jimmy gets up from the table and heads back to the deck.

CARUSO  
 We appreciate the communal sharing  
 of duties but dietary variety is  
 necessary for survival.

Jack stares blankly at Caruso.

JACK  
 Translation. We're sick of burgers.

Caruso scowls at Jack.

CARUSO  
 Burgers and dogs three times a week?

JACK  
 Can't you teach him to make something  
 else?

CARUSO  
 I'll even eat zucchini.

ELAINE  
 I appreciate your dad making dinner.

CARUSO  
 Maybe he could do the laundry. Or  
 vacuum.

JACK  
 I could learn to cook. Spaghetti  
 doesn't look that hard.

ELAINE  
 He thinks you like his grilling.  
 Don't hurt his feelings.

Jimmy enters with a plate of potatoes and buns.

Caruso gets up from the table.

CARUSO  
 I'll get the mayo.

JACK  
Get the peanut butter, too.

JIMMY  
Jack, how was school?

Caruso puts the mayo and peanut butter on the table.

JACK  
Boring.

Jack grins at Caruso.

JACK  
But I didn't fall asleep.

Caruso takes the peanut butter off the table just as Jack grabs for it.

LATER

Elaine washes dishes. Jimmy clears the table.

Caruso trudges into the kitchen with a laptop and books which he puts on the table.

CARUSO  
How long are we gonna do this?

JIMMY  
Until your grades get better.

Caruso sits.

CARUSO  
I meant tonight.

JIMMY  
Until all your homework's done.

Caruso drops his head onto the table.

CARUSO  
I'll be here all night.

INT. CARUSO HOME - CARUSO'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sun shines into Caruso's room. Caruso sleeps soundly when the alarm goes off. He thumps the snooze button and covers his face with a pillow.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Caruso flies into a wall of lockers, his backpack and contents scattering. He slides down the locker until he sits on the floor.

Shak looms over Caruso.

SHAK

Britney.

Caruso looks up at him. He doesn't seem frightened - more like he has become accustomed to such treatment.

WHACK! A mop comes out of nowhere and smacks Shak across the back of the head.

Shak turns, rubbing his head.

Bobbi, wielder of the mop, stands with mop in hand. She is dressed in fencing pants and a black t-shirt. Her backpack is on the floor next to her.

SHAK

Stupid.

Shak tries to brush the mop away.

Bobbi is too fast for Shak. She moves the mop under and over and under his hand, spins it, and plunges the mop squarely into his chest, sending him flying backwards into the lockers.

Bobbi waves the filthy fibers under Shak's nose.

BOBBI

I picked this up outside the boys' bathroom.

She wiggles the mop.

BOBBI

Mmmm. Smell that bouquet.

Shak grimaces and walks away, wiping his face with his shirt.

Bobbi thumps the mop on the floor triumphantly.

Caruso struggles to his feet and collects his scattered belongings.

CARUSO

Saved by a girl. Again.

BOBBI

Give it a couple of years. You'll be the rescuer.

CARUSO

Somewhere in America there's a school where no one gets picked on.

Bobbi hands the mop to Caruso while she digs a form out of her backpack. She waves the form in front of Caruso.

BOBBI

If you don't file a complaint, I will.

CARUSO

Why would you file a complaint? You can defend yourself.

Caruso hands the mop back to Bobbi and trudges down the hall.

Bobbi looks over the form in her hand.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

MALE STUDENTS (14-15 years old) are in gym clothes. Shak, one of the biggest boys in the group, stands off to the side alone.

KYLE (20's), the gym teacher wears fencing pants and a black T-shirt. Bobbi, also wearing fencing pants and a black T-shirt, stands next to Kyle.

There is a fencing strip and a scoreboard behind the strip. Kyle is relaxed but speaks with confidence and authority.

KYLE

Today we start our fencing segment. The fencing club loaned us their equipment. Bobbi takes classes and she'll help demonstrate.

Kyle holds up a mask.

KYLE

You must wear your mask when you fence. The only time you are on the strip without it is when the Judge checks your equipment and when you salute your opponent.

Kyle grabs a glove.

KYLE

Another piece of important safety equipment is the glove. Even though there is a spring tip on the blade it can still cause a nasty bruise.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Kyle holds up the plastron and puts it on.

B) Kyle holds up the jacket and puts it on.

C) Kyle and Bobbi hold up the body cords and loop them through the loop on their jacket.

D) Kyle and Bobbi connect the cords to their weapons.

E) Kyle and Bobbi take a fencing position on the strip.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Kyle holds three swords. An epee, a foil, and a saber.

KYLE

There are three kinds of swords.

He holds up each one as he names it.

KYLE

A foil. A saber. And an epee. The rules are different for each. You'll be learning the epee.

Rusty raises his hand. Kyle nods.

RUSTY

My dad says we're supposed to learn foil first.

KYLE

My class. My choice.

Kyle holds up the epee.

KYLE

On the tip is a spring.

Some of the boys rough house. Kyle stops and stares at them. They slow their rough housing down but continue pushing and poking and laughing as they watch Kyle.

KYLE

Vladimir Smirnov, who won Gold at the 1980 Olympics, was killed in 1982 during the World Championships when a blade broke and went through his mask . . .

This gets the boys' attention and they stop playing and look at the teacher more seriously. Kyle walks slowly and menacingly, glaring at the boys as he speaks.

KYLE

. . . plunging into his brain and killing him instantly.

The boys gulp. Kyle stops and returns to his normal teaching voice.

KYLE

It was a sad day for fencing, but it also put into motion safety standards for masks.

Kyle holds up the epee and presses the spring tip.

KYLE

The spring tip will budge when it is pressed against your opponent.

The scoreboard behind Kyle lights on the green side.

KYLE

One of you will have the green light and your opponent will have the red light. The fencer whose light is lit scores the point.

Kyle presses the tip again. The green light goes on.

KYLE

Whoever gets to five points first wins that bout.

Kyle pushes the tip four more times.

KYLE

Direct eliminations, also called D. E.'s are fifteen points instead of five.

Kyle puts the sword down and faces the students.

KYLE

Everybody get in a line and face that wall.

The students get in a line.

KYLE

If you are right-handed hold your right hand out.

The right-handed students put their right hand out.

KYLE

If you are left handed hold your left hand out.

The left-handed students put their left hand out. Shak is left-handed.

KYLE

Now follow your hand with the same foot.

Kyle demonstrates the correct advance technique for right-handed fencers.

Kyle switches hands and demonstrates the correct advance technique for left-handed fencers.

The students clumsily advance. They have no rhythm.

Kyle shakes his head.

KYLE

It makes it easier if the back foot follows the front foot.

Kyle demonstrates a smooth advance, again.

The students advance to the end of the gym.

KYLE

When you get better I'll have you retreat. But, for now turn around and continue to advance.

Kyle turns around and advances. The students follow.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Caruso and Bobbi are at their lockers.

CARUSO

That was boring. Like dancing only worse.

BOBBI

It gets better. Wait until you actually fence someone.

CARUSO

You enjoy math, too.

BOBBI

I do the work and study. Doesn't mean I like it. I want to graduate and go to college. How are you going to earn a living?

CARUSO

I've got about ten years before I have to decide that.

BOBBI

More like five. Time flies. You turn around and the kids are grown.

CARUSO

Kids?

BOBBI

Don't you listen to your parents?  
Mine are always lamenting about how  
we aren't babies anymore.

CARUSO

Listen to your parents and talk crazy.

BOBBI

I'm not talking crazy. I'm going to  
have to earn a living. Mortgage.  
Groceries. Cable. Internet. Fencing  
equipment.

Caruso thinks for a second.

CARUSO

Can I live with you?

Bobbi slams her locker and gives a dirty look to Caruso.

BOBBI

Not a chance. I don't need my parents  
whining about the worthless bum I  
married.

Bobbi stomps off. Caruso watches her, worried.

INT. CARUSO HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Elaine is at the kitchen desk paying bills on her laptop.

Caruso enters. He looks at what his mom is doing.

ELAINE

How was school?

CARUSO

Boring. Are you paying bills?

She looks surprised at Caruso's question.

ELAINE

They won't pay themselves.

CARUSO

What kind of job do you think I'll  
get when I'm older?

ELAINE

Not a very good one if your grades  
don't pick up.

CARUSO

Can my wife and kids live here?

Elaine looks shocked.

ELAINE

What!?

CARUSO

I don't have a wife and kids.

Elaine looks relieved.

CARUSO

Not now. I mean when I'm older.  
And I get married. Can I bring my  
wife and kids here to live?

ELAINE

Your dad and I are retiring to Hawaii.

CARUSO

Oh.

Caruso trudges out of the kitchen.

Elaine watches him, still confused, shaking her head.

EXT. BOBBI'S HOME - NIGHT

Caruso rings the doorbell.

BOBBI'S MOM Answers the door.

BOBBI'S MOM

Hi Caruso. Bobbi is fencing.

Caruso looks at his watch.

BOBBI'S MOM

They have an Olympic Fencer as a  
guest speaker this evening.

Caruso nods and slinks down the steps.

BOBBI'S MOM

I'll have her call you.

CARUSO

Thanks.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Caruso sits in the seat leaning against the window. Other  
STUDENTS are on board.

The bus stops and Bobbi buoyantly gets on.

She walks down the aisle and sits next to Caruso.

CARUSO

You didn't call.

BOBBI  
I got home really late.

Bobbi digs in her back pack and pulls out a picture.

BOBBI  
I had my picture taken with an Olympic  
fencer. Look at the medal.

Caruso glances over at the picture. He's intrigued.

CARUSO  
They give medals for fencing?

BOBBI  
It's been an Olympic sport since the  
1896 Olympics.

CARUSO  
Is that your goal? To fence in the  
Olympics?

BOBBI  
I haven't really thought about it.

Bobbi puts the picture back in her backpack.

CARUSO  
Yeah, right.

Caruso leans his head against the window.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

Students are lined up in the gym. They all wear fencing  
gear. They hold their masks and epee weapons.

The fencing strips and scoring equipment are set up.

Kyle and Bobbi take their places on the strip. Bobbi has  
the red light and Kyle has the green light. They hook up  
their cords. They hold their masks in their left hands and  
salute with their swords with their right hands.

Kyle and Bobbi fence.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Red light.
- B) Kyle and Bobbi fence.
- C) Green light.
- D) Kyle and Bobbi fence.
- E) Green light.

F) Kyle and Bobbi fence.

G) Red light.

H) Kyle and Bobbi fence.

I) Green light.

J) Kyle and Bobbi fence.

K) Red light.

L) Kyle and Bobbi fence.

M) Green light.

N) Kyle and Bobbi fence.

O) Red light.

P) Kyle and Bobbi fence.

Q) Red light.

End series of shots.

Bobbi and Kyle remove their masks and shake hands.

Shak leans over to Caruso.

SHAK

I challenge you to a duel to the  
death!

Kyle watches the exchange between Shak and Caruso.

KYLE

Shak! You're up!

Shak takes his place on the strip.

Kyle hooks Shak up.

KYLE

Shak here is left-handed. Watch out  
for left-handed fencers. Most fencers  
are right-handed and it is sometimes  
difficult for a fencer to understand  
a left-handed fencer's moves.

Bobbi hooks up.

KYLE

Check your weapons.

Shak stands there. Bobbi moves her sword toward Shak. He  
backs away.

Kyle grabs Shak's blade and hits Bobbi's bell with the blade.

Bobbi does the same with her blade touching Shak's bell.

Bobbi salutes. Shak stands there.

KYLE

It's common courtesy to salute your  
opponent before the bout.

Shak salutes.

Bobbi and Shak put their masks on. Bobbi has the green light,  
Shak has the red light.

KYLE

Fence.

Shak creeps forward.

Bobbi lunges and scores a point.

Shak takes off his mask.

SHAK

She cheated.

KYLE

Hardly. Put your mask back on.

Shak gallops toward Bobbi. She deftly moves to the side and  
Shak runs past her. As he passes, she scores off his back.

Shak removes his mask.

SHAK

She hit me from behind.

KYLE

Then don't run past her.

Caruso laughs.

Shak puts his mask back on and approaches Bobbi.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Bobbi and Shak fence.

B) Green light.

C) Bobbi and Shak fence.

D) Green light.

E) Bobbi and Shak fence.

F) Green light.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

Shak takes off his mask.

Bobbi takes off her mask and approaches Shak with her hand out.

Shak starts to unclip himself.

KYLE

It's customary to shake hands after the bout.

Shak grudgingly shakes Bobbi's hand.

Caruso goes up to Bobbi.

CARUSO

That was awesome.

BOBBI

I'll give you some pointers.

Caruso and Bobbi go to a corner of the gymnasium.

Kyle points to two students who take their place on the mats.

CORNER OF THE GYMNASIUM

Bobbi coaches Caruso.

BOBBI

Say a fencer is coming at you and you want to deflect their blade. You do what is called a parry. There are a lot of intricacies but basically you slide your blade over which stops their blade.

Caruso looks confused.

BOBBI

Put your mask on. We'll go over a couple of these things real quick.

Caruso puts his mask on.

MAIN GYMNASIUM STRIP

The two students fence.

The green light goes on.

KYLE

Halt. Five. Four.

The students remove their masks and start to unclip.

KYLE

Shake!

The students stop and shake each other's hand.

KYLE

Shak and Caruso! You're up!

CORNER OF THE GYMNASIUM

Caruso stops and looks terrified.

Bobbi tries to reassure him.

BOBBI

You'll do fine. You're faster than  
he is. And smarter.

Caruso nods, not really believing her.

CARUSO

Yeah.

Caruso takes a spot on the strip with the red side and  
connects his cord.

Shak does the same, connecting to the green side, with a  
swagger and a glare at Caruso.

Caruso looks up at Shak.

Shak grins and waves his sword from side to side.

Caruso gulps and gives a pathetic wave to Shak.

KYLE

Shak. Salute correctly.

Shak gives an emphatic salute.

Both fencers put their masks on.

KYLE

Fence.

Shak rushes toward Caruso.

Caruso sidesteps him and Shak runs past.

Caruso hits Shak in the back.

Shak whips off his mask.

SHAK

What's with the hitting in the back!?

KYLE

If you stay in front of your opponent they won't be able to hit you in the back. One. Zero.

Shak angrily puts his mask back on.

Shak approaches Caruso more slowly this time.

Shak lunges.

Caruso parries and lunges scoring a point. Both boys look at the scoreboard.

The red light is lit.

KYLE

Two. Zero.

They return to the start position and approach each other.

Caruso lunges and scores a point.

KYLE

Three. Zero.

Caruso is standing taller, more confident.

Caruso advances toward Shak. Shak lunges. Caruso parries and flicks off Shak's back, scoring another point.

Shak removes his mask.

SHAK

I didn't run past him and he still hit me in the back.

KYLE

It's called flicking and it's acceptable in epee. Four. Zero.

Shak angrily puts his mask back on.

Both boys approach.

Shak lunges.

Caruso quickly retreats leaving Shak in an awkward position.

Caruso lunges while Shak is still down.

KYLE

Five. Zero.

Bobbi quietly claps her hands together quickly.

Caruso removes his mask and shakes Shak's hand. Caruso nonchalantly walks away until he's off the mat then does a jubilant "yes" sign.

KYLE

Good job students. Next class we'll go over some moves you saw today.

Bobbi approaches Caruso.

BOBBI

Awesome!

CARUSO

I beat Shak.

Caruso grins.

CARUSO

I beat Shak.