

# THE QUARRY

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## Chapter One: The Strange Shop on Orchard Street, From *Young Warrior*

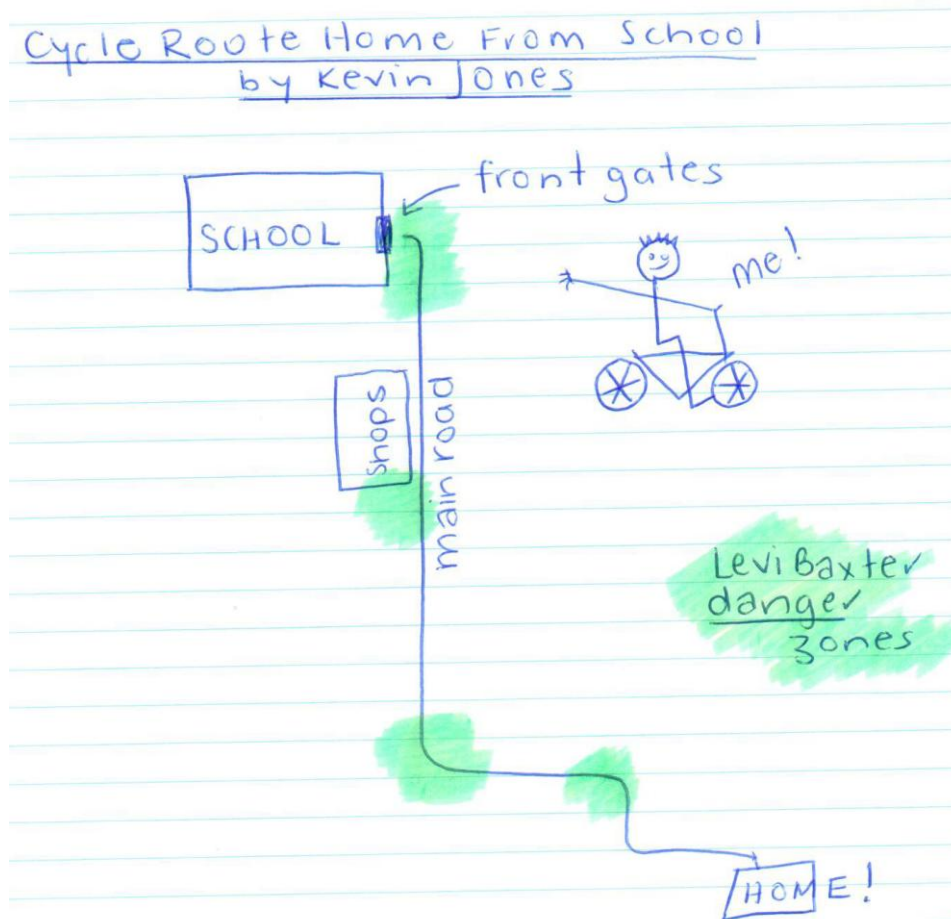
*Young Warrior is an adventure novel for middle school children. Eleven year old Kevin Jones stumbles on a strange and mysterious dojang, from where he is transported to a fantastical realm to train with Master Cheng, and to be taught the ancient secrets of the monks, martial art and combat. But when the magic force that keeps peace in the realm begins to fade and Master Cheng goes missing, Kevin will need to use everything he has learned, as well as a few tricks that only a modern kid would know, to save Master Cheng and his world.*

Today wasn't the first day Kevin Jones had stood outside the strange shop that was tucked in the corner of Orchard Street. Its narrow red door had a brass knob no bigger than a brussels sprout. Its little square windows were dirty and grey. Hanging from the roof on rusty chains was a small wooden sign that might once have been colourful and grand, but was now tired and faded.

The sign read:

*Master Cheng's Hpio*

For a long time Kevin hadn't even known about Orchard Street. Kevin's quickest route from his school to home was to turn right out of the front gates, pedal all the way down the main road, then turn left, right and left again. In a hurry, with his school bag over his shoulder and a jumbo juice-box in his hand, he could make it home in four minutes and fifty-two seconds, if he threw his bike down on the lawn and his mum had left the front door unlocked.



But it hadn't been fast enough. Not after Levi Baxter transferred to the school. Not after Levi Baxter, who was two years older and twice the size of Kevin, took a special disliking to him. Not after Levi Baxter started waiting for Kevin at the school gates, chasing him down on his pushbike that was bigger and fancier than Kevin's (whose bike had been bought in a 'Bargain Sale' of unpopular stock the shop was desperate to get rid of). Four minutes and fifty-two seconds was no longer fast enough for Kevin to make it home without his tie missing, a dead arm and his grubby school shirt pulled over his head.

The last time Kevin cycled the main road home was on the Thursday before Easter. His class had been let out early for the school holidays, and he was flying

down the street, his skinny legs pumping on the pedals, a giddy grin on his face. ‘In your face, Levi Baxter!’ he shouted. ‘Let’s see you catch me today!’ Then as Kevin rounded the corner...

Levi Baxter stepped out in front of him. Kevin turned the front wheel sharply to the left and tried to ride straight past him, but Levi grabbed the strap of his school bag as he went past, and yanked. Kevin yelped as his bike slid out from underneath him, and he dropped to the ground. Levi’s meaty face stood over him, grinning. ‘Caught you, Jones!’ Then he wrestled Kevin into a headlock until he couldn’t breathe.

That was also the last time Kevin saw his school bag. By Easter Monday, Kevin heard that his exercise books were seen strewn around the local oval — lodged between tree branches, hanging over the goal posts. One was even stuffed up a down-pipe. Levi Baxter had been busy.

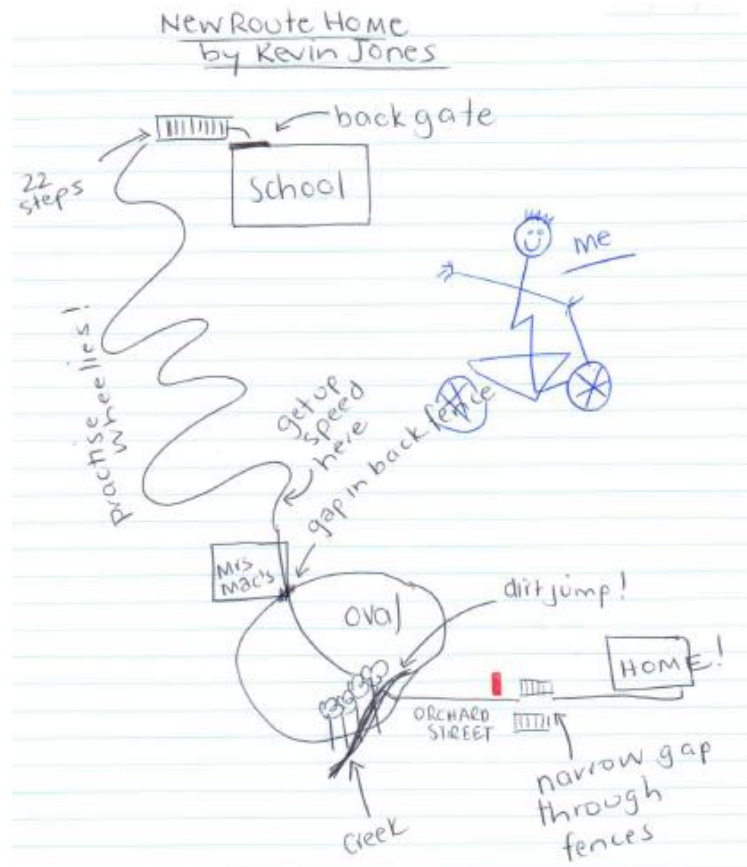
Kevin Jones had spent his Easter holidays devising a new route home from school.

#### Kevin’s New Plan To Ride Home

- Do NOT go near the front gate! Exit by back gate instead.
- Go down the concrete steps (twenty-two of them, must stand up and use legs as shock absorbers or *Owww!*)
- Zig-zag through the back streets (practise my wheelies!)
- Peddle down Mrs Mac’s driveway and across her yard (get a good speed first so I won’t get caught)
- Go through Mrs Mac’s back fence where the palings are missing
- Go across the oval
- Then under the trees on the far side (duck for branches)
- Peddle up the dirt jump and over the creek (*Whooooooooo!*)
- And cut through the very end of the odd little street to HOME!

The ‘odd little street’ was, in fact, Orchard Street, a street which Kevin had only just discovered. The quiet dead end street seemed forgotten by the whole neighbourhood. At the very end was a narrow path between two fences (just wide enough for Kevin’s handlebars to fit) which popped out onto Kevin’s street. From

there he could make it safely through his back gate and home. Kevin wasn't as big and his bike wasn't as fast as Levi's, but he was nimble, he could weave in and out between trees and land small jumps easily. He was certain if Levi tried to follow him home on this route, he wouldn't get caught.



On his last day of school holidays Kevin had timed it on his stopwatch. In a hurry, with his new school bag worn like a backpack and with both hands on the handlebars, he could make it home twelve minutes and ten seconds.

But he never did. Because at eleven minutes and thirteen seconds each afternoon since that day, Kevin stopped outside the strange shop that was tucked in the corner of Orchard Street, and pressed his nose to the dirty glass.

*Can you see it on the map? It's the little rectangle in red.*

The first time Kevin looked inside, the windows were so dirty that he couldn't see in. He pulled the sleeve of his jumper over the heel of his hand and rubbed on the glass. It made a loud squeak. He jumped back. Had the people inside heard? He turned to pick up his bike to leave, but stopped. Who was inside? What did they do in there? Kevin pulled up his sleeve and rubbed again, this time a little more carefully so

he didn't make a noise. After a moment, the dirt began to come off and there was a small patch in the middle that he could see through. He pressed his nose firmly against the glass, cupped his hands around the side of his face to cut out the glare, and stared in.

The room was dingy and dim. There was no furniture and the grey walls were bare. A single light bulb hung from the ceiling on a long wire, giving off a pale light. In the centre of the room stood a squat looking man dressed in long robes of orange cloth, with large panels of gold embroidery around the collar, on the sleeves, and on the bottom hem which brushed his bare feet. The man was staring downwards, the bald crown of his head towards Kevin. His arms were outstretched, and between his hands was a gold bladed sword, its tip touching the stone floor in front of him. Suddenly in one swift motion (Kevin would swear from outside he heard a '*whoosh!*' as the air parted) he lifted the sword high above his head and...

*'Kyup!'*

Kevin leapt away from the window. What was that? He looked around. No-one else was on the street. No-one else was there to notice. He crept back up to the glass, and when he peered in again, he was astonished.

The little room he'd been looking in was utterly different. It was bright and modern. Lights were on, the walls were painted white and packed with photographs. There were mirrors at the far end, with two flags above them. Kevin recognised the Australian flag, its blue, red and white, with the Union Jack and Southern Cross. But the second flag was unlike anything Kevin had seen. It was square, on a turquoise background with a golden tower in each corner and a red flame in the middle. Through the glass it almost looked to Kevin as if the flame was flickering. There were blue mats across the floor, and a bald-headed man (who Kevin was certain he had seen a few moments ago wearing robes and holding a sword), was dressed in a black outfit with red edging. He was pacing along the front of the room, shouting instructions with a sound Kevin hadn't heard before.

There were four students, lined up in two rows of two, each dressed in black pants and jackets, (*'dobok'*, Kevin would later practise saying, enjoying the way the *'bok'* burst from his lips). They had coloured belts around their waists. Every time the instructor shouted a different word, the four students punched, and gave a funny yell.

*'Hana!'*

*'Kyup!'*

*'Tul!'*

*'Kyup!'*

*'Set!'*

*'Kyup!'*

*'Net!'*

*'Kyup!'*

*'Tasot!'*

*'Kyup!'*

Suddenly the instructor stopped shouting and looked through the clear patch in the window straight at Kevin. Kevin stepped back. He shouldn't be peeking. But the instructor merely nodded slowly in acknowledgement of him, with a hint of a smile, then turned his attention back to his students.

*'Yossot!'*

*'Kyup!'*

The four students threw another punch.

Kevin grabbed his bike and pedalled home, his heart beating fast. He felt a little scared, a little excited, and most of all, he couldn't wait to look inside again tomorrow.

For two weeks each afternoon after school, Kevin stopped at the shopfront, pressed his nose against the window and watched the students on the blue mats. The tall student with a blue belt around his waist could somersault over a pommel horse and land back on his feet! The student wearing a green belt kicked quick and high. The other two children were small, and the legs and sleeves of their uniforms so long, that they had been rolled up. They were wrestling on one of the mats. Kevin watched the students curiously. If he could learn to do that, would he be better prepared against Levi Baxter? Then he pictured his mum. 'Maybe next year,' he saw her saying, as she always did when he asked about something that needed money. She would follow it with a quiet sigh. Plus, he was still in trouble for 'losing' his school bag (completely

unfair as it wasn't even his fault!) Besides, there was something else that bothered him. It was the instructor.

Only occasionally did Kevin try to get a peek at the instructor. Shorter than the student in the blue belt, his head was shiny and domed like the top of a brown egg. When he demonstrated kicks, his legs moved so fast Kevin only saw a blur, followed by a crisp thwack as his *dobok* pants snapped. But even out of the corner of his eye, Kevin couldn't forget the image of the orange and gold robes, a glinting sword, the sound of a whoosh as it cut through the air...and it made him shiver.

Today, as Kevin was pedalling out of the school grounds, dark clouds blew over the sky. By the time he reached the oval, raindrops were falling. He stood up in his pedals and rode faster. *Too wet to stop today*, he thought. He jumped his bike over the creek, and turned onto Orchard Street when a fierce wall of wind howled down the road and hit Kevin from behind. *Woomph!* It blew through his woollen jumper and chilled him from his back to his elbows. *Where did that come from?* he thought. Kevin mounted the curb and cycled down the footpath, out of the rain. But the wind followed him. *Wooooomph!* It hit him again, this time whipping around his legs, and he wobbled on his bike, but he kept pedalling. He was almost at the shop when the hanging sign began to swing on its rusty chains, sending an eerie whine down the footpath. Kevin stared up at it as he cycled underneath and then *WHAP!* A piece of paper smacked him right in the face. It covered his eyes, he was cycling blind! Kevin snatched the paper away with one hand, just in time to see the shopfront directly in front of him. His bike slammed into the wall, and he tumbled to the ground.

'*Owww!*'

Kevin rolled over, and lay on his back for a moment, catching his breath. He rubbed the back of his head, a small nugget was already forming there. He examined the rest of himself. A few scratches on his knuckles and he'd have bruises tomorrow, not too bad. But his bike hadn't been as lucky. The front wheel was bent and the tyre had burst open. The handlebars were scratched and the shiny bell dome was dented. Kevin pressed the thumb lever. Instead of a sprightly '*briiiiingggg*' to announce itself, the bell made a disappointing '*vvvvvvvvvvv*'. Kevin slumped. Replacing the bell would take the last of the ninth birthday money he had stashed in his piggy bank. The rain was getting heavier. And he would have to push his bike home. What a stupid

day. He stepped forward to see if anyone from inside the shop had heard anything, when a dreadful sound boomed from the end of the street.

‘Jones. I SEE YOU!’

Levi Baxter!

‘This is how you’ve been getting away!’ he shouted.

Kevin stepped backwards, and reached down for his bike. ‘Stay away from me Levi, or I’ll...I’ll...do something!’ he said. He swung his leg over his bike and pushed on the pedal, but with the bent wheel it wouldn’t move. Levi started to laugh.

It must be explained here that Levi Baxter didn’t laugh like other eleven year olds. His laugh was slow and menacing, and his chin and throat puffed out like a bullfrog (Josh Sampson had passed a note around the class while they were watching a video about bullfrogs in science lesson — ‘Looks like Levi Baxter’s twin brother!!!’ it said. The note made it half-way around the class before their teacher Mr Hutchins spotted it, and Noah Samuels ate it on the spot). Now Levi was pacing, step by step, down Orchard Street towards Kevin. ‘What are you going to do?’ he said. He was close. Too close. Kevin pushed on the pedal again, but it wouldn’t budge. Levi had nearly reached him. Kevin threw down the bike and started to run. ‘You’ll never outrun me, Jones!’ And Levi leapt after him.

Without thinking, Kevin changed direction and threw himself at the red door. He grabbed and turned the brass brussels sprouts handle, threw the door open and jumped inside. Bang! There was an eerie echo as the red door slammed shut behind him. Kevin stared, terrified, as the door handle rattled and the red door shook, but it didn’t open. Levi banged on the outside. His voice was muffled through the door, but Kevin heard him. ‘You can’t hide in there forever! Next time, Jones. Next time I’ll get you, you wimp!’ He heard the sounds of his bicycle being stomped on. The crunch of metal. A final ‘vv v v v v ...’ from his bike bell. Then silence.

‘Phew.’ Kevin turned away from the door.

Standing in front of him was the bald-headed instructor.

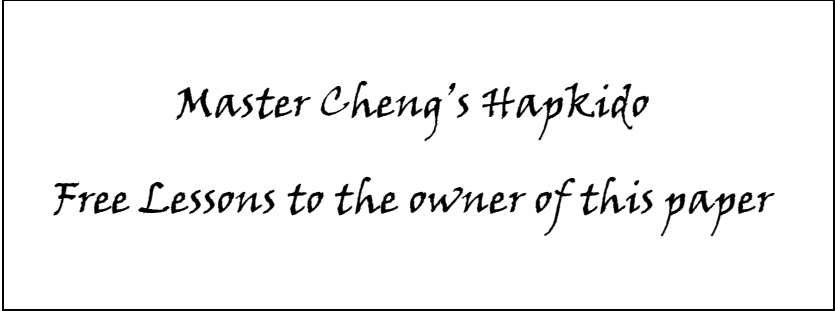
The instructor looked calmly at Kevin. Then he slowly bowed his head. When he raised it again, Kevin noticed his face was older than he’d thought. His golden skin was wrinkled like a shrunken balloon and his eyes were little half-moons. His



eyebrows were pale with flecks of gold. Unsure what was expected, Kevin awkwardly tried a bow.

‘Welcome,’ he said. ‘I am Master Cheng.’ His voice was gentle but confusing, an accent Kevin hadn’t heard before. ‘I am waiting. You are here for free lesson.’

Kevin looked blankly. Master Cheng nodded in the direction of Kevin’s hand. Kevin looked down. Clutched tightly in his fist was the small piece of paper that had hit him in the face as he had cycled down the road. He hadn’t realised he was still holding it. He smoothed it out and read what was on the paper.



*Master Cheng's Hapkido*  
*Free Lessons to the owner of this paper*

‘And you *are* owner of paper, yes?’ said Master Cheng.

Kevin thought about it. If it flew into his face, did that make him the owner? The door behind him had stopped rattling, but he had no idea whether Levi was now waiting quietly in ambush outside. So he nodded. Master Cheng smiled.

‘Then your time has come, young *jeonsa*.’ My young student. And he pointed Kevin in the direction of the *dojang*.