

DAREDEVIL
The Kid's All Right

By Ryan Lynch

PAGE ONE

Panel 1

Black.

MRS. WILLIAMS:
...Mister Murdock?

Panel 2

MATT's RADAR-SENSE gives us a faint, red outline (standing out from the black) of a woman talking at him.

MRS. WILLIAMS:
Are you with us, Matthew?

Panel 3

The woman's face grows closer (larger).

MRS. WILLIAMS:
MATTHEW!

PAGE TWO

Panel 1

A scrawny MATT MURDOCK, aged 14, is sitting at a desk in a high school classroom. He's seated between two other students. MRS. WILLIAMS is towards the foreground, body oriented towards MATT.

MATT is wearing his trademark glasses. Behind them, an irritated scowl. This woman doesn't know how LOUD she is to someone with super-hearing.

MATT (grumbles):
I heard you the first time.

Panel 2

Close shot of MRS. WILLIAMS, a tough-as-nails teacher. She doesn't care that MATT's blind.

MRS. WILLIAMS:
So glad you could rejoin us. I'd thought you were taking advantage of your condition.

MATT (off-panel):
I'm blind, Mrs. Williams –

Panel 3

Close shot of MATT.

MATT:
- not deaf.

Panel 4

MRS. WILLIAMS:
Now if only you were mute, you might've avoided detention.

MRS. WILLIAMS:
See me after school, Mister Murdock. Don't be late.

Panel 5

MATT slinks into his seat.

MATT (soft):
Shit.

MRS. WILLIAMS:
I heard that.

PAGE THREE

Panel 1

MATT (CAPTION):
I hate it here.

MATT (CAPTION):
I can hear every last ugly sound in this building, and two down the block.

Panel 2

MATT (CAPTION):
Up until two months ago, my life sucked. I was the local punching bag – by choice. Then, I saved an old guy from an oncoming truck, and I was blinded by radioactive waste.

MATT (CAPTION):
I got a grace period. For two whole months, people were nice to me.

Panel 3

MATT is tripped by assholes in the hallway.

MATT (CAPTION):
I was lucky to get that much.

MATT:
UNH!

Panel 4

CRAIG sneers at MATT.

CRAIG:
What's the matter, Murdock? Didn't see it coming?

Panel 5

MATT picking himself up off the ground. People looking down at him. CRAIG and friends are laughing about it.

Panel 6
MATT gets up, walking away.

MATT (CAPTION):
I hate it here.

PAGE FOUR

Panel 1
MATT eating lunch by himself, in a cafeteria crowded with people.

Panel 2
SIOUXSIE, a punk girl – wearing a denim jacket, combat boots, and fishnet stockings – comes over to him with two of her punk friends.

SIOUXSIE:
Hey –

MATT:
What.

Panel 3
SIOUXSIE gets belligerent. MATT is dismissive.

SIOUXSIE:
What're you doing here? This is our spot. Go eat somewhere else.

MATT:
I'm sorry, I didn't see a sign or anything.

Panel 4

SIOUXSIE notices his walking stick.

SIOUXSIE:

Oh shit.

Panel 5

Close up, GIRL. Softer expression.

GIRL:

You're that blind kid, Matt Murdock, aren't you?

MATT (Off panel):

Yeah.

Panel 6

SIOUXSIE, Dee, and Pattie. SIOUXSIE is gesturing to them out of habit.

SIOUXSIE:

I'm Siouxsie. Like Souxsie and the Banshees. This is, uh, Dee, to your left, and that's Pattie, to your right.

MATT:

Nice to meet you.

MATT (CAPTION): I can't see them, but I can smell them. Dee smells like lunchroom pizza and floral deodorant. Pattie has soda breath. Siouxsie reeks of clove cigarettes and cheap vodka.

PAGE FIVE

Panel 1

SIOUXSIE, sitting down next to MATT. PATTIE and DEE are still standing, looking on.

SIOUXSIE:

So, what do you think of high school?

MATT:

I hate it.

Panel 2

SIOUXSIE grinning. PATTIE being combative.

SIOUXSIE:

Can't pull the wool over your eyes, huh?

PATTIE:

Nice, Sue. Be more of a bitch.

SIOUXSIE:
Shut up, Pattie.

MATT:
It's alright.

Panel 3

MATT, palms up. "Fuhgeddaboutit." PATTIE, a little concerned.

MATT:
I'm blind. No big deal.

MATT:
What'm I gonna do – cry about it?

PATTIE:
Well, no – but people should treat you a bit better.

SIOUXSIE:
No.

Panel 4

PATTIE and SIOUXSIE getting into it.

PATTIE:
Are you fucking serious?

SIOUXSIE:
I think he'd rather be treated like a human being. But y'know what? Ask him yourself.

SIOUXSIE:
If you're interested, he might just want a seeing eye bitch.

Panel 5

SIOUXSIE walks off.

MATT (CAPTION):
I can hear their anger, but I can almost see the smirk on her face.

MATT (CAPTION):
She's my kind of person.

PAGE SEVEN

Panel 1

MATT talking to MRS. WILLIAMS in the classroom, who has a softer expression on her face than earlier.

MATT (CAPTION):

Lucky me, so is Mrs. Williams. I talked her into not sending a note home about the detention.

MATT (CAPTION):

Dad won't notice if I'm home thirty minutes late, anyway. He gets home around six. But he reads the mail, and I can't lie to him for shit. If I get in trouble at school, it's going to be even worse at home.

Panel 2

MATT walking away from his high school, alone. He looks pissed.

MATT (CAPTION):

It used to be, anyway.

Panel 3

Close up on a framed picture on a table. Empty, crushed beer cans near a picture of the two Murdocks at the local boxing gym; dad in trunks, posing with a left jab, and son doing the same. Both are smiling. Piles of bills near it. A smaller picture of Matt's mother, B&W glamour shot.

MATT (CAPTION):

Ever since the accident, he just drinks and cries. I think it's the hardest thing for a father, especially mine.

MATT (CAPTION):

I never knew my mother. It's just us. Not that he hasn't dated, just that nobody wants to date a former boxer with a loser kid.

Panel 4

Close up on Matt's Dad, pulling beer out of the fridge. Little expression on his face, except for sadness. He's not hiding anything, because he has nobody to hide it from.

MATT (CAPTION):

I think he cries because he can't do anything physically – if there was somebody he could punch, or a two-ton weight he could lift to give me back my eyesight, he'd do it in a heartbeat.

MATT (CAPTION):

But ever since I was sent to that hospital, he's been completely helpless.

Panel 5

Close up on Matt's Dad, gripping a trembling man by the collar with the left hand, gesturing as if to punch with the right. Matt's Dad looks fearsome.

MATT (CAPTION):

I don't even know where he got the money for my hospital stay. I was there for almost a month – and I know things are tight as is. He was giving boxing lessons down at the Gym, just so I could have some extra clothes for school.

MATT (CAPTION):

He just wants me to fit in. To be normal. To succeed.

PAGE EIGHT

Panel 1

Close up. MATT walking down a side-street.

MATT (CAPTION):

Why do I feel like I'll never live up to that?

MATT (CAPTION):

He's always telling me to visualize success, to see it in my mind.

Panel 2

MATT in front of an abandoned warehouse. STICK, martial arts janitor extraordinaire, is in the background, leaning against the wall.

MATT (CAPTION):

Right now, Dad –

MATT (CAPTION):

I can't see shit.

Panel 3

MATT hears STICK's voice, and whips around.

STICK:

It took you long enough.

MATT:

How did you –

STICK:

The same way I'll teach you.

Panel 4

STICK:

Follow me.

PAGE NINE

Panel 1

STICK grabs MATT's cane, causing MATT to fall on the ground.

Panel 2

MATT pushing himself up off the ground.

MATT:

Why'd you do that, you asshole?!

STICK:

Step one – your walking stick isn't a crutch. It's a weapon.

STICK:

But if you need it to get around, it stays a crutch.

Panel 3

STICK

STICK:

If you don't need it -

MATT:

Then it's a weapon.

STICK:

Don't interrupt me.

Panel 4

MATT giving STICK attitude. STICK holds MATT at length with his own walking stick.

MATT:

But I'm right.

STICK:

That doesn't matter. Am I the teacher?

MATT:

Yeah – and?

STICK:

Then you listen. When I ask for you to do something, you do it. This is not a question of you being right.

Panel 5

Close up, STICK. Standing tall, like a drill sergeant. MATT's walking stick is resting on STICK's shoulder.

STICK:

You learn from me, by me, through me. When we are here, don't think for a second that you know more than I do.

STICK:

I've been blind since I was born, and as soon as I could walk, I was training. Can you hear my heart beat?

PAGE TEN

Panel 1

MATT-VISION. Blackness, echoes of a heartbeat.

SFX:

THUMP

Panel 2

MATT (Close-up)

MATT:

Yes.

Panel 3

STICK and MATT. STICK is moving around MATT.

STICK:

How does it sound?

MATT:

Healthy.

Panel 4

STICK is starting to have fun. He has a twisted smirk on his face as he circles MATT.

STICK:

Listen to my voice. How old do you think I am?

MATT:

Forty?

STICK:

Heh.

Panel 5

STICK and MATT. STICK has almost completed a full circle around MATT.

STICK:

Master Izo was half your age when he started training.

MATT:

How old is he now?

STICK:

A hundred and eighty, by my last count.

Panel 6

MATT – Closeup.

MATT:

Bullsh-

Panel 7

MATT gets whacked with his own stick, by STICK.

SFX: THWACK

PAGE ELEVEN

Panel 1

MATT stares at him, intensely, and grits his teeth. He's tense and ready to fight. Big panel.

Panel 2

STICK looks bemused.

STICK:

Good. You understand.

Panel 3

STICK walking off into the darkness.

STICK:

Let's begin.

PAGE TWELVE

Panel 1

MATT, in the hospital bed. STICK in the dark corner of the hospital room.

MATT (CAPTION):

I met Stick in the hospital, where I was recovering. I knew he was different.

MATT (CAPTION):

His heartbeat didn't jump when he saw me. He didn't pity me.

Panel 2

STICK standing over the bed.

MATT (CAPTION):

He just said, "How do you feel?"

MATT (CAPTION):

"Horrible," I said. "My life's over."

Panel 3

Close up. MATT, red faced, angry. Gauze patches over his eyes, and wearing a hospital robe, but you can see the tension in his face.

MATT (CAPTION):

He laughed at me.

MATT (CAPTION):

I felt my face flush with anger. I was weak, and he was laughing at me.

Panel 4

OUTSIDE the hospital room, looking in via the windows. STICK at the foot of the bed, standing. MATT in the bed. Birds flying past the window, into the sky.

MATT (CAPTION):

But then, he stopped.

MATT(CAPTION):

He asked me one question: "Do you want to keep crying, or do you want to live again?"

PAGE THIRTEEN

Panel 1

MATT arrives back home. It's a dimly lit apartment in Hell's Kitchen, with a few of JACK's boxing posters on the all. The table mentioned earlier is in the main room, along with a TV and a worn couch.

Panel 2

MATT in his room. It's dark and barren, save a bed, books, and a desk.

MATT (CAPTION):

I know there should be posters. Something saying, "Hey, a teenager lives here."

MATT (CAPTION):

But what's the point?

Panel 3

CLOCK reads 6 pm. MATT is doing homework at his desk.

JACK (off-panel):

Matt, I'm home!

MATT:

Hey dad!

Panel 4

JACK in MATT's doorway. MATT looks up.

JACK:

You hittin' the books?

MATT:

Hard as you hit Maberry.

JACK:

That's my boy!

Panel 5

JACK grabbing MATT's shoulders, rustling him a bit. JACK looks curious. MATT looks nervous.

JACK:

Hey, you got a little muscle on ya now.

MATT:

Yeah?

PAGE FOURTEEN

Panel 1

JACK shares a smile with MATT, who is still seated.

JACK:

Guess you're growin' into a real man, like your dad.

MATT:

Hope so.

Panel 2

JAJACK is concerned.

JACK:

Dinner's on the table when you want it. I got, uh, dim sum, spare ribs, lo mein, and some veggie stuff.

MATT:

Thanks, Dad. Be there in a bit.

JACK:

You want some help?

MATT:

Nah, I've got it.

Panel 3

JACK leaving the room. MATT in the desk.

Panel 4

MATT takes a deep breath.

PAGE FIFTEEN

Panel 1

MATT gets up.

Panel 2

MATT walks to the door.

Panel 3

MATT's hand grabs the cane.

Panel 4

MATT walking through the living room, using the cane.

Panel 5

JACK at the kitchen table, MATT in the doorjam. JACK is looking on with a kind of sad pride.

PAGE SIXTEEN

Panel 1

MATT is seating himself at the very small table. They're seated maybe two-and-a-half feet away from each other, with a bunch of Chinese food containers in between.

Panel 2

JACK, talking with an eggroll in hand.

JACK:
So, I talked to the foreman today.

Panel 3

Over JACK's shoulder. MATT, guiding a fork to a container of lo mein.

MATT:
Yeah?

JACK:
He says, with the way I've been working, I'll be up for a promotion next month.

MATT:
That's great, dad.

Panel 4

Over MATT's shoulder. JACK looking displeased as he talks about their case. Eggroll still in hand.

MATT:
Any luck with the lawsuit?

JACK:
No.

JACK:
Those assholes at the company keep saying that there was no way that crap could've made you go blind. Fredricksen said that your actions were commendable, but that he doesn't think we have a case.

JACK:
They're arguing, uh, reckless endangerment.

Panel 5

MATT:
What would've happened if they ran over the old guy?

JACK:
They probably would've weaseled out of that, too.

JACK:

The world don't care if you did the right thing and saved an old man. The law says you put yourself at risk, and the company don't have to pay us nothin'.

Panel 6

Over Jack's shoulder. MATT pounds the table.

SFX: WHAM

MATT:

That's bullshit! That's not right!

JACK:

I know it's not, Matt.

PAGE SEVENTEEN

Panel 1

Over Matt's shoulder. JACK has a sad, defeated look on his face as he talks.

JACK:

But the law's on their side, and ain't nothing we can do about it.

Panel 2

Faded silhouettes. JACK slapping an eight-year old MATT. The shadows drape over the table where the picture of his mother rests.

MATT (CAPTION):

Those words stuck with me. There was a time, about six years before, when some little bastard ripped up my book, and I set him straight with my fists.

MATT (CAPTION):

It was the last time my dad hit me.

Panel 3

Close up on MATT, who's picking at the box of lo mein. He feels powerless.

MATT (CAPTION):

Now, whenever he finds himself in a situation he has no physical power over, he shrinks. He's not Battling Jack; he's just Dad. He's worse off than I am.

Panel 4

Extreme close up on JACK's face.

MATT (CAPTION):

I used to see it in his eyes – the anger. The frustration. It's not the world he grew up

in, where the good guys won, the bad guys got locked up, and the law was on the side of the little guy.

MATT (CAPTION):

He's like John Wayne, but these days, most people prefer Gordon Gekko.

Panel 5

Both of them, sitting at the table. On the wall between them, one of JACK's weathered old boxing posters, with him doing a mock uppercut – BATTLIN' JACK MURDOCK is the text on it.

MATT (CAPTION):

So he made me promise to stop fighting. He made me say that I'll use my brains to get ahead – because one look at him can tell anybody that brawn got him nowhere.

PAGE EIGHTEEN

Panel 1

MATT's clenched fist, in front of a locker.

MATT (CAPTION):

There's something that always eats me up inside, though. The anger. The fight. Dad tried to make me hold it back.

MATT (CAPTION):

I don't know if I can.

MATT (CAPTION):

I don't know if I want to.

Panel 2

Mid shot of MATT and SIOUXSIE, who's similar clothes to the prior day, but has a Ramones t-shirt and mini-skirt on. MATT is leaning against a locker.

SIOUXSIE:

Hey.

MATT:

Hey.

SIOUXSIE:

So am I right?

Panel 3

Close-up on them.

MATT:
Right about what?

SIOUXSIE:
You.

MATT:
Your friends still mad?

Panel 4

SIOUXSIE gets a little closer, and has a flirty look on her face. Matt gets what's going on.

SIOUXSIE:
Who cares? I can make new friends.

SIOUXSIE:
Cute friends.

MATT:
Cute friends?

SIOUXSIE:
Very cute friends.

Panel 5

Close up, SIOUXSIE's face right in front of MATT's. He has a bit of a mischievous smile.

SIOUXSIE:
By the way, you aren't going to class.

MATT :
I'm not?

SIOUXSIE:
I'm not either.

PAGE NINETEEN

Panel 1

Mid shot. They turn around, surprised. It's STICK at MATT's school! SURPRISE!

STICK:
Yes, you are.

Panel 2

Close up, SIOUXSIE and MATT. SIOUXSIE is getting angry with STICK, MATT's trying to calm her down.

SIOUXSIE:

Fuck off. You're a janitor. You can't tell us what to do.

MATT:

He can.

Panel 3

Close up, MATT and SIOUXSIE whispering to each other.

SIOUXSIE (whisper):

No, he can't. Are you crazy?

MATT (whisper):

He's not a janitor. He's my sensei.

SIOUXSIE (whisper):

Sensei? Don't they have to be Japanese or something?

Panel 4:

STICK, from across the room. They're looking at him.

STICK:

No.

STICK:

We don't.

Panel 5

STICK approaches them.

STICK:

Matt, you're going to class.

MATT:

Yes, Sensei.

STICK:

And you, young lady. We will have words.

PAGE TWENTY

Panel 1

MATT passing SIOUXSIE in the hallway – who ditched the fishnets, punk get-up, and everything. She's just wearing jeans and a t-shirt. No make-up.

MATT (CAPTION):

I didn't see Siouxsie for weeks after that. The next time I did, the blue hair dye and the smell of cloves was gone. I don't know what Stick told her, but it made a hell of an impact.

Panel 2

MATT in the hallway, girls gossiping about him.

MATT (CAPTION):

It also ruined my only chance of having a girlfriend for the next four years. Thanks, Sensei.

Panel 3

JACK, smiling at a report card.

MATT (CAPTION):

That was fine by my dad. He wanted me to get A's anyway, and I did. If it weren't for Stick, I wouldn't have had the discipline.

Panel 4

MATT, blocking STICK's kick with his arm.

MATT (CAPTION):

He wanted me to join some clubs. I had training with Stick. We worked it out.

Panel 5

MATT and STICK fighting in the warehouse, with the early morning sun peeking into the building.

I did the Debate Team in the afternoon, and in the early mornings before school – when Dad was still tired from doing the third shift – I'd train with Stick.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

Panel 1

MATT i

MATT (CAPTION):

My control over my senses increased. I got to the point where I could keep track of everything happening around me, and focus in on one or two singular voices from a block away.

MATT (CAPTION):

I had to learn Braille for school, but Stick showed me how my sense of touch could let me read normal books.

Panel 2

MATT just passed (and shocked) a pair of girls in the hallway.

MATT (CAPTION):

My senses of smell and taste were sharpened. I could recognize girls in the hall by their cheap knock-off perfumes –

MATT:

Hey, Debbie.

Panel 3

MATT, looking incredibly ill at the lunch table.

MATT (CAPTION):

And, to my dismay, I realized what really was in those chicken patties.

Panel 4

The school's mens' room. MATT is hidden by one of the dividers, and is puking into a sit-down toilet. CRAIG, leaning against one and smoking a cigarette, is distracted by the noise.

MATT:

HURRRRK!

Panel 5

CRAIG standing over the sickly MATT as he pukes in the toilet.

CRAIG:

Hey, what's the matter, Murdock?

CRAIG:

Ate something you didn't like?

Panel 6

MATT, wiping his face.

MATT (CAPTION):

This is a bad idea.

MATT:

Yeah, I did.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

Panel 1

CRAIG is suddenly cross.

MATT:

I ate out your mom right before lunch.

Panel 2

CRAIG grabs MATT.

CRAIG:

Say it to my face, you blind fuck!

MATT (CAPTION):

There's a familiar heartbeat – right around the corner.

Panel 3

CRAIG getting forceful; MATT screaming for help.

CRAIG:

Say it!

MATT:

HELP! SOMEBODY, HELP!

Panel 4

MRS. WILLIAMS comes charging in with The Principal. CRAIG is in the foreground, holding MATT by the collar.

MATT (CAPTION):

If there's one thing my dad's taught me, it's that your head can get you out of more messes than your fists.

MRS. WILLIAMS:

Mister Richards, put him down. Now.

Panel 5

MATT is being helped up by MRS. WILLIAMS.

MATT (CAPTION):

If there's one thing Stick's taught me, it's to know that anything – in the right situation – can be a weapon.

MRS. WILLIAMS:

Are you okay, Matt?

MATT:

Yes, Mrs. Williams.

Panel 6

CRAIG is being dragged off by the Principal in the foreground. MATT is standing in the middle of the bathroom with Mrs. Williams.

MATT (CAPTION):

I'm a blind teenager trying to get by in Hell's Kitchen. It's a rough life. But you know what?

MATT (smiling quietly):

I think I'll be all right.

END