

LAX. What's the worst thing that happened to you in school?

HERMAN. Now that's a hard question.

LAX. Give me a highlight. *(We hear a toilet flush. Cross-fade to the bathroom in Broome High. Herman enters. Michael Ray and Michael Green enter.)*

MICHAEL RAY. Hello, Herman. Spare some change?

HERMAN. Just leave me alone.

MICHAEL RAY. Just leave you alone? Hmmm. Not today. *(The two boys grab Herman and force his head into one of the toilets.)* See, this way you don't have to listen to him bitch and moan. *(They laugh. Mr. Phelps enters the room holding a box of Fig Newtons.)*

MR. PHELPS. What the devil do you boys think you're doing? *(They instantly let Herman go, then look at the floor.)* What are your names?

MICHAEL GREEN. Michael.

MICHAEL RAY. Michael.

MR. PHELPS. Michael and Michael what?

MICHAEL GREEN. Michael Green.

MICHAEL RAY. Michael Ray.

MR. PHELPS. Is that their real names, Herman? *(Herman says nothing. He has the blank look on his face.)* Do you boys realize how many different strains of bacterium reside in these toilet bowls? Do you? The lungs are most susceptible to infection. If severe enough, the infection could be lethal. If Herman inhaled enough water, he could have been killed. Killed! Do you

understand? Now you two go to the principal's office and tell her what you've done. You should be ashamed to call yourselves Broome students, picking on a boy half your size. (*The boys exit.*) You're a sophomore, right, Herman? (*Herman nods.*) I remember when I was your age, the older boys would treat me the same way. Don't worry about it. In a few years, things like that will all be fond memories of high school. You'll probably be friends with those boys next year. It sounds crazy, but some of the greatest friendships start as fights. Me and my best friend ...

HERMAN. Mr. Phelps?

MR. PHELPS. Yes?

HERMAN. Can I go now?

MR. PHELPS. Yes. Yes, of course.

HERMAN. Thank you. (*Herman exits. Mr. Phelps looks in the mirror, pats down a wild eyebrow hair.*)

MR. PHELPS. Poor little guy, he'll always be a nerd.