



Dan Gutman



Miss Lazar Is Bizarre!



Pictures by Jim Paillot

My Weird School #9

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 HarperCollins e-books

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A Bathroom Emergency

My name is A.J. and I hate school.

Listen, I'm about to tell you something I never told anyone else. I never even told my best friends, Michael and Ryan.

But you can't tell *anyone*. It's a secret. Promise? Cross your heart and hope to die? Are you ready? Okay, here's the secret.

I can't tell you.

Oh, all right, I'll tell you.

Sometimes, when I'm at school, I ask my teacher, Miss Daisy, if I can go to the bathroom even though I don't really have to go to the bathroom. That's the secret.

Okay, okay, so it isn't such a great secret.

But sometimes I just get that antsy feeling, and I want to get out of class for a few minutes. So I ask to go to the boys' room.

I was feeling that antsy feeling one day in class. Miss Daisy was talking about weather, and she was showing us pictures of volcanoes and tornadoes. It was pretty cool, but I just wanted to stretch my legs for a few minutes. So I raised my hand and asked Miss Daisy if I could go to the boys' room. She said okay.

Nobody else was in the boys' room. I didn't have much to do in there. There's not a whole lot to do in a bathroom, except for go to the bathroom, which I didn't have to do. I looked in the mirror for a minute and made funny faces. I washed my hands. I shot paper towels at the garbage can. Then I figured I'd better get back to class.

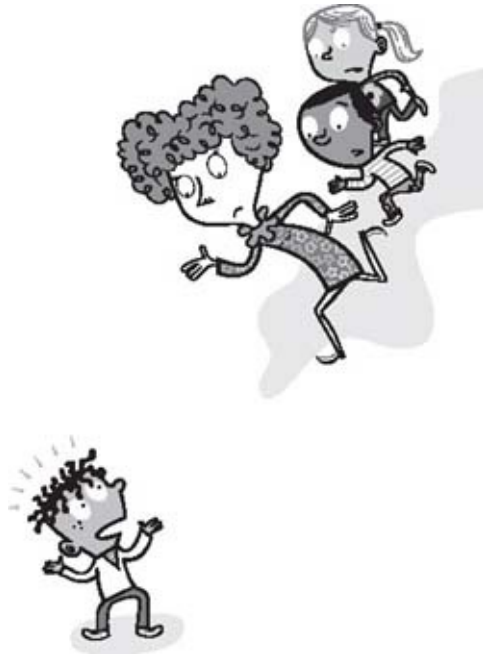
I thought I should flush the toilet because then it would sound like I really went to the bathroom. So I flushed it.

You know how the water is supposed to swirl around and around the toilet bowl like a little tornado and then go down the hole in the bottom? Well, this water didn't swirl at all. It didn't go down the hole, either. It just started rising.

It got higher.

And higher.

It went all the way up to the very edge of the bowl. I started to panic. And then it went *over* the edge and started spilling onto the floor! Water was pouring out of the toilet bowl! It looked just like those erupting volcanoes Miss Daisy was telling us about. I thought I was gonna die.



I didn't know what to say. I didn't know what to do. I had to think fast. So I ran out of the boys' room and started yelling.

"Help! There's a volcano in the boys' room! Run for your life! It's erupting! The toilet is going to explode!" Everybody came running out of our class, even Miss Daisy. Our principal, Mr. Klutz, was running down the hall. He came running over too.

"What's going on?" asked Mr. Klutz, who has no hair on his head at all. I mean *none*. His head is like a big lightbulb.

"I flushed...and the water...it got higher...and it's going to blow!" I panted. I was all out of breath.

Mr. Klutz pulled out his walkie-talkie and started talking into it. "Miss Lazar!" he said. "Come quickly to the boys' bathroom! It's an emergency!"

Miss Lazar to the Rescue

Now the water was sliding under the boys' room door and into the hallway! The whole school was going to be flooded!

For a second or two, I thought, *This is great!* If the school flooded, we would get to go home. Maybe the erupting toilet volcano wasn't such a bad thing after all.

"Did you put something down the toilet, A.J.?" Mr. Klutz asked me.

"No!" I said. "I just flushed it, and—"

I never got the chance to finish my sentence, because at that very moment there was an ear-piercing shriek of a whistle, and it sounded like a lawn mower was coming down the hallway.

It was Miss Lazar, our school custodian! She was riding her motorized scooter. Miss Lazar was wearing her big blue overalls with the letters "sc" on the front. She carried one of those toilet plunger thingies with a suction cup on the end. My parents have one at home just like it.

Miss Lazar and the scooter screeched to a stop right in front of us.

"Have no fear, students! It is I, Super Custodian!" said Miss Lazar as she hopped off the scooter. "What happened?"

"A.J. had a bathroom emergency," said Andrea Young, this really annoying girl in my class with curly brown hair who I hate.

"I did not!" I said.

"You got here just in time, Miss Lazar!" said Mr. Klutz. "The toilet must have backed up."



Mr. Klutz totally didn't know what he was talking about. The toilet didn't back up. It didn't move an inch.

"This looks like a job for Super Custodian!" said Miss Lazar.

"What a mess," Andrea said. "A.J. made a big mess."

"The messier the better," said Miss Lazar. "I love messes!"

"You do?" I asked. "Why?"

"If kids didn't make any messes, I wouldn't have a job," said Miss Lazar. "So make all the messes you want. In fact, I wish you kids would throw more garbage on the floor. I don't have enough to clean up."

So nah-nah-nah boo-boo on Andrea.

"Stand aside, students," said Miss Lazar. "Super Custodian is here to save the day! Anytime finger paint is spilled, or somebody loses a retainer in the garbage can, or a child throws up, I am at your service to—"

"Can you just clean up the mess, please?" asked Mr. Klutz.

"You can count on me!" Miss Lazar said. She put on these gigantic yellow plastic gloves and pushed open the boys' room door. It looked like a lake in there.

Miss Daisy told us we should go back to our classroom. But before we could make a move, we heard Miss Lazar's voice.

"Aha!" she shouted. "Here's the problem!"

Miss Lazar came back out of the bathroom with something in her hand.

"Crayons!" she said. "Somebody stuffed a bunch of crayons down the toilet."

Mr. Klutz and Miss Daisy looked at me like I was the one who stuffed the crayons down the toilet. I didn't. I really didn't. Why would I do a dumb thing like that?

From the hallway we could see the water was starting to go down the drain in the bathroom floor. The toilet wasn't overflowing anymore.



“Wow, you did it, Miss Lazar!” said Andrea. What a brownnoser!

“Miss Lazar saved the day!” said Andrea’s crybaby friend, Emily. Everybody started cheering and clapping their hands. Miss Lazar took a bow.

Principal Klutz is like the king of the school, but Miss Lazar is like a real living superhero. Anytime something goes wrong anywhere in the school, she is the person to call. Miss Lazar can clean up any mess and fix anything that breaks. She’s the only one in the whole school who can turn the lights on and off when we have an assembly, because she has a special key. She can solve just about any problem in the world.

“It was nothing, really,” said Miss Lazar, taking off her yellow gloves. “Anybody could have—”

She never got the chance to finish her sentence, because at that very moment her walkie-talkie beeped.

“Miss Lazar!” said the voice in the walkie-talkie. “We have an emergency in Mr. Docker’s science room!”

“Until we meet again!” said Miss Lazar as she hopped back on her scooter. “Duty calls!”

And then she roared down the hallway.

Me and Michael and Ryan started giggling because Miss Lazar said “duty,” and the word “duty” sounds exactly the same as the word “doody.” It’s okay to say “duty,” but you’re not supposed to say “doody.” So every time anybody says “duty,” I can’t help but think of “doody,” and I have to start giggling.

“Duty” sounds way too much like “doody,” if you ask me. Those two things should definitely have two different words. Don’t you think?

The Greatest Idea in the History of the World

After all the excitement was over, we went back to class and learned more about weather. Miss Daisy said she was proud of the way I made a connection between volcanoes and tornadoes and toilet bowls. That made me feel good. But then an announcement came over the loudspeaker that made me feel bad.

“Students, this is a reminder that you should never put crayons or any other inappropriate objects into the toilet bowls. Thank you!”

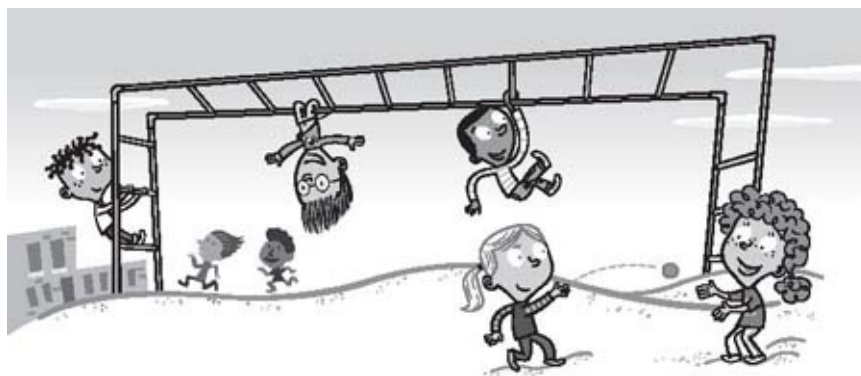
Everybody looked at me. I didn’t put *anything* down the toilet bowl. I didn’t even have to go to the bathroom in the first place.

Luckily it was time for recess. Me and Michael and Ryan climbed the monkey bars. Annoying Andrea and Emily were playing catch nearby with a tennis ball.

“I bet I know why you put crayons down the toilet, A.J.,” Andrea said. “You were trying to start a flood so school would be closed and you could go home.”

What is her problem? Why can’t a toilet bowl fall on her head?

That was a total lie she made up. I didn’t even *think* of flooding the school so we could go home until the bathroom was already flooded. I just ignored Andrea.



“Tell us the truth,” Ryan whispered. “Were you the one who put crayons down the toilet?”

“You can admit it to us, A.J.,” said Michael. “We won’t tell anybody.”

“Guys,” I said, “I didn’t put *anything* down the toilet. I didn’t even have to *go* to the bathroom. I just wanted to get out of class for a few minutes.”

Andrea and Emily were still throwing their tennis ball back and forth.

“You hate school,” Andrea said. “That’s why you did it, A.J.”

“You’re gonna get in trouble,” Emily said.

“I didn’t do it!” I yelled.

“Did too!”

We went back and forth like that for a while, until the tennis ball that they were playing catch with got loose. It rolled over near the monkey bars. I jumped down and grabbed it.

“Toss me the ball, A.J.,” Andrea said, holding her hands out.

Well, nah-nah-nah boo-boo on her. Because that’s when I got the greatest idea in the history of the world. I didn’t toss the tennis ball back to Andrea. I took that ball and chucked it up on the roof of the school!

“Oops,” I said to Andrea. “Sorry. I missed you. Bad throw.”

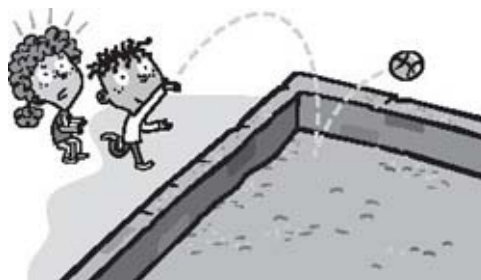
“Way to go, A.J.!” said Ryan.

“Wow, I didn’t know you could throw that far,” said Michael.

Emily started crying, the big crybaby. “That’s *my* tennis ball!” she said. “I got it for my birthday. It’s a special ball that glows in the dark.”

“Now you’re *really* going to be in trouble,” Andrea said. “First you stuffed crayons in the toilet, and now you threw Emily’s ball up on the roof. I’m going to tell on you. My mother is vice president of the PTA, you know. She could have you suspended.”

“She means it, A.J.,” said Ryan.



“If you get suspended, you still have to do all your classwork,” Michael said.

He must have been reading my mind, because as soon as Andrea said I would be suspended, I started thinking it would be cool to sit home and play video games all day.

“Okay, okay,” I said to Emily. “I’ll get your stupid glow-in-the-dark tennis ball back.”

Up on the Roof

How was I going to get Emily's ball back? There were no ladders or stairs leading up to the roof of the school. I didn't know how to get up there. There was only one thing to do. I had to go find Miss Lazar. She would be able to figure out how to get up there.

Me and Michael and Ryan went inside the school and down the steps to the basement, where Miss Lazar's room is. We knocked on her door, and she opened it.

Miss Lazar's room is the awesomest room in the school. She doesn't have a bunch of boring books or computers. She's got all kinds of tools and machines and junk all over the place. It is cool.

In the corner I noticed a door with a sign on it that said SECRET ROOM. Wow! A secret room! My friend Billy who lives around the corner told me that every school has a secret room down in the basement. Billy says that's where they keep the bad kids.



“What’s in the secret room?” Ryan asked Miss Lazar.

“That’s where I keep the bad kids,” said Miss Lazar.

Billy was right!

But then Miss Lazar laughed and said she was just joking. She told us she had something very special in the secret room, but she couldn’t tell us what it was because, if she did, it wouldn’t be secret.

We told Miss Lazar that some kid (not me) threw a tennis ball up on the roof of the school.

“This looks like a job for Super Custodian!” said Miss Lazar, grabbing her toilet bowl plunger. She stuck it into her belt like a sheriff in a western movie sticks his gun in a holster.

“Why do you need a toilet bowl plunger to get a tennis ball off the roof?” I asked.

“Oh, you never know when a plunger might come in handy,” Miss Lazar said. She’s weird.

Miss Lazar marched out to the playground, and we followed her. She looked up at the roof, and then she looked at the wall of the school. Then she did the most amazing thing in the history of the world. She started climbing the wall!

Everybody in the playground stopped what they were doing and ran over to watch. Miss Lazar dug her fingers and the toes of her shoes into the little cracks between the bricks, and she slowly made her way up the wall. It was amazing! You should have been there!

I guess word got around, because by the time Miss Lazar reached the second floor of the school, even Mr. Klutz had come out to watch.

“What’s going on?” Mr. Klutz asked.

“Miss Lazar is climbing up to the roof to get Emily’s tennis ball,” Ryan told him.

“I used to do a little rock climbing in my younger days,” Mr. Klutz said.



Finally Miss Lazar was standing up on the roof of the school. Everybody was craning their necks to see her.

“There are all *kinds* of things up here!” Miss Lazar called down. Suddenly balls and notebooks and hats and other stuff were flying off the roof.

“There’s my old Frisbee!” some kid yelled.

“I was *wondering* where that umbrella went,” said somebody else.

Emily got her stupid ball back. Everybody clapped and cheered for Miss Lazar as she climbed back down the wall.

“Wow, Miss Lazar is like Spider-Man!” one of the third graders hollered. “Okay, everyone,” Mr. Klutz said, clapping his hands. “The show is over, and so is recess. Everyone back to class now.”

“Boooooooo!”



“Hooray for Miss Lazar!” somebody yelled.

“Hip hip hooray!” we all shouted.

“Nothing to it,” Miss Lazar said when she got to the bottom. “Time to mop the cafetorium. Duty calls.”

Then we all giggled because Miss Lazar said “duty” again.

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