

BOYS
FROM THE SQUARE OF ARMS

Written by

Emilia Nowak
M A G N I F I C A

FADE IN:

1. INT. CLASSROOM/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - SUNNY NOON

PROFESSOR CRAB finishes solving a long math equation on the green board.

PROFESSOR CRAB

Well, the result is two. We will finish the multiplication and division exercises tomorrow. Less than five minutes remain until the end of the class, so I will be able to interview one more student.

He puts down his chalk, sits down at his desk, and grabs the teacher's journal.

A deathly SILENCE falls. The classroom is soaked in tension.

The professor browses through the pages of the journal. He traces the names with his finger. Finally, he threateningly announces the verdict:

PROFESSOR CRAB

Fabrizio!

POOF! Some jump up on their chairs, others fall in relief. The student from the end of the room says:

GIACOMO

(rolls his eyes)

Unfortunately absent.

PROFESSOR CRAB

Oh, let's go on...

And he looks for another victim.

The class DIES again. The name comes - POOF!

PROFESSOR CRAB

Giacomo!

GIACOMO

Come on, please - not me!

PROFESSOR

Come here, brat, now! Immediately! And bring your notebook with you, if you please.

GIACOMO shuffles his legs. He walks lazily to the desk.

PROFESSOR CRAB

Come on, come on, so I can give you at least a poor three.

GIACOMO

(under his breath)

It would be good...

PROFESSOR CRAB

What are you mumbling? Anyway, get to work. He rubs his hands eagerly. Giacomo silently hands him the notebook.

PROFESSOR CRAB

Here you go. First, let's see your scribbles for today...

He opens the student's notebook and flips through the pages.

PROFESSOR CRAB

Today's lesson...Hmm...Yesterday's, yes, there it is! Homework...uhh – did you do it? Well, Giacomo, bravo. I see that you can do something...after all...

He analyzes the notes. Giacomo smiles miserably.

Joyful children's LAUGHTER comes through the window.

PROFESSOR CRAB

(with a stern voice)

Maurizio, close the window.

Little MAURIZIO gets up from the first bench, goes to the window, and closes it solemnly.

Outside the window, in the background: the large hand of the clock on the church tower will show twelve in four minutes.

The professor draws mercilessly on the pages of Giacomo's notebook. The student begins to sweat.

PROFESSOR CRAB

No! No, no, no...Ah, I praised you prematurely!

The class – thirty-four boys, third and fourth graders – slowly gathers to leave:

CIRO arranges loose sheets and stacks his books. JACOPO, in the back row, is yawning like a hippo.

BIANCO, with white hair, turns out his pockets and shakes crumbs out of them.

PINO and CRISTOFORO change their legs' position under the bench, ready to jump up at any moment.

LUIGI follows the clock hands with the lovely LEONI.

STEFANO and ROBERTO clean their pencil cases, and FRANCO and LORENZO clean their nails.

MASSIMO unscrupulously unfolds the briefcase on his lap and arranges the books in it according to size, finally squeezing them with straps so tightly that the bench creaks — CRACK! CRACK!

The teacher looks toward the class, and Massimo is embarrassed.

PROFESSOR CRAB

What happened?

There is silence. Massimo loosens the straps. Pino stops shuffling his feet. Bianco takes his hands out of his pockets. Jacopo, covering his mouth with his hand, stifles a yawn. Ciro puts down the sheets of paper.

PROFESSOR CRAB

What happened?

He repeats it. But all the students are already sitting nicely in their seats. The teacher returns to revising the student's notebook. He smiles to himself and whispers:

PROFESSOR CRAB

God, what a fool...

At that moment, Jacopo leans out of the side row of benches and whispers to the little boy:

JACOPO

Attention, Angelo!

ANGELO looks back, then lowers his eyes to the floor. A small ball of paper rolls at his feet. He picks it up and unfolds it. On one side, it says: "Give it to Massimo." He crushes the paper back into a ball and, at the right moment, leans out of the bench and whispers:

ANGELO

Attention, Massimo!