

# PAUL ZINDEL

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for  
*The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*

## THE PIGMAN



A most unusual story...

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## One

**N**ow, I don't like school, which you might say is one of the factors that got us involved with this old guy we nicknamed the Pigman. Actually, I hate school, but then again most of the time I hate everything.

I used to really hate school when I first started at Franklin High. I hated it so much the first year they called me the Bathroom Bomber. Other kids got elected G.O. President and class secretary and lab-squad captain, but I got elected the Bathroom Bomber. They called me that because I used to set off bombs in the bathroom. I set off twenty-three bombs before I didn't feel like doing it anymore.

The reason I never got caught was because I used to take a tin can (that's a firecracker, as if you didn't know) and mold a piece of clay around it so it'd hold a candle attached to the fuse. One of those skinny little birthday candles. Then I'd light the thing, and it'd take about eight minutes before the fuse got lit. I

always put the bombs in the first-floor boys' john right behind one of the porcelain unmentionables where nobody could see it. Then I'd go off to my next class. No matter where I was in the building I could hear the blast.

If I got all involved, I'd forget I had lit the bomb, and then even I'd be surprised when it went off. Of course, I was never as surprised as the poor guys who were in the boys' john on the first floor sneaking a cigarette, because the boys' john is right next to the Dean's office and a whole flock of gestapo would race in there and blame them. Sure they didn't do it, but it's pretty hard to say you're innocent when you're caught with a lungful of rich, mellow tobacco smoke. When the Dean catches you smoking, it really may be hazardous to your health. I smoke one with a recessed filter myself.

After my bomb avocation, I became the organizer of the supercolossal fruit roll. You could only do this on Wednesdays because that was the only day they sold old apples in the cafeteria. Sick, undernourished, antique apples. They sold old oranges on Fridays, but they weren't as good because they don't make much noise when you roll them. But on Wednesdays when I knew there was going to be a substitute teaching one of the classes, I'd pass the word at lunch and all the kids in that class would buy these scrawny apples. Then we'd take them to class and wait for the right

moment—like when the substitute was writing on the blackboard. You couldn't depend on a substitute to write on the blackboard though, because usually they just told you to take a study period so they didn't have to do any work and could just sit at the desk reading *The New York Times*. But you could depend on the substitute to be mildly retarded, so I'd pick out the right moment and clear my throat quite loudly—which was the signal for everyone to get the apples out. Then I gave this phony sneeze that meant to hold them down near the floor. When I whistled, that was the signal to roll 'em. Did you ever hear a herd of buffalo stampeding? Thirty-four scrawny, undernourished apples rolling up the aisles sound just like a herd of buffalo stampeding.

Every one of the fruit rolls was successful, except for the time we had a retired postman for General Science 1H5. We were supposed to study incandescent lamps, but he spent the period telling us about commemorative stamps. He was so enthusiastic about the old days at the P.O. I just didn't have the heart to give the signals, and the kids were a little put out because they all got stuck with old apples.

But I gave up all that kid stuff now that I'm a sophomore. The only thing I do now that is faintly criminal is write on desks. Like right this minute I feel like writing something on the nice polished table here, and since the Cricket is down at the other end

# A MOST UNUSUAL FRIENDSHIP

When sophomores John and Lorraine played a practical joke a few months ago on a stranger named Angelo Pignati, they had no idea what they were starting. Virtually overnight, almost against their will, the two befriended the lonely old man; it wasn't long before they were more comfortable in his house than their own. But now Mr. Pignati is dead. And for John and Lorraine, the only way to find peace is to write down their friend's story—the story of the Pigman.

**“Headline news . . . remarkable . . . Zindel has written a story that will not be denied.”**

**—*Publishers Weekly***

**“This is a shocker of a book.  
Startling and truthful and vivid.”**

**—*Young Readers' Review***

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A Q&A with the author, a look at  
Paul Zindel's real-life Pigman, and more!

**US \$6.99 / \$8.99 CAN**

ISBN-13: 978-0-06-075735-9

ISBN-10: 0-06-075735-3

