

Philosophy Club: Pilot

written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY.

History class. The classroom walls are littered with maps of Europe and America and posters of historical figures like Napoleon, Freud, George Washington, Nietzsche, and Louis XIV, along with posters from 90's punk rock festivals. The teacher, MR. TEAGUE, stands at the whiteboard with a slideshow on the Italian Renaissance. He's a hefty dude with slicked hair and tattoo sleeves. He looks like a retired rockstar.

ERIC WANG is a wiry Chinese-American boy with tufty hair and glasses. He sits in the front row with his two friends ALEX ANDREWS, a short Jewish kid with messy hair and one of those cheeky t-shirts that says "Sarcastic comment loading...", and MONISHA PRADESH, an Indian-American girl with a tight ponytail and an even tighter schedule, on either side of him.

MR. TEAGUE

(corny)

... and that's why Da Vinci is Da Man.

He is a little too proud of that joke.

Eric smugly raises his hand.

ERIC

Mr. Teague?

MR. TEAGUE

Yes, Eric Wang.

ERIC

I hate to challenge you on such a contentious point, but-

MR. TEAGUE

Please, we welcome a challenge!

ERIC

(snarkily)

But if Leonardo was such a genius, how come his famous flying machine only works in fantasy novels?

MR. TEAGUE

Well, I'd challenge that, because it is so much outshined by his other works of brilliance.

(MORE)

MR. TEAGUE (CONT'D)

A man should not be judged for a
small failing amidst a sea of
triumphs.

Monisha sits looking zombie tired, but she is still somehow
diligently taking notes on everything being said.

ERIC

True, but if he really was a
genius, wouldn't he be able to
logically predict if his invention
was gonna work or not?

Alex raises his hand.

ALEX

Mr. Teague? I'd like to challenge
that challenge to the challenge.

MR. TEAGUE

Yes, Alex Andrews.

ALEX

Eric's a nerd and I'm bored. Can I
please go barf?

Eric shoots Alex a sharp, yet playful look.

The lunch bell rings.

Monisha looks at Alex and with a coquettish smile and mouths
"THANK YOU"

Cue theme song: "Rebel Rebel" by David Bowie

ACT ONE

INT. TEAGUE'S CLASSROOM. LUNCH.

Eric, Alex, and Monisha sit in desks in the middle of the empty room. After a beat, Eric stands up.

ERIC

(self-righteous)

Hear ye, hear ye. Bowers High School Philosophy Club is now in session. Welcome to the weekly meeting of the melding of minds.

ALEX

Geez, no need for the royal precession, sire, it's just us. Again. It's like no one here even knows we exist.

ERIC

Well, Alex, I still like to maintain a certain level of decorum. I am the president after all.

ALEX

Yeah, and I'm the Duke of Rochester. Again, just us in here!

ERIC

Monisha, will you kindly read us a summary of last week's minutes?

Monisha doesn't notice.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Monisha?

She's dozed off. Alex waves a hand in front of her, then pokes her in the shoulder and she jolts awake.

MONISHA

Wha? Oh sorry guys, I just can't focus today. I pulled an all-nighter last night putting some final tweaks on that big paper for Ms. Malone's class.

ALEX

But that paper's not due for another week and a half.

MONISHA

Yeah but I needed to get ahead.
(manically)

I gotta stay on top of my schoolwork, cuz I've been falling behind in my SAT training, and my work on the badminton pitch has been lagging, not to mention mock trial, student council, yoga, and opera lessons. If I don't get at least a 97 on this paper, I can basically kiss Harvard goodbye!

ALEX

(melodramatically)

Oh my stars! How will you ever make it through!?

MONISHA

Cuz I'm Monisha Pradesh. This is what I do. But not today. Today I'm a wreck.

She slumps into her chair.

ERIC

Well that's all very nice, but I'd like to get to this week's topic: Altruistic Utilitarianism. What do we owe to our fellow human?

ALEX

(vindictively)

Well, for starters, Eric, you owe me that three dollars you borrowed from me last week to buy "Classical Greek Thinkers" trading cards.

ERIC

You're never getting that money back! I got all duds. I barely even got one Euripides!

ALEX

You know I love Euripides!

ERIC

Well, you should have gotten it yourself!

ALEX

But that was-- ugh no fair! I'll report you to Ms. Shiu!

MONISHA

Guys, guys. Cool it. And didn't you hear? Ms. Shiu's not even the principal anymore. Mr. Remington is taking her place.

ALEX

What? Really? "Rat Face" Remington?

ERIC

Sheesh, that'll be a doozy.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY.

Ominous music plays as PRINCIPAL REMINGTON prowls the halls, on the way to his office. He has a Darth Vader-like presence. Kids cower and hide when they see him, as if they've seen a monster. He has a greasy comb-over, a wrinkled face with a permanent scowl, and beady squinty eyes. He resembles a rat.

CUT TO:

INT. REMINGTON'S OFFICE. A MINUTE LATER.

Remington sits smugly at his desk. In the chair across from him sits NATHANIEL RIVAS, the school's most notorious and mischievous troublemaker. He is a tall Latino dude with thick, dark spiked hair and a devilish smirk. Remington doesn't notice that he has a HUGE booger sticking out from his nose, which comically bounces when he speaks.

REMINGTON

Well, well. Nathaniel Rivas. I never thought I'd see this day. You, here. In *my* office. It feels good to--

NATHANIEL

(re: the booger)

Um, Mr. Remington, you've got a little--

REMINGTON

That's *Principal* Remington to you, young man. Now that I am the newly appointed *head* of this school, I can more properly execute my visions for Bowers High. I'll no longer be limited by my former low-level English teacher status.

(MORE)

REMYINGTON (CONT'D)
I too so enjoyed our time together
in Freshman Lit,

NATHANIEL
(under his breath)
Yeah, it made *my* freshman year lit.

REMYINGTON
Excuse me?

NATHANIEL
Ugh Principal Remington, you have--

REMYINGTON
(steamrolling through)
You've been given *every* punishment
known to man. Suspension, gum
scraping, line writing, you
practically *live* in detention. And
the past three years you've done
nothing but make my life a living
hell. TPing the teacher's lounge,
handing out *dozens* of Hertz donuts,
catfishing the lunch lady. That was
cold, man. But I will no longer--

NATHANIEL
Um, Mr.--

REMYINGTON
I will no longer be humiliated!

Nathaniel can't keep his eyes off that booger.

NATHANIEL
Sir, just--

REMYINGTON
(blowing up)
WHAT! WHAT IS IT!?

NATHANIEL
(gesturing to his nose)
You've... you've got a booger.

REMYINGTON
A BOOGER?! I--

Remington wipes his nose, but the booger only hangs lower and
drips.

REMYINGTON (CONT'D)
As I was saying, I--

NATHANIEL
 (trying to stifle a
 giggle)
 You still didn't get it.

Remington grabs a tissue from his desk, wipes the booger,
 then aggressively throws it on the floor.

REMINGTON
 (out of breath)
 Okay are you happy!? My point here
 is that people respect me.

Nathaniel chortles.

REMINGTON (CONT'D)
 I run this place now. And I can't
 have you going around and making me
 look bad. There shall be
 consequences for your actions of
 dissent.

NATHANIEL
 What's "dissent?" Is that like
 dessert?

REMINGTON
 No, it's much worse.

He picks up the referral slip on his desk and gestures it to
 Nathaniel.

REMINGTON (CONT'D)
 Stealing from cookies Ms.
 Kalinski's desk? Seriously?

NATHANIEL
 (defiantly)
 Come on, I love cookies!

He offers a fist bump, but Remington emphatically declines.

REMINGTON
 I could suspend you. I *should*
 suspend you. No sir, your problems
 go well beyond the realms
 punishment. But, being the
 compassionate leader that I am,
 I've decided to prescribe you a
 more... constructive treatment.

NATHANIEL
 What, Saturday School? Been there,
 done that.

REMYINGTON

No, Nathaniel. You need to learn right from wrong. You need structure. You must be properly socialized. And I know just the nerds for the job.

CUT TO:

INT. TEAGUE'S CLASSROOM. SAME LUNCH.

ERIC

...and that's why Kant would argue that the deontological categorical imperative justifies Batman choosing *not* to kill the Joker.

ALEX

But he coulda just choke slammed the guy when he had the chance! He'd be doing the city a service!

MONISHA

But see Eric is right here. He can't be the hero he's meant to be if he violates his maxim of good. One can only be considered good if *all* of his actions are performed with the good will, out of duty to moral law.

ALEX

Geez I just wanted to see him do a gnarly choke slam on the clown guy.

The lights flicker for a moment and the mood suddenly changes.

MONISHA

Does anyone feel a cold, eerie energy about this room?

ALEX

Crap! Remington approacheth!

They snap to attention as the door swings open. The room shudders. Remington stands in the doorway.

REMYINGTON

(putting on face)
Good afternoon, students.

(MORE)

REMYINGTON (CONT'D)

I'd like to present you with the newest addition to your little philosophy club.

Enter Nathaniel. All three nerds let out a scream in unison.

REMYINGTON (CONT'D)

Oh, you all know Mr. Rivas?

ERIC

DO we know him?!

ALEX

Do WE know him?

MONISHA

Do we know HIM?

ALEX

He's a legend!

ERIC

Notorious!

MONISHA

He's like the most sketchy guy in the school!

ALEX

The sketchiest!

ERIC

We can't be associated with... that!

ALEX

He clogged all the toilets with cereal that one time!

ERIC

He unleashed a rabid chicken into the quad last month!

MONISHA

He sabotaged my sophomore class president speech by blaring fart noises through a megaphone!

ALEX

(tentatively)

Actually, that one was me. Sorry about that hehe.

REMINGTON

Well he's your new buddy now. He needs to properly learn right from wrong, so he's going to be eating lunch with you from now on. You guys can do that, right?

MONISHA

Well, I don't--

REMINGTON

(with sadistic glee)

Cuz ya *HAVE* to do it! Why? Cuz I said so!

ERIC

Well, at any rate, we don't consent to this! In fact I *dissent* to this!

NATHANIEL

So *THAT'S* what that word means.

ERIC

Mr. Remington please--

REMINGTON

PRINCIPAL Remington, *PRINCIPAL* to you now.

ERIC

Ugh *PRINCIPAL* Remington, but Michel Foucault says that retribution and punishment is--

REMINGTON

I don't give a-- excuse my french-- a *HOOT* about Foucault!

ERIC

(blowing up)

Argh yaknow this is why people call you a *RAT*! Because you plague people like this!

REMINGTON

(blowing up even more)

WHAT!? That was uncalled for, Mr. Wang! I'm administering you a Bowers Beautification.

He whips out a green slip of paper from his blazer pocket and hands it to Eric.

ERIC

Lame!

REMYINGTON

You'll be enjoying your next lunch period picking up trash in the cafeteria!

ALEX

(under his breath)

And you'll be enjoying your next lunch making freshmen wet themselves and drinking their tears.

REMYINGTON

And Mr. Andrews, a beautification for you!

MONISHA

No!

REMYINGTON

And one for you, Ms. Pradesh, just for good measure!

MONISHA

Oh, why must you punish us so!!!!

REMYINGTON

Because I'm the *principal*, that's why! This campus will be *gleaming* by tomorrow afternoon!

MONISHA

But Principal Remington, I can't--

REMYINGTON

Deal with it!

Remington exits, slamming the door, sucking all the air out of the room with him. There is a long, awkward silence.

Nathaniel lunges at Alex, who flinches and lets out a short and shrill yelp.

NATHANIEL

Hey, Onion Alex. Hehe remember that?

(beat)

So... what were y'all talking about?

ALEX

Oh, just the deontological
categorical imperative of Kant.

ERIC

I *Kant* believe this is my life.

Blackout.

ACT TWO

INT. TEAGUE'S CLASSROOM. CONTINUOUS.

The three nerds goggle at Nathaniel with frightful looks on their faces.

MONISHA
(to Nathaniel)
Um, will you excuse us a moment?

The group turn around, forming a private huddle. Very hush-hush.

MONISHA (CONT'D)
What are we going to *do*?!

ALEX
I don't know! He's RIGHT there! A bona fide agent of chaos!

MONISHA
He's like the joker.

ALEX
In our very own school!

ERIC
(defeated)
It seems like we have no choices.

MONISHA
We still have our free will as humans, right?

ERIC
Not when you're fifteen we don't. He already got me in trouble!

MONISHA
Well, technically you did that.

ALEX
And now we gotta eat lunch with *him*? Every day?! Forever?!

ERIC
Wait, I've got a plan.

They start to turn back around, but Monisha stops them.

MONISHA
 Hey what was that "Onion Alex"
 stuff about?

ALEX
 Sometimes I like to eat a raw onion
 like an apple. Sue me.

MONISHA
 Weeeeird.

They turn around to face Nathaniel. He sits counting a pile
 of Twix bars on the desk.

ERIC
 So, Nathaniel. We'd like to make a
 deal with you.

NATHANIEL
 I was about to say the same thing.
 This whole situation is a bummer.
 I'll give you half price on a box
 of Twix and we can call it a day.

ALEX
 (perking up)
 I'll take it--

MONISHA
 Principles, Alex. Principles.

Alex shrinks into his chair.

ERIC
 You're a senior. You're connected.
 You know everyone. Whether we like
 it or not, you're...

NATHANIEL
 Cool?

ERIC
 Exactly.

ALEX
 And we're not.

MONISHA
 (under her breath)
They're not.

ERIC
 We'll...
 (air quotes)
 (MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)
 "give you homework," and you never
 have to really hang out with us.

NATHANIEL
 Ha, homework? Puh-lease. Gimme a
 break.

ERIC
 Listen, we don't like this as much
 as you do.

NATHANIEL
 You got *that* right.

ALEX
 Ooh, but maybe you could put in a
 good word for me with...
 (in a thick spanish
 accent)
 Ava Contheption.

MONISHA
 Who's that?

ALEX
 The new exchange student from
 Ethpaña. She is *tres belle*.

MONISHA
 Dude, that's French.

ALEX
 Eh, close enough.

NATHANIEL
 Oh yeah I've seen her. She's fiery.

ERIC
 Well because of you, we're *all* in
 trouble with stupid Ratface
 Remington now.

NATHANIEL
 (casually)
 Uh no you're not. Just don't do it.

MONISHA
 What?! But you were there! You saw
 us get those beautifications.

NATHANIEL
 Yeah here's a tip, dorkos. Just
 don't go, don't do it. That's what
 I do.

ERIC
 (stunned)
 Really?

MONISHA
 It's that easy?

NATHANIEL
 Yeah, *technically* I've had a
 beautification every day for the
 last three years. When I realized
 it didn't matter if I go or not, I
 stopped. Nothing matters, dude.

ALEX
 (cathartic)
 Nothing... matters?

ERIC
 Huh. Nihilism. Just like Nietzsche.

NATHANIEL
 Who's she?

ERIC
 We have got a lot of work to do.

FADE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT. 3 PM.

The three nerds wait for their parents to pick them up.

ERIC
 So what do we do?

ALEX
 We're criminals!

Monisha puts her head in her hands.

MONISHA
 Oh my gosh my mom's gonna kill me!

ALEX
 We gotta change our identities or
 something!

ERIC
 Ha. No.

ALEX

Come on, why you gotta shut me down like that. I said "or something!"

ERIC

Just no.

ALEX

Move schools?

ERIC

Warmer.

ALEX

I got it, I got it. Maybe if we only ever walk *behind* Principal Remington, he'll never be able to find us!

MONISHA

Or we could just do the punishment.

ERIC

But it's not deserved!

ALEX

Yeah, no way I'm doing it.

MONISHA

I don't want to either, but--

ERIC

Wait, come on guys, we can't just run away from our problems forever. Remember the "Great Gatsby Flu" of last year?

MONISHA

Oh yeah, when we had seven weeks to write seven essays and no one showed up on the due date cuz they all pulled all-nighters the night before?

ALEX

Yeah, I remember I had the "flu."
Huh. I flunked that project.

ERIC

Exactly my point!

MONISHA

Oh, but my mom really will kill me.
You guys *know* my mom.

(MORE)

MONISHA (CONT'D)

This is the first time I've gotten in trouble since that time in first grade when I asked too many questions during the "How Was Your Summer" presentation.

ERIC

You just had to say your experience!

MONISHA

Hey! I wanted to do it perfect! And I only got a 98 because I talked for twenty minutes too long. My mom had a major uproar!

ERIC

And I can't have this misdemeanor on my record! There goes Stanford! There goes Princeton! There goes my life!

ALEX

There goes that extra twinkie in my lunch tomorrow!

MONISHA

You guys are right. We've gotta find some way out of this.

ALEX

What happened to principles, Mo?

ERIC

Alright so are we agreed? I don't necessarily like or trust Nathaniel, but if it's worked for him this long?

ALEX

So we just *lie* to our parents and shirk our troubles?

MONISHA

(hyperventilating)

Ooh geez oh geez oh geez.

ERIC

If it must be done, it must be done. Just this one time.

They shake on it.

CUT TO:

INT. ERIC'S CAR.

This sequence is intercut between the character's respective parent's car, on their drive home from school.

ERIC'S DAD
So, how was school today?

INT. MONISHA'S CAR.

This car is decked out in political stickers and signs for her mom, local politician Harini Pradesh. They read, "Vote Harini! She's No Weenie!" Inside, it is stocked with lawn signs, flyers, and balloons.

MONISHA
(nervous)
It was... good.

INT. ALEX'S CAR.

ALEX
Uh... awesome!

INT. ERIC'S CAR.

ERIC
Fine. It was good. Talked about Da Vinci. Already knew it. No big deal.

INT. MONISHA'S CAR.

HARINI
Oh really? What'd you do?

MONISHA
(internally panicking)
Oh you know, regular student stuff.

INT. ALEX'S CAR.

ALEX'S DAD
You sound a little funny. Is everything okay?

ALEX
 (brushing him off)
 Yeah dad everything's fine, all
 good in the hood.

INT. ERIC'S CAR.

ERIC
 Tip top shape.

INT. ALL THREE CARS. SPLIT SCREEN.

They all pull into their respective driveways.

ALL PARENTS
 (in unison)
 Ooooookay... now go do your
 homework.

Alex looks triumphant, Eric is impressed with himself, and
 Monisha sits in pensive shame.

FADE OUT.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY. BEFORE SCHOOL.

Eric, Alex, and Monisha walk down the hall and run into Mr.
 Teague. He's wearing a black slim fitted short sleeve shirt
 with spiked buttons, guns blazing, tattoos on display.

ERIC
 Hey, Mr. Teague.

MR. TEAGUE
 What's up Eric?

ERIC
 Um, we're in a bit of an ethical
 pickle. Say, if we were to li--

Alex jumps in front of him.

ALEX
 (fiercely interrupting)
 Hey Teague how'd you get your
 tattoos?

MR. TEAGUE
 Well, to be frank, I went a little
 crazy in the nineties.

MONISHA

I can see that.

MR. TEAGUE

The sweet old days of punk rock.
Oh, that I could go back.

MONISHA

Seems like you never left.

MR. TEAGUE

Fair.

Alex points at the middle of his teacher's left forearm.

ALEX

Yeah so what's this one?

It's a three-headed octopus with three faces of Kelsey Grammer.

MR. TEAGUE

It's a three-headed octopus with
three faces of Kelsey Grammer.

ERIC

Frasier? Really?

MR. TEAGUE

Come on, it was the nineties.

ALEX

Baller.

MONISHA

What did you parents think?

MR. TEAGUE

Oh, they didn't find out for
yeeeeears. I just wore sweaters
around them. Covered it up. It
would have driven them up the wall!

ALEX

What!

MR. TEAGUE

Fun fact: I hid my mohawk from them
for all of college just by always
wearing a hat.

ERIC

Really.

ALEX
You had a mohawk?!

MONISHA
So you just... avoided all the
consequences?

MR. TEAGUE
Yeah, what they didn't know can't
hurt them.

Alex shoots a glance at Monisha, who smirks and then goes
back to sulking.

MR. TEAGUE (CONT'D)
Now, Eric. What was it you wanted
to ask me?

ERIC
Oh never mind. I feel somewhat
better about it now.

ALEX
Yeah, all good in the hood.

MR. TEAGUE
Alright, well, see you guys in
fifth period.

Slightly confused, Mr. Teague exits to his classroom.

EXT. BEHIND THE MUSIC BUILDING. SAME DAY. LUNCH.

The bell rings. Eric, Monisha, and Alex shirk their lunchtime
punishment and walk along the back of the music building,
hidden.

ALEX
Well, this was easy. Empty lunch
area for us!

ERIC
Remington will never find us here.

MONISHA
I don't know, guys, I still feel
bad about this.

ALEX
Oh come on, Mo. Lighten up a
little! We're totally safe out
here. Home free!

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
We got our blessing from Teague!
All is well in the world!

All three sigh together, naively content.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA. LUNCH.

Principal Remington stalks the cafeteria like a shark. He scans the room like a Terminator staking out a target, searching for the nerds he sentenced to clean-up duty. They are nowhere to be found. His rage bubbles.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. BEHIND THE MUSIC BUILDING BUILDING. CONTINUOUS.

They sit down against the wall and open up their lunchboxes. Monisha pulls out a box of raisins.

ALEX
Ha! Raisins? Lame!

MONISHA
Hey lay off, my mom doesn't let me have any candy. This is the closest I can get to that sweet sugary buzz of euphoria.

ERIC
So you got elderly grapes.

ALEX
Ha, good one Eric.

MONISHA
And I bet you have something I couldn't possibly make fun of.

ALEX
Oh, just this raw steak.

He takes out a raw steak in a plastic bag.

MONISHA
And you laughed at me for my raisins?

ALEX
 (indignant)
 What, I didn't think we'd be eating
 outside today. I usually heat it up
 in Mr. Teague's room. Just enough--

ERIC
 (reciting)
 So it's not cold in the middle.

ALEX
 Yeah, see? *Eric* gets it.

MONISHA
 Weirdos.

Eric sits eating a turkey, lettuce, mayo, and cheddar
 sandwich on Wonder Bread.

ALEX
 And let me guess. Turkey, lettuce,
 mayo, and cheddar on Wonder Bread?

MONISHA
 Just like every day ever.

ERIC
 I believe you can tell a lot about
 a man by what he brings for lunch.
 So what if I eat the same thing
 every day? Forming consistent
 routines is the behavior of a
 genius.

ALEX
 Ha! And you really think you're
 some kind of Zuckerberg?

ERIC
 Well, my 4.7 GPA would not refute
 the suggestion of such.

MONISHA
 You *seriously* think you're a real
 genius?

The math teacher Mrs. Jacobson enters from around the corner.

MRS. JACOBSON
 Oh, hey Eric. Do you think you
 could proofread my test for my
 freshman pre-calc class? I want you
 to make sure I didn't make any
 mistakes.

ERIC
(smug as all hell, to
Monisha)
You were saying?

MRS. JACOBSON
Oh, and also Remington's looking
for you.

Eyes widen! Oh no! Shock and terror!

ACT THREE

INT. CAFETERIA. LUNCH. LATER.

Defeat! Eric, Monisha, and Alex stand with trash bags picking up garbage in the cafeteria. They wear bright yellow vests that say "Beautification" on them. Bummer!

ERIC

Well this sucks. All we ever did was speak truth to power!

MONISHA

And lie to our parents. And ditch our punishment.

ALEX

And skip breakfast. I'm starving here! All I've got is this stinkin' onion!

He takes an onion out of his pants pocket and takes a thick and crunchy bite, grossing Monisha out.

MONISHA

Ugh, how could this get any worse?!

ERIC

It'd be bad enough if we didn't have to wear the Yellow Vest of Shame.

Suddenly, they get pelted in the chest by three pizza slices thrown from three jocks one table away.

JOCKS

He heh heh.

MONISHA

Oooooof course.

Alex perks up.

ALEX

Ooh! Guys! Hide me! There she is!

ERIC

Who? Where?

ALEX

Her!

He points at a beautiful girl on the other side of the cafeteria. She is tall with long wavy brown hair and vibrant brown eyes. This is shown in slow motion, like a tacky romcom.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (lovestruck)
 Ava Conthepthion.

He oggles from afar.

ERIC
 Snap out of it, she can't see you
 like this!

ALEX
 Rude, but yes! You're right! She
 can't see me like this! I... I got
 onion breath!

Ava begins to walk over to the garbage cans near the nerds to bus her tray. Alex is panicking now.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Quick! Lemme camouflage into this
 wall!

He tries his best to blend in with the wall. Too bad the wall is white and he's wearing bright yellow.

She slows down when she passes Alex making a fool of himself. He opens his eyes and notices her. His eyes widen in shock. This is also in slow motion. He's trapped! Eric and Monisha awkwardly try to smile and act normal, as if nothing is weird. After a beat, Monisha elbows the stunned Alex to say something.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (stammering)
 Uh, que patha, Ava.

She waves... to her friend at the table near Alex and walks past. She never even noticed him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (as she goes)
 Me amo!

Eric elbows Alex.

ERIC
 That means "I love *me*!"

ALEX

Oh. Me amo you!

Eric pats him on the shoulder.

ERIC

There there, good buddy.

MONISHA

You'll have better luck next time.

ALEX

If there *is* a next time! She's only here for the semester!

All three sigh.

Mr. Teague approaches towards the cafeteria exit, where Eric and the gang are situated, still picking up trash. Eric looks down in the dumps.

MR. TEAGUE

Eric! Why so down in the dumps?

ERIC

I just feel really crappy about this whole punishment thing. I'm supposed to be better than this. Now I'll never get into Dartmouth.

MR. TEAGUE

What?! Please, you're *Eric Wang*, boy genius. You could do Dartmouth in your sleep.

ERIC

Not with *this* on my record. I thought I could just run away from my problems, like you said.

MR. TEAGUE

What? I said?

ALEX

About not telling your parents about your tattoos and stuff?

MR. TEAGUE

Oh come on, you really can't believe that applies to *everything*. They did eventually find out, and were even madder!

MONISHA
 (to herself, panicking)
 Ooh geez oh geez oh geez.

MR. TEAGUE
 But cheer up, dude. Look at it this way. It's like with Da Vinci: "A man should not be judged for a small failing, amidst a sea of triumphs." You'll be okay.

ERIC
 You really think I'm like Da Vinci?

MONISHA
That's what you're getting out of this?

MR. TEAGUE
 Don't get ahead of yourself, pal. Chill. Move forward.

Mr. Teague exits. Eric sighs.

Nathaniel comes up to the gang. He's also wearing the yellow vest and carries a trash bag.

NATHANIEL
 Hey guys.

ALL THREE
 (shamefully)
 Hey Nathaniel.

ERIC
 Well, we got caught. And given another week of *this*. You happy?

MONISHA
 Thanks a *lot*, man!

ALEX
 Wait a minute, what are you doing here?

MONISHA
 Yeah I thought you *never* don the Yellow Vest of Shame.

NATHANIEL
 I don't know. It's just that... you guys *really* are such losers.

MONISHA

Uh... excuse?

ALEX

Thanks?

NATHANIEL

Yeah, like Mega Losers.

ERIC

Geez, we get it.

NATHANIEL

And I figured I'd take you under *my* wing.

ERIC

Come again?

NATHANIEL

I guess I figured if nothing really matters, why not just... I don't know, I don't have anything philosophical to say here. To be honest I'm just lonely all the time and I don't actually have anyone to really hang out with.

ALEX

What? You know everybody! You're like a legend! You don't have any friends?

NATHANIEL

You don't gotta rub it in bro, but kinda. When it comes down to it, no one wants to hang out with the kid who's always in the principal's office.

MONISHA

So you're really just constantly in trouble?

NATHANIEL

It's like I'm in a prison. All they ever *do* is punish me here.

MONISHA

Does it make you want to... become better?

NATHANIEL
 Honestly, not really.
 (beat)
 I'm eighteen years old, dude. I
 know I can do even a little better
 better than--

He gestures at the dumb yellow vest.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
 This.

ALEX
 Vest of Shame gets to ya.

ERIC
 (sigh)
 Yeah I hear ya.

NATHANIEL
 I just can't live my whole life in
 detention, ya know?

ALEX
 Heavy, bro.

NATHANIEL
 I'll go to your little club.

ERIC
 Thanks dude. Much appreciated.

MONISHA
 Wow, that was... very mature of
 you.

Just then, Nathaniel sticks out his leg and trips an incoming
 freshman, who spills his lunch. Nathaniel sniggers to
 himself.

MONISHA (CONT'D)
 On second thought, this is gonna be
 a tough nut to crack.

ALEX
 Yaknow guys, I don't really mind
 this cat so much.

ERIC
 Yeah, I guess he's not the worst.

Nathaniel sharply looks back at them, eyes wide.

NATHANIEL

But we boutta get *mad* revenge on
Principal Ratface though.

ALEX

Ooooh, this is gonna be a good
year.

ERIC

I sure hope so.

MONISHA

I sure hope you're right.

ERIC

I'm always right.

Alex takes out the raw onion and chomps a thick bite out of
it, grossing out the three others. Freeze frame.

Blackout.