

**The Schwa Was Here**  
By Neal Shusterman

**Characters:**

**Anthony Bonano** - Main character. AKA "Antsy."

**Mom Bonano** - Antsy's Mom. Can't pronounce "th" sound (Catlick, Antny)

**Joe Bonano** - Vice-Executive Vice-Vice-President of Product Development for Pisher Plastic Products.

**Christina Bonano** -

**Frankie Bonano** - Antsy's older brother, age 16. Just got his license. Drove an old Toyota.

**Calvin Schwa** - Boy who seemed to disappear all the time.

**Charles J. Crawley** - Old recluse (age 75) who owned and lived above Crawley's Restaurant. Had fingernails like "Ginsu knives." Antsy nicknamed him "Chuckles." Looked like the Emperor in *Star Wars*.

**Lexis Lynn Crawley** - Mr. Crawley's granddaughter, age 14. AKA, Lexie. She was blind.

**Moxie** - Lexie's guide dog. Named after "Amoxicillin."

**Howie Bogerton** - Main goal in life was not to have any goals in life. Took everything literally. Good at math and science. As creative as a "barcode."

**Ira Goldfarb** - Self-proclaimed cinematic genius.

**Manny Bullpucky** - Crash dummy produced by Pisher Plastics.

**Wendell Tiggor** -

**Mr. Werthog** - Science teacher. Had a twitch in his lip that made it look like he was kissing the air.

**Amy van Zandt** - Girl who sat in the last row of science class.

**LoQuisha Peel** - Girl from science class.

**Dennis Fiorello** - Boy from science class.

**Aunt Rosie** - Antsy's aunt who had a pink aluminum Christmas tree.

**Mr. Spanks** - School security guard.

**Principal Assinette** - School principal.

**Mr. Schwa** - Calvin's dad. House painter. Fell off a ladder a few years ago and suffered head trauma.

**Margaret Taylor** - Schwa's Aunt Peggy who came over a few times a week to help out. She owned the house that the Schwa and his dad lived in.

**Pamela O'Malley** - Girl from school.

**Mrs. Greenblatt** - Nearsighted lady who lived two doors down from Antsy. She found Manny Bullpucky's head when she was trimming her hedges and called 911.

**Marco and Sam** - Mr. Schwa's painting partners.

**Ed Neebly** - "Dowser" who worked for the city's Department of Water and Power.

**Gunther** - Night Butcher at Waldbaum's. Worked there 19 years. From Belgium.

**Mrs. Schwa** - The Schwa's mother. Ran away with the butcher from Waldbaum's when he was 5.

**Oscar** - Butcher who the Schwa's mother ran away with.

**Rona Josephson** - Realtor who was selling the Schwa's house.

**Setting** - Gerristen Beach, Brooklyn.

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## Questions:

- What was the name of the restaurant in the story? (Crowley's Restaurant)
- What was Pisher Plastics' most famous product? (Plastic strainer at bottom of urinals)
- Where did the boys try their first attempt at breaking Manny Bullpucky? (The Marine Park Bridge)
- What did they try for their second attempt? (Blew him up with a firecracker)
- Where did they try their third and final attempt? (Brighton Beach elevated subway station)
- Who sat next to Antsy in Science Class? (The Schwa)
- What's a "duplex?" (Two homes connected together)
- What were the only two "A's" that Antsy saw on his school papers? (Anthony and Bonano)
- What country did the Bonano family relatives come from? (Italy)
- How did the Schwa's family get its name? (Great Grandpa Schwartz emigrated to the United States and died from a heart attack before he could finish spelling his name at Ellis Island)
- Who was mooching all the missing snack cakes at the school cafeteria? (Mr. Spanks, the security guard)
- How old was the Schwa's mother when she disappeared? (5)
- What was Wendell Tiggor's dare that took the Schwa and Antsy into Crowley's Restaurant? (Bring back a dog bowl)
- What was Antsy's good luck phrase about taking dares for the Schwa? ("Stealth is wealth.")
- How many dogs did Mr. Crowley have? (14) What breed were they? (Afgans) Who made their dog bowl? (Pisher Plastics)
- What were Mr. Crowley's dogs named after? (Seven Virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude, Faith, Hope and Charity. Seven Sins: Envy, Sloth, Anger, Lust, Gluttony, Pride and Avarice.)
- What color was the Schwa's house? (Canary yellow)
- What did the Schwa like to collect? (Famous paper clips)
- Name 3 famous paper clips in the Schwa's collection. (Nuclear Arms Treaty signed by Reagan and Gorbachev; original lyrics of "Hey Jude;" mission manual for the space shuttle)
- What did Antsy and the Schwa have to do as punishment for breaking into Mr. Crowley's apartment? (Walk his 14 dogs every day)
- Did Antsy have braces? (Yes) How do we know? (Lexie felt them)
- What were Antsy and the Schwa rivals over? (Both wanted to be Lexie's girlfriend)
- Where were Lexie's parents? (On vacation in Europe)
- What was the Big Argument about between Antsy's parents? (Who was the better cook?)
- What did Antsy say instead of BS? (Bullpucky!)
- Where did they take Mr. Crowley after he fell in the shower? (Coney Island Hospital)
- Where did Lexie go to school? (Academy of the Blind)
- What did the name for the "Four S Club" stand for? (Four senses other than sight: Touch, Hearing, Taste, Smell)
- What kind of class did Antsy's mom take? (French cooking)

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- How were Antsy's and the Schwa's moms similar? (Both lost their "self" and had to rediscover a purpose in life)
- What game did the Schwa like to play at the grocery store when he was about 5? (Name all the kinds of food as he went down the aisles)
- What's a "dowser"? (Someone who used wishbone-shaped sticks to find water underground.)
- What was the name of the grocery store where the Schwa's mother left him? (Waldbaum's in Carnasie)
- What did Antsy and Lexie do to for shock therapy for Mr. Crawley? (Kidnapped him and took him on a helicopter ride around Manhattan)
- What did the Schwa do to get noticed? (Rented a billboard with his picture and the slogan "Calvin Schwa Was Here") Why didn't his plan work? (The Gowanus Expressway was closed for construction; also near Greenwood Cemetery)
- What kind of trouble did Frankie get into? (Arrested for drunk driving)
- What did Mr. Bonano do after getting fired from Pisher Plastics? (Joined with Mr. Crawley to manage a French-Italian restaurant)
- What was Mr. Crawley's final job for Antsy and Lexie? (For a monthly stipend of \$100 plus expenses...to kidnap him once each month and take him on an adventure)
- What was the graffiti that Antsy started? (A face made from a few simple lines, wispy hair and an upside down e on the forehead. "The Schwa Was Here")
- Why did the Schwa and his dad have to move? (They were having trouble with finances, presumably because the Schwa spent much of their savings on his billboard plan)
- Where did the Schwa find his mother? (Key West, Florida)

## In What Book...

Did someone say, "They'd put a price tag on a dead rat if they thought it would sell. Then they'd hire an advertising firm to show beautiful women wearing them on their shoulders. It's all part of a free-market economy." (Mr. Bonano talking about Pisher Plastics)

Did a boy collect paper clips that had been part of famous events?

Did someone say, "Crawley gave money like bulls gave milk: not at all, and you got gored for asking."

Did a boy's mother run away with the butcher when he was five years old?