



## TEACHER'S GUIDE

Andrew Bean is a sidekick. Well, sort of a sidekick. To be a sidekick you have to have someone to stand beside and...you know...kick with, but Drew's super is tucked away in a bar somewhere trying to forget his glory days. The result: Drew usually ends up being saved by someone else's hero. He knows he shouldn't complain. Not everybody is blessed with super powers (though admittedly his are pretty lame) or gets to be part of a super secret organization of crime fighters (though H.E.R.O. has too many rules) or gets to be best friends with a girl who can bench press a bulldozer (though lately she's been acting strange). It's just that it's hard to finish your history project when you are dangling over a vat of acid. And it's even harder when you're not sure what...or whom...to believe in.

This coming-of-age story is not just an adventurous superhero romp; it provides many opportunities for self-discovery, discussion, and analysis. The reading level and vocabulary are ideal for grades 4 through 8, and it could easily be used as a read aloud for younger students.



## About the Author

John David Anderson lives in Indianapolis, Indiana with his wife and twins. He is an avid reader, hiker, chocolate-eater and game-player. He believes that books should be entertaining enough to distract you while they subtly needle you with life lessons and philosophical conundrums. He is the author of both *Sidekicked* and *Standard Hero Behavior*.

## What You Can Talk About

1. The idea of moral absolutism and the sometime fuzzy line between what's right and what's best.
2. The role of heroes and role models in our culture and whether people in the spotlight have an obligation to be a positive influence.
3. The idea of masks and multiple identities: Namely, how we are all forced to adopt certain personas in certain situations and how difficult it can be to construct an authentic or "true" personality.
4. The use of power. Should people who have power of any kind (legal, financial, cosmic, etc.) use that power altruistically or should they be able to use it to serve their own personal ends?
5. School lunches and whether or not they are as bad as Drew thinks.
6. Honesty and trust: Specifically, how do you decide whom to trust? What do you do when someone violates that trust?
7. The need to belong. Why we join groups and clubs and how derive our identity through them.

## Discussion Questions and Writing Prompts

1. Do you think Drew is a hero? Why or why not? What heroic qualities does he possess? What are his weaknesses? What do you admire most about him?
2. Do you think Jenna is a hero? Or the Titan? How about Mr. Masters? Pick another character and discuss or write about what makes them "heroic" or not.
3. The Fox says there is no such thing as good or evil. There are only those with power and those without. Do you think this is true? What's wrong with this idea?
4. Why do you think Jenna goes along with The Fox's plan? Do you think she's a villain at the end? Are there any cases where the "ends" might justify the "means."
5. Drew has to hide the truth about his involvement in H.E.R.O. from his parents. How does this impact his life? How does it change his relationship with the Titan or with his friends?
6. Which characters redeem themselves by the end of the novel? What do you think Drew has learned by the end? What do you imagine his future holds?
7. Read the conversation between Drew and Jenna in Chapter 16 again. What point does Jenna make about the difference between good and evil, right and wrong? When she says "I needed to know," what do you think she's talking about?
8. If you could be any member of H.E.R.O., who would it be and why?

## Fun (and Educational) Learning Activities

### 1. Create your own Drew Bean Olfactory Test.

Materials: 10 test tubes, wrapped in paper to conceal contents

10 different "substances" that have distinctive odors (i.e. cinnamon, garlic, vanilla, peppermint oil, sunscreen)

Number the tubes and test your fellow students on their sense of smell. Can they identify which substance is in each tube by odor alone like Drew can? Use this as a fun activity to lead into a discussion of senses or chemical properties.

### 2. Develop your own Code of Conduct.

Imagine you are starting your own club for aspiring superheroes (or some other organization). What would the rules be? What is the penalty for breaking those rules?

What is your own personal code of conduct? What rules or guidelines do you try to live by on a daily basis? Write it out on paper first, then you can chisel it into marble.

### 3. Imagine yourself as a superhero or sidekick.

What would your powers be? What name would you take? What would your weakness be (yes, you have to have one)? What would your costume look like (feel free to sketch it out)? Who would your nemesis be? Where would your headquarters be located? If you are a sidekick, who is your partner? Why?

Use the hero cards on the next page to design one of your own!

What do you think your answers to all the questions above say about you, your personality, your goals, and your limitations?

Insert Picture Here	<b>Name</b>
	Your real name
	<b>Secret Identity</b>
	Your hero name
	<b>Affiliation</b>
	Your Super team
<b>Stats</b>	
<b>Notable Powers</b>	
Strength	#
Power	#
Speed	#
Agility	#
Resistance	#
Perception	#
List major powers here	
Insert motto or catchphrase here	

	<b>Name</b>
	Andrew Macon Bean
	<b>Secret Identity</b>
	The Sensationalist
	<b>Affiliation</b>
	H.E.R.O.
<b>Stats</b>	
<b>Notable Powers</b>	
Strength	2
Power	2
Speed	2
Agility	2
Resistance	2
Perception	10
Hyper acute senses	
Utility belt	
That just about does it	
I smell better than you!	

### For Further Reading

*How to Be a Superhero*, Barry Neville

*The Extraordinary Adventures of Ordinary Boy*, William Boniface

*Powerless*, Matthew Cody

*The Science of Superheroes*, Lois Gresh

*Standard Hero Behavior*, John David Anderson

For more information about the author, visit  
[www.johndavidanderson.org](http://www.johndavidanderson.org)

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