

Selected and annotated by Tad Andracki
September 2014

Anderson, John David. *Sidekicked*. Walden Pond/HarperCollins, 2013. 384p. Gr. 5-9.
Andrew's disappointed with his superpowers—hyperacute senses—and with his assigned superhero mentor, the Titan, who went into hiding after vanquishing his archenemy, the Dealer. Now, the Dealer seems to have come back from presumed death. Can Andrew and his fellow sidekicks stop the villain and rescue the Titan . . . from himself?

Avasthi, Swati. *Chasing Shadows*. Knopf, 2013. 320p. Gr. 7-10.
Corey, his twin sister Holly, and their friend Savitri spend their time freerunning across the south side of Chicago, but tragedy strikes and Corey and Holly are shot—fatally, in Corey's case. Holly slips in and out of hallucinations, shaped by the girls' favorite comics, as she grapples with the loss of her twin, trying to make herself her own superhero.

Bowers, Rick. *Superman Versus the Ku Klux Klan: The True Story of How the Iconic Superhero Battled the Men of Hate*. National Geographic, 2012. 160p. Gr. 7-10.
This lightning-paced history uncovers the ways that the creators of *The Adventures of Superman*—Jewish in an era of anti-Semitism in the '40s—aspired to launch a public takedown of the still-persistent KKK. Linking their experiences with information gathered by a KKK infiltrator, the creators came up with the “Clan of the Fiery Cross” radio episodes, and Bowers pulls all of these threads together into this exciting narrative.

Campbell, Chelsea M. *The Rise of Renegade X*. Egmont, 2010. 352p. Gr. 8-12.
In a world where superheroes and villains know exactly what they'll grow up to be by the shape their thumbprints take on their sixteenth birthday—*V* or *H*—when Damien's print turns out to be an *X*, his mom, a ne'er-do-well extraordinaire, reveals that his father is a hero, the Crimson Flash. Damien moves into his dad's home—alongside an established family—setting this coming-of-age tale amid battles of epic proportions.

Carroll, Michael. *Super Human*. Philomel, 2010. 336p. Gr. 8-10.
A plan to bring back a sadistic and violent superhuman has a fanatic group infecting adults of the world with a plague intended to prevent contemporary superheroes from stopping the effort. Enter this ragtag group of teens with nascent superpowers, hellbent on foiling the plot, even with their very teenage problems still haunting them.

Chabon, Michael. *The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man*; illus. by Jake Parker. HarperCollins, 2011. 40p. 4-7 yrs.
Awesome Man has it all going for him: shiny new super suit, positronic ray powers, and enemies bear-hugged into submission. But Awesome Man—whom audiences know is an ordinary kid with a super imagination—ends up in time-out due to some of his smashing successes, until he calms down just a bit for a nice hug from Mom.

Cody, Matthew. *Powerless*. Knopf, 2009. 277p. Gr. 4-6.

Daniel and his family have moved to “The Safest Town on Earth,” which he’s pretty sure is also the most boring, until he sees some of the other kids performing some pretty super stunts. Daniel discovers that kids in this town have superpowers, but only until the age of thirteen, and he is thrust into a hunt for the mysterious force that robs the kids of their abilities, without the benefit of powers himself.

Cosentino, Ralph. *Wonder Woman: The Story of the Amazon Princess*. Viking, 2011. 36p. Gr. 2-4.

This picture-book style tale introduces the backstory of the Amazon princess, including her upbringing on Paradise Island and relationship with her mother, Hippolyta. The story doesn’t end with the tender relationships, though, and there’s plenty of action as Wonder Woman vanquishes each of her enemies page-by-page using all of her special abilities.

Escoffier, Michaël. *The Day I Lost My Superpowers*; written and illus. by Michaël Escoffier and Kris Di Giacomo; tr. from the French by Claudia Bedrick and Kris Di Giacomo. Enchanted Lion, 2014. 26p. 5-8 yrs.

The young masked narrator of this picture-book romp discovers that she can “fly” (when launched into the air by an adult), and she explores what other “superpowers” she has, including making things disappear (by eating them). A crash from an attempted flight has her convinced that she’s lost all of her powers, until Mom’s super hug and kiss make her feel much better.

Frenette, Bethany. *Dark Star*. Hyperion, 2012. 356p. Gr. 7-10.

Audrey knows that her mother is the Minneapolis superhero extraordinaire, the Morning Star, but she doesn’t know how deep the powers run until she’s attacked by a demonic being and discovers that her mother is one of the Kin, people with superhuman abilities who are charged with keeping the world safe from Harrowers, creatures trying to take over this world.

Harkrader, Lisa. *Adventures of Beanboy*. Houghton, 2012. 240p. Gr. 4-6.

Tucker is an aspiring comics creator, and his favorite superhero is H2O. So when H2O’s creators announce a contest for the kid who can create the best sidekick, Tucker’s sure that winning the contest will be a boon for his career and his strapped-for-cash mom. But between the new babysitter (a school bully) and the demands on his time, will Tucker ever be inspired enough to create flatulent superhero Beanboy?

Jung, Mike. *Geeks, Girls, and Secret Identities*; illus. by Mike Maihack. Levine/Scholastic, 2012. 308p. Gr. 5-8.

Vincent Wu and his friends are the most avid—and nerdiest—of Captain Stupendous’ fans, so it’s only natural that the superhero turns to them for help when in a pickle. The boys are more shocked to find that Captain Stupendous is Polly, Vincent’s secret crush, and her problem is with Vincent’s dad’s old rival—who has now kidnapped Vincent’s mom.

Kahaney, Amelia. *The Brokenhearted*. HarperTeen/HarperCollins, 2013. 352p. Gr. 7-10.

Anthem falls hard for Gavin at an underground party, breaking up with her posh boyfriend and sneaking out to the seedier side of town to be with Gavin. When thugs kidnap Gavin, Anthem dies trying to save him—until a black-market surgeon gives her a mechanical heart, and thus

superhuman powers. This Batman-inspired novel weaves together plenty of intrigue with its high-stakes chases.

Larson, Hope. *Who Is AC?*; illus. by Tintin Pantoja. Atheneum, 2013. 176p. Gr. 7-10.

Lin has turned to zine-making during her move to a new city, telling stories about crime-fighter Rhea Ironheart, but after witnessing a robbery, she transforms into the weapons-wielding and costumed heroine herself. This graphic novel traces Lin's coming to terms with what being a superhero really means, all while a menacing internet denizen conspires to use others' heartbreak into a weapon against Lin.

Lewis, Josh. *Super Chicken Nugget Boy and the Furious Fry*; illus. by Douglas Holgate.

Disney/Hyperion, 2010. 141p. Gr. 2-4.

Fern's (short for Fernando) first forays at his new school brand him a dweeb and earn him the attention of Dirk, school bully. When he and his pet salamander, Arnie, fall into a pile of radioactive goop, they're gracefully transformed . . . into a super-sized breaded and fried piece of poultry and his trusty lightning-fast amphibian sidekick, who must battle Dirk's mutant French fry threatening the school.

Marko, Cyndi. *Kung Pow Chicken: Let's Get Cracking*. Scholastic, 2014. 72p. Gr. 2-3.

When Gordon and his brother Benny visit their uncle Quack in his laboratory, an accident involving toxic sludge transforms them into Kung Pow Chicken and his sidekick, Egg Drop. The newly hatched superbirds must track down the cause of their fellow chickens' sudden loss of feathers—which seems to be Granny Goosebumps' green glowing cookies.

Matti, Truus. *Mister Orange*; tr. from the Dutch by Laura Watkinson; illus. by Jenni Desmond.

Enchanted Lion, 2013. 159p. Gr. 6-10.

When his older brother Albie goes to war in 1943, New Yorker Linus discovers a superhero that Albie had created amid his old comic-book collection. Linus copes with his fears for his brother and the responsibilities suddenly thrust upon him through conversations with the superhero—and with the eccentric artist in the neighborhood, Piet Mondrian.

Montijo, Rhode. *The Gumazing Gum Girl: Chews Your Destiny*. Disney Hyperion, 2013. 128p. Gr. 2-4.

Gabby Gomez loves gum, but she doesn't expect that "MIGHTY-MEGA ULTRA-STRETCHY SUPER-DUPER EXTENDA-BUBBLE BUBBLE GUM" will have the effect it does: changing her into Gum Girl, complete with hyper-stretchy appendages perfect for stopping robberies and plane crashes. Gabby must figure out how to keep her powers secret from her gum-disapproving *mami* and use them for the good of others in this graphic novel/early chapter book.

Moore, Peter. *V is for Villain*. Hyperion, 2014. 336p. Gr. 8-10.

Brad's sick of living in his older brother's shadow, especially since he doesn't seem to have any superpowers as his brother does. His demotion to the powerless echelon of his school brings him to some real friends, who see the problems in this society's hero-worship and want to shake up the system . . . villain-style.

Morales, Yuyi. *Niño Wrestles the World*. Porter/Roaring Brook, 2013.

Niño—caped and tighty-whitey clad—may only be a famous *luchador* in his head, but he easily vanquishes all of his opponents drawn from Mexican folklore . . . until *las hermanitas*, his little sisters, unmask him. Although *lucha libre* isn't technically superhero fare, this book's use of super villains and comics-style design elements will surely draw in super fans.

Nobleman, Mark Tyler. *Bill, the Boy Wonder: The Secret Co-Creator of Batman*; illus. by Ty Templeton. Charlesbridge, 2012. 48p. Gr. 3-5.

This biography explores the lesser-known story of Bill Finger, the soft-spoken guy lost to history in the wake of Batman's more forceful co-creator Bob Kane. Comics-style artwork and box insets, as well as an extensive and engaging author's note, provide interest into this story of a man snubbed by his partner and by fame.

Pope, Paul. *Battling Boy*. First Second, 2013. 208p. Gr. 5-9.

Haggard West, hero of Acropolis, seems to be the only hope for Acropolis, constantly under siege from horrific monsters, until his untimely death. Battling Boy, son of gods, then springs onto the scene, armed with a monster guidebook and a collection of T-shirts that help him use animal powers. This graphic novel follows his ascent as the city's new hero, all while West's daughter Aurora is using her father's lab to train herself to take on the monsters.

Rocco, John. *Super Hair-O and the Barber of Doom*. Disney Hyperion, 2013. 32p. 5-9 yrs.

Rocco and his friends totally have superpowers—they can destroy cities (Legos) and fly (leap from ladders into the wading pool). Rocco's convinced that the source of his power is his hair, so the trip his father plans to the barber sounds horrifyingly like the end of his superheroism.

Sanderson, Brandon. *Steelheart*. Delacorte, 2013. 386p. Gr. 7-12.

In this futuristic world, some people spontaneously develop Epic superpowers, changing them into villains. David's at the forefront of the anti-Epic rebellion, but a chance to take out their leader, Steelheart, shows David that not everything is as it seems with the Epics.

Trine, Greg. *The Adventures of Jo Schmo: Dinos are Forever*; illus. by Frank W. Dormer. Harcourt, 2012. 112p. Gr. 2-4.

Jo Schmo comes from a long line of crime-fighters, but her time to step up as a superhero comes sooner than expected when her uncle retires. Jo and her dog, Raymond, must figure out the hero thing when Dr. Dastardly releases reanimated dinosaur skeletons across San Francisco.

van Draanen, Wendelin. *The Gecko and Sticky: Villain's Lair*; illus. by Stephen Gilpin. Knopf, 2009. 201p. Gr. 4-6.

Dave Sanchez's life with his pet gecko, Sticky, gets turned upside down when he finds out that Sticky can talk and is on the run from Damien Black, a criminal mastermind. Sticky once stole Black's power bracelet that—when coupled with the ingots that Black still has—can give the holder superpowers. Can Sticky and Dave retrieve the ingots while still evading Black's dastardly plans?