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Opening extract from

Kenny Wright Superhero

Written by

James Patterson

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1

I AM STAINLEZZ STEEL




WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING IN YOUR WARM BED LAST NIGHT...
...I WAS BEATING THE SNOT OUT OF A BUNCH OF WANNABE THUGS OVER ON POTOMAC AVENUE.
PUNCH
PASS
KICK
WHO'S NEXT?
THANKS, STEEL.
HEY, IT'S WHAT I DO.
WHOOSH!


ASSISTANCE NEEDED!!!
WHILE YOU WERE DREAMING ABOUT THE NEW XBOX YOU JUST MIGHT GET FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY...
...I WAS RESCUING A FAMILY FROM THE FREEZING COLD IN ANACOSTIA PARK.
ARE YOU THE STAINLESS STEEL?
I AIN'T THE EASTER BUNNY, KID.
AND BEFORE YOUR ALARM CLOCK WAS EVEN THINKING ABOUT GOING OFF...
...I WAS OVER ON U STREET, SAVING ONE OF A CAT'S NINE LIVES.
NO PROB.
MEOW.


I HAVE A COMIC BOOK NAMED AFTER ME AND A TRACK ON KANYE'S LATEST MIXTAPE IS DEDICATED TO ME. AND ONE MOVIE...
FEEL STEEL
COMING SOON!
CREATED BY KENNY WRIGHT
SO FAR...
I'VE TAKEN DOWN GENERAL ZOD TWICE, DEFEATED LOKI AT HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT, AND BEATEN DARTH VADER AT CHESS.
CHECKMATE, VADER!
THAT'S IT. I'M MOVING TO A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY. I'M OUT!

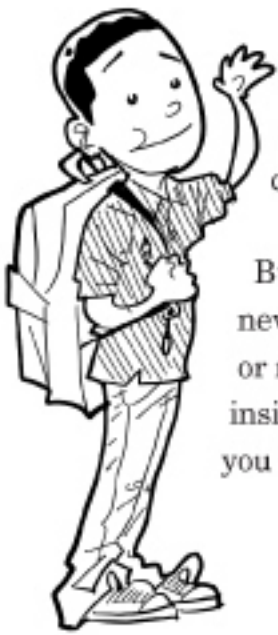

MY NAME IS
STAINLESS STEEL!!!
CUT THAT LIGHT OUT!

2

THE REAL ME

Today I, Stainlezz Steel, am officially bugged out. Today's my first day at Union Middle School, and the truth is, I'm a little scared.

Don't laugh. My school is way worse than your school. Believe that.



In real life, I am mild-mannered, easy-to-get-along-with Kenny Wright. And as you may have figured out by now, Stainlezz Steel only exists in my crazy mixed-up imagination.

Superheroes aren't real. I know that. But you show me a kid who says he never wished he could fly like Superman, or run like the Flash, or mess around inside Iron Man's supersuit…and I'll show you a kid who's lying through his grill.

That's why I made up Stainlezz Steel. Inside my head, I mean. Because I have about as much chance of being a superhero as a turtle has of winning a hundred-yard dash. And the only battles I ever win are on the chessboard.

Not like Steel.

It doesn't help that my stubborn-as-a-donkey Grandma Hope insists on walking me to school, either. (I call her G-ma for short. She calls me Kenneth, for long, but you can just call me Kenny.)

I explained to G-ma that I'm in sixth grade now. It's straight-up embarrassing to show up with your granny on the first day. Everyone thinks I'm kind of a geek to begin with. Well... maybe not a *geek-geek*, but I'm definitely not "that dude." You know that dude; the ladies love him, and the fellas want to be him. But try explaining that to G-ma. She may not be hard of hearing, but she can definitely be hard of listening, if you know what I mean. And she has an opinion about EVERYTHING.

And don't get me wrong. I've got mad respect for G-ma. She takes good care of me, and I try to do the same for her. She also makes the best peach upside-down cake you ever tasted.



It's just that I'm crazy nervous about starting middle school. Like, throw-up-on-my-shoes nervous. Kids like me can get stomped down pretty quick at a place like Union Middle.

But G-ma doesn't notice. On the real, for a little old lady, she has a lot of heart. She's fearless. Sometimes I think she may be a champion MMA prizefighter at night. Hey, it's possible. She just keeps walking on down Martin Luther King Avenue, talking to me about grades and high expectations, while I try to hold on to my breakfast and figure out how I'm going to make it through the first day.

Times like these, I could use a little less Kenny and a lot more Steel.