

MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS AS EDITORS: THE BEEBOP AND ARNOLD CONNECTION

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The public's anxiety regarding basics and the principal's nightmares over test scores have strengthened the hold of drill-and-recite, learn-the rule, fill-in-the-blanks teaching techniques over too many language arts programs today. You know the symptoms — long lists of skills taught in a typically predetermined and too frequently illogical sequence, with complete subjects to underline in the second grade, comma rules in the third, and repetition masquerading as review starting no later than the fourth. In these programs, reading is king. Learning about language pushes aside learning *how to do* language. Creative writing, finally, becomes something to mess around with after the important stuff has been tended to, rather like ballet or pottery.

You and I know this in unhealthy. We continue, instead, to seek affirmation for our contrary ideas of student-centeredness, process learning, and creativity as the vital center of language arts rather than as an afterthought. A recent project among fifth-grade children at St. Elmo School in Columbus, Georgia, since replicated with both older and younger learners from fourth through eighth grades, provides this sort of affirmation. Creating an episodic novel for

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younger readers and parents, these children worked in editing groups to arrange and rearrange episodes classmates had written, to re-write sentences, and to apply spelling and punctuation skills — all with little or no teacher correction. Given the will to “get it right” and with time set aside for structured editing tasks, these youngsters used both prior learning and common sense in improving writing they cared about.

It took us — the children, Mary Bass, their regular teacher, and me — about four one-hour class sessions to write, edit, re-edit, and manufacture the book. The writing of episodes, plus the creation of numerous illustrations, took place both during and between these four sessions, either at home or during study time at school.

The idea of writing individual episodes to be integrated into a whole work came from several sources, a collective novel described in *The Whole Word Catalogue*, Al Yoder's work with college freshmen reported in NCTE's *Activating the Passive Student*, Karen Hubert's story “*recipes*” in her *Teaching and Writing Popular Fiction*, and even my own son's fascination with superheroes each Saturday morning. Though the basic idea was not original, we shaped it to the point that it was at least distinctive.

For the first session, Mary and I had prepared a story skeleton (APPENDIX A), an outline which the class would use in creating a superhero character, filling in the key elements in his or her history, and describing a sidekick minor character. The children and I brainstormed ideas in a rapid-fire twenty-minute period in which all were able to contribute. As we worked, turning down one idea and accepting another, each child wrote in the particulars that filled in the skeleton, an activity which gave the boys and girls a personal, concrete product of the project from its beginning. What they came up with were characters guaranteed to excite most juvenile tastes: Beebop, a twelve year-old boy with green hair, balding rapidly, orphaned when his parents ate poisoned liver, and capable of flying when the magical words “Ooo-loo-loo Kitty Chow” were spoken; and his faithful companion Arnold, hairy and boneless, who had rescued Beebop from Boo Bop de Baby, his childhood home, and who continued to advise the hero on matters of strategy in dealing with criminals.

With these critical points settled, the youngsters were primed for episode writing. Pairs were formed, and each pair

was given a strip of paper with two Episode Starters on it. In question form, Episode Starters prompted thinking about different elements in the hero's story — Beebop's childhood, his introduction to Arnold, the beginning of his magical powers, even his involvement in the Iranian hostage crisis. A second type of Starter dealt more with description than narrative — Beebop's pets, his home, and further details about his appearance and dress. Each pair selected one of the two Starters and then collaborated in generating ideas and getting them on paper. Different pairs worked on different episodes. Writing began quickly that morning, with a number of children finishing up later on. As a follow-up activity, Mary asked them to read over their story skeletons and draw accurate pictures of the heroes.

At the end of Session 1, I had exactly what I wanted, considerable stimulation and excitement, plus the promise of much student writing before we would meet again. Several days later, I collected a batch of papers and a number of artists' renderings of Beebop and Arnold. Typing up the first drafts, I was struck, as I so frequently am, by the children's strong imaginative abilities coupled with a kind of disjointedness — sentences turned inside out, verb forms that would befuddle Noam Chomsky, and phrasing that indicated that better thinking was going on in the writer's head than he was up to putting on paper, at least in a draft. Clearly, I was no Kenneth Koch, but we at least had crazily rich material to use in upcoming editing sessions.

Session 2 included several activities — selection of "official" Beebop and Arnold illustrations, an arrangement of episodes into a pleasing whole, and small-group editing. By the end of the hour, Mary and I could tell that the book, on completion, would suit both our tastes and those of the children.

Selection of Beebop and Arnold illustrations got us off to a lively start. "Your choices will be on the cover of our book," I explained as the children filed past and examined the entries I had taped to the blackboard. Returning to their seats, they marked ballots quickly. They had already informed me that *A Hero With Green Hair* had been chosen as the title during my absence; with both title and illustrations, we'd soon have a cover to judge our book by. Mary counted the ballots, and I went on with the lesson.

On the board, I had listed the episodes in more or less random order. "How should we put these together?" I asked.

“Which one do you want to come first?” Children expressed their ideas forcefully, convincingly — Beebop’s childhood had to come first, along with his first encounter with Arnold; then an account of how he was “sent down” to earth. And so on. Other sections — Beebop’s pets, a vivid description of his house, his encounter with the Iranians — fell in place according to youthful logic, and then the overall shape of *A Hero With Green Hair* was realized.

We were ready for editing. I explained that we would read the entire story aloud once we’d worked a bit more on the parts. “You’re going to be editors. Now . . . editors are people who take writing and make it better, get it ready for publication. Famous writers use editors all the time. In fact, editors sometimes are more important to books than writers are — they tell the writers what parts to leave out, what parts are unclear, and things like that.”

I then took the class through two short exercises (APPENDIX B), a punctuate-by-voice exercise and an ellipsis exercise. For each, the goal was to train the child’s ear to listen to an oral reading, then identify a missing element in the text, either basic punctuation or words and phrases omitted from their copy. The punctuation drill, which I first read of in James Moffett’s *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13*, called on students to mark their drafts according to what they heard in my voice — commas for short pauses, periods for longer ones. I drew the text from the local newspaper, a juicy item about juvenile shoplifting. The youngsters had learned punctuation via rules and worksheets for years; now they would let their ears take the lead.

The ellipsis exercise, similar in format and technique, highlighted a different problem. Several of the first-draft episodes confirmed that a child’s mind, like yours and mine, often races ahead of hand and pen. Words and phrases thought to be captured on paper had been unconsciously allowed to escape; the resulting copy was not really poor, but rather simply incomplete. I explained this to the children. “Editors use little marks called carets to show where words and phrases have been left out,” I told them. “When you listen carefully, it’s easy to figure out where the missing words ought to go. Many times, you can even tell what the exact missing words are.” I asked them to listen closely to my oral reading, then, like editors, to mark their copy with

carets in the right spots. The selection continued the shop-lifting account from the newspaper.

In quick order, the exercises were completed. We shared results. We speculated on the identity of the missing words, and then compared our choices with those of the journalist. As I had hoped, most of the boys and girls were on target. Their punctuation was conventional enough, and their ability to sniff out missing words and phrases was nearly perfect. Now they were ready to edit the episodes.

Groups of four were formed by combining two pairs from our first session. Each was supplied copy that the original pairs had written, which meant that each child would work with two episodes, one familiar and one new. Each had a typed copy. Reading the drafts aloud, the children would make whatever changes they felt would improve the episodes, everything from adding new ideas to correcting spelling errors. All four would have to agree on the change, and the group would present Mary with a single edited copy signed by each.

“Pay special attention to omitted words,” I asked, “and mark your texts with carets like we did in the exercise. Add words that are needed.”

During the twenty minutes that followed, Mary and I served as roving consultants, avoiding the temptation to point out problems, but assisting the group in making up its mind about an editing question. When asked, we supplied spelling corrections rather than allow the session to turn into a dictionary search. But when a child, for example, insisted that something sounded funny in a sentence, we might agree and suggest that the foursome, together, could probably figure out an improvement.

Later, we will look more closely at one episode and how it was transformed through two editing sessions. For now, though, suffice it to say that impressive change took place in the session. The sprung syntax of the first drafts found a more conventional order, missing elements were identified and put in place, and basics — spelling and punctuation — moved toward adult standards. Reading the ordered episodes aloud to the children that morning, Mary and I were pleased at what our fifth-grade editors had accomplished. They, in turn, listening raptly, were delighted as their long story was presented with all parts for the first time.

Preparing for Session 3, Mary and I agreed that additional editing was desirable, though we were uncertain how

willing the children would be to rework the material a second time. Some of the edited drafts were pretty well finished — a little proofreading was all that was needed. Others, perhaps because the children were too close to material they themselves had written, were still in rough form. Edited American English dominated some episodes, while non-standard dialect forms showed up in others. We decided to keep the same editing groups, but rotate the episodes. This, perhaps, would make a second round of editing palatable as well as clean up problems that might be overlooked otherwise.

At the start of the session, a booklike second draft was passed out, complete with Beebop and Arnold on the cover and the title, *A Hero With Green Hair*, in bold letters. The episodes within now had headings, and big empty boxes on each page indicated where illustrations would go in the final copy. The children were excited by the metamorphosis; they eagerly suggested what pictures ought to go on each page, selecting as they did both significant events in Beebop's saga and those which were strongly visual. Having named five key scenes, the class agreed to submit drawings to me which would be judged by my six year-old son and a friend, with winners to appear in the final copy. (See APPENDIX D.)

We then moved in to a second editing. Given a limited task and new copy to work with, the children took on the work with much more enthusiasm than I had expected, making a number of minor and a few major changes. Careless mistakes were caught, language was regularized without losing individuality, and — in about fifteen minutes — we had our final copy. Papers in hand, I was allowed to leave only after assurances that I would return with the finished books soon.

Session 4 resembled a cast party after a successful opening night. Though work remained to be done, we knew that the hardest part was finished and that the rewards could be enjoyed soon. In forty-five minutes, we literally manufactured seventy-five copies of the books. A day or two earlier, I'd picked up the entries for the five drawings. With minor rigging, I had steered my young judges into choosing drawings from five different children. These, along with the second editings of the episodes, had been quickly transferred onto mimeo stencils. Now, in assembly-line fashion, groups of children were given colored markers and stacks of freshly printed sheets, one page per group. Then — with one

child marking blue pants, a second adding in a brown shirt, and so on — sheets were passed around the group until it completed a full stack of colorfully illustrated pages. When a group concluded its task, members moved to a central collating and stapling table, where finished pages were gathered and assembled. Chatter and the whack of staplers filled the air until, before long, our books were finished, one set for the class, another for a second-grade group down the hall, and a third batch for me to brag on in my teaching-of-writing class at the college. I left feeling like there might be a dash of magic in Mary Bass's fifth-grade classroom at St. Elmo after all.

In the weeks that followed, several other Columbus teachers decided to try out the episodic novel project with their students. Led by a Columbus College graduate student, Mary's sixth-grade class, envious of what our boys and girls had been doing those weeks, produced *Steel Woman*, an elaborate tale with a female superhero. Eighth-graders at a nearby junior high school concocted *The Adventures of Superfly*, featuring Harvey Bishop (Superfly) and Keith Williams, described as "a well built sixteen year old who was the spitting image of Billy Dee Williams." Harvey, so the story goes, could change into Superfly when needed. Keith "supplied the muscle." With both *Steel Woman* and *Superfly*, copies were prepared for younger readers as well as class members, and non-directive editing sessions supplanted conventional teacher correction and "assistance." A class of underachieving fourth-graders generated *Dexter, A Hero*, though their teacher adapted the project to include greater adult control of both episode writing and editing. I have yet to compare notes with a behavioral disorders teacher whose students range from eight to eleven years, now using the general approach with her children.

What, though, did the children learn from creating *A Hero With Green Hair*, *Steel Woman* and the others? What can we learn from their experience? Two or three points are worth highlighting, points in our affirmation of learning by doing, of student centeredness, of creativity in language arts.

First, it is clear that the novel project offered a motivating context for plugging in the so-called writing basics, the workbook skills that concern the public, the easily measured materials that dominate standardized tests. St. Elmo's children are the products of language arts instruction that is

neither radical nor reactionary, neither finger-popping progressive nor stodgily traditional. Their first drafts revealed a substantial difficulty with using mechanics in their own writing, a quality that should surprise no one. In two editing sessions, though, these elements were brought under control with less difficulty than might be imagined. One of the episodes, Mike and Kim's "Beebop's Amazing House" (APPENDIX C) exemplifies the extent of this process.

Mike and Kim's episode, in some respects, was the best piece of writing in the class; in others, it was the worst. On the one hand, it was highly imaginative and richly descriptive, with word pictures that could have inspired *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Not surprisingly, it was the most memorable part of the tale to second graders who, a week later, wrote thank-you notes for their gift copies and told about what was, for them, the "best part" of *A Hero With Green Hair*. But its first draft was so marred by omissions and mechanical errors that it was almost unreadable, the sort of writing a teacher reads and concludes, reluctantly, that this particular youngster simply can't put sentences together, not yet anyway. Syntactically, the writing in each draft is immature, with short, grammatically repetitious sentences, a factor which may relate to the dual authorship, the nature of descriptive writing as opposed to exposition, or both. Between Drafts I and II, though, marvelous things occurred — thirty individual changes in 127 words, everything from sixteen spelling corrections to four instances of adding back elements which Mike and Kim, in their rapid-fire, almost breathless burst of a dozen strong images, had failed to put on paper when first composing. Substantial improvements, fewer in number, also took place between Drafts II and III.

Teaching is always a political act, and Mary Bass and I could not help but wonder about the reaction our adult readers might have to *A Hero With Green Hair*. What if they found errors? What if it was too creative, somehow, and thereby suspect? We concluded that our project could have been defended, if need be, for its realistic use of basics rather than its cavalier dismissal of them. Process-centered language arts teaching, ultimately, is basics-centered as well.

Mike and Kim's episode reveals a second important point — that writing is important enough that children ought to be allowed to do it badly. They need to fall off the

bike a few times rather than go back and study the wheels before we permit them a second effort. Draft I, as suggested previously, is incomplete more than it is poor. Unhindered by the usual preoccupation with errors, Mike and Kim established a flow of fresh ideas and vivid words freely and imperfectly. Some of their classmates wrote less freely but more precisely. Had we rejected "Beebop's Amazing House" — and you and I know this sort of thing happens every day — we would never have discovered the good things to come in Drafts II and III. Worse yet, Mike and Kim would have learned that writing was something they didn't do very well. Every classroom, elementary school through graduate school, contains students who've learned this negative lesson, too pointedly, too frequently. For Mike and Kim, for your students and mine, we must get some words on paper, preferably lots of words, before we judge those words from an adult vantage point, before we begin to improve what has been written. *A Hero With Green Hair*, then, suggests that we should produce a great deal more flawed writing in our classrooms if we want to see, eventually, writing improvement in our high schools and colleges.

Will young people edit their writing willingly? My third and final point is this: they can and they will. Revising and editing have too often been cast in these terms: "Here, kid, make these changes — the ones I've marked." Revising is always work; defined as error correcting only, it is drudgery few of us would take on willingly. Like writing itself, though, *revising for* can be meaningful. A tenet of student-centeredness argues that you can't write writing; rather, writing should be for someone about something. Revision — editing — must be seen the same way. When students write and edit something real for someone real, their motivation is assured. When that motivation is met by focused editing tasks, successful revision is the product.

Middle-school students as editors? Certainly, Beebop and Arnold, Steel Woman, Superfly and his Billy Dee Williams look-alike buddy Keith have shown us how.

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APPENDIX A:
STORY SKELETON AND EPISODE STARTERS (SESSION 1)

(TITLE) _____

This book's main hero is a (MAN/WOMAN/BOY/GIRL) who is _____ tall and weighs _____ pounds. He/she is extremely _____. His/her hair is _____, and his/her eyes are _____. He/she appears to be normal, but he/she has one very strange physical characteristic, which is _____. This trait was inherited from his/her parents, who lived _____ (PLACE) where all the creatures were _____ and _____. His/her parents died when _____. NAME FOR THE HERO _____

_____, of course, is very intelligent. Especially, he/she knows a lot about _____ and _____. When people want _____, they come from all over the world for _____'s advice.

_____ (NAME) has a companion, a side-kick who is with him/her on most of his adventures. He/she is very different from _____. Physically, he/she is _____. Unlike the hero, he/she _____ His/her name is _____ and he/she is able to help _____ by _____.

(HERO'S NAME) _____ has one important weakness, which is _____. Luckily, most people — especially criminals — do not know about this weakness.

(HERO'S NAME) _____ has magical powers. Whenever he/she wants to _____, he utters the strange words, "_____." The moment these words are spoken, (WHAT HAPPENS?) _____

_____ (HERO'S NAME) _____ lives in (PLACE — COUNTRY — CITY — STATE) _____. His/her home looks like _____. It is _____ and has _____. Until he/she is needed, HERO'S NAME leads a normal life, working as a _____. In this job he/she works with _____ and _____ a lot. He/she does/doesn't like _____.

USE ONE OF THE QUESTIONS FROM THE SUGGESTION SHEET FOR IDEAS TO WRITE YOUR PART OF THE BOOK.

EPISODE STARTERS

When were _____'s superhuman powers first used? Describe this happening in detail. Who was involved? What happened? What was the result?

Describe the appearance of (HERO) _____ and (COMPANION) _____ in detail. What kind of clothing do they wear? What colors? Are they wearing a disguise? Are their clothes useful in some way? How?

When did (COMPANION) _____ first come to be with (HERO) _____? What happened? Was (COMPANION) in great trouble? Who was involved? Why? Was there a villain (bad guy) involved?

Describe (HERO) _____'s home in some detail. Where is it located? What special rooms does he/she have? What kind of furniture is there? Are there any special souvenirs he/she has from old adventures? What are these and why do they have special meaning?

Before coming to (PLACE WHERE HERO LIVES) _____, our hero lived somewhere else. Where was this? What was it like? Why did he/she leave there? Who was involved? Was the change good or bad? Why?

HERO _____ has a pet _____. Describe this creature. How did it come to be HERO _____'s pet? Was there an adventure involved? What happened? Were there any narrow escapes?

HERO _____ has become involved in the Iranian hostage crisis. Write a scene in which the representative of a secret government agency tells HERO what is needed and how he/she can help. What happens? How?

What was HERO like as a child? Describe his/her parents. Describe where they lived. Tell about the day when his/her parents died. How was HERO saved? Who was involved? Tell what happened in detail.

Describe HERO'S daily life when he/she is "normal." Who else works with HERO? Are they friends? Why? What do they like about each other? How does HERO learn about people who need his/her help? What, exactly, does he/she do then?

One time, HERO's great weakness almost cost his/her life. What happened? Who was involved? How did HERO get out of trouble? Was he/she changed? How?

APPENDIX B:

PUNCTUATION AND ELLIPSIS EXERCISES (SESSION 2: EDITING)

Teacher: *Punctuate what I read aloud, adding commas (short pauses in my voice) and periods (long pauses in my voice).*

Kimberly 13 and her mother like thousands of other local shoppers were out for a day of holiday gift buying at a Columbus department store they'd agreed to meet later at a prearranged time and place and had parted to look for gifts after about twenty minutes an announcement came over the loudspeaker Mrs. Daniels please come to the second floor security office the message found her trying on a pair of

shoes and as she hurried toward the crowded escalator Kimberly's mother anxiously wondered if anything had happened to her daughter why didn't I keep her with me was she injured in some way Mrs. Daniels soon found that her child had not been physically harmed she'd been stricken by another kind of malady one that strikes 45 percent of its victims between October and December the shoplifting bug.

Teacher: *Now mark places where you think I have left out words or parts of words.*

A plainclothes security guard had spotted Kimberly a \$2 tube of candy-flavored lip gloss in her. She'd for kicks, she lamented later. Besides, she had more than enough money with pay for it.

Of the three categories of shoplifters amateurs the largest group. They're either elderly people, bored housewives or kids a thrill. They luxury items, and 99 percent of them have the money to pay for them.

Georgia loses taxes on \$368 million each year to. Nationwide, while \$25 million is lost to bank robbers, \$16 billion is lost because of shoplifting.

APPENDIX C:

MIKE AND KIM'S EPISODE ("BEEBOP'S AMAZING HOUSE"), DRAFTS I, II, AND III WITH ANALYSIS — SESSIONS 2, 3, AND 4

DRAFT I

Beebops home looks like a head it two gaint ears one a sun deck and the other one an elevator. The gaint eyes big great binaculors. His brain serves as a water bed his teeth make a white shiney couch. Beebop and Arnold clean it everyday the nostrills are Beebops secret passage he just flies out one and flies in the other. the hair makes a good trampoline. and in the right chek bone an old eyiptan neklace with 50 dinonos 40 rubys and 30 enerals. Its hanging up above the rubber snake. His kithen is on of the back of the ear. he has alot of none sticking pan. Beebops hone use to have a mustache but the kept getting caught so he shaved it off.

DRAFT II

Beebop's home looks like a head. It has two giant ears, one a sun deck and the other one an elevator. The giant eyes serve as great big binoculars. His brain serves as a water bed his teeth make a white shiny couch. Beebop and Arnold clean it everyday the nostrils are Beebop's secret passage he just flies in one and flies out the other. the hair makes a good trampoline. in the right cheek bone hangs an old Egyptian necklace with 50 diamonds 40 rubies and 30 emeralds. Its hanging up above the rubber snake. His kitchen is on the back of the back of the ear. He has a lot of non-sticking pans. Beebop's home used to have a mustache but he kept getting caught in it so he shaved it off.

DRAFT III

Beebop's Amazing House

Beebop's home looks like a head. It has two giant ears, one a sun deck and the other one an elevator. The giant eyes serve as great big binoculars. His brain serves as a water bed. His teeth make a white shiny couch. Beebop and Arnold clean it every day. The nostrils are Beebop's secret passage. He just flies in one and out the other. The hair makes a good trampoline. In the right cheek bone hangs an old Egyptian necklace with 50 diamonds, 40 rubies, and 30 emeralds. It's hanging up above the rubber snake. His kitchen is on the back of the ear. He has a lot of non-sticking pans. Beebop's home used to have a mustache, but he kept getting caught in it so he shaved it off.

DRAFT CHARACTERISTICS:	Draft I	Draft II	Draft III
Number of Words	127	134	132
T-Units	15	15	15
Clauses	16	16	16
Words/T-Units	8.46	8.93	8.80
Clauses/T-Units	1.06	1.06	1.06
Words/Clause	7.93	8.36	8.25

APPENDIX D: the final draft.

A HERO WITH GREEN HAIR!



Beebop, The Hero With
Green Hair, and his
boneless friend, Arnold

Including the following episodes:

Beebop's Early Life
Beebop's Last Homeland
Beebop's Pets
Beebop's Amazing House
Beebop's Great Weakness
Beebop Faces the Iranians

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November, 1982 — February, 1981

BEEBOP, THE HERO WITH GREEN HAIR, AND HIS BONELESS FRIEND, ARNOLD

Beebop's Last Homeland

Our hero lived in Boobop De Baby where alot of people danced. He left because people kept dancing on him. Arnold helped him to escape. It was good because he found his big-eared house. It was a good place to live.

Beebop's Pets

Beebop has a pet named Soolky. Soolky is an armadillo. Soolky is green and is 93 years old.

Beebop found Soolky in a cellar, when he tried to save an old lizard. There were no narrow escaped in this adventure.

Beebop has two other pets, a pet Roach Bug and a pet rhinoceros. The pet Roach Bug is little. It's red with yellow spots and weighs 7 pounds. His name is Roachy. The pet rhinoceros is big, fat, green, and it weighs 1,222 pounds. His name is Rino. He found the roach bug. When he moved into his house he was lying on the floor almost dead. Beebop feed him and make him well. He has loved him ever since. Beebop found Rino one day when he was flying. He saw something. It was a rhinoceros. He wanted it to protect him so he flew down and put magical powers on the rhinoceros and he said, "OOO-LOO-LOO Kitty Chow" and took off. When they got home they all made friends. And no narrow escapes.



People dancing on Beebop in Boobop De Baby

Beebop's Early Life

Beebop, as a child, was very rude and had bright green hair, which fell out when he just turned "12" years old.

His parents were also very rude. They also had green hair which falls out every two years.

Beebop was very sad because his parents ate poisoned liver and died. They lived in the woods, where all the animals were bald, and once had green hair but it fell out.

Beebop had a hard time getting food, because his mother and father got his food when they were alive. But Beebop didn't have to suffer too long because Arnold came along. He had helped Beebop find food and build a home. Beebop told Arnold he wanted to be friends forever.

When Beebop was a baby he was sent down in the Random House Dictionary. He learned all the words to grow green hair. His powers were used when he saved a woman from growing green hair. Then he became a hero. The way he found Arnold was when he saved the lady. Beebop took her to the hospital where Arnold was a nurse.

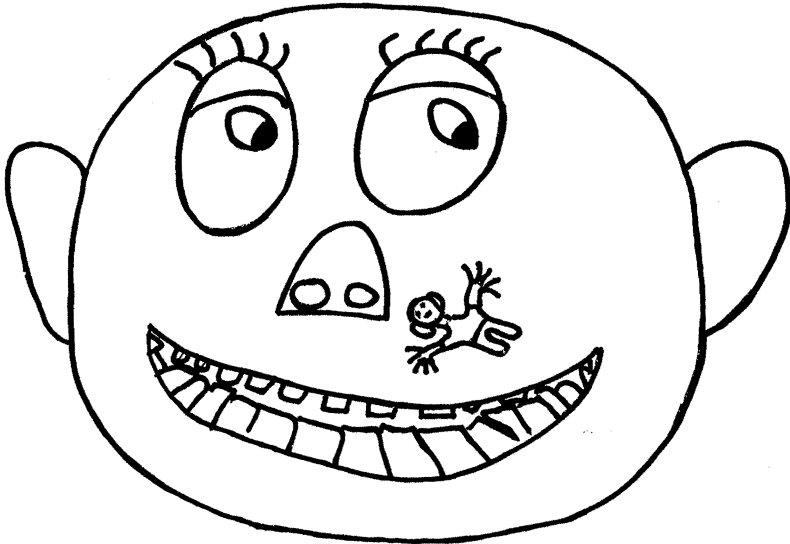


Beebop's Arrival in the Random House Dictionary

Beebop's Amazing House

Beebop's home looks like a head. It has two giant ears, one a sun deck and the

other one an elevator. The giant eyes serve as great big binoculars. His brain serves as a water bed. His teeth make a white shiny couch. Beebop and Arnold clean it every day. The nostrils are Beebop's secret passage. He just flies in one and out the other. The hair makes a good trampoline. In the right cheek bone hangs an old Egyptian necklace with 50 diamonds, 40 rubies, and 30 emeralds. It's hanging up above the rubber snake. His kitchen is on the back of the ear. He has a lot of non-sticking pans. Beebop's home used to have a mustache, but he kept getting caught in it so he shaved it off.



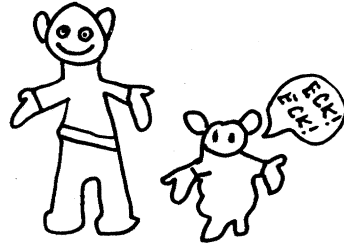
Beebop's Great Weakness

One day Beebop said his magical words "OOO-LOO-LOO Kitty Chow." When he got in the air something came from outer space. It was a large spinach fract. Something happened to him. He grew 10 feet tall, and his hair turned red, white, and blue. It made him so weak that he lost all his powers and he could not fly. Because he was so weak he could not fly for a week.

Beebob Faces the Iranians

Beebob was the President of the United States. They got the Americans and he said if they did not let the hostages go he would make their hair turn green. They did not let them go so Beebob got mad and said, "We are going to kill you and your people." The Americans got away because they killed the Iranians. How it happened was when the Americans went to Iran for a vacation. The Iranians kept them in Iran and it is their 384th day being hostage.

Beebob said they needed him because he can fly. They wanted him to help get the hostages from Iran so they can be free for the rest of their lives. Beebob dressed up like a ape with green hair and Arnold dressed up like a monster. Beebob has an old chair. He swings on a tree and sleeps in a tree. When he wants to swing he says, "OOO-LOO-LOO Kitty Chow," and he starts swinging.



Beebob and Arnold as Ape and Monster

AFTERWORDS FROM MRS. BASS AND MR. BREWBAKER

A Hero With Green Hair is the creation of the young imaginations of all the children in the fifth-grade class. On the day we began the project, a "frame" was created (orally) by completing blanks in a story outline we supplied. Then children worked together or singly in writing, editing and illustrating the various episodes included in the final collection.

Here is the frame we created:

This book's hero is a boy who is 5' tall, 12 years old, and weighs 83 pounds. He is extremely rude but cute. His hair is green and his eyes are blue. He appears to be normal, but he has one very strange physical characteristic, which is baldness. This trait was inherited from his parents, who lived in Boobop De Baby, where all the creatures were wild and bald. His parents died when they ate poisoned liver.

His name is Beebob. Of course, he is very intelligent. Especially, he knows a lot about mountains and baldness. When people want to grow green hair, they come from all over the world for his advice.

Beebob has a companion, a side-kick who is with him on most of his adventures. His is very different from Beebob. Physically, he is hairy. Unlike the hero, he is boneless. His name is Arnold and he is able to help Beebob by giving him advice.

Beebob has one important weakness, which is spinach. Luckily, most people — especially criminals — do not know about this weakness.

Beebob has magical powers. Whenever he wants to fly, he utters the magical words, "OOO-LOO-LOO Kitty Chow." The moment these words are spoken, he begins to fly.

Beebop lives in Greenland. His home looks like a head. It has big ears and two stories.

Until Beebop is needed, he leads a normal life, working as a nurse. In this job he works with Arnold — and a flyswatter. He likes eating flies.

AND ONE FINAL NOTE TO ADULT READERS:

You will probably find some errors in *A Hero With Green Hair* — some, though, not many. We believe that errors in writing may be the path to learning skills. Errors can be exploited and are rarely indicative of failure. They indicate that a child is learning and will learn yet more in the future.

Many skills were applied in writing and editing *A Hero With Green Hair*, and the children identified and corrected scores of errors in spelling, punctuation, word choice, and other elements. They missed a few. We decided, however, that the writing was theirs and that our final correcting would have been a little dishonest to them. So we *proudly* present *A Hero With Green Hair* to you, readers, complete with one or two comma splices and, perhaps, a misspelled word.