

SHREDDERMAN

By Wendelin Van Draanen

Dear KC3 Readers,

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. When I was a kid I was neither cool nor popular. I was a geeky, klutzy, nerdy kid...and I had crooked teeth and ugly clothes! So it was really easy for people to pick on me, but this one girl named Paula was the worst. She made fun of the way I dressed, the way I walked, the way I talked...she was merciless! She'd even follow me into the bathroom and make fun of me there. (No, I'm not kidding.)

Well, I grew up and grew into myself, and I became a teacher, and I saw that the world is full of little Paulas! (Some of them are 'Pauls', but you know what I mean.) And then when my children entered school, I was reminded of Paula all over again.

You see, when he was younger, my older son liked to do things that are a little unusual. Like count by nine-and-a-half. (Again, I'm not kidding.) He was a miniature "mad scientist" and he didn't care if his socks were inside his pants or over his pants. He was too busy calculating the rotational speed of the earth...or something.

So, of course, he got picked on. And it doesn't help to know that you're "not alone" – that there are kids all over the world getting picked on, too. You want to stop it! You want to *do* something!

Enter Shredderman (da-d'da-da!) A boy (oops, superhero!) who fights for truth and justice with his super-strong *brain*. A boy who can take down his school's notorious bully without ever laying a hand on him.

With the Shredderman books I've combined my experience as a mom, a teacher, and a picked-on kid and I've tried to create an entertaining way to help kids find the superhero inside of them. I also tried to make the books that would help kids *like* to read, which apparently, I have. Three-thousand three-hundred Missouri third graders can't be wrong! I am very excited that you've chosen *Shredderman: Secret Identity* to be your favorite title this year! Thank you!

Oh. And in case you're wondering what ever happened to Paula, I'll let you in on another secret:

I don't know.

But I *do* know that she doesn't have a multi-book contract with Random House, nobody's making *her* stories into movies, and (most importantly) she's never won the KC3 Reading Award.

Thank you for this wonderful honor. Missouri readers shred!

Yours in truth and justice,

Wendelin Van Draanen