

STEP INTO READING®

reading on your own

STEP

3

 **WEDGIEMAN:**
a HERO *is* BORN



The ADVENTURES of
WEDGIEMAN

By Charise Mericle Harper
Illustrated by Bob Shea

Dear Parent:

Congratulations! Your child is taking the first steps on an exciting journey. The destination? Independent reading!



STEP INTO READING® will help your child get there. The program offers five steps to reading success. Each step includes fun stories and colorful art. There are also Step into Reading Sticker Books, Step into Reading Math Readers, Step into Reading Phonics Readers, Step into Reading Write-In Readers, and Step into Reading Phonics Boxed Sets—a complete literacy program with something to interest every child.

Learning to Read, Step by Step!



Ready to Read **Preschool–Kindergarten**

• big type and easy words • rhyme and rhythm • picture clues

For children who know the alphabet and are eager to begin reading.



Reading with Help **Preschool–Grade 1**

• basic vocabulary • short sentences • simple stories

For children who recognize familiar words and sound out new words with help.



Reading on Your Own **Grades 1–3**

• engaging characters • easy-to-follow plots • popular topics

For children who are ready to read on their own.



Reading Paragraphs **Grades 2–3**

• challenging vocabulary • short paragraphs • exciting stories

For newly independent readers who read simple sentences with confidence.



Ready for Chapters **Grades 2–4**

• chapters • longer paragraphs • full-color art

For children who want to take the plunge into chapter books but still like colorful pictures.

STEP INTO READING® is designed to give every child a successful reading experience. The grade levels are only guides. Children can progress through the steps at their own speed, developing confidence in their reading, no matter what their grade.

Remember, a lifetime love of reading starts with a single step!

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First Page

STEP INTO READING®




 **WEDGIEMAN:**
a HERO is BORN



By Charise Mericle Harper

Illustrated by Bob Shea

Random House  New York

Dedication

*For my boy, Luther, and his buddy
Asher—it's fun watching you two together.
—C.M.H.*

*For my son, Ryan, who is learning to
eat his veggies —B.S.*

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Summary: Veggieboy practices flying, lifting, and helping people to hone his superhero skills, and finally Veggieman's training as a superhero is complete, but he is surprised when children want to change his name.

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v3.1



One day a superhero was born.
His name was Veggiebaby,
and he was very hungry.
He ate vegetables, lots of them,
even the green ones.



The tiny round ones were his favorite.



There was a big sign on Veggiebaby's wall. Veggiebaby looked at it.



“GAAAA!” said Veggiebaby.
He played with his food anyway.
He was good at it.
He made broccoli bears,



tomato tigers,



spinach spiders,



and even giant green-bean gorillas.



Veggiebaby was brave.
He wasn't scared of vegetables, no
matter what they looked like.



He just drooled, looked them in the eye,



and then gave them
a bite.
It was good training for
a superhero baby.



Babies are messy eaters.
Superhero babies are super-messy eaters.
When Veggiebaby ate lunch, there was
food everywhere.

There were carrots covering the carpet.
There was squash on the sofa.
There were peas in his pants.



And sometimes, there was even
cabbage on the cat.



The cat did not like cabbage.

All the vegetables made Veggiebaby very healthy.
He grew fast, and one day he turned into Veggieboy.





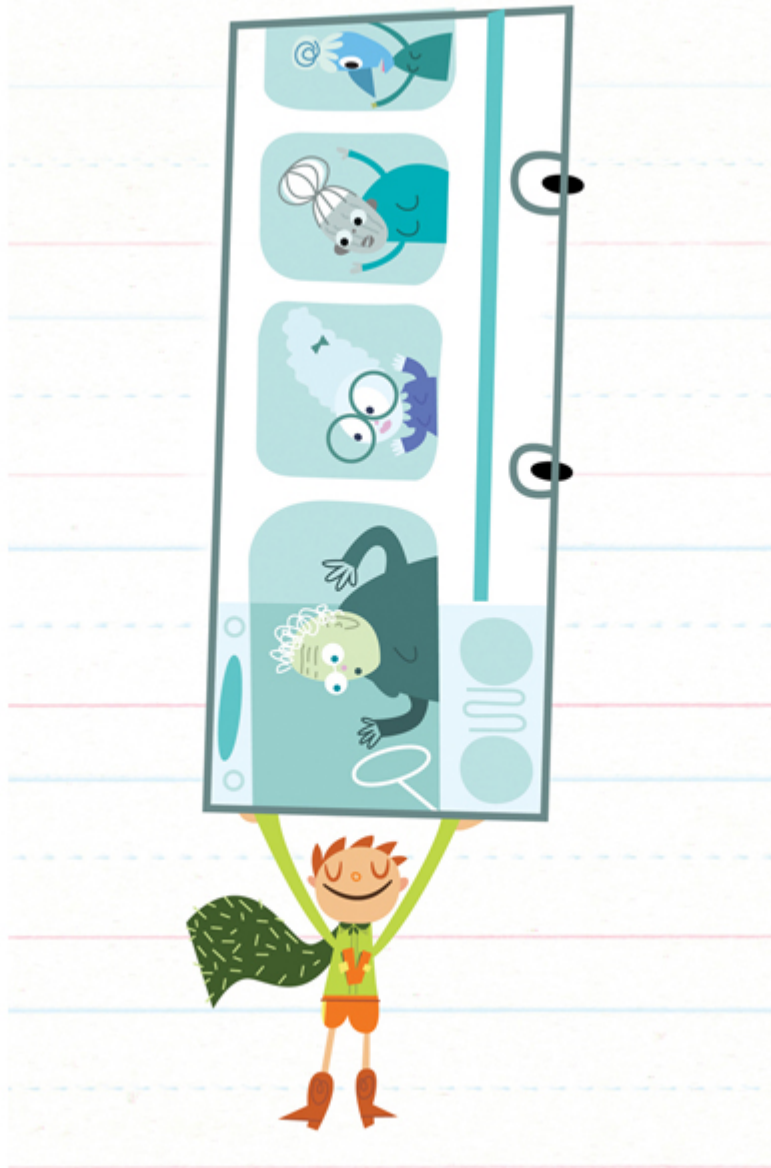
Veggieboy said, "I must practice
my superhero skills."
He practiced flying.
It was not easy.

One day he spent nearly three hours stuck on the ceiling. It was a lot easier to go up than to come down.





He practiced lifting.
He held a tree full of chattering
squirrels high in the air.



He held a bus full of chattering grandmas high in the air.



“I can do more,” said Veggieboy.
“Who wants to go next?”
Suddenly, there was silence.
Not everyone likes to look down
from the sky.

He practiced looking with his X-ray eyes.



Not everyone was happy about that.
Not even Veggieboy.
Some things are better not seen.



He practiced shape-shifting.



“I am a hamster!” said Veggieboy.
Nothing happened.



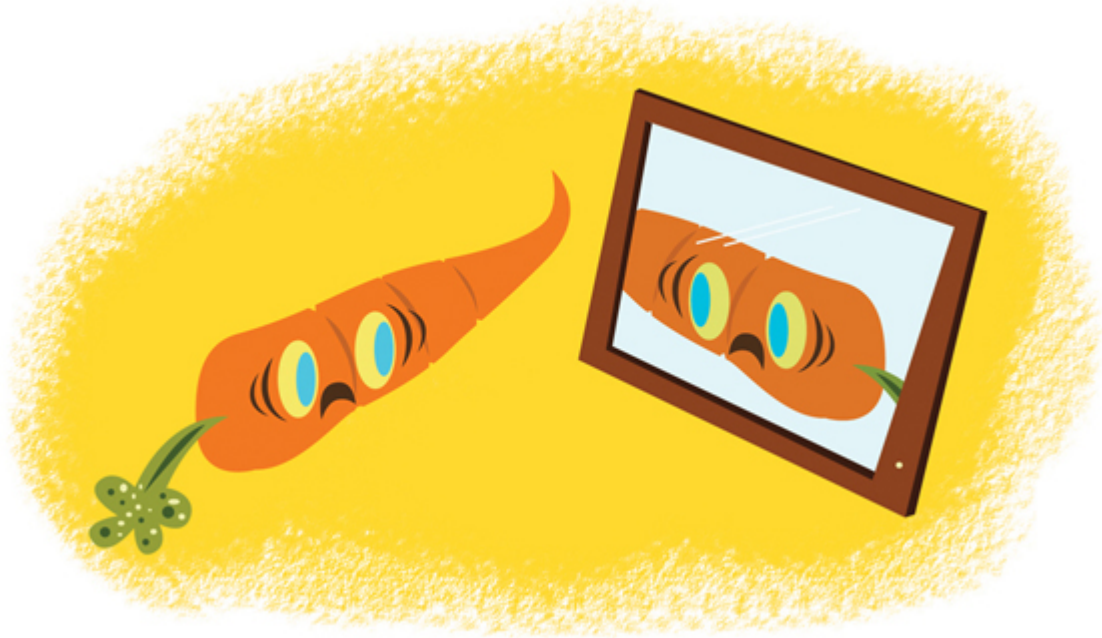
“I am a robot!”
said Veggieboy.

Nothing happened.



“I guess I can’t shape-shift,”
said Veggieboy.
He was only a little bit unhappy.

Mostly, he was hungry.
He thought about carrots.
Suddenly, BAM!



He was a giant carrot.
“Ah!” screamed Veggieboy.
“I look so tasty!”

He quickly changed back.
“That’s dangerous!” said Veggieboy.



“I’m only going to use that
in emergencies.”

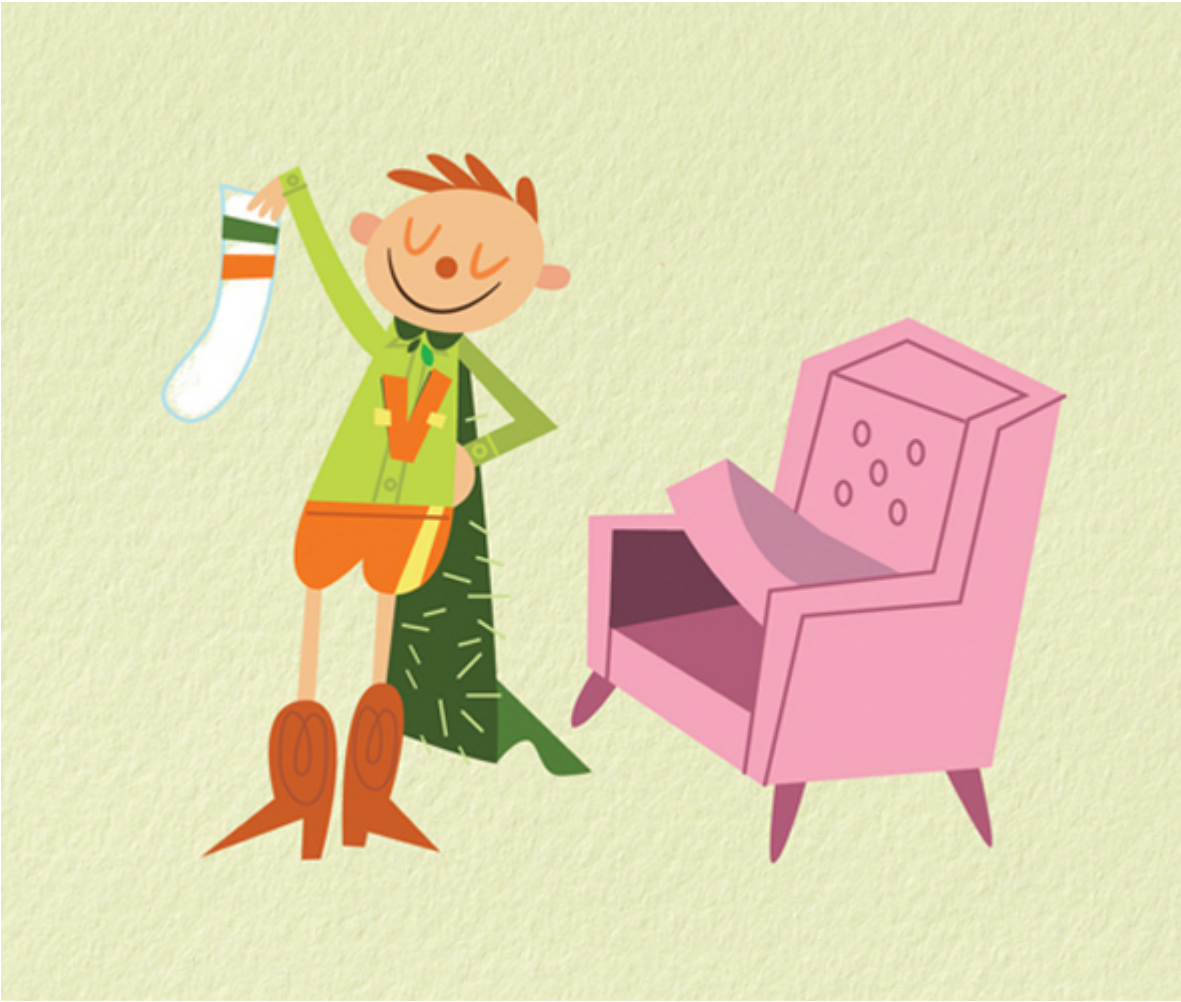


Veggieboy was proud of his super-skills.
And because he was a *superhero*
he only used them to do good.

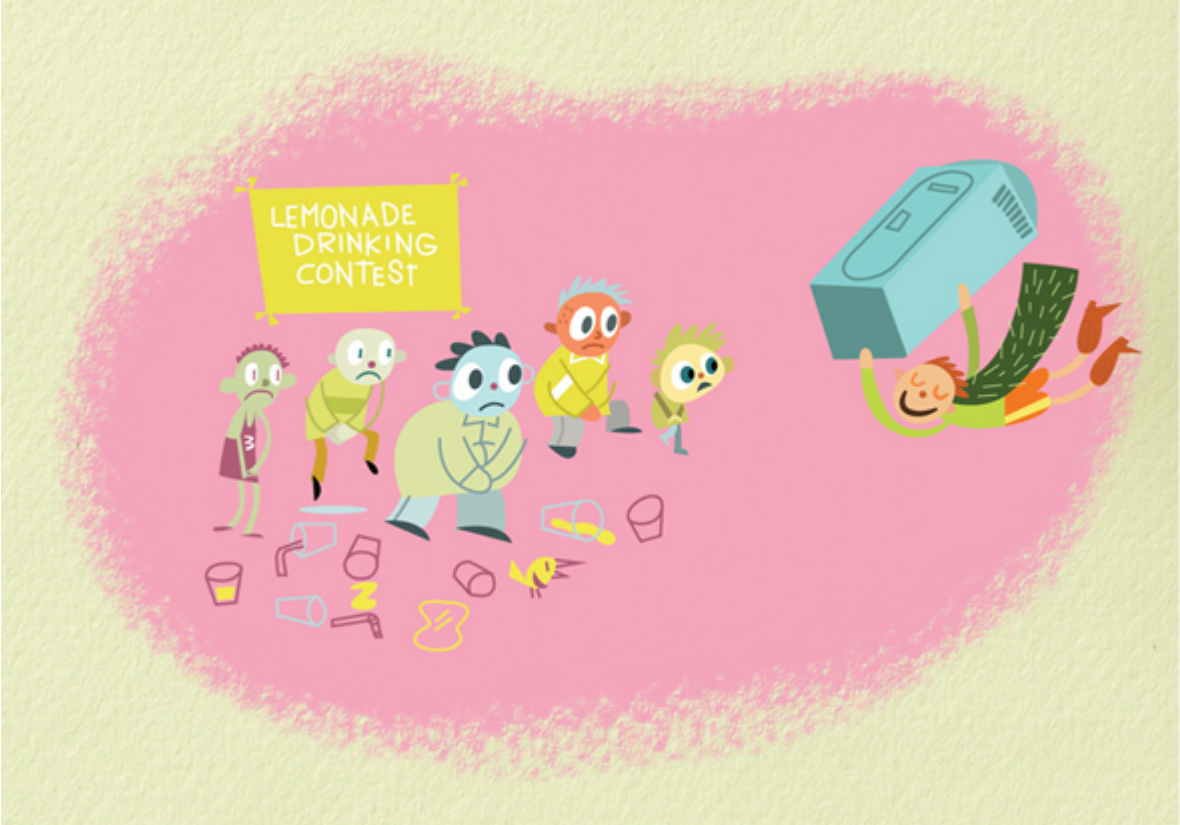
On shopping days, he carried groceries and old ladies.



He could find lost keys or missing socks



And he was always helpful at fairs and picnics.



Veggieboy was a very busy helper.



But there was one thing he never forgot.
He always ate his vegetables.

One day Veggieboy turned into Veggieman.



Veggieman was now a grown-up.
“I need a new superhero outfit,”
he said.



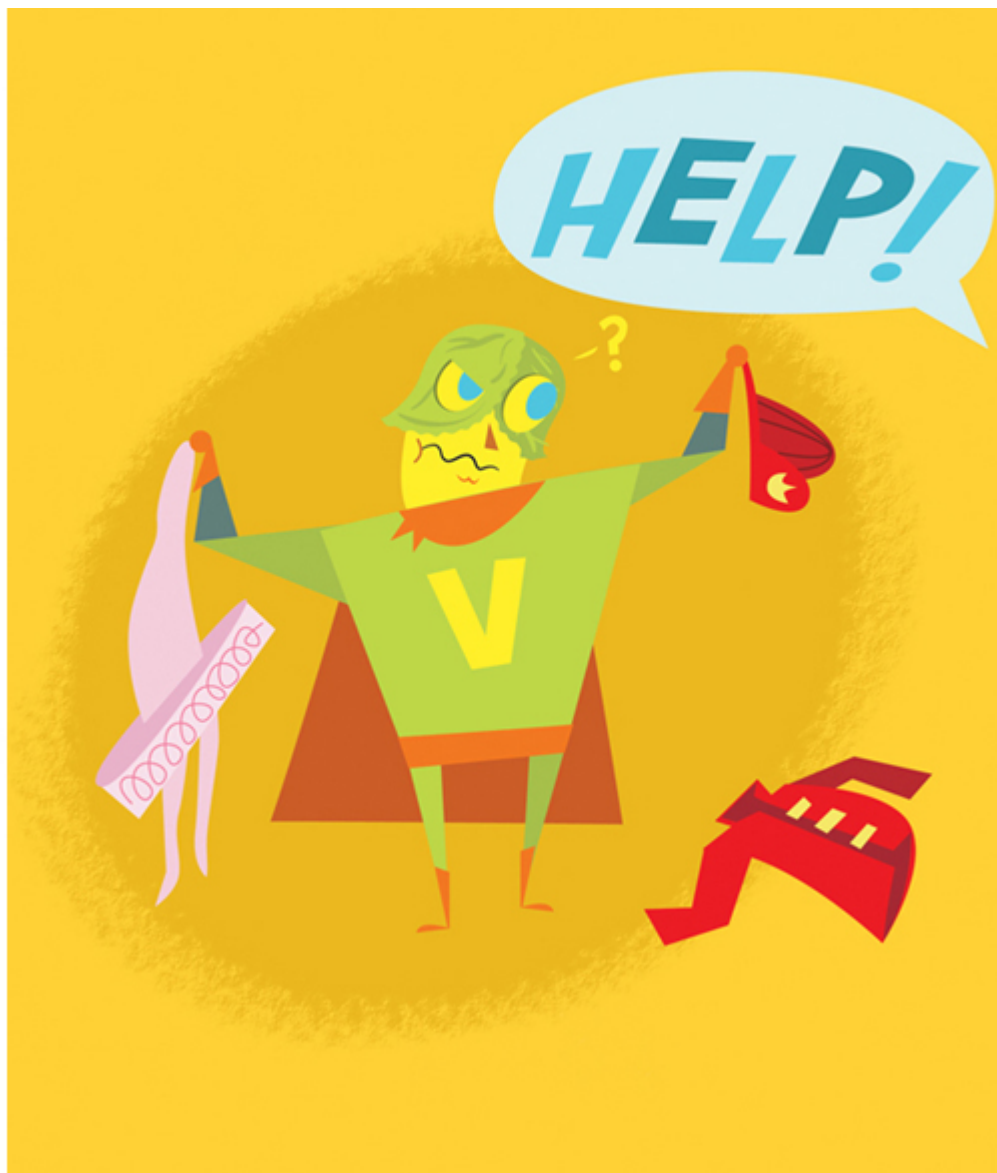


He went to the store.
He tried on lots of outfits.

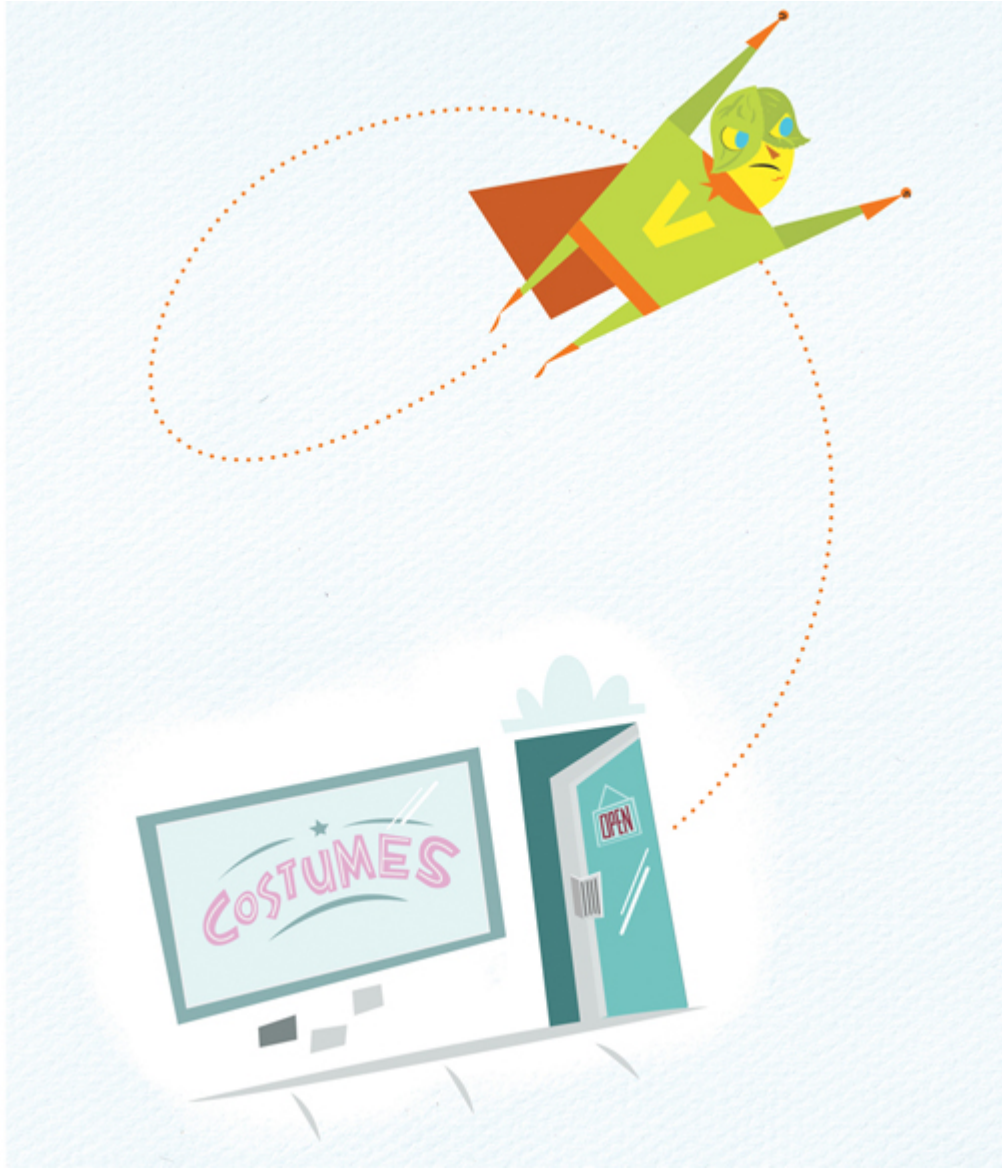
Finally, he said, “I think this is the one. Now I can help the children of the world eat their veggies and be healthy!” He smiled and made a superhero pose in the mirror.



Suddenly, he heard a scream.
It was a cry for help.



“That’s my call!” said Veggieman.



He ran out of the store and flew into the sky.

Veggieman used his super-ears to find the sound.
A small boy was stuck high in the branches of a tree.



“Help me! Help me!”
cried the boy.



“Save him! Save him!”
cried the children
under the tree.



“Hang on!” shouted Veggieman.



He grabbed the boy and
carried him safely
to the ground.



“Eat your veggies and you can be strong like me,” said Veggieman. He gave the small boy some carrots.





All the children were happy.
“Yay! Wedgieman! Our hero!”
they cheered.

“No, wait,” said Veggieman.
“It’s *Veggieman*, not *Wedgieman*!”
“No it isn’t!” said the small boy, and
he pointed to Veggieman’s chest.



A stick from the tree
was stuck to Veggieman's shirt.
It made his *V* look like a *W*.
Veggieman pulled off the stick.



“Silly children,” he said. “It’s a *V*,
not a *W*. I’m Veggieman.”
“I like Wedgieman better,” said the boy.
“Yay! Wedgieman!” cheered the children.



Veggieman was confused.
He was not used to children.
Especially children who were wrong
but said they were right.
He thought for a moment
and then smiled.



He pointed to his chest.
“Look, children, even if I made this *V*
into a *W*, it still wouldn’t spell *wedgie*.
And that’s because *wedgie* has a *D*
in it.”



“That’s okay,” said the children.
“We don’t care about spelling.
You can fix it.”
And then they ran off to play.



THE END—OR IS IT?

Veggieman walked back to the store.
He was tired and
didn't feel like flying.



He was sorry that he didn't have any extra carrots or spinach in his pockets.
"This outfit is too loose," he said.
"I need a smaller size."



He pulled up his pants.





A small boy was watching.

The small boy told everyone what he had seen.



All the children were excited about
the new superhero in town.
His name was Wedgieman.



STEP INTO READING®

reading on your own

It's time for YOU!
Pick your favorite
spot to read.
This is going to be
a great book!

What this book is about . . .
Wedgieman: A Hero Is Born
There's a new superhero in town—
Wedgieman! He fights the bad guys and
makes sure children eat their vegetables.



Learning to Read, Step by Step!



Ready to Read **Preschool–Kindergarten**



Reading with Help **Preschool–Grade 1**



Reading on Your Own **Grades 1–3**

Is your child comfortable tackling new words? Does your child like to read on his or her own? It's time for Step 3.
Engaging Characters • Easy-to-Follow Plots • Popular Topics



Reading Paragraphs **Grades 2–3**



Ready for Chapters **Grades 2–4**



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