



## The Greatest Power

*Wendelin Van Draanen , Stephen Gilpin (Illustrator)*

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**The Greatest Power** Wendelin Van Draanen , Stephen Gilpin (Illustrator)  
*Could you choose between a superpower and a friend?*

The evil treasure hunter Damien Black needs some quick cash—so he robs the local bank. But Damien Black didn't figure Dave Sanchez into his plan. Dave's been itching to try out the Invisibility Ingot in his magical wrist band, and here's the perfect opportunity to make like a superhero! So Dave and Sticky set off after the robber, determined to retrieve the bank's money. The Black mansion is a house of hysterical horrors, but somehow he and Sticky manage to navigate the maze and escape with the cash. *Asombroso!* Dave thinks he's home free, but Damien Black isn't one to give up easily—more than the cash, he wants Dave's wrist band, and he's got a dastardly devious plan that even an invisible boy won't be able to slip out of.

## The Greatest Power Details

Date : Published May 26th 2009 by Knopf Books for Young Readers (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9780375843778

Author : Wendelin Van Draanen , Stephen Gilpin (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 208 pages

Genre : Adventure, Mystery, Humor, Childrens, Juvenile

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## From Reader Review The Greatest Power for online ebook

### Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Sally Kruger aka "Readingjunk" for TeensReadToo.com

The Gecko and Sticky return! This is the second adventure of a young boy named Dave Sanchez and his pet Gecko. Once again, they are battling the evil villain Damien Black.

It just happens that one day when Dave and Sticky are at the bank, a bank robber storms in and demands that everyone hit the floor. He proceeds to demand money from the tellers and fills a stretchy bag. Two things happen just before he uses an odd weapon to shoot sleeping darts into all the banks' employees and customers. First, Dave recognizes it is the evil Damien Black, and second, the villain turns back and steals a tiger-eye ring from a woman's finger. Dave and Sticky know what they have to do and the chase is on.

The two crime fighters follow Damien Black down into the sewer. They follow the trail to his fabulous mansion. Using the ingots of Invisibility and Wall Walking, they are able to sneak into the mansion. The question is can they find the money and the ring before Damien discovers they are there and uses his many thingamagigs, doohickeys, and multi-purpose gadgets to stop them.

Important facts that readers of the previous adventure will need to remember is that Dave and Sticky are in possession of the amazing Aztec wristband that utilizes the magic ingots. Dave only has two of the ingots while Damien Black has the rest and desperately wants them and the wristband back. This new adventure also continues the mystery of the famous Gecko superhero that Dave has become. He is still hoping for a more exciting name, but so far Sticky is making that impossible.

Wendelin Van Draanen must have a blast when she's writing these action-packed adventures. Thinking of the wacky, off-the-wall gadgets and gizmos, not to mention the witty dialogue, must keep her laughing as much as her readers will as they turn the pages. This is some fun stuff for middle grade readers.

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### JustOneMoreBook.com says

One wisecracking lizard, one over-caffeinated monkey and 200 pages of action, attitude and *assombroso* alliteration transform run-of-the-mill read-aloud adults into comic superstars. Talk about the greatest power!

You can listen in on our chat about this book on our Just One More Book! Children's Book Podcast.

Other books mentioned:

Clementine's Letter

Sir Fartsalot Hunts the Booger (Kevin Bolger on JOMB)

*We'd love to hear your thoughts on a favourite children's book. Leave a voice message on our JOMB listener hotline, +1-206-350-6487, so we can include your audio in our show*

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### **Dolly says**

The second book in the The Gecko and Sticky series by Wendelin Van Draanen. The story is just as action-packed and dramatic (or should I say convoluted?) as the first tale.

I wasn't a huge fan of the first book in the series, but I got a free copy of the audio CD of the third book in the series, Sinister Substitute, from a book swap and I thought I would at least listen to this story to keep the continuity of the plot.

At this point, I'm not sure if I'll listen to the third story or not. In any case, I will certainly not keep it. Back to the book swap...

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### **Uriel says**

The book is called "The Gecko And Sticky" and the author is Wendelin Van Draanen. The book is about the Gecko and he has a powerful bracelet and he has a sidekick named sticky he is a very special Gecko because he can talk two languages.

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### **Natalie K says**

I hadn't read the first book in this series, so I was slightly lost with the back story of the two characters. They are spin-offs from Van Draanen's popular Shredderman series which I enjoyed reading. This was a cute story. It's a fast read, full of adventure - perfect for a reluctant reader. It skews more to a boy read, but it was cute and ends in a way that makes you want to read the next book. Here's hoping this series lasts more than 4 books.

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### **Gabriel says**

I think this book is exciting and risky, it makes you want to read more of these fun books!

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### **Jay says**

Book two of this series is funny and entertaining. The whole family listened to it on our drive (Thanksgiving holiday) and enjoyed it. It's read by the same guy who read the "Pals in Peril" series, and the stories have a lot of similarities, so if you know and like one series, the other is a good bet for "something else you will like." The target audience is probably kids in the 9-13 year old range.

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### **Destinee Sutton says**

It's confusing, but I think "the Gecko" is actually the alter ego of a crime fighting boy named Dave, while Sticky is his pet gecko, whose first language is Spanish. Sticky's got 'tude, which is where a lot of the humor comes from. Lots of gadgets and action.

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### **Michael says**

The quirky villain and his bumbling side-kicks reminds me of "A Series of Unfortunate Events", but with more laughs.

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### **K Grant says**

Full of action, "good guys," bad guys and a crazy monkey. Repetitive (as is good for the age) plenty of explanations that had us, who were listening, laughing and waiting for more.

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### **Beckett Geary says**

When you have two powers try to use your own power.

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### **Brett Jed says**

A great read aloud for my sons at bedtime...

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### **Jenny says**

Poor Dave...he has now been nicknamed "The Gecko" because in the first installment he was seen walking up walls using Damien Black's power band and ingots. But he totally wants a better superhero name, like "Disappearing Dude." But no such luck...Thanks to Sticky, I think he is "stuck" with "The Gecko."

In this second book, Damien robs a bank and Dave and Sticky set off to get the money back. Of course, no one else knows that Sticky can talk and sometimes when he mutters to Dave, other people hear him...creating some funny events. "Ay ay ay..." With Damien and the bandito brothers around, there will be no end of troubles for Dave and Sticky. There is a bit of action and adventure, magic and mischief, and lots of humor included in these short chapter books. My girls really have enjoyed these books, but I think boys would like them just as well or better.

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## **Louis says**

This book was one of the better ones in the series.

The first thing that I should mention is that this is the 4th book in the series that I have read, although this title is the 2nd in the series. Of these titles, I have listened to 2 of them and read the other 2.

I read this title. The illustrations, although few, enhanced the story line. I also appreciated the Spanish dictionary in the back of the book. I do speak and read some Spanish, but I thought that it was cool to include this feature.

I had included in a previous review of one of the titles in this series comments indicating my dislike of the use of potty humor. This was much subdued in this volume. In fact, it seemed completely absent. This only proves my point that it is completely unnecessary in children's literature.

The description of the interior of the mansion was fascinating. I really enjoyed reading about the Rube Goldberg villainous devices that were present there.

The true highlight of the book was what the "greatest power" turned out to be. It would be unfair to spoil the book by revealing it here but I found it moving.

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## **Tami says**

The Gecko & Sticky are two of the most hilarious characters I have ever come across in literature. Sticky is the actual gecko and the "Gecko" is the superhero moniker of Sticky's 13-year-old friend, Dave Sanchez. Confused? It makes sense when you read the book, whose tongue-in-cheek narrative style is full of asides and inside jokes for the reader.

The Gecko and Sticky actually make their first appearance within the pages of van Draanen's four book Shredderman series—which I also highly recommend. (There is very little of van Draanen's work I cannot recommend—only those I have not yet read.) It should be noted that in Shredderman they appear as a fictional superhero and sidekick character whereas in The Gecko & Sticky series the narrator specifically tells us she is relating an ABSOLUTELY TRUE story.

Dave is a typical 13-year-old boy. He is courageous, honest, well-intentioned, and has an entrepreneurial spirit. In the first installment he creates his own courier company powered by his bicycle. This serves to establish him as responsible, reliable, and an experienced bicyclist, allowing him to believably travel from one location to another. He meets Sticky, a gecko lizard, and discovers in the first book of the series that Sticky can speak. He later finds out that Sticky has a habit of stealing small items and is also guilty of both embellishing facts to his advantage and omitting those that are not.

Despite Sticky's less admirable qualities, his adventures with Dave oppose the exquisitely dastardly villain Damien Black show him to be good at heart. Likewise the friendship between Dave and Sticky continues to grow in each book. Dave learns unconditional acceptance of Sticky's more frustrating tendencies. Sticky is increasingly genuine in his dealings with Dave as both gradually realize how much their friendship has come to mean to each of them.

The development of the friendship between the two characters is best experienced when reading the books in order but each individual story stands well on its own as well. The three bumbling Bandito Brothers (who are not really brothers and began as a mariachi band, not as bandits per se) who perform as Damien Black's inept henchmen, along with Rosie, their buck-toothed burro, are also an endless source of humor.

These books are a wonderful combination of humor and adventure. I LOVE reading these stories aloud to an audience as well as independently. I read the first installment aloud to my 4th graders this year and they really enjoyed it.

I highly recommend this series; these stories are the definition of LAUGH-OUT-LOUD.

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