



Cyborg Cat and the Night Spider

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Reviewer:

[Stuart Dyer](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This superhero series accounts the adventures of the young Adedoyin and his friends, The Parsons Road Gang. Set in their school in London, the story tells of how the gang have to stand up to bullying and stick together to help their friend as he adapts to the changing nature of his superpowers.

Adedoyin wears a calliper on his leg due to the effects of polio as a baby, and it helps him to leap around in goal and to earn the nickname Cyborg Cat. There's nothing he can't do: it gives him the strength to keep up with his friends and to sprint around school between lessons, bumping into ill-prepared bystanders. However, Adedoyin is getting older, and heavier, and his leg won't be able to keep supporting him, despite the calliper. He finds himself slowing down and soon has to come to terms with the fact that the Cyborg Cat will need to use a wheelchair.

Meanwhile, a local graffiti artist has taken against the Cyborg Cat and threatening artworks appear around town. The Parsons Road Gang are faced with the challenge of making sure Ade misses out on nothing, despite the chair, while standing up to the insults of bullies and uncovering the identity of the evil graffiti artist. A tough task to say the least but, fortunately, the gang always live by their motto ('always stick together?') and the Cyborg Cat knows he can count on them to go to the greatest of lengths to support him.

Though the story features extraordinary heroics and depicts vibrant characters fighting for good or evil, its focus is really upon the everyday challenges faced by Adedoyin, as he adjusts to new mobility challenges. Ade's father refuses to accept his son's 'weaknesses' and locks the wheelchair away, and there are children in Ade's class happy to use callipers and wheelchairs as ammunition for insults. Most affecting is Ade's love of sport and the need to come to terms with the fact that he can't do what he has before.

As the story explores these personal issues, it retains throughout an extremely clear and positive message: there is nothing that Adedoyin can't overcome, thanks to his determination and the kindness of his friends.

The story is heavily autobiographical and many of Ade Adepitan's childhood memories are shared. Sceptics might easily dismiss this approach as a vanity project for another celebrity author, but the truth is that Adepitan's story is truly inspirational, and his accomplishments are extraordinary. Moreover, the quality of storytelling here is very good. It

succeeds in placing superheroism alongside everyday problems, to highlight the experiences of children with disabilities and to confront prejudices. Yes, the Cyborg Cat faces extreme challenges, but the defining elements of his growing-up are the jokes he shares with his friends and the love he shares with his family, and these are also the most enjoyable parts of the book.

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