

THE MAULED MAGE

A TALE OF BRAVERY AGAINST ONLINE
CRUELTY

BINDI AND BEAM
BOOK 2

CASPER PIETERS



For everyone who's ever had a tough time online, facing the not-so-nice parts of social media. This story is for you.



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CHAPTER 1

DIGGING DEEP



4:00 pm, Monday

Beam

IN THE DIMLY LIT SHED, BEAM SAT IN FRONT OF A GLOWING SCREEN, lost in thought. His school day had just ended, and like clockwork, he retreated to his sanctuary filled with the hum of electronics. Known among his peers for his knack with technology, today he was on a quest for answers. Yet, frustration crept in as his search yielded no results. The silhouette of his curly hair, untamed and rebellious, mirrored his persistent spirit. This

moment, like many before, was not just about solving another tech puzzle—it was about proving himself—especially after the mishap that shook his family's stability. The weight of his past mistakes hung heavily on his shoulders, driving him to push further, to fix what had been broken. Beam, always led by his heart, quickly acted without much thought. His journey through friendship and duty was complicated, especially with his twin sister Bindi by his side. She was a constant reminder of the deep connections he valued and the wrongs he aimed to right. He typed in the name, but the results came up blank

"Surely, there must be frinkin' something here," he muttered to himself.

Taking a deep breath, Beam moved his fingers quickly over the keyboard. He was determined to uncover any leads in the vast online universe.

There's always a trace, he thought, if you look deep enough.

A rumor circulated at school about Lee, a quiet kid in Beam's class. Some said Lee was being picked on online, but no one knew who was doing it. Beam was good with computers and tried to find clues to help Lee. He felt like a detective as he clicked and searched, looking for evidence that he was being cyberbullied.

Beam stumbled upon a peculiar web page about Lee. His eyes widened in shock as he read hurtful words and rumors. "No, this can't be real," Beam whispered, feeling disturbed. Despite his unease, he continued reading in search of any information that could aid Lee.

The more he read, the more suspicious he became that these mean messages were from someone at their school. He noticed that all the posts were made after school hours. "I need to save this," Beam thought, trying to take a screenshot, but it didn't work. The page was tricky to capture, then suddenly, it vanished.

Bugger! Who is this?

Beam realised the cyberbully must have observed his prying

DIGGING DEEP

in real-time. Whoever the bully was, they had hidden their actions with such skill and finesse that it left him both amazed and disturbed.

Slippery jerk, he thought to himself. *Now I can't even trace their identity.*

As Beam backtracked his search history, a mix of surprise and worry crept over him like a suffocating fog. *How could someone be so cunning and devious?* His pulse quickened as he realised the danger of underestimating this unknown adversary.

He leaned back, rubbing his sore neck, and looked around his shed, feeling a bit spooked.

He spotted a spider in the corner, wrapping up a moth in its web. The sight made him shiver. He turned off his computer and stood up. "Lee needs my help. I'm sure of it."

CHAPTER 2

TAKING ACTION



8:45 am, Tuesday

Beam

THE SCHOOLYARD WAS A HIVE OF ACTIVITY IN THE EARLY MORNING, just before the first bell rang. Kids everywhere, laughing and talking loudly, untroubled by the low-hanging gray sky and the continuous drizzle. The rain made the paths and bushes shiny. The promise of another school day charged the atmosphere with anticipation.

Under the shelter of an overhang near the bicycle shed, four

friends huddled together, seeking refuge from the miserable weather. Beam kept biting his lower lip. *We've got to do something here, but what?* He rubbed his hands together, and scanned the area as if searching for something lurking in the shadows.

Jack, with raindrops glistening on his ruddy hair, raised an eyebrow. "Beam, you look like you've seen a ghost. What's up?"

Beam stole one last look behind him before speaking. Standing close together, their breaths forming clouds in the chilly morning air, he shared his discovery.

"I found out something last night," Beam said quietly. "It's about Lee and the bullying online."

Maddy's eyes got big. She grabbed Beam's shoulder. "What did you find, Beam?"

Jack, looking ready to act, asked, "Yeah, tell us. Any idea who it is?"

Beam took a deep breath. "I think the person bullying Lee might be from our school," he said slowly. His friends looked shocked.

Jack said, "From here?"

"We have to stop the bully and help Lee," Maddy said, then shared her firsthand encounter with bullying, highlighting the deep emotional turmoil it caused her.

Jack slammed his fist in the palm of his hand. "We need to be smarter than that bully."

"Let's be careful. We can't accuse someone unless we're certain," Bindi said. "But you're right, we do need a solid plan."

Maddy was about to speak, but Jack interrupted.

"What if we tell the whole school? That might bring the bully out."

Bindi furrowed her brow, troubled by the suggestion. "I don't think telling the whole school is a good idea. It could actually make things worse," she said cautiously.

"Why?"

"The bully might like all the attention."

THE MAULED MAGE

The bell rang, and all of a sudden, kids began streaming into the school.

As they made their way to class, Beam mentioned the idea of talking to the school counsellor about Lee.

Maddy and Jack exchanged glances. She was upset and really wanted to help Lee.

“Being bullied makes you feel you’re all alone,” Maddy said with a meek voice.

Bindi wrapped her arm around her.

“We’ll see Miss Pardo at recess. See if we can get her to take action,” Beam said as they hurried to class.

CHAPTER 3

SEEKING COUNSEL



11:00 am, Tuesday

Beam

AT RECESS, BEAM KNOCKED ON MS. RYAN'S DOOR. SHE WAS KIND and smiled a lot.

"Hi Beam. Oh, you brought the entire gang. Please come in."

"Ms. Ryan, have you heard anything about Lee being cyber-bullied?" Beam said as they remained standing in front of her neat desk.

The counsellor's expression turned serious as she scanned

her office, ensuring they were alone. "I can't discuss specific cases with you, Beam, you know that. But I can tell you that Lee has spoken with me about some concerns."

The room turned quiet, and Beam sensed anxiety.

"We want to help Lee, Ms. Ryan. We found some scary things online." Bindi leaned forward, whispering. "But the files we found disappeared."

Ms. Ryan sighed, her friendly smile faded. She looked worried and said she wants to help Lee too. "It's great that you care, but without solid proof, there's little I can do. I advised Lee to take a break from playing World of Warcraft. That's where the bullying is happening."

Lee quitting World of Warcraft? That will never happen. Beam shook his head slightly. He felt disappointed.

Maddy crossed her arms, a determined expression on her face. "Ms. Ryan, that means the bully goes unpunished and surely will strike again."

The counsellor looked surprised, but then her expression softened. "I appreciate your concern for Lee, but please be careful. It's a complex issue and getting involved may not be the best course of action."

As they left her office, Jack said, "This is so bizarre. Lee just wants to be left alone, and some freak is tormenting him behind a screen? What a coward."

Maddy nodded in agreement. Sitting back is not an option. We need to do something. Lee might not want to talk about it, but we must help him."

As they returned to their classrooms, the rumours around the school grew. Word spread that Bindi and Beam were on the case, figuring out the cyberbullying rumors and trying to bring the bully to justice.

How did the story get out so fast? Beam thought.

Lee sat calmly at the back of the class, unfazed by the buzz around him.

. . .

SEEKING COUNSEL

After school, Beam sat in his shed once more, his big screen glowing with a dozen open tabs. Instead of working on his portal, he ended up trying to recover the voice recordings he'd seen the night before.

Beam opened a can of soda and flexed his fingers and began a deep search into the cyberworld. He followed a complex path of websites and forums, searching for hidden files and encrypted messages. Beam was determined to go further into the virtual labyrinth of shadows.

Time flew, and Beam got exhausted, but he kept going. His eyes scanned filenames and extensions as he clicked through folders, searching for anything that appeared strange. Eventually, he came across an isolated server marked by a heavy-duty firewall.

Hmm... What are they hiding here?

His fingers moved swiftly over the keyboard as he entered lines of code to get past the security.

Easy peasy!

There it was, the hidden files containing voice recordings from World of Warcraft. He opened one of them. His speakers unleashed a relentless stream of insults and threats, each one worse than the previous.

What the heck! How can anyone be so frinkin' cruel?

Just as he was about to save the evidence, something weird happened. The voice recordings began to warp into an unintelligible, garbled noise. Beam desperately tried to save the recordings, but it was hopeless. One by one, the sound files disappeared, and a message appeared on his screen.

YOU'RE TOO STUPID TO EVER CATCH ME 🐱

THE MAULED MAGE

He stared at it, stunned. Beam got up and walked to his house, his head full of thoughts. He found his sister in her room.

“Are you sleeping?”

“No. Come in.”

“After heaps of digging, I found the files, but I couldn’t frinkin’ save them. They disappeared right before my eyes. Then, I received a weird message that seemed to be meant for me.

“What message?” Bindi sat up in her bed.

Beam told her.

Bindi furrowed her brow. She thought they should be careful and make sure they knew the complete story before doing anything. “This is getting stranger and stranger. It’s like some sick individual is playing a game with us. We’ve got to catch him, especially if that creep is at our school.”

Beam was thinking hard, figuring out what was happening. He agreed with his sister that they had to do something. He worried about Lee and wanted to help him because he cared. *To find out the truth behind the cyberbullying. She is right. No matter the risk, we should help him.*

“Get some shut-eye. You look as if you’re the one being bullied.”

“Good night sis. We’ll deal with it tomorrow.”

CHAPTER 4

DAYDREAMING



3:35 pm, Wednesday

Beam

BEAM FELT A GENTLE POKE WHILE DOZING OFF IN CLASS.

Jack, sitting next to him, leaned in and whispered with a grin, “You’re snoring.”

“Hey, stop that,” he mumbled, still half-asleep. He blinked and massaged the spot where Jack had prodded him.

“Wake up, sleepyhead. You’re missing all the fun.”

THE MAULED MAGE

Beam thought to himself, *I need to get that portal up and running.*

Miss Pardo continued her lesson, “Bullies often feel scared and insecure, and they may try to hide these feelings through aggressive behavior. Remember, if we stand together and support someone who is being bullied, it can often discourage the bully and make them back off.”

Wow. That felt so real. Beam’s mind remained half in the Metaverse world he wanted to return to. He sank deeper into his seat, his eyes wandering around the classroom. Bindi, his twin sister, sat next to her best friend Maddy, hunched over, watching him. With an encouraging smile, she pointed towards the wall clock. It was the last period on a Tuesday after sports.

Another ten frinkin’ minutes.

He was eager to jump on his bike and ride home, savouring the thought of taking in the fresh air along the way. He wanted Jack, Bindi, and Maddy to join him for a hangout session at his shed.

I wonder what is wrong with it? Beam scratched his forehead. *Most of it I copied from the original portal.*

He stared out the window, doing his best to tune out Miss Pardo’s monotone lecture. He felt his eyes glaze over as he watched the autumn leaves dance in the wind outside, with Miss Pardo’s voice droning on somewhere in the background.

Please, bell, ring early for once ... Beam’s eyes were open but unseeing as he sat motionless in his chair. Thoughts on the project consumed his mind as he worked in his shed for weeks—a portal to the unlimited Metaverse—a magical door to exciting, faraway cyberworlds. He devoted every waking moment to tinkering with the colorful lines of code that made up the complex algorithm. The slightest error—a single misplaced comma—would corrupt the entire program. He knew he was close, but he spent many days debugging it.

I can’t wait to get it working. We’ll never run out of new adventures.

DAYDREAMING

Despite being a skilled coder, the complexity of his portal project left him completely stuck.

So many of these magical worlds. Imagine the fun adventures we could have, far, far away from this boring life.

Jack noticed Beam staring out the window again. "Still dreaming about your adventure worlds?" he whispered with a smile.

Beam's eyes brightened as he sat up. "Yeah, you just wait. Soon you'll be coming along!"

CHAPTER 5

FIXING CODE



3:47 pm, Wednesday

Beam

“YOU’RE COMING?” BEAM SAID AS THEY STROLLED OUT OF THE class towards the bicycle shed. “I want to show you something.”

“Sorry, Beam. I’ve got horse riding lessons today. Maybe next time?” Bindi said.

“I’m going with her,” said Maddy, who never rode horses herself due to an allergy to animal hair that caused big red welts

all over her body. However, she loved watching her friend perform jumps from the safety of the enclosed member stand.

“Okay, got you. You’re coming?” he turned to Jack, who already sat on his e-bike.

“Can’t either. I’ve got soccer practice. I promised my team I would be there.” Jack lived for his soccer and excelled as a striker. His aim was to make it into the under-fourteens A-team, a goal within striking distance.

“Hey, why don’t you come and watch the game? It’ll be enjoyable, and a breather from your project!”

Jack hinted to why they had been avoiding their unofficial clubhouse lately. Whenever there, Beam sat bent over at his desk typing away on his keyboard, oblivious to anything happening around him. The portal project became his obsession. His friends said it couldn't be done, but he refused to give up.

“Suit yourself.” Beam hopped on his bike and rode off.

Jack caught up.

“Don't be such a goose. I'll swing by your shed right after the game, and we can work on it together.”

“Okay, in about two hours, then.”

They each went off in their own direction. As soon as Beam got to his shed, his secret hideout, filled with all sorts of gadgets, an old glass door fridge, and a big computer with multiple screens. Posters of space and robots covered the walls, and two cozy couches opposite each other created a sitting area. He leaned his bike against the wall outside, next to the door.

On his way to his work desk, he grabbed a cold drink from his fridge, plonked down, and turned on his computer with a voice command. The screen lit up and the endless lines of colourful code appeared on the screens.

Every time I test it, I'm stuck in the same frinkin' spot. Something must be conflicting with what I just wrote...

Beam was in deep concentration, when a knocking sound disturbed his attention.

THE MAULED MAGE

Jack... Maybe his game cancelled. But, he never knocks...

The soft knocking continued between slight pauses. With a grumble, he slid off his work chair and stepped to the door.

Who could it be?

He opened the door, surprised to see Lee.

Okay, he's the last person I expected... "Hey, Lee! Didn't expect to see you here."

Lee, always a bit of an outsider at school, preferred the quiet company of his books over the boisterous chatter of classmates. He was often found in secluded corners of the library or under the shade of an old oak tree, immersing himself in worlds far removed from the bustling school corridors. His love for reading wasn't just a pastime. It was his refuge, a way for him to escape into the tranquility of different realms. He remained standing at the door, barely looking up, busying himself cleaning his black-rimmed glasses, holding them up against the sky.

"Don't just stand there. Come on in."

As if startled by Beam, he put on his glasses and stared at him, his eyes now magnified through the thick lenses. He remained standing at the open door, peeking inside. "Are you alone?"

"Huh, yeah, sure." Beam moved aside, giving him room to enter. Lee looked in both directions before he stepped through the door. "Want a cold drink?"

"Nice setup." He stared at Beam's computer. The shed was a novel sight for him, a captivating world filled with blinking lights, whirring machines, and an array of digital gadgets, some in perfect condition and others in various stages of disrepair. He clutched a book to his chest, looking around with wide, curious eyes.

Beam strolled up to the fridge, took out another drink, and gave it to his unexpected guest. Lee already stood over Beam's desk and was leaning in close to the monitor, his fingers not touching, but hovering over the keyboard.

"Pretty impressive, but some of your logic is flawed." He scrolled with a hefty pace through the lines of colourful code.

Holding the can of lemonade, Beam was at a loss for how to react.

"So it is true. You're coding to break out of the restricted Metaverse ... clever ... as I said, impressive."

"How do you know ...?" Beam stood flabbergasted.

Lee began to type.

"Hey, stop it. You could corrupt it all," Beam said, pulling Lee's arm away from the keyboard.

"Please, don't touch me," Lee said with a bewildered look on his face. "I don't like anyone touching me."

Beam understood Lee was unique in his own way. Ms Ryan had explained that he was just like everyone else, but that he had his own special ways of doing things.

Jeez, I know you're a bit awkward, mate, but first you touch my gear, and then you insult my work. "I know. It got a bug somewhere, but it's a work in progress."

While leaning over the keyboard, Lee tilted his head sideways to face Beam.

"Rumours go around, you've been to the unrestricted Metaverse. I know that a cyberworld without borders exists. Nothing to bump into, right?"

"I won't deny it, but what's that got to do with—"

"I see what's happening. Some parts of your code are making it go in circles. We can fix it together. See here and here." He pointed at some code lines as he scrolled downwards. "Then there are some mis-configured virtual hosts specifying incorrect IP addresses, causing unintended routing requests."

No kidding, I heard he was a nerd, but this guy takes it to another level. "So that's why it doesn't work, you reckon?"

"Not just that, there are a few other things, but nothing that can't be fixed. I can help you get it going."

Beam's amazement grew. "You know so much about this.

THE MAULED MAGE

Thanks for offering to help. Let's sit down and you can tell me more about it."

He handed him his drink, taking care not to touch his hand.

"Yes, good idea. Let's talk."

CHAPTER 6

CYBERBULLY



4:47 pm, Wednesday

Beam

THEY SETTLED INTO COUCHES THAT FACED EACH OTHER, SEPARATED only by a narrow table cluttered with an assortment of objects—predominantly electronic parts. Beam cleared a space amidst the chaos, shoving aside the jumble of components to make room for their drinks.

“In World of Warcraft, there's someone who keeps bothering me,” Lee said abruptly, the words tumbling out in a rush.

"They're hiding their identity with a VPN called IPHidden." As he finished speaking, his face contorted into a grimace, reflecting a mix of frustration and helplessness.

So, it is true after all, Beam thought.

"He's relentless in his cruelty, constantly ruining the game and causing me to lose battle after battle. Assuming the role of a powerful troll, he bombards me with comments that really get under my skin."

Beam's voice softened as he leaned in, his eyes reflecting a mix of concern and curiosity. "I was thinking about the other day—why did you keep quiet about it then?" His question was gentle, inviting an honest response rather than demanding it, as he tried to understand Lee's hesitance.

Lee returned a pained expression, his chin trembling, He looked away.

"It's making me wary of everyone and everything," he mumbled, swallowing hard as he rubbed his chest.

"Could you track him to find out who it is?"

"Right, tried that, believe me, but nothing so far."

Why is he telling me all this? He's not really my friend.

"Did you talk with anyone else about this?"

"Yes."

"Your parents?"

"Total waste of time."

"Someone at school?"

"The school counsellor, Miss Pardo, didn't have enough proof to do much. She said maybe I should stop playing World of Warcraft. But no way would I ever think of doing that."

"Hmmm... A VPN... They're tricky. People can hide behind them and send messages and you never know where they came from." Beam was thinking aloud.

"I overheard you talking to your friends about creating a portal to enter the unlimited cyberworld." With his head, Lee gestured in the computer's direction. "Using that, I may be able to work out who it is. That's why I came to you."

Oh, so you want to use MY portal to catch the frinkin' bozo.

"Did you code it yourself?"

"I didn't write all of it by myself. Most of the code came from a secret portal we stumbled upon earlier in the limited Meta-verse." *Maybe with his help, I'll get it fixed sooner.*

"Awesome. Some of it is super clever stuff I've never seen before."

"I haven't been able to get it working just yet, but I feel like I'm really close."

"I'll read what you've got so far and correct your errors. I already fixed a few."

"You think you can fix them?" Beam's interest peaked.

They got up. Lee picked up a VR goggle from amongst the gear on the table and both wandered over to Beam's work desk and stood behind his monitor. As Beam watched, Lee deftly opened a new window on the computer. He typed quickly and with purpose. On the screen, lines of code materialized one after the other, each appearing swiftly as Lee continued. This display of rapid coding was like watching a painter expertly stroke colors across a canvas, with each line of code adding to the emerging picture of their project. Every so often, Lee paused to open a new window on the computer. In these moments, he carefully selected pieces of code from a different source, perhaps a library of pre-written code or a previous project of his own. He meticulously integrated these snippets into the current project, ensuring they fit perfectly within the existing lines. After he completed his work in the main coding window, he executed a final crucial step. He selected the entire block of code he had just refined, copying it with precision. Then, with a few clicks, he pasted this updated code directly into Beam's program, effectively merging his enhancements with Beam's original work. Once done, he straightened up, folded his arms, and turned to Beam, who watched him work with fascination. He never met anyone else who could write in computer language, let alone be an absolute ace at it.

THE MAULED MAGE

"Let's run diagnostics," Lee said, stretching his back.

"Where did you learn to code like that?"

With a knowing smile, Lee gently tapped the side of his head. It was a playful gesture that conveyed a simple message. His coding skills were self-taught, a product of his own intellect and curiosity.

Wow, impressive! "But will it work?"

The AI-driven diagnostic syntax test thoroughly checked every line of code for errors. You could follow exactly where it was as the line being checked briefly lit up. Then it stopped. A window popped up with a short message, 'Are you ready?' Beneath this were two tick boxes.

YES NO

"We should try it," Lee said, putting on the spare VR goggles and before Beam could respond, he ticked 'yes' box and hit enter. Beam hastily put on his VR unit and stared at the middle screen. The built-in VR cameras scanned their faces and made humming noises indicating the sets were firing up. Lee briefly turned to Beam and gave him the thumb up. A holographic projection showed a bright tunnel, like a swirling, smokey rainbow. Just as they were about to step into it, it crashed. The colourful projection turned into a blank screen, leaving the boys staring at it in surprise.

"So frinkin' close! It almost worked," Beam said, overcome by absolute awe with the progress they made. After exhausting all options and experiencing repeated failures, he finally achieved some success, thanks to Lee.

Well, almost.

"It did work, but your computer needs more vector

processing power. Your CPU can't cope with the demand. I'll upgrade it tomorrow. I go home now. It is time."

Beam glanced at the top of his screen, revealing it was only a few minutes before six o'clock. Lee turned, grabbed his jacket and backpack from the couch.

"Must go now. See you tomorrow here at four pm." With that, he vanished through the door, leaving an astonished Beam in his wake.

Hey, Jack never showed. This is incredible. My god we almost pulled it off! Beam forced himself to calm down and checked his equipment. *Everything looks good.*

He closed the shed door behind him, feeling he was the owner of the greatest treasure on earth. Crossing the lawn to his house, he spotted his mom and Bindi chatting at the kitchen table. He couldn't wait to tell his sister about his progress, but he decided to keep Lee's plan a secret for now.

She'll only convince me not to do it.

BINDI AND BEAM SERIES



This captivating series of illustrated novellas is carefully crafted to serve as an interesting learning resource for preteens and young teens as they navigate the twists and turns of online life. Through each thrilling story, our beloved heroes, Bindi and Beam, courageously confront real-world challenges such as cyberbullying, online privacy, digital health and wellbeing, and many more digital citizenship issues.

These tales transcend mere adventures; they are invaluable lessons in the art of safely navigating the vast expanse of the

internet. The vibrant illustrations adorning each book breathe life into the digital escapades, making them particularly engaging for visual learners and those who are new to intricate topics like internet safety.

The Bindi and Beam series transforms the process of learning about the online world into an exhilarating journey. It empowers young readers, instilling in them the confidence and awareness necessary to explore the internet with caution and care.

Book 1 - The Web Trap: An enthralling virtual adventure turns perilous, as friends race against time in a digital labyrinth to rescue one of their own from the seductive clutches of a reality-bending game. **Theme:** Tech obsession

Book 3 - The Bewitched Game: A riveting tale of virtual reality, where a young girl's quest against a vengeful witch's spell becomes a race to save a generation from the blurring lines between the digital and real worlds. **Theme:** Digital Health and Wellbeing

Book 4 - The Truth Merchants: A thrilling journey where our young heroes battle a digital dystopia, teaching vital lessons in digital literacy and the power of unity in the face of online chaos. **Theme:** Media literacy

Book 5 - The Not-Me Selfies: A thrilling tale of identity, technology, and friendship, where teens confront their AI doppelgängers in a digital battle for identity, blurring the lines between virtual reality and the essence of self. **Theme:** Digital identity

Book 6 - The Meta Menace: Join Bindi and Beam on an electrifying journey through a cyberpunk wonderland, where they'll challenge the oppressors, restore the rules of digital commerce, and unleash the true potential of technology – an

unputdownable adventure that redefines the boundaries of the digital realm! **Theme:** Digital commerce

Book 7 - The Controller - attention is a resource - Join 'The Controller' saga – a captivating journey where your attention is the prized treasure, and controlling it means mastering your digital destiny. **Theme:** Attention is a resource

Book 8 - The Cybernetic Cipher: In this heart-pounding adventure, a group of friends navigate the perils of a digitally connected world while unraveling the secrets of safeguarding their privacy, making it a must-read for young readers seeking to protect their online identity. **Theme:** Privacy

Book 9 - The Counterfeiters: In an exhilarating digital adventure, Bindi and her friends dive deep into the metaverse's counterfeit art world, confronting betrayal and deception while unraveling the intricacies of copyright and the importance of safeguarding the rights of content creators. Their ultimate showdown with the enigmatic mastermind highlights the transformative power of knowledge and unity, emphasizing the significance of upholding ethical standards in the realm of digital creativity. **Theme:** Copyright

As readers advance, they can smoothly transition to the Team Savv-i series, which is designed for a slightly older audience. This transition provides the opportunity for a more in-depth exploration of internet-related topics, aligning with students' expanding understanding and curiosity. The Team Savv-i series maintains the captivating narrative style found in Bindi & Beam while evolving its content to cater to the maturing perspective of young teenagers. This natural progression guarantees that students consistently receive age-appropriate and relevant education in digital citizenship. These series serve as invaluable

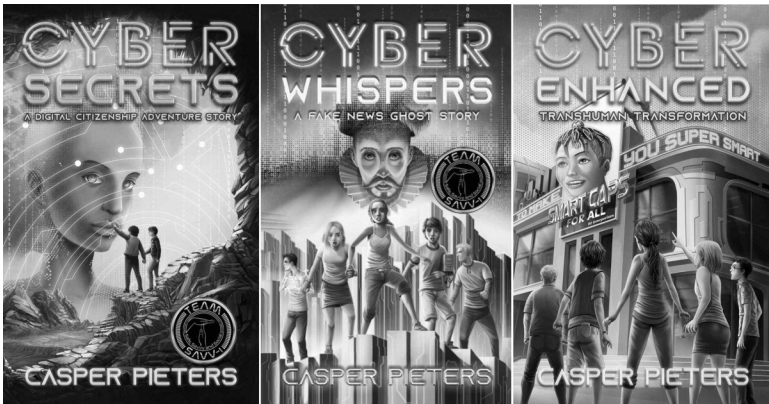
BINDI AND BEAM SERIES

resources for educators, aiding them in guiding students through the intricacies of the digital age.

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<https://www.casperpieters.com>

TEAM SAVV-I SERIES



Team Save-i series

Set off on an exhilarating new chapter with Bindi and Beam, now 14, as they trade the bustling city life for the charming simplicity of a country town. In this fresh setting, they forge Team Savv-i, a group dedicated to navigating and conquering the ever-evolving challenges of the digital world.

The 'Team Savv-i' series continues the thrilling journey of making the internet a safer, smarter, and kinder place for everyone. Yet, as our heroes embark on their cyber adventures, they face their most formidable challenge yet: Big-O, a super-intelligent entity with doubts about their mission, plunging them into a whirlwind of intrigue and danger.

Perfect for young teens, this series blends action-packed storytelling with vital lessons in digital responsibility. Join Bindi, Beam, and Team Savv-i as they prove that bravery, intelligence, and kindness can make a world of difference in the vast realm of cyberspace. Get ready for a journey full of suspense, innovation, and the power of teamwork in the digital age. 'Team Savv-i' is more than just a series—it's a call to action for young minds to become thoughtful and responsible internet users.

Cyber Secrets - a digital citizenship adventure story

Theme: The nine elements of digital citizenship

Dive into the digital adventure of a lifetime with 'Cyber Secrets' as twins Bindi and Beam, along with their friends, battle against the sinister forces of Big-O in a high-stakes quest to make the internet safer and fairer. With cyberbullying, identity theft, and a super-intelligent showdown, it's a thrilling ride through cyberspace you won't want to miss!

Cyber Whispers - a fake news ghost story

Theme: Media literacy

Listen to their 'Cyber Whispers, a fake news ghost story that takes young readers on a thrilling journey through cyberspace, teaching essential lessons about media discernment and the power of truth in today's digital world!

Cyber Enhanced - transhuman transformation

Theme: How tech can shape the user

Enter the heart-pounding world of 'Cyber Enhanced,' where Team Savv-i races against time to stop a sinister plot that could reshape humanity. A thrilling quest that explores the edge of technology and personal relationships, this story is a spine-tingling journey into the potential dark side of self-enhancing tech.

For more information on my writing and where to buy or preorder these books, please visit my website

<https://www.casperpieters.com>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Casper Pieters is a multifaceted author, adventurer, and educator. Inspired by early encounters with prominent authors and his adventurous spirit, Pieters crafts educational fiction that intertwines thrilling narratives with key lessons in digital citizenship. His works, driven by neuroscientific insights, aim to educate young readers through engaging storylines.

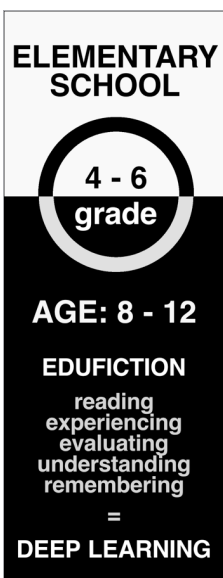
A marine biologist turned filmmaker and teacher, Pieters' diverse experiences enrich his writing, making his stories not only informative but also resonant with real-life adventures. His commitment is to impart age-relevant IT knowledge seamlessly through storytelling, ensuring readers learn while being wholly entertained.

The reasons why I publish independently

- it allows me to update the stories when needed
- it gives me greater creative control
- I set the price, even by region, so everyone can have access to my books
- it allows for a closer relationship with my readership
- it is now possible to have an excellent global distribution

And your reviews—are the strawberries on the icing.





ISBN CODES

Paperback ISBN 978-0-6457642-5-3

eBook ISBN 978-0-6457642-4-6

BISAC CODES

JUV039230 - JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Bullying

JUV039060 - JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship

JUV049000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Computers & Digital Media

JUV036000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Technology / General

JUV053000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Science Fiction / General

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CURRICULA CONNECTIONS

ADVENTURE NARRATIVES FOR DEEP LEARNING

As educators, we understand the importance of equipping students with a comprehensive grasp of digital citizenship concepts by the end of Elementary School. Topics like cyberbullying, privacy, online safety, security, and appropriate internet use are crucial in today's digital world. The Bindi & Beam novella series serves as an exceptional resource for this purpose, delicately weaving these themes into captivating fictional adventures.

Through the series, students not only learn about digital citizenship but also connect deeply with the characters, seeing the real-world implications of technology through their experiences. The illustrations add an engaging dimension, particularly beneficial for students who might need an extra spark of interest or those who are visual learners. These drawings can also serve as valuable tools for classroom discussions, making learning interactive and enjoyable.

Common Core State Standards - English Literacy

The Mauled Mage narrative is focused on the themes of cyberbullying, the power of teamwork, and the intersection of technology with social issues, all of which can be aligned with various Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Here's how the story's elements relate to specific standards,

English Language Arts (ELA)

For ELA, *The Mauled Mage* can be linked to standards that focus on reading comprehension, analysis of themes and character development, and writing narratives or arguments based on text evidence.

1. Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details: The story's focus on cyberbullying and resolving the issue through teamwork aligns with CCSS that require students to analyze themes and summarize texts.

- Craft and Structure: The narrative's structure, including its use of digital and fantasy elements, can be analyzed for its use of figurative language and how it impacts the tone and mood of the story.

For example, standards under the CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5 (for 5th grade) include understanding themes, comparing and contrasting characters, and determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.

- Reading Literature (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4-8):** Analyze themes, characters, and settings. "The Mauled Mage" offers opportunities to discuss cyberbullying, friendship, and resilience.

- Writing (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4-8):** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences. Students could write from the perspective of the characters dealing with cyberbullying

2. Writing

- **Text Types and Purposes:** Writing assignments could focus on argumentative essays on cyberbullying, narrative essays from a character's perspective, or explanatory texts on the impact of technology in society.

- **Production and Distribution of Writing:** Students can work on projects that involve researching cyberbullying and presenting findings in various formats, showcasing their ability to use technology responsibly to produce and share information.

3. Speaking and Listening

- **Comprehension and Collaboration:** The story could serve as a basis for discussions and presentations on cyberbullying, digital citizenship, and the moral implications of technology in society.

- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:** Students can engage in debates or presentations on themes within the story, such as the ethics of hacking or the responsibilities of bystanders in bullying scenarios.

4. Language

- **Conventions of Standard English:** Analyzing the dialogue and narrative language for grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

- **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:** The text provides opportunities to explore domain-specific language related to technology and social media, as well as figurative language used to describe the digital world and emotional experiences of the characters.

To integrate this narrative into an ELA curriculum effectively, educators can develop lesson plans that include reading comprehension questions, creative writing assignments, group projects, and discussions that encourage students to explore the ethical dimensions of technology and social media. These activities not

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only align with the Common Core standards but also promote critical thinking, digital literacy, and empathy.

Common Core State Standards K-12 Technology Skills Scope and Sequence

Digital Citizenship - Explain responsible uses of technology and digital information:

- describe possible consequences of inappropriate use.
- Demonstrate the of technology and responsible use an understanding using electronic safety issues in media at home, in school, and in society.

Ethics in society | Cyberbullying | Digital Citizenship

ISTE Standards for Students

ISTE Standards for Students: Digital citizenship, technology operations, and concepts. Create digital storytelling projects, focusing on responsible online behavior and understanding the impact of technology on personal well-being.

The Mauled Mage can enhance digital literacy and align with the ISTE Standards for Students by focusing on:

1. Digital Citizenship (ISTE Standard 2): Teaching students to recognize the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital world, and to act and model in ways that are safe, legal, and ethical.

2. Knowledge Constructor (ISTE Standard 3): Encouraging students to critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts, and

make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

3. Creative Communicator (ISTE Standard 6): Students use digital media to express themselves creatively and thoughtfully, understanding how to communicate and publish for a variety of purposes and audiences, including responding to or discussing themes within "The Mauled Mage."

Integrating these standards, educators can guide students to apply critical thinking to digital interactions, understand their impact online, and creatively express their learning and solutions to issues like cyberbullying highlighted in the novel.

Mathematics

- While not directly related, mathematical problem-solving skills can be integrated through activities like coding or creating surveys about cyberbullying.

Science

- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS): Use the theme of technology in the novel to explore topics like digital footprints, internet safety, and the science behind online platforms.

Social Studies

- Explore the impact of digital communication on society, ethics, and personal responsibility. Discuss the history and evolution of cyber laws.

Arts

- Visual arts projects could include creating posters or digital art promoting kindness and anti-bullying messages. In drama, students could perform scenes from the book or their own scripts based on its themes.

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Physical Education and Health

- Discuss emotional and physical well-being in the context of cyberbullying. Develop strategies for managing stress and fostering positive social interactions.

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