

THE WEB TRAP

CAUGHT IN A CYBER FANTASY, HER LIFE
PAUSED

BINDI AND BEAM
BOOK 1

CASPER PIETERS



To Ayla, Pearl, Blue, Reo, Sybel, Uma, and all children growing up in a digital world—remember, you are far more special than any technology.



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CHAPTER 1 - SEVEN MORE DAYS



Wednesday, 29 October 2025 - after school

Bindi

I love birthdays, just not my own, Bindi thought. She flopped down on the comfy couch in her twin brother's shack and stared out the window. The bleak sun on its sinking path behind the tall pear trees. "She can't stop blabbing on about her birthday." The inside of her palms warmed from rubbing the top of her pants.

"It's driving me bonkers—another week to go. pfff... I don't know if I'll last." *If only she eased up a little.* Her mind almost pleading with itself. Leaning backwards, she released a rollercoaster of a sigh, twitching her long plait against her lips. *I'll show her what friendship is,* she drew to her conclusion. The fresh scent of shampoo still lingered from earlier this morning. *What can I do that would work?* She straightened up. "Maybe I'll give her something she won't forget." *After all, she's my bestie. The only one who gets me. Not mum, dad, or my bro, ugh... he always thinks he does.*

"Girls only, right?" Beam said, twisting his head away from the pile of electronic who-knows-what he probed and poked like a surgeon.

"She wanted it that way." *Not my first choice.* "The things she comes out with." Bindi leaned forward to get closer to the boys. "Before the bell today, she whispered in my ear—friendship is measured by the size of a present—I nearly fell off my seat. Can you believe it?"

"Hah, why hang out with her, then? She ain't popular." Jack said, sitting stretched out, using his feet to sway the creaky rocking chair next to Beam's desk. "She is such a drag. Why go?"

"Don't listen to him." Beam said, "I would get pretty messed up if my best mate didn't show on my big day."

Big day? More like, big suck day. Forever sucking up mum and dad's attention, leaving me the crumbs. Every birthday she could remember ended with her feeling sad.

"You'll see. It will be fun. I heard her mum is even getting her the famous chocolate ice cake with fresh strawberries from Brickfields."

"Yummy. Save me a piece, pretty please?" Jack winked at her.

"It's her all-time favorite. She told me a thousand times." She poked out her pointy red tongue at Jack between the strokes of her plait, then flashed a cheeky smile. Feeling her cheeks blush, she buried her face between her arms and knees. Her single plait spun through the air.

"Huh... What are you planning?" Beam asked without looking up.

She raised her head like a gopher. *For you to guess Mr Arora, and for me to know.* Avoiding Jack, she turned to stare a hole in her brother's back. "No idea yet, but I'll make sure it sticks."

CHAPTER 2 - BIRTHDAY PARTY



Sunday, 2 November 2025 - 3:10 pm

Maddy

"Bin, you're late."

My bestie wrapped her arms around me, then let go.

"Happy birthday!" Bindi said in my ear.

Wait till you see my new toy, my mum gave me.

Bindi looked around the party room at all the colourful streamers and balloons.

"Wow. She did a fab job."

"She did alright, I guess."

Seeing my expectant eyes, she fumbled in her pocket. With a huge grin, she pulled out the tiniest present I've ever seen. *Is she kidding me? I thought you're supposed to be my bestie!*

"Must be a diamond or something," I gasped, feigning delight.

I glimpsed around the room. *They're all watching. Too embarrassing. How could she? My best friend.* I scratched off the wrapping, faking excitement. A plastic jewellery box with golden letters sat forlorn in the palm of my hand. I glanced up. Bindi's face burst with anticipation, spurring me to open it.

If I chip my nail, she is so going to get it.

The lid popped off with a sharp click.

"Oooh. No way."

A twinkling friendship necklace, each matching half, sat side by side, staring up at me. One pendant, a tiny key, the other, a heart adorned with sparkling jewels, with on one side a cut-out that matched the key.

"I loooooove shiny gold and jewels."

Bindi nodded.

"My biggest wish always was to have one."

Jumping up and down, I could sense tears coming up, but wiped them with my sleeve and beamed a big smile. The other girls stood around making cooing sounds.

"Besties, right?... yeah," I said as I kept hugging Bindi, holding the little box tight. "You made me so happy." I whispered in her ear.

Then it struck me, and I pushed her back at arm's length. "Which one is yours, then?"

"Hey, who owns the key to your heart, you silly?"

"Aaaah... so true."

Bindi looked me straight in the eyes as she dangled the heart pendant in front of my face.

"This necklace is a sign of our everlasting friendship bond."

You must NEVER EVER take it off. Not even in the shower. You promise?"

"I swear. You will always be my rock." I said, committing my heart to this solemn truth. I held up my hair and stretched my neck forwards. Then we took turns.

"Opposites attract, hey?" I said as I hung the key necklace on her.

Bindi held the tiny key and fitted it into my pendant. My heart blew up like a hot-air balloon. We both shrieked and spun around while we hugged. Then I remembered.

"My mum gave me the latest DreamWalker."

I pulled the VR goggles off the face of a girl who hogged it for way too long.

"It connects with your thoughts so you get to play in your own fantasy world. Pretty cool, hey! Common, have a go. You'll love it."

Bindi felt with her finger the shiny metal knobs inside the headset.

"Don't worry, we'll watch everything you're doing."

I pointed at the giant screen mounted on the wall.

"Okay, I'll try it out."

With eyes squeezed, Bindi placed the goggles on her head.



Maddy

First time. Could get scary. What was she thinking, pulling that trick on me? Lucky for her, I love the pressie. I traced the little jewels on my pendant with my finger as I waited for her scene to appear. Everyone watched Bindi move around as if blindfolded, with her hands outstretched, partly blocking the large live screen where her avatar appeared.

Bindi stood on an open prairie with a clear blue sky and a scorching sun overhead. Behind her was a steep drop. In front of

her, the land stretched out into endless red hills with windswept thorny bushes scattered here and there. She twisted her head from side to side. Her hands grabbed hold of the goggles. The dust cloud grew larger as it raced towards her.

"I've seen this in the movies. I think it is a herd of animals, horses maybe," a girl said.

Upright horns of the wild beasts appeared through the fog as they roared across the bone-dry plain.

"They're bisons!" another girl said, her voice shrieking high with tension.

All eyes glued to the screen as if Bindi was some famous actor in a blockbuster movie.

"Happy birthday!" A girl's mousy, high-pitched voice pierced the roaring noise from the stampeding herd.

I glanced over my shoulder, seeing another late-comer standing at the door. In her hands, she held a huge red present with a gigantic bow of gold ribbon.

Yippee more gold. "Hi," I whooped and ran over as quick as my body allowed.

"Happy birthday, Maddy!" she peeped, handing over the big box with outstretched arms.

"It's humongous!" *Desperate to be my friend, right?*

Shaking it—it made a muffling sound. I ripped the glossy paper and tossed her card aside. Two other girls tore away from the screen and joined us.

"It could be a crystal growing kit," one of them said.

"Shhh... don't give it away," the other teased.

I gave them my deadliest death stare, then opened the lid.

"Oh, wow, super chill." I lifted the light-blue hat with a silky feather from the fluffy, soft padding.

"Fits peeeerfectly."

I went to the mirror to make a few adjustments.

"Adorable. Just sooo totally me." In my most put on voice. "Help yourself," I said with my sweeping hand pointing towards the table loaded with snacks.

Returning to the mirror, I made a few fashionable poses, puffing my lips and twirling my body like a proper model. I could see my so-called friends in the reflection hiding their smiles as they watched me. A dark bulge leaped alive in my tummy. *Grrr! They better be laughing for the right reasons.*

CHAPTER 3 - BISONS



Virtual Reality

Bindi

No way! Stampeding bison, and they're coming my way! Bindi's mind went haywire. She recognized the landscape from one of her nightmares. Her chest tightened, blood drained from her face. Her leaden arms hung by her side, her feet glued to the spot.

A mind-boggling large herd stormed towards her, whipping up clouds of dust darkening the sky. Trampling hooves grew

into a deafening thunder, trembling the earth beneath her feet. She stumbled a few steps back, oblivious to the gaping drop behind her.

The bison closed in on Bindi as if making her their target. Bloodshot eyes locked onto her. She shuffled another few steps. To her shock, the sandy edge crumbled beneath her right shoe. Over her shoulder, she noticed a few rocks drop to a dizzying depth.

I've no where to go...

She swung her head left and right, checking her options. Moments later, the first bison leaped with a howling grunt into the air just off her left.

They'll going to take me down...

She dropped herself to the ground, more like collapsing in a desperate attempt to save herself. More beasts followed. One after the other, soared over her, nearly touching her. A grimy black belly filled the sky overhead. Its hind legs jerked past her head. More came. Unable to stop, they bounced high over the edge as if they could fly, but plunged like grunting boulders.

Bindi coughed, overwhelmed by the dirt and the dust. She covered her ears to stop the howling noises as the beasts hurled to their deaths. Absolute chaos surrounded her. A large bison tripped and slid towards her.

She jumped up in vain, trying to avoid the enormous sliding mass, but it slammed into her and together they dropped into the ravine. Bindi screamed, seeing white stars grow dimmer as she fell backwards, floating like an autumn leaf. Darkness surrounded her, pierced by bloodcurdling groans and blaring bleats.

CHAPTER 4 - WARNED



Sunday, 2 November 2025 - 3:36 pm

Maddy

"It fits so well. I luv it." *I want to be pretty always. Pretty people are always popular. That's why Bin is popular, even if she can be a dork sometimes.* I kept glimpsing in the mirror. A collective hush from the girls made me spin around, welcoming their adoration. Instead, they watched with gaping mouths the wild scene of crazy leaping bisons on the big TV. Bindi fell backwards. Her

hands held high, both on screen and for real, trying to stay upright.

"Bin! It's only VR!" I shouted as I ran towards her, holding onto my new hat.

Bindi let rip another cracker of a scream. Joined in by a few other girls. Mum burst in through the door. On the screen, an overhanging branch broke her fall, as she grasped wildly in the air, trying to get hold of something. She caught the struggling Bindi, pulled off her goggles to reveal a face whiter than chalk, and lowered her on the wool carpet.

"You're right, dear?" she said, frowning. "Maddy, fetch some water."

I gestured to the nearest girl to get running. *Duh. I'm not leaving when my bestie needs my help.*

Bindi nodded. "It was so real."

I knew she would fall for it, but gosh, maybe it went a bit too far. I kneeled beside her. "It's only VR, dummy. None of it is real."

"I'm okay.... Really. I... I just need some... some water. Ugh. That dust, awful." She rubbed her throat and swallowed with difficulty.

Pushing herself up into a sitting position with her legs stretched out, she looked like a discarded doll. Mum still supported her back. The girl returned with a glass of water, which I lifted to her lips.

"What happened?" I said, putting concern in my voice.

My mum turned to me with a frown.

Oh, no! "Mum, please not now. This is MY party." I rolled my eyes upward.

"Maddy... girls... I know you are having a party--"

"Mum, later please. Please!"

"--This new technology. What do you call it again, hum?"

With the goggles still in her hand, she raised them in the air.

"DreamWalker," one girl said.

"Thank you. This DreamWalker can be lot of fun, but it can

also become scary. I'm so sorry, Bindi, that you got such a fright. It is important to look after each other when playing with it."

She stared straight at me. I fiddled with the rim of my hat. *This is my party. I'm so embarrassed. Mum, please shut up and go away.* "We know, Mum. Thank you, but please go now."

"Bindi could have hurt herself."

"Have a look, she is okay. It's only VR. This is my party. Girls only, remember?" I mustered the biggest frown, hoping it would do the trick. Mum gazed down at Bindi, who stopped drinking and put on a half smile.

"Thanks, Ms S," she said, as she rose to her feet. "I feel much better now."

Mum shot off another glance in my direction.

"Okay, I'll leave you girls to your party, but don't forget to look out after each other."

"Yesss, mum," I said in a drawled out voice as I pushed her out of the door. "Time to party. Sure you're okay Bin? Good... Now watch. I'll show you how it's done. Believe me, it's oodles of fun."

CHAPTER 5 - THE VIOLINIST



Virtual Reality

Maddy

With the goggles back snug on my face and before I could say 'boo', I landed on a narrow street lined on both sides with crummy houses. *With luck, he is at the market again.* Sprinting at a steady pace, I passed shops on either side. *These clothes look so weird. I'll check them later, first finding mister handsome. Bin will be so jealous.* Turning a left corner into another narrow cobble-stone street. The square must be that way...

Giggles came through my goggles, and I sensed the girl's eyes on my back. *I forgot they can see my every move. , . You just wait, girls, and see why I'm really here.*

Dropping my thoughts, I ran as fast as my body allowed and rounded another corner. A colourful, bustling market appeared. The hustle-and-bustle drowned out any sounds from the party room. Stalls laden with goods, stacked vegetables, flowers, bric-à-brac, and tonnes of books. A trader held up a large pink fish and announced in a croaky voice, 'Fresher than this, you can catch it yourself. *Yuk, so many grubby people. Do they ever wash here?* A mix of fresh flowers, pungent human odors, and disgusting scents pierced my nose. I shunned contact as much as possible as I pressed through the crowd. Above the cacophony, a soft melody rose. *I knew it. He's here.*

I glanced over my shoulder and flashed a smile, giving the thumbs up to my friends.

I wriggled closer, pushing through the throng. A few people danced with brass bangled arms up in the air, making a rhythmic racket. I squeezed through to the edge of the spectators and came face-to-face with my mission. The strumming of his violin climbed high above the tune of the band. Majestic and tall, dressed in a long black coat, he stood with the rest of the musicians in a circle around him. His black manes swayed in jerks as he played his instrument. The staccato, like rattling fireworks, gave me instant goosebumps. His dark, piercing eyes turned downwards and bored straight into me. Combined with his gleaming white smile, lifted me swirling high with the jet-setting notes sprung from his bow. The notes stopped, and I opened my eyes. He was gone.

Sunday, 2 November 2025 - 4:12pm

Maddy

Shocked, but still swooning, I pulled off my headset and looked around. *They're not even watching.* The girls talked to each other, munched snacks and gulped down their drinks.

They missed it all. Flipping around, I spotted Bindi standing by herself, looking straight at me. I joined her.

"Did you see him?"

Bindi smiled. Her sparkling eyes answered my question.

"Isn't he a hot?"

Bindi nodded.

I felt relieved. At least, my best friend shared the biggest moment of my life. "I've seen him before, but NEVER heard him play like that. Isn't he awesome?"

"He is superb."

"But why did he vanish? He did see me. He even winked at me! Oh, I'm sure he is my soul mate." I closed my eyes and swooned, clasping my hands.

"Maddy, he's not real. He's only--"

She noticed my face darken.

"He is real. As real as your bisons."

"Fair enough," Bindi said. "He's totally cute."

I cracked a broad grin and hugged her.

"He's the best. I bet you he played that tune just for me." The thought made me giddy. "Why did he go? I must get back and find him."

"You're having a party. Remember. You can search for him later."

"Common Bin. Look at them. They're not taking any notice."

All they do is munch on the snacks and yap nonsense.

"No way to stop you, can I?"

"You're the best!"

With a snap, I placed the goggles back on and returned to the streets.

CHAPTER 6 - THANK YOU, BYE!



Sunday, 2 November 2025 - 4:35 pm

Bindi

She can't do this for too long or it's the end of the party, Bindi thought. "Look, Mad is on the hot trail to find the violinist." She pointed to the screen.

Curious, the girls turned around.

Maddy strolled from street to street, asking anyone if they saw a group of musicians. The girls ate most of the snacks and it

didn't take long for them to grow bored watching her roam the endless streets.

"Look at her. Running like that, she might lose a bit of fat," a girl said as she looked at the empty table.

A few girls giggled at the comment, then turned away from the screen to wander bored around the room.

"She doesn't need us. I'm going," another girl said, picking up her jacket.

"Wait, I'll come with you," a smaller girl said.

"Hey guys, it's Mad's birthday party," Bindi said.

"She is not even here," the girl with the jacket said. Her mouth turned down, and she puffed.

Bindi tapped Maddy on the shoulder, but she shrugged it off.

She tapped again. This time, more persistent.

"Okay! Okay!" Maddy snarled, yanking off her headset.

"They're all leaving," Bindi said.

"Let them go," she said, shielding her mouth. She turned to the group of girls and, with hands cupped around her mouth, and burst out, "The party is over. Hope you enjoyed stuffing your faces. Bye-bye. THANK YOU, BYE!" She dropped her volume and said, "Good riddance, right?"

She strapped her goggles back on and returned to the same spot.

The girls scrambled to get their coats and left in a hurry. Bindi stared at her friend. *How rude was that? Obsessed by her new toy. I get that, but...* She fingered the tiny key around her neck imagining the rumors that would fly around the schoolyard. Looking up at the screen, Maddy's avatar strolled along a narrow alley to stop at yet another passerby. The real Maddy stood transfixed, unaware of anything happening around her, occasionally turning her head or raise her hand. Bindi sighed, zipped up her jacket, and walked out of the room.

"Thanks for the party, Ms S."

"Going so soon? I still have the chocolate cake to serve."

"Everyone is gone already. I'm the last one." She placed a pile

of empty trays on the kitchen bench. "Thanks for catching me." Bindi gave her a big hug eyeing the untouched cake.

"I'm glad you didn't hurt yourself."

"I'll be back tomorrow morning to see how Mad is doing."

"Bye Bindi. Say hello to your mum and dad from me."

Bindi nodded and left in deep thought. What a lousy birthday party. No wonder she's got no friends. She doesn't even try. That stupid DreamWalker made her worse.

Bindi strolled to where she left her bike, leaning against the hedge. Fancy that. Out-competed by a toy for my best friend's attention. As she wheeled through the garden gate, a shrill shriek came from the house.

CHAPTER 7 - MAGIC MIRRORS



Virtual Reality
Maddy

I turned another corner and my heart skipped a thousand beats. Halfway down the empty street, under an old hanging shop sign, he stood waving, then opened a door behind him and disappeared.

"Hey, wait," I shouted. A door slammed, followed by the tinkling of a brass bell. *Why all this hide-and-seeK?* I held onto my hat and sprinted over as fast as I could. As I got near, I could

make out the words on the hanging sign—MIRARI SHOPPE. The sun-bleached golden letters barely readable on the faded green background.

Out of breath, with a stabbing pain in my side, I got to the spot in front of this otherworldly shop. Its blue-grayish paint hung in strips of the woodwork. *Gosh, what is this place?* I peeked through the display window. *Where is he? Wow, look at those mirrors.* I placed my hands on the glass to see better. *Should I go in?* My curiosity got the better of me, and letting him slip through my fingers was not an option. *What's the harm in having a closer look, right?* The worn brass door handle turned with ease, and I pushed the entry door open. A little brass bell jingled.

"Hallo. Anyone here?" I waited, but not a peep. All I could hear was the thumping of my heart banging on my eardrums. *Strange? I wonder what this shop sells? There is nothing but mirrors.* I moved slowly closer to a full-length, ornate rimmed mirror.

"No way!"

I jumped out of my skin. Everything I wore, including my hat, had changed instantly. In my reflection, I saw myself skinny as and wearing a slim, deep pink dress. *Huh?* I ran my hands along my sides, but still felt my ever-present curves. I thought... *Great dress... It fits me so well. What I would give to be that slender and beautiful.* I turned around to check. Good, still alone. I wonder... I shuffled over to the next mirror. *So awesome.* I wore tight-fitting emerald green pants with a cream jacket and a feathered red cap. *Nice, but I look like a huntress.* I ran to another mirror. This time, I appeared in a pink gown with a beaded illusion neckline, a beaded waistband, and a kinda weird polka dot skirt. Passing from mirror to mirror, I forgot about finding my handsome violin player. Changing outfits is a breeze without having to take them on and off. Some were gross, but hey, who can argue about taste? I moved on to the next mirror. It was the last one right at the back of the shop. Nothing prepared me for my total transformation, as if someone turned on the light. With a gaping mouth, I gazed at the figure in the mirror. Moments

trickled by before I realised it was me standing in the most stunning outfit I ever laid my eyes on. I wore a full-length light-blue satin and brocade gown with attached peplum covered loads of the finest sparkling precious stones. On top sat a neatly fitting hoop cream coloured petticoat embroidered with fine silk flowers. This sleek outfit made me look super sophisticated, as if I were the movie star. Super soft elbow-length white gloves covered my arms and a fine choker with glittering jewels fitted neatly around my gorgeous shaped neck. To top it off, a brilliant jewel-studded tiara sat sparkling in my curly blond hair. "Ooooooh! So beautiful. This is fit for a princess," I said to myself. Deep down, a strange longing stirred up inside of me.

A crack of a floor plank behind me shook me out of my spell.



Virtual Reality

Maddy

I shrieked with fright and spun around, to see a shriveled up old lady standing arms-length away from me.

Where did she come from? Gosh, she must be the owner. "I, I didn't mean to—" I sputtered. In my shock, I remembered why I entered her shop. "Did you see... huh... a young man with a violin come in here?"

"Your Highness! What an honor to be graced by your presence. My humblest greetings."

She bowed before she went on.

"An exuberant gathering eagerly awaits your return, Your Highness."

"Who... What?" I stammered. *First, she gave me a massive scare and now she thinks, I'm some sort of royal... it's a sales gimmick. Bah!*

Then a strange thought entered my mind. I glimpsed back at my reflection. *Is she thinking?... No way!* "Listen huh—"

"Please, call me Olivia, if it pleases you, Your Highness."

"I'm sorry, but my name is Maddy. Not—"

"Princess Aleela, you humor me. You're the favorite of the House of Magnolia. Your people have taken the day off and await your arrival. The royal ball simply can't start without you. Please, Your Highness, return to your world. We are delighted to welcome you back."

Me? Princess Aleela? You kidding me or what?

Olivia didn't seem to joke. She pointed towards the large mirror. Princess Aleela stood there in her magnificent attire.

So, that's me?... Welcome me back?... She must be bonkers. I stepped back—but... I do like the sound of a royal ball and me being ... the favorite royal—checked the old ladies face again. Nothing wrong with a bit of fun... I guess. . It's my birthday, after all...

Olivia held out her arm to show that I should step into the mirror.

Hmm... Hope it's safety glass. I closed my eyes, readying myself to leap. *I must be as nuts.* Then I remembered she didn't answer my question. I opened my eyes. "Excuse me huh... Ms Olivia. You never told me if you saw a tall boy with dark hair and a violin under his arm?"

"Your Highness, he passed through here not long ago. He is one of your chief court musicians responsible for livening up your party."

She still gestured with her right arm to show me I should take a step forward.

"He passed through here?"

I pointed at the mirror to make sure. The shop owner nodded and flung her hand up and down as if to say go.

Moving a little closer, I noticed the mirror's surface was spotlessly clean. *Not a smudge. Almost as if it wasn't there.* Another look over my shoulder. Her head bobbed up and down, encouraging me to go on.

She's totally loopy.

Unsure, I touched the mirror with my right hand. To my amazement, it went straight through as if made of air.

That's sure is weird. I pulled my hand back. . *Could it be one of those magic portals you read about in fairy tales? Now, that would be insane.* My heart skipped a beat at the thought. *Hey, it's my birthday. A girl can have some fun, no? AND maybe if he is there...* Holding onto my hat, I closed my eyes, readying myself for serious pain. *Cinderella, here I come...*

I took a big step forward—*the girls back home better be watching this*—then everything changed.

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 2 - The Mauled Mage: A gripping virtual saga of friendship and bravery, where a group of young metaverse adventurers confront the shadows of cyberbullying in a fantastical world that mirrors their own. **Theme:** Cyberbullying

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

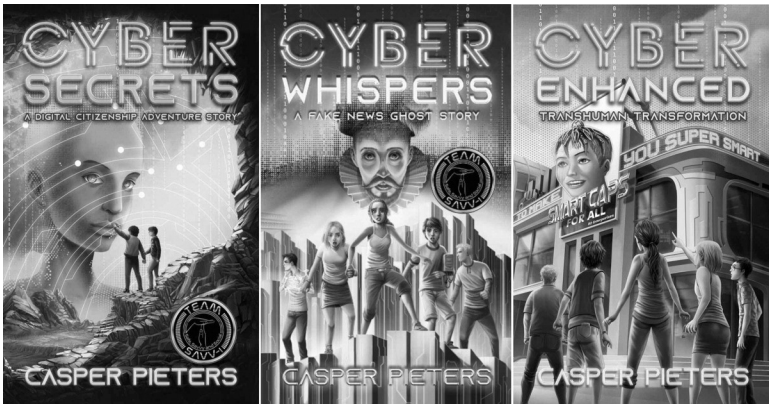
As readers advance, they can smoothly transition to the Team Savv-i series, which is designed for a slightly older audience. This transition provides the opportunity for a more in-depth exploration of internet-related topics, aligning with students' expanding understanding and curiosity. The Team Savv-i 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

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

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

<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.

<https://www.casperpieters.com/bookstore>



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.

As students progress, they can seamlessly transition to the Team Savv-i series, tailored for a slightly older audience. This continuation allows for a deeper exploration of internet-related topics as students' understanding and curiosity grow. The Team Savv-i series maintains the engaging narrative style of Bindi & Beam while evolving the content to suit the maturing perspective of young teens. This progression ensures that students continue to receive age-appropriate, relevant education in digital citizenship, making these series indispensable tools for educators in guiding students through the complexities of the digital age.

Common Core State Standards - English Literacy

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2 - Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarise the text.

Grade 5 | English Language Arts Standards | Reading Literature Key | Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2 - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Grade 6 | English Language Arts Standards | Reading: Literature | Key Ideas and Details

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 | Copyright Acceptable Use, and Plagiarism | Digital Citizenship

ISTE Standards: For Educators

2.2 Leader - Educators seek out opportunities for leadership to support student empowerment and success and to improve teaching and learning.

- 2.2.a - Shape, advance and accelerate a shared vision for empowered learning with technology by engaging with education stakeholders.
- 2.2.b - Advocate for equitable access to educational technology, digital content and learning opportunities to meet the diverse needs of all students and tools for learning.

2.3 Citizen - Educators inspire students to positively contribute to and responsibly participate in the digital world.

- 2.3.a - Create experiences for learners to make positive, socially responsible contributions and exhibit empathetic behaviour online that build relationships and community.
- 2.3.b - Establish a learning culture that promotes curiosity and critical examination of online resources and fosters digital literacy and media fluency.
- 2.3.c - Mentor students in safe, legal and ethical practices with digital tools and the protection of intellectual rights and property.
- 2.3.d - Model and promote management of personal data and digital identity and protect student data privacy.

*** For high-resolution images, to use in class,
please click here**

ISBN CODES

Paperback ISBN 978-0-6457642-1-5

eBook ISBN 978-0-6457642-2-2

Hardcover ISBN 978-0-6457642-3-9

BISAC CODES

JUV039060 - JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship

JUV049000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Computers & Digital Media

JUV036000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Technology / General

JUV053000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Science Fiction / General

JUV012030 - JUVENILE FICTION / Fairy Tales & Folklore / General

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