

Meta Four

Written by Laura Snyder
Thursday, 11 March 2010 19:44 -

What has happened to our superheroes of the past? Superman, who was faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound - oh, and he could fly, too - went all loopy over Lois Lane in the 80's. He totally lost my respect when he slept with her in the snow cave. She didn't deserve him.

We still have some superheroes that have powers that relate to strength and speed or other physical attributes, but I always wondered where the heroes were that overthrow their opponents with brains instead of brawn: Heroes that could be role models for the math whiz or the English geek?

I am an English geek. Who are my heroes?

Today I am introducing the Meta Four; superheroes for the progressive wordsmith.

First, we have the Incredible Simile, who can take the likeness (or "as-ness") of any form; like a shape-shifter. Oh, there he is now! His sidekick is Miss Personification who makes inanimate objects sit up and take notice.

Then we have The Period who sounds like she could really kick butt on certain days of the month. In reality, though, the only thing she can do is stop the nefarious Run-On-Sentence. Run-On Sentence has been known to destroy entire paragraphs by reciting endless monologues. I don't know what we'd do without The Period to fight for us.

Captain Coordinating Conjunction can join two unrelated thoughts! Amazing! At my best, I struggle to put two related thoughts together. Since we are all friends, I can tell you that his alter ego is Andor Butt. With a name like that, it's easy to see why he chose to fight bad guys. He and Run-On-Sentence grew up together and were best friends until Coordinating Conjunction met The Period.

With his Subordinate Conjunction, who can turn into a preposition at the drop of a capital

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letter, the Captain battles for truth, justice and the Andor Buttian way.

The fourth member of the Meta Four is Professor X-clamation. He doesn't have true superpowers, per se, but he uses his powerful voice to interject at precisely the right moments. You'll notice that he interjected twice while I was yammering about Captain Coordinating Conjunction. Many people don't know that Professor X-clamation is the mastermind behind Batman's "Biff! Pow!" strategy in the old series.

Together, our superheroes and their sidekicks will rid the world of grammatical errors. Of course, so much evil abounds in Sentence City that there will always be miscreants making trouble for the humble residents.

For example, Double Negative. Twice as powerful as the Single Negative, he doesn't have the ability to not confuse our heroes with his mind-numbing whining. Single Negative is his twin brother and, incidentally, is one of the good guys.

The wicked Misspeller is a bumbling sorceress who causes havoc in Sentence City by changing street signs that lead people to the Porkway instead of the Parkway. She is easily defeated by a spell checker, but sometimes her methods are diabolically sneaky and need to be quashed by our Meta Four.

And, of course, Dangling Participle used to wander in dark alleys, but he's now doing hard time for indecent exposure.

Although, we, as citizens of Sentence City, have word processors and spell checkers to fight against the day to day obstruction of grammatical clarity, in the fight for proper English, we have no better friends than the Meta Four.