



## STUDENT GUIDE

### EVERYDAY HERO MACHINE BOY

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**Overview:** When Machine Boy falls from the sky into the domed city of Mega 416, he leaves a wake of destruction in his path... until Karate Grandpa is able to turn on his heart. Now, Machine Boy wants nothing more than to become a hero! Whether he is fighting giant bugs in the school's basement, rescuing cats from trees, or making the perfect spaghetti sauce, Machine Boy is always looking for the best way to help others. But when his heart begins to interact dangerously with other debris from space, Machine Boy wonders if he can be a power for good after all.

#### IMPORTANT SETTINGS

- Mr. Hounds Grocery
- Mega 416 (city)
- Mr. Hound's greenhouse
- Kobushi house
- Bathurst Secondary
- Universarium

#### NOTABLE CHARACTERS

- "Karate Grandpa" Goh Kobushi
- Grandma Mei Kobushi
- Machine Boy
- Mr. Hound
- Bea Sharpe
- Orphan Universe members:
  - Petit Dejeuner
  - Doki Doki Doki
  - King
  - KO
  - Chad

#### KEY THEMES

- Spaghetti
- Family
- Community
- Personified animals
- Martial arts
- Grief and loss
- Sense of belonging
- Friendship
- Self esteem



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who or what would you say is responsible for Goh's death? Was it the actions of one or more characters? Was it something that was destined to happen that day?
2. What did Mr. Hound's reaction to Mei Kobushi say about his character. What about how people respond to the death of one another's loved ones?
3. Discuss the symbolism of the bluebird throughout the book- from Machine Boy's first appearance, to the greenhouse, to the end. How does the bird make you feel and what do you think the symbolism is here?
4. What do you think "Don't rob tomorrow to feed today" means when Mei says it?
5. Osu is the Japanese word to "push" or "to endure." Discuss the significance of this word and concept throughout the story.
6. The bullies say that Machine Boy is "not even a legit person" (p. 44). Do you agree? At what point do you as a reader start to "forgive" Machine Boy for the chaos that takes place around him?
7. Discuss the concepts of loss and grief throughout the story: How do we see each of the main characters dealing with loss (of grandpa, of the car, of Tony, etc.)?
8. Grandma Mei says she and grandpa Goh do karate "to overcome." What activities do you turn to when you are facing stress or negative feelings?
9. When Machine Boy finds out Bea was an operative and not his friend the whole time (page 78), he initially says he won't help save 416. Is he being a "selfish coward" like Bea says? What would you do in that situation?
10. What does the story say about the concept of "family?" We see the Kobushis never had a child of their own. How does Mei and Goh's treatment of their community, including their students and Machine Boy, show their feelings on what family means?

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. Design your own robot, including a costume. Give it a name and some characteristics.
2. What's your favorite food? Ask your family for an old recipe for it, or find one online.
3. Write your own song lyrics/poem inspired by the book.



# TEACHER'S KEY

Reading/Interest Level: Grades 8-12

## Common Core Aligned Pre-Reading

### Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- Ask students to consider their idea of what makes a family. Is it blood relatives only, or is there a different way they define it? Have them go into the reading with these ideas in mind and examine if the story confirms or contradicts their initial thoughts.
- Talk to students about popular robot characters in movies, books and television. Are they able to connect with robots, on a human level? Why or why not? Find out if this changes after experiencing EHMB.

## ACTIVITY GUIDE

1. Have students design their own robot, including costume. They should give it a name along with basic characteristics.

Have them explain their design aesthetic and the inspiration behind their robot character. Lead a discussion about their ideas.

2. When mining for family recipes, be sensitive that some students may not have these types of traditions. Point them instead to recipe databases such as Tasty.co and AllRecipes.com. Encourage them to discover new recipes.
3. Like graphic novels, song lyrics are an often overlooked educational tool. Lyrics can speak to student's interests and experiences, and they should be encouraged here to apply previous lessons on poetry creation and self expression to this exercise.
4. Take the opportunity to discuss student answers to question 8 about skills for handling stress and anxiety. Consider leading into a more in depth social emotional learning discussion, tying to core SEL competencies (panoramaed.com).

## RECOMMENDED TITLES FOR FURTHER READING

- *Mech Cadet Yu* by Greg Pak, illustrated by Takeshi Miyazawa, BOOM! Studios, 2018.
- *Descender* by Jeff Lemire, illustrated by Dustin Nguyen, Image Comics, 2015.
- *Red Dog* by Ron Cohen, illustrated by Rob Atkins, 451 Media Group, 2016.

