

DIGITAL EVENT AND ACTIVITY KIT

For Retailers and Parents



Use this kit in conjunction with *Marcus Makes a Movie* for in-store events or at-home kid activities!

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR!

photo credit: Kevin Kwan



What's up, book people???

Kevin Hart here: comedian, actor, producer, entrepreneur . . . and now, children's author.

It's not the usual career move. But when I was growing up in North Philly, there weren't a whole lot of kids' books I could see myself in. I want to do my part to put some new faces on your shelves.

Even more, I want to INSPIRE KIDS—especially the kids like me, who didn't have much growing up—to DREAM BIG and work their butts off to make those dreams come true.

When I was coming up, all I heard was NO. No, you can't. . . . No, you're not good enough. . . . No, you don't have the right education or know the right people. . . . Blah blah blah. I'm stubborn, so I turned those NOs into fuel. Every time I heard one, it just made me work harder to prove wrong whoever said it.

But not every kid is like that. A lot of them hear NO and believe it. When they do, we ALL lose out. Because there's greatness in them! But if they quit before they even get started, it never has a chance to develop!

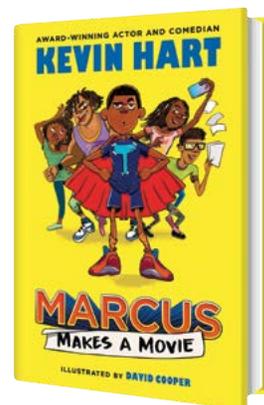
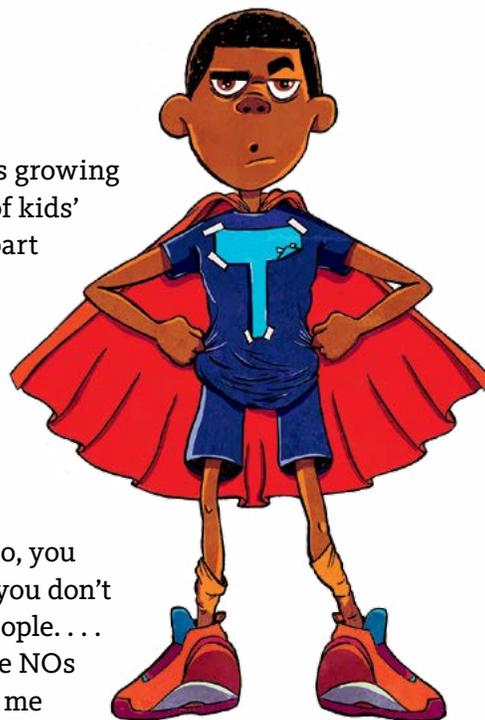
I wanted to create a story that'd help those kids believe in themselves by showing them somebody who's just like them, who draws his own road map and then follows it down a long, wild path to success.

The hero of *Marcus Makes a Movie* is a lot like I was growing up. He doesn't have money or connections; he's not a great student or a star athlete. But he's got BIG DREAMS, and he's willing to put in the HARD WORK to make them come true. As Marcus and his partner-in-hustle, Sierra, try to turn his superhero-movie idea into an ACTUAL movie, they hit a ton of roadblocks. And they screw up a LOT. But these kids NEVER QUIT—and by the end of this first story, they've created something they're proud of.

That's only the beginning of their journey. This is the first book in a series I'm cowriting with Geoff Rodkey, the dopest middle-grade author I know. We'll make EVERY kid who reads this book laugh, we'll make MOST of them cry (for real! Chapter 25's going to knock you on your butt, people!)—and if we did our jobs right, we'll inspire some of them to GET OUT THERE AND HUSTLE after their dreams the same way I did.

Enjoy! It's a fun ride! And we're just getting started!

Kevin



WRITE THE SCREENPLAY DRAFT

“What you need is the blueprint!”

Just like a blueprint is the plan you follow to build a house, a screenplay is the plan you follow to make a movie. Follow the steps below to create your screenplay! You will need a computer or a few extra sheets of paper for this one.



1. Give it a title!

PHONE ZOMBIES
by
Sierra Martinez

2. Set the scene

- Each scene has a heading that will tell your reader where it takes place and what time it is.
- These scenes start with either “INT.” for *interior* (if the scene takes place inside) or “EXT.” for *exterior* (if the scene is outside).
- Then you add where the scene happens and the time of day!

EXT. SIDEWALK - CENTER CITY - DAY

3. Add the Action

- Write what is happening in the scene in the *present tense*, like it is happening right in this moment!

TOOTHPICK walks down a city street, carrying a fishing pole.

4. Add the Characters and Dialogue

- Add character names in all caps and indent their name when they are about to speak.
- Speaking lines are called “dialogue.”

TOOTHPICK

I’m so glad I got a day off from fighting evil! Time to go fishing!



5. Make something happen!

- In every scene, something has to HAPPEN that moves the story forward.

A very upset WOMAN runs up to Toothpick.

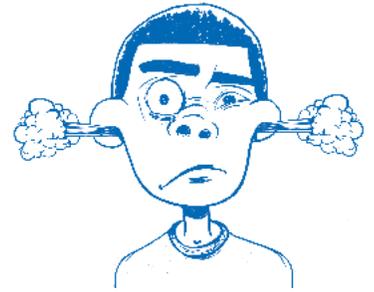
WOMAN

Help! The Doom stole my dog!

TOOTHPICK

No time for fishing! I gotta go to WORK!

Toothpick hands his fishing pole to the woman and runs off to save the day.



6. Keep adding scenes!

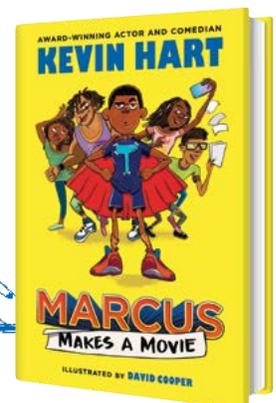
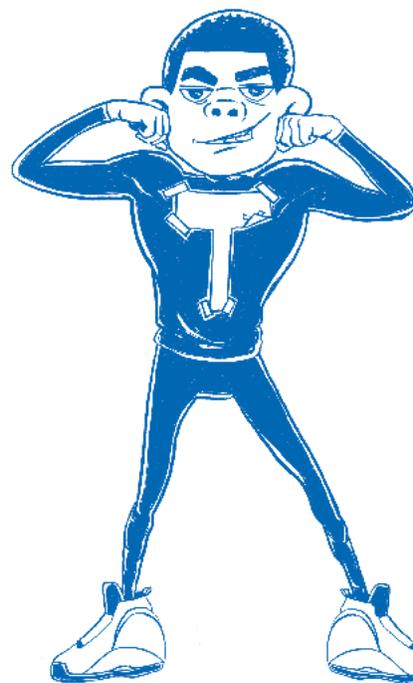
- Make sure every scene moves the story forward. First, your character learns more about the problem (Why did the Doom steal the dog?). The problem gets bigger (Is the Doom stealing LOTS of dogs? Is he training them to be an army of evil house pets?). Your character makes progress to solve their problem (Toothpick figures out where the Doom is keeping the dogs!), but they experience a setback that makes it harder to solve their problem (The dogs have been brainwashed and attack Toothpick when he tries to save them!).

From screenwriter and author Geoff Rodkey!

WRITE AND REWRITE!

“You gotta sit your butt in the chair. Write the BAD version first. Then you REwrite it. Make it GOOD. But you can’t write the good version till AFTER you write the bad version.”

The only way to become a screenwriter is by practicing! You have to hustle to make it happen. Don’t be afraid to write and rewrite your screenplay. You can look up screenwriting online or find books in your local library to learn more techniques. Who knows—maybe someday it will become a MOTION PICTURE! Remember, if you can dream it, you can definitely DO it!



For Parents and Retailers!

Use these questions to lead a discussion about *Marcus Makes a Movie*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do the kids in *Marcus Makes a Movie* take control of their project? How can you apply this to your own life? Describe a time when you felt empowered and in charge.
- Why is it so important for Marcus to film in the hospital? What kinds of issues does this decision cause in his friendships? How does it affect his movie?
- What kinds of emotions did you feel when you read about why filming in the hospital was so important to Marcus? Why do you think Hart decided to reveal the reasons behind Marcus's need to film there slowly?
- Marcus's mom's death is a defining moment in his life that drives many of his actions and emotions throughout the book. What is one of your defining moments, silly or serious?
- What kind of friend is J.R.? What kind of friend is Sierra? Why do you say this? Compare and contrast Marcus's friendships with J.R. and Sierra. What makes Sierra a different kind of friend than J.R.? Be sure to use specific evidence.
- In order to get help with his movie, Marcus has to help others. Have you ever experienced this in your life? Explain. What other examples of relationship-building do you witness in this book?
- Marcus wants to give up several times throughout the book, but he pushes through and finishes his movie. What is his driving force? What is something that you are passionate about? Were there moments you had to decide whether to give up or to continue? How did you make your decision? How does Marcus make his? What does this reveal about his character?
- How does Marcus change throughout the story?

For further at-home learning,
assisted by parents!

STEP INTO THEIR SHOES

Marcus Makes a Movie is about a young and gifted Black protagonist who creates something incredible. This story allows Black kids and other kids of color to see themselves as the main characters of a story, while also allowing white students to see their classmates in the spotlight.

Marcus learns empathy throughout his filmmaking process. Likewise, this activity gets at the heart of learning empathy. Celebrating people of color and what they accomplish is important for cultivating a diverse and respectful community both inside and outside the classroom. In this activity, have your child pick a famous person who is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC) to focus on. This person can be famous in any way you choose (e.g., artists, scientists, historical figures). After researching a BIPOC's life, have your child write a letter as Marcus to this person, exploring common ground. Ask your child, "What does Marcus think they have in common? How do they both face struggle? Are they both funny?" Then you can take it a step further and ask your kid, "How are you, Marcus, and the BIPOC you researched alike? How are you different? What makes your famous person just like the rest of us? What makes them 'famous'?" When kids learn about people who are like them and who are different from them, and then celebrate those similarities and differences, the community is strengthened. Plus, it's just cool to be kind.



Adapted from the teaching guide written by Room 228 Educational Consulting, with public school teacher Shanika Parker as lead teacher. To learn more, visit rm228.com.

This activity is great for in-store events or at home!

MARCUS MAKES A _____ (You Fill in the Blank!)



Marcus makes a movie with his comics, but what other art forms could we make using a comic? What if *Marcus Makes a Movie* was actually *Marcus Makes a Play*? Or a song? Or a _____? Change the tune! Kids can make a play, song, dance, sculpture, or anything else using Marcus's comics. The possibilities are endless! Your kids are in control! They are the expert artists and creators. This project can be a collaborative effort or it could be an individual project. Working together builds community, and if we lead by Marcus's example, we can see that everyone can be part of creating something special. Marcus was able to cast Big Tyrell to play DOOM, even though he was scared of him. Now that's community building. Everyone has a place in this project.

- Kids choose the art form they want to use to tell Marcus's story. This new art form should explore the themes, conflicts, and feelings that Marcus examines in his comics. Be sure to have kids thinking and discussing before they jump in. They can work in partners or groups based on interest (e.g., kids who like to paint might design a painting, students who love to dance can choreograph a dance, students who love to sing or rap might write and perform a song). Groups can even collaborate with one another! If one group writes a song, another group might choreograph a dance to it and perform it.
- Provide check-in opportunities for groups as they prepare their art. Remind kids to really think about how particular elements of their art are telling Marcus's story. And if they notice that Marcus's comic story overlaps with Marcus's personal story, give them a high five. Okay, that may be too corny, but definitely celebrate their thinking.
- Once kids have perfected their craft, have them perform for or share with the larger group! Before, during, or after the performances, ask guiding questions, like "How does an artist or illustrator create feelings in their characters? How do other artists (e.g., dancers, painters, writers, rappers, sculptors) create feelings, express worry, fear, relief, etc. in their art? How are these art forms different? How are they similar?" This is such a special way to build trust in a community, to celebrate art, and to provide an opportunity for kids to showcase what they are learning and what new knowledge they are building from that learning.



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MAKE YOUR OWN COMIC

Using the panels below, draw your own comic just like Marcus does with Toothpick! The comic can be about superheroes or anything else you like! Be sure to include speech bubbles when characters are talking and thought bubbles when they're thinking.

