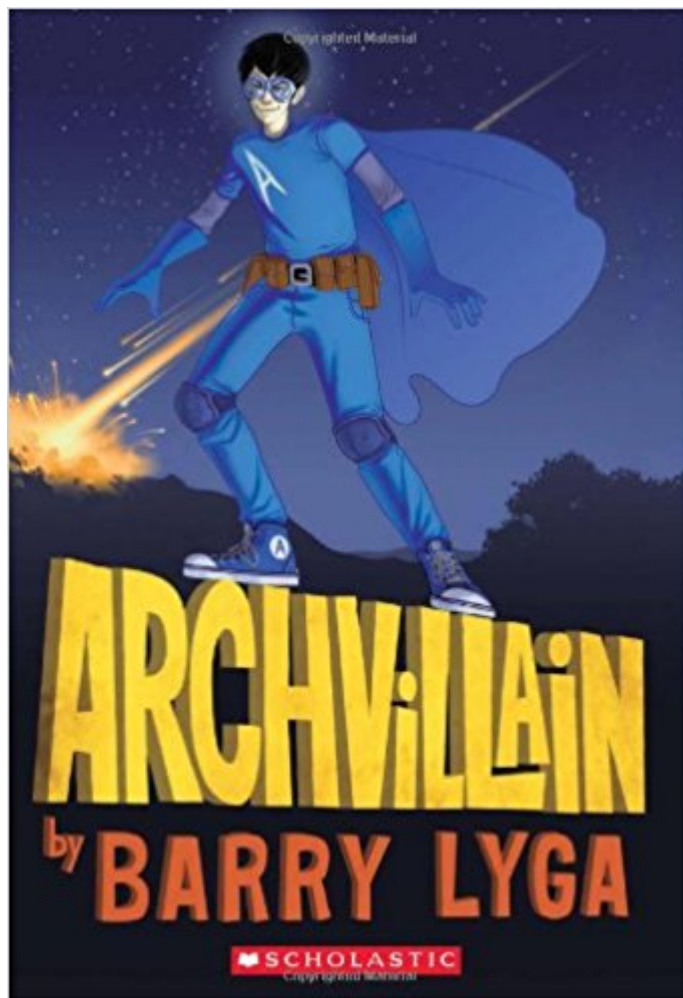


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# Archvillain #1



## Synopsis

Critically acclaimed author Barry Lyga's middle-grade debut ARCHVILLAIN now in paperback! Kyle Camden knows exactly where he was the night Mighty Mike arrived: sneaking around the fallow field behind Bouring Middle School, preparing one of his most ingenious pranks yet. Which is why he couldn't tell anyone where he was. Or what he saw. Those lights everyone saw in the sky weren't tiny meteors burning up in the atmosphere. They were some kind of strange, supercooled plasma that bathed the entire field -- including Kyle -- in alien energies. Unfortunately, the energies also brought Mighty Mike to Earth. Kyle is the only one who knows that Mighty Mike is an alien. Everyone else thinks that Mike is just some kid who stumbled into the field, got beefed up on meteor juice, lost his memory, and decided to start rescuing kittens from trees. But Kyle knows the truth. And he'll do anything in his power to stop Mighty Mike, even if it means being an Archvillain!

## Book Information

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Age Range: 9 and up

Grade Level: 4 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 5-7 "Sixth-grader Kyle is smart, popular, and the planner of high-quality pranks. Then an encounter with a mysterious "space plasma" leaves him with cosmic intellect, super-strength, and the ability to fly. Kyle loves his new skills, but decides it's safest to keep them under wraps. However, the plasma has brought something else as well "a strange boy whom Kyle strongly suspects is an alien. Mighty Mike has superpowers too "but he isn't shy about exercising them in

public. Mike quickly becomes a sensation with adults as well as kids, even though his good deeds don't always go smoothly. Kyle resents Mike taking over his top-dog status and suspects that the newcomer may have more sinister schemes in mind. He plans a super prank to expose him, but things get disastrously out of hand. There is a subtle underlying message about perception vs. reality. Kyle is not a particularly admirable character. He is self-centered and frequently uses his newfound powers to manipulate people. Much of his vaunted popularity seems to rest on his ability to humiliate others, especially in setting up grudge pranks on request. His crowd is quick to switch allegiance when a new sensation comes along. The author takes some sly digs at popular culture as well. The question of Mike's true identity is left unresolved. Is he an earnest, if somewhat naïve superhero or are Kyle's rather cynical suspicions on track? Who is the good guy and who is really the archvillain? Tune in next time....Elaine E. Knight, Lincoln Elementary Schools, IL© Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

When Kyle Camden comes to after something fishy happens during a night plasma storm, he feels stronger, faster, smarter. As he already considers himself quite the supergenius (devoted to showing folks how dumb they are), he now feels even better about how great he is. That's until Mighty Mike, a kid who mysteriously appeared right around the same time as that plasma storm, shows up and annoyingly starts flying around, saving every day of the week. Kyle's convinced Mike is an alien, and he sets out to defrock the caped imposter by donning a costume of his own and embarrassing him in public. Motivated almost entirely by jealousy and petty spite, Kyle is a far cry from a sympathetic character—in fact, many kids will see nothing more of his swelled head than a most swirly-worthy target. But he plays the antihero part with comic aplomb, and Lyga displays a nice grasp of superhero tropes (especially the gadgetry, with radiation-dampening antennas and the ilk) that middle-grade boys will flock to. Grades 4-7. --Ian Chipman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A very charming read. Kyle is a bit of a snob but the author carries it off well and the premise is interesting and well done, The writing is a delight and I enjoyed all the characters,

Great book, nerdy and funny at the same time. Barry Luca is great. I hope that the mad mask and yesterday again are this good.

I will start off by stating I was excited to read this. I made my pledge to not read any more books from the library(see post from yesterday), but this one came in and I had to read it. Why? Because I enjoy the writing of this author. However, this one did not really do it for me. This is no Fanboy or Boy Toy in my mind. Maybe if I had not been reading middle grade sci-fi nonstop for the last month I would have liked it better, but compared to some other novels it just did not rise to the occasion. I did not like the main character. Kyle just irritated me from the start. His boldness about how cool he was due to his pranks bothered me. There was nothing about him I liked. If there was someone like that in my school I would be very surprised to see him/her with many friends. Mighty Mike arrives and I did not care for him either. He is so perfect in a superhero-esque way. He was too perfect and too nice and at the same time completely stupid not being able to speak correctly and being oblivious to all aspects of Earth. The story ends with it being wide open with no real closure just Kyle preparing for his next prank. This too bothered me as I understand that series make more money, but this one does not need to continue. If it does(maybe I am alone on my thoughts), then at least provide some type of closure as I felt like I was missing some final pages. I hate to be negative of any book because I know that not everyone thinks like me. Don't deter your thoughts about reading this book because of my views. This is a superb author who I enjoy reading, but this one just did not grab me. However, maybe it will grab you. I always state that I will be honest and I did just that even though I feel bad for doing so.

These days superheroes are popping out everywhere in our media. We've got television shows like No Ordinary Family and the upcoming The Cape series, and 2011 will be a bumper crop of superheroes flying to the big screen. Personally, I can't wait. So my Spidey senses have been more alert than usual, seeking out the superheroic reads. However, I missed a perfect little gem that popped out onto the shelves in October. Thankfully I've since rectified that mistake and am now taking steps to make sure you don't make the same mistake. Barry Lyga's Archvillain is just wonderful storytelling. The thing that makes this book remarkable is how deftly Lyga takes his readers into the viewpoint of the bad guy in the story. Let me correct that. Kyle Camden doesn't actually set out to be the villain. It just kind of happens to him. The way bad things will to any kid his age who's trying to find his way in the world. Kyle's whole mission in life is to try to get people to stop taking themselves so seriously. Unfortunately, he doesn't know when to back off his mission and stay in safe territory. He's been in hot water off and on throughout his entire life. The night he got a bath in some strange kind of plasma that may be from another planet just made things worse. Now Kyle is super smart, invulnerable to almost everything, and can fly. No one can stop him from doing

what he wants to. Except his own innate ability to screw things up. I laughed out loud at some of the things Kyle set his sights on (Pants Laser? To blast the pants off his nemesis, Mighty Mike? C'mon, that there's funny!) The night he got his bath, another boy showed up with superpowers as well. No one knows where Mighty Mike came from, and he's got amnesia (so he says) and can't remember anything of his past. Kyle suspects Mighty Mike is an alien from another planet who's bent on controlling the earth if he can. The problem is that as smart as Kyle is, that's about as dumb as Mighty Mike is. Mighty Mike has no real intellect to speak of, yet he always gets acknowledged for being a hero - even when some of the things he's being given credit for were done by the Azure Avenger (Kyle). His bad luck shows up again when no one remembers his cool name and instead start calling him the Blue Freak. But Kyle devotes his energies to debunking the hero worship the community turns on Mighty Mike, and there are huge laughs along the way. Even as smart as he is, Kyle can't think of everything. He alters his parents' brain, creates a smart-alecky sidekick, and even cobbles together a few other devices (like Mimi). The book really struck a chord with me regarding Superman's relationship with Lex Luthor. Kyle almost sounds a lot like Luthor, jealous, wary, paranoid, and egotistical, but somehow Lyga pulls all that together and makes Kyle loveable. I loved the familiar ring the story had too, though, and thought the author had set everything up wonderfully. I read the book in a couple sittings. My 13 year old, on my recommendation, read the book yesterday. Couldn't put it down. This is one of those books you give to reluctant readers (especially boys) and watch them crawl into a fun world that they'll want more of. Thankfully, this is the first book of a series. Lyga promises more volumes to come. And he's hooked me because I really want to know who the villain truly is and where Mighty Mike came from.

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