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## My First Superhero, Sort Of

By PAMELA PAUL

### SUPER DIAPER BABY 2

**The Invasion of the Potty Snatchers**

Written and illustrated by Dav Pilkey

189 pp. Blue Sky/Scholastic. \$9.99. (Middle grade; ages 7 to 10)

At what point does a parent of young children stop condemning potty talk and simply throw up his or her hands and let the scatological speech spill forth? The lure of toilet-related topics seems as inevitable as potty training itself, as if once out of diapers, children are unable to resist the conversational detritus they might otherwise have left behind.

This may explain the wild popularity of Dav Pilkey's "Captain Underpants" series. (More than 46 million copies in print. Yes, that's right.) In 2002, the books spawned what was perhaps an inevitable spinoff, "The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby." Fans have had to wait 10 long years for a follow-up, which appeared in bookstores yesterday: "Super Diaper Baby 2: The Invasion of the Potty Snatchers."

Like its predecessor, the new book is "written" by the team of George Beard and Harold Hutchins, ne'er-do-well schoolboys — "2 ridonkulous kids" in the oft-misspelled argot of the author — who fell afoul of their teacher, Mr. Krupp, after writing the first "Diaper Baby" installment. When Mr. Krupp gives them a copy of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" to broaden their literary horizons, George and Harold interpret their teacher's intentions in their own messy way.

Here's what children will like: the second volume's steadfast devotion to bathroom humor; multiple "Flip-o-Ramas" simulating animation in the style of old-timey flipbooks; the return of the irrepressible hero, Super Diaper Baby, and his sidekick, Diaper Dog, and the appearance of a worthy villain, Rip Van Tinkle.

And here's what grown-ups will like: misspellings so obvious they will make even the most "inventive" spellers recognize the error of their ways; the rare sight of an African-American literary hero, albeit pint-sized, and his parents forming a positive depiction of an African-American family; scratched-out text that will remind young readers and doodlers that art and literature need not be perfect but, rather, are often works in progress.

Grown-ups will also like the happy Father's Day ending. But most of all, they'll appreciate children laughing as they dive in and page through this old-fashioned thing called a book. (And on a topic for the ages.)

