

The Hope Machine

Let me tell you – it's not easy being an Evil Super-Genius when you're ten years old. Firstly, nobody respects you or your evil plans. Secondly, my Evil Super-Genius laugh sounds more like a giggle because I still have quite a high voice. Thirdly, all the adults have already copyrighted all the cool superhero and villain names. So – and do not laugh unless you wish to die – my alter ego is ... The Deadly Pencil. Trust me, I tried every possible combination of names and they were all taken. And my superhero nemeses are Sensible Boy, Captain Coventry, and Llama Boy and Goat Girl. Also – the movies are wrong. There are *so many* superheroes. It's so tiresome – *everybody* wants to be a goodie. I'm completely outnumbered. They all get to hang out

together and I'm completely by myself. But that's how I like it.

So, I have to come up with evil schemes, and that's why I invented the Hope Machine. If you hadn't guessed, it's a machine which makes hopes come true. Dangerous technology if it fell into the wrong hands though. Can you imagine? It would be all 'world peace' this and 'love and happiness' that.

Yuck.

The first time I attached the Hope Machine's mind-reading helmet, I closed my eyes and hoped that something horrible happened to Goat Girl (she had just foiled one of my evil schemes), and it worked *perfectly*. I found out the next day that one of her goats had eaten her cape and pooped in her helmet.

The second thing I hoped for worked so well it backfired. I hoped I would finally get some respect and that I'd be treated like a proper Evil Super-Genius. The following day I woke up to find my house completely surrounded by superheroes. And not just Llama Boy – all the big ones were there. They insisted I come out and

apologise for being naughty and I had to promise to behave from then on. I had no choice but to agree.

So undignified.

The final time I used the Hope Machine was the night before my birthday. After the embarrassment of having to apologise, I decided to finish them once and for all; I hoped for DEATH TO ALL SUPERHEROES! I went to sleep wearing the Hope Machine helmet just to make EXTRA sure my hope came true.

That was a very bad idea.

I awoke the next day to the doorbell ringing. I answered it to find all my nemeses on the doorstep.

They were *not* dead.

They were very much alive and carrying balloons and cards and presents. All for me.

There was a cake, and they sang 'Happy Birthday' and they gave me a huge party with games and dancing.

It was all perfectly *dreadful*. Clearly, the machine had gone horribly faulty whilst I was sleeping and for some reason thought I hoped for fun and happiness.

Now I'm stuck with having *friends*. And I even

caught myself *smiling* this morning – and it wasn't even a super-villain evil grin.

Double-yuck.

Obviously, I have thrown the Hope Machine in the bin.

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Vocabulary ('The Hope Machine' by Sam Copeland)

1. On the second page, the word *dreadful* is in italics. Why has the author done this?
2. Write two other words the author could have used instead of the word *dreadful*.
3. Find a word that means the same as 'laugh'.
4. The author uses the word *undignified*. What does that word mean?
5. Why is the title of this story 'The Hope Machine'?

Retrieval ('The Hope Machine' by Sam Copeland)

1. Name three superheroes the evil superhero refers to as *nemeses*.
2. Give two reasons why it is not easy being an Evil Superhero Genius.
3. Why was sleeping wearing the Hope Machine helmet a bad idea?
4. Who is the narrator of this story? How do you know?
5. How did the evil superhero feel when all the other superheroes turned up on his doorstep early in the morning? Why?

Summarise/Predict ('The Hope Machine' by Sam Copeland)

1. Summarise the key events of this story (use bullet points)
2. What is the main message of this story?
3. Based on what you have read, what does the author suggest in the last paragraph might happen next? Predict.
4. What would you do in this situation? What do you think the character might do?

Explain/Compare ('The Hope Machine' by Sam Copeland)

1. Compare the feelings of the evil superhero at the beginning and end of the story.
2. Explain how the evil superhero is different to the other superheroes.
3. At what point does the atmosphere change in the story? Justify your answer using the text.
4. Can you think of another story, which has a similar theme/situation? How are they similar/ different?

Inference ("The Hope Machine' by Sam Copeland)

1. How can you tell that the evil superhero doesn't like the other superheroes? Explain using clues in the text.
2. Describe one incident where the evil superhero's wish came true.
3. Using the evidence from the story, draw a picture of Evil Superhero Genius. Write key words around to describe him.

