



## A PARENT/TEACHER STUDY GUIDE

### PART I: SKILLS REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does Cody help James gain confidence at the bowling alley?
2. What else does James do to build his confidence?
3. What does James do at the literary party to help himself overcome his fear of talking to people?
4. What two different approaches does David take to handle Eve's bullying?
5. What does James do about Bram's bullying that doesn't work?
6. What does James do about Bram's bullying that does work?

### PART II: READING COMPREHENSION & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. An archetype is often a type of character we see across many different stories from many different eras. For instance, DC's Superman, Marvel's Hyperion, and Image's Omni-Man are archetypes of the noble strong man that originated in ancient mythologies, including Greek and Roman. Can you identify an archetype for each of the main characters in *The Crimson Protector*: James, Gizmo, Bram, Eve, and Cody? What characteristics did you notice that suggested each archetype?

2. Throughout *The Crimson Protector*, there are both subtle and direct references to several other works of literature, including novels like F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and superhero comic books like Marvel's *Thor*, *Daredevil*, and *The Incredible Hulk* and DC's *Superman* and *Nightwing*. To what extent do these references enhance the themes of Kranzler's novel? Perhaps choose one or two of the literary allusions to examine more closely.
3. What are the main factors that lead James to become the Crimson Protector? How do his experiences and influences up to that point contribute to the superhero he creates for himself? Consider his costume, tools and weapons, and approach to heroism.
4. To what extent does James change after he becomes the Crimson Protector? Be sure to consider both the positive and negative changes.
5. Examine the key relationships James has throughout the story (Gizmo, Cody, Bram, Eve, Josh, his parents, Jessica, Frank). How does each one contribute to who James ultimately becomes at the end of the novel?
6. In each encounter with Bram, both as James and as the Crimson Protector, to what extent does James do the right thing? This question will require that you first establish a context for what *you* believe to be the right thing, a lens through which you may explore James' behavior.
7. Although Eve never actually changes during the narrative, through James' perspective the reader sees a major shift in her character. What impact does this shift have on James and, as a result, on the reader? What does Eve's character suggest about socialization, especially among young people?

### PART III: BONUS QUESTIONS

1. For those who have also read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, go on a literary scavenger hunt and try to list as many of Kranzler's allusions to it in his book. How do the themes in that classic American novel inform the plot, setting, characters, and themes in *The Crimson Protector*?
2. For those who have read more than a handful of superhero comics, or who have watched superhero films or television series, go on another scavenger hunt and try to list as many of Kranzler's references to existing superhero characters and concepts. To what extent would an intimate knowledge of superhero history and literature influence the reading of this novel?