

# DEAD MAX COMIX

FURBALL OF THE APOCALYPSE!

## Discussion Guide

By Dana Sullivan



1. Derrick's sister hangs out in his room with him to hide from their mom, who drinks a lot. How do you think their mother's drinking problem affects them? Do you think it has brought Derrick and his sister closer together?
2. Derrick's sister says he uses his art to deal with his problems in a way she envies. How do you think making art helps Derrick? What are some healthy things you do to help you handle your problems?
3. Why do you think Derrick decides to have Dr. Stein save Dr. Frank—rather than having Dr. Frank save Dr. Stein—in his comic? Do you think it was a good change?
4. Why do you think Derrick gets nervous when his sister buys him “good” paper to draw his comics on? Do you think it puts more pressure on him to do well?
5. Doug reveals that Derrick hasn't told him much about his mom. Why do you think Derrick chooses not to tell his friends about her? Do you think talking about her and her drinking problem would help him?
6. Why do you think Max finally decides to write about his mom in the comic?
7. How does plastic harm the environment? What are some things we can do to reduce the amount of plastic that ends up in the ocean?
8. What do you think Derrick's mom means when she calls Max's urn a “crutch?” Why do you think he holds on to it? Do you think it's a bad thing that he still has it?
9. Do you agree with Derrick's mom that it's time for him to move on from Max?
10. What do you think the overall message of the book is? What did you learn from reading it?



### Book Details

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## About Book 4

Derrick's goldfish friends, Finn and Gillian, have gone missing! Things take a turn for the weird when Derrick realizes his two science teachers are also nowhere to be found. Is it possible Finn and Gillian have been transformed into giant teacher-snatching zombie-robot piranhas? Could mysterious postcards hold the answers? And what do plankton, plastic, and the fate of the oceans have to do with missing persons and punny, piscatorial pets? The game is on, and Max and Derrick are on the case... but they could be headed for the deadest of ends as they battle to bag the menacing **Furball of the Apocalypse!**



## About the series

Middle school can be survival of the “fitting-in” at best. In Dead Max Comix, Derrick discovers that his secrets aren’t as scary as he thought, and that he’s not much different than other kids. Dead Max Comix is a light-hearted touch at accepting yourself and not letting something as trivial as your dog getting killed by a car or your parents divorcing get in the way of finding your own way.

—“Every socially-isolated cartoonist kid needs an invisible friend. Derrick has found his in his dead dog Max.”

—David Small, Caldecott-winning author of *Home After Dark*, *Stitches*, *Bloom* and more

## About the Author-Illustrator

Dana Sullivan grew up in Southern California drawing on every piece of paper he could find. He kept at it until someone finally published his books. He’s written and illustrated dozens. He even teaches picture book and graphic novel classes. Dana now lives near Seattle. You can see more of his work at [www.danasullivan.com](http://www.danasullivan.com).

