



Hero

by Perry Moore | ★★★★★

Y.A.
NOVEL

Moore's compelling fiction debut is about Thom Creed, a likable teen who's dealing with some heavy issues. He's a fledgling superhero with a crippling crush on his hunky do-gooder idol, Uberman, and he can't tell anyone. His dad is a disgraced former hero himself, the two are pariahs in their hometown, and any mention of being gay and superpowered around the dinner table is blasphemous. But when Thom is offered a shot at joining the League (a heroes guild,

sort of like SAG only with bigger muscles), he's forced to reconcile his sexuality, face his father's legacy, save the world and grow up—all at the same time. Being a teenager is much more taxing, apparently, when you're wearing tights.

The author, a producer of the *Chronicles of Narnia* film series, has a good grip on the problems teens face; as Thom navigates the politics of high school and the League, he discovers that what sets him apart is also what makes him strong. "I'm a firm believer that you have to create your own miracles," says Ruth, one of his teammates. "There's no pearly white gates with an open bar and all the Midori you can drink."

This is funny, touching stuff written for teens but engaging enough for adults. Moore's characters are enigmatic misfits whose struggles to belong are totally believable, whether or not they've got the ability to fly, light themselves on fire or see the future.—J.D.

