



# The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man

*Michael Chabon , Jake Parker (Illustrator)*

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Awesome Man can shoot positronic rays out of his eyeballs, fly as straight as an arrow, and hug mutant Jelly-O! Even villains like Professor Von Evil and the Flaming Eyeball are no match for this caped crusader.

But Awesome Man also has a secret. . . . Can you guess what it is?

The first picture book from Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Michael Chabon perfectly captures the fantasy life of young superhero fans.

## The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man Details

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Author : Michael Chabon , Jake Parker (Illustrator)

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# From Reader Review The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man for online ebook

## Scarlett Sims says

This is a perfect example of what a children's book should be. I heard that Michael Chabon was sick of kids books that had too many words in them so he set out to write a book that kids would actually like and he really really succeeded. There aren't too many words on each page, so a kid trying to read it himself wouldn't get overwhelmed. The story is fairly easy to understand and he uses current language, so there aren't a lot of dated words or concepts the kids will need explained. I don't know how well the book will hold up--in 20 years I'm not sure kids will enjoy it; it's a bit of an artifact of a current post-ironic climate, but for kids now, it's a winner. Even though the cover indicates that it is a "boy book," my girls really enjoyed it, too.

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## Kayla says

I initially gave this book 4 stars, but I've bumped it up the a full 5 after reading it a few more times. Here's why:

- Not too many children's books continue to amuse me after rereading several times (in a row). This one does. In fact, it's even better the second time through because, knowing the "twist" at the end, you pick up on the clues to Awesome Man's secret identity throughout the story.

- The tone is pretty hilarious ("I'm basically just awesome") and fun to read aloud with a bit of swagger.

- It has everything a superhero loving kiddo could want--positronic laser beams, squishy slime, bad-guy butt-kicking, a sidekick super dog...

- I love the underlying message of self-control. Awesome Man describes what he does to calm himself down when he gets angry, which is a great message for kids.

- The illustrations are cool and keep my kids' attention.

- My 7-year-old daughter and nearly-5-year-old son both enjoy it.

- I feel like some of the negative reviews on here are inaccurate and unfair. Just seeing that anyone could give this book 1 star is plenty of motivation for me to give it 5 (but this is the least of my reasons).

Bottom line: it's a winner in our house.

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## Kaethe says

I'd have liked Awesome Man more, I'm sure, had I never read Traction Man Is Here! or Traction Man Meets Turbo Dog. The art is perfect for the tone; I just happened to fall in love with a similar book before.

Library copy.

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## Robert Owens says

What a cute book!

My five-year old son loves superheroes. Awesome Man is right up his alley. He had read it with his aunt prior to bringing it to me to read to him. He loved showing me all the kewl things in it. I really liked how the shadows of Awesome Man changed.

My son asked me if I had a secret identity when we finished. How neat is that?

I liked the story and the awesome grip that Awesome Man has. The illustrations complemented the story perfectly. Good job!

This is a good book to use with my fourth graders. Good similes and onomatopoeia are seen throughout.  
\*\*\*\*

How best to bring the end of Spring Break? Reading *Awesome Man*, of course. Fritz brought this book downstairs this morning. He kept showing me the kewl shadows in the book and speaking of secret identities. After the cooking was done, it was time to read this again.

Getting into announcer mode a la the original Superman, we had a blast reading about the positrons, Flashing Eyeball, and the super power grip. After this awesome experience, Fritz provided me with a power grip of his own. Yeah, that was totally awesome!

Read this book!  
\*\*\*\*

Fritz spent the day in a water park and then riding rides on the boardwalk. It was an exhausting day. Even though it was late and he was obviously tired, he still wanted a bedtime story. He selected our favorite here. :)

My buddy is awesome!  
\*\*\*\*

Now that my boy is older, I have co-opted the book for my classroom. ;)

Love this book! So do my students. This year I had a special surprise for my students (and visiting teachers) with this book.

My classroom decor is superheroes. As such, this book fits in well. I decided to move this read way up in the school year. This year we read it on day 2. After discussing the book, I let them in on the secret: I am Awesome Man. They giggled and laughed. Then I said, "I can prove it!"

At that, I calmed the students and said, "Okay Google, what is my name." And the cardboard assistant Fritz and I had built last year responded, "You are Awesome Man!"

The class howled! :)

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## Quinn Rollins says

Perusing books on GoodReads, I stumbled across a picture book I hadn't heard of before, written by one of my favorite authors. Michael Chabon has been a favorite of mine since reading *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*. That book that fictionalizes the comic book writers of the 1930s cemented the name Michael Chabon with superheroes, and even though he hasn't written anything in that genre since, when I

saw this picture book I ran out and picked it up.

The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man is a 2011 hardback picture book, illustrated by Jake Parker. This is the first picture book from Chabon, and the first from Parker as well--and is their first collaboration. If this book is any indication, I'd love to see them work together again.

Awesome Man is a superhero--flying, red-caped, masked superhero. He can:

Fly as high as a satellite

And as straight as an arrow

Or through the time barrier and not get dizzy, or feel nauseous, or smash into things...except on purpose. When you are a superhero like me, sometimes you have to smash into things.

We go with Awesome Man on a patrol through the big city, where he takes on villains like mutant Jell-O from outer space, and giant killer robots, and Professor Von Evil. He almost tells us his secret identity halfway through the book, but is distracted by another threat. So the "astonishing" secret identity is put aside until the end of the book. My boys thought they guessed the secret identity on a page that has a Clark Kent-looking fellow, but they were wrong. Excellent red herring, boys.

The book is told using Awesome Man's voice--exuberant and child-like, which makes it a lot of fun to read aloud. After reading it to my sons (ages 7 and 9), they read it a second time to each other, giggling at the heroics happening on each page.

Jake Parker's illustrations are beautiful, with the bright colors of a comic book. Awesome Man looks like he's part Superman and part Incredible, and is instantly recognizable as a superhero. The pictures are playful and have the clean lines of animation. There's a lot of action, crumpling robots and flying through the skies, but with an innocent joy that removes any real danger. Every page is fun to look at as well as to read aloud, a tribute to Mr. Parker's skill. A favorite page shows the Fortress of Awesome, Awesome Man's underground headquarters. That page alone could fire kids' imagination for days--I know it did mine.

The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man is a fun book for anyone who's a fan of superheroes, and while paying tribute to several different heroes, isn't just an imitation of any of them in particular. It's a great picture book that gets it all right. If you've got kids who love The Incredibles, or Superman or Batman or Captain America, they'll love this book. Goodness knows we did.

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## **Nancy Kotkin says**

A kid imagines himself as a flying superhero who fights villains with "positronic rays shooting out of his eyeballs." A little too violent for me personally, though probably within acceptable standards for many parents, teachers, and librarians. Not the most original picture book, but will probably make a hit with the superhero-loving crowd. I wish the dog had a bigger role, especially as he is featured on the cover of the book.

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## **Scott Foley says**

I've often said that Michael Chabon is one of America's preeminent contemporary authors, so when I heard he had a children's picture book available, I jumped at the chance to procure one on behalf of my three-year-old.

Michael Chabon's *The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man* is cute and innocent and consistent with what we know and love about super heroes. The story follows the adventures of Awesome Man as he teases an astonishing secret throughout.

Personally, I found it a tad violent for my three-year-old because of the hitting and fighting. Also, some of the language was not appropriate for her (but we're talking "kick a little behind" and "what the heck" ... nothing too serious). I have no doubt that in another year or two I'll be more comfortable letting her look at it.

It should be noted, however, that my daughter asked me to read it to her for three days straight after reading it to her only once ... and she referred to it as "Awesome Man," so clearly the one time I read it to her resonated.

Jake Parker's artwork is beautiful. The pictures are fun, colorful, charismatic, and I love the dots in places replicating the way comic books were once colored.

An instant favorite with my daughter, *The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man* is a harmless, engaging picture book that, while a tad too violent for my three-year-old because of the fighting, will surely delight those a little older.

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## **Maya says**

I have to give this 5 stars because Miles loves it So. Much! I think this is a great superhero book for a 3.5 year old because some of the things that are difficult about sharing superhero stories with a kid that age are not present here. the "bad guys" are silly and not at all realistic. Their bad deeds are just being sort of scary or making a big slimy mess. And Awesome Man's secret identity is a perfect reveal for a kid who is constantly pretending to be someone/something else. Took this out of the library, but I will be buying a copy soon.

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## **Rachel says**

I know we're not necessarily on Good Reads looking for children's books, so I have never reviewed any. But this book was so much fun, my boys unanimously agree that we need to purchase it once we've returned it to the library. Its such a clever book, and if you read it like a circa 1960s super hero, you'll laugh yourself, and your three year old will bring it to you every morning and ask you to read it again, and again, and again....

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### **Ch13\_megan Carlisle says**

The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man is an awesomely hilarious debut picture book from Pulitzer Prize winning author Michael Chabon and animation illustrator Jake Parker. Awesome Man is a super hero who can do no wrong. He has an Awesome Power Grip, shoots positronic rays out of his eyeballs and lives in a secret fortress under the Arctic Ocean. Throughout the story the reader is trying to discover Awesome Man's secret identity. Will they find out before the book is over?

The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man is well paced story filled with laughs for children and the adults reading with them. The illustrations give a nod to superhero's of the past. While reading, children are introduced to a variety of words that are unique to this type of text: positron, arch nemesis and antimatter, just to name a few.

This text is great for 1-4 grade. Younger children will enjoy trying to guess the identity of Awesome Man and older children will appreciate the drawings and will themselves be able to connect personally with Awesome Man's adventures.

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### **Barb says**

Another one of those books...

I did not like anything about this book, the story was lackluster, the illustrations were unpleasant to look at and I felt like this was another one of those books...

You all know what I'm referring to...those books that grab your attention because the author has written something else that was great and now they've published something that isn't but because of the great book the book that isn't great will be able to sell a ton of copies before anyone really notices that the not at all great book isn't great.

I hate when that happens...

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### **Amy says**

The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man really is astonishing! This is a fantastic superhero book--great bold illustrations, the story told in language and in a style that the kids of today use, and there's action galore (as there should be in any decent superhero book).

But Awesome Man *does* have a secret in this book--the secret is masterfully revealed, and the denouement left both my niece and nephew sitting in the back seat with their mouths hanging open. After we finished the book, they spent time trying to figure out how the author of Awesome Man had so successfully hooked them and then pulled the wool over their eyes. It was fantastically funny!

There's a story in here for grown ups, too, and I found that to be as gentle and and as quiet as Awesome Man's heroics were big and bold. This is an excellently done book, and well worth the read, even if superhero books aren't your usual literary fare.

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### **Heidi-Marie says**

A kind-of predictable story with a slight moral lesson controlling anger & emotions, but not bad. Kids may like the writing (though it didn't always get me). A few random parts in there, but I think the kids will like that, too. This might make an interesting school-age storytime read--if you can master the telling of it. Otherwise, I think the kids would love this as a read-alone.

By the way: Is "awesome" still in use? I thought it was a word for my generation (and yes, I still use it more than I should!). I don't mind having my own Fortress of Awesome though.

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### **Lisa Eskra says**

I liked the retro comic book feel of the book, but the story is terrible. Awesome Man basically lists all his superpowers then fights random bad guys who show up out of nowhere. Very aimless in that regard when even a simple plot would've been easy to devise and much more engaging. There's also nothing to appeal to little girls with this book. Unless you're already a fan of Chabon/Parker, skip this book. Good premise, poor execution.

Decent illustrations but come on -- kids deserve a good story too.

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### **Janessa says**

This is the new favorite at our house. Tonight my four year old streaked into the kitchen in his pajamas, urgently demanding, "Where is the book where the guy fights the eyeball?" Even my ten year old loves it. "There are clues, Mom, so that you know it is really a kid pretending to be a superhero." My favorite thing about it? Usually my four and six year old want ME to read their bedtime stories, but this is a Dad-only book. It must be a guy-thing.

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