The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man by M. Chabon

Merrill Distad

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Abstract


Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Michael Chabon recounts an archetypal small boy's fantasy life as superhero Awesome Man. Equipped with all the requisite SuperPowers, including positronic-ray-blasting vision and a “thermovulcanized protein-delivery orb,” young Awesome Man, accompanied by Moskowitz, the Awesome Dog, does battle against the forces of darkness, including talking mutant Jell-O from beyond the stars. After vanquishing Professor Von Evil and his antimatter Slimebot, the young hero battles his arch-nemesis, the Flaming Eyeball, and henchmen Red Shark and Sister Sinister. Returning to his “Fortress of Awesome, deep at the bottom of the deepest, darkest trench under the Arctic Ocean,” he finds his mother, the only one aware of his secret identity, awaits his return in the kitchen to offer him a restorative serving of cheese, crackers, and chocolate milk.

Chabon’s thoroughly derivative story line, familiar at least since Super Man’s 1939 debut in Action Comics No. 1, is only redeemed by Jake Parker’s imaginative and charming illustrations. Adults reading this slight effort to children will at least be afforded a chuckle over Moskovitz, the Awesome Dog, named in honour of one of Sci-Fi’s most prominent students and proponents.

Recommended with reservations: 2 out of 4 stars

Reviewer: Merrill Distad

Merrill Distad is Associate University Librarian (Research and Special Collections Services) and University Archivist, University of Alberta, and is the co-editor of Peel’s Bibliography of the Canadian Prairies to 1953 (Toronto, 2003). He is the author, most recently, of The University of Alberta Library: The First Hundred Years, 1908–2008 (Edmonton, 2009).

Author Biography

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Awesome Man is a superhero 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 a 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. I’m on a Michael Chabon kick right now, and I was surprised to learn he wrote a picture book. (The illustrator is Jake Parker, and the pictures are bright and happy and complement and enhance the story.) My children, who are now 10 and 13, enjoyed me reading it to them. Comics & Graphic Novels>. The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man - Hardcover. Share This Title: Read a Sample. Read a Sample. Read a Sample. Read a Sample. Enlarge Book Cover. 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. + Read more. RESOURCES. Printable Activity. ISBN: 9780061914621. ISBN 10: 0061914622. Imprint: HarperCollins.