What's My Superpower?

By Aviaq Johnston • Illustrated by Tim Mack

EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE

INHABIT MEDIA

WHAT'S MY SUPERPOWER?

About the Book

Nalvana feels like all of her friends have some type of superpower. She has friends with super speed (who always beat her in races), friends with super strength (who can jump high off the playground swing), and friends who are better than her at a million other things. Nalvana thinks she must be the only kid in town without a superpower. But then her mom shows Nalvana that she is unique and special, and that her superpower was right in front of her all along.

About the Author

Aviaq Johnston is the author of the bestselling picture book, *What's My Superpower?* For older children, teenagers, and grown-ups, she has written the award-winning novel *Those Who Run in the Sky* and the sequel, *Those Who Dwell Below*. She has also written the short story "Tarnikuluk," winner of the 2014 Aboriginal Arts and Stories Award, and "The Haunted Blizzard," featured in *Taaqtumi: An Anthology of Arctic Horror Stories*. She grew up in Igloolik and now lives in Iqaluit, Nunavut, with her dog, Sunny.

About the Illustrator

Tim Mack cannot fly, run super fast, or swim like a fish, so instead he draws those things. Tim is a Canadian-born illustrator living in Vancouver, British Columbia. He enjoys playing with colours and shapes and never misses an opportunity to swim in the ocean, though he still wishes he could swim as well as a fish.

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

Before reading the book out loud, hold it up and show the cover to the class. Ask students what they know about superpowers. Does the child pictured on the cover look like the superheroes they are familiar with? Tell students to raise their hands if they hear an unfamiliar word while you are reading the story out loud and then stop to define the word as you're reading. Point out the name of the author and the illustrator and define their roles in telling the story.

During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *What's My Superpower?* Provide students with the chance to voice their own opinions, share their experiences, ask questions, or point out anything else they may notice about the book.

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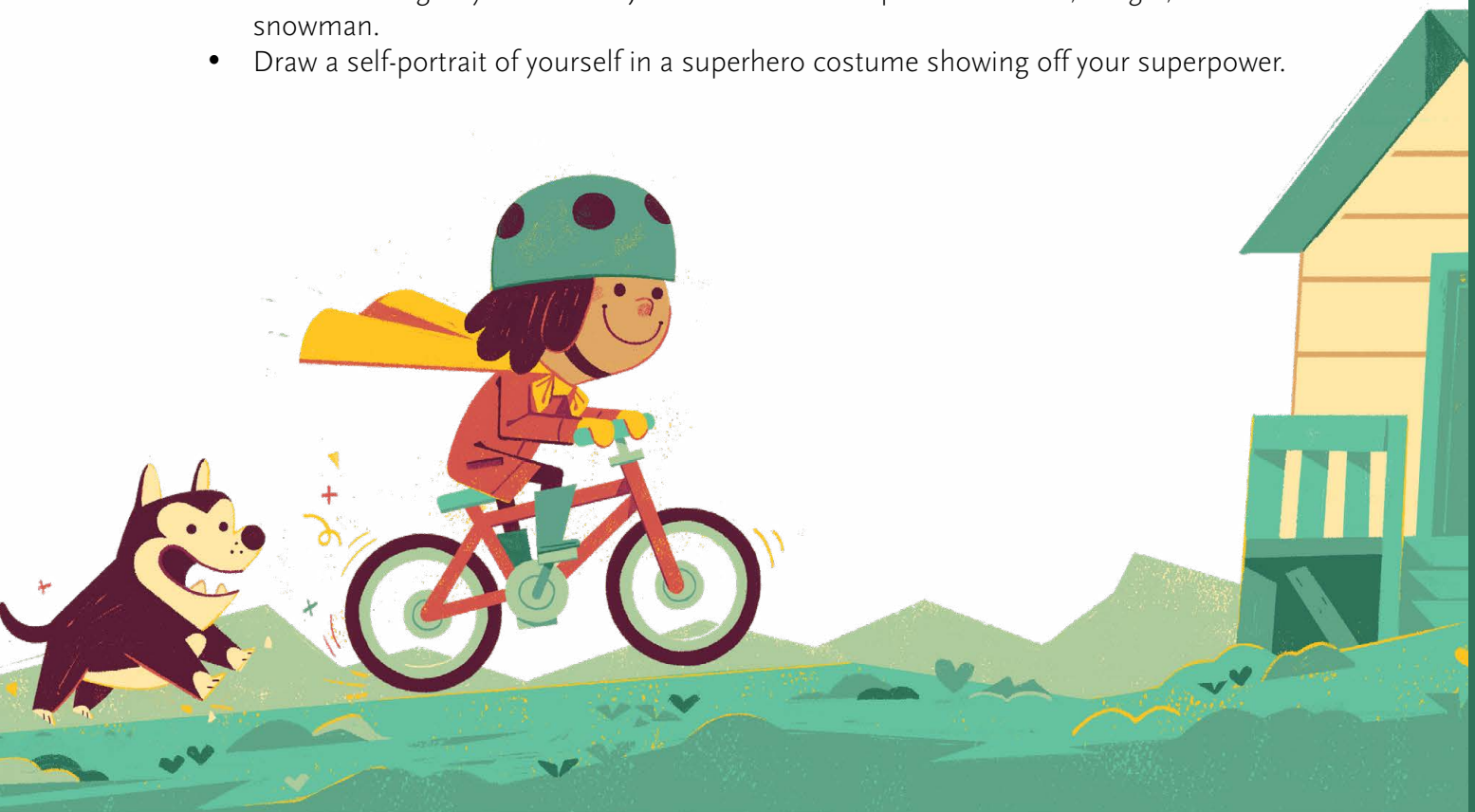
- Was the story different from what you expected it to be? Does the word “superpower” make you think of superheroes with magical powers? What magical power or talent do you wish for most? How would you use that superpower to help people? To have fun? To make mischief?
- Why do you think Nalvana wants a superpower? What kind of superpowers does she imagine for herself? Where do you think she got the idea of having superpowers? Why does she dress in goggles and a cape? Did you ever dress up like a superhero? Does wearing a costume make you feel more powerful or brave?
- Nalvana discovers that some of her friends have superpowers that are different from the magical kind. Can you name some of the superpowers her friends have? Do you know anyone who can run fast, jump high off a swing, make things, or hold their breath underwater? Can you think of any other non-magical superpowers? Which one of these would you like to have? How would it come in handy in your life?
- When Nalvana comes home from school, she tells her mother about a friend’s superpower, and then she tries to see if it will work for her. The book’s illustrator depicts Nalvana’s efforts in a humorous way. Which scenes of Nalvana practising superpowers were the funniest?
- Did you notice that in many of the story’s pictures Nalvana’s dog is with her, even though the dog is never mentioned in the story? Do you think the illustrator decided on his own to put the dog in the story, or did the author ask him to do it?
- Joanasie has the same special talent as his dad: they are both carvers. Think about the things you are good at. Do your parents, grandparents, or siblings have the same talent?

- Did you know what all the words in the Inuktitut glossary meant? Let's go over the words *anaana, iglu, inuksuk*, and *panik*.
- Nalvana loves everything about her small town. Can you describe it? What do the town's kids do for fun? What do kids do for fun in your town? Does it sound like a great place to live? Or would you rather live in a large city? What are the good and bad things about both places?
- How does Nalvana finally discover what her superpower is? Do you agree with her anaana that Nalvana's superpower is "making people feel good about themselves"? Do you think that's a good superpower to have? Did you guess what her superpower was before her mother told her? Do you think that her anaana might have the same superpower that Nalvana does? Why?

Extension Activities

- When she was wondering about her superpower, Nalvana imagined herself flying in the sky, or talking to animals, or even breathing underwater. Choose one of these and write a new story about Nalvana where she is using this superpower.
- Imagine that Nalvana's dog has a superpower, and write a story or draw a comic strip featuring a super adventure they might have had.
- How fast is fast? Nalvana tells her mother that Davidee was fast "like the wind on a blizzardy day." Think of some other ways to describe being fast and use each one in a sentence. Do the same with some phrases describing how high Maata can jump from the playground swing.
- Imagine what Nalvana's town looks like from the descriptions and pictures in the book, and make a map of the town that shows Nalvana's house and the school, playground, sledding hill, swimming pool, and other places mentioned or depicted in the story.
- Use modelling clay to recreate Joanasie's snow sculptures: animals, an *iglu*, and a snowman.
- Draw a self-portrait of yourself in a superhero costume showing off your superpower.