

WHAT IS YOUR SUPERPOWER?

Dear Educator,

Superheroes, archnemeses, secrets, and castles, along with funny moments, hope, and “the Frets” (anxiety) are all part of Portico Reeves’ life – a life your students might relate to.

You and your students can learn more about Portico’s superhero adventures in Jason Reynolds’ new action-packed graphic novel, *Stuntboy, in the Meantime*. It’s a story that speaks directly to young readers and addresses their real-world feelings, like anxiety and stress, in a positive way – a story introduced by this free educational program from Simon & Schuster and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired. With language arts activities that draw on the novel’s engaging graphics and uplifting messages, the program also supports social-emotional learning and can be used with or without reading the book.

Feel free to share this program with other teachers in your school. Please let us know your thoughts on the program by returning the enclosed reply card or by commenting at ymiclassroom.com/feedback-stuntboy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

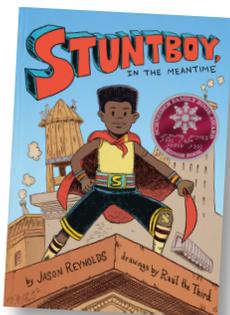


CAITLYN DLOUHY BOOKS
Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing

For questions, contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.

About *Stuntboy, in the Meantime*

Portico Reeves has a secret identity that only his best friend, Zola, knows about. As Stuntboy, he is the superhero who keeps all the other superheroes, and his fellow residents of Skylight Gardens (a.k.a. The Castle), safe. Lately, that means protecting Zola from their archnemeses, Herbert Singletary the Worst, learning to tame his own anxiety attacks (the Frets), and trying to keep his mother and father’s arguing (which always reminds him of an episode of Super Space Warriors) from turning into an Explosion of Great Magnitude.



Target Audience

Students in grades 4 to 6

Program Components

- A classroom wall poster
- This teacher’s guide
- Three reproducible activity sheets
- A reply card for your comments, or comment online at ymiclassroom.com/feedback-stuntboy

All program components can be downloaded at ymiclassroom.com/stuntboy, along with a PDF excerpt from *Stuntboy, in the Meantime* to use with Activity 1, and a standards alignment chart.

Program Objectives

- Support literacy skills and story writing
- Reinforce social-emotional learning skills
- Help students understand their feelings and provide tips to help them handle their emotions

How to Use the Poster

- Before hanging up the wall poster, photocopy the teaching guide and make copies of the three activity sheets for students.
- Direct students’ attention to the poster and discuss what having a “superpower” means to them. Explain that superheroes help people, but they aren’t the only ones who hold superpowers. We all have superpowers, like being kind to others or a special talent. Ask students to share: *What do you think your superpower is?*

Activity 1 • Write Your Adventure

Begin this writing lesson by downloading an excerpt from *Stuntboy, in the Meantime* at ymiclassroom.com/stuntboy to distribute to students with the activity sheet. Invite students to share how the dynamic drawings by Raúl the Third, combined with the text, bring Portico’s story to life. Explain that the main ingredients of a captivating story are a main character who faces an obstacle, and plot lines filled with suspense and action. Read the book synopsis and review the story elements (characters, setting, problem, and solution) from the activity sheet checklist. Then have students analyze these elements and the art in the excerpt to answer the questions on the activity. Review the answers as a class. Next, pair students to plan, write, and illustrate their own adventure story or comic strip using the story starters.

Activity 1 Answers: **1.** Portico Reeves has a secret superpower to keep the other heroes he knows super and safe. Characters: Portico’s mom, dad, granny, and cat (in illustration), Mr. Mister, Frisbee Foster. **2.** The story takes place in Portico’s apartment building – Skylight Gardens, which Portico calls The Castle. **3-5.** Answers will vary.

Extension: Each episode in *Stuntboy, in the Meantime* begins with theme music. Have students add a song to their story and explain why they chose it.

Activity 2 • Surrounded by Superheroes

Superheroes are all around us – even if we don’t always realize it. For example, Portico sees Joe, the superintendent of Skylight Gardens, as SUPER because he helps people in their apartment building. Superheroes have superpowers that they use to help or inspire others. Encourage students to think about how ordinary people do extraordinary things. Then pass out the activity sheet and have students use the graphic organizer to describe someone who inspires them. Afterward, they can honor their superhero with a thank-you note, poem, short story, or drawing.

Extension: Have students write a response to the novel’s underlying questions: *If you could have a secret superpower, what would it be and why? What would your superhero name be?* Ask students to draw a picture to accompany their answer and hang them around the poster.

Activity 3 • About the Frets

When Herbert Singletary the Worst acts mean, Portico gets the Frets. Portico also gets the Frets when his parents argue. Ask: *What do you think Portico means when he says he has the Frets?* Explain that the Frets are feelings of worry, fear, and anxiety. Pass out the activity sheet, which encourages students to assess their feelings. Students may be hesitant to share their feelings. Let them know they do not have to share their responses. Students will also read some tips to help them when they get the Frets and can brainstorm additional strategies, such as turning to a trusted adult or a friend for support, as Portico does with Zola. Help students understand that we all feel the Frets sometimes and figuring out ways to manage these emotions can help us through them.

Extension: Portico describes how his body reacts when he has the Frets – like an “inside mix-up” where his heart starts growling and his stomach starts beating. Invite students to come up with their own analogies or metaphors to describe how their bodies feel when they feel worried or afraid.

Online Resources

- simonandschuster.net/books/Stuntboy-in-the-Meantime/Jason-Reynolds/9781534418165
- ymiclassroom.com/stuntboy



WRITE YOUR ADVENTURE

In the graphic novel *Stuntboy, in the Meantime*, Portico Reeves, the main character, keeps his identity as the superhero Stuntboy a secret from everyone – except his best friend. Read the excerpt your teacher provides to learn more about Portico and his adventures. Then answer the questions below about the elements of an action-packed story. Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

1. In this excerpt we meet the novel's main character, Portico Reeves. What do we learn about him? What makes him special? What other characters does the author introduce?

2. Where does the story take place?

3. How does the illustrator make the Skylight Gardens apartment building resemble a castle? Why might Portico think of his home as a castle?

4. What captures your attention about the illustrations?

5. Why do you think Portico has a secret superpower?

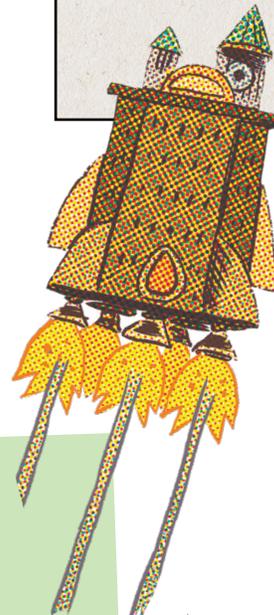
Story Elements Checklist

Be sure your story includes these elements:

- Characters (people or animals in the story)
- Setting (where the story takes place)
- Problem (the situation the characters have to figure out)
- Solution (how the problem is solved)

PLUS...

- Powerful graphics to enhance the story



Big, Bigger, BIGGEST Story Ideas

Now, it's your turn to write your own adventure story or comic strip. Choose one of the story ideas below. Use the checklist on the right to help you plan elements of your story, and then set off to create your super adventure! Remember to add pictures, too.

- I woke up and had to face my biggest fear...
- I just discovered our home has a secret door. What is behind it?
- I found out that my pet has a secret superpower that it is using to...



For After School

Share your adventure story and drawings with a trusted grown-up. You might even want to act out a scene from your story for them!



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SURROUNDED BY SUPERHEROES

In *Stuntboy, in the Meantime*, Portico thinks Soup, the superintendent of Skylight Gardens, is a superhero because he helps people around their apartment building. But superheroes aren't the only ones with superpowers. Sometimes we find that everyday people do the most extraordinary things. Think about someone you know who is a superhero and fill out the information below.

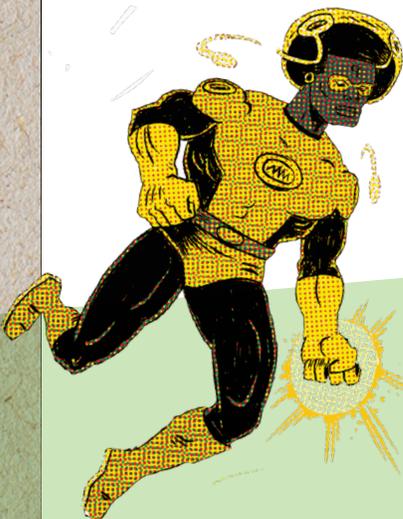


Someone I think is a superhero: _____

What qualities are important in a superhero?

Why do you think this person is a superhero?

How does this person inspire you?



Surprise Your Superhero!

On a separate sheet of paper, honor your superhero by drawing a picture or by writing a poem, short story, or thank you note for them.

For After School

Portico's superpower is doing stunts to keep people safe. Write a list of what your different strengths – or superpowers – are and share them with a friend or grown-up. Ask them to share what their superpower strengths are, too.



ABOUT

THE FRETTS!!



When something is bothering Portico, he gets a terrible case of the Frets. That's his name for feelings that cause worry, fear, and anxiety. We have all experienced the Frets at one time or another. Answer the questions below about experiences you might have had with the Frets.

1. Can you describe a time when you felt the Frets?

2. What are some things that cause you to have the Frets?

3. In the novel, Portico describes the Frets as having the worry wiggles, grumpy jumpies, or hairy scaries. How does your body feel when you have the Frets?

Tips for Tackling the Frets

- Talk with a parent or trusted adult
- Talk with a friend
- Sing and dance
- Listen to music
- Write in a journal
- Go for a walk



EXCITED



LONELY



SAD



ANGRY



SILLY



ANNOYED



SCARED



HAPPY



PROUD



SURPRISED



WORRIED



CONFUSED

This Is How I Felt...

Portico and the other characters in *Stuntboy, in the Meantime* experience all sorts of emotions. Review the list of emotions on the left. Then answer the questions to explore some of your feelings.

1. Choose a positive feeling from the list: _____
A time I experienced this emotion was when: _____
2. Choose a feeling from the list that might cause you to have the Frets: _____
A time I experienced this emotion was when: _____
3. Portico's best friend, Zola, shows him how meditating and yoga can help him calm down when he feels anxious. What are some things that might help you when you have the Frets? Write about them on the back of this sheet.

For After School

Talk with a trusted adult or grown-up you know if you are dealing with big emotions and need help. You can brainstorm more tips for tackling the Frets together.



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