

KIRKUS REVIEWS

THE PURIM SUPERHERO

Author: Kushner, Elisabeth

Illustrator: Byrne, Mike

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People forget that Superman is an alien. This book is a reminder that that's the source of his strength.

Here's a secret that isn't taught in school: Everyone has a superpower. It might be drawing monsters or kindness to strangers or the ability to read an unusual number of books. Nate's power is that he feels like an alien. He's the only boy in his class with two fathers, Daddy and Abba. All the boys in Nate's Hebrew school class are dressing up as superheroes for Purim, but Nate really wants a green costume with antennae. (Comic-book fans would, of course, suggest that he dress as the Martian Manhunter.) "Sometimes showing who you really are makes you stronger," Abba says, "even if you're different from other people." Nate's secret power gives him unusual creativity, and his solution wins him an award for most original costume. Byrne's illustrations make the ending especially satisfying, with half-a-dozen young superheroes standing around in tennis shoes. (Longtime superhero fans, however, will feel old when they see Wolverine in a picture book.) A generation from now, this book may feel hopelessly outdated: A moral about tolerance and being yourself may seem painfully obvious. Many will view this as a sign of progress. If that happens, it will be because of the work of heroes like Nate.

For now, this book is both timely and entirely satisfying.
(Picture book. 4-9)

