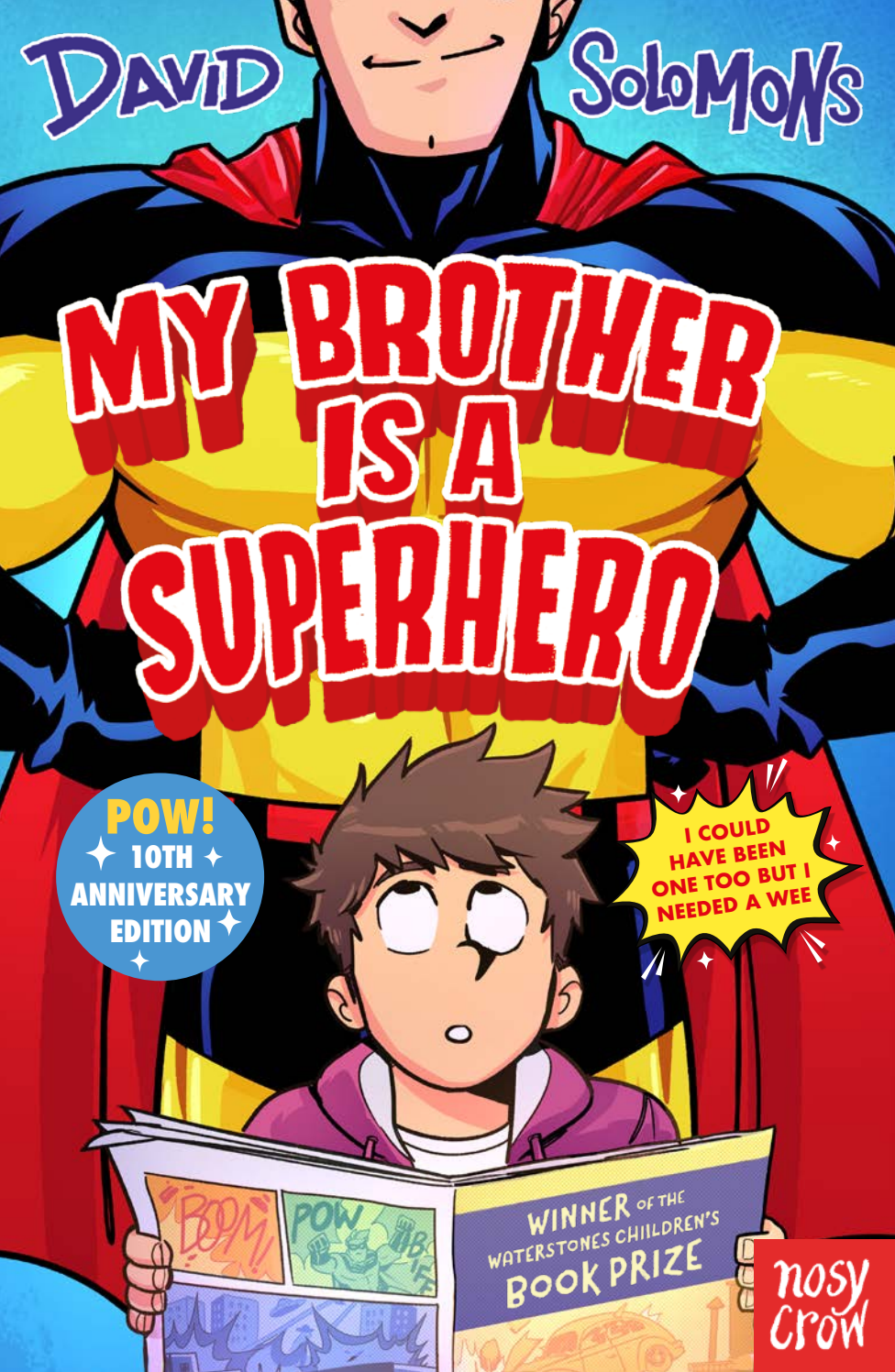

DAVID SOLOMONS
MY BROTHER IS A SUPERHERO
POW! 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
I COULD HAVE BEEN ONE TOO BUT I NEEDED A WEE
BOOM
POW
WINNER OF THE WATERSTONES CHILDREN'S BOOK PRIZE
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PRAISE FOR DAVID SOLOMONS

"Eleven-year-old Luke is comics-mad, so it's horribly unfair that his older brother Zack – whose comics knowledge is precisely zero – should be given superpowers by a visiting alien while Luke's having an ill-timed wee. When Zack's kidnapped by his arch-nemesis, though, Luke's forced to slough off his sulk and enlist his friends to try and rescue his brother – with only five days to save both Zack and the world...

Peppered with perfectly-judged pop culture references and glorious, silly-clever humour of the most addictive kind, Solomons' book and its sequels slyly investigate the complex bonds between siblings and friends, sometimes strained by jealousy and misunderstanding, but strong enough to withstand even the most determined attack."

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"David Solomons one of the authors I most admire, with his brilliant storytelling, coupled with buckets of humour. This series, which is packed full of superhero references, is engaging from the very first page and has a plot that will keep you reading past your bedtime."

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"The Scottish screenwriter represents the best in contemporary comic writing for children – splendidly zany, full of irresistible trivia, but never scrimping on the emotional undertow that ensures longevity and heart."

The Guardian



MY BROTHER IS A SUPERHERO

DAVID SOLOMONS



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For Luke and Lara, of course



1
THE (NOT) CHOSEN ONE



My brother is a superhero, and I could have been one too, except that I needed to go for a wee.

My name is Luke Parker, I'm eleven years old and I live in a mild-mannered part of London with my mum, dad and big brother, Zack. He wasn't always a superhero, but with a name like Zack you've got to wonder if my parents had a hunch that one day he'd end up wearing a mask and cape and saving orphans from burning buildings. I mean, come on! It's not a name, it's a sound effect. It's what you get in a comic when a superhero punches a supervillain. Pow! Blam! Zack!

It seems to me that in life you are faced with clear-

cut moments when things could go one way or another. Vanilla or chocolate. Smooth or crunchy. Drop the water bomb on Dad's head, or hold fire. It's up to you which choice to make and sometimes all it takes to change the way your whole life turns out are four little words.

"I need a wee."

It was the fateful evening. Zack and I had been in our tree house for about an hour and I was bursting. I was reading an old issue of *Teen Titans* by torchlight and Zack was doing his maths homework. He's always been a bit of a swot. Before he became Star Lad, at school he was star boy.

"Then go," he said, solving another quadratic equation with a flick of his pencil. "I'm not stopping you."

The truth was I didn't want to go down the rope ladder in the dark. It had been hard enough climbing up it in the first place. It's not that I'm unfit or anything, but put it like this: you won't ever see me on an Olympic podium. I suffer from hay fever and have funny-shaped feet that mean I have to wear these things in my shoes called "orthotics". When Mum first told me I needed them I was excited. I thought they sounded like supersoldier-power armour, but when they finally arrived they turned out to be bendy foot-shaped supports and not a cybernetic exoskeleton suit. That

was a disappointing Thursday.

I hung my head out of the tree-house door. "Maybe I could just wee from here?"

"Out! Get out of here, you disgusting child!"

Zack is only three years older than me, but when I've done something to annoy him he calls me a child. Of all the things I can't stand about my big brother, being called a child is number forty-seven. Not that I have a list.

OK. I do have a list.

Even before he became a superhero the list was up to number sixty-three. Now it's almost at a hundred. He is *very* irritating.

I climbed down the rope ladder and went into the house.

I did a wee.

When I returned to the tree house a few minutes later, Zack was sitting there silently in the dark. I knew something was up because he'd stopped doing his homework. I grabbed my torch and levelled the beam in his face. He didn't even blink.

"Zack, are you all right?"

He nodded.

"Are you sure? You look … different."

He nodded again, very slowly, like he was working

out some complicated thought in his head and then said in a croaky voice, "I think … something amazing just happened to me. Luke, I've changed."

Now this didn't come as a great surprise. About six months before, Dad had taken me aside for what he called a man-to-man chat. We sat in his shed – I think that's because it's the most manly room we have – and Dad explained that from now on I might notice some changes in my big brother.

"Zack's embarking on a great journey," said Dad.

"Brilliant! When's he leaving? Can I have his room?"

"Not that kind of journey," said Dad with a weary sigh. "He's going through something called puberty," he went on. "His voice will be different, for instance."

"Ooh, will he sound like a Dalek?"

"No, not like a Dalek."

"Pity."

"He will become hairier."

"Ooh, like a werewolf?!"

"No, not like a werewolf."

This puberty lark didn't seem up to much. There was other stuff, to do with privacy and girls, but to be honest, after the let-down about the Dalek and the werewolf I stopped taking it in.

So, when Zack told me in the tree house that something

had changed, I knew exactly what to say. I pursed my lips and gave a serious nod like I'd seen the doctor do when he told me I had glandular fever. "I'm afraid that you have caught puberty."

He ignored me and stared at his hands, turning them over and over. "I think I have superpowers."