

Read the beginning of ‘My Brother is a Superhero’ by David Solomons and answer the questions below.

Chapter One: The (not) Chosen One

My brother is a superhero, and I could have been one too, except that I needed 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 villain. 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 a 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 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.

Questions

1. Why isn't Luke a superhero?

2. Luke describes the place where he lives as 'mild-mannered'. What does this tell you about the place where Luke lives?

3. Give definitions for the following words/phrases:

a. a hunch:

b. clear cut moments:

c. fateful:

d. swot:

4. What will Zack's brother do as a superhero?

5. What are 'orthotics' and why does Luke have to wear them?

6. Luke describes Zack as 'a swot'. Find evidence in the text that supports Luke's opinion of his brother.

7. What opinion does Luke have of himself? Give evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. Over to you! What happens next? Write your own description of how Zack becomes a superhero. (Use a separate sheet of paper.)