

HOLIDAY HOUSE

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

MIGHTY READER AND THE BIG FREEZE

by Will Hillenbrand



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NEW SERIES!

ABOUT THE BOOK

A new superhero is on the scene to inspire reluctant readers in this humorous comic book–style picture book series.

Hugo, a beagle puppy, transforms himself into Mighty Reader when his canine classmates run into reading disasters. In his first adventure, Hugo's new friend Barkley freezes up when he must read aloud in class.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

- What does the cover art reveal about the main character? Describe the powers of a superhero. Define the word “mighty.” How can a superhero be considered mighty?
- “Setting” is where a story takes place. Study the illustration on the title page. What is interesting about the school bus? What does it resemble? How does it suggest the setting of the book?
- Hugo is a new student. Describe how he is feeling on the school bus on his first day. Is he lonely, scared, afraid? Discuss how the word “Slam!” adds to his worries. How do the other students react to Hugo? He sits next to Barkley on the bus. Make note of the book Barkley is reading. What does the cover of *The Adventures of Mighty Reader* reveal about Hugo?



- Explain how Ms. Wulff, the teacher, introduces Hugo to the class. Hugo reads aloud a book titled *All About Me*. What do you think is on the first page of Hugo’s book? What might Hugo add to his story after he meets Ms. Wulff and his new classmates?
- Ms. Wulff asks Barkley to read aloud *Spring Is Here*. Why is Barkley afraid to read the book aloud? Define “confidence.” How does Barkley need to boost his confidence? Explain how Hugo transforms himself in an effort to rescue Barkley. Which superhero does Hugo most resemble?
- Mighty Reader encourages Barkley to play “I spy” when reading the new book. Play “I spy” with *Mighty Reader and the Big Freeze*. What do you spy about Hugo’s classmates? What is the first hint that Hugo and Barkley are becoming friends? What do you spy about the “reading emergency”? Spy the background on the page when Barkley is “freezing up.” What does it reveal about what is happening to Barkley? How does Barkley become a hero to Ms. Wulff, the author, and the other students?
- Hugo and Barkley’s class meets an author. Barkley asks, “How do you make your stories?” Discuss the purpose of the illustration of the author in the shower. What is he thinking about? Why does the next illustration show him at his drawing table? The author says that he begins writing and illustrating with a dot. Then he takes it for a walk. Explain why Barkley takes *Spring Is Here* for a walk at the end of the book.
- Will Hillenbrand uses panels, or frames, to tell the story. How is this style similar to a comic book? Point out places in the story where speech or word balloons are used. How does Hillenbrand show action? Why is it appropriate to tell the story of a superhero in the style of a comic book?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.



Photo Credit: Ian Hillenbrand

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Will Hillenbrand is both the author and illustrator of the Mighty Reader series, inspired by Will’s own experience growing up with dyslexia. He has written and illustrated a wide range of picture books for children, including the popular Bear and Mole series. *Spring Is Here* won the Please Touch Museum Book Award. *What a Treasure!*, a Pennsylvania One Book, was written with his spouse Jane Hillenbrand. A seasoned elementary school teacher, Jane serves as an advisor on the Mighty Reader series. The Hillenbrands live in Ohio.

