



Sammy's Monsterous Thoughts

Derek Pedersen

Katie Neipp, Illustrator

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Sammy's Monsterous Thoughts is a positive picture book in which a young inventor works through her toughest challenge yet.

In Derek Pedersen's charming picture book *Sammy's Monsterous Thoughts*, a young inventor entertains negative and positive thoughts that impact her outlook and output.

Sammy is trying to assemble a new gizmo in her tree fort laboratory. Though she is smart and creative, her plans keep going awry. As the gizmo malfunctions on repeat, Sammy is discouraged to the point of thinking only negative thoughts. She shouts: "I can't make this work!", "This is too hard!", and "I'm not smart enough!" Those thoughts turn into little, ill-behaved monsters that begin to wreak havoc on Sammy's lab—making messes, breaking items, and preventing her from making progress on her project.

Sammy regains her positive outlook after reading an encouraging note from herself: "If the gizmo isn't working, just keep trying and always stay positive—you can do it!" Changing her outlook and no longer entertaining her negative thought monsters, Sammy persists at building the gizmo. The moral is universal: though people make mistakes, it is essential to keep trying, learn from one's errors, and not let negative thoughts weigh one down.

The text is doled out in thoughtful quantities; some of it becomes part of the illustrations. Different font sizes, colors, styles, and arrangements result in an interactive element to the story, while the use of all-caps, text wrapping around the illustrations, and handwritten bits of text results in depth and variety. The illustrations themselves are colorful and active, showcasing Sammy's gizmo attempts, her frustrations, and all the naughty little monsters in eye-catching arrangements that balance well with the story. The result is a dynamic storytelling experience.

Sammy's Monsterous Thoughts is a positive picture book about disappointment, frustration, and the harmfulness of negative thoughts in which a young inventor works through her toughest challenge yet.

ALEX DAILEY (March 15, 2022)

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