



There's a Monster in My House

D E-Collen

D. Coddington, Illustrator

FriesenPress

Softcover \$8.99 (20pp)

978-1-5255-3768-4

There's a Monster in My House approaches a very sensitive topic in picture book format, helping to make tough conversations a little bit easier.

D. E-Collen's powerful picture book *There's a Monster in My House* acknowledges that other humans can sometimes be the most terrifying monsters of all.

The monster here is not the type that hides in the closet or under the bed. Instead, the book's monster moves in when the narrator is only five years old and at first seems kind. He brings her presents. But then the monster begins to command her to keep secrets from her mother, including the fact that he comes into her room at night. At school, the teacher tells her students that they should inform an adult if someone makes them feel uncomfortable. The book ends with the child telling the teacher all about her monster.

The book packs a punch in its few pages, in great part due to the childlike narration by the victim. Her name, and the monster's name, are never revealed, making it seem as if these events could be happening to anyone we know, committed by anyone we know. The final page lists a few of the rights that children have according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Coddington's illustrations are just as important as the text. For the most part, the monster is depicted as a stark black shadow with long claws, with one extremely powerful illustration in which the monster, still shadowed, has part of his face and hands revealed as he holds a gift, reemphasizing the fact that this monster is human.

There's a Monster in My House approaches a very sensitive topic in picture book format, fairly advising parents to exercise caution when they choose how, or if, to approach it with their child. It helpfully asserts that children should tell people they trust if they are ever made to feel uncomfortable.

KELLY THUNSTROM (March 15, 2019)

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