

The Book of Mistakes

by Corinna Luyken

This is a visual celebration of the creativity which can spring from embracing one's mistakes. Luyken's drawings show a progression of mistakes incorporated into increasingly complex illustrations which conclude with a zoom of scale that takes the reader back to the beginning. The illustrations draw drama from the contrast of black ink with pastel watercolors and pencils. While each small element is delightfully realistic, the combinations are utterly whimsical, in the best sense of the word. On her website, Ms. Luyken's says that she is fascinated by "the emergence of something from nothing," which explains why her book takes the reader from one small ink splat to a huge tree teeming with activity. Readers young and old will long to play in that tree, and this book may just inspire them to sit down and create one.

Corinna Luykens lives and makes art in Olympia, Washington. This is her first picture book, but she is working on another picture book for Dial, which deals with the opening and closing of hearts. She has also illustrated *Weird Little Robots*, by Carolyn Crimi, which will be coming out from Candlewick Press in 2019.

Website

<http://www.corinnaluyken.com> is Ms. Luyken's website. Her background information and interviews are under the heading "Information."

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding

Working *with* mistakes instead of discarding them can lead to the creation of better things. (Yes, she is a fan of Bob Ross' "happy little accidents".)

Overarching Questions

Why can it be better for people to work with their mistakes, and incorporate them into projects and processes, instead of discarding them or stopping?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions

- Why do you think the author used so many balloons in this book?
- If you were in the tree, what would you be doing?
- What could be the next picture?

Common Core ELA Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Suggested Activities

- Show your readers a picture of the tree which inspired the tree in this book. (It's posted in an interview on the *Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast* blog (here). Find an interesting physical feature near your library, and ask them to incorporate it into a group portrait.
- Ask your readers to write (or draw) how they might respond creatively to a mistake or unexpected circumstance in life, such as:
 - ◇ The power goes out at the beginning of family movie night.
 - ◇ It rains just before setting out on a picnic.

- ◇ Someone throws up in the art room, and art class has to be moved outside.
 - ◇ Your favorite shirt gets a stain on it and you aren't allowed to wear it the way it is.
 - ◇ You and your friends are all set to play soccer, but your only ball pops.
 - ◇ You are about to decorate some cupcakes, but all the sprinkles fall on the floor.
- Download these activity sheets from Corinna Luyken's website, which are pages from the book with drawing prompts embedded in them.

Companion Books

Books About Successful Mistakes

Jones, Charlotte Folz and John O'Brien. *Mistakes That Worked: 40 Familiar Inventions & How They Came To Be*. (Note: SLJ said, "The only detriment to this otherwise versatile book is the cartoon stereotypes of the Eskimo, Native American, and Chinese man.")

Reynold, Peter R. *Ish*.

Saltzberg, Barney. *Beautiful Oops!*

Spires, Ashley. *The Most Magnificent Thing*.

Stories About Repurposing

Henkes, Kevin. *Owen*.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*.

Scieszka, Jon, and Mac Barnett. *Battle Bunny*.

Taback, Simms. *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*.