



Sarabella's Thinking Cap

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From the bestselling creator of *Skippyjon Jones*, a heartwarming story about the importance of imagination and creativity.

Sarabella is always thinking—conjuring, daydreaming, and creating new worlds from her imagination. There is so much going on in her head that it can barely be contained. But there are times when daydreaming is decidedly not a good thing—like when you’re supposed to be doing multiplication tables. Luckily, Sarabella has an understanding teacher and with his encouragement She comes up with her own idea to show everyone who she is.

Sarabella's Thinking Cap Details

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From Reader Review Sarabella's Thinking Cap for online ebook

Emma (Miss Print) says

Very enticing artwork but a bit long for not a lot of payoff. The idea is interesting and it could tie in well with a story and craft kind of activity but on its own I wasn't dazzled.

Cheriee Weichel says

Stunning illustrations are what first drew me to this book. I was then blown away by the important message about creativity and imagination.

There is so much to love about this book. Sarabella's accepting family and teacher. Even though he does send home notes about Sarabella's daydreaming, at the same time as they acknowledge how clever and imaginative she is, they show appreciation for her as well.

Rebecca says

This book is gorgeous! I instantly fell in love with the art. I love the message about being a quiet, creative thinker and using your hobbies (in this case art) to communicate to the world who you are.

Brooke Ohrt says

Summary: Sarabella cannot focus! All she does is daydream. She daydreams at home, but more importantly, she daydreams during school. She daydreams about big things, small things, and everything in between. Eventually, Sarabella started getting notes sent home from her teachers about how she needs to learn to focus. Her parents told her not to worry because they used to have the same things happened when they were in school. When Sarabella went back to school the next day, her teacher assigned the class to make a project showing what they daydream about to show to the class. When Sarabella makes her project, she does something a little unique. Instead of making a poster like the rest of her class, Sarabella decides that she's going to show multiple daydreams and make a hat with different words, objects, colors, animals, and much more. When Sarabella got up to show her class what she made, they were all intrigued by all of her thoughts. One boy was even inspired. The next day Sarabella saw Bob, her classmate, wearing a hat similar to her but with his own daydreaming ideas. The two then saw they had a lot in common based on their thoughts, which were shown on their creative hats worn on their heads.

Activity: After reading this book to the class, a simple activity can get the kids to really use their imagination. Throughout the day, every half hour, give the class 3 minutes to daydream and write down what they are thinking about. After a whole day of daydreaming and imaginations, the next day, provide brown paper sacks, multiple different decoration materials, and let the students make their own daydreaming hats. This activity allows the students to think outside of the box and use their imagination in ways they might not ever have before.

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Jana says

I love this picture book because I, and many others, can relate to Sarabella's wandering mind. Sarabella is constantly thinking and wondering and dreaming. One thought leads to another, and another, until the thoughts are a million miles away from where they're supposed to be. This can especially tough for kids in school, where so much of the day requires focus on what teachers are telling them to be thinking about. The adults in this book are caring and supportive, and help Sarabella nurture her creative thoughts, but still trying to get her to concentrate on her work. The artwork, rendered in acrylics, gouache, collage, and mixed media, uses rich, warm textures and details to invite readers in to explore the world of Sarabella's thoughts. In doing so, I found so many of the items and ideas in her head matched my own! I could spend hours pouring over the illustrations and thinking about the things in them! This could be an awesome mentor text to help kids develop their own thinking caps!

Julie says

Gentle story about a girl who thinks deeply. I am in love with Schachner's illustrations

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

Sarabella is a talented artist who has a lot of trouble focusing on her school work and getting it done on time. Consequently, she brings home a lot of notes about daydreaming instead of paying attention. But no matter how hard she tries, Sarabella's keep turning away from school and into her own daydreams. Finally, her teacher Mr. Fantozzi gives his class a weekend a project ideal for Sarabella, called "A Penny for Your Thoughts." And Sarabella knows just what she needs to do for this project. This is an important story to share with a class, or even at home. Kids have difficulty focusing on school for all kinds of reasons and wisely, Schachner doesn't not give Sarabella a specific diagnose. But she doesn't excuse behavior like Sarabella's either. Instead, she presents a way that should lead to understanding. After reading this book, I immediately began to daydream about what my thinking cap would have looked like when I was Sarabella's age. And I wish I had had this book to read to my former students who also struggled with focus problems. Schachner's gouache, acrylics, collage and mixed media illustrations will take your breath away.

This story also really struck a personal note for me. I was an undiagnosed dyslexic who struggled with school, brought home lots of notes similar to Sarabella's, and often lapsed into daydreaming. It wasn't until an 8th grade teacher actually "saw" me that things changed.

Ricki says

My goodness. This book is so, so beautiful. I suspect it will be in the running for the Caldecott. Sarabella has difficulty focusing. Her daydreams take her brain to wonderfully imaginative places. I could spend hours

with this book. I plan to frame some of the pages for my kids' bedrooms.

Kathryn (Nine Pages) says

Review originally posted on my blog, *Nine Pages* .

Though from the creator of Skippyjon Jones, this is a very different book: softer illustrations, a more inspiring than hilarious message. Sarabella is always thinking about the most extraordinary things (seriously, the illustrations are amazingly detailed and beautiful with text to match), but she doesn't speak much. Her daydreaming gets her into trouble at school and at home. Her teacher assigns them to a project that allows Sarabella to express her thoughts and daydreams. She wows the class with her thinking hat and makes a friend. My toddlers had a hard time concentrating on this story. It was long and there wasn't a lot of humor to engage them, but the adults in the audience (myself included) were enthralled. My kids' attention wandered away before the last few pages, but I read quickly because the parents and I wanted to know how it ended, to see the last few pages of Schachner's beautiful artwork.

Jared White says

First, I have a confession to make. I don't think I've ever read a Skippyjon Jones book all the way through, even though I work in a public library and I've often helped patrons locate them to check out. From glancing through and what I knew of them, they just seemed too silly but I suppose since I've found a book by the same author that is definitely one of my new favorite books, I might need to give them another chance.

This book is absolutely beautiful and I love the story.

Sarabella is quite a daydreamer; a wonderful, talented, quiet daydreamer of extraordinary things, but unfortunately she's not always the best at focusing on her school work. This causes her to often be sent home from school with notes from her teachers but her parents don't mind too much. Once upon a time they were once sent home from school with notes as well. Eventually there's a school assignment which allows her to shine and share some of the splendid things in her head.

I loved seeing into Sarabella's head (and into the simple thoughts of her cat) and I loved learning a little bit about her family. Overall a great book.

But, I would not use this in a story time because a crowd would have a hard time seeing and appreciating all the aspect's of Sarabella's daydreams.

Also, I suppose my only little fault with the book is that school work isn't really conveyed to be important at all. But, then again, I suppose its importance is stressed enough elsewhere, so for the span of one book we can all focus on the beautiful and creative imaginings of a little girl who does a lot of amazing, artsy thinking.

Laura Harrison says

I love all of Judy Schachner's animal books. This is one artist who sure can draw cats! I have to say I was completely blown away by Sarabella's Thinking Cap. The story is very good but the illustrations-wow! Perhaps Judy Schahner's best work. I can see this being a favorite with children easy. Simply spectacular.

Martha says

Sarabella's Thinking Cap with its gorgeous colorful mixed media illustrations, tells a heartfelt story of a wondrous child who finds her imaginative thoughts (daydreaming) much more interesting than doing her daily school work. Learning how to focus a powerful imagination is tough for Sarabella, yet through a kind nurturing teacher, Mr. Fantozzi and her own ingenuity she comes up with a brilliant solution. She designs a stunning Thinking Cap, brimming inside with found objects, pieces of paper with text, and pictures she drew or collected, inspiring her to "question, ponder, wonder, reflect, and ruminante." Made of a paper bag and decorated with exquisite watercolor and collage pictures, her "Thinking Cap" helps her productively manage her incredible creativity, and motivates her classmates to do the same. Kids will want to carefully read and study the intricate surprising detailed drawings, and messages entwined on each double spread. Many will be inspired to make their own helpful Thinking Caps. The powerful story and beautiful pictures will make this a great read aloud, especially for inspiring imaginative story starting ideas. A must buy for elementary libraries.

Paul Hankins says

Love this celebration of imagination as initial distraction that is finally recognized for the gift that it can be. The artwork in this book is stunning and the message should not be missed by classroom teachers who have that student who daydreams or zones out in the middle of a lecture or an activity. Ladder this book with Bored and Brilliant and you'll see immediate connections between spacing out and creativity.

Bethany says

In SARABELLA'S THINKING CAP, Sarabella has a huge imagination and always seems to be daydreaming. She has trouble in school because it's hard to keep her thoughts together. With her inability to focus on her schoolwork, she gets sent home with a note for her parents.

Instead of being in trouble, Sarabella learns that she gets her daydreaming from her parents. They, too, had problems in school. Her teacher, Mr. F, tries hard to get Sarabella to say what she's thinking, but nothing seems to work. That is, until he gives them the weekend assignment to draw your best daydream.

The pictures in this book are absolutely stunning I was able to relate because I daydream a lot as well. Sarabella learns that it isn't bad to daydream, she just needed to discover how to say how she felt.

Final Verdict: I loved the pictures because they are colorful and beautifully drawn. I would recommend this

story to children who daydream, have an active imagination, or love to draw.

Sarah says

Beautiful illustrations and a lot of different ideas to study on each page! Children who love looking for details will enjoy this one.

As for the story, I thought for sure that Sarabella the daydreamer was going to start writing out her ideas. Or that she was going to get some concrete ideas to help her concentrate on her schoolwork. But the simple explanation of "Sarabella began to imagine what her thinking cap might look like. And then she turned back to her work." didn't cut it for me--why was she able to concentrate this time?

I'm sure this will come on the Caldecott table though--acrylics, gouache, collage, and mixed media are all good things.
