

Abracadabra Whoopsie

Adam Kargman

Tristan Tait, Illustrator

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Abracadabra Whoopsie is a magical picture book that teaches siblings to appreciate each other.

In Adam Kargman's picture book *Abracadabra Whoopsie*, a struggle between siblings is embellished with magic, and a lesson emerges.

Jordy is frustrated with his younger sister, Keeka. She's stealing the attention, ripping his pictures, and causing all sorts of problems for him. He makes a wish that she will disappear.

That night, he's visited by Perziluzo, a mysterious man who gives him a wand and spell: "abracadabra whoopsie!" He tells Jordy that it will make his sister disappear; "whoopsie abracadabra" will make her reappear.

Jordy uses the wand so that he can play and create in peace, and he ends up making Keeka disappear and reappear at will—until his mom throws out the "old twig," and Jordy has to chase down Perziluzo to get Keeka back. A twist ending turns the tables on Jordy.

Though the story rests on familiar ground (a sibling rivalry), surprising twists and unique elements help it to stand out. When Jordy realizes that he misses Keeka, it is unexpected. The humorous ending is distinct, and a careful reader will see it coming, but Jordy doesn't.

Jordy's frustrations with his younger sister clarify his choices. It's obvious he's at the end of his rope and looking for solutions, however crazy, because he wants to create and play without destruction looming. Keeka is a baby; she throws temper tantrums and touches things she shouldn't, but her actions make sense for her age. Jordy's willingness to do anything to guarantee his own happiness makes Keeka's frustrations with him understandable. Jordy only learns his lesson and gets Perziluzo to give Keeka back by remembering something heartfelt; when Keeka turns the tables, it's amusing.

Typography changes—the curse and counter curse are written in a curly cue font, and "Poof" and "Bam" appear after each—are a stand out element, helping readers to distinguish the magic from the regular text and making the situation more jovial.

Tristan Tait's illustrations are beautiful, full of color and a sense of magic. They show everything that Jordy experiences, and his facial expressions, in detail. Each time Keeka reappears, illustrations depict her emotions as they progress from surprise to anger. The magic wand looks enticing to hold, and Perziluzo's hair stands up like horns, making him appear evil in illustration alone.

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REBECCA MONTERUSSO (June 12, 2019)

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