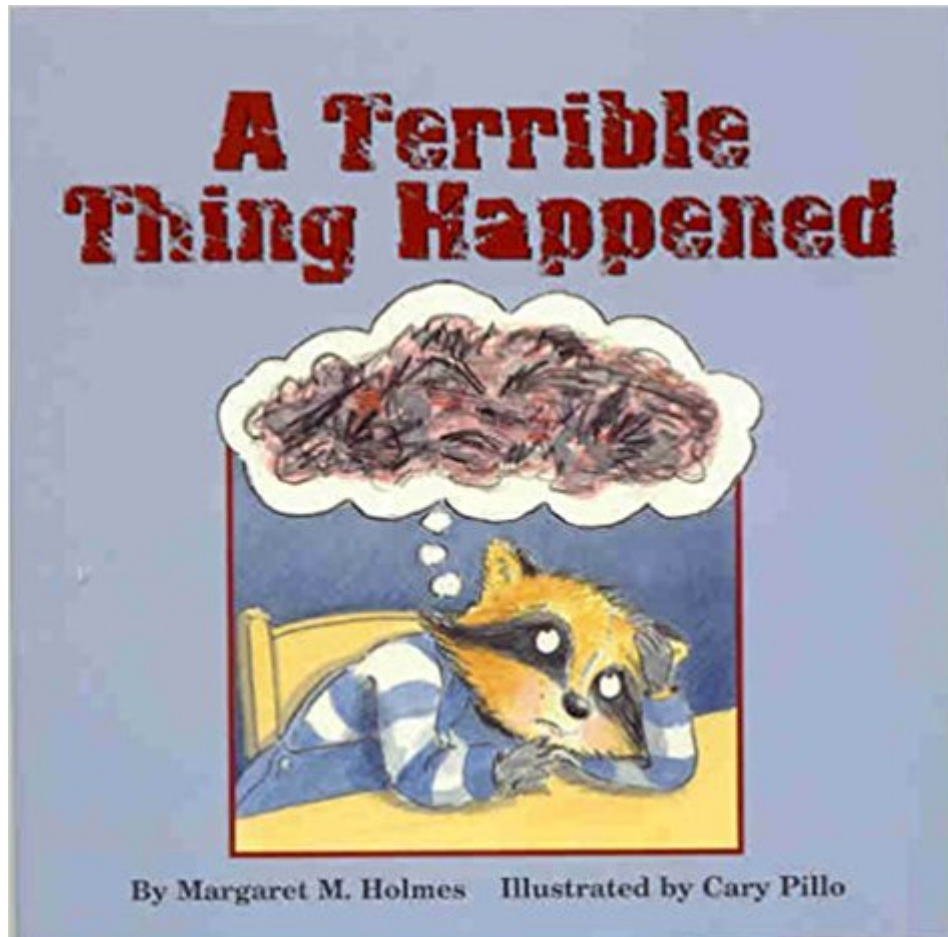




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# A Terrible Thing Happened



## Synopsis

Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing happen. At first he tried to forget about it, but something inside him started to bother him. He felt nervous and had bad dreams. Then he met someone who helped him talk about the terrible thing, and made him feel better.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

## Customer Reviews

I love that this book is vague about what the actual problem is, never specifying what terrible thing the main character saw. I feel that this is helpful so that if something is bothering a child, that it might help them to think about what is bothering them instead of the character in the book. It expanded on all of the negative ways the terrible thing was affecting the main character and offered him hope of feeling better through talking to a trusted adult who could help him figure out his feelings about what he saw. I love the line: "Sometimes parents help children figure out their feelings. Sometimes teachers or other grown-ups help. That is how Sherman met Ms. Maple." I love that line for a couple of reasons 1.) Not every child is raised by mom or dad - and it is nice to see that other adults are mentioned as other credible options and also 2) Although many parents are helpful, there are some who are not...or unfortunately may be the major contributor to the child's issues, so for these children it is important to offer other options. Because you can't flip through the book online to see if

you like it before buying it, I thought that it might be helpful to write it out below since it's relatively short:Page 1) "Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing. He was very upset. It really scared Sherman to see such a terrible thing."P 2) "Sherman did not like feeling so afraid. He did not want to remember what happened. So Sherman decided not to think about the terrible thing he saw. Sherman thought that would make him feel better."3) "At first the plan seemed to work. Sherman woke up every morning. He brushed his teeth and he went to school."4) "Sherman played with his friends. He teased his sister and he walked his dog."5) "Everything seemed all right for a while. But something inside of Sherman was starting to bother him."6) "Sherman had to play more, run faster, and sing louder in order to forget the terrible thing he saw."7) "Other things started happening to Sherman, too. Sometimes he did not feel hungry."8) "Sometimes his stomach hurt or his head hurt."9) "Sometimes he felt sad, but he did not know why."10) "Sometimes he was nervous for no reason at all."11) "Sometimes he did not sleep very well."12) "Sometimes when he did sleep he had very bad dreams. The bad dreams scared Sherman."13) "All of these things made Sherman angry. It seemed like Sherman was angry all the time."14) "Sherman started getting into trouble at school. Sometimes he felt so angry that he did mean things."15) "Getting into trouble so often made Sherman feel bad."16) "Sherman did not understand all of his bad feelings. He felt confused.Sometimes parents help children figure out their feelings. Sometimes teachers or other grown-ups help. That is how Sherman met Ms. Maple."(Pic of Ms Maple appears to be in a school-counseling room type setting, but it does not specify).17) "Ms. Maple helped Sherman think about his feelings. She listened while Sherman talked to her. They played while they talked. Sherman did not feel as mixed up when he talked to Ms Maple."18) "Once when Sherman and Ms Maple were coloring, she told him to draw a picture of how he felt when he was angry. This seemed like a strange thing to draw, but Sherman did it."19) "After that, Sherman drew lots of pictures. Pictures of the pain in his stomach. Pictures of the bad dreams he had. Pictures of the fear he felt."20) "And at last, pictures of the terrible thing he saw. (Illustrations of the terrible thing he saw is a bunch of black, grey and red scribbles in the shape of a cloud)"21) "Sherman and Ms. Maple talked about the pictures. He asked if the terrible thing he saw was his fault. Sherman said he worried a lot about that."22) "No," Ms. Maple told Sherman, "it was not your fault."23) "Nothing can change the terrible thing that Sherman saw, but now he does not feel so mean. He is not scared or worried. His stomach does not hurt as much,. And the mad dreams hardly ever happen."24) "Sherman Smith is feeling much better now. He just thought you would want to know."The illustrations in the book are great! Also, the "Parents and Caregivers" section in the back is insightful and practical.

I was a child therapist. I worked with children who had been abused, traumatized, tortured or suffered from privation. This book was a most effective tool I used many times. Children place great value on the printed word at this age. They believe what they read. The text is written in an easy, comforting style. Ms. Holmes helps the child to feel ok about expressing what has happened. Going at a comfortable pace for each child is necessary. This is not a book to pick up and read when there is extra time at the end of a visit or day. Not before going to bed. The child does better if they are well rested. Parent(s), therapists or caregivers must be prepared to help the child feel secure and safe while working through this. Not just during the reading but through out the time it takes to unpack what happened to the child. Assisting the child in understanding, helping them to not assume blame, and creating a safe place is a most important part of reading this book. It's the piece that is not included with the book. You make that happen. You may also need to work through this with a therapist. Best wishes.

I love that the child can easily place themselves in the character's situation because it is not specific. I also think it's great that the book takes the children through the symptoms that occur when they try to hide or suppress the memory of what happened.

I became acquainted with this book at a counseling session for my adopted 4 yr old who experienced trauma at 18 months. She didn't talk about the trauma herself until a few months ago, but has described what happened to her with incredible accuracy. When the therapist read this book to her, she sat unbelievably still while the entire book was read to her! It was like she was relieved to learn that others felt the same things she does. I was so moved by her reaction that I bought the book to have at home. It perfectly describes many of the feelings and reactions that children experience with a trauma. I learned a great deal from it myself like why she acts hyper and talks so loud! I also like that by the end of the book Sherman is feeling much better...giving my child hope that she can feel better in time too. She has 'read' the book out loud to me several times in the short time we have had the book...and has related it to her trauma. This book, and a similar book called Brave Bart, are great books for helping kids who have experienced a traumatic event.

This book can be used for any traumatic happening in a child's life. Herman saw a terrible thing, but we never know what it was, leaving the reader to decide and make it personal if they wish. It also does a good job showing a child what play therapy would be like and might be good to read before

a first visit to a therapist.

First off, if you're needing to look into books like this, I am truly sorry. This book was perfect for our needs. I appreciated how the terrible thing was never described in any way so my child could imagine it as whatever he needed it to be. The descriptions of nightmares, crazy behavior, acting out and getting into trouble and feeling yucky all the time were appropriate for my child's experience. I especially appreciated the representation of therapy. It helped my preschool-age child know what to expect--the talking and playing, and ultimately the feeling better. He marched right into his first appointment and told the therapist all about what they were supposed to do and how she would help him, and got right into talking about his 'terrible thing'.

Excellent book for processing trauma and normalizing reactions. It could be used with a wide array of kids with a wide array of traumas. Nice that there is a book like this out there.

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