

An Activity Kit For *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes*

By Mark Pett and Gary Rubinstein, illustrated by Mark Pett



Prepared by We Love Children's Books

About the Book

Beatrice Bottomwell is a nine-year-old girl who has never made a mistake. She never forgets her math homework, she never wears mismatched socks, and she ALWAYS wins the yearly talent show at school. In fact, Beatrice holds the record of perfection in her hometown, where she is known as “The Girl Who Never Makes Mistakes.” Life for Beatrice is sailing along pretty smoothly until she does the unthinkable—she makes her first mistake.

The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes introduces readers to the idea of having a growth mind-set and that taking risks and sometimes making mistakes is part of how everyone learns and grows.

About the Author and Illustrator

Writer and illustrator **Mark Pett** lives in Mississippi with his wife, two children, and a very old dog named Catfish. Every February, the family draws five random digits from a hat and travels to whatever zip code it makes. He has illustrated several books and is the creator of the syndicated comic strips “Mr. Lowe” and “Lucky Cow.”

Author **Gary Rubinstein** teaches high school math by day and is occasionally a comedian by night. In addition to coauthoring this book, he has written two guidebooks for new teachers. He lives in New York City with his wife, Erica, and his daughter, Sarah.



Praise

“*The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes* is a must-read for any young (or old!) perfectionist. Beatrice Bottomwell is perfectly imperfect!”

—Stephanie Oppenheim, *Oppenheim Toy Portfolio*

“Beatrice offers a lesson we could all benefit from: learn from your mistakes, let go, laugh, and enjoy the ride.”

—Jennifer Fosberry, *New York Times* bestselling author of *My Name Is Not Isabella*



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Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

Do a picture walk of *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes*, examining the illustrations as a class without reading the text. What sort of story do the students think this will be? Will it be funny or serious? Will they learn a lesson or be entertained? How much of the story can they understand without reading the words?

This book is about a girl who does everything perfectly, and then one day, she makes her first mistake. How do students predict she will react? Do students know anyone who doesn't make mistakes?

Ask students if they have ever heard the saying "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."
What do they think it means?

Vocabulary

As you read the book, have students raise their hands when they hear a word or phrase that is new to them or that they do not understand. As a class, discuss how students can use context and the illustrations in the story to figure out the meaning of unknown words. Help students make real-life connections to these words.

Post-Reading Discussion Questions and Activities

Being Beatrice

As a class, look at the text and illustrations to create a character map of Beatrice. Create four categories: what does she look like, what does she say, what does she do, and what do other people say and think about her. How do the author and illustrator convey this information about her? What parts of her personality are best shown in pictures? Which are best told in words?

Ch-ch-changes

Beatrice begins the story as a girl who doesn't make mistakes, but by the end, she is doing all sorts of things the "wrong way." Do students feel that she has grown? How can making mistakes be considered better than not making mistakes?



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What Would Happen If...

In the first part of the book, Beatrice is known as “The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes” and the text describes many things she does perfectly. Break students into small groups and have them discuss what she does correctly, how she could have made a mistake, and what would have happened if she did. For example, what would have happened if she had dropped the eggs? Come together as a class and discuss their thoughts. Do students think Beatrice’s parents care if she makes mistakes? Have students ever been afraid to make a mistake?

Main Idea

Break students into pairs and have them retell the story to one another in order to identify the main message of the book. Have them talk about the following questions: What lesson is the story trying to teach? How does the story communicate this message? Does humor make the lesson easier to understand?

First, Next, Last

As a class, list the major events of *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes*. Ask students how the story begins, what happens in the course of the action, and how it concludes. Did the events have to happen this way? Could things have happened in a different order and have the story still make sense? Why or why not?

Three Little Things

Break students into small groups and have them identify three things Beatrice’s brother, Carl, does that can be considered “mistakes.” Citing specifics from the text, how do students think Carl feels about these things? Does he know they are mistakes? How do others react to them?

My Mistake

As a class, examine the way Beatrice reacts after she almost drops the eggs. Compare this to her response when her friend drops the rhubarb. How does Beatrice react when she makes a mistake, as opposed to when someone else makes a mistake? How do students feel about each of Beatrice’s responses? If they had the opportunity, what advice would students give to Beatrice?



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One Thing Leads to Another

Beatrice's mistake at the talent show is her first—but it isn't a simple one. It is a series of unfortunate events that all lead up to one big mess. As a class, locate the pages where she has dropped everything. Now work backward, identifying what happened in each previous scene to cause "what happened next." How far back does the chain of events go?

The Further Adventures of Beatrice

At the end of the book, Beatrice tries all sorts of new things and enjoys them. Have students create an illustration showing something else fun and exciting that Beatrice will try now that she isn't afraid to make a mistake. Have students dictate or write a description or story of what Beatrice is doing in their picture and how she feels about it. Create a classroom display of her new adventures!

Encouragement

Sometimes it is very hard to remember that making a mistake is not the worst thing in the world. Have students discuss what it is like to make a mistake and how sometimes we need to make mistakes to learn and get better at something. Have each student create a motivational poster with a positive message that will help them to do their best and work through their mistakes. Display the posters in the room for the whole class to see and draw encouragement from.

