

TWO-TIME NEWBERY MEDAL WINNER

LOIS LOWRY

Attaboy, Sam!



In the second book about Sam, he grows up a little bit, still takes things very literally and shows even more initiative in creating mischief. Here the family is all working to handcraft gifts for the mom's birthday. Sam's older sister is working on a poem, their dad has some project of his own but Sam is the most ambitious of all. His mom's favorite perfume has been discontinued so Sam determines he'll make her his own special perfume of all her favorite smells. If she says she likes the smell of fresh bread, he tosses a piece of bread into his special perfume container. The smell of babies? Sam doesn't quite get that, but he dutifully collects some baby doody and tosses that in as well. It's an amusing conceit and somehow Lowry draws out this mission to fill up an entire book. Her gift is in letting us appreciate Sam's ingenuity without feeling the need to show everyone else discovering what he's up to and repeating what we've already thought: what a clever, imaginative kid! That gives the second book about Sam a more satisfying kick than the first. Lowry's low-key humor throughout is welcome, making it good for kids and adults wanting to share what their tykes are reading. -- Michael Giltz