

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Fudge-a-Mania

by
Judy Blume

Book Information

Judy Blume, Fudge-a-Mania
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Pete describes the family vacation in Maine with the Tubmans, highlighted by the antics of his younger brother Fudge.

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Main Characters

Big Apfel a former major league baseball player who lives in Southwest Harbor, Maine where the Hatchers are vacationing
Buzzy Senior Sheila's grandfather
Frank Fargo Jimmy's rather moody father, who works as a painter
Fudge Hatcher Peter's five-year-old brother, who has an active imagination
Jimmy Fargo Peter's best friend, who comes to spend some time with Peter on his vacation
Libby Tubman Sheila's teenage sister
Mitzi a young girl who Fudge befriends while on vacation in Maine
Mr. and Mrs. Tubman Sheila's parents
Mrs. A Mitzi's grandmother and Big Apfel's wife
Muriel Peter and Fudge's grandmother, who ran a gymnastics camp for many years
Peter Hatcher a young boy who spends three weeks of his summer vacation in Maine with his professed enemy, Sheila Tubman
Sheila Tubman a classmate and neighbor of Peter who does not like him

Vocabulary

bacteria germs that can make a person sick
bile a yellowish-green fluid secreted by the liver
chaos disorganization
moored tied securely with ropes and anchors

Synopsis

Peter Hatcher usually has a difficult time getting along with Sheila Tubman at school and in their apartment building. He is looking forward to some time away from Sheila over his summer vacation. However, Peter's five-year-old brother, Fudge, informs Peter that he is going to marry Sheila. If that is not bad enough, his mother tells him their family will be renting a house next to the Tubmans for three weeks over the summer vacation. In order to help him cope, Peter persuades his friend, Jimmy Fargo, to visit him for the latter part of that time.

When the Hatchers arrive in Maine, the Tubmans tell them they will actually be sharing a house. This is even worse than Peter could have imagined. The Hatchers' vacation gets off to a poor start when their dog gets sprayed by a skunk and Fudge's pet bird, Uncle Feather, disappears. While looking for Uncle Feather, Peter and Fudge meet Mrs. A. They discover that Mrs. A has a five-year-old granddaughter and that her husband is Big Apfel, a former major league baseball player whose cards Peter collects. Peter looks forward to the weekly baseball game the townspeople play with Big Apfel.

Sheila makes a deal with Mrs. Hatcher to babysit Fudge so Mrs. Hatcher can enjoy some free time. Peter ends up spending time around Sheila and Fudge since he is bored by himself. The three spend time at Mrs. A's having snacks and playing with her granddaughter, Mitzi.

One day Peter and Fudge go to the library where Fudge is looking for a book. He does not find the one he is looking for and has a fit. The girl working in the library, Isobel, calms him down and suggests that he write his own book. This satisfies Fudge. As

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they are leaving the library, Fudge notices something funny about Peter. Peter is developing a crush on Isobel.

A few days later Peter's friend Jimmy arrives with his father, Frank Fargo. Jimmy's father decides to stay with the Hatchers and Tubmans since the weather is bad and it would make camping difficult. Sheila begins teasing Peter about him feeling dizzy over Isobel, and Jimmy decides he wants to meet Isobel, so the three ride bikes to the library. On the way Peter swallows a fly. The man at the bike shop suggests that an ice cream cone will make him feel better. The three have the ice cream and eventually make it to the library only to find out that Isobel is not there.

Later that week the families go on a sailboat ride. Mrs. Hatcher stays home with Fudge, who is sick from eating too many blueberries. The others enjoy a pleasant sailboat ride with Mr. Hatcher at the tiller. On the way back the weather gets bad and the water becomes rough. The boat tips on its side, and Peter's grandmother takes control of the boat. They arrive in the harbor safely.

Later that weekend Peter gets his chance to play baseball with Big Apfel. He is disappointed, however, when Big Apfel decides to bat for both teams.

The vacation draws to a close as Peter's grandmother and Sheila's grandfather get married. Peter is not sure how this will affect his life, but he and Sheila agree that they will still dislike each other.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

What do Fudge and Mitzi have in common?

They are both five years old, have a younger sibling, are spending the summer near grandparents, are afraid of monsters, and like books.

Literary Analysis

The place where Peter's family goes for their summer vacation, Southwest Harbor, Maine, is very different from New York, where they live. How are the two places different from one another?

Southwest Harbor has only one street and a few shops. It is quiet and dark at night. In Southwest Harbor many people live in houses instead of apartments and the weather is often foggier and damper than in New York. New York is much larger and louder. Peter and Sheila are probably not allowed to go off and play just anywhere in New York, as it would be more dangerous than Southwest Harbor.

Inferential Comprehension

Why doesn't Sheila's friend show up for part of the vacation? How might the vacation have been different if her friend had come?

Her friend got chicken pox and could not come. Jimmy probably would not have been as nice to Sheila if her friend was there because he would not have felt sorry for her. Sheila and her friend probably would have teased Peter more about Isobel. The two pairs of friends might have stayed far away from one another.

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Constructing Meaning

At one point in the story, Peter watches as his little brother and sister play babyish games with his parents. Peter's grandmother notices this, puts her arm around Peter's shoulder, and says, "It's not easy being the firstborn, is it?" Do you agree with this statement? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being the oldest, middle, youngest, or only child in a family?

A student's reaction to the first question will probably depend on what position they hold in their own family as either oldest, youngest, middle, or only child. In Peter's case, the advantages of being oldest may include receiving privileges and freedoms sooner than younger siblings, getting a bigger allowance, being looked up to by younger siblings, and being able to help younger siblings. The disadvantages can include being held responsible for watching younger siblings, being blamed when things happen to younger siblings, and being pestered by the immature actions, comments, and questions of younger siblings.

Tootsie's footprints. Invite an artist or art teacher to the class to share what motivates him or her in creating artwork. Give the students some paint and ask each to create a series of pictures with one theme. Have them explain what inspired them to create the paintings and theme.

Responding to Literature When Peter gets upset that Big will be playing on both of the baseball teams, a lady suggests to Peter, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Ask the students to share a time they have been in a place or situation where people do things differently from how they are used to doing them, perhaps at a friend's house or in a relative's town. Ask them how they handled it and what they learned from the situation. This could be an oral or written response.

Teachable Skills

Recognizing Setting The place where the Tubmans and Hatchers visit seems to offer a wide variety of activities for vacationers. Have the students find information about the vacation areas of Maine or some other place they would like to visit. Using the information they find, have the students create a tentative schedule of activities they would take part in. Have them report to the class about the vacation area they chose to research.

Comparing and Contrasting Since Fudge is one of the main characters in this story and the book is called *Fudge-a-mania*, it is interesting that it was written from Peter's point of view. How might Fudge have told the story? Have the students choose a scene from the book and rewrite it from Fudge's point of view.

Recognizing Details When Tootsie walks over Mr. Fargo's artwork, Mr. Fargo uses this as inspiration to create a series of paintings using