

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

Recommended for Grades 3-6

Book Summary: Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

This is a very cute and fun story about the struggles of having a little brother. Peter is a nine year old boy who lives in New York. His little brother, Fudge is two and a half. Fudge is constantly causing problems for his brother. He colors on Peter's homework, he tries to fly and knocks out his front teeth, he won't behave at the dentist or at the movies. When his parents have guests over, Fudge embarrasses the whole family by putting stamps all over their guests' luggage and costs his father an important business account. All of the things Fudge does drives Peter crazy and will be things that most kids can relate to and will laugh at.

[SPOILER] Fudge does the worst thing ever when he eats Peter's pet turtle. At first they all think he is joking, but he really did swallow Peter's pet turtle. Peter is furious and upset. Everyone else is worried about Fudge. Fudge has to be hospitalized until he passes the tiny turtle. In the end, Peter gets a pet dog to replace his turtle. His father points out that they got a dog that is too big for Fudge to eat.

Author Biography: Judy Blume

Judy Blume was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey on February 12, 1938. Her given name was Judith Sussman. Her mother was a homemaker and her father was a dentist. She went to an all-girls high school and then started college at Boston University. Unfortunately, she had to leave school after only a few weeks because she got mononucleosis. When she recovered, she decided to resume her studies at New York University. It was there that she met John Blume, a lawyer. The two later married. Judy graduated with a B.A. in Education in 1961.

Judy and John had two children, Randy and Lawrence. Judy submitted books for publication for years before finally getting her first book published. She wrote many books for children including "Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing," "Are you There God? It's Me Margaret," and "Blubber." Many of her books have been challenged or banned in schools because they deal with very sensitive issues. Judy works very hard to protect people's freedom to read.

Judy divorced her husband John in 1975. She quickly met and married a physicist named Thomas Kitchens, but their marriage only lasted a few years. She married George Cooper, a former law professor and nonfiction writer in 1987. Judy and her husband now split their time between Key West, Martha's Vineyard, and New York City.



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Discussion Questions: Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

1. Do you think Peter likes his brother Fudge? Why or why not? Does he love him?
2. When Mrs. Yarby gives Peter a book he already has, he pretends to like it. When Fudge brings out the copy of the book Peter already has, Mrs. Yarby is insulted. Do you think Peter did the right thing by pretending to like something he already had or should he have been honest right away?
3. Peter's father loses the Juicy-O business account because of the naughty things Fudge did while they visited. Does it seem right to fire someone over something that happened not related to work? Why do you think so?
4. When Fudge won't eat for a week, his dad finally has enough and dumps a bowl of cereal over his head. Does this seem like the right way to get Fudge to behave? Why do you think so?
5. Fudge knocks his teeth out at the playground and Peter's mother is mad at him, even though it was Shelia who was watching him. Have you ever been blamed for something that wasn't your fault? How did you react?
6. Peter and his mother sometimes trick Fudge to get him to do what they want. For example, they trick him into thinking Peter is getting saddle shoes so Fudge won't have a fit about getting them. Do you think this counts as lying? What else could they do besides trick him?
7. Peter often feels that his parents don't love him as much as they love Fudge because they let Fudge do things that hurt Peter, like drawing all over his homework. Do you think this means his parents love Fudge more? Why or why not?
8. When Peter's mother goes to stay with her sister for a week, his Dad is pretty terrible at taking care of them. He can't cook, and he loses Fudge in the movie theater. Do you think Moms are better at taking care of kids than Dads? Why do you think this way?
9. Fudge eats Peter's pet turtle. Whose fault do you think this is? Why?
10. This book was written over 40 years ago. Can you tell that it was written a long time ago? Do you think families have changed much since then? Why or why not?



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