



The Pain and the Great One

Judy Blume , Debbie Ridpath Ohi (Illustrator)

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“Sometimes I think Mom and Dad love *her* more than me.”—The Pain

“Sometimes I think Mom and Dad love *him* more than me.”—The Great One

The Great One thinks her brother, the Pain, is a messy slowpoke who gets dessert even if he doesn't finish dinner. She thinks her parents love *him* more than they love *her*. The Pain thinks his older sister, the Great One, is a bossy know-it-all. Just because she's older, she gets to feed the cat and play real songs on the piano. He thinks his parents love *her* more than they love *him*.

How will they ever find out who is loved more?

The Pain and the Great One Details

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Calista says

I hear this book everyday in my house right now. One child thinks the other child has it better and the other child thinks they have the short stick. This is so well done.

There are two parts to this story. First part is about the little brother from the big sisters POV. He gets everything, life is so unfair. The second part is the big sister from the little brothers POV. She is perfect and gets everything. They are unhappy separated.

I know I was this way with my brother too. The illustrations did not wow me, but they help tell the story. The story seems to be the perfect interplay, at least in our house.

The kids were funny. they said things like "I never do that" or "I always share" Yeah right. Interesting to see how they want to see themselves. This book is perfect childhood. Judy rules and she really does understand children.

Karen GoatKeeper says

We see the world through our eyes. We judge others by our standards. The saying we should walk a mile in another's shoes first is wise advice. How do you teach this to a child? How many of us forget to do this?

This book opens that door. The daughter is two years older than her brother. He is so often a nuisance.

The son is younger. He sees his sister doing things he can't yet.

I highly recommend this book for all children to read and talk about. It wouldn't hurt for parents to read and think about these issues too.

Licha says

Somehow this is one of the Judy Blume books that escaped me growing up. I suppose because once she became my favorite author, I was more interested in the "older girl" books than I would have been in some kiddie book.

This book was actually very cute. It is a story of sibling rivalry told from both perspectives. Big sister (The Great One) thinks little brother (The Pain) gets away with everything and is coddled by mom and dad. Lil brother thinks big sis is the favorite cause she's smart and can do everything right.

I liked that there was no obvious lesson in this book because when you're little you're going to hate your brother or sister no matter how much mom or dad tries to make you love them and show you you need your brother or sister. Of course the adult can see the subtle lesson in the book, but this book was not written for me, the adult. There is no resolution at the end of this story and that's perfectly fine.

The illustrations are cute, but as a kid, I always thought of them as the "cheap" drawings. Kids like to look at either funny or really nice drawings. I don't believe kids will be wowed by the art here.

Holly says

My students always enjoy this book. I read it to illustrate point of view. The kids have many connections to the stories of these contentious but lovable siblings.

Khayrun says

The Pain and the Great One is a story that most children can relate to. It's about Jake (The Pain) and Abigail (The Great One) who are siblings. Their problem is that they are always arguing about everything. However, they come to realise when serious problems arise, such as bullying, they are both there for each other. I enjoyed the book greatly, as I felt I could relate to it, having siblings myself. The different chapters contained different themes, such as 'Bruno's ear' and 'The Breaf-kast Café', all of which made me laugh. The book also teaches children about important issues such as how to deal with bullying, the importance of asking for help if you need it and looking out for your friends. I thoroughly recommend the book to others, including teachers, who can gain a few ideas for their own lessons.

Corey says

6-yo review: I didn't like this one that much because they are not very nice. It's about a girl who is 8, and the boy is 6. They are brother and sister. The girl is the great one, and the boy is the pain. The great one gets ready super-fast, and the pain has super-ugly behavior.

Connie says

One of the great gifts of Judy Blume is that she doesn't lie to kids. Her books are refreshingly - and sometimes painfully - honest. As a kid, I sure appreciated it. Too many books lie, because they think children can't hear the truth. They ignore the fact that children already *know* the truth many times.

The truth in this book is that sometimes, having a brother or sister just sucks. The lie that most people would try to give is the moral that you really, deep down have to love your sibling after all - right?

Well, Ms. Blume skirts very *close* to that moral, when each child realizes midway through a rant that getting a special privilege without their sibling isn't any fun, and, indeed, their parents try to push that moral on them - but no, that "no fun" bit is just another reason why their sibling is awful! And the next day they remembered, not the moral, but the rivalry.

Each child's rant about their brother/sister ends with the thought that maybe their parents like the other one best. I think we've all felt that. I did just last week, and I'm an adult :) There's no reassurance here except the other sibling saying the same thing.

If you're uncomfortable with this sort of presentation of facts, I'd suggest you borrow the book from the

library before buying. Otherwise, I firmly suggest you buy this book for your own library.

Max says

It was good though if you don't know my favorite character think harder I'm a boy who else is a boy in the story???

Carrie says

Could Judy Blume have known my little brother and I any better?! He was the pain and I suppose I was the great one. The way the girl described her brother and the preferential treatment was exactly how I felt as a kid towards him. So I know when the little brother was doing the same that it must be how my brother felt about me. Interesting! Blume did a great job with showing both sides!

Dawn Little says

Judy Blume was a fixture in my childhood, but somehow this book slipped through my radar. Had I seen it when I was a kid, I would have seen my brother and me in it! And I still do! This is a great book to use as a mentor text when taking sides on an issue. It is also a great mentor text for making connections -- because unless you are an only child, we all have stories of sibling rivalry from when we were younger.

Jenna says

Its a really funny book. Dont get your hopes up they don't get along at the end. I say agin its a funny book.

Debbie Reiber says

The Pain and The Great One by Judy Blume is a contemporary realistic fiction book. The age group this book is intended for is primary to intermediate. There are really two stories in one; the sister tells how she sees her brother and how her parents love him more, and the brother tells how he sees his sister and how his parents love her more.

I thought this book was definitely a book that most children could relate to when it comes to family. The older sibling sees the younger sibling as a pain because they are so needy and gets his/her way with everything. The younger sibling feels inferior to the older sibling because he/she can do things better than the young sibling can. So both children try to do things on their own and find that it's really not fun without the other sibling. Also, it ends with the same scenario for both children. Mom and Dad spend more time with the other sibling and they love them more. I think this a good book for young readers because if they have siblings they can probably relate. The book will show them that their parents love both of them, but the attention comes in different forms. And without your sibling you may be bored.

Muse Here says

I like that this book had perspective from both point of views. I did not, however like the parenting mentioned throughout the book. Clearly the parents have NOT read "Siblings Without Rivalry" by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish. Anyone who has more than one child, should definitely read this book. The parents mentioned in this book, I think are fairly typical. They are (unbeknownst to them) pitting their children against each other. The parents DO show favoritism, to each of the kids in the book. This is why they each resent each other so much. The parents solution to the problem is to simply state "remember that tomorrow" whenever one kid is without the other kid. The real problem is that the two kids have not been taught how to play together, how to be a team or even how to consider the other person's perspective. I get that this book was probably written to help children in such a situation relate to their other siblings, but the fault is not with the kids. It's with the parents. Instead of looking at the brother's artwork when they get home from school and making the daughter feel like an intrusion and totally left out, the mom should have said "hey, come look what your brother did at school, do you remember when you made a similar project in this grade?" And then, she should have reversed it and told the son to look at what the daughter did and ask him if he was excited to be that age, so he could do similar projects.

And this (imo) is key, when the boy knocks down all the girls blocks, mom should have said "sounds like you have a problem. I know you two are old enough to work it out together and find a solution. Please let me know what it is, I can't wait to hear what you've come up with." Instead of chastising one or the other and trying to solve such a simple problem for the kids.

Really, this book should be an example of how NOT to raise your kids. I would like to get it again, so I can read it to my kids and see if they can identify what the parent SHOULD be doing, instead of "learning sympathy".

I'm giving it two stars, because the kids seemed like typical relatable kids, but I thought the story was geared to the wrong audience. The kids aren't the ones who need to change, the clueless parents are.

Shira Burns says

The joys of sisterhood when you have younger brother who absolutely gets on your nerves. In this story the main character has named her younger brother The Pain because he gets away with all types of things that mom and dad would not let her get away with and he is destructive. On the other end the younger brother names his sister The Great One because mom and dad believes that she is really smart and she gets to be responsible for things around the house. Many young readers with siblings will be able to make text to self connections either from a big brother/sister point of view or the younger brother/sister point of view.

Jennifer Lara says

I think that this book is trying to tell how they both feel about each other. My opinion is that they may have different feeling about each other because they are siblings. I will recommend this book who has similar feelings like the people in the book.
