

BOOKNOTES

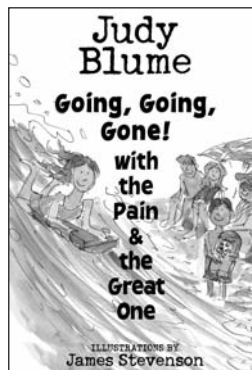
educators guide



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ABOUT THE BOOKS

Jake (The Pain) is in the first grade, and Abigail (The Great One) is in third. Like most brothers and sisters, they are prone to silly spats. Abigail thinks it “dumb” that Jake only eats “white” foods, but Abigail has her problems too. Her friends don’t know that she can’t ride a bicycle, and the Pain threatens to reveal her secret. There are episodes involving a school pet, a canceled sleepover, learning to read, being lost in the shopping mall, and an unpleasant encounter with Uncle Phil and his bratty kids. Through it all, the brother and sister team help one another in dealing with a fifth-grade bully, searching for a lost tooth, and watching their aunt’s dog. There are friendships lost and found, family disasters, and lots of laughter that pose the biggest question of all: Which one does Mom and Dad love most?

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Family • Sibling Relationships • Friendship • Bullying • Fear • Honesty

GRADES K-4

★ “The stories are sweet and accurately depict the growing pains of childhood.”

—*School Library Journal*, Starred,
on *Soupy Saturdays with the Pain & the Great One*

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THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

FAMILY

Ask students to name scenes in each of the books that support Jake and Abigail's belief that their parents love the other one best. Discuss how the Porters are patient with their children. What do Jake and Abigail learn about family from visiting Uncle Phil in *Friend or Fiend with the Pain & the Great One*?



SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

Ask students to describe Jake and Abigail's relationship. Abigail calls Jake "The Pain," and Jake calls Abigail "The Great One." Discuss how Jake lives up to the name that Abigail has given him. How does Abigail act like the Great One? Why does Jake think it fun to make Abigail mad? In spite of their sibling spats, Jake and Abigail sometimes help one another. Have students name one time in each of the books where they are nice to one another.

FRIENDSHIP

Have students discuss what they look for in a friend. It is normal for friends to sometimes have fights. Engage the class in a discussion about the best way to solve spats. How do little disagreements lead to bigger problems? How does Madison Purdy make matters worse for Abigail and Sasha in "She Stole My Story" in *Friend or Fiend with the Pain & the Great One*?

BULLYING

Most schools have at least one bully that makes life miserable for the other kids. In *Cool Zone with the Pain & the Great One*, Roger Culley, a fifth grader, bullies Jake. Have a class discussion about what kids should do if they are having problems with a bully. Abigail is brave when she fights Roger, but was that the smartest thing for her to do?

FEAR

It is normal for kids to have fears. Have students discuss Jake and Abigail's fears. Why don't they want their friends to know about their fears? Engage students in a conversation about the best way to overcome fears.

HONESTY

In *Soupy Saturdays with the Pain & the Great One*, Abigail can't ride a bike, and she doesn't want her friends to know. She tells them that her bike is being fixed. When Jake questions why it's okay for the Great One to lie to her friends, his mom replies, "It's more like pretending." (p. 42) What is the difference between lying and pretending? In *Friend or Fiend with the Pain & the Great One*? Jake and Abigail learn that their cousin, Sierra, is lying about living in Montana and having six horses. Mom explains, "Sometimes there's a fine line between lying and wishing." (p. 44) Discuss the difference. What does Abigail learn from this experience with her cousin?



CONNECTING TO THE CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS

Use the comic page from the Sunday edition of the local newspaper to explain to students the concept of the comic strip. Then instruct them to pick a favorite chapter or scene from one of the books and write and illustrate it as a comic strip.

HEALTH/SAFETY

In *Going, Going, Gone! with the Pain & the Great One* Jake gets lost in the mall—only he doesn't realize that he is lost. Instruct students to make a poster that illustrates the proper things to do should they ever get separated from their parents in a crowd. Have them make a caption for their poster.

SOCIAL STUDIES/SCIENCE

Have students use an atlas to locate Everglades City, Florida, where Grandpa Pete lives. In *Going, Going, Gone! with the Pain & the Great One*, the Porters go to visit him. Instruct students to find out about becoming a junior ranger in the Everglades on the Everglades National Park Web site at www.nps.gov/ever/forkids/beajuniorranger.htm. Then have students write a letter of recommendation for either Jake or Abigail to become a junior ranger.

MATH

Divide the class into small groups and ask them to reread the story titled "Extravaganza" in *Going, Going, Gone! with the Pain & the Great One*. Ask them to consider the number of tickets that Aunt Diana buys Jake and Abigail at the county fair, and how many tickets it takes for their various activities. Instruct each group to make a word problem for the rest of the class to solve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In *Soupy Saturdays with the Pain & the Great One*, Jake doesn't like playing soccer, and Justin, Jake's best friend, admits that he likes soccer but doesn't like soccer league. Jake's dad says, "It's not about winning or losing. It's about having fun playing the game." (p. 25) Finally, Soccer Doc comes up with a way to help his team enjoy playing. Divide the class into small groups, and ask each group to come up with five things that coaches can do to help kids enjoy playing on a team. Then have the groups share their ideas with the entire class.



ART

In *Cool Zone with the Pain & the Great One*, Jake's first-grade class starts a restaurant called the Breakfast Café. Have students work in groups to complete the following assignments:

- Group 1—Design a menu
- Group 2—Make an advertisement for the local newspaper
- Group 3—Design a placement that reflects the name or the restaurant
- Group 4—Make a special invitation to special guests (parents, the principal, other teachers, etc.)

VOCABULARY | USE OF LANGUAGE

The vocabulary in these books isn't difficult, but challenge students to find one of two words from each book to include in a dictionary for Jake's first-grade class. Have them write a definition of the words, and to write original sentences using the words.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judy Blume spent her childhood in Elizabeth, New Jersey, making up stories inside her head. She has spent her adult years doing the same thing, only now she writes her stories down on paper. Children all across the nation and throughout the world have named her books their favorites. She received the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, the only children's book writer ever awarded this honor.

For more information about the author, visit www.judy-blume.com

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