

Fudge-a-Mania Study Guide

Fudge-a-Mania by Judy Blume

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Plot Summary

Fudge-a-Mania by Judy Blume focuses on Peter Hatcher, a fifth grade boy from New York City. He must share a vacation house in Maine with his arch enemy, Sheila Tubman. Peter must come to terms with the beginning of adolescence by dealing with Sheila and his pest of a little brother, Fudge.

Peter Hatcher is a fifth grade boy from New York City. His mother tells him that the family is going on a three week vacation to Maine. She says that they will be neighbors with Sheila Tubman's family. Sheila is Peter's arch enemy. She is in sixth grade and he cannot stand her. Mom tries to ease the shock by saying Peter can invite his friend, Jimmy. Peter tells Jimmy that his house and Sheila's house are far away and they will not have to deal with her. Jimmy agrees to come. Peter dreads the vacation.

Peter's family drives 10 hours to Southwest Harbor, Maine, a cute, little town. When they pull up to the vacation house, Sheila is on the porch. Peter realizes his family and the Tubmans share a connecting house. They must share a kitchen and living room. Only a door separates their two living spaces. Peter is horrified. Sheila is not happy either because she hates him too.

Sheila gets a job babysitting Peter's five year-old brother, Fudge. Fudge is a curious and energetic boy. He is a handful. Since Jimmy is not there for the first part of Peter's vacation, Peter must hang out with Sheila and Fudge. They meet Mitzi, who is a neighbor girl and Fudge's age. Mitzi's grandfather is Big Apfel, who was a star baseball player for the Boston Red Sox. Peter gets excited that he will get to play in a Sunday game that is hosted by Big.

Jimmy visits. He is nice to Sheila, which makes Peter angry. Peter is angry because Jimmy is his friend, not Sheila's friend. Peter also develops his first crush on the library assistant, a 16 year-old girl who is pretty. Sheila and Fudge tease him about it.

They play in the baseball game with Big Apfel. Peter hopes Big looks at him and loses his concentration. He messes up a lot. He begins to get angry at himself, but Jimmy thanks him for inviting him to play. Fudge says Peter is his best brother. Peter realizes some things are more important than the baseball game like being a good friend and brother. Peter's grandmother and Sheila's grandfather have a romantic relationship and they marry. Peter realizes he will never get away from Sheila. During the reception, Peter and Sheila agree to hate each other forever.



Chapter 1: Who's the Lucky Bride?

Chapter 1: Who's the Lucky Bride? Summary

Fudge-a-mania by Judy Blume centers on the life of Peter Hatcher, a fifth grader, and his family vacation in Maine. His little brother, Fudge, causes a lot of trouble. Peter is unhappy that he must share a house with Sheila Tubman, his arch enemy.

In Chapter 1: Who's the Lucky Bride?, Peter Hatcher has a little, five year-old brother named Fudge. Fudge says he will marry Sheila Tubman. Peter pretends to faint. Peter's mom comes in and asks why Peter is on the ground. Fudge says he told him about his plans to marry Sheila. Peter hates Sheila. Mom explains Buzz Tubman, Sheila's father, told them about the vacation house in Maine. The house is right next to the Tubmans. For three weeks in August, Peter must live next door to Sheila. Peter pretends to faint again. Fudge says he will marry Sheila in Maine. Peter is very unhappy.

Chapter 1: Who's the Lucky Bride? Analysis

Peter's motivations are to stay away from his arch enemy, Sheila Tubman. However, he cannot get away from her because of the location of the vacation house. This foreshadows that Peter will create circumstances in which he will not have to see Sheila. Peter will do everything in his power to keep her away. In contrast, Fudge wants to marry her. This represents a duality between the two brothers. The reader can see that Peter and Fudge are two very different boys.



Chapter 2: Pete and Farley

Chapter 2: Pete and Farley Summary

In Chapter 2: Pete and Farley, Peter goes to Tico-Taco for dinner. They talk about spending three weeks next to Sheila on vacation. Sheila lives in Peter's apartment building in New York City and they go to the same school, so there is no getting away from her. Mom says it will not be as bad as he thinks. Sheila is older now; she is a sixth grader. Peter says she is the Queen of Cooties. Fudge asks what are cooties? Dad explains cooties are like lice or bugs that live in a person's hair. Peter does not like being called Pete. He calls Fudge, Farley Drexel Hatcher, which is Fudge's real name. Fudge gets upset. The family is chaotic. They let Tootsie, the baby sister, run around the restaurant. The kids scream. Mom and Dad try to calm them. Fudge suggests he should go to camp for the summer, but the family does not have much money. Mom says Peter can bring a friend, Jimmy Fargo.

Peter calls Jimmy, but Jimmy is reluctant because it is one week next door to Sheila. Peter tries to sell him on it by saying there is a forest in between the houses. Sheila is scared of dogs, so Peter can put his dog Turtle on her. Jimmy says a week with Peter's family is a long time. Jimmy is an only child who lives with his divorced father, Frank Fargo. Frank is a painter. Peter tells Jimmy everyone who will be there: his family, Turtle, Uncle Feather (Fudge's pet bird) and Grandma Muriel (Mom's mom). Jimmy calls Peter back and says yes because Frank can camp out and Jimmy will stay at Peter's house.

Chapter 2: Pete and Farley Analysis

Peter and Jimmy represent two different types of families. Peter's family is chaotic and loud. He has two siblings with a lot of energy. Mom and Dad try to discipline, but they cannot control their children very well. In contrast, Jimmy comes from a quiet, two person household. Jimmy lives with his father. His mother and father split up a while ago, thus Jimmy is from a divorced family. For Jimmy, handling a big family is difficult. Peter and Jimmy represent the opposite sides of the spectrum of family. This foreshadows that Jimmy may find the vacation very difficult with the Hatcher family. It may overwhelm him completely.



Chapter 3: The Most Disgusting of Them All

Chapter 3: The Most Disgusting of Them All Summary

In Chapter 3: The Most Disgusting of Them All, the family drives in an old Blazer to Maine. It is a 10-hour drive from New York City to Southwest Harbor, Maine. Peter thinks Grandma is smart because she flies up to Maine. Mom reads a guidebook and sees the town and says it is perfect. They are all annoyed because they have been in the car for 10 hours. At the house, Turtle jumps out of the car and heads for the woods. Sheila is on the porch. She screams her head off because she is scared of dogs. They all go onto the porch. Fudge proposes to Sheila. Sheila's older sister Libby comes out with a puppy. They are confused because Sheila is afraid of dogs. Sheila says she loves the puppy. She says Turtle is the most disgusting dog. Peter asks where his house is. Sheila explains their houses are connected and only an inside door separates them. Peter is furious.

Chapter 3: The Most Disgusting of Them All Analysis

Peter's motivations now become impossible. He now cannot stay away from Sheila no matter how hard he tries. Peter must turn his motivations into something different because his original motivations are not going to happen. This foreshadows that Peter's vacation may turn into something very different than he expected. Perhaps Sheila and he will learn to coexist.



Chapter 4: The Worst News of the Century

Chapter 4: The Worst News of the Century Summary

In Chapter 4: The Worst News of the Century, the family goes into the house. Peter finds out they must share the living room and kitchen with the Tubmans. Only a staircase separates their living spaces. Peter is very upset. There are three bedrooms for the Hatcher family. Mom and Dad will share a bedroom. Grandma and Tootsie will share. Peter and Fudge will share the smallest bedroom. Grandma arrives and does four cartwheels on the front lawn. The Tubmans are impressed. Sheila asks if Grandma can teach her how to do that. Grandma says yes because she ran a gymnastics camp for years.

Sheila says her friend Mouse Ellis will come in 10 days, which is exactly when Jimmy Fargo comes. Sheila is not happy to hear Jimmy is coming.

Chapter 4: The Worst News of the Century Analysis

The house reflects the economical situation of Peter's family. They cannot afford a house by themselves, thus the family struggles a bit with money. In a previous chapter, Dad says the family cannot afford to send Peter to summer camp. Therefore, the family does not have a lot of money. This idea of the struggling middle class is throughout many of Judy Blume's books for children. This reflects the poor economic situation in the time period of the 1980s. Blume's child characters usually must deal with a family that cannot afford many extras. Thus, Peter's family is a reflection of the times.



Chapter 5: Uncle Feather's Adventure

Chapter 5: Uncle Feather's Adventure Summary

In Chapter 5, Uncle Feather's Adventure, Peter and Fudge have breakfast with Grandma and Buzzy Senior, Sheila's grandfather. Fudge counts his Cheerios. Sheila comes down in a fuzzy pink robe and bunny slippers. Peter thinks Jimmy is going to go right back on the plane when he sees Sheila. Sheila opens all the windows because her puppy keeps going to the bathroom inside the house and it smells. She looks inside Uncle Feather's cage. The bird is not there.

Peter and Fudge go outside to find Uncle Feather, but it is very foggy. They go to the water and knock on a door. Mrs. A answers the door and invites them in for a snack. Fudge says Uncle Feather is missing and describes him. Mrs. A thinks Uncle Feather is a weird person. Peter stays quiet. Mrs. A asks if Uncle Feather is crazy.

After they leave, Peter reprimands Fudge for leading Mrs. A into believing Uncle Feather is a person. They go back to their house and hear screeching. Libby says there is a bat after her. It is Uncle Feather, who is a black bird. Everything ends well.

Chapter 5: Uncle Feather's Adventure Analysis

Though Peter may not recognize it, the two families begin to blend into one. They have family issues such as the escaped bird. Sheila is comfortable enough to come downstairs in her girly, morning attire. Fudge neurotically counts his Cheerios. These two families turn into one wacky family. Peter takes his place as a disciplinarian of Fudge. His role in the family changes from child to one of a disciplinarian. Peter seems to begin a self-journey of growing up and taking responsibility when he feels he must find Uncle Feather. This foreshadows that Peter might throw himself into other grownup situations while on vacation, and he will learn and grow from them.



Chapter 6: The Perfect Baby-Sitter

Chapter 6: The Perfect Baby-Sitter Summary

In Chapter 6: The Perfect Baby-Sitter, Sheila asks Mrs. Hatcher to babysit for Fudge. Peter says Sheila had babysat for Fudge a few years ago and Fudge had lost his two front teeth flying off the monkey bars. Sheila says she has taken a babysitting course since then. Mom agrees and says she will pay Sheila \$7 a day for watching Fudge two hours in the morning and four hours in the afternoon. Peter says, what about him? Mom says he can watch Fudge too. She will pay \$7 a day and she does not care how they split the money. Sheila will not split the money.

Fudge starts asking Sheila questions. Peter laughs inside because Sheila does not realize what a handful Fudge is. Everyone goes off to activities after lunch. Peter is alone. Peter runs into Sheila and Fudge collecting rocks on the public beach. Mrs. A comes out and says for Fudge to meet Mitzi, her granddaughter, who is also five years-old. Sheila and Fudge go to Mrs. A's house and have a snack. Peter is unhappy because he has no one with whom to hang out. He misses one of Mrs. A's snacks.

Chapter 6: The Perfect Baby-Sitter Analysis

Peter becomes a loner, even though this is not his wish. His original motivation had been to stay away from Sheila, but this is not working well. He becomes lonely. Peter's motivation now turns into trying to find someone with whom he can hang out. He wants to be part of the group. Peter realizes that being lonely is much worse than hanging out with Sheila. To overcome his loneliness, Peter must change his motivations once again to blend into the group.



Chapter 7: The Best News of the Century

Chapter 7: The Best News of the Century Summary

In Chapter 7: The Best News of the Century, Peter joins Fudge and Sheila at Mrs. A's house. They meet Mitzi. She is really cute and wears a baseball glove on her left hand. Mrs. A introduces them with the last name Feather, but Peter says it is Hatcher. Mrs. A asks Fudge his real name and he says it is Farley. She says Farley is a beautiful name; it is the name of an old movie star. Mrs. A and Sheila leave to get food. Peter, Fudge and Mitzi are left in the room. Fudge and Mitzi get shy. Peter gets the conversation going. He asks about her baseball mitt. She says it is her grandfather's mitt, Big Apfel. Peter gets excited and says he has Big's baseball card. Mitzi says he can play in a game with them this Sunday. He has to pass the over-under test. Peter must be over four and under 104 years of age. He is. He starts screaming in excitement.

Later on, he calls Jimmy to tell him his neighbor is Big Apfel. Jimmy does not say much. Peter says Big Apfel is the greatest centerfielder of all time. He played on the Boston Red Sox. Jimmy asks how the Queen of Cooties, Sheila, is doing. Peter lies and says he does not see her because she has a babysitting job. He does not tell Jimmy whom she babysits.

Later that night, Peter comes up with an idea to explain why they are sharing a house with the Tubmans. Peter wants to say they have a big, old house, but it has poison gas inside the toilet. The house is condemned and they have had to move in with the Tubmans. Jimmy is big on environmental issues, so Peter thinks Jimmy will understand. Peter goes to sleep without any problems, realizing he has a good story for Jimmy.

Chapter 7: The Best News of the Century Analysis

Big Apfel represents the ultimate boy fantasy: to have a star athlete living next to him. Big is a dream come true for Peter. He now has his sights on playing in the big game on Sunday. Peter becomes a joiner once again. His motivation to become part of a team takes over and he wants to meet Big Apfel. Peter now must socialize with Sheila because they will hang out at Mrs. A's house. Peter continues his self-journey toward growing up. He understands that to get what he wants, sometimes he must associate with people he does not like. This is a big part of growing up.

Even though Peter grows internally, he is still concerned with appearances. He makes up a story to tell Jimmy and even lies to Jimmy on the phone. Peter is still child-like in this way because he cares too much about what other people think. This foreshadows that Peter will come face to face with his lies when Jimmy visits. It will be interesting to see Jimmy's reaction to these lies.



Chapter 8: Fudge-a-mania

Chapter 8: Fudge-a-mania Summary

In Chapter 8, Fudge-a-mania, Peter wakes up in a bad mood because he realizes Jimmy will not believe his poison gas story. Peter remembers his Dad saying that falling asleep when his body is not tired is a way to avoid problems. Peter thinks he is right because he does not know what to do about Jimmy. Peter thinks a lot can happen in a week; maybe the Tubmans will decide to leave.

Peter wonders why Mrs. A never says that her husband is Big Apfel. He thinks it is because she is tired of people falling all over themselves. Mitzi looks at Peter's baseball card and says that used to be Big Apfel. She says he looks different now because he has more fat. Peter says Big is younger in the baseball card. Peter takes Mitzi to the back of his house, where Sheila and Fudge plant a rock garden. Peter warns them this is not their backyard; they are only renters. Fudge and Mitzi start twirling around. Mitzi says it is Fudge-a-mania. Once you catch it, you cannot stop. Peter starts twirling around and says he has caught Fudge-a-mania. Libby comes out of the house and asks how she can sleep with all this noise. But it is already 10 a.m. She says Peter's family is always chaotic.

Mom and Dad are happy with the rock garden. Peter and Sheila say mean things to each other. Grandma and Buzzy Senior do not understand how they cannot get along, especially when Turtle and Sheila's puppy are best friends.

Tootsie wants to play with Peter, but Peter shakes her off. Tootsie falls and cries. Everyone blames Peter. Dad rides Tootsie around like he is a horse. Mom picks up Fudge and kisses him. Grandma understands and says to Peter it is not easy being the first born.

Chapter 8: Fudge-a-mania Analysis

Peter grows and develops in this chapter. Firstly, he realizes that his false story to Jimmy will not work. He must face his problems head on. Secondly, he disciplines Sheila and Fudge for making the rock garden because it is not their backyard. He takes the disciplinarian role once again, thus separating himself as an adult from the children. Then Peter realizes as the oldest sibling, he is blamed a lot. He thinks it is easier being the youngest. Peter separates himself once again from the children because he looks at himself as someone older. Peter continues his self-journey here, but it is confusing. He is not a small child, but he is not an adult. He is somewhere in between. He represents the confusion of adolescence because as a fifth grader, he will enter into adolescence soon.



Chapter 9: Dizzy from Izzy

Chapter 9: Dizzy from Izzy Summary

In Chapter 9, Dizzy from Izzy, Peter hangs out at the beach to get a glimpse of Big Apfel. Mrs. A says the game is cancelled this Sunday because Big will be at the big antique show. Fudge wants to get a mitt-sy, or a baseball glove. Mitzi has a book named Tell Me a Mitzi. Fudge is jealous because it is about her name. Mitzi says she is special. Dad, Peter and Fudge go into town. They go to the sporting goods store and buy a baseball glove for Fudge. Peter and Fudge go to the library. The regular librarian is not there. A library assistant named Izzy is there. She is pretty and 16 years-old. Fudge asks for a book called Tell Me a Fudge or Tell Me a Farley. She looks for him in the card catalog. There is nothing. Fudge throws himself down the floor and has a fit. People stare. Peter tells him he is too old for a hissy fit, but Fudge disagrees. Izzy says Fudge knows the most about himself, so he should write a book. Fudge says he cannot write. Izzy says Fudge can tell his brother stories and he can write them down for Fudge.

Peter thinks Izzy is really pretty. She has dark, chocolate eyes. He becomes dizzy from how much he likes her. He tells Fudge he feels like he is dizzy or like he is floating, but he does not tell him why. Later that night, Peter is in bed and he wants to dream about Izzy. He tries to train his mind to dream about her. He goes to sleep. He wakes up disappointed the next day because he dreams about Sheila.

Chapter 9: Dizzy from Izzy Analysis

Peter continues growing up when he meets Izzy. He is attracted to her. He thinks she is very pretty and has a strong attraction to Izzy in a physical way. This is new for Peter. He does not know how to deal with this feeling, so he feels dizzy. He acknowledges his feelings, but he takes a while to process the full scale of his emotions. When he goes to bed, he wants to dream of her. Though this is meant in an innocent way by Blume, it infers that Peter has his adolescent, sexual awakening here. He starts to look at girls as more than annoying. They are objects of beauty and sexual attraction. Peter steps away further from being a child and steps more and more into the world of adults. He is a blooming adolescent.



Chapter 10: Green Gurgling Gas

Chapter 10: Green Gurgling Gas Summary

In Chapter 10: Green Gurgling Gas, Sheila receives a phone call. Her friend Mouse Ellis has the chicken pox and cannot come to Maine. Sheila is really upset. She says life is so unfair. The room assignments are switched because Peter and Jimmy will share a room. Fudge will move into Grandma and Tootsie's room in a roll-away bed. Fudge starts to jump on the roll-away bed. Mom says not to do it. The roll-away bed collapses and catches Fudge in the middle. They pull Fudge out. They talk about snoring. Fudge asks if Grandma still snores. She says she does not know. He says snoring keeps the monsters away. Fuzzy Senior says he does not know if he snores anymore because his wife is dead. Fudge gets serious and suggests he and Grandma should sleep together because they are best friends. He likens them to Peter and Jimmy sharing a room. Everyone laughs.

Frank Fargo, Jimmy's father, and Jimmy come. Jimmy sees Sheila and the Tubmans. He gets the explanation of the house and how they are sharing. Jimmy likes Sheila's puppy. The arrangement seems okay with Jimmy. Frank says he will bring their bags out of the car. Mom suspiciously asks if Frank thinks he is staying too. Peter says Frank meant Jimmy's bags. But Frank says he is going to sleep there as well because he cannot camp in cold, rainy weather. Mom and Dad are in shock. Dad offers Frank the sofa. Mom looks like she is about to faint.

Later on that night, Jimmy apologizes for Frank's pushiness and weirdness. He is embarrassed by Frank. Peter says not to worry about it. Peter tests his poison gas story out on Jimmy. He says some guy has poison gas in all the toilets up here. Jimmy asks if he means green, steamy, gurgling stuff. Jimmy laughs. Jimmy does not believe it and makes a joke out of it. Peter laughs too.

Chapter 10: Green Gurgling Gas Analysis

When Jimmy comes, Peter must face his problems head on and be honest. He must take an adult approach, thus he must integrate himself into the adult world more. He explains the situation to Jimmy and does not lie. When he tests out the poison gas story on Jimmy, Peter realizes he is being childish and foolish. He learns telling the truth is the best option. Peter also emerges more in the adult world, since the room assignments switch. He is rid of Fudge. He can now room with someone who is his equal. This is a big moment for Peter, who is usually surrounded by little ones.

Grandma and Buzzy Senior seem to be starting a relationship of some kind. Even Fudge notices. He jokes they should sleep in the same room. This foreshadows that Grandma and Buzzy Senior's relationship may flourish into a romantic relationship. This idea of romance parallels Peter's attraction to Izzy. Peter begins to have romantic

feelings. Meanwhile, his elders, Grandma and Buzzy Senior, who are well-versed in romance, have feelings for each other. No matter young or old, romantic attraction is possible.



Chapter 11: The I.S.A.F. Club

Chapter 11: The I.S.A.F. Club Summary

In Chapter 11: The I.S.A.F. Club, the families are at breakfast. Jimmy and Sheila seem to be getting along and it annoys Peter. Jimmy takes an interest in Sheila's puppy. Peter cannot stomach this. Fudge interrupts and starts to sing, "Peter got dizzy from Izzy at the library" (The I.S.A.F. Club, p. 96). Fudge says Peter felt like he was floating when he left the library. Peter gets really angry and embarrassed. He starts to scream at Fudge. Grandma bangs her spoon down and the commotion stops. Breakfast is quiet, but Peter can hardly eat.

After breakfast, Sheila teases Peter about Izzy. It is their first sunny and warm morning in Maine. Sheila will not stop about Izzy. She says she has seen Izzy, who has curly hair and a fat butt. Peter defends Izzy and says she is not fat. Jimmy asks when he can meet Izzy. Sheila suggests they all ride bikes into town and go to the library to see what Izzy looks like. Peter throws a fit and says Jimmy is there to visit him, not Sheila. He runs up to his room. He says first Jimmy says he cannot stand Sheila and the next thing he knows, they are best friends. Jimmy comes up and says he feels sorry for Sheila because her friend has chicken pox and cannot come to visit.

They bike into town. Peter pedals very fast and goes ahead of Sheila and Jimmy. He is still angry. He breathes hard, with his mouth open. He swallows a fly and falls off his bike. He thinks he might puke. Sheila and Jimmy help him up and take him to Bicycle Bob, who says Peter is part of the I.S.A.F. Club now, or the I Swallowed a Fly Club. Bob says the best way to heal swallowing a fly is to go next door to Ickle's ice cream shop and buy a vanilla cone. Bob says there are special meetings of the I.S.A.F. Club too. They go to Ickle's and get ice cream. Sheila comments that Tony Ickle is a hunk.

They go to the library. Peter is too embarrassed, so he makes up a story about how bikes have been stolen lately, so he must stay outside to guard the bikes. Sheila and Jimmy go in, but come out disappointed because Izzy only works afternoons.

Chapter 11: The I.S.A.F. Club Analysis

The teasing of Peter suggests Peter as a true adolescent. He is embarrassed at his feelings. He wants the teasing to stop. Even though he does not tell Fudge why he felt dizzy, Fudge figures it out. Thus, Peter's feelings for Izzy are obvious. Peter's motivations are to keep his crush on Izzy quiet. He cannot have her know. He stays outside the library, so he resists becoming an adolescent at that moment and resists his true feelings. The library in this scene symbolizes a place to learn, grow and educate oneself. When Peter refuses to enter the library, he refuses to learn, grown and educate himself about adolescence. He wants to remain a child in this scene. This represents

the struggle of adolescence: sometimes you want to be an adult and sometimes you want to be a child.

When Peter swallows the fly, his childlike character comes back. He must confer with Bicycle Bob, who tells him a childish story. Peter buys an ice cream cone to feel better. Peter is a child, even though he has strong feelings for an older girl. In Peter's world, his motivations waver between being an adult and being a child. He decides which role he chooses by deciding in the moment of a particular situation.



Chapter 12: Baby Feet

Chapter 12: Baby Feet Summary

In Chapter 12: Baby Feet, Frank Fargo, an artist, sets up his studio in the side yard. He has his canvas spread like a rug on the grass. He has a bucket of blue paint. Fudge is all blue and Peter thinks he got into Frank's paint bucket. But Fudge is blue with blueberries. They had gone blueberry picking and Fudge had eaten a bunch of blueberries. Peter is mad Fudge had eaten them because it had been hard work picking them. Fudge is sick to his stomach.

Dad comes home and announces he has rented a sailboat. Six others can go with him. He has the boat from noon to 4 p.m. Jimmy is scared of going on the boat because he is not a good swimmer. The six who join Dad are Peter, Jimmy, Grandma, Mr. Tubman, Mrs. Tubman and Sheila. It's a little boat and they all step in. It is nice. They sail and soak up the sun's rays. They sail to a little island and have a picnic. They rest and relax on the island for a bit.

On the way back, the water is rough from the wind. The boat rocks back and forth. The sails hit the water. Everyone gets scared. Jimmy starts to get seasick. Mrs. Tubman says Grandma should take over and be the captain because Grandma is an expert sailor. Dad gets angry, but relents. Grandma takes over and straightens out the boat. She calms everyone as they sail home smoothly.

At home, Peter picks up Tootsie and she has blue feet. They realize she has been into Frank's paint bucket because they see blue footprints across the grass. They tell Frank, who turns purple. But then he takes a closer look. He likes the way the little blue footprints look on his canvas. At dinner, Dad announces he apologizes for being a sore sport when Grandma had taken over the boat. He says Grandma had saved the day. Frank says he wants to thank Tootsie for walking across his canvas. She has inspired a series of paintings called Baby Feet. Buzzy Senior kisses Grandma, which shocks the adults, but not the kids.

Chapter 12: Baby Feet Analysis

Dad admits he is wrong. He shows the children what a true adult is: someone who can admit his/her mistakes. Peter needs to see this because Peter must learn this lesson himself. Peter starts to learn when to admit he is wrong by not telling Jimmy the poison gas story. Peter must learn from his father's example for future reasons. This foreshadows that Peter must admit he is wrong in a major situation to come. With the Sheila situation, he still cannot admit he had been wrong about it. The summer with Sheila has not been that bad and he even will meet Big Apfel because of her.

The blue footprints represent childhood. Tootsie is still a baby. These footprints show her obvious childlike qualities. Peter knows what Tootsie did is wrong and he separates

himself once again from being a child. This situation warrants for Peter to act like an adult, so he does. He realizes being a child is not all that bad, especially if it inspires a series of paintings. The Baby Feet series of paintings symbolizes the beauty and innocence of childhood, two things Peter slowly loses.



Chapter 13: Captain Fudge

Chapter 13: Captain Fudge Summary

In Chapter 13: Captain Fudge, Fudge oils his mitt-sy (baseball glove) with Mom's Oil of Olay face cream. It smells really girly. Peter says he should oil a baseball glove with real oil. Fudge is about to get upset, but Peter says it is creative of him to use the Oil of Olay. Peter wakes up Jimmy at 10 a.m., but Jimmy does not want to wake up. Peter says Big Apfel will be there. Today is game day.

They go to the park. Sheila reads in the car because she is scared of the big dogs. There are many people Peter knows there such as Bicycle Bob and Mitzi. Peter sees Big Apfel dressed in a Red Sox uniform. He is huge, six feet six tall. Big says he is too old to take the field and run the bases anymore, but he will bat for both teams. Everyone cheers, but Peter thinks it is not right. They draw straws for team captains. The captains are Fudge and Izzy. Peter tries to send mental messages for Izzy to pick him, but Izzy picks Tony Ickle, the hunk from the ice cream shop. Fudge picks Mitzi then Peter. Izzy picks Jimmy. Nothing works out Peter's way.

The first play of the game is a hit to Peter, who plays second base. He takes his eye off the ball to see if Big is watching him and the ball drops at his feet. Then he overthrows to first base. Peter feels horrible. He gets up to bat and his Grandma catches his good hit. Izzy gets up to bat and hits a good hit. Mitzi and Fudge play with the ball. Finally, Peter gets the ball and tags Izzy out. He pushes her over by accident and she gets mad. Peter's team loses 26 to 8. Jimmy says Peter is his best friend because he forced him out of bed to go to the game. Fudge says Peter is his best brother. So Peter does not feel like such a loser. He realizes next Sunday may be better.

After a shower, Mom looks for her Oil of Olay. Fudge tells Mom he used it all on his mitt-sy.

Chapter 13: Captain Fudge Analysis

Peter takes the parental role with Fudge. Instead of making him feel badly for using Oil of Olay, he tells him he is creative. On the ball field, he learns the lesson from his father of not being a sore sport. He is angry at himself about how the game is going, but he realizes there are more important things. It is more important to be a good friend and good brother. He feels happy that he is both. Therefore, Peter finally achieves a good balance between adult and child. He can be responsible and a disciplinarian, but he can also be a kid who enjoys playing baseball with his friends.

When Izzy chooses Tony Ickle, it is obvious who attracts her. Though Peter may take on an adult role sometimes, he is still viewed as a child by the opposite sex. Izzy's selection of Tony represents that Peter has a long way to grow and develop. He is still a

child and for him to reach adolescent and sexual maturity, it will take a much longer time.



Chapter 14: The Ring Bear

Chapter 14: The Ring Bear Summary

In Chapter 14: The Ring Bear, Frank announces his Baby Feet series will be featured in a gallery in Soho. They all must come. Grandma and Buzzy Senior announce they are in love and will get married. Mom and Mr. Tubman are in shock. Peter realizes he is stuck with Sheila for life. They all make wedding plans. Sheila and Libby are bridesmaids who will wear decorative jeans. Fudge is the ringer bearer, but he calls it the ring "bear."

They have a wedding under the trees. It is a warm and clear day. The guests give creative gifts, including Peter and Jimmy who make a banner. The ceremony begins. Fudge and Mitzi twirl around with the ring pillow and lose the rings in the grass. People find the rings. The wedding barbeque is a huge success and lasts for hours. Sheila says to Peter even though they are related, she will always hate him. He says the same. They promise to hate each other and shake on it.

Chapter 14: The Ring Bear Analysis

Grandma and Buzzy Senior's marriage represents mature love. Peter is in the stage of beginning love and has not had a relationship yet. But Grandma and Buzzy Senior are old professionals at love. Their love is what Peter will eventually reach. Though he is unlucky in love with Izzy, Grandma and Buzzy Senior's union foreshadows that he will be lucky in love one day. He just needs to grow and become an adult and he will be ready for love. It will be a long time until he reaches this rite of passage, so Peter should enjoy being a kid while it lasts.



Characters

Peter Hatcher

Peter Hatcher is a fifth grade boy from New York City. He lives with his mother, father, brother Fudge and sister Tootsie in an apartment. Peter is a responsible boy. He looks after his brother and disciplines him. He does the same with his sister. But Peter sometimes has a hard time with his family because his siblings are so loud and energetic. They often cause a ruckus and it is always chaos when the Hatcher family is around. Peter has one arch enemy: Sheila Tubman. Peter thinks she is gross. When he learns he must share a summer house with her, he feels his world is over.

Peter and his family go to Maine for three weeks on vacation. He becomes fascinated with Big Apfel, the famous baseball player who is his neighbor. The idea of playing in a Sunday baseball game with Big excites him. Peter is easily annoyed by Fudge, who is a handful and an innocent troublemaker. Peter's friend Jimmy comes to visit and Peter feels happy. He is angry that Jimmy hangs out with Sheila. Peter discovers love when he meets a pretty, older girl. This is Peter's first time feeling this way and he feels dizzy. Peter realizes that he likes to be social and he hangs out with Sheila too. Even though his family is noisy and crazy, he loves them. He wants to be part of the group. Peter wavers between being a disciplinarian for Fudge and Tootsie and being a kid himself. He is about to start adolescence.

Fudge Hatcher

Fudge Hatcher is Peter's five year-old brother. Fudge's real name is Farley Drexel Hatcher, but he does not like being called by it. Fudge is an innocent troublemaker. He is a handful and he has a lot of energy. He is curious and creative and these qualities get him into troublemaking situations. He asks a lot of questions about how the world works. He is curious about knowledge. He loves to play with Peter and Tootsie. He likes sharing a room with Peter. He falls asleep though before they can ever talk.

Fudge starts to write a book about himself. He taps into his creative side this way. He acts his age most of the time because he cries when he is upset and even throws a hissy fit in the middle of the library. He desperately wants a baseball mitt, which he gets. Sheila is his babysitter. Fudge proposes marriage to her because he believes Sheila will stop monsters from coming into his bedroom. He believes when people are married, the monsters go away. Fudge's playful behavior is loved by many. He is very cute and people cannot stay mad at him for long. Fudge also likes to try different things. For example, he eats a ton of blueberries, he plants a rock garden and he tries to play baseball. He is a go-getter who cannot be stopped. Fudge loves the adventure of things.



Sheila Tubman

Sheila Tubman is a sixth grade girl who goes to the same school as Peter. She is Peter's arch enemy. She is scared of dogs, even though she has a little puppy. She hates Peter too. Her family and Peter's family share a vacation house in Maine for three weeks. She is Fudge's babysitter when she is there. She is a know-it-all.

Mom

Mom is Peter, Fudge and Tootsie's mother. She has a hard time controlling the kids. It is her idea to share the vacation house with the Tubmans. She pays Sheila to babysit Fudge.

Tootsie

Tootsie is Peter's one and a half year-old sister. She likes to try to talk. She dances and walks.

Jimmy Fargo

Jimmy Fargo is Peter's best friend. He comes to Maine for a week. He does not know about sharing the house with Sheila until he gets there. But he is nice to her.

Grandma

Grandma Muriel is Mom's mother. She can do cartwheels because she ran a gymnastics camp. She has a relationship with Buzzy Senior that turns into marriage.

Mitzi

Mitzi is Fudge's new friend. She is a five year-old girl who loves baseball. Her grandfather is Big Apfel, the famous ball player.

Izzy

Izzy is the library assistant. She is a very pretty, 16 year-old girl. She is nice to Fudge. Peter likes her.



Frank Fargo

Frank Fargo is Jimmy's artist father. He stays on the Hatcher's couch, even though he is not originally invited. He is a bit strange. He paints a series called Baby Feet, inspired by Tootsie's blue paint footprints.

Big Apfel

Big Apfel is a famous retired centerfielder for the Boston Red Sox. He is Peter's neighbor and Mitzi's grandfather. He hosts a town game every Sunday.

Mrs. A

Mrs. A is Big Apfel's wife and Mitzi's grandmother. The kids go over to Mrs. A's house for snacks.

Buzzy Senior

Buzzy Senior is Sheila's grandfather. He starts a relationship with Grandma and they marry.

Dad

Dad is Peter, Fudge and Tootsie's father. He admits when he is wrong.



Objects/Places

Southwest Harbor, Maine

Southwest Harbor, Maine is a beautiful, little town where Peter and his family vacation.

Tico-Taco

Tico-Taco is a restaurant in New York City where Peter and his family eat. They cause chaos there.

Cooties

Cooties are bugs found in a person's hair, similar to lice. Children say people have "cooties" when they think the person is gross.

Myna Bird

A myna bird is a bird native to Asia. It is small and comes in a variety of colors. Uncle Feather, Fudge's bird, is a myna bird.

Over-under Test

The over-under test is the famous baseball player Big Apfel's test for who can play in his baseball game. The players must be over four and under 104 years of age.

Mitt-sy

Mitt-sy is a term for a baseball mitt that Mitzi and Fudge use.

Card Catalog

A card catalog is the system used in the library where people can look up books to see if the library has the book and where it is in the library. It is an old system now replaced by computers.

Chicken Pox

Chicken pox is a viral infection that is highly contagious among children. It causes itchy, red bumps.



Ickle's

Ickle's ice cream shop is where Libby works and the teenage hunk, Tony Ickle works. The kids get their ice cream there. It is located in Southwest Harbor, Maine.

Oil of Olay

Oil of Olay is a skin cream women put on their skin to make it younger and moisturized.



Themes

Adolescent Awakening

One of the major themes in *Fudge-a-mania* is adolescent awakening. Peter begins the book as a child. He whines to Mom and Dad about spending his vacation next door to Sheila Tubman, his arch enemy. He lies to his friend Jimmy about sharing a house with Sheila. He acts immaturely. When he arrives in Maine, Peter must confront his problems head on, like an adult. He must learn to coexist peacefully with Sheila. He also takes the adult role many times when disciplining Fudge. Peter slowly starts to move into the role of an adult when needed. Additionally, Peter develops his first crush on an older girl. He feels dizzy because of his feelings.

All of these experiences lead to an adolescent awakening in Peter. He begins to act like an adult. When Jimmy comes, he chooses not to lie. Peter continues to discipline Fudge, even fathering him in some ways. He gets along with Sheila most of the time, thereby working on his relationship with his arch enemy. By the time the book ends, he realizes being a good friend and brother are extremely important. Peter grows and develops mentally into an adolescent. His awakening has helped him realize that he needs to act like an adult in certain situations. However, because he is an adolescent, not a full adult, he wavers between acting like an adult and a child. Peter chooses which role is needed for each situation. He is a true adolescent now.

Chaos

One of the major themes of *Fudge-a-mania* is chaos. Wherever the Hatcher family goes, chaos follows. The family structure of the Hatchers is built around chaos. For example, when the Hatcher family goes out to eat at Tico-Taco, Mom and Dad do not discipline the little kids much. Tootsie runs around the restaurant. Fudge is loud and excitable. Mom and Dad seem to choose to let the kids be themselves in public situations. They do not stifle their energy or creativity. When the Tubmans live with the Hatchers, they are now involved in the chaos as well. Even Libby, Sheila's older sister, declares that chaos follows the family. The first morning in the vacation house, Uncle Feather escapes from his bird cage and the kids run around after the bird. Breakfast is never quiet. Peter and Sheila fight. The kids scream excitably.

The one who causes the most chaos is Fudge. Fudge seems to cause a scene wherever he goes. For instance, he eats a ton of blueberries and gets them all over himself. He causes a ruckus at Grandma's wedding when he twirls around with the ring bearer pillow and loses the rings in the grass. The ceremony stops as guests search for the rings. Even Mitzi names a game *Fudge-a-mania*, where they twirl around and yell and cannot stop. The game is based on chaos and Fudge is right at the center of it. Fudge causes chaos wherever he goes, making him the most chaotic member of the Hatcher family.



Socio-Economic Status

One of the major themes of *Fudge-a-mania* is socio-economic status. The reader sees that Peter's family does not have a lot of money. They live in an apartment somewhere in New York City. They decide to go on a vacation to Maine, but they must share a rental house with another family. When Peter says he wants to go to summer camp instead, Dad declares they do not have the money for it. He also says Grandma has paid more than enough for the Maine rental house. The rental house seems fine, but the bedrooms are small and the family must share rooms. They also must share a kitchen and living room with the Tubmans. The Hatchers' socio-economic status seems to be one of a middle class family. They struggle with money and can only afford small things.

The idea of being struggling middle class is a common theme in Judy Blume's books. The child characters must come to terms with the fact they cannot have everything they want. They must budget. Luxuries are not a possibility on this type of budget. For example, Dad buys Fudge a mitt and he rents a cheap boat for an afternoon, but that is as luxurious as it gets for the Hatchers. Peter subconsciously learns to budget and to understand the struggle of his parents' finances. Like most of Blume's child characters, Peter must realize that he is in a middle class family and that material things do not mean much compared to family and love.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is first person. The point of view is personal and reliable, which is proven by the fact the narrator, Peter, knows the events and situations about which he reports. He can also tell the reader the emotions of other characters. For example, Peter knows when Fudge is about to cry or get upset. This point of view is important to the book because one of the major themes of the novel is adolescent awakening in Peter. There could not be such a dramatic turn of Peter's growth and development into an adolescent if the reader could not see into Peter's personal thoughts and emotions.

The story is told through a combination of exposition and dialogue. Judy Blume uses this method because the reader must keep focus on all the characters and hear their voices. The voices of the children are especially important. Children usually blurt out whatever they want to say, so the dialogue reflects this reality. The events are primarily seen through Peter's eyes and since Peter is the oldest and most responsible child, his narration is reliable. Through this first person point of view, he admits his mistakes and gives the reader access to his inner feelings. For instance, the reader knows how strong his crush is on Izzy and how upset he is with himself when he messes up in the baseball game. Without this personal point of view, the reader could not gain this important information.

Setting

The novel is set mostly in Southwest Harbor, Maine. It is a quaint, little town by the ocean. Tourists can swim at the public beach, rent a boat or ride bikes throughout the town. Southwest Harbor is a peaceful vacation spot, especially compared to New York City, where Peter and his family live. Southwest Harbor is beautiful and has many residents who live there year round, including Mitzi's grandparents. Peter and his family share a vacation house in Southwest Harbor. It is a two family house that is connected by a door. The families share a kitchen and a living room with a fireplace. Peter's family has three small bedrooms to themselves, which they must share. The house seems like a normal vacation house without any luxuries or frills. A large portion of the novel is set in and around the house; however, the house itself is not given much description.

The children also go to Mrs. A's house, which is a normal house with black shutters. They get snacks there such as cinnamon buns, tea and hot cocoa. The characters also get an afternoon on a boat. They soak up the sun's rays as they sail on the ocean. They stop to picnic and relax on a small island. On the way back, the sea is rough due to high winds. The sea takes over the setting as the characters get scared. The last setting of the novel is the yard of the vacation house. Grandma and Buzzy Senior get married in a



ceremony under the trees. The Maine weather, which is usually cold and wet, is warm and clear for their wedding day.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is informal. The sentences are constructed in a grammatically perfect way and adhere to the complex rules of grammar, but the children's voices are dominant. Thus, the language sounds like the language of children. For example, Peter speaks like a normal boy. Fudge does as well, but he is little and the language reflects his age. For instance, Fudge calls his baseball glove his mitt-sy, a babyish term he picked up from his five year-old friend. The language adds a depth to the novel that allows the reader a glimpse into the world of children and how children interact with one another.

The language of the novel does use a bit of slang. The slang is more children's slang, not any type of vernacular. This is apparent when Tootsie speaks because she is only one and a half years-old. She uses slang terms because she cannot pronounce names yet; i.e. she calls Peter "Pee." The use of this children's informal language aids this style of writing because it keeps to the reality of the characters who are children. Children actually speak exactly like they speak in this novel. Overall, the language is very easy to understand. It is effective in distinguishing the different characters, especially among the children. The language also tells the reader what details are important to children. For example, Mrs. A's house is white with black shutters. This is all Peter observes of the house and all the reader needs to know.

Structure

This novel is comprised of 14 chapters, each approximately 10 pages long. Each chapter has a name that refers to some action or event within the chapter that foreshadows what the reader is about to read. The chapters tend to be short and lack descriptive passages, especially when describing place or location. Between paragraphs, short amounts of time pass. For example, the span of the novel is three weeks. The narrator covers this span of three weeks by talking about the events that affect him most.

The plot of the novel is fairly simple without subplots. The novel is about Peter, a fifth grade boy, who vacations with his family in Maine for three weeks. He must share a house with his arch enemy, discipline his little brother and begin adolescence.

The novel's pace is fast because it is a book for children and an easy read. There are childish slang terms, but there is no swearing of any kind for the novel's young audience. The plot engrosses the reader into the world of children and the world of this fictional family vacation in a small Maine town. The story is linear without any flashbacks or long sections of back story. The novel is an easy read and entertains as a whole.

Quotes

"And that's how it all began." Chapter 1: Who's the Lucky Bride?, p. 5

"I'm talking about spending three weeks in Maine next door to the Tubmans." Chapter 2: Pete and Farley, p. 7

"Maybe three weeks in Maine wouldn't be as bad as I thought." Chapter 2: Pete and Farley, p. 13

"There are times when it's better not to say anything." Chapter 5: Uncle Feather's Adventure, p. 34

"It's Fudge-a-mania! Once you get it you can never stop." Chapter 8: Fudge-a-mania, p. 62

"Being a baby is so easy. Riding around on Dad's shoulders, knowing he'd never let you fall." Chapter 8: Fudge-a-mania, p. 67

"Who can explain it, who can tell you why?" Chapter 9: Dizzy from Izzy, p. 77

"I was glad I wouldn't have to lie to Jimmy after all." Chapter 10: Green Gurgling Gas, p. 91

"Pete got dizzy from Izzy at the library." Chapter 11: The I.S.A.F. Club, p. 96

"Dad relaxed a little. So did the rest of us." Chapter 12: Baby Feet, p. 112

"All's well that ends well." Chapter 12: Baby Feet, p. 117

"Nothing was working out the way I'd planned. Absolutely nothing." Chapter 13: Captain Fudge, p. 128



Topics for Discussion

How does Peter's character grow and develop throughout the book? Where does Peter begin his emotional journey and where does he end it? What are the catalysts for change in Peter's growth and development?

Why is Fudge so important to Peter's growth and development? What does Fudge represent in Peter's childhood? How does Peter act like a father figure to Fudge?

Peter enters the beginning of adolescence. How does adolescence create a duality in Fudge? Is adolescence a positive or negative thing in this book? How does Peter view his own adolescent beginnings?

How is romance viewed in Fudge-a-mania? Is romance for the younger or older generations? What physical signs does Peter feel of romance and how does he interpret them? What does Peter learn about romance?

What is the Hatchers' socio-economic status? How does the family deal with issues of money? Does money define them? Why or why not? How does Peter view money and material things?

How are Jimmy and Frank different from the Hatchers? What type of family do Jimmy and Frank represent? How is Frank as a father compared to Dad? Who is more nurturing and paternal? What are the differences between Jimmy's relationship with Frank and Peter's relationship with Dad?

Are the female characters strong in this book? Does Judy Blume create Peter's family as a matriarchal or patriarchal family? What weaknesses and strengths does Sheila have? Is she as strong as Peter? Why or why not?