

Nothing's Fair In Fifth Grade



Synopsis

A fifth grade class, repelled by the overweight new student who has serious home problems, finally learns to accept her.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 600 (What's this?)

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; First Edition edition (September 11, 2008)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 118 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #22,223 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Weight #64 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Bullies #91 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Social Skills

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

This winner of 13 state "children's favorite" awards shows Jenny and her friends as they struggle through elementary school injustices. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.
--This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Barthe Declements is an author of children's and young adult books. Some of her published credits include Fourth Grade Wizards, Double Trouble, I Never Asked You to Understand Me, and Bite of the Gold Bug: A Story of the Alaskan Gold Rush (Once Upon America).

I was first exposed to the work of Barthe DeClements in my FOURTH-grade year - 1989. During story time, my teacher read this book to us, and I immediately fell in love with it. Some may compare this to Judy Blume's "Blubber," as both are about fifth-graders, both feature girls who are singled out for teasing and torment due to being overweight, and both the narrator and the object of torment are

presented - initially at least - as unsympathetic characters (Elsie because she steals from her classmates and panhandles for forbidden sweets during lunch, Jenifer because of her initial hate of Elsie before she begins to understand Elsie's life situation). However, this book seems to have more heart and certainly has a more satisfying conclusion than "Blubber." In "Blubber" (which I still enjoy) Judy Blume never characterizes Linda "Blubber" Fischer as anything more than a chubby pushover without a backbone. In "NFIFG," we come to understand why Elsie is the way she is - she comes from a broken home, she's been abandoned by her father (at least it seems so), she has a verbally and physically abusive mother who very likely has some psychological issues of her own, and she eats for comfort. (In that respect the book, published in 1981, may be seen as ahead of its time, being written at a time when the psychology behind obesity was not as widely discussed in the public sphere as it is today.) At the same time, her stealing is not condoned and she is made to face the consequences for her actions. One other reviewer thought the book was an example of fat-shaming. I can't disagree more. Elsie's suffering doesn't end when she begins to lose weight, because she still has a less-than-ideal home life to contend with, including a mother who is so neglectful and abusive toward her that she won't even buy her new clothes when the old clothes no longer fit (until a classmate's mother shames her into doing so). Jenifer becomes Elsie's friend not because of Elsie's weight loss, but because she comes to understand Elsie's life situation better and to realize that Elsie is a human being with real feelings. Eventually she is able to bring Sharon and Diane around to do the same. And despite her weight loss, Elsie is still a target for bullies and name-calling. There is a sequel, HOW DO YOU LOSE THOSE NINTH GRADE BLUES?, published in 1983, which continues the story of Elsie into high school, and even though she has slimmed down into a svelte beauty by then, the weight loss hasn't solved all of her problems, as she still suffers from insecurity and her relationship with her mother is still strained. Nowhere do I see a message along the lines of MAGGIE GOES ON A DIET (i.e. that losing weight will magically make you popular and solve all of your problems). As for the narrator, "Blubber"'s Jill Brenner is a spoiled brat and a jerk essentially throughout the entire book, and never grows or matures in any way - the lesson she learns is about standing up for herself, not about treating others with respect, and she never feels any remorse for the torment she caused Linda, even after she herself is on the receiving end of the teasing. In "NFIFG," Jenifer's coming to know Elsie as more than just "the fat girl" - as a human being with real emotions who is mired in a very tough time in her life - seems somewhat cliché and "After School Special"-like at first, but it has better lessons for readers than "Blubber." Jenifer is simply much more likeable than Jill. Since this was published over 30 years ago, a number of the cultural references are obviously dated - for example, MORK AND MINDY, and when was the

last time 10/11-year-old girls listened to Elton John, the Bee Gees, and the Rolling Stones? - but the lessons about not judging a person until you understand his or her life situation, and about looking past a person's attractive (or unattractive) exterior to see the person inside, still hold true. For more of Elsie, read the sequel HOW DO YOU LOSE THOSE NINTH GRADE BLUES?, which gives much more insight into Elsie's unhappy home life and frosty relationship with her mother. Also recommended is 1985's SIXTH GRADE CAN REALLY KILL YOU, which introduces a new character, Helen (who hides her own feelings of inadequacy due to her reading disability through juvenile delinquency) and brings back Jenifer, Elsie, Diane and the rest for supporting roles.

Daughter enjoyed the book very much.

I rated this book a five because it's a great book for kids. I didn't really dislike anything about this book. I would recommend this book to kids going into fifth grade because it teaches them not to bully and to stand up for your friends. It also teaches kids never to go hitchhiking.

This book really touched me because once I was just like Elsie and had that problem, it might not has been as bad as Elsie's situation but it was similar. This book is very inspiring and I recommend it for all girls young and old.

I liked it but it was a little bit way to short It was a great book though and I have read it five times it never gets old I recommend this book plus it stays true 2 it's title!!!!!! :):):):):)

This was an amazing book it is so touching that girls like Jenny and girls like Elsie could become such good friends

Loved this book, it is an honest look at fifth grade life, I got it for my daughter and am looking forward to some good talks with her. It is funny and sad and helps you look past the surface of a person or situation.

It may have some mistakes but is interesting and I actually asked if I could read it!:) #you should read this book!!!!!!!!!!!!#yah giraffes

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