

Helping you choose books for children



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Opening extract from
**The Pain and the
Great One, Soupy
Saturdays**

Written by
Judy Blume

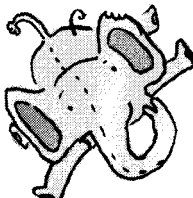
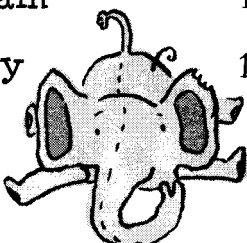
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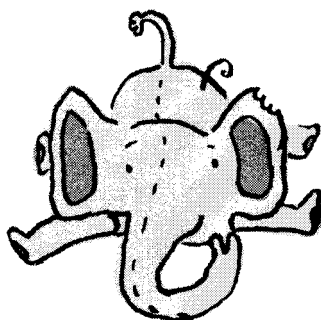


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Meet the Pain

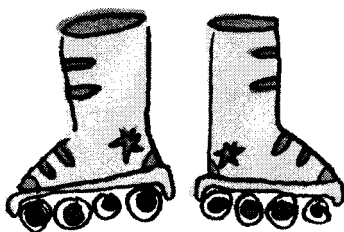


My sister's name is Abigail. I call her *The Great One* because she thinks she's so great. She says, "I don't think it, I know it!" When she says that I laugh like crazy. Then she gets mad. It's fun to make her mad. Who cares if she's in third grade and I'm just in first? That doesn't make her faster. Or stronger. Or even smarter. I don't get why Mom and Dad act like she's so special. Sometimes I think they love her more than me.





Meet the Great One



My brother's name is Jacob but everyone calls him Jake. Everyone but me. I call him *The Pain* because that's what he is. He's a first-grade pain. And he will always be a pain – even if he lives to be a hundred. Even then, I'll be two years older than him. I'll still know more about everything. And I'll always know exactly what he's thinking. That's just the way it is. I don't get why Mom and Dad act like he's so special. Sometimes I think they love him more than me.



Mr Soupy



The Great One

On Saturdays we do errands with Dad. He's good at errands. Today, even though it was really warm, the Pain was wearing earmuffs. Big fluffy ones. Our first stop was the shoe store. The shoe salesman took one look at the Pain and said, "We have some nice snow boots on sale. Half price."

"Why would I want snow boots in May?" the Pain asked.





The shoe man shrugged. "Looks like you're getting ready for winter," he said, pointing to the Pain's earmuffs.

"I'm getting ready for a haircut," the Pain told him.

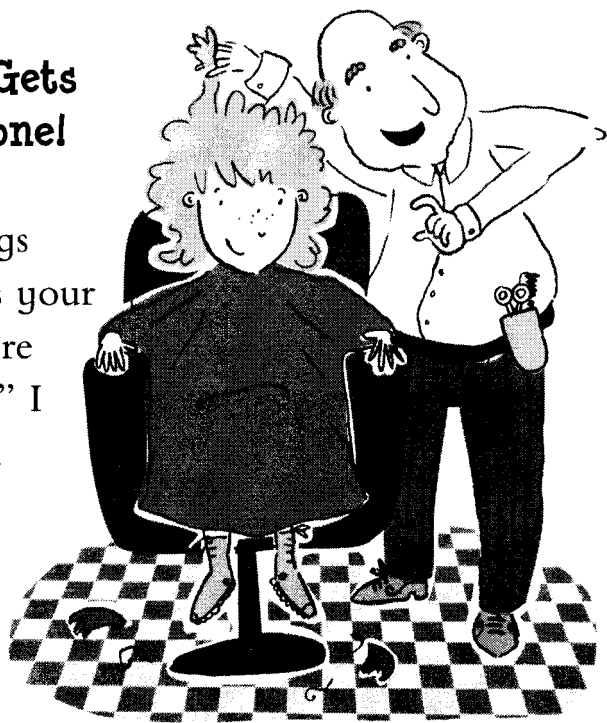
“Oh,” the shoe salesman said, as if that made perfect sense.

The Pain got a pair of sandals. So did I.

From the shoe store the three of us walked up the street to Mr Soupy's. Mr Soupy is our haircutter. You have to be under twelve to have Mr Soupy cut your hair. In the window of his shop there's a sign. It says:

Mr Soupy Gets the Job Done!

Mr Soupy sings while he snips your hair. “No more than an inch,” I reminded him when it was my turn.



“A big inch or a little inch?” Mr Soupy sang.

“A little inch,” I said.

I knew when Mr Soupy was done because he whipped off my cape and shook out the hair. I watched as it floated to the floor. It looked like more than an inch to me.

Then it was the Pain’s turn. But he was still outside. He looked over at Dad. Dad was in the waiting area, reading a magazine. Then the Pain looked at me.

“What?” I said, even though I knew *what*. The Pain is scared of haircuts. He didn’t used to be scared. Nobody knows why he’s suddenly weird about them. Maybe he knows. But if he does, he’s not telling.

Finally he climbed up into the chair.



“Hmmm . . .” Mr Soupy said,
walking around him. “It’s hard to give a
good haircut when a person is wearing
 earmuffs.”

The Pain
just sat in
the chair
pretending
he couldn’t
hear a
word. I
lifted one of
his earmuffs
halfway off and
talked right into his ear.



“Mr Soupy says he can’t give you a good
haircut while you’re wearing earmuffs.”

As soon as I said it I started wondering
if Mr Soupy is his real name. Probably not.
It’s probably just some name he invented. If

it is his real name, I wonder if it's his first name or last? Probably his last. I wonder what his first name is? Sam Soupy? Scott Soupy? *Zachariah* Soupy?

Mr Soupy tried to get the Pain to take off his earmuffs. He made silly faces. He did a wild dance. But he wasn't getting anywhere. The Pain just sat there.

Finally I said, "Why don't you try it with just one ear covered? That way, if Mr Soupy doesn't cut off your first ear you'll know you're safe."

The Pain didn't answer.

"Look around," I told him. "Do you see anyone without two ears?"

The Pain looked at the kids who were waiting.

They looked back at him.

"That doesn't mean it can't happen,"



he said. "Besides, if Mr Soupy cut off your ear, would you come back?"

"The only cut you get at my shop is a *haircut!*" Mr Soupy sang. Then he laughed at his own joke.

I laughed with him.

But the Pain didn't even smile.

"You can cut the back," the Pain told Mr Soupy. "You can cut the front. But you can't cut around my ears. Those are the rules."

"OK," Mr Soupy said. "No problem."

"You can do that?" the Pain asked.

"Sure."

"Won't he look funny?" I said.

"Sure," Mr Soupy said. "But he didn't say he cared about looking funny."

Mr Soupy raised his scissors to the Pain's head. As soon as he did, the Pain let out a wail . . . "*Waaahhhh!!!*"

That got Dad's attention. He came over to the chair. "What's up?" Dad asked.

Mr Soupy put down his scissors and said, "I give up!"

"You can't give up," Dad said. "You're Mr Soupy. You get the job done!"

Mr Soupy sighed. "Bring him back in a few days," he told Dad. "When I don't have a crowd waiting."

At home, the Pain said, "I'll grow my hair long and wear it in a ponytail."

"OK," Mom said. "Fine."

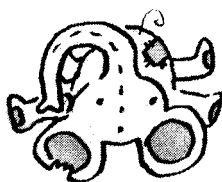
"Fine?" I asked her. "How can you say that's fine?"

"What's the problem?" she said. "If Jake wants a ponytail, he can grow a ponytail."

"George Washington had long hair," the Pain said. He was racing two little cars







around Mom's chair. Fluzzy, our cat, was trying to catch them.

Oh, excellent! I thought. My brother's going to look like George Washington. "Are you going to get wooden teeth too?" I asked him. "Because George Washington had wooden teeth. Did you know that?"