



fudge-a-mania



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Judy Blume

To George--who took me to Maine, and was there to encourage me every day *and* to Larry--the original Fudge, currently a member of the I.S.A.F. Club

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1 Who's the Lucky Bride?

"Guess what, Pete?" my brother, Fudge, said.

"I'm getting married tomorrow."

I looked up from my baseball cards. "Isn't this kind of sudden?" I asked, since Fudge is only five,

"No," he said.

"Well... who's the lucky bride?"

"Sheila Tubman," Fudge said.

I hit the floor, pretending to have fainted dead away. I did a good job of it because Fudge started shaking me and shouting, "Get up, Pete!"

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What's with this Pete business? I thought. Ever since he could talk, he's called me Pee-tah.

Then Tootsie, my sister, who's just a year and a half, danced around me singing, "Up, Pee... up."

Next, Mom was beside me saying, "Peter... what happened? Are you all right?"

"I told him I was getting married," Fudge said. "And he just fell over."

"I fell over when you told me *who* you were marrying," I said.

"Who are you marrying, Fudge?" Mom asked, as if we were seriously discussing his wedding.

"Sheila Tubman," Fudge said.

"Don't say that name around me," I told him, "or I'll faint again."

"Speaking of Sheila Tubman ..." Mom began.

But I didn't wait for her to finish. "You're making me feel very sick..." I warned.

"Really, Peter." Mom said. "Aren't you overdoing it?"

I clutched my stomach and moaned but Mom went right on talking. "Buzz Tubman is the one who told us about the house in Maine."

" *M-a-i-n-e* spells *Maine* ," Fudge sang.

Mom looked at him but didn't even pause. "And this house is right next to the place they've rented for their vacation," she told me.

"I'm missing something here," I said. "What house? What vacation?"

"Remember we decided to go away for a few weeks in August?"

"Yeah... so?"

"So we got a great deal on a house in Maine."

"And the Tubmans are going to be next door?" I couldn't believe this. "Sheila Tubman... next door... for two whole weeks?"

"Three," Mom said.

I fell back flat on the floor.

"He did it again, Mom!" Fudge said.

"He's just pretending," Mom told Fudge. "He's just being very silly."

"So I don't have to marry Sheila tomorrow," Fudge said. "I'll marry her in Maine."

"That makes more sense," Mom said. "In Maine you can have a nice wedding under the trees."

"Under the trees," Fudge said.

"Tees..." Tootsie said, throwing a handful of Gummi Bears in my face.

And that's how it all began.

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2 Pete and Farley

That night we went to Tico-Taco for supper. I wasn't very hungry. The idea of spending three weeks next door to Sheila Tubman was enough to take away my appetite. I wish the Tubmans would move to another planet! But until that happens there's no way to avoid Sheila. She lives in our apartment building. We go to the same school.

I kind of groaned and Dad looked at me. "What is it, Peter?"

"Sheila Tubman," I said.

"What about her?" Dad asked.

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"We're getting married," Fudge said, his mouth full of chicken and taco shell.

"I'm not talking about your wedding," I said. "I'm talking about spending three weeks in Maine next door to the Tubmans."

"It won't be as bad as you think," Mom said.

"You don't know how bad I *think* it will be!"

"Sheila's older now. She's finished sixth grade, same as you."

"What's age got to do with it?" I said. "She'll still be the Queen of Cooties."

"What's *cooties*?" Fudge asked.

When I didn't answer he tugged on my sleeve.

"What's *cooties*, Pete?"

"Since when am I *Pete*?" I asked, shaking him off.

"Since today," he said.

"Well, I prefer Peter, if you don't mind."

"Pete is a better name for a big brother."

"And Farley is a better name for a little brother!" I figured that would shut him up since his real name is Farley Drexel

Hatcher and he's ready to kill anybody who calls him that.

"Don't call me Farley!" he said. Then he really let go and yelled, "I'm *Fudge!*"

The waiter, who heard him from across the room, came over to our table and said, "Sorry... we don't have any tonight. But we do have mud pie, which is almost the same thing."

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Dad had to explain that we weren't talking about dessert. And Mom added, "We never eat dessert until we've finished our main course."

"Oh," the waiter said.

But before he had a chance to get away, Fudge looked up at him and said, "Do you have cooties?"

"Cooties?" the waiter asked. "For dessert?" He looked confused. Especially when Tootsie banged her spoon against the tray of her baby seat and sang, "Coo-tee... coo-tee..."

I could tell Fudge was about to ask the same question *again*, but before he had the chance I clamped my hand over his mouth. Then Dad told the waiter we didn't need anything else right now.