JUDY BLUME

USBBY Author Nominee
2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award
# Table of Contents

Cover photo of Judy Blume by Elena Seibert.

## About Judy Blume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Literature for Young People</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation: Presentation of Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters to Judy Blume, National Book Foundation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Her Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards and Distinctions</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography of Books for Youth</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translations</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten Most Important Titles</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Representative Titles</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews of Submitted Titles</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix: About Review Sources</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Judy Blume was born on February 12, 1938, in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. She is the younger child of Esther, a homemaker, and Rudolph Sussman, a dentist. As she grew up, she dreamed of becoming "a cowgirl, a detective, a spy, a great actress, or a ballerina. Not a dentist, like my father, or a homemaker, like my mother—certainly not a writer, although I always loved to read" (Blume, 2022).

Blume didn’t seriously consider herself to be a writer until adulthood. After graduating from high school with high honors, she attended New York University and majored in education. After her children started preschool, Blume began making up stories. She enrolled in a continuing education class on writing for children, and through that class, began drafting her first published work, *The One in the Middle Is the Green Kangaroo*.

Her early works were heavily influenced by the books of Beverly Cleary, which she read for inspiration: “No books delighted and inspired the way Beverly Cleary’s did. I once fell off the sofa, I was laughing so hard while reading one of her books” (Kirkpatrick, 2021).

During this time of continuing education, Blume also wrote what would become her first children’s novel, *Iggie’s House*. But it was her second novel, *Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret*, published in 1970, which helped to change young adult literature for decades to come. The frank, honest storytelling centered around the coming-of-age of twelve-year-old Margaret and her factual approach to discussing both her spiritual questions and the realities of puberty during a time when frank exploration of both topics were rarely, if ever, mentioned in books for youth.

More novels addressing body image, bullying, friendship dilemmas, sibling rivalry, and generational trauma were published in the following decades, giving Blume a scandalous reputation among adults, as well as generations of adoring young readers, who recognize an artful, caring, and respectful author willing to tell the truth about growing up.

As Blume’s status as a well-known, bestselling author has grown, so has the controversy over her work, resulting in inevitable battles within American culture. In the 1980s, Blume was the
subject of an organized censorship campaign in the U.S. that led her to become, according to the American Library Association’s rankings, one of the 21st century’s most banned American authors (ala.org, 2021). Blume says that writing Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret? “was not courage. It was naïveté. “[I] had absolutely no idea [I] was writing a controversial book. There was nothing in it that wasn’t a part of my sixth-grade experience” (Handcock, 2022).

As her books were increasingly targeted by would-be censors, Blume began to take an active role in combating book challenges and promoting intellectual freedom, which she continues to do to this day. On her website, Blume provides a toolbox, developed by the National Coalition Against Censorship, which guides librarians and educators through the process of defending the books in their collections and lesson plans (Blume, 2022).

Blume’s commitment to supporting readers and their intellectual freedom has prompted her to take on another role: bookseller. She is a co-founder of Books & Books, an independent, nonprofit bookstore near her home in Key West, Florida. As a bookseller, she is a vital literacy advocate in her community. The bookstore offers a wide range of choices, regardless of controversy. She says, “I don’t think anyone has ever asked us to remove a book from our shelves. If they did, we’d explain that what’s not right for one customer may be exactly right for another.” (Brown, 2020).

The turmoil of opinion over her books has not lessened her popularity or importance to young readers; in fact, over the course of her fifty-year career, she has received more than ninety literary awards, including the Distinguished Contribution to American Letters Medal from the National Book Foundation (2004), The E.B. White Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters for lifetime achievement in children’s literature (2017), the Living Legends Honor from the Library of Congress in the Writers and Artists category for her contributions to American cultural heritage (2000), an American Book Award nomination for Tiger Eyes (1983), and the Carl Sandburg Literary Award from the Chicago Public Library (2018). A documentary about her life, Judy Blume Forever, premiered at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival, and a large-budget film adaptation of Are You There God, It’s Me Margaret will be released in April 2023, underscoring the continuous and contemporary appeal of her work.

To date, Blume has written 25 books for young readers. While her works vary in theme, subject matter, location, and tone, her ability to make her readers feel seen, heard, and respected remains constant and rare. Her novels “raise the voice of honesty to an art form” (Egan, 2022). In books that explore sibling conflict, family changes, uncertainty, loneliness, and the myriad other experiences of youth, she writes with clear, reassuring language which invites readers to embrace their own questions, to feel less alone, to find truths about growing up that easily transcend generations. “I’ve never lost my memory of being a kid,” she says. “That’s my superpower” (Brown, 2020).
Biography

References


In a remarkable career spanning over 50 years, Judy Blume has achieved iconic status as one of the most beloved and influential writers of books for young people. Globally, over 90 million copies of her books have been sold, and they have been translated into 32 languages. Her perennial appeal lies in her singular ability to write with honesty, humor, and respect about young people’s lives. Through Blume’s wholly formed characters, children and teens discover their own private questions, dreams, and struggles. Her books have helped generations of young readers to grow into themselves, and along the way, to discover the lifelong rewards of reading.

It’s rare that authors achieve both unmatched popular appeal as well as critical acclaim; Blume has enjoyed both. She has received some of the United States’ highest accolades, including The National Book Foundation’s Medal for Contribution to American Letters, recognition as a Library of Congress “Living Legend,” and an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Yale University. Countless contemporary authors credit Blume with helping them to become both readers and writers, including Raina Telgemeier, John Green, and Jacqueline Woodson, who says, “For all of us who read [Blume’s work] and grew up to be writers, there is that imprint of her teaching us that young people have struggles and their struggles are valid” (Yorio, 2018).

Blume’s indelible characters span an unusually wide age range. She has written about young children in their first years of school, such as the tussling, energetic young siblings in The Pain and the Great One series. She has written about 10-year olds navigating friendship and bullying, such as Jill and Linda in Blubber, and young teens just entering puberty, such as Margaret, in Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret, and Tony in Then Again, Maybe I Won’t.
And she has written about older teens on the edge of adulthood: Katherine and Michael in *Forever...* In each book, Blume demonstrates an unerring aptitude for zeroing in on the feelings and concerns particular to each age, and to each child’s circumstances.

One of Blume’s most popular series is known as “the Fudge books” in the U.S. (and the “Karamel” series in many countries). Farley, whose nickname is “Fudge,” is seen by his older brother, Peter, as a small but mighty human tornado. In *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, Peter reports on Fudge’s uncanny knack for causing mayhem and destruction wherever he lands: an important dinner for Peter and Fudge’s dad goes awry when Fudge begins spilling family secrets; a birthday party ends in exhaustion and tears. And Fudge’s treatment of Peter’s pet turtle, Dribble, pushes their sibling relationship to the breaking point.

In the subsequent books, Fudge gets older but not necessarily easier to handle, as he announces his plans to marry Sheila Tubman, Peter’s arch-nemesis, in *Fudge-a-Mania* and develops an unhealthy obsession with making money in *Double Fudge*. These stories, which continue to be widely read around the world, tap into a universal appreciation for the push-pull of sibling friction and love. Their humor and knowing portrayals of rowdy children have helped pave the way for other similar, groundbreaking books, such as Jeff Kinney’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series.

In another popular title for young children, *Freckle Juice*, eight-year-old Andrew wishes desperately that he had freckles. A classmate offers to sell him a secret recipe that she claims will give Andrew the desired dots. When his project quickly turns into a disastrous situation, though, he is reluctant to discuss his dilemma with a trusted adult. Finally, his kind teacher finds a creative solution. The book’s realistic portrayal of jealousy, private conflicts among children, and a child’s yearning for independence has continued to resonate with 21st-century readers, and *School Library Journal* declared that the book remains, “just as relevant to today’s grade-school audience” (*School Library Journal*, 2005).

Blume’s trailblazing, realistic portrayals of the lives of preteens and teens has earned her both unprecedented acclaim and controversy. When they were first published, her novels discussed experiences of puberty and, in *Forever...*, first love and sex, in an
era when such topics were rarely discussed in a direct, open manner, free from innuendo or euphemism. In Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret, first published in 1970, the highly-relatable preteen protagonist, Margaret Simon, voices her feelings about religion, first periods, bra shopping, and the first fluttering of sexual attraction. A few original reviews of the book reflect fearful attitudes that are still voiced by some adults today. A reviewer for Kirkus, for example, remarked in a 1970 review of Margaret, “there’s danger in the preoccupation with the physical signs of puberty” (Kirkus Reviews, 1970).

Blume says that she never intended to write something controversial. She simply based the story on her own questions and preoccupations when she was 12 years old: “To me there was nothing wrong with thinking about getting your period and wanting your breasts to grow. It wasn’t controversial in my mind. It was just true” (2020, CBC/Radio Canada). In addition to the frank discussion of puberty, the book’s inclusion of religious faith has also raised concerns from would-be censors. Margaret is the daughter of a Christian mother and a Jewish father, and throughout the book, she addresses God directly about where she fits in. Blume says that she feels that many parents who try to ban books or have them removed from libraries, “are afraid. . . Books that make kids laugh often come under suspicion; so do books that encourage kids to think, or question authority; books that don’t hit the reader over the head with moral lessons are considered dangerous” she says. (Blume, n.d.).

With 1975’s Forever..., Blume’s first novel for older teens, her reputation as a controversial artist grew. In the novel, 18-year-olds Katherine and Michael meet at a New Year’s Party, and together, they explore first love and their first sexual experiences. Blume has said that Forever... was inspired by her daughter, who asked her mother if she could write a book in which “two really nice kids in high school who love each other do it and nothing bad happens.” Blume says she was troubled by the messages being sent to kids—particularly girls—that sex was linked with punishment, rather than pleasure and responsibility (Sutton, 1996). In Forever..., Katherine and Michael’s frank discussions include birth control, and their loving relationship does not end in either marriage or tragedy; rather, the teens just drift apart as young adult relationships often do.
Despite all the attention that her books have received for their honest exploration of seemingly taboo subjects, Blume does not write “problem novels.” There are no lectures or lessons in her books; they are richly developed, wholly integrated fictional stories of growing up, and it’s the truth of their characters’ feelings that seems to have resonated with so many generations of young readers. In 1977, The New York Times noted, “It’s evident her appeal goes beyond sexual frankness: She must be conveying a certain emotional reality that children recognize as true” (Whedon, 1977). Blume’s stories are not ones of exceptional trauma: they were radical then and remain so now for their ability to give weight and importance to the private feelings of what might appear to be children living relatively unremarkable lives.

Her dedication to portraying the inner lives of children has withstood half a century of coordinated efforts at censorship. According to the American Library Association, she is among the “Most Frequently Challenged Authors of the 21st-Century.” In response, she has become a tireless advocate for free speech and the freedom to read, and she has long been one of the most influential voices in the U.S. on the subject. Her awareness-raising efforts include a book for young adults, *Places I Never Meant to Be: Original Stories by Censored Writers*, which she edited and then donated the proceeds to organizations supporting intellectual freedom.

In addition to her countless public appearances defending children’s freedom to read, she also maintains a section on her website devoted to issues of censorship and how to combat it. There, she instructs children, teachers, and librarians on the steps they can take if books they care about are challenged, and she has developed a resource guide and toolkit, in conjunction with the National Coalition Against Censorship, to help combat censorship in schools. Blume’s commitment to supporting readers and their intellectual freedom has prompted her to take on another role: bookseller. She is a co-founder of Books & Books, an independent, nonprofit bookstore near her home in Key West, Florida. As a bookseller, she is a vital literacy advocate in her community.
Contribution to Literature for Young People

In the introduction to *Places I Never Meant to Be*, she writes, “What I worry about most is the loss to young people. If no one speaks out for them, if they don’t speak out for themselves, all they’ll get for required reading will be the most bland books available. And instead of finding the information they need at the library, instead of finding the novels that illuminate life, they will find only those materials to which nobody could possibly object.” (Blume, 1999). And on her website, she says, “I wish the censors could read the letters kids write” (Blume, n.d.)

Blume has, in fact, published a book for adults that combined some of her readers’ letters with her own growing-up experiences. The *New York Times* review of this title, *Letters to Judy: What Your Kids Wish They Could Tell*, praised the book for the family communication it helps to inspire: “The book is not a how-to manual, but one compassionate and popular author’s way to help parents see life through their children’s eyes, and feel it through their hearts and souls” (Winship, 1986). Blume donated all proceeds from the book to a fund that she set up to support organizations dedicated to young people’s health and wellbeing.

Blume continues to receive thousands of letters and emails every year from readers. (Dominus, 2015). On her website, she offers an example of just such a letter: “Dear Judy, I don’t know where I stand in the world. I don’t know who I am. That’s why I read, to find myself.’ Elizabeth, age 13” (Blume, n.d.).

Young people today treasure her work for its ever-reliable honesty and artistry; they are the rare novels “that illuminate life” Despite all the coordinated attempts to keep her titles off school and library shelves, educators and parents continue to champion her work, and her books continue to pass from classmate to classmate, from older sibling to younger sibling. In 2023, a documentary, *Judy Blume, Forever*, was released, as well as a big-budget film adaptation of *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret*, underscoring the story’s perennial appeal to contemporary young people.
“While certain details have changed over the years, the experience of growing up is really universal,” says Kelly Fremon Craig, director of the Margaret film adaptation. “It’s the same across the decades. . . . It feels so comforting to know that you’re part of a long lineage. It takes that ‘you’re not alone’ feeling and multiplies it exponentially” (Lenker, 2023).

“For legions of young people. . . Blume is, at heart, a childhood friend,” writes Roger Sutton, former editor of The Horn Book, and one of the most respected children’s literature specialists in the U.S. (Sutton, 1996). For Blume, being the best friend to young readers means to be the best writer she can be. “The responsibility, as I see it, is first to be honest. To be honest with your characters” (Frey, 2004).

When asked about the enduring popularity of her books, she says, “I’d guess it’s that young readers continue to identify with my characters. Some things never change. . . . Kids need choices. There are always some who want to read about real life. I write for those readers” (Freeman, 2005).
Contribution to Literature for Young People

References


“Books that Blume: An Appreciation,” by Richard Jackson in Elementary English, September, 1974

Judy Blume
Photo courtesy of Bradbury Press
Books That Blume: An Appreciation

Richard W. Jackson

Judy Blume’s books talk to kids. Hundreds of letters tell us so. For one thing, her stories sparkle with kids’ talk. Her dialogue seems to be theirs, not so much written as overheard. But few people can know the part that talk plays while Judy is creating her books.

Early in her career Judy Blume found a writing style exactly right for her stories (and her readers,) and she’s perfected it. Style is the one aspect of the writer’s art that she and I don’t talk much about; her style is there; editing it would just be fussing. But we do talk about plot, structure, character, pacing. And after such talks new scenes, new characters come spinning out of her imagination; she always knows more about her people, kids or adults, than she shows in the early versions of the manuscripts we see. Talking somehow releases what she knows, frees ideas that were inside a story and inside her head, just waiting. Since our first meeting about Iggy’s House, Judy’s first novel for children, we have spent literally weeks talking.

I usually see a new manuscript from her in its third draft, that is, after she has written the book out and polished it twice. The manuscript always arrives with a handwritten covering letter; for instance, this one: “Here’s Margaret! I can hardly stand parting with her. She’s become my very good friend.” Readers of the book, which became Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret, will know what Judy meant. My partner, Bob Verrone, and I read the script that came with the letter (Iggy’s House was at the typesetter’s by that time) and started talking immediately. “True,” “honest,” “funny,” “needed,” “controversial” were some of the words we used. (The entire management of Bradbury Press—the two of us—agrees before we take on any book for publication.) We talked, off and on, for a couple of weeks.

Talking with Bob helps me crystalize my thinking before I start making notes for Judy. These are most often written in the margins of the manuscript during my second reading. They may take me another couple of weeks.

Judy then comes in to Bradbury to talk. Before we begin she opens all the windows in my office because she likes to have plenty of fresh air while she works. And work we do. We close the door and the two of us hole up for the day. The manuscript sits between us (I try to edit only in pencil, so that comments and questions which in conversation we either attend to on the spot or decide to discount, can be erased), and we go through it page by page. We may spend an hour talking about a single point in one paragraph because such a point often draws to itself many other strands from elsewhere in a book. Sometimes I’ve

Richard Jackson is Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief of Bradbury Press
made suggestions about moving a chapter from one place to another or even deleting it, or amplifying a line or a short scene from which Judy may create a new chapter completely. Sometimes we discuss recutting chapters, that is, starting and stopping them in different places—it's remarkable what an effect she can achieve by ending a chapter in the middle of an event rather than at its resolution. For instance, the break between chapters 4 and 5 in Are You There God? is effective because it suspends Margaret Simon between first-day-at-a-new-school feelings and anticipation about joining her new friends' secret club.

A lot of our talking is questions and answers (an editor's job is asking questions in such a way that the answers will be helpful to writer and book). Here's an example. In Are You There God?, Nancy Wheeler, one of Margaret's friends, goes on a weekend trip to Washington, D.C. with her family. While she's away she drops Margaret a postcard with three words on it: "I got it!" (she refers to getting her period for the first time). Margaret reads what Nancy has written, is furious and rips up the card. On the manuscript alongside the message I wrote: "Is Nancy telling the truth?" There was something in her character that made me suspect she was lying. The question surprised Judy, who was thinking about Margaret more than she was about Nancy, but it released something too. It turned out that Nancy was lying. That fact, and Margaret's reaction to learning about it later on, is very important to the story.

Judy is naturally a first-person writer, she's most comfortable expressing her main character's point-of-view. In first-person books the speaker plays a literary role, but he or she must always be "in character." For this reason, first-person writing is tricky. Judy and I had one of our best editorial conferences on this point about Tony Migliore in Then Again, Maybe I Won't. In order to organize my thinking I had written out a report and sent it to Judy before she came in for our second talk on the script; these quotes come from that written report: "What is Tony writing this book about? Not about 'values' (which might summarize for adults the theme of your book), but about himself and the world of his life: family, friends, moving, school, doctors, etc. Yet the sound of what he tells us is objective rather than intimate. . . . You've given him, at the beginning of the book, a reporter's role.

"You are a writer, so you are mindful of keeping us informed; the trick will be to inform us but not to appear that you're doing so, because Tony is not a writer . . . ."

"It suddenly strikes me what it is about the Jersey City sequence that isn't right. It is a sequence of observed details of the Migliore's life there, the trappings, but most of it is from the outside. The present chapter one springs to life through Tony as a person: once when he is speculating on whether his father is a spy, and again at the end, when the meaning of the move to Rosemont crashes in on the kid and he bawls.

"The description of moving is so 'thing-bound.' Could moving be portrayed subjectively from Tony's insides by means of a scene about some loved article of his that Mama wants to leave behind in Jersey City?"

Judy went home to think about it. By the end of the next week, the loved article had become a school pennant—and the scene that had grown in the center of the second chapter showed us naturally a kid's feelings about moving from a familiar house to a strange new one. The feelings had been there all along; the question had merely nudged them into the light.

Because of our talks, Then Again grew by thirty manuscript pages, its characters grew fuller, its pacing between serious and
comic more complex. When the final manuscript arrived, Judy enclosed a note: "It's been great fun to work on but I'm afraid if I hang on to it any longer I'll do too much to it... Hope it all goes together right—I can't tell any more." Of all Judy's books, *Then Again* is my favorite—perhaps because of the good work on it I shared in.

With one exception, all of Judy's manuscripts have grown longer during editing. The exception is *It's Not the End of the World*, from which Judy cut several sequences and one character between the third draft and the final. Originally, Karen Newman's father met and fell in love with a young woman after he'd moved out of the family house. She was the antithesis of Karen's mother, and naturally enough Karen, who tells the story, didn't like her one bit. But the woman was a true-to-life character in a divorce situation. In the third draft of the book Karen's father remarried and his three kids attended the wedding with very mixed feelings. The scene was excellently done, but the remarriage issue took the focus off Karen (as the narrator she couldn't know anything that happened out of earshot, couldn't express anyone's emotions except her own); the result was that only dislike for the woman came across, making her a "heavy" and Karen's father appear unsympathetic, as if the divorce were his fault). Judy's story concerns a twelve-year-old girl and her family. She doesn't take sides in the divorce question—in fact, she set out to show us two decent parents caught by their situation rather than a bad scene caused by one or the other. We talked about it. Judy decided that for Karen's sake in the story she should cut out the remarriage issue. I agreed with her; the decision grew out of her feeling for Karen.

*It's Not the End of the World* presented a plotting challenge: a chronology imposed by the legalities of divorce proceedings. Judy's solution was Karen's "Day Book" which unobtrusively dates events throughout the last half of a school year, and—more noticeably—allows Karen complete and often desperate honesty in a situation in which honesty is difficult. (On March 2 Karen writes in the Day Book: "Divorce... it's the end of the world." On May 9 she writes to her grandfather: "Daddy and Mom are definitely going to get divorced! I've tried hard to get them back together. Honest! But nothing works. I have discovered something important about my mother and father. When they are apart they're not so bad, but together they are impossible!" During those three months Karen has sensed how difficult adults find being honest with children; she comes to accept what she can't change.) To me, *It's Not the End of the World* is about honesty as a kid experiences it, rather than divorce.

But the novel is often described as Judy Blume's "divorce book." We don't consider any of her books by their apparent subject matter—for menstruation (*Are You There God?*), wet dreams (*Then Again*) or divorce (*It's Not the End*)—are not the subjects of any of these books. To us the books belong to the kids who people them. As a writer, Judy's means of showing us kids in all their quirkiness is *situational*. Each of her main characters faces a problem, but none of her books is about the problem; each is about a kid or kids in a real situation, facing it in his or her own way.


Deenie Fenner is a beautiful girl, almost thirteen, who seems destined to become a model. Her mother pushes and pushes, though Deenie would rather be having fun with her friends than traipsing around to modeling agencies. A perceptive gym teacher notices something odd about
Deenie’s posture during a cheerleading try-out, and eventually Deenie is told by doctors that she has scoliosis, a gradually progressing curvature of the spine which, if untreated, will cause pain and permanent deformity. Treatment is either an operation or a brace which has to be worn for four years. The book is very recently published, so I won’t spoil it by giving the story away. But the outcome of the final scene surprises even Deenie herself.

The *editorial* surprise was not Deenie at all. It was her friends, Janet and Midge. From the beginning, Deenie was a jaunty, outgoing kid, and she was right in the center of the book, but as a character she had nowhere to go. The situation stopped her from growing literally, just as scoliosis was stopping her spine from growing straight. Suddenly it struck us (in a telephone conversation, I think) that Janet and Midge were the answer. Deenie *did* have somewhere to go in her relationship with these kids, from whom she decides to keep the truth about her illness. Judy called me up in great excitement about how a revision of Janet and Midge was coming along. When they hear, finally, that Deenie is to have an operation, they take her for a day on the town, and buy her a nightgown for the hospital. The nightgown, an ordinary enough article, like Tony Migliore’s school pennant, symbolizes a situation and expresses with simplicity a range of feelings in the story. And it becomes an element of the plot.

Judy was pleased with Janet and Midge. But in *Deenie* she was most pleased with a couple of pigeons. In chapter 16, Deenie is called to the Vice-Principal’s office at school. She doesn’t know why, and she’s nervous. She describes the scene: “I opened the door. Mrs. Anderson was smiling. I’ve heard she always does, even when she’s punishing kids. Her desk was in front of a big window but she sat with her back to it so she couldn’t see the pigeon standing on the ledge. Ma says pigeons are dirty birds with lots of germs and I should stay away from them.” Further in the scene, after Mrs. Anderson has told her that she’s eligible to ride the special bus for handicapped children, Deenie tells us: “All of a sudden there was a big lump in my throat. I had to look out the window so Mrs. Anderson wouldn’t notice. Another pigeon was on the ledge and both of them were walking back and forth looking at me.” Two weeks later Deenie is called to the office again, on the same matter. “‘Oh that . . .’ I looked out the window but no pigeons were on the ledge. I tried to think of what to say . . .” Those pigeons, which Deenie first sees when, in consternation, she looks away from Mrs. Anderson, which then seem to be dumbly confirming Deenie’s oddity as someone handicapped, and which later have flown off, express deftly the progression of Deenie’s fears and feelings about herself. A small touch, to be sure, but the kind of detail which in its rightness gives a writer joy.

Has the joy in writing come through in this appreciation? Perhaps writing appears to be just work, work, work, for editor as well as author. I hope that’s not the impression I give. Writing *is* work, no doubt about it: saying what you mean is difficult, and the pressure to grow from book to book is sometimes immobilizing. But Judy Blume, for one, has been rewarded with great popularity. She does receive hundreds of letters. “Nothing pleases me more (she has written us) than having one of my young readers ask, ‘But how do you know all our secrets?’ I try to explain that when I write it is the child I was speaking but kids find that very hard to believe.

“I really do remember everything that’s happened to me from third grade on. I know just how I felt and exactly what I was thinking. When I hear the phrase Now
Child I say to myself... Oh, that was me in 1950. Yet it also describes my daughter today. And fifty years ago it was my mother, writing secret thoughts in her diary.

“The middle years of childhood are tough and just getting through the day is a full time job for most kids. That’s the way it’s always been and the way it’s always going to be. Growing up is no picnic. No kid gets by without a few scars; most wind up with more than that... and a first experience is still a first, whether it’s a kiss, a menstrual period, or a punch in the nose. There will always be fear and hope, love and hate, jealousy and joy... because feelings belong to everyone. They are the link between the child of today and the children we were.”

Judy Blume takes joy in her books. And it shows. From the first idea to the final touch the books bloom steadily, warming to the objective light we cast during the editorial (talking) process. But the Blumes the world loves are Judy’s. Editors do not write the books they publish, and though their influence in a book and over a writer may be strong, the writer is the originator, who has the first and the last word.

We are just about to start talking about Judy Blume’s next book, *Blubber*. What a treat!

Watch for it.
Appreciation: Presentation of Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters to Judy Blume, National Book Foundation


One of the great pleasures of being the Chair of the National Book Foundation is having the honor of presenting the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. This year is the first time the Foundation will bestow the Medal on a writer whose principal audience has been young readers, and whose work has made her one of the most influential and important writers in America.

Various authors desire different outcomes from their work, including fame, fortune, social influence, political change, love, and to leave an everlasting mark. Perhaps young adult writers have a special place for the last item on that list. Their books reach still-forming minds and have the opportunity to imprint themselves, to help these growing personalities over a few of the rough spots, to explain a bit about how the world works, and, perhaps most important, to be enchanters, to be literary alchemists, to be the sorcerer’s apprentice who takes the jumble of letters and words and sentences, and out of them creates lifelong readers.

Judy Blume is just such an artist and artisan. You see her readers on school buses and subways and in bookstores, their noses buried deep into Fudge or Superfudge or Tiger Eyes, or late at night when they are supposed to be asleep they huddle under the covers with a flashlight and speed through Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret.
Though boys often read her work, especially the Fudge books, it’s to girls she has spoken most powerfully. You can turn to your neighbor tonight and if she’s under 55, Judy Blume was one of her best friends from the ages of 9 to 13. If she’s over 55, Judy Blume was her daughter’s best friend in those years. Few writers in America have had such an enormous impact in encouraging children to be children and adolescents to be adolescents, and inspiring them to develop in their own ways, in their own time, in accordance with their own dreams.

Her individual works are among the most acclaimed books for young readers in the country... And in these perilous times, just two months ago, the American Library Association designated her as the second most censored author in America over the past fifteen years. She has taken up the gauntlet of that censorship and dedicated her time, energy, fame and money to ensure that the written word will continue to be free and unfettered in our society.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to present the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters to Judy Blume.

Retrieved from:

Awards and Distinctions

Career Awards

1983  Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award
1984  Carl Sandburg Freedom to Read Award, Chicago Public Library
1986  John Rock Award, Center for Population Options
1986  Civil Liberties Award, Atlanta Civil Liberties Union
1987  Excellence in the Field of Literature, New Jersey Education Association
1987  Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, Kean College, NJ
1988  South Australian Youth Media Award for Best Author
1989  Most Admired Author, World Almanac
1992  National Hero Award, Big Brothers/Big Sisters
1994  Golden Plate Award, American Academy of Achievement
1996  Margaret A. Edwards Award, YALSA, ALA
2000  Library of Congress Living Legends Award
2003  Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, Mount Holyoke College, MA
2004  National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters
2009  University of Southern Mississippi Medallion for Lifelong Contributions to Children’s Literature
2009  National Coalition Against Censorship Defense of Free Speech Award
Awards and Distinctions

2010  New Jersey Hall of Fame Inductee
2010  Harvard Lampoon Inductee
2010  Honorary Doctor of Letters, Rutgers University, NJ
2011  McGovern Award, Smithsonian
2013  Young Adult Literary Prize, Chicago Tribune
2013  New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association Legacy Award
2013  ALAN Award, NCTE
2013  Intellectual Freedom Award, NCTE
2015  Regina Award, Catholic Library Association
2017  E.B. White Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters
2018  Carl Sandburg Literary Award, Chicago Public Library
2020  Changemakers of the Year, NYU
2020  Humanitarian of the Year, American Red Cross
2020  Honoree for Distinguished Service to the Literary Community, Authors Guild Foundation
2021  Honorary Doctor of Letters, Yale University
2021  Free Speech Defender Lifetime Achievement, National Coalition Against Censorship
Awards and Distinctions

Book Awards

Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret

1975  Nene Award, Children of Hawaii
1976  Young Hoosier Award, Indiana Media Educators
1979  North Dakota Children’s Choice Book Award (1979)
1980  Great Stone Face Award, New Hampshire Library Association
2005  *Time* magazine All-Time 100 Novels
2012  *Scholastic* magazine’s Parent and Child 100 Greatest Books for Kids

Blubber

1983  North Dakota Children’s Choice Award

Forever...

2012  100 Best-Ever Teen Novels, National Public Radio

Freckle Juice

1980  Michigan Young Reader’s Award, Michigan Council of Teachers
Awards and Distinctions

**Friend or Fiend? with the Pain and the Great One**

2009  Junior Library Guild Selection

**Fudge-a-Mania**

1983  California Young Reader Medal
1983  Iowa Children’s Choice Award
1983  Nene Award, Children of Hawaii
1983  Nevada Young Reader’s Award, Nevada Library Association
1983  Sunshine State Young Reader’s Award, Florida Association for Media Education
1983  Pennsylvania Young Reader’s Choice Award, Pennsylvania School Librarians Association
1983  Michigan Readers’ Choice Award, Michigan Reading Association

**Here’s to You, Rachel Robinson**

1993  Parents’ Choice Award, Parents’ Choice Foundation

**Just as Long as We’re Together**

1989  Young Reader’s List, Virginia State Reading Association
Awards and Distinctions

Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great

1982 South Carolina Children’s Book Award
1984 Book of the Month, German Academy for Children’s and Young People’s Literature

The Pain and the Great One

1985 Children’s Choices, International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council
1989 Young Readers’ Choice Award, Alabama Library Association Children’s Book Council

Fudge-a-Mania

1980 Texas Bluebonnet Award
1981 Michigan Young Reader’s Award, Michigan Council of Teachers
1981 Children’s Choices, International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council
1981 Great Stone Face Award, New Hampshire Library Association
1982 First Buckeye Children’s Book Award
1982 Georgia Children’s Book Award
1982 West Australian Young Reader’s Award
1982 Nene Award, Children of Hawaii
Awards and Distinctions

1982  North Dakota Children’s Choice Award
1982  Colorado Children’s Book Award
1982  Tennessee Children’s Choice Book Award
1982  Sue Hefley Book Award, Louisiana Association of School Libraries
1982  Texas Bluebonnet Award Libraries
1982  Kinderbuch Award, U.S. Army in Europe
1982  Utah Children’s Book Award
1983  Young Reader Medal, California Reading Association
1983  Great Stone Face Award, New Hampshire Library Association
1983  Young Hoosier Award, Indiana Media Educators
1983  Young Reader’s Choice Award, Pacific Northwest Library Association
1983  California Young Reader Medal
1983  Georgia Children’s Book Award
1983  Arizona Young Readers’ Award
1983  Iowa Children’s Choice Award
Awards and Distinctions

1983  Golden Sower Award, Nebraska Library Association

1983  Garden State Children’s Book Award, New Jersey Library Association

1983  Northern Territory Young Readers’ Book Award, Darwin, Australia

1984  New Mexico Land of Enchantment Children’s Book Award, New Mexico International Reading and Library Association

1984  Reader’s Choice Award, Minnesota

1985, 1986  Sunshine State Young Reader’s Award, Florida Association for Media Educators

1985, 1986  Great Stone Face Award, New Hampshire Library Association

1988  Soaring Eagle Award, Wyoming Education Media Association

1988  Book of the Children of Missouri Award, Missouri State Library

1989  Book of the Children of Michigan, Michigan Reading Association

*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*

1972  Charlie May Swann Children’s Book Award, Arkansas Elementary School Council

1975  Young Reader’s Choice, Pacific Northwest Library Association
Awards and Distinctions

1978  Arizona Young Reader’s Award, Arizona State University
1978  Massachusetts Children’s Book Award
1978  Georgia Children’s Book Award
1978  Rhode Island Library Association Award
1980  North Dakota Children’s Choice Award
1980  West Australian Young Reader’s Book Award
1981  Kinderbuch Award, US Army in Europe
1981  Great Stone Face Award, New Hampshire Library Association
1983  Massachusetts Children’s Book Award
2012  50 Best Books for Kids, TimeOut New York Kids
2012  Parent and Child 100 Greatest Books for Kids, Scholastic magazine

Tiger Eyes

1981  Best Book for Young Adults, School Library Journal
1982  Books for the Teen Age, New York Public Library
1983  California Young Reader Medal
1983  Buckeye Children’s Book Award
Awards and Distinctions

1983  Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children’s Book Award, Vermont Department of Libraries

1985  Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award

1985  Iowa Teen Award, Iowa Education Media Association


The One in the Middle Is the Green Kangaroo, written by Judy Blume. Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1969.


Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret (1970)

**Braille:** *Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret.* (1981). American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, KY.

**Chinese, traditional:** 神啊, 祢在吗? (2022). 幼狮文化, Taipei.

**Croatian:** *Bože, jesli li tu? Ja sam, Margaret.* (2022). Mozaik knjiga, Zagreb.

**Czech:** *To jsem Ja, Margaret!* (1999). Albatros Media, Prague.

**Danish:** *Er du der, Gud? Det er mig, Margaret.* (1987). Gyldendal, København.

**Dutch:** *Bent Du Daar, God? Ik Bent, Margaret.* (1975). Leopold, Amsterdam.


Translations and International Editions


Italian: Ci Sei, Dio? Sono Io, Margherita. (edition forthcoming.)


Translations and International Editions

**Blubber** (1974)


**Chinese, traditional:** 鯨脂. (1986). 民生報社 總經銷聯經出版事業公司, Taipei.


**Hebrew:** שמנונית. (date: 1979). דביר כטעמן, Tel Aviv.


**Italian:** *Quando le balene.* (2019). DeA Planeta Libri, Milano.

Translations and International Editions


**Turkish:** *Arsiz Kizlar Cetes.* (2011). Küçük Ev Yayinlari, Istanbul.


**Cool Zone with the Pain and the Great One (2008)**


**Hebrew:** הפסקת עשר. (date: 2011). כתר, Jerusalem.

**Korean:** 골치 야, 학교 가자. (2009). 시공 주니어, Sŏul.

**Deenie (1973)**

**Braille:** *Deenie.* (1987). Queensland Braille Writing Association, Brisbane, Qld.

**Hebrew:** *Dini.* (1993). 'Almah, Tel Aviv.


**Indonesian:** *Deenie.* (1997). Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta.

**Korean:** 내이름은디니. (2001). 이채, Sŏul.

**Latvian:** *Dīnija.* (2000). Zvaigzne ABC, Riga.

**Sinhala:** *Dīnī.* (2013). Vijēsūriya Grantha Kendraya, Mullēriyāva.


Translations and International Editions

**Double Fudge (2002)**


**Chinese, simplified:** 糊涂班里的小财迷. (2014). 浙江少年儿童出版社, Hangzhou.


**Hebrew:** (date: 2005). כתר, Jerusalem.

**Korean:** 퍼지 는 돈 이 좋아!. (2008). 시공 주니어, Sŏul.

**Persian:** (Date: ۱۳۸۳). قفا تاراشتنا, Tehran.


**Serbian:** *Drugi fadž.* (2005). Laguna, Beograd.

**Spanish:** *Lo Que Mas Me Gusta Es...* (2004). Alfaguara, Madrid.

**Thai:** *Fatčhī kamlang sōng.* (2004.) Phrǣo yaowachon, Krung Thēp.

**Turkish:** *Çifte caramel.* (2019). Çocuk Kolektif Kitap, Istanbul.

**Forever... (1975)**


**Chinese, traditional:** 我的第一次. (2001). 園丁生活房, Taibei.

**Croatian:** *Zauvijek.* (2001). Mozaik knjiga, Zagreb.

Translations and International Editions


Translations and International Editions

**Freckle Juice (1971)**

**Danish:** Hvordan får man fregner? (1982). Munksgaard, København.


**Korean:** 주근깨 주스. (2006). 시공사, Sŏul.

**Spanish:** Jugo de pecas. (2016). Loqueleo, un sello editorial del Santillana USA, Doral, FL.

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**Friend or Fiend? With the Pain and the Great One (2008)**


**German:** Luis und Amanda: Popelpanik Und Andere Riesenspektakel. (2011). Tulipan Verlag, Munich.
Translations and International Editions

Fudge-A-Mania (1990)


Persian: لسع دنق یاه یزاب لخ (Date: ۳۹۳۱). قفا تاراشنزا, Tehran.


Translations and International Editions

**Going Going Gone! With the Pain and the Great One (2008)**


*Hebrew*: ב ואי עלות שיא (Date: 2011). כתר, Jerusalem.

**Here’s to You, Rachel Robinson (1993)**


**Iggie’s House (1970)**


Translations and International Editions

**It’s Not the End of the World** (1972)

**Albanian:** Nuk është fundi i botës : roman për fëmijë. (2003). Konica, Tirana.

**Danish:** Verden går ikke under af den grund. (1986). Den grimme Ælling, Odense.

**Dutch:** Zo’n Ramp Is Het Nie. (1980). Leopold, Amsterdam.


**German:** Deshalb geht die welt nicht unter. (1986). Ex Libris, Zürich.

**Greek:** Δεν ήρθε και το τέλος του κόσμου. (1998). Κέδρος, Athens.

**Hebrew:** ז זה לא סוף העולם. (Date: 1972, 1984). כתר, Jerusalem.


**Korean:** 일기로 쓴 카렌의 고민. (2007). 중원문화, Sŏul.


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*It’s Not the End of the World, Hebrew edition*
Translations and International Editions

*Just as Long as We’re Together* (1987)

**Croatian:** Sve dok smo zajedno. (2001). Mozaik Knjiga, Zagreb.

**Danish:** Når bare vi har hinanden. (1988). Sesame, København.


**Hebrew:** כל עוד אנחנו ידידים. (date: 1989). תכר, Jerusalem.


**Serbian:** Samo da smo zajedno. (2009.) Laguna, Beograd.


*The One in the Middle Is the Green Kangaroo* (1969)

**Japanese:** ぼくはみどりのカンガルー (1983), 偕成社, Tokyo.
Translations and International Editions

**Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great (1972)**


**Chinese, simplified:** 史上最糟的好友聚会. (2014). 浙江少年儿童出版社, Hangzhou.

**Dutch:** Sheila de geweldige. (1982). Leopold, Amsterdam.


**German:** Sheila die Grosse. (1986). Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, München.


**German:** Deshalb geht die Welt nicht unter. (1986). Ex Libris, Zürich.

**Hebrew:**beeldede_FLU225202-1.jpg

**Italian:** Mitica Sheila! (1994). Emme Edizioni, Trieste.

**Japanese:**わたし的秘密おしえてあげる. (1986). 偕成社, Tokyo.


**Russian:** Шейла Великолепная. (2013). Розовый жираф, Moskva.

**Serbian:** Poznatija kao Šila Velika. (2005). Laguna, Beograd.

**Spanish:** Sheila la Magnífica. (1993). Alfaguara, Madrid.


Translations and International Editions

The Pain and the Great One (1974)


Superfudge (1980)


Hebrew: חנה ועופר לשון. (Date: 1980). חנה ועופר, Jerusalem.


Superfudge, Spanish edition   Superfudge, Persian edition
Translations and International Editions


Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (1972)

Braille: Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing. (2015.) Braille Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
Translations and International Editions


**Russian:** Питер обыкновенный, или Младших братьев не выбирают. (2020). Волчок, Moskva.

**Serbian:** Priče jednog tupsona iz četurtog razreda. (2005). Laguna, Beograd.


**Turkish:** Dördüncü sınıf a giden bir hiscin hikâyesi. (2019). Çocuk Kolektif Kitap, Istanbul.


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Tales of a Fourth-Grade Nothing, Bulgarian edition  Tales of a Fourth-Grade Nothing, Turkish edition
Translations and International Editions

*Then Again, Maybe I Won’t* (1971)

**Braille:** *Then Again, Maybe I Won’t.* (1981) Royal N.S.W. Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, North Rocks, N.S.W.


**Hebrew:** (מדלייה מירבumnos אליש מירבך) : מירבשנ' ירבדן תודיסו נ' בריאה ירות, (1982) ביבא־לד זוז , ירבד.


**Mongolian:** *Dakhiad I bas bi ingekhgûj ch bajzh magadgûj.* (2014). Sojombo, Ulaanbaatar.

**Spanish:** *Quizá no lo haga.* (1971, 1989) Alfaguara, Madrid.


*Tiger Eyes* (1981)


**Chinese, traditional:** 老虎的眼睛. (2013). 远流出版事业股份有限公司, Taibei.

**Danish:** *Tigerøje.* (1983). Borgen, København.

**Finnish:** *Tiikerisilmä.* (1985). WSOY, Helsinki.

**French:** *Œil de tigre.* (1985.) L’école des loisirs, Paris.

**German:** *Tigerauge.* (1999.) Omnibus, München.

**Hebrew:** עיני זמר. (date: 1991). כתר, Jerusalem.

Translations and International Editions


Soupy Saturdays with the Pain and the Great One (2007)


**German:** Spinnenkackesuppe und der erste Halbgeburtsstag der Weltgeschichte. (2010). Tulipan Verlag, Berlin.

**Hebrew:** תמלשמה זוקה כשים קרה של תותבש. (Date: 2011). רתכ, Jerusalem.

**Korean:** 우리는 무적 남매 골치 와 대장. (2009). 시공 주니어, Sŏul.

Ten Most Important Titles

*Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publisher/Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Dell Publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Listening Library, LP audiobook</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Random House Children’s Books</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Simon and Schuster</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>Dell</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Listening Library, audiobook</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Simon and Schuster/Atheneum</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Listening Library CD audiobook</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Delacorte</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Delacorte</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Listening Library, CD audiobook</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Listening Library, digital audiobook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Simon &amp; Schuster /Atheneum Books for Young Readers</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Simon &amp; Schuster /Simon and Schuster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ten Most Important Titles

**Blubber**

1974  Dell Publishing
1974  Listening Library, LP audiobook
1986  Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers
1986  Yearling
1988  Cornerstone Books
1991  Listening Library, cassette audiobook
2001  Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
2003  Listening Library, cassette audiobook
2003  Listening Library, CD audiobook
2004  Yearling
2005  Thorndike Press
2007  Listening Library, CD audiobook
2007  Listening Library, digital audiobook
2013  Simon & Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers, e-book
2014  Simon & Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Ten Most Important Titles

*Deenie*


1973  Dell Publishing
1984  Listening Library, LP audiobook
1991  Dell Publishing
1992  Listening Library, cassette audiobook
2003  Delacorte Press
2005  Laurel Leaf
2012  Delacorte, e-book
2003  Atheneum Books
2009  Delacorte Press
2009  Listening Library, CD audiobook
2011  Listening Library, digital audiobook
2014  Simon & Schuster /Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Ten Most Important Titles

**Forever...**

1975  Dell Publishing
1976  Pocket Books
2003  Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
2007  Simon and Schuster/Simon Pulse
2012  Listening Library, digital audiobook
2012  Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers e-book
2014  Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
2021  Listening Library, digital audiobook
Freckle Juice

1971  Dell Publishing
1985  Simon & Schuster
1986  Dell Publishing
1990  Listening Library, cassette audiobook
2004  Random House, cassette audiobook
2006  Listening Library, digital audiobook
2006  Listening Library, CD audiobook
2011  Listening Library, CD audiobook
2014  Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
2021  Listening Library, digital audiobook
Ten Most Important Titles

Starring Sally J. Freedman As Herself

1977  Dell Publishing
1991  Bantam Doubleday Dell
1997  Bantam
2000  Simon & Schuster
2004  Listening Library, CD audiobook
2007  Listening Library, digital audiobook
2011  Listening Library, CD and digital audiobook
2012  Random House e-book
2014  Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Ten Most Important Titles

**Superfudge**

- 1980 Dell Publishing
- 1987 Cornerstone Books
- 1992, 2003 Listening Library, CD audiobook
- 2003 Scholastic
- 2006 Listening Library, digital audiobook
- 2003 Scholastic
- 2007 Penguin/Puffin Books
- 2011 Penguin e-book
Ten Most Important Titles

*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*

- 1984 Dell Publishing
- 1972 Listening Library, LP audiobook
- 1991 Bantam Doubleday Dell
- 2002 Penguin/Dutton
- 2003 Penguin/Puffin
- 2003 Scholastic
- 1996, 2000, 2005 Listening Library, CD audiobook
- 2006 Listening Library, digital audiobook
- 2007 Penguin/Puffin
- 2007 Scholastic
- 2011 Penguin, digital audiobook
- 2012 Penguin/Puffin
Ten Most Important Titles

Then Again, Maybe I Won’t

1971 Dell Publishing
1971 Laurel-Leaf
1971 Listening Library, audiobook
1986 Dell Publishing
1986 Yearling
1988 GK Hall
1990 Listening Library, cassette audiobook
2000 Books on Tape, cassette audiobook
2002 Listening Library, CD audiobook
2007 Listening Library, digital audiobook
2014 Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
2021 Listening Library, digital audiobook
Ten Most Important Titles

*Tiger Eyes*

1981 Dell Publishing
1981 Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers
1982 Dell Publishing
1987 Cornerstone Books
1991 Dell Publishing
2009 Delacorte Press
2011 Listening Library, CD and digital audiobook
2012 Delacorte Press
Five Representative Titles

Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret

1970 Dell Publishing
1970 Listening Library, LP audiobook
1986 Random House Children’s Books
1990 Simon and Schuster
1991 Dell
1997 Listening Library, audiobook
2001 Simon and Schuster/Atheneum
2004 Listening Library CD audiobook
2010 Delacorte
2011 Delacorte
2010 Listening Library, CD audiobook
2010 Listening Library, digital audiobook
2014 Simon & Schuster /Atheneum Books for Young Readers
2020 Simon & Schuster /Atheneum Books for Young Readers
2022 Simon & Schuster /Simon and Schuster
Five Representative Titles

*Forever...*

- **1975** Dell Publishing
- **1976** Pocket Books
- **2003** Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
- **2007** Simon and Schuster/Simon Pulse
- **2012** Listening Library, digital audiobook
- **2012** Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers e-book
- **2014** Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
- **2021** Listening Library, digital audiobook
# Five Representative Titles

**Freckle Juice**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>Dell Publishing</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Simon &amp; Schuster</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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<td>Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Listening Library, digital audiobook</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Five Representative Titles

Starring Sally J. Freedman As Herself

- 1977  Dell Publishing
- 1991  Bantam Doubleday Dell
- 1997  Bantam
- 2000  Simon & Schuster
- 2004  Listening Library, CD audiobook
- 2007  Listening Library, digital audiobook
- 2011  Listening Library, CD and digital audiobook
- 2012  Random House e-book
- 2014  Simon and Schuster/Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Five Representative Titles

*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*

- 1984 Dell Publishing
- 1972 Listening Library, LP audiobook
- 1991 Bantam Doubleday Dell
- 2002 Penguin/Dutton
- 2003 Penguin/Puffin
- 2003 Scholastic
- 1996, 2000, 2005 Listening Library, CD audiobook
- 2006 Listening Library, digital audiobook
- 2007 Penguin/Puffin
- 2007 Scholastic
- 2011 Penguin, digital audiobook
- 2012 Penguin/Puffin
Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret

**Booklist—original review**

Pre-teen girls’ concern with breast development and menstruation and their burgeoning interest in boys are treated with honesty and humor in a tender, funny first-person story narrated by an almost twelve-year-old girl who discusses her private hopes and anxieties in candid conversations with God. The preoccupation with bodily changes which Margaret and three of her classmates share is realistically portrayed within the framework of typical preteen school, home, and social activities. Margaret is also concerned about religion since she is the daughter of a Jewish father and a Christian mother and is expected to make her own choice when she grows up. Family and peer relationships and dialog ring true. (January 1, 1971, Booklist)

**Kirkus—original review**

The comical longings of little girls who want to be big girls—exercising to the chant of “We must—we must—increase our bust!”—and the wistful longing of Margaret, who talks comfortably to God, for a religion, come together as her anxiety to be normal, which is natural enough in
sixth grade. And if that’s what we want to tell kids, this is a fresh, unclinical case in point: Mrs. Blume (Iggie’s House, 1969) has an easy way with words and some choice ones when the occasion arises. But there’s danger in the preoccupation with the physical signs of puberty—with growing into a Playboy centerfold, the goal here, though the one girl in the class who’s on her way rue it; and with menstruating sooner rather than later —calming Margaret, her mother says she was a late one, but the happy ending is the first drop of blood: the effect is to confirm common anxieties instead of allaying them. (And countetrends notwithstanding, much is made of that first bra, that first dab of lipstick.) More promising is Margaret’s pursuit of religion: to decide for herself (earlier than her ‘liberal’ parents intended), she goes to temple with a grandmother, to church with a friend; but neither makes any sense to her—“Twelve is very late to learn.” Fortunately, after a disillusions sectarian dispute, she resumes talking to God...to thank him for that telltale sign of womanhood. (October 1, 1970, Kirkus)
Reviews of Submitted Titles

**Forever...**

*Booklist–original review*

Blume vitalizes all those sex-education books in her lively, graphic story of a senior-year love affair based primarily on physical attraction. Once Katherine Danziger and Michael Wagner meet at a party, they have eyes only for each other, and their romance progresses rapidly from kissing to heavy petting to lying together and finally to frequent sexual intercourse after Kath gets the Pill from a Planned Parenthood officer. Although Kath’s parents are supportive of her, they worry she will get herself into exactly the situation she is in. The pair are separated after graduation when the Danzigers force Kath to take a summer job at a New Hampshire camp and Michael is sent to his uncle in North Carolina. At first, they write each other daily, but then Kath becomes attracted to another counselor and feels guilty and emotionally confused. Michael’s unexpected arrival at the camp brings matters to a head. Characters—including adults and friends of the protagonists—are well developed, dialogue is natural, and the story is convincing. (October 15, 1975, *Booklist.*

*The New York Times Book Review–original review*

Eighteen-year-old Kath wears a medallion with Katherine engraved on one side, Michael on the other, and the inscription reads Forever. But in a summer camp in New Hampshire, where Kath is a tennis counselor, she faces an ancient dilemma: “How can you love one person and still be attracted to another?” This crisis is engendered by Theo, an older man of 21. With green eyes, yet. And Kath thereupon chooses an ancient solution, which calls for a new medallion. These problems of the heart are written in basic teen idiom, complete with letters to and from camp and a convincing date-by-date account of first love. (December 28, 1975, *New York Times Book Review*)
Reviews of Submitted Titles

Freckle juice

**School Library Journal—original review**

This convincing small-boy adventure proceeds smoothly to a satisfying conclusion. The conniving little girl, understanding teacher, and feckless, freckleless boy are amusingly depicted in the impish black-and-white illustrations and in the story which is especially suited for reading aloud to second-and third-graders. (May, 1974, *School Library Journal*)

**School Library Journal—updated review**

Judy Blume’s Freckle Juice (1971) and The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo (1981) are just as relevant to today’s grade school audience as they were when first written. In Freckle Juice, Andrew wants to be just like Nicky, the boy in his class who has an abundance of freckles, and is willing to try anything to get them. When nosey Sharon offers to sell him the recipe for Freckle Juice, Andrew takes her up on it with almost disastrous results. . . . A worthwhile addition to primary grade collections. (April, 2005, *School Library Journal*)
Reviews of Submitted Titles

**Starring Sally J. Freedman, As Herself**

*The New York Times*—original review

Sally J. Freedman is an adolescent Jewish girl from New Jersey in this novel set in the 1940’s. She has a dentist father whom she adores, a moody conscientious mother, a fink brother with health problems and a folksy live-in grandmother. The Freedman family moves to Florida for a school year to speed the boy’s recovery from a bout with nephritis. The father must stay behind to see to his dental practice and can only visit his family infrequently, leaving them to deal alone with their new surroundings—new schools, new people and a culture of senility and suntans. The move to Florida, frightening for everyone, shows Sally what a family is all about.

Sally's head is full of movies and World War II, of Esther Williams and Adolf Hitler (Sally doesn’t distinguish between the two; she just loves her, hates him). She has an imperfect sense of the world around her; it is through the twilight world of pulp magazines and historical folklore that Sally’s accumulating yearnings and resentments escape and find expression. Reality, from which she comes and goes, is defined by her feelings for her father, which are passionate, and touchingly open, and for her mother, who is lonely, filled with sexual tension and both irritable and overprotective with her children.

The move to Florida, frightening for everyone, shows Sally what a family is all about. In particular, she confronts for the first time the mystery of her parents’ connubial relationship. Witnessing their awkward, then tender, reunions, she feels the impact of their need for one another without fully understanding what it means. It’s a reminder to all of us that there’s a time when children know the facts of life without understanding them. Beyond that, the book is largely a chronicle of Sally’s adjustment to a new life, of wishes and nervousness and fun, and the author’s memories of the 1940’s.
Interestingly, Mrs. Blume herself has become a much discussed subject of the sub-teen culture she writes about. Kids read her books with a blushing curiosity once reserved for certain words in the dictionary, parts of the Bible and naughty passages in Hemingway. They know they will find some frank discussion of prurient matters like breasts and menstruation. Some of her readers may also have read “Fear of Flying,” yet they reread “Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret.” It’s evident her appeal goes beyond sexual frankness: She must be conveying a certain emotional reality that children recognize as true. Portnoy may complain all he wants, but kids will go right on needing reassurance that there is a time of slow awakening, of normal curiosity and confusion about what they are learning and feeling. (May 1, 1977, The New York Times)

School Library Journal—updated review of audiobook edition

The indomitable Sally J. Freedman proves her timelessness in this recording that is skillfully and charmingly narrated by author Judy Blume (Yearling, pap. 1986). It is 1947 and the imaginative Sally is 10 years old. Older brother Douglas has been sickly for some time, so the family moves from New Jersey to Miami Beach’s warmer climate. Sally’s beloved father stays behind to continue working as a dentist. Sally’s family is warmly and realistically portrayed. Mrs. Freedman’s excessive caution and worrying clearly cause difficulties for her husband and children. The relationship between Douglas and Sally is not so warmly portrayed, with the usual sniping between siblings. Sally spends the winter making friends, getting into trouble, and trying to prove that an elderly man in their Miami apartment building is really Hitler in disguise. She frequently thinks about Ma Fanny’s sister and niece who were both killed in Dachau. References to Jewish traditions are explained. Sally spends much of her time dreaming up stories in which she is a detective, movie star, or volunteer for American postwar efforts—and always the heroine. Blume’s narration is spirited and perfectly paced. While she doesn’t give each character a different voice, her tone differentiates them. Clearly there is much of Judy Blume in the main character and her affection for Sally shines through. The novel is as pertinent today as it was when first published, making it a must have for most libraries. (September, 2005, School Library Journal)
Reviews of Submitted Titles

**Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing**

**Booklist—original review**

In this light, humorous, episodic story, nine-year-old Peter Hatcher tells of his problems with his little brother Fudge, a two-and-a-half-year-old attention-stealer who writes on Peter’s homework with magic markers, refuses to perform for a television commercial until tricked into it by Peter, pretends to fly like a bird and knocks out his front teeth while Peter is supposedly watching him, and worst of all, swallows Peter’s pet turtle. Fudge is too exaggerated to be very believable, but Peter’s difficulties with him will be readily understood by children with younger brothers and sisters. (1972, Booklist)

**School Library Journal—updated review as part of the series, “Top 100 Children’s Novels”**

Stacy Dillon says, “Nobody can get the voice of kids quite like Judy Blume. Fudge and Peter are every kid and just as relevant today as they were in 1972.” The synopsis from the publisher reads, “Living with his little brother, Fudge, makes Peter Hatcher feel like a fourth grade nothing. Whether Fudge is throwing a temper tantrum in a shoe store, smearing smashed potatoes on walls at Hamburger Heaven, or scribbling all over Peter’s homework, he’s never far from trouble. He’s a two-year-old terror who gets away with everything—and Peter’s had enough. When Fudge walks off with Dribble, Peter’s pet turtle, it’s the last straw. Peter has put up with Fudge too long. How can he get his parents to pay attention to him for a change?” According to American Writers for Children Since 1960: Fiction, the book came about when, “A house helper who knew that Blume was writing books for children brought her a clipping one day about a boy who swallowed a turtle. ‘Willie Mae,’ to whom the book is dedicated, kept Blume informed of developments, and the story found its way into the enormously popular Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (1972), in which Peter Hatcher’s ‘problem’ is his two-year-old brother, Fudge . . . The original idea was for a picture book called ‘Peter, Fudge and Dribble.’ It was rejected as a picture book by Bradbury, but Ann Durrell, children’s editor of Dutton, suggested the form in which it was finally published.” And aren’t we glad she did? Peter is a child everyman. The straight man to Fudge, doomed to forever be overshadowed by his little brother (they don’t call this series the Peter Series, after all). (Written by Betsy Bird and featured in Fuse 8, a School Library Journal blog, May 30, 2012.)
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