



The Brothers Quibble

Aaron Blabey

SYNOPSIS:

Spalding Quibble ruled the roost.

He shared it with no other.

But then his parents introduced a brand new baby brother.

Uh oh.

A picture book about love (and war) from the award-winning author of *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley*, *The Dreadful Fluff* and *Noah Dreary*.

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WRITING STYLE

Brothers Quibble has strong underlying themes of friendship and acceptance which will help young readers in developing social relationships and accepting conflict as part of even the strongest friendships. Aaron's expressive illustrations add plenty of humour but also a strong dose of heart to the story.

A Rhythmic rhyming pattern which allows the story to flow smoothly whilst preserving the strong narrative voice.

Suitable for younger children (ages 5-8), ideal for those currently with younger siblings or those receiving one soon. (Also ideal for younger siblings, as the book has two messages, one in the narrative told by the actions of Spalding and the other through the reaction of his younger brother, Bunny.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aaron Blabey has won a CBCA (Children's Book Council of Australia) Book of the Year and an AFI Award, and his book *The Ghost of Miss Annabel Spoon* has been shortlisted in the 2013 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Aaron has been included on the Smithsonian Institute's Notable Book List and was a National Literacy Ambassador in 2012.

Visit Aaron on his website at www.aaronblabey.com

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Once again, Aaron has taken a situation that so many of have experienced - or are still experiencing (whether as kids or parents) and shows us the funny side while delivering a wonderful message. He's a master!

STUDY NOTES/ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS

PRE-READING DISCUSSION:

- What is it like to be an only child?
- What advantages might an only child have?
- How might a child feel about having a brother or sister?
- How might they react?
- Why might they react in this way?
- How might a younger sibling feel about the older sibling/s?
- Which child in the family has the best position – eldest, middle, youngest etc. Why?
- What does the word ‘quibble’ mean? What might this suggest about the brothers in this story?

READING:

Page 1

- Consider the picture of Spalding Quibble. What can you tell about him from this image?
- What aspects of the illustration give an indication of his personality?
- What is Spalding’s attitude towards his house, his parents and his life?
- Why might Spalding be wearing a crown and a robe?
- What does it mean to ‘rule the roost’?
- From this illustration, what do you suspect his relationship with his brother will be like?

Page 2-3

- Consider Spalding’s facial expression. How does he feel about his life?
- Consider where his parents are standing in relation to Spalding. What might this suggest about their relationship?
- Why might this be the first Spalding has heard about a new brother?
- Do you think he would have behaved any differently if his parents had told him earlier that he was getting a brother?

Page 4-5

- How do Spalding’s parents look when they tell him about the new baby?

- What does this suggest about how they expect Spalding to react?
- Why might Spalding think this is some kind of bad joke?
- How has his expression changed from the previous page?

Page 6-7

- What is the impact of calling the new baby 'Bunny'? What might this suggest about his parents' feelings towards him?
- How is Spalding seen to be different on this page?
- Why does he stay at the door while his parents fuss over the new baby?
- Why might Spalding not be wearing his crown?
- What feeling do you think Spalding is feeling towards Bunny?
- What do you predict might happen?

Page 8-9

- Why does Spalding slam the door and declare war on his brother?
- How do you think his parents will react?
- Will this get Spalding back the position and affection he craves?

Page 10-11

- How are the illustrations and the words on this page funny?
- How does Spalding try to re-gain attention?
- Do you think it is working?
- What sort of child does Bunny appear to be?
- What is the impact of showing Bunny in his parents' arms in each illustration?
- What sort of life does Bunny have? Look at the expression on Bunny's face.

Page 12-13

- Compare this image of Spalding's parents with the first illustration of them. Parents are often tired when a new baby comes along, but is it really Bunny who has made them look so tired?
- In what way can Spalding be seen to still 'rule the roost'?
- What effect would it have to send Spalding to his room each day?
- What message does this send to Spalding?
- Do you think this will help to improve his behaviour? Why?
- What do you think his parents should do to change Spalding's behaviour?

Page 14-15

- What sort of child does Bunny appear to be?
- How is he different from Spalding?
- Why does Spalding barely appear on this page?
- What is he doing when we do see him?
- What does this tell us about the boys' relationship?

Page 16-17

- How does Spalding react to Bunny's first word?

- Why do you think, despite all the terrorising he has suffered, Bunny's first word is 'Spalding'?
- Why might Bunny be so fond of his brother?
- Was this the relationship Spalding expected?
- In what way do you think their relationship might change now?

Page 18-19

- Which of the brothers appears to 'rule the roost' now?
- How does Spalding react to his brother's kindness?

Page 20-21

- What indication is there that Spalding has not completely changed his ways?
- Do you think Bunny really does love Spalding, or his behaving this way for another reason?

Page 22-23

- Why might Bunny help Spalding to escape from his room even when he was sent there for being mean to Bunny?
- How are the brothers shown to be different from each other?

Page 24-25

- How has their relationship changed?
- Why does Spalding decide it is better to do things with his brother?

Page 26-27

- Why might the author have shown that Spalding and Bunny still fight?
- How would you have reacted if they had been perfect towards each other from now on?
- How do you react when Bunny hits back at Spalding?
- What does this suggest about their relationship now that Bunny is older?

Page 28-29

- How do the parents react to their sons?
- Why might Bunny and Spalding doing things together be a mixed blessing (bad as well as good)?
- How do the boys look about doing things together?
- Is it natural for brothers (and sisters) to fight? Why? What sorts of things do you fight about?

Page 30

- Who is wearing the crown in this illustration? What does that suggest?
- Does either of the brothers seem to have the upper hand?
- How do you think the boys would feel without each other?
- What do you think might happen if they had another brother? A sister?

WRITING STYLE:

Illustrations:

- How does the author/illustrator use humour in his illustrations?
- What is the impact of his careful and selective use of colour and size? How has he used these in his illustrations to increase the mood or the message?

Writing Humour:

- What makes this book funny? Is it the words or the illustrations, or a combination of both?
- Select the part that you think is the funniest and explain why.
- Choose your favourite illustration and explain what you like about it.

Rhyme:

- How does the use of rhyme add to the story?
- Does it make it easier to read or predict the storyline?

ACTIVITIES:

- Write a 'Guide to Becoming a Sibling.' Include dos and don'ts (starting with the things Spalding did to Bunny).
- Imagine that you are Spalding. Write a series of letters to your parents or to Bunny when you first meet the baby, while he is still little, after he says your name and when he is a little bit older. In your letters, show how your relationship towards Bunny is changing.
- Write your own story about a child's reaction to a new brother or sister.

Marketing / Publicity / Online

- Performance video of Aaron telling the story in the same style as the video for The Dreadful Fluff – this will be used as a feature for Penguin Teachers' Academy, Mummy Bloggers and sites such as Mama mia and Hoopla might use it.
- Advance copies with hand written note sent to key CBCA members.
- Full page advertisement in Reading Time, Off The Shelf and Magpies magazine.
- Review on OZTL Net 14,000+ subscribers

- Feature picture book title with ALEA
- Feature page in 2014 catalogue
- Submission as national Read Aloud title for NLNW 2104
- Alannah and Madeline feature on Website
- Wide coverage across Penguin Teachers' Academy and Puffin social media.