



Jacob Have I Loved

Katherine Paterson

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Esau have I hated . . . Sara Louise Bradshaw is sick and tired of her beautiful twin Caroline. Ever since they were born, Caroline has been the pretty one, the talented one, the better sister. Even now, Caroline seems to take everything: Louise's friends, their parents' love, her dreams for the future.

For once in her life, Louise wants to be the special one. But in order to do that, she must first figure out who she is . . . and find a way to make a place for herself outside her sister's shadow.

Jacob Have I Loved Details

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From Reader Review Jacob Have I Loved for online ebook

Amy says

I must have read this girlhood favorite a dozen times, the tears dropping onto the pages regardless of how familiar the words and storyline had become. Something about Sara Louise's intense sibling rivalry and inability to recognize her parents' love for her spoke to me, a second child who frequently felt overshadowed by my older brother. Her earnest desire for God's love amidst fear of His disapproval also reflected my search to feel God's love for me in all my messy imperfection.

20+ years have passed since my last reading. It almost embarrassed me that the rawness of her emotions still pulled tear after tear from my eyes. Her blindness to the love of her parents struck me more strongly, along with her slowness in recognizing her ability to change her situation. That is part of the essence of all true tragedy, though: as humans we see through a glass, darkly, imperfectly, and cause the majority of our own sorrow.

Tsorningold says

A book of incomparable unfairness.

I am not saying every story needs to be wrapped up in clean white bows, I am saying that my 13 year old self was not prepared for the grossly overstated cruelty of life presented in this book.

I hate it.

Calista says

I do love Katherine Paterson. I don't really know what to make of this book. I don't know if I have seen a main character who seems to know herself in some ways and be so lost in others. She is crippled by the shadow of her talented twin sister. She is also a tom boy and wants to be able to do a man's job.

I guess after going through this, I don't really know what the point was and what it's trying to share with us. It does turn out ok for Wheeze and I don't know. I did love that it takes place on an island off the Baltimore Harbor. They talk about the Baltimore Sun and other things that I know. I enjoyed learning about the island culture in the 40s. That part of the book was great.

Her grandmother is a villain. She was terrible. I simply don't know what to take away from this book really. The characters were good and the situations were real. I didn't sense direction from the book. I don't know, something felt missing to me. It's an interesting read and there are some hard things in the story. I went ahead and gave this an extra star because it's written by Katherine, otherwise I would have given it 2 stars.

It is well written. I guess it is a strange book. I need to think about it more.

John Hsu says

Listened to this on audiobook, which probably made it worse because you couldn't accelerate through the miserableness of the lead character. There's some decent storytelling in here but it really comes across as a score-settling diatribe written by a self pitying girl who hated her twin's guts.

That topic could be covered winningly with real humor, perspective or at least some dramatic progression but hardly anything significant happens to the central conflict in the book. Instead, it all kinda peters out in a montage-y end sequence that is hardly rewarding given that we've been dragged through a detailed litany of offenses both real and imagined.

I would have rather had 3 chapters of her teen life and 12 chapters of her life after leaving home - there's a far more interesting tale buried in there.

Erin Casey says

I highly recommend this book to teen girls and their parents. The central girl is foiled at every turn in her life by lack of money, lack of parental support, lack of beauty... and also by her overbearing and truly gifted sister. When she connects with her grandmother, listens to her and learns to let go of all these restrictions, to let go of any resentment, frustration or bitterness and to get out and do what she needs to do to live her own life, she does!

She finds peace, happiness and eventually a love of her own not through any fairytale romance or knight on a white horse, but through searching out the path best for her and then working with dedication.

I do not intend to make parents think they need to learn a lesson about parenting from the book, rather, it would just be a lovely story to be able to talk about with your daughter.

Annalisa says

I loved reading this book with my daughter and seeing it both through her eyes and mine, from the parent and the child's point of view. I felt the injustice of Caroline's special treatment and how it affected Sara Louise, the pain of being the unloved child, the adaptable one that's easy to ignore. I could so relate to my own life, slipping through the cracks when I wouldn't speak up for myself. At times I wanted to shake Caroline for being so selfish and taking so much away from her sister.

But another part of me saw that many of her parents' injustices were only perceived and that much of Sara Louise's insecurities were typical teenage girl. This isn't a story of Wheeze getting back for years of mistreatment, but a story of her learning to love herself. Once she learned to stop sacrificing what many times wasn't even asked of her and to push for her own dreams, she could be happy.

The story reminded me a lot of Chinese culture, how they train their children to think highly of themselves and put themselves out there because there isn't anyone else out there to love them as much as themselves. It's in stark contrast to American virtues of loving others above ourselves. Caroline reminded me of the Chinese values, speaking up for herself, and Sara Louise of American values, sacrificing oneself for others. There has to be a happy medium in there, defending our own interests while we look out for the benefit of

others too, a way to love others and love ourselves too, a time to sacrifice and a time to stick your ground.

It's a beautiful story of the pain of growing up. I loved the full circle message at the end. And I loved that my daughter stopped reading mid sentence to point out the similarities to me.

Penny says

I was debating between two and three stars on this one, but I realized that I sat and finished it when I should have been doing other things, so I took that as a sign that it deserved three. I did like the tormented adolescent protagonist, and I was anxious to know how things would work out for her.

That said, this one seems a little weak for a Newbery winner. After lingering over Sara Louise's adolescence, the last two chapters rushing through a big chunk of her adult life seem out of place, and nothing in them flows very naturally from the rest of the book. (Yeah, I get that Appalachia is supposed to have something in common with the community she came from, but that whole thing isn't developed enough to really work for me.)

While I'm on the subject of things not flowing in a logical progression, the "I might want to be a doctor" thing came out of nowhere.

And the part about the money she earned and kept secret *went* nowhere. She made such a big deal of it for a while that I was sure it was going to lead to a big row, with her family being hurt that she didn't tell them about it, or that at least she would do something decisive with it when she "found herself," but no, it was just forgotten.

I did find the book enjoyable; I don't mean to trash it. It just didn't quite meet the expectations that were set up by that big gold seal.

Kathryn says

I absolutely hated this book. It doesn't even give you the satisfaction of seeing Miss Perfect Goldilocks get hers in the end (or at least, seeing her admit what a hell she made for her sister).

I really don't understand why this received the Newberry. I read it because I felt I had missed something but now I wished I hadn't. Books tend to become part of your soul and this one gave (and continues to give) me the creeps! The most depressing story I've ever read in my life.

Rebecca McNutt says

From the author of the wonderfully imaginative *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Jacob I Have Loved*, targeted at older readers, is a really profound and impressive story about the futility of sibling rivalry and the importance of family unity.

V_murray says

This book should be read without the presentiment that the heroine is going to be heroic, selfless, lovely, or even pleasant.

To judge the book based on that is to completely miss the point of this novel.

No, Sara Louise isn't a pleasant heroine. She is eaten up with neglect, bitterness, jealousy, and it's difficult to tell whether she has more self-loathing or loathing for anything or anyone who isn't herself, at least for childhood through adolescence.

With that said, it is vitally important that this book exist. I can't think of a single book I had throughout school that had such a heroine or hero, and which carried such a message or perspective. No, the books were about the Carolines--people who were pretty and/or talented, so very different and special, meant for so much more, and by work they eventually earn their happy endings. And in those books, the Wheezes maybe got some redemptive character arc that is meant only to support the primary heroine's character arc from struggle to triumph.

And since I just finished an entire novel from the perspective of the lesser sister, that disgusts me. Don't get me wrong--there was not a single moment reading this novel where I was not acknowledging the fact that the image I was given through Sara Louise's eyes had a greater slant than your average flying buttress. However. That is important. It is important that we not fetishize the "outcast" in our literature--and let's be perfectly honest, how the hell many books exist that tell us "It's good, preferable to be weird, to be the outcast, to be strange and unlike anyone else." Except that's hard, lonely, isolating, and the normal populace will always still choose the Carolines over the Wheezes among us.

Which brings us to question the heroine's value. Where is she being Sara Louise, the heroine we wish to see redeemed on a cold night, wondering as she wanders, and where is she Wheeze, so eaten up with hatred of her own sister and mother and everyone else that she will destroy her lotion and scream that she doesn't want to go to the boarding school she'd been saving and saving for just because she wants to be alone when she really doesn't? It's complicated, and that's the value: being a girl is complicated, self-loathing is complicated, and trying to love yourself and your family is complicated.

There aren't perfect characters in this novel. Wheeze is a chore, but you are a liar if you say you didn't think Grandma was a bitch. You're also a liar if you didn't feel at least a tiny bit of sympathy for her when Louise did.

I was assigned this book as an English Education major in a class on Adolescent Lit, looking forward to novels and classes. This is a great novel for paying attention to perspective. This is a great novel for looking at the value of a novel even when the main character isn't "pleasant," because not every main character is meant to be pleasant.

I'd recommend this book to anyone with the ability to process that novels with unpleasant characters can still be fantastic novels, filled with well-crafted characters.

Janessa says

I read this book several times as a teen. I was drawn to the story of the two sisters. I found myself both disturbed and fascinated by the cleft between them, and nursed Sarah Louise's injustices as if they were my

own. I was also captivated by the beautiful imagery and the setting along the Chesapeake Bay that was, to me, strange and fascinating.

Recently I returned to the book, reading it for the first time as an adult. It was a completely different experience. It became a story about how we perceive ourselves, and how intricately that is linked to how we believe we are perceived by others. I saw how Sarah Louise's perception of reality becomes what is real to her. It shapes the decisions she makes, how she defines herself, how she relates to her sister.

As a teen reader, I failed to see the growth and resolution that come into Sarah Louise's life when she learns to set aside her perceptions and accept what is the truth. Once she finally listens to the Captain telling her, "You don't need anything given to you," and then accepts her parent's love for what it really is, she is free to leave her island home and find herself, and her destiny.

Destiny might seem a strong word to use. Sarah Louise herself is furious when Joseph Wojtkiewicz suggests that her arrival in the mountain-locked Appalachian community she eventually calls home has been predestined. But there is a wholeness and beauty to Sarah Louise's life, a calmness and completeness that is unmistakable. And echoing that is the cycle of life and death that is repeated in the images of the crabs, in the story Sarah Louise's birth, and in the death and life that occur in the book's final scenes.

I think Patterson expects a lot from her teen readers. As the story begins, an adult Sarah Louise acknowledges, "Life begins to turn upside down at thirteen. I know that now." That is not something I could have understood as I teenager, at least not with the same perspective as Sarah Louise. I was still there. Now it is different. Now I read those words and feel a pang in my chest because I know how true they are. But I'm glad I had the experience of reading this book both as a teenager and as an adult. It made Sarah Louise's story more meaningful and poignant to be able to see it both as she experienced it, and as she processed it later in life.

Denise says

Lines that I loved:

It would have been harder to stay away and imagine what people were staying about me than to go and face them.

How could I face a lifetime of passive waiting?

For a moment is our sorrow. Joy forever in the sky.

But to fear is one thing. To let fear grab you by the tail and swing you around is another.

Annoyance drove out panic.

But I was not a generous person. I couldn't afford to be. Call was my only friend. If I gave him up to the Captain, I'd have no one.

She would not fight with me. Perhaps that was the thing that made me hate her most.

Sometimes I would rage at God, at his monstrous almighty injustice.

My spiritual health was about on a par with a person who's been dead three days, but I wasn't about to admit it.

Real intrigue was far more delicious than the pretend kind.

It didn't seem right to me that the Captain should be robbed of the chance to tell his own tragedy. He had nothing else to call his own. He should have at least had his story.

Is the world so short on trouble that you two crave to make more?

A man with strong clean hands would never look at me in love. No man would. At the moment, it seemed worse than being forsaken by God.

One must face facts no matter how unpleasant.

Crazy people who are judged to be harmless are allowed an enormous amount of freedom ordinary people are denied.

No one on the mainland had ever invited me to talk about home before, and the longer I talked, the more I wanted to talk, churning with happiness and homesickness at the same time.

Rachel M says

Who is Sara Louise's biggest enemy?

- 1) Caroline, her twin sister. Sara Louise is unhappy because Caroline is so happy, so talented, so loved. The reason Sara Louise is unhappy is because Caroline was loved more than her, from birth.
- 2) Her parents and grandmother. They just don't love Sara Louise. They are ever trying to find ways to give Caroline more privliges, stealing what little Sara Louise has.
- 3) Call and the Captain. Both, in different ways, cast their ballot with Caroline, not Sara Louise.
- 4) God. Even God said, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." Jacob is the favored twin = Caroline.
- 5) Sara Louise, herself.

This book was almost painful to read. From the beginning, I sympathized with Sara Louise. Over and over again, she is being forgotten about, and I did want to hate Caroline for always getting the attention. Sara Louise's parents (and Caroline, I think) are blind to the effect their words and actions are having on Sara Louise. As the novel progresses, Sara Louise takes this painful sense that she is unloved, and turns in upon herself. At this point, she starts to see nothing but UNLOVED, stamped on every action of the people around her. She even deliberately rejects the opportunities her friends and family take to show their love for her.

I am trying to decide what is most tragic about the book - is it the fact that those around Sara Louise don't adequately show her their love for her? Or is it Sara Louise's response to this? I guess, as I think about it, both are tragic. The message of this story can relate to so many different situations in life - many people come from very painful circumstances, suffer horrible injustices, or are not loved as they deserve to be. If we

internalize these hurts and never allow them to be healed, at some point we make a choice to perpetuate the bad - to let the evils we have received continue to live in us. Sara Louise is given a painful childhood - in which she perceives that she is worth less to her parents than her sister. But when it begins to look as though there will never be anything that belongs only to her, she loses all hope, and lets her pain wreak havoc on her life. Unfortunately, no one feels the effects of this muted life as much as she does.

Sara Louise's struggle is to come to know and love who she is, or to live far below her potential. It is so interesting that envy is really, at heart, self hatred - it doesn't really have anything to do with another person - just as, in Jacob Have I Loved, Caroline for Sara Louise is not really the problem - she is just the symptom.

Lynda says

3.5/5 stars

Jacob Have I Loved is a novel by Katherine Paterson that won the 1981 Newbery Medal.

The story takes place during the early 1940s on the small, fictional island of Rass in the Chesapeake Bay. Life on the island revolves around fundamentalist religion, seasonal fishing for crabs and oysters, and the often fulfilling lives of those who "follow the water." While the men lead rugged, dangerous lives, Paterson chooses to focus on the women of the island.

Jacob Have I Loved revolves around the sibling rivalry between Sara Louise ("Wheeze") and Caroline Bradshaw. The combination of envy, love, and hatred that twists Sara Louise's relationship with Caroline realistically reflects the insecurity and competitiveness experienced by most children.

What my father needed more than a wife was sons. On Rass, sons represented wealth and security. What my mother bore him was girls, twin girls. I was the elder by a few minutes. I always treasured the thought of those minutes. They represented the only time in my life when I was the centre of everyone's attention. From the moment Caroline was born, she snatched it all for herself.

Her cruel grandmother compares the girls to the Biblical brothers Jacob and Esau. She takes pleasure in taunting Sara Louise by quoting from the Bible,

Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated

only deepening Sara Louise's resentment for Caroline. It is this jealousy that threatens to embitter her for life. Sara Louise's journey is a solitary one and it is impossible not to feel her exquisite loneliness.

Self-discovery is one of the most important themes in this novel. Sara Louise must find her purpose and her place in the world, beginning with her place in the family. In learning to allow love and awe to exist alongside bitterness and sorrow-and by realizing that all of this matters even if nobody else knows or sees it-Sara Louise begins to acquire the knowledge and resilience that will ultimately sustain her.

Mariel says

This book embarrassed me a little. It embarrassed me more than a little. I'm no stranger to self pity and

talking myself into not doing things.

It is also embarrassing because it is cloying and whiney.

Louise (nicknamed Wheeze) slumps in the shadowed footsteps of her twin sister, Caroline. Caroline is very clever. Wheeze is not a sexy nickname. She totally eliminated the competition with that strategic strategy. The fam and Caroline, as well as their whole island, love everything about Caroline, anyway. You know those soap opera actresses who do something evil? And they grin evilly over the shoulder of the hot guy shoulder they are crying on? As the good girl looks on helplessly? Louise does the dirty work to put food on the table (crab fishing, mostly). I get that the family were awful. Her best (only) friend (if anyone didn't see him falling for Caroline coming dead end roads off, they weren't paying attention to the whole premise of Caroline > Louise), Call, doesn't seem to really like her either. It's all very depressing. And weird. She develops a crush on a man older than her grandmother! (The grandmother is the biggest beyotch in the book.) The methodist stuff was heaped on way too much for my tastes (not that it was methodist. Just the goody two shoes religious-y aspect. It's just that "Methodist!" was name dropped an awful lot). So it's depressing and weird and... She was soooooo whiney. The "You don't need people to hand stuff to you" message was tacked on. Louise didn't exhibit any spunk. I didn't believe that much that she stops letting her family belittle her to keep her on as their caretaker for life coming out of nowhere. More, please. She also becomes a doctor and finds a husband (with three kids) pretty damned instantly. After tons and tons of whining. There should have been a fairer ratio, I say.

Caroline was never anything but a figure of in the distance perfectness and tongue wagging. This was supposed to be a twin book! What the hell gives?

Why did I write a whole review for? I should've just said "A really bad episode of Avonlea but told from the perspective of the evil twin instead of the spunky little girl who gets the old twin with a man and out of the thumb of the bitter spinster twin."

Annoyingly quaint.

P.s. I forgot to mention the freaking weird hand lotion incident! What the fuck was that?

P.s.s.

I pictured the beloved captain to look like THIS.

laaaaames says

I remember loving this book as a kid, so I picked it up the other day. I'm not exactly sure why I liked it so much, because this time around I didn't find it nearly entertaining. Also I didn't feel sorry for Louise this time around; most everything Caroline got that Louise didn't was due to Louise's inability to speak up, or because her attempts to get something for herself completely backfired due to her passive-aggressive ways of doing so.

Also, I must say, I got a little wiggled out when she hugged the Captain and that incident began her sexual awakening. I mean, what?

I also thought it was interesting that religion was shown to make Louise pretty miserable but there was never any follow-up on that. I suppose this wasn't the sort of vehicle for any sort of anti-religious or anti-god agenda, but it really upset me to see someone so tortured by words from the bible and then have no

conclusion to mark those words as, ya know, something besides a "curse from god". Maybe that's why I used to like this book; back in seventh grade I was in Catholic school.

Becky says

I read this beautifully written book in one sitting. It's the story of Louise, a young girl growing up in the shadow of her beautiful, talented twin sister. In the course of the book, Louise endures the youthful tribulations of falling in love (first with a man who's almost old enough to be her grandfather, then with a childhood friend who used to seem "second-rate" to her) and finding a place for herself doing "man's work" in the tiny, insulated island community in which she lives.

The book doesn't have much of a plot, but the characters are so realistic and balanced that you do care about what happens to them. The Chesapeake Bay setting is finely drawn, and the descriptions of oyster culling and crab netting are interesting -- and might make you hungry.

The book's emotional achievements are great. *Jacob Have I Loved* accomplishes subtly what so many other YA books shove down the reader's throat -- sibling rivalry, the uncertainty of first love, the frustration and excitement of figuring out who you are & where you might want to go in life -- all of this and more are presented with just enough drama to make them interesting, but never so much that you feel you're reading anything less than a Newbery winner.

The book also reminded me of one of my favorite books -- Madeleine L'Engel's *A Ring of Endless Light*, for a few shared themes, most notably sibling rivalry, the role of religion, and first love, not to mention a very similar setting.

I highly recommend *Jacob Have I Loved*. It's a little gem that I wish I'd read sooner, and will probably reread in the future.

MaryG2E says

Louise Bradshaw is a teenager when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbour in December 1941. Her family ekes out a tough existence fishing on Chesapeake Bay, in a desolate, windswept environment. The fishing consists of crab collecting in one season, oyster harvesting in the other. The work is hard, but consistent, and although it does not pay well, there is a steady income. The small population of Rass Island is doggedly Methodist, with strict rules for living, and strong censure for any form of deviation. It is a grim, joyless existence, one which Louise yearns to leave.

Louise's twin sister Caroline, born a few minutes later, is everything Louise is not. She is pretty, fair-haired, blue-eyed and dainty, whereas Louise is tall, raw-boned and plain. Caroline turns out to be musically very talented, and this, combined with her looks gives her a privileged upbringing, as everyone celebrates her beauty and talent. She gets all the attention while Louise gets none. Over time, Louise become more and more embittered as she is passed over and ignored repeatedly, in favour of Caroline.

I think Louise reserves some of her deepest resentment for her parents, as they allow Caroline to receive every bounty the islanders can bestow, while consciously ignoring her needs, and not insisting that good fortune should be shared between both twins. On a number of occasions in the narrative, my heart went out to Louise, so callously was she neglected by everyone in favour of Caroline.

Turning her thoughts inward, Louise focusses on working hard, earning good pocket money while avoiding school where possible. When her best friend Call quits his job with her father on the fishing boat to enlist in the armed forces, Louise takes on his work, labouring fiercely beside her dad. It gives her the kind of inner peace that she could not obtain in the feminine environment of the domestic sphere.

Throughout the book, kind fortune continues to visit Caroline, while Louise is left behind, in danger of becoming a bitter, twisted adult. She has to give herself the opportunity to make her own life, and the courage to grant herself permission to leave Rass Island.

This is a short novel, with a spare, elegant prose style. Easily accessible to older children, it is also a satisfying read for adults, I think. It won the Newbery Medal in 1981, as *the most distinguished American children's book published in the previous year*. There is a lot of emotion in the narrative, some delicious humour and a good dose of sadness. An important message emerges gradually - that we are responsible for how we deal with our personal circumstances, and that we all have opportunities to be seized - if we have the right attitude. It is a valuable lesson built into the body of an engaging story for young adult readers.

Margaret says

THE STUPIDEST BOOK EVER!!!! WHAT WERE THE NEWBERY PEOPLE THINKING????

You may be taking a dislike to me at this minute for criticizing the great and mighty prodigy that is Katherine Patterson. I accept that my opinion is not popular. It makes me feel special. I just have never liked Katherine Patterson. If I read a book by her that garners more than two stars(however unlikely[I believe in miracles, though]), don't expect me to apologize for this. This book is one of the only books that I, the soft and plushy book lover, am firm about hating. Now, let's talk about the book.

This story centers around a selfish, silly girl named Sarah who HATES her grandmother, her sister, and God. Actually, it starts out as an uncomfortable dislike, but quickly morphs into a hairy beast of evil.

1. Her sister

Caroline is her twin sister, and because of Sarah's intense jealousy, is portrayed as a snob by Sarah. Caroline may have wronged Sarah several times, but please, Caroline is her *sister*, for goodness sake! Caroline probably cares about Sarah. Sarah is way more responsible for the rift between them, because she never seems to think Caroline is worth trying to understand.

2. Her Grandma

Sarah's crazy old Grandma disturbs her, and that is probably the only part of Sarah I understand. It's strange, that because Grandma has a bible, Sarah seems to think this is what faith looks like. She doesn't think her Grandma is a source of wisdom at all, until her Grandma references a bible verse that Sarah completely misinterprets to "prove" her ignorant theory that God hates her, otherwise if He had, she would have had a perfect life. (That's the title: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated") Which leads to the 3rd item,

3. God

What can I say? She rejected God because He's above her human weakness, and perfect, just like she thinks her sister is.

4. Assorted other items

Her crush on that eighty year old man grossed me out! xP

Why does she get mad at her sister for "stealing" a man she doesn't even like?

Her sister also supposedly steals her parents, but Sarah finds out she doesn't like her parents a great deal, anyway.

At the end, when she delivers those twins, she feels so heroic for making sure the healthier baby (just like she was) isn't neglected while she is taking care of the smaller babe (like her sister was).

Omigosh! That ensures the babies will get equal amounts of attention and love from their parents! She's saved a child from having to go through a pitiful, neglected childhood like hers, that poor, tormented, self-righteous child that she was!!! Good job, you have just established a false sense of closure (even though you still hate those people)!!!!

Thus ends my tirade.

****update: I just found out that in the book, Sarah tends to go by her middle name, Louise. Whatever. What kind of book is it that I'm so distracted by its suckiness I forget her name?*

Sandy says

This story was, for me, a painful journey through adolescence with Sara Louise (Wheeze) Bradshaw. The teen years are, for some, a time of confusion, heartache, anger, and bewilderment. Certainly this is the case for Sara Louise. The story is packed with a variety of personalities, issues, and emotions and Wheeze is a sensitive and perceptive girl who feels and thinks deeply. Eventually, she manages to lurch her way through many troubling situations into adulthood, but the reader who goes along for the ride must be prepared to share her anguish.

Much of Wheeze's anger concerns her twin sister, Caroline, who seems unintentionally to steal the spotlight. Feeling overlooked, inadequate, and ordinary by comparison, Wheeze seethes with resentment and sometimes lashes out at Caroline and at those who admire and coddle her. Although I initially felt impatient with Wheeze's persistent complaints, I forced myself to re-examine the "Bobbsey Twins" mythology which in my childhood had shaped my notions of life as a twin and I found deep within myself some empathy and compassion for Sara Louise. While life seems (figuratively) to drop gifts into the lap of Caroline — financial support, a top-notch music education, and fame as a singer — Wheeze struggles to find her way in the world.

The story is complicated by the vagaries of Wheeze's emotional life. She zigzags her way through an attraction to an "older" man, the dementia of her grandmother, ambiguous feelings for a childhood friend, and ambivalence about her own future. Finally, inspired by a few facts about her mother's youth, she decides to leave her island home to pursue a dream of her own. Sara Louise's dream evades her, though, as was often the case for women following the Second World War, but her determination and resilience bring her to a place where she finds contentment, a sense of purpose, and a family of her own.

This book, understandably, won several awards for author Katherine Paterson, including the Newbery Medal in 1981. This is a story which provides many topics which could be pondered and discussed by school-age

youth and adults alike. The reason for a middle-of-the-road three-star rating is that the conclusion seems, some 35 years after publication, too simplistic for our time. While many of the issues raised in this story are timeless, I doubt that many young people in our current global, digitalized community would either relate to Sara Louise's life or have the opportunity or the desire to make the kinds of decisions which satisfied her.
