



My Side of the Car

Kate Feiffer , Jules Feiffer (Illustrator)

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Wishful thinking and a wonderful daughter-and-dad rapport drive this charming collaboration between Kate Feiffer and her father, Jules Feiffer.

Sadie has wanted to go the zoo forever, but something always gets in the way. Not today! Today they are finally on their way, and nothing can stop them - not a broken arm or a lost dog or a surprise visit. Not even her dad's observation: "Sadie, it's raining." Because when Sadie looks out her window, not only is it not raining on her side of the car, the sun is shining and people are watering their lawns and wearing sunglasses. Even when the road on Dad's side starts looking more like a river, Sadie can barely see a raindrop fall on her side of the car. This warmhearted tale of a child's optimism and a father's loving patience is guaranteed to tickle the funny bone, no matter the weather.

My Side of the Car Details

Date : Published April 26th 2011 by Candlewick Press

ISBN : 9780763644055

Author : Kate Feiffer , Jules Feiffer (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Humor, Transport

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From Reader Review My Side of the Car for online ebook

Candice says

A two-points-of-view kind of story, or perhaps two versions of reality. Sadie and her dad are going to the zoo. They have planned this trip for a long time, and Sadie explains how and why it was cancelled several times. But today is the big exciting day! And then her dad notices it's raining. But, miracle of miracles, it's not raining on Sadie's side of the car! As they get closer to the zoo, Sadie's dad asks her if it's raining yet on her side of the car, and the answer is always no. Sadie describes what she sees on her side of the car, and at one point she sees that "people are putting on their sunglasses and heading to zoos all over the world on my side of the car." Reality hits when they reach the zoo, but there's still a happy ending to the story of a child's optimism and a father's love and patience. At the end, there is a discussion by Jules and Kate Feiffer on the event that inspired the book.

Westminster Library says

A lovely conversation between a dad and his daughter. A trip to the zoo turns lively when it begins to rain and each passenger has a different viewpoint from their seat in the car therefore offering different perspectives! Such a fun way to teach children to remember to listen to others' stories and to always remember that life can be lived from a variety of perspectives.

Find My Side of the Car at the Westminster Public Library!

Karen says

This book is delightful, especially if you read the conversation between Jules and Katie Feiffer at the end. There isn't much to the story, but, in this case, the journey definitely is the adventure, and not the destination.

Cynda says

[running like a giraffe, her legs a-working (hide spoiler)]

Tara says

I have to admit, I didn't really "get" this one. But I love the Feiffers so...

April says

1. Rating: 4

2. A book review by Children's Literature says, "Kate tells a story about a trip she and her father actually took. She really wanted to visit the animals at the zoo, but it was raining...at least on her father's side of the car. Kate looked out the window and saw people watering their lawns, walking dogs, playing with balloons, while the windshield wipers worked hard. Her father suggests they postpone this trip as the weather is so inclement, but Kate insists it is NOT raining on her side of the car, until she admits it is. As they prepare to return home disappointed, Dad realizes that the rain has stopped, and the visit to the animals is realized. The wonderful, whimsical watercolors show us the feelings of the two characters, and make the reader understand Kate's mistaken insistence on fair skies. This is a wonderful story of bonding, and wishing, and a father's comprehension of the feelings of his young daughter. It makes for a wonderful story time book."

3. The author wrote this story about when she was a little girl and her and her dad decided to try to take a trip to the zoo. They had tried to go before, but something always gets in the way - her mom had to go to the hospital after stepping on a toy, her dog ran away so they had to look for him, her grandparents ended up coming over. But this time, she was determined that they would go. However, it starts raining... But only on her dad's side of the car. On her side, it's sunny and people are wearing bathing suits and "going to zoos all over the world." By the end of the story, they get to the zoo and it has started to rain on her side so they decide to come back another day... Until they get up over a hill and all of a sudden it stops raining, so they head back to spend the day at zoo! The colorful watercolor illustrations definitely provide good picture support for this story and I think kindergartners, first, and second graders may really enjoy it.

David says

My Side of the Car by Kate Feiffer, illustrated by Jules Feiffer is a story based on an actual incident about a child and their insistence that a promised trip to the zoo be completed even when faced with a raging downpour.

Sadie is sure her trip to the zoo is finally here. Despite rain on her Dad's side of the car, on her side the sun is shining and people are watering their lawns and wearing sunglasses. This tale of a child's optimism and a father's loving patience should strike a chord with many readers.

The text has great dialog and a very child centered point of view. The repetition of the phrases "go to the zoo", "going to the zoo", and "It's not raining on my side of the car" help give this a strong cadence making it an effective read-aloud. The recounting of previous attempts to visit the zoo gains the sympathy of the reader. The loving father-daughter dynamic is wonderfully portrayed. The discussion, at the back of the book, of the actual event recounted in the story is a wonderful look at child versus adult point of view.

The illustrations done in watercolor and pencil have the trademark look of Jules Feiffer including his great ability to show expression using his chosen illustration technique. His ability to show the humor in a situation remains strong. Mr. Feiffer nails great details starting with the cover illustration showing the father's reflection of his face in his side mirror and the reflection of the sun in the daughter's side mirror. I particularly enjoyed the delighted expressions of Sadie in the first picture of the story, and in the car when she realizes that they are going back to visit the zoo. The pictures of the imagined escaped tiger, and of throngs of people wearing sunglasses heading to the zoo are favorites too. The photo of father and daughter at the time of the story on the inside back jacket flap is a great touch.

This has the potential to become a favorite read for many and a classic example of father-daughter love. I recommend this for school and public library collections.

For ages 4 to 8, fathers-daughters, traveling, cars, perspective, rain, weather, zoos, patience themes, and fans of Kate Feiffer and Jules Feiffer.

Meghan Collins says

I was attracted to a couple different things about this book. The title and the cover of the book, both grabbed my attention while I was reading through all the books on the shelf. "My Side of the Car" made led me to believe that different viewpoints were a huge aspect to this book. The cover shows different pictures of the weather on each side of the car. One side of the car appears to be a father, who is driving, and the other side of the cover shows a young girl looking out the window.

I thought the book was creative, showing the differences in how people perceive things around them, especially when they really want to see something. In the book, a father and daughter take a day and plan to go to the zoo. The daughter, Sadie, explains that they have tried to go to the zoo three times before this day, and they were never able to because of complications. Something always seems to happen when they try to go to the zoo. Today they were going, and Sadie was excited! While driving to the zoo, it starts to rain hard and Sadie's dad says to her that they cannot go to the zoo because of the bad weather. "It's not raining on my side of the car", Sadie says to her dad. The two go back and forth about whether it is raining or not. The author, Kate Feiffer, tries to show how Sadie isn't seeing the bad weather because she is really excited to go to the zoo. The story is a cute way of showing how sometimes you see what you want to see.

I was most drawn to how the illustrations always matched each person's perception on every page. As a reader, you could both read and visually see each person's perception at the same time, giving a better overall effect. On the left page, you would see the father's perception as he was driving. On the right side of the page, you see the daughter's perception as she was riding in the car. The point of view of the illustrations were exactly that of riding in a car, making the reader feel completely involved in the story. I found myself picturing myself riding in that car seeing both perceptions actually.

I would recommend this book for use, both personally and in the classroom. It is a good book for parents and children, and an easy read for beginning readers. This book can be used in the classroom in multiple ways. I can see myself using this for describing different perceptions, or thinking about a different point of view. I can also see myself using this book for a prediction activity. The father asks Sadie several times if it has stopped raining yet, and the children can predict several times as to what will happen next.

Matt says

Sadie is desperate to go to the zoo, but something always gets in her way. This time, the journey with her dad seems to be headed for perfection, until the skies open and the rain comes down. Sadie convinces herself that the rain is NOT on her side of the road, though she must eventually come to terms with it. Still, Sadie and her dad want to make it work, so they come up with a plan. Neo is excited to go to the zoo (with me, no less). We have a school field trip date all lined up. It better be sunny, or I will be reading this one to the entire class.

Betsy says

Reality is subjective. You learn this when you have children of your own. What may be glaringly obvious to a parent will pass right over a six-year-old's head (and vice-versa). To a certain extent, children and parents live in entirely different worlds. I've been trying to come up with a list of children's books that acknowledge this fact, and it's tough. So many picture books are of the didactic let's-teach-kids-not-to-lie variety that the ones where kids come up with their own imaginative stories and live to tell the tale are few and far between. I mean, can you think of any books where a child stretches the truth because they truly believe what they're saying, straight in the face of parental obliviousness? Aside from Calvin and Hobbes it's a toughie, but that's just one of the many reasons why I am so very fond of the father/daughter creation that is *My Side of the Car*. A brilliant example of willful ignorance (or is it?) Kate and Jules Feiffer tap into those times in a kid's life when the line between what's true and what they hope is true blur.

You don't understand. Sadie isn't just excited that she's going to the zoo today. She's excited because she's FINALLY going to the zoo today. If you ask her, she can come up with three previous times when she was supposed to go to the zoo and ended up having to do something else instead. But today's different. She and her dad are in the car and nothing could possibly stop them . . . until it starts to rain. Sadie's dad is understandably worried and has to inform his daughter that rain means they can't go to the zoo. However, Sadie (ever the optimist) informs him in no uncertain terms that while it may be pouring on his side of the car, there's nothing but sunshine, and zoo-going folks, and people watering their lawns, and ice cream eaters on her side of the car. That is until they actually get to the zoo. Then it's up to Sadie to determine what it is they do next.

I've always liked Kate Feiffer's books but until now I hadn't found one that killed with the cadences like this one does. Repetition works in books when it's used well and in the service of the story. That's part of what I love about what Kate has done here. Right from the start Sadie starts in on the different days when she was supposed to go to the zoo. Listen to how beautifully Ms. Feiffer recounts these. "One day when we were supposed to go to the zoo, my mom tripped over a toy fire engine. So we went to the hospital instead of the zoo. Another day when we were supposed to go to the zoo, my dog, Pasha, got lost. So we spent the day looking for him instead of going to the zoo. Another day when we were supposed to go to the zoo, my grandparents showed up for a surprise visit. And they don't like the zoo. So we went to the museum instead of the zoo." First off, she gets 100 points for not beginning the third example with the word "and" (example: "And another day when we were supposed to go to the zoo..."). Now look at how many times she uses the phrase "go to the zoo" or "going to the zoo". It just fits like it was tailor made for the ear canal. The whole book is like that too!

Then there's the use of little girl hyperbole. Kids exaggerate. It's what they do. But part of what I love about Sadie's exaggerations here is that some of the time she's just exaggerating to herself alone. She's willing herself to believe what she says. For example, when her father asks her to look out her window to see if it's raining yet the text reads, "I look out my window, and the sun is shining on my side of the car. People are putting on their sunglasses and heading to zoos all over the world on my side of the car." She doesn't tell this to her father, which leads me to believe that it's something she needs to see and believe for herself first. Then Ms. Feiffer starts to test how far she can push her audience. Are kids reading this book going to believe Sadie when she says it's not raining on her side? They know that rain doesn't tend to fall on 50% of a car. Interestingly, they may side with the idea that Sadie is making this stuff up . . . until the moment when she concedes that one drop has fallen down her window. That's such an odd little detail that it may throw young readers right there. If she's lying then why does she admit to seeing even one drop?

Mr. Feiffer's job is to keep up with his daughter. She's laying down the beats of the book and he's picking 'em right up again. Some of this is fairly self-explanatory, like when he has to show the previous interrupted zoo trips. But Kate has left him sufficient room to get creative as well. When Sadie says that, "The monkeys and giraffes and elephants and polar bears have waited a long time to see us," Mr. Feiffer conjures up the most morose looking polar bear you've seen this side of a melting ice cap. He also has to find a way to show great zoo-going masses of people and, perhaps trickiest of all, he has to illustrate a car where only half of it is being rained on. Or rather . . . he has to be ambiguous. Since the child reader is never quite certain if Sadie is telling the truth or not about her side of the car, Mr. Feiffer has to show the car from her perspective, while also making other images a little less crystal clear. There are certain drawings where you can definitely see the rain hitting the roof and hood of the car, but it's up for interpretation as to whether or not only half the vehicle is getting wet or if it's the whole kerschmozzle.

Mr. Feiffer, I'd like to note, is the author of the greatest picture book readaloud in the history of the world: *Bark George*. I seriously believe that if you were to come up with a single picture book to enthrall readers 0-100, it would be the winner. Part of the charm of that book, aside from the beautifully unnerving storyline, is Feiffer's art. Those of you familiar with his *Village Voice* days will be pleased that after all this time his style remains recognizably his own. Best of all, he doesn't suffer the problems of a Charles Schulz, who began his cartooning life with perfectly straight lines only to get shakier and shakier as the years wore on. Feiffer's style has always been loose, and in *My Side of the Car* that looseness is key to the storytelling. Sadie, for her part, is infinitely adorable. Your initial glimpse of her is on the first page where she can be seen performing a mid-air leap, the prospect of a zoo visit gleaming in her eyes. Later that look is repeated when it is clear that the rain has stopped and she can go to the zoo after all. The watercolors employed in this book perfectly capture the look of daytime in the rain, all green foliage and gray overcast light. As for the details, parents will appreciate that Sadie is strapped into the backseat and not the front passenger seat (not a safe place for a kid to be, particularly on a rainy day). They'll also like that Sadie's father thought to have a change of clothes for his daughter in the backseat. For my own part, I loved what Feiffer did with her post-wet hair. Prior to walking to her father's side of the car in the rain her hair was a rather nicely coiffed Ramona-esque do. After getting back in the car that same hair frizzes out every which way. Nice touch.

There are certain concepts that work really well in a picture book because all kids understand them. Injustice is probably one of the best. Kids really glom on to stories about injustice and disappointment. *My Side of the Car*, therefore, does a bloody brilliant job of tapping into that feeling. Kids don't just identify with Sadie here. They become her. There's not a child alive that's going to blame her for wanting to go to the zoo so badly that her observations fly in the face of reality itself. And with Mr. Feiffer's excessively accessible illustrations to help the story along, this just comes across as one of the best little picture books to hit the market all year. A fun, beautifully illustrated, original concept with a great idea and some top-notch writing. Nuff said.

For ages 4-8.

Tasha says

Sadie and her dad are finally heading to the zoo. Their trip has been cancelled for several reasons that Sadie can clearly remember, but today nothing can stop the trip. They are on their way to the zoo when Sadie's father points out that it's raining. Sadie looks out her window and says that it isn't raining on her side of the car. Her father keeps driving, because all Sadie sees out her window is sunshine and lots of people heading to zoos. People on her side of the car are watering their lawns, though it's pouring on her father's side of the

car. When they get to the zoo, Sadie's father allows her to decide if they should stay, because it is raining hard on his side of the car. Sadie decides that it would be too wet to go to the zoo in the rain. So they reluctantly head home, until her father notices that the sun is out on his side of the car...

This picture book is inspired by a real-life event between author Kate Feiffer and her father, illustrator Jules Feiffer. They share their version of the event that inspired the book at the end of the picture book, and Kate continues to insist that it was never raining on her side of the car. That's the beauty of personal perspective and the power of imagination and expectations for children. This book captures it with humor and because it is told from Sadie's point of view, with an honesty and care for the child view.

The combination of the fresh point of view from Kate Feiffer and the loose-lined art of her father is a winning one. The imaginative power of Sadie never wavers in Kate's writing. The humor of the text and its attitude is reflected effectively in the illustrations as well.

Highly recommended, this book reminded me of both my own strong convictions as a child and those of my own children. It is a testament to the imagination and creativity through which children view the world. Appropriate for ages 5-7.

Emma Burkhart says

I'm adding this picture book because something about it appealed to my 6-year old in a big way. I thought it was cute and enjoyable but probably wouldn't have read it more than once or twice...but he keeps asking for it over and over. I think he's intrigued by the idea that the girl in the story wants to go to the zoo so much that she stubbornly insists that it is not raining on her side of the car...perhaps he likes the idea that imagination and optimism can make things turn out the way you want them to. Sweet.

Matthew says

Enjoyed it.

Jill says

A funny little story about a father who takes his daughter to the zoo, but it starts to rain and he wants to postpone the trip. The little girl's response is that it isn't raining on her side of the car, and they should continue on their way. It's a sweet, cheerful story.

Nick says

Was there ever someplace you really wanted to go as a kid, but things kept getting in the way of it happening. For me, Disneyland was that place, but for the little girl in this story, it's the zoo. Obstacles large or small have prevented her from going there with her father. At last, today is her chance, and...

It's not often that you get your famous cartoonist dad to illustrate a picture book based on a real incident involving the two of you. Kate Feiffer, and father Jules, have turned in a very cute book about how parents and kids can perceive the same event differently, based on their own desires and needs. Just like Charlie Brown's refusal to admit to a baseball rainout, the little girl in the story is firmly convinced that it is only raining on her father's side of the car, and that nothing can prevent their many-times-delayed trip to the zoo. Kids will identify with the kind of things that keep parents from fulfilling promises, and parents can relate to the way life can get in the way of the best intentions. It's a fun book that can get families talking about some of the things that never quite get around to happening.

The book is no celebrity fluff, either. Kate Feiffer has written several other children's books, and this one is a genuine treat. Still, her father's cartoons add quite a bit to the story. It's interesting, though, to see that the elder Feiffer draws the character based on himself with more hair than he had at the time.
