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Elizabeth and Jessica in a tug of war...

Chubby Robin Wilson has been following Jessica around for months. First she wanted to be her friend -- now she wants to join Pi Beta Alpha, Sweet Valley High's snobby sorority.

When Elizabeth, Jessica's twin, nominates Robin for the sorority, Jessica is furious. Robin may be friendly and smart, but she's certainly not beautiful or popular enough to be a Pi Beta. Jessica's determined to find a way to keep Robin out.

But Elizabeth is just as determined to make Robin a sorority sister. Soon the twins are locked in a struggle that develops into the biggest power play at Sweet Valley High...

Power Play Details

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From Reader Review Power Play for online ebook

Suede says

First off, this one star review has nothing to do with the cover, which is by far one of my favorites of the series. I'm really hoping that at some point during the primaries Obama and Hillary do a recreation of this.

I really don't want to be a hater about anything related to Sweet Valley, since reading these books as an awkward pimply pre-teen was a VERY IMPORTANT part of my social calendar. And I hate to think that instead of reading great Literature, I was merely being brain washed into believing that to be perfect you need to be a size 6 blonde haired aquamarine eyed twin that drives a Fiat and lives in a split level house, buuuuuuuuuuuuut...I'm pretty sure this was ghost-written by someone as a joke. Most of the series is like a subliminal message, just a little whisper in my ear that to be popular and well liked I need to either be captain of the cheerleading squad or the school newspaper's gossip columnist. Not book #4. No sir. This one punches you right in the face with it's message. IT'S NOT OKAY TO BE FAT. IF YOU ARE FAT, YOU ARE A LOSER. IF YOU ARE FAT, YOU WILL HAVE NO REAL FRIENDS, AND YOU ARE STUPID AND NAIVE IF YOU THINK OTHERWISE. IF YOU ARE FAT THE ONLY THING YOU ARE ALLOWED TO WEAR IS A TENT DRESS, EVEN TO THE WEEKLY SWEET VALLEY HIGH DANCE, YOU WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED TO WEAR A NICER TENT DRESS THAN THE ONE YOU WORE THAT MORNING (shudder). And even though I'm sure wearing a tent dress is more comfortable than wearing the fugging pantsuit that Jessica always wears, deep inside I know, I should be afraid of them, very, very afraid. Tent dress = social death in Sweet Valley.

I always thought that my years of therapy could be traced back to the hours upon hours I spent comparing myself to Tiffani Theissan and Tiffany Weber on the cover of 'Teen magazine, but now I see that this book was my gateway into self loathing hell.

Belle Lumiere says

Let me preface this review by saying any negative things I say about Sweet Valley High are said with absolute love and affection for the book series as a whole. These books were a huge part of my childhood and teenage years, so they will always hold a special place in my heart - even if they're terrible.

Power Play was a pretty damaging book for me to read as a teenager, but as a 31 year old it was just plain infuriating. The main storyline revolves around "chubby" / "fat and ugly" / "tubby" / "fatso" Robin Wilson, who is bullied and fat-shamed throughout the book until she loses weight and suddenly becomes beautiful and popular. JUST LIKE REAL LIFE, GUYS. *eyes roll out of head onto the floor and out the door*

Teen Sociopath Jessica Wakefield takes advantage of Robin and promises to help her pledge to Pi Beta Alpha - the hottest sorority at Sweet Valley High. Knowing her sister's true form (Satan) but loving her anyway, Bleeding Heart Elizabeth Wakefield takes pity on Robin, and vows to help her get into the sorority. Of course nothing goes to plan and everything comes to a head with Robin being brutally humiliated at the school dance. After this public humiliation Robin "turns her life around" ie: eats lettuce leaves for lunch (literally) and runs laps of the school track until she loses weight and becomes thin and beautiful. Surprisingly enough, Jessica's motivation for being extremely cruel to Robin is (for once) not a boy. This is

pretty rare for a Sweet Valley High book, but it does highlight how much of a terrible person Jessica is. She is cruel purely for the sake of being cruel.

The side story in the book revolves everyone's favourite Brunette Millionaire Lila Fowler, and her penchant for shoplifting. Of course there are little to no consequences (affluenza!), and once again Bleeding Heart Elizabeth Wakefield manages to save the day.

Sweet Valley High promoted some UNHEALTHY ideas, and this is probably one of the worst books in the series for that, however the cover of this book is FLAWLESS, and the twins look as stunning as ever. 1/5

hannaH says

Actually, this is one of my favourite Sweet Valley High books, primarily 'cause it's so fat-phobic and unhealthy. In the space of approximately one week, Robin goes from being a fatty who nobody likes, to slim, gorgeous and captain of the cheerleading squad. (Does that happen in this book? Whatever, it happens eventually.) And Jessica is in high form here, and Elizabeth is so condescending, it's brilliant.

Jerry says

It's business as usual for this series...which isn't a bad thing.

LB says

This review is also posted at <http://readingnookandcranny.blogspot....>

All Robin Wilson had ever wanted was to be popular, but it seemed she had been going about it the wrong way. All she had to do was be confident, take care of herself, and treat the people around her the way they deserved to be treated...

I liked this series growing up, didn't I? I could swear I did, but I am finding it harder and harder to remember why. I know I liked the Sweet Valley Twins that I read, and I was obsessed with the SVU for a while, but maybe I never actually read the series when they were in their prime in high school.

Oh boy, so here we go again. Let's start with Robin this time. She wants to join Jess's Sweet Valley High Beautification Committee (only started so that Jessica can run for Miss Sweet Valley High since she has been too self centered to have any extracurriculars on her resume), but Jessica and her elite snob jackwad friends don't think Robin is the 'right type' of person to join the club, so they make her go through a whole song and dance of high school hazing that is pretty messed up, hoping she will drop out on her own accord. Robin, obsessed with popularity, goes along with humiliating herself (because why not?), then - when things don't exactly go her way - she drops out of school to be homeschooled and hit the gym and get a makeover, so that maybe she could be popular. I'm sorry, but exsqueeeze me? How is this the message we want to send to teenage girls? If you get bullied in high school but a bunch of bitches, just drop out and buy into the whole stereotypes of beauty, stripping yourself of your identity, and then you too can be popular! Ummm, f*&^ no.

Jessica is as much of a brat as always. How have her parents not sent her off to a boarding school yet to get her attitude adjusted? Even Elizabeth is a little annoying in this one. Miss Goody Two Shoes wants to be helpful, so she meddles in the Robin situation which, surprise, surprise, backfires completely. Like we couldn't see that one coming.

Where are the parents in this series? Is it just me, or do these books tend to teach the wrong kind of moral story? The only one I almost want to feel sorry for in this novel is Lila, but she's such the cliche of a spoiled rich kid that I can't. These characters are all archetypes without any depth. And whenever you think they might develop into an actual human like character, it always seems to go sideways. Another disappointing letdown.

Amy says

I devoured these Sweet Valley High books when I was a young girl and am not at all surprised that they are still around! In this book, Elizabeth and Jessica are locked in a struggle that develops into the biggest power play at Sweet Valley High when Elizabeth nominates 'chubby' Robin Wilson to pledge Pi Beta Alpha, Sweet Valley High's snobby sorority. Jessica is determined to keep Robin out and Robin gets the best revenge. Meanwhile, Elizabeth becomes suspicious when Jessica is suddenly showered with expensive gifts from her best friend, Lila Fowler. It's been a while since I was in high school, but I imagine this is only a slightly out-of-date depiction of typical high school drama.

Cate Marsden says

I actually put off reading this one, because my vague memories of it were horrific, and I wasn't wrong: it's like a PSA about bullying overweight people until you induce an eating disorder. The language used by everyone who talks about her is uniformly awful. Also, if Robin *hadn't* turned out to be beautiful once she'd lost weight, what then?

BUT. There are a few moments I loved. Bruce Patman preening because he thinks Elizabeth wants him to ask her to the dance was perfect. (She missed a great opportunity for revenge when he used the dance to be cruel to Robin, though.)

Also, deep down Elizabeth has her own streak of sociopathy: "Actually, she thought, it was kind of fun to pit her wits against Jessica and her sorority sisters--as long as she won, of course." Fun, okay. It's not like they're playing around with some girl's emotions or life or anything, right?

Plus I did not know the back was such an erogenous zone, but it gets Elizabeth purring: "When he began to rub her back as they danced, Elizabeth could barely remember where she was." And a few chapters later: ""How about like this?" he asked her huskily as he ran his hand over her back, sending chills all the way through her."

Elizabeth on the possibility of talking to their parents when she thinks Jessica might be shoplifting: "That wasn't a dumb idea. That was a totally idiotic idea."

jessica wilson says

i know these books weren't pulitzer prize material back when they first came out in the eighties but at least then the characters had morals. these new rewrites paint teens as being material obsessed and the label dropping is just too much. i truly think these could have been updated with a bit more aplomb. afterall, they may be targeted at fifteen year olds but methinks it is the twelve year olds (and us geeky first timers) who will be buying them.

awful, simply awful.

Brooke says

Reliving Robin, the mean girl excitement, and the subplot made me realize two things. The first is that 37 must be Sweet Valley High's favorite number lol. The second is that this book just isn't for me anymore.

Anna Cole says

This one was a little problematic for me because of the fat shaming, however it was written in a different time and had some other good messages in it.

Melanie says

I love how there's no irony at all in this book. The fat insecure girl caricature is literally shoving candy bars and cheesecake down her pie hole every time she's mentioned in the first quarter or so of the book, then after she doesn't get let into the sorority she goes to see her aunt who kicks some sense into her and over the next month loses like 30 pounds and gets totally hot and beats out Jessica for Football Queen or something ridiculous like that. And Bruce who is a dick to her suddenly wants her once she's sexy.

Jenn says

Before Reading: Oooh...it's face-off time with the twins! I always think of them having long, straight hair but it's always kind of short and wavy on the covers. Weird. This is the uber fat-shaming one. I'm sure I'll have a LOT to say about this one!

The Main Plot in 50 Words or Less: Robin is infatuated with Jessica and the Pi Beta Alpha sisters. Jessica is disgusted with her fat rolls and does everything she can to keep her out of the sorority. Elizabeth helps Robin, but does more damage in the end.

The Second Plot in 20 Words or Less: Lila becomes the typical "rich girl wanting daddy's attention shoplifter". Elizabeth helps her out, too.

Opening Lines: *Elizabeth Wakefield didn't know how messy things would get with Robin Wilson and the sorority pledging, until she was in too deep to back out.*

Closing Lines: *Jessica in love with an experienced college man meant storm clouds would be gathering soon. And all Elizabeth could do was hope that the inevitable winds would not shipwreck those close to her sister-including herself.* (I don't even know what this means. Too much metaphoring.)

Best WTF Lines: Too many to type, so I made a handy graphic below. Enjoy. (I even color-coded it for you, see if you can figure out who said what!)

Happenings in SV: Robin Wilson thinks Jessica is her best friend, but Jess is just using her to run her errands and stuff. Robin wants to join the Pi Beta Alpha sorority at SVH (why does a high school have a sorority, anyway??), Jessica is the president and "promised" Robin she would nominate her. Of course, she never does and Elizabeth ends up doing it instead. Jess is pissed and decides to haze Robin, making her run the track every day, wear a bikini to the beach, and ask Bruce Patman to the Discomarathon (dance of the week/book).

Elizabeth bribes Bruce into saying yes to Robin by giving him a glowing article in the "Eyes & Ears" column of the school paper. He agrees, but then totally humiliates Robin at the dance by dumping her at the dance floor in front of everyone. Robin is devastated and runs off, but ends up coming back with some geek called Allen Walters (never heard of him). Then Robin gets blackballed from the sorority (thanks to Jess) and she is heart-broken.

After the vote, she cuts everyone out of her life and stays home for a while, then starts working out and eating better. The book kind of makes it seem like it's been a few weeks, but I don't know about that. Robin starts to lose a lot of weight and even becomes pretty. Liz stops her one day and mentions it. *Robin fixed her penetrating eyes on Elizabeth, "Liz, I may have been stupid about almost everything-the Pi Betas, Jessica, and maybe even you. But if you're asking me if I'm starving myself to death, I wouldn't give any of the PBAs the satisfaction."* Yeah, right.

Robin eventually gets thin and pretty and tries out for the cheerleading squad and makes co-captain, with the furious Jessica. She also wins Miss Sweet Valley High, which is some kind of football queen (I don't even know) and snubs Bruce Patman for Allen.

Lila starts giving Jessica tons of expensive gifts and Liz finds it a little suspicious. When Liz is at the mall one day, she talks to a shop keeper who tells her that they've had some theft lately and Liz thinks it might be Jess. Later, she sees Lila at a shop, stealing a bracelet. Liz almost gets pinpointed for the theft, but runs off. (That's not suspicious at all.) Then, Lila calls Elizabeth up, panicking, because Jessica gets arrested for shoplifting! Lila finally fesses up and her daddy is called in and fixes everything. For some reason, Lila asks Liz for all this help and begs her not to tell Jessica anything about it.

Fashion Icons: You can see all the Robin tents up in the WTF-graphic, so I'll skip those.

Jessica was wearing leotards and exercising with Jane Fonda via video cassette.

Jessica was bouncing down the steps in an ice-blue string bikini, heading for the backyard pool. With her slim body, she'd never suffer the miseries poor Robin had gone through that day at the beach.

An oddly dressed young woman [Lila] was standing in Lisette's studying the counters. She was wearing a pair of bright green, skin-tight pants and a loose striped blouse that looked as though it could accommodate two people.

On Monday Robin showed up in designer jeans, a rainbow top, and a new hairstyle. Lip gloss and perfect eye makeup created an effect that almost caused Bruce Patman to walk into the gym door.

Comfortable overalls disappeared. Sneakers went into the closet. With carefully dressed hopefuls lounging around on the school lawn, leaning against the white oak trees, Sweet Valley High looked like a spread from a fashion magazine. [Doesn't it always, with its "no fatty" policy??]

Jordache jeans were challenged by Calvin Kleins. Miniskirts were seen next to tapered slacks. Makeup and new hairstyles turned the young women into Glamour models.

Twin Hijinks: Elizabeth is at home & answers the door to Robin, who knows she's not Jessica. Elizabeth asks her how she knows and Robin says, *"I don't mean to offend you, Liz, really I don't, but I'm pretty sure Jessica's never dressed like that in her life."* (Old jeans and a flannel shirt)

The salesclerk at Lizette's grabs Jess for shoplifting, thinking it's Liz. When they're together, the clerk thinks it's a gang lol.

Other Thoughts: This book was so amazingly horrendous, I just had to give it 4 stars. I don't think I've ever read a book that made me feel so awful about being a chubby bunny. :p I'm not sure what exactly the authors/ghost writers/editors/publishers were thinking with this one, but they missed the mark, big time. Not only does Robin get tortured nonstop for being a fatty, but when she finally does lose weight (very quickly and unhealthily), she immediately becomes Miss Popular.

Elizabeth calls Jessica "Jessie" throughout the book, which kept throwing me off. I don't think she does that in any other books. This book also had about 637 examples of Jess saying "thirty-seven" in it. (See what I did there?) Why was that number so important?

Reviewed at Give a Hoot Read a Book

Jen says

Good lord, this particular book just send the **WRONG** message to young girls. And I love me some Sweet Valley but really!

Basically Jessica won't let Robin join her sorority (and who has sororities in high school anyway?) because she's fat. And Robin gets all depressed but then gets *motivated* and loses like a bajillion pounds by pretty much starving herself and exercising too much. Great themes Francine! Like you haven't shoved down our throat how perfect Jess and Liz are already for 3 books (and will continue too for another 100 or so.)

But wait, happy ending! Robin gets skinny (in like two weeks!) She joins the sorority and cheerleading squad and makes Jessica look stupid! Good things only happen to people who aren't fat! Christ...I think I'm going to go eat a donut.

Laura says

If you want to get ahead in Sweet Valley, apparently it's best to not be fat! Sadly, I remember being so enamored with this book as a chubby high school freshman.

That's because every chubby gal secretly wants to go away for the summer and come back hot and svelte so you can lord it over the entire boy's baseball team. (Well, I also wanted to make out with Kirk Cameron, but that was before he started spouting off about how bananas are a religious miracle.)

I wonder how they're going to re-do Robin in the new release of this book. If Jessica and Elizabeth had to be slimmed down to an better-than-perfect size 4, Robin might be *gasp* a size 8. That IS pretty heiferish. We really shouldn't be promoting childhood obesity...

Connie says

Source: *I read this online via Openlibrary.*

Title: Power Play

Series: Sweet Valley High #4

Author: Kate William & Francine Pascal

Overall Rating: Less than two stars but I'm being generous

I know what you're thinking, "wow, Connie's being brutal today" and honestly, I'm not. I'm really not. This book infuriated me, I can't seem to remember why I was so obsessed with this series in my pre-teen days, maybe it was because I didn't read all of the start of this series, but I don't know. This book sends a horrific signal to young pre teens and it's probably fortunate that I never read this book. It's discriminatory and it's potentially triggering to people who suffer from body dysmorphia or other body/eating related anxieties or problems.

Okay so, the story is, Jessica is the president of this society that a girl named Robin Wilson wants to join. However, Robin is slightly overweight, so that means that she isn't allowed to join basically and they take the mick out of this poor girl by making her run laps round a pitch, wear a bikini and be embarrassed by the hottest guy in school, (so they bully her basically.) And then surprise, surprise she doesn't get into the sorority. And the reason she doesn't get in? Because Jessica and Elizabeth are perfect size 6 models who don't really care about the fact that she starts over exorcising and starving herself to lose weight, Liz even calls her Terrific for doing this at one point. I don't understand how a 150 page novel has angered me so much.

Was this acceptable in the 80s?

In the end, Robin becomes co-captain of the cheerleading squad because she's pretty now.

Ugh! Let's hope book 5 doesn't want to make me break my laptop as much as this one did.

