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Bakalářská práce

THE DEPICTION OF SIBLING RIVALRY AMONG SISTERS IN JACQUELINE WILSON'S NOVELS

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Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury. Souhlasím, aby tato práce byla uložena na Univerzitě Palackého v Olomouci v knihovně Pedagogické fakulty a zpřístupněna ke studijním účelům.

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Abstract

Sibling rivalry is a matter that should not be overlooked. The theoretical part of the thesis comprises the topics of two developmental stages – middle childhood and elementary school children and early adolescence, siblings, and sibling rivalry. The last three chapters are dedicated to Jacqueline Wilson and her novels *Double Act* and *The Worst Thing about My Sister*. The research part focuses on finding examples of sibling rivalry symptoms in the novels and suggesting possible solutions to four of the selected symptoms with the help of the examples from the novels.

Contents

Introduction

My bachelor thesis is dedicated to the topic of sibling rivalry among sisters in Jacqueline Wilson's novels. This topic is very close to me since I also have a sister and sibling rivalry was present almost every day between us. There were quarrels, fights and screaming, although we were all right an hour later. Then my sister started her swimming career and became excellent at it. She was a multiple state champion and did well internationally too. However, I suffered from instant comparisons with my sister. Everybody saw only her, and I became overlooked. It was difficult for me even though I was aware that none of this was her fault. Nowadays, even though my sister does not swim anymore, I still feel like I am often being compared to her. I chose this topic of my thesis due to the fact, that it can help me understand my sister and sibling relationships more and become a better older sister and probably improve the relationship with my parents as well. The reason why I chose to demonstrate the sibling rivalry on novels by Jacqueline Wilson is simple. She was my favorite author in my early adolescence, and I have read most of her books and admire the way how she can project common social or relationship issues in a way an 11-year-old girl understands.

The aim of the thesis is to find the symptoms of sibling rivalry in Jacqueline Wilson's novels *The Worst Thing about My Sister* and *Double Act*. The thesis also aims to suggest solutions of selected symptoms of sibling rivalry found in the novels. Additionally, it aims to provide information and guidance on how to solve certain issues sibling rivalry may bring to the parents.

The theoretical part of the thesis focuses firstly on describing the developmental stages that are associated with the characters in Jacqueline Wilson's novels in the first two chapters of the thesis. The third chapter depicts an older and younger sibling, their personality traits, their relationship with each other and older and younger sisters. The fourth chapter illustrates sibling rivalry – its symptoms, causes, possible consequences and explains how to deal with it in a more general manner. The last three chapters are dedicated to the novels and author. The fifth chapter describes Jacqueline Wilson's life and career and her approach to siblings. Another section consists of an analysis of the novel *The Worst Thing about My Sister* (2012) – character and story analysis. The same applies to the novel *Double Act* (1995) in the last chapter.

The research part's major focus is on finding the examples of sibling rivalry in the novels, describing them, and finding the most frequent symptoms of sibling rivalry. Then four of the symptoms are selected and a solution suggestion is provided to each of the selected symptom, with the help of expert literature.

THEORETICAL PART

1. Middle childhood and elementary school children

In middle childhood, the children from 6 to 12 years old. At this age, they build new skills and face new challenges in their lives. Their cognitive and physical competencies are improving, and these changes have an impact on whether they succeed or fail in certain activities as well as on choosing them (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 274).

1.1 Physical and motor development

Considering motor abilities in this age range, children become more independent in their movement. Sports are important as well, whether they are done in a group or individually (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 275).

1.1.1 Growth

A 6-year-old weighs approximately 20 kilos and is about 1 meter tall. The growth is quite regular and steady, continuing like this until 9 (girls) or 11 (boys). From this age, the growth spurt in both sexes begins, i. e. they start to grow faster. However, as mentioned above, some factors affect growth, like nutrition, activity level, genetic factors, exercise, etc. (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 275–278).

1.1.2 Internal changes

As children grow, their bones tend to grow at the same time, sometimes they can even cause pain as they lengthen and broaden. By the age of 6 or 7, their primary teeth start to fall out and new teeth begin to grow. This year is also typical for gaining muscular matter and girls tend to be as strong as boys at this age. Additionally, the brain of an elementary school child acquires its final form by 90% at the age of 8 (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 276).

1.2 Motor skills development

1.2.1 Gross motor skills

Throughout this age range, the children's movement improves. By the age of 5, some locomotive skills development is complete. Tasks such as jumping, throwing and catching are performed precisely and with more clarity. At this age, children incline towards sports and various kinds of stunts, i. e. tree climbing (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 276). Differences in movement skills tend to be conditioned by how much their parents support them or, on the other hand, discourage them from physical activities (Langmeier & Krejčířová, 2006, p. 120).

1.2.2 Fine motor skills

Fine motor skills keep developing and refining. Mostly the progress is possible thanks to preschool teachers who practice their cutting, drawing, and other fine motor skills with children, during their time spent in kindergarten. When children start attending school, the increase in their writing skills starts to be apparent. Taking complete control of their bodies is necessary for their mental health and being accepted to the group of peers (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 277).

1.3 Cognitive development

Most cognitive development happens in school at the age of 5 to 7. Children are exposed to many kinds of interaction between classmates and teachers (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 281–282). At the age of 7, children start to think logically about things and objects without seeing them. However, this logical thinking concern concrete things that they can imagine clearly until they are 11 when they can logically assess information without being able to imagine them concretely (Langmeier & Krejčířová, 2006, p. 124–125). By the age of 11, they can contemplate the world around them. "*They think about and anticipate what will happen; they make guesses about things and then test their hunches*" (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 283).

Thinking of an elementary school child is bound to reality. They want to know everything about the world they live in – according to what rules it functions, etc. When children ponder about something, it is usually based on their personal experience. Slowly, they begin to understand rules valid in certain situations and generalize real experiences. At the age of 11 or

12 they can comprehend different relationships and context and use available information (Vágnerová, 2005, p. 242–243).

1.4 Emotional and social development

Elementary school children are actively involved in human society, and they develop their social and emotional skills predominantly in school among teachers and peers. The group provides children an opportunity for different interactions, i. e. cooperation, competition, concurrence, or helping others. Social understanding of individual needs, opinions and wishes of people keep differentiating at this stage. On the contrary, they build the ability of self-regulation and self-management. The growth of self-regulation is essential for understanding one's feelings in some situations and taking the feelings of others into account as well. Children also learn that they can hide their emotions from anyone but themselves. Due to school attendance, they can acquire some non-abstract values (Langmeier & Krejčířová, 2006, p. 130–132).

2. Early adolescence

Early adolescence lasts from 10 to 15 years old, but it depends on a child, because every individual is different. Early adolescence is described as a transition between childhood and adolescence. Moreover, there are many changes, physical and mental, that an early adolescent must go through (Pike, 2002).

2.1 Physical changes

2.1.1 Hormone physical changes

Physical changes of early adolescents happen as the result of the presence of hormones in endocrine glands (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 348).

Girls begin to mature between the age of 10 and 11, boys a year or two later. Rapid growth and increase of physical strength together with other changes in body proportions are the signs of early adolescence. As a result, early adolescents often experience awkwardness as they learn to control their bodies, i. e. acne, strong body odor, because of increased activity of oil-producing glands. Growth and other changes are accompanied by the increase of body fat (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 348–349). Secondary sexual characteristics appear during this episode (Langmeier & Krejčířová, 2006, p. 143).

2.2 Cognitive development

Langmeier and Krejčířová (2006, p. 149) point out that the intellectual abilities of early adolescents tend to be better than those of adults, i. e. storing information, their reuse and creative thinking.

Thinking moves from concrete to abstract. They manage to think of various ways how to approach a problem and can ponder about the future and use assumptions (Pike, 2002). Early adolescents can think systematically and experiment with their ideas. They can accept hypothetical problems and ask themselves theoretical questions (Vágnerová, 2005, p. 333– 334). Early adolescents start developing an interest in social, political, or moral events and issues. There is also a particular form of egocentrism developing as they grow older. It may be why they sometimes cannot recognize their thoughts and opinions from the ones of others (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 372).

2.3   Emotional development

Early adolescence is defined by distinctive changes in emotions. Therefore, early adolescents are unstable and intense primarily because of hormonal activity. They might feel anxious about how they look to a certain extent (Pike, 2002). Their emotional reactions tend to be inadequate. On the contrary, the expressions of feelings are likely to be short-term and variable. They frequently get surprised by their feelings as they cannot explain what causes them to feel like this. They feel like their thoughts are exceptional, although they tend to be highly sensitive and critical. Early adolescence is also characteristic of hiding emotions, impulsivity, and lack of self-control. Adolescents wish to differentiate themselves from others; therefore, they tend to change their appearance. Early adolescents require emotional acceptance and their position in the world. They fight for this position even though they feel insecure and doubt the world is a positive and safe place. Acquiring their position in the world is one of the most important tasks of this developmental period (Vágnerová, 2005, p. 322–341).

2.4   Social development

Relationships with their peers and parents change during early adulthood. Early adolescents advise each other about many topics, i. e. parents, clothes, other peers – boyfriends or girlfriends, etc. There are various places where they can meet new friends, e. g. at school or at a leisure time activity (Pike, 2002).

Early adolescents refuse authorities like parents or teachers (Vágnerová, 2005, p. 346). "*Often they are critical of all social institutions, including family and especially their parents*" (Craig & Baucum, 1999, p. 368). They find it hard to accept their authority, and they only do so if the authorities truly deserve it. Discussions and arguments with the authorities serve as a training of an adolescent's competencies and abilities to prove their qualities, to a certain extent (Vágnerová, 2005, p. 346).

3. Siblings

Sibling relationship, in many societies and cultures, is understood differently. It may describe a specific position of a sibling relationship, i. e. the youngest sister, or it could indicate social context (Sohni, 2019, p. 35–36).

What may be crucial for siblings' lives and relationships is a phenomenon called sibling constellation. Sibling constellation explains how birth order affects life choices and answers the questions concerning personality based on whether siblings were born first, second or last. It may provide the key to their relationship with friends, co-workers, relatives, the type of job they do, and their problem-solving skills (Leman, 2016, s. 19–55).

3.1 Older sibling

Historically, the position of a first-born sibling was advantageous and exceptional and that they knew their fate since childhood (Adler, 2018, p. 128). However, it is often said that nowadays the position of an older sibling cannot be judged unless the sibling and family situation and circumstances are known (Novák, 2007, p. 39). Worth mentioning is, that first-born child is a completely different person than a younger one, and that should be kept in mind (Leman, 2016, p. 77).

3.1.1 Personality traits

Older siblings tend to have a sense for responsibility and control. Their self-confidence can be fragile (Novák, 2007, p. 41). However, they are also goal-oriented and aspire to be successful. They appear serious, systematic and believe in authority (Leman, 2016, p. 79). Their belief in authority might be associated with them wanting to please their parents, which is again associated with a conservative attitude of many older siblings (Rowley, 1980, p. 62).

Firstborns are perfectionists, they are very organized and most of them are oriented towards studying. They care to follow the rules and order in general. That may be why older siblings achieve great success in life (Leman, 2016, p. 79). Firstborns tend to be *"more sensitive to pain and [...] avoid dangerous sports, but [...] are less likely to become an alcoholic or a criminal"* (Rowley, 1980, p. 62).

There are several types of personalities of older siblings. The first type is described as exemplary. They want to please everybody and be acknowledged by their parents and other

authorities. The second type is characterized by strong will and mild aggressivity. People who belong to this group are ambitious and sometimes hot-headed (Leman, 2016, p. 81–83).

Firstborns usually struggle with a decrease of self-confidence. Problems like these may result from the parents' behaviour towards them compared to their behaviour towards the younger sibling. Although not all issues are parents' fault. Sibling rivalry may be also responsible for some of them (Prekop, 2002, p. 32–35).

A survey implemented by Nyman (1995) of The City College of New York concerning the identification of birth order personality traits asked the respondents to name three attributes that describe the personality of firstborns. The sample consisted of 139 students (87 women and 52 men) with an average age of 24, usually from a family of 4 people. 27% of these people were firstborns. Then, the respondents should rate the three attributes from the most negative one (-5) to the most positive one (5). Predominantly, the oldest sibling was described as dominant and aggressive. The positive qualities were intelligence, independence, ambition, responsibility, caring, and friendliness. Dominance and independence were the most named in male firstborns and nurturance with responsibility in firstborns of the opposite sex. Negative qualities attributed most to firstborns were self-centeredness and being spoiled apropos male firstborns. Being spoiled was also the negative quality of female firstborns mentioned the most.

3.1.2 Relationship with younger sibling

In relationships with their younger sibling, older siblings can be protective (Leman, 2016, p. 79). However, it is usual, that some of them may get tired from their parent-like role. Parents usually expect their oldest children to be the best – in sports, have good grades, etc. Nevertheless, this may result in the child becoming a rebel and ventilating anger towards the younger sibling. Another significant role the older child has is that their behaviour influences the younger one in good or bad direction, since the younger sibling copies the older one, especially at an early age (Brazelton and Sparrow, 2005, p. 76–78). Some firstborns might feel like they have lost the privileges of being an only child, when the younger sibling is born. Therefore, they sometimes appear jealous and question their relationship with their parents and consequently become more vulnerable than before (Novák, 2007, p. 41–42).

3.1.3 Oldest sister of sisters

The oldest sister generally stands in charge of things and is aware of her authority, sometimes too much. She does not care about material wealth, and she would rather pay attention to principles and does not like being tricked.

She is a perfectionist and wants to have everything done before she enjoys herself. Although she wants everyone to have the same approach, nonetheless this does not have to pay off for her in some cases eventually. It may relate to her placing high demands on others and even higher demands on herself (Novák, 2007, p. 89).

3.2 Younger sibling

When taking the topic of this thesis into account, it is worth mentioning that by the term 'younger sibling', the last-born child in the family is meant.

3.2.1 Personality traits

According to literature like the Bible and fairy tales, the younger sibling is generally perceived in the same way. The parents and everybody around treat them in a rather specific, more gentle way, i. e. they grow up in a more amicable environment. Therefore, the personality of a younger sibling has some specific features that influence their entire life and approach to it (Adler, 2018, p. 125).

Allegedly, younger siblings are usually extroverted, since they have everyone's attention and time. However, they can have older parents and grown-up older siblings who do not give them much of their time and attention and therefore the youngest one becomes dependent on themselves (Novák, 2007, p. 45).

Leman (2016, p. 162) describes younger siblings as extroverted, funny people. They are straightforward and have an exciting approach towards life. They want to be in the centre of attention, they are charming, persistent, and good at business.

On the other hand, they tend to be manipulative, egocentric, or spoiled. Their effort to gain everyone's attention may lead them to rebel, since they assume they are not taken seriously by others (Leman, 2016, p. 161–180). These character traits may originate from the fact that they

are considered as the youngest and therefore they cannot be trusted and entrusted anything, and this pushes them to prove different (Adler, 2018, p. 125).

Additionally, Adler (2018) distinguishes two types of younger siblings. In the first group, there are the more successful ones. They are self-confident, active, moreover, they can surpass the older sibling with their actions. The second type is also ambitious and wishes to achieve some goals in life, however, it is neither that confident nor active. This type of younger siblings is ambitious in a certain way – they avoid danger and do not orientate their ambition towards their life tasks.

According to Nyman's survey (1995) concerning the identification of personality traits based on birth order, the respondents identified the dominant positive qualities of younger siblings as sociableness and thoughtfulness. These major characteristics are complemented by minor ones like ambition, dependence, independence, dominance, intelligence, responsibility, and nurturance. Nurturance and independence are associated with females contrarily dependence and independence are both connected to male younger siblings. There are noticeably more of negative qualities than in the firstborns such as dependence, irresponsibility, immaturity, and rebellion. A negative trait describing females is passivity males are typical for self-centeredness, laziness, and insecurity.

3.2.2 Relationship with older sibling

The relationship with older sibling differs because every human being is unique. However, there are some behavior patterns that occur more regularly.

Firstly, Leman (2016, p. 164) explains, that younger siblings usually live overshadowed by their older brother or sister. Everything they do or achieve undergoes comparison to the actions of an older sibling, especially by their parents. This may serve as an argument for wanting to prove them and everyone else wrong.

Secondly, the reason why younger siblings tend to avoid danger etc. may be due to their relationship with older siblings. They are not able to surpass them, get scared and therefore, they incline to escaping their problems by searching for excuses and lowering their ambitions. This also may result from feeling of inferiority towards older sibling (Adler, 2018, p. 126).

3.2.3 Youngest sister of sisters

Youngest sisters appear lovely at first sight and tend to evoke maternal attitude. However, their character is completely different. They like action and changes. Younger sisters are quick decision-makers. They decide alone and usually their choice is not usual either. On the other hand, they look for appreciation and good atmosphere, mostly at work. Tense relationships are normally avoided by them. They wish for respect and protection. Nonetheless, they dislike manipulation, stereotypes, and exhaustion.

They like nice things and are not big spenders. They know how to attract people they like, especially men. Maybe because they got along with their father the most (Novák, 2007, p. 90–91).

4. Sibling rivalry

Sibling rivalry is a huge problem and thus should not be overlooked and underestimated. This phenomenon can be controllable and acceptable in a mild form. However, too much rivalry is not satisfying for any side (Novák, 2007, p. 56). On the contrary, Brazelton and Sparrow (2005, p. 5) see sibling rivalry as "*[…] an important way for each child to get to know the other: 'How far can I go? How far can she?'*".

There are plenty of definitions concerning sibling rivalry, but the one by Bradley (2020) sounds the most comprehensive. She describes sibling rivalry as an "*[…] ongoing conflict between kids raised in the same family. It can happen between blood-related siblings, stepsiblings, and even adopted or foster siblings*".

There are many topics intertwined in deeper sibling conflicts such as violence, dominance or rivalry. However, the first conflicts that come out on the surface are indicated by the parents (Sohni, 2019, p. 105).

4.1 Symptoms

Common attributes of sibling rivalry according to Bradley (2020) are:

- verbal or physical fighting
- name-calling
- tattling and bickering
- competing for parental attention
- envy

Novák (2007) adds several features that concern a wider field of relationships:

- open hostility
- disobedience
- deterioration in school performance
- minor neurotic shoplifting
- regression

These features appear when a child wants to grab their parents' or peers' attention. For example, they shoplift not to make themselves wealthy, instead they give the stolen things to

others in pursuance of recognition, because they are not recognized by their parents (Novák, 2007, p. 57).

The Center for Parenting Education (n. d.) completes the list of signs with these features:

- lying
- destroying things that belong to the other one
- throwing things at each other
- hiding something important to the other one

Together with these aspects, sibling rivalry is often associated with jealousy. This type of emotion is defined as a negative part of anxiety coming from a feeling of insecurity and fear (Novák, 2007, p. 56).

4.2 Causes

Sibling rivalry might start even before the younger sibling is born. Even during a mother's pregnancy, the parents sometimes tend to overlook the older sibling and focus on a successful delivery of the baby, even though they are aware that they should treat both children equally, which is always hard at the beginning (Brazelton & Sparrow, 2005, p. 1–16).

An inevitable cause of sibling rivalry is comparison. Siblings are constantly compared to each other by their parents. However, this will not help anyone. Parents assume that they are helping their children understand what is right and wrong by comparing them to their siblings. However, what the scolded one understands from this is that they are worse than their sibling. Comparison may evoke feelings such as hopelessness, hatred, jealousy, feelings of inferiority and envy (Brazelton & Sparrow, 2005, p. 87–89).

Bradley (2020) presents other factors that can cause sibling rivalry:

- Major life changes – events like this may be stressful for children and they can ventilate this through their siblings.
- Ages and stages – sibling rivalry can be worse than in another one in a particular stage.
- Jealousy – usually when other sibling is praised for something.
- Individuality – usually, siblings want to differentiate themselves from one another. They commonly do this by competing with each other.

- Lack of conflict resolution skills – children tend to copy these skills from their parents and do not see any other way how to handle conflict.
- Family dynamics – if a child is treated differently for specific reasons (chronic illness, negative behaviour, etc.), it can change how the family functions and the members communicate.

4.3 Consequences

The effects of sibling rivalry can be positive or negative. They might have a long-term duration and can affect adult lives of the siblings.

Negative long-term effects of sibling rivalry can be devastating in adulthood. Adult siblings might experience feelings of rejection by their family and struggle with their identity or trust. They pay attention to how others treat them and create opinions on people based on this criterion. Siblings who suffered through sibling rivalry in childhood tend to be less empathetic and lack conflict-resolution skills and the knowledge of how to prevent them. They may not interact with people well because they did not have many opportunities to learn these skills due to constant conflicts in their families. Relationships, at work or romantic ones, seem difficult to maintain. When raising children, they tend to follow patterns their parents created, and as a result, sibling rivalry may develop in their children (Byrne, 2020).

However, the consequences of sibling rivalry encompass their positive side simultaneously. Children experiencing sibling rivalry may develop a wide range of skills useful in their adult lives. They can build emotional intelligence and acquire some social skills, i. e. communication. Siblings also improve their problem-solving skills and knowledge to control their impulsive behavior and handle conflicts (Patek, 2021). In this case, Brazelton and Sparrow (2005, p. 4) claim that siblings learn how to share, know what the other sibling needs, negotiate and compromise through sibling rivalry.

5. Jacqueline Wilson

Jacqueline Wilson is a British author of many children's books. Her successful career started with publishing her novel *The Story of Tracy Beaker*, which was popular especially among millennial children, and she became the most borrowed author in British libraries (Leszkiewicz, 2020).

5.1 Life

Jacqueline Wilson was born in Bath in 1945. After a few years, her family had to move to her mother's parents because they had little money. Her parents had aversion to each other, so there were insults, arguments, and infidelity on daily basis. Wilson describes to Leszkiewicz (2020) that she took her childhood as a lesson: "*I learned to be quite clever at gauging people's moods, working out why they were like this, or what I was doing that was irritating them.*" She describes her childhood as suitable for her later writing career. At 17, Wilson got a job at a publishing company, where she met her future husband, and they got married when Wilson was 19 years old. Then she left the company, and they had a daughter – Emma. Wilson describes her marriage as old-fashioned. She did all the housework, and her husband was the breadwinner. Their roles were strictly given and did not overlap. In the 90s, she divorced her husband, and a few years ago Wilson came out as a lesbian (Leszkiewicz, 2020). Nowadays, she lives in East Sussex with her wife and her daily regime contains writing at least 500 words so two of her novels can be published each year (Allardice, 2020).

5.2 Writing career

Wilson's writing career began at an early age. At 11, she read almost every book in a children's section in a library. At the age of 12, she started writing by keeping a diary. Her parents did not want her to attend university, so she left school at 16 and got her first job at a publishing company. When she was 17, she got her first portable typewriter for her birthday. In the same year, she started working at DC Thompson, which was a job she wanted. After her daughter was born, she spent her time at home, however, she was getting up early to write articles for teen and women's magazines and pursuing her dream of having her novel published. In 1991 she wrote a novel she became famous for – *The Story of Tracy Beaker*. Nowadays, usually, 2 of her books are published every year (Leszkiewicz, 2020).

Wilson predominantly writes about children who are getting bullied, are homeless, in care, etc., and whose parents are getting divorced, violent, ill, or absent. Wilson can precisely capture what children think and imagine. In her work, she uses her childhood experiences and still feels the emotions she first experienced as a child very intensively (Leszkiewicz, 2020).

5.3   Jacqueline Wilson and siblings

Jacqueline Wilson is an only child. However, she always wished to be a part of a big family. As a child, Wilson was imagining what would it be like to have a sister. She always wanted to have someone to play with as an only child, therefore, she acted like she had a sibling. She played with dolls with her imaginary sibling, talked to them, and pretended they replied and even often argued with them. This reflects in her writing, where she creates sisters that are often very close to each other (Wilson, 2012, p. 257).

6. The Worst Thing about My Sister

This novel is about sisters and their relationships. It is very suitable for this thesis because even the title suggests that sibling rivalry is present there.

6.1 Main characters

- **Marty**

Marty is the youngest member of the family and the main character of the novel. She is a boyish-looking girl with curly hair in a developmental stage of an elementary school child. Marty likes animals, especially the stuffed ones she sleeps with and plays with, treating them as if they were real. Marty has a very colourful imagination and sometimes escapes to imaginary worlds in her mind. She also is an artistic person and draws a comic book about a fictional superhero called Mighty Mart. She gets along with her dad the best of all family members. Marty does not have a lot of friends; her only friend is Jaydene, her classmate.

Marty does not really like her sister Melissa, and since the novel is narrated from Marty's point of view, the reader usually sympathizes with her even though she is not always right about everything; moreover, she can be stubborn or egoistic sometimes. However, she can self-reflect on her actions.

- **Melissa**

Melissa is Marty's older sister. She is very girly, has long straight hair, likes pink colour and make-up. She likes dresses and everything Marty does not. As the previous subchapter on older siblings mentions, older siblings tend to be more organized, and Melissa is a perfect example. She also likes to dress more like an adult and sometimes acts like one. However, there are times when Melissa acts like a child, perhaps because she is in a stage of early adolescence, which is a transfer from childhood to adolescence, thus her actions and thinking keep changing. Melissa has a stuffed doll named Baba, which indicates she also has her childlike side. Her relationship with Marty is tense; however, she can stand up for her during tough times.

- **Mother**

The mother's name is Jan. She is very hardworking. She works as a school secretary, and in her free time, she sews custom dresses at home. She wants to be a good mother to her

children and earn some money, which the family lacks. It is apparent, that she is very busy and sometimes misunderstands her daughters because she does not spend enough time with them. She is trying to solve the issues between them, but not always the right way. Sometimes it seems like she is taking Melissa's side predominantly. Jen appears as a strong woman that never breaks down; however, throughout the book, it seems like she is hopeless at times.

- **Father**

The father works as a travel agent. Because the family does not have enough money, he must have his office at home. He has some carpentering skills as well. When it comes to his personality, he hardly cries but he can be very emotional. He loves his family and wants them to have the best; however, he is not very successful, which troubles him. Nevertheless, he is mentally strong and does not want his children to know he struggles. He tries to spend as much time with his daughters as possible by playing with them or watching movies. However, he can be strict when they do something wrong and wants them to learn a lesson.

- **Jaydene**

Jaydene is Marty's classmate and best friend. She is tall with dark hair. Jaydene is sensitive, quiet, sometimes anxious, and likes girly things, i. e. make-up, cosmetics, and likes to do hairstyles for herself or her friends.

6.2 Story

The story begins with a fight between the sisters – Marty and Melissa Michaels. They begin calling each other names and fighting physically. Throughout the entire story, Marty and Melissa continue fighting (verbally or physically) for various reasons. Whether it is about their toys, different personalities, mess, etc. Michaels's family does not have much money. The family income comes from the work of the mother. The father does not earn enough money working as a travel agent, and therefore he is upset that he cannot give his daughters the best.

One day, the mother has a customer to sew a dress for. It is Marty's classmate – Alisha. Marty's mother and Marty herself, therefore, get an invitation to Alisha's birthday party. Marty's mother sees it as an opportunity to promote her business, so she decides to dress Marty into her handmade dress, which Marty hates, but agrees since this can help the family's financial situation. After the party, Jan gains more customers; therefore, she needs a free room

for her business, which ends up in the sisters sharing one bedroom and the rivalry between them becomes more intensive. At school, Marty has it difficult too, because some of her classmates start to call her names, because of the dresses they saw her in at the party. However, Marty does not want to let them laugh at her and decides to act, which ends up with her going to the headmaster's office. She feels betrayed because nobody wants to hear her side of the story. However, Melissa stands up for her unexpectedly. After some time, Marty decides to invite her only friend Jaydene to play. However, Jaydene seems to get along with Melissa better, and they end up talking and playing together, leaving Marty alone. Marty gets angry and plans a revenge. When Melissa invites her friends to show them her and Marty's new room, Marty makes a mess in the room on purpose. However, instead, Melissa and her friends laugh at Marty's toys, and Melissa damages some of them. So, Marty decides to damage her sister's favourite toy – Baba. After Melissa finds out, she takes all Marty's toys and hides them. Marty, thinking Melissa threw the toys out, begins to fight with her sister, which ends up with Melissa injured and unconscious. The family rushes with her to the hospital, and fortunately, Melissa is alright two days after. Further, Marty learns that Melissa only hid her toys to teach her a lesson and feels ashamed of hurting her. The story ends with Marty and Melissa making up and realizing they love each other after all.

7. Double Act

The second selected novel also tells a story about sibling relationships, precisely a relationship between twins – Ruby and Garnet.

7.1 Main Characters

- **Ruby**

Ruby is the older twin, she is a 10-year-old girl with long hair, usually tucked in braids. She is very talkative and likes to talk about herself. She is active and good at sports. Being older, Ruby feels like she has the power to decide for her sister, e. g. about clothing. Ruby likes to read, but not as much as the rest of the family. She likes to daydream about the future where her sister and she are famous actresses. Ruby is the more boyish twin. She likes to climb on trees, can fight, and hardly anything scares her. She also does not cry and does not like to talk about difficult situations that occurred in her life.

However, Ruby can be quite manipulative when it comes to quarrelling with her sister. She usually stops talking to her and everybody else when things are not how she wishes. Since Ruby is the louder one, usually, the desires and thoughts of the other twin become overshadowed.

- **Garnet**

Garnet is the younger twin and looks exactly like her sister. However, her personality is the complete opposite. She is a quiet, neat-looking, 10-year-old girl. Garnet is more prudent and cautious than her sister. She likes to read old books like most of the family. Garnet is a good student and does most of the schoolwork for herself and her sister. She can be very emotional and cries a lot.

Unlike her sister, she does not want to be an actress. However, she likes her sister so much she is willing to do anything to make her happy. Garnet is the more submissive twin. Usually, she acts like she does not mind being bossed around.

- **Father**

The father's name is Richard Barker. He works in an office in London, but he does not like his job. He likes buying and reading books and selling them again. He is a single father

because his wife Opal died three years ago. Richard is a wonderful father and wants the best for his daughters. When he starts dating Rose, he learns his happiness is important too. Throughout the story, Richard quits his job to move to the countryside and open a small bookshop called "The Red Bookshop".

- **Grandmother**

Ruby and Garnet's grandmother is an old lady with arthritis living with her granddaughters and son. She used to make dresses at Fashion House, then at home, because she had to look after the twins since their mother died. However, because of arthritis, she had to stop sewing entirely. Like most family members, she likes to read too, especially romances.

She likes her granddaughters and her son and cooks for them. After they move out, the grandmother ends up living alone. However, she keeps sending postcards to their family and ends up finding love.

- **Rose**

Rose is Richard's girlfriend. She had a bric-a-brac stall in an arcade and kept meeting Richard at boot fairs. They both share a passion for books. Rose is a very open and kind person, although the twins and the grandmother do not like her at first. However, she loves Richard and decides to move with him to the countryside so he could pursue his dream. She is very nice to the twins; although sometimes they give her a hard time, in the end, they learn to know she is not as bad as they thought.

7.2 Story

The whole novel is written as diary entries. The twins find an empty book and take turns in writing their entries since they look the same and share many things.

In the beginning, the ten-year-old twins live only with their grandmother and father, because their mother died. Their mother's name was Opal, and she died three years ago. Since then, their father has been single until he met Rose. After keeping it a secret for a few months, the father decides to bring his new girlfriend to a family dinner, however, neither grandma nor the twins like her. Nevertheless, the father seems happy and decides to quit his previous job and move into the countryside with Rose and the twins, leaving grandma behind. The twins disapprove of his decision since they must leave their friends, school, house, and most importantly – their grandma. However, they have no word about this, so they move to the

countryside where their father opens a bookshop. The twins do not like the new place at first and spend most of the time together without having any friends.

One day, the older twin, Ruby, finds out that the casting of a series about twins is taking place in London. Ruby always wanted to be an actress; therefore, she decides to persuade her sister, Garnet, and both travel to London alone, without telling anybody. However, this casting turns out badly because Garnet is very nervous and does not like acting. Moreover, their father finds them and is very angry at them for escaping. The twins then return to their new home.

After some time, Ruby comes up with a plan to escape the place for a longer period – to go to a noble boarding school. They write a letter to the headmaster saying they would like to attend, although Garnet is not sure about it. However, their father says the tuition fee is expensive, and they cannot afford it. Despite this, the headmaster replies, the school can offer one full scholarship if they pass an exam with a good grade. Ruby and Garnet, thinking the school accepts them both because they are twins, come and sit the exam. When the results come, they learn Garnet was accepted. Ruby gets mad at her for doing so well and stops talking to her for the whole summer. She even changes her appearance – cuts her hair and starts wearing different clothes. Also, they stop taking the diary entries into one book. However, in the end, when Garnet is about to leave for the new school, they make up because they will always be twins and always love each other.

RESEARCH PART

The aim of the thesis is to find the symptoms of sibling rivalry in the novels by Jacqueline Wilson. The thesis also aims to suggest solutions to chosen symptoms of sibling rivalry found in the novels by J. Wilson. Additionally, it provides information and guidance on how to solve certain issues sibling rivalry may bring to the parents. With the help of two selected novels, parents may be able to solve sibling rivalry issues more promptly and peacefully without feeling hopeless they cannot help their children to get along better. They can use examples from the novels to help their children understand that the problem they are dealing with, the characters in the novels dealt with too and therefore get a better understanding of what they are going through themselves.

In many of J. Wilson's novels, the main characters have siblings, with whom they either solve the issue, or they undergo the issue together. However, in not many Wilson's novels, the siblings deal with the issues among themselves. I selected two novels, where the sibling relationships, alongside with the struggles they bring, play the main role, and these are *The Worst Thing about My Sister* and *Double Act*.

During reading these two novels, I focused primarily on detecting the usual symptoms of sibling rivalry between sisters in the first and the second novel. Since *The Worst Thing about My Sister*, as the title suggests, is almost entirely about sibling rivalry and how far can it get, it was not complicated to detect the symptoms. In *Double Act*, the sisters usually do not have the problem to get along; however, as The Centre for Parenting Education (n. d.) claims: "*Remember that sibling rivalry is inevitable to some degree.*" Therefore, it was possible to detect some symptoms of sibling rivalry in this novel as well.

Therefore, in the following part of the research part, the symptoms of sibling rivalry are presented alongside with concrete examples of each symptom from Jacqueline Wilson's novels.

After listing the symptoms, four of the symptoms found in the novels will be selected for further possible solution suggestions with using illustrations from the novels.

For further interest in some of the four selected symptoms, it is recommended to investigate expert literature deeper, because the provided suggestions serve rather as a summary of the most important solution suggestions according to the author of this thesis than a detailed list of all possible options.

8. Solution suggestions and examples from the novels

8.1 List of sibling rivalry symptoms found in the novels *The Worst Thing about My Sister* and *Double Act*

Throughout reading the two selected novels, these symptoms were discovered:

- Destroying things that belong to the other sibling
- Hiding things that belong to the other sibling
- Envy and jealousy
- Physical fighting
- Bickering
- Tattling
- Name-calling
- Competing for parental attention
- Regression

8.2 Possible solution suggestions for four selected symptoms of sibling rivalry

Symptoms selected for further solution suggestions are:

1. Destroying things that belong to the other sibling
2. Envy and jealousy
3. Physical fighting
4. Name-calling

These symptoms were selected for a few reasons. Firstly, they appear in the novels very frequently. And secondly, they can have a very serious impact on the siblings' future lives, according to my personal experience and expert literature.

Because there are many possible solutions on how to handle these symptoms, these below serve only as illustrations of them and most of these solution suggestions can be applied to other symptoms as well, since they are more versatile.

At the beginning of the subchapters, examples of each symptom of sibling rivalry from the novels are given. If possible, examples of how the parents handled a particular symptom

of sibling rivalry in the novels are given at the end of each of the four subchapters. They may serve as a comparison to the suggested possible solutions.

8.2.1 Destroying things that belong to the other sibling

Children usually destroy things on purpose to cope with some frustration they have. This may help them to release the tension, although it is not a very good way how to handle these negative emotions (Abraham & Studaker-Cordner, n. d.). However, there are other possibilities on how to deal with destroying things of other siblings, whether it is out of rage towards the other sibling or other intensive emotions. With knowing what the initiator of this behaviour is, it is possible to provide feasible solutions on how to deal with destruction of things belonging to other sibling.

8.2.1.1 An example of destroying things that belong to the other sibling from *The Worst Thing about My Sister*

"*I was much too quick for her. I ran up my bunk-bed ladder like a monkey and flopped down on my top bunk, tearing at Baba with my bare hands. Her newly sewn leg came off at once,* and *the other one, and – grisly triumph – her whole head came off with one gigantic tug. 'Baba!' Melissa screamed, and started climbing the ladder to rescue her. 'Get away! Get off!' I said, kicking out with my feet, determined to tear Baba to bits*" (Wilson, 2012, p. 223).

8.2.1.2 Allowing the child to collapse emotionally

Markhamová (2017, p. 57) suggests parents to allow their children to collapse emotionally, when they experience an enormous number of negative emotions. It is also helpful to accommodate the environment so the child can collapse in piece at home. Children cannot fully control their emotions. Therefore, it is better to let them explode instead of holding the emotions back. When children are allowed to calm down in peace, without additional scolding, it is easier to communicate and negotiate with them afterwards (Abraham & Studaker-Cordner, n. d.).

8.2.1.3 Consequences and conversational approaches

After the child calms down, it is essential to let them know that some consequences will follow. It is important to let the child know the rules, e. g. destroying your sister's things and any other things is unacceptable (Abraham & Studaker-Cordner, n. d.).

Secondly, it is suggested to state expectations as a parent in front of a child and explain what will follow if they destroy more things. Additionally, they should know that if they say they destroyed something because they were angry, it is not an excuse (Abraham & Studaker-Cordner, n. d.). Čapková and Čapek (2010, p. 54) add that as a parent, it is good to express your own emotions with a focus on the act itself, instead of blaming the child, i. e. "It made me very sad that you destroyed your sister's toy." Abraham and Studaker-Codrner (n. d.) say it is also appropriate to let the child take responsibility for their actions. If a child destroys their sister's toy, they should solve the problem themselves, whether by sewing the toy or apologizing or buying a new one. It is not suggested that the parents should do it instead, because the child, who destroyed the thing, will not be fully held accountable for it.

Abraham and Studaker-Cordner (n. d.) emphasize the importance of conversation. They say the parents should ask their child to think about other ways on how to relieve negative emotions without destroying things. They also add an example of a parent who found out that jumping on a trampoline helps their child with additional energy release.

8.2.1.4 Additional tips

a) Control your own emotions

Parents often get overwhelmed with negative emotions when property is destroyed. It is important to put yourself aside and remember, that the problem is, the child does not know how to cope with their emotions otherwise. Having emotions in check may help parents to react better and to feel better (Abraham & Studaker-Cordner, n. d.).

b) Be Patient

This is important, because the child will need time to improve and practice different coping skills. The role of the parent is just to be persistent and let their child take responsibility for their actions (Abraham & Studaker-Cordner, n. d.).

c) Listen

When dealing with such behaviour as destruction of property, it is important to listen to how it happened from several points of view. Čapek and Čapková (2010, p. 59–60) describe four steps on how to listen effectively.

1. Listen carefully
2. Throughout the child's narration, try to express the strive for empathy and understanding by using non-verbal signals, i. e. eye contact, nodding, etc. Verbal expressions such as "I see" come in handy as well.
3. Try to describe how the child feels verbally, whether it is a negative or a positive emotion, e. g. "This made you upset" or "You feel betrayed" or "You were happy about this" or "You felt relieved."
4. Express your wishes, e. g. "If only this wouldn't happen."

If the problem concerns only the child and not the parent, usually the child comes up with a solution alone throughout this process, because it will help them to sort out their thoughts.

8.2.1.5 What not to do when dealing with destruction of property

According to Trélaün (2005, p. 70–71), there are three suggestions on what to avoid when dealing not only with destruction of property:

a) Do not play the victim

Phrases like: "You are going to make me crazy!" do not help at all when solving a conflict. The parent blames their children and sets themselves in a position of a victim that is not responsible for anything.

b) Do not take sides

When a parent decides who is wrong and who is right, the loser feels frustrated and wants revenge. The parent enters the conflict and forces a solution on the children; therefore, they become dependent on what the parent says and are not able to solve the problem without anyone's help.

c) Do not give up

If a parent gives up, they resign to their parental role. Being silent only makes the conflicts more frequent because children long for parental attention and they are trying to gain it. Indifference of a parent is unbearable for children.

8.2.1.6 An example from the novels on how the parents handled a situation concerning damage of property for comparison

" *'Mighty Mart is a comic strip, not a cartoon. And you tore it all up, and I spent* ages *on it.'*

'As if any of this matters,*' said Mum. 'Now, tidy yourselves up. Melissa, you go downstairs and get the pizzas out of the freezer. Martina, change that T-shirt* now. *And both of you, stop showing me up in front of Mrs Evans.'"* (Wilson, 2012, p. 9).

According to the given expert literature, this reaction of a parent does not fulfil any of the points stated. It seems that the parent plays the victim, is not patient and does not listen. There is no time for the children to collapse emotionally. Moreover, the parent does not give the children the time needed for solving the issue themselves and separates them instead.

8.2.2 Envy and jealousy

Envy and jealousy belong to the most common symptoms of sibling rivalry. Even in the mentioned novels by Jacqueline Wilson it appears very frequently. Jealousy and envy are natural feelings that need to be expressed in some way. It is important to realize that a jealous or envious child is not bad or that they misbehave. Jealousy is inevitable, but it is something that can be overcome (Dalloz, 2002, p. 11–13).

8.2.2.1 An example of envy and jealousy from *Double Act*

"*Well how can I go to a good stage school when my rotten old father won't send me to one, though he's sending my sister to the poshest boarding school in the country*" (Wilson, 2006, p. 167).

8.2.2.2 Expressing jealousy and envy is important

Since these emotions are natural and inevitable as mentioned before, the children should be able to express them freely without moral condemnation. If the feeling is still present, it is a sign that a child needs time. Not that the situation is hopeless, because anyone can overcome envy and jealousy and it is never too late.

Self-reflection is important. Parents should think about how they handled jealousy and envy themselves. Jealousy and envy of their own children may help them with that and therefore make their life a little easier (Dalloz, 2002, p. 26).

It is important for a parent to acknowledge their children's feelings and not overreact. Phrases like "It is okay to feel jealous of your sister sometimes" may work (Morin, 2021).

It is also suitable to hear them out when something bothers them as Čapek and Čapková (2010, p. 59–60) suggest in the previous subchapter on destroying property.

8.2.2.3 Individuality should be respected

Most parents do not want their children to fight so they treat them equally. They get the same things, etc. However, this can be a problem, because even if the children are twins, it is crucial to take their individuality into account, because each child has a unique personality, and they should be treated according to their needs.

When treating children equally, especially at an early age, they may come to think they are identical; however, one can be better at something than the other and therefore they become jealous, because they do not take their mutual differences into account (Dalloz, 2002, 63–64).

8.2.2.4 Comparing siblings may amplify mutual jealousy or envy

Comparing one child to the other may amplify not only jealousy or envy but the mutual hostility in general. It is better to focus on each child and their abilities or behaviour separately and instead of comparing their abilities or behaviour to their sibling's. More sufficient is to let the child compare their abilities to their previous ones (Morin, 2021).

Avoiding labelling is necessary as well. Using phrases like: "She's the sporty one" does not help to beat jealousy at all (Garcia, 2020).

8.2.2.5 One-on-one time

Jealousy and envy may originate from a feeling that a parent loves one child more than the other. It is recommended to schedule one-on-one time with each child. The time does not necessarily need to be spent on travelling, trips etc. It can be just a small amount of time where you play a board game or read a book with them (Morin, 2021).

8.2.2.6 An example from the novels on how the parents handled a situation concerning jealousy or envy for comparison

" *'Now this is getting ridiculous,' said Dad.*

'Pull yourself together, Ruby. I'm ashamed of you. I know you've had a bit of a disappointment, but there's no need to be nasty to poor old Garnet. Why can't you be big enough to congratulate her? She didn't act like this over that television audition, now did she? She was full of praise for you'" (Wilson, 2006, p. 145).

According to the given expert literature stated above, the first noticeable thing about this reaction is that the parent compares their children which can only intensify jealousy and envy between the siblings. Moreover, this example is from a novel about twins, so they are treated equally most of the time, however, their individuality matters.

8.2.3 Physical fighting

One of the ways how siblings approach conflict is aggression. This type of emotion is usually associated with humiliation or attacks aiming at the other sibling. They are afraid of defeat; therefore, they feel like winning is the only option. It may result in the aggressor losing respect and being avoided by others (Čapek & Čapková, 2010, p. 67).

Aggression can be manifested among siblings in various ways and one of them is physical fighting which is a manifestation of suffering and emerges when a particular need is not fulfilled (Dumonteil-Kremer, 2015, p. 69).

8.2.3.1 An example of physical fighting from *The Worst Thing about My Sister*

"But I'd spent two whole hours drawing Mighty Mart, and now she was just confetti on the carpet. So I thumped Melissa in the chest. And she slapped my face. And then we were rolling around on the floor shoving and screaming. I'm much better fighter than Melissa, but she scratches with her pointy fingernails. I'm fast and furious and I know how to punch properly, but Melissa is a lot bigger than me" (Wilson, 2012, p. 5).

8.2.3.2 Intervene or not to intervene?

According to Brazelton and Sparrow (2005, p. 104), the parent should know that when they decide to intervene, they will likely reinforce the amount of sibling rivalry between children. However, Faber and Mazlish (2009, p. 113) say that when the situation worsens or becomes more intensive or dangerous, the parents should intervene.

8.2.3.3 When parents have to intervene

Faber and Mazlish (2009, p. 113) suggest that when children fight physically, firstly, parents should ask them whether this is only a game or a regular fight. When they say it is only a game, then it should be allowed. However, the game should be accepted on every side. Despite this, parents should respect what they feel as well and therefore let the children know that e. g. this kind of game is too much for them so the children should find a different activity.

When the situation becomes very dangerous and there is a high risk that the children may hurt themselves, it is necessary for parents to step in. Faber and Mazlish (2009, p. 113) advise parents to describe what they see to the children firstly, e.g. "I see two children that want to hurt each other." Secondly, the authors suggest separating children from each other by saying e. g. "Now it's not a good time for you to be together. Jane, go to your own room and Jack, go to yours as well."

8.2.3.4 Setting boundaries

When the fights happen or are likely to happen more frequently, there should be boundaries set so the children will not physically fight in the future. However, setting boundaries is important not only in physical fighting but for fighting in general.

For setting boundaries, it is important to formulate them in an understandable way, so the children know what is acceptable and unacceptable, e. g. "Your brother is not a punching bag. You can punch your pillow instead." Restrictions such as: "You can splash on her, but only a little so she's not wet" do not give the child a proper foundation to lean on when deciding on their actions (Ginott, 2015, p. 96).

Boundaries should be firm, so the child understands that this restriction is valid, and the parents insist on it. However, if parents do not know how to set boundaries, it is better to do nothing at first and think through their attitude at first. Boundaries should be set to minimalize the child's resistance and preserve their self-respect. When parents express their disapproval, authority should be felt from it (Ginott, 2015, p. 96).

8.2.3.5 Games for reducing anger

What is effective when dealing with siblings' physical fighting may be to play some games for reducing anger. This may be important for preventing violent behaviour not only between siblings but in a group of children (i. e. at school) as well. Plummer (2019, p. 10) describes anger as a natural human emotion that the children need help handling. In her book *Anger management games for children*, Plummer (2019, p. 11–26) suggests that these games can be also played at home in families. Apart from this, games provide opportunities to learn in different spheres of social and personal development which might be essential for dealing with or preventing physical fighting and not only that. These games can be applied in various situations and are also good when dealing with other symptoms of sibling rivalry.

Here is an example of an anger-reducing game, that can be also played at home (Plummer, 2019, p. 103):

The game is called 'Talking Heads'. The duration of this game is approximately 10 minutes, and it is suitable for smaller groups.

Skills that develop during the game are cooperation, focus, anticipation, negotiation or taking turns.

This game is played in pairs. One child puts their arm around their friend's, and they pretend to be a single person. They are speaking about a certain topic and each child says one word in a way a sentence is created. This means they have to anticipate what the other one is going to say, which might be frustrating or hard. The topics can be: "What I was doing yesterday" or "Why I like chocolate".

This game can be modified so the audience is asking the couple questions and they have to answer them by taking turns after each word.

8.2.3.6 An example from the novels on how the parents handled a situation concerning physical fighting for comparison

"*If we'd been left to our own devices, Melissa would have ended up as pink pulp, but Mum came running out of her bedroom and barged into my Marty Den to stop us.*

'What are you doing*? Stop it at* once*, Martina and Melissa! You know you are absolutely strictly forbidden to fight! You're not little guttersnipes, you're* girls.*'*

She pulled us apart and stood us on our feet.

'How dare you!' she hissed. 'Especially today, when Mrs Evans and Alisha are in my bedroom and can hear everything. Alisha's such a sweet little girl too. You'd never catch her fighting' (Wilson, 2012, p. 6).

According to expert literature, the parent did the right thing and intervened in the fight, because the children might have hurt themselves. Another positive step is that the parent reminded the children of set boundaries, i. e. they are forbidden to fight. However, as the subchapter on destruction of property suggests (and it was mentioned that some recommendations may fit different issues) the parent should not play the victim, which the mother eventually did in the end.

8.2.4 Name-calling

Name-calling is an issue that can cause pain in the future lives of siblings. It has a huge impact on personality development of an individual too. It can make the child think that the insults targeted at them are true, i. e. they are useless, worthless etc. Therefore, they can act according to them, e. g. if a child is called rude, they come to think they are rude and start acting that way (PrimeParents, 2019).

However, only a few sources write about name-calling. Therefore, a synthesis of them can be found below.

8.2.4.1 Examples of name-calling from The Worst Thing about My Sister and Double Act

An example from *The Worst Thing About My Sister*:

"*'You shut up, you pig!' I said. 'Oh, lickle crybaby,' said Melissa*" (Wilson, 2012, p. 211).

An example from *Double Act*:

"*But oh no, Miss Suck-up-to-the-teacher-smarty-farty has to write all that rubbish*" (Wilson, 2006, p. 71).

8.2.4.2 Role models

PrimeParents (2019) advise parents to serve as role models for the children and teach them to use more positive words. This can be done by providing a model in a way that parents will not label their children negatively and call them names, e. g. instead of using phrases like "Don't be rude." Usage of an opposite words is suggested, i. e. "Try to be more polite." This way, children will only hear what they are supposed to do instead of insults. Because if children hear only negative comments, they start to believe them. Moreover, it is important not to call one's significant other or other people names to provide a positive model for children.

8.2.4.3 Process of teaching

PrimeParents (2019) suggest parents can teach their children how to interact without name-calling after providing a suitable role model.

Firstly, they should let the children know that name-calling is inappropriate and can cause harm. Parents may suggest children to formulate the sentences differently when expressing annoyance etc., e. g. "I don't like what you did."

Secondly, it is essential to provide a clear consequence if name-calling appears, inform children about it, and make the consequence happen every time when name-calling occurs. When this type of consequence does not seem to work, it is advised to select a different consequence and continue in the same pattern.

8.2.4.4 Talking about feelings

Daniel (n. d.) adds that from a young age siblings should learn how to talk about their feelings and what causes them. Additionally, parents should be empathetic when a child expresses their feelings. However, they should be careful not to accept name-calling by any means and for whatever reason. Morin (2020) suggests parents to teach children coping strategies, i. e. taking a self-timeout, e. g. when they feel angry, they should go to their room to calm down.

Children often do not know how to talk about their feelings so when a child feels angry or sad, it is recommended to sit with them and talk about how to deal with these kinds of emotions, because children usually are not familiar with the ways how to cope with their emotions which may result in them becoming aggressive or seeking attention. Praising

children for expressing their emotions plays a significant role in this process too (Morin, 2020).

Unfortunately, for this topic, there were no examples of reactions of the parents found in the novels.

Conclusion

Sibling rivalry is something that happens naturally among siblings, however sometimes it can turn out badly. In the introduction I mentioned personal reasons why I decided to dedicate my bachelor thesis to this topic. I have a younger sister and sibling rivalry was present between us on daily basis and even though it is not my sister's fault, I still suffer the consequences. I chose to intertwine the topic with the novels by my favourite author – Jacqueline Wilson, because reading her novels was an important part of my childhood. The aim of the thesis was to find examples of symptoms of sibling rivalry in Wilson's novels – *Double Act* and *The Worst Thing about My Sister*. The presence of sibling rivalry in the novels was proven. The thesis also aims to suggest solutions to chosen symptoms of sibling rivalry found in the novels by J. Wilson. Additionally, it focused on providing information and guidance on how to solve selected sibling rivalry issues that may occur among siblings to the parents. A more personal aim of this thesis was to help the parents solve sibling rivalry issues among their children more peacefully and quickly. Moreover, illustrations from the novels may help, because parents can recommend them for their children to read and therefore self-reflect on their actions. The thesis also provides examples of reactions of the parents found in the novels to help the parents self-reflect as well, moreover, to evaluate whether the reactions of the parents from the novels were appropriate or not or even compare the reactions with their own ones.

The theoretical part described two developmental stages in which the characters from the novels are, siblings, sibling rivalry, the author – Jacqueline Wilson, and the two selected novels *The Worst Thing about My Sister* and *Double Act*. This was essential, because it provides the background information for understanding the research part of the thesis. The research part focused on which sibling rivalry symptoms were found in the novels, then selecting four of them according to the frequency of appearance in the novels and importance. To each of the four symptoms I added an example from the novels, suggested possible solutions on how to handle these issues for the parents and provided another example of reactions of the parents from the novels for comparison.

At the beginning of writing the thesis, I was hoping to find out more about sibling rivalry and this was fulfilled. I was surprised when reading the novels, thinking some reactions of the parents were inappropriate; however, after doing some research on solution suggestions I found out that some reactions of the parents I found unsuitable, were right according to the expert literature. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that sibling rivalry concerns people and

not machines, therefore I advise to look into certain issues more deeply, because every human being reacts differently to some situations. However, the thesis has highlighted there surely are some patterns that occur more regularly.

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Resumé

Závěrečná práce je zaměřena na nalezení příkladů projevů sourozenecké rivality v románech od Jacqueline Wilsonové – *To nejhorší na mé sestře* a *Dvojčata v průšvihu*. Z těchto projevů jsou poté vybrány čtyři a ke každému je navrženo možné řešení pro rodiče. Každá z těchto čtyř sekcí je doplněna ještě o příklad reakce rodičů na daný projev z románů pro případné srovnání s vlastními činy nebo s poskytnutými doporučeními. Bylo zjištěno, že příklady sourozenecké rivality jsou přítomny v obou z vybraných románů. Byla taktéž navržena možná řešení jednotlivých projevů sourozenecké rivality.

Anotace

Jméno a příjmení:	Veronika Hudcová
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Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Petr Anténe, M. A., Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2022

Název práce:	Zobrazení sourozenecké rivality mezi sestrami v románech od Jacqueline Wilsonové
Název v angličtině:	The depiction of sibling rivalry among sisters in Jacqueline Wilson's novels
Anotace práce:	Sourozenecká rivalita je téma, které by nemělo být přehlíženo. Teoretická část práce zahrnuje témata dvou vývojových stádií – mladšího a staršího školního věku, sourozenců a sourozenecké rivality. Poslední tři kapitoly jsou věnovány Jacqueline Wilsonové a jejím románům – *Dvojčata v průšvihu* a *To nejhorší na mé sestře*. Výzkumná část se pak soustředí na nalezení příkladů projevů sourozenecké rivality v románech a na navržení možných řešení čtyř vybraných projevů za pomoci příkladů z románů.
Klíčová slova:	Sourozenecká rivalita, sourozenci, Jacqueline Wilsonová, starší sourozenec, mladší sourozenec, rodiče
Anotace v angličtině:	Sibling rivalry is a matter that should not be overlooked. The theoretical part of the thesis comprises the topics of two developmental stages – middle childhood and elementary school children and early adolescence, siblings, and sibling rivalry. The last three chapters are dedicated to Jacqueline Wilson and her novels *Double Act* and *The Worst Thing about My Sister*. The research part focuses on finding examples of sibling rivalry symptoms in the novels and suggesting possible solutions to four of the selected symptoms with the help of the examples from the novels.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Sibling rivalry, siblings, Jacqueline Wilson, older sibling, younger sibling, parents
Přílohy vázané v práci:	žádné
Rozsah práce:	51 stran
Jazyk práce:	angličtina