

The Sand Castle - Rita Mae Brown

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In *The Sand Castle*, beloved American novelist Rita Mae Brown (*Rubyfruit Jungle*) revisits some of her most spirited and unforgettable characters—sisters Juts and Wheezie Hunsenmeir, and Jutss precocious young daughter, Nickel—as they come together to cope with a life-defining loss. It's August, 1952, and seven-year-old Nickel sets off for a day at the seashore with her mother, aunt, and cousin Leroy. Everyone's excited when they reach Chesapeake Bay—everyone except for Leroy, who is recently motherless and frightened of the world around him. Nickel delights in tormenting her cousin, but, as the group lounges on the beach and begins work on a magnificent sand castle, the sisters try to coax him out of his shell. As the sun swings higher in the sky, Nickel's taunting of Leroy escalates and the weight of family history between her mother and aunt rises to the surface—until Leroy is bitten by a crab and all of their arguments fall away. It isn't until years later that Nickel can see that single day at the beach for what it truly was—a life-changing lesson on family and all the pleasure and heartbreak that comes with it.

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