



Kristy's Great Idea

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It all began with a great idea ... and the inspiring original story of the Baby-sitters Club is back! Kristy Thomas's brilliant business plan gets off to a great start with the help of Claudia Kishi (vice-president), Mary Anne Spier (secretary), and Stacey McGill (treasurer).

Kristy's Great Idea Details

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From Reader Review Kristy's Great Idea for online ebook

karen says

okay, so i have never babysat a day in my life. is it surprising that no one would entrust their little precious dumplings to my care??

however - i loved these books. and lately, i have found my mind drifting back to this series, and i kind of want to read them again, is that bad?? they were such a huge part of my early reading life - i read them ever so many times, and took my favorite ones on vacation with me year after year when my mom told me i could bring a friend.(is that super sad?) i still remember tons of tiny details about the series:

i remember that kristy burned her mouth on pizza in book one.

i remember that mary-anne's father told her she could buy a bikini as long as the bottom was decent (guess he didn't mind seeing her boobs hanging all over the place)

i remember that claudia's sister's iq was 196.

just stupid little facts, but i remember more about this series than i do about actual people i know (i recently got back in touch with one of my favorite people from high school and she mentioned that her brother just got engaged, and i was like - "dude, you have a brother?" however, i know that kristy had three (charlie, sam, and david michael))

bsc was my introduction to camus (and you had better believe i mispronounced that shit. also "janine" for some reason i rhymed it with "canine" in my head.) see how cute i was??

but what is the appeal of a series like this to a girl like me, who never wanted children, and preferred stuffed animals to dolls and never wanted even to be *around* other children?? was it just because i was a voracious reader, and these books came out so quickly that there was always something new? was it just for me to learn how to socialize with more normal girls with more traditional goals and mindsets? was it just because i had a mad crush on claudia and wanted to find all her hidden candy stashes? was it just because of the depth of characterization and high-lit postmodern flourishes of ann m martin?

it's anyone's guess really, but i feel like these stories, read so long ago, are nonetheless deeply ingrained on my brain. and lo!

i found a baby sitters club chronology, and i realize i only ever got up to number 24! so many more to read! plus super specials and bsc mysteries and baby sitter's little sister and super specials and bsc friends forever, whatever those are. i might just toss proust in the corner and regress and only read this series for the rest of my life.

but i looked at some silly timeline this on the internet, and now i have spoiled it - i know all the future events!! there is trauma and death and fire and leaving and returning and getting kicked out (!) of bsc!! (what did she do???)

also, in researching to figure out where i stopped reading them, i found this woman whose bsc reviews own my heart now.

i thank you for indulging me in what is in no way a book review, but a little squee of nostalgia from me to you.

p.s. - i hate hate hate the new covers.

come to my blog!

Lauren R. says

I don't feel like taking the time to add the whole series. But C'mon, you know you read them...all 549085290 of them AND the spin-offs. Looking back, they were terribly written and not realistic at all...But that didn't stop us from dressing like Claudia or trying to start our own BSC.

Jenna says

Like so many '90s kids, I was obsessed with *The Baby-sitters Club*. OBSESSED. I still have most of my collection (I sadly got rid of the many doubles I had), but I haven't really revisited the series as an adult. I was afraid that they'd feel really dated and it would tarnish the memory I have of them.

But yesterday the nostalgia got too much for me and I decided to pick up *Kristy's Great Idea* for the first time in about 20 years. And while aspects of the plot certainly are dated (so much of it hinges on the use of *landlines*), I was surprised by how much I still enjoyed the book – and especially how much I enjoyed the character of Kristy.

I was never really a Kristy girl. I had little in common with the outgoing, sporty, boy-hating president of the BSC. Her big mouth and bossiness annoyed me at times. But as an adult I've got to say I actually loved those things about her. From the very first line of the book, she hooked me: "The Baby-sitters Club. I'm proud to say it was totally my idea." That line feels audacious in a way it probably shouldn't. I mean, we're *still* having conversations about how female protagonists are frequently criticised for being "unlikeable", yet here is Kristy Thomas, bragging about her intelligence from the first page, and being lectured by her teacher for lacking decorum on the second, and not really giving a fuck about any of it, except that it means she has extra homework. She's a 12-year-old girl who doesn't care what others think, who speaks her mind, who not only comes up with brilliant ideas but puts them into action, who makes mistakes and is sometimes rude and messy but tries to learn and grow. What a gift of a character – even if I didn't fully appreciate her when I was young.

I also loved that there was space for Kristy's complex feelings about her family and friendships. I got the feeling that The Baby-sitters Club was as much a desperate attempt to keep her changing friendship group from splintering as it was about trying to make money or solve her mum's problem of not being able to find a sitter. So yeah, I may have gotten a little emotional at the last line: "I hoped that Mary Anne, Claudia, Stacey, and I – The Baby-sitters Club – would stay together for a long time." BECAUSE THEY DID, YOU GUYS. THEY DID.

Anyway, I didn't expect to get so soppy about this book, so let me quickly sum up some other random observations I had while reading:

- This very much feels like an origin story where the characters we know and love are yet to reach their most well-known forms. Like, Kristy never once wears jeans and a turtleneck! She wears skirts and blouses with knee-high socks (oh my!).
- Speaking of clothes, there were 4 detailed outfit descriptions (two Claudia, two Stacey), and they were all as delightfully bonkers as I remember. My favourite is Claudia's, when she wears "a baggy yellow-and-black checked shirt, black pants, red jazz shoes, and a bracelet that looked like it was made from telephone cord. Her earrings were dangling jointed skeletons."
- Also at one point Claudia tells Kristy she still dresses like a baby, and when Kristy points out Claudia is wearing sheep barrettes, this happens: "'Sheep,' Claudia informed me witheringly, 'are *in*.'" Incredible.
- On the subject of Claudia and Kristy, a big undercurrent of the book, as I mentioned above, is the growing divide between them, best summed up in this amazing description of Claudia: "She's wearing a bra, and the way she talks, you'd think boys had just been invented." There are several mentions of Claudia's obsession with boys, and Kristy's utter lack of interest in them, meanwhile Kristy tells Claudia she's beautiful. And on one hand this is all a very normal part of growing up and people developing at different stages and in different ways, and on the other hand I think we can all agree Kristy DEFINITELY has a secret crush on Claudia.
- Even though this is a Kristy book, I love that all the girls go on their own journeys, and by the end Mary Anne is standing up to her dad, Claudia is negotiating time spent on art vs homework with her parents, and Stacey tells the other girls about her diabetes (which leads to a really nice moment where Kristy tells her she has nothing to be ashamed of).
- I totally shipped Stacey and Kristy's brother, Sam, when I was young, and I still do tbh. I mean, Sam thinks Stacey is a "foxy chick" and she thinks he's a "gorgeous hunk". It's obviously meant to be. Even Kristy thinks so – she has the "BSC is a success" slumber party at her house party so Stacey can see Sam again. Nothing but respect for MY president.
- I feel VERY OLD saying this but I was shook that Stacey, at age 12, is allowed out until 10pm on weekends, and David Michael, age 6, walks home from school by himself and has his own house key. Don't even get me started on 12-year-olds being left alone to care for small children/going to houses of families they don't know. At one point, when Kristy shows up at a house and there are no kids around, even SHE begins to think she might get murdered. It turns out that she's there to care for two dogs, but it COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE and it feels like this prospect is just never addressed again (I guess, as the series goes on, they actually know all the families, BUT STILL).
- BTW the fact that Kristy bans pet-sitting after the dog job was perhaps her worst idea (excepting the one in book 100, *Kristy's Worst Idea*) because it's an easy way they all could have made more money.
- Speaking of dogs, Louie the collie made me weirdly emotional, I vaguely remember that he dies at one point and I'm not ready for it (should I continue rereading this series? Is that ridiculous? Do I care?).
- I got to the end of the book and discovered I'd filled in the notebook pages using my squiggle pen at age 11. Highlights include me believing I was most like Claudia (wishful thinking), and saying that if I ever wrote a BSC book it would be about "boys" (I was as boy-crazy as Stacey...and still am tbh). Also the fact that I wanted to start my own club called the "Pre-teen Sensations", where we'd have no officers and no meetings, but a lot of fun.

- Of course, the character I am *really* most like is Boo Boo. The fat, cursed attack cat, who looks like “a pillow with legs attached” and doesn’t like to be touched by strangers. A legend.

amandalee says

I am using the first Baby-Sitter's Club to represent the approximately, I don't know, 100 plus BSC novels I not only read, but owned, in my late elementary / early middle school years. I was in love with these novels and even belonged to the BSC Book Club, where two novels (in sequential order) were mailed to me every month (or bimonthly, I don't really remember). I was gifted the BSC board game, which was terrible, but amusing. My sisters and I even used these novels as "textbooks" when we played dorm room (I know, what weird, nerdy kids we were). Looking back, I realize that these novels were terribly written. However, they illustrated to a young and somewhat impressionable child that it was okay to be any type of girl one wanted to be (sporty, into fashion, about saving the earth, etc.) and the members of the BSC entertained me for hours on end.

**Note: The BSC novels are ranked five stars simply to emphasize the many hours of reading bliss and entertainment they provided, and should not be misinterpreted as a reflection of their literary value.

Cora ? Tea Party Princess says

5 Words: Friendship, secrets, loyalty, family, responsibility.

That was cute.

I would have likely loved it when I was 12, and even now when I'm very much older it was a lovely read. I enjoyed the story, how the girls were introduced, the funny little problems they encountered. It was lovely.

Dray says

I'm terribly tempted to add all the BSC books to my goodreads for two reasons:

1. I'm at work doing absolutely nothing else.
2. It would make me look all badass with lots of books...until someone happened to notice that half of them are the Babysitter's Club books. My badass badge would then be taken away.

So I'll just add the first one. These books get five stars for the sheer entertainment value of 7-10 year old Andréa. I thought those girls were SO COOL. Stacy and Claudia were totally my favorites and I tried on several occasions to get my other 7-10 year old friends to set up a BSC. It was never successful...probably since 7-10 year olds have zero babysitting qualifications. Nevertheless, I read these books constantly, which meant at least that I was reading constantly. I have no doubt they sparked my interest in more books, and then more books until I became the literary scholar I so clearly am today. ha.

Jessica says

I can't rate these books, because giving a bad rating would be a lie -- I was crazy about them when I read them -- but giving them a good rating would be misleading because it would lead you to believe that they were good, and they're not. I mean, in a way they must be or they wouldn't have been so popular, but they're definitely Lame, especially when you consider how much incredible children's fiction there is out there.

The closest thing to these books for me is the *Doors*, one of the other few things I'm embarrassed to have liked as much as I once did. But I did like them, in fact, I loved them, and the fun thing about this series is that they were a fad in the fourth grade, which added a social element to the otherwise solitary experience of reading.... kind of like *Bookface* for the late eighties! Anyway, the best thing about these books was that Dawn was the coolest, and a vegetarian, and from California (*I'm from California! I'm a vegetarian!*). The other best thing was that Jessie was also the coolest (*I'm named Jessie! [well, kind of]*), because she was black, but she didn't show up until halfway through the series, probably after some distraught black kid in suburban CT's mother wrote some stern letters, and she never really did much anyway. The worst thing was that Mary-Ann was a pathetic, boring priss, Kristy was a boring soccer dyke who never so much as peeked out of the closet, and Claudia was borderline mentally-retarded, and taught kids it was okay not to be able to spell as long as you had craaaaaazy earrings and beautiful Asian American features, including long shiny hair down to her butt and beautiful almond-shaped eyes. Am I remembering that wrong? I hope not, that'd be a weird thing to make up.

Mike Lawson says

This book made me feel guilty. As a little soon-to-be gay boy in the 1980s, I watched my older sister devour the Baby-Sitters Club series. She just ate them up. And I learned at a young age it wasn't "appropriate" for young boys to like the same things as their sisters.

"Michael, take off those Madonna gloves!"

When I picked up the first of the super-popular Baby-Sitters Club series, I couldn't help but feel a bit of guilt. Kristy's Great Idea is book #1, and about Kristy Thomas' idea of forming a Baby-Sitters Union...only they call it a "club." They come together for pointless meetings, vote on matters, and collectively bargain for prices and advertising space.

It was pretty obvious to me why these books were popular. They had everything a young-adult wants to see in a book: kids making money without relying on their parents, Kristy's hate for her mother's fiance, Stacey's eating-disorder-that-turns-out-to-be-diabetes, Claudia and her frustrating older sister, Mary Anne's over-protective father.

It was obvious from this first book that this is a series that many great kid's series used as the prototype.

If I was going to complain about something, I might point out how each of these girls is a walking character-type, but I'll see how that unfolds in the next 9 books (I've made a commitment to read the first ten in the series).

It feels really great to look at a book series like this one that brought my older sister so much joy and to

finally be able to get excited about these books publicly. The Corey Haim fascination I secretly shared with her 20 years ago, however, will never be acted upon.

Rhiannon says

"The Baby-Sitters Club was a success. I, Kristin Amanda Thomas, had made it work." - Kristy, accepting the 1986 Mahatma Ghandi Award for Most Humble 12-Year Old Ever

Was Claudia described as having **almond-shaped eyes**:
Surprisingly, no. Although she was described as "exotic."

Was Mimi's accent described as **rolling**:
Nope

How many times was the word "**incredulously**" used:
Twice

What Would Claudia Wear:

-Short, very baggy lavender plaid overalls, a white lacy blouse, a black fedora, red high-top sneakers with no socks

-A baggy yellow and black checked shirt, black pants, red jazz shoes, a bracelet that looked like a telephone cord, and dangling, jointed skeleton earrings
-An outrageous red felt hat

What About Stacey?

-Stacey was wearing a pink sweatshirt with sequins and a large purple parrot on the front, short, tight-fitting jeans with zippers up the outsides of the legs, and pink plastic shoes.

-A matching top and skirt made out of gray sweatshirt material with big, yellow number tens all over it, hair clips shaped like rainbows, and little silver whistles dangling from her ears
-Red plaid wool pants with red suspenders (*What the f*ck is it with these girls and suspenders?*)

Quit letting 12-Year Olds Watch Your Goddamn Kids

"Oh my gosh," I cried. "I forgot! It's Tuesday...Tuesday is my day to watch David Michael. I'm supposed to beat him home. Otherwise, he gets home first and has to watch himself." David Michael is my 6-year old brother.

"So, what about this baby-sitting club?" "Well, I replied..." [After much discussion and negligence] We were interrupted by a thump and a wail. Jamie had fallen off one of the swings.

Awwwwwwwwkward

"Are your parents divorced, too?" I asked.
"Nope. They've been married for fifteen years."

"Mine have been married for twenty."

"My mother died when I was a baby," said Mary Anne quietly. "She had cancer."

Stacey looked embarrassed. "Well, I really better go..."

Bitch!

"I'm sorry, Watson." I mumbled. I walked out of the kitchen and up the stairs. When I was halfway up, I yelled over my shoulder, "I'm sorry you're a terrible father!"

"Really, Kristy! A sweater with snowflakes and snowmen on it? You look like a four year old."

"Well, you've got sheep barrettes in your hair!" I yelled. "You think they're adult?"

"Sheep," Claudia informed me witheringly. "are *in*."

"Are you accusing my mother of *lying*?" Stacey cried.

I thought for a moment. "I guess so."

Srsly. Ew!

[Over fondue], Watson made this rule that if your bread fell off your fork and landed in the cheese, you had to kiss the person sitting on your right...And then, it happened. I was just sticking my fork into the pot when my bread fell off and landed in the cheese. Guess who was on my right? Watson.

"Kiss daddy, kiss daddy!" cried Karen.

Sarah says

Looking back I'm a bit ashamed to admit I enjoyed this series so much. By no means are the books well written; the characters are flat, the plots predictable. Everything is dressed in a neat and tidy bundle, all works out in under 150 pages. You can almost hear the sappy music as the book draws to a close. Even as a preteen I recognized this was not great literature, especially as the series rapidly expanded, Ann Martin and what must have been a slew of ghost writers turning out books at an alarming rate. I think what kept me reading was the comfort I found in the simplicity, predictability, and ease of the novels. The faces lining the halls of Totem Junior High were less than welcoming and The Baby-sitter's Club series served as some sort of balm, a salve against the onslaught of teen angst (oh, so dramatic!) Just as in my earlier days I had longed to live with the Bradys or the Ingalls so too did I long to join the ranks of Kristy's baby-sitter's club, to have problems that I knew would be quickly resolved and all would be right with the world (at least until the next installment in the series.)

As a teacher these are on my recommended reading list. Particularly for struggling readers I believe the predictable and repetitious nature combined with the less than demanding vocabulary can serve as a bridge to more expansive literature. The easy reading may inspire confidence in the reluctant reader. If the reader enjoys the book she (I may be sexist but I really can't imagine a boy having an affinity for these books) is likely to return for more books in the series thereby getting more practice which in turn strengthens the reading muscle, making her more limber when she moves on to more complex reading.

Sarah (Starry Night Reader) says

This just popped up on my Goodsreads updates and now I'm feeling so nostalgic. I adored this series when I was a kid. Even just looking at the covers makes me happy. I'm really tempted to buy them all and read them again, but what if they're terrible now??

Kathleen says

Puntje 17 van de Verbeelding Book Challenge: "Een boek lezen waar je gek van was als kind". De babysittersclub. Ayup. Ik denk dat ik bijna alle boeken van de Babysittersclub reeks heb gelezen, back in the day, en het was fijn om even terug te keren naar die personages. Maar het boek als volwassene lezen is toch helemaal anders dan het boek als negen of tien-jarige lezen.

Ariel says

I am firmly convinced that, years hence, when Ann M Martin no longer graces the mortal coil with her presence, scholars will reflect upon the deceptively simple narrative lines of the Baby-Sitter's Club #1 and will discover the singing truths of human experience encoded in the mundane details of affluent suburban youth.

Like so many heroines before, Kristy attempts to reconcile her desire for autonomy with the crippling social restrictions on young females with her suburban Connecticut neighborhood. Spurred on by her desire to gain financial independence, she forms an alliance with colleagues and attempts to find revenue streams through traditionally female child-rearing activities.

Their fragile attempts to break into the adult world are scattered. A single dangling earring, a pair of brightly-hued shoes, the jingle of a bag of hidden candy: each of these is a clever cipher placed carefully by Martin, a reminder of the delicate balance between subjugation and freedom.

Sarah says

On one of my book challenges, I needed to read a book from my childhood. Plus, I'm in a pretty serious reading slump, and thought a short book would help me get out of it..

I loved these books when I was younger, I remember checking out a couple every time I went to the library as a child.

It wasn't a bad book, I enjoyed the nostalgia from re-reading it, and it was a quick read.

2.5/5.

(my ten year old self would've given it a 5/5)

?Jordan? says

Decided I wanted to Re-Live my childhood and read all these books from start to finish! 4 childhood friends come together to start a BABY-SITTERS CLUB. All of these girls Have major differences but all manage to be great friends. In this specific book we find out a big secret that Stacy is hiding...but would her friends truly judge her if they knew? What a great and fast nostalgic read
