



California Girls!

Ann M. Martin

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Who would believe it - the Baby-sitters have won the lottery! And with their winning money, the girls are all going with Dawn to... California!

What adventures they have. Jessi lands a (tiny) part in a TV show, Kristy gets into a kind-of-fight with Dawn's We Love Kids Club, and Stacey turns into a surfer girl! And in between all that excitement, they still have time for baby-sitting, sight-seeing, and the beach.

How can they go back to Stoneybrook now that they've turned into California girls?

California Girls! Details

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From Reader Review California Girls! for online ebook

Shira says

finally a super special that I enjoyed (the first since Baby-Sitters on Board!)! our favorite baby-sitters win \$10k in the lottery and decide to spend it on a trip out to California to hang out with Dawn's family. They each respond to the different setting in a different way (check out character plotlines), most of which fit their characters pretty perfectly. Dawn is the overarching narrator in this one (two in a row -- she narrated Baby-Sitters' Island Adventure).

character plotlines:

-Dawn: hates Carol, her dad's girlfriend. She thinks Carol acts too much like a teenager and not like a responsible adult. When an emergency happens (see Stacey's plotline) she ends up handling it like an adult, and Dawn is angry at first but then gets over it and tells her dad that she'd be okay with him marrying Carol (which he will in *Here Come the Bridesmaids!*). Annoying level in this book: 3/10

-Kristy: thinks the We <3 Kids Club is dumb since they don't have strict rigid beliefs about how to run their business. She babysits Erick and Ryan DeWitt (whom the W<3KC members have told her are terrors) and decides that she can handle taking them to Universal Studios (where they are wearing jams! how 1990 of them!) and has to deal with their hyperactivity. Annoying level in this book: 5/10

-Mary Anne: babysits Stephie Robertson and is overprotective and annoying, since Stephie has asthma. Mary Anne keeps thinking she's gonna have an asthma attack every time she seems excited about anything. Then as they're saying goodbye because Mary Anne is leaving Stephie says she wishes Mary Anne were her mother. Ew. And as Stephie is crying about having to say goodbye, she FINALLY actually has an asthma attack because she's sad. Annoying level in this book: 6/10

-Stacey: gets into a reckless surfer dude lifestyle (takes 1-2 lessons then thinks she can ride the biggest waves, thinks it's cool that her new older kid surfer friends are negligent and aggressive drivers). Of course she gets into car crash because the dude driving (Beau) doesn't look or signal before switching lanes on the freeway, and it turns into a 4-car + one huge truck pileup. Carol comes to get her from the hospital and says she's gonna have to tell Dawn's dad and Stacey's parents, and Stacey is all like, "I thought you were cool, man." But Dawn ends up being impressed by Carol acting like an adult. Annoying level in this book: 3/10

-Claudia: meets and dates Terry who is into foreign films and douchey restaurants, so she tries to pretend to be that.. They see an Italian film and Claudia can't deal with the fact that you have to read the English words written across the bottom of the screen (subtitles, LOL) and she says she didn't get the movie because, "the story made no sense to me. It was just a lot of people bicycling around the Italian countryside." Double LOL. She orders escargots bc she thinks she can pronounce it (why doesn't she just get the chicken that Terry's having?) and then has to eat em. She asks about the situation in the Soviet Union so Terry talks about glasnost. Finally she calls Janine who tells her to be herself and they end up having stuff in common (Terry likes old movies, Claudia likes movies, Terry is interested in her art, etc). Annoying level in this book: 5/10

-Jessi: goes with Derek Masters from *Jessi and the Superbrat* to his TV studio where they film *P.S. 162*. She is an extra in an episode & learns facts about the biz (special effects, etc) which she then annoys Mallory with at Universal Studios. She and Mallory fight and she initiates the end of the fight. Annoying level in this book: 3/10

-Mallory: is a shallow idiot. Dyes her hair blonde and buys makeup. Spends all her money on the dye and makeup and expects to borrow from Jessi for the rest of the trip. When she goes with Jessi to *P.S. 162* she doesn't get cast as an extra because the guy doesn't like her look. Kristy saves the day by telling her she's being a jerk and that everyone likes the old Mallory better/it doesn't matter if the guy didn't like her "look" because it's not what she actually looks like. She is the Mary Anne of this book. Annoying level in this book: 10/10

highlights:

- not really a highlight but an interesting thing. this book is dedicated to lisa novak and gregg peretz. I looked them up out of curiosity. they were a young married couple who were murdered while celebrating their first anniversary in southern vermont. I assume ann knew lisa novak because she was an editor of children's books. ann even created a book donation organization in lisa novak's name: <http://www.lisalibraries.org/>
- jeff and his friend rob have a fight over who is the biggest deadhead.
- elaine stritch from the woody allen movie september is visiting ps 162/doing a guest appearance. this is so random and funny to me.
- jenny preziosso wants to name her new baby "yucky toilet"
- they call it magic mountain, not six flags. someone did their west coast lingo vs. east coast lingo research!
- I love stacey's recklessness because it's in character and I could see myself getting swept up into that storyline.
- every moment claudia tries to impress terry is HILARIOUS. read her character plotline part. it's funny.
- I love california. I love all the universal studios stuff -- I was getting some serious nostalgia. I wish they went to disneyland though... :(
- jessi calls a movie a picture. not only is she turning into a hollywood douche, she's turning into a hollywood douche from the 1930s!

lowlights/nitpicks:

- I find it hard to believe that claudia's conservative, practical dad would buy her lottery tickets every week. I also find it hard to believe that kristy would use the lottery money she won on a trip instead of putting it into a savings account or something.
- dawn gets chicken on the plane. IS SHE OR ISN'T SHE A VEGETARIAN?
- dawn says san diego is really far from LA, which isn't true, especially considering dawn lives near anaheim. they keep going to hollywood, burbank (which is in the valley), etc. which is almost as far as san diego, just in the opposite direction. both over an hour from anaheim.
- I don't buy that mallory doesn't know what asthma is, especially since she knows that a mortgage means the bank owns your house and you pay it off in installments every month (which she clearly stated in Poor Mallory!)
- this is presumably winter break (mostly because it's a two week break and they have their coats on the plane). december isn't hang out in a bikini/swim in the extremely cold pacific ocean time of year.
- when carol says, "I know people who change to please--" and dawn cuts her off so claudia thinks that's all she was gonna say. and claudia thinks it sounds like good advice. but carol was obviously going to say, "but that's a bad idea."
- blonde hair dye on auburn hair wouldn't work. you'd need to strip it with bleach first, which is not wash-out. the reason sun-lite works is the lemon principle: lemons interact with the sun to bleach your hair. also when they dye mallory's hair back to its original color, if it's REALLY blonde, it won't look right. you need a base color to add the sort of natural looking different colors (natural highlights and lowlights) to hair before you can get it to look right. otherwise it looks too perfectly one color and doesn't look natural. /hair science rant
- jessi says she woke up early on wednesday to go with derek to the taping of his show, and she says mallory is blonde by that point. but mallory ends up dying her hair later on wednesday (after going to the mall) so she can't be blonde yet
- they're all bewildered by mchale's navy and have never heard of it but they are stoked on lucille ball and leave it to beaver references? consistency, ann! are the members of the bsc or are they not 40 years old?
- terry says he usually likes old movies but lately he's been watching woody allen movies (implying that he means he's watching new movies) like interiors, annie hall, and love and death. those all came out in the 70s. why not actually name contemporary ones? crimes and misdemeanors, alice, september, etc? those all came out in the late 80s (or in alice's case, 1990).

one claudia outfit:

- "For instance, on the day of this meeting, she was wearing a red shirt with Mexican hats and cactus plants printed on it, and blue-and-white-striped pants held up by polka-dotted suspenders. On her head was what looked like an engineer's cap (it matched her pants), and dangling from her ears were miniature cowboy boots, which she'd made herself."

one stacey outfit:

- "On this particular day, Stacey was wearing wide-legged, cropped pants; her Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt; and high-topped running shoes."

no snacks in claudia's room.

Kate says

Somehow, these 7 girls get to go on vacation together, to California to visit Dawn, because THEY WON THE LOTTERY. Setting aside how ridiculous this concept is... Mallory dyes her hair blonde and wants to be a movie star, Mary Anne baby-sits for a girl with emotional asthma, etc. When Mallory finally realizes that her hair looks terrible, it's Stacey to the rescue because apparently once Stacey thought she'd look good as a redhead then had to dye her hair back to blonde.

Ciara says

goddamn, this book is boring. the premise is that the connecticut state lottery has climbed to 23 million dollars. claudia has been buying tickets, but all the babysitters chip in to buy seven tickets & watch the draw together at a slumber party at kristy's house. dawn's ticket has five of the six numbers, so the babysitters win \$10,000. ludicrous. they use the money to fund a vacation to california, where they all stay at dawn's dad's house. i can't even fathom how huge his house must be, to shelter six extra teenage girls for two weeks (i'm not counting dawn because she already has her own room there). each babysitter has an "adventure" of some sort.

kristy & the other babysitters all attend a meeting of the we [heart] kids club, the babysitting club started by dawn's california friends. kristy is very distressed by the way they run their club. there are only three members, they don't have regular meetings days or time frames, they don't keep a club notebook, they just put their hands over the receiver & ask who wants the job rather than calling parents back, etc. kristy thinks she knows everything about babysitting clubs & by extension, babysitting. so when the club gets a call about sitting two rambunctious little boys that happen to be terrors, kristy volunteers for the job. she plans to do an awesome job & prove that the we [heart] kids girls just aren't as good at babysitting as she is.

of course it doesn't pan out that way. the boys are just as awful for her as for every other babysitter they have. kristy gets permission for the boys to join her & the other sitters for a day at universal studios, where they throw wet paper towels at the ceiling of the bathroom, stand up in the special effects tour train, & generally make mischief. kristy has to concede that she's a good sitter, but that doesn't mean she's necessarily the child whisperer.

mary anne also accepts a job at the we [heart] kids meeting. she gets a job sitting for stephie. stephie's mom

died when she was little, & stephie's dad is kind of strict with her. plus, stephie is shy & sensitive. basically, mary anne feels like she can relate to stephie. but stephie also has asthma, which is triggered by emotional distress. mary anne is constantly panicked about stephie's asthma & thinks she's going to have an attack every thirty seconds. she's constantly clutching stephie's "inhalator" (i have friends with asthma, & they call them inhalers, so...?) & trying to make sure stephie doesn't do anything too rambunctious. stephie also joins the group at universal studios, & mary anne worries incessantly that all the scary special effects are going to trigger stephie's asthma. but stephie is fine & mary anne finally learns to relax.

mary anne sits for stephie one last time before heading back to connecticut, & stephie is really sad to see mary anne go. this would count as emotional distress, i guess, & stephie has an attack. mary anne handles it pretty well, & mary anne & stephie decide to be pen pals.

mallory feels insecure about her looks in california because she thinks everyone out there is blonde & made-up. which just isn't true. once again, ann m. martin displays her lack of experience in california, where probably the overwhelming majority of people are in fact not blonde at all. but try telling that to mallory. she gets carol, dawn's dad's girlfriend, to drive her to the max factor museum, which could not sound more dull. she spends almost all of her traveling money on tons of make-up that she isn't even allowed to use back in stoneybrook. she spends over an hour in the morning making up her face...even though there's nothing she can do about her glasses & contacts. she even buys "wash-out" blonde hair dye so she can be blonde. which would really just turn red hair orange, but...whatever. supposedly it works. the babysitters are not especially impressed by mallory's transformation. & jessi is especially frustrated because now mallory has to keep borrowing money from her for food & trips & stuff.

mallory accompanies jessi to the set of "p.s. 142," the sitcom on which derek masters stars. the director asks for extras for a crowd scene, & mallory volunteers, but he says she doesn't have the "right look". mallory is crushed. she's blonde & wearing nineteen pounds of make-up--how much more right can her look get? she mopes & doesn't join the other babysitters when they go to an amusement park the next day. she just stays home & reads & feels sorry for herself. what a baby.

she also realizes that her makeover has to go away when they go back home, so the babysitters help her choose some new hair dye that matches her old hair color, & stacey & claudia pool their money to buy mallory's make-up off of her. mallory uses the money to pay jessi back what she owes. i don't know if this is really a happy ending, because it doesn't seem like mallory really learned anything about accepting herself.

jessi is hanging out a lot with derek masters on set. she is chosen to be in a crowd scene, & derek again encourages her to pursue an agent & get involved with acting. jessi considers it, but decides that ballet is her true passion. again.

she also fumes a lot over mallory & her makeover. she displays a lot of maturity by wondering if maybe their arguments are her fault, that she's not being supportive enough. so she talks to mallory, but nothing really gets resolved. because this whole thing is actually mallory's fault! but in the end, jessi gets paid back & tells derek that she is going to focus on ballet. *yawn*

stacey takes a beginning surfing class at the beach & gets surf fever. she pretty much just wants to go to the beach everyday & ride the waves. she even rides a few waves that are way too big for her, & dawn gets mad at stacey for endangering herself. stacey morphs into an adrenaline junkie. she makes friends with some local kids that are really into surfing.

but one of the kids stacey has befriended is a really reckless driver. at first, stacey thinks it's exciting, & she

even goes so far as to tell the dude that he's a good, offensive driver. but her tune changes when he gets into a car accident on the highway with stacey & all her new friends in the car. no one is badly hurt, but the situation scared the shit out of stacey. she is taken to the hospital to be checked over, & calls dawn's house for a ride home. carol answers & stacey & dawn are both relieved because they think carol will keep the accident a secret. carol has been acting more like their friend or a big sister than an adult. but carol puts her foot down & tells them that she has to tell dawn's dad what happened because he's responsible for everyone's safety while the girls are staying at his house, & they will have to call stacey's parents. at first stacey is upset (& embarrassed), but she realizes that carol is right. she agrees not to hang out with those kids anymore.

claudia meets a cute boy at the beach & they go on a date. but claudia quickly realizes that she's out of her depth with terry. he's really smart. he takes her to a french restaurant & wants to see an italian movie with subtitles. claudia thinks she's too stupid to hang out with him. so she decides not to see him anymore.

but stacey runs into him at the beach & gives him dawn's dad's phone number. he calls because he wants to see claudia again. at first, claudia is angry, but she likes terry a lot, so she goes. & it's just one disaster after another. she borrows boring, conservative clothes from the other babysitters for her dates & calls janine to get ideas on smart things to discuss with terry. terry seems woefully oblivious to the fact that claudia can barely manage her end of the conversation. claudia talks things over with carol, & carol says that sometimes people change who they are for a relationship. dawn cuts carol off & says that's terrible advice (she would know from book #37...but she forgets quickly enough when lewis comes to town a few books later). rather than clarifying that she also thinks it's a bad idea, carol says nothing. um...okay? claudia thinks carol is actually giving her some awesome advice, so bends over backwards to change herself for terry.

finally she realizes it's not working out & she ends up talking to terry about what she really likes--art, mimi, babysitting, etc. it turns out that terry has some less cerebral interests as well & claudia is relieved that she was herself...though she is sad that she'll have to leave terry behind when she goes home. the girls have a long conversation about how upsetting it is that they always "fall in love" with awesome dudes on vacation when the relationship doesn't really have a future. yeah, that is a truly ridiculous trope of the super special books.

& lastly, we have **dawn**. her big arc concerns her relationship with carol. at first, dawn doesn't like carol at all. she thinks carol tries too hard to be friends with the girls & doesn't act her age. dawn is disgusted when carol wears a bikini to the beach. she thinks carol is too old to wear bikinis...even though it's stated in some book that carol is in her late 20s. if you can't wear a bikini in your late 20s, when can you wear one? way to make me feel a million years old.

anyway, dawn's feelings change after stacey's car accident. she's impressed that carol did the difficult & adult thing. she writes carol a letter apologizing for her behavior, & she tells her dad that it's okay with her if he wants to marry carol. again, *yawn*.

& then the babysitters go back home. the book closes with some of the correspondence they receive from their california friends. stephie's dad is letting her get a dog. carol misses dawn. terry will love claudia "forever". etc etc etc. nobody cares.

Kelsey Stewart says

The Baby-Sitters Club series was to me at 9, what Sex And The City is to me at 27. Oddly enough, I didn't

really enjoy babysitting and only did it a handful of times when I was a teen. But I totally considered myself part of this pre-teen sisterhood of do-gooders. I also have not an ounce in common with rich, thirty-something single Manhattanites. So I guess things don't really change.

Back to BC Club. There was the one that annoyed me: Mary Anne was a total bully bitch in my mind (but with good reason - quite the backstory with her). There was the one I had nothing in common with: Claudia was way too into fashion for me to comprehend. And there was Stacey, who, for the life of me, all I can remember about her is that she had diabetes. And then there was the one I worshipped: Dawn was a blonde vegetarian from California and I had a major girl-crush on her. In this particular book the girls get to come with Dawn one Summer when she visits her dad back in California. Wait, now that I think about it, one of my favorite episodes of *Sex And The City* is when they all visit LA for a weekend. Wow, the song has certainly remained the same.

Palak says

CANNOT BELIEVE!! And the fact that Claudia had a boyfriend! And Mary-Anne Found a mini her!

Samantha says

I hated this as a kid, and I hate it now. I just thought it was all so incredibly stupid! Also the plot with Stacey totally happened once on *Full House* (the whole riding with older kids who like to speed and do dumb shit in the car). C'mon.

Heidilore says

Baby-Sitters Club Super Special #5-California Girls

This edition is a Super Special, which means the girls get into zany adventures that no normal pre-teens/early teens could possibly entertain. In this particular book, the girls WIN THE LOTTERY. To be specific, they win ten thousand dollars in the Jack-O'-Lottery. I don't think this has absolutely anything to do with Michael Jackson; if it does, apologies are in order. So, the very feasible plot device enables the girls to go visit California during some kind of two week Spring vacation. Why California? Dawn's parents are divorced, her mother moved to Connecticut and her father and little brother Jeff live in California. So, the girls split 10 grand (I guess they didn't account for taxes) and each get \$1428 bucks, which is apparently enough for airfare from the east coast to Cali, various theme park admissions, etc. Yes, this is very probable, even in the 80s.

Of course, there are various problems. Dawn's father is dating a woman named Carol that she absolutely despises; Kristi doesn't get along with the west coast equivalent of the club, the We <3 Kids Club (not that Kristi really gets along with anybody); Jessi gets a big head because she gets to be an extra in a tv show; Stacey becomes a surfer (wow, dude) with weirdfrienditis; and Claudia, who is notorious for being, well, dumb, falls in love with a smart guy that is probably more suited for her sister, Janine.

The best plot of the book, though, in my opinion? Mallory Pike. Mallory, the 11 year old. Good grief. Poor,

geeky, redhead-freckley Mallory who doesn't really seem to serve a purpose in any of these books. Anyhow, she decides that she wants to be a "California girl", whatever the hell that means. I guess all the people in California look the same? Funny, I didn't notice that problem when I was in California, but okay. Sooo...Mallory decides to become a California girl. How? With makeup and hair dye, of course! Naturally, the other girls are totally chagrined about Mallory's behavior. Never mind each and every one of them are acting nuts, but okay. She uses up all of her spending money on blond hair dye and cosmetics at the mall. You would think there would be serious problems with this issue, with Mallory being only ELEVEN YEARS OLD, but the saleswoman gives her a wash-out blond hair dye and a ton of makeup. Okay, how does a blond, wash-out hair dye become effective on a redhead like Mallory? Has anyone else ever tried to dye their hair blond from red? Well, I have, and it is a very long process...especially with the darker red that Mallory has. Oh, and why does the cover feature Mallory with red hair? Why not impress us with her new California girl looks? Ahh, I shall just have to accept these idiosyncrasies.

Of course, everything wraps up nicely in the end. Keep in mind as it is a Super Special, it needs to be wrapped up and zany, but we won't mention the whole situation in the numbered books. It simply didn't happen. Maybe they were dreams, that would probably be a bit more realistic

I give it five stars out of five stars, simply for the whole kitschy nostalgia and the laughing until I'm crying bits.

Cheryl says

I reread this for Terrible-Book-Club. I'm giving this book 3 stars because it really isn't that terrible for a young adult/children's book. I LOVED BSC when I was a kid! As an adult, however, it's just so silly. The plot is silly and the characters are silly. But none of this detracts from how I felt about these books 20 years ago.

Logan Hughes says

The Baby-sitters Club buys a block of lottery tickets and wins \$10,000, which they use to fly themselves to California to vacation at Dawn's father's house. Their adventures:

Kristy scorns the disorganized We ♥ Kids Club, but slightly changes her tune when Dawn's friends prove their knowledge about the children they sit for.

Mary Anne baby-sits Stephie Roberts, who has asthma. Mary Anne keeps fretting about a possible asthma attack, insisting Stephie can't do things like roller-skate or go on outings, despite the W♥KC sitters assuring her it's fine. This seems weird; hasn't she already learned from Stacey that just because you have a disease it doesn't mean you're sick all the time?

Claudia awkwardly dates a Japanese boy named Terry who is as smart as Janine. She thinks she's not good enough for him, and sort of playacts along, pretending to know what he's talking about. Predictably, things look up as soon as she relaxes and "is herself."

Stacey hangs around with an older crowd, bonding with them over her sudden interest in surfing. They encourage dangerous surfing practices, but in a weird left turn, it's not a surfing accident but instead a car accident that provides the climax of her storyline. Stacey is unhurt but shaken.

Dawn is annoyed by her father's girlfriend, Carol; Carol (Dawn complains) tries too hard to act cool and kid-like. When Carol acts "responsibly" (tattling to Jack Schafer) after Stacey's accident, Dawn sees Carol in a

new light. Personally, I feel like Carol is the worst of both worlds--annoying like a kid and untrustworthy like an adult--but I guess all Dawn wants is some boundaries. And she is incredibly self-aware about it. Jessi visits Derek Masters on the PS 162 set and is asked to be an extra. The idea to pursue acting is dismissed as quickly as it arises. It's the exact same plot as Superbrat but in about two sentences. Mallory decides she wants to be a "real California girl" and dyes her hair using "wash-out" blond dye (I CALL BULLSHIT). She also buys a lot of make-up, even though her parents forbid her to wear it (the laid-back Pikes? Really?) For the rest of the trip she borrows money from Jessi, annoying her. She learns her lesson when the director on the PS 162 set passes her over, and when, after she dyes her hair back to red, a boy checks her out. External validation of her appearance was all she needed!

Like all Super Specials, this book suffers from a lack of focus and an abundance of travel pamphlet product placement (this time, it's Universal Studios instead of Disney), but at least the plotlines are more or less character-organic, with the possible exception of Stacey's.

Ann M.'s Obsessions: Claudia mentions I Love Lucy during the overly detailed description of the plane ride (drink!), and later everyone is impressed by the idea of going to Beverly Hills to drive by Lucille Ball's house.

Timing: It's not made entirely clear, but this seems to be a one-week school break rather than summer vacation. It was released in December of 1990, but there's no mention of Christmas or other holidays. However, the next Super Special New York, New York is explicitly spring break, and there's not enough discontinuity to place this in a different year. Perhaps the girls get a week off after Christmas or something and that's what this is.

Revised Timeline: Winter break(????) of tenth grade.

Rachel Brand says

A fun read, but I definitely prefer the original series - the characterisation in the Super Specials isn't always as good, and the fact that seven storylines are going on all at once sometimes bugs me. Despite this, the Sea City special was one of my favourite books when I was a kid!

Juliana says

loved it as usually,i don't really have bad reviews.I love all the books that i read(sometimes)

lisa says

The baby sitters win the lottery, or I guess, part of the lottery. They use their winnings to travel to California to visit Dawn's family. Of course they have crazy adventures. This was one of the few super specials I didn't like as a kid.

Things I remember from reading this as a kid:

I had assumed the whole time I read this series that Dawn was a vegetarian, but I remember reading that she asks for chicken as her meal on the plane, and thinking "WHAT! Dawn's not a real vegetarian!" Lots of

books do describe her as not eating red meat, but until I read this book (when I was nine or ten) I was sure she was vegetarian.

Mallory dying her hair blonde, and then dying it back to red, and blowing all her money on make-up and then Claudia and Stacey buying it back from her. As a kid I pictured Mallory looking blonde, and trashy with her insane amount of make-up, sort of like the Texans who traipse around Santa Fe.

Stacey being in a car crash and hoping that Carol wouldn't tell anyone about it. Of course Carol tells Dawn's father, who tells Stacey's parents, and Stacey gets a big lecture. As a kid I could not understand what the big deal was since Stacey wasn't driving, and the wreck wasn't her fault.

Things I've considered since reading this as an adult:

I was a little horrified that so much of the plot hinges on the BSC winning a lottery. It seems odd for a thirteen year old girl to buy a lottery ticket every week, especially if that thirteen year old is Claudia Kishi, whose parents are so strict and straight-laced. Because Claudia is under eighteen she has to get her father to buy it for every week, and he apparently agrees. And then when the lottery reaches \$23 million (which I guess was a lot of money back then, but seems quaint compared to the lotteries now) the entire BSC buys tickets (I'm assuming with the parents permission)? Mary Anne's strict father, Mallory's protective parents, they were all ok with thirteen year olds, and eleven year olds buying lottery tickets and agreeing to split the money. And then once they win (even though they only win a smaller jackpot, worth only ten thousand dollars -- again quaint) everyone's parents are ok with letting them blow the money (over \$1000 apiece) on a trip to California. Even in the early 90s one thousand dollars wouldn't have paid for even one semester of college, but why aren't their parents forcing them to put it in some kind of college fund? Instead they swan off to California, and then complain on the airplane that they don't have enough money for first class tickets.

I can't believe that Dawn's father is totally fine with letting seven teenage girls stay at his house for two weeks. I can barely handle two adult guests for one week. I can imagine he had some regrets, since Mallory and Stacey completely cut loose and lose their minds on this trip. Mallory spends ALL her lottery money on make-up (which seemed like an unethical move on the part of the saleswoman who had no problem selling an eleven year old hundreds of dollars worth of cosmetics) and dyes her hair from red to blonde (now that I know about dying hair, I know that Mallory must have bleached her hair, which is a crazy and sometimes iffy process to do from home) and then has to freak out and dye her hair back to red before her trip home. Stacey goes riding to the beach almost every day with her older friends who have only had their licenses for a short time and drive like maniacs, leading to a car accident, of which they are at fault. I can imagine Mr Schafer surveying the wreck of his home after the girls leave, the bathroom sink stained with red hair dye, a bill for Stacey's ambulance ride and emergency room visit, the kitchen depleted of food, and vowing, "Never, ever again will I have so many teenage girls under my roof at one time."

I hated Dawn's attitude in this book. She is so mean to Carol, and hates everything she says and does, when there's no reason to, like being annoyed that Carol says "you guys". What adult does not say "you guys"? What is Dawn's problem? (Although she has a point when Carol's dating advice to Claudia is "Some people try to change their behavior or personality in order to make a relationship work," although she could have been leading up to a greater point that made more sense. She's cut off by Dawn who tells her she's stupid.) Dawn also acts like a shocked old lady when Stacey expresses an interest in learning to surf. ("Surfing is very dangerous," she says, primly.) In later books Dawn becomes obsessed with surfing, and the books are written like she's done it forever, so I found her attitude weird in this book, especially since she introduces Stacey to her friends who like to surf. Of course, it turns out that Stacey is a cocky surfer who thinks she is

better than she is, so maybe Dawn was right to think surfing was dangerous for Stacey, but she still sounds like an old lady.

I had completely forgotten about Claudia's woes of dating a smart boy. She is sure she's not smart enough for him, and makes everything really awkward for herself. I loved this storyline, even though it felt too old for a middle school story. (It reminded me way too much of dating in my early 20s.) Her friends give her good advice about not worrying what Terry thinks of her, and that she is not inferior to him. But instead of trying to find some common ground, and telling Terry about herself Claudia just tries to keep the conversation "smart" and asks him his thoughts on the conflict in the Soviet Union. (Good god, this book is old.) I was fascinated by this storyline that I had mostly forgotten about because it shows how overshadowed Claudia feels by anyone she feels is smarter than her. From what the series has shown of her relationship with Janine, this makes a lot of sense. Claudia assumes all smart people are just like Janine -- hard to talk to, and somewhat patronizing. She doesn't understand that Janine's style of communication is odd, even to intelligent people. Today we would probably say Janine is on the autism spectrum, and that is probably why she has a hard time understanding the rules of socializing. She talks like a textbook, and is obsessed with her computer because that is how she is comfortable processing information. and she doesn't get that it alienates people, and when they get frustrated with her, she just dismisses them. Claudia has grown up with Janine acting like this, and seeing Janine encouraged to be smart and super focused on her classwork by her parents, and she assumes that anyone who loves school, and takes advanced classes acts this way, and that it's a good way to be, since it shows how smart you are, and smart people are better than everyone else. She doesn't want to disappoint the cute boy who seems interested in her with what she thinks of as her lowbrow interests (and she probably thinks this way because Janine or her parents have at some point or another dismissed them as such) so she does her best to keep him interested with "smart" topics. It never once occurs to her that people who take advanced classes in school, and who enjoy foreign films and French food might have interests in things like old movies, or artists. She calls Janine in a panic after two bad dates with Terry to get some talking points about current affairs ("You know, like greenhouses and stuff. . . And some wall came down," is how she sums up her knowledge of current affairs). Janine has to point out to Claudia that smart people may be smart, but they like the idea of Hollywood and movie stars just as much as anyone, and that he would probably enjoy a day of sightseeing in Hollywood. So Claudia invites Terry to look for famous people's houses with her, and they have a great time. And of course, I loved that Terry is a geek for classic Hollywood. He's more excited to see the home of Cornell Wilde than the home of Harrison Ford. I'm assuming he's Asian since his last name is Liang, so I now I have a crush on a forgotten BSC character. I'm guessing we never hear anything about Terry again.

Years ago, when 30 Rock first aired the show that featured Jack Donaghy's mother, I was watching it with a bunch of people. Everyone liked Mrs Donaghy so much that we looked up the actress, and I remember someone saying "Her name is Elaine Stritch." "Who's that? Never heard of her," everyone else said, but like a robot programmed for this exact moment I said, "Oh, she's a famous Broadway actress. I think she was in Woody Allen movies also." I had no idea how these words came to me until I reread this book, and realized I must have remembered the information from reading this book, since Elaine Stritch is the guest star on the TV show Derek Masters stars in. It was a weird moment.

I will never understand why the baby sitters panic so much at the thought of asthma. Mary Anne is so nervous baby sitting for Stephie, who's sweet, smart, and energetic, but she has asthma, so. . . Mary Anne thinks she can't do anything. From what I recall the baby sitters take this attitude toward Abby when she joins the club much later in the series. They are terrified that she isn't fit to baby sit because what if she has

an asthma attack on the job? Never mind that one of their original members has diabetes, which is arguably a much more serious and dangerous disease than asthma. Eventually Mary Anne realizes that Stephie can be as active as any kid, but she still freaks when she has to deal with Stephie's mild asthma attack, and is relieved that she doesn't have to baby sit for her anymore. It annoys me that the baby sitters can't handle regular children, just the perfect robotic children of Stoneybrook.

Nancy says

In which a group of 13 year olds win the lottery and go to OMGCALIFORNIA. STFUDawn hates Carol - who, at 32, acts pretty much the same way I do, and I'm 34, so STFU, Dawn. Stacey surfs, Claudia falls in LUV with another Asian, K. Ron takes over the We *stupid hearts symbol that drives me crazy* Kids Club, and MA frets. In other news, Jessi is an extra who surprisingly experiences no racism, and Mel-ry is a complete asshole. Seriously, I hate Mal so much in this book. I want to maim her.

Swankivv says

The thing I remember most vividly about this book was that the girls won the lottery and decided to go to California, and Mallory felt like the ugly duckling so she spent a bunch of money and time trying to look super hot with pricey beauty treatments and hairstyles. Because of this, when the girls get to be extras in a movie for like a second, Mallory is excluded because she looks too fake and they want the crowd to look natural. She's totally bummed. I remember being surprised that anyone would sell that much expensive crap to a preteen, but I guess it's not that surprising. Oh, and since she threw all her money away on makeup she keeps leaning on Jessi to cover her. Jessi almost doesn't have her own plot because most of it involves a) being ticked at Mallory and b) doing the exact same "considering going into acting/deciding nah, she likes ballet" thing she did in a previous book. Can't she do both?

I don't remember the other storylines quite as vividly. But I remember that since this is California they of course have to go to Dawn's house, and meet up with Dawn's old friends who have their own babysitting club. You'd think these kids would want to do something besides babysit on their vacation, but of course they have to work the designated subject matter in, so they decide it'll be fun to attend Dawn's friends' club meetings and Kristy tries to tell everyone what to do because apparently the only person on the whole planet who knows how to run a babysitting club is Kristy Thomas. Of course you know she's setting herself up to fail when she tries to prove that she's the greatest thing since sliced bread by taking a sitting job with kids who are known to misbehave constantly, and she has to eat her words. Oh, and Mary Anne gets to sit for a kid she relates to because they had a similar dead mother/protective father situation, but Mary Anne flips out over the kid's asthma which just goes to show you how it's hard not to be "over" protective sometimes.

The Stacey plot is kind of annoying because she just decides that she's obsessed with surfing and starts craving high-risk behavior, including getting into a car with a guy who drives aggressively. As soon as this enters the plot you KNOW there's going to be an accident. Well, no surprise, there is. And of course this teaches her a lesson. If someone seems to like high-risk behavior, they're bad and don't hang out with them. 'Kay. (Stacey gets barked at by Carol, Dawn's dad's partner, which makes Dawn happy because she's been all grouchy about the fact that her dad's significant other is kind of young and possibly immature, so this brings new respect to the table.) And since this is *Baby-Sitters Club*, and a vacation, someone has to do something ridiculous over boys. That would be Claudia. She tries to change herself for a boy who's really smart and

sophisticated, and of course learns that's the wrong thing to do.

The thing I hate most about these books is that the "lessons" they learn on several levels always happen to be intertwined and related while teaching the same lesson in a parallel fashion, and that made them feel constructed rather than lived. I know I'm probably expecting too much, but just because a book's for kids does not mean it should get a pass on presenting life and human nature unrealistically to make a point.

Debra says

For my written review, please check out the link below:

Debra's Book Cafe

Debs :-)
