



Kristy and the Walking Disaster

Ann M. Martin

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They're lean, they're mean, they're the pride of Stoneybrook. Who are they? They're Kristy's Krushers!

When Kristy sees how much her little brothers and sisters want to play on a softball team, she organizes a ragtag team of her own. They may not be champions, with Jackie Rodowsky, walking disaster, on the team, but at least they have team spirit!

Now Bart's Bashers have challenged the Krushers to a game. The Bashers really are lean and mean . . . but the worst part of it all is that Kristy has a giant crush on the Basher's coach.

Kristy and the Walking Disaster Details

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From Reader Review Kristy and the Walking Disaster for online ebook

Julie Decker says

Kristy decides to round up the neighborhood's baseball enthusiasts who are too young for Little League and make a ragtag baseball team out of them. But when another team disrespects their efforts, Kristy and the opposing team's coach end up going to head to head. Kristy wrestles with whether she likes the other coach, and in the meantime, she supports each of her kids and teaches them about sportsmanship while improving their skills.

One VERY good lesson in this book--which inspired me to give it a third star--was that when Bart was a jerk to Kristy, she actually cooled off on liking him. Too many books aimed at young girls have guys treating the girls terribly and they respond by chasing him desperately or trying to change themselves to please him. But Kristy? She's like, "That guy's a jerk." However, the kids were put in little boxes for the purpose of this book; each had a single defining feature that held them back in baseball, and each had to overcome said obstacle for the team to feel successful. And even though the first book that featured Matt--the baseball-playing deaf kid--did a passable job not making his whole identity about deafness, this book sort of undid that (even though he's a fantastic player, a standout even, and his deafness is a drawback only in that the other kids who don't know sign language can't easily communicate with him). It's also nice that they can live by "it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game" without actually having to win the game to embody that spirit.

Elaine Mullane says

I used to love the Babysitter's Club! My friends and I used to swap them between us when I was in primary school. They were so popular at the time, there was a waiting list at the library if you wanted to read them in chronological order! I used to be allowed to buy one book a week on a Friday when I was younger; this was usually an Enid Blyton, Roald Dahl, Point Horror or one of these! I would love to revisit them at some stage, just for nostalgia's sake!

Shira says

this is my first time reading this book

kristy starts a ragtag softball team (kristy's krushers) comprised of kids who are too young or otherwise ill-equipped for little league. she meets bart taylor, coach of bart's bashers, a team that is slightly more uniform in age and ability. they decide to have the krushers and bashers play a game against one another, and kristy crushes (not krushes) on bart. the titular walking disaster is of course jackie rodowsky, but he's not really the most significant character in the book so I'm not sure why he gets the title spot.

highlights:

- introduction of the krushers, bart and his bashers, and the kuhn kids
- really great cover art. it doesn't say who did it but I assume it's hedges soileau. the faces are so distinctive, and they all actually look the correct age.

- this very kristy moment: kristy thinks the good weather is a good omen, but realizes that bart is experiencing the same weather and maybe he thinks it's a good omen too. "that's why omens are stupid."
- introduction of claire pike's baseball attitude. she throws tantrums and screams NOFE-AIR!

lowlights/nitpicks:

- biggest issue of all: kristy is gay. I'm sorry, but I am not buying this huge crush she has on bart. I would believe that she would think she has a crush on him because her friends tease her about it or something, but there is no way she would act the way she does about bart in this book.
- thirty-seven is not that old to have a kid, kristy. also is your mom really only thirty-seven? that's really young (but not unheard of) to have four kids, one of whom is a senior in high school.
- kristy narrates that the dues pay for two things: kid kits and parties. I'm sorry, how did you get to that bsc meeting? remember charlie, your brother who you pay out of the dues to drive you there?
- a bernese could never "look like a mouse" in comparison to a rottie. both are large dogs. shannon is still pretty young, but she's probably 7-9 months old by this point, which means she's probably 70 or 80 pounds at least. even if bart's rottie is a particularly large one, that's still 110 or 120 pounds (much of which isn't in height but is in muscle), which is still not large enough for a 70/80 pound dog to look tiny in comparison (not to mention to fit under a dog's undercarriage without crouching)
- the bashers are such jerks! bart is such an idiot!

no outfits

jackie's disasters:

- spills pink lemonade
- pitches a normal pitch that somehow ends up on the neighbor's roof's gutter
- while getting another ball, knocks things over in the garage
- trips over his shoelace
- trips running home during a softball practice game
- ball slams into his face, and he loses a tooth
- hits a home run that crashes through the principal's window
- runs into the catcher's cage
- trips over the bat
- swings a bat that slips out of his hands and knocks into the refreshments table
- bat flies out of his hands and almost hits the pitcher for the bashers
- breaks a lamp

snacks in claudia's room:

- cheese doodles in art supplies under the bed
- pack of mini candy bars in art supplies under the bed
- bag of doritos (n.s.)
- box of mallomars (n.s.)
- gummi bears (n.s.)
- package of twinkies (n.s.)

Swankivy says

When I picked this one up I expected to not really enjoy it because I don't care for books about "disasters" and contrived clumsiness, but I have to admit I have a weakness for inspirational sports movies and this kind of reminded me of *The Sandlot*. Kristy has a clumsy sitting client and invites him--along with some other neighborhood kids who are too young for Little League--to join her ragtag softball team, Kristy's Krushers.

Annoyingly, there had to be a non-sports element as well, so the author threw in a romance--Kristy developed a crush on an opposing team's male coach. Great. (I thought it was cool, though, that unlike a lot of girls her age, Kristy actually starts disliking her crush when he does jerky things.)

I didn't like that the children on the Krushers were really stereotyped. Every child had something specific that made baseball difficult, and was defined in this book by whatever that trait was. (It annoyed me that the deaf kid had his deafness invoked as a setback in playing baseball, when actually baseball is Matt's THING and the only problem he has regarding deafness is that not many kids can talk to him.)

I did like that even though the inspirational sports "thing" was played out--the underdog team plays a better, more practiced team and gets scoffed at until they show them what they're made of--they didn't actually come from behind and WIN. And they weren't all pissed off about losing--they were legitimately glad that they did as well as they did, and that was cute and cool.

Ciara says

hated this book as a kid, hate it as an adult. this is the one where kristy starts her ragtag softball team, kristy's krushers (although obnoxious brat karen brewer insists on spelling it, "kristy's crushers," because she is all about proper spelling). her team consists of kids too young or uncoordinated or otherwise unfit for little league, including jamie newton (afraid of the ball), calire pike (prone to baseball-related tantrums), david michael thomas (a klutz), jake kuhn (chubby), matt braddock (deaf...& this prevents him from joining little league how, exactly, in a way that wouldn't result in a lawsuit?), gabbie perkins (two & a half years old), etc. & let's not forget poor jackie rodowsky, the titular "walking disaster". kristy spends a lot of time observing that jackie's sneakers are untied, his jeans are muddy, his hair is mussed, there's a hole in his t-shirt, etc. uh...he's a seven-year-old boy. lay off! poor jackie. the sitters are so mean to him. he does "disastrous" things like hit a home run into the woods so the ball is lost (dude, at least he hit a home run!), fouling the ball so it breaks a window at the school (which, if it were that easy for a seven-year-old to do that, the ball field is probably too close to the school & it's not really jackie's fault), tossing the bat & knocking the legs out from under the refreshment table at the big game (the refreshment people should have set up further away--i mean, how far can a little kid really throw a bat?), etc. they just never cut him any slack.

the other part of the plot involves the krushers' rivalry with another ragtag softball team, bart's bashers. the bashers are generally older, better players, & all boys. they are just a smidgen too young for little league, i guess. it seems unsporting for the bashers to even play against the krushers, but true to the formula of all underdog sports fables everywhere, the bashers underestimate the krushers' tenacity & determination, & krushers fight to win & nearly succeed. & it's the nearly-winning that really matters to the krushers, who are delighted to not have been defeated & ground into the dirt.

the bashers are coached by bart taylor, a thirteen-year-old boy who lives in kristy's neighborhood. kristy gets a big crush on him. but she is not impressed when bart & some of his bashers check out a krushers practice session & make fun of some of her players. they call jake a "fatso" (that's sad! leave the fat kids alone!) & matt a "dummy" (that is beyond the pale--i would have smacked the ugly right off those bashers). kristy is disturbed by the fact that bart doesn't seem to notice his players fucking with her team & her crush fades. good for kristy! but it comes back later when he offers to walk her home.

& thus begins the sad fact that we have to deal with at least a little boring softball crap in every single kristy book for the rest of the series. horrifying. but perhaps this is why i joined a softball team myself when i was eight. in our first big game, the pitcher hit me in the knuckles with the ball & broke one of my fingers. i never lifted a bat again.

Natalí says

The last of this batch of BSC Kindle read. I read it pretty quickly (don't really know why) but I remembered having read it before. I actually remember almost nothing of the storyline except for the presence of Bart. The highlight of the book is just that... Kristy likes a boy. After so much complaining (in the last books) about how she dislikes them, there comes a boy that can make her change her mind... Now I'm realizing that, as I finished the book more than a month ago, I've already blocked the rest of the storyline :P Oh well, its one of those books that features a lot of the little kids together (the Krushers!!) and we have mini cheerleaders! Bring it On!

April says

Fantastic books for young girls getting into reading!! Great stories about friendship and life lessons. The characters deal with all sorts of situations and often find responsible solutions to problems.

I loved this series growing up and wanted to start my own babysitting business with friends. Great lessons in entrepreneurship for tweens.

The books may be dated with out references to modern technology but the story stands and lessons are still relevant.

Awesome books that girls will love! And the series grows with them! Terrific Author!

Kristine (The Writer's Inkwell) says

Posted originally on my blog:
The Writer's Inkwell

Why is it that just as I'm starting to remember why I loved this series, I get to a book that makes me wonder why the hell this was ever a popular series. Of course, I was really young when I originally read this book. Probably no older than seven to be exact. But for the life of me, I did not recall Kristy talking so horribly about the kids on her team. At one point, she's mentally repeating what the craptastic kids on the Bashers team said. And though I know that was more of her own self doubt... it's disturbing to see her call someone a fatso and what not.

But worst is the fact is titled like it's all about Jackie. But in truth, he's barely part of the story and his accidents are mentioned in passing as a recap. But read the description on the back of the book... why isn't it all about the Walking Disaster on Kristy's team? Heck, it doesn't even mention Jackie! This kind of disjointed story telling is exactly why these books read so young and why so many of us are going back over them and shaking our heads.

I was never really a fan of Kristy's, but had I been, I would have hated her after rereading this book.

Jennifer says

Souvenir du primaire... qui aurait dû y rester. ;-) Ha ha ha!

lisa says

Kristy forms her famous Krushers in this book. This was the first of several books that bored me out of my mind since they went on and on about softball, and described the games these little children played in great detail. Reading about softball isn't interesting even when the players are good. I read this when I was nine or ten, but I could have been older because I'm sure I put off reading it since it seemed so boring.

Things I remember from reading this as a kid:

The only thing I remember very clearly is that Karen throws a fit because Krusher is supposed to be spelled with a C. She eventually makes her own Crushers t-shirt. One of the only Babysitter's Little Sister books (the "Karen books" as they were known to me and my friends) I read growing up was about Karen being such a good speller that she wins spelling bee after spelling bee, and that she becomes more and more obnoxious with each win. Eventually all her friends hate her, her teacher has to lecture her about humility, and she loses the state spelling bee to a girl who is the embodiment of humility and good sportsmanship. This plot did not endear me to Karen, and did not inspire me to read more of her series. I can so picture her being the only one lame enough to spell her team's name korrekctly, I mean correctly.

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

One of the last BSC books I ever read (and therefore one I remember really clearly) is Kristy + Bart = ? when Kristy feels pressured to be Bart's girlfriend, and is uncomfortable with that idea. At the time I read it I knew without a doubt (and was pretty mad at myself for not figuring it out earlier) that Kristy was gay. So it was interesting to read this book (which I have little memory of) and see the beginning of her relationship with Bart. Knowing what I now know about Kristy it's odd to read, which may be the plot and writing of this book felt uncharacteristically clunky and stilted. This is writing that became more prevalent as the series went on, and the ghost writers came in, but this book was written by Ann M Martin herself. I'm guessing she's not a big fan of baseball, or of writing about Kristy's huge (strange) crush on a handsome, athletic male. Kristy's crush on Bart comes across as something given to her character for the sole purpose of having Bart in her life. They could just as easily be friends without any romantic tension, especially since Kristy always seems uncomfortable with it. Later in the series everyone makes a big deal about how Bart is only Kristy's "sort of boyfriend". Kristy herself always seems more comfortable thinking of Bart as her friend, and occasionally, a boy who like-likes her, and is therefore a good option to take to school dances. In the late 1980s, early 1990s, in a suburban Connecticut town that's as conservative as Stonybrook, I would imagine it's a lot easier to think of attending a middle school dance on the arm of boy you don't feel that passionately about (but that you consider a good friend), than on the arm of a girl you have a massive crush on. I like to imagine that Kristy grew into her sexuality without much fanfare, and settled down with a woman who loves collies, and is happy to let Kristy take their lives in any direction Kristy seems fit. I especially hope this future for Kristy after reading this awkward attempt at her crush on a boy.

Kristy says that Watson loves baseball. I swear to God that later in the series he doesn't know a thing about baseball, and Kristy makes fun of him. Am I making this up? Loving baseball seems like such an un-Watson type thing.

Claudia comes to "help" Kristy with Krusher practice, and acts exactly the way I would if I was pressured to help my friend coach a softball team of misfits. She wanders around aimlessly, eats candy, and checks out

her nails. If she had had a phone she would have been posting things on Instagram and Twitter: #sobored #favor #softballsux

Bart acts like a jerk in this book, and I'm surprised Kristy's crush on him lasted longer than this book. He spies on her team, and he brings his Bashers with him to make fun of the Krushers by laughing at the girls, and calling Matt Braddock a dummy. In this day and age they would be suspended from play. I'm surprised that bossy, loud-mouth Kristy let them get away with it, but maybe she wanted to set a good example for the kids. (Again, just letting kids be mean doesn't sound like Kristy, which is another reason this books sounds like it was written by a ghost writer.) Luckily, Haley Braddock steps up and threatens the kid who called her deaf brother a dummy.

Samantha says

I have always loved baseball, ever since I was a kid. Loved to go to games, loved to play it, just...you know. I was a sports child who grew into a sports adult.

I hated this book back then, and I hate this book now. The Kristy softball stuff was always SO BORING, and this is an entire book about her starting the Krushers. It is literally nothing but Claire Pike tantrums, Jackie Rodowsky doing klutzy stuff, and just general dullness. I am so glad it's over and I can move on with my re-read.

Ashley says

I'm generally not a fan of sports books, but gosh if the Baby-sitters Club didn't make a great one. The story is cute, and even though (spoiler alert!) the Krushers didn't win the big game, they tried, and it tugged at my sports-hating heartstrings a little bit.

Also how is Gabbie Perkins on the team and speaking coherently at two and a half, when Marine Barrett is essentially a lump at the tender age of two? Gabbie is playing baseball in an organized setting, while Marnie gums down Cheerios in her stroller. There's some major Perkins favouring here, AMM! (As if that's news to anyone lol.)

Meredith says

You know when you attend a professional baseball game in the summer, it's mildly interesting because you can eat nachos, paint your nails, get a tan and sing along to whatever they blare from the speakers? But when you watch a professional baseball game on TV it's a bit more boring because you lose some of the experience? Now imagine reading a book about a softball team that is half comprised of toddlers/preschoolers (literally Gabbie is 2.5) written at about a third grade reading level. See where I'm going with this?

If I don't hit my monthly reading goal, I cheat by reading a few BSC books. Clearly this has been happening a lot lately, since I'm on number 20. I haven't picked these up since 4th or 5th grade, which is well over 20 years now, and sad to say that they were better when I was 8. There are little aspects of these books that feel really dated and out of place. Like the fact that all the moms except Dr Johanssen stay at home and only need

babysitters in the afternoons so they can run errands and go to doctor's appointments. Or that the deaf kid is called a "dummy" in this book without severe reprimand.

Kristy's books aren't really my favorite, and this one is one of the weaker books so far. Although I haven't gotten to that Abby BS yet.

Sarah says

3.5 Stars

Logan Hughes says

Kristy forms a ragtag baseball team.

The title for this is insanely wrong, since Jackie Rodowsky (the walking disaster who is introduced, and gets more screentime, in #10) is not at all the focus of this story. In fact, it's about Kristy starting her baseball team for kids who are not that good at baseball, the Krushers, and it's exactly as much about Jackie as it is about any of the other kids on the team, including David Michael and Karen, the Papadakises, three Pikes, Matt Braddock, the Barretts, the Kuhns, and several others. The story follows Kristy's idea for the team; organization and practice; meeting Bart Taylor, a neighborhood boy who runs a team called the Bashers; and the first Krusher/Basher game.

This is the most remarkably one-track Baby-Sitters Club novel I've read. There is no B-plot, and all of the baby-sitting interludes are just more Krushers practice with an intro written by some member of the club who happens to be sitting some member of the team. Since I'm not really interested in baseball, this also makes it one of the least interesting books for me.

Okay, technically, there is a romance subplot--Kristy claims to have a crush on Bart--but it doesn't really come from anywhere or go anywhere or affect Kristy's behavior. It feels unconvincing and wrong, but maybe that's just the queer theorist in me talking.

Timing: During the school year. Most of the action takes place outside, so it's not the dead of winter. I believe spring is the traditional time for baseball stories. We'll say early April, since March is probably still pretty much mid-winter for Connecticut. Funny how we were in October for so long but skipped almost completely over the winter. But we'll be in April for a good long time, too, since Dawn's spring break--almost certainly in late April--isn't until 23. I'm not sure how I feel about the trend of sticking four or five books in a month, because while it certainly conserves time (so we won't end up with a revised timeline of 40-year-old baby-sitters), it strains credulity: most of these books occur over several weeks, but none of them mention the events of the others' storylines as occurring concurrent, and indeed many mention them as if they have already happened.
