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When Lou McNally was last in Stoneybrook, she was the Worst Kid Ever. Now she's back...and Abby is going to be her baby-sitter. She's prepared for the worst, but Lou is a perfect angel. Is the new Lou too good to be true?

Abby and the Best Kid Ever Details

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From Reader Review Abby and the Best Kid Ever for online ebook

Sally says

Lou was more fun when she was naughty, and Abby's not a real baby-sitter anyway.

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!

Marian says

I don't remember ever having read this one before, which isn't all that surprising since I'd pretty much outgrown the BSC by the time Abby appeared.

It takes Abby entirely too long to figure out what's wrong with Lou, and I found myself interested more in Sean Addison's attitude problems anyway.

Tanya says

Ah, the BSC. I think it was a mistake to add Abby to the series. Don't get me wrong, I like the character, but she's too written to please too many people. TONS of characteristics, to the point that you end up with contradictions, or things that just don't fit. Bad asthma and allergies, star athlete, slacker, great student, twin, wild hair, Jewish, practical joker/funny, loves Elvis and R&B, damaged due to the death of her dad. It's just too much.

Meh.

Maria Elmvang says

Really not a fan of Abby, but I liked the plotlines where she wasn't the main focus.

Kara says

Meh. Abby's annoying.

Samantha says

This was so boring I was falling asleep reading it, which is horrible. It was just completely dull, and I could care less about Lou moving back or the Addisons and their book burning sociopath child moving away. It was just awful.

Nancy says

In which, once again, no real sympathy is shown for a kid who was in foster care. And STFU, Abby.

Ciara says

man, i sure am relieved that i only have like twenty books left to recap, because they are seriously going downhill.

this one is all about how lou mcnally, terror of kristy & the worst kid ever has moved back to stoneybrook with her brother & adoptive parents (an aunt & uncle). the mcnallys call the babysitters club for sitting help while they settle into their new house & complete renovations, & abby gets the first job. she's a little nervous, because the other babysitters have updated her on lou's well-deserved reputation, so she is surprised to find lou well-behaved, tidy, & helpful. in fact, she may be a little bit too helpful, trying to carry boxes that are too heavy for her & constantly being underfoot in an effort to make herself useful. abby tells the other sitters that lou has changed. she thinks maybe it's the positive influence of being reunited with her brother & having a loving home life.

meanwhile, abby is struggling a bit in school & has decided to do a black history day project to try to bring her grade up. she pitches a plan to do some kind of educational project with a bunch of sitting charges. her teacher is skeptical, because it sounds like abby is long on good intentions but short of actual ideas, but abby insists that she'll pull it off & it will be great. she has a brainstorming session with a bunch of kids, & nicky pike suggests a project about the underground railroad. abby likes this idea & invites all the kids to the library to help do research. i don't know why a) abby would want a bunch of kids to take care of when she's trying to research her extra-credit project, nor b) why the hell the kids are so pumped about the project. sounds pretty boring to me.

abby has a big stack of books ready to be checked out, & she asks lou to grab another one off a cart. unfortunately, in lou's zeal to be helpful, she knocks over the entire cart. abby instead dispatches lou to gather up the books abby chose so they'll be ready for check-out, but lou misunderstands & puts a bunch of them back on the shelves. abby knows lou didn't mean to be disruptive, but she is still a little frustrated by the fact that asking lou to help seems to be doing more harm than good. this is why you should just go to the

library alone, abby.

finally abby decides that she will film a dramatization of some of stoneybrook's key roles during the underground railroad years, starring the kids. she writes up a script (lou accidentally erases a big chunk of it), assigns roles, & cobbles together props & costumes. while filming an outdoor scene, lou walks right through the frame, bearing a thermos of cider for abby. the scene is wrecked & abby kind of snaps at lou, telling her to stop trying to be so helpful all the time, & also to stop apologizing for every mistake she makes. abby tells lou to basically lighten the hell up.

so lou goes back to being a bad kid. she starts disrupting abby's movie on purpose with silly pranks & jokes. at one point, she leaps out from behind a door during filming & startles abby that she drops the camera. luckily, jay catches it, so everything is okay, but abby is really frustrated with lou & wants to get to the bottom of her behavior.

during another sitting job, lou accidentally drops a plate & it breaks. she completely loses her shit & can't stop crying. she finally confesses that she's afraid that if she isn't perfect & helpful all the time, her aunt & uncle will send her back to foster care. jay tells her that they would never do that, they legally adopted both him & lou, & he would never let them do that anyway. abby is just kind of sitting there, not knowing what to do, when mr. & mrs. mcnally get home. they are quick to comfort lou & assure her that they would never give her up, no matter what happened. this magically works, erasing all the trauma of being abandoned by her mother, her father dying, being shipped off into foster care, being separated from her brother, etc, & she starts acting like a normal kid again.

abby turns in her movie & gets an A.

in the B-plot, the addisons are moving to seattle so mrs. addisons can accept a job offer. claudia takes it surprisingly hard, i guess because we're supposed to think that she & corrie have really bonded about being artists. all the babysitters are like, "we'll miss corrie so much!...oh yeah, & sean." the addisons hire the club a lot of sit while they pack up the house, & while corrie is as good as gold, sean acts out & is a big jerk. he finally confronts mary anne & accuses her & all the other babysitters of hating him. hey, sean? if you think someone might hate you, one way to definitely make them hate you for sure is to be a total dick about it. mary anne denies hating sean, but he doesn't believe it. the babysitters decide to convince sean they don't hate him by making him "king for an hour". really? an hour? hey, sean, you're right, they hate you. they take him sledding & he has a great time...right up until the end when stacey says, "whew, i'm glad that's over." sean takes that as confirmation that they all hate him.

the babysitters have a going-away party for the addisons, & sean spends the whole party moping in a corner. finally he starts crying & admits that he'll miss the babysitters. they tell him they'll miss him too & i guess it's all good. but i'm sure they won't be sad to see the back of his library-book-burning, tantrum-throwing, running-away, mentally unstable self. they wonder what he'll be like when he gets older. one word: columbine.

incidentally, jay mcnally is eleven years old, & the mcnallys still hire the club to babysit for him. he should form a support group with tiffany kilbourne & ben hobart.

Logan Hughes says

Lou McNally, formerly the Worst Kid Ever (Kristy and the Worst Kid Ever), moves back to Stoneybrook with her family. (You'll recall at the end of her first book, she left the Papadakises' foster care when her aunt

and uncle were located, and she was reunited with her brother there.) Abby's never met Lou, but she's heard reports, and she's alarmed when she meets an incredibly quiet, polite, docile child. Lou seems super-controlled. Even her brother Jay is weirded out.

Abby gets neighborhood kids involved in her school project, in which she's directing a video play about the Underground Railroad for Black History Month. Lou throws herself into helping, but her efforts generally backfire--she puts away books Abby still needs, for example, and she brings Abby a drink while she's filming, ruining the shot. Lou is highly-strung, freaking out with apologies when she inadvertently causes trouble. But when Abby tells her to lighten up, she seems to get pissed, and reverts to her "bad kid" ways temporarily, stirring up chaos with the kids in the video.

Eventually, with no real help from Abby, Jay gets Lou to admit that she's scared her aunt and uncle will send her away if she's not perfect. Lou is crying in Abby's arms when her family returns home and Abby leaves it to them to sort things out.

Abby's video gets a standing ovation when she presents it, and she pays lip service to learning not to be so controlling, because it wasn't as important for her video to turn out perfectly as it was to have fun, but really it seems like the lesson is that being controlling is awesome because your video turns out great.

There is also a subplot in which Corrie and Sean Addison are moving away, and Sean believes the BSC will be glad to see the back of him. They try to convince him that he's wrong, even though it's kind of true. We also get a few glimpses of the Nicholls family who will be moving into their house, including Mr. Nicholls, who yells at his kids a lot for minor infractions. I sort of feel like they sometimes work in elements from the next book in the series because they can, without thinking through the implications. For example, Mr. Nicholls' kids are pretty clearly nervous all the time because their father is mean, and if you've read the next book, you know he's abusive. Situated in this book, it plants the seed in your mind that Lou is being abused, which is the opposite of the point they're trying to make.

It's interesting to see Lou again and a story in which she is now super-careful because she believes that happy, apparently stable family situations are inevitably fleeting is a cool idea. I'm not sure why this was Abby's book (why not Kristy or Mary Anne, who have established emotional connections to her?) As I mentioned, Abby's plotline would have been more powerful if she actually learned a relevant lesson about control, e.g. by having all her actors quit when she was too hard on them. Instead, she spends a huge amount of time dithering about what she wants her project to be, while Kristy warns her she needs to shape up and come up with a plan. All this seems to come to nothing and have little to do with the plot. It just feels like stalling, as if the writer were coming up with the story in realtime and then not editing...hey!

Lingering Question: Jay is eleven, the same age as Mallory and Jessi, so why do the McNallys hire a baby-sitter? Jay doesn't need one himself, and you'd think he could look after his eight-year-old sister if he's not particularly interested in baby-sitting as a career choice. He seems perfectly responsible and he has a close, protective relationship with Lou. It's not like Lou is particularly rambunctious these days.

Cover Art Oddity: The cover shows Lou sitting primly in a white dress, which made me wary that (like the first book did, to a certain extent) this book was going to shore up the lame correlation of boys' clothes = bad kid and girls' clothes = good kid. However, Lou's "good kid" clothes in the book aren't particularly feminine. She wears headbands, but other than that it seems to be tidy rugby shirts and corduroys in matching colors. (Her "bad kid" clothes aren't described.) At one point, though, she's described as wearing Jenny Prezzioso's style, and then the outfit that follows isn't like Jenny at all, so maybe there were last-minute edits changing frilly dresses to clean playclothes, because some blessed soul in the writers' room had my exact concern.

Timing: February (Black History Month)

Revised Timeline: Because the presentations end up getting shown at the Community Center, there's no

particular reason the video has to be a school project, but I'm not sure why else Abby would do a video. Maybe, in an effort to figure out her calling while working some lame job, Abby is taking a continuing ed video production class. That would explain why she has access to a camera and editing equipment and knows how to use them, which facts are just assumed here.

Shira says

this is my first time reading this book.

in this book by ghostwriter Nola Thacker, two new families are moving to town with kids that are bsc client ages: the nichollses (whose father seems abusive, foreshadowing Claudia and the Terrible Truth) and the mcNallys. does that name seem familiar? yes, lou mcNally from Kristy and the Worst Kid Ever is BACK, and now she's trying to be the best kid ever and failing miserably. she keeps overdoing it while trying to help and accidentally making things worse -- like when someone comes to a party at your house and insists on helping you clean up even though you tell them you can handle the cleanup and then they use a scouring pad on your nonstick pan and then your nonstick pan is irretrievably damaged (not like I'm speaking from personal experience or anything...). abby has decided to include the bsc kids in her black history month extra credit project, which gives lou even more chances to ruin things for abby with her good intentions.

abby has no focus and no idea what she wants to do for her project, and eventually after kristy sideeyes her a couple times for her lack of organization she decides to focus on stories about white saviors helping black enslaved people escape through the underground railroad. because black history month is obviously about white people, right? eventually lou cracks and makes it clear that she's scared her adoptive parents (her aunt and uncle) will give her up. they tell her they love her unconditionally. so that's resolved. the subplot is that sean addison from Mary Anne and the Library Mystery and Claudia, Queen of the Seventh Grade freaks out because he thinks that the bsc won't miss him when the addisons move away. because he is one of those kids who pours salt on snails and will grow up to do worse things, possibly because he has some of the most neglectful parents in the entire bsc universe (see Claudia and the Sad Goodbye).

highlights:

-soapbox feminist abby, on presidents day and mlk day: "where is a day for the women? why don't we have susan b. anthony day? or sojourner truth day?"

lowlights/nitpicks:

-abby suggests that since philadelphia is the city of brotherly love, there should be a city named philasororia for city of sisterly love. but that would be combining greek and latin roots. the greek word for city of sisterly love would ALSO be philadelphia, because adelphi means sibling (and in actuality philadelphia means the city of siblingly love). can you tell I'm married to a classicist?

-abby says "easy as pie" and stacey says "pi? r squared?" but that's nonsense. pi r squared is the function for solving the area of a circle, but a true math nerd wouldn't have brought that function up out of nowhere and would instead have said, "3.1415926?" or "archimedes' constant?" or something. can you tell I'm a math nerd?

-lou knocks over a cart when trying to take a book from it. sounds like that library has flimsy carts. a lawsuit waiting to happen, cause a kid is DEFINITELY gonna get injured by it. it's not lou's fault at all.

-like the simpsons episode where the whole black history month project is about lisa trying to convince people that her family were white saviors, i.e. making bhm about white people, abby portrays all of the white people saving the black enslaved people in her 60 minute video project. I guess you can't portray the actual enslaved people when you live in a town as white as stoneybrook, but still...smdh

-abby claims her movie is a documentary, which it's clearly not. or I guess one aspect of it is the making of

the movie itself, which I guess could be a documentary, but that's only one part of the movie

outfits

claudia outfit:

"She had on a red tunic with an orange-red braided belt (that she had made herself, naturally). Her leggings were a rose-pink color, and she had on black shiny flats with tiny rosettes on the toe. She'd pulled her hair back with a large red silk scarf that matched the tunic. Her earrings were silver snowflakes, also homemade."

stacey outfit:

"Stacey was wearing a cropped sweater in dark blue-green that looked good with her blue eyes. She also had on a short skirt (black faux suede), pale blue tights, and very cool-looking black suede boots that came to just above her knees. Tiny gold knot earrings completed her ensemble."

snacks in claudia's room:

- m&ms (n.s.)
 - chocolate trail mix (n.s.)
 - garlic nugget pretzels (n.s.)
-