



## The Fire at Mary Anne's House

*Ann M. Martin*

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When Mary Anne is woken up in the middle of the night by her cat, Tigger, she immediately knows something's wrong. Then she smells the smoke...and hears her father yelling her name. Mary Anne's house is on fire - and she makes it out right before everything burns down.

Now Mary Anne doesn't know what to do. All of her possessions are...gone. Her house is...destroyed. Will Mary Anne be able to get her old life back? Will her family move away from Stoneybrook...for good?

## **The Fire at Mary Anne's House Details**

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Author : Ann M. Martin

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## **From Reader Review The Fire at Mary Anne's House for online ebook**

### **Rachel Brand says**

To be honest, as the final book in the series, this was a bit of a let-down. It didn't seem fair to see the series end this way, but I guess that's because the publisher wanted to hook us into reading the spin-off series about the original characters. The book on its own dealt with the topic of the house fire very well, and the sub-plot about writing an essay on babysitting for a competition was pretty touching, but considering this was the last ever "real" BSC book, I feel a bit let down. Not sure whether to give this a 3.5 or 4.

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### **Rea K says**

There. There were 131 of these things. I'm not ashamed to say that my youthful self owned a good portion of them (not to mention there were scads of super-specials and mysteries and stuff) because when I was a child, I read like a child. I always wanted a baby sitter club of my own (not that there were any children in the neighborhood that I was entrusted to watch). I grew to have read so many that I didn't need the excessive "this is everyone and why we started" and that was probably a large portion of why I quit reading. That, and at the tender age of however old I was, I already was certain that it was pathetic to NEVER grow up. (a very important part of why I quit reading Nancy Drew, that, and the complete rewrite of the old ones to modernize them creating completely different books. Seriously, publishers. Stahp rewriting things that were golden as is.)

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### **Martine says**

Last in the series. Sniff.

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### **Ciara says**

mary anne is flipping through a magazine with the clever name "teenzine". an ad for a contest catches her eye. "teenzine" is looking for the world's greatest babysitters. applicants must write an essay about why they like to babysit, they have to solicit testimonials from some of their charges, & they have to include a history of their babysitting careers. mary anne thinks someone from the babysitters club is a shoo-in to win the contest, so she brings the magazine to the babysitters club meeting that afternoon.

kristy consults to rules & regulations & then suggests that the babysitters club enter as a group. apparently there's nothing in the rules saying that an entire group of sitters can't enter. everyone is excited about this idea because it means they won't be competing against each other, & they don't see how they could possibly lose with all their combined babysitting experiences & skills. kristy volunteers to write the essay, mary anne will compile the history, & stacey will start soliciting testimonials from the charges.

this all takes place on wednesday. mary anne exhaustively catalogues everything she gets up the following

friday, because she says it is the last normal day of her life (not that she knew that at the time). it's pretty dull. the babysitters are still working on their contest entry, which is due the following week.

that night, mary anne goes to bed. everything is normal until 4:30am when tigger wakes her up by meowing & butting his head against her. when mary anne wakes up, she realizes that the smoke alarm is going off. then she hears richard yelling for her in the hallway. she scoops up tigger & makes her way to the door. she touches the handle & it's warm, but not hot. as soon as she opens the door, the room fills with smoke & she can hear a fire crackling & popping. richard grabs her wrist & yanks her toward the stairs. still holding on to tigger, mary anne makes her way downstairs. the smoke is thicker with every step, & she can feel the heat of the fire. they have to crawl the last few feet to the door because it's too smokey to walk, but they make it out okay. sharon is waiting outside for them. somehow, she maintained the presence of mind to grab the portable phone off the stand in the hallway & called the fire department. they show up shortly after mary anne & richard get outside.

mary anne stands in a stupor while her house burns to the ground. it takes the fire department several hours to put out the fire & the house is destroyed. almost nothing is salvageable. stacey lives nearby & came over when she heard the sirens. she calls the rest of the babysitters club, & soon after daybreak, kristy shows up with watson & elizabeth. they offer to allow sharon, richard, & mary anne stay with them while they figure out their next move. mary anne's family accepts.

everyone else is in tears about the fire. sharon realizes all her photos of dawn & jeff are gone & starts crying. mary anne realizes that all the letters she saved & all her photos of her mother are probably gone, but she can't bring herself to cry. sharon calls dawn, who offers to come out on the next available flight. mary anne can't cry or talk to anyone.

watson & elizabeth go into organizational mode back at their house. elizabeth starts organizing a housewares drive so mary anne's family will have possessions when they find a new place to live. kristy organizes the babysitters club into shifts to help mary anne's family sift through the debris looking for salvageable possessions. richard gets in touch with the insurance company. mary anne is back at the site of the fire looking for anything that can be saved when watson shows up with dawn. dawn immediately loses her shit.

mary anne's family is finding it difficult to live at watson's place. even though they have plenty of space there, kristy's family is a chaotic ball of perpetual motion & it's hard for schafer-spiers to have a moment alone to figure out what to do next. richard finally calls a family meeting in the playhouse in the backyard. he says he was offered a job in philadelphia. he was going to refuse it, but since the house burnt down, he thinks maybe moving to philadelphia could be a good way to start over. sharon has been wanting to change careers & would be able to go to a better school in philadelphia. dawn seems indifferent to this suggestion, but mary anne is horrified. she's lived her entire life in stoneybrook (except for those 18 months when richard shipped her off to iowa) & can't imagine losing her school, her friends, & the babysitters club on top of her house & all her belongings.

she keeps having nightmares about being trapped in the house as it burns down, or being stuck in an unfamiliar room, unable to find her way out, in a fire. she finally gets up in the middle of the night one night, steals kristy's bike, & bikes back to the site of the fire. she goes into the barn, which wasn't affected in the fire, & sees the few items that teams were able to save from the wreckage. she finally lets herself cry. that's where dawn finds her. dawn explains that she saw mary anne leave the room during the night, & when she didn't come back, dawn figured she had come to the barn.

that's pretty much where the book leaves us. kind of a weird cliffhanger to end the babysitters club books.

i've already recapped the friends forever series, which covers the schafer-spiers' decision to turn the barn into a house. so that's how that shakes out.

& i'm done! i have recapped all 131 regular series babysitters club books, 15 super specials, three reader requests, six portrait books, 36 mysteries, & four super mysteries! whew!

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## **Logan Hughes says**

Finally, I have read the last book in the mainline Baby-sitters Club series. I know (and the writers/producers/marketers knew) that the series will continue in the form of the Friends Forever series, but still, this book should offer some closure, right?

It does and it doesn't. But hold on. We must savor this experience. Let us take a moment to consider the cover. I normally don't talk about the cover art up front, but this is the most amazing/insane cover of any Baby-sitters Club book. The new series will have photographic covers, so this must have been Hodges Soileau's last commission and he seemed to have enjoyed the hell out of it. Mary Anne has that look you very rarely find on a BSC cover: the haunted, hungry kind. She is closer to the camera than any BSC character has ever been in a cover, soot-covered, hair disheveled, eyes sunken, looking around in terror or possibly guilt as the blaze rages and smoke billows out of the ashen shell of the house behind her. Everyone I've showed this cover to assumed Mary Anne was the arsonist. Paul at Blog of Holding used it as an inspiration for a paranormal roleplaying encounter. Hodges isn't entirely to blame/credit for this awesomeness: whoever wrote the tagline, "Can Mary Anne rise from the ashes?" deserves a hearty handshake, or maybe just a hearty shake. It's pretty clear nobody gave a fuck at this point and I love the results. I wish they were this cavalierly melodramatic all the time.

The actual book isn't quite as nuts, although it does contain the promised fire. The initial plotline has the club putting together an essay, history, and testimonials to enter a teen magazine's "Baby-sitter of the Year" contest. (The rules neither explicitly allow nor explicitly disallow entering as a group, which makes me think they will probably be disqualified. Why not nom the obvious choice of Kristy, who would be seriously hard to beat? The whole group would still be proud if she won, especially since she'd largely be winning on the strength of the club itself and she'd undoubtedly put in some line in her essay about how the group's varied skills and strengths make the club more than the sum of its parts. Also, in practice, she ends up doing most of the work for this project, so she's really shooting herself in the foot giving anyone else credit.) The contest is mostly an excuse for the literary equivalent of a clip show, with the baby-sitters reminiscing about past sitting adventures (thankfully not in much detail) and even reading some old notebook entries. There is also some comedy business with the charges trying to tape-record supportive testimonials, but they end up saying things that make the sitters sound bad, like Jackie talking about all the injuries they helped him patch up and the triplets declaring they'll say anything as long as they are paid.

The house fire is a welcome sudden left turn starting in chapter 6 and dominating the rest of the book. Smoke alarms wake up the family and they are able to get out of the house in time (including Tigger). Sharon manages to call 911 before the base of the portable phone melts. Firefighters eventually come, but the destruction is absolute. The fire was caused by some "faulty wiring" in the kitchen. Yeah, faulty wiring named Mary Anne's secret other personality!

Mary Anne is emotionally numb in the aftermath and doesn't even cry, although her friends and family do. The Brewers take in the family for the time being. Dawn flies out immediately, although what can she do but be an additional burden on Watson? Not that he minds, but you'd think Richard and Sharon would. The

Spier-Schafers dig through the wreckage, but they don't find much; Mary Anne's most prized sentimental possessions (photos, souvenirs, letters, journals) are gone. Various families around town donate clothes and home goods to help replace what was lost. Charges ask about the fire, and some of the sitters take the Pike kids on a field trip to the firehouse to learn about fire safety. In her usual selfish introvert style, Mary Anne spends a lot of time focusing on how awkward it is to live in Kristy's awesome house full of busy friendly people, but she recognizes that people are being nice to her. Eventually she has a nice emotional breakthrough moment with Dawn at the burned-out shell of the old house. Richard drops the bombshell that, now that they are homeless, and because Sharon wants to go back to school, he is considering accepting a promotion that would move the family to Philadelphia. This is still up in the air at the end of the book.

In all the excitement, the BSC lets their submission to the contest slide until the very last minute. Kristy doesn't think she can write up an inspiring essay and a history in one night, but Charlotte and Haley mobilize the other kids and get them to collaborate on the history part, including many sections about themselves. Kristy writes the essay, including an explanation about how the kids wrote the history and how deeply touched she is by that. The essay is sort of bad (nobody ever said Kristy was a great writer), and I feel like this could have been pushed even more, but as it is it's a fun, just-sappy-enough send-off to the baby-sitting-focused portion of the series.

The fire stuff is actually pretty decent too, with lots of potentially kid-memorable details about what would happen to your family, yes yours, reader, if a bad fire happened. The fire is destructive enough to be serious without the devastation of a character death or maiming. It provides a nice we-are-together-that's-the-important-part moral without downplaying how much it would suck to lose everything you own.

As a capstone for the series, this is mostly a failure (and I don't say that only because I believe retrospective endings are cop-outs). The symbolic destruction of a beloved BSC place is a cool idea, presumably intended to herald big, irreversible changes; the writing team is, as literally as possible, burning their bridges. At the same time, it feels like a pulled punch, because while Mary Anne and Dawn's house has gotten a fair amount of screen time and description in the series, it's not as important and plot-essential as, say, Claudia's room. (Now, a fire a Claudia's house would have some serious implications for the BSC: gone would be the clubhouse, the phone, the record books, all of Claudia's artworks and her mementos of Mimi...) Even Kristy's mansion feels slightly more iconic to me than the farmhouse, and the cliffhanger threat of Kristy moving away would certainly have felt more high-stakes. (Mary Anne arguably holds the club together as much as, or even more than, Kristy does--Kristy may have gotten the ball rolling, but it's Mary Anne who does the hard maintenance work--but you have to think pretty hard about it to realize that, and the point isn't made in the book.) And the final book in the series feels like it should, by rights, belong to Kristy. Mary Anne is one of the original four, I suppose, but she is so low-key and introspective; the series is does its best to go out with a bang, but Mary Anne is a human whimper.

Even given that the fire is only a symbol, the story doesn't really deliver on the death/rebirth/farewell/hello themes that fire generally represents. By the end of the book, nothing aside from the symbolic house itself has really changed. The BSC is intact (granted, the threat of a breakup would feel old hat and untrustworthy after the test breakup in #100); it's summer, but as usual no mention has been made of graduating or moving ahead in time; we don't even know for sure that Mary Anne is moving away. If you've read ahead to the Friends Forever series, you know that she doesn't. In fact, the family renovates the intact barn into a home and end up as close to square one as possible. This book struggles, first because it can't decide whether it wants to bid a fond farewell to this series or lead directly into the new one, and second because it is hard-pressed to find anything momentous enough about the series facelift to even mention.

That said, regarding it as simply another BSC book and not as a finale, it was enjoyable. It was nice to spend

some time with the characters, to see them react to a difficult real-world situation with their usual blend of hard work, organization, and mutual care-taking. And that's the only thing that really matters. The rest is just stuff.

**Timing:** Early summer

**Revised Timeline:** The girls' second academic year after college draws to a close. Pretty soon they will just be thinking in years. Summer and September will cease to have meaning. Fire knows no age, although if Mary Anne were really two years out of college (and presumably working or grad-schooling) and her dad were thinking of moving away, it wouldn't be a "but I don't want to leave Stoneybrook!" It would be "Welp, guess I better check the Stoneybrook News for apartment listings!"

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**Dawn says**

My friend, who is also in love with the BSC loaned me *The Fire at Mary Anne's House*, the last real BSC book (for some reason, Martin decided to change the series to "Friends Forever", even though it appears all the same characters populate them). I had never read this far into the BSC books, I outgrew them around book #80 or so. This book was still good, I teared up when Mary Anne was going through the aftermath of her house burning down, but it didn't quite have the same magic as the earlier books I remember from childhood. One reason is very likely the fact that Martin began, at some point, to have her books ghostwritten. So, although there's not a specific part that I can point out that obviously betrays the ghostwriter, it still feels different.

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**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!

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**Hezekiah says**

Wow. This book was way more intense than I remembered. Mary Anne's reaction to the trauma of the fire felt so real: the nightmares, the derealization, the emotional numbing. The action sequence of escaping from the burning house was extremely well done. The research for this book was well done.

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## **Marna says**

I realized that my book count so far this year is abysmal. But maybe that's because I've been reading a lot of these I never got around to (because by the time I discovered them I was already almost too old and could not be seen buying them - also, I just didn't have a lot of money). So, it's kind of a secret project of deep shame because of stress and other factors that make me just not want to read anything difficult or scary. I actually read the other 'last book' in this series before this one (because I'm buying them in lots off ebay in lots and reading them in no particular order).

Anyway, this is a very long and convoluted way of saying: I am going to do what I used to during library read-a-thons (for which I never won anything except a copy of *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E Frankweiler* - a book that I still didn't get around to reading until sometime last year) and just log some books way below my reading level as a way to raise the grand total a bit. But not every book, as that would be pathetic and sad. Just the few that stuck out to me (I'm also planning on reading the prequel and will probably log that here as well).

There not being much to say about these, I will mention that I got pretty choked up over everything with Tigger in it. I always related to the whole 'pale bookworm' aspect of Mary Anne's character (but not the ability to be in any way nice/tactful) plus, I also love cats and have a few and would not care (as my book is safely filed away in several different places) if everything in my house burnt up but them. Well, maybe in that it would be inconvenient. But I am not a terribly sentimental person.

Also, the parts with Dawn in them.

What's really creepy is I'm reading *Mary Anne and the Memory Garden* now, and it seems like the author PLANNED to burn down Mary Anne's house for quite a while! They make a point of saying it's a 'fire trap' and that Richard recently bought a bunch of new smoke detectors!

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## **Jason Pettus says**

(I now maintain a blog just for my kid-lit reviews. Find it at <http://kidlit4adults.blogspot.com>.)

A friend has convinced me to try my hand this year for the first time at writing children's literature; but I don't actually know anything about children's literature, so am starting the process among other ways by first reading a stack of existing books that have been recommended to me. Today's selections are my first foray into the world of "The Baby-Sitters Club," which during the 1990s and '00s became one of the most successful kid-lit series of all time; between the original tales and the various spinoffs, there are now nearly 500 volumes set in Ann M. Martin's sleepy middle-class suburb of Stoneybrook, Connecticut, with collective sales of at least 250 million copies and a literal empire of supplemental merchandise, feature films and television episodes. (By the way, I've been quietly told by gossipy friends in the industry that dozens of these books were actually ghostwritten by other authors, with Martin simply slapping her name on them at the end for brand consistency, although I have no way of actually verifying that; for those who don't know, this is one of the types of employment I'm seeking within the YA industry, to be the ghost-author of such formula-driven, interchangeable chapter books, which is why I'm reading so many of them these days.)

And as you can expect, the BSC books follow a familiar formula down to a T (or at least the three I read --

#81's *Mallory Pike*, #1 *Fan*, #115's *Jessi's Big Break*, and #131's *The Fire at Mary Anne's House*), staring with just a massive amount of exposition, not even cleverly handled but literally as if you were reading an encyclopedia entry; in fact, each and every title in the series starts first with an entire chapter of that book's particular hero reading aloud her own Wikipedia entry, then a second chapter of them reciting the entry concerning the club itself (essentially a group of junior-high female friends who gather around a central phone every late afternoon, so that parents can call that "hotline" and have the most appropriate babysitter sent to their house later that night), a total of eight thousand words devoted to nothing but reminding people of all the various things that have happened in the hundreds of books that came before it. Like many chapter-book series, the "crises" that befall club members are usually pretty gentle in nature, and the books mainly exist as a way to teach non-controversial moral lessons to its readers. Each book is roughly 30,000 words total, pretty normal for the 9-to-12 age group they're designed for; but surprisingly, the main characters themselves are mostly aged 12 to 14, just a little older than most of the books' readers, which confused me at first until I thought back to my own childhood, and how I used to love at this age reading books about kids a little older than me, in that I felt like I was sneakily getting away with something.

To her credit, Martin tries to inject as much diversity into this white-bread environment as she can, and also introduces plenty of modern hiccups to the stereotypical nuclear family (the club members' backgrounds are filled with ugly divorces, single parents working full-time jobs, sudden moves into entirely new economic classes, adopted Asian siblings and the like); but to her detriment, these are the exact types of books that edgier YA authors are railing against, sickly-sweet tales where all conflicts are resolved by the last page, and where all the kids ultimately end up dutifully obeying the pronouncements of the all-wise adult authority figures around them. I mean, you can't argue with success, but the BSC books are definitely the ones helping to write the "rules" for chapter books to begin with, which is why they barely ever break the well-known rules we now think of when thinking about this type of literature (you know -- make sentences short and punchy, introduce lots of peril but very little legitimate danger, be sure to repeat important information several times, concentrate on the way that girls this age interact with each other, set many of the scenes in a school environment, try to get the parents out of the way as much as possible, always have a happy ending, etc etc etc). They're neither outstanding nor terrible, which I'm sure is a big reason they've sold 250 million copies by now, and I can see myself easily being able to churn one of these out from beginning to end in just two or three weeks.

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## Robin says

I've never read the entire BSC series chronologically; as a kid I stopped at #43 ("Stacey's Emergency") in 1991 and started reading Sassy Magazine. The next year my mind was sufficiently blown by Nirvana, and from that point on, all tween-hood BSC bets were officially off. As an adult I've reread and stopped and re-collected and reread and stopped again. But I saw the LAST BABY-SITTERS CLUB BOOK EVER at a thrift store and figured that I needed to read it. The Baby-Sitters Club was important to me. It's probably the reason that my job title today is "babysitter". It made me love reading the way no other young adult series did. I was a Kristy. Et cetera.

This is the last BSC book ever, and it's still a "the author gratefully thanks \_\_\_\_\_ for ghostwriting this book help in preparing this manuscript" situation? I call shenanigans. I can also tell that it's wicked late 90's because on page 2, Mary Anne makes a point of proclaiming that she doesn't have dreadlocks, baggy jeans, or a pierced nose (let alone ears). There's the prerequisite pages upon pages of back story and explaining how the Baby-Sitters Club works, which seems pointless. This is the last book, and the club won't exist in exactly one month. Why bother?

The B-plot of the story, which revolves around the BSC's group entry into some shitty teen magazine's "Babysitter Of The Year" contest, serves as the sort of clip show before the series finale. The contest requires an essay and testimonials from charges, so there's a lot of, 'Remember when Jessi sat for the Mancusis and had to feed rats to a snake?' And, 'Remember when Jenny Prezzioso had a temperature of 104 and I incurred thousands of dollars in medical bills by calling an ambulance, rather than just giving her some Tylenol?' (Never mind "remember when Jessi thwarted jewel thieves?", or "remember when a bunch of us were shipwrecked and then stranded on a deserted island?" Those sound like winning essay topics to me for sure.)

Suddenly, the A-plot drops like a ton of bricks. The Schafer-Spier farm house burns to the ground. We see hints of Mary Anne's love for her house and home life sprinkled throughout the chapter- her comfy old bathrobe she can't seem to throw away; her excitement about painting her room yellow in the summertime (but which shade of yellow?! Oh Mary Anne, you dependable bore, you). All of a sudden, poof, it's gone. The house where so many BSC sleepovers and camps took place? Gone. The ghost-ridden secret passageway? Gone, at least on one end. (Which leads me to wonder: did the ghost burn up in the fire? DID THE GHOST START THE FIRE!?)

The Stoneybrook community reacts in the various ways they know best. Kristy and Watson offer to let Mary Anne and her family stay for as long as they need to. The BSC provides Mary Anne with much-needed emotional support. Vanessa Pike writes a poem. Meanwhile, the Spier-Schafer family considers moving to Philadelphia. Soon B-plot merges with A-plot; since Mary Anne is too busy with the fire to write the BSC history, the kids of Stoneybrook offer to do it for them, since they've been there the whole time. (Ah yes, that 13-year span where they were in 7th grade for one year, and repeated 8th grade 12 times. It's like something out of *Lost*.)

As I'm reading this with adult eyes, I appreciate the sensitivity with which the author approaches the topic of the fire; fire safety is discussed throughout the book, as is the trauma that Mary Anne endures (Mary Anne, the notorious crybaby who cries about anything and everything, cannot bring herself to cry about the fire). But still: WTF?! Why was it a necessary plot point for the farm house to be burned down? Was it done so that there would be an excuse for Dawn to reappear in the last book? Also, what happens next? The book ends with Mary Anne and Dawn crying together in the barn in the middle of the night. Where does Mary Anne go from here? Do she and her family move to Philly? How long do they stay at Kristy's house? Does the BSC win the Babysitter Of The Year contest? Most glaringly: *Mallory can't even pick up the phone in a situation like this?*

I get that Scholastic and Ann M Martin were trying to transition into the *Friends Forever* series, to have a guaranteed crossover readership that they could grow upon. The problem is that they didn't do justice to the original series that carried Scholastic's banner for more than a decade, and likely offended their remaining BSC readership by taking them for granted and expecting them to feel nothing, to move on into a drastically different- and more grown-up- series without pause. It's sad (and telling) that they couldn't give the series a proper sendoff: one last Super Special exotic preteen vacation, one last forbidden Stacey McGill love affair, one last Cokie Mason Halloween shenanigan; heck, I'd even take one last dumbass mystery to be solved. But this is ridiculous.

For shame, Scholastic. For shame, Ann M. Martin. FOR SHAME! When I get my eventual BSC tattoo, it will be despite, not because, of this book.

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## **Kerri says**

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## **Samantha says**

I haven't been reading the books in total perfect order, and my crappy mood today made me want to read something devastating. Congrats, Mary Anne! You won because your house burned down and you lost everything!

It felt like such a weird, cliff-hanger ending to the regular series. I know that this book leads into the Friends Forever books which are the REAL ending to the series, but still. I was almost sorry I went ahead and read it, because it felt like the real ending of something when I still have quite a few books to go. I dunno...a good and bad choice, I think.

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## **Gretchen says**

It's been fun to dive into a couple of BSC books again. I devoured these books when I was a kid. *The Fire at Mary Anne's House* is the final installment in the original BSC series. It was published in 1999. I was a freshman in college at this point, so I had never read this one.

The book begins with Mary Anne and the rest of the BSC just out of school for the summer. The first thing I wondered was, "Oh my goodness, did the BSC finally finish the 8th grade?" The summer starts off uneventfully enough. Mary Anne finds a contest in a magazine for America's Best Baby-sitter or something like that, and so the BSC decides that they are going to enter the contest as a group rather than each entering as individuals. Nice way to prevent any hard feelings, I guess.

But then one night Mary Anne's kitten Tigger, who has been a kitten for a good 10 years at this point, wakes her up to a blazing fire. Mary Anne, her father, her stepmother, and Tigger get out safely, but their house is destroyed. In the aftermath of the fire, Mary Anne finds it difficult to deal with her feelings. The usually emotional Mary Anne does not even cry.

I thought this book was actually pretty good. I felt like it provided a good story for readers who might have experienced a similar devastating event and were having a hard time dealing with it. As I was reading the book, I thought, "Wow, this is pretty serious stuff." I guess I had never really thought about what it would be like to have my house burn down and lose everything... all my books, my pictures, my clothes... It was kind of overwhelming to think about how that would affect me. Reading Mary Anne's feelings about having lost everything she owned was very sad.

I miss the BSC. These books, I think, are what really started me being a voracious reader. I wish they were still popular among kids today.

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### **Kristin Bateman says**

I grew up reading Baby Sitters Club...in fact this was the series that taught me to learn how to love how to read.

I quit the series around book 50, but I always needed to know how it ended.

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