

No Sisters Sisters Club: A Bailey Fish Adventure

Linda Salisbury

Christopher Grotke, Illustrator

Tabby House (Oct 19, 2005)

Unknown \$8.95 (192pp)

978-1-881539-40-7

It seems that eleven-year-old Bailey is finally adjusting to living with her grandmother, Sugar, in Central Virginia when this second Bailey Fish Adventure book begins. Her mother is still away on business in Costa Rica, but Bailey seems pleased that they are communicating via the Internet and postcards. Her new friendship with Emily Dover and maintaining her relationship with Amber back in Florida seem to make her happy. What could go wrong now?

Everything—at the mere sound of a doorbell announcing the appearance of Paul Fish, Bailey’s father. He has come from a Navy base in Guam, where he is stationed, with hopes of becoming a part of Bailey’s life. Expecting the reunion to be a difficult one, he has brought along his ten-year-old daughter, Norma Jean, to befriend Bailey. From the beginning, Paul’s plan backfires. Bailey believes that the time Norma Jean spends with her at Sugar’s will be unbearable, as she finds Norma Jean pushy, annoying, and too talkative. Norma Jean’s stay sparks the inception of the No Sisters Sisters Club, a club made up entirely of best friends in Central Virginia and Florida “because [best friends] are better than sisters.”

To support the adventurous intent of the series, the author includes a minor storyline concerning an abandoned house, and historical details about key figures in Central Virginia’s participation in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. These aspects of the book are less compelling than the anticipation of reading what will happen next with Bailey and her sister and the other new family members. Will Paul bring his sons, eight-year-old Paul, Jr. and four-year-old Sammy, to meet Bailey? Will Sugar force Bailey to go live with her father, or will he try to kidnap Bailey? The possibilities for mystery and adventure are endless.

The illustrator, an artist, designer, and Creative Director of MuseArts, Inc., has contributed black-and-white drawings that, while realistic, mainly depict objects, (i.e., a photo album, a computer screen, etc.) rather than characters, which seems ironic since Norma Jean is portrayed as a gifted artist able to draw distinct images of people.

Salisbury has written several books, among them are *Good-bye Tomato, Hello Florida*; *Read My Lips: No New Pets!*, and she is also a co-author of the award-winning *Smart Self-Publishing*. Young readers and teachers will appreciate the maps, discussion questions, booklist, glossary, and photos of historical markers in the back of the book. Children ages eight through ten (though the title is intended for readers through age twelve) will find this book interesting and Bailey’s honesty and curiosity likeable.

KAAVONIA HINTON (August 18, 2009)

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