



The Against Taffy Sinclair Club

Betsy Haynes

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It was bad enough when Taffy Sinclair was just a pretty face. But now that she's developing faster than Jana Morgan and her fifth-grade friends, it's an all-out war! What Jana and her friends don't know is that even the best-laid plans can backfire suddenly.

The Against Taffy Sinclair Club Details

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Author : Betsy Haynes

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Celeste says

This is a hard book to review — the *Taffy Sinclair* and *Fabulous Five* series were some of my favorites as a kid (starting in about 1st grade), so I have a lot of nostalgia for them. They, along with the *Baby-sitters Club* books, are the reason that I and various friends were constantly starting our own little clubs (that never lasted, but still). But upon re-read, through the filter of my modern feminist views, there's so much awful stuff here! Body shaming, internalized misogyny, all the basics — even as Jana herself talks about how they're all for the "women's movement", they're plotting against a fellow fifth-grade girl just because she happened to develop over the summer. Yikes!

To be fair to this book in particular, that's actually part of what Jana deals with (spoilers ahead): (view spoiler) Still, I mean, this was written in the '70s, so I can't be **too** harsh on it. And it's not only about the Taffy drama; Jana also has issues relating to her absent father, which I think is the more emotional part of the book. She also gets embarrassed, or is afraid she's going to be embarrassed, a LOT. "What if [insert possible scenario] happens? I'd be so embarrassed that I'd DIE." A bit dramatic, yes, but probably accurately so for a preteen. And I think capturing the experience of being a preteen girl is what this book (and the series overall, IIRC) does best.

Marissa says

Was feeling nostalgic last night and read this in about 1 1/2 hours. Think I might reread the whole series again.

Erin says

Next in my string of rereading childhood favorites, this short but sweet novel took me about a half hour this afternoon. This is a time capsule. Jana Morgan is the head of a group of immature elementary school girls who are jealous of the prettiest girl in their class. They have a club against her, stalk her incessantly and have meetings where they report on everything they have seen her do. As a kid, I always related to Taffy Sinclair, as I always felt a lot like her. I think this book is incredibly realistic, plus reading it really shows me how different my childhood was from my kids. In a modern elementary school, these little bucketdippers would be expelled for bullying. ;) All in all, this is an excellent book and I don't think children's books today have as much realism, not just with the jealousy issue, but in describing how so many people in America actually live (late bills, absentee fathers, apartment living, etc) rather than the exaggerated lifestyle of the wealthy. I miss books about average people.

Angie says

This is probably the first complete book I read in English, I was in 4th grade and needed a dictionary beside

me for a LOT of words. But I was so hooked that this is the book that encouraged me to want to learn more English. I wrote to Betsy Haynes a few years ago and told her that in my email and SHE WROTE BACK saying I had made her day! I still own all these books and I'm not parting with them ever. Jana, Melanie, Beth, Christie and Katie got me through some tough times when I was growing up.

Karianne says

I loved these Taffy books when I was young. She sounded gorg and I wanted to be her friend even though she was "so stuck up". Loved it!

Alana says

So odd going back to this. Poor Jana never eats a decent meal in the whole thing.

Eliza Evans says

Why did they all hate Taffy Sinclair? Plus I hate when an author refers to one of her other books within the text, like she didn't write the damned thing.

Peacha says

Betsy Haynes treads on the heels of Judy Blume and Paula Danziger for this one. Jana Morgan a neurotic , over dramatic preteen leads a club against a snooty, beautiful classmate Taffy (which we're never quite sure is ever justified.) When Taffy develops you-know-whats that's the last straw. The girls have a plan though - they've been reading woman's magazines and found themselves a bust developing ad dubbed the Milo Venus - ha- Venus deMilo - and decide to sell enough brownies to purchase the crazy contraption. Code word becomes Lambda Rho - which stands for Little Raisins! Meanwhile Jana is trying to figure out why her flaky dad has brushed her off a promised summer vacation , develops a crush on a teacher , attempts to speed things up with cotton balls and loses her clubs beloved book which has all their non-existent bust measurements and catty comments about Taffy. A frenetic , fast paced , lol story. Which just misses being as bad as Blubber mainly because Jana manages to embarrass herself (not Taffy) at every turn! For a longer review - with a peek at 70's bust ads that might've inspired Betsy Haynes - and some groovy 70's kids clothes - check out my site -<http://cliqueypizza.wordpress.com/>

Bunny says

As someone who hated a lot of girls in school, this book was always a favorite of mine. I can't believe I'd forgotten about it! Love!

I bought it at a library sale to have again, but to hoard, or not to hoard, that is the question. And Taffy Sinclair didn't make the cut.

Brenda says

This book gave me the idea of an "against so-and-so club". Not a great idea because I went on to use it with mixed results. Also, I remember thinking that Taffy Sinclair looked absolutely perfect on the cover, exactly how I wanted to look in middle school. Now I think Taffy Sinclair is an awesome name for my next cat.

Cara says

Loved all the Taffy books!

Aida says

Holy balls, I remember reading this when I was little. I've never forgotten the Venus de Milo Bust Developing kit and the code-name for little boobs: Lambda Rho, which stood for "little raisins." Ah, one of my first encounters with Greek.

Wendy says

I read this because I was inspired by Paperback Crush: The Totally Radical History of '80s and '90s Teen Fiction to reread the books that I had loved when I was younger. Betsy Haynes was a favourite author because she wrote the Fabulous Five series which this book is a precursor to.

Does it hold up? Kinda. Most of the problems are pretty universal preteen angst stuff. Divorce, school, friendship, etc... Jana Morgan, the main character, is a pretty typical kid.

There is a lot of girl hate (obvious from the title), and body shaming which probably made more sense in the late 70's when this was originally published. Now it does feel almost brutal to read in a kids book. But I will say this, the narrator is Jana Morgan, a fifth grader. She isn't a reliable narrator and there's a harsh authenticity to her inner dialogue that as a kid I related to more than I'd like to admit. The fact is that Taffy Sinclair is probably more like Jana and her friends than she is different and while it didn't get all the way to that realization, it was on its way.

And then there's Katie. Oh, Katie who probably planted a lot of seeds in my young feminist brain. Having a character who's so beloved in a book series who isn't afraid to stand up for her beliefs, be proud of her self-improvement, and question the decisions she and her friends make through the lens of her own budding feminism was so important to me. She's not perfect, but she's in fifth grade!

My first reread inspired by Paperback Crush was really more of a success than I expected. Despite the sharp edges of my own remembered girl hate and body shaming, The Against Taffy Sinclair Club made me feel

warm and fuzzy with candy-coloured nostalgia. I haven't found any of the Fabulous Five books yet, but I can't wait.

Stephanie says

I was obsessed with the Taffy Sinclair books as a kid! Recently dug these out of storage and had to take a look through. I may be biased, but I think it still holds up. ;)

Justin says

I used to moderately enjoy this series. I don't remember exactly which ones I read and which ones I didn't, but I remember that I preferred the ones narrated by Taffy. The other girl was kind of a bitch.
