



Almost Always

Bobbi Reed

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Here's the way Eva sees it: if John is so concerned about her butting into strangers' lives, he shouldn't leave her sitting at a table in Bob Evans with nothing to occupy her time . . .

Enter Cecelia—a pregnant teenager who needs a family for her baby. Fate has placed her at the table behind Eva and John.

Now Eva has a chance—a chance to give her daughter, Shelly, the one thing Shelly desperately wants.

But nothing is ever as easy as it seems.

Because sometimes daughters are not born to us—they are gifted by desperate teenagers—or seated behind us at Bob Evans . . .

Almost Always Details

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Kristi says

I really enjoyed this quick and easy read. I was pleasantly surprised (and a little shocked) that this was the author's first work. The book had a good, solid story and well developed characters. I liked the flow of the book as it moved smoothly from chapter to chapter keeping my interest the entire way from beginning to end. In fact, I stayed up late to finish the book. I had to know what happened to everyone.

Even though the story is somewhat predictable and I guessed what was going to happen before it did, this was still a fun book to read. I'm pretty sure I would read more from this author. I would recommend this to anyone looking for a quick, easy, light read.

JL Smither says

It says something to this author's skill that this book was able to fill me with so much anxiety so consistently. I'm certain that *Almost Always* reads very differently depending on the reader's place in life. For me, I'm in my early 30s and don't yet have that baby-countdown-clock running in my head. And Eva's behavior, especially in the beginning, was horrifying to me. The fact that everything actually, somehow, turns out pretty well didn't feel like justification for Eva's decisions so much as it felt like tumbling down a flight of stairs and miraculously landing on your feet. You give a big sigh of relief when you realize you're OK, but every nanosecond of the fall was filled with the tension of trying to avoid breaking your neck.

Every character in this book felt real and well developed, even seeing them through Eva's judgmental eyes. You even realize that some of them are just indulging her, even though she doesn't seem to see it. Eva's certainly the protagonist of her own story, and those people aren't always fun to hang out with. By the end, Eva does mellow out a bit, although I'm not entirely sure she's learned her lesson. Then again, it would be unrealistic for her to change dramatically, when she has clearly lived her whole life meddling in and judging other people's affairs. But she does evolve, as do those around her, and you really do get to see the good-hearted intentions that she had all along.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

I will admit I picked this book up because I thought it going to be more of a Christmas story looking at the cover. A gingerbread house does play a part in the story but this more of a year round story.

I would find it difficult to be Eva's child and hope I am never a mom like her. I know it is a in mother's nature to always want to fix things, but sometimes Eva just goes too far. She does have a huge heart and thinks she is doing the right things and that her way is the best way but they way she butts her way in to certain situations drove me a little nuts. Eva happens to overhear a conversation in a restaurant, a pregnant teenager talking to her friend. She immediately decides it is fate and this girl is going to give her baby up to

Eva's daughter who has been trying to adopt a child. We follow on Eva on her journey to make that happen.

It is a very heartwarming story in places and aggravating in others but a very compelling read none the less. Eva is a complicated character with many layers. While I didn't like her overbearing qualities she was very real. There are many moms in this world just like her. She has a good heart, helps her friends and neighbors, but could have been more supportive of her husband and a little more understanding of her daughter's wishes. She does open her heart and home to Cecelia and they become very close. Things do "Almost Always" work out the way Eva wishes but the key word is "almost".

Husband John is retired and is interested in gingerbread houses. In fact, he is planning to make one to enter into a contest held in North Carolina. Eva wishes he had a more "manly hobby" and thinks he is wasting his time in his endeavor to enter the contest.

Daughter Shelly and her husband have been unable to have a child and their attempts in adoption have failed when the birth mothers have backed out. They have decided to just take a breather from all the treatments and filings to regroup when Eva informs them of her plan. They are not sure what to do or say but they are just not ready for another disappointment.

Cecelia comes from a single parent home with a mother than is basically absent. She is following in her mother's and sister's footprints by having a child way too soon and is completely overwhelmed by the prospect of being a mother.

This story is very well written with many twists. The characters are very developed and realistic . They continue to evolve as the story continues. Eva was over the top but redeems herself a little bit in the end.

I enjoyed this story.

Rebecca says

Meddling mother helps arrange adoption for her daughter who is struggling with infertility.

The characters reside in Ohio so that was fun. At first, I wasn't sure about the mom as she came across as a meddling busy body who needed her own life. After awhile, I realized that she truly did mean well with her intentions and she was an extremely giving person.

Own on Kindle, Free, 310 pages, 3.5 stars

Karen L. Jurewicz says

Good first novel

I finished the book in two days. It was better than I expected. The story was plausible, with no fairy tail details, which I dislike. My initial reaction was dislike for the protagonist, as I found her behavior very annoying. She had never worked outside of her home, raised two successful children and was convinced she had the solutions to all problems. As the story progresses, she began to realize that her children were adults

and didn't need her constant assistance, and she became a more likeable person. The story ended satisfactorily, and I was glad I read it.

As always, I want to mention the editing. It was well done. I noticed no misspellings, use of wrong words, and poor punctuation. These things are important to me, as frequent mistakes are very disruptive when I'm reading. I do recommend this book.

L.A. Frazier says

I stayed up late to finish this book. It is one of those slice of life (think Anne Tyler) - good hearts do not always equal the smartest choices type of story. Eva is a meddler, but a meddler with a kind heart. Everything would go so much smoother if people just did what she felt they should. Of course that never happens - so the reader walks with Eva on the journey of a lifetime - the chance to secure a baby for her daughter who can not have one.

By the end you do not want to leave till you have found out what has happened to everyone - you are that attached. This is truly a GOOD READ!

Sandy says

Almost Always

Deciding whether or not to give a child up for adoption is one of the hardest decisions a woman will ever make. Being unable to conceive or successfully carry a child to term is one of the most painful experiences a married couple will ever share. When two couples, each facing one of these problems, are thrown together by fate, someone is going to be hurt. This story is about such a struggle. Very realistic look at real life issues.

Mary says

Wow. Just wow.

I couldn't get past the 1st few pages, then skipped to the end and had to scroll through that.

I wanted trike this book, the story seemed sweet. But, the way it was written was awful. The badly formed sentences, the changing of tense past and present on a whim. The typos.

Plus, in the 1st few pages, Eva comes across overbearing and creepy.

Seriously? If the author I'd serious about this book and writing in general, get an editor and maybe few writing classes?? Good luck!

Andrea says

Eva is a busybody, with the best intentions for her friends and family. Within the novel, she tries to find her daughter a child, while her husband competes in a gingerbread making competition. These quirky situations

are fun and really sets the plot of the story. But we also see Eva really grow throughout the novel, and show real obstacles of family and marriage within good fiction. I recommend this book to anyone, especially teenagers to adults.

D Bish says

We follow Eva on a touching journey through the time of life where you finally come to grips with the fact that your children can live their own lives - and you no longer need to control everything for them. Of course this goes not just for her daughter Shelly but for the young girl she tries to help - CeeCee. In the end we come to the realization along with Eva that sometimes you have to let your children go and trust they will make the choices that are the best for them. This is a great book club book! The print version has great questions in the back.

Marlene says

Eva is notorious for striking up conversations with strangers, so it was no surprise to anyone when Eva did just that while dining out with her husband. In the booth behind her sat two teenage girls. One of the girls, Cecelia, talking about being pregnant and wanting to place the baby for adoption. Eva's daughter, Shelly, has been trying to get pregnant with no success. Eva knew that she had to approach this girl. How often do situations like this happen? And she surely wasn't going to let this opportunity pass her by.

One would think that Shelly would be thrilled to hear about the potential of adopting Cecelia's baby, but instead she's cold when dealing with her and makes no effort at getting to know her. This not only confuses, but also concerns Eva. She doesn't want Cecelia changing her mind about allowing Shelly to adopt the baby.

But, as the pregnancy progresses, Eva and Shelly get more and more concerned. Cecelia rekindles the relationship with the baby's father and starts spending less time with Eva and her family. The thought that Cecelia could call off the adoption weighs heavily on their hearts. Eva starts to question if she made a mistake approaching Cecelia in the first place and Shelly wonders if she's going to have to deal with another disappointment.

Almost Always is a heart-warming book. The bond that the family shares and the lengths that they'll go to in order to make each other happy is palpable. The book will make you laugh one moment and cry another. I found myself forming a bond with the characters and relating to what they were going through. As a young mom and also an adoptive parent, I could relate to Cecelia's struggle with being a pregnant teen but also with Shelly and the stress one goes through when adopting. This book will tug at your heart strings and will be in your mind long after you finish the book. A must read for sure!

Joanne says

Sometimes what should be the easiest choices turn out to be the hardest. Eva tries to influence everyone into

make the choices that will bring out the best outcome - at least the best that she can see. But as usual people seem to do what they want anyway. The husband taking up the hobby of building Gingerbread houses made me smile. This was a thoughtful and entertaining read. I even went through the Book Club questions at the back. Good book!

Suzanne Goldsmith says

I loved the premise of this book, the memorable characters, the gentle humor, and the complexity of the interrelationships in this totally believable family. Busybody Eva's voice is so engaging -- you want to sit down and gossip with her even though you're also dying to box her ears. And to protect her from the trouble that surely lies ahead . . . And as for Cecelia? You're just going to have to get to know her for yourself.

J. A. Lewis says

I read this one cover to cover once I started it. The story of a mother whose children are grown and gone but who still longs for love, affection, and close relationships. She is an imperfect person who butts into things she probably shouldn't, but whose heart is in the right place. Eva's daughter has been unable to have a child and fate places Eva in the right place at the right time to correct that situation, or does it? The characters are well developed and the plot is interesting. Yes, there are some editing errors, but I didn't find them to be so glaring as to take away from the story-line. I actually found myself comparing some of my own well-intentioned faults to Eva's. Often meaning well, but butting in where I probably don't belong. I did enjoy this one.

Mrs Mommy Booknerd <http://mrsmommybooknerd.blogspot.com> says

Life is full of twists and turns that we don't expect. Twists and turns that take us places we never thought we were to go. In *Almost Always* we are taken on a journey with some amazing characters, in circumstances so real that you are drawn into the story. There is meaning in all things and sometimes things have a way of revealing themselves, and ultimately revealing who we really are in the process. I really enjoyed this book and rate it 4 stars.
