



Achingly Alice

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

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Alice has decided she needs priorities in her life -- and the first is to get her favorite teacher, Miss Summers, to marry her father. The only problem is that the vice principal, Mr. Sorringer, wants to marry Miss Summers too, and Miss Summers seems to be having trouble making up her mind. How can someone be in love with two people at the same time? It doesn't make sense to Alice -- until Sam, her friend from Camera Club, starts to pay attention to her. Sam is quiet and gentle, and a terrific dancer -- Alice likes being with him. But Alice has been Patrick's girlfriend for almost two years -- so why is she interested in another guy?

Achingly Alice Details

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MarinnaC says

I had followed Patrick and Alice together for a while while I was binging this series, and this was a welcomed change of pace. It was nice to see how Alice grew, and she's just enjoyable to be around- a friend I needed in middle school.

Melody says

Another good Alice book. I get the sense that even though Alice is with Patrick, something might happen with Sam. Guess I'll keep reading the series to find out. And in this book, Alice tells a lie to Miss Summers which she agonizes over privately, and Miss Summers makes an announcement. I won't spoil what it is. On to the next Alice book...

Jessica says

I just spent 30 mins of my workday I didn't have trying to remember what this book series was. Finally. Inhaled them when I was younger. The best.

Cheryl says

I want Miss Summers to be avoiding marrying Dad because she's happy being single and living her own way in her own cozy house, dating at will, helping Alice as much as Aunt Sally and Cousin Carol do but not being a live-in Mom. Of course, Dad might not want to be just special friends with Miss S., so that'd be difficult.

But the three girls do often talk about not getting married, and it should be seen as a totally viable option. After all, Lester is doing his own thing first and has no real plans to ever marry, why can't a female character?

Sara says

Recently I read the book "*Achingly Alice*" by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, which is a story about Alice, the main character, and the events that take place as she tries to get her teacher to marry her father who're in love. The cover is what caught my eye as I thought it'd be a sweet romance considering the cover, it was bland though. The best part in this book honestly had to be when Alice was crying realizing she meddled too much in the lives of others. I felt she deserved to feel terrible for her nosiness. My biggest problem with this book was the fact that Alice and her friends kept talking about sex, adults and themselves. These characters

are supposed to be in middle school, and it was tacky and disgusting for their age, if the author wanted to bring the concept in it would've been better if they were older. Truthfully I disliked this book, since the plot was dry; I was skimming most of the time. Not to mention the characters seemed unrealistic and downright annoying, I seriously wanted to punch Alice in the face multiple times. Surely I won't recommend this to any of my friends since they deserve to read a quality story, not this garbage.

Morgan says

Not the strongest, but still good

Dumlesi Ndam says

Alice's misgivings nearly ruin her.

Ellica says

Finished! In love with this book, although I don't think that this is the best book to read after reading "The Grooming Of Alice" (another book in the series) because the plot of this book was all before the plot in "The Grooming Of Alice" however, it's a really great book and I would recommend it to any 12 or teenage girl to read.

Sally says

I remember reading this as a middle schooler and not knowing exactly what a NordicTrack instructor was. Now I always think of Pamela's mom and her boyfriend when I see the NordicTrack treadmills at the gym.

Jenaya D says

Achingly Alice can be an adventure, after you get over the run on sentences and incorrect punctuation. Although, I couldn't relate to any of the problems, I still enjoyed reading how the problems were solved. The author taught me many things, I could have went the rest of my life without knowing, but they're still nice to know. In my opinion, the main character, Alice learned some valuable lessons that some people can apply to their life. There are also a few jokes scattered about.

Achingly Alice simply explains that life can't always go your way. For example, Alice's best friends don't have the "perfect" little family. One of Alice's best friend's mom ran off with another man (A NordicTrack instructor) and her other best friend is "stuck" with her baby brother. Some scenes in the book were slightly confusing. Achingly Alice May have its ups and downs, but it might be worth a try.

Chris says

I don't know why everyone has such a tizzy about these books. They are quite wholesome in my opinion. It's nothing that girls on a playground aren't discussing everyday in any town.

Logan Hughes says

Alice goes too far trying to engineer a happy ending for her dad and Miss Summers, but she gains some sympathy for Miss Summers' torn-between-two-lovers drama as she gets to know Sam from Camera Club while still dating Patrick. (Christmas through spring, eighth grade)

Random Observations:

* I'm calling it: this is the book when Alice officially becomes a boring stick-in-the-mud. She complains like a crotchety old woman about watching the ball drop at New Years, yet turns down an unsupervised party because "I'm not ready for those kinds of parties yet." No kid has ever believed she's "not ready for" any adult milestone, except maybe the odd goody-two-shoes, socially backward nerd who only ever speaks to adults, which I guess Alice is!

* The storyline where Elizabeth is scared to have her first pelvic exam at first seems intended to reassure girls that it's not that bad, and I think this is a totally worthy goal; I remember being scared of the gynecologist when I was that age. But this portrayal only makes it worse! It plays on girls' fears without reassuring them. The exam itself remains mysterious, since it's not witnessed by a POV character, only related later by the most melodramatic and puritanical character in the series. She's mortified by the procedure, reinforcing the idea--or introducing it, if a girl didn't already feel that way--that having your vagina examined by a doctor is, and should be, shameful and terrifying.

* I think this is the first book which begins the annoying narrative feature of having Alice list unconnected things in her life without going into any of them or explaining the connection. Like, "Things are up in the air with Dad and Miss Summers; Marilyn is working at the Melody Inn; I'm getting to know Sam; and Elizabeth has a new baby brother." Just pick a topic. There are a few amusing scenes and incidents, but much of the book is summary and could easily be cut. Unfortunately, this will be a recurring theme as the series progresses.

Joyce says

I was surprised that Sam wasn't as prominent as the summary made him sound, but I guess that could be chalked up to his quiet personality. Also, life has many aspects. Nice to read about Mr. McKinley and Miss Summers' relationship developing. A little scary to see Alice want to try guys other than Patrick. I wonder what Crystal had to tell Lester so soon after her wedding - some sort of problem with her new husband? Read this in a morning and afternoon at the library and on a bench in front of a grocery store.

Celinda Reyes says

Although I didn't enjoy this one as much as the rest I do like that we're starting to see Alice grow up & deal with more complicated problems. In this book we see everything from love to pelvic exams, and really get a small window into how awkward & confusing this time of your life is.

Maria says

The winter of Alice's eighth grade year poses a whole new set of challenges and excitements.

As the title suggests, Alice finds herself aching in a multitude of ways. She desperately wants her dad and favorite teacher, Miss Summers, to tie the knot, but Miss Summers is torn between Alice's dad and an old flame (who just happens to be the middle school vice principal, Mr. Sorringer).

While Alice is at first angry at Miss Summers, she soon finds herself feeling a little more sympathy when Alice herself is unsure about wanting to stay with her boyfriend Patrick when she finds herself attracted to a different guy in her Camera Club. She struggles between her attachment to Patrick while wanting to maintain her independence and explore other options.

I generally think the Alice books are pretty feminist in nature, but there are definitely some moments that make me shake my head. Alice's obsession with her dad marrying Miss Summers is particularly out of control in this book -- she goes as far as to lie to Miss Summers about seeing Mr. Sorringer out with another woman, which blows up in her face later. She also fantasizes that Miss Summers should quit her job teaching in order to become a wife to Ben and a mother to Alice, as if these two are mutually exclusive. Part of this is Alice's desperation to have a 'normal' family again (Alice's mom was a homemaker), but this underlying message of traditional gender roles bothers me.

I'm pretty excited that Miss Summers has decided to move to England for a year, for my sake as well as her's. Alice seriously needed to stop obsessing over her dad's love life, and I'm sick of reading about it.

Not one of the strongest books in the series, but it moves the plot along at a decent pace and clears the way for brighter installments ahead.
