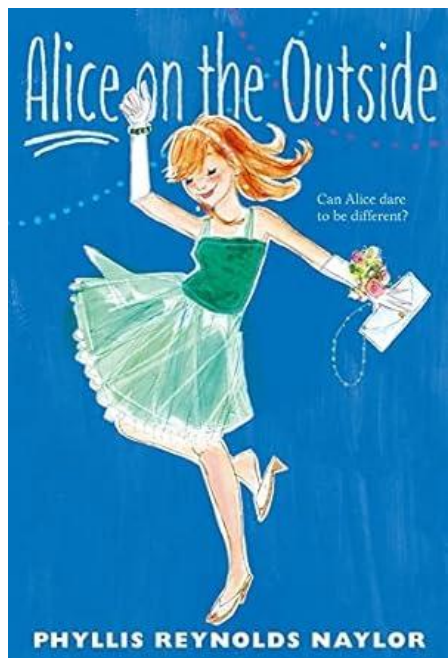


Alice on the Outside



Book Summary

Eighth-grader Alice has lots of questions about sex, relationships, prejudice, and change.

Summary of Concerns

This book contains; activism, alternate gender/sexual ideologies, bullying, controversial cultural, gender, religious, and social commentary, DEI/CRT, non-sexual nudity, profanity (minor), sexual activities, and sexual discussions/references.

Juvenile

By Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

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Youth Advisory

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24	<p>We each had a couple of cookies and chugged down a bottle of Sprite. Then I said, “When you were kidding around with Carol last night, did you feel anything?” Lester wiped his mouth on his sleeve and raised an eyebrow at me. “What do you mean, did I feel anything? Did I fondle her, do you mean?” “No, I mean, did you feel lust?” “Lust? Who are you, Queen Victoria?” “Sexy. Did it excite you, Lester? Do I have to spell it out?” “If you mean did it turn me on, sure, a little. Do you mean did I want to throw her on her back and make mad love? No.”</p>
25	<p>I was sure concentrating on Carol. I’d pushed my clothes from one side of my closet so Carol could hang hers in there, and emptied two drawers of my dresser. Carol got up really early each morning, even before I did, and after she took a shower, she’d come back to the bedroom, slip off her robe, and put on her panties and bra. The first morning I had my eyes half-closed, but when a twenty-five-year-old woman is standing stark naked in front of you, I think you’re allowed a peek.</p>
27	<p>I swallowed. “Carol, what does intercourse really, really feel like for a woman?” There. The question was out. The room was awfully quiet. “The first time, you mean?” she asked. “Well, yes. That too.” “Uh ... Alice, you do know how it’s done, don’t you? I mean ...” “I know what goes where,” I told her. “But how does it feel when a man’s penis goes inside you?” “Well, for some women it hurts a little the first time. Maybe the first couple of times. After that it doesn’t. It feels pretty good, actually. It’s exciting to feel yourself opening up for a man, and nice to have him kissing you.” “But you spend your whole honeymoon in pain? Is that why people go away somewhere and lie on the beach?” She laughed. “Not exactly. Besides, so many girls use tampons now that they’ve already stretched themselves a little down there. A honeymoon’s sort of a vacation after all the work of a wedding. It used to be that a man and woman felt self-conscious and shy right after they were married, so they went off to be alone where people weren’t always watching them.” “Okay, but what’s sex like later? When it doesn’t hurt anymore?” It was easy</p>
28	<p>“You’re the only one I can ask,” I told her. “I’ve always wanted to know. Pamela and Elizabeth do too. All we know is what we see in the movies, and the movies make it look as though a man and a woman are having a fit together.” Carol laughed again, then rolled over and faced me in the darkened room. “Forget movies, Alice. They aren’t much help. It looks so easy in the movies. A man and woman climb in bed and make wild love and they both come at the same time and—” “What does that mean?” “An orgasm. A climax. A peak of excitement. If you’ve ever masturbated, you already know what it feels like.” “So how is real life different from the movies?” I asked. “Whew! These questions really are getting embarrassing,” she said. “Okay. I’m sorry. I’ll just go on being a sexual ignoramus the rest of my life, and on my wedding night I’ll tell my husband I’m a lot stupider than he thought, because I couldn’t find anyone who would—” “Okay, okay,” Carol said. “In the movies, a couple has intercourse, and the man and woman climax at the same time. In real life, some men and women like to make love in other ways. Every woman is different, so it’s up to her to tell her partner what she really likes. Same goes for the man. That’s one of the problems with having sex with someone you don’t know too well.” “Why?” “Because girls want guys to think they’re sexy, so they sigh and moan and do all the stuff they see women do in the movies. Then the guy thinks he’s a real stud, so he goes right on doing what feels good to him, and it may never do much for the girl. Wait for someone you really love, Alice—love enough to marry—and then you can talk about things like that.” I swallowed. It was embarrassing enough trying to imagine Patrick and me, for example, having sexual intercourse. I couldn’t even imagine having to</p>
29	<p>give him instructions! “I don’t think I can do that, Carol,” I said finally. “It’s too embarrassing.” “Alice! You’re thirteen! Of course it’s embarrassing!” “Fourteen,” I corrected. “Almost.” “You don’t have to think about these things for years yet! It would have been embarrassing for me at fourteen too. Heck, it was embarrassing enough at nineteen when I married The Jerk. The main thing about sex is that you should feel comfortable and just enjoy being together, touching and kissing and not worrying too much about the rest. If a man really loves you, he’ll want to keep you happy and will make love however you want.” I thought about that awhile.</p>

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29	<p>“If I don’t like intercourse so much, what are the other ways?” “Almost anything you can imagine. Sometimes you may want your husband to touch you with his hands and sometimes with his lips, and you’ll try different things and see what’s best. You’ll want to ask him what he’d like you to do to him. You’re just two people in love, giving each other pleasure.” We lay so long then without talking that I realized finally Carol had fallen asleep. Her breathing came slower, more steady, and one of her legs gave a little twitch. Sex was a lot more complicated than I had thought. I’d always imagined that the woman just lay down on her back, and the man got on top of her, and something wonderful happened. All the woman had to do was wear a sexy nightgown. I never imagined she had to talk! To give directions, yet! Elizabeth invited Pamela and me for a sleepover Sunday after Aunt Sally and Carol flew back to Chicago. We were sitting there cross-legged on Elizabeth’s bed—one of the two twin beds with white ruffles in her room—and were eating Pringles when I said, “Well, I asked the question.” “What question?” asked Pamela, her mouth full of chips. “About sex. What intercourse is really, really like.” Elizabeth looked embarrassed already. “Do we have to discuss this?” she asked</p>
30	<p>“No, Elizabeth. Pamela and I can sit in the bathroom and talk about it, and you can go your whole life not knowing what to expect on your wedding night,” I said. “All right, go on then,” she said reluctantly. “I already know what sex is like,” said Pamela. “I see it on the adult channel all the time. Men groan and women moan and then they both smoke cigarettes.” “Wrong,” I said, and for once I knew something Pamela didn’t. “That’s the movie version, Pamela. That’s not real life.” Pamela leaned back against one of the pillows. “Well, I know that once you start having sex, you’re addicted,” she said. “When mothers write to advice columns to say their teenage daughters are having sex, the doctors always say you’d better make sure they know all about birth control, because once they start, they can’t stop.” “What?” cried Elizabeth, alarmed. “Like perpetual motion or something?” “Oh, Pamela!” I scolded. Pamela always exaggerates. “Okay, what is sex really, really like? Carol should know,” she said. “Well,” I told her importantly, “it’s the same kind of climax you feel if you touch yourself, except you have a man kissing you too, which makes it more exciting. Some people like intercourse best, and some people like other things, and it doesn’t matter what.” “You mean you can try a whole bunch of stuff to see what you like the most?” asked Pamela, looking interested. “I don’t even want to think about it,” said Elizabeth. “The main thing, Carol said, is that a woman sort of has to give a man directions—tell him where to touch her and everything,” I said. Elizabeth looked horrified. In fact, she choked on a Pringle. “You have to talk about it? Out loud?” “You could probably type it on a piece of paper,” Pamela told her. “I can’t do this!” Elizabeth gasped. “I won’t!”</p>
31	<p>“Carol would say that if you can’t talk about things like this with a man, then you shouldn’t be in bed with him in the first place. She says if a man really loves you, he’ll make love any way you want.” And then I added jokingly, “Standing on his head, even!” We were all quiet. Elizabeth had her eyes tightly closed. I think we’d all had the idea that with sex, women just let it happen. “Whoever invented sex must have had a sense of humor,” I said at last. And Pamela said, “Why couldn’t we make love like amoebas—just dissolve together and not have to worry about giving instructions?” “Why couldn’t we make babies just by shaking hands?” said Elizabeth. “Why do our sexual parts have to be down there, for heaven’s sake?” “And if sex isn’t like it is in the movies, why do women keep on getting married and having intercourse? They must like something about it,” Pamela said. “Maybe they like having somebody to snuggle up to on cold nights,” I suggested. “Maybe it’s nice having somebody around to talk to and do things with—plan a life together and everything.” “Maybe what they really want is children,” said Elizabeth. Pamela began to grin. “And maybe they really do like to take off their clothes and get naked together and have sex and make love no matter how they do it. By land or sea, underwater, in the air, in the trees... .” “Whatever works,” I said. The more we thought about it, the better it seemed. If I got married when I was twenty-five, say, that gave me at least eleven years to get used to telling my future husband how I wanted him to make love to me. Once I figured it out myself, I mean. We turned on Elizabeth’s TV and saw a man and woman starting to make love. The woman’s hair wasn’t even messed up. She had gorgeous breasts. Their bedroom overlooked the sea. Gulls were calling. The man was groaning, the woman was moaning, and waves crashed up on the shore.</p>

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35	<p>It was when I got to social studies that afternoon that I heard about what we were going to do the week of March 21. Mrs. Willis talked about the many target groups of prejudice based on race or sex or age or money, and that the week of March 21 would be declared Consciousness-Raising Week, or CRW, for the whole school. In fifth-period class that day, every student was handed a list of rules for CRW, during which the school would be run by an arbitrary sort of caste system based on the color of the student's hair. Mr. Ormand, our principal, came over the public-address system and explained it to us. This was only an experiment in consciousness-raising, he said. Every student, in every class, had to turn in a one-page essay at the end of the week on how he or she felt during CRW. And then he read the rules aloud while we followed along on our instruction sheets. Those with dark brown or black hair were the A group. Those with light brown hair, red hair, or dark blond were group B. Those with light blond or gray hair were the C group.</p>
55	<p>"Oh, for crying out loud!" Pamela said finally. "One of the guys slipped his hands under my sweater, that's all." And then, looking right at Elizabeth, she added, "Yes, he touched my breasts. He got a three-second feel through my bra, and then I pushed him away, okay?" We still didn't say anything. I don't know what Elizabeth was thinking, but I was remembering the time in Patrick's basement when he was giving me a drum lesson. How he'd sat close behind me, holding me in his arms. He didn't touch my breasts—he almost did—but I'll have to admit I sort of wanted him to. I mean, that's what sex is all about, isn't it? You're supposed to want to caress each other. It's supposed to feel good. It's natural. It's normal. So when are you supposed to stop saying no and start saying yes?</p>
56	<p>Then Elizabeth got into the act. "You know that time we went to Chicago on the train, the three of us, and that man came in your compartment and kissed you and touched your breasts, Pamela?" she said. "I think that started all this. I think it set up cravings in you that you just can't control." We stared at her. "The thing is, Pamela," she continued, "if you let a boy get to first base, he'll try to get to second, and if he gets to second, he'll steal third, and ..." "Ye gods, Elizabeth, I'm not playing baseball, I'm making out!" Pamela said. "And you know what? It feels good! People act so surprised when you say that. Like, boys make out because it feels good, and girls just do it to please the boys." She got some Diet Coke from the fridge and we put all the sofa cushions on the rug, then sprawled on the floor. "You're right, you know," said Elizabeth. "At church, Sister Madeline never talks about how we might do something like that because we want to. She's never ever once said that it might be fun." "Of course! How would she know, she's a nun!" I said. Elizabeth sighed. "You know what I wish? I wish that we could just go to sleep some night and wake up married. Then we could do anything with our husbands that we wanted, and we wouldn't go to hell and we wouldn't have to confess anything to the priest, because it would all be legal."</p>
92	<p>We sat down on the swing, and Patrick pulled me next to him and kissed me, real slow, sort of moving his mouth from side to side as though he wanted to touch every centimeter of my lips. Then he stopped and whispered in my ear, "Tell me how you like to be kissed." Oh, no! I thought. It was happening! I was only in eighth grade, and already a boy wanted to know how to make love to me! "What?" I gasped. "I just want to know how you like to be kissed. Gentle or hard or ... there are all kinds of ways. What do you like best?" "S-Surprise me," I said again. It's all I could think of. I didn't want to give directions. I didn't want to be the guide. I wasn't ready for this. I wanted it to be like it is in the movies, where the man knows what to do and whatever he does is just right, and the woman looks glamorous, not awkward, and ... Patrick turned his body toward me, braced one hand behind my back, and with his other hand pushed against my shoulder so that I was half lying on the swing and he was bending over me, kissing me hard on the mouth.</p>
96	<p>"Well, one day Aunt Sally caught me in the basement trying to wash my sheets." I tried to understand. "Why was that embarrassing?" Lester glanced over at me, then straight ahead. "You know about nocturnal emissions, don't you?" Good grief, what else was there to learn? I wondered. It sounded like</p>

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97	<p>something having to do with a car. "No," I said. "When a guy reaches puberty and has a sexy dream he ejaculates in his sleep, and wakes up to find the sheets wet. I didn't want Sal to find out. Then she saw me."</p> <p>"When a guy ejaculates, how much semen comes out A cup?"</p> <p>"A cup? Ye gods, no. A tablespoon or two, maybe."</p>

Profanity & Sexual or Derogatory Terms	Count
Breast / Tit	12
Penis	1
Piss	1
Shit / Bullshit etc.	1
Hooker	1
Sacriligious & other offensive language usage	Count
God / God damn etc.	5
Hell	1