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Alice, I Think

Elizabeth Myers

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Juby, Susan. *Alice, I Think*. Illustrated by NA. HarperTempest, 2003. ISBN 0060515430. \$16.89. 290 pp.

Reviewer: Elizabeth Meyers

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Humorous stories; Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Coming of age--Juvenile fiction; Self-perception--Juvenile fiction; Family life--British Columbia--Juvenile fiction;

Alice began school a little later in life than most children. Her first day of school was in first grade, but her problems didn't really stem from that. Before she started school, Alice was convinced she was a hobbit, and, to the general destruction of her social life, she dressed like one on the first day of school. Now fifteen and convinced that she's scarred for life from the treatment she received from the other kids in her first grade class, Alice has spent her years since then being homeschooled and trying very hard not to be noticed. But when Death Lord Bob, her counselor/therapist, suggests she goes back to public school, Alice takes on a string of changes (like getting a job and acquiring a 'new look') that, while calculated to make her more suited to the real world, end up seeming to push her farther and farther away, in very, very funny ways.

Susan Juby's wry first-person narrative creates a protagonist that is at once profoundly pessimistic yet still somehow likeable. While readers may at times be frustrated with Alice's sometimes apathetic and rather negative attitude, they will more often than not find themselves connecting to her as she struggles through the humorous and painful realities of not fitting in. *Alice, I Think* would be an especially entertaining read for teens who have gone through the homeschool experience, or for those who have felt, at any time, that they were just a little bit different.