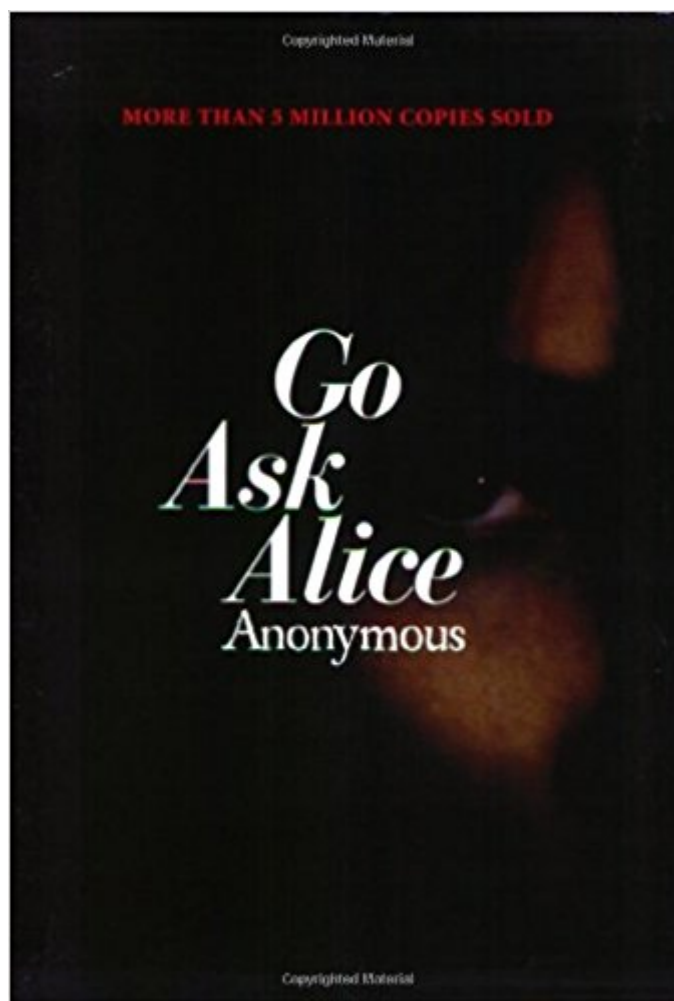


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# Go Ask Alice



## Synopsis

A teen plunges into a downward spiral of addiction in this classic cautionary tale. January 24th After you've had it, there isn't even life without drugs.... It started when she was served a soft drink laced with LSD in a dangerous party game. Within months, she was hooked, trapped in a downward spiral that took her from her comfortable home and loving family to the mean streets of an unforgiving city. It was a journey that would rob her of her innocence, her youth -- and ultimately her life. Read her diary. Enter her world. You will never forget her. For thirty-five years, the acclaimed, bestselling first-person account of a teenage girl's harrowing descent into the nightmarish world of drugs has left an indelible mark on generations of teen readers. As powerful -- and as timely -- today as ever, *Go Ask Alice* remains the definitive book on the horrors of addiction.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1010L (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Simon Pulse; Reprint edition (January 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416914633

ISBN-13: 978-1416914631

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.7 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (1,813 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #4,464 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Drugs #3 in Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Drugs & Alcohol Abuse #15 in Â Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Addiction & Recovery > Alcoholism

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Presumably the diary of a teenage drug addict, *GO ASK ALICE* was first published when I was in junior highschool. It was widely distributed at my school, and the faculty urged the students to read it for an accurate portrait of the horrors of drug use--and read it I did. At the time I was very, very impressed by the book. But that was almost thirty years ago. Today I am 40 years old, and I am a much more critical reader than I was when I was 12. And my thoughts upon rereading this book are

quite different than they were when I first came to it. The obvious issue here is whether or not the book is what it purports to be. Upon re-reading it, I find myself willing to believe that GO ASK ALICE is indeed the diary of a teenage drug user--but I also think it has been heavily re-written in spots to intensify its anti-drug agenda. I base this observation on two points. First, whenever the book describes drugs or their effects, it suddenly changes tone and becomes very, very specific in a way that the other entries are not. Secondly, the descriptions it offers re the effects of certain drugs are exactly those you would expect of a non-drug-user writing with reference to studies available in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This does not change the fact that this is a good book for young teenagers to read. The literary merit is zero--but that is not the point; the point is, as it always was, that casual drug use is simply not a good idea, and it places you in a situation where one thing can easily lead to another without the user being aware of the drift or having conscious control. But it is also a book that needs to be read with responsible adult input, for some of its content may need qualification. Ultimately, although dated and perhaps not quite as honest as it at first glance seems, it remains a powerful tool in any parent's anti-drug arsenal. GFT, Reviewer

I don't mind people liking this book or gaining something from this book, but many of the adult reviewers here seem hellbent on promoting this book as either a major literary work or as an actual diary depicting the horrors of teen drug abuse. It is neither. I think it does potential readers, especially teen readers a true disservice to promote this book in either way. If you're doing this, you are not being honest. It is NOT a real diary. It simply is not. It is a work of fiction created by Sparks. She continued this path - soap opera in diary form in a full-out series of books warning teens about the consequences of bad behavior. Don't believe me? Go to the Snopes Web site (you know, the one that confirms or dispels urban legends, rumors and out-and-out lies?) and read about Go Ask Alice. The researchers there confirmed that it is a work of FICTION written by SPARKS (not "Anonymous") as if it were a real diary. I'm not saying this is necessarily a bad thing, as long as teens aren't being told this is a girl's real diary. That would be a lie. I don't believe in lying to teens, regardless of how noble you think the cause. Interesting note - Sparks, who is now in her eighties - was (maybe still is, I don't know) a member of the Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints church. She wrote books that promoted the values of her church (obey your parents, clean living, etc.) - she just seemed to forget that annoying little commandment "Thou Shalt Not Lie." Apparently, there was even a 1979 musical inspired by "Alice" follow-up "Jay's Journal" that focuses on Spark's promoting fiction as fact, taking advantage of "Jay's" family (there actually was a "Jay," but most of the book about him was fiction) to enhance her own career, etc. BTW, note to English teachers - if you're

having your students write papers on this book (there are better books out there), make sure the papers aren't plagiarized from the net. I was amazed at how many "lift this paper" versions of Alice book reviews I found. A tipoff is that most, if not all, spoke of Alice as being a wonderful, emotional, true account of a teen struggling with drugs. If students actually research this book, they'll know it's fiction. Of course, being an English teacher, you already should know it's fiction, right? There are books that give true, harrowing accounts of what happens when you use drugs. This is not one of those books. This book is a didactic soap opera - a cautionary tale written in a highly dramatic, unrealistic way. It is not particularly well-written, not great literature, but it's written in an emotional, dramatic, edgy (for its time) way to draw in teen readers. Judging by its popularity and the doggedly admiring reviews here, it's been very successful. I don't mind this book or its format, but I do have a tremendous problem with it being promoted to teens as something that it is not. Enjoy it as a work of fiction, realize that drug users generally have very sad, wasted lives, use it as a way to realize you should "just say no," whatever. But realize it's basically a fictional soap opera or an after-school-special in fake diary form. If you understand that, then by all means, read and enjoy. Don't use drugs and don't lie to people. Both are nasty habits to have.

"Go Ask Alice," the tome so gloriously expounded upon by four-hundred and forty-four readers below, is a fictional account of a teenager's descent into drugs. It is "edited" by Dr. Beatrice Sparks. Now take a moment, shopper, and do a search for "Beatrice Sparks" under "Books." As you can see, Ms. Sparks knows a quite a few anonymous teenagers, each of them with a different malaise. Whether it's Annie (pregnancy) or Nancy (date rape/AIDS), Jay (drugs/Satanism) or Jennie (pills), or even Sam (gang violence), Ms. Sparks covers it all. At the age of eleven, reading this book was a terrifying gateway into nethers of teenage existence. Now, at the age of nineteen, it has become a relic of the American War On Drugs; an antiquity like Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaigns or the "D.A.R.E." program. Like most anti-drug literature, it's well meaning, but inconsistencies ultimately get the upper hand. "Go Ask Alice" reads like a pulp conspiracy novel, with the subject "tricked" into addiction by her friends (acid in the Cokes at a Party) who will stop at nothing to make sure she keeps taking drugs. The amount of drugs consumed throughout the book would have made Grace Slick nauseous. The climax is equally laughable. David Toma had it right when he said that the most important factor in keeping kids off drugs was the unconditional love and care of a family. Maybe Ms. Sparks should have written a book on that instead.---- For those who can stomach a truly candid book about drug use, seek out "Naked Lunch" by William S. Burroughs. For those who lack the patience to actually READ a book, watch Soderbergh's "Traffic."

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