



[Home](#) > Bad Alice

Bad Alice

Books Reviewed:

[Bad Alice](#) [1]

Issue:

[140](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Pam Harwood](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Ure has a long and distinguished record of treating sombre or disturbing themes without being negative or depressing, in novels where the medium of story neither swamps the message nor is dried out by it. She has never used these gifts to better effect than in **Bad Alice**. The book's subject is child abuse, occurring where it mostly does: in families, behind closed doors. The abuser is the warm, extrovert, pious and plausible neighbourhood saint. Alice, aged about twelve, is the younger (and much the brighter) of two adopted children, victims played off against each other. She reads **Alice in Wonderland**, and encodes her secret trauma in brilliant pastiches based on Carroll - marvellous but credible achievements for a gifted, spirited but damaged child. Her deserved good luck is the arrival next door of 13-year-old Duffy. He has major problems of his own, but as a newcomer befriending Alice he is immune to the slanders which have branded her locally as a liar and a basket case. When Alice entrusts her literary efforts to him, he eventually discovers how to read them, and takes action. The story is gripping, both the children and adults subtly drawn and entirely believable, the message important. And the satisfying close is not false comfort. This is a very fine book. Awarders of prizes, please note.

Running Order:

36

Source URL (retrieved on Sep '19): <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/140/childrens-books/reviews/bad-alice>

Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/bad-alice>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/140>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/pam-harwood>